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JUNE 2001

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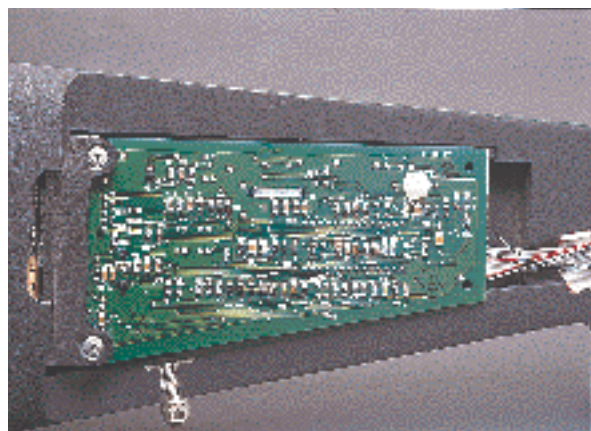
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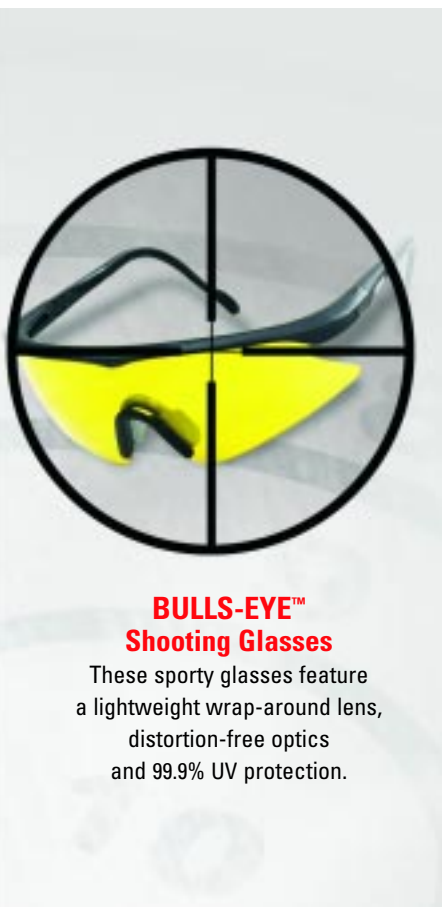
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LETTER OF THE MONTH



GUNS MAGAZINE APRIL 2001

Best Of Show

I would like to thank you for *GUNS Magazine's* ongoing support of the American Custom Gunmakers Guild. The award that you sponsor has become synonymous with "Best of Show."

The monies that you have donated to our Education Fund have grown over the years so that next year we will be able to offer modest grant-in-aid money to deserving gunsmith students. We value your previous and continued support. Thank you very much.

J. Peter Mazur, President
American Custom Gunmakers Guild

Each year, GUNS Magazine donates a \$500 prize to the ACGG and Firearms Engravers Guild's continuing education funds as a "best of show" prize. We're glad to know that our donations, combined with the spectacular expertise of the members of these guilds, are perpetuating the love of fine firearms.

— Editor

Alienation Fee

In the state of Tennessee, we have a sales tax on various consumer items such as food, gasoline, etc. One of the sales taxes we have is a 10-cent tax on the sale of ammunition. We Tennesseans all know that the tax is part of the cost of buying a box of ammo, because the tax sticker is placed prominently on each package. That tax helps to pay expenses incurred by the state. We gun owners have no complaint about that.

However, a recent trip to Wal-Mart opened my eyes to how silly the "anti-gun" types have gotten. I purchased one box of .22 and one box of 9mm ammunition. In addition to the charges for the ammo, the receipt also shows an "ammo fee." That "fee" is actually the tax.

At every store I've ever purchased ammunition from, not one has ever given me a receipt showing a lawful tax as a "fee." Wal-Mart is obviously so afraid of upsetting some anti-gun effeminate, that they are willing to pretend to charge a "fee" to anyone purchasing ammunition.

Congratulations, Wal-Mart! You've just alienated a longtime customer.

D.L. Turner
Murfreesboro, Tenn.

Fortress Of Fools

After reading Ayoob's article "Fortress America" (*GUNS*, January '01), I found myself in disagreement with some things. But then, after reading Timothy White's response to the article in the March 2001 "Crossfire" ("Not In My Fortress"), I felt compelled to respond.

As a licensed fire alarm and security systems technician and reserve police officer, I take exception to his favorite security device — the gun. Just like the mere presence of a weapon stops over 60 percent of crimes, a legitimate security system on a home stops a break-in attempt. We won't even begin to go into the advantages of a monitored fire alarm system.

There is nothing wrong with having a security system to supplement your own personal protection. In my home, I have a full security system, with every window and door switched. I have three color cameras on the house, and my gun safe is wired, as well.

The far-right, Wild West mentality fuels

the anti-self-defense crowd. My gun is not the "one size fits all" solution to the problems that confront me as a homeowner. However, my Model 23 Glock is ready to stand guard when electronic measures fail.

In a world of civil tort, I want to take every possible measure to prevent a confrontation in my home or on my property in which I would be required to use a weapon to defend myself.

Bob Andrews
Grand Rapids, Mich.

Varmints & Splinters

Fred Marcus' letter ("Howling At The Moon," *GUNS*, April '01) should be a lesson to us all. It is a perfect example of how ignorance and cliquishness splinter the gun-owning community, allowing the enemies of our liberty to play us against each other to the inevitable, eventual detriment of all.

Apparently inspired by a PETA-type bumper sticker stating "Meat Is Murder," Marcus launches into an ill-informed diatribe against varmint and predator hunters. He, oddly for a hunter, seems to characterize all of us as wearing "oil-stained Confederate-flag T-shirts and Budweiser caps." And coyote hunters particularly, in his mind, convey the image of "uncaring, murderous slob" who enjoy "torture and bloodletting."

Marcus' ignorance of the issue is disturbing. I won't go into great detail on the reasons that pest control, as represented by varmint hunting, is needed, or the terrible depredations that coyotes inflict, not only on livestock, but most especially on the deer and antelope herds — those animals that Marcus appears to approve hunting for "sustenance or even trophies."

The real issue is the failure of all the different shooting sports and interests to support each other, even to make the effort to learn why someone might enjoy a different aspect of shooting than we ourselves do.

The clay and bird shooters see no reason to join the NRA, because they don't believe anyone would really see their shotguns as a threat, so no one would want to take them away. Charlton Heston finds it "inappropriate" for anyone to own an AK-47. Prairie dog hunters don't want to sit frozen in a tree waiting for a deer to come by. Once-a-year deer hunters don't see why anyone should need more than "one handgun a month." And Marcus thinks his trophy-hunting image is ruined by coyote hunters ...

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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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Listen up, people! To the Sarah Bradys and Rosie O'Donnells of the world, you are all the same. You are evil in their eyes whether you carry a Winchester Model 21 or an AR-15, a 30-30 or a MAC-10. Learn that lesson, and learn it well — then fight back! But for Heaven's sake, fight the enemy — not each other!

Jeffrey G. Starr
Phoenix, Ariz.

Varmints Part 2

Many of us in the “big, empty middle” of the country view varmints as predators and vermin. Collectively, they cause untold millions of dollars of crop, livestock and equipment damage, lost use of acreage and a few assorted diseases.

As a result, we shoot these pests.

William Moore
wrmoore2001@yahoo.com

Varmints Part 3

What could a city boy from Los Angeles know about the problems we face with “innocent” coyotes and prairie rats? These pests are not called varmints for nothing. Coyotes kill livestock and even pets. Prairie rats cause

crop damage, and the holes they dig can cause injury or death to livestock, damage farm machinery and even place people at risk.

Scott Morris
TheMorrisBunch@hotmail.com

Drying The River

In his letter, (“Cry Me A River, Officer,” *GUNS*, April '01), Steve Barber revealed a lack of knowledge about the police and suggested and displayed polemic anti-police feelings.

Let's get this straight — those executive officers who stood behind the former President when he signed anti-gun edicts are all *political* appointees and are *not* the most qualified to lead the police. They are not representative of the overwhelming majority of the officers that protect you and me.

I am really tired of those who take shots at the men and women who face down the evil of our society and enter dark alleys and engage in mortal combat with deadly mean people while we sleep in our beds at night, warm and protected. Until the citizens understand what the police must do to protect them, they should search for understanding and compassion for those who “protect and serve.”

Smart guns and smart holsters are dumb ideas, and it might surprise you to know that most officers prefer honest, honorable and

courageous people to be armed. When an officer is in serious jeopardy, it is not the politician, the Hollywood actors, or the anti-gun-left that they depend upon, it is the real American who is ready and able to stand with the officers.

Instead of taking shots at the police, let's aim at the people who want to disarm America — start with Jane Fonda and the rest of her type. I speak from experience, as I have been on the front lines and have served as a police executive.

Thomas Proctor
kma367@mindspring.com

Atta Boy, Taffin

Thanks for the single best all-around gun magazine on the market. A big “Atta Boy” to John Taffin for his *great* in-depth report on H&R 1871s Wesson & Harrington single-shot rifles in your April 2001 issue. Although they are the “high end” of H&R's line, all the H&R break-open rifles and shotguns have been great bargains for decades. Ordinary folks can afford H&R guns.

To modify a quote, “Beware the frugal old man with only a few guns — he's likely to be dangerous to mess with.”

W.W. Hassler
Tallahassee, Fla.



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Speaking Of Guns

The gun culture has become part of the fabric of American values and even speech patterns. It's even more pervasive than most of us "gun people" realize. I never realized the gun connection with the phrase "the whole nine yards" until reader Ivan Shapiro explained it to me in an e-mail.

Says Shapiro, "The term 'the whole nine yards' came from World War II fighter pilots in the Pacific. When arming their airplanes on the ground, the .50 caliber machine gun ammo belts measured 27 feet, before being loaded into the fuselage. If the pilots fired all their ammo at a target, it got 'the whole nine yards.'"

The Clintons and Bradys et al go off half-cocked and shoot from the hip, with rapid-fire delivery that often misses the mark. This is because, even though they're trying to shoot to kill, their overbalance of hysterical emotion leaves them with hair-trigger tempers, often so wrought up that they're hotter than a two-dollar pistol.

Their logic frequently misfires. The debaters for our side prevail on logical grounds because we keep our powder dry, and have good enough timing that we hold our fire. We don't waste a debate point prematurely because we don't fire 'til we see the whites of their eyes, and we draw a fine bead when we do.



... go off half-cocked ...

"... shoot from the hip ..."

"... keep your powder dry ..."

At that point in the heated point/counterpoint, when there's fire in the hole and a coup de grace is needed to put their weak, terminally flawed arguments out of their misery, we hit 'em right between the eyes. And at that point, by golly, we do give 'em the whole nine yards. Figuratively speaking, of course.

Combat Semantics 101

There is room for some discussion of Combat Semantics in the vocabulary of the gun. We are told that only the untutored would say "revolver and automatic," and that the proper terminology is "revolver and semiautomatic." This bears some discussion.

Since the accepted terminology is "automatic" for something like a machine gun, and "semiautomatic" for something that only fires one shot per pull of the trigger, we are obviously defining the nature of the device by its firing mechanism. Well, guess what?

The revolver's cylinder doesn't "revolve."

The Earth revolves around the sun once a year, and the only way the sixgun's cylinder could revolve would be if it went in an orbit around the outside of the frame. The cylinder rotates on an axis, as the Earth also does each day, which is why any revolver shooter who knows the drill speaks of things like "cylinder rotation checks."

The damn thing isn't a revolver; it's a rotator! Samuel Colt didn't check the dictionary, neither did anyone at the U.S. Patent Office at the time, apparently, and everybody

has gotten the name wrong.

The only thing on that type of gun that revolves is the cartridge supply. If anybody wants to say, "Well, that's the baseline of definition, and that's why we called it a revolver," they have to answer one question. How does an "autoloader" feed its cartridge supply? The answer is, of course, "automatically."

Therefore, it's gotta be either "revolver and automatic" or "rotator and semiautomatic" to be semantically correct. Ya can't have it both ways. End of argument.

Semi-auto or automatic? That is the question. Ammo makers seem to prefer the latter term to describe the operating system of modern, self-loading handguns.

VIVA LA HANDGUN

It came into vogue some 20 years ago to refer to contestants at combat handgun matches as "shootists." This did not please Col. Jeff Cooper, the *éminence grise* of the discipline. He remarked crisply that the proper term was "shottist."

Which is correct? Hell, don't ask me. I still say "ain't," and I probably didn't even spell *éminence grise* correctly.

However, I submit this final point, and then we'll give this particular column its own *coup de grace*.

If we shoot with style and with grace, with *panaché* and *élan*, shouldn't each of us be...a *shootiste*?



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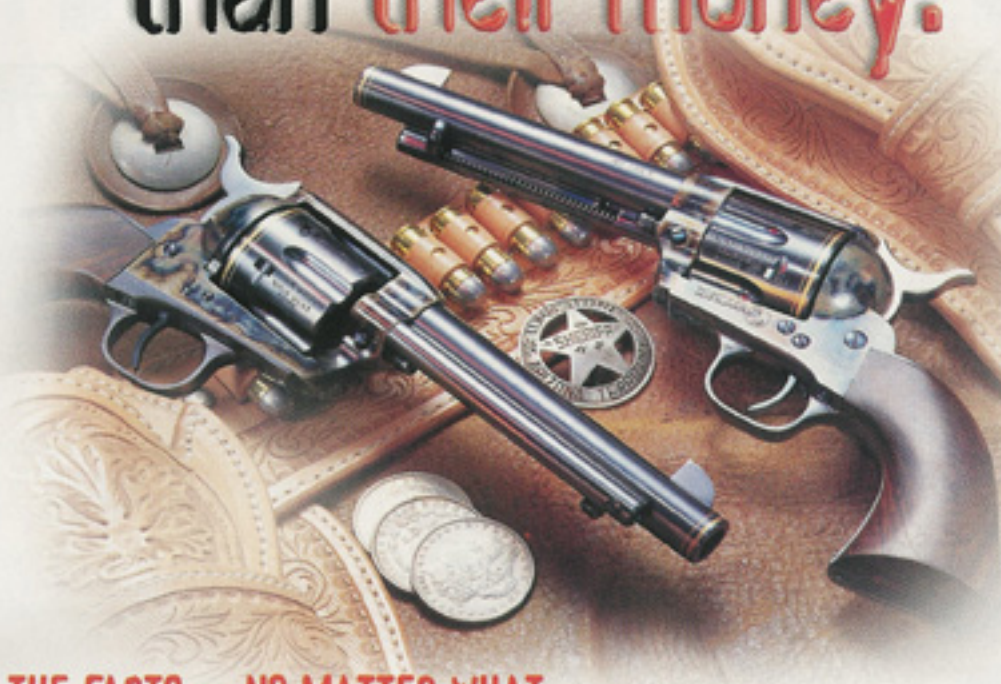


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With lots of surplus parts still available, shooters can easily adapt the M1 Carbine to almost any tactical need or configuration.

The M1 Carbine For **SELF-DEFENSE AND LAW ENFORCEMENT**

BY CHARLES KARWAN

*SHOOTERS SEEKING A HIGH-PERFORMANCE
TACTICAL CARBINE WITHOUT A HIGH-TECH PRICE TAG
ARE REDISCOVERING THIS VERSATILE, VINTAGE FIREARM.*

Police agencies and armed citizens need a good long arm to supplement their handgun for defensive purposes. There are very few situations where a person is better off defending himself with a handgun than a good long gun, if the latter is available.

Here the definition of long gun is a shoulder-fired weapon like a rifle, carbine, submachine gun, assault rifle or shotgun. There is a readily available, often overlooked long gun that is superb for this purpose that can out-perform most of its high-tech, expensive competition — the M1 carbine.

In recent years the traditional shotgun has been losing favor with both police and civilians for defensive use. The reasons for this include excessive recoil, a high degree of proficiency in operation, potential collateral damage from the buckshot pattern, and the limited effective range with buckshot.

In answer, many departments, individual officers and armed civilians have turned to semi-automatic rifles or carbines in either pistol calibers or .223 for use as tactical long guns. Some law enforcement agencies have turned to submachine guns.

All of these guns offer improved ballistic performance



"The M1 Carbine has superb reliability under the worst field conditions, accuracy that exceeds virtually all pistol-caliber carbines, and its little .30 Carbine cartridge packs about 2¹/₂ times the kinetic energy of a .45 ACP load fired from a pistol."

and practical accuracy over a handgun. However, none of the pistol-caliber carbines or submachine guns are nearly as effective as the old and often unfairly maligned .30 M1 carbine.

With proper ammunition, the M1 carbine can easily compete in effectiveness with .223-chambered weapons out to at least 150 yards, and few police or civilians have any business shooting at anybody farther away than that.

In addition, the M1 carbine weighs only 5½ lbs., making it a pound or more lighter than most of its competition, including even the pistol-caliber carbines, and considerably lighter than many like the UZI submachine gun at 8.8 lbs. or the M16A2 at 7.9 lbs.

Born For Combat

The M1 carbine has many other assets as well. It has superb reliability under the worst field conditions. Its accuracy exceeds that of virtually all the pistol-caliber carbines and submachine guns on the market and is comparable with that of many of the semi-automatic .223 rifles.

Right: There are a myriad of accessories available for the M1 Carbine, including five-, 15- and 30-round magazines, mag pouches, muzzle breaks and flash hiders.

Bottom: The M1 Carbine has negligible recoil, is much easier to shoot accurately than a handgun, and is available at much more reasonable prices than today's crop of high-tech tactical .223 carbines.

Another huge advantage for the M1 carbine is that, unlike most modern firearms, it has pre-ban high capacity 15- and 30-round magazines readily available in quantity at very modest prices. The same holds true for spare parts and accessories.

Ballistically, the M1 carbine's little .30 Carbine cartridge packs about 2.5 times the kinetic energy of a standard .45 ACP or 9mm load fired from a pistol. This is solidly in the energy territory of the .44 Mag. revolver.

continued on page 22



NEW?*

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M1 CARBINE

continued from page 21

Indeed it has only 90 ft./lbs. less energy at the muzzle than the Russian 5.45x39mm cartridge and is only a little farther behind the .223 when fired from 14.5" or 16" barreled carbines.

Options And Tactics

Although a cartridge's muzzle energy is not the sole criterion for measuring its effectiveness, it is a good indication of the cartridge's potential if it is loaded with properly designed expanding bullets. With military-type FMJ bullets, the .30 Carbine will drill right through car bodies and such.

This capability is highly desirable to police officers in many situations. When the .30 Carbine cartridge is loaded with expanding bullets, its effectiveness as a manstopper increases exponentially. One police unit used M1 carbines loaded with JSPs in several shootings. They found the carbines to be extremely effective. Quoting one of their more experienced officers about the results from shootings with a .30 Carbine using expanding bullet ammunition, "We never had to shoot anyone twice."

