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NUMBER THREE IS NUMBER ONE!

Roy Huntington: I very much enjoyed your article on the Schofield No. 3 replica. I think many others did, also. I like the fast ejecting, but not the slow loading so I made an \$8 experiment. I purchased an HKS 25-5 speed loader to see if the cartridges would align with the cylinder holes. Even though HKS did not make the 25-5 for the Schofield, the speed loader worked slicker than horse poop in the rain. Attaching the loaded speed loader to the leather cartridge loop, by inserting one bullet in allows me to hang four speed loaders on my leather belt. Attaching a speed loader to the leather gun belt by bisecting six rounds with the leather belt and pushing down, with a wiggle, also works but I like that technique second best. Great fun in the Texas sun.

William Rogers

FITZ BY ANY OTHER NAME

My question is about an article done by John Taffin about Fitz Revolvers (*GUNS* August 2021). I came across an older S&W at a gun shop I had to pick up. As far as I could determine, these weren't done by Smith and where it came from cannot be determined. The S&W historical society could not help and S&W did not know. It seems only Colts were used and this is a .38 special Smith made between 1942 and 1945.

Jerry Ladicicco



The photos are clearly a Fitz-style sixgun done on an S&W platform. As the idea wasn't patented or produced commercially (to my knowledge), theoretically you could have made one using any double-action as the starting point. Maybe an eagle-eyed reader will have more insight! —BW

GET OFF THE FLOOR!

Once again I am amazed by the genius of Dr. Dabbs in your August issue. When I saw his article on the HEX Dragonfly and possible Springfield Armory lingerie, I was hooked. Then when I saw him wield the names Jane Austen and John Rambo in the same sentence I was speechless. Only Dr. Dabbs could link those two together for posterity. I prostrate myself before him. Please note above said prostration is from respect and not for medical examination.

M.C. McClintock



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THE FINEST IN THE FIREARMS FIELD SINCE 1955

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PERFECT PACKIN' PISTOL PART VII THE .41 MAGNUM

We continue our look at the Personification of the Perfect Packin' Pistol using these words from the Taffin Dictionary of Sixgunning: "Perfect Packin' Pistol is a title given to a sixgun or semi-auto 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."

The seventh and last cartridge to be looked at from S&W, chambered in a swing-out cylinder double-action revolver, is the .41 Magnum. This was the last practical magnum cartridge for chambering in a Perfect Packin' Pistol. S&W would come up with two more magnums, the .500 and the .460; however both of these cartridges require extra large frames — in fact Smith & Wesson calls them X-frames. They are too large to be carried comfortably on a daily basis.

In 1968 I had a brand-new Ford F250 V-8 four-on-the-floor PU with a camper shell. I loaded our three pre-school kids in the truck and I set out on a 2,500 mile adventure to take them back to visit their two sets of grandparents for the summer. Diamond Dot and I took the opportunity we had — with the kids gone — to spend some time camping. We

loaded the pick-up with groceries, sleeping bags, an assortment of sixguns and headed out with no particular destination in mind except one. We would stop in Salmon, Idaho and visit Elmer Keith. We spent a day with him and his wife and that evening he turned on the news and said to me about CBS, it was the "Communist Broadcasting System." What would he say today?

ELMER'S .41?

Elmer was well known for packing a 4" .44 Special until 1956 when he changed to a 4" .44 Magnum. However, I found him carrying something else. It still had a 4" barrel and still had carved ivory stocks and was still carried in his favorite holster, except this time the chambering was .41 Magnum, another cartridge he had a lot to do with being introduced. I just happened to take along my 4" .44 Magnum, with the belt and holster I had designed and fabricated myself. He made me feel awfully good when he said how much he liked my design and how just about everything was right with it. I still have that rig, however the belt has mysteriously shrunk over the passing of 50+ years.

S&W was the first company to market a .41 Magnum sixgun. In his book, *History of*



The now Classic 4" Model 57 .41 Magnum. Ammo is still factory loaded.

Smith & Wesson, Roy Jinks says of the .41 Magnum: "The .41 Magnum was developed in 1963 to fire a cartridge between the .357 Magnum and .44 Magnum. When the cartridge was developed, Smith & Wesson manufactured a companion revolver to its famous Model 29. It was identical to the Model 29, except that it chambered the .41 Magnum caliber."

From the very beginning the Model 57 (.41 Magnum) was available in both blue or nickel and also with a 4" barrel. The Model 57 is a popular handgun with connoisseurs of the cartridge; however it has never had the following of the .44 Magnum. Not even close! It was a cartridge needed to fill a gap, but for some unknown reason, this model never received the recognition it deserves.

In addition to the beautifully finished and adjustable-sighted Model 57, S&W also came up with the fixed sight Model 58 .41 Military and Police. The first test gun in this caliber was built on the frame of a .38/44 Heavy Duty revolver; however the production gun did not have the desired enclosed ejector rod of the Heavy Duty. The Model 58 was developed primarily for law-enforcement use; therefore, when it was introduced, it was only manufactured with a 4" barrel having either a blue or nickel finish. Had it been offered with the enclosed ejector rod I think it would have been much more popular with outdoorsmen.

In his autobiography *Hell, I Was There*, Elmer Keith shares his part in bringing the .41 Magnum to fruition: "... While we were attending the NRA convention in Washington, D.C., Bill Jordan, the old border patrolman, came to me and says, 'Elmer, you've got the .44 Magnum. How about getting a .41 Magnum for the police and sheriff's departments over the country that don't care for the recoil of the big .44?' I told him, 'Bill, there never was a better time. All the arms company heads are here as well as



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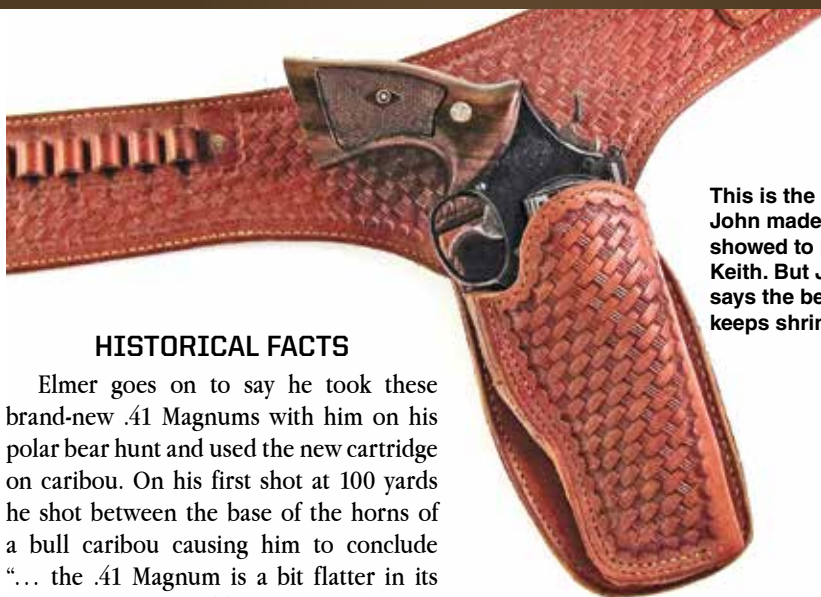
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"I asked them for a .41 Magnum, case length to be the same as the .44 Magnum, bullet diameter to be 0.410" so that no old .38-40s or .41 Long Colts could ever be revamped to handle the larger bullet as they go around 0.403". I wanted a 220-grain bullet. Doug Hellstrom also insisted on the 0.410" diameter to preclude the possibility of a cartridge ever being used in the old .41 guns that would not take its pressure. Earl Larsen of Remington could make the ammunition if the other boys would make the guns. Doug Hellstrom and Bill Gunn of Smith & Wesson agreed to bring out the gun ...

Some six months later just as Charlie Shedd and I were leaving for the Arctic on our polar bear hunt, a pair of 4" Smith & Wesson Magnums, with target sights and triggers trimmed to 3/8", the hammers cut back about 1/4", arrived. They had rosewood grips and my name on the side plates of the pair, consecutively numbered, No. 1 and No. 2."



This is the rig John made and showed to Elmer Keith. But John says the belt keeps shrinking!

HISTORICAL FACTS

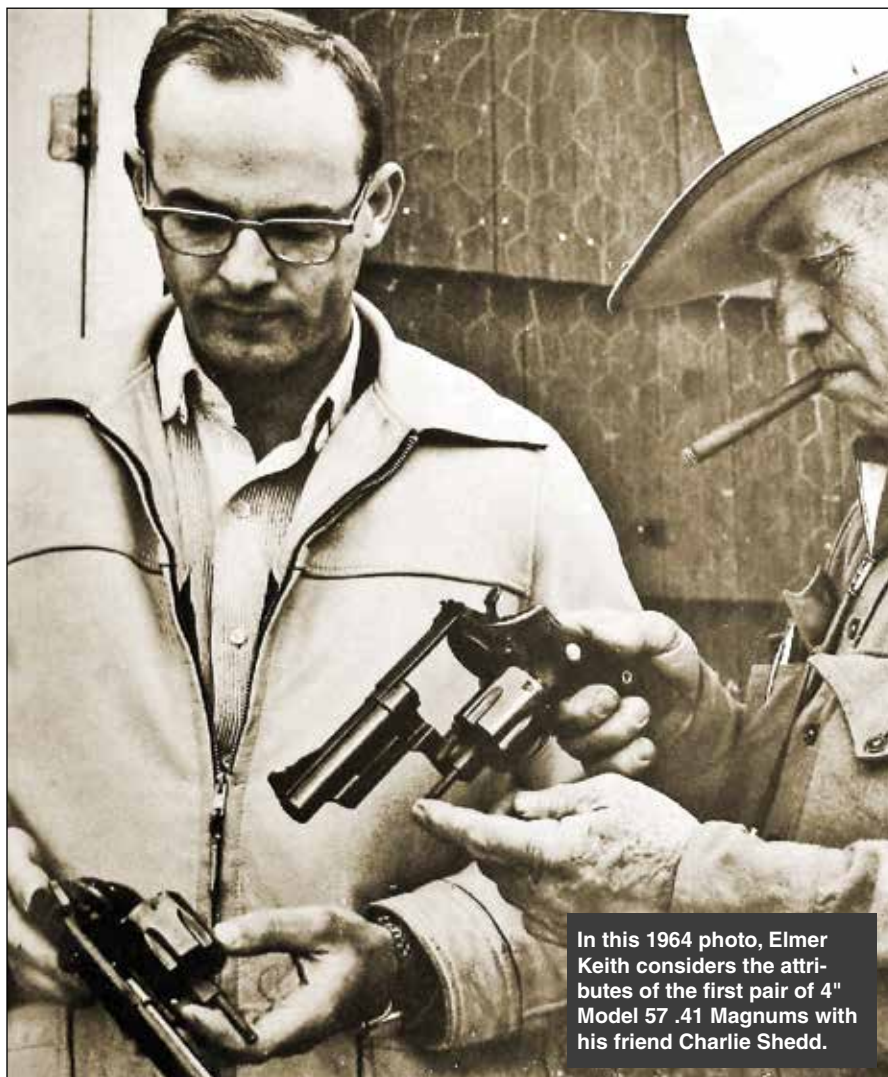
Elmer goes on to say he took these brand-new .41 Magnums with him on his polar bear hunt and used the new cartridge on caribou. On his first shot at 100 yards he shot between the base of the horns of a bull caribou causing him to conclude "... the .41 Magnum is a bit flatter in its trajectory than the .44 Magnum I was used to." I have found the same thing as Elmer in that the .41 Magnum is considerably flatter shooting than the .44 Magnum when shooting both out to 300 yards.

In his book, *No Second Place Winner*, Bill Jordan shares about the .41 Magnum: "... regarding all the writers who have

climbed on the bandwagon and, I am sure, will now make load claims to have been the Pappy or Mammy of this load, I wish to make a statement! I tagged along with Elmer Keith and said 'amen' while Elmer cornered the firearms and ammunition people, individually and collectively, at that 1963 NRA members meeting in Washington and got commitments that actually started the ball rolling ... So, regardless of who set the actual dimensions and specifications, it was that grand old man of the shooting game who did the work that made this load a reality."

Bill Jordan, Elmer Keith and Skeeter Skelton all saw the .41 as a better choice for law officers over what was then available. However, it was not to be and very few departments ever adopted it. The standard S&W .41 Magnum would last just under 30 years. In 1986 the stainless steel counterpart of the Model 57, the Model 657 arrived, and before the end of the last century the .41 Magnum would be offered in the Mountain Gun configuration.

It took me a while to adopt the .41 Magnum. Although I came to know the .41 Magnum late, about 15 years after it first arrived, I finally fell for the S&W .41 Magnum and eventually wound up with a pair of 4" Model 57s stocked with exotic wood. At the time I would've said the .41 Magnum with full house loads had less recoil than the .44 Magnum loaded the same. At this stage of my life felt recoil is a real problem and I can't tell any difference between the two of them. However, I do know both of them are much more controllable and easier shooting with loads in the 900 to 1,000 fps range. And either will handle any situation like any good Perfect Packin' Pistol should!



In this 1964 photo, Elmer Keith considers the attributes of the first pair of 4" Model 57 .41 Magnums with his friend Charlie Shedd.



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OLD FAVORITES BITTERSWEET AT TIMES?

Thomas Wolfe titled his famous 1940 novel, *You Can't Go Home Again*. I tell my students, when common sense is involved, there are times you can be wearing your Self-Defense Coach hat or a Life Coach hat, and find yourself giving the same advice. Under both hats, I've found sometimes you can go home again — but it's bittersweet, and may not be quite the same.

I've met the longtime target shooter who started with Dad's old Colt Woodsman he eventually inherited. When he got serious about competition he worked his way up through the exotics to settle on an expensive Pardini .22, yet still took the Woodsman to the range for old times' sake. And the cop who had to be dragged away from his familiar revolver when his department went to those new-fangled odd-o-matics, only to switch back to the round gun at retirement. Both seem to live happily ever after.

CASE IN POINT

I bonded with the 1911 .45 pistol in 1960 at the age of 12. I had been reading Jeff Cooper's essays on that pistol and it was as if a messiah had risen in the West. Dad, who owned autos but preferred to carry revolvers, indulged me, and soon I was carrying one loaded and concealed while working part time in the family jewelry

store. It was a 1918 production Colt — the original 1911 configuration — and I still own it. Soon it was joined by others. In time, I carried it as a police service pistol and as a personal defense gun. I shot 1911s in bulls-eye and PPC, IPSC and USPSA and IDPA, Bianchi Cup and more. I shot one or

another 1911 .45 exclusively at the National Tactical Invitational for six years straight. I won a lot of stuff with those guns.

Time went on. After being an instructor for a while, I made it a habit to teach with a different gun on each training tour, just to stay competent with everything. After all, the students all brought different guns so it made sense to stay on top of each system.

In recent years, I grew complacent in that regard. Instead of changing each tour, it became seasonal, with the occasional exception of a gun I was testing for an article. In seasons when I taught a lot in 10-round limit venues, a revolver or a single stack like the 1911 made sense. Other seasons it would be a traditional double action Beretta or SIG, and more often than anything else in the time of striker-fired pistols, one or another GLOCK. In 2017, the long-dormant Second Chance match resurfaced as "The Pin Shoot" every June, and it seemed logical to go back to the 1911 for that. To re-familiarize with the 1911 .45 beforehand, that has become my "second quarter teaching gun."



1911s come in all sizes. These, all Springfields, are a 5" Range Office (top left), a Plaxco-comped 1911-A1 (right) and snubby EMP 9mm (bottom).



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Strapping one back on for the duration, I got that “bitter-sweet” taste again.

THE SWEET AND THE BITTER

I’m reminded 1911s come in all flavors. Mine range from 3" to 6" barrels, and I own them in calibers .22, .38, .45, 9mm, 10mm and .45 Winchester Magnum. In the time of the ammo drought and inflation, I’m glad to have .22 conversion units. When I recently had to fly to California, whose Draconian laws no longer allow out-of-staters to purchase ammo there, I figured 115-grain 9mm would let me carry twice as many rounds as 230-grain .45 within the airlines’ 11-lb. ammo limit, so I took a 9mm Springfield Ronin.

With its approximately 18-degree grip-to-barrel angle, the 1911 points perfectly for me. Browning’s design genius — or decades of habituation? Probably a mix on that one. There’s no slimmer, serious .45 for inside the waistband carry, and that, plus nostalgia, have always made something

inside me purr a happy “Aahhh” when I strap one on. The logic-mandated on-safe carry adds a layer of safety and is proven to buy time in a struggle over a weapon. The low bore axis minimizes muzzle jump, load for load. And of course there’s the short, sweet trigger pull.

But, there’s some bitter with the sweet. Arthritis has both tenderized my gun hand, and limited its digits’ range of movement. I can no longer dump the magazine as quickly and surely with my right thumb as in yesteryear, slowing my reloads perceptibly. A full-power .45’s recoil will make the hand ache the next morning after a day with a lot of shooting.

A shoulder holster, like this Simple Shoulder Holster from Diamond D, can help tote a big gun, like a 5" 1911, without putting weight on the hips.



Some deteriorating spinal discs have put pressure on the sciatic nerve, with sciatica symptoms on the right hip where I’ve always carried. However, the slimness factor I mentioned earlier helps when I don my now-orthopedic shoulder holster, a well-worn Bianchi X-15, which keeps a full-size 1911 .45 discreetly concealed.

Gun-wise, at least, it seems to me, Thomas Wolfe wasn’t 100% right. 

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Henry's Big Boy Classic and the Uberti Cattleman both fire the powerful .45 Colt cartridge.

PISTOL CALIBER CARBINES RE-INVENTING THE WHEEL

In the last several years pistol caliber carbines (PCC) have become all the rage. Facebook and other social media sources have several groups related to them and all of the major competitive organizations have added a special category for them and accessories are plentiful.

If one cares to be technical the first rifle/carbine to use pistol ammunition was the Model 1873 Winchester. Chambered in .38-40 or .44-40 it was appreciated by lawmen, outlaws, cowboys and anyone else who ventured away from readily available supplies as the cartridges would work in either their rifles or revolvers.

Today the term pistol caliber carbine is generally used to designate a semi-auto carbine using pistol ammunition, most commonly 9mm Luger, .40 S&W or .45 ACP. Less common are .380 and 357 SIG chamberings.

EARLY 'MODERN'

My first PCC was a now-discontinued Marlin Camp-45 using the same magazine as a

1911 pistol. Another model, the Camp-9, used a magazine compatible with the S&W Model 59 series of auto pistols. Both were reliable utilitarian carbines. Production ran from 1985-1999 and some agencies even experimented with using them as patrol carbines.

I bought another PCC around 20 years ago; an MGI Marck-15 old school AR-15 type carbine. Bought while the 1994 Assault Weapons Ban was still in place, its 16" barrel is not threaded for any type of muzzle device. Unlike many other PCCs currently produced, it uses a proprietary 32-round Colt magazine. Like most pistol caliber carbines, it uses a blow-back action.

Many pistol caliber carbines use the same magazine a manufacturer uses for their pistols. This is largely aimed at the law enforcement market as well as private citizens, with the thought magazine compatibility between the two platforms is very important.

In another life I was a member of my department's SWAT team. Members of the

team carried their personal 1911s and were issued an H&K MP5 and later an AR-15. The thought of compatible magazines never crossed our minds.

RUGER DOES IT

Currently one of the most popular PCCs, due to both availability and price point, is the Ruger PC Carbine.

This handy carbine's 16.1" barrel has a threaded muzzle for different muzzle devices including flash hiders, compensators and suppressors. The Ruger is available in different models including versions with a full barrel shroud and various stock colors. Mine is a TALO Distributor Exclusive in Flat Brown Earth.

The Ruger PC Carbine is a takedown carbine making it handy to store or transport. Takedown is as simple as locking the bolt back and verifying the rifle is unloaded, pushing a recessed lever, twisting the subassemblies and pulling them apart.

A dead-blow action features a custom tungsten dead blow weight shortening bolt travel and reducing felt recoil and muzzle rise.

