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.38 SAA

I have a question for one of your writers, sixgun expert Mr. John Taffin, about first-generation Single Action Army revolvers: Were any ever chambered in either .357 Magnum or .38 Special?

Matthew George

Yes the first generation Colt Single Actions were chambered in both .38 Special and .357 Magnum. In fact Single Action chambered in .357 were sent to England during the Second World War as they were so short of firearms. —JT

BLACK POWDER QUESTIONS

I haven't hunted with black powder in several years now, and with the lack of ammo and reloading supplies, I pulled one of my smoke poles out of the back of the safe and enjoyed several shooting sessions. It did get me thinking since the dearth of shooting supplies, will modern day pistol and rifle primers ignite black powder? Or "white" (Pyrodex) powder? I know some modern black powder rifles use shotgun primers.



Is there a power difference in pistol/rifle primers and those for shot shells? Has anyone tried to shoot black powder in a modern smokeless gun successfully? Would it work? Would you have to use lead bullets or would copper coated ones seal the bore? Seems if it worked that would be a viable option for home or close quarters-defense. Any writers there wish to experiment?

Donald Mangum

Interesting questions. Here are my answers:

- 1. Yes, modern primers work fine with black powder or substitutes and as you noted, many factory "muzzleloaders" use shotgun or rifle primers.*
- 2. The different-sized primers have different payloads of fulminate so they create a larger or smaller blast to ignite the powder. The choice is dependent on the powder capacity of the case.*
- 3. Black powder in a modern gun? Actually, that's how modern cartridge guns got started so it would work for many older rounds. As one example, the .45-70*

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GUNS

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THE FINEST IN THE FIREARMS FIELD SINCE 1955

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PERFECT PACKIN' PISTOL PART II THE .44 SPECIAL

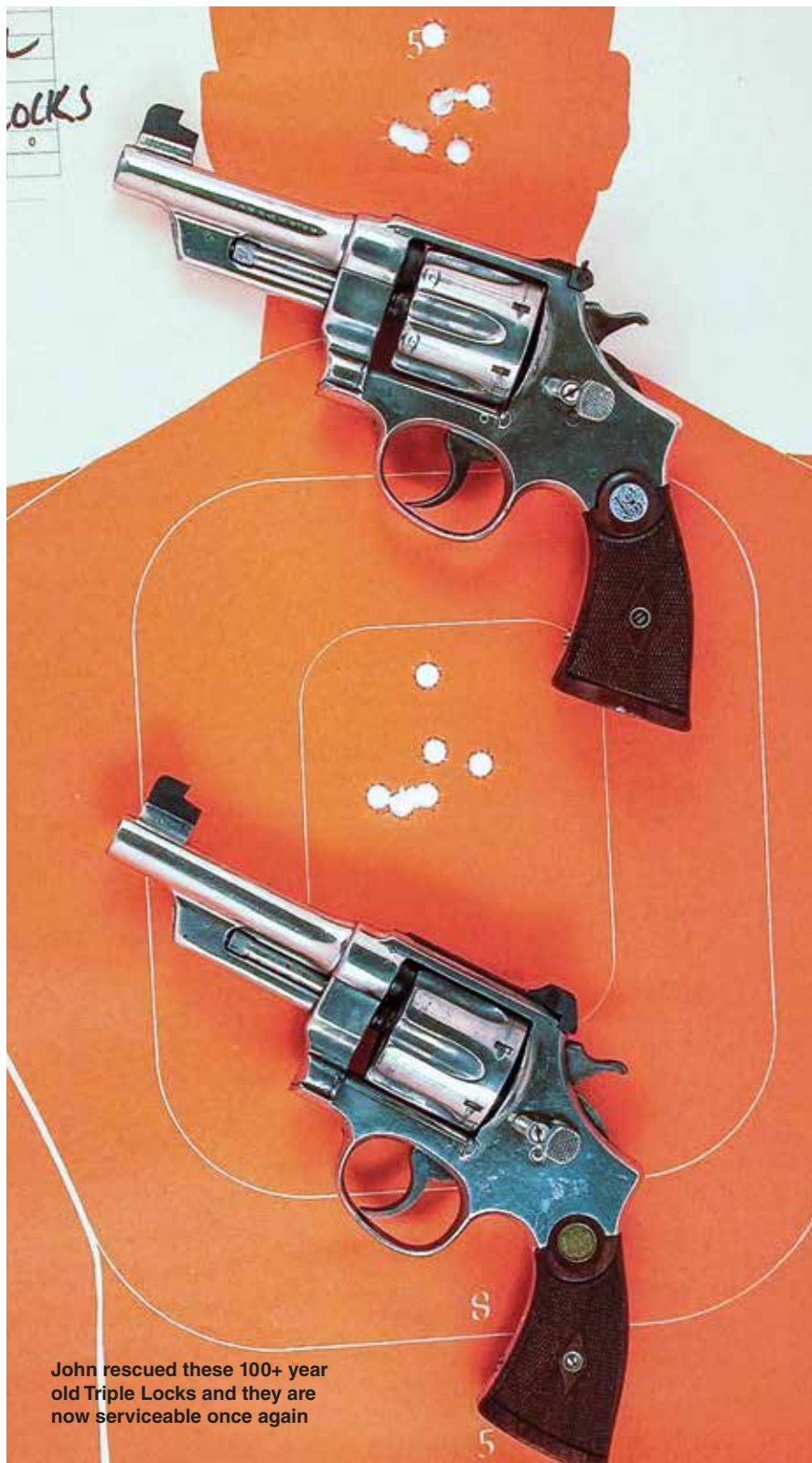
We continue our look at the Personification of the Perfect Packin' Pistol by concentrating on 4" double-action Smith & Wesson sixguns by remembering these words from the Taffin Dictionary of Sixgunning: "Perfect Packin' Pistol' is a title given to a sixgun or semi-automatic with a barrel not less than 4" nor more than 5-1/2" which can be carried easily all day in a well-designed holster, placed under a bed roll comfortably at night and can be expected to handle any situation which should arise."

IN THE BEGINNING

The roots of the .44 Special go back to the Model #3 American. It was chambered in .44 Henry Rimfire, making it a companion to the 1860 Henry levergun. However, the military wanted a centerfire cartridge and the result was the .44 S&W American. The Russians gave Smith & Wesson a large contract for this Model #3 but made changes — the best was the .44 Russian ammunition. Both the Henry and American .44s used a heeled bullet with smaller base-diameter fitted inside the case with the rest of the bullet the same diameter as the outside of the case, much like the .22 Long Rifle today. The Russians wanted a uniform diameter bullet smaller in diameter than the outside of the case.

The .44 Russian proved to be a superb cartridge and shooters such as Walter Winans and Chevalier Ira Paine were soon setting records that stood for decades. When I assembled .44 Russian rounds as close as I could come to the original black powder version, I was able to put 25 rounds in one hole shooting a 7-1/2" Bisley Model Colt.

After their success with the lengthening of the .38 Long Colt cartridge to become the .38 Special, Smith & Wesson turned their sights upon the .44 Russian, lengthening it to become the .44 Special. In early 1908 the first N-Frame S&W revolver arrived. Basically, an enlarged Military & Police, there were two differences aside from the chambering. This was the first Smith & Wesson sixgun to have an enclosed ejector rod and the cylinder was locked in three places — the rear, the front of the ejector rod and the front of the cylinder using a beautifully machined third lock. Officially named the .44 Hand Ejector 1st Model, it was also known as the New Century .44 Military



John rescued these 100+ year old Triple Locks and they are now serviceable once again

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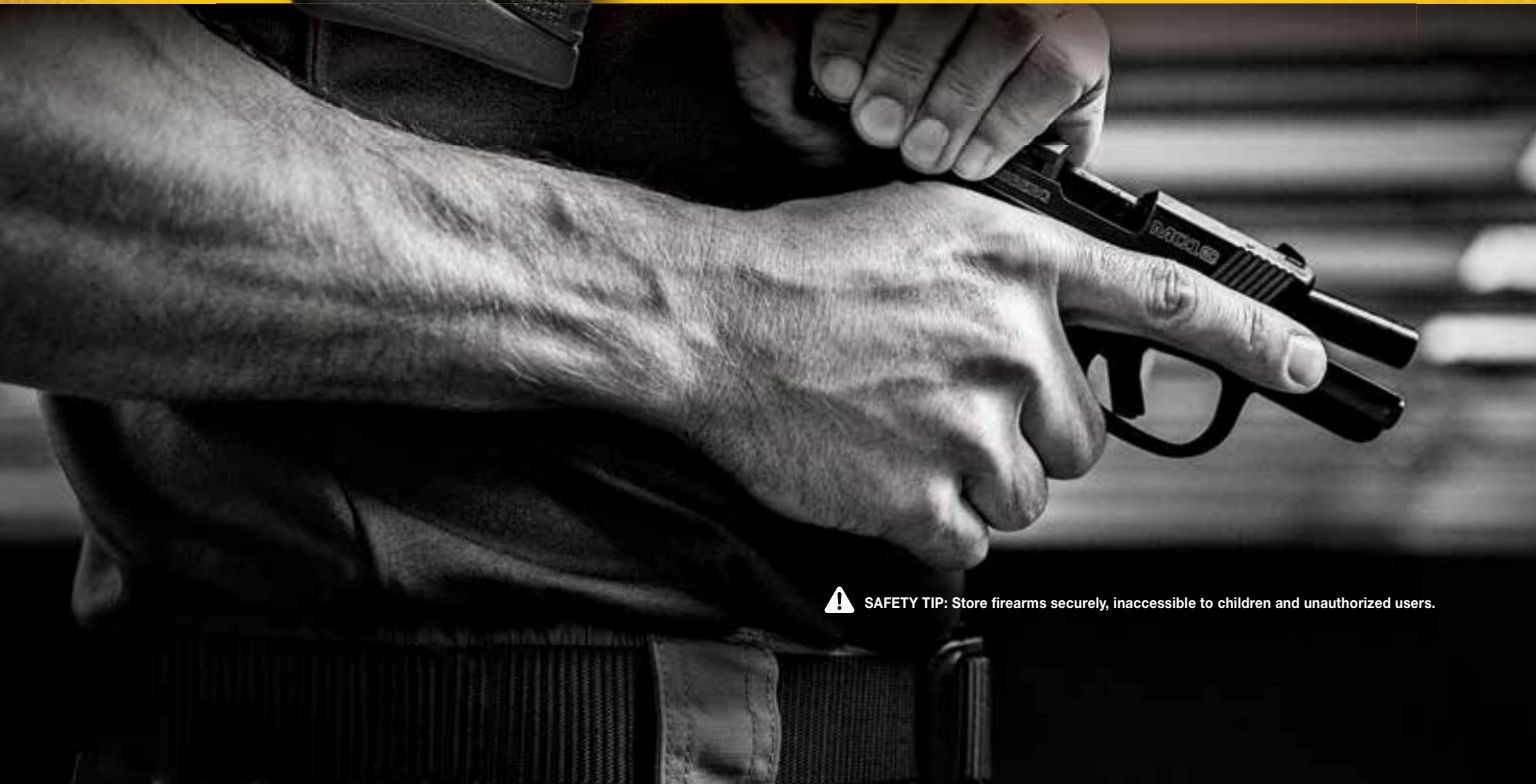
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SAFETY TIP: Store firearms securely, inaccessible to children and unauthorized users.

Model of 1908. For those who really appreciate quality sixguns, however, it became the Triple-Lock.

BEST OF THE BEST

This revolver is still often referred to as the finest double action sixgun to ever exit from Smith & Wesson or anywhere else. The ammunition was another matter. With this large framed, very strong revolver, the .44 Russian with its 246-grain round-nosed bullet at 750 fps could have been greatly improved. Instead, in spite of the longer case, the .44 Special duplicated the ballistics of the .44 Russian. It would take experimenters like Elmer Keith and the .44 Associates to bring the .44 Special closer to perfection.

In the late 1920s Keith began writing about the .44 Special, designing a new cast bullet, the 250-grain semi-wadcutter Lyman/Ideal #429421. It is still a favorite bullet with many handloaders of both the .44 Special and .44 Magnum.

The Triple-Lock was offered in both fixed-sight and target-sighted models and three standard barrel lengths of 4", 5" and 6-1/2". I have two 4" versions, both of which are nickel-plated and were rescued from the bone pile. One was an original Target Model that someone had very poorly cut back to 4" and the other was originally a fixed-sighted version someone had cut a channel for an adjustable sight on the top strap. My gunsmith went to work and installed a modern S&W adjustable rear sight on the former and a Dave Lauck rear sight on the latter. They are both now totally usable though not original, making them excellent PPPs.

The Triple-Lock only lasted until 1915 when it was removed from production and replaced by the 2nd Model without the third lock or the enclosed ejector rod, thus saving the purchaser \$2. A measly \$2 killed a grand sixgun! It wasn't long before shooters started asking for a return of the Triple Lock. This never happened but in 1926 Fort Worth gun dealer Wolf & Klar placed a large order with Smith & Wesson for what would become the 3rd Model Hand Ejector. The third lock was not returned, however the enclosed ejector rod was back.

LAWDOGS

This sixgun, especially with a 4" barrel, was very popular with peace officers in the Southwest and FBI agent Jelly Bryce also favored this .44 Special Model 1926 until the arrival of the .357 Magnum. Target Models are very rare and quite valuable and I have

never seen one with a 4" barrel though factory records show two were shipped in 1940. I have been fortunate to come up with two 4" fixed-sighted models thanks mainly to readers who stumbled onto them at an exceptionally low price and contacted me about them.

The epitome of the 4" double-action .44 Special was reached in 1950 with the arrival of the 4th Model Hand Ejector or as it is most often known the 1950 Target. Mainly offered with a 6-1/2" barrel, Target models are also found very rarely with 5" barrels. Four-inch Target Models are scarce but can be found and I have come up with two of these. Elmer Keith favored the 1950 Target

with a 4" barrel as his every day Packin' Pistol from its introduction until the .44 Magnum version arrived in 1956. He carried the Special in his duties as Salmon, Idaho town constable and he also used it to take his yearly mule deer when he was hobbling along on a bad ankle while fishing.

Skeeter Skelton sold his 4" 1950 Target when the .44 Magnum arrived, however he soon found the latter was too powerful for law enforcement use and went back to the .44 Special 1950 Target. In his writings he had a load using the Keith bullet over 75 grains of Unique. He got this load from Keith but made it popular and it is now universally known as the Skeeter Load. This load has a



The 4" S&W .44 Specials — Model 1926 (above, top guns) and 1950 Military Models (above, bottom guns). Thanks mainly to the efforts of Skeeter Skelton, Smith & Wesson resurrected the 4" 1950 Target (below) in the mid-1980s.



muzzle velocity of about 925 fps from the 4" barrel, making it sufficiently powerful — while still controllable — for about 99% of everything we ever want to do with a sixgun.

In addition to the 1950 Target, S&W also offered a fixed-sighted version, the Model 1950 Military. The 4" version is a particularly rugged sixgun. In 1957 when all Smith &

Wesson sixguns received model numbers, the Target Model became the Model 24, while the Military Model was designated the Model 21. All Smith & Wesson .44 Specials were dropped in 1966. It could have been the end of it except for Skeeter Skelton. Skeeter began to lobby both Colt and Smith & Wesson to return the .44 Special to their catalogs.

Skeeter not only wrote about the return of the .44 Special, he also instigated a letter writing campaign. In response Smith & Wesson came out with that Model 24-3 .44 Special in both 4" and 6-1/2" lengths and this was followed with the Model 624, the stainless steel version in the same barrel lengths. I soon had a pair of 4" Model 24-3s and a Model 624 with the same barrel length. I'm so pleased with these guns. They have been fitted with pre-ban ivory stocks with the blue versions carved in the Elmer Keith pattern and the ivories on the Model 624 scrimshawed by Twyla, the late wife of my friend Jim Taylor.

All of these along, with my 1950 Target, 1926 Model and restored Triple-Locks are all highly cherished sixguns that will eventually be passed on to my grandkids. 



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ELDEN CARL A TREND-SETTING "ORIGINAL COMBAT MASTER"

Elden Carl was one of the handful of original Combat Masters to whom the legendary Col. Jeff Cooper dedicated his classic book *Cooper on Handguns*. Cooper called Carl "the best overall pistol shot I ever knew." He and Thell Reed are the only "original masters" still with us. Mutual friend Jay Hohenhaus was kind enough to put the two of us together and give me a chance to pick the brain of a man I had grown up reading about in gun magazines and books.

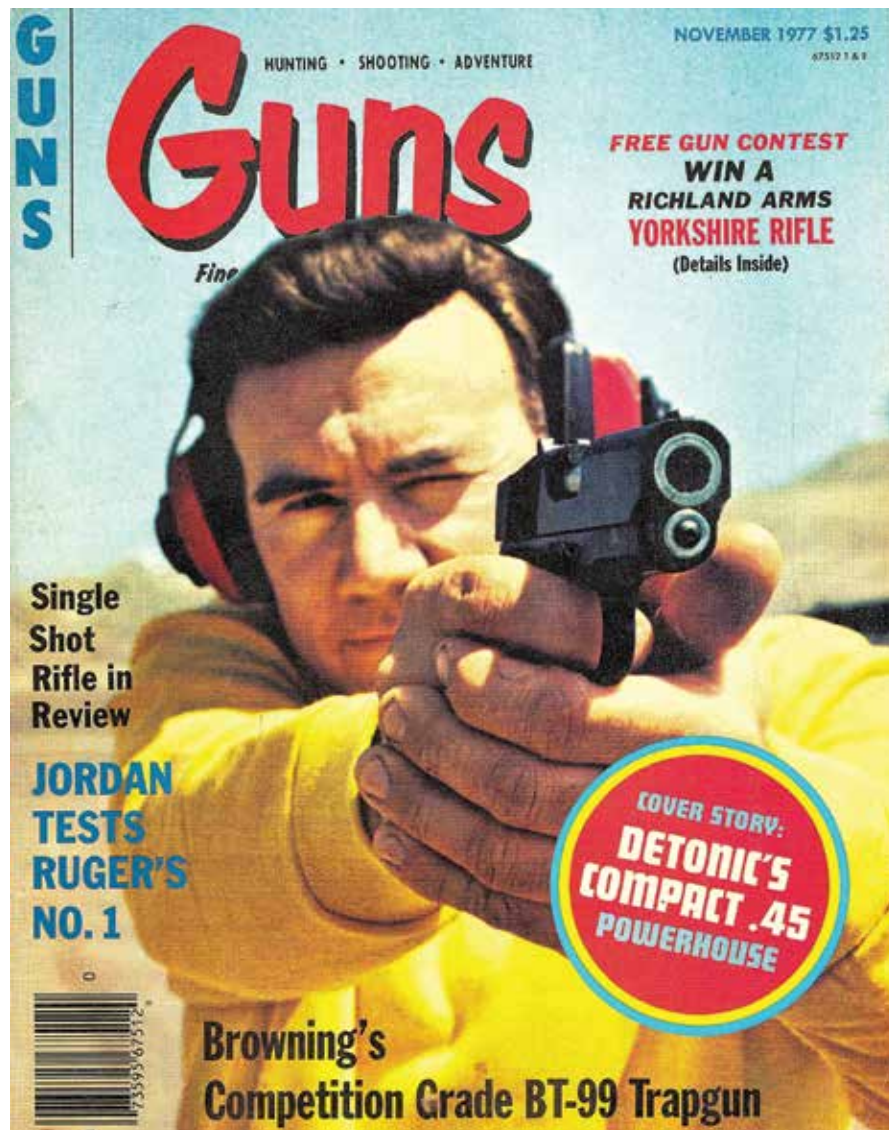
Completing his service in the Navy in the 1950s, Elden Carl became a lawman, first with the El Cajon, California Police Department then serving most of his career

with the San Diego County Sheriff's Office, retiring in 1980 after being injured in a motor vehicle accident. As partial as he was to the 1911, the guns he carried on duty were Smith & Wesson revolvers: the Model 19 .357 Combat Magnum with 4" barrel or the Model 29 .44 Magnum with 6.5" tube, the latter loaded with 240-grain lead Keith bullets at 950 feet per second in .44 Special cases.

THE CHAMPION

Elden Carl won Cooper's Leatherslap contests, the precursor to IPSC (the International Practical Shooting Confederation) and USPSA (United States Practical

Elden Carl was on the cover of the November 1977 *GUNS* with a Detonics .45.



Elden Carl in his salad days, demonstrating his isosceles stance with "stacked thumbs" grip.

Shooting Association) today. In one match at 100 yards, he tied with fellow Combat Master Jack Weaver (as in "Weaver Stance"), and they had to shoot off. Elden won with five shots from his Model 29 landing in a 3" group from 100 yards. Cooper called it an unofficial world record — to Elden's knowledge, this record still stands.

