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FIG. 7
FIG. 8
FIG. 9
FIG. 10
FIG. 11
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FIG. 14

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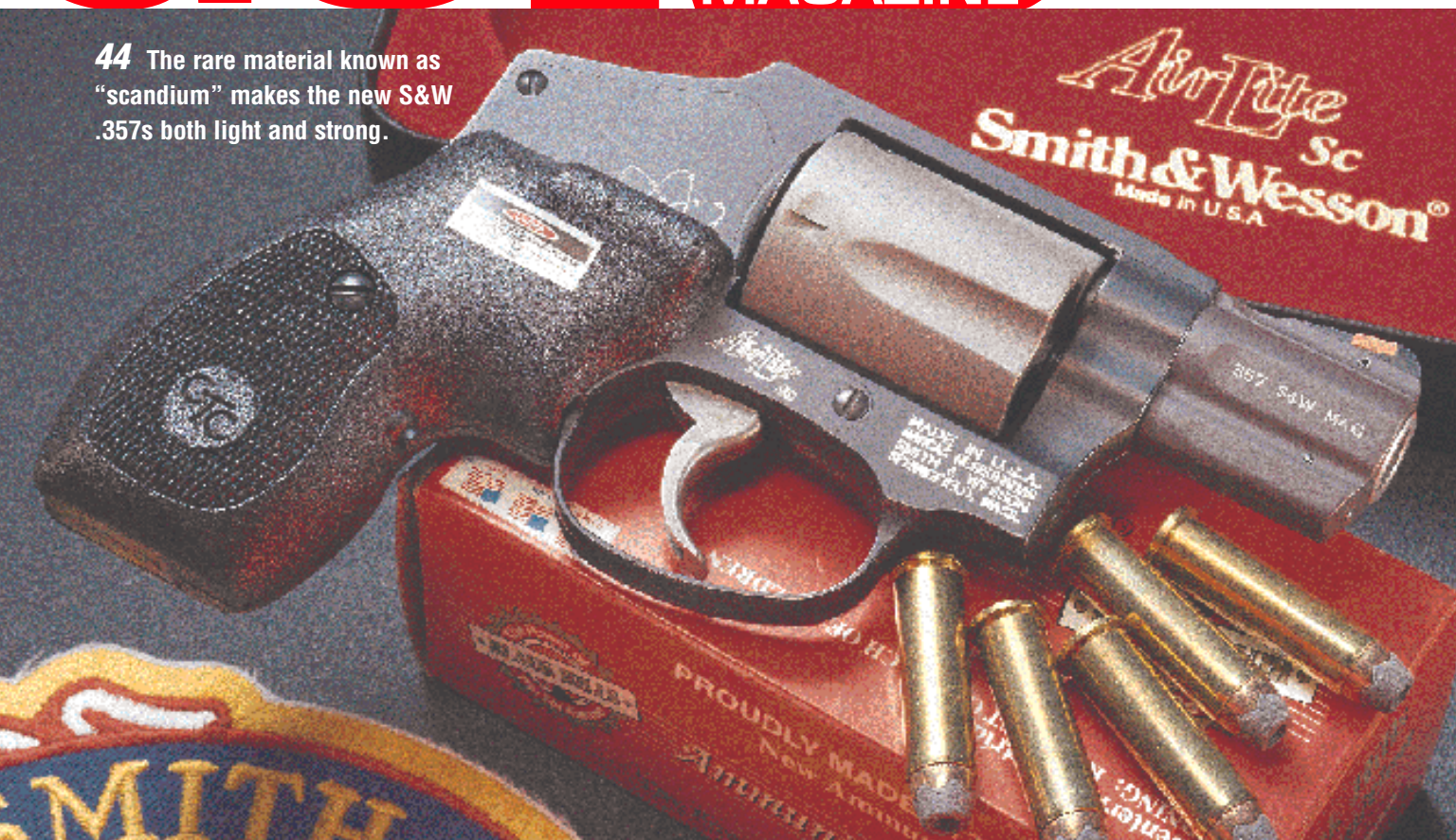
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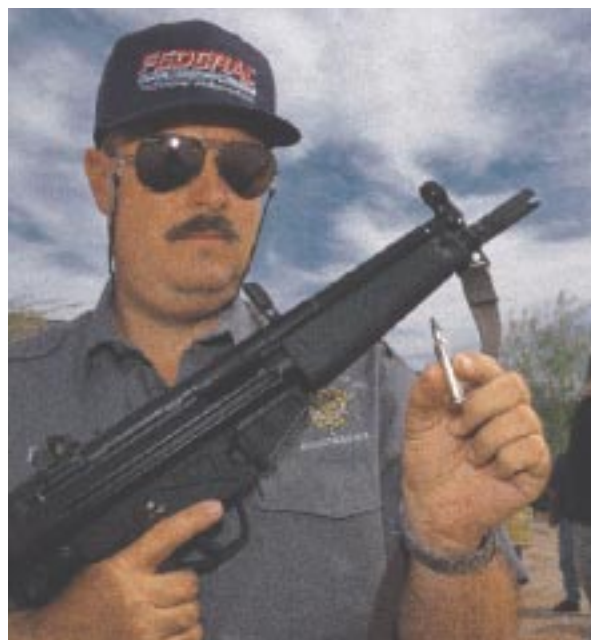
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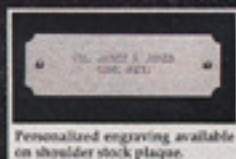
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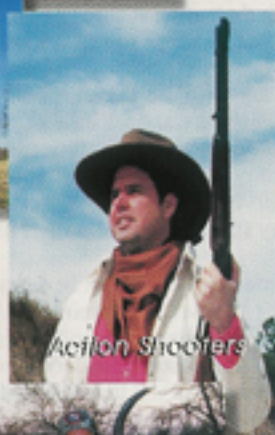
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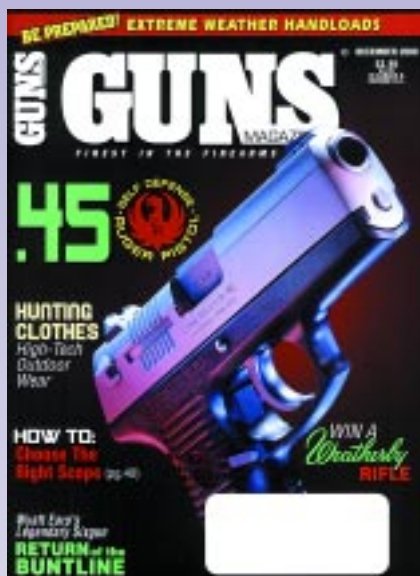
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LETTER OF THE MONTH



GUNS MAGAZINE FEBRUARY 2001

What Are You Wearing?

I'll admit it: I knew nothing about hunting clothes. I've bought a lot of parkas, overalls and boots for hunting over the years, but I'd always just assumed that Cordura, Polartec, Saddlecloth and whatever were all just fancy names for "warm clothes."

So, when I read your article ("High-Tech Hunting Clothes," *GUNS*, Dec. '00) I was surprised to learn that all of those various fabrics and insulations have a specific purpose and place in a hunter's wardrobe. Your article was far more informative than the average clerk in the Wal-Mart hunting section — in fact, you made me aware of a few new items that I didn't even know existed. (Scent-absorbing fabric? What a great idea for bowhunting. I'm going to look into expanding my wardrobe before the next season.)

Thanks for a great, informative article that all hunters should be required to read before they open up their checkbook at their local sporting goods store. I bet you saved a lot of hunters from buying clothes that don't really do what they want them to do — and made a few embarrassed to know that they'd bought some stuff they didn't really need.

Tim Brown
Minneapolis, Minn.

The Myth Of The Mouth

In "Common Myths Of Headspace" ("Crossfire," Dec. '00), James White claims that the idea of a rimless pistol cartridge headspacing on the case mouth is a "myth," and that such cartridges headspace on the extractor. Headspace and support of such cartridges as the .45 ACP and the 9mm is, in fact, on the case mouth, and reloads for these cartridges must not be crimped so deeply as to eliminate the headspace area. A cartridge with a deep crimp may fire even without proper support, but accuracy will be erratic and pressures may be excessive as the case mouth intrudes into the barrel leade, which is sized only for the diameter of the bullet.

A quick look at any Model 1911-type .45 pistol will show that the extractor does not, and is not intended to, hold the case back against the breech face and provide proper headspace. That function is, the role of the chamber shoulder in the barrel. I know of no pistol chambered for a rimless case in which the extractor is intended to provide case support and headspace control. The "myth" is correct and White's concept is wrong.

James E. Keenan
Middletown, Md.

The Post Office Delivers

Regarding "The .450 Marlin" by Jon Sundra (*GUNS*, Dec. '00), while your knowledge of the .450 Marlin may be right on the money, your knowledge of postal workers is sadly lacking, as seen in the comment: "A scoped levergun may be as much of an oxymoron as a postal worker." I find this very offensive!

My husband and myself are both postal workers. I can assure you our jobs are a lot more strenuous and mentally exhausting than you would ever consider. When was the last time you did physical work non-stop for 12 to 16 hours? Most days are spent without even a lunch break. I doubt you have ever done any of this. While I'm aware the general public doesn't think we really do anything but drive around all day, you as a writer should be more careful in choosing your words.

To print such a derogatory remark about something you obviously know nothing about shows a severe lack of judgement on your part, and very little, if any, research. I'm sure that we are not the only postal

workers who are avid hunters and lawful gun owners. I feel you owe all postal workers an apology.

Maria M. Sudduth
Bumen, Ga.

A Plague Of Hornets

Thanks to Dan Johnson for his informative introduction of two new components for all of us Hornet fans ("Handloading The .22 Hornet," Dec. '00). As he mentioned, inconsistent accuracy had also plagued me in the past despite two fine Hornet rifles: a Kimber Cascade and a Ruger 77.

The Hornet is perhaps the smallest round regularly reloaded with expectations of fine accuracy. A 1 gr. change in powder charge that might be negligible in a larger cartridge, like the .30-'06, could represent an 8 percent variation in the diminutive Hornet.

I have finally achieved consistent results by thinking of my Hornets as wildcat/benchrest rounds — the .22 Hornet Benchrest. All cases are carefully prepped, and powder charges weighed to within 1/10 grain. Like Johnson, I have found that partial sizing and the use of the Lee Factory Crimp die are critical steps. Small pistol primers also add to round-to-round uniformity and seem perfectly adequate to ignite such small charges.

Robert Cleveland
Rcrosby825@aol.com

Not As New As You Think

As concerns the "Gun of the Month" in
continued on page 12

Errata

In "Hunting Elk Creek" (*GUNS*, Nov. '00), the acreage of Vermejo Park Ranch is incorrectly listed as 500 acres. The Ranch comprises 500,000 acres. *GUNS* apologizes for the error.

"Return of the Buntline" (*GUNS*, Dec. '00) includes the statement, "Loading some 255 gr. cast bullets over 7.2 grs. of Winchester 231 and 6.0 grs. of TiteGroup raised velocities ..." The correct statement should read "Loading some 255 gr. cast bullets over 7.2 grs. of Winchester 231 or 6.0 grs. of TiteGroup ..." *GUNS* apologizes for this error and reminds readers that it is always important to check loading data in the manufacturers' loading manuals before handloading any ammunition.

GUNS MAGAZINE™ welcomes letters to the editor for "Crossfire." Send your letters to: **CROSSFIRE**, GUNS Magazine, 591 Camino de la Reina, Suite 200, San Diego, CA 92108. Email: ed@gunsmagazine.com

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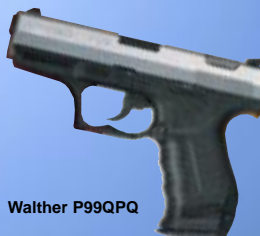
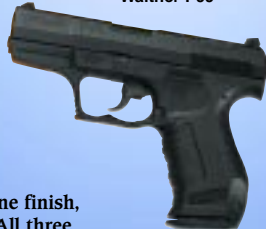
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CROSSFIRE

continued from page 10

GUNS, November 2000, perhaps the Casull
CA 2000 should be called a diminutive gun
re-created for discreet concealed carry.

I am in possession of a five-shot
revolver, manufacturer unknown, cham-
bered in 6mm. Cartridge brass is Berdan
primed center fire, and head-stamped Velo-
Dog. The similarity between the two
revolvers is noteworthy, particularly the
fold-up trigger.

This relic was retired when ammunition
became obsolete on the modern market.
Legend has it that the revolver was used by
European bicyclists to ward off attacks by
unfriendly watchdogs and their ilk.

I always smile and get a sense of satis-
faction every time the facts prove that what
goes around, comes around and the more
things change, the more they stay the same.

Zack F. Ziobro
Lemont, Ill.

Kevlar And Sharp Objects

In the December 2000 edition of
"Crossfire," a reader made reference to the
idea of police vests as protection against
edged weapons ("Diallo: Justified And
Necessary"). The issue was whether an officer
faced with a knife or ice-pick attack had a
useful level of protection by virtue of his vest.
The answer: nothing to bet your life on.

The fibers of a vest will separate or cut to
allow passage of a sharp weapon. In contrast to
the tip of a blade, a bullet is blunt and will
impact a large number of fibers, which will
resist entry. Hoping a blade will strike a rein-
forced liner panel and be retarded is foolhardy.
It is common in knife attacks for such
assailants to strike quickly and repeatedly.
People who attack with knives are often highly
emotionally charged and aggressive assailants.

Vests used by police are correctly referred
to as bullet-resistant, not knife-resistant.

James D. Williams
Memphis, Tenn.

Vat Do You Vant In A Pistol?

I picked up the September 2000 issue and
lo and behold, Teutonic perfection on the
cover ("HK USP Expert .45," Sept. '00). I
know, I know, I can already hear the sabers
clearing the scabbards. Hold your horses,
before the command to "affix bayonets" to
your 1911s is given, I give you the prover-
bial "other side of the coin."

Heckler & Koch came to the American
shooter and asked him what he wanted in a
pistol. Since their target group of pistoleros
had been weaned on the 1911 for the past 80
years, naturally they chose those features
that were on the 1911.

The USP can be carried "locked and
cocked," just like the slab side. True, it
doesn't have the beavertail grip safety, but it
doesn't need it. While I would not hesitate to
carry a 1911 into combat (there is a reason the

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Marines damn near revolted when the U.S. went to the wussy-nine), I wouldn't without putting the old horse through its costly paces. The fact that I may be deployed with the Corps means that my USP is going with me — straight out of the box, I might add.

So, put your sabers back in your scabbards, lest you fall on them. Sure, Kimber, Springfield and Para-Ordnance have made great strides in 1911 technology, but it has taken them 89 years to do it (God bless Mr. Browning). HK's engineers just brought an outstanding design in from the cold and perfected it.

Lance Cpl. A.C. Anderson

Dan_Neff@hotmail.com

Get Off The Mount!

I just finished, for the second time, "Elk Rifles" in *GUNS*, November 2000, since it took two times through to digest what was written. Before I respond to the article, it was a joke ... right? And if it wasn't a joke, I'd really like to know who came down from the mount and decided we all need to buy a .338 Win. Mag. to go elk hunting. I've seen a lot of elk killed up our way and most of it was with the old standbys and not the .338 Win. Magnum.

One old boy up here gets his elk every year with a .243 Winchester. I've seen them killed with everything from the .270 Win. to the venerable .30-30.

Just in case you're wondering, I carry a Model 700 Mountain Rifle in .280 Rem. with 160 gr. Nosler Partition bullets. Which brings up the real point you should have made: Killing an elk has everything to do with the right bullet at the best possible velocity, and hitting the animal where it will put it down, not depending on some magical "you've got to have a bullet this big, or else."

Daryl Taramasso
Stevensville, Mont.

The Hard-Working Enlisted Man

In the article, "The Future Of The Service Handgun" (*GUNS*, Nov. '00), Ayoob states that "people in the artillery use handguns." I have been in the artillery for 16 years, three years active duty and 13 years in the Pennsylvania National Guard. The only people I have ever seen issued a handgun were the medics and officers ranking captain and above. Some people in my Guard unit carry a squad auto weapon, but most of us carry a good old M-16 (not the new A-1s) or a few M-203s.

I wish I could be issued a handgun. It would be so nice and would save room in the back of an M-109 self-propelled Howitzer — not to mention it would be a lot easier to clean. Thanks for thinking of us hard-working enlisted men anyway.

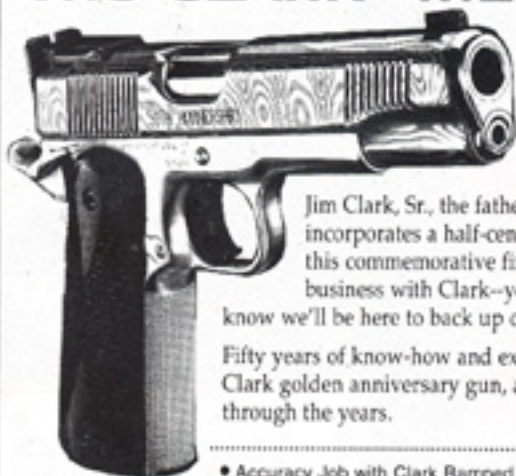
Jan. D. Seiders
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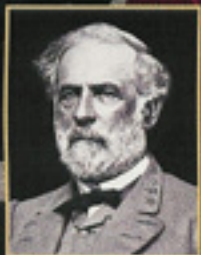
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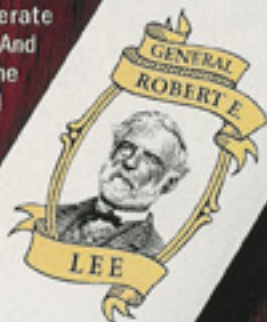
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THE BIG COUNTDOWN

Colonel Jeff Cooper popularized the terminology used to describe the state of a semiautomatic pistol in terms of its readiness for firing. The following is an explanation of Cooper's terminology, as both a refresher course for those of us familiar with the terms and as an introduction for new shooters.

Condition One

Condition One means "cocked and locked." The magazine is loaded, there is a live cartridge in the chamber, the hammer is cocked, and the manual safety is engaged. With the safety "on," most professionals consider such a gun safe for holster carry. The user who needs to fire quickly draws, thumbs the safety catch to the "fire" position and executes what will now be a short, easily-pulled trigger stroke, thanks to the pre-cocked hammer. The on-safe condition, however, is a proven lifesaver if your attacker momentarily gains control of your firearm.

The bad news: There are credentialed experts who believe that this is dangerous because of the "hair trigger" effect of a cocked hammer. That will only be a problem if the trigger is particularly light. A 4 to 5 lb. or greater trigger pull minimizes these concerns.

The good news: The short, easy pull for the first shot assists an accurately fired first round when drawing and firing at high speed.

This is the most efficient way to carry a single-action, semiautomatic pistol for self-defense. Peace of mind may be increased if the holster has a safety strap that interposes between the hammer and the firing pin. I'd suggest a gun with an internal firing pin block that renders it safe from accidental discharge if struck or dropped. The latest models of Colt, Browning, Kimber, Springfield and ParaOrdnance single action auto pistols include such safety features.

Condition Three

Condition Three means the pistol has a fully loaded magazine locked in place, but its firing chamber is empty and the slide will have to be "racked" to chamber a round before the gun can be fired. This is the traditional U.S. Army method of carry with both the old 1911A, and the current Beretta M9 double action.

For a quick reaction to deadly threat, both hands are required to activate a gun in Condition Three. This is why most serious users avoid it. Condition Three does have its place for carry, however. If I am carrying a gun like a Glock, which does not have a manual safety per se, and do not have access to a holster which covers the trigger guard (as is strongly recommended by the Glock factory), and have to shove the gun into my waistband, I'll make sure the chamber is empty.

A semiautomatic pistol that does not have an internal device to lock the firing pin and which is stored in an automobile might best be kept in Condition Three. If there is a car crash, the violent forces can theoretically cause an "inertia discharge" by driving the firing pin forward against the primer of a chambered round.

Condition Two

The auto pistol contains a loaded magazine, and the hammer is down with a fresh cartridge in the chamber. This is the appropriate way to carry any sort of double action semiautomatic pistol that does not have a "selective firing system" — that is, a cocked-and-locked carry option. Selective systems include the CZ75, the Taurus, S&W pistols and most variants of the HK USP, to name the most popular. Condition Two is, of course, an option with the selective guns, and it's an option most users choose.

A single action pistol should *not* be carried this way. The hammer-down position may bypass internal safety devices that would render some guns drop-safe if they were cocked and locked. The hammer must now be cocked or lowered by hand with a single action pistol, and that gets dangerous. Cocking and un-cocking most semiautomatic pistols by hand is awkward because the hammer is located much farther back than on a revolver, and the procedure is an invitation to accidental discharges.

A double action auto with manual safety is considered "Condition Two" if it has a round in the chamber, whether or not the safety is engaged.

Condition Four

In Condition Four, which can apply to a revolver as well as a semiautomatic pistol, the handgun is completely unloaded. With reasonable access to a loaded magazine, speedloader or moon clip, the user is only a very few seconds away from having a loaded gun in hand, but is by no means ready for a "quick draw contest" against an attacker with a loaded weapon.

Condition Four buys peace of mind in households where a loved one is desperately nervous about having loaded guns around.

