

The SEARCH Is Over

LET THE HUNT BEGIN

QUICK SKIN
V-005



STORY AND PHOTOS BY JOSHUA SWANAGON

I am not a winter person, far from it. I would take blue skies and 80s every day for the rest of my life, if I could. However, every year I do find myself longing for a short burst of winter in November. That time of the year is when we all get together at deer camp and swap big stories and even bigger lies. Each year, everyone asks me what new knife I have, and this year I am looking forward to introducing the TOPS Knives' Quick Skin to camp. I am sure it will receive a very warm welcome. Not every year is a boon for our camp, but it is important to us all, as it is a time for family and friends to get together and fulfill an important pastime together.

Of course, one of the big parts of deer camp is the processing of the harvested game throughout the week, and everybody tends to get in on the action for the sake of expediency. While there are tasks that can be done without a knife — for example, you can peel the hide off without a knife, although it is easier with one — most every job during

“... IT IS PURPOSE-BUILT AS A TRUE FIELD SKINNER THAT CAN GET THE JOB DONE ...”



With the upswept ulu-style blade, there is a workable belly straight forward of the grip.

processing requires a good knife. For this reason, the hunting knife has been one of the most designed and manufactured knives throughout history in the hunt for the perfect solution, and every designer's take on it is completely different.

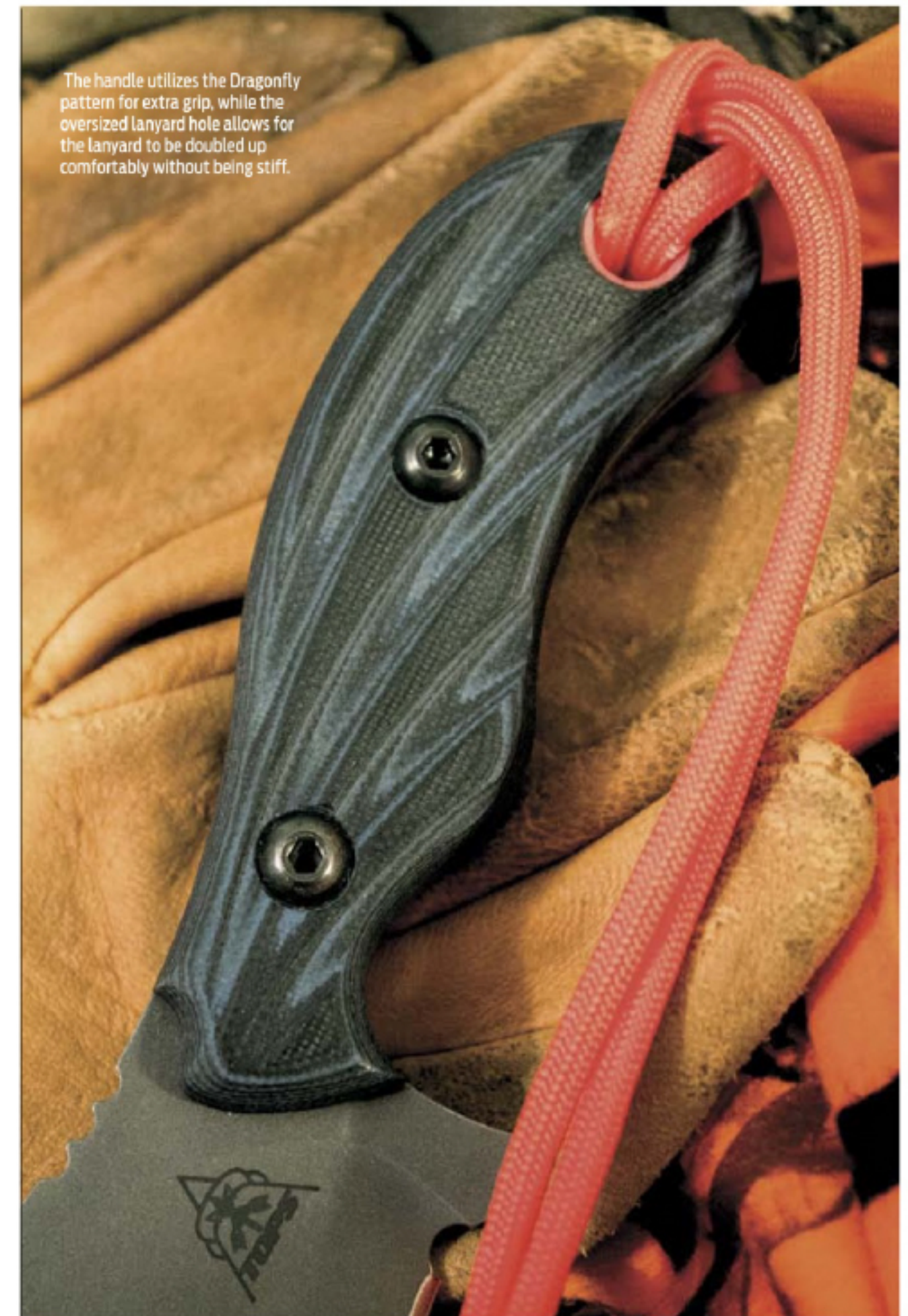
In steps the TOPS Knives' Quick Skin, a purpose-built knife with one function: process game. Unfortunately, at the writing of this article, it is blue skies and 70s, which means that processing game is an impossibility at this time. If you have read any of my articles, you know that I prefer to put a knife through a solid battery of tests before writing about it; however, I will have to draw from my experience and knowledge base for this one. Fortunately, I know the quality and performance of TOPS Knives, so I am very comfortable discussing the virtues of the Quick Skin.

