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HIGO NOKAMI





I- From left, the Primavera (Spring), Estate (Summer), Autunno (Autumn), and Inverno (Winter) knives

2-A detail of the right side of the Primavera with the chirping sparrows and the Eastern pink rose mother-pearl

ften, when we hear "The four seasons" our minds take us to the Italian composer and violinist Antonio Vivaldi. This time, instead, we want to propose you "Il cimento dell'armonia e dell'inventione" (The Contest Between Harmony and Invention - set of 12 concertos by Antonio Vivaldi) created by master knifemaker Attilio Morotti (www.atti-

knives.com) together with the famous engraver Gianfranco Pedersoli (www. gianfrancopedersoliengraver.it). Four small folding daggers (the Atti model is the Thunder Dagger), each with a different type of mother-pearl and each with a specific engraving having landscapes that varies as the seasons do. The project is the idea of a private collector (who prefers to stay anonymous), friend of both craftsman. While peaking through the typical materials available during knife shows, he noticed that the various florescences of the mother-pearl range from the pink, to the yellow, to the green and end in the white. As a fan of the twins knives, while making conjectures with Atti and Gianfranco on what can be done that



3- A detail of the Estate engraving (right side) the handle is Indian yellow mother-pearl and a duck on the foreground

hasn't already created, they came to the idea of producing a set of knives of four knives.

Each mother-pearl has been matched to a season and each knife has been pertinently engraved. Common denominator is the front side that carries in the foreground a bird, whereas on the back there is the landscape typical of season. Springs carries the eastern pink rose mother-pearl, and

an engraving inspired by the words of Giacomo Leopardi depicting how the song of the solitary sparrow enveloped by country flowers comes together with the chirping of the other birds creating a melodic sound that spreads out in the valley.

Summer carries the yellow Indian mother-pearl, with strong and sunny shades and duck on the foreground kissed by the warm summer rays. The typical serenity of lazy day surrounded by the water-lilies in the sunlit pond.

Autumns has the colors of the Tahiti mother-pearl. In a dreamy landscape, a wood-pecker is engraved while stashing away nuts for feeding the offspring during winter time.

And lastly, winter holds the premium Australian mother-pearl. The snowy owl invites us to admire the rigid winter climate in the pure-white snowy mountains.

THUNDER DAGGER

Author: Attilio "Atti" Morotti,

www.atti-knives.com Lock: liner-lock Length: 200 mm

Blade: RWL34 stainless steel **Handle:** 416 stainless steel

Spacer: stainless steel and gold plated

liners carved with a file

Scales: file engraved mother-pearls

with 18k gold pin

4- Autunno (right side of the picture) has the colors of the Tahiti mother-pearl and has engraved a wood-pecker while stashing away in the tree some nuts



FIXED BLADE

EVOLUTION

Many readers may recall the Maserin 987 Siberian Knife, with its unmistakable shapes and scent of other times. The new Tusk keeps its main characteristics, using modern construction technique and materials, apt for a military use of the modern times

by Tommaso Rumici





I. The new Maserin Tusk is strongly related to the preceding Siberian Knife designed again by Lilin. In its respect, it uses materials more suitable to contemporary military purposes

2. The brand on the blade are few, small and very readable, Nicolai Lilin signed as Kolima. The blade is in N690Co has a stone-washed finishing that promises to properly hide the signs of use

The new Tusk is the result of the second collaboration between Maserin cutlery and Nicolai Lilin, author of the book "Siberian education", by which Gabriele Salvatores got inspired for his movie with the same name. The relation with the first project, the famous 987 Siberian Knife, is quite clear even though the two models cannot be confused. Even if it recalls the winding shapes of its predecessor, the new fixed is more compact and readier for a military use, as the disappearance



3. The Kydex sheath seen on the first samples has been replaced by a more compact Nylon casing, with a plastic core. Belt fastener aside, on the back there is a M.O.L.L.E. system. The entire system, retention lanyards included, is ambidextrous

of wood and shiny surfaces testifies and have been repalced by G10 and a stone-washed finishing.

