

ALL PHOTOS BY MSG KIM BREED UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED

IT WAS A FACTORY FOLDER SHOOT-OUT!

TWO PRODUCTION FOLDERS GO THROUGH THE CUTTING PACES AT HIGH NOON AND SURVIVE TO TELL ABOUT IT



Sporting a black-PVD-coated N690Co stainless steel blade, black, textured G-10 handle scales and a pocket clip, the Spartan Blades Akribis frame-lock folder falls under what the author considers the tactical folder umbrella. (Kris Kandler image)

Each of the folders tested—the Spartan Blades Akribis and the CAS Iberia Chantha—has a different feel. The Akribis, sporting a black-PVD-coated blade and textured G-10 handle scales, is what I'd classify as a tactical folder. The Chantha is more of an everyday carry folding knife with a traditional look and makeup, including a wide, polished blade and an ebony handle. While the Spartan Blades Akribis is a frame-lock folder and includes a pocket clip, the CAS Iberia Chantha is a locking-liner folder made to slip into a pants pocket and retrieve via a leather lanyard. The grinds of the two knives are also different, the Akribis being hollow ground and the Chantha sporting a convex blade grind.

For this factory folder shoot-out, I decided to start with easy tasks and progress to more difficult cutting chores. I had just received a shipment, and the box was packed with my least favorite thing—plastic peanuts. Static electricity makes

them stick to everything and they end up everywhere except in the box. Ugh! Why not slice up a few of them?

The Akribis “swooped in” to fillet the first packing peanut. The 3.5-inch CPM S35VN stainless steel blade performed nice, smooth cuts, and I was able to control the edge so the slices wouldn't go all the way through the plastic, keeping the peanut intact. The 2.75-inch N690Co stainless steel blade of the Chantha was scary sharp while cutting. I nicked my fingernail three times, and I had thin slices of peanut sticking to the knife and my camera. I think I will use a torch to melt the peanuts outside next time.

I spent the next 15 minutes trying to bag the peanuts so I could slice up the box. With a section of cardboard in hand, the slicing began. I always cut the cardboard against the grain/holes because it's more difficult to cut straight that way and a better test of an edge. Starting with the Akribis, I pulled the edge through the

SPEC CHART

COMPANY: Spartan Blades
MODEL: Akribis
BLADE STEEL: CPM S35VN stainless
BLADE LENGTH: 3.5"
STEEL THICKNESS: .125"
FINISH: Flat black PVD coating
ROCKWELL HARDNESS: 58-60 HRC
HANDLE: Black textured G-10
FRAME: 6AL-4V titanium
KNIFE LOCK: Frame lock
FEATURE: Rick Hinderer Lock Bar Stabilizer
OVERALL OPEN LENGTH: 8.5"
MSRP: \$445



The CAS Iberia Chantha is what the author terms an everyday carry folder with a traditional look and makeup, including a wide, polished blade and an ebony handle, made to slip into a pants pocket and retrieve via a leather lanyard. (Kris Kandler image)

SPEC CHART

COMPANY: CAS Iberia
MODEL: Chantha
BLADE STEEL: N690Co stainless
BLADE LENGTH: 2.75"
STEEL THICKNESS: .133"
FINISH: Polished
ROCKWELL HARDNESS: 58-60 HRC
HANDLE: Ebony
LINERS: Z40C13 stainless
KNIFE LOCK: Locking liner
FEATURE: Leather lanyard
OVERALL OPEN LENGTH: 6 7/8"
MSRP: \$175

cardboard. The blade started to stick to the cardboard, making it difficult to cut straight. As I looked closer, I could see the cardboard sticking to the blade coating and knew I could fix that quickly by spraying the blade with WD-40 and letting it soak in for a few minutes. I got totally different results the second time, with smooth cuts and a blade that was



The first few sections of cardboard the author cut using the CAS Iberia Chantha (left) flew off the piece he was holding. After he sprayed the PVD-coated blade of the Spartan Blades Akribis (right) with WD-40, it cut smoothly and was easy to control.



