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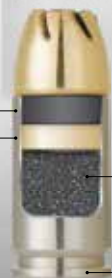
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Turning revolvers into real fighting tools! MIKE WOOD

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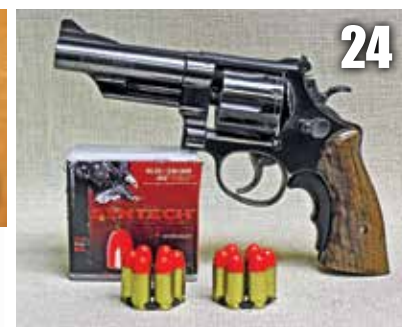
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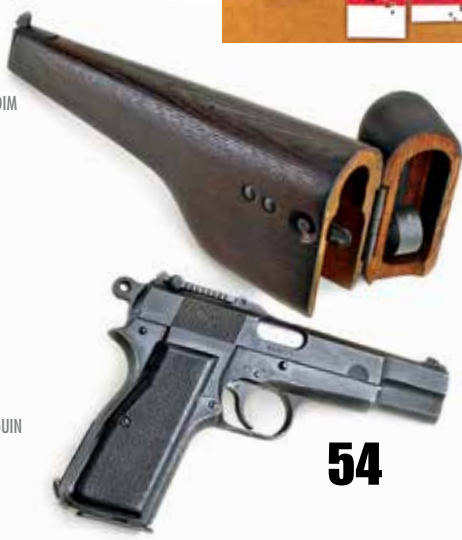
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WIN HANDGUN OF THE MONTH **70**

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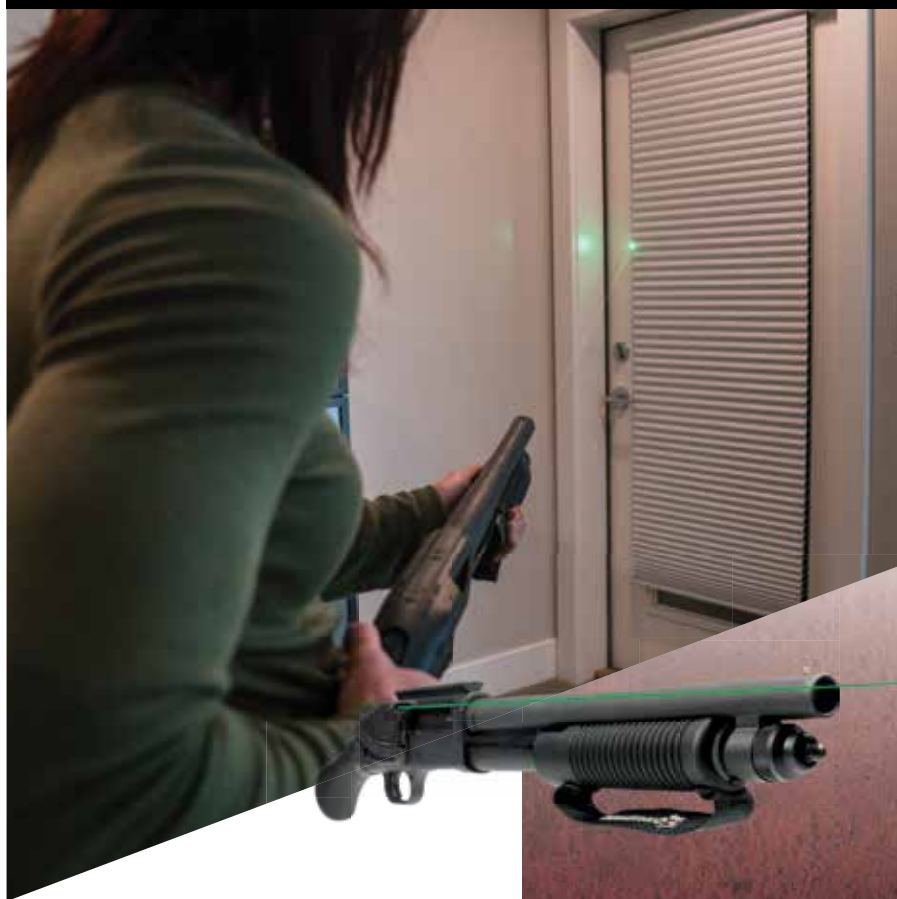


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CLASSIC ISSUES

Want to dig deep into the history of *American Handgunner* magazine? Did you know you can go through past issues back to the very first one in 1976 all the way to the year 1988? For free! There's a lot of good reading there, so go to the site and start digging! We're sure you'll get pretty nostalgic taking a look at these classics and will no doubt enjoy them as much as you do today's most recent issues! To find them go to americanhandgunner.com and scroll down to the bottom to click the "Classic Issues" link. Or, visit <https://americanhandgunner.com/classic-issues/classic-handgunner-editions>.

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FMG QUICK HITS ON YOUTUBE

Want to see the guns you read about on the pages of *American Handgunner* live and in action on the screen? Swing by to watch FMG's Quick Hits on our FMGPubs YouTube channel. Recently, we covered the new FN 509 Midsized from FN, a handy to carry yet fully capable 15+1 9mm pistol ready for CCW duty.



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I WON!

I've just received the SIG pistol awarded in a giveaway gun contest in *Handgunner*, and I simply want to thank you and your team there for the excellent prize and great magazine! I genuinely appreciate all of your kind assistance and cooperation throughout this process — Jazz rocks! — as well as the generosity of *American Handgunner* and SIG SAUER. I wondered if these contests were really legitimate, and I was certainly extremely pleased to find out the FMG contests are, indeed, legit!

Bruce (last name withheld by request)
South Florida

Another Winner

What an anniversary present! I just picked up my Taurus 85 Ultralight .38 Special Gun giveaway at my FFL dealer. The double action pull is smooth, with no stacking and a clean break. The single action is creep-free and crisp. I'd estimate it at about 2-3 lbs. It's a great day, indeed. It's my 39th wedding

anniversary and my granddaughter's 7th birthday too. Her dad and I are taking her shooting for the first time today. She'll be using her big sister's Ruger 6.5" single six stainless. So thanks again! I never thought I'd actually win after 20 years. Dreams really do come true.

Bill C.
Elizabethtown, KY

GUNS Winner

Thanks Jazz and thanks *GUNS Magazine*. Received my winning pistol today from my dealer and the latest *GUNS Magazine* in the mail too, so it was a banner day! The people at the dealer were really impressed. I explained how the monthly giveaway works, so you might have a few more

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SPEAK OUT

people from Hermiston, Oregon registering to win each month!

Duane C.
Via email

We love to get these notes from winners. If it wasn't for Associate Editor Jazz Jimenez and her hard work keeping tabs of the giveaway gun program — and the energetic participation by our clients — we wouldn't get these great letters! Keep entering and we'll keep giving 'em away! —RH

Dillon Service

I'd like the readers of *American Handgunner* to know what fine folks there are at Dillon Precision Products, Inc. I've owned a Square Deal reloading press for 31+ years and it's served me well. In times past, I have had two very minor issues that Dillon folks sent me parts free of charge, correcting the issues. Recently, I experienced an issue rendering my press inoperable. I phoned Dillon and they asked me to send my press to them. Within a week and a half of sending my press, I got it back, in perfect condition. With the exception of the major metal parts, my press was completely rebuilt. And all the work was done free of charge! When Dillon Precision Products, Inc. advertises their reloading presses come with a lifetime "No B-S" warranty — they mean it.

Kenny Bell
El Cajon, CA

Kenny, it's something I hear from you guys again and again about Dillon, and it certainly mirrors my own experience owning their gear over the past decades! Thanks for letting us know and for spreading the good word about those fine folks. —RH

Affordable .22s

As always, great magazine! Roy Huntington's article about the inexpensive .22 single shot (*Insider*, "The Knocabout," May/June 2019) was excellent. He has only to look as far as a Heritage Single action to fill his need for an inexpensive truck gun these days. They're just South of \$150. A polymer-framed 4" barrel Leinad-style .22/.22m/.380 single shot should go for \$79.98.

Ellis R. Sisk
Via email

*Great idea on the Heritage. And with the introduction of Ruger's new "Wrangler" .22 SA (see my *Insider*, this issue) we've got lots to choose*

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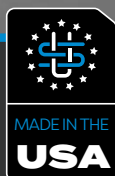


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SPEAK OUT

from. Ruger's is likely less than \$200 street price so you get a SA .22 like a Single Six, for an amazing price! —RH

Pepper Spray?

I've been getting *American Handgunner* for years and my current subscription runs thru 2027, just so you know! I always read Roy's *Insider* first. Anyway the EDC pictures and accompanying article interested me (*Insider*, "Micro-Carry, Mini-Carry, Medium-Carry & Mondo-Carry," July/Aug 2019). I relate to the mini-carry. All the articles on EDC in different magazines never seem to include pepper spray. I feel it's useful in a situation where you need some type of deterrent without having to draw a gun, which is always an option if needed. Any thoughts from you guys?

Bill Montgomery
Via email

Bill, that's a good point. During my police career I saw pepper spray fail to stop a bad guy many times. What I fear is someone will buy a small purse-sized pepper spray then think they have a solution to everything, guaranteed to stop a bad guy in his tracks. But it's just not the case. Sometimes, sure, but sometimes, not so sure. As another "tool" in a bag of tricks you train around it makes perfect sense. But people need to train for the concept of it not working, then go to plan B, then C, then D ... etc. —RH

Bull/Farm Guns

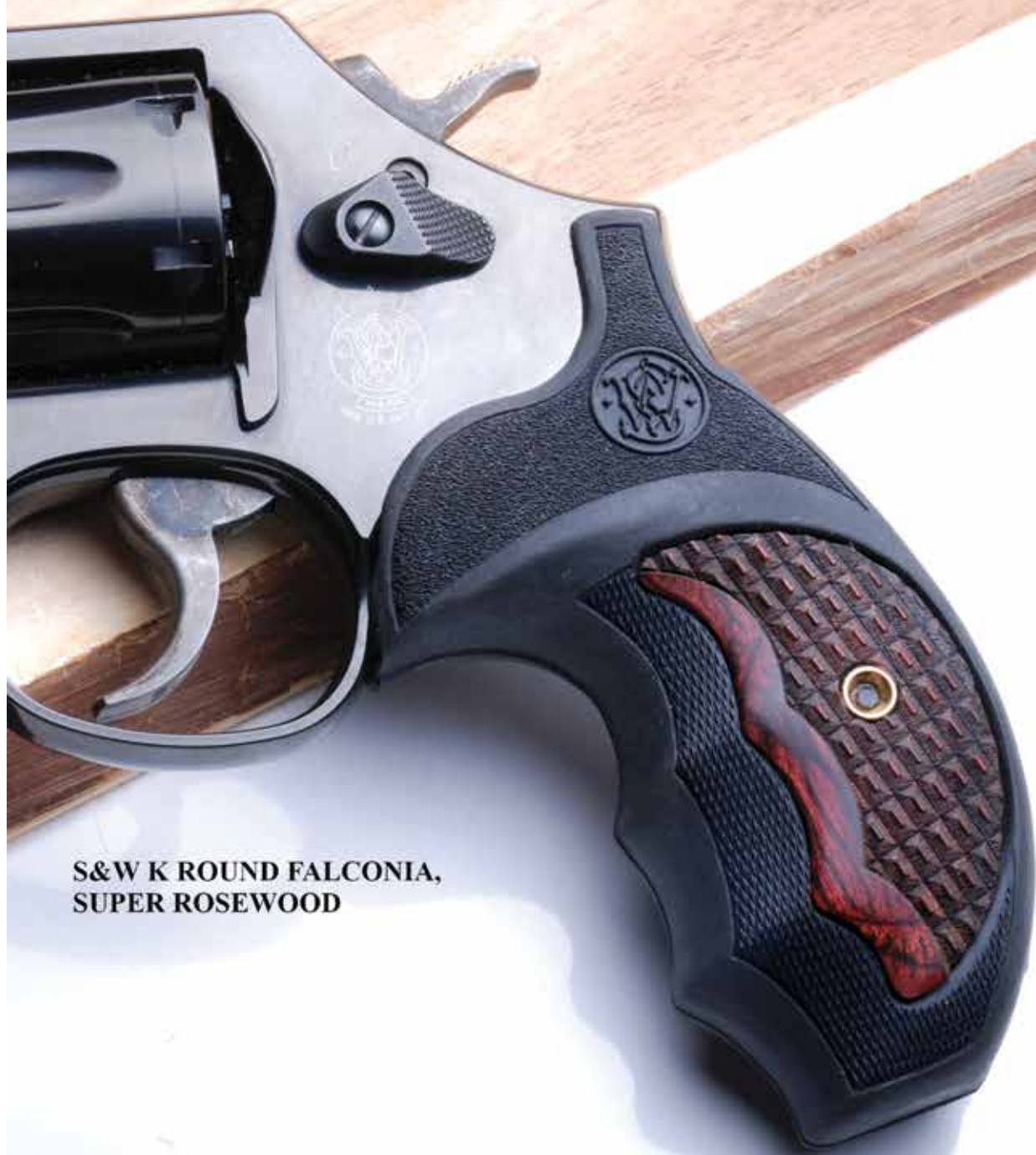
I got my new *American Handgunner* today and read your response about a "bull gun" with a lot of interest (*Speak Out*, "Farm Carry," July/Aug 2019). I have a Taurus Tracker in .44 Mag and I shoot 220-gr. hard cast at 1,000+ out of it loaded with 9.5 grains of Unique. The little gun is quite potent but not abusive with the ported barrel. With the moderate loads you described, and I load, it's also accurate. It's handy for field work where rattlesnakes are encountered, too. A full capsule of #9s at close range is very effective, and I figure it would work well with a 180 JHP as a defense gun.

J. Stacy
Via email

I agree on those modest loads being much more fun than going full steam. Especially in a lighter weight gun. —RH

One of the comments in "Farm Carry" reminded me of the time my

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SPEAK OUT

wife and I were newlyweds almost 50 years ago. We were living on her dad's farm and skunks were a serious problem. One morning, a skunk sprayed near the house, and when we went to see what was going on we spotted him about 50 yards away in tall grass. After a discussion about whether we should dispatch it or let it go, we decided it would be best to get rid of the vermin. So I sent a 40-gr. .22 HP down range and right on target. To our dismay, one of our Holsteins, whose head and back coloring mimicked a skunk's, jolted up just enough to let us see she wasn't a skunk — and died. She had been laying in a depression behind a log, with only the top of her head showing. To this day I've never lived this down and often have had to endure the ribbing our family is happy to dish out.

Ron Ricci
Via email

I read the recent letters column in regards to defending yourself against large aggressive animals and wanted to relate an incident I observed. In my career as a locomotive engineer I've been involved in a number of crossing collisions, one of which involved a semi-truck with 80 head of cattle in it. My train struck the truck at the rear wheels of the trailer, causing the rear end of the trailer to shear off and drop the remainder of it onto the ground. All of the cattle came pouring out at a dead run, save for one sprawled on the ground. At first glance I thought she was a goner, but in the hour and a half we waited for the highway patrol to show up she managed to get up and stagger around.

She was obviously grievously injured, so the trooper decided to put her down. Using his S&W M19 he fired a shot to her forehead from a distance of about 15 feet, staggering her but not finishing her. A second shot had the same result. At this point he got his Ruger Mini14 out of the trunk of his cruiser and put the poor beast out of her misery. This was a young cow, and she still shrugged of two well placed shots, so I can't think it would have been any different for a larger, angry bull. I don't imagine any handgun would seem adequate enough when you're confronted with a ton of angry unground Chuck bearing down on you with mayhem on his mind, but I'm sure it would beat slapping him in the face with your hat. Keep up the great work, *Handgunner* is by far the best in the business.

Randy Raney
Via email

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I've heard from some farmers too, since that reader letter. Most say cows — and bulls especially — are too valuable to just shoot if they get upset and try to get you. Farmers and ranchers told me they keep their ATV or tractor, etc. between them and the critters during chores, and some recommend a stout stick kept handy. They said waving it and if needed, bashing a cow or bull on the nose/snout usually does the trick. But still, you'd need good nerves, I'd say! But then again, they're professionals and I'm not when it comes to cattle! —RH

Tauris Holsters

Regarding the recent article on Tauris Holsters (*Carry Options*, July/Aug 2019), I've had one of Mike Taurisano's holsters since 1992 when I switched from uniform to plainclothes. It's still my favorite holster and I wouldn't hesitate to buy another.

The craftsmanship is first rate and the holster only gets better as the leather breaks in. I also have a belt Mike made to go with the holster and it's still in great shape, albeit it now has to be worn on the last hole! Thanks for reminding your readers about Mike's products and his first class workmanship.

Lou N.
USBP/HSI (Ret.)

Off-Duty Carry

I just read Mas's column (*Cop Talk*, July/Aug 2019) issue about cops carrying or not carrying guns off duty. Off-duty cops not carrying a firearm was one of my pet issues during the entire time I was on the job. In the old days, my department required off-duty carry, but it was never enforced. Today, nobody seems to care, including the cops. I'm personally aware of at least three incidents where an off-duty cop would have been able to prevent a violent crime — if they'd been armed.

Our local FOP lodge meets at night in a not-nice neighborhood on a dark street. Why should they be armed? Well, suppose some crazy decides to open the door and kill some cops? The door was never locked, by the way. I stopped going.

Al
Via email

Competition Vs. Hunting

I would have never considered competitive shooting a benefit to handgun hunting until Mark Hampton brought it to my attention in one of his articles (*Handgun Hunting*, "Competition Vs. Hunting?" Jan/Feb 2019). I've been a handgun hunter for 40 years and always considered it a style of



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SPEAK OUT

hunting that was pretty calculated. Still-hunting, some stand hunting, it was always anything but on the verge of chaotic. Now, after my first moose hunt in Alaska this past fall I'm rethinking that.

When I got my chance at a bull moose, I was sitting Keith-style. My guide called him in just perfect, then all hell broke loose. After my first shot, the moose jumped, then the other three guys with me started shouting — "Hit it again, hit it again!" I lost sight of the bull, so jumping up from my position I got another shot off, followed by two more. All the while the guys were still yelling. Mayhem is what it felt like. Moose running, men yelling, I'm shooting ... you get the drift here. Maybe, I would have been better prepared if I had kept at cowboy action shooting?

I shot .45 Colts with full house blackpowder loads at the time, but gave that up many years ago. Nowadays I hunt with a Freedom Arms .454 and I can definitely see a benefit to timed events with heavy recoiling guns. That moose hunt certainly got me to thinking how to better prepare for the unexpected. Then again, maybe I'll just hunt alone next time to keep the ruckus to a minimum!

Mike Harmon
West Des Moines, IA

Slippery Grip

I have a hard time gripping the rear serrations on my GLOCK 42. My grip keeps slipping off for some reason. I don't have trouble with my other semi-autos though. Is there something I can do or attach to improve the purchase on the rear serrations on the 42 and still be able to use a holster?

I'm also looking for a shoulder holster for my SIG 365. I intend to use it around the house as I have back issues and, at certain times of the year, OWB and IWB really cause some problems. I don't need a double mag pouch or anything fancy and am just looking for a simple, quality rig. Could you suggest a couple of makers to help me out?

Mike McDonnell
Via email

Mike, this product (www.tractiongrips.com) would likely take care of your grip issue. If they don't have a fit, keep in mind good old fashioned skateboard tape works great too. It's sort of a "sandy" feeling. Do an internet search for "grip tape." I found all sorts when I did it. Also, stores like Home Depot have a traction tape used for stairs. I checked it out and it's



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pretty much just skateboard tape and would likely work fine.

On the holster, that's a tough one as the gun is so new makers are still ramping up production and I haven't seen shoulder rigs yet. I'm thinking something made out of nylon might be best. A "generic" fit for small autos would likely work. Look for a fit for a gun close in size to the 365 (one of the smaller GLOCKS or possibly a Taurus model or a Kimber Solo, etc.). Check out Uncle Mike's as they have a pretty good "generic" line of holsters of all sorts. There are others too so dive into an online search and I'm sure you'll find plenty, I sure did when I nosed around some to see for myself.

A custom maker could also help you but would cost a bit more and have a wait, more than likely. There are also simple lightweight vests specifically made to carry a gun in an inside pocket. That's a good option too. —RH

Nine Years Later

An amazing thing happened recently Roy. Nine years after you showed my knife-making work in *Handgunner* I still get folks who place orders from that first article! I still can't say thanks enough.

Billy Helton
Via email

Billy, it was great to hear from you! I hear this sort of thing all the time from people we feature and even advertisers who call to tell us they're still selling product from an ad they placed months and even years ago. You guys seem to keep the magazine and re-read it now and again. But I understand, as I often grab a handful of 20 or 30 (or 40!) year old *Handgunners* and "re-enjoy" things! If you'd like to see Billy's work (and you should!) you can find him at www.heltoncustomknives.com, Ph: (918) 230-1773. His work is very affordable — and first-class. —RH

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LET THERE BE LIGHT — AND LASERS OR: HOW TECHNOLOGY GOT ME MARRIED

Keeping up with the latest technology is a lesson I learned long ago. Back in the Nixon era, I hung out with a pretty good group of buds at college. At a party the girlfriend of one of the guys brought along a friend, a stunningly beautiful young woman just starting a career as a schoolteacher. While the other guys fought in the backyard to see who would ask her out, I managed to contain my crippling shyness enough to spring my pickup line — “You come here often?” When she agreed to a date, my so-called buds said it was proof miracles do occur.

In addition to being shy, poor, inarticulate and a green farm boy I owned nothing but a couple of guns, a beat-up '56 Meteor and a student loan. Many of my buds had good jobs and fancy cars. Some even had suits and ties. No, really.

As Christmas approached I was still in the running, until she canceled a Friday movie date. She had to compile and rank all her student's assignments, mid-term and final exams. This was before computers, before electronic calculators were commonplace, so we're talking long hours with a sharp pencil. And this, dear reader, was the magic moment when



The Streamlight TLR-8, weighing only about 2½ oz., has a white light output of 500 lumens and a laser available in red or green. A lot of punch in a tiny package!

keeping up with technology paid off.

I was one of the select few who actually owned an electronic pocket calculator, a wonder of the day. It cost me \$80, nearly a week's wages, and was about equivalent to what you can get today in a box of cereal. So presto, two days of tiresome work was done in a couple of hours. Other guys might be able to offer fancy dinners and flowers but I gave her technology — and two days of freedom!



There are a lot of great lights available out there. From left: SureFire 6P LED, SureFire Fury, Streamlight ProTac with integral bracket to fit 1913-style rails, Streamlight PolyTac HD and BrightStrike RHIGHT-MHLS.

STILL KEEPING UP

It seems the pace of technological innovation is moving faster than we can grasp. When I was a kid, a flashlight was made of thin aluminum, took two D-cells, put out a dim yellow light and broke if you dropped it. It was kept in the junk drawer until there was a power failure, at which time it wouldn't work.

But flashlights have been evolving rapidly for at least the last three decades. Take the iconic SureFire 6P, introduced circa 1988. A marvel of its day, the original 6P had an incandescent light that ran hot, had a one-hour battery life, and put out about 65 lumens. Around 2008 the 6P LED was introduced. It was tougher, less likely to be damaged if dropped, ran cooler, tripled (or more) battery life, and put out about 80 lumens. I have one, and still use it.

SHARP FOCUS

Just because I got off the train doesn't mean the train stopped.

LEDs have gotten better and better. The current SureFire 6PX Pro puts out 600 lumens at full power and has an optional 15-lumen low power setting. Battery life is 1.5 hours on high, 52 hours on low — and the light costs not much more than it did in 1990.

My Streamlight PolyTac HP is one of my favorite lights. It's water- and impact-resistant, with high (275 lumens), low (14 lumens) and strobe settings. Even though it's only about four years

old, I see on the Streamlight website the current version is even better, with high (600), medium (260), low (35) and strobe settings, and can be programmed to quickly access your preferred functions. The technology thing again, eh?

What I knew about lasers was from the movie scene in which Goldfinger was about to use one to cut James Bond in half. A laser then was about the size of an anti-aircraft gun. Back then we would never have believed a day would come when lasers were readily available devices.

So, I've been very impressed with the Streamlight TLR series, and the current TLR-8 is amazing. How they get

white light output of 500 lumens from a tiny unit 2" long and weighing less than 3 oz. is beyond me. Plus, a laser aiming device in your choice of red or green; options of light alone/laser alone/both light and laser; and all in a tough, durable and recoil-resistant package. Goldfinger would have been jealous.

If your current light or laser is a few years old, you should check into what's available now. You may just need to upgrade your technology fix.



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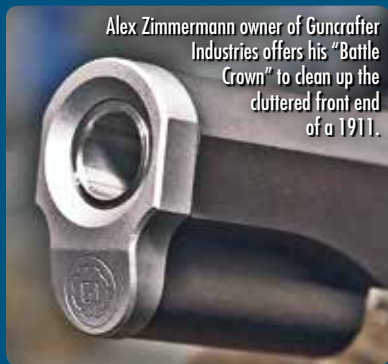
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Greg's classic Wilton vise is his most-used tool, hands-down.



Alex Zimmermann owner of Guncrafter Industries offers his "Battle Crown" to clean up the cluttered front end of a 1911.

GOLFING GO-TO

We use files everyday and Alex Hamilton of Ten Ring Precision has a cool way of handling them — golf balls. He drills a hole in the ball for the handle end of the file, making for a comfortable handle, allowing the 'smith to push from the palm easily without causing hand fatigue.

Sanding can be rough, but Dan Bachelor of Powder River Precision has found a tool making all those sanding strips easier to use. It's an adjustable sanding stick by Zona allowing you to hold 1" strips off a roll of sandpaper flat and taut. This gives him a 5" flat surface to use. Once the sandpaper is used on both sides, just loosen the tension knob and replace the paper.

I've got more screwdrivers than I can count. Two sets are always on my bench though, Brownells' Magna-Tip and Chapman. Both are made for gunsmithing. The Magna-Tip with its large handle is for heavy torque or specialty bits, while the Chapman set is very handy for quick jobs and is non magnetic.

I do make some of my own, repurposed from screwdrivers I find at yard sales or flea markets. They get a ground tip slot to fit a specific need like the elevation screw on a BoMar style sight with its thin shallow slot, then saved for just that job.

1911 GOODNESS

I've always toyed with the idea of a cleaner front end for the 1911. Its bushing, spring cap and barrel making for lots of layers and angles. Now Alex Zimmermann owner of Guncrafter Industries has cleaned it up. The "Battle Crown" is a combination bushing and spring cap cover in one. The Battle Crown is 0.250" thick and comes with a deep well for the barrel to sit low into.

MUST-HAVES FOR THE DIY GUNNER

Every craftsman has his "go-to" piece of equipment or tool. That bit of "necessary" on the bench or in the toolbox, never loaned to or touched by others. It's not rare or valuable; it's just that work stops without it.

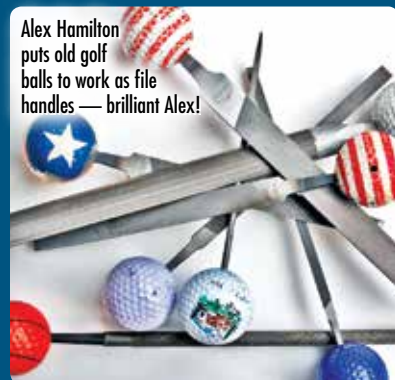
For me it's my bench vise. An old Wilton 5" beast bolted to my bench. I've had it so long I don't even know where I got it. The jaws are battered aluminum and most of the blue paint is worn. But all my work finds its way into the vise at some point. It holds dozens of jigs for frames, slides, sights and more. It's the center of my workstation.

Everyone wants the coolest new gizmo, but when you come down to it a lot of work must still be done by hand. And holding parts firmly is a must.

I asked a few other smiths what they considered must haves in their shops. Jason Burton of Heirloom Precision had

a great one — his OptiVISOR. Jason is a master of hand checkering with the patience of a saint who must look very closely as he files 30, 40 and 50 lines per inch. The magnifier allows easy viewing without eyestrain. I must have five visors in my shop and one is always within reach.

Ned Christiansen of MichiGuns Ltd. makes a lot of fixtures. One clever one he designed is for holding small dovetail sights. Made of 7075 aluminum, it holds a variety of dovetail sights for handwork or milling. The jig has a variety of popular sized cuts like Novak, Heinie and Wilson. You insert the sight and tighten the setscrew holding it firmly in place.



Alex Hamilton puts old golf balls to work as file handles — brilliant Alex!



MichiGuns Ltd. offers this great sight holding jig, worth its weight in gold when you have sight work to do.

The bushing is chamfered to 11 degrees, which you can match to the barrel crown. There's the standard fitting involved for the barrel. The sample I fit was very close, with a 0.580" inside diameter.

If you're fitting it to a slide with the spring cap shoulder like a Colt you will either have to remove the shoulder or use a Commander-length spring cap to allow for assembly. There is about 0.005"-0.01" of material to remove on the top radius. I tried both the Govt. and

the Commander in unfinished carbon and found the machining is first rate. I like it.



For more info: www.brownells.com; www.guncrafterindustries.com; www.chapmanmfg.com; www.m-guns.com; www.zonatool.net

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MALFUNCTIONS

'BANK' DRY-FIRE PRACTICE MEMORY

Everyone practices empty reloads — you just fire til empty and reload. Yet, during a confrontation, an empty reload probably won't be the deciding factor. The numbers seen most often for rounds fired in self-defense shootings are three and four. And your pistol holds how many rounds? Just maintain control, shoot accurately and you won't need to reload. Just remember to expect the unexpected, though.

The chances of having a malfunction during a fight, when things are far less than perfect, are high. Under stress people make mistakes. Maybe your firing position doesn't provide

the pistol enough resistance to function, creating a "stove pipe" or failure to eject. Malfunctions are always unexpected. A weapon experiencing mechanical troubles, like a broken ejector — *during* a fight — requires clearing for *every* shot fired. Think about it.

The ability to clear a stoppage efficiently under imperfect conditions — without delay — is mandatory. Learning this requires lots of repetition, as in the thousands. The best way to bank these repetitions is with dummy ammunition — non-firing rounds for training/practice — and a few minutes of daily dry drills.

BEFORE YOU START

The number one concern with dry practice is always safety. The four safety rules are always in effect. You have a backstop capable of trapping any unintentional shots, no live ammunition is in the area and "Done" means stop! Most negligent shots occur after someone decides they're finished, loads their weapon — forgets — then decides to perform the drill "one more time." And, even though it's dry practice, malfunctions are easier to do using the Coach & Shooter format.

To clear malfunctions I teach a "non-diagnostic binary technique." You press the trigger and it doesn't fire. Step 1: Load. You attempt to load, but the way

the slide feels when you rack it says, "That didn't work." Step 2: Unload then Load again. This two-step approach — Load/Unload & Load — is efficient, easy to learn and to apply. You don't need to identify what type of malfunction you have, or decide how to fix it. The only reason you need to distinguish between the stoppages is setting them up for practice.

A "Type I" stoppage is caused by a faulty round, a bad primer, no round in the chamber, magazine wasn't seated so the slide didn't chamber a round, or for some reason the slide is out of battery.

