

Custom Knife Selection Guide



Handmade Custom Knives
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Table of Contents

Custom Knife Selection Overview	3
Knife Design Platform	4
Materials Selection	14
Embellishments and Modifications	23
Additions	28
Build Cost Determination	30
Ground Rules	31
Custom Knife Selection Worksheet	33

Custom Knife Selection Overview

If you are new to the world of handmade custom knives, you will soon realize that there are many decisions to be made before work on your knife can begin. When you recognize that nearly every part of a custom knife can be modified or customized in some way, and that there are so very many different materials to choose from, the process of selecting just what you want your knife to be can be a daunting task. If you are one who has already dabbled or perhaps even fully immersed yourself in the world of handmade custom knives, you are already aware of the many choices that you are about to make. Whether this is your first time ordering a custom knife, or you are simply adding another gem to your collection, this guide is meant to help you through the selection process.

This guide is broken down into sections which will help you to make the necessary decisions to make your knife dreams come true. To begin, choose a knife design platform that will suit your needs. Second, determine the materials that each part of your knife will be made from. Next, select any embellishments to add to your knife to make it even more unique. Lastly, decide if there are any additional items that you want included with your knife. The final two sections of this guide offer an overview of what to expect when it comes to the cost of commissioning your edged piece of art and some of the ground rule standards that are adhered to.

If you are one who loves surprises and trusts in Brandant's artistic eye and style, you can forgo some or even all of these choices and simply turn him loose to create a unique, one-of-a-kind piece of edged art. So, it's really up to you on how involved you want to be in the selection process of creating your handmade custom knife. Whether you're all in, or hands off, you will end up with an heirloom knife that is sure to be cherished for generations.

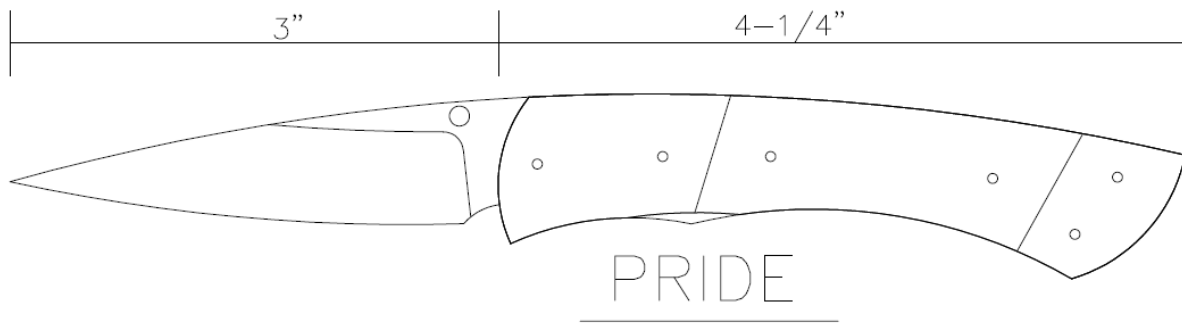
A Custom Knife Selection Worksheet is provided at the back of this guide to aid you in keeping track of your ideas and to help you clearly define what your dream desires are for your handmade custom knife. This will be critical in conveying your ideas to Brandant so that he may fully understand your intentions and create the one-of-a-kind piece of edged art that you are imagining.

Knife Design Platform

The first step in selecting your custom knife is to determine which knife design platform best suits the intended use of your knife. Will this knife become your new everyday carry knife? Is it intended to perform a specific task? Do you intend to gift it to someone special in your life? Or, do you simply want an art piece that will sit on your mantle and wow your friends for years to come? Once you determine what you expect the knife to do, you can then choose a design that will perform that function.

Listed below are the available design platforms that Brandant is currently offering. Each design has its own unique look and feel to it.

