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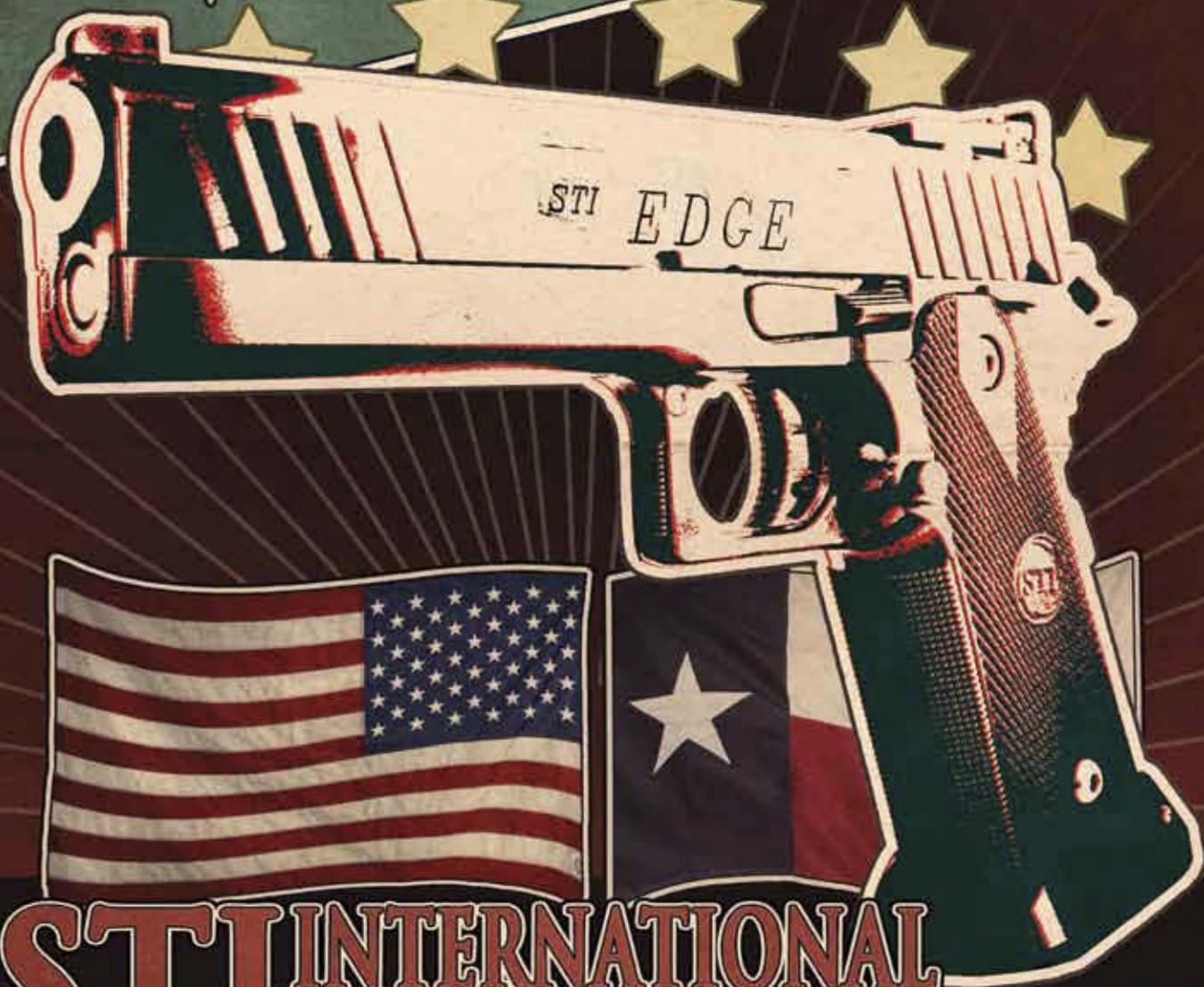
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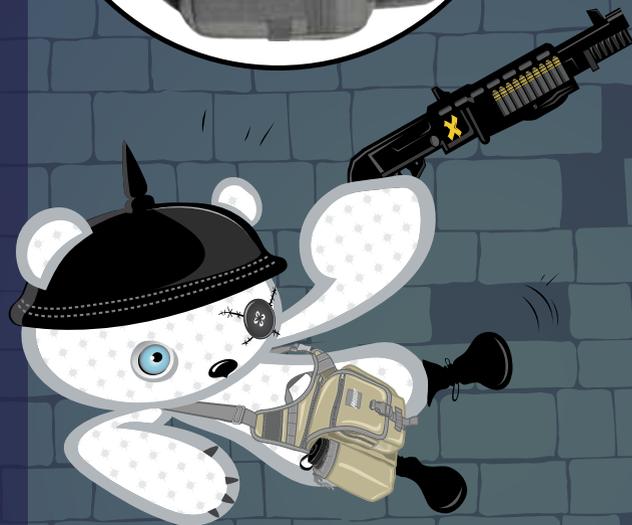


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Volume 37 • Number 5 • Issue 219

SEPTEMBER • OCTOBER



FEATURES

46 THE 9MM NANO

Beretta joins the pocket-auto pack. J.B. WOOD

48 PRE-WAR COLT NATIONAL MATCH

Pistolsmith Jason Burton turns a beater into a beauty. ROY HUNTINGTON

50 SHOULDER-STOCKED HANDGUNS

Savvy idea — or a waste of time? MIKE "DUKE" VENTURINO

52 HANDGUNS OF DAVE LAUCK

Fancy, functional BBQ guns. JOHN TAFFIN

58 FREEDOM ARMS' MODEL 97 .45 COLT

Pursuing the Perfect Packin' Pistol. MARK HAMPTON



60 CLOSE LOOK: HIGH-TECH GEAR

Lights, lasers and cell phones? DAVE ANDERSON

63 ARSENAL'S AF2011-A1: A DOUBLE 1911?

Two 1911s for the price of one — sort of! STEFAN PEREY

64 NO BULL BLADES

Bladesmith Trace Rinaldi's compelling customs. PAT COVERT

69 CLOSE LOOK: ACCESSORIES **WEB BLAST!**

Wonder widgets for your hand-howitzers. JOHN CONNOR

COVER STORY

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BIG-BORE HANDGUN HUNTING

Five tips on selecting and using a hunting handgun. Mark Hampton

DEPARTMENTS

- 20 THE AYOOB FILES** Massad Ayoob
The James Patterson Incident.
- 26 THE SIXGUNNER** John Taffin **WEB BLAST**
Lipse's .45 Ruger Flat-Top convertibles.
- 38 BETTER SHOOTING** Dave Anderson **WEB BLAST**
Tackling trigger control.
- 70 GUN RIGHTS** Alan Korwin
Dial 911 — and fry?
- 94 GUNNYSACK** Roy Huntington
Echo-Sigma pack, Impact Armor Clipboard, TruGlo binoculars, Walker's Ultra Ear.



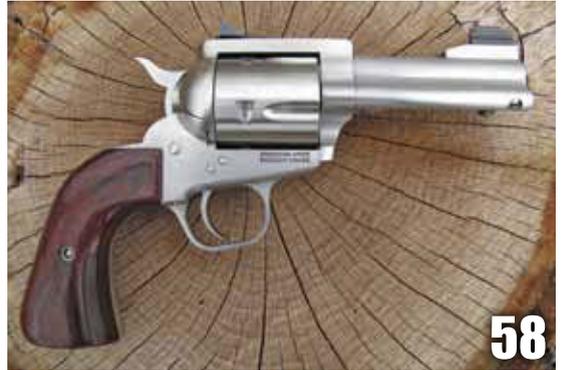
63

COLUMNS

- 8 SPEAK OUT**
- 22 GUNCRANK DIARIES** JOHN CONNOR
- 24 SHOOTING IRON** MIKE "DUKE" VENTURINO
- 28 PISTOLSMITHING** ALEX HAMILTON
- 30 CARRY OPTIONS** SAMMY REESE
- 32 REALITY CHECK** CLINT SMITH
- 34 COP TALK** MASSAD AYOOB
- 36 HANDLOADING** JOHN TAFFIN
- 40 WINNING EDGE** DAVE ANDERSON **WEB BLAST**
- 42 HANDGUN HUNTING** J.D. JONES
- 44 TAFFIN TESTS** JOHN TAFFIN
- 106 THE INSIDER** ROY HUNTINGTON



64



58



28



42

RESOURCES

- 91 WEBSITE SHOWCASE**
- 92 CUSTOM CORNER**
- 98 SPOTLIGHT** STEVE EVATT
- 102 AD INDEX**
- 103 CLASSIFIEDS**

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24

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BROWNING MUSEUM

Over the last couple of days I read the fine article by editor Huntington and pistolsmith Bill Laughridge on the two Browning shop prototypes, the "Hammerless" and the "1910" ("Rarest Of The Rare," July/Aug 2012). The high sphincter factor you two felt while carefully disassembling them as you analyzed the design intent of Browning literally jumped off of the written page. Great work.

Lloyd Seager
Via e-mail

More On Browning

Your most recent masterpiece on the Browning guns was completely over the top. I have visited that very museum and stood drooling over the early works of John Browning. Your step-by-step retelling of the adventure was completely over the top of anything I've ever seen before. Congratulations on a landmark piece of firearms journalism.

You took national treasures, disassembled them, put them back together, and gave us one terrific history lesson. Just don't let your hat bands get too tight!

Norm Fishler
Roswell, N.M.

Norm, thanks for your kind words. To say Bill and I were amazed to actually have access to those guns, is to

sorely understate the situation! We'll be going back next year to examine Browning's early Hi-Power prototypes. Diana Azevedo, the Museum director, has already put out the welcome mat again. Stay tuned! RH

Great article on John Browning's Model 1910 and Hammerless models.

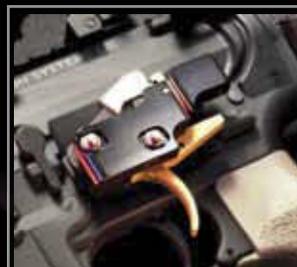
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SPEAK OUT

It was full of technical details of each pistol, yet very readable and entertaining. After studying the accompanying photographs, I have a question. Why were you and Mr. Laughridge not required to wear gloves while handling these in-the-white prototypes? I assume the guns are kept in a climate-controlled environment to keep them rust free? How did you and Mr. Laughridge ensure you would cause no future harm to these priceless items from the contact with your skin?

Donald Fleu
Ashland, Ky.

Interestingly enough, the guns aren't kept in a climate-controlled case, but are simply behind glass, open to the ambient air. Both guns actually showed a bit of surface discoloration from being handled over the years. Due to the detailed nature of our inspection, using white gloves would have been awkward, at best. Instead, we kept our fingers well oiled, and when finished, made sure the guns were carefully treated with a top-quality preservative. RH

COP Talk Caveats

When Ayoob spoke of watching your background when putting down an animal, it reminded me of two incidents occurring when I was a patrol deputy on the LASO, in the early 1970s in South-Central LA. One of our deputies was dispatched to a horse vs. vehicle accident and a CHP officer was on-scene, directing traffic. Our deputy used his .357 duty revolver (loaded with Remington 125-gr. .357 ammo), to shoot the horse. The round penetrated through, then ricocheted, striking the CHP officer, who later died in the ER. I think a 12-ga. is a better option.

Another officer, Tony Arceo of the El Monte PD, was killed when a shot fired at a robbery suspect by another officer also ricocheted, hitting Tony and killing him. It was the last officer's funeral I attended. We'd had too many in the 1960s and 1970s. Watch those backgrounds!

Bob White
Mission, Texas

Lions And Tigers

What a sad event Mas outlined in his Ayoob Files ("The Zanesville Wild Animal Escape," *Ayoob Files*, May/June 2012). Deputy Merry's story, as well as the zoo lady's, is heart catching. His depiction of the need for officers to destroy the released wild animals after the owner's suicide showcases the need for conservation and hunting/wildlife

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SPEAK OUT

common sense. I'm not anti-hunting, and importation of exotics has enhanced Texas hunting, but will we lose the Everglade's fauna to pythons? Can the ocelot and jaguarundi survive the border fence? How about the zebra mussels, fire ants or rhino poachers?

Ayoob informs — as he thrills.

Lynn Holt
Mansfield, Texas

Ranters

I just got the latest issue of *American Handgunner* (July/August 2012) and seemed to be drawn to Frank Mallory's letter. Methinks he protests too much. I'll be 65 later this year, and have seen the changes that got us where we are. My first gun was a single-shot J.C. Higgins rifle, bought at the local Sears store. I lived in Arizona where you used to be able to buy ammunition in the local 7-11. Having said that, I felt I must refute some points in his letter.

Paragraph two mentions the "...ridiculous anti-Obama rhetoric..." When you look at President Obama's record, he is very much anti-gun and, as a matter of fact, told the Brady bunch to be patient because he can do more "next term." I have a real brain and think for myself. It's just I agree with most of the rhetoric in pro-gun arguments. I'm a retired SFC and retired teacher, so I must not be that dull. There is no center in the gun debate. You're either for guns or against guns.

Paragraph four states: "Come to center, come to common sense." Again, there is no center. Much as Mr. Mallory said, I'm a lifelong gun owner, have a large number of firearms, and a lot of ammo, and this doesn't make me a nut either. I refuse to believe people who are trying to take my guns away are centrists, and I should meet them anywhere except in a debate.

Mr. Mallory, your attitude is the problem with many other gun owners and follows the "thee, not me" way of thinking. Gun owners are not idiots and can see the writing on the wall. I would rather have five ranters on my side than 1,000 wishy-washy centrists, when it comes to guns and gun control.

Rod Linkous
El Paso, Texas

Someone has been misleading reader Frank Mallory. I have to wonder if Frank has been out of state in the last couple of decades? In case you haven't noticed, California's gun laws are a direct consequence of Mr. Mallory's "common sense." Most of the rest of the country has a different kind of common

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SPEAK OUT

sense, and a consequence of that are the lower crime rates hatched from our line of reasoning in pro-gun states. How's the crime rate in your state Mr. Mallory? Here in Washington, we recently passed legislation allowing our law-abiding citizens to own suppressors. We are currently working on legislation to give law-abiding citizens the right to own short-barreled rifles too. What legislation has passed in California in favor of gun owners recently? Your heart may be in the right place, Mr. Mallory, but your eyes are tightly shut!

In a more positive light, you guys have the best gun magazine out there. I consistently read your magazine from cover-to-cover, and enjoy every moment. You guys are a good influence on us!

Gregory Acres
Via e-mail

Just received my July/Aug issue of *American Handgunner*, and I couldn't get past Frank Mallory's rant re: pro-gun ranters. As a retired US Navy Chief Petty Officer, 5-year street cop, and 18-year licensed private investigator, my instincts tell me to go with the ranters. I fervently believe there are elements extant in this country that will not be satisfied until every decent, honest, law-abiding citizen is totally disarmed. They won't be satisfied until the only ones with guns are the criminals and the police. Or perhaps just the criminals. When it comes to preserving our rights and freedom, I will proudly rant my ass off!

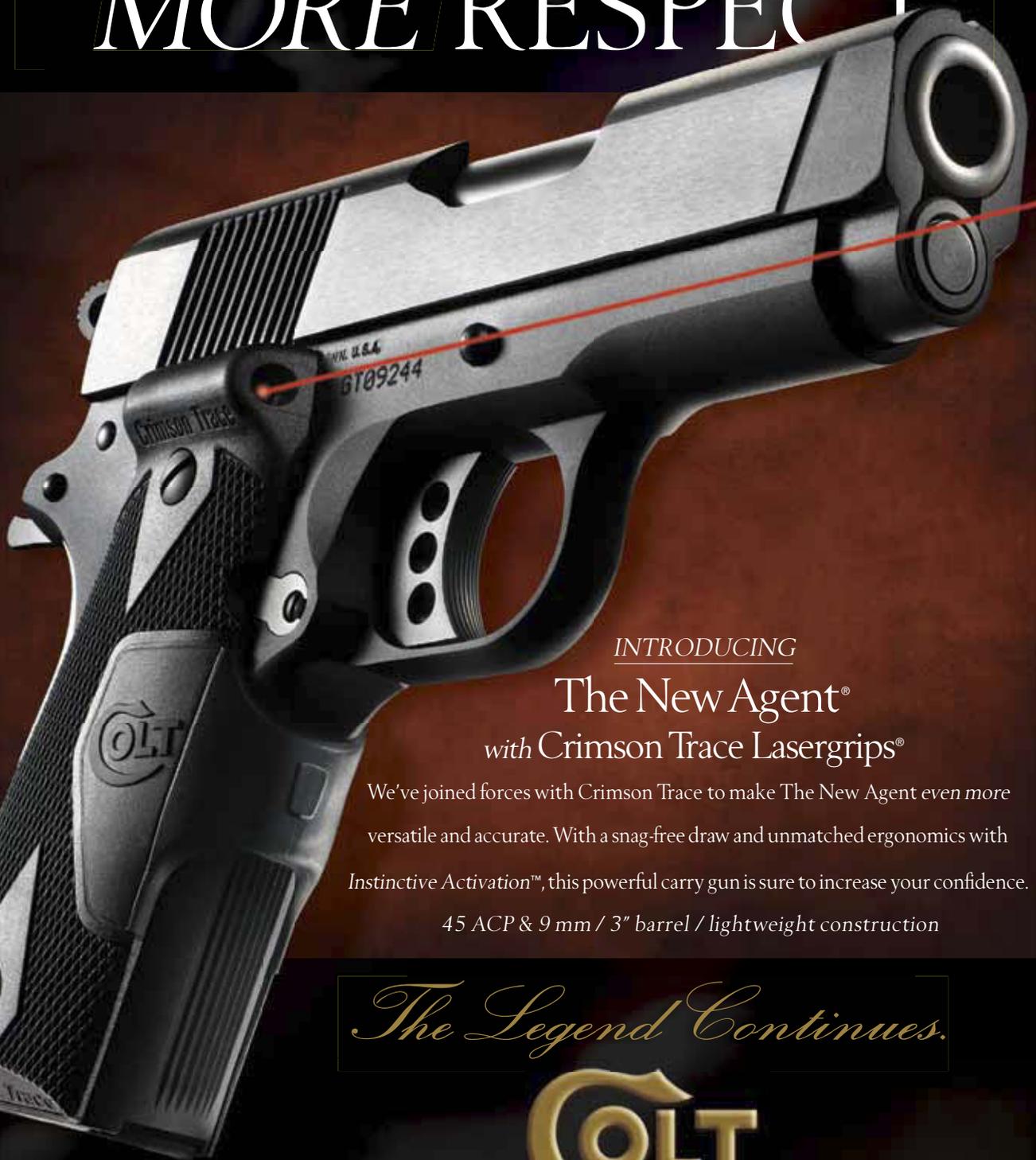
Mike Mulkern
Portland, Maine

I'm not an extremist. I firmly believe you should have to be at least 18 years old before you can go into a gun store and buy a machine gun without a background check. And, Frank, please pass along my contempt to Sarah Brady.

Eric
Via e-mail

I don't believe for a second that Mr. Mallory (*Speakout*, July/August 2012) is a gun enthusiast, with a couple dozen guns and a pile of ammunition. His statement about "the anti-Obama rhetoric" tells me he is an Obama supporter. I'll wager he is yet another of the people in this country — and especially California — with their heads in the sand. Apparently he hasn't heard of the anti-gun stance of Eric Holder, Obama himself, and the clowns in the Congress, who are hell bent on taking guns away from those who choose to own them. If

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SPEAK OUT

he thinks it can't happen here, maybe he should view the videos that have been around for years of the gun confiscations in England, Australia, New Zealand, and then pack his camper up and take a journey to Canada. After he tells the border guards he has a couple of his many guns in the closet, he won't be going anywhere in that country either.

Keep the gloves off. We aren't buttering you up to see our names in your magazine; we are supporting you for hammering these anti-gun cry-babies as they deserve. *You rant?* How about Mr. Mallory's "... pro-gun rants, ridiculous

anti-Obama rhetoric, led by the nose by such extremist views, paranoid behavior ..." comments? It's obvious who was ranting. You were way too polite in your response. These clowns make me sick.

J. Connors
Via e-mail

I thought your response to poor Frank was outstanding! I like the way you guys shoot straight and say what you think without a lot of mealy-mouth political correctness. As an old former lawman and a history buff, I especially like Ayooob and particularly enjoyed the historical piece on the Jonathan Davis incident (*Ayooob Files*, July/Aug 2012). And as always, Connor and

Smith (Heidi or Clint) are always worth reading, and then there's *Gun Rights* and, well ... all your writers are very good and always informative. Keep it up — and I apologize for not being more negative for those who complain about the positive letters you sometimes run!

Kent Hogge
Utah

I confess it gets to me when I see people stand on the fence about everything. One thing I've noticed about getting older (I'm 57 now), is the fact I don't mind speaking clearly and slowly, and stating exactly what I feel about something — good or bad. I try to deliver the message politely (if they'll take it that way), but I'll be damned if I'll



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let anyone push us around. And I'm glad when I get notes like yours, since it reminds me Handgunner speaks for many who feel the same way. RH

Apex Tactical Kudos

I purchased parts for my S&W M&P .45 from Apex Tactical. During the installation I lost the sear spring plunger. After assuming the "gunsmithing" position (on hands and knees looking) a number of times, I considered it lost forever. I called Apex, explained the problem and offered to pay for another to be sent my way. They wouldn't hear of it, and a few days later I had three new ones in the mail — at no charge! The Apex parts perform perfectly, and you can't fault their customer service. As far as my gunsmithing talents go, well, that may be another story!

Joe Fracassi
Rochester, N.Y.

Complaints!

In a recent *Speak Out* letter, Mr. Tim Adams complained about the fact nobody seems to give you guys bad reviews. He must be a very new reader/subscriber. As a subscriber from issue number two in 1976, there are many-a-bad reviews of *Handgunner* out there. Using only the last 2 years as examples, there are complaints about not enough Conner, Mas is not prominent enough, Clint Smith needs another paragraph or two, Venturino's Hawaiian shirts are too loud and his WWII guns are not handguns. But, I admit, they make for interesting breaks in his other really good articles. Hmmm, seems I have been reading a really well put together magazine. Sorry, Mr. Adams, you need to buy a few of the really *bad* magazines to understand the difference.

Mercdragon (Vietnam-era call sign)
Via e-mail

Most-Hated

You are a bad, most-hated, magazine editor because: 1) Your quality of information, staff writing, testing, commenting, paper quality, photos, depth of perception and wisdom, make all the other gun magazines look like a poor cousin in comparison. 2) You should be ashamed of yourself for allowing *Handgunner* to outstrip the vast majority of other magazines so completely. *You* are destroying their self-esteem! 3) You constantly hurt the feelings of whiners by standing up for what you believe in, and then offering the proof. It would be much better to sit on the fence and "be reasonable." Can't we all just get along? 4) How dare you allow your writers and columnists to make so much common sense and not just BS the line

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SPEAK OUT

that: “Everyone is good, and even the bad are good at heart, they just need a hug.” 5) In short, you should never have such a strong opinion or honest writing. Bad magazine! BAD! BAD, I SAY!

Rob
Via e-mail

I Wasn't Invited!

So what's with you and Bill Laughridge sneaking into my state and visiting the best gun museum covering anything Browning — and not inviting me? I would have at least taken you to an In-and-Out Burger for old times sake. Instead, you were sipping wine in some 4-star hotel. (I don't think Utah has a 5-star hotel?) Next, you'll probably come back when I'm off hunting, and you'll sneak in and out again and not tell me!

Still, that article was the best of the best. Just being able to know the same pistol I could only see behind glass was there in your pages, it was enough to make me go visit them again. I can't wait to read the write-up on the Hi-Powers.

Terry Gardner
Pleasant Grove, Utah

.44 Fun

I enjoyed your piece on the .44 Mag. and Special (*Insider*, “Those Fabulous .44s,” July/Aug 2012). It matches what I have recently discovered. Around 40 years ago, I bought a Charter Arms .44 Spl. Bulldog. It was my off-duty gun for a while. All I shot was factory 246-gr. LRN ammo. I figured the bullet was big and would work okay. While returning from a 2-week service school, a huge deer was hit by a vehicle in front of me. The deer had a broken back and needed putting down. After making sure nothing was going to get damaged when I shot it, I commenced to shoot it at the base of the skull. I'd learned not to do a skull shot with a .357 since things go everywhere. Well, this “powerful” .44 Spl. had to do more, I reasoned. Instead of putting the deer down, it reacted with simple shakes of the head, moving about as much as a bobble-head in the back of a San Diego taxi. As I took careful aim, with each shot the deer simply looked pitiful, and shook them off. I then reloaded, returned to the deer and fired five shots into the chest area. It then died quickly. My confidence in factory LRN bullets at walking speed went way down.

I swore off .44s for 35 years, but recently started to reload and shoot a Taurus and a S&W .44 Special. Now I realize with the right loads, the .44 has shown it is simply a fun caliber, and I don't care if it isn't a powerhouse

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on either end. And it will definitely ensure my place at the bottom of the score sheet for shooting so slowly with a 5-shot revolver!

IDPA was instrumental in getting me back into shooting after a 9-year break, following many surgeries and retirement. Great fun, great practice and it doesn't cost much to compete.

Don Dineen
Via e-mail

Retired Cop-Carry

I was pleased to see Massad Ayoob focus on the desirability of we retirees carrying a firearm (*Cop Talk*, July/Aug 2012). Way back in the dark ages, when I attended the L.A. County Sheriff's Academy, our firearms instructor made a point to emphasize that when honorably retired, we will still have the protector mindset and it would behoove us to maintain our skills with a firearm. As a retiree, I carry concealed 100 percent of the time I'm away from the house, and do so in spite of criticism from some others, including some retired cops. In the rural area in which I live, backup for on-duty officers can be a long ways off, and I would hate to come across a situation where to be helpful I needed to be armed — but wasn't. In my view, as long as a retiree has the physical and mental sharpness to carry safely, they ought to for a whole lot of reasons. And, of course, it goes almost without saying that to maintain that sharpness, practice on a regular basis.

In this politically-correct era, where even some cops in "administrative" roles don't carry a weapon on-duty, it's important to keep in mind, in spite of the liberals' utopian view, some things don't change. And one thing that doesn't is the need to keep those self-preservation skills you've honed over decades, in a current state of readiness. Some of us may live longer that way. Be safe.

Jerry Boyd
Chief of Police, Retired

Dr. Fadala

Happy to see your fine comments recently about the icon of gun-writing, the good doctor (Sam Fadala), and your mention about the comparison of archery to black powder. Although most of my black powder enthusiasts have probably gone over to the dark side (jacketed bullets, scopes, etc.), there are still a few of us who rely on the Doctor's good writing to keep our powder dry, while using cap-and-ball and open sights. Besides, it's the law in most states.

In one of Sam's books, he alluded to the fact we should use hornet-nesting material to protect the patch when

Continued on page 88

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ENEMY WITHIN: THE JIM PATTERSON INCIDENT

SITUATION: Someone is about to kill you, your wife, and your daughter — and he's a member of your family.

LESSON: Sometimes the attack comes from an unexpected quarter — and the dynamics of violent encounters often have to be explained to those who would judge you in the aftermath.

It is October 7, 2009, in the small community of Noel, Mo. Marty Reece and his wife Jindy have been slowly ending a marriage that has degenerated into drug-fueled wife abuse. Jindy and her parents, Jim and Kimberly Patterson, are trying to keep things copasetic for her sake, and the sake of her and her estranged husband's little boy, 3-year-old Wyatt.

That's why today, after playing football with his three adopted kids, Jim goes golfing with his son-in-law. It's a pleasant day; they are getting along well. Jim has a few beers on the golf course, and at a bar where they stop on the way home to shoot some pool. Marty is outpacing him considerably in the beer department, and showing it. When they get to Jim and Kimberly's house, Jindy is there, and with Marty obviously too drunk to drive, Jindy drives him to the place where he now lives. Jim grabs some dinner while Kimberly takes care of an errand.

In the car with Marty and their little boy, Jindy's evening is less routine. Marty is in an ugly mood, accusing her of being a "psycho-bitch." When they arrive at his place, he announces he's not getting out of the car. Jindy has been through this before; she flips open her cell phone, calls her mom's mobile number, and asks if Kimberly can pick her and Wyatt up there. Jindy is planning to simply leave the car at Marty's and pick it up tomorrow when he has sobered up.

Marty rips the phone from her hand and snaps it in half.

Kimberly hurries home to get Jim. Meanwhile, in front of Marty's home, things are escalating. When Jindy attempts to get out of the car, Marty grabs her by the hair and pulls her back in. He rips the handle off the car's gearshift, snatches up Jindy's digital camera, and flings both away.

By now, Kimberly has rushed into the Patterson house and told Jim Jindy is in trouble. At that moment, the phone rings. On the other end is Jindy, who has retrieved the bottom half of her flip phone, and can speak but not hear on the device. Jim hears his daughter cry urgently, "If you can hear me, come now!" Jim quickly puts on some shoes. Kimberly says, "You'd better grab your gun." Jim hastily makes his way to the bedroom and grabs the Ruger P90 DC .45 he keeps on the top shelf of the closet in an Uncle Mike's holster. Then he and his wife hurry to the family van and, with Jim at the wheel, head in the direction of their embattled daughter.

By now, Marty has done the hair-pulling thing again, and punched his estranged wife in the head. Jindy has screamed, "Wyatt, wake up, wake up, look what Daddy's doing!" Perhaps the guilt intrinsic in the thought of his little boy seeing him beat his mother is what does the trick, but now Marty turns his attention from Jindy to the car to vent his rage. He begins pounding on the vehicle and trying to rip the rear door off its hinges.

Continued on page 79

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HOME, HOME ON THE RANGE NOT SO MUCH SOMETIMES ...



The message from His Illuminated Immenseness Roy-Boy was terse as a curse: "Drive 322 miles to [BigUgly] City*. Pick up [XXX] pistol** at FancyPantz Sporting Club & Range***. Shoot, test, group, chrono loads, make copious notes, and ship pistol FedEx next morning, OYT." "OYT" is his shorthand for "Or You're Toast." Thanks, Roy.

