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SPECIAL EDITIONS

FMGPUBLICATIONS.COM

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EXCLUSIVE FIRST LOOKS

Still catching up from this year's SHOT Show, Jeff "Tank" Hoover and Dave Workman provide first looks at new products in weekly online exclusives for *American Handgunner* and *GUNS Magazine*. Read recent reviews of the Nighthawk Custom Colt Series 70, SCCY DVG-1, Federal Solid Core ammunition and more at americanhandgunner.com and gunsmagazine.com.

QUARANTINE READING

Want more content from *American Handgunner* and *GUNS Magazine*? Get reviews, history, tips, tricks and tactics from your favorite editors and writers in new Special Edition issues, including *Survive: Personal Defense*, *Concealed Carry* and *DIY Guns*. Check out John Taffin's 380-page *Book of the .45 Caliber*, too! Finish reading this issue, then head over to fmgpubs.com/store to order yours.



ENTERTAIN YOUR EARS

The *GUNS Magazine* Podcast continues to build an audience, offering long-form interviews with industry veterans like Ed Brown's John May, and short musings on relevant topics like summer carry options with Editors Brent T. Wheat, Roy Huntington and Tom McHale. Stream on your favorite apps, including Apple Podcasts, Google Play and Spotify, and online at gunsmagazine.com/podcast.

SHOW OFF YOUR WHEELS

Calling all revolver wranglers, moon clippers and Dirty Harry fans — we want to see your wheelguns! If you're not already subscribed to our *Wheelgun Wednesday* newsletter, you're missing out, and if you are, your wheelgun could be featured in a future email. Send a quality photo of one of your revolvers with a short description or background story to wheelgunner@fmghq.com.



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COOL GEAR

As I write this, we're all reeling from the impact of the COVID-19 virus outbreak. One of the biggest shocks to our industry was the cancellation of the National Rifle Association Annual Meeting. Normally it's an opportunity for manufacturers to introduce a second wave of new guns, gear, and ammo after the January SHOT Show, and the *Handgunner* team was primed to go. With no show, we're going to do our best to dig up the scoop and get the word out.



Note the clever marriage of softer custom molds and the embedded electronics module.

EAROLOGY

Speaking of the smart balance of "off-the-shelf" and custom technology, check out the new Westone Defend-Ear Digital X5 electronic in-ear hearing protection devices. They're custom fit to

your ear to provide a perfect seal — and this means better sound protection. The fancy electronics that pass through or amplify the sounds you want to hear, while blocking ear-damaging noise, are packaged in a modular insert. The custom molded component is much like those silicone-type models you can have made at local gun shows and shooting events, so they're comfortable. However, they include a standard cutout to house the electronics module. Unlike pure custom in-ear designs, you can replace the molded sections at any time and move the more expensive electronics to a new set of molds. Your ears change shape over the years, so this design protects your investment. Great idea!

HONEYBADGER DON'T CARE

Like the famous internet meme, Black Hills HoneyBadger ammo don't care about expansion-limiting tough barriers. This self-defense load is topped with a solid copper projectile — with a twist. Literally. The deep flutes act like a propeller in organic tissue, creating a wound channel larger than bullet diameter. With light-for-caliber bullets, you'll notice higher velocity but significantly lower recoil too.

While interesting for any caliber, the concept might breathe new ballistic life into .380 ACP compact carry guns where the traditional hollow point expansion and penetration balancing act can be on the iffy side. HoneyBadgers offer guaranteed penetration with disruption to boot.



HoneyBadger bullets are solid copper and shaped to cause disruption. Without need to expand, they just don't care about barriers.

SMART VELOCITY

As a long-suffering tech geek, I appreciate smart use of technology — like this. Fancy chronographs need to display velocity results, record data and perform calculations. To do this, the folks at Competition Electronics make efficient use of the giant computer that's already in your pocket — your smartphone. It has a display with better quality than your big screen TV, a computer thousands of times more powerful than the ones that put men on the moon and near-infinite storage capacity.

The Competition Electronics ProChrono DLX uses Bluetooth to connect the optical sensors downrange to your phone on the shooting bench. You see results instantly and they're captured and recorded. With every shot, the DLX re-computes to show cumulative stats. The handy-dandy part is that you can define shot strings on your phone, like "SIG XCompact, Black Hills HoneyBadger 9mm 100-grain" before you head to the range. Voila! An automatic velocity library. It's easy to export the data to other apps if you like. If you reload, tinker, or are just curious, it's an invaluable piece of gear.



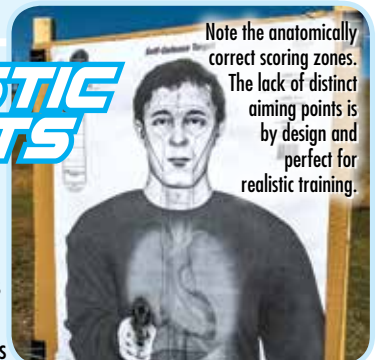
The ProChrono DLX transmits real-time information to your smartphone for display, capture and analysis.



REALISTIC TARGETS

I can't see what I'm aiming at with the Tactical Target Systems Self-Defense Anatomy targets — and that's by design! Huh? These targets look like your classic dangerous guys wearing a built-in X-ray.

Subtle shading shows vital areas on the target itself, so you know where your hits are landing. Unlike traditional silhouette targets, the system maps scoring zones to realistic anatomical positions. As in real life, there are no bright orange "aim here" points, and therein lies the benefit for more realistic practice.



Note the anatomically correct scoring zones. The lack of distinct aiming points is by design and perfect for realistic training.



For more info: www.competitionelectronics.com, www.westone.com, www.black-hills.com, www.tacticaltargetsystems.com

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WILL'S PHRASE-TURNING

I just had to drop you a line after reading many articles by Will Dabbs to say how much I enjoy his "turns of the phrase." In his cover feature on the Springfield Armory Hellcat in the latest issue (May/June 2020), he made the comment about follow-up shots being as "... smooth as snot in a daycare full of two-year olds." I haven't quite stopped laughing yet. That's almost as good as my favorite of all time, "... slicker'n deer guts on a doorknob!" That's some high quality writing right there!

Don Mowzoon
Via email

Scope Shortage?

I'm about to get a new S&W Mod 648 (.22 mag) and am excited about it. I plan to scope it using a Weigand mount but I have to say, what the devil has happened to handgun scopes? I have several, but haven't needed to buy a new one in years. At that time there were many choices, but now, not so much it seems. From what I see, it's pretty much Burris or Leupold, and I'm

not saying they're bad, as I own several of each. But I also own Bushnell, Nikon and Weaver handgun scopes and those all seemed to have shuffled off at about the same time. I remember Mark Hampton did a story on handgun scopes back in 2015 and the list was short, but it's ridiculously short now. Are any of the new innovative companies like SIG SAUER or Vortex thinking about intro-

ducing handgun-specific models? I'm going to put a 2x Burris on the 648 and it will be fine. Still, it would be nice to have options.

Mike Smith
Via email

Mike, optics (other than red dots) are more limited today but there are still models out there by the companies you

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mentioned if you nose around some. In my case, however, I almost always simply use rifle scopes. Especially on a .22 and more modest-recoiling center fire calibers, the short eye relief doesn't matter, and they're rarely shot off-hand regardless. Just get some smallish variable .22 scope, or even fixed four power. You'll be amazed at how well it works. I don't have a dedicated handgun scope on anything. Even all my Contender barrels (up to .30-30) have riflescopes on them. It's great to dial-in 8 or 10 power for longer shots and 2 or 3 power for close-in shooting. On your .22 mag, a 3-8 variable would be great, allowing for longer range shots, which that gun is certainly capable of doing. —RH

Family Protection

I just restarted a subscription I let lapse for too long! I received my first issue, the May/June, and love it. *Handgunner* is still the only serious magazine out there for we gun nuts, and for that I say thanks! I read the "Home Invasion/Coker Family Incident" in *Ayoob Files*, and it was eye opening. This article exposed just about all the holes in what I thought was an ironclad home defense plan. If I asked my wife to get me a gun while I was being pistol whipped — like Pam Coker — she too would grab what she's comfortable with. In her case, it'd be her S&W 19. While the .357 is king for stopping power, because of the mayhem, and after reading this article, I'd want firepower to make up for errant shots in all the chaos. Please tell Mas thanks. And thanks again for the best gun magazine around!

Joe Dileo
Via email

The Eyes Have It

I read the article "One Eye — or Two?" (*Better Shooting*, Nov/Dec 2019) in the November/December issue. I've been a competitive shooter for over 40 years in one type of handgun competition or another. First in IMHSA, then IPSC, and IDPA with a sprinkling of bullseye and bowling pin shooting mixed in. Now, at 62, I still shoot some IDPA but only sporadically and still enjoy plinking.

Very early in my competition years, I used to shoot with one eye, and over time switched to two. I still shoot that way and I agree with the advantages stated in the article. However, that got me thinking.

I started out shooting with my weak hand (left) index finger around the front of the trigger guard. After many, many scoldings from fellow shooters,

Continued on page 72

Former CIA Officer Giving Away a Free Copy of His New York Times Bestselling Spy and Survival Book

For the next few days, *American Handgunner* readers can claim a free copy of the *New York Times* bestselling book, *Spy Secrets That Can Save Your Life*. This book is chock full of skills every God-fearing American needs to know. For instance, you'll discover how to easily hotwire a car (page 69). How to pick virtually any household lock in under 30 seconds (page 72). How to become a human lie detector (page 161). How to quickly improvise a nasty self-defense weapon in a crisis situation (page 51). The three-step process for disappearing off the grid and what it really takes to vanish (page 77). Four secret pressure points that stop attackers in 2 seconds flat (page 220).

But, that's only a small part of this 250-page book. Inside, you'll discover over 101 censored survival secrets that anyone can use. Pretty amazing, right?

Now, if you're like me, you're probably wondering why this former CIA officer is willing to give his book away for free to you. Well, the answer is simple. The name of this former CIA Officer is Jason Hanson.

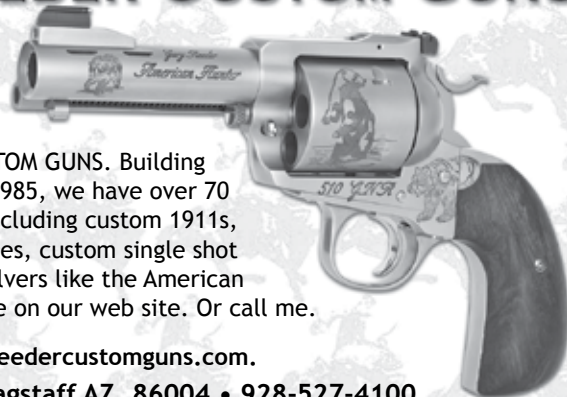
You might have seen him on the television show *Shark Tank* or Fox News or NBC Today or Good Morning America. God has blessed Jason with a wonderful life and he feels a strong obligation to share his spy and survival secrets with others. Giving this book away for free is one way of doing that. In fact, this book has already saved a number of lives including a young woman named Heather, who two men tried to kidnap at a gas station. Heather told us, "*The secrets Jason reveals in this book have literally saved my life. I used what Jason taught me to escape a potential kidnapping and an attack. I'll be forever grateful for the techniques he shared with me.*" As you can see, you want to claim your free copy of this book today. Just keep in mind, this offer is only good until we run out of books and we are giving away this book on a first come, first served basis. So, drop everything and visit our website while we still have free books in our warehouse.

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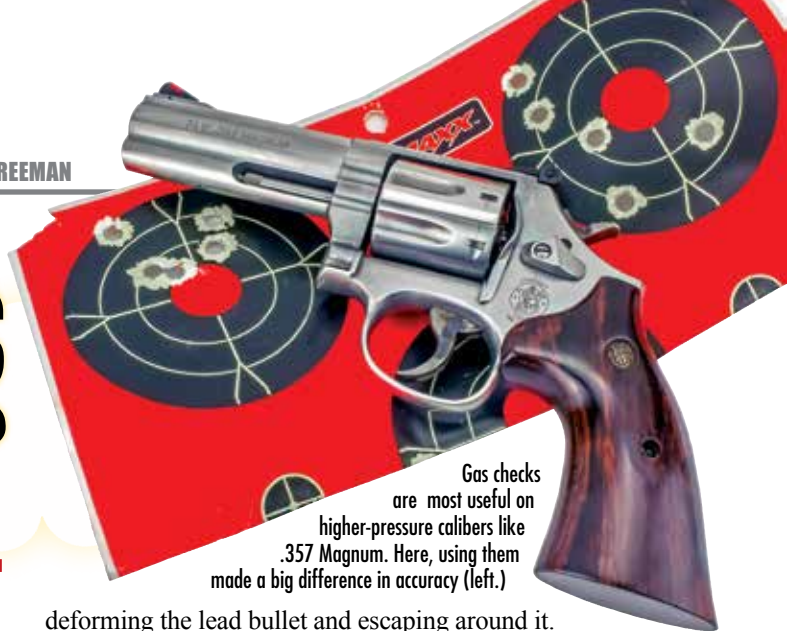


GOT GAS PROBLEMS? HERE'S THE CURE

High pressures from maximum loadings and magnum cartridges can cause significant problems when coupled with cast lead bullets. Escaping gases can increase lead deposits in the barrel, unbalance the bullet and cause gun-damaging gas cutting. A solution to these problems is a gas check — a thin cup or disc made of copper, aluminum, zinc or brass and fitted to the base of a lead bullet to provide a harder base surface. It works as a seal to help prevent pressure from

deforming the lead bullet and escaping around it.

Blocking the escaping gas not only minimizes the lead buildup and damage to the gun, but helps the bullet grip the rifling. There's a fancy word for what the gas check helps the bullet do in creating the seal. It's called obturation. To be clear, a gas check serves no purpose with copper-clad or other jacketed bullets.



Gas checks are most useful on higher-pressure calibers like .357 Magnum. Here, using them made a big difference in accuracy (left.)



CHECK THIS

Gas checks are primarily used with lead bullets in high-pressure revolver cartridges like the .357 and .44 Magnums. They're also helpful with .45 Colt rounds for self-defense or hunting and even 10mm semi-autos. Gas checks are available for the Enfield .303, M1 Carbine and other surplus rifle lead bullets, allowing you to reload and shoot affordable lead bullet cartridges. For calibers where ammo availability is limited, that can be a lifesaver.

There are several ways you can integrate gas checks into your reloading. One is to buy

Adding gas checks is easier than you might think. David runs them through a caliber-specific sizing die, like this Lee Precision Sizing Die Kit.

cast bullets with a gas check already installed. These are available from companies including Brownells, MidwayUSA, Grizzly Cartridge Company, Montana Bullet Works and Missouri Bullet Works. You can buy Hornady or Lyman gas checks and install your own if you're casting your own bullets. Installing your own gas check is easy if you use a bullet sizing kit — I use a Lee Precision Lube & Size Kit for Cast Bullets. Pushing the bullets through the sizing die seats and crimps the gas check. Piece of cake.

Some hardcore handloaders make their own gas checks from beer cans or aluminum flashing, which is available at a building supply store. It takes some special tooling you may have to make yourself, but if you're interested in making gas checks, there are some videos on YouTube showing you how.

POLLUTION-FREE GAS?

How well do they work? A good bore light will help you determine if the gas checks are helping keep your revolver's bore clean. You can also check performance benefits by measuring a gas check's effect on speed and accuracy.

I've been teaching reloading to one of my grandsons and his friend and one of our recent projects has been loading lead bullet cartridges with gas checks. Working with a Great Lakes Ammunition 158-gr. SWC polymer coated cast lead bullet, we installed Hornady gas checks using the Lee Precision Lube & Size Kit. We also loaded a batch of the exact same bullets without gas checks installed so we could compare results. For this load we

used 3.0 grains of TiteGroup for both gas checked and non-gas checked bullets.

We chronographed both loads and found the gas checked bullets averaged 791 fps out of the chute and the non-gas checked bullets trucked along a little slower at 764 fps. Not really much difference there — a little over three percent. We also did some informal accuracy testing at 10 yards. The gas checked bullets grouped into 3" while the non-gas-checked projectiles printed noticeably larger groups at 4.5".

At the end of the day, my S&W 686 .357 Magnum wasn't very dirty, and the holes in our targets were something we could smile about. If you're casting your own bullets for .357 Magnum or .44



David installed gas checks on these Polymer Coated .38 Caliber SWC bullets.

Magnum, adding gas checks is a surprisingly easy job using the Lee Precision bullet sizing kit for the appropriate caliber. For higher-pressure loads, you just might find yourself with a cleaner handgun and if you're lucky, improved accuracy.

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Reamers are used to rough or "finish" cut chambers. The two "Go-No-Go" gauges (left) are used to check your work. Clymer, Pacific Tool and Gauge and Dave Manson make the reamers.



DEMYSTIFIED:

CHAMBER REAMERS

Reamers are precision ground chamber cutters perfectly sized and contoured for a firearm's cartridge. Reamers are critical to cutting the barrel for accuracy and function. Pistol barrels are primarily straight-walled, making cutting chambers either by hand or machine somewhat easy. Pistol reamers are important for accuracy and function. Too short a chamber and the pistol or revolver might not cycle. Too long and you can get excessive leading and accuracy loss.

I buy my barrels with short "gunsmith" chambers, allowing for finish reaming after the barrel has been installed. In most cases a "chamber reamer" can be used to cleanly cut the remaining five to 10 thousandths for proper headspace. But the chamber reamer doesn't always cut the "throat" which is the transition area from smooth chamber wall to the barrel rifling (lands and grooves). A barrel throat should be angled at about two degrees, and, by using two reamers, the chamber or roughing reamer, and the throat or finish reamer, you will save tool life and get better cuts. If you're using a semi-fit barrel, the finish reamer can do all the work for the occasional barrel fit.



The 1911 barrel-link cutting jig from Powder River Precision makes cutting custom barrel links a whole lot easier.

MAN VS. MACHINE

Hand cutting requires an adjustable tap wrench to hold the reamer. Also needed is a Go-No-Go gauge for the caliber barrel you're fitting. The reamer is placed in the short-chambered barrel secured in a vise vertically. The reamer is slowly turned in a clockwise direction while being lubricated with cutting fluid like Kroil. A finish pistol reamer for a .45 or 9mm cartridge — seating off the case mouth — should be cut to a depth allowing the case gauge to sit flush with the barrel hood. If you don't have a gauge, a quality factory loaded round can be used to gauge the chamber length.

Some reamers allow for a stop collar, preventing over-cutting the chamber. This could prevent the firing pin from reaching the primer. So go slowly and check your depth often. Let gravity do the work, very little down pressure is needed.

A more precise method for chambering is using the lathe. The barrel is mounted in a collet or lathe chuck via the headstock. The reamer is mounted in the tailstock using a floating reamer holder. The holder allows the reamer to cut true, following the barrel bore even with a slight misalignment between the headstock and tailstock.

These reamers have a "live" or spinning pilot, preventing damage to the rifling while turning in the lathe. I use the slowest rpm on my lathe with plenty of flood lubrication. As the barrel turns the stationary reamer is moved into the chamber with the tailstock a few thousandths of a time. The reamer is backed out and the chamber measured with a "Go-Gauge" until the proper fit is achieved.

Pacific Tool and Gauge owner David Kiff went into great detail about how each "flute" or cutting blade had a slightly different design for cleaner cuts and smoother finish. David has been designing and manufacturing reamers since 1977. PTG as well as Clymer and Manson reamers are all used in my shop and each maker offers custom cutters for the gunsmith trade.

LINK FIXER

I also recently found a great new jig for cutting 1911-barrel links. Designed by Dan Bachelor of Powder River Precision it allows me to cut barrel links in the length I want instead of trying to modify an off-the-shelf link. The jig is supplied with uncut link "blanks" for the slide stop pin. It has a gauge pin to zero from with a coaxial indicator. Move 1" to center over the link pinhole, then adjust to mill the slide stop pin hole. I drill with a 13/64" cutter, and ream to 0.204". This is great for precision fits where the pre-made numeric links won't fit — no more oval holes cut with a file. He also has a prototype unit in the works with each hole size indexed in thousandths.



For more info: www.powderriverprecision.com, www.mansonreamers.com, www.clymertool.com, www.pacifictoolandgauge.com



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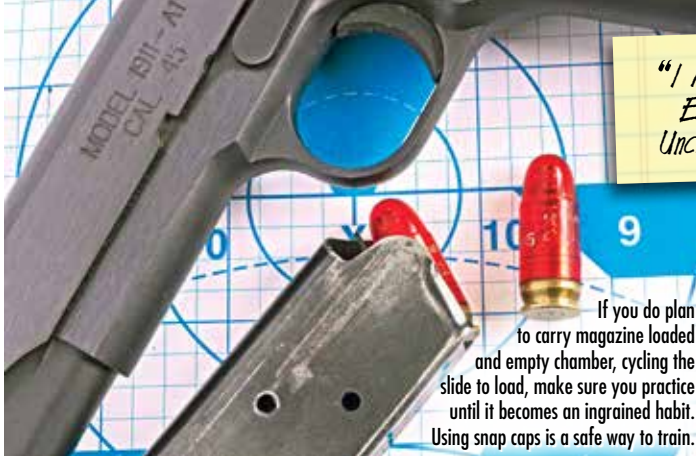


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A 'BULLET' IN THE CHAMBER?



"I have arthritis but a steady hand. I just got a S&W Shield EZ and I like it. I'm wondering if it's safe to carry in an Uncle Mike's WB holster with a bullet in the tube. -Rocky."

If you do plan to carry magazine loaded and empty chamber, cycling the slide to load, make sure you practice until it becomes an ingrained habit. Using snap caps is a safe way to train.

A S&W Shield 9mm with a Viridian laser sight fitted. Dave used this as his CCW for a few weeks to try it out — always with a cartridge chambered.



His Editorship forwarded Rocky's note to me saying, "Stop ice fishing and do some actual work." When someone says, "Is it safe?" I assume they mean is the pistol safe against negligent discharge. The Shield is an excellent pistol, well designed to reduce the possibility of an unintentional discharge. It's available with or without a manual safety and has a grip safety to prevent firing unless the pistol is held in the hand. It's also got a relatively long trigger pull to help ensure it's only fired by deliberate pressure. There's also a firing pin lock preventing firing should the gun be dropped. I'm not sure if Rocky's holster has a thumb break or safety strap, but if so it's an additional level of security against the gun being dropped.

Any pistol can be a weapon. If you place a loaded magazine in it, chamber a cartridge, hold it in your hand and press the trigger it will fire, and the bullet will damage or destroy whatever it strikes. That is what it was designed to do. Is the gun safe? A better question is — are your gun-handling skills safe? Even with all the built-in safeguards things can happen.

I heard once of a handgun that was burned in a fire. The round in the chamber cooked off without anyone being injured. Even then the gun didn't load itself, nor did it start the fire. Strictly speaking the only way to be absolutely, 100 percent certain there will not be a negligent discharge is to not buy the gun in the first place.

BALANCING RISKS

But in reducing one form of risk you've increased another. Presumably you carry a gun in order to defend yourself against a lethal attack. For most of us the likelihood of a lethal attack isn't very high. Heck, if it were, we wouldn't go out at all. So, as with many things

in life, we make choices based on our own intelligence, circumstances and experience. I wear seatbelts while in a vehicle and a flotation device while on a boat. The odds are I won't get in an accident or fall overboard, but if the odds go against me I want to increase my chances of survival.

A semi-auto can also be carried with the magazine loaded and the chamber empty. Such a carry is mandated by many armed forces, and is the method taught to Israeli private citizens licensed to carry

sidearms. Actually this is not such a bad system for some. Without a round in the chamber the pistol cannot fire no matter how severe an impact it suffers. Compared to loaded-chamber carry it may not be as fast or easy to get the gun into action, but it certainly beats the alternative of leaving the gun at home. In any case a split-second draw is seldom a factor in defensive shooting. I can't recall who said it, but there's a saying, "I'll either have plenty of time to get the gun out, or none at all."

DAVE'S CHOICE?

When hunting big game I almost always carry my rifle with the magazine loaded and the chamber empty. I like knowing the rifle cannot fire, even if I trip over a log, or a branch snags the trigger. When it comes time to shoot I can cycle the action and chamber a round as the rifle is being shouldered. But there is one big difference. If I'm too slow, or tie up the gun by not cycling the bolt properly, the worst result is the game gets away and instead of venison chops I eat canned sardines. In a defensive situation the consequences can be fatal.

My concerns with empty-chamber carry for a defensive

pistol are not so much about speed. One concern is it takes two hands. There are many reasons why one hand may be needed for something else — fending off a foe, pulling a friend to safety, holding a steering wheel, opening a door. I think there's value in being able to present and fire the pistol with one hand. The other concern is the process of racking the slide adds a step that could conceivably go wrong.

My personal choice is to carry a semi-auto with a cartridge chambered and manual safety (if present) engaged. Others can make their own choice. And I didn't even comment on the use of the word "bullet" instead of "cartridge" — but I'll bet 99 percent of you did!