1. Pride

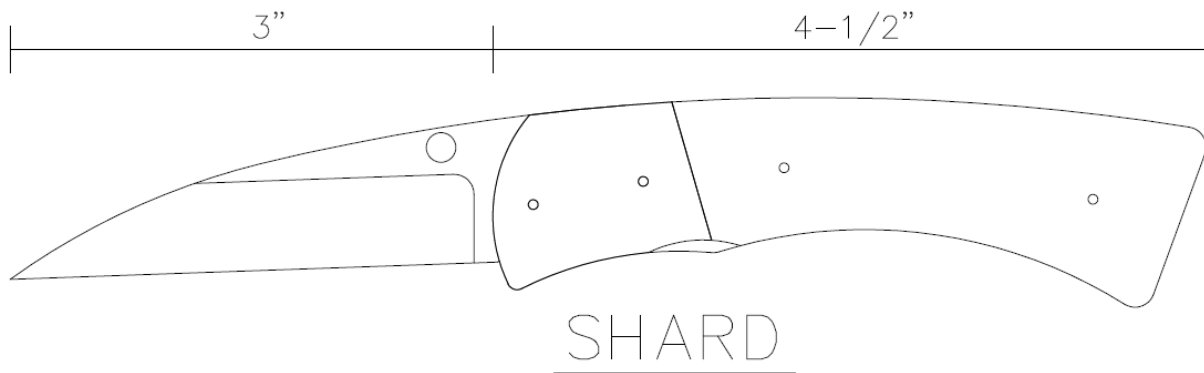


Example: CPM154 blade, zirconium bolsters, and lightning strike carbon fiber scales.



The Pride design is one of Brandant's most popular platforms. With its spear point blade, smooth curves and sleek style, it's easy to see why.

2. Shard

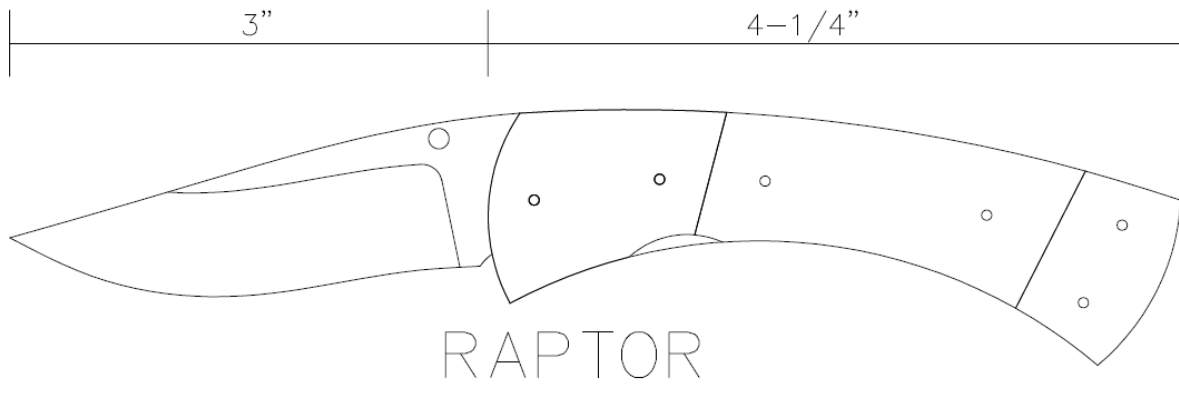


Example: CPM154 blade, textured 416 ss bolsters, and mammoth ivory scales.



The Shard design features a laser-sharp wharncliffe blade and a very ergonomic handle.

3. Raptor

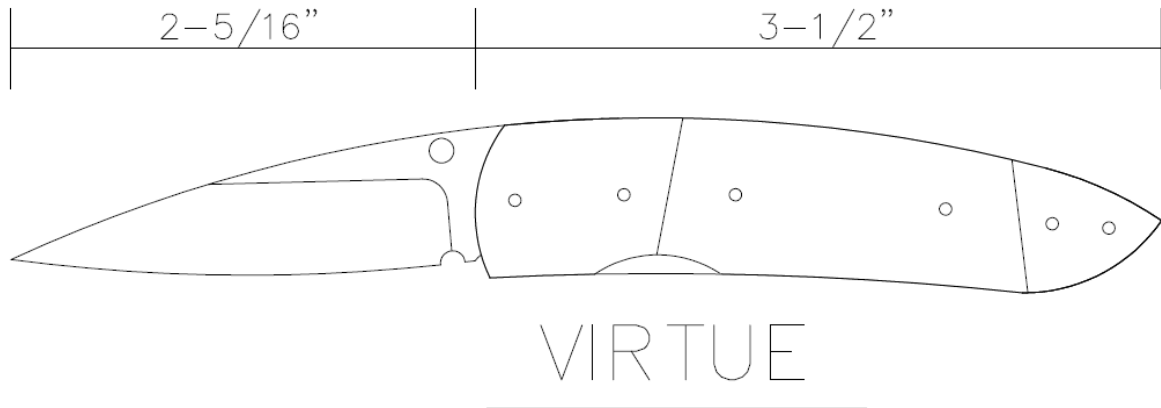


Example: Damasteel blade, textured 416 ss bolsters, and buckeye burl scales.



