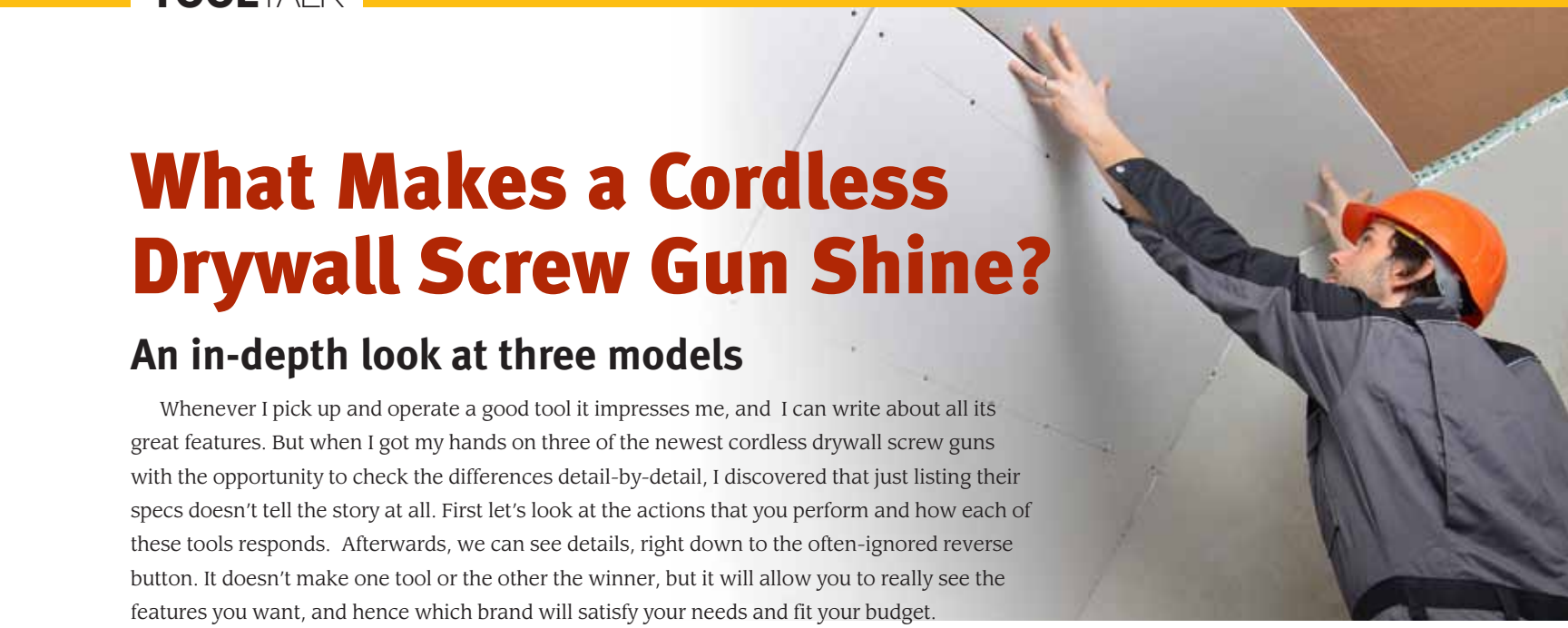

What Makes a Cordless Drywall Screw Gun Shine?

An in-depth look at three models

Whenever I pick up and operate a good tool it impresses me, and I can write about all its great features. But when I got my hands on three of the newest cordless drywall screw guns with the opportunity to check the differences detail-by-detail, I discovered that just listing their specs doesn't tell the story at all. First let's look at the actions that you perform and how each of these tools responds. Afterwards, we can see details, right down to the often-ignored reverse button. It doesn't make one tool or the other the winner, but it will allow you to really see the features you want, and hence which brand will satisfy your needs and fit your budget.

Cordless Drywall Screw Guns [action]

For all three tools in all modes, the driver does not spin until forward pressure is applied to the screw. Where "trigger pull" then "forward pressure" is the mode, the sequence can be reversed—forward pressure then trigger pull—which in some cases gives off less noise from the motor.

