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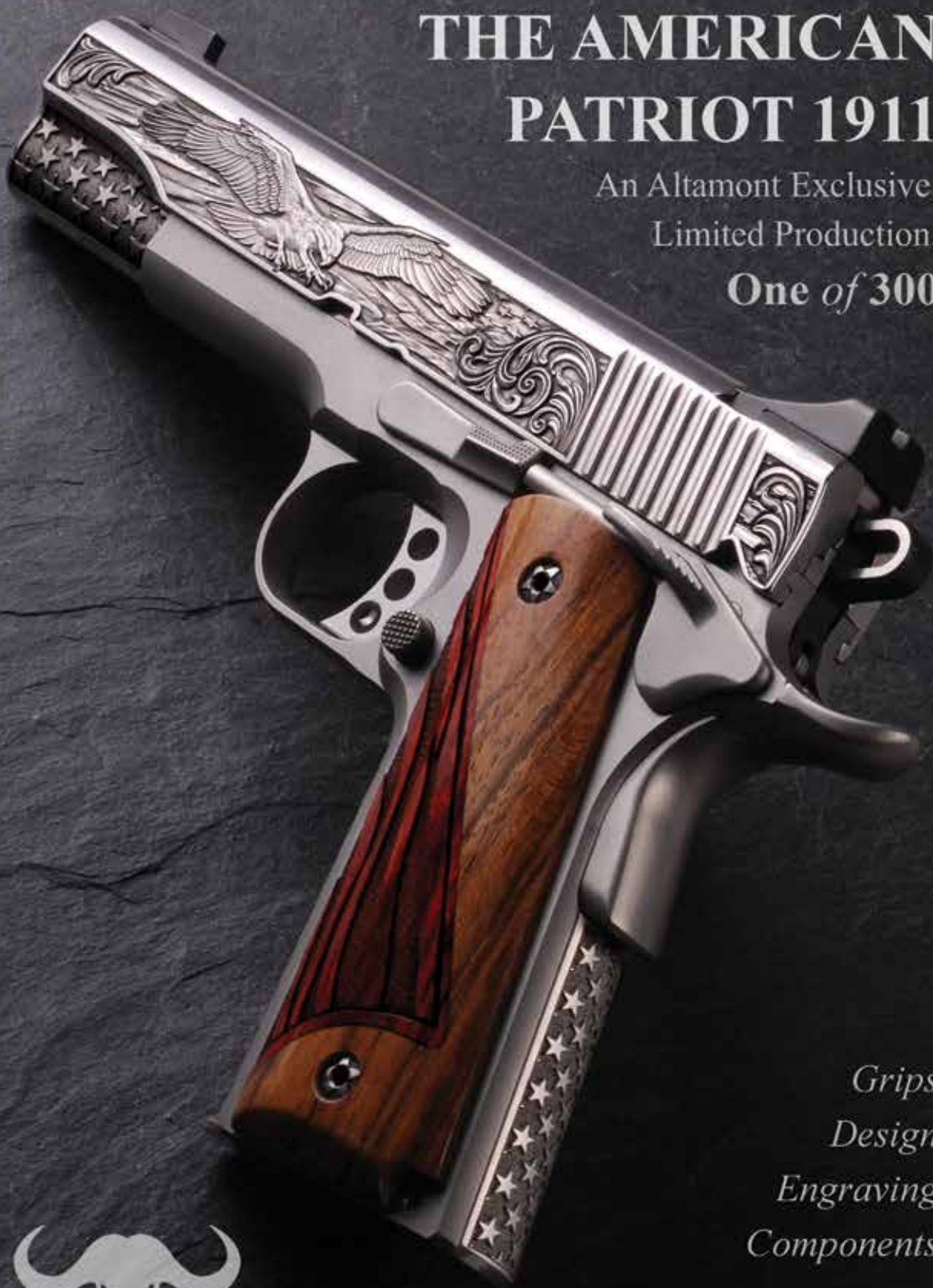
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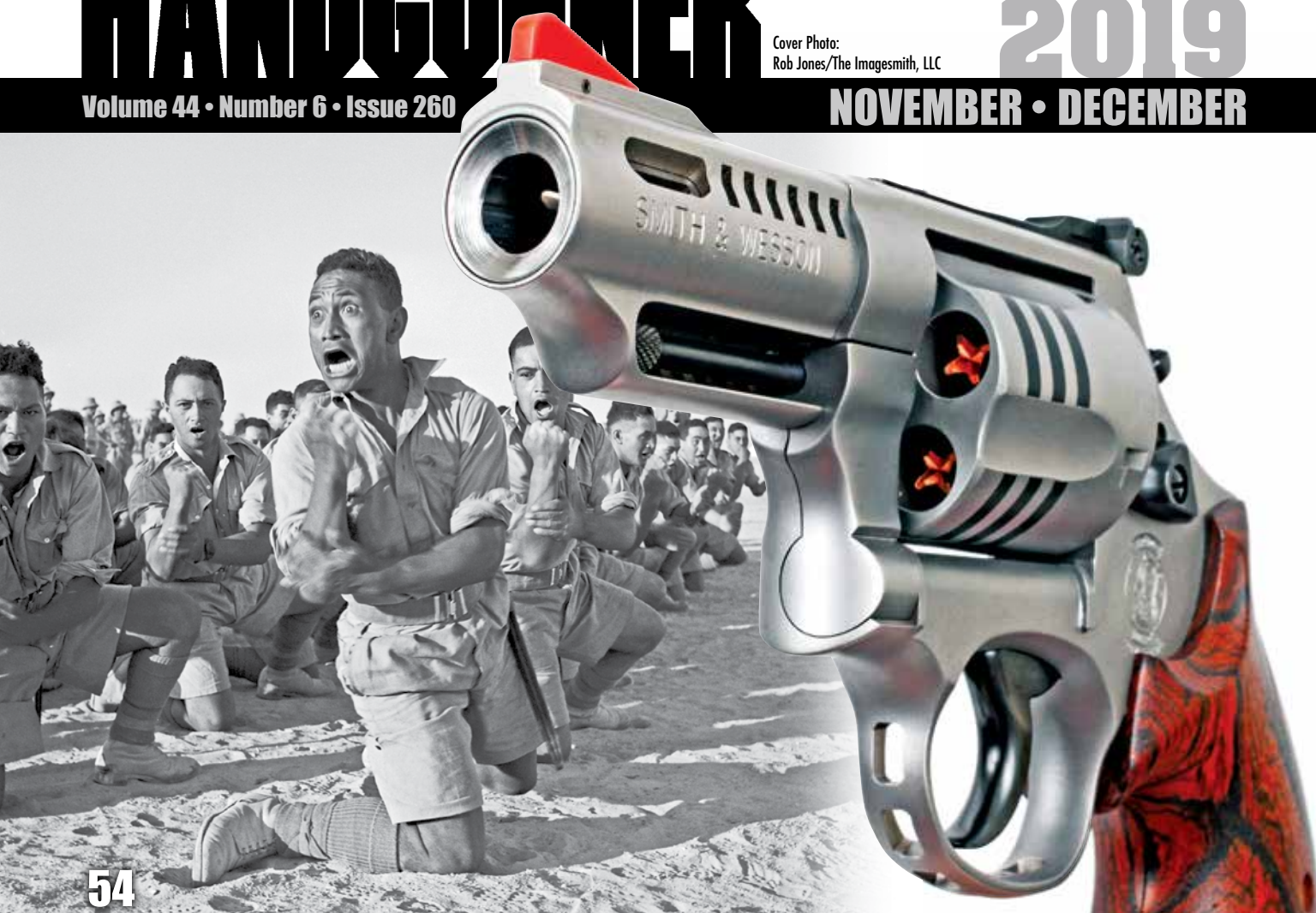
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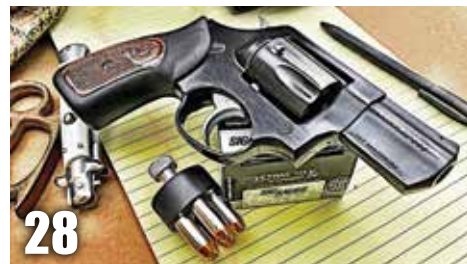
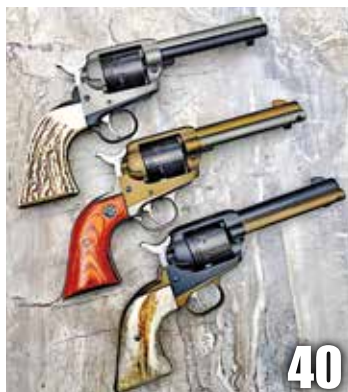
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Want to keep on top of what we think is some of the coolest new gear on the market? Then be sure to follow our *Online Exclusives* selected by our editorial staff and reviewed by Tank Hoover. From reviews of holsters such as the new Blackhawk T-Series system to a consideration of the new SIG SAUER ProForce Air Pistols to a piece on TruGlo's Fiber Optic Pro Sights, we've got you covered!

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CLASSIC ISSUES

While we're always looking forward, we don't forget to look back from time to time. Heck, with a title that stretches back to the mid-1970s and has been packed with great content, it'd be foolish not to wander through those past pages from time to time. And we've made it easy by posting digital copies of *American Handgunner* from the first issue in 1976 to the year 1988 — and all for free. To find them visit americanhandgunner.com and scroll down to the bottom to click the "Classic Issues" link. Or, visit <http://ahandgunner.online/classicissues>.

LET'S BE FRIENDS

We're working very hard to put the "social" in social media, and we'd like you to be a part of it. From Facebook to Instagram to Twitter and more, you'll be seeing much more content and interactivity from *American Handgunner* as well as *GUNS Magazine* on the digital front. So, stop by and see what's going on in the digital world of *American Handgunner* and feel free to start up a conversation!



FMG QUICK HITS

Want to see the guns you read about in the pages of *American Handgunner* and more live and in action on the screen? Then check out FMG's *Quick Hits* on our FMG-Pubs YouTube channel. We recently

covered the exciting Kimber Evo SP (CDP) pistol, an impressive little striker-fired 9mm ready for deep-cover CCW duty. How did it do? Swing by our channel and see for yourself.

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DINOSAUR HUNTING

Normally, one of the first articles I read is Duke's, but his piece on hunting dinosaurs, I mean, er . . . dinosaurs and handguns, set a new bar height (Sept/Oct 2019). It's one of his all-time best. And that's covering several million years from what I can tell.

Paul Loschiavo
Via email



Our Responsibilities

Your recent *Gun Rights* series presents a number of compelling arguments against legislation limiting gun owners' rights, but I see no strong positions to address what we all (should) consider a very serious gun crime situation throughout this country. What are your (and your readers) specific proposals to reduce this acknowledged and severe problem? Gun ownership is not just a right but a serious responsibility. If that handgun is not

carried, it *must* be secured for the safety of family and friends (especially children), and statistics prove many illegal guns are obtained by theft from homes and vehicles.

Way too many in my demographic (60s, white male) take their lives with a firearm, and younger military vets are a close second. Suicide does not go away by not talking about it. Talk to friends and family (and yourself) before this becomes a personal tragedy for you.

For those concerned about personal

defense, owning and/or carrying a firearm is not the simple solution — routine tactical practice is an absolute requirement. LEOs know and practice this and still have field issues.

Many legally obtained firearms become illegal at some point and not just ones stolen. This problem must be addressed. Not all legal buyers — or those they sell to — are "good guys." Unfortunately, it's human nature; some people are evil or motivated by financial greed.



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SPEAK OUT

I'm offering my comments and encouraging others to reply with possible solutions. I have no real answers to this complicated problem but we all need to keep thinking about it.

Terry Baker
Via email

Parking Lot Insanity

I read Duke's column on the parking lot fiasco (*Shooting Iron*, Sept/Oct 2019). It doesn't pay to try and figure out why people do stupid, dangerous and evil things. You need to pay attention to what they're doing, what jeopardy it places you in, then react appropriately. Secondly, after the driver came back again it would have been time to leave and call 911. Maybe even after the first time. Usually if something doesn't seem right — it isn't. Listen to your gut. Glad it all worked out okay though, and thanks for sharing the experience with us all. It serves as a good reminder.

Mark
Via email

Gun Winner

Just wanted to tell you how great it was to win the May/June 2019 *American Handgunner* magazine prize package. I read the magazine cover to cover every month and then enter the drawing never thinking I would win. Can't tell you how excited I was when I opened your letter and found out I had won! I'd like to thank you personally for the way you helped me through the process.

"Boyd"
From Illinois

The Mighty .25

Great article by Mike Cumpston on the tiny but "mighty" .25 ACP and its little launching pad pocket pistols ("25 ACP Ragtime Wonders," July/Aug 2019). It may not be mighty in the sense of its big brother .45 ACP, but it's mighty in the sense of all the little poppers that have been made to shoot it — and the comfort and protection it's provided over the years. Would I pick it if I could choose a more powerful round? No, but it sure beats fingernails or harsh words! Mike left out the best of the group though, in neglecting the Beretta 950 Jet-Fire tilt-barrel semi-auto.

The slides of pocket .25 ACP pistols are hell to rack due to their stiff recoil springs, but with the Beretta 950 you simply cock the hammer, put the safety on, insert the loaded magazine, hit the slide tilt lever and insert a cartridge in the chamber. When you lower the barrel, the gun is loaded, cocked and locked for duty. The gun can be carried



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Clete Davis
Via email

Armed And Competent

I was rereading letters in both *GUNS* and *Handgunner* today. I noticed a vibrant pattern that's getting stronger, especially in *GUNS*. Readers have a varied interest but the same *joie de vivre* I think that's French and adds a bit of fancy to an otherwise ordinary thought. I searched the periodical section at the big library we have here this afternoon and could not find anything to compare to either magazine. Perhaps you've found a segment of the population far superior to the rest? If we reach a point of numbers where we can influence society, all the better. Also, we're armed and competent, so we have that going for us too.

Ted P.
Via email

Dire Consequences ...

Several months ago you — or a sister publication — published a letter from a fellow who, some years ago, was dispatched by his wife with \$300 to buy a washing machine. On the way he stopped by the local gun store and spent the money instead on a new Colt Python. His wife was not amused then, and is not now!

Please more fully consider the consequences of such a letter. My wife shares my passion for "walnut and blue" guns, and I shared the letter with her. The next time I left the house, she shoved \$300 in my pocket and told me to come back with a Colt Python. I am now in kind of a fix.

Keep up the outstanding work. I truly enjoy your magazine!

Dave S.
Via email

Dave, we hope you're not living in the dog house these days. By the way, I'm good for another \$300 for another Python if you don't mind? —RH

A Reminder

We're maintaining America, its principles and values — each in our own way. Part of my life, who I am, and what I stand for is displayed in the pages of *American Handgunner*. You and your writers have displayed character and integrity in your endeavors —

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SPEAK OUT

and I certainly do appreciate that. I'm certain the loyal readers of your mag do too. The younger and newer readers will soon learn the magazine and writers contribute to their way of life — and they should feel grateful and privileged.

We take care of our own! And that "own" becomes extended at times.

We are decent human beings and American Patriots and on occasion we might hear we are good spouses. Ha!

My ancestor is Private Jacob Vatter, a Revolutionary War soldier from a Pennsylvania Regiment who was with General Washington at the Battles of Trenton and Yorktown. May I one day measure up to his citizenship and service.

God Bless the Republic!

Press on. Out for now.

Ronnie B.

A Son of the American Revolution,
and an American Handgunner

You sir, have humbled all of us here. While I'm not entirely sure we always live up to your description, I'll tell you firsthand — we do our best. I know I speak for all of us here at both Handgunner and GUNS when I say we'll stay the course. —RH

Tongue Twisters

As a long time reader and subscriber to both *Handgunner* and *GUNS*, I've occasionally seen mention of how to pronounce certain names. I would love to see a short article or sidebar of names and their phonetic pronunciations. Perhaps even as a tear-out to keep as reference. As a start here's a short list your other readers could add to. In no particular order: Sako, Shielen, Geissele, Polygonal, Garand, Kahles, Leupold, Dieudonné Saive and Lilja.

Both magazines are superb. The writers with their in-depth articles, the photography and layout, the knowledge shared and the humor. You all are greatly appreciated.

Meyer Weiner
Via email

Meyer, what a great idea! Many of those are among the ones we just sort of mumble over when we read them. I've tasked Dave Anderson to take this project on. Dave's the right guy for it so I anticipate a good read. I'd like to add "Radom." Is it "Ra-Dom" or "Ray-dome?" Dave, you listening? —RH

Fix It Syndrome

You guys hit it out of the park with the *DIY GUNS Special Edition* magazine. I'm a 78-year-old DIY "practical gunsmith" and once I began to read

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SPEAK OUT

the magazine I couldn't put it down! Great content and great authors. I love the technical stuff I can actually do at home. If you understand how guns work, you can understand why they're designed the way they are, and you can maintain and repair them.

John Hinckley
Washington, Michigan

We worked hard on that one, John, so it's good to hear it's striking a chord. If you'd like to get your own copy, you can find it on the local newsstand or magazine rack or go to www.fmgpubs.com/product/american-handgunner-diy-guns-2019-special-edition/ or call: (866) 820-4045. You can also get a PDF download of it online too. —RH

Dry Firing And Red Dots

I'll get right to it. Can I dry fire my handguns without using snap caps? I've been doing this off and on for several years without apparent damage to them but I've been told I should use snap caps. Do the gun models make any difference to this activity?

My second question is what are the pros and cons of red dot sights on pistols? Are these optical sights more accurate than the ones coming on my handguns? I'm a retired deputy sheriff and shooting handguns is a hobby of mine.

Phillip R. Martin
Joliet, Illinois

Good questions, Phillip. On the dry-firing, if the guns are modern center-fire guns, you're fine. If it's a rimfire, especially an old one, use snap caps or empty .22 cases (and rotate the cases now and again). But better to get snap caps for them. I think one of the best reasons to use snap caps is you're assured the gun is unloaded. Dry-firing is an important part of honing your skills, but do it safely by keeping the guns and ammo well separated from each other and making sure the back-stop is safe.

On the "dot" sights, they're not more accurate than iron sights, but if you can see the dot or image more clearly, it will be easier to shoot more accurately. The "single sighting plane" placement of the "dot" means you only need to focus on the target, the dot is sort of "magically" appearing on the target. Put the dot where you want the bullet to go and press the trigger. With irons you're trying to keep three things in focus — the rear sight, front sight and target — virtually impossible. The downside is the fact electronic sights can fail, are bulkier than irons and it takes practice to become fast with one. On a personal

note, I use dot-type sights on some of my .22 autos, both for small game hunting and targets and plinking. All of my defensive guns have irons. —RH

Revolvers Rule

It's a great day and an uncommon one nowadays to see a revolver on the cover of a gun mag. But there it was on the cover of the Sept/Oct issue of *American Handgunner*. Thanks for knowing revolvers remain viable handguns, and many gun people love their wheelguns. It was a great issue, with revolvers also featured in articles by John Taffin, Duke Venturino — I'm one of those dinosaurs Duke talked about — and Clayton Walker. It was interesting to learn about the S&W I-Frame. Also liked Duke's other article about the incident in his home state of Montana, my birthplace. Of course, I always learn something from Massad Ayoob, Dave Anderson and Your Royal Editorship, Mr. Huntington. Receiving your magazine always brings joy — like a family reunion but without the hassle. Thanks for that.

David Livingston
New Mexico

David, rest assured revolvers will remain a common theme for both Handgunner and GUNS since we're all die-hard revolver shooters too. We always appreciate the kind words, too! —RH

Gun Cleaning

Can you do an article on properly cleaning pistols like GLOCKs, step by step with recommended cleaning solvents, oils and such?

Frank
Via email

Frank, we've covered such things many times, and the best way to get a handle on it is to watch the Insider Tips video on cleaning a semi-auto. Go to www.youtube.com/user/fmgpubs then search for "Gun Cleaning 101" and I think you'll find what you're looking for. There's also lots more sort of "how to" videos there so nose around some. —RH

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Jessie Harrison shooting with one eye closed at the 2008 Limited Nationals. It can hardly be called a disadvantage since she has won more national and world titles than I have space to list.

Phil Strader, Grand Master and past USPSA Regional Director shooting Open Class in 2008. Both eyes open, even as the gun fires. Note how everything seems centered and natural — gun, head and body position, eyes centered in their sockets.



ONE EYE – OR TWO?

Should I shoot with one eye open — or two? The short answer is two. Most shooters, most of the time, are better off with both eyes open. Most of the top competitive shooters I've observed shoot with both eyes open. There are exceptions and I know of world-class shooters who shoot with one eye closed. While I prefer and recommend shooting with both eyes open, I really don't believe having one eye closed

is a serious shooting fault.

For some people, closing one eye also affects the muscles controlling the open eye. Some shooters have noticed reduced visual acuity with the open eye. Since this seems to be an individual thing you might want to experiment using an eye chart. Try with the eye closed, then with the eye open and relaxed but covered by a patch. You should be able to quickly identify

if there is any reduced acuity in the eye being used.

Another objection to having one eye closed is loss of depth perception, and in some cases our sense of stability. This may not be an issue in shooting, in which the eye is closed only for a brief period when actually firing. But the loss of an eye, especially for an adult used to binocular vision, can be a serious issue.

LEARNED SKILLS

Fortunately most people can learn to function with just one eye. Golf legend Tommy Armour lost sight in one eye during WWI as a result of a gas attack, and had to relearn the game. All he did was win 25 PGA tournaments, including three majors. Sammy Davis Jr. (who lost an eye in a car accident) learned to play again too, and also became an exceptionally skilled gun handler. In fact Arvo Ojala, who trained many Hollywood figures, said Davis and Jerry Lewis were the two best gun handlers he ever worked with. Davis even wrote a little article on his gun collection for the June 1957 issue of *GUNS Magazine*.

Functioning with one eye can be learned, but it isn't easy. In all aspects of shooting, from natural point of aim, to stance and grip, I like techniques that are natural, comfortable and repeatable. I believe our eyes work best when they are more or less centered in their sockets, relaxed and comfortable. Both eyes open gives better depth perception, a wider field of view and I believe it improves overall body stability and balance.

Nonetheless there can be circumstances in which closing one eye is a reasonable solution. One example is a shooter who is cross-eye dominant. For example, one who shoots right-handed but has a left master eye. One solution is to learn to shoot left-handed. This seems to work best if a youngster is fortunate enough to have a mentor who recognizes the issue and makes the switch at an early age.

Another solution is to continue to shoot right-handed and turn the head a bit so the dominant left eye aligns the sights. This works with handguns but not rifles or shotguns. Possibly the simplest solution is to close the dominant left eye and let the right eye take over.

EQUALIZING THINGS

Another fairly common situation is to have both eyes about equal, with neither strongly dominant. One eye is always going to be the master eye but sometimes there isn't a great deal of difference. I tend to fall in this category and although I see the sights with my right eye I also get a fairly good image of the left side of the gun with the left eye.

At one time I had unconsciously developed the habit of half-closing the left eye to increase the dominance of the right eye. I didn't realize it until I saw some photos from downrange. A better solution is to put a strip of transparent tape across the lens of the non-dominant eye (the left, for me). Over time the master eye tends to become more dominant, at least in my experience.

Most shooters wear tinted glasses while shooting outdoors. I had to go back a decade or more in my files to find photos of top shooters wearing clear or lightly tinted glasses so the eyes could be seen. It was a bit of a nostalgia trip!



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ARE YOUR BULLETS PC?



A pair of .41 powder-coated bullets (left) with a trio of .45 powder-coated bullets.



You can "shake and bake" your bullets to powder coat them. Place them in a plastic container, mix with powder and shake, then bake.

When it comes to cast bullets, we can find ourselves in a Catch-22. Many sixgun hunters prefer hollowpoint bullets for thin-skinned game, and therein lies the problem. If the alloy used is hard enough to prevent leading, the hollowpoint may not even open up and possibly even shatter. If we go the other way with a softer alloy that promotes hollowpoint expansion, we may have a problem with leading from bullets driven to magnum velocities.

When Smith & Wesson's .357 Magnum arrived in 1935 shooters found they had a sixgun capable of stunning velocities, but the ammunition available at the time leaded barrels up quickly. It was not until Ray Thompson designed his #358156GC bullet with a copper gas check for Lyman 70 years ago the problem was solved. To this day I still think this is the best standard weight bullet ever designed for the first magnum.

THE NEXT EVOLUTION

Now we can literally have our cake and eat it too with today's powder-coated (PC) bullets. Whatever bullet design we choose, plain base or gas checked, powder coating can be applied. Along with this coating we can use a maximum-sized hollowpoint and an alloy virtually guaranteeing expansion. My friend, fellow Idahoan and fellow Shootist Dick Thompson is a huge fan of powder-coated bullets and has provided me with examples in .32, .357, .41 and .45 he has powder coated. He thinks powder coating is here to stay and told me many of the commercial casters are now offering PC bullets, and mold makers are offering powder-coated molds with no lube grooves.

There are several ways to coat bullets, one of which is using an inexpensive spray paint gun. However, this requires a specially built box and the bullets have to be standing up when sprayed. Dick uses the "shake and bake" method as well as the tumbler method. For the first method, a plastic container which creates static electricity is needed to bond the paint to the cast bullets. Something as simple as a Cool Whip container will hold 75 bullets or so, and you just add powder and shake. Next, they are dumped into a colander so the excess paint can be shaken off, placed on nonstick aluminum foil and then baked at 400 degrees for 10 to 12 minutes. Once done, cool and size as normal cast bullets.

For larger quantities a 1-qt. plastic bottle with a screw-on lid will handle 200 to 300 bullets. Add a couple of tablespoons of paint and shake for about 90 seconds, then dump them on non-stick aluminum foil and bake.

He says at this point it doesn't matter if they are double stacked and they don't have to be standing up. They should be sized as soon as they are cool because they will age hard in a few days, making them harder to size. If they size hard simply spray them with Hornady One Shot Case Lube, which will prevent sticking in the sizing die.



No, John hasn't made tubes of lipstick part of his handloading gear. Those are powder-coated .41 Mag. bullets.

A tumbler also works, and Dick says he uses his Hornady Tumbler with 300 to 500 bullets and two to three tablespoons of paint. He tumbles it all for about 20 minutes before baking. One of the problems easily run into is adding too much paint: "A little goes a long way. My first bottle coated approximately 7,000 bullets," he explained.

IN THE FIELD

How good are PC bullets? Dick says in the last five to six years he's stacked up a fair number of deer and antelope with different .41, .44 and .45 hollowpoint bullets. He uses an alloy of 70 percent wheelweights, 30 percent lead and about 1/4 lb. of Linotype thrown into the pot.