The Raptor is a robust knife with a slight recurved edge.

4. Virtue

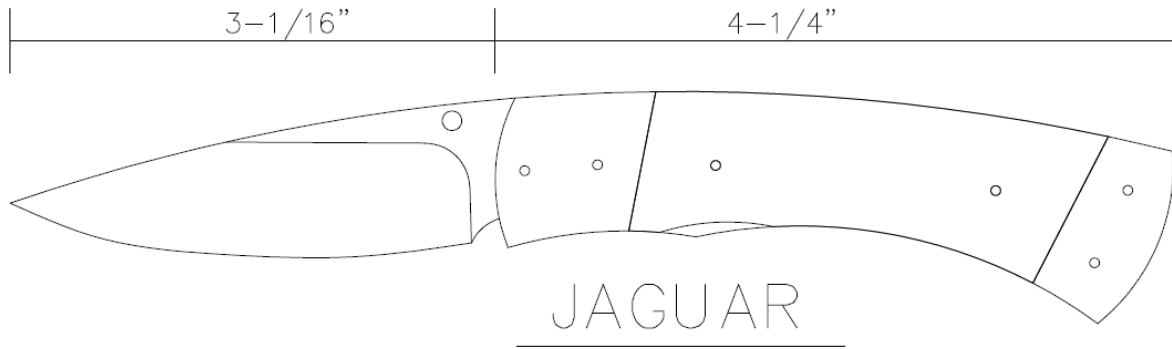


Example: 440C blade, 416 ss bolsters, and mammoth tooth scales.



The Virtue sports a nice drop point blade, clean curves, and is the perfect size for pocket carry.

5. Jaguar

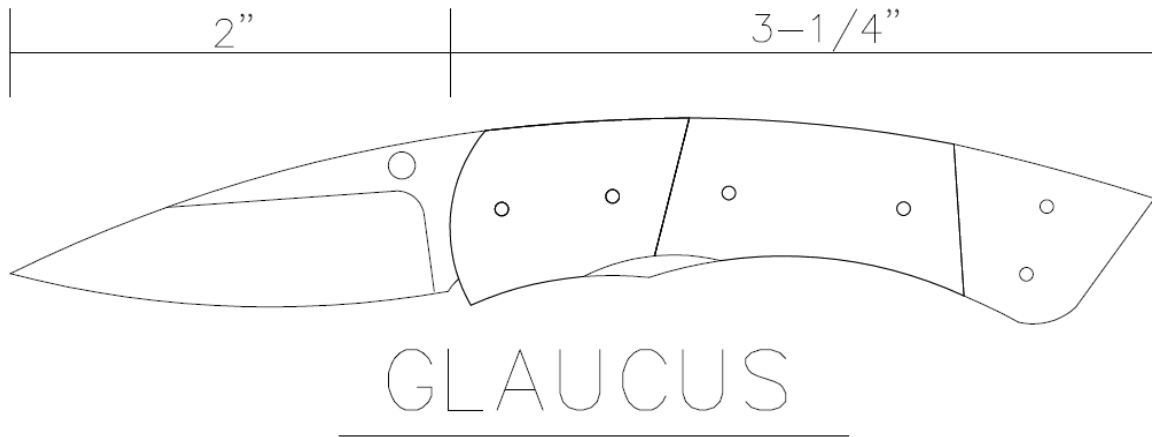


Example: CPM154 blade, copper bolsters, paduk wood scales.



The Jaguar wears a drop point blade with a generous belly for fine cutting tasks.

