

Rout Out Of The Box



Alan Goodsell *tests the stability of the new Freud router table combo*

PHOTOGRAPHS BY THE AUTHOR

Freud are well known for their router bits but less so for routers and router tables. There are many router tables on the market and it is a difficult choice to make when buying one. What sets this table apart is that it is one of the most complete systems available as it includes everything you need to get routing, including a router – you will have to supply your router bits however.

In The Box

You get all the components to assemble the PKG0026 router table system package including a sheet-steel, self-assembly base unit, which incorporates height adjustment on the legs so you can set the top to a height that is convenient for you. As suggested in the instructions, it is a good idea to bolt the table to the floor to increase its rigidity and stop



left You get all this in the box



above Also included is the powerful FT2000E router



above Take care to identify all the parts, then assemble the base



above Attach the top

it walking around in use or tipping if long heavy workpieces are being routed. To attach to the top of the base there is a sturdy and flat router tabletop, which is 32" x 24" x 1" thick, melamine-faced MDF and incorporates an aluminum channel for your miter fixtures, as well as the threaded mounting points for the fence. Also pre-machined is the cutout and recess required to fit the nicely made insert plate. The plate is supplied with a pair of clear plastic reducing rings so you can close the gap when using smaller router bits, this helps to stop your work dipping into the gap. There is also a lead-in pin for freehand work with patterns.

The router fence supplied in this kit is, in my opinion, one of the best on the market. It is modeled on the type of fence that is found on a shaper, and its main body is solidly made from cast aluminum with well-made adjustment features. The big feature for me is the ability to accurately adjust the fence faces in and out independently of each other. This makes it a breeze to set the router table for edge jointing, or routing those tricky moldings that need support on the outfeed fence. You may note in the picture that the right-hand fence face isn't fully machined with the recesses it needs to mount it on to the fence back plate, but I have a new one on the way from Freud. The fence faces also adjust laterally, so they can be set close to the bit you are using. On the front of the fence is an easy to adjust chip guard that directs dust and debris back to the extraction port on the rear of the fence that you can attach your shop-vac to. All the fixtures are supplied in the kit, but it would have been good if there

had been a wrench for the bolts of the base unit. Finally you will find two instructional videos on CD-ROM. One covers basic routing tips and techniques and the other provides step-by-step instructions on how to create raised panel doors.

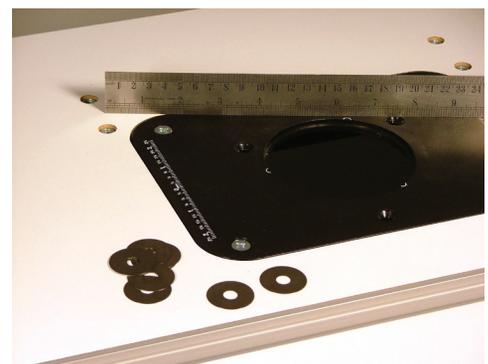
Router

The router is the powerful FT2000E, 3-1/4 hp plunge base model that has been on the market for some time, and features variable speed of 8,000 to 22,000rpm and soft start. When mounted in the table the on/off switch was easy to reach on the front and the speed wheel is just to the side of the router and also easy to adjust. The router has long, plunge legs, shrouded with rubber gaiters, which allow a lengthy 2-3/4" plunge, and are particularly valuable for use in a router table. There are many router lifting solutions on the market but I found the fine height adjustment on this router to be sufficient and set depths of cut accurately with relative ease.

The router runs well and keeps good power when under load for those heavier cuts that you would want to make when using a router table. It would pay to remove the router frequently to blow dust from the end of the motor unit to stop any build up in there that may cause problems down the line – this applies to most routers. It also makes a good handheld router when out of the table. There is a three position depth turret on the base and an easy to use depth stop rod on the router's motor housing. Supplied in the kit are a clear plastic dust port and chip guard, as well as a spare 1/4" collet, and the wrench for changing bits. The router features a spindle



left Place shims in the recess to set the insert plate level with the top



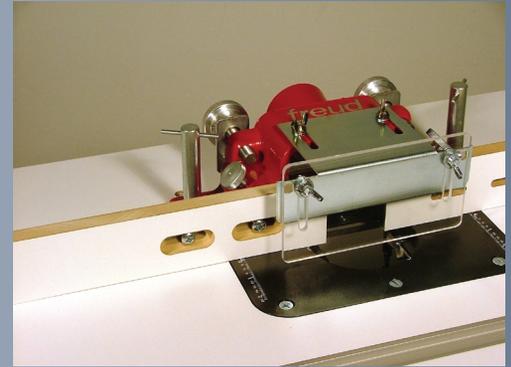
right When tightened down, check the insert plate is flush



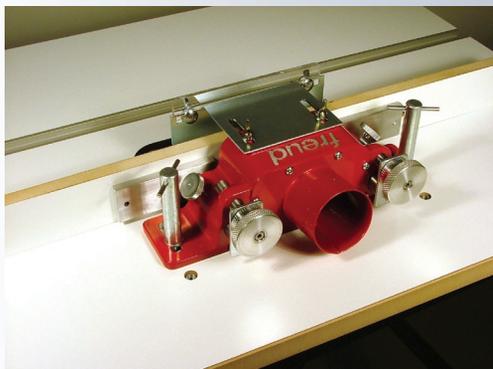
above It is easier to flip the top to attach the router



above With the router in place it's controls are easy to reach



above The table features a sturdy shaper-like fence



left Independently adjustable fence faces make this a versatile tool



right The assembled router table ready to go

lock, the button for this is also easy to reach when in the table, and allows single wrench bit changing. The side handles are large and comfortable to hold with all the controls that are easy to reach while in the table are also easy to reach while the router is handheld.

Assembly

The assembly of all the angle base components isn't my favorite job as it takes some time, but it really isn't that difficult once all the components have been identified. It is a good idea to carry out the assembly on a flat surface and would be useful to have a spare pair of hands available to hold things in place while being bolted together – but not impossible without. Once assembled it becomes a sturdy platform for the top, which is simply screwed in position using the eight supplied screws. The next job is to fit the insert plate into the pre-machined cutout and recess. There are shims supplied that fit between the plate and the recess to adjust the plate so it is flush with the top of the table and I found that two of them on each hole did

the job and allowed for when the bolts are tightened. Use a straight edge such as a steel rule to confirm that all is true.

The router has to be fitted next and I found it easier, as I was assembling it on my own, to remove the table top and flip it over and mount the router with gravity assisting me rather than hindering me if the router was to be fitted from the underside. The three countersunk bolts for the job are supplied with the router and the pre-drilled holes in the plate line up perfectly. Flip the top over and re-attach it to the base unit and you will see that the router's controls for on/off and plunge are easy to reach from the front of the table.

Next, assemble the router fence, which is an easy process that doesn't even need instructions. Two t-bolts pass through the fence's mounting slots to hold it to the top and there are two holes in the top so that the fence can be positioned depending on the diameter of the bit you are using. Now the router table is ready for use and all you need to do is supply and fit the router bit of choice into the router and start routing.

Conclusion

I really liked this table and it will be a great addition to any shop. It is so complete out of the box yet still retains the flexibility to make alterations such as swap out the insert plate and router for ones of your own if you prefer. The best feature for me is the superb fence that gives me the ability to rout the way I like to, with all the adjustments I need.



MORE INFO

Price: \$399
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