I'd never been to the FPSC&R before; not my kinda range. The road in was paved n' striped! Broad paths of machine-made burgundy pea-gravel were flanked by double rows of rocks, the inner row painted white, and the outer row battle-ship gray — and lacquered! A glass control tower sat atop the main rangehouse, manned by some clean-shaven dude with aviator shades, a headset and microphone, and enormous binoculars. *Somewhere close*, I thought, *there's a ring-knockin' Annapolis grad runnin' this show.*

Soft muzak, like a chamber orchestra on Quaaludes playin' the Rolling Stones' "Satisfaction" wafted from hidden speakers. A mellow baritone cut in with "Brass boy to

Section C-12!" Instantly this ancient dude who looked like Gabby Hayes wearing Walter Brennan's castoff bib overalls appeared and ran a cordless vacuum "brass sucker" down the spotless shooting line. He had hair like fried steel wool and eyebrows like electrocuted mice. Goggling my battered boots and bristly jaw with his one good eye, he gave me a big 5-toothed grin.

"Connor, ain'tcha? Look like yer pitcher in *Handgunner*. M' name's Moss." He vanished through a Hobbit-door, leaving a scent of Hoppe's Number 9, fried bologna and swamp-butt. I smiled, and then noticed the shooters had wrinkled their noses in distaste.

LIKE ANOTHER DIMENSION

I'd never seen so many fresh, vibrantly colored polo shirts outside of a Land's End window display. Two guys wore "Mitt Romney jeans"; tailored, pre-faded, dry cleaned and pressed. The others wore crisp slacks. These guys had *hairstyles*, not *haircuts*. They would have names like J. Chauncey Bid-

dlesworth IV and Hollings H. Hampton, Senior. Nothin' against those boys, mind you, but I couldn't at that instant ever remember having a good time amongst so many un-faded shirts. I dropped my "guest pass," a forged bronze disc with the club seal on it, into the right front pocket of my bush shorts and it fell through the hole — one of the holes — clangin' like a manhole cover on the smooth, epoxied concrete deck. I felt eyes on me and envisioned wrinkled patrician noses. Their electronic muffs

musta been turned up. Sorry, Chauncey, *je regrette*, Hollings.

The shooting counters were smooth as pool tables. Chairs were bright tubular steel with padded seats. There were acoustic baffles overhead, and not a single hole in 'em. Electric target holders glided back and forth over thick, manicured green grass. It was 68 degrees F, blue sky with a polite breeze, and the whole thing put me completely off my game. I couldn't hit squat nor shoot for beans. It was just so ... *wrong*.

Rat Canyon Remembrance

I missed the Rat Canyon Range; the dancing dust devils tearing away targets and flingin' 'em like a hurricane hitting a loaded clothesline; the gaping knotholes knocked out of the warped gray planks of the firing line, perfect for stickin' revolver barrels in to safely park your Roscoe; the overhead so shot fulla holes that when it rained and you were under it, it was raining there too, the only difference being *that* drizzle was filthy, fulla grit and desiccated bug corpses, so you stood out in the clean rain until the shower passed.

I missed the P.A. system, which was just ol' Rangemaster Robbie's Navy-trained "Chief Bosun's voice," which can rattle your fillings when he lovingly calls out, "Git that muzzle downrange or I'll shoot ya myself, meathead!" or "Stop shootin' an' pull up yer pants, Cooter, I can see yer plumber's crack from here! Yer gonna catch hot brass in it!"

I missed the Rat Canyon range-rats and how they got their range-names****, like "Boot" and "Moon" and "Fiddlesticks"; why there's a sun-bleached sagging left-foot Tony Lama boot hangin' from an overhead beam, what's in it, and

why the right one's interred out beyond the 25-yard line.

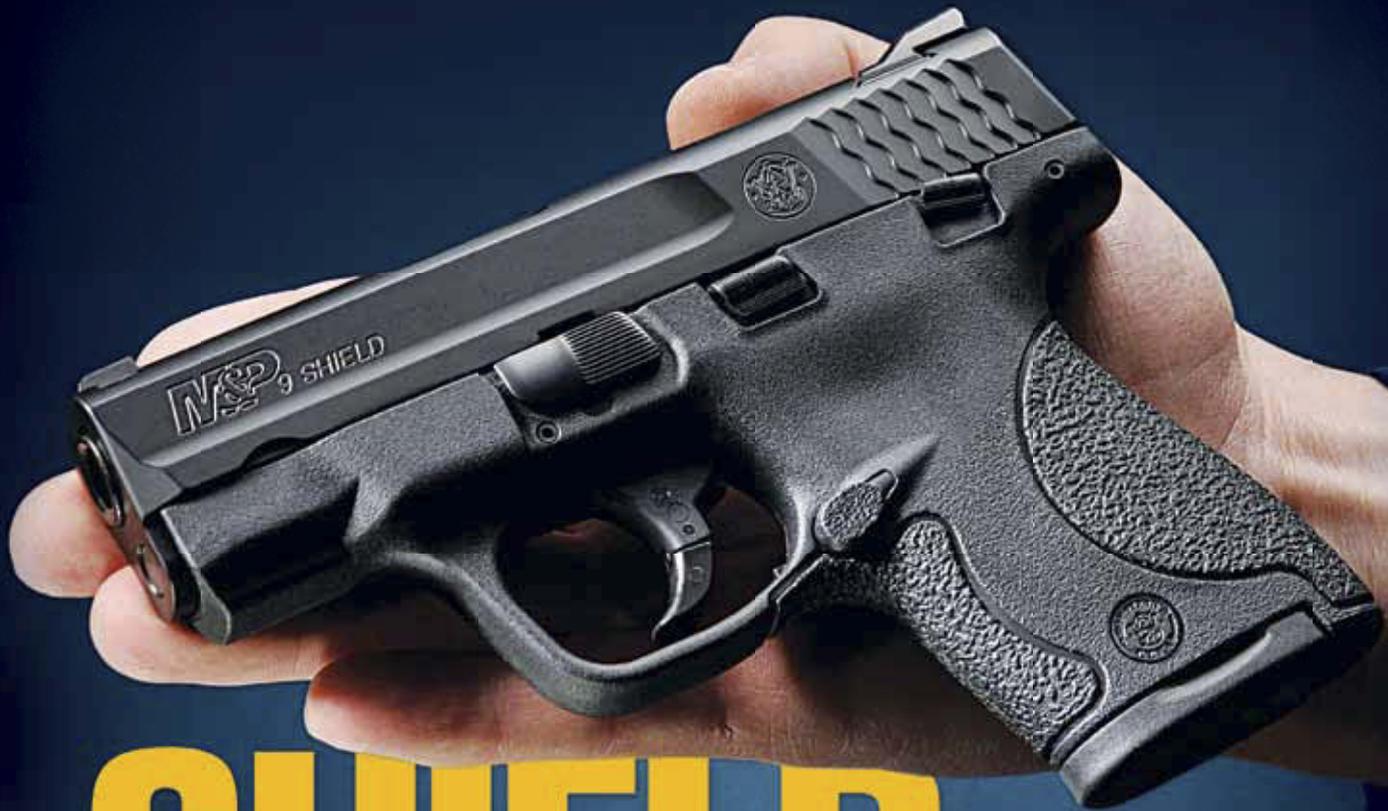
I felt just awful. Everything was so "right," it was all wrong. Then a suddenly chill wind whipped my *Infidel* T-shirt. From the southwest, billows of purple-black clouds with bright-flashing bellies hurtled toward us. Moss materialized at my side, a single-action Army stickin' outta one pocket and a 1911 butt outta the other. The parking lot emptied in 60 seconds. Last man out was Aviator-shades, who barked "Lock up, Moss!" and jumped in a gray Mercedes.

"Fraid of gittin' their fancy cars sandblasted," Moss spat, then smiled. "Wanta do some shootin'? Gonna git fierce quick, but who cares? After, I could fry up some SPAM, heat up some beans, n' be honored t' share a whiskey with ya. Got biscuits too." His bushy eyebrows waggled in the wind, and sand from the un-manicured puckerbrush flats pelted us. We both grinned like monkeys. My assignment got done. Life is good. Connor *OUT*



*Can't name the city. If you live there, my condolences.
**Can't name the pistol. You'll read about it soon.
***Can't name the club. They threatened to sue.
****Can't tell ya, no space — maybe next issue.

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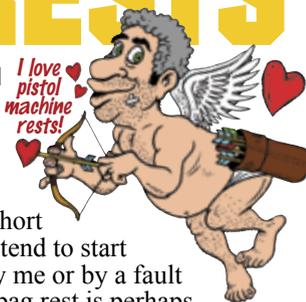
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MACHINE RESTS

LOVE AT FIRST SIGHT?

I love pistol machine rests!

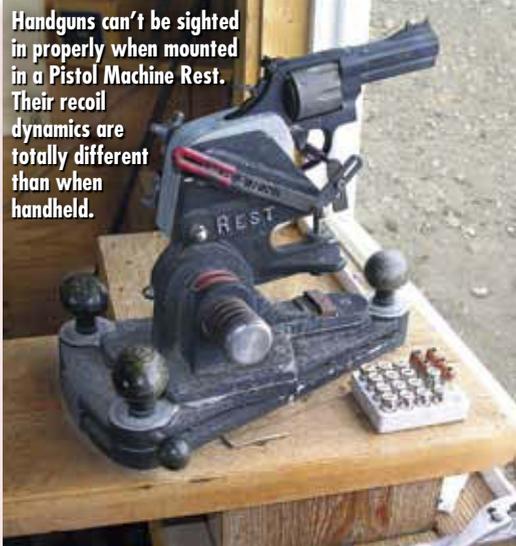


My job would be much more difficult without them. The alternative to a pistol machine rest is to shoot handguns from a sandbag rest. Although never very good at sandbag shooting I can do it — for a short period. After a bit my eyes blur, my hands get sore, and I tend to start jerking triggers. Then I never know if flyers are caused by me or by a fault of guns or ammo. My limit for group shooting from sandbag rest is perhaps two score rounds of light to moderate power (.22 LR to .44 Special) and not more than a dozen full-bore loads from magnums.

On the other hand, when using a machine rest I've fired several hundred rounds in an afternoon, and figure the results are as valid for the last cluster as for the first. The hitch is changing targets, as in it's a time consuming 50-yard roundtrip after every group. On my luckiest days I've conned Yvonne into being my target changer, but usually can only prevail with considerable whining about my bum knee.

Before I had my own home range, a Lee Pistol Machine Rest was handy. It needs no permanent mounting because the handgun actually isn't anchored to the rest. It's a sort of brace affair. The handgun, sans grips, is mounted between aluminum grip adaptors, which are then pushed against stops in the base plate. Although still handheld, it's aimed the same each time. Back in the '70s I made up a portable bench out of an old redwood picnic table. Then I would find a suitable backstop on secluded public land and be able to start shooting in a matter of minutes. Too bad Lee Rests have been out of production for decades now. It was a good idea.

Handguns can't be sighted in properly when mounted in a Pistol Machine Rest. Their recoil dynamics are totally different than when handheld.



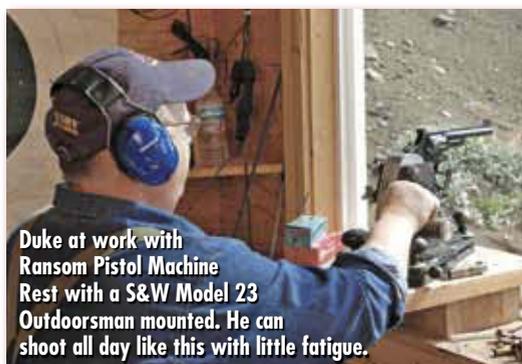
THINGS YOU CAN LEARN

When in a hurry to meet a deadline I'll often settle on 5-shot groups because it saves time both in reloading chores and shooting. On occasions when I get my life planned a bit in advance, I prefer 12-shot groups from sixguns or 10-shot groups from autoloaders. A dozen rounds through a sixgun means every chamber is fired twice. If one chamber tends to throw flyers it's immediately evident. Flyers from the same chamber don't happen often, but on occasion I have seen one chamber giving better precision than the other five.

Once I mounted up my old Smith & Wesson Military & Police .38 Special of 1940s vintage and fired five, 5-shot groups from each chamber using factory 148-gr. wad-cutter ammunition. All chambers averaged less than 1.50", but one of them averaged less than 1".

Now here's a solid fact although I've read differently on the Internet: You cannot sight in a handgun when it's mounted in a machine rest. Having it bolt into that apparatus changes recoil dynamics. In other words, a handgun does not recoil as freely as when handheld. In my experience most, if not all, shoot much lower than where their sights are aimed when machine-rest mounted.

Admittedly most handgunners do without a pistol machine rest, but I dearly love mine!



Duke at work with Ransom Pistol Machine Rest with a S&W Model 23 Outdoorsman mounted. He can shoot all day like this with little fatigue.



When time allows, Duke likes to shoot 12-shot groups from revolvers so each chamber (of sixguns) is used twice.

THE RANSOM

Once I owned a permanent place to shoot I transitioned to a Ransom Pistol Machine Rest. With this setup the pistol is clamped into the rest, which means the entire apparatus must be solidly anchored. Recoil from powerful handguns is nigh on an irresistible force. Get a finger between a bench top and big revolver's butt when it's fired and you'll agree.

So, when I had my shooting house built some years back the contractor put in a beam for the Ransom Rest as part of the construction. It does not shift. Still you cannot bolt the handgun into its grip adaptors and start testing with the first round. To mount up a pistol or revolver in the Ransom Rest first its grips are taken off. Then its bare grip frame is put into special aluminum grip adaptors lined with a dense synthetic material. Those are fastened into the machine rest, the handgun's sights aligned on target, and shooting starts.

The sights won't stay aligned where you started. Recoil will cause the handgun's grip frame to settle into the grip adaptors, which causes the bullet's point of impact to climb. Personally, before paying attention to groups, I fire at least 20 rounds of fairly hot loads to settle the handgun in. Then test shooting commences.

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FLAT-TOP RUGER BLACKHAWKS

When it comes to firearms these are the best of times. No, scratch that, these are the *best!* of times. Yes, I definitely miss the old classics and we haven't seen a new Three-Screw Ruger or Pinned and Recessed Smith & Wesson with Diamond grips for nearly 50 years. On the upside, where we once had relatively few choices when it came

to a new firearm, we now have literally thousands of choices. And also on the upside, the fact that so many newer shooters want the newer guns means, in many cases, the old Classics found in used form at gunshops and gun shows often go for bargain prices.

We don't have any of the old Classics, however thanks to the combination of Lipsey's and Ruger we have the next best thing. When the Ruger .357 Blackhawk arrived in 1955 it had a flattopped frame, a three-screw action, and was basically the same size as a Colt Single Action. The Flat-Top disappeared in 1962, the three-screw action gave way to the two pin New Model action in 1972, and at the same time all Blackhawks were built on the larger .44 Magnum frame. Gone forever was

that smaller, handier and easier to pack, original .357 Blackhawk. Well, almost.

In 2005, to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the original Blackhawk, Ruger brought out a Flat-Top New Model downsized to match the original. As an extra-added bonus, Ruger brought back the original grip frame configuration, which had been lost in 1962. The original XR3 grip frame was an alloy, while the new version is all steel and both are basically the same size and shape as that found on a Colt Single Action. They didn't even stop there, as the adjustable rear sight was a Micro once again. It wouldn't be too much of a stretch to say the 50th-year Blackhawk is even better than the original, as it was now all steel and could be safely carried with six rounds.



Left, top: The .45 ACP cylinders really make the duo versatile. They shot great too! Left, below: The .45 Colt cylinders showed that having correct chamber throats pays off in the accuracy department.



MORE AND BETTER

The 50th Anniversary Model of the .357 Blackhawk was, of course, a 1-shot, 1-year deal. That could've been the end of it except for the farsightedness of one of our top firearms distributors, Lipsey's. When that original .357 Blackhawk arrived back in 1955, we were promised, or at least Elmer Keith thought so, future models chambered in .44 Special and .45 Colt. Neither one ever materialized mainly due to the arrival of the .44 Magnum, 1 year later. To safely hold the

Continued on page 76

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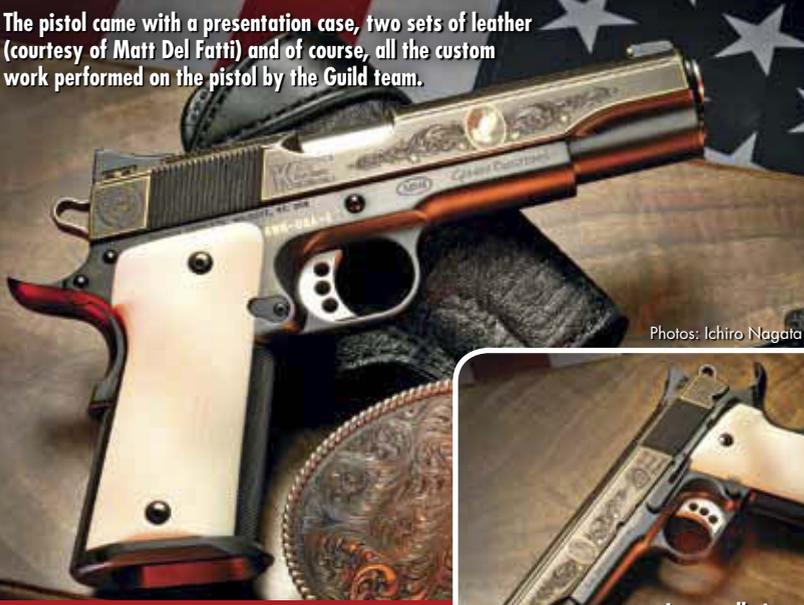


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PRESIDENT GEORGE W. BUSH PISTOL

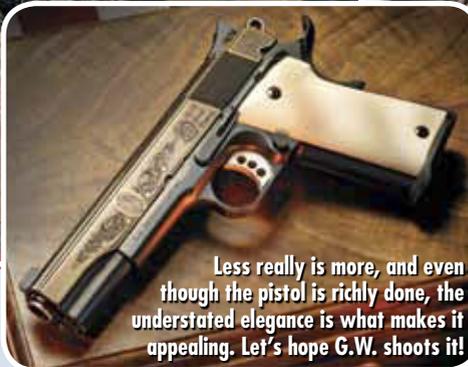
The pistol came with a presentation case, two sets of leather (courtesy of Matt Del Fatti) and of course, all the custom work performed on the pistol by the Guild team.



Photos: Ichiro Nagata



Guild members presented the pistol to former President Bush in his office in Dallas, Texas early on June 23, 2009. Here, some of the "guys" laugh it up with G.W.



Less really is more, and even though the pistol is richly done, the understated elegance is what makes it appealing. Let's hope G.W. shoots it!



Arare handful of guns made over the decades reach significant historical status after a military leader, outlaw or other noteworthy person used them. Some of these fine old guns are very plain and are simply factory guns used by famous people. Revolvers and pistols used by Jesse James, General Custer and others were "Plain Jane" weapons which gained fame, commanding hundreds of thousands or even millions of dollars, simply because the DNA from these men's hands is permanently imbedded in the grips and metal.

Other famous handguns belonging to the legendary are elaborate works of art created by custom gunsmiths, engravers and grip makers to become not only capsules of history, but gold standards of the gunsmiths trade. These fine guns are valuable works of art on their own, but when owned by a celebrity like Buffalo Bill Cody or Annie Oakley, they become priceless.

Such is the Model 1911 shown here, created and presented to President G.W. Bush by the American Pistolsmiths Guild. On its own, it's likely worth about \$25,000, including elaborate engraving by Brian Powley and specially fitted ivory grips by Roy Fishpaw. When George W. Bush first touched and took possession of this work of art — bearing the solid gold serial number "GWB-USA-1" — the value immediately increased to around \$50,000. Over time, it could be worth hundreds of thousands of dollars in the collector world. Presidential firearms have been among the most prized of collectables if they ever escape the family — and few do.

THE IDEA

After an initial concept by Marc Morganti of Gemini Customs, men of the American Pistolsmiths Guild joined forces on this project. The Caspian-based 1911 pistol was created as a tribute to George W. Bush and his support

of Second Amendment rights, and was presented to him in "W's" Dallas, Texas office when his job as President was complete. Had it been donated to him when he was in office, he would have been unable to keep it due to the value. Any personal gift worth over \$250 received by him in office would have to have been donated to the G.W. Bush museum. We wanted the President to own and shoot it, so we waited until he was out of office!

The men of the Guild who created this masterpiece stand out as among the some of the best artists and craftsmen around. The project began with the extraordinary gold inlay engraving of Brian Powley. Weldon Lister created a one of a kind sterling silver buckle depicting President Bush's favorite oil painting, "A Charge to Keep." The men who cut, filed and shaped this presidential pistol are: Roy Fishpaw, Roy's Custom Grips; Neil Keller, Kustom Ballistics; Scott Mulkerin, SDM; Dave Lauck, D&L Sports; Larry Vickers of Vickers Custom; A&A Engraving, custom case; Matt Del Fatti, leather; Alan Tillman of Art Enterprises, Bill Laughridge of the Cylinder & Slide Shop and appreciation goes out to Wilson Combat and Ed Brown Precision who donated parts.

Keep in mind, if you commission a custom pistol for your own family, you're creating a legacy in steel and wood — like this pistol — sure to be valued as representing "Dad" as it's passed from generation to generation. Enjoy the photos!

By the way — when you see "W" in current photos, take a look at his belt buckle!



Courtesy of engraver Weldon Lister, this buckle has been seen being worn by G.W. regularly.



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THE PERFECT POCKET HOLSTER?



RECLUSE HOLSTERS

Many years ago a very good friend called, and from the word “Hello” I knew something was wrong. “I’m okay,” he said, “but I’ve got to tell you something ... (long pause) ... I had a ND in my pocket. My keychain got inside the trigger of my pocket pistol, and I’ll be damned ... it went off!” Luckily he wasn’t hurt, and the million-dollar round went into the ground, through his pants.

At the time, I had been guilty of just dropping a revolver or pistol into my pocket on more than one occasion, sans holster. Needless to say, I didn’t do it anymore from that point on. My friend’s ND put me on a quest to find the best way to pocket carry. Since this happened prior to every company having a web page, I was starving for information and had to write to holster makers for catalogs. I took my quest a step further, and went so far as searching out instructors who specialized in pocket carry.

The first few pocket holsters were made so tight, they caused a range dance I called the “Pocket Holster Draw Shake and Wave.” The gun would be stuck in the holster after drawing it, and I had to either shake or wave it to get the holster to come off, or use my offhand to pull it off. Obviously those weren’t viable options. Some of the holsters had a hook built in to “catch” on the pants, so the gun would come out of the holster. Those only worked some of the time. Eventually, some pocket holsters became more user-friendly and the shake and wave dance was gone.



Top of the page: A normal firing grip and a simple draw allows the gun to snick out smoothly, with the holster remaining in your pocket. **Above:** The horsehide outer side of the Recluse quickly formed to Sammy’s pocket.

The unique injection molded trigger insert keeps the gun secure and safe.

Lots Of Options

I would hazard a guess everyone who chooses to carry a gun, regardless of carry method, is always looking for the perfect holster and I’m no different. I have a few favorites, but I’m always looking for “the one.” I recently met Tod Cole, who had also been on the quest to find a pocket holster meeting his criteria. Tod found with the holsters he was buying it was almost impossible to get a firing grip on small pistols and revolvers. He was also finding the guns were still printing through his pocket. He grew frustrated and decided to build his own. Tod’s initial designs evolved to become his line of Recluse holsters.

I have to say, when I first held one I thought, “This thing won’t work.” I thought it would tear up my pocket and it would be impossible to get a grip on the gun due to pocket pressure. I was wrong on all counts. As you can see from the photos, the horsehide J-frame front-pocket holster formed to my pocket quickly. I’ve been using the holster for several weeks now and I’ve found it works exactly as advertised.

The unique 1-side-open design allows for a perfect firing grip every time. And more importantly, the holster stays in the pocket every time I draw the gun. The trigger block is what makes this holster safe for all kinds of pocket guns. The patented design is specifically molded for each gun, so the fit is perfect, and the smooth backing of the holster prevented any printing.

Re-Holster Hints

A buddy of mine asked how I re-holstered with such a specific groove for the trigger and triggerguard. I took the holster out of my pocket and put the gun into the holster, and then put it back in my pocket. The drill is every time you draw your pocket pistol, re-holster it the same way: 1) Remove the holster from your pocket. 2) Put gun in holster. 3) Put holstered gun in your pocket. If you do it this way, you’ll never become a member of the of pocket-holster Negligent Discharge Club.

If you prefer back-pocket or cargo-pocket carry, Recluse has a holster for you. They’re available for most small revolvers and semi-auto pistols in black leather or natural horsehide. If you don’t see your favorite carry gun listed on the web page, give Tod a call — he’s always working on new models.

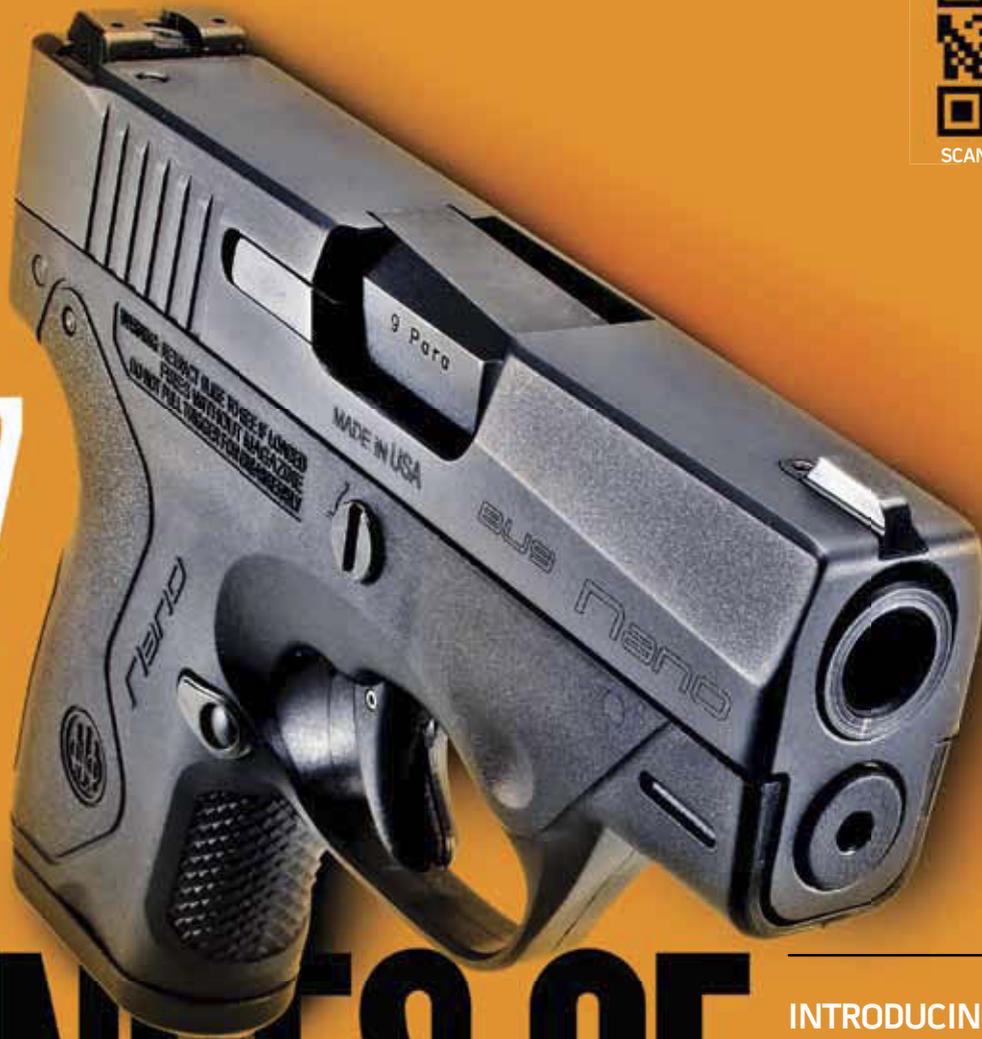


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SHOOT & SHARE DOING DRILLS

After 40 years of teaching, with over 30 spent running a school, the most common questions I get regard range exercises. And many of those involve our “100-round” handgun exercise we developed a few years ago. Go to www.thunderranchinc.com and you’ll find the details posted on the homepage under a training icon to save you time trying to track it down.

But, because of these continuing requests, I’m going fishing of sorts with all of you. If you have a set of drills you shoot regularly send them to Editor Roy (editor@americanhandgunner.com) or send them to troregon@centurytel.net. Explain the goal your drills are geared for, and tell me the details on how to do the drills. I’ll be glad, actually grateful, to shoot the drills you send, evaluate them and offer any suggestions to change or improve them. After we shoot your drills, we’ll credit you and pass them on to *Handgunner* readers. We’ll share, like my Mom used to say.

You’ll want to consider those shooting your drills will have a wide range of personal skills and equipment, so consider the bigger picture of how you are helping *others* train. You can “outsmart” us all by having an 18-round string of fire because your Glock can manage that, and you’ll “show those 1911 guys!” So keep in mind, could *you* shoot your drill with all the handguns you own? If the drill is for a type of handgun — like backup guns — then say so. That will help people know what you are trying to address.

We’ll post the reader-generated drills in my column as a sidebar. We’ll also stick to handgun courses, but keep in mind many handgun courses can be fired with the AR platform. The difference is mostly about backstops and targets and such.



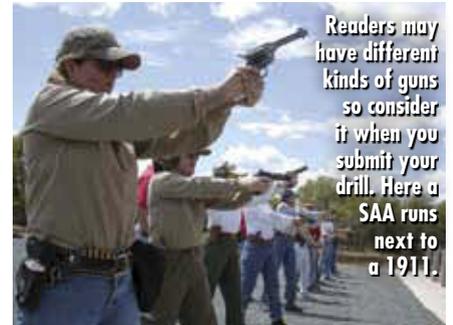
We all don’t have access to fancy shoot houses. Use simple drills to develop skills you can put to use in real-world situations.

