

The Schrade SCHAS assisted opener boasts a partially serrated blade and a T-6061 aluminum handle with an asphalt grip. Closed length: 4 1/2 inches. MSRP: \$50.62.



When Imperial Schrade closed its doors in the summer of 2004, an icon of the knife industry appeared to have passed into memory. A few months later, however, Taylor Brands of Kingsport, Tennessee, acquired what collectively could be called the "intellectual property" of the venerable knife company.

Antique knife patterns, tooling, trademarks, CAD drawings, the Schrade trade show booth, and decades of colorful history passed along to Taylor. The company has invested time, capital and energy into a new, emerging Schrade, which captures what Taylor officials said are the best of the company's well-known offerings and complements them with a variety of new knives and ancillary products. Along with the Schrade label have come the famous Old Timer, Hammer, Uncle Henry and Schrade Walden names, and Taylor officials are trying to leverage the power of the brands to the fullest.

During the same auction in which Taylor Brands made its blockbuster purchase, Smoky Mountain Knife Works, Blue Ridge

Knives and United Cutlery bought the remaining inventory of Schrade-produced knives and other assorted Schrade items. Reportedly, stockpiles of those pieces are just about depleted.

"We've taken the tooling and gone overseas with some of it, and here in the United States we have gotten 140 products out to the market in six months," explained Stewart Taylor, Taylor Brands president. "We've added a hatchet with a hunting knife companion, for example, and nationally known lines like Old Timer and Uncle Henry have given us the opportunity to license T-shirts, gloves, hats and safety glasses. So, we have expanded the line to carry a lot more names into different areas. We're also working with companies to make cigarette lighters, and now that we have the basic line of knives out, we're working to create commemorative issues for the collector market."

As for the main attraction, Schrade is now offering three Taiwan-made assisted-opening knives with stainless steel blades and synthetic handles. The knives debuted

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at the 2006 BLADE Show. Taylor said some early Schrade-pattern automatics are being made in the USA and reintroduced into the market as well.

To facilitate the production of knives in quantity, Taylor said he is supporting a group of investors with a start-up factory in Pennsylvania by guaranteeing a minimum number of knife orders. Equipment also has been added to the floor in Kingsport, where the automatics are being manufactured. Under the name *Schrade Tough*, a line of camouflage knives is now available.

"I would say that in the past year we have introduced 25 new Schrade knives," Taylor advised. "The real meat and value to the farmers and such are the traditional stockman-type knives. There's a new generation out there that likes the one-handed and assisted-opening knives with camouflage and black blades, and we're creating interest among these buyers now."

Taylor said Taylor Cutlery, which also markets knives under the Smith & Wesson label, has experienced phenomenal growth during the past two years, and really ever since its founder started the company in 1975 with \$5,000 in borrowed money and enthusiasm for local gun shows and flea markets. A new computer system has been installed in Kingsport, the company has moved into a 163,000-square-foot building, and the ad-



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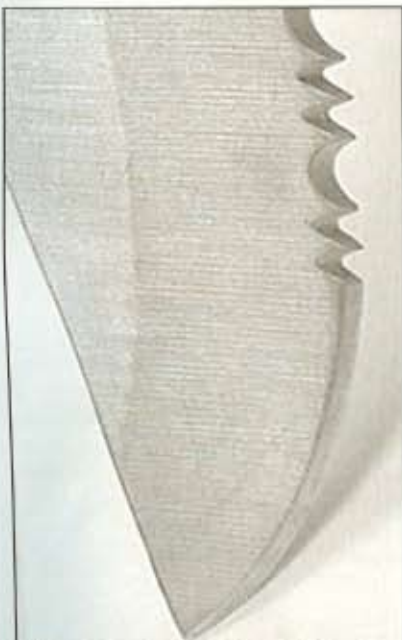
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The Schrade Tough ST5C sports a handle of camouflage-coated stainless steel and a 3-inch stainless steel blade. Closed length: 4 3/8 inches. MSRP: \$17.32.

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Blade Steels 440C stainless, some in a black Teflon coat finish, and Schrade+Stainless

Handle Materials Desert ironwood, red pick bone, T-6061 aluminum, camouflage anodized aluminum, rubber, stag, yellow composition, buffalo horn and more

MSRP Ranges \$16-\$200

acent 15 acres have been purchased to allow for future expansion. Taylor points to staying ahead of fast-paced growth as the driving force behind these strategic moves.

"We know that we have to give good service, and we're bringing our overseas products in by air to maintain delivery deadlines for our customers," he related. "We know people have their jobs on the line, and we take that very seriously. We received one recent order at 4:45 p.m. and shipped 18,000 knives to 17 different loca-



The 94 Old Timer whittler is a pocketknife classic. The blades are 440C stainless and the handle is desert ironwood. MSRP: \$22.

tions the next day so the product could be distributed to the customer's 3,000 stores within the next three days."

A few years back, Schrade was the No. 1 selling knife at Wal-Marts across the country, and Taylor said that he expects the brand will return to that status. In addition to working with Wal-Mart on distribution, K-Mart, Tractor Supply, Tru-Value Hardware, Best Buy, and other high-profile retail outlets will be carrying the expanded Schrade line. In the meantime, Taylor indicated that Smith & Wesson knife sales have continued to climb during each of the last 10 quarters. He said he sees Smith & Wesson and Schrade as complementing one another rather than competing. Each may, in fact, open doors for the other.

One of the strongest connections through the years between Schrade and the buying public has been a healthy collectible line. Taylor has already begun to strike that resonating chord by bringing in antique knife expert Charlie Dorton. In the 1980s, Dorton helped spearhead Bulldog Brand and was among those who aided in the "rebirth" of the John Prindle and Winchester brands for Blue Grass Cutlery. In addition, he previously designed Schrade Classic collectible knives and will be working on the production of commemoratives when the Pennsylvania factory comes on line.

"I feel that the Schrade brands, the name itself, and the designs made over the last 100 years make it a national line of knives which can be made into more of a collectible line than ever before," Taylor reasoned. "We'll come out with a limited number of collectible knives each year to help maintain the values, we're working with authors to come up with books to include a price guide, and we're starting a collectors club. We're the new chapter in the history of Schrade, and we understand that there are some people who still want to collect that Ellenville, New York, stamp. We want those to continue to be highly successful, and having a new product line out will bring new collectors along."

Future efforts to spur the collectible market will include special editions with upscale handle materials such as stag, limited production runs of 1,000 or less, and the stamping of dates directly onto some blades.

The company president stressed that the new Schrade will remain quality conscious and sensitive to the price points that are within reach of the working public. Upscale special-edition knives may sell for as much as \$200, while the bread-and-butter working knives will generally range from \$16-\$20.

With more than a century as a top brand in the knife industry, Schrade has embarked on a new era and has already become a vital component of the future for Taylor Brands. Big plans are already being put into motion, and Taylor insisted that the biggest winners will be the consumers.

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