Review of Jet Table Saw, Router Lift, and Router Package.

by

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I recently purchased the special package deal Jet is offering in several woodworking magazines. This package includes the JTAS, 3 HP, 10" table saw, the 52" Premier XACTA micro-adjustable Commercial fence, XACTA XLIFT-K router lift, table, legs, and a "free" Bosch 1617EVS router.

The package can be had in either right or left tilt configurations. I chose the right tilt version.

Packaging:

The package is shipped in seven boxes, which include; the saw, rails, fence, table legs, table, router lift, and router. The packages all arrived without any visible external damage.

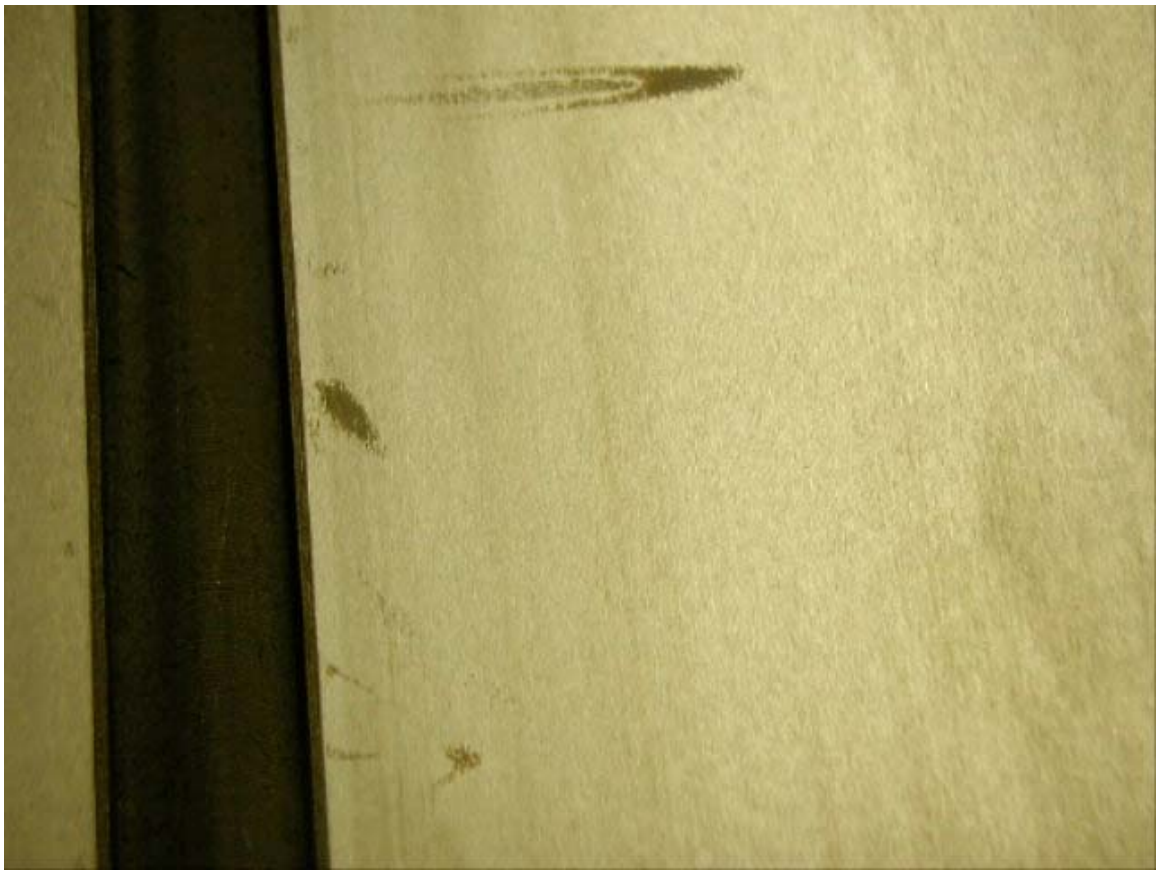
I had just “assumed” that I would have to mail a coupon to Bosch, to obtain the router, but to my surprise, it was included in the shipment.

