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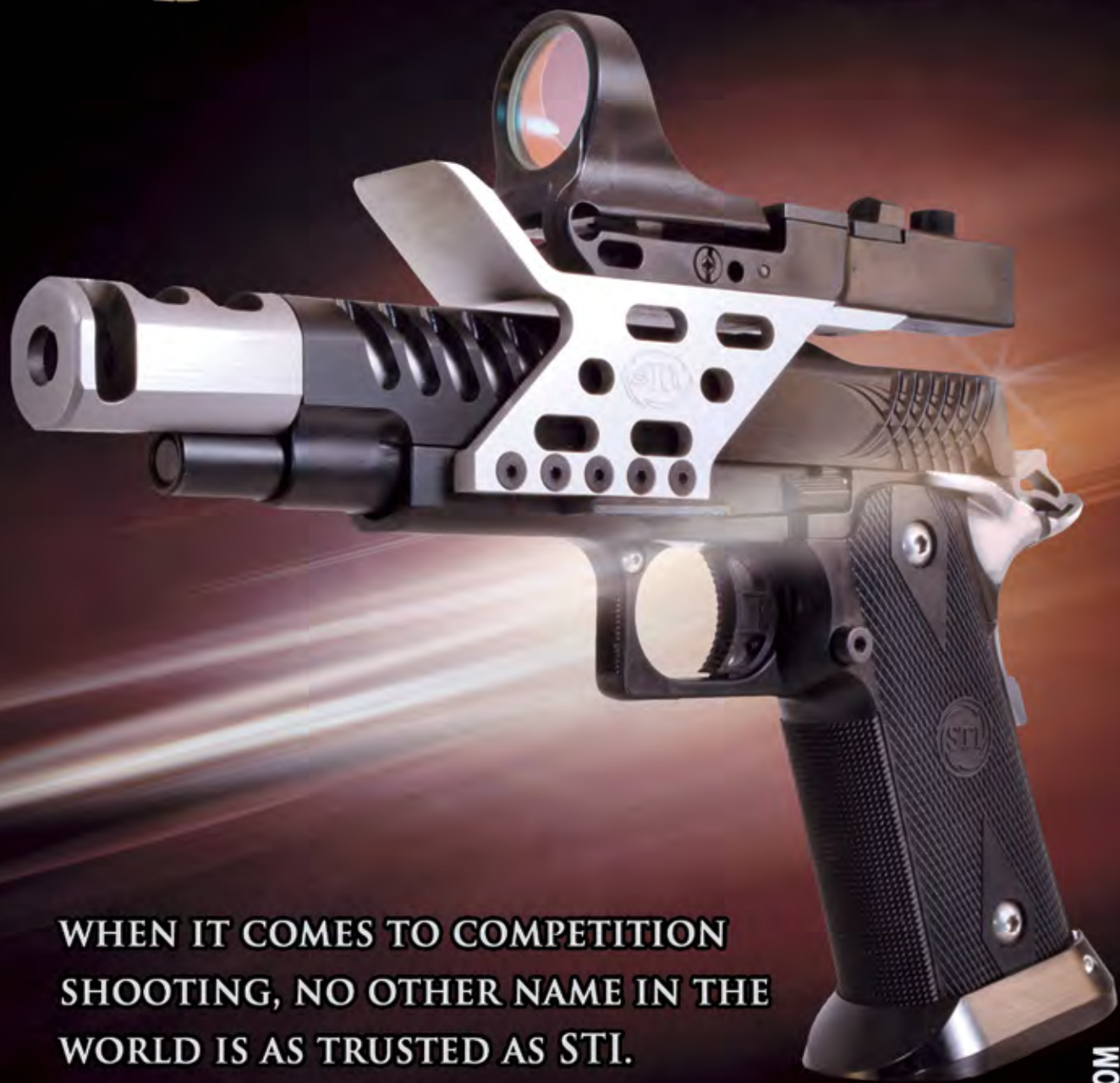
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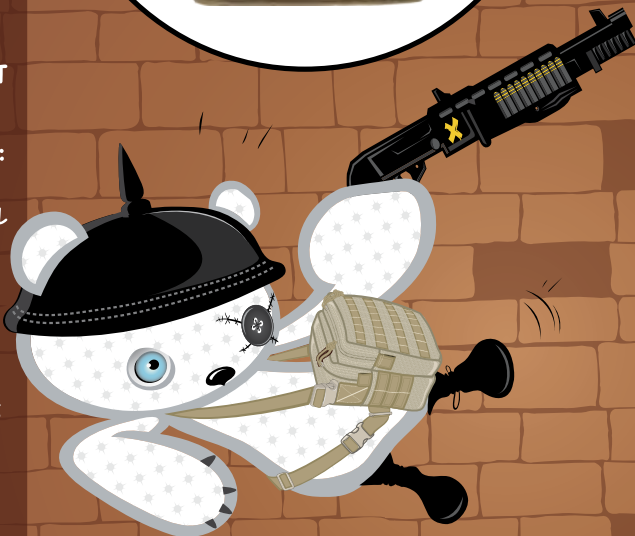
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FEATURES

48 THE CALIBER MYTH

What? No magic cartridge? Surely we're wrong? Dave Emory

50 LITTLE HANDGUNS

Is it *bad* to like the little guys? Mike "Duke" Venturino

52 MORRIS CUSTOM'S SST1

Shhh ... be vewy, vewy quiet! A suppressed fighting 1911. Roy Huntington

58 THE SIG SAUER 210

A literal living *Legend* of reliability and accuracy. Mike Cumpston

60 ON A MISSION

SOG's rock solid knives! Pat Covert

63 CLOSE LOOK: COMPETITION GEAR **WEB ELAST!**

What's new, cool — and *needed* — to stay competitive. John Connor

65 A REAL HANDMADE 1911

Check out this battlefield-made Vietnam-era trophy. J.D. Jones

69 CLOSE LOOK: AIRGUNS

Serious, silly and semi-silly serious. Airsoft and airguns: tons o' fun! John Connor

72 SPRINCO'S RECOIL REDUCER

A recoil reducer for handguns — but does it work? Ralph Mroz

101 THE RHINO REVOLVER

A series of surprises. J.B. Wood

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AIRSOFT GUNS

A sensible training option. J.I. Galan

THE REISING .22 SEMI-AUTO PISTOL

An interesting bit of handgun history! MacGregor "Mac" Scott

DEPARTMENTS

- 20 THE AYOOB FILES** Massad Ayoob
The Zanesville wild animal escape.
- 28 THE SIXGUNNER** John Taffin
Colt's New Frontier is back!
- 32 BETTER SHOOTING** Dave Anderson
Whitney Wolverine .22.
- 70 GUN RIGHTS** Alan Korwin
Should you sue?
- 94 GUNNYSACK** Roy Huntington
Rosen shoulder rig, Frontline holsters, KA-BAR ZK knives, Tactlet gun wallet



COLUMNS

- 8 SPEAK OUT**
- 22 PISTOLSMITHING** ALEX HAMILTON
- 26 GUNCRANK DIARIES** JOHN CONNOR
- 30 HANDGUN HUNTING** J.D. JONES
- 34 COP TALK** MASSAD AYOOB
- 36 HANDLOADING** JOHN TAFFIN
- 38 WINNING EDGE** DAVE ANDERSON
- 40 REALITY CHECK** HEIDI SMITH
- 42 SHOOTING IRON** MIKE "DUKE" VENTURINO
- 44 CARRY OPTIONS** SAMMY REESE
- 46 TAFFIN TESTS** JOHN TAFFIN
- 106 THE INSIDER** ROY HUNTINGTON



RESOURCES

- 82 OPEN RANGE**
- 92 CUSTOM CORNER**
- 98 SPOTLIGHT** STEVE EVATT
- 102 AD INDEX**
- 103 CLASSIFIEDS**

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66

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A LESSON THERE

Is it just me or do I detect the fact you guys can actually laugh at yourself, have fun and still come across as knowing your stuff? Hey, maybe the fact you don't act all high-and-mighty is a secret way of showing you're confident enough to not have to be jerks? There's a lesson there, I know ... I just have to figure it out. It's obvious some other magazines might want to learn it to, if you ask me.

Frank Townsend
Ogden, Utah

Joining ACLU

Several years ago, I spoke to your Mr. Korwin (*Gun Rights* author) and pointed out a basic flaw in pro-Second Amendment articles is they mostly appear in gun mags and the people who read them are *already* convinced. He suggested joining the ACLU where we would not be preaching to the choir. Not a bad idea. And as to his less

than polite comments on the anti-gun crowd, if the shoe fits ...

John A. "Jack" Betz, Jr.
Via e-mail

Jack, I used to think the same thing about preaching to the choir, but have since found out many readers are always looking for facts and ideas to help them talk-up our side to the gun-

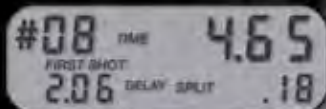
grabbers. Guys like Alan give them the word-ammo to fight back. RH

Not Much Anymore

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like me. Reading other gun magazines is like reading an elementary school reader. Some were good once — but not much anymore. Keep at it you guys!

F.E. Richeson
Englewood, Tenn.

Too Fast?

An outstanding article on overthinking velocity (*The Insider*, "How Fast Is Fast?" March/April 2012). It's nice to see someone tell the true story about handgun ammunition effectiveness. Too much has been written in the past as to how everyone just had to buy the most expensive and fastest handgun ammo. I believe you published an article in the past about coroner reports on gunshot victims. I think in that article you reported your personal observation there isn't much difference in wounds between common handgun calibers. Good information for all the people trying to decide what gun is right for them. It should help with the "I've got to have the biggest gun" quest. A gun you can carry and shoot well is more important than it's caliber. Not bashing the premium ammo or large calibers, it's just common sense to me. Use the gun you're the best with regardless of caliber. Excellent magazine! Connor Rocks!

"Bob"
Via e-mail

And ...

I especially liked your thoughts on velocity in your column. How refreshing! It's amazing, everyone's fixation with velocity, and at some serious costs, which you spelled out so well. I look at it too as a gunmaker who values functional reliability above all else. Some of these loads today are being pushed so fast, they are pushing the optimal operational envelope of many semi-auto pistol designs. Of course, the envelope pushing gets even worse when you consider the personal protection trend towards smaller, compact pistols. With their reduced slide mass, increased slide velocity, reduced dwell time and slide travel and sensitivity to proper spring weights, etc., designing the ammo properly is critical to stacking the odds toward reliable function in the compacts.

Primer flow can also be made worse with the higher pressures, tying up the pistol due to debris in the firing pin channel. Just a hunch — and I could be totally wrong — but I wonder if some makers might be using small rifle primers in their high pressure loads? Which might very well be why you hear of

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SPEAK OUT

misfires with certain brands. Either way, again — a possible cost to reliability.

I think the way to go is pick a premium projectile designed to perform really well without screaming velocity, and load it to a pressure/velocity level optimizing the reliable function of the firearms in prevalence in the market. Make it controllable no matter what you're shooting it in, make sure flash is minimal, pay close attention to quality control, and the shooter can then develop a great deal of confidence with his firearm and ammo. Especially because it actually runs! My loads will never win high-velocity contests — because I don't want to. But will the public get it?

Sure, someone could do a limited test fire with some hot loads in their pocket-rocket and everything may appear fine. But in the end, it still comes with costs. I appreciate you spreading this refreshing way to think about velocity needs.

Stan Chen
Stan Chen Customs

What Stan isn't saying is he makes a line of ammo called ASYM (we've featured it in Handgunner's pages) and have found it to adhere to precisely what Stan is talking about regarding common sense velocity, good bullet construction and reliable functioning. He's also a top-quality custom pistolsmith, so understands what makes a gun work. His thoughts bear listening to. We're flattered a professional like Stan took the time to let us know we're making sense. Now ... if I could just get Connor to make sense. RH

Not Cheesy

I was reading John Conner's article about chalk and cheese last night (*Gun-crank*, Jan/Feb 2012) and it suddenly dawned on me why the FMG mags are so much better than the rest. When I was a kid, one of my favorite things was sitting in the warm kitchen at my grandpa's house on a cold winter day listening to the men talk about guns, tell how they "sucked for Joe into trading his Colt Python for that old motorcycle," handle the different guns passed around the table, and generally just enjoy being in the company of *men*. For a kid, that's a pretty heady experience. I think that's the same feeling people get when they read your magazines. It's not about how it takes 827 nanoseconds for the 16.745-ounce bolt to cycle on the P27-A12 sniper rifle — it's about the passing along of hard won knowledge and shared life experience. It's about mentorship. Sometimes when I sit down to read the latest issue, just for a moment, I am back

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in my grandpa's kitchen. I can almost smell the lingering aromas of wood smoke, the bacon we had for breakfast and gun oil. And that's worth a lot.

Dr. Ryan Ford
Via e-mail

Doc, you couldn't have made us any happier with your words. That's exactly what we try to do: simply be gun guys, just like you fellows. And most of us have those same cherished memories. Ain't we a lucky bunch, all of us? RH

Not Just Names

I just read your answer to the "Assault Rifle Nonsense" letter (*Speak Out*, March/April 2012). I've long advocated using "real" terminology instead of legislated definitions that are designed to imply evil or induce fear in the unenlightened. This comes under that "winning the hearts and minds" part of the battle. I've posted in a number of forums and recommended we stop using the term "High-Capacity Magazines" unless it really is a high-capacity magazine.

Different states have different legislated definitions for high-capacity magazines. Here in New Jersey it's anything larger than 15 rounds. In California and New York it's anything larger than 10 rounds, and in Maryland it's anything larger than 20 rounds. Instead, I use — and recommend — the following terms:

Standard-Capacity Magazine: The mag the gun was designed for.

Restricted-Capacity Magazine: Legislated capacity smaller than standard.

High-Capacity Magazine: Greater capacity than standard.

Thus, a 15-round magazine for my Glock 19 is a "standard-capacity magazine" since that is what the gun is designed around. A 15-round magazine for my Browning Hi-Power is a "high-capacity magazine" since that gun was designed for a 13-rounder. A 10-round magazine is a "restricted-capacity magazine" for either gun since, other than legislation, there is no valid reason for it to exist, and a 20- or 33-round magazine for either gun is, indeed, a "high capacity magazine" since they are larger than either gun was designed for.

Curt Ogden
Via e-mail

Curt, that's a hell of an idea, and I think it makes perfect sense. I'll pitch it to the NSSF (the political action organization for the shooting industry) and even see if we can get anyone at the NRA to listen. RH

Getting Embarrassing?

My congratulation on a wonderful magazine! Yours is the best gun mag I get — by a long shot! The articles are

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SPEAK OUT

pertinent, informative and fun to read. Thankfully they lack the macho, self-promoting, screed that fills other similar rags. Your authors write as knowledgeable men who are self-confident enough to let the readers see their strengths as well as their human foibles. What other mag would have printed Mike Venturino's article about the death of his dog? It was a touching story, showing us Duke is just a man, and not some New Age Rambo intent on impressing us with the size of his knife, his steely gaze and his ability to hold 1" groups at 100 yards with his new-fangled derringer. Down to earth, no nonsense, accurate and fun articles are what this reader wants — and thankfully what you provide!

Thanks a bunch, and keep up the great work. I eagerly await the next editions of both *American Handgunner* and *GUNS*, and gladly renew my subscriptions when they are due. Please pass along my sincere appreciation to the entire staff and all your authors.

Tom Richwine
Carlisle, Pa.

Tom, we don't take your praise lightly, and appreciate it a great deal.

Speaking as the guy who has to try and wrangle this lineup of semi-miscreant gun guys, trust me when I say, we're all exactly like most of you — hopelessly addicted to gun stuff and shameless about how much fun we have sharing it with Handgunner's extended family. And Lord only knows what WWII helmet Duke will don in a future picture to prove that very point. I'm sure the self-proclaimed "demon-of-darkness" crowd go into an apoplectic seizure every time they see us actually having fun shooting. They always seem so serious, don't they? RH

Anti-Pro-Gun?

I would like to speak up for and concur with reader G. Solis (*Speak Out*, March/April 2012). The overall content of your magazine is excellent. I'm a veteran, and an NRA member since I was a kid in Alaska back in the 60s. That said, rabid reactionaries such as Mr. Korwin (*Gun Rights* author) ought to cool their jets a bit, and your magazine should highlight them less. Contrary to the fear mongering of his like-minded fellow travelers, restrictions to gun use and ownership (except here in Illinois, unfortunately) have generally diminished. Extremism, such as that espoused by Mr. Korwin, as well as by

his counterparts on the Left, contribute to a poisonous demonization of our fellow citizens. We are not each other's enemies, but honest witnesses for what we each believe.

In a pluralistic society such as ours, democracy is not a zero sum equation in which bullies seek to "defeat" and "crush" the opposite side. Mr. Korwin and others like him, again on both sides of the political divide, can of course disagree when necessary, but should refrain from the sort of dehumanizing characterizations that were previously leveled at George W., and are used today to profile Obama and other politicians. That your magazine gives such ideologues a platform without restraint contributes to the rhetorical sewage infecting today's political process.

Bruce Taylor
Chicago, Ill.

Bruce, thanks for your kind words about Handgunner. The gun-grabbers don't seem to mind using every tactic in the book to foist their agenda on us, so why not take the gloves off? Over the years, I've written countless articles being all "objective" and "honest" about it all, only wanting a level playing field — only to see our side get poked in the eye regardless. "How many children must

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die!” shouts, with much rending of hair and tearing of clothing in picket lines (as they disrupt MY NRA show); not to mention the terrorist tactics of the Brady crowd have left me unwilling to keep the boxing gloves on. As a matter of fact, we’ve tossed ‘em away. I confess, it’s been interesting to see their reactions when we push back. I was on a radio show not long ago having an impromptu debate with a gun-grabber. I questioned everything they said, demanded their sources, showed where they were blatantly wrong and refused to take it on the chin nicely. I don’t think he’d ever had anyone “push back” as hard as I did, and it lit-up the phones with people saying how glad they were I “put him in his place.”

I’m tired of hiding and being nice. And so’s Alan. RH

And ...

In a letter written by G. Solis published in the March/April 2012 issue, one of your readers took exception to the language used in an article by Alan Korwin, who referred to anti-gun people as “bigots” and “beyond stupid” (*Gun Rights*, Nov/Dec 2011). Based on a recent news article regarding Wisconsin’s new Castle Doctrine, I’d say the shoe that Korwin offered fits perfectly.

The Criminal Law Section of our State Bar here in Wisconsin, who presumably have some knowledge of criminal law, had written a letter to our State Assembly asking them to vote against a recent “Castle Doctrine” bill, protecting homeowners who use deadly force in self-defense. Perhaps the most absurd statement in the letter against the Castle Doctrine was this: “Under its provisions, malevolent, reckless, or paranoid people who shoot trick-or-treaters or repairmen on their porch will be presumed to be acting in self-defense.”

I find it inconceivable the lawyers, prosecutors and judges who are responsible for handling criminal law could make such a statement. It is possible they are grossly incompetent and ignorant of the bill’s provisions, but since these are the people who actually prosecute and apply the law, I have to assume they possess at least a modicum of intelligence, and have hopefully read the law.

The other possibility is they are intentionally trying to mislead elected representatives for their own reasons. In layman’s terms, we call this “lying through your teeth.” The only reason to spout such falsehoods to the State Assembly is to advance a political agenda. They are opposed to self-

defense, or perhaps they find it abhorrent they might have to actually prove someone broke the law (under an outdated concept called “innocent until proven guilty”) when a law-abiding, taxpaying citizen defends himself from a person who unlawfully and forcibly entered his home.

If any of your readers can come up with a better explanation of why a group of lawyers and judges would claim a Castle Doctrine law will allow homeowners to shoot trick-or-treaters without criminal liability, I’d be happy to hear it. Otherwise, “beyond stupid” seems to fit quite well.

Edwin Zalewski
Via e-mail

And ...

I was disappointed with the letter to the editor by G. Solis ripping Alan Korwin a new one for his observations in his *Gun Rights* column. To quote the Bard-on-Avon, “Methinks he doth protest too much!” Mr. Solis’ rant oozed with the smugness of justifiable righteousness one expects from the anti-gun folks, and not from a man with Solis’ background. What I gleaned out of Korwin’s article was him simply telling the truth, in non-politically correct terms. Well, thank God, it’s about

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SMART GUN CARE

SPEAK OUT

time. In my opinion, the vast majority of your readers, like me, are sick to death of the politically correct police. If one acts like an idiot, a dunce, etc., then tell it like it is, and to hell with tip toeing around the issue. Please keep it up Mr. Korwin, (and Mr. Conner); there are not enough folks out there like you gentlemen.

Finally, as a long time subscriber who has flushed all other gun magazine subscriptions, please permit me to say your publication is superb! I enjoy all aspects of your fine work, from the glossy paper, to the exceptional articles, and well done ads. Thank you for continuing your tireless effort to

maintain your position as the best gun magazine — by far — on the planet.

George F. Wills
Cartersville, Ga.

It's Not Right!

I just read the issue featuring the Chambers Custom Mirror Image Duo on the cover (March/April 2012). How dare you tease this left-handed shooter with the likes of a left-handed 1911! When I finished the article, I found that the gun is not really being produced. I've been pining for someone to make a 1911 leftie for years. I thought the wait was finally over. I love the platform, but have grown disgusted with right-hand-specific wares. I mean, it's the 21st century, right? Though wrong-handed, I have purchased 1911s to satisfy myself,

but the quality of that hardware was a major disappointment. Are you listening Geneseo (Springfield Armory)? Are you listening Yonkers (Kimber)? I'm waiting for someone to really reinvent the wheel and make an evolutionary, ambidextrous, double-stack descendent of the 1911 (STI, are you listening?). Somebody please build a functioning, non-custom, left-handed 1911 and I'll buy it. I know it won't be cheap, but I'll buy it. I can't be the only one.

Bob T.
Via e-mail

Almost 100 Percent

I'm retired from the Army and spent several years teaching weaponry at a school for unconventional warfare. I also spent 5 years as a cop

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working the fugitive felon apprehension unit, and taught weapons as an additional duty. I mention this solely to establish that over the course of almost 6 decades I have a highly-tuned BS detector when the subject is firearms. I always look forward to reading *American Handgunner* because your articles are timely, to the point, are almost always 100-percent accurate, and you have a staff of enthusiastic, knowledgeable writers, most of whom have not only “talked the talk” but have also “walked the walk” either in the military or as a cop. If I could subscribe to just one magazine, it would be *American Handgunner!*

Dennis J. Buckner
Via e-mail

Clint And Alan

I read where Clint is “sort of offended” (*Reality Check*, March/April 2012) by those who ignore or forget safety rules. He is a master of understatement. He puts forth a solid outlook on accidental discharges and their causes in his column.

Then I read where Mr. Solis is evidently offended by Alan Korwin’s article using straight-up language to describe our enemies (and they are our enemies for those of us who swore to “protect and defend the Constitution”). I am not offended by Mr. Korwin’s language, nor by Mr. Solis’ outlook. I am, however, offended by the gall or hubris of our enemies who have taken over our schools, the public news media, our government and the education of our young. These same enemies are somewhat protected by “respect the office, not the man (or woman) in it.”

I have lately been offended by those who condemn our Marines for allegedly urinating on terrorists. These idiots know nothing of the history of warfare, and are separated from head-loppers only by the very military they abuse. The “prissy” are offensive to me by the fact of their existence.

There is a wad of offense to go around in this society lately.

The other night, being of less than sound mind and body, I had an insomnia event, and turned on the radio and grabbed a book. The radio was on an AM station which broadcasts “Coast to Coast.” Normally, that program has every whacka-doo with something to say on, whether what they say is cogent or not. Usually, it’s background noise to my late night reading. This particular evening, it had a gentleman who was apparently an officer of “Fully Informed Jury Association” (FIJA). I found what he had to say about juries and instructions by judges to juries both fascinating and offensive (in the sense that I am offended by being misled by those



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SPEAK OUT

in positions of authority). Their organization is about helping to educate American citizens about the rights of a jury to judge the *validity* and *morality* of the law, *as well* as the facts under which a defendant is being tried. I cannot really address whether he was completely correct or not, not having a thorough legal background. The premise of FIJA is worth considering, however, and dovetails nicely with the other rights enumerated in our Constitution. This is a link to their website: <http://fija.org/about/history/>

My best regards to you and your staff.
Elton Wylie
Via e-mail

Parent Gun Rights

I read with a great deal of interest the column (*Gun Rights*, Jan/Feb 2012), by Mr. Korwin. While I believe in gun rights, and proper interpretation of the Second Amendment, one paragraph in his article really struck me. He said, until the age of 18, your gun rights come from your parents. That provision really hit home with me because, among other things, I truly believe a proper education is very important, and the parents have a great deal of bearing on that.

I went to a private high school that had its own rifle team, which would have been in 1951-1955. In addition, time and again, I have seen young children, boys and girls, taken out by their parents to either a ranch or outdoor shooting range, and taught the proper handling of a firearm, and the destructive power of a firearm. All of these children always come back with a heightened respect for firearms. So, while some might argue for different laws, let us not forget the impact of education, and the role parents should be playing in it.

W. Stuart Home
Via e-mail

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SITUATION: An embittered man sets more than 50 dangerous wild animals free upon his community before committing suicide ... and you have to come in and deal with it, using standard police firearms.

LESSONS: Determination, tactics, teamwork and marksmanship skill under pressure can make up for less than “dangerous game power level” firearms.

Oct. 18, 2011, late afternoon on the outskirts of Zanesville, Ohio, the county seat of Muskingum County. Here, Terry Thompson, age 61, owns a ranch he has populated with some 56 exotic wild animals. They include six black bears, two big grizzlies, three mountain lions and two wolves. But his collection goes beyond indigenous American animals. The cramped cages in his zoo compound also contain assorted primates and, more ominously, 17 African lions and 18 Bengal tigers. None of them are tame. And he’s just opened the cages and released them all.

Having recently returned home from a Federal prison term for crimes involving illegal firearms, and discovering his long-suffering wife had left him, Thompson apparently plunged into bitter despair.

As the animals begin to leave their cages and taste freedom, Terry Thompson raises a stainless steel .357 Magnum revolver to his head, and pulls the trigger.

The long, dark night of killing has begun.

First Response

The first call came in to Muskingum County 9-1-1 dispatch at approximately 5 p.m. A neighbor saw a lion in her backyard. Sheriff’s deputies were dispatched, and arrived swiftly. What they found was something most cops have probably never seen before: an array of large, carnivorous predators walking around freely. Deputies soon spotted Thompson’s lifeless body near the barn. A white tiger was eating him.

Reinforcements were already on the way. Sheriff Matt Lutz arrived quickly and took command. Realizing the animals were probably clustered within a 500-yard radius of their pens and cages now, he knew how fast they could move. There were dense woods adjoining the 77-acre Thompson farm, and they were close to an interstate highway and more heavily populated neighborhoods. Having been to the property many times on animal related issues, Lutz knew the huge danger these animals presented to the populace, and he knew there was only one mechanism of containment with any chance of working.

He called in every available deputy, and gave the order to put the animals down. Now!