Out to at least 150 yards, the .30 Carbine cartridge usually makes a more serious wound than does the .223, .308 or .30-'06, when the latter are used with FMJ bullets. It is also greatly superior to any of the common defensive pistol rounds fired from a handgun or carbine, even when the latter uses hollow point ammunition.

Even the FMJ .30 Carbine load is far more effective than is commonly thought. After interviewing many veteran M1 carbine users from World War II, Korea and Vietnam, we found that the vast majority of these soldiers found the M1 carbine to be quite effective even with GI ball ammunition.

One former Marine who saw extensive combat with the M1 carbine in the Pacific in World War II was quite emphatic that the little gun and its cartridge were effective in the close-range combat that he experienced. He also stated that he greatly preferred the M1 carbine to the Garand for that type of fighting because of its much lighter weight, shorter length and higher magazine capacity.

First-Hand Experience

Another veteran M1 carbine user interviewed was a U.S. Army Special Forces adviser in the early days of the Vietnam War. He had advised indigenous units armed almost exclusively with M1 carbines, and used the gun extensively himself in combat. He stated that the M1 carbine was very effective in the jungle combat that they typically experienced. Interestingly, he said that when M16s eventually replaced the M1 carbines, he

found that the new gun offered little if any significant advantage in effectiveness over the older M1 carbines.

Probably the most authoritative account of the effectiveness of the M1 carbine in real combat comes from the superb book *Shots Fired In Anger* by John George. George served as a company grade officer in World War II in the famous Merrill's Marauders, operating behind Japanese lines. George was a highly experienced and successful service rifle competitor, shooter and hunter before the war, so all of his writing is from the perspective of someone highly knowledgeable about guns.

The M1 carbine was his primary weapon in the Marauders. The light weight of the carbine and its ammunition made it ideal for troops like the Marauders that carried all their supplies and equipment with them and were re-supplied by airdrops. His book covers several instances where he personally used or observed M1 carbines employed with great effect.

George reports, "The M1 carbine turned out to be the ace weapon of the war, as far as I am concerned. It was light and handy, powerful, and reasonably accurate ... The cartridge was powerful enough to penetrate several thicknesses of helmet, and to perforate the plates of the Japanese bulletproof vest, which would only be dented by .45 auto slugs. It was flat shooting enough to have practical accuracy at more than 200 yards ... For many types of offensive fighting, such as sneak raids and infiltration tactics, it was often superior even to the M1 (Garand), penetration being the only point of difference."

Full-Auto Follies

Late in World War II a selective-fire version of the M1 carbine was introduced as the M2 carbine. These saw little use in World War II, but were extensively used in Korea. Many of the accounts about the ineffectiveness of the .30 Carbine round come from improper and ineffective use of the M2 carbine on full auto.

Typically, the soldier or Marine dumped an entire magazine on full auto at a charging enemy with little or no effect. The probable truth is that in most instances it was ineffective because he simply missed. When firing the M2, if the first shot does not hit, none of the following shots will hit either, because the weapon will quickly climb off target, particularly with a long burst. The idea that anyone could absorb a magazine full of .30 Carbine bullets through the chest and keep coming is a myth born of bad shooting.

One must remember that these accounts are all about the M1 or M2 carbine using standard GI hardball ammunition. When this weapon is used with modern expanding bullets, its effectiveness against soft targets is increased considerably. One of the best .30 Carbine loads is the Winchester HSP. It is very accurate, feeding and expanding superbly and reliably.

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9000S



9000S Type F

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An important asset of the M1 carbine is that two or three M1 carbines can be purchased for the price of one AR-15 or MP5 submachine gun. An affordable M1 carbine is worth more than all the expensive state-of-the-art rifles that you do not have when you need them, because you cannot afford them.

Something else in the M1 carbine's favor compared to all the submachine guns and rifles based on military assault rifles, is that it is relatively innocuous looking. Police do not like to be perceived as storm troopers, and the M1 carbine is much less likely to cause that impression than an AR-15 or an MP5.

The M1 carbine is too good a gun to be overlooked. Several hundred thousand of them are in circulation in the U.S., and many can be purchased at very reasonable prices. Israeli Arms International (IAI) and Springfield Inc. are currently offering excellent M1 carbines made to GI specifications using surplus military M1 carbine parts. Many more surplus M1 carbines are standing offshore, waiting to be imported into the U.S. under a favorable political climate.

For defensive fighting purposes typically encountered by police and armed civilians, an AR-15 or one of its better clones is perhaps preferable to the M1 carbine, if both are used with expanding bulleted ammunition. However, the M1 carbine with expanding bullet ammunition is more effective than any .223 rifle loaded with GI handball or any submachine gun or semiautomatic pistol-caliber carbine on the market. The M1 carbine is that good!



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and we will send you free by return shipment one of our latest keyed cable locks (yellow colored) and instructions for its use on your Ruger firearm. We strongly encourage you to take advantage of this free offer. Please also adhere to the following important safety warnings, regardless of the type of storage system or locking device you use:

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Please remember that firearms should always be stored **unloaded** and separate from ammunition when not in use. This simple common-sense safety precaution can prevent the vast majority of gun accidents. Remember also that while gun locks provide increased security, any locking device can be intentionally defeated by a determined individual, given sufficient time, determination, keys, or tools; and that no mechanical device or lock can absolutely prevent careless, thoughtless, or deliberate misuse of a loaded firearm. It is your responsibility to own, store, and use firearms safely. There is no such thing as a foolproof gun, and a loaded gun should never be considered "childproof," regardless of internal or external safety devices.



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Burris, Leupold and Redfield offer bases with dovetail rings front and back. These rings really hold. The .454 Casull generates recoil energy similar to a .458 Win., but a Leupold base with dual dovetail rings has held the Burris scope on our gun perfectly.



A potential problem with this design is that if the holes in the receiver are misaligned, the scope may be stressed or even bent. Burris only uses Double Dovetails for their Signature rings with synthetic inserts that can correct for misalignment.

Conetrol rings hold the scope at both ends, and the bases permit some windage adjustment. Although getting the crosshairs squared up can be a tedious chore, once properly fitted, they are attractive and secure.

Talley's vertically split rings have long been a favorite with custom gunmakers and are becoming more widely available. They are very well made, attractive and strong. Talley also makes bases (available from Brownells) to permit the use of Ruger scope rings on other popular rifles such as the Winchester 70, Remington 700, Browning A-Bolt and some Mausers.

Scope rings are one item for which quality doesn't have to be costly. Weaver rings and bases aren't as fancy as some, but for sheer strength and utility combined with light weight, they are hard to beat.

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:

Brownells, Inc., Dept. GM

200 South Front Street
Montezuma, IA 50171-1000
(515) 623-4000
fax (515) 623-3896

Scope Base Screws — An Old Standard

Long ago, some unknown gunsmith drilled and tapped a rifle receiver ring to attach a sight base. The machine screw size he chose was 6-48. Since then, the 6-48 base screw has become the industry standard.

Why this oddball size was chosen is a mystery. Custom gunmaker Ed Brown commented that if you went into a machine shop to buy a 6-48 tap, they wouldn't have it. The only purpose for which 6-48 screws are used is to attach sights to rifles.

A #6 screw has a diameter of 0.138". The second number denotes threads per inch (tpi), so a 6-48 screw is a #6 with 48 tpi. Industry standards for #6 screws are coarse (32 tpi), fine (40 tpi), and special (36 tpi). The 6-48 size is an oddball.

Even the description of the Brownells Screw Chek'r (a device for identifying screw size) notes that it "covers all standard sizes, but not 6-48 or the other bastard sizes." Of course, Brownells supplies 6-48 taps and screws to the gunsmithing trade, and scope base manufacturers supply screws with their bases. It's not like we're going to run out. So what's the problem?

It used to be that heavy target scopes were mounted mostly on light-recoiling rifles. Powerful rifles either used iron sights or light 2½x or 4x scopes — and probably weren't fired often.

Today's shooters want light rifles, powerful cartridges, and bulky, heavy scopes. Keeping over 20 ounces of scope attached to a .338 Ultramag rifle is asking a lot of four small screws. Some gunmakers feel that the #6 size isn't adequate for current needs, and

that 8-40 (0.164" diameter, 40 tpi) should become the new standard.

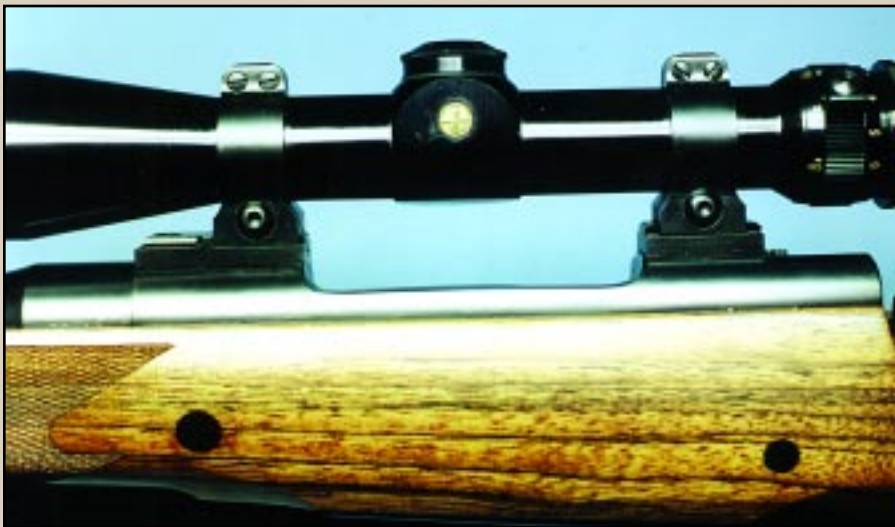
Ed Brown's custom 702 action comes drilled and tapped to accept 8-40 screws, as do other custom actions such as Nesika and Geske. Some custom gunmakers routinely convert factory actions to accept 8-40 screws by re-drilling and retapping the holes. Brown believes it's only a matter of time before the major gun manufacturers switch to the larger screws.

What about the millions of rifles already out there? Properly attached, 6-48 screws do quite well. They are specially hardened and heat-treated, and they thread into the tough steel of the receiver. Most makers recommend they be tightened to 20 inch-lbs., which is not that easy to achieve with slotted

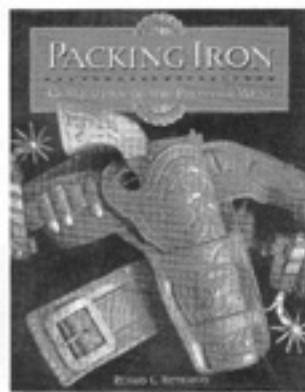
or Allen-head screws.

Screws with Torx heads are easier to tighten. These come standard on some new bases, and are available from several base manufacturers and from Brownells. The bases, screws and receiver should be degreased with alcohol, and a thread-locking compound should be applied to the screws. Cinched up tight, they are adequately strong for most purposes.

For extra security with heavy scopes or powerful rifles, Brownells sells an 8-40 base conversion kit to assist gunsmiths in adapting factory actions. This is not a job for the home hobbyist. Drilling and tapping the tough steel of a receiver, while keeping the holes straight and aligned, is a task for a good machinist.



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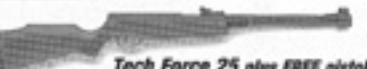
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Bianchi International has entered the tactical holster market with a modular system of components to accommodate a wide variety of handguns and accessories. The heart of the Bianchi Cobra system is the "Tactical Holster" which is an ingenious adaptation of Bianchi's military holster, the M9.

The Tactical Holster is basically a sandwich of Velcro and nylon; cleverly engineered to fit any configuration of handgun, with or without a weapons-mounted flashlight. There is a secondary security strap for a double-locking thumb snap retention in even the most rugged environments.

The Tactical Holster is designed to attach to either a standard 2.25" web belt or to Bianchi's "Modular Accessory Panel," which drops from the belt to the thigh. Tactical officers prefer to carry their sidearm and other accessories on their thighs, because bulky body armor and tactical vests can interfere with conventional hip carry. The Modular Accessory Panel provides six different attachment points for

Cobra mag pouches and other accessories.

In testing, we found the quality of construction to be typical of Bianchi — outstanding. The edges of the ballistic nylon were tightly rolled, the stitching was evenly spaced, and there was ample reinforcing at all the stress points.

Our sole complaint is the thumb snap, which must be lifted up to disengage. The tab to lift it is hard to grasp. Compared to the "downward-rock" motion required to release the safety on Safariland's tactical holster, the Bianchi holster was slow and awkward. But for versatility, adaptability and overall quality of construction, we were very pleased with Bianchi's Cobra Tactical line.



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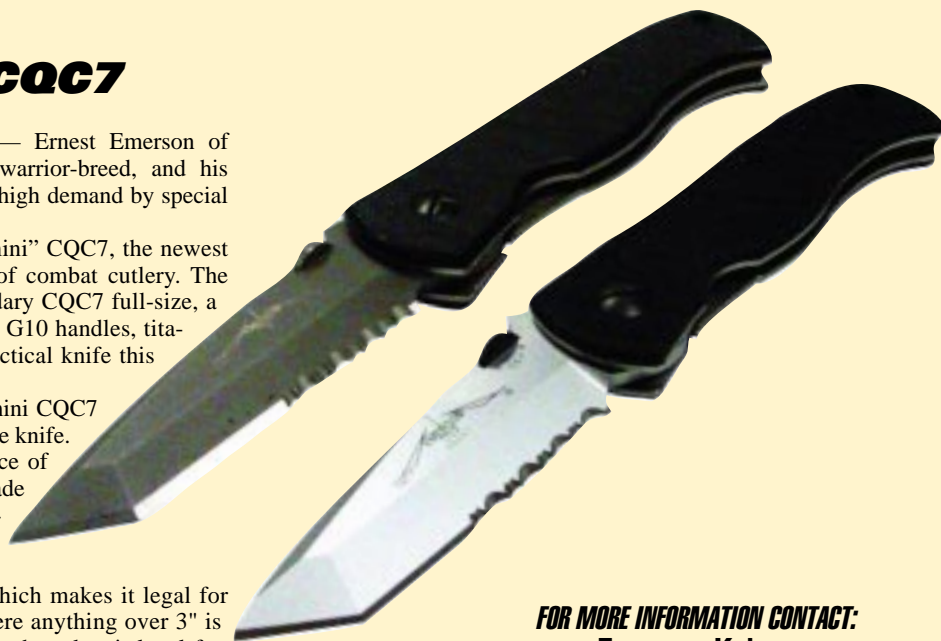
Let's get one thing perfectly clear — Ernest Emerson of Emerson Knives is the archetype warrior-breed, and his custom and production knives are in high demand by special force operators and hardcore professionals.

That understood, we can look at the "mini" CQC7, the newest knife from the man on the leading edge of combat cutlery. The mini is an 85 percent version of the legendary CQC7 full-size, a chisel ground tanto made of 154 CM steel, G10 handles, titanium liner and the best ergonomics of a tactical knife this side of feudal Japan.

Unlike most reduced-scale knives, the mini CQC7 is not a proportional reduction of the full-size knife. "We're not going to compromise the essence of the knife," Emerson explained. "The blade thickness, liner thickness and handle thickness are all the same. Only the length and width are shorter."

The mini has a blade length of 2.9", which makes it legal for many jurisdictions, especially Europe, where anything over 3" is illegal. Emerson noted that the shorter length makes it legal for airline travel, too.

"We don't make a gentleman's knife. Even though you can use it to open your mail, you can still drive it through the hood of a car if you want," Emerson said. The mini retails for \$139.95.



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BY CAMERON HOPKINS

Laser Grips

Crimson Trace is the leading maker of micro-lasers for handguns, under the brand name Laser Grips. As the new name implies, the laser is incorporated in a replacement grip. The laser-aiming device is fully adjustable for windage and elevation and the grip does not interfere with any holsters.

Most importantly, the Laser Grip people emphasize that conventional iron sights are still fully functional, unobscured and unimpeded — and they advise you to use them, except in certain situations that lend themselves to the tactical use of their built-in laser. Laser Grip tells you up front that their product is an auxiliary aiming device. “We believe you should always be able to sight and shoot a handgun without a laser,” says the first page of the company’s catalog.

Having granted that practical point, the Laser Grip is, in fact, an excellent adjunct to iron sights. First, a laser can be aimed from awkward positions, like reclining in bed or sprawled on the floor. Second, the laser is superimposed on the target so that if the eye is drawn to the threat, instead of the sights, there

is an aiming reference. Third, the laser can be a powerful deterrent, allowing a potentially lethal encounter to de-escalate.

We installed a Laser Grip on a Les Baer Custom “Monolith.” Zeroing is easy — using a rest, simply aim at a spot about 10 yards away, then adjust the laser to sit on top of the front sight. Adjustments are easy with the provided Allen wrench. The laser is extremely bright, even in well-lit areas.

Laser Grips are available for most popular makes and models of autos and revolvers, including Glock, Beretta, SIG, S&W, Colt and Taurus. Prices start at \$229, reflecting a recent price reduction of about 20 percent.



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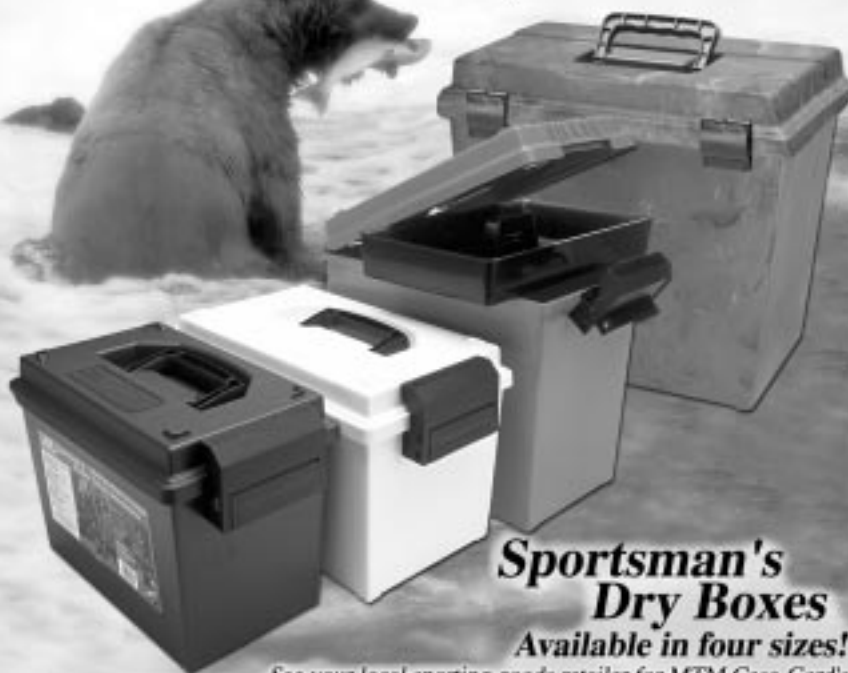


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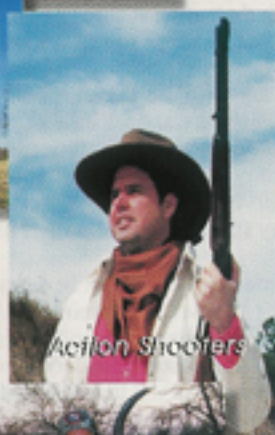
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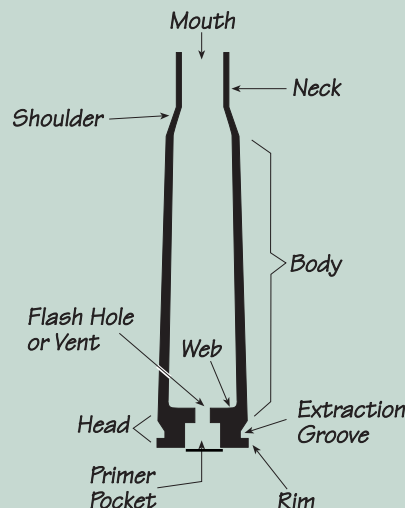
You Can Learn A Lot *FROM A PRIMER*

Handloaders are handicapped by being unable to measure pressure. Those who venture outside the envelope of safety provided by loading manuals can find themselves in dangerous waters. We've always been taught to look at the fired primer for signs of excessive pressure, and that's sage advice, but, generally, by the time noticeable primer flattening or deformation occurs, we've already gone too far. Here's why.

