

**FREE!**  
Online Tool Guide pp. 10

**EDITOR'S CHOICE: 7 MUST-HAVE SHOP HELPERS!** Page 64

# WOODWORKER'S WJOURNAL

"America's leading woodworking authority"™

## Norm Unplugged

Exclusive Interview: The "Prince of Power Tools" reveals his passion for hand tools. Page 18

## 8 Great Nail Guns

Torture test reveals your best bet Page 76

### Special Features

- Arts & Crafts Bed
- Bathroom Vanity
- Shaker Table

**Ian Kirby**  
Woodworker's  
Master Class Page 58



April  
2007

\$5.99US \$7.99CAN 04>

0 71486 02123 0

Display until May 5, 2007

## 23-Gauge Pin Nailer Test

By Chris Marshall

**B**rad nailers sure beat hand-nailing, but even they have their limits. An 18-gauge nail head can leave a noticeable hole on a small project, and brads will occasionally split thin or brittle stock. Every now and again, you'll get a wayward nail that veers off course and blows out the side of a workpiece. The damage can be tough to fix. Sometimes you simply need a thinner nail, and that's where a 23-gauge pin nailer can save the day. It sinks headless nails about the

thickness of a stick pin into the tiniest moldings without splitting them, and the nail holes virtually disappear (see sidebar, page 86). These guns have tapered tips that take the guesswork out of placing nails, so they're perfect for installing slender glass retainers or sneaking a nail into a tight corner or small fillet. You probably won't reach for one of these peashooters on every project, but they definitely fill a need for those really finicky, delicate fastening jobs.





*If you wish you had a nailer that could properly handle the small stuff, here's the gun you've been looking for. These pint-sized nailers are perfect for delicate fastening, and the nails leave almost no holes behind.*

Pin nailers are designed for detail work, so that's how I set up a recent test of eight nailers. I ran a clip of 100, 1" nails through each gun to see how they would fasten 1/2" x 1/2" sticks of pine and poplar to larger boards. I also shot pins through some even narrower 1/4" oak strips to see if the tiny nails

would split the wood or blow through the edges. Well, the results were impressive. Despite differences in lumber hardness, density and thickness, there wasn't a split, blowout or misfire after nearly 1,000 nails. These nails may be puny, but they're plenty capable. Generally, the guns were also up to snuff, but a few still shone as superior tools. Here's what I learned about each one and which nailer received my top-dog honors.

#### **Bostitch HP118K**

Bostitch's HP118K has some features that are attractive on any nailer: a rubber overmolded grip, side-loading magazine and rear exhaust port to keep annoying blasts of air away from your face. It also has a "hi-low" control for adjusting nail set depth. The tool made a decent showing here.

Pin nailers have an unusual trigger style that sets them apart from larger guns. Instead of a safety on the nailing tip, there's a second trigger behind the main trigger that prevents it from firing. Without a safety on the gun's tip,

*Tool Review continues on page 78 ...*



## GREX

Model: P635

Price: \$219

Phone: 626-289-7618

Weight (lbs.): 2.21

Fastener Range: 3/8" to 1 1/2"

Exhaust: Rear

**Standard Accessories:** Carry case, belt hook, two protective nose tips, air-hose fitting, oil

For more info on the web, use our



GREX outfits the P635 with a removable protective nose tip to cushion its blows.



## GREX P635

The GREX P635 ran a neck-in-neck race with Cadex for best all-around performance in this test group. It doesn't have the nifty blower, and it won't shoot 2" nails, but these are the only differences that really separate these two guns. And, considering that the P635 will leave \$150 more in your pocket, the playing field levels out quickly.

Like Cadex, GREX fits this pinner with a pair of soft, no-mar tips to ensure perfect nailing surfaces. Even without the plastic tip, the P635 left only hints of dimples on softwood, and hardwoods were unaffected by the metal tip.