				
ACTION	**DeWalt** **20V Max XR DCF620D2**	**Milwaukee** **M18 Fuel 2866-20**	**Festool** **DWC 18-4500**	**Comments**
Motor off until pulling trigger – then drive starts with forward pressure on screw.	Standard single drive operation.	Standard single drive operation.	No	Apply forward pressure first, then pull trigger, reduces the noise factor.
Motor always on – drives screw with forward pressure on screw.	Trigger Lock ON – no need to hold trigger. Bit turns with forward bit pressure.	Trigger Lock ON – Auto Start OFF. No need to hold trigger. Bit turns with forward bit pressure.	No	Constant noise of motor and gear box.
Tool ON – but motor and bit start turning together only after forward pressure on screw.	No	Auto Start ON – pull Trigger but motor does not turn. Motor and bit start together with forward pressure on the bit. Trigger Lock ON while Auto Start is ON, no need to hold trigger. Motor and bit start together with forward pressure on the bit.	In MANUAL mode – operates like standard single drive operation except that the motor does not turn before the bit driver. Motor and bit start together with forward pressure on the bit.	Much quieter operation for both tools.
Motor turns on without pulling trigger upon forward pressure on screw.	No	No	In AUTO mode – no trigger pull or trigger hold required. Both motor and bit start with forward pressure on bit.	Very quiet operation.

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Cordless Drywall Screw Guns [details]

				
DETAILS	**DeWalt** **20V Max XR DCF620D2**	**Milwaukee** **M18 Fuel 2866-20**	**Festool** **DWC 18-4500**	**Comments**
Sound	DeWalt and Milwaukee run at about 66db with the Festool a little lower at about 60db. I tried an analysis of pitch, frequency, and volume but the numbers didn't tell the story that my ears were hearing.			With slightly lower volume and much lower pitch as well as the motor only running while the screw is turning, one has the impression that the Festool is far less noisy than the others.
	Pretty standard sharp whining we are used to with drywall guns.	Slightly higher pitch than the DeWalt but less noticeable when used with Auto Start – motor not running if the screw is not driving.	A lower dull sound although almost the same volume as the others.	
Size of tool	Compact	Compact	Larger than others but still compact — a bit square.	All very well balanced.
Weight of bare tool	2.4 lbs / 1.09 kg	2.5 lbs / 1.13 kg	2.6 lbs / 1.18 kg	Amp hours of the battery change the weight dramatically.
Bit anchoring into chuck	Magnet and retaining ring – tight. Hard plier pull to change bit.	Magnet and retaining ring – moderate. Slight plier pull to change bit.	Magnet and retaining ring – very light. Occasionally bit stays with screw.	
Belt hook	Comes in box – left or right installation. Belt hook interferes with 20V Max XR battery. Mounting not giving clearance for battery.	Comes with belt hook attached, can be switched to other side.	Comes with belt hook on left and scaffolding hook on right. Both can be reversed.	
Collation device	Yes. Super easy no-tool switch from standard chuck to collation device. 180° alternate mounting. 1" to 2" screws.	Yes (available March/April). Super easy no-tool switch from standard chuck to collation device. Screw strip hang down can be rotated 360° in 45° increments. 1" to 2" screws.	Yes. Super easy no-tool switch from standard chuck to collation device. Screw strip hang down can be rotated 360° in 30° increments. 1" to 2-1/4" screws.	
Reverse	Must depress bit to engage reverse drive. Screw must be proud enough to not engage the depth clutch. Popping off the depth stop nose cone will allow reverse to remove recessed screws.	Must depress bit to engage reverse drive. Screw must be proud enough to not engage the depth clutch. Popping off the depth stop nose cone will allow reverse to remove recessed screws.	The reverse button disengages the depth clutch and the bit turns upon a trigger pull without depressing the bit – in both Auto and Manual mode.	The Festool is the only tool of the three capable of removing recessed screws directly.
Price without batteries	$150 bare tool. $100 collation accessory.	$200 bare tool. Collation accessory price info not available at press time.	$425 bare tool, but includes collation attachment.	

Montreal-based TV broadcaster, author, home renovation and tool expert Jon Eakes provides a tool feature in each edition of Home BUILDER. www.JonEakes.com