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CROS\$FIRE

LETTERS TO GUNS

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Where Are They?

Several local shops have had the Ruger SR1911 .45 on order for months, and not a single one has had one delivered yet. I've been to shops and gun shows in three states and haven't seen one either.

Where are they?

Marc Rocque
Salem, Ore.

Ruger responds: "We understand the great interest in the Ruger SR1911 pistol and recognize that the demand currently exceeds the availability. We have shipped thousands of pistols to date and continue to produce at maximum capacity each week. We are presently planning to increase capacity but this will take a while to impact availability in the market place. We appreciate your patience and will continue to work as quickly as possible to meet the demand without compromising the quality of the American-made Ruger SR1911."—Sturm Ruger

.17 Marlin

Enjoyed the article by M.L. Mcpherson in the December issue.

Dennis Stewart
via e-mail

*I admire brevity.—Jeff John
Ditto—M.L. Mcpherson*

Cave?

MSgt. Walker, have you been living in a cave for a few years? Some years ago, I was running a range for Air Force Security and we were still using the S&W .38 Special. One of our troops, "Mouse," weighed in at around 100 pounds. She noticed I was not packing a .38 and asked, "Sgt. Mo, what's that pistol?" I replied, "Well Mouse, it's a 1911, .45 auto." She asked, "Is it better than the .38?" and I replied, "Well, yes, some of us think so." "Can I try it?" She did, putting down the pop up targets with ease. She wanted to know where she could get one. We found female shooters didn't have to prove they already knew how to shoot, would listen to instruction, and made pretty

good shots. Some of the ladies here in Montana put meat in the freezer every year, with a variety of other big bores. Why, they even shoot in matches!

TSGT Lynn Moshier USAF, Retired
Stevensville, Mont.

J-Frame .25 ACP!?

On page 31 in December's "Gunsmithing" column by Hamilton Bowen (don't lose that guy, not only is he gunsmith supremo but he can write), there is a caption which reads, in part, "The wee 6-shot clips are for a .25 ACP J-frame S&W."

Gentlemen, we must see this handgun. We've seen bunches of stories about converting large bores to larger bores so this might be an interesting change. At least I'm intrigued. I think other readers might be also.

Dave Rickels
Bakersfield, Calif.



Here it is: the one and only .25 ACP J-frame S&W, custom built by Hamilton Bowen.

This little gun started out as more of a prank than anything, though I tried to justify it as an understudy to a .50 AE M1917-style Redhawk in the place at the time. All it took to make was a .22 LR M34 cylinder, some Lothar Walther .25 ACP barrel stock and a .25 ACP chambering reamer. We lined the original barrel and had friend Norman (he of column fame) make us some moon clips. Shot well enough, though I did not shoot it a great deal. Eventually sold the gun to a collector of such curiosities. —Hamilton Bowen

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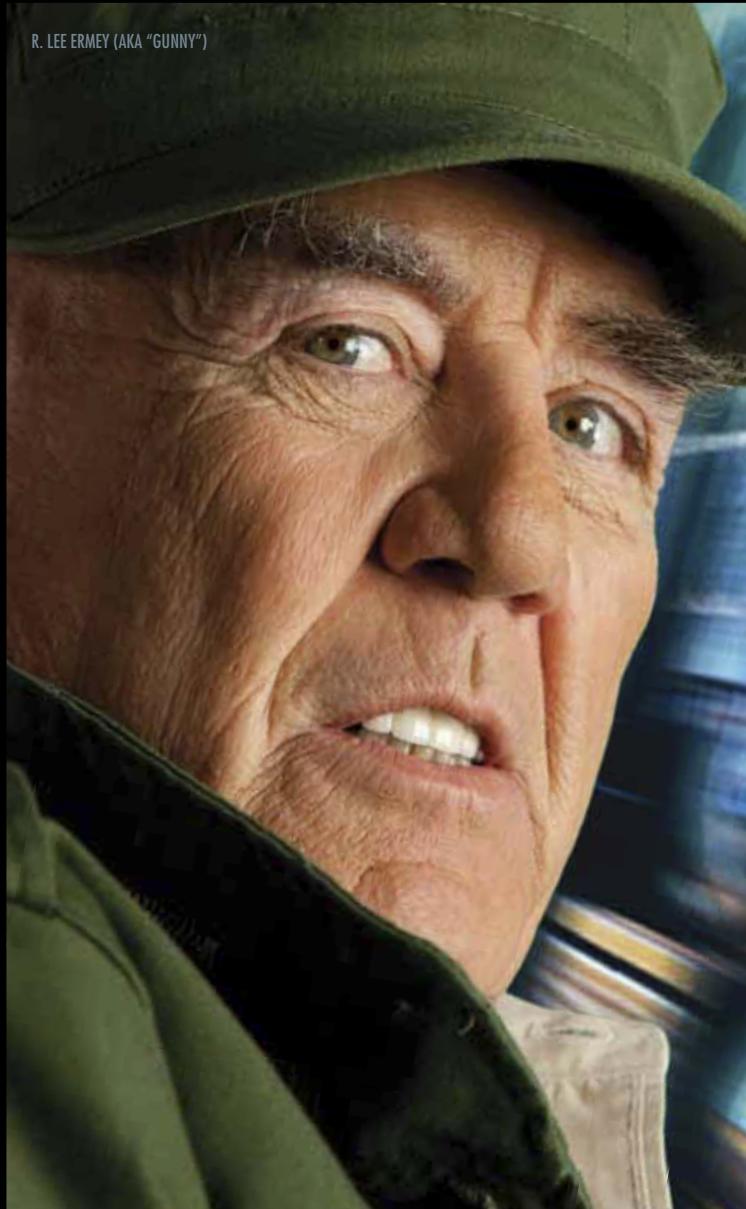
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R. LEE ERMEY (AKA "GUNNY")



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SHOTGUNNER

STORY: Holt Bodinson

LETHAL LOADS & LASER CARTRIDGES

Hot new ammo for varmints and waterfowl plus a nifty training aid.

While I own a varmint rifle or two, I won't take a calling stand without a shotgun at hand. The shotgun is a caller's tool—ideal for coyote, fox and bobcat in brushy and broken country where those varmints can make startling, rabbit-like appearances at ranges under 50 yards. The shotgun is also ideal for moving varmints often screened by brush—brush that will easily deflect or destroy thin-jacketed varmint bullets zipping along at 3,200 fps plus. Having said that, I also will have a Remington 660 in .243 Win alongside my leg just in case the varmint hangs up out there beyond 40 or 50 yards.

Kings of the varmint shotgun world are the 3" and 3-1/2", 12-gauge magnums and the 3-1/2", 10-gauge magnum, shooting large doses of B-, BB- or T-size shot at 1,300 to 1,350 fps. What converts an upland or waterfowling scattergun into a varminter is the load.

Coyote Shredder

Under their Federal Premium label, Federal has followed Remington, Winchester and Hevi-Shot by cooking up a real coyote shredder of a load under the label "Heavyweight Coyote." This 12-gauge, 3" load

Laser Ammo's 12-gauge cartridge is a natural for some in-home practice drills.



combines 1-1/2 ounces of buffered Heavyweight BB shot with Federal's patented Flitecontrol wad. Muzzle velocity is right up there at 1,350 fps.

Federal's proprietary Heavyweight shot is 35 percent more dense than lead, while the Flitecontrol wad keeps the shot string together, until the wad's integral air brakes slow it down after leaving the muzzle. The combination produces very dense patterns across a range of loads running from turkey and waterfowl to buckshot and this latest coyote load.

The Midway/Caldwell coyote target pictured here comes complete with replaceable centers. It's a lot of fun to use. The pattern produced by the Federal coyote load was fired at 40 yards with a modified—not full, not extra-full—choke in a Winchester Super X2. The result speaks for itself—it's a coyote shredder load.

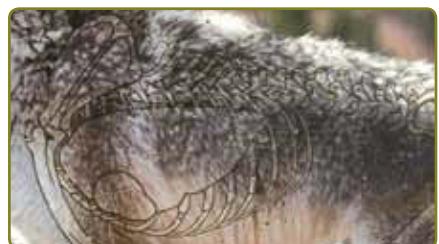
Winchester's Hex Shot Patterns

A box of Winchester's new "Hex Steel Shot" finally arrived, giving me the opportunity to shoot a few patterns. What I received was a 12-gauge, 3" loading of 1-3/8 ounces of No. 2 shot at 1,400 fps.

Announced earlier this year, Winchester is calling its new cubical-



Federal's "Heavyweight Coyote" load is a true coyote shredder. The Caldwell target has a replaceable center. Note how the target has the vital organs and bones printed on it (below). These disappear downrange.



shaped shot, a hexahedron—"Hex" for short. The new waterfowl approved Hex Shot features rounded edges and corners. According to Winchester, because of its shape, it can be more easily stacked inside a shot cup, providing up to 15 percent more non-toxic shot in each shell. The shot cup itself is new, and its "diamond cut" petals act as tiny air brakes to gently separate the wad from the shot.

The secondary benefit claimed for Hex Shot is its capacity due to its shape to create greater wound channels in tissue. With a bit of advertising hyperbole, Winchester's ad copy reads, "Hex Shot is designed to hit waterfowl like high-velocity, tumbling bricks—creating massive wound channels, preventing over penetration and maximizing energy deposit and knock-down shock within the bird."

The waterfowl-patterning target I favor is HunterJohn's. It features the profile of a flying duck, an outline of the ideal impact area in a duck's anatomy for clean kills and five, offset 30" circles allowing you to select the one that best contains the shot pattern.

I shot three patterns at 40 yards with a modified choke in my

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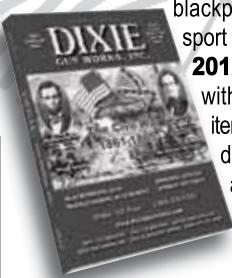
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Winchester Super X2. The target illustrated depicts dead ducks, with a little bit of patchiness but a pretty good distribution of shot within the 30" circle selected. Frankly, I was surprised how well the non-spherical shot held a pattern at 40 yards.

The waterfowl season is just around the corner, and I'm anxious to see what Hex Shot will do in the blind.

The 12-Gauge Laser Cartridge

This is one of the greatest home training aids I've ever come across. It is a 12-gauge cartridge containing a red laser activated by the firing pin of a shotgun. It's really a spin-off of a whole family of small arms laser-training aids manufactured by Laser Ammo, Ltd. of Israel.

The 12-gauge aluminum shell unscrews so you can insert a firing-pin-activated laser pointer unit inside. The base of the shell sports four scalloped cutouts. As you insert the cartridge into the chamber of a pump or semi-auto, you align the extractor with one of the cutouts so the shell is not extracted when you cycle and recock the gun. The ejectors on double guns are normally wider than the cutouts and probably will not work with the current model. I'm going to suggest to the manufacturer a further modification of the unit so it will function with double gun ejectors.

The unit is a perfect complement to Gil Ash's "flashlight drill," developed at the OSP Shooting School, with the exception you can't mount a flashlight on a single-barrel gun and have the



At 40 yards, Hex Shot produced duck killing patterns (above) on the HunterJohn target. Compared to conventional No. 2 shot, Hex Shot (below) is really odd looking.



Federal and Winchester have introduced some sensational new loads.

laser cartridge work. So here are a couple of the modified drill ideas.

Standing in the center of a moderate-sized room, notice the seams formed at the juncture of the walls and ceiling and how those seams connect the four corners. The seams will represent the flight paths of your birds and the corners, the shot points. Starting at alternate corners will give you a left-to-right and a right-to-left crossing shot.

With the gun in the ready position and starting at one corner, begin tracking the seam with your gun, mount the gun, take the shot at the next corner and follow through. Another drill would be to look at a corner (straightaway bird), mount the gun and take the shot. The idea is to develop a consistent and smooth mount and let-off and see where that instant red dot impacts.

With a Mini Maglite in one barrel of a double, and the laser cartridge in the other, these drills would really be meaningful. We'll get that Laser Ammo cartridge adapted to doubles yet. **GUNS**

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RANGING SHOTS

STORY: Clint Smith PHOTOS: Heidi Smith



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SO YOU WANT A SHOTGUN?

The SRM 1216 12-gauge, 16-shot semi-auto might be for you.

Enough has been written about shotguns to fill several books, yet there are still plenty of people who misunderstand what the shotgun does and why. These are constant issues since there are new gun people coming into the self-defense fold and bluntly, even a lot of old gun people do not understand the shotgun completely. So let us address some of the more subtle issues (this is not to say I have all the answers, but then again I do know some of the questions).

The shotgun is legal just about everywhere in the United States, and if you live where you can't own a shotgun, you need to move—seriously. The barrel has to be 18" long with an overall length of 26". In some states the shotgun cannot have a detachable magazine, box-type or drum. In some jurisdictions and hunting applications there is a shell capacity issue.

The shotgun is a bit longer than a handgun. In short-barreled versions, often called riot guns, the 18" barrel even at full overall length is not much longer than a handgun held and shot

properly. The big thing with a shotgun is to practice the manipulation of the gun in the environment you plan on applying it in, whether it's your home or vehicle or elsewhere. Whether a shotgun is better than a handgun is a moot point. If the door opened now and a guy stepped in the room coming at you with a knife, would you rather shoot him once with a pistol or once with a shotgun? Question answered. The shotgun will, in a proper place and time, physically remove bone and meat, which makes for quite a fight changer if not a fight stopper.

Thinking back, I remember as a cop personally seeing four different people shot at close range with a shotgun. One had a missing leg, one had a missing lower jaw and the other two had missing heads... the gun at close range seems, in my limited experience with it, to be modestly effective.

Distance

The distance to the target is a big salient point with the shotgun. Based on the fact the gun throws inconsistent patterns at varying distances, it is helpful to know the load and the choking of the gun being used. Measure the distances inside your place of potential application, such as your bedroom hallway, and then replicate that distance at the range and shoot your selected choice of ammunition to see how it patterns. Shotguns inside homes are often more like rifles than you might imagine, and the pattern of projectiles and their spread is smaller than the shooter often thinks. Most often the shotgun needs to be aimed in one form or another to place even part of the projectile pattern on the target.

Pattern & Chokes

You can get all kinds of magic choke things installed in your shotgun barrel. For every custom-choked gun, there are hundreds of shotguns without one, so don't outsmart

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yourself. If you want a custom screw-in choke, buy it, but make sure it is screwed all the way into the gun. I have seen many screw-in chokes go sailing downrange with a load of shot. Keep 'em tight.

All of the choke in factory shotgun barrels is in the last nominal 2" or so of the barrel, so if you cut a 30" full-choke barrel off to make it "handy," you also made it a cylinder bore, or in technical terms a "friggin' straight pipe." It will be OK inside your house, but don't count on it much for passing overhead duck hunting gigs.

As always buy good ammunition.



The magazine partially removed for replacement. The tube easily snaps in and out of place.



The lever below the barrel is the magazine release lever that allows the tubes to rotate. The flat, serrated lever angled below the barrel is the actual press-and-release lever so the magazine tube can be removed and/or replaced.



The SRM magazine holds four rounds in each tube. This is a good end view of the magazine tube while unlocked from the 1216 shotgun.

Reduced load shotgun ammunition is a godsend to all of us interested in self-defense. The old 3", 12-gauge 00-Buck magnum loads ruined a lot of people to shotgun shooting, so pass on it at every chance. Shoot your ammo type selection on paper and at varying distances to confirm pattern size. Don't blow off birdshot. (Note to the forum "experts" saying birdshot is for birds: You don't want to take a load of No. 6 shot in the face down a hallway.) I didn't say birdshot was my first choice, I said don't blow it off as ineffective. Your choice, but would you rather go down the hallway with a baseball bat, or wait for the bad guy to come to you and shoot him with a No. 7-1/2 skeet load in the crotch?

Gun Types

These are pretty well defined: single barrel, double barrel, pump action and semi-auto of either recoil or gas operation. Single barrels can be shot well. You just need to practice loading. Double barrels can be shot twice as well, but you still need to practice loading.

Pump actions need to be cycled with the pump elbow under the gun to confirm positive cycling of the action, and again you need to practice loading.

Semis of gas or recoil types unload pretty fast if you like shooting fast. They need to be watched if fighting from the ground to confirm proper reciprocation of the action due to lack of operator resistance behind the gun. And you need to practice loading.

A consistent theme appears to be you need to practice loading. It has been since the beginning of shotguns.

SRM 1216

So if the loading thing bothers you, here is a thought. Based on where you live, and give or take a duck hunt, for personal defense consider the SRM 1216. I tested the prototypes about two years ago and the production guns having been shipping for some time now. It is an odd duck, sort of. The 1216 is a semi-automatic 12-gauge shotgun. It can shoot either 2-3/4" or 3" (we covered the 3" thing earlier) shotgun ammunition. The trick part is the gun uses a detachable magazine that is not allowed in California and other weirdo places. It has four separate, but attached tubes, with each tube holding four shells, hence 1216—a 12 gauge with four tubes times four shells equals 16.

The gun is a delayed roller blowback semi-automatic. The trick part is after the fourth round is fired, the bolt holds back. The shooter pushes a forward-mounted lever and the



Not your father's duck gun, the SRM 1216 is a 16-shot, self-defense semi-auto.

shooter's hand rotates a new 4-round tube into alignment, the action closes and the fight is on. Repeat as required for two more times. Total 16, and if you shoot all 16 rounds of 12-gauge ammo, you have gotten yourself into a big fight, or you need to shoot better.

Should it be a big fight, it is scary quick and easy for the now empty magazine to be quickly lowered out and replaced with a new fully-loaded tube. The gun is completely ambidextrous in set up. The SRM 1216 is not cheap, but it works and holds 16 rounds of 12-gauge ammunition.

I have a Remington 870 because I have had it for 40 years. I have a Mossberg 500 because it is way functional and way affordable. The SRM 1216 shotgun holds more ammunition than both of those two guns put together. If you want a shotgun for home defense and you are in a quandary about loading a shotgun, there might be a new chapter in the continuing saga of the defensive shotgun—chapter SRM 1216.

STORY: Dave Anderson

THE SAKO TRG-42

A well-made long-range rifle in .338 Lapua.

Even in boom times, with money no object, there can't be a big market for a rifle/scope combo retailing at close to \$5,000, shooting ammunition at \$6 per shot. We're all after value these days—I know I am—but even when we drive secondhand economy cars it can still be fun to read about the latest Ferrari or Maserati on occasion.

Recently my friend Chris put together a very impressive long-range shooting package, and was kind enough to let me borrow it (provided I supplied my own ammunition!). The rifle is a Sako TRG-42 in .338 Lapua, with the optional muzzlebrake and factory bipod. The scope is a Nightforce 5.5-22x56.

The TRG-42 is built around the Sako long action with three locking lugs. Bolt lift is just 60 degrees, giving lots of clearance between bolt handle and scope. The action feeds from a detachable 5-shot magazine, double stack tapering to a single feed. The straight-line design provides exceptionally smooth feeding. Cycling is so smooth and effortless; I checked a couple of times to see if a round had in fact been fed into the chamber (it had).

The barrel is 27-1/8" long (not including the muzzlebrake), hammer forged and with a 1:10" twist in .338

Lapua. The barreled action is bolted to a very strong, rigid aluminum/polyurethane stock. The barrel is free floated with lots of space under the barrel. Forget the old sporting-rifle test of passing a dollar bill under the barrel to see if it is floating freely. There's enough space for this whole magazine to fit.

The rifle is made for military and police duty, and for long-range competition shooters, with adjustments in just about every conceivable way to fit the individual. The cheekpiece is adjustable both vertically and horizontally. The buttplate can be adjusted for length of pull, height and pitch.

Even the trigger position can be adjusted for angle, as well as back and forth and horizontally. Trigger quality is outstanding. It has a 2-stage pull with very smooth, predictable takeup to a clean break adjustable from 2 to 5 pounds. All adjustments can be made



The combination of rifle weight (nearly 12 pounds without optic) and the very effective muzzlebrake made the Sako TRG-42 a pleasure to shoot from the bench (above). It's loud, but recoil is very tolerable. The Sako 3-lug action (below) has a short 60-degree bolt lift with lots of clearance between bolt handle and scope.

Bolt operation is very smooth and precise.



(in fact the entire trigger mechanism can be removed for cleaning) without any further disassembly of the rifle being required. This trigger had been adjusted to 2.5 pounds and was a joy to shoot.

At around 14 pounds all up, obviously this is a rifle to be shot from a rest. I had a good variety of ammunition from Black Hills, Federal, Hornady and Lapua in bullet weights from 250 to 300 grains.

The .338 Lapua is no toy, but between rifle weight and the effective muzzlebrake it was an easy rifle to shoot well. Our 600-yard range is currently closed due to construction work, but at 100 yards the Sako consistently shot 1/2 MOA or better 3-shot groups. Actually even 600 yards is not much challenge for the .338 Lapua, or for that matter for a .223 or .308. Ranges have to stretch out to 1,000 or 1,500 yards and more for the Lapua to show its stuff. There are a surprising number of .338 Lapuas in use by local shooters and talk of finding a 1,500- to 2,000-yard range at which to use them.

The Sako TRG-42 is built for precision long-range shooting with fully adjustable stock and heavy barrel on the long 3-lug Sako action. The scope is 5.5-22x56 Nightforce.



TRG-42

MAKER: SAKO LTD.
P.O. BOX 149
FI-11101 RIIHIMÄKI
FINLAND
WWW.GUNSMAGAZINE.COM/SAKO
IMPORTER: BERETTA USA
17601 BERETTA DR.
ACCOKEEK, MD 20607
(301) 283-2191
WWW.GUNSMAGAZINE.COM/BERETTA

ACTION: Bolt action, 60-degree bolt lift, **CALIBER:** .338 Lapua, **CAPACITY:** 5, **BARREL LENGTH:** 27-1/8" w/o muzzlebrake, **OVERALL LENGTH:** 47-1/4", **WEIGHT:** 11-3/4 pounds w/o scope, **STOCK:** Aluminum/polyurethane, desert tan, **RETAIL:** \$4,400

5.5-22X56 SCOPE

MAKER: NIGHTFORCE SCOPES (LIGHTFORCE USA)
1040 HAZEN LN.
OROFINO, ID 83544
(208) 476-9814
WWW.GUNSMAGAZINE.COM/NIGHTFORCE-OPTICS

MAGNIFICATION: 5.5X-22X, **TUBE DIAMETER:** 30mm,
OBJECTIVE DIAMETER: 56mm, **EYE RELIEF:** 3.9",
ADJUSTMENTS: 1/4 MOA, **ADJUSTMENT RANGE:** 100-MOA elevation, 60-MOA windage, **LENGTH OVER-ALL:** 15.2", **WEIGHT:** 32 ounces, **RETAIL:** \$1,751

Everything about the rifle operated smoothly and reliably. The 5-shot magazine snapped in place and locked securely. The safety, located inside the triggerguard, locks the trigger and firing pin, as well as locks the bolt in closed position. Safety operation was silent and positive.

The Nightforce 5.5-22x56 is a superb optic with excellent resolution and clarity. Adjustments are repeatable, accurate and reliable. Nightforce scopes have earned an exceptional reputation with long-range shooters, including police and military precision marksmen.

A wide range of accessories are available for the TRG-42 including bipod, muzzlebrake, suppressor, cleaning kits, cases, iron sights and scope mounting options. Nightforce offers several reticle patterns and other options for its scopes, so these prices are only to give a general reference.

A local gunshop here in North Dakota brought in three of these Sako TRG-42s in .338 Lapua and despite the price, sold all three in a week. Nothing like an oil boom, 3-percent unemployment and "help wanted" posters at every store and restaurant to put purchasing power in the hands of consumers.

