



On Trend

Roger Bisby reviews a Master at work

Scribing in skirting and other mouldings is a job that has been done with a coping saw for as long as anyone can remember. It has always been possible to do it with a router, but finding the right cutter has been the real challenge. The Scribe Master Pro has been around for a few years now but recently Trend have taken on the marketing and distribution, and spookily or not they also make a specific cutter.

The cutter is important because it is a 4mm cobalt steel downward spiral twin fluted unit that is also very strong. It needs to be strong because it cuts in a single pass without bending. It cuts hard

and soft wood as well as MDF and is rated for 10,000 rpm, but you should really only run it at around 2,000 rpm. More than that and you run the risk of burning the cutter. The important thing is to let the cutter do the work and never force it through. Despite being strong you can snap it, because it won't bend and at something around £35.00 a pop you won't want to snap too many.

The special base tracing plate on the jig angles the router away from the cut, so it produces a slight undercut on the scribe, which means the front edge fits snug against the host material. If all this looks complicated don't worry – like flying an Airbus, it's easier than it looks.

It looks more complicated than it is. The heart is the pin scribing gauge that needs to be set to your moulding. You can even scribe one moulding into one of a different type should you ever need to do that. You can angle the piece for out of plumb walls, but I would prefer to keep the skirting straight and spring it in. Once you start cutting out of square it is difficult to know where and when to stop.

Talking to various carpenters you get the usual diverse reactions from "you wouldn't catch me using that" to "great, where can I get one?" A lot depends on how much scribing you do and what you think constitutes cheating. For some people anything that involves electricity is cheating, but if you are doing second fix work all the time and you are more interested in making a living than earning a place on the board of The Grand Worshipful Company of Joiners and Pattern Makers, then this jig is going to speed the job up no end.

It is designed to be mounted on your mitre saw stand so you can cut and mitre each run of skirting as you go. Once you get the hang of it you will find it very fast. A good tip is to set in a piece of sacrificial softwood that you can cut into once. That will give you a datum to position the skirting so you don't waste any.



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