

# Veritas Bevel-down Bench Planes

Blade carrier helps to preserve cap-iron settings with ease.

When Veritas redesigned its bevel-down bench planes, the Canadian company started from scratch. Released in the fall of 2014, these tools share almost no DNA with the company's previous generation.

And, in the Veritas tradition, the company's engineers also chucked tradition when designing these planes. As a result, there are a lot of new things to talk about here. Let's start with the geometry.

For the first time in the history of the craft, you can buy these bench planes with a frog milled at every working angle between 40° and 65° in half-degree increments. There are three standard-size frogs (40°, 45° and 55°, but oddly, no 50°). Ordering a custom angle adds \$10 and a little time to the process.

So expert plane users can get exactly what they want. Beginners will probably stick with a 45° frog, though I would recommend spending the extra \$10 and get a 50° frog for your smoothing plane if you like curly wood.

You can also customize the knob and tote that come with your plane. There are two kinds of totes (standard and traditional) that are each available in three sizes (small, medium and large). I ordered a traditional tote in medium based on the company's recommendations. After trying other handles during a woodworking show, I prefer the small



**New technology.** The "blade carrier" allows you to use the plane with or without a cap iron, and makes setting the cap iron a snap.



traditional tote. So you might consider stepping down a size when you order.

The front knob is available in three shapes—standard, mushroom and tall—that reflect the three common types on many metallic bench planes.

And if that's not enough, you can also decide if you want O1 tool steel or the proprietary PM-V11 (spring for the PM-V11; it's nice). And, of course, you get to decide what length the sole is, from a No. 4 (9½") up to a No. 7 (22").

I purchased a No. 4 from the company, and I've spent about a month with it. There are some things I like and others that are odd. Let's get the odd out of the way. The rear tote is farther back on these tools than on a traditional Bailey-style plane—it was a full 1" back compared to my Stanley No. 4. So my index finger has to stretch to reach the blade on the Veritas. That feels weird, but I'll get used to it.

Second oddity: The traditional tote is more shapely than previous Veritas totes, but it could go further. The flats on the tote don't need to be there. I will remedy that myself with a rasp.

Those complaints aside, the heart of the plane—the frog, blade, cap iron and mouth—are quite incredible, both well-made and well thought-out. You can use the plane with or without a cap iron; that's because Veritas re-

signed the way the cap iron and iron are fastened together with what it calls a "blade carrier."

The other amazing thing about the blade carrier is it allows you to preserve a particular cap-iron setting while sharpening. So if you use a closely set cap iron, the tool's blade carrier will allow you to drop it into that same favored position with incredible ease.

(One nit to pick: The plane's instructions are a little backward in my opinion when it comes to setting the cap iron. See my online video for details.)

If you are waging a personal war on tear-out, you'll also appreciate the way the mouth is opened and closed—it's just like on the company's bevel-up planes and block planes. The design allows you to quickly adjust the mouth with a twist of the front knob.

Price-wise, these planes are a bargain for what you get, from \$269 for a basic No. 4 to \$389 for a custom No. 7. They are Canadian-made and backed by Veritas's excellent customer service. My small complaints aside, these planes are winners, both for beginners and demanding users.

— Christopher Schwarz

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## Veritas Custom Planes

Lee Valley Tools ■ [leevalley.com](http://leevalley.com) or 800-871-8158

Street price ■ from \$269 to \$389

■ VIDEO See how Christopher Schwarz prefers to adjust the cap iron on this plane.

Prices correct at time of publication.