

Steel City 13" Planer is a Solid Contender

The new Steel City Tool Works machines we've tested have been solid tools with few frills at a fair price. And the company's newest 13" portable planer, the 40200, fits in well with the company's other products.

The 40200 has features that woodworkers need, including a three-knife cutterhead, quick-change knives and two feed speeds, plus a \$399 price tag that makes it a good value among other 13" planers. Of all the merits of the machine, the one we think is most important is the three-knife cutterhead. Our experiences with three-knife machines have shown they produce a nice surface finish for a longer time because the blade wear is spread out over three knives instead of two.

Not that changing knives on the 40200 is difficult. The two-sided disposable blades drop in on pins – it takes 15 minutes to change all three. Another key feature about the knives: You can adjust them left and right to cancel out any nicks that appear on your knives.

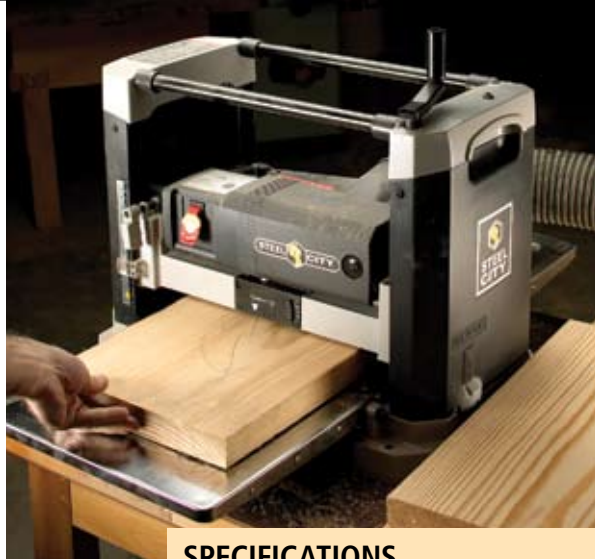
We've run a couple hundred board feet of hardwoods and softwoods through the planer to see how gutsy the motor is, how nice the

surface finish is and to see how much snipe was created at the ends of boards. The motor was fine – you're never going to get induction-motor power out of a universal motor in any portable planer. The surface finish was excellent at both feed speeds (16 and 23 feet per minute). And the snipe was acceptable – a few thousandths of an inch of thickness. You can sand that out with ease.

There's no cutterhead lock, which some woodworkers like but we don't think is a do-or-die feature. Like on all portable planers, we wish the polyurethane infeed roller was grippier. It wouldn't grab the boards firmly when it got dirty. All in all, if you really want a three-knife cutterhead and two speeds with a good price, this is a tool for the top of your list. **PW**

—CS

For more information, circle # 158 on Free Information Card.



SPECIFICATIONS

Steel City 40200 13" Planer

Street price: \$399

Replacement blades: \$57

Warranty: 5 years

Weight: 66 pounds

Performance: ●●●●○

Price range: \$\$\$

Steel City: 615-225-9001 or

steelcitytoolworks.com