As the pressure builds in the case, it exerts equal force in all directions. Gasses take the path of least resistance, which, fortunately for shooters, results in pushing the bullet down the barrel. But if the pressure is more than can be used to accelerate the bullet, the gas has to look for somewhere else to go. The weakest link is the primer pocket. In a cutaway view of a cartridge case, we can see that the bottom of the primer pocket is quite thin compared to the rest of the base.

Actually, primers are vital seals, but pressure is still pushing through the flash hole until the bullet leaves the barrel. As long as pressures are reasonable and there is no excessive headspace, all is well. But excess pressure has to find someplace to go, and that path will be *around* the primer.

Large primers have a diameter of 0.210" (small are 0.175"), and primer pockets run between 0.208" to 0.209", which gives us the



press fit we want in primer seating, but this is not a complete barrier to excess pressure. The gas pushes outward on the sides of the pocket causing them to enlarge. And it doesn't take much expansion to turn the press fit into a self-decapping pocket.

The first warning sign of excessive pressure is not indications of primer flattening, but when it doesn't take any effort to put in a new primer. By that time, maximum pressure limits are already being exceeded.

It's hard to say how much pressure is needed to initiate the process of enlarging the primer hole, but the factories can give us some clues. Their normal workup testing usually includes going a little above the SAAMI maximum, just to see the latitude and safety of the powder they're loading. For example, the maximum pressure for the .30-'06 is 60,000 psi. Primer pockets will begin to enlarge, and primers begin to fall out, when pressures approach 70,000 psi.

Above, as the cutaway shows, the primer pocket is the weakest point in the cartridge case, and gasses can escape there if pressures are pushed too high. Left, repeated uses under excessive pressure can enlarge the primer hole, making primers difficult to seat.



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For some time now, we've been working with a wonderful software program called *Quickload*. It allows us to play *what if* games with internal ballistic calculations for pressure and velocity.

The ammo companies publish a velocity of 2,700 fps. for a 180 gr. bullet in the .30-'06. Plugging in a powder that we know to be good in the .30-'06 shows that loading the cartridge just two grains over maximum brings it up to the dangerous 70,000 psi range.

You can see that there is a nice safety margin, but it goes away quickly, too. Some reloaders think it's okay to *begin* a grain or two above the maximum.

A great benefit of reloading is that brass can be used many times, but it has a finite life, based largely on how the

shooter treats it. It seems that some loaders think it's criminal to throw away a piece of brass. And this is false economy and dangerous.



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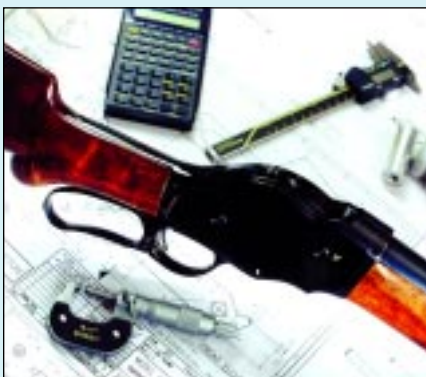
If you enjoy lever-action shotguns, 2001 seems to be your year. First, Winchester announced their Model 9410 shotgun in .410, and now Tristar Sporting Arms, Ltd. is importing a stunning replica of the Winchester Model 1887 from Australia.

An original John Browning design, the Model 1887 12 and 10 ga. lever-action shotgun is one of the rarest and most unusual shotguns ever built. Total production between 1887 and 1898 was only 64,855 guns, and then an improved Model 1901 in 10 ga. only was introduced.

A lesser-known, but fascinating fact is that Winchester actually chambered the M1887 for the .70-150 Winchester rifle cartridge based on a necked-down, brass, 12 ga. shotgun shell. The load was 150 grs. of powder with a bullet of 700 and 900 grs.

Three such guns are known to exist.

The "New Model" 1887 was reverse-engineered from the improved Model 1901 and is now produced by the famous ADI Limited Lithgow Facility in Australia, that currently produces Steyr AUG and FN small



Tristar's big lever-action Model 1887 shotgun is a stunning reproduction of one of John Browning's most unusual designs.

arms for Australian and other defense forces.

Lithgow's Model 1887 is a finely fitted and finished 2 3/4" 12 ga. shotgun of historic significance. It sports an improved cylinder, 22" chrome-lined barrel, and American walnut stocks, and weighs 8.75 lbs. The magazine accepts five shells, and the rolling-block action is smooth as silk.

Suggested retail price is \$1,195, and considering the complexity of the action, that's a reasonable price. This traditional Model 1887 will sell well with the cowboy action shooters, and those who simply enjoy owning and shooting something a bit different and tinged with nostalgia.

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The 20 ga. slug is accurate, flat-shooting and often produces better penetration on big game than a 12 ga. slug. Given its milder recoil, the 20 ga. slug gun is also ideal for women and young shooters.

Winchester has just improved the traditional 20 ga. slug load by offering a new 260 gr. sabot Partition Gold slug with a muzzle velocity of 1,900 fps. Based on the highly successful 12 ga. Supreme Partition Gold shotgun slug loading, the new 20 ga. Partition slug is designed especially for rifled bores and will be in the gun shops well before the 2001 deer season rolls around.

Accurate and flat-shooting, Winchester's Partition Gold 20 ga. slug also yields milder recoil than its 12 ga. counterpart.



FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT: Winchester Ammunition

427 N. Shamrock
East Alton, IL 62024
(618) 258-3568
www.winchester.com

Turkey Tubes For Constricted Columns

Turkey tubes are special, and if you hunt turkeys, these special-use choke tubes can be worth their weight in gold. The usual design of a turkey tube is based on a gradual constriction section followed by a long parallel section. The theory holds that the shot column is compressed and rearranged in the constriction portion, while the longer parallel portion permits the shot column to readjust and realign, thus producing a tighter and more consistent pattern. The theory works in practice.

Turkey tubes are normally extended to accommodate the long parallel portion of the choke and are thick-walled to contain the pressure outside the barrel.

Carlson's, an industry leader in choke tube production, has improved upon the basic design by adding ports to the end of the turkey tube. Premium turkey loads now sport 2 to 2 1/4 ozs. of shot at velocities from 1,125 fps to 1,210 fps in the 12 ga. 3" and 3 1/2" hulls and in the 10 ga. 3 1/2". Ported turkey tubes can help a lot in reducing the rather heavy recoil and muzzle jump generated by these powerful loadings — especially when you're backed up against a tree!

Made from aircraft-grade stainless steel with a non-reflective coating, Carlson's ported tubes are also knurled to facilitate easy inser-

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Include 440C Stainless blade, handle material,
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Overall length is 7 3/8"

SS166K Cobra Kit\$9.95

SPORTSMAN KIT



Overall length is 7 3/8"

SS164K Sportsman Kit\$9.95

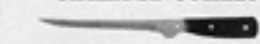
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Sharp, flexible stainless steel blade is 12" over-
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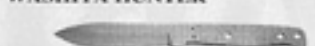
CN142 1"x42"\$10.95

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The kits below include stainless steel pre-
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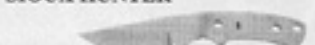
WASHITA HUNTER



SS463 Washita Blade only\$19.95

SS463K Washita Kit\$27.95

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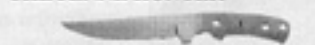


7 5/8" overall with 3" blade

SS458 Sioux Blade only\$17.50

SS458K Complete Kit\$25.95

CHEYENNE HUNTER



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SS495 Cheyenne Blade only\$18.75

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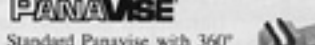


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SS783 Navajo Blade only\$24.72

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Standard Panavise with 360°
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CUTLERY KIT11 pc. traditional style cutlery set includes pre-
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block of Dymondwood handle material.

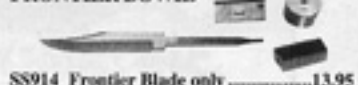
TEXAS BOWIE KIT

The Texas Bowie Blade, (12 1/2" overall, 7" x 1
1/2" x 3/16" thick blade), brass guard and pom-
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Made from 440C Stainless Steel

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SS262 Gut Hook Blade\$8.70

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SS260 Tundra Blade\$8.70

KODIAK

Overall length 6 1/8", blade 2 1/2"

SS261 Kodiak Blade\$8.10

THE SHARK

Overall length 5 1/2",
blade length 2 7/8", 2
3/4"

SS176 Shark Blade\$8.95

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Supplied with 3 rivets. Made from 440C
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without sacrificing magnum power***



THE SM By Holt Bodinson

*the right direction
compact rifles
and range.*

Short, bolt-action, big game hunting rifles really came into their own with Winchester's release of the .308 family of cartridges in the 1950s.

With an overall length of only 2.800", the .308, .243 and .358 had an impact that forever changed the shape of car-

tridge and hunting rifle design.

The .308 family of compact cases proved to be inherently accurate. The .308 quickly replaced the .30-'06 in big-bore competition and even had a long run as a premier benchrest cartridge. The .243 Win. proved itself equally accurate for precision varmint and light big game hunting. The short, fat cases facilitated loading densities of 95 to 100 percent, resulting in more uniform ignition, less shot-to-shot variations in velocity, and greater accuracy.

The shorter cases in hunting calibers also permitted rifle makers to shorten and lighten their actions and to scale down the overall proportions of their rifles. This resulted in rifles that are compact, light, well-balanced and fast-handling. Indeed, some of the most pleasingly designed and accurate out-of-the-box hunting rifles ever released were the pre-'64 Winchester Model 70 Featherweights, the short-action Remington 600s and 700s and Sako Foresters chambered for the .243 and .308.

In 1963, Winchester surprised the hunting world with another new short-action cartridge, the .284 Winchester. Here was a hot 7mm sporting cartridge with the same overall length of a .308, but with a larger body, sharp 35-degree shoulder and rebated rim. It was a radical design for its day, but it proved you could pack the powder capacity of a .30-'06 into a case with an overall length of 2.8". Yet the .284 is a potent big game cartridge in a short action rifle.

continued on page 38

Left: Browning's Medallion A-Bolt in .300 WSM is both handy and extremely accurate for a factory rifle firing factory ammo. Right: The three .300 WSM factory loadings include a 180 gr. Fail Safe, a 180 gr. Power-Point, and a 150 gr. Ballistic Silvertip. Below: A nilgai hunt in Texas was the proving ground for the new .300 WSM cartridge, which showed outstanding penetration and weight retention on this tough Indian antelope.





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.300 WSM continued from page 37

Cartridge Evolution

Looking back over Winchester's 50-year history of short-action cartridge designs, the evolution of the .300 WSM becomes obvious. It's not surprising that Winchester has taken the sharp 35 degree shoulder and rebated rim design of the .284 and combined these features with a larger diameter case body while maintaining an overall cartridge length of 2.8" in the recently introduced .300 WSM.

Anyone who is comfortable with the recoil of the .30-'06 can easily transition to the new .300 WSM and gain magnum performance without feeling they're being punched around. How does the .300 WSM perform in the field? Is it really a midget .300 Win. Magnum?

We recently used the .300 WSM in both the Winchester Model 70 and the Browning A-Bolt while hunting nilgai, a large antelope from India that stands approximately 55" at the shoulder and weighs about 600 lbs. These animals are fast, tenacious, make for a magnificent trophy and are very good eating.

If you don't drop a nilgai with your first shot, you're in for a long chase. The nilgai is one tough animal. Outfitters usually recommend at least a .300 Win. Mag. class cartridge.

Winchester currently offers three very different loadings for the .300 WSM. There are 180 gr. Fail Safe and 180 gr. Power-Point loads rated at 2,970 fps and a 150 gr. Ballistic Silvertip pushing 3,300 fps. According to the factory, WW 760 is the propellant of choice in all loads, so hand-loaders should be able to equal these velocities. The working pressure for the .300 WSM is right up there at 65,000 psi.

The 180 gr. Fail Safe offers moderate expansion and very deep penetration. It is our choice for nilgai bulls, as the ideal shot is placed through the shoulder to reach the heart and lungs, and penetration is essential. The Fail Safe would be a good bullet choice for moose, brown bear and larger African plains game.

The 180 gr. Power-Point is a more traditional soft point. It offers excellent expansion and penetration. From our observations on nilgai cows, which are smaller and lighter framed than the bulls, the Power-Points created much more internal organ damage than the Fail Safes. It would be an excellent bullet for elk, large bodied deer, bear and most African plains game.

The 150 gr. Ballistic Silvertips offer rapid expansion and less penetration. We did not fire this load at game, but based on previous experience, the Ballistic Silvertips are well suited to sheep, antelope, deer, black bear and lighter African plains game. We would like to see a 150 gr. Nosler Partition at 3,300 fps added to the factory lineup. If not, the Nosler Partition gets our nod as a bullet we would surely want to handload.

Premium Performance

The short-action Winchester Model 70 Featherweight is furnished with a 24" barrel,

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while the short-action Browning A-Bolts carry 23" tubes. Both rifle lines scale out at about 6.5 lbs. unscoped. The difference in velocity between the 23" and 24" barrels is statistically insignificant.

What was significant is that stated factory velocities at the muzzle were right on the button and three-shot accuracy was sub-MOA. We're talking 1/2" to 3/4" groups at 100 yards with factory rifles firing factory ammunition. Like the short, fat, PPC series of benchrest cases, the .300 WSM proved to be not only efficient, but also wonderfully accurate.

One of the outstanding benefits of the short 30s, a category that includes the Lazzeroni Patriot as well as the .300 WSM, is their reduced level of recoil in light, handy rifles when compared to the .300 Win. Magnum. The short 30s require less powder to generate the same level of performance, and the powder seems to burn more efficiently in these sharp-shouldered cases, making shorter barrel lengths practical.

With the introduction of the .300 WSM, Winchester has maintained the lead in the development of short-action big game cartridges that they have enjoyed for over 50 years. Mated to the handy, short-action Browning A-Bolts and Model 70 Featherweights, the new .300 WSM is destined to be a success in the game fields.



FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:

Winchester Ammunition

(618) 258-3568

www.winchester.com

Browning

(801) 876-2711

www.browning.com

U.S. Repeating Arms

(801) 876-3440

www.winchester-guns.com

Kahles American HUNTER 3-9X

This tough, variable-power scope is an ideal companion to a .300 WSM rifle.

While nilgai hunting, we also had the opportunity to test Kahles' new American Hunter 3-9x42 scope with their intriguing TDS reticle system. The TDS system is a standard 4-plex-type reticle with four shorter reticle lines below the main horizontal line, which can be calibrated to compensate for range and wind to 500 yards when firing the .300 WSM. Although it is complicated — the reticle is mounted in the second image focal plane and only works at the 9x power setting — we were impressed with the brightness and precise, repeatable adjustments of the Kahles American Hunter line.

The Century 2000 Defender is the ultimate in self-defense.

With the 3-1/2" barrel the C2K will chamber the 3" .410 00 Buck Shot with five pellets.

The C2K Defender has a 3-1/2" double barrel, rebounding hammer, retracting firing pins, crossbolt safety, cammed locking lever, spring-loaded extractor and interchangeable barrels.

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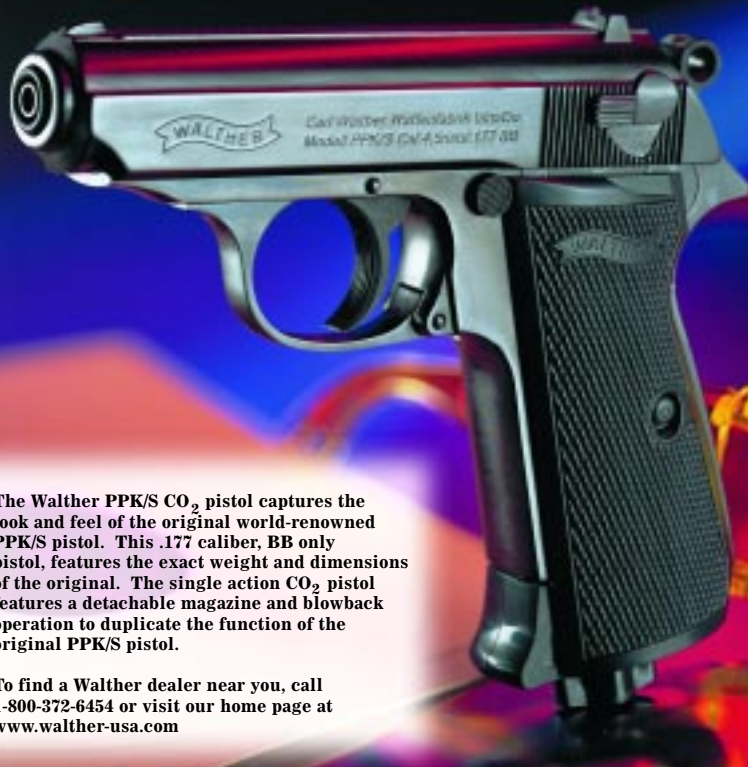
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Made with utmost attention to quality and detail at every step, the Super Varmint AR from Les Baer may be an evolutionary advance in the development of varmint rifles. *Opposite: Although this is no lightweight, mountain hunting gun, the nearly 12 lb. Baer rifle proved its mettle by putting 150 shots into a group hardly larger than a dime.*





*Think there's no upstart,
semi-auto, plastic-stocked AR
that can outshoot your tackdriving
turnbolt? Then this amazing rifle
is about to rock your universe.*

The Les Baer SUPER VARMINT

Story by Dave Anderson Photos by Ichiro Nagata

Gunsmith Les Baer is mighty proud of his Ultimate AR rifles. The literature describing the flagship Super Varmint Model confidently states: "... as dependable as any rifle built ... so good it makes the tough shots look easy ... guaranteed to shoot 1/2 MOA groups!" Bold words, especially considering the short time Baer has been in the highly competitive AR business.

