

PHOTOS BY JOE DENIG



One of Robby's comments concerning his T.A. Schmid Standard Model Sawmill sums it up very nicely: "It's a good bang for the buck."

T.A. Schmid

Standard Model Sawmill

Reviewed by Joe Denig

I had really lucked out. The weather this summer in North Carolina had been extremely hot. However, this was a perfect day, with the highs in the mid-80s and low humidity. I was going to spend an afternoon visiting Robby Carlson at his family-owned farm just north of Raleigh to discuss his T.A. Schmid Standard Model Sawmill.

Robby's background is in construction. He has spent his life around the building trade, from contractor to construction supervisor, to his present job as a building inspector for the city of Raleigh. What I think he enjoys doing most is spending time working on his family's 103-acre farm. He built the house he lives in, which is a real bachelor's

pad, consisting of a garage downstairs to store what he call his "toys" in, with his living quarters upstairs. He became interested in owning his own mill after a hurricane hit several years ago. With so many trees blown down in the Raleigh area it was impossible to find an available portable mill operator to saw his logs up. He had always been fascinated by portable bandmills and he told me that he could watch them operate for hours. A little after the hurricane Robby visited the State Fair grounds and met the man behind the T.A. Schmid Standard Model Sawmill, Tom Schmid. He told me that he was so impressed with Tom and his approach to his portable bandmill that he purchased his mill without actually seeing it run.

The T.A. Schmid Standard Model Sawmill will not win any beauty contests or high tech awards, but as Robby terms it, "it is a common sense sawmill." It is designed for those who are interested in trading physical labor for a less expensive alternative to the many more sophisticated portable bandmills. The mill meets Robby's goals—he saws for himself as a hobby. He enjoys cutting logs into lumber for projects around the farm. He likes the simplicity of the mill and doesn't mind the physical exertion required to manually load, turn and dog a log.

Robby purchased his T.A. Schmid with an optional heavier frame and a trailer package. He felt the heavier frame was better since he could operate the mill on less flat terrain.

Normally, Robby operates his mill with the trailer tongue and wheels removed, so the sawmill sits on the ground. On the afternoon that I spent with Robby he showed me how to remove the trailer package and set the mill on the ground. He likes this method of operation because it lets him easily roll the logs onto the mill's bed. He has sawn with the mill in the trailer configuration using stabilizing outrigger legs supplied with the mill, and reported no problems. For trailering the mill comes equipped with lockdowns that secure the carriage in place during transit.

The optional track frame is constructed out of 2 x 6 x 3/16 inch steel tubing. The tracks are made from 2 x 2 x 3/8 inch angle iron. Steel cross members

T.A. SCHMID DATA SHEET

NAME & MODEL NUMBER

T.A. Schmid Standard Model

MANUFACTURER & ADDRESS

T.A. Schmid Portable
Bandsawmills
PO Box 225
Schuyler Lake, NY 13457
1-315-858-2290
1-888-858-8589
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hmid

MILL OVERVIEW

Band or Circle Mill: Band

Stationary or Portable:
Portable

Standard Equipment: Blade
guides, log turner and 4 log
dogs

Cutting Capacity: (diameter
and length): 36-inch diameter
and 16-foot length

Weight: 1,350 pounds

Length & Width: 20 feet x 5
feet 4 inches

FRAME & CARRIAGE

Size and Construction of
Frame: 2 1/2 x 2 1/2 x 3/16
inch tubular steel

Tracks are Made of: 2 1/2 x 2
1/2 x 3/8 inch angle/bridge
welded to 2 x 6 3/16 inch
tubing

Are the Tracks Replaceable?
Yes

Wheels are Made of: Cold
Rolled Steel

Carriage Bearings: Double
Row 5200ZZ

Carriage Support System: 2
post mill with cantilever saw
head

SAWING HEAD

Wheel Diameter: 18 inches

Wheel Face: Reinforced
rubber

Wheel Construction: Cast
Steel

Wheel Shaft: 1 3/16 inches

Recommended Saw Blade:
12 feet 1 inch x 1 1/4 x .042
inches for softwoods, for
hardwoods, same specs with
Morse Blade that has 1-inch
tooth spacing

