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Classic vs. Modern Interpretation

Field Comparison; Grohmann #1 vs Mora 2000

Sharpshooter

- Gear reviews and tests - Edged tools - Fixed blades -



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Description :

Field testing two popular woods knives, head to head.

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Cold and Snow; Canada and Sweden, a cold snow covered bit of woods and two great knives to test make for a good day.

The two knives:



The Mora 2000 by K J Eriksson is a modern incarnation of the classic Scandi knife with a somewhat short (4.4 inches/ 112mm) thin blade (.097 / 2.5mm) oval cross sectional handle with no guard. The overall length is a very comfortable 9 inches (230mm) with the handle made of a slightly soft plastic and includes a very slight swell acting as a guard of sorts.

The Grohmann #1 is a classic in its own right; having been designed by D H Russell, a cutlery merchant from Toronto. Russell brought Rudolf Grohmann and his family from Czechoslovakia to build them in Nova Scotia. The elliptical shape and balanced design have made been recognized as both a great knife and item of beauty being displayed at the Museum of Modern Art in New York. The Grohmann #1 has a Rosewood handle, stainless steel blade .125 (3.175mm) thick measuring 4 (102mm) long. The offset full tang handle eliminates the need for a guard on the 8.5 (216mm) long knife.

The lab:

My favorite piece of woods, covered with about 10 inches of fresh snow, disturbed only by deer tracks. On this wintery day I am going to put the M2K and #1 thru their paces with some basic camp knife tasks.



The tests:

The order and tests were intentionally selected to evaluate the blades in both performance and durability. Starting with Batoning, followed by fine shaving and then precise whittling.

Round 1

The first test was batoning thru a frozen branch about 1½ inch thick. Batoning is an excellent way for shortening branches when the knife you are using is too light for effective chopping. The technique calls for holding the blade against the branch to be cut and driving it thru with blows directed on the spine.



The M2K was first:

Three solid blows and the blade was half way thru...



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a few more and the job was done. The thin blade sliced thru the frozen wood quite easily, in fact more so than my ¼ inch thick Randall Model 23.

The Grohmann was next; again three solid blows buried the blade well into the branch.



I think the elliptical shape of the blade with its curved edge helped the slightly thicker blade dig into the wood, in fact deeper than the M2K with the same blows. Unfortunately a problem became evident, the spine of the #1 was now almost flush with the top of the branch before the branch had split. The solution is to hold the handle down on the work surface and strike the forward end of the blade, sort of like levering the blade rather than driving it. The Grohmann's full tang construction made me a bit more comfortable although I have not broken a stick tang knife with this technique. I hate breaking any knife, even if in a planned experiment; knives are tools and the mechanic in me loves and respects tools.



Results of Round 1: Both knives came thru batoning with flying colors, exhibiting no obvious deformation of the edges, though the M2K edged the #1 slightly due to the wider blade eliminating the need to leverage the end of the cut.

Round 2

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The next part of the test was Fuzz Sticks;

Long curls of wood are vital for fire starting and I believe any knife worth carrying should be able to make an impressive fuzz stick. If the edge is less than optimal the curls will break off as the blade skips out of the cut.

The Grohmann created these almost artistic tight curls in some Osage Orange:



M2K is no slouch either:



The curve on the #1 created the curls, entering the wood diagonally is a trick many experienced whittlers use when making the feathers on Matchstick Chickens ; the straighter edge on the M2K still performed well, though not quite so fancy.

Results of Round 2: functionally we have a draw but I will give points to the Grohmann for the artistry of the Poodle Fuzz .

Round 3

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The last test was using both knives in making the notches required for a Figure 4 Trigger.

This test is more subjective than the others. I used both knives in the process and afterward looked back at which one I was drawn to more often in the job. Both knives are quite capable whittlers, especially with the push cuts necessary to make precise cuts.

Grohmann:



Mora 2000:



Perhaps more due to the handle shape and size relating to my hand, I found myself choosing the M2K more often than the Grohmann. It's work like this that demonstrates the basis of the Scandi's popularity in Woodlore circles. The Grohmann is a great cutter and excels in most tasks, but I had a hard time getting the notch ends straight due to the curved edge.

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Results of Round 3: The M2K wins this one... mostly because my hand seemed to reach for it thru the whittling process. I forced myself to use the #1, but somehow the M2k just continued to appear in my hand.



Round 4

In spite of the fact that I planned three rounds of testing, this fourth category needs to be included.

Round 4 is the place the M2K comes up unquestionably short, the sheath; in a word... HORRID! I recognize the clear superiority of plastics over leather in sheaths for knives that will actually be used, still the M2K sheath is awful. I thought Nauga's were considered an endangered species after the Naugahhide craze of the 70s. Perhaps KJ Eriksson has discovered a stockpile of petrified Naugas and is doing the world a service by disposing of them in the shape of Mora 200 sheaths. The Green plastic is textured with a pattern that is intended to look like some sort of leather.



NO WAY! I'm not going to be seen in public carrying an M2K in the factory sheath.

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The Grohmann sheath is not a fair representation of the sheath that you will get with a new Model 1, somewhere along the line, the original leather was wet formed and dressed up with a bit of beadwork and some paracord. A flap style sheath is also available if you choose.

On/Scene Tactical has developed a Kydex sheath for the M2K, my Mora 2000 will be riding in style as soon as I can get one.

Both of these knives earned their reputations as great knives. The Grohmann #1 is also referred to as the Design Award knife and I can see why. It is a classic that would serve well as a camp knife on anyone's belt. The \$90 retail price is easily found deeply discounted making this a wonderful value for the outdoorsman seeking a classical addition to his kit.

However, the Mora 2000 outshines the Grohmann in actual hand friendliness. The Scandi design, hand filling handle and well shaped blade make this one a knife that will be lashed on to my pack, as soon as I can find a sheath for it. At \$30 from Ragweed Forge, this must be one of the best values in the knife world.

The Grohmann; I'll keep it, maybe it'll become a "Loaner" for when I go camping with someone who doesn't yet own a good knife. The #1s performance should be enough to convince anyone that a good knife is imperative.