Pistol Versus Bear

One of the first deputies to start pulling triggers was Jonathan Merry. He settled the red dot of his Vortex optic on a gray wolf, and pressed the trigger of his M4. The animal was soon down and done. Merry returned to his patrol car, put the rifle inside and closed the door. He was about to enter the driver’s door and bring his patrol car back to the central scene when a black bear found him.

He saw the animal make eye contact. There were many directions in which it could have moved, but it lowered its head and charged him on all fours, growling. Outside the vehicle and unable to retrieve his rifle from inside it, he drew his pistol and fired.

The animal was coming full speed, and he has no recollection of aiming, only of focusing on its head and hoping to plant his shot in the brain.

Continued on page 74

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SAFETY SENSIBILITY



Many of today's polymer pistols use a "passive" safety in the form of a lever in the center of the trigger pad, yet many shooters still want an external safety of some sort.

The crusty Master Sergeant stood at the front of the room slapping his crippled leg with a whip-thin swagger stick he had removed from a dead enemy on Guadalcanal. His OD green army dress uniform was a perfect background for the seven or so lines of colored ribbons, especially for the one at the top with white stars on a field of blue. Most represented a violent moment in time in this man's military combat life. He seemed to be 9' tall when he spoke, but he was really a stretched 5'8" with his shoes and hat on, all cased in a sinewy 145-pound body. I could only imagine the physical scars that old body held as he lifted the beat up US Property GI .45 to eye level and said, "This, gentleman, is the greatest pistol ever created by man, and the safest pistol on the face of this scorched earth."

He continued, as we new recruits, awed in the presence of everything we teenage pups assumed a man should be in the late 1950s. "Today, men, we will talk about the safety of the Model 1911-A1, and how you can keep from killing yourself with it. First, the trigger is nothing more than a piece of metal until you put your finger on it. That, you pieces of #&*@%, is your first lesson.

"Second, the grip safety keeps the trigger from being pulled unless the pistol is gripped with a firm, manly hand. The thumb safety, when clicked to the up position, blocks the rear of the sear to stop it from disengaging from the hammer hook. When you click it to the down position, the pistol is hot, ready for bloody business. Then there is the hammer with a half-cock notch designed to catch the hammer before it hits the firing pin if the pistol ever falls to the ground with the hammer cocked. If I catch any one of you puking dropping your pistol, you better be dead or dying."

Alex Disagrees

This is where I depart from the Sergeant and enter the modern world of sharks and lawyers. Colt designed and added the Series 80 safety to the 1911 model, probably in response to lawsuits from shooters without sense enough to understand basic firearms safety. In doing so Colt did away with the half-cock notch on the hammer, which would have been a perfect backup to their multi-part new design, by the way. Shooters now have to deal

with this modestly complex system, brought upon themselves. An option for Colt, would have been to pull a page from "their own history" and use the beautifully designed Schwartz safety that is worked by the grip safety, and disconnects the firing pin simply. Food for thought.

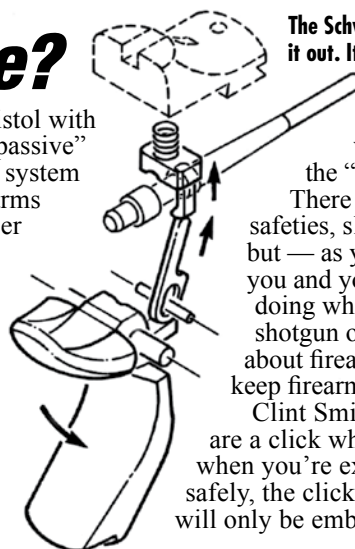
Kimber uses that simple, successful Schwartz design today on all of its 1911 variations. Kimber also leaves the half-cock notch on the hammer, as do most all modern 1911 pistol manufacturers, with the exception of Para USA.

Other modern safety inventions include the unnerving "hammer drop" safeties where you push a slide-mounted lever down so the hammer hopefully falls on a block in front of the firing pin. Hammer drop safeties are very unsettling to me and probably to most shooters. Dropping the hammer on a loaded chamber makes most shooters grit their teeth. Please don't tell me about all your police training — we don't have it out here. I like safeties that block the sear, and lock the hammer in place.

Passive Or Active?

Then there is the newer generation of auto pistol with no "active" safety, they generally favor a "passive" safety mounted on the trigger. This passive system is common on many polymer models today. Firearms instructors teach the novice soldier or police officer and feel an officer should be able to pull the pistol out of the holster and not have to think about taking a safety off under duress. I guess that works just fine for soldiers and law enforcement, but I respectfully submit that unless you get training with the system, it can be challenging for the unwashed masses. Indeed, S&W (on the M&P) and Springfield Armory (on the XD series) offer some models with an optional external safety.

Interestingly enough, gunsmith Joe Cominoli



The Schwartz safety in "fired" position. See if you can figure it out. It's actually very simple.

and I have retrofitted hundreds of Glocks with thumb safeties for shooters who want an active safety. There are options to the "no external safety" if it's a concern for you.

There are button safeties lever safeties, cross-bolt safeties, sliding safeties and many other designs, but — as you already know — the *only* safety is you and your ability to stay focused on what you're doing when you are holding a loaded pistol, revolver, shotgun or rifle. If you only remember one thing about firearm safety, please remember to "always keep firearms pointed in a safe direction."

Clint Smith recently wrote the two loudest sounds are a click when you are expecting a bang, and a bang when you're expecting a click. If your gun is pointed safely, the click won't matter — and the bang will only be embarrassing.





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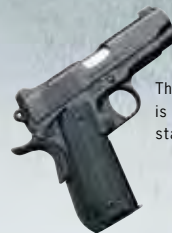
The new Super Carry Ultra+™ (left) and Super Carry Custom HD™ establish a new standard of personal defense. Seven Super Carry models are offered, all chambered in .45 ACP.



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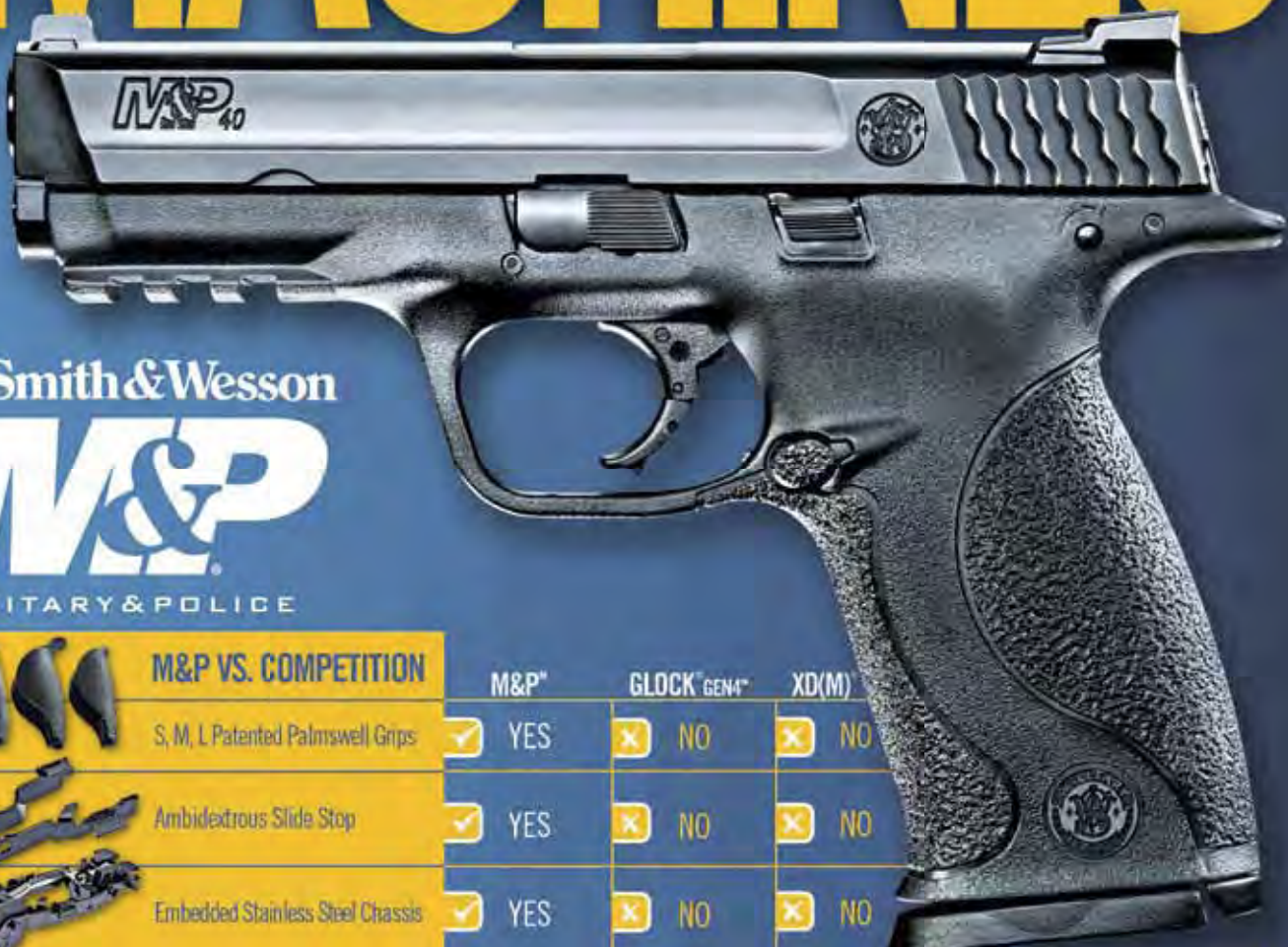
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The M&P is also the only pistol that comes with three sizes of interchangeable, dimensional Palmwell grips for a best-in-class ergonomic fit. In addition, the ambidextrous slide stop, thumb safety option and easily reversible magazine release customize M&P versatility and performance to every shooter. Inside and out, M&P pistols put every advantage in your hand.

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M&P VS. COMPETITION S, M, L Patented PalmSwells Grips	YES	NO	NO
Ambidextrous Slide Stop	YES	NO	NO
Embedded Stainless Steel Chassis	YES	NO	NO
Ambidextrous Thumb Safety (optional)	YES	NO	NO
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Okay, candidate, stand in the bucket. Grab the handle. Now lift yourself.



SANDBAGGIN' CANDIDATES

Just A Coupla' Questions And Comments

The elections are coming, and I can't get close enough to candidates for federal office to have little chats with 'em. They see me coming and scatter. I think it's the steam whistlin' outta my ears, or the flames shootin' from my eyeballs. Maybe you can sneak up on 'em for me?

SUGGESTED QUESTIONS

Do you agree the Second Amendment right to keep and bear arms is an individual right; that it applies to individual free citizens? This is a Yes or No question. Don't spin off sophistry about how you've always supported American sportsmen, how plunkin' ducks and dropping deer is "an American heritage," okay? Yes or no? If yes, we want that in writing, now. If no, we're done here — and so are you.

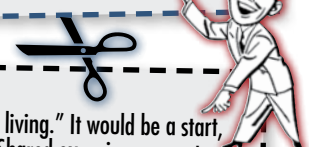
Are you familiar with the Latin phrase "Panem et Circenses" and the history behind it? If you don't, you're not qualified for public office. It worked for a while in Rome, but didn't end well.

Have you ever met an American military veteran who volunteered to serve, sacrifice and possibly die to preserve Socialism? One who went into battle inspired by the words of Marx, Lenin, Stalin? I haven't.

Do you understand that two dollars is more than one dollar? That's a good start! Now, if we entrust you with one of our dollars, is it okay for you to spend it all on cupcakes for yourself and your pals, and bill us for four more dollars? Think hard, 'cause this is a Pass/Fail question.

Can you name four ways the federal bureaucracy is different from cancer? Three? Two? One? No, saying "Government doesn't intend to kill you" isn't valid; neither does cancer.

Would you support a "Nancy Pelosi Outrageous Arrogance Law"? It would say that any politician who stands next to a 20-pound stack of legislation, grins like a kabuki witch and says, "We have to pass it so you can see what's in it," gets a savage beating and thrown out of office — through the window. The closed window.



TALKING POINTS

The current buzz phrase is "redistribution of wealth," like it's something new. It's not. It's been goin' on since the imposition of income tax in 1913, and furiously since the so-called "War on Poverty" kicked off. And don't call it wealth anymore, because most of us getting redistributed don't have wealth. We just have some earnings left. Say, "we want to redistribute what's left of your earnings," and see how far you get with that. That's called honesty. Try it.

We now have second and third-generation career welfare parasites; those who have never worked; just lived on the public dole. If you won't end it, how 'bout a generation limit on it? Computerized public birth and welfare records can enable that. Like, you get three consecutive generations of freeloaders, then we pull the plug on trough-swilling and tell their offspring, "Sorry, you're

gonna' have to get off your butts and work for a living." It would be a start, and it would promote some shared experiences. Shared experiences create consensus. Think about it.

Almost half (47 percent) of US households pay NO income tax at all. Virtually none of those are "the rich." A small percentage is truly impoverished. Many are "career unemployed." There is a psychological and philosophical value in everybody paying something in income taxes, even if it's \$10, even if it's paid out of our money, which you gave to them. Paying something gives them a dog in the fight.

Neither mass deportations nor amnesty programs will ever solve the illegal immigration problem until and unless our borders are secured. If you send 'em south, they flow back. If you legalize 'em, more come. If you secure the borders, then you can hash out the problem. We are — or were — a sovereign state. We should act like one.



Warnings: Listen Up!

If you've got the Race Card in your pocket, you can take that sucker out and burn it right now. The overwhelming majority of us — black, white, brown, whatever — don't give a damn what anybody's skin color is, and we're sick of being accused of racism — often, by racists. Stupid, vicious and greedy are colorless, and that's what we're against. You play that race card

on us and we might burn it for you — while it's still in your pocket.

Get a bucket with two handles on it. Keep it in your office. Every time you think a new tax or higher taxes will help create prosperity, stand in the bucket, grab the handles and try to lift yourself off the deck. Winston Churchill explained the physics a long time ago. Look it up, and learn something.

Thanks for your help, guys. Politicians are awful slippery critters, and I'd recommend you grab 'em by the ear, but ... I guess I pinched 'em too hard. The screamin' is somethin' awful. *Connor OUT.*



(Editor's Note: Maybe you outta' copy this and keep it in your wallet. Might come in handy if you find yourself close to one of these politician-animals some day. RH)

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The new .44 Special New Frontier (right) with a pair of 3rd Generation sixguns. John feels the newest generation has the best finish!



Colt's "New" New Frontiers in .45 Colt and .44 Special. That great leather is by El Paso Saddlery.

COLT'S "NEW" NEW FRONTIER WELCOME BACK!

How does one improve on perfection? The original Colt Single Action Army was a study in perfect pistol perfection when it arrived in 1873. It balanced perfectly, pointed naturally, and was chambered in a powerful cartridge, the .45 Colt. It would be 1935, with the arrival of the .357 Magnum, before the .45 Colt load was shaded, and there were many of the time who would tell you the .45 Colt was still the best when it came to a fighting cartridge.

As good as it was way back in the frontier times, Colt still set about to improve it. By the late 1890s, the West had been pretty well tamed and shooters were using sixguns for something besides fighting and self-defense, namely target shooting. Colt did two things to try to make the SAA better suited for punching holes in paper. The frame was flattopped and fitted with very crude adjustable sights, then it was turned into the Bisley Model in 1896, with a wide hammer and trigger and a ladle-shaped grip frame, better suited for target shooting.

Neither one of these Flat-Top Target Models lasted very long and, in fact, shooters asked that the Bisley Model be made into a regular Single Action by keeping the grip frame, wide hammer and trigger but going back to the standard hog-wallow trough rear sight found on all Single Action Armies. The improvements just didn't go over very well.



All New Frontiers are to be loaded only with five rounds, and an empty chamber under the hammer. Always!

A NEW FRONTIER

It would be nearly 70 years before Colt tried to improve the Single Action again, and this time they did it perfectly. In fact, the Perfect Single Action Army became even more perfect, if such a thing is possible. In 1960, John Kennedy was elected president and it looked like a new era had arrived, and in fact, people called that time the "New Frontier." To celebrate this new era of good feeling and looking toward the future, Colt decided to upgrade the Single Action Army and call it the New Frontier. The mainframe was given a heavy flattop and fitted with an adjustable rear sight, matched up with a ramp front sight. The frame, including the new flattop, was beautifully case colored as only Colt could do, and the balance was finished in what Colt called Royal Blue at the time. I thought it was just about the most beautiful sixgun I had ever

seen. However, I was in college and working to support the young lady who would eventually be known as Diamond Dot and our three young babies. There would be no New Frontier for me. But I could hope.

Continued on page 99



Targets shot with the 5½" .44 Special Colt New Frontier showed the new Colt could shoot!



The 7½" .45 Colt New Frontier was a jewel but John found the .44 Special out-shot it by a tad.



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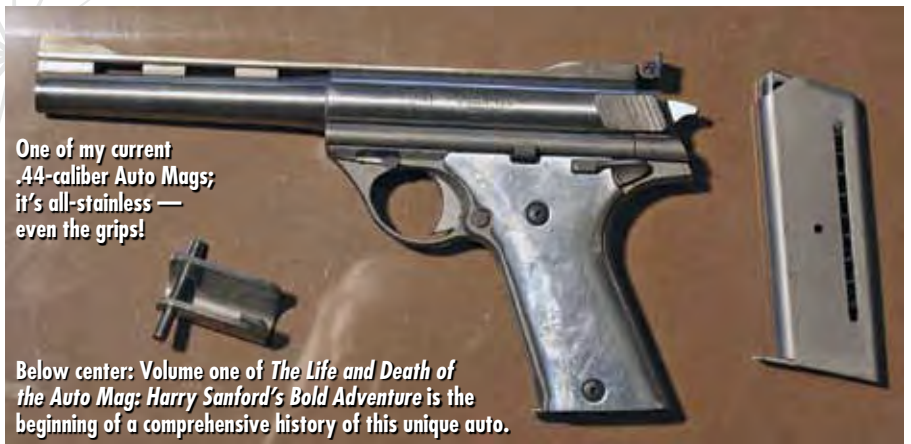
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THE MYSTIQUE OF THE AUTO MAG



One of my current .44-caliber Auto Mags; it's all-stainless — even the grips!

Below center: Volume one of *The Life and Death of the Auto Mag: Harry Sanford's Bold Adventure* is the beginning of a comprehensive history of this unique auto.

Harry Sanford was the man most responsible for the Auto Mag pistols. Although most of the initial design was the work of Max Guera, Sanford is the man who made it happen. Totally new in design, the Auto Mag Pistol was of stainless steel construction using a multi-lugged rotating bolt. A combination of the rotating bolt and clever accelerator (to open the bolt), made it able to handle enormous pressures for a recoil-operated handgun.

Loosely based on the .308/.30-06 case-head size and robust case-head construction, the first offering was in .44 AMP caliber, closely followed by the .357 AMP. The .44 was called the AMP. The standard 6.5" barrel length of the Auto

Mag easily exceeded contemporary .44 Magnum velocities from revolvers, and vastly exceeded them with the 8" and 10" barrel lengths. While doing this, the annoying cylinder-barrel gap blast and frequent "spitting" of the revolvers was eliminated, and accuracy drastically improved. In the mid 1970s, I shot a 6" 10-shot group at 300 yards using a 2X Leupold on a 10" .357 AMP. Nothing else in handguns would come close to that accuracy. You will even have to work hard to match it with any handgun now produced. In the same barrel, a Super Vel 90-gr. 9mm would do 3,000 fps with reasonable accuracy, flawless functioning and the ability to turn a jackrabbit into a hairy mist.

Big Game

The .44 AMP was meant for big game, and handled them well. I killed a large bison with one of Lee Jurras's LEJ custom .44s with a 265-gr. Hornady bullet, as well as many other medium-game animals. The .41 JMP (Jurras Magnum Pistol) was Lee's baby and it was a good one. From a personal standpoint I think I prefer the .41 over the other calibers, and I'm usually .44 guy in revolvers. Kent Lomont, who has pulled the trigger more times and on a wider variety of guns than anyone in history, made up a number of other cartridges for the gun but didn't really sell them. If you should be so lucky to have one, it's worth a lot of bucks — as is practically any Auto Mag.



Often criticized for functioning problems, the cause was generally ammunition load data developed in pressure barrels and never tried in an actual gun prior to it being published. Unfortunately, that still happens. Over the years, I've tried many guns with my ammunition properly loaded to give the correct recoil impulse, and every one of them worked just fine.

The BIG Book

Sanford's saga of production of the gun is legendary. Always underfunded, with a great deal of personal sacrifice he kept it going for many years. Today it is a "cult" gun that won't die, in part due to the extraordinary efforts of Bert Mason, who has recently published the first volume of "*The Life and Death of the Auto Mag: Harry Sanford's Bold Adventure*." This, my friends, is a book! The cover is in 3D, and all the pages and photos are of a quality I haven't seen before.

A this point the first chapter of the saga (this volume, if you will) covers the very early days of design, prototypes, patents, initial drawings and the trials and successes of getting the project underway. This book and what follows is the result of Bert's 10 years of research, and the investment of a huge amount of personal funds and time obtaining information and example firearms. The books are literally custom made to order. Two sizes are in production. The 11x14 is \$475 and the 8.5x11 is \$280.



For info: www.americanhandgunner.com/auto-mag-heaven or bert@automagheaven.com



Generally the AM cartridges may be loaded to higher-pressure levels, and not having a barrel/cylinder gap will give considerably higher velocities than revolver loads. The .357 Magnum, .357 AMP, .44 Magnum, .44 AMP, .41 Magnum and .41 JMP cartridge comparisons.

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WHITNEY WOLVERINE

22

POLYMER PLINKING - IN PINK?

Olympic Arms has reintroduced the Whitney Wolverine .22 pistol. The original 1950s-era Wolverine had considerable potential as a sport/plinking pistol. It was undone by the startup costs inherent in a new business, a few initial teething problems, and costly legal wrangles. The biggest obstacle was competition, namely the Ruger Standard .22 auto pistol. Through the 1950s Ruger kept the price at \$37.50. To compete you had to make a basically sound, durable, reliable .22 sport pistol at a competitive price. Otherwise, Ruger would bury you.

If anything, the competition today is tougher than ever. So if the Wolverine couldn't compete successfully in 1960, what has changed? Can the Wolverine of today compete successfully? Time will tell, but current Wolverines have a couple of advantages. They are being made and sold by Olympic Arms, a company which holds its own in the very competitive AR market. They have production facilities, trained personnel, manufacturing and marketing experience. They don't have to start from scratch, as the original company did.

The other advantage is the proven utility of high-strength polymers. We don't have to question anymore whether polymer pistol frames work. And, although equipment to make polymer frames is expensive, actual production cost per unit is low.

The design of the original Wolverine makes it ideally suited to the use of polymers. The Wolverine frame is simply a housing for the operating components and is not subject to heavy impacts or stresses. Molded in one piece of high-strength polymer, the Wolverine frame houses the steel barrel and bolt in an upper tube, while the grip portion houses the magazine and lock work.

It's In The Details

Originally, the Wolverine frame was made of aluminum alloy. Some of those I've seen had what appeared to be file marks, indicating handwork to fit them properly. Handwork means more labor costs, which means a higher retail price. The Wolverine design is one in which polymer not only works, it works better. Polymer means the Wolverine frame can be made to very precise dimensions. The frame is unaffected by rust, it's light, strong and durable. Costs of production per unit are low, meaning the Wolverine can be priced lower than the competition.

The Wolverine is a full-size pistol, but so light at 19 ounces, as to feel almost toy-like. The manual safety functions the opposite of what I'm used to — up for safe, down to fire. It also has a magazine safety, a feature I could live with or without. I really miss a bolt hold-open feature. Not only does the Wolverine not lock back on the last shot, there is no way to manually lock the bolt open.

Using due safety precautions, I tried the trigger pull. Whoa — now I'm really interested. The trigger had minimal take-up and broke consistently at just over 3½ pounds. There was some detectable creep in the pull, but it was smooth and completely free of "steps." The pull was one of the nicest I've seen short of a full-house target pistol. I tried two other Wolverines and found their pulls virtually identical. Accuracy was very good too, with 25-yard groups from a rest consistently under 2".

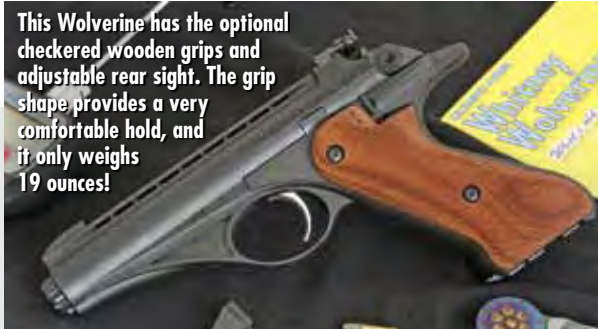
Reliability had me frustrated for a while. The adjustable-sight model gave regular feeding failures, with the fresh cartridge sticking at the 12 o'clock position above the chamber. Meanwhile, the "pink pistol" was perking along beautifully. Olympic sent along a couple of spare magazines. I found the magazine supplied with the adjustable-sight pistol gave a couple of feeding failures per magazine. Another would fire nine rounds flawlessly and stick on the 10th round. The other two functioned flawlessly. The results were the same with either pistol, regardless of the ammo I used.



Polymer is light — and also allows color choices. I'm not sure women necessarily prefer a pink pistol, however it does coordinate nicely with both the shirt and the Hemi Challenger. Kaitlyn Hanson drives!



While the frame/housing is polymer, the action components are steel. The recoil spring surrounds the barrel. Note also, a couple of small components you don't want to lose.



This Wolverine has the optional checkered wooden grips and adjustable rear sight. The grip shape provides a very comfortable hold, and it only weighs 19 ounces!

LIGHT, HANDY AND AFFORDABLE!

Takedown for cleaning isn't too hard, provided you read the manual carefully first and undertake the task over a good workspace. There are a couple of small parts which fall out when the bolt/barrel assembly is withdrawn from the frame and would be darn easy to lose.

The muzzle is threaded for the polymer nut, which secures it to the frame. For a bit more dramatic appearance the barrel nut can be replaced with a flash hider. More practically, it should be easy to fit a suppressor should you wish to go to the legal steps and costs involved.

Everyone who shot the Wolverine remarked on how comfortable the grip was, and on the quality of the trigger. The Wolverine is unusual in that it's very light, yet unlike most light pistols it has a full-size grip and sight radius. At its moderate price (\$294 MSRP), it's a fun little plinker, and with its light weight it's a handy pistol for a hiker's daypack or for a fishing tackle box.



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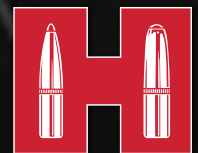
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WHEN POLICE MUST SHOOT ANIMALS

In many police departments, particularly the smaller and more peaceful ones, most of the rounds fired in the line of duty involve “humane destruction” of injured or dangerous animals. The rabid skunk reported by a homeowner, the deer lying plaintively in the road with its spine shattered after it ran in front of an automobile, or the snarling dog charging a cop who is serving a warrant.

In the *Ayoob Files* column in this issue, it discusses the Zanesville, Ohio incident in which the local sheriff’s department had to euthanize 49 exotic animals that had been released upon their community by an angry man just before he blew his own brains out. Some of those officers were hunters — one responded to the scene with his personal Remington 700 in 7mm Magnum — and did good work with it.