The blade is in Böhler N690Co, shorter and wider compared to the predecessor, with stronger curves and a slightly upward tip.

The first part of the cutting edge has a concave evolution that won't let slip away what you are cutting.

While it approaches the tip, it transforms in a generous belly, perfect to make deep and long cuts. Once we have worn out the blade, sharpening it by stone is certainly not an easy task, but a common Diamond Round Shaft will be enough to give it back its edge.

The stone-washed finishing highlights the beveling and gives to the metal a seasoned and aggressive look, that will keep on getting nicer and unique by collecting the signs of use.

The branding is small but readable, and almost attached to the scales, in a protected area where it's difficult they get damaged.

Lilin, as usual, signed as "Kolima".

The Tusk is an hidden tang, with two G10 scales that have been internally lighten, so to completely enclose the steel, the only exception is the triangular crusher. The precise work is testified by the lack of wiggles.

The handle of our model is black, but there is a model with alternate green and black layers. The superficial finishing is multifaceted, deep enough so to add grip without becoming abrasive. The tang is secured with two burnished screws, with large heads that on one side are rounded and on the other there is a indent for a 2.5mm Allen key. On the back, there is also a hole for the lanyard.

Compared to the Siberian Knife, the Tusk gives up the metal guard, fascinating but truly little practical in the generic use, as well as the forward positioning of the index finger, really not necessary for a blade with such length

4. The tang of the Tusk is hidden, and it runs inside the two machining found on the GIO scales. The work is very precise, so much so that once the knife is mounted there are no wiggles of sort. To disassemble it, we have used a 2.5 mm Allen key





5. The handle ends in a small triangular protruding part of the tang, that acts as glass-crusher. Nearby, there is also a hole for the lanyard. The superficial finishing of the scales is gripping but not abrasive

On the other hand, we find an imposing lower quillon, able to safeguard our index even in intense tasks, as well as a knurled thumb resting area with a pretty perfect profile, very useful when you need to use a lot of strength in shearing through or in a lunge.

When in hand, the Maserin is surprisingly light, thanks to the hidden tang, comfortable and truly exploitable while hunting or hiking.

The Tusk behaves perfectly in every type of cutting task, whereas it needs a little practice for those with the tip, as it is upped.

We are not surprise to learn that some military units have already expressed interest in the new design by Lilin. In fact, aside being nice and aggressive, it's an efficient tool.

The sheath differs from what we were expecting, as recently the Kydex one of

the first models has been replaced by Nylon ambidextrous one, with a plastic core and MO.L.L.E. fastening system on the back. We are sorry to see that only the last one is now available, we had a soft spot for the Kydex one.



Robust and adaptable



Kydex out of production

Producer: Coltellerie Maserin,

www.maserin.com Model: Tusk 988 Designer: Nicolai Lilin

Blade material:

Böhler N690Co 59-60 HRC Handle material: G10 **Total length: 267 mm** Blade length: 143 mm Blade thickness: 5.8 mm

Weight: 298 g **Sheath: Nylon**









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BORN TO WORK

Extrema Ratio states that the Fulcrum II T and the M.P.C. are two folders suitable for heavy tasks and actually their robustness is way over one could expect. They might look interchangeable, but they are not, as each one has its own personality

by Roberto Allara

n the fixed version, the Fulcrum can be found in Afghanistan, with every Italian Alpine trooper, in other words with military men used in operating in the harshest situations, at high altitudes, far from logistic services, at low temperatures and in an hostile and deeply dangerous environment.

The universal tool, for those in need to work and survive in the outdoors, certainly is the knife; it's only logic to wish it being robust and not too specialized - it will be more difficult to break it and you won't be tight to a specific function; it's impossible to know in advance what the use of the knife will be needed.





