

**F**or the last five months, the outrageous scene in my shop has included nine new full-size cabinet saws. Why? So I could soak up enough information to help you make a wise, well-informed choice when you're ready to invest.

The benefits of a cabinet saw over a contractor's saw make for a long list. First, the added power is appealing. The contractor's saw has to limit motor size to about 1½ HP to meet household 110V current. In my view, this is somewhat underpowered for a table saw. The additional power in cabinet saws means they last longer, cut through hardwoods at full capacity (3") with ease, and allow for the use of standard kerf blades for smoother, burn-free cutting (some even accept 12" blades for more capacity). To take advantage of this power, you have to provide a 230-volt circuit. All homes have this current available; it's just a matter of providing a dedicated circuit with its own breaker and outlet.

Additionally, the construction of cabinet saws makes them easier to tune, and they stay true longer, thus requiring less maintenance. Because of the motor placement they are better balanced and take up less space than a contractor's saw. They're also quieter.

So why are there so many contractor's saws in home shops? In a word ... price. From my experience, though, I have found that the purchase price is not always the final cost. When you consider that the life of a well-maintained cabinet saw could easily stretch over generations, the initial price could be looked at as a long-term investment.

### **Rojek PK 300V**

The Rojek is the most different looking saw of the bunch in this test. The 7' rolling table guide rail on the left side sticks out 7" in the front and a lot in the back. It took some time to get used to operating the saw around this feature, but in short order I felt comfortable and actually safer. The fit and finish is high quality with no rough or sharp edges and good paint. The main cast-iron top is narrow but is supplemented with a sliding table to the left and a stamped steel extension table to the right. The size proved adequate for every kind of cutting except for full-size sheet goods. The extension table could use a leg to give it support at the right rear. Like the other Euro saws, the Rojek has

appealing safety features: soft start, motor braking, a usable guard assembly and superior dust collection. It does use a 5/8" arbor and will even accept a dado set.

The light duty Euro rip fence was not in the same league as the Biesemeyer types, but I found it was sturdy enough, locking parallel with little flex under heavy loads. It has a micro-adjuster as a bonus but like the Hammer, there is no cursor.

The modest sized but versatile 16" x 22" rolling table takes crosscutting to new levels. The table glides smoothly and effortlessly, with no play. It comes with a long crosscut fence, built-in sliding extension, two flip stops and an eccentric hold-down. The fence can be mounted at the front or the rear of the table. I kept it at the rear, where it allowed a 53" wide cut compared to 23" at the front. If you need to cut large panels, I strongly suggest upgrading to the optional larger table with outrigger (\$375). Removing and installing the crosscut fence was easy enough. There is a positive stop to return the blade to square, but no way to register the rule for the blade except to re-measure. The company said they were working on a solution.

### **Conclusion**

Each of these cabinet saws has its special features and drawbacks. It would be great to take the best features and put them together for a perfect saw!

When it comes to picking one of these saws, I lean toward the European offerings. Safety, accuracy, versatility and value are my driving factors. For safety, there is currently no comparison on U.S. saws to European standards. You can actually eliminate kickback — the number one cause of accidents on the table saw —



### **Rojek PK 300V**

Street Price: \$2,695  
Weight: 487 lbs  
Made in: Czech Republic  
Tilt: Right  
Motor: 3.6 HP, 15.5 amps  
Top: 32" X 19"  
Blade Size 10" & 12"  
Blade Included: No  
Warranty: 1-year  
Phone: 800-787-6747  
[www.rojekusa.com](http://www.rojekusa.com)



The well thought-out and efficient dust port not only connects directly to the blade shroud (under the table), but also has a junction to connect the hose to the blade cover.



The 4" diameter scoring blade precedes the main blade, making a shallow cut that virtually eliminates tearout in the most difficult of materials.

without interfering with common table cutting tasks, by using the riving knife/blade cover combination. Efficient dust collection, soft starting, braking motors and safety switches additionally contribute to safety.

For accuracy, versatility and safety, the sliding table, once used, is a revelation. The woodshop has no better way to crosscut accurately. This becomes especially apparent when crosscutting long, wide or heavy work. A surprise to me was how much ripping I could also do on a format table like the Hammer. As mentioned, the sliding table is also versatile as a platform for jigs and joinery.

In my view, (and if you can afford it), the Rojek is a great value. It has, without a doubt, the most useful standard woodworking features, especially in the areas of safety and accuracy.

*Kelly Mehler is a cabinetmaker and table saw expert located in Berea, Kentucky. His completely updated The Table Saw Book is currently available from Taunton Press and is on sale at [www.kellymehler.com](http://www.kellymehler.com).*