



Tool tester Bob Saunders feeds an ash board through this bandsaw to test its resawing power and accuracy.

Deluxe 14" Bandsaws

Ranging from \$770 to \$1,495, these saws give you greater power and resaw capability than entry-level models.

Choosing to purchase a 14" deluxe bandsaw says a lot about where you are in your woodworking journey. You're ready to move to a machine capable of tackling all curve-cutting, ripping, crosscutting, and resawing tasks in even the thickest and hardest wood species. Thankfully, you don't have to jump to a pricey 18" or larger bandsaw to get these attributes. This class of 14" bandsaws—measured by wheel diameter—does it all.

What to look for in a 14" bandsaw

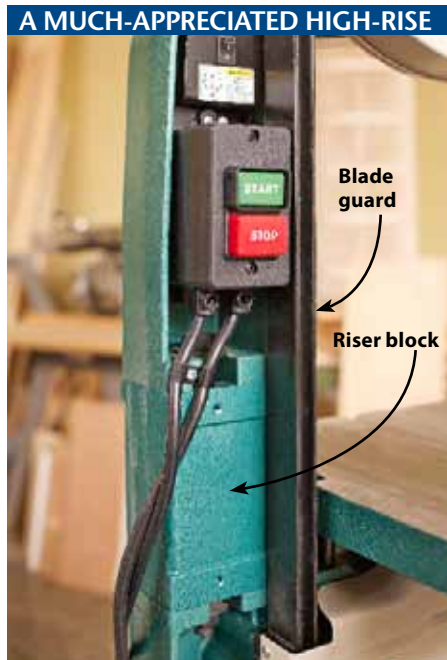
■ **Ample resawing capacity.** Start your search by focusing on the widest board the saw can rip standing on edge. Get as much capacity as possible, because you'll never wish you had less. Having the ability to rip a wide board into thinner pieces opens up greater project options, such as bookmatched

door panels or thin slabs laminated around a curved form. Resawing allows you to maximize the face (showing surface) of a prized piece of wood, such as spalted maple or quilted mahogany.

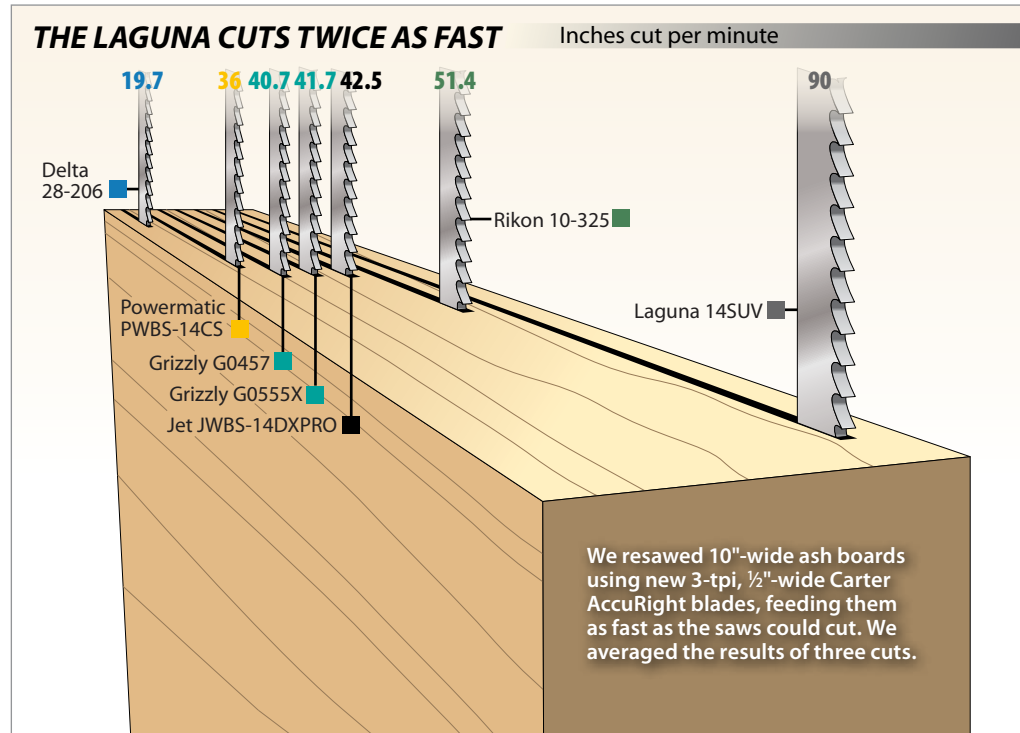
A one-piece steel frame—found on three of the bandsaws in this test—provides 10–14" of resaw capacity. On the other hand, three of the C-frame saws (Delta 28-206, Grizzly G0555X, and Powermatic PWBS-14CS)—which look like big cast-iron C-clamps on bases—resaw only 6" out of the crate. But if you install an optional riser block (\$70–\$120), shown *below left*, you'll double that capacity. Though a C-frame saw, the Jet JWBS-14DXPRO comes standard with 12" resaw capacity built into its column; no need for a riser block. The C-frame Powermatic includes the riser-block kit as standard equipment. (Watch a free video on installing a riser block at woodmagazine.com/riserblockvid.)

