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## Benchmade cigar cutter

Benchmade Knife Co. has long been known for its extremely high-quality knives, which carry equally high prices, but earlier this year the Oregon-based company began shipping creation aimed at another market. This creation is the Benchmade 1500-181 Cigar Cutter, a single-blade guillotine cutter that includes CPM-S90V stainless steel located inside the carbon fiber handle. Measuring 4.15 inches and weighing 4.2-ounces, the cutter includes a number of interesting features, including a blade that is released using the Benchmade axis locking mechanism, which basically means it is opened using a release bar that can be lowered on both sides of the cutter. However, this is just the beginning, as the 1500-181 also features blue sapphire titanium oxide coated screws, dual titanium alloy fed backspacers, carbon-coated black blades and even real sapphire that are inserted into white gold frames to release the bar. Of course, all these features come at a price. In this case, that MSRP is \$1,000, although street prices seem to come around the \$850 mark. Only 250 cutters were released, all of which were made in America. HOW DOES IT WORK? Simply put, the Benchmade 1500-181 is a modified version of the single-blade guillotine cutter, albeit with a fairly unique design. When the blade is closed, it is almost completely hidden in the case - the only part you can see is when you look through the space where the cap goes, where you see the Benchmade logo - but it simply pulls firmly on the trigger on both sides of the cutter, causing the blade to appear with a blunt thunk, opening where you put the cigar. Then it's a simple matter of inserting the cigar cap you're about to enjoy and pushing down on the blade, causing the blade to pass through the cigar until it hit the end of its path with a satisfactory click. The blade will then remain hidden in this position until you reactivate the trigger. WHAT MAKES IT SPECIAL? After almost a month of constant use, I can tell you that this is an amazing cutter for physical use: the balance of holding is excellent, the blade is sharp and is so well made that it has never come close to being anything less than an absolute pleasure to pick up and use. Unfortunately, there is more cigar cutter than how it feels and how it looks, and in this regard, Benchmade had some significant flaws. The first couple of times I cut cigars, I was left with a small shelf sticking out on the back end which was quite obvious. Assuming I needed to adjust my technique a little, I tried a number of different options: I pushed the blade harder and softer, faster and slower, I even slightly twisted the cigar while cutting the cap, all impeccably. No matter what I tried, the vast majority of times I cut my cap with this cutter, I was left with the same the shelf sticks out of the back of the cut. In fact, several times, the blade did a better job of completely destroying the cap as opposed to cutting, although it was a fairly rare occurrence. The main problem seems to be one of the design: if you look through the bottom of the housing-you can see what I'm talking about in the photo above-there is an obvious gap between the blade and the edge of the inner cover. Basically, this means that when you cut a cigar, there will almost always be a small part of the cap that will remain uncut, no matter what you do to try to mitigate this fact. Having said that there were times that I was able to get a clean cut as you can see from another of the photos above. However, these clean cuts were few and far between, and never amounted to more than about 10 percent of the total number of cigars that I used the cutter on. GOOD visual impact - This is one of the best looking cigar cutters I've seen bar none. The combination of an overall slightly curved design, muted carbon fiber handle and blue lights for details is striking and instantly means it's an expensive item, even if you don't know anything about it. Quality materials - The first time you get it, you know it is a well-made, quality piece of craftsmanship. At 4.2 ounces, it doesn't exactly light, but it offers an amazing balance, to the point where you can spin your finger like a fidget spinner if you choose (and yes, I am.) Build Quality - In over three weeks I used this knife, it was thrown into a bag where it banged around with other cutters, carried in my pocket with my keys and was even dropped several times in an accident. None of these actions have led to anything close to scratches, dents, or other visual damage that I can recognize. Lifetime warranty - As with other products produced by Benchmade, the 1500-181 cigar cutter comes with a lifetime warranty that includes sharpening services. BAD Design - While the build quality can be great, the design is flawed. The combination of the gap between the blade and the inner edge of the cover means that almost every time you cut out the cap, you stay with the shelf of tobacco, no matter how you try to compensate. There were also several times that the cutter destroyed the cap, although this was not a common phenomenon in any way. Price - It is impossible to get around the fact that this cutter is easily one of the most expensive cutters on the market today. Limited availability - Some will probably look at it as a good thing, but there are only 250 of them available at the moment. COMPETITION Although there are no direct competitors that have a similar single action blade and material quality, there are some single blades on the market. One of the interesting options is les fines lames cigar knife - i cutter i will be reviewing in the future - which is a French folding knife with a place to insert cigars to be cut, which are built with stainless steel MOX27Co and is valued at around \$ 500. Other competitors: Paul Garmarian Cigar Cutter - Priced at \$20 and includes a plastic case along with a Sheffield blade, which is also one of the sharpest cigar cutters I've ever reviewed. XIKAR X875 Cutter - Retailing for \$34.99, the X875 is made specifically for cutting cigars with a ring of 80 and XIKAR advertises the fact that you can match the cigar 75 rings through the hole in the cutter. Colibri S-Cut - Thanks to its rubber base and stainless steel blades, this cutter can hold a cigar for