

Staying Sharp

Boye knife doggedly retains cutting edge.

David Boye, the Arizona knifemaker whose unique folding boat knife of cast dendritic cobalt won our June 2000 sailors' knives bench test and was a reference standard for our March 2004 revisit, recently introduced a new model Basic 3 Cobalt knife.

These knives doggedly retain a cutting edge when going through tough, blade-resistant materials like rope, cardboard, or even old rugs. Others give up long before the job is done. In our experience, Boye's cobalt knives last much longer—and when they finally do slow down, they can be resharpened with just a few strokes on a medium stone. The difference, we reason, is in the metallurgy.

Boye's cobalt blades are "cast to shape and retain the pristine crystal network of highly dendritic (branching) bonded carbide throughout the blade, which aids in cutting and maintaining the structure of the cutting edge," according to the maker.

Most knives are from steel that originally contained a similar crystal microstructure, but then underwent rolling, stamping, or forging to shape. This process breaks down the original carbide microstructure of the metal. The carbides at the edge are then no longer rooted into the overall microstructure. Complex heat treatment is then applied to develop properties such as hardness and toughness.

Each sharpening of the Basic 3 exposes



Boye Basic 3
Cobalt knife

fresh hard carbide micro-teeth. The cobalt blade material is "completely impervious to seawater corrosion and is non-magnetizeable."

The Basic 3 has a hand-filling handle wrapped in black paracord, and a hefty 4-inch, plain-edge, drop-point blade with enough "belly" and hand clearance from the cutting surface to stand in as a chef's knife. The finger guard is faceted with the same angle as the cutting bevel, providing a sharpening guide—a repeatable angle that shortens an already quick job by reducing the number of unproductive strokes across the sharpening medium—strokes that undo work already done, the bane of inexperienced sharpeners. The ambidextrous, multi-wear nylon sheath features a molded brass insert that acts as a spring to retain the knife without a keeper.

The Basic 3 also provides a scraping surface (last 2 inches of the top of the blade is flat and thick) and a hammering surface (butt of handle). The new Boye costs \$360 and is available direct from Boye Boat Knives. ▲

CONTACT

BOYE BOAT KNIVES, 800/853-1617, boyeknives.com