However, the cops found no sport in it. I spoke to the Sheriff who ran the sadly necessary containment operation, Matt Lutz, and several of the deputies, and to a man they found it grimly depressing. Not to mention dangerous. There were 35 lions and tigers that had to be accounted for. A male Bengal tiger can reach 580 pounds, and a male African lion averages 400. When I was in lion country in Africa, the professional hunters I was with favored the .458 Magnum with 510-grain softnose bullets. The lawmen that dealt with the Zanesville situation primarily had 55-grain .223 ammo. These cops definitely got their daily adrenaline requirement — but they didn’t get any sport out of it at all.



Often, all the officer will have to deal with the animal problem is the pistol on their hip. This .45 ACP, a Springfield XD with TLR-1 light, can do the job on moose or big bovines.

Rural police have learned over the years there’s a place for everything from .22 Long Rifle to 12-gauge slugs when animals of various sizes must be humanely destroyed.



CRITTER GUNS

Dedicated critter guns in police cars are not the norm today, as it was in many, more rural agencies years ago. Today, an officer is expected to do the task with the patrol weapons he has at-hand. In northern New England, where all my own police service has been, the biggest critters we’ve had to deal with at roadside were moose. A 12-gauge slug to the head generally concludes the animal’s pain decisively. Alaskan cops, who often have to shoot bears, have repeatedly told me the Brenneke-rifled slug is likewise very effective on their big animals.

Bystanders may have gathered around the poor run-over beast that needs to be shot, and might generate a public relations issue. When you put a .357 round into the head at close to muzzle contact, eyeballs can pop out and brain matter can spray. “Mommy! Lassie was hurt, and instead of helping her, they *blew her head all over the place! Wahhh!*” This had been the rationale of the .22 in the police cruiser before I ever pinned on a badge, and it’s understandable. Better to explain what you’re going to do and ask them to leave if there’s time.

CAVEATS

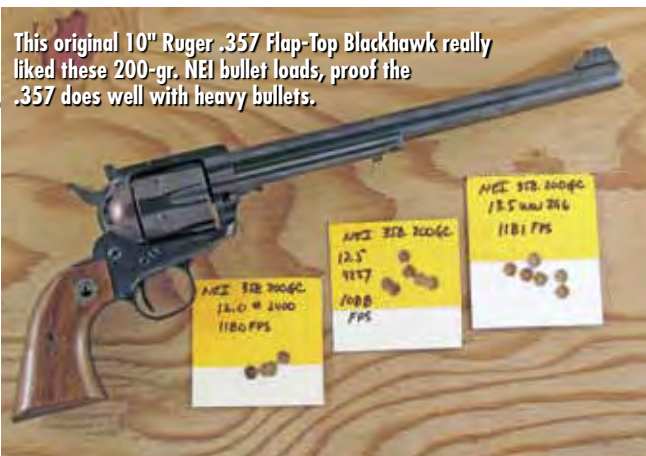
Consider backstops and shooting backgrounds, and where a ricochet might go. Be sure you’re using something that will stay in the animal, or in the ground beneath it if it’s already down. You know the old thought process of: draw an X between left eye and right ear and right eye and left ear, and shoot for the intersection of the X. Well, for many animals, that’s a little low and goes below the brain, and sends matters downhill fast. I learned from experience to go about a third *above* the centerline of that “X” on a standing, facing animal to get an instant humane kill. On steers and hogs, the base of the skull, shot from behind never failed me, but I never had to shoot a tiger there with a low-penetration .223 round either. One deputy in the Zanesville incident *did* have such a shot fail. If the animal is dangerous, keep your distance. The Ohio officers in the private zoo escape understood this, and it almost certainly prevented some from being mauled or killed.

If you think the animal is rabid, try for a vital-zone body shot. If Murphy’s Law holds true, as soon as it’s down someone will run up yelling, “Did

anyone see the raccoon that just bit my kid?” The latest medical advice I’ve received is the medicos need the entire brain of the animal intact to examine, to see if it was rabid or not. If they don’t have that, they have to assume it *was* rabid; Prophylactic treatment for rabies is not only rather painful, but potentially life-threatening in and of itself. Keep a bottle of Clorox or similar bleach in the trunk of the patrol vehicle: it’s the best cleanser if you’ve had to put your hands on an animal that was rabid or have contaminated yourself with blood, saliva, etc. Now aren’t you glad those nitrile gloves are on your duty belt?



The .458 Magnum, or even .45-70s (like these, and the matching Sabatti Double Rifle) are not generally standard items in the police armory. But you may wish they were.



This original 10" Ruger .357 Flap-Top Blackhawk really liked these 200-gr. NEI bullet loads, proof the .357 does well with heavy bullets.

HEAVYWEIGHT BULLETS IN THE .357 MAGNUM

One of the first manufacturers to offer suitable silhouetting sixguns was Dan Wesson, with their 8" and 10" heavy-barreled .357 Magnum.

These were superbly accurate revolvers, however there were problems. An occasional pig, and not so occasional ram, would quiver and then settle back down without toppling, even when hit dead center with a full-house load with a 158-gr. jacketed .357 Magnum bullet. We soon learned the answer was a heavier bullet, however another problem surfaced, which was the lack of suitable bullets. It would take a while for manufacturers to offer 180- and 200-gr. full metal jacket .357 Magnum bullets, and even bullet casters found they had little to choose from. One bullet placed in the service was the RCBS #35-200FNGC (flatnosed gas check) designed for the .35 Remington lever-action rifle. It had the weight, but it was also overly long for the cylinder of the .357 Dan Wesson.

The solution was to seat it deeply in .38 Special brass. This, of course, did not leave much room for powder, however we were able to get muzzle velocities of around 900 fps. When shooting at 225 yards it seemed like it took forever for that bullet to reach the rams, but when it got there it did the job! That slow-moving, heavy bullet never failed me. It took down every pig and ram I hit. If I didn't hit, it was not the fault of the bullet or the sixgun. That was the beginning, and we soon had heavyweight bullets available from a variety of makers.

A standard 158-gr. (left) with Oregon Trail's 180, NEI's 200 and Lyman's 210.



STRAIGHTFORWARD

It wasn't only silhouetters who discovered the capability of heavyweight bullets in the .357 Magnum. Handgun hunters also soon found heavyweight bullets were more accurate and penetrated deeper in game. Muzzle velocities in revolvers were certainly slower, and quite a bit so, however the heavy bullets could be driven at very respectable speeds in the Thompson/Center Contender, as well as leverguns.

Loading heavyweight bullets in the .357 Magnum is pretty straightforward and handled the same as loading standard-weight bullets except for two things. We have to realize the powder capacity is reduced, so great care is needed not only in what powder is chosen but also how much is to be used. A second problem is overall cylinder length. Before loading a significant number of heavyweight .357 Magnum loads it's a very good idea to make sure the bullet selected does not protrude past the front end of the cylinder when crimped in the crimping groove.

If I had to pick only one powder for heavy bullets in the .357 Magnum, or even in the .44 Magnum or .45 Colt for that matter, it would be either H110 or WW296, but more common powders can work too. My most used powder charge with either one of these excellent powders is 13.0 grains, when using bullets weighing from 180 to 210 grains in the .357 Magnum. These are both ball powders and magnum primers are absolutely required for proper ignition. With #2400 and #4227 I pretty much lean to standard primers with the former, and magnum primers with the latter.



For the non-reloader, DoubleTap offers a 200-gr. gas check bullet load, here shot in a S&W Highway Patrolman, showing excellent 25-yard accuracy.

HEAVY IS ACCURATE

I mostly stay with gas check bullets in all .357 Magnum loads simply because they seem to shoot a lot more accurately. For most of my big-bore sixgun loads I use straight wheelweights for loads under 1,100 fps; however, with the smaller diameter .357 Magnum bullets I prefer a harder alloy and normally mix lead and type metal in equal amounts.

A heavyweight bullet I've used for several decades is Lyman's 210-gr. Keith-style gas check bullet #358627. A new favorite is the NEI #358.200GC. This is a 200-gr. wide flatnosed, gas check bullet, and with its 4-cavity aluminum mold, casting is fast and the light weight of the aluminum reduces the fatigue factor significantly.

Commercial bullets available are a 187-gr. WFN gas check from Cast Performance Bullet Company, while Oregon Trail offers a plain-based 180-gr. bullet. Loaded over 11.0 grains of #2400, muzzle velocity is around 1,100 fps from my 10" Ruger Flat-Top, with excellent accuracy.

Suppose one wants to shoot heavyweight bullets in a .357 Magnum sixgun and doesn't cast bullets or even reload? DoubleTap has two excellent heavyweight bullet loads available using 180- and 200-gr. gas check bullets. They shoot right at 1,400 fps in my 10" Rugers and are exceptionally accurate. Grizzly Ammo also offers a 180-gr. load which I use in my 7½" Freedom Arms .357 Magnum. This load is also very accurate, with a muzzle velocity in excess of 1,400 fps. After much use, it's obvious to me, heavy bullets in the .357 Magnum can be extremely accurate.





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DA AUTO EVOLUTION WHAT'S OLD IS OFTEN NEW

Firearms design takes odd twists and turns along the way. Sometimes better technology comes along, sometimes buyers decide another design concept better serves their needs. The evolution of the semi-auto pistol is an interesting one. We don't have to rely on myths or hearsay since auto pistols have been around not much more than a century, and developments have been well documented.

A very influential development was the double-action (DA) concept. The Walther PP series that fathered the idea garnered a lot of publicity. The DA auto seemingly combined the greater capacity, faster reloading, and flat profile of the auto pistol with the "point gun – pull trigger" simplicity of the revolver.

We won't reopen the endless debate on whether the concept was needed. In fact there was great interest in the concept of an auto pistol, which could be fired simply by pulling the trigger, rather than having to release a safety, cock a hammer, or cycle a slide.

The Walther P-38 adapted the DA concept to a locked-breech, full-size military sidearm. A great many P-38s came to America as war trophies. The US military did a lot of evaluations of enemy ordnance after the war, and evidently found things about the P-38 they liked. One was the ability to lower the hammer on a loaded chamber by using a lever rather than a thumb. Armed forces hate having their personnel killed or wounded, and they really hate having them killed accidentally. Most unintentional discharges with handguns happen during routine loading and unloading.

I know, I know, it's all about training, but the reality is there isn't always the time, budget, or individual motivation available. During WWII, soldiers went into combat with handgun training limited to firing one or two magazines. It's hard to fault ordnance people for looking for ways to make firearms easier and safer to manipulate.



This is a competition version of the Beretta 92, functionally identical to the M9 pistol adopted as a US service sidearm in 1985.



Walther P-38, PP: The first successful DA auto pistol was the Walther PP (bottom), a blowback design. The Walther P-38 (top) used the same concept on a locked-breech, service-size sidearm.



Evolution in action. The P-38 design (bottom) of the 1930s led to the S&W 39 of the '50s, and in revised form, to the S&W 6906 (top).

COP-DRIVEN MARKET

At the same time police departments were moving decisively from revolvers to auto pistols. Departments wanted autos, and they wanted high capacity. S&W responded with an array of options so vast it took a guide to keep track of the models. They had single stacks and double stacks, traditional DA and DAO, carbon steel, stainless steel, and alloy frames, 9mm, .40 S&W and .45 ACP options. The oldest man in the world couldn't have kept track. One thing they had in common: these "Third Generations" were some of the best auto pistols made by S&W or by anyone else at the time, for that matter.

Currently the traditional DA with slide-mounted lever seems to be fading in popularity, in favor of polymer-framed, striker-fired designs such as the Glock, S&W M&P, Springfield XD and others. So what's my point? One: We shouldn't let a successful concept fade without at least a nod of respect.

And two: Just as the switch to auto pistols resulted in bargain prices on police trade-in revolvers, the switch to striker-fired autos is resulting in some great buys in auto-pistol trade-ins. Everyone is looking for value these days. I bought a very nice S&W 6906 from a detective friend who now carries an M&P. A lot of really good guns are coming on the market, often at really good prices. Oh happy days — again.



GETTING MODERN

During the 1950s, the US Army began to seriously consider a new service sidearm. They wanted a lighter pistol, preferably one with a DA mechanism. S&W designed an auto pistol along the lines requested. It would be assigned model number 39 in 1957. When the military lost interest in a new sidearm, S&W made the pistol available for commercial and police sales.

The Model 39 operates differently than the P-38, using the 1911-style tilting barrel lockup instead of the P-38's separate locking block. That aside, the M-39 strongly resembles the P-38. It uses a slide-mounted lever as a hammer drop/safety, the grip shape is very similar, and in fact P-38 magazines fit M-39 mag wells (they won't lock in place unless cut for the M-39 mag catch).

Sometimes things don't happen quickly in the handgun world. In the 1970s, the M-39 began to be accepted by police agencies, notably the Illinois State Police. Extensive use by ISP uncovered a few weaknesses in the M-39, and S&W made use of ISP experience in making improvements. In the 1980s and 1990s, the basic "P-38" concept achieved its greatest success, when combined with high-capacity frames.

Forty years after WWII, in 1985, the US military adopted the M9 Beretta. It had the slide-mounted hammer drop/safety, the DA first shot/SA subsequent shot, even the same locking block design as the P-38. It added a high-capacity frame and a trigger-actuated firing pin lock.

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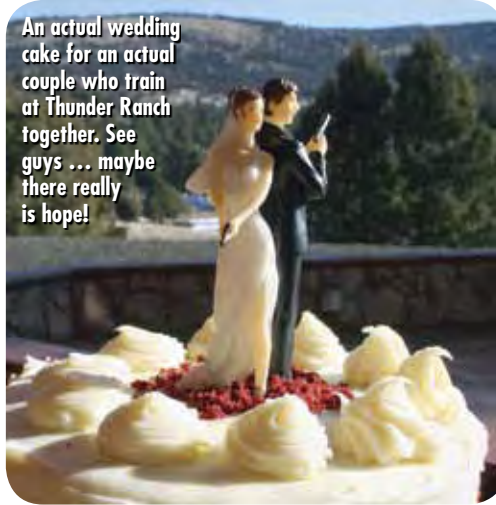


I DO'S AND I DON'TS: IN TRAINING?

After being married to Clint for 13 years — and this can be said of any couple together for a long time — you learn there plenty are “I do’s” you perform well together. Then there are the activities you could categorize in the area of “I don’t,” you never try to accomplish in the same room. For Clint and I, the list is down to one activity: hanging pictures. This is very definitely something we don’t think even counseling could help. I can “eye it” to make it level; he has to measure it and get the little bubble-level thing out. I can figure out where the stud is by knocking on the wall; he has to get the stud finder with the red beeping light. I want them a little higher on the wall, he wants them a little lower.

Our solution to this is easy: we don’t hang pictures together.

We can laugh about the “I don’t” stuff when it comes to everyday activities, but when it comes to training with fire-



An actual wedding cake for an actual couple who train at Thunder Ranch together. See guys ... maybe there really is hope!

arms; it’s something you simply have to overcome. Get over it, and change it from an “I don’t” to an “I do” — and do it now.

Having two people in the same house who don’t train together is like the two of you going on a cross-country trip in your car and only one of you wearing a seat belt. Someone is going to get hurt if things go wrong, and when you’re not on the same page about the defense of yourselves and family, then you’re literally asking for tragedy.

Some of you reading this (I’m assuming it will be mostly husbands) might be saying things like, “Oh, I would love to have my wife be into guns, but she wants nothing to do with it.” I completely understand,

but as Clint says, “You got her to marry you, so you can be smooth enough to get her to have a basic knowledge of the firearms in your home too.”

All-Ladies Classes



One of the helpful ways you can get her into shooting is by sending her to a class all on her own, and, better yet, send her with one of her girlfriends. There are many all-lady classes around the country. I have been teaching them since the early 1990s, well before Clint and I got married. My mom and I spent years teaching one of the very first all-female programs in the country. It was not a man-hating class; it was about getting ladies in the door and being around others of like-interest — new to guns.

Questions such as, “How does this gun work?” and, “If I’m going to use one, I need to do it the right way, so can you show me?” were always on their minds. After the initial get them through the door part, you have to make it top priority to get this new-found practice and training right up there with other vows like “In sickness and health” and “In the hour of our reloads.” Most of us will try something if we enjoy it, and shooting can be the same way.

The very person most likely to be with you when the chips are down is your wife — shouldn’t you make training an “I do” part of your relationship?



class, and she didn’t smile or speak for two days. We were all feeling just horrid; this was not going to work out for either of them, and we had ruined the chance to get her into guns. On the lunch break of the last day of class, she came marching into my office and

BUT THIS IS FUN



One of the very first all-lady classes we taught at Thunder Ranch Texas had a female student who actually changed the way our staff thought about this type of class. At the start, some felt there was only a limited need for this type of class — easy to say when you have spouses already into the “I do” gun portion of the marriage. We taught a student who came to classes by himself for years. He was a wonderful man, whose one and only goal was to someday get his wife into guns. The first all-lady class was the key for him.

His wife showed up for her first

asked me to stand up. Once I stood, she wrapped her arms around me and with tears in her eyes said, “I get it now. He didn’t come to Thunder Ranch to get away from me, he came here because this is fun!” In the following years, she came on her own a couple times, but after that they only came together, making training a priority in their marriage.

As that couple learned, in the end, making time to train together is one of the best things you can do for your relationship. Also, it’s one of the few things truly affecting the “until death do us part” agreement, if you have something go wrong and end up in a fight for your lives. Make training an “I do,” and do it now. Not only will you not regret it, you just might live happily ever after *because* of it.





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SLUGGING IT OUT: PART 2

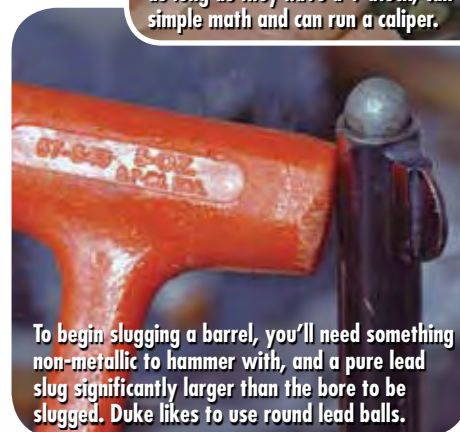
In the last issue, I wrote a "How-To" about slugging handgun barrels. I finished it by saying measuring a slug from a barrel with an odd number of grooves is more difficult because the grooves don't oppose one another. Let me begin with a brief overview of slugging a barrel for those who might not have read the last issue.

A great many handguns have barrels with actual groove diameters varying from their nominal specs. This was common in bygone times, but still is with some foreign pistols and revolvers. Forget all about it if you're going to only shoot factory-made jacketed bullets because you can't vary from the sizes manufacturers offer anyway. The place slugging is beneficial is with lead alloy bullets, especially those made yourself. Commercially sold lead alloy .45-caliber bullets can be commonly had measuring .451", .452" or .454". If you're casting them yourself you can also size them to .450", .453" or .455".

Slugging a barrel is ultra simple. It consists of merely pounding a piece of lead down the handgun's barrel and measuring it. There are a few caveats to consider. First, use only pure lead for your slug. Second, tap it into the barrel's muzzle with something non-metallic, such as a weighted rubber hammer or a hardwood stick. Next, tap it on through with a piece of wooden dowel. Don't use a metal cleaning rod! And don't let the slug bounce off the floor as it exits the barrel as being so soft it will be deformed.



Next comes the measuring and the math. If Duke can do it, anyone can, as long as they have a V-block, can do simple math and can run a caliper.



To begin slugging a barrel, you'll need something non-metallic to hammer with, and a pure lead slug significantly larger than the bore to be slugged. Duke likes to use round lead balls.

Duke's Secret

And here's my own personal tip. Pure lead round balls as sold for cap-and-ball pistols make perfect slugs, but use ones considerably larger than the barrel to be measured. This way the slug gets a good length of parallel sides to measure. For instance, to slug .44-caliber barrels I always start with a pure lead round ball measuring from .451" to .457".

For a demonstration, I slugged the barrels of a S&W revolver because, to the best of my knowledge, all that company's revolvers have 5-groove rifling. This sample was an N-frame .44 Special, 2nd Model Hand Ejector made in 1929. I had never slugged it previously, having been satisfied to accept S&W's nominal spec as .429".


A .457" pure lead round ball was tapped through the .44's barrel. Now this is where the skill of a machinist and knowledge of mathematics comes into play. By the way, I don't have either one. Once, after writing I was unable to measure a slug accurately because it came through a barrel with an odd number of grooves, I received an e-mail from a reader named Ken Caldwell. He has both machining skill and math knowledge and he offered to make me a V-block so I could measure barrels with an odd number of rifling grooves. What a V-block consists of is a small piece of steel with a V-shaped trough cut into it. The slug rests in that.

Once nestled in the V-block, a formula is used to determine the slug's diameter. "A" is the measurement from the bottom of the block to the top of the slug. "C" is the distance from the bottom of the V-shaped trough to the bottom of the block. "C" is subtracted from "A" to get the value of "B." "B" is then multiplied by the constant .8944 to get the diameter of the slug. Ken also told me "C" is always unique to each V-block, but I don't know how to determine it!



A V-block like this one is needed to measure slugs from odd-numbered rifled barrels.

AND THE ANSWER?

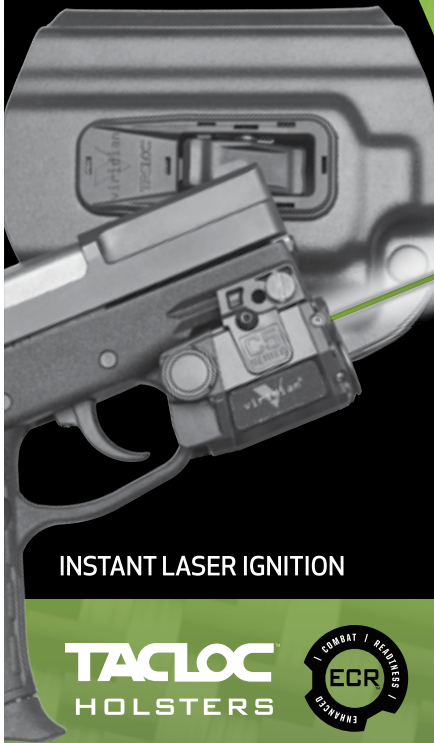
For the .44, my "A" measurement was .826". My V-block's "C" measurement is .34658". Subtracting "C" from "A" gave a figure of .47942". That multiplied by my V-block's constant of .8944 gave the measurement of the slug as .42879". Since my calipers are only hobby grade, which can safely be rounded off to the nearest thousandth — or .429"! 

If I've peaked your interest, V-blocks are available from online sources like www.brownells.com or www.midwayusa.com, and other sites offering machine tooling.

Photos: Yvonne Venturino

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Ankle Rig Realities

I remember it like it was yesterday. The jackrabbit-quick driver of the stolen SUV bailed out and took off so fast I was sure he would lose us. That's when I heard it — the sickening sound of metal sliding across asphalt. I wasn't sure what it was at first, until I heard cussing followed by yelling: "That was my ankle gun." Lucky for us, Mr. Car thief was a sprinter and not a long distance runner. He pooped out before he made it across the parking lot. The left side of the once-perfectly shiny Smith and Wesson Bodyguard was now... well, a lot less shiny, and the veteran cop was red faced.

I wish I could say this was the only time I had heard of an ankle gun leaving its holster, but it's not. I remember the sick look on another cop's face as we retraced his steps in a foot pursuit looking for his, which ended up in the bushes. Luckily, the K9 working that night was a great tracker and found the gun.

While you may not be a cop, you still might find yourself running to catch a bus, or after a kid who's about to dash into

the street in front of a car. In a fight on the ground? You don't need to be losing your ankle gun then. The moral of the story here is use a quality holster and if it wears out — buy a new one.

Ankle holsters aren't for everyone. Our very own Mike Venturino says he can wear one as long as he takes a stool with him everywhere he goes, so he can put his foot up in order to draw and re-holster the pistol. Body type and physical ability means this holster isn't for everyone. Mike knows his limitations and sticks with modes of carry that work for him.



James Yeager of Tactical Response Shooting School, helped Sammy demo an ankle rig draw. Note how he keeps his eyes on the threat, but the draw "stroke" is very definitive and safe, with good muzzle control. It would be easy to shoot yourself in the knee if you didn't practice — so practice, safely.



Tauris

Mike Taurisano has been making holsters for longer than most have been alive. His Tauris line of holsters have a reputation for being built to last — like a full 30-year police career. He told me a while back, "Most people wear ankle holsters incorrectly. It's an ankle holster, not a calf holster. They're meant to be worn low and secure." Mike's ankle holsters have thumb retention straps, and he adds a tension screw to take up any slack as the holster stretches over time. The sheep-shearling padding and battle-tank tough mounting system makes for all-shift or all-day comfort.

GALCO

Galco's Ankle Glove is made in the Galco factory, but its made by *hand* in the factory — which makes it "factory custom," if you will. I've had my Glock 26 riding in one for a long time. During a friend's last deployment, I received an e-mail requesting an ankle rig for a G26, so I sent him mine. I've since replaced it with a new one. The really cool part is it doesn't require a break-in period. The wide Velcro band keeps it in place, and the retention snap makes sure I won't be watching my gun slide across the pavement.

Regardless of the ankle holster you choose, make sure you're wearing it properly. For instance, His Editorship Roy swears by Renegade Holsters, and wore 'em his entire police career, even drawing from it in backup gun matches. So, find something *you* like — then get lots of practice with it. When you're standing on the "X" facing the big bad wolf, it's not the time you want to find out you can't get to your backup gun.

For more info: www.americanhandgunner.com/product-index and click on the company name, or call: Galco Gunleather (800) 874-2526; Tauris Holsters (315) 735-0530; Renegade Holsters (602) 482-6777



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The Bowen Custom S&W features easily swapped .25-20 and .256 Winchester cylinders.

.25-20/.256 IN ONE!

It's been my good fortune to know the greatest custom sixgunsmiths who have ever lived, simply because they are alive and well and practicing their craft now. For the past three decades I've been accumulating examples of the creative genius of these gentlemen, and my relatively short list numbers more than a Baker's Dozen. At the top of anyone's list we must find the name of Hamilton Bowen. He may share top billing with a few others, however there are none any better. Hamilton goes way beyond the title of custom sixgunsmith. Not only is he extremely talented when it comes to metalworking, he also has great imagination and artistic talent.

Over the past three decades, Hamilton Bowen's shop has built some of the biggest and baddest sixguns imaginable. But his heart, his true sixgunning heart, is with the more pleasant shooting sixguns. I know, over the years, he's been especially appreciative of the old .32-20, and in recent years has built some very fine examples of custom sixguns chambered in the relatively new .327 Federal Magnum.