Load the pistol with a mag full of dummy rounds. Get on-target and press — no "bang." Load. Come off the trigger, tap to ensure the mag is seated and rack the slide to load. Press and repeat, again



The very best way to learn to clear stoppages is dry practice with dummy ammunition — don't use live ammo!

and again. At some point the slide locks to the rear on the empty mag. Reload, with another mag full of dummies. Coach watches to ensure the process is safe and the sequence is correct.

MORE PRACTICE

The "Type II" is a failure to eject an empty piece of brass — a "smokestack" or "stovepipe." Load with dummy ammo. Pull the slide slightly to the rear without ejecting the chambered round. The coach places a dummy round or empty piece of brass into the ejection port. Shooter releases the slide, trapping the obstruction in place.

Get on-target and press. It doesn't fire. Load. Off the trigger, tap to seat the mag and rack the slide to load. Don't skip "tap." During live fire some pistols will create a Type II if the mag isn't locked in place.

A Type III is the "dreaded double feed" — two things/objects, an empty piece of brass and/or live rounds, trying to occupy the chamber. Unload, then manually lock the slide to the rear. Point the muzzle down so Coach can insert a dummy round into the chamber. Keep the muzzle down, put in a mag full of dummy rounds and pull the slide rearward to release it.

Go on-target, press and nothing. You attempt to load, but racking the slide doesn't clear the stoppage. Time to unload. You'll need to pull the mag from the pistol

and the slide is trying to feed the top round from the mag so it won't drop free. A great reason for extended base pads on your mags, by the way. I retain the magazine, it's normally not the problem, putting it in the pinky finger of the firing hand where it's ready when it's time to load. Cycle the slide *aggressively* three times to clear out the trash. Once the slide feels right — it's going into battery — index and seat the mag, and rack the slide to chamber a round. If racking three or four times doesn't clear out the trash the pistol is jammed or broken, requiring time and tools to correct.

Daily dry practice, 10 or 15 minutes a day, is the easy way to bank these repetitions. Plus, the learning curve with dry practice is steeper than during live fire. Don't try to go fast. Slow down, make every repetition a good one. You're striving for efficiency, and developing the ability to clear a stoppage immediately under stressful conditions and without delay.

But, it takes time. The chances of your fight involving a malfunction are high. Dry practice could well be the deciding factor in your fight.



Most stoppages in a fight are created by the shooter, but faulty ammo can also create a stoppage.



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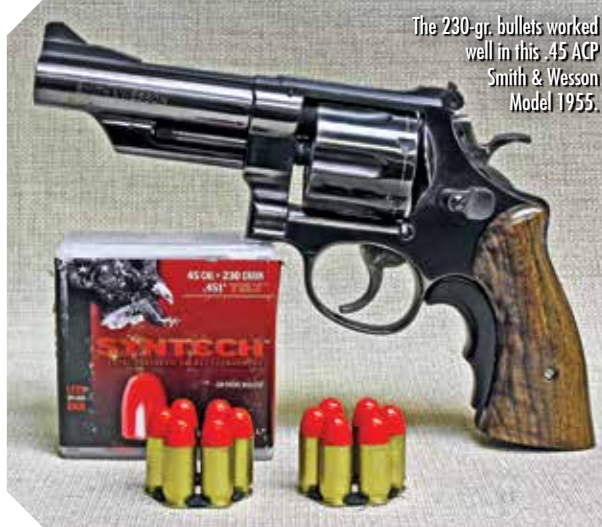
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The 230-gr. bullets worked well in this .45 ACP Smith & Wesson Model 1955.

Want some cutting-edge bullets for your next reloading project? Federal is now offering Syntech Component bullets. You know, those eye-catching bright red ones? In the past, reloaders have had to choose between cast bullets and copper jacketed bullets; now Syntech offers a third alternative — a polymer jacket. Currently they are offered in 9mm/115-gr. FN, .40/165-gr. FN and .45/230-gr. RN.

All of these are coated with a red Total Synthetic Jacket (TSJ) polymer coating trademarked by Federal. Federal claims this jacket eliminates copper fouling, decreases heat and friction, and provides clean, accurate and consistent performance as well as less splash-back when used on steel targets. The copper fouling is eliminated and splash back decreased simply because there is no copper jacket.



John tried out the Federal Syntech in 9mm, .40 and .45 sizes with four types of powder, including Alliant Sport Pistol.

LOADED QUESTIONS

Most of my experimentation with Syntech bullets has been with the 230-gr. .45 ACP bullet using four powders, namely True Blue and ZIP from Western Powders as well as Alliant's Sport Pistol and Green Dot. I have achieved excellent results with all four. Some examples are 5.5 grains of Sport Pistol for 860-880 fps and 1" groups at 20 yards from a Ruger SR 1911, Springfield Armory 1911A1 Stainless Steel and Colt Gold Cup. I found

7.0 grains of True Blue clocks out at 850 fps with 1" groups in the Ruger and the Kimber Target II, and 5.5 grains of ZIP is just under 800 fps and achieves the same groups with all four mentioned semi-automatic pistols. While all of these are excellent results, the most outstanding performance came from 5.5 grains of Green Dot giving around 825 fps and slightly tighter groups from all four pistols. Obviously, there's something very special about Syntech 230-gr.

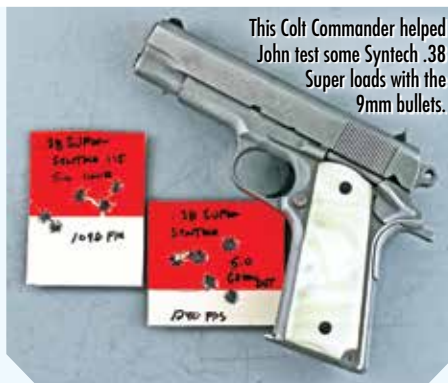
polymer-coated red bullets.

Switching to the 10mm and Syntech 165-gr. FN .40 bullet over 6.5 grains of Sport Pistol gave 1" groups in a Kimber Target II Stainless at 1,130 fps and the same accuracy in a Nighthawk Long Slide at 1,185 fps. The best group of all from any of the Syntech bulleted loads and guns tested came from the Long Slide Nighthawk using 6.0 grains of ZIP. A relatively mild shooting load at just over 1,000 fps, it placed five shots in 7/8" with so little felt recoil it's literally a load one can shoot all day.

AN OLD FRIEND

Soon it was time to switch to my favorite 1911 chambering, namely the .38 Super. Here came Green Dot again with the best results. I used a classic Colt Commander in .38 Super I bought back in 1968. I had Bill Wilson install one of his barrels on it and then had the rear sight replaced with an adjustable MMC sight. Now I had something. With the 115-gr. RN bullet over 5.0 grains of Green Dot, the muzzle velocity is right at 1,160 fps and groups right at 1".

All of these bullets are designed for use in semi-automatic pistols, however the 230-gr. .45 bullet over 5.5 grains of Sport Pistol does right at 800 fps from a 4" S&W



This Colt Commander helped John test some Syntech .38 Super loads with the 9mm bullets.

Model 1955 "perfect packin' pistol" when loaded in .45 ACP brass and used with full moon clips.

All of these loads were assembled with one extra step, namely the use of the Lee Factory Crimp Die. This takes the place of the regular taper crimp die included with most die sets and not only helps to assure the loaded cartridge will chamber easily but also ensures bullets will not be pushed back into the case. I also use the Lee .45 Carbide Minimum Sizing Die to aid in increasing bullet-to-case friction.

So, are these Syntech just a pretty face or the real deal? Well, if you ask me I believe these colorful bullets are here to stay.



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SAFETY TIP: Store firearms securely, inaccessible to children and unauthorized users.



On an exciting trip to Siberia to hunt snow sheep, Mark got to fly in an old Russian military helicopter. He noticed everybody onboard was praying as it lifted off!



A COLLUSION OF CHAOS HUNTING SNOW SHEEP IN SIBERIA

Hunting has thoroughly enhanced my life. Some misinformed individuals view hunting as simply pulling the trigger and taking an animal's life. This misconception is a far cry from reality. Hunting is much more than punching a tag. The anticipation of the adventure, preparation, experiencing other cultures, seeing different places off the beaten path, making new friends — all add up to rewarding memories and give life an interesting dimension. Taking an animal is but one small piece of the overall experience.

I've been extremely fortunate to experience many adventures in far-flung, remote parts of this planet. For starters, I've done 29 hunts in Africa encompassing 10 countries, and 25 hunts in Asia in 11 countries. This has opened my eyes to say the least. All have been rewarding and memorable, but there have been a few bumps in the road.

DISORDER AND DISARRAY

A few years ago, I traveled to Siberia, Russia for a snow sheep hunt. At the time, there was a once-a-week flight from Anchorage to Petropavlovsk, located on the Kamchatka Peninsula. Upon arrival I was greeted by a Hungarian hunter and my Russian outfitter with whom I'd be hunting the following week. Early the next morning we drove to the airport to catch a flight to Plano. A message came over the loud speaker: "Flight to Plano delayed." Two hours later we heard the same statement. We sat in the parking lot twiddling our fingers. Every two hours the same message repeated: "Flight to Plano delayed." Finally, late in the evening we heard, "Flight to Plano cancelled." Not exactly music to our ears. We returned to the motel.

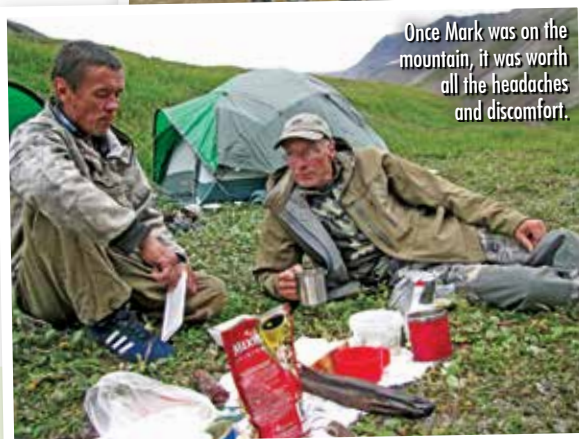
The next day we arrived at the airport early in hopes to catch our flight. Every two hours we heard the same

dreadful message: "Flight to Plano delayed" until late in the evening when we heard "Flight to Plano cancelled." Back to the motel again. This went on for six long, boring days.

Finally, on the seventh day it was announced our flight was scheduled for departure. After facing a shoving and pushing match to get through the backlog of travelers through security — and a thorough pat down by a very attractive female Russian security agent

— I was finally on the plane!

We flew to another airport only to hop on an old Russian military helicopter. I didn't want to see the maintenance schedule. I noted most everyone on board was praying in some manner as the helicopter took off. I found out later we had to take a helicopter to Plano as they were working on the runway and a plane couldn't land. We were all thankful when we landed and our feet were on solid ground.



Once Mark was on the mountain, it was worth all the headaches and discomfort.

WORTH THE EFFORT

Our local guide picked us up and drove a short distance where we loaded our gear in a Russian tracked contraption that looked like a tank without a turret. At 6:00 in the evening we took off in it toward the hunting area. Have you ever ridden in one of these for 12 hours?

We arrived at spike camp at six in the morning. By the way, it's impossible to sleep when a "tank" is going over rough terrain through remote Siberia! After a quick breakfast we loaded our gear on horseback and took off up the valley. Three hours later we dismounted and began setting up small tents. When we finished organizing our camp, the guides wanted us to climb a mountain to look for sheep. This had all the makings of an endurance contest.

After six hard days of mountain climbing, enduring rain and cold, we finally scored on nice rams. Immediately, we reversed our course and began the journey back. Our tank broke down on the way. This isn't a place you call AAA or anyone else for that matter. Fortunately, the driver was able to repair the vintage military unit — after several hours of difficult maintenance.

When we finally arrived back in Petropavlovsk everyone was exhausted. Unfortunately, I missed the once-a-week flight back to Anchorage, Alaska, and had to wait another week! After three weeks away from home I called my wife and explained the situation. As you might gather, she wasn't thrilled. She asked me if I had a girlfriend. I reassured her I didn't, but if I could find that gal who frisked me at the airport ...



The adventure continued when he got to take a 12-hour trip in this tracked contraption across very rough terrain. No napping for him!

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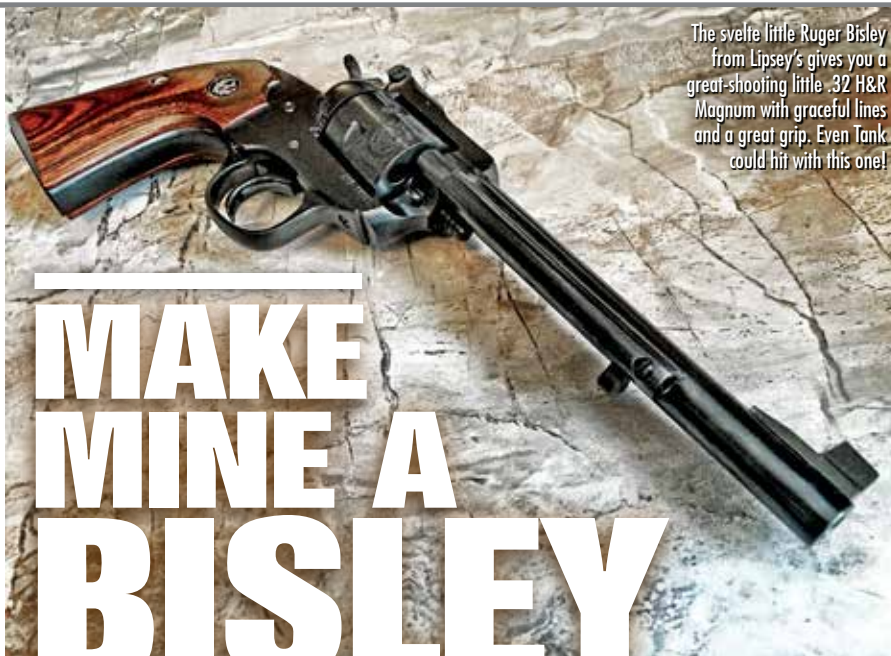
DESIGNED TO PROTECT.

JEFF "TANK" HOOVER

Look at the custom front sight from Fermin C. Garza that Tank installed. Those glare-eating teeth work, too!



The svelte little Ruger Bisley from Lipsey's gives you a great-shooting little .32 H&R Magnum with graceful lines and a great grip. Even Tank could hit with this one!



MAKE MINE A BISLEY



NO GOING BACK

I got my first Ruger Bisley after years of shooting "heavy" .45 Colt handloads with "Ruger only" recipes. Bill Ruger, yet again, proved those who thought him foolish wrong, for bringing out such a gun in 1984. The traditional plow-handle Ruger revolvers were small in my hand and the shape not conducive to managing heavy recoil.

The Ruger's Bisley grip-frame rectified the plow-handled, knuckle-basher by giving my hand more grip to hold onto.

More importantly, the grip angle was different. Now, recoil came straight back into the meaty part of my palm, saving my knuckle in the process. Additionally, the stylish low-curve of the Bisley hammer accommodates one-handed cocking during target shooting; and it adds to its stylish good looks!

The Bisley is now my favorite grip design, especially amongst Rugers and especially for the big-bore boomers. However, the gun I'm telling you about today is a cool little Single-Six Lipsey's exclusive model chambered in .32 H&R Magnum.

This blued beauty touts a 6½" barrel and dark hardwood grips. The classic roll-marked unfluted cylinder tastefully sports "Ruger Bisley" in scrolled script and its throats are a perfectly sized 0.314". The steel-framed revolver comes with adjustable rear sights and a serrated front sight, and weighs in at 39 oz.

Although I lack the aristocratic blue blood of a high society well doer, I do enjoy the grip-frame named after the quaint village of Bisley, England. In case you're not familiar with the history, the famous Bisley Matches date back to the 19th century and are associated with the Victorian-era clubhouse first built in 1865 and moved to its current Bisley location in 1895.

The matches challenged shooters to wring the most out of both their skills and their guns. To give them an edge Colt released its Target Model in 1894, a specialty gun with a flat top complete with drift-adjustable rear sight and removable blade front sight. The Target Model also had a funny-shaped grip.

It wasn't until after the Colt proved itself at the Bisley Matches, years later, would it become commonly known as the Colt Bisley — and only after further refinements were made to the grip frame and hammer. Thereafter, the "funny" grip would be associated with the Bisley name and appear on guns from a range of makers.



The Bisley's cylinder throats were a perfect 0.314". Note the attractive scrolled script markings.

SHOOTING THE .32 BISLEY

Prior to shooting the Bisley, I did my standard Tank Tune-Up. I replaced the trigger spring with a Wolff 30-oz. spring and polished the hammer spring strut. I also swapped out the front sight for one of Fermin C Garza's custom front sights.

I had two loads on hand, some Federal 85-gr. HPs and a self-concocted 100-gr. HP bullet I cast from a Miha mold loaded over a stiff charge of 2400 and lit by a Winchester small pistol primer.

I shot from the bench at 25 yards for five-shot strings. All I can say is the gun shot better than I could. Groups were in the 1" to 1.5" range. Perhaps if I had a frilly handkerchief to wipe my spectacles that were fogging in the humidity, I might have shot better? As it was, I had to use my Carhartt T-shirt, with yesterday's egg yolk down the front.

These Ruger Bisleys make for great field guns. Loaded properly, vermin are in serious danger, as are soda cans and any other plinking target of opportunity. The Bisley grip just feels good in my hand, whether I'm shooting stout, heavy loads or small-bore cartridges. Lipsey's Ruger Bisley has an MSRP of \$669. Have your local dealer contact Lipsey's to ship one to you.



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SHOOTING IRON

THUMB BUSTIN' MUSINGS FROM THE DUKE

MIKE "DUKE" VENTURINO Photos: Yvonne Venturino

Duke practicing double taps with his S&W Model 442 .38 from about seven paces. Many people carry small guns like this, but never practice. Don't be that person.



ALMOST... A DQ STOP TURNS UGLY



Last summer for the first time in my life I thought I might have to use a gun to defend myself. I did not, but the episode rattled me that day, and six months later I still wonder about it. The encounter was very strange.

It was a hot July evening. Yvonne had some sort of meeting for horse lovers, so a visiting friend and I decided we needed ice cream. We duly drove into town to the nearest Dairy Queen and each got chocolate sundaes. For some reason my friend was driving, but we were in my mini-van. The evening was decidedly warm so we parked under a shade tree in a parking lot behind the DQ. It belonged to them, was paved, I'd say about 50 yards long and perhaps 20 yards wide. It could be entered from both the front of the DQ and an exit at the rear onto another city street. There were a few picnic tables but we had the place to ourselves — briefly.

While we sat there enjoying our treat, I happened to notice a fellow in the next lot about 20 yards away behind an electrician's or plumber's business. He was unloading tools from a work truck. I'm fairly situationally aware and pointed out to my buddy, "The guy over there is packing." That's perfectly fine here in Montana, openly or concealed with a CCW license. The fellow appeared to have a 1911 on his right hip and a spare mag on his left side.

Now hold that thought for a moment.

About then what I call a "bubba-mobile" roared in from the front parking lot entrance. It was painted primer gray, had rusted-out fenders and a muffler so loud we could barely hear one another. The driver had on a straw hat and at least a three or four day's beard stubble. He backed into a parking space about 20 feet to my right, parallel with us, but only stayed a moment. Then he roared away, screeching his tires, out the back entrance to the street. We shrugged and continued minding our own business.

Mere minutes later Mr. Bubba again roared into the lot from the front passing close behind our parked mini-van. He then stopped with his truck situated so we would be perfectly T-boned if he backed up. And that's exactly what he did, again screeching his tires — but stopping a mere foot or two from the driver's side door of our vehicle. Then he roared away out the back entrance again making his tires squeal. My friend said, "Heck if he had kept going he would have hit me dead center."

That's when I double checked my S&W Model 442 .38 to make sure it was loaded.



BUT WAIT

Minutes later, for a third time the guy roared into the lot from the front. This time, without slowing, he tried to turn beside my van's driver's side. In doing so he whacked the van's bumper taking it and the tail light out. Sitting inside we got a severe jolt. At this point I exited the van's passenger side and went around behind it. The .38 was in my right hand shoved out of sight into my pocket. I could see Mr. Bubba jumping out of his truck and running around the front of it. My decision then was made. He had acted aggressively for no reason and if he had been armed even with so much as a tire iron I was going to shoot.

Instead he was unarmed and immediately started blubbering, "I'm sorry, oh God, I'm sorry! I'll make this right. I've got insurance. I didn't mean to hit you." This was being shouted at me with whiskey breath. And by his manic behavior I figured drugs were involved also.

At this point seeing there was no danger I happened to glance past Mr. Bubba to where the workman had been unloading tools. Bless his heart; he had his 1911 out and was braced against his work truck covering me. I raised my left hand palm out to show him we were okay and he holstered and went on about his business. You've got to love Montana!

POST THOUGHTS

I took the fellow's insurance information, never dreaming for a moment it would be valid but it turned out to be good. Still, because of the damage I had to call the city police. When I started dialing the cops Mr. Bubba took off on foot like a scared rabbit and I never saw him again. The cop asked his whereabouts and I told him. He said, "Never mind. His address is right here on his insurance information. I'll get him later." That was the end of it.

The guy's behavior was completely erratic. Why keep coming back to this parking lot? Why peel rubber? Why pull so close to us in a completely empty lot? I'll guess I'll never know. What I did learn is a peaceful situation can go to hell instantly. My hot weather handguns are S&W 5-shooters — a Model 360 and a Model 442. High capacity autoloader packers might sneer at my choice but the first rule of self-defense is to have a gun, and I did.

I'm also glad someone I didn't even know was prepared to help me. And finally to critique myself, being right handed I stepped into the open between our vehicles to confront the guy. I should have remained behind cover, for I had no idea if he was armed or not.



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XT 22

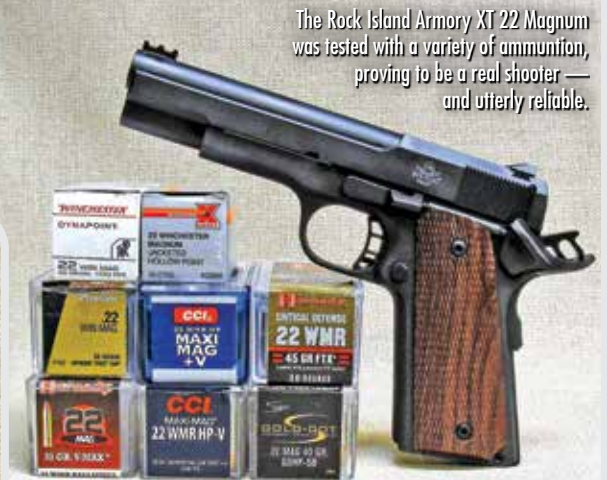
MAGNUM 1911

I've never been what I would consider a gun collector but rather a gun accumulator. The collector normally focuses intently on one particular type of firearm. My problem is I like most guns, and any gun I acquire I expect to shoot. By being an accumulator my focus is quite broad — anything interesting to me! And therein lies the problem; just about everything interest me. So since 1956, I've been accumulating interesting firearms.

Just as with most shooters, at least young shooters, I started with .22's. As life progressed I became more and more interested in the bigger bores, however the .22 has never lost its attraction. Now that I've made it through most of Shakespeare's Seven Stages of Life I find .22's (and .32's for that matter) have even more attraction than they did in the beginning.

Good semi-auto .22's are a real passion with me. Although the Colt Woodsman Match Target and the High Standard Target Pistols are no more, we are still fortunate to have so many excellent versions available to us, especially from Browning, Ruger and Smith & Wesson.

But, the same can't be said as to availability with those chambered in .22 Magnum. About 30 years ago AMT brought out the AutoMag II. This was a sleek, 2-lb. stainless steel single-action semi-auto with a 10-round magazine — for the .22 Magnum. It was one of the trimmest field semi-automatics ever offered but is long out of production.



The Rock Island Armory XT 22 Magnum was tested with a variety of ammunition, proving to be a real shooter — and utterly reliable.

THE WAIT IS OVER

It's been decades since anyone has offered a readily available semi-auto .22 Magnum pistol, but the drought is finally over. The number one producer, quantity wise, of 1911 pistols is not found in the United States but in the Philippines. Rock Island Armory (RIA) offers 1911 quality pistols, at very reasonable prices, made in the Philippines. Their regular 1911's are available in .45 ACP, 9mm, 10mm and thankfully in .38 Super, including blue and nickel versions.

Their latest offering on the 1911 pattern is the XT 22 Magnum. Looking at the exterior, this smallbore powerhouse looks just like a 1911 complete with a beavertail grip safety with a memory bump, and 1911 controls on the left side anyone would be familiar with. The grip frame is identical to

a .45 ACP Government Model to the point I was able to swap out the factory supplied checkered rubber grips with a pair of Herrett's fully checkered Cocobolo panels, setting off the Parkerized finish quite well.

Capacity of the XT 22 is 15 rounds when carried fully loaded cocked and locked, with one in the chamber and 14 rounds in the magazine. Mine was ordered through my local shop, Buckhorn Gun, and since it comes with only one magazine I ordered two extra giving me a packin' capacity of

Continued on page 78



The XT was reliably accurate. These are 20-yard groups, with CCI's Maxi-Mag HP +V going into 5/8"!

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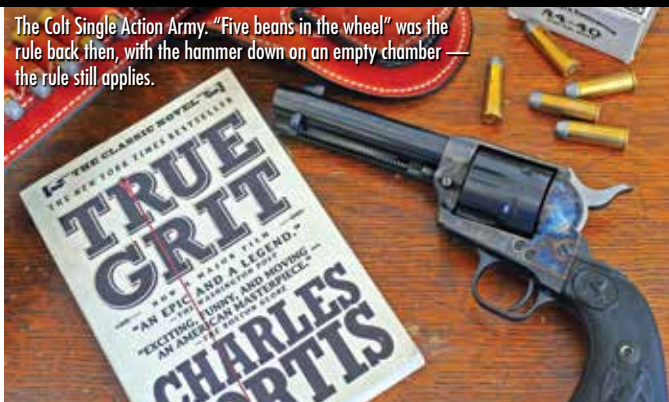
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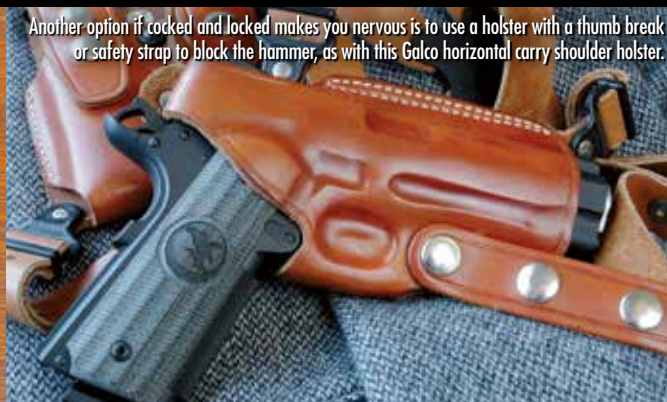
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The Colt Single Action Army. "Five beans in the wheel" was the rule back then, with the hammer down on an empty chamber — the rule still applies.



Another option if cocked and locked makes you nervous is to use a holster with a thumb break or safety strap to block the hammer, as with this Galco horizontal carry shoulder holster.



SAFE CARRY MODES

The Colt Single Action Army was introduced in 1873 and with only occasional breaks has been in production to the present day. Throughout the nearly 150 years of its existence, it's been common knowledge to keep an empty chamber under the hammer whenever the revolver is loaded.

The firing pin of the Colt SAA attaches to the hammer. If there's a live cartridge in the chamber under the

hammer, the firing pin is pressing on the primer. A blow to the hammer spur can cause the cartridge to fire. And no, keeping the hammer in the "safety notch" is not an option. The purpose of the safety notch is (we hope!) to catch the hammer should it slip while being cocked. The interface between the notch and the thin tip of the sear is not very robust. A brisk blow to the hammer spur will almost certainly

cause the revolver to fire.

This is hardly breaking news. The rule "five beans in the wheel" is as old as the revolver. When loading a traditional single action Colt or similar revolver, open the loading gate and bring the hammer to the third (loading) notch, which frees the cylinder to rotate. Load one chamber, skip one, load four, bring the hammer to full cock and carefully lower it on the empty chamber.

THE 1911

The popular 1911 has two ready modes. Most shooters who carry one use the cocked-and-locked mode — full magazine, cartridge in the chamber, hammer at full cock and manual safety engaged. With most modern 1911 designs the beavertail grip safety curls around the hammer to protect it from impact. Even the original short tang grip safety did a fairly good job of shielding the hammer.

Some shooters simply cannot feel comfortable carrying a 1911 cocked, even if firing it requires releasing two safeties and pressing the trigger. One solution is a holster with a thumb break or safety strap blocking the hammer. If the shooter still doesn't feel comfortable carrying cocked and locked, a single-action semi auto may not be the right choice, and these days there are many options.



The hammer of the 1911 is fairly well protected from impact should the pistol be dropped or struck.

The second acceptable mode of carry is magazine loaded, chamber empty. With *no round in the chamber* the gun cannot shoot, no matter if it's dropped, struck, or tossed into a fire. Magazine loaded/chamber empty is how I carry a hunting firearm in the field. The small amount of time taken to chamber a round has never cost me a shot yet, and if it does and the game gets away, no big deal.

Personal defense is a different issue. We carry a firearm to defend our lives against a sudden and unexpected lethal attack. Maybe there will be time to get the gun out and a round chambered — but maybe not. I won't say this mode is really a bad idea. With practice, racking the slide to chamber a round can be done very quickly. At best it's not as fast as cocked and locked; it takes two hands; and there's the chance of a misfeed. Some very qualified people prefer to carry chamber-empty, and although it's not my choice I won't criticize.

A BAD CHOICE

A third mode I used to see recommended for the 1911 is one I disapprove of thoroughly — magazine loaded, round in the chamber, hammer down or in the half-cock notch. Don't do it. It's only marginally faster than carrying with a chamber empty, while it greatly increases the risk of a negligent discharge. The lowered hammer is much more exposed to impact than when it's fully cocked. In some models, a brisk blow to the hammer (like being

dropped), combined with a weak firing pin spring and/or sensitive primer can result in the pistol firing.

Lowering and cocking the hammer manually carries the risk of having the hammer slip from under the thumb. We all think it will never happen to us. Well, it only has to happen once. As the saying goes any vessel carried to the well often enough is bound to get broken.

Lowering the hammer on a live round means both safeties are disengaged and the trigger is pressed — which are the

things we do to *fire* the pistol. When thumb cocking, odds are the pistol will fire if the thumb should slip with the hammer just short of the half-cock notch (or if the notch fails to hold).

Hammer down on a live cartridge introduces a substantial degree of risk while giving very little in return. With cocked and locked, or empty chamber carry, there's never a need to lower or cock the hammer over a live round. In fact there's hardly any need to touch the hammer at all. Keep in mind these same ideas apply to the Browning Hi Power too.



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THE "HIGH SABRINA" ACTUALLY WORKS?



The "Sabrina" ready position — mocked by some — has proven useful when running with a service pistol. You saw it here first: Mas as a Charlie's Angel.



Training gun from Smart Firearms "shoots" lasers and emits an audible tone if finger is on trigger too soon.

