

## ASK THE MAN WHO OWNS ONE

# "Owner's Report" On High Pressure Washers

Are you satisfied with the performance of your high-pressure washer? What could the manufacturer do to improve your pressure washer? What do you think is the optimum level of pressure? Have you modified your pressure washer in any way?

These are some of the questions we asked owners of pressure washers in an effort to highlight those pressure washers that perform with flying colors and to pinpoint "lemons" that fail because of poor performance or failure of the dealer or company to provide service.

### Here's how the survey shaped up:

"I'm not happy with our 1000 psi Clarke-Delco hot and cold portable pressure washer because you can't use soap with it at high pressures. The soap injector works only at very low pressures of around 50 psi. We use it primarily for cleaning up farm machinery and trucks. Other than our problems with the soap, it works well," says Gerald Van Zyl, Montevideo, Minn.

"I used to use hot water but it made so much steam when cleaning farrowing houses that I couldn't see what I was doing. Now I use a 1986 Aqua Blast 2,000 psi cold water sprayer and it does a good job (Aqua Blast Co., Rt. 4, Box 366, Decatur, Ind. 46733). I've had little trouble," says John W. Johnson, Columbia City, Ind., who's been pleased with the three Aqua Blast units he's owned over the years. "One problem is that the nozzle, which is adjustable for different spray patterns, gets stuck after a short time and is no longer adjustable. I also think the soap and disinfectant injector should be more reliable."

Harry Nyenhuis, Albert Lea, Minn., has had good luck with his 1989 1,000 psi Deere 118 cold water washer. "It takes dirt, oil and grease off machinery with no problems. I've also used it to take paint off the house. Have not seen any jobs that it does poorly. It only weighs 65 lbs. so it's easy to move around. The only change it needs is a longer handle so you wouldn't bump your heels when pulling it and so that you would not have to stoop so much."

Walter H. Cook, Livermore, Kent., bought a hot and cold 1,000 psi pressure washer from Central Tractor Co. (P.O. Box 3330, Des Moines, Iowa 50316) that he says works well. "It works fine for washing mud off tractors and for cleaning up combines. I use only the cold water. One improvement it could use is to put cotter pins and washers on axle instead of caps to hold wheels on."

"I liked the low \$460 price as well as the performance of my 1989 pressure washer from Northern Hydraulics (P.O. Box 1499, Burnsville, Minn. 55337). It's got a Briggs & Stratton 5-hp. engine and a Hypro 8600 1,500 psi pump, both American-made, and uses up to 140° water. I like the variable-pressure nozzle and the soap injector included with the washer. I've never used a hot water washer but the warm water lets me easily clean off most grease and oil. One suggestion is that you should get more than 20 ft. of hose with the unit. I recommend at least 50 ft.," says Jim King, Mt. Sterling, Ohio. "I haven't had it long enough to test the durability but the pump has a 2-year warranty and I know Briggs & Stratton engines are built very well. One modification I made was to add a house-size water filter to the pump inlet for a cost of only \$15."

"I use hot water for grease and oil, and cold water for dirt and mud. Cold water works best inside buildings because it doesn't get steamy like hot water," says F.

J. Kutt, Canton, Ohio, who put together his own 1,000 psi 1-hp. electric-powered pressure washer. The washer consists of a 1 hp. GE electric motor, a 4-piston Hypro pump, a wand with shutoff valves, a 30-ft. high pressure hose and an "unloader" valve.

Leonard Heck, Belfield, N. Dak., likes his 1981 "Liquid Brush" 650 psi pressure washer from Britt-Tech Corp. (Box 216, Britt, Iowa 50423). "It has been trouble-free and doesn't need any improvement. We use it to wash vehicles, tractors, engines. Works good on everything."

"I'm satisfied with my 1988 Alkota portable cold-and-steam pressure washer that's set at 1,200 psi but could be increased to 1,400 psi. (Alkota Cleaning Systems, P.O. Box 158, Alcester, S. Dak. 57001). It's used on cars, pickups, tractors, balers and anything else we need. If I were in the market I'd buy another one, especially since the service is so good. The hot water really gets things clean, and hot water works even better with soap," says Bob Worm, Stanford, Mont.

"Hot water with soap does fine with most equipment but you need a steam cleaner to really cut through the grease of diesel engines," says Jerry Cobb, Eustis, Fla., who's pleased with his 1986 Electro-Magic Inc. 200 psi portable steam cleaner (Electro-Magic Inc., Fords Mill Road, Paris, Kent. 40361). "It has never failed to start and does a good job, although I wish it had a chemical distribution tank on it. It's equipped with a plastic hose that you stick directly into the cleaner. I also wish they'd put a wagon type steering handle on it for ease of moving it around."

"There's no comparison between cold water versus hot water washing. That's what we found out when we switched from a cold water pressure washer to an Allied 1,000 psi hot water washer 2 years ago (Allied Farm Equipment, 1102 E. Cherry St., Vermillion, S. Dak. 57069). It has plenty of pressure and we've had no trouble even though I use it a lot for my repair business. One problem is that the knob that controls the addition of detergent is at the end of the wand and is too hot to handle when running. It should be moved or modified. Also, they should add a high-pressure detergent applicator. I can only use detergents or degreasers when spraying at low pressures," says Gary Brunner, Nisland, S. Dak. Clarke Zipse, Freeport, Ill., owns an L & A Products Inc. (2112 Old Hwy. 8, St. Paul, Minn. 55112) portable cold water washer that pumps 2 gpm at 500 psi. "We're happy with it for washing down machinery, engines and to spray off loose paint before painting. One improvement we made was to equip the washer with a John Deere spray wand that's got a nozzle that adjusts from 0 to 40°."

