

Tests on Request

Here are some new products we've been told about recently. Email us at newtools@britishwoodworking.com to tell us which you'd like us to test most, and why.



Vacuum Dakota's Vacuum Clamping system comprises two bags (24x24in & 48x48in) and a mains pump and costs £220 from rutlands.co.uk, 01629 815518.



Self-centred The two rolling guides on Trend's new Self Centre Mortising Jig automatically centre a mortise or groove on a component up to 100mm wide. It costs about £28. See trend-uk.com for details or call 0800 487363.



Bench-mounted For turners who prefer to sharpen on a bench grinder, but like Tormek's jigs, you can now get a kit to use (for instance) the fingernail gouge jig on a grinder. The BGM-100 will cost about £55. Details: tormek.com or 0300 100 1008.



Sanderson Classic Hand Tools are now selling the gorgeous Sanderson Hardware fittings, including Hinge Kits. Details classichandtools.com or 01473 784983.

Graco Finex Spray Guns

Restorer David Oakes tests a new spray gun from the US

Devilbiss are the most common spray guns for professionals, and mine cost nearly £300 a few years ago. The Finex gun costs less than £90. I started using it just for base coats because I wasn't sure how it would perform, but now I use it all the time, mainly using pre-catalysed lacquers for dining tables and chairs. There's quite a demand for retro 1970s furniture to be restored, and it's important to use the original finish rather than French polish.

The high volume, low pressure (HVLP) gun arrived with a 1.0mm nozzle, which we had to replace with a 1.3mm because the smaller one was too tight for lacquers. Now that we've got the right nozzle it works perfectly. In fact I'd say that it's possibly better than the Devilbiss because it has a broader fan and is more consistent. The gravity-fed cup is a bit on the big side, which can be awkward inside cabinets, but there's also a Mini version. It's certainly good for large tables.

The important thing with a spray gun is that it produces a consistent fan, in a lozenge shape, that gives you a nice wide, even finish. If it's inconsistent, with too much at the centre, you can end up with striping. I don't know if these guns will stand up to constant, industrial use (only time will tell), but they are easier to set up and brilliant if you are just starting out with spraying. Because of the wide, even fan there is less risk you'll overlap, which also leads to striping.

The Graco Finex HVLP 1.3mm Spray Gun is sold in the UK by Behlen. It weighs 1.2kg and costs £81.50. Visit behlen.co.uk or call 0115 973 7288.



Consistent David says that the Finex spray guns give a consistent, wide fan. He seems to prefer them to his Devilbiss: praise indeed!

