



From here on, I let the pictures do most of the talking. They're shot without flash, to save the battery on my camera and to honor the beautiful light in the production facility. The resulting haziness needs to be taken for granted.

The raw lumps of coticule are transported to the production building in the back of an old pick-up. They are sorted out and cut to slats with the aid of a diamond circular saw. The majority of them are cut from larger rocks of coticule, and as a result, not naturally bonded to a blue back. They are glued to a slate back. For reasons of cost-effectiveness they use Portuguese slate flooring tiles for that purpose. When the glue is cured, the sides are trimmed. After that the hone's surface is smoothened and the sides chamfered on a large water-cooled rotating sanding disc.

Although easily enough to explain, it still is a very







*(upper left) coticule slats, waiting to be glued.*

*(right) coticule, glued to slate tiles.*

*(lower left) trimmed to final size.*

*(lower right) tons with coticule powder stored in the attic, at the moment tested at labs of the beauty industry for use as ingredient in scrub creams.*

*(middle) Two beautiful, unfinished "bout"s.*





labor-intensive job to produce a coticule hone, which explains why it is a perished industry and why the price tag of a coticule is what it is.

Rob also elaborated a bit on the different layers coticule can be harvested from. In the old days, there was more emphasis on the differences in honing capabilities between those layers that each carried their own name. There's a display cabinet in the entrance hall, that contains hones from many different layers. Rob spoke about the journals of the previous quarry owner, who according to Rob, had a large fondness and affinity for his product. They have sent a bunch of different coticules to Joel, the founder of "Badger and Blade", for quality assessment. They plan on comparing Joel's findings with the notes of the previous owner, and plan on the future installment of a grading system that is based on a given coticule's layer of origin.

And that's how we came to the end of this interesting and remarkable guided tour. Rob refused to charge us anything for his services, so what else could we do but to purchase a beautiful coticule hone, as an omen of our appreciation of the man and his business. "Take all the time you need searching through the stock", said Rob. And so we did...

*Shaving in the wild: my longtime friend and straightshaving pal Kris.*

