

■ **HAND TOOLS**

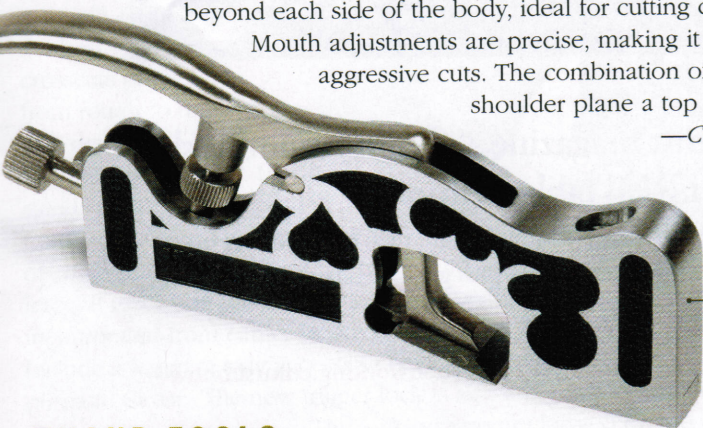
Shoulder plane pairs classic styling with solid performance

WOOD RIVER'S MEDIUM SHOULDER PLANE (No. 92) traces its lineage back to iron shoulder planes that Edward Preston manufactured around the turn of the 20th century. But Wood River didn't just reproduce the Preston models. They made them better by redesigning the blade-adjustment mechanisms to eliminate lateral slop when the blade is moved forward or back—a real plus for this trimming tool.

Out of the box, the plane is well made, with unique and beautiful details cast and machined without any burrs or sharp edges. The ¾-in.-wide by 8¹³/₁₆-in.-long plane feels solid and comfortable in the hand. The sole was dead-flat and the sides were accurately square to the sole, an important characteristic for trimming tenon shoulders. The blade is flat, square, and 0.006 in. wider than the plane body, allowing it to project 0.003 in. beyond each side of the body, ideal for cutting clean, square corners.

Mouth adjustments are precise, making it easy to dial in the tool for fine or aggressive cuts. The combination of aesthetics and quality makes this shoulder plane a top performer at a very attractive price.

—Chris Gochnour is a furniture maker and hand-tool expert.

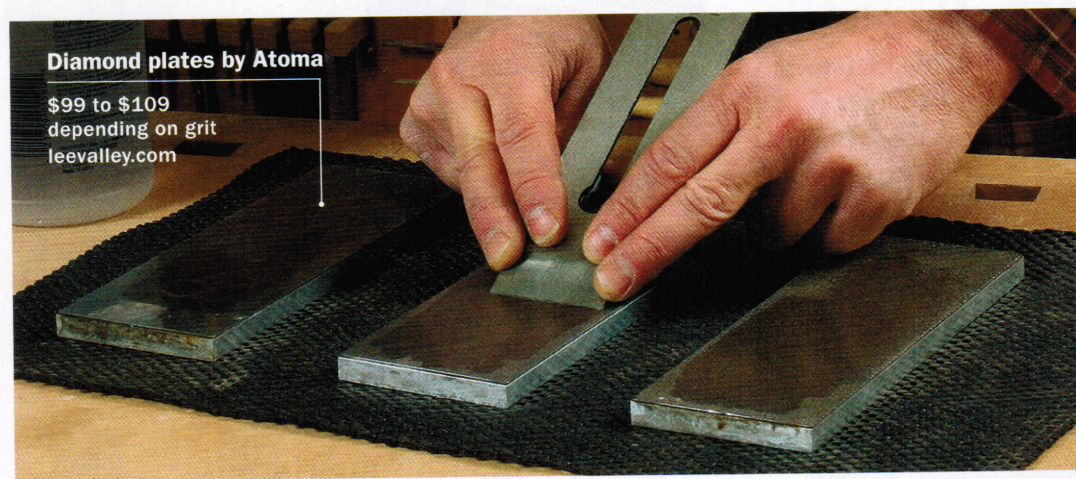


Medium Shoulder Plane by Wood River

\$150
woodcraft.com

■ **HAND TOOLS**

Durable diamond plates work fast



Diamond plates by Atoma

\$99 to \$109
depending on grit
leevalley.com

FOR RAPID STOCK REMOVAL, IT'S HARD TO BEAT DIAMOND PLATES. And the Japanese-made Atoma diamond plates are some of the best I've used. They come in three different grits: 140, 400, and 1,200. Each plate is dead-flat, with symmetrically organized diamond clusters that cut extremely fast while promising to reduce diamond fracture and breakdown, which helps durability. The 140-grit plate is ideal for forming a bevel or correcting a chipped edge; the 400-grit plate is great for lapping waterstones and blade backs; and the 1,200-grit plate is ideal for refining a lapped surface and preparing an edge for final polish. The Atoma stones achieve the rare triple play in sharpening equipment: fast, flat, and durable.

—C.G.

Laser Kerf Saw Blade by Infinity Tools

\$180
infinitytools.com



■ **POWER TOOLS**

Thin blade cuts with minimal waste

INFINITY'S NEW THIN-KERF BLADE helps you get the most out of your prized woods, as it cuts a tiny (¹/₁₆-in.) kerf and leaves virtually no tearout. The 40-tooth ATB negative-hook blade is surprisingly rigid and stable, thanks to a thick, built-in blade stiffener. But the stiffener makes it impossible to use a riving knife because it offsets the blade plate away from the inner arbor flange, so you'll need to add a wafer-thin splitter to your tablesaw insert (Infinity sells a special splitter for \$20). The stiffener also limits the cutting depth to 2 in. These issues aren't large obstacles, because this isn't a general-purpose blade. Instead, it's a high-end specialty cutter made to reduce waste when cutting expensive stock. It's also great for narrow or thin stock that would get chewed up by a standard-kerf blade, making it ideal for cutting inlays, stacks of veneer, and even delicate moldings.

—Roland Johnson is a contributing editor and tool enthusiast.