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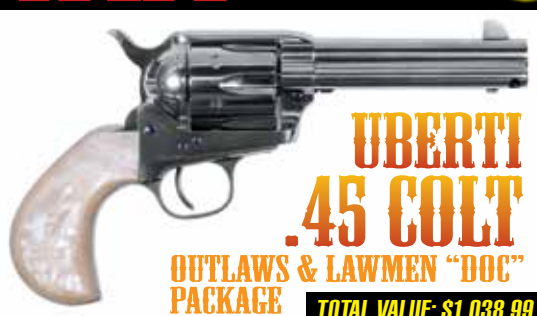


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GUNCRANK LIVE!

Have you ever wanted to shoot the breeze with our resident guncranks? Now you can! Join Editors Roy Huntington, Tom McHale and Brent T. Wheat for casual round-table discussions on relevant and entertaining topics, tips and tricks, don't-repeat cop stories and lots of good-natured jokes. Tune in every Wednesday at 8pm ET on the *GUNS Magazine* or *American Handgunner* Facebook page, or on YouTube at youtube.com/fmgpubs.



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SHOOT AND STREAM

The *GUNS Magazine* Podcast keeps rolling with new interviews and Quick Hits with Brent, Roy and Tom every Friday. Recent episodes have featured our own Dave Workman, Rob Jones and Shari LeGate, as well as conversations on home defense guns, everyday carry gear and the worst guns ever made. Stream anywhere on Apple Podcasts, Google Play, Spotify and gunsmagazine.com/podcast.



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HOUSEKEEPING

Some of you gifted with eagle eyes might have noticed changes in the table of contents. Maybe lots of changes. Never fear, we haven't removed any of your favorite stuff! Know how sometimes you keep doing things, month after month, and finally one day you stop and ask, "Why do we do that?" or "Why do we have this here?" Well, that happens to us too.

Here's the skinny on the shuffling. We're trying to put more content in the number of pages we've got while making it clear what's inside. Our Departments section continues to focus on high-interest subjects every issue — *Carry Options*, *Handloading*, *Pistolsmithing*, *Handgun Hunting* and all the rest you know and love. Everything in the last issue is present and accounted for — it just might have a new home in the contents. Spring cleaning complete.

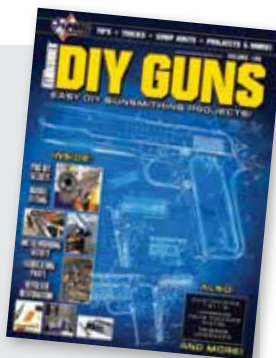
NEW: HANDGUNNER DIY GUNSMITHING!

You're about to gain valuable pro tips on wood-working, metalworking, parts fabrication, lathe and mill techniques, and even a bit of welding. Ready?

The all-new *American Handgunner DIY Guns* book is here — with a new twist. It's now available in multiple convenient formats: the printed versions you know and love and as an eBook for those who prefer tablets and Kindle reading.

Want to upgrade the trigger on your polymer pistol? No problem. How about making your standard pistol shoot 1" groups? Learn dozens of other builds and improvements. Here's the best part: You won't even need a pile of expensive tools. On the other hand, if you're looking for an excuse to add to your tool collection, we'll give you recommendations.

Available at amazon.com — just search for *DIY Guns*.



AMERICAN PISTOLSMITHS GUILD



After the July/August issue went out the door, we got an update from our friends at the American Pistolsmiths Guild. Here's the scoop. Our hearty congratulations to the newest inductees!

- Jason Burton, *Heirloom Precision*, heirloomprecision.com
- Claudio Salassa, *Briley Mfg.*, briley.com
- Ted Yost, *Estate Sporting Ltd.*, estatesporting.com
- Don Fraley, *Advanced Weapons Technology*, awtllc.net
- Kevin Neblock, *K&S Custom Gunsmithing*, ksgunsmithing.com

"Gentlemen — Congratulations on your accomplishments. We are proud to have you as members of the American Pistolsmiths Guild."

—Daniel Batchelor, President, American Pistolsmiths Guild

FULL SIZES FOR XL PEOPLE ONLY?

Have you ever heard some "wise" apothegm? Then nodded your head thinking, "Sounds legit." Here's one. "I'm not big enough to carry a full-sized gun." I take this one as a personal challenge because it's simply not true. Sure, it may be true a full-size gun is larger and heavier, but you can certainly conceal it if you have the desire. Will it be as easy? Maybe not. As convenient? Probably not.

Whatever you do, don't offer up the "I'm too small to carry a full-size pistol" to Gunsite Instructor Il Ling. She can be described as "petite" at five-foot nuthin' but she carries a 1911 chambered in .45 ACP.

I much prefer to carry compact (really

mid-size) and preferably full-size guns. On any given day, you'll catch me with a SIG P320 XCompact with an optic, a full-size P320, a 1911, a S&W M&P full size or maybe a Beretta PX4 Compact Carry. I like big guns and I cannot lie.

Here's how I've solved the concealment problem: A Clinger Holsters No Print Wonder. This nifty IWB invention solves the biggest concealment hurdle — the grip — with a clever hinged belt mounting system. The shell is Kydex and the rear belt clip extends toward your back via a rigid Kydex wing. The front clip attaches to a flexible leather or rubber extension that links the belt attachment to the holster shell. The result is predictable when you think about it. Once the front clip is

These two different Clinger No Print Wonder holsters both have flexible front hinges — one made of rubber and the other leather. The result is great concealment.



fastened to your belt, attaching the rear draws the whole holster alongside your body. The grip, of even a full-sized gun, is drawn in tight to your body so it doesn't protrude to the side or out the back.

Yes, with desire and motivation, you can carry a 1911 or other fluffy guns under a T-shirt. Check it out at clingerholsters.com.



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AMPLE AMMO

I love John Connor's stories and articles and have enjoyed seeing them again in the emails. I'm 78 years old and am sad to see our country in such bad shape. Who could believe it? We need more John Connors on the front lines.

I'm an American Handgunner subscriber and have an ample supply of ammo.

Robert Mefford — Ellijay, GA

Isn't That Dangerous?

I enjoyed reading Dave's take on Loaded Chamber Carry (*Winning Edge*, July/August 2020). He's spot on about the military's prohibition of one in the chamber — at least in 1968 when I was an MP in Vietnam. I didn't know anyone in our company who obeyed the rule. As you can imagine, clearing leather with that flap on the issued holster in-place was difficult, at the least. Much less chambering a round and bringing up on-target. I had an occasion to do a little up close and personal dance with someone wearing unflattering black pajamas who did not have my best interests in mind. I know, without a doubt, had I not violated the rule, I would not be here today.

More to the point, Dave is "on-target" when he points out it takes two hands to make your pistol something other than a club. But you still need to practice, practice and do more practice. If you don't have the skill and trust in your ability to be efficient, your intended target will have your weapon. In that case, leave it at home.

In my 33 years with the San Diego PD and eight years with the U.S. Marshals, I have consistently carried a loaded 1911 with one in the chamber off-duty and will continue to do so in retirement. I also support my local indoor pistol range, which is open during these trying times.

At one point, several years ago, my youngest son saw my pistol on my belt cocked and locked and asked, "Isn't that dangerous?" I told him, "I hope so!"

Bob Nunley
Via email

Dirty Fellow

Just reread your article on the two Ruger 22s (*Insider*, "Wrangler Vs. Super Single Six," Nov/Dec 2019). One thing really hitting home for me was the long-term loaner coming back to you with obvious neglect. I believe the expression "No good deed goes unpunished" is very true. I loaned out my

Marlin 1897CB .22 rifle to a coworker for his kids to shoot. Finally got it back after 11 months, only by asking.

Since we are in the middle of this stay at home order, I thought it would be a great time to give all my firearms a good cleaning. Turns out the Marlin literally took over 12 hours to clean. I have never worked on such a neglected rifle. I have done 4-day training classes, and never had that much trouble cleaning any firearm.

Keep up the great work on your magazine.

CW4 John J. Coyle II USA (Ret.)
Via email

Lee Precision Rocks

I've been in contact with Lee Precision Reloading and their employee, Laine, to help me with a loading challenge. They're going to take a set of their .41 Mag dies, cut them to accommodate the .41 Special dimension I need for my revolver, and then ship them to me. My cost was very reasonable. A new set of dies (I did not want to alter my .41 Mag dies) and a \$15 per die charge to alter, shipping and tax. Not a bad deal at all! So, a big thank you to John Taffin for setting me on this path to start with. Thanks to Starline for making the brass. And, finally a big thank you to Lee Precision for making this possible and at such a reasonable cost.

As always, deepest regards to you and the staff at *GUNS* and *American Handgunner*.

Ron Bruce
Lake City, CO

Good Old Days

I lived in Coronado, CA with my parents. When I was 16 years old my buddies and I would take the ferry across to San Diego and wander downtown looking in surplus stores and pawn shops. In one shop I saw a Marlin 336 in 30-30 for \$55 and had to have it. The guy in the



shop said I could make weekly payments until the rifle was paid off. It took me a while, but eventually I took possession. The shop wrapped a paper bag around the action, I guess to hide the fact it was a rifle, but I suspect the barrel and stock gave it away. We walked through downtown San Diego on Broadway, made our way to the ferry landing, and then back home in Coronado. No one made any comments to us or even gave us suspicious looks. Times have changed! Can you imagine a 16-year old buying a rifle and walking with it through a major city — especially in California?

"Hank"
Via email

Range-Friendly

I agree completely with Tom McHale (*Vantage Point*, May/June 2020) regarding the importance of bringing a friend to the range. Doing so would seem to be the best way of introducing non-shooters to the positive aspects of firearms ownership and increasing our numbers. However, I submit we sometimes work against our own best interests. I'm referring to range policies prohibiting guests. I've belonged to two different gun clubs since moving to my area of Pennsylvania 15 years ago and have been confronted in each case with rules forbidding non-members on the firing line. Clearly a response to concerns over liability, policies such as these hurt our cause in the long run. Just one more way litigiousness brings us down.

John Maher
East Stroudsburg, PA

Anti-Gunners Buying Guns

Suddenly the anti-gun faction is worried about protecting themselves and their families should police presence and response be affected by the pandemic.

And well they should be concerned. Here in Reno, break-ins are on the rise, particularly against the elderly.

I am a 78-year-old geezer who has always believed in the 2nd Amendment. As a Brinks employee I carried for years, and I have had my CCW since leaving California to retire in Nevada. Therefore, I have no reason to rush to my local gun store at this time, as I am already prepared for the current situation and the possible need for personal protection. I have also been a subscriber to *GUNS* and *American Handgunner* for more than 20 years. Keep up the good work. I'll stay subscribed — though only two years at a time. I don't know how much longer I'll last!

Art Schubert
Via email

Hey Art, subscribe for at least five years so you'll be inclined to stay alive to get your money's worth! Glad to see you're carrying these days. Stay safe. —RH

Guncrank Lives!

I subscribe to just one retail gun magazine, *American Handgunner*. I know I can get the digital versions, but I simply haven't gone down that path just yet. I confess I miss John Connor and his *Guncrank Diaries*' wit and wisdom, within your pages, and he was always one of my favorite writers, by far. His storytelling was always entertaining. However, as I opened the most recent edition of *Handgunner* (May/June 2020), I discovered with great joy Dr. Will Dabbs has taken over the column! I just wanted you to know this is a great choice, and I highly approve!

I've read articles by Dr. Dabbs over the past few years and have come to really appreciate his diverse life experiences, reflected so well in his writings. He is a tremendous storyteller, and to me, has a unique, enjoyable writing style. I always look forward to receiving my next issue of *American Handgunner*, and this will make it even more special!

Thank you for continuing to produce a first-class publication that supports the shooting industry and sport!

Robert S. (Steve) Miller
Shreveport, LA

Thanks Robert, and I know Will realizes the big shoes he has to fill. But like you, I have no doubt he'll do it splendidly! Thanks for your many kind words. —RH

Holster Boxes

I love every issue of your magazine and look forward to its arrival in my mailbox. I have now developed a new skill, reading the magazine while on the floor in hysterics. Roy Huntington's article on holsters (*Carry Options*,

Continued on page 57

Former CIA Officer Reveals in New Free Book:

How Elite Special Forces Commandos Enjoy Uninterrupted Power During Covert Missions In The Worst Hellholes On Earth

If you want to learn how Special Forces commandos enjoy uninterrupted power during covert missions in the worst hellholes on earth, this will be the most important message you ever read.

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HOW TO MAKE PERFECT AMMUNITION

Every manufacturing process has a Quality Control (QC) function. In a manufacturing plant, QC is separated from the assembly process so there's no temptation to overlook defects. Since you're the whole kit and kaboodle, you need to develop your own QC processes. Cutting corners while manufacturing ammunition can be a bad thing.

A good QC process begins with organization. MTM Case-Gard offers a universal reloading tray that works for most rounds you're likely to reload. Get several; you'll use them.

While you're at it, pick up some of their ammo boxes for your finished product.

Although MTM makes labels, I suggest you get a package or two of Avery's 8066 File labels. Even if you don't have a computer, you can handwrite on these and stick them on your ammo boxes. Knowing what I will load before getting to the bench, I preprint labels with the caliber, powder charge, bullet and date. These labels stick well, but you can pull them off when it's time to use the box for a different load. Believe me, having those details on your ammo box will come in handy down the road. You don't want to discover you've developed a tack-driver and not remember the recipe.



A potentially lifesaving tip: Label your powder measure. Or keep only the current factory container next to it until finished.

POWDER MATTERS

You know the first rule of gun powder is to keep it dry, right? Still applies today. Keep your powder in its original container until you load it into your powder measure, and then either label the powder measure or leave the container near it until the leftover powder is returned to its original package. Why? Because I've had a reloading session interrupted, not getting back to it for days. When I did, I had no idea what powder was inside and I had to discard it rather than take a chance on using the wrong powder.

Getting the powder weight correct seems to be the number one challenge reloaders face. No matter what the brand, powder measure settings drift, so check periodically to make sure it's still dropping the prescribed load. I use a digital scale when setting up and for checking every 10 to 12 rounds. I used to put my powdered cartridges in a reloading tray, and when it was full or I'd reach my limit for the session, I'd use a flashlight to look into all the cases for double-charged or uncharged cases. Now, I seat each bullet immediately after charging. Might work for you, might not. I still check the powder drop periodically.

When seating bullets, it's imperative you get the overall cartridge length (AOL) correct. Too long, the rounds won't

Take the time to label your work! David uses Avery file labels to keep track.



INSPECT THE RAW GOODS

QC starts with examining your raw materials. Brass is the only reusable component, so it warrants special attention. Although many don't clean their used brass before reloading, I suggest it. It looks pretty, but more importantly you can get a better view during inspection.

Start by keeping your brass separate by caliber. Separating by brand is generally unnecessary unless you're loading high performance rounds for accuracy, hunting or long-distance shooting.

You can clean your brass chemically or in a tumbler. I use a tumbler exclusively now that I've discovered corn cob media works better than walnut shells. Add a bit of auto polish to make your brass shiny rather than spending two to three times as much on a specialized cartridge case polish.

I use a plastic kitchen colander to separate my brass from the media. I pick up and look at every cartridge as I take it from the colander and place it into a reloading tray. Check for splits, bulges, burs and enlarged or distorted primer holes. Depending on the cartridge type, you may have to trim it and clean up some edges.

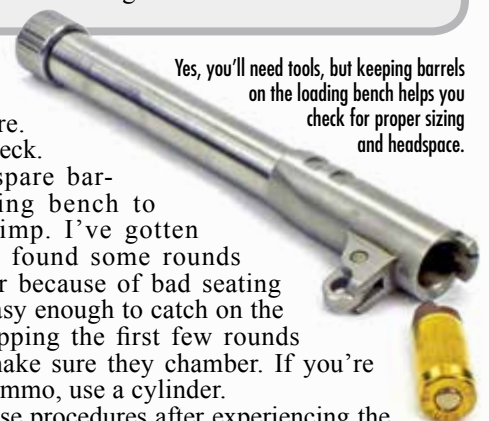
When you're satisfied with your brass, turn your attention to the primers. Make sure you're using correct primers for the load and they've been kept clean and dry. When priming, inspect each round to ensure the primer is flush and not damaged from seating.

chamber; too short and you're increasing pressure. Use a caliper to check.

I keep some spare barrels at my loading bench to check fit and crimp. I've gotten to the range and found some rounds wouldn't chamber because of bad seating and crimps. It's easy enough to catch on the bench by just slipping the first few rounds into a barrel to make sure they chamber. If you're loading revolver ammo, use a cylinder.

I developed these procedures after experiencing the consequences of interrupted range outings. In the worst case, it's possible to blow up a gun, causing injury or death if you don't pay attention to detail.

Slow down and hire yourself as a QC manager.



Yes, you'll need tools, but keeping barrels on the loading bench helps you check for proper sizing and headspace.





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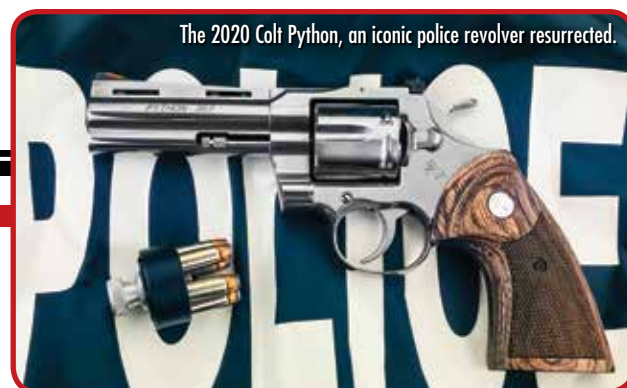
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POLICE HANDGUNS OF THE PAST TEACH US LESSONS RELEVANT TODAY



The 2020 Colt Python, an iconic police revolver resurrected.

IS PRESENT!

If we don't know where we've been, it's harder to tell where we're going. In 2020 Colt re-introduced their top-of-the-line Python revolver. It hit the covers of gun magazines, and likely set a posts record on coltforum.com. But what does that have to do with today, when virtually all American cops carry autoloaders?

In 1955, when Colt introduced their Python .357 Magnum top-line target revolver, it quickly became a prestige gun in law enforcement. Some cops still carried 6" service revolvers, but the concept was fading. Colt brought it out with a 4" barrel, named it the Police Python, and its LE popularity increased.

Few departments issued something that expensive, though it became standard issue for Colorado State Troopers and the Georgia State Patrol bought some. But many departments gave their officers the choice of "Colt or Smith & Wesson, period," and an amazing number voted with their wallets and bought Pythons at a time cops were notoriously underpaid.

THE POWER OF PRESTIGE

Whatever the job, most want to distinguish themselves. When all wear the same uniform, there aren't too many ways to stand out. The Python was one. It was a time when a leather instead of nylon patrol jacket made you something special, because in some departments only those on the elite TPF (Tactical Patrol Force) could wear them. It was a time when cops wore medals on their shirts that said "Pistol Expert" or "Combat Master," and that just ... said something.

Many departments had pistol teams,

because if the Chief wanted to distinguish his department as being particularly good, there weren't many metrics by which to measure. Conviction rate? Up to the prosecutor's office. Crime rate? Largely dependent on the demographics of the community. But if your pistol team excelled, the Chief could show the budget-controlling politicians his agency was, at least in some measurable way, *The Best*.

A lot of cops on those pistol teams shot Colt Pythons. They were more accurate because a "second cylinder



Mas' duty Python (left) and the new 2020 model (right).

hand" came up under the ratchet and locked the cylinder in line with the barrel when the hammer fell. The Colt's 1:14" rifling twist stabilized bullets better than the 1:18.75" twist of rival S&Ws and later, Rugers. The heavier underlugged barrel and .41-size frame of the Python held the gun steadier on target than the .38-size K-Frame S&W. The later L-Frame S&Ws and Ruger GP100 were copies of the Python envelope.

SOME THINGS CHANGE, SOME DON'T

In a microcosm of modern industry, the 2020 Python is a song of MIM and CNC machining while the original Python was a symphony of American craftsmanship, hand-built and polished by Colt's most skilled experts. Retaining the "bank vault lockup" of cylinder and barrel as the hammer fell and the more propitious rifling twist, the New Python in early testing has shown itself the equal of the old Python in accuracy. The company promises its more rugged frame and modernized "guts" will make Python 2020 more durable than Python 1955.

The current domination of the autoloading duty pistol is such the service revolver won't be making a comeback in today's uniform holsters. Really, it's

more of an allegory. Today's analog to a Python "back in the day" would be something like a 1911, perhaps an STI Staccato, or a polymer-framed, striker-fired pistol with its weapon mounted light augmented by a carry optic, flared magazine well and textured grip. Something that says to the knowledgeable onlooker, "That cop knows guns, and is probably fast and accurate with them." Then and now we've had reports of criminals debriefed in custody who said there were times they would have shot a cop, but the way the officer carried the gun — and himself — made them reluctant to start a fight.

Even for today's peace officer not allowed by their agency to carry a revolver as primary duty sidearm, the resurrected Colt Python is something of a symbol of all of that.



For more info: www.colt.com



The Python's weighty underlugged barrel keeps the revolver steady on target and aids recoil control.

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THE HIDDEN UPSIDE OF A CRISIS

Crises bring new gun owners who'll need lots of help understanding the guns and gear they need, and how to use it all.



As I write this, we're experiencing yet another end-of-the-world crisis. It's about my 30th; I've lost count since the Cuban Missile Crisis of 1962. Many react by buying guns and ammunition, a seemingly rational response.

Often the demand comes from those who already own guns, using the circumstances to justify the purchase of a gun they have long wanted. Never let a crisis go to waste, as the cynics love to say. Anecdotal evidence suggests this time is different, with many first-time buyers. Many are surprised to find purchasing a firearm isn't quite as easy as they've been indoctrinated to believe.

EDUCATION WANTED

Isaw a cartoon with a yuppie type in a gun store: "I want to buy an AR-14GLOCKForty loaded with a hundred green-tip exploding bullets in fully automatic clips and I would like to use the gun show loophole, please." It comes as a shock to find they must prove their identity, meet age and residency requirements, pass an FBI background check, and in some states, get a firearm owners' license and complete a waiting period.

These first-time gun owners are going to need help, like the new handgun owner perplexed because he couldn't load 9mm Parabellum cartridges in a Walther .380 pistol. A friend who works at a gun store told of a man who said he had never owned a gun but was buying one now at the insistence of his wife. He bought a pump shotgun. A couple of days later he returned with the shotgun completely disassembled, the parts in a cardboard box, needing help to reassemble it.



These new gun owners are unlikely to read gun magazines. Often our assistance will come down to one-on-one interaction. I'm sure many *Handgunner* readers are already asked for advice on cartridge and firearm selection.

BE NICE, MAKE ALLIES

At times like this I like to remind myself of a few basic courtesies:

Don't gloat. When someone you know who has made a habit of sneering at and mocking gun owners, and now wants a gun, it's tempting to say I told you so. I try to resist. No doubt when the crisis is past many will return to their old ways, but some may see the light and become allies, or at least neutral.

Don't mock their lack of knowledge. Remember what little they know about firearms and shooting comes from TV and is almost always wrong, sometimes hilariously wrong.

I remember some dumb ideas I once had. When first reading reloading articles I didn't know a "grain" was a unit of weight and thought it referred to a kernel of powder. If a load called for 58.5 grains, I pictured counting out 58 kernels and then cutting one more in half. The memory helps me to be patient.

Set a safe and responsible example. Remember, those new gun owners have been indoctrinated with gun owner stereotypes. Some may genuinely believe all gun owners are middle-school drop-outs, gubmint-hating bigots. Civility is always a good thing.

Direct them to professionals. Firearm safety and shooting skills are best taught by experienced instructors using a structured training program. Local gun clubs, wildlife organizations and the NRA can provide training or help locate instructors. Check nra instructors.org for more information.

