



THE ZIEBA KNIVES MS3 IS A DRESS FOLDER THAT HANDLES SERIOUS BUSINESS.

TEXT AND PHOTOS BY JOSHUA SWANAGON

STOUT GENTLEMAN

"THE ZIEBA MS3 IS A BEAUTIFUL AND ELEGANT DRESS FOLDER WHOSE PLEASING AESTHETICS ARE RIVALED ONLY BY ITS EXCELLENT PERFORMANCE."



A gentleman is always prepared.

Have you ever gotten dressed for a formal event, only to find that your regular knife is just too heavy for your dress slacks? Or the clip is big and gawdy and distracts from the clean lines of your suit pants?

Me too. But I cannot see myself going without a knife, regardless of the occasion or how nicely I need to dress. Pocket knives are an option, but I have grown accustomed to a clip knife that is easily accessible. I guess I am just a creature of habit and a little set in my ways.

For that reason, I am always keeping my eyes open for knives that are small and classy enough to fit with even the nicest suit yet are quality enough to handle normal, everyday tasks. However, I do not have the budget to go out and purchase an expensive custom knife just for the rare occasion that I am actually wearing a suit or dress slacks.

It was this unique need that made the Zieba MS3 "Manhattan Special" such a great fit. It has the style and panache

Above: The blue-anodized titanium hardware really sets off the MS3.

Middle: The spacer on the MS3 has light jimping along the spine and butt for added grip and nice aesthetics.

Bottom: The milled clip keeps the MS3 in your pocket with enough tension to hold it in place—without making it hard to retrieve.

to fit into the classiest ensemble while maintaining a quality build that can get real work done—all at a price that is affordable for a knife in this class.

Let's take a look at the knife and how it performed.

Initial Thoughts

You might be looking at this knife and thinking to yourself, "I recognize that knife; that was done by Zieba for Shinola." And you would be correct ... to a degree. It is true that Zieba and Shinola put out a version of the MS3 that was titanium and had the blue-anodized titanium hardware, but that is where the similarities end.

While speaking with Michael Zieba, it was very clear that this version of the MS3 was his to do with as he saw fit. This gave him the ability to finally make it *his* way. Because of this, he could do the things he wanted with it and utilize his choice of steel without worrying about distributor budget concerns. This, along with some other changes detailed in this article, make it a true Michael Zieba piece.

The bead-blasted titanium handle is contoured beautifully into a lightly



rounded, ergonomic shape that not only feels great in the hand but also adds to its pleasing aesthetics. The handle contains milled lightening pockets on the inside; these are intended to reduce the weight of the

MS3 down to its amazingly light 1.97 ounces. The spacer runs from just past the halfway mark of the handle all the way around the butt and contains light jimping along the length of the spacer on the spine and the butt.

The 2.5625-inch, full-flat-ground blade is constructed of Nitro-V (an upgrade from the previous M390 steel of the Shinola) and comes to an aggressive tip that is perfect for tasks

Above: Although the author didn't have much leverage, he was able to cleanly slice the corner off this phone book.

requiring some level of penetration. The very thin, .117-inch blade, combined with the Nitro-V, gives the MS3 a very keen edge that slices with the efficiency of a kitchen knife while remaining tough enough for opening durable packaging.

Also new for this model is the addition of a sharpening choil, which allows for easier sharpening along the entire length of the edge. When closed, the blade centers beautifully in the handle, demonstrating a very tight fit and finish.

How to order the MS3

It is important to note that Zieba does not sell via his website, so if you want the MS3 for yourself, you will have to go to either KnifeCenter.com, TrueNorthKnives.com or FortHenryCustomKnives.com. His site always shows his knives out of stock, so you will want to check these sites for availability.

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The blue, slotted anodized titanium hardware really sets off the look of the MS3 and moves it from the "classy user" category to the "functional elegant art" group. The milled, contoured titanium clip is configured for tip-up, right-hand carry and holds the MS3 in the pocket with just enough retention so that it won't come out unexpectedly, while remaining easy to retrieve.

