I tried something different...thoughts?

Posted by WayneReimer - 07 Sep 2012 09:24

Most of the knives in my collection fall into the more "tactical" styling, and I pocket carry at least one per day. I use all of my knives regularly, and none too gently, so my needs for an edge are dictated by overall usability, sharpness, and durability. Appearance (i.e. polish) is a secondary concern.

I have a number of Striders of various sizes depending on the job I may need to do. Lately, I've been carrying a mini SJ75 a lot. This is a bit of a polarizing design; some love it, some hate it (looks wise), but the ergonomics are superb, and it's a tremendous little knife. The problem is that it's a knife that, to me anyway, screams for a polished edge, so of course you lose a bit of cutting ability with a good polish. I should mention that my standard for a good polish is different than many of you; for me a good polish stops at 1000 grit, with stropping to 1 micron followed by bare kangaroo leather.

Yesterday, I re-profiled this knife from 22 degrees per side to 20, and took it to my "polished" standard. It was extremely sharp, however I'd lost the tooth that I like to have for things like zip-ties, etc.

In an attempt to solve this, I re-mounted the knife (I use a Field and Sport, BTW), set the arms at 22 degrees (remember the knife is now at 20 degrees) and did one pass, tip to heel with a 1000 grit stone.

There is no visible difference, naked eye. With a ten power loupe I can see it pass, but barely. Cutting performance however is improved. I have some tooth back and cutting zip-ties (which I seem to be doing a lot of lately) is noticeably easier.

My question is this; what other ideas do you have for having a polished edge that still has some tooth? I've tried stopping at a lover grit stone and stropping from there, but the toothiness is muted by the stropping. It seems to me that re-introducing some fresh tooth after the strop like this gives a bit more "bite" to the cut, but I'm sure curious about others experiences

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Re: I tried something different...thoughts?

Posted by KenBuzbee - 08 Sep 2012 12:36

PhilipPasteur wrote:

Did you read my entire post? A big part of what I was getting at was that convexing (good) is not the same as rounding the edge (bad).

I micro convex all of the time with the strops and like the results.

Ken, what specific photos are you referring to. Clay has posted a whole bunch of them. It is helpful to have a spesfic reference when talking about things.

Okay, thanks Phil. From the post I quoted.... I was just double checking. It's all good.

Photos like this one are all through some of Clays posts:

but it sounds like we're on the same page.

Ken

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Re: I tried something different...thoughts?

Posted by WayneReimer - 08 Sep 2012 13:07

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Phil, no worries, I understood what you were getting at.I could have been clearer in what I was/am trying to accomplish with this specific edge.

While I have a couple of "testbed" knives that I'm trying to attain the sharpest and most polished edge possible

(a 7in. USMC Ka-Bar and an Emerson Gentleman Jim), with this knife I'm shooting for the most

effective "real world" edge I can get.

In terms of defining that goal, since I will likely be carrying the SJ75 frequently, I want to achieve a good, all round cutting edge; one that I can cut a sandwich and peel and apple at lunch, cut through a dozen zip-ties, open mail, break down a shipping package, etc. and do similar tasks for 2 to 4 days without significant degradation in it's cutting ability.

I know I can attain a much sharper edge on this knife, I also know it will be much more fragile, leading to daily maintenance which I may not have time (or inclination for that matter) to perform.

With both the Emerson and the Ka-Bar, I've been able to achieve tremendously sharp, polished edges. Although I've got 50 years of freehand sharpening under my belt, and am pretty darn good at it, I've never had sharper knives than these two are currently. Could they be even sharper? Almost certainly, but I doubt it with the stones and strops I currently have. As it is now, they both make me somewhat uneasy, especially the Ka-Bar, because they're so sharp.

But, as I said...these are "experiments". the Ka-bar dulls quite quickly. It's certainly still sharp, but it loses that "laser-like" quality easily. The Emerson holds onto the edge longer, but it's still not something I'd rely on as a sole EDC blade; the edge is fragile and I'm quite sure it would chip or roll over with vigorous use. It's all a juggling act, me thinks!

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Re: I tried something different...thoughts?

Posted by ApexGS - 08 Sep 2012 13:58

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I've done some experiments of my own lately on my Hogue EX01, which is a fantastically tough 154CM blade I've taken to chopping thick encroaching weeds and even small saplings with until I get some beefier hardware for brush clearing. I've tried a few different angle offsets on the strops (I only have the 3.5 and 5 on regular leather) and noticed the feel of the edge is quite different compared to same-angle stropping. I've been leaning toward leaving the angle the same, as it seems to me to give more of a razor-sharp feel to it and performs better for my uses. Interestingly, as far as "feel" goes the decreased angle stropped edge doesn't have the "sticky" sort of sharpness you can feel very clearly, though the cutting ability is still extremely good.

Having read over most of the posts I'm going to have to pick up something to peek at the edge better and experiment with micro bevels as well. I think the combination of polished edge and a toothy micro bevel will be perfect for most of my daily uses.

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