GUIDES AND STRAIN SYSTEM

Type of Guides: Roller Band
guide tensioners

Strain System Used: Manual

Wheel Tilting System: N/A

SETWORKS

Method of Setwork Drive:
Manual

Set Display: Scale Board

Automatic Sets? Positive lock-
ing settings

ALIGNMENT

How is Alignment Done at
Factory?: Carefully

Alignment Guides for User:
Visual

POWER PLANT

Standard: 13 HP Honda

LOG TURNER

12 volt winch wrap around
system

LOG LOADER

12 volt winch wrap around
system

LOG DOGS

4 fully adjustable: manual

CARRIAGE FEED DRIVE

Type (hydraulic, electrical,
mechanical, or manual):
Manual

TOWING

Wheels and Trailer: No
brakes required for weight rat-
ing, 2,000-pound axles, 13-
inch tires

Towing Weight: 1,350
pounds

Tongue Weight: Adjustable
by head placement

GUARANTEE:

One full year parts and
workmanship

OPTIONS AVAILABLE

Maxi-Frame and trailer pack-
age, 12-volt electric log
loader/turner

BASE PRICE

\$3,775

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PORTABLE SAWMILL *Review*



Robby Carlson pushes the saw through a cut.

support the log and these are adjustable by shimming. The log is held in place by manual dogs made from steel tubing. The lefthand dogs are fixed to the lefthand side of the bed frame and can be adjusted in height according to log size. The righthand dogs can be adjusted for location as well as height. Logs can be loaded from either side of the mill. Robby prefers to load his mill from the right side with the left dogs in the up position. He uses two boards to form a low inclined ramp and a cant hook to roll the logs onto the mill. Mills that are currently ordered with the optional trailer package and heavier frame, come equipped with two steel cogged inclined ramps.

With me as Robby's assistant, the procedure of loading and dogging the logs worked well. We sawed mostly smaller diameter material that afternoon. And I could tell that our speed could be greatly increased with experience, especially with the log diameters that we were sawing. For larger logs it may not be so easy. A 12-volt, winch-type loader and turner is available as an option.

The sawing head is supported by a two post frame constructed out of 2 1/2 x 2 1/2 inch and 2 x 3 inch tubular steel. Carriage wheels are machined with sealed bearings. Nylon track scrapers are included with the mill. The saw head is raised and lowered

using a ratchet crank connected to a sprocket, which in turn is tied to a shaft using another sprocket and #40 roller chain. The turning of the shaft raises or lowers the saw head via two cables attached to the saw head. A simple scaleboard is supplied to figure thickness of boards. Instructions come with the mill on how to mark the scaleboard so that you are able to cut the thicknesses that you want. To raise the carriage you

simply crank the handle. Each click from the ratchet is approximately one-tenth of an inch. To lower the head you slightly crank the handle to raise it, which takes pressure off of the ratchet, and then releasing the ratchet lets the crank rotate slowly to lower the head. When sawing, Robby lowers the head just below where he thinks he wants to place the saw line and then raises the head with the ratch- *(Continued on page 42)*



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PORTABLE SAWMILL *Review*

(Continued from page 6)

et operating to fine tune the set. The process sounds more complicated than it actually is.

The bandwheels are 18 inches in diameter, made from cast iron pulleys. A rubber belt is used to form the surface of the bandwheel. A screw mechanism is used to pull the wheels apart, which strains the blade. Each time the blade is changed the bolts must be loosed and tightened. Robby has stripped the nut on this mechanism and feels that this is one area on the mill that could use improvement. The manufacturer reported that in response to Robby's suggestion they have started using a higher grade nut

and bolt that is bored out, which allows the screws to be packed with grease. The wheels can also be adjusted for tilt, controlling the location of the gullet to the wheel face. The rubber belt on the bandwheel allows the blade to give, preventing blade failure when a sliver of wood gets caught between the bandwheel face and blade. Each bandwheel is covered by a hinged guard, which allows easy access for blade changes.

Two saw guides are supplied with the mill. The one on the left side is fixed, while the right side saw guide is adjustable. Both are of the roller type, with a back lip that prevents the blade from slid-

ing backwards. Blade lubrication is accomplished using a garden-type sprayer. Robby uses a mixture of four parts diesel oil to one part chainsaw bar oil, and every several feet of saw travel he gives the blade a shot of oil.

There are various power options available on the mill, including electric motors, gas engines with manual start and gas engines with electric start. Robby's mill was equipped

with a 13 HP, electric start, Honda gas engine. He never had a battery so he hasn't used the electric start feature. He does believe the Honda has been a very reliable power source. While I was there the engine started on the first pull every time.