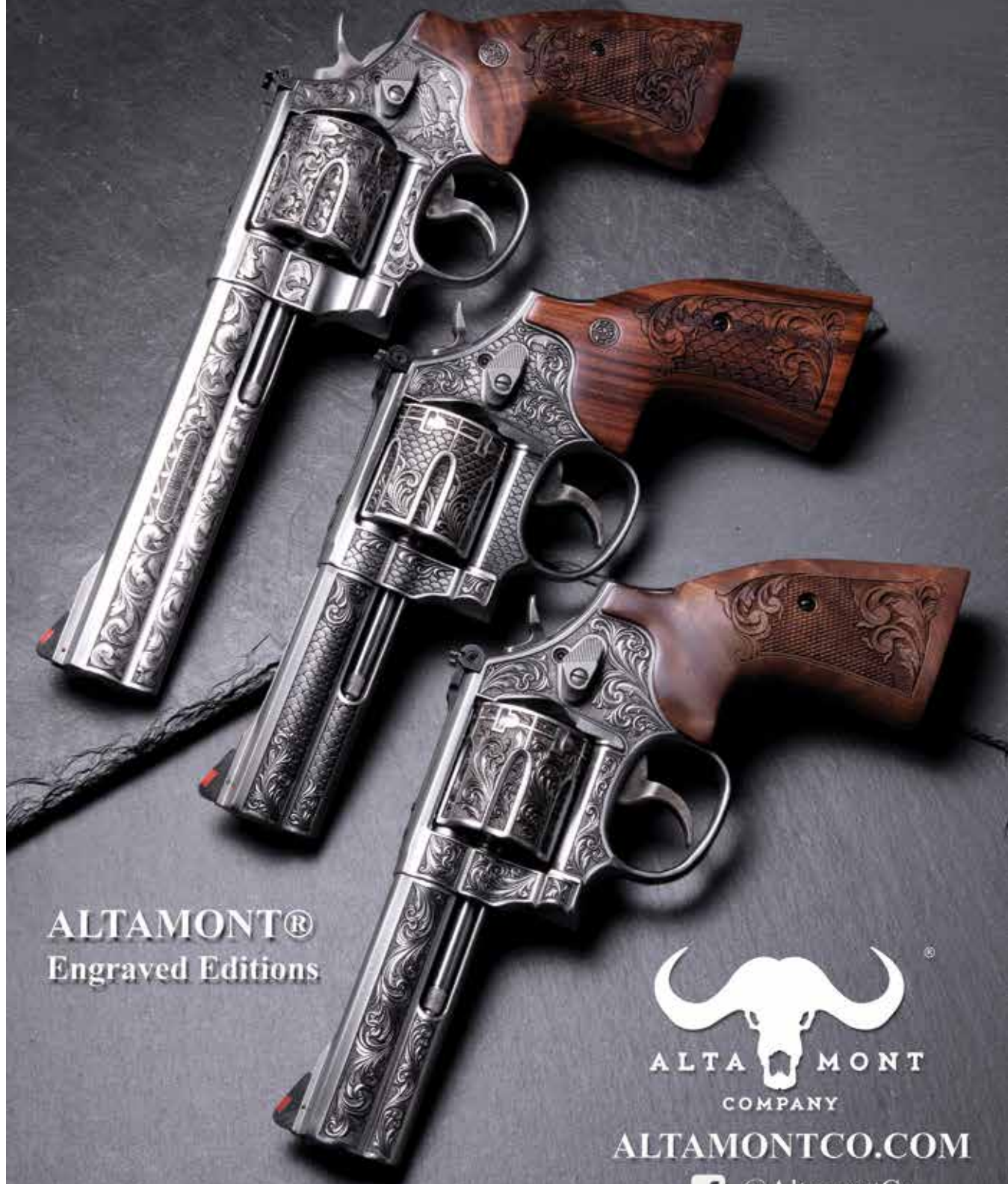
You and I can help with advice on maintenance, cleaning, safe storage, ammunition selection, proper nomenclature and so forth. It's better not to be too pedantic too early. I might even bite my lip and let it go when they ask, "How do I load bullets in the clip?" Later might be time to have them march around saying, "This is my pistol, and this is my gun ..." but for now, focus on essentials.

Speaking of essentials, remember your own safety. In my experience, first-time shooters are self-conscious and very concerned with safety. Any mistakes they make are from not knowing better. Still, a range full of first-time shooters makes me nervous and I know of instructors who wear body armor while teaching. Personally, if I feel I need body armor just to go to the range, I'm likely not going!



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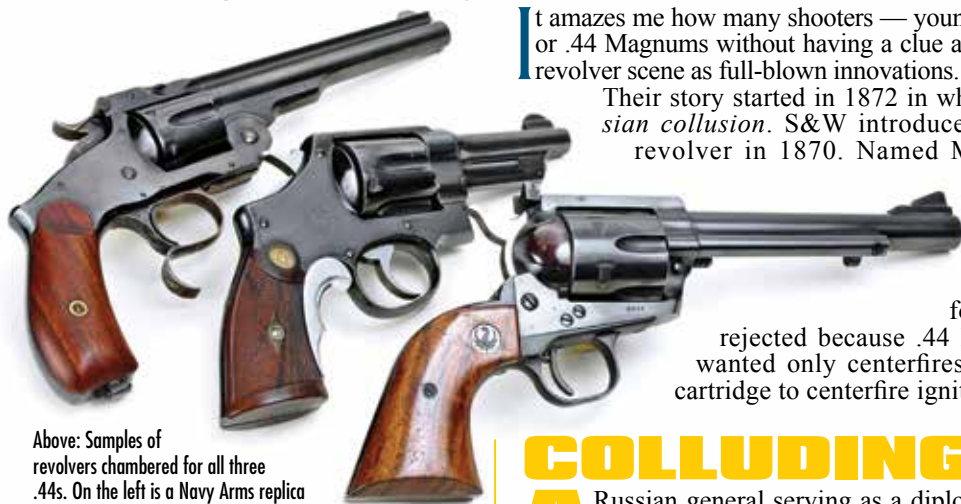
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.44 RUSSIAN, SPECIAL & MAGNUM



Above: Samples of revolvers chambered for all three .44s. On the left is a Navy Arms replica of a 3rd Model S&W .44 Russian. Below, from left to right: .44 S&W Russian, .44 S&W Special and .44 Remington Magnum.



ALL-AMERICAN .44 SPECIAL

Now jump to 1907. S&W wanted to enter the large frame, swing-out cylinder market. As a cartridge for the Hand Ejector, First Model .44 (nicknamed triplelock) they introduced a wild and crazy idea. They lengthened .44 Russian's case to 1.16", using the exact same 246-gr. bullet at a similar velocity of about 750 fps. It was named .44 S&W Special. Factory loads carried either smokeless or black powder. S&W carried the .44 Special through four remodels stopping in 1966. In the 1980s they reintroduced Model 24s (Hand Ejector, Fourth Model) and Model 624s (stainless steel) and in the 21st century there have been some .44 Special limited editions.

Then in 1956 S&W knocked the

It amazes me how many shooters — young and old — talk about their .44 Specials or .44 Magnums without having a clue as to their ancestry. Neither arrived on the revolver scene as full-blown innovations. They were derived in a stair step fashion.

Their story started in 1872 in what might be called *an instance of Russian collusion*. S&W introduced their first metallic cartridge-firing revolver in 1870. Named Model #3, it was chambered for the

.44 Henry, same as used in Winchester's Model 1866 rifles and carbines. Hoping for army contracts S&W submitted the new Model #3 to the U.S. Government

for testing. It was almost immediately rejected because .44 Henry was rimfire — the government wanted only centerfires. So, S&W remodeled the .44 Henry cartridge to centerfire ignition and called it .44/100.

COLLUDING FOR GOLD

A Russian general serving as a diplomat in America took note of the Model #3 and thought it would be an excellent sidearm for the Czar's cavalry. Except he disliked the two-diameter heel-type bullet used in .44/100. The general *had this crazy idea a bullet's body should be the same diameter* and fit inside a cartridge case. Since the Russians promised to pay for their S&W Model #3 in gold, the company was happy to accept their idea. Thus was born the S&W .44 Russian, and henceforth the .44/100 was called .44 American.

Early on factory .44 Russian loads contained roundnose bullets as heavy as 275 grains. Winchester's 1899 catalog listed them at 255 gr., still roundnose. Some of these early factory loads had lube grooves exposed. Later all lube grooves were covered as would be right and proper with lead alloy bullets. Case length was 0.97" and velocity was likely a bit over 700 fps. The black powder charge was 23 grains.

As matters progressed, the Russians wanted changes in the Model #3 and the allure of gold was incentive for S&W to make them. First model .44 Russian Model #3s looked identical to the company's .44 Americans, but soon the Russians wanted some changes. Most notable were humps at the top of Model #3's grips and odd-looking spurs extending from trigger guards.

Barrel lengths were reduced from 8" with the First Model Russians to 7" on the Second Model Russians. Then there was a Third Model .44 Russian with 6.5" barrel. It's recognizable by a large thumb screw on the topstrap. A little-known fact is S&W sold about a quarter million .44s to the Russian Government.



These three .44s — Russian, Special and Magnum — can be handloaded with the same bullet.

gun world on its ear by introducing the .44 Remington Magnum with its introductory vehicle being a strengthened N-Frame. In 1957 the company went to model numbers with .44 Mags getting Model 29. Again, the new cartridge was *a wonder of innovation* (sarcasm intended). The new magnum case was the .44 Special stretched to 1.29". However, bullets changed from 246-gr. RN to 240-gr. SWC with a gas check. Velocity changed also to nominal 1,470

fps. Those factory loads leaded like the dickens! I know — 18 such rounds came with my first S&W .44 Magnum in 1968.

Personally speaking, I've owned and handloaded for a multitude of revolvers for all three of these .44s. Of course, Russian and Special .44s can be safely fired in .44 Magnum revolvers, but I freely admit nowadays I'm far fonder of shooting the Russian version from Navy Arms replica 3rd Model No. 3.

Like me, it's big but gentle.





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Fast forward a few stone-ages, and things haven't changed much. We know the importance and advantages concealed carry provides. Thankfully, we have an abundance of reliable and reputable holster makers like DeSantis Gunhide to help in our endeavor of protecting our families and ourselves.



Whether packing plastic or iron, your pistol of choice will look good and ride securely in a DeSantis rig. On top, a Mini Scabbard, with Auto Ordnance 1911, and down below, an Osprey with Tank's GLOCK 22.



The Dual Angle Hunter is a rugged, beautifully stitched thumb-break holster you can wear strong side, or cross-draw style for convenience.

THE HISTORY

"We didn't invent concealed carry, we just perfected it" is the unofficial motto of this solid 2A company from Amityville, NY. They've been doing what they do best for almost 50 years.

What started as a hobby for Gene DeSantis became a career — which morphed into a family business involving his sons Danny and Chad. Gene made a holster for an FBI friend in the early '70s while he was still in college. Impressed, the friend told Gene he could sell more to fellow agents if Gene would make them. Upon graduation, Gene saw a gap in the holster industry and opened shop, serving the likes of the FBI, Secret Service, TSA, DHS, Customs and Border Patrol.

You needn't be a Federal Agent to appreciate the comfort, style and security a DeSantis holster provides. Picking one up, strapping it on and holstering your pistol, the quality is apparent. Whether made of thermoplastic Kydex, premium leather, suede, or nylon, rest assured, it's made right.

Attention to detail, quality control, speed of delivery and having holsters in stock for newly released guns are just some keys to the success. DeSantis also produces belts, hunting accessories, dog collars and duty belt gear for law enforcement.

Let's highlight some favorites.

DUAL ANGLE HUNTER

This classic thumb-break shuck is made of premium suede-lined saddle leather. You can wear it "conventionally" strong-side, or "conveniently" cross-draw style, because of two separate slots for belts up to 1.75" wide.

The thumb-snap design adds security during rough country excursions but is still quick on the draw. Other features include full trigger-guard coverage, heavy outline stitching, channel groove for front sight and closed toe construction. The Dual Angle Hunter is as tough as the hunters who wear them.

VARIABLE 87

This lightweight IWB holster offers comfort for you and your shooter. Made from 1060D Ballistic Nylon and lined with slick pack cloth for a smooth, quick draw. Features include the DeSantis Tuckable 360 clip offering unlimited cant adjustment and integral sweat shield allowing the wearer to mount anywhere on their waistline, at any angle they choose. The Variable 87 is available in six different sizes to accommodate most handguns.

SLIM-TUK

A newer model made of Kydex, with a tuckable 360 nylon C-Clip, offers the wearer unlimited mounting options. You can change the hardware for left- or right-handed carry. Features include full-length front sight groove, ambidextrous mounting, adjustable gun tension, angle adjustable



The Slim Tuk (left) is a Kydex IWB model allowing custom cant and the ability to wear anywhere on your belt. The Variable 87 is made of 1060D Ballistic Nylon. It's a safe, secure and mighty comfortable option of carrying IWB.

for optimal comfort and presentation, and lightweight construction.

MINI SCABBARD

A traditional OWB holster with a stitched fold-over belt loop, this minimalist-style holster has a tension screw allowing custom fit. Made of premium saddle leather, its boned-in perfection adds style to this slightly forward cant for quick presentation. A slim, trim concealable option, especially for a 1911.

OSPREY

This dual IWB/OWB offers versatility on circumstances or choice. Worn OWB, the combination double-belt loop has a traditional stitched loop, with punched rear slot, for a secure anchor system pulling the gun-butt tight against your torso. The removable external front-snap loop allows IWB wear, anchoring the holster to your belt.

ACTION!

You know you've made it big when Hollywood takes notice of your product. Bruce Willis' iconic shoulder rig in *Die Hard* is a DeSantis. He even asked for it by name in the later movies. DeSantis holsters have made appearances in *American Gangster* and *Law & Order* too. Even Arnold and Chuck Norris displayed some DeSantis gear in *Terminator* and *Invasion U.S.A.*

You don't need to be a movie star, federal agent, or even a copper to take advantage of the great gun gear DeSantis Gunhide offers. Their best customers are just regular folks like you and me.

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DIY OPTIC GUNSMITHING

ADD A RED DOT OPTIC TO YOUR PISTOL

"Drop In" should always have an asterisk* next to it. Yes, many parts are marketed as "drop in," and many do just that. However, given the vast array of pistols like the 1911, revolvers and GLOCK clones, slight modifications should be expected with any off-the-shelf part. If you plan accordingly from the start, you'll be better prepared and less frustrated.

Usually it's just a few strokes of a file or stone. Each part can be unique and require different amounts of "tuning" but one thing is universal — *go slow*. I see it all the time, a new part ruined by the owner who was just too eager to make it fit. Sometimes all that's needed is removal of metal the thickness of copy paper — that's two thousandths of an inch. Patience pays.



CAN YOU ADD A RED DOT YOURSELF?

One great DIY for your pistol is adding an RMR style optic. They're easy to see in all lighting conditions and can improve speed and accuracy. George Smith at Evolution Gun Works (EGW) in Pennsylvania offers mounts for over 25 makes of handguns compatible with Trijicon, Viper/Venom, FastFire and Docter mounting standards. Here, I'll install a Venom optic mount on a Colt 1911 with Novak rear sight.

First, be sure to unload the pistol and remove all ammo from the work area. After field stripping the pistol, you must remove the rear sight from the slide. A bench vise allows me to hold the slide

firmly while I use a soft metal drift to hammer out the rear sight. Use leather pads cut from an old belt between the vise jaws and slide to prevent damage and *be careful not to squeeze the slide* to point of bending. Yes, this can happen!

For the drift punch always use something softer than the sight material, like brass or aluminum. If the sight has a set screw, remove it first. Some heat may be required if it's glued in place, but usually slow turning of the proper Allen key works fine.

Tap the factory sight out with the

drift and hammer. Start slowly, then increase force until the optic moves. Once it starts moving continue until it clears the slide dovetail. The hard part is over. Since we'll be installing the EGW part in the existing dovetail, you can always return the pistol to the factory set up so save the sight.

TIME TO OPTI-CIZE!

Next clean the factory dovetail of glue, grease and dirt. I like to dry fit a new part before I do anything else. Most times the part should fit. The EGW part is aluminum, and that makes fitting easy using hand tools. On the first try my mount started into the slide dovetail easily. It moved about 1/4" into the slot with finger pressure from either side. *This is good.* I want a fairly tight fit so the optic won't shift during recoil.

I use an aluminum drift, just a small scrap of aluminum rod about 4" long. I like to wrap one end in duct tape to prevent scratches on my new part. Since this was close to fitting I just used a small hammer to tap it home. I like the Brownells 3/4" gunsmith

Here Greg has installed the new EGW base in the existing Colt factory rear sight dovetail. If you're careful, this is a safe DIY upgrade.



hammer with a brass head on one end and nylon on the other.

Once again tap with increasing force until the optic base in the middle of the slide dovetail. You can use a pencil to mark the middle of the slide and the middle of the base and then hammer into place until the lines meet.

The kit includes setscrews for the base to secure it in the slide dovetail. I give it a little shot of brake cleaner and

After mounting the base to the slide, you simply mount the optic to the base with included Allen screws.



add a dab of (red) LocTite # 271. Now the Venom optic is held on the base with two Allen screws and four positioning studs. For these screws I'll use low strength #222 purple LocTite for easier removal when changing batteries.

Pretty straightforward, eh?  Now go forth and DIY upgrade!

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Photo: SGT Michael R. Goya



Photo: Jared Verde

Above: Will spent five birthdays straight stuck in some wretched desert. Even still, two stood out among the best ever. Left: An aircraft like this one was both home and office for months on end back in the day.



A mother's love is a powerful, beautiful, unshakable, holy thing. It can also manifest in some surprising ways.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO ME

Of all the sundry holidays that so liberally populate the modern Gregorian calendar none is so superfluous as the birthday. For children it's an excuse for unbridled greed and materialism. For those of us above a certain age it's an inevitable and undesirable reminder of our own mortality. If you have to miss one holiday, pick your birthday.

When I was a soldier, we always said the calendar was arbitrary. Christmas was whenever dad was home. Christmas represents the greatest thing ever to happen to humankind; the calendar date, not so much.

Those are indeed some rarefied platitudes. However, after five years straight wherein Uncle Sam had me spending my February birthday in some wretched desert I was suffering from a mighty case of self-inflicted melancholia. As I sat alone in a smelly tent shivering in the cold, a surprisingly common occurrence in deserts in my not insubstantial experience, I wallowed in self-pity there was not a soul within several thousand miles who knew it was my birthday.

The Brotherhood

My piteous reverie was interrupted by a cacophony most discordant. The familiar yet tortured strains of the *Happy Birthday Song* came wafting across the forlorn sand. Just then the tent flap flew open and in walked three remarkably disheveled apparitions. This grating rendition bore little evidence to the more familiar melodious sort.

In walked Rus, Chris and Mike — my combat crew. We were close, as are all filthy guys grown accustomed to corporate institutionalized hardship. Rus car-

ried in his grimy mitts a genuine Hostess Zinger festooned with a comparably genuine conflagrating birthday candle.

We had been languishing in this forsaken locale for quite some while and there wasn't an option of jogging down to the mini-mart for a resupply of poge-y bait. This Zinger, in this austere setting, was itself a most precious thing.

The guys grinned as they deposited the hallowed confection atop my rucksack along with a postcard sporting the grinning visage of a half-naked woman. The racy postcard was also not the sort of thing one tripped over in such rugged spaces. I remain to this day vexed as to how they came by these two remarkable items.

I discreetly wiped away a tear and thanked my buddies genuinely. I blew out the candle, produced my survival knife, and cut the Zinger into fourths so we could all enjoy it equally. I later covertly binned the postcard. Despite the genuine affection it represented it seemed manifestly unwise to roll back home after so long away to have my bride discover such a bawdy trinket. With more than half a century on my own personal Hobbs meter, however, this birthday stands out among them all as the best ever.

Bubbles

Moms. Wow. God sure knew what He was doing when He made those. I was off someplace saving the world thousands of miles from family and home, sleep-deprived, frazzled, foul-smelling and grouchy. It was yet another birthday spent someplace I'd sooner not be.

Mail call is a holy thing to soldiers in the field. In the days before Skype

and ubiquitous data links back to the World, good old-fashioned mail was the lifeline back to things soft, warm and sweet-smelling. This day I had a package. My dour comportment perked at the prospects.

The box was of modest dimensions and externally unremarkable. I took the small parcel to a quiet place so as to explore it with the reverence it warranted. I loosened its bonds with the blade on my Gerber and peered expectantly within.

Inside there was a scrap of soft white cloth carefully folded around a 3x5 card. I gingerly unwrapped the cloth and held it aloft to find a spanking new Mr. Bubble T-shirt. My fingers quivered as I hefted the thing.

Nowadays you can get a Mr. Bubble T-shirt on Amazon for a 10 spot. Back then, however, the only way to obtain the genuine article was to use up enough Mr. Bubble bath soap to acquire the requisite number of proof-of-purchase seals and send off for a copy via mail order. Ordering a Mr. Bubble T-shirt required some serious planning and a great deal of personal hygiene.

I retrieved the card and read it by the dying desert light. Scrawled across the front in my mother's beautiful familiar script it read simply, "I know you've always wanted one. Love, Mom."



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John believes the Freedom Arms five-shot Model 97 is the finest .44 Special "sixgun" ever to come from a factory.



.44 SPECIAL FIVE GUNS

Sam Colt started it all. In 1836 his Colt Paterson became the first truly workable revolver. Chambered in both .36 and .40, it was a smallish, somewhat fragile five-shooter. Groups like the Texas Rangers took to the new repeating pistol. However, Sam Colt went bankrupt and that could've been the end of that except for another Sam.

By the late 1840s we were at war with Mexico and Ranger Sam Walker went east looking for Sam Colt to see if he could come up with a viable revolver. The Sams put their heads together and came up with the 1847 Walker Colt. It weighed 4.5 lbs and packed six .44 round balls over 50- to 60-gr. of black powder. Many believed it could stop man or beast out to 200 yards. The true sixgun had arrived.



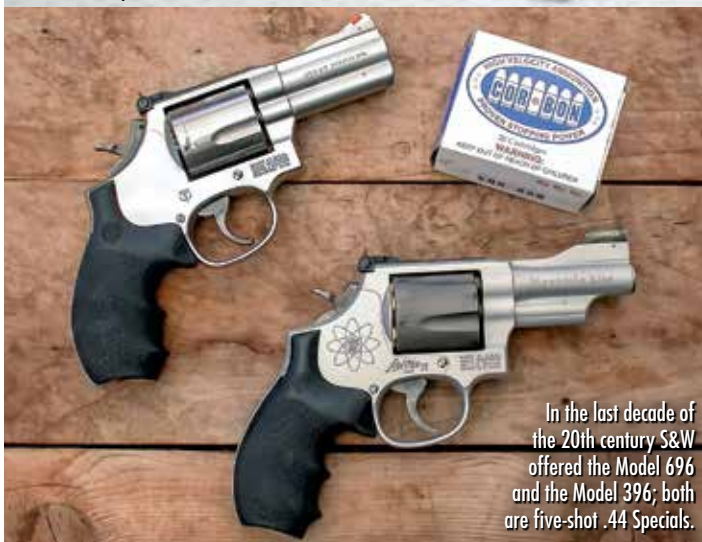
Ruger now catalogs a 3" five-shot .44 Special GP100.

THE .44 SPECIAL SIXGUN ERA

Over the next three decades Colt six-shooters evolved through several stages: the Dragoons, the 1851 Navy, the 1860 Army, the Cartridge Conversions, the 1871-72 Open-Top and the 1873 Colt SA Army. Meanwhile, over at S&W, we had the .44 American in 1869 followed by the Model #3 Russian and the New Model #3. In 1907, the first .44 Special arrived with the S&W New Century, or Triple-Lock — the first of what we now call N-Frames. This First Model Hand Ejector was followed by three more Hand Ejectors: the Second Model, Model 1926 and the 1950 Model Target.

