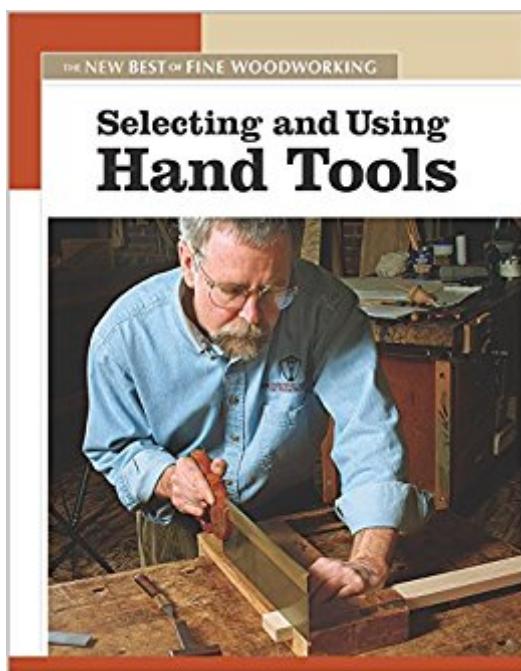


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Selecting And Using Hand Tools: The New Best Of Fine Woodworking



Synopsis

From the editors of America's leading woodworking magazine. Hand tools range from a simple ruler to complex planes, and with a well-chosen complement it is possible to accomplish any task in woodworking. This collection of 28 of the best articles from "Fine Woodworking" covers all you need to know about hand tools, from choosing the right ones for the job, to marking and measuring, using chisels, sharpening edge tools and saws, and essential hand-tool techniques.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Fine Woodworking has been publishing the best woodworking information for small shop woodworkers since 1975.

Yes, this is a well-written book. Like all Taunton publications, it has great photos, clear casual English, and lots of useful information for neophytes. Because I am slowly replacing all of my tools that were stolen, I needed specific information: resources for buying bargain tools. This book is not good for that purpose because much information is not current. Several of the resources do not have web-sites (Joseph Co- purveyors of the cheap Eberle saw) and some resources (like Misugi Design) are now defunct. Also, prices are from 1998 or earlier articles, which means they are not even close to our post-Bushian inflationary prices. The editing is not up-to-date. Much of the

"taunt-ed info" inside this tome is recycled from Fine Woodworking articles (Get it? Taunton Taunted! ha! ;-)) As a FW subscriber I found most of it redundant... stuff I already knew or had seen previously. One good thing about this book is in the first chapter, page 8. Mario Rodriguez shows a table with his portable hand-tool selection. For woodworking-newcomers, this is an excellent description of a versatile, complete hand-tool collection. For experienced woodworkers, especially those who are seduced by "latest-power-tool lust," this single page shows you a world of hand-powered, skill-building tools that can accomplish any woodworking task. You will save thousands, be a better craftsman and be less of a slave to the power company if you follow his advice. For those who already know this, the information serves as a hand-tool inventory-list, nothing more. Another great little section is J. Petrovich's terse two-page treatise: "Making a chisel from a file." (Pages 140-141) This is in the chapter, "making your own tools," edited by Asa Christiana. Because my dad was born in 1898, he had to know how to make his own tools from necessity, so I already learned tool-making and modification from him. To qualify my praise for this small section of the book, I can bore you with this fact: My dad made HUNDREDS of specialized cutting-tools from files during his lifetime. I have made numerous cutting tools from files myself. I think Mr. Petrovich's elegantly simple treatment of this crucial subject is the most concise and understandable I have seen in print. It is worth the price of the volume for those who don't know, simply because tools are SO expensive nowadays, any practical woodworker MUST learn how to make at least some of his own. Working with specialized homemade tools is deeply satisfying, environmentally-sound and eminently practical. MANY times, it is IMPOSSIBLE to buy the exact tool you need, so making tools is the only option. If you have never used a chisel (or knife) made from the steel of an old file, you will be shocked the first time you do. Files are VERY hard high-carbon steel that can take and edge and hold it well. Mr. Petrovich describes a simple tempering technique using your kitchen oven. He gives suggestions on how to shape your chisel with common grinders and other files, then shows an easy method for making and attaching a handle. It may seem surprising, but you can make a wonderful chisel in about ten minutes. (excluding the time for tempering) It takes me longer to drive to a store, search through the selection, drive home, then sharpen a new chisel. When you consider the price of good new chisels and the price of old files, you can see how this one chapter could save you MANY times the price of the book. The cost for modifying files is mere pennies. The drive to a tool-store can cost more in gas! This book has the typical suggestions for acquiring bargain hand-tools: flea-markets, auctions, etc. Good luck with that... In my experience, it takes a certain mean character to vie for bargains at flea markets, garage sales and auctions. You have to contend with the elbows of penurious competitors, some of whom