A reversible magazine release and



The Ruger PC Carbine will handle magazines from different Ruger handguns as well as GLOCK mags — smart. And they're fun to shoot!



GUNS Your next gun story begins here!



MGI Marck-15 old school AR-15 type 9mm carbine — 20-year-old tech.

reversible charging handle to support left- or right-handed use enables one-handed control manipulation while maintaining a proper firing grip.

In some people's opinion one of the best features is it uses Ruger SR-series or Security-9 magazines even though the SR-series releases from a notch in the front of the mag and the Security-9 releases from the side. Clever engineers at Ruger.

Ruger recognized the most popular pistols are the GLOCK 9mms so the carbine includes a magazine well accommodating GLOCK magazines as well. Switching the mag wells can be accomplished easily in less than five minutes. Those engineers were a busy lot.

The suggested retail for the Ruger PC Carbine starts at \$649, but I've seen them for sale on some websites for as low as \$429, so shop around.

Parenthetically, some dealers trying to cash in on the present unavailability of firearms have jacked the price up to around \$900. If and when this firearms famine ceases, we'll remember who they are.

As you can tell by the space I gave to it, the Ruger PC Carbine is currently my favorite, but there are many manufacturers to choose from, including H&K, Wilson Combat, Beretta, CZ, CMMG, PSA and many others.

Shop wise and decide which best suits your personal tastes and budget.

Ruger.com



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THE .32 WCF DUKE RE-THINKS HIS PLINKING GUNS

Of all the popular Old West cartridges the .32 WCF/.32-20 has lacked popularity with me. I don't know why exactly. Perhaps it was because I never had a raging miniature poodle that needed shooting. Or maybe it was because the concept of mating such a tiny cartridge to such heavy guns as Colt SAA revolvers or Winchester lever guns seemed illogical.

Whatever the reason, while I've owned dozens of big bore Colt SAAs and likewise with Winchester (and replica) lever guns, I've owned precisely four .32-20s. One was a Colt SAA with 4-3/4" barrel, one was an Italian SAA replica with 7-1/2" barrel, one was an original Winchester Model 1873 on which someone had shortened the barrel and magazine tube to 20", and one was a Japanese made Browning replica of Winchester's Model 53 with 22" barrel.

All were decent guns. None stuck

around very long. Now in 2021 matters have changed. First, in 2020 I found a 3rd Generation Colt SAA with 7-1/2" barrel made about 10 years ago. As with all Colt SAAs I've seen in recent years it's a beautifully crafted revolver. Because its previous owner decided to "erase" its color case hardening due to some surface rust it was priced very attractively. Its blued surfaces were untouched. I'm going to have it re-color case hardened but that will be a future column.

That Colt has been a fine shooter and just plain fun for popping empty soda cans and chunks of firewood. I shoot on my own property so the cans are policed and the splintered firewood left to make its way back to nature. Over the winter and spring of 2021 I've loaded hundreds of .32-20s, all with cast bullets either of my own making or commercially cast. Luckily when I launched

on my full auto kick a dozen years back I laid in thousands of suitable primers for each purchase. Therefore current shortages have not plagued me.

PLINKERS

Mostly .22 rimfires have been the ultimate plinking guns, but this shortage has raised ammo prices significantly. The .32-20 might actually be cheaper now. A powder charge of 3.0 grains of Bullseye will net 2,333 loads from a 1-lb. can! Another fine load is 3.5 grains of Titegroup. That makes for 2,000 loads per pound. Most .32-20 bullets run from 100 to 120 grains. That's 70 to 58 bullets per pound of lead alloy.

There was one problem when I returned to .32-20 reloading. My RCBS and Lyman .32-20 molds had disappeared since last used in the 1990s. Have you tried to buy RCBS or Lyman molds during this time of shortages? None available! However, I did find an outfit called MP Molds that had in stock a brass four-cavity "convertible" mold capable of making 115-grain hollow point



Duke's .32-20 Colt SAA and Cimarron Arms Short Rifle. Duke pronounced them great fun to shoot!

This lineup of cartridges contains the Winchester Centerfire pistol size cartridges that were chambered in Models 1873 and 1992 lever guns in the late 1800s. From left: .44-40, .38-40, .32-20 and .25-20. The latter one was only in Model 1892s.

or 120-grain solid bullets by changing a few parts. Of all places it was in Slovenia! I prepared for a long wait but it arrived in one week. Talk about service! Closer to home in Utah I found a company named Arsenal Molds. They offered a clone of RCBS's 98-grain SWC so I ordered a brass four-cavity mold there too. It also arrived in a week. I was set to go.

THE BUG STRIKES – AGAIN

With enthusiasm building for .32-20s I just had to start looking at lever guns. I didn't want original Winchester or Marlins unless I could examine their bores for condition, and unfortunately Montana's gun shows have been curtailed severely by COVID-19 problems. So I turned to the Internet searching for Italian Winchester replicas. What I desired was a '73 carbine because it would be lighter. Even on the Internet they weren't all that plentiful.

One afternoon while Yvonne was in a store and I was sitting outside with my iPad, I located a few Cimarron .32-20 carbines and short rifles. Before my wife returned I had

bought and paid for one. Only when it arrived did it dawn on me I had bought a short rifle instead of a saddle ring carbine. Short rifles are configured as normal length rifles but only have 20" barrels. When I told Yvonne of my mistake she said, "Duke, sometimes I think you need constant adult supervision."

Anyway, the Cimarron .32-20 also shoots fine. With the mentioned powder charges

and bullets my 7-1/2" Colt SAA gives about 850 fps and the 20"-barreled lever gun breaks 1,200 fps. I'm having great fun with both.

PS: I haven't told Yvonne yet but I just ordered a Cimarron .32-20 saddle ring carbine. Shhh ...

Cimarron-Firearms.com



Duke got this four-cavity .32 caliber bullet mold from Arsenal Molds in Utah.

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TOURING SNAKESVILLE AND A POINTED ENDING ...

It was the Spring flood season in the Mississippi Delta. For me and my friend that meant exploring. We launched the johnboat provisioned for the day with a couple of candy bars, a Coke apiece, and my friend's recurve bow. We hadn't quite graduated up to firearms, so the bow was for defense against bears, communists, Yetis, etc. Then as now I never venture into the wilderness unarmed.

I manned the front of the boat, while my buddy took the stern. That meant I was the engine and he the rudder. The guy up front is pretty much just propulsion. The rearmost crewmember does the practical navigation.

The river was high and the water swift. We kept the boat between the copious willows lining the banks, but only just. Then we gathered up some undue velocity and were confronted by a most unfortunate hairpin. The bow of the little aluminum boat, the end containing yours truly, slammed indelicately into the brush. The force of the water pressing in behind secured the boat in place.

I instinctively leaned backwards until I was on my back and pressed down by the weight of the surrounding copious brush. As spiders aplenty and similar creepy crawlies call such stuff home I explained in perhaps less than civil tones how much I coveted extrication. That's when I saw him.

I have known a great many folks who don't so much mind poisonous snakes. They will prattle on for days regarding their many manifest virtues ranging from eating rodents to ably making more baby snakes. I simply must disagree.

I have had more than a few bad experiences with these creatures and have seen the aftereffects of a proper pit viper bite. I take my cues from Adam and Eve and harbor an almost insensate hatred of the things. Something else can eat the rodents. I think water moccasins are the reason God made shotguns. At this delicate juncture, however, my friend and I seemed to be temporarily between shotguns.

He was draped across a handful of brushy limbs staring me in the eye from a slant range of perhaps eight inches, his eyes and mine locked in a rictus most desperate.

I have no clear recollection how big he was. Through the subjective lens of history I'd conservatively estimate about 12 feet. Realistically, I don't care. He was huge, and I was well within his effective range. Were he to strike it would be into my eyeball. I had little interest in that.

THEN ... NOTHING HAPPENED

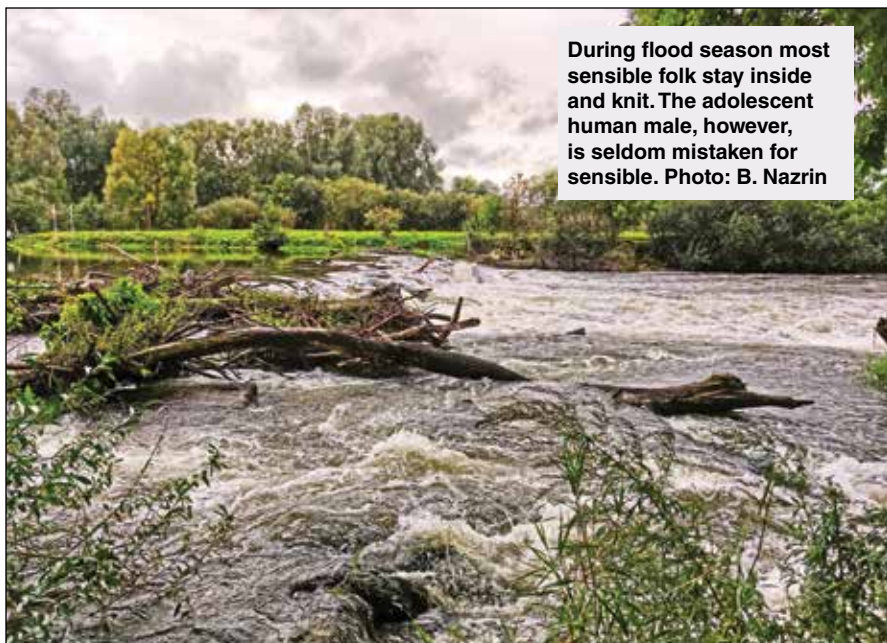
I explained to my pal in dulcet tones it seemed I was now sharing a certain intimate space with an enormous venomous serpent.

I then further explained how grateful I might be should he stop whatever it was he was doing and remove the boat from this slithery gent's domicile. Throughout it all I kept my eyes locked with those of the snake, his sinister vertical pupils most obvious at such close range. For what seemed an eternity — literally nothing happened.

I caught movement out of the periphery of my vision and glanced up. To my horror there was a rusty broadhead perched some 3" from the side of my face. I contorted backward to see my friend balanced precariously above me, his old recurve bow now fully drawn. Before I could voice my simply breathtaking displeasure with this turn of



Agkistrodon piscivorus — Water Moccasins. I've stepped on them before while out walking in the woods and seen what they can do to a human leg when vigorously envenomated. Will hates these guys. Photo: Meg Jerrard



During flood season most sensible folk stay inside and knit. The adolescent human male, however, is seldom mistaken for sensible. Photo: B. Nazrin



Archery is a simply splendid way to kill a lazy Saturday afternoon. A bow and arrow make for a suboptimal snake defense tool, however. Photo: Annie Spratt

events he released the arrow and the world exploded.

There was thrashing and splashing aplenty as I snatched up my paddle and clawed the boat out of the giant brush pile. As I restarted my heart I shared some choice words with my buddy. He said he wanted to retrieve his arrow. I told him to be my guest. I wasn't myself voluntarily re-entering Snakesville to do so. I reversed the boat in the current and shoved the stern in this time. About 6" of the arrow twitched above the roiling water, the fletching moving rhythmically with the current.

My pal gently snatched up the tail of the shaft and retrieved it. Impaled upon the end was a water moccasin about the size of my arm. It seemed the arrow had hit the snake in his open mouth, pinned him to the creek bed through his lower jaw, and quite effectively stopped the threat. We dragged the big snake up onto the bank and beat him to death with a log.

The geometry of the thing told a fascinating tale. The bolt had skewered the big snake through his open mouth as he prepared to bite me in the face. Had my pal's aim not been true I might have yet ended up even less attractive to look upon than I am now. God clearly watches out for young boys.

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WEIGHT	24" 10.5 LBS	24" 10.5 LBS
LENGTH	20" BARREL: 39.5" 22" BARREL: 41.5" 24" BARREL: 43.5"	20" BARREL: 39.5" 22" BARREL: 41.5" 24" BARREL: 43.5"

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HANDLOADING THE .38 SPECIAL: THE POCKET PISTOLS

The modern era of the 2" revolvers/pocket pistol/snub gun/belly gun began in 1926 when Colt introduced the Detective Special by trimming the barrel of their Police Positive .38 Special back to 2" while keeping the six-shot cylinder. At first they maintained the square butt configuration of the Police Positive, however they soon saw the wisdom of round-buttting the grip frame for not only better concealment but also to protect the linings of suit coats. Growing up in the pre-television days, we looked forward to Saturday afternoon matinees and they always featured B-Western movies where the sixgun of choice was the Colt Single Action.

At the same time there were also many detective movies being made and in those the heroes and villains alike were mostly armed

with Colt Detective Specials. I still vividly remember Alan Ladd having a Colt Detective Special stored in a special hiding place in his car. In 1950 Colt lightened the Detective Special by using an alloy frame and the result was the Colt Cobra that was the same size as the Detective Special and also maintained the six-shot cylinder.

Smith & Wesson's M&P of 1899 went through various changes and by the time they reached the Model 1905 4th Change they began, but only rarely, to offer a 2" version. During WWII they also, again rarely, offered the 2" Victory Model with its wartime finish. Some 300 of these went to the Department of Defense. After the war there were more 2" M&P .38 Specials offered. During the 1930s S&W offered their smallish I-Frame 2" pocket pistol in both .32 and .38 S&W (not Special).



In 1950 S&W slightly enlarged the I-Frame and the result was the quintessential pocket revolver, the J-Frame, five-shot .38 Special. At a convention of police chiefs that year a contest was held to name the new revolver and "Chief's Special" was chosen. A few years later this would be dubbed the Model 36. In the mid-1950s three more versions of the Chief's Special arrived, the Airweight/Model 37, the Bodyguard/Model 38 and the Centennial/Model 40. In 1965 Smith & Wesson brought forth the crown jewel of their pocket pistols with the .38 Chief's Special constructed of stainless steel, as the Model 60. It proved to be the beginning of a long line of stainless steel revolvers and semi-automatics from a long list of manufacturers.

LOADING

My bullets of choice for .38 Special Pocket Pistols are cast bullets from Lyman molds, #358477, a 158-grain SWC and the #358311 — the standard round-nosed .38 Special bullet. I also use a lot of Oregon Trail bullets, especially their 158-grain SWC and their 148-grain WC. I feel especially comfortable with the latter bullet with its full blunt nose hitting the target full on.

I do use Unique for 2" .38 Special loads but my main powder of choice for standard loads is Bullseye. My standard load for Bullseye is 3.5 grains with Bullseye and 5.0 grains with Unique. The latter load gives around 75 more fps velocity. It seems apropos to use Bullseye since both the cartridge and powder are more than a century old, dating back to prior to the turn of the 20th Century. As a matter of fact, the first smokeless powder load for the .38 Special in 1899 used 3.6 grains of Bullseye.

With the two Lyman cast bullets my standard load is 3.5 grains of Bullseye. At the present time my standard load for the Oregon Trail bullets is 2.9 grains of the same powder. I would like to be able to tell you how I went through all the scientific evidence to come up with a charge such as 2.9, however what actually happened is I was loading a large batch of these bullets and at the first setting of my RCBS Powder Measure it dropped 2.9 grains of Bullseye so I simply stayed with it.

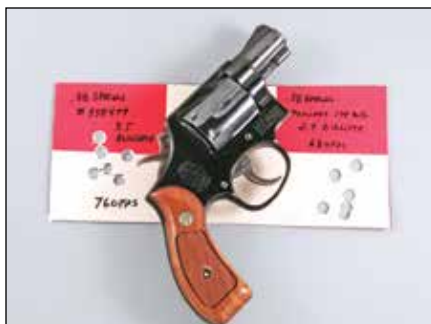
In the past, perhaps before I knew better, I've used much heavier loads in my Chief's Special. Elmer Keith pointed out these were extremely strong guns as with their five-shot cylinder the bolt notch was in between chambers so there is no weak spot there. The cylinder also filled out the

frame with very little barrel protruding back to the frame in front of the cylinder. In an emergency I would use heavy loads if it were all I had, however perhaps I'm wiser today or just more careful and I stay with standard loads like those listed here.

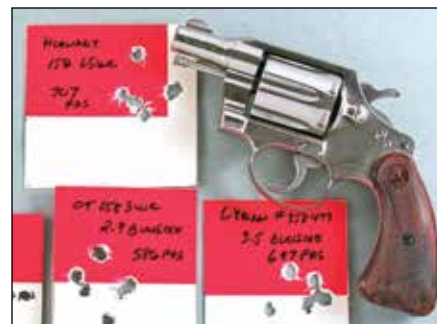
MEDIUM FRAME LOADS

In addition to these standard-sized pocket pistols both Colt and S&W have offered medium-frame .38 Specials. Colt very rarely issued the Official Police with a 2" barrel while S&W did the same with their Military & Police/Model 10 as well as the Airweight version, the Model 12. In addition to all of these classic pocket pistols, there are dozens of currently produced 2" .38 Specials from not only S&W, but also Charter Arms, Taurus and Harpers Ferry. Some of the newer models are also rated for +P loads.

For many years I carried a big bore single action or double action sixgun, or a semi-auto pistol. They were always comforting, although not always comfortable. However, at this stage of my life I'm more interested in being comfortable than



S&W's Model 12 (above left) is the Airweight version of the M&P .38 Special, holding six shots as opposed to the J-Frame's five. If you're not hitting well, watch your trigger control. Here's a Colt Detective Special (above, right) showing what can be done if you learn the ropes.



feeling comforted. I always have a J-Frame pocket pistol where it should be — in my pocket. It's either one of these classic .38 Specials, or more likely a J-Frame .357 Magnum loaded with +P .38 Specials.

There was a time in my life when I felt the need to be armed very discreetly and at the time I could not risk anyone brushing up against me and discovering the firearm. For all these years my weapon of choice was an S&W .38 Chief's Special in the top of my boot. It was certainly just as easy, actually

easier to get to it, than if it was carried in an ankle holster and was always at the ready. I was not armed for battle or to fight a war but simply for last-ditch protection for me and mine.

I not only felt comfortable — I was definitely comforted. This particular Chief's Special has been customized by Teddy Jacobsen who tuned the action and bobbed the hammer, and also finished it with MetaLife giving it a stainless steel appearance. 



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NOW IS THE TIME

Light has ever made life more interesting. In Egypt as early as 1300 B.C., polished bronze disks served as mirrors. A thousand years later, the Greek mathematician Euclid came to roughly understand *reflection*. About 14 hundred years later, an Arab named Alhazen came up with a theory describing how reflected light behaves. It was too late to save young Narcissus, who according to Greek mythology grew too fond of his own appearance in a pool. He tried to touch it, fell in and drowned.

REAL SCIENCE

Not until 1300 A.D. did glass and metal join up as a mirror, in Venice. Light drew more attention after 1590 when a Zacharias Johnson claimed to have built a microscope. Legend has it one day in 1608 Dutch spectacle-maker Hans Lippershey accidentally lined up two lenses on a distant weathervane. Suddenly the iron chicken looked as big as a cow! The next year, Italian astronomer Galileo Galilei built his first telescope. Light passing through its convex

front lens and concave rear lens converged behind the instrument. Johannes Kepler changed its design so convergence happened inside. He didn't bother to right the image with an erector because stars have neither top nor bottom. In 1668 Sir Isaac Newton designed a telescope using mirrors instead of lenses — as do observatory telescopes today.

Had the curious stopped exploring light after only 300 centuries, we'd still be held to iron sights.

Optical advances over the last 150 years coming at breakneck speed have yielded all we know as sporting optics. Meanwhile, laser-ranging binoculars date only to 1992 when the new Leica Geovid appeared in *Popular Science*. It read range to 1,500 yards, cost \$6,000 and weighed as much as a pet raccoon. In 2004 and 2005 it gave way to the Geovid B, equally capable but lighter, more compact, less expensive. An HD version with fluoride glass came in 2009. Eight years later the Geovid HD-B ranged to 2,200 yards and featured ABC — Advanced Ballistic Compensation — essentially a

computer assist tapping ballistic and environmental data to help you hit far away. Leica kept an "R" version of the Geovid as a no-frills laser-ranging binocular. With a reach of 1,200 yards, it now sells for \$1,599. The HD-R reads to 2,700 yards, costs \$2,599. Leica's Geovid 3200 HD-B (with the ABC absent in the R) adds 500 yards for \$400 more.