CONSIDER

Anyone can train on a million dollar range. I’ve seen them, shot on them and frankly, you don’t *need* them. You do have to consider the kinds of ranges your drills may require and would allow people to actually shoot. Many ranges won’t allow holster work, or moving and shooting. So drills should always be flexible. If people have more ammo, they can run the set two times, maybe once from the holster, once from the ready position, left-handed or 1-handed. If you can’t draw at your range, shoot from the ready.

Since what is happening is about *training* not necessarily speed,

consider liberal times for your drills you submit. Shooters can always work to shoot your drills faster with experience. PACT would be happy to sell anyone a timer if they asked! Maybe encourage a buddy system where somebody shoots while the other shooter keeps a watch to help correct technique, or keep time.



Readers may have different kinds of guns so consider it when you submit your drill. Here a SAA runs next to a 1911.

CHART	Distance (yards)	No. Of Shots	Description	Par Time (seconds)	Reps	Total Rounds
	25	2	2 shots center-of-mass	6	2x	4
15	3	2 shots center, 1 shot head	6	1x	3	
7*	2	1 slide lock, reload and 1	6	2x	4	
7	4	5 center-mass, 1 shot head	5	2x	6	
5	2	1 shot to head	2.5	2x	2	
3	6	5 center-mass, 1 shot head	4	1x	6	

* Seven yards starts with round chambered, empty magazine. Draw and fire, slide will lock, reload and shoot last round for a total of two rounds. Do the set twice.

This whole drill could be shot from a ready position or from the holster. Jason said his intent was to use this drill as an all-around primer for defense. Speed is not the primary point, be accurate first, then meet or beat the par time with practice.

Roll The Ball

Counting the original 100-round drill as the number one exercise, credit for the number two drill to get this rolling goes to Jason “The Kid” Burton from Heirloom Precision, in Tempe, Ariz. Distance required is 25 yards, indoors or out, and only takes 25 rounds. This is intended for handgun, and you’ll need a paper plate or ISPC-type target.

This is your chance to share what you know, what you think, or how you consider training should be conducted. Here’s your chance to shoot and share so let me hear from you.



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Glock 21 Gen4 SERVICE PISTOL

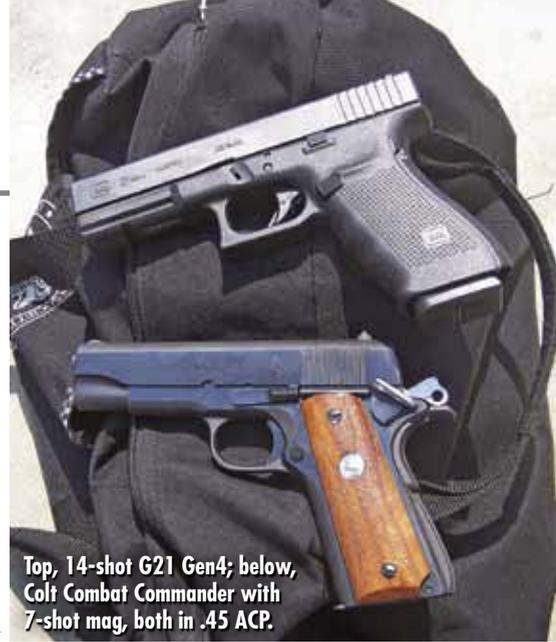
In 1990, the SIG P220 and the S&W 4506 were neck and neck as the most popular .45 ACP police service pistols in the US, the 1911 still being a regional oddity and a SWAT gun rather than a rank and file duty sidearm. That year, visiting the Glock plant in Smyrna, I saw an early sample of the Glock 21, the large-frame G21 made originally as a 16-shot 10mm, re-conceptualized as a 14-shot .45.

Within a very few years, the Glock 21 had become America's most popular police .45. It was light for its size, soft-kicking for its caliber and actually more accurate than most of the smaller-caliber Glocks, perhaps because of its

8-sided rather than 6-sided polygon rifling. Once some early magazine problems were sorted out, it quickly proved itself reliable. "Keep it simple, stupid" was the dominant philosophy in police handgun training, and this Glock .45 had no de-cocking levers or safety catches.

And, of course, it had 14 rounds, literally twice the capacity of the World Wars-era 1911 .45. Two spare 13-round magazines on the duty belt sent the cop onto the street with 40 .45-caliber cartridges. What wasn't to like?

In the more than a score of years since, the G21 has become the standard service pistol for lawmen from



Top, 14-shot G21 Gen4; below, Colt Combat Commander with 7-shot mag, both in .45 ACP.

the Anchorage (AK) Police, to the San Bernardino County (CA) Sheriff's Department, to LAPD's elite Special Investigations Section, to the Orange County (FL) Sheriff's Department, and countless points in between.

GEN4 TREATMENT



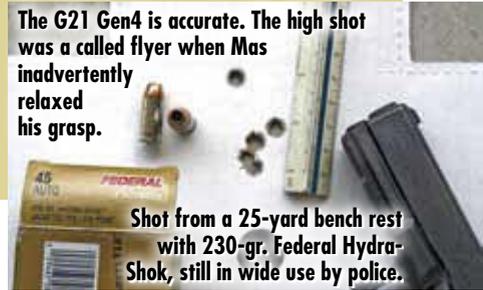
The Gen4's improved (and ambidextrous!) magazine release.

With its enlarged frame for longer cartridges, the G21 was a big pistol. Anchorage was known to send guns to Robar to get them trimmed to fit officers with smaller hands. Glock first addressed this with the G37 standard-size pistol using the shorter

.45 GAP cartridge, then with the variations of the 21SF (Short Frame, referring to backstrap-to-frontstrap dimension), and now with the Gen4, which has a shorter trigger reach, but backstrap inserts for those with larger hands.

RTF (Rough Textured Finish) on the gripframe is a Gen4 signature feature, along with a larger (and ambidextrous) magazine release button which eases and speeds reloading. But, older G21 magazines won't work in the pistol with the mag release button reversed to southpaw configuration. Finally, the double captive spring that worked so well on the Baby Glocks has been adapted to the larger guns in Gen4. It makes the slide a little stiffer to rack. So far, subjectively, about one shooter in three seems to find a little recoil reduction with the new spring system in the .45. A source at Glock tells me the new G21 Gen4 recoil springs are rated to last two-thirds longer than the 17-pound spring in the older 21.

The G21 Gen4 is accurate. The high shot was a called flyer when Mas inadvertently relaxed his grasp.



Shot from a 25-yard bench rest with 230-gr. Federal Hydra-Shok, still in wide use by police.

SHOOTING THE GEN4

The Gen4 treatment doesn't turn the 21 into the little slim-line 7-shot G36, which allows so much trigger reach the average male hand can get the distal joint of the index finger squarely centered on the trigger. In its out-of-the-box "size small" configuration, without the grip spacers in place, the Gen 4 21 *does* allow that average length finger to center squarely on the pad, by which I mean the whorl of the fingerprint. That's where many combat pistol masters recommend placing the finger on a short-pull auto-loader, anyway.

The pull itself is not bad at all. Our test sample, serial number SAU849, was a "blue label" police package with three magazines and Trijicon night sights,

labeled as having a 5.5-pound trigger pull weight. The Lyman digital gauge showed that to be about spot on: an average of 5 pounds, 9 ounces measured at the toe of the pivoting Glock trigger, and half an ounce under 7 pounds when measured from the center where the finger usually makes contact. Changed internal geometry necessitated by the grip reshaping adds a good pound of pull weight, but Glock is installing their new "dot" connector to make up for that. On the test pistol, the trigger pull was very uniform and very smooth.

That, in turn, helped it shoot well. The big .45 ACP Glocks have always been accurate. This one delivered five rounds of the classic old Remington 185-gr. JHP police load into 2" on the

nose at 25 yards, with the best three into 1.25". I was working on a 1" group with the last of my Federal 230-gr. Hydra-Shok when I relaxed my grip on the last shot and pulled high, creating a 1.90" group. The first four had been .95" center to center, and the best three at .65"! That's target pistol territory: what we expect from tightly fitted \$2,000 semi-custom 1911s, not economy priced run-in-the-mud Glocks.

It seems safe to say the Gen4 treatment will help the Glock 21 to hold its position as the most popular of today's standard issue .45 caliber police service pistols.



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THREE OLD RELIABLES

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We are indeed fortunate today to not only have so many powders to choose from, but also have them easily accessible. We've always had lots of powders, but finding them was certainly not easy in the late 1950s. There were, however three standout powders which were seemingly always available and easy to find, Bullseye, Unique and #2400, all available from Hercules.

Bullseye goes all the way back to 1898 when it was developed by Laffin & Rand. In 1902 it was switched to the DuPont label and then in 1913 Hercules took over some of the DuPont powders, including Bullseye. Of course, today all former Hercules powders are produced under the Alliant label. Bullseye is double-based, with 40-percent nitroglycerin content. It takes up so little powder space care must be used to prevent double-charging the cartridge case. A loading block allowing you to look into each case before seating a bullet is good insurance, as well as a powder sensor on the loading press.

From day one Bullseye has been *the* powder for target shooters, at least when target shooting was king. Everyone who paid any attention at all knew the standard loads for target shooters were 2.7 grains of Bullseye under a 148-gr. wadcutter in the .38 Special, and 3.5 grains with a 200-gr. bullet in the .45 ACP. With charges such as these, 1 pound of powder resulted in just under 2,600 .38 Special rounds and 2,000 .45 ACP rounds. With 4.5 grains under a 246-gr. roundnose bullet, the standard factory .44 Special load can be duplicated. And 5.0 grains with a 250-gr. bullet in either the .44 Magnum or .45 Colt makes for an accurate and pleasant shooting midrange load.

UNIQUE

Unique goes all the way back to 1900 when Laffin & Rand also developed it. Then in 1902, just as with Bullseye it was switched to the DuPont label and then in 1913 it also became a Hercules powder; and as with Bullseye, it's a double-based powder with 40-percent nitroglycerin content. Not only is it a great sixgun powder, many rifle shooters use it for reduced loads with cast bullets. There are those who have always complained Unique burns "dirty." In fact, in recent years Alliant has marketed a cleaner burning Unique. Who cares if powder burns dirty, whatever that means?

Anyone who has spent any time at all with the .44 Special surely knows the "Skeeter Load." This load consists of a 250- to 260-grain cast Keith bullet over 7.5-gr. of Unique and does 900 to 1,000 fps depending upon the sixgun. Skeeter Skelton made this load famous in his writings, however it was not original with him, as he actually got it from Elmer Keith. Take this same load and place it under a 200-gr. SWC cast bullet in the .45 ACP and you have Jeff Cooper's recommendation for a full house .45 ACP load. It's also a grand powder for the .45 Colt, .44-40 and .38-40, with my standard load being 8.0 grains for all three. However, I sometimes go 8.5 or 9.0 grains with the .45 Colt. These loads are in the 900 to 1,000 fps range or more again depending upon the sixgun.

2400

Finally we come to #2400 which goes all the way back to 1932. Just as with Bullseye and Unique it is a double-based powder, however the nitroglycerin content is half as much at 20 percent. It was originally designed as a rifle powder for such cartridges as the .22 Hornet and .25/20, however it did not take long for reloaders to find it was *the* powder for full house loads in the .357 Magnum and .44 Special. In fact without #2400, there would not have been a .357 Magnum. If anyone can be given credit for making #2400 famous it is, of course, Elmer Keith. For several years he had been experimenting with heavy loads in a .44 Special using #80 powder, however when he discovered #2400 he found what he needed for the rest of his life and developed several loads that will always be known as the Keith Loads.

His loads consisted of heavy powder charges using his bullet design. For the .44 Special it was Lyman's #429421, weighing 250 to 260 grains depending upon alloy, over 17.5 grains of #2400.



This is a warm load and should be approached with due caution. When the .44 Magnum arrived he used the same bullet over 22.0 grains. With the .45 Colt he recommended his bullet, #454424 over 18.5 grains. With Heavy Duty loads in the .38 Special it was his #358429 over 13.5 grains. Again all loads should be approached with due caution.

If these three old standbys had disappeared from production in the 1950s we would have been in a real quandary. Today they are just as good as ever, however they have competition. With Bullseye-level loads we can do quite well substituting AA2 or WW231. With Unique, either Universal or Power Pistol will do everything we need. Finally, #2400 loads can be assembled with #4227, AA9, H110 or WW296. Yes, they can be replaced — but it simply wouldn't seem quite right. 

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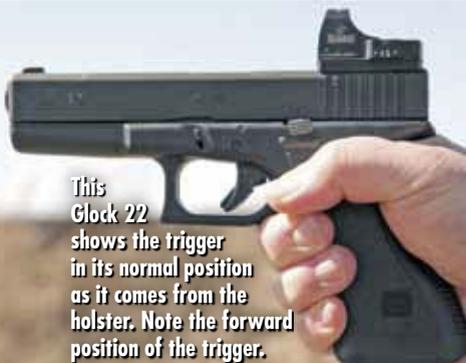
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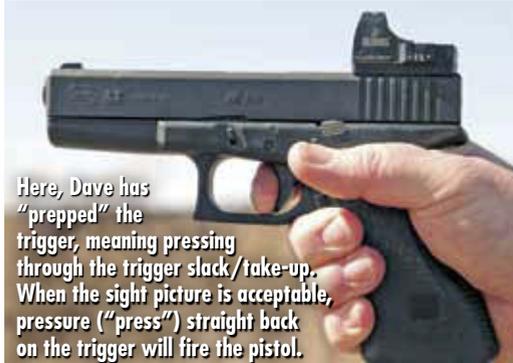
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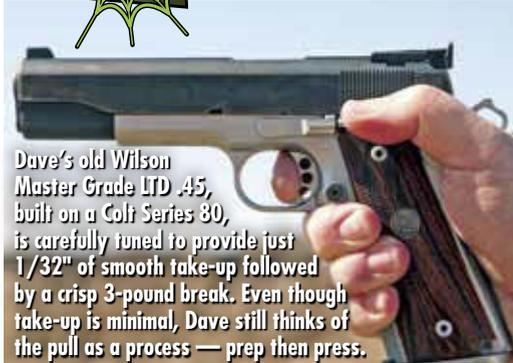




This Glock 22 shows the trigger in its normal position as it comes from the holster. Note the forward position of the trigger.



Here, Dave has "prepped" the trigger, meaning pressing through the trigger slack/take-up. When the sight picture is acceptable, pressure ("press") straight back on the trigger will fire the pistol.



Dave's old Wilson Master Grade LTD .45, built on a Colt Series 80, is carefully tuned to provide just 1/32" of smooth take-up followed by a crisp 3-pound break. Even though take-up is minimal, Dave still thinks of the pull as a process — prep then press.

TRIGGER TALENT

These days it seems everyone wants to run without ever having learned to walk. Talk of accurate shooting and you can count on a sarcastic lecture about how unrealistic it is to waste time on basics.

"What, do you think in a shootout there will be time to get in your nice balanced stance and to grip the gun just so, to fire a careful, accurate shot? No, you'll be moving, the bad guy will be moving, it will be dark and scary and stressful. That's what you should be teaching."

I try not to counter sarcasm with sarcasm. What I'm thinking, but don't say, is: "Yes, you're right. Some day you may be a pro quar-

terback coming up to the line, spotting an opportunity and calling an audible. Maybe you'll scramble to evade a tackler when your lineman misses a block; you'll run left, spot an open receiver and throw back to the right off the wrong foot while running to evade one of those cat-quick linebackers.

"But you aren't a pro quarterback yet. Right now, this minute, you're at the this-is-a-football stage. Someday you should be able to hit a moving target while moving yourself. But right now, let's try and hit a stationary target while standing still."

Or as the great Tommy Campbell says, "If you can't hit the target once shooting slowly, there's a pretty good chance you can't hit it twice shooting fast."

The great pros didn't start out as pros. Several times I've read how irritating they find it when a fan says, "It's easy for you, you're such a great natural athlete."

It suggests their achievements are just a random gift, a lucky chance. It doesn't recognize the endless work and discipline — not over just weeks or months, but years — needed to refine those gifts into greatness.

No one is saying you must be a superstar in order to defend yourself with a handgun. But if you want to be a competent, skilled handgun shooter, it's going to take time, effort and discipline. If you want to build your skills on a solid foundation, there are no shortcuts.

TAKE-UP VS. CREEP

In trigger terminology "take-up" (also called trigger slack) and "creep" have different meanings. Take-up is movement of the trigger, which doesn't impart movement to the sear. A certain amount of take-up is normal with semi-automatic pistols. The trigger needs to move forward after each shot to reengage the sear. A little extra movement ensures the trigger can move forward far enough. Creep refers to trigger movement in which the sear is being moved under load.

For now though, we are discussing take-up. The amount of take-up can vary considerably with different makes and models. I measured (at the center of the trigger) take-up on a few handguns.

On my best target .22s, a High Standard Victor and an S&W 41, take-up is minimal, about 1/64". Most of my 1911s have 1/16" take-up, while a couple of competition models measure 1/32". Take-up on a stock Browning High Power measures 3/32" and on a Glock 35, 1/8".

This is the take-up encountered when drawing or picking up the pistol for the first shot. Some models reset over a shorter distance. For example, the Glock 35 mentioned has 1/8" takeup for the first shot, but needs to move forward only 1/16" to reset. On the other hand, on a Ruger SR22 I tested recently, the single-action pull has a full 3/16" take-up and needs to move forward almost the full distance to reset.

Prep And Press

In developing trigger control for accurate shooting, manage the pull in a 2-stage process — prep and press. To prep the trigger means simply to press through the initial take-up to take the slack out. Remembering our safety training, the trigger finger doesn't go into the triggerguard or onto the trigger until the gun is on target — not necessary precisely indexed, but closely enough so an unintentional premature shot won't endanger anything but the target.

As the pistol aligns roughly on-target, the trigger finger moves into the guard, onto the trigger and smoothly takes up the trigger slack. Then as the shooter confirms a satisfactory sight picture, the trigger finger smoothly presses through to sear release; prep then press. With enough repetitions it can become a subconscious skill.

Prep/press is learned first in deliberate fire without time pressure. Until it becomes a subconscious skill there will likely be times the shooter overdoes the "prep" part and presses right through to fire the pistol. As skill develops, prep/press is not limited to slow fire. With training it can be done very quickly, certainly during the interval during recoil recovery and acquiring the next target.

For more on trigger control, go to www.americanhandgunner.com and click on the Web Blast link at the top.



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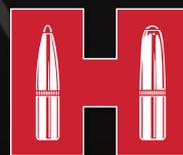
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Two 10-shot magazines are included with the SR22. Rear sight is adjustable, manual safety and magazine release button are ambidextrous.

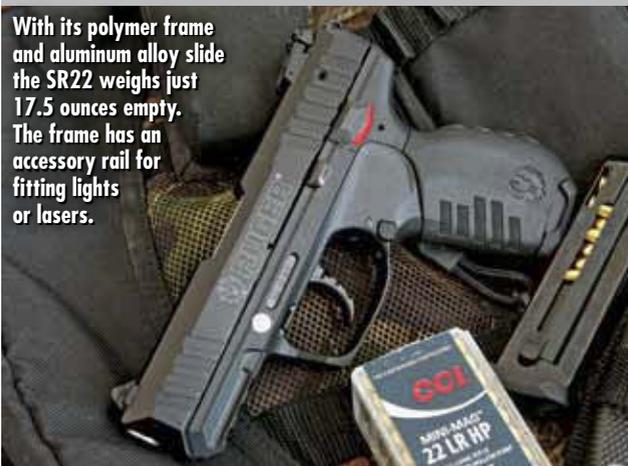


NIFTY SR22

These are interesting days for those who enjoy rimfire pistols. No doubt ammunition cost and availability is a major factor. I also suspect shooters are finding it easier and faster to develop skills without a lot of muzzle blast and recoil. The other night at a public range I noticed a couple of shooters with what they said were their first handguns, a .38 Special snubbin' and a 9mm. Both were shooting reasonably well, but they certainly did not seem to be enjoying it. I hope they develop enough skill to be capable of home and personal defense, but I doubt they'll ever become shooting enthusiasts.

The pistol shown here is the SR22, a neat little semi-auto from Ruger. It has a polymer frame, with the slide made of aluminum alloy. A separate steel breechblock is dovetailed/pinned into the slide, and holds the extractor, firing pin, and firing pin block. The barrel is stainless steel with six rifling grooves, right hand 1:16" twist. Operation is straight blow-back and the barrel is secured to the frame with a large hex-head screw accessible in the triggerguard just ahead of the trigger. Actually there's no need to remove the barrel for routine cleaning.

With its polymer frame and aluminum alloy slide the SR22 weighs just 17.5 ounces empty. The frame has an accessory rail for fitting lights or lasers.



Solid Features

The design uses an external hammer and ambidextrous hammer drop/safety. The safety doesn't lock the slide and can be in the down/safe position while loading or unloading, which is nice. The magazine release, at the base of the triggerguard, is also ambidextrous. In addition to the manual safety, there's a magazine safety and a firing-pin lock is released only when the trigger is pressed. A slide stop/holdover lever can be engaged manually to lock the slide back, and operates automatically when the magazine is empty.

The magazine well is metal alloy. A molded rubber grip piece slides over the well and is secured by pins/projections in well and grip. Two grip sizes are provided, and it took a pretty good pull to get the grip off. After the first couple of times it got easier, but still continued to fit securely.

Takedown for routine cleaning is fast and easy, in the Walther PP/PPK style, and the Ruger instruction manual makes it simple. Magazine bodies are made of steel and should prove durable. There's also a handy thumb-piece to depress the follower and make loading easier. Kudos to Ruger for including two magazines with the pistol. Also included are two floorplates with extension spur, a nice zippered soft case and a padlock.

HIGH SPEED ONLY

The SR22 functions best with high-speed .22 LR ammunition, as is the case with many .22 autos. Most of the shooting I did was with CCI Mini-Mags and a bulk pack of Remington Golden Bullet hollowpoints (about 300 rounds of each). Functioning with these loads was completely reliable, except for one CCI round which didn't fire. Examination showed a nice deep firing pin indentation. I reoriented the round 180 degrees in the chamber and it fired.

A "333" bulk pack of Winchester ammunition seemed to be rather less powerful as about one round in four wouldn't drive the slide back far enough to eject the fired case. I also tried some standard velocity target loads. With these it was more like half the rounds didn't eject.

Single-action pull was at almost exactly 5 pounds, with a long take-up and one small "step" I could feel with a slow trigger press. Double action pull, should you care to use it for the first shot, is reasonably good, smooth and with just a bit of stacking towards the end, finally breaking at 10 pounds.

Front sight is a ramped post with white dot, fitted in a dovetail cut. The rear sight is strongly mounted in a dovetail cut and is adjustable for windage and elevation — nice to see on a moderately priced .22. It has two white dots, and the manual gives directions on how to reverse the sight blade should you prefer plain black.

Groups (five shots at 25 yards) averaged in the 2 1/2" range. With the rather heavy trigger, light pistol weight and short sight radius, precision shooting takes concentration, but this is splendid accuracy for a pistol like this.

The Ruger SR22 is a very nice plinker, trainer, outdoorsman's pistol and just a lot of fun to shoot. The only criticisms I can make are of the nitpicky sort. I wish the sight adjustments were marked to show direction, and the windage screw slot bigger. Quality of materials, parts fit and workmanship appears to be very good, with crisp lines and a smooth, even finish on metal parts. MSRP is listed at \$399.



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WHAT'S A "BEST BULLET?" AND IS THERE SUCH A THING?



My phone rings, and I hear this all the time, "What's the best bullet for my (fill in the blank here)." And it's an easy answer: There's no such thing as a best bullet.

Yep, that's the way I see it. Of course the eternal argument of cast vs. jacketed rages on, at least for the revolver guys — although the Black Powder and Cowboy competition shooters seem to have settled their part of it.

"Best" usually turns out to be for some specific purpose, and I can usually answer that with several examples of something capable of doing the intended job. But "best" still escapes me, as usually a few bullets in any caliber will fill the bill, and in some calibers and use — dozens will.

Plinking with revolvers or auto pistols is something we

all do. Cast or swaged lead is the cheapest and can usually be found in factory or reloaded ammo. Swaged is usually the cleanest of the two, as the "smoke cloud" produced by cast slugs is unpleasant and somewhat unhealthy to breathe. Frankly, inhaling the fumes produced by firing any shot is not a healthy practice. Nor is casting bullets without more than adequate ventilation, just to remind you.

ACCURACY

For what purpose? Close action shooting for practice? Lead bullets are fine, but I seldom see top shooters using anything but jacketed in meaningful competition. Both accuracy, and a clean gun that runs flawlessly, is important for them. Jacketed ammo is cleaner and usually more accurate, so there you go.

Hunting accuracy? Hunting what and what distance? Hogs at 15 feet? Heavy cast bullets have excellent penetration, doing minimal tissue damage, and in a heavy load usually exit. That's mostly a good thing. But if you really want "exit" there are several jacketed bullets, and

the Barnes "buster" is perhaps one of the best.

But if you are tangling with that hog with a bunch of dogs and people involved, maybe a fast expanding, low penetration bullet is a safer yet effective projectile. I'm reminded of an incident of holding leashed dogs wanting back in the fight and I felt something odd on my ankle. Looking down I saw a little 10-pound piglet gnawing on my ankle. All he had was milk teeth, but he did a good job on my boot.

Moving on to the single shots, I have no doubt jacketed bullets are superior hunting bullets. The varieties are literally endless, with each manufacturer touting



Recovered bullets exhibit varying expansion characteristics due to different designs. Velocity is the most important factor in bullet performance. Selecting the right bullet for the right velocity is often difficult.

his wares in such a manner to either piss you off or make you feel stupid for not using it, regardless of caliber/animal size or likely distance involved.

Quick Conclusions

First, define the job. Hogs with no dogs? Use a magnum revolver over .357 caliber, with heavy jacketed hollowpoints if the likely distance is under 50 yards. Getting into 100-yard territory, a single shot should be considered, in a cartridge capable of at least 2,000 fps with a relatively heavy (for the caliber) or "premium"-type bullet with known impact characteristics.

Deer at the same distance? Lighter weight, softer bullets may do the job a bit better, but the expanding hog bullet will also work. Long-range deer or antelope? High velocity, flat trajectory, decent accuracy with a hunting bullet (not match bullet) is desired. Yeah, I know, match bullets are usually more accurate than hunting bullets, but they are designed for one thing at impact, punching a hole in paper.



Base portion recovered from a controlled fracturing bullet after exiting from a deer.

Learn to shoot well and practice a lot, and not just off sandbags. Learn to control excitement and concentration. Learn animal anatomy so you can shoot them where they live. Brain/spine/shoulder shots are the most likely to instantly down an animal. With other hits, expect them to run — and be happy if they don't. Head and neck shots suck. They're wonderful if they work, but the target is small and usually going to move. If they're not placed exactly they can be a real disaster. Shoulder-chest shots are lethal and offer a bigger target.

A good idea is to look at the Sierra website for examples of different types of bullets. Pick a few and call their help line to determine the useful velocity of a particular bullet. There's no need to over-think it all, but at least think about it.



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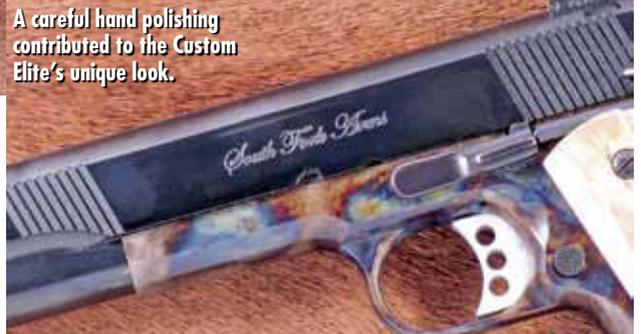
JOHN TAFFIN

The elegant case-hardened frame sets the South Fork Arms Custom Elite out from the pack.



SOUTH FORK ARMS 1911

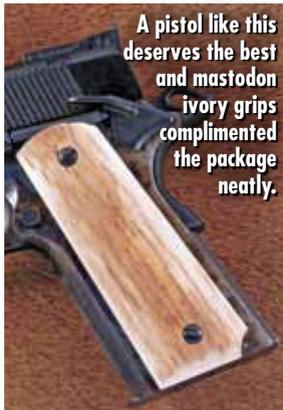
A careful hand polishing contributed to the Custom Elite's unique look.



HOW SAM COLT MIGHT HAVE DONE IT

Is it really possible to have too many 1911s? That's like saying one can have too many single actions, or friends, or money. In all cases it's nice to have the dilemma. Try to count the number of variations available on the 1911, or try to even make a list of all the manufacturers of 1911s. I doubt you can. And when you factor in the custom makers, the list gets even longer. Now, add one more.

Jason Perkins of South Fork Arms, which is located in Mexico, Mo., contacted both His Esteemed Editorship and myself, knowing he needed something different to really catch our attention. What was different about Jason's is the fact his version stirred up visions of custom Colt Single Actions in my sixgunning soul. No gimmicks, simply a beautiful 1911, and once I saw the pictures he sent, arrangements were made for me to spend some time with this unique .45 ACP.



A pistol like this deserves the best and mastodon ivory grips complimented the package neatly.

One of my all-time favorite Western movies is *The Wild Bunch*. Set in the South-

west in 1916, William Holden plays Pike Bishop, one of the last of a fast disappearing breed. As he straddles two centuries, Bishop carries a Colt Single Action .45 in a hip holster and one of the new and thoroughly modern 1911 .45s in a shoulder holster. South Fork Arms' 1911, as we shall soon see, makes the perfect companion semi-auto for the Colt Single Action Army. These two examples of perfection from the inventive genius of William Mason and John Browning are still timeless today. Perhaps they have been equaled, but only perhaps, and they certainly have never been bested, at least in this sixgunner's mind, soul, and spirit.

It's easily seen where the inspiration for the Custom Elite came from — the Colt SAA in classic guise.



Jason guarantees 1" or less at 25 yards. John's groups using Hornady ammo showed the gun was well capable of that kind of accuracy.



Each Custom Elite .45 comes with a lined and fitted custom presentation case.

Unique Take

With all this in mind let's take a close look at Jason's version of the 1911. In talking with him I learned several things. For one this 1911 never, ever came close to a buffing wheel, as the Perkins Custom Premium forged slide and frame were meticulously sanded by hand for 3 days to remove all machine marks. The frontstrap was hand checkered 25 lpi with a file, no machinery involved. The frame was then sent off, during which time Jason blued the balance of the parts. Now here is what makes this 1911 unique. The frame was turned over to that master of beautiful case

colors — Doug Turnbull. Now do you see the connection with the Colt Single Action Army? Single Actions and this 1911 both have case-colored frames. But it does not stop there.