■ **Plenty of power.** Cutting curves or ripping stock up to 2" thick won't challenge the power of any 14" bandsaw. But when you resaw—especially hardwoods 10" or wider—you need power in spades. For this, look at two factors. First, the motor should be rated at least 1 hp, but go bigger if your budget and shop's electrical capacity can handle it. (Bandsaws powered by 110-volt motors top out at 1½ hp; anything greater requires a 220-volt circuit.) In our testing, the 3-hp Laguna 14SUV dominated the power showdown. (See the chart *below*.)

The second power factor: the wheels that drive the blade. Cast-iron wheels outperform aluminum ones because their greater weight generates more momentum to power the blade through a cut. This weight also dampens vibration, resulting in greater accuracy and cut quality. Of the tested saws, all but the Delta have cast-iron wheels.

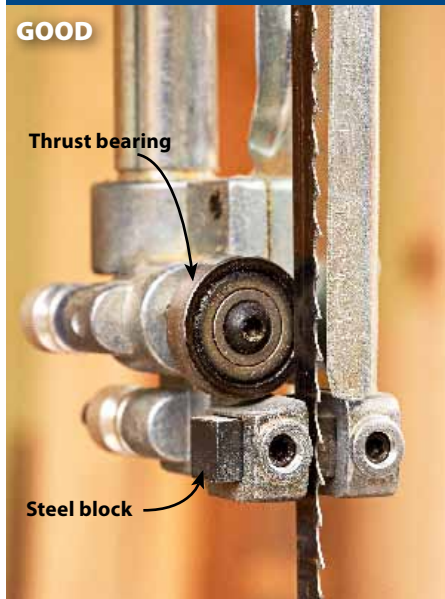


A riser-block kit comes with the block, a connecting bolt, and extended blade guards. It takes about 20 minutes to install.



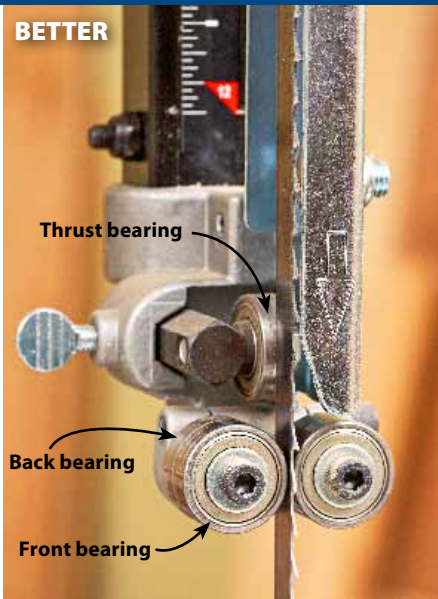
BETTER BLADE GUIDES MEAN BETTER BLADE-HOLDING FOR CURVE CUTTING AND RESAWING

GOOD



Steel guide blocks sit a few thousandths of an inch from the blade. The thrust bearing snugs up behind the blade the same distance; the blade runs against the thrust bearing's face.

