

Hammocks by Haddock

A blind craftsman in North Carolina has woven quality hammocks for more than 25 years — without dropping a single stitch.

The art of hammock weaving usually takes a sharp eye, a skilled hand and an abundance of patience, but in the case of Lenwood Haddock, a lack of sight actually works to his advantage. His highly trained and sensitive hands are acutely aware of every step of the intricate process, and since he began his craft in 1986, he has woven approximately 130,000 perfect hammocks.

Haddock completely lost his sight during a hunting accident in 1973 when he was 18 years old. “My whole working career has been blind,” he says. He found a job as a woodworker with a

couch and went to sleep. I lift weights, but I wasn’t as tough as I thought I was. You have to learn the coordination.”

In time, however, Haddock got into a good working rhythm and found that he had a knack for the job. In the beginning, he worked on-site at the company, but after a year or two, he moved his operation to his workshop next to his house where he had toiled for 10 years during his woodworking days.

The process of weaving a hammock involves making and catching hundreds of loops, and a single missed stitch creates a hole that can widen and make the hammock uncomfortable or even dangerous to use. Even experienced weavers drop stitches from time to time, but to his company’s knowledge, Haddock has never turned in a hammock with a missed stitch. With his left thumb physically touching every loop of rope, his nimble fingers are quick to catch and remedy any mistakes.

Haddock weaves his hammocks using cotton, polyester or DuraCord rope in a variety of sizes. His company pre-measures the rope for each hammock and wraps it onto a wooden rope needle so it’s prepped and ready for Haddock’s use. About once a week, a courier from the company stops by to drop off new supplies and pick up the stack of finished products, which can total between 100 and 120 a week. From there, other



craftspeople assemble the rope bodies onto white-oak spreader bars and add the necessary weather-resistant hardware for hanging.

Since Haddock began with Hatteras Hammocks 26 years ago, the company has grown and acquired other brands, and was renamed The HammockSource to embrace the growing family of hammock brands and styles. Today, it is the world’s largest manufacturer and seller of hammocks, all built by hand with quality materials.

Through all the changes, Haddock’s routine has altered little, though he now focuses his work on the Original Pawleys Island brand of hammocks in The HammockSource family. Working back and forth across the rows, looping the rope and pulling and tightening it to create a uniform product, he continues to dedicate himself to producing a perfect hammock with every single one he starts. And in doing so, he uses his blindness to his advantage. “I’m not sure how sighted people do it,” he admits. Haddock’s hammocks range from \$160 to \$200. **CBC**



vocational program for the blind, but when that organization closed down, the North Carolina state services for the blind connected him with Hatteras Hammocks.

On his first day of work, “I did a total of one hammock,” Haddock laughs. “And then I came home and laid on the

contact

The HammockSource
800-334-1078
thehammocksource.com