

On the Job

Raising the Bar on Efficiency

by Kyle Dunkley

When I was a kid growing up on Vancouver Island in British Columbia, one of my chores was getting the firewood in. I started with an ax and a wheelbarrow, then moved on to a chain saw when I was old enough. I spent many hours using chain saws and became quite proficient and accurate.

I now run a small framing company; we frame 10 to 12 homes a year. My skill with the chain saw has proved a timesaver, particularly when cutting out window and

the openings with tar paper and peel-and-stick and the second installing doors and windows. I like this method because it's fast and we don't have to worry about the wind picking up and blowing off the paper before the windows are installed.

While the chain saw is running, I also cut out interior door plates throughout the house. Using the chain saw is twice as fast as using a reciprocating saw and easier on your back.

I make my first cut across the bottom, with the tip of the bar following the bottom plate or rough sill. Next I cut one side (1), then the other (2), starting from the top and working down. The last cut is across the top (3); I let the piece fall naturally to the ground with no binding on the saw.



door rough openings. Most crews build walls on the floor and use a router with a flush cut bit — or, after snapping lines, a circular saw — to cut out rough openings before standing them. I typically sheet my walls straight across, stand them, and continue the framing until the interior walls and roof are completed.

In our area, installing windows and exterior doors is part of the framing contract. So once the house is dried in and the doors and windows have arrived on site, I'll go around cutting out all the ROs from the inside while two other carpenters follow behind, the first detailing



I use a Stihl MS 290 for this job; I put a 16-inch bar on it, so it's a little lighter — but it still pumps out 12,500 rpm. Eye protection and ear muffs are a must, of course. And you have to watch out for nails; they'll dull the teeth in a hurry.

Kyle Dunkley owns Konstant Construction in Victoria, British Columbia.

Restoration in the Round

Before starting the renovation of this nineteenth century home (1) in Elgin, Ill., Chuck Keysor referred to photographs taken in the '60s for original architectural details. The gracious Queen Anne had gradually been “modernized,” its exterior woodwork hidden behind vinyl siding and the spacious wrap-around porch (2) replaced by a concrete stoop.



To build a porch like the original, Keysor had to fabricate a 10-inch-tall beam with an 8-foot radius. Working on a temporary plywood deck, he secured 2x10 blocks along the arc (3), then used plastic resin glue (4) to laminate eight layers of 1/4-inch plywood (5, 6). At the ends of the curved beam, he left staggered 2-foot laps to allow for tying the curved section back into the straight sections on either side.

After lifting the 2-inch-thick beam into place, he added a few extra layers to beef it up (7), then framed and finished the porch roof (8). — *Ted Cushman*