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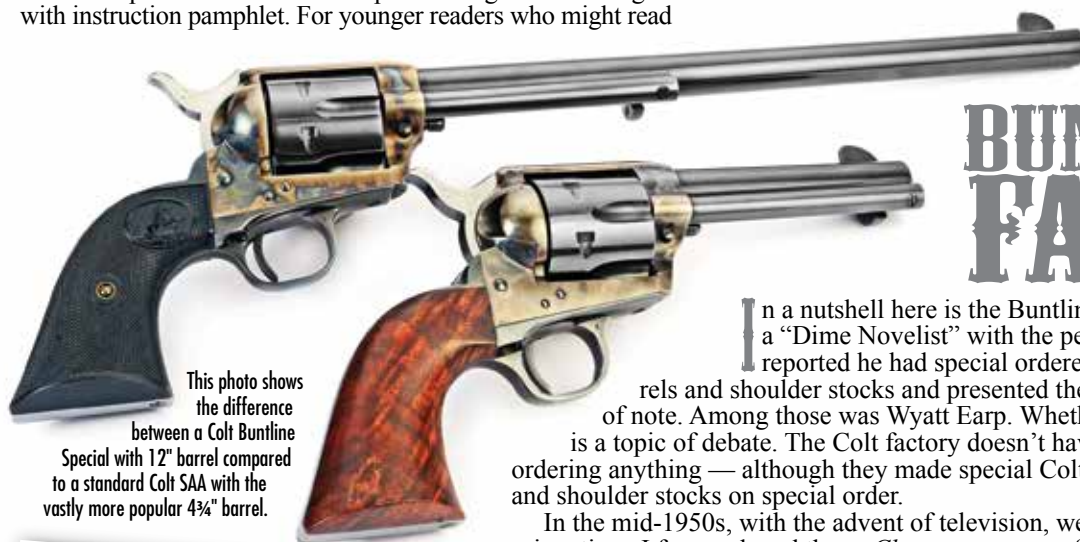
A COLT BUNTLINE SPECIAL FIND

Upon entering the door of a recent Montana gun show, I thought, "My money is safe. There will be nothing in here that trips my trigger." Having walked no more than 10 feet and inside of five minutes, I was nigh on broke.

What got my wallet was a pristine 2nd Generation Colt Buntline Special .45 still in its dilapidated original box along with instruction pamphlet. For younger readers who might read

this and not understand; a Buntline Special is a standard Colt Single Action Army except it wears a 12" barrel. I am no great fan of Buntlines having owned a 3rd Generation one back in the 1990s. I purchased this one because Colt Buntlines are moderately rare — especially 2nd Generation models. And this one was in *like new* condition. Truthfully, I couldn't tell for sure if

it had ever been fired. It will have been by the time you read this.



This photo shows the difference between a Colt Buntline Special with 12" barrel compared to a standard Colt SAA with the vastly more popular 4 3/4" barrel.

BUNTLINE'S FABLES

In a nutshell here is the Buntline story. Back in the 1870s a "Dime Novelist" with the pen name of Ned Buntline reported he had special ordered Colt SAAs with 16" barrels and shoulder stocks and presented them to western law officers of note. Among those was Wyatt Earp. Whether this actually happened is a topic of debate. The Colt factory doesn't have a record of Ned Buntline ordering anything — although they made special Colts with extra-long barrels and shoulder stocks on special order.

In the mid-1950s, with the advent of television, western shows were all over prime time. I for one loved them. *Cheyenne* was my favorite but *Have Gun Will Travel* was another good one, *Maverick* was entertaining and gave James Garner his start. Another one well remembered was about Wyatt Earp as portrayed by Hugh O'Brian. His Colt Buntline also got plenty of airtime.

It was the popularity of those TV westerns that nudged Colt back into reintroducing the SAA in 1956. Naturally, the company capitalized on the popularity of the Wyatt Earp TV show by introducing their "Buntline Special" in 1957. The one I found at a Montana gun show was made during that first year judging by its serial number.



Colt also gave the 12" barreled SAAs their own name of Buntline Special.

BUNTLINE'S BY THE NUMBERS

Colt did something unique, at least with their early Buntline Specials — they added serial numbers to barrels that weren't matched to numbers on the frames. These numbers had a BB prefix for "Buntline Barrel" and then numbers starting with 100. Those numbers are stamped on barrel bottoms just in front of the cylinder's base pin. Mine is BB318. According to the book *Colt SAA Post War Model* by George Garton, Colt produced 595 Buntline Specials with blue/case colored finish in 1957. There's more proof mine was first year production.

Also in Garton's informative book are basic Buntline Special production numbers for both blue/case color finish and nickel-plating. Colt made 3,994 blue/case colored Buntlines between 1957 and 1974 when 2nd Generation SAA production ended. During the same time frame the company only manufactured 65 nickel-plated Buntline Specials. All were chambered as .45 Colt.

Sales of Buntline Specials followed TV western trends. They sold best in their first three years: 595, 1644 and 277 of blue/

case color. Figures didn't reach triple digits again until 1970.

Did the extra-long Buntline barrel give super velocity to .45 Colts? Some comparative testing I did with my old 12" barrel Buntline Special and a 7.5" standard SAA says no. A charge of 8.0 grains of Unique with 255-gr. lead alloy bullet gave 999 fps from my 7.5" barreled SAA and 10 fps less from the Buntline Special. Next I tried a charge of 7.2 grains of W231 with the same bullet. The 7.5" barrel gave 937 fps and the Buntline Special beat that by only eight fps.

Obviously, the Buntline Special was a novelty sold by Colt without actual practical purpose. I've never been especially attracted to them but finding one from first year production still with its original albeit nearly destroyed box definitely tripped my trigger. Next I'd like to stumble on a 2nd Generation .45 with a 3" barrel. Only 503 of those were made.



This is Duke's number BB318. Colt started the numbering with BB100.

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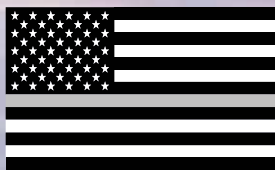
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3 QUESTIONS TO STAY ALIVE

Your first response to danger *should* be avoidance and escape. Not being involved in a confrontation is the easiest, safest path to victory. You do everything possible to avoid/escape trouble. Yet, there are situations where that either fails or isn't an option. "But," you ask, "how do I know when it's time to fight, to use aggressive force to stop the threat?" My response involves three other questions. Do I know the details? Am I going to contribute to solving the problem? Is it worth risking my life?

Do you know the details? Most violence is sudden, unexpected and dynamic. Unless it actually involves you, it can be difficult if not impossible to know exactly who is doing what to whom, and why. Under stress, a cocktail of chemicals dumps into your body. You experience tunnel vision, auditory exclusion and the brain distorts time and distance. Your mind will even play tricks by filling the gaps in short-term memory. For instance, what just took place two seconds ago — may get changed to what it thinks *probably* happened based on previous experiences and memories.

You see a "grungy, biker" assaulting a young lady. He slams her to the ground. You draw your pistol, rushing forward to save the day. Except the undercover officer you're about to attack is trying to keep the female suspect from stabbing him. This probably isn't gonna' go the way you thought it would.

Without knowing the specifics — who did what and why — you can't and shouldn't intervene. Again, if it doesn't involve you, retreat to a safe area. You never know when an isolated, focused event may bleed over into your safe zone and snare you. Before becoming entangled in a violent situation, first ask yourself, "Do I know the details?" And as always, notify the appropriate authorities as needed.



Many people train regularly, but there's more. You need to ask: "Is this situation worth risking my life for?" This isn't the kind of question you need to be debating with yourself in the middle of a fight.

PROBLEM SOLVING?

Next, ask yourself, "Am I going to contribute to solving the problem?" While shopping at Huge-Mart you hear gunshots, screaming and yelling somewhere in the store. With all the noise bouncing around inside the large warehouse it's difficult to tell exactly where the action is. You and 13 other law-abiding concealed carrying citizens draw your pistols, moving toward the trouble, clearing and searching the aisles looking for threats.

Law enforcement arrives. They're looking for threats too, and they have to treat everyone with a weapon — including all the "good guys" — as potential threats. You haven't contributed to solving the problem; in fact, you've made it more difficult for the professionals to work out a solution.

First, you don't know the details, so don't go looking for trouble. You may find it. Unless you know you're going to affect the outcome in a positive way find a safe place that if necessary can be easily defended. I think about it this way. There's a fire in my kitchen. I grab the extinguisher and put it out. If I see a building ablaze, I'm going to a safe area and call the professionals.



Tiger lives in the country and his defensive plan includes a long gun. As you ask the hard questions like "What am I going to defend?" — you need to consider what type weapons you'll have.

THE BIG QUESTION

"Is this worth risking my life for?" At my age, this is an incredibly short list. As a younger man I didn't take insults lightly — Scotts Irish with some Cherokee. Now, I don't argue with anyone, no matter what they say or do. Can you imagine shooting someone — very possibly killing them — simply because you couldn't ignore an insult? I'm not willing to die, or be forced to use my weapon against someone over a piece of property they're trying to steal. All of that can be easily replaced.

"What am I willing to die for?" isn't a question you should ask when angry. Think about it, the worst decisions you ever made where when you were mad. Regardless of what they say or how they act don't let it bother you.

The *only* reason I'm going to get involved is when it's absolutely necessary. If someone attempts to physically take control of me or Gretchen, or assault one of us — now that's a different question.

What are you willing to risk your life for? Only you can answer this question. But, I recommend asking it in advance. Remember, fighting is problem-solving at high speed. The more questions you can answer in advance the more efficiently you arrive at a solution.

There are enormous responsibilities associated with owning/carrying a firearm for defensive use. You go out of your way to be polite with everyone, no matter how big a jerk they are. When

you do see signs of possible trouble you avoid and escape. And, before becoming involved in a violent situation you always ask, "Do I know the details? Am I going to contribute to solving the problem? Is this worth risking my life?"



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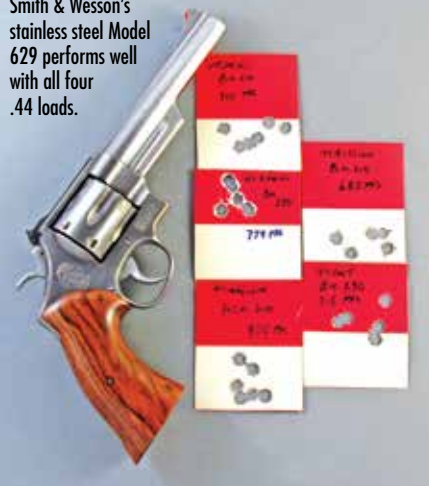
SHORT BRASS LONG CHAMBERS

Versatility is the watchword for this 4" nickel-plated S&W .44 Magnum as it handles .44 Magnum, .44 Special, .44 Colt and .44 Russian — becoming very pleasant shooting with “nice” loads.



HSM offers easy shooting loads in .44 Russian, .44 Special and .44 Magnum.

Smith & Wesson's stainless steel Model 629 performs well with all four .44 loads.



DOES IT ALWAYS WORK?

One question often arising from handloaders has to do with the use of short brass and long chambers. Cartridges like the .38 Special in .357 Magnum and .44 Special in .44 Magnum chambers come to mind. I graduated from high school in 1956 and two of my early sixguns were the Ruger .357 Blackhawk and the S&W .357 Highway Patrolman. In those days .357 Magnum brass was in short supply and I had one box of Norma .357 brass I babied. However, .38 Specials in those days when bullseye shooting was king were not only easy to come by but were relatively cheap. I shot thousands of .38 Specials, mostly loaded at .38/44 levels,

in those two .357 Magnums.

Today the semi-auto may be king, but the sixgun is the Mighty Prince of Versatility. Normally if the cartridge will fit in the chamber of a sixgun it will fire no matter what the length. With a semi-auto case length is of prime importance. If the case is too short misfires may occur. Too long and the case may not even chamber or allow the slide to close completely. I've heard of some 10mm autos with an extractor strong enough to hold the shorter .40 S&W loads in place, allowing them to fire. However I haven't tried it myself, and don't recommend it.

With the coming of long-range sil-

houetting spreading across the country in the late 1970s, one of the first to meet the revolver-needs of the sport was Dan Wesson with their 10" heavy-barreled .357 Magnum. This was a medium-frame revolver, and to make it work successfully, heavyweight bullets in .38 Special brass at very modest velocities were used. My choice was the RCBS #35-200GC, a bullet originally designed for the .35 Remington rifle. In .38 Special cases and loaded to about 900 fps they performed with excellent match accuracy in the Dan Wesson.

... NOT ALWAYS

I recently tested a bunch of .32 Long loads in several .32 Magnum revolvers. Did the “short-brass in long-chambers” work? Some loads actually produced one-hole groups, others gave excellent accuracy. However there was one exception. One .32 Magnum with a record for accuracy with .32 Magnum brass gave me 4" groups with the .32 Long. So the perfect answer to the original question is — “We won't know until we try” if short brass works. However the chances are very high for success.

Contemplate the choices we have when it comes to short brass and long chambers. The .32 S&W will work in .32 S&W Long, which will work in .32 Magnum, which will work in .327 Federal chambers. Oddly

enough, .32 ACPs will work in many .32 revolver chambers since they have enough of a rim to prevent going too far forward into the chamber.

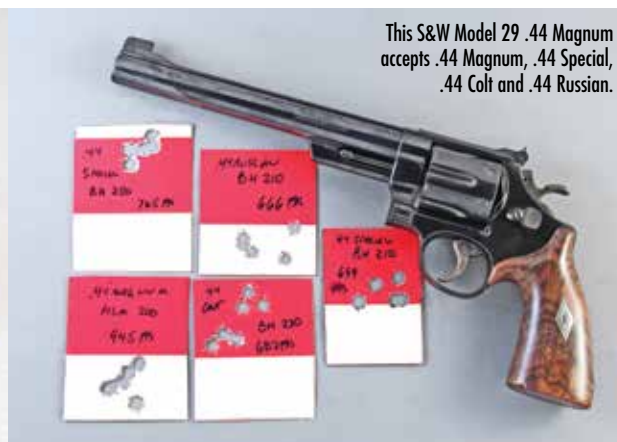
I've used .38 Super loads in some .357 Magnum cylinders that would accept them. Going up the scale .38 Short Colt will work in .38 Long Colt, which will work in .38 Special, which we know will work in .357 Magnum. If we're really feeling lucky we can try any of these in the long .357 SuperMag chambers.

I don't expect very good results with the latter as I have a Dan Wesson Model 460 that accepts .45 ACP, .460 Rowland and .45 WinMag all using moon clips. Rowlands are okay and WinMags work well, however the short .45 ACPs are pretty much a waste of time.

In the .41 Magnum we can also use .41 Special handloads but I don't expect either one to work very well in the .414 SuperMag.



With two cylinders this Colt New Frontier can be used with .44-40, .44 Special, .44 Colt and .44 Russian.



This S&W Model 29 .44 Magnum accepts .44 Magnum, .44 Special, .44 Colt and .44 Russian.

THE REAL WORLD

All of the above is well and good but here I'm more concerned with .44 Magnum sixguns. With the .44s we not only have the versatility we like, but we also have a great deal of flexibility when it comes to which .44 cartridges can be used. Let's take a quick look at the short(er) .44 cartridges we can use in .44 Magnum cylinders.

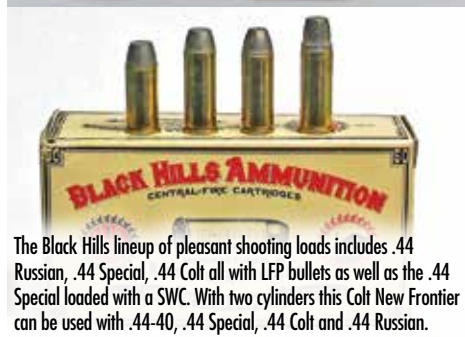
For testing purposes I look to Black Hills and to HSM using their .44 loads all of which are designed for easy shooting. From Black Hills I went with the .44 Special in 210 LFP and 250 SWC, .44 Russian 210 LFP and .44 Colt 230 LFP. From HSM, .44 Magnum 200 LFP, .44 Special 240 LFP and .44 Russian 200 LFP.

The most obvious example of shorter cases in longer chambers is using the .44 Special in .44 Magnums. I'm long past the age of being beaten up by round after round of full house .44 Magnum loads. All sixguns chambered in .44 Magnum were tested with all four softer-shooting .44 loads while those chambered in .44 Special protest-fired with Special, Colt and Russian .44 loads.

The results using the 7 1/2" Texas Longhorn Arms Flat-Top Target were interesting. I not only fired all the loads through the .44 Magnum cylinder, but also had auxiliary cylinders in .44 Spe-



After eight decades of service this Colt New Service Target Model still shoots .44 Special, .44 Colt and .44 Russian loads excellently.



The Black Hills lineup of pleasant shooting loads includes .44 Russian, .44 Special, .44 Colt all with LFP bullets as well as the .44 Special loaded with a SWC. With two cylinders this Colt New Frontier can be used with .44-40, .44 Special, .44 Colt and .44 Russian.

cial, .44 Russian and .44-40. With just the one cylinder and all four loads for all practical purposes the accuracy was the same with the tightest groups being 1" for five shots at 20 yards. The largest groups hovered in the 1 3/8" range.

The most accurate loads proved to be the HSM .44 Special 240 LFP at 784 fps and the .44 Russian 210 LFP from Black Hills at 686 fps, both providing 1" groups. This was the first sixgun tested and the accuracy obtained with the short .44 Russian in the longer .44 Magnum cylinder indicated to me the test would prove short cases work just fine.

With the .44-40 cylinder in place the Black Hills 200 LFP clocked out at 832 fps with a 1 1/4" group. The HSM 200 LFP was slightly slower at 786 fps and slightly more accurate with a 1 1/8" group. Again there was no practical difference between these loads.

THE .44 SPECIALS

When I switched to the .44 Special cylinder in this Flat-Top Target, groups tightened considerably. The .44 Russian load from HSM and the Black Hills .44 Colt load both grouped into 7/8". The Black Hills 250 SWC delivered 3/4", and the most accurate, the Black Hills .44 Special, astounded with a 5/8" group. Again there is no practical difference between these loads. Muzzle velocities were only slightly higher in the .44 Special cylinder when compared to the .44 Magnum cylinder.

With all the sixguns tested, 12 chambered in .44 Magnum, seven in .44 Special, and one each in .44 Russian and .44-40, I can say no matter which sixgun is chosen — if the cartridge will fit in the cylinder it will perform well. A total of 120 combinations of loads and sixguns were used. Less than 10 percent of them grouped into 2" — with all the rest into 1" or less.

To me this means no matter what .44 sixgun I'm using it will perform with shorter brass cartridge cases than it was chambered for. A bonus with the .44 Russian and .44 Colt loads is they turn the 5-shot .44 Specials — the S&W 396 and Charter Arms Bulldogs — into very pleasant potent shooters. Actually these loads also are very practical for use in the lightweight .44 Magnums and also the S&W 5-shot .44 Combat Magnum.

Chances are high, very high, short brass will work in long chambers with very few exceptions. Just make sure you clean the chambers well since the short brass leaves a fouling ring.



For more info: www.black-hills.com; www.hsmammunition.com

Bill Grover's personal Texas Longhorn Arms West Texas Flat-top Target has four cylinders —



chambered in .44 Magnum, .44 Special, .44 Russian and .44-40.



SURVIVAL AFTER A SHOOTING

Ron Barber's *In the Line of Duty* training videos have been a tremendous asset to law enforcement for many years. One of his latest is, I submit, a "must see" for working cops. On September 16, 2016, Officer Betty Shelby of the Tulsa, Oklahoma Police Department was enroute to a domestic disturbance when she came across a Lincoln Navigator stopped in the middle of the road, its operator shambling aimlessly about some distance away. He did not respond to her attempt to speak with him, and as a certified DRE (Drug Recognition Expert) she determined he was "on something." As backup responded, an observer in a police helicopter above the scene came to the same conclusion. The man turned out to be under the influence of a high quantity of PCP augmented by the stronger TCP.

The big guy kept reaching into his pockets. Shelby drew her gun and covered him as he continued to ignore police commands. Her lawyer, Scott Wood told me, "Betty gave him commands for 88 seconds before the shooting. (He) looked at Betty and visually targeted her before reaching in ..." — through the open driver's window of his vehicle as if going for a gun. She screamed at him to stop. He ignored her and continued. Having seen in training films how quickly a man could draw and fire from such positions, she discharged a single 165-gr. .40 S&W Gold Dot round from her department issue GLOCK 22. The bullet struck him in the side and he collapsed instantly. He did not survive.

It turned out he didn't have a gun after all. The media exploded.

MEDIA MANIPULATION

Terence Crutcher, 40, was African-American; Shelby, a 10-year officer, was white. The family of the deceased hired Florida attorney Benjamin Crump, who in turn brought in media specialist Ryan Julison. This was the same team who had created the image of Trayvon Martin as an innocent child murdered by a white racist in Florida. They had also portrayed Michael Brown as the "gentle giant" murdered by a white racist police officer in Ferguson, Missouri. George Zimmerman was found not guilty in the death of Trayvon Martin at trial. Officer Darren Wilson was cleared by the prosecutor's office after a lengthy investigation into the death of Michael Brown. And, just as both men were exonerated by extensive FBI/DOJ investigation — Betty Shelby would be investigated by the FBI/DOJ with no Federal charges filed.

But, for now, she was facing a local prosecutor under tremendous political pressure since the shooting had garnered international attention. Six days after the shooting, before the investigation was finished and before a full report had been put in front of him, the prosecutor announced he would charge Officer Betty Shelby with First Degree Manslaughter.

INSIDE STORY: IN THE LINE OF DUTY

For some time now, Ron Barber has produced the *In the Line of Duty* series of police training videos. Shelby and her husband Dave, also a Tulsa cop at the time, detail the nightmare of the shooting's aftermath, the trial, and the ongoing persecution following. Oklahoma put the "speedy" in "speedy trial" for this one, putting it in front of a jury in May of 2017. She was acquitted by the jury, whose foreman would later write, "The jury concluded any officer put in that situation at that exact moment and regardless of the skin color, gender or size of the suspect would have performed the same way ..."

In the *In the Line of Duty* video, Betty and Dave Shelby shared the following hard-learned advice. Hire defense lawyers who know their stuff. Shelby had two defense attorneys: ex-cop Scott Wood, familiar with police training issues, and Shannon McMurray, experienced in homicide trials. Sign up beforehand for FOP legal defense, or your department's equivalent. The Fraternal Order of Police paid the \$411,000+ legal bill. For private citizens, the analog would be a post-self-defense support group like the Armed Citizens Legal Defense Network.

The National Center for Police Defense paid for her security during her trial. Have an emergency nest egg to get you through the trial. It's hard to find work when you stand charged with murder or manslaughter. Access to psychological and emotional support is critical. Fortunately, TPD had a program in place for officers involved

in such critical incidents.

For those who don't, the film recommends reaching out to www.bluehelp.org and www.thewoundedblue.org. Consider a trust for your personal assets. At the time of the video, Shelby was still a defendant in a pending lawsuit by the family of the deceased. Have a go-bag, and evacuation plans, ready. The Shelbys say they were informed a Black Lives Matter contingent was planning to go to their home *en-masse* to place her under citizens' arrest for murder. Seeing the potential for negative outcome, the Shelbys had to flee their own home on short notice.

Be able to articulate your own knowledge of policy and law that informed the actions for which you are being tried. The judge did not allow TPD instructors to testify as to her training. Fortunately, Shelby was able to do so very well herself when she took the witness stand.

The Shelbys have left TPD and now work for separate sheriff's departments, but their ordeal is ongoing. They have a private company offering training for coping with the aftermath of critical incidents: www.iswb.net. Rob Barber's policy is to offer his training videos only to bona fide law enforcement, academies, criminal justice programs at the college and high school level, accredited security, or government entities. This one is episode SI46 — Betty Shelby and Surviving the Aftermath of a Fatal O.I.S.



For more info: www.lineofduty.com,
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OFF-SEASON BLUES?

HEAD TO THE GUN GYM

For most outdoor pursuits there's generally a down-time, a time in the year when the activity you enjoy most is at a lull. For handgun hunters there are certain times on the calendar when most hunting seasons are closed. I'm not collecting stamps or knitting then — so what do I do?

Got a new optic you want to try? Now's a good time to replace the old one. I don't know about you but I neglect cleaning my guns thoroughly during hunting season. So, I drag them all out and give each one a good cleaning to keep the Hoppes smell strong in the gun room. Make sure all the mounts and scope rings are tight while you're at it. Replace

any parts, add new grips perhaps and mount a different scope. You name it and the off-season is a good time to make certain all your guns are ready for action.

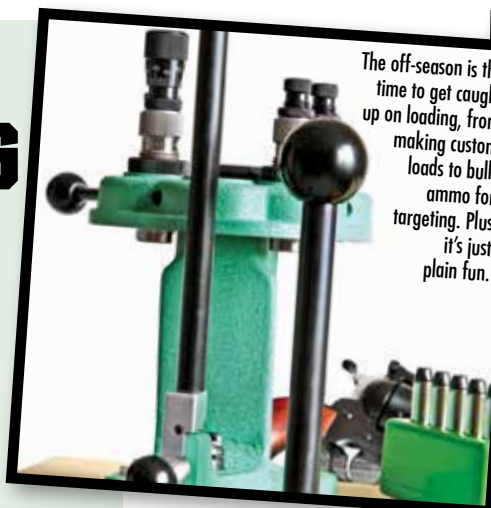
We often spend an excessive amount of time and money getting ready for a hunt and we've got the latest and greatest everything. But here's one factor never to be overlooked or taken for granted — yourself. Are you physically and mentally prepared to go the extra mile? I know hunters who've hiked for hours on the first day of the hunt — and were hurting so bad the next morning they couldn't move. According to guides, many hunters are out of shape and can't shoot — period. This is not music to your ears, I know, but is harsh reality. Take steps to assure you're in shape, before the hunt.

HIT THE LOADING ROOM

During down-time, I like to hit the man cave for some reloading. For me, this is a good time to reload all my empty brass. It's a time to roll out some practice ammo for every handgun I shoot often.

There are new bullets to test, different powder recipes, along with different loads for experimentation. Heck, it's downright therapeutic. You can customize loads for your specific gun, with the bullet of your choosing. Handloading has many advantages and I can't think of a better way to spend a miserable, windy, freezing cold winter day.

Redding's T-7 Turret press works well for me. Once the dies are adjusted, you can begin cranking out loads. I really like Redding's 4-die pistol set for seating and crimping in separate stages. The loading bench and shelves are home for reloading manuals, Starline brass, primers of all sorts, Nosler, Sierra, and Hornady bullets along with a multitude of loading accessories. It's all good — it's all enjoyable — and reloading is a great way to make valuable use of downtime in the off-season.



The off-season is the time to get caught up on loading, from making custom loads to bulk ammo for targeting. Plus it's just plain fun.



Don't let off-season blues get you down, expand your horizons. Hog hunting is available year-round. Mark took this boar with a Freedom Arms Model 83 in .41 Mag.