up to 66 rings and is available in a variety of different colors, all of which are priced at the same \$39. Tonino Lamborghini Le Mans Cigar Cutter - Sold in a variety of finishes with a price range from \$80-125 depending on the design, this cutter can accommodate cigars up to 54 rings. SHOULD YOU BUY IT? Cha If you're looking to increase the amount of Instagram likes in cigar pictures you never smoke, this is a great tool to do it with. Not if you want to cut a cigar. This is the cutter you want to have until you actually use it. Benchmade 1500-181 is a combination of quality materials, amazing visuals and a wonderful balance, plus it is made in America. But the cutter fails in effectively cutting cigars, so it doesn't matter if it's \$1,000 or \$1, made in America or made in China - it just doesn't work. In the past two years, a slew of well-known knife makers have made raids on the cigar market by selling different versions of cigar cutters to their fans. The most notable - and one of the most expensive - was Benchmade Knife Co. 1500-181 Cigar Cutter, a single-leaf guillotine that was released in 2018 at a cost of \$1,000 each and limited to only 250 total units. Further derogations followed, all of which were limited and contained exotic materials such as Damasteel and other upper-class steels; handles burl wood; and the use of carbon fibre, white gold and

sapphires throughout the rest of the cutter. These models were limited edition under benchmarked gold class flagship and include 1,500-191 (\$450), 1,500-192 (\$900) and 1,500-193 (\$1,200) and 1,500-194 (\$1,000). Fast forward to August this year, when Benchmark announced a regular production version at a much more affordable price, the 1500. What is it? Anyone who has seen or used any of the other Benchmark cigar cutters will find the 1500 to be quite similar, at least in its external appearance. It is a single-blade cutter where the blade opens with a button and then close the knife to cut cigar cap. The handle is made of Richlite - a material made of resin-infused paper that is water resistant, sanitary and is both heat and fire-resistant while the blade consists of CPM-S30V stainless steel with a hardness level of 58-60. Physically, the cutter measures 4,185 inches long and weighs a total of 3.95 ounces, while the aforementioned knife is kept in place using the Benchmark axis locking mechanism. This mechanism is also used to open and blade, specifically by pulling back on a small trigger located on both sides of the cutter. According to Benchmark, the blade at 1500 is 0.09 inches thick and can cut up to 60 ring gauge cigars and the cutter is sold with both a satin case as well as a leather case. How much does it cost? 250 dollars. HOW DOES IT WORK? Basically, the Benchmark 1500 is an amped-up single-blade guillotine cutter. Closed, the blade is almost completely hidden inside the cover, which means that the only part you can see is through the hole where the cap goes. However, the simple action of pulling firmly on one of the triggers located on both sides of the cutter causes the blade to appear firmly, which also opens the open place where the cigar cap is located. After this action, place the cutter in your hand so that the curved base is supported by an index, center, ring, and little finger, while the thumb is located on top of the blade. Then insert the cigar cap you are about to smoke into the hole - make sure you assess how much you will take off as well as you can - and press the blade with your thumb, causing the blade to pass through the cigar until it comes to the end of its journey with a loud click. The cap that has just been cut is held in place and the blade will remain hidden inside the handle until you reactivate the trigger. As with a number of other individual guillotine blades, when cutting cigars with Benchmark 1500, you can use it either in the right or left hand, although the process for each hand changes slightly. The key is always to have a cigar pointing in the same direction towards the blade so that the cap - ie. The easiest way to say is the part you want to smoke should be towards the side of the blade with the logo. The part that is going to cut off should be on the side of the blade, which does not have a logo. To use the cutter in your left hand, the process is the same, but the tip of the blade - with your thumb still on the edge - will now be aimed at you and you will hold the cigar in your right hand. Make sure that the end of the cap that is cut is on the same side as the beveled edge of the blade when the cigar is placed in the hole, then press with your thumb as before until the blade cuts through the whole Good excellent build quality - The cutter is extremely well designed, extremely well balanced and - at least for the month I used it - extremely durable. It looks great - it just looks great when you take it when you use it, and yes when you take pictures of it. Richlite Handle Took Everything I Threw At It - The handle is quite durable and shows virtually no signs of wear or anything approaching damage, despite the fact that I carried it in my pocket with change, keys and stones. (My son collects stones, but often runs out of space in his own pockets.) Made in America - For me, it's always nice to see a product like this made in the U.S. Lifetime Warranty - As with the rest of the products that Benchmark produces, the 1500 Cigar Cutter comes with a lifetime warranty that includes sharpening services. Easy to Find - 1500 is a regular production item, so it's no problem to find one for sale in any number of retailers. The price includes a very nice leather runt - I'm not a big fan of fairy tales in general, but I won't turn one down, especially one as good as this. BAD Cuts are good a lot of the time, but not even close to all time - as in the case of quite a few of the individual guillotine cutters that were made by knife companies, the combination of the gap in-between the blade and the inner edge of the housing means that almost every time you cut your cap, you will be left with shelves of tobacco, no matter how you try to compensate. There were also fairly common problems with (slightly) damaged packaging and/or caps, although both were less of a problem than the results I got from 1500-101. It's hard to see exactly how much of the cap