The second thing I always notice on a prized Colt SAA is the grips, especially when they are of such exotic materials as ivory, pearl, stag or ram's horn. Jason continues the theme by fitting his 1911 with mastodon ivory grip panels. The combination of deep, bright bluing, combined with case-hardened frame and exotic grips results in a spectacular 1911. Jason says, "I can tell you whenever I hold her like this it makes me feel a little warm and fuzzy inside! I can't

Continued on page 75



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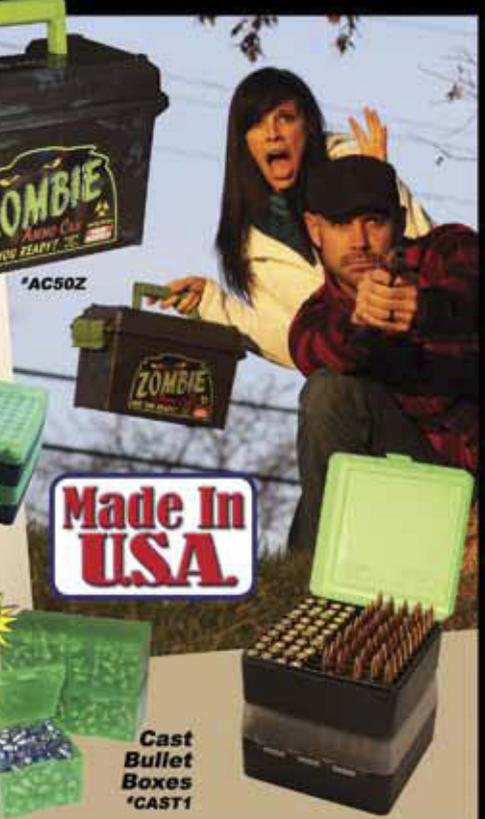
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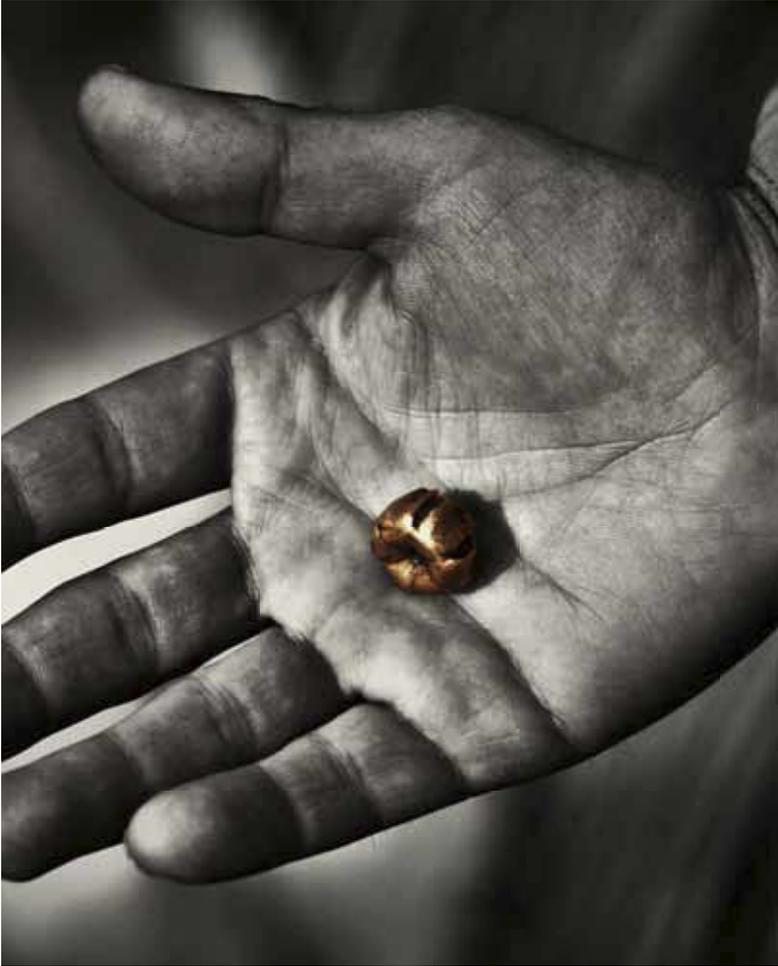
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THE 9MM NANO

BERETTA JOINS THE POCKET PACK

Beretta's Nano joins the other small 9mm autos growing in popularity.

J. B. WOOD



The Beretta Nano and the test ammo from Cor-Bon, Black Hills and Hornady.

The slide recoil is nicely handled by this 2-stage captive spring unit. The original brilliant design was by Larry Seecamp.



Over the past few years, we've seen a whole bunch of neat, tiny pistols in .380 Auto. Then a little later in time, a few in 9x19mm. For the big-bore he-men, there have even been a couple in .40 and .45 Auto. I wondered, a while back, when is Beretta going to get into his scene? Well, now we have the answer — the Nano.

The dictionary definition of the name is "exceedingly small." Or, as a technical prefix, "one billionth." While it's not quite in that category, it is very slim and compact for a pistol in 9mm. And I'm told, there will soon be a version in .40 S&W. In addition to the size factor, there are no protruding parts. The only external control, the

magazine release, is very low profile.

Even though there's room for only two average fingers on the frontstrap, the grip frame is so perfectly shaped it sits well in the hand. The front and back have good, deep checkering. Using space-age polymer for the grip-frame makes the unloaded weight 20 ounces. So, even loaded, it will be a comfortable carry.

The Nano has a striker-type firing system, and a DAO trigger with a smooth, quick pull. If you move the trigger slowly, there's a slight hesitation point at the end of its arc so you can use the sights. There is an internal automatic striker-block that is concealed just before let-off. The striker system is a "reset-type," with the slide movement placing the striker in an intermediate

position. It's interesting to note this is only the second time Beretta has made a striker-fired pistol. The other one was a little .25 Auto, the Model 1920. That one was made for 41 years, and was later called Model 318 and Model 418.

With the automatic striker block and the DAO trigger, no other safety system was needed. However, because of the legal-weasels out there, they added one of those "flipper" things in the trigger. The idea was to prevent accidental firing from inertial movement of the trigger and trigger bar if the pistol was dropped on a hard surface.

Actually, given the minimal mass of the components, you'd have to

Continued on page 93

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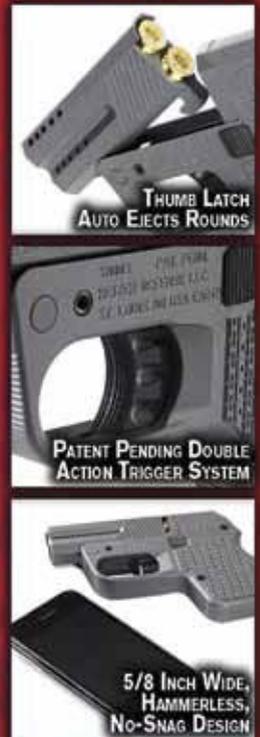


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PRE-WAR COLT NATIONAL MATCH

A BEATER BECOMES BEAUTIFUL

Okay, I'll just say it out loud: Many of you will be upset to see what was done to this old gun. Cries of "foul!" will ring, no doubt. But keep in mind, this gun belongs to an experienced collector, shooter and custom gunsmith in his own right, Larry Vickers. And, since it's Larry's gun, it was up to him to do what he wanted with it. And what he wanted to do was have Jason Burton, of Heirloom Precision of Tempe, Arizona, bring this old gun back to life — but in a unique way.

While holding onto the feeling of what a pre-war Colt is — and was — Larry asked Jason to update some performance items, restore the cosmetics and create what is essentially, if you ask me, what Colt *might* have done had they had today's technology, metals and parts available to them 80 or more years ago. So keep an open mind and see how Jason resurrected this magical gun.

The Decision

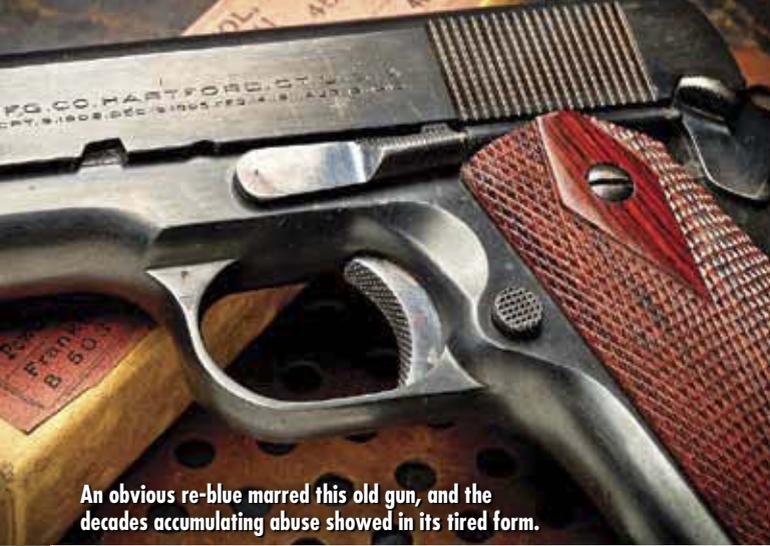
After talking the build over with

Jason, Vickers agreed all the modifications would have to stand the test of time, honoring the tradition of the 1911 and the pre-war Colt pistols. And that's why there are no mag wells, night sights or other bits detracting from the classic look. It's not a clone of a pre-war Colt National Match, nor is it a textbook restoration of one. It's more of a tribute, but unlike a kit-car made of fiberglass, for instance — this gun is built on the original.

According to Jason, building on a pistol like this is a "gut-check" —

The raw material was this pre-war Colt National Match. It was far from elegant, but both Jason and Larry saw the potential.

Afterward, Jason's touch is evident in the straight lines, flat polish and remarkable attention to detail.



An obvious re-blue marred this old gun, and the decades accumulating abuse showed in its tired form.



A flawless finish and some modern parts still adhered to the spirit of the original.

his words. First, according to Jason, “Larry is a discerning shooter with an extensive collection of custom pistols.” Second, was the base gun itself.

“I think it’s fair to say this is a rare gun and one which would be hard to replace even given the condition before the build,” explained Jason. And he’s right, since nice examples of pre-war National Match Colts are currently in the \$5,000 to \$7,000 range.

With many things a custom gun builder does there’s no room for error, but when you start-in with a file on a base gun like this, it can be game-changing. “It almost feels like putting it all on the line, and then some,” Jason told me. “Truth is, I’m flattered when any customer wants me to build a gun for them, so getting a chance to build a project like this on a pre-war National Match base gun, for a knowledgeable collector and shooter, is not something I took lightly.”

While Jason thought about the implications of changing the gun from its original condition, he and Larry seemed to be on the same page. “I know some folks would rather this gun have stayed original,” said Jason. “I think it’s pretty clear we’re both not part of that club. The base gun was less than perfect by far. It was heavily pitted under the stock panels and had many dents, dings and pits throughout the entire gun. It was also missing some of the original parts,

like the barrel, and it had even been re-blued at one time.

“So I guess it staying original was kind of out of the question. For me it was a cool base gun and one, which I may never get the prospect to build on again. I certainly wasn’t going to waste this chance, and should I ever get an opportunity to build on another pre-war National Match I likely won’t hesitate any longer than I did on this gun. A project like this, with its uniqueness and intricacies, is part of what makes building one-off customs so much fun and rewarding. And at the end, the guy who owns it is happier than when he bought it.”

A Theme

Vickers wanted a traditionally styled gun doing justice to the heritage of the pre-war Colts. He wanted a full-house effort, and he and Jason agreed the gun should have traditional looks mixed in with the best modern modifications and parts, all done without taking away from the classic and distinctive quality the gun already possessed.

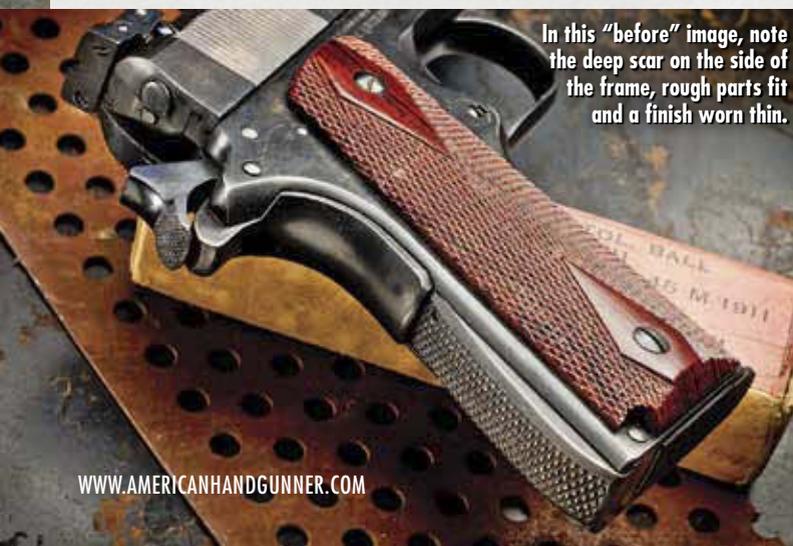
In addition to the modifications, the gun needed a good bit of cosmetic clean up. The dents, dings, pits, etc. all had to be draw-filed and blended out. Some of these dents and dings were “conveniently” intermingled with the roll-marks. Fortunately, the roll-marks could be restored and re-engraved by master

engraver J.R. French (who’s also done many other projects with Heirloom Precision). More cosmetic clean up came in the form of line straightening. The cut for the existing rear sight also had to be repaired before the new sight dovetail could be machined and the sight installed. The cocking serrations were also re-cut. Jason was meticulous, and no part was left untouched. If it wasn’t perfect — it wasn’t finished.

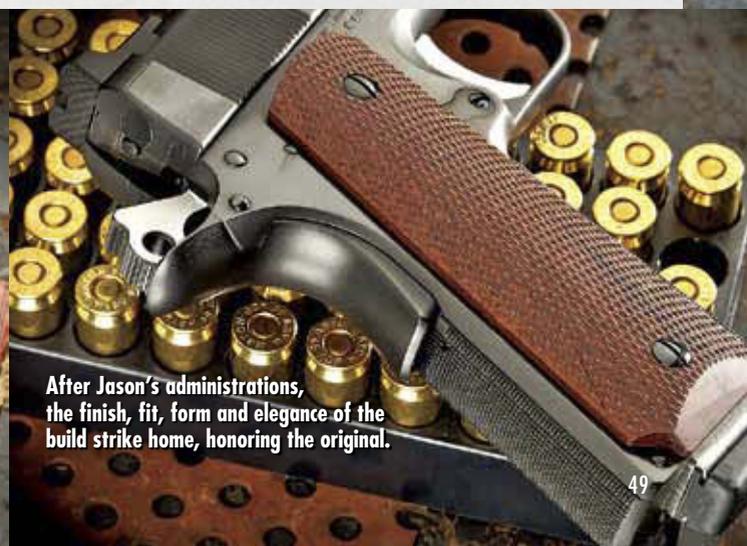
A military NM barrel and bushing were fit to the gun, and the standard reliability modifications were performed, along with the installation of a bar-stock extractor, EGW firing pin stop and slide stop and Wilson extended ejector. Vickers requested a traditional Colt Commander style hammer, and I think it works very well with the theme of this gun. The grip safety is one of the new EGW machined parts, having been significantly re-profiled to give it an overall smaller size, while still looking like it belongs on the gun.

The thumb safety mimics the look and “feel” of a Colt Commercial part, while being slightly larger and more user friendly for most shooters. Vickers wanted 30-lpi checkering on the gun, since, according to Jason, “We both felt 30 lpi has long been a standard of custom 1911s, so after high-cutting under the triggerguard, the frontstrap and

Continued on page 78



In this “before” image, note the deep scar on the side of the frame, rough parts fit and a finish worn thin.



After Jason’s administrations, the finish, fit, form and elegance of the build strike home, honoring the original.

Facing to the right are two Lugers. Top is a German 9mm, bottom a Finnish 7.65mm Parabellum. Facing left is an Inglis P35 9mm with its wooden shoulder stock/holster.



PHOTOS: YVONNE VENTURINO MIKE "DUKE" VENTURINO

**GOOD IDEA?
OR A WASTE
OF TIME ...**

SHOULDER-STOCKED HANDGUNS

One of the earliest types of pistol using a wooden shoulder stock is the Mauser Model 1896 "Broomhandle."



When you think about it, wooden shoulder stocks for handguns are an odd concept. They negate the basic purpose of a handgun, to provide a lightweight portable sidearm. Wooden shoulder stocks add weight and bulk to the mix although it must be admitted some were well thought out. Regardless, in military and police applications handguns are defensive weapons for use in emergencies. Yet no one could get a shoulder

stock affixed to a handgun in time to use it in an emergency.

So why do it in the first place? Their benefits seem immediately evident. Instead of a pistol or revolver wavering about at the end of one's extended arms, it's braced against the shoulder. In effect, shoulder stocks turn handguns into carbines. Consider this, for most of the muzzleloading era, rifles and carbines were single shots. Conversely the fastest firing weapons available were revolvers. Therefore shoulder stocks came about in an effort to extend their range and gain the advantage of firepower. Think of the firepower a German soldier brought to a trench raid in World War I when he had a semi-auto 9mm pistol affixed with a shoulder stock and

a 32-round drum magazine. The majority of his opponents had bolt-action rifles and 6-shot revolvers.

Silliness Occurs

But then some military organizations buying into shoulder-stocked handguns got downright ridiculous in their expectations. The John Inglis copies of Brownie's Hi-Power (P35) made for China and shipped with wooden shoulder stocks have tangent rear sights graduated to 500 meters! Germany was worse. Their

Duke say's having a tangent rear sight on the Inglis P35 9mm graduated to 500 meters is ridiculous.



The Inglis P35 9mm with shoulder stock/holster attached. It looks like it would be effective, but looks might deceive!



Left: With the 8"-barreled Luger, 9mm Duke shot this hand-sized 10-round group on steel at 25 yards. Five rounds off-hand and five with shoulder stock attached.



Above: With the 8" Luger 9mm, Duke managed to hit the PT-Torso target all five rounds at 50 yards.



The 8" 9mm Luger with 32-round drum magazine inserted. It's lying on the shoulder stock.

8" 9mm Lugers had the same type of rear sight — graduated to 800 meters! Would you think it possible to hit a man-sized target at 800 meters with a pistol using 9mm Parabellum, having 115-grain bullets at about 1,250 fps muzzle velocity? Also keep in mind although the pistol is better braced with a shoulder stock, it still has a short sight radius. For a Hi-Power/P35, that's 6¼".

There was another purpose too. Some designs did double duty as holsters — albeit as heavy, bulky ones. Wooden holster/shoulder stocks are actually kind of neat when you're looking at them, but hang one from your belt and it turns into a big whale fin beating you on the thigh. At least those I've seen for some Mauser 1896s (aka "Broomhandles") have straps so they can be hung over the shoulder.

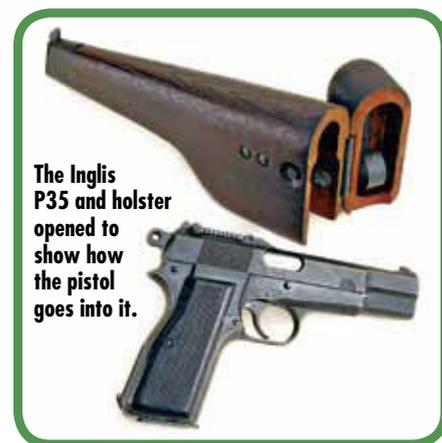
Real Ones

I rounded up three shoulder-stocked, semi-auto pistols for us to take a look at. One belongs to me, a John Inglis Hi-Power 9mm. Its serial number proves it was one of those made in Canada in 1944 for a Chinese contract and still has the original wooden holster/shoulder stock, and also the tangent sight.

Two friends donated Lugers from



Once the magazine is inserted, it's actually a tidy package and you can see it would have been very effective in trench warfare.



The Inglis P35 and holster opened to show how the pistol goes into it.

their collections. One is a .30 caliber with 3¾" barrel and markings showing it belonged to the Finnish army at one time. The other Luger is one of those long-barreled German jobs dated 1917, complete with drum magazine

and the special loading tool needed to cram 32 rounds into it. My friend's grandfather brought it back from WWI. Interestingly, even though both Finnish and German Lugers came with their own shoulder stocks, I found them interchangeable. They are mere ¾" thick slabs of hardwood cut into the profile of a stock.

The P35 has a 4¾" barrel, and with its shoulder stock/holster attached it's 21" long. The .30 Luger is 22½" long with the stock, and the 9mm Luger is 26¼" long. Those slab shoulder stocks for the Lugers weigh no more than a half-pound but that holster for the P35 adds over a pound to the mix. Speaking of holsters, get this; the German Luger's shoulder-stock straps to the back of its holster for storage. I needed a full 5 minutes to get it unstrapped and attached to the pistol. It's definitely not for emergency use!

Do They Work?

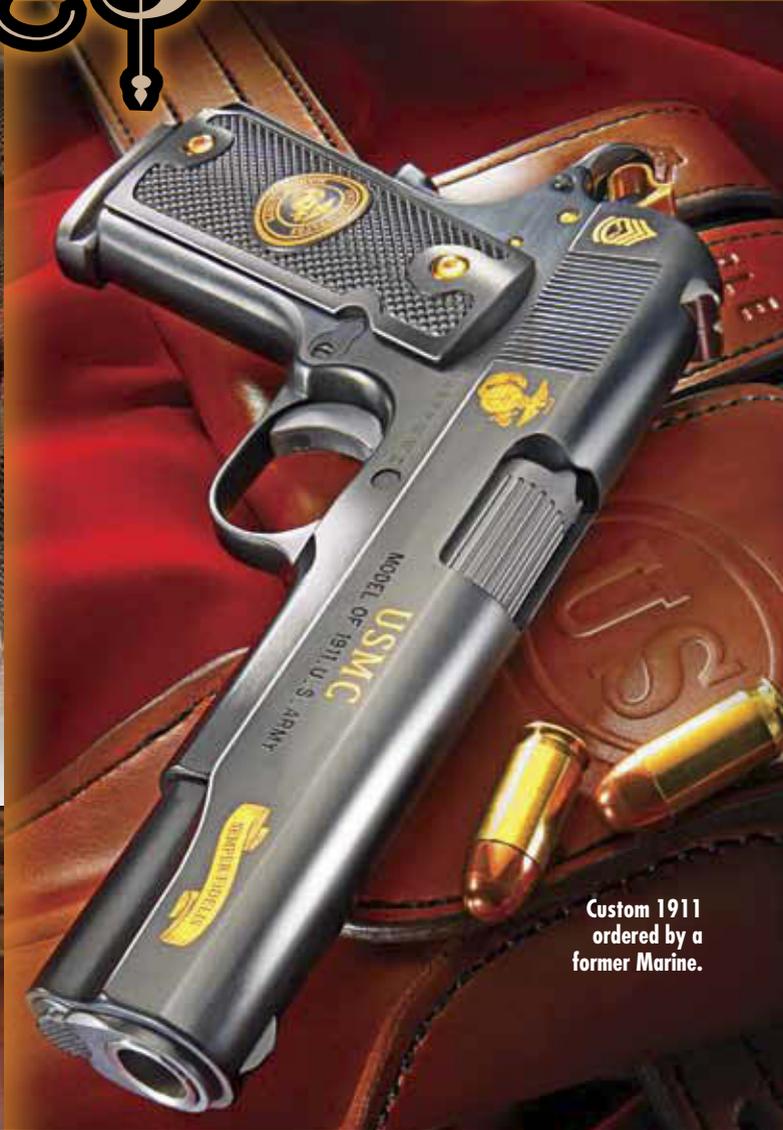
To try out these stocked-pistols, I developed a little informal exercise.

Continued on page 73

Dave



Signature 1911 Professional Model with SureFire light.



Custom 1911 ordered by a former Marine.



Dave does regular work with the Texas Rangers. Here's the Professional model with custom touches.

FANCY BUT FUNCTIONAL

Long before I had much in the way of expendable income for buying sixguns I enjoyed looking at the works of such past gunsmiths as O'Meara, Houchins, Sedgely and Eimer as well as custom sixguns from the King Gun Sight Company. They were among the top sixgunsmiths customizing Colt and Smith & Wesson revolvers in between the two world wars. I found pictures of their works in old copies of *American Rifleman* as well as several books. Today we are blessed with a wide range of revolvers, semi-autos, and single shots in virtually every possible chambering, as well

Handgun



Dave's handy with single actions too!



A blued, retro-1911 made for a client who wanted a 95 percent retro-look, but also built to be "shooter" he could use in Pike-style matches.

BBQ GUNS!

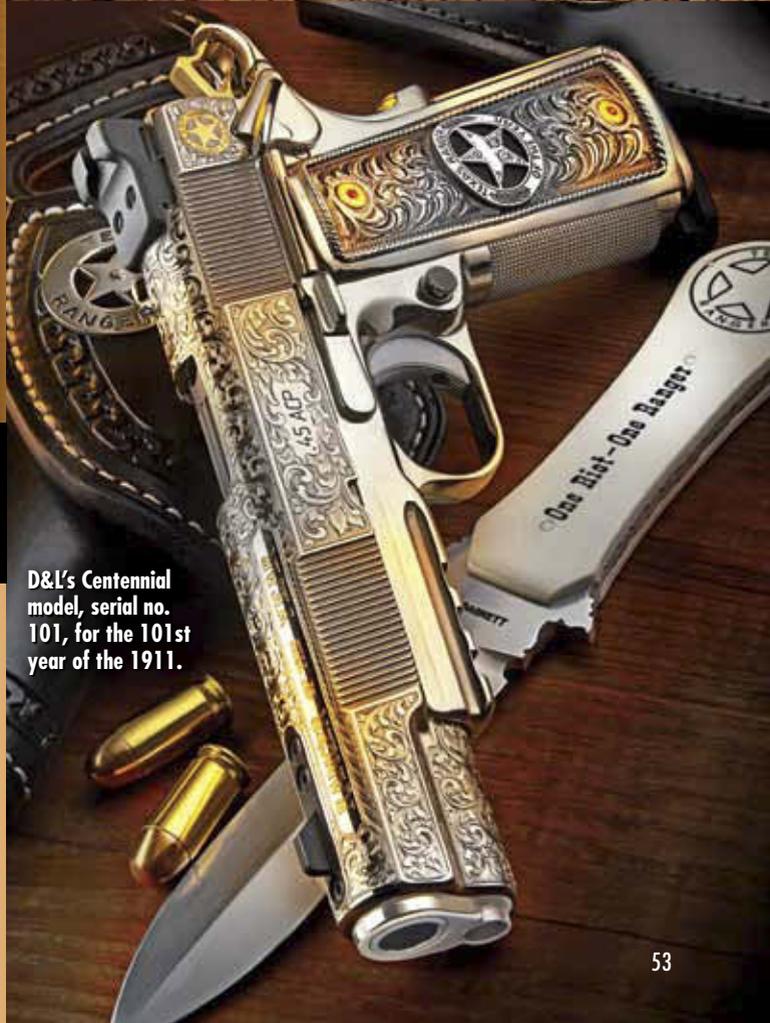
JOHN TAFFIN
PHOTOS: CHUCK PITTMAN, INC.

as being offered in not only the traditional blued steel but stainless steel, polymers, titanium, scandium and possibly even un-obtainium. Our choices are almost endless; in fact so much so one might think there would be no need for custom sixgunsmiths today — but think again. The greatest pistolsmiths who ever lived are practicing their creative art right alongside all the factory offerings.

Then And Now

Elmer Keith used the first three mentioned custom sixgunsmiths in building several of his special Colt Single Actions,

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D&L's Centennial model, serial no. 101, for the 101st year of the 1911.

Maave Hancock

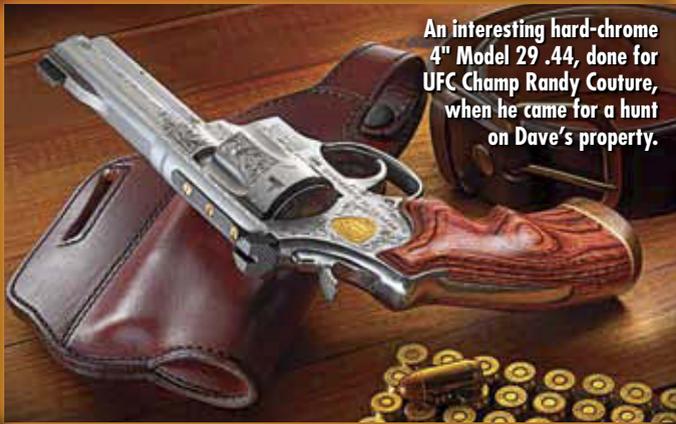
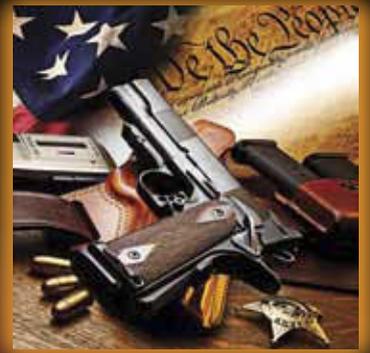


A 3" J-frame
with D&L sights
"melted" into the frame.

Professional model.



This Model 29 was built for Clint Eastwood. The project was motivated by some of Clint's fans, who wanted to pay tribute to his stellar work in the movie industry. Clint reflected the enhanced 29 is beautiful, and now has a special place in his personal office.



An interesting hard-chrome 4" Model 29 .44, done for UFC Champ Randy Couture, when he came for a hunt on Dave's property.