BETTER



With bearing guides, the front bearings ride just behind the blade gullets. (Back bearings support only blades ½" or wider.) The blade edge runs against the thrust bearing's rim.

BEST



Four points of ceramic side contact prevent blade twisting better than bearings. Rather than a thrust bearing, this guide uses a ceramic insert.

■ **Quality blade guides.** A bandsaw with great power and cut capacities but lackluster blade guides is like a Mercedes without power steering. Adjustable blade guides mounted above and below the table prevent the blade from twisting or wandering side-to-side during cuts, greatly enhancing accuracy. The best guides prove easy to set and adjust,

because you'll do this every time you change from one blade width to another.

The tested saws feature three types of guides, shown *above*: steel blocks, ball bearings, and ceramic contacts. All held blades true enough in our curve-cutting and resawing tests, but we like the ceramic guides best because they completely eliminated blade twisting.

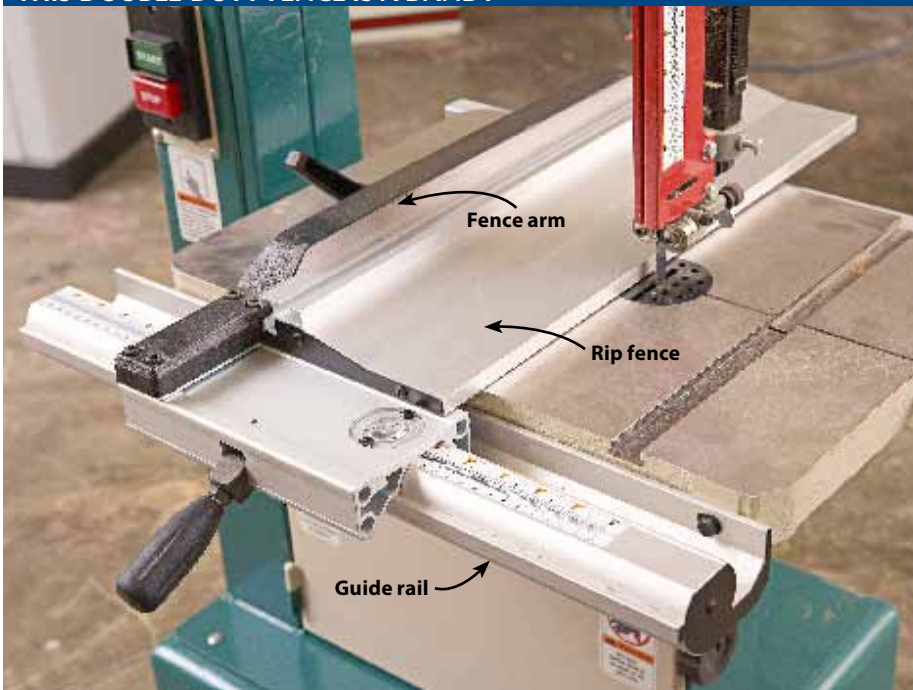
(Although it wasn't a big problem, the other guides allowed slight blade twisting when we cut circles less than 1" in diameter.) The Laguna guides contact the blade at four points on each of the upper and lower guides, twice as many contact points as the other saws. The steel blocks created more friction—and potential blade-damaging heat.

Now look at these user-friendly features

■ **Comfortable table height.** Table height on five of the seven tested saws ranges from 42" to 44". Find a working height that's comfortable for you without hunching over, then look for a match. Our 6'-tall tester found himself bending down to use Laguna's 35½"-high table; he liked the Rikon 10-325's table height—just under 40"—best. If you plan to add a mobile base to your saw, remember it will add an inch or two to the table height.

■ **Accurate, adjustable rip fence.** For straight-line cutting, a rip fence proves a vital accessory, and all but the Delta and Jet include one. All the fences include adjustments to compensate for blade drift (when the blade fails to cut parallel to the fence). Four of the saws' rip fences can be used in two dimensions: upright for resawing tall stock, and low and flat, shown at *right*, for reaching underneath the blade guides on thin, narrow rips.

