

Festool C12 Cordless Drill/Driver

SURPRISING POWER IN A COMPACT, VERSATILE PACKAGE.

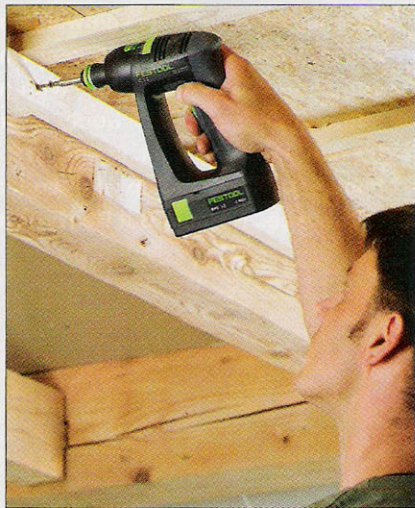
Point blank: This is the best 12-volt drill/driver I've ever used. As powerful and versatile as it is small, Festool's C12 sets a new category standard. I tested it drilling small and large holes, driving various lengths of wood screws and Tapcons, and even mixing thinset. The C12 was a great tool at every step.

Out of the Box. The C12 is an impressive if unorthodox-looking tool. Its compact slide-on 1.3-amp-hour nicad battery exchanged nicely, the tool

was well-balanced, and all switches were easy to reach and work. At 3 pounds 6.8 ounces, it's one of the lightest 12-volt nicad drill/drivers on the market. Its onboard bit storage is excellent: Instead of pinching driver bits in fingernail-bending metal clips, it holds them securely with magnets. To remove bits, slide them in the storage channel, up a ramp, and out. Top-notch design.

The tool also ships with a hex drive bit holder (finally!) and a keyless

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Festool's C12 is the ultimate combination of low weight and big power for drilling and driving.

Festool (CONTINUED)

1/2-inch chuck that are exchangeable using no tools. And, both chucks have bearing collars to protect work—very smart. Remove either chuck and the C12 also turns bits directly from the tool. I used the hex drive with Festool's magnetic bit holder the most. While I liked it, I'd get extras

because the shank isn't compatible with standard 1/4-inch hex-drive accessories. The C12 also ships with an incredibly sharp 1/8-inch brad-point drill bit.

Power. The C12's new brushless motor is small but powerful. It easily popped hole after hole through double 2-by with a dull 1/2-inch auger bit. I mixed small batches of thinset and

drove a couple hundred 1 5/8-inch wood screws through cement board and plywood for a tile substrate and later drove 3-inch deck screws into 2-by with zero problems. Not surprisingly, the tool doesn't have the torque to sink 2 1/2-inch Tapcons into concrete. The tool beeps when the battery needs a charge—a nice feature.

Versatility. I love how versatile the Festool is. To remove an oddball metal awning, the C12's compact size (and no-chuck bit holder) enabled me to squeeze it into a tight space. Its unique body design makes it easy to hold the tool in different ways (in-line, by the handle, or using two hands) and still get good purchase on the screw. This also helps for long projects like screwing off drywall or a wood deck because you can change hand position and hold off fatigue. The tool is even compact enough to fit securely, battery-down, in my tool pouch, a great feature for when you need to set the tool aside.

Upgrades. Right-angle and offset chuck accessories are available for the tool, though I didn't try them out during this test. They also have accessory drill and driver bits, countersinks, and plug cutters. And, if you have a problem, Festool's toll-free service number is right on the label.

Festool thought of everything and built a winner.

■ **Festool C12:** \$315. 888-337-8600. www.festoolusa.com. Circle #203.

—Mark Clement



The C12 ships with a hex drive chuck. It's ideal for switching out bits quickly.