The funny thing is the US has huge supplies of oil and natural gas all over the country. Drill for oil and gas, create jobs, achieve energy independence for the nation and get rich. It's just crazy enough to work.

GUNS

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OPPOS

STORY: Jacob Gottfredson

VORTEX OPTICS

A full line of glass for any budget and application.

The last two sniper matches I attended were also attended by Scott Parks of Vortex Optics. He had set up a table in the shooters enclosed area, spreading glass of every description across his booth. Guys were looking through them, doing the "ooh" and "ah" stuff. Rather than spend a couple of minutes at his table doing the same thing, I ask Scott to send some pieces for review.

Scott Parks, the company's R&D guy, is an excellent shooter. The glass he was selling certainly does not stand in the way of his doing well. In fact, maybe that was the reason he was standing so high on the scoreboard. It intrigued me enough to spend considerable time with them. The question now is: How do I get all the glass that arrived into the limited real estate of this column?

I found Vortex has opted to hit the market with optics retailing from \$200 to well over \$2,000. The best of Kmart and Neiman Marcus all rolled into one? They are available on the street for somewhat less.

The monoculars are small, light and well dressed for military use, incorporating Vortex's famous reticle and ranging system. I could not fault them. The smaller one was an 8x36mm called the Solo. The larger monocular was the 10x50mm Recon R/T, each

with slightly different features.

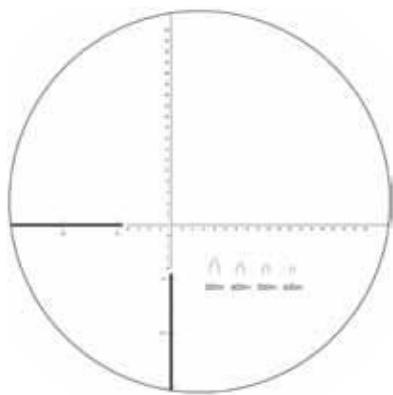
I got two binoculars as well—the Viper 10x50 R/T and 8x28 R/T. The eyecups are fashioned to reduce incidental light from the side, and the objective lenses are protected with rubber cups that are connected to the lenses to prevent loss. The reticle is seen through the left lens, and a ring focuses it, producing a crisp, black image. The diopter adjustment is just forward of the right ocular lens.

Both the monoculars and the binoculars are armored. The binos use roof prisms with phase-coated prisms, XD extra-low dispersion glass, fully multi-coated lenses with Armor Tek coating on the exterior lenses. The binoculars are also armored to meet military specs. Ranging bars are .5 mils graduations and silhouettes are included. They are purged with Argon gas to waterproof and fog proof them.

Another big star for Vortex is their classy Razor HD spotting scope. The firm didn't mess around when they designed this baby: High-density extra-low dispersion glass, fully multi-coated lenses, and argon gas purged. It has an 85mm objective lens with a triple apochromatic lens system. It uses coarse and fine focus knobs and can be rotated in the tripod.



Both the Recon R/T (above, left) and the Solo (right) are monoculars with ranging capabilities, utilizing their R/T reticle. Both have carry clips. The Recon also has a mount to accept a tripod. Vortex has put a lot of thought into these tough little optical devices. The Recon R/T monocular has a very unique reticle (below). Ranging bars have .5 mils graduations and silhouettes are included.



I also received a 4-16x50mm Viper and a 5-20x50mm HD Razor riflescopes. Both have fast focus diopter adjustment rings. I was delighted to see they incorporate features I have wanted for years. For example, the power designations on the Viper's variable ring are raised and pointed at the shooter. This relieves him or her having to pull the rifle from the shouldered position to see what power the scope is on.

The Viper uses a bar reticle in the second focal plane. Thus, when you go from 16X to 8X, the subtension between each bar would be doubled (and so on) and is so designated on the ring. The Viper has a 30mm body,

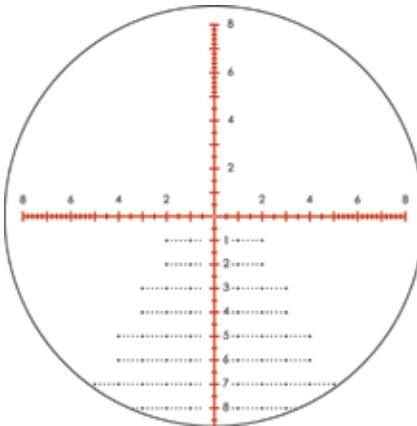


The HD 5-20x50mm Razor EBR-2B MRAD tactical riflescope is the Vortex firm's flagship. It is chock full of innovative features and is based on a 35mm tube body. With the HD Razor 5-20x50mm riflescope reticle (below), holdover and wind holds are a snap.

while the Razor has a 35mm body. The Razor had both the reticle bars and the elevation and windage adjustments in MRADS. They call it the EBR-2B, and it is very nicely laid out as well as being in the first plane. So ranging is the same no matter what power you choose. It also has illumination. The Razor 5-20x50mm is a top of the line scope.

The Razor HD is the best of their spotting scopes. They sent the angled version vs. the straight. The first thing I liked was the coarse and fine focus wheels. This causes a lot less vibration than the helical variety (ring around the body) when focusing, and is easier to fine focus. It incorporates a sunshade as well.

An 85mm objective lens gives ample light transmission at most powers, although the exit pupil diameter drops to 1.42mm at 60X. But then so does every other industry scope with the



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MODEL: TYPE:	SOLO MONO	RECON R/T MONO	8X28MM BINO	10X50MM BINO	4-16X50MM RIFLESCOPE	5-20X50MM* RIFLESCOPE	20-60X85MM SPOTTING SCOPE
MAGNIFICATION:	8X	10X	8X	10X	4X-16X	5X-20X	20X-60X
OBJECTIVE (MM):	36	50	28	50	50	50	85
RANGING:	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
EYE RELIEF (INCHES):	.7	.6	.78	.78	4.0	3.9	.78-.7
OPTICAL COATINGS:	FMC	XR	FMC	XR	FMC	XR	FMC
EXIT PUPIL (MM):	4	5	3.5	5	12.5-3.13	10-2.5	4.25-1.42
FOV (FT @ 1,000 YDS):	393	215	319	278	117-60**	22-5.76**	117-60
WATERPROOF:	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
WEIGHT (OUNCES):	10.2	15.2	11.8	27.2	22	35.2	65.7
LENGTH (INCHES):	5.4	7.0	13.7	15.8	15.25	15.8	15.3
CLOSE FOCUS (FEET):	16.4	12	7.5	8.2	150	120	16.4
ADJUSTMENTS:	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	75 MOA	36mrad	N/A
TUBE SIZE (MM):	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	30	35	N/A
RETAIL:	\$199	\$689	\$479	\$779	\$549	\$2,499	\$2,000

Notes: * Reticle illuminated by 1 CR2032 Lithium battery. **FOV: Ft @ 100 yards. N/A= Not Applicable.

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The Glass

While Vortex optics incorporates the latest in features, most of which I really like, optics are just that: It is all about the quality of the glass. So I proceeded to test them on my charts, during low light, under poor conditions and mirage.

MODEL: TYPE:	SOLO MONO	RECON R/T MONO	8X28MM BINO	10X50MM BINO	4-16X50MM RIFLESCOPE	5-20X50MM RIFLESCOPE	20-60X85MM SPOTTING SCOPE
RESOLUTION:	6	6	8	8	8	10	15
CONTRAST:	Excell	Excell	Excell	Excell	Excell	Excell	Excell
ASTIGMATISM:	No	No	No	No	No	No	No
CURVATURE OF FIELD:	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No
ROLLING DISTORTION:	No	No	No	No	No	No	No
PIN CUSHION DISTORTION:	Slight	Slight	Slight	Slight	No	No	No
BARREL DISTORTION:	No	No	No	No	No	No	No
COLOR FIDELITY:	Excell	Excell	Excell	Excell	Excell	Periphery	Excell

Clearly the HD Extra-low dispersion glass is better and is higher priced. The 5-20x50mm Razor riflescope did display slight color fringing at the very periphery of the image. The Vortex glass is good, but the spotting scope really tops their list for quality glass and image. I will put it up against any on the market.

GUNS



These 8x28 Vipers (left) and 10x50 (right) are tough mil-spec bins with good glass, but lack the high-density glass of the more expensive Razor binocular line. The Viper R/T line does, however, incorporate extra-low dispersion glass, fully multi-coated lenses, Armor Tek, armor and are all Argon purged.

same objective lens size and power. Why does it matter? Because anything below about 2.5mm exit pupil diameter does not transmit enough light to produce fine resolution. Just a fact of life. But visual acuity is not entirely based on exit pupil. It also has to do with the quality of the glass and its coatings. And in that regard, the Razor HD spotting scope is right up there with the best of them.

Vortex uses High Density (HD) premium, extra-low dispersion glass in the Razor, which enhances resolution and color fidelity. It also features a triple apochromatic lens system, which reduces fringing, dilution of color

fidelity, and degradation of resolution.

The lenses are fully multi-coated, Armor Tek protects exterior lenses, and Argon gas is used to reduce fogging and promote waterproof performance. The body is a magnesium alloy. A rotating tripod mount and view-through soft case was included.

The 20-60X eyepiece is included in the price, but they also sent along their 30X wide-angle lens, a great addition that adds tremendous flexibility to your viewing needs.

Vortex also makes red-dot sights, mounts and many other items. Take a look at their website. What I have seen, I liked.

GUNS



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HAND GUNS

STORY: Massad Ayoob PHOTOS: Gail Pepin

THE REVOLVER

In the age of the autoloader,
some say revolvers are obsolete.
This writer ain't so sure.

I just got done with seven weeks and a little more carrying and shooting revolvers, coast to coast. I've already lost count of the powder horn jokes.

An instructor needs to be familiar with all the guns the students bring to class, so I carry a six-shooter for at least one training tour a year. For 2011, it was two tours; five weeks for one tour and a couple more for the next. A host on the first tour wanted me to shoot with his team at his state's IDPA championship, and they were short a Stock Service Revolver (SSR) shooter. Once I got home there were only a few days before the next tour, which would culminate with the IDPA World Championships. I decided at the last minute that since for me IDPA stands for I Don't Practice Anymore, instead of International Defensive Pistol Association, I might as well stay with the platform I'd been carrying, hence the second wheel-gun run.

Good News

Revolvers are less ammo-dependent than autos, and obviously not magazine-dependent at all. They'll run anything from blanks to snakeshot to the hottest stuff it says on the barrel it's chambered for. In almost two months and nearly a 1,000 rounds downrange, there were no

ammo-related malfunctions. Power? An almost 40-year history tells us the Remington 125-grain .357 Magnum hollowpoints I had in the cylinders when I carried the guns "for real" leave nothing to be desired in that regard.

If you are in a belly-to-belly confrontation and have to jam your muzzle against your would-be murderer's body and pull the trigger, most autos will be pushed out of battery and fail to fire. Not so with a revolver.

Round guns, by and large, are more accurate than square guns. Back in the late '80s, the police department I then served became the fourth in the country to adopt the S&W 4506 .45 ACP. Those guns would do 2" to 2-1/2" for five shots at 25 yards. That was pretty cool... but the S&W Model 13 .357 Magnum revolvers we traded in for them could do the same at twice the distance. More than once in the four perfect-score qualifications and three matches during those seven weeks, one of my revolvers turned in the winning score, the best being a 60-shot timed qualification with about a 4" group in Harrisburg, Penn.



In the excellent Washington State IDPA Championships, Mas was pleased with the performance of his 3" S&W 66.

While a cylinder is a distinctly smaller ammo reservoir than most magazines, and makes for a slower refill, this can be ameliorated by simply carrying a second revolver, which I always did (or a third, which I occasionally did). And, did I mention, history shows fewer stoppages with wheel-guns than with autos?

Bad News

When revolvers do malfunction, the malfunction tends to be harder to clear. I started the first tour with a vintage pinned and recessed S&W Model 19 that turned out to have a birth defect, resulting in trigger return failures. I managed to overcome it in the first match, a local IDPA event, and win SSR division, but it was close and I had to switch to my backup 3" Model 66 to finish. Thinking the 19 was fixed, I took it to the Washington State Championships, only to experience a time consuming lockup in my first event. Again I defaulted to the 66, which worked fine, coming in second overall/First Master, which are kind ways of saying First Loser.

Mas shot a 3" S&W 66 to win Stock Service Revolver class at an IDPA match in Onalaska, Wash.





Tuned by Bob Lloyd, Mas' S&W 686 has just scored 600 out of 600 in a 60-shot timed qualification course.

And, of course, there are times when you do need more than six shots. At the IDPA World Championships—which demanded raw, flat-out speed and good accuracy—the top overall score was an amazing 248.29 seconds, posted by my Team Panteao teammate Bob Vogel, shooting in the Enhanced Service Pistol division where reloads are needed only after 11 rounds. Having to reload after every six shots, Jerry Miculek, whose trademark gun is a moon-clip-loaded S&W Model 625 .45 ACP Enhanced Service Revolver, captured that division with 411.79 seconds according to the preliminary scores online at this writing. Using speedloaders, current US champ Craig Buckland captured the Stock Service Revolver title with 426.79 seconds. I'm proud Craig is one of my graduates, since I can't come close to him anymore, and now live through him vicariously. The point is however, even the best in the world get more rounds downrange faster with an auto than with a revolver.

On the second leg of my journey, I carried a Smith 686 tuned by master gunsmith Bob Lloyd. It won the SSR South Mountain Regional IDPA Championship for me in Phoenix in 2010, and a New Hampshire State Championship for me years before that, and could have won the world title in SSR division if the guy shooting it hadn't been an old, slow sufferer of cerebral flatulence. The revolver itself worked perfectly and I always felt safe carrying it.

The bottom line? There are times when the revolver is better, and times when the auto is better, and no one has to apologize when carrying either platform. It's up to the individual's preferences based on perceived needs and threat profile and ability. The double-action revolver ain't dead (no pun intended) by a long shot.

GUNS

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MONTANA MUSINGS

STORY: Mike "Duke" Venturino

PHOTOS: Yvonne Venturino



Duke firing his Swedish Model 1896 6.5mm with the Leupold 2.5X Scout Scope installed via the Accumount system.

ACCUMOUNTS

Anyone can install them. Even Duke!

As with many of you readers, my eyesight is deteriorating normally with age. Unfortunately for me this is happening precisely when my interest in shooting vintage military rifles is at its peak. In fact my eyesight is poor enough that in order to tell if my handloads are delivering sufficient precision I must test fire them from my scoped sniper rifles (and replicas thereof) of the same calibers.

Then by accident on the Internet I encountered a small company named Accumounts. Their primary products are replica mounts for vintage sniper rifles, but it was another genre of mounts they offer that caught my attention. They are billed as "no-gunsmith" mounts for fitting scopes to many types of standard infantry rifles. Usually I become very wary when something is billed as "do it yourself." As detailed in a previous column, I am so mechanically inept that even anvils are in danger around me.

But being an adventurous type (Yvonne says, "impetuous"), I ordered

some of Accumounts no-gunsmith mounts, namely for a Swedish Model 1896 6.5x55mm and a Japanese Type 38 6.5x50mm. Those two iron-sighted rifles were chosen as my test subjects because the former has shown signs of fine accuracy, while the latter has shown no such signs at all.

Accumounts no-gunsmith mounts are made to work in two ways. The easiest by far is as scout-scope mounts. In this manner, the rear barrel sight is taken off the subject rifle and a long eye-relief scout scope installed. The second way requires an extender bar for the mount, which then places the

scope further to the rear over the action. Then a standard scope can be mounted. This also requires an altered bolt action so it clears the scope. Not wanting to change vintage rifles, I went the scout scope route.

In the back of my mind, my plan was to actually take the no-gunsmith mounts to my friend and gunsmith Tom Sargis, who lives a mere 5-minute drive from my home. However, as things played out, the day they arrived I was so busy it was evening before I got the package opened. Yvonne says besides impetuous I'm also impatient; so I decided to try mounting my no-gunsmith scout-scope mounts without my gunsmith.

To my utter surprise, they are indeed "no-gunsmith" mounts. In fact I got them affixed to both rifles with a mere single casualty. That was a leaf spring in the Type 38's sight which I broke by trying to remove it in the wrong direction. (A replacement cost only \$2 so it wasn't too severe of a lesson.)

Here's how those no-gunsmith scout-scope mounts are fitted. On both the rifles which I used for test vehicles, the rear sight is held to its base by a pin. That is driven out with a proper fitting punch. Then the Accumount, which by the way is made of heavy-duty aluminum, is set onto the sight base. There are threaded holes on either side of the mount that line up with the flanges that held the original pin. Accumount supplies small screws that then go through those flanges and into the mount. Then to cinch the Accumount up tight, a large Allen-headed screw goes in from the top. When it is tightened the mount is set firmly.

All that's required then is to put Weaver-type rings on the mounts.

This Japanese Type 38 6.5mm with 1-4X Leupold Scout Scope installed with Accumounts and rings. It still did not turn that rifle into a tack driver, but it did improve its "hit-ability" greatly.





This is the Accumount base, screws and Allen wrenches alongside the German K98k onto which it will eventually be fitted.

Accumounts makes heavy-duty aluminum rings with quick-detachable levers, or standard Weaver rings can be used. I fitted my two rifles with rings from Accumounts. Onto the Swedish 6.5mm I fitted a Leupold 2.5X scout scope, and onto the Japanese 6.5mm, a Leupold 1-4X variable scout scope. Fitting mounts, rings and scopes on both rifles required about a 1/2 hour, a couple of Allen wrenches, a punch set and a small hammer.

At the range I use for sighting-in tests, I stumbled across two small problems, both with the 6.5mm Swede. First off when bore-sighting at 25 yards, there was not enough right windage adjustment in the scope. That was easily fixed by turning the Accumount rings 180 degrees. Then there was plenty of windage adjustment available. Shooting went well, and, as I suspected, that Swedish rifle, dated 1900, was capable of fine precision. Three-shot groups were running about 1" to 1-1/2". Then suddenly bullets began landing wildly. After dismounting the scope by its quick-detachable levers, I saw that the base had come loose. I had only finger tightened the top screw and it worked loose. It was given a good hard twist, the scope remounted and a couple of sighting shots made, and I was in business again.

What about the Japanese 6.5mm? I deem that experiment a success also. The scout scope and Accumounts didn't turn it into a tack driver, but it did allow me to discern that it's about a 3-MOA rifle. That translates into about 3" groups at 100 yards. It probably never shot tighter than that even when new back in the 1930s. At least now I can reliably hit steel plates with it out to about 300 yards.

Next on my agenda is a set of Accumounts no-gunsmith bases and rings for a German K98k 8mm. I know that rifle is accurate and I also now know I can put a scout scope on it all by myself!

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HANDLOADING

STORY: John Barsness

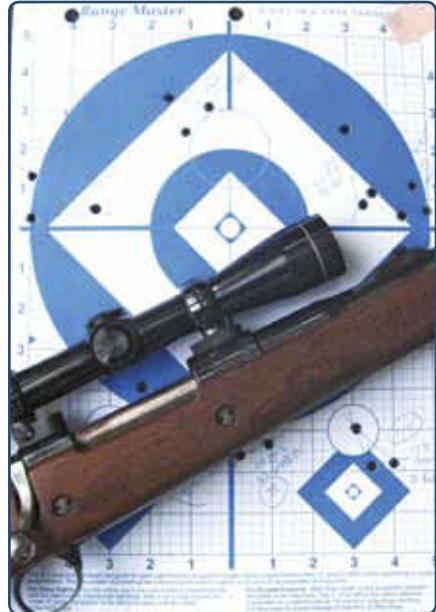
BIG SEVEN Handloading the 7mm Remington Magnum.

Any hunter under 40 probably doesn't realize what excitement the 7mm Remington Magnum created during the 1960s and '70s. The cartridge was introduced in 1962, along with the "new" Remington Model 700 rifle, essentially a prettying-up of the very plain 722 and 721 rifles. The publicity from Remington (echoed by a bunch of gunwriters) claimed their new 7mm combined all the best features of every all-around big-game cartridge ever. It was as powerful as a .300 Magnum, yet shot as flat as a .270 Winchester and didn't kick any harder than a .30-06.

Oddly enough, the hype was close to correct, considering the published ballistics of the original factory ammunition, a 150-grain bullet at 3,260 fps and a 175-grain at 3,020 fps. The 7mm Remington Magnum immediately became the hottest-selling big-game round since World War II. My friend and fellow gun writer John Haviland worked in a lumber mill in Missoula, Mont., during the 1970s, and says every worker was issued "a hard hat and a

7mm Remington Magnum."

Recall all the excitement over the .300 Winchester Short Magnum a decade ago? Multiply that dozens of times and you'll have some idea of the 7mm Remington Magnum phenomenon. Sales of .270 and .30-06 rifles dipped noticeably, something that had never happened since the war, and the .280 Remington almost died. The "Big Seven" quickly became one of the world's standard hunting cartridges, chambered by



The Browning shot reasonably well with all bullet weights, but seemed to prefer 140- to 150-grain bullets.

every rifle manufacturer on earth. Close to a dozen other commercial and proprietary 7mm hunting rounds have appeared since 1962, yet some hunters still walk into gun shops and ask for a box of "Seven-em-em shells," expecting to be handed a box of 7mm Remington Magnum ammunition.

Unlike some other factory rounds introduced back then, the original factory velocities of the 7mm Remington Magnum weren't too exaggerated. Or at least the velocity of the 175-grain load wasn't, the load that backed up Remington's claim their 7mm was as good as most .300 Magnums. The *No. 6 Speer Manual*, published in 1964, includes a table of factory loads chronographed at the Speer lab in "typical sporting rifles." The rifle used to chronograph 7mm Remington Magnum loads was a Remington 700, and the 175-grain load got 2,990 fps, not too darn far from 3,020, especially when the rifle, for some reason, had a 23-1/2" barrel instead of the standard 24". (The 150-grain load didn't do so well, only getting 3,135 fps.)

The magic muzzle velocity of the 175-grain load was attributed to a new, proprietary IMR powder developed



The 7mm Remington Magnum is suitable for about any non-dangerous game, and many hunters even prefer it for hunting big-bodied deer, like this eastern Montana buck taken by John's old friend Pete Jackson.

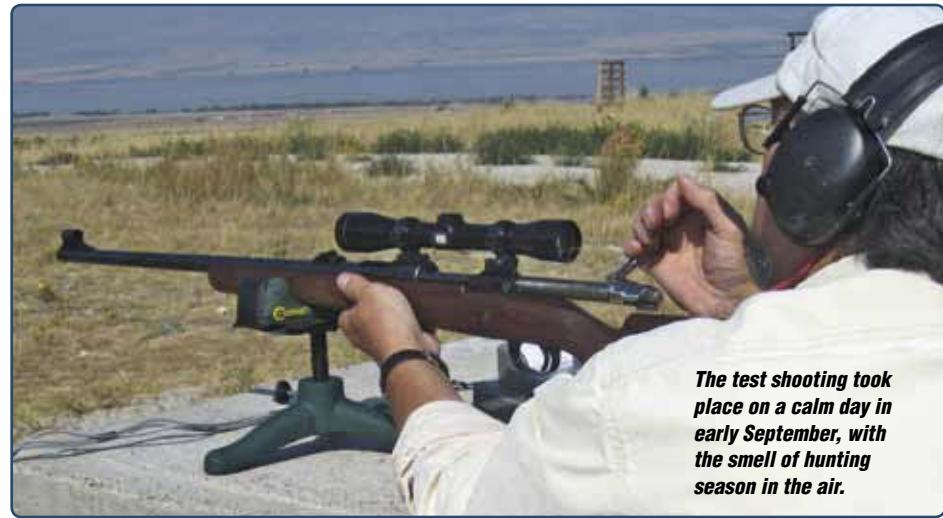
by DuPont. Eventually this was released to the public as IMR7828, but for several years handloaders had to make do with powders such as the original mil-surf H4831.

