

UNEXPECTED DIRECTIONS

KIERAN KLEIN OF HAMMER DOWN FORGE TURNED AN INTEREST IN BLACKSMITHING INTO A CAREER IN KNIFE-MAKING.

TEXT BY JOSHUA SWANAGON | PHOTOS BY KIERAN KLEIN

There's just something alluring about clean, sweeping lines and exquisite materials.

When I stumbled onto Hammer Down Forge, I found myself asking how I had missed this company for so long!

It was immediately evident to me that the knives being produced by Kieran Klein were right up my alley. With aesthetics paralleled only by stunning profiles, finishes and materials, I couldn't pass up the opportunity to delve a little deeper into Hammer Down Forge.

So, it just seemed like the right thing to do to introduce you to Kieran and his craft.

01 A Simple Start

Having an interest in blacksmithing, Kieran was presented with the opportunity to purchase a home with a shop large enough to house his interests. While he was learning blacksmithing, a friend of his had shown him some simple railroad spike knives. After doing a little more research on these knives and learning of the possibilities, Kieran's career took a turn toward knife-making.

02 The Challenges

Kieran finds that his greatest challenge lies in making a knife that is unique

DIG A LITTLE DEEPER

Hammer Down Forge
Instagram: @HammerDownForge
Website: HammerDownForge.com

enough to stand out in the crowd—without looking like a clone—but is still 100 percent useable. He places great importance on the fit and finish of his knives to help achieve that goal.

03 The Process

Kieran doesn't have a specific design process when he comes up with the different models he makes. Instead, he finds a need and then focuses on the key qualities and features that make that design work the best it can. His favorite styles to create generally involve anything with a recurve, whether it is an EDC, chopper or fighter.

04 It's in the Materials

Preferring 80CRV2 carbon steel for both his small and large blades (due to its toughness and edge holding ability), Kieran also likes to work with CPM-20CV stainless for his EDC knives because of

its edge retention and rust-free qualities. For his handle scales, he likes to work with Micarta when a synthetic handle is what's called for and burl wood when he wants to use wood for its looks without compromising strength.

05 The Process

Kieran started off forging, but he has moved to stock removal. However, he does plan to return to forging in the near future.

06 Ordering

If you are interested in obtaining a knife from Kieran and Hammer Down Forge, contact him directly at his website or his Instagram page. Although he does take customer requests, he also likes to put his own spin on them to ensure both he and the customer have some input on the design. Depending on the design, the wait for a Hammer Down Forge knife will take six months to a year—right on point for solid craftsmanship! **KI**

GETTING PERSONAL

City: Check, Virginia
Educational Background: High school
Years Making Knives: 7

