

Zona Mitre Box and Saw

Reviewed by James Brook

I have noticed that for even one-off saw cuts in small section wood most woodworkers head immediately for a power mitre saw. Now sawing on these machines is great but can be problematic for small and thin pieces of wood. Hence a traditional mitre box and hand saw is often just as fast and safer.

Made of extruded aluminium, the Zona mitre box is small and well made. Manufactured in the USA it is 165mm long with an inside width of 51mm. The pre-cut slots are neatly done and it comes with a matched saw that runs in the pre-cut slots. These slots are at 90°, 45° and 30°. Whilst not obvious to many, the 30° is an ideal angle to splice lengths of wood together end to end.

The saw is very fine toothed at 42 teeth per inch and has a plain gents style handle. The sawblade is 150mm and only around 0.25mm thick with a pressed metal spine, however it cuts on the pull stroke like a Japanese saw.

\$38



This mitre box set is designed for small detail work like mouldings and beadings. For this reason I found wood up to 5–6mm thick was the maximum comfortable thickness the supplied saw could handle. I figured the saw being so thin and with a high tooth count would be very slow cutting and it was slow, but acceptably so.

The trade-off in speed was a very smooth and polished sawn face. Boxmakers should appreciate the speed and smoothness of cut for fine work as will model makers or any one fitting mouldings or similar. I found it very accurate for mitres and splicing. It is also rated to cut thin plastic, brass and aluminium. At \$38 for the saw and mitre box it is great value for money.

You are not limited to use the supplied saw alone though. One of my Japanese dozuki saws with a similar thickness sawblade fitted in the mitre box slots and this was a revelation. This saw in conjunction with the mitre box was outstanding for quickly and accurately sawing all types of soft and hardwood at thicknesses up to 20mm.

I readily recommend the mitre box as a purchase to use with a Japanese saw, you will have to check the thickness of saw you wish to use however. Overall, this is faster than setting up a power mitre saw, and much safer.

Review tool from www.woodworksupplies.com.au