Well, as they say in Texas, if it's fact, it ain't bragging. The Super Varmint semi-automatic rifle is a pleasure to shoot, absolutely reliable and accurate enough to make most bolt-action varmint rifles run and hide. It may well be representative of the super-accurate target and varmint rifle of the future.

Varmint shooters may be headed for one of those paradigm shifts futurists love to talk about. For decades, the classic varmint rifle has been a heavy-barreled bolt action. Improvements have been evolutionary: more rigid actions, better barrels, strong and stable synthetic stocks, pillar bedding and aluminum bedding blocks.

Today's varmint rifles are certainly more accurate and consistent than those of 40 years ago, but in concept and appearance they

haven't changed much.

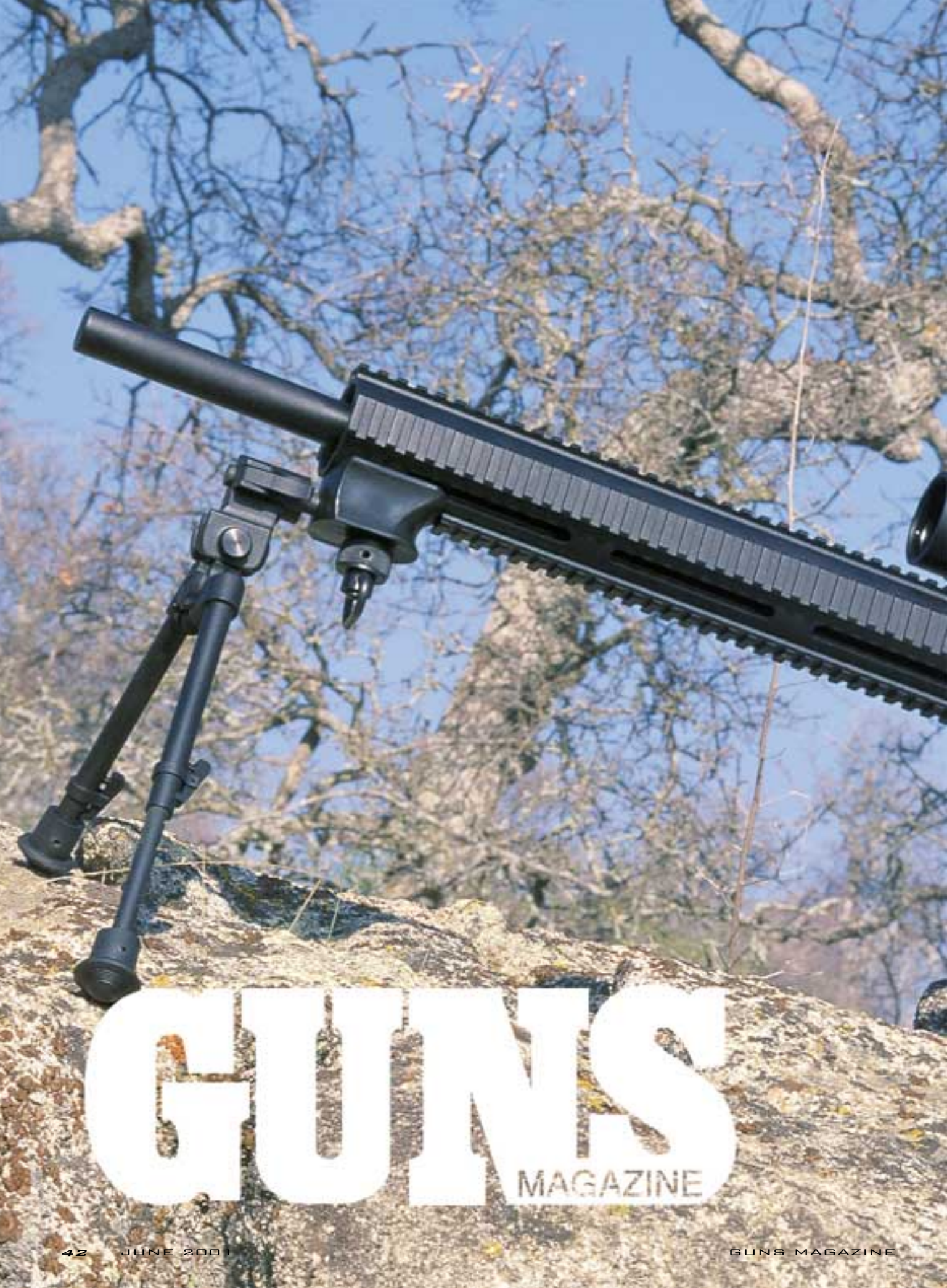
In the past decade or so, custom gunmakers and target shooters have been unlocking the secrets to accuracy with the AR-15 design. Target shooters have come to appreciate the accuracy potential of the AR rifle, but much of the general shooting community isn't aware of what has been happening.

The Master Of Accuracy

Having earned the highest respect for his 1911s, gunsmith Les Baer recently began turning his attention to America's rifle. The development of super-accurate ARs such as the Les Baer Ultimate may mean that the long reign of the bolt-action varmint is coming to an end.

This is going to be hard for a lot of us tra-

"AS THEY SAY IN TEXAS, IF IT'S A FACT, IT AIN'T BRAGGING. THE SUPER VARMINT SEMI-AUTOMATIC RIFLE IS ACCURATE ENOUGH TO MAKE MOST BOLT-ACTION RIFLES RUN AND HIDE. IT MAY WELL BE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE SUPER-ACCURATE RIFLES OF THE FUTURE."



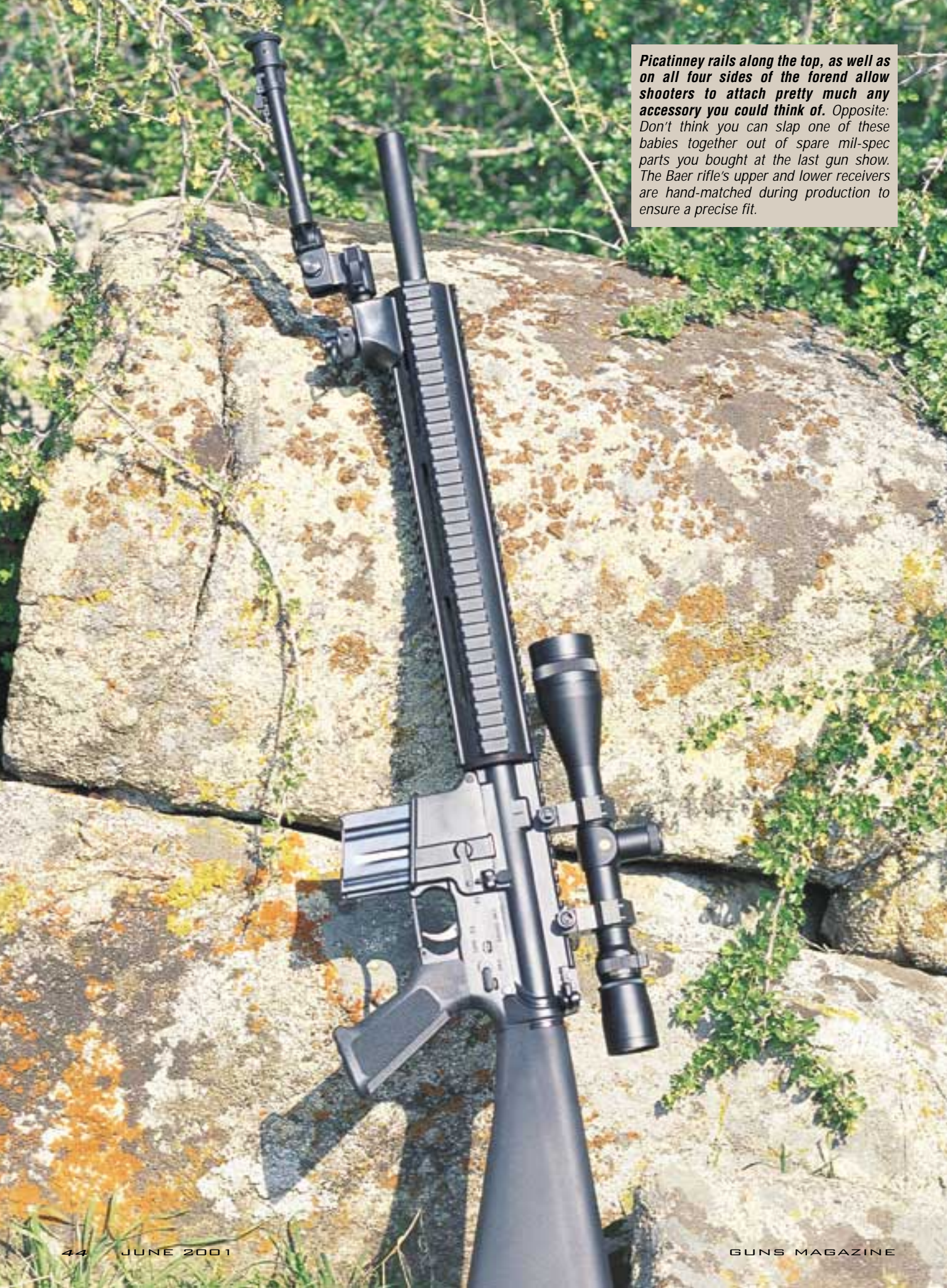
GUNS

MAGAZINE

Les Baer

SUPER VARMINT .223



A black Baer rifle is positioned diagonally across the frame, resting on a large, light-colored rock covered in patches of orange and yellow lichen. The rifle features a long Picatinny rail on the handguard, a telescopic sight mounted on the receiver, and a bipod attached to the front. The background consists of green foliage and more rocks.

Picatinny rails along the top, as well as on all four sides of the forend allow shooters to attach pretty much any accessory you could think of. Opposite: Don't think you can slap one of these babies together out of spare mil-spec parts you bought at the last gun show. The Baer rifle's upper and lower receivers are hand-matched during production to ensure a precise fit.



ditional types to swallow. It's little short of heresy to suggest that a descendant of the controversial M-16 might be capable of challenging the bolt action in pure accuracy. Speed of fire, sure. Durability and reliability, maybe. But accuracy? That has been the bolt action's trump card.

Sub-1/2 MOA — Now That We Have Your Attention ...

Okay, enough theory. What sort of accuracy are we talking about? We spent two afternoons shooting Les Baer's top-line rifle, the Super Varmint Model in .223. We started by conditioning the bore, firing and cleaning, and working up to five, then 10, then 20 shots between cleanings. The shooting was done in February in North Dakota, the temperature at 3 degrees above zero, with an occasional puff of wind blowing hard snow crystals into the action and onto the scope lenses.

We fired 30 consecutive five-shot groups

at 100 yards using three types of factory ammunition: Black Hills 52 gr. Match HP, Black Hills 50 gr. V-Max, and Federal 52 gr. Sierra MatchKing BTHP. We kept the pickup truck parked behind the shooting bench with the engine running; after firing two groups, the shooter would climb in the cab and warm his hands at a heating vent.

Those were the terms — two shooters, over two days, with three different types of factory ammunition, firing 30 consecutive groups in bitterly cold conditions. Here are the results: The best group measured 0.27". The worst group measured 0.65". The average of all 30 groups was 0.475". Every single one of the 150 shots fired would have hit a dime — at 100 yards.

What's most impressive about the Baer rifle is the consistency. An occasional tiny group doesn't mean too much. These days, one hears a lot of casual talk about rifles, even big-game rifles, shooting in the "2s" and "3s" (i.e., 0.2" and 0.3" groups). Generally, it turns out it was one fluky three-

shot group. These things happen.

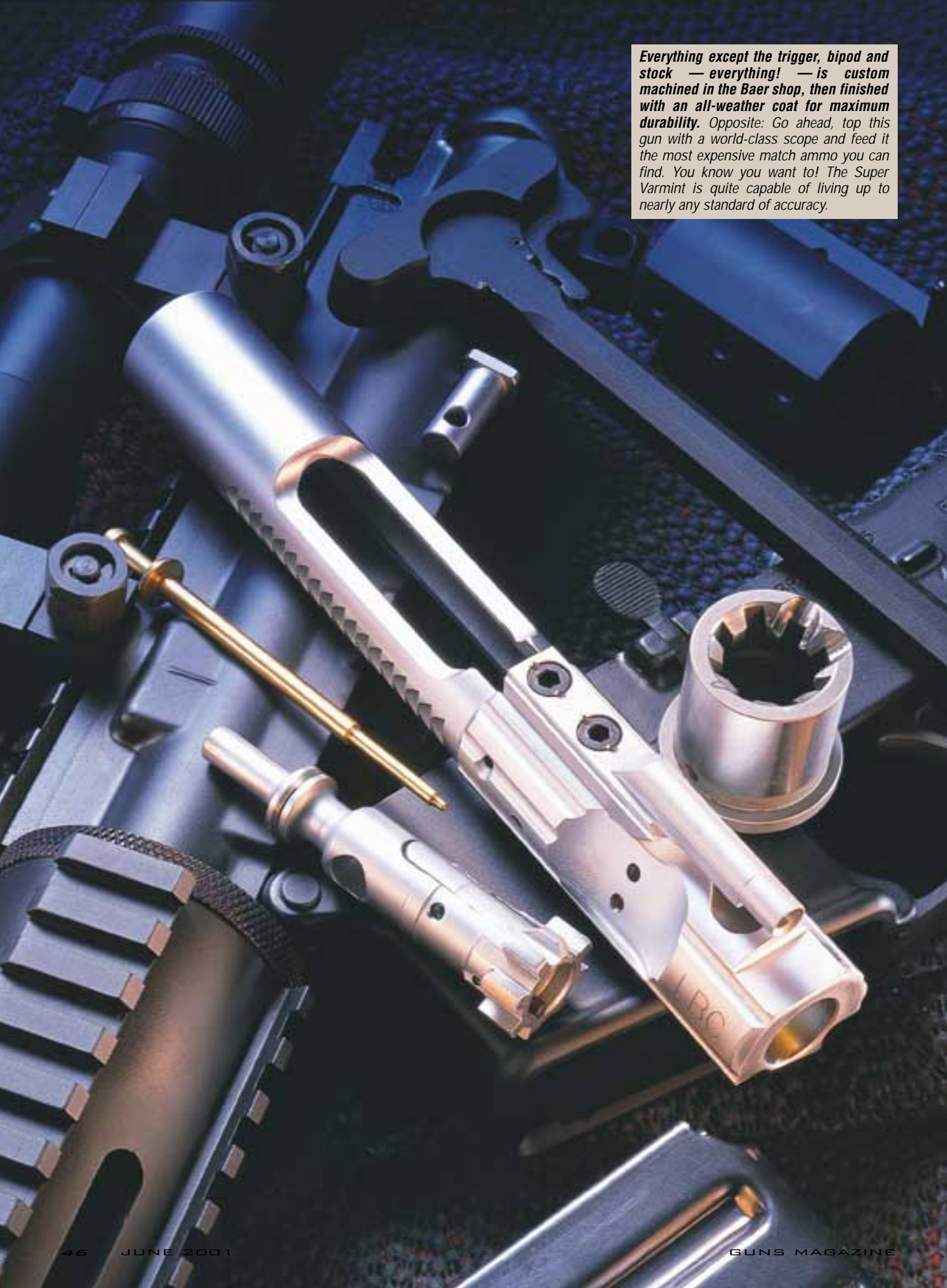
Great, But It Could Have Been Better

It's worth noting that both shooters felt we weren't reaching the rifle's full accuracy potential. Several times, we'd have four shots in 0.25" or less and then a fifth opening the group to the 0.5" to 0.6" range. Warmer temperatures (and trigger fingers) would likely have reduced group average size by at least a tenth, maybe two tenths.

Baer included several test targets shot under better conditions. They measured from 0.15 to 0.20 MOA. We don't know if these were average or "best" groups, but they do show the rifle's potential.

The cold weather had one benefit — it proved that the Les Baer rifle is functionally reliable even in tough conditions. Including shots fired to condition and foul the bore, plinking at twigs in the backstop and the shots fired for group, some 300 rounds were

"WE EXPERIMENTED WITH SUBSTITUTING COMPETITOR'S COMPONENTS, BUT EACH TIME WE DID, GROUP SIZE WOULD OPEN UP. BY MAKING OUR OWN PARTS, WE FEEL CONFIDENT THERE AREN'T ANY WEAK LINKS."



Everything except the trigger, bipod and stock — everything! — is custom machined in the Baer shop, then finished with an all-weather coat for maximum durability. Opposite: Go ahead, top this gun with a world-class scope and feed it the most expensive match ammo you can find. You know you want to! The Super Varmint is quite capable of living up to nearly any standard of accuracy.



fired. There were no malfunctions of any kind. Though the bore was cleaned regularly, the bolt carrier and action weren't cleaned until the end of each day.

So what's the secret? According to Baer, there is no secret. It's a matter of doing a lot of little things right. "All of the components have to work together," Baer commented. "The big advantage we have is that we make most of our own parts. The only components on the rifle we don't make ourselves are the Jewell trigger, Versa Pod, and the buttstock and pistol grip. That means we don't have to compromise on standards, and the parts are designed to work together as a unit.

"For example, our upper receivers have the carrier bore precision machined and honed. The bolt carriers are made to the same tolerances, so the carrier travels straight back and forth while cycling. We make the bolt heads so they match the locking lug recesses in the barrel extensions."

Baer continued, "We experimented with substituting one component at a time with a competitor's product. We'd fit another make of match barrel to our upper receivers, and group size would open up. Or we'd fit our barrels to a competitor's upper receiver, and groups would open up. By making our own parts we feel confident there aren't any weak links."

All The Right Stuff

Let's talk about those components. The Les Baer Custom (LBC) barrels are made of 416-7000 series stainless steel blanks, cryo treated to relieve stress and hand lapped before and after rifling. A 20" heavy barrel is

standard on the Super Varmint model, but 18", 22" and 24" lengths are optional. The test rifle had the standard length barrel, with rifling twist of 1:12" for 40 to 55 gr. bullets. For those wishing to shoot heavier bullets, twists of 1:8" and 1:9" are available.

LBC upper and lower receivers are machined from 7075 T-6 forgings, precision-machined and hard coat anodized. The upper and lower receivers are matched during production to ensure a precise fit. On the Super Varmint rifle, there was virtually no discernible play between the two parts.

Baer rifles receive a tough, all-weather Teflon-S finish called Bear Coat on the upper and lower receiver, all small parts and even on the barrel, at the customer's request.