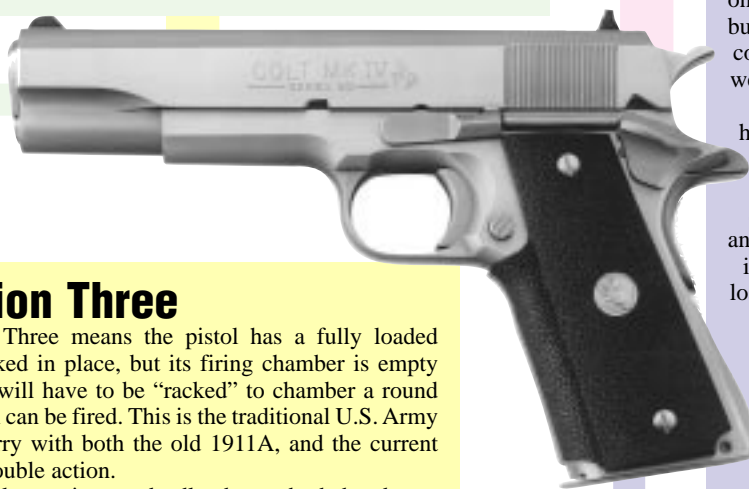
I have many times carried an unloaded semiautomatic pistol on my strong side hip and a loaded magazine on the weak side when in a jurisdiction where I couldn't carry a loaded gun, but was not legally prohibited from carrying an unloaded one.

In one European country where I used to teach annually, I put a lot of emphasis on drilling the students with "Condition Four Draws" — the dominant hand drew the pistol, the support hand drew the magazine, the pistol was loaded and charged, and the firing then commenced. The few extra seconds it takes to load the gun beat the heck out of going home to get a loaded one.

CONDITION ZERO

In Condition Zero, the pistol is loaded and cocked with a live round in the firing chamber without a manual safety engaged. This is the condition the gun would normally be in during sustained fire.

Some victims of testosterone overdose have suggested that this would be a safe way to carry a pistol in a holster, ready for super-fast action. The rest of the world considers anyone who carries a gun in this condition to be "an accident waiting to happen." It is the rest of the world that's right. *Never* carry a gun this way!



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Ernest R. Emerson, President - Emerson Knives, Inc.



What Do You Do With 20 Extra Pellets?

There's nothing more fun than a good, lively debate about shotgun gauges. The wee .410 and the 28 ga. always get their share of the controversy, but no gauge seems to generate more lively and animated discussions than the 3½" 12 ga.

Some say it's fading from the scene — that it can't replace the 10 ga. magnum, even with equivalent loadings. Others say the 3" 12 ga. magnum is all that's needed. Then there's the perennial story about a turkey hunter who lit one off with his shoulder snuggled against an oak tree, which resulted in a broken collarbone.

On the other hand, many hunters find it a very useful chambering, particularly for waterfowl, turkey and varmint.

What made the 3½" 12 ga. necessary was steel shot. Being lighter, there is simply more steel shot in an ounce than lead. Take BBs for example. There are 70 steel BBs in

an ounce and only 50 of the lead variety. Those extra 20 steel BBs had to be accommodated somehow, so the 3" magnum shell was stretched out another 1/2".

The 10 ga. is a mighty gun but ponderous. Remington SP-10s with 26" barrels will run 10½ to 11 lbs. unloaded and Browning Gold 10s, at least 10½ lbs. Great for static waterfowling but a bit heavy for an afternoon stroll after a few pheasants.

Comparable guns chambered for the 3½" 12 ga. shell like Winchester's Super-X2 and Remington's 11-87 Super Magnum will run 7½ to 8 lbs. Still a little heavier than ideal for upland game but passable, and that 3½" 12 gauge will accept 2¾" and 3" shells as well.

Where the 3½" really shines over the traditional 3" 12 ga. is velocity. As an example, a 1½ oz. load of

steel BBs from the 3½" is flying at 1,450 fps while the 3" is doing 1,265 fps. Light steel shot needs greater velocity to ensure lethality at game ranges and the 3½" dishes it out in spades. You can drop the payload of the 3" magnum to gain equal velocity, but in the process you sacrifice pattern density.

The secret to the 3½" magnum is to use its extra volume for powder to secure the high-

est velocities possible when using 1½ oz. to 1¾ oz. of steel shot. When it comes to turkey hunting with lead shot at turkey calling ranges, then the heavy 2¼ oz. payloads and super dense patterns really make a difference.



Reworking shotgun chokes is an art best left to gunsmiths like Brian Murphy.

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While ACTIV shells and components are still available from major supply houses, the North American production facilities have been sold abroad. When we called SAAMI for a current contact, they had none in their records. Current suppliers didn't know whether or not ACTIV components would still be available when their current supply was exhausted. If you use ACTIV hulls, now's the time to stock up.

The ACTIV shotshell may just have been ahead of its time.



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Know Your Bore

Although the modification of forcing cones and chokes is best left up to a gunsmith who specializes in the art, there is a great deal to be learned by the application of a bore gauge to the shotguns that pass through your hands over the years. Frankly, it's self-protection as well. When you're buying a used shotgun or a shotgun without removable chokes, don't believe the choke designation on any barrel until it has been measured with a bore gauge. We're not talking about one of those cheap key-ring gadgets or the application of a dime to the muzzle of a 12 gauge to see if it carries a full choke.

Choke is determined and measured as the difference in diameter between the main bore and the tightest portion of the choke. The difference is generally referred to as the degree of constriction. For the 12 ga., the average constrictions expressed in American terms are:

Full:	0.030" to 0.040"
Improved Modified:	0.020" to 0.030"
Modified:	0.010" to 0.020"
Improved Cylinder:	0.005" to 0.010"
Skeet:	0.000" to 0.005"
Cylinder:	0.000"

For example, if the standard bore of a 12 ga. is 0.729" and the tightest portion of the choke measures 0.698", the difference is 0.031", and the choke would be rated "Full." What if the bore of a European gun measures only 0.725" or the barrel is back-bored? Same rules apply. The choke constriction values established for different gauges do vary.

In short, it's nice to know what the choke measurements for a gun are before you buy it or a diagnostic tool if your existing gun isn't throwing the patterns you think it should. A bore-measuring tool will also permit you to measure chamber, forcing cone, choke lengths and the calibration of removable choke tubes.

Brownells offers bore measuring tools that range from a practical \$42 caliper to multi-gauge dial and digital indicator sets costing 10 times as much. These are either interesting toys or essential tools — in any case, they're nice to have.



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\$TOCK OPTIONS\$

Since the 1960s, the trend has been towards straighter stocks and away from Monte Carlo designs. For example, a pre-'64 Winchester 70 Featherweight has drop at comb of 3/4", at Monte Carlo of 1", and drop at heel of 1 1/4". The current Featherweight has drop at comb of 9/16", no Monte Carlo, and drop at heel of 7/8". The Remington Mountain Rifle stock is even straighter with drop at both comb and heel of 3/8".

A straight stock recoils straight back, with little or no muzzle rise. The straightest stocks are not on sporting rifles at all, but on military rifles such as the M16. In this design the heel of the buttstock is actually higher than the bore. Combined with an effective muzzle brake, recoil is straight back, allowing the shooter to stay on target even when firing on full automatic.

The trade-off is that a straight stock delivers more recoil force to the shooter's shoulder, rather than letting the recoil energy lift the muzzle of the gun. Most shooters don't mind a drop at heel of 1 1/2", even 2" or so. They would rather have a bit of muzzle jump than have all the recoil come straight back and bop them over the eye with the scope.



Stocks have become straighter, with less drop at comb and heel, as is illustrated by Winchester rifles spanning three eras. Top, current Model 70 Featherweight; center, Model 70 from the early 1960s; bottom, Model 94.

WHERE THE CHEEK MEETS THE WOOD

Length of pull is measured from the center of the trigger to the center of the buttplate. Drop at comb, at Monte Carlo (if present) and at heel are measured from the centerline of the bore. Other dimensions include pitch (the angle of the buttplate relative to the bore), cast on/off (the angle of the stock to right or left relative to the bore — factory stocks are almost always straight) and the size and shape of the buttplate.

An important and often overlooked factor is the thickness and shape of the comb. Consider two rifles, a Remington-Lee bolt action as made from 1886 to 1906 and a recently made Winchester Model 70 Super Express. Stock dimensions are similar; for the Remington, 13 1/2" length of pull, 1" drop at comb, 1 1/8" drop at heel. The Winchester stock measures 1 3/4" x 9/16" x 1 1/8". Both rifles weigh about nine pounds.

Nonetheless the Remington, chambered for the modest .30/40 Krag cartridge, is distinctly more unpleasant to shoot than the Winchester, chambered for the .375 H&H. One reason is the small steel "rifle" buttplate of the Remington versus the large, flat, padded buttplate on the Winchester. The other reason is that the Winchester stock is much thicker.

Thickness in a stock to some extent compensates for height. With a narrow comb a shooter's face must lean over and press against the stock for support. Muzzle jump then drives the sharp comb into the cheek.

With a thick, nicely rounded comb, a shooter's face is positioned higher, alongside the stock rather than on top of it. When the muzzle jumps in recoil, the rounded comb tends to slide along the face rather than banging into the cheekbone.

That's why you shouldn't compare stock dimensions without also considering the thickness and shape of the comb. A standard Browning BAR, for example, has a drop at heel of 2", while the standard Winchester 94 has a drop of 1 1/8". The Browning stock, however, features a thicker, rounded comb that is considerably more comfortable.



Although both rifles have similar stock dimensions, the Winchester Model 70, on left, is considerably thicker than the Remington-Lee.

Stock Design: ASSAULT & BATTERY

Cartridges get more powerful, rifles get lighter, and recoil increases. Recoil may be largely subjective, but it can still hurt. In his book *Keith's Rifles for Large Game*, Elmer Keith described the first time he fired an army qualification score with the 1903 Springfield: "I wound up with an expert rifleman's medal; a broken nose, from the safety; my upper lip cut almost through and swollen down over the lower lip, and my chin peeled by my finger nails."

Keith's Springfield was chambered for the standard .30-'06 cartridge. Imagine the effect of such a stock if the rifle was chambered for the .338 Win. Magnum.

The miserable recoil of the Springfield is usually attributed to its short (roughly 12.9") length of pull. Actually, a short length of pull can be quite useable if the other stock dimensions are right. What made the 1903 a bear to shoot was its low, narrow comb, considerable drop at heel and narrow, hard

buttplate — features left over from the early Kentucky and Pennsylvania flintlocks.

Excessive drop at heel makes it difficult for the stock to support the shooter's face while aligning the sights. It causes the rifle to pivot around the shoulder during recoil, increasing muzzle jump and the blow to the shooter's cheek. Combine excessive heel drop with a small steel buttplate and minimal length of pull and you have a weapon that's dangerous at both ends.



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state of the SMART GUN

By Massad Ayoob

A handgun which can instantly recognize authorized users is the Holy Grail of today's R&D departments, but is this a quantum leap in firearm safety or just a technological disaster waiting to happen.

“THE CONCEPT OF THE SMART
GUN SOUNDS GREAT. IT'S A
GUN YOU CAN FIRE INSTANTLY,
BUT ONLY YOU CAN FIRE AT
ALL. IMBEDDED TECHNOLOGY
KEEPS THE BAD GUY FROM
HARMING YOU IF HE GETS
CONTROL OF YOUR GUN.”

“Smart guns” has become the latest buzzword cliché among opponents of the civil right of private gun ownership. Colt's (with a subsidiary called iColt), Smith & Wesson and Sandia Labs are all firmly on the bandwagon, having put significant funding into the research and development of such a gun.

None, however, have been able to field a working model for potential end-users to test. Colt's was embarrassed when they showed their prototype to a reporter from a major newspaper and it failed to work. An Eastern Seaboard governor who was pushing for a bill that would limit people to “smart guns” was humiliated when the model he was demonstrating locked up solid and wouldn't work when it was supposed to.

All this has left a foul taste in the mouths of legitimate gun users, in the private and police sectors alike. Those who have seen the reality of self-defense know that a protection gun must be available for use instantly. The gun-banners' “model legislation” mandating “smart guns” has been written to expressly exempt police from the requirement. This tells you cops don't trust it. If they don't, then perhaps neither should you.

The Smart Gun In Theory

The concept of the smart gun sounds great. It's a gun *you* can fire instantly, but *only* you can fire at all. Imbedded technology keeps the bad guy from harming you or someone else if he gets control of your gun. You could leave your gun where you could quickly reach it, but an irresponsible child or other unauthorized person would be unable to fire it if they found it.

If it worked...

The concept, as sold to the public, breaks down into three categories: fingerprint recognition, electronic recognition and magnetic action. Let's look at all three.



The only functional design which currently fits the "smart gun" criteria is the MagnaTrigger custom job, which necessitates the wearing of a magnetic ring to disengage an internal trigger block (inset).



I have yet to meet a working street cop who likes the idea of fingerprint recognition technology. The sellers say that it will instantly recognize the user's fingerprint, which is programmed in, and be capable of firing immediately as soon as the authorized hand takes a firing grasp.

We potential buyers have some grave concerns. What about cold weather when we will be wearing gloves? Fingerprint recognition potential is now totally blocked, and in a fast-breaking emergency there won't be time to rip the glove off the shooting hand.

If the legitimate user has been injured in the attack, viscous blood will quickly fill up the areas between the ridges of the fingerprints, probably rendering them unreadable by the device, and thus causing an "access denied" reaction when the user needs the gun most. The same could happen in a scuffle that leaves the legitimate user's hands covered with mud or whatever.

The Network Is Down

Electronic transponder technology raises even more concerns. The theory is that the gun will be activated when it is within a certain proximity to a transponder the intended user wears on the belt or wrist. When the gun is outside this range, it will "go dead."

Where, then, shall we draw the line of the transponder's range? I've heard a distance of three feet postulated. Now, I'm only an average size man, but when I drop down into a rollover prone firing position, the grip-frame of my handgun is a measured 41.5" from my hip holster, presumably the location of the transponder. Thus, I've put my own gun out of reach of its activator.

The same could happen with a long-armed officer or citizen firing with arm extended, or anyone firing straight up at a sniper in a high vantage-point or a wildcat about to pounce from a tree limb. Therefore, the transponder would have to reach more than four feet away from itself to acti-

vate the gun to reliably be of use to the legitimate user.

The purpose, however, is to keep you from getting shot with your own gun. Virtually anyone who gets your gun out of your hand or holster is going to be within three or four feet of you. In any case, a disarmed cop will instinctively lunge toward the attacker to retrieve the snatched weapon, again putting the responder into "activation range." Therefore, the belt-mounted transponder doesn't offer much promise in the real world.

What about a wrist-mounted transponder? Of course, you'll need one for each wrist in case you have to fire with the weak hand only due to an injury to the gun hand.

But things on the wrist can be torn off in a struggle. It happens all the time in fights, the kind of fights that escalate to deadly force situations. This is why experienced cops and bouncers are seen to take off their wristwatches and ID bracelets and slip them into a pocket when they think a brawl is in the offing. This factor makes the wrist-mounted transponder also seem impractical.

A ring on each hand is more promising — in theory. We are, however, still waiting patiently for one to be shown to us that might actually work, given the limited space a ring offers for electronics without getting in the way of hand function in normal daily activities.

With any sort of electronic technology, you have to worry about jamming. We live in a world where scofflaw "techies" pay big bucks for devices that block police radar. How long would it be before the first "gangland geek" came up with a device that would block the transponder of any nearby officer (or armed citizen), rendering the good guy's weapon inoperable?

It's A Gun And A Compass

The third smart gun safety mechanism postulated is magnetic technology. This is the one least often discussed by the gun-banners. That's because a magnetism-based

continued on page 26

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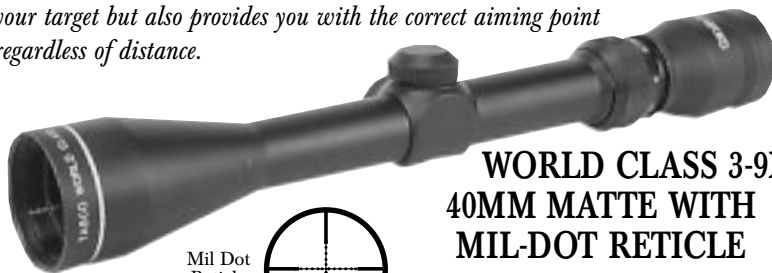


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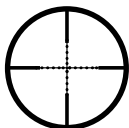
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SMART GUN

continued from page 25

smart gun actually exists, and has been working for some 25 years.

A full-time inventor named Joe Davis designed something he called Magna-Trigger in 1975, and patented it shortly thereafter. It was a modification of a S&W revolver with leaf-type mainspring (i.e., K-frame or larger) so that it could only be fired by someone wearing a magnetic ring on their middle finger.

The front strap of the S&W's grip-frame is cut away and replaced with a module that holds what looks like a little steel flag and flagpole. The flag blocks the rebound slide, allowing the trigger to be drawn back only far enough to drop the bolt and allow a cylinder rotation check. It prevents the gun from firing.

When the hand wearing the magnetic ring closes into a firing grasp, reverse polarity between the ring magnet and the one mounted at the base of the "flagpole" spins the latter unit. The metal flag is now clear of the rebound slide, and the gun can instantly be fired in double-action mode.

A ring should be worn on each hand, to allow for shooting back if wounded in the gun arm. The gun should be modified to double action only, since if the gun is taken away in a cocked condition, anyone can fire one shot from the single-action position before the rebound slide is blocked again. The rings are interchangeable, allowing spouse, partner or other authorized person to use the "proprietary" gun.

Downsides? You cannot handle computer disks, videotapes, audiotapes or any other of the magnetically-sensitive things we come into contact with daily without ruining those things. The rings are ugly—plain steel bands—though they can be styled to look like class rings or other ordinary jewelry for an extra cost.

The technology is limited to K- through N-frame S&W revolvers. I've seen attempts to use the magnetic principle differently to modify revolvers with coil mainsprings (J-frame S&W, Colt Trooper, Ruger) but they were not as reliable and therefore not as successful.

Attempts were made by another inventor to modify the Beretta DA auto pistol and the Colt 1911 to work this way, but test samples were finicky, and in any case would work only in the right hand. For all practical purposes, "magnetic smart gun technology" does not exist at this time for the semiautomatic pistols that are overwhelmingly preferred by the police community and largely favored by today's private citizen handgun purchasers.

Living With Smart Guns

Most of the people who theorize about "smart guns" have never actually carried one on police duty or as an armed citizen, or relied on one as a home defense weapon. For

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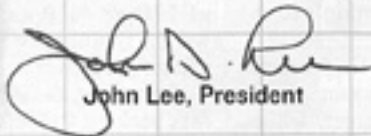
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almost five years, I carried a Magna-Trigger equipped sixgun. The experience was instructive.

The gun was a S&W Model 66, the stainless steel .357 Combat Magnum model. Its action had been tuned by famed revolversmith Andy Cannon.

My first child was three years old when I had the 66 modified by Joe Smith. It allowed me to have a loaded revolver at my bedside that the toddler couldn't harm herself or anyone else with if she stumbled across it while I was asleep.

At the time, I was teaching classes involving officer survival, handgun retention and awareness for armed citizens. It made sense for me to have a MagnaTrigger gun along to show the students, and using it as my personal defensive weapon was convenient as there was simply one less gun to carry on trips.

The rings were no more inconvenient than any other piece of jewelry. The gun always worked, so long as it wasn't fitted with finger-groove grips. The flanges between the grooves could turn the flat, inward facing magnetic portion of the ring to an angle where it might not work.

Far From Perfect

While teaching officer survival with Ray Chapman at Chapman Academy, we discovered one weakness in the design. Cutting away the front of the frame to install the module weakens the overall structure of the grip-frame. This is not a problem in routine shooting, even with lots of magnum ammo going downrange. (The K-frame revolver had to be rebuilt once or twice from the constant pounding of 125 gr. .357 rounds, but the function of the Magna-Trigger was never impaired.)

What we did find was that a certain disarming technique popularly taught in prisons would lever the gun in such a way that the cutaway frame of the S&W could bend back and outward. This caused the Magna-Trigger module to slip just enough that it would no longer block the rebound slide, which allowed the gun to be fired by anyone.

There was a silver lining to this cloud, however; both Chapman and I could now testify as expert witnesses in court that if your gun was ripped out of your hand, it was possible that this action would make it fire despite the Magna-Trigger, warranting your use of your backup gun to shoot the person who had unlawfully disarmed you. Prior to that, the concern had been expressed that if someone got such a "smart gun" away from you, the courts might hold you liable if you harmed him, since even though in theory he had a gun, he would be armed with a non-functioning weapon.

In the mid-'80s, however, I regretfully put this gun into semi-retirement. Our teaching format had gone heavily toward videotapes, and handling them with magnetic rings could have wiped them out. Our students and the cops I trained at my depart



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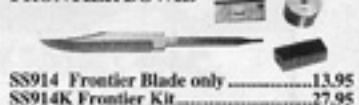
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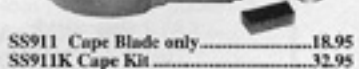
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ment were increasingly trending toward semiautomatic pistols, and the technology of the MagnaTrigger did not translate.

Joe Smith died some years ago. Rick Devoid acquired the rights to the product from the estate, and today offers conversions (and already converted revolvers) through Tarnhelm Supply. The conversion of your revolver costs around \$350 and includes two magnetic rings.

The Smart Gun And The Trojan Horse

Why do those handgun prohibitionists who push for the "mandatory smart gun legislation" pointedly ignore magnetic ring technology? For the simple reason that it actually exists. For one side of the anti-gun movement, the "smart gun" is a Trojan Horse. Their plan is simple.

