

## Creative woodworker mills his own lumber

Gordon Adair has always had a thing with wood and using it in and around the house. Gordon shares how he first discovered the Peterson mills: “In the early 90s at my previous house there were six Douglas Fir trees of millable size. I hired a local guy to mill them. He had an older model Peterson mill that was run by a VW engine sitting on a trailer, with hydraulics going from the trailer to the mill. Ever since I saw that mill in operation I’ve wanted to get a Peterson for myself.”

The particular model that Gordon is describing here is a Production Frame (PF). Peterson-branded portable sawmills have been manufactured for over 30 years. As is the case with any innovative company, many design iterations have been tried and tested over the years.



Around 1991, experiments with alternative motive power sources that could be incorporated into a ‘pivoting unit’ were taking place. Since farmers in New Zealand already had tractors, it made sense to utilise this existing power source by using a so-called Power Take Off (PTO) generators, to power a sawmill. As a result a few of these hydraulic PTO-powered machines were sold in the local New Zealand market.

**“Ever since I saw that mill in operation I’ve wanted to get a Peterson for myself”**



Gordon retired from the navy when he was 38 years old, and became a property investor. At nearly 70 years old, he has many wood and tree related stories to tell, like this one: “While inspecting a group builder’s display home, I noticed this beautiful kitchen bench, made out of laminated Rimu. I wanted a bench like that for my own home, but the price (NZ\$6000) put me off. Not much later I decided to subdivide my land and build a new house in my backyard. I had to tear down the

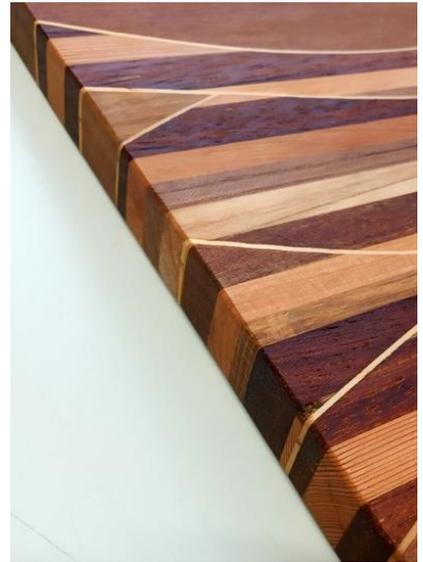
garage next to the original house, to provide access to the back section. This garage was built in the 1920s and was made out of said Rimu. I ended up using the wood and making a kitchen bench for about NZ\$100.”

## MILLER FEATURE

Gordon wanted his own sawmill so that he could cut timber in any desired dimension. Asked why exactly he chose the Peterson brand, Gordon mentions: "I like how the mill is totally portable, I've been able to do several milling projects for friends on location. I also like how the mill fits on the back of my 8x4 ft trailer and how easy it is to set up. I'm not pushing the mill too hard. I don't like having to do the tailing myself, since it interrupts the milling process. Luckily I've got an 83-year old friend who helps out at times."

He's keen to add the planer blade and sanding kit accessories to his toolset, which will give him more control over the quality of the finished boards.

He recently has been milling Redwood and Macrocarpa logs, and is keeping the slabs for future on-selling. Depending on the chosen cutting pattern, one wide slab is attainable from every log with every Peterson swing blade. After milling half way through a log, flip it onto the top of a half sawn log, and continue milling as per normal. If you don't require multiple slabs out of each log this is an accurate, economical method of producing them. You then have the option of leaving a live edge for a rustic look, or flipping the blade to the vertical position and cutting the edge to leave a perfectly square slab.



**"I like how the mill fits on the back of my 8x4 ft trailer and how easy it is to set up"**

Gordon is a long-time hobby woodworker. He loves working with wood and has been making end grain chopping boards on and off over the years. More recently, he came across a website where a Russian woodworker is showing how to make end grain chopping boards showing remarkable 3d effects. Gordon has now begun making these himself: "I give them away to friends. I gave one to the local Menzshed who included it in their Christmas sale. It sold, eventually, and though many admired it most said it was too good to use as a chopping board".



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