FORMING GOOD HABITS

Unless you're Spiderman, practice becomes an essential component of skill and accuracy. I like punching bug-hole groups in paper just as much as the next guy but in the real world of hunting, I need to emulate hunting situations. Banging away at steel targets is fun, providing instant gratification. Shooting off of a backpack, a tripod or resting the gun on my knees, mirrors real field conditions, paying dividends later.

You can even go a bit further and take a short jog, do a set of push-ups, or any physical activity increasing your heart rate before shooting. You can easily simulate shooting under stress, rattled nerves or buck fever. I wouldn't say I'm a picture of relaxation when a big, mature whitetail buck steps out of the woods and presents a shot. Nor am I calm after climbing a steep mountain to find a ram on the adjacent peak. Let your imagination take over and shoot from unorthodox shooting positions. If you hunt long enough, you'll find yourself shooting from an uncomfortable position — I guarantee you.

There really isn't a good alternative for quality trigger time. Knowing your gun and load is critical. Accepting our own limitations is equally important. Just because your buddy can hit a tin can from 100 yards off-handed doesn't mean you should be attempting a shot at big game under the same conditions. Proper practice is essential and will give you the confidence needed when an opportunity presents itself.

The off-season is a good time to hone your shooting skills. Take advantage of the opportunity to have fun and get in shape at the same time!



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VISIT: ROCKRIVERARMS.COM

SA revolvers generally have a gate on the right side of the frame. Opening it allows access to the chambers for loading and unloading. Centerfire or rimfire, operation is the same.

Some DA revolvers, like those made by Ruger and Kimber, use a cylinder latch pressed inward rather than forward, like a S&W. Revolver is an 8-shot Ruger in .22 LR.

ALTERNATIVE GUN-THINKING

During WWII the First Special Services Force (FSSF) was armed with U.S. weapons, including Johnson machine guns. They were also trained in the use of captured weapons, including firing exercises, disassembly, maintenance and reassembly. I think there's a good lesson there for modern handgunners.

Today, there are so many makes and

models you can hardly be expected to become familiar, much less proficient, with all of them. To become familiar with them, the logical thing might be to buy one of every new gun to stay familiar with the new technology. But we all know, realistically you could likely never do that.

A variation of this plan is a procedure

I follow on a small scale. When I want to learn more about a certain model I search for a clean used sample I can buy at a decent price. Then I disassemble it, reassemble, shoot it and photograph it for my files. Generally after a few months I can trade or sell it without too much loss. It's not a quick way to learn about different guns but it is thorough.

A latch on the left side of this Enfield top-break is pressed down allowing the barrel/cylinder assembly to pivot down, exposing the chambers for loading and unloading.



REVOLVER-CENTRIC

Most handgun owners are content owning a handgun or two and really aren't interested in building up a collection. I know our regular readers are much more knowledgeable and enthusiastic than most handgun owners, but even they have lots of interests other than shooting — and allocate time and money for those interests.

An excellent alternative is to get active in a local gun club. In many places the only place to shoot safely is at a formal range, often carrying a requirement of being a member. Don't expect other members to offer pistols for you to try out right away — and keep in mind, it's often considered bad manners to ask. Once you get to be a regular, you'll find other members happy to share knowledge and equipment.

Maybe you want to learn more about revolvers. No need to go in to see if this is the club for you, just check the parking lot. If you see working pickups, a rusty tool chest bolted in back, a manual transmission with a real compound-low truck gearing, brush scratches and a cracked windshield, odds are you've found revolver people.

In this semi-auto era a primer on revolvers might keep you from looking like a complete newbie. Let's assume you're a competent handgunner well versed in safe firearm use. Here's a few points to ponder about wheelguns — never forgetting there're exceptions to about everything.

MUSINGS

Revolvers generally have no manual safety, though usually there are internal parts to prevent firing if the gun is dropped. Single-action revolvers have just one way of being fired — the hammer is manually cocked, rotating the cylinder, bringing a cartridge in line with the barrel. Then the gun is fired by pressing the trigger.

DA revolvers have two ways of being fired. The hammer can be cocked and trigger pressed to fire as with a single-action. The gun can also be fired with one long heavy pull on

the trigger — rotating the cylinder and cocking the hammer back, compressing the mainspring.

With single-action revolvers a gate on the right side of the frame is opened, providing access to the cylinder for loading and unloading. Most DA revolvers have a cylinder swinging out to the left for loading and unloading. The cylinder is

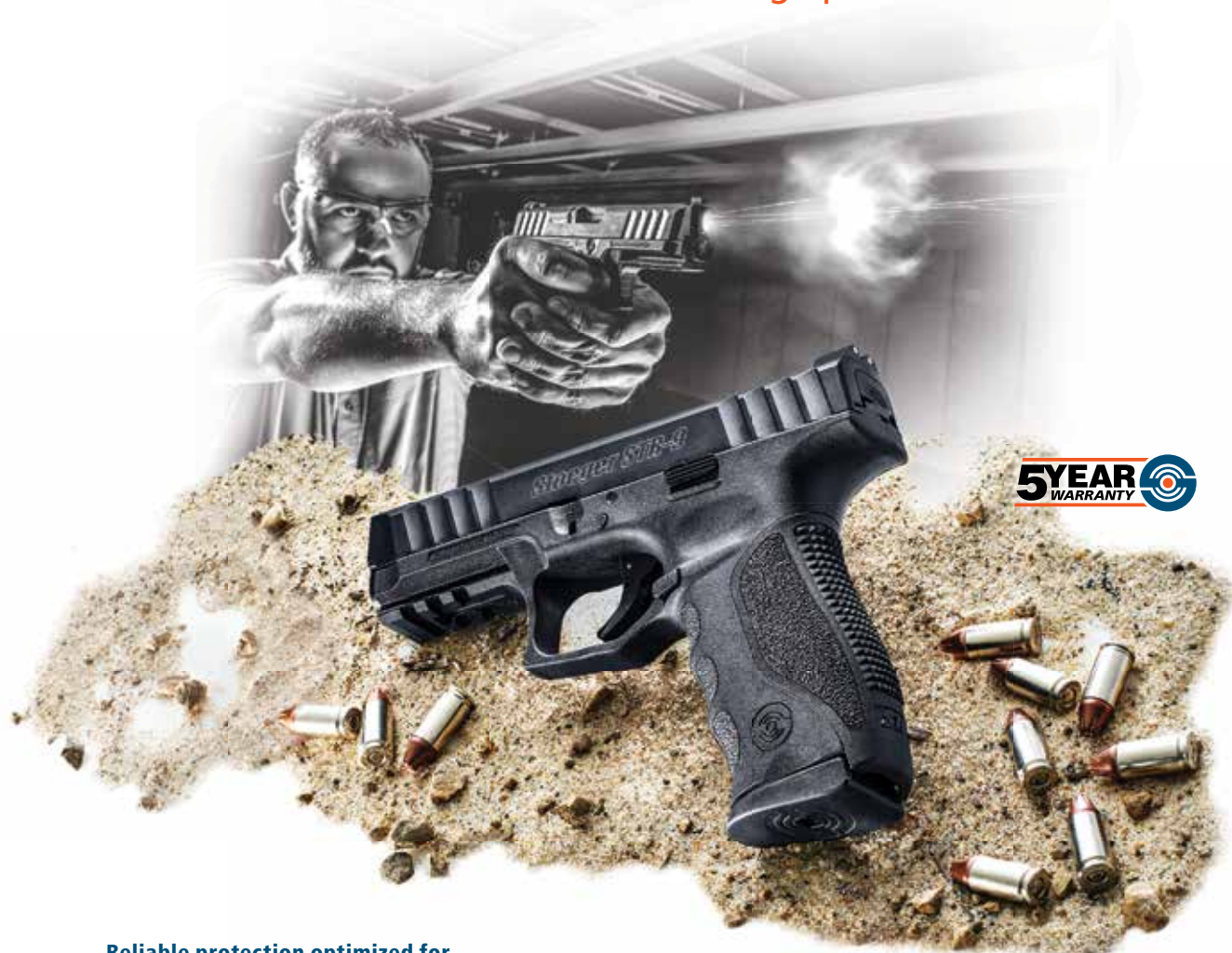
released by a latch on the left side of the frame. The cylinder latch can be moved back to release (Colt); pushed forward to release (S&W and Taurus), or pushed inward to release (Ruger or Kimber).

You can learn a lot from those old revolver guys. Just remember, a mind is like a parachute, they both work better when they're open.



The compact STR-9C is now available

Tough protection in two sizes



Reliable protection optimized for every day carry. Stoeger's reputation for dependable and durable firearms continues with the new STR-9C striker-fired, semi-automatic 9mm pistol. Smaller than our full-sized STR-9, it's made for concealed carry. Both models feature an integrated rail for accessories, internal safety, front and back slide serrations for easy cycling, a three-dot sight system, enhanced ergonomics, and rounded edges for snag-free draws and holstering. Interchangeable backstraps offer a custom fit. Experience the feel, balance and quality of our STR-9 and STR-9C at your local firearms dealer today. For more information, please visit us online at StoegerIndustries.com.



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FREE TO GOOD HOME



Dog shows quite a bit of gray these days, but so do I.

COMPANY, PROTECTION, ANTIDEPRESSANT — FRIEND

did before an overseas deployment. However, she was part of our family now, entitling her to proper healthcare.

She was, for the time being at least, a girl, so Daisy and Lucy made it into the hat. I suggested Agamemnon but was

mercilessly overruled. Eventually a consensus was reached.

This unpretentious animal had no discernible pedigree. Hers was indeed a convoluted heritage. The pitiless vagaries of genetics conspired to keep her off the stage at the Westminster Kennel Club.

Her name was Dog. When first we announced our decision she lit up like we had plugged her into the wall. She didn't much care what she was called. She just wanted to be loved — and to love back more in return.

Rip was an adorable \$200 beagle. This was a lot for an animal by my standards. The kids fell instantly in love with the little rabbit-chasing machine. On our first real outing Rip took off after a bunny or a girlfriend and just never came back. The kids were crushed. I was disgusted.

All the best dog stories begin with five words — “Free To Good Home” — written with a used-up marking pen on a ragged piece of cardboard. In my case, from underneath a dingy, rundown house trailer eight of the most

wretched mongrels poured forth. They were ugly and emaciated. Ears pointed in different directions, tails were crooked, and their polychromatic coats spanned the palette.

The ugliest of the lot just wouldn't leave us alone. She barked and leapt trying to earn our attention. Where the other little dogs loitered laconically, this one looked like she wanted to be on our shoulders. We were about to make one seriously homely addition to our tribe.

The vet wasn't happy. She had heartworms and needed more shots than I

Noblesse Oblige

Dog is not a particularly large animal, and she is by her nature docile. However, never threaten her tribe. She once got into a tussle with a larger hound, resulting in an infection I had to drain. Throughout it all she never bit or scratched.

She once cut her foot grievously on a piece of glass. I seriously thought she was going to bleed out. I numbed her up and sewed her quivering paw back together with some 4-0 Vicryl. She didn't snap at me then either.

She never chased cars, but she always played lead dog up our labyrinthine driveway. A moment's distraction on her part was all it took. A cast on her fractured leg along

with the cone of shame had her on the mend. She was also once bitten in the face by a water moccasin but was not terribly inconvenienced.

At 13 years of age she is completely deaf. Tens of thousands of rounds will do that. However, she never could bring herself to be anywhere we weren't even when it was loud.



Unpretentious mutts seem to make the best pals. Just like their plebian human counterparts, they seem to pack less emotional baggage than the pedigreed sort.

DENOUEMENT

Dog doesn't do tricks, and she's never known a night indoors. She always smells a bit doggyish, even when clean. Dog's food comes from a big institutional feeder, and she gets her drinking water from the lake. Considering the rancid carcasses she has dragged up over the years I'm not unduly troubled about waterborne illnesses.

The kids are gone, and my bride and I have embraced the next phase of our lives. The days of little scampering feet and daily explorations about the farm with Dog in tow are lamentably

gone, never to return. She's old, but so am I. At an adjusted age of 91 she remains surprisingly spry.

Dog loves me even when I'm tired, grouchy, or smell bad and maybe even more if the last. She jumps up into the truck to inquire about my day every evening when I get home from work. In return for keeping her fed and regularly scratching

behind her ears she would willingly give her dying breath for me. She's made that clear many times over the years. There's a great deal we Homo sapiens could learn from Dog.





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DEFENSE

NEW FIOCCHI BLUE GUARDIAN

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



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ALIEN GEAR FOR EARTHLINGS

BOLDLY EXPLORING NEW FRONTIERS

Alien Gear, provider of innovative holster systems for mere earthlings, forged an intergalactic partnership with a few new companies, broadening their product line and providing us with more cool gear. Tedder Industries, makers of Alien Gear have added *Bigfoot Gun Belts* and *Tactica Defense Fashion* — shooting gear designed for women — to the family. But don't let the last name fool you, there're some things us guys wouldn't mind having too from this galactic gear trilogy.

SHAPE-SHIFTING HOLSTERS

We're all familiar with Alien Gear holsters, the synthetic system built for comfort and compatibility between humanoid and gun. This year they've released the Shape-Shift System. Just as it sounds, it's a way to shift, or shape your carry mode, depending on your needs for the day. The System offers various ways of carrying IWB, OWB and even a nifty way to safely mount your shooter in your vehicle for quick access.

The adaptable concept starts with the packaging, serving as part of the instruction system. Select the carry system you want and pick the proper base. Lifting the inner lid reveals the hardware options to go with your carry choice. There's a detailed instruction manual included, but who reads those? If you're like me, and get confused, the manual does make it easy. There's also a useful website to walk you through the process — even simpler!

This Cloak Chest shoulder rig is perfect for the outdoorsman wanting a no-nonsense, comfortable rig that won't get in the way while wearing a back- or waist-pack. The soft, cushioned base is anchored to your torso with durable woven nylon. The CoolVent neoprene allows contact area to breathe with its wicking action, while protecting your gun. A custom molded shell covers the trigger guard for safety offering a secure fit.

Bigfoot Gun Belts supplies gear to support your gun and your pants. The Steel-Belted-Belt features a rugged but flexible stainless-steel core providing maximum weight-bearing support. Combined with triple-edge finishing on the English bridle leather, tough roller



buckle hardware and durable directional snaps, this belt will never let you, or your britches, down.

Funny things happen to the male species of humanoids as we age — our britches need help defying gravity. Here's the really cool thing: Suspenders are trendy! What distinguished, cranky old geezer would be complete without suspenders? Roy wears them, and he's not even cranky. Well, not usually. Coming from Bigfoot Gun Belts, you know they're made from the same classic English bridle leather, too. Elastic bands in the back guarantee

utmost support, comfort and function. Choose either X- or Y-back style, with one or two anchor straps.



The Alien Gear Shape-Shift system allows one holster to serve many needs including, IWB, OWB, car and even bedside.

SOME THINGS FOR HER

For the female warrior, Tactica Fashion Design specializes in clothing, handbags and other feminized gear for the stylishly rugged woman who can take care of herself. The Bug Out Bag is a rugged nylon expandable backpack with 39-liter capacity measuring 14.5" wide, 21" tall and 8" deep. The main internal compartment, flanked by two divided external compartments, can expand to 64 liters if needed. The urban camo

pack also has ammunition loops, a hydration reserve compartment, padded shoulder straps, parachute buckles on the side and MOLLE webbing. A sturdy handle up top offers "Grab and Go" functionality.

Tactica's Bug Out and Pistol Bags offer solid gear for the prepared urban woman.

The Tactical Pistol Bag stows two pistols in soft but tough quilted pockets, ensuring your guns won't get dings, dents or scratches. It features a durable woven nylon exterior shell for protection. The heavy-duty zipper is counter-sunk, making the bag water-resistant in the rain. The rug also has four exterior mag pockets for spare ammo. Tote the whole thing with two sturdy straps.

If you can't carry your CCW, no worries! The Personal Safety Alarm with an integral light is just the ticket. It attaches to your key chain, so it's always there. The 140 decibels of pulsating, ear-shrieking panic alarm is sure to distract and draw attention.

Don't alienate yourself — you don't have to go off-planet to find a variety of useful self-defense gear. Just check out the growing list of offerings from the Tedder intergalactic empire.



For more info: www.aliengearholsters.com. Also, go to www.americanhandgunner.com to see more Alien Gear product photos!



Alien Gear will help you find your inner alien. They also make great gun belts and suspenders.



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THE SIXGUNS OF MILT MORRISON

Back in the 1990s, Milt and Karen Morrison were visiting us and after supper I pulled out a few sixguns. I had the idea of coming up with a different kind of custom gun. I also had a few copies of old articles from the 1920s through the 1950s concerning customizing Colt Bisley Models. As a result, a Cimarron Bisley .44-40 was turned over to Milt for conversion to a real hideaway sixgun — single-action style. I wanted a true 19th-century-style belly gun, a term once used for short-barrelled, easy-to-conceal sixguns. Turned loose to use his artistic freedom, Morrison came up with the perfect single action for concealment and defensive use.

The result was a real single-action defensive sixgun. Milt removed the ejector rod housing and the ejector rod mounting slot on the right side of the frame, welding and re-contouring the frame in the process. The standard Bisley grip frame was removed and replaced by a brass Bird's Head grip frame adapted to a Colt-style mainframe. At the same time, the original Bisley hammer was changed from its link system to a roller system to work with the new mainspring.

The action was tuned, all end-shake was removed, and



The Shootists commissioned Milt Morrison to build these custom .45 Rugers for John in 1995 and 2014 celebrating John's involvement with the group.

gun was finished in Milt's high luster Black Diamond blue. To top it off an 18K gold band was inlaid around the cylinder. The result is one of the most beautiful and efficient single-action belly guns as ever existed. Chambered in .44-40, it's potent but easy to shoot and control with the heavy barrel.

a 2" long heavy barrel fitted. For easier sighting when deliberate shots were called for, the rear sight notch was changed from its V-shape to give a square picture, and a new front sight was fitted. The trigger was also contoured to match the inside of the trigger guard.

To finish the project the mainframe was re-colored, and the rest of the

A RETRO-CLASSIC

We have many modern guns available, however the number one spot in my sixgunnin' soul still belongs to the old classics. Alan Teague commissioned Milt to do a very special sixgun:

"It would be my take on the Colt Target Bisley. The frame would be a

Flat-Top, barrel would be an octagon 6.5" to 7.5", rear sight would be dove-tailed, adjustable for windage only.

And the front sight would be, somehow, adjustable for elevation. The cylinder would be unfluted, grip frame would be a Ruger Bisley style, the frame would be color case hardened and the barrel, cylinder and grip frame would be done in Milton's Black Diamond finish. The grips would be ivory, and finally a grip cap would be steel, either Black Diamond or color case, with a silver medallion insert."

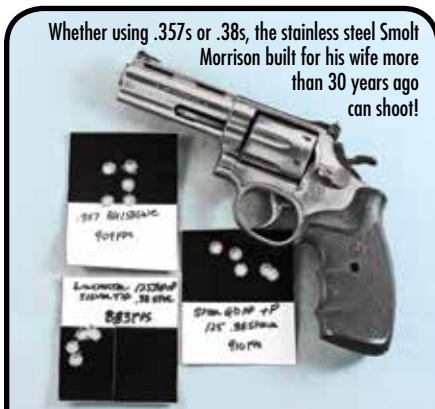
Milt has taken one of our modern single action sixguns and turned it into a true classic. Starting with a Ruger Bisley Model the top strap is welded up and then recut to accept a rear sight patterned after that found on the Colt Flat-Top Target sixguns of the 1890s. In fact this model is called the Ruger Flat-Top Target. The front sight is in a dovetail and the rear sight — patterned after that found on the old Colt Target — is adjust-

able for elevation. The heavy 7.5" barrel is hexagonal. The grip frame, hammer and trigger are reminiscent of the Colt Bisley Model Flat-Top Target from 1896.

The left side of the barrel is marked "Bisley Target" while the right side above the ejector rod housing is inscribed with the caliber, .41 SPECIAL. The frame is case hardened while the balance of this classic rendition, including the hammer, is finished in the deep Black Diamond bluing Milt is well known for.

Two gold bands encircling the rear of the cylinder add a classy touch. The grips are ivory micarta, and the butt is fitted with a special silver ring cap. The underside of the butt itself is scrimshawed with a head of a wolf. The combination of Bisley grip frame and heavy barrel makes this big sixgun very pleasant to shoot whether you choose the .44 Special or .41 Special chambering. All in all this is one of the most beautiful custom single action revolvers I've ever encountered.

Whether using .357s or .38s, the stainless steel Smolt Morrison built for his wife more than 30 years ago can shoot!



A SPECIAL .44 SPECIAL

Years ago Milt rescued a Colt New Service .44 Special and in the process fitted it with new sights, totally tuned it, and turned it into a 4.5" Target Model. I had found a .44 Special someone had started to convert to a Target Model by installing an adjustable rear sight. It was not in the best of shape mechanically and the original front sight, which was too low for the rear sight, was still in place. This 4.5" New Service was turned over to Milt Morrison for total rebuilding and the installation of a proper front sight. It's not an original New Service Target but it will certainly do.



Milt Morrison rescued this .44 Special Colt New Service from the boneyard and turned it into a very special Special.



Whether Rugers or Colts, the Python conversions prove to be accurate and feel very good in the hand.



Milt Morrison converted this Bisley Model .44-40 into a very effective 19th Century-style "belly gun."

SHOOTISTS

In 1986 I invited a dozen sixgunners to gather with me in Wyoming for a week of shooting and sharing. We had such a good time we decided to make this an annual event and "The Shootists" was officially formed. Since that time The Shootists have met annually and they have twice honored me with special sixguns.

In 1995 Milt Morrison was commissioned to build a special sixgun for me as "Shootist of the Decade." Starting with a Ruger New Model Blackhawk .45, Milt totally tuned the action, fitted a new front sight, finished this special sixgun in his Black Diamond finish with gold embellishments, and our mutual friend Dave Wayland made the custom grips. The top strap is engraved: "In Memory of Deacon Deason" who was the founder of BearHug Grips and a very special friend and Shootist.

Then in 2014 friends in the industry honored me with a banquet and I was again presented with a special sixgun from The Shootists, also built by Milt Morrison. This is also a Ruger New Model Blackhawk .45 albeit this time it's a Bisley Model patterned after Milt's Western Hunter package. It is of course totally tuned, fitted with a new front sight, finished in Black Diamond bluing with a case-hardened frame and gold embellishments.

The gold lettering is a very special touch that includes my "4Fs" — Faith, Family, Friends and Firearms — engraved on the cylinder. The whole package is topped off with custom grips with my initials. Both of these .45s are cherished sixguns and the only problem will be figuring out which grandkids they will go to.



Milt Morrison's "Smolt" conversions all shoot splendidly.

SMOLTS

About 30 years ago Milt set about to build a special sixgun for his wife Karen. Starting with a stainless steel .357 Magnum S&W Model 66, Milt expertly fitted a 4" stainless steel Python barrel to the K-Frame S&W. The resulting "Smolt" has a totally new balance, heavy in the front, and well-suited to DA shooting.

For many decades sixgunners argued the merits of Colt versus S&W DA sixguns. The majority of aficionados felt the DA mechanism of the Smith could not be topped, while the Colt was better suited to single action firing.



Milt Morrison resurrected the Colt Flat-Top Target of the 1890s with this special custom Ruger .41 Special.



The "Cougar" is a Ruger Security Six with a Python barrel. The combo works just fine.

Even Fitz, John Henry FitzGerald, who was Mr. Colt during the two world wars, privately said the S&W had the better action for DA shooting. The .357 Python not only had a heavy barrel but

was also tighter as to bore diameter than most .357 sixgun barrels and seems to shoot a shade better. Combining the two, as Milt did way back then, resulted

Continued on page 61

AFFORDABLE, RELIABLE AND OPTIC-EQUIPPED!

Mastering the SCCY's double-action only trigger takes practice. When you learn to work it properly, the SCCY and red dot sight will reward you with amazingly accurate results.



DAVID FREEMAN

SCCY'S CPX1 & CPX2 RED DOT MODELS

I was already a SCCY fan before getting one mounted with a Crimson Trace CTS-1500 Red Dot. Joe Roebuck of SCCY was a Mechanical Design Engineer with over 40 years of experience as a tool and die maker. Watching state after state enact concealed carry legislation, he envisioned a demand for a safe, simple to use and affordable firearm. Using his skills and experience Joe designed one. He started his company in 2003 to sell the CPX line of handguns. Joe Roebuck's vision was to build a high-quality firearm as good as or better than other brand name products — without costing a fortune.

SCCY's Daytona Beach factory, just

a half a mile from the Daytona 500 Speedway, contains state-of-the-art CNC machining centers using custom tooling and programs designed by Joe Roebuck. All major metal components are manufactured right there in SCCY's facility. The guns are 100 percent American made and backed by a perpetual warranty. SCCY has sold over 500,000 guns in four different models. Two 9mms, one with an



The small size of the SCCY with a red dot makes concealed carry easy.

external safety and one without, and two .380's, one with the external safety and one without. Each of those models is

also offered with a Crimson Trace Red Dot sight.

Some Details

The red dot gun is my third SCCY, so you know I must like them. It's a SCCY Blue CPX-2 9mm. The barrel on these are 3" long, machined from bar stock, with seven lands and grooves having a right-hand twist. The receiver is made from 7075-T6 aircraft grade, heat-treated aluminum alloy. The slide is stainless steel with a Black Nitride finish. The top of the slide is machined nicely for the Crimson Trace Red Dot sight.

The SCCY Frame is made from Zytel polymer with an integral recoil cushion on the back strap. The 3-dot sight system is totally visible through the Red Dot sight, which is an advantage. SCCYs are DA only, with an internal hammer and an inertial firing pin, protecting against discharge if accidentally dropped. The trigger is designed to have a consistent 9-lb. trigger pull. The one I'm running with the Red Dot sight is averaging 8 lbs. 1 oz. It was heavier initially, but 30 or 40 dry-fires plus my time at the range smoothed it right out. The 10-round magazines have two choices for a baseplate, either flat or extended for a pinky finger.