Here's the latest word from Dick: "In the last couple of days I've been using a new bullet

weighing 212 grains which is an LFN-style hollowpoint with a gas check in my wonderful .41 Magnum Bisley. When Tank Hoover arrives I'll be ready and waiting. I've already taken one deer a few months ago with the 230-gr. Keith .41 now it's time for this new hollowpoint to show me how it holds up in the game fields." You can bet whether in his hands or Tank's the powder coated bullets will do fine!



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NOT SO NICHE?

REMINGTON'S RADICALLY CAPABLE 700 CP



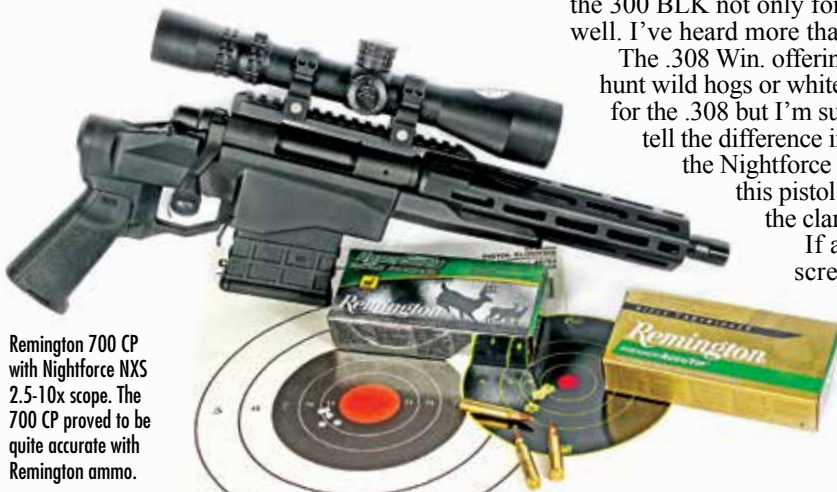
Karen discovered how fun the 700 CP can be while banging steel plates with it.

When I first heard Remington was introducing

a bolt-action pistol, the discontinued XP-100 came to mind. I couldn't wait to get my hands on one. Could shooters be so fortunate? The XP was an accurate, single-shot handgun that performed well on the range and in the field. When I received the new Remington 700 CP, it wasn't exactly what I'd expected. It seems the trend for modular chassis-type rifles has carried over into the handgun market.

My test gun arrived in .223 Remington, but it's also available in .308 Win. and 300 BLK. Barrel length on the .223 and 300 BLK is 10½", while the .308 Win. wears a 12½" barrel. The barrel features a threaded muzzle and suppressor protector and is just screaming for a suppressor. Based on the short action Model 700, the 700 CP features a Magpul MIAD pistol grip like you would encounter on an AR. Its Remington X Mark Pro trigger is adjustable from 3.5 to 5 lbs. — mine broke cleanly at 5 lbs. Overall length with the .223 was a little over 20".

Before mounting any optic, the gun tipped the scales at 5 lbs., 14 oz. The 700 CP features a black, hardcoat anodized finish. It comes with a detachable AICS-style, 10-round magazine. The chassis is equipped with a free-floating, M-Lok handguard that is octagonal and well-ventilated, and also ready to accept a bipod. A rear single-point, quick-detach sling point can be easily removed if necessary. The 700 CP comes with a two-position safety lever located directly behind the bolt. Serrations at the end of the large bolt knob make running the bolt easy and consistent.



Remington 700 CP with Nightforce NXS 2.5-10x scope. The 700 CP proved to be quite accurate with Remington ammo.

REACHING OUT

Thanks to the generous 7"-long Picatinny rail, I quickly mounted a Nightforce scope with Nightforce rings. Previously I didn't have any experience with Nightforce optics, so I was looking forward to some range time. This NXS 2.5-10x compact riflescope was just the ticket. It comes with a 30mm tube and lots of internal adjustments for long-range shooting. Both elevation and windage have 100 MOA adjustments. My scope came with the MOAR reticle. This optic also comes standard with a power-adjustment throw lever that allows the shooter to change magnification settings in a blink of an eye, even when wearing gloves. The scope looks like it was made to fit the 700 CP as it's not quite 12" long.

After securing two different Remington factory loads — 50-gr. Accutip-V boat tail and 62-gr. Core-Lokt Ultra Bonded PSP — my wife and I headed to the range. We first got the pistol sighted-in at 25 yds. After a few adjustments we moved out to 100 yards and started to work. The 5-lb. trigger made us both work harder, but the .223 was delivering satisfying groups.

WHAT'S A NICHE?

Which market will the Remington 700 CP entice? The .223 I tested was more than accurate enough to wreak havoc on an overpopulated prairie dog town. The pistol was pleasant to shoot, and if I'd adjusted the trigger down to 3 lbs. or so it would have been easier to shoot well. You can certainly enjoy ringing steel targets with the little .223 and cheap ammo is readily available. Some may prefer the 300 BLK not only for target shooting but small game and varmints as well. I've heard more than one report the 300 BLK is very accurate, too.

The .308 Win. offering would be a good choice for those wanting to hunt wild hogs or whitetail. Personally, I would much prefer a 15" tube for the .308 but I'm sure most game inside 300 yds. wouldn't be able to tell the difference in a little less barrel length. With a good scope, like the Nightforce tested, I'm sure you could hammer some hogs with this pistol. Speaking of the Nightforce, I really appreciated the clarity and quality of this scope. It's a keeper for sure.

If an accurate, bolt-action pistol is on your radar screen, check out the Remington 700 CP. The futuristic-looking modular chassis is here. Surely you'll have fun ringing steel targets, and you just might take the pistol hunting as well!



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PISTOLSMITHING

THE INSIDE SCOOP ON PISTOLSMITHING TECHNIQUES

GREG DERR

AFTER

BEFORE



The 1921 Colt Police Positive donor gun was pretty rough, but a perfect base gun for the project.



The finished Colt .38 "Fitz Special" in matte blue with nitre blue accents looks pretty authentic, and was great fun to build.

FUSSING WITH A FITZ

Sometimes you just have to get out of your comfort zone. I work on a lot of 1911's every year. So when I got a call from Mark Mason of Downers Grove, Illinois with a request for a one-off project, I took the chance it would be a good change of pace. Mark wanted an iconic "Fitz Special," scoring an abused 1921 Colt Police Positive in .38 Special for \$55 bucks at a local police shop for a base gun. I agreed pending a first hand look at this classic Colt. It turns out

the revolver was moderately pitted and had an overall brown patina. The pits and scratches were just deep enough a nice blue was never going to happen, but Mark was okay with this, and on a limited budget.

I dove into my research on the "Fitz"-style guns. I never had seen one in person and only a few pictures. John Henry Fitzgerald was a NY Trooper who worked as a spokesman and gunsmith for 26 years at Colt. His revolvers were designed for a quick draw from the pocket or waistband. The lack of a full trigger guard allowed the finger to fall right on the trigger fast. The bobbed hammer and short barrel offered fewer snags. The number of true Colt-made "Fitz Specials" is unknown, but in the '20s it was the hot modification. They were made in .38 Specials and the rarer .45 Colt. Originals can demand prices north of \$2K with documentation.



Ted Yost came to the rescue with a custom gold line front sight.



The Police Positive in process next to an image of an original "Fitz Special."

Things are shaping up, and the retro-look is thought-provoking.

SQUARE TO ROUND

We converted the frame from a square butt to a "somewhat" rounded butt. I did this with a bench grinder then a Scotch Brite wheel. I found some square grips online and rounded them to fit while on the frame for a perfect match. For a grip finish, I used Tung oil over the old patina. I wanted the revolver to look less than perfect since the finish was going to be matte blue.

Speaking of finish, I blasted the large parts with a mix of glass bead and aluminum oxide at 120 grit. The screws, trigger and hammer were polished on a

THE BUILD BEGINS

The barrel, cylinder and internals were all fine. I removed the barrel from the frame with a Brownells' action wrench preventing "springing" the frame while unscrewing the barrel. My son Nick cut the stock barrel from 4" to just over 2". The short barrel was then chucked in my lathe for truing and crowning to 2".

Cutting the trigger guard was easy, but the hump where the guard meets the frame in front of the cylinder needed lots of work. Some photos I saw left a slight hump. I wanted it to look like it never existed so I jiggled the frame up rigidly in the mill and cut as much of the hump as I could. Then I went at smoothing with files and sand paper to the point you would never know it existed. The ejector rod was cut and rethreaded for the end cap, something "Fitz" did not usually do but it looks odd without the cap.

Fitz reused the original front sight. I didn't like the half circle look of the Colt so I managed to get Ted Yost to make me a 1" square blank with a gold inlay I could shape into a front sight. To set the sight in the barrel I cut a 1/8" keyway on top, allowing the new sight to sit in place while silver soldering. Once I got the proper sight height for a 25-foot zero I shaped the front edges and serrated 50 LPI with a checkering file. Bobbing the hammer was straightforward, just grind off the spur and reshape.

buffing wheel to high gloss. Nitre Blue Salts from Brownells were used to treat the screws and trigger as well as the cylinder release. This was to provide contrasting accents to the matte blue frame, done with Brownells' Oxynate No. 7. The hammer was left in bright polished steel, as were the original Fitz Specials.

This was a fun project for me and

Nick and our client Mark, who was patient during the process. I like the idea of doing the occasional one-off since I learn more about the gunsmiths who came before me and their innovations.



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CARRY OPTIONS

ROY HUNTINGTON

FROM CLASSICS TO CUTTING EDGE IN CARRY METHODS

"This is one of those times I have a few things I'd like to share with you. None really needs an entire page, so doing it in bite-sized chunks gets more ideas out to you — faster, helping these great companies too! Let's get to work."



Barranti-Myres's innovative and just plain cool retro-packaging using hand-made wooden crates is attention-getting. Combined with his Barranti-Myres holster line, it's clever — and smells the way wood and good leather should!



Diamond D's "Alaska EDC" holster and Dozier's hand-made leather belt team-up here to tote a S&W M&P .380 Shield EZ.

MORE CARRY OPTIONS - OPTIONS

DIAMOND D LEATHER Our old friends from Alaska have come up with a bare minimalist holster fitting medium and large autos. Called the "Alaska EDC," it's two die-cut flat pieces of high quality leather, cleverly sewn so when you run your belt through the loops, it turns into a holster.

A couple of other makers do similar rigs but leave off the back leather flap. Diamond D's design is better, I think, because the back flap shields your tender bits from being prodded and poked, while protecting the gun at the same time. At only \$35, get one for your smaller guns and one for your bigger guns and smile because you saved a lot of money while scoring two clever holsters!

DOZIER BELTS If you look at the picture of the Diamond D holster, you'll see a high quality belt through the loops. That's from another old friend, Bob Dozier, the famous Arkansas knifemaker who lives just south of me. Bob's also justly famous for his leatherwork and the three belts he sent me to peek at (black, tan and the nice mahogany shown) show his skill off. Made of doubled-over 6-oz. bridle leather sourced from Herman Oak, the belts are hand-tooled and hand-stitched by Bob himself. They're fitted with solid brass or nickel-plated solid brass non-removeable buckles. First class stuff.

He can make them up to 48" with a single piece of leather but if you need something bigger (up to 56") he'll need to splice 'em. They come in 1 1/4" or 1 1/2" widths and cost \$85. That's very reasonable for a high quality leather gun belt likely to last the rest of your life!

NEXBELT Maybe it's just because I'm getting miles on the frame, but belts tend to bother me lately, which is why I often favor a softer belt and always use suspenders. But the Nextbelt line is very unique. It doesn't have the classic pre-spaced holes but uses an innovative sort of

cam/ratchet and track system (the track is on the back of the belt) to give you 1/4" adjustments. You can fit your belt to the size you want by trimming, then locking the buckle to it. It's a simple, rugged and comfortable system using high quality components.

They make a sort of military-looking nylon version and lots and lots of leather versions, including fits and designs for women. Each belt fits up to a 50" to 67" waist depending upon the model, and you can trim them to fit precisely. I've been using the design in two styles for about six months and they work as advertised. The nylon one is my favorite and is a bit "softer" than the leather. Either are rugged enough for carrying though, and are in the \$65 to \$75 range.

BARRANTI MYRES Mike "Doc" Barranti is no stranger to our pages. But he's ramped up the game here. Doc now owns the S.D. Myres name and much of Tio Sam Myres tooling and is resurrecting designs and the spirit of the time. Doc's "Barranti-Myres" line of gunleather now offers packaging just as Tio Myres would have done over a century ago — small crates! A holster of your choice comes in a draw-string bag, packed in the hand-made crate, along with a color catalog and Certificate of Authenticity, signed by Doc himself. By the way, Doc makes the leather gear personally, with just a tad bit of help now and again in his otherwise one-man shop!

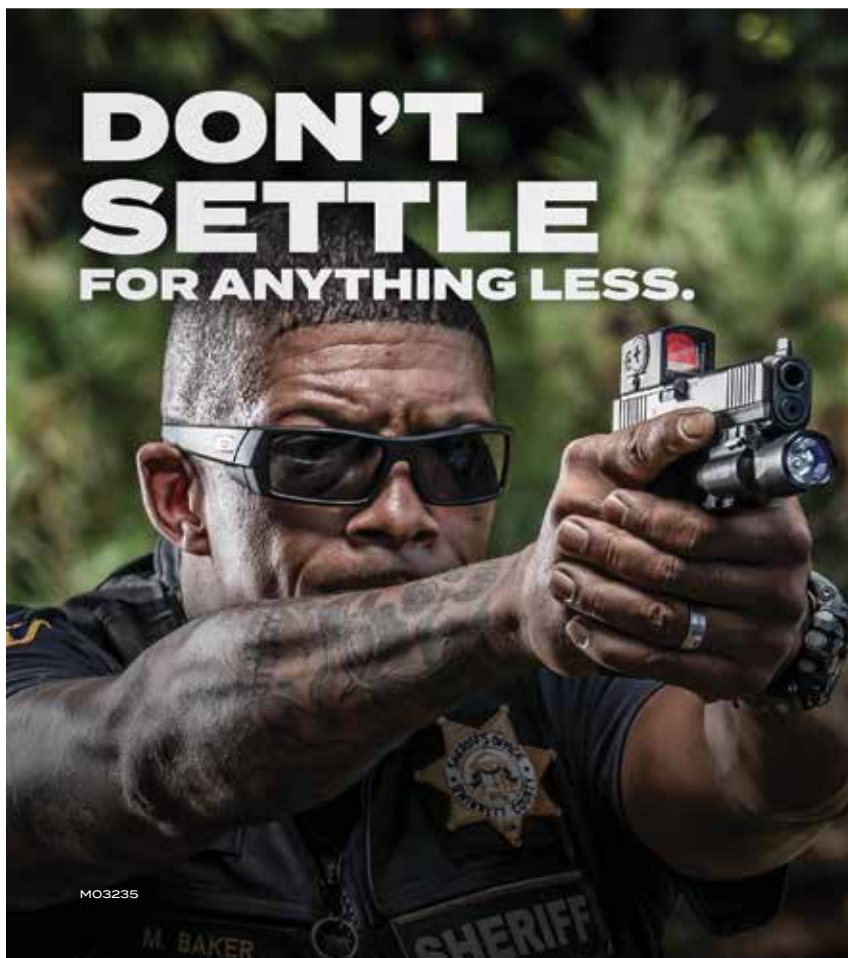
Now's your chance to enjoy the unparalleled smell of wood and leather combined, while enjoying a piece of living history in the form of a Barranti-Myres handmade holster. Prices are around \$275 — including the holster. This is simply great fun at every level. Well done, Doc!



Nextbelt's "Professional EDC Series" (leather or nylon) offers a ratchet adjustment system offering 1/4" adjustments to fit and are exceptionally comfortable.

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SINCE 1977



If you like classic revolvers, the new Ruger SP-101 in blued steel should be right up your alley.

JEFF "TANK" HOOVER



Photo: Ruger

Tank proved that a snubby revolver can shoot if you do your part.



He ran a variety of ammo through it without a hitch.

RUGER'S TIME MACHINE

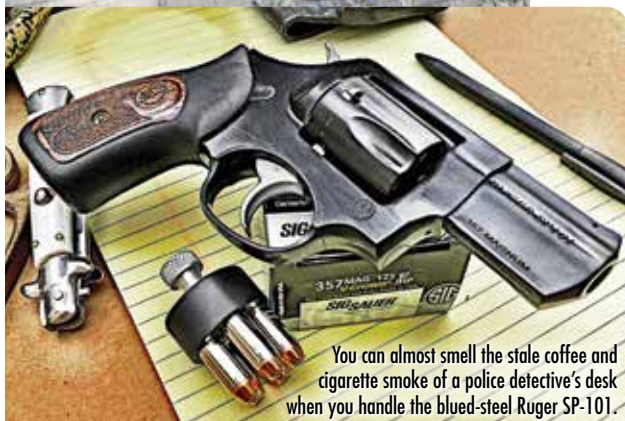
Whether gumshoe detective or guncrank writer, the words "revolver" and "reliable" are synonymous to these probing guys. There's a reason some guns are destined to be classics before rolling off the assembly line.

What makes them classic, you ask? Simply put, they have style. They're made the old-fashioned, old school, old memory kind of way. You know, back when blued steel wasn't an option, it was your only choice. Same with wood grips. Short-barreled revolvers were king back then. Yes, old is cool!

My first experience to blued steel snubbies was as a rookie cop. I had to give information to the saltiest of salts, the station detectives, about a robbery. To a bald-faced rookie, these curmudgeons were investigative legends, not only having a "been there and done that" reputation, they had the look seeping through every pore.

Entering the DB (Detective Bureau) office, the smell of burnt coffee and cigarette smoke hit your sniffer. Each World War II-era desk had an overflowing ashtray, accompanied with a stack of case-files, on it. Every detective was wearing a wrinkled suit and looked as though they lived in the office. Some did.

To a man, all wore old leather holsters, probably older than me. These cops solved cases with their noggins. Most could have a suspect in tears by just staring at them, followed by a signed confession. They meant business, and they all carried a blued-steel snubby.



You can almost smell the stale coffee and cigarette smoke of a police detective's desk when you handle the blued-steel Ruger SP-101.

YESTERDAY, TODAY

So how about those of us today who might want a classic-style blued snubby? Then check out Ruger's SP-101, overbuilt in the strength and ruggedness department and able to withstand .357 Magnum pressures. And it's available in blue! It's no lightweight, though, weighing in at 26 oz. Overall length is 7.2" and height is less than 5". It's capable of shooting either .357 Magnum or .38 Special cartridges, and is a five-shot shooter. MSRP is \$719.

The rubber handles are stylishly accented with gorgeous checkered wood inserts, featuring the Ruger logo, while also providing cushioning to the hand from recoil. The left grip is recessed, allowing use of a speed loader, during hasty reloading.

Sights are as they should be on a pocket-pistol — low and subdued. The serrated front sight reduces glare and is securely pinned through the top rib, allowing for easy swap-out, if needed. The rear sight consists of a snag-free, hog-trough channel, milled

out of the top strap.

A transfer-bar safety allows safe loading of five cartridges in the five-chamber cylinder with no risk of discharge, unless the trigger is pulled. The triple-locking fluted cylinder assures extremely tight lockup, providing top accuracy.

The full-lug of the 2 1/4" barrel adds needed heft, absorbing recoil while shooting Magnum loads and adds to the coolness factor in looks. A stainless steel hammer, trigger, transfer bar and star-extractor of the cylinder contrast nicely with the blued steel.

SHOOTIN' THE SHORTY

Short-barreled guns can be just as accurate as their longer barreled compatriots, they're just not as forgiving when it comes to sight alignment. Being just a smidge off can make a huge difference downrange.

I shot the Ruger at 50 feet from the standing position and loaded it with SIG SAUER 125-gr. V-Crown .357 Magnum, Black Hills 100-gr. HoneyBadger .38 Special +P, and handloads consisting of 170-gr. cast Keith bullets loaded over 13.0 grains of 2400 in .38 Special brass.

Groups ran in the 2" to 3" range, with most hovering around the 2" mark. This little piece is a shooter, and it doesn't surprise me in the least! There's enough light on either side of the front sight to provide a sharp sight picture, so I wasn't too surprised by the results with the little gun.

If you want a high-quality snubby that'll take you back to the good ol' days of blued steel guns, then be sure to check out this Ruger SP-101.



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A PERFECT PAIR

GREAT .22'S FROM COLT AND HIGH STANDARD

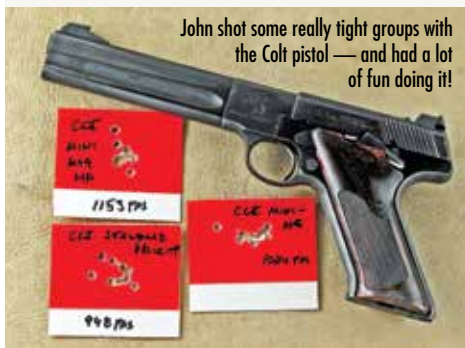
The 1949 Colt Match Target resting on an advertisement from 1953.



High Standard Sharpshooter pistol with an advertisement from the 1950s.



John shot some really tight groups with the Colt pistol — and had a lot of fun doing it!



There's simply nothing better than a good .22. Recently I picked up two really great Classic .22's, a Colt Match Target and a High Standard Sharpshooter. While these are often pretty pricey — particularly the Colt — patience paid off and I found them both for good prices.

The Colt's catalog of 1915 first introduced the Match Target: "This is the only automatic pistol now made to handle the standard caliber .22 Long Rifle cartridges, and will prove most popular with shooters, sportsmen, trappers, and others desiring a high-grade pistol adapted for this economical and easily obtained ammunition."

This pre-Woodsman Colt of 1915 had a 6½" barrel, weighed 28 oz., had a 10-shot magazine, was full blued and had checkered English walnut stocks. Sights were a bead front adjustable for elevation and a rear adjustable for windage. This same basic pistol would be made from 1915 to 1947 and was designed

by John Browning. It became the Woodsman in 1927.

By 1940, Colt was advertising two models of the Woodsman Automatic Pistol. First was the 6½" .22 and it was joined by a field pistol, a Sport Model version of the Woodsman with a 4½" barrel. In 1938 Colt introduced the Woodsman Match Target. This Colt had larger grips, a heavier 6⅝" barrel, and a rear sight fully adjustable for both windage and elevation. In 1955 the Woodsman Match Target was changed and both the 6½" and 4½"

Match Target Models now had full-length heavy barrels. This model would last until 1977 when the Woodsman was removed from production.

There's no doubt the final version of the Match Target is one of the most beautiful .22 semi-automatic pistols ever produced. However, it was very expensive to produce and lost out to High Standard .22 pistols on most of the firing lines of serious pistol matches. It also had to compete with the Ruger Mark I and the Smith & Wesson Model 41, both of which arrived in the 1950s.

CHAMPION CHOICES

Most shooters who've been around long enough to gather some gray in what hair they have left automatically think of semi-auto .22's when they hear the name High Standard. This is certainly natural

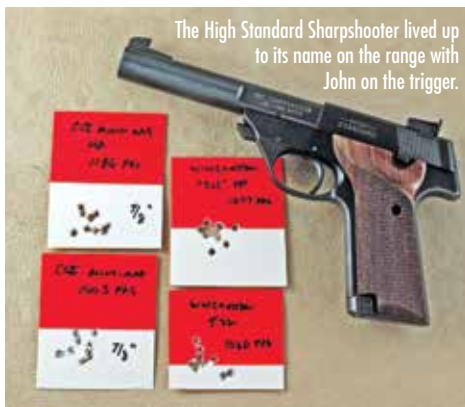
as High Standard was responsible for the best across-the-board lineup of .22 semi-automatic pistols ever produced. The company was certainly well named as, at least until their latter years, its .22's were held to very high production standards. Virtually everyone who was very serious about target shooting went with a High Standard .22 semi-automatic pistol.

High Standard produced a long list of .22 Semi-automatic pistols from 1932 until they closed their doors in 1984. They were produced in different facilities, and my friend Denis tells me as I'm looking at used High Standards to always keep in mind: "Hamden good; Hartford bad." Apparently, the quality slipped significantly when they moved from the Hamden plant to the Hartford plant.



John just added two classic rimfires to his collection — a Colt Match Target (top) and a High Standard Sharpshooter.

The High Standard Sharpshooter lived up to its name on the range with John on the trigger.



Continued on page 70

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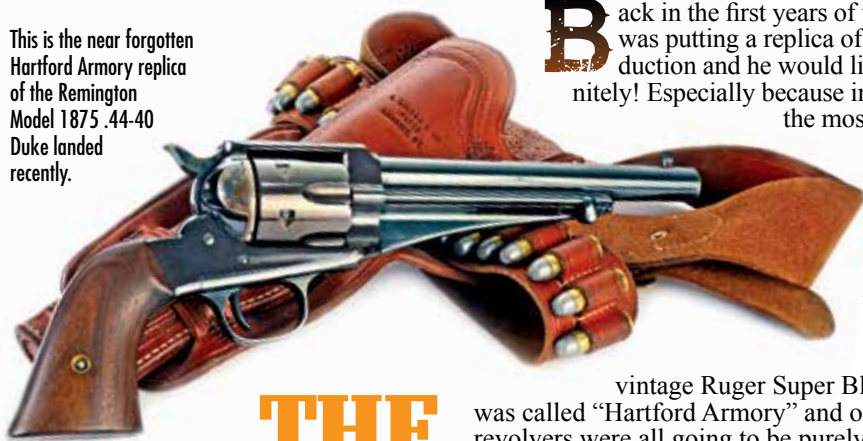
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PROTECT IT OR LOSE IT.



A REMINGTON RESURFACES

This is the near forgotten Hartford Armory replica of the Remington Model 1875 .44-40 Duke landed recently.



THE ORIGINAL

Remington's Model 1875 was intended as a competitor with Colt's new "Strap Pistol" of 1873 that eventually gained the moniker of Colt Single Action Army. In some ways the Remington was superior to Colt's design. Whereas the Colt's grip frame consisted of two pieces bolted to each other and then to the main frame by six screws, the Remington's grip frame was forged integral with the main frame, with the single piece trigger guard held in its recess by a single screw.

Obviously, Remington borrowed heavily on the SAA's basic design, as the 1875's mechanical function was the same. Anyone familiar with a Colt SAA could pick a Remington Model 1875 up and go right to work with it. Of course both revolvers were single action only.

Back in the first years of this century a fellow contacted me saying he was putting a replica of the Remington Model 1875 revolver into production and he would like to visit and show me his prototypes. Definitely! Especially because in my opinion the Remington '75s were about the most unheralded sixguns of the black powder era.

He showed up with a satchel full of revolvers, even including a prototype of the very rare Model 1890 Remington.