The first step is to pass a law that says the only guns people can carry, or even possess, are "smart guns." The second step is to raise a glass of champagne with Sarah Brady and Al Gore and toast their own cleverness. They have now banned all existing firearms, with the false promise that citizens can only possess something that doesn't exist.

The fact that the MagnaTrigger does exist mightily nettles those in the anti-gun community. Interestingly, another wing of the anti-gunners is against the whole concept. They see the smart gun as a *gun*, after all, and absolutely refuse to "endorse" any gun of any kind.

It will be interesting to see how the prototype "smart guns" from S&W, iColt, etc. perform, if they ever actually reach the point where those who hype them will let them out of the factory for independent testing.

In the meantime, a true smart gun that has stood the test of time does in fact exist. However, the MagnaTrigger revolver is a special purpose tool that cannot possibly replace the conventional defensive handgun for many purposes. The one man on earth who knows the most about it, Rick Devoid, has said so himself. In fact, he has said so publicly, which irks the anti-gunners enormously. But then, those people never did handle the truth very well.

The "smart gun" is just pie in the sky. At best, it's an immature technology a great distance away from proving itself applicable to the guns used daily by police officers and law-abiding armed citizens. At worst, it may be the sneakiest trick yet to deprive the American public of his right to own firearms.



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9000S



9000S Type F

Available in manual safety ("F") and decock-only ("D") models, all 9000S pistols feature the unmistakable Giugiaro Design styling that gives this new Beretta semiautomatic a distinctive, modern look, but more importantly offers shooters improved hold and control.

The frame is constructed of the latest generation of glass-reinforced technopolymers, keeping the weight of the 9000S to less than 28 ounces.

The durable, wear-resistant soft polymer grips are overmolded onto the frame for maximum recoil absorption and fatigue reduction, as well as a firm grip even in the harshest weather conditions. The model 9000S also accepts the magazines of the 92 Series pistols (optional spacer required), and holds 10 rounds of ammunition — even in the 40 S&W model.



9000S Disc Holster System



The innovative exterior of the 9000S houses a unique patented locking system with a tilt-barrel, open-slide design. The two strong barrel locking lugs engage the slide directly, eliminating the need for any intermediate components and maintaining the extraordinary reliability of Beretta's traditional open slide design. All 9000S models feature an automatic firing pin block to prevent firing in case of accidental drops or strikes against hard surfaces, as well as a chamber-loaded indicator for added safety.

A full line of specialized holsters, made exclusively for the Beretta 9000S, is also available.

Every aspect of the 9000S is undeniably Beretta — materials, design, performance, safety features — and unparalleled in quality.

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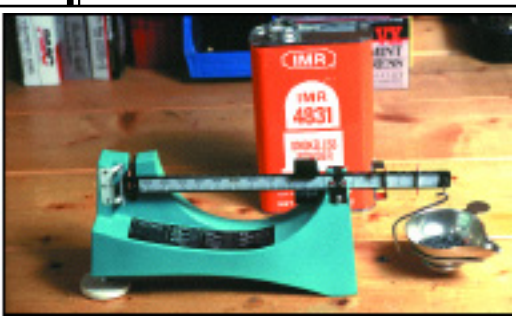
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Ten-Hut! Basic Training For Reloaders

There is one factor that brings most serious shooters to the reloading bench — money! You can craft a good handload for at least half the cost of comparable factory ammunition and with just a little care it can be equal to or better than the high-priced spread.

The equipment pays for itself very quickly even if you only shoot as few as 100 rounds a month. More often than not, shooters don't often pocket those savings — they use the money to shoot more and that also has advantages. If you can shoot two or three times more, you should become a better shot quicker.



A simple beam type loading scale will easily handle the important task of weighing powder.

A beginning handloader does not really need a lot of equipment to get started, but within each category there are some choices to make. The first thing you need is a **good loading manual**, which should be the first purchase ahead of everything else. Be sure to choose one that has good descriptions of each step in the loading process.

Next is the press. A new reloader should get a **good single-stage press**. Progressive tools are wonderful but are not designed for basic teaching. Most people don't need the high volume they'll turn out and with a single stage you can load rifle or pistol ammo with a simple change of dies and shell holder.

Loading dies are next and once more there are lots of choices. Buy a brand name set. If you're going to load handgun ammunition invest a little more and get a set of **carbide sizing dies**. Rifle cases need to be lubricated for sizing, but straight wall handgun rounds can be run through carbide dies without extra lubrication.

Next on the mandatory list is a **powder scale**. Within the last decade we've seen electronic reloading scales and they are a great

convenience, but someone just getting started really doesn't need to spend that much. A simple beam balance mechanical scale is just fine. Weighing powder is a task that *must* be done accurately and the scale should be supplemented with a small set of check weights to verify the accuracy of the scale.

There are a **few other necessary items** for the beginner's reloading bench. You need a small powder funnel, a loading block to hold the charged cases, a case chamfering/deburring tool, case lube and a couple of those neat little stackable plastic bins for work in progress. You can put fired cases in one bin and move them to another bin at the completion of each operation. When reloading a quantity of handgun ammo this avoids confusion.

While every reloader *must* have a powder scale, a powder measure is not mandatory. It is certainly possible to put some powder in a clean bowl and use a small spoon to trickle powder into the scale pan until the proper charge is reached. When you're loading a box of rifle ammo this is not bad, but if you're loading 100 rounds of handgun ammo it is poisonously slow. Powder measures fall into the *nearly mandatory* category.



A powder measure will make handloading chores more efficient.

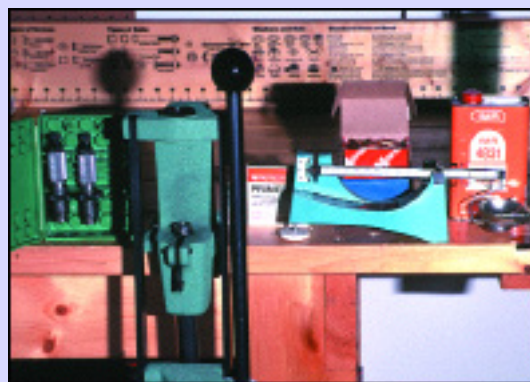
BEYOND THE BARE NECESSITIES

If you're truly starting from scratch, a **packaged kit** from one of the major loading tool manufacturers may be the best way to go. As a rule, the cost of the package will be less than the sum of the individual prices.

When you're ready to put together your first handloading bench, it really pays to shop around. Retailers, whether they operate a mail-order service or have a store-front gun shop, are very aware of the competitively-priced nature of this business. There is usually a "suggested retail" price, but often there is also a "street price" that features a considerable built-in discount.

Visit local shops and consider more than just price. A local retailer may be the best source even if their price is a little higher — the products come with a service that's hard to find at mail-order houses. That service is information, instructions and answers to questions.

The best reason for becoming a reloader, however, is to be able to shoot. The good news is that you can shoot a lot more for the same amount of money. Lunch may not be free, but there are still bargains. Reloading is one of those.



The basic gear for a handloading bench includes dies, press, scale and powder measure.

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The Sinclair Rest

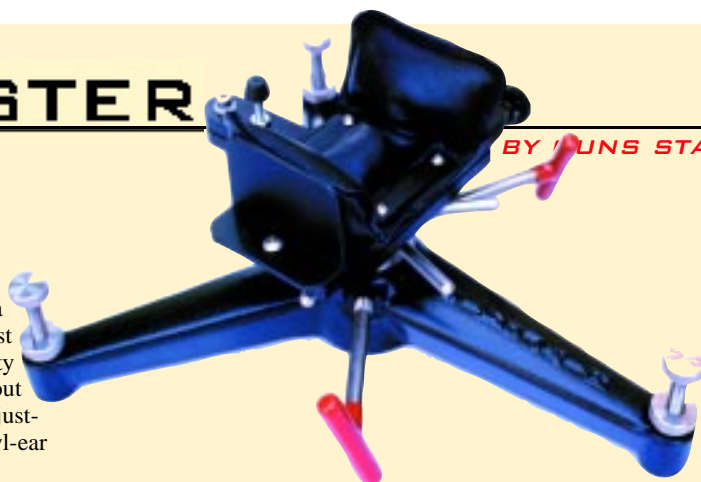
The heart of a good group, a sub-MOA shot cluster, is a stable, consistent rest, and the Sinclair Rest is the best there is. A good rest provides the shooter with the ability to make minute, precise adjustments to his aiming point without disturbing his set-up. The Sinclair Rest allows for left-right adjustment with a fine knurled adjustment knob that moves the owl-ear bag platter sideways.

Elevation adjustments can be made in three manners. The coarsest adjustment is made by loosening one of the red-colored T-handles and lifting the entire rest post, securing it again with the T-handle. This is not as hard as it sounds; light pressure is all that is required.

Finer elevation adjustments can be made dialing up (clockwise) or down with the large spoked handwheel, locked in place with the other T-handle. The finest of all adjustments can be made by using the rear leg of the tripod rest, which has a knurled elevation knob with a lock nut.

The unit came with an owl-ear bag and we supplied our own sand. Filling the bag and attaching it to the rest was easy and straightforward using Sinclair's clear directions. (How hard can it be to pour sand in a bag? Even our three-thumbed editor-in-chief managed it.)

There are small, subtle refinements to the Sinclair Rest, which indeed there should be in a precision product costing \$287. There is an adjustable forend stop, rubber protected, at the front of the



rest to facilitate repeatable placing of the rifle in the owl-ear bag. The rest is non-symmetrical with the two forward-facing legs being closer together.

The cast iron pedestal is powder-coated for protection against corrosion. Not that such a nice rest would ever be left in the rain, but the powder coating will eliminate any surface rust that can occur. The three legs each feature an adjustable foot with a sharp, pointed toe for staying in place on a bench.

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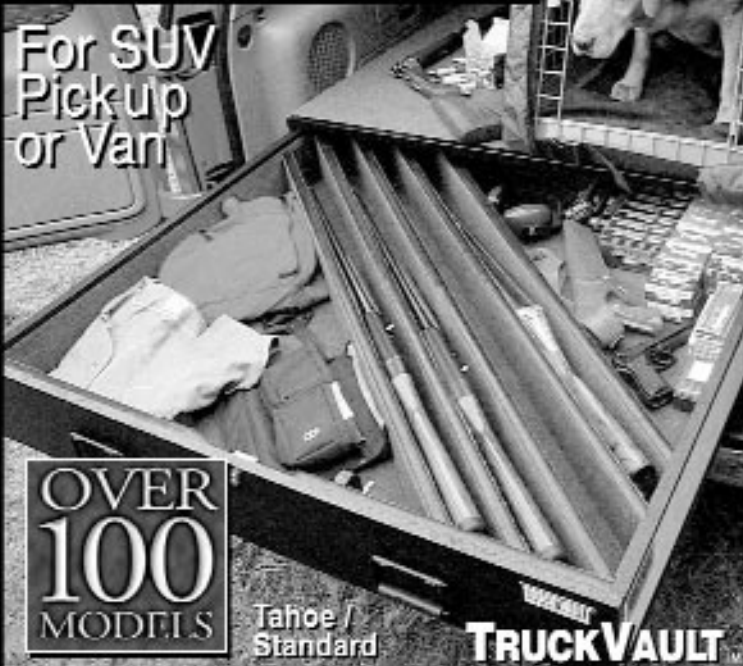
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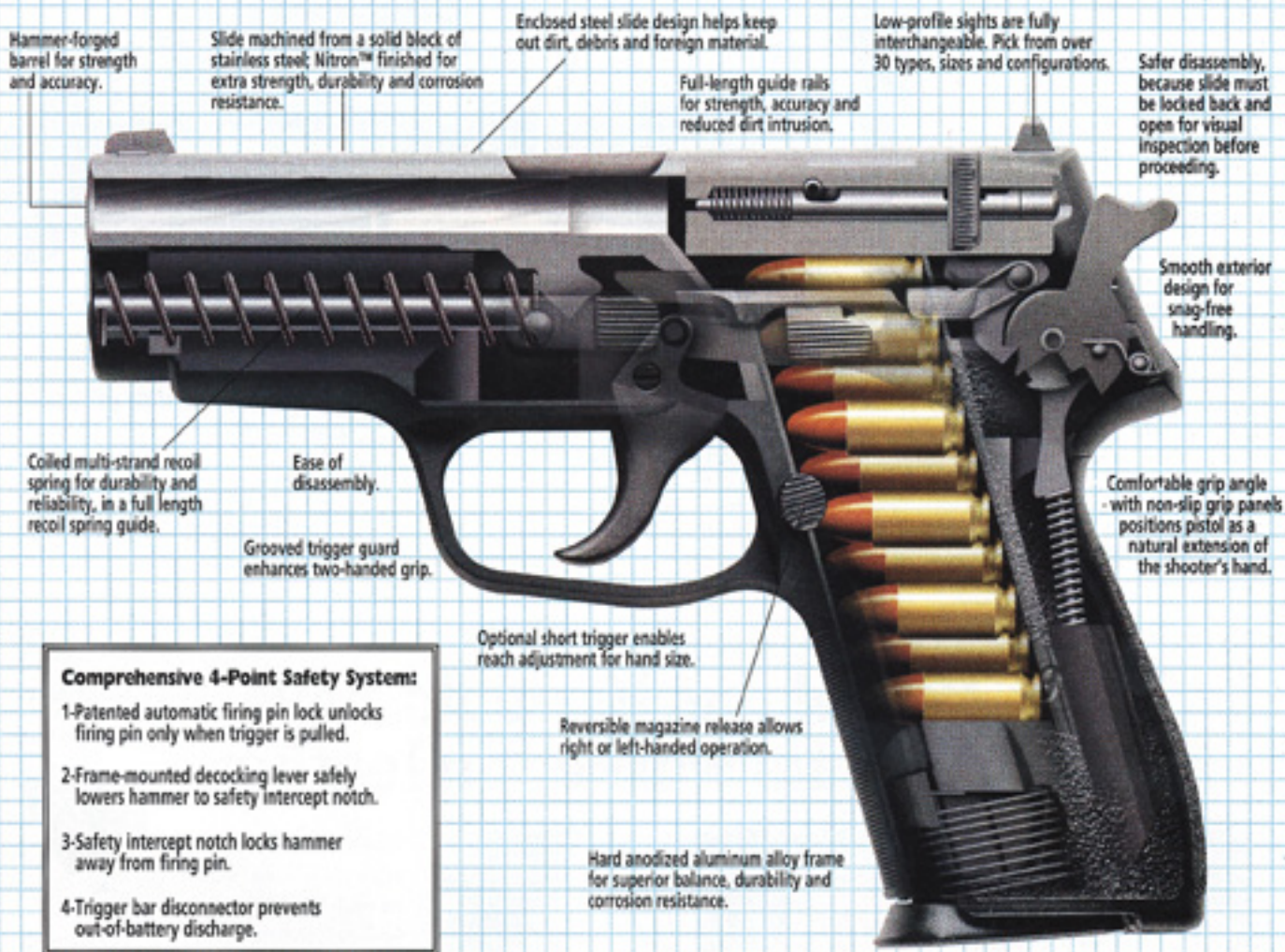
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WHEN IT COUNTS



Emerson Mach I

Ernest Emerson is a custom knifemaker who parlayed his phenomenal success in designing and handcrafting serious tactical knives into a proper manufacturing concern. In only two years, Emerson went from making a few hundred handmade custom Special Forces knives, one at a time in his garage, to manufacturing thousands of knives for the retail trade. This is not easy.

The mass-produced knives from the new concern, Emerson Knives Inc., not only equal the quality of his handmade blades — they're better! Emerson Knives Inc. does not totally rely on mass production. Edges are ground by hand and the assembly of the blade into the locking mechanism, the real beef in a folding knife, is also done by hand.

However, the critically time-consuming tasks of cutting out the blade blanks, fabricating the G10 handles, machining out the liner locks and other mundane matters are accomplished with Emerson's state-of-the-

art machinery with a higher degree of precision than is even possible in hand-work.

The latest design from Emerson is called the Mach I. It is a clip-point, double-V ground, liner-lock tactical folder featuring G10 handles, titanium liners and 154CM stainless steel blades. The 3.5" edge is partially serrated and features a Black T finish. It sells for \$240.

Sounds so matter of fact, so dispassionate. But those features — at that price — are nothing short of mind-boggling when

you consider that the Mach I is the current state-of-the-art in tactical folders. A similar handmade version from Emerson would cost about triple that.

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:

Emerson Knives, Dept. QM

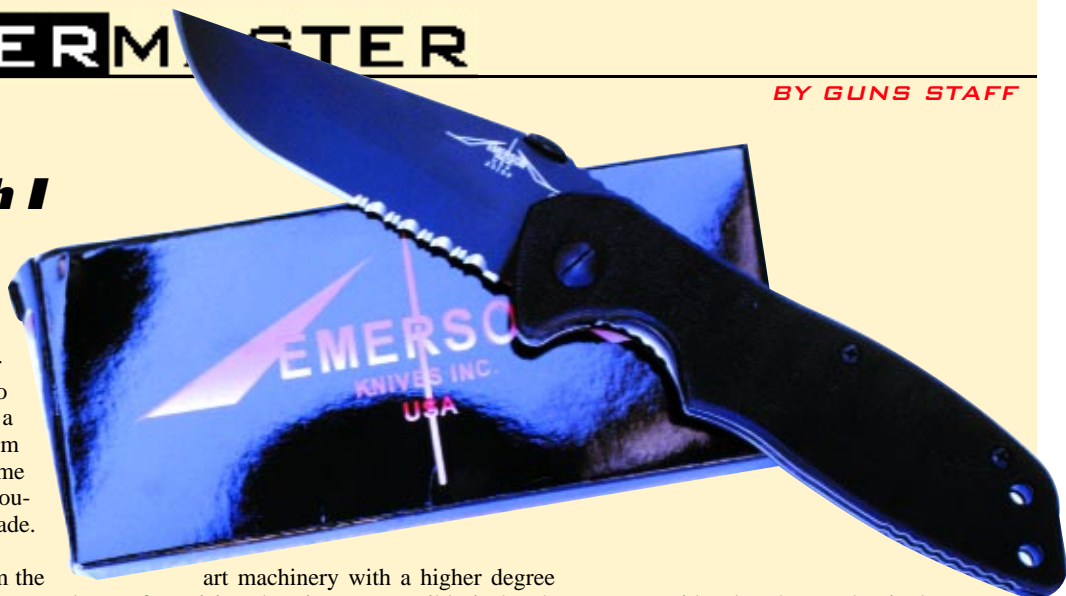
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We know what you're thinking and we thought the same thing at first — holsters that trumpet themselves as "one-size-fits-all" are sure to be cloddish compromises. We cringe as we think of the various lumps of nylon called holsters that proclaim to fit any "large auto." We prefer dedicated, specific tools and accessories, one thing made precisely to perform one job, and do it extremely well.

But in the case of the Wilson Adjuster Holster, we may in fact find the exception that proves the rule. The Adjuster is, believe it or not, a highly versatile holster that really will accommodate a wide range of pistols without compromising function or design.

To test the Adjuster, we retrieved a Browning Hi-Power from the gun safe and began to fiddle with the two adjustment screws. The main adjustment screw, mounted where the welt would be on a conventionally sewn holster, controls a plastic roller, which contacts the portion of the pistol just in front of the trigger guard. This regulates the tension of the holster on the

pistol.

The second adjustment screw is at the bottom of the Adjuster and allows the fore and aft "rock" of the pistol to be dialed in. Once properly adjusted, which took all of a minute, the Adjuster wrapped around that Hi-Power as if it had been specially made just for that gun.

Out went the Hi-Power and in went a Kimber 1911. A few twists of the screwdriver later and, *voilà*, a perfect holster for a 1911. The fit was as good as one of Wilson's purpose-built 1911 holsters.

The Adjuster comes with a stiff paddle for ease of slipping the holster on and off. The Adjuster comes in several models to fit just about any auto. The basic models are #A1BSR (1911 family and Hi-Power);



#A2BSR (compact 1911 family, small S&W autos, Kahr); #A3BSR (Glock, HK USP, SIG, Ruger autos, large S&W autos); #A4BSR (Beretta 8000, small SIGs, compact Glocks, HK USP compact). Each model sells for \$100. An adjustable belt slot attachment is available instead of the paddle for \$20.

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Kestrel Pocket Thermo Wind Meter

Once you start shooting much beyond 200 yards, the name of the game is not how well you can shoot or how accurate your rifle is; it's how well you can dope the wind. Varmint hunters and long-range target shooters know all too well the esoteric science of wind doping. Target shooters have it relatively easy because they can position little wind flags downrange to detect any wind shifts between their bench and the target. Varmint hunters make do with holding "two dogs into the wind" and hoping for the best.

Enter now the Kestrel Pocket Thermo Wind Meter, a handy, little battery-powered device that measures wind speed. Armed with this knowledge of the wind speed and direction, it is then a matter of knowing your rifle's ballistics and making the necessary compensation, either by holding off the target — mil dots are a tremendous help here — or by dialing the correction into your scope.

Either way, knowing that you are dealing with, say, a crosswind of 9 mph and that the ballistic coefficient of your Sierra 50 gr. Blitz will cause it to drift 11.7" at 300 yards, you can then make your adjustments.

Ah, but not so fast. You are assuming a perfect crosswind. The

Kestrel can tell you if the wind is coming from a quartering angle, which will lessen the billowing effect of that 9 mph gust. Say the breeze is coming from 60° off your muzzle — that's less than a full crosswind. You will then have to compensate less in your hold-off, which is another way of saying that doping the wind is more art than science.