6. Glaucus

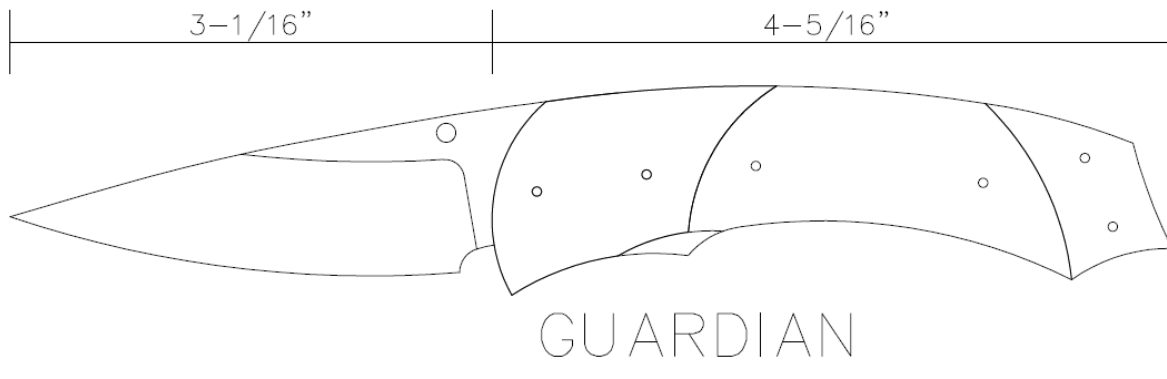


Example: CPM154 blade, heat colored copper bolsters, dyed maple burl scales with black liners.



The Glaucus is a small knife, but its drop point blade and compact size make it a perfect daily carry knife, fitting perfectly into the coin pocket on a pair of jeans. Brandant carries a version of this knife as his personal EDC.

7. Guardian

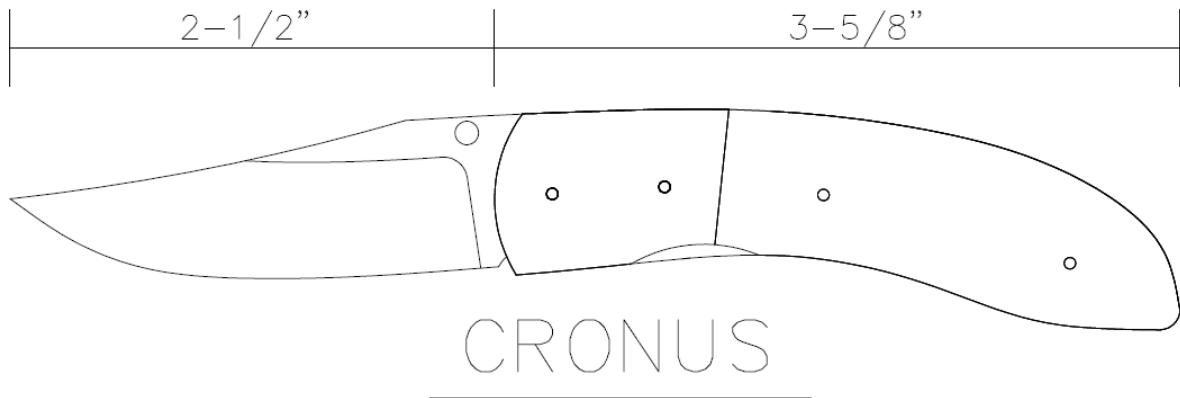


Example: CPM154 blade, textured 416 ss bolsters, and lightning strike carbon fiber scales.



The Guardian is where gentleman's style meets tactical. Its drop point blade and fine tip make it useful in many applications.

8. Cronus

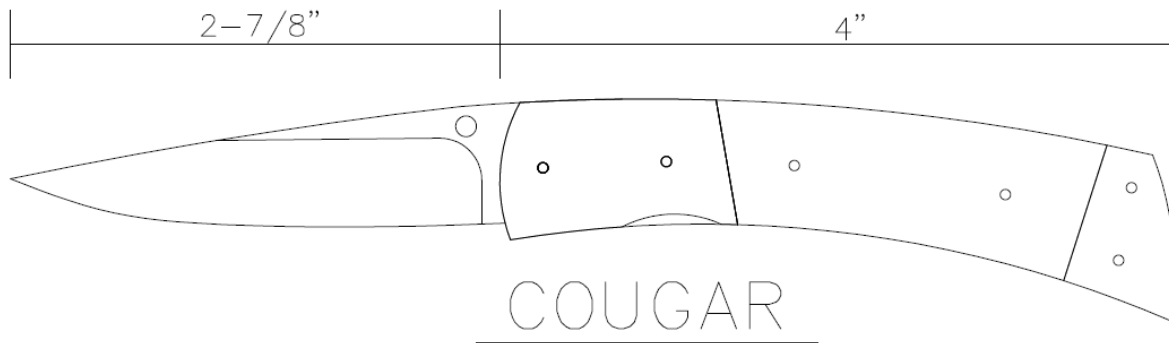


Example: CPM154 blade, 416 ss bolsters, and jigged bone scales.



