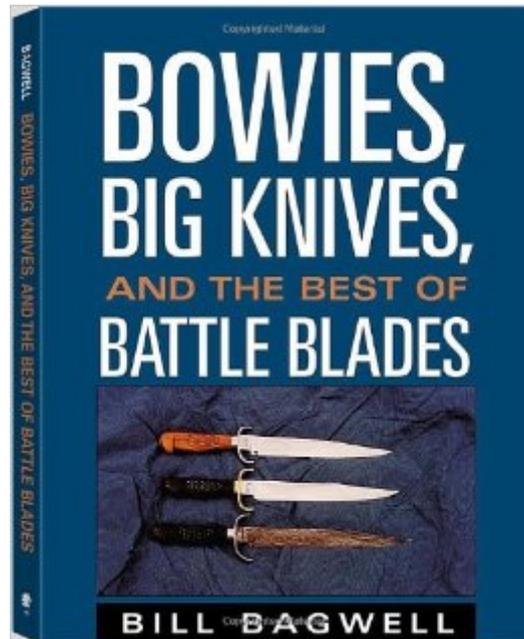


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Bowies, Big Knives, And The Best Of Battle Blades



Synopsis

This book binds the timeless observations and invaluable advice of master bladesmith and blade combat expert Bill Bagwell under one cover for the first time. As the outspoken author of Soldier of Fortune's "Battle Blades" column from 1984 to 1988, Bagwell was considered both outrageous and revolutionary in his advocacy of carrying fighting knives as long as 10 inches and his firm belief that the Bowie knife was the most effective and efficient fighting knife ever developed. His assignment as a contributing editor to SOF was to test and evaluate contemporary knives from all over the world, and he soon earned a reputation for cutting to the chase. Candid and frank almost to a fault, he told it like it was - and he could always back it up. Sixteen years after his first column made its debut, Bagwell's convictions on knife design and blade technique have gained validity in the industry, and he has earned the respect of even some of his most vocal critics. This book provides an unprecedented opportunity to study the design and use of Bowies and other big knives and learn which blade designs and combat techniques stand up to both the rigors of battle and the test of time.

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Customer Reviews

Bill Bagwell was the author of the "Battle Blades" column in "Soldier of Fortune" magazine from 1983 to 1987. During that time he wrote many articles about a wide variety of knife related topics. In his book "Bowies, Big Knives and The Best of Battle Blades" Mr. Bagwell reprints many of these articles. Mr. Bagwell begins his book with a closer look at the Bowie knife, which he advocates as

the deadliest knife on earth. He advocates carrying a knife of at least 9.25 inches, and in *Bowies, Big Knives and The Best of Battle Blades* he explains how to effectively carry a large knife in modern society without drawing unwanted attention. (I can personally attest to the effectiveness of Mr. Bagwell's instructions on the use and carry of the Bowie knife, as I have done so for years using the method he suggests.) Because much of the book is reprints of 'Battle Blades' articles we also are treated to Mr. Bagwell's opinion on a number of other knives, such as the K-Bar, saw-toothed blades, daggers, the Kukri, the Japanese tanto knife, throwing stars (shuriken), and the AK bayonet. Mr. Bagwell's opinions on these knives can be controversial, but his opinions are well reasoned in each case ~ whether one agrees with him or not. While "*Bowies, Big Knives and The Best of Battle Blades*" gives much insight into the idea and concept of knife fighting, it isn't a manual intended to teach knife fighting techniques. For that Mr. Bagwell recommends the training material produced by James Keating at Comtech, here in Washington State (again a recommendation I can personally attest to having much merit).

Let me start by saying that I have a respect and love for a well constructed Bowie knife. It really does combine the best features one looks for in a combat blade. Chopping, slicing, cleaving and piercing. A well made Bowie does it all. And with enough reach that hopefully its wielder can stay out of reach of his opponent. I have trained for many years in a combat martial art of Japanese origin, but have not been blinded by "my" art to the point that I cannot appreciate a great fighting knife design when I see one. Also, as an aspiring Bladesmith, I look to greats like Bagwell for inspiration. Ergo, my love of a well made Bowie. I really wanted to love this book. Bill Bagwell has created some beautiful and deadly Bowies over the years. Any of which I would stake my life on. However, this book leaves much to be desired. The first bit of the book, and the last bit are by far the best. That is where almost all "bowie talk" is located. The rest are reprints of Bagwells "*Battle Blades*" columns published in *Soldier of Fortune* in the 1980's. As such, they talk much about other knives and how they don't stack up to the well designed Bowie. And I agree completely, most don't. But I think most people buying this book are choir members, fully immersed in the church of Bowie. As such, I find the bulk of the book detracts from the premise of the book. I honestly wanted to know more about what goes into great bowie design, why it was engineered the way it was, how it was used, etc. But those portions of the book are few and far between. To be fair, the description of the book indicates that the book contains reprints of Bagwells articles published in SOF. But, seeing how I didn't subscribe to SOF in the 80's, there is no way to know what those articles consisted of.

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