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including the famous #5 SAA that he considered the ultimate .44 Special. I never dreamed I would someday have a large shooting collection of factory revolvers, let alone custom sixguns, semi-automatics, and single-shots. It has been my privilege to have guns built by such top gunsmiths as Bob Baer, Hamilton Bowen, Dick Casull, John Gallagher, Jimmy Clark, David Clements, Brian Cosby, Ben Forkin, Alan Harton, Jack Huntington, J.D. Jones, Ken Kelly, John Linebaugh, Milt Morrison, Gary Reeder, Jim Stroh and Bill Wilson. The beautiful sixguns and semi-automatics pictured here are from another top line gunsmith who has also touched guns for me, namely Dave Lauck, the 1-man operation that is D&L Sports, of Chino Valley, Ariz.

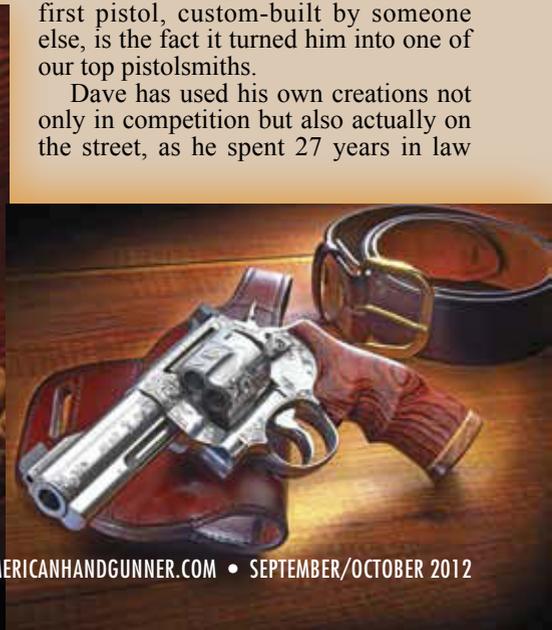
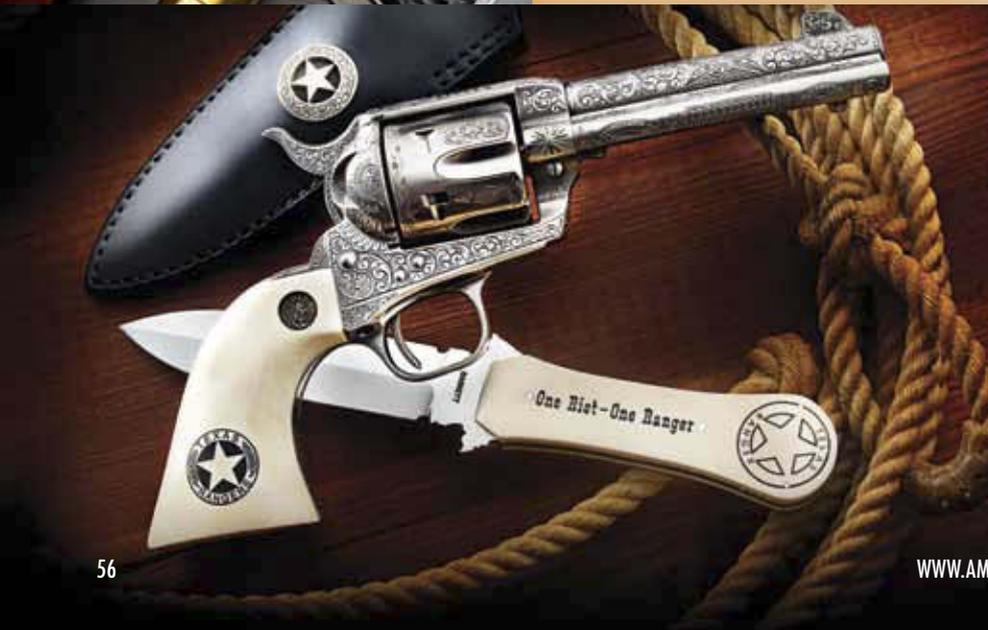
I don't know if the old line-gunsmiths from the 1930s era ever worked together in an organization to promote high-quality gunsmithing, in fact I

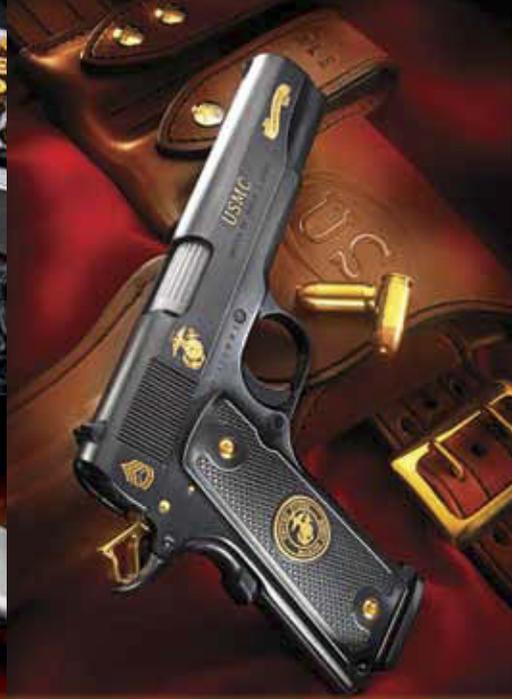
doubt it very much. However, today the American Pistolmiths Guild exists to do that very thing. Each year, one of the members is chosen as pistolsmith of the year, and for 2012 that award has been presented to Dave Lauck.

Imperfection To Invention

Dave got into custom pistolsmithing for the same reason several others who are now Guild members started. In his own words: "I put aside money to send one of my personal 1911s to one of the big name shops of the time, and when it came back, it was a disappointment, so I studied on how to make the 1911 run ever since. Decades, and literally millions of rounds of .45 ACP later, they seem much better. When you literally shoot things until they break, you learn what parts need to be improved, and then you continue shooting until it breaks in the process. That is where my heavy-duty line of sub-parts came from." The unintended outcome of his first pistol, custom-built by someone else, is the fact it turned him into one of our top pistolsmiths.

Dave has used his own creations not only in competition but also actually on the street, as he spent 27 years in law





Leather by Purdy Gear
(www.purdygear.com).

“A UNIQUE ASPECT OF THE TEXAS RANGERS IS THE FACT BBQ GUNS WERE STANDARD DAILY WEAR, AND AS SUCH, FUNCTION MUST AT LEAST EQUAL FORM.”



enforcement with experience in investigations, SWAT, narcotics, sniper and patrol. All of this background shows up in his pistols, and as he says every one has to be one he would carry himself — or it does not go out to a client. Many of his customers are special operations personnel who absolutely must have the best possible equipment. And he also says his goal is every pistol he builds is better than the last one.

Taffin's Lauck Sixguns

I know of Dave's work personally as he has worked on a pair of Smith & Wessons for me as well as two Ruger Vaqueros. The Smiths are nickel-plated 4" Model 29s, which Dave slicked-up internally and also smoothed and rounded the face of the triggers and reduced the size of the thumb piece on the target hammers, making them much more suitable for fast double action work. Stag grips were expertly fitted and I then added Tyler T-Grip adapters to make them much easier to handle in the double-action mode.

The Vaqueros, both stainless steel,

and one in .45 Colt, the other .44-40, were also slicked-up, fitted with stag grips, and had the long barrels shortened even with the ejector rod to aid in speed from leather. All of these custom touches were very minor compared to much of the work Dave does.

Dave also offers a replacement

fixed rear sight for Smith & Wesson revolvers. This sight is minus any sharp edges, gives a nice square easy-to-see sight picture, and totally fills in the area on the top of the Smith taken up by the rear sight assembly. This sight was designed for anyone desiring

Continued on page 85



Freedom Arms Model 97 in .45 Colt makes an ideal carry gun for many outdoor activities like camping, fishing, backpacking or working around the farm.

MARK HAMPTON

PICKING MY PERFECT

PACKIN' PISTOL

Freedom Arms Model 97



Our own John Taffin coined the “Perfect Packin’ Pistol” moniker, and he’s been on the trail of one ever since. And I have to say, he’s right about it. Unless it’s light and handy, you just don’t have it on-hand. It never fails; you bump into wily coyote or other vermin when you’re not carrying your favorite sidearm. I was doing some chores around the farm the other day on the tractor and had a coyote stand there — and watch me work! If I would only have been carrying a handgun, and I know better! This wasn’t my first mishap. Then my wife and I were checking some of our property’s fence

that had suffered considerable damage due to the ice storm. A few of the tree limbs had fallen on the wire and we were repairing the devastation. Way yonder, as we say here in Missouri, on the backside of our property, a big bobcat bounced out in front of us. With my quick wit, all I could do was throw the hammer. That didn’t work out, so I thought, okay, I’ve had enough.

I called my friend Bob Baker of Freedom Arms and told him to send

Freedom Arms revolvers are well-made, quality firearms, easy on the eyes and will deliver decades of pride of ownership for any shooter. Can you say “Swiss Watch”?

me something I could pack all the time, and I mean all the time, when I was at the farm. I wanted to wear it on the tractor, riding around on the Polaris Ranger, fixing fence, taking a morning hike, you name it, and I wanted to be packin’. This gun wouldn’t be equipped with a long barrel, like I usually prefer, and equipped with only iron sights. This particular gun would not be a hunting handgun per-se, but an easy packing rig I could carry at all



Mark found Purdy Gear's leather among the finest he's ever used. Here're her Pancake and IWB ideas. Elegant, I'd say.



For comparison purposes: the FA Model 97 in .45 Colt is somewhat smaller and lighter than the custom Mag-Na-Port .44 Magnum, Ruger Super Redhawk, shown here with 5" barrel.

times. After Bob listened to my criteria he said he'd be sending something he thought I'd like.

Compact Powerhouse

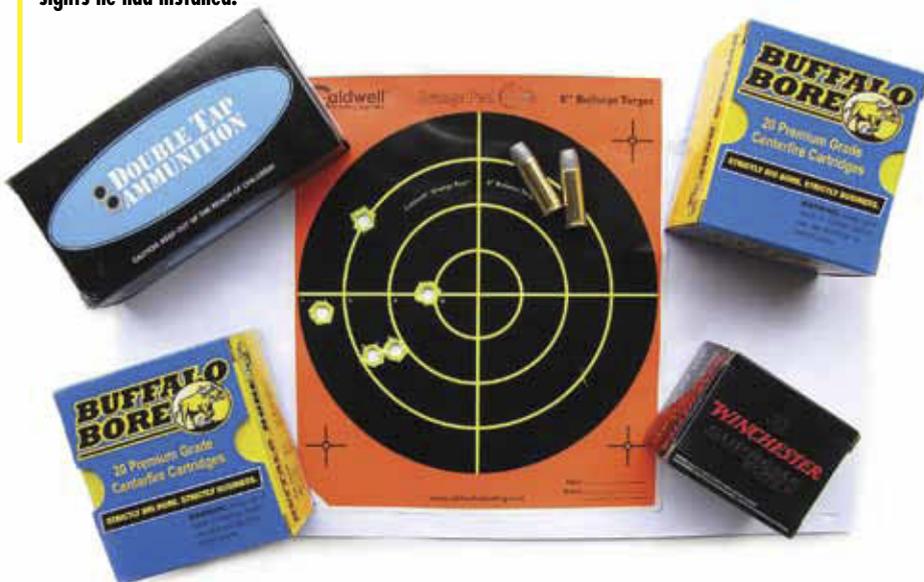
Sure enough, when I opened the box, I knew this little gun had a secure place, and a new home. Inside the box was a shiny Premier Grade Model 97 in .45 Colt, just what the doctor ordered, compact and easy to carry. The Model 97 is not new by any means, but was first introduced back in 1997 in .357 Mag. A couple of years later, Freedom Arms chambered this mid-frame, single-action revolver in .45 Colt to the delight of many.

This stainless steel single action is somewhat smaller than the Freedom Arms Model 83 you see, typically chambered in the mighty .454 Casull. I couldn't wait for a range session with rounds procured from Winchester, Double Tap and Buffalo Bore ammunition. Good gosh, Double Tap produces 18 different rounds, nine standard and nine +P heavy stuff. Buffalo Bore manufactures six +P offerings, and big red also makes a ton of different .45 Colt ammo from personal defense rounds like their Supreme Elite Bonded PDX1 all the way "down" to Cowboy Action. There is no shortage of quality ammo in a wide variety of different bullet weights for a multitude of applications.

Recoil?

At the range I discovered not only did those beautiful winewood, round

With an abundance of factory ammunition available, you don't have to reload unless you want to. Accuracy from the short-barrel .45 Colt is more than acceptable for a trail/hunting gun (this is a 25-yard group). Mark feels the gun is much more accurate, but was hampered by the Express-style sights he had installed.



butt grips look good, they felt wonderful. Now I wouldn't want to shoot those heavy .45 Colt +P 325-gr. rounds from Buffalo Bore all day long, but they *are* manageable. The smooth grips are not abrasive and make shooting even heavy rounds more comfortable. This gun is light, tipping the scales at a measly 33 ounces. Realistically, I am going to be carrying this revolver much more than I will shoot it, so I'm fine with the weight. Obviously there is recoil involved with this light five-shooter and short barrel, but

it is manageable.

The ammunition I gathered from Double Tap, Buffalo Bore and Winchester all performed at a level you would expect from a 3½" revolver. There were not any malfunctions or surprises. Barrel length on the Model 97 comes standard in 4¼", 5½" or 7½" but I wanted something really compact, so I chose the non-standard length. If I would have chosen this gun for strictly hunting purposes, I would have easily gone with the longest barrel available.

Continued on page 74

HIGH-TECH GEAR

A CLOSE LOOK AT



HIGH-TECH GOODIES DAVE ANDERSON LIGHTS, LASERS, RED DOTS & CELL PHONES?

The boss man phoned the other day, and Editor Roy wanted me to check out new high-tech gear. “You’ve got the right man,” I assured him. “You probably think I’m talking on what we techies call a

landline. Not so. What looks like an ordinary briefcase is actually a phone! I can use it anywhere! In fact, I’m at the mall right now. You should see people stare, like they’ve never seen a briefcase phone before.”

I heard Roy shouting to his secretary, “Are you sure no one else is available? Anyone at all? An illiterate yak herdsman maybe?” Guess not, since I got the job! Be warned, some of this tech stuff is mighty complicated. I told Roy I’d try and “dumb it down.” He said I was uniquely qualified for the job. Such praise is embarrassing.

Since we’re on the topic of cell phones, current versions do a bit more than just talk. With available apps, your cell phone can provide reloading and pressure data; direct you to the range, time and score the match, video competitors in action, and download the video to a website. If you’re a hunter you can get weather reports, sunrise and sunset times, coyote calls, turkey calls and recipes for cooking the turkey. And that’s just scratching the surface. Ah, but a briefcase phone ... well, you could only wish, right?



1 Laser aiming devices continue to get smaller, less expensive, more convenient, more reliable and durable. This SML (side mount laser) from LaserLyte is for small-frame S&W and Taurus revolvers. It comes with four mounting plates to fit various models, and longer screws to replace the sideplate screws. The laser beam can be used in either constant or pulse mode. With the sight in place the revolver still fit a Bianchi pocket holster.

2 This trainer target from LaserLyte increases the fun factor in dry-firing and can be used virtually anywhere. LaserLyte has three styles of laser devices to fit different firearms and project a momentary laser beam when the trigger is released. The type shown here fits the chamber, and each “shot” registers on the target. After a string you can “shoot” the display target again, and all shots will show. Because there’s no recoil the laser beam projects a bit high, but I found a 6 o’clock hold gave center “hits” for me.

3 I don’t believe in buying shooting skill with fancy equipment, but I’ll make an exception red-dot sights. I’ve seen them help turn casual

handgunners into veritable shooting machines, mowing down rows of 8” Bianchi plates at 40 yards. Red-dot sights have gotten smaller, tougher, more reliable, with battery life measured in years. Here are a few

examples, clockwise from top left: Sightmark SM Ultrashot Holographic sight; the very moderately priced Sightmark Sure Shot Reflex; Leupold Deltapoint, which has a magnesium body and weighs just .6 ounces; Trijicon RMR, made in the USA and as with all Trijicon products, built tough for the heaviest use.

4 Adventurous types use tiny POV (point of view) cameras attached to helmets and such when they jump off cliffs or out of airplanes. Maybe you want a video of shooting, from the shooter’s viewpoint. The tiny Epic video camera is so small and light it could be taped to your cap brim. It has a wide-angle lens and records in full 1080HD mode.

5 Crimson Trace laser sights have earned an enviable reputation for quality and reliability. Crimson Trace now has the Master Series. The





6

G10 style is shown here and rosewood is another option.

On the front is the "Instant Activation" panel. Pick the pistol up and the laser is activated, set it down and the laser shuts off. Viridian makes this C5 series light/laser in different sizes. This small model is an excellent match for subcompact-size pistols. Viridian uses a green laser rather than the more conventional red. Many shooters seem to find a green beam easier to see and track, especially in brighter ambient light. This sight also has a 100-lumen white light.



4

6 These Glock 22 pistols provide a lot of options for home defense. Left, this one has a Burris Fastfire II red-dot sight replacing the standard rear sight. It has a 4-MOA dot, and the Fastfire III has options of 3- or 8-MOA dots. On the frame rail is an Insight Technology M6X combination white light/laser. The right one has a 1/2-ounce JPoint dot sight. This pistol also has a combination white light/laser on the frame rail, a Streamlight TLR-2. Even with white lights on the gun, I want the option of a separate flashlight. In this case it's the SureFire 6P.

7 I suppose flashlights are actually not too high tech anymore, but current versions still impress me. On the left, the Springfield XDM's frame rail has a SureFire X300, while the Glock on the right has a Streamlight TRL-2 light/laser. Streamlights TRL-4 has even more features. Weapon-mounted lights have a place but don't replace the need for a reliable flashlight. Top is a Streamlight Scorpion, below it the classic SureFire 6P, both with LED lights. I'm still fond of the big workhorse on the bottom, a SureFire M3T combat light. This one is the Millennium Series, but every maker offers an almost bewildering array of models to fit any need.



For more info: www.americanhandgunner.com/product-index and click on the company name.



5

ROY ALERT!



BEWARE SUBSCRIPTION SCAM

DEAR READERS: Nefarious scoundrels have been trying to scam *Handgunner* readers by offering unauthorized subscriptions for a ridiculously high price. Don't be a victim of this dastardly behavior! It's easy to protect yourself; simply remember: NEVER pay more than \$37 for a 2-year subscription to *Handgunner*! If it asks for \$71, toss it! I've received a bunch of calls from you guys, reporting suspicious offers to renew subs to *Handgunner*. You have detailed receiving offers on mailing pieces, looking suspiciously similar to ours. They direct you to write a check or submit a credit card number for the outrageous price of \$71 (almost twice the published price!!!). They appear to be from us — but they are most certainly not! While it is still rare, it has occurred, so keep a sharp eye and don't be shy about questioning something like this.

It's easy to verify that it's legit. Confirm the *Handgunner* ID Number on the top line of the renewal label matches your ID on the magazine you get. The price is NEVER higher than \$19.75 for one year, or \$36.75 for two. Our offers say, "Make check payable to *American Handgunner*" (NOT some sleazy third party!). The return address will either be 12345 World Trade Drive, San Diego, CA or P.O. Box 509093 in San Diego. Anything else spells trouble!

Keep in mind, we're always just a phone call away. Pick up the phone and dial (858) 605-0253 to chat with one of our ace subscription staffers or go to www.americanhandgunner.com and click on "Contacts" to reach us. We're actual human beings, and will be happy to help you out anytime. You can also always drop me a note at editor@americanhandgunner.com if you want to report a scam, have a question or think I can help out.

— Roy Huntington, Editor

DON'T BE A VICTIM!

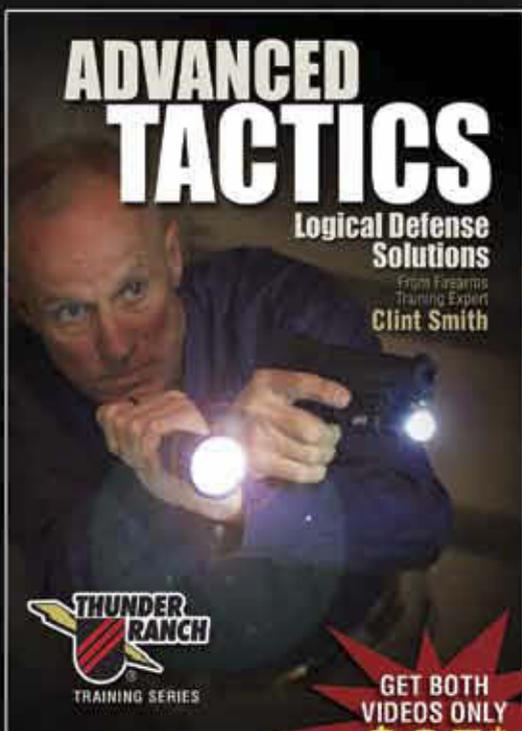
- CONFIRM THE ID #
- NEVER PAY MORE THAN \$37 FOR A 2-YEAR SUBSCRIPTION
- WHEN IN DOUBT, CONTACT US



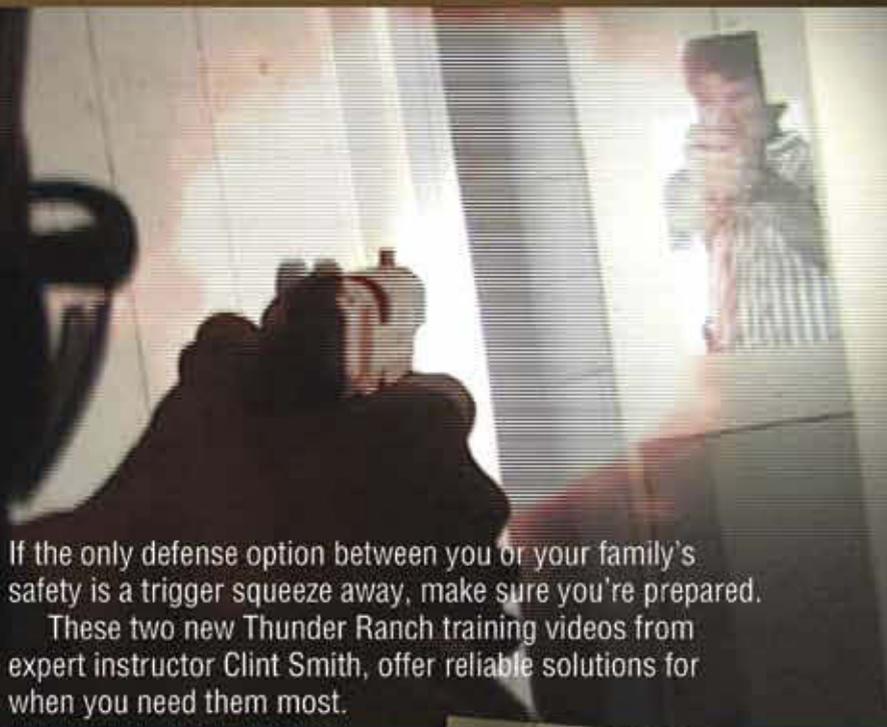
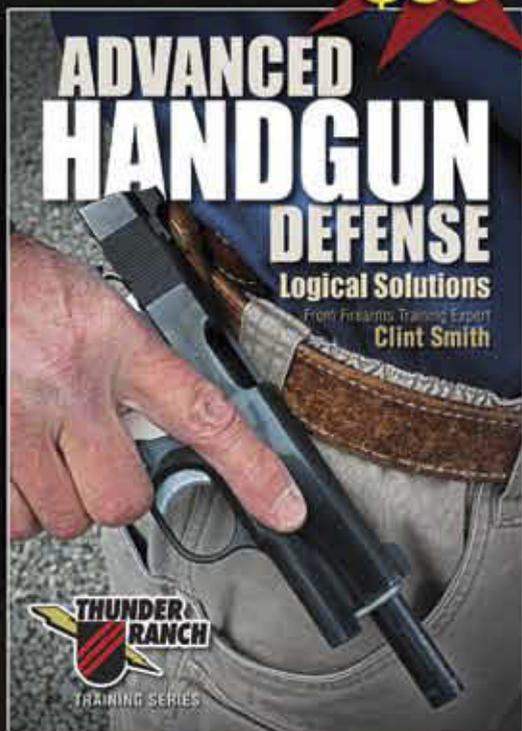
AMERICAN HANDGUNNER

“Once the bullet goes down the barrel
you can never bring it back.”

~Clint Smith



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“It's hard to learn new skills
in the middle of a gun fight.”



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ARSENAL'S AF2011-A1

Nope, you're not hungover, those really are double-barrel 1911s!

HUH? WHAT?

STEFAN PEREY
HANDGUNNER'S EUROPEAN
CORRESPONDENT

A DOUBLE 1911?

I recently attended the IWA 2012 Show in Nuremberg, Germany — the biggest gun show in Europe for the past 40 years. Think of it as the American SHOT Show, only with beer, wine, hunting dogs and people with funny accents. Oh, and Lederhosen too. You meet a lot of old friends from all over the world, talk about guns and the gun world, celebrate this wonderful industry we are in — and maybe have one beer too many at dinner!

So, after a hard evening “consulting” with beer steins, the next morning I stumbled into the booth of a young Italian company called Arsenal Firearms. My first impression was maybe I was suffering from double vision and really needed to be more careful with that beer. There, right in front of me, sat a 1911 with two barrels in one slide! I rubbed my eyes, looked again, and it was still there. I had to learn more.

16 Rounds

The Arsenal Firearms AF2011-A1 (in .45 ACP or .38 Super) is the first production 1911 double-barreled pistol in the world. This beast weighs 65.2 ounces unloaded, and the 1-piece frame and slide are machined out of solid blocks of 39NiCrMo steel. The frame actually has two separate magazine wells and two single-stack magazines, for a total of 16 rounds of .45 ACP — both paired with a single-floor plate.

The handling characteristics of the fat AF2011-A1 are, shall we say — unusual. But it is possible to control the gun when firing, according to Arsenal staffers. They also have a video on their website showing it firing.

One slide, two barrels, two guide rods, and trust us when we say there's lots more involved!



Get your good glasses on and sit down and think about this. Trust me, your brain will hurt.

Besides the single frame for two mags and single slide for two 5" barrels, there are other specialized parts. The single-spur, double hammer; single-body, double mainspring housing and wide grip safety (all with extra-wide dimensions) are unique to this gun.

When you disassemble the AF2011 you'll notice the special barrel bushings as well as the slide catch lever and thumb safety with extra long pins. On the other hand, the Italian double features pretty standard 1911 parts like the recoil spring rods and recoil springs, firing pins and firing pin plates, leaf springs with three arms and the sears of the trigger system. Also the grip scales, screws, bushings and sights — mounted between the barrels on the top of the slide — are regular components, so you can use every aftermarket part you wish.

Performance

It will be an amazing experience to pull the trigger *one time* and send

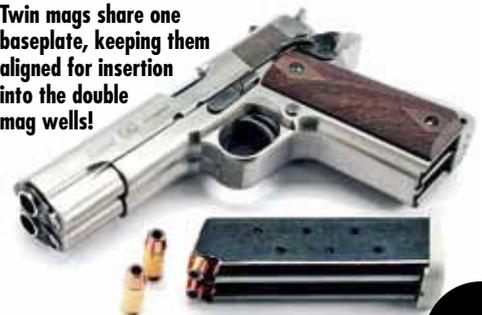
two 230-gr. bullets (460 grains) down range. When you use the AF2011-A1 in condition one, cocked and locked, with 16 rounds in the magazines and the chambers loaded, you can theoretically deliver 18 rounds, or over 4,100 grains of bullet weight to the target. That's about 9.5 ounces, ladies and gentlemen, or more than a half-pound of lead into a target in a few seconds. According to representatives of the company, the two bullets fired in one trigger pull will impact the target 1" to 2" apart at typical distances of 15 to 25 yards.

The AF2011-A1 will be available with a deep blue finish or a nitrite coating, delivered in a dedicated alloy presentation case with security lock. The extraordinary pistol also can be ordered with special engraving, gold inlays, initials and monograms according to whatever you wish.

Do we *need* this gun? Um, maybe I do? But even if you don't *need* one, it is a remarkable engineering feat. And like sports or racing cars, maybe some of the technology used to create the AF2011 will eventually turn up in other designs.

For more info: www.americanhandgunner.com/arsenal-inc or (708) 643-2220

Twin mags share one baseplate, keeping them aligned for insertion into the double mag wells!



NO BULL! BLADES!



LEO



TTTK



S.I.C.K.



S.I.C.K.

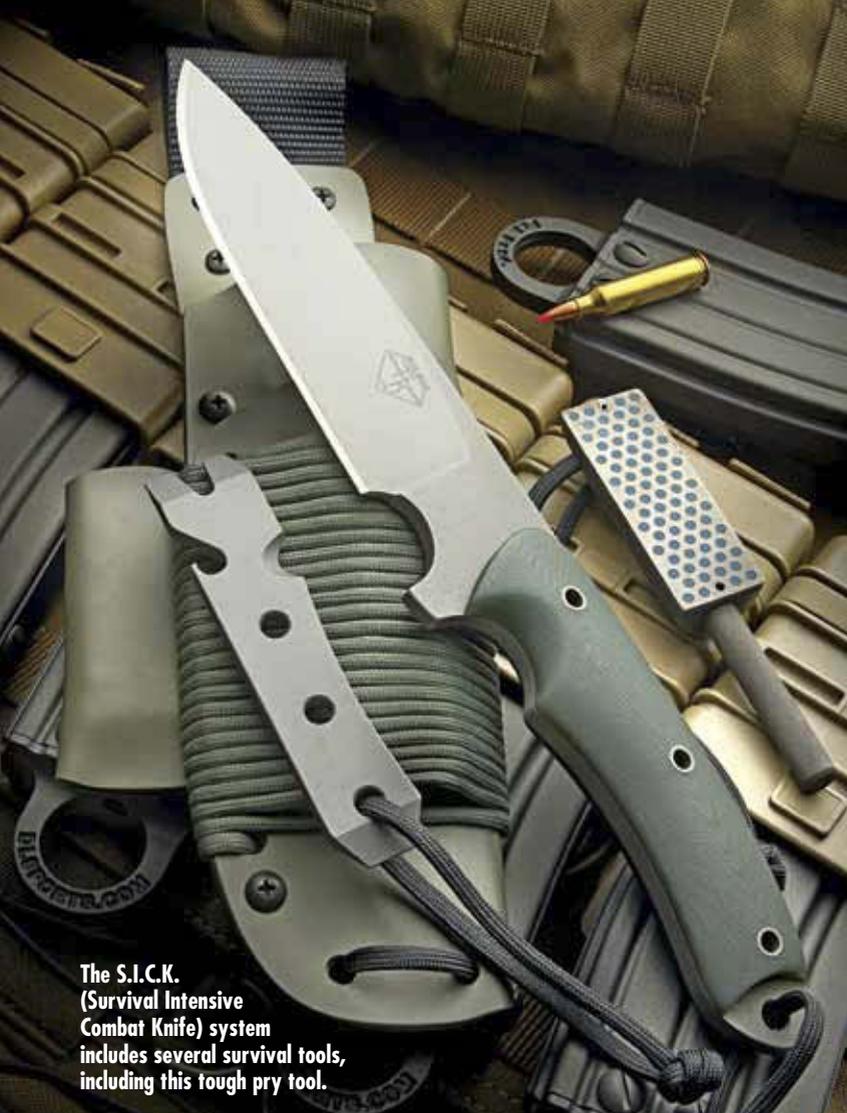
PAT COVERT
PHOTOS: CHUCK PITTMAN

TRACE RINALDI'S CUSTOM BLADES: STANDING THE TEST OF TIME

When we first featured custom knifemaker Trace Rinaldi in these pages 10 years ago he was just a young upstart trying to break into an already crowded field of artisans. Most were riding the tactical wave jumpstarted by the first Gulf War. Back then we used these words to sum up the young knifemaker's wares: "Straight and simple, Trace makes knives meant to be used. These are edged implements that can turn the average Walter Mitty into a human thresher." Since our last visit Trace's career has gone through some major changes, so we thought it would be interesting to go back and give our

readers an update.