you're removing - Due to the design, the cigar cap is significantly obscured as the blade cuts through it, meaning you're basically guessing how deep you're cutting. Price - Sure, 1,500 retails for a quarter of the cost of 1,500-101, but they still cost \$250, which puts them in the same class as some pretty heavy hitters. Difficult to cut cigars with ring gauge above 60 - While not impossible, you have very few options when it comes to cutting cigars over 60 ring gauge, and cutting something as big as a 70 ring gauge cigar is almost ridiculous. HOW DOES THE BENCHMARK 1500 COMPARE TO THE ORIGINAL BENCHMARK 1500-1801 CUTTER? At first glance there are very few changes with 1500 compared to the original 1500-101 other than obvious external elements: it still has the same basic design and pieces of the same size ring gauge cigars and blade keeps opening and closing in the same way. However, look a little closer and you will notice that the original is much nicer thanks to touches like blue sapphire titanium oxide coated screws, du dut titanium alloy foraged black blades with carbon canned and the fact that there are no sapphires inserted into the white gold frames on the release bar. However, according to the company, there are actually some design changes to the latest version of the cutter in an effort to make the cuts cleaner and more consistent, which are not as obvious when doing general visual inspections, as a spokesperson described in an email to halfwheel: Functionally no change, but the updated edge is more effective. There were some complaints about crushing, not cutting. So the product team reassessed the design and found that shifting the edge point against the inner surface of the handle would make the cut cleaner and more consistent. Previous special edition cutters have also used distortion offsets (the edge point is not centered), but this model has pushed the offset to an even more prominent position. After more than a month of use, I noticed a number of differences between the two models: The pieces are slightly cleaner and more consistent - I was a little skeptical that there could be a lot to be done to limit the number of cutting problems I had with the original, but moving the edge of the blade closer to the inner surface of the handle definitely had a positive impact on the results. There were still problems with damaged packaging and small pieces of tobacco, but both became significantly less common. Blade and handle made up of different materials - I'm not really up to date on my metals and the differences between them, but the original cutter has a CPM-S90V stainless steel blade, while the newer cutter has a CPM-S30V stainless steel blade. In addition, the handle on the 1500 consists of Richlite compared to the much more attractive-and much more expensive-carbon fiber at 1500-101. Lighter Weight - I wouldn't have thought that two ounces would make that big difference, but I felt the difference the first time I picked up both cutters at once to compare. While I don't think the lighter weight had a significant impact when cutting cigars - both versions are perfectly balanced - it was a little nicer to wear in your pocket. It's not that visually appealing, but still better than most cutters on the market - Sure, the cheaper price means you don't get the cool materials used for the handle, but ricote looks very nice on its own and I haven't had any problems at all with being scratched or damaged in any way. COMPETITION Although there are plenty of other single-blade cutters on the market, there is no one I know that has the same design as the Benchmark 1500, except for different variants from the same company. If you're looking for a cutter at roughly the same \$250 price tag, my first choice would be the ST Dupont Double Cigar Cutter (\$209), which includes both a straight cutter and an in-mill in the same. However, while both cutting options at ST Dupont work significantly better when it comes to actually cutting cigars, it doesn't have quite the same visual appeal that Benchmark does. Other competitors: Benchmark 1500-101 (\$1,000) - If you are looking for almost the same design in the cutter, but want to make it with more expensive materials, resulting in a significant price increase, you found it in this option. However, it should be noted that it has more cutting problems purely than 1500. Fox Knives 749 Cigar Cutter (\$85) - Another standalone guillotine cutter, but with a price point much lower than 1500 and similar visual appeal if you're looking for a very unique option. Oh, and it's actually really, really good at cutting cigars. Les Fines Lames Cigar Knife (\$500) - Yes, this French option also has problems cutting cigars cleanly and costs twice as much, but if you're looking for another cigar knife that looks great on Instagram, this is it. As a bonus, you can use it as a (very, very sharp) knife. Les Fines Lames Le Petit (\$149-\$14,180) - Although not as visually unique as the original Les Fines Lames, this smaller option also costs less, cuts cigars cleaner, is easier to wear and is able to cut larger cigars with a ring gauge thanks to the semicircular opening of the cigar. TOPS Knives 208 Clipper Cigar Cutter (\$159.95) - Cigar knife that has a number of the same problems that clean caps cleanly but with a price tag of almost \$100 less while cutting up to 60 cigars. It also has the ability to be used as a knife and also includes a bottle opener built on the back of the blade. SHOULD YOU BUY IT? Cha Let's get this out of the way quickly: the new Benchmark 1500 definitely cures some of the problems I had with the original model, all while maintaining a number of the best aspects such as suburban balance and axis locking mechanism. In addition to being lighter, easier to find and significantly cheaper, it also cuts the cap cleaner and with a greater consistency than 1500-101. After all, the cutter still suffers from the same problem: oftentimes when cutting a cigar, leaving on the cigar other pieces of tobacco, leaving a shelf of tobacco or causing the packaging to crumble. There are quite a few things to love about 1500, but in the end they still do not perform their primary function: cut caps from cigars cleanly and consistently with little or no damage. Damage.

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