In 2003 a core group of experienced master trainers including six-time shootout survivor and founder Ed Nowicki, formed the International Law Enforcement Educators and Trainers Association (www.ileeta.org). They've hosted an annual conference in the Midwest ever since, this year in St. Louis. There, several hundred instructors convened to learn from dozens of vetted presenters for five-and-a-half days of cutting edge "train the trainer" work. We can't show you the whole gold mine in one column, but here are some of the most valuable nuggets I encountered.



FINE POINTS

Paul Taylor, a Senior Instructor and Course Coordinator at Force Science Institute — presented "High or Low: The Impact of Muzzle Position on Response Time and Decision Making." The lecture came from two of Paul's own studies on this topic. He found officers took 0.30 of a second to realize changes in the situation they faced, but could fire at a rate of 0.25 seconds per shot, or faster. Aimed in, he determined average time was 0.31 seconds with a regular start signal, but with a shoot/no shoot light signal this went up to 0.56 second, and it averaged 0.39 of a second to respond to a visible weapon. Paul cited a 2011 study by Peter Blair confirming the above. He also cited Force Science's recent findings on what they call Dispatch Priming: what the officer was told to expect influences his perceptions and reactions when he gets to the scene.

Paul found low ready slower than high ready: the decision to shoot takes longer than the movement required to fire. He also found low ready led to what he called "oversteer" — less accuracy, with the first shot often high over the shoulder.

Many instructors laugh at the muzzle-high position often seen on TV, known colloquially as "the High Sabrina" from the old show *Charlie's Angels*. But Taylor noted some departments have found "Sabrina" high ready better when an officer has to run with his pistol out.

Brain Trust

For 16 years at ILEETA I've run the Deadly Force Panel of Experts, this year assembling 16 men and women whose total police

training experience added up to close to half a millennium. Among the topics: cops thrown under the bus by bosses and "getting ahead of the narrative." The venue being so close to Ferguson, where the community burned after the false trope of a "hands up, don't shoot" fatality at the hands of a cop, many in the audience knew first hand the price of not doing so. Forward-thinking agencies have led the way in preventing civil disturbance by explaining controversial police shootings to the public as soon after the incident as possible.

There has been broad acceptance of SOLO (Single Officers Life-Saving Others) concept of response to "active shooter" incidents, pioneered by Ron Borsch, who was on the panel. Panelist Don Gulla pointed out the importance of broadcasting on the radio while responding, "I know this suspect, he likes to fight cops." That's a nugget, right there, for both street and court survival.

"Active Shooter" Interdiction

Serving on the Active Shooter Panel of Experts, I hated the term and so did most present. Active Shooters should be those who train regularly with firearms and those we fight are "active killers" or, Ron Borsch's term, Rapid Mass Murderers (RMM). "Active Shooter" is still used largely because that's the terminology of some sources giving grant money for training and equipment. Don Alwes, who led the panel, is seeing more officers killed, more citizens fighting back — and more friendly fire tragedies in recent events.

Police instructors generally favor training school faculty to shoot back, usually with a

two-tier program: Primary armed guardians locking down and protecting their own classrooms, with a second level of more highly trained armed volunteers to "run to sound of guns."

Morgan Ballis who has taught over 1,500 educators, 17,000 students and 1,000 LE and military in active shooter response, is the son of a survivor of the 2011 Gabby Giffords incident. He pointed out emergency medical response to such incidents has been emphasizing tourniquets because of their many proven lives saved in military combat and police shootings. But, treatment of torso wounds may need more emphasis than tourniquets at the scene, since most military and LE training is for casualties who are wearing body armor.

Gear

The seminar encompasses the ILEETA Expo, where police equipment makers show their latest. Many liked the Cheata Tactical leg rig's ability to carry a backup gun or med gear comfortably. A training pistol (Smart Firearms) not only "shooting" laser beams but sending audible and visible alarms in dry-fire training if a trainee's finger enters the trigger guard prematurely. But ILEETA is far more about software than hardware: The "job" is not about equipment, it's about people.



For more info: www.cheatasport.com; www.smartfirearms.us



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American Rebel, designer and manufacturer of their own innovative “concealed and safe” lifestyle products for gun owners, introduced several new concealed carry coats and jackets this year. They start with high quality, warm, comfortable, practical garments allowing freedom of movement. All are triple layered: a water resistant insulation sandwiched between a soft lining and a tough outer shell fabric. All feature American Rebel’s patented proprietary protection pockets inside the left and right lower front to conceal your full-size handgun without printing. These pockets secure with Velcro and a snap to keep them closed and have a tab to instantly pull them open when you need your gun. All have a pocket with elastic loops to carry extra magazines.

The heavy duty, cold weather, brown Cartwright canvas hooded coat is now a full line of rugged outerwear for men. Black and green were added in hooded, hoodless and vest versions. The inside breast pockets have two elastic magazine retention loops sewn in, and an additional Velcro closure inner pocket for your cell phone on the left. Outside you have two vertical zippered chest pockets and two deep waist exterior pockets. Heavy metal zippers close the front and chest pockets. MSRP on the hooded and hoodless Cartwright coats is \$139.99 and \$119.99 for vests.

For cool weather, American Rebel has added a new, lighter-weight Freedom line of stylish men’s and women’s jackets with an outer shell of finely woven, rain and wind resistant, stretchable, black polyester-lycra fabric. The men’s jacket has an inside right breast Velcro flap secured pocket to hold two extra magazines in elastic loops and on the inner left breast, an open pocket closed with a Velcro tab good for your wallet and phone. The women’s jacket has no interior breast pockets. On the exterior, both have zippered waist pockets.



LADIES TOO

The Women’s Freedom Jacket is a hip-length jacket with a sporty, tapered look created by the clever placement of the narrow color accent panels, near, but not quite at, the sides of the torso. I wish the men’s coat had these. It would offer me a slimmer look without the sacrifice of so many delicious cookies. Women’s accent colors are pink, teal or orange. The women’s Freedom jacket is lined with lighter material than the men’s jacket and was designed to conceal, without printing the lighter, smaller, self-defense carry pistols many women prefer. Sized extra small to extra large — MSRP is \$79.99.

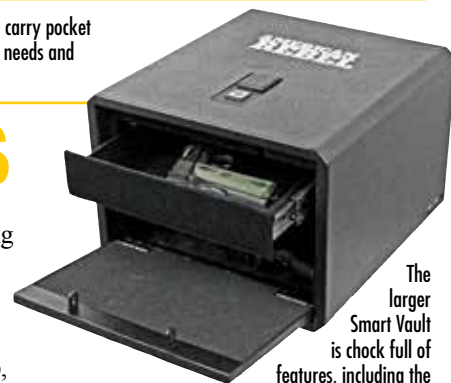
The women’s “New Freedom” jacket has the same concealed carry pocket system as the men’s jackets but is styled to meet the specific needs and wants many women have concerning smaller CCW guns.

GUN BOXES

American Rebel’s new Smart Vaults are the precocious offspring of the marriage of hi-tech GEN7 biometric fingerprint recognition and the smart phone. The safe memory holds up to 50 fingerprints. It opens via a small, soft-touch sensor on the top, releasing the lock in 0.03 seconds. It operates on a rechargeable lithium-ion battery good for six months between chargings. The safe’s onboard computer maintains a log of everyone who opens it too. Link the Smart Vault to your Wi-Fi and you can view the access log through a secure cell phone app and even open it remotely.

The safe can also be set to text you every time it’s opened. There’s no accidentally forgetting to close it either, because it can be set to alert you if it stays open longer than a time you designate. They also have a 120-volt transformer and external power cord connection feeding three internal USB charging ports so you can plug into a wall outlet and securely charge your cell phone or laptop inside the sealed safe.

American Rebel Smart Vaults are American-made, old-school, security: 14-gauge steel, welded corner, bodies with a reinforced face and front opening door secured by a dual bolt latch. They are lined with soft, abrasion-resistant foam on all interior sides. The AR-510i is 8"x13"x14" with an MSRP of \$299.99. The larger AR-520i is 10"x13"x14", has a tool-box style top drawer and an MSRP of \$399.99.



The larger Smart Vault is chock full of features, including the ability to link with Wi-Fi to communicate with your smart phone, keeping track of operation, use and status.



For more info: www.americanrebel.com, Ph: (833) 267-3235

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John took a Ruger Single-10 in stainless steel and had his local gunsmith give it the same treatment as the Bisley Single-Six.

RIFLE-BARRELED RUGER SIXGUNS?

Someday. We all have a list of things we are going to do someday. Sometimes the list is short and sometimes the list is long. Sometimes the “somedays” are taken care of; sometimes we just never get to them. One of my someday projects for several years has been to have a Ruger 10/22 .22 rifle barrel fitted to a Single-Six.

The problems holding me back were twofold. Firstly, I wasn't sure it would actually work, and secondly I was reluc-

tant to change any of my current Single-Sixes as they are all great shooters. The answer came when I looked in the case at my local gun shop, Buckhorn, and saw a used Ruger Bisley Model Single-Six at a very reasonable price. I was careful not to shoot it first as if it had been superbly accurate, I would've been reluctant to change it.

One factor pushing me to doing this project was the fact the sample gun had a 6½" barrel which to me just doesn't seem to fit on a single-action sixgun. The original Colt Single Action Army was a 7½"-barreled .45 Cavalry Model and later versions were offered with the 5½" Artillery Model length and then the Civilian Model which had a 4¾" barrel.

JUMPING IN

Once I had purchased the source gun, I zipped back to the house to pick up a 10/22 barrel and then hurried back to discuss the project with the new gunsmith at Buckhorn. Keith is fresh out of gunsmithing school, so I had yet to figure out just what he could do. As we discussed the project, I quickly determined he knew what he was doing and there would be no problems.

The Ruger 10/22 standard barrel is tapered and the front sight is in a dovetail on a barrel band. We would use the front portion of the barrel cut to a 9½" length, rethreaded and fitted to the .22 Bisley Model. The Bisley has a standard Ruger square notch adjustable rear sight with the notch wide enough to accommodate the Ruger standard front sight found on most Single-Sixes and Blackhawks. However, the 10/22 barrel's front sight is a small gold bead on a very narrow post. I doubted the combination would work, but since the rifle's front sight is in a dovetail it would be easy to install a different front sight if needed.

Several days later I got a call from Buckhorn to come and pick up my “new” Bisley Model .22. Keith did an excellent job rethreading and setting the barrel with a minimum barrel/cylinder gap. There are many words in our language which are overused and one of those is “cool.” In this case it isn't; this is one of the coolest sixguns I've ever seen! The long, tapered cut-down barrel of the 10/22 really does look perfect on the Bisley Model. In fact, it looks so good I really wondered if it actually could possibly shoot as good as it looked. I wasted no time trying it out.



You're looking at two “someday” projects John decided to pull the trigger on. It's two Ruger .22 revolvers fitted with cut-down 10/22 rifle barrels. Yep, you read that right!

WHERE IT COUNTS

The first thing I noticed on the range was how small the tiny little gold bead looked in the square notch rear sight. I thought this would have to be changed, but I really concentrated to make sure the bead was centered in the square notch and fired my first shot. What a grand surprise I received. It was dead on for elevation and I only had to move the rear sight two clicks clockwise to center the groups.

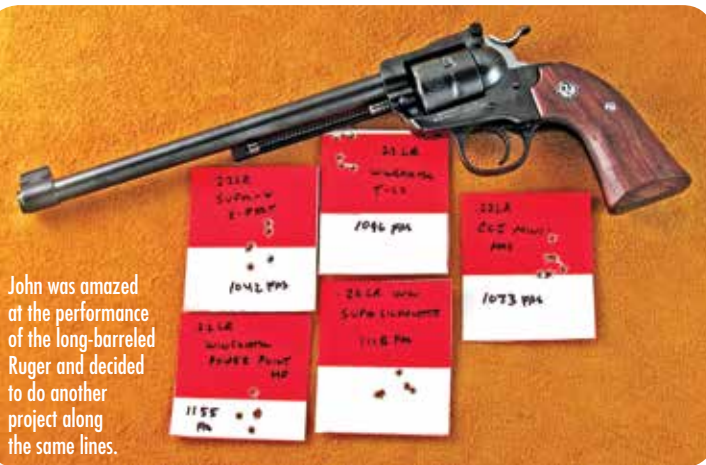
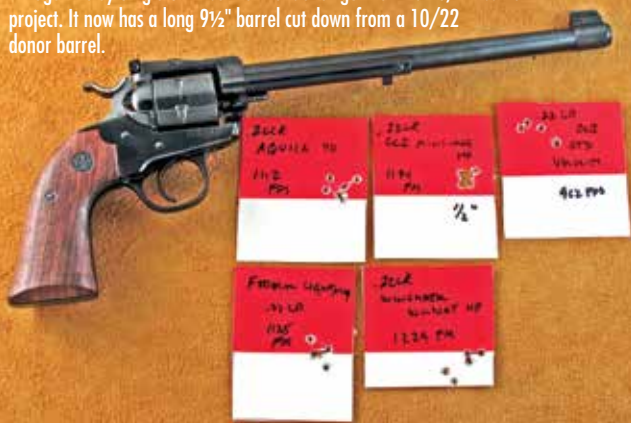
I'm not one who believes much in luck, but my goodness how lucky was this? Not only were the sights so close to begin with, I was able to shoot exceptionally tight groups. In testing I went with 16 different brands/configurations of .22 ammunition, and all the groups together averaged less than 1" for five shots at 20 yards. The most accurate loads turned out to be from CCI with their Mini-Mag and their Mini-Mag HPs, both grouping at 1/2" with muzzle veloci-



With results like this, who needs a rifle?

ties of 1,075 fps and 1,195 fps, respectively. Aguilas were right behind these at 5/8" and 1,112 fps while Federal Lightnings (1,125 fps) and Winchester T22s (1,096 fps) came in at 3/4". The largest groups recorded with any ammunition measured 1 3/8". This is excellent performance.

A Ruger Bisley Single-Six was the first donor gun for the 10/22 barrel project. It now has a long 9 1/2" barrel cut down from a 10/22 donor barrel.



John was amazed at the performance of the long-barreled Ruger and decided to do another project along the same lines.

THE NEXT STEP

In fact, I was so pleased I decided I could not just stop at one. All I needed was another base gun. You probably won't find it hard to believe after the results I got with the Bisley I picked a gun I already had with a 6 1/2" barrel. This time I went with a stainless-steel Single-Ten. Back I went to Buckhorn to perform the same thing with this .22. Keith was so excited about how well the first turned out he wasted little time coming up with the next version.

While the custom-barreled Single-Six shot so very well, I knew this Single-Ten was at best an average shooter and did not expect really good results. It is also harder to concentrate for 10 versus six shots. I soon found out I was wrong, as I tested the completed gun with the same 16 different .22 loads and was most pleasantly surprised. This time the largest group was only 1 1/4" and it proved to be much more consistent in group size than the first conversion. Six groups measured at 1 1/8" and the 1 1/4" size groups numbered

five. That is 11 out of the 16 groups fired in this range. The most accurate at 3/4" proved once again to come from CCI with their Mini-Mag HP at 1,275 fps and their standard velocity at 980 fps also shot very tight groups.

Sometimes our "somedays" not only arrive but actually work out especially well. Either one of these long-barreled .22's carry well in my Chevy 4x4 pickup and they beg the question, "Who needs a .22 rifle?"



For more info: www.ruger.com

SIGHTS & OPTICS

A CLOSE LOOK AT



MARK KAKKURI

SEE IT— HIT IT SIGHTS AND OPTICS

Sights and optics are better than ever, constantly benefiting from the firearm industry's ongoing technological innovations. Whatever your tactical need or preference, from good old night sights to red dot, holographic, magnifying and reflex, your wishes are a touch-screen away. These sights and optics will help you see — and hit — your target.

1 Aimpoint's Micro T-2 offers a very easy-to-use but extraordinarily effective means of aiming. Look through the optic, find the "floating" red dot and that's where your rounds will hit. Weighing a mere 3.7 oz. (with its mount), the Micro T-2 sports a 1X (non-magnifying) parallax-free optic. Compatible with all night vision devices, the Micro T-2 offers multiple brightness settings, adjusted by an intuitive knob. Simple, clear and durable. \$774 to \$901, depending on options. www.aimpoint.com

2 EOTech's 518 holographic sight offers a variety of red reticles and a wide field of view. You use the optic with both eyes open, allowing your peripheral vision to keep track of things well outside the scope of the optic while aiming. The reticle also allows you to see more of your target and what's around it inside the aiming window. Weighing 13.8 oz. and offering 20 daylight settings, the 518 draws power from two AA batteries. Versatile, intuitive, and rugged — \$555. www.eotechinc.com

3 EOTech's G33 Magnifier mounts in front of your gun's optic and swings in or out as needed. It'll add



11.2 oz. of weight but measures under 4" in length. When in place in front of your optic, it provides 3X magnification. It's submersible to 10 feet with fog-free internal optics. Paired with the EOTech 518 or other holographic sight, it'll speed up transitions between near and far targets — \$609. www.eotechinc.com

4 Trijicon's RMR Type 2 is a red LED reticle sight powered by a standard CR2032 battery. Tough and lightweight, the RMR adjusts easily for windage and elevation. This model also offers eight brightness settings set manually or automatically. Weighing 1.2 oz. and made from forged aluminum, a single battery can last for years — \$699. www.trijicon.com

5 TRUGLO's Tritium Pro night sights offer the glowing green of Tritium, a radioluminescent light source needing no batteries or light exposure — Tritium sights are always on. TRUGLO's Tritium Pro sights offer a no-snag, holster-friendly design, a durable protective finish, an angled rear sight edge so you can manipulate your gun's slide and a U-shaped notch on the rear sight with a bright white ring on the front — \$104. www.truglo.com

6 TRUGLO's Dovetail Optic Mount allows you to mount small optics onto many GLOCK models, S&W M&P pistols and Ruger Mark II-IV pistols using the factory rear dovetail or the Picatinny rail mount on the Ruger. Made of CNC'd steel with Nitride finish, it makes optics installation fast and easy with no machining needed — \$58.99. www.truglo.com



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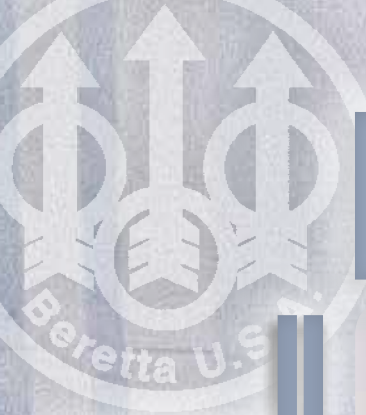
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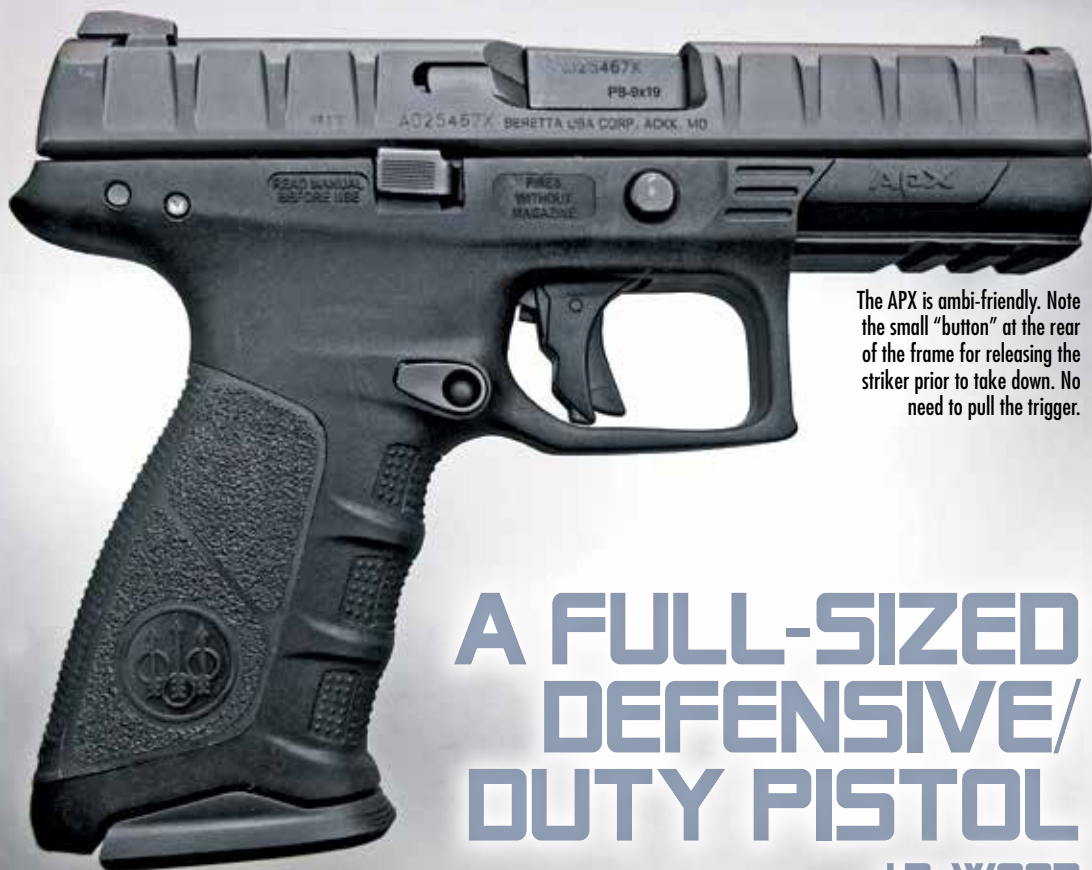
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BERETTA



The APX is ambi-friendly. Note the small “button” at the rear of the frame for releasing the striker prior to take down. No need to pull the trigger.

A FULL-SIZED DEFENSIVE/DUTY PISTOL

J.B. WOOD



Sights are bold and rugged and adjustable for windage.



Over the past 30-plus years, I’ve written two books on Beretta pistols, so my fondness for the brand should be well known. When I write about something new from Beretta, I have to try hard to stay objective. This applies to the APX, introduced in 2017. It’s their entry in the current competition of striker-fired polymer-frame pistols. It’s Beretta’s first striker-fired design since a neat little .25 Auto pistol from the last century, and its good features are numerous. The one shown here is the basic APX in 9mm, but there have since been several alternate versions, including one with a threaded barrel. A .40 S&W chambering is also offered. Other options include twin opposed manual safety levers.

As with most modern pistols, there’s an internal striker block safety, always “on-safe” until the end of the trigger pull. There’s also a trigger-block safety, one of those “flippers.” This one is well-fitted, with no annoying sideways wiggle. In



Slide release, take-down lever and mag release are all where they belong.



Beretta's APX (our sample is in 9mm) isn't a pocket pistol.



Take down is pretty typical of the breed and is fast and easy.

the same category is the squared front of the trigger guard, there for those who still use this obsolete hold.

This full-sized pistol has a generous magazine capacity of 17 rounds. The magazine release is reversible and just above the front of the trigger guard is a small grooved rest for the trigger finger. The slide has good retraction projections, front and rear. The locking system is falling-barrel, and the recoil spring and guide are a captive unit that won't fly away during the easy takedown process. The slide latch is perfectly located at the top of the grip, having release tabs on both sides, and the APX is left-hander friendly too. There's also the standard-issue rail for a light or laser.

Take Down

During take down, some of today's striker-fired pistols require you pull the trigger to disengage the striker from the sear before the slide can be taken off. If you've forgotten a live round in the chamber, results can be life-changing (or, ending!). On the Beretta APX, on the right side at upper rear, a small dimpled button can be pushed in to safely lower the striker with no trigger-pulling needed.

The grip frame of the APX settled perfectly into my average-sized hand. It has a very deep in-curve at the upper rear, and ample room for all three fingers on the front strap. There are finger recesses there, but very shallow, so they won't bother different-sized hands. Two other back strap pieces are provided, marked "S" and "L," but I left the "M" in place.

The "square picture" sights are both dovetailed, so lateral adjustment is possible but on my sample this wasn't needed. Standing using a two-handed hold, my APX gave centered groups of 3.5" and 4.5" at 7 and 15 yards respectively. Ammo was from Black Hills, SuperVel, SIG and Winchester. It ate

them all, of course — hey, it's a Beretta!

For those who like to have the numbers, the APX tips the scale at 27.9 oz. The overall length is 7.56", height is 5.6", width 1.3" and barrel length 4.25". As previously noted, the magazines hold 17 rounds. In the nice kit, you get a spare mag and a neat loader.

The Action

In the family of striker-fired pistols, describing the trigger systems is often difficult. Some say they're DA, while others call it "Semi-DA." In most of them — neither is right. In the APX, the rollover sear is termed by Beretta as the "cocking lever." Yes, as it turns over toward the rear it does move the already-cocked striker back just a little before it lets it go. I'd still call this single action but it does take a definite press. On my APX, it's a clean 5-lb. pull.

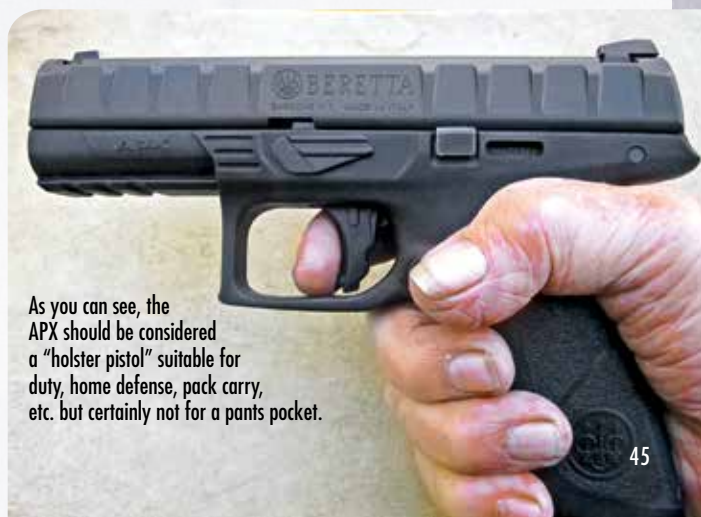
There are a couple of little optional features for the APX, and I'm guessing both are offered to meet the requirements of some

European police agencies. One is an indicator on top of the slide showing the chamber is loaded, while the other is a magazine-disconnect safety. I'd consider the first unnecessary and the second annoying. If you want them, they'd have to be special ordered.

The steel parts of the APX have an extremely durable matte black Nitride finish, while the grip-frame is made of glass-reinforced polymer. With the dimensions given, this version of the pistol would not be for deep concealment. It would be perfect though for open carry if you do such a thing — car or home defense. Mine now resides in the headboard of my bed.

Suggested retail price for the APX is \$575 but you'll often find it listed for a little less. Even at full price, it's definitely worth it. 

For more info: www.beretta.com, Ph: (301) 283-2191

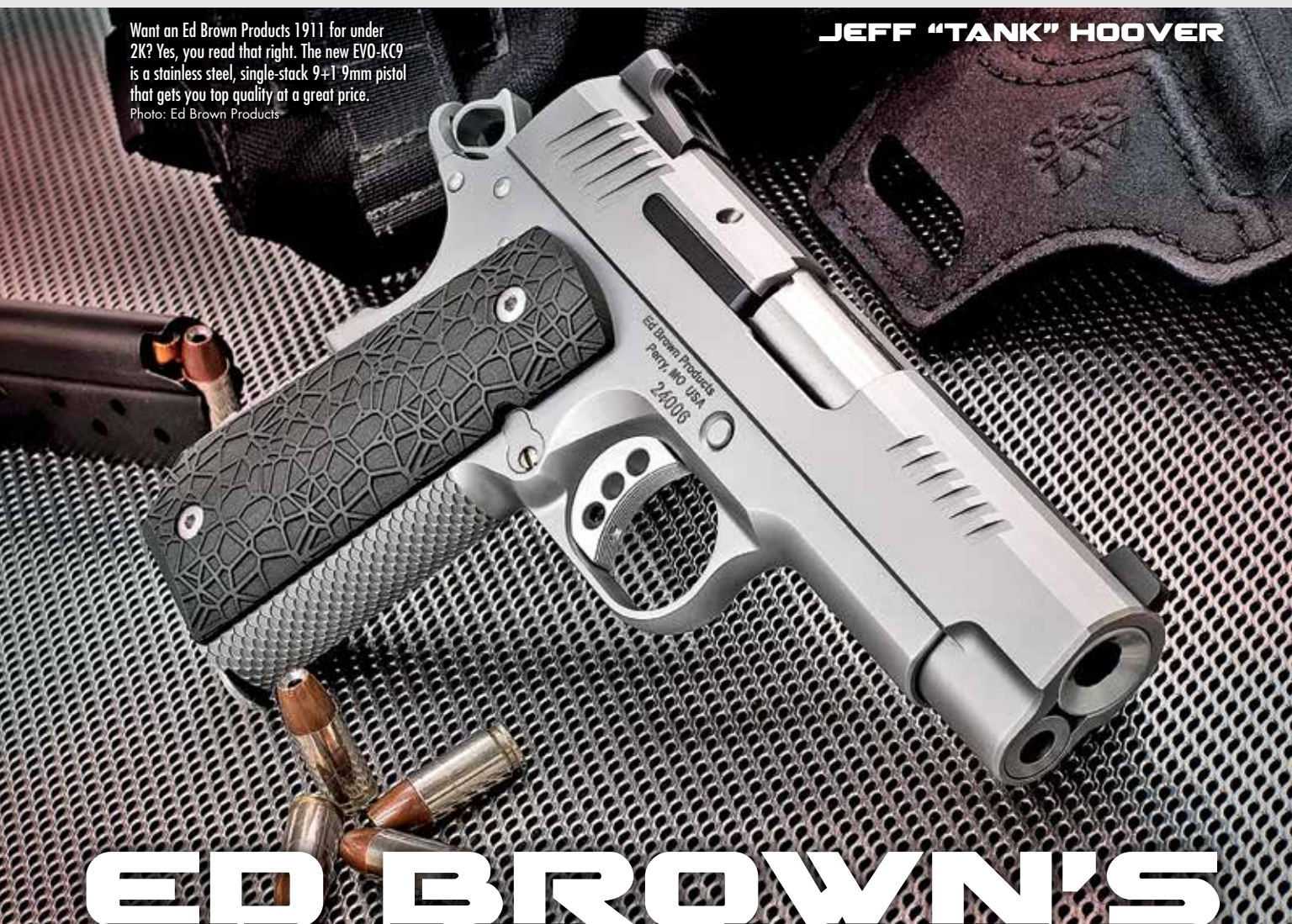


As you can see, the APX should be considered a "holster pistol" suitable for duty, home defense, pack carry, etc. but certainly not for a pants pocket.

