
Festool Trion Jigsaw

by Victor Rasilla



Many tool companies produce good stand-alone jigsaws, but Festool's Trion model is a cut above. It has the advantage of being part of a system that includes optional dust extractor vacuums and straightedge cutting guides. I've been using the Trion PS 300 EQ for about six months, and it's superior to any other jigsaw I've used.

Precise Cutting

One of the things that sets this tool apart is the absence of any blade sway during tightly curved cuts. There's no wander because the blade is held on three sides by a solid carbide guide. The guide adjusts, so you can fine tune it to fit the blade.

I used the Trion to make 1-inch-radius cuts on the ends of 30 redwood 2x2s for a garden trellis. Despite the tight radius, the blade didn't wander, so the cuts were a perfect 90 degrees through the stock. They would have been slightly beveled if I had made them with another saw.

The Trion can be used with Festool's FS guide rails to make straight, accurate cuts. All you need is one of the rails and an \$8 adaptor plate. I've used these rails with Festool's circular saw and router, but I don't do enough straight cutting with jigsaws to bother using the plate. I have used the Trion with a conventional edge guide, and with the splinter guard in place it was able to trim door bottoms with zero splintering and near table-saw precision.



Carpenters don't normally use jigsaws for long, straight cuts, but with a straightedge and splinter guard, the Trion will cut almost as cleanly and precisely as a table saw.

Dust Extraction

Festool's construction tools are geared toward the high-end finish carpenter. They're particularly suited to "live-in" remodeling and medical industrial applications, where low dust generation is required. The Trion's cutting area is enclosed by a clear plastic chip guard, and dust is extracted through a pair of collection ports built right into the shoe. A hose adaptor can be clipped into the back of the shoe and connected to a dust extractor. Festool makes a number of trigger-activated extractors, but the Trion works fine rigged up to my old shop vac.

The shoe bevels up to 45 degrees in either direction, but the adjustment requires a wrench, and the bevel gauges are hard to read when the saw is tilted beyond 30 degrees. The tool-less blade chuck accepts T-shank blades and is easier to operate than most other clamps because it's activated by a lever on the housing. There's absolutely no play in the chuck mechanism, and that increases the precision of your cuts.

The barrel-grip version is designed for right-hand use and is comfortable to grasp with medium hands. At five pounds, it's easy to use for extended periods. However, the housing did get noticeably hot when I used it for ten minutes straight. The 6-amp motor is equipped with electronic speed control and has the power to maintain speed under heavy cutting loads such as 8/4 hard maple. The saw has orbital cutting action and comes with a removable cord.

The Trion comes in a Systainer, Festool's brand of case management. Systainers for different tools stack, mate, and lock together. They can be carried as one unit or wheeled around on top of a Festool vacuum. The Trion is available as a barrel-grip (PS 300 EQ) or a top-handle model (PSB 300 EQ).

The only downside to these saws is their price. At \$250, they're about \$100 more than competing models. That said, I bought one of the barrel-grip models, and it was worth it because I like to do very precise work.

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