Meanwhile Colt chambered both their SA Army and the double action New Service in .44 Special. We reached the epitome of Colt SA .44 Specials with the New Frontier in the early 1960s.

These were true sixguns and in the early 1960s, .44 Special shooters had a choice of the S&W 1950 Military or 1950 Target or the Colt SA Army and New Frontier. Then disaster struck! Both Colt and S&W dropped the .44 Special from production.



In the last decade of the 20th century S&W offered the Model 696 and the Model 396; both are five-shot .44 Specials.

RESURRECTION

Fortunately, Charter Arms enlarged their .38 Special to create the five-shot .44 Special Bulldog. It wasn't as beautifully finished as the Colts and S&Ws and wouldn't handle the heavy loads some used in .44 Special sixguns. However, it was a .44 Special.

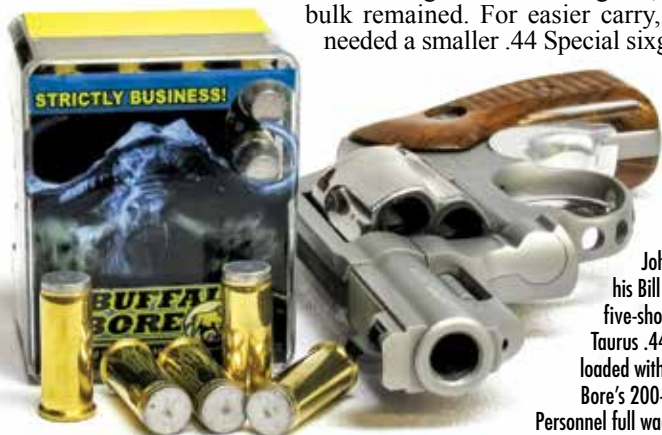
Ruger arrived on the sixgun scene in the early 1950s but didn't produce a .44 Special with the early .357 and .44 Magnum Blackhawks.

Since .44 Specials were so hard to find, Skeeter Skelton in the 1970s led the way introducing conversion of .357 Three Screw/Old Model Blackhawks and the S&W Highway Patrolman to .44 Special while urging both companies to bring the .44 Special back. Eventually Colt chambered their 3rd Generation SA and New Frontier in .44 Special and in the 1980s S&W resurrected the 1950 Target as the Model 24/624. These were all true sixguns, however they too were dropped and only sporadically have we seen .44 Special sixguns from both companies.

Ruger finally brought a New Model Flat-Top .44 Special for a Lipsey's special run. Since then we've been able to find Ruger .44 Specials in both blued and stainless versions and Flat-Top Blackhawk and Bisley Models.

SPECIAL OR MAGNUM?

Since the .44 Magnum arrived in 1956, why would one want a .44 Special? While many of us attach a spiritual quality to the .44 Special, the principal reason is they're lighter (usually by about a half-pound) so they're easier to carry. Also, most .44 Magnum shooters rely on .44 Special loads for everyday use. The .44 Special sixguns are basically the same size and fit the same holsters as a .44 Magnum. While lighter, the bulk remained. For easier carry, we needed a smaller .44 Special sixgun.



John keeps his Bill Oglesby five-shot custom Taurus .44 Special loaded with Buffalo Bore's 200-gr. Anti-Personnel full wadcutters.



John's family is well-protected by a pair of Malamutes and a pair of Charter Arms Five-shot Bulldogs.



S&W's .44 Magnum five-shot Combat Magnum makes an excellent .44 Special.

DOWNSIZED FIVE-SHOOTERS

S&W led the way in down-sizing sixguns. In 1935 the first .357 Magnum arrived in a full-sized .44 Frame. Thanks to the urging of Bill Jordan, S&W came up with a smaller .357 Magnum, the Combat Magnum, which was built on the .38 Special K-Frame. Nonetheless, it still held six rounds. To fit larger-diameter .44 Special cartridges, the company had to lose one, resulting in the five-shot .44 Special.

As we entered the last decade of the 20th century, we had two five-shot .44 Specials available. Charter Arms still offered the .44 Bulldog while Taurus produced a five-shot .44 Special, the Model 431. I've often mentioned there are two Charter Arms stainless steel Bulldogs stashed in the two bathrooms in

Continued on page 58

GRAIL GUNS

Occasionally I run across someone discussing their ultimate “Grail” gun. I often wondered what factors other handgunners considered in their criteria. In the *American Heritage Dictionary* I found a definition of Grail: “the object of a prolonged endeavor.” I guess it would be safe to say we’ve all longed for our own version of a Grail Gun. For some, this may be a highly customized piece, perhaps a family heirloom, maybe even a vintage firearm with a well-known history or rich tradition. We all



Mark's Grail Gun is this Freedom Arms Model 83 in .44 Mag. with 10" octagon barrel and Leupold scope.

have our opinion of what a Grail Gun represents. Mine is a pure hunting handgun.

I've reached the stage in life where I should be exiting the “acquisition phase” and gravitating more toward the “liquidation chapter.” Why do I keep buying guns? Well, I can't help myself! I was wanting (notice, I said wanting, not needing) an object of a prolonged endeavor. For me, it would be the hunting handgun of my dreams — a Grail Gun.

A COSTLY FRIEND

Talking to my friend Bob Baker of Freedom Arms usually ends up costing me money. This time was no different. I shared with Bob what I had in mind and it all started in the form of a Model 83 in .44 Magnum.

The double-four can handle most anything within

sane revolver ranges and I had lots of ammo, Redding dies, and a shelf full of reloading components. Regardless of whether it's whitetail deer on the farm, wild boar, black bear, or just about any other critter I may pursue, the .44 Mag. can get the job done.

Next, I wanted a 10" barrel with a desire to squeeze out as much velocity as possible. I chose an octagon barrel — just because it's cool! It weighs a tad bit more than a round barrel version and I wanted the extra weight to help mitigate recoil — but mainly because of cosmetics, to be honest. The barrel would wear an inverted crown. I opted for a sight deletion as I would fit a scope, so the barrel is naked. Freedom Arms offers their Lovell mount for scopes and it holds the optic securely.

The Model 83 comes with wine wood grips. Black micarta

is an option too but the wine wood grips look just swell. An action job and trigger stop were in order.

I elected a field-grade matte finish. After all, this will be a serious hunting handgun and I didn't need the pretty, polished finish normally found on Premiere Grade guns.

When I received the revolver, I shipped it to my good friend Ken Kelly of Mag-na-port International and Ken worked his magic with a dual trapezoidal porting. He even jeweled and polished the trigger and hammer. Ken has been customizing my revolvers for many years — when he's finished, they're a joy to shoot!

I mounted a Leupold 2.5-8x silver scope Lovell mount to finish the job. Now we have a serious hunting revolver! It goes without saying — the fit and finish of Freedom Arms revolvers are well known. The timing and lock-work are akin to a bank vault.



Any Grail Gun worth its salt has to have custom work, like Mag-na-port quad-trapezoidal ports and inverted crown.

THE HOLY GRAIL

Now it was time to hit the range. It came as no surprise how well this gun shoots — better than I am capable. The dual-trapezoidal ports help reduce muzzle rise and the revolver behaves itself even with magnum loads. The action and trigger are smoother than silk. I've put a bunch of rounds downrange and the barrel likes Hornady's 240-gr. XTP and HSM factory load of Sierra's 240-gr. JHC bullets. One of my favorite loads so far is with Unique and Sierra's 240-gr. JHC. At this point, I've only shot this revolver out to 100 yards and Hornady's 240-gr. XTP would take out groundhogs all day long. I still have a lot

more testing to do with factory ammo and handloads. You guessed it — I'm having way too much fun.

Hornady is coming out with their new Handgun Hunter lineup and Federal Premium has announced their 300-gr. Solid Core offering. There is much more work to do with handloads including Nosler, Speer Deep Curl and Swift A-Frame bullets. With preparation for several upcoming hunts, including boar and black bear, I've got plenty of shooting and testing ahead.

The question comes to mind ... Once you get a “Grail” gun, does it remain a “Grail” gun, or do you continue searching for the next one? I'm not sure. I'm just thankful I now have an object of a prolonged endeavor!



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WHEN "9MM" ISN'T 9MM



That dog won't hunt!
This story began when
a reader's acquaintance
tried to fit a 9x19mm into a
Walther PPK/s 9x17 (.380 ACP).

Having met a new handgun owner perplexed to find 9mm cartridges wouldn't fit in his .380 Walther PPK/s, *Handgunner* reader Jack Walsh sent a note suggesting a discussion about 9mm cartridges. Sorting out all the various 9mm cartridges could fill a book, but we can try to cover some of the more popular examples.

The most popular "9" by a huge margin is the 9mm Parabellum, also known as the 9mm Luger and 9x19. Parabellum comes from the Latin proverb *si vis pacem, para bellum* (if you seek peace, prepare for war). It dates to 1902 and was developed for the Luger pistol, hence the 9mm Luger name.

The 9x19 designation indicates bullet diameter and case length in millimeters. It's been called the perfect semi-auto pistol cartridge and features a rimless case with a deep, strong extraction groove and a strong casehead area. The ratio of cartridge length to diameter enhances feeding reliability.

In the late 19th century, semi-auto pistol designers realized it was difficult to make rimmed revolver cartridges feed reliably. One approach was bottleneck cartridges. Another adopted by Colt on its .25, .32, and .38 ACP cartridges was a "semi rim," slightly larger than the case diameter. The 9x19 headspaces on the case mouth engaging a ledge at the front of the chamber. Its success proved the system worked.

Colt used the case-mouth system

of headspacing on its rimless .380 ACP cartridge (1908). In Europe many refer to it as the 9mm Short and more formally 9x17mm under the European standard system.

These two are the "9s" American shooters are most likely to encounter.

Left to right: .380 ACP, 9mm (9x19mm) and .38 Super.

9MM EXAMPLES

9x18 ULTRA (9MM POLICE): Developed in 1936 as a possible service cartridge for the German Luftwaffe, it's slightly more powerful than the .380 ACP, but still suitable for blowback pistols. With war imminent, the project was shelved. Around 1972 Walther revived it for use in the West German Police PP Super until it was discontinued in 1979. SIG, Mauser and Benelli also made some blowback pistols for 9x18 Ultra.

9x18 MAKAROV (9MM MAKAROV, 9MM MAK, 9x18 PM, 9x18 SOVIET): Unlike almost all other nines, which use bullets of 0.355" to 0.356" diameter, the 9mm Mak uses 0.365" bullets. It's widely used in Soviet bloc nations as a handgun and submachine gun cartridge.

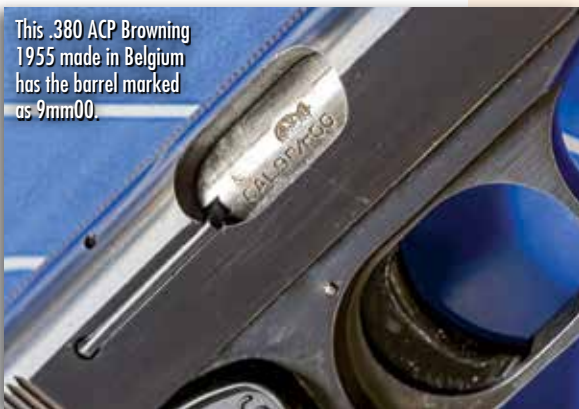
9x20 SR (9MM BROWNING LONG): Developed in 1903 along with the FN 1903 pistol. Like the Colt series, it's semi-rimmed, hence the SR designation. It's less powerful than the 9x19, since it was a blowback design unlike the locked-breech Luger. Sweden adopted the FN as their military sidearm in 1907. When supply was cut during WWI Husqvarna manufactured under license. Made to high standards, they became available as surplus in the U.S. in the 1960s. Many

were converted via a chamber sleeve to accept .380 ACP ammunition.

9x21 (9x21 IMI, 9MM IMI, 9MM ITALIAN): Italy and some other nations prohibited private citizens from using 9x19 ammunition, as it was a "military" cartridge. To quote the late great Jeff Cooper, "silly rules provoke transparent evasions." The 9x21 used a longer case with bullets seated deeper, so overall length (and ballistics) were virtually the same as 9x19.

9x23 WINCHESTER (VARIATION, 9x23MM COMP MADE BY STARLINE): Intended for practical shooting competition, the 9x23 combined the rimless design, strong case head and extraction groove of the 9x19 with the 23mm case length of the .38 Super. Designed by competition enthusiast John Ricco in collaboration with Winchester, it solved feeding problems of .38 Super in double-stack magazines. Delayed by a legal battle between Ricco and Winchester, it faded with reduced USPSA/IPSC power factors — a shame as it is a very good cartridge.

9x25 DILLON: Based on a necked-down 10mm Auto case, the 9x25 Dillon produced even more pressure than the .38 Super, and with a good compensator almost eliminated muzzle rise. It had a brief run as a competition cartridge but is seldom seen at matches anymore. I most remember the ferocious muzzle blast. Can you hear me now?



This .380 ACP Browning 1955 made in Belgium has the barrel marked as 9mm00.

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THE PISTOL-CALIBER CARBINE FOR DEFENSE

TIGER MCKEE

I've never been interested in handgun-caliber carbines. "If you have a platform that size," I thought, "why wouldn't it be a rifle caliber, with the advantages of additional velocity?" In other words, an AR carbine. But my opinion has changed — Ruger's PC Carbine was the catalyst. Turns out, the pistol caliber PC Carbine is an impressive weapon for defense, especially in the home.

Pistol-caliber carbines make a lot of sense. Commonality — in this case, the ability to use the same ammo for handgun and carbine — is nothing new. It was common practice in the wild west with .44/.40.

The concept isn't new for Ruger either. From the mid '90s to 2007 they produced carbines in 9mm and .40 used with great success by law enforcement. But it faced stiff competition from the AR platform, which became standard issue for patrol work.

Carbine Reborn

Ruger reintroduced the PC Carbine in 2017, in 9mm and .40, with several updates in a variety of configurations.

It's a take-down carbine — push a button, twist and the PCC separates into a small, compact package that's perfect for travel. The new PCC uses Ruger's SR-Series and Security-9 Ruger mags and includes an adapter for GLOCK mags. The original PCC's trigger wasn't ... However, the new PCC has a smooth and crisp trigger, breaking at 5½ lbs.

The ability to carry one type of ammo in identical magazines is a bonus. It simplifies preparation and creates more options when responding to a threat. Arming family members with pistols and carbines as appropriate simplifies and exponentially raises potential.

The first requirement for any defensive weapon is reliability. *I fired my PCC with trash ammo I picked up off the Shootrite range and it functioned flawlessly.*



Split it in half, and you've got a compact "go anywhere" package. Just remember to check local/state laws to ensure you're compliant when it comes to gear like magazines.

The PCC is available with an adjustable stock. The fixed stock model has spacers to adjust length of pull. Weight and length are about the same as an AR carbine, which is easily handled by most members of your "team." You can swap charging handle and mag release from side to side.

The Ruger PCC is a platform you can easily set up to fit your needs. Throw one of the new 9mm revolvers into an ankle holster — revolvers

Continued on page 70

FIOCCHI

DEFENDS



Fiocchi—a global leader in defensive ammunition—merges the latest cartridge technology with its Old-World heritage craftsmanship to deliver the new Blue Guardian defense ammo. Building on its years of producing NATO-certified cartridges and components, such as heavy metal-free primers, Fiocchi brings its innovative, manufacturing expertise to bear on a new line of specialized ammo for personal defense applications.



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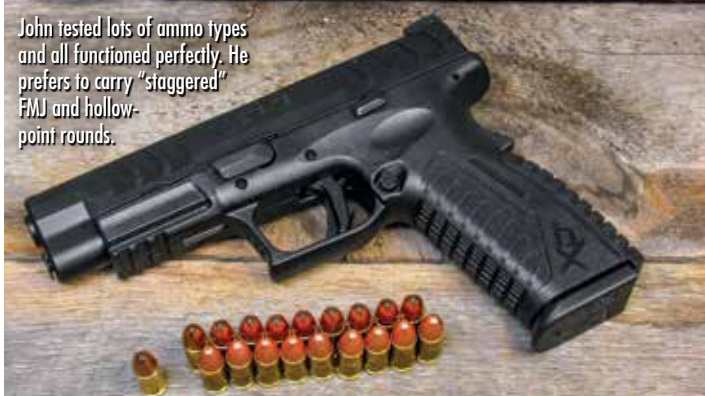


JOHN TAFFIN

The Hellcat isn't much larger than a five-shot J-Frame and carries 12 rounds plus an extra in the chamber.

A TRIO OF SPRINGFIELD ARMORY NINES

John tested lots of ammo types and all functioned perfectly. He prefers to carry "staggered" FMJ and hollow-point rounds.



The Springfield Armory Ronin Operator 9mm 1911 is exceptionally attractive with a two-tone finish. It also ships in a zippered protective case.



A "CLASSICS" GUY ADOPTS POLYMER PISTOLS AND 9MM 1911S

Targets fired at 20 yards with the Springfield Armory XDM Elite.



It's 1980 and the sixgun is king! Most police officers carry a revolver and the vast majority of those are chambered in .357 Magnum. Thanks to Col. Cooper the .45 ACP 1911 is becoming more and more popular. The 9mm? Nobody really cares. If someone had given me 1,000 to 1 odds the 9mm would become the most popular chambering in my lifetime, I would've looked upon it as a sucker bet and the waste of a good dollar.

I invited a dozen plus men to gather in 1986 — an event later known as the Shootists Holiday. At this first meeting everyone brought a good six-gun or two, with one exception. A man destined to become a wonderful friend, Jerry Danuser, *had the audacity to show up with a 9mm pistol* — one few knew of — the GLOCK 17. And the world changed.

Today a lengthy list of manufacturers produce an even longer list of quality pistols with polymer frames. Enter Springfield Armory. While the company offers a stunning array of rifles and pistols in a plethora of calibers, let's consider three very different 9mm introductions.

XD-M Elite 9MM

Springfield Armory's lineup of striker-fired, polymer-framed pistols originated with the XD, later followed by the "more-features" XD-M. Offered in a variety of sizes, the family serves well as concealed carry or home-defense pistols, competition, informal target shooting or just plain plinking.

The latest family within a family is the Elite Series. As I write this, there are four basic models: the Elite 4.5", the Tactical OSP with 5.28" threaded barrel and optical sight mount, a shorter 3.8" carry version, and the 5.25" competition model.

The 4.5" Elite weighs in at 29 oz. and has a hammer-forged 4.5" barrel and forged steel slide, both of which are Melonite finished and matched with a black polymer frame. The slide has grooves on both sides at the front behind the front sight and at the rear in front of the rear sight making slide manipulation easy.

The polymer grip frame has aggressively molded gripping surfaces on all four sides which aids in a very secure hold. It also comes with a flared mag well which I removed for my everyday use. For me this is an everyday packin' pistol, not a competition pistol. Springfield Armory supplies two 20-round magazines and interchangeable back straps. However, as it came it fit me just fine. The front of the frame has a molded in rail should one prefer to mount a light or laser.

It was not until after WWII when



John found the Ronin Operator to be plenty accurate when firing 20-yard, five-shot groups.

much easier to see square-notch rear sights matched up with a square front sight appeared. Now most pistols and revolvers come with good sights. The Springfield Armory Elite is an exception to the rule. It does not have good sights, it has *great sights* consisting of a white outline "U" shaped rear sight matched with a red fiber-optic front sight. They are exceptionally easy to see and when I extend the Elite in my shooting hand they effortlessly appear.

The new META trigger defines the new XD-M Elite family. It measures 6.5 lbs. on my Brownells Trigger Pull Gauge, feels quite smooth and releases at 90 degrees. Safety features include a trigger insert leaf and easily engaged grip safety. There is also a cocking indicator on the back of the slide and a loaded chamber indicator.

It's still winter as I write this — at least 40 degrees below my comfort zone — so I would expect tighter groups in better weather. I'm nowhere near as tough as I used to be! I fired 10 different factory loads ranging from 115 to 147 grains in both hollow-point and full metal jacket configurations with no malfunctions of any kind. My most accurate loads at 20 yards proved to be the SIG SAUER 124-



John geared up this Springfield Armory Hellcat with a Shield Sights RSMc Red Dot optic and New Pacifica Leather holster.

gr. FMJ at 1,215 fps and a 1" group for five shots and the 115-gr. Blazer Brass FMJ clocking out at 1,160 fps. With its 20-round capacity as an everyday packin' pistol I carry it with staggered rounds — a JHP followed by an FMJ followed by a JHP — making it suitable for any situation that should arise.

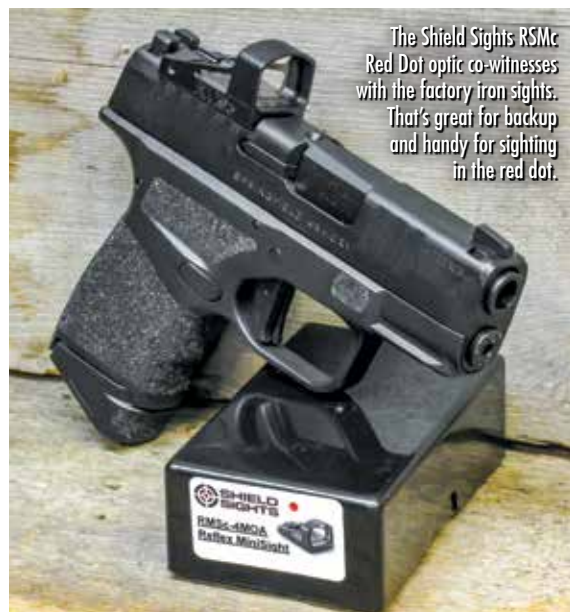
Hellcat Micro-Compact

The Hellcat shares its name with the venerable Grumman F6F Hellcat, a carrier-based fighter plane in the Pacific from 1943 through 1945. Dodge also uses the name Hellcat for its 2020 Challenger 717 HP and 797 HP muscle cars. So, this Springfield Armory Hellcat is in good company.

The Hellcat is at the opposite end of the size spectrum from the Elite. It's a 17.9 oz. Micro-Compact 9mm pistol designed for pocket or holster carry and features a 3" hammer forged barrel. It comes with two magazines with 11- and 13-round capacity. That translates to just *one round short of a J-Frame with two speedloaders* all in one package!