By 1970 the advertised velocity of the factory 175-grain load had even gone up a little, to 3,070 fps. By 1980 however, the ammunition industry had started the transition to piezo-electronic pressure testing, and it was found the 7mm Remington Magnum got a little squirrelly at top pressures, partly because of relatively quick throat erosion. During the initial phases of throat erosion, peak pressures often become erratic, due to increased friction in the rough throat. (Later on, when the throat gets totally washed out for a ways in front of the chamber, pressures tend to decrease—but not at first.)

Data Problems

During this period, the publishers of many loading manuals didn't use real pressure-testing equipment, whether copper-crusher or piezo. Instead, they worked up loads the same way handloaders did, by increasing powder charges in a "typical sporting rifle" until the rifle showed signs of distress. Often the same rifle was used for several editions of the manual, and with 7mm Remington Magnum the throat really eroded. Also, some foreign rifles didn't have quite the same throat dimensions as American-made rifles. As a result loading data wandered all over the place.

By about 1980 all these problems were becoming addressed. Most loading-manual publishers used actual pressure equipment, and replaced test barrels as they became worn. Also, barrel length was starting to be standardized at 24", instead of the 26" commonly used when the 7mm Remington Magnum was introduced. Eventually all of these factors resulted



The test shooting took place on a calm day in early September, with the smell of hunting season in the air.

in a reduction of factory-ammo velocities to 3,110 fps with 150-grain bullets and 2,860 fps with 175s.

Over the decades I've owned four 7mm Remington Magnums, and loaded for a couple of others. For many years my standard practice was to load a 160-grain Nosler Partition, starting with around 60 grains of Hodgdon H4831, Alliant Reloder 22 or IMR7828, and work up until muzzle velocity reached 3,000 fps. In some rifles this happened with as little as 62 to 63 grains of powder, in others it took around 65 to 66 grains—but none of the rifles showed any sign of distress, and usually shot very well.

These days handloaders have many more powders to choose from, and often the original 175-grain factory ballistics of the 7mm Remington Magnum can be approached or matched, even in a 24" barrel. My present 7mm Remington Magnum is one of the Browning High-Power rifles made in the 1960s and 1970s on FN Mauser actions. Mine is one of the later rifles, made after the salt-cured wood days, with a toggle-type extractor rather than the full-length extractor, picked up one day from the consignment rack at Capital Sports &

Western Wear in Helena, Mont.

It's in very good shape, with a professionally installed Pachmayr Decelerator recoil pad, and my Hawkeye bore-scope showed the barrel didn't have any visible signs of throat erosion. The rest of the bore looked like the insides of today's custom-made, hand-lapped barrels, and the trigger broke very cleanly at almost exactly 3 pounds.

This seemed like a perfect test rifle for newer powders, so I mounted a 6x36 Leupold in Burris Signature rings. There wasn't any 7mm Remington Magnum ammo on hand for preliminary sighting-in, so I loaded up a dozen rounds with 150-grain Nosler Ballistic tips with 62.0 grains of H4831SC, enough to theoretically get around 3,000 fps, and then assembled a bunch of other test ammo.

The factory bedding wasn't modified at all, as over the years I've found many rifles shoot extremely well as made, even if made in the 1970s. The range-testing took place one calm 80 degree F afternoon in early September. After a couple of shots to get on paper at 100 yards, the very first 3-shot group with the 150-grain Ballistic Tip load measured under 3/4". Not a bad start, especially since muzzle velocity was just under 3,000 fps.

With scope and mounts the rifle weighs 9-3/4 pounds (the Browning High Powers were never light rifles), making an afternoon of benchrest shooting quite comfortable. The rifle seemed to prefer loads with 140-to 150-grain bullets, though some loads in all bullet weights shot pretty well—and with 175s, one load came very close to the original muzzle velocity. The older I get the less I like recoil—and the less I mind carrying a relatively heavy rifle for any hunting not requiring steep climbing. This "old" Browning just might see some field time soon!

7MM REMINGTON MAGNUM HANDLOADED AMMO PERFORMANCE

BULLET (BRAND, BULLET WEIGHT, TYPE)	POWDER (BRAND)	CHARGE (GRAINS WEIGHT)	VELOCITY (FPS)	GROUP SIZE (INCHES)
NOSLER 120 BALLISTIC TIP	Magnum	79.0	3,465	1.18
REMINGTON 140 CL ULTRA	Reloder 25	72.0	3,300	.83
NOSLER 140 PARTITION	Magnum	76.0	3,279	.93
NOSLER 150 BALLISTIC TIP	H4831SC	62.0	2,992	.68*
HORNADY 154 SPIRE POINT	Retumbo	73.5	3,077	1.15
NORMA 156 ORYX	Magpro	72.0	3,154	1.69
SIERRA 160 GAMEKING	Retumbo	70.0	3,001	1.38
BARNES 160 TSX	Retumbo	68.0	2,984	1.26
BERGER 168 VLD	Retumbo	68.0	2,860	.85
SIERRA 175 GAMEKING	Reloder 25	67.0	2,981	1.60
NOSLER 175 PARTITION	Magnum	70.0	2,901	1.80

Notes: * "Sight-in" load. All handloads used Federal 215 primers.

GUNSMITHING

STORY: Hamilton S. Bowen

THE CROWNING ACT

Some years ago, the shop had completed a nice little Old Model Ruger revolver caliber conversion with dedicated .44 Russian chambers. If ever a gun should have shot well, this should have been it. Alas, on the first trip to the range, I would have been lucky to hit myself in the foot. There was no accounting for the awful accuracy. The rebore from Delta Gun Shop look great. It ranged perfectly. The forcing cone was in spec. Our reamer had a throat section of around .430" which was spot on. Factory ammunition from Black Hills admitted no problems. I simply could not figure out why this gun shot so poorly. Giving it yet another hard look and thinking to myself the muzzle looked a bit odd, it finally dawned on me I had not yet crowned the barrel.

Ordinarily, most modern firearms feature precisely machined crowns that rarely ever give trouble, but the Ruger barrel had just been rebored and the bullets were now emerging from a flat crown that showed the usual ground/polished crown of the times. Without the usual 60-degree inner chamfer that trued up this surface, the remaining flat crown was hopelessly out of square and gave the predictably awful results. The moral of the story is simple: When all else fails, check the crown.

A barrel's crown is a small thing, but a poorly executed crown on any rifled barrel will have a devastating effect on accuracy. While I do not profess to have a thorough understanding of the dynamics of bullets exiting barrels, it requires little mental heavy lifting to recognize the problem. If the entire circumference of the heel of a bullet doesn't exit the barrel at exactly the same time, subtle variations in gas pressure bearing on the bullet's base and pressure from the barrel itself on the bearing area of the bullet can cause the bullet to tip slightly off its axis when it exists the barrel. Once tipped, the bullet will tend to wander off course more than usual. In short, the crown must be as square as possible with the bore axis.

Crowning operations are commonly done when making custom

barrels from blanks, shortening existing barrels, putting a rebored barrel back into service or simply pursuing mysterious accuracy problems. Getting the crown good and square is not complicated, but does require some precisely made tools to achieve satisfactory results. This is one operation that can't be conducted out of your back pocket with a Leatherman tool. Crowning gear ranges from simple hand tools to precision machine shop equipment. What you use will depend on the sort of crown your particular application requires.

If you need only chase the inner chamfer on an existing crown just to make sure it is square, there are a couple of tools available. Brownells muzzle and cylinder facing and chamfering tools are versatile and affordable. I prefer to use the more standard 60-degree chamfers, so use a piloted countersink driven by a T-handle tap wrench. Most makers provide pilot bushings in .0005" increments so it is not difficult to get a perfect fit for a specific bore, vital to a smooth, chatter-free cut. Most professional shops who are regularly engaged in barrel work will perform this operation on a lathe between the tool and a center but the barrel must be removed from the receiver.

If you are also cutting a barrel and need to face the end of the muzzle as well, there are several alternatives. The simplest procedure is to start with a file, then true up with a simple piloted facing tool. For real tool junkies or mere for-profit enterprises, the Muzzle Crown Refacing Tool from Manson Precision Reamers is beyond cool. Developed by Boris Teper, a Russian émigré with a PhD in automotive engineering, the cutting heads use carbide inserts piloted by an adjustable internal expanding collet-type mandrel. It even has a brush to help keep chips out of the action and clean out the bore afterwards. The facing cutters are available with both flat and 11-degree styles. There is also a cutter for an exterior bevel. The flat crowns are typically chamfered internally with the usual 45- or 60-degree chamfering tools to complete the job.



These humble holes (Freedom Arms radiused crown on left, flat chamfered Ruger crown on right) shape a bullet's destiny and must be square with the world.



Tools of the trade (above): a piloted facing cutter, a piloted 6-degree chamfering tool and a couple of specially ground lathe tools to cut radiused crowns. Cutting the radiused crown on a shortened Smith & Wesson barrel (below) must be done in a lathe with a round form-cutting tool.





Major components of the Manson tool are the carbide insert cutters (above), which are precisely aligned in the barrel with the expanding mandrel pilot. These sophisticated Manson cutters (below) feature removable carbide inserts for smooth, chatter-free cutting. On the left is the outside chamfer cutter, on the right, the flat facing tool.



While flat or 11-degree inverted crowns are all well and good, vintage-style guns demand a radiused crown. This is where your \$20K crowning tool (engine lathe) comes in handy. If there are any simple hand tools for producing this crown, I am unaware of them. These crowns are cut by starting with a flat crown with an internal chamfer to guide a half center in the lathe tailstock, then carefully formed with a specially ground lathe tool with a radiused cutting surface. The half center provides a small and necessary window of access to the edge of the bore with the tool, while still keeping the barrel turning precisely on its axis. Flat, recessed target-style crowns popular on precision rifles are also typically machined on a lathe, usually run in some combination of 4-jaw chucks on each end of the spindle or centers and a steady rest.

Barrel crowns are an essential part of good accuracy and while they are rarely out of kilter, fixing and forming them need not be a costly or complicated exercise. The procedures are not beyond the means and abilities of most serious hobbyist gunsmiths.

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One of the most revolutionary cartridge-rifle combinations ever to sail down the milsurp stream is the French Lebel. "Revolutionary," you say? You thought the only revolutionary development in France was the French Revolution, not sterling small arms?

Ah, but you're wrong. The Lebel Model 1886 was the first rifle chambered for a smokeless powder cartridge, the 8x50R, commonly known as the 8mm Lebel, for you see, the French developed smokeless powder in 1885 and a few months later, fielded their new cartridge. It was a revolutionary development in the 1885-1886 period, potentially shifting the balance of power overnight in Europe and quite unsettling to France's Germanic neighbor.

The military ramifications from France's development of smokeless powder were enormous. No longer was an infantryman's position given away by a bloom of white smoke. No longer was the frontline's vision of the enemy obscured by a pall of black-powder smoke. No longer did rifles have to

be cleaned nightly. Most importantly, smokeless powder, leaving minimal fouling in the bore, facilitated the development of smallbore cartridges with jacketed bullets, working at higher pressures, delivering velocities over 2,000 fps, producing flatter trajectories and extended ranges. The advent of smokeless powder also made possible for the first time the development of the machinegun as a practical design.

Both the 8mm Lebel cartridge and the 1886 Lebel rifle had their Gallic quirks. The 8x50R cartridge was derived from France's 11x59R Gras cartridge. Refashioning an 11mm case into an 8mm created a large rimmed, steeply tapered case with a very squat and dumpy appearance. Yet, it worked in rifles and machine guns from 1886 to 1929 when it was officially replaced

by the French 7.5x54mm rimless cartridge, but in fact continued to be in use through WWII and beyond, as well as serving as a big game cartridge in milsurp Lebel and Berthiers.

The Model 1886 rifle was not as revolutionary as the cartridge it fired. The rifle was largely designed by the French arsenal at Chatellerault and produced there as well as at the government arsenals of St. Etienne, St. Denis and Tulle. The Lebel design was in part derived from the Austrian Kropatschek rifle, which was used by the French Navy and featured a full-length tubular magazine, and a bolt design derived from France's M1874 Gras rifle.

With the development of smokeless powder, General Boulanger, the French Minister of War, ordered the immediate design of a smallbore rifle to be ready for trials in 90 days. Fortunately, Chatellerault had already developed an advanced prototype for a new infantry rifle, so the pieces began to fall in place.

Lt. Col. Nicholas Lebel, commandant of France's Ecole Normale de Tir (the army school dedicated to the improvement of small arms and marksmanship), was selected to serve on the trials commission. The name, "Lebel" has been associated with the rifle and the cartridge ever since.

To handle the higher pressure of the smokeless powder, the existing Kropatschek/Gras design was strengthened with the addition of a detachable bolt head that both enclosed the case rim and carried two front-locking lugs that locked horizontally into recesses in the Lebel's distinctive, 2-piece stock and receiver.

Held in place on the bolt with a single machine screw, the Lebel detachable bolt-head design permitted the ready regulation of headspace in the production process, but seems somewhat impractical

Many of the long, heavy 8-shot Lebel rifles were cut down into 3-shot carbines.



Old Remington 170-grain softpoint ammunition has proven exceedingly accurate in all French arms Holt has shot.



The cut-down Lebel carbine was widely issued during WWII and was a much handier arm. Unusually straight, the Lebel trigger averaged a crisp 4 pounds, 3 ounces on a Lyman electronic scale.

from a combat point of view.

To remove the cock-on-opening Lebel bolt from the receiver, you must first unscrew that machine screw, turn the bolt head clockwise and pull it forward, detaching it from the bolt body which can then, and only then, be withdrawn from the receiver. Can you imagine doing that with freezing fingers in a muddy WWI trench and not losing an occasional screw and complete bolt head? I have a hunch most Lebels were cleaned only from the muzzle end. Yet the Lebel proved to be a good arm and very accurate. So accurate in fact, it was selected as the sniper rifle of choice over the later Berthier model.

One of the interesting aspects of the Lebel design is its full-length tubular magazine, which holds eight cartridges in the rifle model and three in the later carbine conversion. The cartridges are loaded directly into the magazine tube through the open receiver. As the bolt is reciprocated, an elevator, activated by the lower locking lug, lifts the next cartridge into line with the chamber. On the lower right side of the receiver is a magazine cutoff switch. When activated, the elevator is raised and locked in place to permit the loading of single cartridges only.

The system has been criticized for not being as fast as a Springfield, Mauser or Enfield to recharge. I would agree, however it is my understanding that, tactically, the French soldier was trained to load single cartridges and to hold the loaded magazine in reserve until needed. Operated in either mode, the Lebel design is functionally reliable.

Over its lifetime, there were three distinct models of the Lebel and five military loadings. The original Model 1886 Lebel rifle sported a 31.4" barrel, an overall length of 51.3" and a weight of 9.35 pounds. In 1893, modifications were made to the receiver, firing pin and bolt head to improve the strength and gas handling qualities of the action. The new model was given the designation Mle. 1886 M93. In 1935, the rifle was cut down to carbine size with a 17.7" barrel and a weight of 7.84 pounds. The carbine as pictured in this article became known as the "Mle.1886 M93R35," which was issued in quantity during WWII.



The bolt head of the Lebel (above) must be removed before the bolt can be withdrawn from the receiver. Activated by the bolt, the elevator (below) raises an 8mm round aligned with chamber.



MLE. 1886 M93R35 LEBEL CARBINE

MAKER: CHATELLERAULT, ST. DENIS, ST. ETIENNE AND TULLE ARSENALS

ACTION TYPE: Bolt action, CALIBER: 8x50R Lebel, CAPACITY: 3, BARREL LENGTH: 17.7", OVERALL LENGTH: 37.5", WEIGHT: 7.84 pounds, FINISH: Blue, SIGHTS: 200- to 1,000-meter tangent rear, blade front, STOCK: Walnut, PRICE: \$350, average condition



Look for matching serial numbers on the bolt, chamber, floorplate and stock. (Note the classic Gallic touch—a mushroom shaped bolt handle.)



The original Lebel cartridge, designated the "8mm Balle M," featured a 231-grain, jacketed, flatnose bullet with a velocity of 2,067 fps. In 1898, the French developed an ultra-streamlined boattail bullet, lathe-turned from 90/100 brass. It was the famous, long-ranging "8mm Balle D" and was given a velocity of 2,297 fps. The final load, adopted in 1932 and designated the "8mm M1932 N," featured a boattail spitzer weighing 231.5 grains with a velocity of 2,480 fps.

How does a Lebel shoot? I have a box of original Remington "Kleanbore 8m/m Lebel Hi-Speed" ammunition loaded with a 170-grain softpoint bullet at 2,640 fps. Although the old Remington "green box" dates back to the 1950s, the ammunition has proved to be exceptionally accurate in every French arm chambered for the Lebel cartridge I have tested.

At 50 yards, the first three shots out of the Lebel carbine cut 7/8". Being stingy with my limited supply of Remington softpoints, that's good enough for me. I might add that while the exterior of the carbine looks a bit shabby around the edges, the bore is excellent. The barrel and receiver are marked with a capital "N," indicating the carbine was rethrotted for the "8mm M1932 N" bullet.

If you should ever plan on shooting the 8mm Lebel, inexpensive dies are stocked by Lee Precision, while fresh 200-grain FMJ-BT Prvi Partizan ammunition is available from Graf & Sons, Inc. And remember, the French didn't put safeties on their military rifles.

Because of its significance as the first rifle ever chambered for a smokeless powder cartridge, the Lebel rifle and carbine are highly desirable milsurp collectables. Don't pass them by.

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One of the basics for a well-rounded battery.

Everyone's first rifle simply should be a .22. It's a great starter, and although we may ignore it in middle years and follow the siren song of more powerful cartridges, usually what goes around, comes around, and we find ourselves in our twilight years enjoying the .22 perhaps even more than we did the first time around, I simply can't understand anyone who is a shooter not having a .22 rifle. In fact, there is one professional hunter in Africa who always asked specifically if his client owns a .22 rifle and how much he shoots it. He figures a man can't be a good shot if he doesn't spend adequate time practicing with what some consider the lowly .22.

OK, the .22 is absolutely basic in any shooter's battery whether we're talking long guns or handguns. The number two rifle which should be on anyone's list is one chambered for the .357 Magnum. There have been several around our household ever since Marlin introduced the 1894C levergun, and I have seen to it each of my grandsons has one. I have probably shot my Marlin .357 Magnum more than all my other lever action rifles put together. Over the years I have added other .357 Magnum leverguns from Browning, Rossi and Winchester.

They are all relatively compact, easy to shoot, more than adequately accurate for the job and in a rifle barrel the .357 Magnum is not all that far behind the early loading of the .30-30. Yes; a .22 rifle first and then followed very closely by a .357 Magnum.

Over the years it's been relatively easy to find both foreign and domestic leverguns chambered in .357 Magnum. In fact the Model 1873 Winchester, the first successful centerfire levergun, is offered in replica form chambered for the first Magnum. Not only is it easy to find .357 leverguns, it is also



The .357 Magnum Ruger Model 77 uses a 5-shot detachable rotary magazine. John found the bolt must be worked with authority to feed a .357 Magnum round from the magazine.



The Ruger M77/357 has a folding leaf rear sight and receiver scallops to accept the provided Ruger scope rings.



The 5-round rotary magazine fits flush with the bottom of the receiver, making the rifle very easy to carry.

almost impossible to find anything else except a very few pump action rifles once offered.

Now there is another choice. The Internet is a marvelous invention packed with information, usually more than we want, and allowing all manner of folk to express their opinion; and opinions definitely flow, almost always hidden behind anonymous monikers. When Ruger announced their bolt-action Model 77 chambered in .357 Magnum, the first reaction I saw from some unnamed individual was "What are those guys at Ruger thinking?" Well, whatever it is they need to think more the same way. I will say uncategorically this latest Ruger Model 77 is one of the handiest rifles Ruger has ever



John feels a rifle in .357 Magnum is a must have for any shooter. The All Weather Ruger in stainless with synthetic stock will become John's truck gun, as well as be used for other duties around the Taffin house.



Ruger covers the three basic rifle categories of bolt actions with the Model 77 in .22 Long Rifle (top), .357 Magnum and .243 Winchester.

produced. I will certainly purchase this one as a truck gun.

The Ruger Model 77/357 uses a rotary magazine holding five rounds. This magazine fits flush with the bottom of the stock, so does not

interfere with carrying, and it is certainly much easier to replace an empty magazine with a loaded one than it is to load rounds into the loading gate of a levergun. The receiver and barrel are stainless steel

while the stock is a black synthetic. This is definitely an all-weather rifle, in fact Ruger calls it their All-Weather configuration, and one that can be left in the pickup in all types of weather without worrying about

Kahr's Most Popular 3" Barrel 9mm Model is Now Available in **a Value Priced Package** featuring Kahr's seven patents

Kahr Arms is pleased to kick off their newest series of Kahr pistols - the CM series. The new line begins with the Kahr CM9093 which is based on Kahr's most popular 3" barrel 9mm model the PM9093.

The CM9 slide is only .90 inch wide and machined from solid 416 stainless slide with a matte finish, each gun is shipped with one 6 rd stainless steel magazine with a flush baseplate. Magazines are USA made, plasma welded, tumbled to remove burrs and feature Wolff GunSprings. The magazine catch in the polymer frame is all metal and will not wear out on the stainless steel magazine after extended use.

Kahr offers the CM series at a great value price but did not compromise on the features, accuracy or reliability found in all Kahr pistols.

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John's best groups fired with the Ruger Model 77 chambered for the .357 Magnum came from 158-grain bullets.

Ruger rings, so just as with the .243, I borrowed a scope, in this case a Burris 1.5-5X, off one of my leverguns for the Ruger .357.

I tried several versions of .357 Magnums in the Model 77 including 158-grain, 180-grain and 125-grain jacketed bullets. The latter two were quite inaccurate, 3" or more at 50 yards, however the standard 158-grain loads stayed close to 1" at the same distance. For some strange reason, five shots using the 180-grain bullets resulted in a clustering of a 3-shot group of about 1", while the other two shots were at least 4" away and not in any stretch of the imagination close to each other. The 125s were simply all over the paper, with no pattern whatsoever.

I learned long ago .357 Magnum rifles using cast bullets demanded gas checks for any kind of accuracy. Thus far I have not had good results with the Ruger using my favorite gas-checked .357 Magnum bullet—the Lyman 358156 Ray Thompson—which works quite well in my leverguns. Perhaps as the Model 77/357 is shot more extensively I will find some other combination besides the 158-grain jacketed bullets, which will work successfully. For right now I'm definitely satisfied with the performance using standard-weight jacketed bullets.

While the testing was done with a scope to remove as much human error as possible, for my everyday use the scope will come off and only the iron-sighted rifle, along with two extra loaded rotary magazines, will be packed in my pick-up. It may also find double duty traveling back and forth from the pickup to the house.

Ruger's Rotary Magazine Model 77 is also offered as a 77/17, 77/22 and 77/44 in addition to the 77/357. I like it.



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EW172 Exhibition.....	35.00
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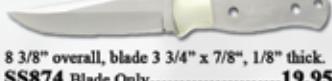


CP697 Brass, 5/32" head.....	2.35
CP627 Stainless, 5/32" head.....	2.35
RD8 Rivet Drill for 5/32".....	19.95
CP669 Brass, 3/16" head.....	2.35
CP629 Stainless, 3/16" head.....	2.35
RD1 Rivet Drill for 3/16".....	19.95

PRE-SOLDERED GUARD KIT

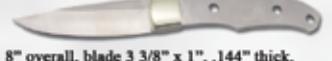
440C Stainless Steel Blade with a pre-soldered nickel silver bolster. Kit includes blade, pins, dymondwood handle material and instructions.

