Review of the Delta Sliding Table Attachment

The Realization

After wasting a lot of time and energy building several versions of crosscut sleds I finally realized how inadequate these jigs are and I began a search for a sliding table to fit onto my saw. I looked at all those I could easily find on the market at that time (there are a couple more now) and finally decided upon the Delta unit. The primary reason for selecting the Delta is because of cost and I spent a lot of time inspecting one the local dealer had on the showroom floor.

Delivery

I ordered my slider from Amazon (TCON), the unit was on back order and took two or three weeks to arrive. I have noted that the price of this accessory varies quiet a bit over time even from the same supplier, shopping around will probably save some money. It appears to me that the unit Grizzly sells is identical except for the color; at the time I bought mine they were about the same price so I opted for the Delta since it matched my Unisaw color.

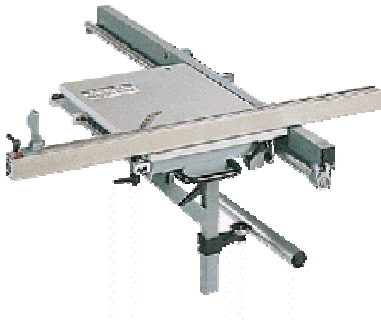
The unit arrived via UPS in a big heavy box, the box was damaged a little but none of the parts inside were harmed and none were missing.

Description

Like all sliding tables, the Delta requires the removal of the left extension wing and the cutting or repositioning of the rip fence rail(s). I've read where some people have cut the rails instead of just shifting them, from my evaluation, none of the OEM or aftermarket rip fences need to be cut although one may choose to do so due to space requirements or because they just don't want to drill new holes to shift them.

Assembly

There isn't a lot of assembly involved and as far as the unit itself goes it is all pretty straightforward. On my example an attachment plate that is used to mount the vertical support to the carriage was welded up off-square a little. I shimmed one side so it would fit up better. The table board was also bowed down by about 1/16". The table board is made of laminated OSB and is not really as good as it needs to be. Since my table was bowed down it was easy to flatten it out by placing some shims between it and a part of the carriage. Aside from these issues the assembly was fairly uneventful.



Alignment

All sliding tables must be aligned when they are installed. Compared to others the Delta is slightl easier than most however none of the aftermarke sliding tables provide a very good means of achieving alignment without a bit of iteration. T good news is that sliding tables tend to hold thei alignment for a long time. In the time I used the Delta I never had to realign it due to it drifting o alignment on it's own. I did align it a few times to the modifications I performed on it but I imag this Delta unit in particular would hold an alignn indefinitely.

While the instructions describe the assembly of t unit and its installation on a machine well, there a lot of detailed information on how to perform a alignment. After a bit of fiddling around it beco pretty obvious how to align the unit but it does ta some time to perform if one hasn't done this bef There is a bit of an art to aligning a sliding table, not aware of any sliding table supplier that demystifies this process, Delta certainly doesn't.

At the end of the alignment process the slider ne to be:

- Travel parallel to the blade.
- Sliding table even with or less than 0.010" a the table (but NOT below it).
- Table travel in the same plane as the saw tab ie: not going up or down relative to the table
- Crosscut fence set ninety degrees to the trav the table.

Because of the weight of the guide bar and its support it is a little difficult getting this piece installed in a position relative to the saw table. T is what may cause some people problems. I

Phil Bumbalough
Sept 21, 2001

eventually made modifications so that this could be dialed in exactly. One thing that can't be "dialed in" exactly is parallelism to the blade. If it doesn't bolt up to the table this way the mount would need to be shimmed into alignment. Mine was right on so I didn't have any problem in this regard.

Evaluation

The force required to move the slider is controllable by how tightly the bearings grip the guide bar. One can set them too tightly so that it requires a noticeable force to move or so that it moves with almost zero effort. I found the best setting to be a little above what is required to move just due to gravity. On the stock slider this force setting is related to alignment of the table height.

The fence can be placed in the "forward" or "aft" positions. In the more American "aft" position (like a miter gauge) the cutting capacity is about 26", the "forward" position is greater at 36". It takes a few minutes to change the fence positions if one desired to do so, I don't imagine many operators would move the fence but would rather keep it in one position or the other.

The fence needs to be removed for some rip cuts, many times it would be possible to just slide it to the left out of the way. If the fence is removed, one will have six loose parts to keep track of. This along with the time it takes to accomplish the process is inconvenient. The fence can be slid to the left but either method of getting it out of the way for a rip will cause the fence flip stop to need to be re-calibrated, this is a nuisance.

A miter scale is embedded in the table surface, it can be used only with the crosscut fence in the aft position. Although the scale graduations look big and crude, due to the geometry of the parts involved the settings can be made very accurately. I haven't measured this to prove it but I suspect it is as accurate in setting angles as any of the deluxe miter gauges from Incra or others.

I periodically applied a THIN coat of Slip-It to the guide bar, it improves the sliding action but an automotive wax would also work. It is important to periodically clean the guide bar and bearings. The Delta is not equipped with sweepers so dust eventually builds up and affects slider performance. It doesn't keep it from working, it just changes the sliding action from great to better than anything else.

The linear performance is better than a miter gau and small pieces that can't even be carried by the table are guided by the fence very easily and accurately. The load carrying capacity is more t adequate for a slider in this size range. If a very large load is cantilevered off of the table it will c some deflection and some form of support shoul used, this type of load would be far in excess of anything normal.

A new owner will probably notice right away tha the guide bar assembly protrudes from the infeed side of the saw in somewhat of an inconvenient manner. It just takes some getting used to and a a while one begins to adopt a different stance wh making crosscuts anyway. This new position wi place the user away from the kick back zone.

Summary

Once aligned, it only takes a couple of uses to become aware of the benefits of a sliding table. After having used a sliding table it would be ver difficult to use a saw without one. In my opinio sliding table like this makes a saw fully twice as useful.

Before I even bought the unit I knew that with s simple modifications I could measurably improv the performance. The main drivers for these changes were:

1. Sweepers to keep the guide bar clean an sliding action working very well.
2. Limit the number of loose parts when th crosscut fence is removed and lessen the time it took to remove and replace (with recalibrating the flip stop).
3. Cover the gaps between the slider and th saw (and correct the flatness issue while was at it).

While I was working on these main issues I wen ahead and made a few more modifications to improve a few more aspects. To be clear, in the original state, the slider worked very well. The modifications listed above could have easily bee designed into the unit by the manufacturer and it shame they did not. The additional modification performed transformed a good accessory into on that performed exceptionally well.

Phil Bumbalough
Sept 21, 2001