

Owner's Report On Best, Worst Welders

Are you satisfied with your present welder? How could it be improved? What's your favorite welding rod for everyday use? Have you modified your welder in any way? What attachments do you use with it?

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

Here's how the survey shaped up:

Wade Hancock, Cullman, Ala.: "It's a computerized machine that will do stick, MIG, TIG and Air Carbon welding all in one unit," says Wade about his 1997 **Lincoln** Invertec V-300 Pro. "The basic unit costs about \$2,100, compared with about \$1,200 for other welders, but it's much more economical for big jobs. The machine has performed flawlessly. The controls are easy to read and understand.

"One suggestion is that the on-off switch could be moved to the front panel instead of the rear to make it easier for first-timers to use.

"I have a 'thumb control' TIG torch, Lincoln LN-7 wire feeder and an Air-Carbon torch, all of which perform perfectly."

Wade has this advice about welding rod. "For day to day performance for agricultural equipment, I recommend either a 6010 for general repair or a 7018 for high strength applications. Both are for DC current only. If you have only an AC machine, then I recommend a 6011 and a 7016."

Debra F. Hapson, Huntsville, Texas: Debra's happy with both her 1991 **Lincoln** AC 225-amp welder and her 20-year old **Miller** Roughneck welder.

"The Roughneck's portable so it comes in real handy for fixing fence," she says. "For a cracker box, the Lincoln has really performed dependably, as have all the Lincoln welders we've had in the past 30 years.

"We built a cart of metal and wood with large wheels so we can roll it around easier."

Gordon Afseth, Stanley, N. Dak.: Gordon likes the portability of his 1993 **Miller** Bobcat welder. "Plus, it has an 800-watt generator," he says. "It's handy and there's nothing I can think of that would improve its performance."

Mike Howard, Scottsville, Ky.: Mike says it's easy to start a bead with any kind of rod with his 1994 **Lincoln** AC-DC welder. "I had a Lincoln 225 AC welder before this one and it was completely trouble-free for 24 years," he adds.

Vic Stratman, Argyle, Mo.: "The day I bought it I had a lot of work lined up with some heavy 3/16-in. dia. rod I bought cheap," says Vic, happy with a 1980's **Hobart** 400 welder he bought used in 1994. "I ran the welder at 260 amps for four hours straight with no problems and the 6-cyl. Ford industrial engine used only 1 1/4 gals. of gas per hour. I was impressed. I especially like the 100-volt outlet on my welder. The idle works well and the 100-ft. cable is a must for working outside."

Vic says 7014 rod works best for new metal, while 6011 works better than anything he's used for rusty oil field pipe and old steel.

Roger Wade Borders, Allen, Okla.: Roger's pleased with his 1994 **Lincoln** Ranger 8 welder powered by an 18 hp Kohler engine. "It's been an extremely good welder, but it needs better cable on the choke," he says.

Kurt J. Freitag, Ashvelot, N.H.: Smooth and reliable is how Kurt describes his 1992 **38 • FARM SHOW**

Miller Legend 225-amp AC-DC welder. "The Onan engine never fails to start and it's quiet running," he says.

Kurt's also much impressed with the Tailhook Utralight welding mask with speedglass he ordered from the Merriam-Graves catalog (806 River Rd., Charlestown, N.H. 03603; ph 603 542-8768).

"It cost something like \$240 so it's not cheap, but it has four settings so you can adjust light individually for different jobs," he says.

Edwin Roberts, Brunswick, N.Y.: Edwin just bought a new **Lincoln** 220-amp DC welder this fall. It'll have its work cut out for it to perform like the **GE** welder it replaces, he says.

"I bought this small, green 220-amp **GE** welder used in 1963. The biggest rod you could use with it was 3/8-in. since it didn't have enough power for anything bigger," says Edwin. "I've used it for everything in the past 34 years, including building two custom-built trailers, and have never had to repair it - not even to replace the leads. It's cooked more than 2 tons of rod since I bought it and it's still working."

Paul Esolt, Johns Island, S.C.: Paul likes his 1992 **Miller** Bobcat 2256 portable welder. "It performs like a dream and is an excellent value for the money," he says. "You also get an 800-watt generator for remote jobs."

Hugh C. Curtis, Hawkeye, Iowa: "I've used **Century** and **Miller** welders but I prefer this one," says Hugh about his 1993 **Systematic** MP 250 MIG welder. "It's easy to operate and all the parts are metal, not plastic.

"We made an all-terrain cart for the welder so we can pull it behind our Honda 4-wheeler, even down the road. We also added 50 ft. of extension cord so I can move it around machinery or out to the yard."

Frank Randl, Jr., Pueblo, Colo.: Frank says his 1991 **Miller** Thunderbolt 230-150 AC-DC welder "has met all the expectations I had for it. The power cord could be 3 or 4 ft. longer to help welding on wider machinery," he says.

"This welder handles all rods well. My favorites are 6013 or 7014.