Form

There are two knife styles that I have always felt were the quintessential hunting knives, the ulu and the Nessmuk. Right out of the gate, the Quick Skin tapped into both of those styles to make a combination that draws from the strengths of each, while adding a few of its own.

The 3.5-inch blade of the Quick Skin has an elongated edge, spanning approximately 1.5 inches before sweeping up to provide a nice, deep, ulu-style belly. This elongated edge provides ample room for chores that would be difficult with the full belly of the ulu, while the deep belly is perfect for skinning and deep slicing tasks. The Quick Skin features a full flat grind, which produces a hair splitting edge bevel that is ideal for slicing and skinning tasks. That combined with the Cerakote coating allows for the Quick Skin to glide through its subject matter with little to no resistance.

The spine profile has a very pronounced modified Nessmuk flair, which helps facilitate a couple of different purposes. With the high, hump back of the Nessmuk style, the tip of the Quick Skin is far less



The handle utilizes the Dragonfly pattern for extra grip, while the oversized lanyard hole allows for the lanyard to be doubled up comfortably without being stiff.

NESSMUK

George W. Sears (1821-1890) was a writer for Forest and Stream Magazine in the 1880s under the pen name "Nessmuk." He also authored a book on camping titled "Woodcraft" which is still popular today in wilderness survival circles. It is unclear where the "Nussmuk" knife originated, but illustrations of it can be seen in his book along with a small axe of his design and a large Moose pattern folding knife. Sears was known for having knives made from his own specifications. It is known that Sears preferred thinner knives with keen edges and smaller, more useable size lengths.

The combination of the ulu and Nessmuk style blades gives the Quick Skin a very wide profile with many options.



THE ULU

The ulu is an all-purpose, deep-bellied knife used by Inuit, Yup'ik and Aleut women for many different tasks from skinning and cleaning game to cutting hair and building igloos. The deep belly of the ulu combined with the handle perpendicular to the blade, provides more pounds per square inch on every portion of the edge, requiring less strength to utilize and creating less fatigue during extended use. It is typically a very thin blade, giving it a very keen edge. The keen edge combined with the rounded blade, make for the perfect slicing knife.



The spine has jimping in two locations for extra control.

“THE QUICK SKIN FEATURES A FULL FLAT GRIND, WHICH PRODUCES A HAIR SPLITTING EDGE BEVEL THAT IS IDEAL FOR SLICING AND SKINNING TASKS.”