Magnesium frames keep weights of 8x42 and 10x42 Geovids to about 35 oz. A gentle sweep in barrel profile belies its Perger Porro-prism design. The HD-B is easy to mistake for a roof-prism glass.

As did its predecessors at their debut, the current Geovid astounds the uninitiated. Instant updates come pell-mell as distance changes with a moving animal. Pick from 12 bullet arcs on a microSD card, or use your data to adjust for a center hit. Powered by a 3-volt Lithium CR2 battery, the Geovid HD-B yields 2,000 range reads at 68 degrees F. It also registers temperature and barometric pressure and computes aim for steep shots. It's a field-worthy glass too. Lenses are phase-corrected; outside glass has Leica's AquaDura coating to shed water. Functional at temperatures down to -13 degrees F, it's submersible to depths of 16 feet. The HD-B display adjusts automatically for brightness.

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In open country, when game may appear from any direction, a laser-ranging bino can help you shoot quickly, with the correct hold for a spot-on hit.



Swarovski's 10x42 EL Range weighs only 3 oz. more than the superb EL without laser ranging.



Ranging with a bino, here Leica's Geovid, saves time when you've none to lose for an accurate shot.

Yes, the Geovid drew competition — Zeiss with its Victory RF, Swarovski with its EL Range. The Victory RF comes in 8x54 and 10x54 versions (38 oz.), as well as 8x42 and 10x42 (32 oz.). At 31 oz., the EL Range is just 3 oz. heavier than EL 10x42s without laser capability. Fast-pitch focusing brings you from near-to-far in two spins. Prisms are flat to 1/100,000 of a millimeter; angle tolerance: 1 1/2 seconds. Like the current Geovid, the EL Range is of open-bridge design.

But what if your taxes aren't all returning as COVID relief? Three grand for a new binocular could sting. Well, two new laser-ranging models halve the pain. Both come in 8x42 and 10x42 versions.

COMPETITION ARISES

SIG's Kilo 3000 BDX scales 31 oz. and ranges animals to 2,000 yards. In scan mode, it gives you four range updates per second. The CR2 battery is good for 4,000 reads. Generous 18mm eye relief makes for quick glassing in cover and reduces eye fatigue during extended sessions. An onboard ballistics calculator can send trajectory data via Bluetooth to a BDX rifle-scope, for hits with dead-on aim. Street price for the SIG Kilo 3000 BDX is about \$1,320.

Meopta's Optika LR 10x42 HD weighs 32.6 oz., reads non-reflective targets to about 2,000 yards. Similar in size and feel to the SIG, it also has a closed-bridge magnesium frame. It's electronically adept, gives



Meopta's Optika LR is compact, weighs 32.6 oz., with advanced electronics and a 2,000-yard reach.



The sophistication of laser ranging, here evident in a GSO binocular, has become more affordable.

quick reads and fetches about \$1,500. With slightly slimmer barrels than the SIG, the Meopta feels better to me in hand. But that's of little import; both have properly "grippy" armor. Both boast big ocular glass, too (22mm for the SIG, 23mm for the Meopta). Both have twist-up eye-cups. Focus wheels smoothly deliver sharp images as close as 8 feet for the SIG, 11 feet for the Meopta.

I've used these laser-ranging binoculars, as well as their more costly brethren — expected disparities are hard to spot. While a higher price can reflect better component quality and features adding versatility, not all such advantages are obvious. "Few people can see the difference between 91% and 94% light transmission," an optical engineer once told me. "Sure, you want the brightest image; but at what cost?" Also, the price of the revolutionary drops as it becomes pedestrian. Competition bleeds profit margins before it prompts cost-cutting that affects performance. High-quality images in binoculars have become ever more affordable. Laser ranging is on the same track. If you've been put off by the high price of laser range-finding binoculars, now is not the time to stop shopping!

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For teaching youngsters to shoot Dave likes this Ruger American compact model (left) in .22LR, and American Ranch model in .223. The Ranch has a 1:8 twist and can handle the long-range 75-grain Berger or Hornady loads. If you want to see a kid's face light up, watch them the first time they ring a steel plate at 500 yards.



Dave's not one of your moly-everything fans but he shoots his Ruger Hawkeye .223 rifle a lot and the moly-coated bullets do greatly increase intervals between cleanings.

IS THE .223/5.56 THE BEST ALL-AROUND RIFLE?

DAVE MAKES HIS CASE ...

Strange times, my friends, strange times indeed. Just flipping through recent news items I see lumber prices up 250% since two years ago, new vehicles sitting uncompleted due to chip shortages, commodity prices leaping up, gasoline shortages, average houses selling for one million dollars, labor shortages, rising unemployment and more.

My coping solution is to contemplate my basic rifle battery and ammunition. Come what may I can keep shooting for a long time. These are the rifles you need: a .22LR, a .223 and a .308. My choices are bolt action because I love bolt actions, but if you prefer a different action type you're still welcome at my campfire. We can discuss it while sipping coffee and gnawing on moose ribs.

If I was limited to just one rifle, I'd &*&^%\$... Sorry, I blacked out there for a second. One rifle indeed! In a fantasy world in which I owned just one rifle it would be a .223 Rem. There was a time I was indifferent to the .223, and for a time I bitterly resented it for usurping the wonderful .222 Rem. But now in both fantasy and reality the .223 Rem. rules.

The .223 Rem. of today is considerably more versatile and capable than when it first appeared more than half a century ago. Initially most commercial .223 rifles had a 1:12 or 1:14 twist. The most popular factory loads featured a 55-grain bullet at 3,200 to 3,250 fps depending on barrel length. A bit more performance than my .222 Rem. loads with a 50-grain bullet at 3,200 fps but not enough to warrant trading rifles. Military influence, not ballistics, gave the .223 an insurmountable advantage over the .222.

HOW CHANGE TRANSPIRED

To understand how we got here we need to look at its military origins. Some years ago I had the pleasure of meeting Eugene Stoner at the SHOT Show. We were able to sit down and chat for an hour or so, which I considered a privilege then and still do.

Back in the 1950s, he said, the U.S. military had just adopted the M14 rifle using

the 7.62mm cartridge, ballistically similar to the .30-06. What might be called the "Old Guard" supported the concept of powerful battle rifles and carefully aimed fire at individual targets.

Other military theorists noted enemy soldiers for the most part don't stand around in the open waiting to get shot. They hide behind things and shoot from cover. Combat in WWII and in Korea had shown the value of suppressive fire, "shoot and move," and the integration of infantry, artillery and air power.

The rifle they wanted would be lightweight, with moderate recoil, selective semi- or full-automatic fire, compact and fast-handling for house-to-house fighting and adequately powerful, using non-expanding bullets. Hmmm, you don't want much, do you? Stone said the only way he knew of to make a small non-expanding bullet behave like a bigger bullet is if it tumbles on impact. Original rifles had a 1:14 twist so bullets were just barely stable in flight, but would destabilize and tumble when they hit something.

Almost as soon as it was adopted the twist was changed to 1:12 to improve stability, which some argued also decreased effectiveness. In the '70s and '80s military users began shifting to heavier bullets for improved downrange ballistics, requiring faster barrel twists. It took a while, but faster twists eventually appeared on sporting rifles.

THE HARD FACTS

Faster twists and sleeker bullets, notably from Berger and Hornady, greatly enhance the versatility of the .223. Compare a 55-grain FMJ bullet (G1 B.C. 0.243) at 3,200 fps to a Berger VLD 80-grain bullet (G1 B.C. 0.455) at 2,750 fps. With both sighted at 200 yards, bullet drop at 600 yards is 91.5" for the 55 grain versus 82.3" for the 80 grain. Now check the 10 mph wind drift figures: 55 grain, 60.8"; 80 grain, 32.5". That nearly 50 percentage advantage in wind drift is huge. Moreover the 80-grain bullet starting out 450 fps slower reaches the 600-yard line going over 400 fps faster (1,271 55 grain, 1,680 80 grain).

So what is a fast-twist .223 good for? Training with moderate recoil and noise.



Dave's a bolt-action user by preference but admits to a soft spot for AR and Ruger Mini 14 (Ranch) rifles. A ranch rifle is on top, while below it is an early Mini 14.

Teaching new shooters the fundamentals of center fire rifles and longer range shooting. Moderate cost due to smaller bullets and powder charges. Excellent hunting performance for most varmint shooting and for deer, the most popular big-game target. Untold millions and billions of .223 and

5.56 rounds have been loaded over the past 60+ years. Even in times of chronic shortages there's a good chance of finding quality brass.

In my experience 1:9 will stabilize 70- and some 75-grain bullets, 1:8 will stabilize up to 80-grain bullets. Here's some

examples of twist rates in various rifles. The Savage Elite Precision is 1:7. Browning X-bolt, Ruger American, Sako 85 and Tikka T3X are all 1:8. Ruger's Hawkeye, Howa, most Savage models, Kimber, Steyr and Weatherby Vanguard are all 1:9. Decide what your priorities are then buy accordingly. 🦏

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THE SMITH AND WESSON 2206

SHORT-LIVED – BUT SENSATIONAL!

Will Dabbs, MD

Sound suppressors make you a better neighbor, help preserve your hearing, enhance accuracy and look cool. Hanging a decent can on the snout of your favorite gat will reliably land you dates with supermodels, regrow lost hair, add a dozen IQ points, cure malodorous feet and instantly render you muscular, svelte and handsome. Okay, so maybe none of the last bit was technically true, but you are nonetheless substantially more likely to be killed by lightning or sharks than by a sound-suppressed weapon. Second Graders ought to sell these delightful devices door to door out of sacks to raise money for the homeless.

A decent .22 rimfire suppressor is most everybody's gateway drug. Once you've realized you can drop a brick of .22 shells in your range bag in the space that formerly held your hearing protection you are invariably smitten. Finding the perfect gun to host your spiffy new can is half the fun. Tracking down the ideal .22 rimfire suppressor host became a holy crusade of sorts for me.

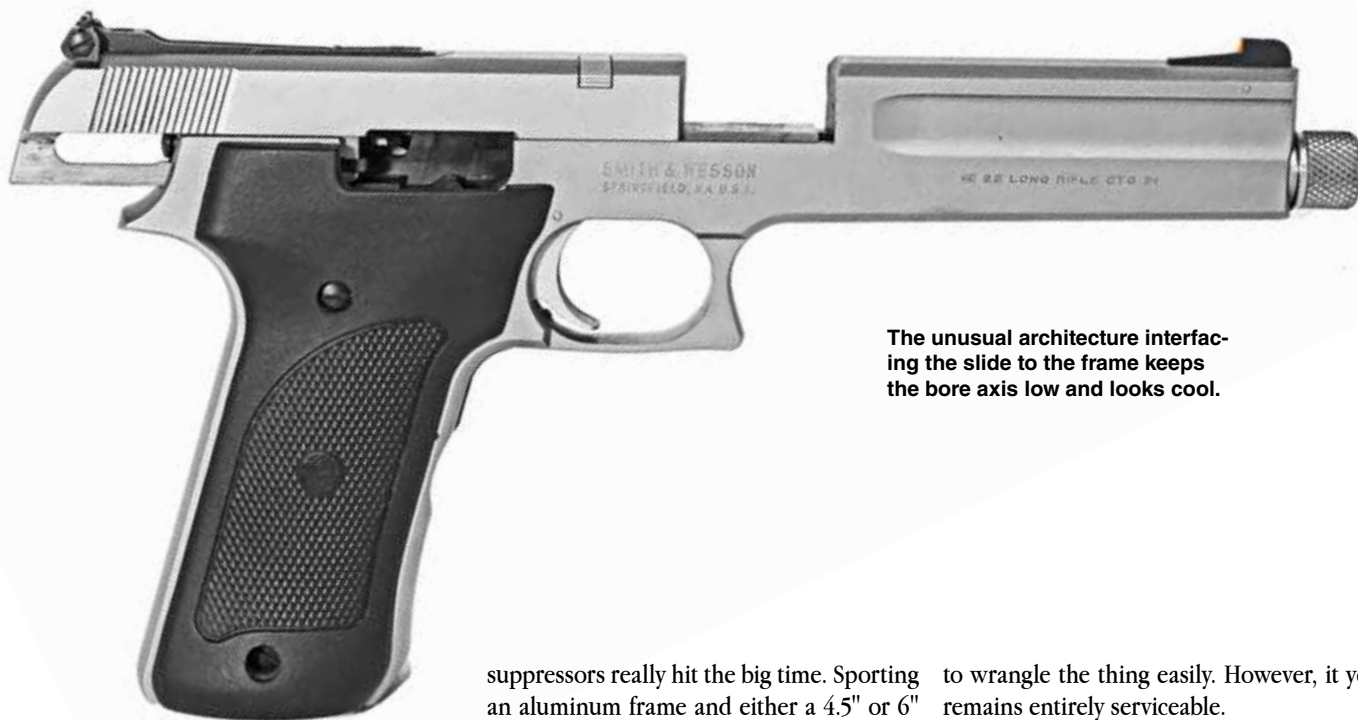
CONSIDERATIONS

I wanted something reliable with a decent trigger and proper controls. I also coveted a gun where I could still use the sights with the suppressor installed. That last bit was fairly daunting. Our great republic is covered in a thin patina of .22-caliber pistols. They come in all shapes, sizes and configurations. Some are more amenable to sound suppressors than others.

My full-sized Smith and Wesson M&P .22 feels like a “real gun” and encourages positive habit transfer. It's a great training tool. However, in both cases the can sits so high it



Once you get started in sound suppressors it can be tough to stop.



The unusual architecture interfacing the slide to the frame keeps the bore axis low and looks cool.

effectively occludes the gun's sights. There had to be a better way.

TOO MUCH, TOO SOON

Smith and Wesson debuted their Model 422 in 1987. This was before sound

suppressors really hit the big time. Sporting an aluminum frame and either a 4.5" or 6" barrel, the 422 also featured a nice single action trigger, a 12-round magazine and a weird kind-of ambidextrous magazine release. The mag release is a little push lever located vertically along the front of the grip. You have to either sport little pixie fingers or enjoy the dexterity of a concert violinist

to wrangle the thing easily. However, it yet remains entirely serviceable.

The thumb safety is left-sided only and fairly stiff. The slide release is in the expected spot. Sights can be either fixed or adjustable. While the slide was steel, frames could be either aluminum alloy or stainless.

The real magic, however, is in the orientation of the barrel relative to the frame.



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The barrel sits low in the chassis so as to minimize muzzle flip. The distal end is secured via a proprietary retaining nut. This geometry allows a standard rimfire suppressor to be fitted such that it does not occlude the sights.

The factory barrel nut will not accept a suppressor, but there are aftermarket threaded versions available online. I had to buy a proprietary wrench to get the old nut off. Fortunately it was cheap.

With the can in place the S&W 2206 (stainless frame and slide) runs fast and

The S&W 2206 is the perfect rimfire suppressor host. Though they were only made for nine years some three decades ago, these unusual guns can still be found online and at gun shows. The Silent Legion can is as good as it gets.

well. The gun is pretty heavy, but reliability on my sample is fine. The sights work great despite the can. This tidy little gun even saved my life one time, sort of.

WAR STORY

I was walking out in the woods with my three kids in tow. Our rural Mississippi farm was our refuge, homeschool science lab and playground. It also hosted more

than a few dangerous creatures. As I am armed whenever I am not asleep or in the shower I was packing my S&W 2206 in a shoulder holster. My first inkling something was amiss was when I felt what seemed to be a big muscular arm moving underneath my GI-issue jungle boot.

The water moccasin in question was as big around amidstips as a robust tangerine. His massive head pivoted toward my shin

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The magazine release is located on the front strap and is weird. It works just fine, however.

in an instant. My young son was half a step behind me.

My next conscious thought the kids were screaming, the slide was locked back on my little Smith, and the empty magazine was ejected on the ground. I was instinctively pawing for the spare mag I had actually left back at the house. Fortunately my heart restarted of its own accord.

About two thirds of the gun's dozen rounds had connected with the big snake. It is an absolute miracle I didn't blow my foot off. However, all the humans involved lived to fight another day.

EPILOGUE

I have read about 4% of these Smith and Wesson .22 pistols had significant reliability problems. This was purportedly one of the reasons for their abbreviated nine-year commercial run. Buying a used version today is therefore not without risk. Like an idiot I actually sold my old 2206 before I bought my first .22 can. I subsequently had to track down another copy to right that grievous wrong. These old guns, particularly the versions with stainless steel frames, are quite spendy nowadays. However, both of mine ran like a chimp after Cheez Whiz.

It takes a special tool to strip these pistols, though that is easily improvised. Additionally, stuff you might actually need like spare extractors is rarer than honest politicians. However, I have indeed found in my vintage S&W 2206 the perfect suppressor host.

SilentLegion.com

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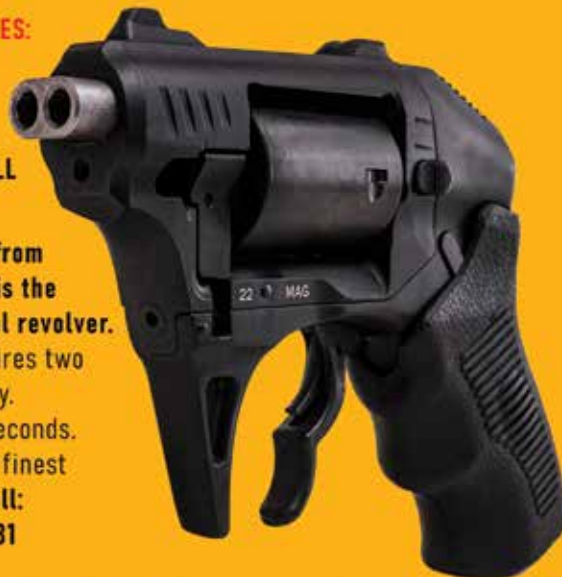
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TIKKA **T3X** LITE ROUGHTECH

Lightweight Reliability

MIA ANSTINE

Sneaking around to the other side of my horse, I pulled the Tikka out of the scabbard as we readied for the hunt. I had grabbed the lead ropes of my hunting partners' horses, handing them their rifles before taking care of my own horse and gear. As I tied Ralph's horse, I heard him whisper his rifle was jammed and the bolt wouldn't raise. It's not the first time I'd been with a hunter who'd had difficulty with their rifle due to the cold.

Then, I heard Jason struggling with his rifle. "My safety won't move," he whispered. I walked over just as Jason managed to drive his safety forward, crank his bolt open and chamber a round. Next, Ralph had his bolt moving finally. Thoughts of the wet snow and freezing temperatures ran through my mind. The snow's already piling up on my saddle and my hat and I caught myself hoping my rifle would run smoothly. With temperatures below freezing, metal

is the first thing to seize up, and that's just what had happened to Ralph and Jason's rifles.

Standing beside my horse, I flicked the safety forward on my rifle, tapping the large handle of the bolt up and back — just as smooth as butter on a hot day in Miami. I closed the bolt, engaged the safety and slung the rifle over my shoulder remembering how much I enjoyed using Tika rifles. With full confidence in my rifle, I was ready to hike through the two-feet of fresh powder. The game was afoot, literally.

LITE RIFLE

After traveling to the Sako/Tikka plant in Finland a few years back, one of the things I've raved about is their bolt action rifles. They're some of the smoothest around. And, when looking for a Tikka to hunt big game during spot-and-stalk hunts in the

The Tikka T3x Lite
Roughtech rides easily
in a saddle scabbard or
over the shoulder!



Right at home in the mountains, Tikka's T3X Lite Roughtech almost floats when carried due to its lightweight construction.



high country of Colorado, weight and caliber are the first things coming to mind.

Just as the name suggests, the Tikka T3X Lite Roughtech rifle is lightweight. The rifle weighs in at just under 6-1/2 lbs. (before mounting a scope or adding a sling) and has an overall length of 42-1/2". My decision was sound, as it feels good on my shoulder as I hike up and down the mountains during the nine-day hunting season.