1. The fixed blade Fulcrum near its folding version

As the success of the Fulcrum has been great, a scaled folder version has been created which is able to keep the Fulcrum main characteristics. The hilt is of generous dimensions, so it can be handled almost better with tactical gloves rather than with a bare hand, at least for those, like me, having smaller hands. Those with bigger hands will find it perfect. Someone may ask why with such a fixed blade, it has been decided to offer a folder one. The reason lays in the dimensions of the object, and moreover in its most important part: the blade.

It's true, the blade is shorter thus less suited to be used for cutting blows or as a machete, but on the other hand, it allows to work with more precision. Therefore, the fixed and the folder are completely complementary and not competitors. At first sight, the knife exudes a certain disproportion between handle and blade. But it's not the case, the best blade will be useless if it cannot be steered with precision, even wearing tactical gloves possibly a frequent situation for a user of a tactical knife. The blade is 6 mm thick and is



2. Both folders by Extrema Ratio have a large and robust clip

made in Boehler N690 steel, a well-established choice of the producer; it's a material that reaches elevated standards of hardness - in this case 58 HRC - and it's hardly weldable.

So, those counterfeiters proposing a fake Fulcrum with welded tang, not only offer a poor quality and badly imitated product but also damage the Italian production of one of its best objects while proposing a blade of clearly lower quality standards. The finishing of the original blade, the Fulcrum II T by Extrema Ratio, is MIL-C-13924 standard burnished. The blade has a chisel tip - which commonly is misnamed Tanto.

The tip is properly aligned with the hilt, and when you hold the knife, the index will naturally fall under the quillon while the thumb rests on the corrugated area on the

back, allowing effective lunges. A quite unlikely situation, as usually the soldier carries a rifle and the official holds a gun, but still another way to defend oneself.

The cutting edge is partially plain on the forward part of the blade, and partially serrated. With such configuration, it's possible to cut those materials that allow precise cuts, as well as fibrous materials. The lock of the blade in the

opening position is of the pump kind, equipped with a special lever, that we have never seen on creations of other producers, made of a steel pin that can protrude from the left or the right side of the unlocking lever. Not only it's impossible to accidentally unlock it during an intense use of the knife, but you can also use it to lock the knife closed.

In this way, you'll avoid accidental openings when extracting it. In

3. All knives by Extrema Ratio have their own identifying number









6. It may resemble a flipper to quickly open the blade, but it's a quillon

any case, folding back the knife acting on the lock lever requires some kind of strength, thus an accidental closing can be reasonably excluded.

But again, abundance is not a bad a thing, and preventing is better than curing. Better safe than sorry. The handle is equipped with a solid clip, and the furthest part of the spacer holds a lanyard hole.

The M.P.C. model

In the Extrema Ratio catalog, among knives for heavy duties, side by side with the Fulcrum II T there is also the M.P.C. (probably it stands for Multi Purpose Combat as on the producer website there is no explanation) model. The handle is massive, sticks out from the hand and can be used to exploit pressure points or crash a window.

When closed, it looks like that the shape of the handle holds a dorsal fin, also called flipper, to quickly open the blade. But that is not the case, as that is a quillon, on which both the spine of the blade and the thumb rest when the knife is in use. As it holds a double quillon, the current literature will tend to classify it among fighter knives. But it's a wrong classification, as to fight there is at least a rifle,

when artillery and missiles aren't available. A tactical knife, can in extreme situations, carry out defensive tasks in close-quarters, but nothing more.

The M.P.C. is a synopsis of the characteristics typical to robustness that are required on a folder and, in respect to the Fulcrum, thanks to a slightly longer blade can be used for more efficient cutting-blows.

7. A hole of generous dimensions allows to secure a piece of paracord as lanyard



On field, for example, when you need to make a peg from a branch is a characteristic that must not go underestimated. The blade is clip point with a swedge of roughly 90 degrees that maintains in the tip all the desired robustness. Like the Fulcrum II, the M.P.C. has a pumplike lock, with the dame safety precautions. The cutting edge has a drop-point shape and has a serration of 40 mm long towards

the rear. In order to lighten the object, without impacting on the robustness, a part of the spine, towards the rear and just above the opening pin that can be operated with just one hand, has been unloaded on both sides. Again, at the end of the handle we find the lanyard hole. As per producer tradition, both knives have their own identification numbers.

