

Excerpts from Masonry Magazine, April 2007:

## Finding the Right Mixer

By Cory Sekine-Pettite

Dependable. Hard-working. Resilient. Well-mannered. These are all qualities that every employer strives to find in their employees. And every company can have at least one "employee" like this — just find the right portable mortar mixer. As many mason contractors can attest, buying a good mortar mixer is a major step toward increased productivity, expanding your business opportunities, and growing your profitability.

### The Basics

The basic rule of thumb is: If you're going to be mixing more than one bag of mortar on a job, you need to have a mixer. Not only will the machine save you time, but it also will provide for a more consistent mix. And should you end up with more work or jobs than your crew can handle — every contractor's dream — then renting additional mixing equipment always is an option. And like every other piece of light construction equipment on the market, prices vary greatly for rental and ownership, so it is up to the mason contractor to determine what his or her needs are.



Jim Swisher, owner of Buddy Equipment in Jacksonville, Fla., said hydraulic mixers "give a contractor an ability he's never had before, especially at some job sites where they want to mix their own grout." Swisher sees these machines as a technological improvement for the industry, but for most mason contractors, "the father and son masonry crews," belt-driven mixers will remain the machine of choice.

The less expensive, belt-driven systems are the bread and butter for most mason contractors. Some of these machines may require a bit more attention, such as regular maintenance and replacement of worn parts, such as gears and belts, but they are the true workhorses of the masonry industry and continue to outsell all other powered mortar mixers.

So how do the various manufacturers, who are using similar engines, differentiate themselves from the competition? One way is through the engine housing or engine cap design.

For example, Buddy Equipment's new engine cap design allows his mixer to be operated with the engine cap closed. In fact, OSHA requirements mandate that engine caps be closed while the mixers are in use, but frequently crews ignore this mandate for

convenience sake. Swisher said: "Because it is inconvenient for the engine caps to be closed because of the way they are designed, most people operate their mixers with the engine caps open."

Also, the front part of Buddy's new engine cap design encloses all of the mixer's drive components. This cabinet, therefore, keeps debris away from these components and promotes longer life for the mixer. Swisher said this innovation would make a major contribution to portable mortar mixer design.

There also are theft deterrent systems to think about, such the ability to remove one [such as the Locking Leg] or both wheels, and those mixers with forklift attachments that simply can be kept off the ground away from temptation.

Regardless of your needs or preferences, there is sure to be a mortar mixer on the market that is destined to become one of your favorite "employees." And while most manufacturers may take a similar approach to designing and building their mixers, each company is able to carve a niche for itself with its line of machines. Remember, competition breeds innovation, which benefits the customers or end-users. Like Swisher says, if there is just one dog in the race, it is not a race.



**Buddy in the operating position....engine cab closed with access to all engine controls makes this possible!**