

meant for." In other words, he is making no apologies for the fact this knife is designed for self-defense—to help you stop an attack right now by shutting down your attacker. This only makes sense; after all, no one apologizes for making a .45 caliber handgun instead of a .32 caliber handgun. Why should manufacturers and designers of knives clearly intended for self-defense make any pretense to political correctness? One common and legitimate use of a knife is lawful self-defense; let's be glad that they are available!

Jim specified the knife design features and left the choice of materials and detailed construction to Boker. The knife itself is made around a 440C blade and a fiberglass-reinforced plastic handle, which incorporates two one millimeter stainless steel liners to strengthen the construction and to give the right weight to the hand. The knife locks with a traditional lock-back, which is usually a stronger choice than a liner-lock, so it's a good choice here.

I am always leery of lock-backs initially, since most of them can be accidentally closed when you take a very hard grip on the handle—a fold of the skin on your palm can, under this pressure, dis-engage the

the knife, and with the knife in the pocket, the alternate punch looks much like the top of a retractable pen. You can swap the tip out with the special wrench that Boker provides with the knife. Another good touch: the same wrench allows you to not only swap the pocket clip from one side of the handle to the other, it allows you to adjust the tension of the clip itself. Finally, the handle has a lanyard hole large enough for 550 cord, and has cross-wise friction ridges along the entire length of the spine.

“In Jim’s words, this knife ‘looks like what it’s meant for.’ In other words, he is making no apologies for the fact this knife is designed for self-defense.”

a stick to form a spear in an air, water or wilderness survival situation.

Thrusts and Slashes

The overall feel of this 6.2-ounce knife is one of serious heft. Not over-heavy, it definitely feels like it can do the job of an impact weapon. It's perfectly balanced for the "fist grip" (just what it sounds like) that Jim teaches, either in a forward grip or a reverse grip. Since Jim emphasizes stabs over slashes in his system, the penetration ability of the knife is critical...and it is, in fact, extraordinary. Using the amount of force I'd use to break a single—or maybe two—pine boards, I was able to thrust this knife up to the hilt into a stack of cardboard! In terms of slashing, the Kris-like concave edge tore nasty 8-inch gashes in the cardboard stack several layers deep. And tightly layered cardboard is a much tougher medium than this knife's intended target. The knife feels anchored to your hand, it stabs unbelievably well, it slashes severely as designed and is balanced just right for these tasks.

What else to say? It performs precisely to spec. What about edge holding? Despite the nice 440C steel, I don't believe this matters. Jim chuckled when I said that the knife would be used only once as intended before it was seized for evidence, which is true. The only thing I'd change is that the very strong lock-back spring prevents the knife from being easily opened by inertia. This is one solid, no-excuses, in-your-face self defense tool!

Bottom line: At first I thought that this was a pretty odd-looking knife, perhaps attempting to incorporate too many features. But after talking to Jim and using the knife, I have to say that it really lives up to its mission, and I truly appreciate and like it. (This isn't the first time I've been wrong judging a knife based on its initial appearance.) The Jim Wagner Reality-Based Blade from Boker is one knife whose unusual looks reflect genuinely practical features. **TK**

For More Information

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The Jim Wagner Reality-Based Blade sunk up to the hilt into this cardboard stack with only a medium thrust!

The alternate "Pen-tip" window punch is in the knife butt, with the standard punch to the side. The Wagner knife comes with both and the wrench to swap them.



lock. I'm happy to say that I could not induce that mal-function with this knife—kudos to Boker. The handle has four finger grooves, and the rear three are textured so as to help you keep your grip. (Jim uses stage blood—a material that looks and feels and even, to an extent, dries like real blood—extensively in his knife training seminars so you can see the purpose of the texturing without my going into graphic detail.) The groove that mates to the thumb during opening is smooth, however, so as to quickly guide the thumb to the opening disk.

There is a glass punch on the butt, which can be used to amplify the effects of the closed knife as an impact weapon. A nice touch: an extra punch comes with

Now let's move along to the blade specifications. The 440C blade is 3 7/8 inches long and has a totally distinctive shape. The front inch or so forms a single-sided grind, tanto-like heavy-duty tip, which Jim calls a gladius tip, after the short Roman sword designed for short, powerful thrusts. The rear two-thirds of the blade is concave-curved, in the manner of a Kris, and is designed for highly aggressive, deep cutting or slashing-type actions. And in case this function isn't clear, on the serrated version of the knife there is a little extra "tooth" at the front of the curve so as to aid ripping. Finally, there is a second hole in a protrusion on the blade's spine. Using the hole, the knife can be lashed to