Elden Carl's time in competitive shooting lasted for only a few years. The sheriff under whom he served — a pro-gun boss who carried a .44 Special S&W himself — had Elden doing firearms safety seminars and shooting demonstrations all over the county. Elden's major hobby, motorcycles, took over his leisure time. He would log more than a million miles on motorcycles and become famous for customizing the bikes.

On the job, Elden's skill with a handgun was such he never needed to fire a shot in the line of duty. Each time danger threatened, he had his gun on the other person so fast they decided to surrender rather than die. In one of those cases, Elden had to reinforce the suspect's learning experience by applying his Smith & Wesson .44 upside the individual's head, Wyatt Earp-style.

THE INNOVATOR

Carl appears to be the first to win a major practical shooting match firing from the isosceles stance, two-handed with both arms extended as opposed to the bent elbows/push-pull stance of his contemporary, Jack Weaver. He remembers today, "I deliberately built up triceps and lats, lifted weights all my life. I could curl

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Elden Carl stands between two other great champions of their time — Bill McMillan (left) and Ray Chapman. Today, 86-year-old Elden is best known for his custom motorcycles like this DR650 (below).

my body weight, 195 lbs., and could bench over 300. When I locked my elbows out my triceps and back would lock in together. I didn't need to bend my elbows. I was the first one to enter a match against Jack Weaver shooting two-handed like him, Jeff Cooper's Advanced Military match in June 1961. Jeff himself was still shooting one-handed then. Ray Chapman came in within a year of me, probably 1962."

The straight thumbs grasp of the pistol is currently the choice of most of our practical pistol champions today. Few realize the first man to use this in major matches was Carl. He started his .45 time with a \$15 surplus 1911A1 bought through the DCM. Discovering the hard way the support hand thumb would be lacerated upon recoil if behind the slide, he found by trial and error both thumbs straight on the same side of the pistol worked best for him. "I called it 'stacked thumbs,'" he told me.

Bumper pads on the floorplates of magazines appear to be another Elden Carl innovation dating back to the very early 1960s. He had lent his .45 to Jeff Cooper at a match, and Cooper had a reload where the flat-bottom GI mag failed to seat; the pistol gave him one more shot and then dropped the magazine to the ground. Elden told me, "I soldered some metal onto the bottom. I gave one to Jeff and still have a couple of those early ones." Today, of course, the bumper pad on the bottom of a 1911 mag is all but standard equipment.

The muzzle-forward holster cant may be another Elden Carl innovation. "I had Don



Hume make me a custom duty rig, with the muzzle canted forward 12 to 15 degrees. It let me start the draw with my wrist already locked. I was the first to win the Leatherslap with a 1911 in 1961 out of a metal-lined holster with that cant, made for me by Alfonso Pineda," Elden said.

Now 86 years old, Elden Carl still builds and rides custom motorcycles — and still keeps a cocked and locked 1911 .45 handy. He has shared some of his history in the art of the practical pistol with Jay Hohenhaus and editor Pat Rose, who graciously provided the photos you see here. You can read more about those foundational days at his website, EldenCarl.com. Some of us are encouraging him to write a book. I sure hope he does.



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THE .45 ACP PART I TIME WELL SPENT

As this is written we are at the apex — hopefully — of the Corona Virus Lockdown. This has had many negative results including businesses that will never recover and many people losing their jobs. On the positive side families are spending more time together, there is a lot less traffic, gas prices locally have dropped over \$0.50 a gallon and I have gone to work doing things I didn't think I had time for before the Pandemic.

BRASS, NOT CHICKEN

Over the past couple years I have been tossing my spent .45 ACP brass into five-gallon buckets. I have shot enough to accumulate three such buckets full of brass and was always going to get to this brass “someday.” So, instead of spending time eating at Jalapeño's Mexican Restaurant, I decided to attack the .45 ACP brass instead of *Arroz Con Pollo*. If I had realized how much time and effort it was going to take, I may have seriously reconsidered.

How many rounds of brass will three five-gallon buckets hold? The first thing I did was sort everything by head stamps. I don't know how practical this is, however, I do know when I did a test with .44 Special brass, my groups with all of one kind of brass were smaller than the groups resulting from mixed brass. Was it enough to make it practical to sort? It's debatable.

I looked at every piece of .45 ACP brass in those three buckets and sorted them individually. This allowed tossing out any with small primer pockets and those I knew were old military brass I had started loading 40 years ago. When I got through sorting, I had 5,250 pieces of quality brass ready to be reloaded with 10 different head stamps. Now it was time to really start to work.

HIT THE BENCH

Using a RCBS RockChucker single-stage press, each case was sized and de-primed using the Lee Undersized Carbide Sizing Die. After this, I used the Lee Universal Expanding Die to just kiss the mouth of the case enough to allow the bullet to enter. The use of these two dies ensure the tightest possible



John's well-worn 75-cent copy of Col. Cooper's *Fighting Handguns* along with a \$75 collector's copy and a current reprint.



A worthy project during the lockdown — 1,000 .45 ACP cases along with Lee Under-sized Carbide Sizing die, Universal Expander and Factory Crimp Die.

bullet-to-case fit. This is especially important as there is no crimping groove with .45 ACP loads.

After priming each case with Winchester Large Pistol Primers using the RCBS Bench Mounted Priming Tool, I charged each case with powder using a loading block so I can look in each case with a flashlight. Bullets are seated and then separately taper-crimped using the Lee Factory Crimp Die, bringing the total handling of the cases up to 36,750 times. Is it/was it worth it? I don't want to even count the number of hours spent or the energy expended, however this is overshadowed by the fact I have over 5,000 .45 ACP loads which are as perfect as I can make them.

DIE HARD

The use of the Lee Undersized Sizing Die, Lee Universal Expanding Die and the Lee Factory Crimp Die accomplish two problems encountered with .45 ACP loads. In semi-auto pistols we have to watch out for bullets being pushed back into the case, thus raising pressure, while in revolvers the problem is just the opposite as the bullets can move forward under recoil. The use of these three dies, even though it requires one extra loading step, prevents either one

of these situations occurring.

The John Browning-designed 1911 Government Model and the .45 ACP cartridge did not arrive at the same time. In fact, the cartridge first appeared in the John Browning-designed Model 1905 and used a 200-grain bullet. When the military adopted the new semi-automatic pistol, the 1905 version became the 1911 version with one of the main changes being an angled grip frame. The new version of the .45 cartridge used a 230-grain bullet at 825 fps, a dead ringer for the .45 Schofield black powder cartridge used by the military since 1877 in both the Colt Single Action Army and the Smith & Wesson Model #3. As adopted by the military in 1911, the Colt Government Model .45 would last as the official military sidearm until 1985.

Today, for many of us dinosaurs, there are only two semi-automatic pistols — the 1911 and all others.

THE MAN

When it comes to the .45 ACP we give the accolades to Col. Jeff Cooper for making the 1911 Government Model so popular. I first discovered Col. Cooper in 1958 when I found a 75-cent Trend



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John uses the Lee Undersized Sizing Die and Factory Crimp Die for loading the .45 ACP to Col. Cooper specifications.



Book #172 paperback entitled *Fighting Handguns*.

These are words about the Colt 1911 I found in Cooper's book more than 60 years ago. "This rugged old bruiser has been sworn at by generations of U.S. servicemen, and has baffled regiments of target shooters, but I'm going to stick my neck way out and say flatly that it is the finest fighting sidearm ever produced up to now. It's a long way from ideal, to be sure, but there isn't anything better around to supersede it."

This still remains true today! To continue with Cooper's words: "I must admit that the weapon is less remarkable for its merits as a piece of engineering than as the only sidearm which combines the advantages of an auto pistol with a cartridge in which a man can place some confidence ... The 1911 and 1911A1 are big pistols, and their 39-oz. weight is not light. The grip is not comfortable for small hands and I don't know any sort of custom work that will make it so. It's a hard gun to shoot tight groups on the target range, and its trajectory leaves a lot to be desired at rifle ranges. But as something for steady wear in situations where some uncouth characters may try to brain you without notice, it's tough to beat... Like many skills, mastery of the big pistol doesn't just drop in your lap, it takes a good deal of effort. In the hands of a man who knows how to use it, the .45 auto is a terrible weapon — very quick, very powerful, very accurate and completely reliable. To get its full potential it must be hand loaded with Keith-type, semi-wadcutter bullets, but even with service loads it's no slouch."

Over the next installments we will be looking at loads for the .45 ACP, both jacketed and cast and definitely at Col. Cooper's favorite load. We'll also look at the Commander, of which Cooper says: "I don't count the Commander as a rival, but rather as a sort of special purpose modification." Stay tuned.

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OLD & NEW RUGER BLACKHAWK .44 LIKE FINE WINE, GETTING BETTER WITH AGE

In the last days of 1955 Remington and Smith & Wesson unveiled the most powerful of handgun cartridges for its day — the .44 Remington Magnum. Then, very quickly in 1956 Sturm, Ruger and Company introduced their .44 Magnum Blackhawk. A slightly increased frame size over .357 Magnum Blackhawks was required to accommodate the bigger .44 cartridge.

THE FLATTOP ARRIVES

Blackhawk .44s came in three barrel lengths — 6-1/2", 7-1/2" and 10". Collectors later termed it the "Flattop Blackhawk .44"

because of its fully adjustable rear sight set exposed on the end of a flat top strap. Later Ruger began putting some protective "ears" on both sides of Blackhawk rear sights but never for the .44 Blackhawks. The model was discontinued in 1963 after about 300 shy of 30,000 were made.

When Flattop Blackhawk .44s were introduced, I was in the first grade and when discontinued I was in the eighth grade. I was totally ignorant of them but not for long. By the mid-1960s I was a devoted reader of Skeeter Skelton and along the way he introduced me to Ruger's Flattop

.44 Magnum because he favored one with a 7-1/2" barrel. Skeeter's Blackhawk .44 may have worn a brass grip frame. My memory is vague on that.

FIRST LOOK

The first time I actually saw a Blackhawk .44 Magnum was in a gun store on the main street of Paso Robles, Calif. It was January 1973 and I was visiting a friend with whom I had worked with in Yellowstone National Park. The .44 was priced at a mere \$95. I had the money but not being a resident of the state it might as well been on the moon. Later the same year, after the same friend and I finished working on a forest fire crew in Montana, we wandered into a gun store. There for the first time we discovered something called a New Model Ruger Blackhawk. I was a bit nonplussed by the action change. No half-cock notch and cylinder rotated freely when the loading gate was opened: What on earth was happening?

Finally in 1989 I became the proud owner of a Blackhawk .44 Magnum, a gift from a good friend. It's a wicked beast with full bore loads so to me it has always been a .44 Special with the option of more power if needed. In 2020 while perusing the Ruger website my attention landed on the New



Ruger New Models such as this Blackhawk .44 Magnum have the safety warning beneath the barrel.



At top is Duke's Old Model Ruger Blackhawk .44 Magnum with a 6-1/2" barrel. Bottom is Ruger New Model Blackhawk .44 Magnum with 5-1/2" barrel.



Duke test firing his Old Model .44 Magnum from Ransom Pistol Machine Rest.

Model .44 Magnum Blackhawk and so I decided to finally give one a try.

OLD AND NEW

Here's a brief comparison. My Old Model .44 Blackhawk has a 6-1/2" barrel. New Model Blackhawk .44s' barrel lengths are 5-1/2". My OM .44 has an aluminum alloy

grip frame but the NM .44 has one of steel. And finally, my .44's rear sight sets up where it can be knocked about in rough traveling but the new one has those protective sides. Interestingly, the unloaded weights of the two .44s were identical at 41 oz. My older Ruger has no safety warning printed on its barrel but someone at Ruger wised up and

now the lawyer-mandated safety warning is under the barrel instead of alongside of it.

And, of course, with its transfer system of action the New Model .44 Magnum can safely be carried with all six chambers loaded while my Old Model .44 is a five shooter for safety's sake. It should (MUST!) be carried with five rounds chambered and hammer down on the empty sixth chamber. I personally have known two fellows who ignored the safety warning and shot themselves — one fatally.

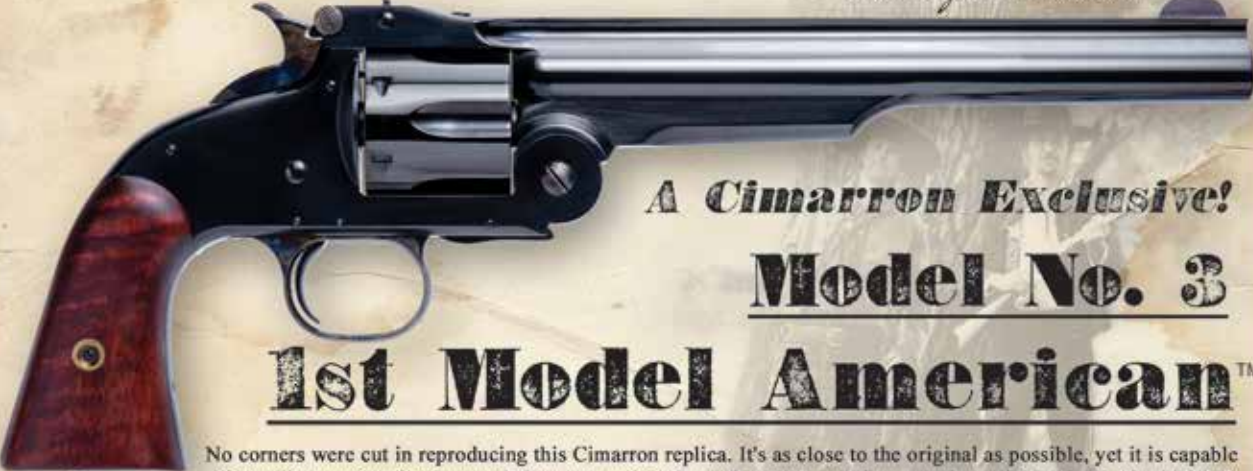
Going along with my idea Ruger Blackhawk .44 Magnums are .44 Specials with the option of also being .44 Magnums as needed, I only shot them with .44 Special factory loads. I was surprised at the difference 1" of barrel made. Velocity from the 6-1/2" length was 770 fps but from a 5-1/2" it was 723 fps. As far as accuracy goes, I couldn't tell a bit of difference between the two. Groups for five shots ran in the 2" range at 25 yards give or take a half-inch or so.

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RIFLE SLINGS

VITAL BUT OVERLOOKED ACCESSORY

A sling is one of the most useful accessories for a rifle. I'm speaking in terms of hunting rifles, not slings for some types of formal rifle competition or the tactical slings used by military and police. My primary purpose for a sling is for carrying the rifle in the field while hunting. Using it as a shooting aid is secondary.

CONTRADICTIONS

There are valid objections to a sling; when still-hunting, for example or on watch during a drive, you want the rifle in both hands so it can be quickly brought into action. On a ground or tree stand the rifle should be in hand so it can be raised without a lot of arm waving and game-spooking commotion. I've heard of slings getting caught while moving through heavy cover; never had it happen myself but I'll agree it could be a concern, especially if you are following up dangerous

game. In such situations it is easy enough to remove the sling and store it in a pocket or daypack.

PROS

Still, I want to have a sling available. A rifle, even a light rifle, can be a tiresome burden over the course of a long day. Even in still-hunting, when it comes time to head back to camp or the truck, it's a blessed relief to get the rifle out of the hands and onto the shoulder. I can recall many a long hike across rolling prairie when hunting antelope or mule deer with the rifle slung. Not only is it easier carrying, but also it keeps the hands free to use a binocular. In fact I've come to like carrying a hiking stick for easier walking in rough country and to steady binocular and rifle.

A sling is also handy if you meet up with other hunters, after a drive for example. I think it is a courtesy to others to have

the action open and the rifle slung where everyone can see the muzzle is pointing in a safe direction. I haven't been checked by conservation officers very often but on the three or four occasions officers drove up to check licenses, I made a point of opening the bolt and slinging the rifle as a matter of simple courtesy. I've always found if you are civil and respectful you get civility and respect in return.

CHOICES

After nearly 60 years of carrying rifles afield I've developed preferences in slings. For lightweight rimfires and center fires I like a simple web strap. I'm embarrassed to admit my favorite wasn't even made as a sling. Originally it was a carry strap for a duffel bag. I liked the length and width so I added a pair of sling swivels. Weight is less than 3 oz. of which most is made up of the swivels. I adjusted the length so it can be used as a hasty sling.

Currently the most popular style of carrying slings have a wide area over the shoulder (the "cobra" style) or a large



One for every need — slings come in all shapes and sizes ranging from simple nylon carry straps (left) to two-piece shooting slings (right) based on the U.S. military pattern dating to 1907.



An ingenious design by the late Eric Ching, this Ching Safari Sling by Galco has an adjustable loop that slips on the support arm to help steady the rifle and also makes a comfortable carrying strap.



Sling swivels come in all shapes, sizes and prices. Inexpensive versions often fail after a short time so bargain-basement swivels are often not the deal they may seem.

padding or fabric or leather addition to the sling. I don't particularly like the look of these but I'll admit they do add to comfort when slinging a heavy rifle. "Heavy" is a subjective term but for me anything over 9.5 lbs. field ready is heavy. When I use such slings, I like to keep it simple though some styles add cartridge loops or pouches to the outside of the padded area.

G.I. ISSUE

Long ago, circa 1907, the U.S. military designed a two-piece sling that could be opened to carry the rifle on the shoulder, snugged up straight to look sharp on the parade ground, or — and this was really ingenious — used as an aid to accurate shooting. Military issue slings are usually 1-1/4" wide and made of thick, heavy leather. Versions for hunting rifles are 1" wide and made of lighter leather. I used one such sling for many years until it started to crack across two of the adjustment holes. I bought a replacement from Uncle Mike's made of basket-stamped leather. It seems to have been discontinued but the one I have should see me out nicely.



This simple web strap weighs less than 3 oz. including the swivels and is ideal on lightweight rifles such as this Kimber Adirondack in 6.5 cm. A now-discontinued Uncle Mike leather basket-stamped shooting sling (below) on Dave's Remington 700 .243 Win.



I use this sling when hunting open prairie for mule deer or antelope. When there are no handy trees or posts to use as a rest, and sagebrush precludes the prone position, sitting with a tight sling is sometimes the best option.

These three styles — web strap, cobra-style and two-piece shooting sling — meet

all my needs. All my slings have quick-detach swivels, mostly by Uncle Mike's to fit rifle studs. I know there are some better-looking flush mounted styles but most of my rifles came with swivel studs fitted. Changing them all over is too much trouble and expense. I like being able to use any sling on any rifle.

ACCESSORIZING YOUR SHOTGUN

MAKE YOUR SCATTERGUN MORE MISSION-CAPABLE

Over 30 years ago I was talking with a manufacturer who specialized in aftermarket items for the Ruger 10/22. I asked him, with all his manufacturing expertise, why he didn't make a firearm himself. I remember him telling me, "There is no real markup in guns for retailers. The real money comes from accessories and the owner's desire to 'customize' his gun."

Those words proved prophetic and it's become near impossible to find a firearm — of any genre — that hasn't been accessorized in some fashion. Bone stock guns are as rare as the proverbial hen's teeth.

As they come from the factory, most firearms are more intrinsically accurate than the average shooter can take advantage of. Nevertheless there are many accessories to help make you more "mission capable."

For the purposes of this article let's focus on the fighting shotgun. I won't get into a discussion of fodder like birdshot vs. buckshot vs. slugs, because — just like Chevy, Ford and Dodge — everyone has their own theory as to which is best.

A standard gun can handle almost any situation a citizen is likely to encounter, but some accessories take the fowling piece to an entirely new level.

STOCKS

One of the biggest problems many shooters encounter is the issue of fit, so let's start with the stock. This includes running the action with the gun still on the shoulder. No problem for some, but very difficult for others, especially on the forward stroke of a pump gun.

Almost any stock can be shortened to allow the user to employ proper technique. My choice is to go with a purpose-designed stock such as the Magpul SGA stock. The SGA spacer-adjustable stock can change the length of pull in 1/2" increments from 12.5" to 14.5". I have this stock on Remington and Mossberg shotguns and I highly recommend it.

LIGHTS

There are two categories of lights: handheld and dedicated. Even if you have a

"A STANDARD GUN CAN HANDLE ALMOST ANY SITUATION A CITIZEN IS LIKELY TO ENCOUNTER, BUT SOME ACCESSORIES TAKE THE FOWLING PIECE TO AN ENTIRELY NEW LEVEL."



mounted light you will still need a handheld light for searching and identification purposes. Weapon lights are for shooting, not scanning an area (Safety rule #2).

I use SureFire shotgun forends with integrated weapon lights on my “social” shotguns. Yes, they are expensive and less costly lights are available but SureFire has decades of hard use backing up their reputation. Peace of mind comes with a cost.

SPARE AMMO

One supposed negative point of the shotgun is its low ammunition capacity. The standard Remington 870 has a magazine capacity of four rounds and the standard Mossberg 500 carries five in the tube. I say “supposed negative point” because unless you’re up holding back an invading Mongolian hoard, there are very few problems four or five rounds of defensive 12 gauge can’t take care of — assuming the shooter does his part.