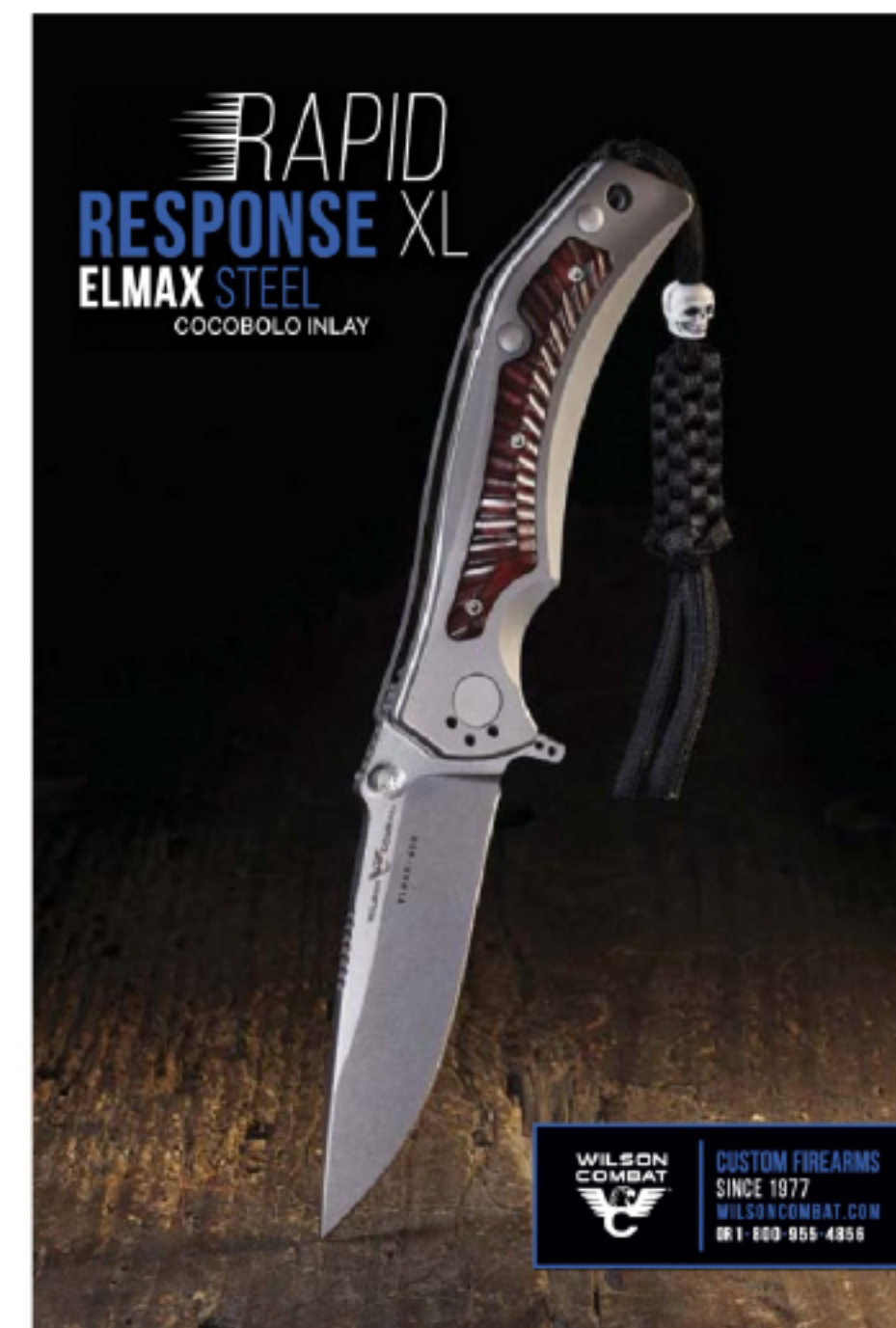
pronounced, which is ideal when first gutting your game. Too sharp of a point on the tip can run the risk of puncturing the gut sack and ruining the meat, while the broader tip of the Quick Skin will allow for less risk of accidental punctures that could destroy the meat or the hide, if you intend to keep it. With an overall length of 7.13 inches, the Quick Skin is very nimble in the hand and can access tight spots within the cavity of your game during field cleaning. The oversized lanyard hole at the butt of the Quick Skin allows for the lanyard to be doubled up, creating a loop for the hand, while still being able to move freely.

Fit

During extended use of any tool, fatigue can be a factor and knives are no different. The Quick Skin was designed with this in mind. The handle is designed with a well-placed finger choil and indent for the following three fingers, while the nice hump on the spine of the handle fills the palm perfectly. With the upswept blade at the belly, there is a comfortable working edge directly forward and centered with the hand, allowing for slicing and skinning tasks in tough-to-reach spots. This also keeps the tip at an upward angle, helping ensure that you don't experience accidental punctures.

