

Trend T11 router



The year 2005 marks the 50th anniversary of the founding of Trend by Jim Phillips. A number of new products have been introduced to mark the occasion, and chief among them are the T10 and T11 routers. Both are made for Trend by DeWalt and both are based on the DW 625 in its updated 2000W form. Their advent means goodbye to the T9, which doesn't appear in the latest catalogue.

The T11 is the more sophisticated model. It preserves all the best features of the DW 625 – variable speed,

excellent collets, simple switch, solid plunge lock, adjustable side fence, 6mm fixing holes in the base – but adds several brand new features which, in my opinion, put it ahead of the competition.

Quick raiser

The main innovation is a built-in fine height adjuster which can be operated from above or below the router base. Trend call it the 'Quick Raiser' and it works in a similar fashion to the 'Router Raiser' which is an American accessory I've fitted to my DW 625.

The T11 showing the Quick Raiser and the details of the base casting



A series of parallel grooves being cut using the CGS attachment



The router base showing the bottom end of the Quick Raiser (upper left)



Dovetailing with the new Leigh D1600 jig



The Quick Raiser consists of a threaded rod which takes the place of the previous plunge limiter, but goes right through the router base so that it can be operated from below the base. Operation is by using a T-handle with a 12mm hex socket end, which engages the nuts at each end of the threaded rod. For table use, a 20mm hole has to be drilled in the table insert plate.

The router base and the bottom end of the Quick Raiser, completely transforms the use of the router in a table. Depth setting is quick and precise without the need for an elaborate and costly insert plate incorporating a lifting device, and without the loss of depth of cut inherent in such devices. The hole, however, does collect sawdust and will need to be cleaned periodically.

New base casting

The second major new feature is a revised base casting with three recesses around the perimeter to allow the use of a quick-release system for fitting and removing the router from the table. In addition, two threaded bosses on the straight side of the base take a slider attachment, which allows the router to run along a Trend Clamp Guide without deviation.

The new base has a larger aperture (75mm) and comes with a centre plate which takes the standard diameter Trend guide bushes. In addition, the three extra-large Trend bushes – 50, 60 and 70mm – fit straight into the base. The centre plate can be aligned for concentricity with the motor spindle using the alignment pin (see below).

Finally, a slider kit is available to enable the T11 to be attached to the Trend Clamp Guide System for cutting housings etc. The kit consists of an alloy bracket, which bolts to the router base, and a plastic slider, which fits over the Clamp Guide.

Other features include a sleeker dust extractor spout, which can be clipped or bolted on, and a range of collets from 3mm to 1/2in. These are of the two-part, snap-in type. Somewhat surprisingly though, only a 1/2in collet is included as standard kit.

Established features, carried over from the DW 625 and the Elu 177 before it,

The router with the guide bush centre plate, alignment pin and selection of Trend bushes



TREND PRT UPDATE

The Trend PRT table has been upgraded to make the most of the T11. The insert plate now has three additional holes drilled for the quick-release fixing posts, plus a 20mm hole for the Quick Raiser adjusting handle.

In addition, one of the short bench-top legs is now fitted with an adjustment foot for levelling it on an uneven surface, and the back fence is now adjustable for squareness to the tabletop.

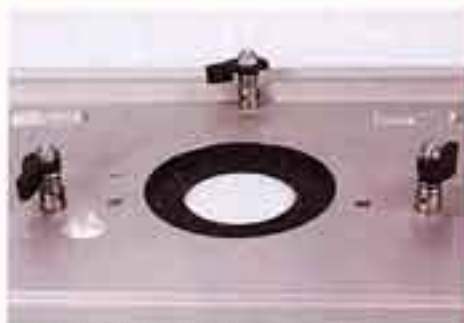
For owners of existing PRT tables, Trend offers a drilling service for the Quick Release and Quick Raiser holes. Trend provide a free phenolic insert plate for a home-made table, but drilling them yourself wouldn't be too difficult.

Quick release system

The quick-release system consists of three posts bolted under the insert plate.



The router in the PRT plate, with one of the quick release levers engaged



The new PRT table insert plate inverted to show the three quick-release fittings

with three plastic levers that lock on to recesses in the base casting.

There's a slight irony in having such a system in the PRT table because, by lifting out the insert plate and placing it on the upturned router, installation with the three 6mm machine screws is about as easy as it gets without any quick release levers. Nevertheless, it's a useful feature, which adds to the user-friendliness of the new Trend system.

The clamping levers are of hard black plastic and their pressure can be set with the assembly nuts. We found traces of black dust on the router base where the plastic had rubbed on the casting, so it's possible that the levers are a long-term replacement item.

The Owner's Manual stipulates that when using large cutters such as panel raisers, or if the router is to be left in the table for long periods, it should be secured with the three 6mm screws as well as the QR levers.

T-handle v Quick Raiser

The T-handle comes as standard with the router for both hand and table use. It's very useful for precise depth-of-cut setting, e.g. when dovetailing, but it takes a lot of effort to wind the router over its full plunge range.

A slotting cutter being set precisely with the T-handle for biscuit jointing in the PRT



The Quick Raiser enables the collet to be wound up and down quickly for cutter changing in the table, but is less convenient when making a precise adjustment. I had the use of both and wouldn't willingly do without either.

The T10

The T10 model is a simplified form of the T11. There's no Quick Raiser, no Quick Release recesses in the base casting, and no provision for the CGS kit. In fact the T10 is almost identical to the latest DW 625. The difference in list price between the two models is only £23.50 so it'd seem rather short sighted to forgo the benefits of the T11 for the sake of such a sum (plus the cost of the QR kit and the CGS kit if you want it).



Tested by Ron Fox

VERDICT

The T11 incorporates all the major features that I want in a heavy-duty router. The key feature is the Quick Raiser fine height adjuster but of almost equal importance is the large base aperture with the facility to take the complete range of Trend guide bushes, including the three extra-large ones.

The Quick Release table attachment system is slightly less important, especially with the PRT table, but will appeal to those who frequently switch their router from hand to table and back again.

All in all, the T11 is another step towards the perfect router. When I last tested big routers, I placed the DW 625 narrowly ahead of the T9 as the best on test. The T11 combines the best features of each with the bonus of the Quick Raiser.

The price given below is the catalogue price but I've seen it advertised for £249.

Price: £334 including the Quick Raiser and T-handle.

Accessories: quick release kit, £22.85; clamp guide system kit, £34.65; quick height adjuster, £21.15.

Contact: Trend

0800 487363

www.trendmachinery.co.uk

PERFORMANCE ●●●●●
VALUE FOR MONEY ●●●●●

include the strong but smooth plunge action, solid handles unencumbered by switch or plunge lock, and the fussy depth setting system that I've never relied on for accurate setting – distorting plastic lens, thick red line, indistinct scale – and that's before it fills with sawdust!

I put the T11 through a full range of hand and table routing applications. From the start it had a familiar feel, as you'd expect from an updated DW 625.

Tests

The first test was grooving the edge of a board with the side fence fitted. Here, the fine adjuster on the fence enables the groove to be accurately widened to accommodate the exact thickness of the drawer bottom. The 10mm fence rods are set wider than on the DW 625, which means that the fence isn't interchangeable with that model though it is with the T9. It can also be fitted to the T5.

We used the T11 with the brand new Leigh D1600 dovetail jig, as well as for some guide bush work and with Trend's Router Compass.