The Kestrel Pocket Thermo Wind Meter also measures temperature and calculates the wind chill. The wind measuring can be read in terms of actual wind speed, maximum gust of wind speed since the unit has been turned on and average wind speed, gusts and lulls combined.

The Kestrel device, which weighs a scant 1.5 ozs. and fits in a shirt pocket, is a shortcut to being an expert in reading the wind. Half the battle is knowing what the wind speed is; the other half is knowing what to do about it. The former you can buy for \$119, the latter with a few years of competition experience.



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The Model 722 is available in four different blade configurations, including SBT, a partially serrated edge with black BT2® blade coating for increased corrosion resistance.

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Carrying a gun no longer means "sport coat and tie." Options like the Bianchi Top Secret make every day casual CCW day.



C Methods Of Carry

By Roy Huntington

Would you use a bargain holster to carry your best pistol? We didn't think so. Choosing the right means of conveyance for your handgun requires some serious consideration.

There are many methods of carrying a gun apart from a traditional holster, including a pack, satchel, pocket or purse. The one-gun, one-carry-method school is a goal to aspire to, but in the real world there are too many guns, too many holsters, too many widgets and just too many opportunities and ideas to limit yourself to one "way."

If you're not constantly experimenting with new methods, ideas and technology then you're in the dark ages. Stay there if you want, but the world is full of titanium, G-10 plastics and other wonderful things that have all come together to make the idea of carrying a handgun a new and interesting proposition.

Of Holsters And Fits

There are threads of commonality among the best holsters. The good ones all seem to exhibit certain tendencies

BEYOND THE HOLSTER

Carrying a gun doesn't always mean in a holster under your toga. Don't forget that rifle case with a shoulder strap, the sling for that big, heavy single-shot "pistol" with a scope, the pistol rug, that plastic lock box or Grandma's old cedar chest. They all work to store, lock, tote or otherwise keep your gun safe or secure.

Hunting or tactical use usually means a sling. Hunters need a rugged (leather or synthetic) sling with some features attached. From days spent in the field, we've discovered that a "non-skid" patch on the sling is worth its weight in gold. Butler Creek, among others, makes a dandy one.

Any sling can easily be made "non-skid" with the application of a product named "Shoe-Goo." It comes in a tube, and runners use it to build up the soles of their worn running shoes. A few "spots" of Shoe-Goo on the correct side of a sling (any sling), and suddenly it doesn't want to slip off the shoulder. It works great, and you can use it on other things, like camera and pack straps. You can find it in your local sporting goods or department store — and you can choose whether or not to tell the teen-age clerk what you're using it for.

Tactical slings are an entire category in and of themselves. Many have very special applications, while others are simply to carry the rifle, but, in general, a rifle without a sling is like a handgun without a holster.

There has been a real bit of engineering devoted to "tactical" bags for rifles. They come with magazine pouches on the outside, zippers, shoulder straps and

pockets to hold "stuff." Many are waterproof, float and can even be locked closed, like the Waller case. This development has turned a simple soft rifle case into a "system" to carry your goodies. A rifle, ammo, magazines and related items can be all carried in one place. It's awfully handy and convenient, not to mention that the lockable versions help keep it out of the hands of the kiddies.

A locking box or case can make storing or carrying your guns and goodies an easy proposition. Be creative and think versatility before you invest big bucks in something you don't really need. MTM and others make inexpensive hard-shell plastic cases that give a shooter an economical way to store, carry and keep safe handguns and rifles.



A rifle without a sling is like a pistol without a holster. The neoprene sling from Butler Creek and the leather one from Thad Rybka make these rifles handy and portable.



toward comfort, fit and function that the ones in the "also ran" categories simply can't compete with — or without.

Holsters are offered as solutions to various problems encountered in the day-to-day drudgery of carrying 10 ozs. or 3 lbs. of handgun. There are good solutions, okay solutions and downright very bad ones.

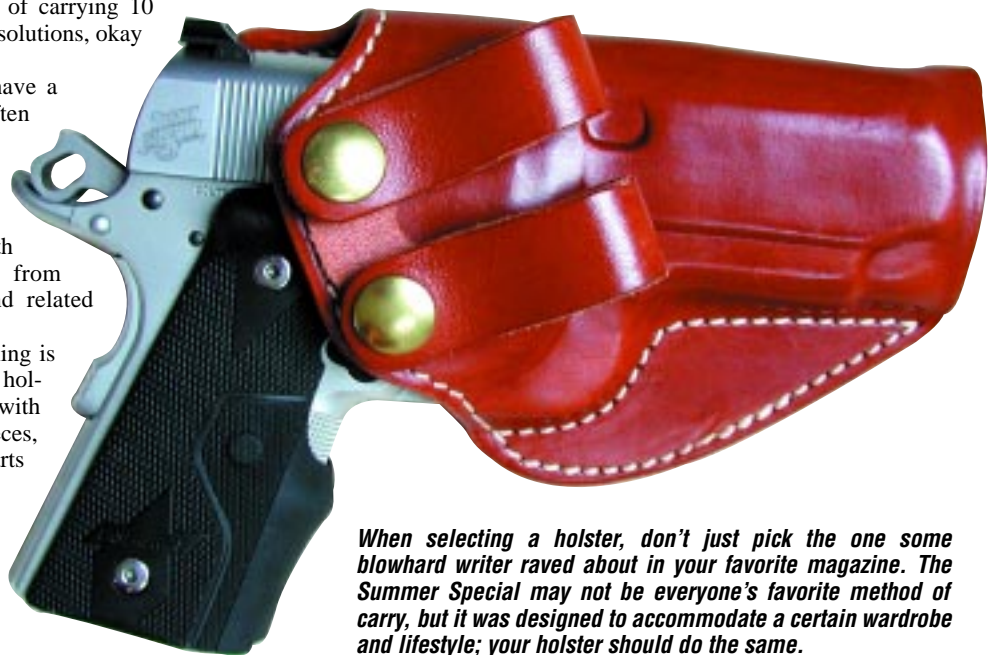
Unfortunately, the "bad" solutions have a strong consumer pull because they are often inexpensive. Perhaps the word "cheap" would be better. Under-priced means an item costs less than it should, a good value, as it were. Cheap means it doesn't cost much and it is probably worth even less. Stay very, very far away from "cheap" when it comes to holsters and related accessories.

The reason we don't like cheap anything is because it doesn't perform well. Cheap holsters are that way because they are made with cheap component parts (snaps, plastic pieces, leather, thread, etc.), so the sum of the parts still equals a piece of garbage.

Are we stating the obvious here? You tell us after you look at what rides on the collective hips of the crowd at the local shooting emporium. Is that cardboard or actually leather? Or maybe neither? We'd hazard a guess.

Don't spend \$10 on a holster for that \$600 gun.

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When selecting a holster, don't just pick the one some blowhard writer raved about in your favorite magazine. The Summer Special may not be everyone's favorite method of carry, but it was designed to accommodate a certain wardrobe and lifestyle; your holster should do the same.

It may not be a Mauser 98 with a deep, rich blue and highly figured claro walnut stock, but for a modern dangerous game gun, the .376 Steyr ProHunter is pretty easy on the eye.



STEYR PROHUNTER 376

By Holt Bodinson

A high-performance, modern cartridge chambered in one of the finest hunting rifles to hit the market in years. If you were waiting for an excuse to buy a new gun, this is it.

Development of increasingly compact big game cartridges that rival the performance of the old stalwarts is one of the most intriguing trends in modern ballistics. The .416 Rem. immediately comes to mind — propelling a 400 gr. bullet at 2,400 fps, it matches the classic loading of the cavernous (and very expensive) .416 Rigby. The .300 WSM is another example, equaling the performance of the popular .300 Win. Mag. in a petite case that functions through a short action rifle.

Now as a collaborative effort between Steyr and Hornady, we have the .376 Steyr — a rimless, compact cartridge capable of easing aside the classic .375 H&H, and in a normal .30-’06-length action.

Steyr has introduced the .376 in two models initially — the ProHunter .376, and, with respect to Jeff Cooper, the Steyr Scout.

Of the two, the ProHunter with a weight of 8 lbs. and a barrel length of 20", is much better suited to handle the recoil generated by the .376 cartridge than the 6.3 lb. Scout with its 19" barrel.

The .375 H&H has been used quite a bit on big and dangerous game. With a bullet a full 3/8" in diameter and with

weights running from 225 to 300 grs., the .375 H&H is a tremendously flexible and effective caliber; however, if we were going to buy or build another .375 caliber rifle, it would be chambered for the .376 Steyr for several reasons.

The new Steyr cartridge comes within a hair's breadth of the .375 H&H's ballistics and it uses less powder to get there. It generates less recoil than the .375 H&H, and it does not require a long magnum action to handle it. The new .376 is simply a remarkable example of good, conservative cartridge design.

New Design, Classic Performance

The .376 Steyr case measures 2.36" (61mm) long. As a basis of comparison, the .30-’06 case is 2.49" (63mm) in length. The

shoulder angle of the .30-'06 is 17' 30" and a similar gradual shoulder angle of 17' 50" was selected for the .376, contributing to its smooth feeding characteristics.

The .376 departs noticeably from the .30-'06 case in its slightly larger rim (0.495" vs. 0.473"), and body diameter. In fact, the body diameter of the .376 at the base (0.504") and the shoulder (0.473") are within a few thousandths of the dimensions found in the .284 Win. case.

The maximum overall length of a loaded round of .376 is 3.110" which just about takes up all the space there is in the ProHunter's detachable magazine. Given the availability of this new case, don't be surprised if you see it necked down to create a whole family of smaller caliber hot shots.

Hornady loads the .376 Steyr as a standard factory round with either a 225 or 270 gr. Hornady Spire Point Interlock bullet. Based on field experience with the .375 H&H, Hornady's .375 caliber bullets, including their excellent 300 gr. RN solid, are superb on game of all weights and persuasions.

Giving the .376 loading maximum utility, Hornady decided to load both bullet weights to the same 2,600 fps velocity. The result is that, for all practical purposes, both bullets have identical trajectories. Zeroed at 200 yards, the factory loads are approximately 2.5" high at 100 yds and 10" low at 300 yards. That's flat enough for the use to which a .376 will be put, and the 270 gr. bullet flies slightly flatter than the 225 gr.

From Theory To Practice

The velocity figure of 2,600 fps is based on a 24" barrel. From the handy, 20" hammer-forged barrel of the ProHunter, the 225 gr. load averaged 2,520 fps and the 270 gr., averaged 2,543 fps.

Out of curiosity, we checked our records to see what velocities we obtained with factory 270 gr. .375 H&H ammunition, normally rated at 2,670 to 2,690 fps, from a Model 70 with a 22" barrel. Interestingly, the .375 H&H was only 40 fps faster in a barrel 2" longer.

Average group sizes for three shots at 100 yards from the ProHunter with the Hornady factory .376 ammunition were 1.5" for the 225 gr. loading and 1.25" for the 270 gr. ammunition.

Having the same velocity, did both bullet weights shoot to the same point of impact? Vertically, yes, but horizontally, the groups formed by the two bullet weights were consistently 3.5" apart — which brings up that great myth of the .375 H&H's "inherent ability" to place 225, 270 and 300 gr. bullets into the same group. From experience with five different .375s — a Browning Mauser, an old Brno, two Model 70s and a Remington 700 — two would and the other three would not, so the results with the .376 and the ProHunter were not surprising.

The very manageable recoil of the .376 was quite surprising. To check this impression, the ProHunter was passed to several shooters — all of whom were asked to shoot it offhand. After shooting several rounds of 225 and 270 gr. loadings, one shooter remarked, "This recoils less than my .338." The general consensus was that the .376 Steyr is more manageable than the revered .375 H&H.

The Cartridge And The Gun

The 225 gr. Spire Point is a new Hornady bullet designed especially for light to medium game such as deer, black bear, sheep, caribou and equivalent-sized African game. The 270 gr. bullet is proven poison for the larger North American species such as elk, moose and grizzly, and for all of Africa's larger plains game, including buffalo.

If you're a handloader, Hornady's latest manual contains

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"The new Steyr cartridge comes within a hair's breadth of the .375 H&H's performance, and it uses less powder to get there. It generates less recoil and does not require a long magnum action."



Put the .356 Steyr cartridges, 270 gr. left and 225 gr. middle, beside the venerable old .375 H&H and you'll quickly see the advantage: nearly identical performance in a standard-length action.

While "Scandium" sounds like the villain in a James Bond story, in reality, it is simply a "rare earth" element which, when combined with aluminum, creates a metal that is lighter than titanium and nearly as strong as steel.



The J-Frame Goes *Scandium*

By Charles E. Petty

One of the rarest of elements lends its muscle to S&W's classic self-defense revolver.

Rare earth elements are found in a very exclusive portion of the Periodic Table of Elements. To put it simply, you don't find huge mines containing any of these four elements. Scandium (for Scandinavia) was discovered in 1879 as a tiny component of tin and tungsten ores. Rare it is. According to S&W's handgun product manager, Herb Belin, "A gram of scandium costs about 10 times more than a gram of gold. It takes tons and tons of ore to get just a little scandium."

But when it is alloyed with aluminum, the material is lighter than titanium and as much as three times stronger than the aluminum alloys used in firearms today. Not quite as strong as steel, but it is not far off. "The stuff is almost pixie dust," said Belin. "It melts right into the aluminum alloy and dramatically increases the tensile strength. It only takes a little to do it too."

Right: A 10.4 oz. .357 Magnum? If you want to simulate this experience, you can simply have your friend hit you in the wrist with a hammer — or you could just load the scandium revolver with milder .38 Specials. Bottom-left: Scandium is the latest element, if you'll pardon the pun, in the development of the snub-nose revolver at S&W.

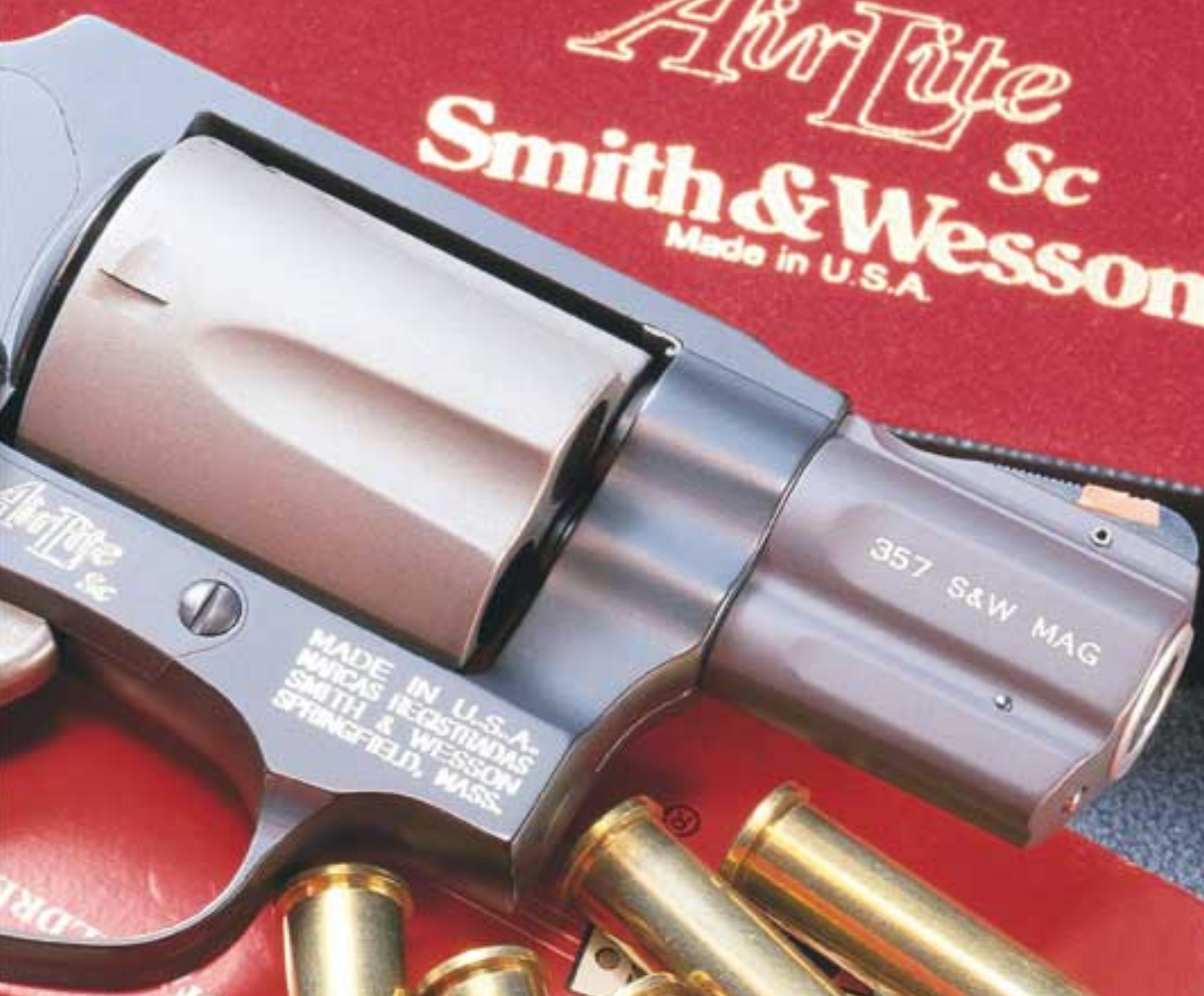


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GUNS

MAGAZINE

THE S&W AGREEMENT: LOVE THE SINNER, HATE THE SIN

Many gunowners are unhappy with Smith & Wesson management for their *agreement* with the Clinton administration. We don't like it either, but the S&W scandium revolvers are just the latest in an illustrious history of firearms design, innovation and technology that goes all the way back to 1852. It is news and we report it as such.

There is a bigger picture here that is missed by all the protesters and boycotters. Smith & Wesson is a national treasure that we can ill afford to lose. Those who proclaim, "Smith & Wesson must die" are playing into the hands of the government. Don't you think Clinton would positively rejoice if a major manufacturer of handguns went out of business?

The editorial policy of *GUNS Magazine* is to despise *the agreement* and strongly support the hundreds of dedicated people there who had nothing to do with, and no knowledge of, that situation. And who, by the way, continue to make good and innovative guns.

S&W's Proud Heritage

Smith & Wesson's history of innovation began in 1852. Today's shooter probably takes a lot of things for granted that might not even be here were it not for the innovative products that have always been S&W trademarks. A glance through an ammunition catalog will reveal many handgun cartridges with S&W in their name, but the two that are most famous are the .357 Magnum and the legendary .44 Magnum.

S&W brought the word *magnum* into the shooting lexicon in 1935 with the introduction of the original .357 Mag. revolver. Doubtless borrowed from the French who use it to describe those big bottles of wine, Smith & Wesson sought, and obtained, a trademark on the word in the new context.

J. Edgar Hoover got the first one. The new cartridge was .125" longer than the .38 Special, the outgrowth of hand-loading work done by gunwriter Phil Sharpe. Then in 1954, in response to hot .44 Special handloads from the legendary Elmer Keith, S&W and Remington teamed to make the .44 Mag. — which also just happened to be .125" longer than the .44 Special.

Clint Eastwood immortalized the .44 Mag. in *Dirty Harry*. Never before or since has a single event done so much to promote a gun. For years S&W simply could not make enough Model 29s to meet the demand, and these guns sold for premium prices far above retail.

But S&W had also been making little guns for years,



No, your eyes aren't playing tricks — that's a .32 H&R Mag. version of the scandium revolver, a design which was discontinued in the early stages of development. (And the prototype is already spoken for, so don't bother calling S&W and offering a bid.)



When S&W broke the 10 oz. barrier with its .22 Airlite Ti, the world took note. Now, the scandium revolver offers a .357 which weighs just a few tenths of an ounce more.



chambered for a variety of .22, .32 and .38 cartridges. On October 24, 1950 they introduced a small, five-shot .38 Special revolver that immediately was dubbed "Chiefs Special." It was the first use of S&W's J-frame design.

A Wonder Of Steel And Aluminum

Originally, the Chiefs Special was made with aluminum alloys in both the frame and cylinder. It was a featherweight 11.25 ozs. The alloy cylinder was short-lived and was replaced in 1954 with a steel cylinder that increased the weight to 13 ozs. People who sent their guns with alloy cylinders in for repair got them back with steel cylinders.

Over the years the J-frame continued — as it still does today — to be a big seller, and it evolved into a number of other models. Of special note is the hammerless Centennial J-frame introduced in 1952 to mark the company's first 100 years. Sales of the original Centennial dropped off, and it was discontinued in 1974. The J-frames —especially the Centennials — were always thought of as "pocket pistols"

and for those, lighter is better.

The age of stainless steel firearms began when S&W introduced their Model 60 J-frame .38 in 1965 and really revolutionized the pocket pistol category. Today, stainless is everywhere in handguns, rifles and shotguns. The Model 60 evolved to become the first .357 Mag. pocket pistol.

But the "compact" craze still sweeps the country. *Smaller* and *lighter* are buzzwords. The Centennial came back in 1993 in both the stainless steel, Model 642, and with an aluminum alloy frame known as the Model 442.

Then the J-frames went on a diet. Weight was shed everywhere. First was a small-frame .22 with an aluminum cylinder in 1997, and then in 1999 S&W launched the Airlite Ti series. A titanium cylinder, aluminum frame and shrouded barrel brought the weight down to where it started with the original alloy-cylindered Chiefs Special. The new guns could handle +P .38 Special ammunition. "Our design goals have been to safely achieve the maximum power-to-weight ratio," said Belin.

