



SOG's Jungle Primitive – “For all you twinkle-toed, amphibian wanabe...”

By: Sal Palma



When SOG took The Gunny as a spokesman they selected one outstanding ambassador and individual. No one in the industry has more clout with baby Jesus than USMC Gunnery Sergeant, Lee Ermey.

There are two SOG ads that feature Lee: in one, he holds an SOG multitool, and in the other, SOG's Jungle Primitive. So, I thought I would do a review of the Jungle Primitive just to see how the knife stacks up against some of its rivals.

The Jungle Primitive is part of SOG's Fusion line. It is an exceptional entry level blade; at a reasonable price point. Therefore, you won't see glamorous metals, elaborate designs or exotic handle materials. What you will see, is a well made knife – that is in keeping with SOG's global reputation for quality knives and tools.

This model ships with a 9 ½ inch blade that is hollow ground to a sharp edge. The blade is finished in a hardcased epoxy black - I was surprised at how resilient the finish is, and after some vigorous use it showed few signs of wear – some marks

were present but noticeably less than I expected. Needless to say I was pleasantly surprised.

The blade thickness is .15 inches so the blade is on the light side of the survival knife spectrum; coming in at roughly 14 ounces. However, its weight belies its ability.

This is an extremely nimble knife that can be carried, in the hand or belt, for an extended period of time without fatigue. I carried it around, for the better part of 8 hours, while I searched for suitable downed trees and branches to give this knife a good workout - I never felt burdend; the knife's weight seems to disappear.

SOG chose 420 steel which gives the blade a Rockwell hardness of 51-53. This is somewhat softer than the more robust survival knives on the market, who offer HRC ratings in the order of 58 or higher; therefor, tool strength won't be as high as the hefty competition, but this knife will take a fair amount of abuse without blinking an eye.

The 420 steel is more suceptible to corrosion so care should be taken to clean and lubricate the knife with some frequency. By using a 420 steel, SOG strikes a balance that is quite appropriate for this knife and its intended use.

Edge retention is fair; however, the knife sharpens easily. A couple of hits with Lansky's Quick Fix pocket sharpener took care of any issues.

As shipped, the blade is extremely sharp and the design incorporates a long plain edge with about 2 ½ inches of serrations just forward of the handle. This is about right to tackle thick nylon rope, without sacrificing your cutting edge.



As you can see in the photo, the blade cut cleanly through the neck of the soda bottle.



The spine is configured with teeth that are quite effective for sawing, but they need to be used properly.



I digress, for a moment, to share a story with you. I was watching a You Tube video of some guy doing a torture test on the SOG Jungle Primitive, and like many of these enduser reviews, it lacked substance and was full of misinformation. The video in question showed the user blasting SOG for including teeth on the spine that don't work. As it stands, the individual in question, was using a back and forth sawing motion, which the knife is not designed to do. The teeth on SOG's knife cut in one direction only, so you have to pull the blade through the cut. It actually does a nice job on a moderately sized tree branch; however, I wouldn't tackle a redwood with it.

The teeth on the spine – when used properly - eliminate the need to beat up the knife's edge and your arm, were you to start hacking away. I'd say that was great thinking on SOG's part, so take those internet videos with a grain of salt. I personally prefer a plain spine for batoning, but with an HRC of 51-53 this knife was not designed to take that kind of stress.

Although the blade is balanced well forward of the handle, this 14 oz. knife lacks the heft that its higher priced brethren have - for the Jungle Primitive, heavy chopping is much more of a chore; however, it performs extremely well for light chopping.

The knife is a full tang design extending through the Kraton handle and terminating in a good sized pommel. The pommel has serrations that function really well as a meat tenderizer, as well as a less lethal option should the situation call for that.

The knife handle is comfortable and roomy; very capable of accommodating large hands. Ergonomics are good, and there is gimping throughout to help achieve a safe and secure grip.

Although tolerable, shock from chopping, especially on larger branches or tree trunks, was felt; so, the user may experience some hand and arm fatigue.

If available, the use of gloves is highly recommended and they were very helpful in insulating the hand and arm from shock.

The handle has a lanyard attachment point as well as two smaller openings, which can be used to lash down the knife to a wooden pole, thus constructing a "spear".

I have to laugh at this point because I've never thought that attaching your survival tool to a pole, which you may end up throwing, was a really good idea. Even if you use it to "harpoon" game, you still run the risk of having a wounded animal run off with you and your spear still attached, until the animal bleeds out.

Frankly, you are much better off putting a point on a hefty branch and using it as your spear, but I have to admit that it does look good on survival shows.

Conclusion

SOG has done a rather remarkable job with the Jungle Primitive. This is a knife that offers great functionality at the remarkable price of \$64, M.S.R.P.

You can break any knife made by subjecting the tool to outrageous stresses, but what purpose does that serve? It is not an accurate indicator of success when the tool is used within its design parameters.

SOG's Jungle Primitive has all of the features and functionality that one needs in a knife that is intended for outdoor use, and does everything that you need it to do convincingly well.

If you do break it, drop it in a gully or ravine, you'll miss it but you won't break the bank to replace it.

Give it a try, and maybe you'll be as pleasantly surprised as I was.