

The Florian Pinker

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I have to confess: I love scissors. Including sewing shears, snips, embroidery scissors, kitchen scissors, shop scissors, hair scissors, folding scissors, and fancy paper edgers, I probably own a hundred pairs. Among my collection I've got a pair of gold-plated scissors, a pair with a laser to aid in making straight cuts, and pairs intended to cut metal. I even have a huge pair of shears 20" long -- and they are surprisingly balanced to handle. And, of course, pinking shears: I own several pairs, plus a pair of scalloping shears.



So it's probably not surprising that I also own this curious gadget: the Florian Rotary Pinker, invented in the US during the 1930s and produced until 2007 by the Florian family-run company in Connecticut. Since then,

production has been assumed by the Overall Manufacturing company.

The Florian pinker handles like a scissor, but in place of blades it incorporates a gear-driven pinking wheel that cuts against a steel bearing.



This design enables the pinker to make one continuous pinked edge, even when cutting intricate designs.



There are several nifty things about this pinker: first, it doesn't bind like some pinking shears tend to do, and it rarely needs sharpening, because the cutting wheel rotates continuously against a steel bearing that helps to keep it sharp. And it can be used either right- or left-handed.



Unlike with pinking shears, it's easy to cut curves and circles with the pinker, and you can produce a continuous pinked edge for yards and yards, without losing your place or having to reposition the device.



It's this ease of continuous use that has made the hand-held rotary pinker a must-have for any task that requires a lot of pinking -- such as, I am told, fitting the fabric covering onto lightweight aircraft.

Nowadays, the Florian Pinker retails for between \$100 - \$112 USD, though I did see one supplier who offered it for \$75. You might be able to find a used one on ebay for \$20-\$30 USD, with an additional \$15 or so for shipping.

Or if you're lucky, you may stumble across a vintage one in a thrift store for under \$10, as I did.



If you're keen to have one, though, I wouldn't wait for it to show up there: in the past 30 years I've seen only two of them. You probably won't be surprised to hear that I bought them both.