

Emerson La Griffe Neck Knife

www.EmersonKnives.com

By Chris Fry

I recently had a conversation with Darkvibe from NYFirearms.com about small fixed blade knives and the Emerson La Griffe came up. DV had just picked one up at a gun show and really liked the knife, so after speaking we both thought a review was in order. As with other reviews I have done for my website and various online forums I'll add this disclaimer; I am not a professional reviewer and the thoughts expressed here are what I believe to be important to someone who may want to purchase a La Griffe.

Design Background

As Ernest Emerson states on his website, the La Griffe (claw) knife design comes from Europe. It is a design from noted French knife-maker Fredric Perrin. Perrin is a veteran of the French Army; an expert in survival under extreme conditions as well as a dedicated martial artist. He has designed many "fighting" knives with two of his most popular being his custom Le Shark and La Griffe knives. Emerson liked the design so much he got permission from Perrin to manufacture his own version (as did Spyderco with the Spyderco SPOT La Griffe).



Perrin Le Shark



Perrin La Griffe

The hook or claw of the Emerson La Griffe is similar to that of a Karambit (sometimes spelled Kerambit) design. These designs are meant to simulate the claws of predatory animals. The Karambit was first brought to the US from



Emerson Waved Karambit Folder

Southeast Asia in the 1950's but went largely unnoticed until recent interest via the martial arts community. In its native country this blade design is very prolific and is used to perform similar functions to small pocket utility knives found here in America. Aside from its utilitarian function the hook or claw design offers significant advantages as a personal protection tool, with a moderate amount of training.

Specifications

The box includes the small fixed blade La Griffe itself, a dog-tags type neck chain and a kydex sheath. It is not a big knife measuring 4.9 inches total length. The blade/cutting surface only measures 1.75 inches. Not a large blade but the claw and handle design offer numerous positive attributes for so small a knife. The blade is a razor sharp chisel grind and runs about .125 inches in thickness. The La Griffe falls at 57-59 on the Rockwell C scale for hardness. The BT model comes with a black oxide finish and a satin finish model is also available, with either model serrations are also an option.



Handles Skeletonized Handle
Blade 154 CM
Finish Black Oxide
Grind Razor Sharp Chisel Grind

Overall Length 4.9 in.
Blade Length 1.75 in.
Blade Thickness .125 in.
Hardness 57-59 RC
Weight 1.5 oz.

Personal Impressions

Carry and deployment should be a major concern when purchasing any edged tool that may be utilized to protect yourself or family. I am not a big fan of the neck knife concept as it pertains to personal protection tools. Neck knives in general move around a lot, they twist and are subject to body sweat if worn against the skin like under a T-shirt during the summer months. Most important to me is the idea of getting a neck knife out from underneath a shirt or coat while one or two attackers are in contact or closing distance; very problematic. It has been my experience that when you need a tool, you really need it and messing around with one arm tied up under my shirt is not an endeavor I care to pursue. So, if I don't favor neck knives then why am I reviewing the La Griffe? Simply put, there are few production, high quality, affordable small fixed blade knives available on the market; the La Griffe is one of them. Most edged tools that fall into this category are either custom blades or cheap junk.

One option I have found works extremely well is to attach a small [Blade-Tech](#) Tek-Lok or Tek Klip to the kydex La Griffe sheath. This provides a belt mount option for the La Griffe and can be carried in numerous configurations for either strong or support side access.

If you like the idea of a neck knife and are not concerned with relying upon it for personal protection then the La Griffe worn around the neck as intended is applicable. Numerous EMS personnel, outdoorsman, climbers, hikers and kayakers like the La Griffe and in these contexts carrying it as a neck knife is certainly a viable option.



Performance

The small claw blade of the La Griffe offers a lot of excellent features as an every day tool. I cut and trimmed some turkey with my La Griffe a couple nights ago and it performed exceptionally. Due to its short blade profile it is not a knife I would utilize for large tasks like cutting tree branches or doing yard work. It is very handy for small household tasks such as cutting boxes, rope or certain kitchen duties.

As a fighting blade the La Griffe offers the unique features of the one inch finger hole and hooked blade. The finger hole, reminiscent of the Karambit mentioned above provides the user with excellent retention of the knife. It also allows the user to still grip objects or an attackers clothing with the fingers of that hand without dropping the knife or having to switch hands. One method of utilization for the La Griffe I discovered from [Don Rearic](#) was at close contact or during standing grapple with an opponent is to grab and ball the fist with the La Griffe in hand. This causes the short hook blade to insert itself into whatever I am grabbing, with a little practice. The finger hole placement also puts the La Griffe in line with the bones and skeletal structure of the arm essentially making it an extension of the hand. So, although the La Griffes hooked blade is less than two inches in length a significant amount of slashing power can be generated.

Is a four to eight inch “fighting knife” preferred if I really had to use an edged tool to protect myself? Sure, but it’s also more difficult to carry and conceal a knife of that size and in my opinion looks more menacing. The La Griffes size and profile are attractive since it’s much easier for me to conceal the La Griffe than it is to conceal even some folding knives I currently own.



Conclusion

The La Griffe is a lot of knife in a small package. It offers the user a good blend of utility and functionality as a potential personal protection edged tool. Its unique design and fit in hand provide the user with an almost familiar feeling, like it was meant to be. The small size is very attractive to those of us who want utility and function while still being able to conceal from prying eyes. In my opinion, the Emerson La Griffe is competitively priced for today’s knife market. I highly recommend the La Griffe to anyone looking for a small fixed blade knife or dedicated neck knife.

Price: \$103 + Shipping [Emerson La Griffe](#)

One Stop Knife Shop - \$65 + Shipping [Emerson LaGriffe](#)