Test-Fire: Bowen Custom S&W 6"

.25-20 CYLINDER		5 Shots/ 25 Yards (inches)
Load	MV (fps)	
Hornady 60 JHP/7.0 gr. #2400	972	1½
Hornady 60 JHP/8.0 gr. #2400	1,372	1¼
Speer 75 JFP/7.0 gr. #2400	929	1½
Speer 75 JFP/12.0 gr. #1680	1,274	1
Remington 86 JFP/8.0 gr. #2400	1,150	7/8
Remington 86 JFP/10.0 gr. #1680	1,112	1⅝
.256 WIN CYLINDER		
Winchester S-X 60 Open Point EXP	1,874	1
Hornady 60 JHP/15.0 gr. #4227	1,556	1⅝
Speer 75 JFP/14.0 gr. #4227	1,459	1¼

BIG BRUISERS

The closing decades of the 20th century, with some overlapping into the 21st century, was the age of truly big-bore handguns, led by the .454 of Freedom Arms and other truly big-bore blasters! The advance of the .327 Federal Magnum gave us all much needed relief.



Hamilton shows his true nature when he talks about this new "little" cartridge: "Those of us who are serious small-bore, small-game revolver enthusiasts have clamored for the moral equivalent of the great old .32-20 but in a more modern, tougher, available package. The cartridge fairies have been listening and have come through in grand style. The .327 Federal Magnum will perform every bit as well as hand-loaded,

Continued on page 91



This S&W Model 53 (.22 Jet) is now usable once again thanks to the new .22 LR cylinder fabricated by Hamilton Bowen.



By using two cylinders Hamilton Bowen's little sixgun chambers both .25-20 and .256 Winchester.



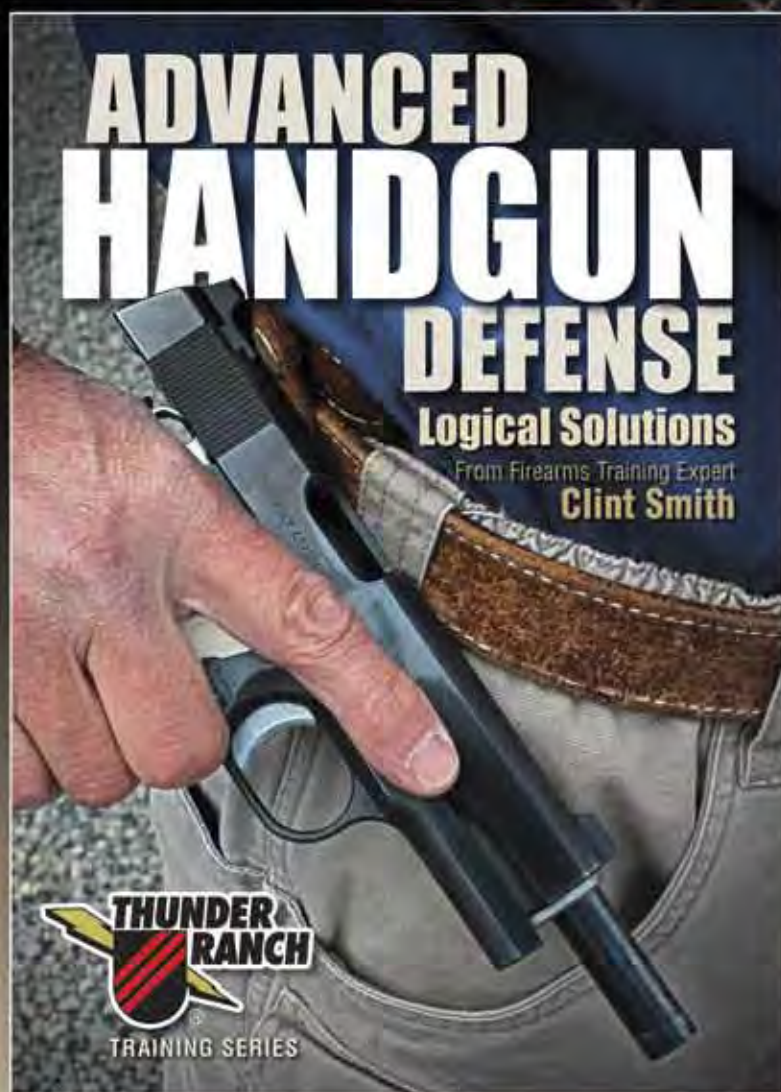
With the Bowen .256 Winchester cylinder in place, the test gun displayed solid small-game accuracy and excellent performance.

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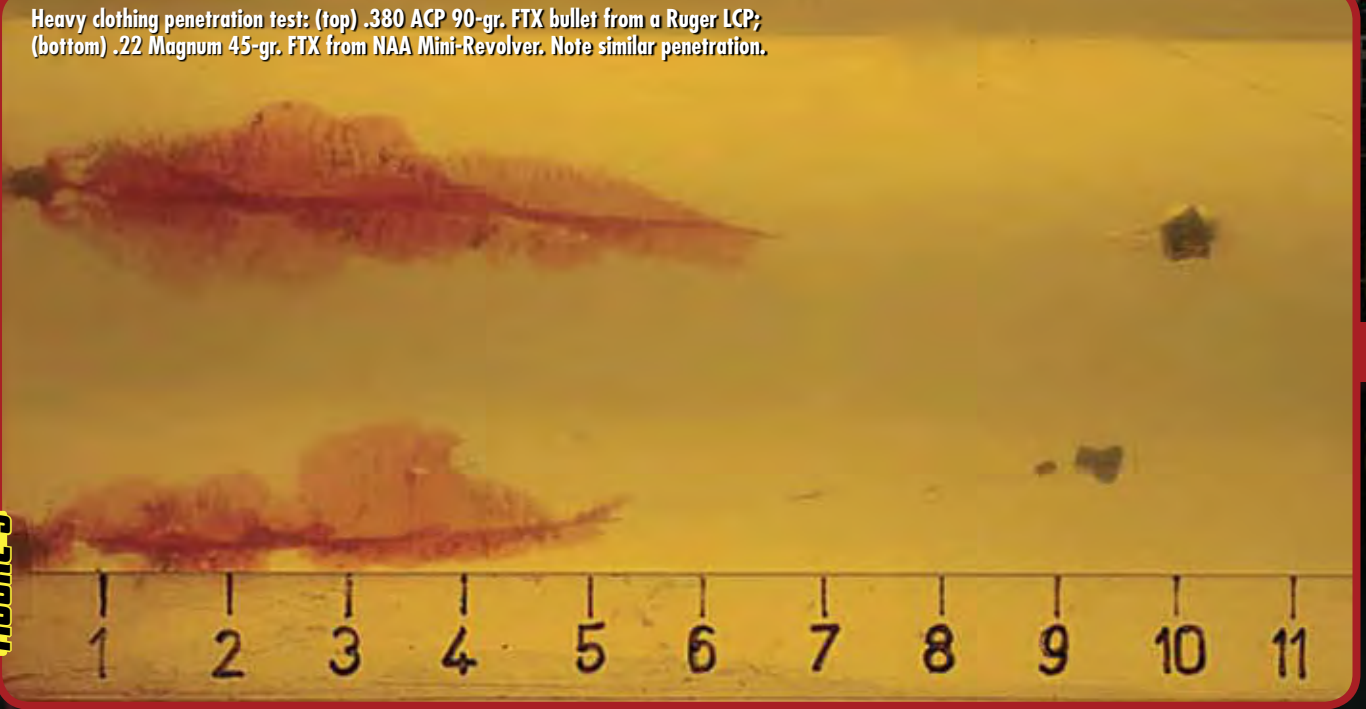
Heavy clothing penetration test in gel with the .32 NAA and 80-gr. FTX load.

FIGURE 2



Heavy clothing penetration test: (top) .380 ACP 90-gr. FTX bullet from a Ruger LCP; (bottom) .22 Magnum 45-gr. FTX from NAA Mini-Revolver. Note similar penetration.

FIGURE 3



Typical performance for a .45 Auto with premium self-defense ammo from many makers. Test gun: Springfield Micro 3" .45 Auto.

FIGURE 4



IS THERE A SILVER BULLET PISTOL CARTRIDGE?

Common concealed carry handguns (not everyone carries an all-steel, 5" 1911!): NAA Pug .22 Mag, Ruger LCP, Walther PPK .380, S&W 637 Airweight .38 Spl, Kahr Mk9 9mm.



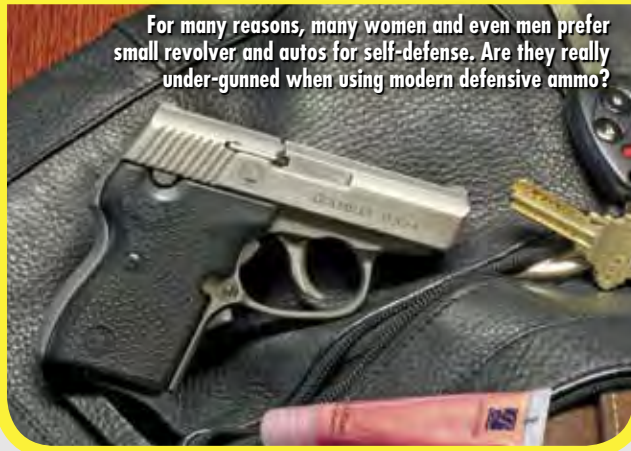
FIGURE 1

THE CALIBER MYTH

DAVE EMARY

We've all heard the discussions, read the opinions in the blogs and been involved in the arguments. "The only self-defense cartridge worth carrying is the .45 Auto" or "You might as well throw a stone as try and defend yourself with a .380 Auto" — and on and on. The arguments and the opinions are endless and for the most part they are exactly that, arguments and opinions. Are you carrying a gun and cartridge combination that is effective or — is there some Achilles heel you don't know about rendering your rig ineffective and useless?

Up to this point in my career, I've fired and tested nearly every caliber and brand of pistol ammunition in the free world. I have developed several pistol bullet designs and done



For many reasons, many women and even men prefer small revolver and autos for self-defense. Are they really under-gunned when using modern defensive ammo?

probably in excess of 5,000 ordinance gelatin tests with these bullets. In the process of doing all this I feel I can share some things based on data, and not so much on opinion. Opinion is a good thing, but it needs to have a basis in fact. And that's often the problem with many forum threads.

This whole discussion can really be brought down to two issues, relatively

easy to get our brain around. The first involves us, the shooter and our abilities, preferences and physical statures. The second is the ammunition and it's actual performance.

You

Let's have a short discussion about the shooter. To lead into this part of the discussion the firearms we are talking about are compact, concealed carry handguns that are small, light and can sometimes be relatively hard to hold onto. They can also develop noticeable amounts of recoil, even with lighter bullet weight loads. Figure 1 shows a small sampling of the wide variety and size of handguns available for concealed carry today. And, yes, it's only serving as a point of reference, and in no way intends to

Continued on page 80

HOW DID IT HAPPEN TO ME?

LITTLE HANDGUNS



These are Duke's current "little pistols." From top: Browning Model 1911-22, Colt Model 1908 .380 Auto (left) and Colt Model 1903 .32 Auto (right). Bottom is Hungarian PA63 9mm Makarov.



MIKE "DUKE" VENTURINO
PHOTOS: YVONNE VENTURINO



Duke's newest "little pistol" is this Colt Model 1908 .380. It's first year production.

For most of my shooting life and writing career I've focused on "big" handguns. I'm talking about big-bore pistols and revolvers of the type one would wear on a belt in the outdoors.

Yet for some reason not even understood by myself, many of the handguns I've purchased in the last few years are small. The most recent is the Browning 1911-22 ("A Baby 1911," Jan/Feb 2012). Recently, I've also added a pair of Colt Models 1903 and 1908, chambered for .32 Auto and .380 Auto respectively. And I've got a S&W Model 360, weighing but 12 ounces, but ridiculously chambered for .357 Magnum; a more practical S&W Model 442 .38 Special and even a Hungarian made PA63 9mm Makarov.

Although little handguns get less press than other types, they've been consistently popular among gun buyers. Consider the following: In a 42-year production run, Colt made over 570,000 of their Model 1903 "hammerless" .32s. That company made only 357,859 of the vastly more famous Colt Single Action Army during a 68-year production run. In a time when the United States' population was a small fraction of today's, Samuel Colt produced over a third of a million of their combined .31-caliber Baby Dragoon/Model 1849 "Pocket Revolvers." That happened in the 25 years between 1848 and 1873. During that time only 215,000 of the vastly better-known Colt Navy, .36 aka

Duke's "little revolvers" are the scandium frame Model 360 at left and an aluminum frame Model 442 .38 Special at right. Although the Model 360 is caliber-stamped .357 Magnum, Duke considers it a .38 Special in practical fact.





John M. Browning's early autoloader pistols were chambered for these three cartridges. They stopped when they got to the .380 Auto. Far left is .25 Auto and middle is .32 Auto.



"Little pistols" have one advantage over "little revolvers" in most have rear sights that can be drifted in their dovetails.

Model 1851, were built. Little handguns may be new to my affections but certainly not to the rest of the world.

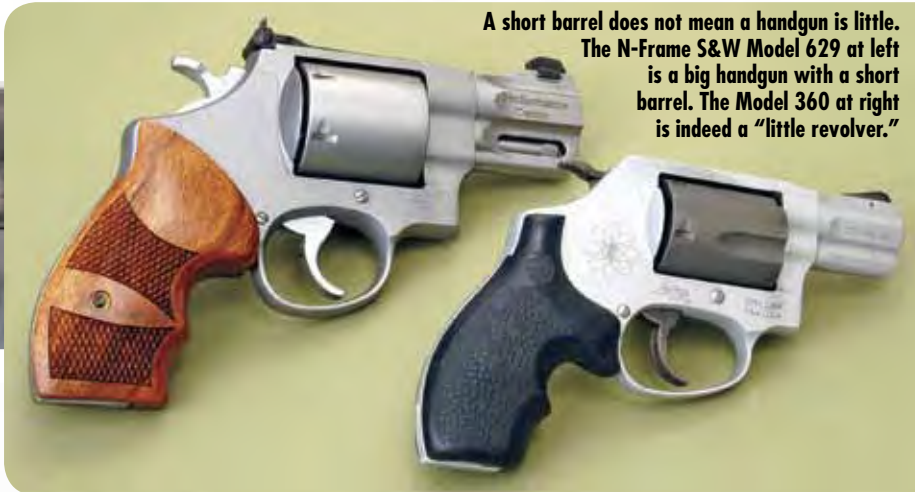
Tiny Terrors?

Traditionally, little handguns have been the weak sisters of the shooting world. Until recently, the most powerful "little revolvers" were .38 Special, and the hardest hitting "little pistols" were .380 Autos. This fact is what has spurred some companies into trying to make little handguns more powerful. It's not a trend that is progressing smoothly though.

Take, for instance, the scandium frame S&W Model 360 .357 Magnum. When mine arrived I first loaded it with five rounds of 158-gr. .38 Specials. At only 3/4 a pound, its recoil was stiff but could be handled by an experienced shooter. Next, I stuck five rounds of 158-gr., .357 Magnum factory loads in it. Recoil was tremendous and muzzleblast from its 1 7/8" barrel was awesome — but not in a good way! That was with the very first shot. Very intelligently, I ejected the other four .357 Magnum rounds, unfired. No matter how somebody at Smith & Wesson caliber stamped that little revolver, in my mind, it will forever be a .38 Special.

Although I've not had the opportunity to fire one of the new breeds of little pistols chambered for 9mm Luger, I fear the cartridge is just too much for a tiny handgun. What's my basis for this opinion? I judge it from my aluminum framed PA63 9mm Makarov with a 3.94" barrel and 21-ounce weight. Various reloading manuals say that with a 95-grain FMJ bullet at about 1,000 fps its cartridge is just a tad bit more powerful than the .380 Auto. Therefore, logically it should be comfortable to shoot. It is not. I can handle

"Little revolvers" mostly have grooves down their topstraps for rear sights and are not adjustable for windage.



A short barrel does not mean a handgun is little. The N-Frame S&W Model 629 at left is a big handgun with a short barrel. The Model 360 at right is indeed a "little revolver."

Little revolvers are not new. Sam Colt started the trend with his 1848 .31-caliber Baby Dragon (front). The other revolver is a Merwin & Hulbert .38 from about 1880.



shooting it, albeit without enjoyment. Yvonne tried one magazine full in it and handed it back saying, "I don't like that thing." Therefore arose my attitude on the prospects of very small 9mm Luger pistols. Time will tell, at least for me!

Little Cartridges?

In my opinion "little handguns" need little cartridges. It's only logical, it seems? Again referring to that S&W Model 360 .357 Magnum. That cartridge gains its power by being longer, thus it holds more powder, and so generates more velocity. There was a reason early .357 Magnum fans liked those big N-frame revolvers with 8 3/8" barrels. From the 1 7/8" barrel of the Model 360, all that extra powder is just blown out into space. The muzzle flash is impressive — its ballistics are not. The .38 Special with its 3.0- to 5.0-gr., fast to medium burning powder charges is just about the ideal round for little

revolvers in my most humble opinion.

At this point somebody is thinking, "Yeah, but what about those snub nose revolvers being made for rounds like .44 Special or .45 Auto?" Those aren't little revolvers, they are *big* revolvers with *short* barrels. With "normal" 4" to 6" barrels they start out 200-plus-gr. bullets slowly. With a snubnose barrel, they're going so slow you can almost see them. That's not a humble opinion. I've chronographed bullets from several of those types of revolvers. They do well to even break 700 fps.

It's my most humble opinion (again) that in regards to little pistol cartridges, John M. Browning got things pretty

Continued on page 71

MORRIS CUSTOM'S

SST1

SUPPRESSOR SPECIFIC TIER 1

ROY HUNTINGTON • PHOTOS: CHUCK PITTMAN, INC.



Mark Morris, the 1-man dynamo behind the shop bearing his name — actually, the *only* man in the shop — is one of those guys who seem to be able to manage just about anything. The term “Renaissance” man is often bandied about, but in Mark’s case, it actually applies. From musician, motorcycle racer, competitor, machinist and professional photographer, to talented custom pistolsmith, Mark does it all with aplomb. But the interesting suppressed custom gun from his shop we feature here is something new — even for Mark.

CAN YOU SAY:

PLAN B?



MORRIS CUSTOM'S

SST1

SUPPRESSOR SPECIFIC TIER 1





AMERICAN
HANDGUNNER



carry, as well as my passion for perfection, I build pistols the way I believe they should be built — reliable, accurate, beautiful to look at and a pleasure to shoot.”

Until this test gun (actually a 3-gun series Mark built), his previous work tended toward the artistic, while still adhering to his mantra of reliability and accuracy. They were, as our photographer Chuck Pittman is fond of saying — pretty too. Mark has an element of thinker/philosopher about him, and his eye is drawn toward elegance in detail, and often *one* line, or a minor shape change in a part, can mean a world of difference in a look — and Mark can see it. His “Yin/Yang” logo is appropriate, if you ask me, showcasing his willingness and understanding of the need for highly functional tools that also appeal to the eye and senses.

What He Does

Morris Custom is not a production “custom” shop, turning out clones; but an honest-to-gosh “each pistol is specifically customized for each customer’s needs” shop. There’s nothing wrong with making limited runs of very high quality guns, that very fact can make them more affordable for more people. I tend to think of them as custom/production guns, since they still are hand-assembled, fitted, tested and offer features and benefits of many one-off custom guns, but when done in “lots” allow a level of affordability simply



Mark started doing custom work when he became dissatisfied with the work done by others on his own competition pistols. By the early 1980s, Mark had teamed up with friend Bob Rector (a machinist and hobby pistolsmith) to learn how to do his own work. In no time, Mark was building guns for friends and local competitors in the Washington state area.

From about 1989 to 1993, Mark worked as a fugitive apprehension specialist (learning to appreciate top quality and reliability in a defensive handgun in the process), and ran his shop on a part time basis. In 1993, Mark went full-time into the custom pistol business and hasn’t looked back.

According to Mark, “With my background in competition and real world



impossible to maintain when building guns one at a time.

So, when you embark on a true custom project with a ‘smith like Mark, what you’re getting is “ownership” of a talented pistolsmith for the time it takes to craft *your* gun, for *you*, to *your* specifications. If you think of it like that, how much would you charge for someone to “own” *your* talent, time, energy, experience and tools to create something wonderful for them? Sort of puts things into perspective, doesn’t it?

The SST1

“A good friend of mine, Wade, of Wade’s Guns in Bellevue, Wash., asked me to build him an ‘end of the world’ gun, as he described it. He wanted it all black and tidy, to be used with his Silencerco Osprey pistol suppressor,” explained Mark. “Since I’ve built some crazy pistols on the STI platform frames, I twisted some arms there and finally talked them out of three. I agreed to build one for STI to display at the SHOT Show, one for Wade, and of course, I needed one too!” he laughed.

According to Mark, Wade wanted his gun to be a combo gun in .40 S&W and .357 SIG (two fitted barrels), but Mark built his own (and the STI gun) in the tried and true .45 ACP. Our photo gun is Wade’s, and my test gun is Mark’s personal pistol in .45 ACP caliber. I wasn’t able to shoot the suppressed version, but Mark assures me it works like a clock, and the Leupold Delta Dot makes aiming

fast and easy over the top of the can.

Mark wanted a very clean look for the package, but since this kind of a build was new to him, he thought long and hard. “With the beast being finished in black, it needed some flair to be interesting and fun,” said Mark. “I milled the Leupold Delta Dot in as low as possible, and found since it’s lightweight — made of magnesium — the final result looks tidy and hardly adds any weight to the gun.”

Mark pondered the idea of iron sights too, but tossed the concept. “I thought about mounting a fixed rear and front but it would have made things too busy on the slide, and frankly ... would have been ugly!” he said, laughing again. “Besides, with the SureFire X400 laser/light combo mounted, you can sight the laser to the same POI as the red dot and if one fails, the other is right at hand, ready to go.”

Continued on page 86



After a 6-year hiatus, SIG SAUER has reintroduced the Legendary Model 210. The first Pistols imported from the German factory comprise the Special Limited Edition, numbered 1-210 with engraving and gold highlights on the slide. Full production handguns arrive sans-engraving and finished in black Nitron. The basic model has highly visible, drift-adjustable sights. The sights on the Target model are fully adjustable.



"THE SIG SAUER 210

MIKE CUMPSTON

Throughout the mid to late 20th century the Swiss service pistol, known variously as the Model 47/48, Model 48, SIG Neuhausen, and commercially as the Model 210, was widely regarded as the "World's Best Pistol." Or, given less hyperbolic acclaim, as the most accurate military/police service pistol. In the 1930s, seeking a replacement for the 7.65 Lugers the country had used since 1900, Switzerland purchased patents from French arms designer, Charles Petter, using the design as a springboard for the arm that emerged after the end of WWII. Modifications received dash suffixes denoting variations on the basic pistol more often than significant design changes.



Visible departures from the original 210 include larger safety lever that does not score the frame, and a beavertail to prevent hammer bite.



Traditionally, test targets were fired from 50 meters, with 2" being the accuracy standard. Recently SIG SAUER has been supplying 25-meter targets instead. This one measures 1.4".

There are a couple of sport/target models, and some featuring caliber conversions in 7.65 and .22 Long Rifle. The post 2000 Model 210-8 had the magazine release on the left side of the grip frame rather than in the traditional heel position. The 210, regarded as an "improved" Browning design, features a number of major departures. The action is a removable modular unit like that

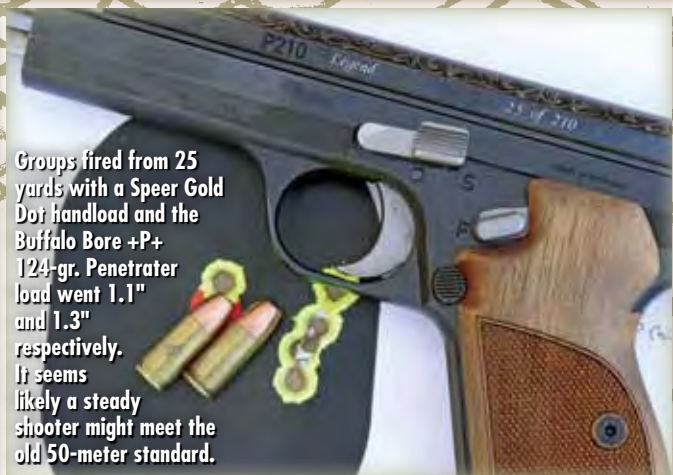
A LIVING LEGEND



The X5 was introduced in 2005 to replace the 210. The greatly increased size and weight did not resonate with fans of the traditional pistol!



One hand slow fire at 25 yards. "Tactical" drills at closer range closely parallel results from 1911s and it's easy to maintain center mass on the B27 target out to 50 yards.



Groups fired from 25 yards with a Speer Gold Dot handload and the Buffalo Bore +P+ 124-gr. Penetrator load went 1.1" and 1.3" respectively. It seems likely a steady shooter might meet the old 50-meter standard.

of the Radom and Tokarev, there is no barrel bushing and the unlocking mechanism is an enclosed under-barrel cam working in conjunction with the slide release crossbar.

Locking lugs on the barrel engage corresponding recesses on the interior of the slide, maintaining the slim profile associated with the Browning progenitors. The slide has external rails riding corresponding inward-facing rails on the frame. This reverses the relationship of these elements on the 1911 and other Browning arms. The slide and frame contact is significantly greater than is usual on Browning designs, and the overall arrangement is widely considered as an important contributor to the

accuracy of most examples of the 210.

Modern Versions

The major factor influencing accuracy (and the high price of the pistols) seems to be close, labor intensive, hand fitting. The notably costly dash-eight stayed in production from 2001-05, at which time SIG introduced the X5-Series. The X5 was to supplant the 210 with a pistol more amenable to modern production modalities while preserving the accuracy of the earlier design.