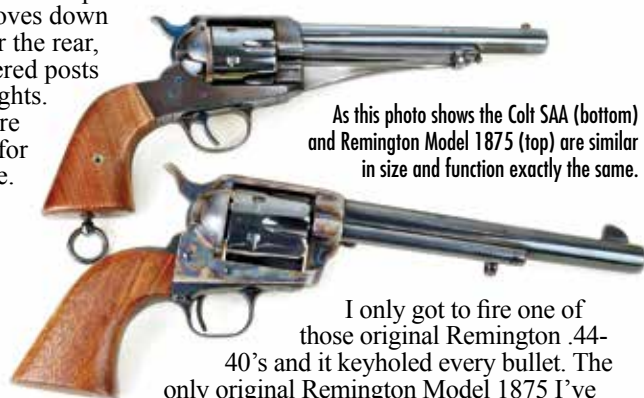
We spent an afternoon shooting his revolvers and as I remember they were in .44-40 and .45 Colt calibers. They were beautifully crafted pieces of machinery. The best way I could describe them was they were reminiscent of the fit and finish of 1960s

vintage Ruger Super Blackhawks. The new manufacturing company was called "Hartford Armory" and of course located in that Connecticut city. The revolvers were all going to be purely "Made in USA."

I was impressed with the samples and told the fellow once he had them in production, to send me a sample or two. I'd write them up fairly and probably buy one or both. The fellow left and I never heard another word from him. I did learn a replica importer back east was going to be sole source for the Hartford Armory revolvers. Then, at least in my life, they faded into obscurity.

There was a half-cock notch allowing the cylinder to rotate freely for loading. Cartridges were inserted into chambers by means of a loading gate on the frame's right side. After firing, empty cases were punched out of chambers by means of an ejector rod mounted on the barrel's right side. The Colt's ejector was housed in a steel tube but Remington's version was exposed. Sights were similar, grooves down the frames' top straps for the rear, and blades (Colt) or tapered posts (Remington) for front sights. The two single actions are so close in size holsters for them are interchangeable.

The '75 had one feature the Colt did not. Running from the frame to near the end of the 7½" barrels were what some collectors call the "sail." It's a sturdy piece of steel serving to brace the barrel when the revolver was used as a club in combat. I've actually encountered Colt SAAs with barrels bent upward from striking something or somebody with a downward blow.

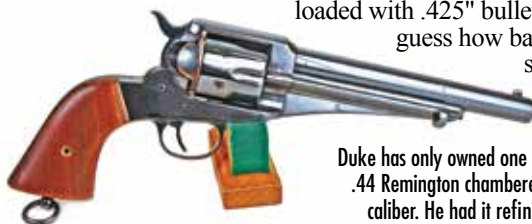


As this photo shows the Colt SAA (bottom) and Remington Model 1875 (top) are similar in size and function exactly the same.

REMINGTON'S BIG MISTAKE

Except for a few specimens made as .45's for government trials, the Remington '75's were all .44's. One chambering was proprietary, the .44 Remington. The other was the great .44-40, and this might be where Remington made a grave mistake. Their .44 round used a heel type bullet actually about 0.451" in diameter. I've had the opportunity to check chamber mouths on two vintage Remington '75 .44-40's and both had 0.446" chamber mouths. At that time .44-40's were factory

loaded with .425" bullets. So you can guess how badly those guns shot with this arrangement.



Duke has only owned one original Model 1875 .44 Remington chambered for its proprietary caliber. He had it refinished along the way.

I only got to fire one of those original Remington .44-40's and it keyholed every bullet. The only original Remington Model 1875 I've owned was pretty much a gray relic. However, it was in .44 Remington caliber and its chamber mouths likewise measured 0.446". Recently a correspondent told me his Remington Model 1890 .44-40 had 0.457" chamber mouths!

Now back to the Hartford Armory revolvers. Recently on a website I saw an HA Model 1875 .44-40 listed for sale. Duke's luck again! I spoke for it without hesitation. It appeared brand-new/unfired on arrival with serial number HA0010. How does it shoot? That's going to be a topic for a future column after I get a variety of factory loads and handloads through it. I'm just happy as heck to land one after all those years!



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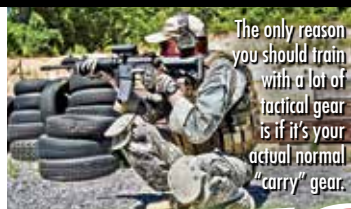
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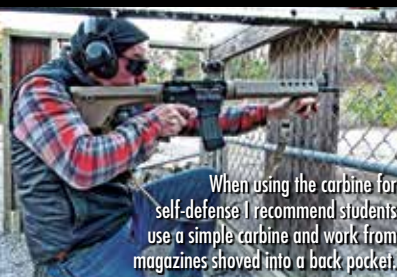


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The only reason you should train with a lot of tactical gear is if it's your actual normal "carry" gear.



When using the carbine for self-defense I recommend students use a simple carbine and work from magazines shoved into a back pocket.



This is my ideal carry gear — very un-tactical and very simple. An S&W K-Frame on the belt, a J-Frame on the ankle and a Marlin .357.

My bag holds more ammo, a fixed blade and small equipment. I like the ability to shoot the same ammo in my pistols and carbine, too.

BEING UN-TACTICAL

Handgun readers include law enforcement, security and military personnel, but the vast majority of us are armed citizens. Our responsibilities are limited to protecting "kith 'n kin." We're not combatants performing tactical operations taking down terrorists to save the world. Self-defense isn't "tactical," as in a carefully planned action toward a military objective. Self-defense, regardless of current trends in the training world, is actually very "un-tactical."

In 1976 Jeff Cooper founded the American Pistol Institute, the first

commercial training center of its type. A.P.I., which became Gunsite, provided training to armed professionals and law-abiding citizens wishing to develop their defensive skills.

Many of Cooper's instructors, such as Clint Smith, Chuck Taylor and Louie Awerbuck established their own schools. Most all these guys were ex-military, but still taught based on Cooper's "Modern Technique" for the pistol, although with slight variations. For example, Clint Smith applied these principles to his Urban Rifle doctrine, using the AR15 for defensive purposes, for us "regular" people and law enforcement too.

Then came the war on terror, a long conflict. Special forces guys retired from the military, joining the civilian market as firearms instructors. AR15's became popular, cool and "sick." "Tactical" and "operator" and various military acronyms became the new buzz words. Everyone — including armed citizens — jocked up in war belts, chest and thigh rigs to run drills simulating major military and law-enforcement engagements like the North Hollywood bank robbery and other infamous gunfights. Students of these classes began teaching to others — often without understanding the origins of these skills and the "why" of their very specific applications.

YOUR ACTIONS

The problem is very little, if any, of this "tactical-ness" applies to concealed carry and self-defense. There's a universe separating "offensive" military tactics, those used by law enforcement and those used for personal protection — the category containing most of us.

As an armed citizen your response to danger should be to move. You create distance, move to cover or an exit, while issuing verbal commands and drawing your weapon. These actions may produce a "psychological" stop; you're not the victim they thought you were and the threat(s) retreats.

You won't be kitted-up in tactical gear. You're lucky if there's time to grab a rifle and shove a spare magazine in your pocket. There's a lot of reasons you shouldn't even loop the rifle's sling around your body. Most likely you'll be fighting with your handgun and one reload. Your goal is to break contact as soon as possible, escaping or forcing the threat(s) to leave.

It may be necessary to clear a building during an escape, or search for a loved one. It will be slow, deliberate tactics as opposed to the "shock and

awe" of an aggressive, dynamic entry.

If absolutely necessary — after doing everything possible to avoid this — you shoot to stop the threat. *You are not shooting to kill!* Yes, you're engaging the center mass of the chest, pelvis or head to stop them as efficiently as possible. There is a possibility they may die, and that's between them and

God. But, *your* intent is not to kill.

Chances are you'll only fire three to five rounds. Yes, there are exceptions, but that's the round count seen in the majority of defensive encounters. You probably won't have to reload. Every action is defensive, and you'll have to explain exactly what you did — and why.

YOUR RESPONSIBILITIES

The defensive application of force in response to a threat is an acquired skill. None of these actions — moving, communicating, using cover, shooting if necessary and the mental skills to solve the problem — are instinctual or natural. If you own a firearm for self-defense you need to attend training to understand and apply these skills.

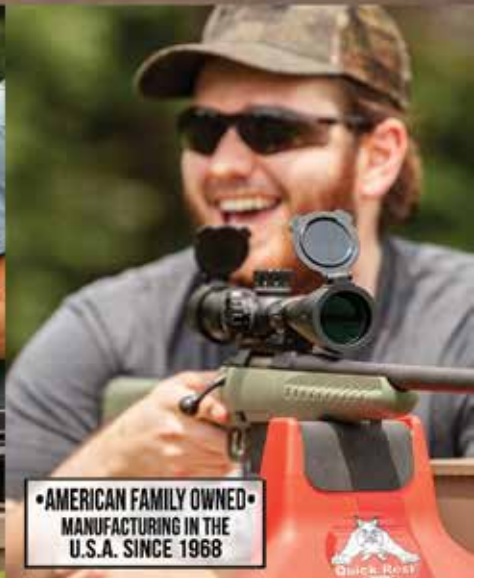
Take plenty of time to research and study, searching for the proper type of school and instructor. Remember, you're not a "warrior." I recently saw a "defensive" class advertised with the word "Killing" in its title. I'm not sure about the rest of the world, but 'round here planning to kill is called "premeditated homicide." Aggressively pursuing a threat to put 'em down turns you into the attacker. Now *you're* the criminal facing prosecution.

Training must be realistic and defensive in nature. Luckily there are plenty of options. After training comes practice. The real learning occurs through repetition.

The best thing you can practice is "humbleness." Many have heard the saying, "An armed society is a polite society," but few understand its meaning. As an armed citizen you're polite to everyone, regardless of how they behave. You don't get into a verbal or physical exchange where you're forced to use a weapon. Your immediate response to danger is avoidance or escape. The *only* reason you fight is because it's worth risking your life — and that should be a short list. And if forced to shoot, you shoot to save life, not take it. All of this is very un-tactical.



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From demonstrative video made for a murder trial: John Strayer's gun is at low ready, Mas is in attack posture with blade ...

... John raises gun to shoot, Mas reflexively turns away, and the dot from the LaserGrip (circled) shows the "shot" hits Mas behind lateral midline — all in an instant.

'SHOT IN THE BACK'

From the mid-1980s to 2019, as an expert witness I've had to explain — in court — how the suspect managed to get shot from behind, yet it was still justifiable homicide by the defendant. It's an uphill climb. In virtually every culture, the "shot in the back" is seen as an indication of cowardly murder. Blame the silver screen in part. Watch the old *noir* movies and notice when an actor is "shot," he usually does a slow swoon to the floor with no blood visible.

Fast forward to the Sam Peckinpah years, and movies like Arthur Penn's *Bonnie and Clyde*, where they used so much slow motion critics coined the phrase "slow dance on the killing ground" for such scenes. Those images are burned into the collective American mind.

Now factor in from an involved officer's first telling of what happened, it takes longer to say it than it took to happen in the first place. Then add the months or even years between the shooting and the trial, and the many days of the trial itself. As little as one critical second in time is exhaustively dissected, and you can understand why a jury is vulnerable to the argument from a prosecutor or plaintiff's lawyer the shooter had all kinds of time to see the now-deceased suspect was turning away — and should have held fire.

It simply doesn't work this way. Those who would judge need to know, because it's "not within the common knowledge" as they say in court. It's not something the average person could be expected to figure out by themselves.

INTERSECTING LOOPS

We've all heard of the OODA Loop concept, conceived by the great trainer of fighter pilots Col. John Boyd in the mid-20th Century to explain how we react to things. We Observe: Our first perception of the thing we have to react to. We Orient: What does this mean? We Decide: This is what I now must do. And finally, We Act: At this point, we begin the physical part of our response.

The generally quoted "quarter second" for average reaction time is about right, though some folks are naturally faster or slower. However, this is *reaction to anticipated stimulus*. Your hand is hovering over the microphone of the timer, ready to slap it the instant you hear the beep you are listening for. You've started already at the "A" of the OODA Loop. The situation we're talking about here is reaction to *unanticipated* stimulus. A huge cognitive element is now added, a full OODA Loop. Remember: *If you thought he was going to turn away, you wouldn't have started pulling the trigger at all!*

The most thorough studies of reaction to unanticipated stimulus seem to come from traffic safety research. Because of the full OODA required, figure three times as long as anticipated stimulus response, or 0.75 of a single second. In one study in Australia, response to unanticipated stimulus ranged from a low of 0.70 to 1.1 seconds, and some studies have found higher.

The next element is how quickly the opponent can turn away from the pain of your first shots or just the fear of your gun rising up toward him. If he's quartered to you in a typical fighting posture, his head and upper torso can turn enough in about a quarter second for your bullet to strike behind "lateral midline," the demarcation line between front and back of head and body used by MDs and attorneys alike. If he's squarely facing you chest to chest, figure roughly half a second for the movement to take place.

FAST SHOOTING

The third element is speed of fire. A single shot can be fired in an instant if already on-target and anticipating a need to shoot. Say, 0.25 seconds starting with finger on trigger, and another 0.10 added if the trigger finger starts on the frame. John Farnam's early police training research in the 1970s, long since proven repeatedly, shows the average person can fire four shots in one second, timing from the first, with a DAO handgun. They can shoot five in one second with the shorter pull and reset of most semi-autos.

Put it all together, you see why it's literally *not humanly possible to stop shooting* when you're firing as fast as you can at a rate of 0.25 to 0.20 between shots. Your assailant's lateral midline crosses your line of fire in as little as 0.25 to 0.5 seconds, and takes you at least 0.7 seconds to stop shooting. That's why the cop-killer took the hero cop's fifth and last bullet square in the back in this month's *Ayoob Files* shooting. And it's why it's imperative to know how to explain this to the triers of the facts.



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HOW ACCURATE IS 'ACCURATE?'

In my experience handgun shooters don't obsess about accuracy the way rifle shooters do. Back in the late '60s and early '70s when I was getting into centerfire rifle shooting and reloading, minute-of-angle accuracy was considered to be gilt-edged shooting. Currently it seems 1/2 moa is the minimum standard if you hope to boast of your rifle's accuracy.

Handgunners — competitive shooters and handgun hunters excepted — just don't seem to get all worked up about accuracy. A cynic might say one reason is not many handgunners can shoot well enough to tell the difference. Another reason is some currently popular shooting sports emphasize speed as much as accuracy — maybe a bit more.

There's no universally accepted standard for measuring accuracy. What I consider my minimum basic standard for handguns is five consecutive 5-shot groups at 25 yards, from a Ransom rest or hand-held over a sandbag. This isn't conclusive but does give a reasonable standard for comparison.

Most centerfire handguns currently purchased are intended for personal or home defense. The nature of self-defense is such the range is almost always very short, and no great standard of accuracy is required. This is not to suggest shooting in self-defense is easy, for it certainly isn't.



Two of the most accurate .22 LR handgun models ever made. The High Standard Victor (left) and the S&W Model 41 (right) made in 1959. From a Ransom Rest they will shoot into about 1" at 50 yards with match ammo.

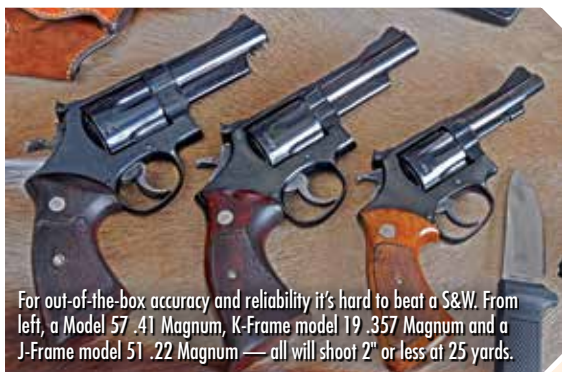
SURPRISING ACCURACY

The most accurate handguns are usually those intended for NRA bullseye or ISU (International Shooting Union) matches. Most often chambered for standard velocity match .22 LR ammunition, the best guns will consistently shoot 1/2" groups at 25 yards. The Smith & Wesson 41 is an excellent example of a world-class target pistol, one of the finest handguns ever made anywhere. I know of model 41 owners who don't compete and may not even shoot much, but just enjoy owning examples of the best degree of human workmanship.

In terms of out-of-the-box accuracy revolvers generally provide the most accuracy at the least cost. My Colt Python is one of the most accurate handguns I own and consistently shoots into 1" at 25 yards. Okay, bad example. The Python was never cheap and at current prices many owners consider them too valuable to shoot.

But even plain old duty revolvers such as the S&W Model 10 almost always shoot well, and some examples can be spectacular. I've seen police trade-ins, carried much and shot little, blue-worn and maybe even with a little surface rust — but settle them over a sandbag and they will shoot into 2" or less at 25 yards. Frankly this is amazing. Considering the cylinder has several chambers, each of which has to line up with the barrel, with the cylinder rotated and locked by a complex group of small components, it's amazing they function at all, much less shoot well too.

Locked-breech semi-auto pistols are even more amazing. With revolvers and most blowback semi-autos at least the barrel is fixed. With most locked-breech semi-auto pistols the barrel is not fixed to the frame and moves around as the action cycles. Moreover the sights are attached not to the barrel but to a separate component, the slide.



For out-of-the-box accuracy and reliability it's hard to beat a S&W. From left, a Model 57 .41 Magnum, K-Frame model 19 .357 Magnum and a J-Frame model 51 .22 Magnum — all will shoot 2" or less at 25 yards.

EXPECTATIONS

Current factory semi-auto handguns on average seem to shoot more accurately than those I owned or shot in the early '70s. One reason is modern manufacturing methods making parts to consistent, close tolerances. Another is better sights and often better triggers. Sights on the Browning Hi Power or Colt Government Model circa 1970

were dreadful tiny little things not much better than no sights at all.

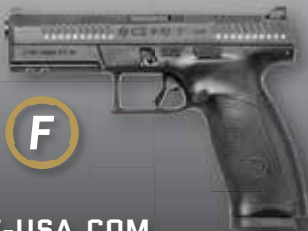
Old timers (like me) still complain because many handgun triggers don't have the crisp, light pull we want on our rifles. But reality trumps theory. I've seen outstanding shooting with triggers such as the GLOCK Safe Action, Springfield XD and S&W M&P triggers. Such pulls may not be short and crisp but they are generally smooth and consistent.

My personal accuracy expectations — average of five, 5-shot groups at

25 yards — are: Match .22's, 1/2"; sport .22's, 1"; centerfire revolvers, 2"; custom 1911's, 2"; stock 1911's, 2" – 3" and duty semi-auto pistols, 3" – 4". A couple of my custom 1911's, a Heinie/Springfield and a Wilson/Colt will shoot 2" at 50 yards. Among duty pistols I've always found Beretta 92 and SIG P220 series pistols gave exceptional accuracy, in the 2" range.

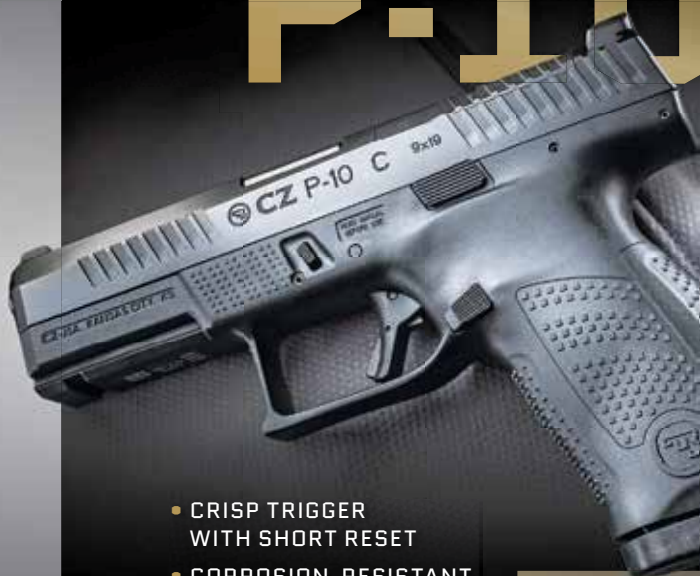
For self-defense I suppose even 5" to 6" groups are good enough. Except I really hate the phrase "good enough."





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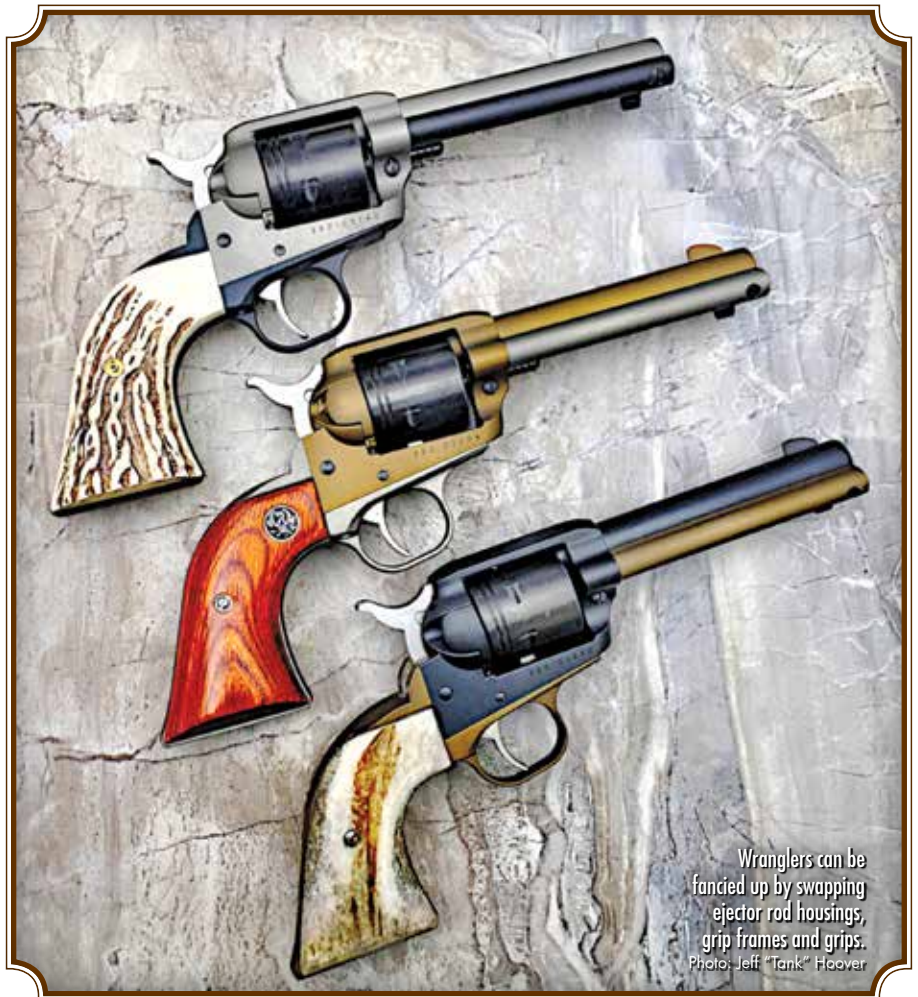


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RUGER'S .22 WRANGLERS AFFORDABLE FAMILY HEIRLOOMS!



Wranglers can be fancied up by swapping ejector rod housings, grip frames and grips.
Photo: Jeff "Tank" Hoover

In 1956 I was straight out of high school and purchased my first handgun, a Ruger .22 Single-Six for \$63.25. At the time I was working for \$0.90 an hour so this pistol took almost two week's pay. That same year the house Diamond Dot and I have been living in for the past 50 years was built and originally sold for \$8,500. I could place it on the market this morning for 30 times that price and sell it by evening. Now Ruger has introduced a new

iteration of the Single-Six, not for 30 times the original price but at an MSRP of \$249. This is definitely a modern miracle! And, although it has only been on the market for approximately one week as this is written, dealers are already offering it for \$200.

The Wrangler has the basic Single-Six New Model lock work and is also the same size. The original Ruger Single-Six was steel with an aluminum alloy grip frame. A lightweight version of the Single-Six was also offered and these are definitely collector's items today. The Wrangler has an aluminum alloy mainframe, a zinc alloy grip frame while the cylinder and cold hammer-forged barrel are steel. The barrel length offered is 4 $\frac{3}{8}$ ", overall length is 10 $\frac{1}{4}$ ", and weight is 30 oz. Sights are traditional

single action with an integral rear sight cut into the top of the frame and a blade front sight. I found them quite easy to see. The barrel groove diameter is the same as all currently produced Ruger .22 Single-Six models, 0.219" and the rifling twist is 1:14".

Now it gets interesting. The cylinders are blued steel and the hammers and triggers are a silver finish, however the rest of the Wrangler is quite colorful. The main frame, grip frame, barrel and ejector rod housing are not blued, nor stainless steel, nor nickel-plated but rather they are Cerakoted just as many of the polymer framed semi-autos offered today by several manufacturers. As this is written there are three models available. One is Cerakoted black, however the other two are more colorful with one being finished in Silver Cerakote and the other Bronze Cerakote. They're quite attractive and high on the Cool Factor list. I've been a blued steel/exotic grip guy for a long time, however, I find these new Rugers quite attractive.



The Ruger Wranglers were tested with a variety of .22 ammunition. Each had its favorite loads.

OPTIONS?

There's an interesting possibility for those who have an artistic sixgun soul. If you have all three versions, then grip frames and ejector rod housings can be swapped resulting in nine different combinations of colors. The plain black checkered synthetic (plastic) grips can also be replaced and XR3-RED grips from older as well as new production Single-Six/Blackhawk sixguns will fit. At least the grip frame pin will line up with the hole in most of the grip panels in my parts box, however most, but not all, of the grips are about 1/8" too short for the Wrangler grip frame. Although they are slightly short they are still usable.

Another possibility for customizing is to fit the Wrangler with take-off grip frames from other New Model Single-Six/Blackhawks. The screw holes line up, however it requires modification of the tabs on the grip frame fitting into the back of the mainframe and the ears at the top of the grip frame fitting on both sides of the hammer may also be too short.

I can see this sixgun winding up in many a tackle box, backpack, carried in 4x4's, slipped into the top of a fisherman's waders, carried by those working trap lines or any place a .22 sixgun is what's needed. I see the Wrangler as a real Workhorse with no worries about damaging the finish of a nicely blued sixgun.

