

## SEAL Pup Knife

A few years back the SEALs put on a contest for a new knife for military field use. It had to relish salt water, vile chemicals, vile weather, severe use, and non-finesse tasks such as prying open ammunition crates. The winner was a big, tough knife manufactured by SOG Knives. It's too big for civilian use—heavy and halfway to a hatchet. So SOG made a version just as tough but in handier size—9 inches long. It's nice to have a working knife that is all tool and no worries.

—SB

## SOG Seal Pup Sheath 9" Knife

\$70 at  
www.actiongear.com  
800/338-4327



## Swiss Army Champ Knife

The Champ is the top-of-the line, everything-included Swiss Army Knife. Made by Victorinox (never Wenger), it includes such niceties as pliers, a tiny screwdriver for glasses (ingeniously screwed into the corkscrew), a tempered pin (crucial for sliver removal, along with the tweezers and magnifying glass), and a ballpoint pen, plus the usual scissors, toothpick, wood saw, awl, etc. It's a bit dense and heavy for pocket wear, so I have it in a pouch on my belt at all times. I use some of its tools all of the time and all of its tools some of the time. Oh, the stories it could tell of situations saved. I'm perpetually amazed that everyone doesn't have one.

—SB

## Swiss Army Champ Knife

\$60.00  
From, for example, REI  
www.rei.com, 800/426-4840  
www.4bestblades.com/champ



## Boye Knives

I carry a sheath knife everywhere except on airplanes. People assume a violent or at least self-defense message from the knife, but it has nothing to do with that whatever. For opening packages and envelopes, for stroll-by gardening, for food management I want a sharp edge in my hand instantly, stowable instantly (hence a pouch sheath instead of clip-down sheath).

It's hard to learn what are the best knives from the knife-fetish magazines because they've agreed never to criticize any knife, and gaudy crap gets lauded along with the actual good stuff. After a few years of sifting I settled on knives made by David Boye and his son, mainly because of the steel. Forged in the shape of the knife, it has a "dendritic" structure that gives a micro-saw edge that cuts very aggressively. The blade takes an edge easily and holds it well. Boye has some innovative all-metal designs that I don't like as well as those with traditional handles. Custom models are available with fancy materials in the grip and etched blades, and there are some good kitchen knives in the line.

—SB

## Sharpener

A knife without an edge is worthless, and most knives you find in pockets, sheaths, and kitchens are dull. Every edge you have, including an ax, should be able to dry shave hair off your forearm, should slice loose-held newspaper without catching.

The most effective sharpener I know is also the easiest to use—just carve straight down on the V of slender stones, a stroke on one side, a stroke on the other. The stones are triangular, so you can use either the flat side or the angle (which permits sharpening serrated blades such as bread knives). Spyderco has had the leading product for 20 years and now has a new improved "Sharpmaker" that looks pretty good. —SB

## Spyderco Sharpmaker

\$45 from, for example,  
www.knifecenter.com  
800/338-6799



## Boye Knives

The fancy Boye knives come from a gallery in California. 800-557-1525,  
www.boyeknivesgallery.com

A regular all-metal line can be found at places like  
www.discountknives.com/Boye/Boye.htm



From the Web site:

"In 1980, Boye began experimenting with the technique of investment casting for making knife blades. He discovered that casting produces a dendritic (fern-like) network of carbide crystal throughout the steel, and that dendritic steel blades hold an edge from 3 to 10 times longer than other steels commonly used for cutlery. His work is considered to be a revolutionary breakthrough in modern knifemaking."

David Boye demonstrates the edge-holding power of dendritic steel by cutting a one-inch hemp rope more than 3,000 times without resharpening.

