



Red Horse Knife Works Continued

Red Horse Knife Works' Edward Kim (left) at an event showcasing the Condor cutter.

that won't ruin their expensive premium cigars when cut. Lower-end cutters could become dull quickly due to cheap, soft steel, whereas the Condor cutter features M390 stainless steel that has been heat-treated to a precise 60 rockwell hardness, meaning it will stay sharp for thousands of cuts.

"We have yet to find a brand at any price point which competes on quality, reliability and affordability," says Kim. "Plain and simple, our value is imbedded in the materials: a titanium frame structure that is nearly indestructible in the day-to-day use of a cigar cutter; German M390 super steel for the blade sharpness and durability, allowing for over 15,000 cuts without sharpening; corrosive-resistant ceramic ball bearings with a lifetime limited warranty; and an unparalleled look and feel all merge here to create the Condor cigar cutter."

One of Red Horse Knife Works' customers described the Condor cutter as "an absolute heirloom piece that I will be able to hand down to my son," Testimonials like this are important to Kim because his aim for Red Horse since its launch has been to build functional art.

"When a customer purchases one of our products, they can instantly recognize the value in the feel, look and design," he explains.

To help draw attention to the Condor cutter in a store, Kim recommends merchandising it in a high-traffic area positioned within the customer's line of sight. Kim also points out the value of having something new in stock to showcase to customers, and the Condor could definitely be a conversation starter and potential upsell. As a way to support retailers and promote the Condor to potential new customers, Red Horse Knife Works is always looking for co-marketing opportunities to help grow

brand awareness for both Red Horse Knife Works' products and the retailer.

Building on its Reputation

As a cigar smoker, Kim understands the enjoyment that comes from savoring a cigar while surrounded by good company and fine spirits. It was in this type of setting that the idea was born to create a cigar cutter with an incredible blade surrounded by quality material that was built to perform over an extended period of time. The goal was to design a cigar cutter that he would be proud to carry and enjoy using. Kim has plans for the Condor brand that include expanding it further into the luxury lifestyle category by way of developing a lighter and even a line of chef's knives. By raising the quality of cigar cutters to exceed consumer expectations, Kim hopes they will in turn begin to demand the same quality from their kitchen knives as they do their lighters and cutters used for cigars.

Expanding Red Horse Knife Works' product portfolio is Kim's focus right now. For anyone seeking an extraordinary piece made of the highest-quality material that is available at an affordable price point, Kim hopes to be able to provide a product for them. The company has plans to scale through retail stores, online distributors and channel sale opportunities. As Red Horse continues to provide unique pieces made to meet high standards and expectations, it expects its reputation as a superior house brand to continue to grow as well. Kim and his team at Red Horse Knife Works continue to work on making their products affordable to the general public but also hope to continue to educate the company's customers on the importance and value of investing in excellence. **TB**

The Value Found in Details

Red Horse's Condor cigar cutter is high-end and retails for close to \$300, but why? It comes down to the details Edward Kim and his team took with the design and development of the Condor, created for the most discerning connoisseur interested in a high-quality cigar accessory. The body of the Condor cigar cutter consists of 6al4v titanium, a material that is tougher than aluminum and will never rust or corrode. The inlays are either a stylish carbon fiber or G10 and are available in a variety of colors. The blades are made from German-made Bohler M390 steel heat-treated to 60 rockwell hardness, and it is a certified "super steel" known for its balance of toughness, ability to take a keen edge, and its resistance to corrosion.

The blade itself is chisel-style, meaning it is ground and angled on one side, creating a nice, flat cut for the cigar. The Condor cigar cutter is capable of cutting cigars up to a 58 ring gauge. For those seeking to protect the investment they make in a premium cigar, Red Horse Knife Works' Condor is designed to deliver the perfect cut that won't ruin a cigar.

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Photos courtesy of Red Horse Knife Works

SUPER CUT

Red Horse Knife Works' Edward Kim talks about how he created the Condor, a high-end luxury cigar cutter. ★ BY ANTOINE REID

Edward Kim is a lifelong martial artist and a former MMA trainer and competitor. He spent 10 years as a security consultant and tactical training instructor. It has been his passion for knife-making that has become his profession and motivation in life. Kim turned his living room into a temporary shop as a way to teach himself how to make knives. It was when this decision led to a nearly destroyed living room that Kim turned to master knife-maker Jim Smyth for an apprenticeship to learn the knife-making craft. As one of the oldest crafts in existence, knife-making has always fascinated Kim. Its history and origins have always been of interest to him and ultimately convinced him to make it a real occupation rather than just a hobby.

"There is something boldly intrinsic about tool-making that gives me an immense sense of satisfaction when the job is complete," Kim says. "That need has always followed me through life, and at some point I finally had to fulfill it."