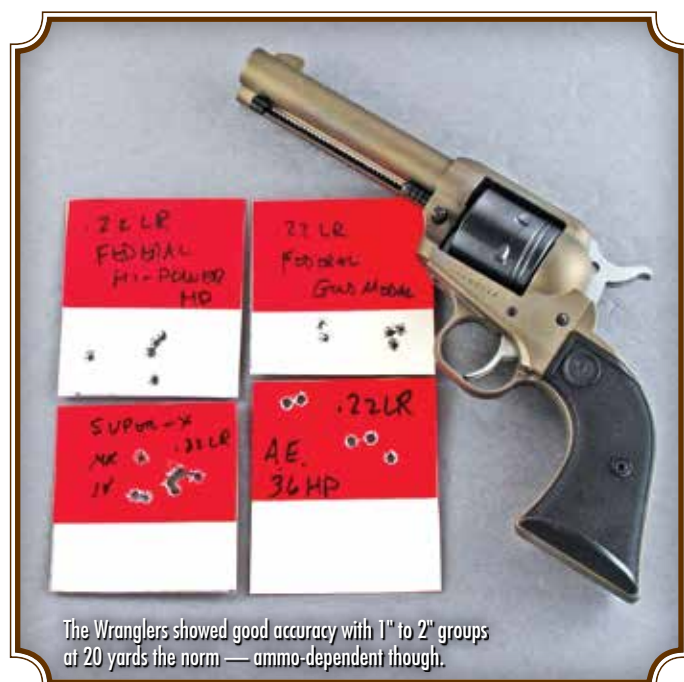


The Ruger Wranglers are offered in silver, black and bronze. That's an early Single Six on the right.

NO MAGNUMITUS

As soon as the Wrangler was announced posters on internet forums started asking if Ruger .22 Single-Six Magnum cylinders could be fitted. The Wrangler has been deliberately engineered so as not to accept magnum cylinders. And the reason is found in two words: aluminum frame. The frame is designed to stand up for thousands upon thousands of rounds of .22 Long Rifle, however it will not do the same thing with the use of .22 Magnum cartridges. This Ruger Wrangler was designed to be a .22 sixgun to do many things, including those I have just mentioned. It is not to be made into something it was never intended to be — a .22 Magnum.

The Wrangler in all three versions was test-fired with 16 variations of .22 LR. I always try to use at least a dozen different types, however with rifles I'm somewhat handicapped as I do not like to use lead bullets in the longer rifle barrels, preferring plated bullets. With the short-barreled .22 Wranglers this is not a problem and I was able to use seven lead bullet versions and nine plated.



The Wranglers showed good accuracy with 1" to 2" groups at 20 yards the norm — ammo-dependent though.

THE RESULTS?

You might think three "identical" sixguns would all perform the same. However, every sixgun, or any other firearm for that matter, even though they may look to be the same and even if they were built on the same day using the same machinery, still maintain their own personality. An example can be found with almost any of the .22's tested,

Continued on page 73



One thing you don't see here is any .22 Magnum ammo. Old .22 Mag cylinders won't fit.

REVOLVER GOODIES

MARK KAKKURI

REVOLVER TRAPPINGS ROUND-GUN GOODIES GALORE!

A revolver's strength lies in its simplicity, but these must-have accessories will profoundly improve performance. From grip, to reloading, to cleaning, to carry — these goodies could ramp up your game so much you'll wonder what you ever did without them!

1 As with any handgun, a proper grip translates to better performance. You can improve grip strength through repeated range sessions, sure — and that can get expensive. Instead, consider a grip strengthener like the ProHands Tactical. Retailing for \$39.95, ProHands provides an ergonomically designed, spring-loaded piston for each finger, as well as a laser aimer to show you how steady you are as you exercise your grip. www.prohands.net

2 At last check there were a thousand-billion aftermarket grips available for the not-going-away-anytime-soon revolvers out there. Some of the best come from Eagle Grips, including these smooth S&W J-Frame Round Butt Kirinite Black Pearl Secret Service Grips retailing for \$149.99. These grips offer great purchase and enhanced concealability for you wheelgun *aficionados*. Eagle also has a long line of natural product grips for a wide range of handguns. www.eaglegrips.com

3 Revolver cartridge reloader? Bought a truckload of .38 or .357 and don't want to fuss with 50-round boxes? MTM's Ammo Mini Can can help. It'll hold hundreds of rounds of loose ammo (up to 12 lbs.) offering a heavy-duty latch and comfortable handle for toting it. Water-resistant and stackable, the Ammo Mini Can is made in the USA and measures 8.4"x4.4"x6.8" on the outside and 6.7"x3.4"x5.9" on the inside. Retail for \$6.99 — cheap! www.mtmcas-gard.com

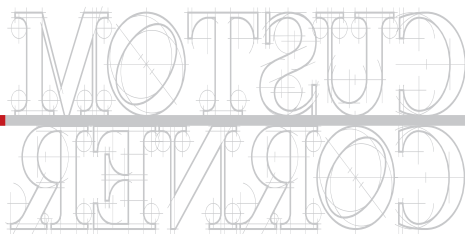
4 Finally, a better way to carry your favorite speed strip. If you're not familiar with Red Nichols Holsters (Australia, mate!), then look them up online and enjoy Red's unique humor. This unique speed strip holster keeps revolver reloads at the ready, all in a good-looking, durable, American horse-hide pouch likely to outlast you and your heirs! Called the "China Stripper," it's model B1936R, costing \$85. Send an inquiry on his website for buying info. www.rednicholsholster.com

5 Real Avid's ingenious system brings multiple gun cleaning tools and equipment together. Tools are locked in place and clearly labeled and small parts stay put in a magnetic tray. A padded cleaning mat rolls up around the tools/container, all fitting into a nifty carry case. Available in three versions: AR15, Universal and Handgun (\$40). www.realavid.com

6 At 8.5"x5"x11" and a 550 cu. in. capacity, Maxpedition's Entity Small Crossbody Bag is probably the closest off-body carry you can get to on-body carry. Using the shoulder strap and carrying your revolver in the concealed carry compartment puts the revolver up against your side but with the rest of the bag surrounding it. Looking very civilian and non-tactical, the bag blends in well with any setting while offering an array of compartments, pockets and fast access to your revolver. Retail for \$134 and comes in ash and charcoal colors. www.maxpedition.com



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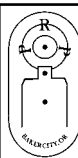


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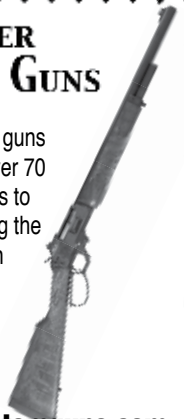
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Love the VP9, but not its Teutonic-style pivoting lever mag release? Then check out the VP9-B, with all the HK goodness of the original with an American-friendly push button mag release.

HK'S NEW AMERICANIZED VP9-B

The two thugs yanked their captive roughly to his feet, a black hood over his head and his hands secured with a zip tie. Any normal man would have panicked, but this was no normal man. James Bond willed himself to remain calm. His heart rate remained in the low 60s. Underneath the hood he smiled thinly.

They paused outside the vehicle and Bond sensed the henchmen on either side through the hood. With a sudden twist of his wrists he brought the edges of his restraints in contact and popped them loose. He pivoted sideways and wrenched the gun out of his assailant's hands by

The original VP9 employed a bilateral pivoting lever for a magazine release. The new VP9-B replaces the lever with an American-style reversible pushbutton.

The revolutionary HK VP70 should have changed the world, but its wretched trigger doomed the gun.

natural causes as a result.

When HK finally arrived at the striker-fired, polymer-framed pistol party they did it up right. Their VP was everything a modern plastic combat pistol should have been. Sporting multiple redundant safety systems, both .40 S&W and 9mm Parabellum chamberings, and an unsurpassed capacity for customization, the VP raised the bar across the industry. The only thing anybody could find with which to fault the gun was its pivoting magazine release.

Little Become Big

No matter how far advanced we become as a species we all remain tribal creatures at heart. My dad can beat up your dad, Fords are cooler than Chevys, and the United States of Freedom-Loving America sets the unrivalled standard for awesome the world over. In keeping with this immutable mantra certain mechanical attributes of the combat handgun seem to be irrevocably associated with our particularly American brand of gunfighting.

The details all spawn from John Moses Brown

Continued on page 71

feel, snapping off two quick rounds into each operative at contact range.

Tearing away the hood he glanced at the liberated pistol. It was a superb HK VP9. It was obvious SPECTRE was employing a higher grade of scum.

The Top Of The Line

James Bond's *Skyfall* found the world's most well-known secret agent running about the abandoned MI6 building in search of the girl while wielding a captured HK VP9 pistol. Where strategic product placement in James Bond movies reliably sells cars, suits, and watches, it also moves more than a few firearms. After seeing Bond take down Mr. White with a sound-suppressed 9mm HK UMP in *Casino Royale* I moved heaven and earth to obtain one myself. As any experienced wife can attest, boys are silly about stuff like this.

HK technically precipitated the polymer pistol revolution in the first place. Their fatally flawed VP70 really should have shaken the world. The gun was cheap to make, sported a double-column 18-round magazine, and arrived in 1970 at the apogee of the space age. However, the massively leaden trigger was not designed for real humans, and the revolutionary people's pistol died of

The VP9 is a rock-solid, striker-fired pistol from HK with excellent ergonomics and a great trigger. Now it has a 1911-style mag release for all of us opinionated Americans!

STOEEGER'S STR-9



The STR-9 from Stoeger is a Turkish-made 9mm giving you a 15+1 pistol with an MSRP starting at a measly \$329.

The standard sights of the STR-9 are white dots. Note the flat face on the front of the sight for racking the slide one-handed. Tritium sights are available as an upgrade.

BACK IN THE HANDGUN-SADDLE AGAIN! **MICHAEL O. HUMPHRIES**

I have to admit when I think of Stoeger my first thought turns to shotguns. You know, all those solid and affordable side-by-sides, over-unders, pumps, semi-autos and such? When the call came to me from them about a new gun on the horizon, I sort of automatically assumed it was a scattergun of some sort. When they mentioned we should consider it for *American Handgunner*, well, that was different indeed.

Stoeger having a handgun shouldn't

be much of a surprise. Not too long ago the company offered the Cougar, a unique rotary-locked 9mm made in Turkey, patterned after the Beretta 8000 pistol. In fact, Stoeger has a long history with pistols spanning its nearly 100 years in business, often importing interesting pistols for the American market. Which brings us right back to the subject of that phone call several months ago.

Striking Forward

If you want a part of the handgun market today, it's an unavoidable fact you need to offer something striker-

fired and polymer-framed. Whatever your feelings on the subject, it's impossible to ignore the effect pistols like the GLOCK, Springfield XD and the S&W M&P series have had on the handgun market. But, as a dyed-in-the-wool fan of blued steel revolvers and 1911s, I own my healthy share of "plastic" pistols too. They work, they're generally easy to shoot well and they're affordable and I can't ignore that.

Enter the new STR-9 from Stoeger, a simple, straightforward Turkish-made 9mm pistol with a starting MSRP of only \$329. Add into the mix an inter-

changeable backstrap system (with optional additional inserts), loaded chamber indicator, reversible magazine release and more, and you have a pistol fitting neatly into the Stoeger line. Specifically, it's a gun giving you a lot of bang for the buck. Vintage Stoeger thinking.

Hands On

While the starting MSRP of the STR-9 is indeed only \$329, this is a purely bare-bones version of the gun. At this price it comes with a single 15-round magazine — 10 if you live in places I refuse to live — and a single medium-sized backstrap. If you're willing to bump up to \$389, you get three of the stainless steel magazines and three backstrap inserts — small, medium and large. Kick it up to \$449 — still a deal — and you get this as well as tritium night sights as an upgrade over the standard white three-dot sights. I received the second of these options.

The pistol came in a basic cardboard box, packed inside was the pistol, three magazines, a gun lock and a magazine loading tool. If you keep any accessory for this pistol, make sure it's the loading tool — more on this in a moment. The pistol has an attractive matte-black finish on the steel parts, and it settled into my hand nicely.

If you've fired any GLOCK, S&W, FN or similar striker-fired pistol, you'll know exactly how this gun works. Internally there's a "drop safety" firing pin block, disengaged when you move the trigger rearward. The trigger itself has a central "paddle" safety blocking unintentional movement of the trigger, and there's no manual safety. Controls are made up of a reversible magazine release and a slide stop lever. That's it.

Externally, the STR-9 is everything you'd expect in a polymer-framed pistol. It has an integral Picatinny rail molded into the dustcover area, a square-faced trigger guard — bringing back memories of the 1980s and Miami Vice — front and rear cocking serrations and a nice loaded chamber indicator at the rear of the ejection port atop the slide.

I must say I liked the shape of the grip, from the replaceable backstrap to the finger grooves on the frontstrap. It just fit my hand, right out of the box. Chunky checkering on the backstrap and smooth "sandpaper" texturing on the sides of the backstrap insert and in

Mike ran five different 9mm loads through the STR-9 without a single malfunction. This one's a solid performer, affordable and reliable.

the finger grooves ensure a solid grip. The pistol's weight of 24 oz. makes it easy to handle, and it sports a 4.17" barrel and an overall length of 7.44".

Range Time

I took the STR-9 out with five different 9mm loads ranging in weight from 115 to 150 grains and set up to run it for accuracy and function. Remember how I mentioned you'd better hang onto the mag reloading tool? All three of the STR-9's magazines were honestly the hardest to load pistol mags I've ever used. It took the tool and a good amount of two-handed dexterity to get all three mags fully loaded. However, once I did I found the Stoeger to be a true workhorse. It fed and fired everything I loaded into it without a single issue.

From a rest at 15 yards I got an average of just under 2", with some 1½" groups in the mix. This is more than acceptable accuracy for a gun at this price point. Also, remember it proved to be extremely reliable, and I'd rather have a gun I know will fire every time I pull the trigger, even if I can't pick off a soda can at 100 yards with it. The trigger was quite heavy for a striker-fired gun, coming in just over 8 lbs. and



Just to the rear of the ejection port is a loaded chamber indicator rising up when it engages the rim of a chambered cartridge.



I think a lighter one would have upped the accuracy potential.

So, My Final Thoughts?

The STR-9 is a solid polymer-framed pistol option for those on a budget looking for a good home defense or — if you don't mind the full-size dimensions — concealed carry pistol. It won't break the bank and will go bang every time you pull the trigger. While it could use a little bit of refining — particularly the trigger — this is a simple-to-use, reliable pistol backed up by Stoeger's five-year warranty. You won't go wrong with it if you want a basic 9mm you can count on. Looks like Stoeger's solidly back in the handgun game!

For more info: www.stoegerindustries.com, Ph: (800) 264-4962





HELLCAT X2 COMMANDER 9MM

GUNCRAFTER'S 18-RD. PERSONAL DEFENDER

ROY HUNTINGTON
PHOTOS: ROB JONES/THE IMAGESMITH, LLC

Some think the 1911 is outdated — too “old school” to be effective today. They’re not only wrong, but spectacularly wrong. It’s like looking at a Model A Ford from 1931, then, because we still drive cars, proclaiming today’s models to be “antiques” and “outdated” and anyone driving a contemporary car must be a duck-billed dinosaur from the cretaceous period.

Technology being what it is — and enthused designers and engineers doing what they’re wont to do — things generally change. Today’s high performance, economical, utterly reliable cars are like that Model A in the same way a 1911 circa 1915 is to a modern 1911. Both cars have four wheels, seats and a steering wheel — and the similarities pretty much end there.

The 1911 mirrors the situation. There’s a slide, frame, trigger and other bits, but each part on a modern 1911 is vastly different than the original. There is, indeed, a Grand Canyon-like abyss occupying virtually every category between the two. And Guncrafter’s Hellcat X2 Commander in 9mm rides the wave of “modern” right at the very top.

The shape is familiar — but the differences are monumental.

The Reasons

Alex Zimmerman and his team craft carefully handmade 1911 series pistols of many sorts. From the groundbreaking HOSS, a beefy, burly virtually indestructible “454 Cubic Inch-sized” 1911, to his attention-getting .50 GI guns — and to this elegantly lightweight, 18-round 9mm — Guncrafter spares no time or energy in making





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GUNCRAFTER **HELLCAT**
X2 **COMMANDER**
9MM

The Hellcat's "wide" frame allows 17-round mags while still fitting most hand sizes.



inal Hellcat controls and BattleCrown muzzle treatment, then machined the Frag pattern into an aircraft-grade aluminum hi-cap grip. Presto, 17+1 rounds of 9mm of your choice." I could "hear" him smiling on the phone — but he wasn't done yet.

"Then we lightened the slide with a series of racy cuts, both for appearance and function. The lightening of the slide is important since the X2 is designed around the 9mm round. You see, with the slide of the 1911 being designed for the .45 ACP it's heavier than ideal for the 9mm. Lightening the slide allows us to run heavier recoil springs, ensuring reliable function across the wide spectrum of 9mm loads."

That's something I'd not thought of before. If you've fired a steel-slide 1911 in 9mm you may have noticed the slide sort of goes "Ka-Chunk, Ka-Chunk" in recoil. It appears you can almost feel the various stages of the recoil cycle. Most function fine, but they do feel different from a .45. The lighter spring needed to allow the 9mm to cycle the heavy slide, also slows the forward snap of the slide back into battery as it picks up another round. I think that's the "Ka-Chunk" you feel.

The lighter slide on the X2 offers a snappier action, for lack of a better word. The gun runs fast, cycles smoothly and goes into battery with a snick — not the "Chunk." You can feel it and sense it immediately.

"For concealed carry," offered Alex, "we offer a Commander-sized version with an aluminum frame and Tritium sights — your test gun. The empty pistol weighs 28 oz. and has

things exactly right. They also embrace, endorse and take advantage of new technology in materials and design to help them achieve their goals.

Alex has been chasing the 1911 design for 37 years now and the constant pressure he puts on himself to push the envelope for the basic 1911 design seems never-ending. That's because it's — how shall we say this — never-ending?

As Alex explains, "The Hellcat X2 came about by taking some of the best features from our single stack Frag and Hellcat pistols and combining those features with a hi-cap frame and grip.

"We took the design of the orig-





Lightening cuts in the slide and the aircraft-grade aluminum frame keep the Hellcat light and easy to carry.

that 17+1 round capacity.”

Yet, I noticed the grip frame is very manageable. Without separate grip panels to add girth, even my very average medium-sized hands fit comfortably with no stretching for the trigger. Eighteen rounds — and still reaching the trigger comfortably — is a new thing for me. When I was a cop, I was always the single-stack SIG P225 guy while most others carried the 16-round P226.

Options

Alex continued, “We also offer a steel-framed 5” Government version with an integral light rail, adjustable rear sight and fiber optic front sight. It’s about perfect for competition, at the range or self defense.”

At 35 oz. empty, but with the same 17+1-round 9mm capacity, the all-steel version puts felt recoil in the .380 range to me. If you’re older, infirm or are simply tired of being beat-up with recoil, this is the gun for you. You could shoot it for fun, plink, shoot targets at the indoor range, enjoy a weekend match or defend your family — all with the same gun. And you’d be very comfy

while you did it.

You’ve undoubtedly noticed the finish. According to Alex, the use of Cerakote gives Guncrafter a lot of flexibility to come up with some really stunning and durable finish combinations. From “hot” colors to more sublime combinations, you can pretty much get what you dream about.

The Mechanics

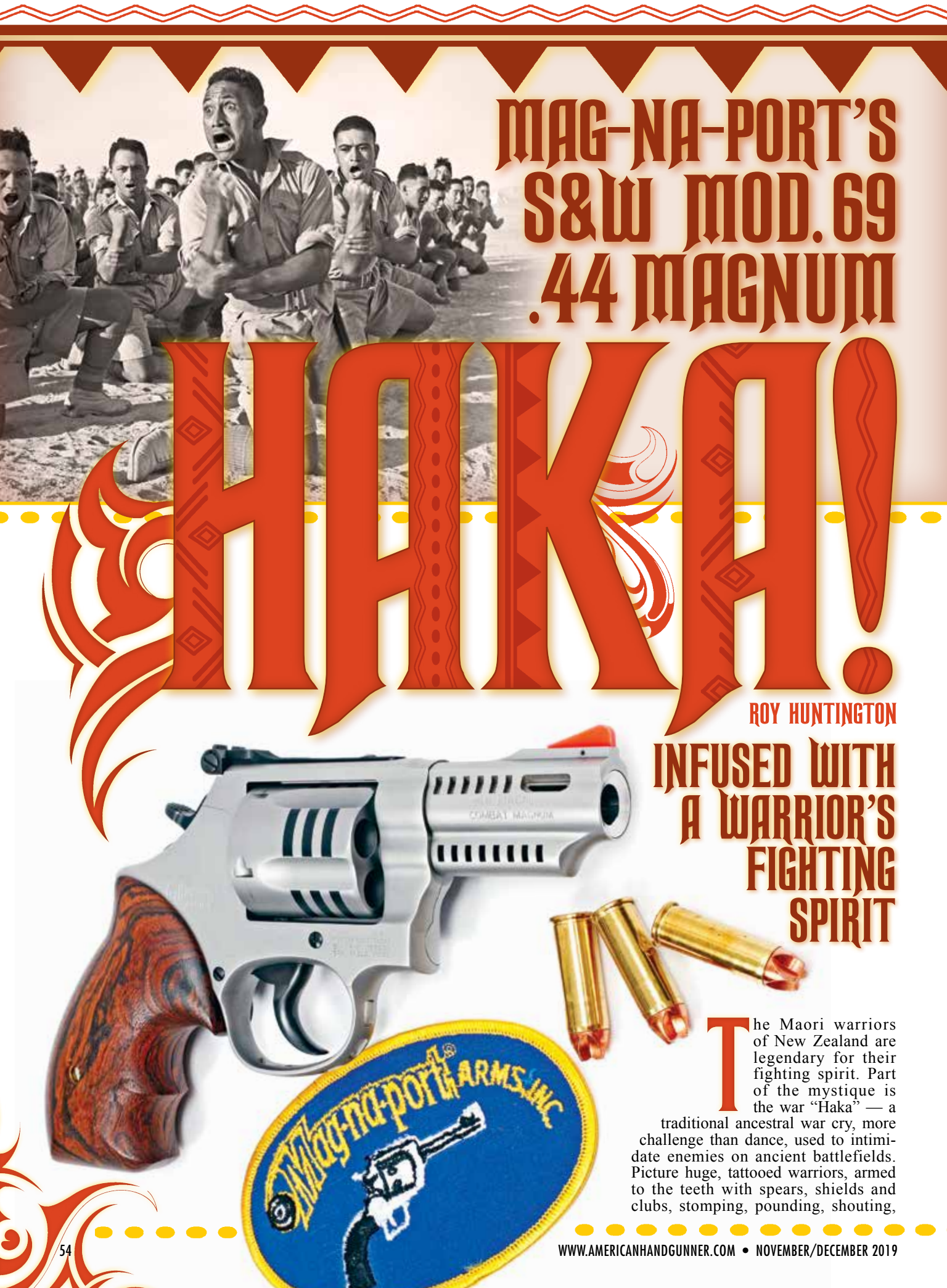
An extremely heavy duty barrel bushing precisely following the entire outside contour of the slide is eye-catching and business-like. The lower one-third is angled back giving it a distinctive, clean look — a bit racy almost. An extra-thick flange protects the muzzle crown to an unprecedented level here. The barrel is heavily countersunk and has an extra deep crown agreeably blended with the flared opening of the Battle Crown. It’s all



beveled, with absolutely no sharp edges to interfere with holstering. It’s a distinctive, impressive look but with a high degree of functionality. It’s an original design by Alex Zimmermann, I might add.

The slide stop is machined from hardened chrome moly steel bar

Continued on page 80



MAG-NA-PORT'S S&W MOD.69 .44 MAGNUM

HAKA!

ROY HUNTINGTON

INFUSED WITH
A WARRIOR'S
FIGHTING
SPIRIT

The Maori warriors of New Zealand are legendary for their fighting spirit. Part of the mystique is the war "Haka" — a traditional ancestral war cry, more challenge than dance, used to intimidate enemies on ancient battlefields. Picture huge, tattooed warriors, armed to the teeth with spears, shields and clubs, stomping, pounding, shouting,



Intro, left page:
Maoris of "C" Company, 28th
Maori Battalion of the 2nd New
Zealand Division perform the "Haka"
for the visit of King George II of Greece
at an army training camp in Egypt during
WWII. The battalion fought during the Greek,
North African and Italian campaigns earning a
formidable reputation as a fighting force.
Photo: National Library of NZ, id: DA-01229-F, Public Domain

This 1.8" 25-yard group
with Double Tap .44 Special
ammo is typical of the work
the Model 69 can do. Like most
big bores, it shot very well, and
this 240 at about 975 fps is a
nearly perfect load for it.

glaring, poking out their tongues grotesquely, daring their enemies to fight — or run.

Today though, a Haka might be performed at a funeral to honor a cherished departed friend, a comrade in arms killed in battle, to welcome respected guests, or to acknowledge a great achievement. Look it up on *youtube.com* to get an idea of what we're talking about here. I promise it leaves a lasting impression.

During WWII the Maori Battalion's service against the German forces in the Mediterranean became legendary. After one successful bayonet charge in the North African campaign, Germans seriously began to fear them, calling them "scalp hunters." The Maori soldiers were without mercy — and to attack, attack, attack was their mantra.

The Maori Battalion gained such respect by the allies they were often used as the spearhead unit during assaults. Bernard Freyberg, the General Officer Commanding the 2NZEF (including the Maori Battalion) commented: "No infantry had a more distinguished record, or saw more fighting, or, alas, had such heavy casualties, as the Maori Battalion."

No less an enemy than General Erwin Rommel (who faced the Maori Battalion in North Africa) said this: "Give me the Maori Battalion — and I will conquer the world."

Such are the roots of the Haka.

Pedigrees

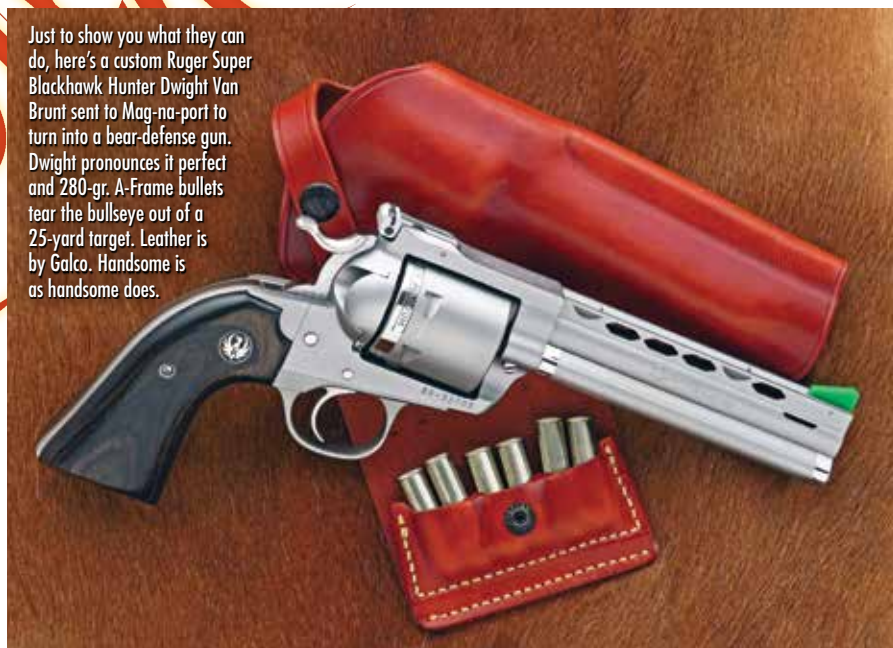
Mag-na-port's craftsmanship and the Maori's penchant for aggressive fighting against their enemies has resulted in this eye-catching S&W Model 69 .44 Magnum. While the 69 is a great field revolver — light enough to tote (34 oz.), but heavy



The 18-degree
muzzle crown
squares things up
and contributes to accuracy.
Black Hills HoneyBadger .44
Special loads are peeking out.