SPECIFICATIONS

- OVERALL LENGTH: 7.13 INCHES
- BLADE LENGTH: 3.5 INCHES
- CUTTING EDGE: 3.5 INCHES
- BLADE THICKNESS: 0.19 INCHES
- BLADE STEEL: 1095 RC 56-58
- BLADE FINISH: TUMBLE FINISH
- HANDLE MATERIAL: BLUE/BLACK G10
- HANDLE STYLE: DRAGONFLY TREAD
- KNIFE WEIGHT: 6.6 OUNCES
- SHEATH MATERIAL: BLACK KYDEX
- SHEATH CLIP: BETA LOOPS
- DESIGNER: LEO ESPINOZA
- MSRP: \$140



THE SURVIVAL STAFF™
“Official Trademarked Survival Staff”
 Handmade in the USA over 25 years
 by Pat and Wes Crawford

- Hiking Staff
- Walking Stick
- Baton
- Blow Gun
- Lance



All in one package

Made from Hard Aircraft Aluminum

\$294.95

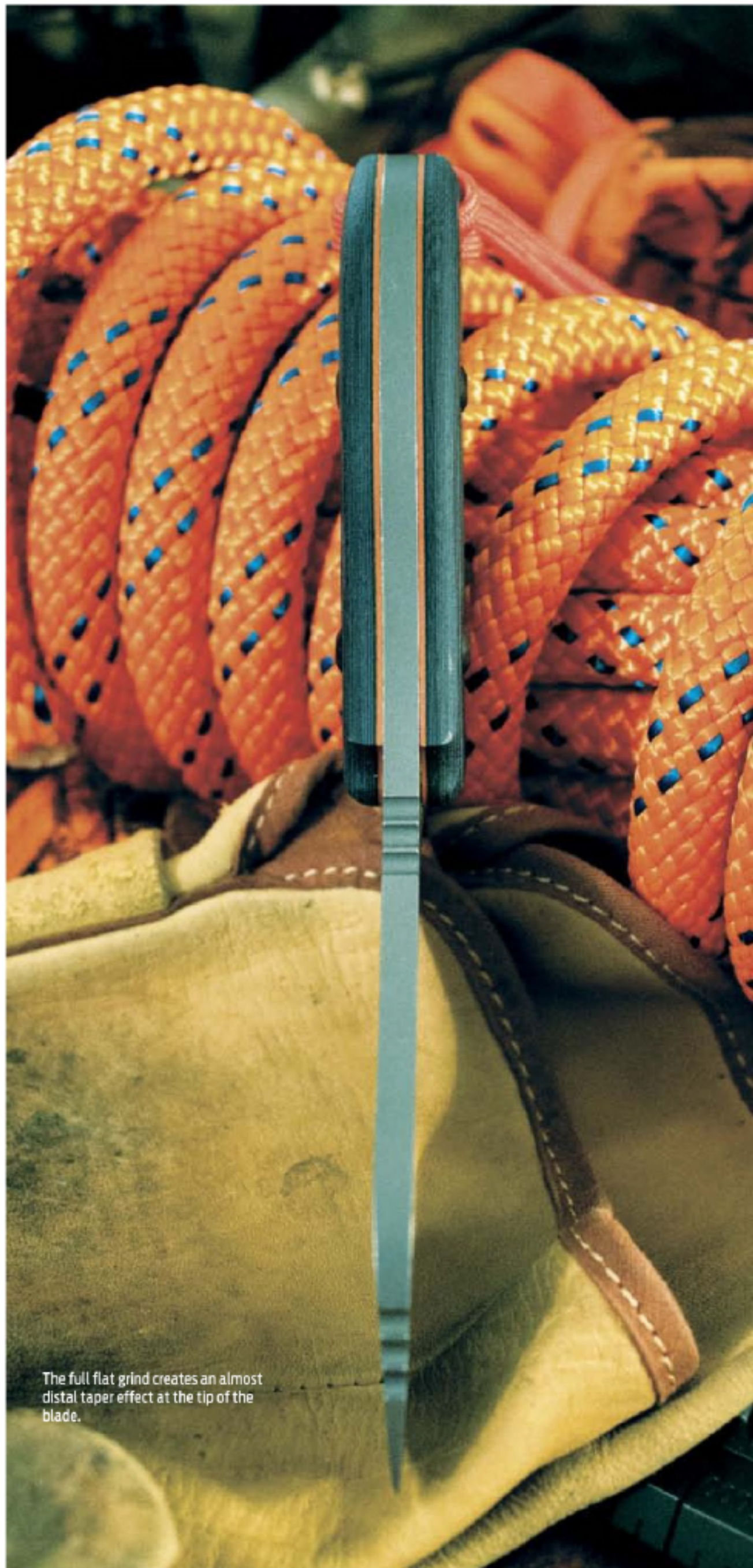
- Ready for delivery
 Knife blade inside

Many Extras Available:
 Rifle Rest, Fish Spear
 Slingshot

Get in on our email newsletter discounts. Just e-mail me and say “add me to the list”

patcrawford1@earthlink.net
 CRAWFORD KNIVES, LLC
 205 N. Center Drive, West Memphis, AR 72301
 (870) 732-2452 • www.crawfordknives.com





“THE COMBINATION OF ULU AND NESSMUK STYLES ALSO CREATES A VERY BROAD EDGE PROFILE ...”