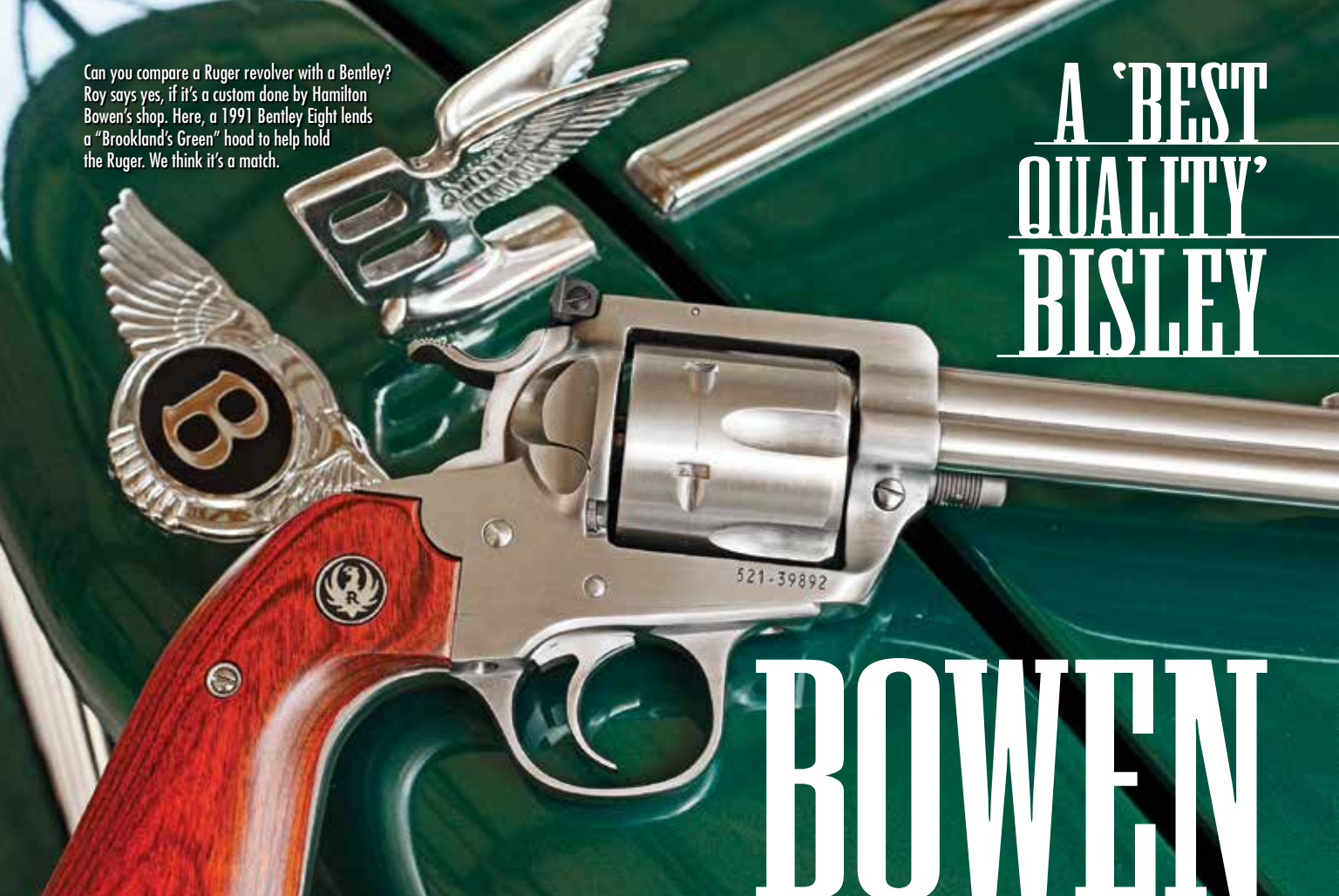
It has the same finish as the Elite and the same excellent trigger at 6.5 lbs. However, the gripping surface of

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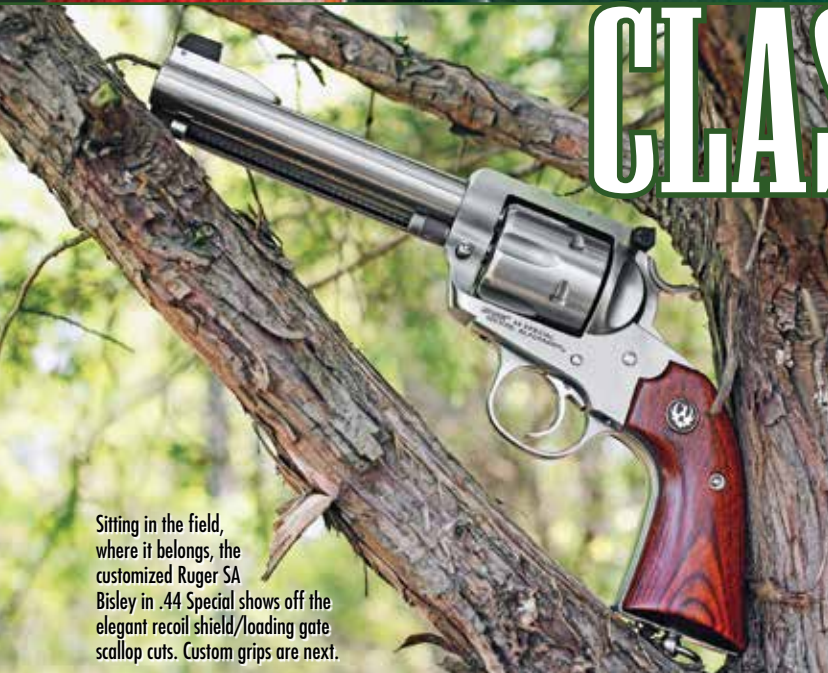
Can you compare a Ruger revolver with a Bentley? Roy says yes, if it's a custom done by Hamilton Bowen's shop. Here, a 1991 Bentley Eight lends a "Brookland's Green" hood to help hold the Ruger. We think it's a match.

A 'BEST
QUALITY'
BISLEY



BOWEN CLASSIC ARMS .44 SPECIAL

ROY HUNTINGTON



Sitting in the field, where it belongs, the customized Ruger SA Bisley in .44 Special shows off the elegant recoil shield/loading gate scallop cuts. Custom grips are next.

It's easy to casually toss terms like "elegance" or "grace" into a conversation. "A Bentley's innate elegance showcases a classic British style." That works. "She lends a certain grace to her gestures, relaxed yet assured." That works too. But when you're talking about a revolver, is it as easy? Do they even fit into the category?

Of course they do.

Just think pre-war Colts, minty S&W Hand Ejectors or the sublime blue on a proper double rifle. Revolvers — and especially single action revolvers — are naturally graceful, full of blended features, flowing lines and often surprising angles. There's no doubt a single

The Belt Mountain base pin adds precision and reliability, while the "black powder" chamfer cut to the front of the cylinder not only looks fetching, it saves the insides of leather holsters too!

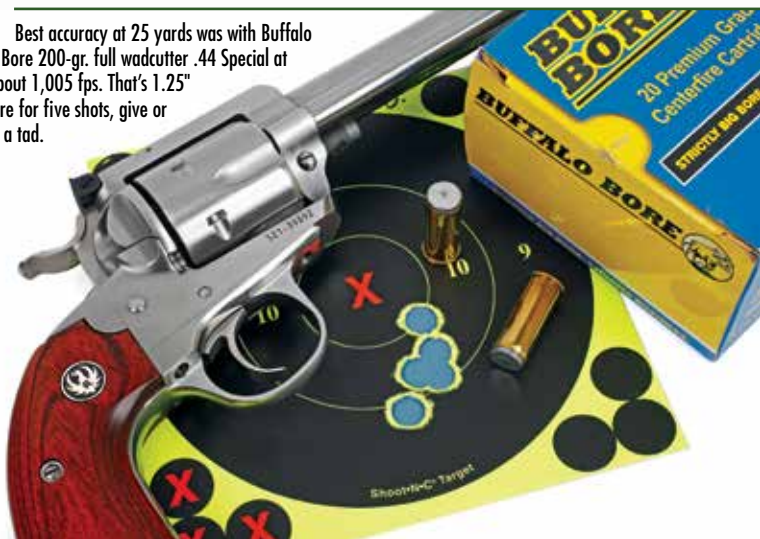


Note how the ejector rod extends the full length of the barrel, offering 110 percent ejector rod length. Sights are Bowen's Rough Country with big dot tritium front. The lanyard loop is there, as any proper revolver should have.



Roy found the customized Ruger enjoyed anything he fired in it. Here's a partial mix of factory ammo. The Black Hills cowboy load (a 210 at about 720 fps) was pleasant and plenty accurate enough for a trial gun or for fun on the range.

Best accuracy at 25 yards was with Buffalo Bore 200-gr. full wadcutter .44 Special at about 1,005 fps. That's 1.25" there for five shots, give or take a tad.



action crafted by a master's hand can't be both elegant and graceful. You only need to look at this Bowen Classic Arms Bisley to see it.

And — be still my fluttery heart — it's a .44 Special.

BCA

Hamilton Bowen was destined to work with steel. Completing undergraduate study in History and English,

stream gunsmithing concentrated on rifles and shotguns, so in 1980 when Hamilton commenced operations as Bowen Classic Arms, he, as he says, "Entered his apprenticeship to himself."

From then to today, Bowen Classic Arms has become a mainstay when it comes to the custom revolver. BCA's parts, tooling and techniques have formed a strong backbone for custom gunmakers to draw upon. However,

BCA's work remains distinctive. If I see a revolver on a table across the length of a room, I can tell at a glance if it came from Hamilton's shop. Hamilton also literally wrote the book on custom revolvers, and in the book details the history, design, craftsmanship, highs, lows and challenges of this most-marvelous of devices — a revolver. BCA is grounded in the round-gun, and it shows.

BCA takes a plebeian, plain-Jane factory base gun,

and through the magic of an experienced, careful eye, an artist's take on engineering — and no small amount of sheer panache — turns the base gun into something any Bentley would be proud to compare itself with.

I've known Hamilton for close to 30 years. To know him is to look forward to a letter or email from him — "Dear Roy, thank you for yours of April 1, leading me to regard the idea of a" What follows is always a journey only a story-teller, well versed in the English language, can lead one. His comments always stand out, even if they are modest — which they always are. Knowing Hamilton, you can clearly see the same in his guns. Each looks simple at first, until you look further, then in spite of the modesty, the "elegance of design and execution" BCA is famous for stands out. At some point, you abruptly realize — your eye was initially fooled. There's much more here than you thought.

Ruger's SA

Out of the box, any Ruger single action is a work horse of practical features and is at least serviceably accurate. I own many, and indeed, my very first handgun was a Ruger Super Single Six 50+ years ago. I'm fond of the Ruger brand, Bill Ruger's attitude of catering to "American" shooters, and am especially fond of their revolvers, eventually leading me to this project.

But first, a tease.

Continued on page 60

The extra-long ejector rod assures you get the trash out. Note the bold, shallow "V" BCA Rough Country rear sight.



THE RUGER-57

The revolutionary Ruger-57 is reliable, sexy and cool.



A Love Story

WILL DABBS, MD

The Ruger-57 (left) occupies a similar niche as does this .22TCM 1911 from Rock Island Armory. Both guns are a hoot to shoot.



Just what is love anyway? Poets have spilt rivers of ink on this torrid subject. Crooners from the beginning of time have infused their particular medium with enough of this gooey stuff to drown the planet.

Love is ethereal, soft, confusing and powerful. Love is something more easily described than defined. Love is

undeniably abstract, yet you invariably know it when you see it.

I have loved my wife since my 16-year-old eyes first fell upon her. I have loved my kids from the moment I met each one of them, pink and screaming. I love both my country and my dog. I love freedom, pizza, the movie *Aliens*, and a roaring fire in the fireplace on a cold winter's day. *I also*

find that I really, really love the new Ruger-57 pistol.

Details

In a sea of many splendored handguns littering the nation's sundry gun emporia, the Ruger-57 is legitimately unique. Lightweight, high tech, beautifully executed, and cool beyond the capacity of the language adequately

Inexplicably, Will wants to buy his Ruger-57 new gifts like this thumb-sized Streamlight LR-8G combination white light illuminator and green laser. Is he okay? Or just smitten?

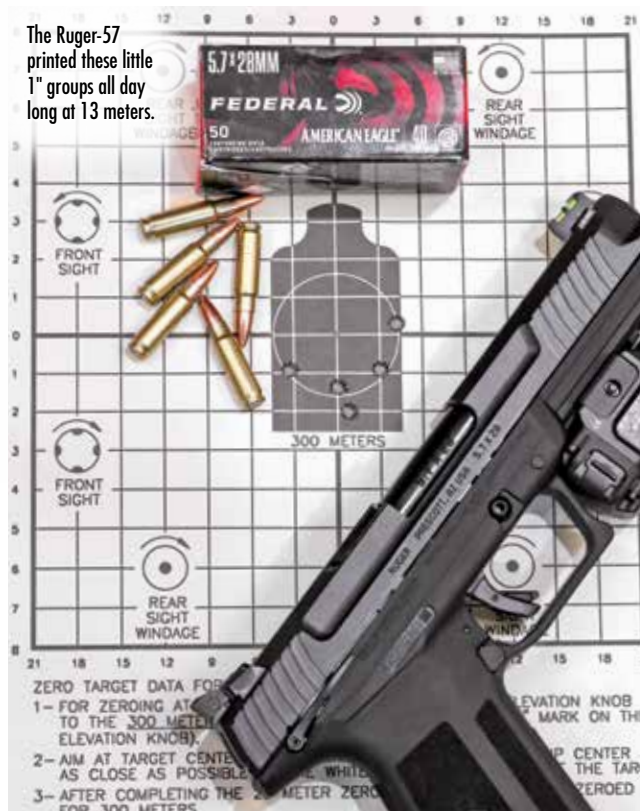


The double column 20-round magazine of the Ruger-57 is similar to the M4 Carbine while being comparably easy to load.



Left to right: 5.56mm, 22TCM, 5.7x28mm, 9mm Parabellum and .45ACP.

The Ruger-57 printed these little 1" groups all day long at 13 meters.



to describe, the Ruger-57 is my new favorite pistol. I defy you to heft the thing, jack the slide, and launch a few of those zippy little Federal 40-gr. bullets downrange without breaking into an expansive involuntary grin.

For starters, the Ruger-57 just looks sultry. The gun is a wee bit longer than most, yet at 24.5 oz. remains unnaturally lightweight given its prodigious 20-round magazine capacity. The angular lines and sleek particulars make the weapon look like something out of a science fiction film. In addition to its radical chambering, *everything about the Ruger-57 reflects the current state-of-the-art in modern combat handgun design.*

The lightweight polymer frame is nicely stippled and aggressively undercut for a high hold. There is a generous length of Picatinny rail on the dust cover. The flat-faced trigger is both comfortable and crisp. The reversible push-button magazine catch is just the right size. The slide release is smallish, but most of us slingshot

our slides during reloads these days anyway. The bilateral thumb safety is long, positive and awesome.

Some people are inexplicably bigoted against manual safeties. I'm an ardent fan. If you have some religious aversion to the thing, just leave it disengaged and act like it's not there. As for me, I like the extra hedge against an accidental discharge.

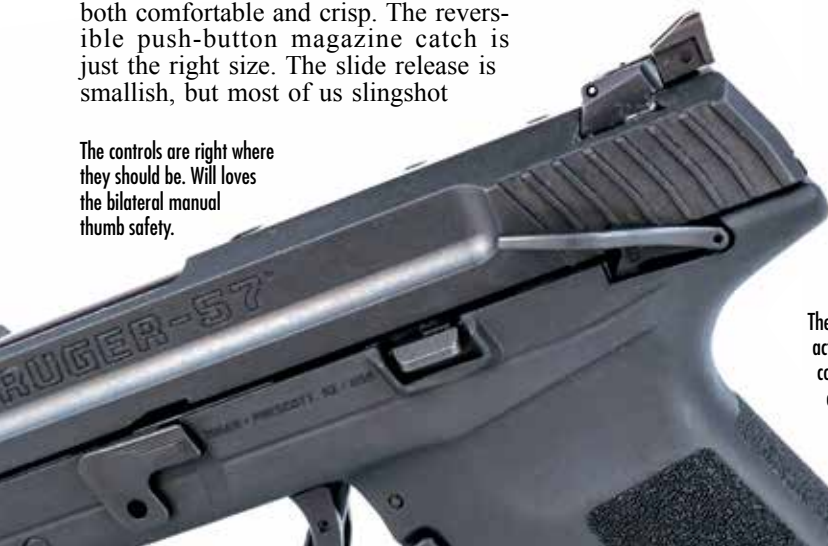
The Secure Action fire control system drives an internal hammer and offers a nice brisk trigger personality along with a short reset that lends itself to fast accurate fire. This trigger has a slightly different character from typical striker-fired fare, yet it remains quite eminently friendly. There is a predictable smooth take-up and a nice discrete break. The Secure Action trigger is long enough to be safe but sufficiently sharp for precision accuracy.

The front sight features a fiber optic light tube. The rear sight is easily adjustable for both windage and elevation with a small screwdriver. Despite their target-grade particulars the sights do not snag or interfere with a proper draw. The slide also features a prominent lightening cut up top.

The rear slide deck is drilled and tapped for an adaptor to accommodate a micro red dot if desired. These adaptor plates are available at www.shopruger.com. This same website offers scads of accessories and carry solutions that make the Ruger-57 into

Continued on page 71

The controls are right where they should be. Will loves the bilateral manual thumb safety.



The Ruger-57 actually sports a concealed hammer as part of its Secure Action ignition system. The rear sight is easily adjustable for windage and elevation.





A WORKING MAN'S WORKHORSE

TAURUS



TOM MCHALE PHOTOS: ROB JONES/THE IMAGESMITH, LLC

Sometimes we at *Handgunner* take a little heat for highlighting guns requiring a letter of credit from a Swiss bank to buy. I get it. Seeing expensive guns made of *unobtainium* feels like watching someone else scarf down a bone-in ribeye served on a sizzling steel plate — with a side of Brazilian rolls dripping with butter. On the other hand, it's fun to see and learn about top-shelf products, even if they don't rank equally with luxuries like food, water and electricity on the family

budget. I'll drool over pictures of a Bugatti Veyron any day of the week even though the odds of me owning one are about the same as Nancy Pelosi speaking at the next NRA Annual Meeting.

Whether or not you're in the frustrated "it's out of my reach" camp, we've got some delightful news for you. This issue's cover feature is an eminently affordable gun with a *manufacturer's suggested retail price starting at just \$327.98*. Why the 98 cents? My guess is they're trying to undercut all those models tagged with a ".99" price suffix. We'll have to see if this bold strategy pays off! I'm just kidding —

I'm always happy to save two cents here and there. It adds up, you know.

So, what is this gun I've seen brand-new on the streets for about \$250? The Taurus G3 polymer-framed striker-fired pistol.

You're probably familiar with the company's more popular handguns like the Millennium Series, PT-24/7, Spectrum, Judge, Raging Bull and a slew of other pistols and revolvers.

Familiar Classics?

The story of successful gun companies emerging from some material or fabrication expertise in an unrelated

AMERICAN
HANDGUNNER



TAURUS

G3

9MM



TAURUS G3 9MM



Model 3810ISO.

Over its history, the company developed some interesting partnerships, resulting in a flood of classic guns offering similar, and near identical designs, at more affordable price points.

In 1970, mega-conglomerate Bangor Punta, then owner of Smith & Wesson, bought a controlling interest in Taurus. As sister companies, S&W shared American gun designs while Taurus contributed design, manufacturing and fabrication experience. The partnership produced a series of handguns like the Model 82 six-shot revolver, a close mirror of the popular S&W Model 10.

Enter Beretta. In 1974, the Italian gunmaker won a contract to produce pistols for the Brazilian military — with certain conditions. Beretta was required to open a factory in Brazil and use local labor. By 1980, the contract was complete. Meanwhile, the current ownership of Taurus had purchased the Taurus brand and assets back from Bangor Punta. Seeing opportunity, Taurus bought the Beretta plant, tooling and designs, also neatly inheriting an experienced workforce skilled at building Beretta pistols. Soon, Taurus offered the PT-92 and PT-99 — solid guns at affordable prices.

Like the rest of us, Taurus went through some interesting times. Teenage rebellion? Resisting the status quo? Growing pains? Perhaps ...

After a struggle with pricing and quality control, in the earlier 2000 era,

the company regained its footing by boosting quality control and trimming prices to provide value to the American gun buyer.

You might remember some interesting handguns hitting the market a few years back in an attempt to establish an “innovator” reputation. The Curve and Model 85 View revolver come to mind. This gimmick phase included *bent pistols* and cartoon-like revolvers sporting a thumb-sized grip combined with a cylinder the size of a 55-gallon drum. I didn’t much care for stuff like this but then again, I don’t much care for Dippin’ Dots even though lots of other people love them. To each his own, I suppose. Love them or hate them, the new offerings nonetheless earned plenty of exposure for the company.

Since then the company has marched steadily onward, introducing new models like the G2 and G3 series while moving to a new home in Bainbridge, Georgia.

The G3 Walking Tour

The G3 is a polymer, striker-fired pistol available in nine different varieties. Choose from all black, two-tone with matte stainless slide, or different frame colors including tan, gray or green. The other offerings vary by different magazine capacities. You can order the G3 with two 10-rounders, two 15-rounders or a 15- and 17-round magazine.

I love the feel of the frame. No, it doesn’t come with replaceable grip panels — that’s one of the sacrifices you make for the very sweet price point of this pistol. The molded-in grip texture — front, back and sides — feels like skateboard tape. It’s low profile, so it won’t gouge your waistline

field is not new. Gaston Glock didn’t know diddly squat about guns but did know a thing or two about materials and engineering. Seeing an opportunity for a fresh approach, the GLOCK pistol was born — you know the rest of the story.

Taurus shares a similar story. Founded in Porto Alegre, Brazil back in 1939 and known officially as *Forjas Taurus* (Taurus Forge) the company manufactured tools and dies until its first revolver offering in 1941 — the



if you carry inside the waistband but offers great hand purchase. I had no trouble keeping this pistol stable in my hand during rapid fire strings. You'll also find thumb recesses for your firing hand on both sides of the frame — a nice touch — so you lefties can't complain about discrimination there. My firing hand thumb knuckle rides there comfortably and helps me get a *consistent grip placement* when I pick up or draw this pistol.

The magazine release arrives in the right-hand configuration but is reversible. The slide lock lever lives permanently on the left side. The only other controls are the disassembly levers. They operate somewhat like those on a GLOCK. When you pull both levers down the slide will unlock and slide off the front of the frame.

The G3's sights are standard 3-dot

variety. The front is screwed into the slide, like a GLOCK front sight, while the rear is dovetail mounted and adjustable for windage.

Double Trouble

I have two identical G3s sitting on my desk, one of which is the 2-tone model with matte stainless slide. That one retails for a bit more, \$360.70.

Factory specs show the trigger weight should be 6 lbs., but I measured a bit less. The all-black pistol averages 5 lbs., on the nose, while the 2-tone model averages 5.25 lbs.

If second strike capability is on your "must-have" list, you'll be happy to know the G3 has it. If you hear a "click" instead of a "bang" you can

Continued on page 74





The .22 Magnum CCI shot (right) and .22 LR shot (left) grouped well at about one yard. But the .22 LR shot didn't penetrate the cardboard backing of the target while the magnum shot went right through. Roy's experience is the magnum shot will kill rats and such while the .22 LR is essentially useless other than for fun!

POINT-COUNTER POINT!

The newest special edition: the Anti-Venom. Tom has been testing two models with boot and bird grip profiles.



MAXIMUM FUN WITH MINI REVOLVERS

NAA offers all sorts of limited editions and special finishes like this gold trio! You can also get custom serial numbers. This sort of thing is a great graduation, retirement, birthday, promotion, etc. gift idea.



TOM MCHALE & ROY HUNTINGTON

Recently I got my greedy little mitts on a stunning pair of special-edition mini-revolvers. Dubbed *Anti Venoms*, they're the result of a partnership between North American Arms and Bill Hicks & Co. You can't miss the homage to the name: Both are adorned with wicked snake engraving and snakeskin grip treatment scaled on there by Black Ice Coatings.

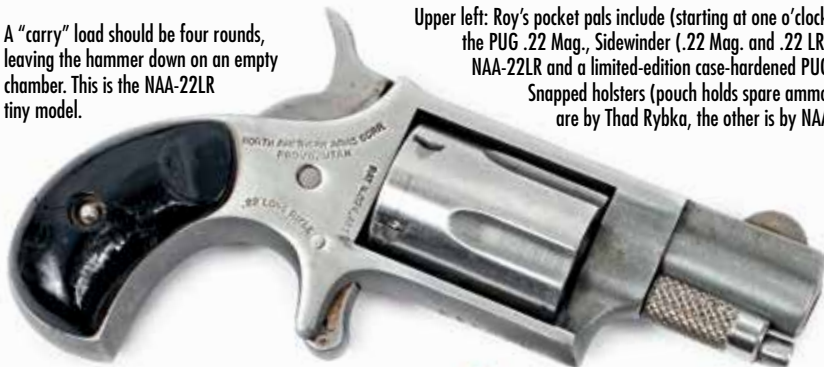
I'll freely admit Publisher Roy has some sweet handguns socked away in his seven-level underground bunker-slash-armory, but I think I've



While smaller with less to hold on to, Tom prefers the bird's head model. It's just insanely handy and easy to pack.

A "carry" load should be four rounds, leaving the hammer down on an empty chamber. This is the NAA-22LR tiny model.

