



Tommy Scott, Goldthwaite, Texas: "I've been pleased with **Wheeler Engineering** (www.wheelertools.com; ph 833-784-5523). They make tools for gunsmithing and other things. When I was gunsmithing, I bought several different tools and sets, including an 89-piece hex driver/screwdriver set, a 36-piece hex driver set, a FAT mini torque driver, a magnetic scope leveling set, and a deluxe scope leveling set. I did a lot of rifle, pistol, and AR work, but my 'specialty' ended up being shotguns because they're generally not taken care of, and I've seen more in the field than other firearms. I worked on a lot of guns that were in bad shape. I ended up breaking lots of tools and bits. Eleven of the bits were from Wheeler. I finally contacted them about buying replacements. Even though I'd had the sets for 10 years, Bryan at Wheeler sent me replacements for free. He sent 27 bits in total. Replacements for the replacements if I ever get my FFL again. I highly recommend Wheeler products and thank Bryan and everyone at Wheeler Engineering."



Alan Linda, New York Mills, Minn.: "I bought a cordless pruner on Amazon thinking it was a DeWalt, but when I got it, I realized it only uses DeWalt batteries. It's actually from **TOCITAA**. I was ready to be disappointed, but now, after pruning 50 apple trees, I'm happy. I expected it to be slow, but it's speedy. I appreciate not having to drag out an 8-hp. air compressor and 50 ft. of airline to run pneumatic pruning shears.

"Another recent pleasing purchase is my **Milwaukee** Fuel 1/2-in. drive impact hammer. Before I got it, I broke three pieces of socket equipment trying to loosen the factory-torqued wheel nuts on my new Bobcat skid steer. The Fuel didn't even blink while loosening the nuts."

John Larson, Hancock, Mich.: "My wife and I have enjoyed making maple syrup as a hobby, and we'd been using camp stoves fired with propane for our small production. We decided to go with a wood-fired evaporator since propane costs were quite high. We did some research and chose **Smoky Lake Maple Products** (www.smokylakemaple.com; ph 920-202-4500). Out of the many options they offered, the evaporator model we thought would meet our needs was the

Dauntless. Their service is terrific. The instructions for assembling were clear, and the assembly process was a fun part of the experience. The quality and performance of the Dauntless evaporator are amazing. **Smoky Lake Maple Products** is a great business to deal with, and we highly recommend them if you want to make some maple syrup and great memories!"

Kent and Faye Frerichs, Wilmot, S.D.: "Our best buy is a **Kubota Z422** 60-in. mower. This zero-turn lawn mower has a powerful Kawasaki motor and a responsive hydrostatic drive. The easily adjusted seat is extremely comfortable and provides a smooth ride, even over rough terrain. It has a durable roll bar that can be easily lowered around trees. The deck height can be readily adjusted with an accurate dial. The three cutting blades proved evenly distributed grass clippings. A handy fuel level sight gauge is a thoughtful addition for operator convenience. This ZTR mower has many advantages over competitors. Faye loves to do our mowing with this Kubota."

Charles Bowen, Valley City, N.D.: "I bought an **X-Pro Hawk 250** motorcycle off Amazon after my old Honda conked out to have something to ride while I fixed the Honda. It was \$1,750 with free shipping. I swapped out the sprockets to make it a little more road-worthy. I also put universal tread tires on. It gets about 90 mpg. It's a great bike."

Charles isn't happy with **DeWalt** adapters for 20-volt lithiums for his drill and driver. "The lithiums will go dead whether you use them or not and don't last nearly as long as the old 18V."

John Marquardt, Wittenberg, Wis.: "I've been doing business with **TimberKing Portable Sawmills** for 30 years (www.timberking.com; ph 888-964-8187). I started with the 1200 model for my own lumber and custom sawing for others. I then went to the 1220 when it came out. I sold them both locally for more than I paid when they were new. This was after at least 5 years of use.

"For the last 7 years, I've been using the new 1400 model, which has a hydraulic head lift and hydraulic feed for forward and reverse. This portable band mill makes very little sawdust.

"I've been pleased with TimberKing, as they treat you like family. The company began as Belsaw Mills and has made portable sawmills in the USA since 1929. They stand behind their products, which are 'built like a tank.'"

Norman Westers, Buffalo, S.D.: "My **Milwaukee M18** Redlithium 1/2-in. drill is my best buy. It's been about 12 years since I bought it, and it's still going strong. My three DeWalt regular-style batteries have long since died."

Eddie Schrock, Augusta, Wis.: "I agree with **Clifton L. Martin's** nomination of **U-Line Deluxe Pallet Trucks** as best buys (Vol. 47, No. 6). They work great except when pulling heavy loads. I removed the big and small wheels and replaced them with nylon wheels, which are much easier to pull. I think U-Line would benefit from offering poly or nylon wheels."