Producer: Extrema Ratio

via Traversa delle Ripalte 72/74/76 Prato,

www.extremaratio.com

Models: Fulcrum II T - M.P.C.

Type: folder for heavy duty tasks
Blade length (mm): 95 - 116

Total length (mm): 222 - 262

Blade thickness(mm): 6

Blade material: Böhler Steel N690 (58HRC)

Finishing: MIL-C-13924 burnishing

Cutting edge: flat edge Partial serration (mm): 40

Handle material: Anodized anticorodal aluminum

Weight (g): 204 - 244

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TITANIUM YOUR HAND

Zero Tolerance does not only produce solid and impressive folders: in its catalog there are models with smaller hindrances and less known to the bigger audience, but very exploitable when used everyday. The 0900 and the 0450 are two perfect examples

by Tommaso Rumici

Top, the Zero Tolerance 0450, designed by Dmitry Sinkevich. At the bottom, the ZT 0900, designed by Les George. Though aiming to different characteristics, both are perfect choices as EDC CARLO TOLERANCE



I. The brands are concentrated on the right side of the blade, gathered in a very small area. Take a look at the different finishing of the bevels: on the 0900 is stonewashed; on the 0450 is a refined satin finishing

ero Tolerance is without a doubt synonym of excellent design and mechanics, but the most common models in our Country have perfect outdoor hindrances, but way off dimensions for an every day use.

With the help of Collini Cutlery, that has recently become importer of the American brand, we have chosen two models with proportions more suitable to an EDC for the too-much civilized Europe. Both frame-lock of this article are produced in the US and carry CPM S35VN powdersteel blades matched with titanium handles and everything is stonewashed finished. Other common trait is the absence of opening pins or indentations, replaced by the KVT system, in



2. Both folders are equipped with robust and functional clips. The 0900 one has a cheaper and awkward look - mainly due to the lateral flaps used to secure it. The better solution is applied on the 0450 which is able to blend in the general design

other words a flipper, with a bottom quillon that acts as lever and the pivot is ball-bearings assisted. The main difference between the two models is the destination of use. Both are designed to be carried everyday and therefore are compact, but the 0900 aims to robustness - making it suitable to occasional abuses, whereas

the 0450 sports a streamlined and elegant look, is lighter and make a great impression even in front of a nice steak.

ZT 0900

The Zero Tolerance 0900 is the work of Les George, custom knifemaker known world-wide, who boasts collaborations with

names of the level of Elishewitz, Pro-Tech and Spartan Blades. Strong of a long experience in the real use of blades, reached as a knifemaker as well as during his period in the Marine as EOD technician, Les George has decided to design a folder suitable for an everyday carry, with small hindrances but with no

compromises on robustness. After having handled the 0900, we can say that result is spot on!

We knew we were dealing with a compact folder, but since the first contact we were taken aback by the dimensions of this Zero Tolerance, remarkably contained and in favor to an easy carry. The blade is a classic clip point,

3. Even if both KVT system (the flipper in the eyes of Zero Tolerance) are exploitable, the folder by Les George is easier and more comfortable to open thanks to a more generous lever. The other model requires a little familiarity



FOLDER

with portion of the edge plain and the remaining that makes a nice belly while reaching the tip. A kind of swedge lightens the aesthetics making it more interesting, without changing its meaning. It's a jack-of-all-trades blade very performing and robust. The left side is void of brands, as the one of the producer is on the handle, whereas the right side carries model, designer, place of production, material and serial number, all condensed in a small area to avoid being intrusive.