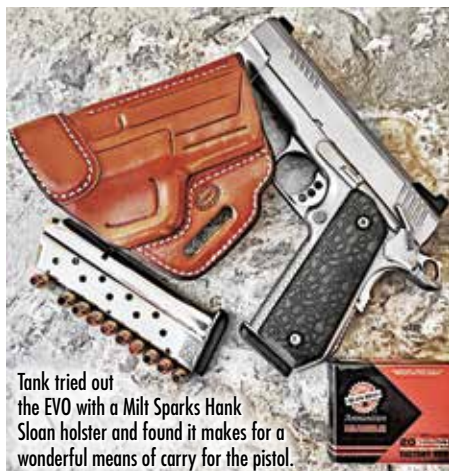
AN EVOLUTIONARY

Want an Ed Brown Products 1911 for under 2K? Yes, you read that right. The new EVO-KC9 is a stainless steel, single-stack 9+1 9mm pistol that gets you top quality at a great price.
Photo: Ed Brown Products

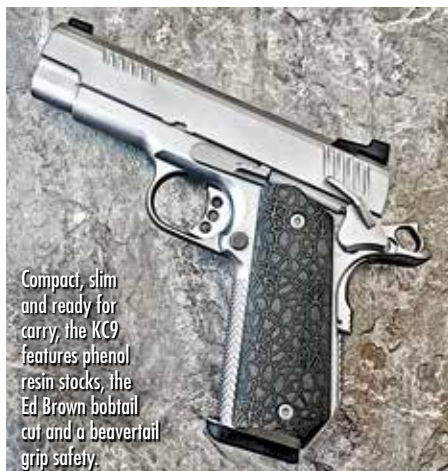
JEFF "TANK" HOOVER



ED BROWN'S EVO-KC9



Tank tried out the EVO with a Milt Sparks Hank Sloan holster and found it makes for a wonderful means of carry for the pistol.

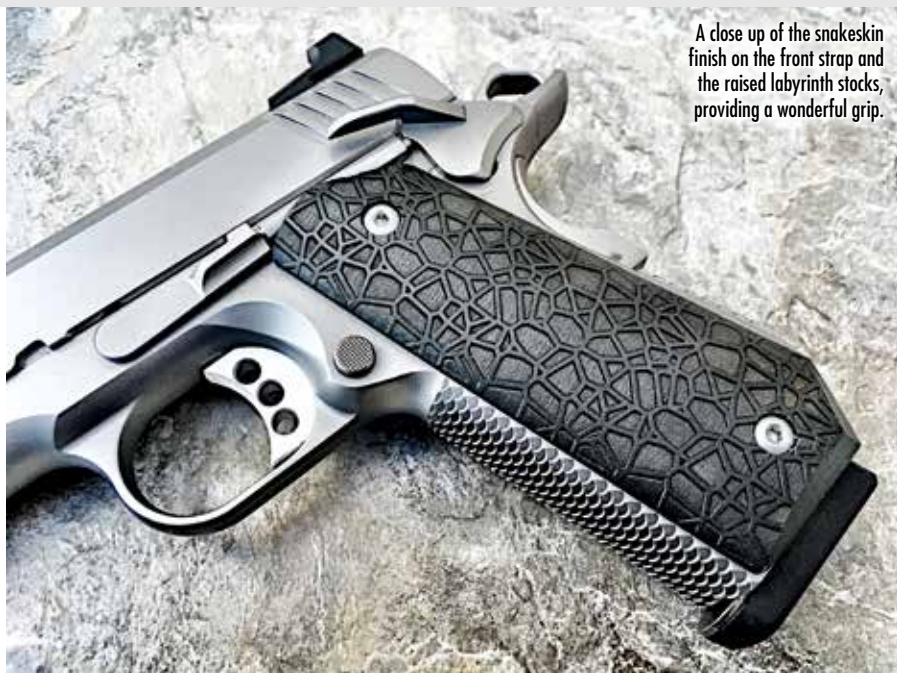


Compact, slim and ready for carry, the KC9 features phenol resin stocks, the Ed Brown bobtail cut and a beavertail grip safety.



The KC9 stripped down. Note the fluted, bushingless barrel and flat recoil spring assembly rated to run up to an amazing 30-40k rounds.

REVOLUTION



A close up of the snakeskin finish on the front strap and the raised labyrinth stocks, providing a wonderful grip.



The U-notch ledge rear sight provides a beautiful sight picture in conjunction with the HD XR front sight. Both are made in-house by Ed Brown Products.

Charles Darwin's controversial book *On the Origin of Species* formulates his theory of evolution by natural selection. Did man evolve from the monkey? Was this the start of the evolution revolution? You're probably asking, "Who the hell is Charles Darwin, Tank? And what's this got to do with guns?" My response? "Don't ask me, I'm no anthropologist! But I am more ape-like than most men...."

I bet you do know who John Moses Browning is, and he's all that really matters in our world, right? So, enough monkeying around, let's get to the root of the matter. I'm here to tell you about Ed Brown's new line of guns, the EVO, and how they managed to make a custom 9mm 1911 with custom features for a lower price than their other offerings. Specifically, an MSRP of \$1,895. What? Yup, let me reveal how it's done.

Behind The Curtain

The EVO-KC9 is a 9+1 single-stack 9mm shooter any 1911 fanatic would be proud to carry, shoot or show off. EVO is short for Evolution, and the KC9 — or Kobra Carry-9mm — is the first offering in the new Evolution series.

Many of you are wondering, "How is Ed Brown Products able to produce a gun of this quality at such a reduced price? Surely, they must be cutting corners somewhere, right?" I'll answer

your question, while easing your mind and quashing any doubts with a simple, "Nope!" I'll let Mr. Brown explain this one.

"Modern design, fixed configurations, and state-of-the-art manufacturing in small custom batches, allow us to produce this series at a 30 percent lower price point, making it the best value to be found in hand-crafted custom handguns," he explains.

The Nitty Gritty

The KC9 picks up where the Kobra Carry left off at its inception 20 years ago, when it raised the standards back then of what to expect from high-end custom 1911's while still being devoted to its roots. The KC9 still includes the top-tier characteristics custom Ed Brown guns are famous for, including the famous Ed Brown Bobtail, stainless steel construction and snakeskin application on the frontstrap and Bobtail mainspring housing.

For 20 years Ed Brown worked on ways he could improve his Kobra Carry and through thorough thought and design as well as a generous helping of blood, sweat and tears, he perfected upon what was once thought of as the perfect packing piece.

The KC9 is optimized for the 9mm cartridge as it carries the same characteristics of the Kobra Carry, only it's now a slimmed-down version in both

size and weight, for optimal concealed carry. The KC9 has all the traditional 1911 controls we all know and love and uses standard 1911 magazines. The pistol is 7½" in length and has a height of just a hair over 5½". Weight is 34 oz. and width is 0.860". The slide and frame are matte stainless steel.

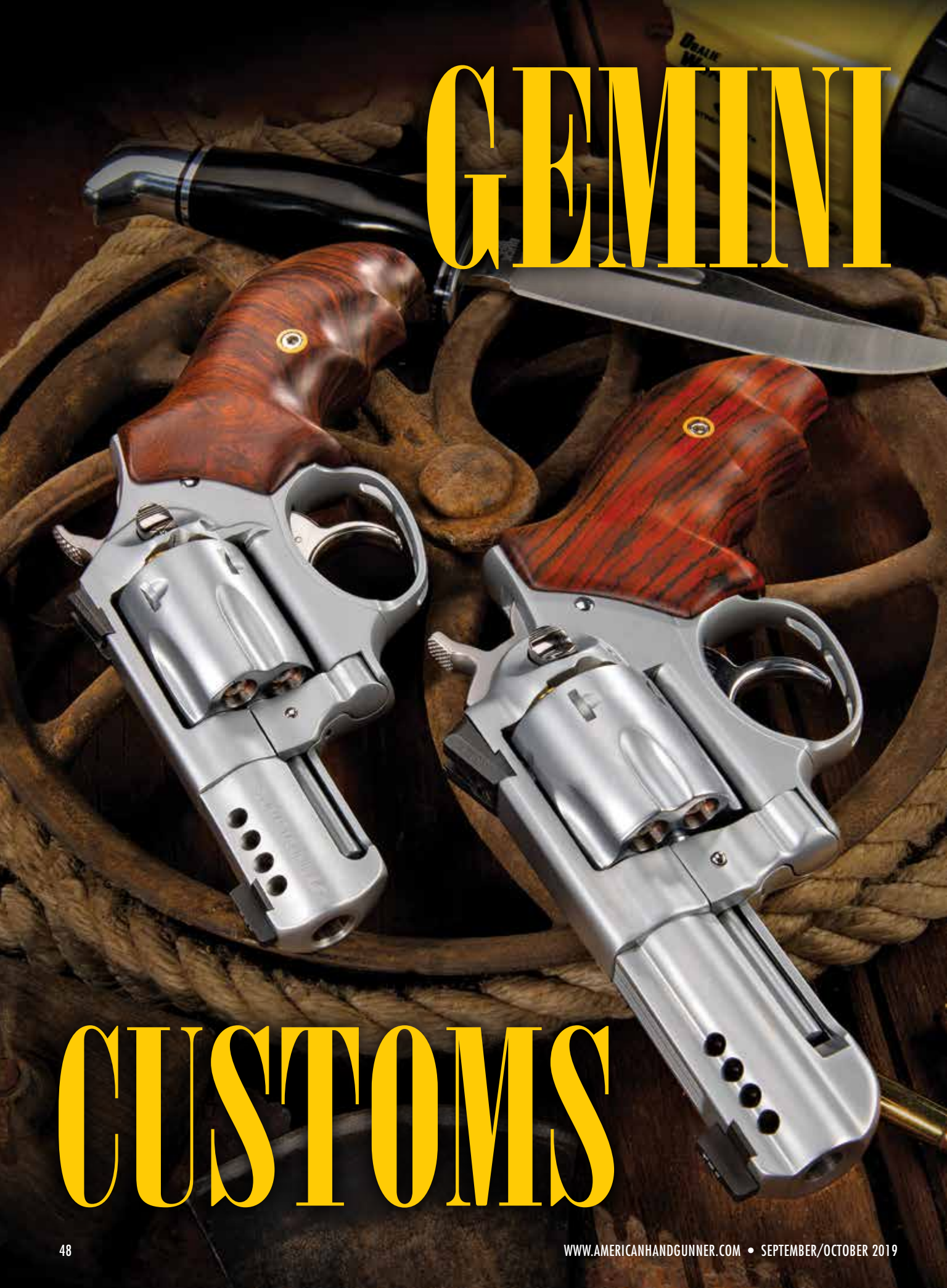
Perfected Parts

For evolution to occur, the process involves the improvement, progress or development of something to become better or more adapted to its environment. Following this theme, several parts on the KC9 were completely redesigned, taking advantage of modern thinking to give us an improved design. For instance, the KC9 has a new external extractor providing more consistent and positive extraction of the most stubborn of shell casings.

The HD XR orange-dot front sight is now easier to change with simple tools and has a Trijicon tritium insert for low- or no-light shooting conditions. A smaller ledge rear sight has glare-reducing rear serrations and a large U-notch, that allows plenty of light on either side of the front sight giving a beautiful sight picture. Lastly, the front face of the rear sight is flat, so you can cycle the slide on your belt or boot heel one-handed, if needed.

The 4" stainless steel bull barrel is

Continued on page 84

The background of the entire page is a high-quality photograph. It features two custom Smith & Wesson revolvers with polished stainless steel frames and wood-grain grips. The grips are a rich, reddish-brown color with a prominent, wavy grain pattern. The revolvers are positioned diagonally, one on the left and one on the right. Behind them, a large, dark-colored knife with a curved blade is visible. The entire scene is set against a backdrop of thick, coiled nautical rope, which adds a sense of ruggedness and tradition to the composition. The lighting is dramatic, highlighting the metallic surfaces of the guns and the texture of the wood and rope.

GEMINI

CUSTOMS

SUBLIME .44 SPECIAL/ .357 MAGNUMS



ROY HUNTINGTON

**PHOTOS: ROB JONES/
THE IMAGESMITH, LLC**

I've known Marc Morganti, founder of this one-man show called Gemini Customs, for almost 20 years. After nearly two decades of association you learn much about a man's character. To me consistency is a benchmark. How someone acts and reacts tells you what to expect down the road. Predictability means reliability — begetting trustworthiness, steadiness and more.

Conduct at both ends of the drama spectrum may be good for spectacle-laced “unreality” TV shows. But in the real world the ability to count on someone is what's most important. At least to me. Marc has proven to me time

and time again to be kind, thoughtful, patient, positive and meticulous; having a genuine drive — and passion — for excellence. His shop is a textbook example of what a custom pistolsmith's dream shop might look like. Except his is real — and he maintains it that way.

In anyone's book, Marc is the sort of fellow you'd want to create a custom gun project for you. When you place your dreams in someone else's

hands, the word “reliable” suddenly carries significant weight.

I chatted at length with Marc over almost a year as we built toward this finished project — four remarkable Rugers. One of the things — actually one of many things — leaving an impression on me was when Marc said this:

“Every gun we build and send out is akin to sending your children into the world to contribute in a positive

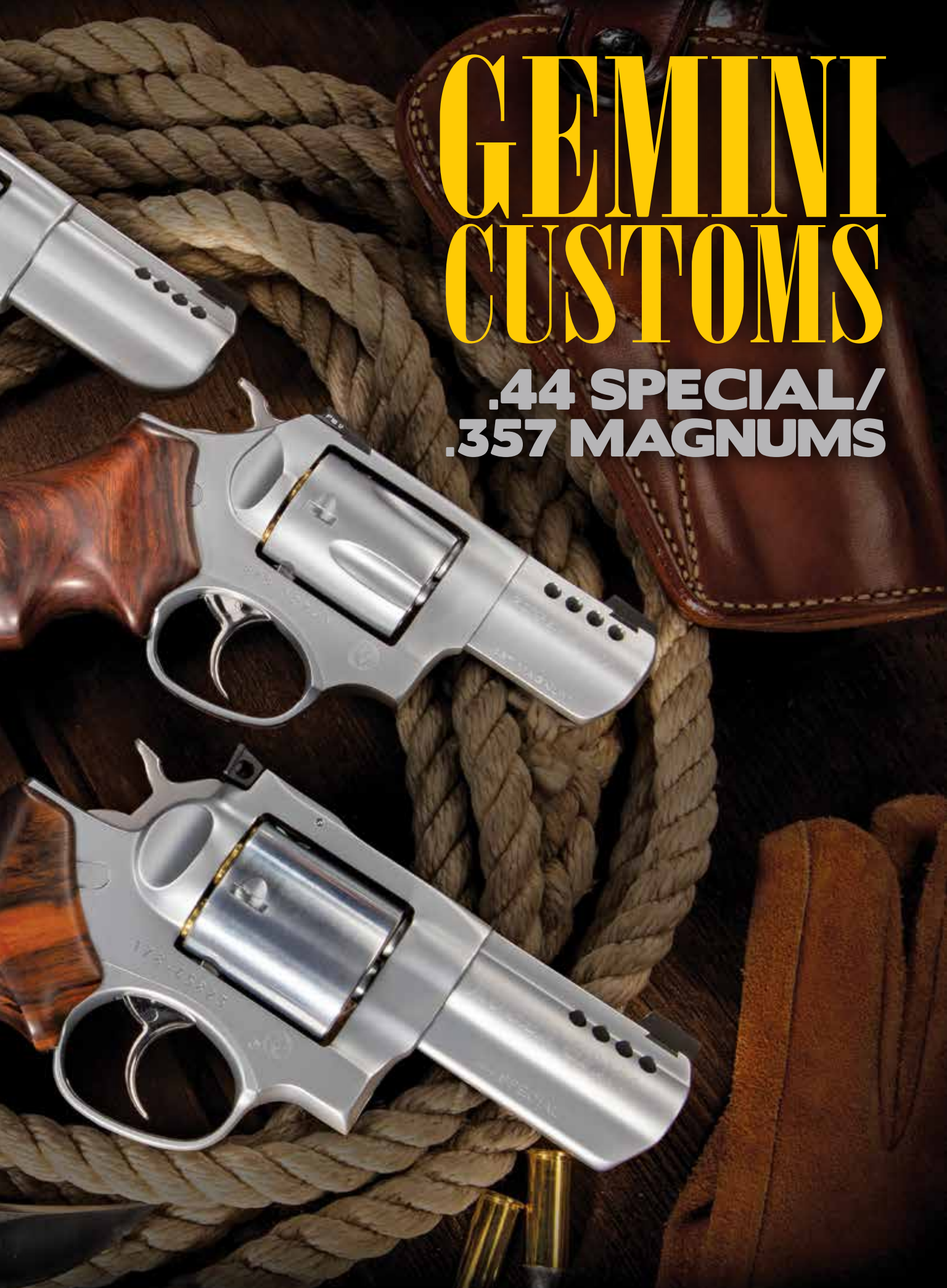
IMPROVING THE PROVEN



AMERICAN
HANDGUNNER

GEMINI CUSTOMS

**.44 SPECIAL/
.357 MAGNUMS**



Exotic wood revolver grips are handcrafted by Marc — something rare in any custom shop!



manner. Like the old saying goes, 'Seek perfection — but demand excellence'."

That is possibly at the core of what you get when you deal with Gemini Customs. This way of thinking is the mechanism making you confident your investment in time and energy and money is in good hands — the right hands. Simply put, Marc will not allow

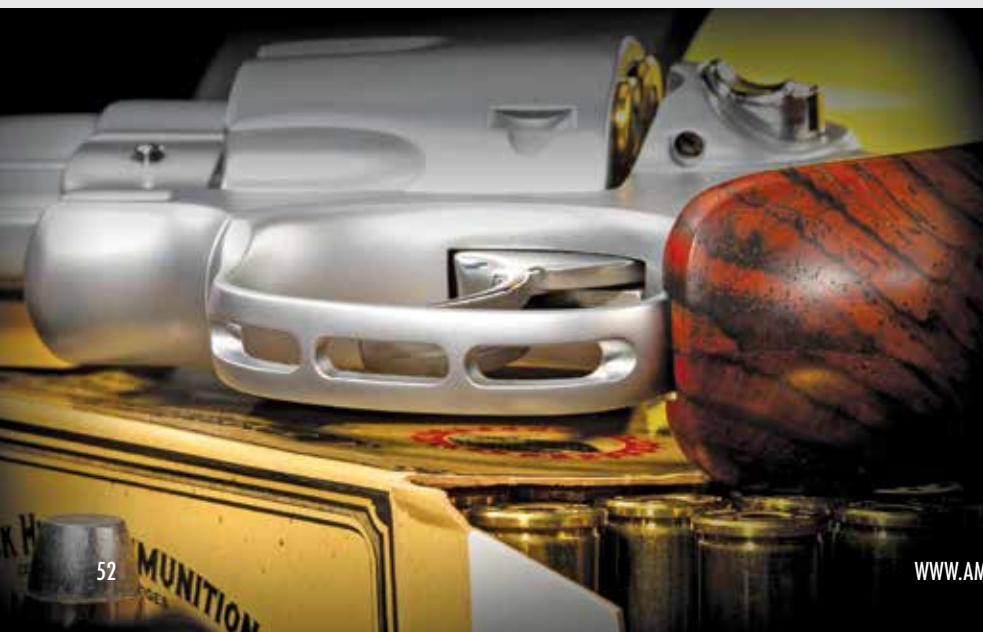
something out of his shop which isn't the very best he can make it.

Period.

Experience

Marc hung his shingle, as it were, in 1997 and has been at it full-time ever since. He's been well known for "best quality" 1911 work and has appeared

in our pages before ("Practical Art from Gemini Customs," Sept/Oct 2006), but decided to concentrate on revolver work some years ago. Now, concentrating on S&W and Ruger revolvers, Marc has developed a following of hard-core revolver devotees who appreciate and celebrate Marc's distinctive take on what a custom



.44 SPECIAL/.357 MAGNUMS GEMINI CUSTOMS



revolver might, should — and can be.

By concentrating on a handful of models Marc has been able to develop a list of custom touches, even major re-builds, specific to both Rugers and S&W round guns. The more you do something the better you get at it, and the guns in front of you represent an apex of one man's thoughts on what a Ruger revolver can aspire to become.

True Custom

If you've never had a custom gun built, it might be intimidating, but it needn't be. Find a gunsmith you can trust. Look at their website to see what's offered. In Marc's case, the Gemini Customs website has some history, photos of completed projects, descriptions of work he can perform and outlines of "packages" for different models. These are sets of custom touches you can have done to your gun or to one Marc supplies. It's a great way to become familiar with the different options a gunsmith offers.

Guns can be used with or without clips.

But here's where it gets fun. Since this is custom work, you can usually pick and choose what you want done to your particular gun. Some mods can only be done to certain models, but the majority of custom features can be worked into most.

The .44 Special

If there could be such a thing as a "typical" custom package, the .44 Special here might be a good place to start. Marc machines off the Ruger barrel "warning" mark, skeletonizes the trigger guard, finish reams and hones the chambers, creates the V8 Hybra-Port porting, crowns the muzzle at 11 degrees, hones the forcing cone, faces and bevels the throat, installs Bowen

Continued on page 81





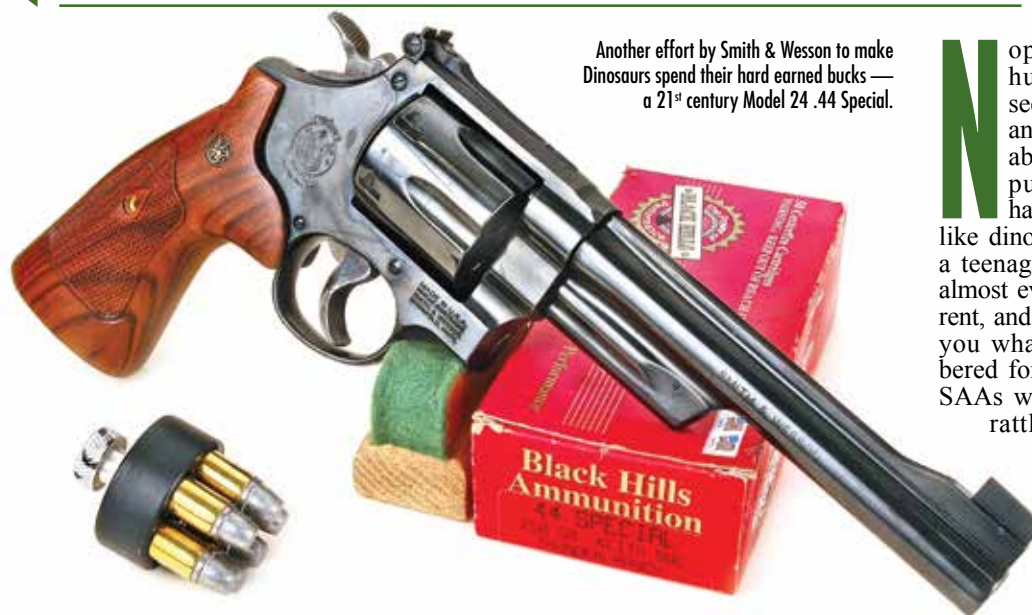
Duke calls these .44's "Dinosaur Guns." From left: Navy Arms 3rd Model .44 Russian, Smith & Wesson Model 21 Thunder Ranch Revolver .44 Special and Ruger Old Model Blackhawk .44 Magnum.



HANDGUNS FOR DINOSAURS?

WE'RE NOT
TALKIN'
JURASSIC
PARK HERE

MIKE "DUKE" VENTURINO
PHOTOS: YVONNE VENTURINO



Another effort by Smith & Wesson to make Dinosaurs spend their hard earned bucks — a 21st century Model 24 .44 Special.

Nope, this isn't about guns for hunting dinosaurs although it seems like some of the revolvers and single shot handguns floating about nowadays could serve the purpose nicely. This is about handguns for us shooters who feel like dinosaurs — and yes, I'm one. As a teenager in the '60s I could identify almost every Smith & Wesson then current, and many discontinued. I could tell you what cartridges they were chambered for and their barrel lengths. Colt SAAs were no mystery either. I could rattle off their available calibers and finish options on demand. Semi-autos didn't interest me much but I certainly knew the difference between the Walther PP series or Colt Gold Cups from ordinary Government Models.



Duke found this new-in-box U.S. Firearms .45 Colt with auxiliary .45 ACP cylinder at a gun store for less than half what it cost when the company was still in business.

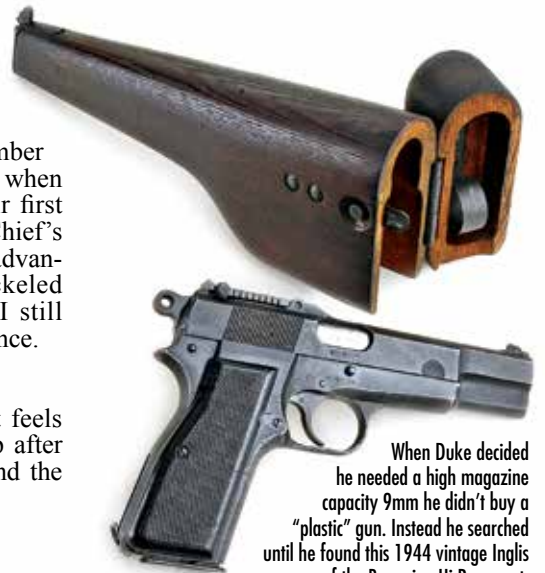
At movies I must have been obnoxious to my dates or even male friends because I would give a running discourse as to what firearms were being prominently displayed. For example in the 1966 movie *The Professionals* I told whoever was with me Lee Marvin was shooting a Colt New Service with a 4½" barrel. In that same year in the movie *Nevada Smith* when Steve McQueen was being taught the finer points of revolver shooting by Brian Keith, I labeled his handgun a Smith & Wesson Model #3; most likely a "Schofield" with a 7" barrel bobbed to 5".

All these guns had one thing in common — they were made of ordinary steel and given a blue or nickel finish,

with my guess being the ratio was about 10 to one in the same order. Grips were usually wood, but exotic materials like horn, ivory or mother of pearl were acceptable. I remember being just a mite less than excited when Smith & Wesson announced their first stainless steel revolver. It was a Chief's Special .38 and I couldn't see its advantage compared to blued and nicked versions of the same handgun. I still don't. Refer to the dinosaur reference.

Rip Van Duke

Then something went awry. It feels like I'm Rip Van Duke woken up after a hiatus from consciousness to find the



When Duke decided he needed a high magazine capacity 9mm he didn't buy a "plastic" gun. Instead he searched until he found this 1944 vintage Inglis copy of the Browning Hi Power set.



Occasionally, American gun makers try to make Dinosaurs happy, as they did with the new S&W Model 22 (aka Model 1917) .45 ACP at right. At left is an original 1917.



Duke says the new "black" semi-autos are "soulless" but this S&W .455 Webley HE#2 that factory letters to the Canadian Government in 1916 has plenty of soul!

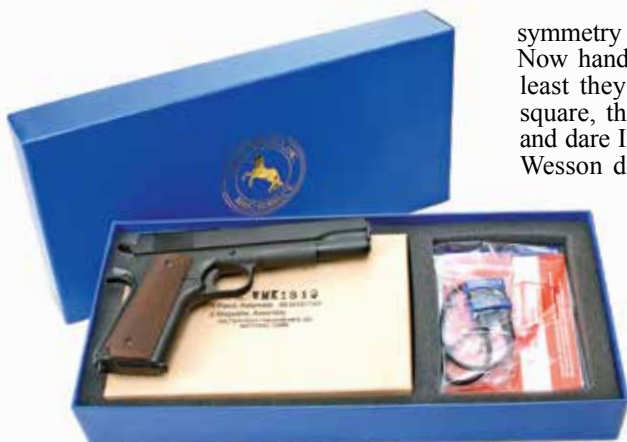
Revolvers now have locks! And keys! Colt hardly even makes revolvers anymore except for a paltry few SAAs priced at over 10 times what they sold for in the 1960s and a new version of an old DA revolver.

Slowly it dawned on me I was a dinosaur — I have outlived my heyday. The American handgun scene changed but I have not. There are two options for me. I can jump on the synthetic, high capacity black semi-auto bandwagon. Or I can bog my head like a bronc and buck my way through this changing world. Instead of perusing cases full of nondescript new semi-autos at stores, I head straight for the ones holding used guns. Just in the last couple years, at one such store I found a mint S&W K38 (Model 14) with a 6" barrel. It was exactly like the first handgun I bought in 1966 but still not overpriced compared to black, square handguns.

Another time but at the same store I spied a Colt .45 Auto with little remaining finish. I asked to handle it and found it was a 1917 vintage Model 1911, all original and mechanically tight, just holster worn. I bought it for about what a run-of-the-mill plastic, 16-round capacity, black semi-auto costs. At another store that sold only used guns I found one of the now defunct U.S. Firearms Company's single action .45's with extra .45 Auto cylinder. It was priced at about half what it would have cost new when the company was in business. Sold!

Soul Food?

I'm afraid I don't pick up current catalogs from new handgun manufacturers but do often visit Internet firearms auction sites looking for the types of handguns I find interesting. And there are plenty! For way less than a modern high capacity semi-auto I bought a S&W Hand Ejector, 2nd Model in .455 Webley. It even factory letters to the Canadian Government in 1916. That's what I call soul!

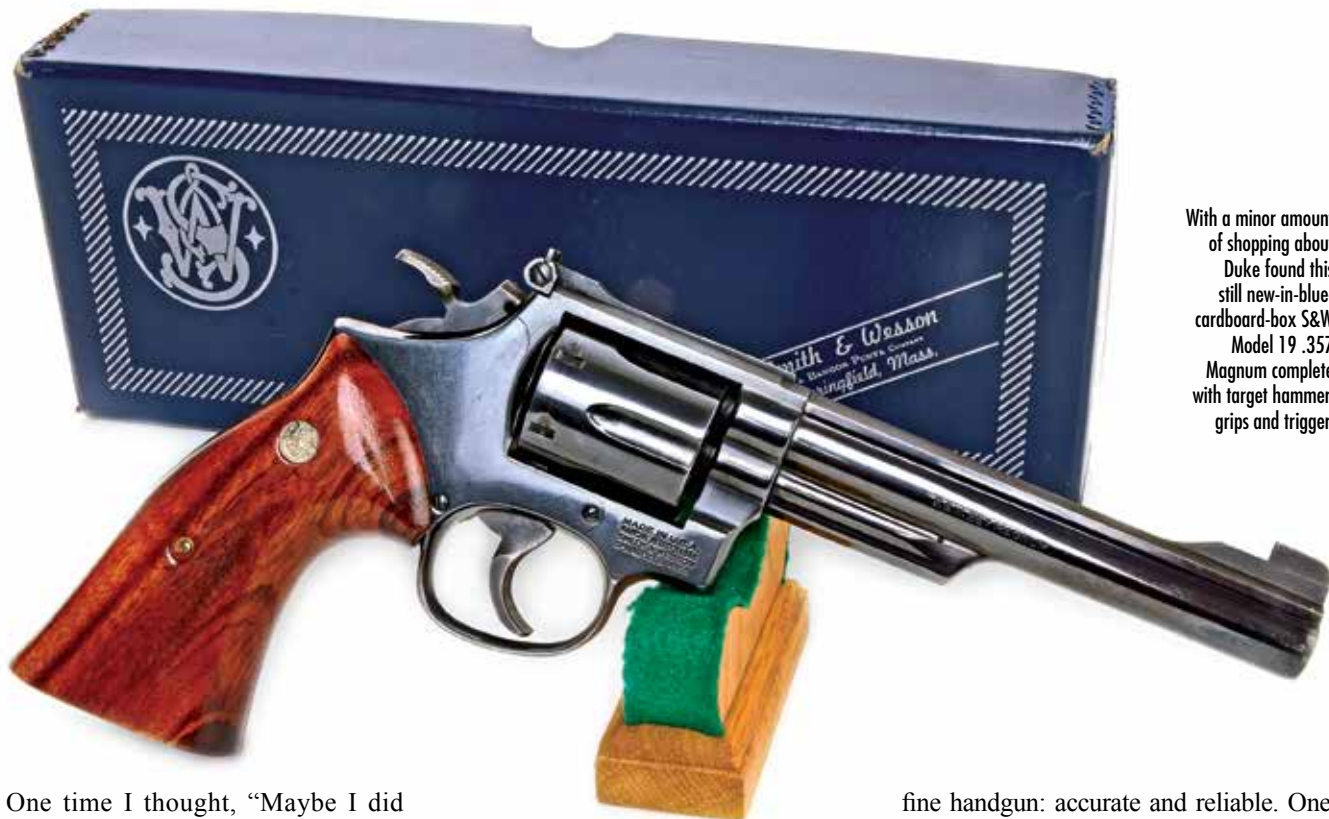


symmetry of my world had shifted. Now handguns are all the same, at least they are in my mind. Black, square, thick, mostly of synthetics and dare I say — soulless. Smith & Wesson doesn't make those beautifully crafted N-Frame revolvers anymore except in some special runs. Heck, the .44 Magnum isn't even the most powerful handgun cartridge anymore. Dirty Harry would be lost in this world.