Elemental Logic

The power genie was out of the bottle with the magnumized Model 60. Aluminum frames simply couldn't handle the stress. Enter scandium and — *voilà!* — we have a .357 Mag. pocket pistol that weighs 10.4 ounces.

Research with scandium began almost as soon as the titanium guns reached the market. Scandium revolvers are undergoing severe tests with both proof loads and full-charge 158 gr. .357 Mag. ammunition. "Several of the test guns have fired over 2,500 rounds," said Belin. He went on to report that only normal wear has been seen on the guns.

To be valid, the tests can't be done from a mount, because the forces on the gun would be entirely different. Since there is a real limit on how many of these powerful rounds an individual can shoot in a day, testing takes a little longer.

The Same But Different

Even though we normally test only production guns, two things made us do this one differently. First, this is a noteworthy technical advance and, secondly, you cannot tell by looking that it's different. The only way is to count the number of electrons in the atom on the side plate — there are 21 instead of the 22 seen on the titanium pistols. They will be identified by the serial number, which will have the prefix of SCA.

Production guns will be available in the first weeks of 2001. There are two models: the 340SC, which is a Centennial design and the 360SC, with a conventional hammer. There are two choices of finish: clear anodized, which is what we're used to on alloy-frame revolvers, and a black anodized finish that we've seen on a few guns.

The black finish will have "PD" in the model designation. Although S&W originally planned to offer this gun in .32 H&R Mag., they have subsequently elected not to produce that chambering in the scandium line. The .32 Mag. will continue to be available in the Airlite Ti line, however.

It's A Handful

This is not your basic gun test report because, other than the material, the scandium revolver is just like other products that have already been tested to death. Instead, we'll focus on how the scandium pistols shoot.

We already know that it's going to kick like an ill-tempered mule that is having a *very* bad day — and so it does, but there was a lot to learn in the process. Obviously, recoil perception is an individual, subjective judgement.

We began with the lightest 110 gr. non +P .38 Special and worked up through 125, 148 and 158 gr. weights in that category. Next up were the +Ps in weights of 110, 125, 130 and 158 grs.

We're sure that some of the credit goes to the Hogue rubber grips but recoil wasn't bad at all. We could feel recoil increase from one load to the next but at no point was it painful. The biggest source of discomfort with the small frame revolvers is from the trigger finger bouncing off the trigger guard with a little dig thrown in by the tip of the trigger itself.

Then came the .357s. Once more we started at the lowest level, a 125 gr. JHP medium velocity load from Remington. The difference between the hottest +Ps was obvious. Recoil was heavy.

Next was the full-charge 110 gr. JHPs. This loading generated considerably more recoil, and for the first time we became acutely aware of a very sharp rap in the web of the hand. Of course the trigger finger was bouncing around too, but recoil wasn't brutal — yet.

That point came next with a full-charge 125 gr. JHP. Our bare hand stung smartly, and another round or two brought out the PAST glove which really didn't help all that much.

Next came a full charge 158 gr. lead hollowpoint. While it didn't seem quite as sharp as the 125 gr. load, it was still too much. The vaunted 125 gr. magnum load zipped out at 1,155 fps, but the "ouch" factor was high.

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The power genie was out of the bottle with the magnumized Model 60. Aluminum frames simply couldn't handle the stress. Enter scandium and suddenly we have a .357 Mag. pocket pistol that weighs 10.4 ozs.

BALLISTIC REALITIES:

BARREL LENGTH & BULLET PENETRATION



Gelatin doesn't lie. The shorter the barrel, the deeper the bullet penetrates as velocity decreases, causing a subsequent reduction in bullet deformation.

A short barrel equals low velocity and penetration, right? An empirical test of .223 carbines offers surprising evidence to the contrary.



Story By Barrett Tillman

Photos By Nyle Leatham

As Bob Dylan used to sing, “The times they are a-changing.” No doubt the folk rocker gave little thought to how that sentiment applied to tactical firearms employment, but it’s true. Not many years ago the conventional wisdom held that .223 caliber carbines were inappropriate for law enforcement, as the rounds were prone to excessive penetration, thereby endangering bystanders. Some pragmatists note that the overall police hit rate hovers around 15 to 25 percent, making misses a far greater concern than through-and-through wounds, but that’s a separate issue.

Recently, this conventional wisdom has been up-ended. In a variety of ballistic media, including common barricade materials, hollowpoint pistol rounds have demonstrated greater penetrative qualities than most .223 rifle bullets. The reason is partly due to the tendency of



HP pistol bullets to become clogged with barrier material, turning the hollowpoint into a solid.

Cutting-edge data also indicates that as .223 muzzle velocities decrease, the result is less expansion, and therefore greater penetration because bullets demonstrate less fragmentation, and therefore retain more weight.

The Jell-O Test

Thanks to the good folks at Federal Cartridge, we had a chance to evaluate a variety of .223 rounds in ballistic gelatin, measuring expansion and penetration. Kent Sakamoto, a West Coast Federal representative with J. Harding Associates, provided the opportunity at Scottsdale, Arizona's ultra-modern shooting range early this year.

Sakamoto explained the requirements for "cooking" adequate gelatin to meet the FBI ammunition testing protocol. No. 258 ordnance gel is kept at four degrees centigrade (39 degrees Fahrenheit) and tested by shooting a BB into the block at 590 fps, plus or minus

20 fps. If the BB penetrates to about 3½", the consistency is acceptable for test purposes.

The object of the test was to determine the penetrative effects of barrel length on a variety of law enforcement .223 ammunition. Consequently, several Colt AR-15 and M4 models and an HK Model 53 were made available by Scottsdale PD and Phoenix area Colt dealer Ken Elmore.

Barrel lengths varied from the HK's 8.3" to a standard-length 16" Colt Sporter. All shooting was done by Rangemaster Rick Furr, firing into 16" long gelatin blocks from a distance of about 25 feet.

A general consensus among the local and federal agencies present indicated that barrels shorter than 14.5" would yield less performance than longer tubes.

Myths And Realities

Of the seven types of ammunition fired in a total of four

If the gun barrel is shorter than your forefinger, isn't bullet performance affected? It sure is, but maybe not in the way you would expect.

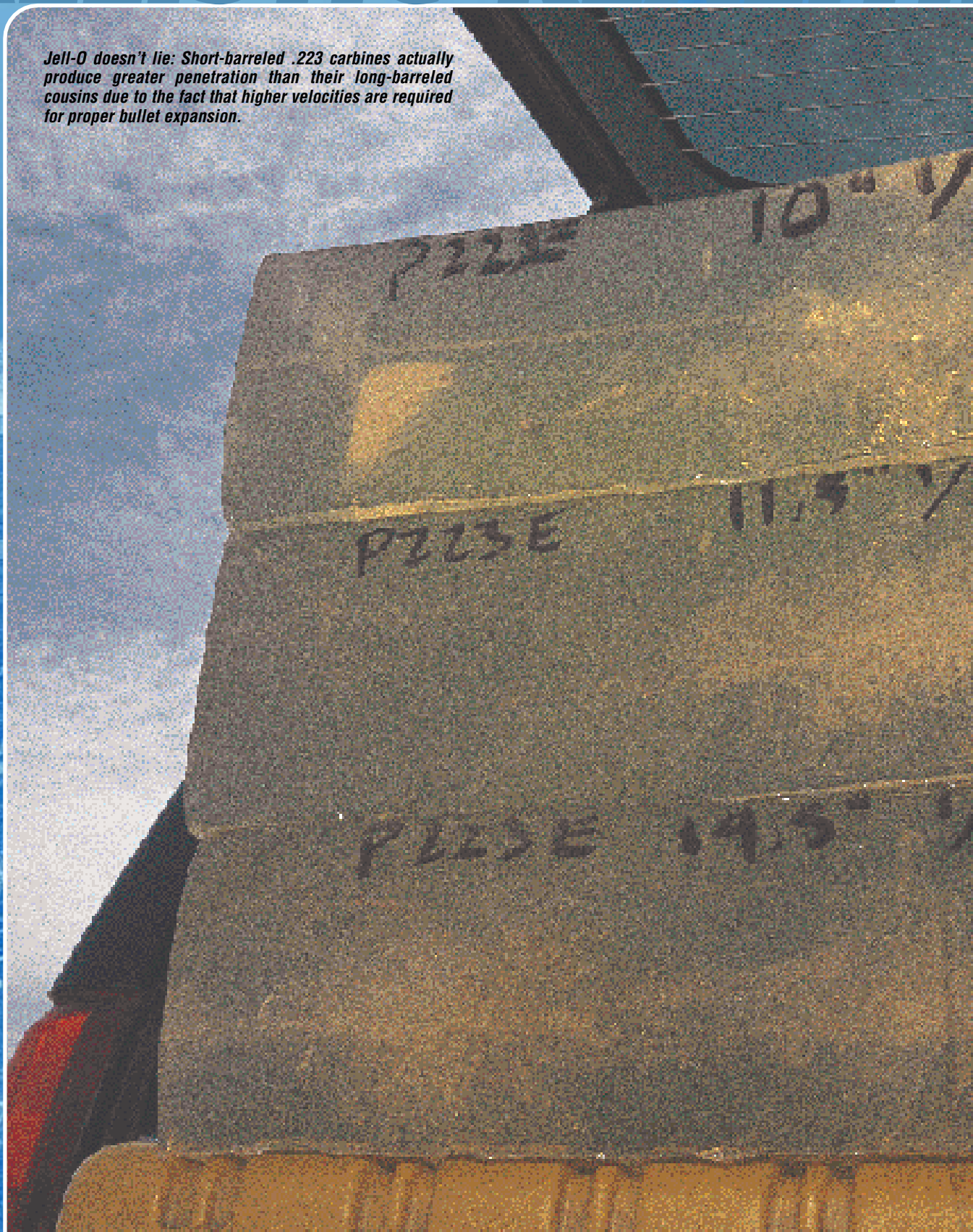


.223 BALLISTIC PERFORMANCE

Rifle	Velocity	Penetration
FEDERAL 50-GRAIN "TNT" HP		
AR-15 16" barrel	2,958 fps	7.5"
HK-53 8.3" barrel	2,363 fps	9.5"
WINCHESTER 50 GR. BALLISTIC TIPS		
AR-15 16" barrel	3,184 fps	12.25"
HK-53 8.3" barrel	2,603 fps	15"
FEDERAL 55 GR. HP		
AR-15 16" barrel	2,958 fps	11.5"
AR-15 14.5" barrel	2,972 fps	12.5"
M4 11.5" barrel	2,802 fps	11.5"
M4 10" barrel	2,599 fps	11"
HK-53 8.3" barrel	2,365 fps	13.5"
FEDERAL 55 GR. TACTICAL BONDED		
AR-15 16" barrel	2,793 fps	13.5"
HK-53 8.3" barrel	2,273 fps	16"
FEDERAL 55 GR. BLITZ KING		
AR-15 16" barrel	2,763 fps	9.75"
HORNADY 55 GR. TAP		
AR-15 16" barrel	2,916 fps	7.25"
SS-109 GREENTIP		
AR-15 10" barrel	2,552 fps	16"

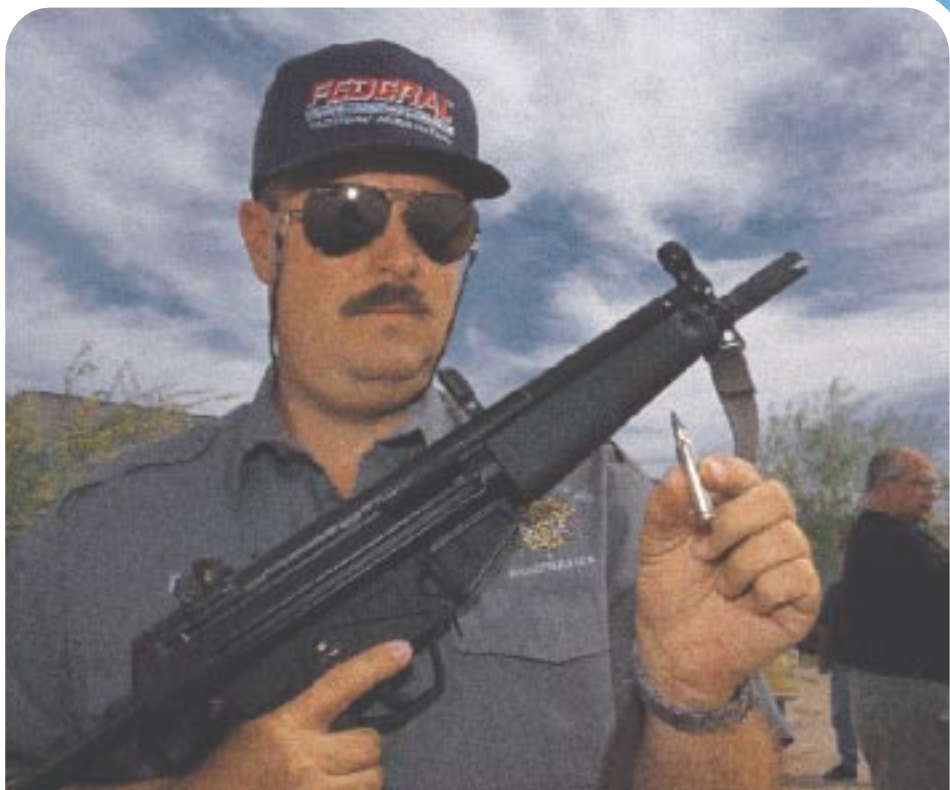
BALLISTIC REALITIES

Jell-O doesn't lie: Short-barreled .223 carbines actually produce greater penetration than their long-barreled cousins due to the fact that higher velocities are required for proper bullet expansion.





“Lower muzzle velocities resulted in less expansion, and therefore greater penetration because less fragmenting occurred and bullets retained more weight.”



Wipe that smile off your face! Ballistic testing is no laughing matter. Examining the terminal performance of the .223 is serious business.

barrel lengths between 8.3" and 16", muzzle velocities ranged from 2,273 fps to 3,184 fps. Penetration varied between 7.25" and 16", or the complete length of one gelatin block.

Nearly all the Colts had 1:7 twist barrels, which are optimized for the military SS-109 round, though subsequent military data showed that the somewhat slower 1:9 twist was adequate. Because only 50 and 55 gr. rounds were tested, no comparison could be made with the heavier commercial .223 bullets, but more penetration would be expected.

As a generality, lower muzzle velocities resulted in less expansion, and therefore greater penetration because less fragmenting occurred and bullets retained more weight. Frequently, however, greater tissue damage was indicated by temporary wound cavity sizes in these rounds, most notably the Federal 55 gr. Blitz King and

continued on page 63

Gun Locks & Security Devices

By Roy Huntington

When you look beyond the political rhetoric, there is more to using a gun lock than just turning a key.

Keeping the number of accidental gun deaths at a minimum is even more important than ever in today's hot political climate with its surrounding new gun laws. But if we can move beyond the political and emotional rhetoric, we should remember that any injury or death caused by accidental misuse of a firearm is a needless tragedy — there are just too many effective safety devices available to gun-owners today to let such accidents occur.

A cabinet full of firearms is no different from a garage full of dangerous, sharp power tools. Any one of them could quickly snuff the life out of anyone that misuses or abuses them, yet they exist safely in households all across the country. Most children are taught that tools can be dangerous if used incorrectly or haphazardly, and they learn not to touch them unless an adult is watching. Children can and should be taught to manage themselves around firearms the same way.

Yet, we can take another step with guns. Although it might not be a bad idea to lock power tools away when small children are around, there is not an industry built around "power-tool locks." However, we find ourselves surrounded by a myriad of available means to safely, quickly and often very inexpensively lock firearms sufficiently well enough to make accidents almost impossible. We should avail ourselves of those opportunities.

Large safes and locking gun cabinets are an ideal way to secure an entire gun collection.

Under Lock & Key

There are some important points to consider when purchasing a locking device. Few makers recommend their respective devices be placed on loaded guns. Indeed, many, if not most, of the devices will not work if the chamber is loaded, or if there is a magazine in the gun. This brings up one of the quandaries of the issue. You want to keep a gun loaded for home protection, yet you want to make it safe to keep accessible.

You need to do your homework on this one and decide for yourself which method might be best, depending on how quickly you might have to deploy a gun should the need arise. A simple padlock through the frame of a revolver will make it safe, but will

not prevent its theft or keep little prying fingers from fussing with it. A one-ton safe will surely keep a loaded gun safe but will also take some time to open should the need arise.

You must decide which is more appropriate for your situation — "out-of-sight" storage or "at-hand" accessibility. Either way, there is a wide range of solutions for the problems at hand. From large safes to small, single-handgun lock boxes to cable and trigger locks, the choices are almost endless. Let's talk about some of them.

Safes

Names like Browning, Granite Security, Liberty Safes, Fort Knox, Sun Welding and GunGuard are just a few of the big names in



safe construction. From simple four- or six-gun steel "boxes" to elaborate 50-gun, furniture-quality safes, these companies offer the ultimate protection for your valuables and for your family.

Many of the safes offer varying degrees of protection from fire, usually described as "30 minutes of exposure to 1,200 degrees," for instance. Valuable documents, jewelry, cameras and more can also be placed in these safes.

Most are very heavy, with weight being one of the factors that make them valuable protection from the "grab it and run" burglar crowd. You just can't pick up a 700 lb. safe and tote it away!

Of course, the downside is the arrangement for delivery and set-up, which can often take several men and special equipment. GunGuard has a simple solution to the problem. Their products come in sections that are assembled by the purchaser on-site in less than an hour. Suddenly a 500- or 600-lb. safe becomes manageable.

Lock Boxes

Many of the big safe makers also offer smaller units. Additionally, there are other makers who specialize in just the smaller sizes. Starlight Cases, QuickCase, V-Line, Pelican, Homak, Ziegel Engineering, Daskocil and most of the handgun manufacturers themselves offer small, one- to four-handgun sized "boxes" that lock in a wide variety of manners.

From simple key locks that mirror the performance of a desk lock to small padlocks, three-row combination locks and sophisticated electronic locks requiring push-button codes, you can choose the one you are most comfortable with.

Additionally, many of the "boxes" can be bolted to a nightstand or wall to become mini "safes" on their own. These work well

Does a gun lock need to be high-tech or specially designed? Heck no! A rusty old Master Lock through the frame or behind the trigger is one of the most effective methods to secure a gun, but it sure isn't going to win any beauty contests.



Choose your gun safety devices wisely. Innovative locks like the Life Jacket give gun owners a measure of security while still allowing fast — but not "instant" — access to the defensive firearm.

for people with smaller collections or for the person who wants to keep a loaded handgun "at hand" but safely stored.

Trigger And Other Locks

Many people feel comfortable with a simple lock on the trigger guard of their gun. Whether they can be applied to a loaded gun should be carefully considered before deciding on the manner the lock will be used. An unloaded firearm with a trigger lock installed is double safe; a loaded handgun with a trigger lock installed is one step away from being "live." Weigh the options carefully before making a decision.

Armadillo, CCL Security Products, Franzen Security, H&R 1871, Safeway Innovations, Saf-T-Lok and Saf-T-Hammer all offer their respective ideas when it comes to locking an individual firearm. There are "bore" locks that effectively block the bore of a handgun, usually in conjunction with locking the cylinder in place, too. There are cable locks that run through the barrel and out the action area, culminating in a keyed or combination lock of some kind. There are devices that attach to the "innards" of a gun, preventing the action of the

firearm from being manipulated until a three-digit code is entered on a small keypad.

Perhaps one of the most innovative to come along, and the one which is causing a real stir in the industry, is the Saf-T-

Hammer. It's simply a very small cylinder that a gunsmith installs through the bottom of virtually any trigger guard, just behind the trigger. By using a supplied "key," the user simply turns the lock until a pin protrudes into the trigger guard. This makes it "impossible" to pull the trigger, which makes firing the gun a rather difficult proposition.

The only pitfall with this system could occur if a hammer/sear relationship is compromised by breakage. This would allow the hammer to then be pulled back and released on its own, as on a single-action revolver. Still, the addition of a Saf-T-Hammer in combination with an unloaded firearm is a great idea.

Integral Gun Locks

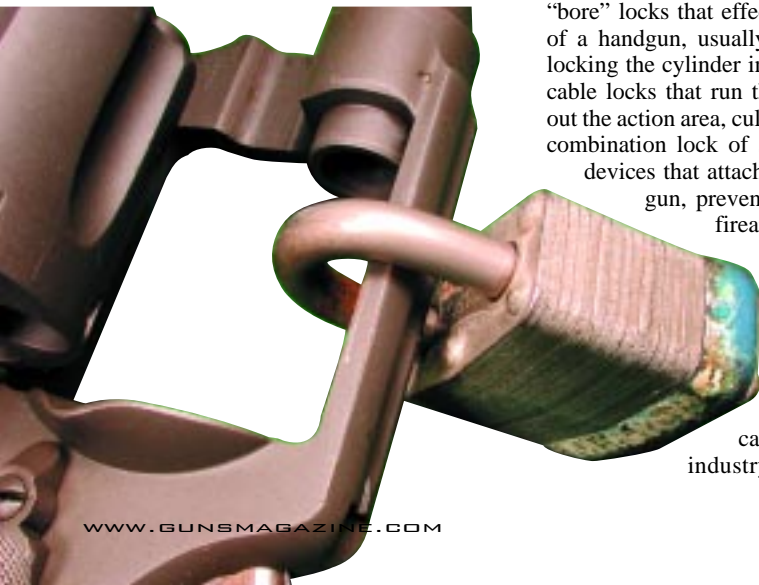
There has been a trend toward manufacturers actually building some type of locking device into the construction of their gun. In the '70s, there was a .45 ACP carbine called the "Commando" that had a three-digit combination lock on the port side behind the trigger. This device locked the trigger and, at the time, was so new that buyers shunned the idea, thinking it would "malfunction." Now we realize it was perhaps simply too advanced for the time.