I sold SCCYs in my gun store long before I ever shot one myself. Our market consisted mostly of new concealed carry clients where the single-stack nines ruled. But the SCCY held its own because of price and capacity. I'm not sure why I went so long without taking them seriously, but two things about the SCCYs got my attention. The first was a wealthy client who had considerable gun knowledge and could have afforded anything — but bought a SCCY for his everyday carry gun.

He gave me three reasons why he chose the SCCY — the size, the fact it held 11 rounds and the DA trigger. I tried

the trigger and didn't like it, but in those days I almost always carried a 1911 Commander with a smooth 4-lb. single-action trigger.

A New Understanding

The second time the SCCY caught my attention was when I passed by a display table at an NRA Expo and saw SCCYs in a multitude of colors and camo patterns. I couldn't help but stop and take all the color in. Working the booth that day was Scott McGregor, SCCY's National Sales Manager and a friend and former team member at FMG Publications. Scott arranged for me to get my hands on a couple of test guns. When they arrived I began to appreciate Joe Roebuck's vision. It's funny how things tumble into place sometimes to open a whole new channel of understanding.

I'd been shooting a Ruger GP100 and challenging myself to become good at shooting it DA instead of cocking for each shot. With practice, I was improving. When I started shooting the SCCYs, the GP100 practice paid off and I shot them well without being put off by the DAO trigger. SCCY's reason for selling them that way matched the reasoning of Ruger, S&W, Kimber and others who sell DAO revolvers with no exposed hammer — they're safer. With practice they can be just as accurate and they have the advantage of preventing accidental discharges by virtue of a trigger pull insisting you intend to shoot.

Breaking down a SCCY for cleaning is simple. A small screwdriver to pry the takedown pin helps but isn't necessary.



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David likes blue SCCYs, green ones and Camo ones too. SCCY has also announced availability of 9mm models and .380 models with red dot sights.

The Red Dot assists in defense by making it very easy to point the gun where it needs to be while you're working the trigger. A couple of small Allen wrenches for adjusting the sight were also included. Before leaving for the range, I put a laser bore sight in the barrel to give me an aiming point and adjusted the Crimson Trace Red Dot so it was right on top of the dot from the laser bore sight. This super-imposed it

Continued on page 65

Fixed sights on the SCCY are plainly visible through the red dot sight.



PORTED PERFECTION



S&W's Performance Center gunsmiths have added refinements, including ported barrel and slide, to the 2.0 version of the company's very popular M&P Shield.

Among the refinements in the 2.0 Shield is a more aggressive grip texture to aid in retention.

DAVID FREEMAN

S&W'S PERFORMANCE CENTER SHIELD

I'd like to think the folks who work at Smith & Wesson's Performance Center hang onto every word we pen about their products, but I suspect the truth is they don't need our praise to know they turn out quality guns. You can see the evidence everywhere: on the competition circuit, in law enforcement, on the hunting field and in the hands and holsters of discriminating shooters around the globe. Regarding the new Performance Center M&P Ported Shield M2.0, S&W took a gun already selling well over a million samples and improved it significantly, while keeping the price within range of us ordinary people. Imagine a Performance Center gun for only \$539 MSRP.

The original Shields have sold out the wazoo in 9mm, .40 S&W and .45

ACP, with demand remaining high. Our shop started selling them in the early part of 2013 and sold them as fast as we could get them in. The next summer, when Shields in .40 S&W were available, almost all the graduates from the

Since the slide moves during recoil, you'll notice three ports on each side to handle the exhaust from the single barrel port on each side.





David ran a variety of practice and defensive ammo through the Performance Center Shield with no troubles. Note the extended mag.

Fort Worth Police Academy bought ones from us as their back-up guns. This went on through three or four classes, at least. It was like an unofficial second ceremony on graduation day — get your badge, then go to the gun shop and get your Shield. Somebody at the academy was spreading the word about us, and we sure appreciated it.

Enhanced M2.0

So, I was keen to check out one of these Performance Center-enhanced versions of the Shield when the opportunity came up. My son loaned me his first generation 9mm Shield for this evaluation so I could point out the enhancements on the M2.0 and the Performance Center additions.

The first thing you notice when you pick up any M2.0 Shield is the grip texture. All the original M&P semi-automatics have a very comfortable, lightly stippled grip.

But if someone tries to twist the gun out of your hand, you'd be hard-pressed to hold on to it. The M2.0 models, whether they are Performance Center or standard, have a grip texture that feels a little like medium-grade sandpaper. Wet or dry, you can hold on to this one.

Although the inner workings of the frame, the trigger, magazine and magazine release appear to be identical, the same components in the Performance Center model have been tuned.

You'll notice the difference in the trigger performance. More on this in a bit.

The Ported Shield is available in the same three chamberings as the original Shield. Each caliber is available with either tritium night sights or HIVIZ sights. For reasons I'm sure make sense to the S&W marketing team, both 9mm and .40 models have manual thumb safeties while the .45 ACP model does not. I got the 9mm with HIVIZ sights. The single front sight is green and the two in back are red.

On all Shields the frame is polymer

Continued on page 68



Above: S&W includes a Performance Center cleaning kit with the PC Shield. It has jags, brushes, patches for multiple pistol calibers, so you can use it on other guns too.



This PC Shield features fiber optic HIVIZ three dot sights — red in the rear, green in the front.

'YOU ASKED FOR IT - WE BUILT IT!'



LES BAER'S AMERICAN HANDGUNNER SPECIAL EDITION



1911 45 ACP

THE READERS' 'DREAM-GUN!' ROY HUNTINGTON PHOTOS: ROB JONES/ THE IMAGESMITH, LLC

It's here, rendered in steel, a sort of living performance of a dream Les and I have shared right along with many of you. This project is one of those times when an idea pinging away at you finally pushes itself to the front. Or, in this case, bashes down the door, demanding to be attended to. Then, suddenly, it's real and I'm holding it in my hand, answering the question:

What would be a "perfect" 1911?

Over the years, I've kept notes

on what you all have asked for in an "unspoiled" 1911. The gamut of wants ranges from Titanium frames, 1-lb. trigger pulls, laser sights, a .221 Fireball chambering — all the way "down" to a simple copy of a WWII GI gun. There has always been, though, constants in the list of *must-haves*. After deleting the oddities, the one-off ideas and the engineering impracticalities, I looked hard at the remaining features shooters listed again and again.

I weighed the benefits of each feature, just how practical they are in the real world, how generally appealing and realistic they seemed, then kept hacking away at the list until it seemed impossible to cut anything else. This isn't what I feel, it's what you feel too — even if I didn't agree completely with your choice. Then, I took to heart what Sherlock Holmes said in *The Adventure of the Blanched Soldier*: "When you have eliminated all which is impossible, then



LES BAE
LE CLAIRE
AHO 00

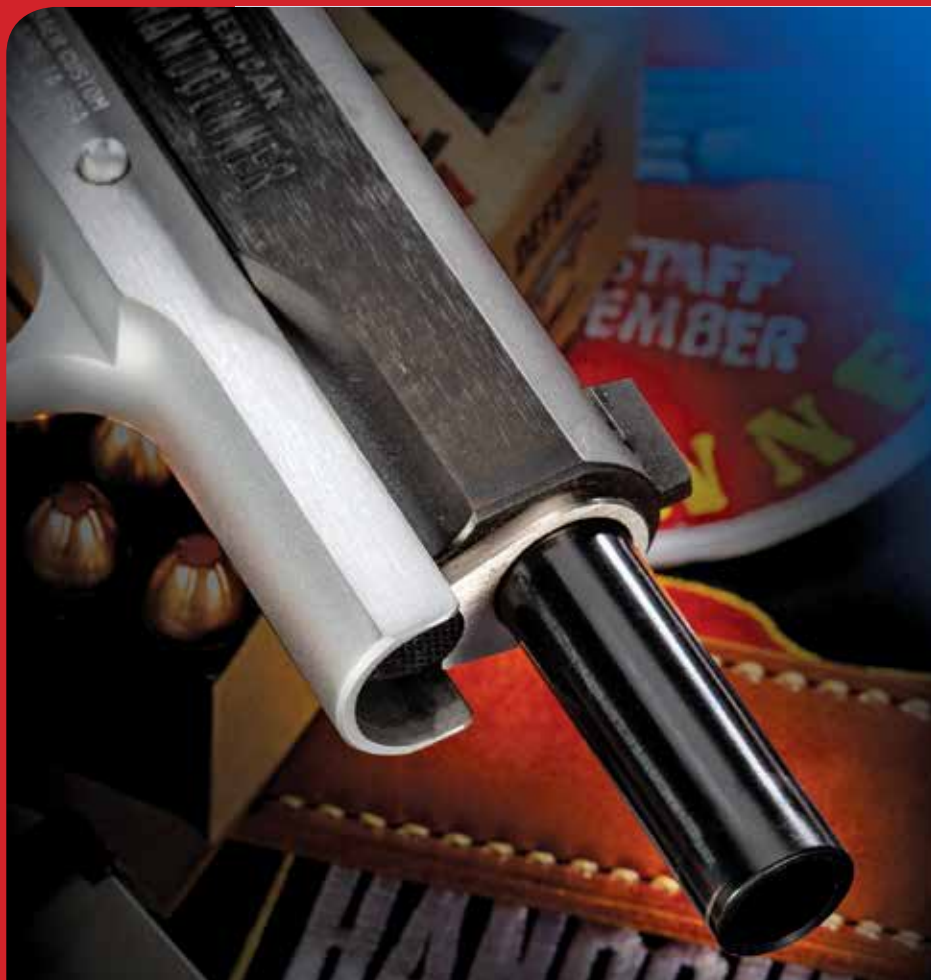
AMERICAN
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**LES
BAER'S
AMERICAN
HANDGUNNER
.45 ACP SPECIAL EDITION 1911**



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LES BAER'S AMERICAN HANDGUNNER SPECIAL EDITION



Limited Edition Holster with *Handgunner* and Les Baer logos at the back is by Barranti Leather.

whatever remains, however improbably, must be the truth.”

Your Thoughts Were?

I kept seeing things like “all-steel” and “5-barrel please.” Keeping plastic to a minimum seemed impor-

tant, a slightly enlarged thumb safety, a grip safety with a bump, hand-filling, aggressively textured grips, front strap checkering, flat mainspring housing, enlarged ejection port, match barrel, a “good” trigger — it was all there.

One surprising consistency was a

“low mounted adjustable rear sight.” That was pleasing to see as it’s a feature I have on most of my 1911’s. Being able to dial-in the sights for your specific load just makes good sense. Especially when the gun is as accurate as one of Baer’s creations. Consequently, Les fits his “Rolo” adjustable, Tritium night sights to each Special Edition. A perfect solution to the quest.

The basic, keystone features the majority asked for read like a John Browning basic model but sort of “biggie-sized” using modern technology and design features. But all the riff-raff, non-essential fluff had to be gone. “... what remains ... must be the truth.”

The list was done, what endured had passed muster — and was followed by a phone call to Les.

“Les, when you called not long ago asking if we’d like to collaborate on a special edition gun I took it to heart. I’ve assembled the ‘most-asked-for’ features from readers and I think you’ll agree, combined with your touches, the result should get some attention.”

I sent Les the list and when he called me back I could tell he was excited. I’ve known Les for about 25 years, having fired dozens of his guns — with some in the “tens of thousands of rounds” category. I’ve seen him excited, happy and enthused — and all three of those happen at once when we talk guns. Les wears his feelings on his face and there’s no baloney or niceties — what you see is what you get from Les.

“This is going to be great, and I can hardly wait to get moving on it!” he said. I could hear the grin on the phone.

Les was very definitely excited. “It’s what they want — so let’s build it!”

Exactly.

Added Features

Baer guns come with a long list of what I’d call “standard” features, but have nothing standard about them. His penchant for consistent quality is represented in the wide-range of 1911 models he makes and the fact each one rides in the top tier of their categories in the market.

Les and his team assured the *American Handgunner Special Edition* featured not only the “must-have” touches readers asked for, but those other thoughtful, even necessary, upgrades to 1911 engineering Baer’s shop has developed over the decades.

I like to call these touches Les Baer’s no-compromise components and build excellence. His “Guaranteed to shoot 3” at 50 yards” promise is one of those and in my book one of most important. While pie-plate groups at 25 yards may get the job done in a defensive handgun — it’s not memorable.

It’s disappointing.

A gun like the *Special Edition* can hit a soda can at 50 yards with the right ammo — and the right shooter on the trigger. Think about that for a second if you will. It’s something to savor, to anticipate and to aspire to. And that, friends, isn’t disappointing. It’s exciting to think about — and to plan on accomplishing. But you need the right tools.

Getting It Done

Obvious to the eye is the two-tone look of the new gun. A surprising number asked for a “retro” two-tone look with hard chrome lower and blued slide. Since we liked the look too, we went with it. Also, most specified no forward serrations on the slide, so they’re not there. We added the double-diamond custom VZ grips — highlighted with the black/blue look — making the final package really pop.

Among other features the Baer shop adds are: National Match frame, slide and barrel; fitted frame/slide; polished/tuned action; custom Baer parts; beveled mag well and the “tactical package” (slight rounding of corners) — along with a long list of Baer-specific special tuning and special touches done to all his custom guns.

Two premium Baer 8-round magazines are included, along with the special custom serial number and “*American Handgunner*” logo on the slide. I’m also proud to add my signature to Les’ on an insert card with each gun listing the serial number and the fact it’s a certified *American Handgunner Special Edition* 1911 meeting all of Les Baer’s specifica-

tions — including accuracy.

Les was insistent a custom serial number be used. From “AH00001” (Mr. Baer’s personal gun, by the way) to wherever the series ends, and each gun will be a unique *Special Edition*.

Speaking of “Number 1” — it was the prototype and Les shipped it to me for a look-see. I shot the hell out of it here at my place and couldn’t fault a single thing. It ran 100 percent, delivered the accuracy promised — and went back to Les slightly blue-worn, with a note from me saying: “Let’s do it.”

Shooting My Gun

The cover gun is serial number

AH00003 and my personal gun, the one I used for this article. After getting it back from Rob, our ace photographer, I really put it through the mill. Jeff Hoffman of Black Hills Ammo was curious about the project enough to send me 1,000 rounds of 230-gr. .45 ACP ball to try to wear it out. I also ran about another 500 rounds of assorted ammo through it.

Over about a month I shot it virtually every day here. Some was careful targeting and a good deal was just banging away at steel plates I keep up at 15, 80 and 100 yards to get the round count higher. About every 350

Continued on page 69



BIG .38

MIKE "DUKE" VENTURINO
PHOTOS: YVONNE VENTURINO



Duke's current two Big .38 Specials are (left) S&W Outdoorman (later Model 23) and 2nd Generation Colt SAA.

SPECIALS

IS THERE REALLY A DIFFERENCE?

When making .38-44 equivalent handloads Duke has tried these three cast bullet styles. From left: 150-gr. SWC, 158-gr. RN/FP and 158-gr. RN. Duke favors the middle one.



Note the much thicker S&W Outdoorman cylinders compared to the .38 Special J-Frame.

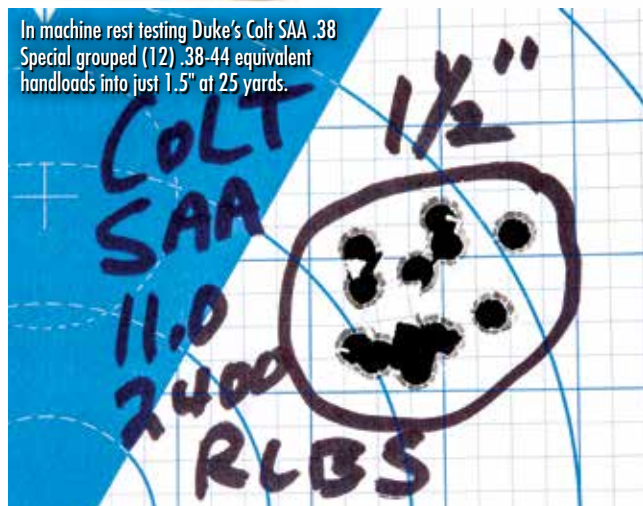
Today we think of .38 Special mostly as a self-defense round for snub nose revolvers. But, before .500, .480, .475 and .460 revolvers, before .357, .41 and .44 Magnums, before even +P .38 Special factory loads, there was the .38-44. It was introduced in 1930 and featured a 158-gr. RN bullet just like



The .38-44 (1930) predated .357 Magnums (1935) by five years. S&W's .357 Magnum (left) was identical to the .38-44 Outdoorsman (right) in size, weight and barrel length.

The .38-44 factory loads carried the same bullets as standard .38 Specials but were loaded to be 300 fps faster.

In machine rest testing Duke's Colt SAA .38 Special grouped (12) .38-44 equivalent handloads into just 1.5" at 25 yards.



the one used in standard .38 Special factory loads *except* nominal velocity was a whopping (for those days) 1,150 fps. The idea was to give a hotter factory load for police, one that would penetrate automobile windshields and doors of the many criminals roaming the roads during the 1930s.

Heavy Duty

Because of its high pressure, S&W had to introduce a new big revolver specifically for .38-44s. It was built upon their large N-Frame that accounted for the somewhat strange name — a .38 caliber revolver on a .44 size frame. In those days S&W, and Colt too for that matter, did not give model numbers to their handguns. Instead they got names. The new .38-44 was named Heavy Duty and came in 4", 5" and 6½" barrel lengths with the middle one being far more common. I don't have evidence of that; it's just my experience-based opinion.

able rear sight and the square shaped front called Patridge. The only barrel length offered as standard on the Outdoorsman version was 6.5". After S&W transitioned to model numbers the Outdoorsman became the Model 20 and the Heavy Duty became the Model 23.

Colt was not about to let a good thing pass and soon specified their large frame DA New Service was suitable for .38-44 loads as well as the Colt Single Action Army. The former DA Colt was offered in 4.5", 5.5" and 7.5" barrel lengths and the SA came in 4.75", 5.5" and 7.5" lengths. Both Colts had the traditional grooved topstrap and blade front sights, but Colt also offered their target sighted Shooting Master in .38 Special.

Magnum Impact

With the advent of magnums — .357 in 1935, .44 in 1956 and .41 in 1964 — interest in .38-44 pretty much died. And of course, the ability to shoot such loads in any .357 Magnum acceler-

ated its demise. By 1966 S&W dropped both the Models 20 and 23. Colt let the New Service expire in 1944 but when the SAA was reintroduced in 1956 .38 Special and .45 Colt were its caliber choices. By 1964 the company had dropped the .38 Special.

Boys Will Be Boys

As big .38 Specials disappeared from the catalogs of new handguns a West Virginia hillbilly kid began his handgunning career with a beloved S&W K-38 and a setup for making .38 Special handloads. One of my most fondly remembered friends that senior year of high school was named Mike Bucci (pronounced "Butch"). His father was our town's chief of police. He approved of our interest in shooting and gave "Butch" his old .38 Special duty gun so we could shoot together. It was an S&W Heavy Duty with a 5" barrel. The local gun club was only three miles from our high school, so Butch and I spent many late afternoons plinking away with our .38s. Later, when I started loading .45 ACP Chief Bucci would allow us to take the department's Thompson Submachine Gun out by ourselves. Yes, it was a different era.

Perhaps Butch's Heavy Duty was the reason I developed a lifelong affinity for sixguns of yesteryear. Factory loads for .38-44 were gone by that time, but as a careful handloader I was able to copy them. Not having a chronograph, we *thought* .38-44 ballistics were duplicated.

Butch and I still got an idea of how regular .38 Specials and .38-44s differed. For my K-Frame .38 the usual

Continued on page 70

THE KELTEC



The CP33 doesn't have a trigger "flipper" safety. Note the over-hang at the rear, there for a number of reasons.

Right: You can see every round in the CP33 magazine, and you need to load it carefully — read the instructions! It's not shown fully loaded here.



J.B. WOOD

CP33 .22 LR PISTOL



The bolt-retraction unit is shown closed, but doesn't move when the CP33 is fired. Sights are good and fully adjustable.

Ten years ago, the design wizards at KelTec startled us with the PMR30, a neat pistol in .22 Magnum with a magazine capacity of 30 rounds. Well, they've done it again. This time, it's in .22 Long Rifle, and the mag figure is 33 rounds. It's the CP33, the model number an obvious tribute to the amazing capacity.

In appearance, its most notable feature is the generous rear-overhang of the frame. There are several design reasons for this. One of them is an internal bolt, and a separate cycling handle not moving in the firing sequence. Another advantage is it gives a standard-rail top

FUTURISTIC — AND FUN

of more than 7" so you can mount a red dot, or whatever.

The long top also results in a sight radius of 8.62". The sights are square-picture, and the rear is fully screw-adjustable. Both sights have fiber-optic dots. The front is green, and the rear one has red on each side of the notch. The sight set-up on the CP33 is excellent.

The rear over-hang also centers the pistol perfectly over the hand. The shape of the grip-frame contributes to the good hold. At its widest point, at lower rear, the width is a slim 1.0", tapering to 0.81" at the front. Even if you have a smaller hand, it's comfortable.

Well-Thought-Out

The weight is also a factor. With a full magazine, it's 31.2 oz. With an empty one, 25.7 oz. The other numbers: OAL is 10.6", height is 6" and width right at 1.7". At the muzzle, the 5.5" barrel has a suppressor-mounting extension, covered by a beautifully checkered ring.

The manual safety levers, both sides, are moved as you would expect; down to fire, up for on-safe. Inside, the safety blocks the sear and disconnects the trigger bar. Two things not there are worthy of praise. There's no "magazine-safety" and no "flipper" in the trigger.

After the final shot, the internal bolt locks open. The protrusion of the external bolt-release is minimal and a small bolt-retraction is an easier way to release it. The magazine-release is at the lower rear, pushed toward the front to operate. It's easily accessible to either hand. These, and the two safety levers, make the CP33 friendly to left-handers.

The trigger is wide and smooth-faced, as it should be. The take-up is minimal, and a small projection on its rear limits over-travel. The well-written manual lists the trigger pull at 4 lbs., and my Lyman electronic gauge says they got it right. The CP33 is not striker-fired but has an internal pivoting hammer, and this contributes to the superb trigger pull.

Magazine Magnificence

The 33-round magazine is a marvelous piece of design work. When you get your own CP33, read the manual about loading. Not difficult, you just have to be careful to avoid "rim-lock." Fortunately, the magazines are made of transparent polymer so you can see instantly if you have done this. The first few times you go out to shoot, it's a good idea to load only 20 or 25 rounds,



The KelTec CP33 pistol is much like their .22 Magnum version, but in .22 LR. It likes High Velocity ammo, like this CCI Mini-Mag.

until the spring eases up.

The CP33 is designed for use with .22 LR High-Velocity loads, so don't try light target ammo. They might affect its awesome reliability. There are many excellent .22 LR HV loads out there, but mostly from habit, I have always used Mini-Mags from CCI.

A Tack-Driver

To those accustomed to solid shooting benches and concrete walkways, my testing accoutrements will likely be amusing. They involve a folding campstool, an MTM Shooting-Stick and target-stand, and a Champion 100-yard sight-in target with an 8" bull. Hey, it works for me.

Someone at KelTec had adjusted the sights and was having a good day. All groups were well-centered, with no flyers. At 25 yards, the groups averaged 4". At 15 yards, one beautiful little group was at 2". The CP33 is extremely accu-

rate, even for older eyes and hands.

I'm sure George Kellgren may have tweaked the design here and there, but overall, the CP33 was the work of Tobias Obermeit. For the black version shown here, the MSRP is \$475. In Desert-tan, it's \$50 more. Out there on the market, somebody will offer it for less. Either way, for the features, quality, and reliability, it's a good buy.



For more info: www.keltecweapons.com, Ph: (800) 515-9983



The magazine release is at the base of the mag, and the safety goes on and off in a natural movement.

The standard-rail top is over 7" long with plenty of room for various optical sight ideas.

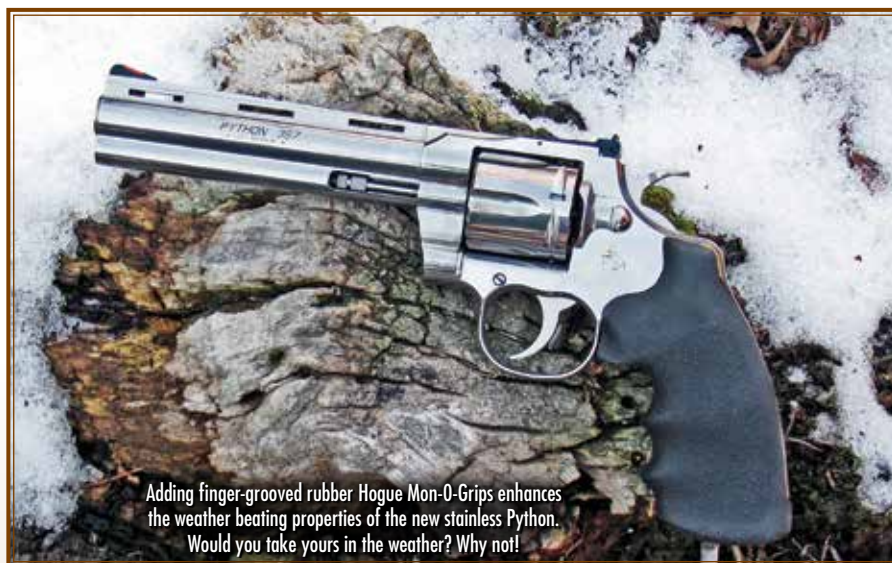




JOHN TAFFIN

THE NEW COLT PYTHON

A DELIGHTFUL RETRO-SURPRISE



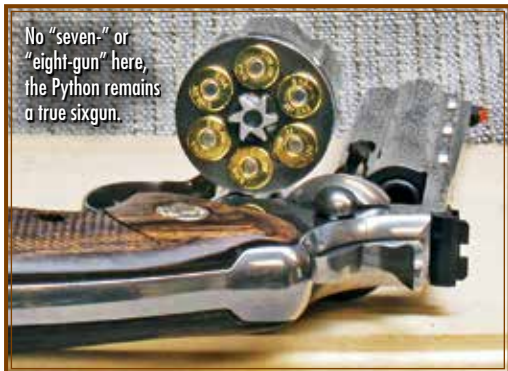
Adding finger-grooved rubber Hogue Mon-O-Grips enhances the weather beating properties of the new stainless Python. Would you take yours in the weather? Why not!

