

repairs. I am 81 and previously purchased 3 new half-ton Chevy pickups that never got more than 100,000 miles before the transmissions would fail after pulling various trailers."

David Traver Adolphus, Bennington, Vt.: "I've been well-pleased with my Stihl FS 56 RC string trimmer bought 2 years ago. I was worried because I had several Stihl chainsaws years ago and they were always hard starters. This trimmer has no problem at all firing up and has plenty of power. I always use ethanol-free gas in all 2-stroke equipment, which helps them achieve maximum power. Plus the gas is far more stable if it's going to sit for a while."

Kevin Cox, Tioga, La.: Kevin's the satisfied owner of a 2015 Chevrolet 2500 pickup equipped with a Duramax diesel engine and Allison transmission. "It had only one minor problem when the DEF tank heater quit working, but the dealer promptly repaired it under warranty. This pickup consistently got more than 20 mpg and pulled heavy loads with ease. At about 143,000 miles I traded it for a 2018 model just like it."

"My 2005 Kubota 3830 4-WD tractor equipped with a Bush Hog front-end loader has been almost trouble-free. It has a lot of power and the loader works well. The battery lasted until 2018. I've never had a battery last that long in any other equipment."

"I like my 2006 Exmark Lazer Z 60-in. zero-turn riding mower equipped with a Kohler engine. Over the years I've owned 5 other zero-turn mower brands - Bush Hog, Grasshopper, Bad Boy, Hustler, and Woods - but this one outperforms all of them."

"My dad bought his 1997 GM Z71 pickup in the fall of 1996, and I got it from him the fall of 1997 when he traded for a new model. I've put more than 200,000 miles on this pickup, but the engine still doesn't use any oil and the transmission has never been touched. It has gone through several electric fuel pumps and numerous sets of brakes and rotors. I've used it to pull very heavy loads, some more than 10,000 lbs., with no problems. I wish I could buy a new pickup just like this one."

He's had problems with his 2015 Retrax retractable pickup bed cover. "Gallons of water leaked into the bed. One time my portable toolbox slid forward while I was braking, and it dented the tray that the bed cover rolls up into. That made it difficult to open and close. That tray should be out of the way of shifting cargo."

Glenn Dawson, McConnelville, Ohio: Glenn nominates his 1989 Kubota 5200 4-WD tractor with full hydraulics, pto, and 3-pt. hitch as his "best buy". "I use this tractor with a front-mount blade and belly-mount 48-in. mower, as well as other attachments that I've built for it. My only expense was to rebuild the blade lift cylinder and replace the front tires. This tractor is like one of the family. I love it."

Jim Ruen, La Crescent, Minn.: "The cordless, portable metal band saw from Makita was a great addition to my shop. While I have multiple metal cutting tools, both corded and cordless, this little band saw beats them all for anything under 2 1/2 in. It is smoother than a reciprocating saw without the noise or sparks of an angle grinder. It also leaves a smaller kerf."

"When I first got it, I put it through its paces, cutting a wide variety of materials. It sliced through pipes, conduits, tube steel and rebar, stuff that I'm likely to cut on a regular basis. It even sliced a chunk off a 1/4-in. thick I-beam. Pvc and softer metal were even easier. The 630-ft./min. blade speed makes



quick work of most steel.

"One use that I really appreciated was cutting old steel used in a concrete foundation that I was breaking up. I was able to get within a couple of inches of the chunk of concrete and slice off the rusty square tubing."

"The adjustable stopper plate makes it easy to line up the tool with the object being cut and helps ensure a straight cut. While knurled bolts would make it easier to adjust the plate, the hex-wrench needed is secured on the body of the saw."

"Changing out the saw blades is easy, but expensive, at 5 blades for around \$49 for Makita replacements."

"Properly adjusting the blade track with the previously mentioned hex-wrench is vital. Other than blade adjustment, no tools are needed for blade change."

"Like the other 200 Makita cordless tools, the metal band saw is powered by an 18-volt lithium ion battery."

"With so many tools coming in plastic housing, the aluminum housing is appreciated."

"Like most cordless tools, the price isn't bad if you already have a battery and charger. Bare tools go for around \$240, while the full kit can be had for around \$411 on Amazon.com."