One quality likely not occurring to many hunters is how a heavy rifle will weigh down a hunter's saddle, causing the saddle to "roll" or slide sideways on the horse's back. When we're using a horse as our means of transportation during a hunt, we don't want a rolled saddle as it's hard on the horse and the rider, who has to constantly make adjustments as they ride.

With the Tikka rifle stowed in a saddle-scabbard, my horse and I jockeyed up and down the Colorado mountains' steep terrain comfortably. Whether you're on foot or on a horse, treacherous topography requires balance, and any off-center weight might throw you and your gear to the side. I found the lightweight Tikka rifle to be an able companion on my hunts.

THE STOCK

The Roughtech rifle is part of the lineup among the T3x base-model. The Lite rifle has a synthetic stock with an angled, low-grip design. A rough surface texture throughout the stock and fore-end earmarks the Roughtech rifle and the surface treatment allows a hunter to keep a firm grip on the rifle regardless of conditions.

Tikka attains that light weight using a modular, synthetic stock. With aftermarket options available, the T3x can be adapted to fit your needs and a shooter can change between a traditional and a pistol-style grip or even opt for a wider fore-end.

I like the sturdy feel of this rifle compared to other polymer rifles I've used. The T3x synthetic stock has a foam insert, giving a more solid feel when you're handling it. As I stalk through the brush, there's little noise as twigs and leaves rub against it. When I fire a shot, the rifle feels solid in my hands, and the crosshairs stay on-target quite well.

SCOPING IT

Since I managed to find a lightweight rifle, I selected what

might be quite an upgrade in optics for the humble .270 Win. caliber I chose. The T3x model rifles have extra screw holes on top of the receiver, so mounting a scope like the slightly brawny Steiner GS3 4-20x50 with plex reticle required no modification or additional parts. Never shy away from spending money on good optics!

A fluted bolt and barrel additionally lend to the T3x Lite's slight design, and I like the look of the worked steel. This precision rifle has a 1:20" rate of twist and I spent some time at the range testing ammunition to see which rounds the barrel favors. I found the Norma Professional Hunter Medium Game 140-grain load won the competition handily, showing great hunting accuracy.

In addressing the issue of recoil in a light rifle, the T3x comes with a muzzle brake. Tikka also designed a large, contoured recoil pad for recoil absorption. The length of pull is 13.2", but the rifle comes with additional spacers to customize it to fit you exactly.

THE ACTION

The Finnish bolt runs smoothly; opening, closing and locking without a second thought. Things can get exciting in a hurry when you're hunting. Once you make your shot, you want to run the bolt, cycling in a fresh round fast and this smoothness helps things along. The wide, angular ejection port and spring-loaded plunger ejector adds to the peace of mind.

The Tikka stainless-steel bolt has a two-locking lug-system, and the stainless construction performs well in all weather conditions. With a large bolt-handle allowing for a 70-degree opening angle, it's easy to grip even when you're wearing winter gloves.

HUNTING WITH THE TIKKA

Opening morning we headed up the trail to a secret spot where I hoped to see my daughter tag another buck. She's experienced, so there's not much coaching involved. We watch through the fog and see movement at the top of the meadow. I raise my binoculars, making the call at 415 yards. She settles in and squeezes the trigger. I watch through my binoculars as she takes her longest shot on a big game animal — and the buck goes down.

Street price: Around \$1,000



Tikka.fi



HAM'R TIME!

MAKE YOUR OWN
DIY AR-15 RIFLE

I'm not a gunsmith, nor do I play one on TV. Unlike former Editor Roy, I don't have a fully equipped machine shop capable of manufacturing all the requisite parts for a B-2 bomber. I do tinker with basic assembly-type operations and minor stuff like swapping sights, installing trigger upgrades and other such novice-to-intermediate level projects. So, this project was a bit of a stretch for me — could I machine a hunk of aluminum “good enough” to not only function but perform at a level worthy of range respect?

Fortunately, the 80 Percent Arms folks have worked with plenty of novice gun builders over the years, so they've figured out how to make the process dummy-proof, provided you follow the instructions with care. When ordering an 80 percent AR10, A15 or AR9 receiver, you'll need two things: the partially machined lower receiver itself and the jig kit facilitating proper milling and drilling. The receiver is not legally a firearm — yet — because it's completely non-functional until you remove lots of metal in the trigger group area and drill a few holes. As such, you can order this kit to be shipped straight to your home — for now, anyway. Do note the product and process provides no exceptions to existing gun laws. If you're not eligible to possess a firearm, you can't legally buy this one either.

JIG MAGIC

The jig itself is ... brilliant. After assembling the side supports and top plate, you mount the receiver blank using

the pivot pinhole and a buffer tube attachment point. The top plate serves as a guide to control virtually any standard router — your milling tool. The side plates not only mark locations of the receiver holes you'll create with a hand drill or tabletop press, they also serve as guides ensuring your holes are perfectly perpendicular.

The company provides a custom router plate mating with the top plate of the jig setup. This router plate accepts mounting pegs interfacing with recessed templates in the jig top plate. The pegs and guides limit router movement so you're only cutting between the lines with the company's router-compatible milling bit.

The process is simple. Using a handy built-in milling bit depth-setting guide, adjust your cutting depth to the shallowest mark. With each pass, you shave off a layer of aluminum by swirling the router in a spiral pattern until you've cleared the area bounded by the jig template. I didn't measure, but each pass cuts maybe 1/16th" or so. Then adjust cutting depth to the next level indicated by the guide and repeat the process. Be patient and don't try to cut deeper else you'll create chips in your future receiver.

You'll make 20-some passes, changing router plate pegs twice more in the process. The deeper pegs limit you to different portions of the cutting template on the jig's top plate. By the time you're done, you'll have cleared out the entire trigger group area clear through to the trigger hole itself. I was amazed at the precision of the millwork, considering I was using standard household tools. The result was smooth and precise, and all parts fit perfectly when complete.

After you've milled out the receiver, you'll need to drill three holes for the trigger and hammer pins and the safety itself. By rotating the jig in your vise, you'll have easy access to the jig guides. I used a cordless hand drill with no ill effects.

I did have to make one small adjustment. The safety detent hole needed a bit of cleaning out where it intersected my freshly drilled safety lever hole. A quick pass with the correct-sized drill bit fixed it in seconds.

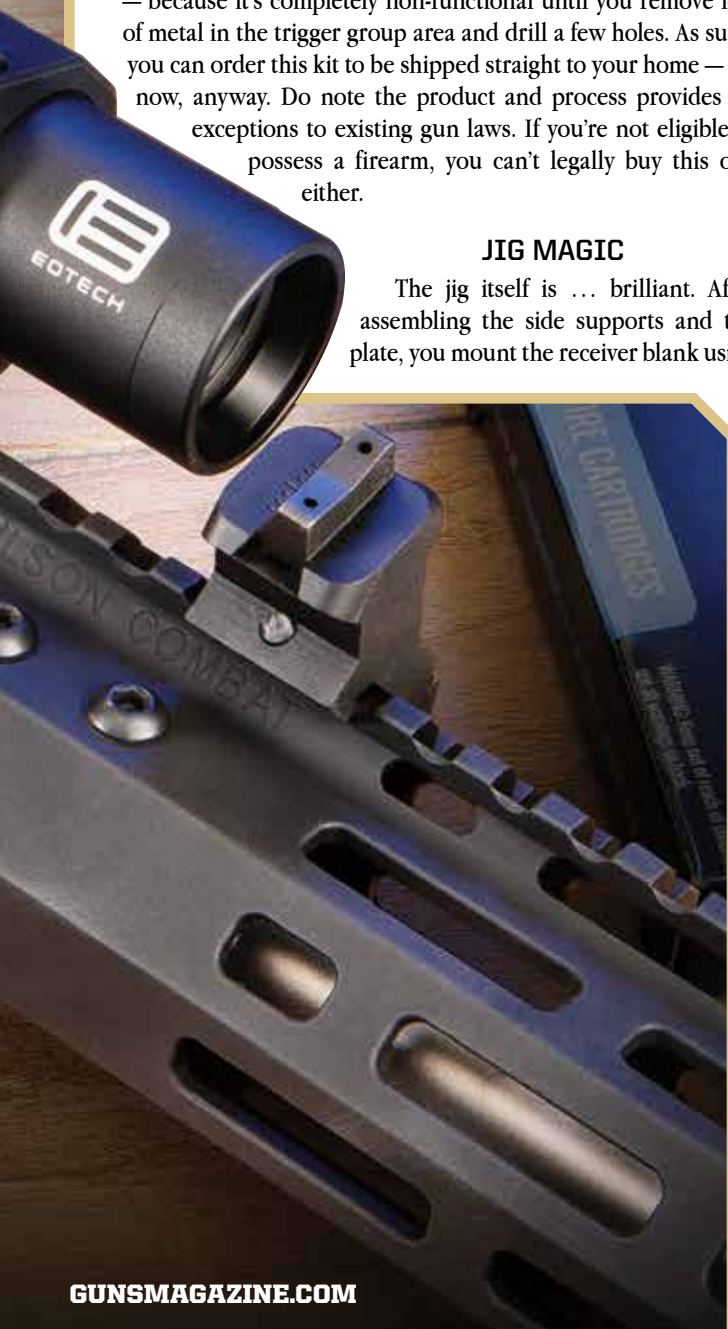
ASSEMBLY

The assembly process is completely standard as the completed lower offers full compatibility with standard mil-spec off-the-shelf AR rifle parts.

For assembly help, visit Brownells.com and check out their AR video series. It's excellent and easy to follow. I will point out one minor difference. The bolt release doesn't use a standard roll pin. The pinhole in this build is blind with the 80 Percent Arms design, so they include a threaded pin that screws right in. Just be sure to look for it in the package and you're good to go.

HAM'R TIME

His Editorship Brent T. Wheat envisioned this project as McHale's Monster, so the caliber had to be worthy of the name. That's a lot of pressure to put on an editor for a “competing” magazine. Oh, by the way, feel free to check out *American Handgunner* anytime! I felt it appropriate to contact the folks at Wilson Combat for perspective. “A

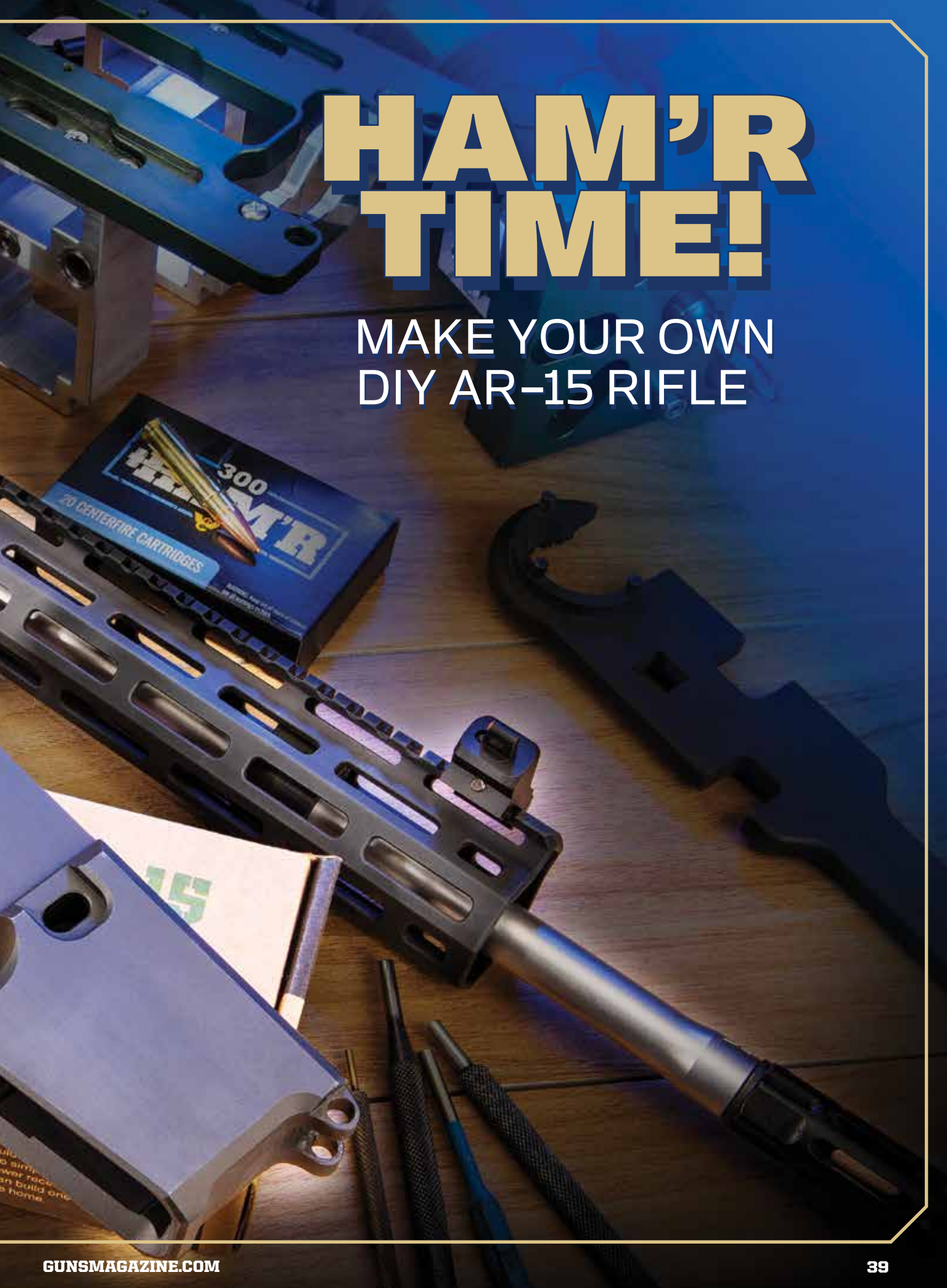




GUNS[®]
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HAM'R TIME!

MAKE YOUR OWN
DIY AR-15 RIFLE



monster you say? You have to build this rifle in .300 HAM'R." Sounded legit to me. Deal.

The .300 HAM'R is a brainchild of Bill Wilson. An avid hunter not quite satisfied with the terminal performance of either the .300 Blackout or 6.8 SPC, he set about creating a full-blown .30 caliber living in peace and harmony in a compact, light AR-15 platform. In fact, the .300 HAM'R requires nothing more than a barrel swap from standard AR-15 fare. Even the bolt remains the same, although Wilson recommends using a magazine friendly to 300 Blackout cartridges for best feeding. I used a Lancer during testing, and it was peachy. Feeding was flawless.

While you can get brass from Starline, you can also re-size and cut down good 'ol .223 once-fired to make cases — a nifty benefit of sticking to a .223-compatible platform. As for terminal performance, think of something along the lines of a turbo-charged .300 Blackout. Without having to fit those extra-long subsonic projectiles, the case is just over a quarter inch longer, creating more case capacity and top end velocity. The .300 HAM'R shines with .308 bullets in the 95- to 150-grain range. And yes, you can get reloading dies to roll your own at home. Given the infinite availability of brass, and in normal times, projectiles, I see no downside to using this niche cartridge provided you reload. You'll be rewarded with about 400 extra foot-pounds at the muzzle over 300 Blackout and a couple hundred more than 7.62x39.

WILSON COMBAT UP TOP

Given the caliber choice for this pig-slaying DIY rifle, the choice of upper receiver and barrel components was easy — Wilson Combat. On Bill's recommendation, I opted to go with the 16.2" Ranger Match-Grade barrel with a 1:15" twist rate. The setup calls for a mid-length gas system, offering a bit of chilling out of the operation of the system. Capping the barrel is the Wilson Combat Q-Comp. This rifle doesn't have near the boom factor of an AR10 .308, but the brake is handy for keeping the muzzle on target during rapid fire.

Holding it all together is a Wilson Combat billet upper receiver. There's no forward assist, nor is one needed for this rifle, saving a bit of weight and keeping a nice clean profile. The handguard is a Wilson Combat 12.6" M-LOK system. It's a perfect fit, leaving about 3-1/2" of muzzle (not counting the brake) exposed. The continuous top rail offers plenty of real estate for a backup sighting option — hold that thought. Seven surrounding surfaces offer M-LOK mounting points along the entire length of the handguard, so attach lights, lasers, or bayonets wherever you please.

The go-bang system is a Wilson Tactical Trigger unit. It's a two-stage design offering about 1/8" of smooth and grit-free take-up, followed by a 16th of an inch of constant pressure travel before a glass rod break. I measured the pull weight at 4-1/2 lbs. The trigger is marvelous and I found it easy to stage for precise shooting.

SIGHTING IN: EOTECH VUDU

A 125-grain HAM'R bullet (Sierra SPT for this example) will carry 1,000 ft-lbs of energy out to just past 200 yards and remain supersonic until it travels about 570, so I wanted to use a lower-power variable magnification sighting option. Given its suitability for closer range moving targets, like feral pigs, I also

wanted to maintain a wide field of view and fast sighting option. The EOTech Vudu 1-6x24 FFP fit the bill.

This Vudu features the fast 70-mil "outer ring" surrounding the crosshairs. Centered in the circle is a standard cross reticle with a thick center aiming dot. At 1x magnification this serves as a giant hollow red dot sighting system. It's fast — super fast. The five hash-marks in each direction from the center give you quick hold points





for elevation and wind adjustment. In lower light conditions, you'll see the whole shebang, outer circle, and inner reticle, light up in red, so don't worry about those daybreak and dusk outings.

The left "turret" is a battery cap. Between the cap and scope body, you'll find rubber-coated push buttons on the top, front and rear sides of the battery housing. The top button powers the illuminated reticle while the front and back buttons decrease and increase brightness. You won't see much illumination in bright daylight conditions, but that's okay as it's designed for low-light use.

This Vudu is a first focal plane scope, so as you rotate the rear of the scope body to change magnification, you'll see the entire reticle grow and shrink. The real benefit to the first focal plane

design is the holdovers represent the same adjustment regardless of what power lever you choose. If you want to adjust windage and elevation on a shot-by-shot basis, the two reticles are exposed for quick and easy adjustment in 0.2 milliradian increments.

BACK UP: XS OFFSET SIGHTS

Given this rifle's sweet spot of up close and personal and out to a few hundred yards, we decided to equip it with a secondary sighting system. While the EOTech Vudu adjusts down to a handy 1x, moving from fully magnified to a short-range configuration takes a few seconds.

Enter the XS XTI DXS Ember Offset Iron Sights. Intended for mounting forward of an optic (rear sight too), these mount on the top rail at a 45-degree angle right of left of center. When you want to use the sights, just rotate the rifle counterclockwise (if you're right-handed) without breaking your shoulder mount and the irons are lined up and ready to go. Be sure to use scope rings tall enough so as not to obstruct the iron sights.

The front sight uses a bright orange photoluminescent dot, highly visible in daylight and transitional light conditions. The rear is the standard XS V-notch with a white vertical bar to aid centering. It's drift adjustable to reconcile windage point of impact.

STOCK

The buttstock choice was easy. Bravo Manufacturing's BCM Gunfighter Mod-0 SOPMOD. This adjustable design offers generously wide cheek weld surface that aids consistent shooting and recoil management. The rubber buttpad keeps your rifle anchored and multiple sling attachment points offer carry flexibility. The nifty hidden feature is a sling management tab for a bungee or rubber band to keep your sling tucked in close while not in use.

BALLISTIC GAMES

With manufactured rifle in tow, I headed off to the range to see how this garage masterpiece performed. On this first outing, I tested three types of custom ammunition manufactured by Wilson Combat: 125-grain Hornady FMJ, 125-grain Sierra SBT Pro Hunter and 110-grain Speer SP.

With its extra case capacity, the HAM'R generated average muzzle velocities of 2,488 (FMJ), 2,544 (Sierra SBT) and 2,615 fps (Speer SP). At 100 yards, five-shot group sizes averaged 1.76" (FMJ), 1.92" (SBT) and 2.76" (Speer SP). I did have a bit of a shake between lower and upper receivers and eliminating movement will likely shrink the groups a bit more. The Vudu scope also uses a thick aiming dot and reticle owing to its 3-Gun and Tactical design goals, so I didn't have absolute aiming precision at 100 yards. Still, not bad at all for a "firearm" (lower receiver) built in my garage with a router!