Today, Taurus, Sako, Steyr and others are designing locking devices into their guns right on the drawing board. Taurus' simple key lock to the back of the hammer and Sako's keyed rifle action are two very elegant solutions to this problem. A locked action combined with another locking device or safe makes it virtually impossible for an accident to occur. It's safe to say this trend will continue.

Action Covers

Somewhere between a trigger lock, bore lock or padlock and a lock box or safe, there lies a gray area that has been filled nicely by one or two companies. Specifically, Firearmour and the Life Jacket by Mogul are two designs that bear looking into.

continued on page 64



THE WILDCAT .41 SPECIAL

Created to BY JOHN TAFFIN

surpass the
ballistics of the
.44, this versatile
cartridge is still
a favorite among
knowledgeable
handloaders.

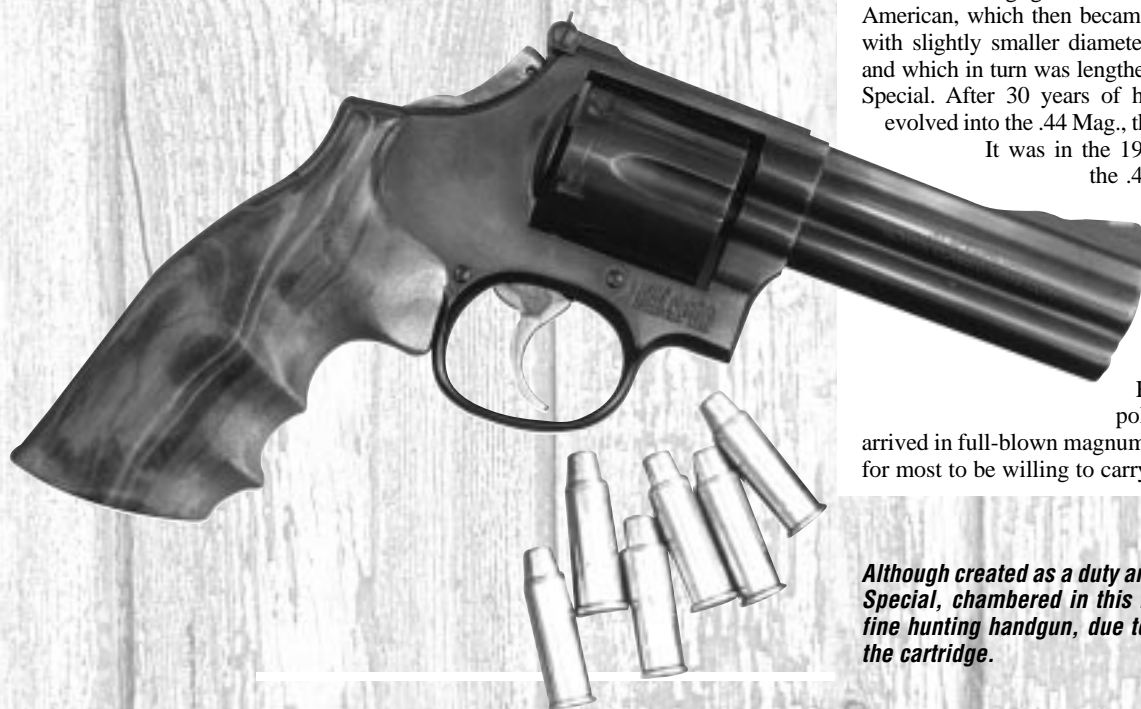
Many shooters are familiar with the histories of the .357 Mag. and the .44 Mag., but not many are familiar with the .41 Mag., also known as the .41 Special.

When the .38 Special was chambered in Smith & Wesson's large-framed sixgun, the Hand Ejector series, the sixgun was the .38/44 Heavy Duty. Experiments soon led the way to the first magnum sixgun cartridge, the .357 Mag. in the specially crafted, finished and fitted Heavy Duty that was simply known as the .357 Mag. in those pre-model-number days.

The .44 Mag. goes back to the 1870s with the .44 S&W American, which then became the .44 Russian when loaded with slightly smaller diameter and inside-lubricated bullets, and which in turn was lengthened to 1.16" to become the .44 Special. After 30 years of heavy loading, the .44 Special evolved into the .44 Mag., the King of Handgun Cartridges.

It was in the 1940s that the newest Magnum, the .41, arrived on the scene. While the other two loadings could trace their ancestry way back, the .41 Mag. came about mainly through the efforts of Bill Jordan, formerly of the Border Patrol, and Elmer Keith. It was designed to be a police and defensive cartridge but arrived in full-blown magnum form and in a sixgun too large for most to be willing to carry for all-day duty.

Although created as a duty and defensive cartridge, the .41 Special, chambered in this Model 586 revolver, is also a fine hunting handgun, due to the outstanding ballistics of the cartridge.



Using a .44 Special case as a guide, .41 Mag. brass is trimmed for use in the .41 Special in this RCBS Trim Pro.



Black Sheep of the Magnums

The .41 Mag. does have a history, but it is not as easily traced as that of the .357 or .44 Mag. The gunwriter, Gordon Boser, like Keith and several others, was a real fan of the .44 Special, but he dreamed of a flatter-shooting sixgun cartridge.

Boser started with a pre-war Colt Single Action Army, re-chambered the cylinder, fitted it with a .404" barrel, and the .401 Special was born. For brass, Boser used .401 Winchester cases cut to 1.2".

Boser, who also later designed the Lyman #401452 for his .401 Special and the .38-40, and #429360 for the .44 Special, used a very hot load in his .401, consisting of 17.5 grs. of #2400 with a 192 gr. bullet. He reported outstanding accuracy up to 150 yards in a fixed-sighted Colt Single Action. That load had to produce well over 1,400 fps in muzzle velocity.

The .41 Mag. arrived as a .41 instead of a .40, probably to prevent anyone from converting old Colt Single Action .38-40s and .41 Long Colts to the new cartridge by simply fitting a new cylinder, or in the case of the .41 Long Colt, courting disaster by simply re-chambering the cylinder. Not only had the .40 become a .41, it was found only in large-frame, heavy sixguns, the Ruger Blackhawk and Smith & Wesson N-frame, nothing like the sleek Colt Single Action Army that housed Boser's pet wildcat.

Handloading The .41

The best wildcats, at least the most enjoyable, are those that are easy to load. For the .41 Special, we simply set the RCBS Trim Pro with a .44 Special case, chuck up a .41 Mag. brass and trim to that length, and then use the Trim Mate Case Prep Center to electronically chamfer the inside of the case mouth and deburr the outside. Both of these machines work quickly and easily. The Trim Mate also contains a primer pocket brush that makes cleaning primer pockets a simple matter.

We have the brass, now we need dies — which turns out to be quite simple. The newer .41 Mag. three-die sets size and de-prime with the first die and then expand on the second.

A side-by-side comparison, from left, of the .38 Special, .357 Mag., .44 Special, .44 Mag., .41 Special and its predecessor, the .41 Magnum.



.41 SPECIAL LOADING DATA

CAST BULLET LOADS

	Bull-X 215 gr. SWC	Lyman 220 gr. Keith
Powder Charge	Velocity	Velocity
5.0 grs. Unique	798 fps	791 fps
6.0 grs. Unique	900 fps	922 fps
7.0 grs. Unique	1,027 fps	1,013 fps
7.0 grs. Universal	994 fps	990 fps
7.0 grs. Action Pistol	845 fps	836 fps
5.5 grs. Red Dot	1,001 fps	987 fps
5.0 grs. TiteGroup	904 fps	897 fps
5.5 grs. N100	942 fps	932 fps
13.5 grs. H4227	1,010 fps	982 fps
14.5 grs. H4227	1,037 fps	1,065 fps
15.5 grs. H4227	1,120 fps	1,100 fps
12.5 grs. #2400	1,063 fps	1,088 fps
13.5 grs. #2400	1,167 fps	1,173 fps
14.5 grs. #2400	1,227 fps	1,226 fps
9.0 grs. Blue Dot	1,008 fps	984 fps
10.0 grs. Blue Dot	1,122 fps	1,060 fps
11.0 grs. Blue Dot	1,211 fps	1,156 fps
12.5 grs. AA#9	1,018 fps	987 fps
13.5 grs. AA#9	1,184 fps	1,173 fps
14.5 grs. AA#9	1,242 fps	1,225 fps

JACKETED BULLET LOADS

	Speer 200 gr. JHP	Speer 220 gr. JFP
14.5 grs. H4227	1,035 fps	1,037 fps
15.5 grs. H4227	1,080 fps	1,102 fps
16.5 grs. H4227	1,155 fps	—
12.5 grs. #2400	1,082 fps	1,063 fps
13.5 grs. #2400	1,157 fps	1,108 fps
14.5 grs. #2400	1,222 fps	—
12.5 grs. AA#9	1,042 fps	1,034 fps
13.5 grs. AA#9	1,142 fps	1,130 fps
14.5 grs. AA#9	1,207 fps	—
7.0 grs. Unique	1,043 fps	1,021 fps
7.5 grs. Unique	1,113 fps	1,079 fps
8.0 grs. Unique	1,175 fps	—
9.0 grs. Blue Dot	—	980 fps
9.5 grs. Blue Dot	—	1,008 fps
10.0 grs. Blue Dot	—	1,049 fps
10.5 grs. Blue Dot	—	1,085 fps

Firearm: Colt Single Action Army, Barrel Length: 5½"

Brass: Midway .41 Mag. Trimmed To 1.160", Primer: CCI #350

Chronograph: Oehler Model 35p

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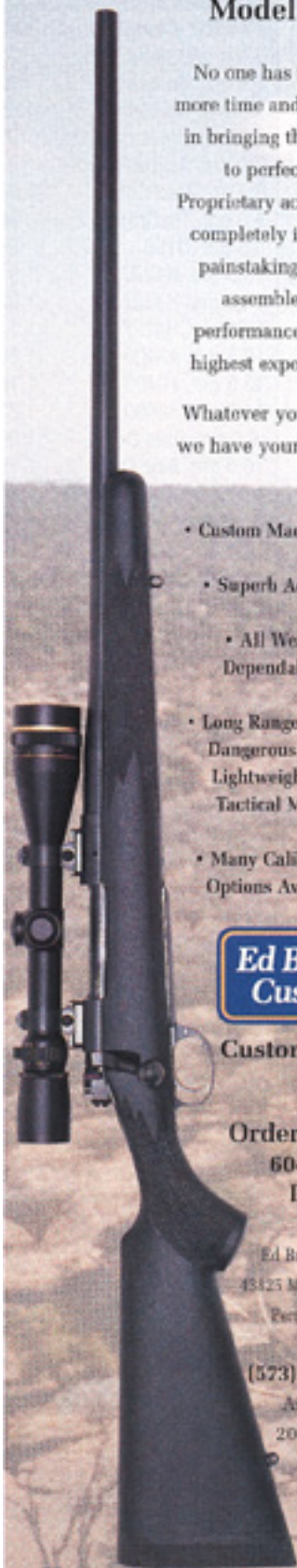
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.41 SPECIAL continued from page 61

These work perfectly for both .41 Mag. and .41 Special brass.

The third die, for seating and crimping the .41 Mag., will probably not be able to be turned down far enough to crimp .41 Special brass. We simply found a used .41 Mag. seating die and had a gunsmith trim enough off the bottom of the die to allow proper crimping with the shorter .41 Special brass.

Our favorite bullet for either the .41 Mag. or the .41 Special is Lyman's Keith design, the #410459. This casts out hard at about 220 grs., and is sized to .410" and lubricated for use in either case. For the .41 Mag., we use a full house dose of #2400 for around 1,450 fps. Chambered in these sixguns, the .41 Special is a cartridge for use mainly in the 950 to 1,050 fps range, with 1,200 fps as a possibility that is rarely used.

Seven grains of either Alliant's Unique or Hodgdon's Universal is right at 1,000 fps with the Lyman bullet, and both loads shoot incredibly accurately in the two single-action sixguns. For a little lighter home-cast .41 bullet, we go with RCBS's #41-200 that drops out right at 200 grs.

Cast Lead Jackets

We don't always feel like casting, so our most-used bullets in the .41 Special come from Bull-X and Oregon Trail. Both offer a 215 gr. SWC bullet. For a jacketed bullet we do not go with the conventional jacketed bullets offered by so many companies, but rather the older style three-quarter jacketed bullets from Speer. Copper-cupped so that no lead touches the bore, these soft lead core designs come in both a 200 gr. HP and a 220 gr. FP.

At .41 Special muzzle velocities, conventional jacketed bullets probably won't expand out, but these will. They are the choice for lung shots on smaller, deer-sized critters with the .41 Special. We especially prefer the 200 gr. HP version at 1,050 to 1,100 fps with either 7.0 grs. of Unique or 12.5 grs. of #2400.

The .41 Special works just fine with many common pistol powders. Standard loads use either Unique or Universal, while heavier chores fall to either #2400 or H4227, which is pretty much the norm for most sixgun shooters for all calibers from .357 Mag. through .45 Colt.

Even today, interest in this worthy wildcat continues to grow. In fact, many sixgunners who have gone the route of having a Flat-Top or Three Screw Ruger .357 converted to .44 Special are now working on a similar sixgun in .41 Special. The .41 Special has nearly all the attributes dear to a sixgunner's heart: Brass is very easy to make, loading is simple with a minimum of effort and money necessary to accumulate dies, accurate loads are commonplace, and in the sixgun mentioned, it makes a very pleasant shooting rig. Could we ask for anything more?



BALLISTIC REALITIES

continued from page 57

Hornady 55 gr. Tactical Application for Police. The best weight retention was the military-issue SS-109 at 2,550 fps, which bent but remained intact.

The greatest anomaly was Federal's 50 gr. TNT hollowpoint, which chronographed 2,958 fps in the 16" Colt (7.5" penetration) and only 2,363 in the HK-53 (9.5"). In other words, at nearly 600 fps less velocity, the same TNT ammo from the HK yielded 2" more penetration.

Overall, the HK produced greater penetration than identical rounds fired from the Colt rifles because, as noted previously, its lower impact velocities diminished fragmentation, and those bullets retained greater mass which increased penetration.

Less Is More

If less is better, Federal and Hornady 50 and 55 gr. rounds from 16" Colts yielded the most promising results. The rounds with the least penetration were the Hornady .55 gr. Tactical, which went to a measured depth of 7.25", Federal's 50 gr. TNT HP, which penetrated 7.50" when fired out of the 9.5" barreled HK-53, and the Federal 55 gr. Blitz King, which penetrated 9.75". All other rounds penetrated at least 11".

Even with extreme penetration of 16", Kent Sakamoto noted that the .223 rounds all were comparable to a 185 gr. .40 caliber pistol bullet, which, if plugged with barricade material, can reach nearly twice that distance.

Despite these results, there will be occasions when tactical teams want more penetration rather than less. Federal 55 gr. Tactical Bonded and Winchester 50 gr. Ballistic Tip ranked close to SS-109, all falling in the 13" to 16" range of ballistic gelatin penetration. Whether those figures translate to similar performance in barricade material can only be determined by empirical tests for that specific purpose.

Some real-world data emerged from the 1993 military action in Somalia in which 18 American soldiers were killed on a "peace-keeping" mission. Using SS-109 and M-855 5.56mm ammo, GIs reported multiple hits on Somali insurgents with little or no effect.

However, in fairness it should be noted that multiple 7.62 hits from M60 machine guns did not always anchor the target; some gunmen were knocked off their feet and bounced back up to return fire. Based on what we observed in Scottsdale, SS-109 seems a reasonable compromise between penetration and wound cavity — just remember that no hand-held firearm, up to and including a .50 caliber, can guarantee an immediate stop.

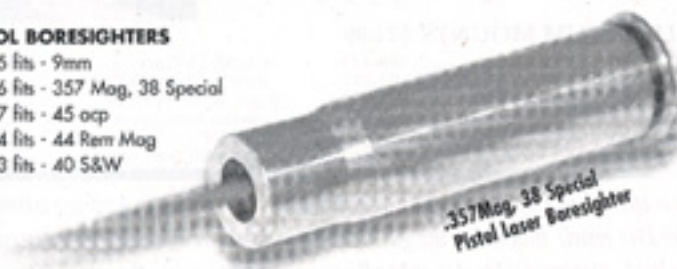
However, .223 rifles and carbines have become widely accepted in law enforcement circles because they afford greater fight-stopping ability than pistol cartridges, either in handguns or submachine guns. Whether Dylan would take note or not, the times have already changed.



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Rather than locking just the bore or the trigger, these devices lock the entire gun and keep prying fingers away from the levers, buttons and action parts. These "sheaths," if you will, cover the majority of the gun body and are usually key-locked. I have personal experience with the Life Jacket and, for the price (around \$20), it offers a great deal of value and peace of mind. One size can handle almost any handgun, except for certain large-frame revolvers and autos.

My Life Jacket safely held a Seecamp .32 or a full-sized Colt 1911 or Smith and Wesson Model 66 safely and securely. The device can be screwed onto a stud in the house to keep a handgun easily at hand. If you're going to keep a loaded handgun readily accessible, this type of device might just be the best idea. You could even use it in combination with a built-in lock (like a Taurus revolver, for instance) and be doubly safe.

Hidden In Plain Sight

If you grew up in a "gun" household, chances are pretty good you got up on a chair to find your Dad's .38 on the top shelf of the closet. For that very reason, the top shelf, under the socks or under the mattress are all simply not options when it comes to keeping your guns safe from kids. They *will* find it eventually, so don't even go there.

There are some manufacturers who offer phony "picture frames" that open to hide a handgun, or some other common household object that in reality holds a handgun. This "hidden-in-plain-sight" approach is a good idea, but you're playing the odds if it also doesn't offer some kind of locking protection. Don't go halfway!

Soft Cases

Many manufacturers offer the ability to snap a small padlock onto their soft gun cases, locking the zipper closed. This might be okay for transporting your guns to the

range to meet state transportation laws, but put it out of your mind if you think it offers security at home. Either the cheap padlock will fail (I've had them fall apart in my hand) or simply a determined 9-year-old will figure out a way to get that zipper open. They are a great way to store your guns, but don't be lulled into thinking a soft case is "secure."

We've only touched upon some of the designs available on today's market. Like most things in life, though, it's not always the equipment that makes the difference, but the mind behind it. A decent security device, coupled with some intensive parent/child interaction, can keep your home safe from firearm accidents and help to keep shooting the safe, exciting sport it is.

As gun owners, it is incumbent upon us to do what we can to keep our kids safe and to prevent accidents. Simply spending as little as five or six dollars can often make the difference.



FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:

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THE J-FRAME

continued from page 51

The point here is that ammunition selection is critical. Accuracy beats power every time. The optimum choice would be the medium velocity loads, but tolerance levels vary, and each shooter must find the hottest load with which you can still maintain comfort and reasonable combat accuracy. With the hottest stuff, only the best trained can manage more than a few shots before they begin to flinch. That's the real breaking point.

The S&W Airlite Ti revolvers carry a warning that advises against the use of lead bullets or — in the case of the .44 Specials — bullets weighing more than 200 grs. The scandium revolvers may carry a similar warning. But the warnings are sometimes misunderstood.

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Using lead bullets poses absolutely no risk of damage to the gun. Instead, it is a matter of recoil. Sometimes the light guns will act just like an inertia bullet puller and the bullets in an unfired round *can* move forward in the cylinder to the point where they interfere with cylinder rotation. It doesn't happen all the time, and the amount and type of crimp in the ammo is critical, but S&W felt that it was best to include the warning. If you want to shoot some lead just check to be sure the bullets aren't pulling in the process.

The S&W scandium revolvers aren't guns you will want to take with you for a pleasant day on the range. They are, however, well-designed pocket revolvers for those who can and must carry a gun for personal protection. Drawing on the best firearms technology from yesterday, today and tomorrow, the scandium revolvers set a new standard in defensive firearms.



FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:
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Author's note: Much of the historical information comes from Roy Jinks' definitive History of Smith & Wesson. It is available from S&W.