Gary Pennock, Great Bend, N.Y.: "In Vol. 48, No. 2, **Elias Wolf** reported he wasn't happy with **AAA** roadside assistance partially because of the towing policy. What he reported is for the basic plan. He might be happier with **AAA Plus**, which covers up to 100 miles of towing four times per year. I've been very pleased with the Plus-level towing."

Clinton Pence, Mitchell, S.D.: "I've had zero troubles with my 2016 **Toyota**

Work Boot Best Buy

Jim Ruen, La Crescent, Minn.: "KEEN work boots and their online store have earned my best buy nomination. Both are impressive.

"I liked the looks of the 8-in. Camden work boots with their carbon-fiber toes. I spend enough time working with heavy logs and rocks that I value toe and foot protection. The carbon-fiber toes are lighter than the steel-toe boots I used to prefer.

"The Camdens are oil and slip-resistant, which is important to me...no broken body parts are needed. They're also EH-resistant should I step on one of my 'should-be-thrown-out' extension cords.

"The treads are designed to give me the traction I need on my steep slopes, especially in wet, slippery conditions. The only downside is it can be hard not to carry bits of gravel into the house.

"The boots claim to be waterproofed while still letting moisture escape. After a couple of months, I still haven't walked through water to test their waterproofing.

"While I could see all the product claims mentioned above on the website, I didn't see the lace retention. I love it. The boots have hook/eyelet combinations for the upper two-thirds of the boot. You can use either or some combination, such as hooks for most of the way and then eyelets at the end for the most secure fastening.

"For the most part, I just use the hooks. Unlike most hooks that secure laces, these are turned down on the ends to capture the laces. They also extend farther down than any other boot I've seen. This means the boot is loose and easily removed when you've unhooked the laces. It may be a little thing, but it's welcome after a long day of hard work in my boots.

"I don't like ordering online if I can find a store with workers who know the product and



Ruen likes his KEEN work boots for their performance and the company's customer service.

how to fit it. That seems harder and harder to find. It was easy to access when I checked out the KEEN online store. I wasn't sure about sizes, so I ordered a 10 1/2 regular and a 10 1/2 wide. The wide was too wide, so I sent it back at no cost.

"Where the company really surprised me was later in the day, after dropping the boots off at UPS, an email arrived. The company had already credited me for the return. I was impressed. Some companies can take weeks to credit a return. KEEN really stands out, just like their boots."

Editor's Note: I put a lot of steps in at shows in different conditions. My go-to shoe for shows is the KEEN Targhee waterproof shoe. They hold up well and keep feet dry and comfortable all day long. -S.G.

Highlander Limited with 3.5 engine and AWD. The only thing I've done is put on a set of tires."

Clinton had a negative experience with his **Stihl BG 50** blower with a gas and oil mix engine. "It was nearly always hard to start. I got so tired of it that I gave it away to a mechanic and let him tinker with it. The Stihl dealer I bought it from told me it would be 6 mos. before they could even look at it. I bought a cordless electric blower. No more problems with starting."

David Pyle, Howard City, Mich.: "Over the years, I've acquired and used several **Deere** implements, including square balers and haybines. When they work, they work very well. But when they break, the parts are more expensive, and the help I get from the service department is atrocious. The service mechanic came out to work on my square baler three times, and it still wasn't working as it should, despite getting charged for every service call. I can't prove it, but based on parts costs, I'm pretty sure they used "gold-plated" parts. I finally gave up after the service department said it would be 4 to 6 weeks before they could get him back to look at it (again).

"I drove down to the New Holland dealer, bit the bullet, and bought a brand new NH 5060 square baler with hydraulic tensioning. This baler works like it should, and my only regret is not doing it years earlier.

"I've sold off everything I have with green paint on it to avoid returning to the Deere store. I understand that I'm not a 'big' farmer that spends tens or hundreds of thousands of dollars on the maintenance of my equipment each year, but the service I received (or didn't

receive) from the Deere dealer was horrible."

Amos Kutz, Christiansburg, Va.: "I'm very satisfied with my **DeWalt 18-volt** drill and impact wrench. The batteries have excellent longevity and hold a charge when in storage or during non-use periods."

On the negative side is his Kobalt drill-operated auger for plumbing clogged pipes. "It didn't perform the way it should. It developed tension on the cable and twisted uncontrollably. It also flicked greasy debris all over, making an unbelievable mess. Not worth the money. I returned it to Lowe's for a full refund."

Pat and Rich Hinderman, Cuba City, Wis.: "Tea Mender Fabric & Leather Adhesive is the best (www.teamender.com; ph 800-552-8252). When we moved to the farm, I was constantly patching jeans and overalls. A farm store helper showed me this glue, and I've used it for over 45 years now. It goes on easily; apply to the patch piece and article to fix and press them together. It outlasts the jeans. It's great for vinyl and leather. You can fix shoe heels and soles, pants hems, and more. It's even fixed my camper tears."

Stephen Zonies, Waitsfield, Vt.: Stephen is the satisfied owner of a DR walk-behind trimmer with attachments. "It starts on the



Continued on next page