Shapton vs. Chosera WEPS Stones - The Great Debate

Posted by jendeindustries - 30 Sep 2011 08:43

There will soon be a lot of questions about Shapton and Chosera stones for the WEPS. This is a good thing.

Shapton and Chosera stones are the Lamborghini and Ferrari in the synthetic stone world, and they compete head to head - much like Coke and Pepsi.

It is my hope that people will come here to ask questions, and discuss their experiences with the Shapton and Chosera WEPS stones in general, along with the use of specific stones, or a specific series. If you have stones from both series, I'd like to get some discussions about comparisons, nuances, and the pros and cons between them.

The goal of the thread is to help people make their own informed decision by reading for themselves what other people are getting out of their stone choices. It's not about arguing over which series will be declared the sole master of the universe. It's about finding out which one is best for a given situation, and about enhancing the overall experience of using your WEPS in general.

FWIW, I have and use all the Chosera *and* Shapton Pro stones (including the 30K) for the WEPS. While the list may be small right now, I hope to soon meet more people on their sharpening journeys who also have all these great toys and can share their thoughts and experiences with the rest of us.

So, let the great debate begin!

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Re: Shapton vs. Chosera WEPS Stones - The Great Debate

Posted by komitadjie - 30 Sep 2011 09:18

So, you DELIBERATELY trying to spark WWIII, Tom?

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Re: Shapton vs. Chosera WEPS Stones - The Great Debate

Posted by edhead35 - 30 Sep 2011 10:39

I choose Pepsi

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Re: Shapton vs. Chosera WEPS Stones - The Great Debate

Posted by leomitch - 30 Sep 2011 11:09

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This is a great topic Tom. I think it is one that will have lasting value so I have made it a sticky so it won't get lost in the shuffle.

I haven't used the Shaptons but I have the Naniwa Chosera stones, so I have some observations about them. When I first began to use them, I was wondering what they would add to the great job done by the WEPS diamond paddles and ceramic paddles.

First thing to note is the fact that they need to be soaked ahead of use and while being used must be spritzed with water to keep them wet enough to produce a slurry as they abrade the metal of the blade...so there is preparation ahead of time and clean-up after.

In use I found there was a general slowing down of the process, but I actually found that for me that was a plus...it became more of a Zen experience since I watched, listened and felt the process more deeply.

The end results were:

-the finish on the edge was more mirror like and the scratches more uniform and symmetrical;

- the edge seemed keener to a certain degree...slicing seemed smoother;

-the stones were not as aggressive as the diamond paddles so the number of strokes/time was increased

Are these stones worth the extra expenditure? I am sure this point will be argued, but to me, compared to where I was regarding sharpening a year or so ago when I got the WEPS,the answer is yes. First as a collector, the mirror finish is a big and welcomed plus. The keenness of the edge is increased in the ethereal world of knife sharpeners who polish atoms!! LOL! Real life sharpness is increased but not so much that an ordinary Joe would care in day-to-day knife use. He might notice for example, that the chicken breast butterflies a little bit smoother or the caping of the elk might proceed a little more easily.

All in all I think they are a plus factor in sharpening and I would suppose that the difference would be most noted on knives used in the culinary arts where a sharp chef's knife is an important tool.

Does this stuff make sense Tom?

Cheers

Leo

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Re: Shapton vs. Chosera WEPS Stones - The Great Debate

Posted by jendeindustries - 30 Sep 2011 19:15

@ Komit - Nah, I already know who the winner is

@ EdHead - that's funny, because I would prefer Coke if I still drank cola.
Also think Ferraris look better than Lamborghinis.

@ Leo - Excellent!

You brought up some very important topics.

The biggest is the initial argument of even "leaving" the diamonds and WEPS ceramics in the first place. I think you have answered that very rationally, coming from a position of more of a hunting/outdoors knife user:

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All in all I think they are a plus factor in sharpening and I would suppose that the difference would be most noted on knives used in the culinary arts where a sharp chef's knife is an important tool.

You've also managed to point the single-most important reason for this thread, IMO:

-the finish on the edge was more mirror like and the scratches more uniform and symmetrical;

- the edge seemed keener to a certain degree...slicing seemed smoother;

-the stones were not as aggressive as the diamond paddles so the number of strokes/time was increased

As with all the accessories for the WEPS, it is not a case where "X" won't work, and "Y" will. It is about the difference in the edges produced and the way they are produced by

the WEPS diamonds, ceramics, pastes, sprays, and Chosera and Shaptons. I strongly agree that for the beginning WEPS user there is only the need to "get sharp" - nothing more, nothing less. When adding the accessory stones like Choseras and Shaptons, and even the other ceramics and diamond plates, it is like your wife/girlfriend having several pairs of shoes for the same outfit (or worse, several outfits to go with each pair of shoes!) - you suddenly have versatility way beyond your initial investment in the WEPS.

The prep and cleanup is a credible factor for some. There is soaking time on the Choseras, but it isn't the 20 minutes that the full sized stones require - Longer is better if you have the time, but I usually spritz them while I am setting up and clamping the knife, and again as I set the angles, and once every now and then to keep the juices flowing while sharpening. It's not the continuous flow that some other water stones require. Shaptons do not require presoaking, so just a quick spritz right before use and once every now and then to keep the stones clean.