It’s common to see magazine extensions offering one to four extra shells. As seen here, I have a TacStar carbon fiber shotgun magazine extension on my 870, bringing it up to a seven-round magazine capacity. It only adds 8 oz. yet is very strong.



The bare-bones Remington 870 will handle almost any situation a citizen is likely to encounter.



A receiver-mounted shell carrier (above) is more useful than a butt cuff — you don’t have to alter your firing grip or lose sight of danger.



Length of pull is critical for proper operation and most stock guns are too long. Magpul SGA stock uses spacers to change the LOP.

I prefer a receiver-mounted extra shell carrier over a butt cuff. With a butt cuff you either have to reach over the top of the gun, obstructing your view of a possible problem downrange, or under the gun that usually results in altering your firing grip. A receiver-mounted carrier alleviates both problems and places the shell nearer to the loading port.

I can recommend both the TacStar original SideSaddle or the Mesa Tactical SureShell carrier. I have tried other brands but have found the shell receptacles so loose the rounds fall out, or so tight they are extremely hard to pull a shell free.

SIGHTS

I have seen some excellent shooting with the common bead front sight hitting with slugs out to around 75 yards.

A better idea is an adjustable ghost ring rear sight and high profile front sight to extend the range and provide better accuracy. A great example of sights from the factory are those used on Mossberg 590/590A1 shotguns.

Many excellent aftermarket sights are available, and front sights are available in

basic black and with tritium and fiber optic inserts. Avoid using the super adhesive *Du jour* — yes, it will hold for a while but I have seen many, many come off while shooting.

If the shotgun is used for self-defense, such a sight will probably come loose at the worst possible time. Buy a rear sight that requires drilling and tapping or attaches to a rail and silver solder the front sight in place.

SLING

A sling for a long gun is akin to a holster for a handgun. My choice is the Vickers Tactical Sling from Blue Force Gear but almost any sling will work. There is one notable exception — a sling holding shells bandoleer style. It will sway to and fro while shooting and throw off your aim and balance.

Proficiency can’t be purchased and none of these items will magically transform you into a good shot. Before you spend money on accessories, lay some cash out for a good training course on the platform from a qualified instructor.

After you learn the capabilities and shortcoming of the shotgun, accessorize to your heart’s content.

FX IMPACT MK II AIR RIFLE

DIALING UP EXTREME PRECISION

There are some shooting disciplines that call for reloading at the bench, making match ammo round-by-round right on the shooting line. In theory, the approach allows the performance-conscious shooter to optimize each round for range and atmospheric conditions.

The new FX Airguns Impact Mk II air rifle does the same thing in its own air-powered way too, with no risk of spilling flammables all over the shooting line. I've found neighboring shooters on the line tend to frown upon being set on fire.

The adjustable nature of this decidedly high-tech rifle makes sense. Serious airgunning is a game of precision, maybe even more so than traditionally "finicky" fire and brimstone activities like bench rest rifle. Pellets come in all weights and sizes for any given caliber and with light projectile weights, environmental factors like wind can make a big difference in outcomes. So, being able to tune pressure and velocity is a natural benefit when you think about it.

POWER TRIP

The FX Airguns Impact Mk II is an engineer's airgunning fantasy. Yes, you can adjust power levels for each shot but there's

more to it.

There are two ways to adjust shot pressure — the combination of these dual adjustments give you precise control over your muzzle velocity for any given pellet. An adjustment knob on the front of the receiver completes an overall power adjustment.

Once you have your overall adjustment in the vicinity you want, turn to the fine tuning power wheel on the left side of the receiver. This dial features a set of unique graduations on each half of the wheel to help you achieve predictable and repeatable power levels. Labeled "A" through "E" on one side and "1" through "5" on the opposite, plus a "MIN" and "MAX" setting, you get 12 unique settings. This feature is handy for dialing in specific power levels for specific pellet types. If you like to geek out experimenting with a near-infinite number of power/pellet permutations, the Impact Mk II is your huckleberry.

Behind the trigger you'll find a screw heading up into the action. This allows you to adjust the regulator pressure up or down. Keep in mind you'll need to dry fire a shot to empty the regulator between each adjustment. Lest this sound too complicated, there's a second manometer



Tom used the FX 81-grain .35 caliber pellets. At 50 yards he got groups ranging from 1-1.5" on a windy day — spectacular for an air rifle!

(pressure gauge) to give you an idea of your current regulator setting.

CALIBER FLEXIBILITY

The Impact Mk II is caliber adjustable. The rifle shown here arrived ready to go for .35 caliber pellets and slugs, but it's easily changed. The barrel on this design is easily swappable as is the caliber-specific pellet probe. Once you've determined your ideal caliber or calibers, you can also swap out the barrel liner to tune within a single pellet





The magazine (above) is fantastic, one of the most reliable designs Tom has tested. The power wheel settings are unique (left) and offers 12 preset adjustments.

diameter. Want a faster or slower twist rate? No problem, change out the barrel liner.

WALKING TOUR

The .35 caliber Impact Mk II shown here packs a 580cc carbon fiber air cylinder. It's built to contain 250 bar (about 3,600 psi) of pressure. A primary manometer near the fill port lets you see current tank status. The number of shots you'll get on a cylinder fill depends on your caliber choice.

For the .35 caliber rifle, you can figure on about 40 shots, give or take, before you need to top off the air supply. As with most FX designs, it mounts forward of the receiver. I appreciated the connection type

— a positive-locking Foster fitting so you won't have to tinker around with finicky probes and fragile "O" rings.

Pellets feed via a rotary magazine with capacity dependent on caliber. The .35 caliber Impact holds 18 pellets in the large rotary mag while the .22 and .25 models hold up to 28. The magazine design is stellar and not persnickety like many airgun mags. It's easy to load by removing the clear cover and rotating the internal sprocket to apply initial tension. Then, just drop the pellets in place, replace the cover and commence firing. I found the system to be utterly reliable in my testing.

As with everything else on the Impact Mk II, the trigger system is adjustable too — you can adjust the height of the trigger face, the take-up distance, and the break weight. Knock yourself out tinkering with this one.

The action will spoil you rotten. The straight pull bolt operates with the same smoothness as new leather shoes on ice. It just glides effortlessly so you can operate it with a finger or two while maintaining a firing grip.

SHOOTING TIME

I tested the FX Impact Mk II using FX-brand 81-grain pellets. To check out the range of velocities with the adjustable power system, I clocked various scenarios using the exceptionally handy FX Pocket Chronograph.

At the MIN power setting, the 81-grain pellets measured 666 feet per second. Moving up to power level "1" increased to 704 fps. Moving to power "3" on the dial, velocity increased to 779 fps while the full MAX setting yielded 877 fps — quite



The secondary manometer helps you control regulator pressure adjustment — and is also customizable.

a range, exceeding 200 fps and I didn't even get into the receiver or regulator adjustments.

Given the quality of this rifle, I set up targets at 50 yards for accuracy testing. The wind conditions were tough for air-gunning, with 12 mph winds coming across the range at a 45-degree angle. For centerfires, this wouldn't have mattered much but remember, we're talking about 81-grain pellets moving well under sub-sonic velocity. I did my best to time shots between gusts and finished with groups ranging from 1.04 to 1.52" depending on the power level selected. My best results came from the mid-level power settings at number "4" on the dial.

I've yet to be disappointed with an FX air rifle. You'll pay, but there's no question you get your money's worth. It's a finely crafted "machine" you'll appreciate for years to come.

"Street Price": around \$2,000.



The FX Impact Mk II is a beautiful rifle all around. If you appreciate the finer things, you'll love it.



The original square-butted blued Model 19 (top) started the whole medium-frame magnum craze, courtesy Bill Jordan and S&W. The stainless Model 66 came along and the round-but 2-1/2" version enchanted CCW-inclined wheelgunners.

S&W MODEL 66 SNUBBIE

THE ULTIMATE CUT-DOWN, CONCEALABLE K-FRAME?

Payton Miller

Back in 1957, thanks to the considerable influence and input of legendary wheelgunner Bill Jordan, Smith & Wesson created the template for the medium-frame .357 Magnum. The Model 19 in 4" square-but trim quickly became the service sidearm of choice for countless law enforcement agencies. It was, of course, blued and featured excellent adjustable sights. In 1963 a 6" model was introduced and in 1966, a round butt 2-1/2" version.

Ultimately, stainless steel began its inexorable rise as the material of choice for revolvers over blued carbon steel. So naturally, the Model 19 "stainlessly" morphed into the Model 66 in 1971 and one extremely useful M66 variant was the 2-1/2" "snubbie." Short barreled K-Frames were nothing new — plainclothes officers had been packing 2" .38 Special M&P/Model 10s well before the groundbreaking 1950 introduction of the smaller J-Frame Model 36 "Chiefs Special."

THE SUM OF ITS PARTS

But the "short 66" offered a few things above and beyond what most previous K-Frame snubbies put on the table: an extra half-inch of barrel for an enhanced sighting radius, easy to acquire adjustable sights, a more concealable round butt, stainless steel construction, and — last but by no means least — a .357 Magnum option. Say what you will about magnum efficiency from a short barrel, we're still talking here about a significant power increase over the .38 Special. So what about

boom, blast and flash? In a word, yes. It's a factor indeed. Very much so, but that's the price you'll pay for more power in an abbreviated package.

Smith & Wesson fanatics are often fixated on "dash-this or dash-that" suffixes for their model number of choice. For the Model 19/Model 66 series, they have an embarrassment of riches



A 2-1/2" K-Frame — which pretty much defines our M66 — is tailor-made for pancake-style rigs like this Bianchi.



M66 "Dash-1" features include (above) a pinned barrel, hammer-mounted firing pin and recessed charge holes (below).



from which to choose as the original M66 series alone goes up to dash-8. Each "dash number" indicates mechanical or design changes, often slight, often not so much. The one we're using here is a 66-1 (1977-1982). It has a pinned barrel, recessed chambers and a hammer-mounted firing pin.

The pinned barrel and recessed chambers would be gone with the 66-2. The hammer mounted firing pin would be gone with the dash-5 advent in 1998. There are other mechanical changes spanning the original production run of the M66 but the three I've mentioned are what make the 66-1 desirable to me personally. Not for any hardcore technical reason I could enunciate anyway, but simply for the fact I just think they're cool.

THE LETTER "K"

A good K-Frame .357 is still a pretty good choice, although if concealability is a serious factor, you'll probably want a J-Frame. And, if heavy magnum use is what you envision, you'll probably be happier with an L- or N-Frame.

Me? The older I get, the more a K-Frame snubbie suits my fancy. My fine-motor skills seem now to be attuned more to larger guns than the J-Frames I've been shooting for so long. And, sad as it makes me, manipulating larger speedloaders and magazine release latches are a bit less, well, complicated and I simply don't see the sense of going to an L- or N-Frame if I'm not serious about high-volume magnum use. Which I am not.

DEALING WITH THE MAGNUM OPTION

As you may have guessed, I don't really enjoy shooting full-boat .357s much out of anything in the way of handguns, let alone a cherry old K-Frame. However, if you really feel the need to exceed Plus-P .38s and are allergic to high blast levels, there are .357 alternatives that are less likely to bang you — or your gun — up on a steady diet.

The original Remington Golden Saber 125-grain Brass Jacketed HP clocked around 1,250 fps, on par with Hornady's new 130-grain Monoflex load. Yes, it's below what you'll be getting from those blistering 125s at 1,450–1,500 fps but essentially, they're like a "triple Plus P" .38 and I've found them to be pretty accurate



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out of just about any barrel length. Out of a 2-1/2" barrel, they're still running around 1,100 fps — "medium stout" for a snubbie but more controllable than those 125-grain full-house screamers.

If you prefer something heavier than 125 grains, an excellent choice for the 2-1/2" M66 is Buffalo Bore's Heavy Plus-P 158-grain .38 Special. This can be had in Hardcast Outdoorsman format or the somewhat slower Soft Cast Semi-Wad-cutter Hollowpoint. Either will top the old "FBI Load" numbers, even from a 2-1/2" barrel but for day-in, day-out practice I'll use the least-expensive standard-pressure 125- or 158-grain .38s I can find. That's fine with me. Smith isn't turning out old-style M66s anymore and I want to be kind to this one.

FANS

I'm certainly not alone in my appreciation for the 2-1/2" M66. Sheriff Jim Wilson is a fan of the original blued M19 version although I'm hesitant to opine whether or not he has the same affection for the M66 stainless. However, he's the first serious gun guy who explained to me why this



Payton's best results with .38 Specials at 25 yards were with Hornady's standard-pressure 158-grain JHP/XTP.

great K-Frame magnum snubbie makes so much sense.

On the subject of controllability, I'm a big fan of Tyler-T grip adapters on the round-butt M66. They help me index the gun properly at "first grab" without having to consciously alter my grip, and they do a good job in preventing the gun from trying to climb out of my strong hand in recoil. Plus, they don't interfere with the use of HKS speedloaders.

Although shooting a 2-1/2" barreled

revolver has its challenges, this particular 66-1 has an excellent trigger (thanks to an S&W Performance Center tuneup nearly 20 years ago). The single-action pull is 2.5 lbs.; the double-action a shockingly smooth 9 lbs. This, plus the excellent adjustable sights, yielded 5-shot groups at 25 yards at just under 2" using Hornady's standard-pressure 158-grain JHP/XTP .38 Specials. Things opened up a bit with Hornady's considerably hotter 125-grain XTP .357 Magnums — but this was more than likely due to an "overmatched operator." Buffalo Bore's Heavy Plus P 158-grain .38 Specials split the difference between the two Hornady offerings.

A few years back, S&W resurrected the Model 66 as the M66 Combat Magnum, featuring a slightly longer two-piece 2-3/4" barrel and longer ejection rod for better ejection of spent brass, plus a ball-detent lockup to address concerns over longevity with magnum loads. Pretty sensible and welcome improvements to be sure.

But the 66-1 is the original that got the ball rolling.

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S & W P E R F O R M A N C E C E N T E R

T/CR22 RIFLE

LIGHTWEIGHT ACCURACY AND GOOD LOOKS

DENNY HANSEN

The Smith & Wesson Performance Center has expanded its rifle line with the addition of four new .22LR rimfire rifles. Co-developed by the Performance Center and Thompson/Center Arms, the new T/CR22 rifles feature a lightweight stainless steel, carbon fiber wrapped barrel and ergonomic stocks in multiple color options.

The rimfire rifles operate using the reliable T/CR22 semiautomatic rifle action and 10-round rotary magazine. The rifles have compatibility with most aftermarket Ruger 10/22 parts and accessories.

The Performance Center T/CR22 is offered in four configurations: a Hogue Overmolded Thumbhole black synthetic stock and Altamont Laminated Thumbhole stocks in wood, red, or blue finish.

I chose the wood configuration for this article because of its traditional good looks.

FOCUS

The Performance center designed and developed this lightweight (4.7-lb.) rimfire rifle for competitive shooting and small-game hunting. A reduction in weight is achieved through the slim, ergonomic stocks and carbon fiber wrapped barrels.

The rifle's 20" carbon fiber barrel has a 1:15" twist rate. The muzzle has 1/2-28 threads and is fitted with a custom Performance Center muzzle brake. Unlike any muzzle brake I can remember, it has five diagonal flutes. Four holes are drilled into each of the flutes. The brake is easily removed allowing the use of a suppressor or other muzzle device of your choice.

An integral Picatinny rail on top of the receiver affords secure mounting of optics. A large bolt handle provides easy manipulation, and the bolt itself is stainless steel.

Because the stock is laminated it shows some interesting patterns in the wood. The pistol grip area and the grasping area of the forend are checkered for a sure hold. The bottom of the forend is flat and it provides a very stable surface whether shooting off bags, a bench or a ruck.

An excellent feature are inlets machined on either side of the stock in the area of the safety. This makes manipulating the crossbolt safety to

either the fire or safe position easy.

The bolt will bolt hold-open on the last shot when using factory Performance Center magazines but the bolt will not hold open



The factory Performance Center magazine has a "first round load assist lever" that didn't seem exactly helpful and Denny isn't sure why it was added.

T/CR22 was co-developed by the S&W Performance Center and Thompson/Center Arms. Unique muzzle brake (right) has five diagonal flutes with four holes drilled into each flute.



Integral Picatinny rail affords secure mounting of optics. The stock is also inlet on either side so manipulating the crossbolt safety is easy.



Thumbhole laminated stock (below) is aesthetically pleasing — the pistol grip area is checkered for a secure hold while the forestock is flat for ease of resting.

when Ruger 10/22 mags are used. I really like this feature on a rimfire rifle if one is not counting their shots — this helps prevent dropping the hammer on an empty chamber that can result in a peened chamber. A manual bolt hold-open is present and the magazine release is the lever-type as used on the Ruger 10/22.

A “FEATURE”?

The Performance Center magazine has a “first round load assist lever.” Out of the box the lever and follower were very tight and I had some difficulty in loading the magazine. After some time it became easier to use. Unless this lever has something to do with the bolt-hold open, I can’t honestly refer to this as a “feature” because I have never had a problem loading a standard 10/22 mag.

My example had an excellent trigger — crisp and breaking consistently at 3 lbs. as measured by a Lyman Electronic Trigger Gauge with barely noticeable creep.

I took a dozen different .22LR loads with me including those from Aguila, CCI, Federal, Remington and Winchester, including both coated and uncoated bullets. Some semi-auto rimfires can be picky about their diets but the T/CR22 ate everything it was fed without a single hiccup.

I mounted a Redfield 3X9 scope to see what I could expect in accuracy. Firing from prone off a ruck at 25 yards, almost

all groups were within 1.5" with a very slight edge going to the Federal 36-grain copper-plated hollowpoint.

QUIET DOWN

I removed the factory muzzle brake and tried the T/CR22 with a Silencerco Warlock II .22LR silencer. Yes, I know “suppressor” is a more accurate term than “silencer,” but since Hiram Maxim patented his device as a silencer, this is how BATF refers to it and this is what it says on my paperwork so I’ll follow suit. Using the CCI Suppressor load, the rifle was almost movie-gun quiet. At 25 yards there was no impact shift between the muzzle brake and silencer.

Although the rifle can be fired wrong-handed, the comb on the stock suggests it is for right-handed shooters. A cheek weld can be achieved shooting left-handed, although it is not especially comfortable.

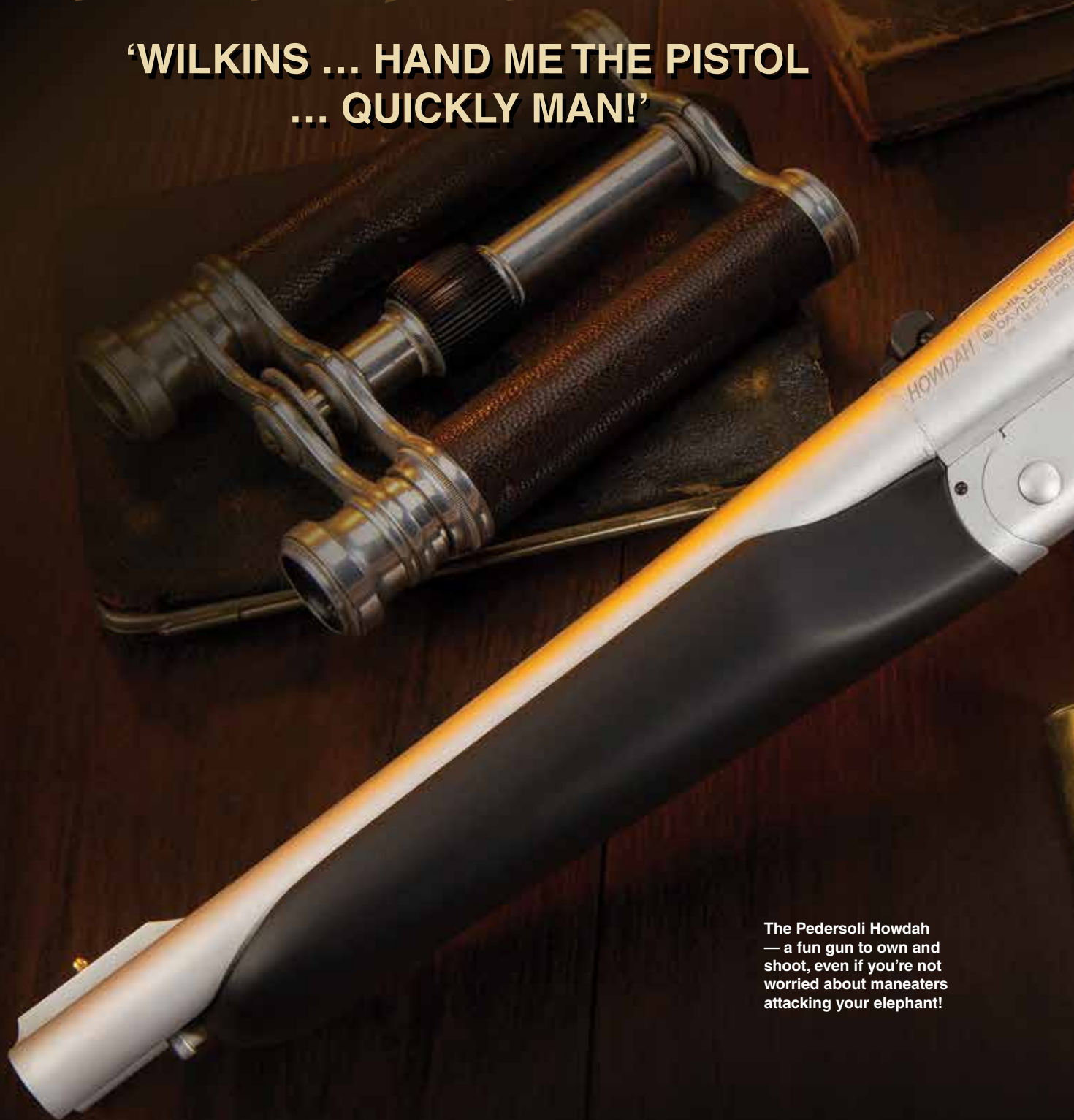
The new Performance Center T/CR22 rifle ships with a single 10-round detachable rotary magazine, manual, obligatory padlock and includes Thompson/Center’s limited lifetime warranty. The T/CR22 rifle with black Hogue Overmolded stock will carry an MSRP of \$523 while the Altamont Laminated Thumbhole version will carry an MSRP of \$642.

