

First class routing, nearly 20 years on

Since being introduced to the market nearly 20 years ago, the Trend T5 has gone from strength to strength. A classic indeed, this variable-speed router is compact, lightweight, easy to control and also represents fantastic value for money

The GW archives show that the Trend T5 made its debut to the market way back in 1998 and was reviewed in issue GW76 by Phil Davy who commented on its ease of use and similarity to the classic Elu 96 and 96E machines.

Now, almost 20 years on, it not only survives, but retains its place in the market as a much loved router by trade and amateur alike; a perfect example of 'if it ain't broke, don't fix it'.

Transitions & tweaks

That's not to say the T5 has remained static and untouched during this period: over time the router has had a few tweaks along the way while still maintaining the classic design and being easy to operate.

This includes an improved spindle lock assembly for more efficient bit swaps, and upgrades to the plunge lock and handles for smoother operation, and under the bonnet, enhancements to the electronics make the router more efficient under load.

Ergonomics & design

Ergonomics play a big part in tool design and little wonder the T5 still survives, as the original Elu version was a hard act to follow, with the sliding power switch position on the side of the tool in easy reach of the thumb for a quick and smooth operation.

The plunge is another area of great ergonomic forethought and where the T5 bucks the trend for most router designs. While the majority rely on a lever lock for the



A clip-in dust kit is supplied to control the dust and help keep the work area clear as you rout



plunge, and these can be good, bad or indifferent depending on how easy they are to access and engage, the T5 plunge is operated via a grip on the opposite side of the power switch.

A simple twist releases or locks the plunge so it's incredibly easy to control, and ideal for ramped cuts or starting in from an edge for stopped grooves or moulds.

It soon becomes second nature to twist, plunge and lock and this is a really intuitive way of controlling a cut without having to feel around the back of the router for a plunge lock lever in order to lift the cutter away from the work.

The inclusion of a simple, clip to fit dust kit to control the dust and keep the work area clear as you rout is also a big bonus.

Router accessories

It's not just about the ergonomics, however; Trend made a big impact on the market with the range of router accessories they introduced with many new, radical and innovative designs in their day, thinking well outside the box and intending the user to get the full use from a router, and this innovation continues to this day. The base design of the Elu routers that were



The fence is excellent and comes with a fine adjuster as standard



taken into the Trend versions remain an attribute that some manufacturers also adhere to with identical guide bush aperture diameters and fence rod spacings, as well as similar base shapes or screw fixings, which ensures they are compatible with the full range of routing accessories. This is high praise indeed, especially for a design that is now decades old – certainly no mean feat in an era of huge technological advances!

T5 changes

So while the T5 seems to have come full circle in retaining a look and feel that is little different to when it was first introduced, under the bonnet the motor has gone from the initial 850W to a 1,000W machine, so there's greater power to drive the more demanding cutters and it remains a compact, lightweight and easy to control router.

The fence remains a fine adjustable cast alloy version as standard with sliding cheeks to allow the fence aperture to be reduced for different applications, just as it was in



Using the guide bush, you can easily work with templates and jigs



Also supplied in the kit is the trammel point for circle and arc work



The sliding fence facings allow full support for different sized bits and applications



The side-mounted sliding power switch is easy to operate



The basic T5 is very adaptable and not just limited to edge moulds; this inlay is easy to let in but very effective



You can use the turret to gauge against fittings such as hinges...



... or against inlays to set the routing depth to let them in perfectly flush

1998 – something that is often omitted in favour of inferior simple pressed steel versions with fixed facings, as used by other manufacturers.

If you are looking to get the best from your router, any fine adjustments are beneficial and welcome, and being able to nudge a cut in micrometer increments with a fence when fitting inlays or making housing joints, for example, is an essential attribute.

The height adjustment out of the box remains the same as the original Elu; a simple depth post dropping down to a rotating three-post turret. Simplistic as it is, the design is clever and

easy to use for routing set depths by using the post to gauge thicknesses of the work to be let in or with gauge blocks, or simply to run a series of passes to limit the depth of cut per pass, which helps to minimise strain on the router and cutter. Again, this same or similar design is replicated across the board by many manufacturers as it works so well.

A fine height adjuster is available for fine-tuning a cut, which is useful for some jig work where a cut may require fine control in order to achieve the fit – when using a dovetail jig, for example – but with most work, the simple depth post works well.

UK wide promotional offer

So nearly two decades on, the Trend T5 retains its place in the industry and continues to be a firm favourite here at GW as well as out in the field, but most remarkable of all has to be its price. Back in 1998 the RRP for the T5 was £199 with a selling price of around £179.



The rotating turret and depth post are simple but very effective for many routing jobs



The simple twist lock plunge is great for fast, easy and controllable plunges

This was certainly a decent price back then for a tool that could do so much and with so many accessories available, but now, in 2017, the T5, thanks to a UK wide promotional offer, can be picked up for a steal at just £149.

There cannot be many, if any, tools that have retained their place in the market for so long a period and somehow managed to shave £30 off their selling price! Here at GW we've always loved the design and performance of the T5, and at this new promotional price, there should now be a lot more people who'll be able to do the same. **GW**

Specification:

- ▶ **Rating:** Professional/trade
 - ▶ **Plunge stroke:** 0-50mm
 - ▶ **Power input:** 1,000W
 - ▶ **Standard collet dia:** 1/4in
 - ▶ **Max cutter dia:** 40mm
 - ▶ **No load speeds:** 9-27,000rpm
 - ▶ **Dust spout size (ID):** 35mm
 - ▶ **Guide bush dia:** 20mm
 - ▶ **Weight:** 3.3kg
 - ▶ **Voltages:** 240 or 115V
- ▶ **Includes:** 1 x 6.35mm collet; 1 x 35mm clip-in dust spout; 1 x 20mm guide bush; 1 x side-fence with micro adjuster; 1 x beam trammel attachment

Promotional price: £149 (list price £267.94)
Web: www.trend-uk.com