The Cronus has a clip point blade with a classic look and style.

9. Cougar

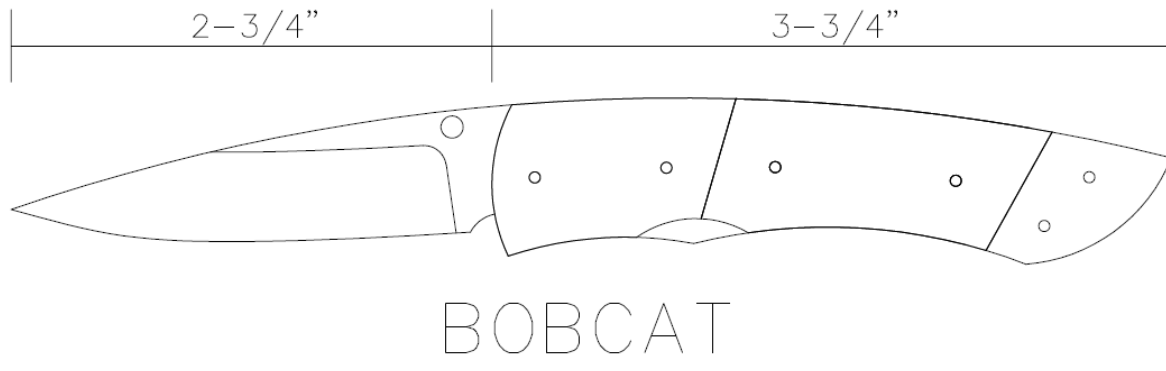


Example: 440C blade, Damasteel bolsters, and dyed maple burl scales.



The Cougar is an all-round workhorse of a knife. Its long, thin, drop point blade makes for a fine slicing knife.

10. Bobcat



Example: CPM154 blade, Damasteel bolsters, and maple burl scales.



The Bobcat is the embodiment of a true gentleman's knife. Its beautiful curves and drop point blade make for a well-rounded package.

A True Custom Knife

If you have something in mind other than those designs included in the list above, Brandant can work directly with you to develop a unique design to your exact specifications. Keep in mind that he will only design and build knives in his personal style and he will not copy someone else's work.

Materials Selection

Once the design platform has been decided on, it's time to flesh out the custom knife with materials that are both eye-catching and stylish. As you might have seen in the example knives shown in the Knife Design Platform section of this guide, different materials can dramatically change the look of a knife. Each major part of your knife can be customized with a material selection that both compliments its features, but also strengthens its purpose. In this guide, the knife will be broken down into its basic components and a range of choices for these parts will be offered.

None of the lists given here in this section should be considered even remotely comprehensive. There are so many choices of materials available to knife makers that it makes the head spin. Please remember that gaudy and cheap materials do not belong on a high-end, handmade custom knife. Please contact Brandant for approval before you set your heart on something that may not work on your knife.

Blade

The blade is the most important part of the knife and care should be taken in the steel selected for its construction. Brandant's standard blade steel is CPM154. It is one of the best all-round blade steels for small folders, offering a significant amount of toughness while maintaining a keen cutting edge. Brandant also works with 440C, a tried and true classic, Damasteel, and a range of pattern welded stainless Damascus steels. Other steels may be requested at your discretion and may or may not be acceptable due to Brandant's ability to work with and heat treat the particular steel of choice. Below are a few examples of different blade steels.

Examples:

CPM154 with satin finish



Mike Norris Ladder Pattern Damascus



Damasteel Dense Twist Pattern



Damasteel Rose Pattern



Bolsters

The bolsters are the parts of the knife which sit just behind the blade and directly over where the blade pivots. Rear bolsters may also be present on a knife at the rear or pommel of the handle. This is a very prominent feature of the knife and a chance to add some beauty and pizzazz to the piece. 416 stainless steel is the standard bolster material. It is very durable, beautiful, and maintenance free. The choices for bolsters are not limited to hardenable steels like a blade is, so the selection is very broad indeed. Here are a few examples of possible bolster materials.

Examples:

416 stainless steel with satin finish



Zirconium



Damasteel



Textured and anodized Titanium



Heat anodized Copper



Satin finished Copper



Scales

Second only to the blade, the handle scales are the most prominent feature of most knives. In a way, the scales are the canvas on which the knife maker paints. The choices of scale materials are practically endless, but, bear in mind, not all materials that are available out there belong on a high-end custom knife. The scales should be durable and beautiful without being over the top. Here are a few photos of handle materials that Brandant has used on his knives.