TCArms.com

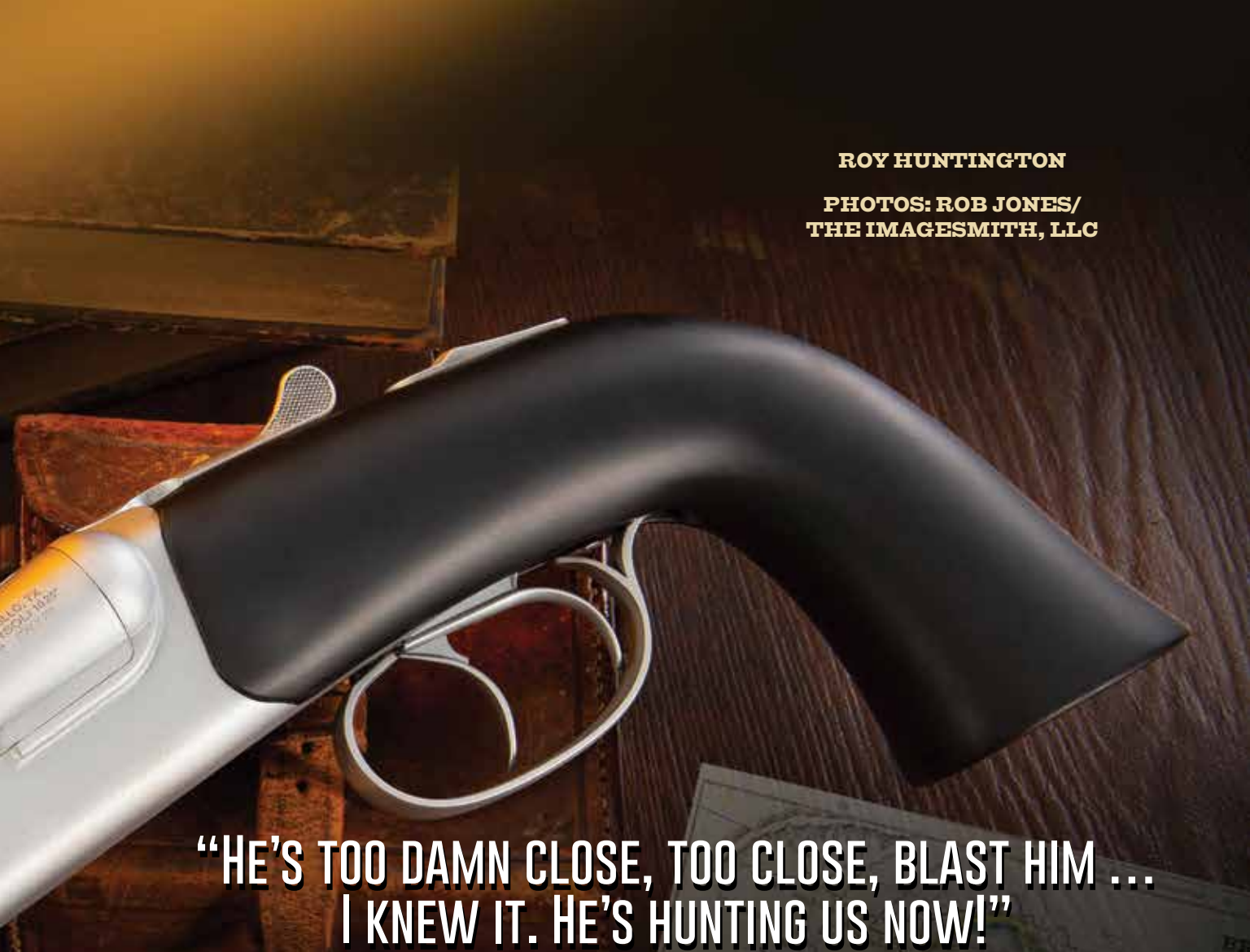
PEDERSOLI HOWDAH

BUILT FOR THE FINAL CHARGE

**‘WILKINS ... HAND ME THE PISTOL
... QUICKLY MAN!’**



The Pedersoli Howdah
— a fun gun to own and
shoot, even if you're not
worried about maneaters
attacking your elephant!



ROY HUNTINGTON

PHOTOS: ROB JONES/
THE IMAGESMITH, LLC

**“HE’S TOO DAMN CLOSE, TOO CLOSE, BLAST HIM ...
I KNEW IT. HE’S HUNTING US NOW!”**

The breeze had stalled and the heat began to pound at the sweating men in the howdah. Their pith helmets were damp, hot and uncomfortable in the sun. The elephant's gait jostled as they moved through the jungle trail. Sir Reginald Humphries, British Commanding Officer of Her Majesty's troops in this part of India, his Batman, Wilkins and their *mabout* riding on the elephant's neck were hunting tiger.

OR WAS THE TIGER HUNTING THEM?

“I don't like it, I don't like it at all,” muttered Sir Reginald. “Blast it, we had him and now he's vanished like the ghost the villagers say he is. Keep the pistol handy, Wilkins.”

Wilkins held the Holland & Holland .577 Snider pistol, only introduced the year before in 1867, but Sir Reginald was known for having the best when it came to hunting. The short, fat, double barrels held the same cartridge as the Snider-Enfield military rifles. Its hefty 480-grain lead bullet carried a lethal sledgehammer-like blow at the muzzle-contact distance, the exact situation the Howdah pistol was created for. Indeed, shooting a rampaging tiger off the flanks of an elephant is something Sir Reginald had done before.

Wilkins hoped he didn't have to do it today.

Sir Reginald signaled for the *mabout* to stop the elephant.

A low, throaty, gravelly growl oozed from the thickness nearby.

“He's too damn close, too close, blast him ... I knew it. He's hunting us now. Wilkins,” Sir Reginald's hand reached out. “Hand me the pistol ... quickly man!”

BRITISH COLONIAL RULE

During the 19th century, the British kept India on a short-leash and the country was filled with British officers on station along with monied British society men, all bent on hunting tigers and other game. They often hunted using the same techniques the local Rajas had used for generations — a howdah-equipped elephant.

The howdah was simply a platform securely held on an elephant's back. They were sometimes built-up on the sides with protective barriers to keep tigers at bay. They could also be very elaborate, if royalty was hunting, or more utilitarian, as situations dictated.

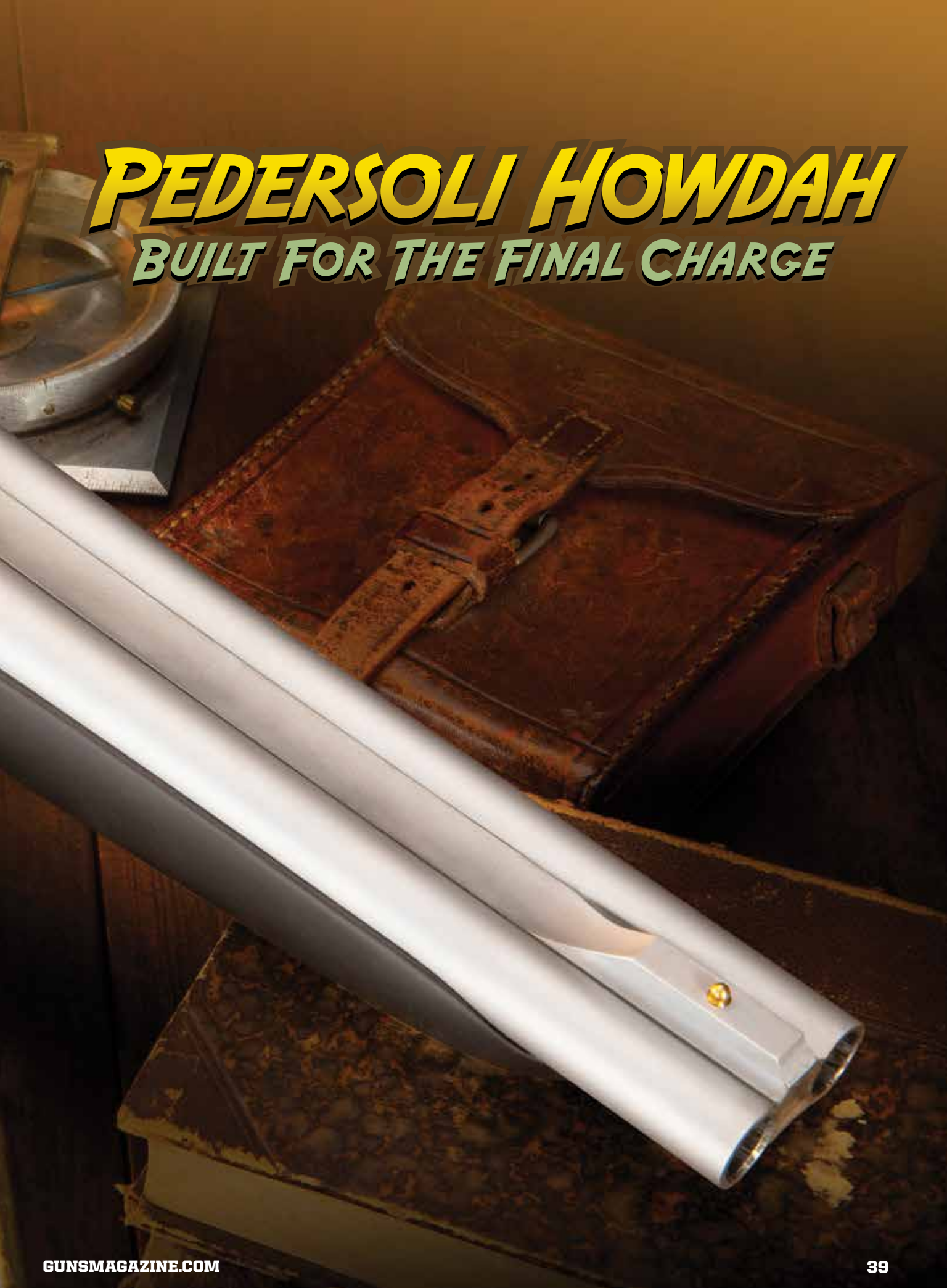
The British were keen on “the hunt” and the strong British “bespoke” gunmakers like Westley Richards, Purdey, Holland & Holland, Manton, Rigby et. al kept them supplied with custom rifles, shotguns, handguns — and eventually, dedicated howdah pistols.

The first howdah pistols were simply cut-down military rifles, often worn-out guns with the barrels shot out. The toe-to-toe



GUNS[®]

MAGAZINE



PEDERSOLI HOWDAH

BUILT FOR THE FINAL CHARGE



Takedown is like any double barrel shotgun or rifle, making cleaning easy. Stocks are painted walnut but Roy feels natural wood would be nice too — maybe even better?



The large tang safety is hard to miss and easy to manipulate, even on the back of a swaying elephant.

engagement distances battling tigers from the back of an elephant didn't require much accuracy but as much stopping power as possible. The big bore military rifles of the time seemed perfect — but hunters soon found cutting a rifle down often left a poorly balanced tool, dangerous when response has to be lightning fast.

ENTER THE HOWDAH PISTOL

Between 1835 and about 1850 Westley Richards made a very heavy single-barreled caplock pistol in .722 caliber specifically for defending your life in a howdah. As cartridge technology evolved, other makers got on board, chambering their various designs as muzzle loaders, then pinfires and eventually centerfires. The final iterations of the classic howdah are large bore centerfire cartridge guns, most often double barreled with external hammers. There are some without external hammers but they are rare.

I think the idea of the external hammers is to simplify things. You “know” the gun is cocked and ready when the hammers are back. Most had very rudimentary sights, often just a bead near the muzzle. We're talking arm-distance or closer so no sights are really needed. Period hunting literature did make a point to say “... use extreme caution so the *mabout* is not killed, as then the elephant would be out of control.” Well ... there's that too.

Keep in mind, at the time, the only real alternative would have been Colt-style muzzle loading revolvers like the 1851 .36 cal. Navy or the various .44 designs, and European revolvers chambered in rim- or pin-fire cartridges of .38 or .45 caliber. None of them would have been very effective stopping a tiger intent on eating your *mabout*.

ENTER PEDERSOLI

Why make a howdah today? Frankly, there's no good reason at all, which makes it all the more unique, interesting and fun. The main reason is simply to enjoy a bit of what I think we can simply call “living” history. Why do we still make single action revolvers? Or single shot .22 rifles? Or any number of other antique designs? There's no “need” for any of them and any plastic or aluminum platform will likely outperform the other designs — but we know the siren song of history beckons and one sure way to sing along is by using the guns of the day.

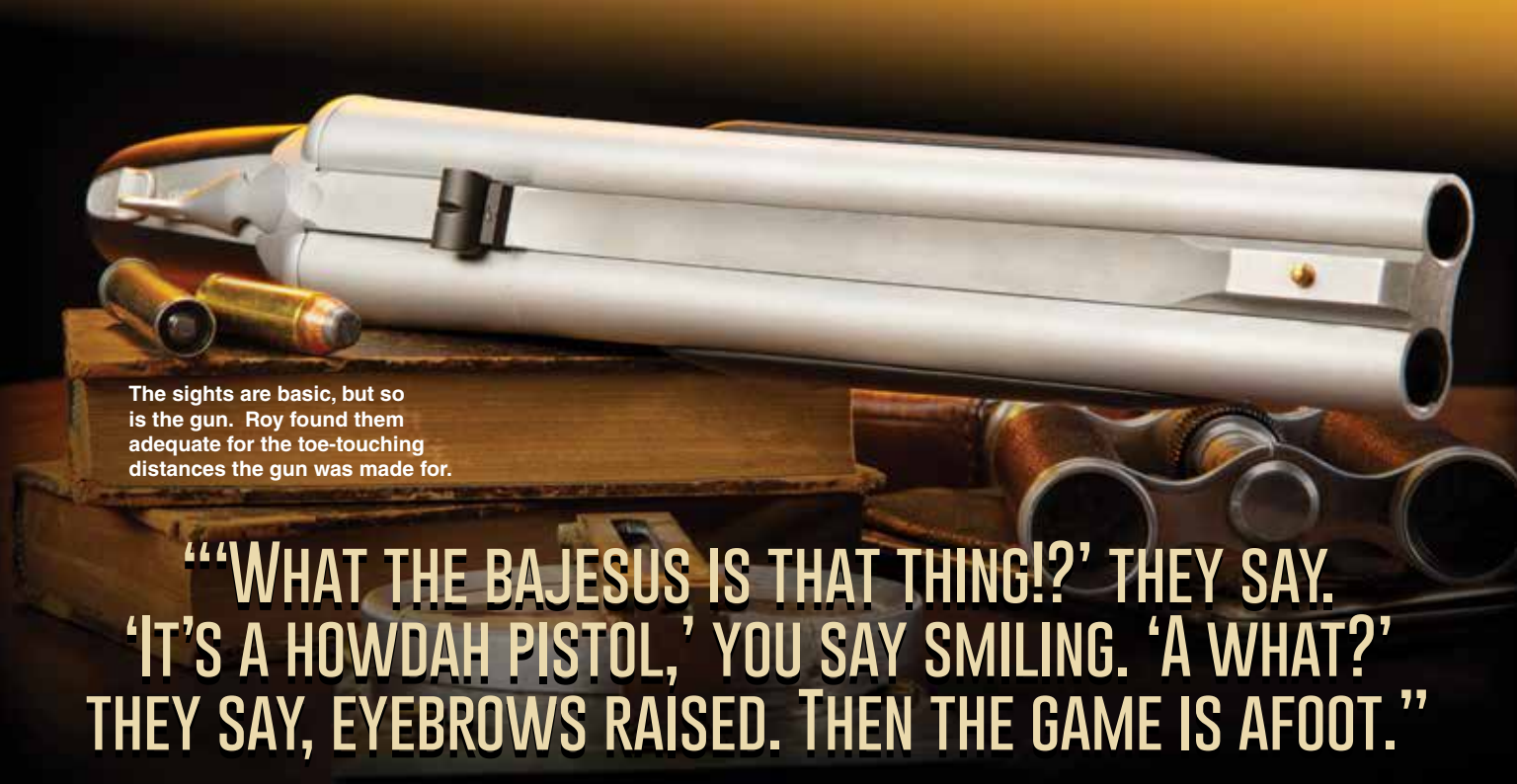
Pedersoli's design has elements of the originals, blended with modern technology. I think had it been offered 150 years ago, it would have been chambered in a larger bore, centerfire rifle cartridge because I think the .45 Colt might be marginal when it comes to stopping charging tigers. We could argue loading it with a Buffalo Bore 300-grain hard cast bullet at 1,400 fps would do the job — and it likely would — but it'd not be the first thing I'd choose were I to step foot in a howdah today.

Nonetheless, it's a delightful bit of whimsy to hold, shoot and experience. It's all steel, with a hard-chrome finish and painted wood stocks, while the action is essentially two single-barreled pistols put together.

That was the whole idea of double rifles to begin with. Two barrels, two hammers, two triggers, two action springs — two separate rifles — just in case one broke at a critical moment.

EXPLANATIONS

Chambered in .45 Colt, it's actually bored to also chamber .410 shotgun shells. Barrels are 10.25" and rifled, keeping it out of the “short barreled shotgun” category. It's about 17" long,



The sights are basic, but so is the gun. Roy found them adequate for the toe-touching distances the gun was made for.

“‘WHAT THE BAJESUS IS THAT THING!?’ THEY SAY. ‘IT’S A HOWDAH PISTOL,’ YOU SAY SMILING. ‘A WHAT?’ THEY SAY, EYEBROWS RAISED. THEN THE GAME IS AFOOT.”

weighing a bit more than 4 lbs. empty. It’s got a brass bead front and a sort of simple “V” notch rear blade assembly. The triggers each control one barrel and yes — you can shoot them simultaneously if you like. It’s actually not very dramatic due to the weight.

The safety is on the tang and comfy to use. Once broken open with the side-lever on top, cartridges or shotgun shells chamber easily and extract the same way. The edges are a bit sharp on the ejector as is the case with many Italian guns and I’d stone them a touch if I were keeping it — but it was only something I noticed and didn’t affect usability at all.

Overall workmanship is top-notch and parts fit as well as you could expect. I think the black-painted stock is a matter of taste and while it does look “tactical” with the hard chrome, I’d like it more left as natural walnut. Your taste may vary though.

ACCURACY?

Well now, I’m not quite sure if it matters. While British officers were known to take their howdah pistols into battle at times, distances even then would be measured in feet. Since this gun is simply made for fun, I’d say the same applies. Could you use it for home defense or some such? Well, of course, just like you could use a club or a spear in a pinch, but there are better tools to rely on. The howdah is heavy, awkward to hold in one hand and the manual of arms to load it is a bit fussy.

The “break-open” takes two hands and firm grips and I found a strike on my thigh helped to break it open expeditiously. You need to extract the empties, re-load each barrel, close it down (two hands again), make sure the safety is off, try to aim the beast — I used my off-hand on the fore-stock — then remember to pull two different triggers. Repeat as needed. Give me a Charter Arms .38 any day if things were serious.

But — and this is the big one — it’s absolutely nearly as much fun as law allows, plus it raises eyes to high heaven when people see it. “What the bajesus is that thing!?” they say. “It’s a howdah pistol,” you say smiling. “A what?” they say, eyebrows raised. Then the game is afoot. It’s fun, trust me.