Regardless of what our political overlords decide to do with the whole notion of home-built 80 percent rifle receivers, I found the building and assembly process immensely satisfying. With care and patience, you can do a fine job of building your very own rifle. Picking every component from the ground up is icing on the cake.



80PercentArms.com

WilsonCombat.com, EOTech.com

XSSights.com, BravoCompanyMfg.com

VIGILANCE RIFLE M20

INTUITIVE, STUPID-PROOF — AND FUN

WILL DABBS, MD

The M20 from Vigilance Rifles is what would happen if a Browning M1919 light machinegun had a baby with a pressure washer. Rugged, simple, reliable and unique, the M20 is so ugly it's awesome. In a world awash in the same old black rifles, the M20 will indeed set you apart.

The M20 is a blowback-operated 9mm that can be had as either a rifle or a pistol. Everything about the gun is modular. Additionally, the receiver lid pivots open like the top cover on a belt-fed machinegun for easy access to its entrails. This makes maintenance a snap, and the mechanical execution is sublime.

PERTINENT PARTICULARS

Little about the M20 seems terribly graceful. Like a pickup truck or track hoe, this gun is 100% utilitarian. This machine is designed for the single purpose of throwing 9mm balls. It's the jockstrap of firearms. However, like the ubiquitous athletic appliance, when you are specifically crafted for a singular mission you tend to be fairly good at it.

The guys who designed and built the M20 have been crafting guns since the 1990s. Previously their forte was seriously big bore rifles. They have built more than 4,000 of those puppies over the decades. When they struck out to build a pistol caliber



The Vigilance Rifles M20 is an undeniably different-looking beast. However, when stoked with conventional ball ammo it runs like an ape after an orange.

The M20 feeds from GLOCK mags, so there are lots of options, and the buttstock or pistol brace will both collapse and fold. Nifty.

“It takes about two mags to get a feel for the M20. After that it runs like a Leftist fleeing responsibility.”

9MM



The top cover on the M20 lifts up to access the inner workings in the manner of a Browning M1919A4 light machinegun.

carbine they started with a clean piece of paper.

Unlike the injection molded wonderguns populating gun store racks these days, the M20 exudes a bit of Uzi or MAC10 vibe. The central chassis is the common component, while the addition of barrels either short or long define the finished product. It's like Garanimals only way louder.

The receiver is cut from a massive aluminum billet and seems nigh indestructible. The barrel is retained via a generous 2" barrel nut. Swapping tubes is as simple as spinning off this nut. All it takes is one standard-issue set of human fingers.

The near end will accept any M4 buttstock or pistol brace, and the mount folds to the left as well. The pistol grip and fire controls are standard M4 and the non-reciprocating left-sided charging handle is easily accessed.

The pivoting top cover is quite curious. There's a mechanical disconnect disengaging the firing pin when the cover is open. The cover can be outfitted with a length of Picatinny rail for optics. The front and rear iron sights are simple, rugged and fixed.

The M20 feeds from standard GLOCK mags, and it likes Promag magazines the best. There are also several options in both sticks and drums. The magazine release is easily accessible, and mags drop freely when it is engaged. The bolt stays closed when the magazine is empty.

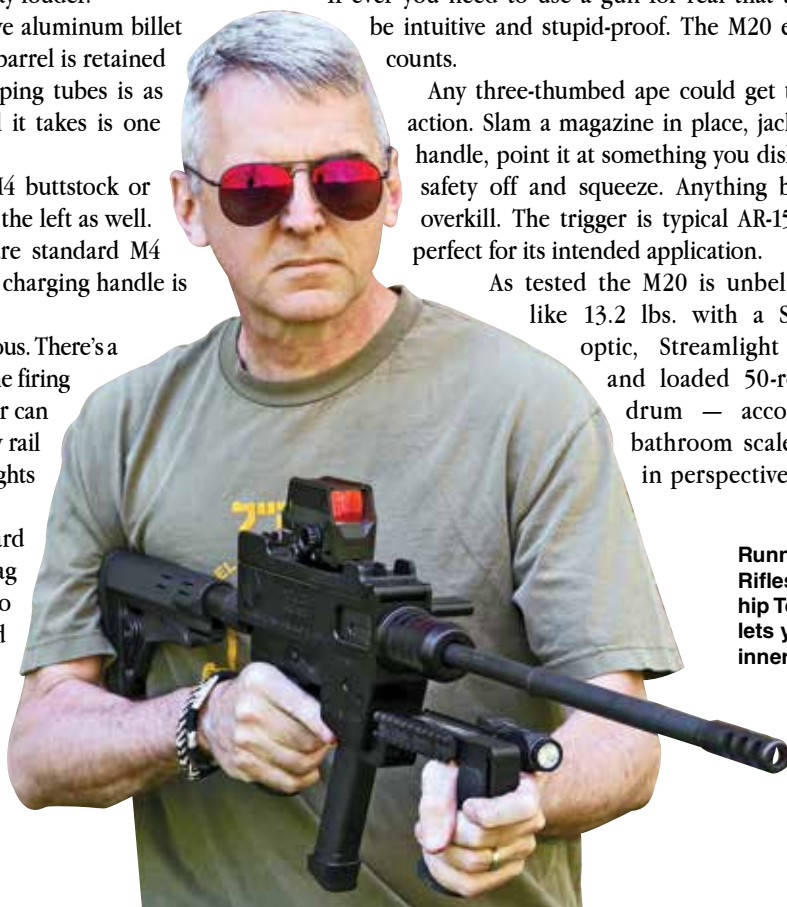
TRIGGER TIME

The simpler the better when it comes to your defensive firearms. I've been shot at before, and I wasn't pondering the existential esoterica of the universe at the time. I was rather on some primal level just trying desperately not to soil my trousers.

If ever you need to use a gun for real that thing needs to be intuitive and stupid-proof. The M20 excels on both counts.

Any three-thumbed ape could get this piece into action. Slam a magazine in place, jack the charging handle, point it at something you dislike, rotate the safety off and squeeze. Anything beyond that is overkill. The trigger is typical AR-15, meaning it's perfect for its intended application.

As tested the M20 is unbelievably heavy, like 13.2 lbs. with a SIG Romeo8H optic, Streamlight TLR-9 light, and loaded 50-round Promag drum — according to my bathroom scale. To put that in perspective, a Thompson



Running the Vigilance Rifles M20 from the hip Tommygun-style lets you channel your inner Dillinger.

submachinegun weighs 10 lbs., a Colt Monitor BAR weighs 13.2 lbs. Given all that mass recoil is therefore not a real thing.

The “Billy Handle” up front is an available option and mounts both a pair of accessory rails and a foregrip. Thusly configured the gun runs comfortably

from the hip in the manner of an M1928 Thompson. All that mass can indeed seem fairly cumbersome from the shoulder. However, should you ever run out of ammo the M20 is plenty rugged to serve as a proper club.

Follow-up shots are fast and intuitive. Out to reasonable handgun ranges I had

no trouble keeping my rounds inside a juice can lid. You have to manually rack the bolt with each magazine change, but more than 100 million Kalashnikov users do just fine with the same chore. It takes about two mags to get a feel for the M20. After that it runs like a Leftist fleeing responsibility.

The M20 ran 100% with any and all conventional FMJ ball rounds. It hung up on occasion with really wide-mouthed hollowpoints. The M20 really hates those lightweight injection-molded rounds like the 65-grain Inceptor ARX.

DENOUEMENT

The Vigilance Rifles M20 isn't for everybody. It's heavy and sports a fair number of sharp edges. However, the M20 is perfect for the guy who wants something truly different.

The M20 is simple to run and, with ball ammo, is as reliable as the tides. The M20 isn't terribly sexy, but it is rugged, effective, and reliable ... not unlike me.

MSRP: \$1,499



VigilanceRifles.co



The Vigilance Rifles M20 is absolutely massive. The receiver is cut from a single piece of billet aluminum. At 13.2 lbs. with a loaded 50-round drum it all enters BAR territory weight-wise. The end result is all but indestructible.

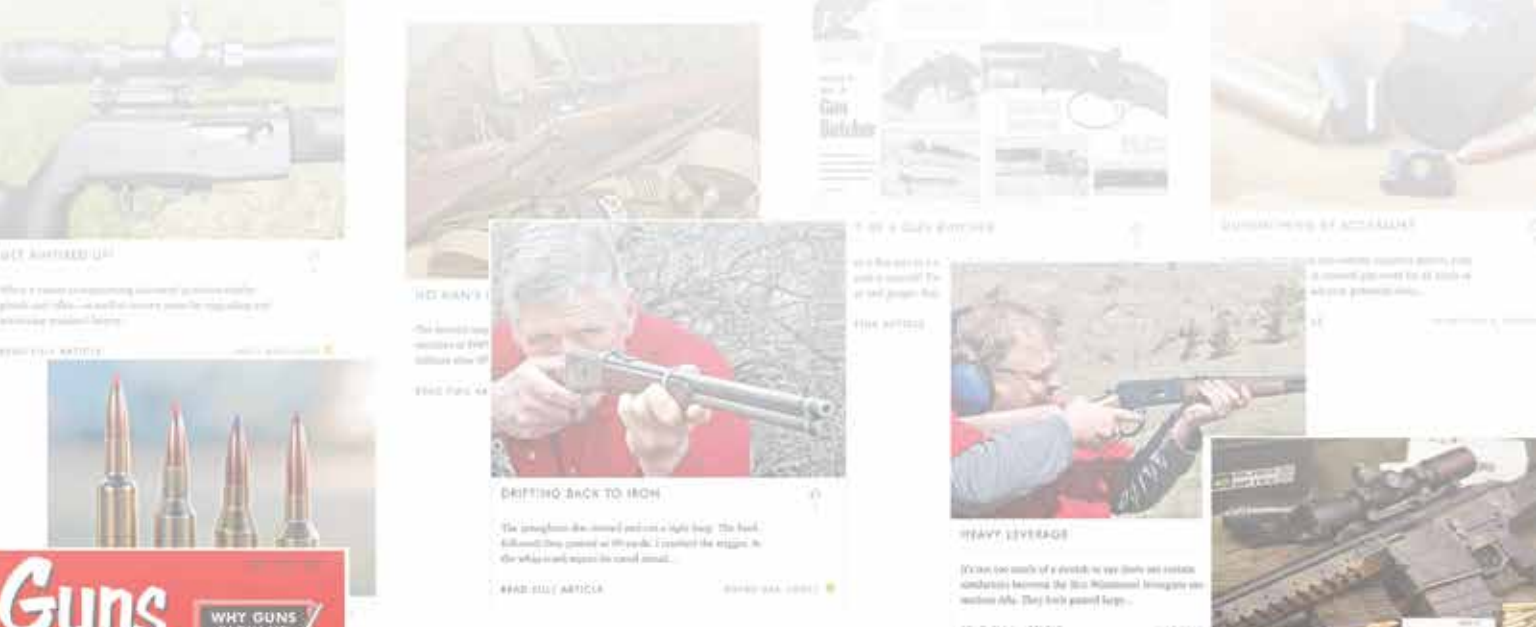
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A TALL MOUNTAIN—



Mark used an H-S Precision pistol in 270 WSM and Federal Premium ammunition topped with a 130-grain Nosler AB for his Ethiopian safari. This combo always delivers rifle-like accuracy.

SHORT MAGNUM HUNT

THE ELUSIVE ETHIOPIAN NYALA ADVENTURE

MARK HAMPTON

There comes a time in life when you wake up one morning and the brutal reality of your existence hits home. I've wrestled with this sober thought for some time now, realizing there are more days behind me than ahead. It makes a person adjust the thought process. There are a few things in life I would like to experience before the checkered flag halts the race. Hunting mountain nyala is one of those life-long dreams.

My wife and I were headed to Ethiopia as my 65th birthday was approaching. For me, there's no better way to celebrate this milestone than to embark on a "bucket list" hunt. Ethiopia is an interesting country sandwiched between Sudan and Somalia, resting on the northern border of Kenya. One of the oldest countries in the world, with 110 million inhabitants, Ethiopia is the second most populous in Africa.

We would be hunting in the highland forest for mountain nyala, a large, beautiful spiral-horned antelope. Another magnificent spiral-horned antelope, Menelik's bushbuck, also thrives in this region and we had procured a permit beforehand to hunt them as well. Our main priority was mountain nyala, the last living ungulate in Africa to be discovered by Westerners. They are only found in high altitude woodlands in a small part of central Ethiopia, where over the years, its habitat has been reduced to only a fragment of what it once enjoyed. Hunters have played a significant role in conserving this species and continue to generate funding creating the incentives needed to protect the mountain nyala and the habitat essential for its continued survival. They are shy, elusive and very challenging to hunt in the thick highland forests making them one of Africa's top trophies.

THE INITIAL HUNT

The 7-hour drive to camp was most interesting. After dodging goats, cows, donkeys, camels and a few baboons along the way, we arrived in base camp. We were hunting with Dave Rademeyer of Northern Operations Africa. Dave had been hunting this area for many years and had been very successful on mountain nyala.

During the first few days we were hunting close to Dave's main camp with Menelik's bushbuck as our target species. These beautiful spiral-horned antelope stay hidden for the most part of the day, only leaving their thickets to feed early in the morning or later in the evening. Several nice males were located during our first few attempts but Dave wanted to take the oldest, most mature male possible so we passed several opportunities. Early one morning I just happened to be glassing a clump of thick brush as a big male stepped out. He had left his bedding area

The mountain nyala is a beautiful, spiral-horned antelope, one of Africa's top trophies. Mark took this big, mature bull from 310 yards shooting across a canyon.



This Menelik's bushbuck was taken with a now-discontinued H-S Precision pistol in 270 WSM and Federal Premium ammo. The 101-yard range helped make it a sure shot.

BOG's new lightweight Deathgrip on top of their lightweight camo tripod provided a much needed steady rest. It allows easy adjustments for high or low angle shots.



Glassing is a big part of most mountain hunting exploits. Quality optics like these Swarovski binoculars (above) and spotting scope are essential tools of the trade. Mark and Karen (below) enjoying a coffee break after a morning's hunt. Sometimes it's the little things helping to make a hard hunt manageable!



and began feeding in the open.

I quickly got Dave's attention. One brief look through his Swarovski range-finding bins and two things immediately followed. Dave quietly said this male is old and he was 101 yards away. As fast as possible, I rested the handgun in the tripod and got the Leupold crosshairs steady. Dave whispered, "Take him when you can." The shot echoed across the canyon while the bushbuck humped up and disappeared. He didn't go 30 steps so the recovery was quick and painless. Our first Ethiopian trophy was headed for the salt.

I was using an H-S Precision pistol chambered in 270 WSM. This now discontinued handgun is extremely accurate, and with the assistance of Federal's Premium ammo topped with a 130-grain Nosler AccuBond bullet, the combination is ideally suited for long-range opportunities. While we were lucky to get close to the



bushbuck, the mountain nyala is often taken at extended ranges. Dave had forewarned me shots could materialize out to 400 yards and to make certain I knew the point-of-impact from 200 to 400.

MOVING MOUNTAINS

We moved locations for the mountain nyala, entailing setting up a tent camp and bringing all our food and supplies up another mountain range. The process was interesting as we hired some locals with their donkeys to transport all of our necessary gear up 9,000 feet. The tent camp was comfortable and allowed us to stay right next to mountain nyala habitat.

Our first evening was spent glassing from one mountainside to the adjacent mountain. It was hard to wrap my head around the dense forest and heather at this altitude. Hunting mountain nyala requires a great deal of glassing as the heather is frequently

higher than your head and provides innumerable hiding places. Time is spent glassing what few openings exist. The vegetation is so thick, Dave advised me not to look for the entire animal but the tips of their horns or just a part of the animal. We didn't see any nyala that evening possibly because of the leopard spotted. What a beautiful sight to behold — a leopard in broad daylight!

Early the next morning we got set-up and began glassing the same mountainside. It becomes a bit monotonous but essential to keep searching. You never know when something will appear. About an hour after daylight, one of the scouts spotted a nyala. We quickly changed positions to gain elevation and then Dave got a glimpse of the horns. I could tell by his expression this was a good one!

We tried several different locations in an attempt to see the nyala but he disappeared. Finally we spotted him again — right

“Before I could raise my binoculars to scan the area, Dave whispered, ‘I see him. Get ready!’”

in the middle of a gauntlet of heather. I could actually see part of his body in the scope but none of us could determine what part. We watched the bull for over an hour but could never risk a shot. The big bull finally bedded down around noon. Dave said, “We’re not leaving here. When he gets back up to feed, he may step in to an opening for a shot.”

So we sat there, waiting and watching. But, as the sun slowly faded, so did our hopes. The curtains closed on the day and we hiked back to camp to endure a “delicious” meal of dehydrated something.

THE FINAL CHASE

Long before daylight the following morning — over a strong shot of coffee around the campfire, we speculated what the bull

did during the night and would he be anywhere near where we last saw him. Deep down I figured the bull got up in the night and wandered off feeding somewhere. Dave was hopeful we could relocate him if he worked his way farther down the mountainside toward water.

In the predawn darkness, we slowly worked our way back to the location we had been glassing from the day before. By the time we arrived, it was barely light enough to see the adjacent mountainside. Before I could raise my binoculars to scan the area, Dave whispered, “I see him. Get ready!” I couldn’t believe it, so I quickly set up the 270 WSM and settled in. There was



The very rugged highland forest of central Ethiopia is home for mountain nyala and other species including leopard.



Local villagers help pack out tents and gear with strong backs and donkeys. Everyone helps — earning some much appreciated money in the process.



While procuring supplies to take up in the mountains, we had a few curious onlookers stop momentarily for photos. The locals were friendly and made us feel at home.

very little light on the mountain and it was surprising Dave had spotted the nyala not 200 yards from where we last saw him. Now the trick was for me to find him in the scope. Fortunately there was a white log clearly visible and Dave used this as a reference. The nyala was standing behind a clump of tall vegetation — behind the white log. It was impressive Dave spotted him as you would really have to know what to look for in this dense growth. Through the Leupold scope set on 8x, I couldn't see the whole animal but his shoulder was exposed.

"He's 310 yards," Dave whispered.

Prior to this hunt, I had practiced shooting steel targets on the farm out to 400 yards. Hitting a steel plate from 300 yards was relatively easy with a good rest and the accurate H-S Precision. But I must confess, in low light conditions with the vital area partially exposed on an animal I've dreamed about hunting all of my life — it was the longest 310 yards I've ever attempted!

Dave whispered, "Don't shoot unless you're sure." Trying to calm myself from the massive amount of adrenaline flowing, as the crosshairs settled I slowly squeezed the trigger. When the shot broke, I could clearly hear the bullet impact since I was wearing stereo muffs. Dave said load again, because the nyala was still standing. The big bull took a couple of steps and fortunately I could still see his shoulder. When the second round struck home, Dave slapped me on the back and said he was down. A monumentally jubilant moment for this country boy!