Many of the touches by Mag-na-port are just for the eye. The bold war-stripes, barrel cuts and trigger guard piercings set the tone. This barrel is 2.75" by the way, and take note of the smoothed and shaped trigger.

Just to show you what they can do, here's a custom Ruger Super Blackhawk Hunter Dwight Van Brunt sent to Mag-na-port to turn into a bear-defense gun. Dwight pronounces it perfect and 280-gr. A-Frame bullets tear the bullseye out of a 25-yard target. Leather is by Galco. Handsome is as handsome does.



A genuinely impeccable personal revolver, the Haka! begged for a rugged, practical holster. Roy worked with Karla Van Horne of Purdy Gear to come up with this flapped, paddle-backed field rig good for strong-side or cross-draw. Versatile — like the .44. Small Bowie is by Billy Helton. A satisfying trio.

enough to be steady — I think its forte is as a defensive/fighting handgun. Compact, but still able to handle full-power .44 Magnum loads, more modest .44 Specials and even CCI shot cartridges, this versatility gives the original design legs. But, even competency in a category can be improved upon.

When I first chatted with Ken Kelly of Mag-na-port about this gun, I basically told him I pictured it as an “all-the-time” gun, not a safe queen. If someone needs a serious trail pistol, back-up in Alaska, a “final-word” defensive gun, or “every-day-carry” to be relied upon, I think the L-Frame Model 69 is a nearly perfect starting platform. Mag-na-port’s sage modifications give it panache — and hone usability.

I turned Mag-na-port loose on the base gun with those few general thoughts, and when I saw the final result — the stout, “tattooed” look — the Haka’s powerful legacy leapt to my mind. And *Haka!* it became, heartily endorsed by Ken Kelly at Mag-na-port.

The Model 69’s character covers more than just a basic palate of options. The adjustable sights assure zeroing to your favorite load, the round-butt means easier carry and the 2.75” barrel is long enough

for balance yet short enough for convenience. The base gun also incorporates many features S&W has introduced over the past 10 years or so.

The barrel looks “solid” but is actually sleeved or shrouded. There’s a longer barreled version available (4.35”) and since this is based on S&W’s classic L-Frame, it’s pretty much indestructible. From my own experience shooting it, you will wear out long before the gun does. Being compact and relatively light, the downside of this convenience is shooting full-house .44 Magnum loads tends to be attention-getting. I think the real way to go here is to use a stout .44 Special and something even milder for fun and trail use.

S&W has had to design in a “ball-detent” lock at the junction of the crane and the frame. It’s a bit like the old “Triple Lock” third lock-up point, only this simply takes the place of the normal forward lock where the

ejector rod used to “snick” into a detent. This model drops the forward detent, substituting the ball-detent. It seems to work just fine and I think in all honesty does a better job than the old system.

In spite of all these features, I challenged Ken to dig deeper and come up with improvements.

And he did.

Haka! Is Born

Mag-na-port is famous for their excellent hand work and built their business by inventing the Mag-na-port process of barrel porting, lowering recoil and muzzle flip. The process works, and tens of thousands of guns have been modified over the years. The business grew under Ken’s dad, Larry (who founded the company) and for many years since Larry’s passing, Ken has continued to develop the company. Today’s Mag-na-port is as modern as you could ask for, staffed by hard working, smiling people, all delivering amazing work in handguns and rifles. I think it’s also good to know Mag-na-port basically “invented” modern big

Mag-na-port used their EDM process to “machine” a cut-out in the rear sight for the white outline. The bright orange front is hand cut and fitted and stands out if you’re moving fast.

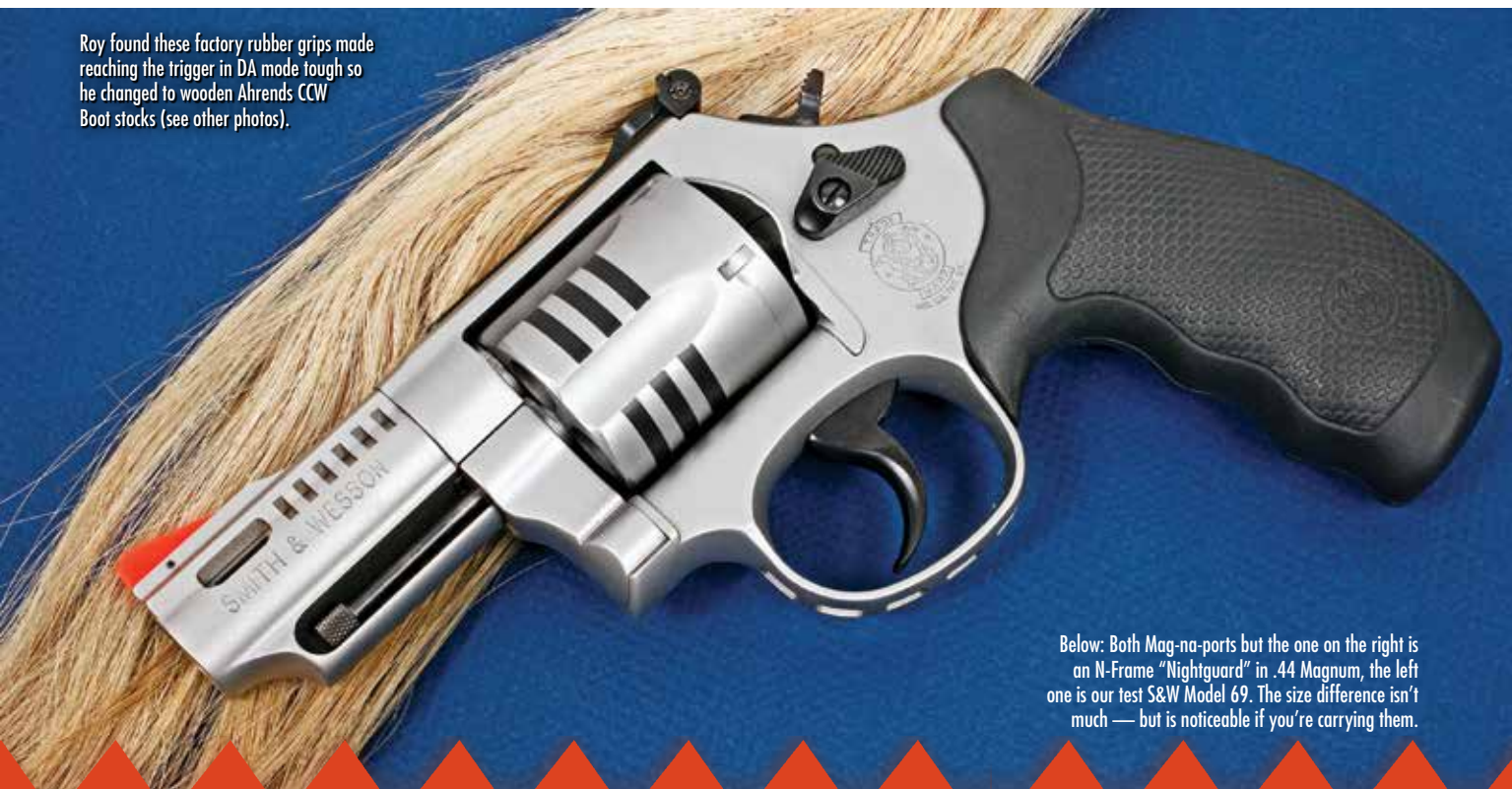


Roy found the more sane .44 Special options make, as he says, “more sense in this medium-sized gun.”



The “Haka!” was as reliable as a piece of rebar, digesting even the nasty, heavy .44 Magnum loads.

Roy found these factory rubber grips made reaching the trigger in DA mode tough so he changed to wooden Ahrends CCW Boot stocks (see other photos).



Below: Both Mag-na-ports but the one on the right is an N-Frame "Nightguard" in .44 Magnum, the left one is our test S&W Model 69. The size difference isn't much — but is noticeable if you're carrying them.

bore snubbie revolvers — well before there were any factory offerings. So there's that too.

The Haka! got the full porting treatment for sleeved barrels and a "Velvet Hone" soft bead blast finish. Ken's team did their "Mini-Bob" to the hammer spur, making it handier and less "grabby" when under clothing. The trigger got a full radius and the hammer, trigger, latch and screws were matte blued. They used their EDM process to cut and inlay a white outline on the rear sight blade, then custom fit and installed a bright orange front blade.

The base gun also experienced Mag-na-port's famous complete action job. Checking headspace, cylinder gap, smoothing internals, removing creep, lightening trigger pull, timing work, forcing cone tuning and numbering chambers are among the specific touches there. Can you say "night and day" from the original factory gun?

Adjusting the muzzle crown squares things off and often really contributes

Continued on page 78

Five rounds of .44 (magnum or special) fit neatly into the L-Frame cylinder. Note numbered chambers, a Mag-na-port trademark.



THE SCCY



The take-down cross-pin, mag release and slide-release are easy to manage, and the ergonomics are spot-on.



Note how the ejection port is opened to the front allowing easy ejection of a loaded round — handy and safe!

TOP QUALITY—AFFORDABLE PRICING

By now, most gun-people know about the compact 9mm pistols from SCCY, the CPX-1 and CPX-2. They differ only in the presence or absence of a manual safety. The less-informed may be misled by the moderate prices, assuming this indicates a lack of quality. Nothing could be farther from the truth.

All SCCY pistols are made of the highest-quality materials, the fitting is

precise and they have the design genius of Joe Roebuck. This brings us to their newest offering, the CPX-3 in .380 Auto. Except for a slightly shorter slide and barrel, it's dimensional data is the same as the 9mm versions.

And, it has the Roebuck "Quad-Lock." Like its 9mm brothers, the .380 uses the classic Browning tilt-barrel locking system. More than 40 years ago, SIG SAUER was the first to improve on the old system. They

squared-off the barrel chamber area to lock into the ejection port. It was copied by GLOCK and many others. Fitting was functional, but not precise.

That is, until Joe Roebuck. He precisely fitted the barrel and slide engagement in four locations — hence the "Quad-Lock." At the back, it's the rear edge of the barrel, the cross-pin and the tilt-track below. At the muzzle, two bearing points below the barrel in the slide.

Accuracy

So, what does this do? After every shot, it returns the barrel to precisely the same position as the previous shot. Obviously, this will have an effect on following-shot accuracy. With several different .380 loads, at 15 yards using a casual rest, the CPX-3 delivered several well-centered groups. The average size was only 2".

In a compact personal-defense pistol, does this level of accuracy really matter? Well, yes. It can mean rather than irritating your attacker, it will put him down. The sights are very good too, with three white dots with a square-picture. After backing out a tiny screw on top, the rear sight can be moved laterally for windage too.

The trigger is wide, plain-faced and shaped perfectly. The smooth pull (DA-Only) is around 8 lbs. but perfectly manageable. The CPX-3 is not striker-fired, it has an internal, pivoting hammer. The hammer is always in a



Take down is simple and fast. The recoil spring is self-contained.

CPX-3

J.B. WOOD



Unlike most gun manufacturers SCCY also makes their own magazines — these are 10-rounders.

Photo: Will Dabbs, MD

“safety-rest” position, moved only by a full DA pull of the trigger. There’s no manual safety, and no need for one.

There’s also no magazine safety. So, if you lose it, you still have at least a single-shot pistol. There are some circumstances making this an important point. The controls are all left-side, and the magazine release is reversible, so you lefties will just have to compensate.

For those who like to have the numbers, the empty weight of the CPX-3 is 15.3 oz. The length is 5.7" and barrel length is a tidy 2.96". The width is 1.1", except at the slide latch, where it’s 1.25". With the finger-rest magazine in place, the height is 4.9". With the flat-floorplate version, it’s 4.5" so a bit trimmer. The finger-rest neatly mates with the two recesses on the front-strap, giving space for all three fingers. But, the height difference is so tiny, I’d say use the finger-rest mag for carry, and the flat for a spare. Both magazines have a 10-round capacity.

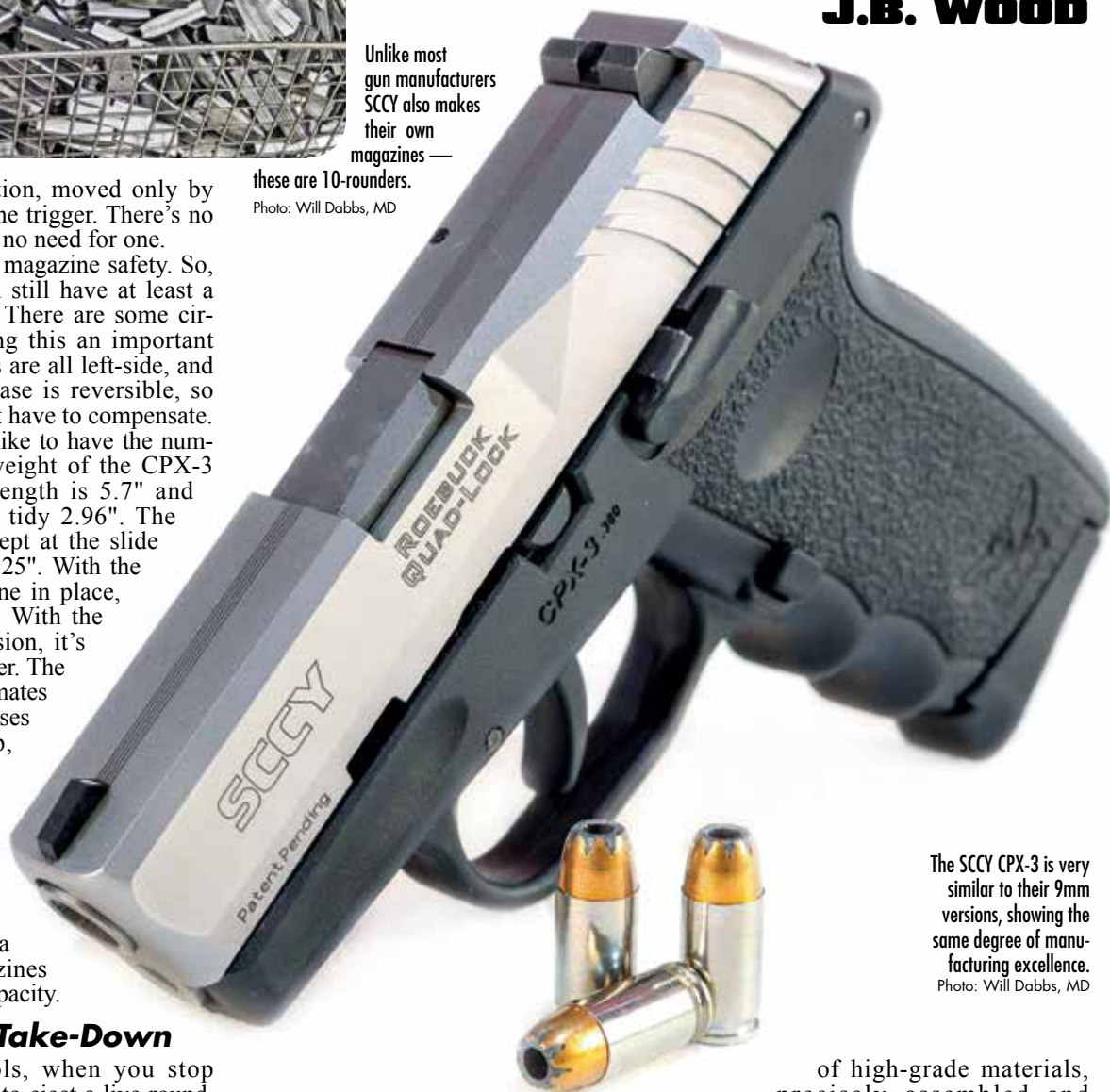
Safety And Take-Down

In many pistols, when you stop shooting and need to eject a live round, there’s a little problem. The nose of the bullet will nick on the forward edge of the port, sometimes causing extractor disengagement. This can’t happen with the CPX-3. The front edge of the ejection port is extended and rounded, and any loaded round will clear easily. That’s thoughtful — and handy.

Another good thing about all of the SCCY pistols is the easy takedown for

cleaning. With the slide locked open and the magazine out, use a strong thumbnail or a cartridge rim to free the cross-pin, taking it out. Then hold the slide, trip the latch, and ease the slide and barrel unit off forward. Take out the captive recoil spring and the barrel, and you’ve done it.

So, here’s a compact .380, made



The SCCY CPX-3 is very similar to their 9mm versions, showing the same degree of manufacturing excellence.
Photo: Will Dabbs, MD

of high-grade materials, precisely assembled and extremely accurate. I’ve seen more than one “suggested retail” price quote, so I’ll just say all were way under \$400, and one barely over \$300! Most of you, unlike this computer-less dinosaur, can get the real figure at the company’s website.



For more info: www.sccy.com, Ph: (866) 729-7599

HONOR GUARD

JEFF "TANK" HOOVER



Above left: The huge orange dot offers a great sight picture for target acquisition. The full, wrap-around serrations on the slide are both functional and stylish!

Slim, light, ambidextrous and capable, the Honor Guard is a great CCW option. And, you can get this zazzy green frame for it!

AN EVERYDAY EDC



The tool-free breakdown is fast and easy for cleaning or swapping out a different colored frame.



Tank tried out the pistol with an Alien Gear IWB holster and Honor Defense's own ammo offering.

With a market flooded with poly-framed, striker-fired pistols, how do you go about creating a new gun that would stand apart from all the others? By getting expert input and coming up with a gun you'd want to carry everyday, all day long. Easier said than done, right?

This is just what Gary Ramey, president of Honor Defense, did. It would be snag-free in design, assuring a quick and smooth draw from the holster, while not getting tangled on clothing. This perfect pistol would be built with quality in mind, yet still be affordable for the working man. It would be fairly lightweight and thin, making it seem unnoticeable when being carried.

Designed For CCW

Concealed carry with a sub-compact pistol is an obvious choice. Gary and Honor Defense knew this instinctively and focused its design around a single-stack, sub-compact pistol concept. I have to say I agree, as eight or nine rounds strapped to your hip is sure as hell better than 15+1 on your dresser at home!

While double stacks offer more rounds of ammo, they also come at a price — namely added weight and thickness. We've all seen concealed carriers "hitch" their britches, giving away their secret. Slim and trim is in for concealed carry, no doubt about it.

Honor Defense's solution is a 9mm pistol dubbed the Honor Guard, a beauty of a single-stack shooter with the concealed carrier in mind. Let me explain the features Honor Defense builds into every pistol to make the Honor Guard a top concealed carry sub-compact pistol.

The Details

The Honor Guard is shaped and contoured to offer a totally snag-free

The Honor Guard from Honor Defense is a slim and compact little CCW pistol in 9mm that also has a slick removable chassis for swapping out frames.



The burlap-like pattern on the grip-frame provides a positive and comfortable grip.

design. Even the muzzle end of the slide is tapered to accommodate easier holstering. It's made for concealment. The pistol is made of 100 percent U.S.-made parts and comes with a lifetime warranty. It's 6.2" in length with a 3.2" barrel, a height of 4.6" and a width of only 0.96". It weighs in at 22 oz.

One of the most interesting features of the Honor Guard is its serialized stainless steel chassis, housing the firing mechanism and legally being the "firearm" rather than the whole polymer frame. This means you can easily remove the chassis and fit it into a different frame of your choice, with Honor Defense offering a range of 10 different color options. The frames have a window cutout on the left side that allows visual access to the serial number. Cool!

Every Honor Guard slide is made of stainless steel. The slide and all innards are all steel, with the exception of a spring sheath. The stainless steel striker housing is machined by Coonan Firearms, a respected leader in the industry and known for quality. A stainless steel striker-block safety is used, making for a tough and corrosion-resistant firing system that won't allow the gun to fire unless the trigger is pulled.

A target match barrel is used, sporting a 15-degree convex crown and assuring top accuracy. Custom stippling on the grip and above trigger guard promotes a positive, slip-free grip. Also, an ambidextrous thumb-groove makes the grip more ergonomic and activating the magazine release easier. The guide rod is also stainless steel.

Sights are steel and snag-free in design with a tapered rear, assuring smooth drawing. The rear sight has a flat leading front-edge face, allowing one-handed slide manipulation on belt or other object, while the front sight is enhanced with a large orange dot.

Two replaceable backstraps for the frame are included, ensuring a comfortable, custom fit for you. A full palm swell backstrap is provided, filling your hand for added grip control. Also included is a flat 1911-style backstrap, providing the traditional feel of the old warhorse.

Fully continuous front and rear serrations cover the top and sides of the slide, giving you a three-dimensional

Continued on page 72

JAKE HOBACK'S RUGGEDLY RELIABLE WORKS OF ART HARDENED EDGE

PAT COVERT

Hoback Custom Camo

MCUT (Modular Combat Utility Tool)

Talim Combatives
Fixed Blade System

We've covered many custom knifemakers in *Handgunner* over the years and, without question, most were inspired by the first pocketknife gifted to them by their father, granddaddy or uncle at a very young age. Jake Hoback's story's a bit different. You see, he was actually making knives at a very young age and the road to where he is today has more twists and turns than a good action novel.

"I started making knives when I was 8 or 9," Jake informs. "I worked at a

blacksmith shop during the summers in Virginia City, Nev., and with a farrier for many years." Born in Olympia, Wash. but raised in the mountains of Nevada Jake tells *Handgunner*, "I spent a great deal of time hiking and camping in the Rockies, so I always needed a good knife."

Hoback's path to becoming a knifemaker would take a roundabout course over the years, but all his stops added more experience and fuel to the fire leading to fruition. "I had several jobs which influenced how I make and design knives," Jake relates. "From an



Hoback/Sneck Collaboration Buster

Custom Tradecraft OTS Auto

engineering perspective, working as an off-road fabricator for rock crawlers, I got a very unique perspective on how to design something to be very strong and lightweight. From a machining perspective, I worked at a turbine engine rebuilding facility. It gave me a great understanding of how to machine parts to exacting tolerances. And lastly, from a usage perspective, I spent the better part of a decade working for the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife doing scientific work where I was able to spend a great deal of time working outdoors — often in very harsh environments.”

Objective Achieved

In 2004, Hoback achieved his dream of becoming a knifemaker. His motto is “I can break a steel ball in a rubber room. I make my knives according to that.” His lifetime of tough jobs and rough living in the outdoors set the tone for the knives he makes — and

his reputation for making hard-use knives endears his customers to him.

There’s nothing Jake enjoys more than holing up in his machine shop and getting down to the nitty gritty of building his knives. Asked what he likes the most about being a custom knifemaker, the artisan responds, “Machining first!!! Then design.” This is telling of Hoback’s personal demands and dedication because all the design in the world is worth nothing if the end result is not 100 percent dependable and reliable under stringent demands. Quality over quantity is the law in Hoback’s world.

There are many more custom knifemakers than there were 10 years ago, and technology has been both a boon and a bust. Some are more designers than actual knifemakers, jobbing their parts out to manufacturers at both home and abroad and assembling them for knife users’ consumption — and make a good living doing it.

Hoback’s customers like the fact his hands are all over the knives he makes from guts to feathers. Such authenticity has propelled Jake to the upper echelon of custom knifedom and garnered the maker a strong customer base.

Variety In Slice

Over the years Hoback has built up a diverse stable of hard-use working knives and, though he may prefer actually making knives to designing them, there’s no lack of variety and imagination in his line.

“On average we offer three to four new models per year, mostly tactical and hard field-use knives,” notes Jake. In addition to folders the Hoback lineup includes a plethora of fixed-blades, axes and tools — and he’s even dabbled in wearables such as his machined Breaker bracelet.

“The Kwaiback folder is our most popular model,” Hoback explained, but

Continued on page 77

LIGHTS & LASERS

A CLOSE LOOK AT



1



2



6

LIGHTS AND LASERS: SEE IT – AIM FOR IT!

MARK KAKKURI

Being sure of your target means *seeing your target* — and seeing your target has never been easier. From gun-mounted to handheld lighting solutions, you can easily have the edge when it comes to target identification and general lighting tools. Trust the technology, but don't scrimp on quality.



3

1 Nightstick's 550-lumen white beam TCM-55XLS Weapon-Mounted Light will light up targets almost 500 feet away, offering a steady light or strobe in a waterproof, aircraft-grade aluminum housing. Weighing in at 2.5 oz., it offers a bezel-activated safe mode battery lockout. The light won't turn on and drain the battery in storage or during transportation. Easy-to-reach switches at the back provide tactile click activation to the user. Retail for \$110. www.nightstick.com

2 TruGlo's Tru-Point light/laser combo brings versatility to your rail-equipped handgun, enabling you to simultaneously light up your target and most of the area around it with a brilliant white light. It also identifies your point of aim on the target with a bright green laser. This unit retails for about \$209, and a quick detach lever and right- or left-handed mounting options make customization easy. www.truglo.com

5

3 When the goal is high-powered but handheld tactical lighting, the "device" is Malkoff Devices. With a CREE LED powered by a CR123 Lithium battery, their "EDC" light's tail-operated switch offers a clear feel for momentary or permanent on modes. The hard-anodized finish



4

will last a lifetime and the robust clip hangs on to pockets, webbing and belts. Smaller, handheld models like this retail for \$114. www.malkoffdevices.com

4 For a subtle approach to a personal lighting device, BriteStrike's Executive Precision Lighting Instrument (EPLI) looks and carries like a pen in your shirt pocket. Once deployed, its CREE LED proves to be very bright and its aluminum construction (shockproof and waterproof) adequate to the task. Casting your choice of a steady beam or a strobe, the EPLI retails for \$80 and runs on two AAA batteries — handy! www.brite-strike.com

5 Retailing for \$55, First Tactical's Medium Duty Light ("medium" for size, not capability) provides an all-around decent solution to tactical lighting. The 274-lumen light, activated by a superb tail switch, will run for almost four hours on two AA batteries. The anodized aluminum construction, aggressively knurled for maximum purchase, offers great purchase. Add the removable strike bezel and you've got a last-ditch strike weapon to be reckoned with. www.firsttactical.com

6 When your lighting needs surpass smaller lights check out the Lightforce Handheld Searchlight. Retailing for around \$200 this amazing light can recharge in your vehicle. The searchlight offers a Fresnel lens and reflector enabling wide angle and a long-distance spot for two to four hours of runtime, plus up to an hour of reserve. A built-in LED charge level and charging status gives you the status of the light at all times. www.lightforce.com



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SUPER COUPON
Customer Rating
★★★★★



	RUN-TIME	
4-7 hours	MAX. STARTING WATTS	2000
2000	RUNNING WATTS	1600
61 dB	NOISE LEVEL	59 dB
48 LBS.	WEIGHT	45.6 LBS.
1.2 GAL.	TANK SIZE	.95 GAL.
3	OUTLETS	3
YES	OVERLOAD PROTECTION	YES
79.7 cc	ENGINE SIZE	98.5 cc
YES	LOW OIL ALERT	YES
YES	PARALLEL CAPABLE	YES
YES	POWER SAVER	YES



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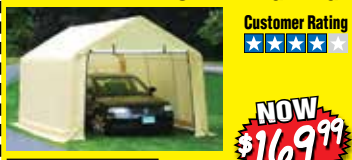
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Case contents and locks not included.

