

## Jig / Machine Versus Joint & Profile Making Capability

The comparison below is NOT intended to be an all-encompassing review of the joint or profile making capabilities of a particular machine or jig. It is ONLY a brief overview of several systems and their capabilities. The listing of systems covers every major type that I thought prudent; there are few others out there as well but those represented below are the types most often discussed on the Net. Some of the devices below could be substituted for other brands; for example, the Porter Cable Half Blind jig is representative of an entire class of jigs.

The costs given below are for rough comparison purposes. Some of these systems can be quite a bit more than listed if every system accessory and cutter is included into the price. This is actually how total system cost should be compared; however, since an individuals needs vary, this is best done by the reader. Also note that I show no cost for a shop-made mortise jig or router table; this will also vary quite a bit.

One could also quibble with a few comparisons within the chart itself. Again this is not a detailed analysis, just a brief overview. It is theoretically possible to do all the operations listed below with a shop-made router table. It is not really practical to do so however and it would take quite a bit of effort and skill to achieve the same results of a commercial system that excels in some particular operation. There are also many other considerations not shown by this chart that should be taken into account. For instance, some will be easier than others to set up, some come with better instructions, some take up less space, some are more accurate, some have good dust collection ability, some have none.

Joint / Profile Task	LittleRat	Incra Fence System (on router table)	Legacy 1000ex	Chisel Mortiser (bench)	Mortise jig (shop made)	Slot Mortiser	Multi-Router 101L & Templates	Akeda Dovetail Jig	Leigh D4 Dovetail Jig	Leigh Mortise & Tenon Jig	Keller Journeyman Dovetail Jig	Porter Cable HB Dovetail Jig	Common Router Table	Tablesaw	
Unit cost, not including router, all cutters or some accy.	\$408	\$320	\$1,835	\$260	\$0	\$1,400	\$3,000	\$346	\$360	\$800	\$160	\$100	\$0	\$600	
Positioning Accuracy	medium	very high	low	medium	high	medium	high	high	high	high	high	high	medium	medium	
Dust collection (stock)	some	good	none	none	none	some	none	good	none	some	none	none	good	some	
Half Blind Dovetails	yes (2)	yes	no	no	no	no	yes	yes (1)	yes (1)	no	no	yes (1)	no	no	
Through Dovetails	yes (1)	yes (2)	no	no	no	no	yes	yes (1)	yes (1)	no	yes (1)	no	no	no	
Variably Spaced Dovetails	yes (1)	yes (2)	no	no	no	no	yes	yes (1)	yes (1)	no	yes (3)	no	no	no	
Variably Sized Dovetails	yes (1)	yes (2)	no	no	no	no	no	yes (3)	yes (1)	no	no	no	no	no	
Sliding Dovetail	yes (6)	yes (1)	yes	no	no	no	yes	yes	yes	no	no	no	yes	no	
Finger / Box Joints	yes	yes (1)	no	no	no	no	yes	yes	yes (5)	no	yes	yes(5)	yes (4)	yes	
Variably Sized Pins	yes	yes (1)	no	no	no	no	yes	yes (3)	yes (5)	no	no	no	yes	yes	
Variably Spaced Pins	yes	yes (1)	no	no	no	no	yes	yes (3)	yes (5)	no	no	no	yes	yes	
Mortise	yes (1)	no	yes (4)(5)	yes	yes	yes (1)	yes (1)	no	yes (5)	yes (1)	no	no	no	no	
Tenon	yes (1)	yes	yes (4)(5)	no	yes ?	yes	yes (1)	no	yes (5)	yes (1)	no	no	yes (4)	yes (1)	
Lap / Half Lap	yes (1)	yes	yes (4)	no	yes ?	yes	yes (1)	no	yes (5)	yes (1)	no	no	yes (4)	yes (1)	
Doweling	yes (6)	no	yes	yes (6)	no	yes	yes	no	no?	yes	no	no	no	no	
Rail & Stile profile	yes (3)	yes (1)	no	no	no	no	no	no	no	no	no	no	yes (1)	yes(5)	
Raised panel	yes	yes (1)	yes	no	no	no	yes (6)	no	no	no	no	no	yes (1)	yes(5)	
Curved edge profiles	yes (3)	yes (1)	yes (1)	no	no	no	no	no	no	no	no	no	yes (1)	no	
Curved surface (Z axis) profiles	yes (6)	no	yes (1)	no	no	no	yes (6)	no	no	no	no	no	no	no	
Dado	yes (6)	yes (1)	yes	no	no	no	no	yes (5)	yes	no	no	no	yes (1)	yes (1)	
Rebate / Rabbet	yes (6)	yes (1)	yes	no	no	no	yes (6)	yes (5)	yes	no	no	no	yes (1)	yes (1)	
Surfacing	yes (6)	no	yes (1)(4)	no	no	no	no	no	no	no	no	no	no	no	
Lathe turning	no	no	yes (1)	no	no	no	no	no	no	no	no	no	no	no	
Rotational Index	no	no	yes (1)	no	no	no	no	no	no	no	no	no	no	no	
Spiral turning	no	no	yes (1)	no	no	no	no	no	no	no	no	no	no	no	
Circle & Hole creation	yes (6)	yes (6)	yes (4)(5)	no	no	no	no	no	no	no	no	no	yes (6)	no	
	72.5	67.5	62	7	12	17	59	30	44	19	10	7	49	36	
Notes:	1	Very good at {5}					4	With inexpensive shop-made jig {3}							
	2	Some re-work with chisel involved {3.5}					5	With additional accessory or cutter {2}							
	3	With much effort {1}					6	Limited in some way {3}							