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SHOPPING WITH
CHRIS SANTOS

Anything but Dull

A number of attractive ways to store knives.



RUBY WASHINGTON/THE NEW YORK TIMES

BLADE RUNNER Chris Santos at JB Prince, a chefs' supply store in Midtown Manhattan.

FINDING a way to store knives that is both functional and attractive has long been a challenge for home cooks of every commitment level. Even Chris Santos, the executive chef of the Stanton Social, a restaurant and lounge in Manhattan, and a judge on "Chopped," a reality show on the Food Network, keeps the knives he uses at home in what he describes as "a beat-up bag with burns and other war wounds."

Mr. Santos, 38, said he is so embarrassed by the bag that he hides it when guests visit: "I kind of stash it underneath the island."

Lately, he has been thinking about replacing it because he has been spending more time cooking for guests at home, testing recipes for a restaurant on the Lower East Side that he and his partners plan to open in August. Recently, he took a break from his various projects to shop for more appealing options.

At JB Prince, a chefs' supply store in Midtown Manhattan, Mr. Santos explained why knives need to be stored properly. "If you just throw your knives in a drawer," he said, "they'll ultimately get dulled or chipped."

There are plenty of alternatives to traditional wooden knife blocks, which can take up too much room in small kitchens, he noted, and present health risks unless they have removable sleeves that can be washed. "If you put dirty knives in there and the interior has bacteria, it will attach to the knives," Mr. Santos

said. "The most common cause for mild stomach irritation usually comes from utensils that aren't cleaned properly."

A knife bag, or knife roll, like the one he uses — but not quite so beat up — is a good choice for home cooks, he said. "The knives slip right in and the pockets keep them separate, so the edges don't burr."

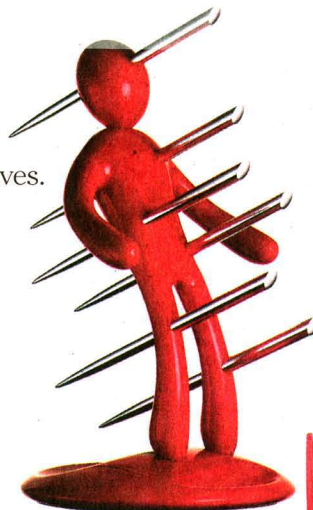
Knife rolls, he pointed out, are also compact: "They have a large capacity, but then they fold up." Holding up a zipped-up case, he added, "This can go in the same drawer you have all your to-go menus in."

After a quick stop at the Cellar at Macy's in Herald Square, where he tried to find an orange Fiesta knife set and holder he saw on the store's Web site (it was only available online), Mr. Santos took the W train to Eighth Street to see what was available at Broadway Panhandler.

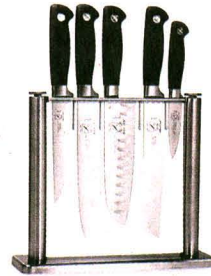
Although he insisted that it has the "all-around best selection" in Manhattan, it didn't carry the Ex, a plastic holder in the shape of a man (he had seen it on Amazon). "I think it would be a great gift to give someone, particularly a woman, who's just gone through a breakup," he said.

At the Museum of Modern Art's store, he admired a stand with an accordion-fold plastic insert that can go in the dishwasher. "This is very sharp looking," he said, seeming to not notice his pun. Knife blocks used to be so boring, he added, and "it's nice to have options that aren't an eyesore."

JULIE SCELFO

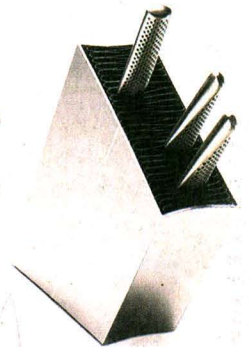


The Ex ABS plastic knife block by Raffaele Iannello; \$69.95 at Amazon.com.



Mercer Genesis Six-Piece Knife Set with Glass Block; \$149.99 at Bed Bath & Beyond, (800) 462-3966, bedbathandbeyond.com.

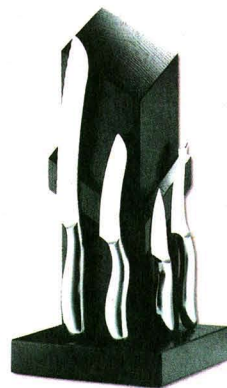
Knife Stand with removable accordion-fold insert by Tools Design; \$130 at MoMA Store, (800) 851-4509, momastore.org.



Legnoart Spicy 6-Slot Knife Holder; \$118 at Amazon.com.



Aluminum Magnetic Knife Holder by Wüsthof; \$59.95 at Crate and Barrel, (800) 967-6696, crateandbarrel.com.



Pott Cado magnetized knife block by Ralph Kramer; \$399 at Fitzsu, (323) 655-1908, fitsu.com.



Slipad Knife block with knives by D Crafoord/U Vejbrink; \$9.99 at Ikea, (800) 434-4532, ikea.com/us.



Fiesta Cutlery, 11-piece set with wood block, in assorted colors; \$115 at Macy's, (800) 289-6229, macys.com.