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Customer Rating
★★★★★



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• Sheath included
Customer Rating
★★★★★



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Customer Rating
★★★★★



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CENTRAL PNEUMATIC 125 PSI AIR COMPRESSOR

Customer Rating
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Customer Rating
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Is it a well-used 1911 from the WWII era — or something else? If you guessed something else, you'd be right. In this case, hiding in plain sight is a 1911 "Retro-Mod" full of surprises. Gunsmith Jarret Wehunt's Cerakote and bench-made "wear" lends a new-old feel to this 1911. Note "finger wear" on grip.

**MAKING SOMETHING
NEW — LOOK OLD AGAIN!**

A RETRO-MOD 1911

Pistolsmith Jarret Wehunt has created what looks like a battle-worn WWII era Colt — but there's actually a race car lurking underneath those familiar lines. The secret? The insides and fitting-work make it a target-grade 1911 any shooter would be proud to own. All the while fooling the eye, a bit like a piece of *trompe l'oeil* artwork — but in steel.

In the car world, this would be called a "Retro-Mod" where incorporating new engines and drive trains inside classic-looking bodies keeps the original "feel" alive while making the cars more reliable and enhancing performance. We love this idea and are anxious to see the concept spread. It's a bit like modern car-makers who release "retro-looking" cars — think: 2002–2005 Ford Thunderbirds. But in this case, the "shell" is clearly a 1911, unlike the retro-designs for autos.

The Secrets

The gent who commissioned this cloaked deceiver is a friend of mine. Being an industry savvy guy and long-time gun guru, he wanted to meet some specific goals.



"You know me," he said laughing. "I like old-school, but I also love high performance, like with my motorcycles. I had this Springfield Armory base gun and after looking at it hard one day, the idea popped out. Let's resto-mod my 1911!"

Gunsmith Jarret fit a new barrel bushing, did the *de rigueur* action work like re-cutting the ramp and polishing, new GI sights, 3.5-lb. trigger (including over-travel screw), de-horned the insides, removed the Springfield logo, tuned the extractor, did a bit of external blending, polished out machine marks, lowered and flared the ejection port — even blending the mag catch to be flush on the right side.

All in all, sort of "old school" mods to mostly existing parts, the way any custom pistolsmith might have "tuned"

a basic 1911 in the '50s to '70s. But don't let this fool you because some of those guns shot like hells-afire — like this one does. At 25 yards, even with my cranky old eyes, this sleeper delivered 1.5" groups with various hardball loads and might do a tad better if I had 25-year-old eyes again.

One of my straight, vintage old Colts from WWII can manage about 3" to 3.5" but the crummy trigger doesn't help. So, with just some gentle massaging, this modern classic shoots like a match-grade 1911 — cutting groups in half or better — while still duping onlookers nicely.

Finishing Up

Interestingly, the finish is good old Cerakote, rubbed down to "wear" the gun some, then clear-coated to protect it from the elements. The wear looks honest — check out the "finger wear" on the front strap — but was all done on the bench. The double-diamond Hogue grips add a final touch of authenticity. This "old Colt" would look right at home riding in a flapped WWII holster.

This has gotten me inspired. I've got a modern, blued S&W Model 10 hiding in the safe. I did a complete rebuild on it (action, crowning, etc.) and it shoots great. Now ... how would it look as a "Victory Model" from WWII?

Pardon me while I adjourn to the bench.



For more info: www.jwgunsmithing.com

Seventy-five years of wear on this 1944 vintage Colt (right) tells an authentic story. The modern "Tribute" 1911 is on the left. What's new is old again?



GUN RIGHTS

Alan Korwin



SHOOTING BACK CHECKS OUT BAD GUYS

Because some communities really *really* don't want to get shot up, they are preparing — *seriously* preparing — to shoot back if some miscreant psycho decides to attack them with live ammo. We're talking here about, for example, orthodox Jewish communities, recent victims of anti-Semitism, a 5,000-year-old scourge seeming like it will always be with mankind.

Why anti-Semitism is raising its ugly head a little higher now may be a subject for a good discussion, which might be satisfying, and intellectually stimulating, but this won't make you any safer, and they know it. It's also a reason to consider tactics and strategy, and live ammo. And with its head raised up like that, it makes itself an easier target — unless you're prepared.

While talkers are talking and leftists are preparing to disarm the innocent "for safety," the truly wise are preparing to recognize the signs of imminent threats, dangerous individuals lurking, and how to fight back with no notice provided at all. The government-run "public" school system, sorry to say, is absent without a doctor's note.

You see, this is the ultimate problem with background checks, which we have been reviewing in this column for the past several issues. Background checks can't save you. They won't disarm the 100 million people who are already armed. Leftists and background-check promoters haven't figured this out — or they know and don't care, which is worse? They can't disarm the criminals who are already bad actors, or they would have. Muslim *jihadis* don't give a rat's ass about your new paperwork and enhanced databases, or new rules including everyone except them, and people who get missed (including everyone already armed). The bad actors just want to murder and wreak havoc.

Only one thing will prevent this. Armed might. The NRA knows this, while the mainstream narrative fabricators cluck their tongues and hurl insults at them — and bad guys hurl lead. The Bloomberg-led forces of darkness mislead, deceive and guide their useful idiots down gilded paths with promises that can't possibly be met. Pollyannas incomprehensively lobby for approved-size-only ammo magazines "for safety." Smart potential victims have figured this out, reject billionaire Bloomberg and his highly armed army, and are developing resistance plans of their own.

Plans?

No, I won't be discussing those plans in any detail, but I can guarantee you they are putting them into place. Targets are being hardened. Even plainly clothed congregants are learning about directed observation, pattern recognition, spotting things out of the ordinary. Profiling, which is a good

Continued on page 87

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SCAN TO ENTER



In this issue, the gun we are giving away comes from a company that started in the garage of a U.S. Marine veteran. We're talking about Bravo Company and their **BCMGUNFIGHTER 1911**. Born of the collaboration between craftsmen at Wilson Combat and the experiences of BCMGUNFIGHTER instructors in the field, the BCMGUNFIGHTER 1911 is unique, and equal parts elegant and lethal. A limited production offering, each firearm includes an individual BCM serial number and is hand-built and inspected at Wilson Combat to ensure the highest quality. It has Wilson Combat's X-TAC 1911's enhanced grip pattern and core features but with a tactical light rail and additional options BCM experts demand — like the Bullet Proof One Piece Magwell, solid medium trigger and tritium front sight. VZ G-10 grips lock the frame's X-tread pattern into the firing hand and reduces muzzle flip without snagging on garments.

With an OAL of 3.85" and weighing 1.7 oz., Spyderco's **McBee TI** (C236TI) is a compact everyday carry cutting tool. Its 1.52"-long blade is made from CTS XHP steel; the handle is Titanium.

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SIXGUNNER

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In his book *High Standard: A Collector's Guide to the Hamden & Hartford Target Pistols*, Tom Dance states: "Although the East Hartford guns lacked the quality of the earlier models, they still shot better than most guns on the market and can be obtained at a much lower price than the Hamden guns." He also addresses just which of the .22 pistols is the best choice: "As to which model shoots the best, that's a tough question for which there is, fortunately, no wrong answer. They all shoot great. Any of the target models, Citation, Trophy, Victor, Tournament or Olympic would be a good choice. For the ultimate, there is the 10X. As far as accuracy goes, you won't find any difference between a Hamden Tournament and the top-of-the-line Victor. Even the 102 and 103 Sport Kings and Flite Kings will shoot better than most guns on the market today. Just find the gun that suits you the best. If you're comfortable with it, you've made the right choice."

The early guns were lettered rather than numbered, such as the Model B, Model C, Model D and Model E. Several of these versions were designed for practice use by the U.S. Military. All of them have the slant grip such as found on the Ruger .22 semi-automatics and the Colt Woodsman line. In 1965 High Standard went to a military grip style so their .22 pistols would have the same feel as the 1911 Government Model. High Standard ruled bullseye competition with fully 90 percent of the competitors using their pistols.

The "Why"

After spending time shooting semi-autos with significant recoil such as a pair of 10mm's, I recently ended my shooting session with this pair of classic .22's. I tried 12 different loads in each pistol and it was very difficult, almost impossible, to find one which didn't come in at 1" or less for nine shots at 20 yds. Many of the groups were in the 3/4" to 7/8" range and I was surprised to find the Colt Match Target not only kept up with the High Standard Sharpshooter but actually came out slightly ahead.

I measured the six best groups fired by each pistol and found the High Standard averaged 0.958" while the Colt came in at 0.854". Now, 1/10 of an inch difference is not of any practical advantage, however it was very gratifying to me to find I could shoot the Match Target with its less-than-comfortable grip this well. Needless to say, I'm happy with my two newest acquisitions!



HK'S VP9-B

Continued from page 45

ing's timeless American icon, the 1911. The VP's grip to frame angle approximates that of Mr. Browning's centenary wonder. Gaston Glock's eponymous plastic pistol, by contrast, reflects more the geometry of Georg Luger's P08 Parabellum. For those of us raised on the 1911 the VP9 just feels more right.

The magazine release on the 1911 is a handy push button sitting underneath the thumb when shooting right-handed. The Walther P99 and P22 as well as the HK USP and P30-series handguns all sport a nicely ambidextrous bilateral pivoting lever, as did the original VP9 and VP40 series. However, that's just not really the way we do it over here on this side of the pond. As a result, the new VP9-B offers a 1911-style magazine release for those of us who just cannot bring ourselves to assimilate.

Better's Now Better

The Heckler and Koch VP9-B pistol represents HK's latest effort to further optimize what I believe is already the most optimized combat handgun in the world. The basic VP9 chassis includes six interchangeable grip sideplates along

with three backstraps. There are also the niftiest little polymer charging supports on the back of the slide to make jacking the slide much easier. Clearly this is a solid, customizable design.

With the more familiar American-style reversible push button, HK has fine-tuned their already superb design to produce the ideal modern combat handgun. Combine all this with an ergonomic chassis and outstanding striker-fired trigger, and the end result does indeed flirt with perfection.

Details

The VP9-B push button magazine release is just that, a button that drops the magazine. However, the button is easily reversible by anyone with even the most rudimentary mechanical proclivities. It is also nicely stippled with the same sort of grippy pattern defining the rest of the frame. Stroking the magazine release naturally drops the empty magazine away freely and instantly.

HK calls them touch points. These are the particular aspects of a handgun's geometry interfacing directly with your sensitive flesh. It's in the nuances of this interface which muscle memory develops with practice and allows you to run your gun quickly, intuitively and effectively, even in the dark. For the sticklers among us the American-style push button really does

complete the total package. The VP9-B pays homage to the institutional adoration we all seem to have for the 1911 while offering the modest weight, reliability and magazine capacity we have come to expect of Information Age combat handguns.

Denouement

Let there be truth among us — my home defense VP9 has the old lever magazine release. I prefer the new pushbutton, but not enough to bin my old standby and start over from scratch. However, if you're looking for the perfect polymer-framed Information Age combat handgun with which to arm a corn-fed American shooter you'd be hard pressed to find anything better.

The HK VP9-B is a bit spendier than its sundry competition at the local gun emporium, but it also brings just a little bit more to the table. HK arms Delta Force, the British SAS, DevGru and James Bond. Love 'em or hate 'em, Heckler and Koch is the go-to mob when the finest shooters in the world need firepower. If you're serious enough about your craft to assess touch points and covet perfection, the new HK VP9-B will get you there.



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HONOR GUARD

Continued from page 61

gripping surface during slide manipulation or press-checks. Plus, they look cool as hell!

The magazine release and slide-lock are both ambidextrous, giving you total control on either side of the gun. The slide locks are recessed, also contributing to the snag-free theme. Capacity is either 8+1 or 7+1, depending on whether you use the flush-fitting or extended magazine.

Shooting The Honor Guard

This sub-compact is a shooter! I shot Honor Defense ammo, along with Black Hills 115-gr. TAC-XP +P and some 124-gr. copper plated handloads to round things out. Yes, you read the first part right — Honor Defense ammo. They offer their own loading. It consists of a 100-gr. copper bullet with a center-drilled frangible hollowpoint and an advertised velocity of 1,300 fps.

The Honor Defense load was the winner in the accuracy department, with 1½" groups at 50 feet being the norm. The Black Hills load gave slightly bigger groups, going about 2" to 2½" groups. Handloads consisting of mixed brass, 124-gr. copper-plated cast bullets seated over 4.5 grains of 231 ran about 3".

The Honor Guard is very accurate and reliable. No malfunctions occurred while I shot more than 250 rounds. Independent tests have repeatedly shown the Honor Guard to be the most accurate sub-compact in its class. Also, the trigger on my test gun was smooth and the pull was a measured at 6.5 lbs.

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If you want one just the exact way you want it, Honor Defense has you covered. It started the "Build A Gun" program offering more than 900 possible configurations when you mix and match color, frame, sights, lasers, and slide lengths. Just go to their website and pick and choose as you please, filling out the order form. Send the completed form, along with a copy of your local FFL and your gun will be delivered to them.

Last Word

The Honor Guard is a well-built and accurate pistol made in America, by American veterans, using American-made parts! It's comfortable to shoot and carry and is one of my new EDC guns. Riding in my Alien Gear IWB holster, I barely notice it, nor does anyone else, as it should be.



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TAFFIN TESTS

Continued from page 41

such as the CCI Mini-Mag Hollow Point.

In one of the wranglers it gave 2" groups while the other two were right at 1". Winchester Power Point and Federal Champion Hollow Points both gave 7/8" groups in one pistol and 2" in another. Nothing can be taken for granted. Everything must be experienced to find the best possible loads.

The Black Cerakoted Wrangler had four types of ammunition that were right at about 1", however two gave the most accurate groups. This sixgun preferred CCI Mini-Mag HPs, and Federal Hi-Power with the Remington Golden Bullet HP and Winchester's 525 bulk pack HP giving the tightest groups.

With the Silver Cerakoted Wrangler, seven of the loads were 1" or less, with the Aquilla Super Extra the most accurate with a 3/4" group. Both the Federal Champion HP and Winchester Power Point HP both resulted in 7/8" groups for five shots at 20 yards.

Switching to the Bronze Wrangler also resulted in seven groups right at 1", with the most accurate being Federal Lightning and CCI Mini-Mag HP. If I had to pick just one load to use in all three sixguns, based on accuracy straight across the spectrum, it would be the Remington Golden Bullet Hollow Point. Of the 48 groups fired it's interesting to see the Aquilla posted the tightest group at 3/4" in the Silver Wrangler and a 2 1/4" "largest group" in the Bronze version.

What all this means is simply no matter what the .22 firearm chosen, just one version of ammunition may result in excellent results — or very poor results. It pays to try the largest possible variety of ammunition if accuracy is the goal.

The Black Wrangler shot 2" to the right for me, however elevation was right on. I will simply adjust the barrel to bring the windage to point of aim. The other two Wranglers are both on for windage, however one shoots 2" low and the other 1 1/4" low in my hands with my hold and my eyes. Both of these are an easy fix as it simply requires filing down the front sight to bring the groups up where they belong.

My kids are shooters, my grandkids are shooters and now I'm looking forward to my great grandkids being shooters. I plan to shoot these Wranglers and take good care of them, however all three of them will eventually go to three of these great grandkids. Perhaps someday their kids, grandkids, and even great grandkids will be shooting these same Rugers!



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AYOOB FILES

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For Plasencia, the world suddenly goes into slow motion. There's time to assess the background behind the gunman, an auto repair shop with many people visible. He knows he has to get closer to guarantee hitting the only safe backstop, the body of the assailant. The gunman is racing toward him, firing now.

Plasencia jumps to his left, coming to a stop in a deep, coiled crouch — the fastest way to cease a headlong rush and maintain balance. Strong-hand only he levels his GLOCK and, using the top of the slide to aim, opens fire.

He has heard the gunfire coming from inside the duplex, but now the world has gone silent. He cannot hear Simms' gunfire, nor his own. But he can feel the recoil, and — focused on the opponent's body and gun — he can see his .45 slugs strike home. Simms' body flinches and jerks as each of the big bullets hit him, and spins away from the cop as the last shot strikes home. Seeing him turn away and fall heavily to the pavement, Plasencia ceases fire.

They are now some five yards apart. Simms is on his back, motionless, the medium-sized GLOCK still in his hand. Plasencia covers him with the G21 and, after a couple of seconds, kicks the weapon out of the vanquished opponent's hand. It skitters under the wrought iron fence and into the adjacent parking lot.

Simms' face bears an expression of surprise. Looking down at him, Plasencia sees his foe's consciousness fade, seeing him take one last breath. He realizes Johnny Simms is dead.

The Scope Of The Horror

Oscar Plasencia had rounded the corner in time to see DeeDee Beecher fall, and to see Simms shooting at her before Plasencia diverted the gunman's attention to himself. He will soon learn of the horror which has taken place inside the duplex in the first flurry of gunfire.

Hearing Mandy Haworth calmly say, "He's inside, everybody come around," Plasencia presumed the situation was contained. His partner Roger Castillo may have presumed the same. If so, it was a fatal mistake.

When the suspect's mother indicated to Haworth who was in the living room that Simms was present and Haworth said so on the radio, the suspect was in an adjacent back bedroom and obviously overheard. With no warning he burst from the room, shooting at the officers from close range as he charged.

Haworth was the first to fall, shot in the head. As he ran past her body Simms fired a viciously gratuitous execution shot barely missing her

vest and tearing through her thorax. The only other officer in the house, Beecher, reflexively moved to the front door to find a more tactical position, just as Roger Castillo gained the same doorway and began to enter. Simms shot him through the brain, killing him instantly, and the detective's body fell backward and sideways out the door.

Beecher tripped and fell out the door, in an impossibly compromised position as the onrushing Simms fired at her. This was Oscar Plasencia's first glimpse of the action as he came around the corner. Though it appeared to him — and probably to Simms — the killer had shot her down, her dropping out of his line of sight caused the thug's .40-cal. bullets to pass above her, and she narrowly escaped being shot. With her knee badly injured in the fall, she ended up in an awkward position which compromised her ability to draw her own pistol and react.

It was at this moment Simms caught sight of Plasencia and turned his attention to him, probably thinking he had killed Beecher. When Simms turned and ran at Plasencia shooting, he would have been between Beecher and Plasencia, putting Plasencia now in Beecher's line of fire.

Detective Roger Castillo died at the scene. He left behind his wife, also a Miami-Dade police officer, and three young sons. He was 41, with 21 years on the job. Detective Amanda Haworth was rushed to the hospital but did not survive. Detective Haworth, 44, had served for 23 years, and left behind her partner and her young son.

Time Factor

Oscar Plasencia told *American Handgunner* that according to the investigation, only 17 seconds elapsed between when Detective Haworth broadcast her last words and when Detective Plasencia said over the radio officers were down and the suspect was, too. He estimates his own shootout with the cop killer lasted perhaps four seconds.

Oscar told me, "I was asked how many rounds were fired. I thought I fired three rounds and Simms, one. In fact, I fired five rounds and Simms, two (at me). All my rounds connected. His went high right over my head and in the door and wall of a nearby unit. I was told one of my rounds struck him in the elbow, three center of mass, and the last as he spun, center of mass but landing in the back between the shoulder blades."

Simms, armed with a stolen 14-shot GLOCK 23, had fired 10 shots at the initial shooting scene, and two at Plasencia as they closed in on each other in the final confrontation.

Aftermath

When responders arrived, Plasencia was placed in a police car isolated from

the scene. By the time he was transported to the Homicide unit's office, the Police Benevolent Association's attorneys were already there. Today, the Florida Department of Law Enforcement investigates Miami-Dade's officer-involved shootings but at the time, the county investigated their own. He wasn't required to make a statement. "The attorneys gave a proffer on my behalf," he recalls. A department psychologist was brought in for him, a doctor Plasencia knew. "He was helpful," Oscar remembers. "He gave me all his contact numbers and told me to contact him anytime. Then he paused and said, 'You probably aren't going to call me, are you?' I just smiled at him. I was pretty sure I could cope with it."

Once fully investigated, the death of Johnny Simms at the hands of Detective Oscar Plasencia was ruled a justified homicide. The family of the deceased cop killer never filed suit.

The long-term aftermath was different. "Roger was my friend, my regular partner," Oscar told us. "I saw him lying there outside the door, the pool of blood under his head, the color drained out of his face, knowing he was dead. There was a long time where I just couldn't talk about it. Now, eight years on, I still feel some survivor guilt. 'Why them and not me?' Roger and Amanda both had young children. My kids were

grown. 'Why them and not me?' Could I have done something different?"

Plasencia completed his career, retiring at the rank of sergeant, and staying on part time as a reserve deputy. "The department was good to me," he says. "They were very supportive of all of us, and our families."

After you've killed a violent criminal, there's always the possibility of vengeful retaliation. Simms had been a big-time gang-banger. Gang Unit intelligence soon revealed the Bloods had "green-lighted" Oscar, that is, had put out the order he should be murdered on sight by any gang member who spotted him. Plasencia and his family remained vigilant, but the threat fortunately never materialized.

The psychological aftermath of having had to kill a human being has two all but inescapable symptoms. One is sleep disturbance, and Oscar seems to be one of the few to escape it. The other, however, is what the great police psychologist Dr. Walter Gorski called Mark of Cain Syndrome: the awareness people are treating you differently after the shooting. If you're treated badly and accused of police brutality as a killer cop, you don't feel good about it. If you are treated as the hero you rightfully are, it still changes your identity in the eyes of others.

In the wake of this incident, Oscar

Plasencia received many well-deserved awards. Locally, he was awarded the Gold Medal of Valor and named officer of the year by his department, and by the Dade Chiefs Association, the Dade County PBA, the state Fraternal Order of Police, and the Florida Sheriff's Association. He made Level One of the National Association of Police Officers Top Cops awards, presented at the White House. From the U.S. Marshals came a Law Enforcement Officer of the Year award, and the Marshal's Task Force gave him a heroism award. There was also a Federal Law Enforcement Association award presented in Denver, and Officer of the Year from the National Latino Peace Officer Association.

And today, Oscar Plasencia says with a catch in his voice, "I'd give it all back in a heartbeat to have Amanda and Roger back with us." He still wears a wristband bearing the names of his fallen sister and brother.

Lessons

After the tragedy the question was raised of why they didn't send a SWAT team. The answer is, tactical teams are sent in when they know there's a dangerous person inside the given four walls. Fugitive warrant service involves a lot of desk time researching, and a lot of shoe leather visiting people who might provide leads on the suspect. This

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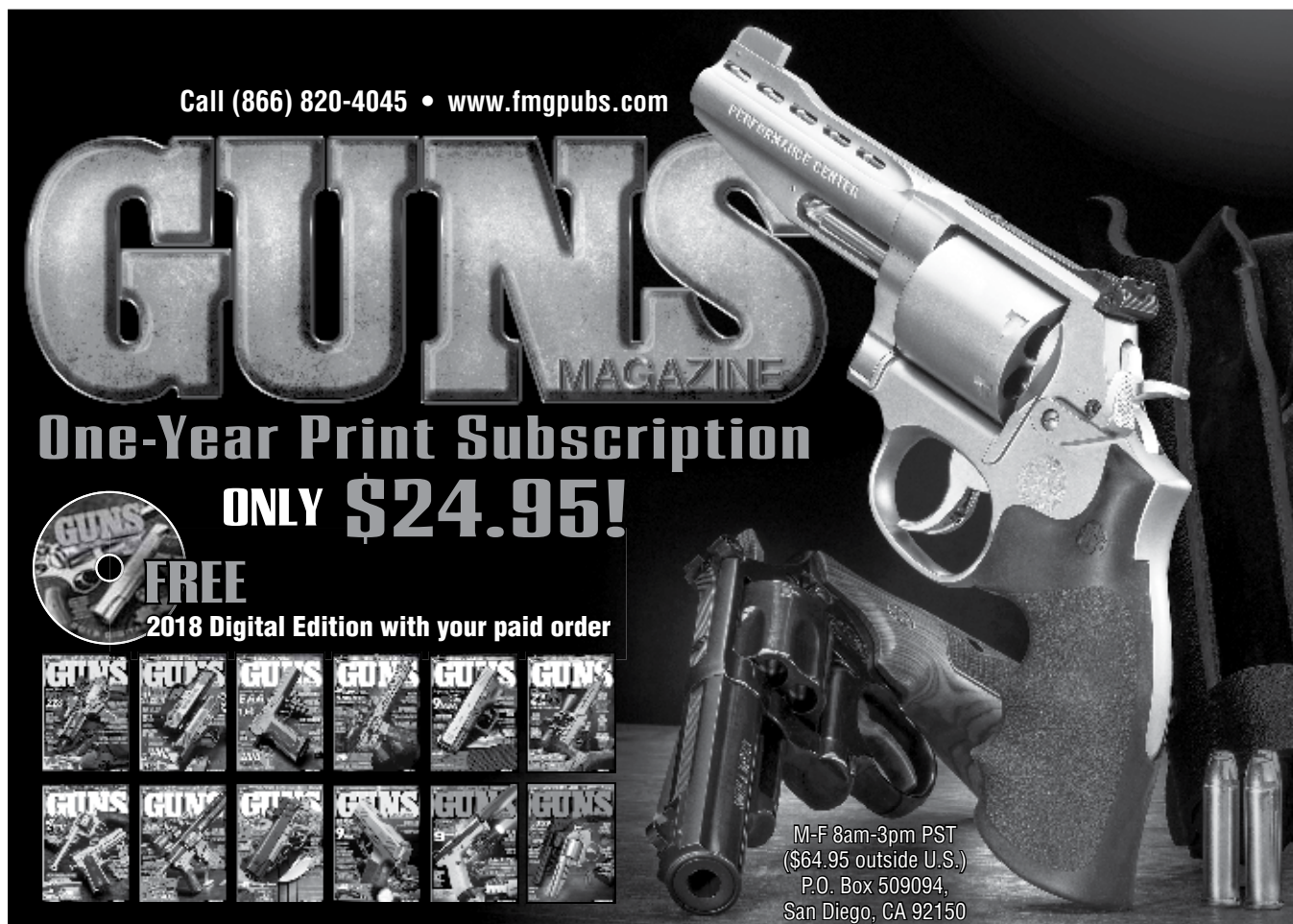
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case was part of the latter routine. “You can’t call SWAT out on a ‘maybe,’” Plasencia would later tell a local reporter.