The X5, later available in 9x19, came out in .40 S&W, which established the platform for both calibers. In 9mm, it is about nine ounces heavier than the

Continued on page 93

CHART

CALIBER: 9MM

ACTION: SINGLE ACTION

OAL: 8.5"

BARREL: 4.7"

HEIGHT: 5.6"

WIDTH: 1.3"

WEIGHT: 37.4"

CAPACITY: 8+1

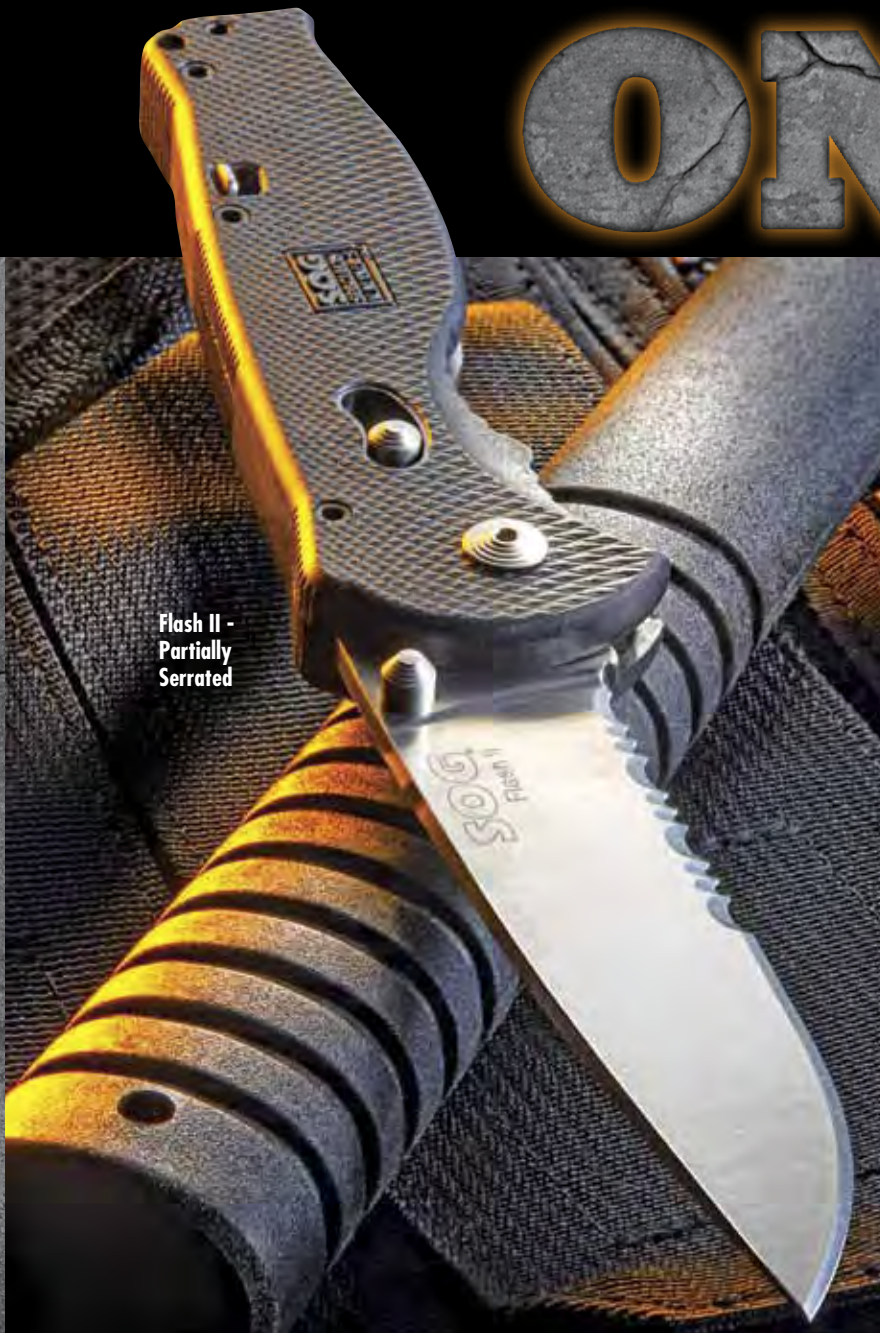
SIGHTS: FIXED (STD.),
ADJUSTABLE (TARGET)

SAFETY: FRAME-MOUNTED THUMB/
FIRING PIN BLOCK

PRICE: \$2,190 (STD.), \$2,390 (TARGET),
\$2,890 (LIMITED FIRST ED.)

ON A

SOG: ROCK SOLID KNIVES!



Flash II -
Partially
Serrated

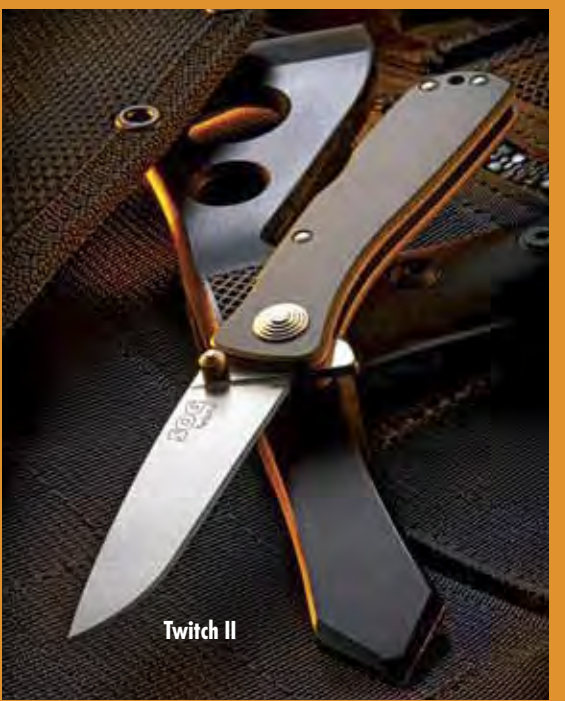


Tactical
Tomahawk

The roller coaster ride known as the cutlery industry has undergone many changes over the past 25 years, but one thing has stayed consistent. SOG Specialty Knives & Tools — commonly known as SOG — still makes tough knives built for the long haul. The tactical segment of the knife world was a lot different in 1986 than it is today. The tactical boom spawned out of the first Gulf War in the early 1990s, and grew to be the hottest genre in the cutlery arena today. At that time, finely engraved gents folders ruled the roost in custom knives, and aside from a fledgling company that was making knives with holes in their blades, the oft-copied Buck 110 was pretty much it in the manufacturer's lines.

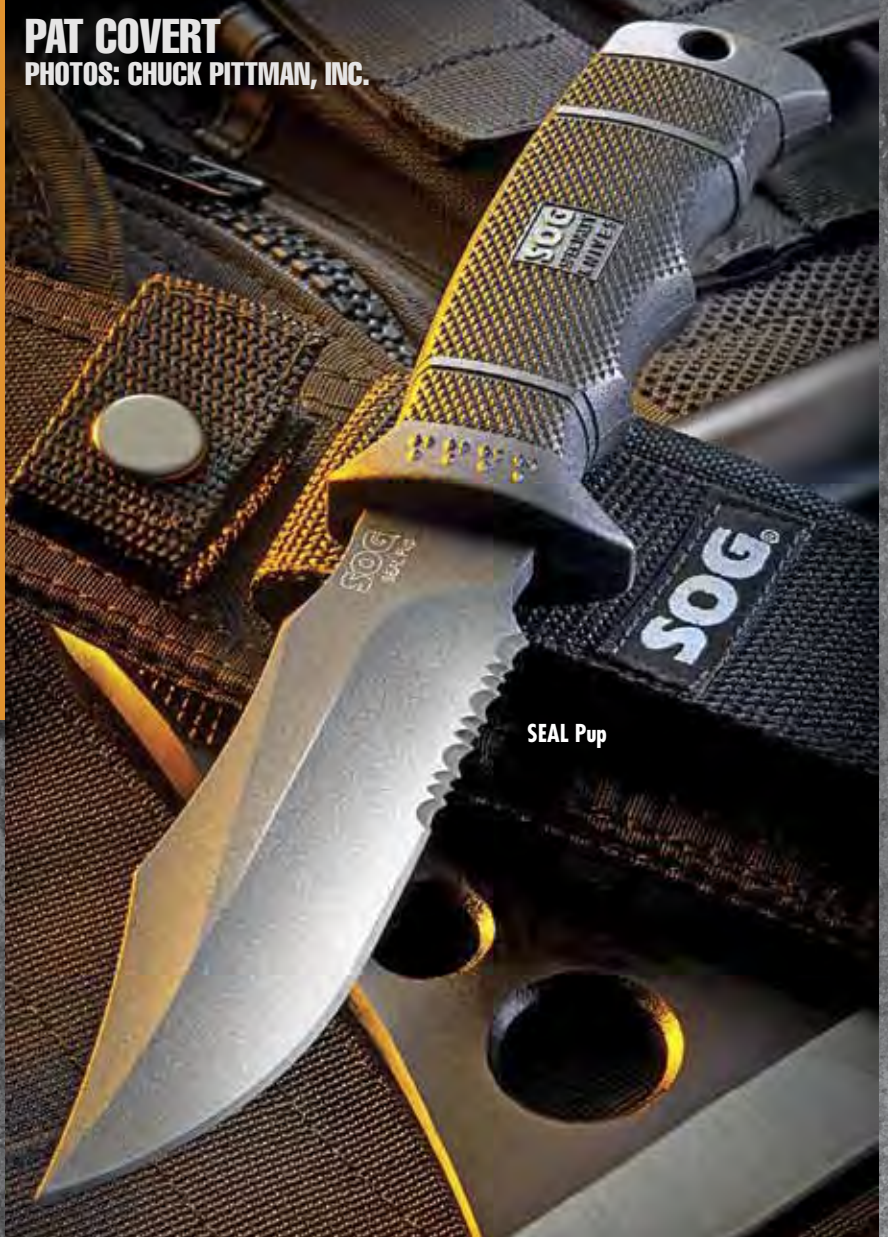
It was around this time SOG owner Spencer Frazer hatched an idea to produce a modernized version of the legendary Studies and Observations Group Bowie knife borne to fame in the jungles of Vietnam. With assistance and encouragement from his wife Gloria, Spencer made modifications to the original design to make it better, such as impregnating the stacked leather handles with resin and making the blade steel thicker so it can be all it can be. The young entrepreneur was not new to design. A math and science major at UCLA, he had experience designing and marketing an audio

MISSION



Twitch II

PAT COVERT
PHOTOS: CHUCK PITTMAN, INC.



SEAL Pup

speaker system of his own creation. After graduation, Frazer went to work on top-secret projects in the aerospace defense industry as a tool and die maker, giving him valuable insight. This, along with an active interest in the modern art movement at the time, gave him a broad and open-minded perspective on how to design and engineer products.

The game changer was when he saw his first his first Vietnam SOG Bowie. Previous game over, a new one was about to begin. He researched the knife extensively, and with Gloria at his side, the couple put together and launched their first adaptation of the storied knife. At \$200 a pop, their reproduction was very expensive for the day, but they sold enough of them to refine their work and branch out into other designs. By the early 1990s, when all hell broke loose in Iraq, they were perfectly situated to provide knives for military personnel and a hungry consumer market following on its heels.

New Tradition

The company eventually went to handles made of glass-reinforced Nylon,

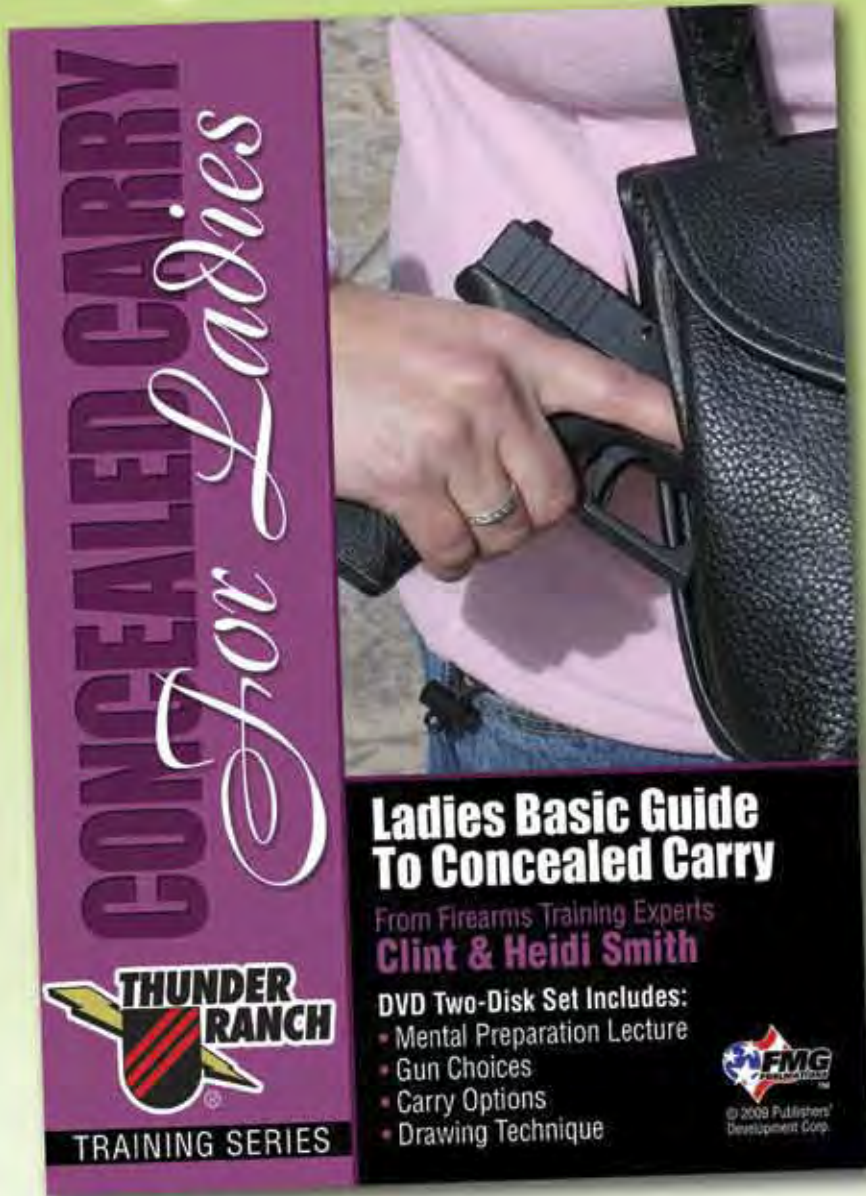
Continued on page 78



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COMPETITION GEAR

JOHN CONNOR

A CLOSE LOOK AT



4

IT'S NOT ALL PLAY, BUT IT CAN BE ALL FUN!

Back when Mickey Fowler was tearin' up handgunning records and hauling championships home in a wheelbarrow, he had just blasted out another win when some hair sprayed, non-shooting talking head poked a microphone in front of him and asked, "So, Mister Fowler, why do you compete?" Mickey's smile turned to perplexed puzzlement. He peered at the guy for a long moment and started to say something. Then Mickey slowly shook his head, sighed and walked away. A grizzled ol' gunner collared the clueless correspondent.

"I think what Mickey means is," he explained, "If you don't know, I can't tell ya." When you compete, sure, you shoot to win, but you don't have to take home the gold to be a winner. In so many ways, *showing up* is winning; *taking part* is the reward; *improvement* is your prize, and *beating your own "best"* is a championship. Here are some cool tools to help you get there.



1

Photo: Chuck Pittman, Inc.



5

2

5

1 Whether you're running a major tournament, going one on one with a pal, or timing your own draw-and-pop, there's a shooting timer to fit your needs and your budget. The PACT Club Timer III is a pocket-sized powerhouse of functions, the choice of hundreds of clubs and thousands of serious competitors. Check it out, and try to stifle your amazement at its bang for your bucks!

2 If you shoot a Glock, from "stock" to Super Galactic Unlimited, Lone Wolf Distributors has all the exotic components you need, from titanium strikers, right up to raging racers like the Werewolves shown here. Lone Wolf is the world's largest source of Glock parts and accessories and they know their stuff, so if they don't carry it, you probably don't want it!

3 In competition, eye protection goes a lot further than just ballistic resistance, and Rudy Project USA takes protection, clarity, comfort and appropriate tints to the limit. My choice is their 3-lens Genetyk kit shown, but I'm lookin' hard at the 5-lens Rydon kit. Rudy's light-adjusting lenses are the best I've used, and you can get 'em made to your prescription too!

4 Tired of dealing with speedloaders that don't quite fit for fast work? Models that were made for another revolver or similar frame size but "will also fit" yours — and don't? Wish you could tweak their spread or angle just a tad? You get that adjustability in a slick, secure design with SL Variant speedloaders from Bobby Mac's. An array of 5-, 6- and 7-shot models are offered for various frames, along with 2.25" extended Sport Grip knobs.



3

5 Some competition holster designs offer bells and whistles instead of proven performance, but Blade-Tech doesn't play that



6

game. If you want security, speed and a smooth draw stroke in a rig that's built to last, check out their Speed Rig for practical competition, and their Pro Series IDPA Pack which, by the way, also makes a great daily concealed carry setup.

6 Want your own master-level tutor in mastering IDPA? Just get a copy of the DVD Mastering IDPA from Panteao Productions. Ten-time national champion and full-time cop Bob Vogel knows what works and what doesn't to shorten your times, tighten your shots and boost your scores. And on DVD, he doesn't mind having to repeat himself as many times as you want!

Watch for the future announcement of my own new competitive discipline, the UOPL — the Underground OFFENSIVE Pistol League. Oh, we're gonna have some interesting drills! Connor OUT.



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A REAL HANDMADE 1911

J.D. JONES



Here it is, a "full" Custom VC National Match .45. Mainly made with a file, probably while waiting for action.

FILED TO PERFECTION - SORTA'

John Miller CWO, retired, showed me an interesting VC "National Match Custom 1911" he obtained in Vietnam many years ago. John was a small arms armorer in LBJ's "Youth In Asia Program." His main job was installing M6 MG mounts; M60C guns and 2.75" rocket pods, and sighting systems on Hueys freshly arrived from the states.

A favorite range for sighting in was near a Special Forces base called Bear Cat. The range was reasonably secure, and landing to make adjustments was common. Early in 1965, he was at the range with a new hotshot aviator fresh from Mother Rucker, anxious to win the war. As John says, "The radio crackled of a nearby skirmish and our Hero pilot decided to join in, with us along, and use up his remaining ammo. Fortune smiled on us and we arrived after the action was over.

Sky King decided to land among the carnage and see what war looked like close up. While we waited, a Special Forces buddy recognized me from the Tan Son Nhut shop and handed me the .45 saying, "Miller, here is a souvenir for you." It was loaded with RA

42 ammo the OSS probably had given to Uncle Ho in WWII, when he was our pal trying to kick the Japanese out of Indo China. I had a hell of a time declaring it as a war trophy, and was accused of stealing a GI M1911. I finally got it straightened out with the Provost Marshall, and got approval to export my treasure to the land of the round doorknobs and big PX.

Does It Work?

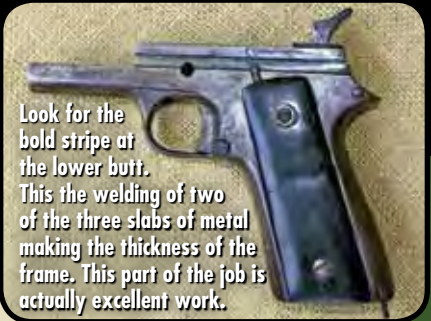
It is fire-able and John has fired it with a couple grains of bull's-eye under a round ball. Of course it didn't function, and a round ball wobbling down the rusted piece of pipe bore left a little to be desired in accuracy. Maybe accurate enough at best for a suicide. Everything about it, with the exception of the brazing together of three pieces of metal to make the frame and slide, is exceptionally crude. Although it was rumored it was issued to VC cadre as a badge of rank, and was probably not intended fire, one can easily look at the gun and imagine a VC patiently filing out the parts for months. It is, regardless of who made it and for what reason, a remarkable feat using hand tools.



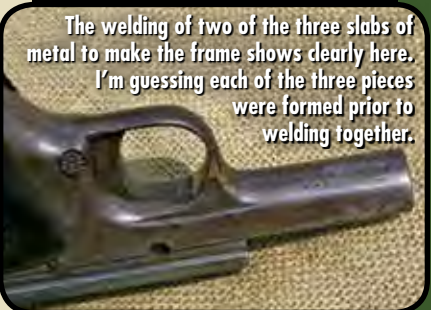
One .45 load up the spout. Yes, it would fire — and be at least as dangerous to the firer as the intended target.



Look for the bold stripe at the lower butt. This the welding of two of the three slabs of metal making the thickness of the frame. This part of the job is actually excellent work.



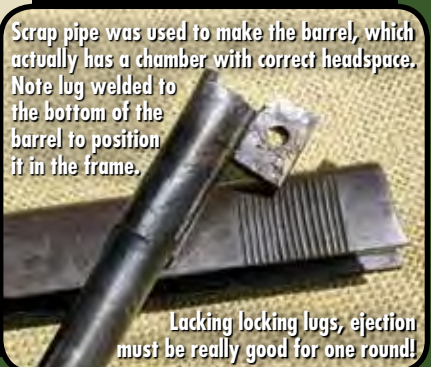
The welding of two of the three slabs of metal to make the frame shows clearly here. I'm guessing each of the three pieces were formed prior to welding together.



Note all the custom parts — including water buffalo horn grips!



Scrap pipe was used to make the barrel, which actually has a chamber with correct headspace. Note lug welded to the bottom of the barrel to position it in the frame.



Lacking locking lugs, ejection must be really good for one round!

Homemade magazine, follower and spring, made from "who knows what," actually works manually with a dummy round.



Whoops — got a bit heavy-handed with the file here. Won't really hurt anything though. Magazine sorta' hides the hole nicely.





WIN!

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HANDGUN OF THE MONTH

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Limit 1 entry per household. This contest is open to individuals who are residents of the United States and its territories only. Agents and employees of Publishers Development Corporation and their families are excluded from entering. Contest void where prohibited or restricted by law. Winners must meet all local laws and regulations. Taxes and compliance with firearms regulations will be the responsibility of the winners. Winners will be notified by CERTIFIED MAIL on official letterhead. ATTENTION DEPLOYED MILITARY: USE STATESIDE ADDRESS! No purchase necessary to enter. Giveaway guns and accessories may have minor handling marks or evidence of being test-fired.

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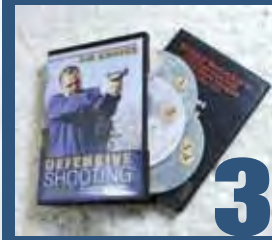
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afford the time or money to attend a training class, at least make sure you can get the kind of solid info available on DVDs like these. Watching Jim Grover or Kelly McCann's take on self-defense and pocket pistols gives you grit to work on the next time you're at the range. **4** The Howard Leight duo of Shooting Safety Combo Kits covers basic ear and eye protection for two shooters. The woman's kit offers a stylish metallic rose color. Both kits have polycarbonate anti-fog lens coatings on the shooting glasses and the solid performance Howard Leight has become famous for.



Kimber needs no introduction, and the proud owner of this set of defensive tools can rest assured the anchor — the Kimber Custom CDP II — will be a solid base for any self-defense program. The moniker "CDP" stands for Custom Defense Package and originates entirely in the Kimber Custom Shop. Features like night sights, 30-LPI checkering, 5" match-grade barrel and chamber, Carry Melt to soften the edges and other custom touches round out this very complete custom 1911 package.

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AIRGUNS

JOHN CONNOR



SERIOUS, SILLY, AND SEMI-SILLY SERIOUS AIRSOFT AND AIRGUNS: TONS O' FUN!

When I started researching this I knew .07 ZIP about airguns, and .001 SQUAT about airsoft. I knew people were hunting wild hogs with high-powered airguns, and some military and police training was being done with airsoft guns, but I wasn't even sure what they shot, or how. That stuff didn't overlap into my comfy, powder-burnin', lead-throwing world. Then a pal put me in touch with Simon Lee of Mad Bull, a Taiwan-based maker of top-notch airsoft guns and gear, and he just about blew the gasket on my head-valve with a mas-

sive info-dump. This is some serious, fun silliness, folks!

A Les Baer licensed airsoft 1911? Serious IPSC airsoft training? Select-fire BB machine guns? Now if I knew any more about 'em I'd have to dump info off my organic hard drive. I'm up to .14 ZIP and .08 SQUAT, and found some really cool goodies to share with you. There's more on Web Blast, so don't miss that! *Bon appetit!*

1 The. COOLEST. Pellet Gun. EVER: The Tippmann SMG .22 by Air Ordnance, a full-auto, belt-fed, 12-rounds-per-second thunder wonder powered by CO2, Nitrogen or compressed air, puttin' out .22-caliber lead pellets at 600 fps! Did I mention it's full-auto? 100-round belts in a rotary drum magazine? It's so much fun you gotta grimace when you say, "This is not a toy!"

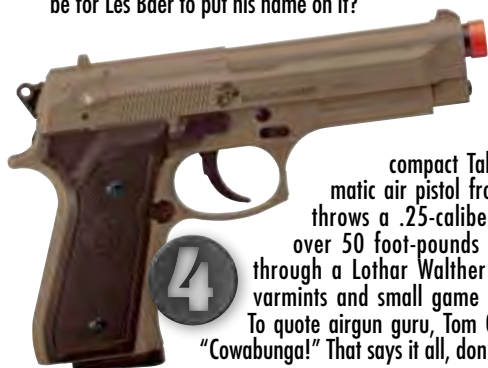
2 So you don't have the bucks for a Les Baer Custom 1911? Or, you shoot one in IPSC, but you want to be able to practice at home? Here's Mad Bull's officially licensed airsoft pistol, a faithful replica of Les's Ultimate Recon 5" model. Powered by Green Gas or CO2 and with a 25-shot capacity, it's marketed via socomgear.com. Quality? How good do you think it has to be for Les Baer to put his name on it?

4 Yup, that's an official Eagle, Globe and Anchor on this spring-powered, 12-shot airsoft pistol by Crosman. The SP01 shown here and several other Crosman airsoft handguns and long guns are fully licensed by the US Marine Corps. This one kicks out 6mm airsoft BBs at up to 325 fps, perfect for your hallway — but not if it hits that glass-framed photo of your mother-in-law ...

5 No weepin', wheelgunners, here's a winner for you: Even "Big Bore" John Taffin should enjoy shootin' this CO2-powered, 8-shot Smith & Wesson M&P R8 BB revolver by Umarex USA. Kitted out with an adjustable rear sight, it'll pop out .177-cal steel BBs at 420 fps, single or double action, into teensy little groups. Put a light on the under-barrel rail and go night rat-huntin'!

6 We led off with the coolest pellet gun ever, and here's the 'way coolest BB gun ever! The Russian-made Drozd Blackbird is already cool when it hits the bench at DrozdMax in California, but then they kick it up several notches as they did with this S.W.A.T. Edition. How 'bout semi, 3-shot burst or full-auto at 600, 900 or 1,200 rounds per minute, with velocity boosted to 700 fps? Powered by a 13cu high-pressure air tank, it's a .177-caliber steel BB pumpin' monster — and you don't have to go to Moscow for customer support!

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GUN RIGHTS

Alan Korwin



SHOULD YOU FIX THE WORLD ... WITH YOUR OWN LAWSUIT?

How outrageous do attacks on our rights and freedoms have to get before you throw caution to the wind, damn the torpedoes, and just sue the tar out of the bastards who are America's great domestic enemies? Can you just stand by while the criminal-injustice anti-rights defilers of the Constitution prance around scot-free? When the intolerable acts and rights-crushing laws get bad enough, and defenders of our rights seem idle, maybe it's time for you personally to take things into your own hands, go to court, and hold those villains accountable. Overturn the bad laws. Remove the evildoers from office for dereliction of duty. Use the courts to get Justice with a capital J! Sue the bums! Yeah, that's the ticket! Mebbe.

Have you ever been to court, even to wait in the jury pool, or pay a traffic ticket, or to (boring!) actually watch a case? Did you like what you saw? Did it seem unjust, confusing, were the procedures a mystery, did it make you feel like a helpless flea? That's a good thing to understand, because filing your own lawsuit is 100 times worse.

“Bad lawsuits make bad law. The enemies of freedom love it when a well-meaning turkey takes on the world through the courts without knowing the rules.”

People do invent their own lawsuits from time to time. You can file an *in pauperis* lawsuit (a pauper's suit, because presumably you don't have the half million it takes to start a proper lawsuit, like, you know, with lawyers). Freelance filing may not be the worst thing you can do, but it's damn close. Bad lawsuits make bad law. The enemies of freedom love it when a well-meaning turkey takes on the world through the courts without knowing the rules, let alone having a game plan — or the support of lawyers, assistants, scholars, researchers and even hip-pocket judges for good measure. A good lawyer knows the law. A great lawyer knows the judge.

