



Outdoors-Magazine.com

<http://outdoors-magazine.com>

The Russian Zlatoust

# Picnic knife from ROSarms

James

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



Publication: Thursday 15 March 2007

## **Description :**

A rather deceiving test of one of these Russian knives made in Zlatoust.

---

Copyright (c) Outdoors-Magazine.com under a Creative Commons

Attribution-Non-Commercial-Share Alike License

---

By curiosity I obtained one of these knives from ROSarms ([rosarmsusa.com](http://rosarmsusa.com)).

The name is the Picnic knife.

It is a big knife. Like most Russian knives, in order to complain with Russian regulations and to avoid being considered as a weapon, it is thin bladed. 13 cm (a bit more than 5 inches) long, but the blade is 2.3 mm thick steel (or so they claim, I think that a good part of that disappeared in the polishing, because it does not match a 2.5 mm thick blade I own). It is thin, very thin, and also makes it light, which is what I was looking for, but one can wonder about the fragility of such a long thin blade, even the Scandinavians do not do 6 inches with only 2+ millimetres of thickness. It is so thin it bends easily using two fingers.

[rosarmsusa.com](http://rosarmsusa.com)

The sheath's leather is not great, it feels like plastic on the smooth side, but it works.

The handle is Russian brown "micarta" with staked birch bark, the whole knife is very light. The handle ergonomics are very good, and the handle materials of good quality. But the tang in it is so thin, that the handle does bend like the rest of the knife, birch bark is not a rigid material. The first time, it emitted a few cracking sounds, but it held since.

The blade is hollow ground, and the edge primary bevel a bit thick and obtuse for real good performances.

The steel is stainless, takes a fair edge, is reasonably hard to sharpen, like a 440C, yet can be sharpened on a Japanese stone or a tungsten carbide sharpener. Sharpening by stone is relatively easy, sharpening by tungsten sharpener shows that the edge seems to be prone to rolling easily. BUT...

But it does not keep it's edge that well in my opinion.

I did some tests, comparing with a carbon steel edge I made myself at 50 HRC, only cutting plants stems and different woods in the outdoors, and not a lot, and it does deteriorate faster than I would have expected. I tried in the kitchen for a few weeks, cutting sausages and meat and cheese on a wooden plank, it also deteriorates too fast in my opinion, when NO deterioration should ever happen, or happened on the reference knife.

Oh, nothing awfully bad, just it is below all my standards on that matter, and I am not extremely demanding (told you, my carbon steel blade of comparison for most of the time is a 50 HRC 0.7 % carbon blade). It also deteriorates some 3 to 10 times faster, if not more, than a stainless steel opinel or a 12c27 mora 2000 which is a very similar size and weight, cheaper, and a much better performer.



**The bendy knife** The first knife I ever encounter with a bending handle!



**A mora 2000 is less bendy** Same force applied on a mora 2000

I suspect chipping of the big carbides it contains is the reason of the fast edge deterioration. Or maybe it rolls too much.

Whatever the steel is, or it's tempering, it does not fit the claims of the maker's site, and it is not a steel very suitable for cutlery. In my mind, it is not a better performer than a 440A/B or even a 420/420j2 blade, which is not a compliment at all for a knife! there is a range in edge holding, and this is in the lower third of it. I have seen 2\$ Chinese kitchen knives behaving better or the same. Any way, this steel is not the super Russian steel that is close in composition to BG42 that the web site claims it is.

The heat treat is normally coming at 57/59 HRC, but if I check the way it goes away under a grinder, I doubt there is this kind of hardness. Maybe we have a missed heat treat there. May be not. I have not tried to contact the retailer. I am not sure I'll be interested by even a correctly heat treated version of this knife. whether it is a missed heat treat or not, I will call it representative of the production anyway, as if it is, it indicates clear lack of quality control.

I have not tried to break the blade to check it's resilience, so I cannot comment on resilience.

This said once this deterioration had occurred, it does not seem to spread much further, just it does not keep a strong razor edge for long, but a poor rather very very dull edge for a long time. You can actually feel the edge deteriorating while cutting!

I have heard that there are lots of factories in Zlatoust, and that having a consistent heat treat quality is the main problem faced in general on Zlatoust knives.



### The ROSarms picnic knife

At 90\$ for such a knife, I think it is simply very expensive for a quality that is not present. Yes, there is craftsmanship, but some materials used are not up to standards that could be expected at that price.

So in the end, they are light, stainless, may work (but not greatly) and are in my opinion largely overpriced for what they provide. A verdict which is obvious if you compare with another maker of thin bladed knives like Mora of Sweden.

It will stay a rather expensive but poor performing curiosity for me. I would have loved to find it a good knife, but it is not the case, it is not that terribly bad either, but I doubt it is worth the price I paid it. I strangely have not yet read any similar comment on the web, well, I'll be the first then.

I hope however it is a missed heat treat, if you have one ROSarms that performs, I'll be interested to hear your comments.

You can also check in our forum [this thread](#) , and [this thread](#)

*Post-scriptum :*

*Let's give a low note on this one. I generally do not write reviews on poor gear, but then in this case, the claims of the maker are unreal, and deserve a correction.*

*In addition, people say that we always say good things about things we review, and suspect we are partial. This is to show that we are not, simply most of the time, crap gear does not deserve any time spent writing.*

*It would be good if makers around the world, rather than selling bad stainless knives, were switching back to carbon steel, which makes production*

## Picnic knife from ROSarms

---

*of good quality knives easy and consistent, and probably gives better profit margins, as it is also cheaper to acquire...*