

**"Planning and Designing the 2010
Journeyman Knife of the Year"**

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Every year the ABS draws names of members to make knives for the American Bladesmith Society Knife Auction at the Blade Show in Atlanta. One of these knives is billed the "Journeyman Knife of the Year" and I was the maker of this knife for 2010.

When I found out that I was going to be the maker of the 2010 knife, I asked ABS Chairman Greg Neely if there should be any particular type of knife that I should make and he stated to just make a good Journeyman quality knife. I pondered on those words for some time as I processed in my mind what this knife should be.

I concluded that the knife I built should be a representation of my journey to get to this point as well as incorporate new skills that I am developing as I continue my journey. I wanted this knife to be large yet maintain a certain amount of elegance to it. I also wanted to use many different materials to create a striking visual effect. I settled on a design that was similar to my first JS stamped knife.



Knifemaker - Brian Thie - JS

Image - Chuck Ward Photography

The blade steel had to be 5160 as this was the steel that I used for my performance test. I also wanted the blade to have the same hand rubbed finish as every one of my JS test knives had and be longer than any blade I had yet made. A length of over 12"

was chosen to show off the hand rubbed finish and to also incorporate techniques to produce a large knife that did not feel heavy or clunky when picked up or used. The tang was to be forged down, shaped, and threaded to securely fasten the handle to the blade. The flat grind, distal taper and long clip all combine to reduce weight and balance out the knife.

I elected to make the guard and butt out of Damascus steel choosing a simple twist pattern for this using 15N20 and 1080 steel.

The ferrule/spacer is a complete component separate from the handle and facilitates the engraving of the sterling silver. The engraving is a light relief scroll engraving that completely encompasses the ferrule/spacer that has no beginning and no end with each scroll flowing into the next. The ferrule/spacer is fitted to the desert ironwood handle with alignment pins.

When designing this knife, I knew that I wanted to keep the tang threaded at ¼" to afford maximum strength in supporting the long blade, but I did not want to have a large finial at the butt of the knife. The solution that I came up with was to recess the butt of the handle to accept a bearing plate that ¼" hardware could be used to securely affix the handle to the blade and then use smaller hardware and alignment pins to affix the butt to the handle. This method combines strength and elegance to the finished piece with the finial only being a ¼" stainless steel ball.

To finish off the package, I made a sheath for the knife. I wanted the sheath to compliment the knife and be a step up from anything that I had done before so I decided to do a two tone inlay / overlay type sheath with ostrich as the inlay. The sheath was also constructed as 2 pieces to facilitate different methods of carry.

While this knife was made completely by my hand including the sheath and engraving, it is a product of tips, encouragement, and advice that so many have given me over the past years that I combined as a representation of what the American Bladesmith Society is about.



Knifemaker - Brian Thie - J.S.

*2010 Journeyman Smith
Knife Of The Year*

Image - Chuck Ward Photography

This article is the first of 2 parts. In the fall of this year, I will be making a knife similar to this knife and will show some of the techniques used to construct this knife.

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