Claims:

1. A blade ~~sharpening and~~ storing device including:

a hollow housing for receiving and storing a blade;

an access opening at an end of the housing through which the blade can be moved longitudinally to be inserted into or withdrawn from the housing;

a blade sharpener pivotally mounted within the housing and positioned to be engaged by a cutting edge of the blade when the blade is inserted into or withdrawn from the housing and which is responsive to movement of the blade relative to the housing to sharpen the cutting edge; and

a blade honing device ~~including at least one honing surface~~ positioned within the housing to be engaged by the cutting edge of the blade when the blade is inserted into or withdrawn from the housing and which is responsive to movement of the blade relative to the housing to hone the cutting edge, wherein the blade honing device is mounted within the housing and is biased by a spring to cause engagement between the cutting edge of the blade and the honing surface.

2. The blade ~~sharpening and~~ storing device of claim 1, wherein the blade honing device is positioned relative to the blade sharpener so as to hone a portion of the cutting edge blade after the sharpener sharpens the portion of the cutting edge of the blade upon withdrawal of the blade from the housing.

3. The blade ~~sharpening and~~ storing device of claim 1~~ or 2, wherein the honing device is positioned between the blade sharpener and the access opening.~~

~~4. The blade sharpening and storing device of any one of the preceding claims~~, wherein the honing device includes a pair of honing members each having a honing surface and being arranged so that there is an overlap between the honing surfaces and a generally ~~vee shaped~~ v-shaped honing recess formed between the two honing surfaces for receiving the cutting edge of the blade wherein said honing surfaces are operative to hone the cutting edge of the blade upon movement of the blade within the honing recess relative to the honing surfaces.

~~5~~ 4. The blade ~~sharpening and~~ storing device of ~~claim 4~~ claim 3, wherein the honing members are arranged in substantially parallel relationship and the honing surfaces are curved in transverse cross section.

~~6~~ 5. The blade ~~sharpening and~~ storing device of claim ~~4 or 5~~ 3, wherein the honing device includes a honing support member supporting the honing members, the honing support member is mounted to the housing to be movable in a linear direction vertically upwards within the housing and is biased by the spring in the vertically upwards direction so that upon movement of the blade relative to the housing the cutting edge of the blade is maintained within the honing recess and in engagement with the honing surfaces.

~~7~~ 6. The blade ~~sharpening and~~ storing device of ~~any one of the preceding claims~~ claim 1, further including a blade restraining mechanism that includes a restraining member movably coupled to the housing and engageable with an opening within the blade, the restraining member being movable relative to the housing between active and inactive positions in that when the blade is inserted within the housing such that substantially the entire cutting edge of the blade is within. the housing, in the active position the restraining member is positioned inside the opening within the blade for preventing withdrawal of the blade from the housing and in the inactive position the restraining member is positioned outside the opening within the blade for allowing withdrawal of the blade from the housing.

~~8~~ 7.. The blade ~~sharpening and~~ storing device of claim ~~7~~ 6, wherein the restraining member is biased by a second spring towards the active position and is configured so that during insertion of the blade into the housing the blade engages and actuates the restraining member to the inactive position until the blade is inserted sufficiently within the housing such that the opening meets the restraining member which is then biased to the active position.

~~9~~ 8. The blade ~~sharpening and~~ storing device of claim ~~7 or claim 8~~ 6, wherein the restraining member includes a projection which extends transversely to ~~the~~ a direction of insertion of the blade into the housing and has a ~~straight~~ arched surface and an opposite sloping surface, wherein the sloping surface is engaged by the blade upon insertion

into the housing and wherein the ~~straight~~ arched surface engages the opening within the blade when the restraining member is in the active position to prevent withdrawal of the blade from the housing.

~~10~~ 9. The blade ~~sharpening and~~ storing device of ~~any one of claims 7 to 9~~ claim 6, wherein the second spring is in communication with a button that extends through a hole in the housing so that the restraining mechanism is operable by hand to actuate the restraining member from the active position to the inactive position.

