Porter-Cable 371K Belt Sander

A smaller-than-usual group of woodworkers gathered at Johnny Jones’ shop in Boerne, a small community just west of San Antonio, Texas. The sparse turnout was probably due to the San Antonio Spurs NBA playoff game against Denver that evening (the Spurs won).

Johnny’s Monday evening group of woodworkers gathers each week to show what they have been working on, get advice on a problem or to just shoot the bull. The previous week, Mike Sauder, owner of the five Texas Woodcraft stores, brought a Porter-Cable 371K belt sander to the meeting and asked the group for an evaluation.

Chip Taute thought the sander looked like an armadillo, inspiring Johnny to give it bands with tape and glue on a pair of eyes. When I saw it, it did look remarkably like an armadillo, the state mammal of Texas.

“It is really well built, solid and compact,” remarked Joe Ripkin. “Larger sanders tend to dig in; this one doesn’t, even on the end of a board.”

“IT really fits in well in tight spaces, and with the proper dust collection system it is virtually dustless,” added Martin Addison.

“That tool would work very well to shape the legs of a rocker after they have been cut on a bandsaw,” Ron Wilde said. “You can hold the sander in one hand, as the molded rubber grip is excellent, and then manipulate the leg with the other.”

Ron felt that the on/off rocker switch was difficult to use and might be vulnerable to damage. Johnny disagreed.

“For $120 this is a great buy,” Johnny said. “It is very well built. Changing the belt couldn’t be easier and the tracking adjustment is excellent. I don’t know of anything on the market like it. I’m definitely getting one.”

— Jim Derby is president of the Kerr Arts & Cultural Center, sponsors of the Texas Furniture Makers Show
Guinevere Flexible-Shaft Sanding Tool

Let us begin by saying that we’ve been carving large chunks of wood into full-size wildlife creations since 1987, and have had 19 years to discover which tools we like. If a new tool doesn’t immediately perform better than whatever we are currently using, then we don’t see any reason to switch. We’re just funny in that way!

The Guinevere is one of those tools that in the first minute of usage you know it’ll be used until the tool dies. Over the next few years the Guinevere will help us create mountains of fine sawdust. This is a fine finishing and sanding tool with a flex shaft – a very smooth, quiet-running motor turning sanding attachments at the correct rpm. It has a pneumatic head for attaching a sanding sleeve. The cylinder sleeve worked nicely on flat areas as well as concave or convex curves. We used it for sanding muscle areas as well as the edges of boards. It worked on things as small as life-sized foxes and as large as a full-sized deer. We used it as a specialty tool in tight areas where other tools won’t reach. It’s not the only sanding tool you need, but it is great for special purposes. It is a nice thing to have in the shop arsenal. Any sanding tool that fits into a drill chuck will fit in this tool as well.

When reading the instructions about the Guinevere we had reservations about overworking the motor. The recommended operating time is only 15 minutes, followed by 15 minutes of resting time. Shoot – we don’t get that kind of working conditions in the shop. Why should our tools? But we found we very seldom worked the tool anywhere close to its 15 minutes of limited operating time. Now if you’re into production work this would become a serious drawback. But we’re picking it up, putting it down, and not running it for 15 straight minutes. It’s a keeper!

— John Garton and Joe Adkins carve for a living in Petersburg, W.Va.
FREE YEAR! 2 YEARS for $29.99!

Visit woodcraftmagazine.com and click SUBSCRIBE—or-
Complete the form below and mail in an envelope addressed to:
WOODCRAFT MAGAZINE
PO BOX 7020
PARKERSBURG WV 26102-9916

Payment Enclosed □ Bill Me □
Name ________________________________
Address ________________________________
City ___________________________ Zip __________
Country ________________________________
E-mail ________________________________

Send in now to get 2 Years for $29.99!

or go to woodcraftmagazine.com and click SUBSCRIBE

By providing my e-mail address, I am indicating I’d like to receive information about my subscription and other offers from Woodcraft Magazine via e-mail.

Outside of the U.S and Canada add $30 for postage.
Foreign orders must be prepaid. Payment in U.S. Funds only.