

Lamello Invis System

A revolutionary joining system with a potentially prohibitive price tag

The very first thing to get out of the way about the Lamello Invis joining system is the cost – it's not cheap! But when you see how clever and speedy it is, opening up avenues of jointing that would otherwise be impossible, you can begin to appreciate that it's worth the money.

Makers of high-end furniture often try to disguise how everything is held together in their pieces; the Invis allows you to join their ranks and make some really clever stuff, only your imagination limiting what you can do. There are also practical benefits. In public places, for example, where there may be a need to gain access through panels without any external fixings on show, these will solve the problem. Security is another issue in public places: because you can't remove Invis-jointed panels without the correct tool you can rest assured that your panels are safe from, shall we say, more unscrupulous types.

Uses

There are different types of Invis fixings for different applications, including various diameters for thinner or thicker stock. The longer type (Pic.1) allows you to pull two parts together while sandwiching a middle one, which is ideal for shelving applications



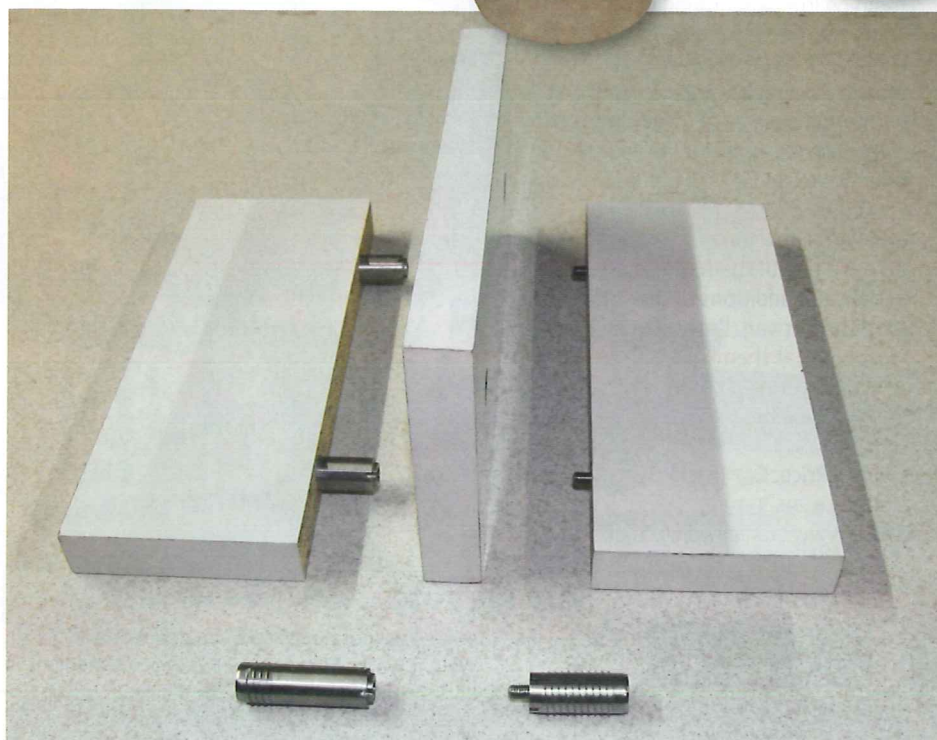
where you don't want to use housings or have supports on show. There are also thinner Invis fixings for access panels, which have a small stud that projects once tightened as shown in this acrylic sample, Pic.2.

You can also use them for pulling up handrails; this used to involve a lot of work, but the Invis does the job with minimal fuss. You could use a single dowel, or just one and some glue – either way, it will pull up nice and tight, Pic.3. The part that does the work is the cube shown in Pic.4, which creates a magnetic force (powered by a drill) that screws the Invis threads in or out as it rotates.

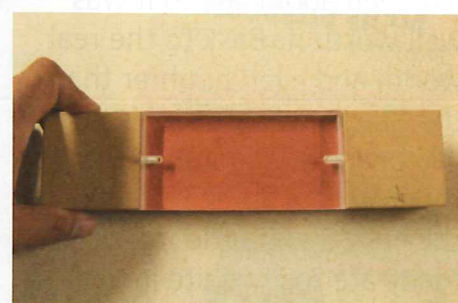
Kitchen fitting

Anyone who has fitted kitchens will know how awkward it can be to get the bolts connected up from the underside, particularly with worktops; this is made extra difficult by the fact that you're often working in cramped surroundings. Take a look at Making a joint and you can see how useful they can be in combination with a few biscuits – although you could rely on the Invis alone, as the system has superb holding power.