One thing that hasn't changed is the "no bull" style you'll find in every one of Trace's knives. His knives don't mince words, just everything that gets in their path. Like most successful knifemakers Trace has continued to improve the quality of his craftsmanship and take advantage of new cutting edge technology, but his penchant for building no-nonsense knives is rooted in his past. "I grew up on a farm in rural southern California," says Trace, "and knives were always tools and prized possessions to me. My love for firearms actually sparked my interest in making knives. Reading *American Handgunner* since I was a teen, I always wanted



The S.I.C.K. (Survival Intensive Combat Knife) system includes several survival tools, including this tough pry tool.



"HIS KNIVES DON'T MINCE WORDS, JUST EVERYTHING THAT GETS IN THEIR PATH"

to build custom pistols, but given the restrictive climate for firearms in California, and all that goes along with that, building guns just wasn't in the cards.

"After meeting a custom knifemaker named Norm Levine at a gun show," Trace continued, "I decided custom knives were the next best thing, and the rest is history. Norm died shortly after I met him, so I never really had someone to teach me to make knives. I read some books, bought some machinery, and through trial and error eventually was making useable tools."

Over the years, Trace built up a faithful following of serious knife users and perfected his work at the same time. Then in 2008, tragedy struck when a fire wiped out his entire So-Cal shop, forcing him to make some hard decisions.

"After the shop burned down in 2009, my family and I moved, lock stock and barrel, to North Idaho near Lake Coeur d'Alene. I had been working on a new shop there for a couple of years, but the fire pushed the move, and we haven't looked back since. It was quite a character-building

period of my life and we had a lot of challenges to overcome to get to where I could make knives again. In retrospect, I wouldn't go back to California for all the tea in China!"

Still Cuttin' The Bull

Don't look for gent's folders in Trace's knife line, but if you need a blade that will wreak havoc, he'll fix you up in spades. Robust blades and ample handles are hallmarks of Rinaldi's knives, which he deals up in nice curves and sound geometry. Nowhere will you see this knifemaker's abundant talents better displayed than in his comprehensive S.I.C.K. (Survival Intensive Combat Knife) model. At just under 12" in overall length, the S.I.C.K. is a healthy-sized knife. The knife's 5.5" drop-point blade is built of thick premium CPM-S30V stainless steel and is 1.6" across at its widest. Below the cutting edge is a choke-up finger choil opposite a long, notched thumb ramp for enhanced purchase. The sumptuous G10 handle has an index finger groove and exposed skull-

cracker base with lanyard hole.

And that's just where the fun begins. "The S.I.C.K. includes a pry tool that also doubles as a striker for the firestarter/sharpener," Trace explains. "The pry tool is intended to do everything you are always tempted to do with a knife tip or edge that you shouldn't use it for! The firestarter/sharpener uses a Mischmetal (rare earth alloy) fire rod that is much more effective than regular ferrocium. The sparks that come off can actually bounce around on the ground like welding sparks. The rod is pinned in, and the handle also has a DMT diamond sharpener to maintain your knife-edge. The scallop on the pry tool wraps around the rod increasing the contact patch, making it a very effective striker." A cord-wrapped multi-level Kydex sheath brings the knife and goodies all together in one place for transport. In essence, the S.I.C.K. is not just a knife, but a survival system built for endurance in any wilds this planet cares to dish up.

Continued on page 72

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3. Do you wear: A) Standard muffs B) Electronic muffs C) Custom ear plugs (electronic or standard) D) Soft ear plugs E) A combination of both
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NEW!
TO ENTER:
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Built in collaboration with Advanced Armament Corporation, Nighthawk Custom's new AAC Suppressor-Ready pistol is one you will cherish for a lifetime. This is an all-business gun, ready to use with or without an Advanced Armament Suppressor. A steel thread-protector comes standard to protect your barrel when the suppressor is not in use.

Available through Nighthawk Custom, its Preferred Dealers or from Advanced Armament Corporation, this custom handgun is loaded with proprietary features. The first to catch your eye will be the lightening cuts on the top of the slide, mainspring housing and front strap matching the Advanced Armament M4-2000 suppressor. The slide sports new Heinie Ledge Straight-Eight Suppressor Sights which are only available thru Nighthawk Custom. These sights are designed to give you a complete sight picture over the top of the suppressor. The distinct "ledge" rear sight allows you to cock the weapon using a hard surface if needed.

CUSTOM FEATURES:

- Proprietary lightening cuts on the frontstrap, mainspring housing and slide top
- Forged frame and slide
- Nighthawk Custom match-grade blacked-out threaded barrel with thread protector
- Medium length lightweight match-grade blacked-out trigger
- Ultra-thin Aluma-grips with Nighthawk Custom logo
- Advanced Armament corporation logo on both sides of the slide behind the rear cocking serrations
- Forged slide stop cut flush with chamfered frame
- Complete de-horn for easy carry

BONUS

1 Stack-On's Portable Security Case is designed to secure a wallet, credit cards, cell phone or handgun for concealed-weapon permit holders during transport. The safe features a keyed-lock and meets TSA airline firearm transportation guidelines. **2** The "Wrapid" by Andrews Leather, is described as a close concealing belt holster with the quick on/off convenience of belt loops wrapping up under the belt, attaching to locking 1-way snaps. In addition, the holster comes along with a matching double-snap-on mag pouch. These custom models are made from exotic Hornback Gator leather! **3** The Mantis Knives MU-6 Red Cyclops offers unique looks and performance. Overall length is 3.5" with a 2.5" blade of AUS-8 steel, anodized 6061 aluminum handle material, with a frame lock and neck chain. **4** According to the maker, the Tactical Ultima offers premium clear hearing and advanced compression technology for protecting your ears. The circuit is designed to automatically sense and reduce background noise and let you hear all the sounds of nature. With four pre-programmed memories, you can select the program best fit for different environments. Noise higher than 90 dB is cut instantly. Value:

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A CLOSE LOOK AT



5



7



4

THE THIRD-BEST THING JOHN CONNOR WONDER-WIDGETS FOR YOUR HAND-HOWITZERS

Granted, the *next best thing* to a brand-new handgun is a great deal on a *used* handgun, making that Roscoe a *second best thing*. So what's the *third-best thing*? Easy. Something cool to enhance, refresh, force-multiply it; an accessory making it look better, snuggle in your hand tighter, improve performance in low-light or inky-dark, personalizes it or just plain tickles your fancy.

Think about it: There's a subtle but significant differ-

ence between pickin' up that new or pre-owned handgun, and sayin' to yourself with stern semi-smugness, "Good to go; okay," versus sayin' "Good to go! Cool!" — with a silly-smirky, almost scary grin on yer mug ... right? And you know, you handgunning' fools, it doesn't take much to do that, does it?

Glad to help, Gonzo; don't mention it. Now check out these gadgets ...

1 Program your Viridian Green Laser X5L or CSL light-and-laser unit to your operational preferences (light, laser, light/laser, etc.). Then, with the unit turned on, shove it into VGL's secure-locking TacLoc holster, and it turns off. When you grip the weapon, your trigger finger indexes on the TacLoc's release button. As you draw, your X5L or CSL automatically turns on! That's Viridian Green Laser's new ECR Enhanced Combat Readiness system. When you draw — it's on!

2 See the kinda J-shaped extension on the magazine base plate? That's Escala Industries' MRS (Magazine Restraint System). Developed by a young cop, they allow you to clip spare mags into your pockets, like the offside front pockets on jeans, without using a mag pouch. I found they're also great for those elastic mag/accessory loops in jacket pockets, keeping mags from slipping out and giving you a more secure hold. Available for 1911 mags, they'll soon be available for Glock magazines.

3 Ruger's outrageously popular LCP and LC9 pistols are now available new pre-equipped with sleek, frame-hugging CenterFire lasers by LaserMax. If you already own a naked LCP or LC9 though, no problem — you can buy them direct from LaserMax. The ambidextrous on/off button is perfectly placed for indexing, and they're inset in a dished recess to protect against accidental activation.

4 The folks at Strike Industries are a bunch of proud flag-wavers, and they've molded Old Glory into some fine, tough polymer and slim-profile 1911 grips. All are cut for ambi-safeties, and offered in matte or semi-gloss finish. The flag texture really works, providing an excellent grip, and your smile's gonna shine over their low price too!

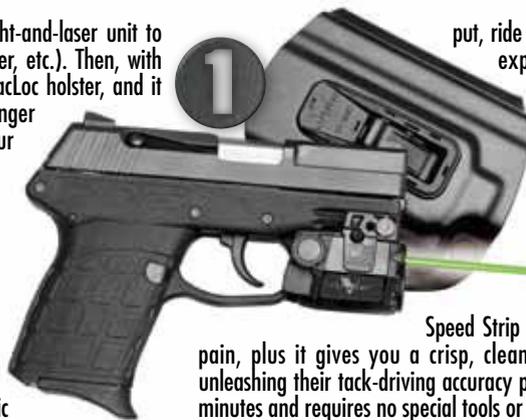
5 The problem with many conventional pistol mag pouches is the way they slide and twist out of position and create irritating "hard points" on your hipbones. These new OWB Mag Carriers by CrossBreed Holsters stay

put, ride high, comfy and close to your body, expose more mag area to grab, and are nicely raked forward. They're available for one or two mags for a wide array of pistols.

6 There are tons of slick-shootin' Ruger .22 auto pistols out there, and they're a pain in the butt to field strip and reassemble. The patented Speed Strip Kit by Majestic Arms eliminates the pain, plus it gives you a crisp, clean 3.5- to 3.75-pound trigger pull, unleashing their tack-driving accuracy potential. Installation takes about 15 minutes and requires no special tools or gunsmith-level skills.

7 Just the right tool for the job, the new STUL — pronounced S-tool — helps you get 'yer Glock apart. The STUL (Slide Removal Tool) allows ladies with long fingernails and guys with sausage-fingers or work-worn digits to comfortably apply even downward pressure on Glock slide-locks during disassembly. You may not think you need it — until you try it, just once!

For info: www.americanhandgunner.com/product-index and click on the company name.



1



3



2



6

GUN RIGHTS

Alan Korwin



DIAL 911 – AND FRY?

The confrontation you've prepared for, thought about endlessly and (hopefully) hoped never happens to you — just occurred. An intruder made an attempt on your life and you prevailed. You heard the break and enter, quickly armed yourself and got to cover, and when the villain fired a shot, you returned fire and dropped him where he stood. Three rounds to the chest and one into the wall, where it stopped inside a stud.

He's lying there on your now bloodstained carpet and looks dead, but you're not a doctor and can't tell for sure. Heart pounding, pulse racing, ears ringing madly from the noise; you're shaking badly from the adrenaline dump. What do you do next?

The tactics and strategy guys drilled you to scan your surroundings for other threats, and reload from cover. There could be accomplices inside or outside. The guy with lead poisoning could reanimate. You know better than to walk over and pump a few extra rounds into the dirtbag, because forensics will spot that and turn an otherwise perfectly clean shoot into a deliberate homicide charge. Your thoughts finally clear enough to realize you need to summon help.

The problem is, you're in no condition to make any sort of cogent statements. Who knows what might spill out of your pie-hole after an encounter like that. And here's the dilemma facing every American involved in a self-defense shooting: If you don't call 911, there will be an automatic assumption you're guilty, through the entire legal process now steamrolling toward you. And if you do call, you'll make statements into a police voice recorder that can *and will* be used against you — to the very people on their way to make an arrest and secure a conviction. If the perp or an accomplice calls first, they'll be "victims" and you'll be "defendant."

Don't you have the right to remain silent? Technically, not until you're charged, and failure to call just looks like guilt. Any right to silence you think you have evaporates when you start blabbing into the recorder. Don't you have the right to an attorney during questioning? That evaporated too when the operator began grilling you, as trained. What about your Fifth Amendment right against self-incrimination? Yeah, what about it?

This is the biggest and deadliest loophole in self-defense law in America. You're damned if you do and damned if you don't. Dial 911 ... and fry.

What Then?

In conferring with more than 70 experts on this problem for my most recent book, *After You Shoot: Your gun's hot. The perp's not. Now what?* I learned significant numbers of "self-defense" convictions rely on frantic traumatized statements in the 911 recordings. No one has really solid answers (or agreement!) on how to protect you from that, because the judiciary is a mess.

Lethal-force expert and prolific writer Massad Ayoob, one person

Continued on page 90

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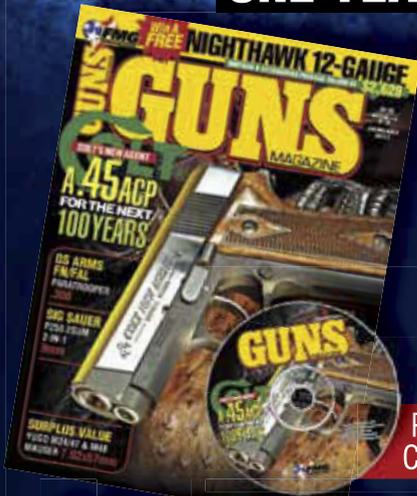
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NO BULL BLADES!

Continued from page 65

At 8.75" in overall length, Rinaldi's wicked LEO model is a mid-sized all purpose tactical, equally at home in field or combat. This slick-styled knife has a 4.5" re-curved blade (3.5" in cutting edge) and features an up-front finger choil. The nicely sculpted, yet business-like G10 handle has two finger grooves, a lanyard hole, and features oversized Torx screw construction. The LEO is packaged in a Kydex sheath with Tek-Lok belt/gear fastener.

The TUK (Tactical Utility Knife) is Trace's base model bread-and-butter tactical. At 7.4" in overall length, the TUK is the perfect everyday carry for those who prefer a fixed-blade to a folding knife. A 3" drop-point blade does the cutting chores and notching on the spine adds gripping power. A finger-grooved handle offers excellent purchase and the fully rounded shape fits the palm like a glove. The small but effective TUK is delivered with a Kydex sheath. Want bigger? Trace also offers a larger 9.25" TUK with a 4.25" blade.

The TTKK, Rinaldi's "tactical utility kitchen knife," is today's modern camp knife. Designed in conjunction with friend and cutlery writer Joe Talmadge, the TTKK has a curvaceous wrap-around handle for superior grip, and don't let the "kitchen" reference fool you. This 9.5" knife can perform a myriad of field chores. The blade is 4.5" in length with a deep-bellied, drop-point profile and a notched thumb rest on the back. A multi-carry Kydex sheath is included.

Options aplenty

Trace offers a selection of steels, including CPM S30V, CPM 154, and CPM3V Crucible Industries offerings, or you can go fancy with exotic patterned Damascus. His typical handle material is G10 synthetic, but here again you can upgrade to carbon fiber or exquisite burl wood. His prices are right in line for handmade custom fare, ranging from \$300 to \$900 or so.

As for Rinaldi, he just enjoys doing what he likes best, making rugged, straight forward using knives! "I enjoy the freedom it allows me to live and work where I want," says Trace. "It's also great to take mankind's first tool and put my own spin on it, while having a style that is recognizable. I don't like making knives for show. My motto is: Function is beauty, and simplicity is the final evolution of complexity." If you're looking for a *honest-to-goodness*, no bull knife, the blade stops here!



For more info: www.americanhandgunner.com/trace-rinaldi or trace.rinaldi@gmail.com

**AGES
4-21**

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SHOULDER-STOCK

Continued from page 51

For a target I chose one of Action Target's steel 18x24" PT-Torsos. I shot five rounds from each pistol handheld from 25 yards. Then attached the shoulder stock and shot another five rounds. Next I moved back to 50 yards and repeated the process but only with shoulder stock attached. The same was done at 100 yards. Aiming at all distances was center-of-mass. Ammo for the 9mms was 1961-dated Finnish military surplus from a freshly opened airtight can. Bullets were 115-gr. FMJs. For the .30 Luger it was Fiocchi commercial ammo with 93-gr. FMJ bullets.

I wasn't trying for pinpoint accuracy (as if I could do it anyway ...). So as expected, each pistol made 3" to 4" clusters at 25 yards handheld. When the shoulder stock was attached, the second string of five bullets splashed right in amongst the first five. No surprises there. I also expected to make nice round clusters when shooting from 50 yards with the pistols braced against my shoulder.

Surprise — I didn't! They are so muzzle-light it was far more difficult than I expected to hold them steady. With the two shorter-barreled pistols, I only hit steel four times each. With the long Luger, I hit all five shots, but the entire target was needed for the hits. From 100 yards, I hit steel only two shots each with the P35 and short Luger, but did manage to pepper it four times with the longer Luger.

Being just a big frustrated I moved into my shooting house and braced on a sandbag with the P35 and fired 10 rounds at 100 yards. I still only managed to connect twice. While painting the target again I thought, "Ok, I'm going to get radical!" To that end, I fired 50 rounds from 100 yards before looking through the spotting scope to find only five splashes on target.

My conclusion was, simply, shoulder stocks *don't* turn pistols into long-range shooters. They're fun to play with but I can't see where they ever had a truly practical application beyond close-range trench fighting.

And Another Thing

I'm sure at this point some of you are thinking, "But aren't detachable shoulder stocks are illegal?!" Well, the answer is yes — and no. For modern handguns they certainly are, but the ATF has ruled that some handguns in curio and relic status can have their shoulder stocks. Before buying one, however, it would be wise to check their list and make sure you're within the law.



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PACKIN' PISTOL

Continued from page 59

For a gun of this nature I thought the express sights would be fine for its intended purpose. Sight alignment is quick, and even my aging eyes can still see them fairly well. The gold bead front sight was beneficial and easy to acquire and the accuracy I obtained from these sights is more than acceptable. Back in my younger days when I followed a pack of hounds chasing wild boar, these sights would have been wonderful, especially when most of the shooting was an up close and personal matter. Heck, this gun would have been perfect for some of those encounters with big mean hogs.

I liked the way this gun handled at the range. The trigger broke around 3½ pounds, which I consider just fine from a revolver for this purpose. The Model 97 is truly a modern single action, with transfer bar situated directly in front of the hammer, moving slightly up and down. The safety engages when the hammer is fully forward and the trigger is released.

Impeccable Workmanship

This mid-frame single action had extremely tight tolerances and

custom hand fitted parts, just as you would expect from Freedom Arms. The revolver is all stainless steel, and the action was silky smooth — much like the larger Model 83 I've shot in .44 Mag. and .454 Casull. I get bored pretty quick with target shooting at the range, so I made a quick trip to the farm where I busted some rocks on a pond bank. Not that much more exciting than punching paper but not so monotonous. The more I shot this revolver, the more I liked it. Getting familiar with a gun before you see real action is essential. I want to be ready when I see the next critter appear unexpectedly.

The fluted cylinder is easy on the eyes and better yet, can be interchangeable with a .45 ACP cylinder. This adds yet another dimension to the shooting applications. Incidentally, the barrel/cylinder gap was almost non-existent. The front sight can also be interchangeable on the adjustable-sighted models. This is a nifty option when going from .45 ACP defensive rounds to heavy .45 Colt bison busters.

Carry Gear

The next piece of equipment that was almost as important as the gun was the holster. After all, if I'm going to be packing this firearm around all the time, I must select a carrying option both functional and comfortable. I

met Karla Van Horne of Purdy Gear at the most recent SHOT Show, and fell in love with her leather products. Karla makes some of the most aesthetically pleasing and functional holsters I've ever seen, and not just for cowboy-action events. These custom holsters are available in a wide variety of options for the most demanding ergonomic considerations, or a specific activity. Karla also makes shoulder rigs, cartridge belts and a bunch of other neat accessories.

Now I'm all fixed for the next varmint to stand there and watch me plow a food plot, check a fence, feed catfish or take a morning stroll. The Freedom Arms Model 97 will be an ideal handgun for fishing trips, camping, hiking or any other outdoor fun where peace of mind is welcome. Who knows, I just might take a deer with this revolver at close range. Whatever the situation, it's going to be nice knowing I have a real packin' pistol on my side, and it's put together by real Americans, right here in the good ol' USA.

So, Mr. Taffin, I seem to have found my Perfect Packin' Pistol. What's yours? 

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TAFFIN TESTS

Continued from page 44

but help believe if Sam Colt was alive when the 1911 was being made he probably would have done some of them something like this." I certainly can't disagree with him.

One of the problems is people who think, "I would not want to shoot that gun — it's too nice." To those folks Jason says all of his guns are made for shooting and *should* be shot. To this end they are hand-fitted with a Nowlin Match-Grade barrel with a target crown, flush with the barrel bushing, and from Cylinder & Slide comes the hammer, sear, disconnect, slide stop and thumb safety.

The first attributes of this pistol noticed are, of course, the bluing, the case hardened frame, and the spectacular grip panels. Any time I test guns on our local range I always have folks who want to see the latest. You can bet all the comments about this pistol were positive. Once we get past the obvious, we can concentrate on those items, which help to make it such an excellent shooter.

The top of the frame is serrated, from the back of the front sight to the front leading edge of the rear sight.

The sights themselves consist of a fully adjustable rear Bo-Mar-style Kensight, matched up with a post front sight, which is set in a dovetail. The post front sight slants slightly forward, while the rear sight blade slants in the opposite direction and is also serrated to cut down glare. The square front sight fits perfectly in the square notch of the rear sight with just the right amount of daylight allowed on both sides.

Both the hammer and trigger are skeletonized, the grip safety is a beavertail and both the frontstrap and flat backstrap/mainspring housing are fully checkered; beautifully, I might add. The highly polished slide has cocking serrations both front and rear and is tightly and smoothly fitted to the frame. On the left side we find "South Fork Arms" and the right side in front of the ejection port, which has been relieved and lowered, is inscribed "Custom Elite."

A Shooter

Not only is this Custom Elite unique in its appearance, I also experienced uniqueness in the fact Jason sent along Hornady test ammo consisting of five different loads: The 185-gr. FTX, 185-gr. XTP-JHP, 185-gr. Z-Max, 200-gr. XTP-JHP and their 230-gr. HAP Steel Match. Test firing was done at a distance of 20 yards, with the best five of six shots measured in each case. All of

these Hornady loads shot extremely well, especially when you consider this Custom Elite .45 was held in 73-year-old hands, while 73-year-old eyes lined up the sights. Jason guarantees 1" or less at 25 yards, and I have no doubt a younger and well-experienced shooter could accomplish this easily. The average for all five loads, using my hands and eyes, was just barely over 1½", and when I say barely I mean by less than 3/100"! The heaviest bullet, at 230 grains, proved to be the most accurate, with a group right at the magic 1" mark. However, the others are so close, for all practical purposes all groups are identical.

There's one other connection to the early Colt Single Actions with this Custom Elite — Jason's desire to provide presentation boxes. He wasn't satisfied with his own efforts, so he has hired someone with higher wood working skills to build the boxes. In addition to the pistol and the ammunition, he also sent along two examples, one in walnut and the other in oak, both fully lined. They are worthy of this beautiful pistol.

It's a remarkable pistol, done-up in a way not commonly encountered. Who says there's nothing new in the 1911 world?



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SIXGUNNER

Continued from page 26

new .44 Magnum, both frame and cylinder were increased in size. The .44 Special was forgotten, and the .45 Colt arrived in the early 1970s, but in the larger .44 frame.

In 2005, I talked to the then-president of Ruger about using the New Model .357 Magnum Flat-Top as the basis for a .44 Special version. He didn't say yes, but then again he didn't say no, and thanks to Lipsey's placing an order for 2,000 units, the .44 Special became a reality. Then 1 year later, Ruger added it to the catalog as a standard item. Again, that could've been the end except for the farsightedness of Lipsey's. This past year Lipsey's took the next logical step and ordered the New Model .357 Magnum Flat-Top in a .45 Colt version in both blue and stainless steel and with 4½" and 5½" barrel lengths. And they didn't even stop there, but went one step further and made them .45 Flat-Top Convertibles with an extra .45 ACP cylinder along with each sixgun.

Pressure/Accuracy

Let me repeat the fact the New Model .45 Colt Flat-Top Ruger Blackhawks are basically the same size as the original .357 Magnum Blackhawk and the Colt Single Action. After the original .45 Blackhawk arrived back in the early '70s, handloaders found they could go well above loads they were used to using in the Colt Single Actions, and most reloading manuals started having a special section for the .45 Ruger Blackhawk.

Some of these loads are in the 25,000-32,000 psi range and *must never* be used in the new Flat-Top .45 from Lipsey. This is an easy-to-pack, medium-framed .45 Colt single action and loads should be tailored accordingly. For me, that means 250- to 260-grain bullets should be kept under 1,100 fps. Save the heavier loads for larger-framed sixguns.

Over the years, .45 Colt sixguns have been plagued with chamber throats in the cylinders, which have not adhered to any sort of standard specifications. I have found .45 Colt cylinder throats as tight as .449" and as large as .457" with the ideal being somewhere around .451" to .452". Tight cylinders are a relatively easy fix, requiring only a throat reamer and the skill to use it. Overly large cylinders can be overcome by using larger diameter bullets, or in extreme cases being replaced. Sending a .452" bullet down a .457" chamber throat doesn't do much for accuracy.

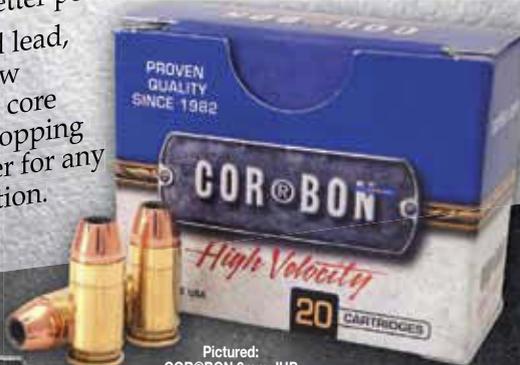
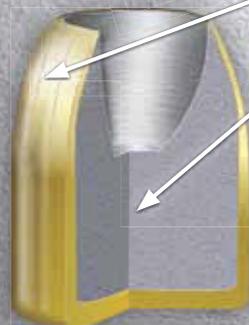
Both of the cylinders on each of these Ruger .45 Convertibles have been

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cut correctly. With the blue version the .45 Colt cylinder having uniform throats at .451", while all of the .45 ACP holes measure .452". With the stainless six-guns, both the .45 Colt and .45 ACP cylinders throats are all a uniform .451". These details in proper sizing the throats are, no doubt, a large part of the reason these sixguns shoot so well.

Details

The blued and stainless steel versions are offered in 4½" and 5½" barrel lengths, however I opted for the 5½" barrel on each. For most of my sixgunning life I have preferred a 7½" barrel single action for shooting, and a 4¾" length for easy packing. In recent years I have found the 5½" to be an excellent compromise between the two. Indeed, the new Rugers are excellent candidates for the title of Perfect Packin' Pistol.

Sights are excellent, consisting of a black Micro rear sight with a nice square notch matched up perfectly with a black ramp front sight with a sloping blade. Normally New Model Ruger single actions come with trigger pulls heavier than I prefer and it's my standard procedure to remove one grip panel and slip one side of the trigger return spring off its post, resulting in a lighter pull. With these two .45 Flat-Tops this resulted in trigger pulls of 2½ to 3 pounds.

When Ruger first started building

single actions in 1953 with their first .22 Single-Six, the grips were checkered rubber and this carried over to the 1955 Blackhawk .357 Magnum. Sometime in 1956 they began issuing walnut stocks and this carried over through the Old Models and New Models. With the arrival of Bisley Models in the mid-1980s grip panels were a little more exotic, appearing to be of cocobolo. Apparently the days of wood panels are over and current single actions mostly have checkered rubber/plastic.

The grips on these .45 Colt Flat-Tops are faux ivory, with black Ruger eagle medallions. The panels on the blue version are such that the pinhole on the grip doesn't quite match up with the pins on the grip frame resulting in an overlap of the panel on the backstrap and an underlap on the frontstrap. Apparently someone paid attention to this fact and the stainless steel version has grips fitting correctly. These sixguns are so nice I intend to fit them with custom grips, and currently the blued version wears a pair of exotic wood grips stolen from another Ruger.

Shooting

Shooting both of these .45s with either cylinder in place is extremely pleasurable. In fact we could call them Perfectly Pleasurable Perfect Packin' Pistols. Whether using standard or

slightly above .45 Colt loads or .45 ACP loads, felt recoil is never close to punishing. The grip panels are a little thinner than I prefer, however with their smooth finish they roll gently in the hand.

I normally like to load standard .45 Colts with 250-260 grain cast bullets at around 900 to 1,000 fps, and both of these .45 Flat-Tops handled those loads with ease. Elmer Keith's original bullet Lyman's #454424 weighs around 260 grains from my alloy, however some .45 Colt cylinders are just a smidgen short when this bullet is crimped in the crimping groove.

