



Machine Operator
Chris Duval

Log Handler
None

Time
16 min. 31 sec.

Cords Processed
1.5

Cords/Hour
5.4

Woodbine Rapido Loco

SEEING THE NEWEST machines is always a big attraction at the Firewood Competition. However, more than one untested machine has taken its place on the field, only to fall victim to some unforeseen problem. It was not until after he had shut down his machine that CRD Metalworks owner Chris Duval revealed that his newest creation—the “Rapido Loco”—was a prototype with less than one hour of running time! “A week before the show a lot of the machine was still in boxes,” he recalled.

Encouraged by Woodbine’s successful demonstration in the 2007 Firewood Competition, Chris Duval went back to the drawing board to come up with two new designs—the smaller “Woodbine Jr.,” and the much larger “Rapido Loco.” At 11,400 pounds, the “Loco” muscled its way in among the other heavyweights. The 66-hp John Deere diesel engine (models now feature 84-hp JD diesel) ran the hydraulics for all the functions—most notably

the sawmill-size 5-foot-diameter cut-off saw with inserted teeth. A key advantage to the circular blade is that, regardless of log size, cutting speed remains the same.

Sitting that close to a blade that size would be unsettling to most people, but the operator is out of line with the blade, and a Plexiglas window stands between the sawyer and the saw. Sitting in the shade of the oversized umbrella that is available with all his firewood processors, Chris had total confidence in the machine and focused on keeping everything moving in proper sequence.

A three-pump stacked hydraulic unit is one reason the machine lives up to its name. The first pump in the unit is extremely large and provides the splitter with approximately 30 tons of splitting force. The second pump is devoted solely to powering the 5-foot saw blade that spins at 1,000 rpm. The third pump powers the machine’s accessories—including the conveyer, the wedge, and the live

A PARTICIPANT IN



deck. The end result is a splitter with an astonishing 3-second splitting time—even with the 8-way wedge used at the Firewood Competition.

The key to the splitter's speed is its electric auto-cycle with a manual override, a unique system developed by Chris Duval that is now included on all large Woodbine models. Once

the operator pushes the “split” button, the machine takes care of the rest. This left Chris free to turn his attention to advancing the log for the next cut and activating the huge cutoff saw. “One piece went into the splitting trough sideways, and I went ahead and split it that way to see if the machine could handle it.” The hydraulic pump kicked into

low gear, and wood yielded to steel. Chris continued without delay.

Going from the original model of Woodbine to the Rapido Loco must have been like going from a Buick to a Ferrari. For Chris, it was a rocky start. “I was not used to the speed of it,” admitted Chris. “It was too fast for the amount of

time I had run it.” Once he got a feel for the controls and settled into a rhythm of cutting and splitting, he made up for lost time. Most of the logs were only half the 24-inch diameter, 24-foot length that the machine is designed to handle, so there were no challenges in that regard. In fact, all 15 logs fit comfortably on the live deck, so there was no need for reloading the deck during the competition. For Chris, it was a one-man show.

Chris built the Rapido Loco in response to the strong demand he sees for large commercial firewood processors. “This machine is designed for the professional firewood producer,” he explained. Still, but isn't it crazy to show a prototype machine to the public with less than an hour of testing? Maybe—“loco como zorro” (crazy like a fox). ■