The horsepower may seem low compared to other bandmills, but on the T.A. Schmid the engine only supplies power to the saw head. The travel of the

MANUFACTURER'S COMMENTS:

T.A. Schmid sawmills are priced for the hobbyist's pocket-book, but built for commercial use. T.A. Schmid mills are used by hobbyists, farmers, loggers, log-home builders and lumber, pallet, tie and stake producers. All sawmills are designed with limited maintenance, one-man sawing, and economics in mind. T.A. Schmid introduced their new 20-25 HP Maximizer sawmill model this year, and it's rapidly becoming their "hottest" seller!

Currently a 20 HP twin Honda Maximizer saw on a fully rigid 20-foot Maxi-Trax frame is priced at \$7,300! One-piece Maxi frames are also available in 24-foot and 28-foot lengths. T.A. Schmid has sawmills from \$3,775 and offers nationwide delivery and set-up with satisfaction guaranteed!

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saw head, the raising and lowering of the head and the log loading and dogging are all manual.

Robby was not shy about putting me to work. Besides giving me the chance to get my hands dirty, it allowed me to get the feel of the mill. Lowering and raising the saw head to get the desired thickness was not a problem. Pushing and pulling the saw head up and down the track was easy. If it was my mill I might change the location of the controls and handles so I could more easily see where the saw was cutting while walking the saw head along. While operating the bandmill I noticed two areas that I would address: the exhaust

from the engine and the sawdust discharge. The extra heat from the exhaust was bearable but not pleasant. Robby said that he had changed the direction of the exhaust discharge to minimize sawdust blowing. On Robby's mill the sawdust discharge is to the right side in the horizontal direction at a relatively high speed. This is where the operator is walking. Robby told me that in the newer mills the discharge is in a downward path, which might eliminate some of the problem.

One unique feature of the mill is what the manufacturer terms clean-cut. Looking at the mill in the direction of travel of the saw head during the cut,

the band blade is traveling in a counterclockwise motion, or sawing from left to right. If the log is rotated 90 degrees in a counterclockwise motion after each cut to square up the cant, the blade enters the cut through the bark only on the first face. After the log is first turned 90 degrees, the blade is always entering the cant on a surface that doesn't have bark.

Well, how did it cut? Super! The mill cut well and was easy to operate. The loading and turning was neither difficult nor time-consuming with the log sizes we cut. The mill produced boards with a smooth surface to uniform sizes. Controlling the mill or walking the saw head

back and forth was not tiring. While in the cut the 13 HP engine maintained its speed and did not lug.

Robby said his maintenance routine is just to make sure that the mill is lubricated. In his dealings with the manufacturer, Tom Schmid, Robby is very pleased. He felt Tom was a very honorable supplier who delivered on his promises.

I think one of Robby's comments concerning his T.A. Schmid Standard Model Sawmill sums it up very nicely: "It's a good bang for the buck." ■

Joe Denig is a Wood Products Extension Specialist at North Carolina State University's College of Forest Resources.

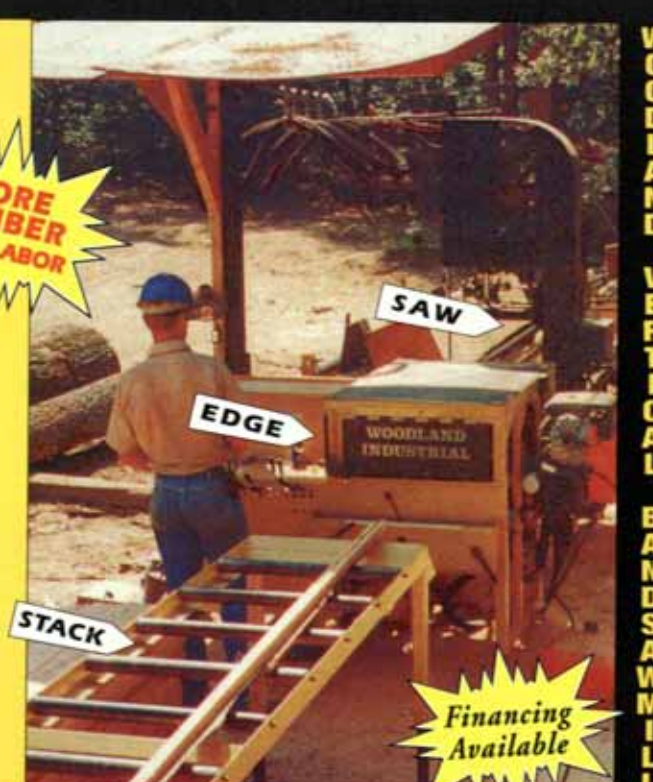
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