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Rapesco TacWise Master Nailer 191EL Pro

by Ben Harvard Taylor published on 13 October 2004

Ask many people what Rapesco manufactures and you'll probably get quite a few bemused looks. Ask who makes their office stapler and they may, after a brief search, discover that Rapesco manufactures many of them. The company has built itself a reputation on making all manner of office accessories, all manually operated and all designed for the normally safe office environment. So, when we at Pocket-lint towers opened our postbag, we were a little surprised to pull out what Rapesco claims to be "the world's best 35mm Nailer/Stapler". Industrial tools from an office tool manufacturer? We gave it the benefit of the doubt and set about putting it through its paces. The instructions were simple and within minutes we were locking and loading the nails (included in the box) into the chamber. The nail gun says it will take nails up to 35mm in length, but we tried it with the slightly shorter 25mm versions. First impressions were good and it scored highly on the 'mates will be impressed with this when they look round the shed' scale. It's lightweight, fearsomely dangerous (when in the wrong hands) and its looks reminded us somewhat of one of the laser pistols from Star Wars. However, the wife wasn't overly impressed to see a grown man prancing around the shed reliving desperate battles against hordes of Storm Troopers (she was even less impressed when we asked her to plait her hair into buns and wear a toga pleading "help me Obi Wan"). We immediately experienced one essential feature. The on/off switch at the back makes it difficult to fire nails unless you really mean to - it saved us from an unfortunate episode in casualty, nearly firing the first nail through our finger. We put it through its paces on a number of different surfaces and even attempted to emulate the manufacturers claimed firing speed - 240 nails/staples a minute. We got nowhere close and think for our own health that it's probably not a good idea to attempt it again. However, it is quick



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and fires as fast as you can pull the trigger. So, what's it good for? Well, if you're going to be undertaking some heavy-duty projects this isn't for you. However, it's great for many things - as long as you're only using wood or plasterboard (or other such lightweight materials). It generally performs well and saves a hell of a lot of time if much of your project needs nailing. Even if you only use it to attach the hardboard to the back of your latest Ikea purchase you'll get some use out of it. Not everything is rosy however. It caused problems when we tried to use it one handed, firing in staples into beams above our head. The staples refused to fire into the wood so that they were flush. This meant that we had to then get a hammer to finish off the job - not ideal if you've invested fifty quid so that you don't have to do exactly that. Using a second hand to steady the gun helped greatly, but it will mean that you can't do a number of jobs on your own and will have to enlist the help of a mate. We also experienced the occasional jam, but they proved easy to clear and hardly surprising considering the force that the nails are being fired into the surface. A further minor gripe is that Rapesco does require you to load the Master Nailer with it's own brand of staples, so there's no buying the cheap 'un-badged' versions, but it shouldn't be a problem considering the range of nails and staples available.

VERDICT

At £50 it's a bit pricey - you can buy a lot of hammers for the same price, but if you're going to be doing a lot of nailing then it's certainly worth considering investing your pennies to speed up the job. It's one for the keen DIYer rather than the Pro's. Just, whatever you do, play nicely with it.

At a glance

What is it?

A dual-purpose electric nail/staple gun

Good

Lightweight, safe and makes you feel ever so slightly manly.

Bad

Difficult to get all the nails to fire flush into the wood, leading to the possibility of snagging.

Verdict

A nail/staple gun, great for the bigger job in your house but doesn't always perform quite in the way you want it to.

Price £50

Our score

8/10

Your score

?/10