It was circa-1955. Bullseye shooting, where you stood on your hind legs and shot one-handed is king. Cops' holsters are filled with either a Colt or S&W DA revolver, with more of the former than the latter. Both companies are about to make major changes in their sixguns — one negative, one positive. The target shooters of the day gravitated more to the Colt while those masters of double action shooting preferred the S&W. The number one Colt target revolver was the .38 Special Officers Model Match, while the fixed-sighted version, the Official Police, was favored by law enforcement. S&W's target revolver was the K-38.

According to one of the experts of the day, Bob Nichols, author of *The Secrets of Double Action Shooting* (1950) had this to say of the old "long



Left: The "Rampant Colt" logo and classic Colt cylinder latch help to make any Colt fan feel right at home with the new Python. Photo: Rob Jones/The Imagesmith LLC



No "seven-" or "eight-gun" here, the Python remains a true sixgun.

action" S&W sixguns:

"The standard-action Smith & Wesson double-action revolver in the .38 Special Military & Police Model is the best gun If you cannot learn double-action hitting within a month, then abandon pistol shooting and concentrate on learning to throw rocks through a barn door. Pistol shooting may not be for you."

Then S&W changed the action from the old long action to the new short action to accommodate target shooters. You can almost see the tear stains on the pages of Nichols' book as he says:

"Don't waste time trying to learn double-action shooting with the new short action Smith & Wesson revolver, however, this gun is built strictly for the single-cocking bullseye pistol man."

Colt Takes Advantage

S&W destroyed the finest double-action shooting sixgun ever to accommodate target shooters. Meanwhile Colt was seeking to make their Officers Model Match .38 Special an even better target pistol. The action was specially tuned and polished and a new heavy barrel was designed. Up to this time all Colt DA revolvers had an ejector rod sticking out in front of the frame, noticeably unprotected from damage. This new Target .38 featured a ribbed heavy barrel with a full length under lug, enclosing the ejector rod.

The whole idea resulted in a very heavy, too heavy at 3½ lbs., for target shooting — beautiful revolver. Colt changed directions and instead of a .38 Special for target shooters, reduced some of the weight by ventilating the rib and milling out the slot for the



Today's new Python comes from a long line of accomplished veterans, from the original, to off-shoots like the Diamondback in .38 and .22 LR. Top to Bottom: 1980's stainless Python, 8" Nickel, 6" blued, 6" nickel and a 6" Diamondback in .22 LR.

Photo: Roy Huntington

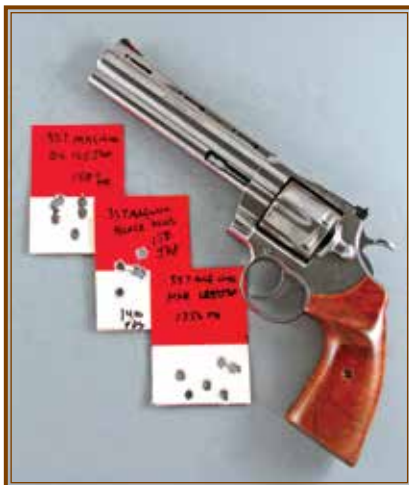
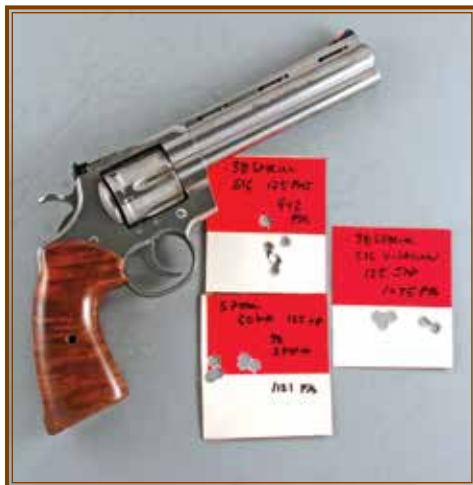


John stuck with factory loads testing the new Python. He found all but one load delivered outstanding accuracy.

The new Python is pictured with John's original Royal blue Pythons — all wearing custom grips. There's not much else you'd want to do to a Python!



Bottom left: Factory .38 Special loads proved easy to shoot and just as accurate as the .357 loads. The Python's roots as a target revolver show. Custom Herrett stocks pictured. Bottom right: Targets fired at 20 yards with .357 Magnum factory ammo showed the new Python continues the tradition of gilt-edged accuracy.



ejector rod even more, deciding this would make a great .357 Magnum.

The Python Was born

Since this was the finest sixgun Colt ever produced, it was given a

deluxe Royal Blue finish and hand-honed action. It's one of the most accurate revolvers you're ever likely to encounter, too. It balances superbly with the heavy barrel that was a trend-setter in 1955 and is now practically a

standard feature on all DA revolvers.

While the Python cocks oh so smooooothly for single action shooting, the DA operation has never felt quite as smooth to me as a tuned Smith & Wesson. That's one of the problems inherent in the Python. The second is the Python has always been expensive to produce, and the lock work goes all the way back to the 19th century, and frankly, is somewhat fragile.

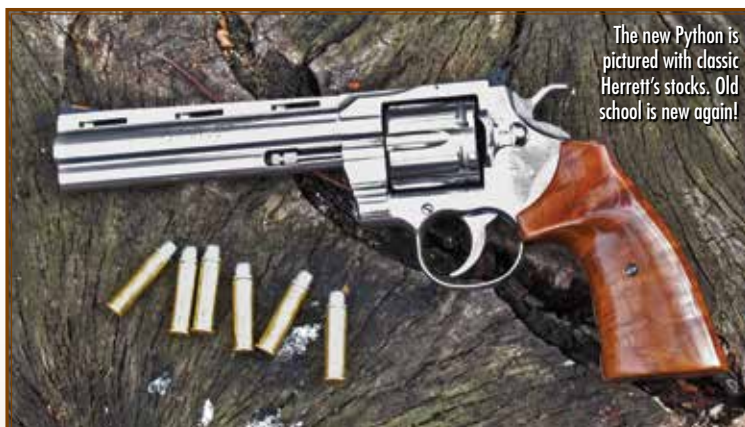
Rebirth

Both of these problems have now been addressed as Colt has resurrected the Python for 2020.

The New Python is not a duplication of the original. It looks just like a Python, complete with the heavy under-lug, ventilated rib barrel, having always been a mark of the Python. The grip frame is also identical to the original. Four grips I pulled out of my parts box for the original Python/Officers Model Match/Official Police/.357



Note the difference in the original Python spring and link (left) compared to the new, beefier unit.



The new Python is pictured with classic Herrett's stocks. Old school is new again!



Magnum all fit the new Python.

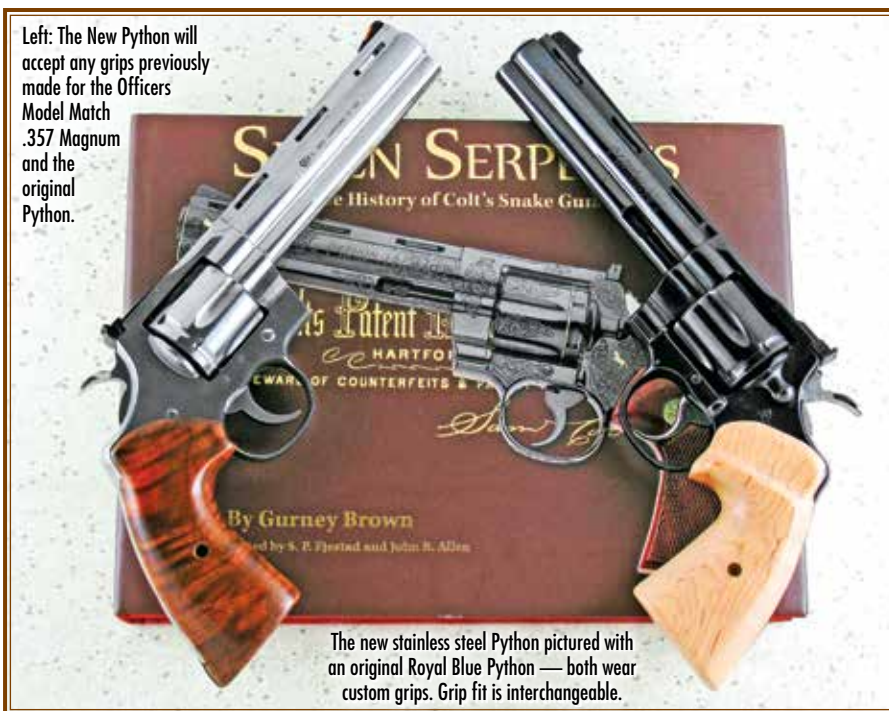
There are two obvious differences on the outside, though. One is the fact the top strap has been increased in size by about 30 percent, and the screw above the trigger guard on the left side is now placed farther to the front, indicating a change in the inner mechanism.

The lock work has been changed not only to make it stronger and less susceptible to going out of time but also to make it easier to shoot double-action. Again quoting Bob Nichols:

"The Colt double action revolver is not capable of double action accuracy fire In its double-action function the Colt double action revolver has a poor trigger pull and a most unresponsive cylinder 'roll'." The latter refers to Smith & Wesson's long action cylinder that seems to almost rotate itself as you fire. The original Python had a DA pull which "stacked" meaning you could pull the trigger back to a certain spot in DA mode and then almost fire as you would a single action. This worked for some people but not for most shooters. This has now been corrected and the new Python has one, straight pull DA without the two-stage operation of the original.

One major thing, thankfully, is the fact Colt did not change the barrel. It's still one-piece complete with barrel, under lug and ventilated rib forged out of a single piece of steel. They did not follow what so many manufacturers have currently done, making two-piece barrels consisting of a barrel and a shroud.

Left: The New Python will accept any grips previously made for the Officers Model Match .357 Magnum and the original Python.



The new stainless steel Python pictured with an original Royal Blue Python — both wear custom grips. Grip fit is interchangeable.

The rear sight is fully adjustable and the front sight now features an interchangeable system with the sights held in place by an Allen screw. The Python comes with a front sight with a red insert, however other sights are available, including a fiber-optic version.

Supernaturally Smooth

The Python is currently available only in stainless steel and I don't expect that to change. Barrel lengths of 4.25" and 6" are listed, but I would like to see an 8" version, if anyone is listening. With unloaded weights of 42 and 46 oz. respectively, the latter is three ounces more than the original Python, so steel has been added in critical places. The more critical specs are a 5-lb. single action trigger pull and 10-lb. DA. Both are smooth and creep-free, and the cylinder throats are all a uniform 0.35".

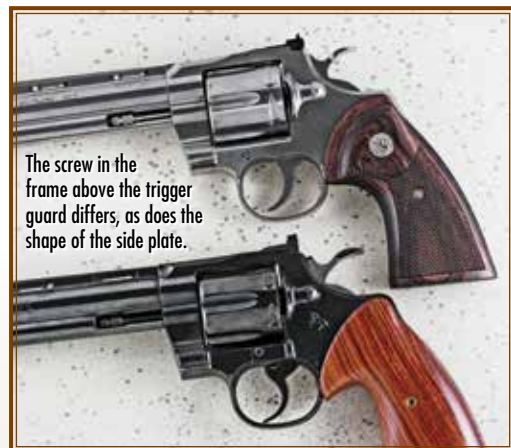
I have two original Pythons from the 1960s to compare with the new Python. My original Python came about as a result of lust, I admit it. Sixgun

lust. I managed to ignore the Python in the 1950s. The translation meaning I couldn't afford one and also buy a Colt Single Action Army, both of which sold for \$125 each. In 1956, at a time I was making 90 cents an hour, I purchased the first new .45 Colt 7½" to arrive in my area and managed to resist the Python.

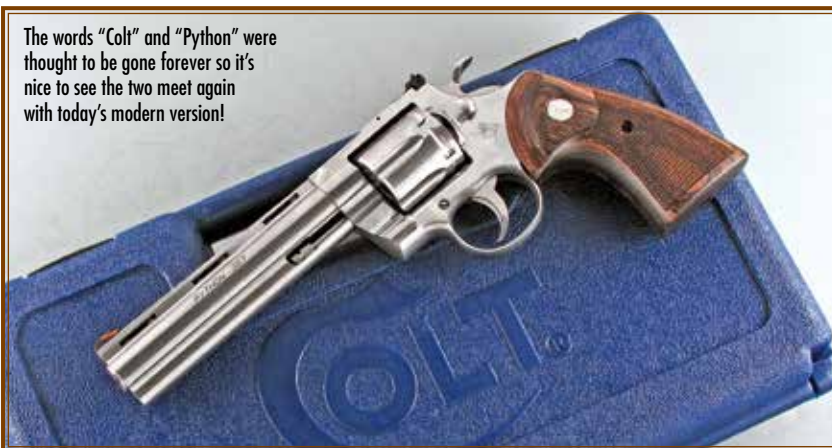
Then in the 1960s Colt began to advertise the 4" Python, using full-sized pictures. I wanted the gun so badly! At the time I was working the evening shift at General Tire while going to college during the day and supporting my family, which included three little babies. There was no money for a Python, no matter how badly I wanted one. However when I found one at the company store — I bought it on payroll deduction.

I never could make that Python shoot to my satisfaction until I replaced the 4" barrel with an 8" barrel, and had Bill Laughridge at Cylinder & Slide tune the action and smooth out the trigger pull. It became the proverbial tack driver.

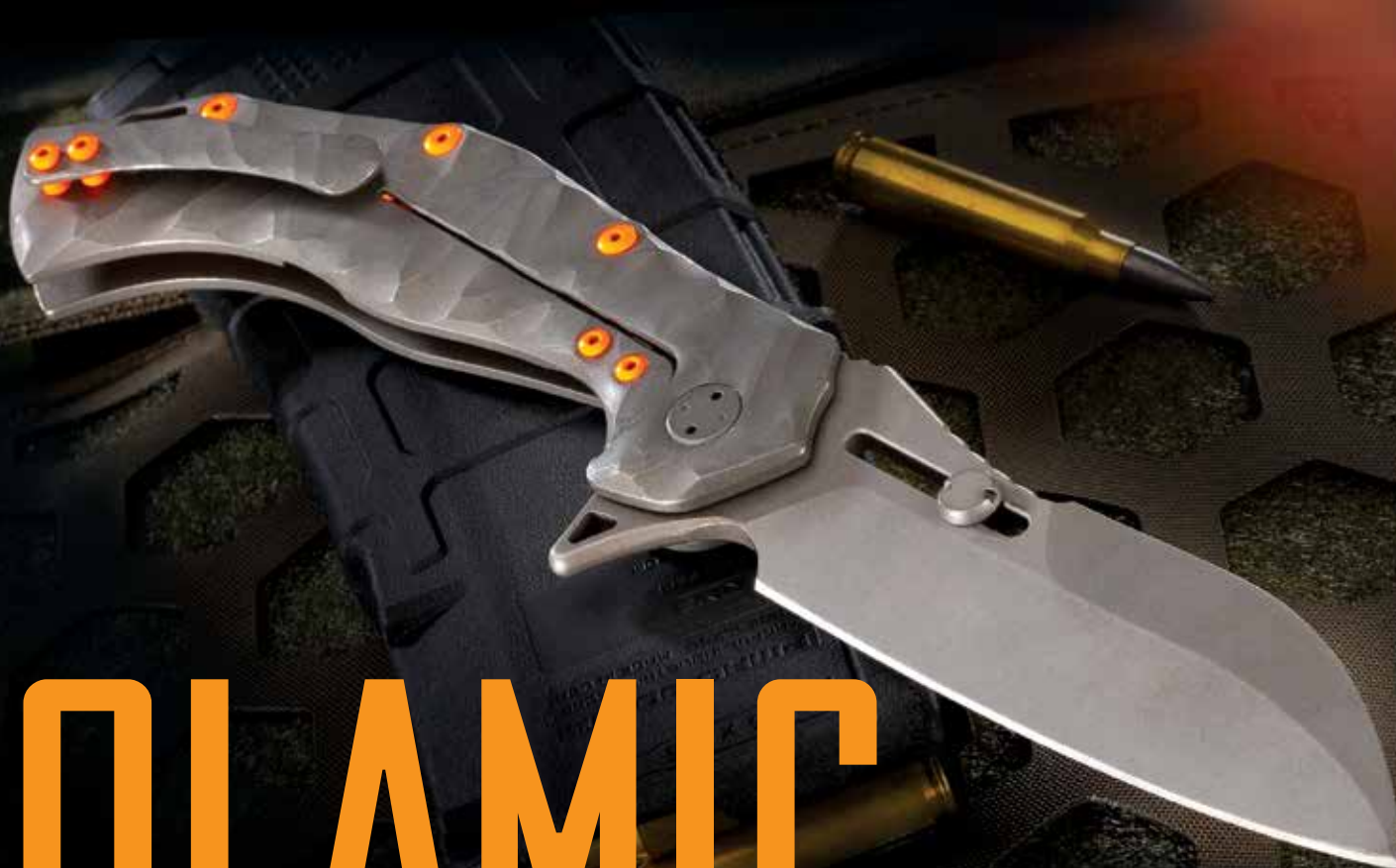
Continued on page 67



The screw in the frame above the trigger guard differs, as does the shape of the side plate.



The words "Colt" and "Python" were thought to be gone forever so it's nice to see the two meet again with today's modern version!



OLAMIC CUTLERY

DESIGN DYNAMOS!

Soloist

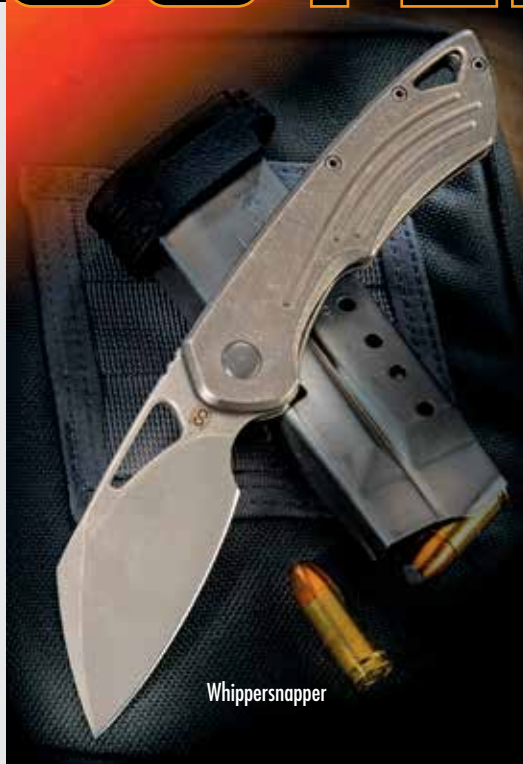
PAT COVERT • PHOTOS: ROB JONES/THE IMAGESMITH LLC

The most sought after tactical knives typically fall into two categories: overbuilt bruisers and stylish slicers. Olamic Cutlery of Visalia, California is one of the rare companies who deliver both, and they do it in a very unique way. Their company motto is “Never The Same” and when you look at their web page you’ll understand why. They never make the same knife twice. Sure, like any cutlery company they have model lines, but the incredible array of color and texture techniques these design dynamos have in their arsenal — from anodizing and special coatings to hand texturing and decorative machining — is simply astounding.

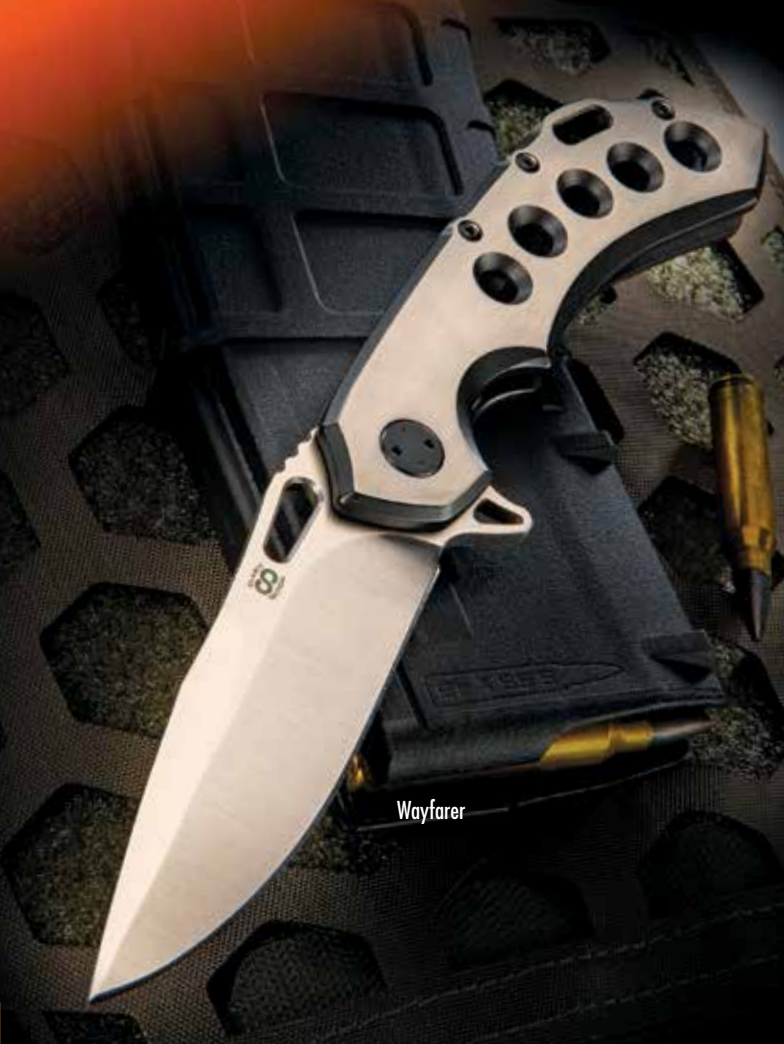
Headed by Eugene Solomonik, Olamic Cutlery is a family business formed a decade ago in 2010. Eugene, with the assistance of custom knifemaker Michael Vagnino, kicked off the folder end of the Olamic operation in Visalia



Rainmaker



Whippersnapper



while his father began making fine fixed-blade knives back home in Russia.

Creative Perfection

Eugene Solomonik is living the American dream. What does he enjoy most? “Being able to exercise both aesthetic and functional creativity on a daily basis while offering a tangible product to people who can truly appreciate it for generations to come,” the knifemaker tells *Handgunner*. “There is something very cool about an item that many consider art yet it also has a pure function. On top of that there is a deep historical significance to the ‘concept of the blade’ both in the context of it being man’s oldest tool and the effect it has had as a weapon.”

Job one at Olamic is to make a sturdy, durable and long lasting knife. “Olamic means ‘something that lasts through eternity,’ thus the infinity symbol logo,” Solomonik informs. “Our folding knives are semi-handmade in our small Visalia, California shop, one at a time.” The company is small (3–5 employees) and you’d be hard-pressed to guess all of their knives are not full-blown customs.

“As of today we have three main lines: handmade Damascus fixed blades from Russia, semi-custom folders of frame-lock design and full custom folders with liner-locks, no CNC. The

fixed-blades are generally traditional hunting knife designs, both full tang and hidden tang. Part of the line are higher end, more modern/experimental designs, with very fancy steels. The folders are all in the technically tactical or EDC categories, mostly flippers, or have multiple opening methods. We try to add one to two folder models per year. Keyword: Try.

“For the fixed-blades we have about six recurring models and then hundreds of one-offs or limited batches,” Eugene continues. “We make semi-custom folders that follow our ‘never the same’ mantra, which means that first we engineer a solid platform of a knife while sticking to the basics — comfort, performance, deployment, etc. — and then we have literally millions of ways to finish one. Most folders at launch are offered in multiple blade shapes as well.

“The Wayfarer 247 introduced in 2016 has been our most popular



model,” Solomonik lends. “It’s a very robust, comfortable, all-around EDC frame-lock with a timeless appeal, infinite build variants, four blade shapes, and enough — but not too many — features. Its main features include things like caged bearings with a thrust washer, a floating backspacer and an internal stop pin. But the main feature is that it is very comfortable in-hand.” Other popular models include the Whipersnapper, Busker, Swish, Rainmaker and the recently introduced Soloist.