Out of curiosity more than any sense of practical use, I bag-rested the howdah at 15 yards. Using Black Hills factory .45 Colt cowboy loads that were handy, recoil was virtually zero. Even heavy 300-grain hunting loads barely caused a stir.

The right barrel, aimed at the target’s center, sent three of the rounds into a nice, 1" group about 6" high and centered, then tossed two into the bull area but just to the right a couple of inches. Oddly enough, the left barrel also hit about 6" high, but the group was a nicely rounded 3.5" and about 3" to the left. The bead sight does make things a bit guessey but I strove to be consistent.

I repeated the drill several times and it always worked out the same. The right barrel would shoot a few into a group, then randomly toss a couple into another spot. The left sent them into the same area all the time. But who cares? I predict if Sir Reginald fired it, he’d pronounce it “Bloody fine, but don’t you have one in a serious caliber, lad?”

Make this in .45-70 and possibly better sights just for the helluvit and you might have just invented a new fun gun, especially if the barrels can be regulated a bit tighter.

AND?

Yes, it’s a winner. At about \$1,395 give or take, it’s not cheap but it’s not too expensive. You could spend this on a nice, modern polymer fancy-auto and exactly nobody would give it a second glance at the range. Spend the same amount on the howdah and be prepared to be inundated with questions, pitches to shoot it — “Oh, please!” — and the stares of people who don’t know quite what to think. All the more reason to wear a pith helmet when you shoot it. “Oh, he must be English?”

And, if you get attempted borders en route home from the range, you can repel the savage brutes in high fashion.

Just don’t shoot your *mabout*. 

ItalianFirearmsGroup.com
Black-Hills.com.

GUN TRAINING

For *Women*

BUILDING SKILLS AND CONFIDENCE

MIA ANSTINE

Training for personal defense incidents is a priority now more than ever. Attacks on private citizens have increased. There are ongoing attempts to abolish police departments in many areas. There is a need for means to defend our own lives.

COMING HOME

The headlights of Jessica's vehicle shine on her hound dogs baying in their kennels, as she slowly drives up her gravel driveway. She's nervous as her husband Mike is being held overnight at the hospital for observation after being attacked by an illegal immigrant. She stops the vehicle and is hesitant about going inside to the "safety" of her home.

Finally, Jessica races up the steps to her house, unlocks the door, turns and slams it behind her. Her heart races as snapshots of what lead up to her husband's attack play through her mind. Alone in her home, Jessica longs to have a gun for self-defense right now and vows to learn how to shoot once her husband comes home.

NOISES

The night before, the hounds' bays were more than typical howling at a passing critter. The couple went to the front door. Mike peered out, shining a spotlight past their vehicles, down the drive toward the kennel — nothing.

A rattling sound came from the back door, making them



Intense scenario shooting drills at Gunsite Academy.
Photo: Mia Anstine



Self-defense handgun training at one of the indoor simulators at Gunsite Academy. Photo: Mia Anstine

“ALONE IN HER HOME, JESSICA LONGS TO HAVE A GUN FOR SELF-DEFENSE RIGHT NOW AND VOWS TO LEARN HOW TO SHOOT ONCE HER HUSBAND COMES HOME.”

jump. They turned to look down the hall and spotted a man's face peering through the window. “Who would come up a dark driveway with so many dogs,” Jessica asked. Mike, always a good Samaritan, ignored her comment and moved to the door. The stranger spoke in broken English, saying he had car trouble.

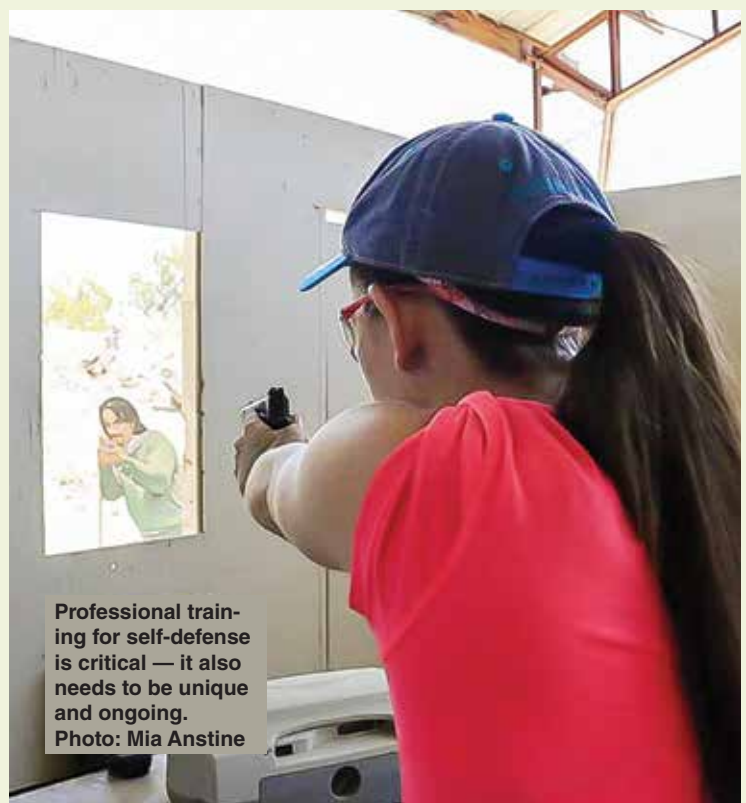
Mike decided to help the man and Jessica watched as her husband's car headed out of the driveway.

“Why had she let her husband leave with the strange man? What should they have done?” A lightning burst of electricity shot from her heart to her arms when Jessica realized there could've been two men and one could've stayed behind.

Mike drove up to a broken down vehicle, shining the headlights toward it — he lifted the hood to peer into the engine compartment — a blow hit the back of his head. Jessica sees the image of a large knife as it pierces her husband's throat.

Gasping for air, Jessica squeezes her eyes closed, holding back the tears. She thinks, “I wish he'd taken his gun.” She then remembers the noise on the front steps and seeing her husband lying in a pool of blood.

The strange man had left Mike for dead, stolen his vehicle, and somehow the Good Samaritan found the strength to crawl home. He now lies in a hospital bed — he'll recover but with lessons from the encounter with an illegal immigrant, not even the hounds are comforting. Jessica feels a need for a gun.



Professional training for self-defense is critical — it also needs to be unique and ongoing. Photo: Mia Anstine

Back in college, Jessica had attempted to shoot a boyfriend's handgun. He laughed as the Colt .45 lurched in her hand. She trembled as she couldn't get it out of her hands quick enough. The improper experience had been the extent of her firearm training; she needed more.

GUN TRAINING FOR WOMEN

Firearms instructor Shirley Watral wrote the book *Heels to Holsters: One Woman's Story of Surviving an Abusive Relationship and Discovering her Inner Warrior* to inspire women. Watral says, "Women sometimes tremble at the firing line and need to be taught differently than men. One thing that's important to me is that I watch for when they've had enough. I can tell when women get mentally exhausted, and that's when I end the class. I create a positive experience, and they leave feeling empowered but wanting to learn more."



Creating a positive experience leaves women feeling empowered but wanting to learn more. Photo: ARMED and Feminine

FINDING A CLASS

When looking for a women's class, ask your local gun dealer for suggestions. For nationwide organizations, look to A Girl and A Gun (AGAG), the Well-Armed Woman, DIVA Women Outdoors Worldwide (DIVA-WOW) or look to your local Department of Natural Resources (DNR).

Some DNR organizations present women's events where they provide the opportunity to shoot handguns, rifles, shotguns, muzzleloaders and bows. While this type of class isn't a replacement for defense classes, it's a way to learn to shoot an assortment of firearms alongside women of various experience levels.

Jennifer Christman of Bear It All Arms Training insists, "Women need to take a class from a professional, and preferably a woman; Not because men don't know what they're talking about or because of intimidation, but rather because women understand the physical differences that need to be addressed when purchasing, manipulating, and firing a firearm."

LEARN THE BASICS

Firearms instructor Connie Brooks of AGAG says, "It's important to get the basics right. Bad habits are hard to undo." It's essential to learn and practice all of these in the classroom before you have live rounds in your gun.

Women need to practice loading and firing live rounds at the range but not in the intimidating manner Jessica experienced. Kelly Ann Pidgeon, owner of ARMED and Feminine shooting school, shares, "We always start with 'Pew,' then move up to 'Pow,' then to 'Bang,' then to 'Boom' — .22 to .380 to 9mm to .45. It builds confidence to master the fundamentals of grip, stance, sight picture and trigger press using lower calibers, and then move up."



Women support women and provide confidence at the gun range. Photo: ARMED and Feminine



PRACTICE DRAWING THE GUN

I asked Pidgeon about her favorite concealed carry holster and she told me about the Shirudo holster, a collaborative design effort between Shibumi Tactical and ARMED and Feminine. “For my build, I was never satisfied with anything on the market, so I collaborated with Shibumi Tactical to design my own.” The holster is a Kydex inside-the-waistband (IWB) design with a low profile, durable and has great retention capabilities.

As an instructor myself, I use and practice with my UnderTech Undercover tank and shorts, always remembering to work on the muscle-memory while not muzzle-sweeping myself.

INCREASE THE INTENSITY

Olympian, competitive shooter, and firearms instructor Gabriella Franco reminds women of the importance of increased intensity while they’re training and recommends the Caldwell Target Turner. “It helps with reaction time and speed shooting,” Franco notes.

While training at Gunsite Academy, my daughter practiced drawing and shooting at quick-turn targets, then progressed to house-clearing and hostage scenarios. She used a Comp-Tac drop-offset holster that accommodates the curve of a woman’s hips. The holster allows the shooter to acquire a proper grip, creating a faster presentation on the target.

Once you’re confident drawing and shooting a handgun, add dummy rounds to the magazine to practice clearing malfunctions so it becomes second nature during intense situations, like those during the Gunsite Academy training.

Comp-Tac drop-offset holster works around the curve of a women’s hips. Photo: Mia Anstine. Kelly Ann Pidgeon (below) empowers a disabled woman as she teaches how to shoot a handgun. Photo: ARMED and Feminine



TRAIN AT HOME

There are times when we cannot get to the range or may not want to burn through pricey ammunition. “Include dry-fire sessions into a daily routine, especially if going to the range is not an option,” says Franco. She and DIVA-WOW founder Judy Rhodes suggest buying an air-gun or Shot Indicating Resetting Trigger (SIRT) Training Pistol. Find a model the same as or closely matching your gun.

Real-life scenarios aren’t going to be as scripted as some classes. Franco emphasizes, “Ongoing good training is the greatest shooting tool I can suggest for women.”



TAC ULTRA CS 9MM

MIKE CUMPSTON

In the beginning there were many barriers to wrapping the 1911 platform around the 9mm cartridge. Likewise, efforts arriving at functional sub-commander-length barrels sometimes ended with the bushing and recoil spring departing the front of the slide and landing in the middle distance.

Said problems are now a distant memory and the current

generation of 1911-based compact 9s rivals and sometimes surpasses the handguns actually designed around the 9mm cartridge in terms of reliability, mechanical accuracy and user-accessible hit-probability.

Further, as *Faaan-tastic!* as plastic really is, there is a great deal to be said in favor of metal. This is particularly true when the metal is steel and the production is a combination of



The Compact is significantly smaller than an original 1911A1. The finish is a phosphate treatment more closely resembling matte tank blueing than Parkerizing.



A FISTFUL OF 9MM FIGHT

Computer Numerical Control and hands-on fitting by skilled workers under the umbrella of a family-owned business. This is a significant factor when, as is the case with Armscor/Rock Island Armory, the family is dedicated to manufacturing excellence, long-term product support — and are excellent people.

TAC ULTRA COMPACT

Major components are made from 4140 chromoly steel valued for high strength, toughness and hardenability. The coned/bushing-less bull barrel is 3.6" opposed to the original Colt /Browning at 5". Overall, it's 7.1" long by 1.3" wide by 5.1" tall, making it almost an inch and a half shorter than the full size 1911 and fractionally smaller in the vertical axis. Unloaded, the RIA 9x19 is 2 oz. heavier than the original 1911 and holds 8+1 fully loaded — the same as currently made .45 1911s.

The "CS" in the model designation stand for "compact" size. "TAC" stands for "Tactical" and since *everything* is tactical, this element requires no clarification. The pistol also wears the name "Ultra" and earns the superlative with a number of A-list features including:



TAC Ultra CS field-stripped for cleaning. A bent paper clip keeps the spring/guide assembly together for removal from the slide.

- Fiber optic front sight with two-dot compact adjustable rear made by LPA Sight company;
- Ambidextrous thumb safeties/"Series 70" (original 1911 lockwork with true half-cock notch and no firing pin block);
- Skeletonized steel trigger with over-travel adjustment weighing 4 lbs. 6 oz. with zero take-up and overtravel;
- Textured G10 grips with checkered aluminum-alloy main spring housing;
- Flared magazine well;
- Two 8-round magazines with bump pads;
- The frame is oversized in front for the Picatinny accessory rail riding under a full profile dust cover/slide.

MAGAZINES

The magazines are of the “officers model”-type with general interchangeability among the pistols of the same size. Most 1911 9mm mags employ a spacer to fit the follower and spring to the .45-size mag body. The magazines with the RIA are a significant departure. The follower and spring are actually correctly sized for 9mm and a groove in the front of the magazine shell further perfects the fit of the cartridge. Rounds do not nose-dive into the ramp and stop. The springs are quite stout, requiring considerable effort to load but the factors in play keep the cartridges firmly in place. They do not ride forward during the firing sequence as occurs with a number of 9mm pistols including several of the micros and even some high-dollar boutique pistols that should “know better.”

This phenomena causes rounds to protrude from the magazine and fall out on the ground when a partially loaded magazine is removed. They can also block ejection, shoving the empty case back into the chamber and setting up a double-feed malfunction. The mags wear the Metalform emblem under the bump pad.

FOIBLES

The CS 9mm utilizes a 16-lb. 13-14 coil spring captured on a full-length guide rod. Removal from the pistol is clearly outlined in the user's manual and replacement is recommended every 800–1,000 rounds.

Finding a dedicated holster can be a challenge. The Galco Concealable is formed around the non-rail pistol but is stitched in a way allowing re-forming for a perfect fit on this railed gun. It is a short version of the holster I use regularly with full-sized 1911s. It hides well over a T-shirt and under an un-tucked sports shirt and I find it completely comfortable. The Galco Corvus is a polymer OWB rig with IWB straps included. Tuckable hardware is available.

Holsters for the wide array of mounted, lights and lasers are a custom proposition.

SHOOTING

My sample has a crisp 4 lb. 6 oz. trigger pull and the 36 oz. weight tilted toward the muzzle, which is a definite plus in terms of steadiness when shooting unsupported. Most 25-yard bench groups were in the 3"-and-under range. Consecutive groups with Black Hills 124-grain +P, Hornady Critical Defense and Critical



Rock Island TAC Ultra CS 9mm — fit, finish and function rivaling the hand-made products of previous decades at a nicer price!



Shots from a strong-side holster at 3,7,15 and 25 yards. The shots were delivered in rapid pairs out to 7 while the rounds outside the 10-ring occurred at 15 and 25 yards.

Duty were 2.0", 2.7" and 3.0" respectively.

Currently, the 9x19 is at the apogee on the fickle roller coaster of handgun cartridge popularity. Wonder-Bullet technology gets credit for making the nine arguably as effective as larger rounds. It has the further advantage of inexpensive ball ammo for practice (prior to the current ammo shortages).

Standard-pressure loads with 115-grain bullets clocked in the mid-to-high 1,000s from the 3.5" RIA — 1,060 fps with Critical Defense, the Black Hills 124 +P at 1,119 fps and the SIG Elite 115-grain clocked 1,193 fps.

At 7 yards, after some practice runs, I was able to get off the first round from leather in 0.95 to just under 1.1 seconds with a second controlled round breaking at 0.23 to 0.25 second while keeping them inside the 9-ring of the B27. Nothing to write home about but faster than I really need to shoot.

My isosceles efforts are head-shot accurate at 25 yards and bracing against an upright “barrier” I can keep five rounds of the Armscor 124-grain ball ammo inside the 9-ring at 50 yards. I fired a few hundred rounds of ball and various JHP loads with 100% reliability throughout. Recoil in the relatively heavy pistol is negligible.

FINAL WORD

The Rock Island compact is much more akin to the full-size 1911s than to the popular 9mm micro 1911 pistols in terms of overall utility. At shorter ranges, practical, shooter-accessible accuracy is virtually identical to the larger belt pistols. Practical and potential usability extends to 50 yards.

The quality of the TAC Ultra CS is on an equal footing with pistols of the same type costing considerably more. Armscor/Rock Island Armory is the World's largest producer of 1911 Pistols and this is likely the major factor in the favorable price structure. MSRP is \$786.

Armscor.com

GalcoGunLeather.com

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DOC HOLLIDAY'S HANDHELD HOWITZER

THE OLD WEST'S DEADLIEST DENTIST

WILL DABBS, MD

John Henry “Doc” Holliday was born August 14, 1851, in Griffin, Georgia, to Henry Burroughs Holliday and his wife Alice Jane. The young man had a cleft palate repaired by his uncle John, both a physician and his namesake. Holliday subsequently struggled with a bit of a speech impediment as a result. Those who knew him said his blonde hair was nearly white.

Doc was a smart man classically trained. He studied Latin, French and Ancient Greek at the Valdosta Institute. At age 20 Holliday earned a Doctorate from the Pennsylvania College of Dental Surgery. The college held his degree for five months as you had to be at least 21 to practice dentistry.

Holliday practiced in St. Louis and Atlanta before settling in Dallas. While there he competed in a dental fair, winning awards

for “Best Set of Teeth in Gold,” “Best in Vulcanized Rubber” and “Best Set of Artificial Teeth and Dental Ware.” Throughout his dental career, however, there remained an ever-present specter.

Holliday’s mother died of tuberculosis when the young man was 15. This is likely where he contracted the disease. In this day TB was a death sentence. Holliday gravitated out West in hopes the dry air might offer him some prolongation. However, the paroxysmal coughing curtailed his dentistry.

A RESPECTABLE PROFESSION

Doc Holliday had a knack for gambling. At this time in this place the career of professional gambler was both respectable and accepted. In 1877 he was shot and grievously wounded over a dispute with a fellow gambler named Frank Kahn. Holliday had previously beaten the man with his walking stick. With the assistance of a cousin, Holliday eventually recovered.

Doc Holliday first met Wyatt Earp in Fort Griffin, Texas, while Earp was pursuing a ruffian named “Dirty” Dave Rudabaugh. Later Earp and Holliday found themselves in Dodge City, Kansas. A group of rowdy ne’er-do-wells led by cowboys Tobe Driscall and Ed Morrison rode into town and shot up the place. When Marshal Wyatt Earp confronted the men in the Long Branch Saloon he found himself badly outnumbered.

Holliday was playing cards and observed the local Marshal’s dire situation. Doc surreptitiously slipped up behind the cowboy leader Ed Morrison and put his gun to the back of the man’s head, thereby disarming the unruly mob. Holliday had Earp’s friendship ever after.

THE OLD WEST’S SEMINAL GUNFIGHT

On October 26, 1881, Deputy U.S. Marshal Virgil Earp was having some trouble with a group of local cowboys from the Clanton and McLaury clans. Earp simultaneously served as the Police Chief of Tombstone, Ariz. When things came to a head, Virgil deputized Doc Holliday and gathered his brothers Morgan and Wyatt for assistance in disarming the violent men.

Expecting a serious fight, Virgil dropped by the local Wells Fargo office and borrowed a 10-gauge side-by-side coach gun. Concerned he might inadvertently alarm the local townspeople, Virgil passed the heavy gun to Holliday so he might conceal it underneath his long duster coat. The *ad hoc* lawmen confronted the belligerent cowboys in a modest lot on Fremont Street.





Many bank guards and stage-coach riders preferred exposed hammers (above) as the ready status of the gun would be easily seen, or felt in the dark. Will used a machine screw and his drill press to manufacture this front sight bead (right). Note the nifty wooden plug some long-dead artisan crafted to fill the void between the pruned barrels.



The "T-latch" locking system (above) consists of this odd pushbutton located just ahead of the trigger guard. Upward pressure releases the action for loading and unloading.



A vintage Parker shotgun is a simply beautiful thing (above). Will's Parker Brothers 10-gauge coach gun (below) rolled off the lines in 1875 and is likely a decent facsimile of the street howitzer Doc Holliday wielded during the famed Gunfight at the O.K. Corral.

Nothing screams tactical overmatch like a cut-down 10-gauge coach gun. In October 1881 John Henry "Doc" Holliday used such a piece to put down Tom McLaury at the famed O.K. Corral.



The details are disputed. However, it is generally understood Doc Holliday killed Tom McLaury with a shotgun blast to the chest before being grazed by a bullet fired by Tom's brother Frank. Frank purportedly yelled the challenge, "I've got you now!" to the cool gunman dentist. Holliday was said to have responded, "Blaze away! You're a daisy if you have!" I have no idea what it means, but it sure sounds cool.

