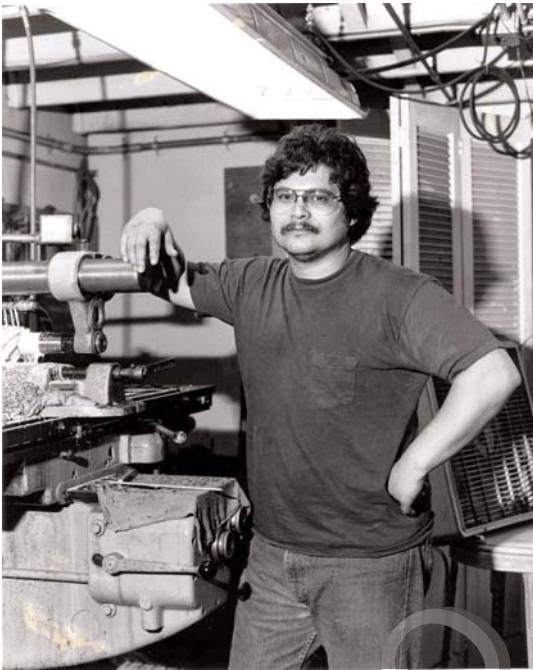


BENCHMADE®

History of Benchmade

With a rich history dating back over 30 years, Benchmade is the product of many dedicated employees, a never-quit demand for excellence and the de Asis family's vision and total commitment to culture, service and innovation. This is the story of Benchmade.

1979



The Benchmade adventure began when Les de Asis wanted a knife that reflected the latest in materials and manufacturing technology to replace the cheap butterfly knives, known as Bali-Songs, he played with as a kid. Using his high-school shop skills, he blueprinted his dream knife before eventually meeting Victor Anselmo, who helped to grind the first ever pre-Benchmade Bali-Song® prototype. Paired with handles that Les sourced from a small machine shop in California, he assembled and finished his first Bali-Song® in his own garage. Proud of his creation, he took this first Bali-Song® into a local gun store and the owner asked, "Could you build 100 more?"

1980



Les incorporated as Bali-Song®, Inc. and rented a small shop in a second story mezzanine in California. The original equipment was purchased from the owner of a manufacturing operation who was looking to retire. Utilizing the rudimentary technology available to him at the time, Les began building handmade custom Bali-Songs, along with Jody Sampson, who ground all the blades. The success of these custom Balis spurred the creation of the first production Bali-Song®: The model 68.

BENCHMADE®

Over the next seven years, the company expanded its product offerings into fixed blades and conventional folding knives, and evolving its name from Bali-song®, Inc. to Pacific Cutlery Corp.

1987



Due to its inability to control quality, price and delivery, Pacific Cutlery Corp. filed for bankruptcy and was dissolved. In 1988, Les reintroduced a new company and new version of the Model 68; This time with a drive to produce product in the US and an even stronger commitment to product availability, quality and customer relationships. The company now needed a new name.

While there was “handmade” and “factory-made,” it was “Benchmade” that described the quality of Les’ product. He was building an operation that made precision parts, but with hand assembly on the finished products.

This was a “bench” operation and Les wanted the name to reflect the marriage of manufactured and custom. In short, it describes Benchmade’s position in the market—even to this day.

1990



Benchmade moved from California to a facility in Clackamas, Oregon and began producing knives there under the name Benchmade, Inc.

This was a major turning point, as the company was now located in the epicenter for knife manufacturing.

Many technological advancements were now possible and Benchmade became the first company to own and employ a high-power laser cutter, allowing for work with steels too hard to stamp. The company also became the world leader in automatic knife manufacturing (still true to this day) and began to supply military units.

BENCHMADE®

1996-1997

To respond to growing customer demand, Benchmade moved from the 15,000 sq. ft. shop in Clackamas to its current location in Oregon City, which sprawls approximately 144,000 sq. ft. today.



With its first ten years of manufacturing experience behind it, and by working with world-class custom knife makers like Mel Pardue and Warren Osborne, Benchmade perfected a business model that involved lending manufacturing processes to custom knife designs; affording a level of innovation and quality to the larger market that was previously unavailable.

This eventually led to Bill McHenry and Jason Williams approaching Benchmade with the AXIS® lock... and the future of cutlery was born.



Present

To this day Benchmade continues to focus on innovation, customer needs, responsible business ethics and operations to bring the highest quality products to the world's elite.

BENCHMADE®

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