Early in the 21st century Colt turned out Model 1911A1 .45's precisely as they had been shipped to the U.S. Government circa 1941–1945, even down to the brown cardboard box.



The holster-worn but mechanically perfect Colt Detective Special at right was on Gunbroker.com and cost a mere \$300. The like-new S&W Model 12 was at a local gun store for \$400. Dinosaur bargains are out there!



With a minor amount of shopping about Duke found this still new-in-blue-cardboard-box S&W Model 19 .357 Magnum complete with target hammer, grips and trigger.

One time I thought, "Maybe I did need a high capacity, 9mm semi-auto." So on Gunbroker.com I found a John Inglis Hi Power complete with wooden holster/shoulder stock. A few years ago I decided I needed some good snub-nose .38's. On the Internet I found a 1961 vintage Colt Detective Special for a measly \$300. At the Colt Forum's classified ads I found a 1926 vintage SAA .45 with about 50 percent finish remaining factory lettering to a hardware store in Maine. It cost me a mere \$50 more than the last newly manufactured Colt SAA .45 I had purchased a few months earlier. Lots of soul in all that steel and wood!

Here in Montana gun shows are still thriving and can be a treasure trove of good handguns for we dinosaurs. Last weekend I viewed a fellow's table holding dozens of still new-in-blue-cardboard-boxes Smith & Wesson revolvers, along with a good number of used Colts and S&Ws. The new ones were priced low enough to make good shooters instead of safe queens. While still on my snub nose kick I picked up three great Smith & Wessons. One was the Model 15 with adjustable sights, another was a nicked Model 10-7 and the third was an 8 $\frac{3}{4}$ " barreled S&W K38. None of those fine sixguns cost as much as anything in new handgun display cases.

To give Smith & Wesson their due the company has made some stabs at giving dinosaurs a few tidbits. One was the recreation of the Model 1917/

aka Model 22 .45 Auto. Another was the Model 24 .44 Special. Colt put out a run of new Model 1911A1s complete with original style box. Also Colt has announced the Detective Special .38 has returned albeit not made in-house.

European Hope

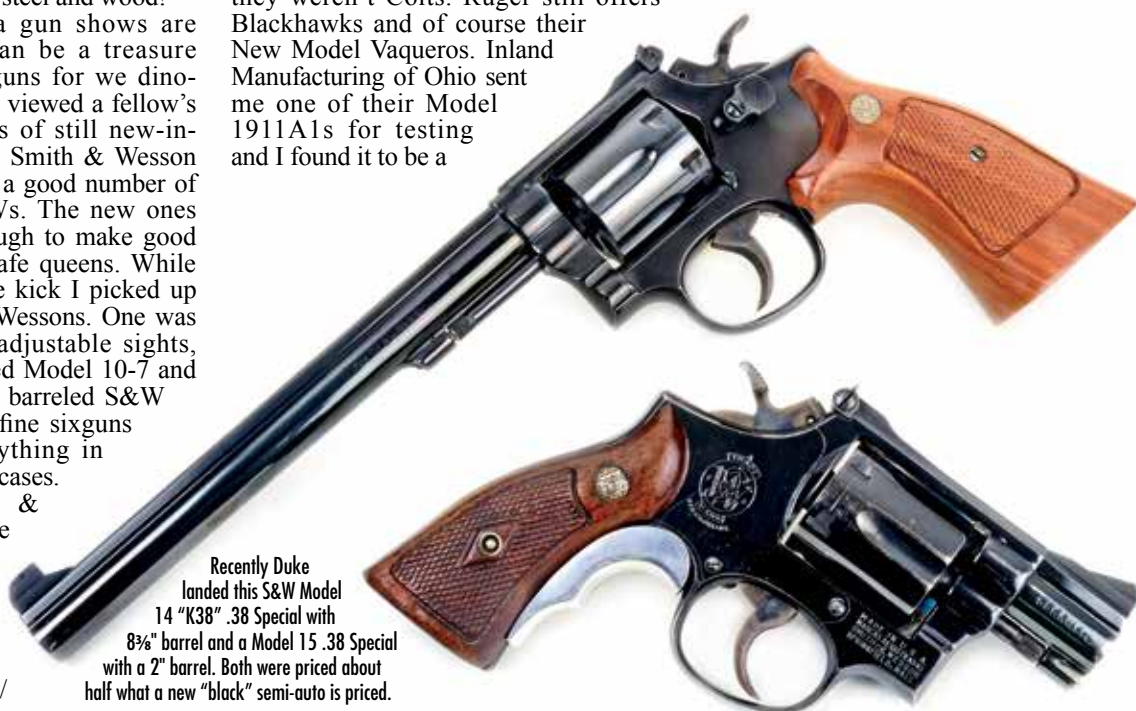
We dinosaurs need not despair too much. Good single action revolvers come over from Italy with great regularity. I've had to look closely at some to discern they weren't Colts. Ruger still offers Blackhawks and of course their New Model Vaqueros. Inland Manufacturing of Ohio sent me one of their Model 1911A1s for testing and I found it to be a

fine handgun: accurate and reliable. One semi-auto actually amazing me was one of Cimarron Arms Model 1911's made in the Philippines. It was a darn nice, modestly priced and very accurate .45 Auto.

I'm not giving up. Having been in this gun'riting business for over 40 years I've seen immense changes, but that doesn't mean I have to be a part of them. I'm a dinosaur and I'm proud of it.



For more of Duke and to see even more "Dinosaur" guns in other articles go to www.americanhandgunner.com



Recently Duke landed this S&W Model 14 "K38" .38 Special with 8 $\frac{3}{4}$ " barrel and a Model 15 .38 Special with a 2" barrel. Both were priced about half what a new "black" semi-auto is priced.

A .22 IN 9MM CLOTHING TAURUS



The Taurus TX22 looks the part of a defensive 9mm pistol and that's the whole idea — but inside lurks the heart of a .22 LR!

TX22

A threaded suppressor adapter comes with the package. Easy on the ears and just as accurate with or without the can.

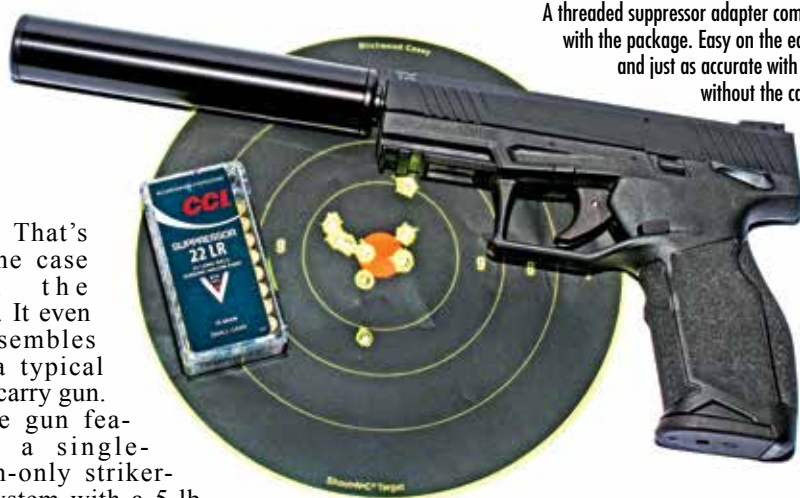
DAVID FREEMAN

I “get” this gun, I really do. It’s a .22 looking, feeling and working like a medium-sized centerfire competition or carry gun. Training and familiarity means this makes perfect sense. Most of our training .22’s feel and look like Lugers or are tiny little versions of something else. All of them have magazines loading by holding down a little spring tab with your thumb while feeding ammo through the top.

If you’ve taught or attended the NRA Basic Pistol classes or other new shooter classes, you know what I mean. It’s a big step from handling and shooting the .22’s to the 9mm, .40 S&W or .45 ACPs we hope they’ll

carry. That’s not the case with the TX22. It even disassembles like a typical 9mm carry gun.

The gun features a single-action-only striker-fire system with a 5-lb. trigger pull with a short trigger reset, both tactile and audible. Proprietary grip texturing ensures a secure grip. When combined with the optimized slide weight for minimal recoil, all this provides extremely fast follow-up shots. The chassis is polymer, the slide is anodized alu-



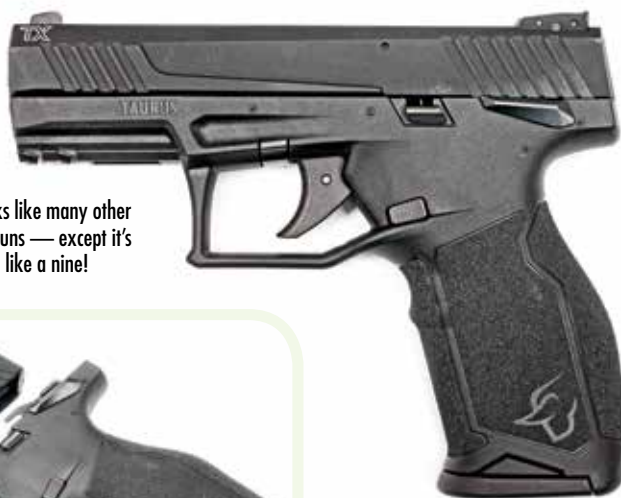
minum, the barrel length is 4.1" and the gun weighs 17.3 oz. empty.

Ground-Up Design

The pistol comes with bright white three-dot sights, big, easy-to-see and adjustable for both windage and ele-



The Taurus TX22 looks like many other polymer 9mm handguns — except it's a .22, handling like a nine!



Take down is fast and anyone familiar with poly-type pistol take-down is right at home.



vation by a flat-blade screw. Sight adjustment instructions are in the manual. Everything about the gun is designed for comfort and ease of use. In fact, the company wants shooters of all levels to enjoy shooting this gun. As such, Taurus considered safety for new shooters, while remembering experienced shooters.

The one I have came with an optional ambidextrous manual safety that can be left off if you don't want it. All TX22 pistols also have a hidden trigger safety preventing unintentional rear movement of the trigger. This new design eliminates the conventional safety blade protruding from the trigger. It also comes with a firing pin block keeping the pin from striking the round unless the trigger is pulled.

The new Taurus has a slide with cocking serrations front and rear, a Picatinny rail on the dust cover, standard slide lock, safety and magazine release. The magazine release is easily reversible by the user too. The slide lock, however, is not ambidextrous. My gun came with two 16-round magazines. You can get one with 10-round magazines if you live in one of those states legislated by clueless individuals who think this somehow makes a difference.

Let's talk a little more about the training use for the TX22. It's the magazine I'm primarily talking about. You load the TX22 magazine like you do a typical 9mm, by pushing down on the follower to load the first round, then on the previous round for loading the rest of the magazine until it's full. Then you pop the magazine in the grip, rack the slide

and you're in business.

There are realistic .22 conversion kits for GLOCKS, SIGs and 1911's, but the Taurus will sell for something less than \$300 (MSRP is \$349) ready to go. To match this with a kit conversion, you'll spend \$500 to \$600 or more on the gun and another \$200 on the kit.

I've previously used realistic pellet guns to get a person ready for shooting a centerfire handgun. I can really see an advantage in using this little jewel for the same purpose. An airgun is an airgun and a "real" gun is a real gun. The difference can be huge so starting with the "real" gun can make good sense.

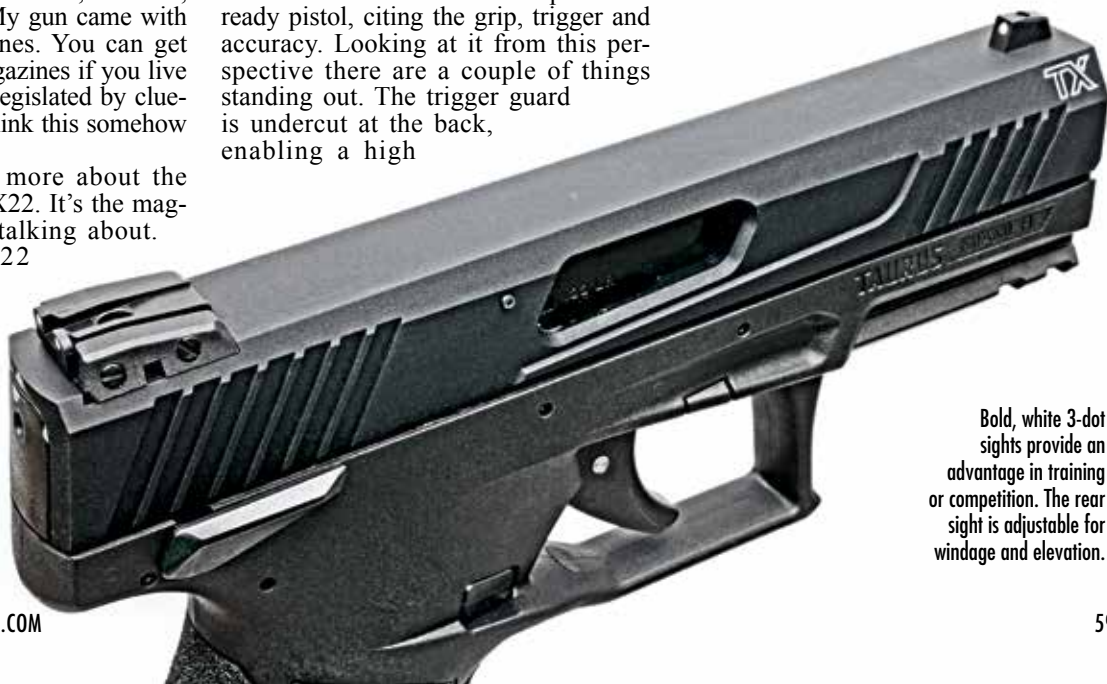
Taurus sees it as a competition-ready pistol, citing the grip, trigger and accuracy. Looking at it from this perspective there are a couple of things standing out. The trigger guard is undercut at the back, enabling a high

grip on the frame. The grip is further enhanced by a small bump on the front strap more-or-less forcing your middle finger into position under the trigger guard — ensuring a good grip is both fast and natural. The reach to the trigger is perfect. The actual trigger is surrounded by a blade pivoting on a pin beneath the chassis, a unique design guaranteeing a smooth, effortless trigger pull with a rapid reset.

Shooting Thoughts

I almost overlooked the threaded adapter for a suppressor, but when I found it tucked into its own little hole in the box, I put it on the gun, along with a TAC 65 suppressor from Tactical Innovations before going to the range. I gathered up several boxes of assorted ammo from CCI, Winchester, Remington, Norma and Armscor to see if the TX22 was ammo-sensitive for

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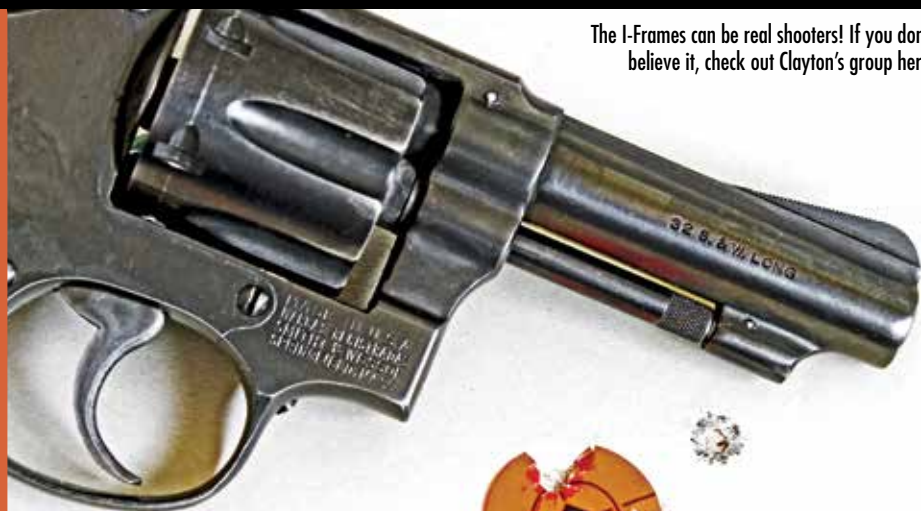


Bold, white 3-dot sights provide an advantage in training or competition. The rear sight is adjustable for windage and elevation.

A LOOK AT S&W'S APPEALING I-FRAMES

THE

I'S



The I-Frames can be real shooters! If you don't believe it, check out Clayton's group [here](#).

HAVE IT

CLAYTON K. WALKER

A nice touch on the I-Frames is the pinned barrel — although perhaps not required for the lowly .32 Long.

As we've been told so often, there's no "I" in team. But you do need it to spell words like interesting and iconic. Similarly, there's no Smith & Wesson without "I" as the wheelguns we know and love arguably all began with the company's "I-Frame." While the frame size has

been out of production for several decades, these great guns are far more than just a historical footnote.

Prior to the I-Frame, Smith and Wesson's bread and butter lay in producing designs relying on a hinged frame. Think of classics like the Schofield and Model 3 as well as the Safety Hammerless designs affectionately — or perhaps

While no longer made, the Smith & Wesson I-Frame still holds a lot of appeal. A svelte little .32, this late model version shows the pinned barrel and is hiding the nifty "flat latch" cylinder release on the other side.





I-Frames varied much in terms of finish, stocks, sights and latches across the production run.

derisively — nicknamed “lemon squeezers.” Ingenious as those auto-ejecting top breaks were, there was a limitation to the design: Since the frame wasn’t solid it placed a ceiling on the power of the cartridges it could handle.

Trend-Setter

S&W introduced its first I-Frame, the .32 Hand Ejector, in 1896. It was so named because, quite literally, the user had to swing the cylinder out of the solid frame and eject the empties *by hand*. It’s surprising to think this was a radical departure for the time, but there you have it. Three years later in 1899, S&W introduced a scaled-up version of the I-Frame capable of handling the higher pressures of the .38 Special cartridge. This gun, the venerable .38 Military & Police, was built on a sturdier “K” frame and eventually morphed into what we know today as the Model 10.

Admittedly, Smith’s .32 Hand Ejector wasn’t the first-ever solid frame design with a swing-out cylinder, but it was the model essentially defining the “before” and “after” periods of the company’s revolvers. From the I-Frame forward, just about every revolver coming out of Springfield, Massachusetts, generally *looked* like we think a Smith is supposed to. The company did make a few adjustments to the lock work, including moving the cylinder stop from the bottom to the top of the frame, and by 1903 the cylinder release was relocated to where we’re used to seeing it.

Really, the only thing antiquated about this I-Frame is the cartridge it

shoots. The .32 was introduced chambered for the .32 S&W Long, a round intended to give the 32 S&W a little more oomph. By any modern standard, it’s still anemic, pushing a 98-gr. bullet at about 718 fps for about 112 ft.-lbs. of energy. By comparison, your rack-grade .32 ACP will produce about 158 ft.-lbs. of energy and a .380 ACP will clock in at about 200 ft.-lbs.

Where It Counts

If you absolutely have to press your .32 Hand Ejector into the role of a self-defense gun, Buffalo Bore has some rounds they developed, in their words, “after countless customer requests for ammunition that will make this cartridge lethal...” While the round-nosed .32 Longs of yore are better than harsh words, let it be known this cartridge isn’t a man-stopper in a conventional sense.

No matter. Aside from the fact this revolver is like a tiny little jewel in terms of its size and craftsmanship, it’s also worth owning because it’s scarily accurate. Shooting a quarter-sized group at 7 yards with any full-sized handgun is an accomplishment for me on a good day. I was gobsmacked when I was able to cloverleaf shots with my I-Frame after only a few cylinders worth of warm-up. Now, sure, I had to modify my grip with my pinky underneath the butt of the gun to be able to get

a straight-line purchase on the trigger. That said, I’d stand on one leg and put my thumb in my ear if it allowed me to regularly print groups like the one pictured. It’s worth the hassle!

A Common Treasure

The good news is if you want an I-Frame like mine, you’ll likely be able to find one. Smith made hundreds of thousands of the little guns up until 1961, at which point it became hard to justify I-Frame production with the similar-but-stronger J-Frame in their product catalog.

Since purchasing my first I-Frame, I’ve since added another, and I’m sure more of these diminutive and eminently fun revolvers are in my future. Find one and shoot one, and I have no doubt you’ll fall in love.



The .32 Long, while not a powerhouse, is still a handy little round. From left to right: .22 LR, .32 S&W, .32 Long and .357 Magnum.



“THIS REVOLVER IS LIKE A TINY LITTLE JEWEL IN TERMS OF ITS SIZE AND CRAFTSMANSHIP, IT’S ALSO WORTH OWNING BECAUSE IT’S SCARILY ACCURATE.”

LEATHER MYSTERIES

KARLA VAN HORN

This old Colt Lightning sports a pair of Gutta Percha grips. If you want to know whatever happened to the hand-friendly grip material, ask your dentist.

THINGS YOU DIDN'T KNOW YOU DIDN'T KNOW

If you are moderately long of tooth, you might remember the classic *Laugh-In* line uttered by Artie Johnson: “*Veerry intier-esstingk...!*” I’ll admit I’m that old — older probably, after spending 50-plus years doing leatherwork. I’ve found myself occasionally uttering that very phrase — yes, complete with Artie’s German accent ... as I discover some oddity of historical leather history. So, in no particular order, and at the urging of His Editorship, I present some odd things I’ve learned during my nearly life-long involvement with all things leather.

Whiter Teeth?

The Ancient Romans collected chamber pot “contributions.” Okay, so far. The urine was used for washing

Cobbling is still a viable technique today for those nasty, narrow places where glue doesn’t want to hold and where machines necessarily give way to hand sewing. Yes, you still have to do this some days!

laundry, tanning leather and (gag!) — whitening teeth! Nowadays, mercifully, vegetable tanned leather is the standard for holsters. Barks rich in tannin like oak, wattle, mimosa and others, give holster leather its characteristic strength, durability, color and working properties. So, no need to “hold it” to tan your leather these days.

Basic Black

In the 1800s, the U.S. Army specified its black leather be “chestnut oak” tanned because it yielded leather with qualities the military desired, including never bleeding or fading. The interesting part is this super-black leather was never dyed. Yup, that’s a fact. The black color was created through a mad-scientist mix of tannery-specific secret tanning sauces mixed with iron particles. Chemistry basics here — slightly acidic tannin would react with the iron and create a deep black color. How’s that you say? Lay a damp, rusty nail on an oak board and you get the same reaction. Who says we’re smarter these days?

A colleague affiliated with George Lawrence (he of the famous Lawrence Leather Company) told me the classic red-tone of some Lawrence gun leather was not dyed with conventional dyes. A cloak-and-dagger mush of aviation

gas (which is red), oils and other fixins’ rendered the color. I can’t verify this but can pretty much say I won’t be trying to duplicate this in my shop to check the veracity of the statement.

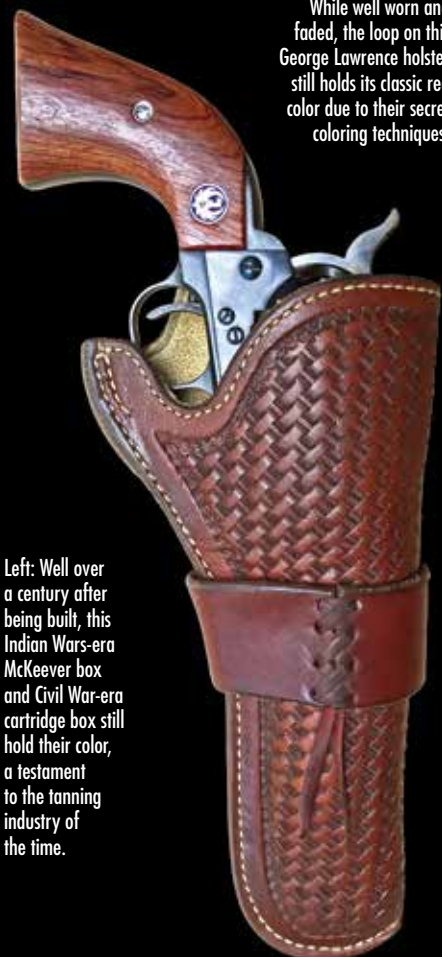
Restrictions May Apply

Toward the end of the 1800s, light household sewing machines were easily purchased by anyone who had the cash, but a heavy stitcher used for leather could only be rented. The contract included “mileage restrictions” of 1,000,000 or

1,500,000 stitches per year. The supplier kept track with a complicated-looking “odometer” attached to the hand wheel. When you hit your limit, you were charged by the thousand. The solution? Stitch fewer stitches to the inch to lower the “miles” traveled. This also saved bobbin thread changes, increasing production, making the bean counters happy! Some things never change, eh?

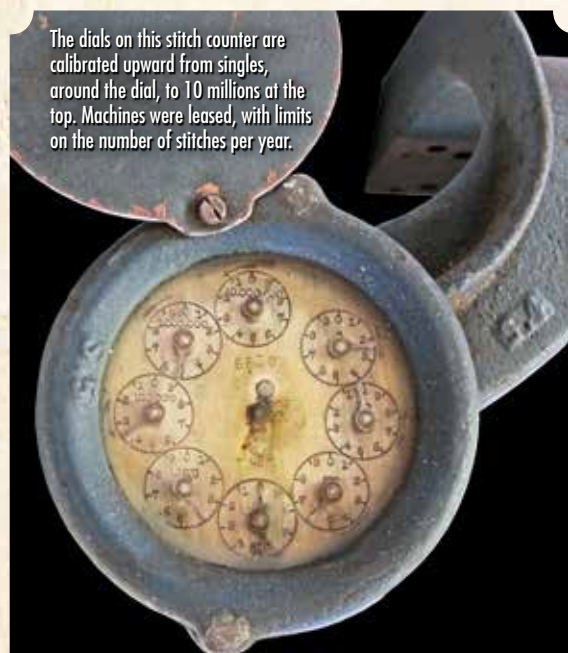
In those days, sewing machine companies held incredible monopolies. If their reps found even a single machine made by someone else on your factory floor, they yanked all their stuff out and you were stuck. The Union Shoe Machinery was actually taken to the Supreme Court over this. Rentals continued up until the late ’60s when the sudden rush of saddlemakers and harness makers running away to parts unknown with “rented” machines made purchasing outright *de rigueur*.

Continued on page 87



While well worn and faded, the loop on this George Lawrence holster still holds its classic red color due to their secret coloring techniques.

Left: Well over a century after being built, this Indian Wars-era McKeever box and Civil War-era cartridge box still hold their color, a testament to the tanning industry of the time.



The dials on this stitch counter are calibrated upward from singles, around the dial, to 10 millions at the top. Machines were leased, with limits on the number of stitches per year.



In ancient Rome the contents of chamber pots were collected for such common tasks as doing laundry, tanning leather and ... and ... whitening teeth!

EATING CROW

Crow is a tough bird and a good knife is required for small bites (Bear and Sons Cutlery from the EDGE line up). Ray says you can get used to eating crow if you eat enough of it.



RAY FLECH

A STUDY IN OPEN-MINDEDNESS

For a very large part of my life a Ruger Super Blackhawk in .44 mag is what followed me around. It's the only gun I've had to point at lowlife to get them to cooperate and leave. As I got older, that thing just kept gaining weight. At some point I moved to lightweight .45 autos, eventually settling on a SIG P220. I know, not small and compact, but compared to the Ruger it was at least lightweight.

Over the same time frame I said a great many bad things about 9mm guns and even more bad things about .380 autos. If it did not have a large diameter, high-mass bullet I thought it was silly, if not completely useless junk. The .17 HMR received the same point of view when it came out. Bet a few of you know what I'm talking about here?

Smacked

Editor Roy and I have been, um ... let's say *investigating* such things for years with no minds changed — at least on my part. Even Luddites, alas,

can't avoid the rapid changes in the industry today. Things like significant technology changes in the gun world — like good plastics and new bullet designs — combined with materials science meant I had to do some rethinking.

The relevance of this smacked me while reading one of Massad Ayoob's *Ayoob Files* articles. The cop had a SIG P220 (Oh, cool just like me ...) with "modern" bullets too. The low-life he was chasing had one of those cheap plastic "things" in "useless" 9mm. The cop and the lowlife shot the excrement out of each other at spitting distances — and both lived. Neither the cop nor the lowlife was instantly stopped; hence the ability to fire lots of rounds into each other. My interpretation from Ayoob's article is the cop prevailed (but just) because of better training. The cop's gun was dry at the end of it all, while the lower life form had rounds left, but was not able to use them to effect.

Epiphany

The lack of "Magical Stopping Power" by the .45 was an epiphany,

snowflakey safe-space moment for me. Enter open-mindedness: "Maybe Roy was right and there is something to 9mm and plastic?" There is, but only if you have modern bullets too. I did not get open-minded nirvana from this one article, but it did prompt me to bug His Editorship some more and explore other info. The path was a few years, and now — at least from the picture you see — possibly a bit too much open-mindedness?

A Longer Reach

I have now field-tested the .17 versus .22 LR and proved to myself for my use (small game mostly) it is actually better. I can easily reach out farther with the .17 HMR than with the .22 LR. Before open-minded set in, I made the argument of "Why not just use a centerfire .22?" While a fair idea, the .17 has very little report, no recoil and is still cheaper. It's also a new cartridge specified from inception to be manufactured so it would be accurate. It lives up to that nicely. The gun pictured will do 5/8" 5-round groups

Ray's move to the dark side of the 9mm was with (top, left to right) the HK P30L, Springfield XDM 5.25 and the Canik TP9SFX. He also tried out some compact 9mm's (bottom, left to right) with the Walther 99C and the Springfield XDE. CZ's 455-17 proved Ray was wrong about the .22 LR. Timer is by Competitive Edge Dynamics and is a must-have. "Dodger" the stuffed rat seems to approve of it all — including the Ruger LCP — or is he laughing at Ray?



at 100 yards consistently. Given I am the weak link in the system; the gun is probably capable of better. New technology worked.

More Enlightenment

I have used both the .44 mag and 10mm to stop small deer with one well-placed shot. Well placed or not, neither the .45 auto nor the 9mm are legal for deer hunting here in the wilds of North Dakota — and most localities. Hence a thought to ponder: Lots of humans are bigger than modest deer. Or even big deer. So the .45 and the 9mm are compromises? Who'd a thought?

