



## AUKTOOLS BENCH TOP ROUTER TABLE

The AUKTools Bench Top Router Table is an all-rounder; it's compact but doesn't compromise on quality, as **Jamie Smith** of **Atelier Cabinet Makers** finds here

**T**he AUKTools Bench Top Router Table is a compact, portable model that can easily be lifted and moved around the workshop while keeping everything set up and consistently ready to use. On first handling, I noticed the heavy-duty 32mm black anodised tubular frame, which is fully welded with no joints to construct and bolt together, thus making for a very strong frame. The frame is fitted with four large levelling feet so minor adjustment will keep the table wobble-free and provide a good grip for whichever surface the table is placed on.

The black frame holds a large downdraft bag, which is attached with straps and has external pockets for convenient storage of frequently used routing accessories. There is also a large zip opening on the front of the downdraft bag, which allows the router to be placed inside the table, along with a 2.5in extraction port.



AUKTools' compact router table features convenient storage for accessories

### Table top

The top is constructed from 26mm thick phenolic laminated HDF board and is edgebanded for durability. I found the laminated surface provides very low friction when routing, which means less effort when passing timber over the router. However, this surface could dent or chip on the edges if accidentally knocked with a hard object or heavy timber, so this is worth bearing in mind during use. This type of router table top is a very cost effective option that will provide a solid, flat surface. The table top size is 400 x 600mm, which is ideal for a portable router table and will ensure it is not awkward or cumbersome to move around.

### Bit changing & accessories

The HDF top is also handily cut out to accept all AUKTools, INCRA, JessEm and Woodpeckers router insert plates and is lined with a stainless steel levelling pad. The insert I used for this test was the metric version of the JessEm Rout-R-Lift Prestige. This system allows the user to adjust the height of the router from above the table without having to fiddle around with the router settings underneath. I fitted the table with a DeWalt 625 router coupled with the Router Technologies Xtreme Xtension, which is a collet extension for 1/2in collets. This enables router bit changes to be made from above the table using the supplied T-handle ball hex key. Overall, when using this setup, I found bit changing to be very simple: you leave the router secured in the router lift



Dust extraction is excellent while routing a rebate in solid oak

with the collet extension pre-fitted in the router, and then when raising the router fully, the collet extension will rise through the table to expose a tightening screw that allows the bit changes to be made from above the table. My only concern when using this setup with the collet extension is that I found it a bit tricky to tighten the collet extension screw using the supplied ball-end hex key. This was due to the tightening screw being at table level and I therefore had to rely on the ball-end of the hex key to work at an angle. I also found I still needed to press the spindle lock on the router underneath the table in order to stop the spindle turning while trying to tighten the collet extension. If you are using a router lift like this, I would recommend purchasing the collet extension, otherwise you may need to lift the insert plate out of the table each time you change a cutter (depending on which router you're using). Setting cutter height is very easy using the router lift, which shows half a rotation with a hex key to give 1mm of rise or fall. The lift



The router table fitted with the JessEm Rout-R-Lift Prestige



A lockable isolation switch allows for easy access



Router table fitted with JessEm clear-cut stock guides



The compact size enables use on the workbench or on the ground

is incredibly smooth and easy to use, unlike trying to plunge a router while used in an upside down configuration.

### Features

The AUKTools router table has a variety of other features including the lockable isolation switch with 2.8m power cord. There is also a  $\frac{3}{4}$ in mitre track set into the top, which allows the use of many handy routing accessories and sliding squares or sleds. The router fence is built from extruded aluminium and has two adjustable laminated faces that can also be adjusted with shims for edging tasks, plus another 2.5in dust extraction port on the back of the fence. I found the extraction works superbly well and used an adaptor fitted with my 27mm extraction hose.

The overall setup and use of this table was easy and user-friendly. The insert plate can be levelled with the screw adjustment and timber passes very smoothly over the surface. I used JessEm clear-cut stock guides fitted in the  $\frac{3}{4}$ in 'T' slot of the router fence, which made for very accurate routing passes. These are an alternative to regular feather boards yet allow a much smoother friction-free pass. The insert plate has various sized downdraft insert rings, which feature a quick change twist to lock them in place.

There is also a small, clear reversible sliding bit guard that offers the user increased dust extraction performance and protection; this simply fits in the standard size fence track.

### Conclusion

I have been using this setup for many different routing tasks and have experimented with a variety of cutters. For each application I found the dust extraction to be sufficient. I have carried out many tasks from small template guided shaping of solid oak handles, up to routing grooves and rebates for panels in cabinet components. I am very pleased with the build quality of the table and highly impressed with the robustness of the router lift. This setup is compatible with most of the popular  $\frac{1}{2}$ in routers available on the market, but you can check the website for specifics. For some applications, I found the bench top router worked well on my workbench and at other times I used it directly on the floor. Its portability makes it ideal for site use or it can also be used out of the back of a van, for example. I would recommend this router table to anyone who is short of space in their workshop, or to those who are looking for an additional portable router table for use in different locations or on the jobsite. ✂



The router table features two large dust extraction ports with a downdraft bag

### SPECIFICATION

- 32mm black anodised tubular frame
- Compatible with most router insert plates of 235 × 298mm
- Tool-free, easily adjustable extruded aluminium fence with two fence shims
- Phenolic HDF top – 600 × 400 × 26mm edgebanded for durability with  $\frac{3}{4}$ in mitre track
- Downdraft bag under table with 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ in OD bottom extraction point
- Side-storage bags for tools
- Lockable isolation switch with 2.8m power cord

**Typical prices:** AUKTools bench top table – £349.95; Rout-R-Lift Prestige – £334.95; Router Technologies Xtreme Xtension – £74.95; JessEm clear-cut stock guides – £98.95; AUKTools downdraft insert rings – £39.95  
**Web:** [www.woodworkersworkshop.co.uk](http://www.woodworkersworkshop.co.uk)



Using the Rout-R-Lift enables easy and precise router height adjustment



Following a template while routing small, intricate oak parts

### FURTHER INFORMATION

To find out more about Atelier Cabinet Makers, see their website:  
[www.ateliercabinetmakers.com](http://www.ateliercabinetmakers.com)

### THE VERDICT

#### PROS

- Compact and easily portable; great features and available accessories make for quick setup and ease of use; compatible with most  $\frac{1}{2}$ in routers on the market; heavy-duty base frame with adjustable feet

#### CONS

- HDF phenolic laminated top may be susceptible to damage if knocked on edges; cutter changes can be awkward when using a collet extension due to limited access to the tightening screw (may differ depending on router used)

**RATING: 4.5 out of 5**