Why water stones?

Posted by Scott Sherman - 20 Oct 2012 08:42

I just recently became a devotee of self sharpening a couple of months ago. Before that, I thought only experts could sharpen my knives because there was such a dizzying array of methods and materials by which it could be done and until somewhat recently, it was all done freehand by craftsmen who probably learned at the hand of other experienced craftsmen.

Enter guided systems like WE (and others) which made expert results obtainable by inexperienced, unskilled knife collectors or someone with a collection of dull kitchen knives which is what got me started. So now I have bought into this WE system and decided to get a PP2. The PP2 was put together at a time when the 1200-1600 ceramic stone was not available due to some production problems (which now seem to have been resolved). This left a gap in the progression of abrasives between the 1000 grit diamond stone and the next available micro fine ceramic stone which shipped as part of the PP2.

Because of that gap, I began to consider the available options including the Chosera water stones made for the Wicked Edge guided rod system. The 2000-3000 and 5000 -10000 sets would very capably fill that gap but going from the proprietary (easy to use) WE stones to the Japanese water stones was messy and the stones have different dimensions making it more complicated to set the bevel etc.

However, having said all that, I have noticed among some here in this forum, there is a preference for using the water stones and I could not help but wonder why. So I would love to hear from those who prefer and use the water stones or who are considering buying them or perhaps you bought them to fill the gap and no longer use them because the 1200-1600 ceramic stone is now available. I would appreciate it if you could share your thoughts and experiences. What do you like about them? Do you regret getting them or if you did would you never consider using the diamond and ceramics. Perhaps you only use water stones, would you also get some of the diamond or ceramics now to supplement your water stones?

I know there is a different feedback and user experience with water stones , but to my untrained eye, you seem to be able to obtain about the same results with the dry, easier to use diamond and ceramic stones, or am I missing something? I am guessing that some here only used water stones freehand before the guided rods were introduced and liked being able to use them with the new rod system and just stuck with the water stones. If so, what is your feelings about diamond and ceramic stones vs water stones?

Thanks for your feedback and insight I am hoping others here are also curious and may learn something here.

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Re: Why water stones?
Posted by PhilipPasteur - 06 Nov 2012 22:42

I will be very interested to hear what you think...

It took me about 8 to 10 months to make myself spring for the whole set. I started with the 400/600 and the 800/1000. I had nothing beyond the 1000 diamonds. I think that you will be very impressed with the edge after the 1000 Chosera. I often leave it at that ...with a bit of stropping. A nice edge.

A bit of tooth, but with a decent amount of reflectivity.

Phil

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Re: Why water stones?
Posted by Scott Sherman - 06 Nov 2012 23:13

Geocyclist wrote:

I jumped in all the way and got them all. My initial thought was 800/1000 and 2k/3k were enough. Based on a lot of feedback I decided to get the 400/600 to back that course to get the diamond scratches out. After that I decided might as well get the 5k/10k too. At least those should save some stropping time. Probably still a good decision, may not use 10k on every knife but probably will use 5k all the time.

WOW! That is way cool.

I will also be very interested in your experiences with them. I sure hope you will share what you learn. I really wanted to get some Chosera's but could not pop for the full set since I am soooooo heavily invested in my PP2 + several extra strops, and two extra sets of ceramics and the 50/80 stones. I was playing with the idea of getting just a set of 5k/10k Chosera's to finish off my mirrored blades after the ceramics. So it will be very interesting to me to hear if you think you actually need to go through the whole Chosera progression or just use the 5k/ 10k after the ceramics to get a nice mirror. Anyway, enjoy and know that I am at least a little jealous.

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Re: Why water stones?
Posted by Geocyclist - 07 Nov 2012 20:19

PhilipPasteur wrote:

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A bit of tooth, but with a decent amount of reflectivity.

Phil

I am interested to see the difference between a "bit of tooth" vs. very fine. I will have to post my findings. Before I pulled the trigger on these I read some as well about plain bench choseras. They have very good reputation among hand sharpeners as well.

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Re: Why water stones?

Posted by PhilipPasteur - 07 Nov 2012 20:32

[quote="Geocyclist" post=6893]**PhilipPasteur wrote:**

I am interested to see the difference between a "bit of tooth" vs. very fine. I will have to post my findings. Before I pulled the trigger on these

I read some as well about "**plain bench chasers".** They have very good reputation among hand sharpeners as well.

plain bench chasers".

What is that? Not ...hopefully not to show too vividly my ignorance... but I have not seen that term...

Bench strop perhaps?

Phil

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Re: Why water stones?
Posted by Geocyclist - 07 Nov 2012 20:36

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Sorry, spell checker got me. I meant plain bench choseras. Just plain chosera stones for hand sharpening.