act desperate and rude. Estate-sales often have a moribund air filled with opportunistic bargain-vultures. And if there is a modestly collectible item, sagacious sellers often behave as if they are offering rare gems instead of working-tools. Bidding frenzies sometimes ensue, pushing prices far out of reach for real crafts-people who want the tool's utility, not pride-of-ownership. With VERY FEW exceptions, (exactly Three) I have not seen any great used-tool values at flea markets or auctions in the last twenty years. It seems the hobby of collecting woodworking relics has been usurped by baby-boomers who drive collectible-prices up and useful-value down. You will spend more time and money traveling to auctions and markets than it costs to buy good new tools, so except for aggressive tool-smitten aficionados, that avenue is largely fruitless. One sound bit of advice in here: keep a running list of tools you need, so that you know what to ask prospective sellers. Often, you can stay within budget if you apply the discipline of "targeted buying," thereby avoiding "impulse" items. Too much emphasis is on the expensive tools (Lie-Nielsen,) or overpriced boutique tools for collectors (Bridge-City) and not enough options are listed for budget-minded practical woodworkers. The prose does not say this as such, however the overwhelming photographic evidence in this tome gives one the impression that all good woodworkers must own only expensive name-brand tools. That is definitely not true. Witness this fact: The world's best, most valuable, collectible and useful woodwork was done over a century ago. This is not just because these items are old. It is because all these articles of furniture or instruments were made by CRAFTSMEN; people who understood wood and tools. MOST of the tools these old-world craftsmen used were made by themselves, or by a small handful of craftsmen at superior hand-tool companies. Absolutely ALL of the tools they used were adjusted, tuned, and sharpened by themselves. Many of the world's most prized / collectible woodworking items came from journeymen tools in the hands of experienced craftsmen. Old Stanley / Record planes and chisels were not the best, but they were inexpensive common tools that real craftsmen knew how to adjust and use. THAT is why there were millions of them floating around in our grandfathers' garages. Those common-grade tools built America, then were quickly replaced by power tools when economic pressure and cheap-power made speed more profitable than skill. The fact is, a knowledgeable craftsman can get great results buying less-expensive planes, chisels and saws if he knows how to sharpen and tune them, then build / use appropriate jigs. This book contains some of that information, but its focus is too commercially-driven and resource information is out-of-date. If you don't know how to make tools, the short chapter has good basic advice, but except for the chisel-making part, is shallow and incomplete. Still that may be worth the price of the book for some. Therefore, I can recommend this book for beginning woodworkers. It also shows practical

alternatives to those bitten by the pricey power-tool bug. For those seeking resources for buying hand-tools, this book is out-of-date and incomplete. It focuses on the "Golly! ...you too can be an old-time woodworker if you buy our featured advertiser's products." It is just another repackaged collection of previously published FW articles with many pretty pictures of premium-brand tools. Popularized advice for finding bargains at flea-markets, auctions or estate-sales is generally useless. If you are an experienced professional or knowledgeable hobbyist, almost all the advice herein is redundant or out-of-date. SO...IF you are not an experienced woodworker, IF you are not a Fine Woodworking subscriber, or IF you don't yet know much about hand-tools, then this is a good book.

Fabulous book, containing probably some of the best shop wisdom from excellent sources. Not to be missed are Mario Rodriguez's notes on rasping, notes on old handplanes, and J.Crate Larkin's bowsaw design, which is an absolute masterstroke of design. A book that is not to be missed for all serious woodworkers!

The latest in the "New Best of Fine Woodworking" series, which collects the best articles from recent issues of "Fine Woodworking" magazine, Selecting And Using Hand Tools teaches the reader about buying the best tools, essential techniques such as four-squaring and using a marking knife in accurate joinery, applying edged tools or handsaws, getting the most out of tools for shaping and modifying, and much more. Diagrams and full-color photographs on every page walk the reader through procedures step-by-step, and the text explains hands-on tasks in easy-to-follow terms. An excellent resource for hands-on woodworkers of all skill and experience levels, from novice to advanced.

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