The Zieba MS3 utilizes ceramic bearings, which will provide greater longevity, little to no maintenance, a smoother ride on the bearing system, low friction and lighter weight than stainless steel bearings... not to mention the lightning-fast opening. Because the bearing system is ceramic, Zieba decided to complete the thought by employing ceramic for the detent as well, because it is very resistant to wear and tear—meaning it will not deform—and is very slick, requiring less lube and providing much less drag during operation.

The framelock includes a stainless steel lockbar insert for a steel-on-steel

lockup. This will help alleviate the wear on the titanium lockbar, thereby ensuring greater longevity.

I normally do not talk too much about packaging, but I thought it would be worth mentioning that the MS3 comes in a ballistic, waterproof case, with foam padding and a nice, red microfiber cloth for cleaning. This is a very nice touch and a great way to store your MS3 between uses.

Testing the MS3

Because the MS3 is more of a gentleman's dress folder, I didn't do my usual hard-core testing, instead opting for typical light, daily tasks that are commensurate with a knife of this size and style (although I did keep them slightly tough to ensure it can handle serious use).

For my first test, I performed one of my typical tests: cutting the corner off a phone book. I cut the corner on the binding side, because the thick binding and glues used to hold it all together can be tough on a knife. The smaller size of the MS3 did not allow me much leverage during this test, but with a few adjustments to my grip as I cut, I was able to cut the corner off cleanly. The edge on the MS3 is really sharp and held up great through this process.

Next, I cut up some thick leather I have lying around for just this kind of test. The MS3 slid right through the leather like butter. Once I had a nice pile of small leather chunks, I

"THE ZIEBA MS3 UTILIZES CERAMIC BEARINGS, WHICH WILL PROVIDE GREATER LONGEVITY, LITTLE TO NO MAINTENANCE, A SMOOTHER RIDE ON THE BEARING SYSTEM, LOW FRICTION AND LIGHTER WEIGHT THAN STAINLESS STEEL BEARINGS ... "



+ SPECS

Blade Material: Nitro-V
Blade Length: 2.5625 inches
Overall Length: 6.625 inches
Closed Length: 4 inches
Blade Thickness: .117 inch
Weight: 1.97 ounces
Handle Material: Bead-blasted titanium
Pocket Clip: Titanium
Hardware: Custom blue-anodized titanium
MSRP: \$325



Even after some heavy testing (for a knife this size), the author was able to cleanly cut right through eight pieces of paracord simultaneously.



cut some larger chunks and stacked seven pieces on top of each other. I then slowly pushed the tip through the entire stack of leather. There was almost no resistance. This is a very sharp and pointy knife!

Then, I took the cardboard packaging from a new toaster and proceeded to reduce it to a large pile of cardboard pieces. Anybody who cuts cardboard regularly can testify that it is really hard on an edge due to the glues and other materials used in the laminating process to make the cardboard. Every cut was clean and quick.

I then took a hank of paracord and folded it over four times, creating eight loops in total, and cut through the entire mass of paracord. The MS3 still had an amazing edge and glided easily through the paracord.

Finally, to test how well the edge held up to the previous tests, I cut three grapes into thin slices. The edge of the MS3 was still so sharp

Above: The MS3 sliced easily through this thick leather, and the tip was able to penetrate seven pieces of leather stacked on top of each other with no issues.

that I was able to get very clean slices on all three grapes, with no tearing or crushing in any way.

No More Dress Slacks Blues

The Zieba MS3 is a beautiful and elegant dress folder whose pleasing aesthetics are rivaled only by its excellent performance.

It is not a hard-core user, but it was never intended to be. It is an answer to the dress slacks blues; one that fits into a formal wardrobe without compromising your overall look but will still perform the tasks at hand.