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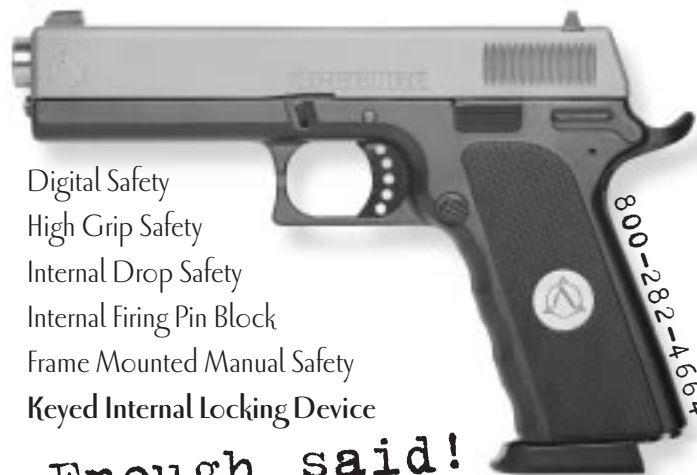
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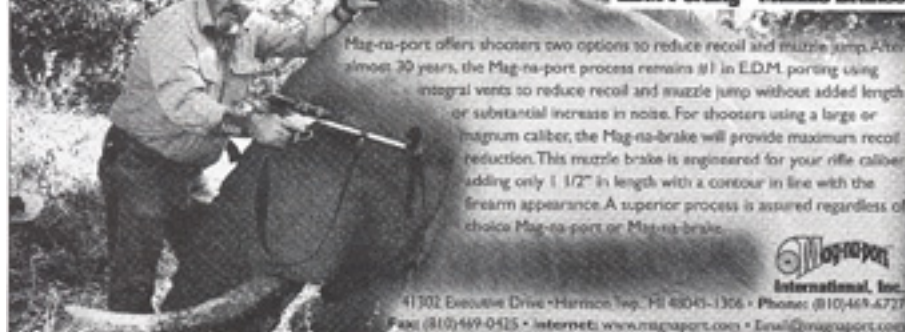
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Defensive Revolvers

By Clint Smith

In an age of high-tech semi-auto pistols, the sixgun still holds its own as a weapon for personal protection and home defense.



Offering a wide array of features and options, the S&W J-frame series is as concealable as any pocket auto, and more powerful than most.

Today's world of defensive handguns, with its focus on high-tech hardware and cutting-edge design, seems to include no place for the revolver, which some younger shooters regard almost as an antique. Since the 1980s, the inroads made by semi-automatic pistols into the world of handguns have overshadowed a domain that not long ago was exclusive to revolvers. How quickly expectations change.

Although it's now the exception rather than the rule to see a law enforcement officer carrying a revolver, there was once a time when semi-autos were scoffed at for duty use. The old hands in the department would dismiss semi-autos with a warning like, "Those things don't work," "They always jam," or "They're not accurate."

In the defensive handgun courses at Thunder Ranch, it's unusual to see a revolver among the 20 students on the firing line. When one of the students is training with a revolver, it is often the wrong revolver carried for the wrong reason.

A typical example is this: A student approaches the shooting line at the beginning of the course with a 2" revolver. Typically, this gun is carried by a student hardly more than five feet tall who may not have put more than 50 rounds through their gun before signing up for the class. This, of course, is not an issue of the size or experience level of the shooter, but of what course of decision caused them to choose a handgun that is notoriously difficult to control as their primary defensive weapon.

As the training course proceeds, the shooter's hand strength won't allow them to make it to the first training evolution before they begin to have difficulties. "I have a blister on my palm, my hand aches and I can't squeeze the trigger one more time," they complain.

To which the instructor asks, "Why did you choose this particular handgun?"

This is where the unfortunate truth comes out. "I like it because it's small and comfortable to carry."

Clearly, someone has sold this person the wrong gun for the wrong reasons. A gun should be carried because it is



These two beefy .45 Colt custom S&W sixguns by Hamilton Bowen, left, and Ron Power are adequate — and even downright respectable — self-defense guns in an age of autoloaders.

comforting, not because it's comfortable, and buying the smallest possible gun as a primary self-defense tool is not always a wise choice. Moreover, the long, heavy double-action trigger of a short-barreled revolver that makes the gun "safe" by making it more difficult to fire, also serves to make this gun very awkward for novice shooters who have not even had the chance to master a standard trigger, much less an excessively heavy one.

Sixgun vs. Semi-Auto

The real issue is not whether or not revolvers are effective self-defense weapons. A quality sixgun in the hands of an experienced shooter is an undoubted lifesaving tool. Historically, revolvers have served their operators as well as can be expected from a hand-held weapon system. (Which is simply an acknowledgement of the fact that no knowledgeable combatant would select a handgun as a first choice if they knew that a fight was about to ensue.)

Autoloading pistols have, for the most part, an advantage over revolvers in the realm of ammunition capacity, even with today's 10-round limit. Similarly, revolvers are slower to reload for the average shooter.

Countering this is the revolver's advantage in operational simplicity. While both weapon systems are reliable, a semi-automatic that suffers a stoppage due to a misfiring load requires a fairly detailed operation to clear; a revolver simply requires a second stroke of the trigger.

For the most part, however, comparing semi-autos and revolvers is much like comparing apples and oranges. Weighing a full-sized Government Model 1911 against a S&W Chief's Special is hardly a fair contest. They are both handguns, but that is about the extent of the comparison.

Put in general terms, the true extent of a revolver's capability becomes apparent. Can a revolver serve you just as well as a semi-auto for plinking, hunting and personal protection? Of course it can.

Would your life be in jeopardy if you carried a handgun designed around this "archaic" revolving mechanism? Certainly not.

All The Bells & Whistles

The revolver's mode of operation is an issue for some people — the gun's exposed hammer gives the shooter the ability to cock the gun and use it in single-action mode. Our philosophy tends toward simplicity: Use the revolver in double-action mode and be done with it.

Cocking the hammer and firing a double-action revolver in single-action mode simply wastes time in a defensive situation. If the lighter single-action trigger pull is necessary for

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DEFENSE REVOLVERS

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making a shot at long range, you're probably outside practical handgun range in any case. Double-action firing can be very accurate at long range; it is simply an acquired skill.

Reloading the double-action revolver can be accomplished via the use of speed loaders, speed strips or by individual rounds. Throughout the history of handguns, one of the driving factors in design evolution has been expediting the reloading process. From single-shot pistols, handgun design progressed through cap-and-ball revolvers and on to cartridge-firing revolvers, which required either a loading gate or a break-top cylinder. Current technology employs a cylinder that swings out of the frame to unload spent cartridges.

Techniques for reloading modern revolvers include both the retention of the gun in the strong hand or the optional method of transferring the revolver to the opposite hand. Both techniques are viable; they simply require adequate practice in whichever technique you prefer.

Carrying options for the revolver are the same as for a semi-auto. There are many good holster designs currently available. Most of these trace their roots deep into the past, when the era of fighting with handguns was truly in full swing.

Strong-side carry of a revolver, whether inside or outside the waistband of the pants, is always a wise choice, as it is for any defensive handgun. A cross-draw holster can add an element of cover, concealment and even comfort in situations where you may be seated or inside a vehicle for extended periods.

Ankle holsters for back-up or "hideout" guns work just as well for revolvers as for small semi-autos. For some shooters, when carrying a revolver there may be an issue of "thickness" compared to a similarly sized semi-auto, but this generally doesn't become an issue except with some of the new breed of revolvers with a capacity of seven or eight or more.

Carrying any handgun for personal protection means modifying both behavior and wardrobe to accommodate the weapon, so any minor differences between semi-autos and revolvers in this area are academic arguments at best.

Trust Your Life To The Best

Many factors have to be considered when preparing to select a revolver for self-defense. How large is your body frame? How much experience do you have with handguns? What is the intended application of this handgun?

To illustrate the possible answers to these questions, we've selected two modern double-action revolvers to address the various options available to revolver users — one small-frame, 2" version and one large-frame model.

The choice of a small revolver is easy. The Smith & Wesson J-frame series is an

industry standard and comes in many configurations and calibers. Options include exposed hammer and hammerless models, all steel, alloy frames and even the new AirLite configurations. Regardless of your preferences, these guns are all simple five-shot revolvers, but the best of the bunch is the new titanium Model 342 in .38 Special, a pocket-sized, medium-powered concealed-carry handgun.

Of course, the only thing better than a 342 AirLite Ti is *two* 342s, one carried on the strong hip and one on the opposite side. With this type of gun, reaching for a second gun is a faster "reload" than trying to empty and replenish the first gun under fire.

At the other end of the scale is the S&W N-frame in the form of a pair of Model 25s chambered in .45 Colt. Big-bore purists may be shocked by this choice, but not everyone wants to be "Dirty Harry" and carry a Model 29 .44 Magnum. For a shooter who is recoil sensitive, or who is familiar with the performance of the .45 cartridge, the Model 25 is a much better choice.

Our guns are custom jobs built by Ron Power and Hamilton Bowen, the latter of whom installed handmade lanyard rings on both of the revolvers by request. While not much of a benefit on a defensive gun, these rings are a very helpful addition in field and hunting environments.

While ivory stocks are somewhat of a luxury, even these made by Roy Fishpaw and Dan Pursley are designed with an eye toward tactical use, with nearly identical cut-outs for speed-loader use and an open, flush fit against the backstrap. For best control, the stocks cover the front straps of both guns, making them both remarkably accurate and functional revolvers.

Carrying any handgun, including a revolver, means you'll have to address four issues: speed of access, weapon security, comfort of carry and concealability. How you balance these factors is a personal choice, but be assured that selecting a revolver does not automatically put you at a disadvantage in any of these categories. As with any handgun, you must consider your needs and choices wisely — only your life depends on it.



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STEYR PROHUNTER

continued from page 43

extensive loading data for their 225, 270 and 300 gr. bullets in the .376 Steyr. Two of the outstanding powders for the .376 turn out to be BL-C2 and AA2230.

Steyr's ProHunter rifle proved to be a good match for the .376 chambering. With a short, free-floated, 20" barrel, it's a handy gun, and quick to get into action. Because of the expansion ratio of the .375 bore, the short barrel really doesn't give up much in terms of practical velocity, and it balances well offhand. The ProHunter .376 is fitted with a stout set of adjustable open sights and takes Browning A-Bolt size bases for scope mounting.


The dark gray, synthetic stock is nicely proportioned, comfortable to shoot, and the length-of-pull can be adjusted between 13.5" and 12.75" by the removal of two spacers that fit between the recoil pad and the end of the butt. The butt is hollow and could be used to store survival or other gear if need be.

The chrome-plated, four-lug bolt carries machining cuts that reduce its weight and provide clearance recesses for dirt. It's easily disassembled but follow the directions exactly when reassembling.

The bolt features a very short lock time that necessitates the use of a heavy main-spring. From the offhand position, it is not the easiest bolt to cock rapidly, and you can crank it when loading a new round quickly, so a degree of practice is called for before you head for the bush. As set by the factory, the adjustable trigger had a crisp, double stage 3.5 lb. let-off — refreshing in these litigious times.

The flush, detachable magazine holds three rounds of .376, which makes the rifle a four-shooter. An extended magazine holding eight rounds is available from Steyr. The synthetic magazine features a partial release that permits you to drop the magazine slightly to unload the round in the chamber or to chamber a single round.

The tang-mounted, three-position safety is a color-coded rotating wheel that proved both handy and quick. In the safe position, an additional safety measure may be achieved by pressing the bolt handle down until it locks against the stock — a procedure that locks the firing pin. When the safety is returned to the "load" or "fire" positions, the bolt handle automatically returns to its normal operating position.

All in all, the Steyr ProHunter teamed with the new .376 Steyr/Hornady cartridge is a great hunting combination right out of the box and a modest and practical 21st century alternative to the venerable .375 H&H. 

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METHODS OF CARRY

continued from page 41

We've used the analogy before but it's exactly like the \$5 socket sets that are virtually irresistible to buy. You know they are no good, you know they will break when you use them, but you buy them anyway and they break when you use them.

Features to look for? If it's a leather rig, get full-grain, vegetable-tanned leather. Full-grain means it's honest-to-goodness real leather and not suede, pressed and rubbed until it looks like leather on the outside. The inside of a suede holster is mealy and "punk" and falls apart almost instantly — thumb snaps pull out, belt loops come apart, stitching pulls through and bits and pieces of your new holster rub off on your blue jeans. Plus, people who know better will stare and point. Some might even laugh. Out loud.

You want vegetable-tanned because chrome- or metal-tanned means the tanning process breaks down the fibers in the leather and makes it softer (like a leather coat). It feels dandy and looks even better, but it won't hold a molded fit.

The Proof Is In The Performance

Where do we start on holster design, anyway? Use your gut here. If it looks "clunky" and doesn't seem to "feel" right in your hand, there is probably a reason. If the holster seems "light" in weight for its size, the color seems "off," the stitching looks "just a little crooked," the inside of the holster is shedding "genuine full-grain leather" like an old shaggy dog in August and you think, "Gee, there is something about this holster that I don't like," listen to yourself. You're being smart. If the design seems elegantly simple, not "too much" and not "too little," look closer.

It only takes three points to hold a gun. Pick up an auto-pistol in your left hand and with the butt to right, point the muzzle down (making sure the damn thing is unloaded first, please). Using your right hand, put your pointer finger on the bottom of the trigger guard, flush against the grip where it meets the trigger guard. Then rest the front of the trigger guard on the side of your middle finger. Now take your thumb and reach around and bring it to bear on the top of the slide at the ejection port. Now let go with your left hand. Presto, you've just made a holster. See how simple? When there are 2 lbs. of leather involved just to hold a 1 lb. gun (the same gun you just held with three fingers) then something is amiss.

As Good As Your Gun

Anyone who has carried a gun around for any length of time has migrated to a lightweight handgun of some kind. Smith & Wesson's new titanium J-frames, Taurus' line of titanium pistols and other polymer-framed wonder guns are being sold by the boxcar load for a reason. They are just plain nifty to carry, which means they're there

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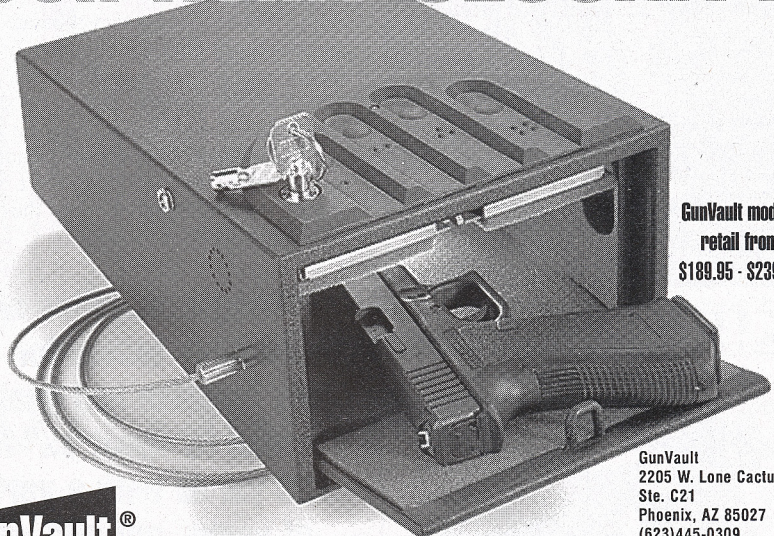
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Find a factory or maker who does what you need done in the way of solutions and then offers them in a quality final product. Before you plunk down your hard-earned dollars, however, see if the store will let you try it on and put a gun into it. You test-drive a car before you buy it, don't you?

Put the thing on and see if it pokes, prods or pulls your Wranglers down. Often a holster looks very pretty in its clear plastic bag, but on your hip it sticks out, bites and otherwise makes itself known as an ill-conceived product of a demented, uninformed mind. Just because it says it's a "holster" doesn't mean it really is one!

Look for a design that puts the butt where you want and need it to be. This is especially important for women, who often don't have the torso length for a high-riding belt rig (think pancake or even some belt slide designs here). Small-framed shooters often are not able to draw the gun easily (especially full-sized autos) without connecting with their underarm.

Thad Rybka, Kramer and a few others build holsters fit just for ladies. They are tough, proven and just as equal to the job as any "man's" holster, but they position the butt of the gun at about the belt level. A short "drop" to the shank makes it possible for ladies (or some men) to suddenly have the room to actually draw a handgun without having to do the Macarena to accomplish the delicate act. Elegant simplicity in design and in the final product is what counts here.

Much ado is put forth about "printing," that faux pas that happens when you bend over and the outline of yer piece, as it were, shows beyond the boundaries of your photo-journalist vest. Frankly, too much worry is given to the idea.

The average Joe wouldn't see a "printed" gun if it were in their face. Besides, with all the cellular phones, palm pilots, pagers and related electronic gadgets on our belts today who's to know what it really is anyway? Take this concern into thought however, and make sure the new holster you're contemplating doesn't sit like a lump on your hip, grabbing and goobering-up the clean lines of your suit coat.

Synthetics And Such

Have you noticed the "sin" in synthetic? To many shooters, this is not a coincidence. We've had our share of plastic holsters and have to admit it's sort of difficult to get very close to them, in a personal way.

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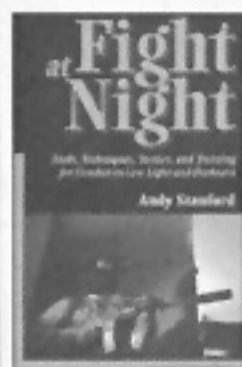


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Argentina's

BALLESTER-MOLINA PISTOL

By Gene Gangarosa, Jr.

A unique convergence of design elements makes this Argentine pistol a real collector's piece — and a very enjoyable shooter.

Argentina's armed forces used the Colt Model 1911 pistol for many years — the Argentine Navy purchased 321 Government Model handguns in 1914 and then formally adopted it as the "Modello 1916." The Argentine army ordered another 10,000 Model 1911s, which were delivered in May 1919.

In 1927, Argentina ordered additional pistols from Colt. The resultant "Modello 1927" featured the 1911A1 modifications recently adopted by the United States Army. After Colt delivered 10,000, the Argentine government built 74,866 more at its "Domingo Matheu" factory in Rosario.

As the Argentines built the Modello 1927, engineers suggested a few changes to simplify production, though these changes did not appear in the Modello 1927. One of these engineers was Dr. Arturo Ballester of the *Hispano Argentina Fabrica de Automoviles, S.A* (HAFDASA) of Buenos Aires, a firm created in 1929 by Ballester and Eugenio Molina to build cars, buses, trucks and diesel engines.

Meanwhile, the Bonifacio Echeverria factory in Spain was building a series of Model 1911 clones known as the "Star" pistols. Though based on Colt's design, the Star lacked some of its refinements, making it easier to produce. The .45 caliber Star Model P influenced the Ballester-Molina pistol's design.

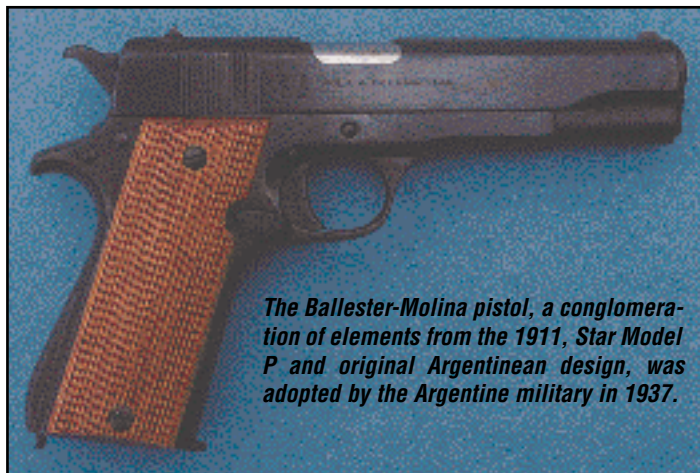
In 1937, with war clouds gathering ominously over Europe and Asia, the Argentine military gave HAFDASA a pistol contract.

The resultant pistol is known variously as the Ballester-Rigaud, Ballester-Molina or HAFDASA, and was the HAFDASA firm's first gun.

Foreign Yet Familiar

The Ballester-Molina is virtually the same size and shape as the U.S. Model 1911A1: 8.5" long, with a 5" barrel and a 36-oz. unloaded weight. The Ballester-Molina uses the same seven-shot magazine as the M1911A1, and all operating controls are in the same locations.

The Ballester-Molina differs from the Model 1911A1 in lacking a grip safety and in using a pivoting trigger rather than a sliding type; however, the serrations used to operate the Ballester-Molina pistol's slide are most distinctive. Instead of the M1911's 18 evenly spaced vertical serrations, the Ballester-Molina's eight slide serrations appear in three



The Ballester-Molina pistol, a conglomeration of elements from the 1911, Star Model P and original Argentinean design, was adopted by the Argentine military in 1937.

groups, with three in the forward group, three in the middle and two in the rearmost group.

The hardwood stocks use a distinctive pattern of 19 vertical serrations. The stocks are also thicker than those of a Model 1911, so the pistol feels slightly wider. The trigger guard is slightly narrower at the front than the Model 1911's; neither pistol is well-suited to handling while the shooter is wearing heavy gloves, an unfortunate omission shared by most contemporary military handguns.

Another problem the Ballester-Molina shares with contemporary military pistols is undersized sights. Operation of the Ballester-Molina pistol, including shooting and field-stripping, is identical to the Colt Model 1911.

The Ballester-Molina's internal mechanical changes from the M1911 include a shorter hammer strut, a firing-pin stop without relief cuts on its sides and a larger-diameter safety lock pin. While none of these changes alter the Ballester-Molina pistol's handling, they greatly degrade parts interchangeability between a Ballester-Molina and an Argentine Modello 1927 or U.S. Model 1911A1. A Ballester-Molina slide will fit loosely and function on a Colt or equivalent Argentine-made frame, but a Ballester-Molina frame is too wide to accept a Model 1911 slide.

The Ballester-Molina is well-made, with a highly polished blue-black finish. A "Ballester-Rigaud" (Rorice Rigaud being the chief engineer) slide marking disappeared after 1939 in favor of the better-known "Ballester-Molina" slide inscription.

The right side of the slide may include an Argentine government crest just ahead of the slide serrations. Also on the right side of the slide, the name of an official Argentine military or police agency may appear.