"I received a gift of a **Jackson** automatic darkening lens (Jackson Products, 5801 Safety Drive NE, Belmont, Mich. 49306; ph 800 558-4582)," he says. "I think these masks are super. Mine works great."

Benj St. John, Blooming Prairie, Minn.: With one exception Benj is satisfied with his 1987 **Century** 250 AC-DC welder. "Performance is smooth," he says. "But the controls tend to be difficult to change."

Benj's favorite rod is Lincoln E 7018 (Lincoln Electric Co., 22801 St. Clair Ave., Cleveland, Ohio 44117-1199; ph 216 481-8100). "It's an all-purpose rod that's easy to clean up," he says.

Eric Willard, Boonville, N.C.: "It's been trouble-free through 50 lbs. of wire," says Eric about his 1993 **Lincoln** Weld Pak 100.

"It's good for light duty welding. I'd buy another one."

Eric says 6011 rod provides good penetration and 7018 seems to give the stronger weld.

Neil D. Kaufman, Buckley, Ill.: Neil's generally well satisfied with his 1995 **Lincoln** Ranger 8 powered by an Onan engine. "It gives a smooth arc and is easy-starting," he says. "However, it needs a light on the control panel and electric fuel gauge. The plastic lenses on the gauges clouded over in just two years. I've added a trailer license plate light to the control panel and an electric fuel gauge from the J.C. Whitney Co. I also relocated the battery since you couldn't jump start the welder if you had to in its original position."

Neil also likes his automatic darkening lens from Jackson Products (5801 Safety Drive NE, Belmont, Mich. 49306; ph 800 558-4582). "You couldn't take it away from me without a fight," he says.

Stan Funkhouser, Hobart, Okla.: "It's smooth enough for all farm work," says Stan about his 1991 **Miller** MillerMatic 200 welder. "It'd be smoother with Argon gas instead of CO₂, but CO₂ is a lot cheaper," he says. "I added a longer power cord so I can get to equipment outside.

"A couple years ago, I bought a **Jackson** auto-hood. If you ever use one, you will never want to do without it."

Kevin McWilliams, Columbia, N.J.: The **Miller** Syncro-Wave 331 (stick and TIG) welder he uses "has some of the most advanced circuitry on the market," says Kevin. "It has an amperage range of 2 to 400 amps. It makes welding of thin stainless and aluminums as thin as a soda can, simple. The

machine is so well made and works so well I wouldn't change a single thing about it."

However, he did add an RFC 14-ft. remote amperage control for precise TIG welding and a Miller Coolmate 1 self-contained cooling unit for TIG torch cooling.

For anyone considering purchasing a welder, he has this advice: "The best all-around machine a farmer could own is a MillerMatic 250 MIG welder. Base cost is \$1,600 to \$1,700 but it's capable of fixing anything around the farm providing you use the correct wire and gas."

Fred O. Gibbs, Greeley, Colo.: "It's good around the farm for general repair," says Fred, pleased with his 1994 **Lincoln** AC-DC 225-amp line welder. "It's been a good, reliable unit."

Douglas McGill, Reynolds, Ind.: "Works great" says Douglas about his 1993 **Miller** 200 wire welder. "It needs larger wheels so I can roll it around easier."

Jim Gault, Westhoff, Texas: "I've been well satisfied with this welder even though my rod and gas supplier told me I should get an AC-DC machine," says Jim about his 1995 **Lincoln** AC 225-amp welder. "He said if I ever needed parts for the AC machine I wouldn't be able to get them. I haven't needed any parts yet."

Jerry Hill, Cass City, Mich.: "It's lightweight, operates on 110 volts and I can use it wherever I can stretch an extension cord," says Jerry, "very satisfied" with the **Lincoln** Weld Pak 100 he bought last March. "It does a good job on material up to 3/16 in. thick. I bought it because of its reasonable price and portability."

R. Dennis Miller, Arthur, Ill.: Dennis is well pleased with the **Miller** Bobcat stick



Metal "Facing" System Makes Handy Repairs Of Worn Parts

Building up surfaces on worn parts is a lot cheaper than buying new parts in many cases and this flame "facing" system that installs easily on any oxy fuel cutting torch can do the job quickly and easily.

Cronatron's PyroFacer system consists of a standard CW 2001 torch handle, a PyroSpray attachment and a #20 tip that's suitable for general applications. It has the capacity to deposit 5 lbs. of heated alloy per hour on worn surfaces. The tip rotates 360 degrees to permit spraying interior surfaces.

The PyroSpray attachment works with any of eight special alloy powders, which come in 1 and 2-lb. bottles. The system is ideal for building up worn surfaces on key ways, shafts, clutches, engine blocks, cams, pump impellers, gears, augers, feed screws,

conveyor chains, plow and disc blades.

The system saves machining time because you can shape the metal as you apply it, the company says. A deposit ranging in thickness from .010 to .125 in. can rapidly be laid down, according to the company.

The basic kit, including various tips, two rosebuds for preheating and surfacing, torch handle, PyroFacer attachment, cutting attachment, four check valves, a regulator and a bottle of PyroSpray 860 sells for \$700 to \$800.

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