Uppers are available with or without the forward assist. All uppers come with a Picatinny rail top for flexibility in attaching iron or optical sights. The bolt carrier, bolt carrier key, bolt and extractor are LBC precision parts, hard chromed for maximum durability. The "QMI Gold" firing pin is machined from titanium bar stock and coated with an extremely hard titanium nitride finish.

Standard equipment on Super Varmint rifles is an LBC round, free-floated handguard machined from aluminum, knurled for sure gripping and hard anodized. An optional feature is a new LBC four-position handguard. Like the original, this is a free-floating design that places no stress on the barrel. The new design incorporates Picatinny rails on all four sides of the guard — top, bottom and both sides.

Developed for tactical law enforcement use, the four-position handguard allows maximum flexibility in mounting sighting

equipment and other accessories. The varmint shooter probably won't need all those options, but the full-length top Picatinny rail does allow flexibility in scope-ring positioning with long, target-style scopes.

Did We Mention The Trigger?

Standard Les Baer AR's come with an excellent 3½ lb. single-stage trigger. Optional on all models, and standard on the Super Varmint model, is the unsurpassed Jewell two-stage trigger. Jewell triggers are a byword for excellence in the highly competitive arena of benchrest shooting, an arena which quickly uncovers any weaknesses, and where "good enough" just doesn't make it.

The Jewell trigger is an absolute joy. The first stage, or take-up, took 16 ozs. of pressure to move the trigger smoothly about 1/4". Continuing to apply pressure, the second stage broke cleanly and with virtually no perceptible motion at 27 ozs. — a bit lighter than standard. Les Baer advised that 32 ozs. is standard on Baer rifles with Jewell triggers.

How is it possible to get a safe, reliable 2 lb. pull on a semi-auto rifle? Intelligent design, uncompromising workmanship, and the best materials properly hardened for durability.

The Versa-Pod is the other assembly that Les Baer buys rather than makes. This is another extremely well-built, well-designed accessory. It can be attached or detached instantly; the legs can be folded for transport or quickly extended for shooting. It is very

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THE .450 MARLIN

A MAGNUM IN DISGUISE

By JOHN TAFFIN

THIS NEW RIFLE AND CARTRIDGE COMBINE A HINT OF WESTERN NOSTALGIA WITH A BIT OF 21ST CENTURY PERFORMANCE.



Opposite: Set up as a lever action "guide gun" with a long eye-relief scope in a mount from Ashley Outdoors, the 1895M is a perfect blend of the feel of the Old West and the performance of the 21st century. Above: The new .450 Marlin cartridge, left, combines the design elements of, from right, the .458 Win. Mag., the .338 Win. Mag. and the .45-70 Government.

Many would-be cowboys and fans of the Old West love the feel of a levergun in their hand, whether on the cowboy shooting range or in the thick brush hunting deer or bear. But American shooters are slow to accept non-traditional chamberings in leverguns. The .30-30 and .45-70 cartridges are givens, but anything in between has not been readily accepted.

Now, Marlin offers a new levergun cartridge that is a real winner. Shooters looking for new levels of performance will appreciate the advantages of the new cartridge; more conservative levergun shooters will be pleased to know that this is not a radical new design, but simply a means of taking the .45-70 into the 21st century with a face-lift. The new cartridge, called the .450 Marlin, may not bear a magnum label, but it still gives magnum-style performance.

The rifle, which is chambered for this cartridge, is known as the Model 1895M. It is so close to the 1895G Guide Gun in the size of the hole in the barrel, weight, barrel length, stock configuration and barrel twist, that you must look very closely to find any difference other than the marking of the barrel. All three of Marlin's Guide Gun-style leverguns have ported barrels and thick recoil pads to help reduce felt recoil.

This recent model, however, offers just a mite more porting than the others. The Guide Gun and Outfitter both

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.450 MARLIN HANDLOADS

Load	Velocity	Accuracy**	Load	Velocity	Accuracy**
Hornady Factory 350 gr. FN	2,030 fps	.3/4"	Hornady 300 gr. JHP 54.0 grs. H322	1,843 fps	.1 1/2"
Hornady 350 gr. FN 42.0 grs. RE-7	1,586 fps	.7/8"	Hornady 300 gr. JHP 56.0 grs. H322	1,953 fps	.1 1/2"
Hornady 350 gr. FN 44.0 grs. RE-7	1,627 fps	.1"	Hornady 300 gr. JHP 58.0 grs. H322	2,050 fps	.1"
Hornady 350 gr. FN 46.0 grs. RE-7	1,678 fps	.1"	Hornady 300 gr. JHP 46.0 grs. RE-7	1,545 fps	.3/4"
Hornady 350 gr. FN 48.0 grs. RE-7	1,738 fps	.1 1/2"	Hornady 300 gr. JHP 48.0 grs. RE-7	1,614 fps	.1 1/2"
Hornady 350 gr. FN 50.0 grs. RE-7	1,817 fps	.1 1/2"	Hornady 300 gr. JHP 50.0 grs. RE-7	1,731 fps	.7/8"
Hornady 350 gr. FN 50.0 grs. H4895	1,430 fps	.1 1/2"	Speer 400 gr. FN 50.0 grs. H4895	1,603 fps	.5/8"
Hornady 350 gr. FN 52.0 grs. H4895	1,454 fps	.1 1/2"	Speer 400 gr. FN 52.0 grs. H4895*	1,673 fps	.1 1/2"
Hornady 350 gr. FN 54.0 grs. H4895	1,655 fps	.3/4"	Speer 400 gr. FN 54.0 grs. H4895*	1,770 fps	.1 1/2"
Hornady 350 gr. FN 56.0 grs. H4895	1,778 fps	.1 1/2"	Speer 400 gr. FN 56.0 grs. H4895*	1,861 fps	.2"
Hornady 350 gr. FN 58 grs. H4895	1,823 fps	.1 1/2"	Speer 400 gr. FN 45.0 grs. RE-7	1,651 fps	.1 1/2"
Hornady 350 gr. FN 52.0 grs. XMR2495	1,413 fps	.1"	Speer 400 gr. FN 47.0 grs. RE-7	1,756 fps	.5/8"
Hornady 350 gr. FN 54.0 grs. XMR2495	1,508 fps	.7/8"	Speer 400 gr. FN 49.0 grs. RE-7	1,800 fps	.1 1/2"
Hornady 350gr. FN 56 gr. XMR2495	1,565 fps	.1 1/2"	Beartooth 405 gr. GC 46.0 grs. XMR2495	1,389 fps	.3/8"
Hornady 350 gr. FN 54.0 grs. H322	1,860 fps	.1"	Beartooth 405 gr. GC 48 grs. XMR2495	1,466 fps	.1"
Hornady 350 gr. FN 56 grs. H322	1,977 fps	.1 1/2"	Beartooth 405 gr. GC 50.0 grs. XMR2495	1,539 fps	.7/16"
Hornady 350 gr. FN 58 grs. H322	2,030 fps	.3/4"	Beartooth 405 gr. GC 52.0 grs. XMR2495	1,567 fps	.7/8"

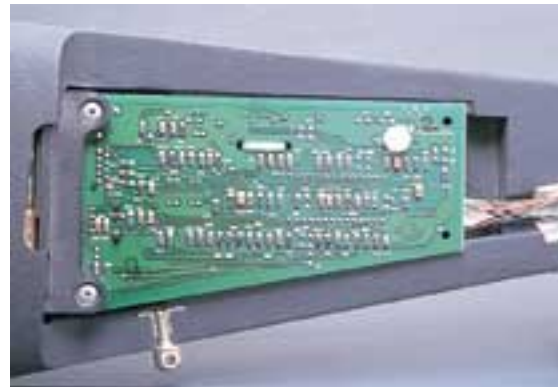
**Compressed load **Accuracy is the result of three five-shot groups fired at 50 yards.*

“THE .450 MARLIN IS AN EXCELLENT CARTRIDGE CHAMBERED IN AN EQUALLY EXCELLENT RIFLE. THE CARTRIDGE, HOWEVER, DOES NOT OFFER IMPROVED ‘SMASHING POWER’ AND DOES NOT RENDER THE .45-70 OBSOLETE.”

A Handloader's Look At **THE REMINGTON** By Charles E. Petty **ETRONX**

An in-depth analysis of this innovative hunting rifle and its unique cartridges reveals a new frontier of accuracy potential.





Left, above: Where the firing pin would be in a conventional rifle, the EtronX has a ceramic-coated conductor. With no spring to compress upon cocking, the only resistance the shooter feels against the bolt comes from the friction of the locking lugs. **Right:** The heart of the EtronX system is the electronic control board lodged in the stock. By transmitting an electric impulse, lock time is not just reduced, but virtually eliminated, giving the shooter much greater control over the rifle's accuracy.

While you've probably already heard about Remington's EtronX system of rifle and ammunition, it is comprised of such high-tech components and is so innovative that we think it is really worth another look based upon more than just an initial test firing. First impressions aren't necessarily accurate.

That was the case here: Some drawbacks emerged that weren't obvious in our short-term evaluation, but so did some very positive elements.

The Model 700 EtronX has two distinctly novel systems. While neither electric priming nor electronic triggers are new, the combination of the two in a sporting gun is a new development.

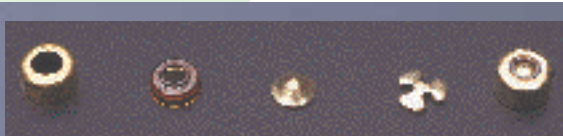
Electric priming has been around since around World War II, primarily in aircraft applications. Solenoid-operated triggers have been seen from time to time in small arms since the 1950s, but they used conventional primers. This really is a new system with two interdependent units. You can't shoot conventional ammunition in an EtronX rifle, nor can you shoot EtronX ammo in a standard gun.

The Prime Directive

Building the system required solutions to a series of challenges in both gun and ammo. They couldn't test the gun design until ammo had been developed, and nobody had ever made primers like this before. Remington's plan demanded that conventional brass be used, and the EtronX *does* fire cases that are exactly the same as standard ammo.

The primer is the only thing that's different — it uses an insulator to separate the priming compound from the case, because without insulation, the rifle would short-circuit and nothing would work. So instead of the normal two-piece primer (cup and anvil), the EtronX has four. None of these components are the same as those used in standard parts, although some have the same names.

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On the outside, the EtronX rifle looks much like a conventional Model 700, but its high-tech advantages become apparent upon closer inspection. **Inset:** Designed to be "transparent," the components of the EtronX primer consist of, from left, the cup, insulator, contact and anvil. A complete primer is seen at far right.



The .**22** WMR TODAY

By C. Rodney James

*This sometimes-ignored and
often-misunderstood cartridge
is at last coming into its own
as a new wave of premium
ammo hits the market.*



Right: A wide selection of choices from today's ammo manufacturers makes the .22 WMR more versatile than ever before. Above: Some of today's premium .22 WMR factory loads include, from left, the Remington 40 gr. PSP, the 30 gr. V-Max, Federal's 30 gr. HP, Winchester's 34 gr. HP, CCI's 30 gr. HP, and a 40 gr. SP and HP from PMC.

After 42 years of production, we are seeing the birth of new and better ammunition in the .22 WMR, an often-misunderstood caliber. Even before the first WMR cartridge hit the market in late 1959, controversy began boiling as to whether the WMR was simply a more powerful short-range round for larger game and varmints such as coyotes and wild turkeys, or a precision long-range cartridge for woodchucks, marmots and ground squirrels at ranges over 100 yards. Early guns and ammunition delivered high velocities and flat trajectories, but accuracy was lacking at longer ranges, dashing hopes of rimfire varmint hunters for successful long-range hunting with this cartridge.

Nevertheless, a hard core of WMR loyalists began experimenting with custom barrels and even reloading the ammunition by pulling factory bullets and loading .22 Hornet bullets in the quest for better results. Ammunition companies responded with warnings of excessive pressures and wear on the one hand and recognition on the other that there was a market for better, flatter-shooting ammunition.

Today shooters are seeing the beginning of a new gener-



ation of WMR ammunition. The new bullets are lighter, faster and feature an almost explosive effect on woodchucks and similar varmints. The 30 to 34 gr. bullets are generally more accurate than the 40 to 50 gr. loadings of a decade or more ago. Yielding velocities over 2,000 fps, the new light bullets do better in wind than .22 LR and earlier WMR loadings that operated in the transonic velocity (slightly above and below the speed of sound), where the ride is bumpy and wind deflection at its worst.

The Ultimate WMR

Competition among manufacturers is beginning to heat up as more WMR rifles come on the market and demands for better performance increase. What's available and how do these new cartridges rate? What can we expect from the new generation of rifles? How can you draw the ultimate performance out of the WMR?

First, a few caveats. The WMR is very difficult to manufacture *well*. It is the longest straight-walled rimfire cartridge in production, and getting an even wall thickness is difficult and critical. Uniform crimping of the bullet in the case mouth presents a formidable challenge to the maker.

Putting an even prime in a deep case and developing a primer compatible with the proper powder is another hurdle. In other words, the WMR is not just a stretched .22 LR, and we will never see a really bargain-price cartridge available. Finally, the WMR is a non-reloadable proposition; therefore, accurate shooting depends on cartridge-to-cartridge consistency.

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ACCURACY RESULTS:

.22 WMR

LOAD	ACCURACY*	
	Ruger 77/22VBZ	HK 300
WW 40 gr. HP	2.2"	1.6"
WW 34 gr. HP	1.7"	1.9"
Fed. 50 gr. HP	1.3"	2.5"
Fed. 30 gr. HP	1.2"	1.8"
Rem. 40 gr. SP	1.8"	1.3"
Rem. 30 gr. BT	1.3"	n/a
CCI 40 gr. HP	1.4"	1.4"
CCI 30 gr. HP (+V)	1.8"	1.5"
CCI 30 gr. HP (TNT)	2.4"	1.3"
PMC 40 gr. HP	1.6"	1.7"

*Accuracy results are the result of three five-shot groups at 100 yards.

.22 WMR Velocities

LOAD	VELOCITY*	
	Ruger 77/22VBZ	HK 300
WW 40 gr. HP	1,766 fps	n/a
WW 34 gr. HP	2,052 fps	n/a
Fed. 50 gr. HP	1,443 fps	1,329 fps
Fed. 30 gr. HP	2,058 fps	n/a
Rem. 40 gr. SP	1,777 fps	n/a
Rem. 30 gr. BT	1,925 fps	n/a
RWS 40 gr. HP	1,095 fps	n/a
CCI 40 gr. HP	1,837 fps	1,744 fps
CCI 30 gr. HP	2,193 fps	2,157 fps
PMC 40 gr. HP	1,762 fps	1,735 fps

*All groups were chronographed 12 feet from muzzle with an Oehler 35P chronograph.



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7.62x39mm 122 Gr. FMJ (500)	489-453	\$63.99
7.62x39mm 122 Gr. HP (20)	668-169	\$3.99
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.22 WMR

continued from page 53

Each rifle will show a definite preference for certain types of ammunition and a dislike of others. Meticulous range testing will be necessary to find the best combination for your rifle, but isn't that what shooting is all about?

Remington

Remington reentered the WMR field three years ago and for the first time offered rifles as well as ammunition. First out were 40 gr. HP and a new offering — a 40 gr. pointed soft point. Promised was a "ballistic tip," — a 30 gr. bullet with a pointed polymer tip. Called the "V-Max," this one was a long time in development, with shipments beginning in early 2000.

This design offers excellent aerodynamic qualities and the advantage of the weight in the rear for better accuracy. Unfortunately, our early results were disappointing, with 4" groups at 100 yards through a Ruger K77/22 VBZ rifle and misfires in the HK 300 autoloader. Both of these test rifles are good shooters capable of MOA accuracy at 100 yards under calm conditions.

Chats with Remington technicians garnered the information that .75" 100-yard groups were obtained in-house — indoors through a 40x Rangemaster from the custom shop. We received a second batch (same lot) and, after having the headspace and bedding on the Ruger checked (and improved a bit), tried again.

This new batch excelled, at 1.1" outdoors. The earlier batch re-tested "less bad" at 3.75", though still poor. This is the first time we have encountered such radical differences within one lot. It was also a lesson in not giving up after the first try.

The priming on this lot was either less sensitive, or the brass was harder, since we experienced misfires in the HK300. Tests with a Marlin lever rifle experienced similar problems. With a little tweaking, the V-Max should be an excellent shooter.

CCI

CCI/Blount was first in the market with a lightweight bullet, and the Mini Mag +V was an instant success — flat-shooting and accurate in many rifles. The latest generation is the 30 gr. Maxi Mag TNT. Like the +V, the TNT features a plated-on jacket, but with the largest, deepest hollowpoint cavity in any WMR bullet.

The results are explosive on prairie dogs and very lethal on woodchucks, as the bullets expand and fragment, delivering full energy into the body rather than penetrating clear through. The accuracy of this cartridge also varied from batch to batch within one lot, with 100-yard groups running as small as 2.4" and as large as 3.8" in our Ruger, which did not like this ammunition. The HK, on the other hand, had a definite preference for it, delivering groups slightly over 1".

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Federal

Federal's latest offering is the "Premium" 30 gr. JHP, designed by Sierra, with a copper jacket applied in the traditional manner. This one is a real tack driver, grouping .5" at 100 yards and staying at .9" at 150 yards under dead-calm conditions in the Ruger.

Under good shooting conditions, with wind moving under 4 mph (just enough to be felt on the face) this bullet will stay very close to 1" at 100 yards.

Winchester

Creator of the WMR, Winchester entered the ultra-high-velocity field in 1999 with a 34 gr. JHP "Varmint Load." Like the Federal, this bullet has an applied jacket. The Ruger has delivered .9" groups in calm conditions.

Like the TNT, Winchester's 34 gr. bullet expands with explosive effect, breaking into almost sand-sized particles when fired into tissue simulants such as ballistic gelatin or even water. This does not mean, however, that they are ricochet-proof. Test shooting the TNT and the "Varmint Load" into turf at 50 yards revealed that while both expanded on contact, they ricocheted with enough force to punch through a half-inch sheet of plywood and keep right on going.

PMC

While offering rimfire ammunition for more than two decades, PMC has just entered the .22 WMR field with two offerings in its "Predator" line. There is the standard 40 gr. JHP and a new JSP with a flat-point design. Both are good groupers, running around .9" to 1.3" at 100 yards in the Ruger — comparable groups to everyone else's standard WMR loadings. The PMC package is sweetened by the fact that both loadings are priced at about a dollar less than the going rate.

Accuracy with the WMR will likely continue to improve, but since it is not used in competition shooting (beyond a little pistol silhouette shooting), a "match" round is unlikely. The point has been reached, however, where the accuracy of the ammunition has exceeded the potential of out-of-the-box rifles. No "match" or high-accuracy varmint rifles have been produced as yet, thus those seeking improved performance will go the custom route. With the very best of equipment, 200-yard kills on woodchucks are possible, but this will only happen under ideal conditions of good light and next to no wind.