Seven years ago, Kim launched Red Horse Knife Works, a company whose focus is to bring high-quality mid-techs to the general public. The knives that Kim makes aren't the basic run-of-the-mill ones you'll find in most stores. They are made with technology that makes them affordable and usable but also aesthetically pleasing. In 2019, Kim's company entered the cigar accessory category with the launch of its Condor cigar cutter, a high-end luxury cutter that features a titanium shell and stainless steel blade that took more than four years to design and produce.

Details of Perfection

When it comes to creating and selling high-end knives, Kim focuses on details rather than price point. "Leonardo da Vinci said, 'Details make perfection, and perfection is not a detail.' This sums up Red Horse's philosophy well," he says. "The commitment to details such as the material used to achieve the correct ratios in both edge sharpness and metal hardness impact everything we do. Incorporating critical customer feedback in order to advance functionality and appeal have become a major factor in our success."

There are many small factors that come together to create the big picture. Kim is a fan of what he calls "old-school Prohibition Americana" which he puts a modern twist on for many of his designs. Sometimes the idea for a product's design comes to him like a lightning bolt, and the overall design comes together like clockwork. This is what happened with the creation of Red Knife's Hell Razor. On the other hand, there are times where he may struggle with an idea to the point at which he's forced to rethink his process.

"I always incorporate superior materials into the creative process," he says. "This often results in a level of quality I could never achieve otherwise. I think our clients see this commitment and have a trust that their Red Horse product is really something special."

The Condor cigar cutter was a product whose inspiration came from a personal space. Kim has been a fan of cigars for 18 years, but as a consumer, he had been rather dissatisfied with the quality of cigar cutters on the ▶



Red Horse Knife Works' Condor cutter took nearly four years to develop. This high-end cutter uses steel that's sharp, durable and serviceable.

Red Horse Knife Works Continued

market. Kim has often found himself diagnosing gadgets and looking at them from the perspective of a craftsman, looking for ways to not only improve what has been done before but also to make them more efficient. With the development of the Condor, originality was the biggest challenge Kim had to deal with. It was hard to not be influenced by existing cigar cutter designs, and as a creative professional, not allowing familiar design elements from others is always difficult. Kim also dealt with making his cutter unique in its look but also functional. He also wanted to use exceptional materials that would make the manufacturing and design of a new cutter a challenge.

The final design for the Condor took more than four years and several failed prototypes before it was developed. Kim had a checklist of criteria that the final product had to have. The Condor cigar cutter had to be comfortable to carry in the pocket as well as to hold in the hand; it had to be owner-serviceable; it had to use a scissor-style action; it had to be razor-sharp and remain that way over time; and it had to feel and look "cool" to the end consumer. The Condor was designed to be the highest-quality cigar cutter on the market, so Kim began the design and production process for it by using the highest-quality materials available and using precision machining to ensure the perfect fit and finish. Red Horse's tolerances are within .0001 of an inch, a statistic that cannot often be achieved by standard methods of manufacturing. The company uses a type of steel that is viewed as one of the finest knife steels by the knife industry due to its balanced sharpness, durability and overall serviceability. According to Kim, the final product outperforms traditional cutters and also lasts significantly longer than most cutters currently on the market.



When a customer purchases one of our products, they can instantly recognize the value in the feel, look and design.



—Edward Kim

"I like the Condor's visual appeal, and when you hold it in your hand and feel the weight of the titanium frame, its effortless motion of the ceramic bearings, and experience its smooth cut that you can only get from the M390 super steel, well, I think you'll have to agree. To me, it is truly a piece of functional art," says Kim.

A unique product like the Condor requires Kim and his team to educate retailers and their staffs about the various attributes of the cutter, including how best to hold it in order to achieve a smooth, flat cut each time, how to use the bottle opener on the flip side of the cutter and, finally, to learn about the quality of the materials used in its manufacture. Because the Condor cigar cutter could be viewed as costly by some, education is key in the marketing and selling of it to retailers. As a way to support those retailers that take the Condor into their stores, Red Horse Knife Works supports its partners with in-store events that include co-sponsor branding to expand its audience and event appeal, co-marketing to its online customer base to help drive in-store traffic, branding opportunities on its website and through social media, and other advertising mediums. Red Horse's limited-time warranty as well as the in-house servicing of its products give retailers and consumers an incentive to give its luxury cigar cutter a try.

High Price and Value

The price tag associated with Red Horse Knife Works' Condor could be viewed as a challenge, but it's not one that can't be overcome. The overall cost and availability of cheap cutters on the market may outweigh the initial investment required for the Condor, but Kim is banking on cigar smokers wanting only the best cutter ▶



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