When the smoke cleared Virgil and Morgan Earp were wounded. Tom and Frank McLaury lay dead alongside Billy Clanton. This tidy little bloodbath precipitated its own modest war.

THE GUN

In the peculiar world of firearms history there yet remains a fair amount of controversy concerning the shotgun Doc Holliday wielded the fateful day at the O.K. Corral. There are allegations it was an inexpensive Belgian Meteor or perhaps a more conventional Remington. I found a reference to an auction wherein Holliday's gun was to have been sold in 1999 but was unable to determine any resolution, photographs, or follow up.

At the time of this famous gunfight Doc Holliday weighed all of 122 lbs., his disease having wrought a severe toll. He therefore purportedly did not care much for shotguns given their prodigious recoil. During the 30-second gunfight he was said to have discarded the heavy scattergun and completed the exchange with his sidearm. Regardless, when I tripped over an auction for a vintage Parker Brothers 10-gauge coach gun made in 1875 I had to make it mine.

PARKER SHOTGUNS

Some names just carry a certain intrinsic gravitas. Among automobiles brands like Bentley, Jaguar and Rolls Royce reliably command respect. The scattergun equivalent is Parker.

Charles Parker was the 11th of 12 children born to a destitute family in Connecticut in 1809. After working as a farm hand and subsequently in a factory, Mr. Parker took \$70 and in 1832 opened his own facility making coffee mills. His first metalworking machines were actually driven by horses. In 1844 Mr. Parker upgraded to steam power and expanded his catalog to include tools, lamps and dinnerware.

With 1861 came the American Civil War and the Parker Company began making rifles for the Union. As a military contractor business was booming. At the terminus of the war

Charles Parker joined his brothers John and Edmund to begin making Parker Brothers shotguns. Those earliest side-by-side scatterguns employed a "T-latch" system of locking.

The T-latch consisted of a prominent pushbutton located ahead of the trigger guard. Upward pressure on this device released the barrels to pivot open. This same model was also called the "lifter action" as a result. Twin triggers and associated exposed hammers completed the design.

Parker shotguns came in a variety of grades, gauges and styles. While Parker became known for expensive top-end guns crafted for royalty and folk of comparable means, their consumer guns were titled "Old Reliable" as a reminder they were not out of financial reach of the Common Man. In 1889 Parker introduced their first hammerless shotgun design.

WILL'S PARKER

My 10-gauge Parker is fairly well preserved given its 145 years. At some point in the distant past somebody very professionally pruned the barrels back to 18". They never bothered replacing the front sight bead.

Trimming the barrels pretty much ruins any collector's value the gun might have, so I just whipped up a replacement bead in my workshop. I turned a steel machine screw in my drill press and shaped the end into a ball using a hand file. I then sited the mounting hole, drilled it and tapped it by hand. A little thread locker keeps everything sturdy. Whoever originally cut the barrels back also crafted a nifty little wooden plug to fill the resulting void between the barrels.

THE REST OF THE STORY

Doc Holliday was rumored to have been a cold-blooded killer and pure death with a gun. Despite apocryphal rumors he killed as many as 16 men, his only historically con-

firmed kill was Tom McLaury in October of 1881. Regardless, at the time of his death Holliday had been arrested 17 times and survived ambush on five separate occasions.

Doc Holliday ultimately succumbed to tuberculosis in a hotel room in Glenwood Springs, Colo., on November 8, 1887 at age 36. He had always expected to meet a violent demise. Realizing the end was near, Holliday looked at his bare feet — knowing he was about to die with his boots off — and flatly said, "This is funny." Those were his final words.

“BLAZE AWAY! YOU'RE
A DAISY IF YOU HAVE!”
I HAVE NO IDEA WHAT
IT MEANS, BUT IT SURE
SOUNDS COOL.



A dapper man, Doc Holliday left few photographs behind. This is one of only a few photos of the dentist with verifiable provenance.

Savage Arms MODEL 220 TURKEY

INSPIRE A CHANGE OF HEART

MARK HAMPTON

It's a funny thing about life — as you transition during the journey, thoughts and opinions about things sometimes change over time as age has a unique way of changing our attitudes and perceptions. Take shotguns for example; if you told me 30 years ago I would be hunting with a bolt-action scattergun, I would surmise your mental well-being was compromised or at least confused. After all, a real hunting shotgun is either a pump or semi-auto while trap, skeet and sporting clay shooters commonly utilize over and under, single-shot and semi-autos. What purpose does a bolt-action shotgun serve on any field? It makes about as much sense as mounting a 24x scope on a lever-action 30-30!

THINGS CHANGE

Well, today my shotgun needs are primarily focused on turkey hunting. Fortunately I grew up and still reside in a rural area with a stable population of wild turkeys. We enjoy a three-week spring season allowing us to harvest two gobblers and in the fall

we have a month long season allowing two birds of either sex.

I love hunting turkey and since I was a kid, turkey hunting has been ingrained into a way of life. The vast majority of my hunting has involved a pump-action 12 gauge and I have taken a considerable number of birds through the years.

Now I'm a card-carrying member of retirement organizations, my attitude and perceptions about turkey hunting and shotguns have changed. When I first laid eyes on a Savage Model 212 and 220, I wondered what on earth they were thinking?

However, I was assigned to review this shotgun and, to be honest, I wanted to take a closer look at this bolt-action scattergun and see for myself if this really was a good option for turkey hunters — or was it just snake oil?

FROM THE BEGINNING

The Savage Model 212 and 220 are both built around the company's Model 110 rifle action. Ironically, I had just finished reviewing one of the various Model 110 versions and was impressed with the rifle from start to finish. So, the Model 220 20-gauge test gun I received was already off to a decent start. Like the previously tested Model 110, this shotgun features attributes most any turkey hunter would appreciate.

The Model 220 comes with the Savage AccuFit stock system, a very practical feature allowing the shooter to easily adjust the comb height and length-of-pull for a custom stock fit. No need for a trip to the gunsmith.

The one-piece synthetic stock comes with a cool looking Mossy Oak Obsession camo pattern that will surely appeal to avid turkey hunters. There are rubber-like, textured inserts around the grip and forend for a secure hold even in wet weather. The Model 220 tipped the scales at 7 lbs. before adding the optic so it wasn't like packing around a log.

The 22" free-floating barrel features an extra-full turkey choke. The blued carbon-steel, smooth bore barrels are secured to the receiver using a locking nut. The barrel does not have a bead sight but sports a one-piece rail begging for an optic.



The Savage Model 220 Turkey makes an ideal gobbler-getter when paired with a Primos Trigger Stick rest.

GOBBLER DOTS

I mounted an UltraDot MatchDot II on this shotgun and I'll have to confess, it's wonderful for aging eyes like mine. Have you ever missed a turkey? I have — and more than once. I know what you're thinking, "How in the world can you miss a big bird with a shotgun?" Well, it may be easier than you imagine.

For me, this occurs when I take my head off the stock and focus on the gobbler, not the sights. With the UltraDot red dot, I can see the gobbler clearly when he struts in to range. Put the red dot on the lower portion of his neck and pull the trigger. The Model 220 has a 7.5" rail long enough to allow flexibility of where the sight fits the shooter best.

Another attribute I appreciate is the user-adjustable AccuTrigger. The trigger pull weight can be adjusted from 2.5 to 6 lbs. My test gun's trigger broke clean and crisp around 4 lbs. The wide, three-position, easy-to-operate safety is located directly behind the bolt and situated ideally to operate with your thumb. The 220 Turkey also comes with a detachable box magazine holding two rounds plus one in the chamber. I also enjoyed the oversize bolt knob — it makes running the bolt painless even when wearing gloves.

RANGE TIME

Turkey season was in full swing and I had already taken one bird with another tag left to fill. I wanted to pattern the Model 220 and get the gun sighted-in with the UltraDot before heading to the woods. A few different loads were tested and here is another area I have experienced an "attitude adjustment."

I'm an old-school kind of hunter where most of the turkeys taken in my life fell to #4 shot. Today's technology has changed the landscape to say the least. For example, Federal offers several loads specifically for turkey hunting and I procured some of their 3rd Degree loads with a blend of #5, #6 and #7 shot that includes Tungsten Super Shot (TSS). For the 20-gauge, I tested 3" loads with 1-5/8 oz. of 7 and 9 shot. The TSS pellets delivers as much penetration energy as a #5 lead pellet, plus there are a lot more pellets being launched.

At the range, it took a few shots to get the red dot sight lined-up. The bolt was easy to manipulate and the red dot provided a consistent aiming point. After setting up a turkey head target from 30 yards, I unleashed the Federal Premium Heavyweight 3rd Degree TSS load. To say I was impressed wouldn't be an overstatement. There is no doubt these new offerings have been an incredible achievement for turkey hunters. When I was younger, the thought of using small shot size would give me cold chills but after witnessing the performance of the TSS Federal premium loads, I realized a new day has dawned!

IN THE FIELD

The first morning I hunted with the Savage 220 was not ideal. The morning started off with a slight wind and light rain but I stayed dry in a ground blind while waiting for the rain to subside. Later in the morning I heard one bird gobble. With a two-hen decoy set-up, I began calling.

I soon heard the drumming sound as a gobbler strutted just out of my sight. A few more gobbles and the big tom strutted in view. He had his eyes fixed on the decoy as I eased the shotgun out the window — I can't tell you how nice the red dot appears on the neck of a turkey. As the bird stopped and raised his head at 34 steps, I pulled the trigger. The high-density payload of TSS



On Mark's test gun an UltraDot MatchDot II was mounted on the one-piece rail.



The oversize bolt handle and three-position safety makes handling easier during those hectic moments when a big gobbler is in range.



Put the red dot on the gobbler's chin and pull the trigger! Pattern of the Federal Premium TSS load with #7-9 shot from 30 yards.

shot took care of business quickly.

While this encounter marked my first with a bolt-action shotgun, it will not be the last. This Model 220 is specifically designed with the turkey hunter in mind and comes loaded with features any hunter will appreciate. Better yet, at an MSRP of \$695, you can't go wrong. For serious, turkey hunting aficionados, the Savage Model 220 Turkey is worth a closer look, especially if you've been on the fence about a bolt-action shotgun.

SavageArms.com

REALISTIC AIR GUN TRA

COMING FULL CIRCLE

DAVID FREEMAN

Air guns have come a long way. Daisy, Crosman and Beeman are brands I've known forever and they have been joined by several other companies including Umarex whose specialty is making branded guns for companies like Colt, SIG SAUER, Smith & Wesson and others. They make very realistic replicas of many of your favorite handguns. Some of the revolvers load cartridges with pellets or BBs inserted where the primers would be. Many of the semi-automatic designs use CO₂ to emulate the blowback operation of their real brothers enough to make an excellent training platform. I have used air guns for several years as training aids for new hunters and shooters as well as for ongoing training in an urban environment.

IN THE BEGINNING

My first contact with any kind of BB or pellet gun was 66 years ago when I discovered a Daisy Red Ryder, badly abused by the weather, in the fork of an orange tree in Leesburg, Fla. I was four, so naturally my dad didn't let me keep the Daisy. Three years later, after we had moved to a farm in Mississippi, Dad gave me a .410 shotgun and began teaching me to hunt. He was a biologist and a conservationist, and he hated BB guns. To him, the only justification for killing an animal was to eat it or to protect crops or domestic animals. He had seen enough innocent songbirds killed with BB guns to rule them out in our family.

Many years later, the need to solve a couple of training problems opened my eyes to a world of pneumatic firearm

usefulness I didn't know existed. Many gun writers live in the wide open spaces where they have the freedom to explore the function and features of various firearms without leaving home, but being a firearm owner and shooter in the city definitely has its challenges — fortunately, air guns play a great role in meeting those challenges.



For both Hunter Education and Handgun 101 classes, this bullet box target trap works great for stopping pellets. Participants can take home their Shoot-N-C target after class.

HUNTER EDUCATION TRAINING.

I grew up country and it was something of a shock to me upon moving to Fort Worth to discover you have to *pay* to shoot around here! City dwellers even pay to hunt and they think it's normal! I don't mind paying every now and then, but living here and shooting on my own place wasn't an option until I discovered air guns were more than toys.

Hunting was such a part of my early life, when I grew older and wasn't hunting regularly I figured it was time to give back. One of the best ways is as a volunteer Texas Hunter Education Instructor. I've had opportunities to teach Hunter Education classes at a range where shotguns or rifles were available for basic gun handling exposure, but other times

I've taught in a facility with no gun range. Since the curriculum allows for using air guns, I tried a couple of AR airsoft guns, but wasn't satisfied with the experience they provided for students.

What does work well are simple-to-operate air rifles such as the Gamo Shadow Whisper. It's a spring-action gun shooting a single .177 pellet with each shot and because it doesn't use CO₂, performance doesn't deteriorate after firing 25 or 30 shots. The Shadow Whisper and its cousins in the Whisper family



WINNING

have excellent sights and at distances up to 20 to 25 feet are extremely accurate. For the Hunter Education classes, I set up an indoor range with a couple of Champion 22 bullet traps using Birchwood Casey Shoot-N-C targets to give students a chance to learn the basics of sight alignment, sight picture and trigger press. Each student gets to take home their own target to show their friends and family.

HANDGUN 101

A few years ago when Texas dropped the training requirements for a Concealed Handgun License from 10–12 hours to 4–6 hours, many instructors were in a dilemma. This change meant the classes were geared more toward experienced shooters because there just wasn't enough time for basic handgun instruction on top of all the laws and other subjects required. Almost universally, each instructor came up with some type of introductory class to get inexperienced people ready to take the course for their carry license.

Because so many potential students were looking for evening classes, my solution was a two-hour Handgun 101 class taught in a classroom. The first part of the class was spent on gun safety, handgun operation and the basics of stance, grip, sight alignment, breathing, trigger control and follow-through while the second part featured practice to seal the concepts in the minds of the new shooters.

Initially, I used SIRT laser training pistols. This was fun for the students but had some negatives. The triggers on those early SIRT guns were not very realistic and when a student finished shooting, their shots were erased. Except for the trigger, those guns had no moving parts. To help new shooters get a better feel for a gun that moves, makes noise and puts holes in a target, I started using a pellet pistol with real blowback operation — a replica Beretta PX4 Storm made by Umarex with the same dimensions, weight and feel of the real thing. It is accurate at distances up to 10–12 feet and the blowback action is very realistic. Students loved shooting it.

Having a variety of air guns similar in size, weight and operation to their real counterparts helps new shooters learn the basics without a lot of noise and recoil.



For “Hunter Ed” training with no gun range, you can’t beat the Daisy Red Ryder, in production since 1940. David recently bought this one at a Walmart for under \$30.



The Gamo Whisper is so easy to use, new shooters can concentrate on the shooting essentials needed to hit their target.



The front and rear sights on the Gamo Whisper are highly visible, making it easier to teach the basics of sight alignment and sight picture.

Hunter Education classes are designed to teach students safety, ethics and marksmanship (above). Most BBs rebound with a lot of energy when they hit something solid. Left, these AirVenturi Dust Devil frangible BBs solve the problem and work great for indoor shooting.

The Beretta was soon joined by other realistic air guns such as the Smith & Wesson M&P, SIG SAUER P226 and recently a SIG P320. I've even thrown in a Luger P08 at times. Each student gets to fire 10 to 20 rounds with an instructor helping them to adjust stance, grip or sight picture as needed. Seeing how these tools helped new shooters overcome the fear of shooting and develop basic skills before taking them to the range, it encouraged me to get some for home use. Now, even as a city dweller, I can shoot for fun or practice whenever the urge hits me.



TRAINING TIPS

BBs or pellets? Outside, it generally doesn't matter but inside I prefer pellets because they react to backstops and bullet traps as you expect. BBs are round and hard, bouncing off almost any hard surface. One new discovery has helped — Dust Devil BBs available from Pyramid Air. These are frangible so they shatter upon hitting a solid surface. With either pellets or BBs, eye protection should always be worn.

Don't expect CO₂ cartridges to go the distance as advertised on the carton. After 25–30 shots, they start slowing down and then they're not accurate. Listen for the slowdown and change the cartridges when the sound begins to diminish. You'll need some tools to change cartridges. Some require an Allen wrench; with others, it's a wing nut. I keep small vice grip pliers on hand for dealing with the wing nuts.

You'll be disappointed if you expect every pellet to fire. Most pellets are made of lead and their shape can be easily altered with handling. Sometimes they just refuse to budge, other times they'll leave the magazine but not quite make it into the barrel. Just shake it off and keep shooting.

Chances are you can find some excellent-shooting replicas for prices you can justify for personal or family entertainment. You'll see handguns and long guns for home use, plus a whole world of hunting air rifles and pistols in serious calibers. When my income won't allow adding "real" firearms to my collection, I can sometimes slip in a nice air gun for the price of taking my family to dinner.

GUNS[®]

MAGAZINE

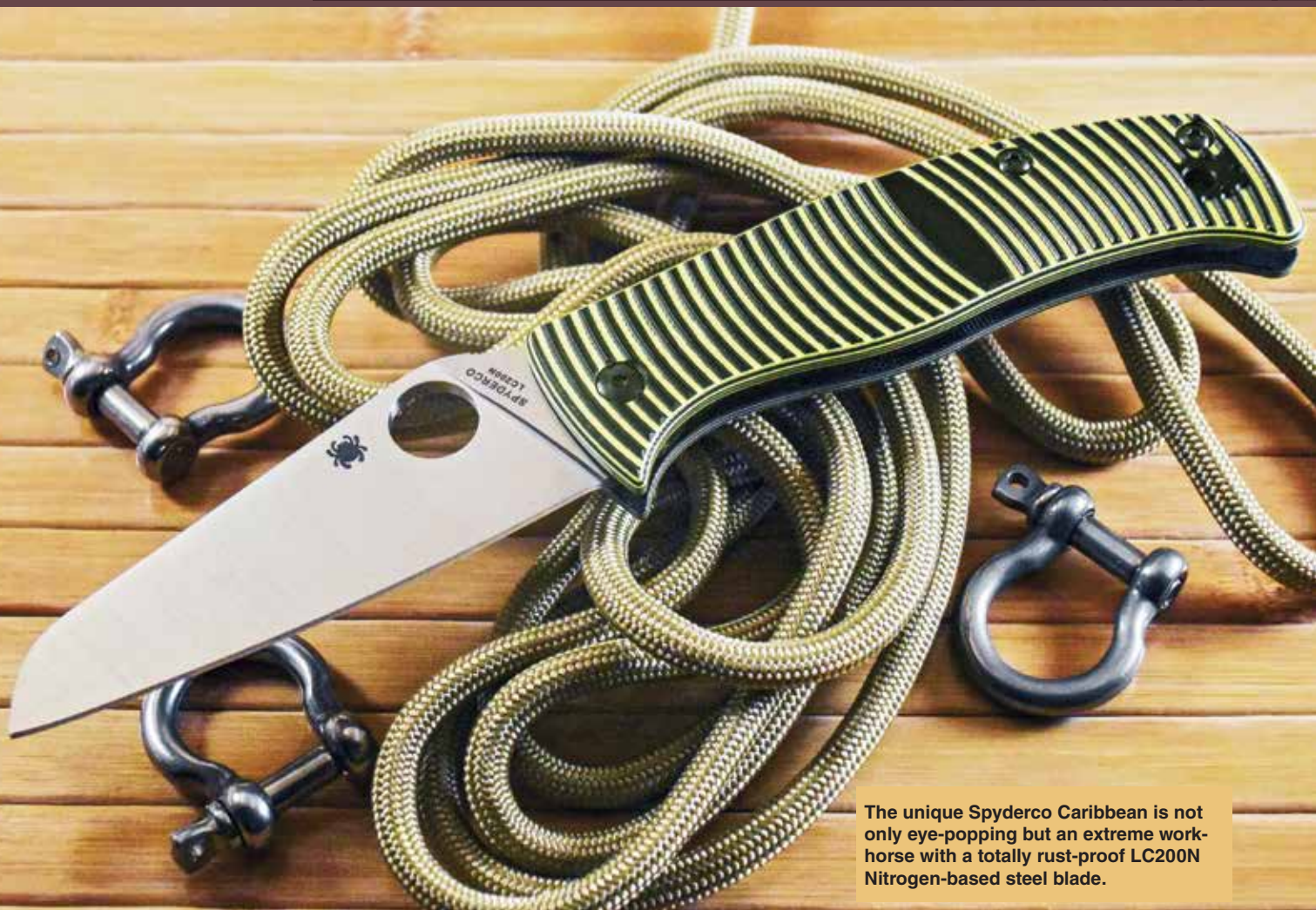
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The unique Spyderco Caribbean is not only eye-popping but an extreme work-horse with a totally rust-proof LC200N Nitrogen-based steel blade.

