Log-Master Sawmill Model LM2

The LM2 is rugged enough to easily handle large hardwood logs, but not so large that it overwhelms a part-time operator. By Bill Gove

Mike Camire of Barrington, New Hampshire, went to the Internet when the time came for him to upgrade his sawmill capability. He had experienced some unsatisfactory results with his previous portable sawmill, and wanted a change. Thus he began to peruse the websites of various portable sawmill manufacturers.

Mike had purchased his first sawmill back in 2001 and had used it for a couple of years before becoming disenchanted and selling the mill. But he admits that "those two years provided good learning experiences and gave me the personal education in what I needed to look for when buying another sawmill." A small, labor-intensive mill without log-loading capability did not meet his ideal of an enjoyable sideline when away from his professional computer activities. So Mike went to the websites, he went to the machinery shows, and he called different manufacturers with his questions.

What was Mike looking for? First of all, he wanted a mill that was rugged enough to eliminate or at least minimize annoying flex in the frame. He had apparently suffered some flex problems with a mill that was framed with angle iron and was too light. Mike also wanted a mill with a head rig carriage that was supported on at least four posts, again due to past experiences with instability. The log bed would have to be flat, he insisted, and the dogging system would have to have rugged, solid dogs, not just tubing.

The President Delivers the Goods

After all of his research, Mike made his decision. In October of 2003, he ordered a Log-Master, model LM2. So imagine how surprised Mike must have been when the company president and CEO drove down his long driveway with the new mill in tow, having driven all the way from the plant in Texas. Company president Herman Gibson then spent the night as a guest at the Camire home and the next morning assisted Mike with his first sawing experience.

In the spring of 2006, I found my way down the long driveway leading to his home tucked away in the woods of southern New Hampshire.

After two and a half years of part-time use, the sawmill still looked new to me. But does Mike now feel that his Log-Master sawmill has fulfilled his expectations and desires? After listening to him talk about the mill and seeing him demonstrate for

SPECS

LOG-MASTER MODEL LM2

Cutting capacity	logs 36 in. in diameter; 24 ft. in length
Power	26-hp Kohler water-cooled, gasoline engine, or 3-cyl. Cat diesel (optional)
Weight	6,300 lbs.
Length	37 ft.
Height	10 ft. 6 in.
Width	8 ft. 5 in.
Frame	3 in. x 6 in. tubular steel (1/4 in. thick) deck is 2 in. x 9 in. solid
Carriage support system	6 post
Band wheels	30 in. diameter, solid steel
Blade size	1 1/4 in. x 19 ft. 1 in (max. 1 3/8 in.)
Strain system	hydraulic tension
Log turner and loader	hydraulic
Dogs	front and rear, hydraulic
Jacks	8 (5 used as outriggers)
Axles	tandem with hydraulic surge brakes
Option	computer networks with unlimited sets
Price	$23,500

Log-Master Portable Sawmill Mfg. Inc.
16609 US Hwy. 259 North, Nacogdoches, TX 75965
Phone: 936/560-6755 ▪ Fax: 936/560-0793 ▪ www.logmaster.com

Manufacturer's Statement: The LM2 is a rugged, reliable, and dependable machine. It has everything you need to start a small sawing business or to just saw for your own uses. At Log-Master we build our sawmills to perform long-term. We cheerfully tell all our customers that if they can find a sawmill that offers more standard features, is more powerful, has a heavier construction, has more and stronger hydraulics, and weighs more than a Log-Master, then they should buy that machine because it is a great sawmill.

a half day, it was obvious that he was quite satisfied as he showed me the answers to his required specs. The mill's bed frame is constructed of 3-inch x 6-inch tubular steel, 1/4-inch thick, and it stood noticeably firm while he was turning large logs.

The saw carriage on the Log-Master sits solidly on what is termed a six-post construction, meaning there are four 2-inch x 3-inch heavy support posts and two tubular steel cylinder rods for the up-and-down movement of the carriage frame. The cross members or bunks on the bed frame consist of 2-inch x 9-inch, 1/4-inch-thick steel.

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The LM2

Of the eight sawmill models manufactured by Log-Master, the LM2 is the fourth-largest model on the list. The LM2 would properly be considered the smallest of Log-Master's heavyweight sawmills, weighing in at 6,500 pounds. Mike does not agree with those who might consider a sawmill the size of the LM2 as inappropriate for a part-time sawmiller. He quite obviously revels in the ease of operation, in the stability, and in the productivity of the LM2 compared with his former small mill.

The 26-hp motor and 30-in.-diameter band wheels can handle logs up to 36 in. in diameter and 24 ft. long.

As Mike stood at the side of the mill with the totally remote operator station or box in his hand, he smiled and recalled the former days with his previous mill when he had to walk the length of his sawmill with each saw cut. The Log-Master has an interesting board dragback system that will bring each board back to a location in front of the operator after it drops off of the saw.

Another feature of his sawmill that Mike was quick to point out is the fully hydraulic system: no electronics. "Much better for maintenance purposes," said Mike. The hydraulic drive on the band wheels drives the 1 1/4-inch band at a speed of 6,200 lineal feet per minute.

The 26-hp motor and 30-inch-diameter band wheels can handle logs up to 36 inches in diameter and 24 feet in length. I asked Mike for a production figure, but he really didn't think he could give a fair estimate; it's not a concern with his type of operation. He sometimes has helpers of varying capabilities or will often work alone on projects that don't involve fast production. I came away thinking that Mike just enjoys running his mill.

There is a standard attachment on the mill for making bevel siding or clapboards and, of course, a toe board under each end of the log for elevating the end of a tapered log. Mike will sometimes make quarter-sawn lumber and reports that the hydraulic system holds the log sections quite firmly while being sawn.

Standard equipment on the mill is a set of tandem axles for highway transport. The wheels are equipped with hydraulic surge brakes. Portable sawmill operators in the East don't seem to use the portable capability of their mills very much and seem to prefer a stationary setup. But down in Texas, where the Log-Master is made, they tell me that the sawmills are frequently

Mike likes the remote operator station that eliminates the need to walk the length of the sawmill with each saw cut.

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When asked about problems or potential improvements, Mike had very little to say. After a little thought, the only thing that he could mention was that he would like to have the log turner and the dog on separate slides. He did have some bearings go bad, but the manufacturer readily replaced them.

The LM2 is not an inexpensive sawmill, and if you are looking for less of an investment, there are, of course, many other choices. There is a wide price range of well-built sawmills on the market today. But if you want a rugged and heavy sawmill with a long life span, I suggest that you consider the Log-Master. I was impressed with Mike Camire's LM2, and I know that Mike is pleased and proud to own the mill. ■

Bill Gove is a retired forester, author of many books, and a regular contributor to Sawmill & Woodlot *magazine.*

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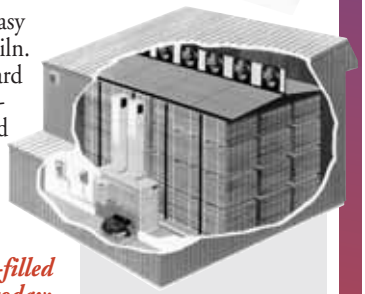

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