Bearcat



8 3/8" overall, blade 3 3/4" x 7/8", 1/8" thick.
SS874 Blade Only.....19.95
SS874K Bearcat Kit.....25.95
KT104 Leather Sheath.....14.50

Nevada Drop Point



8" overall, blade 3 3/8" x 1", .144" thick.
SS650 Blade Only.....19.95
SS650K Nevada Drop Point Kit.....25.95
KT104 Leather Sheath.....14.50

WEEKEND PROJECTS

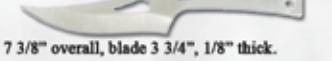
440C Stainless Steel Blade Kit includes blade, pins, dymondwood handle material and instructions.

Renaissance Dagger



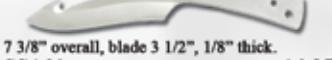
6 1/4" overall, blade 3 3/4", 1/8" thick.
SS167 Blade Only.....12.95
SS167K Renaissance Kit.....14.95

Cobra



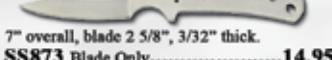
7 3/8" overall, blade 3 3/4", 1/8" thick.
SS166 Blade Only.....14.95
SS166K Cobra Kit.....16.95

Sportsman



7 3/8" overall, blade 3 1/2", 1/8" thick.
SS164 Blade Only.....14.95
SS164K Sportsman Kit.....16.95

Ringtail



7" overall, blade 2 5/8", 3/32" thick.
SS873 Blade Only.....14.95
SS873K Kit(w/brass bolster).....24.95

LOCKING LINER KITS

The 605 Kits



8A stainless sub zero quenched. Overall length 5 3/4", 3 3/8" closed, cutting edge 2 3/8", 3/32" thick.

KV605MS 605 Mini Serrated.....	34.95
KV605M 605 Mini Standard.....	39.95
KV605 Orig. overall 7-7/8", 4-1/2" closed, 3 1/4" blade.....	39.95

Black Widow



Black Anodized Stainless overall is 7 5/8", 4 1/2" closed. cutting edge 3 1/8". Is supplied with preshaped, drilled Quincewood handle material. Use a torx wrench T10 and a T6.

SS652 Black Widow.....19.95

Hi Tech Folder



8A stainless steel blade with satin finish. It is supplied with preshaped, drilled Quincewood handle material. Length 7-3/4" opened, 4-5/8" closed, the cutting edge 3-1/8". Use torx wrench T10 and T6.

SS3520 Hi Tech Fighter.....19.95

Fallow Kit



High Carbon Stainless blade, NS bolster, belt clip. Supplied with preshaped, drilled Quince wood handle material. Overall length 7 13/16" 4-1/2" closed. 3-1/4" cutting edge.

Use Torx T10 & T6.

SS656 Fallow Locking Liner.....19.95

JEWELLED OPENERS

For the 605 folder, Fallow, Black Widow and Hi-Tech Folder as well as other large folders using ambidextrous thumb openers with 1/8" or 5/32" holes, with supplied adapter.

7/32" dia. x .200" long each side.



01 02 03 04 05 06 07 08 09 10 11 12
Choose appropriate color code and add it to the end of the part number below.

TB81— Style 825 Opener.....19.95

VG10 Folder Kits



Each kit includes all components except handle material. Easy instructions for the beginner. VG10 Super Sharp Mirror Polished Laminated Blade. Overall length opened is 6 5/8", 3 7/8" closed, cutting edge is 2 1/2".

VG101 Blue Titanium Liner.....69.95

VG102 Silver Titanium Liner.....64.95

VG103 Stainless Liner.....59.95

Pre-Shaped Handle for VG10

Stabilized exhibition quality preshaped handle for the VG10 folder kits above.

VG519 Stbl California Buckeye.....11.95

VG570 Stbl Desert Ironwood.....11.95

VG10 LITTLE BIGHORN



VG-10 33 layer Damascus, super sharp high cobalt steel blade.

Length 5 1/8", 3" closed, cutting edge is 2".

SS723 VG10 Little Bighorn.....59.95

JANTZ USA BLADES

Made with pride in Jantz's Davis Oklahoma manufacturing facility, using Crucible steels. Each blade is double tempered & cryo treated for maximum wear resistance and edge holding capability. Brass bolsters available. Available in peened or satin finishes. Call if you do not see the part number for the finish you are wanting.

Pattern 21



7 7/8" overall, 3 1/8" blade, 5/32" thickness

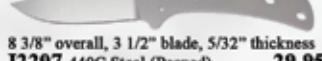
J2108 440C Steel (Satin).....29.95

J2127 D2 Steel (Peened).....29.95

K214 Stainless Bolster.....6.95

KT103 Leather Sheath.....14.50

Pattern 22



8 3/8" overall, 3 1/2" blade, 5/32" thickness

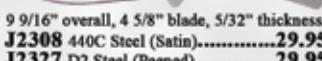
J2207 440C Steel (Peened).....29.95

J2228 D2 Steel (Satin).....29.95

K214 Stainless Bolster.....6.95

KT103 Leather Sheath.....14.50

Pattern 23



9 9/16" overall, 4 5/8" blade, 5/32" thickness

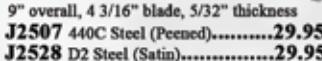
J2308 440C Steel (Satin).....29.95

J2327 D2 Steel (Peened).....29.95

K214 Stainless Bolster.....6.95

KT111 Leather Sheath.....14.50

Pattern 25



9" overall, 4 3/16" blade, 5/32" thickness

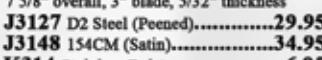
J2507 440C Steel (Peened).....29.95

J2528 D2 Steel (Satin).....29.95

K214 Stainless Bolster.....6.95

KT111 Leather Sheath.....14.50

Pattern 31



7 5/8" overall, 3" blade, 5/32" thickness

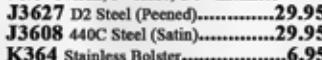
J3127 D2 Steel (Peened).....29.95

J3148 154CM (Satin).....34.95

K314 Stainless Bolster.....6.95

KT104 Leather Sheath.....14.50

Pattern 36 (SS573 Silver Moose)



7 5/8" overall, 3" blade, 1/8" thickness

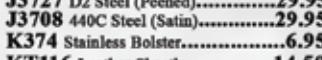
J3627 D2 Steel (Peened).....29.95

J3608 440C Steel (Satin).....29.95

K364 Stainless Bolster.....6.95

KT103 Leather Sheath.....14.50

Pattern 37 (SS473 Silver Fox)



6 5/8" overall, 2 5/8" blade, 1/8" thickness

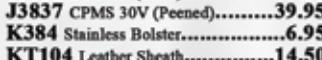
J3727 D2 Steel (Peened).....29.95

J3708 440C Steel (Satin).....29.95

K374 Stainless Bolster.....6.95

KT116 Leather Sheath.....14.50

Pattern 38



7" overall, 2 1/2" blade, 5/32" thickness

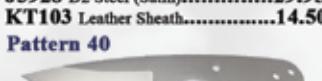
J3828 D2 Steel (Satin).....29.95

J3837 CPMS 30V (Peened).....39.95

K384 Stainless Bolster.....6.95

KT104 Leather Sheath.....14.50

Pattern 39



6 1/2" overall, 2 1/2" blade, 1/8" thickness

J3907 440C Steel (Peened).....29.95

J3928 D2 Steel (Satin).....29.95

KT103 Leather Sheath.....14.50

Pattern 40



7 3/16" overall, 3 1/4" blade, 1/8" thickness

J4008 440C Steel (Satin).....29.95

J4027 D2 Steel (Peened).....29.95

KT103 Leather Sheath.....14.50

LETTER OPENER

Available with or without a lightly etched Oak leaf design. 6" length, 4 1/2" blade, 7/16" wide, .046" thick.

The Frisco

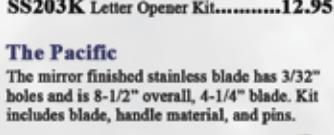


SS204 Frisco w/ Engraving.....7.95

SS205 Frisco without Engraving.....7.95

The Burlington

This new opener is easy to customize. Nickel Silver bolsters are pre-pinned and ready to finish, the mirror finished stainless blade is 9-1/4" overall, 5-1/2" below the bolster. Kit includes blade, handle material, and pins.



SS203 Letter Opener.....9.95

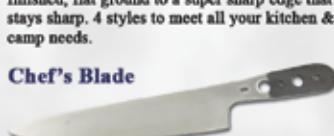
SS203K Letter Opener Kit.....12.95

The Pacific

The mirror finished stainless blade has 3/32" holes and is 8-1/2" overall, 4-1/4" blade. Kit includes blade, handle material, and pins.



Chef's Blade



12-1/2" overall, 8-3/4" blade, .078 thickness

SS107 Chef's Blade.....16.95

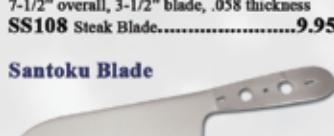
Cook's Blade



10-1/2" overall, 6" blade, .078 thickness

SS106 Cook's Blade.....14.95

Steak Blade



7-1/2" overall, 3-1/2" blade, .058 thickness

SS108 Steak Blade.....9.95

Santoku Blade



10-3/4" overall, 6" blade, .070 thickness

SS110 Santoku Blade.....17.95

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Q&A

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

Got a burning question to ask the editor? Contact him at: Email: ed@gunsmagazine.com or postal at: GUNS Q&A, 12345 World Trade Dr., San Diego, CA 92128. Due to the volume of mail received, GUNS cannot offer a personal reply.

JEFF JOHN

What Matters?

Q: Does where a gun is purchased or the serial numbers have any relationship as to the quality? Are any rifles, pistols, revolvers or shotguns acceptable for competition shooting as-is, or do they all need to be customized or special ordered for expert marksmanship?

*Farrel Thomas
Chehalis, Wash.*

A: For the most part, serial numbers tell you little about a new, factory-made firearm. If you shop at a store with a knowledgeable sales staff and a wide selection,

you'll better be able to compare the handling characteristics between various arms.

For entry-level competition at a local IDPA match, an out-of-the-box pistol from any of our main gunmakers should get you started. Everybody sees slightly differently, so a pistol or revolver with fixed sights may need to be adjusted. The USFA SAA .45 Colt pictured nearby shoots right over the front sight for me with factory loads, so I feel blessed. If you're going to shoot 50-yard bull's-eye competition, you'll need a custom pistol combined with plenty of practice.

Jacob Gottfredson wrote a humorous story in the May 2009 issue about losing a 600-yard, F-class benchrest match to a chap shooting an out-of-the-box iron-sighted Rock River AR-15 using factory ammo from Black Hills. Jacob was shooting a custom \$5,000 scoped rifle with handloads. Score one for an off-the-shelf rifle!

As for shotguns, the target O/Us made by Beretta, Browning and others in the same price class should work great if they fit you well. That's another reason to go to a store with a knowledgeable staff. Your eye is the rear sight on a shotgun, so fit is important.

The bottom line is, as your shooting skills grow you will begin to understand how your particular firearm can be made to serve you better. That's when the customizing or trading up should start.

Sticky Situation

I was picking up a bluing job at Jim Hoag's shop the other day (8523 Canoga Ave., Canoga Park, CA 91304, 818/998-1510), and he told me

VELOCITY COMPARISONS: REVOLVER VS. PISTOL

S&W REVOLVER

LENGTH (INCHES)	CYL GAP (INCHES)	VEL (FPS)	STND DEVIATION
4	.004	808	14
5	.006	823	14
6.5	.007	822	16

1911 PISTOL

MAKE	LENGTH (INCHES)	VEL (FPS)	STND DEVIATION
Brown	4.25	766	18
Wilson	4.25	812	22
BarSto-1	5.0	843	16
BarSto-2	5.0	864	15
Kart-1	5.0	869	9.3
Kart-2	5.0	873	6.6
Colt NM	5.0	859	14

All ammunition is CCI Blazer Brass 230-grain TMJ from the same lot. Velocity is the instrumental average of 10 shots over a PACT chronograph.

of a gent who came in with a .30-30 Winchester 94 with a .308 Winchester firmly jammed in the chamber. Telling the salesman at the gun store the top of the barrel was marked ".30 W.C.F." he was sold ".308 Winchester" ammo. Well, at least they are both .30 somethings. Know your caliber!

More Auto Vs. Sixguns

Q: I found Roy Huntington's explanation interesting and his conclusion valid in September's Q&A titled "Auto vs. Sixgun." I noted however, that like most people who address the "auto vs. sixgun" velocity issue, he failed to mention one obvious fact that seems relevant.

Specifically, the 5" auto barrel is measured from breach to muzzle and includes the chamber, whereas the 5" 1917 has 5" of rifled barrel plus another 1-1/2" of chamber in the cylinder. Shouldn't attempts to compare performance between wheel guns and auto's take this into account?

The results would certainly be different, but I suspect that differences between individual guns of similar configuration might still approximate the variation found between closed and open systems.

Rob Crosby
via e-mail



The nice thing about having a revolver such as a USFA SAA (left) with a .45 Colt and .45 ACP cylinder is having a 3-caliber gun (note the .45 Schofield round between the .45 Colt and .45 ACP). Such a combo is especially useful for shooting up .45 ACP handloads too light to cycle the 1911, or topped with bullets the self-loader won't feed. Leather is by Rick Bachman, Old West Reproductions (left) and Jim Lockwood, Legends in Leather (right).

A: Your last paragraph is the most telling. It's fun to do the comparison, and the .45 ACP's performance in different makes and lengths of barrels in both revolvers and pistols is amazing.

Charlie Petty did a comparison test in his "Ammo" column for the

January 2005 issue. He chronographed three S&W revolvers and seven 1911s all with Speer .45 ACP 230-grain TMJ ammunition. A reprint of the 1-page column is available for \$4 from www.gunsmagazine.com/archives. The chart from the column is reprinted nearby.

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The American Spirit Arms custom AR test rifle in 5.56 performed perfectly, with the heavy barrel contributing to accuracy testing.

THE HANDBUILT

CUSTOM AR

ASA's Modern Defensive Rifles.

Roy Huntington

Editor, *American*

Handgunner Magazine

Located in Scottsdale, Ariz. for almost 20 years, ASA does one thing, and does it extremely well—build AR-15, M16 and M4 rifles. And, being both a production and a custom shop, they can build a rifle exactly to your specifications, using their 100-percent made-in-America parts (all major parts are manufactured by ASA), and then deliver it to you personally at their shop. They offer tours, and will even allow you to watch while your rifle is being built. All ASA rifles are backed by a fully transferable lifetime guarantee, and each rifle is personally inspected by company owner Joe Sirochman before it goes out the door.

I know custom pistols, especially 1911s, so have some pre-conceived notions of what custom work should stand for. Superior fit over factory “assembled” guns, better finishes and a cohesive look to the package, as if it was tailored like a good suit, are all elements. The parts should look right together, be blended, fit and finished as well as possible—and be of the highest quality. The ASA rifle

didn't let me down. While there are many shooters more knowledgeable about the AR platform than I am, our test rifle simply looked good, and even I could tell it was a dandy.

This particular rifle is a bit of a showcase of what ASA might do for you. You can start with a stock rifle (still made to extremely high standards of fit, finish and function), or chat with the consultants at ASA to work with them to create something exactly meeting your needs.

While standard rifles are guaranteed to meet 1-MOA accuracy expectations, this custom rifle is guaranteed to live up to a 1/2-MOA goal. And, after shooting it, I have no doubts it can with the right ammo and optics.

Some Details

Based on their innovative “Side Charge Receiver” design, this concept of offside charging means your hand can clear optics, and offers a stout handle for operating the bolt. You also don't need to lose cheekweld when running the bolt. It's simple, non-reciprocating, elegantly engineered, solid as a rock and works as advertised. I'm sold on the idea.

Other features include the forged lower receiver with EDM machined mag well, Robar NP3 finish on the upper and lower, 16" stainless steel bull barrel (1:8" twist for 5.56 or .223), ASA Picatinny-railed gas block, Ergo Grips Ambi-Suregrip and Z Float free-floating quad rail, ASA 6-position collapsible stock, ASA 4-pound trigger with anti-walk pins and easy to see Diamondhead front and rear flip-up sights. As I handled the rifle I noticed how smoothly the controls functioned, and watched for the little things like pins fitting correctly, sights mounted solidly, a crisp



and repeatable trigger, and more such things, all of which rested in the ASA platform.

It's an impressive rifle, especially with the inclusion of the side-charging concept. For our test, ASA assigned a part number allowing you to follow the build sheet for our sample gun if you like. Called the Model ASA-16/BBSC-NP3, if you decide you need one just like this, they can recreate this custom rifle just for you.

Shooting

After zeroing at 50 yards here on my range in "the back 40," I moved targets out to a lasered 100 yards and settled down. With the 1:8" twist, I had assumed heavier ammo in the more than 70-grain weight would be fine, but tested lighter weights such as Federal's .223 55-grain topped

with Barnes Triple Shock "Tactical" bullet made for law enforcement. Other ammo tested included Black Hills 55-grain Softpoint and 75-grain Match HP, Winchester 55-grain Ballistic Silvertip, International Cartridge's 55-grain Green Elite and ASYM Precision's .223 77-grain OTM (BTHP). From light to heavy, we'd find out what worked.

Some generic 55-grain military ball settled right in and served to sight in at 50 yards, delivering well under .5" if I paid attention. Once at 100, I went through the premium ammo using the great targets from Mountain Plains Industries. The bold, inverted "V" makes keeping iron sights aligned much easier, and shooting scoped rifles a breeze.

That's when the interesting things began to happen. The 55-grain loads ran perfectly and groups hovered in the 1" or better area. Keep in mind this was with iron sights from a bench, and I'm usually not that brilliant with iron sights at longer ranges. The great trigger paid dividends, and the solid sight picture from the Diamondhead sights made it

ASA's custom test rifle proved to be reliable and accurate, with a very complete package (above) of well-fitted accessory parts already installed. The components are very simple and Roy was amazed to note how cleverly the conversion was engineered. Takedown (below) begins by pushing out the cross pin on the receiver, opening the action. Then a twist of a small, metal block above the rear of the bolt allows it to slip out, and sliding out a rail on the left allows the charging handle to be removed. It's very fast and easy. Our test rifle had a chrome carrier as part of the custom package.



easy to keep my focus on what I was doing. The 55-grain loads from Black Hills, Winchester, ICC and Federal all shot in almost boringly predictable 1" groups.

However—and with no fault of the ammo or the rifle—the rifle simply didn't like the heavier 75- and 77-grain loads from Black Hills and ASYM. I have shot both loads in rifles with 1:7" and even 1:10" twist rates and they have both performed with sterling results. But like anything mechanical, this particular rifle, with this particular barrel,



The custom ASA rifle came with Ergo Grips Z Float Free Floating Quad Rail and ASA Picatinny railed gas block.

didn't like these heavy bullets. This surprised me, as I would have thought the 1:8" twist rate, theoretically at least, should stabilize heavier bullets. Perhaps up to 62 to 65 grains would work (I didn't have any on-hand to try), but the ultra heavy 75- and 77-grain bullets were just too much in this case, and they key-holed.

With the right load, this rifle clearly delivered stunning accuracy. Keep in mind I did not mount optics on the rifle, and if I'd had something appropriate available, I'll wager those lighter bullet loads would have plunked neatly into 1/2" to 3/4" groups at 100, and likely kept 1/2 MOA out to 200 or 300 yards. The workmanship and reliability (no problems encountered, ever, with all the ammo running through the gun just fine), would make this a first-class defensive rifle to meet the profile of a true, "Modern Defensive Rifle"—a moniker we've coined here at FMG Pubs.

Important Points

The transferable lifetime warranty and accuracy guarantee means you buy an ASA rifle, essentially risk free. If it doesn't shoot, they make it shoot. This is a company full of young, enthusiastic men and women, who seem proud of what they do, hold themselves



With 55-grain bullets from various makers, the ASA custom rifle shot easily repeatable groups (above) of 1" or so at 100 yards—with the folding Diamondhead iron sights! Not a sign of a problem with the heavy ammo or the rifle, but simply a mis-match with rate of twist and bullet. Still, we thought you'd enjoy seeing these classic keyholes (below) when we used 75- and 77-grain bullets. The ASA delivered match-grade accuracy with lighter bullets.



personally accountable for their work and offer a rifle of top quality and innovative design, with an accuracy guarantee some others could only wish for in their dreams. At \$2,365 at full retail, our test rifle isn't cheap, but it does deliver true value. With some mediocre \$750 ARs selling today, why not save up a bit more money in your piggy bank and get something you'll never have to upgrade?

ASA offers basic fighting rifles for \$1,125, and if you option your rifle out with upgrades and performance mods, you get to something like our test rifle. Still, a 1" guarantee from their "factory" 16" rifles is stunning! American Spirit Arms deserves a hard look if you're in the market for a Modern Defensive Rifle.

GUNS

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THE GOVERNOR

GUN



The Governor is a large handgun but well-balanced, and accepts a wide variety of ammunition for personal defense. The Governor's tritium night sight is a real plus for typical self-defense scenarios.

Avertissement: Keep out of reach of children. Read all instructions. Garez hors de la portée des enfants. Lisez toutes les instructions.

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PDX1
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GUN REVIEWS

S&W's new revolver shoots .410, .45 Colt and .45 ACP.

Holt Bodinson

Photos: Robbie Barrkman

Who would have thought that a personal sized blunderbuss would turn out to be one of the hottest selling handguns of the 21st century? In a short decade, we've gone from the pot-metal, cap-gun looking Thunder Five (look that one up on the web) to its more classy sequel, the Taurus Judge and now Smith & Wesson, roars out with their own version, or should we say, "elects" its own version, the "Governor."

Well, the model name is sort of corny. Taurus started it, but the Smith & Wesson Governor-elect goes to the head of the class because he's a 6-shooter!

Believe me perps, do not mess with the hand holding a Governor if it's loaded with six Winchester PDX .410 shells. Or if the owner is of a more experimental persuasion of

mind, the Governor might be loaded with two Winchester PDX .410 shells, two .45 ACPs and two .45 Colts. Yes, this little blunderbuss is a meat grinder.

I admit that more S&Ws occupy the stalls in my stable than any other handgun—from the old Centennial my grandfather used to shoot coyotes and jacks with from the window of his Model T, to the AirLite Titanium that rides my shoulder holster every morning when exercising the dog, to the latest, an M&P9 fitted with Crimson Trace grips and a SureFire X300 weapon light. I like the pull of their double actions better than Colt's, and the quality and reliability built into S&Ws, generally, have been outstanding. The new Governor follows that tradition.

When you finally have one in your hand, you'll realize the Governor, in spite of its stubby 2-3/4" barrel, is a large revolver—not heavy, but large—yet stylish. Much of its size is dictated by the long, stainless steel, 6-shot cylinder that accommodates 2-1/2" .410 shells. Anyway, the Governor is 8-1/2" long, 5-1/2" high and 1-3/4" wide. It will be interesting to see what the holster makers cook up for open and concealed carry of the big Governor. I like to think of it in the role of an unholstered home and car gun.





THE GOVERNMENT GUN

GUNS

MAGAZINE



DIR RIVIS



The Brownells moon-clip stripper tool is an essential part of the Governor's tool kit.



The Governor is devastating (above) when fed Winchester's 2-1/2" .410 PDX1 personal defense load. The Governor handles .45 ACP and .45 Colt just fine, too (below).