SPYDERCO CARIBBEAN

ISLAND VIBE IN NAUTICAL KNIFE

Spyderco has been throwing “zingers” in their line dating all the way back to when founder Sal Glesser decided to put a hole in the blade. The Caribbean is one of those. Sure, it has an island vibe to it and the handle pattern could easily be a take-off on one of those colorful striped fish swimming around a reef, but there's more to explore with this knife. The Caribbean is a modern take on the legendary “rope knife” used by seafarers over a century ago, particularly in its deep Sheepfoot blade. But this blade style is a universal workhorse used by electricians, carpenters and carpet cutters alike.

At 8.54" overall the Caribbean is a big fish and its vibrant striped black-and-yellow frame has an unmistakable island vibe. The 3.70" satin-finished Sheepfoot blade is of LC200N steel with a high Nitrogen content, making it totally rust-proof

— typical of Spyderco's Salt series knives. The 4.84" handle is machined from black and yellow G10 that not only gives the Caribbean its attractive looks but adds ribbing to the surface for added purchase. Topping off this unique folder's cool attributes is Spyderco's patented Compression Lock located on the upper spine of the handle where it's out of the way but easy to locate. A tip-up Titanium pocket clip backside makes for easy, at-the-ready carry — and it's reversible for right or left handers.

WHY YOU'LL LIKE IT

Needless to say, if you like a knife that stands out in the crowd, the Caribbean will fulfill your wildest dreams. But this is a workhorse of a knife — one that will not only serve boaters and fishermen well but literally anyone who encounters tough



Spyderco's patented Compression lock, located on the back spine of the handle, is inconspicuous but easy to locate for disengaging the blade.

cutting and slicing chores on a regular basis. It will take all the salt and sweat you can throw at it and never disappoint you with rust or corrosion — in fact, it will take virtually anything you throw at it. Suggested retail for the Spyderco Caribbean is \$260, a not too salty price for a forever knife. 

Spyderco.com

CROSSFIRE

continued from page 8

cartridge as initially designed was .45 caliber and contained 70 grains of black powder. This was before copper jackets were widely used so lead bullets work fine.

There are two primary downsides with black powder: corrosion if the gun isn't cleaned — well — with the bigger factor being black powder is significantly less powerful than modern smokeless powder. Some modern rounds, even if filled to the top with black powder, would probably be more of a "pop" than a bang. I wouldn't volunteer to be shot with one, but the resulting rounds would be significantly lower in power and velocity; some might not even exit the bullet from the barrel, creating a host of safety issues.

Doable? In some cases. Advisable? Maybe as a last-ditch, end-of-the-world thing. Will you see any publications experimenting with the concept? Probably not for a host of reasons, most of them starting at "reader safety." —BW

DABBS IS STILL WITH US

Why no piece by Will Dabbs in this issue (GUNS March 2021)? I hope he is still on the staff. I find his pieces to be most informative and entertaining.

Ken Coveney

Absolutely, Will is still here as he's one of my favorites (readers too)! When putting together the monthly lineup, I just simply overlooked using one of his pieces. Don't worry, he's got plenty more in the hopper — wait until you hear about his experiences with beavers and high explosives! —BW



WHERE THE MILDEW GROWS

Thanks for lightening my mood and bringing a smile to my face with your article, "Where The Mildew Grows" (GUNS Insider, March 2021). I, too, have a soft spot for military surplus stores that began in my boyhood. In the city where I grew up, there was The Red Front Store nearby. They sold just about any cool device a boy could wish for: BB guns, slingshots, canteens, tents. I took \$5 of my hard-earned lawn mowing money and bought a genuine U.S.-military-issue surplus canvas pup tent, complete with patches but minus poles and stakes. No problemo, the store also sold tent stakes. I got hold of a couple of old broom handles which made dandy poles. I remember the unique smell of the tent to this day. A sort of combination old canvas and paraffin wax smell, combined with the smell of battle. That tent saw many a backyard campout (I lived in the city). I kept it into adulthood, letting my kids discover the adventure of pretend soldiers and peculiar tent smells. Thanks for the trip down memory lane!

Dean Gundry

Thanks for the kudos, my moldy prose got more reader mail than anything in a while. Apparently the stench of mildew is important to guys our age! —BW

MILDEW DEUX

"Where The Mildew Grows" brought back exciting memories. Walking home from high school in the mid 1950s we would stop at Sears and not only ogle the guns hanging on the wall, we could actually handle them and I can still recall working the action of the Winchester slide-action .22s! You would stand there and dream of the hunts you were going to go on.

Then on to the surplus market. We had a company in Braintree, Mass. about 20 miles south of Boston, Grossman's, who brought in Military surplus by the freight car full! Like you said, it was soaked, stinky, moldy and just fascinating! "The Gang" could spend all day there.

Thanks for the brief moment of turning the clock and memories back.

David B Connor

MILDEW TROIS

Brent T. Wheat struck a chord when he mentioned the year I graduated from high school (1975). He took me back to the 10 or so years leading up to that date and the regular trips I would make with my Dad to local Army/Navy Surplus stores in the Milwaukee area. Good memories.

I remember well the aroma of those places and, like Mr. Wheat, I miss them.

Thank you sir for helping me relive some fond memories.

Steve Kopischke

MILDEW QUATRE

Brent T. Wheat forgot to end his message with "... and you kids better stay off my lawn!"

A fellow old-timer-at-large in Colorado, Fam Wrongski

They should already know better... —BW

NO JOY

In John Taffin's article "Reloading the 357 Magnum Levergun," he has a photo of a Marlin 1894 with a great stock cover with 12 cartridge loops. Where can I find one of these for my 1894?

Sid Davis



Yes it is great and got a left-banded one for my oldest grandson, but unfortunately these came from the Leather Arsenal and Elmer McAvoy, who is now retired. —JT

MUSKET HELP

Please recommend to me a craftsman who can evaluate and repair muskets that have been poorly stored but have been passed down in the family from my grandfather to my son. There are 4 to 5 rifles, all from the 1800s. We live in Southern California.

Alan Russell

continued on page 65

RESIST

RESISTANCE IS NOT FUTILE THWARTING THE PLAN TO RESTRICT YOUR RIGHTS

Dave Workman

Many months before the 2020 election, the Biden campaign published its plan to “end our gun violence epidemic.”

It was and remains a wish list of the gun prohibition lobby, complete with gun and magazine bans, registration and so-called “universal background checks.” There is a “safe storage” requirement (the constitutionality of which is questionable under the 2008 Heller ruling), and a one-gun-per-month purchase limit. It also bans the online sale of firearms, ammunition, kits and gun parts.

GRASPING AT AIR

“It’s within our grasp,” says this plan, “to end our gun violence epidemic and respect the Second Amendment, which is limited.”

The Second Amendment is limited only if we allow it to be so. These “limits” exist only in the imagination of the extremist left, the same people who rioted, looted and burned last summer.

The Biden plan would regulate ownership of semiautomatic Modern Sporting Rifles (MSRs) and their original capacity magazines under the National Firearms Act (NFA). Each would be subject to a \$200 tax, same as full-auto machine guns. Rough estimates are this would cost law-abiding American gun owners at least \$34 billion.

Or, you can sell them “back” to the government, which never owned them in the first place.

The Biden plan is to “reinstate the Obama-Biden policy to keep guns out of the hands of certain people unable to manage their affairs for mental reasons.” This could boil down to being unable to balance your checkbook, and the Social Security Administration would be required to supply its records to the NICS system to help make this happen.

The Biden plan is to “incentivize state ‘extreme risk’ laws.” This is the Red Flag provision to disarm as many people as

possible by giving states the funds to implement such laws and enforce them.

The Biden plan will offer “incentives” to the states to set up gun licensing programs. This is a part of the effort to turn the Second Amendment right to keep and bear arms into a tightly regulated privilege. Under this part of the scheme, citizens would be required to “obtain a license prior to purchasing a gun.”

What’s to stop this outrage? You are.

COURT TIME

Donald Trump spent four years filling federal court vacancies with conservative judges; people who recognize the Second Amendment means what it says. He put three conservative justices on the U.S. Supreme Court.

Remember your high school civics classes — there are three branches of government: Executive, Legislative and Judicial. All are equal. Until you can re-capture Capitol Hill in 2022, use the courts.

Right now, there are organizations taking the fight to the gun prohibitionists. Your support will make the difference. The courts will be busy, but only if you give strength to the people keeping them busy. Donate to support their legal battles.

WHO ARE THEY?

While New York State and the establishment media have been concentrating on dismembering the National Rifle Association as a lobbying powerhouse, anti-gunners have allowed their flanks to be attacked.

The Second Amendment Foundation (SAF), which specializes in education and litigation, has emerged as a legal powerhouse. SAF brought the case of McDonald v. City of Chicago to the Supreme Court and has used this victory to open the floodgates for challenges to local gun laws. Only because of concerns Chief Justice John Roberts might lean liberal, several SAF cases were not granted review last year. The situation has now changed with the death of Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg and her replacement by Justice Amy Coney Barrett.

Now, there is a sure conservative majority on the high court that bodes well for review of cases currently winding their way through the lower federal courts. Those cases touch on the right to bear arms outside the home and whether MSRs and their magazines are protected by the Second Amendment.

SAF has partnered with the NRA on a number of cases already, striking down gun bans in Seattle park facilities, a proposed gun ban in San Francisco, and the confiscation of firearms after Hurricane Katrina, for example. They are currently working to undo a gun control measure passed in Washington State in 2018.

Under the SAF umbrella you will find Jews for the Preservation of Firearms Ownership, Doctors for Responsible Gun Ownership and the Police Society Podcast. All are now projects of SAF (SAF.org).

The Firearms Policy Coalition, a California-based organization, is a rising legal star, often joining with SAF in legal challenges and occasionally launching its own cases with other groups.

FPC puts social media to good use and they will likely carve some significant legal notches over the next few years (Firearm-sPolicy.org).

Don't overlook Gun Owners of America, an organization founded in 1976 — they can be scrappy and have a devoted following.

They work in congressional and legislative halls and call themselves the “only no-compromise” gun rights organization (GunOwners.org).

To be sure, the NRA is hardly out of the game. NRA fights best from behind circled wagons and the organization numbers in the millions, with training programs, lobbying expertise and the strength and loyalty of its members. The NRA is not a big building in Fairfax, Va., but millions of men and women who believe there are 10 Amendments in the Bill of Rights.

Unlike Joe Biden, those citizens do not see the Second Amendment as “limited” (NRA.org).

There are state organizations worthy of support who can harass the flanks, groups such as the Virginia Citizens Defense League, Oregon Firearms Federation, California Rifle & Pistol Association, Gun Owners Action League of Massachusetts, The Association of New Jersey Rifle & Pistol Clubs, Illinois State Rifle Association, New Jersey Second Amendment Society, Gun Owners Action League of Washington, Oregon Firearms Federation and so many more it is impossible to mention them all.

They're the skirmishers — the grassroots activists who will hold the line while a flood of legal actions work through the federal court playing field leveled under Trump. ➤

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REAL AVID MASTER SIGHT PUSHER

You're probably like me — I've put off buying a dedicated sight pusher but after marring yet another pistol with poorly wielded drift punch, I finally ordered one. I had looked at several on the market and while they might work, all of them seem more like prototypes than a finally finished product.

Things changed when a heavy package arrived at my door. I had ordered the Real Avid sight pusher to test, but the box I received couldn't possibly have contained the device — unless they had included a firebrick in the box. Turns out they hadn't.

What I found was the most robust, heavy duty sight tool I've ever seen. It's got all the usual features of such tools but the quality of craftsmanship and finish is literally levels above anything else. It's not cheap, but it's certainly a beast



and so far hasn't worked up a sweat on any rear sight I've tried. In fact, I think I could probably snap off the rear sight from a rusty Civil War Dahlgren cannon if necessary.

MSRP: \$149.99

RealAvid.com

AMMO ARMOR

When any mechanical object ceases to operate, there is a pretty fair chance one of the most insidious materials known to man or beast — gunk — is to blame. If you carry spare magazines anyplace

except an officially-sanctified magazine pouch you run the risk of collecting this nasty substance, which is more than happy to gum up the operation of your Elite Masterblaster.

However, I'd venture to say most real-world earth people carry their spare magazines in a variety of places aside from magazine pouches. My spares often ride in a backpack, truck center console or the cargo pocket of my pants, inviting lint and various cheeseburger crumbs to climb aboard and mess things up.

Fortunately, the simple, effective and inexpensive solution to the problem is Ammo Armor. These are plastic sleeves that fit like a glove over your magazines to keep them clean and also protect the vulnerable feed lips. With Ammo Armor, your magazine is safe but always ready in case a reload is necessary.

MSRP: Around \$10

Ammo-Armor.com



SNEAKY PETE HOLSTERS

If you love the concept of being a little crafty and hiding things in plain sight, you're going to love the Sneaky Pete Holster.

The Sneaky Pete looks like a very large cellphone or calculator (remember those?) case but is designed to carry a small pistol right in the open on your beltline. My test case is a well-made black leather design fitting my AMT Backup .380 like a glove, holding it secure and unseen even though the



entire world can see the oddish rectangle pouch on my strong-side waist.

Sneaky Pete makes holsters to fit a variety of small guns and they use a variety of materials and outside markings, such as "Power Pack," "Outdoor Gear," a medical symbol and, my favorite, a case marked with a cross. I suppose onlookers might think you're carrying a small quick-draw Bible in case of an emergency baptism. Regardless, everybody will see the holster but thanks to the quality construction, strong magnet closure and benign looks, they'll never realize you're packing heat right under everyone's nose.

MSRP: Starting around \$65

SneakyPeteHolsters.com

CROSSFIRE

continued from page 61

After checking around, there are plenty of folks who are qualified but I can't recommend anyone from personal knowledge. I'll put this up in Crossfire and maybe one of our expert readers can make a recommendation of someone with specialized expertise. —BW

NO MO' CONNOR

I just got an email newsletter with an article written by John Connor. If he's back I'll gladly subscribe just to read his articles.

Chuck Hobbs

Nope, sorry, he's still retired — we've tried to beg, plead, wheedle and whine but he's hung up his key-board for good. I even Photoshopped some comprising pictures of him with Nancy Pelosi but he didn't care (not surprised). However, he's so popular — and good — we like to keep his stuff out there for those who haven't read him or want to get another taste. —BW

CALLING TED!

As so many others, I am thoroughly enjoying your podcast series as well as your magazine and hope you continue to voice your opinions, provide insight and promote new and innovative products in the shooting industry.

I would like to suggest Ted Nugent as a guest on your podcast. I haven't heard much from him lately but he has always expressed his opinions in an extremely forthright manner and, above all, is entertaining. Keep up the good work!

Doug Neal

Ted would be fun, I've talked to him briefly years ago. So Ted, if you wanna rock the Podcast, just reach out! And, as a measure of my zeal, 20 years ago "Wango Tango" was the number-one track on the CD player in our SWAT armored personnel carrier! —BW

PLAY OR PASS?

Back at the beginning of 2020, my friend



took me shooting with his collection of pistols. I was raised with rifles and my Dad taught me to shoot with .22 and a British Enfield Carbine. Following our excursion I went out and bought a Springfield Armory XD with 5" barrel. I duly went out and purchased 200 rounds of ammunition — that was the last time I could find 9mm, apart from 1,000-round cases that were unaffordable for simple target shooting.

So here is my question — do I simply give my new hobby up and sell my XD or buy something else? A .22LR perhaps. Would really like some straightforward guidance here please.

Bill Kuiper

I don't see the shortages getting better anytime soon. Behind the scenes many manufacturers are admitting they're a year or more backordered (even though a significant portion of backorders are likely double-orders from dealers). Ammo supply is simply insane and even reloading supplies are scarce. The only thing I can suggest is hang on to what you've got and ride it out. All things are cyclical and eventually there will be ample supplies again someday. In the meantime, if you can find a .22 LR pistol you like, it would be a worthwhile investment if you actually want to shoot rather than see your guns collecting dust. —BW

SUPPORT YOUR FRIENDS

I just finished the March 2021 edition of GUNS Magazine and after reading the article by Dave Workman, "Fight Back Against Anti-Gun Social Bigotry," I went to the CCRKBA website to look at the list of anti-gun businesses.

I've always tried to avoid anti-gun businesses and spend my money with more gun-friendly companies, but have not seen a list of pro-gun companies. Do you know if a similar list of pro-gun companies exists?

Tim Cole



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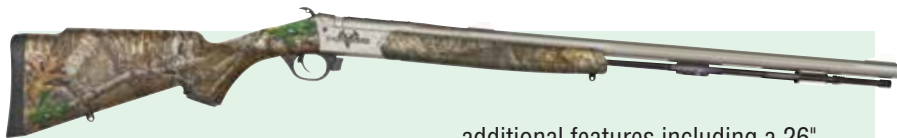
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OBSKURA NOX RIFLE **ALLTERRA ARMS**

AllTerra Arms introduces the Limited-Edition *Obskura Nox Rifle*. The Idaho-based AllTerra collaborated with camouflage innovator Kryptek and optics legend Leupold to create a unique, high-performance package. The rifle's Carbon Hunter stock sports the new

Kryptek Obskura Nox pattern. It comes pre-mounted and sighted in with a Leupold VX-6HD 3-18x44mm CDS-ZL2 scope featuring a MOA dial system and illuminated T-MOA reticle. The match-grade 22" barrel is spiral-fluted to shave weight and dissipate heat without affecting accuracy. MSRP: \$7,745. For more info: (208) 608-5179, AllTerraARms.com



PURSUIT XT **TRADITIONS FIREARMS**

The *Pursuit XT* is the next generation of Tradition Firearms' Pursuit series. It is outfitted with a VAPR twist barrel with a 1:24" twist. The Pursuit XT has also been upgraded to include the Elite XT trigger system. This mid-level muzzleloader is packed with

additional features including a 26" Chromoly steel barrel, Dual Safety System, Accelerator Breech Plug, Speed Load System and more. It is offered in several models as well as scoped and non-scoped versions. In picture, the Pursuit XT .50 Cal Realtree Edge with Premium CeraKote Finish with 3-9x40 Scope. MSRP: \$499. For more info: (860) 388-4656, TraditionsFirearms.com



DASH PANEL BLIND **ALPS OUTDOORZ**

The *Dash Panel Blind* from ALPS OutdoorZ is developed primarily for turkey hunters and other on-the-move ground hunters. The free-standing, three-panel blind uses a single-hub design for compact, on-the-move storage, quick deployment and stability in challenging conditions. The Dash Panel Blind weighs 5 lbs., 8 oz. with a 54" height and adjustable open dimension of 40" to 80". It comes with ground stakes, an interior mesh pocket and is offered in Mossy Oak Obsession camo. For more info: ALPSOutdoorZ.com



LANNY **CRKT**

CRKT's *Lanny* is an everyday carry knife that takes a classic slip joint style and brings it into the future with the Assisted Opening innovation. Its 3.18" blade is made of 8Cr13MoV high-carbon stainless steel with a satin finish; handle is 6061 aluminum. Strong and lightweight, the Lanny has an OAL of 7.44" and weighs 4.10 oz. MSRP: \$89.99. For more info: (800) 891-3100, CRKT.com

TAURUSTX 22 COMPETITION **TAURUS**

Chambered in .22LR, the *TaurusTX 22 Competition* is built on the same proven full-size polymer receiver as the TaurusTX 22. However, it features a newly engineered slide and barrel assembly designed to work with red dot optics. It has a "skeletonized" slide with a cutout between the ejection port to just behind the front sight. Part of the TaurusTX 22 Competition platform is a 5" bull barrel with the breech end machined to accept a base mounting plate. The match-grade bull barrel is threaded to accept a suppressor or muzzle device and includes a thread protector. MSRP is \$484.85. For more info: TaurusUSA.com



HAVOC RS440 **TENPOINT CROSSBOW TECHNOLOGIES**

TenPoint's 26.5"-long *Havoc RS440* is the industry's fastest crossbow-per-inch. Delivering 440 FPS with same-hole accuracy from a platform measuring only 26.5" long and 7.5" narrow, the Havoc RS440 provides safe de-cocking through the ACUslide cocking and de-cocking system. The RS440 comes in Veil Alpine camo or Graphite Gray. MSRP: \$2,599.99 and \$2,499.99, respectively. For more info: (800) 548-6837, TenPointCrossbows.com



GUN-MAX GUN OIL **REAL AVID**

Real Avid presents *Gun-Max Gun Oil* — a firearms lubricant to enhance corrosion resistance and provide lubrication under friction and low-temperature viscosity. It's available in 120-oz. aerosol and 4-oz. bottles. The aerosol cans are equipped with a flip-up two-position spray nozzle that folds down and stores with the can. MSRP: \$12.99 for 12-oz. can. For more info: (800) 286-0567, ReadAvid.com



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online at gunsmagazine.com

MODEL 20 VIGILANCE RIFLES

The *Model 20* submachine gun from Vigilance Rifles is chambered in 9mm NATO. It is available in 10-, 17- and 27-round PMAGs and 50-round ProMags. The base set includes a carbine barrel, folding stock, extendable

stock, muzzle brake, Picatinny Rail and one 10-round ProMag. MSRP: \$1,699. For more info: (928) 910-3623, VigilanceRifles.co



GLX 2.5-10X44MM FFP RIFLE SCOPE PRIMARY ARMS OPTICS

Primary Arms Optics has announced the release of a reticle configuration for the *GLx 2.5-10x44mm FFP Rifle Scope* (MPN: 610143). The ACSS Griffin MIL reticle brings the advanced ranging tools and horseshoe design of traditional ACSS reticles to a MIL-grid system. Built to enhance agility and accuracy of mid-range precision rifles, the GLx 2.5-10x44 has multi-coated, low-dispersion glass providing exceptional light transmission. The lightweight body and 2.5x minimum magnification improve handling speeds in close quarters. A large eyepiece and daylight-bright illumination assist in rapid target acquisition. MSRP: \$649.99. For more info: (713) 344-9600, PrimaryArms.com

.450 BUSHMASTER HI-BC BULLETS NORTHERN PRECISION

Northern Precision Custom Bullets now offers *.450 Bushmaster Hi-BC Bullets*. These are "Pin-Point" high ballistic coefficient .45 caliber (0.452" diameter) bullets for longer-range, "higher-retained" energy in rifles requiring relatively short overall length rounds. Also available: a line of .44 caliber bullets in a wide range of weights and styles for handguns/rifles; spitzer bullets for the .454 Casull in 300-375 grains; .458 and .416 rifle bullets; and the "Sabre Star" .416 caliber varmint bullet (215 grains). MSRP: \$25 per 25 Pin-Point .452 non-bonded bullets. For more info: (315) 955-8679, NPCustomBullets.com



223 REMINGTON BERGER AMMUNITION

Whether on the firing line or in the field, Berger Ammunition offers unmatched performance in today's most popular calibers. With results rivaling precision hand loads, competitive shooters, hunters, and the nation's elite operators trust Berger to shoot better. New for 2021, *223 Remington 73 Grain Target* and *77 Grain Tactical* offerings. MSRP: \$29.99 per box of 20. For more info: (660) 460-2800, BergerBullets.com



COMFORT FLEX IWB VERSACARRY

The *Comfort Flex IWB* is made with a forward cant for an easy draw. It is held in place by a strong belt clip for stability and fit while remaining easy to get on or off. Part of Versacarry's *Comfort Flex* holster line, the IWB holster is ultra-slim and lightweight for a comfortable carry. It is made from Versacarry's signature water buffalo leather that surrounds a polymer insert. This makes the holster strong and resistant to collapsing upon pistol draw. Optics compatible, it will fit most pistols with Reflex sights. MSRP is \$44.99. For more info: (979) 778-2000, Versacarry.com

HOLSTER FOR ALTOR PISTOL ALTOR CORP.