Nail clips slip easily into the magazine, and the dual triggers functioned without issue. This gun is mid-sized and comfortable to hold, with exhaust air that blows

out behind the grip through a muffling filter. An on-board Allen wrench will be handy when the eventual jam occurs, although I never needed to use it. (Incidentally, clearing jammed nails from all these guns is a similar job,

*Tool Review continues on page 82 ...*

## Leigh Vacuum & Router Support

Revolutionary Design patent pending

coming soon!  
leighjigs.com

VRS



### VRS Features

- Dust chute aligns with router for dust & chip free routing
- Superb support for your router
- Easy to attach, use and remove
- Fits all Leigh dovetail jigs

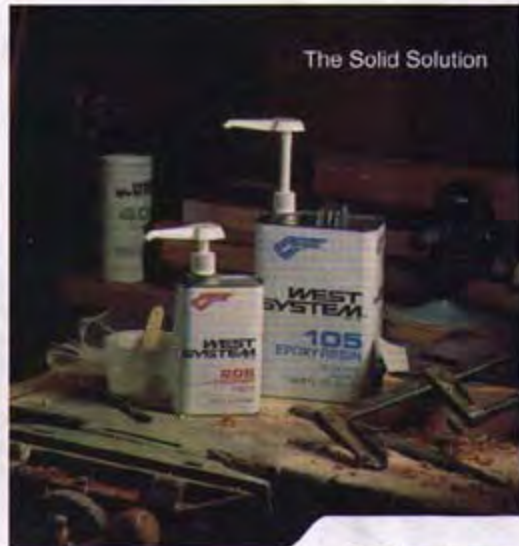
No other jigs do so much, so easily and so well.

See the Video!  
leighjigs.com

**LEIGH**  
Leigh Router Joinery Jigs

25 YEARS  
of Innovation  
and Excellence

The Solid Solution



A complete system of resin, hardeners, fillers and additives.

- Choose fast or slow working times
- Easily modified for gap filling
- Excellent water resistance
- Good adhesion to nearly everything

**WEST SYSTEM**  
Epoxy products ■ Reliable solutions

West System Inc.  
866-937-6797  
www.westsystem.com

Call today for your free User Manual and Product Guide

(Circle No. 83 on PRODUCT INFORMATION form)





#### Dresser Interpretation

I am writing on behalf of my father, James H. Whitman, of Erie, who is an avid reader of your journal. He recently finished a bird's-eye maple dresser based on one he saw in your February 2006 issue by Mike McGlynn. He loved the original version but likes to add his own interpretation to the piece to make it his own.

*Tom Whitman  
Waterford, Pennsylvania*

**WJ Responds:** Tom, we're glad your dad enjoyed Mike's dresser. Be sure to check out his "Greene and Greene Queen-Size Bed" in this issue. Does your dad have any of that nice-looking lumber left?

#### Bravo! Entertainment Center

I always enjoy Sandor Nagyszalanczy's articles, but this one ["Designing an Entertainment Center," December 2006] especially impressed me! As someone

who sold consumer electronics for 27 years, I found that his article addressed issues in electronics furniture that even major manufacturers overlook. Bravo for putting amplifiers on top where the heat they generate won't rise through the other, more sensitive components!

Thanks. Your magazine is by far the best of my many subscriptions.

*Mary Moscicki  
Southampton, New York*

#### It's All Relatives

[The December 2006 "On the Level" mentioned that 2006 was the 100th anniversary of the Porter-Cable Company.] My great-uncle by marriage was Raymond E. Porter. I am sending you a picture of him at a young age. A very interesting man, to say the least.

*John Crouse  
Wolcott, New York*



R.E. Porter founded Porter Cable Co. "to manufacture automobile jacks and steering wheels."

**Safety First:** Learning how to operate power and hand tools is essential for developing safe woodworking practices. For purposes of clarity, necessary guards have been removed from equipment shown in our magazine. We in no way recommend using this equipment without safety guards and urge readers to strictly follow manufacturers' instructions and safety precautions.

It's more than wood,  
it's your pride.



#### Trusted Quality. Lasting Durability.

Manufacturer and supplier of the finest quality power tool accessories. Call or visit us online for a free catalog.

888-809-5673  
www.montanabrandtools.com  
34837 Innovation Dr., Avon, NY 58964

MADE IN MONTANA  
U.S.A.  
**MONTANA**  
BRAND

(Circle No. 46 on PRODUCT INFORMATION form)

www.grexusa.com

## VOTED BEST NEW TOOL IN 2005

POPULAR WOODWORKING

"OUR PRAYERS TO THE PNEUMATIC GODDESS  
WERE ANSWERED ... WITH THE GREX P635 ..."  
POPULAR WOODWORKING

"THE GREX P635 IS THE LEXUS OF PINNERS"  
WOOD MAGAZINE



Guaranteed up to  
**13/8"**

**GREX**

**GREX P635**  
23 GAUGE HEADLESS PINNER

(Circle No. 37 on PRODUCT INFORMATION form)