

STYLISH EDC



THE XV FOLDER, FROM LIONG MAH, SLASHES
ITS WAY TO AN IMPRESSIVE MILESTONE

STORY AND PHOTOS BY JOSHUA SWANAGON



“... AFTER ALL TESTING WAS COMPLETE, I WAS STILL ABLE TO SLICE PAPER CLEANLY AND SLOWLY, WITHOUT ANY CATCHING OR TEARING.”

Although it looks oversized, it is very comfortable in the hand and fits my average-sized hands very well.

If you are a fan of CRKT, then you are familiar with Liong Mah designs—whether you realized it or not—such as the G.S.D., Eat’N Tool, Mah-Chete and more. With a penchant for the practical but a flare for style, Liong Mah designs knives that users and collectors are equally grateful for.

For his 15th anniversary designing amazing knives, Liong has pulled out all the stops to present his latest collaboration with Reate Knives, the XV Folder. I had the chance to speak with Liong at the 2018 Blade Show, and it was clear that he is an innovator, with knives that look as good as they are useful.

I have had the opportunity to carry the XV Folder for a while now and have found that it lives up to the Liong Mah name.

First Impressions

The XV Folder is available in four finishes: hand-rubbed, satin-finished blade with wired wheel handle and blue accents; belt-satin-finished blade with blue and stonewashed handle and silver accents; black PVD-coated stonewashed blade, handle and clip with blue accents; and stonewashed with blue accents. For testing, I was sent the hand-rubbed, satin-finished blade with wired wheel handle and blue accents and the belt-satin-finished blade with blue and stonewashed handle and silver accents.

The subtle nuances of these knives are amazing. The more time you spend looking at the details, the more you notice.

Contact

Liong Mah
(917) 349-2188
LiongMah.com

Off the bat my eyes were drawn to the integral frame, which is not a common feature in folders, giving it a very clean look and smooth lines. The frame features milled and ventilated weight reduction pockets, reminiscent of and with permission of Michael Burch Knives. At the butt of the handle are well-placed scallops that catch the palm and pinky well for additional comfort and retention, while there is some very light jimping on the spine of the handle to assist in that as well.

Also, on the spine of the handle is the prominent XV stamp, and the rear portion is rounded for maximum comfort. All along the user interface portion of the handle are beveled edges to reduce any hot spot development during use. At the butt of the handle is a small lanyard hole milled into the solid frame that’s just big enough for a paracord lanyard.

The 4-inch CPM-S35VN stainless steel blade features a tanto point with a hollow ground primary bevel. The spine has a beautiful swedge that runs the length of the entire blade, assisting in excellent penetration and alluring aesthetics. At the thumb, on the spine of the blade, is a very unique set of jimping that is directed back towards the thumb for maximum grip when in use.

Although it didn’t come hair-popping sharp, it did come sharp enough to put

into immediate use. While open, the blade is held securely in place with a frame lock that includes a replaceable stainless steel lockbar insert/over-travel arrestor.

The reversible pocket clip is placed nice and high so the XV Folder will sit deeply into the pocket. It is shaped nicely with the scallops, following the flow of the XV Folder beautifully. The clip is constructed of titanium and has a ceramic ball insert for retention. The clip retention screw, at the butt of the knife, protrudes from the knife and would double as a suitable window-breaker. I found that it is a little tight in the pocket and was slightly difficult to place back into the pocket on my normal jeans—especially if your knife pocket is a little torn up like mine. However, with more use it became a little easier.

The 9.20-inch overall length looks overwhelming and oversized at first, but the fit in the hand will have you appreciating the larger size.

Through the Paces

I have been carrying the XV Folder for a little over a month now and have used it for a lot of different daily tasks, which it performed perfectly. But over the last few days it has seen a lot of work when

my wife and I drove from our home in Michigan to my home state of Colorado for a visit. Along the way we stopped at rest stops for snacks and different meals, at which times the XV Folder was employed to slice cheese, vegetables, fruit and other meal prep. I found that the hollow grind was perfect for this function.

