

adventure journal

THE DEEPER YOU GET, THE DEEPER YOU GET

Gear Review: Wenger EvoWood 18 Knife

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My first knife came to me without my parents even knowing about it. My dad gave me his drab brown Plano tackle box and an old fiberglass fishing rod so I could go fishing with a friend. I'd never been fishing, and my friend's dad was taking us. My father was done with fish, unless it was salmon from the grocery, so he was fine with me taking the dusty, heavy box that smelled like the attic and the fishing pole I'd never seen him use.

I was in the fifth grade. The knife I later discovered in the box was a little corroded, with two blades and a faux pearl handle. I soaked it in oil, to clean up the main blade, but kept my mouth shut about it. I'm sure my father had completely forgotten about the knife, but it came in handy that opening day of fishing from the dock, my first ever. It rained. Then it cleared and I caught a huge trout. A stranger put down his pole and taught me how to kill the fish, and how to gut it with my knife right there on the dock. Something

clicked: knives were small keys to manhood. You could cut yourself, but only if you weren't careful. Like any tool, in the right hands knives were extensions of will, and even of creation.

Subsequent knives were even cooler, Wenger and Victorinox Swiss Army models that came for birthdays, one of which was so fat and stiff with foldouts it took me years to break in, although I still have that knife, along with nearly every other one from my boyhood, including one my grandfather gave me for a 16th birthday gift. I'm no knife collector, but I still believe in what I learned as a boy, that a knife can be an unparalleled tool, a very small thing that divides us from the rest of creation.

And while I'm fetishizing tools, I will say that this EvoWood 18 from Wenger is hardly any different than the other Swiss Army knives I own. Its stainless blades and tools will doubtless remain flawless, only needing sometime sharpening to last a lifetime of camp outs and use around the garage. I've had this knife for a little while now, but it barely looks used, despite cutting with it, sawing with it, eating with it.

However, the gorgeous walnut handle is a thing of beauty, and also of utility. Use it on a cold day and it won't be as dead and inert in your palm as a plastic-handled knife. Also, after decades of use my other Swiss Army knives are more scarred and marred than patinaed. This one, I expect, will grow some kind of true character, rather than just look battered. And, by the way, the knife is made from walnut wood scraps that would otherwise go to waste, which is just a little nicer than more plastic in the world.

\$55 [LINK](#)