One Last Bit Of Crow

A "real" shot timer is way easier to use than a smart phone. I had resisted due to being basically a tightwad. After losing track of shots while making speed runs on multiple targets using the phone, I was frustrated. The phone does not reliably "hear" the shots, at least in my experiments with various apps. Plus I can never see the phone screen in daylight. So, coughing up for a shoot timer is another bit of crow I sampled as I protested.

Eating crow is a short-lived discomfort, while the light and small plastic 9mm keeps on giving. The nine is cheap to shoot too, and it doesn't bother my

"EVEN LUDDITES, ALAS, CAN'T AVOID THE RAPID CHANGES IN THE INDUSTRY TODAY."

aging wrists like the bigger bores.

So, what's the adage about old dogs and new tricks? Keep an open mind and you might just be surprised at what you find. I find I'm beginning to get used to the taste of crow. As a matter of fact, with just the right adult beverage ...



If you're going to carry a "small" cartridge, you have to have good ammo. The HoneyBadger, SIG and similar will do the job.



Depending on the gun, you might also have enough ammo onboard to use suppressive fire if needed. It could happen.

A.G. RUSSELL'S UNMATCHED CONTRIBUTION TO THE CUTLERY INDUSTRY

REQUIEM TO A TITAN

PAT COVERT

PHOTOS: ROB JONES/
THE IMAGESmith, LLC

Original Sting

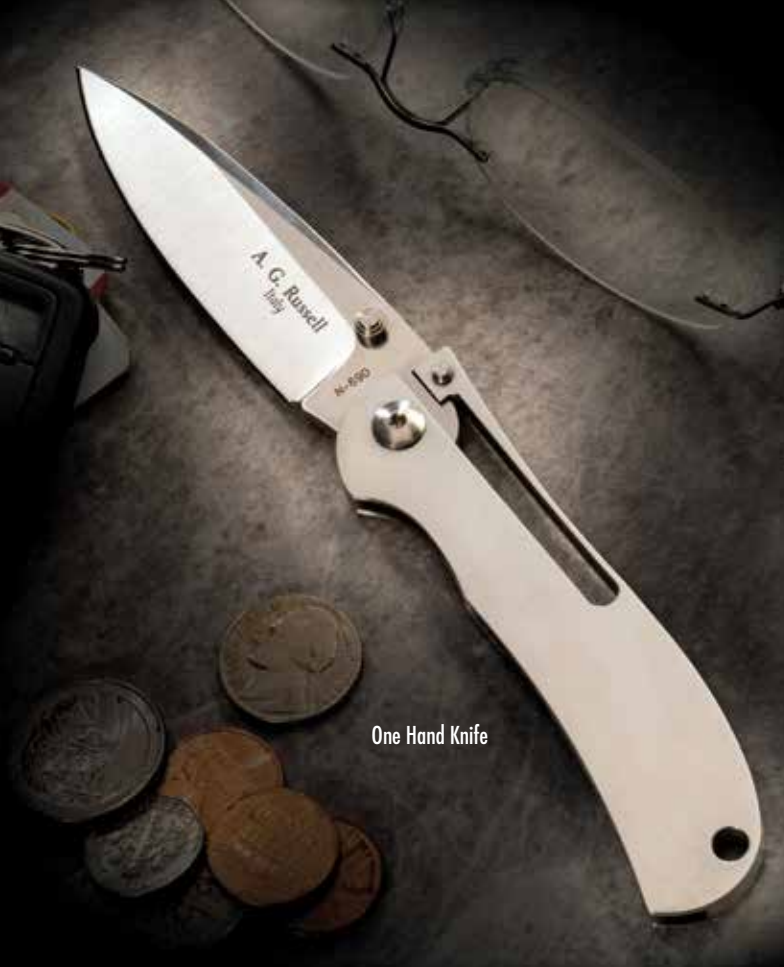
Sting 3

Wharndcliffe
Lockback India Stag

Sandbox Bowie



Simply stated, A.G. Russell was a giant in the cutlery industry whose impact will live forever. On October 12, 2018, Arkansas native A.G. passed away at the age of 85, leaving behind a lifetime of personal achievements unmatched in the history of modern American cutlery. Russell was best known for being an entrepreneur and a pioneer in mail order knife sales, but this is only a part of his story. A.G. was also a walking encyclopedia of knifemaking and manufacturing history. He also possessed an extraordinarily keen insight into knife design and many of his own creations can be found in the volumes of



One Hand Knife



Folding Gents Hunter

A.G. Russell Knives mail order catalogs and on the shelves of his namesake retail store in Rogers, Arkansas.

They say behind every great man stands a great woman — and in A.G.'s case this is certainly true. Goldie Russell, his wife of many years, has an incredible business mind and was able to grow the company by leaps and bounds while Russell concentrated his efforts on product. Together they took the company's catalogs to new heights, building a mail order empire unmatched in polish and class.

We recently had the opportunity to talk with both Goldie and Phil Gibbs, A.G. Russell Knives' chief engineer, who committed A.G.'s designs to CAD and oversaw their production. All of the knives we've featured in this tribute are designs created and produced by Russell.

The Early Times

We asked Goldie to tell us how A.G. got started in the knife business. "A.G. was born in Eudora, Arkansas, on August 27, 1933," Goldie tells *Handgunner*. "He grew up all over the country because his father served in the Army during World War II. He lived in the Houston area, in Fayetteville and Hot Springs, Arkansas, in New Jersey, in California — his father was Provost Marshal for the 6th Army there — and in Hof, Germany where his father was Provost Marshal for the U.S. controlled area.

"He became interested in knives at a very young age when his grandfather put him to forging a blade to keep him underfoot," Goldie continued. "That interest continued through his young life and his early career. He bought and gave away knives during his years in California and always carried pocketknives. When A.G. moved back to Arkansas in 1964, he started selling Arkansas sharpening stones through small ads in *American Rifleman* and *Guns and Ammo*, which gradually led to offering knives in those same ads. That was the beginning of his mail order company."

Nearly two decades later A.G. Russell Knives would shift gears into the powerhouse it is today. "A.G. and I met in 1982 when we were both recently divorced," Goldie shared. "We married in the summer of 1988 and I began to work with him full time in January 1989. We made a pretty good team. I had been a high school art teacher with a major in Art and a minor in English. That training has been very valuable in building catalogs and other marketing materials.

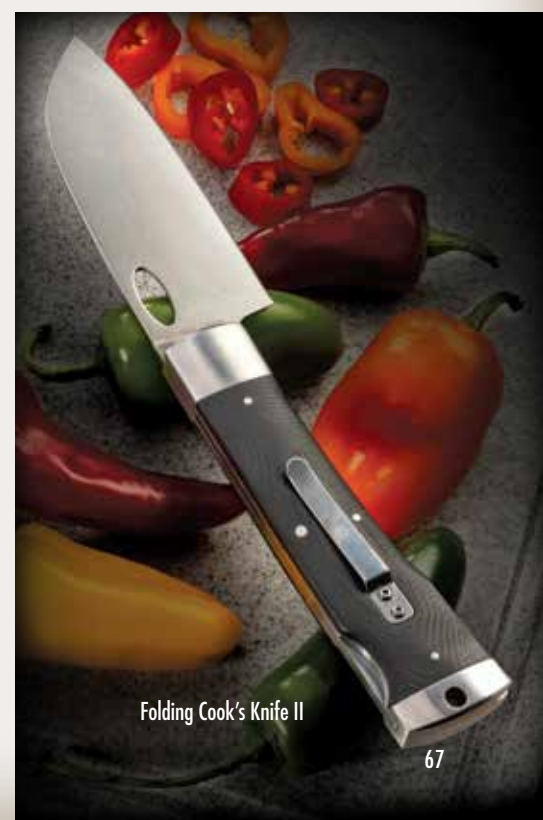
"A.G. was bold and creative in designing knives and in promoting knives, his own or those made by others, and also in promoting the cutlery community as a whole. He taught me to write the way he thought, how he wanted his company run, and how he wanted his customers to be treated.

He designed knives and worked with the manufacturers who made them. He spent much of his time promoting A.G. Russell Knives and knives in general."

Entrepreneur & Designer

A.G. Russell's exposure to the cutlery industry across the many decades

Continued on page 79



Folding Cook's Knife II

PISTOL ACCESSORIES

A CLOSE LOOK AT



3



6



10

PISTOL PERSONALIZATION MAKE 'EM YOURS

SUZI HUNTINGTON

Today we're deluged with tempting new gun designs sure to stretch anyone's fertile imagination. But this doesn't mean the need to gussie things up isn't a must-do too. Sure, factory offerings are more varied than ever, but bless them ... accessory makers are keeping up, teasing us with goodies to enhance, accelerate and, as my daughter used to say, "Prettify!" things. So get crackin' and send us some pics of your idea of a "perfect" look! Email us at editor@americanhandgunner.com, and don't dally — we'll share 'em on Facebook.

1 The Apex "Freedom" edition triggers not only fly the flag but enhance your S&W M&P while they do it. The flat-face, forward-set trigger kit reduces pre- and over-travel, and allows you to set your finger lower to increase leverage. Add in lowering pull weight, changing travel to match a 1911's trigger — and easy installation — this is an easy and important change-out for your M&P — \$184.95. www.apextactical.com

2 Birchwood Casey's "Gun Plumber" folding tool is chock full of can-do trap-pings. Hiding inside is a cleaning rod, range rod, 1911 bushing wrench, torx and hex blades, pin pusher and a threaded rod for jags and brushes. A "one-tool" toolbox for any shooter — \$19.99. www.birchwoodcasey.com



1



4

3 We used to use skateboard tape on grips in the old days, but Decal Grip is way ahead of us now. Their pre-cut kits fit most polymer pistols, offering an easy way to get a grippy feel going on your favorite roscoe. Clean the surface, peel off the panel and apply. Presto, you're done. Very easy and works great — around \$10. www.decalgrip.com

4 Cerakote isn't a do-it-yourself spray-on finish. You need training, the right equipment or, better yet, get a professional to apply it. It's a polymer-ceramic composite coating you can apply to metal, plastic, polymers and even wood! It enhances abrasion resistance, corrosion resistance, resists impacts and ramps up hardness. Durable? You can Cerakote an engine piston for crying out loud! And it comes in about any color or color combo you can imagine. www.cerakote.com

5 Ergo is famous for their innovative grips and accessories for all sorts of guns and is a go-to source for AR-style grips. Their Flat Top grips (shown) come in a host of cool colors too. Their new TDX-0 is a deluxe "zero angle" grip



(vertical) for ARs and AR pistols and changes the whole way they feel. From around \$20 and up depending on product. www.ergogrips.net

6 A holster is like a rifle sling — you gotta' have some way to carry your handgun when it's not, um ... in your hand. Galco's top-quality Speed Master 2.0 is a paddle/belt combo rig and just the ticket for CCW, range or training use. Made of premium steerhide with an adjustable tensioner, the belt slot can be adjusted for different widths and ride heights and fits up to a 1¾" width — \$86. www.galcoconleather.com

7 Galloway Precision sells a gazillion performance enhancing bits and accessories for virtually any common defensive pistol out today. Hubby Huntington recently installed this kit for his Ruger LCP II, including their Sigurd short stroke trigger, mag extension, steel guide rod and spring, Traction Grip Overlay and enhanced recoil spring (use your stock inner spring). He said their online video walking you through the installation makes it easy if you have some tool skills. He's smiling now and said the parts worked great — around \$70 or so for this batch. www.gallowayprecision.com

8 Hogue's "Handall" Beavertail Grip Sleeves slip right onto your GLOCKS (or other pistol models) really ramping up the game when it comes to holding onto things. There's a gentle palm swell and the unique construction helps to soften recoil too. It's covered in Hogue's classic "Cobblestone" texture to-boot. About \$10.95 to \$12.95 depending on the model. www.hogueinc.com

9 OT Defense is a small veteran-owned start-up offering kits so you can stipple your own gun. It's a fun, simple way to add some serious "grip" to your polymer pistol frame, customizing it at the same time. This is their "fancy" kit, coming with everything you would ever need, including practice panels. It's made in the USA and contains every single tip they make! I say, start big and end big! Share the cost with some buddies and everyone can give it a try — \$192.99 with a 30-watt burner. There are lower priced starter kits too if you don't want to share. www.otdefense.com

10 Rival Arms has essentially upped the game when it comes to after-market GLOCK parts. From slides and barrels to night sights, slide completion kits and more, all the parts are user-installable and I'd call them "best quality" for sure. Everything except



WWW.AMERICANHANDGUNNER.COM

the Tritium is made in the USA. Rival Arms helps you get the custom look and performance without the custom gunsmith costs. www.rival-arms.com

11 XS Sights' DXT2 Big Dot Night Sights expands on the "Big Dot" concept, introducing "Optic Yellow" and "Optic Orange" with Tritium inserts. These Big Dot sights use a patent-pending colored glow dot, causing the sight to glow before it's dark enough to see the Tritium center. A set of original Big Dots made my police quals a breeze in the olden days. These are direct replacements for your existing Big Dot sights if you want to upgrade — \$132. www.xssights.com

12 Brand new from Pachmayr are their Alume grips. Made of a composite of aluminum mesh encapsulated in a translucent epoxy resin. The result is a very cool sort of 3-D look and texture. Available in black, green, blue, brown and red (shown), the pattern has some serious "depth" when you see it in person. A real upgrade for your favorite 1911 — \$99.98. www.lymanproducts.com





WIN!

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HANDGUN OF THE MONTH



**KIMBER
EVO SP (CS)
PISTOL PACKAGE**

ENTRIES MUST BE RECEIVED BEFORE SEPTEMBER 30, 2019 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 2019, P.O. Box 501377, San Diego, CA, 92150-1377.



SCAN TO ENTER



PLUS



HACKETT SHOOTING GLASSES & BACKPACK



VZ GRIPS DAGGER



FMG writer Jeff "Tank" Hoover must have foreseen the *EVO SP (CS)* would land on our giveaway page because he recently wrote about it on *American Handgunner Exclusives* (www.americanhandgunner.com/handguns/kimber-evo-sp-cs). Tank called the striker-fired, aluminum-framed sub-compact 9mm custom shooter the "crown jewel" of Kimber's *EVO SP* line. The *EVO SP* is machined to the tightest tolerances and put through multiple hands-on human factors testing to ensure the best user experience. *EVO SP's* Custom Shop Special is finished in KimPro charcoal gray on the frame and black Ferritic Nitro Carburing (FNC) on the slide. The 3.16" barrel is deep-crowned and bushing-less; the aluminum 6- to 7-lb. trigger has a crisp reset. The pistol's stainless steel slide, gray/black G10 grips and front and back straps have Stiplex-inspired texture.

The *VZ Executive G10 Dagger* from VZ Grips is machined from a solid piece of G10 which is non-conductive and doesn't throw a metal signature. Add it to your EDC kit and take it anywhere you go. Comes with a leather sheath handmade by Gadsden County Leatherworks.

Hackett Equipment's *Little Bertha* is a 2-pistol range backpack in Coyote Tan with a "taticool" design. Made of 900D Polyester, *Little Bertha* holds everything you need and keeps them organized for a day at the range. The *Tactical Shooting Glasses* meanwhile protects your eyes with its Polycarbonate UV 400 lenses. They turn into goggles so you can use them for shooting, work, riding a motorcycle and even mowing the lawn.

Wouldn't you want to own the crown jewel and all the other goodies in this giveaway? You have to join though if you want to win. Go to www.americanhandgunner.com/giveaways. You can also mail a postcard. —Jazz Jimenez

EVO SP CUSTOM SHOP SPECIAL

MAKER: KIMBER MFG. INC., (888) 243-4522
CALIBER: 9MM, CAPACITY: 7+1, BARREL LENGTH: 3.16", OAL: 6.1"
WEIGHT (EMPTY): 18 OZ.
WWW.KIMBERAMERICA.COM
VALUE: \$1,047

VZ EXECUTIVE G10 DAGGER

MAKER: VZ GRIPS, (850) 422-1911
WWW.VZGRIPS.COM
VALUE: \$70

LITTLE BERTHA BACKPACK & TACTICAL SHOOTING GLASSES

MAKER: HACKETT EQUIPMENT, WWW.HACKETTEQUIPMENT.COM
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1600	RUNNING WATTS	1600
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1.2 GAL.	TANK SIZE	.95 GAL.
3	OUTLETS	3
YES	OVERLOAD PROTECTION	YES
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YES	LOW OIL ALERT	YES
YES	PARALLEL CAPABLE	YES
YES	POWER SAVER	YES



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PRICE **\$1,009**
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HONDA EU2000i

*HONDA EU2000i stated specs

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RESISTANT TARP



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61282/68049/62326/61253 shown

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CHARGER
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MODEL: SC1
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Apache

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Customer Rating
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WITH TRIPOD
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1000 LB. CAPACITY
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SPORTS CHAIR
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FLIP LIGHT
• Wireless, tool-free and
easy installation
Customer Rating
★★★★★



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• 21" L x 10-1/8" H
Customer Rating
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COMPARE TO WARN
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SAVE \$421
ITEM 64045

10630745

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GLOVES
Customer Rating
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COMPARE TO VALEO
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GUN RIGHTS

Alan Korwin



WE MIGHT SUPPORT BACKGROUND CHECKS IF ...

Part
4

Let's summarize the background-check problems once and for all, as the Democrats now control the House of Representatives. Their effort to ban guns, cleverly disguised as these innocent-sounding background-checks, will be exposed.

First, don't forget why they're on the front burner again. The House is dominated by anti-gun legislators who have now come out of their closets and passed two gun-denial bills back-to-back (H.R.8 and H.R.1112). Second, this is motivated by schoolchildren legitimately and desperately seeking to stop other children from mass-murdering them. But why a handful of schoolkids are becoming psychotic monsters isn't remotely addressed — or deterred — by background checks.

If these checks don't affect the serious problem, then why do them? Adults pulling the kids' strings have manipulated them into pushing for this long-time goal of the gun-ban adults. So, the country teeters on the brink of gun-owner registration and disarmament under false rubrics of stopping psychotic mass murderers.

Why?

Insiders understand the main purpose of background checks is to gather the names of gun owners, which it does quite well, thank you. Background checks ignore the problem of sociopathic children who want to murder their classmates. Mass murderers have never been stopped by checks; that's just the evidence. If the goal was really to prevent mass murder, we'd be doing something else.

Even the crime-fighting value for background checks is extremely low, especially compared to cost. If costs of the system were instead applied directly to crime-fighting, crime would drop.

The system falsely denies innocent people's constitutional rights constantly without effective due process. People turned down can't be convicted of anything. John Lott's research puts the figure at better than 95 percent. Convictions of criminals trying to buy guns are abysmal — in the two digits out of tens of thousands of denials and millions of checks. And learning if you're on the secret list is banned. Getting off if you're falsely denied a purchase is extremely difficult.

Private Options

It's impossible to enforce background checks on private transfers, the new step in Democrat strategy — and the very purpose of H.R.8. To fix the transfer "problem," total gun-owner registration must be introduced, as it's "common sense" and a logical next step even though it too cannot disarm criminals. The private-transfer ban of an "improved" background check system turns innocent acts of handing a gun to someone you know into a felony. Non-crimes

Continued on page 85

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AYOOB FILES

Continued from page 93

later tell Tanya Metaksa, "That one got him in the chest and the coroner said it was the one that ultimately killed him. At the time, it didn't even slow him down. He slugged me again and grabbed hold of me. All I could think about was 'Dear God, don't let me pass out,' and 'Don't let go of that gun.' I have never gripped anything so tightly in my life. As strong as he was, he couldn't get the gun out of my hand. We were fighting breast to breast, so the gun was between us."

Sammie fired yet again, hitting him in the abdomen. She told Tanya, "He continued to fight, if anything he fought harder, and that's when we fell back through the dining room doorway to the master bedroom. We were still breast to breast. He was slamming me into walls and tables, beating me in the head, doing pretty much what he wanted except getting the gun away, and I managed to get off one more shot. That one was at a down angle and ended up in his groin."

Sammie fell, and the hulking attacker landed on top of her and began to strangle her. She said, "He weighed almost 200 lbs. and I was pinned down. There was just nowhere to go and I thought it was over for me. He's choking me, I can feel I'm about to lose it, I don't know what to do, and I think I'm going to die. I'm not very religious, but in my mind I started to pray. I asked God to forgive me; I even asked him to forgive the son of a bitch who was killing me, and I prepared to die."

And she adds, "At that very moment, he puked blood all over me and died."

James Wayne Horne died at 36, with a record for prior burglaries, and a toxicology screen with so many drugs it raised the eyebrows of even seasoned cops who investigated this justified homicide. Sammie Foust survived, albeit with permanently impaired vision, some permanent throat injury, and severe dental damage from the beating. She would later tell Metaksa, "I am very, very regretful that someone had to die, but I'm equally glad it wasn't me. That was the choice I had to make. I made it and I chose to live."

Armed Robbery

Charmaine Klaus worked in a convenience store in Michigan, where company policy was employees could not be armed. Tanya Metaksa noted there had been a series of armed robberies of such establishments in the area and, "The thieves would rob the stores, then take the clerks out in the woods, where they tortured and killed them. The

store's supervisor had told the managers and clerks not to carry guns. If a robbery was attempted, they were to give up the money. If they wanted to take you out of the store, simply refuse to go ... (Charmaine) told her husband about the new rules and he got angry. Neither of them liked the odds of getting caught unarmed by a crew like that. After some discussion between them, they decided she would carry and simply not tell anyone about it." Mrs. Klaus's gun of choice was a discreet little Smith & Wesson .38 Special.

At 10:30 PM on the night in question, at end of shift, Charmaine was in the back room finishing accounting when clerk Darlene Ramsey, 19, rushed in to tell her a masked man with a gun was entering the store.

He came in shooting.

As Ms. Ramsey tried to close the back room door, the gunman fired through it and then burst in, and instantly opened up on the young clerk. She fell, shot in the chest and the abdomen. But by now, Charmaine Klaus had her revolver in her hand. She would later tell Tanya Metaksa, "I shot him. Unfortunately, the bullet hit a tooth and broke up. Even though it lodged in his throat and he was bleeding very badly, he continued the assault. I had a Smith .38 revolver; he had a Colt semi-automatic Super .38. He just kept shooting, but he was somewhat disoriented because of the shock of being hit, and missed me. Bullets whizzed by my head and I started to crawl under the desk. He was in the hall (by then), firing at me through the door. And then he decides to come back into the room and I'm under the desk, blocked from doing anything. He grabs Darlene and shoots her point blank in the head. Then with his last bullet he shot me."

Charmaine Klaus continued, "I could see he had the gun up by my head and at the last moment I moved my head and put up my hand. His bullet went through my hand and into my jaw. Now his gun was empty so he left, just running out of the store."

Charmaine survived. Darlene Ramsey did not. Her murderer, Albert Joseph Hartford, Jr. survived and was captured, identified thanks to Charmaine's bullet and his blood she spilled on the floor, and was convicted and sentenced to life in prison. Charmaine told Tanya, "I'll spend the rest of my life working to see we don't lose our right to self-defense."

Stalker And Abuser

When the man Dottie Collins fell in love with put her through an escalating pattern of abuse that turned into physical beating, she dumped him. He retaliated by ramming her car with his. She called the police, who arrested and

jailed him, and she went to the magistrate and swore out a restraining order.

She also acquired a pistol.

She told Metaksa, "I bought the gun, a small .25 caliber semiautomatic, after he ran me off the road. The day after I bought it, I had my son buy a box of shells and load it. I never shot the gun, in fact I'd never shot a pistol before. I know some people raise hell about small guns, 'Saturday Night Specials' or some such. All I can say is on a particular Friday night a 'Saturday Night Special' saved my life."

On that Friday night, she had just gotten into her car and put it in "drive" when the abuser appeared, leaning over the hood of the vehicle and shouting, "You're dead!" He fired, and the bullet grazed her right temple. Stunned but still conscious, she fell sideways onto the front seat. The assailant came around, smashed a side window, and entered. Said Dottie Collins later, "He got in the car and shot me twice more. One bullet went in above the knee and came out below it. It turned out to be a fairly clean wound. My leg gives me some trouble, but the bullet didn't hit any bones or anything. The other one caught me in the left forearm, shattering the bones. Chances are I'll never regain full use of it. I've already had surgery and there is more to come to rebuild the bone."

She had fallen across her pocketbook, where she kept her pistol. She was able to retrieve her .25, point it from her awkward position, and fire til it was empty. "I had no idea if I hit him or not," she told Metaksa later. "I couldn't see anything at the time, but I could feel the car go over the embankment and drop about 30 feet. The last clear thought in my mind was when Roger got out of the car. He screamed at the top of his lungs, 'I hope you're dead, I hope I've killed you!' From then on it's a blank until I woke up in the hospital."

She awoke to at least some good news. Her would-be murderer was in custody, and being treated for the bullet wounds she had put in his hand and jaw, causing him to flee the scene. At the time *Safe, Not Sorry* went to press he had not yet been adjudicated, so Tanya did not include his last name.

Multiple Home Invaders

On a quiet Sunday morning, Brenda Hibbitts was alone at home talking with a friend on the phone when she heard her front door come crashing in. Tanya records her saying, "I had my purse sitting by the couch where I was sitting and I just grabbed my gun out of it ... I stood up and looked down the hall and there were three people standing there. One was a great big ol' guy, about six

one or six two and two-forty, muscular, looked like a boxer. He was in front and holding a hammer. Two smaller people were behind him ..."

Her S&W Model 3913 Lady Smith 9mm was already leveled on them. Mrs. Hibbitts continued, "I looked at them and I said, 'Get out of my house or I'll kill you.' He just looked at me, that was when I noticed he had a hammer in his hand. He raised the hammer and I took a step back. Then he took a step forward and I fired a shot. It was the first time I ever fired that gun. I thought I'd missed him because he had no change in expression at all. The three of them ran into the bedroom next to the hall."

In the tense moments that followed, Mrs. Hibbitts had a dialogue with the hulking leader of the home invaders. It culminated with his plaintive, "I'll leave if you just won't shoot me again."

She allowed the trio to flee. Police soon caught up with them; they had dumped their wounded leader at a local hospital. All turned out to be wanted for other armed robberies. At the time *Safe, Not Sorry* came out, they were still awaiting trial. Mrs. Hibbitts was unharmed. She would later tell Tanya Metaksa, "I was raised around guns. I don't shoot like my husband and son do, but I know what I'm doing with a gun.

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Since this happened I've started practicing with a pistol and learning how to shoot a rifle and a shotgun. I'll always have a gun and I'll always keep this one. In fact, I just might have it bronzed."

Disarmed By Law

In 1991, the state of Texas had no provision at law for private citizens to carry guns in public. Newly minted chiropractor Dr. Suzanna Gratia didn't want to risk losing her professional license over a gun charge, so she took her S&W .38 Special Airweight out of her purse and kept it, legally, in her vehicle. That's where it was, in a parking lot a hundred yards away, when she had lunch with her parents in a Luby's Cafeteria in Killeen. Mad dog killer George Hennard drove his truck through the windowed front wall into the restaurant and then emerged, armed with two pistols and shooting everyone he could see. He murdered Suzanna's father when he attempted to disarm him, and as Suzanna's mom cradled her dying husband, the bastard executed her, too.

Hennard murdered 24 victims and wounded 19 more before police arrived. Wounded by their gunfire, he blew his own brains out. Suzanna had been as close as 15 feet to him and, a good and experienced *pistolera*, could have easily shot him down — but when she reached reflexively to her purse, her gun was in the car, leaving her helpless to stop the massacre and prevent her parents' death.

Suzanna Gratia went on to become a wife and mother, and one of the strongest voices ever for the responsible armed citizen movement. Her testimony helped Texas get shall-issue concealed carry, and today Dr. Suzanna Gratia-Hupp is still an influential champion of gun owners' civil rights. I was present when she gave a speech at a SHOT Show in Texas years ago. In the front row were several reporters from the mainstream media, many of them snickering and sneering before she spoke. But by the time she was done, some of them were wiping away tears, and not a one of them had anything negative to say in their news reports of her talk.

Lessons

Tanya Metaksa made the first lesson abundantly clear. As Mark Moritz famously said, "The first rule of gun-fighting is, Have A Gun." Listed here in the order in which Ms. Metaksa presented them, the four armed women had a much better outcome than the one disarmed by what were then the laws of her state.

Have your gun where you can get to it in time. The only one of the four armed defenders here to emerge unscathed was Brenda Hibbits, the only

one to get her gun in her hand before the actual fight started. This is probably not a coincidence.

As Robert Ruark put it so well, “use enough gun.” We look at how much injury Sammie Foust sustained while waiting for the wounds inflicted with her tiny .25 auto to take effect, and at the fact Dottie Collins’ assailant was still capable of vigorous, conscious, purposeful physical activity after she shot him in the face with *her* .25. It’s easy to say, “Get a bigger gun!” There’s validity in this, but it doesn’t go far enough. Charmaine Klaus’ attacker was still able to kill after she shot him in the face with a .38 Special, and Brenda Hibbits’ assailant was a “psychological stop” who remained up and running with a 9mm hollow point in his chest. On the good people’s side, Charmaine Kraus was shot in the jaw with a powerful .38 Super but was able to stand, move about, telephone her husband, calm customers verbally, and talk to police when they arrived, all *after* sustaining the wound.

Experts agree shot placement is key. Not “chest” or “head,” but heart or brain. It takes skill, born of training and practice, to achieve that level of hit potential. Yes, and some luck, but luck seems to favor the trained and practiced. The chest is a big place. Old West outlaws like Jesse James and John Wesley Hardin took pistol bullets in the chest and rode away to heal on their own without medical attention. There’s a lot of “head” that doesn’t contain central nervous system, and the skull and maxillo-facial structure have lots of hard, angled bones comprising a natural protective helmet, as three of the above-cited women discovered. Read Dr. Jim Williams’ book *Tactical Anatomy*, available at tacticalanatomy.com.