"It's the next step up from putting your finger over the end of a hose," says Darwin Latt, Castlewood, S. Dak., about his 500 psi K.E.W. Industries, Inc. (130-B E. St.

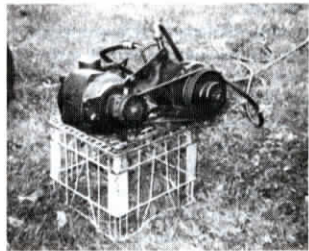
## Pressure Washer Built From Power Steering Pump

Dale Nelson, Blackduck, Minn., built his own portable high pressure washer from a car power steering pump and an old 1/4-hp electric washing machine motor.

Nelson feeds water into the power steering pump with a garden hose. The electric motor belt-drives the pump. He fitted a heavy-duty 10-ft. long rubber hose over the pump's outgoing oil line and fitted a grease gun with a needlepoint nozzle to the end of the hose to serve as a spray nozzle.

"It doesn't have as much pressure as commercial high pressure washers but it's been trouble-free and has plenty of pressure to clean engines and equipment," says Nelson, who's in the logging business.

Nelson salvaged the power steering pump from a 1968 Ford LTD equipped with a 390 engine. He used the alternator and power steering brackets off the same car to connect the washing machine motor to the power steering pump. To gear down the motor, Nelson put a smaller pulley on the motor and a larger pulley, removed from the car's crankshaft, on the power steering pump. He then brazed a garden hose fitting onto the power steering pump's filler tube. "A pump reservoir surrounds the pump and is sealed on one end with a



rubber O-ring," says Nelson. "When I first started using the pump, water leaked out past the O-ring. I solved the problem by brazing all the way around the seal so water couldn't leak out."

To make the spray nozzle, Nelson ground the end of a 6-in. long grease gun needlepoint to make the hole bigger so it would make a wider spray pattern. He runs both hot and cold water through the sprayer.

When Nelson isn't using the washer he empties all the water out of the pump and fills it with oil to keep it from rusting until he uses the washer again.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Dale Nelson, Ponemah Star Rt., Box 5, Blackduck, Minn. 56630 (ph 218 835-6410).

Charles Rd., Carol Stream, Ill. 60188) cold water "hobby" washer. "This size sprayer is strictly for light work such as washing off machinery, and it works fine for that. It doesn't do a good job on baked-on dirt or grease. Hot water or steam would work better."

"This is the second Kleen King washer we've had from Britt-Tech Corp. It's a 1982 model and works well with either soap or plain water up to 120°. I would buy another one because I've tried other washers in the past that didn't work as well. You have to be careful when working with high pressure because you can damage bearings by washing out the grease," says Alvin E. Meyer, Jr., Garner, Iowa.

"I own an X-O Kleen Gun that attaches to the exhaust of a tractor, combine or other engine (Wages Enterprises, Inc., 903 Vel Ray Dr., Abernathy, Texas 79311). "The exhaust acts as an air compressor which siphons cleaning fluid up through a special nozzle. You can also use it as a "dry" cleaner to blow dirt and debris off all types of equipment. You can regulate the pressure by changing the speed of the engine powering it. Works great," says Derald Bugner, Reeder, N. Dak.

"My 1988 Honda 3,000 psi portable washer heats water up to 120° and always starts with one or two pulls. It'll clean just about anything and is designed for easy maintenance. It's 11 hp. and pumps 4 gpm. The motor has an "oil alert" that lets you know if you're low on oil. I also like the "down stream" soap injector. Hot water helps loosen grease and dirt but I think the additional cost of a machine that'll handle heat is better spent on higher pressure," says George Vonderheide, LaFarge, Wis.

Eugene Sellers, Trout Run, Penn., owns a 1989 Karcher HD1150 2,000 psi sprayer that'll spray cold and hot water as well as steam (Karcher Cleaning Systems, P.O. Box 778, West Paterson, N.J. 07424). "I'm pleased with it but I don't like that fact that when you release the handgun trigger eve-

rything shuts down. When you pull the trigger again it takes about 10 sec. for the machine to get back up to pressure. I now feel I would like a "bypass" design better where you would have instant pressure. Otherwise it's a good machine that'll handle any type of cleaning chore."

"My 1987 American Kleener washer from Tipton Electric Motor Co. (107 W. 2nd St., Tipton, Iowa 52772) uses cold water and then, with the flip of a switch, provides hot water from a large kerosene-fired furnace. It's portable and has plenty of pressure at 1,300 psi. It has a 3 hp. electric motor on it for plenty of power and four different nozzles to choose from. I like using cold water when washing the barn or cleaning off equipment but when you've got a heavy-duty cleaning job you just can't beat the combination of pressure and hot water. It just seems to get under the grease or manure and lift it up. The optimum level of heat and pressure seems to be 180 to 200° at 1,300 psi. All hoses are quick couple so you can move the unit easily. There's no maintenance except for checking the pump oil. All controls are on one knob at the top so it's easy to operate. I highly recommend this company because they can custom-build virtually any kind of sprayer powered by pto, electric motor, or gas," says Ron Baker, Mechanicsville, Iowa.

"We use our 1989 Deere 118 cold water 500 psi washer to clean farm machinery, especially radiators. It works well for most jobs. I'm satisfied," says Charles Morgart, Bloomdale, Ohio.

Ivan W. Shank, Dayton, Va., built his own sprayer using a Cat 1,500 psi pump with ceramic plungers that can handle cold or hot water as well as steam. "This heavy-duty pump is built in Japan and is designed for use in car washes. We mounted it on wheels so it's portable. It holds up well to heavy use and requires little maintenance. You have to be careful when you get up over 1,000 psi because some paint jobs will begin to peel or flake off."