Upper left: Roy's pocket pals include (starting at one o'clock) the PUG .22 Mag., Sidewinder (.22 Mag. and .22 LR), NAA-22LR and a limited-edition case-hardened PUG. Snapped holsters (pouch holds spare ammo) are by Thad Rybka, the other is by NAA.



With most models, you load and extract empties by removing the cylinder and using the cylinder pin to poke out shells.

got him outclassed this time. It's a rare day when my wife sees me unbox recent arrivals and states with immutable authority, "I'm keeping that." There you have it.

Just so you can enjoy his humiliation in the face of overwhelming verve and dash, I felt it appropriate to share our conversation ...

Tom: Roy Boy. Check these out. A matching pair of *NAA revolvers with bite*, and I mean this in the literal sense. As you might surmise by the elongated cylinders, these little reptile slayers are geared to handle .22 Magnum while fitting niftily in the pocket of my snake-skin pants. Heck, I might even stow one in my Howard Knight custom rattler-skin boots. Jealous yet?

Roy: Amateurs ... I'm forced to deal with 'em. But then again, Tom, at least you're heading in the right direction. You'll find the little NAA guns to be a bit like jewelry — but jewelry you can shoot. You'll likely have seen those tiny silver 1911 earrings in the jewelry tchotchke booths at SHOT? These aren't anything like those. They're not earrings — although perhaps we shouldn't encourage this certain segment of society? — and they're not toys, but they have the same sort of "I gotta' have those" appeal.

And, obviously your wife has excellent taste.



For me, I keep mine in a drawer and decide on which to use as the mood strikes. Tuxedo? Gold, obviously. Kayaking?

Why the minimalist .22 Short version to save weight. Grizzly Bear? That's easy, the .22 Magnum Pug — real stopping power for the big bears. Some day you'll understand.

Tom: Jewelry? I'm all about serious use, not metrosexual adornment. Ain't got time for cosmetics ...

One reason we're keeping these little doses of Anti-Venom is their usefulness for snakes. I'm guessing up there where you live in Fantasy Land, all you've got to worry about are bunnies and teddy bears. Here in the land of shrimp and grits, secession and tough folks, we've got Cop-perheads and Water Moccasins growing to a length of 94 feet or so. Check out the nifty snake evaporation pattern

from the CCI WMR Shotshell Loads. Now that's Anti-Venom!

Roy: Well, we don't have 94-foot snakes, but we do have some wild pigs. I've found a .22 Magnum solid between the eyes at 50 yards does the job. Just kidding. At least in my dreams it does. But surely — and no, I didn't call you Shirley, although I'm tempted at times — you've heard of the *Great*

Continued on page 62

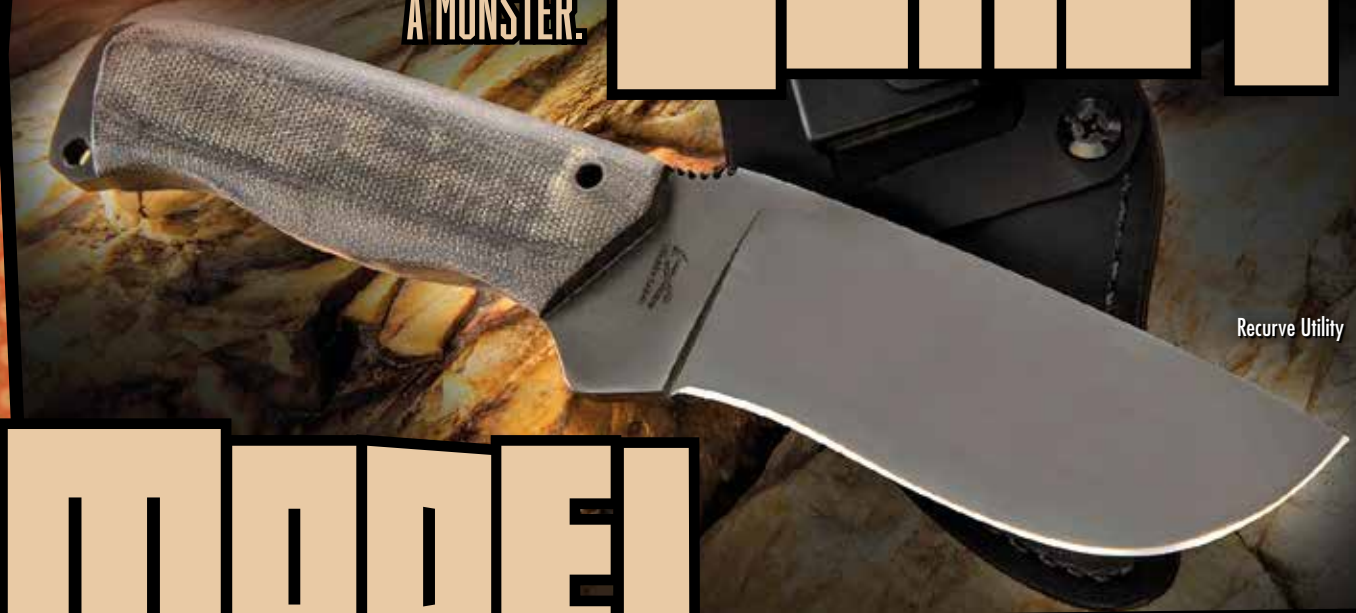


CCI shotshells really make these little guns useful.

The Speer or similar "Personal Defense" .22 Magnum loads are effective, delivering around 950 to 1,000 fps velocity from the short barrels.

W.R. CASE & SONS AND KNIFEMAKER
DANIEL WINKLER HAVE CREATED
A MONSTER.

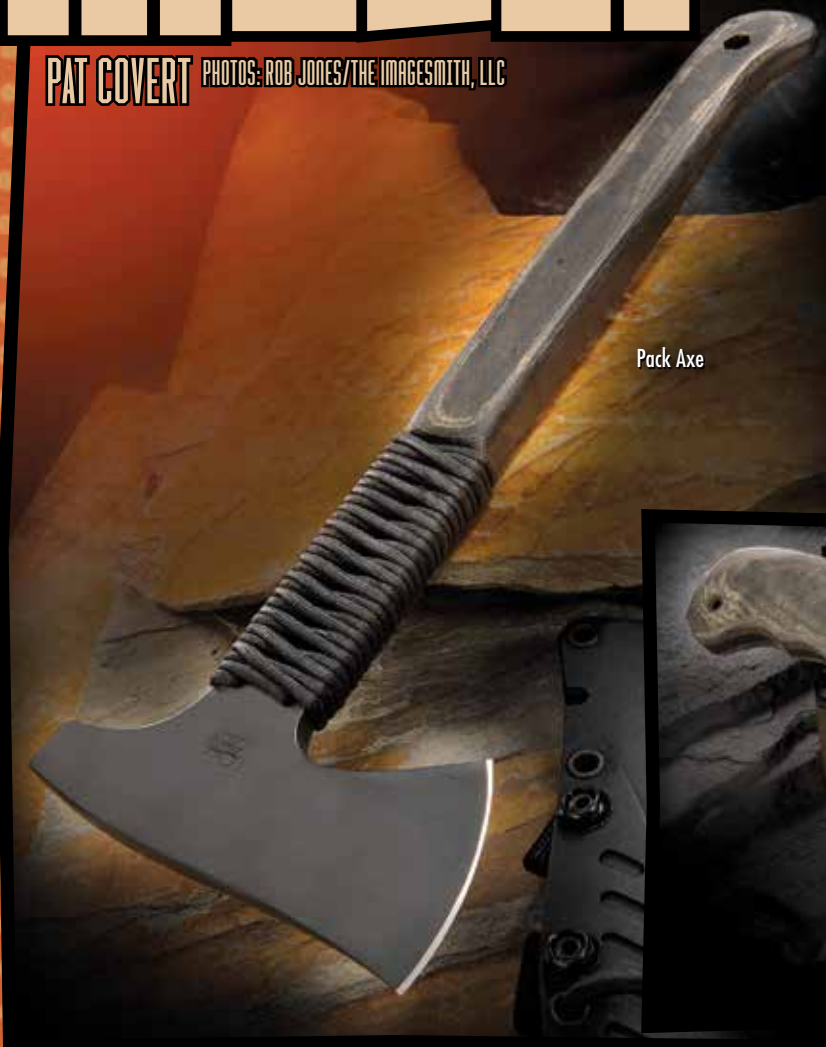
BEAST



Recurve Utility

MODE!

PAT COVERT PHOTOS: ROB JONES/THE IMAGESMITH, LLC



Pack Axe

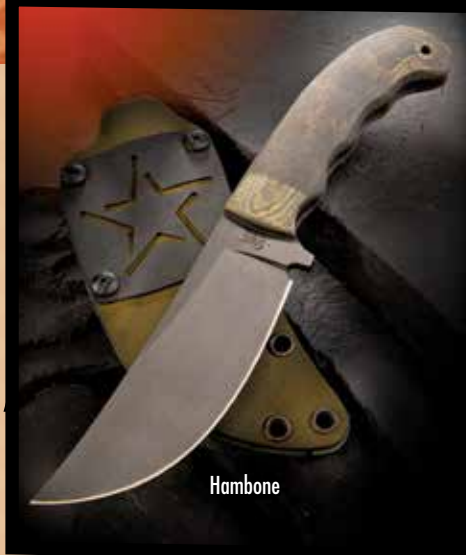
The annual SHOT Show is not just a huge venue for buying and selling, but an incubator for building new relationships and exchanging ideas. At SHOT Show 2016 two diverse parties got together and discussed the possibility of a collaboration, planting the seeds for what would become Case Winkler American Hero Knives. Party A was W.R. Case & Sons (known to most knife enthusiasts simply as “Case”), the legendary manufacturer of fine pocketknives and fixed-blades in the U.S. for over 110 years. Party B was custom knife-maker Daniel Winkler and his wife Karen. Daniel makes some of the most painstakingly crafted tactical and sporting fixed-blades on the planet. The two very different parties laid the groundwork for what would be a common



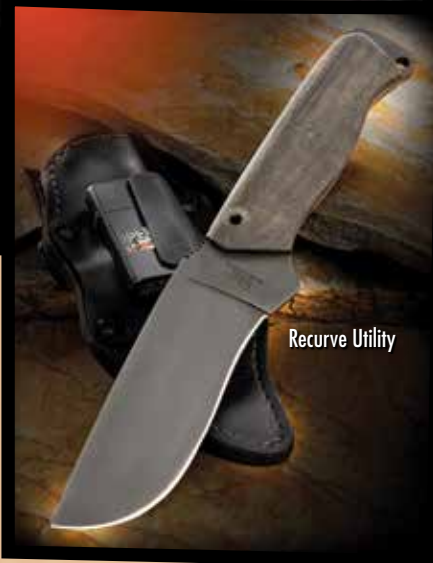
Hambone



Skinner



Hambone



Recurve Utility

mission: to offer Case customers elite fare under the Case Winkler name.

"The folks from Case noticed the Winkler Knives booth and were interested in doing some kind of collaboration," Daniel tells *Handgunner*. "Karen and I were honored at the request but didn't know how to create a partnership that made sense. During the coming months we met with two different groups from Case at our shop in Boone, North Carolina. Soon after, Karen and I went to the Case factory in Bradford, Pennsylvania. It all came together when Karen and I learned the rich history of W.R. Case & Sons and the U.S. military during World War II. That history, coupled with the current connection between Winkler Knives and current U.S. Special Operations, inspired the Case Winkler American Heroes Series."

Beast Mode

The American Heroes Series blends Daniel's superb knowledge and craftsmanship with Case's historic ability to manufacture excellent, hard-use knives. "For this series I work with someone from the military community to create a design reflecting the individual's professional needs in cutlery," Winkler informs. "Each Hero has full input in the design features, and I work with them closely, adding my 30-plus years' experience in designing and making knives."

"Once the design is worked out,"

Dan notes, "Case and Winkler Knives work as a team and split the manufacturing — using both companies' strengths, experience and reputation to create a knife or axe honoring the hero. The goal is to make a high-quality tool for the knife public that reflects the hero's past and present. Honoring these men with this series is a small way we can pay them back for the sacrifices they have made so we can live and enjoy freedom here in the U.S.A."

"Each design is made respecting the high-performance quality needed by professionals in the field. Knife performance must flow from both the design and materials used to achieve this goal," Winkler explains. "We do not compromise in material or processes. Winkler Knives supplies the parts for each knife or axe, as well as the sheath. W.R. Case and Sons has the manufacturing expertise to create each piece using a team of craftsmen who make up the best Case has on their

staff. I work with their people and help bring together my knowledge of high-performance cutlery blended with their vast manufacturing experience."

Heavy Duty Lineup

Winkler has already produced each of the knives in the American Heroes Series in his own custom line, so the knives have been "vetted" for their design prowess. Case's iterations are as close to Winkler's own fare as they can make them, but they employ efficient manufacturing techniques to offer their customers more affordable versions. We asked Case marketing guru Fred Feightner to weigh in on the individual knives in the line.

"Our first collaboration was the Case Winkler Skinner," Fred notes. "This fixed-blade, which can serve double duty as a tactical or sporter, was co-designed with Kevin Holland — a retired Navy Seal and U.S. Army top tier Special Operator. The Skinner is a high-performance fixed-blade that's lightweight and well-balanced, featuring a flat ground, distal tapered trailing point blade made from 80CrV2 steel. The handle is skeletonized with a tapered tang. The Skinner measures 9 $\frac{5}{8}$ " overall and weighs just under 6 oz."

Next, Case and Winkler pulled a juggernaut out of the hat. "The Recurve Utility No. 6 was co-designed with Harry Bologna, who proudly served his country for 22 years as a U.S. Navy Seal," Feightner informs. "The Recurve Utility No. 6 features an extra-thick fixed-blade made from 80CrV2 steel

Continued on page 56



WIN!

AMERICAN
HANDGUNNER

HANDGUN OF THE MONTH

UBERTI

OUTLAWS & LAWMEN "DOC"

1873

CATTLEMAN



.45
COLT
PACKAGE

ENTRIES MUST BE RECEIVED BEFORE SEPTEMBER 30, 2020 WINNERS CHOSEN BY RANDOM DRAWING. Limit one entry per household. To protect the privacy and security of winners, their names will NOT be made public. Contest void where prohibited by law. Winners must undergo a background check and comply with all other federal, state and local laws. Taxes and fees will be the responsibility of the winner. Contest open to U.S. residents only. Employees and agents of Publishers' Development Corp. are not eligible. No purchase necessary. Winners will be notified by certified mail on official letterhead. Winners must respond within 30 days of receiving notification or an alternate winner will be selected. Attention deployed military: use stateside address! Giveaway guns and accessories may have evidence of being test fired or exhibit minor handling marks. Factory warranties may apply in some cases. The *Handgun of the Month* package is awarded only to the entrant drawn and will not be awarded if the firearm presented is illegal in the jurisdiction of the winner. An alternate, authorized winner will be selected. No substitutions or transfers to a third party are allowed. **UNABLE TO ENTER ONLINE?**

Mail a postcard with your name and address (no envelopes please) to American Handgunner Magazine, GOM September/October 2020, P.O. Box 501377, San Diego, CA, 92150-1377.

SCAN TO ENTER



SOFHOLD GUN MAGNET



TOPS KNIVES STREET SCALPEL 2.0



Uberti's Outlaws and Lawmen Series pays homage to the famous men and women of the Old West. Each item in the collection is inspired by the actual gun carried by a historical figure. In this issue of *Handgunner*, we're giving away the Outlaws & Lawmen "Doc" 1873 Cattleman Revolver. It represents the gun of Doc Holliday, famous gambler and friend of lawman Wyatt Earp. Following the lines of Doc's own Colt Lightning, this long gun is fully nickel plated with a pearl-style grip. However, the "Doc" is single action instead of double action and in .45 Colt instead of .38 caliber. Overall length is 9.75"; weight is 2.2 lbs.

The *Street Scalpel 2.0* has all the features of TOPS Knives' original Street Scalpel, but lighter. Made with 3/16" stock, the 2.0 is a better slicer but still strong even for tough jobs. It's an EDC fixed blade that can double as a combative knife when needed. You'll get this too if you win this giveaway.

We have one more prize — the *Sofhold American Patriot Gun Magnet*! With the Sofhold, your handgun can be within reach when you sleep, drive or work! With over 50 lbs. of pulling force, the magnet can secure even heftier guns. It's covered with soft, premium leather so the magnet won't scratch your piece.

Win this package and be transported to the time of Doc and Wyatt! It's easy to join. Click on www.americanhandgunner.com/ giveaways. Another option is to mail a post card! —Jazz Jimenez

OUTLAWS & LAWMEN "DOC" 1873 CATTLEMAN REVOLVER

MAKER: UBERTI USA, (301) 283-6981

WWW.UBERTI-USA.COM

CALIBER: .45 COLT, CAPACITY: 6, OAL: 9.75"

BARREL LENGTH: 4.75", WEIGHT: 2.2 LBS.

VALUE: \$869

STREET SCALPEL 2.0

MAKER: TOPS KNIVES, (208) 542-0113

WWW.TOPSKNIVES.COM

VALUE: \$130

SOFHOLD AMERICAN PATRIOT GUN MAGNET

MAKER: SOFHOLD

WWW.SOFHOLD.COM

VALUE: \$39.99

TOTAL VALUE: \$1,038.99

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GUN RIGHTS

Alan Korwin



THE U.S. BILL OF WRONGS: PART DEUX

WHAT'S GOING WRONG IN AMERICA

Let's cut to the chase. Though this list could keep going with countless details (which some of you will no doubt bring to our attention) under any normal circumstances:

- *It's wrong to take away guns, ammunition and accessories people already legally own.**
- *It's wrong to limit common ammunition and gun types.*
- *It's wrong for gun-rights groups not to press for increased public gun ownership.*
- *It's wrong for anti-gun groups to exist, but they're free to do so.*
- *It's wrong for communists to run for office in America.*
- *It's wrong to call communist China, China.*
- *It's wrong for mass media not to run stories identifying our mortal enemies clearly.*
- *It's wrong for journalists to omit positive gun stories.*
- *It's wrong for reporters not to call out anti-American policies of candidates.*
- *It's wrong for schools to teach gun fear and encourage so-called "gun control."*
- *It's wrong for schools to fail to teach marksmanship and safe gun handling.*
- *It's wrong for candidates to run on anti-rights platforms.*
- *It's wrong for reporters to fail to question unconstitutional policy proposals.*

- *It's wrong for broadcasters to let favored politicians use their air to advertise themselves.*
- *It's wrong to violate the plain terms of the Constitution and not face punishment.*
- *It's wrong for branches of government to usurp each other's powers and skate.*
- *It's wrong for federal departments not contemplated by the Constitution to exist.*
- *It's wrong to let stare decisis overrule original intent in the Constitution.*
- *It's wrong to have bureaucrats with clipboards empowered instead of subservient.*
- *It's wrong to be armed and feel ashamed.*
- *It's wrong for criminals to get and have guns more freely than innocent citizens.*
- *It's wrong to have to spell any of this out, we used to know it to our core.*
- *It's extra especially wrong to campaign for office on a policy of promising to disarm or subarm the public.*

Elect Me And I'll Enslave You

In fact, you cannot legitimately qualify to take the office of the Presidency on such a position. Why? Because you must swear an oath to ascend to that office. An oath is a solemn, meaningful pledge to the people you will represent. Taking an oath under false pretense, or with purpose of deception, is the most grievous, duplicitous, evil thing a person can do. You cannot legitimately take office that way. It completely disqualifies you from any sense of legitimacy.

It means you are a fraud and could literally be expelled in an uprising for doing so. It would be like saying, with the sugar-coating stripped from your words, "Elect me and I will enslave you." That's grounds for revolution or civil war, it really is. Happens the world over, all the time. People who enslave other people open themselves up to and are subject to removal from office by the harshest means.

Oaths Matter, As Does Hate

In America we avoid this with solemn oaths. Yes, oaths are that important. For the Presidency:

I do solemnly swear (or affirm) that I will faithfully execute the office of President of the United States, and will to the best of my ability, preserve, protect, and defend the Constitution of the United States.

Can you say that and also promise to violate the Second Amendment? That's a rhetorical question with one simple answer: "No." Promising to take your guns away — some of them, any of them, only the black ones, the big ones, the good ones, the fast ones, the ones everyone likes, the ones police think are best, the ones you already own, any of them — prevents you from honestly saying "I will defend the Constitution."

It's wrong to teach your children to hate and fear guns. It's wrong to teach anyone to hate and fear guns. It's wrong to have anyone who hates and fears guns teach. It's wrong to hate. It's wrong to let anyone filled with hate and fear go about in society without getting treatment, or remedial education. It's wrong for people whose understanding is so thin and limited they don't understand how force can be used to preserve and defend liberty against the vast array of evil forces assembled to deny it to you and the world. One hopelessly misguided self-deception of the left is violence never solved anything. This couldn't be more wrong. Without violence, you-know-who would still rule Germany.

Continued on page 73

NEW

ULTRA CUSTOM

This Holster Changes
EVERYTHING

Custom mold your holster to your firearm in 15 minutes!



The Ultra Custom leather holster with patented pending Memory-Lok Technology allows you to mold and re-mold your holster for the ultimate in customization.



GUNLEATHER

1791gunleather.com

GUNNYSACK

FEDERAL PREMIUM PUNCH AMMO



Here's another "easier to say than do" apothegm

... Shoot several hundred rounds of your defensive ammo through your carry gun to be sure it's reliable! At average prices, this works out to a few hundred bucks of money-to-noise conversion.

The folks at Federal have a new self-defense ammo offering — Punch. The premise is to deliver the features consumers care most about, thereby lowering the production cost and price. Law enforcement requires ammo designs that perform in scenarios rare to civilian use like glass and steel penetration. Punch includes carry and home-defense relevant features like nickel cases for corrosion resistance and slick feeding, reliable expansion through clothing barriers and consistent penetration.

Including civilian-relevant features makes a big difference in the price point. You can buy Punch for a little over half the price of traditional self-defense ammunition. For more info: www.federalpremium.com



CROSSBREED RECKONING HOLSTER

Hybrid holsters are comfortable and stable thanks to the large back panel between your handgun and body. With a basic design of a Kydex shell fastened to a leather backer, you don't have the option of adjusting retention because the backer material, usually leather, can flex.

The Reckoning holster from CrossBreed overcomes the challenge with a new hybrid approach. You can tighten the mount screws between the Kydex shell and leather back. Rubber washers in between allow you to adjust retention pressure. There's also a separate retention device under the trigger guard. Using an Allen key, increase or decrease pressure on the trigger guard. This system is independent of the backing-to-shell pressure, allowing fine tuning of retention strength.

This is a hybrid holster that passes the shake test with flying colors. With an unloaded gun inserted, turn it upside down and shake. With retention set, it won't fall out. For more info: www.crossbreedholsters.com



SIMULTANEOUSLY

ERADICATES COPPER AND EVERY TRACE OF DOUBT.

