



Anthony Bailey gets to grips with Trend's new bar clamp and spreader system

At long last Trend have introduced a fast bar clamp spreader to rival others on the market. I get excited by new clamps and clamping systems - sad I know - but they are the basis for good assembly methods after accurate jointwork.

These clamps come in four capacities: 6, 12, 24 and 36in, come from the USA and are marked with American and German patents pending.

The handgrip and jaws are moulded from glass-reinforced nylon plastic similar to the Irwin Quick Grip series. A nice touch is the rubber grip surfaces for comfort and positive handholding.

The jaws have slip-on hard rubber facings to give a bigger clamping area and avoid surface damage. In the rear of the pistol trigger is a spring release tab to speed up applying or removing the clamp while using the main squeeze grip for fine adjustment and applying full pressure.

A black-finished carbon steel bar

with two metal stop dowels holds both jaws accurately and safely. A red turnscrew on the tail jaw can be removed so the jaw can be mounted at the other end against a dowel, thus turning the clamp quickly into a spreader for holding internal components or separating dry assembled work prior to gluing up.

In use

Having used both the Irwin XP and Irwin Quick Grip models a lot, it was an interesting change to try out a different make. For sheer force the XP series can't be beaten but for lighter clamping, up to the stated 112kg force, these Trend clamps are very nice to use indeed.

All edges are rounded and the ergonomics are good. They are relatively light to heft around and it is perfectly possible to apply them to quite delicate work. Remember thought that no quick clamp will substitute for sash or T-bar clamps for getting panels flat but for all other purposes these work extremely well. *f&c*

Clamp capacities



The bar clamps/spreaders come in four capacities

F&C verdict

Whatever size you use, these clamps are very quick and convenient, apply force accurately and without damage, and are a lot of fun to use.

Keep plenty handy though as clamping up rarely needs only one or two clamps.

The price may be a little off-putting if you need a lot, as Trend don't currently do a discount price for quantity. They would be good sold in packs of 10 for instance - just a thought...

Pros

Ergonomic design
Quick and easy to use
Relatively lightweight

Cons

Not for the heaviest work
Expensive in quantity

The numbers

Model Bar clamp/spreader
Clamping force 112kg
Prices & sizes 6in (BCS/6) £20.02, 12in (BCS/12) £22.78, 24in (BCS/24) £25.54, 36in (BCS/36) £29.68, all prices inc VAT

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