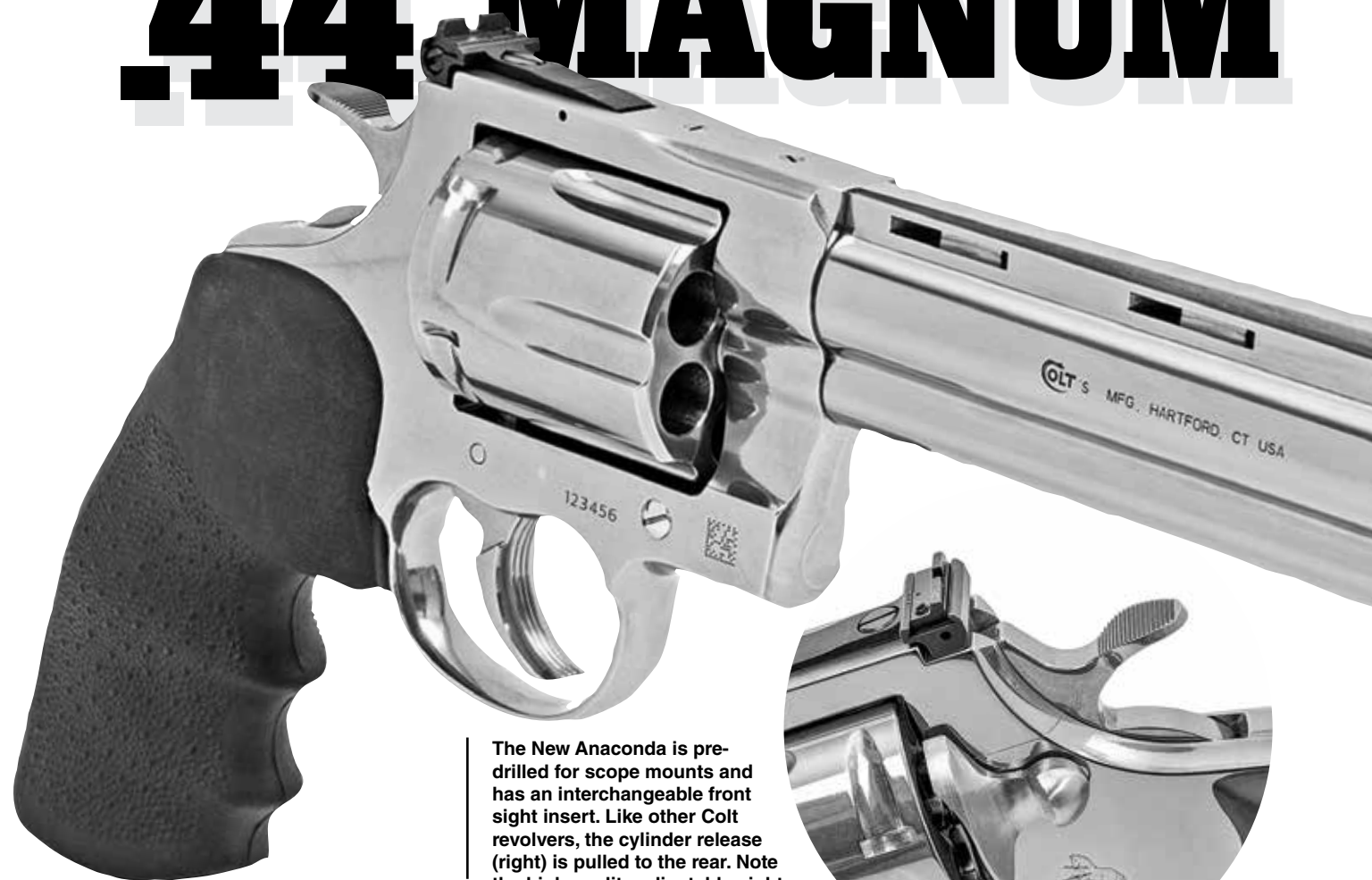
MEMORY BUILDING

After a brief celebration, we begin working our way to the nyala. Now 310 yards is not very far but the terrain was so steep and difficult, it took a good 45 minutes before we made it to the bull. What looks like sprouts and small vegetation from afar is actually 10-foot tall heather. No wonder these animals are difficult to see, as they seldom feed in wide open places. When I first laid my eyes on the nyala, I couldn't believe what I was seeing. What a magnificent, beautiful animal with massive horns. It was an impressive sight I'll always cherish.

The Ethiopian adventure was an incredible experience. Observing the culture, friendly people and magnificent wildlife left memories never to be forgotten. The country is home for a variety of wildlife, including lesser kudu — another "bucket list" animal. This spiral-horned antelope calls the Danakil desert home and if good fortune prevails, I just may have to return. 🦌



THE NEW COLT ANACONDA 44 MAGNUM



The New Anaconda is pre-drilled for scope mounts and has an interchangeable front sight insert. Like other Colt revolvers, the cylinder release (right) is pulled to the rear. Note the high quality adjustable sights.

BIGGER AND BRAWNIER!

JOHN TAFFIN

Although all the Colt “Snakes” were gone by 2006 it seems they were simply in a long hibernation. In 2017 the original Colt Serpent, the Cobra, was resurrected and then followed by the King Cobra. Both were not copies of the originals but new designs. Last year the New Python slithered out of the den and although it looks much like the original it has a completely new, and what I would call improved action. All three of these Snakes are available in stainless steel only.

As of March 22 of 2021 we have the arrival of the fourth Colt Snake, the Anaconda. It also is not a copy of the original but more like a larger New Python. When I tested the original Anaconda .44 Magnum I said this about it: “The Anaconda looks like the healthy offspring of the marriage between a stainless Python and a King Cobra with the barrel being pure Python, albeit larger in diameter, and the rest of the gun definitely descended from the King Cobra. Except for the King Cobra-shaped trigger guard, it is a strikingly handsome sixgun, even better looking than either



The New Anaconda (top) compared to the 1990s version. Note the brawnier cylinder of the New Anaconda.

The New Anaconda (top) is a larger version of the New Python.

of its parents." So far all New Anacondas are stainless steel and I don't expect this to change. Two barrel lengths are offered, 6" and 8" and the first ones out are 6" versions. I don't know if they will offer the 4", but I certainly hope so.

BIGGER IS BETTER

Checking the New Anaconda against the original I found the current version is larger in almost every way. The cylinder length is now 1.909" as compared to the 1990s version at 1.749". With this length cylinder the New Anaconda not only easily accepts .44 Magnum loads with the original Keith bullet, but also those with 310- and 325-grain weights with plenty of room to spare. Cylinder diameter is larger slightly at 1.757" compared to 1.749". Notice the original was basically the same length as the diameter. The diameter of the frame in front of the cylinder has been increased from 0.894" to 0.903" while the diameter of the barrel is up from 0.808" to 0.825". The width of the top strap has been increased from 0.669" to 0.996".

The action has a completely different feeling being the same as used in the New Python with the DA pull dramatically improved from 13.5 lbs. to 9.75 lbs. and definitely feeling much smoother. I can't compare the single-action pull because the old one was worked on and is now 4 lbs. while the new one comes in at 6 lbs. but with a creep-free, smooth feeling. However, for my everyday use I will have the trigger pull brought down to 3 to 4 lbs. Colt is using the same main spring in the Anaconda as the Python resulting in cocking it double-action feeling very light.

There's a polished stainless steel finish except for the top strap and top of the frame, which are a matte finish. Just as with the original Anaconda — and both the old and New Python — the barrel has a ventilated rib with three slots. Also, as on the



John's .44 Magnum handloads assembled with #2400 and #4227 performed well in the New Anaconda.

original, the ejector rod is fully enclosed by the heavy under-lugged barrel. The rear sight is all black and fully adjustable while the front sight is a ramp-style with a red insert. The front sight is of the interchangeable system locked in place from the front with an Allen screw and other front sights are available and easily changed. With the quality and MSRP of this new snake I think it would be a good idea if Colt would include several front sights with each of these New Anacondas. The top of the frame is tapped and threaded for a scope mount.

The action features a transfer bar safety and the hammer spur is finely serrated allowing easy cocking without irritating the thumb. The trigger is wide and also serrated, again not so sharp as to irritate the trigger finger. The grips are finger groove rubber with a pebble-grained finish and turned out to be the same style as the Hogue grips I have installed on my New Python. The cylinder release, pulled backwards, operates quite smoothly and easily.



The New Anaconda with John's favorite .44 Magnum deer hunting load, the Black Hills 240 JHP.



The left side of the barrel is marked in two lines with “ANA-CONDA” and “.44 MAGNUM” while the right side bears the inscription “COLT’S MFG. HARTFORD CT. USA”. The serial number is on the right side of the frame above the trigger and I am happy to say there are no warning labels.

JOHN’S INNER VOICES ...

The Anaconda is an all stainless steel sixgun and falls into the category of heavy guns especially in these times when so much emphasis is put on easy carrying lightweight sixguns and semi-autos. It tips the scale at just a few ounces under 3-1/2 lbs., which may not make it the easiest to pack all day but it certainly aids in shooting, especially in these days when moderation reigns. You see, my inner voice often reminds me in direct chats about the need for me to “Be more moderate in your shooting” — thanks to a lifetime of big bores, heavy loads and the wear and tear they’ve done to my frame!

When I tested the original Anaconda I used 14 factory loads and 18 handloads, with the majority being what we would call Heavy Loads. Many of those were assembled with 295- to 330-grain bullets. Obeying the Moderation Commandment testing the New Anaconda I went with three factory .44 Magnum loads and 17 handloads from mild to Heavy .44 Special level loads. I also tried some very pleasant everyday .44 Special loads consisting of 12 factory loads involving some serious outdoor loads and eight handloads. In addition to .44 Magnum and .44 Special cartridges, the Anaconda will also accept .44 Russian and .44 Colt loads making for some very enjoyable easy shooting.

Test-firing of the New Anaconda took place in March when spring had not yet sprung, so the conditions were not the best.



The cylinder of the New Anaconda (above) is long enough to easily accept Keith bullets as well as 310- and 325-grain heavy bullets. The New Anaconda comes in a sturdy lockable plastic carrying case (below). Wouldn’t it have been great fun if they’d packaged it in a classic looking cardboard box!



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To remove as much human error as possible I used a Leupold 4X LER scope mounted on a Colt-supplied base. This weight added to the 53-oz. weight of the New Python itself resulting in my hands and wrists issuing no complaints at all.

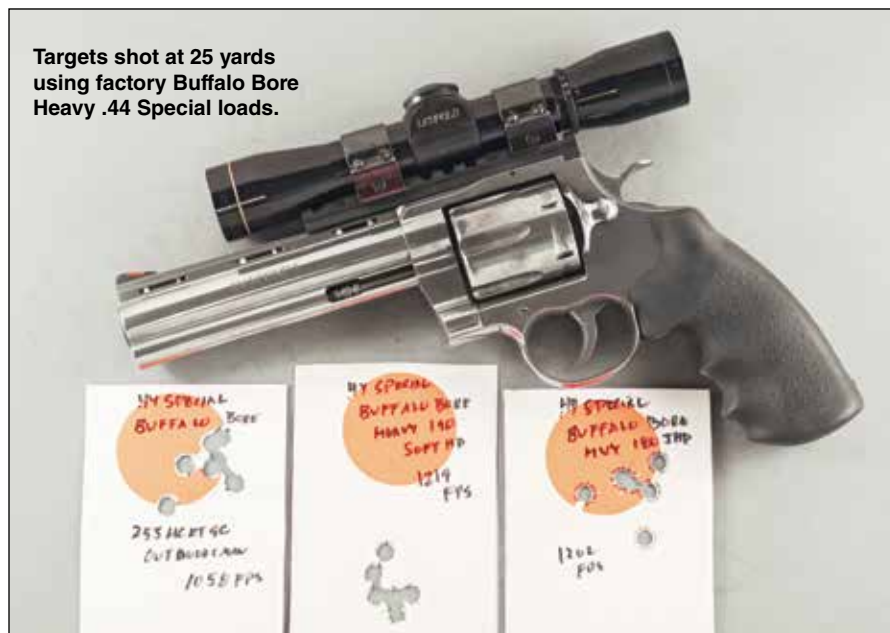
SHOOTING

Both the factory loaded Buffalo Bore 255 Keith and the SIG SAUER 240 V-Crown JHP .44 Magnum loads group right at 1" for five shots at 25 yards, with muzzle

velocities of 1,438 fps and 1,317 fps respectively. Switching to handloads using Hornady JHP bullets also gave excellent results, with the 200 JHP over 20.0 grains of #4227 coming in at 1,052 fps; 240-grain XTP over the same charge resulted in 1,053 fps while this same bullet over 18.5 grains of #2400 clocked out at a respectable 1,276 fps. All three loads grouped five shots right at 1" at a distance of 25 yards.

I got a very pleasant surprise when I switched to Buffalo Bore Heavy .44 Special

Targets shot at 25 yards
using factory Buffalo Bore
Heavy .44 Special loads.



Targets shot at 25
yards with .44 Magnum
handloads assembled with
Hornady bullets and #2400
and #4227 powders.



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loads. Some .44 Magnum sixguns will shoot the shorter .44 Special loads well while others give mediocre performance. This New Anaconda performs exceptionally well with .44 Special loads. Their 180 JHP clocked at 1,202 fps with a 1-3/8" group and the 255 Hard Cast Keith Gas Check Outdoorsman was at 1,058 fps and a 1" group. The most accurate load of all I tried — grouping five shots into 7/8" at 25 yards — was the 190-grain Soft Cast HP at 1,219 fps. All of these loads should do quite well for hunting deer-sized critters.

For those interested in heavy-bulleted loads for the Anaconda, 21.5 grains of WW296 or H110 with the 295-grain GC Keith-style bullet clocks out right at 1,300 fps, while the Speer 300-grain JSP over the same charge is right at 1,200 fps. The RCBS #44-300 over this same charge is an excellent-shooting load clocking out right at 1,335 fps. The Ray Thompson designed .44 Lyman #431244GC bullet, which is a 255-grain SWC Gas Check, is an excellent shooting bullet when loaded over 25.0 grains of WW296/H110 for just under 1,400 fps or 22.0 grains of #2400, clocking out right at 1,475 fps. I've been using these loads for the past 30 years in my original Anaconda, although definitely in moderation these days, and they are certainly capable of handling anything in the lower 48.

THE FUTURE?

Will we see any more snakes from Colt? I don't see any point in resurrecting either the Boa or Viper which were only produced for one year and most of us have never ever seen one. Colt has been sold to CZ whose main focus is on semi-automatic pistols so we'll keep our fingers crossed. However I hope they not only continue with these four snakes but also resurrect what is one of the handiest Trail Guns ever produced, the Diamondback. It's somewhat of a miniaturized Python built on the original Cobra/Detective Special-sized frame. Whether in .38 Special, .22 Long Rifle, or even .22 Magnum it's easy to pack all day and made for those situations in which we do not need anything more powerful. Sometimes progress really is on our side. Not very often though — but occasionally — and resurrecting the Diamondback would be a very positive step in the right direction.

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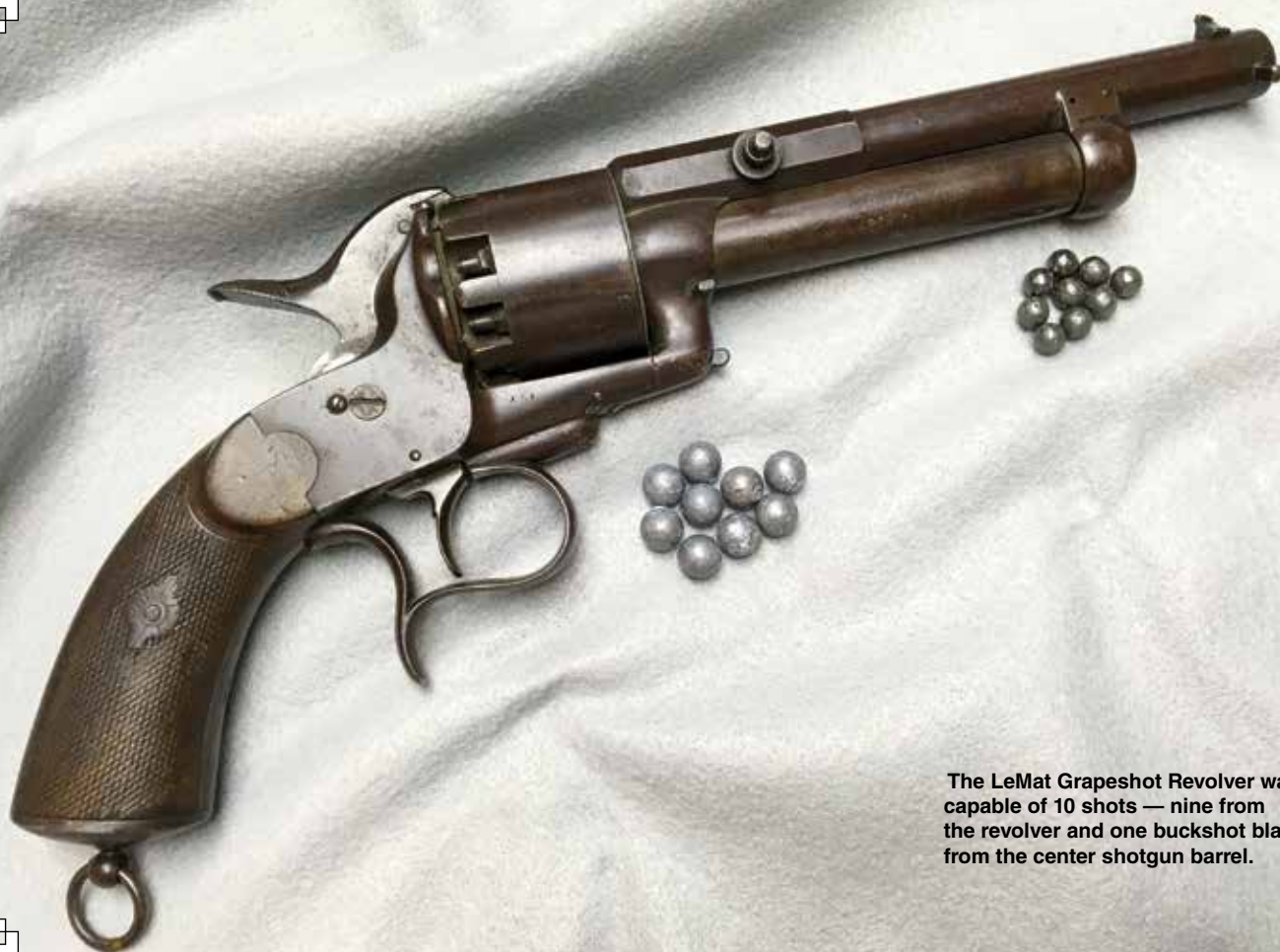
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The LeMat's 'Grapeshot' Revolver

ALAN GARBERS

The life, exploits and intrigue of Dr. Alexander LeMat would take a TV mini-series to tell. The man snuck \$400,000 in gold out of New Orleans right under the noses of the Union occupiers! Since this isn't a copy of *War and Peace*, we can't cover every thread in the fabric of his life.

Jean Francois Alexander LeMat was a young doctor in France. No doubt, stories of the wealth flowing through the Crescent City (New Orleans) had crossed the Atlantic. In 1840 New Orleans was the third-largest city in the U.S.A. and the fourth-largest port in the world. Riches from the interior of the Missouri/Mississippi/Ohio river systems all flowed through the city. New Orleans was still strongly French, so it is no mystery what pulled LeMat away from his family.

It was a smart move too. With the constant influx of travelers from around the world and the bayous breeding hordes of blood-sucking insects, New Orleans was a petri dish of illness and disease. Of the 167,000 inhabitants, only 75 were doctors. Doctor LeMat could have written his own paycheck, but he had other aspirations.

RUDIMENTARY TECH

Martial pistols of the day held mostly five or six shots, a quantum leap over the single-shot pistols still in use. LeMat dreamed of even more shock and awe. In 1856, he applied for a patent on a 9-shot revolver, rotating on an 18-gauge shotgun barrel capable of shooting one 400-grain ball or a charge of buckshot. The hammer was unique with a pivoting tip to hit the nipples of the revolver or

Civil War Shock 'N Awe



The loading lever was complex and bulky and many soldiers removed it for combat. Photo: Jon Marmand

This stunner of a reproduction by Pietta of Italy showcases the complexity of production, even for today's gun makers. Photo: Jon Marmand



The spur trigger guard was stylish but awkward to use in real combat. It was dropped from later models.

the center chamber. In total, the handgun could fire 10 shots. To many, the center barrel was a cannon filled with grapeshot. The moniker stuck. His invention became known as “LeMat’s Grapeshot Revolver.”

As fate would have it, LeMat’s wife was a cousin to General Pierre Gustave Toutant Beauregard, perhaps best known for his role in bombarding Fort Sumter and starting the Civil War. But, in 1859 Beauregard was still a highly respected U.S. Army officer. He was impressed with LeMat’s prototype revolver; so much so preliminary trials were held in New Orleans. The other officers involved were equally impressed. They all felt it was better than any weapon currently in use by the military, including those made by Colt.