Olamic blows through a ton of Titanium, the main component used in their handle frames. For steel they use a variety of upscale exotics. “We

Continued on page 66

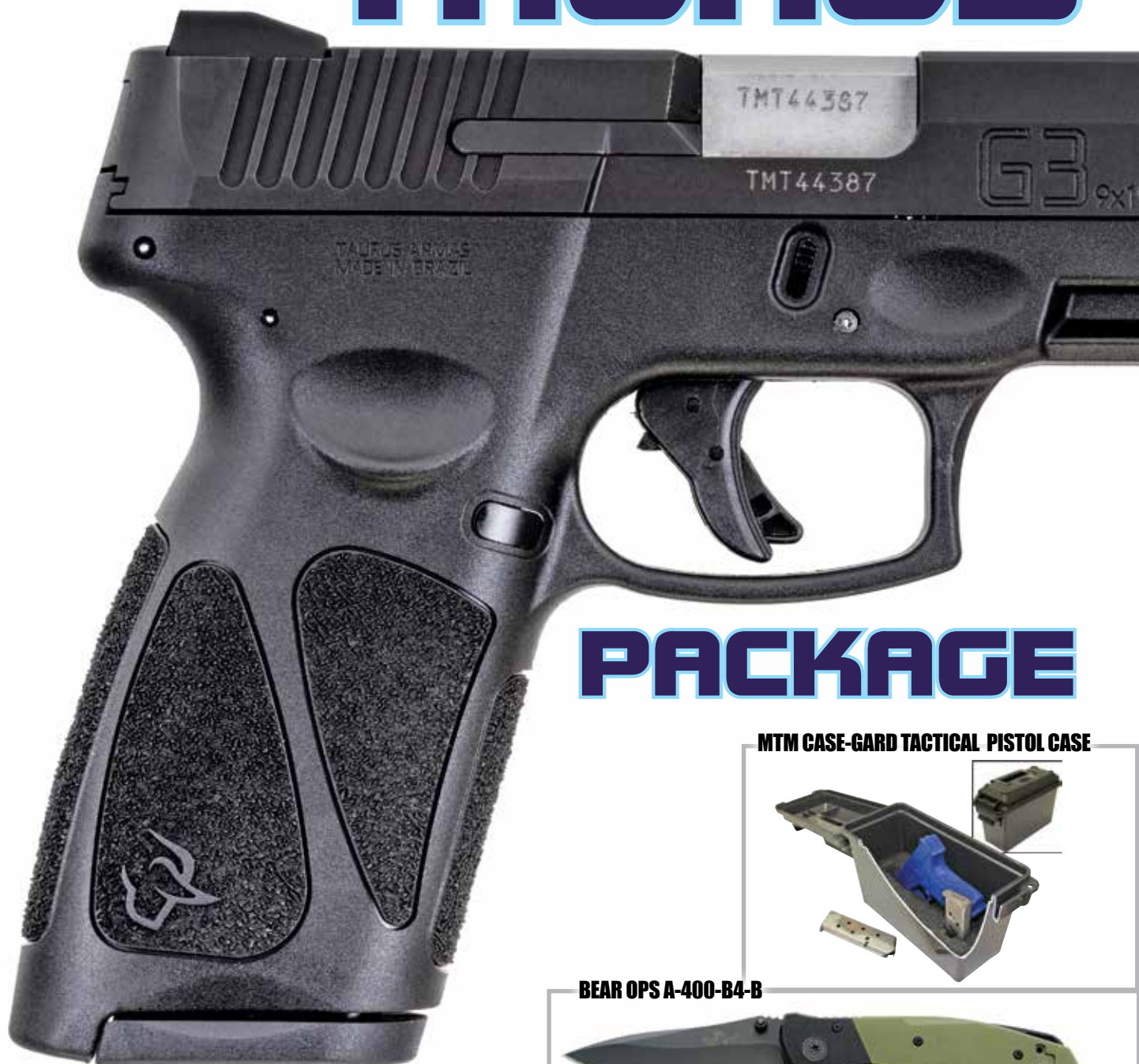


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SCAN TO ENTER

G30



WIN

The Taurus G3 is at front and center of this issue's giveaway package. It has a polymer-frame profile in a full-frame configuration with generous stippling patches across the grip for maximum control and retention. There's also an ergonomic palm swell and side-frame memory pads for quick hand positioning. The frame has an integrated Picatinny rail. A manual safety and slide release lever above the thumb makes manipulation easy. The G3's 6-lb. trigger has a smooth take-up and a crisp, clean break exceeding the performance of typical striker-fired pistol triggers. A short reset promotes quick, controlled follow-up shots. The Taurus G3 has a fixed front sight and a drift adjustable striker block rear sight. It also features a loaded chamber indicator.

Carry your Taurus G3 in CrossBreed's *SuperTuck* IWB holster. It's comfortable as well as concealable. Hand-molded to fit your firearm, the SuperTuck has premium leather backing with a molded and mounted Kydex pocket. You can wear it with your shirt tucked in, or not. Modular SnapLok powder-coated steel belt clips enable you to adjust cant and ride height.

Transport your Taurus G3 safely in MTM Case-Gard's *Tactical Pistol Compact Case (Model TPC1C)*. Designed to transport a compact handgun and two magazines, the case has pre-cut military spec foam to hold your pistol securely. A heavy-duty latching system seals the case and a double padlock provides security.

The *A-400-B4-B* from Bear OPS is an assisted-opening knife. It has a 3.25" blade made of Sandvik 14C28N Stainless Steel. Handle is Black and OD Green G10. The knife measures 7.5" when open; 4.25" when closed. It also has a reversible pocket clip for tip up carry.

Thoroughly clean your guns from bore, breech and action. The *Master Cleaning Station (Handgun)* from Real Avid provides spill-proof storage and organizes gun-specific cleaning tools. A magnetic tray keeps small gun parts from getting lost during cleaning. An oil resistant, no-slip, padded mat provides a safe cleaning surface. The Master Cleaning Station rolls up and fits into a storage bag.

We have one more prize in this giveaway—the *Razor X-TRM* from Walker's. Protect your ears with its a dynamic sound suppression system! The X-TRM features cooling pads, a moisture-wicking headband, and omni-directional microphones for clear digital sound.

Win this package and you'll be super ready for the range! But first you have to join. Go to www.americanhandgunner.com/giveaways or mail a postcard! —Jazz Jimenez

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SANCTUARIES

WHEN THE CONSTITUTION ISN'T ENOUGH

Was Thomas Jefferson wrong? Not about everything, just this: "Rights are unalienable." If rights are unalienable, the Chinese people, all one-and-a-half billion of them, would be armed. Women living in oppressed countries would be free. In fact, all peoples would be free, and armed, and tyrants would be under the gun — not the other way around. Sorry, Tom, rights are not unalienable.

Rights are easily lost. That's the truth. With apologies in advance to my wild-eyed, dyed-in-the-wool libertarian friends and their utopian ideals, your rights and your property are neither unalienable nor derived from the natural order of the universe. Your right to your life, your guns, and everything else you think you own is based on pure and raw power.

You own what you own because you can exercise dominion over it, you can demand it. The moment you lose or relinquish that power, or someone with greater power takes it from you, your home or your pencil is no longer yours. This is the ugly truth of life on planet Earth. Jefferson was wrong. What he said is nice, it has served us well in its own way, it's just not the case.

I'm not saying it isn't a high ideal, these lofty rights, and a worthy goal to strive for, but you strive for them while armed. That part the Founders got dead right. You may not have to pull a gun at every turn. And that isn't to say you have to poke your gun in the face of every tyrant or petty functionary who intends to relieve you of your rights.

Equally, they don't have to overtly threaten you with force whenever they relieve you of rights or property you would like to think you inalienably own. The political party that is now woofing and attempting to steal your right to arms, is in possession of superior arms they conveniently control. And dangerously so, those are in the hands of their authorized surrogates, who understand this all too well, making you folks quiver in your boots.

Infringement Cannot Stand

A few states are unfortunately taking long strides toward forced disarmament, in violation of every law and principle our nation holds dear, abrogating the oath of office entirely. Working in great halls of injustice, with extraordinarily pompous circumstance, they are writing bills, supposedly supported by peoples' representatives, who believe they wield power to relieve you of your arms, by writs. The Commonwealth of Virginia is on

Continued on page 71

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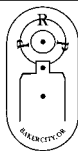
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TAFFIN TESTS

Continued from page 35

in the best attributes of both.

Milt did much gunsmithing as the S&W armorer for the California Highway Patrol and then moved to Colorado and opened his own shop, *Qualité Pistol & Revolver*. Now, he's back in my neighborhood. Since he's arrived here we have talked about many possible projects, one of which was building my own personal Smolt.

I had a 4" blued Python barrel on-hand resulting from re-barreling my Python to 8". I have been holding onto this barrel for just the right project for several years. Then a while ago, Jerry Moran, the well-known Python 'smith visited me along with his family and dropped off another 4" Python barrel. Now it was time to get off the dime and get these projects going. And the combination of Jerry's contributing another barrel and Milt arriving here told me it was time to do this.

Smolt Vs. Couger

Starting with a 2.5" S&W Model 19 .357 Magnum, we began the project. Milt prefers the shorter barrel version as a base gun as it's easier to match up the top of the Python barrel with the top of the frame of the S&W. Now, what was

I to do with the other barrel? One of the old Classic Sixguns we rarely see, or at least I rarely see in my area, is the Ruger Security-Six. More than 1 million of these were made, however they are not readily found on the used gun market. Then it happened — I found not one but two used Ruger Security-Six .357 sixguns, one a 4" stainless while the other was a 6" blue. Since the Python barrel was blue, the latter was the only choice.

There's no question about my liking the conversion on the S&W Model 19. With the barrel change it becomes a totally different sixgun as to balance and shooting DA. I knew without question I would like this "Smolt." However, I did not realize how much I would really like the "Couger."

The Security-Six is an excellent sixgun, however it becomes especially special with the addition of the 4" Python barrel. The transformation as to balance and shootability is even more pronounced with the Security-Six Couger than with the Model 19 transformation. When Ruger stopped production of the Security-Six to bring out the GP100, a heavily under-lugged barrel was added. Now, I know what the Security-Six gains with the same style barrel.

Shooting Fun

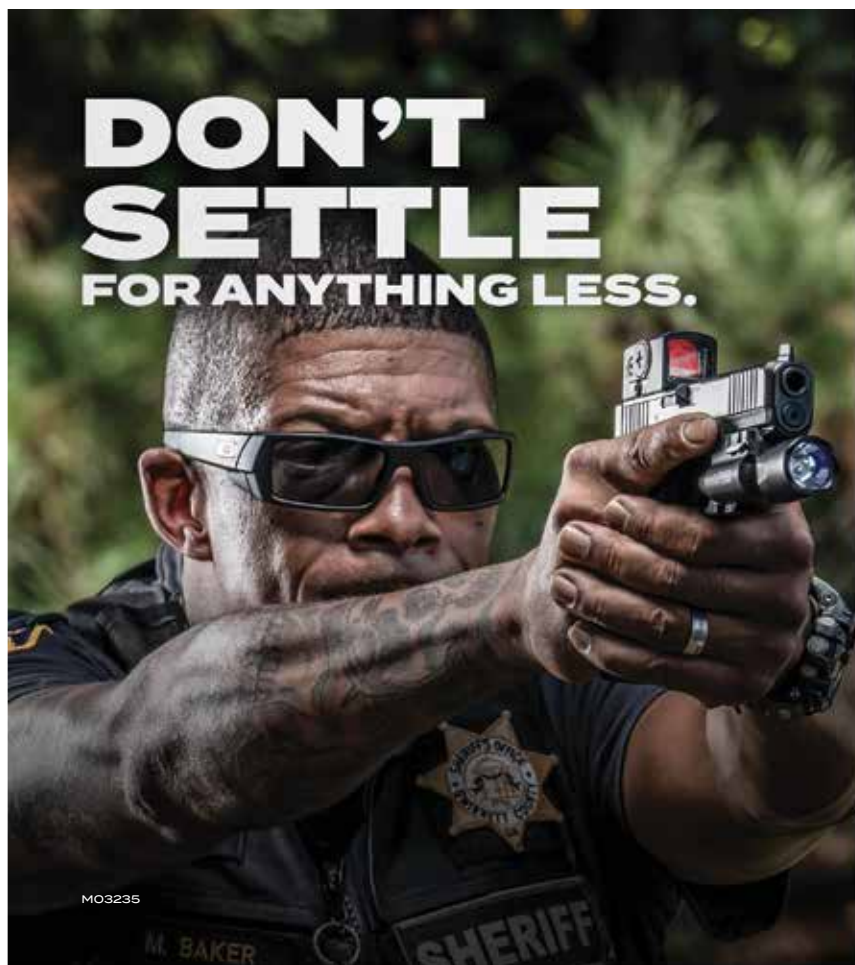
I especially enjoy shooting these custom conversions with .38 Special

loads, as they are so pleasant shooting. Switching to some of my favorite .357 Magnum loads, the Smolt performs especially well with the Lyman #358429 Keith bullet over 14.0 grains of #4227 for 1,065 fps and five shots into 1" at 20 yards. With the Couger, my .357 Magnum loads assembled with 6.0 grains of Unique performed well with Lyman cast bullets. The Lyman #358429 Keith load resulted in 1,081 fps and a 5-shot group at 20 yards of 1 3/8". Lyman's #358477 SWC clocked out at 1,022 fps and 1 1/4", while the Lyman #358311 RN has a muzzle velocity of 1,074 fps and a 1 1/8" group. With factory .357 Magnum Loads I found the Winchester 145-gr. Silver-Tip performed well, with muzzle velocities in both sixguns right at 1,325 fps.

Converting to a Smolt or Couger is not simply a matter of unscrewing the old barrel and screwing in the new. The threads are different and the frames require some special machining. The conversion is certainly not inexpensive, plus you need a Python barrel and a base sixgun to start with.

Is it worth it? With these two special Python-ized .357 Magnums by Milt Morrison now in my possession — I would say definitely so. 

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AYOOB FILES

Continued from page 77

and as his Springfield Armory XD comes up at last, a fireball blooms from the muzzle of the shotgun.

Rich White topples backward: A 12-gauge rifled slug has gone through his chest and into a wall, piercing an I-beam and bouncing off another wall before coming to rest.

The killer is moving to his left, and the stunned deacon is moving back away from him. The killer pivots toward him and fires again. Wallace slumps down onto a bench, hit in the chest with a full charge of 00 buckshot.

Kinnunen pumps another shell in the chamber and moves toward the minister's position, but his time is up. Jack Wilson has held his fire waiting for a *clear shot that won't endanger bystanders*, the same reason he's aiming for the head. He is in a Chapman-style modified Weaver stance, gun arm locked straight and support arm bent and pulling tight and rolls back the double-action trigger of his SIG-SAUER P229.

Whatever evil in the murderer's mind that drove him here is gone now, swept away as a 135-gr. Hornady Critical Duty .357 SIG bullet crashes through his brain, causing a spasm tightening his trigger finger and sending one last buckshot blast harmlessly upward. His body collapses instantly in a twitching heap. Keeping his muzzle high to clear the bystanders, Wilson moves cautiously but quickly toward him. He sees the blood pouring from the downed gunman's shattered head, but out of an abundance of caution picks up the shotgun and moves it out of the man's reach.

Other team members have moved forward. Some cover the gunman with drawn pistols, one joins a nurse in the congregation to apply first aid to the two victims, and at least one calls 9-1-1.

The gunman was undoubtedly brain-dead before his corpse began to fall. Rich White and Tony Wallace, tragically, will not survive.

Time Factors

The six-second figure widely quoted in the mass media and the gun-related internet is generous. The security cam video of the shooting is readily available on the Internet, but the best version to look for is the one with commentary from John Correia on his blog at www.activeselfprotection.com/blog. The elapsed time between the shotgun becoming visible to the moment the first shot was fired was approximately *three seconds*. After *one* more second, the deacon is mortally wounded by shot number two. It's right at the five

second, or a whisker more, mark when Jack Wilson shoots.

Useful Details

I interviewed Jack Wilson for this article a month after the shooting. The investigation was not yet complete — it takes time to dissect a case in which three human beings were killed. Jack had learned a lot more than what was available in the first few days.

At the time Wilson dropped him, Jack told me, the killer had *seven live rounds* left in the 12-gauge and three more shells in his pocket. The gun appeared to be a 20" barrel model, pistol grip only, with magazine extended to the muzzle. Jack explained why the round count doesn't sound right. "He had a mix of slugs and buckshot," he told *American Handgunner*. "The three he fired in the church were all standard length 2¾" shells. The rest were those little Federal mini-shells, an inch and three quarters in length."

**The elapsed time
between the shotgun
becoming visible
to the moment the
first shot was fired
was approximately
three seconds.**

Jack had been carrying concealed in his regular holster, a Galco SSS2 open top scabbard worn strong side. His pistol was a SIG P229 .357, his favorite carry gun and one of four in his possession. A long-time firearms instructor, he's been certified by the Texas Department of Public Safety as an instructor for Concealed Handgun Licenses (CHL), now known as LTC (License to Carry) since Texas authorized concealed carry in the mid-1990s. He was not only the leader of the church's security team, but its firearms instructor. From 1980 to 1986, he served as a reserve deputy with the local sheriff's office. He'd had occasion to unholster his weapon in the line of duty, but until this day he'd never had to fire a live round at another human being.

We gun people winced when we watched the video when martyred good guy Richard White struggled to get his gun out of his holster and brought it up too late. The gun was concealed not only by an untucked shirt but also by an open-front sport coat, and it appeared White was carrying near the middle of his back. Jack Wilson

told me, "Rich usually carried a SIG P229 Legion, and wore it just behind his right hip in a Galco open-top holster. He normally concealed it under an untucked shirt when he came to church. That day it was kind of chilly, so he had a jacket on over his shirt. *I don't know why he was carrying it farther back than usual that day.*"

When he scooped the rest of us with his analysis of the security cam video, Brother Correia estimated the distance between Wilson and Kinnunen at the moment of the stopping shot as 12 to 15 yards. He was damn close. Wilson told me since Kinnunen was moving at the time Wilson killed him, they can't determine it to the inch, but the investigation shows 45 to 47 feet separated the men at the instant of the rescue shot.

Lessons

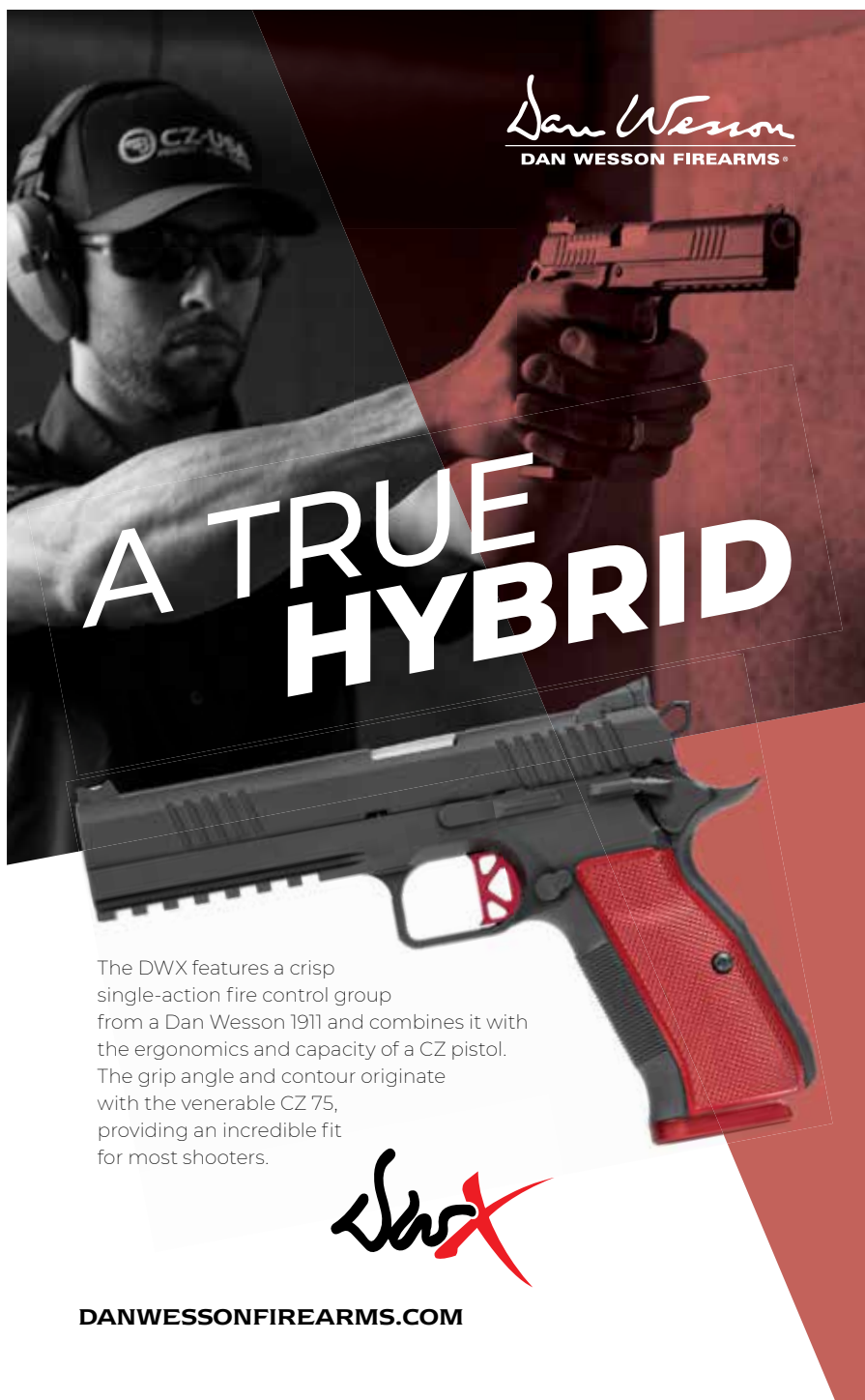
This incident was a tragic atrocity cut short by heroism and skill at arms. Its most important lesson to the American public is the importance of church security, and by extension school security, workplace security, and even home security. First responders got there quickly, much more so than the national average. According to Wilson, police were on the scene in about two minutes and paramedics arrived about three minutes after the last shot was fired.

Had the church been a gun-free zone, a rule which by definition only the law-abiding would have obeyed, the killer would have been free to dispense 11 more shotgun blasts in a target-rich environment of some 240 or more innocent men, women and children.

Ten more live shotgun shells — 11 if you count the one he spasmodically discharged upward at the moment Wilson killed him — and no one to stop him? Police two minutes away? And he had murdered two men in less than two seconds already? *Do the math.* Anyone not blinded by an empty political agenda can see how many lives were saved by the armed citizen voluntary security team.

On the tactical side, there are some things we can discuss. We've already addressed the tragically slow draw of the slain Richard White, who died three seconds after his stimulus to draw with his XD just starting to come up on target. Don't carry in a manner from which you haven't practiced drawing! Mr. White was wearing two cover garments and was seated, having to stand to complete his draw.

From under a closed front garment, your fastest draw is to use your support hand to lift the hem while your gun hand goes for the pistol. From an open front garment like a sport coat, the firing hand can sweep the covering fabric away as you draw. Drawing from a seated position is always harder and slower when the gun is at or behind the



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hip. Drawing from a middle of the back position is slower still. Mr. White had all these things going against him in those three seconds; that's why he ran out of time before the 12-gauge slug tore into his chest.

The oft-quoted statement "combat accuracy is six inches at six feet" is BS. Wilson told me he teaches center chest aim as the default, and head shots only if that's all you have. Here a head shot was all he had because *bystanders were in the line of fire*. He trained his people to shoot at distances like the one at which he made the attack-ending shot — he practiced what he preached. He nailed a solid head shot on a moving man at 15 yards or more.

Protectors should be armored! None of the security team were wearing soft, concealable body armor, which is available to defeat not only buckshot, but the rifled slug that killed Rich White. Consider this: the role of armed security is to protect the innocent from armed criminals. The criminals will be inclined to shoot the *protectors* first, which is exactly what happened at the West Freeway Church of Christ. A good concealable ballistic vest is available for the price of a decent quality handgun. They are legal for law-abiding citizens to possess and wear in all 50 states.

Be prepared to go hands-on. It's my understanding Tony Wallace, the deacon within arm's reach of the killer when the gun came out, was not a member of the security team and wasn't armed. I don't know if he had any hand-to-hand fighting experience or training, but if he had, he might have been able to grab the killer in a bear hug and to slow him down and give the armed security team members time to react. Instead, he had the natural reaction of moving back away, and was murdered. For every member of a congregation or school staff member who volunteers for armed security, there will be many more who are not up for the responsibility. Consider training those who don't care to be armed in some basic hand to hand or disarming training in case fate puts them in a situation where they can do something positive.

We should also note the video depicts Jack Wilson showing exemplary muzzle control — high ready — as he moved through the chaotic scene toward the suspect, *decocking his SIG* after he was sure the killer was down and out of the fight. Several other members of the 22-person security team — as many as 16 or 17 were present — also drew their weapons. Most had good muzzle discipline, but at least one "muzzled" churchgoers as he moved toward the threat. Another did so when he tucked his gun under his armpit to reach for his cell phone to call 9-1-1. John Correia, who did the first analysis of this

incident, spoke of the importance of using a holster allowing one-handed reholstering, and of practicing something as simple as saying "*Siri, call 9-1-1.*"

It is ironic some strident politicians who want to take guns away from law-abiding citizens also cry out for the reduction of "mass incarceration" and for non-punitive diversion for criminals. Look at how many warning signals the multiple murderer in this case gave out to the criminal justice system over more than a decade of committing serious, life-threatening crimes. Yet he was continually allowed to plea bargain down from felonies to misdemeanors. His adjudication as mentally incompetent to stand trial should itself have been sufficient to make him a Prohibited Person insofar as owning firearms, yet there he was with a deadly weapon. *News flash* for those who push for gun control: Lawbreakers break laws. Only law-abiding citizens obey them. Duh.

At this writing, we don't know where and how Kinnunen accessed the shotgun he used in the church.

Tragic Truth

A popular term for dangerous criminals is VCA: Violent Criminal Actor. "Actor" is the operative term. By definition, action beats reaction, and defenders are *reactors*. In this case, two men died before the threat could be neutralized. It has happened before. In 2012, at the New Destiny Christian Center in the Denver area, a man opened fire and killed the minister's mother. He was instantly shot and killed by a congregant who was an off-duty armed police officer. The rescuer could not possibly have known until the first shot was fired the danger was there, but we'll never know how many lives were saved. In 2007 at the New Life Church shooting in Colorado, the gunman murdered two girls in the parking lot, hopelessly out of reach of armed security volunteer Jeanne Assam. Not until he burst into the church itself with gun in hand was she able to drop him with multiple hits from her Beretta 92 9mm.

In all these cases, the rescuers saved multiple lives. Following the West Freeway Church of Christ incident, Governor Greg Abbott awarded Jack Wilson the Lone Star State's highest honor for a private citizen, the Governor's Medal of Courage.

This incident will go down as yet another proving the truth of the saying, "The only way to stop a bad guy with a gun is a good guy with a gun." We at *American Handgunner* wish to pay tribute to armed citizens Jack Wilson, who stopped the killing, and Richard White, who died while attempting to do so. We also thank Jack for sharing his experiences with us, and with you.



SCCY'S RED DOT

Continued from page 37

over the fixed front sight visible through the transparent red dot. Game-on.

