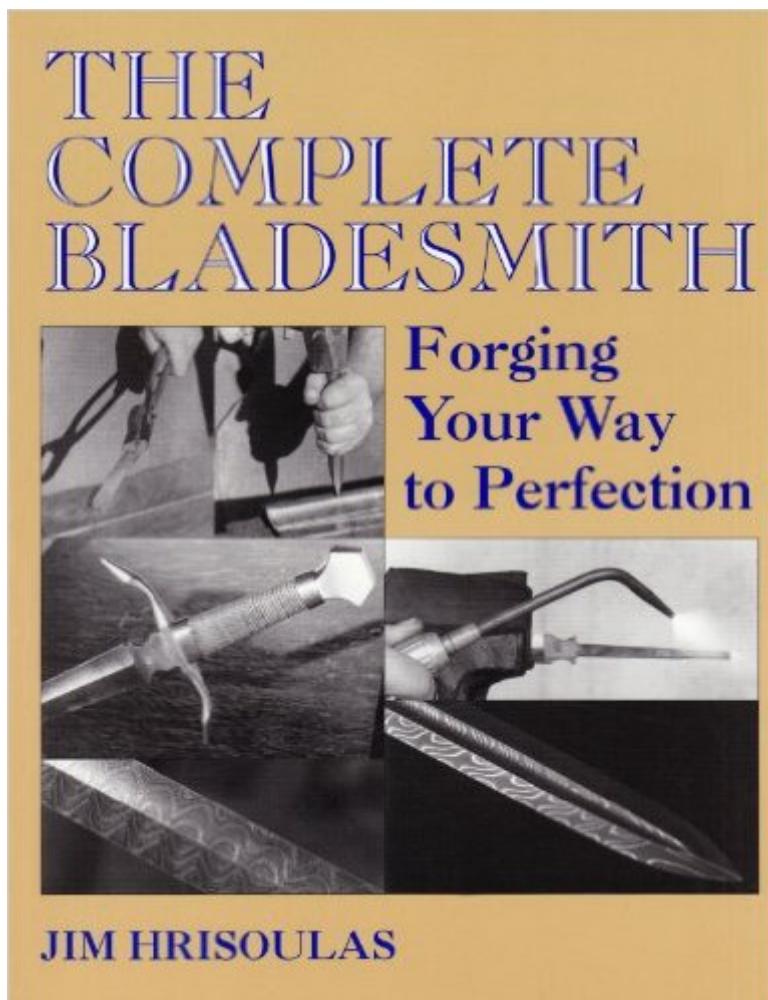


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# The Complete Bladesmith: Forging Your Way To Perfection



## Synopsis

Looking for instructions in bladesmithing that'll put you on the cutting edge of the custom blade market? Then this definitive guide to forging world-class blades is for you. Written by a master bladesmith, this book tells you how to set up your forge, select your materials, fashion grips and hilts, grind edges and much more!

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Jim Hrisoulas has let out information some knifemakers refuse to share, and he is big enough to handle the criticism. He not only knows how to create beautiful knives and swords, he also knows how to write, so the novice to experienced knifemaker can comprehend the content. He also provides excellent diagrams of the subject matter he is addressing at the time. From the steels, tools, and techniques, to some trade secrets, it is all here. For the novice to experienced knifemaker, there is something for you to discover. The forging basics are spelled out in a clear and concise format. Most anything that has to do with the forging of blades is covered thoroughly in this volume. This book is a must for the wannna-be knifemaker. Jim also has two other books in print, "The Master Bladesmith", (Advanced Studies in Steel); and, "The Pattern Welded Blade", (Artistry in Iron). I have all three volumes, and most other knifemaking books in print, the other books being superfluous in contrast. All three volumes are a must for the serious forger of the steel blade, and should be required reading. What an addition to a starving subject matter, not to mention an attractive classic collection of works in the field. These books are really upscale in content in

comparison. Why did I give the book a 9 rating if it is so good? You really need all three to have the best, a 10+. Warning: These books are not for the knifemakers that use the stock-removal method for knifemaking, although there is information that any knifemaker would like to read and use, it just may not pay to buy them. I have no personal bias here, as I do both methods. I would be happy to give my opinion of content regarding the other two books. Did someone say light the forge? Nels Nelson - nelsk@azstarnet.co

While you can't learn any craft this complicated solely from a book, this one comes pretty close. It's an impressive primer on the field covering everything from laying out your shop to tools/equipment, steels/alloys, grip materials, leatherwork, construction, heat-treating, grinding, sharpening, and tempering. It even covers Japanese heat-treating and polishing techniques and how to forge several patterns of Damascus steel. There are great charts/illustrations too. The author not only knows his craft but he is able to communicate this knowledge clearly and effectively to his readers. His writing is pleasant and easy to follow. For perspective, I should point out that I know just enough about this field to be dangerous. I apprenticed to master bladesmith Bob Powell for about a year quite some time ago, not to take up sword making as a profession but rather to have access to the tools and education to forge my own blade. Jim Hrisoulas, on the other hand, is a true expert! With more than 17 years working at the forge, he specializes in medieval style blades and Damascus pattern welding techniques. His knowledge and experience really shine through in this great book. Lawrence Kane Author of *Surviving Armed Assaults*, *The Way of Kata*, and *Martial Arts Instruction*

I'm also a relative novice at blacksmithing and bladesmithing. I found Dr Hrisoulas' book to be of great value. True, there's nothing in the basic bladesmithing that hasn't been written before by somebody, or multiple people. However, the sections on the Japanese and Northern European laminated blades are fascinating and valuable. His beginning section is just that. The beginning. He does most beginning smiths a favor and leaves out volumes of metallurgical data that only serves to confuse the novice smith and compound the difficulties inherent in making the first few blades. Of the dozen or so books that I've read on just blacksmithing NONE gives the reader an accurate price list. None will tell you how much a good anvil will cost, they will tell you that it's your biggest investment. Even Goddard's standby "\$50 knife shop" isn't really \$50 unless you have access to a machine shop or the junkyard on "Junkyard Wars" first. If you want an "anvil" any large piece of steel with a flat side will do. Railroad track isn't great but it'll do to start. Of course, that's in just about every book. For a traditional style anvil, you can spend \$100 on an imported Chinese steel

one at about 100#. It's face is fairly soft and 100# get moved around easily, even on heavy stumps. Or you can go overboard and spend the aforementioned \$1200 and get about 450# of anvil. The average bladesmith, and blacksmith, will only ever need 150-200#. For beginners, servicable hammers are available for less than \$10 (you get what you pay for) up to \$50 and all manner of tongs can be had for \$30-50 each. I recommend this book, especially if you're able to get it for less than cover price.

I bought this book with next-to no prior blacksmithing experience. The first few chapters are good primers, but I would strongly advise -NOT- using this book as your only means of learning. As was stated previously, anvils CAN BE expensive. However, keep in mind that, especially starting out, there is no shame in the infamous "Rail Road Track Anvil." Also, a suitable forge can be made out of an old barbecue lined with clay. However, back onto the main topic: The book is called "The Complete Bladesmith" for a reason. It covers just about everything you need to know (however I cannot stress enough that no blacksmith becomes a master bladesmith by reading) from tangs to making grips and hilts. There is even a chapter on Japanese blade making. It's definately a good read, and worth the price.

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