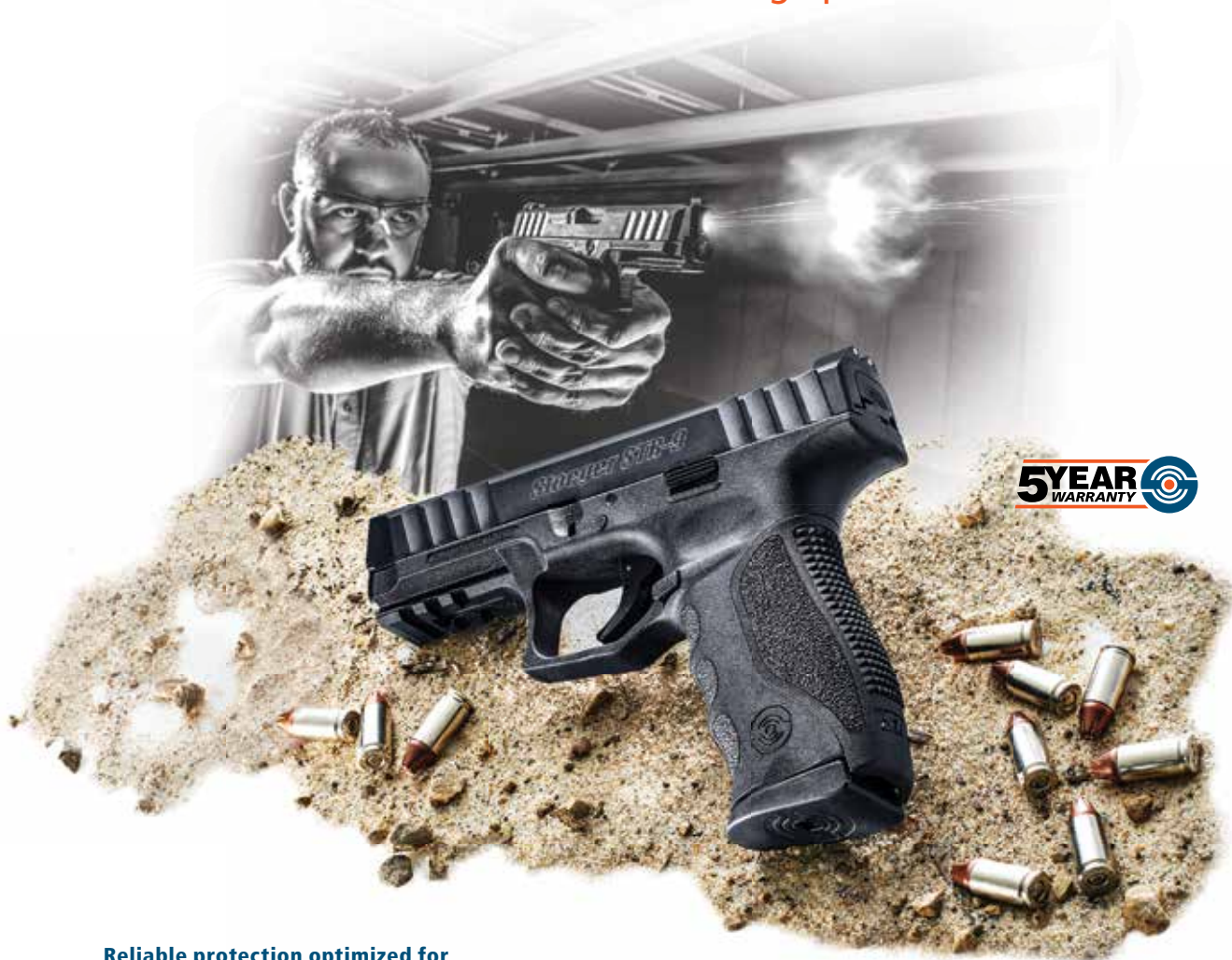
WINCHESTER
SMOKELESS PROPELLANTS
FOR LOADING PROFESSIONALS

www.wwpowder.com

Introducing new WinClean 244. It's the Winchester 231 equivalent specially enhanced to eliminate copper fouling as you shoot. It delivers the same clean-burning consistency and low-flash characteristics, while prolonging the full accuracy potential of you and your firearm.

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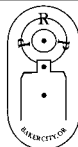
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BEAST MODE!

Continued from page 49

with careful gimping along the blade spine to provide a safer biomechanical advantage when working with the knife. An extended, widened pommel provides an ideal striking tool for use around the campsite or in the field. The knife weighs 12 oz. and measures 9½" overall."

"Our third offering was the Case Winkler Hambone," Case's marketing specialist relates, "which we designed with retired U.S. Army veteran and Medal of Honor Recipient Clint Romesha. This high-performance field knife features a 5" 80CrV2 steel blade with an exaggerated curve extending from the hilt to its sharp pointy end. The ergonomic grip features a glass breaker extension for emergency situations. The knife measures 9¾" overall and the eight stars along the blade spine honor Romesha's eight warrior brothers lost during the Battle of Kamdesh in Afghanistan on October 3, 2009. The knife's name comes from a U.S. Army pack mule who served 14 years with the U.S. Army Cavalry that included two WWII missions. Today, a memorial to Hambone the pack mule stands at the Fort Carson, Colorado U.S. Army base."

For their newest collaboration, the company stepped outside the fixed-blade zone and turned once again to Kevin Holland for inspiration. "The Winkler Pack Axe features solid, 3/8" thick 80CrV2 steel construction," Fred relates. "The Pack Axe is 15" overall length, weighs in at 26 oz. and has a skeletonized handle with tapered tang. The axe head is 6¼" wide with a 2½" cutting edge. The opposite head end features a blunt hammer edge for pounding stakes, tapping rocks, busting up kindling for fire starting and more. A reinforced Kydex carrying sheath with nylon straps allows for belt carrying when you're on the go outside."

We should mention here Case Winkler sheaths are every bit as well built as the knives they house. These are works of art in themselves.

Beast Feast

Although the Case Winkler line is not extensive, they more than make up for it in extreme craftsmanship. According to Fred and Daniel, their plan is to add another Hero to the stable every year. I've handled Daniel's custom fare side-by-side with the Case Winkler knives and you'd be hard pressed to tell the difference. Prices range from \$325-\$350 for the knives and \$499 for the Pack Axe — and each and every one is downright beastly!

For more info: www.winklerknives.com,
www.caseknives.com

SPEAK OUT

Continued from page 11

May/June 2020) was a hoot. The truth can make you laugh, that's for sure. In the '80s I supplemented my income by performing magic. My mentor told me in time I would have a closet full of props that didn't serve my needs or desires. He sure was right. Holsters are about the same. Naturally I tried a bunch of them and for some reason or another the thing just didn't blow my skirts up. I'm a guy, perhaps I should have said kilt as I am rather Irish, Welsh and Scotch. Being an official geezer in my 70s now, I've whittled the holster situation down to the basics and seem content with the current crop.

Oddly enough I had just filled a grocery bag with holsters, including a shoulder holster which can be worn very rarely in Florida due to the warm weather. So, my dear friend will now have the pleasure of determining which holsters will work for him once I gift him the bag. Probably, none of 'em. Thanks for your good humor and great magazine.

Henderson Talbot, Jr. FVGEC
Via email

Doing The Math

I noticed the Standard Manufacturing Thunderstruck S333 double-barrel revolver in an advertisement on page 71 of the May / June 2020 issue. The ad stated that this revolver fires two .22 Magnum rounds simultaneously. Does this make it a .44 Magnum?

N. Hall
Via email

We see what you did there! —TM

Problems Or Puff?

Greetings from Midcoast Maine. My purpose in writing: while I very much enjoyed John Taffin's Colt Python review, I wondered as I read on when he planned to mention the revolver's widely reported problems. I further wondered when I got to the end of Taffin's report whether as an editorial policy you appreciate the difference between a frank and honest review and a puff piece.

Mike Silverton
Via email

Mike, first thank you for writing. Yes, I saw some of the "widely-reported" so-called problems on the Internet. I did two things. First, I consulted the number one expert for Pythons. He said the new Python was improved over the old design and they "did it right." Apparently, there were a few problems because of a loosened screw and Colt has addressed this. The second thing I did was shoot it.

I experienced absolutely no problems

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during my shooting sessions. The Python faced the same thing every new product faces — self-proclaimed Internet experts going into their trashing routine. There are no perfect guns — problems can often arise with anything mechanical. Colt has addressed the matter and corrected what few problems were found.

I don't do puff pieces. Never have;

never will. Our policy with both Handgunner and GUNS is to tell it like it is. There are several firearms and products over the past 40 years I wouldn't review as they were not worthy of my time. I only review things which work, and I have often pointed out minor problems.

Thank you again for writing. Good shootin' and God Bless. —John Taffin

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SIXGUNNER

Continued from page 27

our home. In the side drawer of my desk is a customized Taurus .44 Special by Bill Oglesby. It has a 2.5"-barrel, matte stainless-steel finish, polished cylinder and trigger, bobbed hammer and V-notch rear sight paired with tritium white bead up front. I've added a Tyler T-Grip adapter and keep it loaded with Buffalo Bore 200-gr. Anti-Personnel full wadcutters.

Before the 20th century ended S&W offered three 5-shot .44 Specials — all of which demand top dollars today if you can even find one. The first example was the Model 696 built on the L-Frame with a 3" barrel. This is an all stainless steel five-gun with a round butt, smooth trigger and S&W adjustable sights with a red ramp front sight. This was followed with the Model 296 which is a 2.5" barreled alloy lightweight version with a round butt and concealed hammer as found on the smaller .38 Special Centennial. Finally came the Model 396 Airlite in 2000. This 3.2" barreled .44 Special is a joy to pack all day long and is a grand choice for backpacking and hiking off the beaten path. It has a round butt aluminum alloy frame, S&W adjustable sights including a HIVIZ Green Dot front sight.

Perfect Packin' Pistols

In 2008, a special version of the Model 396, the NightGuard arrived with an all-matte black finish, 2.5"-barrel, fixed rear sight and Tritium front bead sight.

S&W reached for the epitome of Perfect Packin' Pistols with the 4.2" barreled Model 69 Combat Magnum chambered in .44 Magnum. This is a stainless steel, five-shot, double-action sixgun. Sights are typical S&W adjustable sights with a white outline rear sight matched up with a red ramp front sight. Just recently a second version with a 2.75" barrel was added. Both of these are .44 Magnums. They work just fine as .44 Specials and you always have the choice of using .44 Magnum loads. For use on the trail it wouldn't be a bad idea to load it with three .44 Special loads backed up with two .44 Magnum loads, giving us a versatile .44 five-shooter.

The Charter Arms original .44 Special in the 1960s was a blued five-shooter with a 3" barrel. At the time it was one of my most carried sixguns and logged many miles in the top of my boot.

As mentioned above two of my house guns are .44 Bulldogs with a stainless-steel version stashed in each of the bathrooms — a vulner-

able place! I load those Bulldogs with 200-gr. Blazer JHPs. The first time I mentioned this several years ago, some laughed; many others felt it was a most sensible idea and followed suit.

With its five-shot cylinder and bolt slots cut between chambers, the Bulldog is much stronger than it appears. It will probably handle heavier loads than most of us would care to shoot. My normal heaviest load for the Bulldog is the Keith 250-gr. SWC over 7.5 grains of Unique. The Bulldog has now been replaced by the latest Charter Arms .44 Special Bulldog, the Pug. Charter Arms also offers a Target Bulldog, which is suited as a trail gun. It has a full under lugged barrel with both 4" and 5" versions available complete with an adjustable rear sight and a ramp front sight.

Before the 20th century ended S&W offered three 5-shot .44 Specials — all of which demand top dollars today if you can even find one.

Ruger is now part of the .44 Special five-gun scene. One of the most under-appreciated DA .357 Magnums is the Ruger GP 100. This excellent design has been around for over 30 years and has proven itself to be reliable and exceptionally rugged. Lipsey's took a good look at the GP 100 and special ordered a 5" blued version chambered in a five-shot .44 Special. In addition to 5" .44 Specials available from Lipsey's, Ruger is also cataloging a stainless steel 3" GP 100 .44 Special.

This brings us to the ultimate SA five-gun, the Freedom Arms Model 97. Only slightly smaller than a Colt SA, we have the option of using any holster made for the Colt. Freedom Arms is simply the finest SA revolver ever produced by any manufacturer. Tolerances are held tightly and the finest materials available are combined with the best possible craftsmanship. Freedom Arms revolvers have always been expensive and owners will proudly attest they are well worth it. As I write this, Freedom Arms delivery time is running about one year.

Colt still catalogs both the .44 Special SA Army and New Frontier, however, they are extremely difficult to find.

Thanks to Charter Arms and Freedom Arms we do have .44 Special five-shooters available. 

BOWEN BISLEY

Continued from page 37

Around 1998 Hamilton took a beater 4" S&W Heavy Duty .38 I found and, through his miracle-making, turned it into a sublimely beautiful 6-shot .45 Colt. It was a classic situation of a first glimpse fooling the eye. I always enjoy handing it to experienced shooters. Initially, it looks like a fixed-sight N-Frame Heavy Duty. Then their eyes narrow as they see the beautiful blue, Roy Fishpaw ivory grips and impeccable fit and finish of everything. It begins to dawn on them this is not a stock S&W. Then their eyes grow wide when they see the bore, and the delicate ".45 Colt" on the barrel. Then they look at me, back at the gun, back at me, back and the gun and mumble something about "What the heck is this beautiful thing?!"

Which is exactly what occurs now with this Ruger.

I sent BCA a dead-stock Ruger Bisley, stainless steel, in .44 Special. I snapped it up when I saw them become available, with the intent of a future project. Hamilton took my note to "Do your magic, as you see fit" to heart, resulting in this discreet yet persuasive final rendition. Some obvious custom touches like BCA's iconic sights are easy to spot. But it's almost impossible to "see" what I like to call the hidden beauty — even though it's in plain sight.

The Touches

Let's clear the decks first. BCA has built a firm reputation supplying arguably the most innovative, rugged sighting designs for revolvers — period. Today, BCA showcases that work as being the foundation of the shop. You can not only simply buy sights from BCA as appropriate for your own gun and install them, but you can also use these bold, clear sights as a benchmark for any build you have done from BCA's catalog of work offered. If you think BCA, make sure sights are at the top of your list.

In our case, Hamilton performed what is essentially his catalog No. RS03(2) "Perfected Bisley No. 2" work. It includes an action/trigger tune, polished cylinder notches, over-size locking base pin, Rough Country rear sight and DX-type front sight with compatible blade.

To this already comprehensive list, Hamilton "larded it up" as he said, with favorite options. Added were a full-length ejector rod housing (assuring 110 percent extraction length) and an added recoil-proof lug hidden beneath the housing to keep it in its proper place. The cylinder received the "black



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powder” chamfer that really helps to save leather holsters, besides simply looking swell.

Something I find particularly fetching is the scalloping done to the recoil shield/loading gate, both pleasing the eye and taking a bit of weight off simultaneously. A lanyard ring is installed — “As any proper revolver should have,” as Hamilton says — and some miscellaneous sight options were tossed in. For me, the shallow “V” and Big Dot Tritium front seem to work fine and are very fast to find.

The Sum Of The Parts

The end result is one of those handguns tending to live on your desk, ready at-hand. During pauses at the computer here, I find myself clearing it, then simply marveling at it yet again. A few “points out the window at imaginary targets” and a few cycles of the action offers assurance things are still as they were, giving me the confidence to get back to work. I’m sure you know the drill.

Shooting is as delightful as you might imagine. The .44 Special means modest loads are both fun, accurate and easy to assemble or find on the market. Something a bit stouter can be used — the Ruger can handle them easily — but I tend to simply change to a .44 Magnum for that silliness.

This BCA .44 Special is all about temperate modesty, so a 240-gr. something at 850 or 900 fps is plenty, allowing the biggish sixgun to speak with authority — but with restraint. I ran Black Hills Cowboy .44 Special (720 fps), Buffalo Bore’s 200-gr. hard cast full wadcutter (chrono’d by me right at 1,005 fps), classic Winchester 246-gr. RNL “original” style ammo (660 fps), Black Hills .44 Special Honey-Badger (a 125 gr. at an honest 1,240) and the old go-to Winchester 200-gr. Silvertip load (745 fps, which surprised me as being so modest).

Accurate?

I found a target allowing me to use the rounded top of the target as a perfect fit to the rounded top of the revolver’s front sight. This offers a surprisingly sharp and repeatable sight picture at 25 yards. Groups were between 1.25" or a tad less (Buffalo Bore wadcutter) to about 3" (246-gr. RNL), with the majority in the 1.5" range. I confess I used my “extra-good” glasses and really took my time. The gun shoots much better than it did when stock (call it a 3" gun with the same basic ammo when I first tested it), so the custom work enhances performance and appeal simultaneously.

I think I’d settle on the Buffalo Bore for personal defense and some sort of

240 gr. at about 900 to 1,000 for pigs or small deer. A favorite handload of mine using a cast 250 Keith and a dose of Unique at 800 fps would also be a great general use load, is comfortable to shoot and still offers enough authority to hold its own if needed.

Your Own Project

Don’t be shy, simply give Hamilton’s shop a call. Tell them what you have and what you’re thinking about. Take note, in the “Catalog” section of BCA’s website, the work offered is listed and straying from listed custom work isn’t done. Keeping the service list manageable allows BCA to turn project guns around in a timely manner. Also, BCA no longer does S&W projects, so make sure you call them with your project ideas to make sure they are doable.

It’s time to sell off some of those gun safe queens and put the money to work on a “once in a lifetime” (or twice?) “Best Quality” dream gun for you. The pleasure of owning and shooting something as satisfying as this long outweighs the memory of the initial cost. Honest.



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MINI REVOLVERS

Continued from page 47

Missouri Field Rattus Norvegicus Gigantus which infests raw pastureland here? Children under the age of five have been known to disappear forever in farm fields. But not here at *Che Huntington Ranchero Del Diablo El Sasquatch*, no, not here, thanks to ultimate Stopping Power Of — The Pug.

And lest you think you're smarter than me, remind me to show you my double shoulder holster "system" for a Quadrangle of powerful packing pistols from NAA. Prepare to be subdued.

Tom: You bring up a great point. I'm currently losing a debate with myself over what type of ammo to keep in this Anti-Venom. The problem is I've been tinkering with two great options. Hornady makes a Critical Defense round loaded with a 45-gr. FTX bullet. I clocked these at 915 and 976 fps from the bird's head and boot grip (longer barrel) models. It's surprisingly controllable in this tiny package and nothing to sneeze at for up close and personal defensive use. On the other hand, the CCI Shotshell is *muy bueno snake medicine*. Hmmm. Decisions ...

After less than 1.6 seconds of careful

debate, I arrived at the perfect solution: buy another revolver and do both. I like the bird's head grip model, so my second will be near identical except for the grip color and design — this will be my "color code" to know what's loaded in each revolver. The new one will pack Critical Defense while the Anti-Venom will naturally carry shot shells. Choose your grip for the job at hand.

Roy: Your points about handling are spot-on. In the spirit of fair play, I just shot my .22 LR model and the PUG in .22 Mag. using CCI shot shells. I also chronographed some Speer Gold Dot "Personal Protection" .22 Mag. (40 gr.), made for short-barreled revolvers. Just for grins I ran a .22 LR Mini-Mag through the tiny .22 LR version. The Speer load delivered about 980 fps while the Mini-Mag did a surprising 860 fps. I'm not actually sure you gain much with the magnum load, so we need to do more testing.

Tom: Speaking of loading ammo, for those who aren't familiar with these mini revolvers, part of the reason they're so small and light is the redesigned function. Features like swing-out cylinders and ejector rods add size and weight. To load a mini, just pull the hammer to half-cock. Then press the spring-loaded button on the cylinder pin and draw it out. Now you can remove

the entire cylinder. If you've got empties, just use the cylinder pin to pop any out that won't shake loose on their own. Loading is this process in reverse.

Roy: But, one clear difference is the "bigger" guns (like the PUG) are much easier to handle than the tiny ones and, frankly, don't want to jump out of your hand. Speaking of safety, while the factory offers a sort of "notch" in between the chambers to rest the hammer, I've found leaving the hammer down on an empty chamber (like a Colt SAA) is the safest way to carry them. Extra-caution is always a good thing! And likely you say, you can always carry two, giving you eight massively powerful .22 magnum shots!

Just kidding on the massively powerful thing.

Nonetheless, I find the PUG in my pocket more often than not, virtually always loaded with CCI Magnum shot cartridges for unexpected encounters with bull field mice in the pole barn or attacking swarms of killer wasps. Call me Walter Mitty if you want ... but that's not my name. Besides, wait until you see what it does to an attacking potato.



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AYOOB FILES

Continued from page 79

rest of the world falls away: There is only the huge man coming toward him as if reaching for Jim's gun.

Jim Stiffler is more than 60 lbs. lighter than Henry Johnson, inches shorter, and hobbled by a bad back and a knee so bad it requires the brace he's wearing now. There is only one reasonable thing left to do.

Jim Stiffler snaps his 9mm up to a Weaver stance and fires.

He sees Johnson spin away from him, moving rapidly to Johnson's right and Stiffler's left, running toward the sewing room. Stiffler stops shooting, with only the one round discharged. He sees the intruder enter the small adjacent sewing room. Jim hears him cranking open the window and realizes that's where he's going to exit. Jim heads outside to see where the man is going.

There is a brief "WTF?" moment. Jim hears an engine come to life and then roar; there's a sound of spinning tires and gravel hitting the house. Jim has made his way back outside, hobbling on the bad leg as fast as he can, and gains the porch where he can see the sedan, its tires spinning. The vehicle has crashed through Jim's fence, hit a pile of concrete blocks, and become stuck. The intruder is behind the wheel, still moving. Jim aims at the rear tire and fires a shot and then hears the voice of his long-ago firearms instructor Frank Lloyd telling him never to shoot at a tire. He takes his finger off the trigger. The second and last shot of the encounter echoes away.

It takes some few moments for him to realize, but the incident is over.

Investigation

When the police arrived, they found Henry Johnson behind the wheel of his sedan, his head lolled back against the headrest and his eyes closed. The evidence photos look like a man taking a nap in the driver's seat until you spot the bloodstained hole in the center chest.

The police were sympathetic. Once he was ID'd, a record check showed Henry Johnson had been convicted over the years for multiple burglaries and crimes of violence, some committed while armed. It turned out Jim's wife hadn't come home yet, but the police realized Jim couldn't have known that.

Then the autopsy report came in. It revealed the deceased had tattoos depicting a Grim Reaper and lightning bolts. If body ink says something about who the wearer is, Henry Johnson had left the message on his corpse. But the autopsy showed something else.

The single, fatal perforating gunshot wound of the chest had entered from the

rear at the edge of the shoulder blade and exited the chest.

Some 23 months later the District Attorney charged Jim Stiffler with Intentional Homicide, the term the black letter law of Montana uses for murder.

The Trial

Long after the shooting, in first quarter 2016, Jim Stiffler went on trial in Helena. He was most ably defended by lead counsel Quentin Rhoades, with Nicole Siefert as co-counsel. Prosecutor Leo Gallagher painted a picture for the jury of an unarmed man, as "helpless as a baby" against the nefarious defendant who had been shot in the back as he harmlessly exited a window after committing a mere property crime.

Quentin Rhoades had been to the self-defense trial rodeo before and knew exactly how to craft an "affirmative defense," which says in essence, "Yes, my client shot him, but he was absolutely correct in doing so." Among other witnesses, Rhoades called me and two other experts to the stand — and the defendant himself.

Dr. Dan Reisberg, author of *Cognition: Explaining the Science of the Mind*, educated the jury on altered perceptions during traumatic, life-threatening incidents which occur at high speed. He explained why, though Jim remembered firing as he faced the attacker with the back-door area behind Johnson as he fired, no bullet was recovered there. He also explained why tunnel vision would have kept Jim from correctly orienting his surroundings during the sudden attack.

Gary Marbut did an excellent job of explaining the ballistics in the case, and the angle of the shot, and why the location of an ejected spent casing couldn't be relied upon to show where everyone involved was at the instant of the shot.

My role was explaining disparity of force, the situation in which an unarmed man attacking an armed one can be devastatingly lethal. Johnson was much bigger, younger and stronger than Stiffler. Johnson was able-bodied and Stiffler physically handicapped due to back and leg troubles — another disparity of force factor. And at the moment the shot was fired, no more than 15 feet separated the men, putting the intruder a second or less away from deflecting, and then gaining control of, Stiffler's weapon. I reiterated why Stiffler had reason to believe Johnson was quite likely already armed with Stiffler's own SIG .45.

Finally, I demonstrated to the jury the interlinked action/reaction dynamics, which explained why Stiffler had honestly thought he'd shot Johnson in the front.

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the attacker's reflexive turn away from danger can cause his lateral midline to cross the muzzle of the defender's gun in as little as a quarter of a second.