Several years ago Dave Scovill set about to basically redesign the Keith bullet by slightly shortening the nose and adding more weight in the body. The result is the RCBS #45-270SAA which weighs around 280 grains from my wheelweight alloy. Loaded over 10 grains of Unique it clocks out at just over 1,000 fps and groups into 1" making it an excellent everyday working load for these Perfect Packin' Pistols. Complete test results on both .45 six-guns using both cylinders are  in the chart on Web Blast.

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PRE-WAR COLT

Continued from page 49

the mainspring housing were both checked in the traditional manner, by hand.”

Keeping with the classically styled theme of the gun, the slide top was left round and fit with a modified Professional Grade rear sight and black serrated front sight. Also machined into the slide were ball cuts, which help to accentuate the retro look of the gun. Just like the checkering on the gun, the de-horn was also performed by hand with a file. The slide was bordered, which is another old school custom touch, and after all the heavy work was completed the gun was finished in a traditional polished blue. The grips are from the talented maker John Van-Zyck at VZ Grips, and they are a one-off set of walnut done in the pre-war NM tradition.

The Result?

“Larry had a good vision of what we wanted this gun to look and feel like, right down to the grips and the polished finish,” said Jason. “He had seen quite a few examples of my work and had pointed out things he liked from a few different guns I had built. When it came time to spec-out the gun, Larry noted one of my guns in particular and basically said to build it like that one, with some small changes. So it actually gave me a good bit of leeway to take things a step further on his gun, and stretch out a bit on some of the modifications I wanted to do.”

Regardless of your school of thought, this is the kind of custom work we all dream about. Whether or not this should have been the base gun is something you probably have an opinion about. But I challenge *anyone* to argue the quality of the build itself. It is, simply, the sort of stuff we love best here at *Handgunner* — uncompromising hand craftsmanship, executed as near perfectly as humans can accomplish. The final result is not only a work of art, but a highly functional tool as well. Marvelous, if you ask me.

“I received the completed pistol in early August 2011,” said Vickers. “In my opinion, this Burton pre-war Colt is the finest 1911 I have ever received from another gunsmith. And to be honest, it’s nicer than I would have been able to do myself in terms of fit and finish. The pistol is absolutely stunning, and a tribute to Jason’s workmanship. I rarely acquire custom pistols anymore, but if this is the last one I ever get, it was a fitting end to a long line of custom 1911 pistols.”



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AYOOB FILES

Continued from page 20

Jindy sees her parents' familiar van coming up the hill toward them in the gathering darkness.

Confrontation

As their van comes up the hill, their headlights sweep the other vehicle and Jim and Kimberly see Marty whaling savagely on the car. Jim pulls over, throws the van in Park, and quickly makes his way to his daughter's side. As he goes past Marty, the son-in-law he has been golfing and playing pool with all day nails him with a solid, full-power sucker punch to the face. Stunned by the blow, Jim grabs Marty in a clinch, and Jindy grabs her estranged husband from behind, trying to pull him off her father.

In moments, all three are in the roadside ditch. Jindy is on her back, and her father is down also, partly on top of her. Marty is above him doing a "ground and pound," raining punches onto Jim.

Only Kimberly is still standing. She has no idea how to fight. She remembers that Jim's gun is in the van, and she sprints back to get it. Snatching the Ruger from its holster, she dashes back to the scene. By now, Marty is still on top, and appears to be hammering both her husband and her daughter unconscious.

She hits Marty on the back of the head with the gun. He shows no reaction and keeps punching. She hits him again, and a third time. He ignores the blows and continues hitting Jim.

Desperate to stop him, she points the gun at his lower body, hoping to fire a shot that will wound and disable Marty, and not miss or pass through and hit her loved ones.

Kimberly Patterson pulls the trigger.

Click! Jim has always kept the pistol Condition Three, the 7-round magazine fully filled, and the chamber empty. But the "click" has done what three blows of the aluminum-framed pistol did not. It has gotten Marty Reece's attention.

He turns toward her savagely. Kimberly sees him rise and come at her, his face a mask of absolute rage. Marty Reece reaches aggressively for the gun as he snarls, "Pistol whip me, bitch!?"

And at that moment, it hits her that her son-in-law is going to take the gun she doesn't know how to shoot away from her, and kill her and her husband and her daughter with it.

The Shooting

On his back in the ditch, half on top of his daughter, Jim Patterson sees and feels his assailant spring upward and turn on Jim's wife of more than 20 years. He sees him move toward her,

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reaching for the gun, and the adrenaline pushes past the pain and the injury and propels him to his feet. He can see that only a matter of inches separate Marty and Kimberly, and the raging younger man is about to take the gun.

"Give me that son of a bitch," Jim cries, meaning the .45. Kim tosses the gun to him across the short distance separating them, and he catches it awkwardly in his right hand. He quickly shifts to a firing grasp, his fingers wrapping around the Pachmayr grips, as his left hand grabs the slide and racks it. Marty has seen the gun changing hands, and is now reaching toward Jim to grab the Ruger, and Jim knows there is only one thing he can do to stop this man from killing him and his wife and his daughter.

Jim Patterson pulls the trigger as fast as he can

The muzzle flashes illuminate the night with a stroboscopic effect. He can see Marty turn away. He stops shooting. Marty falls and says, "Oh, my God, I'm gonna die!"

Jindy tries to give Marty first aid. Kimberly manages to find a cell phone and calls 9-1-1 for paramedics. Jim makes his way back to the van, shoves the still-cocked Ruger P90 into the holster that's still in the van, and sets it on the front seat — and then begins to weep.

The Investigation

Marty Reece had one thing right that night: he was going to die. Autopsy showed he had sustained five through-and-through gunshot wounds. He had been hit once in the right upper arm, with the bullet reentering the chest and piercing lung, liver and diaphragm, exiting the lower chest on the opposite side. Another bullet had gone side-to-side through the intestines. One slug had gone back to front, cutting a major vessel that brings blood back to the heart, the inferior vena cava. Two more 230-grain FMJ projectiles had entered the back, cutting the spinal cord and exiting through the front of the torso. Gunshot residue on the body was indicative of close-range shooting.

Father, mother and daughter waived their Miranda rights and, still badly shaken, gave video interviews to detectives that night. Sheriff's department personnel were familiar with Marty Reece's history of physical violence. Jim Patterson voluntarily submitted to a blood/alcohol test, which in the words of one investigator, showed he "had been drinking a little bit but not enough to be concerned." The toxicology screen that accompanied the autopsy of Marty Reece showed a blood alcohol content which constituted nearly twice the Missouri standard of too drunk to drive. Though Jindy told investigators Marty had a long history with meth-amphetamines, and despite the fact she thought meth might have influenced his

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behavior that night, Marty Reece's tox screen was clear for drugs.

It appears in the aftermath the Sheriff's Department determined it was a justifiable homicide. However, the town marshal's office in Noel, Missouri requested the investigation be turned over to them. This was done.

And soon, Jim Patterson was charged with manslaughter. Not long after, the charge was upped to murder in the second degree.

The Trial

Jim Patterson hired Duane Cooper of Pineville, Missouri as defense counsel. Cooper had come to Pineville as a prosecutor, 2 years out of law school. He had done a number of homicide cases in that role, and in 1999 hung out his shingle as a defense attorney. One of the few criminal defense lawyers who could claim an extraordinary 75-percent acquittal record, he knew what it would take to defend Jim Patterson, and that would include solid expert witness testimony. A "gun-guy" in his private life, Cooper asked around for a reference. Someone told him to call Brandon's Gun Shop in Joplin, Mo. And, the folks at Brandon's said, "Call Roy Huntington."

If the name sounds familiar, Roy Huntington is the editor of *American Handgunner* magazine, who came to that job after retiring from a 20-year career as a San Diego street cop. He had worked closely with the late, great forensic firearms master Gene Wolberg of the same department, and had testified as an expert witness in Superior Court in the San Diego area — for the prosecution. When he looked at the evidence, he told me he was horrified.

Huntington took the case, and Cooper got a "two-fer" because with Roy came his wife Suzi Huntington, a retired investigator from SDPD and now editor of FMG's own *American COP* magazine. Suzi worked behind the scenes, analyzing the investigation elements used by the prosecution and showing they had holes in them large enough to drive a paddy wagon through.

Roy focused on reconstruction of the shooting. Because several of Patterson's bullets had entered behind lateral midline, the prosecution was basing much of its case on the theory Reece had been "shot in the back," so it couldn't be self-defense.

The wheels of justice grind slowly, and the case did not come to trial until February of 2012. When it did, it lasted only 3 days. The case had been brought originally by a prosecutor who was seen by some as not friendly to armed citizens. By time of trial, the case had been inherited by her successor, a young prosecutor named Jonathan Pierce. On the defense side, Duane Cooper held no animosity toward Pierce; he saw his

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opponent as someone duty-bound to try to make the best of what his predecessor had started.

In Pierce's pre-trial deposition of Roy Huntington, he had asked, "And that's your opinion, that it was justified, or was self-defense?" Huntington had replied, "Absolutely. Frankly, I was appalled when I heard this was being prosecuted." Huntington had shown Pierce the handwriting on the wall, but perhaps the momentum of the case could not be denied.

Marty Reece reaches aggressively for the gun as he snarls, 'Pistol whip me, bitch?!'

The trial lasted 3 days, almost all of it consisting of the State's case. Duane Cooper's strategy was to win in cross-examination. Armed with Suzi Huntington's analysis of the flaws in the prosecution theory and his own trial experience, he dismantled the prosecution's argument like a wrecking ball. Cop after cop — though called by the prosecution — turned into defense witnesses when they honestly answered the cross-examination questions and showed there was simply no reason to believe it was anything other than defense of self and family.

When the State closed its case on the third and last day of trial, Duane Cooper called only two witnesses for the defense. One was a policeman recalled to the stand to clarify a point of evidence. The other was Roy Huntington. For some 2 hours of direct testimony, Huntington explained the work he had done with Wolberg, and his study of research by Dr. Bill Lewinski at Force Science Institute, by me at Lethal Force Institute and others. He made it clear to the jury, with a pistol with short trigger reset such as the Ruger P90 in question, five shots could easily be fired in under a second. All ear-witness and eyewitness testimony had confirmed this rapidity of fire. And, he stressed, an attacker can turn so quickly away from the defender when the tables are turned against him that several shots can be fired before the shooter can mentally process the fact the threat has stopped — and they can cease pulling the trigger. The jury nodded as he spoke, understanding the final piece of the puzzle.

Cross-examination was brief; there was, after all, nothing in Huntington's testimony that could be effectively challenged. Shortly thereafter, final arguments were made and the case went to the jury. Before that happened, an attempted murder charge (against

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PHOTO: JIM COOPER

Kimberly Patterson for clicking on an empty chamber when she tried to disable the man attacking her husband and daughter) was dismissed by Judge Tim Perigo. The charge against James Patterson went to the jury at last.

It took the jurors only 3 hours to find him not guilty on all counts, and the long nightmare was over.

Lessons

The next time someone tells you, "A good shoot is a good shoot," feel free to laugh. A change in investigating agencies may well have turned a finding of justifiable homicide into a murder charge in this case. Roy Huntington's explanation of action/reaction paradigms that lit the light bulb for the jury and explained the shots in the back in that fast-breaking moment in the dark, covered things which are not taught in law school and are not common knowledge among the jury pool.

Ditto the fact that "Yes, you can shoot unarmed people who are trying to take your gun and murder you and yours with it, as surely as you could do it if they were reaching for their own gun."

The traditional advice of "Say nothing to the cops!" is not written in stone. While Duane Cooper, as a defense lawyer, still gives this advice, he's the first to tell you talking to the cops was helpful to the Patterson family. Jim Patterson's heartfelt account of what happened, taped hours after the shooting — when he sat in an interrogation room, bare-chested because his blood-soaked shirt had been removed — was so obviously sincere it resonated with the jury. Since there was nothing to add, Duane didn't even have to put him on the stand.

One deputy testified at trial during Cooper's cross-examination the statements in the immediate aftermath of the shooting, bearing in mind the three of them had been separated as soon as police arrived on the scene minutes after the incident, "provided a large indicia of truthfulness."

From the hardware side of things, be sure your loved ones know how to use your gun if they ever need to, and don't load the damn thing with hardball! Both Kimberly and Jim came within an instant of being disarmed and possibly murdered because the wife didn't understand how the husband's gun worked. Every single 230-grain Winchester full metal jacket ".45 hardball" bullet went through-and-through in this case. The circumstances were such that no one was behind Marty trying to pull him away, as had happened with both wife and daughter during the moments before the shots were fired. If they had been there, invisible to the shooter in the dark, the results might have been much more tragic than they were.

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It isn't always "Good Guys 1, Bad Guys 0." Little Wyatt was in the Reece vehicle in his carseat when his father was killed by his grandfather. All this has not yet been explained to him. That's going to be tough, and everyone in the family knows it. This is a question perhaps better asked of "Dear Abby" or "Dr. Phil" than of *American Handgunner*, but history tells us trying to be nice to members of the family who have a history of violently abusing other members of that family, rarely seems to end well.

From the hardware side of things, be sure your loved ones know how to use your gun if they ever need to, and don't load the damn thing with hardball!

Another BS alert is when someone says, "The good guy got acquitted in the end, so it's all just fine." That's a little like saying, "After two and a half years of facing death by cancer and the agony and expense of chemotherapy, this patient is cancer free for now, so cancer is nothing to worry about." James Patterson spent tens of thousands of dollars for his defense, and take it from someone who has followed these things for 33 years as an expert witness in weapons/shooting cases, it could have cost him even more.

Jim Patterson told me later, "Mr. Cooper did an excellent job, and so did Mr. Huntington. If I'd spent a million dollars, I don't think I could have got a better defense." The Pattersons and their daughter today have a good relationship, though Jim dreads the day when he has to explain to his grandson why he killed the boy's father. It's not a "happy ending" for the Pattersons, just not so horrible an ending as it might have been.

I personally congratulate Duane Cooper, and Roy and Suzi Huntington, for doing justice in this case. It was Roy's first call to speak for the wrongfully accused instead of his lifelong role of speaking for the prosecution against guilty criminals, and it's better you hear his feelings on that from him instead of from me. But all of us want *American Handgunner* readers to understand just what's at stake, and what can happen in cases like this, and that's one reason this corner of the magazine exists in the first place.



DAVE LAUCK

Continued from page 57

a heavy-duty sight, which cannot get out of adjustment.

It proved to be just the thing I needed to rescue a Smith & Wesson Triple-Lock, which dates back to the time before WWI. Someone had done his best to butcher what was at one time a fine sixgun. They cut the barrel to 4", remounted the front sight, nickel-plated the entire firearm, and then cut a channel to accept a modern style Smith & Wesson rear sight assembly. When it came into my possession, at a very low price because of its condition, the channel was there, however no rear sight had ever been added. I had my gunsmith, Tom at Buckhorn, install the D&L rear sight assembly along with a post-front sight, and now at least I have a shootable sixgun.

A Master's Tribute

Personally I have been shooting 1911s since 1956. I am no expert in either his use or quality, however I do know what I like. Someone who is an expert in the use of the 1911 is our own Clint Smith.

Clint had this to say: "Dave Lauck, of D&L Sports from Gillette, Wyo. (now Chino Valley, Ariz.), built the first Thunder Ranch Special. Dave is a well-versed instructor, tactician, writer and gunsmith. This quiet man built and gave me the pistol as a gift in 1992 in recognition of the opening of Thunder Ranch. The silver-finish, full-sized 1911 is built on a Colt pistol. It has a small ambidextrous safety and Novak sights with night insert, and the slide has forward press check serrations. The slide lock 'button' that normally extrudes from the right side of the receiver is milled flush. The pistol has an extended beavertail and Commander-style hammer. The front and backstraps are hand checkered. The Lauck gun bearers a Thunder Ranch shield, sans the lightning bolt with the words 'Thunder Ranch Special' engraved diagonally across the shield where the three cross stripes are. There has been only one of these pistols built in this configuration with these markings. It has been, and is today, a very reliable and accurate handgun. I still have this pistol, and it was the first custom pistol I ever owned."

Great Guns=Grand Photos

Let's take a look at some of Dave's creations in the beautiful photos by Chuck Pittman. Here at *American Handgunner* we have been blessed with great photographers over the years. So much so, we often take them for granted. Years ago, at least 30 or so, there was a fellow who did superb

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photography to back up many of Skeeter's sixgun articles. When I ran into him at an NRA Show and complimented him on his work he said I was the first one to ever express such. As a writer, I definitely understand a picture is worth a thousand words, so enjoy Chuck's great photographs of some truly grand handguns by Dave Lauck.

There are several 1911s pictured. First comes the Centennial 1911 which is serial numbered 101 for 101 years of the 1911. Dave is one of those, like many of us, who believe the 1911 has never been bested and is basically the best combination of handling, safety, reliability, shootability, power, size, weight, capacity, accuracy and on and on and on. Dave says with the right tuning it is still, after 100 years, the best overall defensive handgun package. The Centennial is his tribute to a great pistol.

Ever since I was privileged to visit Charlie Schreiner's private museum on the YO Ranch, I've been interested in Texas Ranger history reading many books covering all their various time periods. One thing is for sure no matter whether the Rangers were in or out, up or down, they were definitely flamboyant. To celebrate the Rangers, Dave has created a pair of Texas Ranger 1911s. These are beautiful examples of what is known as BBQ guns in Texas. A BBQ gun is known for its striking appearance and is normally worn at special occasions where form highly trumps function. However, a unique aspect of the Texas Rangers is the fact BBQ guns were standard daily wear, and as such, function must at least equal form.

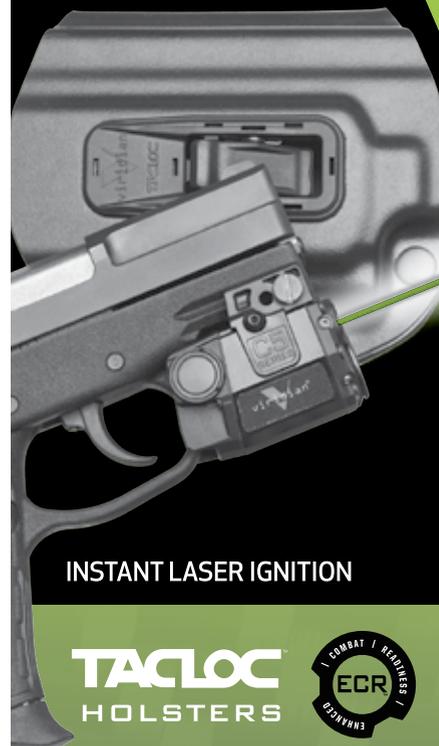
BBQ Guns That Work

Dave's pair of BBQ 1911s are actually his full house Professional Models. They are definitely beautiful on the outside, however this is teamed up with perfection in performance. Dave refuses, as he says, "... to bling-out a stock base gun" that does not have total inner reliability, allowing it to be trusted as a carry gun. Any of these beautifully enhanced pistols and sixguns pictured, are also totally dependable working guns.

Along with the pair of Texas Ranger 1911s, we also have a pair of sixguns representative of earlier Texas Ranger sidearms. At least up until the time between the two world wars, the standard Texas Ranger sidearm was the Colt Single Action. These were usually worn in pairs, often engraved, and most assuredly equipped with ivory or pearl grips, which were also most assuredly a badge of office for the Rangers. Dave's .45 Colts, whether 1911s or Single Actions, are a fitting tribute to a great, long-standing law enforcement organization.

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And not to forget another great organization we have a custom 1911 done for a former Marine as a tribute to his service and the Corps. We can never, ever thank our servicemen and women enough. This Lauck gun is definitely a fitting tribute. The final 1911 is a most striking example, complete with presentation box. This was built up for a client's use in Wild Bunch matches.

The chambers of my sixgunning heart are just about equally spaced between 1911s, Single Actions and Smith & Wesson .44s. I like 'em all. Dave, as mentioned earlier, did a pair of Smith & Wesson .44 Magnums for me. Pictured, we have a couple other beautifully enhanced Smith .44s. One is a silver-plated and engraved 4" .44 Magnum that was ordered by a highly supportive and dedicated wife for her husband upon his retirement as Deputy Sheriff. The second one, done in hard chrome, was done for UFC Champ Randy Couture when he came for a hunting trip while Dave was still residing in Wyoming. Earlier, Dave made up a Presentation Grade 1911 for the ultimate proponent of the use of our greatest pistol, namely Jeff Cooper, when he visited in Wyoming. That pistol now resides in the Buffalo Bill Museum in Cody.

Make My Day

If you've been around shooting long enough, you remember how hard it was to find a Smith & Wesson .44 Magnum in the 1970s. If one was located it usually went for double or triple retail. Smith was working around the clock trying to meet the demand which was caused, by of all things, a movie. In the early 1970s, Clint Eastwood brought his portrayal of Dirty Harry to the big screen. Remember "make my day"? As Dirty Harry he was armed with a .44 Magnum Smith, and the rush was on by folks who had no shooting experience, yet simply had to have a Dirty Harry .44. We managed to survive all this and eventually not only did the price come down on Smiths, but Ruger and Dan Wesson also started making double action .44 Magnums. Dave Lauck's tribute to Clint Eastwood was instituted by several of Clint's friends. Clint graciously accepted the beautifully embellished Model 29 and now keeps it in a special place in his personal office.

So, congratulations to Dave Lauck on his selection as Pistolsmith of the Year for 2012 by the Guild, and more importantly, congratulations and thank you for providing us with examples of handgun art, which are also highly efficient fighting or hunting handguns.



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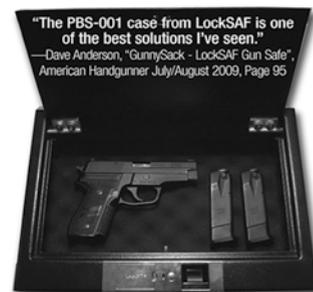
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SPEAK OUT

Continued from page 19

loading patch and ball. I wrote Sam and informed him I couldn't find any here in the bay area of San Francisco. Low and behold, a brown envelope arrived a short while later with enough hornet nesting material to keep me shooting for several years. Now, if they would only quit raising the prices on percussion caps.

You have a terrible publication, Roy, and that is why it's so difficult waiting the 2 months before the next issue arrives so I can rag on it too. I'll try to be more negative when I write next.

Franklin White, SMSgt,
USAF Retired
NRA Endowment Life Member
Fairfield, Calif.

When I was, shall we say, um ... "younger," I read Sam Fadala's books and admired his encyclopedic knowledge of all-things black powder (among other topics). Now, Sam writes for us here at Handgunner, and to say that's both an astounding situation and a source of delight to me, is to sorely understate matters. I'm still a bit amazed Sam knows my phone number and first name, and that's something the same 16-year-old kid never would have believed would happen. Astonished is a good word. RH

Safety Rules

Ms. Heidi Smith hit the nail on the head with her emphasis on the four rules of firearm safety (*Reality Check*, Jul/Aug 2012). We can never go wrong emphasizing the basics and safety. The tragedies with which Ms. Smith illustrated the importance of the rules indicate an over-confidence and complacency of those involved. These are two characteristics we should guard against.

I've drilled my kids on the four rules from an early age, because I cannot guarantee I will be present when they encounter a firearm. In the process, I realized the four rules of firearm safety apply to non-firearm situations. Power tools are an obvious application. Who has not used a power drill or saw for home repair? 1) All tools are always energized (plugged in). 2) Be sure to unplug the tool when changing bits or blades. 3) Keep your finger off the trigger until you're ready to drill or cut. 4) Be sure of what you're drilling or cutting and what is behind it.

Teaching my older kids how to care for their baby brothers or sisters revealed the most entertaining application of the four rules. Anyone who has changed a baby boy knows all babies are always fully loaded. Don't point



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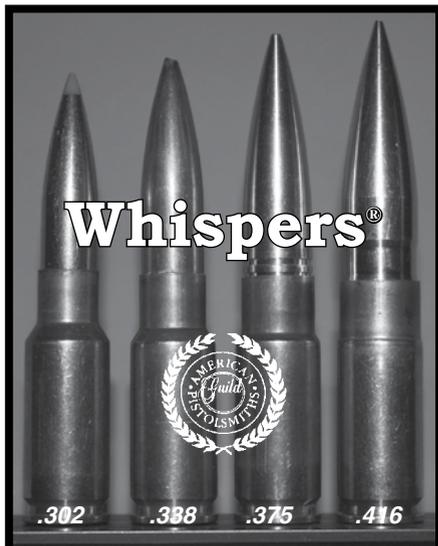
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your baby at anything you don't want destroyed — or at least stained and smelling like spit-up. These gave my kids a good laugh, but also reinforced firearm safety.

By applying the four rules to other applications it keeps the rules ingrained in my thoughts. It makes other activities safer — and can even be fun.

P.S. I'm also one of the 95-percenters with good things to say about *American Handgunner*.

Mark Gruber
 Hastings, Minn.

That's great thinking, Mark, and the analogy using power tools is spot-on. I'm going to use it when I teach the rules from now on too. What a perfectly simple way to get non-gun people to understand the concept. Nicely done! RH

Custom Gunsmith

A long overdue note of thanks for the recommendation of Terry Tussey as a gunsmith. I have an older Browning Hi-Power that needed an overhaul. It had been worked on back in the 1980s by Austin Behlert. Not too many gunsmiths do Hi-Powers these days, and even fewer would work on something that some other gunsmith worked on. It turns out Terry is the guy. He overhauled my Browning and did a fantastic job. He was on time and on budget! I don't know why I waited so long. It's a delight to shoot.

Greg Chambers
 Via e-mail

Greg's experience with Terry (Tussey Custom) is typical of what happens if you rely on a gunsmith with a solid reputation. If you have a dream project in mind, check out the ads for custom pistolsmithing in Handgunner's pages. We know the majority of those who advertise personally, and can safely say, if you see them in our pages, you can trust them. If you have more questions, feel free to drop me a line at editor@americanhandgunner.com and we'll do our best to hook you up with a gunsmith who can help you manage your dream.

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GUN RIGHTS

Continued from page 70

I worked with, has a highly regarded 5-step plan he teaches his students, which I included, but it's formulated for when police arrive. Like many attorneys, he recommends specific statements to make. I call these "Adnarim" (the reverse of Miranda) statements, where you tell authorities the "right" stuff, instead of the state telling you what your rights are. It's imperfect at best, and everyone's Adnarim is different. Check out USCCA's. Will you remember the words? Get them right? If you say anything twice, will it be different, so police can ask which is true?

Many people I meet have their own unique ideas on what to say, how they'll talk their way free, turn officers into friends, and they're delighted to tell you. Not even "experts" are uniform about this. "Don't say anything!" is the most universal advice, but then of course you can't make the call. And when the *gendarmes* arrive, do you just stand mute like a robot? No one can. No one does. "Only say this and this," is very common wisdom, but no one suggests the same set of words.

When police are involved in a shooting, they often actually make no statements, and instead confer with their *team* of lawyers. If that works for them, it ought to be good enough for you, except if you lawyer-up right away your guilt may again be *presumed*. I'll bet most of you don't even *have* a lawyer, which means you'll go shopping for one at exactly the wrong time. Or use the one the people trying to convict you supply as a public defender.

It took a whole book to get to the bottom of this, and there really is no bottom, yet. So be advised you are at risk, *even if perfectly innocent* (Editor's note: Read this month's Ayooob Files for an example). If we get our unique "911-Limited-Immunity Law" passed, that will help. "After You Shoot" introduced it, got our County Attorney to begin investigating it, and we'll keep pushing that ball downfield.

Bottom line, "It's always better to avoid a gunfight than to win one." And remember New Safety Rule #1: "If you ever drop the hammer, you'll be writing out your life savings to your lawyer." The other four rules are in the book. I'm outta space here. 

Alan Korwin is the author of nine books on gun law, including "After You Shoot: Your gun's hot, the perp's not, now what?" He runs the GunLaws.com website for Bloomfield Press, the largest publisher and distributor of gun-law books in the country.

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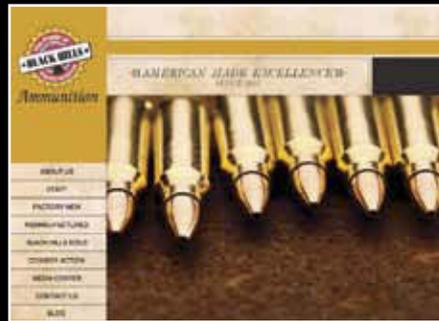
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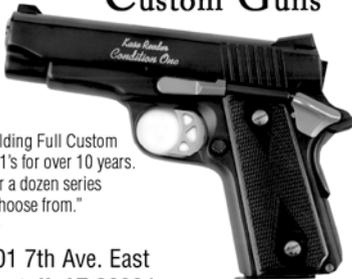


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BERETTA NANO

Continued from page 46

drop it off a tall building to achieve that. This "trigger safety" had its beginning more than 100 years ago, on an Iver Johnson revolver. It was revived around 1930, on the Auer Behordenmodell, and 50 years later on the Glock. It's still a goofy idea, but I do understand why they had to use it.

Details

The locking system of the Nano is the familiar falling-barrel type. The captive recoil spring unit is a version of Larry Seecamp's dual-nested design, and it helps to tame the felt-recoil. The slide locks in the open position when the last round is fired. With the magazine out or a loaded one in place, pull back slightly to release it.

The single-row magazine holds six rounds. A small stud on the left side mates with a channel inside the grip frame, ensuring no tilting at the top. For left-handers, the magazine catch is reversible.

The square-picture sights have three white dots, and the rear notch has ample width. The rear sight is secured with two Allen screws, and can be laterally adjusted in its dovetail. The front sight, in a lengthwise dovetail, has a single Allen screw and can be easily changed.

As with most current pistols, there are several warnings on the grip frame. One is "FIRES WITHOUT MAGAZINE," giving you the good news there is no magazine-disconnect safety. Yet another warning is "DO NOT PULL TRIGGER FOR DISASSEMBLY." This one is directed at the doofus who has left a round in the chamber and is doing the takedown for cleaning.