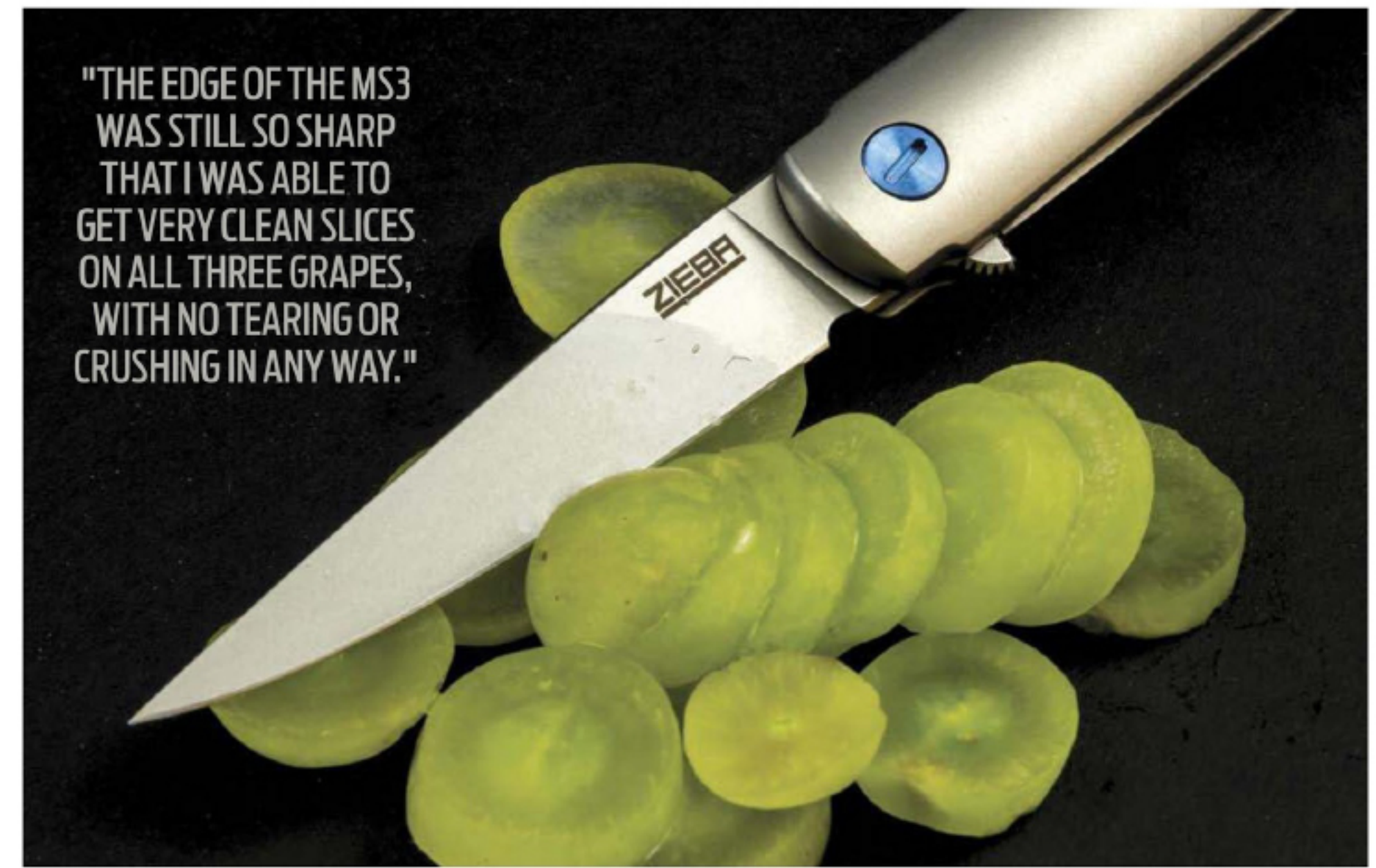
If you are looking for the right knife for the boardroom or ballroom but don't have a CEO's budget, the Zieba MS3 is the perfect choice. True, with an MSRP of \$325, it is nowhere near a budget knife, but it is still well within the range of affordable when you consider the quality it brings to the table.

Well done, Michael. My formal and dress casual attire is finally ... on point! **KI**

Opposite page, top: After all testing was complete, the author sliced a few grapes. The MS3's edge was still extremely sharp and had no issues with this task.

Contact

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"THE EDGE OF THE MS3 WAS STILL SO SHARP THAT I WAS ABLE TO GET VERY CLEAN SLICES ON ALL THREE GRAPES, WITH NO TEARING OR CRUSHING IN ANY WAY."

HOGUE KNIVES

A01-MICROSWITCH[®] AUTOMATIC KNIVES



2.75" BLADE
Drop Point
or Wharncliffe
6.60" Overall Length



1.95" BLADE
Drop Point
or Wharncliffe
5.85" Overall Length
Bottle Opener Frame



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