Serial numbers occur inside the slide (visible only when the slide is removed from the frame) and on the left side of the main-spring housing on the frame. An issue number may also appear on the top of the slide, ahead of the rear sight.

In addition to the standard .45 caliber service pistol, from 1940 to 1953 HAFDASA also produced smaller numbers of .22 Long Rifle Ballester-Molinas. Identical in size and appearance to the .45 caliber weapon, these used a blowback bolt to accommodate the lower recoil of the rimfire cartridge. These guns were issued for training to Argentine military and police agencies. Compared to the .45 caliber service pistol, .22s are rare today due to limited production.

Into The Fray

The Ballester-Molina's appearance was timely, and the Argentine government lost no time in issuing the pistol, first to military units, followed by police issue. While Argentina managed to stay out of World War II, many Ballester-Molina pistols made it to the fighting.

In 1940, the British Purchasing Commission visited the Americas to buy war

continued on page 78

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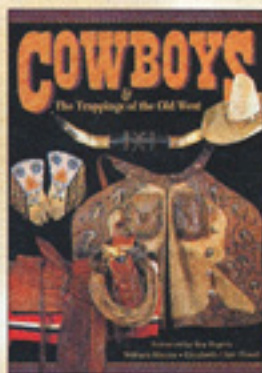


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BALLESTER-MOLINA

continued from page 77

materials. Fresh from their forced evacuation at Dunkirk, where British soldiers had escaped but left their equipment behind, the British bought every firearm they could.

To the hard-pressed British, the Ballester-Molina looked good. It used the widely respected .45 ACP cartridge. The British were well acquainted with its parent pistol, the Model 1911, having issued it to the Royal Air Force during World War I. They purchased about 15,000 Ballester-Molina pistols.

A top-secret espionage and sabotage unit called Special Operations Executive (SOE) received many of these guns. Secret agents of the SOE, carrying Ballester-Molina pistols, were dropped behind enemy lines in occupied Europe, working closely with local resistance forces to make life tough for the Nazis and their collaborators.

The Nazis fought back hard, and losses among SOE operatives were heavy. Many SOE agents never returned from their missions, so Ballester-Molina pistols show up in Europe on occasion.

The British issued another 10,000 Ballester-Molina pistols to their 8th Army fighting in the North African desert against Italian and German forces. The pistols served well, despite the region's extremely harsh climactic conditions.

After World War II, Ballester-Molina issue continued in Argentina. Production finally stopped in 1953. Exact figures have not been published, but the manufacturing run certainly ran into the tens of thousands.

In the 1960s, a locally produced variant of the 9mm Browning High Power pistol began supplanting the Ballester-Molina, at which point some were released for export. Ballester-Molinas remained in limited service, particularly in naval and police hands, as late as the 1982 South Atlantic War, which Argentina fought against Britain over the Falkland Islands. In the 1990s, Argentina released its remaining Ballester-Molina pistols from reserve stocks, and many of these were imported into the United States. Other commercial sales were made in Latin America.

From Service To Sport

The Ballester-Molina pistol demonstrated excellent accuracy, for a service pistol. Moreover, its reliability proved flawless, even with hollowpoint bullets that sometimes jam older military guns not designed for such ammunition.

Like the M1911A1, the Ballester-Molina pistol points well and has a solid, reliable feel that inspires great confidence. During its heyday, this was one of the best military pistol models. Indeed, this old dog can teach a few tricks to the newcomers!

Colt collectors once turned up their noses at the Ballester-Molina, regarding it as a cheap copy. Today it gets more respect as a well-made, interesting and high-performing handgun with a rich history.



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From Franchi

Benelli USA is importing the new Model 912 Franchi Variomax 3 1/2" autoloading shotgun for the serious turkey or waterfowl hunters. The Variomax has a lightweight receiver and multi-lugged rotary bolt, which locks directly into the chrome barrel. The

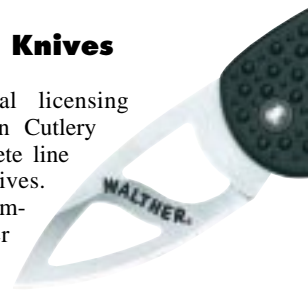


gas system is designed to accommodate 2 3/4", 3 and 3 1/2" shells. The patented dual safety system blocks the sear and removes tension from the hammer spring if the bolt is out of battery. The Variomax is also offered in the new Advantage Timber High Definition camouflage. Benelli USA, 17603 Indian Head Hwy, Accokeek, MD 20607-2501, (301) 283-6981, FAX: (301) 283-6988, www.benelliusa.com

New Walther Knives

From Gutmann Cutlery

Under a special licensing agreement, Gutmann Cutlery is offering a complete line of Walther knives. Included are the compact Walther Collector's Series pocketknives, which feature detailed scrimshaw images of the PPK, P38 and P99 model semi-automatic pistols on the handle. Each knife measures 2 1/2" closed, with a 1 1/2" 440C stainless steel blade. The knives weigh just 1.2 ozs. Gutmann Cutlery, P.O. Box 2219, Bellingham, WA 98227, (360) 650-9141, FAX: (360) 676-1075, e-mail: customerservice@gutmanncutlery.com, www.gutmanncutlery.com



New Semi-Auto Shotgun

From European American

European American Armory introduces the Model MP-153 3 1/2" semi-automatic, gas-operated shotgun. With its self-regulating/adjustable gas exit valve, the shooter can go from light to heavy loads without the need of a conversion kit. The MP-153 feeds 12-gauge shells (2 3/4", 3" and 3 1/2") in one magazine tube, mixed or matched. From the factory, the MP-153 will fire 2 3/4" (1 1/4 oz.) to 3 1/2" steel shot without adjusting the gas regulation unit. European American Armory, P.O. Box 1299, Sharpes, FL 32959, (407) 639-4842, FAX: (407) 639-7006, e-mail: aacorp@bv.net, www.eaa-corp.com



NEW PRODUCTS



New Blackie Collins Design

From Meyerco USA Knives

The "Speed-Assisted Rascal" is a new Blackie-Collins designed folding knife whose strut mechanism utilizes a stainless steel coil spring to assist in the opening and closing of the blade with the use of only one hand.



The Speed-Assisted Rascal measures 5-7/8 inches long with a 2 3/8" stainless steel blade. It weighs just 1.6 ozs. The handle and clip are manufactured from Fibersin, a nearly unbreakable synthetic. Meyerco USA, 4481 Exchange Service Dr., Dallas, TX 75236, (214) 467-8949, FAX: (214) 467-9241, e-mail: meyerco@bnfusa.com

AR 15 Rifle Video

From AGI

The American Gunsmithing Institute has produced a comprehensive two-hour instructional video (Course #323) on building an AR 15 rifle. Master gunsmith Bob Dunlap details how to legally build an AR 15. From triggering to barreling, Dunlap covers each detail in an easy-to-understand, step-by-step method. Dunlap teaches the viewer how to troubleshoot, resolve the common problems often encountered in the building process and how to head space the barrel properly to achieve the desired professional end product. Course #335 is a companion one-hour instructional video on how to properly perform an effective trigger job on an AR 15 rifle. Both video courses retail for \$29.95. American Gunsmithing Institute, 1325 Imola Ave,

Building An AR15 Rifle



covered in the building process and how to head space the barrel properly to achieve the desired professional end product. Course #335 is a companion one-hour instructional video on how to properly perform an effective trigger job on an AR 15 rifle. Both video courses retail for \$29.95. American Gunsmithing Institute, 1325 Imola Ave,



Ste.504, Napa, CA 94559, (707) 253-0462, FAX: (707) 253-7149, e-mail: agi@napanet.net, www.americangunsmith.com

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Euro Sports is now importing the MEOPTA Artemis line of hunting rifle scopes from the Czech Republic. The Artemis 2000 line offers 4x32, 6x42 and 7x50 magnifications with respective lens diameters of 32mm, 42mm and 50mm. The 2000 line delivers outstanding optical parameters, increased shock resistance, excellent color correction and rugged dependability. The 2001 differs from the 2000 by being fitted with the reticle No.4 at the point of line intersection. The lens diameter is 50mm. Euro Imports, 905 W. Main St., Ste."E," El Cajon, CA 92020, (619) 442-7005, www.meopta.com



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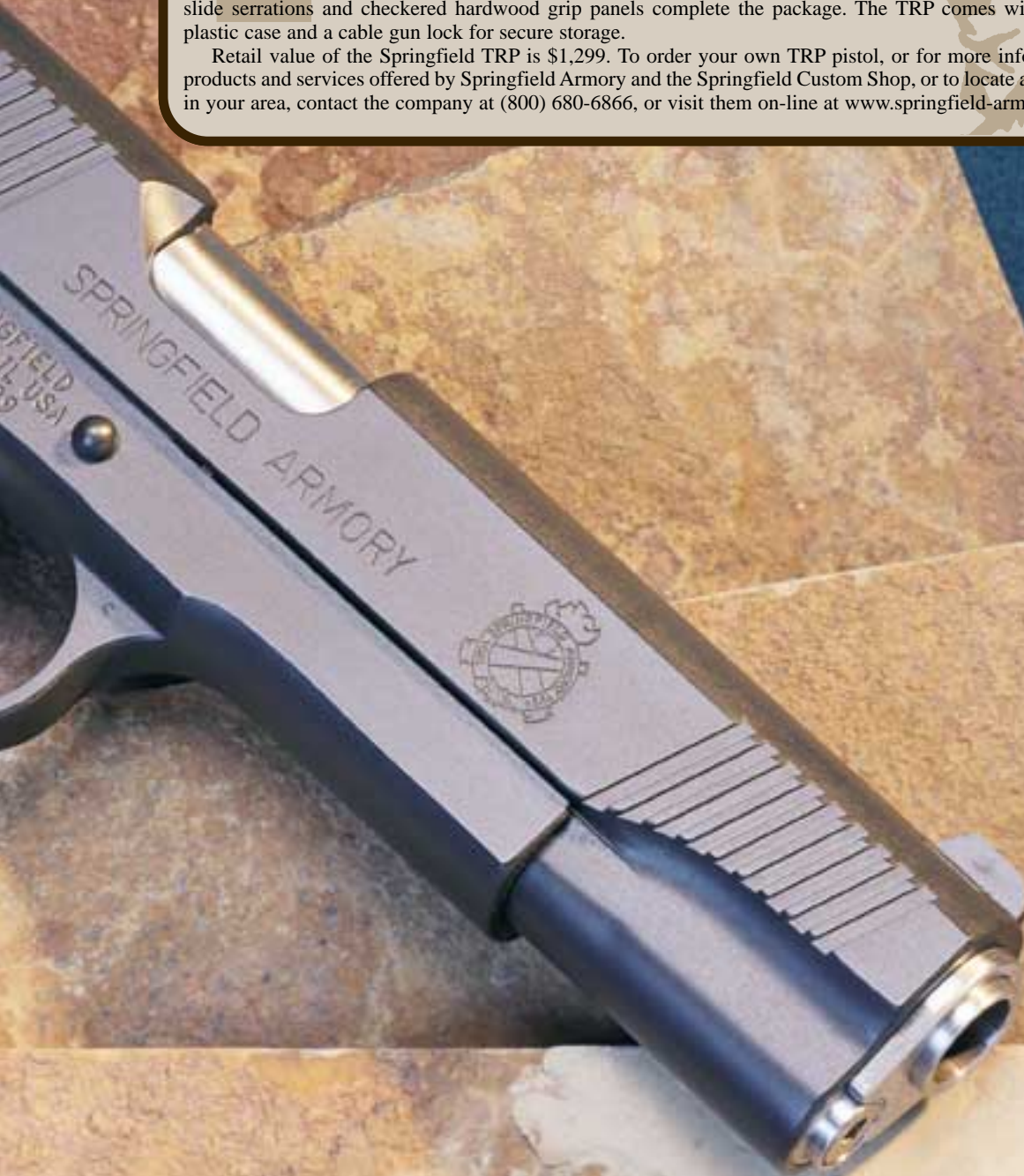
TO ENTER CONTEST: Fill out the **GUN OF THE MONTH** entry card located in this issue. If the card is missing, use a postcard (no envelopes please). Send to **GUNS Magazine, GOM FEBRUARY**, P.O. Box 639033, San Diego, CA 92163-9033. Entries must be received before MARCH 1, 2001. Limit one entry per household. 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. 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. No purchase necessary to enter.

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This month's Gun Of The Month prize is the outstanding TRP 1911 from Springfield Armory, an ideal handgun for home defense, duty use, or even IDPA competition. The TRP is a full-sized 1911 chambered in .45 ACP with an extended beavertail, palm-swell grip safety, Commander-style hammer, match trigger, extended ambidextrous thumb safety and beveled magazine well. With a trigger and action job from the Springfield Custom Shop, this gun is both reliable and accurate right out of the box.

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Retail value of the Springfield TRP is \$1,299. To order your own TRP pistol, or for more information about the products and services offered by Springfield Armory and the Springfield Custom Shop, or to locate a Springfield dealer in your area, contact the company at (800) 680-6866, or visit them on-line at www.springfield-armory.com.



GUNSClassifieds

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2000. Ads received after closing will appear in the following issue. Please type or print clearly. **NO PROOFS WILL BE FURNISHED.** Include name, address, post office, city, state and zip code as counted words. Abbreviations count as one word each. Mail to GUNS MAGAZINE CLASSIFIEDS, 591 Camino de la Reina, Suite 200, San Diego, California 92108. **NOTE: WE NOW HAVE DISPLAY CLASSIFIEDS IN BOTH GUNS MAGAZINE AND AMERICAN HANDGUNNER. ASK FOR OUR NEW RATE CARD. (619) 297-8525.**

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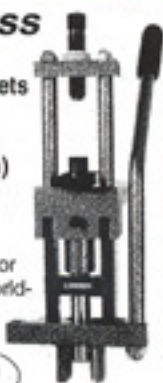
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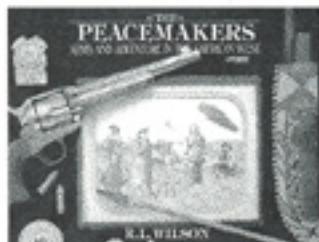
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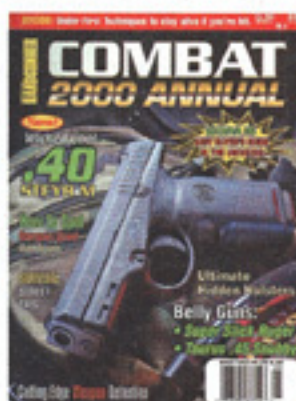
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REMINGTON

continued from page 90

facturing techniques, added a Bushnell scope, and given the whole thing a suggested retail of \$359. If that's not the hunter's version of an iMac, we don't know what is.

The gun is designed for the "casual whitetail hunter," according to Remington engineers. With a 4-lb. trigger and a bore-sighted 3-9x scope already attached, a hunter can buy one of these guns, a sling and a box of ammo in the morning, test the rifle with a five-shot group at an 8" target or even a paper plate, and be ready to head into the woods by lunchtime. The synthetic stock and matte, blued finish make the rifle very durable. (No word yet on whether the stock will be available in Blueberry, Grape, Lime, etc... Maybe Remington's new motto will be "Hunt Different.")

At the opposite extreme is the innovative Model 700 "Ultimate Lightweight." This new rifle achieves its remarkable weight of 5½ lbs. with the use of a titanium receiver and a skeletonized bolt. The rifle also features a 22" stainless steel barrel and a Kevlar-reinforced fiberglass stock, and is available in .260 Rem., .270 Win., 7mm-08 and .30-'06. With a retail price of \$1,199, the "Ultimate Lightweight" is an outstanding rifle at a fraction of the price of a similar custom gun.



ULTRA MAG

continued from page 90

spectrum, the .375 UM provides a ballistic turbo charge for hunters who know and love the .375 H&H Magnum. The .375 UM fires a 270 gr. bullet at 2,900 fps, with some 5,041 ft./lbs. of muzzle energy. The 300 gr. loading retains more energy at 200 yards than the .375 H&H has at half that distance. Factory loads will be available with a 270 gr. Hornady SP and a 300 gr. Swift A-Frame bullet.

All of this, of course, begs the question, "What's next for the Ultra Mag?" Some hunters may look for a UM varmint cartridge, but considering the punishment such a cartridge would unleash on a barrel, that's unlikely. Our semi-educated guess would be for a .270 UM, giving hunters a flat-shooting cartridge for deer or antelope.

Sources at Remington also hint that Big Green is toying with the concept of a more efficient cartridge — that is to say, a short-action magnum. Such a cartridge with, say, a .30 caliber bullet would result in a rifle with the ballistics of a .300 Win. Mag. sporting a .308-length action. Sound familiar? It should — Winchester-Olin announced just such a cartridge two months ago. Word is that Remington decided to shelve the idea until 2001 in order to focus on the Ultra Mag line. You can't keep a good idea down.

For more information about Remington's new product line for 2001, you can visit the company on-line at www.Remington.com. (Or you can do it the "old-fashioned" way, by telephone, at (800) 243-9700.)



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Looking for something to spice up your coffee table? Or maybe just something to tide you over until it's time to start planning for this year's hunt? If so, then do we have a book for you.

Game Days is a beautifully illustrated, coffee table book celebrating the spirit of the hunt, complete with both its triumphs and its defeats. Quotes from hunting enthusiasts — Teddy Roosevelt, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Oliver Wendell Holmes and Jack O'Connor, among others — punctuate wonderful photographs of game, wilderness and the hunting life. Chapters describing the yearly ritual of the hunting season, from the trip to the range for "sighting in" to the unique phenomenon which is "Opening Day," will give you a few laughs and a few moments of deep reflection.

You'll find yourself paging through Game Days again and again, lingering over the pictures and contemplating the many quotes — and, in the end, wanting to share them all with your hunting buddies. Game Days retails for \$35 and is available from Willow Creek Press.

Or, if you prefer something a bit more practical, Willow Creek also offers a selection of outstanding cookbooks for the hunter. Their "Fish & Game Mastery Library" series includes Venison, Pheasant & Quail and Ducks & Geese. Other cookbooks, such as The Northwoods Table, include a wide variety of recipes which celebrate the spirit of game cooking.

For more details on the books available from Willow Creek Press, or to order any of their publications, contact them at (715) 358-7010.



Remington's Newest Rifles

Remington's newly unveiled Model 710 rifle may just be the iMac of the hunting world. Apple Macintosh computers once enjoyed outstanding brand recognition among computer users, but those users were very dedicated and knowledgeable; casual users and first-time buyers tended to choose other brands which were, in a word, cheaper. Then Apple introduced the iMac, which was advertised as being ready-to-go right out of the box, had an impressive list of features, and boasted a price tag which was competitive with the "off brands." It was a huge success.

The Remington Model 710 is based largely on the

same philosophy. Big Green has taken some of the best components of their classic Model 700 (namely the trigger and chamber design), combined them with some innovative new elements which take advantage of state-of-the-art manu
continued on page 89



Mr. & Mrs. **Ultra Mag** And All The Kids

Two years ago, we saw the introduction of Remington's .300 Ultra Mag, a .30 caliber cartridge with more power than either the .300 Wby. Mag. or .300 Win. Magnum. Last year, Remington built on the success of the Ultra Mag concept with the .338 Ultra Mag, which brought the same improved level of performance to elk and bear hunters as well.

Now, Remington has introduced not one, but two new Ultra Mag cartridges, the .375 and the 7mm, making the Ultra Mag a full-

fledged family.

The 7mm Ultra Mag is advertised as "the flattest-shooting big-game cartridge out there," with performance rivaling that of most lightweight varmint cartridges. The 7mm UM has 36 percent more case capacity than the popular 7mm Rem. Mag., and fires a 140 gr. bullet at 3,425 fps. When sighted 2½" high at 100 yards, the 7mm UM is only 8" below line of sight at 400 yards, and still delivers 28 percent more energy than the 7mm Rem. Magnum.

At the other end of the
continued on page 89



DOIN' THE NUMBERS

\$60

The fee Canadians must pay, as of Dec. 31, to obtain a gun-owner's license. Prior to that date, the government had been charging only \$10 in order to encourage compliance with the new license requirement.

Source: Calgary Herald

4

Number of hours some Canadian gun owners had to stand in line for the "privilege" of obtaining a firearms license as the deadline approached.

370,000

Reported backlog of unrecorded licensees which exists at the Canadian Firearms Centre — any one of whom could be charged with owning a gun without a license if they were to be apprehended by police.

QUOTE of the MONTH:

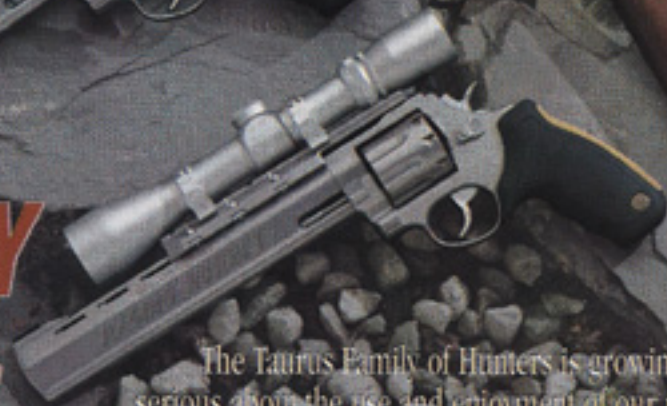
"The essence of life is that it lives by killing and eating, that's the great mystery. The basic hunting (folk tale) is a kind of covenant between the animal world and the human world."

— Joseph Campbell



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