The saw itself, is all in one box, which includes the motor cover, cast wings, and accessories such as splitter/guard, blade wrench, miter gauge etc. This saw comes with no blade and only a standard size insert. My saw was on a wooden pallet, held in place by one bolt. Not sure if the other bolt fell out, or if it was shipped with only one bolt. The main box, containing the saw, weights just over 400 lbs. The motor is bolted to a bracket (red) so that it can’t move during shipping and the on/off switch is also bolted to the tabletop, using a temporary bracket, to keep it from being damaged or damaging the cabinet.

I had two very minor items that I relate to shipping damage; one, the blade guard/splitter had an area, a little smaller than a dime, where the finish had worn away by rubbing against something during shipping, and two, one side of the motor cover was bent about half of an inch out of square. The paint, on the motor cover, was not damaged, and I bent it back into shape without much effort. I’m not at all worried about the splitter paint.

Fit and finish:

The cabinet is in perfect condition, no defects that I could see. The surfaces of the two wings were also like I expected. The main saw table, however, had several slightly rusted or discolored spots. I thought these would go away after the protective grease was removed, but they didn't. The top was covered by plastic sheet and I assume some moisture got between the sheet and the tabletop and caused the problem. Not really rust, more a discoloration. This was removed using a scotch bright, wax, and elbow grease. Here is a before picture.



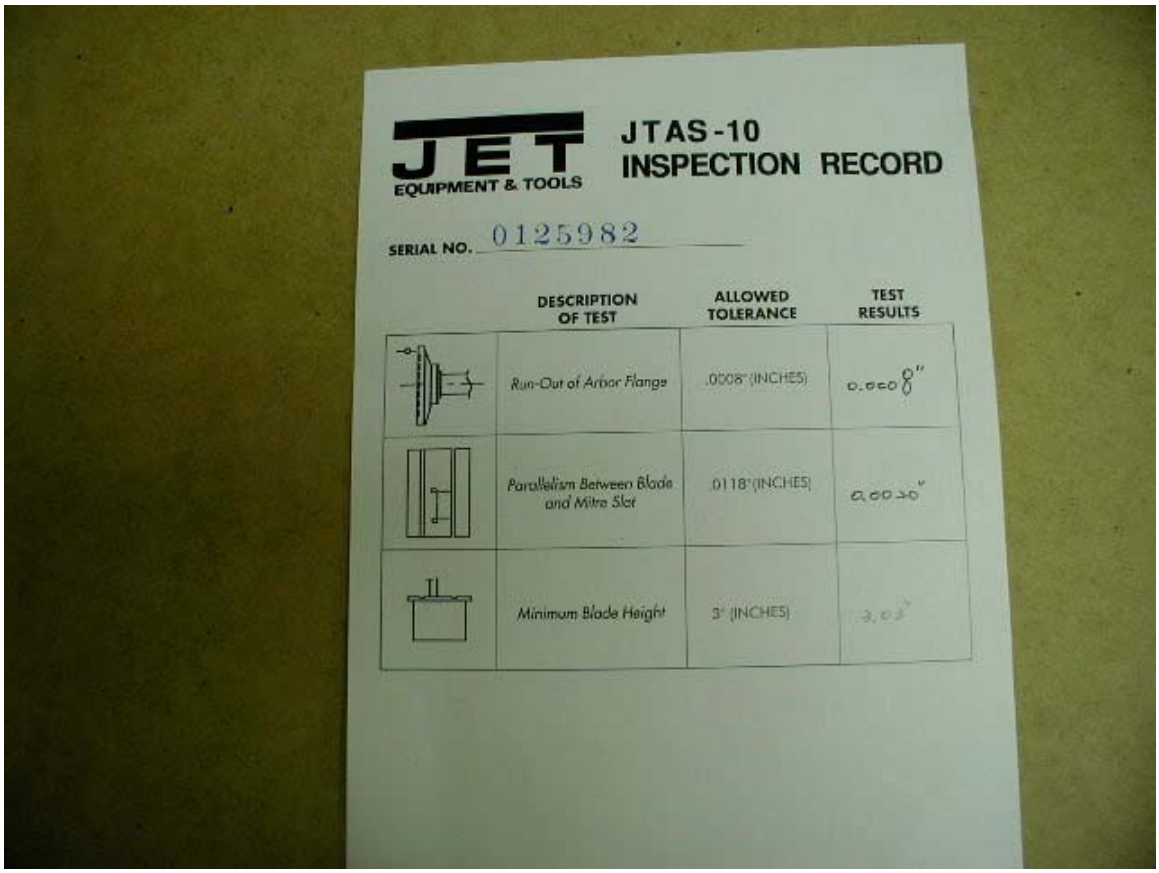
The 52" rails were in good shape with one small spot along the top of the front rail that appears to have been rubbed while the paint was still wet. Not a problem for me, but something I noticed.

