

The Many Styles of Bowie Knives

The first ever Bowie knife came to be when James Bowie's brother, Rezin Bowie had made a long hunting knife for himself, but gave it to his brother James when he went to a duel. James ended up using the knife to defend himself while he was down and they say the rest is history. Everyone wanted a Bowie knife. Everyone Wants a Bowie Knife - Many of the early styles of Bowie knives were made by everyone and anyone and they were all called Bowie knives just because there were no patterns or drawings at that time. Some of them had a coffin shaped blade to represent the kill that James had done in order to survive. One thing they all had in common was that they were made to be used as a weapon. So in the beginning a Bowie knife was simply 'a knife like Bowie's'. There have been a number of contenders for the title of the 'original Bowie knife', one of the more recent being the Edwin Forrest knife. Claims of the First Original Bowie Knife - Forrest claimed to have received the Bowie knife from James Bowie himself soon after the Sandbar fight or duel. A celebrity of sorts, he even went on tour with the knife. It has never been proven without a doubt that his knife was the original Bowie knife. From what historians can piece together from written accounts, some from Rezin Bowie himself and the knife of Forrest's estate, the original Bowie knife is large and plain, similar in shape to an Indian trade scalper's knife. What a Bowie Knife Looks Like - This original knife has a straight back and a sharp edge that curves at the end to make a point which was chipped at one end. Today there are styles that look like utility knives and large hunting knives that can help with field dressings and skinning. All wearing the name Bowie, there are knives that are small daggers, and plain knives, and utility knives. Bowie knives were in such demand in the early 1800's that highly skilled merchant craftsmen, custom knife-makers, experienced cutlers, and surgical instrument makers could all be found making the Bowie knives in every town and city across America. The knives were beginning to become more of a uniformed shape and size. It seems as if everyone, everywhere wanted a Bowie knife. Collecting Bowie Knives Today - Today, to a collector, the first Bowie knives made in the early 1820's and 1830's are now worth at least \$20,000 in excellent condition. They are worth less if not in pristine condition. During the 1840's and 1850's more attention to the handle and sheath was given. Designs of handguns and ornate and intricate patterns were carved into each by hand. The sheaths were often nickel-silver plated. The Bowie knife went through many design styles, depending on where you lived. For example, San Francisco had a Bowie knife that was pointed, double edged and the handle was more of a pull handle from a cabinet. Every town and city wanted to be unique in their presentation of the Bowie knife. It wasn't until after the civil war that the decline of the Bowie knife became prominent due to the rise of the pistols. Pistols were easier to carry and use from a distance. Bowie Knife Comeback - But the Bowie knife survived after all. In the 1880's, the Bowie knife was mass produced as a Bowie style hunting knife and was beloved by greenhorn outdoorsmen everywhere. After several decades as a hunter's best friend, the United States Military took the Bowie knife to a new level in the combat utility knives of World War II. The Bowie knife is still used as a combat knife today. The Bowie Knife Today - Today, the Bowie knives feature the same look and incredible feel of power of their former ancestors, but include some modern design techniques. Today's manufacturers use top of the line stainless steel, wood and other handle material to create an array of unique designs. There is a design just right for you and your personality. Some Bowie knives are made especially for collectors and mounted in glass or hung on the wall for show pieces or traded or sold at knife shows. Bowie knives can be very useful as we have learned. They are extremely useful to hunters and hikers and campers and anyone interested in providing themselves with a method of self defense. Proper training is recommended before using a knife. Cleaning and maintaining your knife so it stays sharp and in good condition is also a good idea to maintain its quality and safety.

About the Author

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