**FED. .45 COLT. 225 GR HP
4". FIVE IN 2 7/8"**

**REM. .45 ACP 230 GR MC
3 3/4"**

.410 RIFLED SL

The frame itself is composed of that great, lightweight, heat-treated alloy, S&W calls "Scandium" which lends strength and reduced weight to a number of handguns in the S&W line. On my Sunbeam scale, I weighed the Governor unloaded and loaded to see where it ranks in the handgun world, given its choice of three possible ammunition types. Unloaded it weighs 1 pound, 13 ounces. Loaded with six 230-grain .45 ACPs, it goes up to 2 pounds, 2 ounces; with six 225-grain .45 Colts, it weighs 2 pounds, 3 ounces; and with six Winchester PDX shells, 2 pounds, 4 ounces. Not exactly an air weight but still nicely portable. There's just enough mass there to be comfortable in your hand.

Because the Governor has an omnivorous appetite, S&W has come up with a neat idea for the .45 ACP. Included with the Governor are standard 6-round moon clips and a unique 2-round clip. The 2-round clips enable you to load the cylinder with either two or four rounds of ACP in any arrangement thought effective.

S&W's 6-round moon clips are something else entirely. You can load them, but I dare you to unload them with finger power. Once that S&W clip snaps onto a case, it hangs on for dear life. I've loaded and unloaded a jillion moon clips for 1917s and Webleys with no problems whatsoever. The solution to the S&W problem is Brownells ".45 ACP Moon Clip Stripper Tool," part No. 352-197-000. Denise Murphy of Murphy's Gun Shop in Tucson, Ariz.,

GOVERNOR

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ACTION TYPE: Double-action revolver, **CALIBER:** 2-1/2" .410 shotshell, .45 ACP, .45 Colt, **BARREL LENGTH:** 2-3/4", **OVERALL LENGTH:** 8-1/2", **WEIGHT:** 29.6 ounces, **FINISH:** Matte black, **STOCKS:** Synthetic, **PRICE:** \$679 (with laser grips: \$899)



The cylinder can hold a mixed fruit pudding of .410 2-1/2" shotshells, .45 Colt or .45 ACP. Stoked with 6 rounds of Winchester .410 PDX1, it is indeed a formidable self-defense revolver.

turned me on to this wonderful, little tool. It not only pops loaded or fired rounds out of those S&W moon clips with no effort at all, but stores them in its hollow handle. If you're going to own a Governor, buy the Brownell tool, too.

The sights are fixed but clean and clear. S&W anticipated an essential need in the Governor and put a tritium night sight on the end

of the barrel. It's a blessing in low-light environments, and taking night fighting a step further, S&W offers the Governor with factory installed Crimson Trace laser grips as well.

The trigger is smooth, measuring 4.1 pounds in single-action mode and 11.5 pounds in double action. These are average values generated using a Lyman electronic gauge.

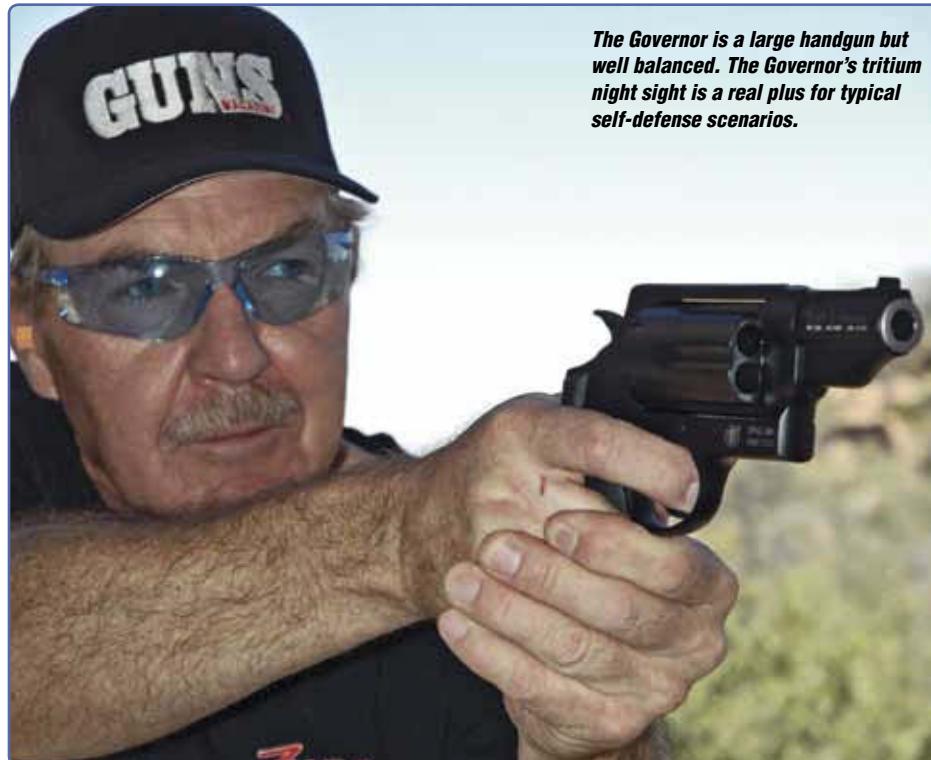
How does it shoot? Winchester's

Supreme Elite "PDX1" ammunition is made for the Governor. This new .410 personal defense load consists of three plated, 70-grain, disk-like projectiles and 12 plated, hard BBs. Shooting at center of mass, you can see how lethal that load is from the Governor at 6', 12', 18' and 25'. The PDX1 does have a little bit of a kick to it, but recoil is soaked up with the Governor's shock absorbing grip.

Switching over to conventional handgun ammunition, the Governor at 25 yards will keep six rounds of .45 ACP and .45 Colt in 2-1/2" to 4". I also had a brilliant idea to test some Brenneke .410 slugs in the Governor. Don't bother. The Brenneke brand is a top performer, but the first shot landed 10" low and several inches off in windage, so I called it a day.

Above all, the Governor is fun to shoot with .410 shotshells. It's a quality Smith & Wesson handgun, and offering one more shot than the competition, the Governor has just taken over the State House.

GUNS



The Governor is a large handgun but well balanced. The Governor's tritium night sight is a real plus for typical self-defense scenarios.

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RESURR

BRINGING A RARE K98K SNIPER RIFLE BACK INTO SERVICE.

Mike "Duke" Venturino

Photos: Yvonne Venturino

In my never-ending quest to shoot historical firearms, there are usually bumps in the road getting a new find up-and-running. Such have ranged from broken firing pins (Japanese Type 14 8mm Nambu) to hopelessly ruined barrels (Sharps Model 1874 Long Range .45 2-6/10" target rifle). Often it takes much time, trouble and treasure to get such guns in good form again.

This time I'm going to tell you about a very historical rifle I bought recently. Getting it into action again was one of those times when everything just literally fell together—sort of. Here's how it played out.

About a month prior to this writing, my cell phone rang just as I was pulling onto the highway on my way to a weekend BPCR silhouette match. It was a friend calling to tell me about a rifle he saw in a pawnshop in Bozeman, Mont. He said it was a German "sniper rifle" but sans scope or rings. I asked how he knew it was a "sniper rifle," if there

Duke's happiness is evident and caused by how easy it was to return his K98k with turret-mount scope system back to original condition. Other projects haven't been as easy.



was no scope. He said, "Because it still had the mounts on the action." Feeling dubious, I still decided to take a look, since my route went through Bozeman anyway.

It indeed was a World War II German sniper rifle, and a rare one to boot. Most German sniper rifles were built on the K98k 8mm Mauser, but the manner in which their scopes were affixed varied to a bewildering degree. Mounting arrangements exist that gained names such as long side rail, short side rail, single claw, double claw, high turret and low turret.

What the pawnshop owner showed me was a worn but still decent condition K98k with all numbered parts matching and a barrel date of 1943. Also it was wearing turret mounts. Those are unique. The front is a large open ring into which fits a truncated cone front-scope ring. Also, there is a tunnel through both front and rear mounts, so the open barrel sights are usable just in case the scope is damaged.

In my ignorance, I had no idea as to whether I was looking at high turrets or low turrets. That didn't deter me from buying the rifle, because the fact was that in all my life I had seen nary a German turret mount sniper rifle. They are not exactly common.

Here's how my thinking went. Knowing many types of sniper rifle mounts and even scopes are being reproduced nowadays, my rather simplistic idea was I'd fill in the missing blanks with replica rings and replica scope. Then at least I'd have myself a good shooting, almost original example of a historical firearm.

Not! As said above I was ignorant. But ignorance can be cured by research and I had two books at home to help. One was *Sniper Variations Of The German K98k Rifle* by Richard D. Law. The other was *The German Sniper 1914-1945* by Peter R. Senich. Both books contain chapters about turret-type rifles. According to them, two German factories built turret K98ks. They were Mauser-Werke Oberndorf and Sauer & Sohn. The German military was famous for stamping "Waffenamts" (inspector's stamps) all over equipment. Mauser-Werke Oberndorf's Waffenamt for turret sniper rifles was "135." Sauer & Sohn's was "37."

The "135" Waffenamts were supposed to be in specific locations on both barrel and scope mounts, and sure enough my new K98k

LECTION



The German K98k sniper rifle with turret mounts and assorted accoutrements a soldier might have had at hand.



had them in the proper spots. Also, authentic turret sniper K98ks had a unique flat safety, which my rifle does wear. An odd thing about it is a large stamped "377" on the buttstock. Its meaning is unknown. However, the last two digits of the serial number are also stamped into the stock, plus Waffenamts are stamped in the barrel channel.

It is interesting to note the K98ks chosen for sniper duty had to pass an accuracy test. With their issue open sights they were fired for group by competent marksmen at 100 meters. Five rounds had to cluster into a circle of 120mm, which is slightly less than 4-3/4". That seems like a fairly liberal requirement. K98ks had 23.6" barrels, weighed approximately 8.6 pounds (without scope or mounts) and early in the war began to have stocks of laminated wood. Caliber was 8x57mm Mauser by our modern American terms. Back in WWII

the Germans labeled it 7.92x57mm. Nominal ballistics for the standard FMJ infantry load (Called sS Patrone in German) had a 198-grain bullet starting at 2,540 fps.

Solder This, Solder That

Despite the details in both above books, their information filled my heart with dread. Every K98k affixed with turret mounts was essentially built individually. The mounts themselves were not only screwed to the rifles' actions *but they were permanently soldered in place*. That's not all. The Germans also dismantled the scopes, got the rings placed where needed, *and then permanently soldered them in place also!* They were never intended for interchangeability. That's why the front scope ring was stamped with the same serial number as the rifle. Also worthy of mention is that until relatively late in the war, the German military used scopes manufactured by

many companies for the civilian trade. Most were 4X and given the moniker "Zielvier."

At this point Plan B was in order. I figured to buy rings from a replica manufacturer and just put a modern scope in them. *Not!* The reason the Germans had both "high" turrets and "low" turrets was to get some of those "civilian" scopes high enough so the unaltered bolt handles would clear their rear bells. Most modern scopes likely will not clear when put in low turret mounts. Not only did I not know which types of turrets I had but there was another potential problem. To his credit one prominent maker of replica rings and mounts told me it would be highly unlikely that his rings would fit into my original mounts.

Disheartened, I began to wonder if I had just added another iron-sighted 8mm Mauser to my rifle racks. Then Yvonne with her usual common sense said, "Why don't you check eBay?" My response was "Huh? I don't know how to work eBay. Besides, I've already checked the firearms auction sites with no luck." Still she persisted, got me hooked up to that website and showed me how to search.

Bingo Again!

Indeed there was a Zeiss "Zielvier" scope in turret rings on eBay, complete with an original leather carrying case. It was not cheap, was in Europe and the seller didn't specify whether it was for high or low turrets. But by now I was a bit less ignorant. Low turret rings had four screws in the bottom of the front ring and photos showed them on this one. But not ever having seen a turret mounted K98k before, I still didn't know if mine had low or high turrets. There is only a 1/4" difference between the two and I had only photos in books by which to judge my new rifle.

Again Yvonne came to my rescue. She has been a lifelong seamstress with a keen eye for detail. She said,



Duke shooting the turret mount K98k at his home range. He was able to ring the 300-yard plate repeatedly.



This was the German K98k with turret mounts as Duke bought it out of a pawn shop.

"Show me your rifle and the photos in those books." After a moment's study she pronounced, "Your rifle has low turrets." Then she proceeded to point out tiny angles and dimensions I would have never noticed. With some trepidation I bid on that scope. Waiting for the auction to end, my mind was in a jumble. Would its rings mate with my turrets? Would the scope set so low that the bolt handle couldn't clear the rear bell? If it did clear would the scope adjust properly? Would it be clear enough to use? Could you even depend on a seller in a foreign country to send it? All those doubts swirled about in my head.

That latter point turned out to be a non-issue. In a little over two weeks the scope arrived at my post office. Quickly tearing open the package,



These are the bullets, powder, primers and dies (above) with which Duke has been fashioning 8mm handloads for his original sniper rifle; duplicating its original ballistics with 195-grain Hornady, 200-grain Nosler HPBT and 200-grain Nosler Accubond bullets. Duke shot this 6-shot group (below) with his K98k turret-mount sniper rifle using the new 200-grain Nosler HPBT competition bullet.



I could see that although there was some exterior rust spots, its optics were clear. In fact it was exactly as billed by the seller.

Did it mount right up and I lived happily ever after? Not exactly. With the front ring in its turret, the rear ring and mount ever so slightly did not match up. Now in my 60s, I have grown much wiser and did not try to force it or fit it myself. My gunsmith buddy, Tom Sargsis has developed a "battle cry" in dealing with me. It goes, "Don't mess with it yourself—I'm only a 5-minute drive away!"

That same day I dropped the rifle and scope off with Tom. As he examined them I shakily asked, "Will they fit together or am I out a bunch of bucks?" Tom calmly said, "No. It will only take a bit of metal fitting to get it on." He was as good as his word and two days later handed me a German low-turret mount K98k ready to shoot. While he was at it, I also had him dismantle the entire outfit and clean decades of grit, grime and dried oil out of every nook and cranny. Tom has a sizeable military rifle collection himself, so it pleased me greatly when he said about my new one, "This is a beauty."

It Shoots, Too

So is this the end of my story? No way! Good things continued to happen. The scope and mounts had plenty of adjustment for proper sighting in. Most German sniper scopes have no provision for windage change, and their elevation adjustment is actually a bullet drop compensator. That means the shooter gets the rifle zeroed at 100 meters and then changes the elevation ring so it also reads "100." Then changing the elevation ring moves the scope's reticle for longer distances. To adjust windage in a turret-mount system, the rear-scope ring is moved laterally on the rear base. It's simple: loosen one side's screw and then turn the other side in to push the rear-scope ring in that direction. It's then a "shoot, see and adjust" sort of deal. In short order we had the rifle planting 8mm bullets dead center in my 300-yard steel target.

Here's one other thing that came together. Simultaneously with the scope and rifle getting mated I got a package from Nosler Bullets. It contained their brand new 8mm, 200-grain hollowpoint, boattail (HPBT) competition bullet. I'm not going blow smoke up your wazoo by telling you that my 70-year-old sniper rifle shot minute of angle groups with that new Nosler bullet. The truth is that it keeps all shots in about 2" at



What made Duke jump at this rifle were all those "67s" all over its metal parts, meaning its serial numbered parts are all matching. The odd safety lever is peculiar to these rifles. Note the decades' worth of accumulated grit and grime.



WWII German Zeiss scopes have a bullet drop compensator to adjust elevation. It is adjustable from 100 to 1,000 meters.



Duke's K98k has all the proper markings. However, he is not sure what the "377" at the end of the buttstock denotes.

100 yards, with many of the bullet holes touching one another. Two other bullets have also given good results: Hornady's 195-grain spirepoint and Nosler's 200-grain Accubond. Incidentally, my standard load for all those is 47.0 grains of Varget powder and Winchester Large Rifle Primers. That charge will give about 2,500 fps from this rifle with all three bullets.

All together it took less than a month for this entire outfit to come together: rifle, scope and even new bullet. Never has a project gone so smoothly for me! In only two weeks from this writing I will be attending the CMP's (Civilian Marksmanship Program) Western Games in Phoenix, Ariz. Part of that will be a vintage sniper rifle event at ranges of 300 and 600 yards. Guess what rifle I'm taking?

Shotguns

FOR WESTERN UPLAND BIRDS

Hey buddy, you interested in a super deal on a Western hunt?



After a covey of Hungarian partridge is scattered, the singles tend to hold very well, especially in warm, early-season weather. Montana gunmaker Stephen Dodd Hughes raises the custom Fox 12 gauge he built himself.

John Barsness

To many hunters, the part of the United States west of the Mississippi River represents their lifetime dream. East of the Mississippi, the common big-game animals are white-tailed deer and feral pigs, with black bears hunted in several states and moose in a very few, and then only by long-odds lotteries. All four of those animals are also found Out West, along with mule and black-tailed deer, pronghorns, elk, bighorn sheep, mountain goats, mountain lions and, these days, wolves.

The trouble with hunting any Western big game, however, is that almost all involve quite a bit of money and even some luck. Residents can buy deer and elk tags over the counter in several Western states, but non-residents can't hunt even those common animals without drawing a tag in a license lottery. And the non-resident fees are pretty high. In my home state of Montana, a non-resident elk license costs \$812, and odds are you won't draw one the first time you apply, or maybe even the second. Then there's the cost of travel, food and accommodations and some way to get 200 or 300 pounds of elk meat home. Add in the optional services of an outfitter (not a bad idea for a first elk hunt, especially when getting a dead elk out of the mountains) and a taxidermist, and the total can come to \$10,000.

However, there's another kind of Western hunting that doesn't involve a lottery, and is cheaper in every way, including bringing meat home, since you can normally stuff the results inside a picnic cooler: The West also has a



Most Americans think a 6-1/4-pound 12 gauge is too light to shoot comfortably, but John's Sauer Model 60 works very well on blue grouse with 1-ounce loads.

much wider variety of upland birds than anywhere east of the Mississippi.

Montana, for instance, has eight species of upland birds. In addition to well-established Eurasian birds such as Hungarian and chukar partridge and pheasants, we have ruffed, blue, spruce, sharptail and sage grouse. In other states, especially further south and west, there are five kinds of quail, including wild bobwhites, not very common anywhere in the East anymore. Several plains states, from South Dakota down through New Mexico, also have prairie chickens and in Colorado's high mountains you can hunt





Eileen Clarke took this wild Montana pheasant at over 40 yards with a Beretta 20-gauge O/U and No. 6 shot. It is very possible to use the same shotgun on all western upland birds.



Thomas Haviland shoots a Benelli Super Nova on everything.

white-tailed ptarmigan.

Aside from a wide variety, hunting licenses are available over the counter and relatively cheaply. Montana's non-resident upland license costs \$110, and the season-long non-resident licenses I've purchased in states from Arizona to South Dakota have also run in the \$100 to \$150 range, though some states allow non-residents to purchase an upland license legal for anywhere from one to five days, at a considerable savings. While it can be a little pricey to pay a trespass fee or hunt at a pheasant lodge in South Dakota or on a Texas ranch, in most states there's still a lot of public ground where wild birds can be found.

Many Eastern hunters assume the biggest problem in Western bird hunting would be bringing a wide variety of shotguns for birds that range from 8-ounce quail to 6-pound sage grouse. This isn't as false as the frequently heard opinion that a Pennsylvania hunter's .270 Winchester or 7mm-08 Remington isn't enough for elk, but it can be overdone. Right now I own 14 shotguns, in all the common gauges and configurations, and only one doesn't get used to wingshoot Western upland birds—a 10-1/2 pound, 10-gauge side-by-side. But then, many shooters deserve a reputation for wretched excess—and I know some Western upland hunters who exceed my wretchedness by a wide margin.

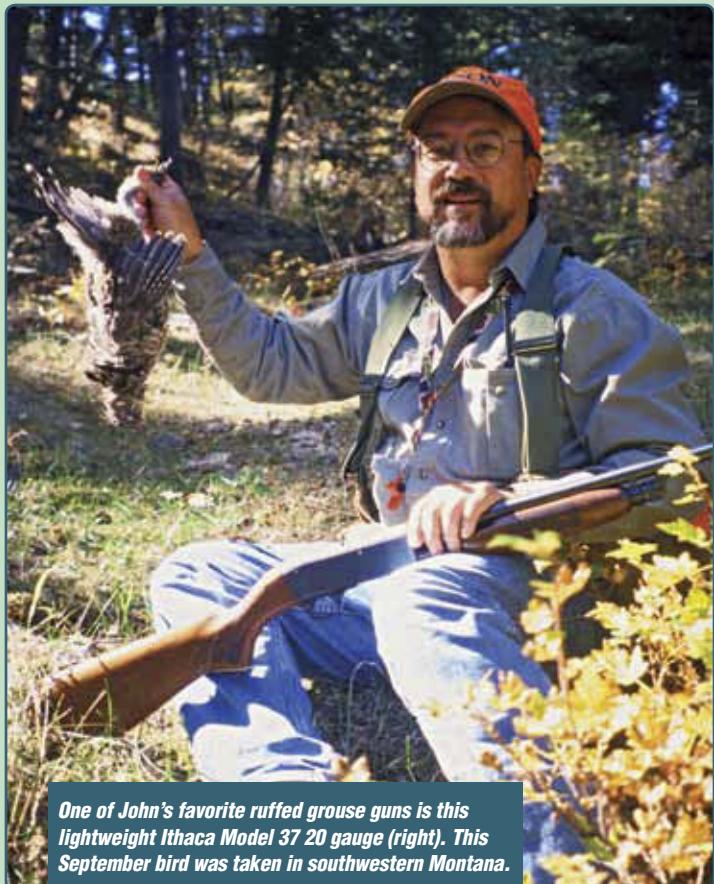
The truth about any upland wingshooting is that only one shotgun is needed to hunt everything from doves to sage grouse. I even admit to having done it myself—with several different guns. The smallest was a 6-pound, 28-gauge Franchi over-under, and the largest my 7-3/4 pound Remington 870, chambered for the 3" 12 gauge. Both worked fine, even for such supposedly specialized

tasks as ruffed grouse in thick cover and pheasants at 40 yards—but another truth is that the wide variety of Western upland birds can be covered more enjoyably and handily with two shotguns.

One should be fairly light, with more open choking, and one should be medium-heavy, with tighter choking. Those categories are vague enough, however, for quite a bit of fantasizing and playing around—the true purpose of acquiring sporting firearms.

We can begin by eliminating any .410 (unless, of course, you don't want to). I own a nice little .410 side-by-side, a 2-trigger Huglu purchased before CZ took over their marketing in America, and have hunted with it enough to know the baby bore's limitations. The .410 works quite well out to about 30 yards, especially with 3/4-ounce loads, whether handloads or Winchester factories, but a 28 or 20 works a lot better, and can be just as light. My Huglu weighs just under 5-1/2 pounds, lighter than many other .410s, but my present 28 gauge is a Fausti DEA SL side-by-side weighing only 2 ounces over 5 pounds. (This is the same gun I recently reviewed in *GUNS*. After the tests it didn't want to leave my house, so I bought it.) There's also a lightweight Ithaca Model 37 20-gauge pump, weighing exactly the same.

For a number of years I didn't like such lightweight shotguns, mostly because I was too young and strong to shoot some of them well. Too light a gun can definitely be a factor in any wingshooting, even though some of us hate to admit it. One friend from the Midwest, for instance, fell in love with the very light Franchi Model 48 autoloader in 28 gauge, convincing himself it would be absolutely perfect for



One of John's favorite ruffed grouse guns is this lightweight Ithaca Model 37 20 gauge (right). This September bird was taken in southwestern Montana.