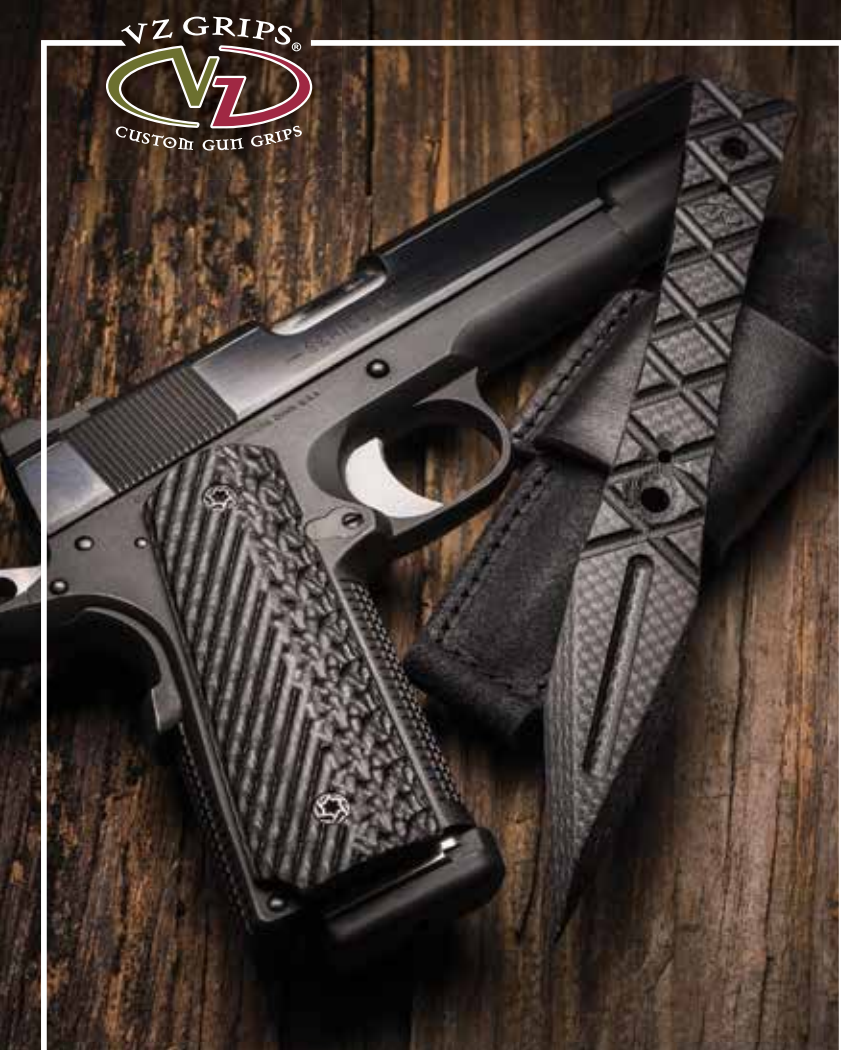
As important as shooting skill is, we can’t ignore the fact three of the four who successfully shot their assailants did it with *guns they had never fired before*. With the lack of prior commitment, it’s unlikely any of them would have taken mandatory training, and a strict training requirement as urged by some anti-gunners would have left them unarmed, helpless and probably dead.

Coming back to training, though, do you doubt if Dottie, horizontal in the front seat, and Charmaine caught under a desk, had been trained and experienced in shooting from awkward positions, they might have been able to fire from there with immediate effect?

Above all, they had the courage to fight back, and they prevailed. We salute these strong women, and we tip the *American Handgunner* hat especially to Tanya Metaksa for bringing their stories to us all. Their experiences were too valuable and too instructive for us not to share with you.







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TAFFIN TESTS

Continued from page 32

43 rounds. The 5" barrel is pinned in place and operation is delayed blow-back. The skeletonized trigger, adjustable for overtravel, matches up with a skeletonized hammer, with the trigger pull advertised at 4 to 6 lbs. Mine came in a little heavier at 7 lbs. and deserves a trigger job.

Sights are excellent, consisting of a red fiber-optic front sight mounted in a dovetail and a dovetail mounted rear sight with no sharp edges. At an unloaded weight of just over 35 oz. this .22 has the look of a .45 ACP 1911 as well as the heft and feel. Not only do 1911 grip panels fit, 1911 holsters also work just fine.

Accurate And Reliable

Rock Island Armory recommends a break-in period of 500 rounds, however this .22 Magnum performed flawlessly from the very first round. A full dozen different examples of .22 WRM ammunition were tried with 100 percent perfect results as to feeding and extraction, while combined with great accuracy, to boot. The excellent sights certainly have something to do with the latter as the red front sight shows up beautifully. The largest group for five shots at 20 yards was well under 2", with fully half of the ammunition tested coming in at 1" or less!

The most accurate ammunition proved to be CCI's Maxi-Mag HP +V with five shots in 5/8" at a muzzle velocity of 1,555 fps. Other notable examples include Armscor 40 JHP, 1 1/8" and 1,280 fps; CCI Maxi-Mag, 1" and 1,300 fps; Federal 30 TNT HP, 7/8", 1,590 fps; Fiocchi 40 JHP, 1", 1,450 fps; and Winchester's JHP at 1,240 fps and a 1" group. The fastest round was CCI's Maxi-Mag +V at just under 1,700 fps, with five shots into 1 3/8".

This pistol is noisy, however felt recoil is virtually nil. With an MSRP of under \$600 quality and performance make it an excellent choice as a small game/varmint pistol, and with the lowpoint ammunition available today, also adequate for concealed carry and self-defense. When we travel off the beaten path we don't always need the most powerful handgun available. The .22 Magnum will certainly handle anything I would be likely to run into in sagebrush, foothills, forest and mountains in my area. This small caliber, big performance pistol certainly serves well as a Trail Gun and also is a good candidate for the coveted title of Perfect Packin' Pistol.

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A.G. RUSSELL

Continued from page 67

he worked in it gave him keen insight into every facet of the business. There is literally no phase of the cutlery world he didn't touch in some form or fashion. "A.G.'s knowledge of the planet's knife industry was, I believe, unparalleled," stated Goldie. "His understanding of the techniques and methods of manufacturing in the major cutlery regions of the world — from the northeastern U.S. to Solingen, Germany to Sheffield, England and Seki City, Japan — allowed him to choose the perfect project for each factory that produced knives for him. He would then push them to expand their capabilities and to adopt some foreign techniques."

Arising out of this immense experience came his incredible knowledge of knife design. Russell knew what looked good and what didn't, what worked and what didn't — then he took the best of the good and added his own touches. Phil Gibbs explained, "His grasp of traditional knife patterns and blade shapes was astonishing. We studied literally hundreds of them together by importing a sample into CAD. Each time he would then design

his own version. Sometimes he would blend two or three antique patterns to produce a totally new one!

"A.G. embraced a 'What if?' approach to design," Phil continued. "He explored how to make traditional knives more tactical, as well as how to make tactical knives more traditional. A.G. was committed to constant improvement. Sometimes we would review a design he had completed several years before and completely redesign it."

Gibbs added, "He was also passionate to increase the quality of his knives — from using better materials to even instructing the factory to polish the inside of his knives before assembly. It was this constant drive to do better that kept A.G. Russell spinning like the well-tuned top it is today."

The Russell Legacy

We asked Goldie to give us some final thoughts on her late husband and where A.G. Russell Knives goes from here. "The things I admired most about A.G. were his honesty and his ethics. He had strong opinions and he stood for what he believed — even when it might have been more financially advantageous to have not. He believed people deserved to be treated fairly. When a situation arose with a customer, he would err on the side of the customer.

From the beginning in the late 1960s and early 1970s, he provided a strong influence in setting the tone for what became the knife industry."

Russell had many accomplishments over the years, too many to name here, but none more important than the fact he is the guy who introduced the public to custom knifemakers — both through his mail order empire and conceiving and helping found The Knifemakers' Guild, the preeminent organization of custom knife artisans.

A.G. Russell Knives will carry on under the skilled guidance of Goldie and Phil — and A.G. left a lot behind for the company to carry on his tradition. "Over the past several years A.G. worked tirelessly to design and develop new knives, building a library of knife designs which he intended for us to produce. A.G. Russell Knives will continue with those plans. Members of our team have been trained well by A.G.," Goldie explained, "and the company will continue in the direction he has laid out for us."

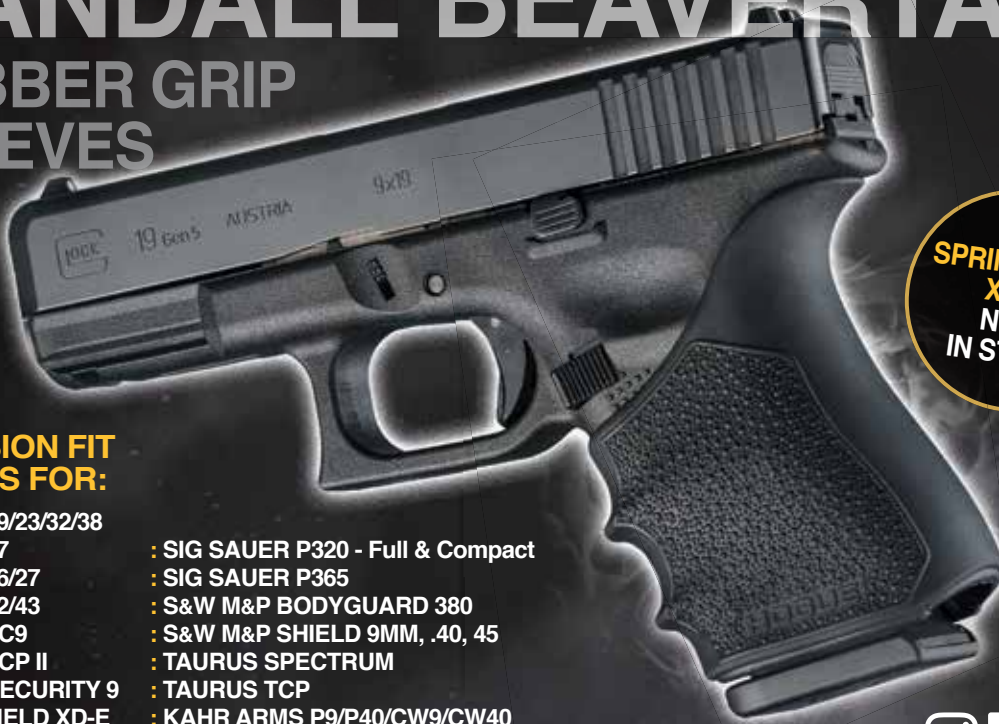
A.G. Russell will be truly missed in the cutlery industry, but it's heartening to know his unparalleled legacy will carry on for many years to come.



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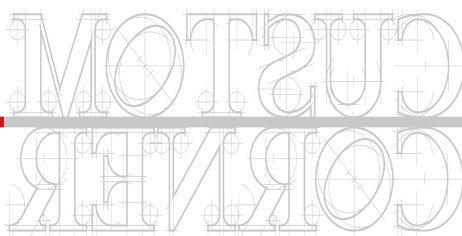
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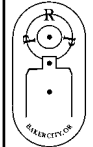


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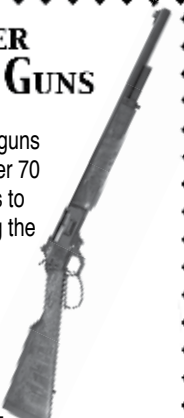
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GEMINI CUSTOMS

Continued from page 53

adjustable sights and Tritium front (with custom machining done), polishes the cylinder, soft glass beads and does a hard chrome finish (Cobrachrome by Tripp Research). The barrel length is 3" and is a nice balance between concealability and shooting comfort.

Marc then custom crafts grips (in this case, Golden Desert Ironwood) in-house, fitting and bedding them to the gun. No other custom gunsmith makes this sort of high quality grip in-house.

But keep in mind, this is the work done on *this* particular revolver and you could have something different on yours. Your imagination and Marc's skills set both the tone and the limits.

SP101

The elegant "little" SP101 is, like the .44 Special, a "Pro Grade" custom gun from Marc's shop. In addition to many of the features listed for the .44, the SP101 has a fixed rear Novak and custom machined front sight (both with Tritium inserts), polished cylinder face (makes cleaning easier and looks snappy) and a moon clip conversion.

Those eye-popping grips are also Desert Ironwood done by Marc. You really do need to feel the grips to appreciate them. They are simply a perfect fit to the gun, with a seamless feel to the joints, and the "reverse" taper sits effortlessly in the hand.

Full power .357 loads are a piece of cake to shoot due to the smooth action and skillfully crafted grips. The barrel on the SP101 is 2.25" and contributes to the satisfying feel in your shooting hand.

GP100

Cast your eyes on the GP100 with flutes and unpolished cylinder with fixed sights. To call it a "basic" package is to understate things here. Most of the mentioned mods are done on this gun, along with the Novak fixed rear and the custom machined front — both are Tritium, of course. The grips are yet another example of Marc's in-shop work and showcase fancy Cocobolo, fitted and bedded to this particular gun.

The GP has been modified to use moon clips, but like the other .357/.38's here, can be fired just fine without clips too. Note the polished "bits" here and there. I should note, trigger pulls on all the guns averaged about 2.5-2.7 lbs. single action. Marc advertises about 10-11 lbs. DA, but according to my Wheeler electronic gauge these were more in the 8- to 9-lb. range and exceptionally smooth. It takes talent to get a DA pull down to this weight range and still be reliable.

When I first tried the DA triggers I guessed in that lighter range so was surprised to see the higher number in Marc's paperwork. I think this may be a case of promise one thing but deliver more than you promise! For reference, a stock GP100 I had showed 11.5 lbs. of sorta' gritty DA and 4.75 lbs. SA with plenty of creep.

Gold Standard

The "gold" gun is a stand-out. Also a GP100, Marc calls this a "Master-grade" gun, complete with 500-grit polish prior to the Cobrachrome finish — and it shows. Marc applies the real gold highlights in-shop and while not something I usually go for, I confess this gun really grew on all of us here at *Handgunner*, including Rob Jones, our ace photographer. The gold is comparable to what Elmer Keith said about ivory grips, "Like a bit of lipstick on a pretty gal." Indeed.

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As is the case with the other guns, the Gold Model (my name) has virtually all of the custom features Marc offers. Note the custom ejector serrations at the tip of the ejector rod, and Bowen adjustable rear and custom machined gold dot front. You can draw the line wherever you like on your own project, and the line can go on and on and on.

In the grip department, Marc crafted a superb Macassar Ebony symphony here, fitted and bedded to this particular gun, then applied a hand-rubbed oil finish. You literally can't feel the seam where the grips join at the front and back. Cut for moon clips, I found shooting the brawny Ruger with full power .357 loads to be an experience in trepidation as your finger presses the trigger — followed by a grin and a need to do it again. And again, and again.

Options

Lest you run out of ideas, Marc also offers jewelry (triggers and hammers, for instance), slab-sided barrel work, de-horning, Weigand sights, bluing, bobbed hammers, action work and, being a custom shop, likely other things you might think up. You just need to ask.

Let's talk grips for a moment. In 2009 Marc approached Jim Badger of Badger Custom Grips — who had been supplying Marc with grips — to

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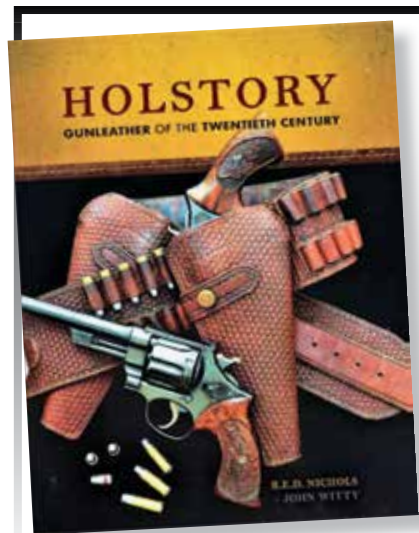


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make custom exotic wood grips for Marc's build. Jim begged off due to allergies, but sold Marc and his shop-mate wife, Karen, an old 1950's Vintage, French Script machine tool Jim had used back in the beginnings of his own gripmaking business. Since then, Marc and Karen learned how to do the grips themselves and now, 10 years later, have no peers in making this sort of thing. Simply mind-blowing work at every level!

The hard chrome Marc uses happens because of his 20-year friendship with Virgil Tripp of Tripp Research. Justly famous for his superior 1911 magazines, Virgil is also a bit of a mad scientist when it comes to the hard chrome process. While not offering it to the general public, Virgil does do it for Marc and his "best quality" custom guns. So, the moral is if you want this impressive finish, there's only one way to get it — Gemini Customs!

Shooting Impressions

Yeah, I shot 'em. I even apologized to Marc for how much I shot 'em. I'm thinking, when the dust settled, I had about 200 rounds through the .44 Special, and another 275 or so spread between the three .357's. I simply couldn't help myself, they were so smooth. I had forgotten how the muscular Rugers tame .357 recoil, and turn any .38 Special load into a smile-a-shot experience.

I honestly hate to use this word, but "astounding" is the only way to describe the DA actions on all of the guns. Normally Ruger DA revolvers are a bit — let's just say it here — lumpy, when you press the trigger in DA mode. "Take-up, creep, tug, pull, grind a tiny bit, clunk, tick then bang."

With Marc's guns, it's one long smooth journey with very tiny — but smooth — reminders of the steps. Other than trying the SA on each with the trigger pull gauge, I did all the shooting DA. When you get yours, I promise you'll want to walk up to strangers at the local range and say, "Hey, you really do need to try this DA trigger pull. No, really. Honest. Try it." Then you'll stand, arms folded, grinning in anticipation.

Some Specifics

I shot a bunch of factory loads, from Black Hills, Federal, Buffalo Bore, SIG, Winchester and a couple of others. Everything ran fine. The .44 Black Hills HoneyBadger (125-gr. solid copper fluted) ran 1,055 fps from that 3" barrel, their Cowboy Load (a 210 lead) did 680 fps and the Buffalo Bore "Manstopper" (a 200-gr. hard cast full wadcutter) clocked at 980 fps.

Groups at 25 yards hovered in the 1.5" to 2" range — with a memorable solid 1" once with five rounds of BH

cowboy ammo! The bold sights and great triggers really helped. Like any big bore revolver, this gun shot like hells-a-fire, only better. None of the loads were the least bit troublesome to shoot and even the hot HoneyBadger and Buffalo Bore were easy-peasy on the hands.

The two GP100 models conducted themselves as gentlemen. And like any gentleman were courteous, placing all their rounds in 2" or so at the same 25 yards. We chased 1.75" a time or three and with better eyes I'm thinking we could have done better. The ammo was a line-up from the same makers so we were shooting good quality loads, in top quality guns — and it showed.

The svelte SP101 could actually be a daily carry holster gun. If your pockets are big enough, it can also live in a pocket holster. Being heavier and a bit bigger than a J-Frame does lend a hand in shootability. It "feels" like a bigger revolver than it is, translating agreeably into handling recoil more easily and offering more reliable gun-handling. A bit of heft makes it easier to hold onto.

Firing some "Fire and Brimstone" .357 loads (even a 180 hunting load) was actually fun — once I doubled up on soft plugs and muffs. Velocities in the rarified air of 1,200 fps and a bit higher were stumbled upon, but the V8 Hybra-Ports do their work and I was impressed with how they modified muzzle flip and recoil impulse in general. But, they can be a bit flamboyant, if you get my drift.

Do You Need One?

Only you can know that, eh? But I've often told people to sell some of their "commodity" guns — how many polymer guns do you *really* need? — and buy one really "good" fun gun. Pull out the stops and get something you never thought you'd have. And make sure you engage the right person to help you with your dream, whatever it might be.

"These projects are more than just a service," Marc told me. "It's personal in nature when you build for a client. The guns I sent you are the guns I'd build for my parents if they were still alive."

That should tell you something about Marc — and something  about these guns.

For more info: Gemini Customs, www.geminicustoms.com, Ph: (502) 226-1230; BMT Equipped Inc. (moonclip), www.bmtequipped.com; Del Fatti Leather (holster), www.delfatti.com, Ph: (715) 267-6420

Go to www.americanhandgunner.com to visit with Roy as he shoots these guns on his back porch and talks about them with you.

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EVO-KC9

Continued from page 47

fluted for weight reduction and stylish good looks. The highly polished, recessed target crown is flush with the front face of the slide. A flat-wire recoil spring system is used, providing a life span up to 10 times longer than conventional springs. Ed Brown recommends changing it between every 30,000–40,000 rounds.

The new stainless steel slide is thinned substantially and the top 1/3 of it is machined in a stylish faceted, custom cut top. Angled rakish cuts fore and aft are milled into the slide providing functional serrations for slide manipulation — and good looks.

The Commander-style hammer and trigger are skeletonized for weight reduction, speed and again, nifty good looks. The grips are phenolic resin and have a spider web-like labyrinth pattern, which has positive traction for your grip, especially combined with the snakeskin-style finish on the grip front strap and spring housing.

Fair warning, here. Once your fingers wrap themselves around these grips, along with the snakeskin frame, your hand won't want to let go of it. This pistol simply exudes quality.

Shooting The KC9

The pistol digested all ammo I fed to it, including powder-coated cast bullet handloads I made, hollow points, ball and any other ammo I could dig up.

My cast bullets were radiused flat-nose in design and powder coated. They were sized 0.358" and loaded over 4.5 grains of Winchester 231 and sparked with Winchester small pistol primers. Loaded this way, it has consistently been a top performer in most 9mm pistols and revolvers in which I've shot them.

Factory loads consisted of Black Hills ammo, both HP configuration and having weights of 115 and 124 grain. Lastly, some SIG SAUER 124-gr. V-crown JHP rounded out the selection. Groups with the pistol averaged 1" to 1.5" for five shots at 50 feet.

Where It Counts

If you've always wanted an Ed Brown Products 1911 but thought they were out of your price range, then definitely give the EVO-KC9 a look. Ed Brown has been producing top-quality 1911's for more than 30 years, and the Brown family personally supervises all aspects and phases of production for their guns. These are made right. And now, you can get one for an MSRP of \$1,895. Sounds good, right?



For more info: www.edbrown.com, Ph: (573) 565-3261

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GUN RIGHTS

Continued from page 73

become crimes, increasing the number of people who become gunless by law.

The registration system must list every gun everyone has, so government agents can decide if you still have everything you had — no more, no less. Deviation is proof you're in violation, subjecting you to arrest and confiscation of every gun you own.

Inevitable innocent inventory errors will be treated as presumption of guilt with proof of innocence placed on your shoulders, at your expense, a corruption of and the exact opposite of our justice system. A one percent error rate equals 3,500,000 new crimes annually.

Non-crimes become crimes, increasing the number of people who become gunless by law.

Every gang member, mental case, would-be murderer and also a hundred million decent Americans who are already armed are ignored by background checks, making it superfluous. Think about that. This fuss is about new psychos and murderers who get their first gun — at retail. Didn't the media or antis think this through? Real crime-fighting dollars are blocked by Democrats who want more money for this charade. This is the real problem.

Armed-criminal research shows background checks do nothing. Villains use straw buyers with no criminal record. Or, they smuggle guns as easily as fentanyl, coke, pot, etc. Or, they just steal them. Why doesn't the "news" explain this?

The Solution

Background checks can be conducted without gathering everyone's name, but politicians and bureaucrats refuse this, because it's really the names they want — they know the checks accomplish little else. The *desperados* list can be securely circulated like wanted posters to gun dealers, to check locally at point-of-purchase, for a fraction of the cost. Instead, it's the usual suspects: leftist/socialist/statists, useful idiots, uninformed media, misinformed schoolkids, hoplophobes, apparatchiks and more who want government surveillance expanded — and you — disarmed. 

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

DEFY DARKNESS.



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TAURUS .22

Continued from page 59

reliability and/or accuracy.

I started off shooting CCI's 45-gr. Suppressor, subsonic hollow point ammo. My shots were grouped, but slightly high when compared to the point of aim. Just a couple of clicks on the sight adjustment screw to lower the rear sight took care of the issue. From then on, regardless of the ammo being used, with or without the suppressor, the gun shot to point of aim. Shot groupings were indicative of a competition-ready pistol. I didn't have a rest, so my not-so-steady hands figured into the results. The more I shot the TX22, the more I enjoyed it. I look forward to a day of popping soda cans and spinning target plates when I can get a day in the country.

A Teacher's Gun

It's funny how an instructor's mind starts fathoming possibilities when introduced to a new gun offering some unique features. I was thinking about some of my former students who struggled with accuracy, and how I might get them shooting this gun until they got the basics down, then transitioning them back to their 9mm carry gun. We can start off with quiet ammo and eliminate flinching. When that's no longer an issue, a load of CCI Mini Mag will introduce a pop almost as loud as a 9mm, but with no recoil. Once we've licked any kind of flinching, those big white dots on the sights can help the shooters struggling with sight picture and sight alignment to put those to rest as well. Trigger pull problems? This is one of the best triggers I've found to work on eliminating any tendency to jerk, push or pull the trigger during trigger operation.

I could envision setting up a firing line of five or six students who have never fired a handgun, using TX22's to introduce them to the basics of pistol operation. Whatever they would learn using this gun would easily transfer to defensive caliber handguns as they progress through their training. Good move, Taurus.

As for competition, it will be interesting to see how the Taurus shooters do when coming up against shooters who are using custom competition race guns. If this happens as Taurus predicts, it will make the TX22 even more in demand. I predict it's going to make its way into our lives as one of the top guns to own if you're a fan of fun .22's — or are serious about learning or teaching. Taurus' reasonable pricing strategy makes it even more likely to be a fan favorite. 

For more info: www.taurususa.com, Ph: (800) 624-1115

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TIPS & TRICKS

YOU DIDN'T KNOW

Continued from page 63

The current standard for machine or hand stitching by the majority of custom leather guys runs seven to eight stitches per inch depending on the item. The old U.S. Army standard was seven, eight or 10 stitches per inch, again depending on the item.

The Queen's Royal Standard is 13 stitches per inch — hand-stitched, by god! I remember standing absolutely slack-jawed staring at the beautiful fine stitching on Queen Victoria's personal side saddle at an exhibit once. It still makes my heart flutter just thinking about it! Yeah, I don't have much of a life.

No Lining Please

Most old holsters were stitched, but not lined. This was about price, yes, but mostly because linings couldn't be installed easily or permanently until readily available contact cements became commonplace. So how did craftsmen hold leather pieces together for stitching back before all the sticky stuff? Ordinary shoe tacks. Do the words "cobbed together" ring any bells?

Original Synthetics

Technology also marched forward in other places. Remember Gutta Percha grips? Those were made from a pre-historic rubber of sorts. It was turned into everything from hot water bottles and buttons to ponchos and holsters. The holsters were tried experimentally during the Civil War and were a dismal failure. But grips worked just fine. So whatever happened to Gutta Percha? Ever get a root canal? Hmm, am I saying your dentist still uses Gutta Percha? Yup.

Synthetics were also being tinkered with by the Germans. An ersatz leather called Prestoff, made of laminated paper, gained its widest use through WWII in everything from holsters and belts to horse tack. The unfortunate part is the fact it would delaminate if it got soggy or if repeatedly flexed. Consequently, the Wehrmacht issued a lot of real leather to their line troops and the second-line folks got the pressed paper stuff.

This gear also took on a certain obvious smell with "mileage." Really good U.S. sergeants and lieutenants taught their men to sniff out Germans by this particular odor — literally saving the lives of their troops with their noses. Kinda makes you wonder if the Germans trained their guys to sniff out that wet-dog smell well-used American web gear made? "Fritz! Shhhhhhh! — sniff, sniff — *Vebbing! Das sind Amerikaner!*"

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Photo: Joe Davies

GALCO KODIAK HUNTER

Okay, so let's say you've invested \$800 bucks or more in a fancy hunting revolver. Maybe put \$500 worth of scope on it too. Then spent another \$200 on hunting ammo to zero it and to practice with. You've also upgraded your hunting gear, took time off from work, and maybe even paid some guide/outfitter fees — all to go on "That Dream Hunt" you've been putting off for years. In all honesty now, why on earth would you scrimp on a good holster to carry the core piece of gear assuring you of a successful hunt?

But people do it all the time. I see \$2,000 worth of carefully selected and curated handgun riding in \$25 worth of crappy nylon all the time. Please....

This particular Galco was actually bought by my friend, Joe Davies, for a hunt just like the one we're talking about. He had a great S&W hunting revolver, a top quality scope and hunted long and hard in the snow with his gear. And Joe didn't scrimp on a good holster. "It made toting the brawny Smith easy and comfortable," he told me. He had spent time on my place here zeroing the gun, and I handled the holster/gun set-up while he was visiting. I've used the model before, but I was once-again reminded of the sheer "no-holds-barred" quality and craftsmanship Galco puts into it. It smells like leather should, too.

The Kodiak — at around \$230 — is about 1/4 the cost of Joe's revolver. And ladies and gentlemen, that's about what you should spend on a good holster for your handgun. Spend

\$500 on a 9mm auto? Good, now spend \$100 or \$150 on a good holster. I know it hurts. So does losing your gun during a hunt — or fumbling a draw when you need your gun most.

I especially like the Kodiak design because it allows two suspension methods.

The holster can either "hang" off your shoulder, with a cross strap to keep things in place, or you can route it so it sort of crosses your chest putting the gun a bit more horizontal. I find the cross-chest method to be most comfortable. There are many ways to customize the fit, and you can also add an optional ammo carrier to the system. And, like anything beautifully made, I promise you'll have great satisfaction in simply enjoying this wonderful piece of genuine leather gear. As it gathers scrapes, scratches, wear marks and some patina, it will also assume the role of official documentarian of your hunts and adventures. *For more info: Galco Gun-leather, www.galcogunleather.com, Ph: (800) 874-2526*



REAL AVID SMART DRIVE 90

I know, I know, you're sick and tired of us reminding you to use dedicated screwdrivers when cranking screws on your guns. So, in light of this, I'll go ahead and remind you again — use the best you can afford! I've got a set of quality gunsmith screw drivers I've had for 35 years and hardly a day goes by I'm not reaching for one or two. Yet, I can't count the number of cheapo standard screw driver sets I've gone through during the same time in my shop, working on equipment, cars and such. They're often just too tempting to pass up. "Wow, a 50-piece screwdriver and Torx head set for only \$5.99!" Then they bend and break at the first use. Why do we insist on taking the bait? Ditto for socket sets, eh?

But Real Avid's latest for smart shooters ramps up the game with 87 tool steel-grade bits (Torx, Allen, Phillips and Standard), along with two driver handles. No cheapo stuff here, nothing but high quality materials and design. The bigger driver has a "Jeweler's Spin Top" so you can turn screws in one-



handed. The shorter handle gets you into tight places, or sort of "plugs" into the side of the big handle, acting like a side-handle on a grinder so you can put some real torque on a screw to get it out or tighten it.

The bigger handle also has a built-in LED light to shine right on the spot you're working, and the tip is magnetic so bits stay in place when you're using them. The lid of the kit opens wide for easy access and the whole kit lives right on the work bench not taking up much room. I like the fact it gives you a place for everything and everything in its place. My rule is take a bit out, use it, then put it back. This way they're

always there the next time you need them.

Real Avid has quickly developed a reputation for inventing cool, practical tools and accessories for cleaning, maintenance and equipping your workbench. Their hammer and punch sets and AR-related tools are essential if you do your own work. Which most of us do! The Smart Drive 90 is \$99.99 at MSRP but you're getting a kit with virtually every bit you'll ever need, two methods to put them to use and the light, jeweler's feature and more.

Did we tell you to use dedicated gun screwdrivers, by the way? *For more info: Real Avid, www.realavid.com, Ph: (800) 286-0567*

STUKEY'S SHOOTING BENCH

I've got a couple of portable shooting benches I use. Name brands, and frankly, they work pretty good. But they're a bit spindly and while you can do decent work off of them, you certainly can't get the most out of your rifle or pistol, especially at longer ranges. It's a trade-off, this whole "easy-to-tote" or "rock-solid" quandary.

I first covered Royal Stuke's shooting benches some years ago. He's one of those classic great American entrepreneurs this industry is full of. He lives and works with his family in Powell, Wyoming. Royal both invented this bench and builds, ships and runs the business with his family there. Royal (his real first name) tolerates no compromises, so this bench is, without any doubt in my mind, the finest you can buy. Everything is over-built, over-engineered and created with only the very best quality in mind. I had one here long enough to use it and I came away utterly impressed, with both the product and the people behind it.

Royal reached out to me lately, letting me know they have a new coating offered for the bench top called "Polyurea." They prime the 13-laminate birch plywood top, spray on the Polyurea coating, then seal this with two coats of a high solids top coat. The result is a virtually indestructible top Royal says should hold up outdoors for 20+ years. Meaning, you could set this bench up on your shooting deck and just leave it right there, come hell or high water. The steel legs are powder coated, the bench frame is steel, there are carry handles, a no-tool set-up routine and the kit fits in most trunks. The top weighs 35 lbs. and the leg bundle about 35 too. This is some serious stuff.