It was the perfect weapon for cavalry and artillery units, and the navy saw it as a great weapon to defend against boarders. The future was looking bright for LeMat, and advertisements — disguised as press releases — were submitted to newspapers promoting its upcoming production.

But the U.S. Army had no interest in investing in yet another weapon system. Perhaps the fact LeMat didn’t have a production facility played into the decision. A U.S. manufacturer could not be found to produce the pistol so LeMat went to find a facility in Belgium or France.

INTO PRODUCTION

The idea of manufacturing the revolver in France may seem strange but LeMat may have been thinking of the future. Clouds of war were forming in the halls of Washington. If Lincoln were to get elected, southern states threatened to secede. Belgium and France had facilities and experienced craftsmen already

producing firearms. And, LeMat was thinking of marketing his revolver around Europe as he had applied for patents in Belgium, France, England, Saxony and Russia.

Within a week of Lincoln winning the presidential election, LeMat received an order of 400 revolvers from the Louisiana Militia. Not long after Louisiana joined the other southern states in seceding from the Union. LeMat was in the thick of things and already working to obtain arms for his adopted country along with producing his revolver.

In August 1861, LeMat received an order from the Confederate War Department for 5,000 revolvers. The Confederate Navy followed suit ordering 3,000 more.

LeMat settled on a factory in Paris, France to produce his revolvers. But a problem plagued LeMat and his revolver. Unlike assembly-line manufacturing by his contemporaries in the U.S., firearm production in France was a cottage industry. Components were machined by small shops and then pieced together in the main factory. Each LeMat was custom made and parts were not easily fitted on another LeMat.

As the LeMat went from prototype to production, changes were made in its design to improve reliability and reduce production time and costs. Firearm experts break the run of percussion LeMat into two distinct models, with a transitional period between the two. The revolver featured here is from the first production run.

LIVING ANTIQUITY

The featured LeMat is numbered 451, which puts it seven guns before the last known First Model LeMat. Pistols in this

production run still had the ram lever (missing on this gun) on the right side, a feature the military testers recommended be changed to the left side. Some experts feel a missing ram indicates a battle-used weapon as there is evidence they were removed to make the pistol easier to use and carry.

LeMat 451 sports a stylish spur trigger guard, much like the Smith & Wesson Model 3 Russian. This was dropped during the Transition period.

The barrel markings are engraved, which, while stylish, required extra skill and added cost. Later production revolvers switched to cheaper roll-stamps.

The pistol barrel on a LeMat screws onto the shotgun barrel. Early First Pattern LeMat revolvers required a spring-loaded lever to be depressed, allowing the barrel to unscrew. The casting and machining to fit the lever added expense. LeMat 451 shows the barrel lock lever had changed to a cheaper flip-out lever. We can assume it's original as it sports the same serial number and font as the rest of the serial number markings on the revolver.

LeMat 451 still features the pin-type cylinder lock, an extremely complicated and expensive system changed in later production revolvers. Reports claim combat grit filled the pin holes and caused the cylinder to either over- or under-rotate.

It's exciting to imagine who originally owned this revolver. The odds are great it went to a high-ranking officer, and we can assume this for several reasons. The LeMat was not cheap. It was roughly three times as expensive as other revolvers manufactured for the Confederacy. The original contract price was \$35 each but inflation and blockade-running costs drove the price to \$80 — over \$2,750 in today's money! Issuing such an expensive weapon to a rank and file soldier would have not been cost-effective for a country struggling to sell cotton and fund a war.

LeMat knew how to generate buzz about his product. If there was a possibility of an endorsement for a government contract, LeMat made sure the person received one of his pistols. Several notable Confederate generals carried a LeMat. Beauregard received two. One was accidentally left at a friend's home, so he gifted it to them and procured another. Jeb Stewart was shot as he was firing his LeMat at Union soldiers. Stonewall Jackson allegedly owned one, but proof of this has disappeared over the years.

Some LeMat revolvers were stolen from shipments and a rare few made it to the Confederate civilian market.

UNIQUE HISTORY

So who owned this LeMat? Unless a forgotten log or journal is found referencing the serial number, I doubt we will ever know. According to records, the LeMats were shipped to the Confederacy in 25-revolver crates. General P.G.T. Beauregard's second LeMat was number 427. General Patton Anderson owned number 475. Our featured revolver most likely shipped with one or the other.

The Union blockade took its toll and the Confederacy only received a fraction of the 8,000 LeMats contracted for. Would they have made a difference in battle? Most likely not. A young private demonstrating the revolver for LeMat complained the recoil from the grapeshot barrel was unbearable. The revolver rounds were .42 caliber so it couldn't use commonly found .36 or .44 bullets.



With the hammer tip flipped down the center shotgun barrel nipple is engaged.



The LeMat hammer had a low, wide, well-checked spur easier to reach with a thumb than competitors' models.



The revolver barrel screws onto the center barrel and is held in place with a pinned lever.

Recently, the LeMat's capabilities have been taken to mythical levels in the hit series, *Westworld*. In the hands of star Ed Harris, the LeMat can mow down entire gangs of men and even shoot through sun-baked adobe walls!

Reproduction LeMats are designed like the Second Model and are very popular with Civil War reenactors with some going to great lengths to make them appear well-used — known as de-farbing.

I wanted the thrill of shooting a reproduction LeMat, but fate had other ideas. The pandemic hit Italy hard and shut down all replica firearm production. Taylor's & Company is one of the few distributors of the LeMat. Like the originals, the reproduction LeMat is labor-intensive and requires significant tooling changes to produce. So, a LeMat will not be forthcoming until other orders are caught up and stocks are replenished. In the meantime, check out the videos by "duelist1954" on *YouTube* if you would like to see one in action.



SOG's CA Crimson Cali Auto is adapted from the company's time proven SOG-Tac Mini 3.75" aluminum handle and the vibrant crimson anodizing makes it a stunner. The Crimson Cali's push button (right) blade release is conveniently located for tip-of-the-thumb access and also serves to unlock the blade for deployment.



L.A. LEGAL! THE SOG-TAC CALI IS WEST COAST FRIENDLY

Some of the most Draconian laws for automatic knives reside in a handful of New England states, with total bans not uncommon. While autos are now legal in the overwhelming number of states in the U.S. some, such as California, have restrictions.

In this notoriously anti-gun state you can own an automatic knife but the blade can be no longer than 2" in length. SOG Knives built the SOG-TAC CA Crimson Auto for those of you who need to legally slake your auto appetite.

The CA Crimson Cali auto-folder is adapted from the company's already successful SOG-Tac Mini 3.75" aluminum handle and is anodized in a vibrant crimson coating. The Crimson Cali has a push button blade release conveniently located

on the top front of the handle for easy thumb access. The Cali's small but effective 1.9" blade is an upswept, black-coated AUS-8 clip-point style with a saber grind on the back edge adding extra Ooooph in the penetration department. On the backside is a slide safety — a SOG favorite on their autos — to keep everything buttoned up when not being used. There's also a tip-up pocket clip for quick, at-the-ready pocket carry. SOG's Crimson Cali Auto tips the scales at a lithe 2.5 oz.

WHY YOU'LL LIKE IT

Very few knife manufacturers make a street legal California automatic. SOG's Mini platform is tried, tested and has received a lot of love by their customers — so you're getting a knife with a proven pedigree. The

push button blade release is so easy to use even a caveman can do it, and when you go to release the blade for deployment you simply go back to the button to release it. Simple and effective. On top of that the Crimson Cali's anodized handle is just downright attractive if you're someone looking to beat the black and silver blues. The crowning touch is the SOG-TAC CA Crimson Auto has a very attractive suggested MSRP of only \$129.95 — a sweet price for all you get in this wicked little beast.

SOGKnives.com

SWAGGER SEA12 BIPOD

Brent T. Wheat

Bipods are like computers: They're fantastic, until they ain't! Anyone who has used a rifle-mounted bipod knows the aggravation of needing a little more up-and-down or traverse when tracking targets, especially moving targets or working extreme angles. No matter how advanced or expensive the bipod, you end up fighting it — which is why many shooters simply say "To Hell with it!" and go back to sandbags and other rests.

There are swiveling bipods but I've found they're either too loose to offer steady support or, if adjustable, there is a one-half-molecule difference between too loose, just right and too tight.

The folks at Swagger might have finally solved the problem with their SEA12 bipod. It's build like a tank, has a solid hex-wrench pic rail mount and the legs adjust from 9" to 12". The ingenious part is a rubber-encased spring in the upper leg that flexes just enough to give you easy gun adjustment but is still solid enough for precision shots.

Without getting the protractor out, I'd guesstimate it's a simple matter to twist the gun perhaps 30 degrees side-to-side and approximately 15 to 20 degrees of elevation. It also feels good to "load" the bipod with a shoulder push for a bit more solid rest. I even like the leg pivots don't have geared teeth, which — trust me on this one — are capable of carving your finger to the bone if not careful.

In the end, the SEA12 is the new bipod on my personal 6.5 Creedmoor bolt gun. Unfortunately, I now have one less excuse for poor shooting!

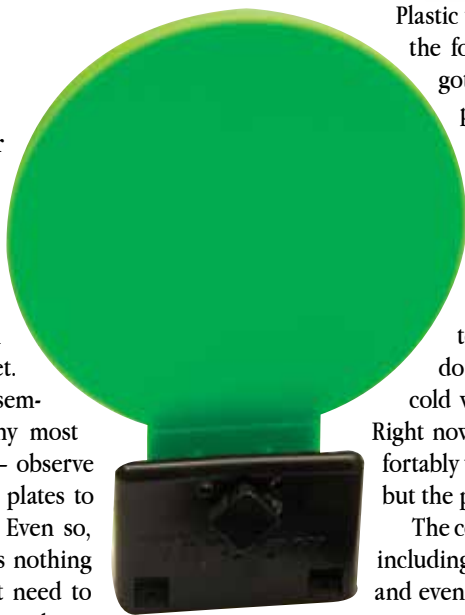
MSRP: \$199.99

SwaggerBipods.com



THROOM TARGETS

Love the sensation of lead and copper flying back at you, perhaps even embedding in your face or arms? If so, you're a hardcore steel target shooter! However, most of us don't enjoy the idea of lead pulling a 180-degree switcheroo and coming boiling back at us at several hundred feet per second off the target. Likewise for bits of copper jacketing resembling tiny flying razor blades. This is why most steel shooters — the sane ones, anyway — observe a conservative stand-off distance from the plates to ensure minimal danger from splash-back. Even so, the occasional incoming chunk reminds us nothing is guaranteed. However, such things don't need to be a problem anymore thanks to Throom polymer targets. In a nutshell, polymer is chemist-speak for "plastic" and if you can work this out, plastic doesn't kick lead or copper jackets back at the shooter.



Plastic targets have been around forever, but the folks at Throom seem to have finally gotten them right. The targets are comprised of an incredibly tough green "miracle" (my words, not theirs) polymer allowing bullets to pass through with only a pinhole to mark the event. The main disadvantage to plastic targets previously was their longevity and this doesn't seem to be an issue with Throom. Weather doesn't faze them as they aren't brittle in cold weather or excessively floppy in hot. Right now here in the Midwest it's so uncomfortably warm even nuns are swearing openly but the polymer targets are nonplussed.

The company offers a wide variety of targets including knockdowns, hangers, bowling pins and even polymer 2x4 brackets to make a safe target stand with no danger of ricochet.

MSRP: Starting at \$19.99

ThroomTargets.com

GUN RIGHTS AND “GREENIES”

WIN THE ARGUMENT – SHOW HOW HUNTING SUPPORTS CONSERVATION!

Dave Workman

October is a good month to remind local community newspapers, talk radio in your region and anyone else who will listen that without hunters and the broader firearms community, state fish and wildlife agencies and the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (FWS) might be shadows of their present selves.

It's something a lot of so-called “conservationists” and “environmentalists” may not care to acknowledge. After all, a fair number of those folks are anti-gunners but they can't avoid the math.

When the gun control crowd starts demanding new restrictions, one course of action they may not see coming would be to demand to know why they want to hurt wildlife. Make this part of your argument and use the available data to back it up.

Thanks to firearms and ammunition sales, the Federal Aid to Wildlife Restoration Act fund is pretty healthy these days. For Fiscal Year 2021, FWS was able to apportion a whopping \$678,894,449 to the 50 states plus the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, Guam, the U.S. Virgin Islands, American Samoa and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

Like it or not, being able to showcase this unmistakably valuable program is a marvelous way to defend your Second Amendment rights. Because hunters and all of those non-hunters who still purchase millions of cartridges and shotgun shells, tens of thousands of firearms and related products, we can lay claim to being the nation's foremost conservationists and wildlife supporters.

PITTMAN-ROBERTSON

The Pittman-Robertson Act became law on Sept. 2, 1937. It puts an 11% excise tax on the sale of “sporting arms and ammunition” and over the past several decades, it has raised billions of dollars. Back in 1972, the Act was amended to add an 11% excise tax on archery equipment (bows and arrows) so all of the bow-hunters share in this program.

Hunters can make credible arguments against anti-hunters, who seem to pop up this time of year to complain about “slaughtering” animals. To their credit, some non-hunting conservation organizations have made strong arguments in support of hunting and the benefits this law has provided such as land acquisition with public access for all kinds of outdoor recreation opportunities.

It's easy to find how much money your state receives from the P-R fund annually. Go online and log onto fws.gov and follow the links to the “Final Apportionment of

Pittman-Robertson Wildlife Restoration Funds.”

Here are a few significant examples, from FY 2021 — Alaska, \$28,248,208; Georgia, \$21,167,163; Missouri, \$17,770,374; Pennsylvania, \$23,776,074 and Texas, \$31,095,765.

PRIVATE GROUPS

Some years ago, I wrote about all of the private hunting-conservation organizations also raising millions of dollars for wildlife programs benefitting non-game as well as game species. As was once explained to me by a wildlife biologist, improvements to habitat for waterfowl, for example, benefit songbirds and other wetland species bird watchers enjoy and those wetlands also are home to beaver and other fur bearers.

Land with natural cover protects small game and upland game birds while also providing shelter and edible plants and insects for a variety of non-game animals. We know this, but very often efforts to protect such habitat supported financially



by sportsmen's groups get ignored.

Here are some of the leading organizations whose members dig into their wallets to maintain such projects: Safari Club International, Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation, Mule Deer Foundation, Pheasants Forever, Ducks Unlimited, Delta Waterfowl, Ruffed Grouse Society and Quail Unlimited, and this just scratches the surface.

One year ago this month, *The Hill*, a news website covering Capitol Hill politics, reported on the resurgence of hunting as a popular activity during the COVID crisis. In a

report published Oct. 31, 2020, *The Hill* noted, "The number of American hunters dropped from 13.6 million in 2011 to 11.4 million in 2016."

However, "A month out from the opening day of Michigan's (2020) whitetail deer firearm season, hunting license sales have surged to almost 446,000," the report revealed, "13% higher than 2019. Deer tags sales are up 16% over last year."

WHAT TO DO

Okay, so what do we do with this information? As noted earlier, use it in letters to the editor or Op-Ed pieces in community newspapers that are always looking for timely, relevant and even provocative articles to gun up reader interest.

With your state P-R funds as the hook, you can localize such an article, which community newspapers really like. Other groups may claim they can now contribute more money to wildlife enhancement and conservation but it would be a stretch for any to claim they've raised more over the years than the P-R fund (more than \$14 billion), especially coupled with all the millions of dollars contributed by the private organizations mentioned above.

Find out if there is a local chapter of any national hunting organization, get some facts and figures and include these in your Op-Ed or letter. Likewise, check with local gun clubs to see what they're up to and possibly focus your article on them, reminding readers how all of these shooters contribute to wildlife conservation even if they don't hunt. Find out whether one of these groups is offering a Hunter Education course, which invariably has a strong firearms safety component and mention this as well.

If you do get an article published, make sure your local lawmaker gets a copy. In your correspondence with legislators, remind them of the benefits to conservation by having more than 100 million American gun owners, including the millions of hunters.

America's gun owners and especially hunters are the cornerstone of wildlife conservation and enhancement efforts. The excise taxes you provide to the P-R program are a big part of the picture but so are license and tag fees, funds raised by purchasing Duck Stamps and other special fees that might be involved.

You're the good guys. Remember that.

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SS (SHORT SLIDE) D&L PROFESSIONAL MODEL D&L SPORTS, INC.

The SS (Short Slide) D&L Professional Model is a commander-size 1911 .45 ACP pistol. However, it's not a commander. The full-size Pro Model had been redesigned to work with a short slide, yet retain the functional slide travel distance and timing of a full size 5"-barreled Pro Model. This design allows shooters to use shocks buffs during their high volume training without concern about slide travel distance. MSRP: Starting at \$3,950. For more info: (928) 636-1726, DLSports.com

15-ROUND HELLCAT MAGAZINE

SPRINGFIELD ARMORY

Springfield Armory has taken its Hellcat pistol — the smallest, highest capacity micro-compact 9mm handgun in the world — and increased its substantial 13 capacity by two. The *15-Round Hellcat Magazine* features stainless steel construction for durability, numbered round count witness holes and a polymer follower. The magazine's extension gives extra gripping area and has a pattern matching the texture of the Hellcat's frame. MSRP: \$39.95. For more info: (800) 680-6866, store.springfield-armory.com



PRO-DRAG TRAILS END #307 COMBO

WILDLIFE RESEARCH CENTER

The Pro-Drag Trails End #307 Combo from Wildlife Research Center is a scent and dispenser set. Pro-Drag is made with a special synthetic felt for maximum scent absorption and dispersal. Super Charged Trails End #307 with Scent Reflex Technology is an improved version of the company's first product. Pro-Drag Trail's End #307 Combo includes a 1 fl.-oz. bottle of Trails End #307, two Pro-Drag scent dispensers and one drag rope. MSRP: \$12.99. For more info: (800) 873-5873, Wildlife.com



WX CLIMB WILEY X

The WX Climb from Wiley X combines its popular rectangular lens shape with an ANSI safety rating for optical clarity and protection against high-mass and high-velocity impact. Built for durability, a lightweight, high-wrap frame blocks unwanted peripheral light and makes for a comfortable, snug fit that stays put even when the wearer is active. The WX Climb comes in three models. The one in the picture has a matte grey frame and polarized blue mirror (grey Base) lens. MSRP: \$90. For more info: (800) 776-7842, WileyX.com

1873 WESTERN REVOLVER DAVIDSON'S INC.

Davidson's now offers two variants of the *1873 Western Revolver*. The new Davidson's Pietta Exclusives are convertible models — each has two cylinders. One is chambered in 45 Colt and one in 45 AP. Offered in a 4.75" and a 5.5" barrel, they both feature a deep blued finish on the frame, cylinder and barrel. The trigger guard, front strap and back strap are high-polished brass. There is also a companion piece: the 1878 Double Barrel Deluxe Coach side-by-side shotgun. Chambered in

12 gauge, it features 20" barrels, a walnut stock, a color case-hardened receiver and more. MSRP: Revolvers \$559.99 each; Shotgun \$989.99. For more info: (928) 776-8055, DavidsonsInc.com



STRATO LOW LOFT JACKET MASSIF

The Strato Low Loft Jacket delivers enough insulation to keep the toughest soldiers warm in cold environments while maintaining hyper breathability to eliminate overheating. The Strato is fully reversible with one OCP side and one black side. When not in use, the jacket can be stuffed into its hand pocket. The OCP color is restricted to U.S. Military personnel. MSRP: \$330. For more info: (800) 462-7743, Massif.com



COMPOUND BOX BLIND HAWK HUNTING

The Compound Box Blind gives stealth a new meaning with insulated steel walls and a steel foam-insulated floor topped with a 1" high-density rubber mat. It measures 7.25' W x 5.75' D x 6.5' T and ships fully assembled and field-ready! MSRP: From \$4,999.99. For more info: (877) 269-8490, HawkHunting.com