Assembly:

Assembly is straightforward. Although following the manual would be impossible for anyone with no mechanical aptitude, as several small errors make it more a guide then a step-by-step instruction procedure. A good example is where they have you try to tilt the saw to 90 degrees before having you install the tilt knob. Of course, if you have no mechanical aptitude, you might want to find another hobby anyway. The tilt knob has a woodrift key, which is taped to the shaft with black electrical tape. It blends right in with its surroundings, and I tried to install the knob with the tape still on the shaft. It took me a couple of minutes to figure out why the knob would not fully seat… The wings aligned

perfectly with the main saw table. No dips or humps as in my previous contractor's saw. One thing that makes the wings look a little funny is that they are not beveled at the front edge, as the saw table is. I'm sure the bevel is to make sure the miter gauge doesn't catch on the front edge of the table saw, but it would have looked a lot better if the wings had been beveled also.

About the only thing I saw wrong during assembly, was that the switch box, which is fully wired, by the way, was missing a nut. Not sure if it fell off during shipping or was just never installed in the first place. Included with the saw is an alignment sheet used by the factory. Nice touch. I am also impressed with the ease with which you can adjust the blade to the miter slot compared to my old contractors saw.



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EQUIPMENT & TOOLS

JTAS-10
INSPECTION RECORD

SERIAL NO. 0125982

	DESCRIPTION OF TEST	ALLOWED TOLERANCE	TEST RESULTS
	Run-Out of Arbor Flange	.0008" (INCHES)	0.0008"
	Parallelism Between Blade and Mitre Slot	.0118" (INCHES)	0.0030"
	Minimum Blade Height	3" (INCHES)	3.03"

The three fence rails were easy to install using the separate instructions that came with the fence. (One note, my manual had three page 9's, better than no page 9, I guess.) The XACTA fence itself, is shipped fully assembled. Take it out of the box and lay on the rails. All the standard adjustments were well within tolerance right out of the box. I tweaked the parallel-to-miter slot and 90 degree to table adjustments and they were a breeze to set compared to my last fence.

Installed the table and legs without any difficulty. The table is made of ¾ inch melamine covered MDF sitting on top of a ¾ " by 2" Oak frame. The table has no pre-drilled holes, so it is a drill to fit operation. The table is only bolted to the fence rails at the four corners. Just to ensure this table doesn't sag, I installed two extra bolts, one in the middle of each side. The legs are screwed to the underside of the table and have adjustable feet. I had to move mine for my particular installation, but they appear to work as designed. Some care has to be given to make sure the surface of the table and the surface of the saw are even to allow for smooth operation of the fence. My table had a very slight hump which made it impossible to have the front, middle, and back all even with the saw top. The middle was always just a little high. Although it worked ok, I installed a bolt between the table and right side saw wing that I used to solve this minor problem. This bolt also helps suck the table and saw wing together. The table has a hole where the router raiser is to be installed. I have two problems here. One, the table is only ¾ inch MDF and the lip that holds the router lift is only ½ in thick. I'm not sure this is adequate for supporting a heavy router and router lift for any length of time, and two, when the router lift is installed, it sits above the surface of the table. This makes sliding anything across the router lift impossible. Of course all it will take to solve this is to deepen the lip the router raiser sits in, but I'm reporting with I found. I'm not planning on using the router lift in this table, but if I were, I'd add some additional support first.

The Xacta router lift comes packaged in one box.

The manual has supplemental pages that made assembly pretty easy. At first glance, the plate to mount the router looks impossible to install, because of all the holes. But the instructions have clear diagrams showing the specific holes to be used for specific routers. I checked the set up for the two routers I have, the DW621 and the Bosch 1617 and they both were dead nuts on.