The ergonomics of the handle, combined with the Micarta scales with Dragonfly Tread pattern, work together to fit the hand perfectly for extended use with little fatigue or hot spot development. The Dragonfly pattern is fairly new to the TOPS Knives line and helps to add an extra level of grip, with the fingers fitting nicely into the grooves. The curvature of the grip also allows for a very comfortable backwards grip with the blade facing outwards for cuttings tasks that require a chest pull method of cutting. The web of the hand fits very nicely into the finger choil, while the humped back spine fills the fingers very well for a very natural grip.

The combination of ulu and Nessmuk styles also creates a very broad edge profile, with the widest spot being approximately 1.75 inches. This broad profile makes it easy to grasp the blade itself between your thumb and fingers for finer, more detailed work, or scraping/skinning jobs. The top of the spine also includes jimping at the thumb and on the drop point for enhanced control while the blade is wet.

Finish

The 1095 high carbon steel blade has a tumble finish to give it a rustic look before having a protective Cerakote coating applied. Utilizing the 1095 high carbon steel and TOPS Knives superior heat treating, the Quick Skin is tough enough to complete every aspect of the game processing from start to finish, including separating joints and splitting the pelvic bone with some light batoning. Utilizing a high carbon steel also makes it easier to maintain

The full flat grind creates an almost distal taper effect at the tip of the blade.

your knife in the field, should the need arise. However, due to the nature of high carbon, it is susceptible to rust and must be properly maintained and oiled. Since its purpose is the processing of meat and potentially other food products, I recommend using edible oils, such as vegetable oil or olive oil to preserve the edge.

Although I am a fan of a leather sheath on a hunting knife, because it adds to the overall feel of its purpose, the Kydex sheath provided with the Quick Skin has enough merits to be worth the departure. The sheath for the Quick Skin utilizes the new Beta Loops with Pull The Dot snap enclosures, allowing for multiple carry options, from scout carry, inside the waist band carry, cross draw, dangler and many other options limited only by your own imagination. If you prefer a more streamline approach, the straps can be removed easily, and the sheath with knife will become narrow enough to slip into a pocket or pack with very little footprint.

From Start to Finish

As with any knife, the hunting knife is a very subjective tool that speaks to everyone differently. With many varying styles of processing game, there is no way to truly find the one knife that will work for everyone. However, there are features that can make a given hunting knife more effective and better at its purpose than others. I believe that the TOPS Knives Quick Skin has incorporated some time-tested and approved features that put it high on the list of knives that can cover a myriad of different tastes and styles. With its ulu blade and modified Nessmuk spine profile, the Quick Skin not only has a very classic look, but is purpose-built as a true field skinner that can get the job done from start to finish. **KI**

CONTACT INFO

TACTICAL OPERATIONAL PRODUCTS
 P.O. Box 86
 Ucon, ID 83454 USA
 Phone: (208) 542-0113
 www.TOPSKnives.com



BLUE RIDGE KNIVES

1,184 PAGE FULL COLOR CATALOG • FULL COLOR MONTHLY PUBLICATION • OVER 400 BRANDS

THE MAIN STREET OF CUTLERY

WE'RE YOUR SUPPLIER NOT YOUR COMPETITOR
 YOUR ONE SOURCE FOR KNIVES & SWORDS
 WORLD-WIDE WHOLESALE DISTRIBUTOR
 ONLINE SHOPPING!
 DEALERS ONLY

30+ YEARS IN BUSINESS

PHONE (276) 783-6143 • FAX (276) 783-9298
 DEPARTMENT KI • 166 ADWOLFE ROAD • MARION, VA 24354
 E-MAIL: ONESTOP@BLUERIDGEKNIVES.COM • WWW.BLUERIDGEKNIVES.COM

Inkosi The Zulu: Chief

Giving you more features in a smaller knife

- Large Hollow Grind Technology
- 2.75" Blade Length
- S35VN Blade Steel
- Angled Pocket Clip
- Ceramic Ball Lock Interface
- Oversized Washers Large Pivot

chrisreeve.com