160OT Mountain Lion...by popular demand (one)

The Schrade Old Timer 160OT Mountain Lion is a nice newer classic Schrade pattern. It was first introduced in 1990, just before the 165OT Woodsman was discontinued in 1991, and produced for only six years, all in Ellenville. The Mountain Lion has serpentine brown sawcut delrin handles held to the full tang by three nickle silver flat head rivets, and a 1 1/8" nickle silver Old Timer shield. A two piece pinned brass contoured guard seperates the handle from the 4 5/8" flat ground 1095 carbon steel clip blade. The pattern of the handle is pure 165OT, while the blade is a flat ground full tang version of the sabre ground 153UH hidden tang pattern.

Due to the modern manufacturing methods, short production run, and low amount of samples available, very few distinctions between the early and late production knives have been found.. No minor engineering changes have yet been found to help to distinguish the chronology of production. One knife might have opaque dark brown delrin scales and another have reddish/caramel transluscent scales, but this is more of a function of the plastic resin availability and color mix than an actual change.

Earliest production was not marked with a "PAT. PEND." tangstamp as was the much earlier introduced 15OT Deerslayer (1964), at least not that I have seen. Perhaps this led to some complications with production and stocking the 15OT's, as it was not continued in 1967 on the first 165's. Neither have I seen serialized examples. So far, the tangstamps I have seen were parallel to the tang on blade right with SCHRADE over USA 160OT (same position as most 153UH).

I have never seen one without the "OT designation added to the "160" on a tangstamp, but the earlier "165's" do not have the "OT" designation added.

The pinned two piece brass guards on these Ellenville knives have the same flat front edge on the lower guard and the concave curve on the back edge for finger relief as the 165OT's, and it could well be the same stock part. The front edge is left flat, saving a casting detail, or machining step.

Only two sheath designs have been found so far, again, not really enough of a sampling to establish an accurate chronology. One is flatsewn with a third ply added to the center protecting the stitching from the blade, a close cousin of the similar 165OT sheath, only slightly slimmer. These may be replacement sheaths. The most common, naturally is the stone pocket sheaths, original issue with the 160OT Mountain Lion (one of my own 160OT's came NIB with one, and most NIB are shown with one) and the 153UH . The 165 is a tight fit in this sheath.
The UH version, if that is what the 153UH is, was made for thirty years (1974-04), and is currently being reproduced on contract by another company in China using red spacers instead of the traditional black. The 153 pattern was produced by Schrade for limited editions and private issues from time to time, but I do not recall the flat ground 160OT being used for them.

They are relatively rare having only been produced for six years, but anyone wanting one can find one. I believe my search for them took a month or two and netted one NIB and one good user for about $30-$45 each. The last three I have watched went for a bit more, but I don't think the current average of $90.65 for a NIB knife will hold up for long. It is odd that there are more mint knives of this model showing up than users. Evidently they were slow sellers for whatever reason. They sold new in 1990 for $48.95 while the 153UH sold for approximately eight dollars more, and the heavier 165OT sold for two dollars more. Would you say Schrade competed against themselves?

I am interested in these knives, discontinued fourteen years now and made by the now closed Imperial Schrade because of their twin parantage by the 165OT and 153UH. It is the serpentine handle that I love so well with another classic blade pattern. The blade sweep is reminiscent of some of the earlier 49'ers, and before that to the 137/147 patterns with leather washer handles. Can a fixed blade knife get much more classic?

Codger