

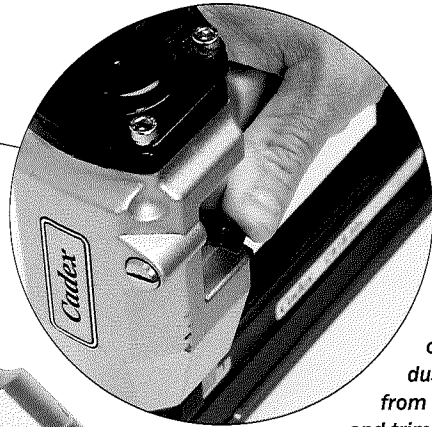
## CADEX 18.50

**Price:** \$240

**Weight:** 3.4 lb.

Despite its awkward appearance, this tool was our favorite of the test. It operates smoothly and quietly, is relatively compact, and has a feature we love: a built-in air blower. The blower, which is on the front of the housing, is useful for clearing drywall dust and debris when installing base trim. It's also useful for dusting off tools and cleaning up at the end of the day. This nailer has a solid feel, and its performance was excellent. Its front safety, with a wraparound rubber nose, handled funky angles deftly. The only thing missing is a belt hook.

**FEATURES** air blower, dry-fire lockout, rear exhaust, quick-release nose, swivel air fitting



**Let the air out.** The built-in blower on Cadex's brad nailer is handy for clearing drywall dust and sawdust from corners and trim. The flow is controlled by a metal trigger you push with your thumb.



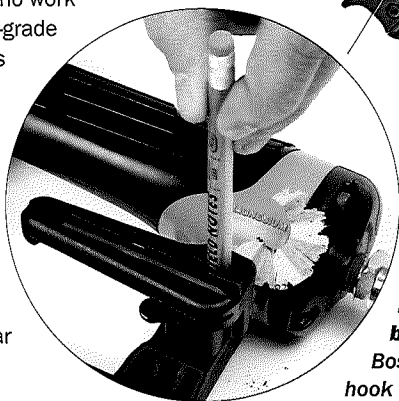
## BOSTITCH BT1855

**Price:** \$85

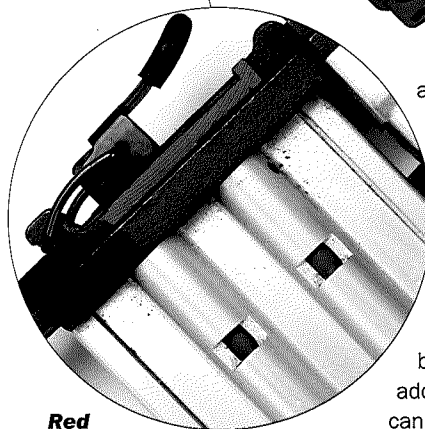
**Weight:** 2.6 lb.

This tool was a pleasant surprise. It left very small holes even in the hardest wood, demonstrated excellent power, and was able to shoot 2 1/8-in. nails. It is also an oilless model, which many carpenters who work primarily with stain-grade materials prefer. Its very small front safety provided excellent visibility, but the tool was harder to get engaged at odd angles.

**FEATURES** dry-fire lockout, rear exhaust, belt hook with pencil sharpener, swivel air fitting



**Better belt hook.** Bostitch's belt hook has a built-in pencil sharpener, and it holds the hex wrench used for clearing jams and making repairs. No tools are required for mounting the hook, which fits on either side of the nailer.



**Red means stop.** The Makita doesn't have a dry-fire lockout, but it does have red indicators that show when the magazine is empty.

## MAKITA AF505

**Price:** \$80

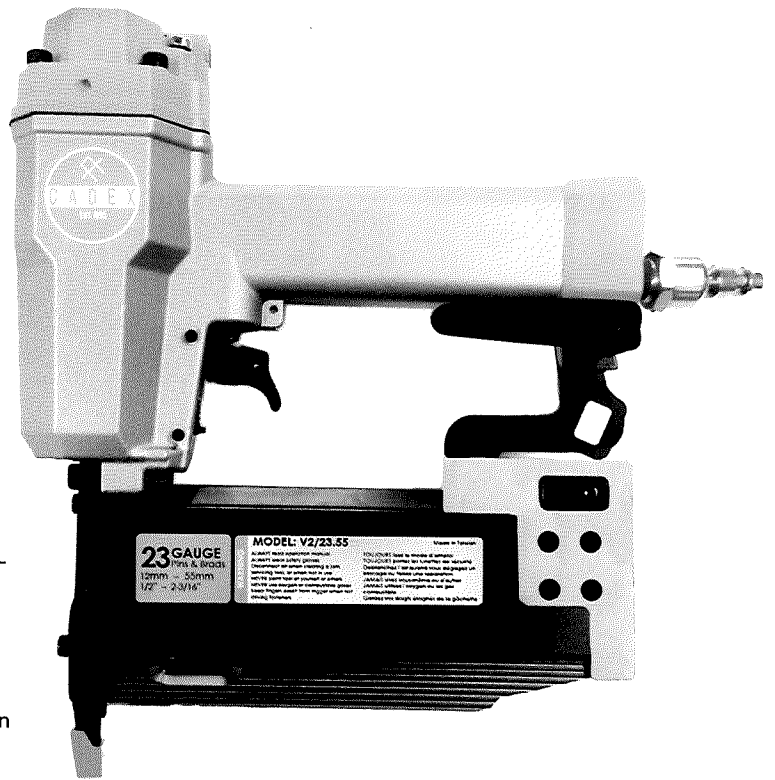
**Weight:** 3.2 lb.