No one has thought about this more in the eight intervening years than Plasencia himself. He told me in retrospect, “I wish there had been more preparedness. I understood the soft approach (no helmets, no shields, no heavy armament). Maybe we could have had a shield and set it by the door just in case. I normally carried a short-barrel shotgun for entry but left it in the vehicle because I was covering the back. I don’t think a long gun would have made any difference.”

“Plasencia presumed the situation was contained. His partner Roger Castillo may have presumed the same. If so, it was a fatal mistake.”

“How many rounds were fired?” is a question which should probably never be asked by investigators, nor answered by the involved party. In an adult lifetime spent studying these things, I can still count on my fingers the number of gunfight survivors who could keep an accurate count once it went beyond a very few shots. This case is a classic example.

Why close the distance? Greater distance usually favors the defender skilled in shooting, but in this case the danger a missed shot would present to bystanders and downed police personnel behind the murderer drove Plasencia to do what he did, and it had exactly the same benevolent result he intended. His movement toward the threat obviously distracted the killer from his attempt to execute the downed Detective Beecher, and very likely saved her life.

“When they see the armor, they shoot for the head.” That was the mantra of Richard Davis, the armed citizen and gunfight survivor who invented the soft, concealable body armor which has saved literally thousands of lives since. It was clear to investigators then and now Simms saw the officers were wearing ballistic vests, and deliberately targeted them for head shots. It was equally clear to Oscar Plasencia that in his final shootout with Simms, the cop killer was aiming high, for his head.

The always easy 20/20 vision of hindsight tells us if the body armor had been concealed under a POLICE-emblazoned light raid jacket, it might have turned out differently, and the killer’s mish-mosh of ball and jack-

eted hollow point ammo, which is typical of criminals, might have lodged in Kevlar instead of fatally piercing unprotected brains.

Expect the unexpected. The officers went to Simms’ mother’s house hoping to get leads to his whereabouts or to convince her to tell her son to give himself up. While they obviously recognized the possibility he might be present, they didn’t really expect it. Action beats reaction. A hand on a pistol, ready to draw against a sudden ambush, might have at least somewhat evened the odds.

Don’t let altered perceptions throw you. Well-trained by his department and studying these things on his own time, Oscar knew beforehand tachypsychia and auditory exclusion afflict well over half of people involved in such encounters. When things went into slow-motion silence, he didn’t let it distract him. He knew about tunnel vision too, and fought through it successfully, constantly vigilant to keep his shots from endangering innocent people behind the murderer.

Maintain your skills. Oscar Plasencia was a “gun guy” fond of 1911’s who would have carried one on duty if the regs allowed, and he practiced regularly with the GLOCK .45 he wore at work. The skill he maintained was evident in his 100 percent hit ratio under extraordinarily difficult circumstances.

Know when to run, and when to shoot. Oscar waited to shoot until he was certain he could hit his target and not send a bullet past the cop killer into the inhabited background the situation had given him. His fast jump-into-a-crouch gave him a stable firing platform from which to fire five fight-stopping bullets into a fast-attacking multiple cop-killer. He had “gotten off the X” because he was watching the opponent and the opponent’s gun, and successfully evaded the murderous gunfire directed at him.

Analyze in macrocosm as well as microcosm. Here, we’ve focused on the involved officers and the circumstances into which they were forced. Looking at the big picture, we need to remember Johnny Simms wasn’t just a member of the Bloods gang but a shot-caller there. The reason Plasencia and Castillo knew him was they had arrested him before on a warrant for violating probation arising from an armed robbery charge. Yet a judge had turned him loose, freeing him to commit one murder and then to murder two police officers and attempt to murder two more.

All of us at *American Handgunner* wish to thank Oscar Plasencia for sharing the lessons he learned so painfully. This article is respectfully dedicated to the memory of Detectives Amanda Haworth and Roger Castillo of the Miami-Dade Police Department.



HOBACK KNIVES

Continued from page 63

on its heels are the popular MK Ultra, Tradecraft, Backslip and A Series models (A8, A10, and A15). His company probably purchases enough titanium each year to build a couple of NASA lunar landers but, heck, it's still the benchmark metal for handle frames when it comes to both weight savings and durability. Most of his folders are of frame-lock design, easily

“I can break a steel ball in a rubber room. I make my knives according to that.”

the top choice among today's hard-use professionals and top-shelf collectors.

The manufacturers of proprietary blade steels have flooded the market with new offerings in recent years, and for Hoback this has been an invitation to choose optimum options for peak cutting performance in his knives. “We use many different steels. It depends on the application. I prefer to design a knife based on its application, and with that I choose the steel accordingly. We have used CTS-XHP, 20CV, S35VN, M390, S90V, S110, REX T15, REX 76, CPM154, AEB-L, Nitro-V, 3V, 4V, S7, 80CRv2, and many more,” Jake reveals. “I don't necessarily have a favorite since it is application-specific. I prefer a good stainless steel over many others for folder work and a good tough steel for axes. I live in very rugged terrain and use my tools very hard, so I want materials that can hold up to what I can dish out. I do a great deal of hiking and some adventure racing, like the Sniper Adventure Challenge.”

Hoback doesn't stop there. There's an artistic side to the knifemaker that puts his knives over the top. Using a variety of techniques such as anodizing, etching and Cerakote stenciling, Jake adds graphics and patterns to his knives — everything from simple camo to military, law enforcement, patriotic, religious and scenic themes. These are the *crème de la crème* of Hoback's creations.

Jake Hoback is more than a custom knifemaker. He's testament to the fact hard work, diligence, study and creativity can get you to the rarified air where the industry's top artisans tread. And at 37 years old, you can bet his best years are yet to come.



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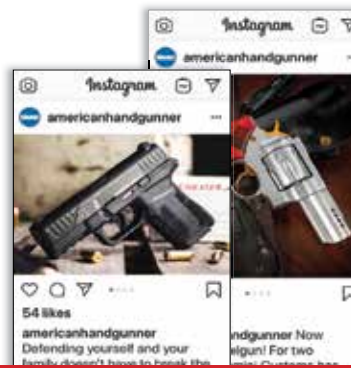
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HAKA!

Continued from page 57

to better accuracy. Ken also used the magic of EDM machining to cut a series of vertical cut-outs in the barrel shroud (Maori ritual scarring?), pierced the trigger guard to help identify “Tribe Mag-na-port” — ending with a bold trio of robust black stripes around the cylinder. I upped the ante some by changing-out the factory rubber grips with a set of Concealed Carry Boot Stocks from Kim Ahrends.

The result is a revolver you can identify as yours at a glance — even from across a room. There’s no doubting Mag-na-port did the work, or whether the Haka! is up to any task undertaken.

Because it is.

Doing Battle

In the spirit of being a fighting pistol, I loaded the Haka! with full power Winchester 240-gr. .44 Magnum loads right off the bat. I also admit I might not have entirely thought things through at that point. I have a 10" heavy steel plate hanging on chains about 20 yards downrange from my back porch. The first round not only smacked my hand hard enough to smart but at least sent the plate dancing too.

Since I still had feeling in my hand, I sent four more rounds in about as many seconds downrange, leaving the plate swinging — and me flicking my hand at my side while doing the “this hurts” dance. That’s similar to the spider web dance, but keeping the muzzle safe at the same time and saying things like “Ouch” and “Oh goodness, that hurt” and “My, my, I’ll think hard before doing this again” is part of the drill.

Or at least words to that effect.

Donning a shooting glove I shot a bit more of the heavy stuff — I know, I know, sometimes it takes me a long time to learn — but honestly did finally realize enough was enough. Can the Model 69 shoot full power .44 Magnum loads? Certainly, and in a pinch, a hard cast 240 at 1,100-1,200 fps is possible, and would likely save your skin. And I predict you wouldn’t hear a thing or feel a single bit of recoil.

But in the real world, would I shoot the stuff in this gun for fun? Again?

Nope.

You ever hit a steel post with an aluminum baseball bat with no gloves on? It’s sorta’ like that. Don’t ask me how I know. I can’t imagine this without the Mag-na-porting too, by the way. Call me sissified, but also call me still able to use both of my hands without spilling my coffee from the shakes.

In a more sane world, I shot a “mild” but highly effective .44 Magnum load from Black Hills, their HoneyBadger. It’s

a 160-gr. solid copper fluted bullet chronographing at an honest 1,425 from the 2.75" barrel. As fire and brimstone as this sounds, recoil is manageable since it’s a lighter 160-gr. bullet. I think it’d stop just about anything walking on the planet.

Their sort of matching .44 Special HoneyBadger — a 125 with the same bullet design — flew at 1,135 fps from the short barrel. It was exceptionally fun to shoot, not to mention very accurate. I’ve seen the gel work on it and it penetrates deeply and reliably. For me, I think I found my main load for the Haka!

I ran some other .44 Special loads and found just about anything in the 240-gr. range at less than 850 fps to be okay, if not always entirely enjoyable to shoot. The classic 246-gr. lead round-nose .44 Special load chrono’d around the 625 fps range. I could actually see the bullet go and was tempted to race it to the target. But it was great fun to shoot, I’ll admit.

Accuracy was typical S&W style, and characteristically big-bore excellent. Say, 1.75" (Black Hills HoneyBadger .44 Special and about the same for their cowboy load at not quite 700 fps) to about 3.5" for the uglier .44 Magnum loads — mostly due to me gritting my teeth and likely shutting my eyes just before the big noise.

My 100-yard steel torso target got tired of being wanged. Bang, clang, bang, clang more often than not was the drill. Easy-peasy comes to mind when using the .44 Special loads. A fun thing is you can often watch the big bullets sort of lope in before hitting the steel at this distance. I kept laughing out loud at that. Who needs a flat-shooting magnum anyhow?

So?

So, it’s fun, that’s what. As I always say, sell off some of your commodity guns and put the money to work on something really fun, likely to hold its value — and even grow — and will deliver a complete lack of buyer’s remorse. These sorts of projects also tend to cause you to grin for no apparent reason, and at inappropriate moments. Pair it with a beautiful, practical holster — like the flapped field paddle rig by Purdy Gear, shown — and the grin will extend from ear to ear.

Thanks Ken, and thanks Mag-na-port. The Haka! helps to make the Huntington family sleep more soundly at night in these semi-scary times. I have to admit, the idea of a Maori warrior standing guard duty does have merit.



For more info: www.magnaport.com, Ph: (586) 469-6727; www.smith-wesson.com; www.purdygear.com, Ph: (706) 692-5536; www.black-hills.com, Ph: (605) 348-5150. To see video, go to www.americanhandgunner.com, “Insider Action”!

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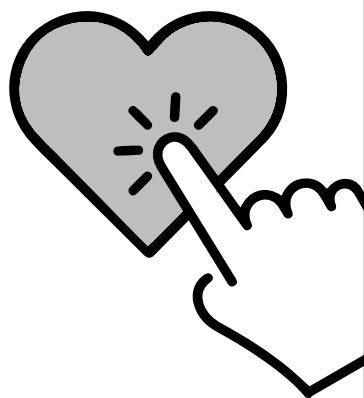
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HELLCAT X2

Continued from page 53

stock, with a slightly enlarged lever — easier to find even when wearing gloves. It's wide and deep, having lengthwise serrations for a non-slip engagement. The built-in detent eliminates false slide locks — a great idea. I especially appreciate the machined lead-in serving to guide the slide stop during installation. You've likely seen the "idiot mark" on some guns where the slide stop has ridden up the side of the frame, leaving a trail to the cut-out hole? Don't be that guy.

Even the hammer is special. Made of hardened tool steel, it has a solid web for strength, deep serrations for no-slip manipulation, a beveled exterior with no sharp edges and a "hook" geometry for optimal sear engagement. The relocated hammer strut pin hole — along with the other touches — add up to a crisp safe trigger pull. Both the slide stop and the hammer were designed by Christopher Provost of Cerberus Tactical.

There are slide top serrations some might say stop glare but I think they're just to look good — and what's wrong with that? A genuine match-grade 9mm barrel contributes to accuracy and reliability and plays well with the match-grade trigger and, as Alex calls it, the "Extreme Reliability Work" done.

The Guncrafter Tritium sights assure you can find 'em when you most need to. The rear is both fixed and burley, with enough height to offer a way to run the slide if you need to by hooking it on something handy.

There's a lot of attention to detail, and while it's pretty, most of it also does double-duty one way or another. The ball-end mill cuts offer a certain charisma, while also performing the needed lightening process. The full de-horning done makes perfect sense in a defensive pistol and also simply makes any gun feel better.

The flush-cut slide stop (on the right side) is not just tidy, it also won't interfere with a finger held alongside the frame. Some say a shooter might inadvertently press the pin out somehow, but I confess in 50 years of shooting conventionally configured 1911s I've never seen or had it happen. Nonetheless, I do like the uncluttered look of the mod — and hey, it can't hurt.

The Hellcat X2 comes with two fitted and tuned magazines and a black Guncrafter Industries Cordura case and test target as part of the package.

Range Thoughts

I really enjoyed this gun, and for many good reasons we've talked about. We're fortunate here at Hand-

gunner because while we get to see the mundane, certainly, it's counter-balanced by the often exceptional guns we meet. The Hellcat X2 is in the exceptional category. I put upwards of 400 rounds of various loads through it and not surprisingly it ran perfectly. I happen to own a Guncrafter FRAG 9mm so I balanced my impressions of the X2 with my experience with the GI brand.

The Frag is an all-steel 5" 1911 — scary-accurate — and is very likely the epitome of the breed. I've also got a good deal of experience with many of GI's guns in the past and found them all to be absolutely reliable and carefully built. I wasn't surprised by how the X2 conducted itself.

Like the FRAG, the X2 was extremely accurate. In my hands, with very careful rested shooting using 147-gr. sub-sonic 9mm loads from several manufacturers — loads always accurate, it seems — groups of 1.5" or a tad bigger at 25 yards were amazingly easy to shoot. A careful trigger press is the order of the day here, and a consistent sight picture. I have no doubt this is a true 1" gun in a Ransom rest, and I'd call it more of a "one ragged hole" I'm betting. This is the sort of gun you can shoot at 50 and 100 yards and have some real fun with it.

All of the loads shot well and I honestly didn't find a bullet weight the Hellcat X2 seemed to like over the others. I settled on the 147's for accuracy testing due to habit, but I think the "124 and heavier" stuff would all work fine. It's honestly a moot point with today's ammo, so just buy what you like and then practice. You'll be fine, especially with the Hellcat X2.

The delightful, crisp trigger weighs in right at 3.5 lbs. — an ounce or two either way from pull to pull on the digital gauge. The great ergonomics, bold sights and sure-footedness the gun delivers makes the Hellcat X2 a shooting machine at every level.

At about \$3,895 you get a level of build quality seen only at the very top of the craft. There's an undeniable sureness and poise in the X2, obvious when the gun is in-hand — and pride of ownership would be over-the-top. Oh, you also get a pistol built by hand — and backed with Guncrafter's Lifetime Satisfaction Assurance.

Before you wring your hands at the price, keep in mind that's about the cost of three "decent" quality factory guns of one sort or another — guns you'd likely see in every gun store and at every range you go to.

Why not be different — and better for it?



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TRUGLO FIBER OPTIC PRO

MICHAEL O. HUMPHRIES

There's a lot more to accurate shooting than simply having an accurate gun. You might have the most mechanically accurate gun in the world, but if you can't see the sights it doesn't really matter. And I don't know about you, but those omni-present white three-dot sights you see on so many pistols these days just don't cut the mustard for me. I personally like to have a minimalist rear sight and a very visible front sight. Make that front sight a bright color? Even better, particularly with these aging eyes.

If you agree, you should consider the Fiber-Optic Pro set of pistol sights from TruGlo. It's available for pistols from CZ-USA, GLOCK, Smith & Wesson and Springfield Armory, so you have a lot of options on a range of commonly available pistols on the market today. The Fiber-Optic Pro includes a front and rear sight assembly, both featuring serrating on the rear faces to reduce glare from sunlight.

The CNC-machined steel

rear sight is a simple notch in matte black — TruGlo calls the finish "Nitride Fortress," which sounds darned impressive to me! — with no dots or marks. The front sight assembly sports an ultra-bright fiber-optic rod. To keep the size of the front sight to a minimum, the Fiber-Optic Pro sports a patented light reflector focusing surrounding light on the entire surface area of the rod — neatly sidestepping the traditional approach of having to make the rod longer to gather more light. The result is a compact and low-profile front sight fitting standard-sized holsters.

For an MSRP of \$82.99, you get not only the front and rear sight assemblies but also extra fibers, giving you the option of having a red, yellow or green front sight. It also comes with extra reflector tape. And thanks to the light reflector system, you also get a nice, bright sight easily visible even in diminished light. Sounds like a winner to me! *For more info:* www.truglo.com, Ph: (888) 887-8456



DEER HOLLOW GRIPS

ROY HUNTINGTON

The term "reproduction" can mean many things, but in the case of grip maker and gunsmith Olof Fornehed his grips (for Colt "snake" guns and some others) are as Colt would have made them — only superior. He even duplicates a few design traits Colt left in (such as a gap at the trigger guard) which Olof could have easily fixed. But as he said, "If I fixed it, they simply wouldn't look like original grips anymore and that would defeat the whole idea!" The medallion is authentic, checkering, fit, etc. is, as Colt collectors say, "Just like an original Colt, only better." Members of the Colt forum were instrumental in helping Olof get things exactly right, and he wanted to give credit where it was due there.

Olof did say he improved on the finish applied. "Colt's clear coat is known to chip and flake off easily, so I'm using a modern, more durable type of clear coat," he explained. Which shows, as the finish is simply marvelous and when I unboxed the sample grips in the photo I immediately dug out my minty original Python. Low-and-behold, Olof's grips were like mine — only better! The grips are hand-selected

American black walnut using factory screws — not the metric screws or those "Cheesy die cast medallions seen in many other reproductions," as Olof says. Fit, finish, checkering and attention to detail is as flawless as a man-made thing can be, and I was seriously impressed by everything I saw. Grips are available with gold or silver medallions, Python generation 2 and 3 have nickel screws, and burl walnut is offered depending upon availability of the wood.

Olof wanted me to remind you fit is dependent upon the gun. He wagers his grips are made more consistently than Colt made and polished the grip frames and in nine out of 10 cases, the grips fit fine. But sure enough, now and again they need some final hand-fitting. He's made an instructional PDF on his website showing just how to do it to help avoid any hysteria. You can also better fit original grips using the same instructions.

Prices are exceptionally fair. From a low of about \$125 for Diamondback and D-Frame grips to about \$200–\$225 for most Python fits, this is far less than original grips go for, and you honestly do get better quality. *For more info:* www.deerhollowonline.com, Ph: (931) 738-5044





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Buck Knives' *Pursuit Series* is a multi-purpose alternative to traditional hunting knives. The knives in the series are competitively priced. They come in fixed and folding versions with standard or gut-hook blades in 420HC steel. Additional design details create a comfortable, non-slip profile. Ideal for use in the field, the blades in the Pursuit Series are finished with Buck's Edge2x technology making them sharper right out of the box. The three fixed and folding versions include a black polyester sheath with green trim. *For more info: (208) 262-0500, www.buckknives.com*

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CZ-USA



A variation of CZ-USA's popular CZ SHADOW 2 pistol, the 9mm *Shadow 2 Orange's* main parts are hand-fitted for precision. The 4.89" barrel is polished to improve accuracy and sports a bushing for added stability. The trigger is tuned for a smooth, crisp release and offers a quick reset. It sports a competition hammer and adjustable aluminum magazine release catch. Aggressive checkering on the aluminum grips provides a solid hold. The pistol has a fiber optic front sight paired with a serrated, black HAJO adjustable rear. *For more info: (800) 955-4486, www.cz-usa.com*



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aircraft-grade Kydex. *Basket-Weave Kydex* variants of many of its popular products are now available. This expands the choices of L.E. officers required to carry a basket weave finish on their gear. The finish is offered in black Kydex only for Comp-Tac's International Holster, Warrior Holster, Single Magazine Pouch PLM, Kydex Tourniquet TACO and Kydex Handcuff TACO. *For more info: (281) 209-3040, www.comp-tac.com*

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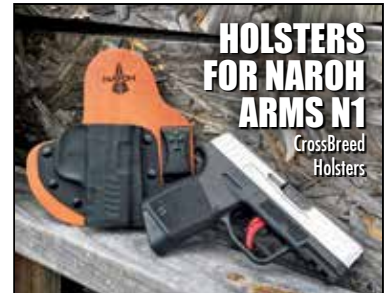
TruGlo



TruGlo's *Fiber-Optic PRO* delivers a fast and accurate sight picture for competitive and recreational shooters. A patented light reflector focuses available light from all angles onto the fiber for a brighter glow, even in low light. Features include an ultra-bright fiber optic front sight, a blacked-out rear sight, serrated sight faces and more. The set includes spare fibers and reflector tape. Guns with the optic will fit standard holsters. *For more info: www.truglo.com*

HOLSTERS FOR NAROH ARMS N1

CrossBreed Holsters



CrossBreed Holsters teamed up with Naroh Arms to develop a line of *Holsters for Naroh Arms N1* pistols. The following CrossBreed holster models are available for the N1 9mm: the SuperTuck, MiniTuck, Appendix Carry, Freedom Carry, Mini Appendix Carry, SnapSlide, DropSlide, SuperSlide, Ankle Holster, Cargo Pocket Rocket, Ohai, Bedside Backup, Purse Defender, Pac Mat, Small Pac Mat, Belly Band, Last Ditch and Reckoning Holster. *For more info: (888) 732-5011, www.crossbreedholsters.com*



O.Z-9 MODULAR BUILD KIT

ZEV Technologies

The *O.Z-9 Modular Build Kit* from ZEV Technologies allows you to customize your own O.Z-9 pistol. The serialized steel receiver (choose between a Black DLC or a Titanium Gray) is the foundation of the O.Z-9. Once you have it, just add more ZEV parts until you complete the firearm that suits your needs. Each O.Z-9 MBK includes these parts to get you started: ZEV O.Z-9 Slide Lock Lever and Spring, Trigger Pin, Ejector Housing Pin, Enhanced Extractor and Extended Slide Release Lever. *For more info: (805) 486-5800, www.zevtechnologies.com*



.350 LEGEND BRASS

Starline Brass

Starline Brass has added another rifle caliber — the *.350 Legend* — to their lineup of high-quality rifle brass. Introduced by Winchester and approved by SAAMI early this year, the *.350 Legend* is a new cartridge without a parent case. The tapered case has a rebated rim allowing it to use the standard .223 bolt face found on many common rifles including the AR-15. The cartridge can be used for hunting in several states allowing straightwall rifle cartridges only, but it doesn't have the recoil of other AR cartridges in this niche. *For more info: (800) 280-6660, www.starlinebrass.com*



GUN PLUMBER HANDGUN TOOL

Birchwood Casey



Birchwood Casey's *Gun Plumber Handgun Tool* has everything needed to keep a revolver, 1911 and/or striker-fired handgun operating efficiently. The compact and easy-to-use tool has a patch loop and an internal threaded rod for quick, effective bore cleaning. Four hollow-ground, flat screwdriver blades fit most pistol and revolver screws. For striker-fired pistols, the tool has a pin pusher doubling as a sight tool. There's also a non-marring 1911-barrel bushing wrench and hex and torx blades for grip screws and general use. For more info: (877) 269-8490, www.birchwoodcasey.com

MODEL 610

Smith & Wesson



S&W reintroduced its *Model 610* revolver chambered in 10mm Auto. Well suited for handgun hunting and protection in the backcountry, the Model 610 is built on the large S&W N-Frame and is available with either a 4" or 6.5" barrel. Designed for use with 6-shot moon clips (included), the M610 is also capable of firing the .40 S&W cartridge. Other features are a stainless steel frame, barrel and cylinder, black synthetic finger groove grips and a black blade interchangeable front sight with adjustable white outline rear sight. For more info: (800) 331-0852, www.smith-wesson.com

COMMANDER LITE PACK BAG

ALPS OutdoorZ



ALPS OutdoorZ's *Commander Lite Pack Bag* is designed to work with the Commander Lite or Commander Freighter cargo frames in transporting hunters' gear and game. The 2-lb. Commander Lite Pack Bag has a 47-liter capacity for carrying your stuff as well as game after a successful hunt. A cinch-strap webbing matrix secures the pack to the external-frame. For more info: (800) 344-2577, www.alpsoutdoorz.com

BULL TROUT

TOPS Knives



The *Bull Trout* is the result of TOPS Knives' 3rd annual knife design contest for its employees. The winner was Martin Murillo for his EDC fixed-blade design. An avid fisherman, Martin designed the Bull Trout for use while fishing. It has burlap Micarta handles and comes with a chocolate leather sheath. The 2.75" blade is stainless 154CM RC 58-60 steel with a tumble finish. Weighing 3.1 oz. with an OAL of 6.13", the Bull Trout is an all-around EDC blade so it's not just for fishing. For more info: (208) 542-0113, www.topsknives.com



AVENGER

Nelson Holsters

The *Avenger* is a classic OWB holster from Nelson Holsters. It hides reasonably well with an untucked shirttail and offers the most for an OWB. Made of 100 percent Wicket & Craig leather, each Nelson holster is handmade in the U.S.A. For more info: (828) 729-3415, www.nelsonholsters.com

GAMECHANGER

Sierra Bullets



The Sierra *GameChanger* hunting bullet combines match accuracy with deadly performance. Sierra reengineered their MatchKing bullet into a hollow point design for quick expansion and fitted it with a transparent green tip for ballistic uniformity. Sierra Ammunition is offered in 243 Winchester, 6mm Creedmoor, 6.5 Creedmoor, 270 Winchester and 308 Winchester. It will also be available in 7mm Remington, 30-06 Springfield and 300 Winchester Magnum! For more info: (888) 223-3006, www.sierrabullets.com

ADAPTABLE BELT MOUNT

High Speed Gear

High Speed Gear's *Adaptable Belt Mount (ABM)* is a sturdy, belt-width adjustable, anti-slide application for mounting HSGI products to a belt. The attachment creates a belt loop with a strip of vinyl-backed 1000D Cordura nylon laminate and a YKK snap closure. Two laser cut slits allow the loop to be threaded through 1.5" to 2" HSGI rigger belts. The ABM is available for TACOs, medical pouches, radio pouches, handcuff pouches, stun gun pouches and more. For more info: (877) 301-2116, www.highspeedgear.com





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T-SERIES HOLSTERS

BLACKHAWK

With streamlined thumb-activated retention, *T-Series* holsters from BLACKHAWK keep a firearm ready while maintaining security. The low-friction, dual-density internal material makes for a smooth and effortless draw while the exterior provides durability with a proprietary glass-reinforced nylon and soft touch polymer liner. Holsters are available in Level 2 or Level 3 configurations. For more info: (406) 284-3840, www.blackhawk.com



BEAR SWIPE IV RESCUE KNIFE

Bear & Son Cutlery

The *Bear Swipe IV Rescue Knife* from Bear OPS features a black-coated Sandvik 14C28N steel blade that quickly deploys with its integrated flipper. The tanto-style blade can cut, carve and pierce. Its scaled black G10 handles offers an ergonomic grip and blade control. The 4.1-oz. multipurpose knife also has a glass breaker, seatbelt cutter and pocket clip. Bear OPS is the tactical brand of Bear & Son Cutlery specializing in military and L.E. knives. For more info: (256) 435-2227, www.bearandsoncutlery.com



REGULUS

Lionheart Industries

The *Regulus* from Lionheart Industries is designed based on consumer and reviewer feedback leading to upgrades including the modular platform, Tru-Axis barrels, refined trigger, redesigned sight sizes, and increased grip and color options. The *Regulus* has an aerospace-grade aluminum frame and a Chromoly steel slide and barrel protected by a Cerakote finish. Each *Regulus* frame comes standard with an accessory rail. For more info: (888) 552-4743, www.lionheartindustries.com



6MM CREEDMOOR MATCH GRADE AMMUNITION

Berger Bullets

Berger Bullets' *6mm Creedmoor Match Grade Ammunition* is available in hunting and target offerings. The 95-gr. Hybrid Classic Hunter delivers deadly hydrostatic shock to medium-sized game. The 105-gr. Hybrid Target enables users to easily acquire long-range targets with precision. Berger also loads 6.5 Creedmoor, 260 Rem, 308 Win, 300 Win Mag, 300 Norma Mag and 338 Lapua Mag. For more info: (660) 460-2802, www.bergerbullets.com



HANDALL BEAVERTAIL GRIP SLEEVE

Hogue Inc.

