

Makita squares up to Stihl

The newest version of the Makita petrol cut-off saw is finally giving the established Stihl TS410 a run for its money, creating some long-awaited viable competition in this area of the market



TOOLS
PHILIP WRIGHT

Stihl has been the market-leader for cut-off saws for many years – it's one of the hardest working items on roadworks, railways and difficult-to-access areas. It has always been one of The Hireman's most popular hire items.

Over the years we've seen a number of potential contenders, but the majority have been too heavy, too expensive or technically inferior – and frequently ended up unfixable in our workshop.

So despite a number of other big name brands – including Makita – trying their best, there has never been any real competition.

Until now: in our view, the EK6100 represents a credible alternative to the Stihl cut-off saw.

It's lighter, just as easy to use, matches the Stihl version in much of its specification – including vibration ratings and power output – and also offers an extra 10 mm of cutting depth.

When using the EK6100, the first thing we noticed was the difference in weight.

Unlike Makita's previous version – the DPC6430 – which at 9.7 kg was considered too heavy and cumbersome to use by our workshop and customers alike, the EK6100 is much lighter at



Cutting edge: the Makita EK6100 and Stihl TS410

8.5 kg, weighing even less than the Stihl TS410, which weighs 9.4 kg, making it easier to handle and transport around sites.

The Makita EK6100 also has the benefit of a smaller wheel nut, which gives more cutting depth: 110 mm compared with 100 mm on the Stihl version.

It doesn't sound like much of a difference but, in our experience, a successful outcome or the reverse can come down to millimetres.

The extra cutting depth would also be important when considering the need for a handheld/portable machine, or a Masonry Bench Saw or similar, which requires time to set up and is more expensive and bulky.

Power play

Makita has also matched the Stihl machine in terms of power output, with the Makita at 3.2 kW/4.3 hp and the Stihl at 3.2 kW/4.4 bhp, and in vibration ratings – 3.7 m/sq sec (Makita) versus 3.9 m/sq sec (Stihl), something of crucial importance for this type of tool.

Stihl has the reputation for making reliable and long-lasting tools; one thing we noted is that

the Makita version has a plastic blade guard, as opposed to a metal one, which could in time give the Stihl version an advantage over the Makita in terms of durability.

From a hire company's perspective, when you take into account the replacement part costs and reducing the amount of machine exchanges on site, this plays a major part on the cost, so the more robust and longer lasting a machine, the better.

In addition, initial reports from the workshop are that the Makita is not as easy to take apart as the Stihl, due to the way it's been designed and put together.

Another advantage of the Stihl machines is that after dominating the market for so long, most fitters and engineers know the models inside out, making them much quicker to take apart and fix.

The Makita EK6100 is still new and therefore relatively unproven, but in the past two months they have consistently been out on hire – as much as the Stihl version – and there have been no complaints.

However, only time will tell whether the Makita version has the durability to compete in the

long term with Stihl's go-to Cut Quick saw.

What we'd really like to see is a more robust solution to tackle the problem of the incorrect fuel being used in two-stroke engines, which is an inherent issue on site.

The resulting damage – which involves the engine seizing up – is frustrating for both suppliers and customers when we have to charge them for the damage.

Philip Wright is east London depot manager at The Hireman

Equipment gains from strategy challenges



EXPORTS
ROB OLIVER

The construction equipment industry straddles the construction and automotive sectors, both of which have been the subject of recent strategy documents.

A prominent word in the

Criterion	Stihl TS410	Makita EK6100
Displacement cu cm	66.7	61
Abrasive wheel diameter mm	300	305
Maximum cutting depth mm	100	110
Weight kg	9.4	8.5
Power kW/bhp	3.2/4.4	3.2/4.3
Sound power level dB(A)	109	113
Sound pressure level dB(A)	98	97