I installed the 1617 without any problems. The router lift has a large opening (3 ½ in) so a full size panel-raising bit can be easily moved above and below the table. The unit also comes with a smaller (1 ½ in) insert and a tool to install and remove the insert. The unit appears to operate smoothly and raises the router much faster then I thought it would. The knob is basically an L-shaped hex (Allen) wrench connected to a holder. It just lifts off so that it is not in the way when routing wider items. I was a little disappointed in the fit and finish of this unit. It is more like what I'm used to seeing in a prototype stage and not a finished product stage. Except for the top, none of the material is anodized or finished, just basically raw aluminum. Not that it matters for operation, just my thoughts. The top has holes around the perimeter for the supplied leveling adjustment screws. One small problem I notice is that it is next to impossible to remove a large bit from above the table. It looks like it can be done, but I'll need to modify (bend) the router wrenches to make this work. A fence also comes with the Router Lift. While the lift is fully assembled, the fence is in several pieces. While not hard at all, it actually took me more time to assemble the fence then to mount the router to the lift. I don't plan on using the fence, but I'd say it is too small for a lot of operations. If the router fence were an option, I would not buy it.

The Bosch 1617EVS router is packed well and is fully assembled as shipped. Comes with a dust shield, ¼ in and ½ collets, template adapter, two wrenches and screws to mount the unit to an auxiliary base (fit the router lift perfectly). The one downside I see to this router, and this is just a personal thing, is that it takes two wrenches to remove the bit. The router has no shaft lock, so the second wrench is necessary to hold the shaft. When I set the router down on the sub-base it actually rocked back and forth. The center of the sub-base has about an 1/8 in crown. With the sub-base removed, the router sits flat as designed. Bosch is sending a new sub-base.

Operation:

The saw is, of course, set up for 220 and comes with no plug. I understand this is normal for most 220 saws. After connecting to power, the saw fired right up. No bang or any other noise that I have read about. I'm using the three belts that came with the machine and it has no vibration at all. I tried the nickel test and it passed (I think). A nickel placed parallel to the blade, would not fall over at start up. A nickel placed perpendicular to the blade, however, would fall over about half the time.

The saw has a sheet metal "pan" that directs the dust to the 4" dust port. Up near the blade is a deflector, of some type, that I "assume" helps direct the dust down into the cabinet. Appears to work well. One thing I've got to get used too is moving the fence. If I grab it in what appears to be the natural position, my fingers are between the fence and the table saw. Moving it this way will take the skin off your knuckles as your fingers hit the bolts holding the rails to the saw. I also do not like the magnified cursor window. I'm not sure if this is my trifocals, the saw, or me. The magnified window has two lines, one on top of the other, to prevent parallax viewing. If viewed from directly above you see one line, if off to the side you see two. I'm having trouble seeing this without moving my head back and fourth and I never know if I'm looking at it from the same angle or not. I "think" because I haven't used it enough to be comfortable, that the image is just too big for me. I plan to move the window closer to the tape, which should reduce the magnification, and I hope, make it easier to read. Again this is just how I feel, and not necessarily how this will work for you. The fence locks parallel to the blade and is solid as rock. It is the new Premier XACTA Commercial fence with micro adjust. Unfortunately, this feature is not as I would have designed it. There is a small locking

knob that looks like an after thought and although it works, it is clumsy at best. You set the saw close to what you want, lock the fence using the micro-adjust knob, turn the left to right knob to zero in on the exact point you want to be, then use the normal lever to lock the fence for use. Of course, the next time you move the fence, you'll find you forgot to unlock the micro adjust knob. I plan to replace current micro knob with an easier to use one.

The sides of the fence are designed to come off if they are pushed from the rear. Works great, but I'm not sure what purpose this serves… I did see an ad, the other day, for a different brand name fence and it appears they make interchangeable sides for their fence depending on what the user wants. I "assume" Jet, or some other supplier, will be offering this same thing for the Xacta fence.

Overall I'm tickled to death with this purchase. I bought it at D&R tools, here in Dallas, during their yearly tool sale. Because of the sale, Jet paid the taxes and because it was local, I did not have to pay shipping. Total bill was $1,699.99. Here is the final setup except for routing the miter slots in the out-feed table.


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