Chasers would also be interesting.

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Re: Why water stones?
Posted by PhilipPasteur - 11 Nov 2012 23:02

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OK...OK.

I said something in another thread.. I am working on it.

I spent a buch of time over the weekend re-working the B75P blade.

I went back to the 600 dimaonds, then 800/1000 then the 1200/1600 ceramics,

then the micro-fine fine and course. I took photos at something like 200X.

I then went "back" to the 1000 Choseras, then 2K, then 3K, then 5K, 10K, then the 12K Naniwa Superstone.

Vey interesting results. I took about 100 pics trying to tease out details. I hope that what I got will be intersting to anyone looking at waterstones.

While doing this I start to really, really appreciate what Clay does. This stuff takes a whole bunch of time.

Now that I have the photos, I have to go back and label them properly, then upload them, then compose a message where they are in the right order and I can comment on them..

I will do it though ☺

Just a teaser, here is a photo after I went through the 600 to 1000 grit diamonds and the four levels of ceramics. The bevel was pretty reflective.. can read print reflected in it, just not real clearly. It is a great edge that cuts like crazy... just not a real hyper reflective mirror edge..

More to come !

Phil

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Re: Why water stones?

Posted by PhilipPasteur - 11 Nov 2012 23:14

One more while I am awake... this is after going "back" to the 1K choseras.

You will see the scratches that show that I tried Clay's suggestion about attacking the scratches from different angles. I did about 75 edge trailing stokes, then 75 edge leading strokes, then about 30 edge trailing strokes... you can see the scratches...

Notice the scratches are not all that different than the 0.6 micron ceramic scratches. On a macro level, at this point the edge was noticeably more reflective...

Later I will catergorize and rename all of the photos and uploade them to photobucket so I can just link them...

Phil

BTW, we are talking about maybe 200 to 250 X here. I have a set of three extension tubes between the body and the lense... a 24 to 85 mm macro lense... at max zoom, then a 10X magnifier on the front. I looked at formulas, ran them and came out around 250X... not an exact science for me.. too many variables. If anything, at this magnification it gives a better perspective on what you see. There is more blade in view, and ..after all, we can't see at 500 or 2500X. When you pick up your knife and look at the edge, well you see what your eyes show. You cut ..what you cut..and know how that works..

☺

More to come...

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Re: Why water stones?
Posted by mark76 - 12 Nov 2012 05:20

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Very nice pictures, Phil!

Interesting, particularly in the last photograph, is the line about half-way the edge. It is as if the edge has been sharpened at two slightly different angles. I noticed that in some of my photographs, too. But I never noticed it until people here started talking about the slight play in the joints of the “old” arm rods. Are you using these? Or did you do this on purpose to create a multi-beveled edge?

A nice thing of the ball joints is that this play has disappeared. Not that it matters a bit in practice. I guess Clay just did this for people who like to stare at edges under their microscopes
:)
(And, yes, I'd be the first to agree that's a weird deviation

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Re: Why water stones?
Posted by wickededge - 12 Nov 2012 08:27

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Those look great Phil, I can't wait to see more!

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Re: Why water stones?
Posted by PhilipPasteur - 12 Nov 2012 08:42

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Wel it will be tonight before I can make much progress on this project. I am at work now.

As we will see, it is very interesting how the lighting brings out features differently. I took some with just ambient lighting, some with bounce flash, and some at a steep angle to the blade (mostly to show reflectivity). At one point it got to where the ambient pics showed nothing but a featureless smooth surface. I then used the flash with a difuser that was angled up and back bouncing off of the white ceiling. This revealed all kinds of sctratches that just werent visible previously.I even took some that should be interesting, but I only reviewed them on the camera. I focused on the reflection of a tree about 20 feet away as reflected in the edge after the 12K Superstones. Definitely different if nothing else

This was a lot of fun to play with, but take a great deal of time. It makes me admire and appreciate the studies that Clay does just that much more.

Mark, I noticed the indications of different angles as well. I do have the new ball joint arms. I adjusted the angle a bit between the superfine and microfine stones, but thought that I simply set it at 18 degrees each time. I was trying to be careful, perhaps the angle cube tolerances ended up being stacked against me. This goes away when I go higher in grit.

I do really like the stuff that Clay does at 500 /800 and 2500. We can really see what is going on at each grit. Sometimes I get lost in the scale at that magnification though. I really set out to let people see the difference that the Chosera stones make in the appearance of the edge at the macro level while tying it is with the scratch pattern. I just like this scale better, for that, and was able to get better and more consistent results than with my Veho. One I get them all up, I will really want to hear what you all think.

Phil

Phil

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