

Sand-Flee offers multi-tool capabilities

By Jennifer Hicks

STAFF WRITER

Back in 2003 Bob Raffo of R.J.R. Studios LLC in Medford, N.J., received a patent for the Sand-Flee portable drum sander he designed to make sanding easier, faster and more fun. The machine comes in two models, the 18" model SF-1800 and the 9" model SF-0900. Since then, he's attracted customers from every state and five continents.

His goal is clear: "When you say Sand-Flee and everybody either knows what you're talking about or has one or two of them in their shop, we will be halfway there," Raffo said.

The machine offers simplicity in set-up and operation, maximum control for delicate tasks, up to 85 percent effective dust control, and the option to sand with several grits at one time, according to Raffo. Its 1/3-hp motor is attached to the steel cabinet, which supports the stainless steel table and solid aluminum drum. It comes with an anodized aluminum fence and a T-track for feather boards and other attachments.

"One particular benefit of the fence is that it turns your Sand-Flee into an 18" jointer. The Sand-Flee does not have any height restrictions and the fence becomes invaluable in working with tall pieces like raised panel doors," Raffo said.

A great deal of engineering goes into the drum, which is CNC-machined to ensure a uniform surface across its entire 18" length, said Raffo.

"We strive for accuracy down to .004 [inch] so that you will not get any chatter in your sanding," he said. "We have extended the shaft of the drum outside the main cabinet, so you can add a keyless chuck to the end and use it for a variety of attachments."

Accessories for the extended shaft include a 60" flex-shaft for freehand sanding. Optional 1/2" and 1/4" keyless chucks accept a variety of sanding drums as well as a selection of sanding mops.

Joe Benkert of Kingston, N.Y., discovered Raffo and his Sand-Flee at a woodworking exposition four years ago in Springfield, Mass.

"For just ease of use, this thing is the cat's meow," Benkert said.

He uses the machine up to twice a week for smaller parts on cabinets, furniture and craft items. He prefers using three grits of sandpaper on his 18" model to get jobs done quickly.

"It just facilitates things so much faster and easier. If you have repetition, like you want to make 20 of a certain part, you just run them over to this thing. It's fast and accurate and when you're done it's ready for finishing," he said.

The 18" model sells for \$696; the 9"

for \$479.95. Various buffing, polishing and profile sanding attachments are sold separately, with prices on the company's Web site.

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The 18" Sand-Flee model SF-1800 portable drum sander.