

Subject: : Gear Talk

Topic: : Spring assist locking knife

Re: Spring assist locking knife

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URL:

Quote:

Both SOG and Kershaw are fine blades. The Kershaw seems to sharpen more easily for me but I have them both. Guys who know the most about knives(not me) seem to sharpen them often.

I can tell you that Kershaw uses multiple blade steels, as do most knife companies.

Someone mentioned a Kershaw Scallion, I believe, which uses 420HC. This is a "medium" grade steel. Very common, not anything special, but a pretty decent blade steel. Certainly a fair step up from the \$30 kitchen knife sets and so forth (those are usually 440A or 440B). Buck knives use an awful lot 420HC. It's kind of a standard in the "nice, but not super" blade steel market. It's not top of the line, but put that steel on an otherwise well designed knife, and it'll do everything 95% of the population ever needs from their knives, and do it well.

The ability to sharpen a knife to "scary" sharp has more to do with the processing of the steel, rather than the chemistry of the steel itself. The really high end steels are often made via powder metallurgy. My company (branded CTS for knife steels) makes a few grades via powder (examples are CTS-20CP, CTS-XHP). Crucible (CPM) is a big player. CPM-S30V is a popular one, and CPM-S90V is a step above in performance (and a step below in how easy it is to work with for the knife maker).

There is generally an inverse relationship between the ability to hold an edge, and how easy it is to sharpen. It's not a perfect correlation, though, it is possible for a really good steel to buck the trend and hold an edge well AND be able to be sharpened relatively easily. But overall, it's a trade off. Higher carbon, and especially vanadium, lead to better edge holding ability. But to get that, you lose something in toughness (easier to break the blade), it's harder to sharpen, and likely less stainless as well.

And then there are "working edge" vs. scary sharp edges. What you call "sharp" very much depends your definition of "sharp." Are you satisfied if it can gut a deer well enough? Or do you want to whittle hair? But there are blades which lose the scary sharp edge quickly, but hold a good working edge for a long time. Others hold a scary sharp edge for longer, but once they start dulling they get dull real quick. This kind of thing has more to do with the blade profile than the steel itself. So it's well out of my realm of expertise, I'm not a knife maker.