THIS DOUBLE-DUTY FENCE IS A DANDY



Dual-position fences, such as this one (on both Grizzlys), mount by T-slot onto a rigid fence arm that locks onto the guide rail. They give you tall and short surfaces for guiding boards.

■ **Reliable tension scale.** On these deluxe saws, we hoped for more-reliable blade-tension gauges, but found we could rely on the scales of just two saws (Grizzly G0555X and Rikon). So it's a good idea to know how to set the tension without the scale. Our tester used the flutter method, where, with the blade guides pulled back and the saw running, he loosened the blade tension

until the blade fluttered side-to-side. Then he tightened it gradually until the flutter disappeared. (Watch Bob demonstrate this technique in a free video at woodmagazine.com/flutter.) All of the saws have quick-release tension levers that relieve enough tension to change blades, and then return to your previous setting without tedious cranking and checking the blade tension as you go.

■ **Effective dust collection.** Dust buildup on the rubber tires of these saws reduces blade grip, so it's important to hook up the saw to a dust collector. Each of the models in this test has a 4" port next to the lower wheel; these proved most effective on the steel-frame models. Doors on the C-frame saws did not seal as tightly, reducing dust-collection effectiveness.

A Closer Look at the Tested Saws



(Price includes riser-block kit.)

Delta 28-206, \$825

800-223-7278; deltamachinery.com

+Pluses: The steel-block blade guides performed well in our curve-cutting tests, even with the riser block installed. Two speed settings provide you the option of slowing the blade speed for cutting nonferrous metal, such as brass or aluminum.

-Minuses: The 28-206 lacks the oomph of the other test saws, especially when resawing wide stock with the riser block installed. Setting the proper blade tension proved difficult because the saw's scale was so far off we could not use it. The saw vibrated more than any other we tested, its blade deflected the most (slightly more than 1/32"), and its dust collection proved inadequate. It does not come with a rip fence, and Delta does not offer one as an option. The motor eats up potential storage space in the lower cabinet.



Grizzly G0457, \$895

800-523-4777; grizzly.com

+Pluses: We really like the rip fence on this saw. Although the G0457 has only 10" of resaw capacity, it was one of three models to cut with less than 1/32" of blade deflection. That's important so you don't waste wood later at the planer flattening a resawn face. And we found it easy to square the table to the back of the blade by adjusting setscrews on the trunnion bracket.

-Minuses: You can't install or remove 3/4"-wide blades without removing the table first, because the blade teeth hit the rabbeted edge of the 2"-diameter table hole. (Grizzly's Bill Crofutt said his company will investigate this and might make changes on future models.) Because the aluminum rip fence mounts onto the right side of a cast-iron arm, you can't rip stock with the fence on the right side of the blade.



(Price includes riser-block kit.)

Grizzly G0555X, \$770

800-523-4777; grizzly.com

+Pluses: This saw has the same rip fence as the G0457, but it has a different table, minus the blade-changing problems. And with a 110-volt motor, it cut slightly faster than the 2-hp, 220-volt G0457. You can install a blade and rely on the tension scale to be accurate. We like its wide-rimmed task light because it mounts on the blade side of the upper cabinet, letting you better direct light onto the cutline. The price above includes an optional riser-block kit that gives you the ability to resaw 12"-wide boards. If you don't need this resaw capacity, save the \$70 and assemble the saw as equipped from the factory.

-Minuses: The quick-release blade tension lever is stiffer to engage than on the other saws, although it held with no problems. Like the G0457, the rip fence will not work to the right of the blade.

Jet JWBS-14DXPRO, \$1,000

800-274-6848; jettools.com

+Pluses: We could change blades quickest on this saw with its easy-to-set ball-bearing blade guides, and yellow tires on the wheels that make it easier to see the blade through the plastic window when adjusting tracking. The rack-and-pinion guide post makes it easy to adjust the top guides up and down without it crashing to the table. A second set of fence-scale markings helps you position the fence accurately for resawing with the attached pivot. If you cut brass or aluminum, you'll like the two speed settings.

