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Bahco Kochanski bush axe

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- Gear reviews and tests - Edged tools - Axes and hatchets -



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Description :

There are many axes in size recommended by Mors Kochansky for Bushcraft. This is one of them made in Europe

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Bahco isn't so obvious choice as manufacturer for bush axes. But if you look right you will find products which are just tailored for bush. And they are best choice in their price range.

Since I read Mors Kochanski's Buscraft I was in search for suitable axe. I know that Granfors Brucks Small Forest Axe is great solution with just the right size but I couldn't get one from where I was living.

Store search wasn't successful, there were just hatchets or big axes with heads from 1000 grams (2 1/4 pounds) to larger weights. I had a good relationship with Bahco distributor here and next step was to look in their catalog. At first look there were two suitable models, HUS 08-500 and HUP 08-500.

As the name said it has 800 grams head and 500 mm long handle. For the US friends that is 1 3/4 pounds and 20" handle.



The only difference is that HUP models are professional ones, with handles from premium USA hickory and that HUP had an additional metal ring wedge together with carbon fiber one same as HUS model.

Price difference was small, about 3 €. So the choice was simple, I go ahead and persuaded Bahco distributor to order one box of 4 pieces.

It was a long wait, for about 2 months, until I received the call from the shop. I got the chance to examine all 4 of them, and to choose best one for me. First one I picked was flawless, with almost vertical grain in handle, with slightly curved annual rings which can be taken as proof that it is from young hickory, and most important it was perfectly true. Grind lines didn't meet at all, there wasn't any edge unless we can call a 1 mm thick surface an edge... But that can be fixed with a little good will and a lot of hard work. I checked the throw, and it was perfect, just like on Mors drawings.

Bahco Kochanski bush axe

I checked another three, all of them had true head, but on two grain was far from vertical, and one had an even better grain, but there was small knot about 2-3mm in size just 5 cm (2") under the head, and i left it in store because of that.



For the moment I left charyng eye on carbon fiber wedge, it is great for securing the axe to the pack.

I spend a lot of time reshaping the head. At that moment I didn't had any power tools for that job so I used a file and large pieces of emery paper. The head was hard, not hard enough that it was imposible to work with, but hard, so I progressed slowly.

I do not own any of the gransfors axe so I could not compare steels.

I moved the bevels back, convexed them, and finally polished them up to 1500 grit emery and after that on strop loaded with russian titan carbide polishing compound with 7-5 microns size. It is smelly, based on thick motor or machinist oil but works great, cutting fast and leaves good finish.



Profile of Bahco HUP after reprofiling. It isn't thin like GB or thick like Roselli, it is somewhere in between, and it looks like it is a good compromise.

I did a lot of thinking about the head profile, and after I read JM gear review of [SFA against Roselli](#) I decided to not to thin Bahco head to much, and to try it with profile somewhere in between SFA and Roselli and close to Weterlings according to the pictures.

Finally I tried it on recent trip to wilderness, first chopping some spruce logs, splitting very seasoned beech for fire, little limbing, building lean to, and all of the other axework around camp. I even use it instead of knife for cutting some pork ribs for lunch instead of Fallkniven H1 just to try it for the occasion I don't have knife with me. It chipped a little when I was using it on beech, but that beech dried on dry barn for tree years and have lot of knots . By the way the chips were small, and were removed with Hoodoo hone with ease in about 5 minutes.

Balance was perfect, and it was very easy to work with it. On the other side I will remove varnish from the handles ASAP and refinish them with german product LIGNOL which is linseed oil with camphor, and other resins and some solvents if I got it right from german. I did the same thing on my smaller bahco and it is indeed waterproof and offers a good grip.

It is light, and fits perfectly on my Burton backpack. It was exactly as long as backpack is high, and head fits great in sidepocket, so it doesn't draw attention on bus stations and during going through cities and villages.

Bahco Kochanski bush axe



Bahco in spruce tree. It doesn't wedge easily, and it is easy to remove it from the trunk.

I tried it again last weekend, and Jimbo was right in his reply on the forums. It didn't chip any more, and held shaving sharpness through prolonged chopping sessions. I stropped it on leather just for one minute or two and that was all.

I must admit that I will like to try Gransfors, and that it will be probably my first choice, but Bahco is good, relatively cheap at 33€ (if anything is cheap with south eastern Europe's salaries) and looks and feels great.

Bahco Kochanski bush axe



My outdoors quartet for this trip. Bahco HUP axe, Bahco Laplander folding saw, my own production custom H1 from Fallkniven BH1 blade detailed in last article, and Fallkniven U2 in neck pouch. I didn't find that anything is missing

I am very happy that I own it and think that Bahco should be mentioned more frequently when we talk about outdoorsmans gear.

Bogdan Ristivojevic