The opening system works perfectly. The resistance obtained by the classic steel ball is perfectly calibrated. A firm pressure of the index on the knurled guard will

4. The 0450, on the left, carries two lively-red anodized spacers. On the 0900 there is only one spacer, where we can hook a lanyard, thus taking care of the lack of a proper lanyard hole





5. When closed, both knives are compact and portable. The 0900 is more imposing, but in reality the hindrances are absolutely comparable, as the 0450 is clearly longer. On none of the knives we've found live edges that may bothersome

make the blade spring as it were servo-assisted and this stage the lock is granitic. The spring carries the typical reinforcing steel insert. The handle is made of two titanium halves of 4 mm, it's truly bomb proof, and also, from an aesthetic point of view, it ends up being likable, thanks also to two millings that partially unload it.

In hand feels comfortable, mainly thanks to the index groove, and even if it's short the little finger can find a proper support - though partial. The bottom quillon is quite developed, therefore our index will not risk meeting the edge, whereas on the spine of the blade there is a milled upward slope, where you can rest the

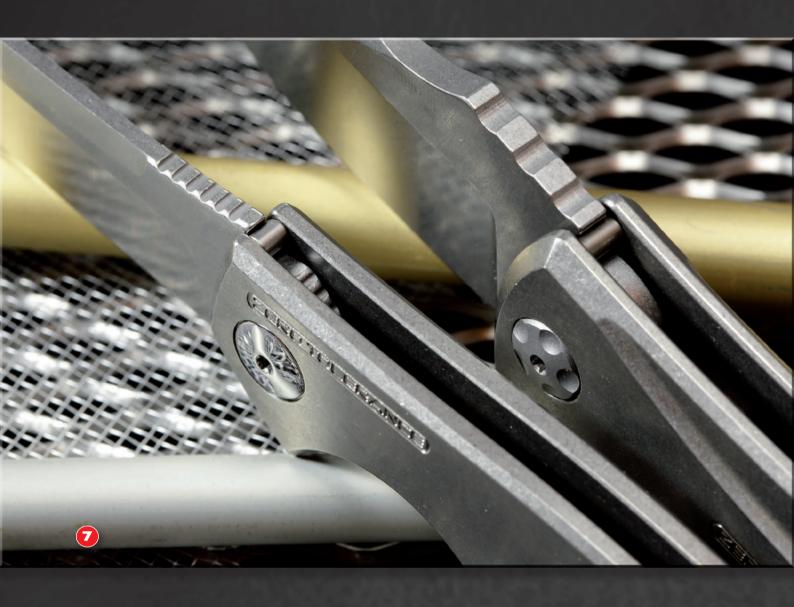


thumb to exert more strength in tougher tasks.

The cut that separates the spring from the rest of the right scale is really a work of art: it's precise and very narrow, with almost imperceptible signs of machining. The two half-handles are separated by a black spacer, around which a lanyard can be attached - thus taking care of the lack of the lanyard hole, and by a stop pin with a smaller diameter than we have expected. The left head of the pivot is opaque, decorated with

6. The screw applied on the front of the frame-lock spring is used to lock the steel insert, that by touching the blade, avoids an early wearing-off of the softer titanium Take a look to the different choices of pivots

millings, hosts a Torx indent for its adjustment, whereas the right one is hexagonal and build in an area of the scale. The clip allows only a tip-up carry and it is reversible. The length is not excessive and design is really nice, even though



7. On the spine of the two blades, a series of millings increase the grip. On the 0450 are descending, and suit better the index finger in precision cuts. On the 0900 are ascending, and are perfect when we need to exert more power, while using the thumb

the two flaps are not the most appealing aesthetic solution.

ZT 0450

The Zero Tolerance 0450 is signed by Dmitry Sinkevich, that many

of you may recall from past collaborations with Fantoni or Rockstead. Unlike the previous model, this is not a completely unreleased design, in fact it derives from the previous Zero Tolerance 0454 - same designer and produced in a very limited number. The 0454 was defined by a composite blade in CPM D2 and Sandvik 14C28N, by a 3D-machined carbon-fiber handle: a jewel that very few have been lucky enough to have and rarely will carry it around.

