



SOG's Swedge II

By: Sal Palma

While visiting the 2010 Blade Show in Atlanta, in June, I had a great time chatting with Chris Cashbaugh from SOG's marketing group. It was a great opportunity to find out what SOG was up to for 2010. Chris covered everything from folders to fixed blade designs as well as SOG's outstanding multitool line. It was then that he pulled out three fixed blade knives and said, "take a look, these are a new design -I think they are really cool".

What he showed me was the Swedge I, II and III. I paused for a second just to let my mind wrap around the looks of the Swedge and concluded that; indeed, it was a very cool and different approach to a fixed blade design.

I left Chris a business card; two weeks later, a Swedge II arrives at my door. It was now time to beat the knife up, a bit, to get a feel for its strengths and weaknesses.



Figure 1 SOG's Swedge I with Kydex Sheath and Swedge II¹

The Swedge is an interesting design and unique in that it breaks the mold for most fixed blade designs. I couldn't call it a fighting knife or a survival knife - so let us refer to it as a utility knife, or every day carry (EDC) design – with fangs.

This knife has a radical look and feel. When you first look at its asymmetric blade angles, it leaves you with a sense that it belongs on an F-117 stealth fighter. Aside from its high cool factor, the Swedge has a great deal going for it.

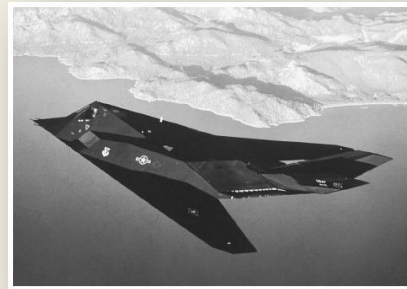


Figure 2 F-117 Stealth Fighter - Courtesy Larry Gilman, Encyclopedia of Espionage, Intelligence, and Security.



Figure 3 Swedge I (bottom) and II in the buff².

¹ Photo courtesy of Sal Palma, Blade Show, Atlanta, 2010
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² Photo courtesy of Sal Palma, Blade Show, Atlanta, 2010



The Swedge family of knives is a collaborative effort between SOG and Canadian designer Brent Beshara. Brent is a retired Canadian military Special Forces operator with 24 years of military experience in a variety of capacities. He is an accomplished designer and founder of Besh Knives, Inc. Brent has a number of successful designs to his credit, which he sells through Besh Knives, Blackhawk Industries, Masters of Defense M.O.D. knives and others.

Japanese designers of centuries past have significantly influenced Brent's designs; this much is evident in all of his work. However, his designs are not simple copies or approximations. Brent has artfully taken the extraordinary power and efficiency of the ancient Japanese designs and brought them forward to the 21st Century with great deal of flair and functionality. This same influence is present in all of SOG's Swedge models.

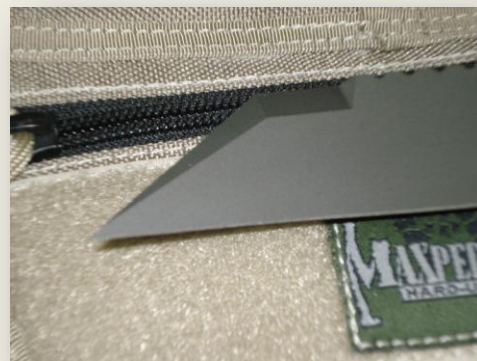


The Swedge II is a full tang design, weighing 7.5 oz., with an overall length of 9.2 inches. The blade is 4.75 inches in length, at a thickness of .156 inches, and bead blasted to a beautiful satin finish.

The blade is AUS8 steel cryogenically treated to increase blade toughness and wear resistance. The result is a blade with a Rockwell Hardness of 57-58. An HRC that is as high as the best

survival or combat knives on the market today. This gives the knife sufficient tool strength to handle most everyday tactical tasks.

AUS 8 also provides excellent corrosion and edge retention so field maintenance is a less frequent event.



The Swedge II is chisel ground to an extremely sharp edge. The knife ships from SOG without a tip edge – a condition easily remedied, and giving the Swedge devastating puncturing prowess.

Brent chose to stay away from an over-molded handle design and in its place elected to use G10 slabs. The spine, forward of the handle, has the best gimping that I have seen in a production knife. It is excellent eliminating, virtually, any chance of having your hand slip over the blade during hard use.

The Swedge II is a knife designed for a saber grip, period. The stroke to use is a slash; rest assured that a slash with a Swedge blade would create serious tissue damage. I do not recommend using a reverse grip with this knife for two reasons. First, stabs usually involve considerable force and the handle does not fill



the hand sufficiently to stabilize the blade. The Swedge II will turn and twist in your hand. Second, the finger groove on the bottom side of the handle is very smooth. Individuals with large hands or fat fingers run the risk of having the hand slip over the knife's edge during a forceful stab. All of the situations that I describe represent extreme situations and in no way preclude this knife from being effectively employed in a tactical situation.

The slide sequence below will illustrate the Swedge blade slashing ability. The straw in the sequence is about the size of a major blood vessel and more resilient to cuts than actual tissue.



Figure 6 T₂ – blade moves through the cut



Figure 4 T₀



Figure 7 the resultant cut

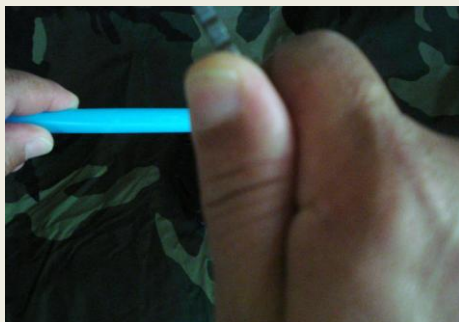


Figure 5 T₁ starting the snap cut

The Swedge II ships with a Kydex sheath that secures the knife with a single retention strap extending across the hilt. The sheath design guarantees a secure belt carry inside or outside the pants; however, with some paracord or hook and loop straps it will secure to a vest or convert into a neck knife.



Conclusion

SOG's Swedge II is one cool tool. However, in this case, cool does not come at the expense of function, and this knife possesses every bit of functionality that you would ever want in a tactical EDC blade.

What is there to like?

- Tool strength is amazing for a 7.5 oz. fixed blade design.
- The blade balance is at the handle making the tip extremely agile.
- Blade gimping is outstanding.
- The cryogenically treated AUS8 blade metal ensures superb edge strength and retention, as well as reduced field maintenance.
- The handle offers a substantial pommel, for a less lethal option, and accommodates a 550-paracord lanyard.
- The package offers extraordinary quality at an M.S.R.P. of \$165.

What is there not to like?

- Nothing

What can be improved?

- The Kydex sheath is functional but I would have liked a more M.O.L.L.E friendly attachment strategy.
- The handle's finger groove should be slightly deeper with gimping.
- The G10 slabs should come in a choice of colors to include coyote brown, foliage green, O.D. and MULTICAM.

Product Photos



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