Blue grouse are big birds, weighing up to 3 pounds, but their country is big as well. Your shotgun will be carried more than it's shot.

hunting ruffed grouse and woodcock in the thickets of upper Michigan. Trouble was, my friend is 6'3" tall and weighs around 230 pounds, and simply over-powered the little gun, missing a lot of birds he used to hit with his "too heavy" 20-gauge O/U.

However, as many upland hunters grow closer to 60 than 40, a lighter gun becomes more attractive, whether hunting ruffed grouse in "crickbottom" thickets or climbing chukar slopes. Light guns will work for either purpose if they're balanced properly.

The main fault of many light shotguns is muzzle-lightness. A muzzle-light gun works fine on going-away shots, but most hunters tend to stop the swing of a muzzle-light gun on crossing shots. I know this due to owning too many muzzle-light guns in earlier years. I finally recognized the

phenomenon, and now insist that my light upland guns have enough weight forward.

A good example was the fancy AyA SxS 12 gauge, purchased when I was 35 as a present to myself for being hired as a staff writer for a Really Big Magazine. The shotgun was the XXV model, with 25" barrels, and weighed a few ounces over 6 pounds. It worked great in ruffed grouse thickets, where many shots consist of poking the muzzles in the direction of a grouse shadow whirring through the trees. But the same gun didn't work worth a darn for open-country shooting, because as soon as I thought about pulling the trigger the gun's swing slowed down.

Eventually I accepted the fact that the AyA was a beautiful mistake, and sold it. A couple of years later another 12-gauge SxS showed up on

the consignment rack of a gunsmith friend, a Sauer Model 60 weighing almost exactly the same as the AyA XXV—but with 72cm (28.35") barrels that made it a lot easier to shoot. The Sauer has its original factory chokes, the typical German tight and tighter, but has been used on a wide variety of birds from blue grouse (with 1-ounce spreader loads of No. 6 shot) to late-season pheasants and spring turkeys (with conventional loads using 1-3/8 ounces of No. 5 shot).

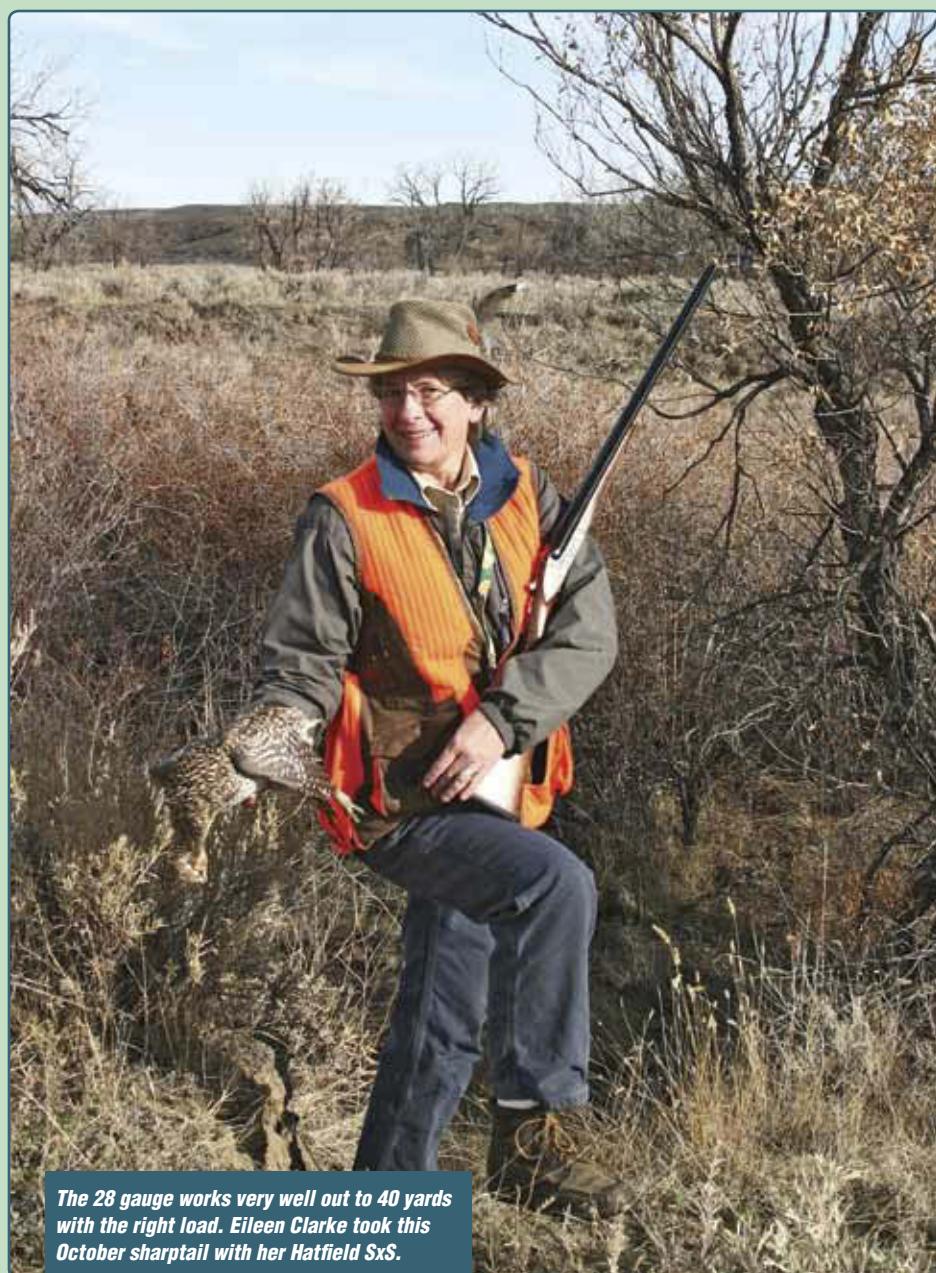
It might seem to most Americans that a 6-1/4-pound 12 gauge would kick too much, but that's only because too many of us insist on shooting "magnum" loads at any bird bigger than a quail. In reality, a 1-ounce load will cleanly kill just about any game bird out to 40 yards, and heavier loads for long-range pheasants or spring turkeys are only shot a very few times during what normally turns out to be a long day of hiking. (As somebody once said in reference to light "mountain rifles" chambered for anything from the .30-06 on up: "The effects of gravity are constant; the effects of recoil fleeting.")

Like the Sauer, the little Fausti 28 gauge swings nicely even on crossing shots because of its 28" barrels. The startling concept that a small-gauge double doesn't work very well with short barrels is finally getting through to American wingshooters, probably due to Sporting Clays.

Repeatingers, whether pumps or autoloaders, can get away with shorter barrels and still balance well due to their longer receivers, plus the fact that extra shells are carried inside the fore-end. Both the Ithaca 37 and my 6-pound Weatherby SA-08 20-gauge autoloader balance well, despite their 25" and 26" barrels, and are frequently used when hunting covey birds, whether quail, Huns or sharptails, when more than two shots can come in handy.

When carrying a repeater Out West, be aware the regulations in a few states make hunting any wild birds with an "unplugged" shotgun illegal. Many years ago I hunted Arizona quail for the first time with my friend Web Parton and his Llewellyn setters. We started out northwest of Tucson, and when the first covey of Gambel's quail went up I shot more than three times with my 20-gauge Franchi autoloader. Quail were dropping everywhere, which I thought deserved some praise, but Web looked at me in horror, saying: "That gun's not plugged!"

Used to hunting in more civilized states such as Montana, where the only point of putting up a covey of anything is to kill more than three, I



The 28 gauge works very well out to 40 yards with the right load. Eileen Clarke took this October sharptail with her Hatfield SxS.



A pile of blue grouse taken with Eileen Clarke's Hatfield 28-gauge side-by-side and Gail Haviland's Beretta 20-gauge O/U.

hadn't read the Arizona regulations closely enough. Luckily, I'd also brought along a 16-gauge Beretta Silver Hawk SxS, and used it for the rest of the hunt. (Web tells me that Arizona has since changed that regulation, but some other states still have such laws, especially for hunting doves.)

The Flush

A lighter, more open-choked gun will be most useful when hunting during warm weather, whether in September and October in the northern states, or later in southwestern states. This is because upland birds tend to hold closer in warm weather, especially when the season hasn't been open very long. Huns and sharptails, for instance, tend to hang out in thicker, shadier cover in September than later in the fall, when they move to more open country. In fact, approaching to within shotgun range in November can

be almost impossible, though some of us try anyway.

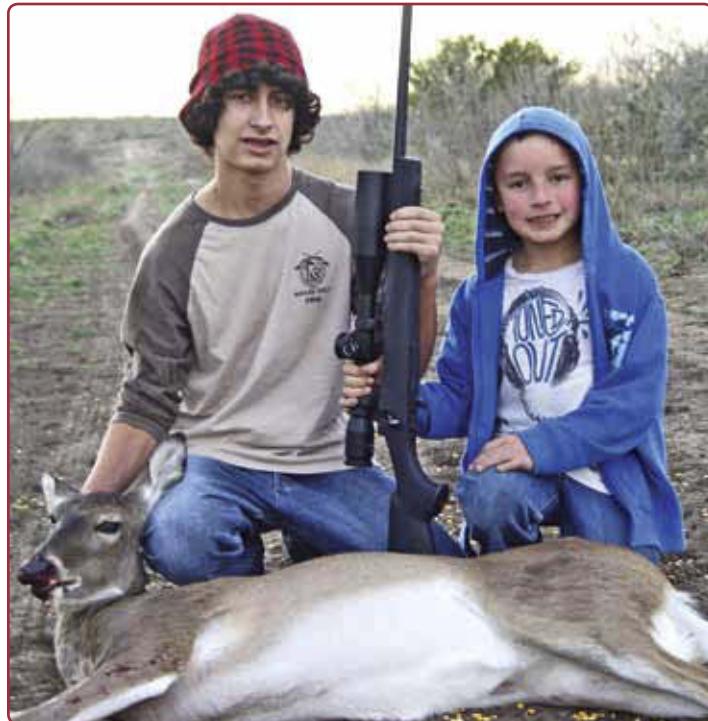
The species can also make a difference. Mearns quail and spruce grouse hold very tightly, no matter the time of year (the reason both are sometimes called "fool's quail" or "fool hens") while scaled quail, prairie chickens and chukars tend to be somewhat spooky even in warm weather, due to the open grasslands they usually inhabit.

This is why you should also bring a tighter-choked shotgun. Most of us shoot better at longer ranges when this gun also has a little heft to it, though anything over 7 pounds really isn't necessary. While I've killed quite a few pheasants out to 40 yards, and sage grouse even further with the 28 gauge, true long-range upland gunning normally requires more than an ounce of shot. Much better is the 1-1/4 ounces of shot, whether thrown by the 3" 20-gauge, heavy 16-gauge loads

or the classic 2-3/4" 12 gauge. I tend to go even heavier with late-season sharptails, pheasants or sage grouse—though "late season" and "sage grouse" really don't go together anymore, since Montana cut off the season at the end of October. Back in the 1990s, when you could hunt sage grouse in November, I often used 3" 12-gauge loads of No. 4 shot for bringing down 6-pound roosters at 50 yards or more, and once even used some leftover No. 2 lead goose loads from pre-steel days, finding them quite effective.

Of course, we could just use the same 7-pound 12 gauge all season long, changing loads and screwing in different chokes for different birds and conditions. I've done that too, especially with a 12-gauge Beretta Onyx O/U, and miracle of miracles, it worked. But what's the fun of hiking all over such a widely varied landscape after different wild and tasty birds with only one shotgun?

HAVING IT YOUR WAY *Inexpensively.*



The buck season in Texas had ended before Jacob's grandson (above) got the opportunity to put one in the freezer for Grandpa. This little doe's meat will be better anyway. The .260 Remington cartridge with Remington's 140-grain Core-Lokt Ultra Bonded PSP did the job instantly with a lung shot at 125 yards. The Hogue Overmolded stock is stippled at the grip and fore-end (below), however, the rubberized material seems to do the job well enough without it. Valdada's 4-14x50mm scope's illumination is activated at the rear with the offset dial.



Jacob Gottfredson

Through an unfortunate set of circumstances for a great guy and his rifle company, I am the owner of a very nice hunting rifle. The rifle is nicely balanced, about the weight I like, great for those cold, wet days and shoots very well. Turns out, you can inexpensively duplicate it.

It is not uncommon to take parts from different manufacturers and build a rifle around them. The recipients of Howa barreled actions do, Weatherby does it, and there are a host of others that do as well. In fact, like mine, many of them are based on the Howa action and the Hogue Overmolded stock. Why not do it yourself?

Howa 1500 Action

The Howa has an interesting concept to keep prices down. Made from forged steel, it has some other excellent points. First is the integral barrel lug, something sometimes seen in much more expensive actions, for example: the Surgeon. Another is the bolt handle, which is also integral. If you have ever knocked the bolt handle off a Remington, you know of what I speak. I have done it three times. It's very problematical as well as expensive to fix.

The bolt offers two lugs, an AR extractor and a beefy shroud. The bolt body is, however, a bit smaller than average for this kind of action. My first clue was when I tried to insert a rod guide to clean the bore. I have several and none would fit. Looking at the end of the receiver, I could see the inside had been sleeved to accommodate the lugs but be small enough for the body of the bolt itself. Out came the calipers. Seems the bolt body on the Remington, Surgeon and Stiller all measure about .700", while the Howa measures about .680". Solved that mystery. But another arises: Why? I suspect they use different sleeves for different cartridge sizes.

Better than a Remington? Ask 20 guys who have used both and you get an answer more than vague. Most like it but mildly complain it doesn't have as many accessories available as the Remington. For example, the consensus is that only two triggers are offered for the Howa: Timney and Basic. How many do you need? Then again, how great does a trigger have to be to serve the average hunter well? The stock trigger on mine is superb! Both the Remington and the Howa will more than do the job. We're not talking the need for a \$4,000 long-range rifle here.

As companies try to slice the pie to meet the competition for less money, they also cut into what makes a rifle great. But we don't all need a great rifle. We need a productive rifle for the job at hand, one that we can afford. The Howa

meets that goal impressively. Barreled actions sell for approximately \$500 from Legacy Sports.

Barrels are individuals. Some shoot well and some don't. I advise you to try the barrel supplied with the Howa action before calling a custom barrel shop. One reason is that the barrel supplied with the Howa is a bugger to remove. Best to send it to a shop equipped to handle the job.

Barrel makers like Hart, Krieger, Shilen and others make great barrels. Not all are competitive quality for a benchrest match, and some carry a second line that are hole punchers. I have competed in benchrest with the folks from Shilen and Hart for more than a quarter century. I have also used all these barrel makers' products on benchrest, long range, hunting and tactical rifles for many years. I have not been disappointed.

One option is to have the barreled-action drop shipped to your favorite gunsmith with instructions to mount a match-grade barrel from one of these suppliers. The one I have is chambered in .260 Remington. Approximately \$200, and \$150 chambering. Again, I suggest trying the barreled action first. It might surprise you. One problem, however, might be that Howa does not supply a barrel in the cartridge you want. For example, I could not find a .260 Remington among their offerings.

Hogue Overmolded Stocks

It is time to think stock. There are several that will marry to the Howa action. The rifle I own came with a Hogue Overmolded stock.

Hogue Overmolded stocks are another interesting concept. The truth is, this is the first time I have come across one. It seems there are several varieties: A fiberglass internal chassis with a rubber outside coating, or an aluminum chassis with the same coating. Mine has a fiberglass chassis. Pillars were used to bed the action with additional glass bedding. This is a do-it-yourself thing, requiring only a torx wrench if you forgo the glass bedding, which is not that difficult. A bit of Marine Tex and voilà!

The stock has a very tacky feeling I suspect would work well in the cold or on a rain soaked day. The forearm is just a bit on the wide side, which is not always a bad thing in a hunting rifle. I prefer a straight comb, which this one has. Approximately \$200.

Testing

My first time at the range was anything but impressive to my very anal accuracy requirements. I had a couple different manufacturer's hunting ammo in .260 Remington and gave them a try. Groups were unspectacular at about



The Howa action's recoil lug is integral (above). The bolt handle is integral to the bolt body as well. These two features make the action particularly strong. The trigger is adjustable. The Hogue stock is provided with either an aluminum or fiberglass chassis (below). This rifle was supplied with the fiberglass chassis. Note the ribs in the fore-end. The receiver area is inletted for Howa's action. Note also the stock is pillar and glass bedded.



1.3" at 100 yards. While that is plenty good enough to paste any elk at 400 yards, it did not set well with me.

I have a sniper rifle chambered in .260 Remington and decided to try some of my reloads I had left over from a recent match. They were not spectacular either. It was time to tune this rifle. I started at minimum and worked my way up to max, bypassing the sniper rifle's load on the way. The groups began to close up around 43 grains of H4831. Since the rifle has a magazine, I was short of real estate to push the bullet out farther, but did move it out a bit. Other powders could have been used as well as other bullets, but with little time left for that, the tuning did prove the rifle has the potential for good accuracy with a little work.

A little more powder and this rifle might go from the .54" I was getting to less than .5" for 3-shot groups.

The rifle is adorned with a Valdada scope. Now there's



Howa action, Hogue Overmolded stock, Shilen match-grade .260 Remington barrel and Valdada scope at the range for testing.

M1500

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4750 LONGLEY LN., STE. 208, RENO, NV 89502
(775) 828-0555
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ACTION: Forged steel bolt action, push feed, 2-lug integral bolt handle and recoil lug. **CALIBER:** .260 Remington, **OVERALL LENGTH:** 44.5", **BARREL:** 24", Shilen Match, **WEIGHT:** 6.5 pounds, **CAPACITY:** 5, **TRIGGER:** Adjustable, single stage, **STOCK:** Hogue Overmolded, **SIGHTS:** None, drilled and tapped, **PRICE:** \$1,000 approximately, finished

4-14X50MM

MAKER: VALDADA OPTICS
P.O. BOX 270095, LITTLETON, CO 80127
(303) 979-4578
WWW.GUNSMAGAZINE.COM/VALDADA

MAGNIFICATION: 4X-14X, **OBJECTIVE LENS:** 50mm, **EYE RELIEF:** 3.5", **ADJUSTMENT RANGE:** 70 MOA, **CLICK VALUE:** 1/4 MOA, **TUBE:** 30mm, **LENGTH:** 15", **WEIGHT:** 25 ounces, **PRICE:** \$1,395

OVERMOLDED STOCK

MAKER: HOGUE INC.
P.O. BOX 1138, PASO ROBLES, CA 93447
(805) 239-1440
WWW.GUNSMAGAZINE.COM/HOGUE

some glass with class! I met Val many years ago and told his extremely interesting story in another rag. The scopes are made in his native Romania and is complimented by Schott Glasswerk German lenses, some of the best that money can buy. His MP-8 reticle was way ahead of the industry in using bars instead of Mil-Dots, as well as putting smaller bars halfway in between. In my estimation it is one of the best reticles on the market: simple, and easy to master.

The reticles are photo engraved. They use a proprietary MC-7 Wide-Band fully multicoated process that includes seven to 11 layers of coatings per lens surface. The one mounted on the evaluation rifle is part of Valdada's tactical series, and sports an oversized elevation turret with 25 MOA per revolution. It has O-ring seals and a nitrogen-filled 30mm tube. They are waterproof, fog proof and shock proof.

The old man said if you mount a \$50 scope on a \$1,000 rifle, you have a \$50 rifle. But if you mount a \$1,000 scope on a \$50 rifle, you have a \$1,000 rifle. An exaggeration, of course, but it makes a solid point. However, as much as I like it, this particular tactical Valdada test scope is not necessary for our needs.



The two varieties of factory ammo Jacob had on hand, plus his sniper round, shot a bit over an inch, so he handloaded H4831SC behind Lapua's 139-grain bullets, starting at 42 grains and ending at 47 grains. Jacob hung a large piece of paper on the backer and drew circles as shown on the right bull. The 47-grain load seemed to want to shoot. After readjusting the scope, he got the same results on the left. Groups are .544" and .511". Another half grain or so may take the vertical out, reducing the groups.

By the time my grandsons and I got to the hunt, the buck season was over. Grandson number one used Remington's 140-grain Ultra Bond to put a tender doe in my freezer. The shot, taken at 125 yards, put her down on the spot.

Bottom line: You can have a custom built rifle, partially done by yourself to your own specifications for barrel and chambering for \$1,000 with a strong action, versatile pillar bedded stock and a good trigger that will take any North American game to 500 yards with ease. If the Howa barrel proves acceptable, cut about \$350 off. **GUNS**

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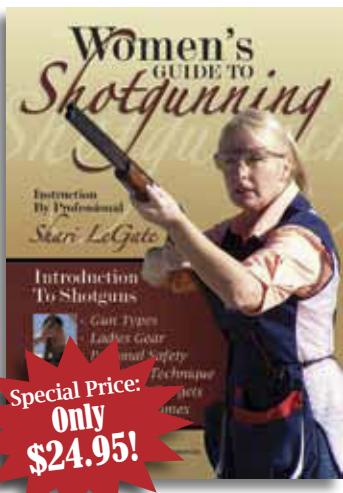
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KNIVES

STORY: Pat Covert

CUSTOM WORKHORSE

Knifemaker Marvin Winn strikes gold with an affordable handmade hunter.

When it comes to knives, the word "custom" scares a lot of folks right out of the chute. Granted, many custom knifemakers' prices are downright scary, but when you can get a very nice handmade knife with premium steel for a couple hundred bucks, it's worth a look. Marvin Winn of Frisco, Texas, makes such knives and does it first class all the way.

Winn's Hunter model is a nicely styled, well executed fixed-blade sized just right for medium to light field chores around the camp, from cutting rope and pointing tent pegs; to all manner of food prep. In essence, this knife is a workhorse that will be an able companion strapped to the side or at the ready in your pack. The Hunter's straight back satin finished blade—4" in length—has a deep hollow grind all the way to the spine, which translates into excellent slicing ability. Marvin cut no corners on the blade steel, and the Hunter features top shelf S30V stainless manufactured for Crucible Industries specifically for the cutlery industry. The knife is 8.75" overall with a stylishly sculpted handle that exudes comfort the moment it hits your hand. The

HUNTER

MAKER: MARVIN WINN

MAXCUTTER KNIVES

8711 OAKWOOD LN.

FRISCO, TX 75035

(214) 471-7012

WWW.GUNSMAGAZINE.COM/MAX-CUTTER-KNIVES

BLADE MATERIAL: CPM S30V, BLADE LENGTH: 4",

OVERALL LENGTH: 8.75", WEIGHT: 6.5 ounces,

HANDLE: Toxic Green G10 (optional), SHEATH:

Kydex or leather, PRICE: \$200



The "Toxic Green" G10 scales (optional) ensure this knife will stand out anywhere, but the quality of the CPM S30V blade steel and overall custom grind ensure a stand out even with a more sedate handle color.

model shown here sports hard-to-misplace Toxic Green G10 scales, but rest assured Winn can tone one down for you. A variety of handle materials are offered, including G10, Micarta and exotic woods. If you're a traditionalist you can also get the Hunter with stainless steel bolsters.

What you'll really appreciate about Winn's knives is the overall fit and finish, and here's where getting value for your money comes in. The workmanship is first class, just what you'd expect in a custom, fabricated from materials that will last a generation or two... or three. Winn's Hunter is priced at \$200 on the nose, and that includes your choice of a handcrafted leather or Kydex sheath. Some production knives cost as much! The knifemaker also offers drop-point models (great for skinning) and a couple of tactical designs as well.

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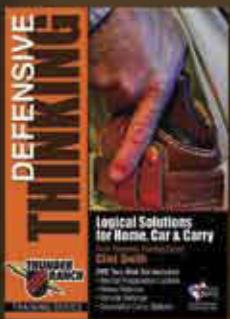
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GUNS VNR

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DAVID CODREA

Reefer Madness

The Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF) has received a number of inquiries regarding the use of marijuana for medicinal purposes and its applicability to Federal firearms laws," Arthur Herbert, Assistant Director of Enforcement Programs and Services wrote in a Sept. 21, 2011 "Open Letter To All Federal Firearms Licensees."

