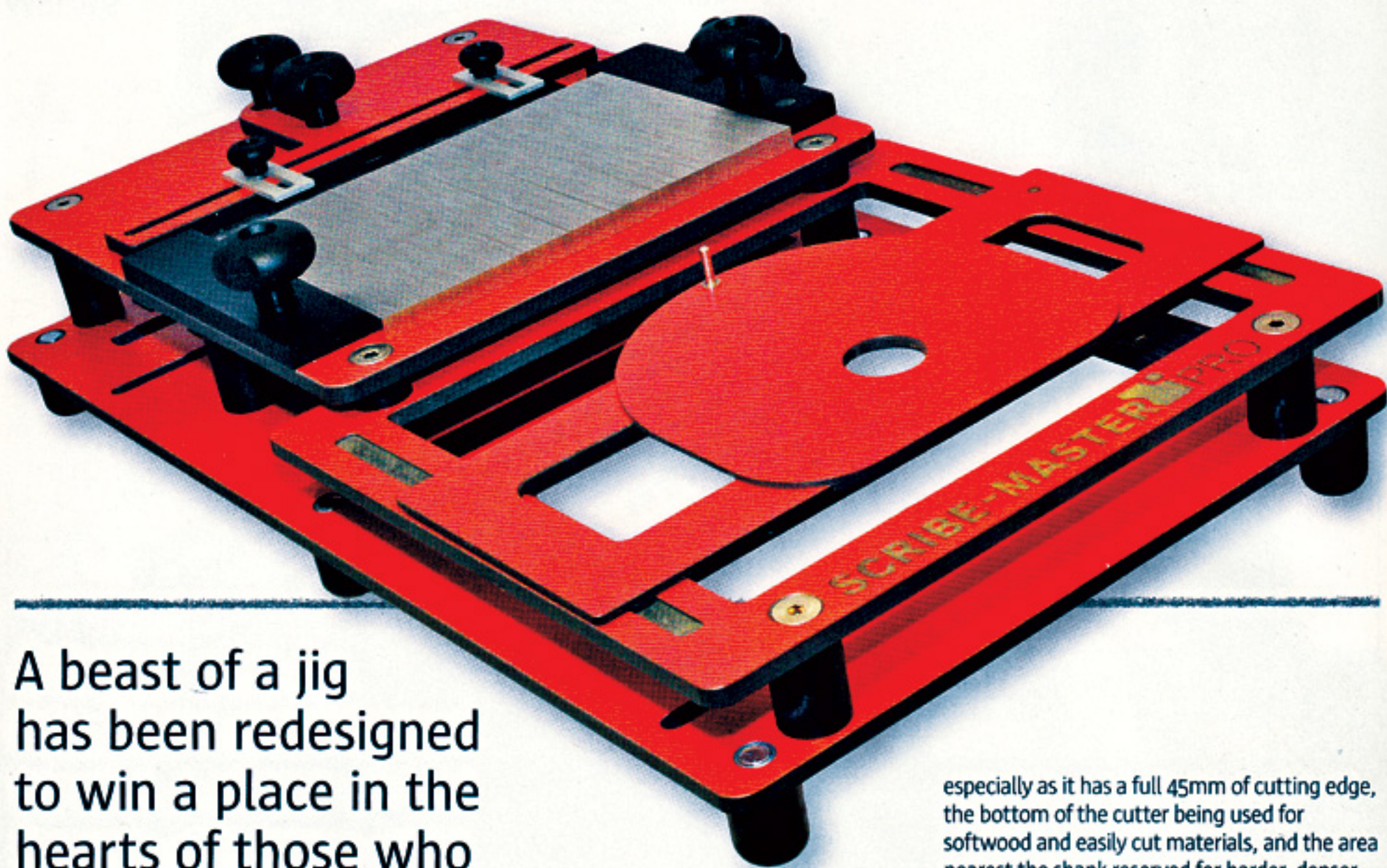


Refined Charmar



A beast of a jig has been redesigned to win a place in the hearts of those who spend much time scribing

Back in *GW200* when I first tested the Charmar it was certainly not the most portable of jigs though it did the job very well. Move on six years and it has had a makeover and a renaming that should see the ScribeMaster Pro becoming a must-have piece of kit for anyone who does a lot of scribing for skirting, dado, picture rail and plinth work.

The most noticeable change is the elimination of interchangeable guide pins to match router cutters. The ScribeMaster now

has a fixed pin and a router cutter that matches it. Only 4mm diameter, it follows tighter into internal quirks for the best fit possible.

The thin profile of the bit could be a cause for concern, but the cutter used – one is included as a special offer in the kit in the initial batches – is ported over from the window industry where they are used to chain out drainage holes in aluminium and uPVC frames.