Everyone wants to fix injustices and stop incursions on our precious rights, but your own lawsuit is the wrong way. I've written about this repeatedly in response to people who ask me how to proceed. I'm not even a lawyer, I'm a writer — shows you what they know. I will say this, though, that's better than mail I get from people who are so fed up they want to start shooting people — a far worse idea. Claire Wolfe got that right in her book,

Continued on page 85

LITTLE HANDGUNS

Continued from page 51

much right over 100 years back. He didn't every time, but did so at least once. The little .25 Auto is a joke. The .32 Auto was much better, but still puny. It was with the .380 Auto JMB got things right. Think about it; the .380 Auto is where it stopped in regards to little pistol cartridges. I'm no guru of self-defense matters, but in terms of little pistols I think .22 LR and .380 Auto make the most sense, and so do .22 LR and .38 Special for little revolvers.

Hard To Hold

When a senior in high school the local chief of police got me and his son free of class for a couple of days. The reason was an FBI firearms instructor was coming to train local lawmen and he needed a couple of go-for/fetch-it kids. To start with, that FBI guy did a demonstration on the course at ranges from seven to 60 yards using a 2" S&W Model 15 .38 Special. He planted every one of his 148-gr. wadcutter bullets centered on target, and his group could be covered with both of one's palms. It was very impressive.

Most of the rest of us are not going to be able to perform like that with little handguns. It's true many of them have the inherent precision to group very tightly. It's just between their poor sights and short sight radius we can't match that precision hand-held. I think little guns are for ranges of about 15 feet to 15 yards or so.

My little pistols all have tiny nubs for front sights, but at least their rear sights are notched blades that can be drifted for windage adjustment. My little revolvers have only a groove down their topstraps for rear sights, matched with tiny blade front sights. They are not adjustable at all. Luckily Smith & Wesson has a good handle on having them hit close to point-of-aim out of the box.

None of my little handguns get fed fancy ammo. For my own home shooting, which is mostly at steel, they get cast bullets, commercially made or poured by me. When I toss one of them into my briefcase or vehicle for travel (where legal) the little pistols get FMJ factory loads and the little revolvers get lead bullet SWC or RN/FP .38 Special factory loads.

I didn't consciously set out to own half a dozen little handguns. Over a period of time they just sort of ended up here. That said, now that I'm thinking about them, visions of some Colt Detective Special or Agent models run through my mind, and likewise a Walther PPK .22 LR. There's plenty to choose from. Hmm ... I need to think on this some more!



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SPRINCO'S RECOIL REDUCER

I believe it was Rob Leatham who once said, to paraphrase: *"The noise and the recoil are part of why we enjoy shooting. It just wouldn't be as much fun to shoot a silent, recoilless electronic ray gun."* I suppose I have to agree about the "wouldn't be as much fun" part. But anything that can reduce recoil (and noise) makes any gun a more practical *weapon*. And even sport shooters go to great lengths to shoot rounds or firearms imparting the least amount of recoil, at least in a match. If you add the effect recoil has on aggravating tendonitis, then the goal of reducing recoil is something just about every shooter seeks to achieve at some level.

Even me, with my full-size S&W M&P carry gun chambered for 9mm. "Nine millimeter?" I can hear you say with scorn. "The nine doesn't have any recoil to begin with!" According to my high school physics textbook, technically it does. And besides, refer to the above paragraph for good reasons. Call me non-manly, if you like, for looking to cut the recoil of even my nine, but you'd also have to level that charge at many top competitive shooters.

The Widget

Toward that end, I recently tried Sprinco's Recoil Management Guide Rod System in my M&P. The system consists of a replacement guide rod incorporating a secondary spring, and a new recoil spring (some pistols also require a separate bushing). As the slide of a pistol moves rearward, it contacts a sleeve on the rear of the guide rod which engages the secondary (sub) spring contained within it, dampening the slide's rearward energy just prior to its full rearward travel. The unit is top



RALPH MROZ

BUT DOES IT WORK?

quality; Sprinco's rods are made of 17-4 heat-treated stainless steel polished to such a good mirror finish it's often mistaken for chrome plating.

To cut to the chase — it works, and works well. Shooting it side-by-side with a friend's identical M&P with a stock recoil spring and guide, we both thought it reduced the felt recoil by about 30 percent, shooting both 115-gr. standard-velocity and 124-gr. +P rounds. Going back the next day and shooting another couple hundred rounds with the Sprinco-equipped M&P, I experienced zero failures shooting it 2-handed, strong-hand only and weak-hand only. This indicates the sub-spring didn't cause any short stroking of the slide.

I know you can't really reduce recoil — you can only spread it out over time. But that's the difference between taking

one of Mike Tyson's punches to the head, and receiving that same energy spread out over a week; one will kill you, the other you won't even notice.

Sprinco president Alan Dugger says: "My primary objective in designing this system was for faster sight recovery in rapid fire; the added benefits of less perceived recoil and reduced slide battering to the receiver are just icing on the cake." He suggested I try shooting double, triple and quadruple taps to see if his system cut the amount of vertical stringing, compared to shooting with the factory parts. This was actually not the best drill for me because I never shoot as fast as I can pull the trigger; 19½ years of police work has conditioned me not to shoot any faster than I can assess what's going on in front of me. But top competitors like Phil Strader, Eric Grauffel and Judy Tant use




The Sprinco Recoil Management Guide Rod System for the M&P consists of the recoil spring in the center and guide rod on the left (other guns may also incorporate a supplied bushing). The factory captive spring and rod are on the right. Note the orange paint on the ends of the Sprinco spring which indicates its particular strength — you'll want to order the right one for the load you plan to shoot. Sprinco also makes a couple extraordinary lubes, including the Machine Gunners Lube shown.

the Sprinco system, and they do appreciate the difference.

Durability?

Here's Alan on the subject: "You never have to replace the guide rod or the secondary spring. It's not compressed enough to stress the spring, and will never take a set. The 17-4 stainless rod is heat-treated and is tougher than most guns (it just won't stay shiny). We have a lifetime warranty against breakage (and they don't break). The recoil springs, being made of chrome silicon wire-stock (like the sub springs), are also cryogenically processed, which gives them an outrageously long duty cycle. They'll run for a minimum of 20,000 rounds, and realistically, much longer." (Note: I did not shoot 20,000 rounds, but if Alan is willing to put this claim in an email, there you go.)

So, it looks like you get no negative impact on reliability, gain the ability to make faster, possibly more accurate follow-up shots and lessen felt recoil at the same time. That's like getting a free upgrade in your shooting performance. Might be worth a try? 

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AYOOB FILES

Continued from page 20

The animal was 10' away when he pressed the trigger of his department issue Glock 22.

The bear collapsed instantly from the single shot, its momentum skidding it virtually to Merry's feet. He couldn't see the wound in the bear's furry head, but he figured it must have been a brain hit to drop the charging animal that fast. It looked as if the terrifying confrontation was over, but he knew how dangerous the animal would be if it regained its feet. With care — and with regret — he aimed the Glock this time and put a second 165-gr. Winchester Ranger-T .40 slug into the animal's brain.

Before the night was over, he would also shoot a Bengal tiger, a full-grown lioness, three male African lions and a grizzly bear; all with the M4. After the close call with the black bear at the car, he wouldn't be caught without a rifle in his hand again, for the rest of the night.

Shotgun Vs. Lion

Detective K.C. Jones (pronounced "Casey" by his friends) was assigned as lead investigator of the untimely death of Terry Thompson. Given the circumstances, he thought it would be an excellent idea to have a long gun readily at hand. Jones assessed his shooting backdrop; he had to begin his investigation at Thompson's corpse near the barn. Because the interstate highway would very likely be in his line of fire if he was attacked by anything coming out of the barn, he chose the shortest-range weapon available to him: a Mossberg 500 slide-action shotgun loaded with standard 12-gauge 00 buckshot.

It wasn't long before he needed it. A burst of gunfire came from behind the barn as other deputies neutralized one of the animals. This apparently spooked a full-grown male lion hiding in the barn area. It came out into view, moving fast and angling toward Jones as it made for some junk cars.

Jones threw the 12 gauge to his shoulder, swung with what he hoped was enough lead on the fast-moving cat, and pressed the trigger from a car length away. The animal disappeared behind a junked automobile. Acutely aware he had now lost sight of the lion and with a fresh round instantly racked into the chamber, Jones scanned for it. He finally spotted it 125 to 150 yards away. It had made its way to a field and gone prostrate. In the fading light he couldn't see where he hit it, but Jones figured if the buckshot didn't kill the animal, it had at least made him sick enough to not want a fight. Knowing the creature was now far out of shotgun range, Jones pointed out its location to Deputy Ryan Williams

of the Special Response Team, who had arrived with a .308 precision rifle. Two .308 rounds kept the wounded lion in his resting place, and ended his pain.

Leo Vs. LEO

African hunters will tell you of their great respect for their biggest indigenous cat, Panthera leo, and whether they call it by its Latin name or simply lion, they'll warn you the female can be more ferocious than the male. The deputies who encountered the single closest of the deadly animals that night figured it out for themselves.

Det. Sgt. Todd Kanavel was one of the law enforcement officers who shared this up close and personal moment. They were at a fence line, which may have been deliberately cut by the animal's owner, when from no more than 3' or 4' away, a lioness thrust her head through the fence at them. They didn't wait for her to get the rest of the way through; they opened fire instantly and heavily with their M4 carbines, dropping her immediately.

The Lady And The Tiger

One of the most ferocious of the animals was also among the last to die. By the next morning, all but the final few had been accounted for. Some half a dozen animals had been saved; they hadn't escaped from their cages. Deputies had resecured the cages, which would allow trained and appropriately equipped zoo personnel to safely transfer them to the Columbus Zoo.

Still at large was one of the bigger Bengal tigers. The preceding night had taught the officers the great cats were tough. Ryan Williams estimated they were putting an average of 30 .223 rounds into the lions to keep them down. Tigers run bigger than lions.

Desperately hoping to capture at least one of the rare Bengals alive, the deputies provided cover for a zoo employee when the last of the tigers was spotted, hunkered down in a patch of weeds. The zoo professional carefully aimed and fired her tranquilizer gun, and her dart went true. Alas, in real life, it takes some 15 minutes for the tranquilizer to work. At the instant the dart hit the tiger, it sprang up and charged the woman from the zoo.

The covering deputies instantly opened fire with M4s and a .308. The wounded animal spun and ran down a fence line. Two other deputies shot it with M4s; it fell then regained its feet. Ryan Williams nailed it with another .308 slug; the tiger fell and again sprang back up. Williams shot it one more time with the .308, and it went down and out of sight.

They waited 15 minutes, hoping the tranquilizer would take effect and the animal's wounds might be treatable by a vet. They finally approached. As they

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neared the spot where the tiger had gone to ground, they saw its head rear up violently from the weeds. Williams, who had swapped his Remington 700 bolt action for an M4 for the close work, put a shot in the back of its skull. Instead of collapsing, the tiger leaped to its feet and charged Deputy Williams and the woman from the zoo. Williams' carbine jammed, but the other deputies opened up with rapid fire from their semi-auto M4s, and Deputy Tony Angelo planted another .308 slug in the big animal. This time, it went down for good. Williams later estimated at least three, if not four, .308 rounds had struck home, and nearly 40 .223 bullets before this last tiger died. It was now 10 a.m. and the last shots of the mission had been fired — in a rain that had begun 12 hours before — as the deputies had searched through the night to contain the animals.

Lessons

A largely clueless public expressed great anger at the police for not being able to magically capture large, dangerous animals. Perhaps they thought each officer was Tarzan, and would wrestle lions down bare-handed and tie them up with jungle vines. Jack Hanna, the famed wild animal expert and advocate, was soon on the ground at Zanesville, and he commended the Muskingum County Sheriff's Department for handling the catastrophe as best as it could be handled. Even the radical animal rights group PETA reserved its rage for Thompson, not the cops who had to clean up after his final assault on a community he rejected.

Sheriff Lutz's decisiveness in recognizing the situation and ordering the animals be shot almost certainly saved lives. Had he and his people dithered, it is likely people would have been killed or crippled. According to investigators, the big cats killed at least two of the primates, completely devouring one. What devours a small ape will gobble up a small human.

No officers were injured, and no innocents harmed. Amazingly, hundreds of rounds had been fired, many if not most at night, with no collateral damage to property or individuals. The cats bit no one but the man who unleashed them. Law enforcement widely recognized the operation as magnificently disciplined.

Jonathan Merry, needless to say, was delighted with the performance of the 165-gr. Winchester Ranger-T .40 S&W round out of his Glock duty pistol. No one expected buckshot to stop an African lion, which averages 400 pounds, in its tracks. Pickup trucks with searchlights and alley lights, each carrying four police riflemen in the truck beds was the strategy, which achieved most of the containment. No one was looking for "1-shot-kill bragging

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rights.” Their job was to euthanize the animals, and not leave any wounded, raging predators at large in the community. After seeing the .223 bullets had little effect on the massive skulls of the tigers and the grizzly bears, the deputies’ strategy became massed barrages of fire aimed at the chest. Once the animals were down, they shot them a few more times — partly to assure humane destruction, partly to keep them from getting back up. This, obviously, led to a high round count. Ohio Department of Natural Resources personnel, Ohio State Police and other agencies played important parts in the containment, though all the shooting appeared to be done by Sheriff’s personnel.

There was no opportunity to necropsy the animals to see how the bullets had performed. However, the MCSO members I interviewed felt the issued Hornady TAP 55-gr. .223, and Hornady TAP 110-gr. .308 ammo did the job as intended. Meant as anti-personnel loads that might have to be used in populated Zanesville, they stayed in the bodies of the animals as designed. Some animals were also shot with one deputy’s privately owned Remington 700 in 7mm Magnum. Sheriff Lutz does not see any need to change ammunition at this time, though ammo allotment for patrol rifles is expected to increase. When ammunition supplies ran low, a retired Sheriff’s Lieutenant brought a thousand rounds of his own .223 ball to the scene, to replenish the deputies’ magazines.

In the dark for most of the ordeal and in the rain for much of it, the deputies gained much appreciation for two items of equipment. One was the red-dot sight, which in one or another brand was on almost all their patrol rifles. Another was the white-light unit affixed to each .223 rifle. Many of the animals were only spotted by the reflection of the light on their eyes in the darkness, and the extra candlepower allowed them to make certain of clear shooting backgrounds.

The deputies felt a collective sadness over having to kill these magnificent animals — creatures they took their children to the zoo to admire. The 18 dead Bengal tigers represented more than one percent of the entire 1,400 animal population of this endangered species on Earth. The responding officers were given an unpleasant job, and they accomplished it remarkably well.

American Handgunner extends its particular appreciation to Sheriff Matt Lutz, Detective Sergeant Todd Kanavel, Detective K.C. Jones, Deputy Ryan Williams, and Deputy Jonathan Merry. Their interviews with consultant Keith Jones and me can be downloaded to your computer or iPod as Episode Number 72 of the ProArms Podcast, available at proarmspodcast.com.

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ON A MISSION

Continued from page 61

a tough composite with a slightly suppler feel than a many synthetics, but the traditional design has been retained and become an SOG trademark over the past two decades. A checkered surface adds enhanced purchase and adds to the classic feel. Other iterations have been spun off the original handle and Bowie design, most notably their most popular knife.

According to marketing director Chris Cashbaugh, "The SEAL Pup is our best selling fixed blade, and probably the knife SOG is most known for. It packs a lot of use and functions in a strong, lightweight package. It sees action on front lines throughout the world by our military personnel, and those from other countries as well." You can see the same handle design on other, more recent models in the manufacturer's line such as the Creed, Force and Ops. Another huge design coup for SOG has been their Pentagon series, which has also generated a whole slew of siblings, including tactical folder versions.

SOG's customer base may have been built on tradition, but their modern tactical folders have caught fire as well. When the assisted-opener craze hit the tactical market, SOG was there with its own unique offerings. Cashbaugh tells *Handgunner*, "The Flash was one of our first assisted opening knives and offers quick 1-handed blade access in a lightweight package. It's great for everyday carry and general outdoor uses. The Twitch was the second of our assisted openers. The Twitch II offers the same 1-handed, quick blade access but comes in a smaller package more suited for the office than the outdoors."

SOG has also become revered as the top maker of multi-tools among our troops. They were the first to make a multi-tool with a set of crimping jaws geared for military use, and have since added other unique features such as power assist. "As one of the first multi-tool manufactures, we've been doing it for quite some time," says Chris. "The PowerLock is our best selling multi-tool. What sets us apart from the majority of multi-tools is our patented Compound Leverage design, which provides more gripping and cutting power than conventional designs. It also allows for the tool to be opened and closed with one hand."

Keeping It Real

One reason SOG has become a favorite among military forces is their affordable price structure. They incorporate highly competent, time-proven steels in their products but stay away

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from the exotic horse-race alloys that tend to drive prices out the roof. Chris informs, "The majority of our blades use AUS8 stainless steel. We have settled on this steel because it offers a great balance of durability, edge holding and cost. In addition to AUS8, we use VG10 in our higher end products. For handle materials we use an affordable selection such as glass-reinforced Nylon, Micarta, G10 and Kraton rubber. These offer durability and ease of manufacture, keeping our prices in line for the majority of customers."

They incorporate highly competent, time-proven steels in their products but stay away from the exotic horse-race alloys that tend to drive prices out the roof.

A couple of years back, SOG launched the Fusion line of knives and tools, which are even more budget conscious than their flagship products. Their Tactical Tomahawk has soared in popularity among our fighting troops, who use it for both breaching, personal protection and, according to the Chris, "It's just fun to have around for target practice."

On The Horizon

We've only covered a fraction of SOG's line here (we'd need a whole issue to cover them all), but a visit to the company's website with enlighten you to their multitude of offerings. While SOG has not jumped on the collaboration bandwagon that permeates the cutlery industry — they choose to use their own in-house talents most of the time — Cashbaugh revealed a recent affiliation with up-and-coming knifemaker Jason Brous. Jason's futuristic designs have been setting the Internet world on fire. Chris also gives us a hint that we might look for more down the road. "I can't share too much at this time, but we are looking to expand into more of the general outdoors sector. SOG is mainly known for making products that excel in military and LE applications, so this will be a new channel for us to get into and also an exciting one."

If SOG does for the outdoors market what they've done for the tactical segment, we're in for a treat!



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CALIBER MYTH

Continued from page 49

be intentionally ignoring other designs.

Shooters come in all sizes and with widely varying preferences and abilities. From just a purely physical standpoint, some of us are rather small in stature, have small hands and are not very well suited for a large-frame gun like a 1911. We also have widely varying sensitivities to recoil. There are also many different ways in which we may want to carry our concealed carry handgun. It may range from a very small pistol or mini revolver in a handbag, to something more substantial in a shoulder holster. There is no 1-size-fits-all answer.

Some of us also don't have the shooting abilities others have. No matter what the user is carrying they have to be able to use it *effectively*. A person armed with a .45 Auto who can't keep shots in a bushel basket at 10 yards, while under stress, is not going to be very effective. A person with a .38 Special or .380 Auto who can shoot in a 5" circle at 10 yards under stress — will be highly effective.

The bottom line is you have to be *proficient* with your equipment, and you have to be able to properly *use, manipulate and fire* it to be *effective*. There are folks who simply cannot shoot well with a .40 S&W or a .45 Auto because they have small hands, or don't handle the recoil well. Does that mean these people are somehow doomed to be risking their very lives by caring a gun/cartridge combination that is hopelessly ineffective because it isn't a .40 S&W or a .45 Auto? Hardly.

Ammo

The truth be known, virtually any cartridge existing, down to even the lowly .22 Long Rifle, is capable of decisively ending a confrontation if put in the *right* place. The catch here is that "right place" thing, and our ability to achieve that right place under a wide range of circumstances and stress levels. In the real world, you have to anticipate the ability to put the bullet in the right place might be a bit of a dicey proposition. So this whole argument really boils down to how much margin for error do we have in the terminal performance of our chosen cartridge for a shot — not perfectly placed? Looked at another way, does our chosen cartridge possess adequate terminal performance to convince someone intending to do us harm they'd really rather not?

At this point I will offer up an opinion eliminating some calibers for serious self-defense work based on data and fact. Any small caliber

incapable of achieving at least 825 to 850 fps from a handgun would be a poor choice. Cartridges that, at a minimum, cannot achieve this level of performance offer little chance of bullet expansion, and would have very low levels of terminal performance. In other words, you're only going to make a hole the size of the bullet. You'd better be a really good shot. Cartridges I feel fall in this category are the .22 Rimfires — excluding the .22 Magnum — .25 Auto, .32 Auto and most of the calibers used in the turn of the last century pocket-type pistols. They would certainly be better than throwing a rock, but they are not going to be *very* effective.

At this point in time, with the state of the art in ammunition and bullet design, most other common self-defense cartridges offer terminal ballistics sufficient to convince an aggressor that pursuing what they are doing is not in their best interests. Opinions stating a cartridge has to decisively end a confrontation assume the majority of us are comfortable with their concealed carry gun being a 4" .44 Magnum — or something bigger — *and* able to shoot it well.

What Then?

The truth of the matter is, with some of the new self-defense ammuni-

tion, even the .22 Magnum in a 1½" barrel revolver, the lowly .380 Auto in a 2.75" pistol and the little .32 NAA cartridge in a 2.5" pistol, can make wound cavities 1.50" to 1.75" in diameter for 5" to 6", and provide up to 10" to 11" of total penetration. Figures 2 and 3 show ordnance gelatin photographs with some of the latest ammunition in these three calibers, tested through FBI heavy clothing. I don't know about any of you, but I would be completely unwilling to stand in front of one of these on a bet that it wouldn't be effective.

Consider for a moment the better .45 Auto loads on the market today produce wound cavities of about 2" to 2.25" diameter and provide about 12" of total penetration. Figure 4 shows a photo of a gelatin test of a leading .45 Auto 185-gr. self-defense load tested through FBI heavy clothing. There's a difference, but certainly not enough to say the smaller calibers are *ineffective*. If a woman feels she needs to carry something small for protection in her purse, I would consider her well armed with any of the above three smaller-caliber loads.

Darn ... No Magic

There is no silver bullet for the most effective self-defense cartridge. What works well for one person might be a terrible choice for another person.

There *are* some choices in caliber that are not advisable. These cartridges are incapable of producing adequate performance to provide effective, reliable terminal performance, and we explained that.

With the recent advances among the industry's manufacturers in bullet designs and propellant properties, there are a number of very good choices of loads in a wide number of calibers. Whatever your choice is in equipment, it should fit you personally, and your circumstances, and you *must be able to shoot it well*. Choose ammunition that has proven performance and reliability — and then practice. And remember, with modern ammunition, reliable handguns and good training, virtually *any* caliber (except the ones we discussed), would be adequate for most defensive uses.

So if your gun of choice is, say, a S&W Model 10 in .38 Special, and you've chosen a modern, self-defense load with a proven bullet design, sought training and practice — what you've chosen is perfectly fine. Don't let the forum commandos cause you to worry.



Dave Emary is a scientist currently involved in ballistic testing, design and manufacture, with a wide range of experience in the field.

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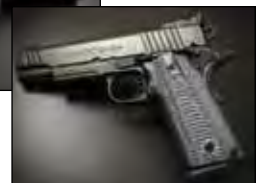
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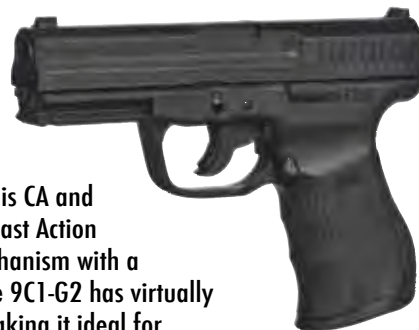
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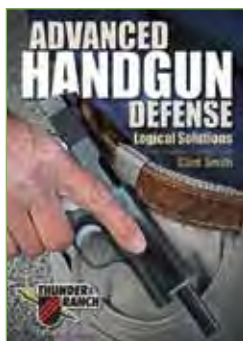


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GUN RIGHTS

Continued from page 70

101 Things To Do 'Til The Revolution, when, "It's too late to work within the system, but *too early to shoot the bastards.*" Stock up on those ideas first.

Legal Genius

As I tell my ardent correspondents, "You need legal *geniuses* behind the effort, a *team* of people not just 'a lawyer,' hundreds of possibilities and ramifications considered, elements for inevitable appeals built into initial pleadings, and the *perfect* test case structured so it can be won. No amount of personal frustration is sufficient justification for a 'wildcat' I'm-gonna-test-this-fool-law-and-right-the-world badly played game. Find enough of the right people to back the plan first, *bankroll the effort*, structure the absolutely perfect test case in the exactly right court, then go — I'm all for it. Oh, I'm sorry, that's hard? That's a lot of work? You don't know if you can or how to do that? You don't have a clue who the right people are? You just want to run with the football? Tough."

The roots of the 2008 *Heller* case, the case that saved the Second Amendment, traces back to lawyers Clark

Neily III and Steve Simpson at a happy hour in 2002, or even earlier, to a law-review article by Don Kates in 1983. This is not 1-man-1-shot stuff.

So what *can* you do?

Get your act in gear by getting to know some lawyers. Do that by going to your state (not national) gun rights groups, joining if you're not a member, and talk with them. Learn who they know and trust in the legal commu-

It's surprising how many people have tons of guns, and enough ammo to sink a ship (based on weight) but no lawyer to call in emergencies.


nity, because those are probably the good lawyers — probably (you have to decide for yourself). Find your state associations at the National Directory link at GunLaws.com.

This serves several purposes. If you own a gun you should own a lawyer too

(they don't like calling it that, but it's just a figure of speech). When you have a lawyer you never have to say, "I want an attorney," you get to say, "I want *my* attorney," a wonderful position to be in.

But How?

How do you "get" your own lawyer? That's the right question, and it's surprising how many people have tons of guns, and enough ammo to sink a ship (based on weight) but no lawyer to call in emergencies (or for simpler things like suing the federal government). When you find one that seems right, you book a *paid* 1-hour consultation, bring a few buddies so you can split the bill and share notes afterwards, and scope out the person. If it seems right, get half a dozen business cards (for your wallet, glove box, desk, spouse and spares), and then you "have" a lawyer.

Now, instead of imaging some fool lawsuit doomed to failure, you're preparing for intelligent defense of your rights — and yourself. And  that's a good legal strategy.

Alan Korwin is the author of nine books on gun law, including "Gun Laws of America: Every Federal Gun Law on the Books, with Plain-English Summaries." He runs the GunLaws.com website, and is the manager of the TrainMeAZ.com campaign.



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MORRIS SST1

Continued from page 57

The SST1 series is finished in Birdsong's Black-T finish and it matches the suppressor nicely. It also looks very business-like, and is tough-wearing. Speaking of suppressors, Mark said he has several suppressors for his .45s, but really likes the supplied Osprey by Silencerco, due to its design features.

Mark said Wade has a great sense of humor, and therein lies the story of the serial number for the photo gun: PLAN B.