To ensure that it received more testing than just regular daily use, I put it through some of the typical testing that I like to perform when reviewing a knife. As I like to do with EDC folders, I pressed the XV Folder through a corner of a phone book—cutting it on the binding side for

a more difficult test—and completely sliced it off. Being a Denver phone book, it was quite thick and didn’t press right through, as with a thinner phone book, but by repositioning the knife a few times, I was able to press through the entire phone book cleanly.

After that I made multiple cuts to cardboard and was easily able to slice up a pile of cardboard chunks. I was not counting, but I would say it was somewhere in the neighborhood of 100 cuts. Cardboard is notoriously hard on edges due to the pressed and pasted materials that include many different types of paper sources. The XV Folder was able to cleanly cut through the cardboard with little resistance.

Next, I stabbed into and sliced up a thick plastic container. Although it wasn’t super thick or rigid, it was hefty enough to put the XV Folder to the test. Which it passed handily. The only time I had to slice was when starting the cut, for the rest of the cut, I was able to simply press right through the plastic.

Finally, I sliced up some old, weathered carpet. Although I was able to slice easily

The spine of the integral frame features a prominent XV stamp and light jimping near the butt.



Below: I was able to push the XV Folder through a Denver phone book at the spine, cleanly.





1:1
ACTUAL
SIZE

Left: The blade centers perfectly in the frame when closed.



Right: I was able to clearly slice right through this heavy plastic container.

“... I MADE MULTIPLE CUTS TO CARDBOARD AND WAS EASILY ABLE TO SLICE UP A PILE OF CARDBOARD CHUNKS ... SOMEWHERE IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD OF 100 CUTS.”

Below: The edge held up nicely, even after cutting up a stack of heavy cardboard.

+ SPECS

Blade Material: CPM-S35VN stainless steel
Blade Length: 4 inches
Cutting Edge: 4 inches
Closed Length: 5.20 inches
Overall Length: 9.20 inches
Blade Thickness: 0.157 inch
Handle Material: Single-piece stonewashed titanium with burch vented milling
Handle Thickness: 0.55 inch
Locking Mechanism: Frame
Pivot Assembly: Bearings
Pocket Clip: Ceramic ball titanium (tip-up, right/left carry)
Weight: 4.8 ounces
Designer: Liong Mah
Made by Reate Knives in China
MSRP: \$500-600



in some spots, it seemed to catch and tear a little in others. To be fair, I must mention that the carpet was old and had been outside for some time, so it was a tough in some spots and soft and broken down in others. I say this because after all testing was complete, I was still able to slice paper cleanly and slowly, without any catching or tearing.

The CPM-S35VN is a premium stainless steel that holds a great edge; however, the drawback is that it isn't the easiest to sharpen in the field, but if you have a sharpening system and can maintain it at home, this is a great option.

Stylish Functionality

Liong Mah has made a solid name for himself throughout the industry for his functional designs, but his custom knives add a level of style that clearly stands out in a crowd. His beautiful designs and well-constructed knives are perfect for collectors and users. If you like carrying works of art that you don't have to worry about using, then Liong Mah knives are the perfect choice, and the XV Folder is a must. With only 300 being made across the four finishes, you will want to get one while the getting is good. **KI**



Below: The frame includes milled and ventilated weight-reduction pockets.

Xeno Tool

While you are working on your overall EDC, you owe it to yourself to take a look at the Xeno Tool. The .25-inch-thick tool measures 5 inches long and features a few common EDC tools, such as a pry bar/screwdriver, bottle opener, .25-inch hex bit holder with increasingly smaller hex keys and belt/finger loop. The Xeno Tool is the basis for the CRKT VIVA, which is a slightly smaller version of this handy little multi-tool. The Xeno Tool is available on Liong Mah's website for \$80.



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