Traditionally, the main problem with worktop joints is getting the top face flush, but by assembling everything from above,



▲ Pic.1 Longer fixings are ideal for shelving applications where you don't want supports on show...



▲ Pic.2 ...while thinner fixings are great for access panels

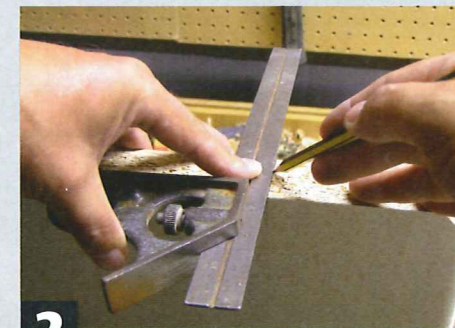


▲ Pic.3 The fuss is removed from pulling together handrail components

Making a joint



1 The worktop joint is cut in the normal manner, using a jig and router



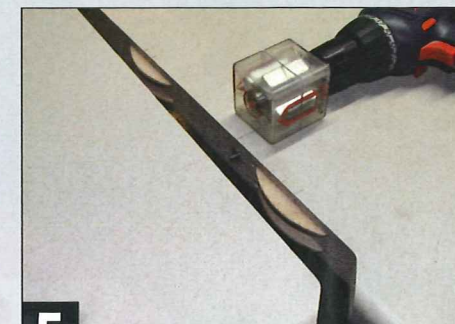
2 Without the Rasto jig you need to take care to be accurate when marking out the dowels



3 A special driver bit is available to drive the Invis fixings into the holes



4 They should sit marginally below the surface, as shown



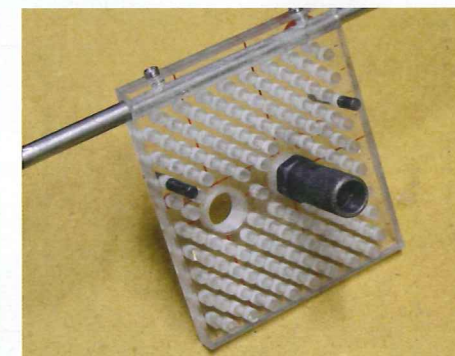
5 While not essential, you can add biscuits to aid the initial alignment



6 To complete the joint, set the drill to the correct orientation. The magnetic device winds the threads in



▲ Pic.4 This is the device that makes the magic happen, using magnetic force to screw the Invis in or out



▲ Pic.5 The Rasto jig is certainly worth having if you're planning to use Invis regularly

as you do when using the Invis system, you can easily see where you need to manoeuvre and tweak the tops to get everything flush. Problem solved. When using biscuits for aligning a worktop joint you sometimes find yourself in a situation where the worktop is trapped between a wall and a unit, and it can be difficult to engage in such situations, as you have to lift the worktop at an angle to gain some room. The Invis sits flush and the threads are sprung so you can get them to align with less hassle.

Add-ons

The optional Rasto kit (Pic.5) makes life even easier in that it has a series of holes for guide pins along with tapped holes for the drill bushings, thus allowing you to mirror the holes

you need to drill. These can be linked up with rods for setting more than one fixing accurately, and are definitely worth having if you'll be using them regularly.

Without the aid of this kit, more setting out is required and the process is a little more long-winded, but still doable. It is absolutely essential that you get the positions right though, as while there can be some minor play, there isn't much room for error. You'll still save time, of course, on the cutting of the worktop bolt recesses, and on the fuff of getting underneath the worktop to tighten them up.

Time is money

As you can see from the worktop joint I put together above, the Invis can live in harmony

with other established jointing systems, such as the biscuit jointer. Smaller components can be fabricated and then locked up tightly with a few Invis fixings, so cost is minimised and you still gain strength.

The price precludes using Invis on low-end projects, but towards the other end of the scale the gain in creative potential justifies the outlay. Whether you feel something like the worktop shown is cost effective is really down to how much an issue ease of access is. It's definitely far easier to see what you are doing by tightening the joint up from above, and it's so easy to slacken and tweak to flush the components up.

All in all, the system is undoubtedly ideal for parts that need complex jointing; in the right applications that makes it cost-effective based on the time saved alone. But if you're not doing high-end work the cost may be an insurmountable obstacle.

Good The Woodworking Verdict

- + Enables all sorts of difficult jointing
- Built-in scale is unreliable

Rating ★★★★★

Typical price: £34.44 (10 fixings)

£178.33 Fitter's kit: driver, Invis block, fixings)

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