"For this unusual project, I wanted the pistol to be extremely accurate, as always, but was concerned about accuracy using a suppressor. When you use a suppressor on your stock 1911, the slide cycles faster due to the pressure caused by the silencer," explained Mark. "It's the same with a AR-15. They will beat themselves to death on a steady diet of suppressed fire, and that's why so many AR shooters use adjustable gas blocks. In a 1911 design, you run into the same situation and can solve it through re-springing the gun and some other details, like barrel-fit. This pistol was designed to be used both ways, suppressed and unsuppressed. I built it so even shooting suppressed, you have a super-accurate gun because it stays in battery longer and lock-up is maximized.

"When Joshua, owner of Silencerco, came out with the Osprey, I knew it would be a hit because of the unique design and open-minded thought process that went into it. There are two things that strike you about the Osprey. First, it's not round! Second, the came mechanism for zeroing the rotation of the silencer on your barrel is sheer genius — simple and logical," continued Mark. "It's also one of only two silencers in production that are truly hearing safe. The Osprey is so unique, it simply *looks* like it belongs on the end of the SST1 pistol!"

Build Specifics

When doing a trigger job for any carry gun, Mark explained he likes to re-cut the sear to a different angle, providing safe engagement, but a crisp, clean break at no less than 4 pounds.

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With this method, even if the trigger is 4.5 to 5 pounds, it's such a clean break it feels much lighter. I've found the same situation with double-action revolvers. It's amazing how a 10- or even 12-pound DA trigger pull can feel like 6 pounds, *if* the action has been honed and fitted correctly. Yet I've felt a 6-pound pull (that wouldn't reliably ignite primers) that felt stogy and "hollow" for lack of a better word. It's all about the fit!

Mark also used one of his own barrels for each pistol built, a ramped design, since the frames were cut for ramped barrels. According to Mark, "Ramped barrels are not necessary for chamber support on these calibers, but do offer longer life for a gun going to be shot a lot suppressed."

Everything about my test pistol (and indeed, the trio Mark built) is essentially one-off — even milling-in the Leupold Delta Dot sight. It was all designed around the suppressor, and specifically the Silencerco Osprey. The design, using a full-length dustcover frame and full-length slide with no lower relief cuts, was so the silencer and pistol had a similar profile.

"I know, it seems picky to many, but I'm all about looks as well as function, and I'm not going to chance either," said Mark. "If it's not a cohesive and attractive design that's also reliable, I'm not interested. Almost anyone can make them work, but I wanted much more than that!"

Mark said Wade has a great sense of humor, and therein lies the story of the serial number for the photo gun: PLAN B. Anyone who follows logic when fighting with firearms, knows a pistol is the *second* choice for a gun fight, so PLAN B is just that — Plan B.

According to Mark, "And it'd better be a good plan!"

Things I Noticed

My test gun was neatly de-horned, but nothing excessive, leaving no sharp edges. The overall feel and fit was everything I've seen from Mark's shop in the past. I put about 375 rounds through Mark's personal gun he loaned me for the test, and basically just ran it magazine after magazine, with a break for a bit of targeting. It ran ... and ran ... and ran. The 15-round .45 ACP mags are amazing, and one in the gun and two or three on your belt would keep you in the fight for a long time.

And, like all of Mark's guns, the SST1 is accurate. The red dot made a high level of precision a bit harder for me at 25 yards, but a nicely rounded 1.3" to 1.5" group told me if I had sharp iron sights, I'll bet it would have gone 1" easily. I used ASYM match 230 ball and Black Hills 230-gr. ball for the majority of shooting. I ran a magazine of Black Hills 230-gr. HP



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through it to see if it ran, and it did. But for some reason, I just feel right using hardball in this gun!

The trigger is just as Mark described it, crisp, but not so light it's scary. The muzzle is threaded for the suppressor, and has a neat thread-guard attached. The modified Brown grip safety fits comfortably, and the ambi-safeties snick on and off perfectly. While Mark usually uses Cylinder & Slide innards, he elected to go with the STI hammer, since the design is a bit edgy and is a nice match to the STI frame. The slide cuts are something Mark dreamed up, and he feels they sort of go with the whole "end-of-the-world" look, and helps hold the suppressor theme on the gun too. We'd have to agree.

The SurFire X400 weaponlight is vintage SureFire in the sense it's built like a tank, and has the unique selector lever allowing light, laser or light and laser. The extended switch wrapping around the guard and to the frontstrap makes it easy to turn it on and off by simply squeezing your grip "a bit more" as it were.

The leather Mitch Rosen, of Mitch Rosen Extraordinary Gunleather, supplied can safely be labeled "over the top." Can you say, exotic? It starts with a dark-brown crocodile shoulder holster rig holding two hi-cap mags for the gun under the right arm, and the SST1 pistol under the left arm. Mitch also made a belt holster holding the pistol with the SureFire X400 attached, and a belt pouch for the Silencerco Osprey. Sounds like there's more to this Plan B than we thought?

like our test guns for you, he's also offering the SST1 in an open sight version, using his TKO "iron" rear sight for the old school crowd. But still, the Delta Dot makes sense too in this sort of defensive gun, likely to be used for home-defense, maybe SWAT entry, and open carry holsters. Mark says he's put a lot of rounds through his SST1 (my test pistol) both suppressed and without a suppressor, and it has run perfectly.

"For me," he told me, "it makes a great home-defense pistol. The hi-cap mags, laser/light combo, 1-handed operation and the quiet of the suppressor (so you can hear what's up after shooting) is perfect for my needs. Indeed, it's now my home-defense handgun. It's comforting to have on the night stand, and — it's seriously fun to shoot too, which just sweetens the deal!"

If you want one, it will run you around \$4,995, or \$3,995 without the Leupold Delta Dot setup. Mark will do them in .45 ACP, .40 S&W, .357 SIG and even the 10mm (his favorite caliber). Overall, the SST1 feels like a fighting pistol should feel. Firm in the grip, with enough options that work in the real world, but don't simply clutter up the platform as eye-candy. All of it is executed in Mark's distinctive, attention-to-detail style. While these guns are something new from him, they act like something having much longer legs, no doubt drawing on Mark's many years of experience building solid guns. Oh ... and they're fun to shoot, too. Or did we already say that?



Other Ideas

While Mark can build a gun exactly

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SIXGUNNER

Continued from page 28

The original New Frontiers, now known as 2nd Generation sixguns, were offered in .45 Colt, .357 Magnum, .44 Special (rare), and even more rare, .38 Special. Barrel lengths were 4¾", 5½" and 7½", though not offered in all chamberings. All of the 2nd Generation Single Actions were removed from production in the early 1970s and came back a few years later as the 3rd Generation run. This time the New Frontiers were offered in the first three chamberings mentioned plus .44-40. They lasted until the early 1980s — and then they were gone.

Never?

Twenty-plus years ago friend and fellow writer Wiley Clapp and I were at a Colt media meeting and we asked two questions about when the .44 Special and the New Frontier would be returned to production. The answer was, basically, never. However, this is an example of never saying never as not only is the New Frontier back, it's even chambered in .44 Special. As this is written, the only examples, which have been produced thus far are a 7½" .45 Colt and a .44 Special with a 5½" barrel. However, we have promises of all three standard barrel lengths in the near future in both of these chamberings, as well as .357 Magnum. It's just a matter of time.

Colt has been around for a long time, and in fact, 2011 marked the 175th Anniversary of Colt Single Actions, going all the way back to the first one, the percussion Paterson of 1836. To help celebrate this momentous anniversary, all New Frontiers produced thus far have special anniversary marking on the barrel consisting of "1836 – 175th Anniversary – 2011" and serial numbers beginning at 20000NF. Once they were announced I immediately ordered up all three barrel lengths and all three chamberings. The 7½" .45 Colt was received first and was followed within two weeks by the 5½" .44 Special. My hope of the 1960s eventually became reality. I now have a long acquaintance with New Frontiers, both 2nd and 3rd Generation versions including all three barrel lengths and chamberings of .45 Colt, .44 Special, .357 Magnum, and .44-40. All of these are very nice sixguns, however, the new versions are even nicer.

Best Ever

These two new New Frontiers are the most beautifully finished factory produced Colt Single Actions I have ever experienced. Not only as to finish, consisting of case hardened frame as only Colt can do it, matched up with a blue which rivals the old classic Royal Blue, but they are also exceptionally well-fitted with no sharp edges. Grip frame

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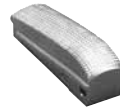
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to mainframe fit is as it should be, and running a finger over the seams shows a nice smooth transition. Lock-up is tight, trigger pulls, while not perfect, are certainly more than adequate.

The earlier 3rd Generation New Frontiers did away with the full-length cylinder bushing going instead to a button in the front end. Two improvements have been made to this latest run, namely the full-length bushing is back, and more importantly, the rear sight has been changed. The original adjustable rear sight was certainly adequate and acceptable, however Colt has now gone to the excellent Elliason rear sight. Adjustments are more precise, and the back of the rear sight is totally flat and serrated to block glare, matched up with a ramp front sight, with both the ramp and the front blade also being serrated; an excellent package all around.

Grip panels are nicely fitted to the grip frame, and shaped to fit my hand perfectly. The only downside is the fact the grips are made out of the plainest walnut one is ever likely to encounter. Proper fitting and shape is certainly more important than fanciness, however I definitely intend to purchase both of these New Frontiers so they will soon be fitted with custom grips to match the beauty of the metal finish. All Colt Single Actions, including the New Frontiers, have the traditional action with no transfer bar. This means they *must* be carried with only five rounds loaded, and the hammer down on an *empty* chamber. No exceptions.

Loads

Bullet casting is normally touted as a great way to do a lot of shooting for the least amount of money, and it is, however that's not the number one advantage, which is being able to custom-tailor bullet diameters to fit each particular sixgun. There's a lot of variation found in the chamber throats of both .45 Colt and .44 Special sixguns. Best accuracy is normally achieved from bullets, which match the chamber throats of each sixgun. I keep a set of 250 pin gauges, round cylindrical rods in increments of .001" from .250" to .500", for this task. The .45 New Frontier gave me a uniform reading of .455" for all six chambers. I keep a generous supply of reloads on-hand with both .452" and .454" diameter bullets, so for the most part, I chose the latter. However, I was pleasantly surprised to find the smaller bullets also shot well, as did factory ammunition.

Most of the Colt 3rd Generation .44 Specials I have encountered have been in the .433" category, while earlier guns from the 2nd Generation run were normally tighter. This latest .44 Special has chamber throats which measure a uniform .429". Reloads were used with both .429" and .430" cast bullets and results show this is the most accurate

Colt Single Action I have ever encountered in 55 years of shooting sixguns. Several loads were under 1" for five shots at 20 yards with one of my favorites, the RCBS Keith bullet #44-250 dropped from a mold I had set up to do hollowpoints over 17.5 grains of H4227. This placed five shots in an astounding .5"! I cannot (normally) shoot this well!

My everyday standard working load for the .44 Special consists of 7.5 grains of Unique or Universal under a 250-gr. Keith bullet. No matter which Keith bullet I chose (H&G, Lyman, NEI, or RCBS) results were excellent, with most coming in at 1" or less for five shots at 20 yards. Muzzle velocity is normally around 950 fps for these loads.

Switching to Hornady or Speer 240 JHPs lowers the muzzle velocity to around 880 fps, but accuracy is even better, with loads hovering at 7/8". When I get behind on my casting I shoot a lot of Oregon Trail Laser Cast 240 SWCs. These bevel-based bullets over 6.0 grains of Unique clock out at 830 fps and also group under 1". I don't think we can ask much more than this from any single-action sixgun.

.45 Colt Loads

Switching to the .45 Colt and sizing my cast bullets to .454" also resulted in excellent accuracy, just a shade above that encountered from the .44 Special. One of my all time favorite Single Action Army level heavy loads is the Lyman #454424 Keith bullet over 20.0 grains of H4227 for right at 1,000 fps. This load groups in 1 3/8". Switching to Oregon Trail Laser Cast bullets for the .45 results in their 250-gr. RNFP over 8.0 grains of Unique clocking out at over 900 fps and grouping in 1 1/8". Complete results of my tests with both the .44 Special and .45 Colt New Frontiers can be found on our Web Blast section online.

Simply Nice Sixguns

The Colt Single Actions chambered in .45 Colt and .44 Special were user friendly even before anyone even knew what that term meant. Everyday Working Loads in the 800-1,000 fps range are exceptionally pleasant to shoot, with felt recoil at a minimum. Recoil is more like a gentle nudge. It may feel macho to shoot the heavier Magnum sixguns, however most of us have to admit the Colt Single Action grip frame, matched up with these loads, is certainly a lot more pleasurable. And those loads will also do most jobs we want done with a sixgun. If for some reason we need heavier hunting handloads, we can use 250- to 260-gr. cast Keith bullets at 1,100 fps in the .45 Colt, and sneaking up close to 1,200 fps in the .44 Special in the New Frontier. There is nothing residing anywhere I'm likely to roam these days that can't be handled with one of these loads.



TAFFIN TESTS

Continued from page 46

high pressure, high performance .32-20 loadings. Better still, the .327 is nothing more than a stretched .32 H&R Magnum, which means it's quite small in diameter and can be built in 6-shot guns on relatively small frames."

Small-Bore Magic

Long before the advent of the .327, in fact in the 1960s, three super high velocity small-bore pistol cartridges arrived with the .221 Fireball, the .22 Jet and the .256 Winchester. I have tried several times to make the .22 Jet work, trying just about everything imaginable which has been advanced as the secret formula and all of them proved fruitless. There is simply no way to get even close to the published ballistics without having a revolver totally locked up due to setback of fired cases. Even though I knew of all the problems with the .22 Jet, when a friend offered me one for sale at an incredibly low price; I grabbed it because I knew Hamilton Bowen was working on producing Smith & Wesson cylinders. I wanted the Smith & Wesson Model 53, not as a frustrating and poorly performing .22 Jet, but simply as a quality .22 sixgun which looks exactly like a Smith & Wesson Model 19.

Once Hamilton gave me the word I sent off my Model 53 to have a .22 Long Rifle cylinder fabricated. I was a little concerned by the fact the .22 Jet bore diameter is larger than the normal .22 LR bore but Hamilton thought it would work, and he was right. When my new cylinder came back there were a few extra things packed in the box. Since he was making Smith & Wesson cylinders Hamilton took the opportunity to make a Model 586-style Heavy Barrel sixgun with two cylinders, not in .357, but rather .25-20 and .256 Winchester.

Convertibles

Now that Hamilton has the capability of producing Smith & Wesson cylinders, you can come up with some absolutely enjoyable "little" sixguns, which puts the fun and challenge back into varmint hunting. Starting with a Smith & Wesson K-frame such as a Model 19, and by re-boring existing Smith & Wesson barrels such as those from the Models 17, 48 and 53, he has the basis for a sixgun with nary a kick in a carload. The test gun sent to me has a heavy underlugged barrel such as found on the current 10-shot Smith & Wesson Model 17 chambered in .22 LR. After re-boring the barrel to .25, he then fabricated two new cylinders, one is un-fluted and chambered in .256 Winchester, while the other in the traditional fluted style, carries a .25-20 Winchester.

Single action sixguns are usually touted as being very easy to switch cylinders and so we have seen Convertible Single Actions in such combinations as .45 Colt/.45 ACP, .44 Magnum/.44-40, .38-40/10mm and .32-20/.32 H&R Magnum. These have all been sold to the shooting public on the idea of not only great versatility, but the ability to swap cylinders, easy to do on a SA. Hamilton has made it almost as easy to switch cylinders on a double-action sixgun.

With the Smith & Wesson one simply backs out the screw on the side of the frame above the trigger, pulls the entire yoke and cylinder forward out of the frame, removes the cylinder from the yoke and replaces it with the second cylinder, inserts the yoke back into the frame, tightens the screw in the side of the frame, and the operation is complete. The only way it could be made easier it is by using two fitted-to-the-frame yokes, each with its own cylinder. Then it would only be necessary to loosen the screw, remove the yoke and cylinder in total, replace them with the second option, and tighten the screw. The problem, of course, is coming up with that second yoke.

Taper Trouble

Even though neither the .25-20 nor the .256 Winchester have the exaggerated milk-bottle shaped taper of the .22 Jet, they are still necked-down cases and revolver cylinders will not work with many loads I use in my rifles. If the loads are too hot for the cylinder, cases will set back and lock up the gun. Both ammunition and cylinder chambers must be very clean. I use patches and a spray degreaser on the cylinder charge holes. Loads must be approached carefully and when cases start backing up, it's definitely time to back off. The .256 Winchester has the greatest case capacity and also the greatest possibility of heavier loads. Most of my shooting was done with the .25-20 cylinder in place as it's not only so pleasant shooting, but many of my .256 Winchester rifle loads proved to be too heavy for use in the cylinder of the Bowen Smith & Wesson.

Complete results are in the accompanying table and it is easy to see how much more powerful the .256 is compared to the .25-20. The first time I ever met Hamilton, back in the mid-1980s at the Shootists Holiday, he had a Ruger Redhawk chambered in .500 Linebaugh. It was a kick to shoot in more ways than one. Both of us have advanced to the time in our life in which the emotional kick of a .25-caliber sixgun is a lot more enjoyable and satisfying than the physical kick from the big .500.

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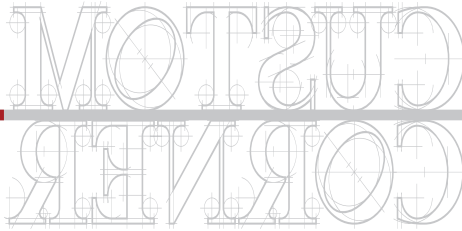
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SIG SAUER 210

Continued from page 59

current 210 and significantly larger in all aspects. Being primarily a competitor's pistol, it was less popular than anticipated in the Western Hemisphere, though competitive shooters appreciate the excellent accuracy and the adjustable trigger available on some models.

The 210 Legend entered US distribution in spring, 2011. Like the X5, it's manufactured at the SIG SAUER German factory, and it seems a safe bet modern manufacturing methods play a significant part in its production. Cost of the basic and target models are competitive with the old Swiss production pistols currently much sought after by enthusiasts. Use of automated machining does not preclude a considerable element of hands-on attention from skilled craftsmen, and the attention is evident in the finished product.

It also has a marginally heavier frame and an internal passive firing pin block that does not interfere with the light, crisp trigger pull.

The slide, barrel and frame of the Legend are rendered in carbon steel — all elements displaying close fit and excellent metal work under a black Nitron finish. The full-length guide rod is stainless steel. The frame-mounted, low profile safety lever of the earlier 210 was difficult to access and manipulate, so has been redesigned for better access.

More Changes

Many — or most — shooters suffer the consequences of hammer bite from the first 210; the Legend eliminates this with a beavertail. Like the dash-eight, the Legend retains the American magazine release. It also has a marginally heavier frame and an internal passive firing pin block that *does not* interfere with the light, crisp trigger pull. My example broke crisply at just less than 4 pounds dry from the box, and after lubrication and about 300 rounds it settled in at a crisp 2 ounces over 3 pounds. Early on, my two 8-round magazines were nearly impossible to load, but the anticipated spring set from shooting has mitigated that process to the merely difficult.

In regard to functioning, all the superlatives apply. Trigger, glass-rod; alide/frame, travel cushion of air; fore and aft barrel lock-up bank-vault. The Target model has adjustable sights, while the basic pistol (and my copy of "Special Limited") come with narrow but highly visible Patridge fixed sights. Mine are precisely centered on the slide and land

most 115- and 124-standard and +P loads dead on at 25 yards. Lighter bullets and 147-grain JHPs tend to hit about 2" left from the bench. In firing several hundred rounds, I experienced several failures to feed with one of my sub-par reloads, and a single failure to feed with a Remington 115-grain ball load. The bulk of my shooting has been with premium quality rounds from Blackhills, Buffalo Bore and Corbon, and I've had perfect reliability with those loads.

Most Accurate?

German-made SIGs, beginning with the 210, traditionally come with a sample target signed by the factory-designated shooter. Originally, these targets demonstrated the 210s were capable of 2" accuracy at 50 meters. At some point, somebody decided to cut the distance in half. My X5 Competition arrived with a 25-meter group measuring 1.1", and the dude who shot my 210 Special Limited planted a 1.4" cluster.

My smallest 25-yard groups with

the X5 and the 210 Legend went .95" and 1.1" respectively. The great bulk of my bench groups range from 1.3" to 1.7", frequently with three of the five touching. Bench accuracy, as well as off-hand, unsupported results, compare very closely to what I get with my Baer TR Special, an accurized Gold Cup done by Alex Hamilton of Ten Ring Precision and with the 9mm X5. The 210 is markedly lighter than the other pistols, especially at the muzzle. That detracts from the steadiness afforded by my 1911s, but the handling qualities are similar enough to the 1911s the muscle memory developed with one serves very well with the other. More to the point, with its fine trigger pull and match-grade accuracy, the Legend clearly stands out from the crowd in the burgeoning herd of service-sized 9mm handguns.

Just As Good?

The candidates vying for the title "World's Best Pistol" has increased significantly in the past few decades. It remains to be seen if the reincarnated 210 will capture the imagination of today's shooters in the same manner as its predecessors. But the enduring excellence of the design and the outstanding execution should assure its acceptance among the most discerning shooters.



For more info: www.americanhandgunner.com/sig-sauer or (603) 772-2302

FRONT LINE HOLSTERS

W e Americans tend to be ethnocentric at times; sort of an “If it ain’t invented here, we’re not interested” way of thinking. Don’t get me wrong, I like to buy “Made in the USA” as much as the next person, but sometimes we close our minds to options that are still sound, and might support countries we could call friendly to us, at the same time. A friend of mine introduced me to an Israeli holster company, in business since 1961. Basically, in Israel (and in much of the world) if you carry a holster, it’s made by Front Line — and I’ll bet you never heard of them. Let’s fix that.

Front Line makes a comprehensive line of police duty gear, and if you’re interested in that, you can check them out. There’s lots of innovative gear in that category, especially SWAT-type modular stuff. But we’re going to concentrate on their leather and synthetic concealment gear. Leather is available in tan or brown, and the multi-layer synthetic is black. Leather holsters can also be suede-lined if you like. Our test gear showed solid workmanship and design, with many designs very classic in appearance and construction. There’s a reason for that — why change things that have worked for decades? I like solidly constructed leather holsters, especially



models and designs I’ve known for years. Having said that, they also offer an astoundingly wide range of fits. According to Front Line: “Every make and model of gun has a fit designed for it.”

Kydex rigs are available, as well as shoulder rigs, excellent belts, a multitude of accessories, load-bearing vests made to a customer’s specs and even ankle rigs. Israeli military and police organizations use Front Line, and last time I looked, those organizations can pretty much hold their own with anyone, so I doubt they would settle for second best in anything. *For more info: www.americanhandgunner.com/front-line or (907) 317-8440*

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KA-BAR ZOMBIE KILLERS

Okay, so I don't know what brought it on either, but this whole zombie killer thing has taken flight. But, think about it, it means companies are making "things" that will work in a last-ditch attack against zombies. So ... anything saying it's zombie proof, would probably work for weeding the yard, keeping pests out of the garden and even protecting Sam and Suzi Homemaker against real-world gremlins.

Enter Ka-Bar ZK Knives (Zombie Killers, get it?), definitely cutters that could save anyone's keister if it needed saving. If you don't know who Ka-Bar is, go hide under a rock. Can you say, Marine Corps knife? Today's Ka-Bar is famous for great value and performance, in knives showcasing innovation and practical use in the real world. All fun aside, I found the ZK knives to be affordable (\$40 for the folder, to \$75 for the fixed blades), tough as old door nails and shaped to do hard work if called upon. I liked the bright neon-green handle



scales since you can find 'em if you lay them down in the weeds, but each comes supplied with black scales if you're more conservative. The supplied nylon sheaths have plastic inserts to keep the (sharp) edges from skewering them, and each knife has just enough heft to get a serious job done.

I found the "Pestilence" chopper (first on the left) to be just the ticket for chopping vines and other miscreant things attacking the old oaks on our land here. "Take that," I found myself saying, as I hacked away. Okay, they weren't zombies, but a wrist-thick vine of poison ivy might qualify at some level? I label the ZK knives in the saving humanity category, nonetheless.

All the knives are lightweight, well designed and, hey, let's just say it ... fun! If you think zombies might be in your future, you can't go wrong. Here we have certified Zombie Killers, from a company who knows a thing or two about defensive knives.

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ROSEN J-FRAME SHOULDER RIG

“Mitch,” I said. “I love J-frames, but you already know that.” We were talking about tractors and milling machines, but had accidentally veered into the realm of holsters. “I had a single J-frame shoulder holster once, it was okay, but only just. I’m telling you, if you built a double J-frame rig, that’d be very cool. Something nice, but not cheap. We baby-boomers can afford it sometimes, so don’t shortchange us. I mean, think about it.” I found myself pontificating, too late to turn back. “Two dead-nut reliable revolvers, easy to carry, a good caliber, always at-hand, I mean, my gosh, what’s not to like?” And it seems, since Mitch is, above all things, a gun guy, he too saw the merit. “Yes ... indeed ... I see the logic,” he said quietly. I could tell he was thinking.

So, herewith is the result. Sometimes retro is there for a reason, and revolvers, retro though they may be, are as current as “five shots, fast” can be. And frankly, five shots can usually solve about 99.5 percent of what’s-what. So, multiply that by two, and you suddenly get 10 shots of that “dead-nuts” reliable .38 Special-something — right at-hand. A “New York” reload simply means you empty your first gun, then go to your second. Well, here you go. Your “reload” is at-hand, comfy and, dare I say, stylish? While panache may have its detractors, at some level, deep inside, we can’t resist it. “Oh, that guy? You mean the guy who carries a pair of J-frames in that cool leather shoulder rig? Oh, I know him.” See? Bet you wish you were “that guy” among your friends?

With solid brass fittings and Rosen over-the-top leather and workmanship, there’s a reason it’s called Mitch Rosen Extraordinary Gunleather. Carrying a gun (or guns) is serious business, and warrants the best you can afford when it comes to carrying methods. And honestly (I can’t be anything but, with you), I can’t think of a single thing wrong with carrying a pair of J-frames as your personal-protection option. Professional hunters carry double rifles because they offer, essentially, two single-barrel rifles in one. Why not have two 5-shot handguns at-hand — always? I can’t think of a reason not to. *For more info:* www.americanhandgunner.com/mitch-rosen or (603) 647-2971, and when you get Mitch on the phone, tell him we sent you.



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TACLLET JR. ACCESSORY BAG

We lived through the days of fanny packs — remember those? “Gee, does that guy have a gun in that black, ballistic nylon bag worn tactically on his hip, to match his mirrored glasses, T-shirt saying ‘Sleep safe, take a cop to bed’ and \$140 designer sneakers?” Today, many soft goods makers are more and more innovative when it comes to hiding guns and related accessories, and Natt Stevens, guru at Tuff Products, is among the leaders in thinking outside that box. Relying on experienced cops and other gun guys and gals, Natt listens, and then puts what they say into action in the real world.

His Taclet bag (a bigger version of the featured Jr. size) got him thinking if someone liked the original, then a smaller, easier to manage one might work well too. And he was right. The Taclet Jr. has many of the features of the bigger one (gun pocket, places to stash a pen, light, wallet, even a place holding a phone with hard case), but is more — shall we say — discrete.