For those who don't want to get into reloading or are just plain "rimfire junkies" who savor tack-driving accuracy, low noise and low recoil with a range potential nearly double the .22 LR, all at minimal cost, the new WMR ammunition delivers the goods.



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REMINGTON ETRONX

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The EtronX cup is similar to a conventional cup with the striking exception that there's a hole in the middle. As the primer is assembled an insulator — also with a hole in the middle — goes inside the cup. Then an electrical contact goes in, separated from the cup by the insulator. Then the primer mix goes in.

The primer is also different. In order to improve electrical conductivity, tetracene is replaced with carbon black. Remington reports that nothing else is changed so the intensity of the primer is not reduced. The whole thing is finished with an anvil that looks very much like a standard part, but serves only to hold everything together. In a conventional primer, the anvil's primary function is to provide support so the primer mix can ignite by percussion.

Our experience confirms Remington's claim that the EtronX primer system is "transparent." In other words, there is no significant difference in velocity for identical loads fired with both types of primer. Since we obviously cannot shoot both loads in the same gun, we need to allow for some small differences due to different barrels.

The 700's Smarter Cousin

All we have to do to see the difference in the ammo is look at the primer, but the rifle looks just like other Model 700s until closely examined. The component on the right rear of the action, which looks much like a normal safety, is, in fact, an electric switch that shuts off power to the trigger and makes the rifle inoperable. Also, right in the middle of the pistol grip is a red LED that glows when the rifle is ready to shoot. If the light is off, the rifle is safe.

At the bottom of the pistol grip is the master switch, which requires a special key to activate. This switch is either on or off, but, unfortunately, it is not intuitively obvious which icon is which. There are two positions: one marked with an "O" (could this mean on or off?) and the other a straight line similar to the letter "I". Oddly, "I" signifies the "on" position. Although this binary notation is in-line with the high-tech design of the gun, Remington would have been better-off designating the positions as "on" and "off." Unless your day job is as a Javascript software designer, the EtronX safety may not be exactly intuitive.

Even though the circuitry automatically enters a low power-consumption mode when not used for a few minutes, unless you turn the master switch off, you will return to find the battery dead or dying within a few days. When used correctly, batteries last a long time, but it's still a good idea to make sure you've got a spare 9-volt battery and a small screwdriver in the range kit.

At The Speed Of Light

The attraction of the system is that there is virtually zero lock time. On a conventional rifle, even though it's very brief, there is a momentary delay — measured in milliseconds — between the time the sear breaks and the round fires. There is no such delay in the EtronX. Remington reports that if you shot an EtronX and a conventional rifle at exactly the same instant, the EtronX's bullet would already be down-range before the firing pin even hit the primer on a regular action.

The electronic circuitry that makes this speed possible is contained in a sealed unit inside the stock. The trigger is really just a switch that sends a high-voltage burst of energy (150 volts) up some wires to the connector in the action, down the special contact in the bolt — the firing pin — to the primer. All this happens at near light speed. Lock time is reduced by 99 percent.

This system also eliminates the need for the heavy spring and cam system, which is necessary to cock the hammer on a conventional rifle. In the EtronX, the locking lugs offer the only resistance to bolt-lift. This makes bolt operation incredibly fast and smooth.

Pulling the EtronX's trigger is unlike anything we're used to. There is virtually no movement of the trigger itself. It feels as if you're pushing against an immovable object until the gun fires. It takes the concept of "surprise break" in a very different direction, but it does not eliminate common shooter errors. The trigger pull is 3½ lbs., but you can still jerk it with exactly the same result you'd get with a standard trigger.

Getting To Know The Trigger

We experienced a long learning curve in trigger management. Over a matter of months, we shot the rifle on a semi-regular basis and tried different techniques of trigger control. What finally emerged was different from the usual shooting method of only putting the tip of the finger on the trigger and gently increasing pressure until the gun fires. That didn't work on the EtronX, and we'd frequently jerk the trigger. We'd squeeze with steadily increasing pressure, but the gun only fired at a point we thought was far past where it should have.

The technique that worked best for us was to put the trigger right in the middle of the first joint and then use a pretty aggressive press. The object is to get the gun to shoot within a couple of seconds. There is no way to "milk" this trigger, and it's far better to apply the amount of pressure needed to fire a shot in a quick, controlled manner. As we learned to do it that way, all at once the gun became much more fun to shoot.

The rifle was equipped with a new Bausch & Lomb 6x24 scope with their new Rainguard coating. This is truly remarkable stuff. Water simply doesn't bead up on the lens, but runs right off. Even in a downpour, the lenses remained remarkably clear and unfogged.

A Handloader's View

Shooting the rifle was obviously limited by the fact that only one factory load is available. That load uses a 50 gr. Hornady V-Max boattail with the proper green tip. Velocity and accuracy are comparable to the conventional load with the same bullet.

Handloading opens up a whole realm of choices not available in factory ammo. The good news is that you may use loading data from your favorite source in EtronX primed cases. Special data is not required. Our experience showed that some powders gave slightly lower velocities with the EtronX, but others did not. Obviously, Remington has the only pressure testing setup there is for this type of load, but, as long as you don't exceed published data for conventional primers, everything should be just fine.

One big difference between the new ammo and old is that the appearance of the EtronX primer changes very little between the unfired and fired state of the ammo. There is no firing pin impression. It's a little strange at first, so the handloader cannot rely on primer appearance to warn about excessive pressure. We don't have the same frame of reference at all, and while primer appearance is not the best way to judge a *safe* handload, by the time you'd see obvious flattening of *this* primer, pressure would be much too high.

The rifle showed some real hints of brilliance with a load using Hodgdon Varget and the Nosler 50 gr. Ballistic Tip. In this case, the brass was neck-sized, and the bullet seated out to nearly touch the rifling.

We never could put a five-shot group together, but several times there would be four in a tiny cluster measuring around 0.2". Unfortunately, there would be one wanderer that opened the group to about 1/2". We honestly can't say whether the stray was our fault or not, but the shooter is willing to take the blame. Moreover, 1/2" groups are not to be sneezed at and offer the tantalizing prospect of greater things. Accuracy with factory ammo has averaged slightly over 1".

In spite of the learning curve associated with the EtronX system, this high-tech rifle has many advantages over conventional rifles. The EtronX offers speed, ease and accuracy in a progressive package.



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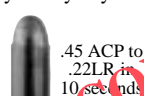
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LES BAER

continued from page 47

strong and rigid, yet permits enough rotational movement that if the legs are set on uneven ground, the rifle can be rotated to square up the crosshairs.

Building a Les Baer rifle is not just a matter of assembling components. Machining parts to the closest tolerances is just the starting point. From there on, it's hand work. "There's only so much you can do with a machine," Baer commented. "These are true custom-built rifles. Every part is fitted by hand, just as precisely as we know how. Matching the upper and lower receivers, fitting the barrel and handguard, tuning up the action — all done by hand."

A Worthy Scope

For sighting equipment, Baer personally uses and recommends the Leupold 4.5-14x scope for the Super Varmint model. At the low end, it has enough field of view for running shots on coyotes; at the high end, enough power for long-range shots at small targets; and at all powers, the definition, resolution, toughness and reliability that shooters have come to expect from Leupold.

For accuracy testing, even more power seemed in order, so a Leupold 8.5-25x50mm Long Range Target scope was fitted. This superb instrument has oversized elevation and windage adjustment turrets. Parallax adjustment is by a third knob on the left side of the scope tube next to the adjustment turrets. The shooter can easily use this knob to adjust focus while looking through the scope.

The quality of this scope can hardly be overstated. The cold temperature finally proved beneficial — with no mirage or heat waves, the scope could be turned up to 25x. At maximum magnification, we could not only see the .22 caliber holes at 100 yards, but also we could actually quarter them with the crosshairs. Adjustments were accurate, precise and repeatable. Realistically, it is more scope than needed by even the most demanding varmint hunter, but for a combination target/varmint rifle, it is unbeatable.

The scope was attached to the rifle with LBC scope rings. These rings compare to standard commercial scope rings like a military personnel carrier compares to a pickup truck. They are heavy, uncompromisingly functional and built to hold the scope securely under the most arduous conditions with no concession to light weight or fancy appearance. By the ingenious use of precision inserts, the same rings can be used for 1" diameter or 30mm diameter scope tubes.

Once the rings have been bolted to the Picatinny rail and the scope locked down, it isn't going anywhere. Although not claimed to be quick detachable mounts, loosening the mounting bolts with a wrench allowed

the scope to be readily removed. When the scope was reattached, we found that point of impact had shifted less than 1/2". With a less accurate rifle, the shift would likely have been undetectable.

Nothing But The Best For These Varmints

The ease and speed with which upper assemblies of AR rifles can be switched can be a useful advantage. A shooter could, for example, have one Les Baer lower unit and two identical Super Varmint upper assemblies. Then if the shooting got fast and furious, he could quickly remove one upper assembly and set it aside to let the barrel cool while continuing to shoot with the second. Or he could have one assembly with a 24", 1:12" twist barrel and a second with a 20", 1:9" twist barrel for heavier bullets.

The Super Varmint is no lightweight mountain rifle. The basic rifle with 20" barrel weighs 9.75 lbs. without scope, rings, Versa-Pod or ammunition. Depending on the scope and scope rings chosen, weight could be in the 11 to 12 lb. range.

With his Ultimate rifles, Les Baer had one simple goal. "We set out to build benchrest accuracy into an AR-type rifle. A lot of people think that can't be done. We think it can."

Current list price on the Super Varmint model is just under \$2,000. That includes

your choice of round or four-position hand-guard, Jewell trigger and Versa-Pod. Scope rings are extra-cost options. Compared to off-the-rack bolt-action varmint rifles, it is expensive. Compared, as it should be, to custom-built target/varmint rifles, it is competitively priced.

The military heritage and appearance of AR-type rifles may be a concern to some. Though functionally no different than any other semi-auto sporting rifle, the "black rifle" image drives anti-gunners and even some shooters batty. Occasionally, shooters will proclaim that "military" rifles have no place on the target range or in the hunting field. They'll say this with a straight face, while holding in their hands a bolt-action Mauser 98.

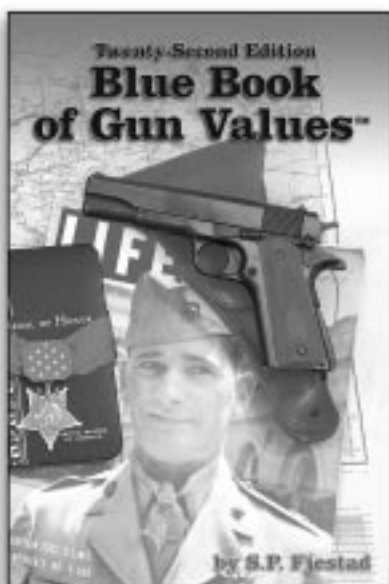
Mauser rifles have equipped more armies, fought more battles, and seen more combat than the M-16 ever has. Custom ARs such as the Super Varmint are no more "military" than a fine custom sporter built on a Mauser action. They should be appreciated for what they are: accurate, reliable target and hunting tools.



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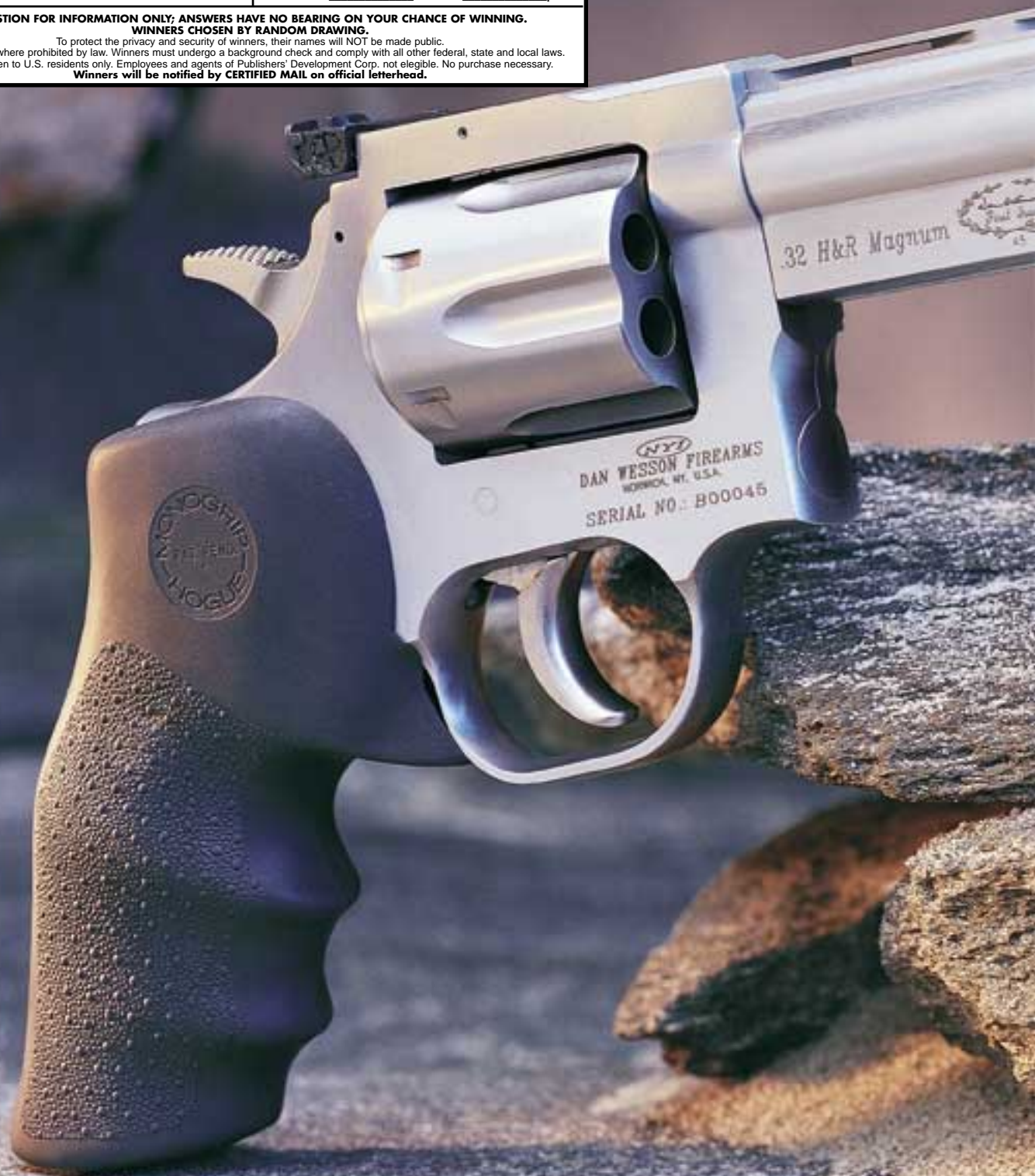
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Our Gun Of The Month prize for June is a delightful .32 Mag. Model 732 revolver from Dan Wesson Firearms. Perfect for target shooting or even some game hunting, the 732 features traditional double action operation with a 6" barrel, white target trigger, serrated ramp front sight, and adjustable rear sight with white target notch blade. The rugged Model 732 is made entirely of stainless steel with a six shot cylinder, and comes with Hogue finger-groove rubber grips. The ventribarrel can easily be replaced with any of Dan Wesson's optional barrels, in lengths of 2.5" to 10". The red insert on the front sight can also be replaced with an optional yellow, white or black insert to suit your shooting needs. Several Hogue presentation-grade wood grips are also available as options. With the 6" barrel attached, the Model 732 tips the scale at 46 ozs.

Suggested retail value of this gun is \$735. To learn more about the entire line of products available from Dan Wesson Firearms, or to find an authorized dealer near you, contact the company at (607) 336-1174, or visit them online at www.danwessonfirearms.com.

THE .450 MARLIN

continued from page 48

have two rows of porting on each side of the front sight, with four holes in the top row and two in the second row. The 1895M, which is chambered in the new .450 Marlin, adds one more ported hole to the top row.

Rugged & Reliable

Marlin leverguns are well known for using real steel for all parts, as well as good quality walnut in both buttstock and forearm. Both buttstock and forearm are checkered, and the magazine tube extends about halfway between the end of the barrel and the front of the forearm. This gives the 1895M a magazine capacity of four rounds.

Sights are a gold bead ramped front mated with a folding semi-buckhorn rear, which is adjustable for elevation by moving the ladder forward or back. Windage is taken care of by tapping the sight one way or the other in its dovetail slot. The safety is the much maligned crossbolt safety. It works well, but is not aesthetically pleasing to most shooters.

In a manner similar to all Marlin leverguns, the 1895M is easily scoped by using the Weaver one-piece base on top of the drilled and tapped Marlin receiver. We chose to use a Weaver variable 1.5-3x in Weaver rings for test-firing groups.

We did not have to remove the rear sight to mount the scope. This scope, which is relatively small in size and power, easily handles most jobs that the 1895M is designed to accomplish.

A fine choice in scope mounts for the 1895M is the Scout Scope Mount by Ashley Outdoors. No drilling or tapping is necessary as this mount uses the rear sight dovetail and the already-drilled and tapped holes on the top of the Marlin receiver. The Scout Scope Mounts work on all three of Marlin's Guide Gun concept leverguns in .45-70, .444 Marlin and the .450 Marlin.

Powerhouse Cartridge

If the .450 Marlin looks familiar it's because it is basically the .458x2" American — a cartridge developed in the early 1960s by shortening a .458 Win. Mag. case. This allowed the building of a lightweight, short-action, big-bore bolt gun for those that wanted the caliber, but not the heavy recoil of the .458, nor the long-actioned heavy rifles in which it was chambered. It also worked in converted Winchester Model 94s.

The .458x2" American was a belted cartridge just as is the new .450 Marlin. The .458x2" American was even often referred to as a belted .45-70. What happened to it? It was soon realized that the .458x2" would enter the chamber of a 7mm Mag. or .338 Mag., and the results, if fired, could be disastrous. Because of this theoretical problem, a good cartridge simply remained a wildcat proposition.

To counter this "problem," the Marlin round has a higher belt so that it cannot enter the chambers of rifles intended for other belted rounds, nor will it fit in a .45-70.

We have already seen some very strange comments about the .450 Marlin by those who obviously have not done their homework. The .450 is an excellent cartridge chambered in an equally excellent rifle. The .450 Marlin, however, does not offer improved "smashing power" and does not render the .45-70 obsolete.

The .450 Marlin as loaded by Hornady is rated at 2,100 fps with a 350 gr. jacketed bullet. It clocked out slightly less than that in our gun over the Oehler Model 35P with readings on different days of both 1,925 fps and 2,030 fps. At 40,000 psi or more, this load is much too powerful for any of the old leverguns, and especially the Springfield Trap Door.

