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Valiant's

Horn Golok Small

OldJimbo

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



Publication: Thursday 9 January 2003

Description :

The essence of the [leuku](#) is of a thin bladed knife which can be used for light chopping - but is also highly practical for everything from butchering to woodwork. It's an absolutely incredible blade design - but lacks the power for limited chopping on the size of wood we have around here.

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The [Golok](#) is a traditional knife of [Indonesia](#).

I've been pretty enthused with my Eriksson bladed leuku, and I made a second from a Lauri blank which I got from [Brisa](#). The Lauri is 3mm thick rather than the 3.3mm of the Eriksson but makes a super blade. I put a handle on one, and am getting ready to put a handle on another for one of my grand-daughters. Here's a picture, of my knife starting to come together. I use it, shape the handle, use it... So the handle is still a little clubby in this pic.



The essence of the leuko is of a thin bladed knife which can be used for light chopping - but is also highly practical for everything from butchering to woodwork. It's an absolutely incredible blade design - but lacks the power for limited chopping on the size of wood we have around here. And so I'd been looking around for a heavier model. The Scandinavians, being smart enough to use axes when required, liked their leukus just as they've been for generations..

Enter the Horn Golok...

Horn Golok Small



Wandi, being a really nice guy, probably thought I was going a little nuts on sword like blades and sent me a little present - a really nice small horn golok (9.5" blade, 350grams for the knife, 460 with sheath - 3/16" blade). Horn in this case means that it has a buffalo horn sheath. I couldn't help thinking as I looked at it that it is just the thing that my leuku covetting grand-daughter would want! Naturally I wanted to play with it first and so I spent some time polishing up the bevels on the belt grinder. Then off I went to see how it worked out in the bush. I almost hated to take it out because it was too pretty! Well pretty is as pretty does...

And here's what I said on the forums...

"The big surprise was the horn golok small. I spent about an hour and a half straightening everything out with a belt grinder. The edge is now one continuous curve with about as perfect an edge and bevel as I am capable of or could wish for - for now... It took a while because I only had fine grit old belts and so went slow to avoid heat. It's one amazing blade now. I've always been unimpressed with most large knives of this length with their thick profiles and secondary bevels - though recognizing why others want them that way. I'm very impressed with the leuku design, but leukos are no choppers of the larger wood found here. Probably there are many like me who have thought about a heavier leuku that would chop and this is it! It's almost double the weight of my Lauri leuku - but half the weight of the kelapa.

For sure it doesn't have the characteristic single bevel edge of the leuku - but that design with flat sides to the main part of the blade would act like a machete and wedge. The golok profile doesn't wedge. The false edge rules out using a baton which is a great pity, but on green poles it's nothing short of amazing, and a baton isn't required. Despite lots of chopping with similar but heavier blades I was shocked by what it would cut through rather than into. JM's "WAOW!" was exactly where I was at. More obtuse bevels on most knives meet their match when you start into harder wood - but this one seems to do very well for its size. I guess the bottom line is that without the false edge it would be great. It is made from natural materials, including the sheath, and made by "old fashioned" methods so I do think that a lot of leuku lovers would learn to love this blade too. The handle carving was no problem in terms of abrasion - but my hands are a little calloused right now. I can't see any problem even if they weren't.

I can see that I'm going to have to get more of these for my grand-daughters! I can see it now - me testing out the latest version of some heavy duty blade and desperately beavering through poles and grand-daughters saying "Why don't you cut these bigger ones?" swish crack, swish crack...

The "Crack!" part is puzzling me. I was chopping with the sumbawa last night on some alders and noticed some very

Horn Golok Small

loud sharp cracking sounds. It was so loud on some hits that I thought the blade had cracked - which of course it hadn't. The alders hadn't split up as far as I could see, but the sharp "crack" was exactly the same as an alder springboarding or splitting upwards. It happened even when I took a sapling in one sweep. Puzzling..."

Later after much more chopping with the little blade to make sure that I wasn't dreaming things, a slight problem did occur. I found that the bird's beak at the back of the handle, began to irritate my little finger. And that's the sum and total of the problems encountered with the blade itself! I've been meaning to spend the required five minutes with a sanding drum on the drill press, or Dremel- but I haven't gotten to it so far, so clearly this isn't a huge problem. I don't even see it wrecking the carving of the bird's lower beak!



The sheath is gorgeous, but does pose one problem, in that it is a loose fit for the blade. I waited a long time in case of any shrinkage or expansion - but so far no change so it's time to glue in some THIN pieces of leather. It's well worth using thin pieces of cardboard to check for fit: it doesn't take much! Other than that, the sheath stays as is. I don't think that I could bear to cover this one in cordage - well not right away! Here's the back:



And here's the picture from the Valiant homepage with one of the alternative handle carvings:

Horn Golok Small



I'm hoping that I haven't offended any leuko lovers in writing this! I began by wanting a heavier leuko, and not finding one, thinking of getting one made. Well the leuko is a specialized blade, and is perfect as it is. The world has enough sorry dreamed-up blades! If a golok comes from a different culture, and does a slightly different job of work - well I'm sure that Scandinavians won't be too long in seeing that it's hand forged, zone hardened, and the handle and scabbard are of natural materials. It's beautiful in both appearance and performance. I guess in writing about this blade together with leukus - I've done so because each is a product of generations of development and I wouldn't want to do without either.

About the only blade that I can think of to test the horn golok against is the Gransfors Bruks mini hatchet. That'll be a whole different blade too - with it's own specializations! I simply don't have access to any other blade that would make a decent comparison in chopping potential. They exist of course, but are hand forged blades outside my price range right now. The horn golok is \$34 US - plus what it takes to get it from Australia and through customs.

Here's a pic comparing size to the other Valiant blades - the horn golok on top, followed by the survival golok, and then the Sumbawa:



Conclusions:

I guess I'm going to have to get a few more of these in the different handle designs and sizes. On the Valiant homepage it's worth scrolling the Java section and looking also at the other goloks with horn sheaths. The damascus is more expensive but is certainly beautiful in itself - both in looks and in performance! Just be warned that you won't stop at one, once you see and use one.

This certainly isn't the blade for chopping your way through dense mixed bush - for that you need a larger golok. This one will easily chop down larger saplings that you'd want to carry far to build a lean to, and in addition it works well on seasoned wood so that you'd be able to get to dry stuff in most cases for a fire. It'll also function well as a knife for making fuzzy sticks and general woodworking. It would be somewhat limited on skinning, unless you were into really large stuff.

One of these pretty knives is for my pretty grand-daughter. You don't just hand over chopping knives to anyone though, without taking time to make sure they know just what they're getting into, make sure that they are properly trained and of proper responsibility! This little knife too, is capable of the draw or saber cut.

Horn Golok Small

You'd sure want to get one of these and learn the draw cut before wagering your same weight "Ninja Commando Rambo Attak XX" against it in a chopping contest. As with a horse called "Buttercup" at some real rodeo, some things aren't what they first seem, no matter how innocent or cute they look.: swish -crack - WAOW!

[Jimbo](#)

Post-scriptum :Original article at [OldJimbo's site](#).