-Minuses: You have to buy the \$100 fence kit separately, and we'd love that 2½"-tall fence to be a few inches taller for better support during resawing. The quick-release blade-tension lever is stiffer than most



(Price includes optional rip fence and resaw pivot.)

Laguna 14SUV, \$1,495

800-332-4094; lagunatools.com

+Pluses: For this price you expect a saw to deliver above and beyond competitors costing much less—and that's what you get. The 14SUV has the most power by far, the greatest resaw capacity (14"), the best blade guides, an L-shaped fence you can use in up or down positions, and a magnetic power switch that prevents accidental start-ups. It also features a table with a rack-and-pinion gear and gas strut for smooth, easy tilting; two 4" dust ports for the best dust collection; a foot brake with power disconnect to quickly stop the blade; and a built-in mobile base. Plus, it comes with a ¾" carbide-tipped resawing blade—a \$160 value.

-Minuses: The table measures 35½" from the floor, about 5" too low for our 6'-tall tester. It's the noisiest of the lot—10 decibels more than the quietest. There's no lower cabinet for storage of accessories.



14" BANDSAWS \$700 AND UP: WHAT TO BUY WHEN YOU DESERVE A TOP MACHINE

BRAND	MODEL	PERFORMANCE RATINGS (1)												MOTOR		BLADE			TABLE					
		PRIMARY						SECONDARY						VOLTAGE (*-PREWIRED)	RATED HORSEPOWER	LENGTH, INCHES (2)	WIDTH (MIN.-MAX.), INCHES	WHEEL MATERIAL (3)	WIDTH × DEPTH, INCHES	HEIGHT FROM FLOOR, INCHES	TILT RANGE (RIGHT/LEFT), DEGREES			
		POWER	CURVE-CUTTING ABILITY	BLADE-GUIDE EFFECTIVENESS	EASE OF ADJUSTING BLADE GUIDES	ABSENCE OF BLADE DEFLECTION	EASE OF CHANGING BLADES	EASE OF TENSIONING BLADE	ABSENCE OF VIBRATION	ABSENCE OF BLADE DRIFT	EASE OF TILTING TABLE	DUST-COLLECTION EFFECTIVENESS	RIP-FENCE EFFECTIVENESS									MITER-GAUGE EFFECTIVENESS	CABINET/DOORS/LATCHES QUALITY	CLARITY OF OWNER'S MANUAL
DELTA	28-206	C	A	B-	A-	C+	A-	C	C	C	B	C	NA	NA	C	B	110*/220	1	105*	⅞-¾	A	16×16	43	45/3
GRIZZLY	G0457	B	A	B	A	A	C+	A	A	B	B	A	A	A	A	A	110/220*	2	106	⅞-¾	C	14¼×19¾	42¼	45/8
	G0555X	B	A	B	A	B	A-	A	A	B	B	B	A	A	B	A	110*/220	1½	105*	⅞-¾	C	14×20½	44	45/10
JET	JWBS-14DXPRO	B	A	B	A	B	A	B+	A	B-	B	B+	B	B	B	A	110*/220	1¼	105	⅞-¾	C	15×15	43½	45/10
LAGUNA	14SUV	A	A	A	B	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	NA	A	A	220	3	125	⅞-1	C	15¾×19¾	35½	45/15
POWERMATIC	PWBS-14CS	B-	A	B	A	B	A-	A	B	B-	B	B	B	B	B	A	110*/220	1½	105*	⅞-¾	C	15¼×20¾	44	45/10
RIKON	10-325	A-	A	B	B	A	A-	A	A	B+	A	A	A	NA	A	A	110*/220	1½	111	⅞-¾	C	15¾×21½	39¾	45/5

NOTES

1. A Excellent
B Good
C Fair
NA Not Applicable

2. (*) 93½" without riser block

3. (A) Aluminum
(C) Cast iron

4. (B) Ball bearings
(C) Ceramic inserts
(S) Steel blocks

5. (*) With accessory riser block installed

6. (B) Blade
(F) Rip fence
(G) Miter gauge
(M) Mobile base
(P) Resaw pivot
(R) Riser-block kit
(T) Tools for adjustment

Powermatic PWBS-14CS, \$1,000

800-274-6848; powermatic.com

+Pluses: Although all the tested saws come with blade-tension quick-release handles, only this saw's orange handle could be seen from the operator position when untensioned. That helps prevent accidental start-ups with an untensioned blade. This saw comes with a 6" riser-block kit as standard equipment, as well as 3/8" and 5/8" blades. The task light mounts and works like that on the Grizzly G0555X. It's nice to have cabinet-mounted hooks for storing the rip fence and miter gauge.