Mike Bellmer, Cotati, Calif.: "I like my 2009 Ellis 1600 portable metal-cutting bandsaw much better than the chop saw I had been using (www.ellisaw.com; ph 800 383-5547). This is a dry saw with no messy water-based oil to deal with and it works



automatically, which saves a lot of time. It automatically shuts off when it's done with the job, so I can just 'set it and forget it'. I've used it on everything from 4-in. stainless steel tubing to 8-in. schedule 40 pipe, which I use to build ranch gates for friends and neighbors. My daughter and son-in-law recently finished building a big arena, and all the gates inside it were made with this saw."

"This saw works great for cutting at a 45-degree angle which adds strength, makes the gates look neat and professional, and doesn't leave any open ends exposed to the weather."

"The saw comes with a small hydraulic cylinder that I use to adjust the blade down pressure. As a result, I can slow the saw down when cutting very hard material or open it up when cutting schedule 80 pipe."

"This saw is also very accurate. I've made 1,500 to 2,000 cuts with this saw and all of them were accurate down to 1/32 of an inch. I can make repetitive cuts with the saw, and



The 44-in. deck on the Path Slayer rotary cutter can be set at 11 different positions.

Best Buy Rotary Cutter

Mack Myers, Kirbyville, Texas: "My 2018 Modern Ag Products loader-mounted, Path Slayer rotary cutter, designed to clear overgrown roadways and ditch banks, is built tough and works great (www.modernusa.com; ph 800 231-8198)."

"I use this cutter with my Kubota 70 hp. 4-WD tractor to clear small trees and grass around my pond and along a roadside ditch. It'll easily cut up to 3-in. dia. tree limbs, brush, and saplings, as well as tall grass. I also use it to trim several tall hedges growing next to our house. It works fast."

"The Path Slayer attaches with a pin-style system and operates off tractor hydraulics. The 44-in. deck can be set at 11 different positions which allows it to cut vertically, offset, directly in front (level), or at a 25, 35 or 45 degree angle in both the vertical and offset positions."

"The Path Slayer weighs just under 580 lbs. To offset that weight I made a 3-pt. mounted, 750-lb. counterweight out of a bunch of 35-lb. cement blocks I already had. The blocks



To offset the weight of the Path Slayer, Myers made a 3-pt. mounted, 750-lb. counterweight out of 35-lb. cement blocks.

set on a homemade steel frame I made by cutting off part of an old car travel trailer and beeing it up with some angle iron and flat steel. I also attached a 3-pt. carrier. To contain the blocks, I welded several flat bars onto the frame that go up and over the blocks."

"I also use this counterweight with my loader bucket and forks. I like it better than any counterweight I've ever seen."

45-degree angle cuts to the left or right.

"I paid about \$1,300 for this saw which is quite expensive, so I gave it a lot of thought before I bought it. In my opinion a chop saw is nothing but a fire hazard because of all the smoke and dust it creates. The only reason I keep my chop saw around is to cut hydraulic hose."

"In my opinion, a chop saw is nothing but a fire hazard."

"My son-in-law is a horseshoe farrier and uses my saw to build farrier's tools. He likes it, too."



David Parker, Carver, Mass.: Just about everything is original on David's 1987 WheelHorse 312A riding mower equipped with a Kohler Magnum 12 hp. engine and a 42-in. deck, including the spark plug and tires. The belts have been replaced once.

"It has almost 1,000 hrs. on it. I change the oil every 25 hrs.," says Dave. "I keep two

complete sets of blades for it and sharpen both sets of blades the first thing every spring. The blades have greasable spindles, which I lubricate every time I use the mower."

He is also happy with his WheelHorse 1054 garden tractor equipped with a 10 hp. Kohler engine. "Everything on this tractor is original, including the lugged rear tires. The company only built this model in 1964 and 1965. I use it in our garden with a single bottom plow, disk harrow, and springtooth harrow. I also pull a small cart behind it."



Jamison Fox, Pecatonica, Ill.: He likes the 2-year VETCo loader-mounted, quick-tach hopper he bought 2 years ago (www.veteranequipment.com; ph 636 233-0644). It measures 67 in. long, 52 in. tall, and 55 in. deep.

"I saved a lot of money compared to other brands, and it's built heavy to stand up to tough use," says Fox. "It's big enough to pick up large quantities of brush and wood, yet is lightweight enough that my Kubota 35 hp. tractor can handle it."

The company says the hopper can handle

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