

SOG SEAL XR **Knife Review**



WHEN I WAS ASKED IF I WANTED TO TEST FIRE ANOTHER KNIFE, it was an easy decision - any excuse to get out into the mountains!

After the first one went missing in the mail, I received a replacement knife - it was one of the supplier's personal knives and not the brand spanking new one that had been intended, but it looked in near new condition anyway.

My initial thoughts were, "This isn't the usual style of knife I'd buy." It was quite heavy and had a tactical feel to it. I'm not a knife expert and admittedly had never heard of SOG Specialty Knives, so I did a bit of research on them.

SOG Specialty Knives are located in Washington, USA. They specialise in making

top quality knives and tools, with most of their history being in the armed forces where their gear is still used.

FIRST IMPRESSIONS

The knife I was provided was a foldable type - a good size for typical hunting applications with a noticeably thick blade which is where the weight was noticed. The quality of construction was evident, and the blade was tight when extended with no wobble to speak of. The knife had a locking mechanism which was also very crisp and had a good positive feel to it. It was

ABOVE:

PUTTING THE SOG TO WORK by removing the head of a fallow buck.

I liked the matte black blade (titanium nitride coating) as this seemed to prevent blood sticking to the blade and starting the corrosion process, which can happen on standard stainless finished blades.

sharp when it arrived 'used' from the distributor, so I didn't bother touching it up before taking it with me; I'll carry a steel with me in case it needs sharpening while in the field.

The tip of the blade is shaped well for skinning without puncturing the meat under the skin when sliding the blade. However, a slightly more curved drop point style blade would further minimise the chance of puncture and is my preference. The blade is made from premium grade stainless steel that is, apparently, the top grade of steel currently available for knife-making. This steel claims to hold its edge well and to be very corrosive resistant. I liked the matte black blade (titanium nitride coating) as this seemed to prevent blood sticking to the blade and starting the corrosion process, which can happen on standard stainless finished blades.

I took the knife with me on a few occasions and either never pulled the trigger or didn't get good photos opportunities using it, so was happy when I finally got to put it to the test and get some decent photos.

FIELD TEST

I was invited to a friend's Greenstone/Caples fallow ballot immediately following lockdown when we were allowed back in the bush. The first day, we managed to get onto a mob of fallow and shoot four of them between the three of us, which meant the knife finally got a workout. Flipping the blade smoothly out of the locked position, I soon made short work of cutting up two of the deer. The knife was sharp and held its edge pretty well; I did give it a quick sharpen after the first deer to restore the edge after cutting the buck's head off. The robustness of construction and thickness of the blade meant that cutting through joints - like removing the head of my buck - was easy, as you could put some weight in without needing to worry about damaging the knife. In the past, I've broken a tip off a knife trying to remove the head on an animal ... definitely something you don't have to worry about with the SOG.

Once finished, after a quick wipe, I folded the knife back into itself, blood and all, to be cleaned up better later under running water. The robustness of construction and the way it's put together means that a bit of blood or dirt in the folding mechanism is of no concern and can be cleaned out later with ease.



ABOVE:
THE SOG SEAL XR extended and ready to use.

BELOW:
FOLDED AND READY for the next hunt.



SPECIFICATIONS

- Blade length: 3.9" (100mm)
- Overall length: 9.2" (235mm)
- Closed length: 5.3" (135mm)
- Blade material: S35VN stainless steel
- Blade style: clip point
- Blade finish: black titanium nitride
- Handle material: black glass reinforced nylon
- Pocket clip: tip-up, reversible
- Weight: 8.2oz (232gms)
- Made in USA

FEATURES

- USA-made S35VN stainless steel blade
- Reversible pocket clip
- 'Persuader' tool on handle
- Ball bearing pivot

RRP \$289

MORE INFO www.nzammo.co.nz



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CONCLUSION

Well made and robust are words that describe this knife best. It's obviously well-constructed and focusses on quality. If you like the tactical look and don't mind carrying around a bit of weight, this knife should serve you well for many years. While the blade shape and knife

weight mean it probably wouldn't be my first choice, it looks like there's a significant line-up of SOG knives of different shapes and styles that would appeal to most hunters and would certainly be worthy of consideration when you're looking to buy your next knife. ■

ABOVE::

THE SOG SEAL XR and other products in the SOG range.

PROS

- Nice grippy handle.
- Attractive looking matte black finish.
- Good-size blade for everyday hunting which held its edge well.
- Thick, indestructible blade.
- Folding blade which reduces size.
- Solid feel with crisp and smooth folding with no creep or movement.

CONS

- There's no denying it's not a light knife. For me, I cover a lot of miles and elevation, so weight is important. I'd prefer to carry something lighter.
- I would have liked to see a sheath come with it, even though it's not crucial for a folding knife.
- I prefer a drop point with a curve to help reduce cuts to meat. The clip point is fine but not as well suited to hunting applications as a drop point.