

Jet 18" Bandsaw

By Bob Genovesi

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About 6 months ago I found myself exploring the same territory. I looked at the Grizzly, Laguna, and the Jet. I settled on the Jet because of their quality, reliability, and warranty. The Grizzly looked good but I don't like to buy something this large sight unseen. The Laguna, while quite a saw, represented less bang for the buck than both the Jet and Grizzly. So if you haven't guessed it by now, I bought the Jet JWBS-18.

After I uncreated this 320 pound beast, I inspected the following:

Fit & Finish - As I had expected, the fit and finish were outstanding, typical JET through and through. No dents, scratches, or unpainted surfaces, probably the result of electrostatic painting process. The trunnions are heavy cast iron and I carefully checked all castings for the possibility of porosity, cracks, and casting flash; none were found. The trunnions are cradled by a heavy-duty zinc alloy saddle and the table tilts smoothly. I added a synthetic lubricant here during assembly.

The 19 x 19 Table - Is robust to say the least. I was impressed with its ground surface. When I say ground, I'm not referring to Blanchard ground I referring to surface ground. There's a world of difference between the two, surface ground being the preferred. I mounted the fence rails and adjusted the fence to be parallel with the blade, pretty simple.

The saw receives its power via a 1 ½ HP motor. It comes wired for 115 volts but past experience tells me to switch over to 230 volts right from the start. In my humble opinion any motor over 1 HP should come wired for 230 volts.

After a few more checks I hit the switch and the saw came up to speed in just a few seconds. Blade tracking was good, although I had to tweak it a little; I'm like that. Another nifty addition is the brush on the lower wheel. It keeps dust from collecting on the tire. Dust collection port is the best. Virtually all dust is whisked away leaving almost none in the lower cabinet. Another point, this saw runs quiet. I had to turn off the dust collector to hear it, or maybe my dust collector is too loud, nah!

I found a piece of 4 x 4 oak, set the fence at 1 1/8 inches, and pushed it through. The saw cut like butter and most importantly, cut straight, it never wandered a bit. To test it further, I set the fence to ¼ inch and ran a finished ¾ X 8 inches wide oak board through it. I just a few short minutes I had 2 - ¼ thick panels, beautifully straight, plus the left over panel even thinner.

I bought this saw through WoodWorkers Warehouse for \$999. I'm not easy to please but one way is to build a quality machine at a good price and have it work this well!