



# Knifestyles of the KITCHEN BLADESMITH

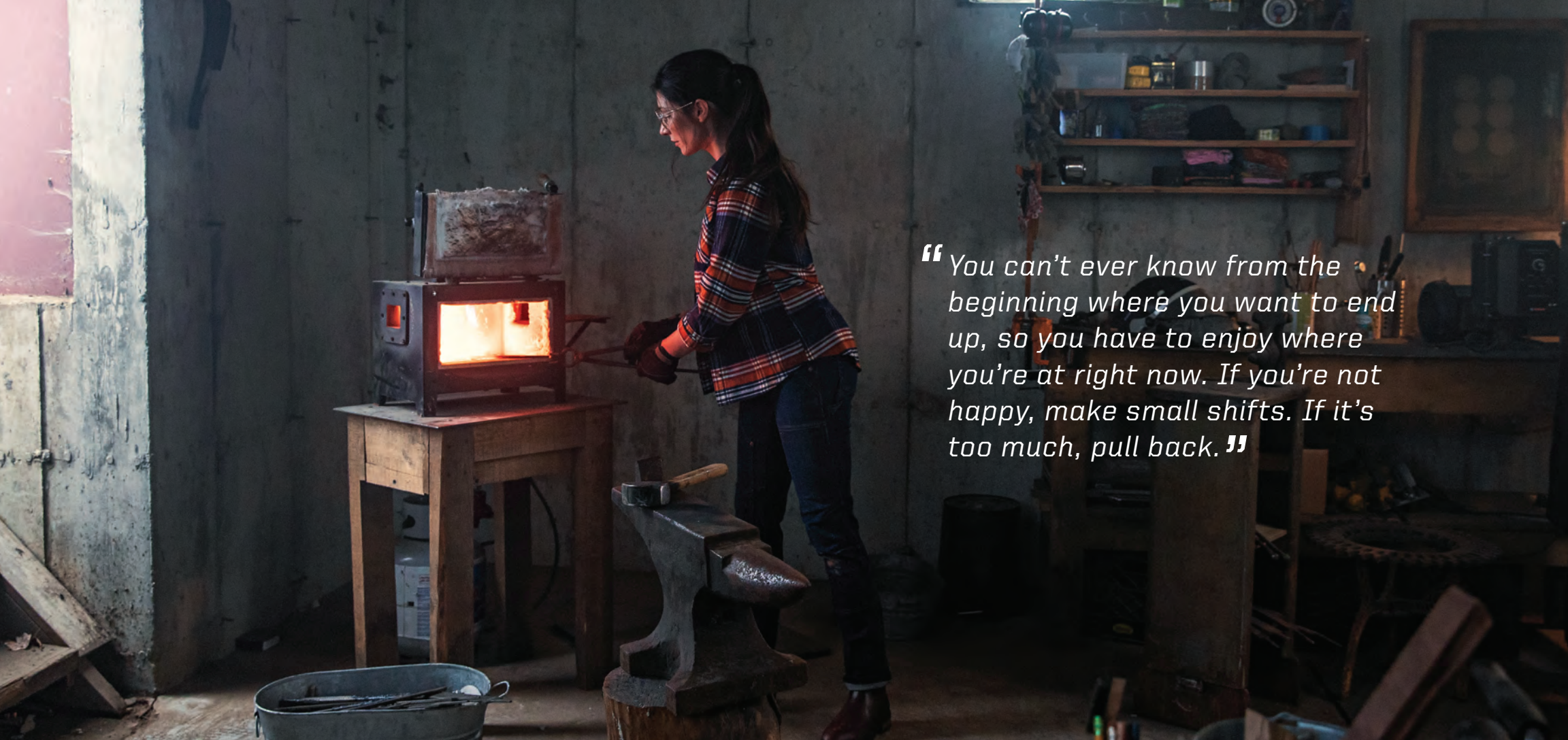
MUCH LIKE HER HANDCRAFTED CUTLERY, KNIFE-MAKING DULUTH WAYFORGER CHELSEA MILLER'S PATH IS NEITHER BY ACCIDENT NOR DESIGN. IN A WORKSHOP WHERE SHOWERING SPARKS, METALLIC DUST AND A SMOKY AROMA IGNITE CREATIVITY, CHELSEA CONNECTS WITH HER CRAFT WHILE THE MATERIALS GUIDE THE JOURNEY.

Hammering metal in her father's workshop was once just a fond childhood memory for now professional knife maker Chelsea Miller. The daughter of a blacksmith and carpenter father, she happily got her hands dirty repurposing metal and wood into useful creations for her family's kitchen.

"I really appreciated that my father never told me how to or how not to do something," says Chelsea. "He just enjoyed watching all of us make and correct our own mistakes."

While molten metal may seem a family trait, Chelsea's adult life began as an actor in New York City performing on stage and in film. When her father's health began to fail she returned to the wide-open spaces of her rural Vermont to aid in his care and rehabilitation back to his workshop. It was during this period that Chelsea found the space to push the boundaries of inner expansion; increasing her capacity for acceptance and fulfillment.

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*“You can’t ever know from the beginning where you want to end up, so you have to enjoy where you’re at right now. If you’re not happy, make small shifts. If it’s too much, pull back.”*

“I found a hunting knife my brother had made,” says Chelsea, who was immediately drawn to it. “The knives in my family’s kitchen had always been on my periphery but a handmade tool such as this really excited something within me.”

The knife was made from an old farrier’s rasp, which her father regularly used to maintain the hooves of his work horse. Even as a child, Chelsea admits she was drawn to the aesthetic of the rasp’s markings and texture; never could she have foreseen how these tools would broaden her connection to artistry, family and cooking.

“The first knives I made didn’t exactly function as high end cutlery; they were best used to smash nuts and seeds, maybe spread a bit of butter,” says Chelsea. “But what I’ve discovered along my path is that it’s best not to decide the outcome before I begin. Being available to the material and remaining curious has always led me to the most surprising triumphs.”

Knife making isn’t an identity for Chelsea; it’s a practice. Her workshop offers a grounded space not only for creativity but to reflect upon and modify her process. “Knives

are a method of transport from the shop to the kitchen, as there are many similarities between crafting a blade and creating a meal,” she says. “When I am mindful of these connections, I am happiest with my work.”

Chelsea’s unique blades are the product of years spent honing her skills, never sacrificing her organic approach of allowing the materials to guide the design. With multifunctional knives able to chop vegetables, zest ginger and grate hard cheeses in one, it’s no surprise professional chefs, home cooks and artistic admirers alike are comfortable with the year-long waitlist.

“Celebrating imperfection is about an appreciation of the journey; the wood handles are cut from slabs milled by my father, the carbon steel rasps once laid in the hands of a farrier,” says Chelsea. “My goal is to nurture a bond between these many incarnations.”

Hands have come to mean so much more to Chelsea since the passing of her father. “I can recall the rough texture of my father’s hands as easily as his gentle gestures; callused but tender,” she says. “I see my own hands in a different light now, carrying on his legacy while creating my own. I feel more connected to him now than ever before, my hands feel like home.”



^ Showing the stages of the knife making, horse shoe rasp, cutting out with plasma cutter, forge, grinder, sander, wood handle and waxing, ships to its forever home.

< Chelsea cutting the template of the knife out with plasma cutter

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