Note the photo of the farm truck sitting on four of the benches. That's not photoshop, as I saw the pics (on his website) of how they got the truck up there. You should take a look. So each of those benches is holding up at least 1,000 lbs. — and likely more. I rest my case. Base price is \$685 plus shipping, and the Polyurea coating is extra since not everyone may need it. Royal says, "Stubbornly made in the USA" on his website and that's a statement about the man. This is the last bench you'll ever buy, I promise. *For more info: Stuke's Sturdy Shooting Benches, www.shootingbenches.com, Ph: (307) 754-2060*



WHEELER DIGITAL TRIGGER GAUGE

This is sorta' like a chronograph. You don't really "need" one, but if you're a serious shooter, a chrono can really open your eyes to some amazing info about your guns, ammo, reloads and much more. And they're not that much, with some models starting in the \$100 range. Trigger pull gauges deliver the same sort of thing. Suddenly, there's no more guessing, and you know for sure what the trigger pull is on your guns. Maybe the fact you're wrestling with accuracy with one of your guns is because the trigger pull is out of spec or just too darn hard! Find out — then get it fixed.

Wheeler's "Professional Digital Trigger Gauge" is chock full of features. It reads 0-12 lbs., has +/- 0.5 percent accuracy, uses two AAA batteries and automatically calculates the max, minimum and average trigger pull of a set. The soft touch buttons work fine, it has a back-lit LCD screen easy to read for us boomers, an audible overload indicator and keeps track of the number of trigger pull tests in a given session.



I particularly like the fact the sensor is on an arm and rests directly on the trigger. You can even test a trigger at the lower or upper portion of the face, for instance. I also like the fact you can fit your finger behind the sensor and press the trigger directly, using the sensor body. There's also a couple of different sensor inserts handling bladed triggers or conventional shapes. You can use it on rifles, handguns or shotguns. There's a foam-lined storage box, clear instructions and a calibration chart included. My chart showed this unit was well within the range of accuracy listed.

At around the \$50 mark, your gun-fund won't take a huge hit, and it will certainly make you a more savvy shooter. If you've felt a certain gun had a "five-pound" trigger pull, now's the time to find out what it really is. You likely will be surprised at how much higher or lower they really are at times. Oh, and buy a chrono while you're at it! *For more info: Wheeler Engineering, www.btibrands.com/brands/wheeler-engineering/*



EDC X9L

Wilson Combat



Wilson Combat has developed a new 5"-barrel, long slide version of the EDC X9 for defensive and recreational shooters who prefer a longer sight radius. The *EDC X9L* combines the accuracy, ergonomics and trigger pull of the classic 1911 design with reliable and high-capacity performance. The 1"-longer barrel version gives an extended sight radius to match the standard 1911 with a 15-round capacity. An optional aluminum magwell ensures fast reloads under stress or on the clock. *For more info: (800) 955-4856, www.wilsoncombat.com*

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To keep GLOCK magazines functioning well even in extreme conditions, they require regular inspection and cleaning. But removing GLOCK floorplates can be difficult without the proper tool. The *Magazine Floorplate Removal Tool for GLOCK (GFRT-01)* makes the job easy. Designed to remove floorplates in all Gen 1 through Gen 5 OE magazines, the GFRT-01 uses the right amount of leverage to draw the floorplate off the magazine body without damaging it. Made of injection-molded nylon, the GFRT-01 is a valuable addition to your toolbox, range bag or pistol case. *For more info: (909) 392-4757, www.TangoDown.com*



575 GLS PRO-FIT IWB HOLSTER

Safariland

Safariland's *575 GLS Pro-Fit IWB Concealment Holster* is offered for several subcompact handguns including the GLOCK 43, Springfield XD-S and Smith & Wesson M&P Shield (9mm, .40, .45). The 575 incorporates Safariland's GLS retention in an open top design with a slimmer, low-cut and compact body, allowing for a comfortable, smaller footprint over comparable models when wearing IWB. The holster body is made of SafariSeven, a proprietary nylon blend. *For more info: (800) 347-1200, www.safariland.com*



BACKPACK BLIND BAG IN MOSSY OAK "BLADES" CAMO

ALPS OutdoorZ

The *Backpack Blind Bag* from ALPS OutdoorZ is now offered in Mossy Oak Shadow Grass Blades camo. The waterfowl pattern is suited for vegetative fields and marsh-edge environments with long grass. Ideal for waterfowling, they can "wear" their gear and keep their hands free to carry decoys, a blind or a seat. Features include adjustable padded shoulder straps, a waist belt and sternum strap and more. The Backpack Blind Bag is also available in Realtree MAX-5. *For more info: (800) 344-2577, www.alpsoutdoorz.com*



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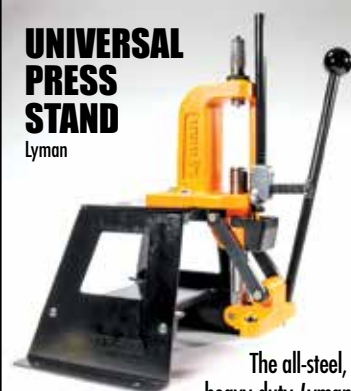
Bear & Son Cutlery

The *Bear Branded Bone Knives* series celebrates Bear & Son Cutlery's almost 30 years of knife manufacturing and the launch of their new logo. Bear Branded Bone Knives feature a laser-engraved white smooth bone handle, a high carbon stainless steel hollow ground blade and a nickel silver bolster. The series consists of three Lockbacks, two Trappers, one Large Stockman and a Cowhand design. *For more info: (800) 844-3034, www.bearandsoncutlery.com*



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Lyman



The all-steel, heavy-duty Lyman *Universal Press Stand* accepts most single, turret and progressive presses. The stand will raise your press 9¼" above the bench surface to lessen your fatigue from having to bend over to cycle your press. It also provides a clear view of all reloading operations. All hardware needed to mount your press is included. The Universal Press Stand can be bolted to your bench or C-clamped to provide quick removal if desired. *For more info: (800) 225-9626, www.lymanproducts.com*

CITADEL AMERICAN FLAG 1911 AND AMMO CAN

Legacy Sports International

Legacy Sports' *Citadel American Flag 1911 and Ammo Can* package consists of a full-size Government 1911 in .45 ACP and an ammo can. The can, fitted with an impact foam insert, nicely stores the 1911 and two mags. Offered in three color schemes, the flag-decorated guns and ammo cans are coated in Cerakote with a Battleworn effect. *For more info: (800) 553-4229, www.legacysports.com*





VIP BLACK Nighthawk Custom

New to the VIP Series from Nighthawk Custom, the *VIP Black* 1911 pistol features hand-engraving by Master Engraver Bertram Edmonston and black Diamond Like Coating. The Government-frame VIP Black is chambered in .45 ACP with an OAL of 8.66" and a 5" crowned barrel. Front strap and mainspring housing serrations as well as hand serrations to the rear of the slide ejector match the Heinie black rear sight. It also has a 14-karat solid gold bead front sight and giraffe bone grips. The limited edition VIP Black comes in a custom walnut hardwood presentation case. *For more info: (877) 268-4867, www.nighthawkcustom.com*

380 ALLER Benchmade Knife Company

Benchmade's six-in-one *380 Aller* was designed for traveling. Features of this compact friction folder include a Wharnccliffe blade, screwdriver/pry tip, micro bit slot, custom pocket/money clip, bottle opener and lanyard/key-ring hole. The blade has a plain edge and satin finish and the handle is black G10. *For more info: (800) 800-7427, www.benchmade.com*



TACTICAL SHOOTING GLASSES

Hackett Equipment

The *Tactical Shooting Glasses* from Hackett Equipment are larger than traditional glasses. They are designed for a wider range of sight and for better protection around your eyes. The glasses look like stylish sunglasses but actually convert into shooting goggles. They are ideal for work, riding a motorcycle, a day at the range or just everyday use. Available in Black, OD Green, Desert Tan, and Pink. *For more info: www.hackettequipment.com*



SBA4 PISTOL STABILIZING BRACE

SB Tactical

The *SBA4* is a 5-position adjustable brace compatible with all pistol platforms accepting a mil-spec carbine receiver extension. Based on the popular SBM4 brace design, it comes with an ambi QD sling socket and an adjustable nylon strap. The *SBA4* offers the user enhanced cheek weld ergonomics, increased stability and improved accuracy while adding only 10 oz. of overall weight. *For more info: (603) 854-5030, www.sb-tactical.com*



MC1sc

O.F. Mossberg & Sons Inc.

In celebration of its centennial, Mossberg introduces the *MC1sc*, a full-featured, 9mm concealed carry handgun. The subcompact *MC1sc* comes with Mossberg's Clear-Count single-stack magazines offering low friction and high wear-resistance and at-a-glance assessment of rounds loaded. It also boasts the Mossberg STS (Safe Takedown System), which does not require the user to pull the trigger to disassemble. *For more info: (800) 363-3555, www.mossberg.com*

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RAGING HUNTER .44 MAG AND .357 MAG

Taurus

The *Raging Hunter* from Taurus received the American Hunter Handgun of the Year Golden Bullseye Award in 2018 for its reliability, innovative design and value. Two models are now being offered: the *Raging Hunter* .44 Magnum (6-round capacity) and the *Raging Hunter* .357 Magnum (7-round capacity). Both come in three barrel lengths — 8.375", 6.25" and 5.125". Developed as a big-bore revolver for big-game hunting, the *Raging Hunter* features a unique barrel configuration with factory-tuned porting and a gas expansion chamber to reduce muzzle rise and recoil. *For more info: (800) 327-3776, www.taurususa.com*



NEWPRODUCTS

STR-9

Stoeger Industries

Stoeger introduces the STR-9 striker-fired, semi-auto pistol. Chambered in 9mm with a 15+1 capacity, the STR-9 is suitable for everyday carry, home protection or fun at the range. It has a black nitride finish, interchangeable backstrap grips and a 4.17" barrel. Front and back slide serrations provide a firm grip, and a smooth-pulling, crisp trigger houses an internal safety. An accessory rail accepts pistol and laser lights and the reversible magazine release makes it ambidextrous. For more info: (800) 264-4962, www.stoegerindustries.com



DELUXE AIWB HOLSTER

MTR Custom Leather

The Deluxe AIWB Holster from MTR Custom Leather allows users to conceal larger firearms. The holster's "claw," a piece of plastic mounted under the trigger guard, uses the firmness of the gun belt to push the grip side of the holster and gun into your body. This prevents the grip from sticking out, a common occurrence during concealed carry. The Deluxe AIWB Holster provides full coverage for the weapon and trigger and is available for most firearms. For more info: (336) 878-2166, www.mtrcustomleather.com



PREPARED CITIZEN CLASSIC

Maxpedition

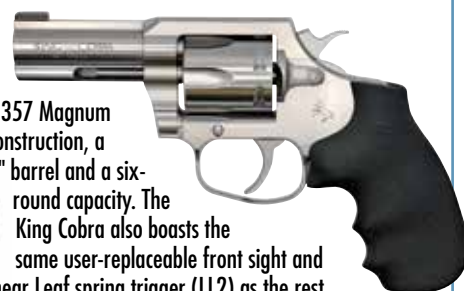
The Prepared Citizen Classic is a CCW-enabled backpack from Maxpedition. Looking like most common daypacks, it helps its owner take on an uninteresting and non-threatening appearance. This protects him from being scrutinized and provides him with a tactical advantage too. The Prepared Citizen Classic has an overall capacity of 1,360 cu. inches with a dual-side accessible, fully looped and lined concealed carry compartment. For more info: (310) 768-0098, www.maxpedition.com



KING COBRA

Colt's Mfg. Co. LLC

Colt's double-action King Cobra in .357 Magnum features American stainless steel construction, a heavy-duty frame with a full lug 3" barrel and a six-



round capacity. The King Cobra also boasts the same user-replaceable front sight and Linear Leaf spring trigger (LL2) as the rest of Colt's Cobra family. For more info: (800) 962-2658, www.colt.com

SMART DRIVE 90

Real Avid



The Smart Drive 90 is a master-grade gunsmithing bit set. It features a unique driver with a jeweler's top handle for one-hand adjustments. A smaller driver can be used alone or paired with the main driver. An added innovation is a super-bright, 360-degree COBB LED light to illuminate your work area with zero shadows. The Smart Drive 90 comes in a well-organized case with a magnetic compartment to store and hold loose fasteners and springs during disassembly. For more info: (800) 286-0567, www.realavid.com

N1 PISTOL

Naroh Arms



Naroh Arms' N1 is a micro-compact 9mm handgun with a 3.125" barrel and an OAL of 6.1". Weighing 16 oz. unloaded, the double-action only (DAO) pistol sports an internal drop safety. The N1 has a 7075 aluminum hard coat anodized receiver with full-length slide rails, a 1913 accessory rail and front and rear slide serrations. Sights are polymer 3-dot (white) standard; grips are glass-reinforced polymer. No trigger pull is required for disassembly. For more info: (321) 806-4875, www.naroharms.com

DICER KITCHEN KNIVES

TOPS Knives

TOPS Knives' Dicer Kitchen Knives are made of CPM S35VN premium steel with blue and black G10 handles. They are kitchen tools that will likely be passed down from generation to generation. The Dicer will eventually be offered as a complete set. Right now, only two are available: the Dicer 8 Chef Knife and the Dicer 3 Paring Knife. The Dicer 8 has an OAL of 12.25"; blade length is 7.75". For the Dicer 3, OAL is 7.88"; blade length is 3.5". For more info: (208) 542-0113, www.topsknives.com



THE SAFE, NOT SORRY LESSONS

SITUATION: One of our greatest 2A advocates compiles the stories of four women who survived because they had handguns — and a fifth who wasn't allowed to have one.

LESSON: "Use enough gun." Get the bullets where they need to go. Have the gun where you can reach it immediately, and if the law doesn't allow this, fight for reform.

It would be hard to find a more ferocious warrior for gun owners' civil rights than Tanya Metaksa. The anti-gun magazine *Mother Jones* called her "one of the most powerful lobbyists in America," and the Associated Press described her as "a blunt, no-nonsense voice for the gun lobby in Washington." I had the privilege of meeting her and hearing her speak back in the day.

She would introduce herself as "Metaksa, not Metaska. AK, as in AK-47." A year prior to her retirement from the NRA's Institute for Legislative Action, where she served as Executive Director, the Harper Collins subsidiary Regan Books published her book *Safe, Not Sorry: Keeping Yourself and Your Family Safe in a Violent Age*.

I thought the most powerful part of that book was the section in which Tanya focused on women who had faced homicidal attack. Four of them prevailed, because they were able to reach handguns in time to fight back and win. One of them could not, because the law in that place and time forbade her to. Here, thanks to Tanya, are their stories.

Armed Home Invader

Friday, May 10, 1996, 6:23 AM. The slender Ms. Sammie Foust had left the sliding glass door of her master bedroom slightly open after letting her cat in. She was in bed watching morning TV when the intruder burst in on her. Metaksa quotes her, "He was wearing a stocking mask, dark clothes, and while all the newspaper articles said he was wearing gloves he actually had socks on his hands. By the time I knew what was going on, he had one hand over my mouth and the other was holding one of those box-cutter razor blades at my neck."

He demanded money. She gave him her purse. He shook it empty and wasn't satisfied. Waving the blade in her face, he demanded the "big money." She pointed to her jewelry box; he dumped that too, and still wasn't satisfied.

That's when he began beating her.

The first punch hit her in the eye, a blow so hard and damaging she would never see the same way through that eye again. To distract him, she pointed to some other jewelry elsewhere in the room.

When he turned to look for it, Sammie finally went for her gun.

She would tell Tanya later, "The fact that I had a loaded gun at hand is more than bizarre. I'd spent the two days before the burglary cleaning out drawers and I had stuff spread all over the place. When I opened one drawer, I found two guns, a .25 and a .32. I knew I owned them, but I didn't remember where I had placed them. Lying next to the little one were four bullets, so I thought, 'well, I ought to see if I can load it just in case I ever need it,' and I put the bullets in the magazine. I wasn't even sure I was putting the right bullets in the right magazine because they were real hard to make fit, so I put the magazine in the gun and pulled back the slide and everything worked. Then I put the safety on and set the gun on the stand by the bed. Never thought any more about it.... And, at that, I don't even know why I thought to do it, because the last time I fired a gun was when I was about 14 years old, and that was either a rifle or a shotgun. I'd never fired a pistol in my life. I don't know why he didn't see it, as it was in plain sight."

But now it was in her hand, and she had the presence of mind to take the safety off. And when he turned back toward her, she was ready.

She shot him in the mouth.

The tiny bullet had no immediate effect. He lunged at her and she shot him again. She would

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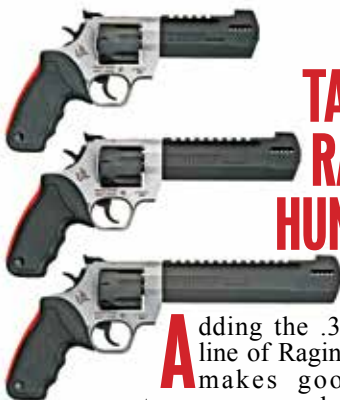
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Look at the photos of the early guns here and you'll clearly see the legacy the Python, Diamondback and even the Trooper proudly wear. Once introduced in the middle 1950s, the Python stole the show from the Officer's Model and grabbed the top-dog, "Super Premium" slot. And rightfully so. But still, like a classic fine car, elegance of build quality, old-school design touches and that difficult to define aura all hold sway. A Python is significant — but an Officer's Model is like a vintage Bentley, still drawing looks and compliments from everyone wherever it "proceeds."

I put these sorts of guns in the "Fewer But Finer" pile. I've been selling off the "commodity" or more common guns I simply don't use any longer and reinvesting the money in "nicer" guns. It's a nice change of pace and at a seasoned age, it's great fun to be able to shoot guns I only dreamt about when I was younger. You should think about all this too.



TAURUS RAGING HUNTERS

Adding the .357 to the line of Raging Hunters makes good sense as not everyone needs or wants the thump of the big .44. The Raging Hunter line features sleeved barrels, tuned porting, gas expansion chamber to help with muzzle flip, adjustable sights, great grips and even a Picatinny rail, among many other features. Barrel lengths are 5.125", 6.25" and 8.375" for the line-up, with matte black or stainless frame colors. All have matte black barrels and cylinders. Around \$900 at MSRP. www.taurususa.com

LIGHTWEIGHT TACTICAL BELT



My old buddy Samantha DeZonia of The Wilderness Tactical sent me this very cool "Instructor" style belt. The Bronze Coyote buckle and tan belt looks sharp to me, and is very low key. The buckle is machined and rated and, while a limited run, is sold out by now, you can still tune into their website for other options, ideas and designs. It's worth the trip just to see Sam explain how to measure for the right belt! They're famous for well designed, innovative products and are great people to work with too. www.thewilderness.com, (800) 775-5650

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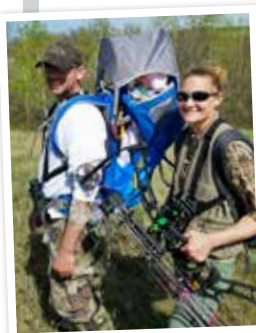
Organized crime-based marijuana sites discovered in CA yearly.



MAXI-LIFT REST

So, for all you who shoot those big, mega-blasters (Mr. Hampton, are you listening here?), a reader sent me this pic. He said, "When I was in my shop the other day, I realized I had discovered the solution for holding up my new S&W 500 Magnum. A few quick pumps of the jack handle and that big brawny beast of a revolver rises like the morning sun!" I'm thinking he was pulling my leg, but the more I looked at it, the more I thought of the potential. Thanks Mitch!

THE MULE



I just love this pic. Ray Fleck, who writes for us, sent it to me. It shows "Dad" Chris Felege (a military veteran and biologist), "Mom" Susan Felege (a PhD game biologist and very active hunter), with their daughter Kaylee. Their challenge was how to bring their new baby, Kaylee, hunting with them. The answer? Chris becomes the mule, toting Kaylee and any other gear they need, while mom does the hunting. Kaylee is now about 18 months old and it's worked out great. Kaylee's involved with it all, sees and gets to "pet" the game once it's down and is spending good outdoor time with mom and dad. What a great way to handle this challenge. I think Kaylee will have a fun, adventure-filled childhood for sure! Babies can add to the fun, not take away from it!



ALASKA URBAN DEFENDER

Famous for their rugged and innovative "Guide's Choice" chest holster — and for plenty of other cool things too — Diamond D Leather's latest appeals to the "citi-fied" CCW crowd. I encouraged them to use their "rugged outdoorsy leather" techniques for the concealed crowd and they sure did. Here's their latest and I really like it. The rough-out construction keeps it in place, and it's lightweight and beautifully made, chock full of Diamond D thinking and construction ideas. At just \$55 it's also a screaming deal — and they make 'em for most small autos. That's my Ruger LCP in this one for size. www.diamonddcustomleather.com, (907) 631-4212



TRADITIONS BULLET/ARROW LAUNCHER GUN-THING

This one made my brain hurt until I got my head around it. What they've done here is put a single shot rifle action around a .22 LR barrel and a barrel (the XBR) you can shoot "Firebolt" 16" aluminum arrows from. You load the arrow from the muzzle, then use a Traditions' XBR Powerload .27 Cal Long "cartridge" in the chamber. According to them the arrow can reach up to 385 fps which is pretty darn fast for an arrow. Recoil is light and it's not loud at all. I'm not sure how it fits into hunting so check your local rules. But it does sure sound like fun, and a good way to allow disabled, youth or frail people to "shoot" arrows! www.traditionsfirearms.com, (860) 388-4656

HANDGUNNER SAYS:

"There seems to have been an actual decline in rational thinking. The United States has become a place where entertainers and professional athletes are mistaken for people of importance. They are idolized and treated as leaders; their opinions are sought on everything and they take themselves just as seriously — after all, if an athlete is paid a million or more a year, he knows he is important ... so his opinions of foreign affairs and domestic policies must be important, too, even though he proves himself to be ignorant and sub-literate every time he opens his mouth." — Robert Heinlein



KELLUBE M12

Neil Keller is one of the most talented honest-to-gosh pistolsmiths I've ever known. He used his skills, developing Kellube M12, and I've used it for more years than I can remember. I really like the 1-oz. bottle for that pin-point applicator. Being 100 percent synthetic it doesn't leave or contribute to carbon fouling,

there's no "carriers" to evaporate and leave residue and it helps cut fouling. You can clean, lube, prevent rust and lubricate with it and as subjective as it sounds, I can "feel" the difference when I use it over some more conventional lubes. For \$7.50 for the 1-oz. applicator it's easy to afford. Order by sending him a note at kellers@mchsi.com, call at (260) 724-3065 or at www.dawsonprecision.com.



RUGER WRANGLER .22 LR

Can you say "hot!?" When Ruger announced this \$249 lightweight clone of the Single Six Ruger fans everywhere grabbed their wallets and ran to their nearest gun store. I've had all three for a while now (Black, Silver and Burnt Bronze Cerakote colors), and they're just too much fun. The lightweight aluminum alloy frame and cylinder keeps weight at 30 oz. and the synthetic grips fit the Single Six style grip frame. The sights are fixed and they have all the Ruger features, like a transfer bar, etc. Barrel length is 4.62" and the sights are fixed. These are arguably one of the best ideas for a general field/plinking pistol I've ever seen. Looks like Taffin has another "Perfect Packin' Pistol" on his hands! A side benefit is the parts are interchangeable, so you can buy all three and swap colors around! Ha! www.ruger.com



LIGHTED CAP

The "Powercap 2.0" by Panther Vision is much brighter than the average built-in lighted cap. The vast majority use "button" cell batteries and put out adequate light for close-in work, but once you get much beyond arm's distance you wish for more light. This new design uses two AAA batteries fitting into a comfy pouch inside the headband. It also ups the power from their standard cap light from 48 lumens to about 75 lumens or so. It's "really bright" and is my new "grab it and go" hat. They come in lots of styles and colors. We recently had a bit of a tornado scare here and spent most of a night awake. It was great to have my hands free and plenty of light if I needed it. www.panthervision.com, (847) 783-5900

CASPIAN "CREW CUTS"

Okay, this just makes perfectly good sense. If you're not aware there's a trend toward what's called "Tri-Cut" 1911 slides, along with some frame mods to match. But some pistolsmiths and amateurs go a bit too far, cutting through the slide or weakening it too much. Caspian is now offering this mod to their frame and slides and does it right, making a potential custom build stronger and safer. And I really laughed when I heard the name for the process, the "Crew Cut Option." Priced very affordably in the \$45 range, they can do this optional cut to the frame or slide you order. They also have a gazillion other 1911 parts and ideas and are a family-owned small business. Do what you can to support them, and get a project going! www.caspianarms.com, (802) 472-6454

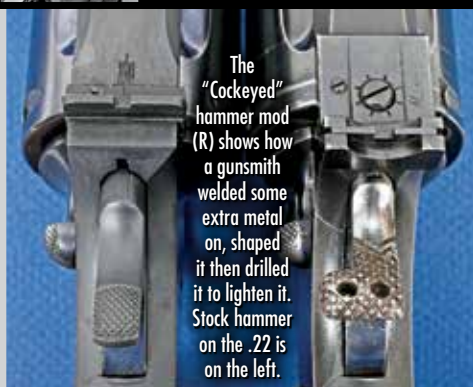


S&W PERFORMANCE CENTER EZ



Our old friends at S&W are ramping up the game with the wildly popular M&P .380 ShieldEZ pistol. Chock full of good ideas like an easy-to-run slide, great trigger, etc. these new models ramp up the game. The Performance Center has added ports, a flat-face trigger, lightening cuts on the slide, HIVIZ Tritium/Litepipe sights and a Performance Center tuned action. Not to mention the sexy gold and silver color touches to go with the blacked-out version. MSRP is right at \$502 which is dirt-cheap for what is essentially a custom ShieldEZ. I have the gold one and so far it runs great, and I really like the flat trigger. More later. www.smith-wesson.com





The "Cockeyed" hammer mod (R) shows how a gunsmith welded some extra metal on, shaped it then drilled it to lighten it. Stock hammer on the .22 is on the left.

PRE-WAR PERFECTION:

THE 'SNAKE' GUNS' PARENTS



The Colt Officers Model Target (.38 at top, .22 below) were scary-accurate. That's a 25-yard group with the .38.

I sort of stumbled onto this .38 Special Colt Officers Model a couple of years ago. I did a favor for a friend and he asked if I wanted "Something in a box or some money?" Knowing this friend, I said, "Something in a box." I chose wisely, as they say. The "something" I received is, from what I can discover, a "Third Issue" Officer's Model Target, Heavy Barrel. The serial number range shows it was made in 1937 and it's in great condition, well-used, but it times right and looks good. This was a target shooter's gun for sure and shows honestly worn grips and back-strap blue wear typical of the sort.

The interesting bits are the front and rear sight changes, trigger shoe and hammer mod. At first, I thought it might be the work of Kings, who was the go-to source for target revolver work in those heady days of fierce firing line competition. But Kings always stamped their work and there was nary a Kings mark on this gun. The front sight base is stock, so I

think whoever did the sights installed a higher front blade to match the period-correct Micro adjustable rear. The hammer mod is that classic King design called the "Cockeyed Hammer" spur. There's a bit of welded-on metal to the left side of the spur, then it was checkered and drilled to lighten it. It made single action cocking faster and easier, which was what was done in those days.

The SA pull is a feathery 1 lb. 10 oz. while the DA pull seems pretty stock. Accuracy is amazing, and using standard high quality 148-gr. target wadcutters from Federal and Black Hills the gun shoots 1" at 25 yards pretty easily if I use my "good" glasses. I've never fired anything else through it and don't plan on it. This is timeless, old-school cool stuff and it's fun to re-live the 1930s.

Another Score

Then, talk about great luck, I was nosing around on a good friend's site where he sells some amazing classic guns (www.sportsmanslegacy.com) and stumbled onto another Officer's. This one is a Colt Officer's Model, but factory stock — and in .22 LR! A quick serial number check revealed it began life in 1938 so I'd call it a peer to the .38. An interesting side note is the SA trigger shows 3 lbs. 10 oz. and that's about right for dead-stock.

There's a bit of magic at work here too. I have a blued Python and a blued Diamond Back in .22, so how on earth could I not have the parents to my more "modern" guns at-hand too? My charge card was glowing for a short time.

Smarter people than me know way more about these guns, but from what I gleaned, Colt introduced the first of these "medium-framed" models in 1904, calling it the Officer's Model, catering to police business. Between then and about 1969, Colt produced several

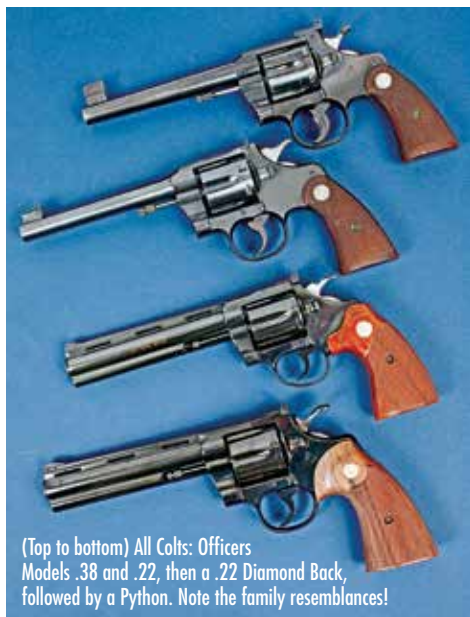
variations, with slightly different mechanicals and looks, but all based on the same idea of a medium-framed gun good for target shooting and even police duty use. The Officer's Model Target was offered beginning in about 1927 and was chambered in .22 LR, .32 Colt and .38 Special. The heavy barrel (like my .38) was made optional in about 1935. According to one source, only the 6" barrel was offered post-war. The grips were checkered walnut with silver-colored medallions so mine seem to be correct.

In those days target shooting was pretty mainstream and these models ruled the roost. Guys like Fitzgerald of Colt honed these actions to within an inch of their lives, helping to assure the guns shot as well as humanly possible with the technology available then. As times changed, model designations changed from "E" frames (with the firing pin in the hammer) to "I" frames if the firing pin was in the frame, but the quest for quality always remained.

Living History

These guns were considered at the top of Colt's revolver lines during their production years, and from the glass-hard, smooth actions on mine, I can see why. The stunning Colt Royal Blue — especially on the .22 here — needs no introduction. Yeah, I know, today's guns are cheaper, "better" built, easier to make, offer more design options and run the gamut from simple to complex. But when talented labor was cheap and hand-work the norm, the Officer's Models were artistic mechanical marvels. They didn't "need" to polish them the way they did, nor take the time to apply that ocean-depth blue or tune the actions so finely it's hard not to shed a tear when you press the trigger. But they did, and the only reason for it is the pride and satisfaction of doing something 100 percent right. Not 98, or even 99.9 — but 100 percent right.

Continued on page 96



(Top to bottom) All Colts: Officers Models .38 and .22, then a .22 Diamond Back, followed by a Python. Note the family resemblances!



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