Studies show while reaction to *anticipated stimulus* runs an average of about 0.25 of one second, it takes about three quarters of a second — or more — for a shooter to cognitively process the *unanticipated stimulus* of the attacker unexpectedly breaking off the assault. The shooter goes through the whole OODA loop of Col. John Boyd. Observe (the eyes see) what is happening, Orient (the brain figures out what the visual input means), Decide what to do now (stop pulling the trigger), and Act (physically stop shooting). I stated honestly what the State was asking of Stiffler was not humanly possible.

In his own testimony before I got there, the defendant had conceded on cross while he thought the man had turned clockwise at the shot, he couldn't be 100 percent certain it hadn't been counter-clockwise. The prosecutor brought this up when he cross-examined me, so we did the demonstration again, turning in the opposite direction. The outcome was the same.

In his final argument, the prosecutor argued by entering his own home to save his wife from a large intruder who had smashed through the front door of their home, Jim Stiffler had become the "initial aggressor" and was therefore not entitled to a self-defense finding.

The outcome was a hung jury, 10 voting to acquit and two to convict. Not long after, the prosecutor dismissed the case rather than try it again. Jim had already won his first battle — to survive. He had now won his second and stayed out of prison with a clean criminal record. Now came his third battle, the civil lawsuit.

The Civil Case

Plaintiffs sued on behalf of the dead man's minor child for wrongful death. The suit was settled out of court for \$20,000 paid by Jim's homeowner's insurance company. That's highly unusual and we'll explain why momentarily.

Personal Aftermath

Four years after the trial and seven years after the shooting, Jim Stiffler told me, "For about the first two weeks I had nightmares and a hard time sleeping. During the case, neither my wife nor I could sleep, and I lost about 20 lbs. We got a lot of help and support from the community. We'd be at dinner and people would come up, tell me I did the right thing, and slip me \$100. Even during the trial at the courthouse people would come up and slip C-notes into my pocket. My friends in the realtor community put on a big fundraiser gathering about \$40,000 for the defense."

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I went through the trial with his lawyers, good ones who don't come cheap. They sympathized with Jim and gave him a \$300,000 defense for \$100,000, with an estimated \$60,000 additional in related expenses. Jim wound up getting a reverse mortgage on the house he and his wife had almost paid off and cashing in stocks he thought would fund his retirement. "I spent two years in a PTSD group, peer support, and saw a therapist for about a year," Jim adds.

Lessons

Don't count on a jury of your peers. Quentin Rhoades had meticulously selected jurors who all said they could render a not guilty verdict in a self-defense case. It turned out the two jurors who insisted on conviction told the rest of the panel shooting someone in self-defense was wrong; Rhoades learned this after debriefing most of the other jurors subsequent to trial. The two holdouts for conviction wouldn't talk to him.

Don't expect your jury to learn how bad a "bad guy" your aggressor was. Prior acts by your opponent, if not known to you at the time you harmed him, will generally not be allowed in front of the jury. Some version of Federal Rule of Evidence 404(b) exists in almost every state. You're being judged by the reasonable man standard. What would a reasonable and prudent person have done, in the exact same situation, knowing what you the defendant knew at the time? There are work-arounds and some state supreme court case-law precedents have worked to reverse this in the past, but that's not yet universal and didn't apply in Montana. The jury in Stiffler's case was never allowed to know Henry Johnson's savage criminal background.

Be prepared to take the witness stand. In a self-defense case, who shot who is stipulated from the beginning: It comes down to why did the defendant shoot the person, and only the defendant can truly answer this. Stiffler handled himself very well on the stand.

Expect dirty tricks. Let's say you were a store owner lawfully detaining a shoplifter when the thief suddenly pulled a knife and you had to shoot him. Expect opposing counsel to ask you something like, "Do you think someone deserves capital punishment for petty theft?" Sure enough, on cross-examination the prosecutor asked Stiffler if he thought Henry Johnson deserved to die for stealing mere property. Stiffler's answer was a right cross knock-down punch which brought this line of questioning to an abrupt end. "I didn't deserve to die, either," he said.

Don't try to pinpoint your exact position in a fluid life-or-death situation. Trajectory evidence showed the men were placed slightly differently than Jim remembered, because the acute tunnel vision he predictably experienced made

him unable to perceive background.

Don't leave guns lying around the house where a burglar might take them — he might just have them in hand when you confront him. Johnson apparently never got to Jim's SIG or Remington, but Jim's reasonable fear of such was an element in the case. He now carries on his person a Kimber Micro 9 most of the time and a 10mm GLOCK 20 when he's in the mountains.

Don't presume a self-defense immunity statute will keep you from being sued after you've been cleared by the criminal justice system. Quentin Rhoades tells me they have such a statute in Montana, but the plaintiff's lawyers tried to get past this by arguing the shooting was negligent. Such statutes protect from lawsuits only those who intentionally fired in self-defense, and a negligence argument can circumvent the protection.

Don't count on your homeowner liability insurance to protect you in a civil suit after a self-defense shooting. There is no such thing as a "justifiable accident." An intentional shooting of another person is argued by plaintiffs as a "willful tort," an intentional act that harms another. Read your homeowner's or automobile liability policy — they usually expressly exempt the insurer for having to pay for a willful tort. Stiffler's insurance company, because the plaintiffs alleged negligence instead of willful tort, paid off the \$20,000 because it was much cheaper than going to trial on the negligence allegation. I also suspect the plaintiff's counsel gratefully accepted the \$20K, a pathetic "chump change" settlement in a world where verdicts for the plaintiff in wrongful death cases normally run into seven figures, because they knew they were unlikely to prove negligence at trial.

When you're in such a situation, get the best lawyers for the job. The job in this case was not criminal defense, but affirmative defense. The best criminal defense lawyers got their reputation by getting off guilty people. The strategy for defending the rights of the guilty is almost 180 degrees opposite from the strategy needed in an affirmative defense case like this, where you need to show the jury while you did the act, you were absolutely correct in doing so. Rhoades and Siefert accomplished exactly that and gave Jim Stiffler and his wife their lives back.

Finally, consider joining a post-self-defense support group. I was already on board as a staff member with the Armed Citizens Self-Defense Network (www.armedcitizensnetwork.org) when I took this case. Stiffler didn't have this kind of protection. You just saw how brutal a financial hit Jim Stiffler took to get his and his wife's lives back. I had seen it before. And, sadly, we will all see it again.



TAFFIN TESTS

Continued from page 35

the polymer grip frame is less aggressive and more like fine sandpaper. The recoil system is a dual captive recoil spring with a full-length guide rod. The sights of the Hellcat are the same as found on the Elite and just as with the Elite they are right there when I bring this little pistol up to fire. The Hellcat also comes with a base plate for mounting a red dot sight.

With its 12-round capacity the Hellcat is a formidable pocket pistol. With its light weight it's not something I would care to spend several hours shooting, however if ever needed in a serious situation, you won't notice the "recoil."

Springfield Armory put me in touch with Shield Sights to equip the Hellcat with a red dot sight. I went with the RSMc 4 MOA Reflex MiniSight. The Hellcat is already set up with a removable plate in front of the rear sight which can be replaced with the proper base to accept the RSMc. This sight co-witnesses with the factory iron sights, so if something should happen to the red dot one simply uses the iron sights. This also helps to adjust the RSMc. Just set the red dot on top of the front sight before shooting to make the final adjustment.

One of the great assets to this sight is the dot is always on — no need to remember to activate it when needed. Even when left in the always ready position the battery will last one to two years.

For a holster, I chose a high-riding Safari Gray Elephant Embossed leather model that rides close to the body and makes the Hellcat easily concealable. It looks good and works well with belt slots both fore and aft. This holster comes from New Pacifica Leather.

1911 Ronin Operator

Over 10 years ago, Springfield Armory sent me a full-sized stainless steel 1911 9mm. That was the beginning, and since then I've had extensive experience with 1911 9mms from at least six other manufacturers. The latest 9mm 1911 offering from Springfield is the Ronin Operator.

I really do like the Springfield XD series of polymer frame pistols, however my heart goes to the 1911 platform. I grew up shooting 1911s and my total affection for them will never change.

The Ronin is an especially attractive two-tone 1911 with a forged blued steel slide matched up with a forged stainless-steel frame. The 5" stainless steel barrel is Match Grade with a 1:16 twist and a fully supported ramp. Sights consist of a red fiber-optic front sight paired with a white-dot square-notch rear sight.

Springfield Armory describes the trigger as a "streamlined and skeletonized Gen 2 Trigger designed for performance." It has an excellent feel and measures out at four lbs. Safety features include the standard 1911 thumb safety and now standard beavertail grip safety with a memory bump. The Commander-style hammer fits into a slot on the top of the grip safety when it is cocked. The frame is checkered on the flat main-spring housing and smooth on the front. Springfield Armory checkered wooden grip panels complement the frame and slide finish nicely.

The recoil system is also standard 1911 with a bushing and no guide rod. Easy manipulation of the slide is aided by easy-to-grasp diagonal slots on both sides of the slide below the rear and front sights. The only negative I can come up with on the Ronin is the fact the magazine release is difficult to depress. If it doesn't loosen up sufficiently with use, and it already has started to, I'm sure my gunsmith can take care of the situation. For some reason the Ronin comes with only one magazine, however, this is an easy fix.

I guess I've come around to the 9mm since that first Shootists Holiday back in 1986.



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PISTOL CARBINES

Continued from page 32

being ideal for contact distance fighting — and you've a carbine, pistol and revolver trifecta. Feed the revolver from the semi magazines. As I write this Ruger has just released the PC Charger, a short barrel pistol version of this platform. With an arm-brace, this would be a great personal defense weapon.

The final goal in equipping a defensive carbine is simplicity. A violent attack is stressful enough without adding a complicated weapon. A sling is mandatory, like the holster for your pistol. I prefer a two-point sling with a quick-release buckle. Adjusted properly, it will do everything I need, and *it's simple*. A weapon-mounted light is also a must for home defense. Don't risk shooting a family member for lack of threat identification. Being right-handed I mount the light at 11 o'clock, which is good for working to the left, right or over the top of cover/corners.

I added an Aimpoint Micro red dot sight. It's not mandatory but is easier and quicker in low light and at longer distances. I mounted it low on the rail of the PCC's receiver because it provides excellent cheek weld and allows use of the factory aperture sights. Equipped this way, the PCC is quick handling at short range, and produces 3" to 4" groups at 75 yards — plenty accurate for defensive purposes.

Why Not?

Need more convincing of the pistol-caliber carbine? In some locations it's illegal to have an MSR platform for defensive use. The PCC provides the carbine's advantages like improved accuracy, extended magazine flexibility and plenty of room to attach accessories like flashlights, lasers and optics. There are threaded versions for suppressors, which would be great for home defense.

A lot of ranges aren't rated for rifle rounds, and many tactical competitions are limited to handgun-caliber carbines. Plus, handgun ammunition is cheaper for practice than rifle ammo. One important consideration, regardless of intended application, is the fun factor. Shooting, regardless of your ultimate reason, should be enjoyable.

The Ruger PCC, as they say, "is a keeper." It's a well-built weapon — reliable and accurate. It's versatile, and it's a good-looking weapon that's fun to shoot. Add a couple of accessories and load up with defensive ammo and you've got a great weapon for defensive use. What more could you want?



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RUGER-57

Continued from page 39

something you can practically use.

The grip is thin enough to accommodate modest-sized mitts as well as my big honkin' monkey fingers. However, the trim box magazine that lurks within holds a whopping 20 rounds of 5.7x28mm chaos. This double-column, double-feed design loads easily just like that of an M4, Uzi or MP5.

Pack the spare mag that comes with the gun and that's 41 rounds on tap. There are recesses built into the bottom of the grip to improve your purchase in the profoundly unlikely event the magazine might get sticky. However, the mags leapt out of my gun like a cockroach from a campfire.

Origin Story

The radical 5.7x28mm round was an FN contrivance designed back in 1986 to meet a NATO request for a replacement for the venerable 9mm Parabellum cartridge. Georg Luger's timeless little pistol round is the most produced handgun cartridge on the planet and has likely killed more people than cancer. However, nowadays most folks who wield guns for a living wear body armor,

so NATO needed something with a little more penetration.

The earliest SS90 rounds pushed a 23-gr. plastic-cored bullet to about 2,800 fps. When fired from FN's comparably radical P90 Personal Defense Weapon, this blistering little round would reliably defeat a NATO CRISAT vest or Level IIIA Kevlar at 200 meters. The P90 looks like it was cut from a piece of 2x4 lumber, but it's awesome enough to equip the U.S. Secret Service as they defend the President.

Somebody someplace decided such supernatural armor-piercing capabilities were way too scary to be possessed by us mere mortals. As a result, the AP rounds are not available on the civilian market. However, there are several intriguing alternatives. Federal offers a splendid 40-gr. target load that's not quite so fast yet still hits with authority.

Taking It For A Spin

If you are able to brush your own teeth, you can run this pistol well. The manual of arms is the same as that of any striker-fired pistol you've ever hefted. As regards the manual thumb safety, use it if you want, don't if you don't. I think it's the bee's knees.

The long snout, undercut frame, and light-recoiling cartridge all combine to make this pistol shoot like a directed

energy weapon. Recoil is perhaps 70 percent of a comparable 9mm pistol and follow-up shots are preternaturally fabulous. *The Ruger-57 will drop a double tap like Jane Austen turns a phrase.* Were I blessed with a tractor trailer-load of Federal 5.7x28mm ammo, I could shoot this thing until I starved to death.

The generous barrel and slide make the Ruger-57 exceptionally accurate. I could print 1" groups at 13 meters off a simple rest until I got sick of doing it. The slide locked back over an empty box every single time and the gun's optimized everything makes it fast and cool.

Drag out a few plastic milk jugs filled with water and get ready for fun on an apocalyptic scale. Those small-caliber high-velocity bullets explode a fluid-filled container like a hand grenade. There's not much ambiguity regarding whether you connected with your target or not. It either explodes, or it doesn't.

On that subject, 27-gr. loads are commercially available that produce a muzzle velocity of around 2,300 feet per second. If my math is correct, this should reliably light off Tannerite. Like liberal politics, venomous snakes, or electricity, you don't want to be standing so close you get any of this on you. However, I can't wait to get my

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mitts on some of the stuff and see what sort of mischief I might foment with it.

Establishing A Genre

With the advent of the Ruger-57, you now have three options in this quirky little niche. Introduced in 1998, the original FN Five-seveN was a lightweight, high-capacity combat pistol that broke new ground in the field of defensive handguns. The pistol weighs a mere 1.3 lbs. empty and has seen active service in the military and police forces of 40 different countries. The Five-seveN typically feeds from a 20-round box magazine and sports an MSRP of \$1,435.

The Rock Island Armory .22TCM is a slightly faster cartridge that also pegs the awesometer. This adorable little round is essentially an extended 9mm case necked down to accept a 40-gr. JHP bullet. Out of a standard handgun barrel, this beast flirts with 2,000 fps.

The RIA guns that push this revolutionary round are all based upon John Moses Browning's inimitable 1911. My copy sports a steel frame, a divine single-action trigger, and a double-column, single-feed 17-round magazine. The gun also comes with a spare 9mm barrel. Swap the barrel and recoil spring and you can run the same gun on standard cheap 9mm Parabellum. This novel pistol is also all but recoilless and spits

out an intoxicating *softball-sized muzzle flash* each time you stroke the trigger.

HK produces a comparably radical 4.6x30mm round for their MP7 Personal Defense Weapon. This high-velocity cartridge occupies a comparable ballistic niche as the 5.7x28mm and .22TCM, but HK has never seen fit to sell anything that shoots it to American civilians. I guess HK doesn't like money.

This new Ruger-57, however, offers something truly revolutionary, fresh and new. The gun weighs about nothing and looks as cool as a Star Wars blaster. With an *MSRP* of \$799, it is also markedly cheaper than the FN offering.

What's It Good For?

The original 5.7x28mm round embodies some of the same secret sauce driving the 5.56x45mm rifle cartridge. The bullet is designed to be a bit butt-heavy and tumble upon impact with something soft and gooey. Though I have not had the privilege of attending anyone unfortunate enough to have received one of these little monsters in anger, they should be intuitively horrible.

A great deal of hay has been made online concerning the proposed lack of stopping power embodied within tiny fast bullets like these. I dare say no one making the claim has ever been shot with one. I have comfortably packed my Ruger-57 underneath my scrubs at work

in a CrossBreed IWB rig for a couple weeks now and feel well prepared for any of life's resplendent ills.

This gun has no recoil worthy of the term and *packs 21 rounds onboard*. Anything that warrants shooting warrants shooting twice. With the Ruger-57 you could get half a dozen of these wicked little rounds on target without breaking a sweat.

Whether you use the Ruger-57 for home defense, personal protection, or simply as the ideal way to while away a lazy Saturday afternoon at the range, this nifty new high-tech hand howitzer legitimately raises the ballistic bar. The FN Five-seveN is an undeniably superb pistol. However, the Ruger-57 is more comfortable to run, remains utterly reliable, looks cooler and sells at almost half the price.

The new Ruger-57 just stole my heart. I find myself wanting to send it silly texts in the middle of the day and frivolously buy it presents like the Streamlight TLR-8G combination white light and green laser. In return this svelte sexy handgun sticks close and remains both utterly reliable and simply great company in a fight. True love is silly that way.



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GUN RIGHTS

Continued from page 53

"People sleep peaceably in their beds at night only because rough men stand ready to do violence on their behalf." —George Orwell

The world is a dangerous place. Our Founders understood this, and faced it head on, with the force needed to vanquish it. We do not live in a place where peace, love and harmony dominate; some utopian place of tranquility. That's a novel — a dystopian novel of deception and poetry that simply does not exist and misleads people into slavery. People teaching this are themselves slave masters, leading lemmings down a gilded path of misery, subjugation and death. Letting such happy tyrants anywhere near the reins of power is a deadly mistake.

Taking an oath under false pretense, or with purpose of deception, is the most grievous, duplicitous, evil thing a person can do.

The nation-state system — ours — the most viable ever invented for protecting life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness, needs defense. It's wrong to not honor your country and its symbols. Working from within for its constant improvement is honorable. To do otherwise is to encourage despotism and lawlessness. Outside a society that features the rule of law, with a Bill of Wrongs instead of a Bill of Rights, life becomes, "nasty, brutish and short," at least according to Thomas Hobbes.

Thrill our editors and propose your own elements for a Bill of Wrongs. In the next issue, not only will we run a few, we'll explore some of the ones we've exposed.

* Note: The very first point begs the question: aren't you supposed to use the front end of your gun to protect it, and you, from any person threatening to take it? 

Alan Korwin's website features plain-English books on state and federal gun laws for the public, and more common sense like you just read. He invites you to write to him or see his work at Gun-Laws.com, where you can get books and DVDs that help keep you safe.

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TAURUS G3

Continued from page 45

simply press the trigger again. As there is no partial cocking happening from the slide movement, it takes a bit more force — about 7 lbs. This is a “your mileage may vary” feature. Some people love it, and some don’t care. I fall into the ambivalent camp as my default action on hearing a “click” is to start the tap-rack drill. The G3 gives you the choice.

The trigger has a leaf safety in the blade and will only move through part of the take-up stage unless it’s firmly depressed. Overall take-up travel is about 1/2". The travel is grit free, especially after shooting a few dozen times. Once you hit resistance, you’ll feel steady pressure for about 1/8" of travel until it breaks. The break sensation is a little mushy, but it’s a perfectly usable service pistol trigger, especially considering the price.

If you’re into shooting the reset, you’ll get just over 1/4" of forward travel before you feel and hear a distinct click.

Safety First

The G3 comes equipped with a manual safety lever on the left side of the frame. A flick up with your firing hand engages it with an unambiguous click. Reverse the sequence to fire. It’s not likely to go anywhere against your will.

Besides the aforementioned trigger leaf safety, there’s also an internal firing pin block. Located in the slide guts, this steel button prevents the striker from moving forward to make contact with a cartridge. The only time it’s out of the way is when you press the trigger. The motion raises the block and allows the firing pin to move forward.

Taurus also includes what they call a memory pad. While not a mechanical safety device, this frame indentation (on both sides) just above the forward section of the trigger guard provides a natural place to rest your trigger finger. I like this. Sure, we should all work to hard-wire proper finger behavior into our brains, but a little nifty engineering to help build the habit can only be a good thing. It’s subtle, but your finger will have no trouble finding it without peeking.

Workhorse

I shot the living bejeepers out of this pistol to run it through its paces using a wide variety of self-defense and FMJ ammo. It ran and ran and ran — with one exception. The G3 has a short throat area and didn’t care for the Inceptor Round Nose 9mm cartridges. The Inceptor ARX cartridges ran fine, however. Those particular Inceptor RN

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bullets are fat in the area just above the case mouth and tended to get caught up in the barrel throat area now and then. To be sure I wasn't looking at some weird anomaly, I repeated the test with the second pistol and experienced the same thing. This is one of those things to just know and file away. It's also a reminder of the importance of testing the ammo you want to use with your specific gun.

In this case, it falls in the no-big-deal category. It's an unusual projectile shape compared to every other 9mm on the market, so it didn't faze me. Considering I shot well over a dozen other types of ammo with no failures of any kind, I'm chalking it up to irreconcilable differences between that specific cartridge and this pistol.

I did use this G3 trial as an opportunity to check out some interesting 9mm ammo.

From Norma, I shot both the Hexagon and MHP. The Hexagon line is an accuracy match load. If you look at the projectiles, you'll see them scored like an expanding hollow-point. However, expansion isn't their purpose — those grooves are designed to improve aerodynamic stability. Science! The MHP bullets are a defensive round offering dramatic expansion. The monolithic design makes them light-for-caliber — 108 gr. in this case. The MHP's delivered virtually no recoil and moved along at 1,146 while the Hexagons left the muzzle at 1,041 fps. Both printed groups in the 3.5" neighborhood from 25 yards.

HSM Ammunition may just be the biggest ammo manufacturer you've never heard of, so be sure to check them out. I used the 115-gr. HP-XTP load. Velocity averaged 1,242 fps while 25-yard groups ran in the 3.4" range.

I also checked out Black Hills' 115-gr. EXP (1,165 fps) and the smokin' 100-gr. HoneyBadger (1,217 fps). The G3 delivered groups in the 3.5" range for both of those as well.

A G3 Compact?

As I write this, a new member of the G3 family is on the way. The new Compact version shares most of the same feature set and comes standard with either three 10- or 12-round magazines. Taurus plans to offer 15- or 17-round magazines as an option, presumably with a magazine sleeve. MSRP of the G3c is set at just \$305.74.

Here's the bottom line. If you need a solid gun that will perform, and at a budget-friendly price point, check out the G3. With a limited lifetime warranty, you'll get new gun benefits at a used-gun price point.



