

# DESIRE FUELS PASSION

DUNNOTTAR FORGE  
MAKES SERIOUS  
STRIDES IN  
IMPRESSIVE TIME



STORY BY JOSHUA SWANAGON, PHOTOS BY JACK KEITH

**A** friend recently contacted me and said, “Hey you need to check out a friend of mine, Jack Keith at Dunnottar Forge.”

Well, when I hear something like that, my interest definitely gets piqued. After following the suggestion to check out Dunnottar Forge, I found myself in awe of his masterful work and was surprised he hadn't come up on my radar before. The more I dug, the more I realized he had only been at this for two years. I am completely stunned at the level of quality he has been able to achieve in two short years. I can only imagine what he will be doing in another five years. This is definitely one knifemaker to watch.

## 01 The Gift That Keeps on Giving

Back in 2015, Jack Keith decided that his father-in-law needed a good retirement gift. Since Jack does most of his hunting on his father-in-law's property, he figured that a handmade knife would be the perfect thing. So, using his Harbor Freight 1 x 30 grinder

and a few files, he started his bucket of shame. Undeterred, he did finally get the knife made, but a substantial amount of time had passed. But that's ok—it was enough to fuel his passion for knifemaking, and now we all benefit.

## 02 The Challenges

Although equipment and time are high on the list of challenges, with constant upgrades to be more efficient, Jack finds his biggest challenge in the time away from family. Having a full-time career outside of knifemaking means that Jack is up late nights and weekends creating his masterpieces. But the true sacrifice comes in missing his 7-year-old daughter's gymnastic events. His family is behind him, however, knowing that his passion could become a life-changer.

## 03 Do What Moves You

Because he feels that too many knives are bought only to live in a safe, he prefers to make tools that will be used daily, such as cutlery and camp knives.

## 04 Mastermind on the Belt

Although Jack can forge, he is limited by the abilities of his location and opts to work mostly with stock removal.

## 05 Material Preference

Jack prefers to work with Damasteel the most, but also works in CPM-154, D2 and 1095 or 1095-based Damascus. To really give his knives the high-quality look he achieves, he prefers to use organic materials for his handle scales, such as natural hardwoods, spalted and figured/burl woods—doing much of his own stabilizing and casting in house. For the finishing touch, he likes to use titanium pins.

## 06 A Little of Both

Jack prefers to make custom knives, but you can find an 8-inch chef knife, a 6-inch Santoku and a small knife referred to as the CHIB, if you would like some of his production work.

## 07 Ordering

Jack normally takes 4 to 6 weeks to get an order out, which is really quite amazing—but expect longer turnaround times around holidays, especially Christmas. At the time of this writing, the books are open for 2017, so if you want some of his work, this would be the time. **KI**

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