



# Nirey Electric Knife Sharpeners

Reprofile your edges for long-lasting sharpness.



**1** **TONY** Pizzata and I visited with Scott Thornton of Total Knife Care recently to catch up and report back on how our Nirey Sharpeners were going. Well, it was all good news really; we picked up some interesting information about where their new markets were and left after a very pleasant couple of hours of coffee and sticky buns.

Sporting Shooter had thoroughly tested the three models of electric sharpener that Nirey, a company of impeccable pedigree for quality of manufacture, about eight years ago and the results were staggeringly good. While there is one professional model, the two that are aimed more at the semi-pro or recreational market seemed to be every bit as well constructed and durable, if less powerful.

The Nirey KE-198 is what you may call the “base model” of the three sharpeners available, but results from my mates who have been using them for the better part of a decade are really happy with their purchases. The KE-198 has four angled slots in the stainless steel wheel cover,

whereby you run the blade through a coarse wheel first for two or three passes and then refine the edge on a finer wheel though the second pair of slots. It is simplicity itself to operate – foolproof, if you prefer.

My best man, Mark Adamson of Three Amigos notoriety in these pages some years back, asked for my recommendation for a knife sharpener because he was sick of blunt kitchen knives his wife used every day. Mark has a full set of F. Dick kitchen knives, as well as high quality hunting blades, which deserved better treatment than they were getting. He bought a KE-198 and has never looked back. I asked him if he ever steeled his blades between sharpening and he said, “No, why would I? I just give them one pass through on the Nirey and I’m good to go again. It’s the best sharpener for my purposes that I could have. I thank you every time I use it.” Geez, you’d think I knocked that sharpener up in my garage, the way he goes on. All credit to Nirey, more like. Tony Pizzata also has a

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KE-198 and he cannot speak more highly of it, saying it’s the best sharpener he has ever used. In fact, he takes his afield, using it through a 150 watt inverter plugged into a lighter socket on the back of his truck, ensuring he always has shaving sharp knives for caping and butchering in the field.

Now some products go through a process of regular development to refine and improve them. These Nireys have been sold in Australia for over a decade and the product is so good, it has remained unaltered and as effective and durable as ever. Its aluminium oxide

sharpening wheels are a permanent fixture, said never to need replacement. Well Tony and Mark have certainly proved that up until now.

The Nirey KE-280 came to reside in my gun room around about the same time as Tony and Mark got their KE-198s and I have not been able to fault it. Unlike Mark and Tony, I give my kitchen knives a lick on a smooth steel every time I use them and they last three or four months easily between sharpenings. Driving two padded nylon wheels with abrasive cloth cover rings/continuous belts, the KE-280 is a powerful, commercial unit which just keeps delivering.

I was initially supplied with two additional replacement belts and I have not had to replace the originals yet – talk about long lasting! It is easy to understand why Coles Butchers around Australia are all installing KE-280s, so their employees are not burning up valuable knife time on an oilstone.

The KE-280 works on a principle of decreasing



pressure with subsequent passes of the blade through two angled guides against the turning belts revolving at 2500 rpm. What eventuates, due to the blade riding slightly higher against the wheels with subsequent lighter pressure, is a finished edge that is a convex profile at the very tip. This means your edge is more resistant to chipping and thus more durable.

Whatever the technicalities, this Nirey KE-280 has been and continues to be the ace of electric knife sharpeners that I have experienced.

The Nirey KE-3000 straddles a middle ground between the 198 and 280, but resembling the KE 280 more in its casing and operation, using abrasive belts to impart an edge every bit as fine as the 280, except the motor has less torque, but slightly higher rotational speed at 2750rpm, making it ideally suited for the recreational/home user up to light commercial use, such as a cafe etc.

The advantages over the KE 280 are its lower price and slightly smaller bench footprint, while using the same replacement belts as the KE-280. For the keen hunter or fisherman, the KE-3000 would have to be considered an ideal sharpening unit.

Now both the KE-280 and the KE-3000 work on the

principle of applying varying levels of blade pressure against the spinning abrasive belts to give a durable and eventually polished edge at a primary grind angle of about 15 degrees, that being the same angle imparted by the aluminium oxide stone wheels of the KE 198. That is very fine and will reset the grind angle on many conventionally ground knife blades, particularly sporting knives, which are mostly around the 22 degree mark. While the Nireys produce an edge slightly less resistant to abuse, they will cut like the "be-jeesus" and will be very easy to touch up to get going again.

Now you may ask why you'd want to choose a Nirey electric sharpener over a competitor's product, like Chef's Choice for example. While competitors products will do a good job sharpening blades, it is worthwhile thinking about the consumables, for when you need to replace belts and other parts. I have been informed by Scott that Nirey's consumables, while top quality, cost a fraction of the competitors' products. Long term, the Nirey user is going to be significantly better off, one reason they are increasingly the butchers' first choice.

If you go to the Total Knife Care website, you will see more technical information when you type in

<http://www.totalknifecare.com.au/about-us/in-the-press> and click on Sporting Shooter 198 and 280 - March 08 you will see my original test report of the KE-198 and KE-280. There is also some exciting news that you can now order the KE-3000 and KE-280 in all inclusive boxed kits, in which you can keep all your sharpening bits and pieces together in one place.

You also want to type in "Nirey" on sportingshooter.com.au and check out Tony Pizzata's new skinning and butchering video using the Nirey KE 198 in the field.

*Nirey products are available where all good knives are sold and you can order them direct from Total Knife Care Phone: 07 3856 4516 Email: [info@totalknifecare.com.au](mailto:info@totalknifecare.com.au) Web: [www.totalknifecare.com.au](http://www.totalknifecare.com.au)*

## ON THIS SPREAD

**1** The Nirey KE-280 has been installed in Coles Butchery outlets Australia-wide and is seen as a great productivity tool in the trade.

**2** Left to right in order of performance, the KE-280 (professional grade), KE-3000 (mid-range belt-driven performance) and the KE-198 (intended for the home kitchen or workshop).

**3** The KE-3000 interior exposed, showing the replaceable abrasive belts that prove very long lasting for keen recreational users. Stripping and assembly is very simple and takes a few minutes only.

**4** The KE-3000 (seen here) and the KE-280 both now come in a handy cased kit form, with spares and maintenance essentials.

**5** The Nirey KE-198, while marketed as the amateur end of the range, is very solidly constructed, providing years of trouble-free performance with highly durable aluminium-oxide abrasive wheels. The 15-degree edge imparted by this and other Nirey sharpeners, lasts months of everyday use with regular steeling.

