



**Above:** Because the Boker Infinity (left) has a blade as hard as any sharpener, it must be sent to the factory for sharpening. The lightweight Boye Dendritic Cobalt 'Prophet' rated tops overall.

short of diamond.

**Boye Dendritic Cobalt 'Prophet.'** Very lightweight. Handle is blue fiberglass-reinforced nylon. Lockback locking mechanism. The aluminum pocket clip is said to be the only non-cobalt fitting on this knife. Single-stage serrations on the sheepfoot-style blade result in a scalloped edge similar to that of many bread knives, a less aggressive cutting pattern than on others tested.

**Buck #2644 River Rafter.** Stainless sheepfoot blade with full serrations and opening stud. Black polymer handle with yellow insert and liner lock mechanism. Stainless clothing clip. Lanyard hole has short lanyard and plastic snap.

**Buck #2729 Yachtsman.** Similar to above model but blade has combination edge, and knife has a second "blade" made up of tools, including a useful shackle key.

**Cold Steel 34RLSB Land & Sea Rescue.** Serrated sheepfoot blade of AUS-8A stainless steel. Lockback locking mechanism; open blade by pushing with thumb on stud. Blue FRN handle with clothing clip.

**Myerchin L300P Lightknife Navigator Pro.** A largish folder in a traditional rigging knife with locking spike. Lockback drop-point blade of 440C stainless has a 60/40 serration. Blade is difficult to open with one hand and,

when locked open, can only be unlocked by partially deploying the spike, also a two-hand operation. The FRN handle has a removable plastic clothing clip, which also contains a tiny but effective red LED lamp for chart reading at night.

**Spyderco C14SOR Rescue.** Lightweight orange handle of FRN. Sheepfoot blade has full serrations,

and was supplied extremely sharp. Trademarked round opening hole conveniently located in a hump in the blade which also serves as a thumb rest.

**Spyderco C26SBK Snap-It.** Substantially the same as the Rescue above, but instead of a pocket clip provides a carabiner-style snap at the blade-pivot end of the (black) handle. Ideal for securing knife to a vest, harness or similar clothing worn above the waist. Use your thumb to operate the snap, then to open the blade without changing your grip. Fully serrated blade.

**Spyderco C30SBK Remote Release.** Similar blade shape to Snap-It above, but with a different handle, which also has a snap for attachment. No pocket clip. Designed to hang at or below the waist, where it is easily detached, then opened using the round hole in the blade, without changing one's grip.

**West Marine Sailing Knife #319517.** Made by Wichard in France. Fairly crude in operation but its slim combination edge cut rope well. Second blade is a shackle key and bottle opener. Strictly a pocket knife, with a non-locking blade. Plastic scales glow in dark. Its low price makes it a good value, but it's not really in the same league with the other high-end knives.

## Conclusion

The four Benchmades and the West Marine showed the best cutting performance on the test ropes. Tops in portability/deployability were the Boye; Benchmade Stryker, Axis Lock and AFCK; and the Spyderco Rescue.

Tops in affordability were the Spy-

derco Snap-It, Buck River Rafter; the West Marine was also very affordable but its low overall score and non-locking blade separate it from the others. The Boye and the Boker led in corrosion resistance. Now try putting all the criteria together. Not easy, is it? The scores in the right-hand column of the chart on page 27 should help.

Our advice: concentrate on the models that did well on the three highest-weighted criteria, unless you have some special need involving the three lesser criteria.

Buy a knife you can live with. Try it out as extensively as you can before buying. Put some pressure on it to test comfort in the hand. Insist on a model that can be deployed, used and put away with one hand. Look for a narrow edge-bevel (compare it with other similar knives) and at least a combination (plain/serrated) edge. If cutting rope is an important application, avoid serrations with long deep points.

Once you've bought the knife, wear it whenever possible so you'll have it when you need it. On board a boat a good metal clothing clip and a lanyard (that's what the hole is for) could make the difference between surviving and not surviving. ■

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*Buck Knives. www.buckknives.com. Boker Knives, 303/462-0662. Knife Center of the Internet,*

*www.knifecenter.com; 800/338-6799. Cold Steel Knives, 800/255-4716; www.coldsteel.com. Kyocera Ceramics, www.kyocera.com.*

*Militec-1 Metal Conditioner. 877/222-5512; www.militec-1.com.*

*Myerchin Knives. 800/531-4890; www.myerchin.com. Spyderco Knives, 800/525-7770;*

*www.spyderco.com. Tuf-Cloth, Marine Tuf-Cloth, 800/546-8049; www.sentrysolutions.com.*

*Wichard Knives, West Marine, 800/262-8464; www.westmarine.com.*