For more info: www.taurususa.com, www.black-hills.com, www.hsmammunition.com, www.norma-ammunition.com

a Moment of Clarity



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Radians' *R-3200 Dual Mic* is an electronic sound amplification earmuff. Two independent microphones pick up and amplify low sound level noises while compressing sounds exceeding safe levels. The R-3200 folds for easy storage and includes a 3.5mm stereo input jack and a patch cable that works with most smart devices. *For more info: (877) 723-4267, www.radians.com*



HOLSTERS AND MAG CARRIERS FOR THE FN 503

CrossBreed Holsters

CrossBreed Holsters now offers *Holsters and Mag Carriers for the FN 503*. The FN 503 is designed as a compact, easy-carry, quick draw pistol with a 6- or 8-round magazine capacity. CrossBreed models for the FN 503 includes the Hybrid MT2 Holster, the SuperTuck, the MiniTuck, The Reckoning, Freedom Carry, Appendix Carry, SnapSlide, DropSlide, SuperSlide, Modular Belly Band, Purse Defender, the Cargo Pocket Rocket, The Gideon Pocket Mag Carrier, OWB Mag Carrier, Tuckable IWB Magazine Carrier and more. *For more info: www.crossbreedholsters.com, (888) 732-5011*



CUMA KAGE

TOPS Knives

The *CUMA Kage* is a short sword from TOPS Knives. Designed by martial artist and self-defense instructor Sijo Waysun Johnny Tsai, the Kage has a 15.5"-long blade made of 1095 RC 56-58 steel and a well-contoured handle. OAL is 24". Fullers and holes were added to the handle to lighten the weight of the sword. The CUMA Kage comes with a Kydex sheath and a leather dangler. Use it as a wall hanger, an unconventional home-defense weapon or a short sword. *For more info: (208) 542-0113, www.topsknives.com*



HOME DEFENSE KIT PEPPER SPRAY LAUNCHER

SABRE Red

The SABRE *Home Defense Kit Pepper Spray Launcher* with Live and Practice Projectiles is designed to deter a home intruder by creating an even greater distance between you and the threat. It's accurate up to 66 feet — releasing up to seven projectiles of SABRE maximum strength pepper powder that bursts on impact up to 175 feet. *For more info: (800) 325-9568, www.sabrered.com*



GTM-122/DB BOHO

GTM Original



The *GTM-122/DB BOHO* CCW shoulder purse from GTM Original features unique Bohemian styling with a debossed butterfly pattern with chrysanthemums. In camel-colored South American cowhide, the bag includes interior pockets and exterior pockets to provide easy access to the holster compartment. Other features include an 11-ply steel cable embedded into the strap, special padding to prevent imprinting, antique brass color metal hardware, nylon coil zippers, RFID protection in the interior zippered pocket and more. *For more info: (847) 446-0700, www.gtmoriginal.com*

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Use MTM Case-Gard's *Pistol Magazine Case* in your range bag, gun safe, or wherever you need to store your pistol's magazines. It holds up to five double-stack magazines. Its low-profile, compact design takes up minimal space in gun safes and storage lockers. The case is portable and allows you to be organized for range days. The clear-smoke finish easily shows what's inside. You can also stack one case atop another. *For more info: (937) 890-7461, www.mtmcase-gard.com*



COMPM5B

Aimpoint

The Aimpoint *CompM5b* is a high performance red dot sight. It can withstand tough handling and environmental conditions without added weight to the user's equipment. With the CompM5b, a user can adjust the reticle position to compensate for ballistic drop for the distance to the target. It comes with interchangeable turrets for different calibers of ammo at different target distances. It also offers wind or lead compensation adjustment. *For more info: www.aimpoint.com*





FN 503
FN America LLC

Inspired by the FN 509 family, the slim, 9mm striker-fired *FN 503* has been built to conceal quickly and discreetly. It has a 3.1"-barrel with recessed target crown, enlarged controls and soft recoil and FN 509-style low-profile iron sights. The all-new skateboard tape-style grip texture provides carry comfort and the all-metal trigger breaks crisply and consistently with an average 5-lb. trigger pull. It ships with one six-round magazine with pinky extender, and one eight-round magazine with grip sleeve in FN's standard soft-sided zippered case. For more info: (703) 288-3500, www.fnamerica.com

INSTINCT CATALYST Franchi



Franchi expanded its female-centric *Instinct Catalyst* line with a 20-ga. over/under shotgun offering. Built to proportionally fit the smaller stature of female shooters and hunters, the Instinct Catalyst adopts specific cast, length-of-pull, drop and comb requirements for quick shouldering and a precise cheek weld. The 20-ga. over/under features an A-grade satin walnut stock and forend, an all-steel, case-hardened receiver and gloss blue 26" barrel. It comes with three chokes (IC/M/F) and a wrench. OAL is 43"; weight is 6.8 lbs. For more info: (800) 264-4962, www.franchiusa.com

AMBIDEXTROUS SWEAT SHIELD 2-IN-1 HOLSTER Remora Holsters



The *Ambidextrous Sweat Shield 2-in-1 Holster* is a combination of two of Remora's holster styles: the Ambidextrous Sweat Shield Holster and the Remora 2-in-1 Holster. The combination holster keeps body oils and sweat away from the upper slide of the gun. At the same time, it also protects the user from "hammer gouge" or similar irritations. For more info: (239) 316-7770, www.remoraholsterstore.com

PERFORMANCE EYEWEAR Leupold & Stevens



Leupold & Stevens has introduced *Performance Eyewear*, an eyewear line taking full advantage of Leupold's 113 years of optics manufacturing expertise. Five styles were launched: the Katmai, Becnara, Packout, Switchback and Tracer. All are made from lightweight, ballistic-rated materials and ships with scratch-resistant polarized lenses same as Leupold's sporting optics. Three of the five styles — the Packout, Tracer and Switchback (in photo) — meet or exceed ANSI Z87.1 high-velocity impact standards for eye protection. For more info: (503) 526-1400, www.leupold.com

BEAR EDGE 61121 Bear & Son Cutlery

Bear & Son Cutlery

The *Bear Edge 61121* is a durable EDC pocketknife with a fast action and tough blade. Its hollow ground 3½" tanto blade is made of 440 stainless steel. The blade can be swiftly deployed by pushing the thumb studs or the exposed blade trigger. A sideliner lock ensures the blade remains in place once the knife is open. This black and red, spring-assisted knife with aluminum handle weighs 3.9 oz. and measures 8½" long open and 4¾" closed. It includes a glass breaker and a reversible pocket clip. For more info: (256) 435-2227, www.bearandsoncutlery.com



BLACK LABEL A-5 MTR Custom Leather

MTR Custom Leather

The *Black Label A-5* is just like MTR Custom Leather's A-5 holster, but upgraded with exotic leather — full black tiger shark with a burnt red full stingray inlay.

The *Black Label A-5* is custom hand-molded to your firearm for better retention. Other features include a leather-reinforced mouthpiece for easy re-holstering, full-combat grip accessibility to allow instant shooting grip, molded sight rail to prevent snags on draw, full slide/barrel coverage, a sweat shield/body shield to keep body oils/sweat away from the gun and protect user from sharp edges of the gun. For more info: (336) 879-2166, www.mtrcustomleather.com



CCP M2 Walther Arms

Walther Arms

Walther's *CCP M2* in .380 Auto is the only polymer-framed pistol featuring Softcoil Gas technology that improves user experience by reducing overall felt recoil and allowing the slide to be easily manipulated regardless of hand strength. Features include low-profile three dot sights, a Picatinny accessory rail, an ambi magazine release button, ergonomic grip, front and rear slide serrations and more. The pistol comes with two eight-round magazines and is offered in black, stainless or Angel Blue finish. For more info: (479) 242-8500, www.waltherarms.com



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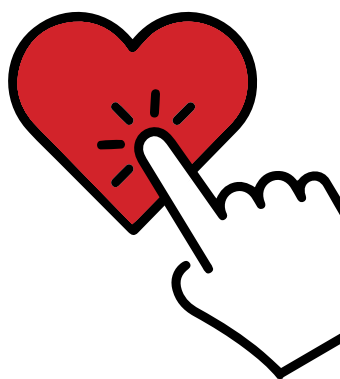
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WHEN BURGLARS ATTACK: THE STIFFLER CASE

SITUATION: When you catch a burglar in your home and the man attacks you for your gun.

LESSON: Law schools often come up short teaching deadly force and “self-defense immunity” doesn’t necessarily mean what you think.

It’s a pleasant May afternoon in East Helena, Montana. Henry Johnson, 37, is having an easy day so far. There was no one present when he broke into the home he’s burglarizing.

He’s a lifelong burglar with a lengthy history of violence and weapon possession, though he’s not armed at the moment. *He doesn’t look like the stereotype of a burglar.* He’s wearing gray sport slacks, a button-front shirt complete with necktie, and running shoes. The only incongruity in his garb is his mismatched gloves, worn so he won’t leave fingerprints.

A common burglary MO is to knock on doors dressed like an ordinary Joe. If someone answers whom he thinks he can take, the burglar can overpower them, and if the homeowner seems too intimidating, being dressed like a salesman allows a song and dance; it’s up to him whether to go away when the homeowner says, “We don’t want any.” And if no one answers the door at all, why, that’s an invitation to break and enter.

Standing over six feet tall and weighing 241 lbs., Johnson easily broke through the unanswered door and discovered no one inside. So far, so good. But he has carelessly left the broken door ajar and the curtains are up. He is rifling through the china closet in the dining room when he hears a pickup truck pull into the yard.

Looking out the front window, Henry Johnson sees a much older man at the wheel of the pickup. Henry Johnson’s day is about to get less easy.

Homeowner Reacts

In his mid-60s, James Stiffler and his wife of 45 years, Sandie, are both retired. Sandie has a part-time job and Jim dabbles in real estate sales and selling guns and accessories. A longtime gun enthusiast, he’s had an FFL for years.

Pulling into the driveway, he’s noticed an unfamiliar sedan parked there. It’s a time of day when his wife should be at home, but he can’t be certain because the double garage doors are closed — so he can’t tell if her car is there.

But his eyes take in the broken front door, and through the window, the big stranger. *Jim’s first thought is for his wife’s safety.* He can’t know if the burglar brought a weapon with him, but he assumes he has one because Jim keeps a fully loaded SIG SAUER P220 .45 pistol in plain sight on his bedside night table. A loaded Remington 700 .223 for varmints is in the bedroom. He figures the intruder probably has at least one gun by now.

The location is remote, the nearest neighboring house barely in line of sight, and the homeowner knows it will take too long for police to get there. There isn’t time to call 9-1-1. Jim grabs the 9mm pistol he keeps in his briefcase, a compact DA Star UltraStar, and rushes toward his house.

Confrontation

Stiffler moves cautiously through the house, gun at a low ready. The trigger is in DA mode, his finger outside the trigger guard. With the curtains open and the sun streaming in, he has plenty of light. He calls out, “Is anyone here?” Suddenly, there’s a noise in the computer room. Making his way there, with his wife’s sewing room on his left, he spots the big man tugging at the knob of the back door of the computer room, trying to open it and escape. But Johnson doesn’t know the door is double-locked and isn’t going to open.

He turns angrily toward Stiffler.

The View From Behind The Gun

Henry Johnson growls menacingly, “I’m going to hurt you!” He lunges at Stiffler. To Jim, the

Continued on page 64

“field rat” gun. But the same shallow rifling also means I could see some key-holing or yaw in some bullets, even at seven yards. Some loads seemed to punch clean round holes though. You’d just have to experiment with yours to see what it likes. I found 147-gr. loads shot well, while light, higher velocity stuff tended to be unstable. They might be skidding along the rifling?

Once you stop laughing at it, you begin to think of reasons to have one. Would I recommend it for a primary defense gun? Of course not. But for your tractor, hiking pack, farm truck glove box, veterinarian’s med kit (to put down animals), the proverbial tackle box, or if you just need a new hose nozzle — just kidding there — the Altor is a good option.

Available in 9mm (my test gun) or .380, I’m thinking a .22 Magnum would be dandy too since those shot cartridges are pretty good. I’m betting you’re seeing this for about \$115 in the real world, so maybe treat yourself to a fun gun, which may end up as a useful tool for you too. Heck, I “drilled” a hole I needed in my chicken coop with mine! For more info: www.althorcorp.com

OUTDOOR EDGE JAEGERPAIR KNIVES

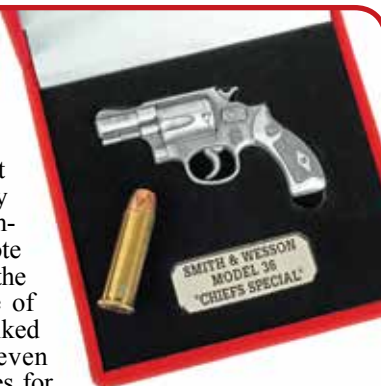


After a lifetime of cleaning game, I like to get it done easily and fast, with a minimal investment in tools. This duo from Outdoor Edge checks off all of those boxes. The set only weighs 8.5 oz. and the sheath makes toting them easy. The 3.9" drop-point Skinner takes care of the skinning/deboning chores, while the 3.7" gutting knife makes opening things up neat and tidy.

Both are heat-treated 420J2 stainless to help keep things easy to maintain. They sharpen easily, yet still offer good edge retention. I really liked the full tang, and the blaze orange handles make sure you can find them in a leaf-littered forest floor! I never understood camo-handled knives. The best thing is the MSRP is only \$33.95 for the kit. Real working tools. www.outdooredge.com

TEENY TINY Mini-Gun

Hampton Weaver’s miniatures come out regularly and this latest is one of my favorites — a perfect early S&W J-Frame complete with flat cylinder latch. S&W really wrote a new chapter in small-frame revolvers with the Chief’s Special and it created a new genre of pocket-carry round-guns. Even those who liked the D-Frame Colts were attracted to the even smaller stature of the J-Frames. This one goes for \$21.95. They are cast zinc, silver-electroplated then antiqued to bring out the details. That’s a .38 round in the pic for size. www.firearmsassurefreedom.com



ADD IT UP

1,000

Face shields made daily by S&W for COVID-19 response.

98

Law enforcement officers killed in the line of duty in 2019.

48

Died due to felonious acts.

40

Average age of officers killed.

36

Assailants with prior criminal records.

12

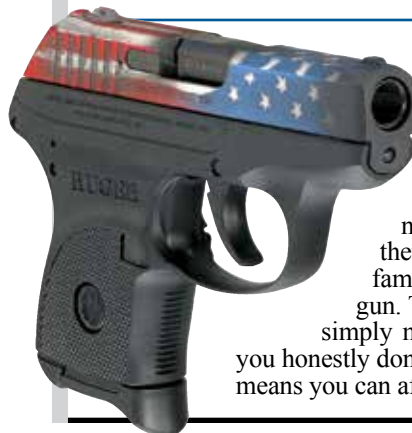
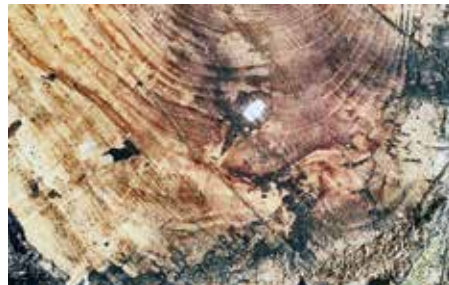
Offenders under judicial supervision at the time of offense.

52

Percentage of children living in homes receiving government help.

BULLET IN A TREE MYSTERY

This one comes from friend Marc Morganti of Gemini Customs. Marc does a lot of logging on his property and he sent me this pic not long ago. “Thought you’d get a kick out of this. I cut an old tree down and sure enough, the saw went right through a big bore lead bullet lodged deep inside.” If you look carefully, you can see the path the bullet took originally, which has since sort of been pushed around so is “S-shaped” now. I told Marc he was sure lucky and to go buy a lottery ticket!



PATRIOTIC RUGER

I don’t know why but this one caught my eye. It’s just a simple Ruger LCP .380 but it happens to be flying a certain flag. I’m biased, I admit, as I carry a similar model daily — which has never malfunctioned, ever, not once, honest. So to me they represent a sort of reliable pocket pal protecting my family even if I happen to be arm’s distance from a “real” gun. The addition of the Cerakote American flag on the slide simply makes things even more personal. At only about 9 oz. you honestly don’t know you have it in your pocket and the \$289 MSRP means you can afford it. Indulge yourself. www.ruger.com

TUSSEY TEASER

If the sort of thing you see in the pic floats your boat, tune into the Nov/Dec issue for a feature on Terry Tussey's favorite thing — building retro-1911s. Terry (of Tussey Custom) is certainly no stranger to our pages. He's a dear, old friend of mine and without a doubt one of the icons of the 1911 world. There is literally nothing Terry doesn't know about the platform, and his expertise shows in his custom guns and in some features he developed in use today by various factory makers. But close to his heart is making dead-nuts original looking honest-to-gosh 1911 models fooling the eye of even collectors — if the frames didn't ultimately say Caspian! Ha! And, they are match-grade so like a resto-mod, look stock outside but shoot 1" groups. More later! www.tusseycustom.com



BENCHMADE BAILOUT & VECTOR



Most "knife" people reach a stage where they're no longer content with cheapo \$20 knives. That's when they reach for the likes of Benchmade. These two really typify Benchmade's drive for quality and innovation.

The Bailout (black scales) is a sort of minimalist design, with a serrated or plain tanto style blade. An "Axis Lock" design, even with the pocket clip it's a feathery two ounces. Look for other options and colors. MSRP is \$175.

The Model 496 Vector sits in a "best" category, offering the assisted opening "flipper" feature and Axis Lock. The blade is a sort of modified drop-point, featuring Benchmade's first-ever compound grind blade (of CPM-20CV steel). The knife is full of eye-appealing "angles" and the pocket clip delivers low-rise carry. MSRP is \$335 — and worth every penny! That's a .308 cartridge in the picture for size. www.benchmade.com

TWO TOUGH LIGHTING TOOLS



I'm here to tell you these latest from

Streamlight have rapidly risen to the top of my go-to pile of luscious lighting lumen-makers. The Strion Switchblade (red one) delivers 500 lumens of either cool white, color-correct light or UV LED light for up to five hours. The swivel light bar is handy and it lives on my bench in the shop. I reach for it constantly to help me with shop tool set-up, repairs, etc. I'm seeing it for less than \$100 online.

The tiny but tough Sidewinder Boot is an issue light for recruit trainees in military boot camp. It's got a spring clip for helmet or MOLLE mounting and is waterproof — and idiot-proof. Using two AA batteries, it gives you 55 lumens and eight hours light on high, or seven lumens and 90 hours on low. It's also got a sliding red lens filter. Mine now lives in the saddle bag of my '73 BMW R75/5. This is made to replace the classic angle-head D-size light we're all familiar with. I'm seeing these for \$25 online. I love simple. www.streamlight.com.

REMORA LOW PROFILE HOLSTER

Remora's "Low Profile No-Clip IWB Holster" is made with a sort of "grabby" outer skin. This is both a sweat shield and a way for this clip-less holster to stay in place when tucked behind the belt. My test sample fit small frame revolvers like S&W's J-Frame or the various small frame Taurus, Charter Arms or Ruger wheelguns.



Remora's holsters are all hand-made here in the U.S.A. by a small company devoted to customer service and high quality at affordable prices. I especially like the fact this holster can be placed virtually anywhere on your waist and does equal double-duty as a very secure pocket holster. The grabby outside helps the holster stay in the pocket when you draw the gun. MSRP is around the \$26 point, and they offer many styles and fits. www.remoraholsters.com

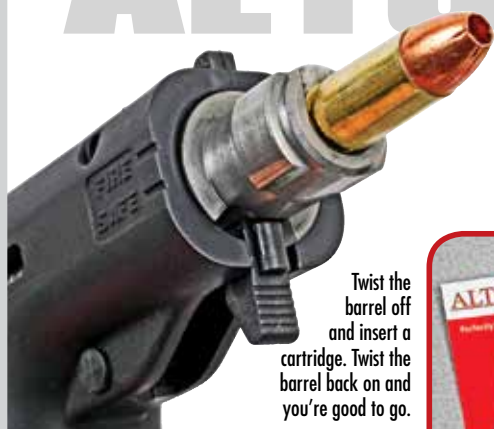
PROUD DADDY DEPARTMENT

Okay, so I was on the back porch shooting a sort of weird set-up. I had an Aimtech grip scope mount on a custom 1911 with a red dot sight on top. I was checking zero and learning if this would help accuracy testing — it did. I now have a Leupold 2x crosshair pistol scope on it. Stay tuned for a feature on what I learned. It happens my daughter Madison was visiting, heard the shooting and stepped outside to check things out. "Can I try it, Daddy?" she asked. "Of course you can," I say. Proud daddy bit: Those three shots are her first three out of this set-up, at 25 yards. The only reason there's just three is that was what was left in the mag. About 100 rounds later she said, "Thanks, Daddy, that was fun." Indeed it was. It seems some millennials understand trigger control?





Two main parts (barrel and frame) make up the Altor. Simple is as simple does.



Twist the barrel off and insert a cartridge. Twist the barrel back on and you're good to go.

ALTOR'S SINGLESHOT SAVVY



Available in 9mm or .380, the Altor also handles CCI 9mm shot cartridges perfectly.

I honestly, really, completely wanted to dislike this gun. I mean, just *look* at it. It's everything silly you can think up. It looks like a hose nozzle for crying out loud. It's single shot (but not a target gun), the barrel comes off to load it (!), the sights are crude, the grip is funny, and — you don't *pull* the trigger to fire the gun — you “let it go.” Huh? What?

I know, I know, I needed to calm down too. When I first saw it in videos I thought, “Well then, that's silly. Looks like part of a *Monty Python* skit.

“I say there, take your silly gun and silly yourself off somewhere with it!

“What silly gun? This isn't a silly gun. This is a real gun and I'll silly you with it if you're not careful, you silly nincompoop.”

That sort of thing. *Monty Python*, after all.

So I had to try one.

Altor is Latin, meaning “Protector” which might ring true in a genuine pinch. It weighs about 10 oz., which is, surprisingly, about what

an empty Ruger LCPII .380 weighs. It's about 6" stem to stern, 3.5" top to bottom and about 1.2" wide, give-or-take a tad. It was developed by the company's owner, Alex Malcolm (scientist and inventor) to be an American-made handgun, affordable, reliable and rugged — able to be purchased on anyone's budget. And, I have to say, the Altor shows excellent workmanship, using high quality reinforced nylon polymer and 416RS stainless for the barrel and metal bits. Thanks to CNC machining it all fits together perfectly and works as-designed. All for about \$129 MSRP.

This is where it gets weird, though. To load it you “pull” the trigger slightly to move the firing pin back, then twist the barrel to the right, unlocking it from the breech. The lock-up looks like the lugs on a rifle bolt. Once the barrel is off you slide a cartridge onto the breech face and it holds it while you click the barrel

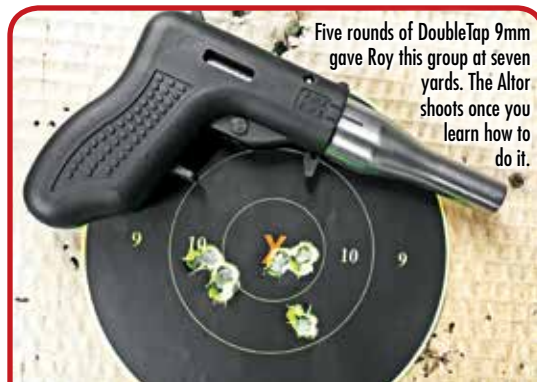
back into place. The forward edge of the trigger snaps into an indent on the bottom of the barrel, allowing the firing pin to reach the primer. So to carry it safely, you need to twist the barrel to cam the trigger back. Putting the cross-bolt safety on locks trigger travel and you're good to go.

To fire, push the cross-bolt safety off, twist the barrel counter-clockwise into the “Fire” position (marked on both sides of the frame), and grip the gun firmly. This is another spot where things enter the Twilight Zone. You should grip the gun with your middle finger just below the ledge at what you might call the “bottom” of the trigger guard (even though there isn't an enclosed guard). Also keep your thumb high, sort of pressing against the upper-back of the grip frame. You “pull” the trigger back until it stops, then, when you're ready to fire, you let the trigger “slip” off your finger. An internal spring, compressing as you pulled, now flings the trigger (and firing pin) into the primer, firing the gun.

Technique?

I'll confess it takes some dry-firing to get the routine down. Keeping your thumb high (even almost hiding the rear sight) really helps to stabilize things. Much — very much — to my surprise I could hit an aluminum can at about 10 yards pretty easily. The group in the photo was at seven yards off-hand, but that was after about 30 rounds to get things down pat. Hold onto your hats too, because I was able to hit my steel torso-sized gong at 80 yards now and again. No, really.

A couple of surprises. The shallow rifling means it handles CCI 9mm shot great and it is now my official tractor



Five rounds of DoubleTap 9mm gave Roy this group at seven yards. The Altor shoots once you learn how to do it.



CCI 9mm shot at three yards — tractor seat to ground range and deadly on field rats.

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