

# *Never Have a Bad Reed Again! How to Make and Adjust Your Own Clarinet Reeds*

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*Dr. Laura Armstrong – Mount St. Mary's University, Frederick Community College –  
Aurora Winds*

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## **Cane Selection**

- **French cane from the Var region**
  - Marion, Rigotti, Donati
  - There are many other cane plantations as well
    - Marion and Rigotti cane – about 50 €/kilo
- **Check the diameter of the cane**
  - AW Reedmaking Tools diameter gauge - \$30
  - circle diameter sheet from a craft store, in millimeters

## **Making a Blank**

- **Make sure you are wearing gloves**
- **Split the cane**
  - Chisel and rubber mallet - \$15-20
  - Reeds n' Stuff Cane splitter – 127 € (probably not worth it)
- **Locate the straightest and flattest sections**
- **Measuring/trimming cane**
  - Stanley clamping miter box with saw - \$15
    - Pros – cheap
    - Cons – makes the cane split, hands can cramp up, not very precise cuts
  - Coping saw and vice - \$15-\$20
    - Pros – cheap and safe, does not hurt hands
    - Cons – takes a long time to measure, less precise cuts
  - Reed guillotine – Reeds n' Stuff
- **Planing/gouging**
  - Greg James planer (can include a vamp cutter) - \$150
    - Needs a block plane – Veritas low angle block plane - \$155
    - Custom order
- **Shaping**
  - Greg James shaper and holder – approx. \$200
    - Additional shapers are \$180
    - Need to use a chisel – Lee Valley - \$15
  - Reed Machine shaper (labeled as a profiler) - \$200
    - Needs a chisel or utility knife
  - Reeds n' Stuff shaping machine - 897 €
    - 1-2 months (mine took almost 6 months!)
    - Includes its own blades
    - Shapes any size single reed from E-flat clarinet to Baritone saxophone

- **Sanding**
  - Plate glass - \$5-10
  - Sandpaper of various grits (220, 400, 600 at least)
    - Norton 3X ProSand – box of 20 sheets \$14-\$20
  - Constantly check the thickness of the blank
    - Digital calipers - \$20

### Preparing a Blank for Profiling

- **Pre-made clarinet blanks (if not making your own)**
- **Pre-profiling**
  - Utility knife - \$6
  - Reeds n' Stuff Pre-profiler cutter - 200 €

### Profiling

- **Profiling machines**
  - Reedual - \$995 – can copy all single reeds
    - Requires sandpaper and vacuum cleaner
    - Norton 3X ProSand – 220 grit - \$14/20 sheets
  - Reed Machine
  - AW Reedmaking Tools Reed Profiler RPM 82 - \$1700
    - Includes a guide of your choice, extra guide sizes (tenor, etc. are \$240)

### Testing Results/Adjusting

- **Testing results with a reed gauge**
  - Jeanne Reed Gauge - \$325
    - get one that reads in millimeters
  - PerfectaReed - \$300
    - All single reeds, only measures in inches
- **Clipping/trimming**
  - Cordier - \$40-\$50
  - Vandoren - \$140
- **Adjusting**
  - ReedGeek - \$65
  - Reed knife - \$50-\$100
  - Sandpaper – see above

### Optional Reed-Making Techniques/Steps

- **Hardness tester**
  - Reeds n' Stuff – 420 €
- **Density testing**
  - Scientific scale - \$35

## **Recommended Resources**

Guy, Larry. *Selection, Adjustment, and Care of Single Reeds: A Handbook for Clarinetists and Saxophonists*.

Opperman, Kalmen. *Handbook for Making and Adjusting Single Reeds*.

Ormand, Fred. *The Single Reed Adjustment Manual*.

Reed, Ray. *The Saxophone Reed: The Advanced Art of Adjusting Single Reeds*.

Rötter, James. *A Guide to the Art of Adjusting Saxophone Reeds*.

Montague, Michael J, and Tina Ward. "Reeds: Good or Bad? It's in the Cane – An Inside View of *Arundo donax*." *The Clarinet* 40, no. 1 (December 2012): 62-65.

Clarinet Reedmaking – [www.clarinetreedmaking.com](http://www.clarinetreedmaking.com)

Earspasm Music. "How to Work on Clarinet/Sax Reeds Like a Pro!" YouTube video

## **Tool and Tube Cane Suppliers**

- AW Reedmaking Tools – [www.aw-woodwinds.eu](http://www.aw-woodwinds.eu)
  - Reed Profiler RPM82, guides, and reed blanks
- Precision Reed Products – [www.reedual.com](http://www.reedual.com)
  - Reedual single reed profiler, planer and shaper
- The Reed Machine – [www.thereedmachine.net](http://www.thereedmachine.net)
  - Reed Machine, planer, profilers
- Reeds n' Stuff – [www.reedsnstuff.com](http://www.reedsnstuff.com)
  - Shapers, gouging machines, cane guillotine, reed blanks, hardness tester
- Lee Valley Tools – [www.leevalley.com](http://www.leevalley.com)
  - Veritas low angle block plane, chisels, sandpaper
- Woodcraft – [www.woodcraft.com](http://www.woodcraft.com)
  - Woodriver low angle block plane
- Jeanné Inc. – [www.jeanne-inc.com](http://www.jeanne-inc.com)
  - Jeanne reed gauge
- The Reed Wizard – [www.reedwizard.com](http://www.reedwizard.com)
  - PerfectaReed reed gauge
- Reeds Online – [www.reedsonline.fr](http://www.reedsonline.fr)
  - Marion and Rigotti tube cane, reed blanks
- Donati Reeds – [www.donati-reeds.com](http://www.donati-reeds.com)
  - Tube cane – need to contact directly to order

## **Contact Information**

Dr. Laura Armstrong

Adjunct Professor of Clarinet and Saxophone – Mount St. Mary's University, Frederick Community College

Owner - Aurora Winds

[reeds@aurora-winds.com](mailto:reeds@aurora-winds.com)