Shooting Discoveries

I shot mostly defensive ammo in the SCCY — Inceptor 65-gr. ARX, Federal Premium 115-gr. Train & Defend JHP and Speer Gold Dot 124-gr. JHP. I also added half a box of Armscor 124-gr. FMJ. All of it fed and ejected well, putting the holes within a 6" circle from 10 yards away. That's my personal goal for a defensive gun. The Red Dot helped me do this consistently, though at first the rounds were impacting low. I remembered a picture I saw on the SCCY website in which the red dot was slightly above the fixed sight. I adjusted the dot on my pistol to match what was in the photo and proceeded to shoot two magazines of Speer Gold Dot at one target. Some of those rounds created a ragged hole in the center of the target. All 20 rounds impacted very nicely near the center.

The Crimson Trace Red Dot sight uses an intelligent on/off system, preserving the battery life. It ships with a plastic cover so the light won't turn on while the gun is not being used. When you carry the gun in a holster or pocket without the cover, the intelligent system keeps the light off. When you draw the gun, the light turns on.

If I draw and point with my natural point of aim and I'm using a mag with the pinky extension, the red dot is out of sight at the top of the reticle, making me adjust my grip. If I put my pinky finger under the grip, regardless of which magazine extension, the red dot naturally aligns with the fixed sight. It's simply a matter of figuring this out for your own style.

David Likes 'Em

I'm fine with carrying a SCCY for self-defense and recommending it for others. The SCCY with the Red Dot sight carries easily in a Bianchi Foldaway Belt Slide 101-16 holster. It also fits in several of the leather holsters I have custom made for SIG or S&W double-stack handguns.

I've not experienced any mechanical issues with the three SCCYs I have, nor did any of my gun store customers report any issues. Just looking at the gun, it appears solid and well made. The takedown for cleaning is very simple, just refer to the clear instructions. There's really not much to go wrong.

There are people who can buy a custom gun costing thousands of dollars without batting an eye. There are also people for whom \$250 is a stretch. SCCY pistols will work fine for people in either group. I sure like them. 

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OLAMIC CUTLERY

Continued from page 55

started with Elmax on the early Swish,” Eugene notes, “then moved pretty much entirely to M390 for the Busker, Rainmaker and Soloist lines. Now we’re using CPM 20CV for the Whipper-snapper and will continue with it. These days I am incredibly impressed with this 20CV, it heat treats well, and is very fine and consistent.”

The Olamic Allure

Olamic Cutlery has a rock solid base that keeps coming back for more, so what’s the allure? Easy question. When you can buy a rock solid semi-custom as good as a custom in a one-off finish, why wouldn’t you? The variations are staggering, from dark tactical and understated good taste to a wide array of razzle dazzle. The Olamic customer’s only challenge is making a selection, plus they offer customers the ability to “build their own.”

We asked Eugene to tell us about his customer base. “The diversity of our customers surprised me, actually. There is definitely no single type, and Olamic owners can be found all over the world, in all walks of life,” Solomonik explains. “It makes sense, too,

since if we were to call it ‘weapons collecting’ then that goes back in human history. Most major museums usually have an armory section. I see people who are hardcore knife collectors and want something different, younger EDC community guys who maybe don’t have a ton of knives but love carrying/using them, those who want a high end truly bespoke item, those who are in the ‘buy it for life’ mindset, and who just want one of something, but the best version of it — the list goes on.

“Our customers like the balance of performance and customizability packaged in comfortable timeless designs,” Eugene adds. “And of course the myriad of our unique finishes/executions, material choices and blade shape options. What seals the deal is they can attain this quickly while being involved in the process.”

We get the impression from Eugene these design dynamos are having way too much fun at their job, but that happens when you can please so many different types of customers with such a dazzling array of options. Think of it as a candy store for adults. The artisans at Olamic Cutlery make some mighty fine knives. 

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NEW COLT PYTHON

Continued from page 53

The other Python is a 6", tuned by Fred Sadowski and willed to me by my dear friend Jack Pender. It's also an excellent shooting pistol and both of these are fitting examples to compare the New Python to. And it does compare favorably.

Both companies are about to make major changes in their sixguns — one negative, one positive.

The new gun functions perfectly and shoots accurately. Cocking the hammer on the original Python is almost a supernatural experience. The new Python with its upgraded action does not feel quite the same way — but almost. I'm happy to trade the feeling to gain the much improved double-action. I did not get rid of the 4" barrel but rather had it installed on a S&W .357 Combat Magnum by Milt Morrison of QPR. The advantage was gaining the smoother DA pull of the S&W. However, now it comes automatically with the new Python.

Accurate — Or Not?

The new Python was test fired with both .38 Special and .357 Magnum factory loads. I have a large supply of handloaded .357 Magnum rounds, both with cast and jacketed bullets. However, as I write this it's late January and I'm definitely a fair weather shooter at this time of my life. These handloads will have to wait until the temperature is closer to the bullet weight than it is to the weight of the powder charge. Spring will come as it always does.

Meanwhile I have had excellent results with factory loads. With the .38 Special rounds the SIG SAUER 125-FMJ delivers 924 fps, and the Speer Gold Dot-HP 125 +P, 1,121 fps. Both put their shots right at 1" shooting from 20 yards. I tried Black Hills .357 loads, their 125-JHP (1,584 fps) and their 158-JHP (1,410 fps) acquiring 1" and 1¼" groups respectively for five shots at 20 yards. Both the HPR 125-JHP (1,356 fps) and the SIG SAUER 125-JHP (1,350 fps), both .357 loads, put five rounds into 1¾".

With both .38 Special and .357 Magnum loads shooting so well it tells me this gun will certainly perform. I had one exception, which again points out all loads should be checked out thoroughly before using them seriously. When I tried the Hornady .357 Magnum soft lead



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swaged 158-SWCHP load the Python threw the bullets about 4" to the left, with key holes resulting. My guess is the softness of the lead alloy did not allow the rifling to properly grip the bullet. This is why I always use hard cast bullets for magnum loads — and especially in the .357 Magnum. It's also rare I do not use .357 bullets with gas checks applied.

I had no malfunctions of any kind with this Python that were gun related and the only exception to great shooting loads was the above-mentioned soft lead bullet.

A Collectible?

It appears Colt has really done their

homework for this resurrection of the Classic Python. It's also different enough I don't see it having any effect on the collector prices being received for Pythons from the last century. Those who purchase it will be buying a shooting sixgun — not an investment. With an MSRP of \$1,499, at first glance it seems very expensive compared to the original price in 1955 of \$125. However, when you compare minimum wage levels at the two time periods the new Python is actually *less* expensive. Ha! Suddenly it's easier to justify buying one!



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S&W PC SHIELD

Continued from page 39

with an embedded stainless-steel chassis system, allowing for steel-on-steel contact between the slide and frame. The slide is stainless steel with a matte-black finish. Total weight of the gun is 18.3 oz.

Included in the package are a flush fit 7-round magazine and an 8-round extended one, which adds an extended finger groove. With the 8-round mag in the gun, the grip is still slightly shorter than the rounded butt 1911 Commander I usually carry. Also included is a very nicely packaged and branded Performance Center cleaning kit with brushes and jags for all handgun calibers.

I dug around to see what holsters I might have to fit the Shield and found a Blackhawk pocket holster that slipped into my jeans pocket, wasn't visibly noticeable and wasn't uncomfortable at all. It's easy to understand why the Shield is so popular as a carry gun. It makes carrying easy, and you've got up to nine rounds of whatever defensive ammo is your favorite in an easy-to-carry package.

So, what about the neatest feature on the PC Shield — the porting? The purpose of porting a barrel is to reduce muzzle rise and perhaps gain some reduction in recoil by venting gasses upward through slots cut into the barrel. The downside to porting a barrel is the possibility of blinding muzzle flash in the dark.

The Performance Center engineers decided two ports on the barrel in the 10 and 2 o'clock positions would produce the desired effect. They mate up with three corresponding slots atop each upper corner of the forward part of the slide.

Standard & Performance

I was fortunate during my shooting evaluation to have the company of one of my fellow instructors from the days when I taught License to Carry classes every week. Sal Castilleja is a Marine who did his 20 years active duty, then more time in Iraq as a civilian operator until he was medically retired thanks to an IED. I love teaching with Sal because of his military experience as an instructor in handguns, personal defense and long-range rifle shooting. When you teach something to a Marine, you know how to break things down into simple, easy-to-remember steps that will come back to them in very intense situations. Sal has adapted his skills to the civilian population and is a pleasure to work with.

Our friends at Vista Outdoors provided us with a nice selection of 9mm ammo with which to enjoy shooting

the Performance Center Ported Shield. Besides the new American Eagle Syn-tech rounds in 115 and 124 grains, we had Federal HST 124-gr. JHP, Federal Train and Protect 115-gr. JHP and 124-gr. Gold Dot JHP.

S&W took a gun already selling well over a million samples and improved it significantly, while keeping the price within range of us ordinary people.

In side-by-side lanes on the range with Sal holding the 2.0 Ported Shield and me holding the original Shield, we each loaded five of the same type round, shot all five rounds, then swapped guns, loaded the same type of ammo and fired five rounds. Starting with the synthetic rounds, we repeated the exercise until we each had fired five rounds of each type of ammo in each of the two guns.

What Did We learn?

Sal noticed the trigger difference right away. The Performance Center Shield has a very smooth trigger. I checked the triggers on both guns with my Lyman Trigger Pull scale, and the PC Shield averaged around 5.5 lbs. while the stock Shield averaged slightly over 6 lbs. The Performance Shield is more comfortable to shoot because of a combination of the reduced muzzle flip, smooth trigger and the new textured grip.

Did porting the barrel reduce performance of the rounds fired? Only slightly, somewhere around 30 to 50 fps. Neither of us noticed any visual issues with the ported gasses. I think it's because of the three holes on each side of the slide with only one on each side of the barrel. As far as accuracy goes, we were shooting at 7 yards and putting all of our shots within a major-organ-sized group, regardless of the gun or the ammo.

If you don't already have a Shield, or if you have one and want to upgrade, check out the Performance Center model. The porting does help with muzzle flip, plus it looks cool, the trigger is excellent, and the price makes it an excellent value. In fact, the MSRP of my sample is only about \$60 more than the standard gun. That's a lot of upgrade for a negligible price bump.



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LES BAER SPECIAL

Continued from page 45

rounds, I broke it down, wiped the innards off, squirted a bit of oil on the rails and went back to shooting it.

If I was having a good day I could chase 1" or just a tad over at 25 yards using that Black Hills 230 ball. Other days I'd ping around the 1.5" to 2" range regularly. It just depended on the light and how I was doing that day. But it does show consistency and the fact if you pay attention to that excellent trigger (3 lb. on average) it will likely out-shoot you. Les told me when he scopes a gun like this, it can shoot 0.77" 10-shot groups at 25 yards. Call that one ragged hole.

The adjustable sights are great and are positive, and very low profile. A bit like the very low mount Bomars from the old days. With a gun as accurate as this one, hitting a squirrel at up to 50 yards is actually possible. I have that 100-yard torso gong and even off-hand, it's amazingly fun to hit that again and again — "bang, clang, bang, clang." A gun like this makes you look good if you do your part.

Final Thoughts

Keep an eye on *Shooting USA* as Jim Scoutten there has the gun slated for his TV show about when you get this issue. We also showcased the gun in our booth at the SHOT Show recently. Some of you attended and stopped by to say hi. The result was always the same when you saw it, "That's one of the coolest 1911's I've seen!" We appreciate your enthusiasm.

The gun ran perfectly, with honestly no issues whatsoever, but that's typical from Baer. The lock-up is tight but not fussy and the slide runs like you're ice-skating. I've pretty much kept this on my desk in my office over the past six or eight weeks and keep asking myself what would I change?

Not a darn thing. And not just because I had a hand in it. You all had many hands in it too, and it seems those many hands knew what they were doing, as the result is very definitely much more than the isolated ideas alone. Call it a perfect storm of 1911 features and benefits, all corralled by someone who knows the breed.

Keep this in mind too. Les says some of his guns have well over 600,000 rounds through them. He said, "I have customers who shoot 50,000 or more rounds a year. They send their guns back once a year and we install a new barrel and bushing and off they go again." That amazed me when I heard it, and I believe it too based on my own experience.

Les and I have been threatening to

The advertisement is split into two main sections. The top section features a close-up of a Ruger SP101 revolver with a custom wood-grain grip. The text "VZ GRIPS" and "CUSTOM GUN GRIPS" is in the top left, and "RUGER SP101 GRIPS" is in the top right. A red banner across the middle contains the website "WWW.VZGRIPS.COM". The bottom section shows a 1911 handgun with a custom grip featuring a pattern of small, circular studs. The text "VZ HYDRA GRIPS FOR 1911" is overlaid on the image. At the bottom of the ad, the copyright information reads: "© 2020 VZ, INC. • 3616 Jackson Bluff Road • Tallahassee, FL 32304 • 850-422-1911".

do this for years and I admit having a plan come together as well as this one has is very pleasant to behold, indeed.

You should be enjoying it too.

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I'm hoping you'll tempt yourself,

then do it. But don't coddle or baby it, as this deserves — needs! — to be shot and enjoyed. And remember, it'll protect your family, you can compete on the weekends with it, and you'll have something very special to pass on to a favorite person some day.

When you get yours, drop me a note and tell me about it at editor@americanhandgunner.com. 

For more info: www.lesbaer.com, www.barrantileather.com. Go to www.americanhandgunner.com/videos to see a video with my thoughts — and some shooting.

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BIG .38 SPECIALS

Continued from page 47

handload was 3.0 grains of Bullseye with 150-gr. lead bullets. For Butch's Heavy Duty we loaded 11.0 grains of 2400 with the same bullets. My load would knock over old bricks from about 50 feet. Butch's loads busted them. My .38 Special would knock over chunks of wood. The bullets stayed inside. Butch's bullets penetrated completely.

By the late 1960s, I began spending summers in Montana and Butch got married. Mid-summer of 1971, I got word Butch had died from a rare form of cancer. I never saw his guns again, but my exposure to .38-44 as a big handgun cartridge stayed with me. I never did land a Colt New Service or Shooting Master .38 Special but have owned all three barrel lengths of .38 Special Colt SAAs. Several S&W Heavy Duty/Model 23s have passed through my hands, including one HD factory lettering to the first year of production. Those are gone but an Outdoorsman (pre-Model 20) given to me by a friend is here as is a like-new SAA .38 with 7.5" barrel.

Home Grown .38-44s

So, what does it take to turn a .38 Special into a .38-44? First off you need a big .38 revolver, although S&W K-Frame .357 Magnums and medium frame Colt Python and Trooper .357s will suffice. Next you need some common sense. The .38-44 is not a .357 Magnum. Don't try to make it one. That old load I used of 11.0 grains of 2400 with 150-gr. bullets is an absolute maximum. It used to appear in old reloading manuals even for K-Frame S&W .38s which is where I found it back in 1966. Modern manuals are far more conservative so hear me — stick with big .38 revolvers for .38-44 shooting.

Here's an alternative. For me .357 Magnums are ear ringers even with good ear protection. Many people shoot .38 Specials in their .357s for this reason. If an intermediate load will suffice then .38-44 ballistics can be achieved by loading down .357 Magnums. Stick with .357 Magnum cases and still use 2400 powder but go one grain (only) over what I listed for .38-44 — 12 grains of 2400 with 150- to 160-gr. lead alloy bullets. I personally favor the RN/FP designs from RCBS and Lyman. Such handloads will put a .357 Magnum in the old .38-44 ballpark.

Those handloads from my big .38 revolvers gave near amazing accuracy. From my Ransom Pistol Machine Rest, my Outdoorsman and Colt SAA gave 12-shot, 25-yard groups of 1.5" or less. That's the sort of sixgun precision anyone can be proud of.



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GUN RIGHTS

Continued from page 58

everyone's radar for a particularly egregious document, declaring power unto themselves to literally confiscate arms the public currently owns.

If infringement and ownership mean anything, forcibly taking guns the public already rightfully possesses is infringement by definition. They can't legitimately write a bill to change those definitions from their simple, commonly understood English meanings. The Constitution itself cannot be rewritten by some lowly functionaries — elected or otherwise. People acting in some hall somewhere, cannot declare unto themselves power to deny basic rights to own property or to keep and bear arms, it doesn't work that way. Take away arms already owned? Seriously? Have they lost their senses? Why on Earth aren't officials at least paying equal attention to armed criminals instead?

Have faith, freedom will out. Faced with tyrannical diktats from their betters, and finding elections, appeals and the usual means of controlling the uncontrolled mob in their legislatures ineffective, yet not wanting to resort to the solution our Declaration provides — bloody revolt and dissolving the

political bands which have connected them with another — the citizenry is resorting to establishing sanctuaries.

Sanctuaries Effloresce

We're pulling pages from leftist/communist/socialist/progressives who don't even recognize the American Way as legitimate. American citizens in Virginia and elsewhere have established (as of this writing) hundreds of sanctuary jurisdictions, where confiscatory gun policies are null and void. Nationwide more such keep-and-bear sanctuaries effloresce.

If infringement and ownership mean anything, forcibly taking guns the public already rightfully possesses is infringement by definition.

These require law enforcement to ignore infringement, neutralizing "official" gun-grabbing incitements to bloodshed. Virginia's motto declares *Sic Semper Tyrannis*, "thus ever to tyrants." Within sanctuary cities, counties and fiefdoms they arise, with teeth. Virtue's

heel on the neck of the tyrant in Virginia's seal is manifest.

So, the notion of waiting for a higher court, which is untimely, uncertain and not the higher authority, must bow to the true authority, the will of the people. All power comes from the people, as we found in our revolution, and there it must remain. The Founders wisely left us armed, and guaranteed our ongoing armament with the Second Amendment, against all pretenders to this sacred right.

So, while your right to arms, property, and life itself may not be unalienable, your right to defend such right nearly is because, as libertarians will always remind us, you own you. And that is something no one can simply take, especially while you retain your arms. Which is all a matter of force.

For this we look finally to two great power brokers who stated it clearly: "Power comes from the barrel of a gun." —Mao, the world's most heinous mass murderer, still pictured everywhere in brutal communist China. And of course, "Power comes from the barrel of a pen." —Ronald Reagan, The Great Communicator. 

Award-winning author Alan Korwin has written 14 books, 10 of them on gun law, and has advocated for gun rights for nearly three decades. See his work or reach him at GunLaws.com.

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SPEAK OUT

Continued from page 11

and most world-class shooters I've met, I reluctantly switched to gripping my strong hand with all four fingers and keeping my thumbs parallel with the gun. I struggled with that grip and found I had to fight to keep the gun stable. However, I kept the grip and practiced enough to be proficient, but was never comfortable.

Several months ago I tried my old grip, with my left hand index finger around the trigger guard and thumbs parallel, and found I was, indeed, more comfortable and steady. I've found the gun is pressed back into my palm better. So just why is it so wrong to shoot with the weak hand index finger around the trigger guard? I honestly don't remember anyone giving me a reason!

Rich
Via email

Rich, it ain't "wrong" to do what you're doing! I don't shoot thumbs-forward either and get beat-up for it all the time by those who do. "Dinosaur" they mutter and shake their heads. The interesting thing though is I generally out-shoot about 90 percent of the people I shoot against. I also shoot old-school Weaver, which makes them even more crazy. I used to chat with Jack Weaver on the phone now and again before he passed. I can say he laughed about the "modern" shooters. "Nobody cares how you hold the gun as long as you hit the target. At least I don't care what they say!" Sage advice.

I've seen disabled shooters in wheelchairs shooting what could only be termed "unconventional" styles outshoot hot-shot shooters who enjoyed full mobility, shooting "perfect" styles. Concentration, practice and elegant trigger control out-foxes rules and regulations every time. At least in my opinion.

I once helped a woman who had severe palsy learn to shoot her J-Frame. At first, she'd miss the entire target at seven yards. Within five minutes she could keep her shots on a paper plate at seven yards. She broke every rule in the book concerning stance, grip and stability — except she put all her concentration on pulling the trigger the best she could! Stay the course! —RH

Pistol Caliber Carbines

Duke's article on PCCs (March/April 2020) was a real eye-opener for me. I always thought PCCs were okay, but just a niche firearm, like

Plenty More

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Contenders — which I own. So I was surprised to learn people buy them in places where handguns are tightly restricted. Duke's article was the first one where I've read that. I've lived in the deep South for over 45 years, so I've never had a problem buying any guns and that problem was off my radar. Thanks Duke, for teaching an old dog a new trick.

Marty
Via email

Marty, lots of urbanized citizens concerned about family protection turn to lever action rifles, shotguns and more modern pistol caliber carbines as a work-around if they can't easily own handguns. I don't think it hampers them in the least either! —RH

Lee To The Rescue!

Kudos to Mr. Taffin's praise of Lee dies in *Handloading*, May/June 2020. I like 'em too. I use a precious — can't find them anymore — stash of military (WCC) .38 Special cases for standard pressure practice loads because of their thicker case wall toughness. They shoot well, and way fewer case mouths crack after multiple loadings.

But when I first loaded up with 0.358" cast SWCs, I had to press each

round into my N-, K- and J-Frame S&W chambers. Lee to the rescue! I bought a Lee Factory Crimp die for .38 Special because it also does a final sizing of the loaded round. The problem got solved, and my reloads drop in and pop out perfectly. This Lee die worked so well, I bought a 4-die set when I got my Mod. 24-3 .44 Special and a 4-die 9mm set for the wifey's Ruger LC9. Yup, love those Lee dies.

CDM
Via email

Gun Parts

It's been a while since I mined your knowledge of gun matters. I have a WWII bring-back 1900 FN Browning 7.65mm in dire need of a new barrel. Are you aware of any supplier of barrels and parts for this gun? Keep up the good magazine work. I look forward to each new issue. Any chance you could get Connor to do a guest article once in a while for old times sake? And thanks for your usual great assistance.

Bruce Goodwin
Via email

First off, the good news. We're running a sort of "best of" Connor and the Guncrank Diaries. It's a direct email

approach so go to www.americanhandgunner.com and get signed up! It's been hugely successful and well-received. While you're there, sign up for our "Wheelgun Wednesday" emails too. They're great fun and you get to see classic and more recent articles about our favorite guns — revolvers!

On the gun parts side of things, check with Numrich Arms, Jack Firsts, www.gunbroker.com and even eBay and other options you can find with a "google" search to find lots of hard-to-find gun parts. Find these people online, but if you need phone numbers drop me a note at editor@americanhandgunner.com and I'll get back to you. —RH

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The *Wilson Combat EXPERIOR Series* of handguns blends the 1911 design with reliability and ergonomic enhancements to optimize handling and shooting performance. With the EXPERIOR lineup, Wilson Combat offers tactical, functional and cosmetic options as a standard feature. Guns in the series have a match-grade slide, frame and barrel machined and hand-fitted by Wilson Combat gunsmiths. They retain the traditional 1911-style slide serrations, fixed Wilson Combat battle sights and the classic 1911 extractor design. All EXPERIOR models sport the TRAK grip checkering pattern. *For more info: (800) 955-4856, www.wilsoncombat.com*



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DM TALON KARAMBIT

Doug Marcaida Knives

The *DM Talon Karambit* is designed by Forged In Fire's Doug Marcaida and produced by 5.11 Tactical. A compact, lightweight and easy-to-conceal knife, the karambit mimics an eagle's retractable talon. Its angled, D2 steel blade for thrusting and slashing is also slightly curved for hook and control. The skeletonized handle with clear scales makes the karambit blend with the user's clothing and seem like it is part of the hand. *For more info: (646) 737-3075, www.dougmarcaida.com*

PUNA

3Coil

The *Puna* is an ideal everyday carry tool. Modeled on an assault rifle, this multi-tool is 3.15" long and can fit in the



palm of your hand. Made of stainless steel, it has six built-in functions including a scalpel, hex tool, bottle opener, keychain attachment and breakaway handle. Five backup No. 11 scalpel blades and flathead as well as Phillips driver attachments are included. The Puna comes in a protective hard case. *For more info: www.3coil.com*

AC-800 BOLD ACTION VIII

Bear & Son

Bear OPS introduces the *AC-800-CF-S*, a pocketknife that's sleek, lightweight and with on-demand action. The knife's slim design is ideal for all-day carry with casual or dress attire. The 2.5" blade is made of Sandvik 14C28N with a 58-60 HRC; handle material is stainless steel with carbon fiber. Closed length is 4". A pen-type clip allows for deep carry and makes it look like a pen tucked in a pocket or inside a briefcase. Bear OPS is Bear & Son's tactical knife brand specializing in military and law enforcement knives. *For more info: (800) 844-3034, www.bearandsoncutlery.com*





DEKA ABLE LOCK FOLDER

Hogue Knives

With a thin profile, natural ergonomics, light weight and smooth action, Hogue Knives' Deka ABLE Lock Folder is ideal for everyday carry. Its 3.25"-long wharncliffe blade with ambi thumb studs has a 59-61 HRC and Black Cerakote finish. Made of CPM 20CV stainless steel, the 0.094"-thick blade is controlled by the ABLE locking mechanism with a tough lock bar and Wolff wire-form springs. The Deka's handle is G-Mascus Dark Earth G10 Scales with Crosshatch Texture. OAL is 7.5"; weight is 2.3 oz. For more info: (800) 438-4747, www.hogueinc.com



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ALTOR describes their unique Single-Shot Self-Defense Pistol as "Perfectly Simple and Simply Perfect." With a total of six parts, only two parts connect to load and fire. Offered in .380 ACP and 9mm Luger, it's a simple striker-fired operation. All metal parts are quality stainless

steel while synthetic parts are firearms grade premium polymer. Lightweight and fully ambidextrous, its ergonomic design makes it easy to hold and carry. The pistol includes a unique, firm trigger pull for light recoil, a traditional button safety plus an additional barrel safety. An integral extractor make reloading easy and quick. For more info: (602) 441-4077, www.altorcorp.com

6A AMBI WAISTBAND HOLSTER

Bianchi Holsters

The 6A Ambi Waistband Holster from Bianchi Holsters is ultra-thin and lightweight with four different ways to carry. It features an ambidextrous design providing strong side and crossdraw carry, as well as IWB and OWB carry. It is designed to accept multiple handguns in one size due to the soft suede construction and Bianchi's Adjust-A-Break thumb break closure. The thumb break has a polymer-tipped snap closure with suede straps. It can be adjusted to securely fit around several different-sized pistols, or removed for those who prefer an open-top design. For more info: (908) 528-3826, www.safariland.com/bianchi



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The Pivot Pro Knife & Tool Sharpener is one of five new manual sharpeners launched by Work Sharp Sharpeners. The handheld tool sharpens and hones knives, scissors, shears and garden tools. The other products are the Pivot Knife Sharpener, Pivot Plus Knife Sharpener, Micro Sharpener & Knife Tool and the Angle Set Knife Sharpener. These products use Work Sharp's Convex Carbide Sharpening System to create a superior convex edge quickly and easily. For more info: (800) 597-6170, www.worksharpertools.com

MODEL 2020 K6S

Kirkpatrick Leather Co.