-Minuses: Despite a 1½-hp rated motor, this saw bogged down frequently in our resaw testing, necessitating a slower feed rate. The ¼" plastic tubing intended to blow dust off the cutline does little good. And the motor sits inside the lower cabinet, negating potential storage space.



Rikon 10-325, \$900

877-884-5167; rikontools.com

+Pluses: The 10-325 has 13" of resaw capacity and a powerful 110-volt motor. The near-absence of blade deflection makes it a great resaw machine. We like its L-shaped aluminum rip fence that locks solidly on a steel rod, yet slides off quickly. And there's more to like: a rack-and-pinion gear makes for easy table tilting; setscrews on the table trunnion bracket help it easily square the table to the blade; yellow tires enhance blade visibility; and two wheel speeds ease the cutting of non-ferrous metals.

-Minuses: You'd expect blade changes to be easiest on this saw because the blade slides forward through the table rather than to the side. But the guide bearings move as you tighten their setscrews, making it more difficult to set up accurately, resulting in the test-longest setup times.



BLADE-GUIDE STYLE (4)	CUT CAPACITIES, INCHES		OVERALL DIMENSIONS (W×D×H), INCHES	TASK LIGHT? (YES, NO)	ACCESSORIES (6)		NOISE LEVEL, NO-LOAD, DECIBELS	WEIGHT, POUNDS	POWER-CORD LENGTH	WARRANTY, YEARS	COUNTRY OF ASSEMBLY (7)	SELLING PRICE (8)
	RESAW (5)	THROAT (BLADE TO COLUMN)			STANDARD	OPTIONAL						
S	12*	13¾	27×23×74	N	B	M,R	67	201	6'8"	5	C	\$825*
B	10	13½	30×30×73	N	B, F, G	M	63	251	8'	1	T	\$895
B	12*	13¾	17×16×74	Y	B, F, G	M,R	65	236	5'9"	1	T	\$770*
B	12	13½	17×24×77	N	B, G, T	F,M,P	63	247	5'10"	5	T	\$1,000#
C	14	13¾	30×26×70	N	B, F, M, T		73	420	6'2"	1	C	\$1,495
B	12*	13¾	34×20×74	Y	B, F, G, P, R, T	M	65	250	5'10"	5	T	\$1,000*
B	13	13¾	30×24×76	Y	B, F, P, T		64	251	6'7"	5	C	\$900

7. (C) China
(T) Taiwan

8. Prices current at time of article production and do not include shipping, where applicable.
(*) Includes riser-block kit.
(#) Includes rip-fence kit.

Commit your tool \$\$ to these resaw kings

Not surprisingly, the \$1,495 Laguna 14SUV proved itself superior in this seven-saw field, earning it our Top Tool award for 220-volt models. Try as we might, we could not bog down this 3-hp workhorse, even when resawing 14"-wide oak and ash.

If your shop's not wired for 220 volts, or if you can't afford the Laguna's price tag, go for the Rikon 10-325 for \$900. It's our Top Tool among 110-volt saws.

If both of these fall out of your price range, then look to the Top Value Grizzly G0555X. Add the optional riser block and you'll have a saw worthy of any shop for less than \$800. 🌲

Produced by **Bob Hunter** with **Bob Saunders**
Illustration by **Tim Cahill**

MORE RESOURCES

■ Watch a free video for an alternative technique on setting blade tension at woodmagazine.com/bladetension.



■ Find helpful tips and techniques as well as reviews of other bandsaws at woodmagazine.com/bandsaw.