ALTOR Corp. has developed a custom *Holster for the ALTOR Pistol*. Made of genuine leather, the holster has loops for six spare cartridges. Several custom accessories for the pistol are also available: interchangeable barrels in .380, 9mm and a 9mm threaded barrel (1/2 x 28); Cerakote-coated polymer frames in NRA Blue, Rose Gold and Flat Dark Earth; and a dual-use elastic bandolier that can either attach two spare cartridges or a small flashlight to the frame. MSRP: \$54. For more info: (602) 441-4077, ALTORCorp.com



SHOCKWAVE BLADE CLASSIC SHOCKWAVE TECHNOLOGIES

The veteran-designed *Shockwave Blade Classic* pistol stabilizer is manufactured to exacting tolerances and is adjustable with a simple pull mechanism. It fits all pistols equipped with a Mil-spec buffer tube: the AR-15

pattern, MPX, GLOCK, CZ Scorpion Evo 3, HK9X pattern and more. The *Shockwave Blade Classic* is made from high-strength glass-reinforced polymer with a QD swivel cup (QD swivel not included). Weighing only 4 oz., it provides additional support when firing. MSRP: \$44.95. For more info: (727) 877-8277, ShockwaveTechnologies.com



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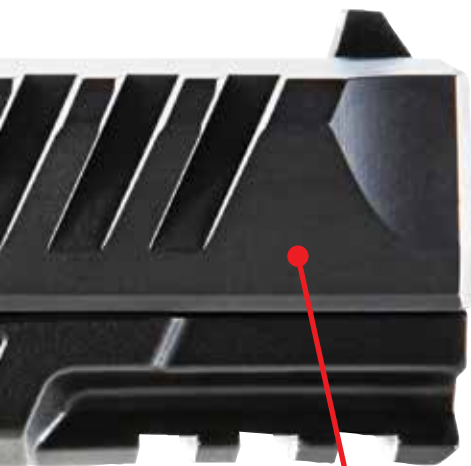


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WINNERS CHOSEN BY RANDOM DRAWING. Limit one entry per household. To protect the privacy and security of winners, their names will NOT be made public. Contest void where prohibited by law. Winners must undergo a background check and comply with all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



WALTHER PDP COMPACT 4"

MANUFACTURER: Walther Arms
(479) 242-8500
WaltherArms.com

CALIBER: 9mm, **CAPACITY:** 15
BARREL LENGTH: 4", **OAL:** 7.5"

WEIGHT: 24.4 oz. (unloaded w/ empty magazine);
21.4 oz. (unloaded w/out magazine)

VALUE: \$649

YOU CAN **WIN!**

TOTAL VALUE: **\$798.99**



PDP COMPACT 4" GIVEAWAY

"It's your duty to build the best performing firearm ... It's your duty to be ready." That's what the Walther Arms' ad says about the *Walther PDP Compact 4"*, our giveaway prize for this issue of *GUNS*. When we pick your name as winner, you'll be ready — to protect yourself and your family. With a capacity of 15+1, the Walther PDP Compact in 9mm caliber is primarily for concealed carry and duty use. It is red-dot ready and comes with two magazines. Key features include a performance duty trigger for repeatable

accuracy, SuperTerrain serrations for more responsive, hands-on engagement with the pistol, modularity and polygonal rifling.

The *ACE Iona — Green Aluminum* we are giving away has a 4" aluminum handle, anodized in a beautiful olive drab green. Its 2.875"-long blade is made of M390 steel, one of the best steels available. With an OAL of 7" and weighing 3 oz., the Iona is light but strong. With a nested liner-lock and a solid stainless wire clip, it is the ideal EDC folder to drop in the pocket, bag, truck or wherever you might need a dependable knife.

The *COMPACT* is a powerful PepperBall launcher you can carry in your pocket. Pre-loaded and ready to shoot with a launch distance of up to 30 feet, the COMPACT fires a projectile with a pepper irritant. The pepper ball bursts to release a pepper cloud upon impact to incapacitate a threat.

Protect yourself and your family with the Walther PDP Compact 4", Giant Mouse Knives' ACE Iona and the PepperBall COMPACT! You'll get these amazing prizes when you win! Just click on GUNSMagazine.com/giveaways or send a post card. —Jazz Jimenez 🗡️

If you are unable to enter online, mail a postcard with your name and address (no envelopes please). Entries must be received by May 31, 2021. Limit one entry per household.

GUNS Magazine
GOM May 2021
P.O. Box 502795
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THE NIFTY .460 S&W MAGNUM A VERY VERSATILE CARTRIDGE!

Versatility gives us more options during dire situations like ammo shortages. Sound familiar? It's why the .460 S&W Magnum is so great! Guns chambered in this hot-rodded cartridge can be loaded with fellow .45 caliber family members like the .454 Casull, and ol' grandpa himself, the .45 Colt.

For handloaders, there's a literal smorgasbord of pickings to choose from for

these cartridges when filling your plate for projectile preparedness.

OPTIONS

I have two fine guns chambered for the .460 S&W Magnum. The first, a beautifully stocked Big Horn Armory (BHA) Model 90, and second, a Thompson/Center Arms (TCA) Encore with a 20" Katahdin barrel.

Lever guns are steeped deep in tradition,

it's the reason we love them so much! We love the fact they're truly American and were used by the spirited individuals settling the west. Their flatness makes them perfect for riding in a scabbard, whether on horseback or ATV — and who doesn't love a repeating rifle as simple as a flick of the wrist?

As pretty as the BHA Model 90 is, the TCA Encore's beauty comes from its rugged handiness. A most utilitarian carbine when fitted with its 20" barrel, this combination exemplifies simplicity at its finest. Being a single-shot makes the rifle appear 4" shorter because it lacks an action, adding to its handiness.

BIG HORN ARMORY

In 2008, Greg Buchel, owner of BHA, wanted to build a lever gun for the newly released .500 S&W Magnum. He did, calling it the model 89. This was followed by the Model 90, chambered in .460 S&W Magnum.

Buchel knew he had to build a stronger lever gun for the high-pressure rounds. Long story short, he did, using designs similar to John Browning's Model 1886 and Model 92.

SINGLE-SHOT SIMPLICITY

Thompson/Center Arms single-shot pistols, rifles and carbines are as simple as things get. Who doesn't love the concept and challenge of hunting with a single shot? Carrying one telegraphs confidence to



Factory-supplied Skinner Sights (above) peep sights on the BHA Model 90 allows for fast, accurate shooting. Tank loves them! The bare bones basic TCA Encore with a 20" Katahdin barrel is a pure utilitarian carbine (below), while the beautiful BHA Model 90 exemplifies what a levergun should be.



others like no other firearm, while making the carrier a better hunter by patiently waiting for the perfect shot.

.45 VERSATILITY

Everyone loves .45 caliber cartridges. I sure do! My favorite cartridge — the old original warhorse .45 Colt — was designed in 1873 for the Colt S&A revolver. Standard loading with black powder propelled a 250-grain bullet at 900 FPS. Fast forward a hundred years and Ruger released their Blackhawk in .45 Colt.

The much stronger Ruger allows judicious hand-loaders to turbo-charge the large capacity case of the old .45, safely propelling 300+ grain bullets approaching 1,300 FPS. In 1957, Dick Casull released his .454 Casull. It's simply a lengthened .45 Colt, loaded to higher pressures, with velocities reaching 1,500–1,600 FPS with the same 300+ grain bullets in handguns.

All these cartridges can be shot in either the BHA Model 90 or the TCA Katahdin-barreled Encore chambered in 460 S&W. Ain't life grand?!

By seating bullets further out in .454 Casull and .45 Colt brass, cycling through the BHA model 90 is possible. Heavy charges of H110, or Lil' Gun, with magnum primers will give excellent results. In a pinch, loading a single round of standard length .454 Casull, or .45 Colt in the Model



Buffalo Bore Ammo and the BHA Model 90 were very compatible as shown (above) — the wood is not too shabby either! Targets shot from 50 yards. Cast bullets and leverguns go together like biscuits and gravy. By seating the bullets further out, they'll cycle through the Model 90. (Below, left) left to right: .460 S&W, .454 Casull and .45 Colt. Buffalo Bore loads some of the finest ammo made for shooters! Tank especially likes the 360-grain hardcast loads.



90 BHA will also work.

SHOOTING

Three different .460 S&W Buffalo Bore loads were used for testing. From the BHA Model 90 the 360-grain hardcast flat-nose (2,077 FPS), a 300-grain jacketed soft point (2,382 FPS) and lastly, a 225-grain Barnes (2,441 FPS). Using Skinner Peep sights and white bead front sight, accuracy at 50 yards was around an inch, about as good as I can hold.

My TCA Encore .460 S&W Katahdin combo has an old Weaver 2.5X scope mounted on it. Velocities were 60-80 FPS lower from the 4" shorter barrel, with accuracy being the same but at 100 yards

distance! No wonder so many people love the TCAs!

MAGNUM ROUND-UP

Guns chambered in the .460 S&W are indeed versatile by being able to shoot .454 Casull and .45 Colt ammo. For handloaders, seating bullets further out provides more powder capacity and smoother cycling in the Model 90 BHA. Obviously, this isn't necessary for the TCA Encore/Katahdin combo but does give you the same advantages of more powder capacity, hence more velocity potential.

Either way, I love the .460 S&W Magnum, a workhorse of a wonderful cartridge no matter what it's loaded in.



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MAGAZINE

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invasion of Europe, there will still be a half-box of ammo sitting temptingly on the tailgate when it's time to leave. You'll keep plugging away, continually muttering "Just one more, I gotta leave right after this one ..."

a few minutes or an hour late from the shop, if you're late from a hunting trip you'll often end up pictured on the side of a milk carton.

This is because hunting-related lateness is often the result of an unusual occurrence rather than simple poor choices. The notable event might be a good thing, such as field dressing a deer taken at dusk,

understanding toward we poor souls — we didn't *intend* to ruin your niece's wedding or miss the ballet, but once we start rambling with gun or rod, time ceases to exist and before long the clock has become our mortal enemy.

As a gesture of our sincerity in the matter, I'll have everyone raise their right hand to take a collective oath swearing our

"... I'LL HAVE EVERYONE RAISE THEIR RIGHT HAND TO TAKE A COLLECTIVE OATH SWEARING OUR ALLEGIANCE TO DEADLINES AND PROMISING TO BE HOME ON TIME, EVERY TIME ..."

In fact, most people don't realize D-Day, June 6, 1944, was actually supposed to take place on May 23rd but Dwight D. Eisenhower was busy working up a new load for his pet '98 Mauser.

REASON #2

Trips to the gun shop account for perhaps the greatest total amount of tardiness in a given year, but hunting involves single larger incidents. While you might be

or it might be the result of misplacing the car. In terms of tardiness, getting lost is a wonderful way to invest in several hours of lateness, not to mention the beneficial effects on the cardiovascular and respiratory systems as you sprint through rough terrain shouting at the top of your lungs.

HAVE MERCY

If you are a spouse who has accidentally stumbled on this column, please try to be

allegiance to deadlines and promising to be home on time, every time — regardless of how many rounds remain in the magazine, how promising the next brushy draw appears or in spite of how fast the fish have suddenly started biting. We promise to be more conscious of the time and quit making excuses about ...

Oops, I'd like to continue with the pledge but just realized I'm late in meeting the boys down at the gun shop. 

CROSSFIRE*continued from page 65*

Dave is working on it, once we have something we'll share with readers. —BW

A DIFFERENT SOLUTION

My rifle is a .32 Winchester Special Model 94 carbine. The model 94 designation is dirt common; the .32 Special not so much. Well-respected as a productive hunting cartridge but since it's so similar to the .30-30, it's almost ignored. The .32 Special ammo was uncommon before the last year; now it's about impossible. I can get it locally because my Ace store stocks it, but in Billings, Mont. or Sheridan, Wyo.? Not so much. I also bought a few boxes of 125-grain .30-30 for fire forming, in case I couldn't find brass. So, I began several years ago buying reloading components when I saw them.

If the government, either thru Presidential Executive Order, or Act of Congress, makes any one of the components of ammunition essentially unavailable thru taxes or prohibition, the entire reloading industry and hobby are obviated. Our various weapons will become really

awkward clubs. That won't do very much at all for being able to defend one's person or family or property but it would essentially obviate the 2nd Amendment, because the "well-regulated militia" wouldn't be able to keep its skills sharp.

The above is a really ugly situation and our best chance right now for sanity in government is the Convention of States. Let us pray the CoS can happen before

the Republic has completely flushed itself down the loo.

Mike Bell

Yep, it's an ugly situation all around. In talks with component and powder manufacturers, they might even be more "underwater" than the gun makers. Everybody is reloading nowadays and the shortages just keep getting worse. I needed a pound of powder for an article and reached out to someone who is very high up in a company and HE couldn't get his hands on one bottle!

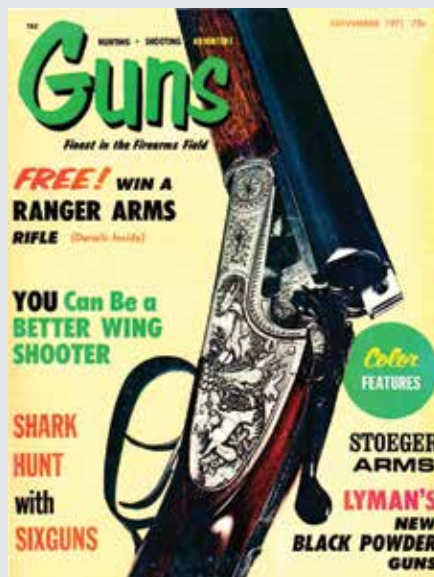
We'll see what happens but I'm not entirely hopeful for at least the next two years ... —BW

OOPSY OF THE MONTH

When I downloaded the November 1970 edition, I found it to actually be the November 1971 edition. While I enjoyed it, I would still like to have the November 1970 edition. Any chance of a correction?

Keith Halliday

We'll get it fixed shortly. Our computer experts must have been salivating over a new gun the day they were linking up back issues. —BW 



LATE, LATE FOR A VERY IMPORTANT DATE BUT, IT'S NOT OUR FAULT!

Please forgive me — I wanted to have this column done in time for last month's issue, but I was running behind.

In this regard, has anyone else noticed a trip to the range, hunting, fishing or outdoors adventure in general almost always involves walking in the door at home many hours after the promised return time?

FACTS ARE FACTS

It seems a curious fact but is an iron-clad truth nonetheless. No matter how many pounds of intention you apply to the matter, you will inadvertently return long after the appointed hour even if you have a wedding or funeral to attend. In my case, there is no doubt someday I'll come rushing into the chapel, reeking of gun solvent and arms full of shooting bags and empty brass, before dropping everything at the feet of the Minister and climbing into the casket with apologies to all.

Realization of this problem came as I was once again dashing home this week, feeling guilty and driving at an excessive speed in a vain effort to locate a spot where I had a decent cellular phone signal to offer yet another long-distance excuse to my wife. For the umpteenth time, I had made iron-clad promises to return at a certain time yet slid into the driveway over an hour late to a dinner of hot tongue and cold shoulder.

The problem not only affects Your Faithful Correspondent but also afflicts those of my small social circle. It remains a matter of conjecture if this is actually our fault or some other malevolent natural force of the outdoors universe. My wife has a wild theory on the matter, but I won't share the semi-coherent ramblings of someone who builds a 36-hour time cushion around all social engagements.

This problem is a universal relationship complaint because many times I have called a friend's home in the evening, only to hear

something along the lines of "Oh, he went to the gun shop this afternoon and was supposed to be home two hours ago. I've been in labor for over 12 hours, so I would expect him any minute." In this particular case, my friend made it back in time for the christening so I really don't understand why his wife was so upset.

FULL CIRCLE

It's interesting to know this phenomenon doesn't just apply to actual shooting and outdoor ventures, but simply the act of discussing them. In the last few years as Lord High Protector of this esteemed magazine,



I've been forced to confront a major failure from my past in this area.

Prior to *GUNS*, I was a freelance writer of almost four decades, meaning I was entirely on my own to meet deadlines. In this regard I failed early and often, as our esteemed AmericanCop.com editor Denny Hansen will wholly attest. Denny was my editor at the now-defunct *SWAT Magazine* and used to be carefree and joyous before offering me a monthly column. I know Denny was shocked if I came within weeks of a deadline and he once fainted dead away when my column arrived only a day late.

Denny wasn't the only one however. I used to be the proprietor of a small outdoor website and one time I was

sitting at the computer when I was suddenly overcome with blurred vision, shortness of breath and trembling of my lower lip. At that moment, I realized I had actually finished a story ahead of my own self-imposed deadline and it felt wildly foreign, as if I had somehow shredded the time/space continuum. Fortunately, I had to test a gun at the range the next day so my ensuing article was late and everything returned to normal.

REASON #1

The most common root cause of all this sporting lateness is the "one more" syndrome. This hindrance is a manifestation of the fact most of the world keeps going on forever, without any clear-cut demarcations such as the foul lines in baseball. Men, especially, need boundaries.

The return time of any shooting or outdoor trip is usually decided upon prior to the jaunt and earnestly shared with those whom it will affect. However, at the end of the day, we are sorely tempted because we need just one more string to fire to tighten up the group, there's one more prime thicket to hunt or we see the perfect sunken log we *know* is holding a monster trout.

These last-ditch attempts often stretch into minutes, sometimes hours and occasionally weeks as we endeavor to end our adventure on a positive note. In fact, I've used this well-known natural fact as a no-fail hunting and fishing technique. Whenever you're getting skunked, grandly announce to the world, "I'd like to keep fishing (or hunting, shooting, etc.) but the Swedish Bikini Team is waiting on me at the hotel and I simply must leave!"

Just make sure you're ready because the sky will soon be filled with birds, the prairies will be black with antelope and fish will fight to commit piscatorial suicide on your lure.

I've also noted a parallel phenomenon on the shooting range — if you're at the range and running ahead of schedule, you'll run out of bullets in plenty of time to pack up, mess around a bit and head home. But, if you're operating under a hard deadline because you're scheduled to perform brain surgery or launch a major

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