I’m an old fan of alternate carry methods. After about 38 years of carrying a gun almost every day (okay, I admit to missing days, but not intentionally, mostly because I used to be lazy about it, but then got my brain under my feet, so don’t you be lazy!), I realized a few things. In spite of what Clint



Smith says about guns being “comforting not comfortable,” there are some days when you just aren’t in the mood to tote 3.5 pounds of 5" .45-caliber steel around (including reloads). Tuff Products knows that, which is exactly the reason they made the Taclet Jr. kit bag.

It fits my Rahrbaugh 9mm perfectly (a great maximum concealment, full-caliber 9mm by the way), and the pocket clip makes it easy-on and easy-off. That’s important in the real world. I know, if you’re really tactical you won’t care about lugging around big iron and such, but sorry folks, for people pocketing J-frames and Kahr .380s, this makes perfect sense. A reload, a flashlight, pen, wallet, phone ... bingo; it’s all there. And when you’re home, snick, it’s off. I really like this thing. Thanks Natt. About \$60, and in non-tactical colors too. *For more info: www.americanhandgunner.com/tuff-products or (877) 883-3776*



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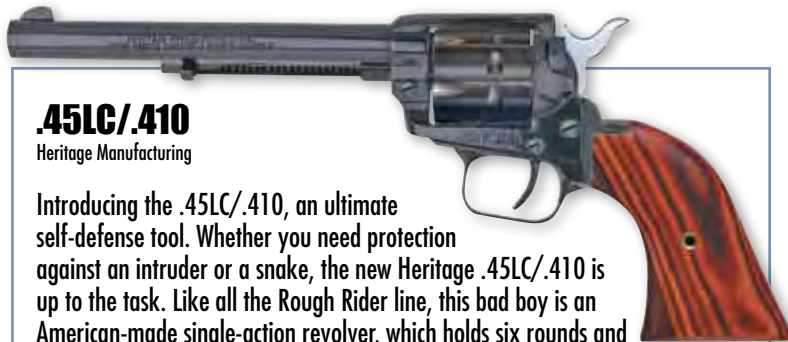


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HDS Systems

HDS Systems is releasing with the new EDC Executive 200-Lumen Flashlight — the latest member of the EDC Clicky series. This single battery flashlight provides four directly accessible preset brightness levels that are optimized for everyday use. The light will run for over 22 hours on the default medium setting, but a blinding 200 lumens is always available when the need arises. For more info: (520) 325-3004 or www.americanhandgunner.com/hds-systems



SHOOTING GAME TARGETS

Hunt Geek, Inc.

Bringing a gun to a card game is generally frowned upon unless you're Doc Holliday. But now you can be everyone's huckleberry when you show up at the range with Hunt Geek's latest nerd-tastic offering of Shooting Game Targets. Whether at the range or just plinking at the farm, turn every shooting session into a total blast and show the world that you rule with any selection of Hunt Geek's Shooting Game Target Packs. Available target game packs include Hunt Geek Billiards, Hunt Geek Dart/Cricket, Hunt Geek Cards/Poker and the Hunt Geek Shooting Game Combo Pack. For more info: (309) 716-0434 or www.americanhandgunner.com/hunt-geek



2012 HODGDON ANNUAL MANUAL

Hodgdon

Hodgdon proudly announces its 9th Annual Manual. The 2012 Hodgdon Annual Manual features so much more than any typical manual: 100-plus pages of rifle and pistol data with well over 5,000 shown loads; information on 30 Hodgdon, 19 IMR and 10 Winchester brand powders; new 300 AAC Blackout data; lead-free bullet recipes for 21 rifle cartridges; and seven highly anticipated articles on topics such as economical handloading with lead-free "green" bullets by some of the industry's top outdoor writers. For more info: (913) 362-9455 or www.americanhandgunner.com/hodgdon

MODEL CM4043

Kahr Arms

The CM4043 is chambered in a .40 S&W caliber, has a 3.0" barrel and an overall length of 5.47" and a height of 4". The pistol weighs in at 15.8 ounces, plus 1.9 ounces for the stainless steel magazine. The CM4043 has a conventional rifled barrel instead of the match grade polygonal barrel on Kahr's PM series; the CM slide stop lever is metal-injection molded instead of machined; the CM series slide has fewer machining operations and uses simple engraved markings instead of roll marking; and finally, the CM series are shipped with one magazine instead of two magazines. For more info: (508) 795-3919 or www.americanhandgunner.com/kahr-arms



1911 SOLO-VAULT

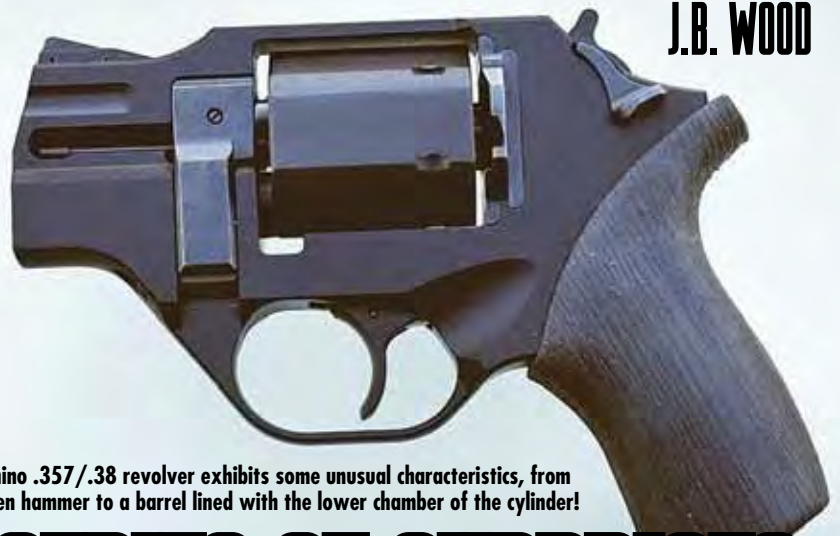
ShotLock

ShotLock, maker of the Shotgun Solo-Vault, is introducing a new Solo-Vault made specifically for full-framed handguns. The ShotLock 1911 Solo-Vault is perfectly sized to house most full-framed, home-defense handguns. The vault can be mounted either vertically or horizontally on a wall or any stable surface. Its dimensions measure 2.375x7.5x11.375". The 1911 Solo-Vault fits all compact and subcompact handguns up to .380 and 9mm. For more info: (800) 967-8107 or www.americanhandgunner.com/shotlock



THE RHINO REVOLVER

J.B. WOOD



The Rhino .357/.38 revolver exhibits some unusual characteristics, from a hidden hammer to a barrel lined with the lower chamber of the cylinder!

A SERIES OF SURPRISES

Okay, let's admit at the start that it looks weird. Still, as grandmothers used to say, "Pretty is as pretty does," and the Rhino revolver does extremely well. The bottom-chamber, lower-barrel system changes everything, and it's all for the good. The background story of this design is interesting.

In the summer of 2000, Emilio Ghisoni sold his Mateba auto-revolver design to another company. (It featured the lower-barrel placement, but otherwise was entirely different.) He decided to apply that most prominent feature to a "non-automatic" revolver, and so the Rhino was born.

In 2006, Signor Ghisoni and his partner Antonio Cudazzo made the first test models. Tragically, Emilio Ghisoni died April 24th, 2008. But the project continued, and prototypes were shown at the IWA Show in Nuremberg in 2009. Signor Cudazzo took the idea to Rino Chiappa; now the Rhino is in production.

Something Unusual

First, let's look at the barrel placement. As any gun person will be aware, the top-chamber arrangement of a conventional revolver puts the main recoil force well above the shooter's hand. Predictably, this intensifies the felt recoil, and causes considerable muzzle-whip, especially noticeable with Magnum loads. With the bottom-chamber, lower-barrel arrangement of the Rhino, this effect is greatly modified. There is still felt recoil of course, but it comes straight back *into* the web of the hand and the arm. In firing the Rhino, I found full-house .357 Magnum loads felt like I was using regular .38 Special cartridges.

The unusual barrel placement is not the only good design feature. The 6-chamber cylinder is hexagonal in shape, with flat planes protruding far less than a conventional rounded type. The pivoting crane latch is perfectly located at upper rear on the left side, and it's pushed downward for release. At the front, the crane has a secondary lock, a vertical plunger and spring. The ejector has ample travel for full-case ejection.

At upper rear center, there is what appears to be an external hammer, but it's not. It is a cocking lever for the internal hammer, which is of course, far down in the frame. The lever is used to cock the hammer for single-action fire, and can also safely lower a cocked hammer. The top of the lever is cut to be a good square-picture rear sight. At the top-left rear of the frame, beside the sight channel, a small, orange pin emerges when the hammer is cocked.

The trigger is wide and well shaped, and I'm glad to report it has no annoying serrations. The double-action trigger pull is smooth and very quick. The single-action pull on my test gun was a clean, crisp 3.5 pounds. The front sight is a nice, non-snagging ramp; retained by two cross-pins, it could be changed for height adjustment.

Surprising Shooting

The shape of the rubber grip may look strange, but when taken in the hand it's perfect. There's ample room at the front for all three fingers of the average hand, and the upper curve of the back-strap nestles nicely into the thumb-web. The grip is a 1-piece unit, retained at the butt by a single Allen screw.

The Rhino will be offered in barrel lengths of 4", 5" and 6" in addition to the 2" version I tried out. At the range, with a variety of loads, the accuracy was surprising. As regular readers will know, I often use the Champion VisiColor 110-yard sight-in target, because its 8" black center is much the same as the center-of-mass area on a combat silhouette.

At 7 yards, with a 2-hand hold, double-action, the Rhino delivered a nice group all in the black and measuring 2x4". This was with a .38 Special load, well centered, just a little low. With the



The hexagonal cylinder may look strange, but actually allows a higher level of concealment.



Due to the Rhino's unusual shape, MKS offers a specially fitted holster of good quality.

.357 Magnum rounds, single-action, one group was dead center, and the measurement was 2". For a 2" barrel and fixed sights, outstandingly good, especially in my, shall we say, senior hands!

Because of the unusual shape, the US importer is offering a nice optional holster. For those who want the numbers, the weight is 25 ounces empty. The overall length is 6.5", height is 4.75" and width is 1.25". Suggested retail price is \$739, a reasonable amount, for this level of quality and performance.



For more info: www.americanhandgunner.com/mks-supply

A.T. Custom Gunworks	92	D & L Sports Inc.	92	Lambert Knives	78	Sand Burr Gun Ranch	92
Al Mar Knives	75	DeSantis Holster	43	LaserMax	85	SIG SAUER	29
American Handgunner Subscription	64	Dillon Precision Products	88	Les Baer Custom Inc.	39	Simply Rugged Holsters	87
American Handgunner T-Shirts	96	Elite Sports Express Inc.	77	Lightfoot Knives	74	Singletary Customs	93
American Tactical Imports	81	Elite Survival Systems	76	Maxpedition Hard-Use Gear	3	Smith & Alexander Inc.	89
Armscor/Rock Island Army	10	European American Armory Corp.	12	Mec-Gar USA Inc.	80	Smith & Wesson	24, 25
Arntzen Corporation	90	Fiocchi of America	45	Meproflight Ltd.	31	Spartan Blades USA	76
Arredondo Accessories	87	Florida Arms Manufacturing Co.	74	Monkey Edge	18	Springfield Armory	27, 107
Bar-Sto Precision Machine	79	Galco Gunleather	6	MTM Case-Gard	95	SSK Industries	87
The Beltman	70	Gary Reeder Custom Guns	92, 93	Nemesis Knives	73	Starline Brass	19
Belt Mountain Enterprises	90	GOTE Gear	79	Nighthawk Custom	11	STI International Inc.	2
Brian Tighe	89	Grayman Knives	74	Old West Reproductions Inc.	76	Sturm Ruger & Co. Inc.	9
Caron Forensics	71	GSI International Inc.	94	Otis Technology	14, 15	Ten Ring Precision Inc.	92, 93
Caspian Arms Ltd.	70	Gunrips.net	78	Pact Inc.	8	Thunder Ranch Training DVDs	47, 62
Chambers Custom Pistols	92	GUNS Magazine Subscription	68	Para-Cord	89	TOPS KNIVES	79
Chip McCormick Custom LLC	21	GunVault	45	Pearce Grip Inc.	75	Tuff-Writer Inc.	77
Colt's Manufacturing Company LLC	7	HiViz Shooting Systems	12	Powder River Precision Inc.	92	Tussey Custom	92
Columbia River Knife & Tool	13, 17	Hogue Inc.	43	Pro Ears	13	USA Shooting Team	41
Competitive Edge Dynamics USA	97	The Holster Store	88	Purdy Gear	78	Viridian Green Laser Sights	43
Crawford Knives LLC	91	Hornady Manufacturing Company	33	Ranch Products	90	Volkman Precision LLC	92
Crimson Trace Corporation	16	IronMind Enterprises Inc.	87	Rick Hinderer Knives	86	W.C. Wolff Company	80
CrossBreed Holsters LLC	75	Iver Johnson Arms, Inc.	88	Rio Grande Custom Grips	90	Wilson Combat	10, 35
Cylinder & Slide Inc.	19	Kahr Arms	18	Rohrbaugh Firearms	73	XS Sight Systems	73
CZ-USA	17	Kimber Mfg. Inc.	23, 35, 37, 71, 108	S.W.A.T.	102	Zerust	86

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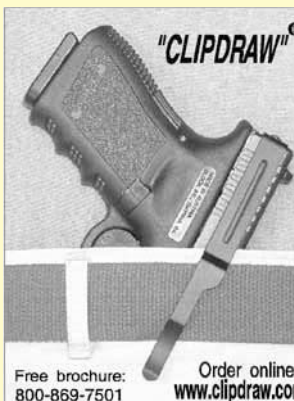


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Smith & Wesson

The Performance Center at S&W showed their 647 in .17 HMR, not entirely new, but newsworthy, nonetheless. Its exotic looks, accuracy and cartridge makes it near-perfect for scoundrel squirrels,



or pesky prairie dogs. The "retro" Model 586 in .357/.38 celebrates their iconic L-frame introduction in the early 1980s. Hard to believe that makes it a classic, and if that's the case, I must just be plain old? Speaking of classics, make sure to buy the Classic series gun of your choice now, since some are already out of production. Once they are gone, this might be the last time, ever, so don't miss out on your dream gun. www.smith-wesson.com

Bianchi

I like things simple and Bianchi's new Allusion line of holsters are simple, but innovative at the same time. The classic "Bianchi look" of hand-crafted leather is still there, but it's wrapped around an inner core of thermo-molded synthetic material. The open top, and fast snap on-off attachment makes the Allusion simple, practical and highly functional. The inner core also serves to keep the holster open, for easy 1-handed re-holstering, critical in many situations. A nice blend of old-school and new. There's three models covering IWB, thumb break and our showcased rig (my favorite), the Model 125 Consent. The Model 125 goes for about \$64, with the others slightly higher. www.bianchi-intl.com



SIG SAUER

Their P238 .380 proved to be reliable and handy to carry, but right off, people wanted it in 9mm too. So, they did it. Their latest version, the P938, is tiny, powerful — and single action — if that lights your fire! The SAS model (pictured) has



an alloy frame and stainless slide. Other models have other features (mostly cosmetic) but this gives you the idea. Something "completely new" is their Adaptive Carbine Platform, sort of an aluminum shell you stick your gun into, suddenly giving it rails, the option of a sling and even a folding stock (for LE and military). It locks onto almost any handgun with a rail, and allows access to all the controls of the handgun. www.sigsauer.com

Woolrich Elite Tactical

Since moving to the "great cold Midwest," I've learned to appreciate a good coat. But unlike some



people who have the "holster gene" and collect box-falls, I suffer from a "constant search for the perfect coat" gene. I spotted this one from Woolrich and found it not only keeps you actually warm (even down to the low 30s or better), but it has secret pockets and goodies allowing you to carry guns, radios, spare ammo, flashlights and such — without alerting the entire world. Unlike the "Hey everyone, I'm carrying a gun" vests, this one just looks like a stylish jacket. Surprise! www.woolrich.com

Brite-Strike

A company that has impressed me with their quality and product line-up, Brite-Strike's EPLI is a true daily carry light, delivering up to 160 lumens on high, 10 on low, and a strobe. High goes for up to 1.5 hours, low up to 8+ and strobe up to 2 hours (disco anyone?) — all done on two AAA batteries! The aluminum/anodized construction make it tough, the pocket clip keeps it handy and the end-cap button keeps it sensible. A tough piece of gear for sure, at around \$80. www.brite-strike.com



Taurus News

While at the SHOT Show, I had a great meeting with Mark Kresser, the new president of Taurus. He's young, brings plenty of industry expertise with him, and has already turned around their customer service department. He's even returned customer calls himself, and personally made sure warranty repair is done on-time and to their customer's satisfaction. He's addressing some quality control complaints as we speak, and there's no doubt, at all, in my opinion, Taurus will rock in 2012. Look for exciting new models (I got one of those "Shhh .. keep it secret" looks at them), but they will not be shown publicly until there is inventory on-hand to deliver to dealers. What a concept for a gun company, eh? A new marketing team will help with their efforts, and we wish them all-success. www.taurususa.com



ADD IT UP
\$130,000

Final auction price on a Thompson sub-machine gun recovered from Bonnie & Clyde's shoot-out location in Joplin.

170,000

Rimfire rifles sold by Savage as of Nov. 2011.

\$30,000

Donated to H.A.V.A. (disabled veteran's organization) by Ruger after a Ruger collectible gun auction.

\$1,500

American Pistolsmiths Guild scholarship amount given to up-and-coming new gunsmiths still in school.

58,395

FFL holders in 2009

63,357

FFL holders as of Jan. 2012 (and climbing). Shhh ...

FMG PRODUCT INDEX

Don't forget, if you have a hankering to find all the goodies in one place, go to www.americanhandgunner.com and click on the "Product Index" link near the top. You'll blast to our comprehensive listing of manufacturers, services and just about all-things gunny. Click on the name of the company and it will take you to a list of features and mentions in our pages, along with a link to the maker's website. So now, when you see "For more info: www.americanhandgunner.com/productindex and click on the company name" at the end of an article — you'll know what it's all about!

SHOOT

If you don't know her, Julie Golob is one the very top competitors around. She's the captain of the S&W Shooting Team, an 8-year veteran of the elite US Army Marksmanship Unit, was named both US Army female athlete of the year and the AMU athlete of the year. Over her 22-year shooting career, she has won more than 115 championship titles, and, since I count myself lucky to know her, I can tell you she's a delightful young woman (and a mom now!). Her new book, *Shoot*, takes on anything anyone might need to know about shooting, with an emphasis on competition shooting. A great first book for a new shooter, or even something to add to an accomplished shooter's library. www.skyhorsepublishing.com



.44 SPECIAL SPECIALS

Most of us love big-bore revolvers, and there's always something compelling about small, big-bore guns. Mark Morganti of Gemini Customs sent me this picture of a pair of his latest projects. They are S&W Model 296s he built new barrels for from Douglas bench rest barrels in .44 caliber. Those stunning grips are the handiwork of his wife, Karen, done out of straight-grained Sonoran Desert Ironwood. I love sharing this sort of stuff with you! Simply wonderful work all-around. www.gemicustoms.com



THE INSIDER

PISTOLSMITH OF THE YEAR

That scoundrel Dave Lauck, head honcho at D&L Sports, has been given the American Pistolsmiths Guild "Pistolsmith of the Year" for 2012 award. Dave's work is stunning, and the award is well-deserved. Nicely done, Dave! www.dlsports.com



Handgunner Asks:

Did you ever notice when you blow in a dog's face, he gets mad at you — but when you take him on a car ride, he sticks his head out the window?



FANCY SHOTGUN?

Was at my favorite gun store here in Joplin the other day (yup, Brandon's), and saw this on the counter. I've been around this industry for quite some time, but I confess I've never seen an "Automatic, Pump, Over/Under, Side-by-Side Shotgun" even once. I don't know about you, but this makes my brain hurt. I'm hoping it was a typo on the box? But at Brandon's, you never know ...



No Sunday Hunting?

NSSF helped to introduce legislation in five states (CT, MA, PA, VA, ME) to remove prohibitions on Sunday hunting. Most of the focus has now been shifted to Pennsylvania and Virginia where they have the largest hunting populations, and the political environment might make it slightly easier to accomplish a repeal of the bans. Much ground-work has been done in VA prior to the start of their legislative session. The NSSF formed the Sunday Hunting Coalition to help repeal Sunday Hunting bans. The coalition is made up of various nationwide organizations. Get involved if it affects you!



BATTLESHIP SAILOR

Dear friend, Tom Ables, has been in our industry for a zillion years and represents companies like Buck Knives (among others), doing excellent PR work for them all. I've known Tom for years, and he's one of my favorite people, period. I recently got this amazing photo and had to share it. That's Tom on the left, and right, but 65 years apart! On the left, he's posing at his old "Engine Room #1, Main Control" station on the battleship U.S.S. Alabama in August 1946. On a recent visit to Mobile to that same ship (now a museum) Tom found his way to his old station and, well ... the photo on the right is Tom at the same spot — but some 65 years later! Hat's off to you, Tom, and thanks to Ken, his son, for delivering the pictures to us. Very, very cool.





2012 SHOT SHOW

GOODIES GALORE

Okay, I hate reviews of trade shows as much as the next guy, but the Shooting And Hunting Outdoor Trade Show is different because it's a giant showcase of all that's cool for the coming year. We get some "Insider" information (get it?), see new stuff, see semi-secret (and really secret!) new stuff that might see the light of day, and chat with industry people about trends, troubles, new companies, old companies and companies no longer with us. So, without further ado — and in no particular order — here's some cool stuff, news and what-not I stumbled upon at the 2012 SHOT Show held in Lost Vegas this past January, and some general "ephis" as Connor would say.

Para USA Sold

Big news just after SHOT (but some of us kinda' knew it at SHOT ...) was the fact Thanos Polyzos — the owner of Para USA — elected to sell Para to the Freedom Group (Remington, Marlin, Bushmaster, DPMS/Panther Arms, etc.) owned by Cerberus Capital Management.



Thanos founded Para in Canada, initially building the first hi-cap frames for the 1911. The rest has become 1911 history, with today's Para USA (since moving to the US several years ago) building a wide range of respected 1911 series pistols. We honestly don't know what will happen now, but we only hope Para's absorption, Borg-like, into the "collective" of Cerberus doesn't cause it to drop off of the map. And to Thanos, I'd like to say, "Well done old friend, so now ... why not rest a bit, eh?"

Colt Rail/Gold Cup



Colt has a fire lit under 'em right now and their booth was packed constantly. A couple things stood out to me, the Colt Rail Gun and ... drum roll please ... the good old National Match Gold Cup is back!

The Gold Cup has cool sorta' retro rubber grips with the gold Colt logo, and put me right back at my first IPSC matches in the late 1970s. The Rail Gun suddenly gives you a genuine 5" Colt 1911, but with a factory rail, no after-market add-on thingy here. Colt is very definitely back, boys and girls! www.coltsmfg.com



Mossberg

While it ain't about handguns, we're not so uppity as to not admit we love long guns too here. Mossberg introduced something called their "Flex" system, which basically allows you to turn a 500/590 shotgun into about any kind of shotgun you'd ever need, from tactical, competition, sporting, etc. with an easy-to-change series of accessory barrels, stocks and goodies — all very cool. Their 5-Gun Hunter Education Set is a series of non-functioning long guns (rifles and shotguns) allowing anyone who teaches



hunter safety classes to get hands-on with new shooters, safely. And, in the "We told you so" department, their 464 SPX is their lever-action .30-30 (and a .22) with all the bells and whistles of many AR-platforms. This has been toyed with before, but Mossberg did it up good. While it's weird to look at, why is it any different than a B-52 still flying combat missions 60 years after its first flight? www.mossberg.com

Sapphire Blue

Ms. Aimee Grant, who helped us out at SHOT, is here in her best "Take a look at this!" pose, holding Kimber's new Sapphire Ultra II, in 9mm no-less. Who says guns have to be black all



the time? I'm telling you, this stopped everybody in their tracks, and I couldn't help but notice the macho guys who actually didn't say it was awful. They even sorta' snuck a quick peek at it and hefted it, saying things like, "Hey, this is kinda' cool." Caught 'em in the act, we did. www.kimberamerica.com

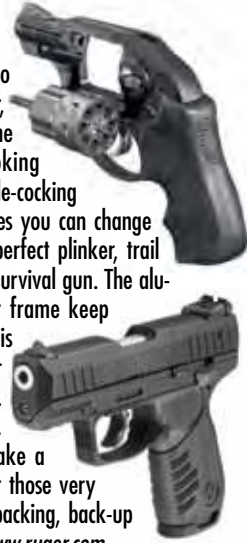
Kahr

Frank Harris, at Kahr, showed me their new CM4043, which builds on their CM series (previously in 9mm), a more affordable line of compact pistols. The latest, in .40 S&W, offers a 3" barrel, all the features of their CW series, but with minor changes like standard rifling and some MIM parts to help meet a price point. All the normal standards are still in place on the CM series, and like the other Kahrs, the CM4043 will find a rabid fan base among shooters. www.kahr.com



Ruger

There was almost too many new things at Ruger, but here's two cool ones. The SR22 is a new, sleek-looking .22, with DA/SA design, de-cocking safety and two grip profiles you can change to fit your hand. A near-perfect plinker, trail gun, casual target gun or survival gun. The aluminum slide and polymer frame keep it very light. The LCR22 is a .22 LR version of their popular LCR .38 revolver. The .22 holds eight shots, is feathery and would make a good personal revolver for those very recoil sensitive, or a backpacking, back-up or do-anything revolver. www.ruger.com



Continued on page 104

THE .380 WAS A CUTE FAD.



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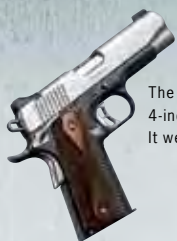


THE KIMBER CDP. CARRY WITHOUT COMPROMISE.

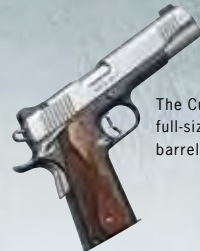
The new Ultra+ CDP II™ (left) with full-length grip and Ultra CDP II™ with short grip are chambered in .45 ACP. Both have 3-inch barrels that make them easy to conceal.



CDP pistols feature night sights and a Carry Melt™ treatment for rounded and blended edges.

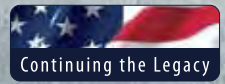


The Pro CDP II™ .45 ACP has a 4-inch barrel and full-length grip. It weighs just 28 ounces.



The Custom CDP II™ .45 ACP is a full-size 1911. Even with a 5-inch barrel, it weighs only 31 ounces.

Absolute dependability combined with power and accuracy is everything in a carry pistol. Kimber® CDP (Custom Defense Package) models take that to the extreme, blending all the important carry features into a light weight, high-performance package. Built in the Kimber Custom Shop,™ each has front strap checkering, match grade barrel, chamber and trigger, stainless steel slide and ambidextrous thumb safety. Seven models are offered, each an unequaled value. Chamberings include .45 ACP and 9mm. A carry pistol is the last place to compromise. Carry a Kimber CDP.



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