Lest you think this renders the .45-70 obsolete, both Cor-Bon and Buffalo Bore offer 350 gr. jacketed bullet loads for the .45-70 that are rated at 2,100 fps. They also clock out at just under this in the Guide Gun. If the demand is there, both Buffalo Bore and Cor-Bon will offer loads in .450 Marlin.

No, the .450 Marlin does not render the .45-70 obsolete by any means. It simply gives us another choice and another look. Perhaps we could just call it the modernization of the .45-70 case replacing the extra large rim with a "modern" belt.

The Long And Short Of It

Neither does the .450 Marlin turn the levergun into a long-range hunting rifle. Zeroed for 150 yards, the 350 gr. Hornady JFN .450 Marlin will drop 5.4" at 200 yards and 3' at 300 yards. As with the .45-70, the .450 Marlin is a short-range rifle for big critters.

The 350 gr. Hornady bullet used in the .450 Marlin is not simply their older .350 flattened off. A comparison shows the jacket extends higher up on the 350 FN and is scored to assist with expansion. Eventually, Hornady and others will offer other bullets in this round, but right now, any other choice remains a reloading proposition.

Hornady's factory loads proved to be exceptionally accurate in this Marlin 1895M. At 50 yards, three shots grouped in 3/4", while at 100 yards in a strong wind, the three-shot group measured 1 1/4". The .450 Marlin cartridge and the Marlin 1895M have the accuracy and power to take anything that walks in North America. We do not yet know how tough the .350 FN bullet is, but we will learn as results come in from the field.

Handloading The .450

After shooting several boxes of Hornady's factory loads, we turned to the reloading bench. Hornady has the dies and we found a .338 Win. shell holder works just fine. Given that the .450 Marlin is a straight-walled case, it works well with Hornady's three-die set, as supplied for the .45-70, with a sizing die, expanding

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and de-priming die and a seating and crimping die. All cases were lubed with Midway's Spray-On Lube and allowed to dry before sizing.

With no loading data available for the .450, we first compared the two cases. Both the .450 Marlin and the .45-70 were filled with a ball powder and the charges weighed. This told us that the capacity of the .450 was 93 percent that of the .45-70. They are almost identical in length, but the .450 is heavier, especially around the head of the case.

With this in mind, we went to some favored .45-70 loads for leverguns and proceeded accordingly. We duplicated the factory load with H322 starting at 54 grs. and working up to 58 grs., which yielded a muzzle velocity of 2,030 fps and the same 3/4" groups at 50 yards. These results came from Hornady's 350 gr. JFN, which is their cataloged #4503.

For reloading, we chose the same powders and bullets we would normally use in any Marlin levergun chambered in .45-70. These powders are Alliant Reloader 7, Hodgdon H4895 and H322, and Accurate Arms XMR2495. Bullets chosen, all of which have proven in the past to have a cannelure located for the proper OAL for the Marlin 1895 action, were Hornady's 300 gr. JHP and 350 gr. JFP, and Speer's 400 gr. JFP. All three bullets shot exceptionally well during our test.

Ports & Cast Bullets

A real surprise was waiting for us when we switched to cast bullets. We did not expect much, as porting and cast bullets are not always compatible. Beartooth Bullets provided some of their .460" 405 gr. hard-cast, gas-checked bullets as we were testing the Marlin 1895M in .450. These were loaded over charges of Accurate Arms XMR2495 in increments starting at 46 grs. They shot incredibly well with the first load, a duplicate of the old Trap Door loading at 1,390 fps, putting three rounds in 3/8" at 50 yards.

When we approach 2,000 fps in either the .45-70 or .450 Marlin, recoil gets to be a bit brisk. While the recoil would not be a bother in a hunting situation, the porting and recoil pad do an excellent job of making the .450 Marlin "enjoyable" off the bench.

The 1895M will be a great choice for elk, moose and large bears. We expect this fast-handling gun will be carried in many a pick-up rack and saddle scabbard.



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Above: Sixgunners who favor the Colt S&W enjoy using Unique powder, but it can also be used to create hotter loads for more modern S&W and Ruger revolvers. **Left:** Unique can be used to load a wide variety of revolver and pistol cartridges, including, from left, the .357, .41 and .44 Magnums, .44 Special, .45 Colt, .45 Auto Rim and .45 ACP.

WITH UNIQUE

By John Taffin

Other than black powder, only two powders for reloaders that were introduced in the 19th century still exist today: Bullseye and Unique. The former goes back to 1898 while its

junior partner was introduced in 1900.

Unique was first introduced to the shooting world by Laflin & Rand, then it became a DuPont product in 1902, and then was found for most of its life in containers bearing a Hercules label. The Hercules label exists no more, and Unique enters the 21st century under the banner of Alliant.

As expected, a powder that is this good and has been around this long has certainly gained a large following. In 1936 Elmer Keith wrote: "Hercules' Unique is a fine powder for loads slightly above normal on up to the full pressures the arm will safely stand. It is not nearly as good for magnum revolver loads as their #2400, but is a fine powder up to 15,000 to 16,000 psi, giving very good velocities for the pressures developed. Unique is a fine powder for loads around 1,000 (fps) in velocity, getting close to 1,100 (fps) in some cases with normal weight bullets."

Writing in 1948, the well-known ballisticians Phil Sharpe said: "This is one of the best of the entire Hercules line for mid-range use in the military rifle family or the so-called sporting rifle types such as the .30-30, .38-55, etc. This powder is also well adapted to use in revolver cartridges and has for a long time been used by loading companies for this purpose."

Finally, John Wootters writing in the 1970s: "Unique is noted for the ease with which it is ignited and burned, although in many loads it tends to leave a residue in the barrel after firing. This powder is non-hygrosopic, which means it does not readily absorb moisture from the atmosphere; indeed, Unique is almost weatherproof."

Down And Dirty

One negative aspect that many shooters often raise about Unique is that it is "dirty" burning. Dick Quisenberry at Alliant states that the "new" Unique coming this spring will be 60 percent cleaner burning than the "old" Unique.

Unique also has a reputation as a hot burning powder, and this can be a problem with heavier loads and plain-based bullets. Best to use gas check bullets to avoid leading. Of course, this is not a problem with jacketed bullets.

While we have not actually counted the thousands upon thousands of rounds that we have loaded and fired with Unique, we are sure it has been our most-used powder for the past 40 years, certainly so for standard loads, as well as our three favorite cartridges for cowboy shooting activities: .45 Colt, .44-40 and .38-40.

There are many grand powders out there, but to this date only Unique has been used in everything from .32 Mag. up to .454 Casull. Since Unique is so easy to ignite, we always use standard primers. What follows are some of our most favored Unique loads for equally favored sixguns and semi-automatics.

continued on page 66

"A powder that is this good and has been around this long has gained a large following. In 1936, Elmer Keith wrote: 'Unique is a fine powder for loads slightly above normal on up to the full pressures the gun will safely stand.'"

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LOADING WITH UNIQUE

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.32 H&R Magnum

It is unfortunate that this grand little cartridge first saw the light of day in the H&R line of inexpensive little sixguns. Had it been introduced in a Ruger or S&W, it probably would have garnered much more respect over the years. It is an excellent little cartridge for busting tin cans or varmints and it works just fine with Unique.

Our jacketed bullet loads consist of Hornady's 85 gr. JHP or Sierra's 90 gr. JHP and 6.0 grs. of Unique for 1,300 to 1,340 fps from an 8" Dan Wesson, or NEI's 100 gr. hard cast Keith bullet over the same charge for 1,300 fps from a 6½" Ruger New Model. Tack drivers, all. These loads, however, are for use only in .32 Magnums from Ruger, Wesson firearms, and L-frame Smith & Wessons.

.32-20 (.32 Winchester Centerfire)

A longtime standard loading for this 19th-century small-bore cartridge has been a 115 gr. gas checked bullet over 5.0 grs. of Unique for right at 1,000 fps from a 7½" Colt Single Action Army or replica. This is an easy-shootin' and very accurate load, the kind one would be happy to spend the day shooting. If a heavier loading were desired, up to 1,300 fps to 1,400 fps with this same bullet, we would not recommend Unique but rather #2400.

.38 Special

The combination of Unique and the .38 Special is a marriage made in heaven. With a 158 gr. SWC over 5.0 grs. of Unique, muzzle velocity from a 6" K-38 is a very pleasant-shooting 850 fps.

Increasing the charge to 6.0 grs. in .38 Special brass for use in .357 Mag. sixguns, results in a good practice load of around 1,000 fps, whether using Lyman's 155 gr. #358156GC, 168 gr. #358429, or RCBS's 150 gr. #38-150KT.

.357 Magnum

We also use Lyman's 155 gr. #358156GC, 168 gr. #358429, or RCBS's 150 gr. #38-150KT in the .357 Mag. with 7.5 to 8.0 grs. of Unique for 1,300 fps from a 4½" Ruger Flat-Top or an additional 50 fps from an 8" Python. These loads are more powerful than many current factory offerings in .357 Mag. They will work very well on small game, or even on larger critters, in a pinch.

9mm Parabellum

Unique is an excellent choice for use in the 9mm. Sierra's little 90 gr. JHC over 7.0 grs. of Unique does more than 1,500 fps from a Browning Hi-Power, shoots very flat, and certainly does the job on varmints. Moving up to Sierra's 115 JHC or Hornady's JHP, the powder charge is dropped to 6.0 grs. with a resulting muzzle velocity of 1,250 fps.

If we do not want the destructiveness of a JHP, we switch to Bull-X's 125 gr. RN over 5.5 grs. of Unique, which also yields the same muzzle velocity.

.40 S&W

Jacketed bullet defensive loads abound for this popular semi-automatic cartridge. For a practice load, Bull-X's 175 gr. FP over 5.0 to 5.5 grs. of Unique yields 950 to 1,050 fps from a 4" barrel. With a little experimenting with the powder charge, it is not too difficult to find a practice load that shoots to the same point-of-aim as a factory jacketed duty or carry load.

.38-40 (.38 Winchester Centerfire)

This old frontier cartridge has long been saddled with a reputation for inaccuracy. It wasn't the cartridge that was the problem, but rather sixguns with oversize chambers and barrels. Modern revolvers from Ruger, Colt and the replicas are all coming through with correctly sized barrel dimensions and this has made a tremendous difference.

Like .32-20 brass, .38-40 brass has also had negative aspects for reloaders because of very thin case necks. Starline brass has made this a problem of the past, and we routinely load .38-40 rounds on RCBS's Pro 2000 progressive press. With Unique and 180 gr. hard-cast bullets, 8.0 to 10.0 grs. will yield from around 1,025 fps to 1,235 fps in a 4¼" Colt Single Action Army.

.41 Special

This easy-to-form wildcat round is made by simply trimming the .41 Mag. to .44 Special length. When custom chambered in such sixguns as the Colt Single Action Army, Ruger Flat-Top or Old Model .357 Blackhawk, or for a slick double action sixgun, like Smith & Wesson's .357 Model 586, the .41 Special fills in the gap as "the cartridge that never was but should have been."

Our most-used load with Unique in this cartridge is either a home-cast Lyman 220 gr. Keith or a commercial cast 215 gr. SWC over 7.0 grs. for just over 1,000 fps. This load is more powerful than a .40 S&W, equal to a +P .45 ACP, and yet is still very easy shooting.

.44-40 (.44 Winchester Centerfire)

The third member of the Winchester Centerfire trio has always been the most popular with sixgunners and levergun users. Some of the old loading manuals list loads for the Model 92 Winchester that are in the .44 Mag. category. For general use with the .44-40, we use a 200 gr. hard cast bullet such as Lyman's #427098 and from 8.0 to 10.0 grs. of Unique. Muzzle velocity from a 7½" Colt Single Action Army runs from 800 to 1,200 fps. The first loading is a natural choice for cowboy shooting activities.

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GUN. Cleaning 101

By Holt Bodinson

Proper methods of gun cleaning and maintenance can help your fine firearms stand up to a lifetime of recreational shooting.



Here's a confession: We hate to clean guns. Fact is, we hate to clean anything. What we dream about is a "defouling shot" — a cartridge we could fire at the end of the day that would scrub out the powder, lead and jacket residues and coat the bore with a suitable rust inhibitor. Of course, if some enterprising chemist came up with such an item, the patent would immediately be bought by Hoppe's, burned, never to be seen again, and we shooters would still be buying cleaning materials and running rods up and down bores for the next millennium or two.

Patches

Some shooters are more than happy to clean their guns with old cut-up cotton undershirts and underpants. We've noticed some frugal gunners cutting paper patches from kitchen towel stock, or if they're well-heeled, from those super-tough, garage-quality, blue paper towel rolls stocked by Walmart.



Bottom left: Sure, you can clean your guns with 30-weight oil and old socks, but why not get the job done right? Today's selection of chemicals and tools make the task of gun cleaning almost enjoyable. Above: Steel, bronze, nylon, brass ... there are a variety of brushes and jags out there. Use the right ones for the right jobs to prevent damage to your fine firearms.

Of course, any of these methods will get the job done, but is this really the standard you want to be known for? When you show off your collection, do you want your friends to see your cleaning table covered with old shredded Fruit Of The Looms? We thought not.

We prefer to use 100 percent cotton flannel patches napped on both sides in sizes from .17-caliber through 10 ga. shotgun. They're designed to go through bores *one* time and end up in the trash. Our patch of choice is the first-rate Pro-Shot line, and we also buy similar quality patches from Sinclair International and Brownells.

We prefer to use 100 percent cotton flannel patches napped on both sides in sizes from .17-caliber through 10 ga. shotgun. They're designed to go through bores *one* time and end up in the trash.

Rods

In our youth, cleaning rods were made of aluminum and pieced together in three sections. The most expensive rods at the time were made from brass and fitted with a swivel handle. Then our English cousins introduced us to the coated steel rods made by Parker-Hale, all the while making the point that soft aluminum or brass rods picked up grit and damaged, rather than cleaned, our fine barrels.

New York State gunsmith John Dewey quickly picked



up the idea and started his own coated-rod business in America, and life has never been the same since. We use both Dewey and Parker-Hale rods of various calibers and buy them from Brownells or Sinclair International.

Every four to five years, we scrap all our rods and buy new ones. Even the surface of coated rods breaks down eventually, so why take chances? Rods are a lot cheaper than barrels. Sinclair offers nice aluminum rod cases. You can make your own from PVC pipe.

While not exactly a rod, the Sinclair locking lug recess cleaning tool for bolt-action rifles is invaluable for cleaning out grease, cleaning-brush bristles, hay seeds, and whatever else lurks in those dark crevices.

Jags, Brushes And Mops

Here's where the work gets done so don't skimp on quality. We favor sharp-tipped brass jags that pierce the patch and dump it off once it has passed through the bore. Sinclair and Accupro offer several excellent designs, and Sinclair will actually advise you on what size patch to use with what size jag. After a bit of experimentation, you'll figure out those combinations, too, but write them down, lest you forget. Wraparound-type jags should be reserved for applying J-B or Rem-Clean abrasive cleaners.

Brushes? Buy only bronze-bristle and brass-core brushes. There are a lot of brushes out there that sport an iron core with a cut-off, twisted tip that is so sharp it is liable to damage a bore.

Nylon brushes are useful, as well, to apply powerful ammonium-based copper removers. Same with mops — but again, don't be fooled by iron cores. Buy 100 percent cotton mops with solid brass twists. If you're a revolver shooter, by all means buy an Allison Speed Brush to fit your cylinder — with six, seven or eight brushes mounted on one handle, it really speeds things up. For shotguns, we favor a bronze brush one size larger than the gauge — a 10-ga. brush for a 12 ga. — and a gauge-sized Tornado brush. These are all available from Sinclair, ProShot, Dewey, Midway and Brownells.



Bore Guides

Bore guides for bolt actions, single shots and AR-15s come in a variety of shapes and designs. Use them. They definitely save cleaning-rod wear and tear throughout the bore and keep solvents out of the action. We like Stoney Point, Sinclair and Dewey designs fitted with solvent ports.

A solvent port allows you to apply solvent or preservatives directly to the patch or brush without getting those chemicals on your hands. We're not fanatics about avoiding exposure to cleaning chemicals, but the less contact you have, the better.

If you must clean a rifle, pistol or revolver from the muzzle end, use a caliber-specific muzzle bore guide or muzzle guard from Dewey, or one of the universal cone-shaped muzzle guides. Protect those crowns and eliminate rod wear at the precious muzzle end of the barrel.

Solvents And Preservatives

There's a new magical cleaning compound every month. In looking for that magical "defouling shot," we think we've tried them all. As a general-purpose solvent that's available everywhere, Shooter's Choice is hard to beat. It cuts right through powder and plastic wad fouling, and attacks copper.

When there are signs of lingering copper after brushing



with Shooter's Choice, we go straight to Sweets 7.62 Solvent without hesitation and have never regretted it. Hoppe's No. 9 is used to clean out Sweets and to clean .22 rimfires. Shooter's Choice Shotgun and Choke Tube Cleaner will eat through plastic and carbon fouling very readily. For black powder, Ballistol is excellent, as are TC's #13 Cleaner and Hoppe's No. 9 Plus.

We don't know who invented the wide-mouth solvent bottle, but they should be hung in effigy. Buy several plastic, flip-top solvent bottles from Sinclair and decant the wide mouths into a truly useful container.

For the exterior preservation of a firearm, we're somewhat sold on wax rather than on oil-based compounds. Wax is a tough moisture barrier, doesn't rot wood or synthetic stocks, and doesn't attract dirt. The museum-grade Renaissance Micro-Crystalline Wax and Cleaner sold by Brownells is superb protection for metal, wood and leather, and a can of it seems to last forever.

When we go afield in tough weather, we prefer a tough

floor wax. Shooter's Choice All Weather Grease gets the nod on high-friction parts like cocking cams and bolt lugs. Remington Dry Lube is useful for internal working parts since it won't thicken in cold weather. Inside barrels, we favor a light film of Break Free CLP, Hoppe's MDL or Shooter's Choice Rust Prevent.

Other Useful Stuff

Because of the smell and volatility associated with cleaning compounds, we strictly clean outdoors or in the garage. Midway's portable Gun Vice, with its numerous compartments for solvent bottles, patches, jags, rods and its camming stock clamp, is the finest design available and does the job whether we are at the range or at home.

Also along for the ride is a quantity of shop rags to wipe

continued on page 72

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GUN CLEANING 101

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down cleaning rods and sop up spills; one of those GI-type, nylon gun brushes that will brush out every nook and cranny; and, if we are shooting a revolver with loads that leave a lot of lead in the barrel, a Lewis Lead Remover.

Applying The Elbow Grease

Because of the variety of firearms and fouling possibilities, it's impossible to describe a single protocol for gun cleaning. What is important is to clean the firearm as soon as possible and not let fouling dry out and harden. More and more shooters are cleaning right at the range. Here are a couple of general protocols that may prove useful:

For removing fouling from uncoated, jacketed bullets, begin by running two or three solvent-saturated patches through the bore. Then, using a solvent-soaked brush, brush back and forth 10 times. Hold a shop rag around the rod with the other hand to remove debris from its surface it as it works.

