

Unique 12-Inch Compound Miter Saw

GCM12SD
Bosch
877/267-2499
boschtools.com
Street price: \$710

I needed another miter saw like my dog needs another chew toy. I have three chop saws already, and they take up more than their share of room. But when the Bosch GCM12SD showed up, I had to give it a whirl — I love big miter saws. Anything that a smaller saw can do, a 12-inch slide compound saw can do as well, and it'll crosscut a 2x12 to boot. (Strictly speaking, the GCM12SD isn't a slider, but it does the same things and competes in the slider market.)

The downside of big miter saws is obvious — their size makes them unwieldy. I hate carrying them from the truck to the job. The GCM12SD weighs in at 65 pounds, which is 6 pounds heavier

than my older 12-inch compound saw, Bosch's 5321. However, the carrying ergonomics of these two saws are completely different. Because of the GCM12SD's more compact configuration (more on this later), it tucks in close to my body when I'm carrying it, so it feels lighter. I didn't think this at first — when I initially picked up the saw from the front, it was incredibly awkward. Then I tried carrying the saw from the back — the way the instructions say to. It was night and day. For its size, this is the easiest saw to carry of any I've ever had.

Although it cuts like one, this tool works differently from slide compound saws. Instead of sliding back and forth on rails, the GCM12SD's head moves on a complicated yet robust-looking set of knuckles. It's unlike anything I've ever seen. The knuckles eliminate the rails, which always got in the way and were prone to fouling with dust. And without the rails, this saw takes up almost 1 foot less space front-to-back than my 5321. And talk about smooth! This is hands down the smoothest-operating chop saw I've used.

Its capacities are right up there, too. It will crosscut 14 inches of 1-by stock and completely cut through a 2x12 at 90 degrees. Its vertical capacity at the fence is 6½ inches for 1-by stock, and it will handle a vertical 2x6. It won't cut a 6x6, but 4x4s are no trouble. The GCM12SD miteres 60 degrees right and 52 degrees left, and it bevels 48 degrees in either direction.

All the controls are up front, which I like. However, there are a lot of them, and which lever or knob does what wasn't intuitive — I had to read the instructions. Once I got past that little glitch, it was clear to me that Bosch has a winner here. — *Andy Engel*



The GCM12SD glides back and forth on a set of knuckle joints. While most of the controls are up front on the swing-table handle, there are enough functions that actually reading the manual is a practical necessity. (The photo at right was shot by David Frane.)



Strap Storage

Strap Sack
541/390-4697
tie-down-storage.com
Street price: \$20 for four heavy-duty sacks

If you're like me, you use tie-down straps all the time, and you hate the bird's nest they create behind the seat of your truck. The Strap Sack solves the problem. It's a nylon bag that's open at both ends. Stick the mechanism of the tie-down strap out the bottom of the bag, then cinch up the sewn-in zip tie to secure the strap. To store the rest of the strap, simply stuff it in the sack and tighten the drawstring. When you need the strap, open the drawstring, and strap away. It's a good idea to capture the bag against the load when tightening the strap, so it doesn't flap in the breeze as much.

Strap Sacks are available in several configurations. The heavy-duty one I tried out easily fits a standard 1-inch-by-15-foot strap. There's a lighter-duty



version that holds the same strap and costs five bucks less per four sacks. And there's a larger, heavy-duty one for holding 2-inch ratcheting straps, as might be used to tie down a small tractor. Those run \$20 for two. — A.E.