The textured G-10 handle of the Akribis (left) felt good and snug in the author's hand while slicing an 8-ounce leather strip. The Chantha (right) crunch, crunched its way through the leather with every cut, and the author nicked his fingernail only twice.



easy to control. Next it was the Chantha's turn. *Zip, zip, zip*—man, the edge was scary sharp! The first few sections of cardboard I cut flew off the piece I was holding. After I regained control, it was easy to keep the cuts in line.

I couldn't wait to get some leather under the edges so I can hear them talk. I was slicing and dicing with the Chantha on an 8-ounce leather strip—*crunch*,

crunch with every cut—and I nicked my fingernail only twice. The knife boasts a very aggressive cutting edge. I did feel a small sharp spot on the thumb notches, but a few strokes with some 400-grit sandpaper removed it. The rounded handle was extremely comfortable. The Akribis was up next to crunch through some leather. The textured G-10 handle felt good and snug in my hand, and there



SPEC SHEET |



The author ran out of half-inch sisal rope on the 221st cut using the Chantha (left), and the edge still shaved hair afterwards. The edge of the Akribis (right) did its job to the tune of 116 cuts, and there were still no sharp spots on the handle.

were no sharp spots on or near the grip. The longer blade made the leather slicing smoother.

ROPE CRUNCHING

It was rope-cutting time! I had about 4 feet of half-inch sisal rope left and was hoping it would be enough. The Akribis was first at the rope cutting line. That sweet rope *crunching* sound drifted through the garage. Using a push stroke, the edge did its job very quickly to the tune of 116 cuts, and there were still no sharp spots on the handle. The handle was comfortable under pressure, and the stickiness of the textured G-10 was perfect. The pocket clip is in the correct spot where it didn't interfere with my fingers.

I took a short break and then started with the Chantha. Wow! I ran out of rope on the 221st cut. It was like cutting celery with a chef's knife, and the edge would still shave hair afterwards. Again, scary sharp! The rounded ebony scales make the Chantha one of the most hand-friendly using knives I have ever tried.

Pine whittling was up next on the docket. The Chantha produced fine, smooth curlicues and some thicker ones as well. The keen edge made whittling simple and easy. After making three pine sticks into curlicues, I stopped. It was way too fun and made a big mess. I noticed the blade wiggle just a bit as it cut the pine. The Akribis produced shorter curlicues and powered through the pine. The blade coating showed some glazing from the wood, so I figured it might need another lube job.

It was on to splitting a 2x6. I used a dead-blow plastic hammer as my baton, and with two whacks on the blade spine the Akribis split a slab off the 2x6. Three more slabs bit the dust at two whacks apiece. The folder still exhibited 100 percent blade lockup, good and tight. The Chantha also split the 2x6 when whacked twice on the blade spine for each slab cut off the board, and it continued for four slabs. The small

wiggle in the blade was the same, but the blade lockup was tight, and I wound up with kindling for the weekend.

It was time to bring out the big brass rod for an edge-flex test on each blade. A correctly tempered edge should flex a small amount and return to true. Too soft and the edge stays rolled over. Too hard and the edge ends up with small chips. Since both blades are ground from stainless steel, the test was relatively equal. The hollow-ground blade of the Akribis flexed down the edge and sprang back to true. The convex blade of the Chantha flexed great until the very end when a micro-sized chip popped out where I pulled the blade away. With the way the Chantha had been aggressively cutting, I would have to lean toward the steel being just a tad on the hard side.

OVERALL

Both knives performed very well, and I liked both of them. The Chantha had a unique feel and fit snugly in my hand. The Akribis has G-10 handle scales for added comfort and grip.

CHANGES

I would like to see the Akribis and Chantha in satin-finished blades.

For more information contact CAS Iberia, attn: M. Hillian, Dept. BL8, 650 Industrial Blvd., Sale Creek, TN 37373 800-635-9366 mhillian@casiberia.com, casiberia.com, and/or Spartan Blades, attn: C. Iovito, Dept. BL8, 625 S.E. Service Rd., Southern Pines, NC 28387 910-757-0035 contact@spartanbladesusa.com, spartanbladesusa.com. Each company warrants against defects in workmanship and materials as long as the knives have not been abused.

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BLADE