

BUDGET OSCILLATING BOBBIN SANDER REVIEWED

I have been a fan of TV woodworking programmes for some time and must have seen every episode of *New Yankee Workshop* that has been shown in the UK.

I have found it most interesting to see how Norm Abrams' workshop has evolved over the years, and it is comforting to know that he has not always had the machinery he has now. He started with a mortising attachment fitted to his drill press and, like me, had a small drum sander which also fitted into the drill press. He eventually upgraded to a dedicated morticer and, instead of the small drill-mounted drum sander, he now has an oscillating bobbin sander. I had coveted this particular machine for some while, but even a small machine was beyond my limited budget so I coped with what I had.

However, things have now changed. Surfing the internet recently, I came across a bobbin sander that would not break the bank – the Charnwood W420 oscillating bobbin sander.

The machine has a tilting table, comes with three bobbins, with loadings and table inserts, a pair of spanners for bobbin changing, dust extraction port and a 24-month guarantee. All this for £169 inc VAT and delivery (mainland UK).

I certainly have not seen a machine, either here or in the USA, with that sort of spec at anything approaching that price. It was an offer I could not refuse...

When the box arrived, the first thing that struck me was the weight. At 33kg it is not exactly a lightweight machine, and on unpacking it I found out why. The table itself is 365 x 365mm (14 3/8 x 14 3/8 in) and is cast iron. The body of the sander is made from heavy-gauge sheet steel and the whole thing has a rugged feel to it. The only fitting that needed to be done was the four rubber feet, a task that was accomplished in just a few minutes.

Once the feet were on and the machine sitting on a bench I found out how simple it is to change the bobbin. Two spanners are supplied with the sander and it is just a matter of holding the



Charnwood W420 oscillating bobbin sander...



... and table inserts



Ready to start sanding

motor spindle with one and screwing the bobbin down with the other. The only thing to remember is that the bobbins are left-hand thread. As the bobbin spindle has a taper, the bobbin must be tightened snugly so it rotates truly. The bobbins that accompany the machine are 21, 38 and 51mm (1 1/8, 1 1/2 and 2-in), and three other sizes are available from the manufacturer, as are replacement loadings.



Results are equally good whether work is placed against it or over the top...

In use

The machine is quiet thanks to its induction motor, and made short work of sanding curves on a recent project.

It sat quite happily on my bench and showed no tendency to creep, although it is my intention to build a mobile base for it as a matter of urgency. Dust extraction is via the 50mm (2in) port to the rear of the machine.

I have not used the tilt 'in anger' yet, but the system seems fairly substantial, with two locking screws, a protractor scale and an adjusting screw to set the table at 90° – although when I checked, the factory setting was fine.

I have no experience of using other similar machines so I cannot make comparisons but I find the Charnwood easy to operate and it does a great job. I feel certain that this machine will be a very useful addition to my workshop.



This model does a thoroughly satisfactory sanding job



To cope with panel cutting, I extended the size of my saw table with a home-made extension table



To get a square end, place one edge of the panel against the fence and run it through the saw. Note that the guard is removed for clarity



Fit the router table with a 19mm straight cutting bit...