Hogue's latest *HandALL Beavertail Grip Sleeve* fits the Springfield XD-E. This HandALL line is Hogue's response to requests for grips compatible with polymer-framed firearms. When installed on a pistol, Hogue's ultra-soft rubber reduces perceived recoil. The beavertail design fills the palm of the hand and added finger grooves provide a secure hold. For more info: (800) 438-4747, www.hogueinc.com

PRECISION SLIDES

Rival Arms

Rival Arms now offers *Precision Slides* for select GLOCK pistols. Each Rival Arms slide is machined from a 17-4PH stainless-steel billet. It has front and rear serrations for slide manipulation during high-stress or competitive situations. Cutouts redistribute weight and promote cooling of the barrel. Each slide is also thermo-chemically case hardened to resist wear. There are two versions: one for the Trijicon RMR and one for other popular optics. A slide without an optic cut is offered for the subcompact GLOCK 43. Precision upgrade slides are available for 3rd and 4th Gen GLOCK 17, 19, 26, and 43 pistols. For more info: www.rival-arms.com



RUN AND GUN: THE OSCAR PLASENCIA INCIDENT

SITUATION: You and the cop-killer are running at each other, guns in hand. One of you is going to die.

LESSON: Preparation is the mother of survival. Expect the unexpected. Know when to run, and when to shoot.

January 20, 2011, Miami, Florida. Sergeant Laurick Ingram meets Detectives Amanda Haworth, Roger Castillo, Diedre Beecher and Oscar Plasencia for a briefing at the Miami-Dade Police Department's Northside Station. They're members of a squad assigned to apprehend violent career criminals and they have a warrant for the arrest of one Johnny Simms. The two female officers are the lead on the case; the two males have been chosen because they've arrested Simms in the past for parole violation and know him by sight. Simms, 22, is wanted for murder. He's believed to have cold-bloodedly shot a man dead for disrespecting Simms' sister. The plan is to visit the homes of the suspect's mother and last known girlfriend. They hope to gain information as to his whereabouts, and to urge them to contact Simms and convince him things will go easier if he turns himself in.

Arriving at the mother's duplex, the cops alight from their vehicles. They've planned a "soft" contact: No helmets or shields, no long guns, no kicking down doors. They're wearing conspicuous tactical Kevlar vests identifying themselves, marked POLICE and MARSHAL because they're also special deputies of the U.S. Marshal's Service due to their frequent fugitive task force duties. Each wears an exposed sidearm. Castillo and Haworth carry department-issued GLOCK 17 pistols while Beecher has a privately owned/departments-approved Smith & Wesson Model 3913. All three 9mm pistols are loaded with ammo which has worked particularly well on their mean streets, Winchester's Ranger-T 127gr. +P+. Plasencia, always more comfortable with a .45, is authorized to carry his personal GLOCK 21 loaded with Federal HST 230-gr. +P.

They know the girlfriend's house is only a couple of blocks away, and if he's there and the mother calls to warn him after the police leave, he'll "rabbit." It's decided the sergeant will drive to the girlfriend's place to discreetly surveil it while the others talk to the mom. Because they're the ones most likely to recognize Simms if he tries to exit through a back door, the two male officers — who usually work as partners anyway — flank to the side of the duplex while Haworth and Beecher go to the front door.

They identify themselves, and the suspect's mother welcomes them inside. Castillo begins moving forward, toward the front of the building. Out on the side Castillo hears Haworth say over the hand-held radio, "He's inside, everybody come around."

He has heard Amanda Haworth's last words.

Suddenly, there's gunfire from inside the duplex.

Rapid Response

Plasencia, 53, reaches reflexively for his GLOCK as he races toward the front of the house. The shots are still breaking, coming fast.

As he rounds the corner, he's inside a corridor formed between the target house and a 10-ft. high wrought iron security fence. Shots are still going off. Plasencia sees Detective Beecher tumbling out the front door and falling to the ground and a man coming out the same door behind her, shooting at her in her disadvantaged down position. The light-complexioned African-American man is tall, muscular, clean shaven with close cropped hair, wearing jeans and stripped to the waist exposing his gang tattoos. Plasencia recognizes him as Johnny Simms and recognizes also there's a GLOCK pistol in his hand.

Endgame

Simms turns to see Detective Plasencia running at him, gun drawn, and charges at the lawman full speed, raising his own stolen pistol.

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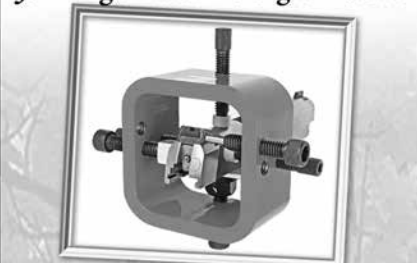
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GUN RIGHTS

Continued from page 67

thing, used by police and everyone concerned for safety in a dangerous world, is being taught. Left-wing denials of valuable profiling tools have been summarily rejected. The Jewish community is not alone in this either and all manner of religious organizations are protecting their flocks.

Chains of command, who and when to report what to, little things that, when combined, can and will make a difference — these things are happening. Communication strategies go so far beyond anything you might imagine. I think Alexa or other listening devices you have unwittingly invited into your home make old-time (legitimate!) fears of Big Brother look like Mickey Mouse fantasies. Dangerous lone strangers are facing a new threat to *their* safety, to which they are virtually unaware. The Rabbis know who is armed in the congregation, pastors are participating, priests are privy to reports. Training is taking place. Our good old Second Amendment is being exercised. This is a good thing.

While democrats and the leftists are increasing their disarmament pressure, using murderers and sociopaths for leverage, the (literal) target market is wising up, saying *Never Again!* and putting iron in those words. Coalescing power into a small number of government hands, the leftist model, is exactly what free people do not want to do.

Use government and police forces as allies? Of course, that's smart, they are at risk too from socialists and the rest of the dangerous misguided lot. Those of us who are wide awake understand *we* are the first responders any time an incident breaks out. If we're unarmed, at least break out the tourniquets, QuikClot and trauma packs, from defensive positions. Known positions. Near egress.

It's criminal to allow a threat the size of the one America faces to go unheeded. If a handful of scholarly, devout, mild-mannered religious types can do it, then certainly our schools could take an equally principled stand. Why aren't they?

Surely teachers (and their unions!) must realize the threat is real, imminent and omnipresent, and no amount of new legislation is going to save children in the short term — if ever. One wise pundit opined we can save ourselves with the laws we already have on the books. He's right.



Alan Korwin's website features plain-English books on state and federal gun laws for the public. Visit www.gunlaws.com.

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much hit anything out to about 100 yards. I'm guessing there are jackrabbit family stories passed down even today of how "Uncle Hoppy was sitting and suddenly got hit with a .22 from 'way far away' out there!"

That was likely us.

The Ruger has always enjoyed a central role in my shooting during the past 50 years. It's helped to teach countless people how to shoot, became blue-worn, and was even scoped with an old Bushnell Phantom scope for a while. I rarely shot .22 Magnums in it as they both cost a lot and made a ruckus with muzzle blast. They didn't seem as accurate either, and I later learned that was indeed the case. After a long-term loan to a friend I got the Ruger back with a good bit of rust on it. I had learned to Parkerize then, so I bead-blasted it and Parkerized the steel bits, leaving the aluminum raw. I actually think it looks good that way.

50 Years Goes By

Which brings us neatly to the new Wrangler. When I first saw it the matte

finish reminded me of my old gun, and at that \$250 price I knew I had to have one. Interestingly enough, it's only the second Ruger "Single Six" style .22 I've ever had, as my original always seemed to take care of the jobs at-hand. I was curious to see — did 50 years make a difference in the classic design?

My original has a silky smooth action from use and those four distinctive "clicks" when you cock it. You need to go to "half-cock" to load and unload it. The Wrangler has the new action, so you merely open the gate and the cylinder turns freely either way. Handy to get the ejector rod aligned and to load it.

The action on the Wrangler was rough and much harder to cock. Over the past couple of months it's smoothed up some but still takes a lot more effort to cock the hammer. It's got a hammer-forged steel barrel, cerakote finish (Black, silver and my sort of bronze color), cast aluminum frame, steel unfluted cylinder, zinc alloy grip frame and excellent feeling plastic grips.

Shooting Some

Make sure you check out *Taffin Tests* in this issue. John put three Wranglers through his testing and it seems he had better accuracy than I did with my gun. He shot at 20 yards while I shot at 25 and 15 but I'm thinking his talented eye and trigger finger simply made the difference. I'll keep testing mine to see if things settle in, and report back.

I put bullseye targets at 25 and small critter targets at 15. I also chronographed about a dozen different .22 loads through both guns. Velocity differences between the 6" and 4½" barrels averaged between "no difference" (low velocity loads) to maybe 100 fps faster with hotter loads in the longer barrel. The no-powder Aguila Colibri 20-gr. loads (great fun, by the way), were actu-

ally slower (352 fps) from the longer barrel vs. 386 fps out of the Wrangler. I've seen this before with this load. The bore friction slows it down I guess.

"Most accurate" was CCI's Standard Velocity (about 950 fps in both guns), delivering a solid 1.25" in the Super Single Six at 25, and a 3" group in the Wrangler. On the critter targets at 15 yards, good old CCI Mini-Mag HP ammo planted them into 0.75" for the Super (1,175 fps) and 2½" and 1,072 fps (with a flyer) for the Wrangler. Without the flyer it'd be about 1.75".

The Wrangler's heavier trigger and hard-to-see fixed sights definitely hindered my 65-year-old eyes. Plus, it seems to hit about 4" to 5" low at 25 yards. At the varmint targets at 15 I was aiming at the tip of the critter's head to hit the bull. But I'll likely file on that front sight to raise the POI to match up with the CCI Mini-Mag load and call it good-to-go. Windage was close enough for government work.

The silky action, smooth trigger, longer sight radius and crisp adjustable sights of the old gun really showed their mettle. But having said that, I see a use for both. The "target" features of the Super Single Six (and similar modern models) makes it very versatile for hunting, plinking, teaching, even serious target shooting.

The Wrangler is just plain fun, and with a bit of tweaking the zero — and smoothing the action a bit — can almost hold its own. It'd be a great trail gun, trap-line tool, boat or truck gun, and even a young person's "first" handgun. In the real world, they seem to go for around \$200 or a bit more, so if you get your kid one, you could get a different color for you and the third color for your wife, or — I'll be modern here — *your* husband! It's all great fun, so you should dig in too. For more info: www.ruger.com.

ADD IT UP

\$19.1 BILLION

Shooting industry gross business in 2008.

\$52.1 BILLION

Industry's gross business in 2018.

4,406,380

Guns produced in 2008.

10,665,318

Guns produced in 2018.

38,575,454

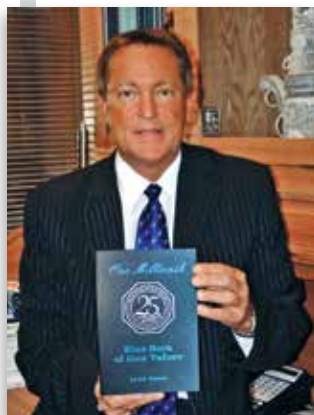
Handguns produced between 2008 and 2017.

4,523,882

Number of .380 ACP handguns produced 2013-2017.

319,364

Number of .22 revolvers produced in 2016.



STEVE FJESTAD PASSES

I was just floored not too long ago when I heard old friend and industry icon Steve Fjestad passed away unexpectedly due to complications after surgery. Steve founded and ran the Blue Book of Gun Values organization, and shooters the world over have relied on his work for decades. His innovative thinking, enthusiasm and attention to detail has made it a snap for we shooters to identify, value and learn about all our guns. There's over 1.8 million copies in circulation, and the latest issue ran 2,512 pages! Steve was an international expert in all-things guns, and his recent book on the AR15 and the market was ground-breaking. He used to visit at our

house here in Missouri when he attended the Tulsa gun show and we always had a great time talking guns, friends and the industry. I'm sad as hell about this. But, his team at Blue Book said they'll keep the flag flying, and we'll do what we can to help support them as they go forward. www.bluebookofgunvalues.com



RUGER FLAG SERIES

Last July Ruger announced a very cool new “Flag Series” of guns. Using Cerakote and flag-camo dipped finishes, the four guns offered so far honor the good old U.S.A. or a particular state. The American flag is featured on Ruger’s AR-556, Precision Rimfire and PC carbines as well as the AR-556 pistol. The North Carolina and Arizona flag is on the SR22 pistol, while the Texas flag is on the 6.5 Creedmoor Precision Rifle. I’m sure more will come, and some are distributor specials. Show your patriotism for the USA — and your enthusiasm for your state. www.ruger.com



CRIMSON TRACE & S&W

Our old friends at S&W announced a run of special Crimson Trace laser-equipped handguns. The M&P380 SHIELD EZ, M642 J-Frame .38, M&P Bodyguard .38 and M&P9 M2.0 Compact 9mm are all sporting Crimson Trace technology. I thought the 642’s Robin’s Egg Blue Lasergrips and stainless/alloy make-up were particularly cool. Look for them at your local dealer. And if you haven’t yet, make sure you take a close look at the .380 SHIELD EZ. I can’t recommend it enough. www.smith-wesson.com

4H GETS SHOTGUNS

We had a problem here at FMG — a bunch of Mossberg shotguns we used at the much-missed “Shooting Industry Masters Competition” over the years. The event was one of the most popular in the industry but it simply grew too expensive and time-consuming to organize for our relatively small gang here. Rather than let the guns — donated for the event by Mossberg! — gather any more dust, we donated them to the 4-H Shooting Sports Program in Carson City, NV. Here’s a letter and pic from Tom Crowley, one of the leaders with the program. This is one of those “pay it forward” situations and we’re pleased as heck we got to do it.

“As promised, here are some pictures of some of the 4-H youth enjoying the Mossberg shotguns you sent. Many of the youth had never used a shotgun. The kids learned very quickly, and started to enjoy breaking clays. Again thank you for the shotguns. The guns are now a valuable asset to the Douglas County 4-H Shooting Sports program.”



CAMERA ON GUN TO TRAP CROOKS

PHOTOGRAPHIC identification of fleeing criminals may be obtained with a recently perfected camera which is attached to a pistol or rifle and worked by the gun's trigger. The lens used can work at an opening of F/3.5, which permits the camera to be used in comparatively poor light and at high speed. The small negatives are sharp enough to be enlarged.

GUN CAMERA?

Who says ideas are new? Check out this newspaper piece from the 1930s about a new “Camera on gun to trap crooks!” The tiny camera attached to the underside of, in this case, a Colt revolver, was activated when the trigger was pulled. Sound familiar? It apparently never caught on due to the technology then, but I’m betting we had the same issues back then as we do now. Nothing is new.



SPARTAN II SIG

This is an attractive look, and combining it with the Spartan logo makes it a great package. SIG recently announced the Spartan II series with two 1911s and two smaller guns, the 238 (.380) and 938 (9mm). The full-size is standard 1911 dimensions with the distressed coyote finish and logo, along with “Molon Labe” emblazoned on the slide. The “Carry” is sort of “Commander”-sized with the same features. The two smaller guns look like “mini-me” versions of the 1911s. I say, get a big one and a little one! www.sigsauer.com

ROBERT REESE, SPRINGFIELD FOUNDER



This is another hard one. Bob passed peacefully in June, at 87. Bob founded Springfield Armory in 1974, preserving historic designs like the M1 Garand, US M14 and the 1911. Wife Carol and Springfield CEO Dennis (one of Bob’s sons) were the first employees. They were soon joined by sons Dave and Tom and together grew the business into the force it is today. Bob was a hunter, farmer, shooter, world-traveler, strong 2nd Amendment advocate and lived his life guided by the principles of independence and personal responsibility. We need more of that in today’s world. Rest easy, Bob. www.springfield-armory.com





ROY HUNTINGTON

THE INSIDER™

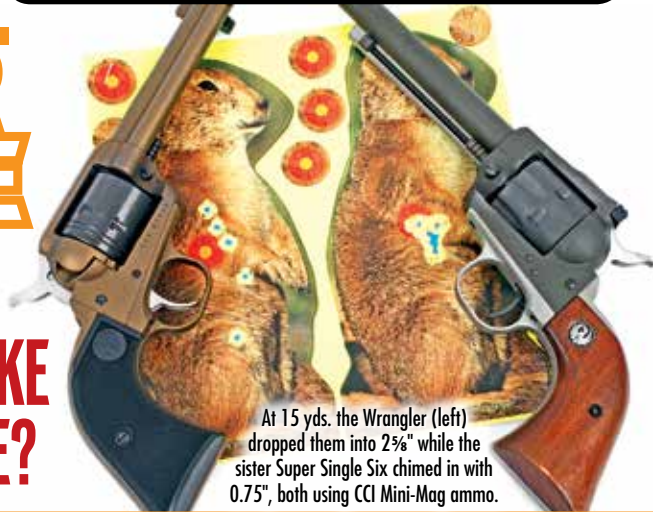
The longer barrel, adjustable sights and smoother action gave the Super Single Six (right) the edge. Roy says both were great fun to shoot though!



WRANGLER VS. SUPER SINGLE SIX DOES 50 YEARS MAKE A DIFFERENCE?



At 25 yds. the old Super Single Six (right) slammed into 1.25" while the Wrangler did a respectable 3". Ammo was CCI Standard Velocity .22.



At 15 yds. the Wrangler (left) dropped them into 2 3/4" while the sister Super Single Six chimed in with 0.75", both using CCI Mini-Mag ammo.

Exchange. Boy, those were the good old days for sure.

As my birthday neared I gathered yard work and chore savings and came up with about \$45. The gun listed at \$66 and alas, there was no light on the horizon. But, as moms tend to do, she magically made up the difference the next time we were on-base and dutifully signed for the Ruger. "You'll be careful, right," she said looking at me seriously.

I double, triple, pinky-swore I would. The five-day wait took 30 days — at least.

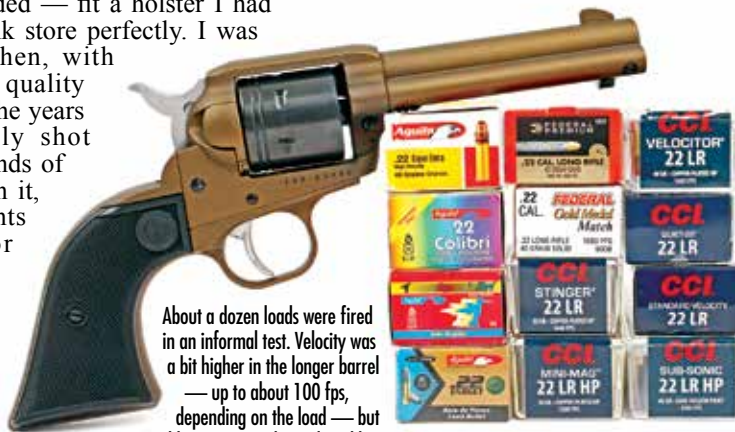
Time passed. Much to my delight, I found the Ruger Super Single Six — adjustable sights and spare .22 Magnum cylinder included — fit a holster I had found in a junk store perfectly. I was in business then, with a "real" high quality sixgun. Over the years I've definitely shot tens of thousands of rounds through it, paying 39 cents (on sale) for Mohawk .22 at the local Whitefront or Fedmart store. The gun belt had loops

to hold .22 cartridges and lord, I felt like a real gunfighter when I wore it.

Hunting And Shooting

Once I got my driver's license my brother, who was about 11 at the time, and I used to go to the high desert east of San Diego. We took the Ruger, a couple of .22 rifles we had — including my "best, first gun," a Remington Model 514 single shot — and usually six or eight boxes of Mohawk ammo. The jackrabbit population grew to fear us, and generations of Oreo cookies, Necco Wafers and cans gave their lives as targets.

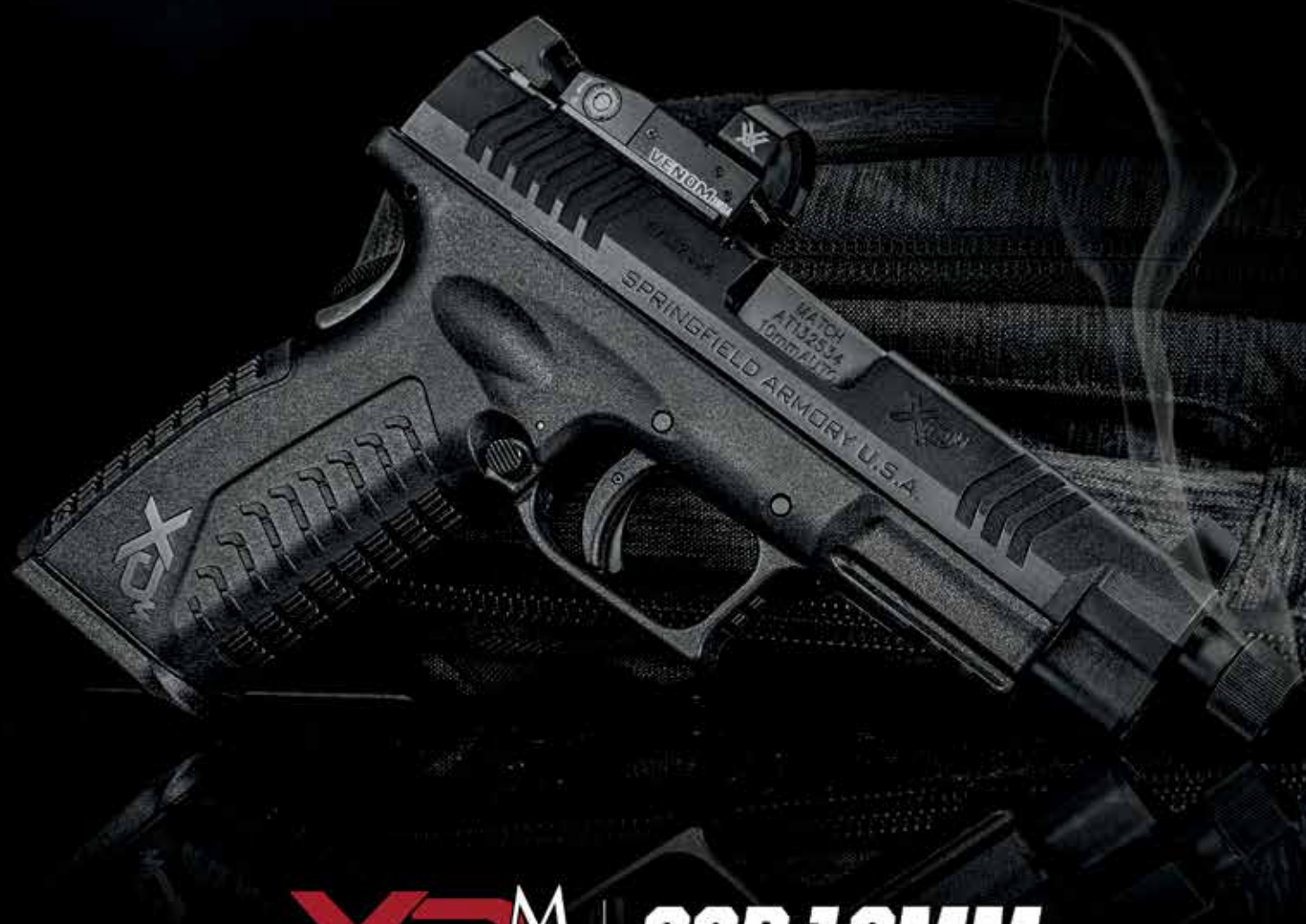
It turned us both into keen-eyed six-gunners and we learned if you took your time that 6"-barreled Ruger could pretty



About a dozen loads were fired in an informal test. Velocity was a bit higher in the longer barrel — up to about 100 fps, depending on the load — but wouldn't matter in the real world.

Continued on page 88

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