Thanks to the great success of that special edition, Zero Tolerance followed-up with two mass production models: the 0452CF same dimensions but S35VN blade and simpler frame-lock structure with a carbon left scale and the 0450 (the one in this article) that gathers the main traits, but with more compact proportions that are suitable for an every-day use. The blade is always a sinter by Crucible, but narrower, long and pointy. Even the thickness is a millimeter less than the EDC by Les George, and the bevels have a likable satin finishing instead of the stonewashed one. Unfortunately, the operating principle of the KVT system resents of the smaller dimension of the lever in respect to the one of the 0900, meaning that making it work requires more strength and is less comfortable for the index finger. We do not exclude that a little running period and use to this situation may get better, but with new knives the difference is very clear. In any event, once put into action on the 0450, the system will make the blade spring, and will lock with a sound and strong "clack". The handle is slim and streamlined, long enough for all the fingers to find a comfortable support without fear of slipping towards the blade.

Compared to the one designed by Les George, this handle does not fill the palm of the hand, and therefore does not offer the same firm grip.



Compact and very well crafted



On 0450 the flipper makes too much resistance

Producer: Zero Tolerance, zt.kaiusaltd.com

Model: 0900; 0450

Designer: Les George (www.georgeknives.com);

Dmitry Sinkevich (sinkevichdesign.ru)

Blade material: CPM S35VN Handle material: Titanium

Length when open: 169 mm; 189 mm

Blade length: 69 mm; 82 mm Blade thickness: 4 mm; 3 mm

Weight: 122 g; 86 g Lock type: frame lock

On the other hand, it ends up being more agile and maneuverable in precision cuts thanks also to the knurling on the spine of the blade. In the case the pivot has been polished to create a nice contrast with the finishing of the other metallic surfaces, and this time the two heads are identical. To take it apart we will need two keys. Between the two titanium scales there are two bright-red anodized spacers.

The is clearly less than the 0900 and makes the small Sinkevich even more easier to carry around. The important thing is to remember that you are carrying it when you get on board of an airplane. Also in this case, the clip carries the ZT logo, but has a different design, it's longer and, in our opinion, nicer in the solution used to secure the handle. Moreover, in respect to the Les Georges design, there is a proper lanyard hole.



Noblesse oblige

Some knife enthusiasts cannot enjoy a nice steak, unless they have a high quality knife to cut it.

So, not knowing what they'll find at the restaurant, they'll carry a steak folder as the

Higo Nokami by the Japanese Shun

by Giorgio Alessandri

The Shun Higo Nokami is a very elegant steak folder, designed with in mind those who cannot give up a perfectly sharp blade when not at home. The light and precious design makes it a style icon

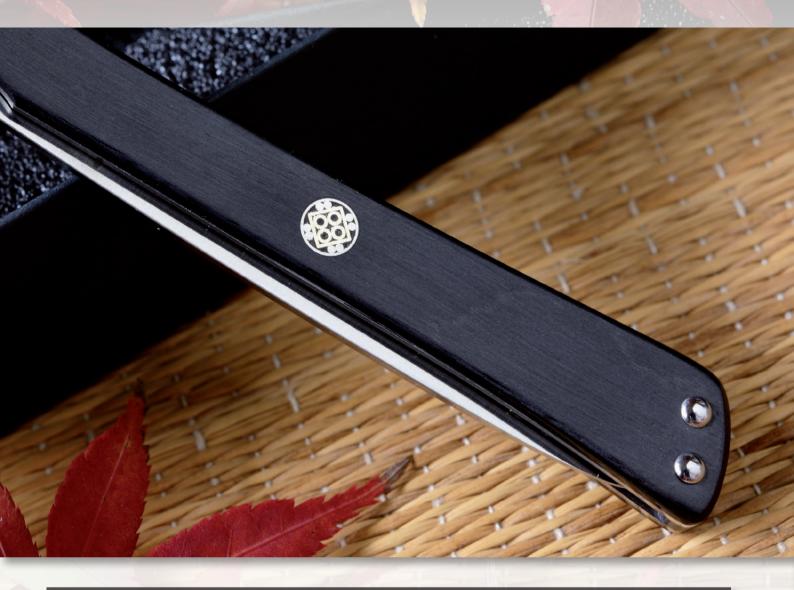




To open the blade it's enough to push with thumb the small area of the protruding tang. The small recess made on the lever rests on the stop pin inside the liners, locking the rotation of the blade. The packaging includes a burgundy leather sheath, that allows to safely carry the folder and avoids accidental openings, as well as scratches by getting in touch with other objects