The spiral flute cutter is an HSSE composition, a High Speed Steel with the addition of cobalt to give it not only additional wear resistance but also flexibility – undoubtedly important with such a thin cutter,

especially as it has a full 45mm of cutting edge, the bottom of the cutter being used for softwood and easily cut materials, and the area nearest the shank reserved for harder, denser material. I found it cut cleanly and quickly without problems.

How it works

A short piece of the material to be scribed is fitted to the sliding back stop. The angle can be set to suit an out-of-plumb wall by using a sliding bevel, or if you are happy with the fit to the wall, a standard square.

The small aluminium angle brackets are snugged up to the top and bottom of the material and the pin comb pushed up tightly to the face of the workpiece.

A small scraper is supplied to push in the pins firmly to the piece. It's then a matter of flipping the comb over to set the negative profile ready



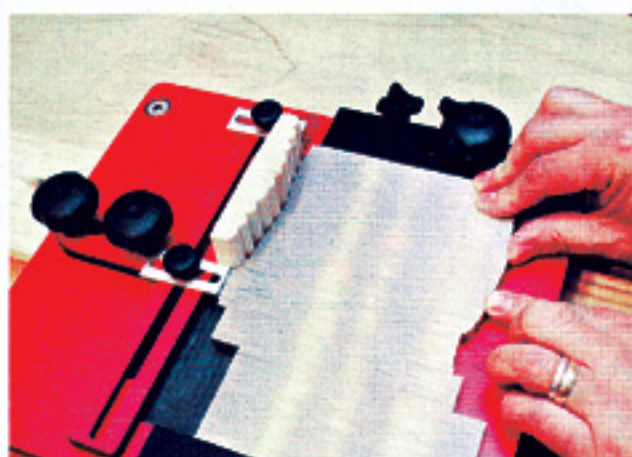
▲ The 4mm guide pin ensures tight scribes



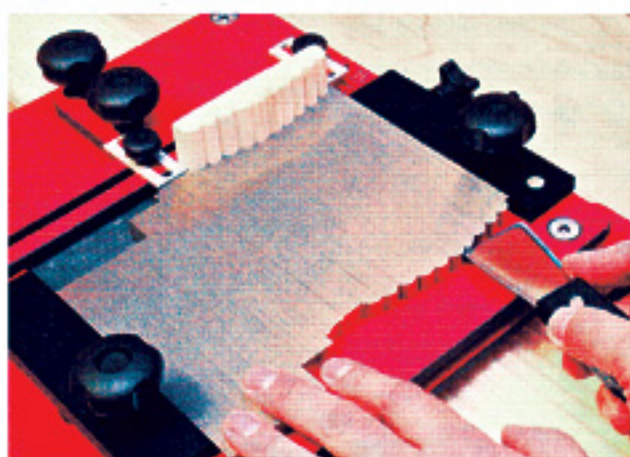
▲ The backstop is set for square or with a bevel to accommodate out-of-plumb work



▲ Two aluminium tabs fit to the edges of the sample piece



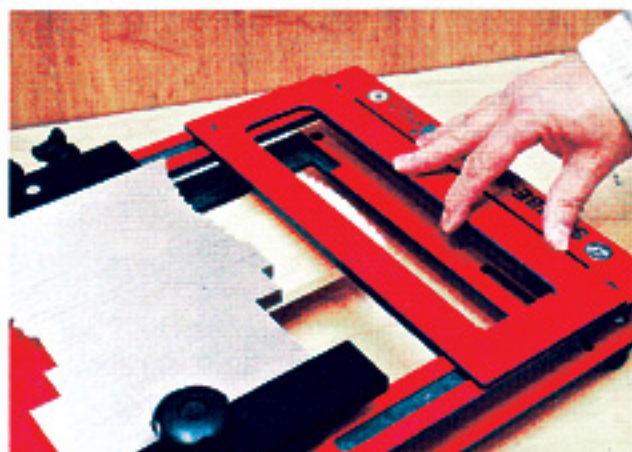
▲ The pin comb is pushed up to the sample piece roughly...



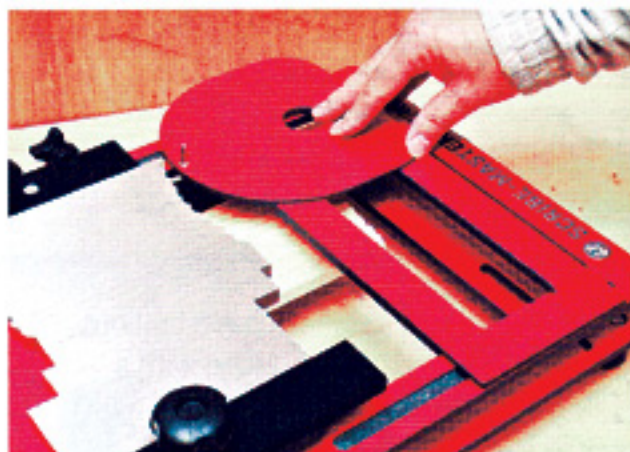
▲ ...then fine tuned with the supplied tool to achieve the best definition



