

# Showtime

Phone: 604-792-9117 • E-mail: phenderson@chilliwacktimes.com • Fax: 604-792-9300



Jeff Maron shows off one of his handmade knives in his home workshop.

Paul J. Henderson/TIMES

By PAUL J. HENDERSON  
phenderson@chilliwacktimes.com

What some people create in their garages and basements can be amazing. Up a quiet crescent on Promontory, tucked in a garage among the suburban jungle, Jeff Maron meticulously and artistically builds hunting and fishing knives with a stunning precision and beauty. Starting with high-quality steel, exotic woods and handstitched leather, Maron puts his heart, soul and quite literally his sweat into each knife. That's because every stage, including making bevels in the tempered steel blades, is done by hand. "I think of people maybe 100

## A CUT ABOVE

Jeff Maron's handmade knives are works of art

years ago back with a file," Maron said during an interview in his workshop. "Most knife-makers use a grinder to make bevels. I do all of them by hand. It takes a little more time, a lot of perspiration and effort." To say he enjoys a challenge would be an understatement given the precision and attention to detail required to make these

knives. (He said he made his own telescope once and that it works quite well.) "I used to do taxidermy, but it's so messy," he added. "With this it's just dust." The knife-building process is a long one starting with the steel, which he cuts into lengths and into the rough form of a blade.

He then uses a furnace to heat it up to 1,000 degrees C and then "quenches" the metal between aluminum plates. There is a long process of heating and cooling to get the metal to the correct level of hardness. Once his blades are formed he makes handles using spalted horse chestnut, camphor burls, 100-year-old holly and other woods.

His favourite is black palm. He also makes leather-wrapped, stitched handles and does custom jobs. "I made a leather-wrapped handle for a local guy," he said. He had a bow and quiver and he wanted it to match." Everything with Maron is self-taught, but his schooling in geology has helped him with the science. But his motivation is his late father. He has a photo of his father over his workbench holding up the head of a huge buck. He also has his father's image tattooed on his forearm as a living tribute. Also because of his father, he donates \$25 from each knife

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Most knife-makers use a grinder to make bevels, but Maron does things the old-fashioned way.

### Not cheap

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purchased to cancer research. "I thought of what I could do to help the community," he said. His knives aren't cheap, they start at \$225, but the quality and personal touch that goes into each one can't be doubted. "I love doing it," he said. "I'm just so excited when it's complete. When I put my logo on then I'm happy." To see more of his knives visit [www.speartipknives.com](http://www.speartipknives.com).