Then, run one more solvent-soaked patch through the bore, and give it 10 more passes with the solvent-soaked brush. Finally, run one last solvent-soaked patch down the barrel, followed by two dry patches.

If "severe" copper streaks can still be seen when shining a bore light down the muzzle, replace the jag with a cotton mop. Push the mop through the end of the barrel and saturate it with Sweets 7.62 Solvent. Run the mop slowly back and forth 15 times without letting it leave the barrel, add more Sweets, and run it slowly through another 15 times.

Be aware that most directions call for leaving these powerful ammonium-based solvents standing in the bore for no more than 15 minutes to avoid etching if the solution should evaporate — but don't risk the accuracy of your gun. Keep that mop running, and the bore wet, until the severe copper fouling is removed.

Then, run a single dry patch through the bore to clean out the blue goop, followed by two patches saturated with Hoppe's #9 to remove the Sweets and two more dry patches. Top the whole process off with one last patch moistened with Shooters Choice Rust Prevent.

If you're working on a rifle, clean the locking lug recesses, the bearing surfaces of the locking lugs and cocking cams, and the face of the bolt. Re-grease the locking lugs and cocking cams. Once every year, disassemble and clean the bolt.

With handguns, remove the carbon from the visible portions of the frame, cylinder, slide and breech face with a solvent-saturated patch and GI brush, then dry the gun and wipe it with a preservative-soaked patch. With revolvers, ensure that no dirt remains under the star extractor. With semi-auto handguns, field strip them every 300 to 500 rounds and give them a thorough cleaning.

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Squeaky-Clean Shotguns

Shotguns present a unique challenge in removing the plastic, powder and lead fouling produced by smoothbore ammo. Begin by removing the barrel(s) from the frame, then either run two patches saturated with Shooter's Choice through the bore or spray Shooter's Choice Shotgun and Choke Tube Cleaner down the bore. Let the barrels stand for 10 minutes. By that time, the dissolving wad residue should make the bore look like the inside of a brick chimney. Don't despair.

Run one solvent-saturated patch down the bore and, using a bronze-bristle brush one gauge larger than your bore, scrub the bore 10 times. Pay particular attention to the chamber and forcing cone areas. Finally, run two solvent-saturated patches down the bore, followed by two dry patches.

If plastic wad residue or leading is still present, wrap a few wisps of 0000 steel wool around the brass brush and give the barrel another 10 good licks, and follow this up with two solvent-soaked patches, two dry patches and one patch moistened with a Shooter's Choice Rust Prevent.

If you're shooting a double gun, clean and re-grease the hinge pin or trunions every cleaning. Every five to 10 years, have a qualified gunsmith tear down your double and completely clean and re-lubricate it. If it's a pump or autoloader, field strip the gun as necessary to clean and re-lubricate the internals — particularly the trigger group — at least once a season.

Cleaning a firearm is really just the application of common sense combined with a bit of respect for the investment you've made in your gun collection. If, for example, you're hunting waterfowl over salt water in a raging downpour, you are going to take more immediate and remedial action than a desert mule deer hunter pussyfooting around in an arid landscape with only 10 percent relative humidity. Clean and maintain your guns ASAP after each use and they will surely give you a lifetime of reliable service.



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LOADING WITH UNIQUE

continued from page 66

.44 Special

One of the most useful loads using Unique powder in the .44 Special is made with Lyman's #429421 Keith bullet over 7.5 grs. of Unique. Over the years we have used it in Smith & Wesson 1950 Targets, Colt Single Action Armies, Great Western Frontier Six-Shooters, and several custom .44 Specials built on Ruger .357 Flat-Tops and Old Model Blackhawks.

Another very versatile load is 7.5 grs. of Unique and the 250 gr. Keith bullet. This round does 950 fps from the 7½" New Frontier, and 900 fps from the shorter Smith & Wesson.

.44 Magnum

Yes, we load thousands of rounds for the big .44 with what are normally considered magnum pistol powders — Accurate Arms' AA #9, Alliant's #2400, Winchester's WW296 and Hodgdon's H110. However, we do not always need the power and accompanying recoil that goes along with these loads, so we use a lot of Unique loads in the .44 Magnum.

We long ago settled on a standard semi-heavy load in .44 Mag. using 10.0 grs. of Unique and either a 250 gr. or a 295 gr. Keith bullet. These loads work especially well in older .44 Magnums such as the pre-29 from Smith & Wesson and Ruger's .44 Flat-top Blackhawk.

The 10.0 gr. load travels at 1,150 fps and fits right in on days when we want a powerful load but really don't want to put up with a lot of recoil. This load, combined with the 250 gr. Keith bullet, is the equivalent of the heavy-duty .44 Special load that was the most powerful sixgun load around for nearly 30 years. It still is a good one.

.45 ACP

A tried and true heavy-duty load for the .45 ACP is a 200 gr. hard cast bullet, such as Lyman's #452460 or RCBS's #45-201KT, over 7.5 grs. of Unique. This is definitely a +P load to be used with great care and common sense. Muzzle velocity is slightly less than 1,000 fps from a 5" 1911.

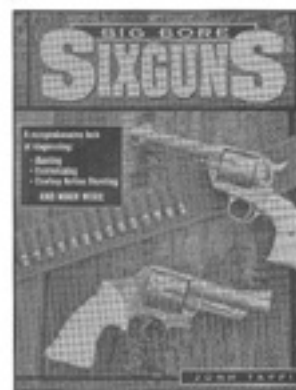
For a heavier bullet load, we like Lyman's 240 gr. #452423 over 6.0 grs. of Unique at 850 fps. Increasing the powder charge to 6.5 grs. raises the velocity nearly 100 fps. This load should also be used with caution.

For jacketed bullet loads, Speer's 200 gr. JHP over 7.5 grs. of Unique clocks out at 950 fps, while Sierra's 185 JHC is a real screamer at nearly 1,100 fps. We say again: Be careful and work up to these maximum loads with caution.

.45 Auto Rim

Although sixguns that chamber the .45 Auto Rim were originally designed to accept .45 ACP rounds with full or half-moon clips

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we normally use the .45 Auto Rim more like a .45 Colt. That is, most loads are assembled with the same 240 gr. to 255 gr. bullets we normally use in the .45 Colt.

We find the same situation with sixguns chambered for the .45 Auto Rim as we do for those chambered in .45 Colt. Post-war sixguns are much stronger than many of the pre-war examples.

For the modern production Auto Rim revolvers, we like 7.0 to 7.5 grs. of Unique and a 240 to 255 gr. hard cast bullet for 925 to 1,000 fps from a 5" Smith & Wesson Model 625. For older guns such as the 1917s from World War I, we do not go over 6.0 grs., which is about a 750 to 800 fps loading. This creates much less stress on these older sixguns.

.45 Colt

If there is any cartridge that gives the .44 Special a run for being most used with Unique, it is the .45 Colt. For many years, our standard Unique loads were 9.0 or 10.0 grs. of Unique with Lyman's 260 gr. #454424 Keith bullet. In a 5 1/2" Colt Single Action Army, muzzle velocities are 980 and 1,030 fps, respectively. These loads are about all you should ask of a Colt Single Action.

For cowboy shooting loads, we drop down to 8.0 grs. of Unique with 255 gr. bullets for around 850 to 900 fps, which duplicates the black powder loads of 125 years ago. We find this adds the required realism to the sport!

.454 Casull

Finally we come to the .454 Casull. No, we do not try to build heavy loads for the .454 using Unique. Rather we try to come up with mild-to-moderate loads using NEI's #325.451, a 325 gr. Keith bullet. With 8.0 grs., 9.0 grs. and 10.0 grs. of Unique, muzzle velocities from a 7 1/2" Freedom Arms Model 83 are 950 fps, 1,070 fps and 1,140 fps.

While these loads are very mild compared to factory level .454 loads, they are well above standard .45 Colt loads, and have many hunting applications. There are very few animals that are normally hunted in the continental U.S. that cannot be taken easily with a 325 gr. bullet at 1,100 fps or more.

We don't like to play the "what if you could only have one" game, but when it comes to powder, if we were limited to nothing but Unique, we could get along quite well.



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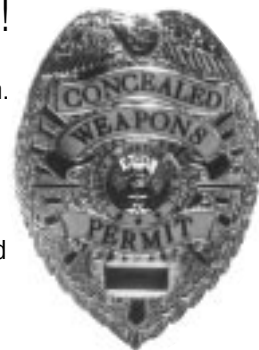
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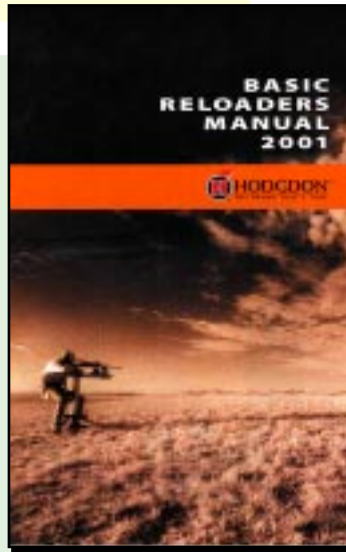
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Basic Reloading Manual

From Hodgdon Powder

Hodgdon Powder has published its new 74-page Basic Reloaders Manual for 2001. It features thousands of rifle, pistol and shotshell recipes, new cartridge data for the .338 Ultramag, .338-378 Weatherby, .450 Marlin, .376 Steyr, "Longshot" pistol data and "Titegroup" shotgun data. Also included are bushing, wad and shot charts. For a free manual see your dealer, or contact Hodgdon Powder Co., P.O. Box 2932, Shawnee Mission, KS 66201, (913) 362-9455, FAX: (913) 362-1307, e-mail: info@hodgdon.com, website: www.hodgdon.com



Limited Edition Collectibles

From Buck Knives

Buck Knives has produced a handsome line of Limited Edition collectibles for 2001. Pictured, top to bottom, is the elegant Koji Folder, a Damascus Dagger (a first for Buck Knives), a Wyatt Earp Folding Hunter and a Vanguard fixed blade hunting knife with a 24k gold running deer laser-cut into the blade. Buck Knives, 1900 Weld Blvd., El Cajon, Blvd. 92020, (619) 449-1100, website: www.buckknives.com



Sporter I Binoculars

From Nikon

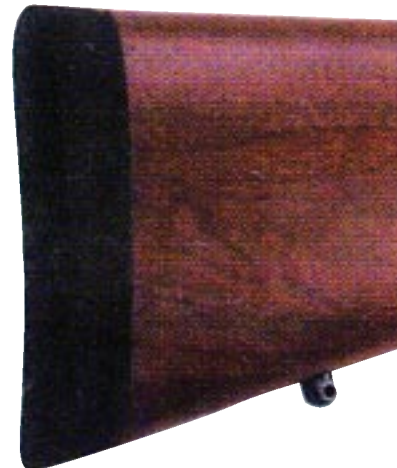
The Nikon Sporter I binocular features a water-resistant roof prism design created for the hunter and outdoor enthusiast. Available in 8x36 and 10x36 versions, the Sporter I is rubber armored to resist shock and to provide a sure, comfortable grip in wet weather. The 8x has a field of view of 336 feet at 1,000 yards and the 10x delivers a field of view of 294 feet at 1,000 yards. Both have extra-long eye relief and close focus distances of only 10'. Nikon Sport Optics, 1300 Walt Whitman Rd., Melville, NY 11747-3064, (631) 547-4200, FAX: (631) 547-4040, website: www.nikonusa.com



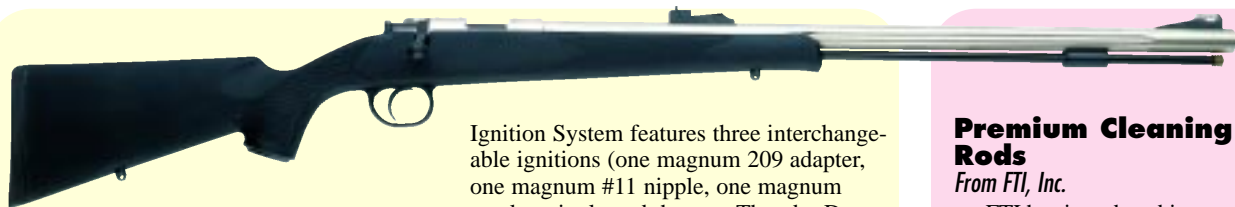
Impact Series

From KA-BAR

KA-BAR's new Impact Series is composed of four all-purpose tactical knives with contoured handles. Three of the knives, the Spear, Tanto and Warthog are made with powder-coated, high carbon steel blades with contoured Zytel synthetic handles. The D2 features a sheet stock, tool steel blade with contoured Micarta handle. All come with ballistic nylon sheaths with Velcro-lined belt loop and snap closure. KA-BAR Knives, 1125 E. State St., Olean, NY 14760, (716) 790-7188, FAX: (716) 373-6245, e-mail: info@ka-bar.com, website: www.ka-bar.com



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Titanium Lightweight

From Remington

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skeleton handle for further weight reduction. The 22-inch, stainless steel barrel has a trim, mountain-style contour and is fitted in a ultra-lightweight carbon-fiber composite stock reinforced with Kevlar and fitted with sling swivel studs. For more information, contact Remington Arms Co., 870 Remington Dr., P.O. Box 700, Madison, NC 27025-0700, telephone: (800) 243-9700, FAX: (336) 548-7741, www.remington.com

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From MTM Case-Guard

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From FTI, Inc.

FTI has introduced its new ProSmith line of premium cleaning rods and firearms maintenance accessories for handguns, rifles and shotguns. The cleaning rods feature free-spinning, self-lubricating Delrin synthetic handles, Corvel-coated, heat-treated stainless steel cleaning lengths and hand-machined Delrin bushings for superior barrel and crown protection. Another innovative accessory is the new Universal Twin-Tip, which places the free-spinning Delrin handle in the middle of two eight-inch Corvel-coated, stainless steel cleaning lengths. One end can be used for brushes and the other for patches or swabs. FTI, Inc., 8 Vreeland Rd., Florham Park, NJ 07932-0955, (973) 443-0004, FAX: (973) 443-0263, e-mail: info@tetraproducts.com, website: www.tetraproducts.com



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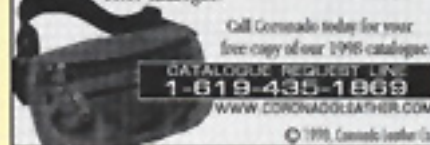
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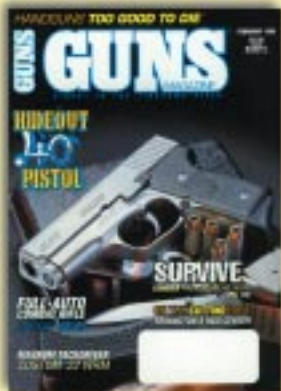
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From The Top Secret Files

A new age in military small arms may soon be upon us. Sources inside FN indicate that the company will soon unveil a new “bullpup”-style rifle dubbed the Convertor.

Initial reports state that the Convertor combines the best design features of two controversial guns: the OICW and the FN P90. The result is a sleek battle rifle chambered in .223 NATO with a multilug bolt, an AUG-type gas operating system, and a polymer housing. The Convertor also utilizes a 20mm, laser-controlled grenade launcher similar to that seen on the OICW.

Interestingly, the gun is reported to utilize a unique case ejection system not seen since the days of the Maxim machine gun — empty cartridge cases are deposited in a tube and pushed out as part of the firing cycle, which is supposed to eliminate the var-

ious problems caused by flying brass.

Most surprising of all: The Convertor tips the scales at just under 8 lbs. — quite a change from previous versions of the OICW, which weighed upwards of 15 lbs. An official unveiling of the new gun was reportedly scheduled for sometime in early spring.

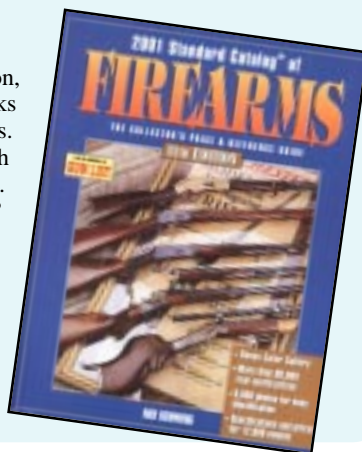


THE GOOD BOOK

The *Standard Catalog of Firearms*, now in its 11th edition, has become one of the most respected reference books for gun collectors, enthusiasts and just plain trivia buffs. Now, the updated 2001 edition of the book is available with more than 12,000 vintage and current-production guns listed.

Want to know the history of your Mauser 98, for instance? This book gives you details on more than 260 model variations from some 56 countries. There's plenty of data on Colt, Winchester and Remington guns too, as well as an expanded section on pre-World War II handguns.

The book is available from Krause Publications for \$32.95. To order your copy, call the company at (800) 258-0929, or visit them on the web at www.krause-books.com.



BY THE NUMBERS

5 percent

Amount of the Canadian federal police agency's 2001 budget which will be spent by the Canadian Firearms Centre, the department in charge of administering that country's new gun licensing and registration law.

Source: *Investor's Business Daily*, Mar. 2, 2001

32

Number of gun locks which failed a product safety test conducted by the Consumer Products Safety Commission, which reported that these models, “could be opened without the key — some just by striking them hard.”

1

Number of the 33 locks tested by the Consumer Safety Commission which did not fail the product safety test.

Source: *The Washington Post*

WEBSITE of the MONTH:

www.wheretoshoot.org

Looking for a shooting club with an indoor pistol range and a sporting clays league within 10 miles of your house? No problem — just log onto this site and enter the criteria you want. This easy-to-use service will return contact information (phone, address and website) of all of its 7,500 member clubs nationwide which meet your needs.

And This Proves What ... ?

Advocates of gun control are crowing over a new study which, they claim, refutes the data published by John Lott in his groundbreaking study “More Guns, Less Crime.” Lott's initial study, based on first-hand interviews, revealed that violent crime was reduced in a number of states after the passage of shall-issue concealed carry weapon laws.

The new study, authored by economist Mark Duggan and entitled “More Guns, More Crime,” supposedly reveals that previous studies on the effects of concealed carry laws are erroneous. Why? Because, according to the report, in states that passed concealed carry laws, there is no evidence that gun ownership increased following passage of the law. Subsequently, crime declined just

as much in areas of high gun ownership as it did in areas of low gun ownership.

In other words, in states that passed shall-issue CCW laws, nobody rushed out to buy new guns, and yet crime rates decreased everywhere, not just in neighborhoods where people already owned guns. Thus, this study claims, CCW laws are a failure. (Which means that, in good liberal fashion, they've redefined the word “failure.”)

Of course, this conclusion misses the mark completely. In reality, both studies underscore the success of CCW laws. Crime goes down when criminals have to fear armed citizens — regardless of how many citizens actually are armed.



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