Examples:

Mother of Pearl



G-10



Timascus



Lightning Strike Carbon Fiber



Burl Woods (This is Maple Burl)



Red Shred Carbon Fiber



Mammoth Ivory



Spacer

One of the most noticeable parts of the knife when viewed from the spine is the spacer, that part which separates the liners and creates the gap between them for the blade to fold into. The spacer is a humble, yet functional part of the knife which offers another chance to embellish the piece. Spacer material choices parallel those of the bolsters. Below are a few examples for you to consider.

Examples:

416 Stainless Steel with filework



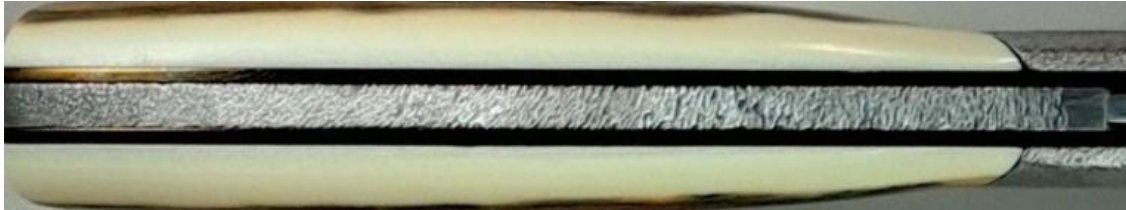
Timascus



Copper



416 Stainless Steel with texturing



Damascus with filework



Lightning Strike Carbon Fiber



Liners

The standard material for liners on Brandant's knives is 6AL4V Titanium. Titanium is a very durable material that takes the set of the lock bar spring well and holds up under hard use. There really is no acceptable alternative for material in a liner locking knife, so the actual material for the liners is not negotiable. However, there are still many ways to customize and embellish the liners of your knife for a unique and stylish look.

One of the unique properties of titanium is that it can be anodized. Anodization changes the color of titanium dramatically from its natural silvery-grey color into golds, purples, bronzes, blues and pinks of varying hues.

The liners can also be fileworked with an infinite number of patterns and possibilities to add spectacular beauty to your knife. Texturing can also be done on the liner edges to give a nice contrast from one material to the next, visually breaking up the lines of the spine.

Embellishments and Modifications

An embellishment on a knife is something that adds to the aesthetic beauty of the piece without changing its form or function. Essentially, embellishments add value to your custom knife and give a piece of edged art its own heart, setting it apart from all other knives. There are many ways to embellish your handmade custom knife in order to achieve something unique and truly beautiful. Some of those embellishments have already been alluded to in the previous sections, but they will be specifically mentioned here in this section.

Filework

Filework is one of the best ways to add value to your knife and to bump up the wow factor. Filework can be done on blade spines, around the edges of the liners, and around the back spacer, even onto the inside of the knife. There are many different and unique patterns that can be added to your knife. Each pattern is done by hand, using a set of small hand files and tools to achieve a beautiful symmetry. Several filework patterns have been shown in the previous section. Here are a few further examples of what filework can add to your knife.

Examples:

Twisted Ribbon filework on spacer



V's and O's filework on spacer and Scallops filework on liners



Alternating Twisted Ribbon filework on spine and Vine & Thorn filework on liners



Twisted Ribbon filework on spine and Serpentine filework on liners



Alternating Twist filework on blade spine and spacer and Serpentine filework on liners



Dots filework on spacer and liners



Twist filework on spine of blade and spacer and Scallops filework on liners



Finishes

Finish, as defined here, refers to the final surface condition of a part. For instance, a blade can have a mirror polish, belt finish, hand rubbed satin finish, or an acid etched finish. Bolsters, spacers, and liners can have a similar finish to a blade, but can also be textured or carved. Scales, depending on the material chosen, can have a variety of finishes as well. Additionally, some metals such as titanium, zirconium, and copper can be anodized or receive a forced patina which changes their looks dramatically. Each of these finishes can truly add a unique quality to your custom piece.