The Higo Nokami is a very peculiar folder, adaptable to generic use, but expressly designed to a convivial use. It's made in Japan by Shun, brand part of the Kai group, together with Kershaw and Zero Tolerance. The folder evokes an antique constructive typology of which

news were gathered already in 1896 - the Meiji period at its fullest - common to the first Japanese pocket-knives. The main characteristic of the traditional Higo Nokami is the protruding part of the tang, that is used to open the blade with one hand, like a free-hand razor or many



At the center of the left scale, a shiny mosaic pin adds a touch of preciousness to the handle. The end of the handle is assembled in a permanent way by two mirror-polished round-head pins.

friction folders. By reinterpreting this antique concept, Kai has skillfully combined tradition to modernity, equipping the folder with a liner-lock system and creating a blade in VG10 stainless steel, the same used in many highend kitchen knives, tempered to 61 HRC. The blade has flat bevels that cover all its height and has a streamlined outline, that widens

as it nears the tip. The company declares a total of 32 degrees of cutting angle, that is to say 16 per side, and is rigorously handmade. Due to its specific use, we would have preferred an even narrower angle, able to do justice to the cutting capabilities of the VG10, that by factory setting are not exciting. The blade has a satin finishing and brands of contained

dimensions, that do not contrast the excellent general elegance. The handle is supported by two metallic liners, one of which works as a locking spring, and on the outside there are Pakkawood ebony scales. The Torx screw in correspondence with the pivot should not mislead you as the knife is not designed to be taken apart, but only adjusted. On the

rear part of the scales, liners and the wood spacer are assembled with two shiny rounded-head pins. To add another touch of elegance, the left scales is embellished with a shiny mosaic pin. When we took in our hands the Higo Nokami, we were amazed by the lightness and the perfect ergonomics, which all translate in highest maneuverability and precise cuts.

To make the Higo Nokami even more practical, the producer has equipped it with a modern liner-lock system, on which no critiques can be made



As we cut into our juicy steak, the index finds the perfect support on the knurling on the opening lever. Both the total length and the blade length are ideal for this specific use. Hardly we will ever use a knife from the restaurant, even if supersharp. The general standards of construction are pretty high, way above what we would have expected. There are still some signs of the production, but it is clearly that the folder has been hand-finished to perfect the assembly. The movement of the blade is fluid and round up to the opening lock, remarkably

solid and precise. The Shun Higo Nokami is delivered in a robust black cardboard box, with silver writings and shaped lining. Inside, we find a paper with instructions on how to open and close the knife (really unnecessary) together with suggestions on its maintenance and the warranty. Moreover, there is a simple burgundy leather sheath, ideal for the carry.

We'd like to thank Scintilla knives shop (www.coltelleriascintilla.com) for the model used for this review



Elegant and refined



😕 It could be sharper

Producer: Shun, kaiusaltd.com,

shuncutlerv.com

Italian Distributor: Coltellerie Milanesi, www.coltelleriemilanesi.it

Model: Higo Nokami **Blade material: VG10**

Handle material: PakkaWood Length when open: 194 mm

Blade length: 86 mm Blade thickness: 2 mm

Weight: 40 g

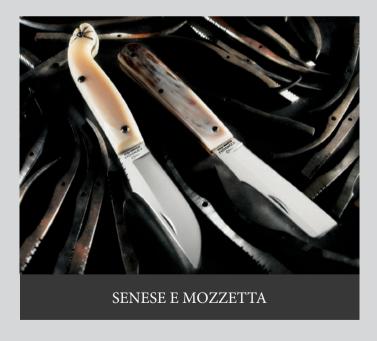
Lock type: liner lock



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