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 wickededge - 23 Feb 2012 12:30

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jendeindustries wrote:

Did I understand you as saying that the Shapton 5K would be better than the Chosera 5K prior to stropping? I currently have the Chosera 800/1K and 2K/3K paddles. I thought that I might go with the Chosera 5k/10K paddles next. Currently I have been going through the stock diamond progression then the 4 Choseras, then 5/3.5 micron strop, then the 1 and .5 micron 3M lapping film. I end up with a decent edge that is quite shiny. I do seem to improve it by hand stropping on felt with .5 micron Diamond, then balsa with CRO, then latigo leather with .25 micron slurry.

So taking a look at what I am doing, would you suggest the 5K shapton by itself before stropping on the WE, or going for the 5K/10K Choseras and then stropping from there. I can't afford to do both at the moment.

In your case, I'm inclined to suggest that you stick with the Chosera 5K/0K because you already have some Choseras, and plan to "jump" to 1K film and then finish with.25 micron with strops. 10K is 1.75 micron so it makes a nice stone transition over the leather strop. the 5K/10K combo also makes the edge amazingly shiny, and you can go straight to the .25 micron strop if you want.

The 5K Shapton won't shine as mirror like as the Chosera, but it is better prepared for a larger jump straight to the 1 micron film.

The major differences between the Shaptons and Choseras is their "sharpening philosophy" - Shaptons use precision to create consistent scratches without polish while Choseras use polishing to compliment their scratches. It's Function vs. Aesthetic - Shaptons strive for function, and lose some aesthetic, while Choseras strive for Aesthetic and lose some function - relatively speaking - neither series comes up short in any category.

You'll be able to see it more clearly when I post the comparison microscope pictures.

One last thing. I notice the Shaptons are sold loose and have to be mounted on a paddle/platen. What is used to mount them. I suppose it would be some kind of adhesive. If so, can you supply any specific information on this?

I believe Wicked Edge uses 3M double sided tape to mount them to the paddles. I used the double sided tape on all mine, and have no issues whatsoever, even with water.

We ship out the paddles with the 3M VHB tape already on the tray, so all you have to do is peel back the protective film and apply the stone. We can also apply them here if you choose so you don't need to worry about making mistakes. Once the stones are on, the aren't coming off in one piece.

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

Posted by wickededge - 23 Feb 2012 12:42

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jendeindustries wrote:

When we are talking at the (sub) micron level, isn't the goal to create an edge that is as even as possible, both at the edge and the edge of the edge? So to smooth out scratches from previous stones and, ultimately (but this is a dream) see no molecule raises and drops at all anymore?

It's a cliff hanger, I know! I've got a couple of things on my plate keeping me from writing up the blogs at the moment - I've got a new website that we're trying to launch on Friday!

That answer is "it depends". The smoother the edge of the edge becomes, the less aggressive it is for tearing, and it slices more. Good for shaving and unzipping hides, but due to the relative thinness of the edge of the edge, it can easily loose that freshness, much like a newly sharpened pencil. Geometry is used to support the edge of the edge. But ultimately, the point of the edge is still approaching 0 width no matter what the angle.

Conversely, a less refined edge has larger serrations in the edge (more refined still has serrations, just a lot of very small ones), and that helps for sawing and ripping power, although the coarser the serrations, the more likely they are to break off during use. Butchers like rougher edges in general since they are more concerned with removing the meat from the bone aggressively rather than making a beautifully presented slice cut.

Anyway, all of this will be explained in due time with the pictures

Therefore I'd be interested to know what the difference is between polishing and creating consistent scratches.

Again, it boils down to Aesthetic vs. Function, and are two different philosophies in sharpening. I prefer the function over the aesthetic in general, but lots of other guys prefer aesthetic over the functional. The Shapton and Chosera 2K stones leave a very similar scratch pattern, but their resulting edges are tangibly different.

I'm in total agreement here with the added caveat that the polish level (when considering function) should be dictated by the type of cutting to be done. In the most simplistic view, if you're push-cutting, as you would to shave or to carve wood, then you'll want as polished a bevel and edge as possible and if you're slice cutting, then some level of micro-serration is desirable, the exact size of the serrations is dependent on the material you're cutting. I've tried to cut zip ties with with a super polished edge and the knife just kind of slides across the surface, so I've found that a relatively coarse finish is good for cutting hard plastics. If you're slashing rope, toothier is better. If you're cutting rope by pressing it against a

board and push cutting, then smooth is better. Materials that have a tough shell and soft interior like tomatoes and baguettes benefit from a slightly toothy edge (unless the angle is super acute and then you can push cut right through that stuff with a super polished edge 🙂

*) When I'm first starting out with a knife, I like to polish as much as possible and then try to use it on whatever it's intended for. Then I start going backwards in coarseness until I find the right finish level for the job and then I keep it there.

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