~~11~~10. The blade ~~sharpening and~~ storing device of ~~any one of the preceding claims~~ claim 1, wherein the blade sharpener includes a pair of sharpening members each having a pair of opposite front and rear surfaces and a transverse surface extending between and meeting the front and rear surfaces, the sharpening members being arranged to overlap to form a generally ~~vee shaped~~ v-shaped sharpening recess between the transverse surfaces for receiving the cutting edge of the blade wherein each of the transverse surfaces meets at least one of the front and rear surfaces at a sharp corner wherein the sharp corner is operable to sharpen the cutting edge of the blade upon movement of the blade within the sharpening recess relative to the sharpening members.

~~12~~11. The blade ~~sharpening and~~ storing device of ~~any one of the preceding claims~~ claim 1, further including a biased blade guide that is configured to receive the blade upon insertion into the housing, the blade guide is configured to bias the cutting edge of the blade into engagement with the blade sharpener and the blade honing device when the blade is inserted into or withdrawn from the housing.

~~13~~12. The blade ~~sharpening and~~ storing device of ~~any one of the preceding claims~~ claim 1, wherein the housing is incorporated in a blade scabbard.

~~14~~13. The blade ~~sharpening and~~ storing device of ~~any one of claims 1 to 12,~~ claim 1, wherein the honing device is positioned between the blade sharpener and the access opening.

14. The blade storing device of claim 1, wherein the housing is incorporated in a knife block.

~~15. A blade storing device and blade combination,~~

~~the blade including opposite substantially parallel sides which meet at a cutting edge;~~

~~the blade storing device including a housing having an access opening at an end of the housing through which the blade can be moved longitudinally to be inserted into or withdrawn from the housing;~~

~~a blade restraining mechanism that includes a restraining member coupled to the housing and an opening within the blade, wherein the opening within the blade extends between and transversely to the substantially parallel sides of the blade and is enclosed within the blade, the restraining member having active and inactive positions in that when the blade is inserted within the housing such that substantially an entire cutting edge of the blade is within the housing, in the active position the restraining member is positioned inside the opening within the blade for preventing withdrawal of the blade from the housing and in the inactive position the restraining member is positioned outside the opening within the blade for allowing withdrawal of the blade from the housing,~~

~~wherein the restraining member is biased towards the active, position and is configured so that during insertion of the blade into the housing the blade engages and actuates the restraining member to the inactive position until the blade is inserted sufficiently within the housing such that the opening meets the restraining member which is then biased to the active position.~~

~~16. The blade storing device and blade of claim 15, wherein the restraining member includes a projection which extends transversely to the direction of insertion of the blade into the housing and has a straight surface and an opposite sloping surface, wherein the sloping surface is engaged by the blade upon insertion into the housing and wherein the straight surface engages the opening within the blade when the restraining member is in the active position to prevent withdrawal of the blade from the housing.~~

~~17. The blade storing device and blade of claim 15 or 16, wherein the restraining member is configured to move between the active and inactive positions by movement of the restraining member in a direction substantially transverse to the~~

~~substantially parallel sides of the blade when the blade is positioned within the housing.~~

~~18. The blade storing device and blade of any one of claims 15 to 17, wherein the restraining mechanism is operable by hand to actuate the restraining member from the active position to the inactive position.~~

~~19. The blade storing device and blade of any one of claims 15 to 19, wherein the blade holder further includes a blade sharpener and a blade honing device, the blade sharpener is positioned to be engaged by a cutting edge of the blade when the blade is inserted into or withdrawn from the housing and which is responsive to movement of the blade relative to the housing to sharpen the cutting edge, the blade honing device is positioned to be engaged by the cutting edge of the blade when the blade is inserted into or withdrawn from the housing and which is responsive to movement of the blade relative to the housing to hone the cutting edge.~~

~~20. A blade scabbard including the blade storing device of any one of claims 15 to 19.~~

~~21. A knife block including the blade storing device of any one of claims 15 to 19.~~

~~22. A knife including the blade of any one of claims 15 to 19.~~