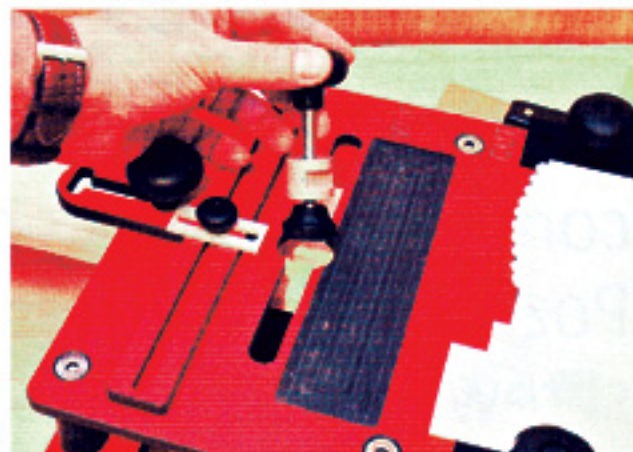
▲ Once the comb is set it is flipped to act as a template



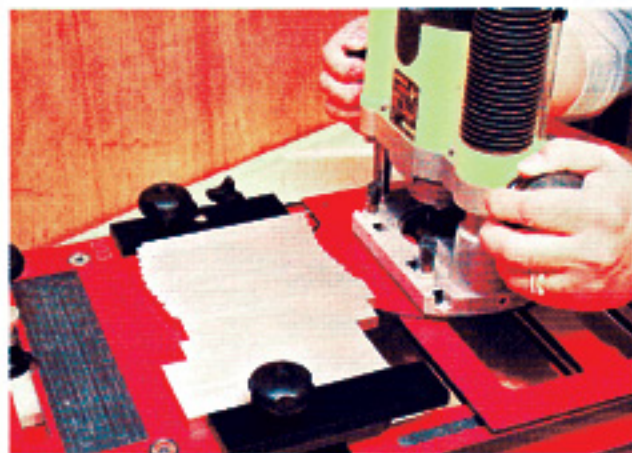
▲ The letterbox part of the jig slides backwards and forwards



▲ The pin plate sits over this and slides left to right



▲ This clamp slides in to the work for routing



▲ The router locates in the pin guide with a 30mm guide bush and addresses the template



▲ The resulting cut is crisp; note the sacrificial block which remains in place and can be used for fast setup on subsequent cuts



▲ Look how cleanly the ScribeMaster joints come up

to address the guide pin.

The work is slid in from below the comb, addressing the stops to ensure the scribe positions correctly. Two adjustable rollers snug up to the pre-marked work to allow fine-tuning. To aid fast setting to marks, a couple of holes on the exit side of the cutter position allow fitting of a sacrificial block. After making an initial cut, this becomes the reference for any further marked work.

The work is held in place while you rout with a slide-in clamp that drops into place and slides along in a keyhole slot to trap the work once it's screwed down, allowing swapping in and out in seconds.

A sliding plate with a letterbox opening moves forwards and backwards in a couple of reference slots, and on this you fit the upper guide pin plate. It's all done with a 30mm guide bush on the router that drops into the receiver hole on the plate, with the plate housed over the letterbox slot to allow side-to-side movement.

This combination allows the router to move

freely across the work as the guide pin addresses the comb, and with the lower letterbox plate machined to sit at a slight tilt, the resulting scribe is slightly undercut for a cleaner fit once the joint is positioned.

Once the comb has been set to suit the profile, each scribe is achieved in seconds.

As with any pin-guided system that has to address a sharp internal radius, there is still a marginal curvature left in where a traditional hand-cut scribe would leave a crisp internal corner, but I found that if you follow traditional methods of cutting the work fractionally long then spring the piece in position, the joint comes up very tight and even in hardwood it is difficult to spot any gap.

Alongside the scribe work, the main letterbox plate can be swapped for a tenoning plate and a set of riser blocks to give you a deeper capacity for external joinery sizes. Fitting the router with a bottom-cutting straight bit and altering the plunge accordingly allows tenons to be made quickly and accurately.

Conclusion

Now the Scribemaster has been reduced in size and is quicker to set up than the original Charmar jig, it's a viable concept that delivers consistent results in double-quick time, plus there's additional scope with the tenon-cutting adaptor.

Good

The Woodworking Verdict

+ Fast repeat scribes; easy to use; quick to set up; tenon adaptor available
- Not ideal for one-off scribes

Rating ★★★★★

Typical price: £299.99

Made in: UK

Dimensions: 550 x 310mm

Max scribe capacities: 195 x 32mm

Weight: 5.9kg

Web: www.scribemaster.com