

The First Safety Razor?

Jean-Jacques Perret was a master cutler on Rue de la Tixeranderie "at the Sign of the Golden Blade" in Paris, France. He was famous for his 1762 treatise, "[L'Art du Coutelier](#)." In 1769 Perret described and illustrated a *Rasoir à Rabot* (razor with plane) or *Rasirmesser à Rabot*. Perret's drawings (see below) show a guard fitting over the blade of a folding straight razor. The guard apparently is smooth (no teeth) and is designed on the principle of a carpenter's plane. Some sources have stated that this guard was made of wood.

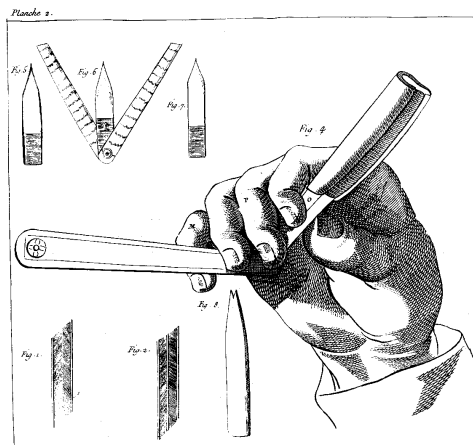
According to Thorsten Sjölin, Perret manufactured and sold his guarded razor. He did not patent it and offered to teach other cutlers how to make them. Mr. Sjölin has found others that may have used Perret's design. In 1787 a German publication reported that a M. Lethien of Paris manufactured a "*Rasirmesser à rabot*, with which one can shave oneself without fear of injuries." It was sold with a 6-month warranty. In July of 1799 a *friedlische Rasirmesser* (pacific razor) was described and illustrated in a German trade journal and said to be a new idea from England. The razor was manufactured by Harwood & Co. in England and sold by Johann Christoph Roder in Leipzig, Germany. It was offered in a green-velvet-lined box together with a pair of leather strops, one black and one red, with the box fitted into a red leather case.

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A model of Jean-Jacques Perret's razor and plate from Perret's 1769 treatise *La Pogotomie ou L'art D'Apprendre ase Raser Soi-Meme* (Pogotomie or the Art of Shaving Oneself).

– Courtesy of Mauro Lorenzi.



Right.
A plate from Perret's
design for a safer razor
(1771)

– Courtesy of
Thorsten Sjölin.

