

## DVD REVIEW: ULTIMATE BANDSAW SET UP & MAINTENANCE

For many woodworkers, the bandsaw is often the first machine they buy. Not only is it less intimidating, safer and quieter than other workshop equipment, but it's pretty versatile. From cutting accurate joints such as dovetails, bevels and tight curves to simply sawing logs for firewood, there's not much it can't do as a saw. Like any machine it needs to be set up correctly to get the most from it, though. Following on from his excellent range of hand tool DVDs (Series 1), furniture maestro Peter Sefton has progressed to Series 2, focusing on woodworking machinery. Starting with the bandsaw, I should point out that this is the first of three DVDs dealing solely with this machine, the subsequent pair concentrating on Advanced Techniques – we'll take a closer look at those in a future issue.

Most of the instruction takes place on a huge Felder bandsaw in his Furniture School's machining shop (a replacement for a previous Hammer machine), although the principles are the same. He occasionally refers to an older Kity bandsaw standing alongside, which is probably more appropriate for most smaller workshops. Incidentally, this was a lovely machine, sadly no longer available... However, to begin he points out similarities, rather than differences between the two models.

### Machine anatomy

Anatomy of a Bandsaw is rather like a visual glossary, consisting of a guide to doors, guarding, microswitches, mains isolators, bandwheels, speeds and drive mechanisms. Some of this may seem basic if you're a bandsaw owner, but there are useful nuggets here, such as how to adjust the tilt on a lower bandwheel (a last resort when blade tracking is a problem).

Moving on to blades, he points out that most difficulties are caused by poor quality manufacturing or blunt teeth, rather than by the machine itself. An explanation of how to calculate blade length for an older bandsaw (when a user manual may have been lost) is handy for those buying secondhand. I loved the tip in the Blades Management sequence – using coloured magnets (a sort of traffic light system) to identify the sharpness of used blades when stored for future use, but not ready to be discarded. Sample blades are neatly examined, with Peter recommending no more than four patterns and sizes to cover almost every cutting requirement.

The importance of a good blade weld is discussed, with a useful demo using a hacksaw to illustrate beam strength. Choosing the correct

tooth size is neatly covered using a sprinkling of walnut sawdust to show how easily small gullets can become clogged on deep timber.

I'm probably not alone in retaining the same blade in my bandsaw for almost every sawing task. Rather than swapping it for a more appropriate width and tooth pattern, the teeth get blunt and cutting becomes inefficient. With knuckles suitably rapped, we move swiftly on!

### Bandsaw commissioning

I'd hazard a guess that few bandsaw guides or DVDs include how to check whether a bandwheel is correctly balanced or not. Peter explains how you can do this at the bench or on the saw itself with rare earth magnets, especially handy if you've bought an old machine that's seen better days. Again, not something that should be attempted unless you're having problems, but interesting all the same.

Finally, adjusting upper and lower blade guides are examined in detail, with tips on avoiding drift when cutting. Also tips on checking the fence for accuracy, with a brief look at after market bandsaw fences, too.

I almost missed the Extras section, which is a real bonus. Covering bandsaws for small

workshops, machine layout, dust extraction (in some depth), rust prevention and folding blades, there's some very useful information here.

If you're already familiar with Peter's style, you'll know what to expect: extremely clear instruction, professional camera work and everything carried out with safety being the first priority. This particular DVD would be perfect for novice woodworkers looking to buy their first machine, though there are gems here for the seasoned machinist, too. The full set of three bandsaw DVDs costs £49.97, which represents nearly six hours worth of viewing. Alternatively, you can buy them as digital downloads. A comprehensive guide indeed...



### THE VERDICT

Produced by Peter Sefton and Artisan Media

Price: £19.99

Web: [www.woodworkersworkshop.co.uk](http://www.woodworkersworkshop.co.uk)

Rating: 5 out of 5