For more New Products visit us
online at gunsmagazine.com



GAUNTLET 2 PCP

UMAREX USA

Umarex Airguns improved on the first generation Gauntlet and has come up with the *Gauntlet 2 Pre-Charged Pneumatic (PCP)*. All new for 2021, the Gauntlet 2 is offered in both .22 and .25 calibers. It brings a refined look and performance potential to shooters looking for an alternative to rimfire rifles or the discerning air gun shooter aiming for the 10-ring. MSRP: \$449.99. For more info: (479) 646-4210, UmarexUSA.com



SABRE STAR BULLETS

NORTHERN PRECISION

Sabre Star Bullets from Northern Precision are now made in .452 diameter for the .45 ACP, the 454 Casull and the 450 Bushmaster. They are designed for extreme expansion for self-defense and varmints. These have cone-shaped hollow points with six sharp expanding points producing a buzzsaw effect on contact. The Sabre Star is also made in .429 and .418 caliber for reduced recoil loads. MSRP: \$25 for 40 standard bullets; \$35 for 25 bonded core bullets. For more info: (315) 955-8679, NPCustomBullets.com



TAQ WALLET

The *TAQ Wallet* is the world's only tactical wallet with a high-power USB rechargeable LED flashlight with safety strobe, integrated bottle cap opener, screwdriver, glass-breaking tip and carabiner attachment site. The TAQ Wallet will also deliver from 75 up to 150 lumens of light on demand with the push of a button. Available in black, blue, OD green (in picture) and aluminum. MSRP: \$74.95. For more info: (866) 496-2506, Quiqlite.com



AR-15/M16 BARREL VISE JAWS

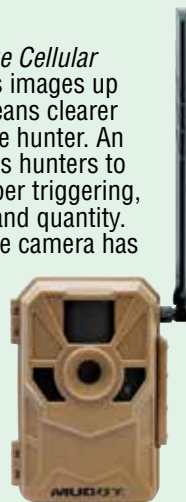
LUTH-AR, LLC

The *AR-15/M16 Barrel Vise Jaws* from Luth-AR is an armorer tool for AR barrels. The Vise Jaws uses two "V" blocks that clamp into your bench vise to simplify assembly work. Additional notches and surfaces can be used to hold or stabilize components while setting or removing pins and other operations. Will work with standard barrels as well as 1" bull barrels and 3/4" heavy barrels. It's made of high-strength 6005 A-T61 aluminum for durability. MSRP: \$29.95. For more info: (763)-263-0166, Luth-AR.com

MERGE CELLULAR TRAIL CAMERA

MUDDY OUTDOORS

Muddy Outdoors' *Merge Cellular Trail Camera* captures images up to 26 megapixels. This means clearer and sharper images for the hunter. An updated burst mode allows hunters to capture up to six images per triggering, bringing together quality and quantity. Beyond clearer images, the camera has a 0.4 trigger speed. The Merge will be powered by the Stealth Cam Command Pro app and set up by a quick-scan QR code. MSRP: \$149.99. For more info: (877) 269-8490, GoMuddy.com



NATCHEZ BOWIE IN 3V

COLD STEEL

Cold Steel introduces the *Natchez Bowie in 3V*, an elegant blade inspired by the infamous 19th century "Under-The-Hill" landing below the Natchez Bluffs. It is a robust bowie pattern knife with an 11.5" clip-point blade made of CPM-3V steel. The handle is G10. Additional features are a polished double-quillon guard, bolster and pommel. Overall length is 17". MSRP: \$629.99. For more info: (877) 269-8490, ColdSteel.com

PINNACLE QUILT

ALPS MOUNTAINEERING

The *Pinnacle Quilt* from ALPS Mountaineering is ready for the 2021 camping season. Based on a 20D 380T nylon shell and efficient 600 Fill Power hydrophobic down fill, the quilt is engineered to more comfortably accommodate different sleeping positions while ensuring optimal heat retention and ventilation options. Accommodates up to 6'2" height. MSRP: \$179.99. For more info: (800) 344-2577, AlpsBrands.com



Howa Carbon Stalker Package

Howa's *Carbon Stalker* in 6.5 Creedmoor is the exciting giveaway prize for this issue of *GUNS Magazine*! It has a 22" threaded #2 barrel contour, a 1:8" twist, a 2-stage match trigger, a machined receiver and forged bolt, a large integral front barrel lug and a 3-position safety. The rifle's bolt has an integral bolt handle and pressure vent holes and bolt faces are true and square to the chamber. Weighing 6.2 lbs., the rifle has one of the safest actions on the market, a reliable M16-style extractor/ejector and stringent and exacting headspace specs. Sub-MOA is 3-shot group at 100 yards using premium factory ammo. Other features include Stocky's Carbon Stock, an Accublock patented lug bed and a Limbsaver butt pad. The Howa Carbon Stalker sports a Kryptek Altitude camo finish.

The *Gamepro Optic* from Nikko Stirling with a 4-12x40 Plex Reticle has a 1" tube and target turrets. With a ¼" MOA per click adjustments, this scope comes attached to the Carbon Stalker so whoever wins this giveaway will be all set for an awesome hunting adventure.

Light your path with the *Macrostream USB*. This compact light from Streamlight delivers 500 lumens of light in a machined aluminum case with a Type II Military Spec anodized finish. It is rechargeable and runs up to two hours on high and eight hours on low. Weighing only 2.2 oz., the 4.5" MacroStream USB includes a removable, two-way pocket/hat clip and a tail cap switch.

The *Squid Black* is a compact, folding knife from CRKT with lots of features. It has a 2.16" blade made of D2 steel, a 2Cr13 handle in a black stonewash finish, a frame lock and friction grooves on the drop-point blade. Weighing 3.5 oz., the Squid has an OAL of 5.70"; closed length is 4.49".

Hurry and enter the giveaway for a chance to win a Howa Carbon Stalker with Nikki Stirling scope, a Streamlight handheld flashlight and a CRKT knife. Go to GUNSMagazine.com/giveaways or send a (post) card.

—Jazz Jimenez



MACROSTREAM USB

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Streamlight.com
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TOTAL VALUE: \$1,448.99

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

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We've heard it's difficult to find post cards these days so here's a tip — use index cards, the back of greeting cards or even cereal boxes!

GAMEPRO OPTIC

MANUFACTURER: Nikko Stirling Ltd.
NikkoStirling.com
VALUE: \$200

HOWA CARBON STALKER

MANUFACTURER: Howa USA
(800) 553-4229
HowaUSA.com
CALIBER: 6.5 Creedmoor,
CAPACITY: 4+1,
BARREL LENGTH: 22", **OAL:** 42"
WEIGHT: 6.2 lbs. (rifle only)
VALUE: \$1,119

SQUID BLACK

CRKT
(800) 891-3100
CRKT.com
VALUE: \$39.99



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THE RUGER BISLEY HUNTER MY "DO-ANYTHING" SIXGUN

Sitting near the ridge top, I see her nervously step out from the quakes. My left thumb cocks the Bisley Hunter before gripping the walking stick with that hand. I place my right hand on top, for support. Feeling stable, I transition to the

sight picture, testing the hold. She's far, but everything is steady and clear — perfect — when the gun fires.

Jerking her head, she bites at the slug's impact, thinking, "That's one helluva' horsefly bite!" The "wumph" sound is

reassuring, echoing back to me. Taking three woozy steps, she drops.

"H..o..l..y, hell," I think, mouth wide open. My first handgun kill, a cow elk, double-lunged at 121 yards! Being in Idaho, land of Elmer, using his bullet design and load, makes it all the more fitting, poetic even.

BISLEY HUNTER'S

My then-new Ruger Bisley Hunter (BH), chambered in .45 Colt, was christened. Over the next decade, we've taken several deer together, all from the same box of handloads. They consist of Lyman's 454424 .45 Keith bullets, loaded over a stiff dose of Alliant 2400, ignited with large pistol primers, going over 1,200 FPS. It's a good load for us.

If there was ever a "do anything" gun, Ruger's BH would be a top contender. While the .44 Magnum BH is a catalog item, the .41 Magnum, and grand old .45 Colt, are available, from time to time, by different distributors. It took a while to get mine.

What separates the BH from others? It's the beefy, heavily ribbed barrel, allowing scope ring cut-outs, making scope mounting a snap. The added weight absorbs recoil from heavy loads, while also steadying aim, as an added bonus. Shooters appreciate the glare-free qualities provided by the grooves on top of the rib when shooting open sights.

My first BH was chambered in .45 Colt because of its "do-anything" qualities. My favorite caliber, its performance is exceptional with its different power levels. One would be hard-pressed finding a better combination. Over time, I obtained all three BH's, I love them so much.

BISLEY HUNTER QUEST

After finally obtaining my .45 BH, a .41 Magnum BH became available, and I snatched it up, too. I've always liked the .41 Magnum and searched for years before finding any gun chambered in it, new, or used. I didn't care, I just wanted a .41 Magnum. I'd already bought brass, dies and molds for it — but still needed the gun.

Handloaders have a backwards way of doing things like that. Anyway, when I saw the .41 BH, I knew I had to have it. Having two out of three guns, I completed my quest getting the .44 Magnum BH for Christmas a few years back — from my wife. What an angel! Besides, you can never go wrong with a .44 Magnum, right? Especially when



Tank's trio of Bisley Hunter's chambered in, from top: .41 Magnum, .44 Magnum and .45 Colt. The Bisley Hunter is a wonderfully versatile SA shooter regardless of caliber. Ruger never made a Bisley Hunter in .22LR/Magnum, so Tank made do with the scoped Hunter, with plow handle grip. The Scope mounting makes these revolvers versatile indeed.





A scoped handgun really lets you wring out the accuracy for testing handloads (above). The makings for Tank's favorite .45 Colt Handload (below) — the one he's relied on many times in the field over the years.



it's a BH. I know, I'm spoiled, and maybe a little obsessed. Maybe?

EYE SCHEMATICS

My original plan was using the BH with iron sights, until my eyes fail, then adding a scope. Happily, I can still see my front sights good enough for deer-sized targets, out to 75 yards, or so. I still prefer irons, as they provide more confidence, simply because I don't see my wobble as much. Hey, we all have it to some extent. However, nothing's worse than watching magnified crosshairs dance around during your trigger press — at least for me.

Shooting from sandbag rests remedies any wobble and is perfect for checking accuracy of new handloads. I never realized how accurate my Bisley Hunters were, until scoping them. I swap the same

Leupold 4X scope, rotating it from gun to gun, as needed.

My preference for a single action sixgun is a no brainer. They're tough, reliable, easy to work on and have a strength and beauty all their own. It's hard to beat those traits. They're appropriate for the rough and rugged terrain we hunt. The Bisley grip absorbs recoil like no other. Say goodbye to bashed knuckles with heavy handloads.

Yup, my .45 Colt Bisley Hunter and me have a lot more hunts to go on. I never tire watching how effectively it performs. It has never let me down. Unfortunately, I can't say the same, and that's another story. But, if you're looking for a "do-anything" shooter, the Ruger Bisley Hunter is hard to beat.



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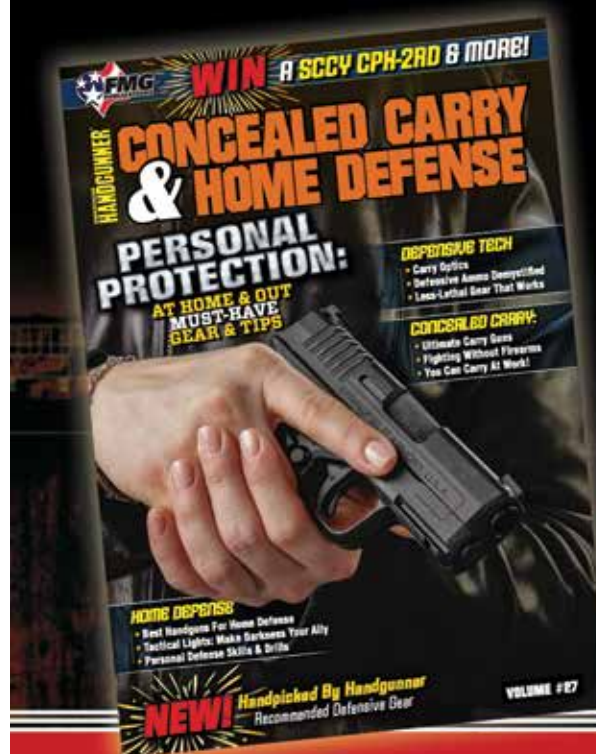
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belt-fed, the most popular being the M249 Light Machine Gun and the H&K HG4.

Trout — Trout have a certain panache so you'll need a stylish gun — preferably something requiring a credit check prior to purchase. To ensure being welcomed into the rarified club of hardcore trout junkies, the best choices in firearms include classic double rifles from Westley-Richards, Holland and Hollard or Purdey.

As trout are thin-skinned and easy to take down once cornered, lighter calibers or slower non-magnum cartridges are most appropriate. While some trout stalkers will go extremely light and choose things like a custom .17 HMR, these speedster calibers often cause too

you'll be the guest of the authorities for several months and might miss a good part of the fishing and hunting seasons.

Inshore saltwater species — If you're targeting things like redfish, sea trout, grunt, sponge or snook, any medium-caliber hunting rifle works fine as the ranges might be long but the water is usually shallow. As these species are abundant and typically weigh under 15 lbs., a favorite .30-30 lever action or .270 bolt-action deer rifle fits the bill perfectly.

Offshore big-game — Are you ready to head offshore and take on giant marlin, tuna, shark, frigate or whale? If so, you'll definitely need big-game gear for such world-class quarry! All of these giant species present serious danger by their sheer bulk and aggressiveness, and require lots of power to quickly subdue. More than

"GISHING ... I THOUGHT IT WAS A VERY CATCHY NAME, THOUGH I'LL ADMIT IT SOUNDS LIKE A VETERINARY PROCEDURE OR SOME OBSCURE RULE OF GRAMMAR."

much meat damage and result in waste. They also ricochet like mad!

Catfish & carp — The bottom-feeders — and the anglers who chase them — are an unpretentious lot and the guns should be likewise. Many who pursue 'cats feel an old hardware-store utility-grade gun, the more battered the better, is ideal. An elderly Stevens single-shot 16 gauge that has spent the past 40 years rattling around behind the seat of a farm pickup truck without the benefit of a case, is perfect. Wrist-rockets, recurve bows and roadside fireworks purchased anywhere south of the Ohio River also work well.

Muskie & pike — These fast, mean fish require large-caliber firepower in a quick-handling gun. Semi-auto pistols such as the 1911A1 are perfect though the magazine capacity is a bit small for the speedy and tooth-laden predators. In fact, larger hunting revolvers such as the .454 Casull or .460 S&W aren't necessarily overkill, especially near the Canada border where these species grow large.

Of course, don't accidentally cross over into Canuck territory with your handgun — it's easy to do in trackless wilderness — or

one angler has been killed by the thrashing, smashing throes of a huge, vengeful marlin brought to the side of the blind, er, boat. This is why serious dangerous-game weaponry is required: minimal required firepower starts at the .45-70 with hard-cast bullets and goes up from there. In fact, many pro bluewater fish stalkers have twin .50 BMGs mounted on the stern.

Exclusive Preview: Next month's *Gishing* cover story — "Dum-dums for dolphin — the definitive guide."

Disclaimer: this article is merely satire and was written after spending too long in the poor-ventilated den with an open bottle of gun solvent. Please know shooting into the water is dangerous and, in most places, illegal. Likewise, firearms are not generally considered legal sport-fishing equipment and you would be subject to a fine or even arrest if you attempt anything listed in the story.

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FISHING GUNS

BEST BULLETS FOR BASS?

During a recent editorial strategy meeting on the panoramic top floor of the 50-story *GUNS* office building in East Bumphrey, someone discovered a new trend. Trends are important to the publishing industry because everyone is constantly chasing them, hopefully luring one or two into a capture net in order to domesticate the shifty little beasts and milk them for all they're worth.

Of course, *GUNS* has mostly ignored the trend of trends, but sometimes we trend towards being trendy like all other trendsetters. In this most recent case, somebody suddenly shouted "Eureka" during the meeting when they were suddenly reminded fishing had become a hot new "thing."

NEVER GONE

Actually, fishing has always been popular and never "went away" but many who don't regularly partake in piscatorial pursuits didn't know this. Now, with all the quarantine restrictions and generalized upheaval of society over the last two years, somebody observed the local fishing hole is packed shoulder-to-shoulder and obviously something was afoot.

For those of us who own as many fishing rods as firearms, we already knew the only change was many people have concluded sitting alongside the water, bored and doing nothing, is vastly preferable to sitting at home bored and doing nothing. Therefore, larger numbers of folks were grabbing a fishing rod and heading out for a day on the water when they weren't allowed to do much else.

Regardless of reasons, to the chagrin of dedicated anglers everywhere, it is indisputable more people are fishing. This clearly qualifies as a trend and thus once identified, any forward-thinking business team asks the all-important question during critical strategy meetings: "What time do they serve lunch?"

Since the noon meal was still an hour away, we returned to the discussion and somebody pointed out a marriage of

firearms and fishing would be a truly unique niche for a magazine. As the oldest consumer newsstand firearms publication, we discussed perhaps *GUNS* could start a new title focused on this pursuit. But one major problem remained — what editor could we *possibly* find who is completely nuts about both firearms and fishing rods.

WHO, INDEED?

I frantically raised my hand in the manner of a fourth-grader who drank too much fruit punch. Fortunately, after the Second Vice President in Charge of Acknowledgement realized I was asking to



make a point, I began my earnest pitch.

First off, for better or worse, I'm the obvious choice to helm this new publication. Though firearms consume approximately 27 hours of my brainpower each day, I also spend one or two minutes each hour daydreaming about fish and fishing. I'm equally happy lying behind a precision rifle, whanging steel with my .45, cradling a side-by-side 20-gauge while following an English setter with a nose full of quail — or stumbling down a creek armed with a flyrod intent on pestering the local smallmouth bass or taking my boat onto the ocean in search of disappointment (I'm not

a very good saltwater angler). Shooting is both my vocation and avocation, but overall I prefer to think of myself — to steal a term from the late Peter Hathaway Capstick — a "Professional Small Boy," full of wild and terrible enthusiasms which encompass both shooting and angling.

Thus, I'm the perfect person to meld the world of fish and firearms. Thus emboldened I proposed a whole new magazine based on "Gishing," a portmanteau of "Gun" and "Fishing." I thought it was a very catchy name, though I'll admit it sounds like a veterinary procedure or some obscure rule of grammar.

"Sorry, Jim, I can't meet you for lunch. A bunch of the cattle need gishing and I probably won't be done until mid-afternoon...."

Regardless of any potential title confusion, I think it's a strong concept. In fact, I've already written the first cover story and will now share some excerpts from "Bustin' Caps on Carp and Crappie: Best guns for any fish!"

Bluegill — Everyone's first catch, the bluegill is a popular and easy-to-find species, making it ideal for everyone from the novice to the expert. As bluegills are unpretentious, small and often caught by kids, a lighter, easy-to-use gun such as a Chipmunk rifle in .22 Short is ideal. Of course, adults enjoy catching them also and as such anglers tend to be panfish specialists, a high-quality .22 rimfire trainer is perfect.

Bass — The "Bucketmouth" is truly "America's fish" and as such, deserving of a classic 12-gauge pump such as the Remington 870, Mossberg 500 or perhaps an heirloom side-by-side. Of course, if you're down south where the bass grow big and burley, more firepower is necessary so 3" double-aught buck or even slugs aren't out of place in your angler's tackle box. If you're targeting swifter, more aggressive smallmouth bass, a quality semi-auto in 20 gauge is perfect.

Crappie — As crappie tend to hang in groups ranging from 100 to a million-plus, a high-capacity firearm is important. Most anglers on the Professional Crappie Hunting Tournament Series use something

continued on page 73

THE ADVANTAGE OF METAL FOR THE PRICE OF POLYMER: MEET THE STK100 – THE STRIKER-FIRED PISTOL BUILT TO TURN HEADS



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