Why the inquiries?

"A number of States have passed legislation allowing under State law the use or possession of marijuana for medicinal purposes," Herbert explained. "During a firearms transaction, a potential transferee may advise you that he or she is a user of medical marijuana, or present a medical marijuana card as identification or proof of residency."

"Are you an unlawful user of, or addicted to, marijuana or any depressant, stimulant, narcotic drug, or any other controlled substance?"

And if he or she does? That's where Federal law comes in. US Code prohibits anyone who is an "unlawful user of or addicted to any controlled substance... from shipping, transporting, receiving or possessing firearms or ammunition... and there are no exceptions in Federal law for marijuana purportedly used for medicinal purposes, even if such use is sanctioned by State law."

Further, Herbert advises, it is "unlawful for any person to sell or otherwise dispose of any firearm or ammunition to any person knowing or having reasonable cause to believe that such person is an unlawful user of or addicted to a controlled substance."

What this means is such persons are required to answer "yes" on ATF Form 4473 to the question "Are you an unlawful user of, or addicted to, marijuana or any depressant, stimulant, narcotic drug, or any other controlled substance?" even if their state law says they are not. And if the dealer is aware that "a potential transferee" has a card "authorizing the possession and use of marijuana under State law, then [they]... may not transfer firearms or ammunition to the person, even if the person answered 'no.'"

Which opens the door to questions, such as what if a person is already a gun owner before obtaining a medical marijuana card? Will they automatically become felons if they don't turn them in first? What if the person is a concealed carry permit holder?

It leads to other questions such as: Are there any studies showing state-sanctioned marijuana users pose a greater risk for violence, criminality or negligent gun use than non-users? Are they more or less dangerous than alcohol abusers? How about *legal* users of controlled substances that also impair patients?

And why the silence from the anti-defense lobby, always screaming about "home rule" when local gun laws are relaxed by higher authorities? Medical marijuana may be controversial, with some claiming it's just a way for potheads to game the system and others swearing it's indispensable in managing the agony of cancer, but regardless, affected states have lawfully enacted their statutes.

Which is why "gun lobby" silence on this is troubling. Friend, colleague and senior editor of *Gun Week* Dave Workman explained why to *The Great Falls Tribune*: "The media—and the gun prohibitionist lobby in particular—would say the gun lobby wants to arm drug addicts."

He's right. But they're going to attack us whatever we do.

Visit David Codrea's online journal "The War on Guns" at waronguns.com, visit DavidCodrea.com to read his Examiner column.

Due to the importance of this column, GUNS will begin posting "Rights Watch" at www.gunsmagazine.com on the 1st of the month—long before it appears here.—Editor

New Heavy Machine Gun Optic

Marines from various units within III Marine Expeditionary Force trained with the first optics system specifically designed for the Mk-19 and M2 .50-caliber Browning machine gun at Range Two on Camp Hansen, Okinawa, Japan, last September 14.

The system, inspired by the rifle combat optic, was field-tested by the Marines for potential incorporation into the Marine Corps' arsenal, said Kenneth Silvers, the new equipment trainer for Marine Corps Systems Command, Headquarters Marine Corps.

The new heavy machine gun optic consists of the M520 ballistic extended rail mount, the M521 heavy day optic and the SUQ31 reflex sight, according to Lance Cpl. Matthew D. Khamsihong, a motor transport operator with III MEF Headquarters Group, III MEF.

"The system can be a little intimidating at first," said 2nd Lt. Erik B. Salzman, platoon commander for Military Police Company,

Headquarters Battalion, 3rd Marine Division, III MEF. "There are a lot of moving parts on it. Once we have given the Marines a class on the new system, and they receive range time with the sights, I am confident they will be able to effectively employ the sights when they are deployed."

One of the dangers using iron sights on heavy machineguns is the potential for friendly fire incidents when engaging long-distance targets, added Salzman. This new optic system decreases that risk by allowing better target identification.

"Normally, any Mk-19 or .50-caliber gunner would end up using only the basic iron sites," said Khamsihong. "With this system, it improves our accuracy a lot by allowing us to actually sight-in and fire."

"The system was designed to improve first-round hit capability," said Silvers. "So if we can accurately estimate the range to the target, the first burst coming out of the gun should make contact with the target. If it doesn't, the day optic has a mil pattern inside which directly relates to the traverse and elevation mechanism for both of the guns. So the gunner can look through the scope, see where



Lance Cpl. Matthew D. Khamsihong, a motor transport operator with III Marine Expeditionary Force Headquarters Group, III MEF, fires the Mk-19 40mm grenade launcher while using a new optic system. The system is designed to increase the weapon's accuracy. Photo: Lance Cpl. Daniel Valle

he missed the target, and based upon that mil reading, he can actually apply that to the 'T' and 'E,' so the second burst should always be on target. It drastically increases the lethality of both weapon systems."

As Marines deploy and use this optic in combat situations, the feedback they give on how they think the system should operate can potentially influence design changes in the next five years, said Silvers.—
Lance Cpl. Matthew J. Manning, Marine Corps Bases Japan

GUNS

The Fur Fix

After the recent death of a soldier from rabies, many commands are reminding deployed service members to stay away from stray animals on and off post.

However, Third Army realizes service members might miss the loyal companionship animals bring to their lives.

For that reason, commands here have a human-animal bond program in place that provides troops the opportunity to interact with animals that have been vaccinated, spayed or neutered and seen by a veterinarian on a regular basis.

Maj. Alisa Wilma, Area Support Group—Kuwait, and command veterinarian, stated even if individuals are real cat or dog lovers, they shouldn't pet the animals running around on post, instead they should go to the Red Cross and make an appointment to see Grayson the cat or Luka the dog. Through coordination with the Red Cross, a command can request the animals be brought to their unit for a visit.

Wilma added "the cats seen on post are part of a trap, neuter and release program to provide a biological barrier against other animals, insects and reptiles."

For that reason, Wilma



Maj. Alisa Wilma, Area Support Group — Kuwait, command veterinarian, gives Luka, Red Cross volunteer and member of the human-animal bond program, a treat during a recent visit with troops. Luka and Grayson the cat are available through Red Cross for any person who has a need to spend time with a cat or a dog. Through programs like this, Third Army is continually taking care of the emotional and physical needs of deployed service members. Photo: Staff Sgt. Regina R. Machine, Third Army Public Affairs

recommends people who live and work here do not feed the cats or hide them under their containerized housing unit. Dogs are not

participants in the TNR program so it is imperative that any dogs seen on post is immediately reported to animal control, as well as any cats

who appear to be injured, sick, or do not have a notched ear.

The order to stay away from animals while deployed is meant to protect individuals and not to be punitive in manner, stated Capt. Nick Moiser, 994th Medical Detachment, veterinarian.

The human-animal bond program is an authorized outlet for service members and government employees who have a need to touch or pet an animal. Through programs like this, Third Army is continually taking care of the emotional and physical needs of deployed service members while continuing to educate leadership on how to better take care of their soldiers.—*Staff Sgt. Regina R. Machine, Third Army/ARCENT Public Affairs*

LAPD Sticks With Remington Shotguns

Remington Arms Co. announced the Los Angeles Police Department again chose the Remington Model 870 Police Magnum and Model 870 Police Marine Magnums as their department-issued shotguns.—*Courtesy NSSF*

a level of support that has not varied by more than a few percentage points since 1995. “The numbers have been consistent over the past two decades,” said Mark Damian Duda, executive director of Responsive Management, the research firm that conducted the study. “Support for hunting is solid,” he added.—*Courtesy NSSF*

Highest Priced Gun

JustLuxe.com reports a new world record for the sale of an American firearm. An 1836 Colt revolver from the Al Cali Collection sold for \$977,500 at Heritage Auctions’ Dallas Signature Arms & Armor Auction last September 18. While specific details on the new owner of the Holster

Public Support For Hunting Strong

Results from a survey commissioned by NSSF have been released showing 74 percent of survey respondents say they approve of hunting,



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Model No. 5 Paterson Revolver were not revealed, it is known the buyer is a collector of firearms and a Silicon Valley mogul.—Courtesy NSSF

ATK Wins UK Ammo Contract

ATK has been awarded a \$37 million contract to provide lightweight 30mm ammunition, including the M788 TP (target practice) training round and the M789 High Explosive Dual Purpose (HEDP) tactical round, to the United Kingdom's Ministry of Defence.—Courtesy NSSF

Battleship Missouri Memorial Research Center

On the 66th anniversary of the end of World War II, Sept. 2, 2011, the Battleship Missouri Memorial held a traditional Hawaiian blessing and opening for its new Research Center, a resource now available to visitors who wish to delve deeper into the ship's history while aboard the "Mighty MO" berthed at Pearl Harbor, Hawaii.

Presided over by Kahuna (Hawaiian priest) Hotch Kekoa, the brief maile

lei ceremony formally opened the figurative hatches to the center, which is located on the Missouri's main deck immediately aft of the Wardroom lounge in what was the "Administrative Office" or "Captain's Office" (depending on the period in the ship's 5-decade active-service career).

The Research Center is open from noon to 4 p.m. Monday through Friday, or by appointment. It is offered as resource to all visitors of the ship, as well as teachers, students, military personnel, researchers and the memorial's own staff. Equipped with six visitor workstations, it provides access to archival documents, photo collections, video resources, oral history recordings and transcripts, crew rosters and a variety of other information. To schedule an appointment, call (808) 455-1600 x256.

"The Battleship Missouri Memorial Research Center offers unprecedented access into our collections department library of more than 600 books and archival material, along with personal, hands-on support from staff and volunteers," said Mike Weidenbach, the Missouri's curator and head of the collections department.

The Battleship Missouri Memorial, located a mere ship's length from the USS Arizona Memorial, completes a



The Battleship Missouri Memorial at Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam in a photo taken July 14, 2011. US Navy photo: Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Daniel Barker

historical visitor experience that begins with the "day of infamy" that saw the sinking of USS Arizona in Pearl Harbor and ends with Imperial Japan's unconditional surrender aboard USS Missouri in Tokyo Bay. Following an astounding career that spans five decades and three wars, from World War II to the Korean conflict to the Liberation of Kuwait, the "Mighty MO" was decommissioned and donated to the USS Missouri Memorial Association, Inc., a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, which operates the battleship as a historic attraction and memorial. The association oversees her

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Kahuna (Hawaiian priest) Hotch Kekoa blesses the Research Center while the Missouri's president and chief operating officer Mike Carr looks on. Photo: Phil Spalding III

care and preservation with the support of visitors, memberships, grants and the generosity of donors.

The Battleship Missouri Memorial is open daily from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Shuttle buses provide roundtrip transportation from the new Pearl Harbor Visitor Center during operating hours. Standard admission, which includes choice of a guided tour, is \$20 per adult and \$10 per child ages 4-12. For more information or to reserve a tour, call (808) 973-2494 or toll-free (877) 644-4896 or visit www.usssmissouri.org.

Glock Donates \$75,000

Glock donated a total of \$75,000 to two separate organizations during the 2011 Modern Day Marine held in MCB, Quantico, Va., last September 27-29. Glock Vice President, Josh Dorsey presented \$50,000 to the Young Marines and \$25,000 to the Marine



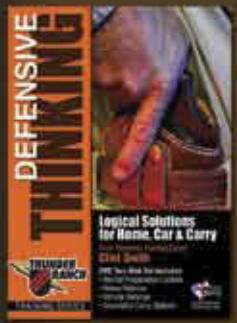
Glock Vice President, Josh Dorsey (left, standing) presented a check for \$50,000 to the Young Marines. Accepting the donation was Lt. Col. Mike Kessler USMC (Ret) (far right, standing), National Executive Director of the Young Marines of the Marine Corps League, and R. Lee Ermey (near right, standing) who has played a key role in the relationship between the Young Marines and Glock, along with Marines of the Marine Corps League and members of the Young Marines.

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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 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!

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— Roy Huntingdon, Editor

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Corps League during a presentation held at the Iwo Jima Memorial, Quantico.

"Glock is proud to contribute to organizations such as the Young Marines and the Marine Corps League, which play such a vital role in providing aid to the families of America's fallen heroes as well as develop the characteristics of our nation's future leaders," said Glock Vice President, and former Marine, Josh Dorsey. "Glock has a long-standing tradition of supporting those that put themselves in harm's way to protect the freedoms we currently enjoy."



Accepting the donation on behalf of the Marine Corps League was (left to right) National Commandant and former Major League Umpire Vic Voltaggio, Glock Vice President Josh Dorsey, retired Junior Commandant of the Marine Corps League James A. Laskey and Glock Federal/Military Sales Tony Musa, along with members of the Young Marines.

This marks the sixth consecutive year Glock has made this contribution to the Young Marines, totaling \$300,000. The Young Marines is a nonprofit youth organization whose mission is to positively impact America's future by providing programs for youth that promote their mental, moral and physical health through teamwork, self-discipline and a drug-free lifestyle. The program strives to instill the core values of "Honor, Courage and Commitment" adopted by each member of the Marine Corps.

This marks the second year Glock has made a contribution to the Marine Corps League, comprised of retired Marines dedicated to promoting the ideals of American freedom and democracy, voluntarily rendering assistance to all Marines and former Marines and to the families of fallen Marines as well as perpetuating the history of the United States Marine Corps. The group is active in supporting injured Marines, youth programs, Veterans benefits issues and the National Marine Corps Museum.—Courtesy Megan Holly, Leader Enterprises

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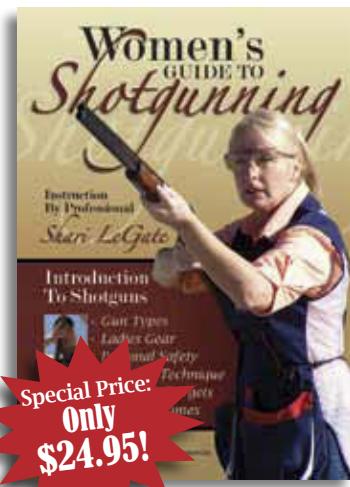
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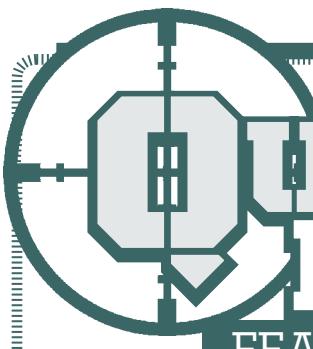
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OLD WEST REPRODUCTIONS NO. 135 OUTDOORSMAN HOLSTER

Rick Bachman of Old West Reproductions is famous for his top quality gunleather, an homage to the Old West, the "Wild Bunch" period and early 20th century Western gun gear. He also does some modern stuff. Our editorial director, Roy Huntington, is a huge fan of Rick's work.

I got to test his latest, in first prototype form: the No. 135 Outdoorsman. It's a chest holster inspired by the WWII vintage "tanker" rig—which Old West Reproductions produces in a way that's authentic to the original design, but evincing much better workmanship and material—yet definitely improved in design.

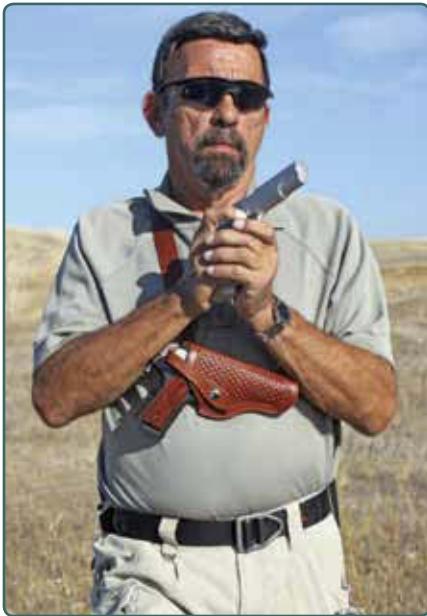
The original Tanker had a safety strap that snapped over the back of the grip frame of a 1911, effectively depressing the grip safety. While this constituted no safety problem to a soldier carrying the pistol with

empty chamber, it can give cold chills to some who wear their 1911 with a round up the spout. No matter how you carried the gun in your Tanker, the strap could get caught between the web of the hand and the back-strap of the pistol, binding the draw.

What Rick has done with the 135 Outdoorsman is move the safety strap to a more logical position, up at the hammer area. This prevents binding of the draw, and intersperses solid leather between the hammer and the firing pin of a cocked 1911, which many find to be of additional comfort. He has also eliminated the Tanker's back-flap of leather, allowing a much surer drawing grasp on the gun.

It's intended for open wear, of course, hence its name. The harness goes over the gun-hand side shoulder, allowing the handgun to be placed anywhere from high on the chest to down at the waist in a cross-draw hip location. I found mid-chest to be pretty comfortable.

Back in the late 1970s and early '80s, Tom Campbell was famous for a chest holster of his own design, and it was so fast he shot his way to the tier of IPSC competition with it. The standard start in the game then was "hands shoulder high," and Tom's hand got to the S&W 9mm or .45 on his chest faster than other competitors' hands could get to the guns on their hips. This was the rationale of the Tanker holster in the first place, since a tank commander with his chest up out of a narrow turret hatch would have a heck of a time getting to a hip holster, but could instantly access the chest holster named after his MOS.



The 135 holster keeps Mas' carry gun out of the way while he demonstrates techniques with an Odin Press dummy gun drawn from his usual hip holster.



Old West Reproductions No. 135 chest holster, shown with a 9mm Springfield Armory EMP, is worn almost horizontal on chest. The safety strap design on the 135 is superior to that of the old Tanker holster which inspired it, because it blocks the hammer, rather than depressing the grip safety.



The Outdoorsman holster is suitable to its namesake's needs for similar reasons. Consider the fisherman up to his thighs or even waist and wearing waders, or the cross-country hiker in winter who might find himself waist deep in a snowdrift. The camper zipped into a deep-cold-rated sleeping bag a bear mistakes for a lunch wrapper is another outdoorsman who'll find an Outdoorsman ideally positioned for fast and ready access.

My friend Frank James, a farmer by trade and gun expert by avocation, has written that he likes a shoulder holster for Magnum revolvers when he's doing chores on the farm, at least in part because when he's under a truck or tractor performing repairs, the gun is easily accessible. That should be at least as true for the Outdoorsman on the chest of an auto mechanic supine on a creeper under a vehicle when a handgun suddenly becomes a necessity.

Frankly, it strikes me that a pistol in such a rig kept beside the bed would be lightning fast to throw on in a home defense situation, leaving the hands free for telephone, illumination device or long gun.

The prototype was cut for a 4.25" 1911. I wore it around the house for a day with a loaded, cocked and locked Ed Brown Signature Model in that configuration. I subsequently wore it to back up my hip holster while teaching a class in California. During that test, it alternately held my loaded Springfield EMP 9mm and an Odin Press dummy of a 1911A1 that



Mas demonstrates the chest draw technique with support arm up, to block close attacks and keep the arm out of the muzzle's path during your draw.

was used for demonstration purposes. While the snout of the full size pistol peeked out from the bottom of the holster a bit, the ability to take sub-compact, Commander size and longer guns of the same type definitely added to the Outdoorsman's versatility.

Workmanship was excellent. Crafted of Hermann Oak leather, saddle skirting steerhide with a proprietary treatment that Bachman is understandably reluctant to share, the test holster's edging, stitching and tooling were impeccable.

My one criticism was that there was some shifting of the holster. This was the only comparison in which the original Tanker holster beat the 135, since the old design has a belt loop to stabilize everything in place. As soon as I brought it up, Rick told me he had already come to the same conclusion and was going to make the Outdoorsman with that feature. It was a down to earth attitude that I appreciated after dealing with too many artisans who wanted to call the thunder of the gods down upon any who dared to question their perfection.

The Outdoorsman is now available for popular autos and revolvers, and can be custom made for the less common models, with a price of \$145 in the handsome Antique Russet color you see on the prototype in the photos, or \$155 with the handsome tooling visible on the test sample. If you prefer plain black, it's an additional \$20 to cover the hand-dying of the leather.

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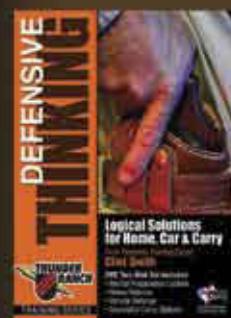


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THE COMPLETE 1911 CLEANING MANUAL CHARLES D'LOU WILDLIFE GALLERY, LTD.

The Complete 1911 Cleaning Manual is a comprehensive, step-by-step description with 111 detailed photographs, for the disassembly, cleaning and reassembly of 1911 series 70, 80 and bull-barrel models. Included are descriptions for cleaning fixed and removable base magazines. Retail is \$19.95. Charles D'Lou Wildlife Gallery, Ltd., (800) 522-1530, www.gunsmagazine/charles-dlou-wildlife-gallery



AR15 MAG CARRIER CROSSBREED HOLSTERS LLC

Designed to carry a single AR mag (or two if you run them "paired"), the AR15 mag carrier is a convenient way to have extra ammo ready for your AR. Featuring a paddle style attachment, the AR15 Mag Carrier slips easily on and off, and carries the extra magazine close to the body and easy to get to. Leave one next to your "ready" gun and you'll have a backup mag handy if needed. Retail is \$43.80. CrossBreed Holsters LLC, (888) 732-5011, www.gunsmagazine.com/crossbreed-holsters



EL RANGE BINOCULARS SWAROVSKI OPTIK

The EL Range redefines hunting equipment. A single instrument combines the capability of razor-sharp, top-quality optics with precise measuring. Highest transmission values, low weight and the widest field of view in its class literally set new standards for optics and precise measuring. Swarovski Optik, (800) 426-3089, www.gunsmagazine.com/swarovski-optik.



KEMPER XL FIREFIELD MG

The Kemper XL features the largest objective lens window on the market with unlimited eye relief and a large field of view. Featuring a bullet-drop compensator circle-dot reticle, the Kemper XL has dual color options in red and green, as well as five adjustable reticle brightness settings for maximum customization. Designed for use on machine guns, the Firefield Kemper XL withstands even a gas-system machine gun's recoil. A rubber shield protects against scratching and damage, prolonging the life of the unit. Perfect for any Class III shooter wanting the maximum in quick target acquisition, the Kemper XL features a field of view so large, it can be used for skeet shooting and fast-moving varmint hunting. Firefield MG, (817) 225-0310, www.gunsmagazine.com/fire-field



UV-KILLER CAMO VEST ATSKO

Can deer see blaze orange? The vision research conducted at the University of Georgia discovered that deer see their daylight world in shades of yellow and brown. Deer eyes lack the red cone, and as a result, they see orange as a shade of yellow, but the catch is they see the UV-brighteners in ordinary blaze orange as a bright blue glow. There is a new solution—wear the new UV-Killer Camo that is designed to be invisible to a deer's eyes, but is totally blaze orange to human eyes. The secret is a patented treatment that is invisible to humans, but applies a defined camo pattern for deer, while stopping the blue glow. Now you can wear UV-Killer Camo, and the entire outfit or vest disappears in the eyes of a deer... but looks like safety blaze orange to hunters. ATSKO, (800) 845-2728, www.gunsmagazine.com/atsko



XS RUGER GUNSITE SCOUT RIFLE RAIL XS SIGHT SYSTEMS

XS Sight Systems announces the XS Ruger Gunsite Scout Rifle (GSR) full-length scope rail with aperture sight. Drop on installation. The rifle rail expands versatility, allowing red dots, scout scopes and traditional optics. XS Sight Systems, (888) 744-4880, www.gunsmagazine.com/xs-sight-systems



If you would like your product featured in GUNS Magazine's New Products, Contact:
Jason Moreau (866) 903-1199.