A Bit Of Shooting

My first note on shooting the Nano was the felt-recoil was much lighter than I expected, especially as I was using only high-performance self-defense loads. Those included the Plus-P DPX from Cor-Bon, the Black Hills JHP Plus-P and the Hornady Critical Defense FTX, all 115-grain loads. Firing was at 7 yards, with a 2-hand hold, which is my favorite way with these little pistols.

The 8" black of a Champion Visi-Color 100-yard sight-in target is essentially the same as center-of-mass on a combat card, and all shots were in the black. The 5-shot groups all measured between 3" and 4", and all were well centered. Functioning was flawless, of course (it's a Beretta!). You may be amazed at the suggested retail price of around \$475. 

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The #101 Bachman Slide for the 1911, shown with the MP 213 single magazine pouch. Both pieces are illustrated with border tooling.

WALKER'S ULTRA EAR

I tend to find myself reviewing active hearing protection and any kind of new hearing gear I find. Then it dawned on me, I was so interested in it because I'm, well ... getting older. And all those .357 Magnums fired without hearing protection when I was 15 (in unison now: "Idiot!") are catching up with me. So while I guard my hearing zealously now, and have for several decades, I'm finding the "amplification" features of the new generations of hearing protection technology to be very appealing. Frankly, they work, and not only do you hear more clearly in the field when hunting, stalking, trying to locate that baying hound, etc., but it sure makes range-work easier too. No more lifting your muff to hear a command just as the guy next to you let's one go. We've all been there.

The Ultra Ear line from Walker's (long known for innovation in electronic hearing protection), is both affordable and delivers fine performance for the money. The Ultra Ear BTE goes behind your ear, with a tube leading into your ear canal. It has a volume control, and you can adjust the sound quality too. It has a sound limiting circuit to muffle shots. Most people would use one of these in the field to better hear game walking in the woods, or to isolate sounds. Two would give you stereo sound and offer mild hearing protection. They are around \$39.95, so a pair wouldn't hurt too bad.

The Ultra Ear ITC looks more like in-ear hearing aids, although they are not actual medical hearing aids. Their in-the-ear location makes them a bit less cumbersome, and they also offer similar features as the BTE, amplifying sound and offering mild compression to cut in-coming gunshot sounds. While I couldn't track down what "mild" means in their literature, I found wearing mine with standard muffs allowed me to still hear, but between the two, cut gunshot sound fine. On their own, they would work I would think for a "now and again" shot (like hunting), but I wouldn't use them solely on the range. About \$75 for both.

They are both inexpensive ways to experiment with sound amplification in the field, and if you like it, you can invest in higher performing models if you need them. Don't tell, but I keep my set of ITC in-ear models handy by the TV set. Just testing them, mind you. *For more info:* www.americanhandgunner.com/Walker's or (877) 269-8490



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TRUGLO BINOCs

I always had a compact pair of binocs with me when I was on duty as a patrol cop, and it seemed they were constantly being loaned out to beat-partners without sense enough to pop for their own. Ditto in hunting camps, I always seem to be the guy with the good glass so everyone wants to borrow it. It's like they suddenly realized \$19.95 wasn't quite enough to pay for good binoculars. Cheap means, well ... they're cheap. Which means they will tire your eyes, likely not last through a shift or one day in the hunting field, and will otherwise cause you heartburn whenever you reach for 'em. Plus, I'll laugh at you.

TruGlo, long known for high visibility sights, red-dot sight systems and such, have recently introduced their Tru-Brite Open-Bridge binocular series. Priced at around the \$280 point, they aren't insanely expensive like \$4,000 or something, or of the "\$9.95 Bargain Deal!" category at the big box store (sure to fail, almost immediately, and give you a headache as they do it). The Tru-Brites have all sorts of cool features like "phase coated prisms" and an ergonomic adjustment wheel for focus and diopter settings and even have high transmission silver coatings on prisms to go with the fact they're "environmental/operational/waterproof/fog-proof" too. I'm not entirely sure what some of that

means, but when I looked through 'em (my test set was the 10x42 model) I could actually see clearly and they brought far away things up-close so I could make them out easily. The last time I looked, that's precisely what binoculars are supposed to do.

During a squirrel attack here at the Huntington Compound, not long ago, I used the Tru-Brite glass to spot while Suzi kept their heads down with a .22 Magnum. No eye strain and no headaches — at least for us. Might have been a few headaches on the enemy's side. Get your own, 'cause I'm tired of loaning mine out! For more info: www.americancopmagazine.com/truglo or (972) 774-0300



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I saw it, lived it and helped here. So, it's not a bunch of bull coming at you when I say, "If you're not prepared for a significant disaster, you're an idiot." Our home missed the damage, but our whole-house generator, tools, food, water, shelter and attitude paid dividends. We helped friends, strangers and were able to keep some normalcy of life since we were prepared. But the one thing I saw that left a lasting impression on me was the fact it hit so fast. Literally, one

moment it was raining, the next: 200 mph winds. Within 20 minutes, a 6-mile swath was cut to the bone.

What if you were caught out in the fray? What if the riot, flood, tornado, hurricane, earthquake, wildfire, tsunami — you name it — happened while you were away from your "stash" of goodies? Enter Echo-Sigma and their stunningly good emergency bags. I tested and looked at their "Get Home Bag" (GHB) and, at only around \$250, literally gives you the stuff that will save the lives of you and your family, if you need it. It's a "1-day" or so, get home bag for one, but it has basic hardware to augment your own survival abilities should it come to it.

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Okay, bear with me on this. You're at home, it's dark, there's a knock on the door, for some reason you're a bit concerned when you open it after eye-balling the guy on the other side. You might have a gun behind your back, but other than that, the only thing between you and a bad-guy's bullet might be that sweaty T-shirt you're wearing. So, same situation, same door, same guy, but you "innocently" answer the door holding the clipboard you were using to take notes mere moments before. The hitch is this clipboard will stop a 240-gr. .44 Magnum SWC at 1,400 fps. Got your attention now?

Impact Armor Technologies' Ballistic Clipboard looks like a simple black plastic clipboard with a convenient handle on it. You use that handle to carry it or hold it up in front of you to protect your good parts. Impact says it also stops a 124-gr. 9mm FMJ at 1,400 fps, which is pretty darn fast. I'd say

you're pretty safe from most of the rounds you're ever likely to encounter in the hands of a bad guy. Rated at NIJ Level IIIA for body armor (that's pretty darn good stuff), I saw a photo of one they had shot four times. One round each from a 9mm, .357 Magnum, .40 S&W and .44 Magnum — same shield — and it was still intact and could handle more. It's light, is about 12x13" and only 3/8" thick.

If you're a cop, this is a no-brainer to me. I'd have given just about anything to have one during traffic stops at midnight in the Heights. And it's not a stupid idea for Sam and Sally Homemaker to have around either. You can probably think of other uses for it too. And hey, you can always use it as a clipboard, right? At around \$150 MSRP, it's pretty cheap insurance. Besides, nobody will call you "that crazy guy who answers his door wearing body armor" anymore. *For more info:* www.americanhandgunner.com/impact-armor or (216) 481-9070



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WEAV-A-TINNY

Weigand Custom

Weigand Custom has developed WEAVE-A-TINNY, the perfect combination for scope mounts and scope mounting. Built on the concept of the Weaver-style mount and the tactical Picatinny-style scope mount, it joins the best features of each to make the ultimate scope mount for all applications. For more info: (570) 868-8358 or www.americanhandgunner.com/weigand



PPS-43C PISTOL

I.O. Inc.

Argued as the best submachine gun of WWII, the PPS-43 has now been redesigned to shoot from a closed bolt position with a safety located at the front of the triggerguard. The PPS-43C pistol has a stamped steel receiver and barrel shroud, an L-shaped flip rear sight marked for 100 and 200 meters, and a fixed-blade front sight. It's chambered in 7.62x25mm TT and weighs 8.09 pounds loaded or 6.7 pounds empty. The barrel length is 9.84" with an effective range of over 200 yards. It's manufactured at the Radom Plant in Poland and has all new polish-made parts and components. MSRP is \$449.95 and it ships with four 35-round curved box magazines. For more info: (866) 882-1479 or www.americanhandgunner.com/i-o-inc



TMT TACTICAL WALLETS

Toner Machining Technologies

TMT Tactical Wallets are made and assembled in the US from carbon fiber/polymer material that is very light, durable and resistant to RFID-type scanning devices. These wallets float, and are sealed with an O-ring to help protect your personal items from being destroyed by water, sand or grit. Each one comes with a built in compass, ink pen, tweezers, toothpick, glass breaker, lanyard hole and two removable Kydex money clips. It also features two built in hidden interior compartments. For more info: (828) 432-8007 or www.americanhandgunner.com/tonermachiningtechnologies



TACTICAL FIELD DECK

Maxpedition

The Tactical Field Deck is built not only with durability in mind, but also a strong artistic aesthetic. With all-weather, durable .31mm PVC construction, the Tactical Field Deck is never in danger from moisture or dirt. Using the Maxpedition characters Max, Rocky, Damo, Lla and the Shell Squad as face cards, each component of the traditional 52-card poker deck represents Maxpedition's unique take on the playing card. For more info: (310) 768-0098 or www.americanhandgunner.com/maxpedition



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SAIGA STRIKEFORCE ELITE

American Tactical Imports

The Saiga Strikeforce Elite is a 6-position collapsible stock with Scorpion Recoil system that offers an aluminum buffer tube and adjustable cheekrest. The Saiga Strikeforce Elite offers a redesigned slim-line rear aluminum receiver mount. With a Scorpion Recoil system, users will be able to absorb recoil energy. The recoil impact is absorbed when shooting anything from a 3" magnum turkey load to a door-breaching load, with no pain being transferred to the shooter! The Scorpion Razorback Buttpad gives the user a non-slip, removable buttpad. Other unique features of the Scorpion Recoil system include not being affected by chemicals, remaining flexible in extreme temperatures and removing limitations from spring- and piston-type recoil suppression systems. For more info: (800) 290-0065 or www.americanhandgunner.com/american-tactical-imports

FNH USA SIGHTS

HIVIZ Shooting Systems

HiViz Shooting Systems has added FNH USA to their already comprehensive list of handgun sights. The new sights will fit the FNS, FN-9, FN-40 and FN-45. The FX-9, FX-40 and FX-45 replace the existing dovetail front sight and maintain the factory sight height, so they remain compatible with the rear sight. These new sights are built to last, using the highest quality materials. The steel base houses the chemical-resistant LitePipes, which are interchangeable and come in green, red and orange. The six included LitePipes can be easily changed with the included key, allowing you to choose the color that best fits your needs. They combine fast target acquisition with remarkable brightness, providing clear visibility in early morning or late evening hunting situations. For more info: (800) 589-4315 or www.americanhandgunner.com/hiviz



PREMIUM MOLDED HOLSTER KIT

Old Faithful Holsters

Old Faithful Holsters has designed a highly concealable inside-the-waistband holster that is extremely comfortable and easy to use. This is a forward cant holster, which is the most popular way to carry. It leans forward and is best worn on the hip between 3 to 5:30 o'clock positions. The Premium Molded Holster Kit comes with a pre-molded Kydex shell that is trimmed, sanded and ready to be installed. The leather is cut and all of the holes are punched. All you have to do is screw it together! For more info: (479) 226-3082 or www.americanhandgunner.com/old-faithful



BATTLE KHAKIS

American Tactical Apparel

There is no better way to secretly carry your pistol and equipment. These pants are engineered for battle, and for everyday operating. Made for warriors, by warriors. American Tactical Apparel builds high quality tactical pants that are tough as nails, and 100 percent made in the USA — they are not cheap pants made in a sweatshop in some foreign country! This is a carry system that gives you comfort, concealment and access like never before. For more info: (281) 864-4754 or www.americanhandgunner.com/american-tactical-apparel



REVOLVER BLAST

Mil-Comm Products

Mil-Comm Products Company introduces Revolver Blast, a 3-in-1 aerosol spray cleaner, lubricant and protectant, as part of its NRA-licensed gun care products. Revolver Blast provides spray-blast cleaning, flushing and lubrication to the tightly fitted parts of revolver assemblies or semi-auto magazines as an interim maintenance treatment that does not require disassembly of a revolver. For more info: (800) 743-4518 or www.americanhandgunner.com/mil-comm



GROUND POUNDERS

Grayman Knives

After 2 years, the redesign of the Ground Pounders is done and they are back and ready for action. Same strong drop-point tip, same tough 1/4" thick 1095 steel, same heavy-duty G10 handle. But now the Ground Pounder's 6" blade is even beefier with a width of 1 3/4" and comes with a working choil. Light enough for field carry, tough enough for hard use, nimble enough for fine chores. The Ground Pounder is 1 3/4" wide with a 6" blade, 12" overall. Each knife is ground individually so variations occur, making each knife unique. Retail for \$195. For more info: info@graymanknives.com or www.americanhandgunner.com/graymanknives



DEFENDEAR DIGITAL

Westone Laboratories Inc.

DefendEar Digital utilizes a modular earpiece design, combining a removable digital module into a specialized custom silicone earpiece. They include the Digital 1, Digital 2 and Hunter models. All feature CENS digital technology, developed from the ground up by shooting and hunting enthusiasts for superior noise attenuation and situational awareness. The Digital 1 is perfect for the all-around shooting enthusiast. Digital 2 offers the flexibility of two programs designed for a shooter who enjoys both target and field. The Hunter model gives the hunter the option of reduced wind noise at the push of a button. All modles are interchangeable with the custom-made silicone earpieces making cleaning, servicing and upgrading a simple process. For more info: (719) 540-9333 or www.americanhandgunner.com/westone



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A.T. Custom Gunworks	92	CZ-USA	18	Kahr Arms	70	Sand Burr Gun Ranch	92
Al Mar Knives	17	DeSantis Holster	81	Kimber Mfg. Inc.	17, 27, 35, 108	SIG SAUER	41
Aluma Grips	93	Dillon Precision Products	88	Lambert Knives	82	Simply Rugged Holsters	88
American Handgunner Subscription	101	DoubleStar Corp.	93	LaserMax	77	Singletary Customs	92
Andrews Custom Leather	79	El Paso Saddlery Co.	90	Lehigh Defense LLC	72	Smith & Alexander Inc.	80
Armstrong/Rock Island Armory	10	Elite Survival Systems	85	Les Baer Custom Inc.	37	Smith & Wesson	23, 43
Arntzen Corporation	90	European American Armory Corp.	29	Lightfoot Knives	81	Spartan Blades USA	79
Arredondo Accessories	19	Florida Arms Manufacturing Co.	83	LockSAF	87	Springfield Armory	33, 107
Barnes Bullets Inc.	45	FMG Special Editions	84	Mag-na-port International Inc.	86	SSK Industries	89
Bar-Sto Precision Machine	88	FNH USA	7	Majestic Arms Ltd.	89	Starline Brass	95
The Beltman	19	Frontier Gunleather	89	Maxpedition Hard-Use Gear	3	STI International Inc.	2
Belt Mountain Enterprises	87	Galco Gunleather	6	Mec-Gar USA Inc.	78	Streamlight Inc.	47
Beretta	31	Gary Reeder Custom Guns	92	MTM Case-Gard	45	Sturm Ruger & Co. Inc.	9
BLACKHAWK!	25	GOTE Gear	88	N82 Tactical	73	Taurus International Mfg. Inc. USA	11
Brian Tighe	80	Grayman Knives	83	Nemesis Knives	84	Ten Ring Precision Inc.	92
Caron Forensics	73	GSI International Inc.	74	Nighthawk Custom	13	Thunder Ranch Training DVDs	62, 71
Caspian Arms Ltd.	86	Gungrips.net	82	Old West Reproductions Inc.	93	TOPS KNIVES	19
Chambers Custom Pistols	92	GUNS Magazine Subscription	71	Pact Inc.	8	Trijicon Inc.	75
Chip McCormick Custom LLC	21	GunVault	71	Para-Cord	81	Tussey Custom	92
Colt's Manufacturing Company LLC	15	Heizer Firearms	47	Pearce Grip Inc.	83	Umarex USA	79
Columbia River Knife & Tool	12, 18	HiViz Shooting Systems	14	Powder River Precision Inc.	92	Viridian Green Laser Sights	86
Competitive Edge Dynamics USA	96	Hinterland Outfitters	85	Pro Ears	12	Volkman Precision LLC	92
CORBON/Glaser	76	Hogue Inc.	76	Purdy Gear	82	W.C. Wolff Company	78
Crawford Knives LLC	87	Hornady Manufacturing Company	39	Ranch Products	90	Wilson Combat	10, 97
Crimson Trace Corporation	16	IronMind Enterprises Inc.	90	Rick Hinderer Knives	89	XS Sight Systems	73
CrossBreed Holsters LLC	14	Iver Johnson Arms, Inc.	87	Rio Grande Custom Grips	87		
Cylinder & Slide Inc.	94	Junior Shooters	72	S.W.A.T.	102		

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CHECK OUT THE LARGE SELECTION OF BOOKS AVAILABLE FOR ALL FIREARM ENTHUSIASTS.



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What brands are owned? Among all handgun owners, 38 percent own Rugers, 33 percent S&W, 17 percent Glock, 15 percent Taurus, 14 percent Springfield, 13 percent Colt, 10 percent SIG SAUER, 9 percent Beretta, 7 percent Browning and 7 percent Kimber (with others listed at lower rates). Note, some own multiple brands, of course.

So, it looks like multiple handgun owners tend to buy more often, shoot a bit more and read a lot about handguns. First-time purchasers ask the advice of friends before buying, but once they own one handgun, often look to purchase another within a year and rely heavily on online info sources. From what I can tell interacting with you, most *Handgunner* readers own multiple handguns, but we do have a growing body of new/first-time owners. So, a nod of my head to you old-timers, and a hearty welcome to the new team! Let's make sure we help 'em out.



WHAT? MORE VIDEOS?

You bet, and these are fun. Tune into www.americanhandgunner.com/insider-tips, hosted by yours truly, and you'll see a growing line-up of shortish "how-to" videos. Our first few are how to buy used guns, something most of us like to do when the urge strikes. Other topics will cover things like sight pictures, trigger-pressing, how to safely unload a handgun, how to be a good gun store customer (yup, there are some tricks to it), how to safely draw a gun from a holster, stopping power, handgun action types and what they mean, basically stuff you guys write to us about all the time. We'll simplify things, have lots of fun doing it, and throw the door open to new topics. Just drop me a line at editor@americanhandgunner.com and tell me what you'd like to see. Keep in mind they are short, quick looks and not meant to replace training or more comprehensive videos. But at least they might give you a bit of insight into something you've been wondering about. Let me know what you think. Also, if you go to youtube.com and search "fmgpubs" you'll find our "channel" with lots of vids. You can subscribe to it and we'll advise you when new vids in our series are posted.

Want to see if it's possible to hit a 100-yard gong with a 1911? You'll have to check it out when that video is posted! And do me a favor, would you? Feel free to e-mail that link to our vids or our YouTube channel to your gun-club members or new shooters. The vids might be helpful for novice shooters, or just to enjoy a few minutes of fun! www.americanhandgunner.com/insider-tips

ADD IT UP

7

Years of existence for the Louder Than Words (LTW) group of custom gunsmiths who donate guns for charity auctions.

12

Members of LTW.

\$289,000

Money raised through LTW projects benefitting Ted Nugent's Kamp for Kids, POSA Cops 4 Kids/Jimmy Fund/Isabella De Bethencourt, American Snipers.org, the Naval Special Warfare Foundation and the Navy SEAL Foundation. Included is \$25,000 raised to benefit two individual people who were in need.

\$3,440

Money raised annually per LTW member for charitable causes or people in dire need.

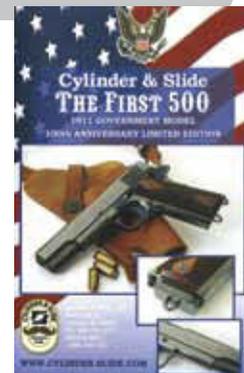
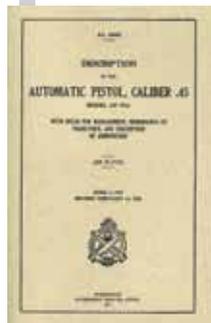
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Amount retained by LTW or distributed among its members. LTW and/or participating companies assume all costs for the donated guns.

Well done guys! RH

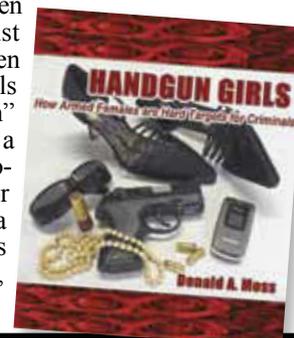
Old/New Books

Bill Laughridge of the C&S shop is delivering the first of his limited edition 1911 representing the exact configuration of the first 500 pistols Colt shipped to the government. There are 19 parts unique to the original so they had to be carefully reproduced for this run. Bill has also printed a very cool booklet called *The First 500* (with a comprehensive intro by 1911 guru Walt Kuleck) covering the differences, complete with great color pics. He's also offering a beautiful copy of the original manual sent with the first shipment of pistols. The books are \$10.95 for the *The First 500* and \$9.95 for the manual. I thought it interesting that on page 16 of the manual (dated 1914!) is says: "Never place the trigger finger within the triggerguard until it is intended to fire and the pistol is pointed toward the target." Seems "Rule 1" was invented a long time ago! www.cylinder-slide.com or (800) 448-1713



Handgun Girls?

The sub-title says it all: *How Armed Females Are Hard Targets for Criminals*. Donald Moss has done an excellent job covering the sometimes unique challenges women might encounter when learning about carrying a gun for self-defense. Not just about the hardware, Donald covers everything from "Seven Shocking Reasons to Carry a Gun" and "Handgun Girls and Nervous Norman" to "Get Married to Your Handgun" — among other thought-provoking topics. Frankly, it's a good read for anyone who carries a gun for personal protection and I can heartily recommend it for any woman (or girl ...) who has an interest. Well done, Donald! This is a digital book you download from his website. I know that's a bit on the "new" side, but it works fine. You pay online, and it's \$19.95. www.handgungirls.com



PRO-GUN POLITICS

The *Daily Caller*, founded by Tucker Carlson in 2010, has launched a *Guns & Gear* section and has hired Mike Piccione as the section editor. The section covers everything from concealed carry and home defense to defensive rifles and gun legislation. “The millions of Americans who own and are interested in guns are currently without the sort of daily news coverage normally allotted to most other American interests,” said Neil Patel, publisher and CEO of *The Daily Caller*. “Most

of the media would never consider publishing a guns and gear section because they are hopelessly out of touch with American values and interests. This is a sad statement about the media. It’s great news for *The Daily Caller*,” Patel continued. I’ve chatted with Mike, who runs the *Guns & Gear* section, and he not only supports the gun magazines by putting links to articles in our pages, but also helps to keep the Washington, D.C. political crowd in front of gun topics. He said he frequently gets calls and e-mails “from politicians” asking questions about guns. Frankly, we’re glad he has their ear! www.dailycaller.com/section/guns-and-gear



Tami Guy

I know how some of you feel about colored guns, especially pink guns, but before you get your feathers twisted, know that Tami Guy earned her pink gun the *hard way*. After fighting and winning a bout with breast cancer, her husband, Marty, asked Robbie Barrkman of Robar “Can you make Tami’s Kimber pink?” Robbie said he could, would be honored to, and here is the final result — and that’s certainly pink! Tami trains regularly with Marty, and she not only *looks* great with her pink Kimber — she *shoots* it great too! Way to kick butt, Tami! And Robbie? Thanks for taking good care of this brave lady. www.robarguns.com if you need your own pink pistol!



Armed Citizen Alliance

Okay, this one is a good idea and even got me aboard. Only recently formed by members of the shooting industry, the ACA is specifically geared toward new/novice or first-time gun owners — specifically people who have purchased handguns for personal protection. Too many first-timers (most first-timers?) buy a handgun and then that’s-that. It goes into a drawer or into a holster or purse (sometimes after a too-limited state mandated bit of training), then it’s rarely if ever fired again. The ACA has partnered with gun stores and industry leaders to offer a simple, fun way for defensive handgun owners to get together and participate in a bit of shooting — while learning to handle their guns safely. It’s not a competition, but these informal “matches” will be hosted by certified ranges and facilities in your area. Membership is \$25 yearly, but your first experience is free.

The ACA is not a competition organization, nor does it intend to take away from existing programs like IDPA or other shooting organizations. Most new shooters are intimidated by the common shooting discipline matches, so they don’t go. The ACA will offer an environment friendly to the brand-new shooter, and they can use the gun they bought for personal protection! I feel strongly enough about this idea I’ve volunteered to be a member of their advisory board. And, their industry affiliates read like a who’s-who of the firearms industry, with names like Brownells, S&W, Taurus, SIG SAUER, Colt, The Outdoor Wire, NSSF and a host of others.

For more info: www.armedcitizenalliance.com

iPhone Armor

CRKT’s iNoxCase for the iPhone 4/4S is made of stainless steel and has a sleek, modern look creating a sort of exoskeleton around the phone. With the minimalist styling, all the buttons and features remain easily accessible, and you don’t have to remove the case in order to dock the phone. It comes in stainless, gold, black or rainbow for \$59.99, or Realtree AP HD Camo for \$69.99. A screen protector, felt pad to ensure snug fit and spare parts are all included to. Wife, Suzi, uses one all the time and told me only the other day, “I dropped it ... nothing broke.” There you go. www.crkt.com



MFR-7

One of the “most-asked” questions we get around here from you guys is “What lube/cleaning stuff should I use?” While it’s not

real critical since most of the stuff is pretty good these days, it is good to use quality gear. Doug Anderson of Pro-Gold, sent me some of their product for a test, and I was surprised at how “fluid” their lube is. Unlike many gun lubes, their MFR-7 is more “watery” for lack of a better term. It’s evidently due to the fact it doesn’t have solids in it like Teflon, graphite or moly. This allows it to function well at very low temps (down to -50 degrees F). I tried it in an AR we were testing, and also put about 400 rounds through an XDm 3.8 in 9mm with nary a glitch. It tends to make it hard for carbon to stick, and it shows. Seems like good stuff to me. Available in spray, bottle or handy pin-oiler. www.progoldmfr.com





Who Are We?



Part of my job is to make sure I have a sense of what *you* like when it comes to all things handgunning. Historically, since I'm basically one of you and enjoy virtually all things about handguns and related goodies, I've listened to my own heart. If I like it, chances are good most of *you* would like it too. But to make sure I'm not living in a closet, I also take reader calls and letters, attend trade shows, shoot at public ranges when I can, visit gun stores in my travels and otherwise try to keep my eyes open. What I've learned is we handgunners are pretty much alike — only different.

The National Shooting Sports Foundation (NSSF) is the political-action body for the outdoor industry. They serve manufacturers by keeping a sharp eye on litigation, laws, industry needs and trends, and are a strong right arm for gun owners and businesses in our industry. Dealers use info supplied by the NSSF to better serve their customers, and we sometimes use the info to help keep our editorial focused in a direction you're likely to enjoy.

Recently the NSSF offered a comprehensive study on handgun ownership. After interviewing over 10,000 handgun owners, a research firm hired by the NSSF came up with some interesting facts and figures. I was surprised by a few points, and not surprised at all by others. First off — and something that *didn't* surprise me — is the fact that the majority of handgun owners typically own more than one handgun, with the average being 7.4 guns. I think I own a few of those “.4” guns and am determined to make them whole some day! Only one in 10 respondents own a *single* handgun. The majority of their handguns were purchased new, and most (91 percent) are described as pistols, which we'll assume are semi-autos. Interestingly enough, the most popular caliber is 9mm, fol-

"Multiple handgun owners tend to buy more often, shoot a bit more and read a lot about handguns."

lowed by .45 ACP and then .22.

Multiple handgun owners are motivated shooters, with the average having gone shooting 26 days in 2011, firing an average of 1,589 rounds during the year. Seventy percent are likely to buy another handgun in the next 12 months.

Single handgun owners are slightly different. They are bit younger (50 vs. 56 years for multiple owners), and half of them (52 percent) bought their handgun within the past 5 years. The younger group is also the most online focused, with 16 percent buying their handguns online. They also rely on online sources (manufacturer's websites: 57 percent or blogs: 51 percent) to help with buying decisions. Just over 54 percent of single handgun owners are likely to buy another in the next 12 months. They use their handguns for home-defense primarily (42 percent), and non-competitive shooting (28 percent). However, 59 percent own their one handgun strictly for personal protection/defense, and 33 percent have concealed carry permits.

According to the study, "Single handgun owners mention home defense significantly more often as the main use of their most recent purchase than those who own multiple handguns (42 percent vs. 22 percent)." Also, both groups didn't spend a lot of time thinking about their purchase, with an average of 3 months or less between deciding on buying and making the purchase. Accessory purchases tended toward holsters (69 percent), cleaning kits (58 percent) and defensive ammunition (52 percent). On average, 73 percent of purchased ammo is centerfire, with 27 percent rimfire. Average ammo purchases are 200 rounds of centerfire and 506 rounds of rimfire (a bit more than a "brick" of .22).

It's nice to know almost 70 percent of us like to shoot with one or more friends, and almost 60 percent of us have introduced someone to shooting handguns in the last 12 months. Keep it up! I was interested to note 52 percent of us shoot on private land (shows where shooters tend to live?), 42 percent at public ranges and 33 percent at private gun clubs.

Sources And Brands

I confess it made me happy to see magazine articles are the "most-referenced" info source for handgun purchases 40 percent of the time; with manufacturer's websites listed as 49 percent of the time, and online forums and blogs at 38 percent. According to the survey, a majority of shooters rely on print and online info sources before making a purchase.

One fact stood out to me, and you might find it of note. Multiple handgun owners tended to rely on a cross-section of articles, online sources and friends to make a buying decision. Single handgun owners tended to rely *heavily on the advice of a trusted friend* for their first purchase, then used other resources for more info. The lesson is to be *available* if someone you've introduced to shooting needs your advice to make that all-important first purchase!

A point that semi-surprised me in the "Importance of Information Sources" section, a television advertisement was listed as "important" only 5 percent of the time when making a purchasing decision, for both classes of handgun owners. Overall (for both classes of owners), 55 percent ranked magazine articles as important when making a buying decision. So there, TV.

Continued on page 104

XDM^M-5.25

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