

Panasonic EY45A2 Cordless Circular Saw

Small, but Perfect Performance



All circular saws tend to be power hungry, and the general rule seems to be the more powerful the motor, the better. But there are some situations where a less powerful cordless saw is the perfect tool. For example, while kitting out a London office a while ago, it was easier to rough out the many sheets of MDF in the courtyard (no mains power available) and then transfer them upstairs for the final trim cutting, where again, the cordless was quieter and almost dust free when connected to a vac extractor.

With a maximum cut depth of about 20mm required for the MDF, the cordless saw was the perfect tool for the job, and with two battery packs on hand, there was no downtime at all.

But even in the last couple of years the technology has moved on, and the first thing I noticed when I picked up the Panasonic EY45A2 was just how light and compact it is. I know it is not recommended, but it is possible to control it quite adequately with one hand in certain situations. Weighing in at just 2kgs with an 18v Lithium Ion battery pack attached it is a lightweight – but I rush to add, it is not a lightweight performer.

The EY45A2 is part of Panasonic's TOUGH Tool IP range and as such has a number of key features that set it apart from the herd. With enhanced sealing against water and dust, motors and gears are well protected against expected site conditions. The electronics are also protected by a urethane layer against dust and water, and they in turn protect the motor and battery pack from overload and over discharge. Part of the deal when buying a modern Panasonic tool is the care and intelligent design that has gone into creating a long lasting and effective power tool.

In layout, the Panasonic follows a similar pattern to other cordless saws I have used. The pressed steel base is rigid and strong with a slot to attach an optional guide fence to left or right. The depth of cut can be set by loosening a butterfly nut and raising the body of the saw on a front pivot bolt.

The guarding and dust extraction however, are where Panasonic has added some unique features that increases the versatility of the saw and allows it to be used in a number of different situations and materials. The blade guard is made of robust plastic for lightness, and is divided into three main parts. The front guard is clear plastic so the user has a good view of the position of the blade onto any cut being made. The view is helped by a bright LED light that is focused on the guide slot in front of the blade and it comes on automatically when the saw is switched on. The last two sections of the blade guard are tinted grey and these can be removed by unclipping them.

When cutting metal, attaching a vac extractor is not recommended because of the fire risk, so the last two bits of guard are needed to collect the resulting metal swarf. In my tests, the guards collected swarf very well, and saved me from having hot bits of metal drop on me while cutting.

Cutting wood however, is much more efficient if the dust is collected. By removing the cover, a 32mm extractor tube is revealed. A standard

**Independent Review
by Peter Brett**



Aimed at pro users in fitting trades like kitchen and window fitting.
Pros:- Dual voltage battery pack capacity, cuts up to 43mm in hardwood, light and easy to control with good dust extraction.

flexible vac end can be placed on it and the dust extraction is almost total, leaving the floor needing only a lick and a promise later. Very handy for those occasions when you have to work indoors and don't want to mess up the client's carpet!

The main handle has a minimal but very effective rubber overmould top and bottom. From the main handle, the forefinger is used to press the trigger and the thumb is needed to push down the safety switch lock so that the motor will start. Couldn't really be simpler.

Talking about motors, the motor housing is so compact that I doesn't obstruct any views or operating hands. The motor is also incredibly quiet – I would venture to suggest that the cutting blade makes more noise than the motor itself.

The auxiliary handle is just in front of the main handle where it is placed to provide maximum downforce on the front of the saw for accurate guidance. At the end of the slim grey body is the battery pack. Panasonic battery packs are acknowledged to be excellent, but the trick that this saw has is that it is dual voltage and can therefore accept current 14.4v and 18v Panasonic Lithium Ion battery packs. While you get a bit less oomph with the 14.4v pack, it wasn't so noticeable that you would insist on only using the 18v version.

I was able to test both the 40 tooth wood blade and the 30 tooth metal cutting blade as they were included in the test package. Currently, it is the metal cutting blade that is supplied as standard. Soon, the full range of 5 blades will be available, as well as the choice of a wood or metal blade at point of purchase. Changing blades takes only a couple of minutes using the hex key kept in a slot on the battery casing.

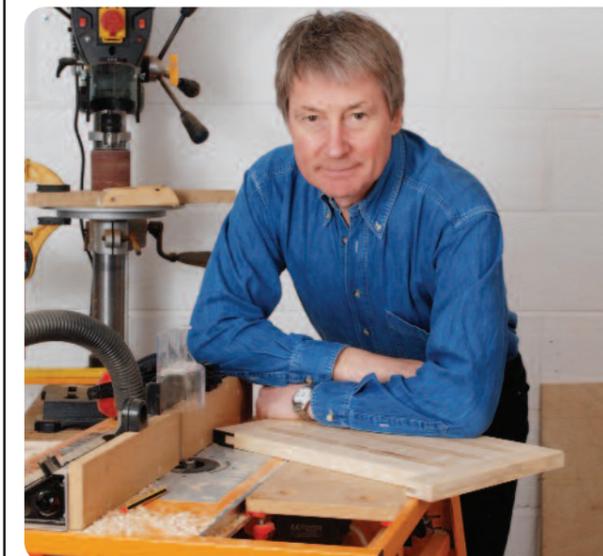
When it came to performance, let me say I was very pleasantly surprised by a number of things. Firstly, the noise levels are so civilized that even using the saw indoors probably wouldn't annoy prospective clients. Secondly, even as I was cutting through some hard, dry 45mm thick beech, the saw cut perfectly as long as I kept the sawblade straight in the slot as is required for accurate cutting. (Pretty good, since the spec depth of cut is 46mm.) Used with a guide rail I got perfect straight cuts every time.

I even managed a few straight cuts along the grain using the guide rail quite easily. The quality of the finish with the new sharp blade was excellent – nearly a "planed" finish with no toothmarks.

Cutting thin steel and plastic was just as efficient, but with these materials, supporting the work properly is even more vital for safe and effective cutting.

For light cutting, especially indoors and with small materials, the Panasonic EY45A2 is a brilliant solution and I recommend it, especially since it comes with all the other Panasonic goodies like the extended guarantee and TOUGH TOOL agenda.

QUESTION: What is Peter Brett waiting for?



ANSWER: To independently test & review YOUR products!

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