

Four decades of Triton excellence continues

IT may have crept up on some people – it certainly did on me – that Triton are celebrating 40 years of woodworking and woodworking tools.

And in the spirit of the original Australian brand, the new ranges of tools are no-nonsense, practical and usable - thus bringing woodworking to the range of users who want to get on with making things, but don't necessarily have the time, place or inclination to learn esoteric techniques.

Pocket Hole Jigs

Joining materials is at the heart of the skill of making things. Even at school I was told there were 'good' joints like mortise and tenons, or dovetails that were 'better' than simple lap joints. But things have changed dramatically. Screw technology and cordless drill drivers have made simple screw joints strong, and practical solutions for jointing.

New and widely available materials like MDF and OSB are cheaper and more suitable to modern application, and can be easily cut and shaped with hand tools, or an increasingly available range of cordless tools.

So, enter the Triton range of pocket hole jigs – a range of jigs to suit every budget from the single user to the professional.

How Pocket Hole Jigs Work

Carpenters use skew nailing all the time – hammering a nail in at an angle in one piece of timber to join with another. Pocket holing is like skew nailing, but with the built-in strength and accuracy of using jigs to ensure accurate and strong results every time - something that skew nailing doesn't always do, even for skilled carpenters.



At a cost of just £14.99, the Triton Single Mini Pocket-Hole Jig comes with the all-important drill bit, driver bit a depth stop, 20 large head screws, and 10 plug dowels.

The instruction booklet includes a few simple sketches to help users set up the jig correctly to take account of the thickness of the materials being joined, and the necessity of setting the depth collar on the drill bit to get the screws to be firmly driven into the receiving material.

What is noticeable is the jig is solidly made in a glassfibre/nylon material which is rigid and strong, and will clearly take a bit of punishment.

The driver bit hole for drilling the pocket is lined with a steel insert to ensure accurate drilling for the life of the jig.

Making a series of single pocket holes in boards may take a bit of time setting each one up, but it is still a cost-effective way of making strong joints.

INDEPENDENT TOOL REVIEW BY PETER BRETT

More Complicated

For those users who might want to join stretchers on tables and stools for example, the Double Mini Pocket-Hole Jig will be worth the cost of £24.99, because it will save a lot of extra setting out – you get two screw joints for each set-up.

But if you only need a single pocket then that is possible too. The same number of screws etc, as the single jig, are included here too.

I was more at home with this jig. I found it easier to clamp than the single jig, as it had more clamping area.

For the 'More Expert'

The more experienced user might want to consider spending £29.99 on an adjustable Pocket-Hole Jig. This offers users the possibility of adjusting the distance between pocket holes, to take account of different widths of timber.

This can be very useful in avoiding imperfections in timber, as well as allowing the user to space screw joints where they would be more efficient in the construction.

Reflecting its 'higher status,' the jig is made in cast alloy for strength and durability. The space settings are tightened with an included hex key and can be set in metric or imperial measurements.

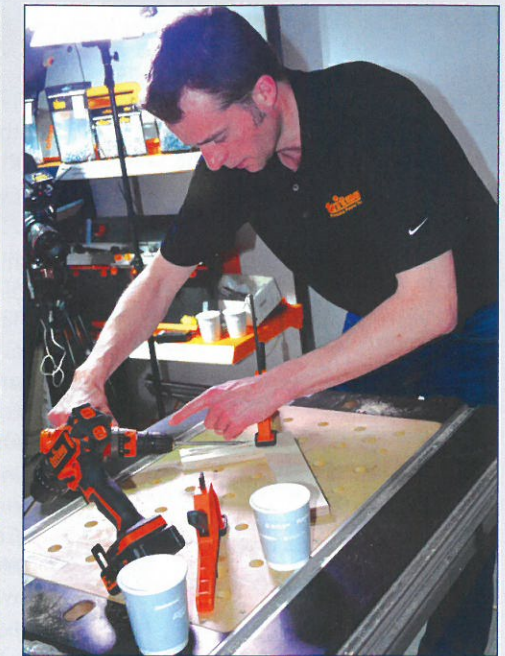
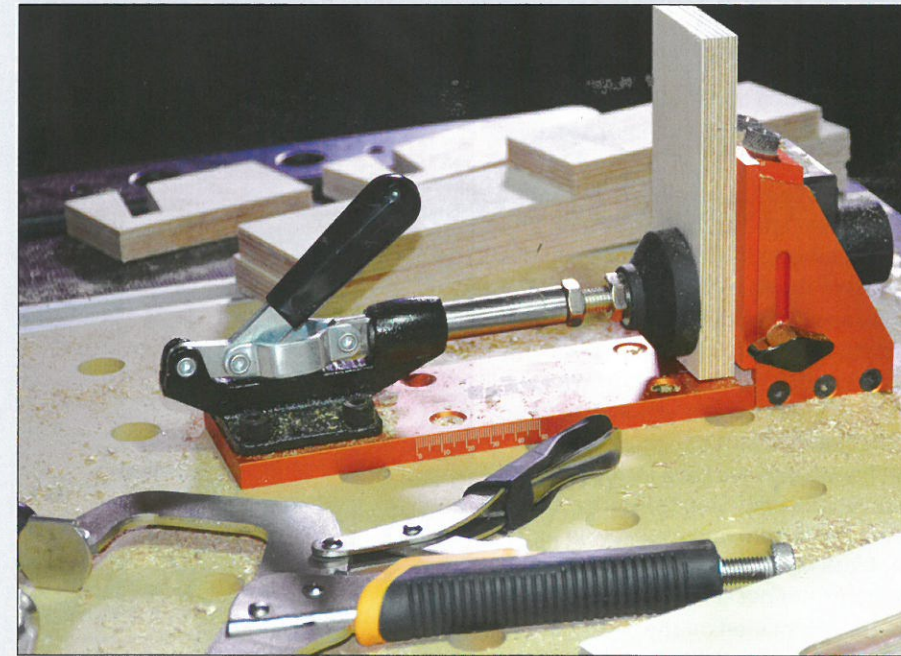
Screws, cover dowels, drill bit, depth collar and driver bit are all included.

Professional Stuff...

Professionals using pocket hole jointing techniques need the convenience of a speedy set up, and robust and reliable jigs that will take a bit of a hammering when flung into a toolbox or the back of a van.

Here the choice is between two kits – the 7-Piece at £59.99 and the 8-Piece at £69.99. The sets are the same, but the bigger set includes a very handy wide-mouthed clamp that is excellent for clamping the workpiece securely.

At the launch of these jigs the Triton Team cleverly engineered a



situation where we press reviewers were encouraged to make a simple frame using pocket holes.

A brilliant idea, because the process of getting 'hands-on' is a key to understanding how the jigs work.

With a few minutes of explanation we were given some ply, some tools, and some jigs then guided through the process. I have to admit that using the professional jig with a built-in workpiece clamp, makes life a lot easier - because it is simple to adjust and simple to operate.

This makes for a minimal setting up time and is something professionals need. What also became clear to me is that the jigs are strong and well-made, and will last for years even in a professional trade environment.

It is also handy the jigs can be screwed to a sub-base that could be held on a portable worktable, or workbench. The jig is much easier to use when the pieces to be jointed are not moving the jig.

What I learned from the exercise is jigs make the process of pocket hole jointing quite easy, but following instructions and accurate lining up of materials is crucial to getting the perfect joint. But even the non-perfect joints were still strong enough to be serviceable.

It is good to see Triton has full confidence in the pocket-hole range of jigs, because they all come with a three-year guarantee. Of course, product users will also need to top up on screws and plug dowels, and they are freely available online and in regular Triton stockists.

