

# 14-in. Bandsaws

These popular models have the size to resaw very wide boards, but can they handle the load?



## Smooth cutter with power to spare

The Laguna LT14SE makes the most demanding curve and resaw cuts with ease. Fit and finish are excellent, with large knobs to adjust tension and tracking, though the table could use a bit more width to the right of the blade. The machine has no tension scale, so you have to test blade tension using a gauge or your finger. Ceramic guides offer support very close to the top of a workpiece. The insert plate is large, and its throat gives wide-open access to the lower guide adjusters, making blade changes easy as pie.



## Lots of features for a good price

The Grizzly G0457 has plenty of resaw power and capacity. The fit and finish are great. The wheel covers are hinged, and they slide off easily so you have greater access to the interior. Dust collection works well, though installing a blade is tough. The tension is easy to set and adjust, with an intuitive quick-release mechanism. The tracking knobs are a good size. The tall fence included with the saw slides smoothly, locks surely, and is great for resawing. Curve cuts were no problem, and resaw cuts were of fine quality.

The most recent generation of 14-in. bandsaws offers greater power and more resaw capacity than their fore-runners. Resawing means running a board on edge through the blade to slice off thinner pieces, and is the most trying task for a bandsaw.

We looked at eight machines with a minimum resaw capacity of 10 in. and with motors of at least 1½ hp. Some saws in this group, such as the Delta, General, Grizzly G0555X, Jet, and Powermatic, have the familiar cast-iron frames but with enclosed bases. Except for the General, all of the saws in this cast-iron family required a riser block to achieve the minimum resaw capacity for this review. The other saws—Grizzly G0457, Laguna, and Rikon—are European style, with welded steel frames and the full capacity built in.

### Close inspection of key components

Before the cutting tests, we took a close look at the essential components, check-

ing roundness of the wheels, table flatness, functionality of the fence, and guide-post alignment. Then we evaluated the ease with which you could change blades.

Fortunately, all of the machines had round wheels and cast-iron tables that were nearly dead-flat. All tilting mechanisms worked fine, too. The Grizzly saws have the best fences—heavy duty and tall for resawing. They slid smoothly, locked securely, and can be adjusted for blade drift.

**Guide-post alignment**—If the guide post, the rod that holds the upper guides, is significantly misaligned, either front to back or side to side, you'll have to fiddle with the guides and thrust bearing every time you move the post to keep the guides close to the workpiece. That's a time-killer. Fortunately, only three saws, the General, the Jet, and the Rikon, had noticeable guide-post alignment problems. The misalignment made moving the post fussier but didn't affect the overall performance of the saws.

### READERS' RATINGS: 14-IN. BANDSAWS

The editors' choice for best overall, the Laguna, also got the highest rating from readers. But the Grizzly G0457, rated best value by the editors, came in at the bottom of the pack. Readers gave the Powermatic their second-highest rating.

4.51	LAGUNA LT14SE
4.40	POWERMATIC PWBS-14CS
4.36	RIKON 10-325
4.11	GRIZZLY G0555X
4.08	GENERAL 690-1
3.99	DELTA 28-475X
3.87	JET JWBS-14DX
3.57	GRIZZLY G0457
Not Rated	STEEL CITY 50100

### Cutting tests gauge capacity and power

We did a series of cutting tests in hard maple, both curve cuts and resaw cuts. For consistency, we used the same brand of ½-in., 3-tpi, skip-tooth blade in each machine for the gradual curves and for the

resawing, and a ¼-in., 6-tpi, hook-tooth blade for the tight curves.

First, we cut gradual curves along the length of a ¾-in.-thick board; then we made tighter, more demanding cuts, 2 in. and 1¼ in. dia. All of the saws did OK or better in the curve-cutting tests, with the Grizzly G0457, the Laguna, and the Powermatic the smoothest cutters.

To gauge resaw ability, we resawed ½-in.-thick boards as well as ⅛-in.-thick slices from a 10-in.-wide, 12-in.-long hard maple blank. The General, Grizzly G0457, and Laguna saws cut the fastest and with excellent results. □

Thomas McKenna and John White contributed to this article.

### Online Extra

For a video close-up of our tests and favorite features, go to [FineWoodworking.com/TG2009](http://FineWoodworking.com/TG2009).

MODEL/SOURCE	STREET PRICE	MOTOR	RESAW CAPACITY	GUIDES/THRUST	GUIDE ADJUSTMENTS	BLADE CHANGES	QUALITY OF RESAW CUTS	RESAW SPEED
DELTA 28-475X www.deltaportercable.com	\$900	1½ hp, 115v	11¾ in.	Steel blocks/bearing	Upper: easy Lower: difficult	Very difficult	Poor	Poor
GENERAL 690-1 www.general.ca	\$3,300	1½ hp, 230v	12½ in.	Double bearing/ bearing	Upper: easy Lower: difficult	Very easy	Excellent	Excellent
GRIZZLY G0457 www.grizzly.com	\$825	2 hp, 110v	10¾ in.	Double bearing/ bearing	Upper: very easy Lower: difficult	Difficult	Good	Excellent
GRIZZLY G0555X www.grizzly.com	\$575	1½ hp, 110v	12½ in.	Bearing/bearing	Upper: very easy Lower: easy	Easy	Good	Good
JET JWBS-14DX www.jettools.com	\$745	1½ hp, 115v	12½ in.	Graphite-impregnated blocks/bearing	Upper: very easy Lower: easy	Easy	Good	Very good
LAGUNA LT14SE www.lagunatools.com	\$1,500	2 hp, 220v	12 in.	Ceramic blocks/ ceramic block	Upper: easy Lower: easy	Very easy	Excellent	Excellent
POWERMATIC PWBS-14CS www.powermatic.com	\$1,044	1½ hp, 110v	12 in.	Double bearing/ bearing	Upper: very easy Lower: easy	Easy	Very good	Good
RIKON 10-325 www.rikontools.com	\$850	1½ hp, 115v	13¾ in.	Bearing/bearing	Upper: difficult Lower: difficult	Very difficult	Good	Good
STEEL CITY 50100 www.steelcitytoolworks.com	\$700	1½ hp, 115v	12 in.	Double bearing/ bearing	Upper: easy Lower: difficult	Easy	Good	Good