Cleanup isn't that bad, IMO - a couple of paper towels or tissues usually soaks up the water - most of it is clean and just drips right off the stones. One note I'd like to add here is that the dry WEPS diamonds do create a good deal of "dust", which also technically requires cleanup time as well.

I think this is a great start!

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Re: Shapton vs. Chosera WEPS Stones - The Great Debate

Posted by dschur - 30 Sep 2011 20:19

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I am really looking forward to seeing some Shaptons for the Wicked Edge. I want to be able to take the bevel down further than my 1600 ceramic limited on stone to reduce the scratches before stopping towards that mirror edge.

I'm a little concerned about having to re-set the angle coming odd the ceramics due to the thicker stones (I imagine getting it exact is rather tricky and that is not the time to start reprofiling at 2000+ grit). Is there a reason they can't be the same thickness - do they wear or dish faster or are too brittle at that thickness?

I am more interested in the Shaptons as I hear they run a bit cleaner (less slurry).

I will probably pick up one set to start when they are available and see how much further that takes my admittedly weak edges. Any idea what grit combos will be available or pricing yet? I'd be coming off the ceramics so a 2K/5K would seem pretty appealing to me.

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Re: Shapton vs. Chosera WEPS Stones - The Great Debate
Posted by drmatt357 - 30 Sep 2011 20:54

Nearly my questins exactly DS. I'm thinking that with a 2k/5k Shapton, you might be able to eliminate the ceramic stones all together and go straight to the leather strops? Any opinions on this... especially Tom at Jende...

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Re: Shapton vs. Chosera WEPS Stones - The Great Debate
Posted by jendeindustries - 01 Oct 2011 00:56

An introductory guide to the Shapton and Chosera WEPS stones can be found in the Guide to Using Wicked Edge Chosera and Shapton Stones
. It covers the basics answers to these questions. I will expand further below, though.

dschur wrote:

I'm a little concerned about having to re-set the angle coming odd the ceramics due to the thicker stones (I imagine getting it exact is rather tricky and that is not the time to start reprofiling at 2000+ grit). Is there a reason they can't be the same thickness - do they wear or dish faster or are too brittle at that thickness?

The stone thickness was a topic of concern when we first started discussing the possibilities of Chosera and Shapton stones for the WEPS with Clay. Technically, one of the major influencing factors was that the Shapton and Chosera stones themselves are easily snapped in half as they get thinner. The aluminum blank was one way to increase their strength, and allow the full thickness of the stones to be used before they needed replacing.

More practically, using the Angle Cube with the screws positioned so they are on the side of the WEPS wings that DO NOT have drilled reference holes in them is the best way to account for the different angles caused by thicker stones.

In my opinion, using the angle cube is a necessity with all the plates, stones, and strops if you want the absolute precision you are asking for. There are slight differences between the paddles (nothing the beginner sharpener will notice, but I'm a propeller-head when it comes to using a guided sharpener...) That slightest variation combined with the fact that the stones will wear over time, makes using the angle cube even more essential for long term repeatability. It really becomes second nature to use the angle cube, too.

dschur wrote:

I am more interested in the Shaptons as I hear they run a bit cleaner (less slurry).

Shaptons pros work best when kept clean of swarf, and they are designed that way. Choseras also work fast when kept clean, but they can use their paste (formed by swarf and loose abrasive) to squeeze out a slightly finer/more polished finish than the advertised grit - and they are designed that way

dschur wrote:

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If your coming off the WEPS ceramics, then a 2K -5K should be just about right. Pricing should be available publicly soon. This is Clay's department.

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Re: Shapton vs. Chosera WEPS Stones - The Great Debate

Posted by komitadjie - 01 Oct 2011 01:18

The set I'm testing right now is to progress from the WEPS 1K plates, and is a 1k/2k Shapton pairing. After that, I'm going to go to a 5k/8k pair, I think. Then perhaps when I get around to winning the lotto, I'll buy a 15k/30k pair.

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Re: Shapton vs. Chosera WEPS Stones - The Great Debate

Posted by dschur - 01 Oct 2011 08:23

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jendeindustries wrote:

An introductory guide to the Shapton and Chosera WEPS stones can be found in the [url=http://jendeindustries.wordpress.com/2011/03/22/guide-to-using-wicked-edge-weps-chosera-and-shapton-stones/]

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Thanks for all of the great info Tom, I haven't introduced using an angle cube into my wicked edge routine yet, I may have to start thinking about that. As for using the non-drilled sides of the guide rod, that's not a problem for me as I have a gen 1 (no sides are drilled). As it is though now with the non-drilled I have to really crank the thumbscrews to prevent movement which is why I like setting them once, and am a little hesitant to adjust mid stream.

I am looking forward to getting and trying the Shaptons. Hope to see them available soon. The idea of staying "on stone" down to 30K really appeals to my mind (but not my wallet :ohmy:)

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