Examples:

416 ss bolster with stippled texture



Anodized and textured titanium liners



416 ss bolsters with satin finish



Carved and textured 416 ss scales



Jeweled, textured, and anodized titanium scales and liners



Forced patina on copper bolster



CPM154 blade with satin bevels and mirror polished flats



Carved constellations motif in Timascus scales



Additions

There are other features that can be added to a knife to improve its usefulness and even more items that can be included with the custom piece to add value as an overall set. Some of these additions to consider are pocket clips, lanyard holes and thongs, custom lanyard beads, stand offs (to replace back spacers), sheaths, cases, and display stands. Many of these additions can be of a very artistic nature and allow Brandant to flex his creative muscles.

Examples:

Lanyard hole in Timascus Scales



Timascus pocket clip



Copper lanyard beads with forced patinas



Leather sheath, paracord lanyard, and copper lanyard bead.



Anodized titanium pocket clip



Build Cost Determination

As you may imagine from all of the information above about the infinite ways that a custom knife may be personalized, there are many factors that must be considered when the cost of a custom knife build is determined. A few of these factors are the cost of raw materials, the cost of consumable materials, shop overhead costs, equipment maintenance, tool wear and tear and replacement, and shop time. So, how does one determine the cost of a custom knife build?

There is no easy way to answer this question since there are so many variables that contribute to a knife's cost and ultimately to its overall value. The cost of each custom knife build is determined on an individual basis. Each knife design has a specific cost assigned as a standard base fee. The fee goes up as the knife is customized, personalized, embellished, and optional components are included.

For example, a standard knife would be one with a satin finished CPM154 blade, satin finished 416 ss bolsters, low-cost but beautiful scales, titanium liners, and a satin finished 416 ss spacer. The price of the build will climb as higher-valued materials are selected, embellishments are added, or additional components are requested.

So, after all of that, the following approach has been found to be the best method to follow:

- Work your way through this guide and choose all of the options for your custom knife that you desire. In other words, pick your dream knife.
- Determine a budget cap that you wish the cost of the build to stay under.
- Contact Brandant with a full description of your knife and your anticipated budget.
- Brandant will work with you from there to develop a full design that meets your needs and stays within budget.

Ground Rules

It is important to establish a few ground rules for custom orders, simply so that there will be no confusion on what is and is not acceptable when it comes to designing a handmade custom knife. Here is a list of Brandant's rules:

1. I make locking liner knives. I've made slip-joints, lock-backs, and full-tang blades, but, for the time being, I'm only taking orders for liner-locks.
2. I do not accept materials supplied by my clients to be used in the making of their custom knife. I buy all of my raw materials from reputable supplies so that I know exactly what I am dealing with.
3. I will not copy someone else's work. I have ethics and integrity and will not compromise either.
4. If you and I collaborate on a new knife design, I hold all rights to that design. This means that I may reuse the design on any number of future projects at my discretion.
5. Custom orders are filled on a first-come-first-served basis. I appreciate the fact that you want your knife as soon as possible. Please be patient, and I will get to your order as soon as I can.
6. Once we have agreed upon a custom knife design and the work on your knife has begun, any further changes may come at an additional cost. If the changes require additional shop time, materials, or costs, additional charges will be applied. I will be fair, but time and materials are not free.
7. There are certain types of materials that I will not use. My name goes onto every knife that I make and I can't in good conscience put cheap, low-quality, weak, or unattractive materials onto any of my pieces. It would lower the value of all of my work if I did so. I understand that this determination can be somewhat subjective. If you have a question whether or not a certain material is acceptable, please contact me directly.
8. I charge a deposit once your knife is under construction. I will not charge you anything until we have settled on the design, materials, and finish quality of your custom piece and I actually begin purchasing materials and start the

build. A typical deposit is 50% of the total value of the knife and is nonrefundable.

9. I will not ship out a finished order until payment in full has been received.
10. I reserve the right to refuse any order. It can't be said more plainly than that. I am not trying to be egotistical or arrogant. I simply may not see eye to eye with your vision of a knife, and may choose not to proceed with your idea. This does not necessarily mean that it is a bad idea, just that it doesn't fit within the realm of what I do and I wouldn't feel right putting my name on it.
11. I will make you a knife to the highest quality and craftsmanship that I am capable of. I strive for the best with each and every knife that I make.
12. I will treat you with kindness and respect. I hope I can ask the same of you.

Custom Knife Selection Worksheet

Below are listed the main parts of your handmade custom knife. Follow the selection guide to help you determine how you want to personalize the components of your knife and list them here on this worksheet.

Knife Design Platform: _____

Blade: _____

Bolsters: _____

Scales: _____

Liners: _____

Spacer: _____

Additions: _____