This nailer feels and shoots like a \$200 tool, but it costs just \$84. Everything about it is refined: It has the smoothest magazine operation of any of the nailers, and it is quiet and comfortably heavy. While it's very capable at odd angles, its chunky nose and lack of a dry-fire lockout kept it from being my favorite model. In addition, the removable safety can fall to the ground when you open the driver housing; I can see it easily disappearing into a pile of shavings.

**FEATURES** directable exhaust, belt hook, quick-release nose

## Primo pin nailer

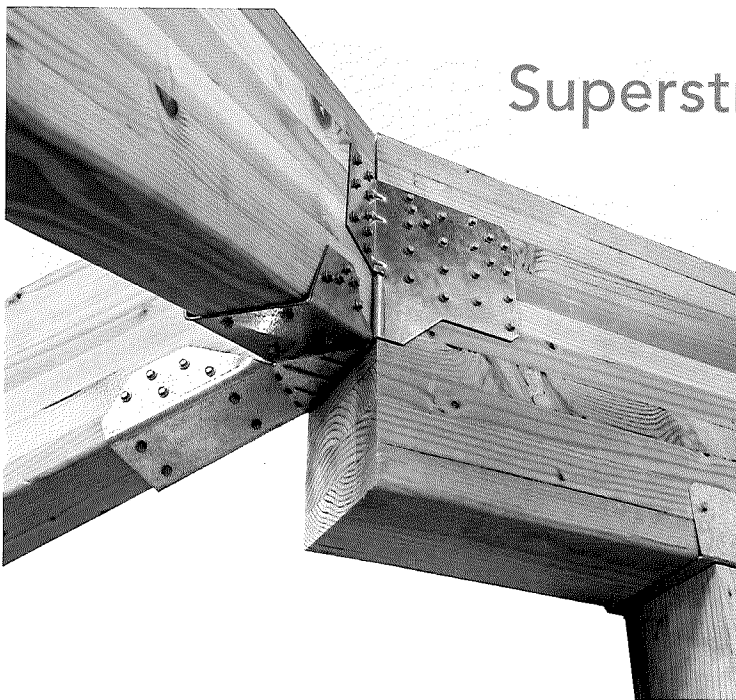
Even after trying Cadex's new top-of-the-line nailer, I'm still unconvinced that I would need to shoot 23-ga. pins that are more than 2 in. long. I did, however, find numerous other things to love about the V2/23.55 (\$300). Like its 18-ga. cousin, which I reviewed in *FHB* #245, the V2/23.55 is decked out with features: impeccable machining, a supersmooth magazine, a swivel air fitting, a belt hook, a dry-fire lockout, and numerous well-placed rubber bumpers for protecting delicate surfaces. The nailer is also coated in a high-tech silicone paint that is very grippy, even in sweaty hands, and has so far worn quite well. The V2/23.55 also has a couple of features that are unusual for 23-ga. nailers: a built-in blow gun and a contact safety. Though I liked both features, they proved somewhat troublesome during the testing period. The blow gun started leaking after a few weeks of moderate use (and some time cooking in the sun in the back of my truck). When I contacted Cadex about the problem, the company immediately shipped me a new tool, which has remained trouble free. I did run into another snag that users should be aware of: The nailer will not work without the rubber guard that goes on the contact safety. My suggestion is to keep a spare handy, or to fix the guard in place with a drop of cyanoacrylate glue, or both.



Overall, this is an excellent nailer, with a full menu of features and the ability to shoot both headless and headed nails from 1/2 in. to 2 3/16 in. It might be my imagination, but I feel like headed nails have a little more pull than the headless variety, so I especially appreciate that the tool accepts these nails. I like the nailer so much that it has replaced an older Grex model as my everyday pinner.

*Kit Camp, a woodworking instructor and finish carpenter in Portland, Ore.*

## Superstrong ridge connector



Simpson Strong-Tie's newest metal connector helps builders make stronger roofs in seismic and high-wind areas. The recently introduced HHRC heavy hip-ridge connector reinforces the connection between large engineered or timber hip rafters and structural ridge beams. The connector is adjustable to a maximum hip slope of 35°, so it works with up to a 12-in-12 (45°) roof pitch. The new connector can be used with all common ridge materials, including structural composite lumber (e.g., LVL, Parallam), glulam, and solid-sawn lumber. The HHRC connector includes Simpson's SD10 connector screws for fastening.

*P.M.*