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CALL GIRL FLEXTONE GAME CALLS

The Call Girl—Estrus Cow Call uses a unique double-beveled back plate, which enables the user to reproduce realistic sounds by applying light lip pressure for soft mews, or by increasing the pressure on the latex, create aggressive estrus mews of a love sick cow. Its harder textured cone and larger air-flow holes at the end allows for louder excited calling, while still giving that true nasal tone of mature cows in heat. Retails for \$14.99. Flextone Game Calls, (866) 995-4263, www.gunsmagazine.com/flextone-game-calls



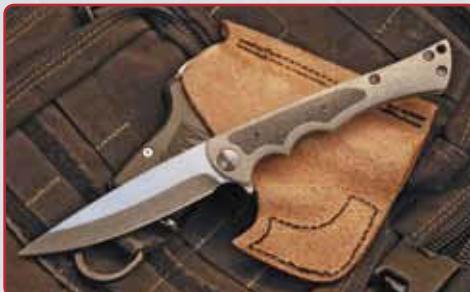
CIRCUIT JUDGE .22 MAG ROSSI FIREARMS

Rossi is excited to offer its popular Circuit Judge in .22 LR/.22 Magnum. This all-new Circuit Judge gives you the versatility and speed you need. It easily transforms from .22 LR to .22 Magnum in seconds with its breakthrough removable cylinders that accommodate nine rounds each. It's everything you could ever want for plinking, target practice or varmint hunting with these popular and affordable ammunition choices. Rossi Firearms, (305) 474-0401, www.gunsmagazine.com/rossi-firearms



HENCHMAN FLIPPER BLACKWOOD CUSTOM KNIVES

Custom knife designer Neil Blackwood presents another great knife—the Henchman Flipper. It's very sleek, and for an unassisted pivot, fires open like a rocket. The blade measures 4" long, and the overall length is 9-1/4". Neil makes them to order in various configurations from user grade to very upscale. The knife shown features a two-tone blade, stonewashed frame and lightning-strike carbon fiber inlay with heat-colored screws. Blackwood Custom Knives, nblackwood4@gmail.com, www.gunsmagazine.com/blackwood-custom-knives



"C" SERIES CONCEALMENT HOLSTER X-CONCEALMENT HOLSTERS & GEAR LLC

The "C" Series holster adapts a classic leather pancake design with the significant improvements Kydex construction allows. The holster is trimmer and lighter than a typical pancake, and features screw adjustable tension. The front panel is .093" thick Kydex and a thinner .06" Kydex is used for the backing, so the holster can be carried ever so slightly closer to the body. All holster panels are CNC machined, the construction is cement bonded, then aluminum riveted. This results in a solid, yet lightweight and easy to conceal compact package. On top of it all, a cool faux stitch pattern is engraved into the surface of the holster, giving the holster the classic leather-like finish. X-Concealment Holsters & Gear LLC, contact@xconcealment.com, www.gunsmagazine.com/x-concealment-holsters



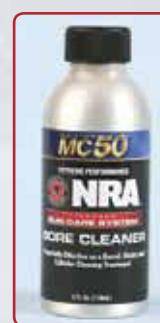
SABERTOOTH KNIFE SPIVEY

The Sabertooth is perfectly suited for hunters, campers, backpackers, fossil-digging archeologists and military. Overall length is 12-3/4", and the blade is 7-1/2". This classic double row of biangular teeth on a sloping spine is the most effective saw on a knife ever designed. In tests, the saw cut through a 1-3/4" iron pipe and showed no damage to the teeth, so cutting through bone or wood will be an easy task. Made with steel used for tank armor, you can be sure the Sabertooth is tough. Spivey, (405) 371-9304, www.gunsmagazine.com/spivey



NRA GUN CARE MC50 MIL-COMM PRODUCTS CO., INC.

Mil-Comm Products Co., Inc., makers of the TW25B brand of lubricant protectants, has recently developed and added MC50 Bore Cleaner to its family of products. Authorized by the National Rifle Association (NRA) to market a line of NRA licensed firearm lubricants and



cleaners, Mil-Comm Products is initially offering MC50 in a 4-ounce bottle that deploys a unique, organic cleaning oil that will treat bore, choke and cylinder surfaces to address copper, lead, plastic wads and other hard-fouling. Unlike standard

bore cleaning products that use heavy solvents to attack hard buildup, MC50 frees residue in the bore by wetting debris and getting underneath it. Mil-Comm Products Co., Inc., (800) 743-4518, www.gunsmagazine.com/mil-comm

ENTER TO WIN!

GUNS MAGAZINE'S GUN OF THE MONTH GIVEAWAY

SIG SAUER P226

You can win this free SIG SAUER P226 Extreme featured on our December 2011 cover and written about by John Barsness. This is a 12-shot .40 S&W with many of the most popular SIG custom shop features already included. And that's not all just one lucky winner will receive!

The Tough Tony from Mantis Knives is also included. With its nearly 1/4" thick modified drop point blade and machined G10 scales, it is one tough little knife.

To keep your new SIG SAUER secure and ready the LockSAF will protect and give quick access. Easy to program and use, it takes one press of a button from a programmed fingerprint to open. Made of 9-gauge steel, it is twice the thickness of other products and comes with four pilot holes in the bottom panel to mount on any flat surface.

If you need your new SIG—and need to identify a threat in the dark—Elzetta's USA-made ZFL-M60 LED Tactical Weapon Light boasts 235 honest lumens out the front (not rated at the emitter like competitive units). Benefits include optical beam projection for uniform lighting, electronic current management circuitry for optimized battery life, fully potted electrical components for ruggedized performance and a patent pending heat sink mechanism for efficient thermal management.

Speaking of seeing, since you have an Elzetta light, you may want to practice a lot with your new SIG in competition and we include a set of Advantage Tac Sights designed for speed, precision and clarity of sight picture, which can be installed in place of your SIGLITE Night Sights in any combination of five colors. You can't win if you don't enter, so send those postcards in pronto or take the survey and enter online at www.gunsmagazine.com/giveaway.

PBS-001

MAKER: LOCKSAF
8117 W. MANCHESTER AVE., STE. 200, LOS ANGELES, CA 90293
(877) 568-5625

WWW.GUNSMAGAZINE.COM/LOCKSAF

DIMENSIONS: 13.98" (W) x 10.24" (D) x 4.57" (H), WEIGHT: 22 pounds, MATERIAL: 9-gauge steel, MECHANISM: Non-volatile memory for up to 10 fingerprints, Foam padding, POWER: 1 9V battery, 2 mechanical keys, VALUE: \$349.95



MT-9C TOUGH TONY

MAKER: MANTIS KNIVES
1580 N. HARMONY CIR., ANAHEIM, CA 92807
(714) 701-9136, WWW.GUNSMAGAZINE.COM/MANTIS-KNIVES

OVERALL LENGTH: 5.75", BLADE LENGTH: 2.375", BLADE MATERIAL: CPM-440V, HANDLE: Machined G10, LOCK: Liner locking, CARRY: Ambidextrous pocket clip, WEIGHT: 5 ounces, VALUE: \$65

P226 EXTREME:

MAKER: SIG SAUER
18 INDUSTRIAL DR.
EXETER, NH 03833
(603) 772-2302
WWW.GUNSMAGAZINE.COM/SIG-SAUER

ACTION TYPE: Locked-breech, DA/SA semi-auto, CALIBER: .40 S&W, CAPACITY: 12, BARREL: 4.4", OVERALL LENGTH: 8.2", MATERIAL: Stainless steel slide, aluminum frame, FINISH: Matte black Nitron slide, hard anodized frame, HEIGHT: 5.5", WIDTH: 1.5", GRIPS: Hogue custom G10, WEIGHT: 34 ounces, SIGHTS: SIGLITE Night Sights, VALUE: \$1,146, VALUE OF PACKAGE: \$1820.85

MODEL ZFL-M60

MAKER: ELZETTA DESIGN, LLC
P.O. BOX 54364, LEXINGTON, KY 40555
(859) 707-7471, WWW.GUNSMAGAZINE.COM/ELZETTA-DESIGN

Material: Body, Bezel and Tailcap of mil-spec type III hard anodized 6061-T6 aluminum, bodies feature circumferential grooves for optional O-rings (included) for an enhanced fit in Elzetta Tactical Flashlight Holders, Output: 235 lumens, Value: \$169.95

FOR WEB LINKS, GO TO WWW.GUNSMAGAZINE.COM/PRODUCT-INDEX

PHOTOS: JOSEPH R. NOVELOZO

TAC SIGHT

MAKER: ADVANTAGE TACTICAL SIGHTS
WRENTECH INDUSTRIES LLC
7 AVENIDA VISTA GRANDE, B-7, SANTA FE, NM 87508
(310) 316-6413
WWW.GUNSMAGAZINE.COM/ADVANTAGE-TACTICAL-SIGHT

Tac Sight kit includes: 5 differently colored front and rear sight inserts, .059" of elevation shim, front and rear sight set screw hex keys, Value: \$89.95

NOTE: The SIG SAUER front sight base is a press fit and may need to be professionally installed.



This contest is open to individuals who are residents of the United States and its territories only. Agents and employees of Publishers Development Corporation and their families are excluded from entering. Contest void where prohibited or restricted by law. Winners must meet all local laws and regulations. Taxes and compliance with firearms regulations will be the responsibility of the winners. Winners will be notified by CERTIFIED MAIL on official letterhead. ATTENTION DEPLOYED MILITARY: USE STATESIDE ADDRESS! No purchase necessary to enter. Firearms may have been used in a gun test. All firearms have full factory warranties.

TO ENTER CONTEST

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Follow sample card below. Mail postcard to:
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P.O. BOX 502795, San Diego, CA 92150-2795.
Entries must be received before **MARCH 1, 2012**.
Limit one entry per household.

QUESTION OF THE MONTH: Where do you make the majority of your ammo purchases?

- (A) Online stores
- (B) Local gun store
- (C) Magazine ads
- (D) All the above

Name _____
Address _____
City, State, Zip _____
Email Address _____

CIRCLE ANSWER(S) TO QUESTION OF THE MONTH FEBRUARY 2012:

(A) (B) (C) (D)

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ODD ANGRY SHOT

STORY: John Connor

FILLING UP FEBRUARY ... and giving your thumbs a workout.

Yeah, I know. February is already filled with snow, ice and daydreams of springtime. But there are other ways to fill it, and when your significant other asks what you're doing sittin' on your butt in front of the TV, you can answer, "Just what you suggested! I'm learning new skills and studying!" Let me know how that works out for you, OK?

The lawn ain't growing, the fish ain't bitin', there's nothing "in season" and the range is under a mini-glacier. Obviously, it's time to put another log on the fire, bust out a video and give your thumbs a workout on the old remote control. But what's there to watch? Here are some suggestions:

Got a family-legacy Winchester '97 trench gun, a WWII Mauser 98, or a crusty, but seemingly sound CZ-52 pistol you got in trade for a washing machine? Would you like to have a master gunsmith slowly and patiently guide you through a detailed mechanical tour right down to the last pin and spring?

The American Gunsmithing Institute has video courses covering tons o' guns of all kinds, new and old. They have 108-hour courses for professional gunsmiths, but their

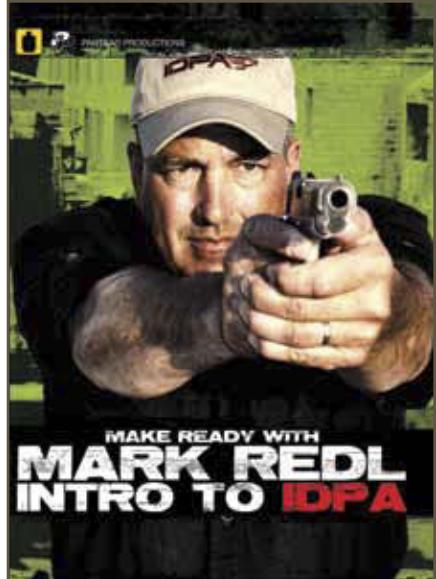
Armorer's Series is made for folks like you and me, who know how to operate and maintain those shooters, but don't know exactly how the widget spansks the sprocket, and tearing them down to the frame is a fearsome thought. Most courses run 90 minutes to 2 hours and cost \$39.95.

If you've been reading Clint Smith's columns, you know he's all about function rather than fads; a guy who can appreciate the latest and finest of tactical firearms and accessories, but who can also duct-tape a flashlight under a double-barrel shotgun, pull a deer rifle from a closet, or pick up a worn-shiny Smith & Wesson revolver and get the defensive job done. And if you've wondered what it would be like to just hang out with Clint and shoot the breeze, he's got a Thunder Ranch video for you.

I highly recommend *Defensive Firearms: Defend Yourself With The Gun At Hand*, a 2-DVD set priced at \$49.95, which covers mental preparation for dealing with threats with handguns, rifles and shotguns—ones you might already own—and range demonstrations. Clint's style is personal and factual; a 1-on-1 with a trainer who understands you must know your tools, but 90 percent of effective fighting is between your ears. Another winner in his array is *Defensive Thinking: Logical Solutions for Home, Car & Carry*, and check out his multi-DVD order discounts too.

The Whole Shootin' Match

In Fernando Coelho's native Portuguese, *panteao* means pantheon;



MAKE READY WITH
**MARK REDL
INTRO TO IDPA**

Four Aces for February: Great training right in your living room!

"a temple" or "a group of persons most highly regarded for their contributions to a field or endeavor." With his *Panteao Productions*, Fernando has gathered an impressive array of outstanding trainers like Paul Howe—a favorite of mine—Massad Ayoob, Dean Caputo, Louis Awerbuck, Tom Yost, Bill Rogers, Jessie Harrison and more, and captured their expertise on a professionally filmed and edited lineup of DVDs called *Make Ready*.

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novice to world-class competitors, and subjects span sport shooting to life-or-death encounters. And Fernando has set up a unique marketing model: You can purchase individual DVDs online or by phone or you can register online, become a subscriber, and have access to "streaming video" of the content of every one of those courses and more as they are released.

The signup options are \$150 for a full year of 24/7 unlimited access, or \$17.95 per month, and you can suspend that program and take a break for a month or two anytime you like. Members also get 10 percent off all DVDs, and have access to short-subject "Pro Tips" videos on-line. If you're not a happy camper, just call within three days of starting a monthly or 10 days of an annual subscription and get a 100-percent refund. This is a full-spectrum evolving operation, very well done.

You don't have to be a high-speed, low-drag combat operator to enjoy the heck out of—and learn a ton from—*The Art of The Tactical Carbine* from Magpul Dynamics. Cameras follow all the action and live-fire instruction as trainers Chris Costa and Travis Haley take a group of students from fundamentals through a performance pressure-cooker, pushing them to their failure points and teaching them how to react, adapt and overcome. In three DVDs totaling more than 5 hours, virtually every aspect of tactical carbine operation is covered, with one disc devoted to fundamentals, another to advanced skills and finally, the third to drills you can use to develop, hone and maintain your proficiency.

In everything from solving weapon malfunctions to engaging multiple targets while on the move, you'll see the trainers' heavy emphasis on consistent, deliberate movements; the kind of actions which build neuromuscular memory to be drawn upon almost unconsciously when you're under stress; from slow and smooth to fast but certain. You'll want to watch this set again and again—and then of course, there's the 4-disc *Volume II* set! And, *The Dynamic Art of the Handgun*, one for the shotgun and one for the precision rifle. Yeah, they get addictive....

Bang For The Buck

Training using well-constructed video has a value you just can't get from books alone, especially when dealing with movement and manipulation skills. For that matter, even the non-tactical skills involved in,



say, detail stripping a firearm are much better presented in video form than in print, because you can *see* how much pressure the gunsmith is applying to a part, or executing a twist-and-lift maneuver which is easy to demonstrate visually but almost impossible to adequately describe in words. The videos we've featured above are among the very best available. They're "the next best thing to being there."

The only thing you may be missing is the smell of hot brass and burnt gunpowder—and the cleanup afterward! Well, maybe you won't miss that part.... Connor *OUT*

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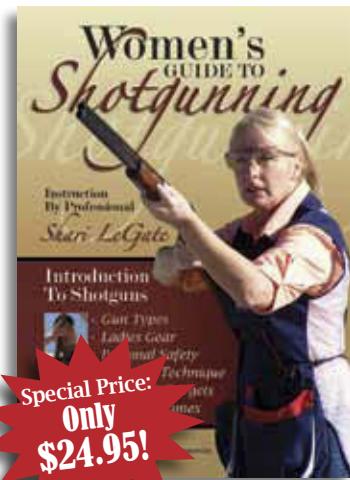
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FEBRUARY 2012

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was tracking cow thieves in Montana and packing two .45 Colt single actions. The one on his hip was loaded with five rounds, however the other one was "safely" carried in a shoulder holster with six rounds. His horse stepped on a yellow jacket nest and started bucking and pitching down the mountain. The gun flew out of the shoulder holster, the hammer spur hit a rock, (they seem to be drawn to rocks like radar!) and the gun fired, fortunately missing both horse and rider. That was the last time Keith carried a fully-loaded traditional single action.

In my earlier years I often carried a Ruger .44 Magnum Flat-Top fully loaded with the hammer in a "so-called" safety notch. I must have had a guardian angel watching over me! More than one hunter traveling in brushy country has had the fully loaded single actions pulled out of his holster by a limb or bush, dropped on the hammer, once again hitting a rock and discharging. All pre-1972 3-Screw Ruger single actions, all Colt Single Actions, all USFA Single Actions and all replica single actions can only be *safely* carried loaded with five rounds with the hammer down on an empty chamber.

As far as I know, Skeeter Skelton was the first to actually share the easy way to load a traditional single action for safe carry. That is, "Load 1, Skip 1, Load 4." This means load the first chamber, skip the second chamber, load the next four, carefully cock the hammer and very carefully let it down on the empty chamber which is now in the proper position. This should be practiced with five dummy rounds to make sure it can be done correctly.

Practice is also needed to know what to do if the sixgun is cocked and not fired. In the movies they always simply let the hammer down and shove it back in the holster; a practice guaranteed to bring disaster in real life. Practice should also be done with dummy rounds in this situation. When the gun is cocked and not fired, let the hammer down very easily and safely, bring it back to half cock and count the number of times it is necessary to advance the cylinder before bringing the hammer back to full cock and letting it safely down on an empty chamber. This *should* only be done with dummy rounds until the process is learned.

What brought this all about is an extremely irresponsible post, made anonymously of course, on a single-action website. The poster said, "Colt did create a safe position being the first click notch on the hammer... Use the first hammer notch for what it was intended, and that is to keep



Colt Single Action has three screws in the left side of the frame, pre-1972 Rugers on the right side. Either way, load 'em with five and put the hammer down on an empty chamber.

the hammer off the primer of a full cylinder." I immediately wrote back in all capital letters for emphasis, "WRONG!! Bad idea!!!! More than one cowboy has been shot when the hammer was struck by something while the fully loaded sixgun was in the holster loaded with six rounds and a hammer in the so-called safety notch. Load one up fully, place the hammer in the "safety" notch, point the gun in a safe direction, and give the hammer a good smack with a piece of hardwood. You won't recommend this dangerous practice anymore. We have been preaching the "Load 1, Skip 1, Load 4, Cock The Hammer And Let It Down On An Empty" for decades, now here you come saying it isn't necessary."

Of course, he had to respond with, "I am not in the habit of whackin' the hammer with a stick of hardwood when the gun is in the holster or in my hand. I would much prefer the old cock the hammer and shooting method when the gun is in my hand." That, of course, revealed his irresponsible attitude and others start chiming in. One had carried his Ruger 3-Screw .357 Blackhawk fully loaded. He dropped it, it landed on the hammer, fired and put a bullet through his ribs. He said: "I had plenty of time to think about how this could have been avoided. I am firmly in the 'leave the hammer down on an empty chamber camp.'" Another shared the story of a fellow who was carrying a fully loaded, traditional single action as a guard on a money truck. He was loading his truck when the door swung shut, hit the hammer on his gun and fired it. He was shot in the leg and never went back to work.

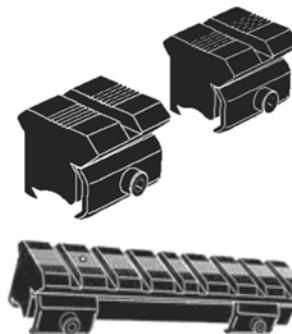
Use the Internet with great care and discernment; bad advice, even dangerous advice is readily available. Be careful out there.

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CAMPFIRE TALES

BY JOHN TAFFIN

BEWARE THE INTERNET

Stupid can hurt.

John Taffin

The Internet is a wonderful resource, although I fought against using it for several years simply because I did not know how valuable it could be. I also fought against computers, digital cameras and cell phones for years not knowing how much work, time, money and energy they saved me. I was stubborn—still am for that matter.

The cell phone rides in my pick-up for emergency use only. It is never on unless I need to call. Normally I send in my articles and pictures by regular mail on a CD, however if something needs to be done in a hurry I can send the text plus one or two photos at a time directly to the editor. This ability can be exceptionally important when we have a very tight deadline. In addition to sending information back and forth, it is also possible to access millions of pieces of information. The Internet is actually in many ways a gigantic electronic library.

Information on virtually every manufacturer is at my fingertips as well as the ability to send and receive e-mails. There is much to be found that is interesting, instructive and even inspirational. The downside is there is also some pretty nasty stuff out there and you have to be discerning. The Internet can also be a nationwide gun store at our fingertips. Again, you have to be discerning here, and it is a good idea to know the person you're dealing with, as well as only dealing with totally legal FFL transfers. Having said that, in recent times I have found two pre-27 5-Screw Smith & Wesson .357 Magnums as well as two rare .44 Smith & Wessons, all on the net. The latter two were a 5-Screw .44 Magnum and a 1950 Military .44 Special. All were purchased at excellent prices. But again, beware of whom you are dealing with!

Not only is the Internet filled with information, there's probably an equal amount of misinformation. There are many places to find reloading information, however anyone would be very foolish to accept reloading information from someone posting anonymously on the Internet. Yet some people actually do this.



Be it Ruger, Colt, USFA or Great Western, if it has three screws it is a 5-shooter.

Reloading manuals are inexpensive, reliable and certainly much safer. The only safe place to find reloading information on the net is from well-respected and identified sources such as those maintained by powder and bullet companies. The world is full of

crazies and there are actually people out there deliberately posting dangerous reloading information which can destroy a firearm and also harm the shooter, or worse. Be very, very careful about any reloading information posted on the net. Many reputable sites simply ban posting of any reloading information.

Mistakes

Elmer Keith did it, Skeeter Skelton did it and I as well as several other writers continue to do it. "It" is preaching the safe handling of traditional single actions. This was a single-action sixgun world in Keith's early ranching days. In his writings from the late 1920s on, Keith always recommended carrying only five rounds in the traditional 6-shot revolver, with a hammer resting on an empty chamber. He told several stories of incidents occurring to those who did not follow this advice.

One of the worst was that of a man and his wife out for a ride in an early Ford. The man placed his fully-loaded 7-1/2" .45 Colt Single Action on the back seat. Back then, the roads were very rough. At one particular bad spot the Colt flew off the back seat, came down on the hammer spur, discharged and the bullet went through the seat and killed his wife.

Keith also recounted seeing several single actions slipped out of their holsters by the rope when the owner was roping cattle and one went off when the hammer hit a rock. He also told of three different friends carrying all six chambers loaded, who shot themselves in the leg when the stirrup of their saddle hit the hammer as they were saddling their horses. Keith learned his lesson the hard way also, when as a young man he

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