The Model 2020 K6s is an ultra-concealable OWB Holster for the Kimber K6s. The holster was designed to keep the revolver close to the body. Handcrafted from the finest American leather, the holster is contoured to the hip for comfort and concealment with a slight FBI cant to minimize profile. There are 1½" belt slots to keep your revolver from shifting or moving. The Model 2020 K6s is hand molded to fit with no break-in required, hand dyed for a beautiful finish and hand burnished with dyed edges. Double stitching with heavy duty thread ensures durability. For more info: (956) 723-6893, www.kirkpatrickleather.com



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The Dicer from TOPS Knives brings "useful uniqueness" to the kitchen. Almost 4" at its widest point, the handle is pushed forward into the blade and designed specifically to provide a comfortable pinch grip when using it. Cut down on food prep time and dirty dishes by using the flat as a spatula. The 7"-long blade is made of 440C RC 58-60 with a tumble finish; the handle is Black Canvas or Red/Black G10. The Dicer comes with a black Kydex sheath. For more info: (208) 542-0113, www.topsknives.com



MANTIS X10 ELITE

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The Mantis X10 Elite is a non-descript black plastic gadget about half the size of a matchbox. You clip it to your practice firearm using the accessory rail and wirelessly connect (via bluetooth) to your Apple or Android portable device. Once it's running, the little black box sends a wide range of data to your mobile device, which then analyzes and displays the results. Whether you're using a rifle, shotgun or pistol, dry or live fire, or a CO₂ gun, the Mantis X10 gives data about how you use your gun, including recoil and holster draw analysis. It records, analyzes and interprets the info to guide you to be a better shooter. For more info: (630) 551-8171, www.mantisx.com



GUNNYSACK

ROY HUNTINGTON

STAN CHEN CUSTOMS

I know the man, Stan Chen, and am always impressed by his modest, self-effacing demeanor. Yet his guns and parts are without compromise. What he does is, indeed, the very embodiment of the craft. His full-custom 1911s (he has no other kind) represent a lifetime of thought, training, accomplishments — and dreams perhaps? The guns are almost otherworldly in their beauty, finesse and function. To own a Chen 1911 is to put the final period on your quest for a perfect 1911. No fooling. I've fired them, held them, used them and they are exactly like Stan — quietly modest. But in this case, there is no need to advertise their quality, they simply radiate it. You can spot a Chen 1911 across a room, mixed in with a dozen other custom guns. I've done it.

Now translate that into his parts. According to Stan's website: "There are many times when off-the-shelf parts simply won't suffice in the creation of a Stan Chen Custom masterpiece. Whenever necessary, parts are made from scratch, in-house, utilizing advanced CAD design, CAM driven CNC machining, conventional machining, welding, precision grinding and skilled handwork." Stan doesn't simply "re-brand" parts others

offer since, simply put, they don't usually meet his no-compromise standards. Now Stan offers some of those parts to the 1911 community.

His new line of no-compromise quality grip and thumb safeties builds on his famous existing parts lines. These new ones, like the others, are impeccably crafted, fit beautifully (with some hand-fitting required, of course) and show the 100 percent all-steel, custom-made attention you expect from Stan's shop. Machined in-shop on certified bar-stock, I have never seen a Chen part that wasn't perfectly made. You'll never see a casting mark — or any imperfections, period — I assure you. *For more info: www.chencustom.com, Ph: (970) 385-7900*



TOM McHALE

XS RAM SIGHTS

I can't speak for you, but on occasion I've had instructors whisper sweet nothings into my ear. You know, like, "Focus on the front sight, dummy!" The folks at XS Sight's designed the new RAMs to help you do just that.

Here's the secret. Not only is the front sight far more visible in dark conditions, it leaps into view in daylight too. Unlike other offerings from XS, the

RAMs are traditional post and notch. The magic lies in the judicious distribution of RAM (radioactive material) and use of the XS Glow Dot technology. Surrounding the front sight Tritium map is a ring of green or orange (your choice) photoluminescent material. During daylight conditions, this surface collects and stores ambient light, so it glows for hours after exposure. In the dark, the Tritium vial provides a partial charge. The result is you'll see a larger, and brighter, front sight dot in all conditions, especially those "in between" dark and light environments.

Standard 3-dot sights have equally sized lamps front and back and since the rear are closer to your eyes, they can often appear brighter and distract focus from the front sight. The XS RAM's front lamp is twice as bright and 30 percent larger than those flanking the rear notch. You'll notice a blacked-out steel surface surrounds the rear Tritium dots, so there is no distraction. You won't have any trouble finding the front sight in any lighting condition.

The notch design also supports natural front sight focus. The rear notch is enlarged, making it easy for you to see the front post. It also has rounded corners in the bottom; that's an optical trick that aids rapid elevation sight alignment. Your eyes focus on sharp corners first — in this case the upper edges of the notch. The leading edge of the rear notch features a relief cut creating a wider field of view through the notch.

With premium sights, the little details make all the difference. If you're a traditional "post and notch" shooter, check out the RAMs. *For more information: www.xssights.com*



LESSONS FROM A TEXAS CHURCH SHOOTING

SITUATION: A criminal opens fire in a church during a busy Sunday service. Fortunately, armed citizen security is in place.

LESSON: There are many, but the over-riding one is good guys with guns do stop bad guys with guns.

We all saw it thanks to church security cameras. A mad dog gunman swings a shotgun out from under his coat during a well-attended Sunday service in a small-town Texas church. Six seconds later he is down, thanks to the skill and determined courage of an armed citizen.

Tragically, the coward has killed one church member and mortally wounded another during those six seconds. The incident reminded the nation proponents of gun owners' civil rights were correct: it takes a good guy (or gal) with a gun to stop a bad guy with a gun.

That's the over-arching lesson from this incident, but it's not the only one.

Hidden Face Of Evil

On December 19, 2019, some 240 congregants were attending services at the West Freeway Church of Christ in the small town of White Settlement in Tarrant County, Texas. A man who entered during the service caught the attention of the church's volunteer security team.

He was wearing a partially effective disguise. Under his long, dark coat, he has concealed a pistol grip-only shotgun, its muzzle believed to have been in his left pants pocket and the rest of the gun stabilized by his hidden left hand. Observant security volunteers noticed he was wearing sunglasses – unusual in church. He was also constantly adjusting a wig and fake beard.

Under the false whiskers was the gaunt white face of a drug-abusing criminal named Keith Thomas Kinnunen, 43. He had a long psychiatric and criminal history. In 2008, he was charged with felony aggravated assault, plea-bargained down to a misdemeanor. Four years later, after attacking a doughnut shop owner in Oklahoma, he was charged with arson and felony aggravated assault with a dangerous weapon. A judge ruled him mentally incompetent to stand trial and remanded him to a psychiatric facility. That same year, 2012, one of his ex-wives had filed a restraining order on him saying he manifested "religious fanaticism" and spoke of demons. She stated under penalty of perjury, "Keith is a *violent, paranoid person with a long line (sic) of assault and battery with and without firearms.*" In 2016 he was arrested in New Jersey for unlawful possession of a firearm, pled down again to a misdemeanor.

A drifter, Kinnunen fetched up in the town a while earlier, cadging meals from the church and becoming angry when the staff refused to give him the cash he had demanded. While the disguise kept the security team from recognizing him, the fact he had one and his furtive behavior alerted them. The team's heightened alert saved lives, because he was *primed to explode.*

The Shooting

The church's volunteer security team keeps him in sight. The facility has security cameras, and one is directed at the intruder. He stalks down the leftmost aisle of the packed sanctuary, in the direction of the pulpit, and stops in the left front corner of the room. Deacon Anton "Tony" Wallace, 64, approaches him. A short distance behind Wallace, seated on a bench against the wall, is security team member Richard White, 67, who is watching them intently. Standing in the aisle somewhat farther back is the security team leader, 71-year-old Jack Wilson, also paying close attention.

No one seems to hear the words spoken between the deacon and the intruder who are within arms' length of one another. Suddenly, Kinnunen leans aggressively toward Deacon Wallace ... *and swings a short-barrel shotgun out from under the garment.*

The security team reacts instantly. White rises from his seated position, fumbling for his pistol as behind him Wilson also goes for his gun. But something has slowed White's draw,

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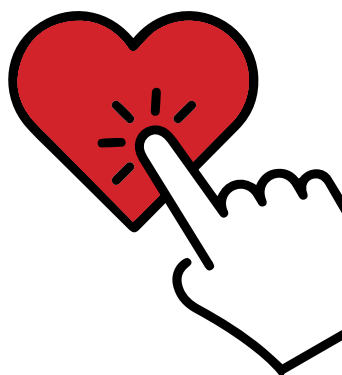
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ITEM 64520, 64521, 64522, 64523, 64524, 64525, 64526, 64527, 64528, 64529, 64530, 64531, 64532, 64533, 64534, 64535, 64536, 64537, 64538, 64539, 64540, 64541, 64542, 64543, 64544, 64545, 64546, 64547, 64548, 64549, 64550, 64551, 64552, 64553, 64554, 64555, 64556, 64557, 64558, 64559, 64560, 64561, 64562, 64563, 64564, 64565, 64566, 64567, 64568, 64569, 64570, 64571, 64572, 64573, 64574, 64575, 64576, 64577, 64578, 64579, 64580, 64581, 64582, 64583, 64584, 64585, 64586, 64587, 64588, 64589, 64590, 64591, 64592, 64593, 64594, 64595, 64596, 64597, 64598, 64599, 64600, 64601, 64602, 64603, 64604, 64605, 64606, 64607, 64608, 64609, 64610, 64611, 64612, 64613, 64614, 64615, 64616, 64617, 64618, 64619, 64620, 64621, 64622, 64623, 64624, 64625, 64626, 64627, 64628, 64629, 64630, 64631, 64632, 64633, 64634, 64635, 64636, 64637, 64638, 64639, 64640, 64641, 64642, 64643, 64644, 64645, 64646, 64647, 64648, 64649, 64650, 64651, 64652, 64653, 64654, 64655, 64656, 64657, 64658, 64659, 64660, 64661, 64662, 64663, 64664, 64665, 64666, 64667, 64668, 64669, 64670, 64671, 64672, 64673, 64674, 64675, 64676, 64677, 64678, 64679, 64680, 64681, 64682, 64683, 64684, 64685, 64686, 64687, 64688, 64689, 64690, 64691, 64692, 64693, 64694, 64695, 64696, 64697, 64698, 64699, 64700, 64701, 64702, 64703, 64704, 64705, 64706, 64707, 64708, 64709, 64710, 64711, 64712, 64713, 64714, 64715, 64716, 64717, 64718, 64719, 64720, 64721, 64722, 64723, 64724, 64725, 64726, 64727, 64728, 64729, 64730, 64731, 64732, 64733, 64734, 64735, 64736, 64737, 64738, 64739, 64740, 64741, 64742, 64743, 64744, 64745, 64746, 64747, 64748, 64749, 64750, 64751, 64752, 64753, 64754, 64755, 64756, 64757, 64758, 64759, 64760, 64761, 64762, 64763, 64764, 64765, 64766, 64767, 64768, 64769, 64770, 64771, 64772, 64773, 64774, 64775, 64776, 64777, 64778, 64779, 64780, 64781, 64782, 64783, 64784, 64785, 64786, 64787, 64788, 64789, 64790, 64791, 64792, 64793, 64794, 64795, 64796, 64797, 64798, 64799, 64800, 64801, 64802, 64803, 64804, 64805, 64806, 64807, 64808, 64809, 64810, 64811, 64812, 64813, 64814, 64815, 64816, 64817, 64818, 64819, 64820, 64821, 64822, 64823, 64824, 64825, 64826, 64827, 64828, 64829, 64830, 64831, 64832, 64833, 64834, 64835, 64836, 64837, 64838, 64839, 64840, 64841, 64842, 64843, 64844, 64845, 64846, 64847, 64848, 64849, 64850, 64851, 64852, 64853, 64854, 64855, 64856, 64857, 64858, 64859, 64860, 64861, 64862, 64863, 64864, 64865, 64866, 64867, 64868, 64869, 64870, 64871, 64872, 64873, 64874, 64875, 64876, 64877, 64878, 64879, 64880, 64881, 64882, 64883, 64884, 64885, 64886, 64887, 64888, 64889, 64890, 64891, 64892, 64893, 64894, 64895, 64896, 64897, 64898, 64899, 64900, 64901, 64902, 64903, 64904, 64905, 64906, 64907, 64908, 64909, 64910, 64911, 64912, 64913, 64914, 64915, 64916, 64917, 64918, 64919, 64920, 64921, 64922, 64923, 64924, 64925, 64926, 64927, 64928, 64929, 64930, 64931, 64932, 64933, 64934, 64935, 64936, 64937, 64938, 64939, 64940, 64941, 64942, 64943, 64944, 64945, 64946, 64947, 64948, 64949, 64950, 64951, 64952, 64953, 64954, 64955, 64956, 64957, 64958, 64959, 64960, 64961, 64962, 64963, 64964, 64965, 64966, 64967, 64968, 64969, 64970, 64971, 64972, 64973, 64974, 64975, 64976, 64977, 64978, 64979, 64980, 64981, 64982, 64983, 64984, 64985, 64986, 64987, 64988, 64989, 64990, 64991, 64992, 64993, 64994, 64995, 64996, 64997, 64998, 64999, 65000

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LIMIT 2 - Coupon valid through 7/14/20

HaulMaster

SUPER COUPON

arm hairs. I used 220-grit to 400-grit wet-or-dry paper with WD40 on a bit of old marble counter top, running the sole over and over to flatten and clean it up. I ended up with a nice, smooth finish. I also polished the sides and a few other metal bits as-needed. The wire wheel and then a buffer with some polish on it did the job.

Re-assembly went smoothly. I adjusted the blade settings until it cut pine shavings good enough to bring tears to any seasoned wood worker's eyes. Even cheap planes work well if you tune them up right. This particular project now lives in the shop of a dear friend of mine, which is extra-pleasing.

The feeling you get taking a rusty hunk of junk and turning it into a gleaming, working tool can't be beat. You feel great, and want to do it again — and again. It's a dandy way to build your skills with abrasive paper, wire wheels, Dremels, taps and dies, sharpening stones (also good for flattening and polishing metal), wood finishing, screw drivers and even making small parts if needed. You end up with a good tool, and you're many steps closer to your first "real" gun project. Suddenly that restoration of your grandpa's old .22 rifle doesn't seem quite so scary now, eh?



RUGER SUPER P100

This 9mm Custom Shop, Model 5066, raises the bar of "Just how many features can we get into this?" Essentially a competition revolver chambered in 9mm, the 8-shot cylinder assures you of plenty of shooting time, and the 6" barrel, good grips and smooth action helps assure great handling. Note how the short cylinder is met by the barrel forcing cone. There's no need for bullets to make a death-defying leap through empty chambers as in a normal cylinder, and the smaller size cuts mass, allowing fast, smooth operation. The cylinder and extractor are cut for full moon clips, and the barrel is cold hammer-forged. We have one of these so stay tuned for a feature and video on it. MSRP is \$1,549. www.ruger.com

"The tumultuous populace of large cities is ever to be dreaded. Its indiscriminate violence prostrates for the time all public authority, and the consequences are sometimes extensive and terrible." — George Washington

WHO ARE THE SHOOTISTS?

The Shootists is a non-profit organization formed in 1985 by our own John Taffin, as a gathering of like-minded enthusiasts, meeting yearly to fellowship and exchange ideas. It has, in the 35 years since, grown to a membership of about 100, with members ranging from industry professionals, gunwriters, and law enforcement officers to teachers, lawyers and physicians. Membership is by invitation only, with criteria based upon the concept of one suitable to "ride the river with" or to "stand in the gap for the land." The Shootists meet each June for a week at the NRA Whittington Center in Raton, New Mexico, where its "home range" is the Hunters Pistol Range.

Activities of The Shootists are focused on education, safety, fellowship and charitable works. A number of children are part of the group, learning to shoot everything from buffalo rifles and long range precision rifles to cowboy action — something adult participants benefit from as well. Range and firearms safety are a focus. Fellowship is important, as Shootists from across the country look forward to reconnecting each summer with what typically become their closest friends. The Shootists Holiday is also a time to remember — a memorial service is held each year to honor members who have passed



away in the preceding year.

As its primary fund raising effort, The Shootists sponsor children to attend Adventure Camp, held each year at the NRA Whittington Center. Recently, The Shootists have begun holding a second, charitable raffle in the winter. The participation and funds raised were phenomenal this past event, raising \$6,350 for St. Jude's Children's Hospital. Of particular note with regards to the latter raffle, every item or service in the raffle was donated. The Whittington Center donated the base gun (a 5½" first generation Colt SAA in 38-40); Tedd Adamovich donated a set of hand-fit burl maple one-piece grips; Bobby Tyler and Tyler Gun Works donated the restoration and refinish of the gun; Dale Bass donated the full coverage engraving and Mike Barranti of Barranti Leather donated a floral carved leather holster every bit the match for the spectacular gun.

I know many of The Shootists and they're a great group of people! www.shootists.org

ADD IT UP

360 BILLION

Cigarettes consumed in the U.S. in 2007.

135 MILLION POUNDS

Weight of the butts from those cigarettes.

499 BILLION

Cigarettes produced in the U.S. in 2004 (24% exported).

1.79 TRILLION

Cigarettes produced in China in 2004.

2.1 BILLION POUNDS

Weight of butts from worldwide cigarette production yearly.

1

Ranking of cigarette butts as most common refuse found on beaches.



EAA GIRSAN 1911

I'm always on the lookout for a good value. EAA's new Girsan line is made in Turkey and like the vast majority of Turkish guns I've seen, exhibits excellent quality, especially for the money. Think of this model as a simple 5" all-steel 1911 but with upgrades turning it into a "competition" or a sort of "custom" model — all for an MSRP of \$901. Added value items include a fully adjustable rear sight, extended thumb shield, ambi-safety, beavertail, EAA's G10 grips, long hole hammer, front and rear slide serrations, competition trigger at 2.5 lbs., mag well, competition barrel, checkering — and the list goes on. I handled one at the SHOT show and was very impressed with the feeling of good quality. We have one coming for a closer look soon. www.eaacorp.com

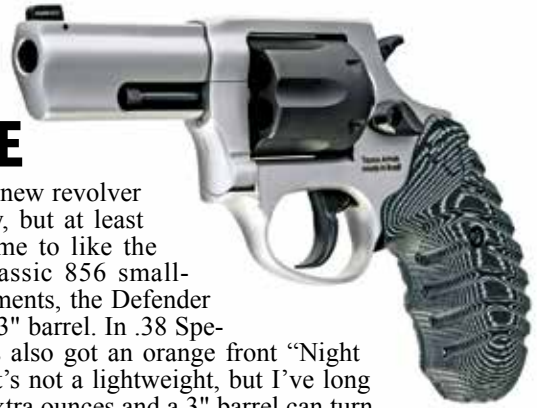


MINI-GUNS

I'm pleased to show you another in this series of high quality cast metal miniatures. This latest is one of my all-time favorite handguns — the Hi-Power. What always strikes me about these little guns are their heft and excellent detail. Unlike many miniatures, the makers here are very careful to get things right. I've helped them with specifics, even supplying high definition photos of guns to help them with their designs. This is number 10 in the series, with the classic S&W Model 36 Chief's Special due next. The past models are still available on their website. MSRP is \$21.95. www.firearmsassurefreedom.com

TAURUS REVOLVER RENAISSANCE

It's hard to pick out one "best" new revolver from any of the makers today, but at least with Taurus it was easy for me to like the Defender 856. Essentially a classic 856 small-frame model with some enhancements, the Defender stands out with the VZ grips and 3" barrel. In .38 Special, with a 6-round cylinder, it's also got an orange front "Night Sight" and fixed rear. At 35 oz. it's not a lightweight, but I've long found the combination of a few extra ounces and a 3" barrel can turn a small-frame revolver into a track-driver. Outfits like Galloway Precision can work the actions to smooth them, and you end up with a very nice revolver. MSRP is \$477 for the Taurus. www.taurususa.com



RANCH PRODUCTS 10MM CLIPS

Mooning means an entirely different thing when you're talking about revolvers — as opposed to intoxicated college students. Ranch Products, makers of "moon" clips of every sort imaginable for more years than I can count, is offering the 10mm clips for the new generation of S&W Model 610 10mm revolvers seeing a resurgence. I like these clips because you can load them with your human-being fingers rather than a fancy mooner or de-mooner. www.ranchproducts.com

MTM HANDGUN STORAGE

Gun safes can get crowded, especially if you're collecting rather than just "gathering" guns! Putting them on shelves or on racks risks dinging them and having them get knocked about. I know that's how they live in my own safe. MTM's idea is simple and brilliant. They offer 3-packs of clear plastic cases in two sizes to fit most handguns (up to 12" long). Each case has a closed cell foam liner and a transparent top. You can stack them and still peer inside to see what's sitting comfy there. They can hold up to two smaller handguns, or other collectible things like coins, jewelry, papers, watches or you-name-it. I gotta get some of these! MSRP is \$16.95 (9" 3-pack) or \$18.95 (12" 3-pack). www.mtmcase-gard.com



Les de Asis Passes

A dear old friend and a true industry icon, Les de Asis, the founder of Benchmade Knives, passed recently. Les started, literally, on a bench, and since the 1970s grew his company into one of the most respected knife making establishments in the world. Les had a magnetic personality, always having time for a visit, a laugh, to share a good dinner and especially — to take care of his customers and staff. He wanted the knife and shooting sports industry to thrive, and left a legacy of quality and innovation which is sure to continue — and grow. Darn it all anyway, it seems it's always the good ones who leave us too early.





As found the plane was rusty and cruddy, and the blade needed attention.



All are jobs any novice can handle, without risking messing up his gun while practicing.

The blade cleaned up, then I trued, sharpened and polished it using diamond stones, then diamond paste on a leather pad.



Wire brushing and some polishing tidied things up nicely. A touch of black glossy paint helped in a few spots too.



The sole flattened agreeably and good old floor wax keeps it slick as well as protecting raw steel from rust.



Good as new, or maybe better since the blade is actually sharp now! A simple project but great for building your tool skills.

PLAN TO PRACTICE ON A PLANE

Hey, um ... uh ... you're talkin' about a wood plane in a, um, you know, uh, like a gun magazine, you know?" Yup, and for a number of very good reasons.

We like to encourage you to get your hands dirty and work on your own guns. In this very column I've covered lots of fun "do it yourself" gunsmithing and simple gun fix projects. Heck, we're even doing another *DIY Gunsmithing* Special Edition as we speak.

But I've also had a few of you reach out when you sort of "got into trouble" on a gun project. I helped you through some rocky spots involving sight adjustments using a cold chisel, one propane torch "situation" as he called it, two "But I only looked away for a second" Dremel adventures and one belt sander incident I still have bad dreams about. So I thought I'd show you a good way to get some good tool skills practice — without risking one of your "future project guns."

Enter the unassuming junk store wood plane. The 1930s-1970s were the heyday of the whole "Real men do it themselves!" period and you couldn't pick up a *Mechanics Illustrated* without seeing smiling, pipe-smoking, hat-wearing "dads" working in the "home shop" or garage. "Handy household projects" got made, and millions of Americans bought wood planes and other tools from the likes of Sears, Montgomery Wards or various "wish books" they wistfully studied. I miss those days, in all honesty.

The upside about this is there are zillions of these old planes rusting away, for sale in antique stores and garage sales. The slick thing about them is they're all sort of like guns. They have wood or plastic "stocks," steel, brass, nickel and even some chrome pieces, threaded bits, flat and round parts and most of the pieces are carefully fitted and

machined to work together. Hey, that sounds like a gun to me.

And The Idea Is?

Even cheaper, older models are usually well made, come apart easily and you can "fix" most broken parts. If you keep your wits about you — and document it with your phone's camera — you can detail strip even a complicated hand plane. Just like a gun.

You can practice refinishing wood, polishing metal, silver-soldering, brazing, maybe even a bit of welding, cleaning up threads, tweaking, timing and adjusting — then put it all back together. The really good thing is if you really, *really* mess things up you're only out the \$20 you spent on a rusty plane — and you still got to practice. But if you do well, then you have a very cool tool *you* restored. You can use it in your own shop, give it as a gift, or — be still my heart — sell it to buy gun stuff.

The plane in the pics is an old Craftsman I paid \$15 for. It was a bit rusty but not too bad, and the blade's edge was in terrible shape. The various threaded parts needed cleaning up and the sole (or bottom) was nicked and rusty but I could tell it'd freshen-up. Overall, a good project plane.

The Process

First, you should photo everything in-place, just as you would if working on a gun model new to you. Photo as you take things apart and even use the video feature to show how things fit or move. Once disassembled, inventory the work to do. In this case I used a bench-top wire wheel to clean the rust and tarnish, and a tap/die set to clean up the threads. This was originally a price-point plane so the handle and knob are hard plastic and were in good shape. I just polished them up some with Simichrome. If they'd been wood, I'd have stripped the finish, sanded and refinished them.

The blade took a bit of work to square and sharpen but I soon had it popping

Continued on page 80

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