

WOOD

14
WAYS TO SAVE A
BUNDLE ON TOOLS p.20

build the ultimate
entertainment center

p.46

short cuts

News and notes from the woodworking world

A \$200 hammer? Yep

While paging through a tool catalog, we found a \$200 claw framing hammer and thought, "What hammer merits that kind of price tag?" Curious, we tested one in the *WOOD* shop and at a construction site.

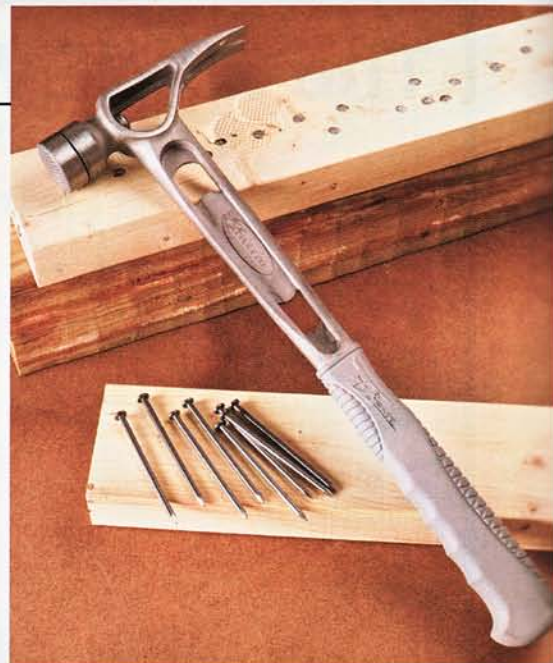
The tool, a model TiBone 15MS, is a 15-ounce, milled-face framing hammer made by Stiletto Tools in Atwater, California. Company president and owner Mark Martinez praised the hammer when asked, "Because it's made of titanium, it's ten times more shock-absorbant than steel," he said. "And it weighs 40 percent less, leading to less arm fatigue. The openings in the head and neck reduce shock, as does the rubberlike handle."

In the shop, we tested it against 22-ounce all-steel and fiberglass-handled hammers that cost \$25 each, driving 16-penny nails in 2x2 and 2x4 stock. "Because the head is

larger and lighter, you need to concentrate more on control during the swing," said Master Craftsman Chuck Hedlund. Chuck also didn't care for the ringing sound created by the titanium or the openings in the head. "I sometimes use the side of a hammer head to drive nails in tight places."

House framer Jacob Tessmer praised the tool, saying "I prefer it over my heavier Estwing framing hammer." He cited advantages in heft and shock absorption. He also liked the magnetic nail-holder for starting nails, saying he could nail faster with the Tibone. "I can set the spike with the first smack, drive it home with the next," he said.

So is the TiBone 15MS worth \$200? For the long-term professional framer, we'd have to say "yes," particularly if there's



This titanium hammer, with its interchangeable smooth or milled face, cost a bundle, but may be worth it for the professional framer.

concern about joint pain. To learn more about Stiletto's hammers, call 800/987-1849, or visit store.stilettotools.com.

18 habits of
successful
woodworkers p.70

Perfectionist's
guide to
airtight joints p.74

