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American Rifleman, February 2001

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**Here he is — the
gobbler that finally
broke Taffin's
Turkey Jinx.**



Taffin's Turkey Takers

Hunting turkeys with a shotgun is difficult enough, but try taking them with a handgun! Taffin tells us how.

By John Taffin

After several decades of hunting varmints and small and large game mostly with a handgun, I decided to take up turkey hunting. The late Bill Jordan had waxed poetically to me several evenings about the joys of pursuing these magnificent birds, which for him meant loading up the motor home and traveling through several southern states during various seasons. Since I wanted to do it right, I made arrangements to attend the National Wild Turkey Federation Banquet at the local level and find out all about wild turkey hunting.

Gearing Up For Success

During the auction part of the banquet, my wife purchased a large, framed picture of a Confederate soldier with a turkey slung over his shoulder. I won the bid for the Spring Turkey Hunt alongside the number one and two guides in the state. Afterwards, I bought a 12-gauge pumpgun, the mandatory camo clothing, and spent some time patterning my turkey loads. I spent a lot of time looking at the picture on the living room wall getting my attitude positive. Yes, I was ready.

The season arrived and I went out with

both men. We covered a lot of beautiful country, both high on the ridges and down along the river. But we never saw a single bird! So it was back to the banquet the following year for a repeat performance. This time my wife bought a large-framed picture of hunting puppies, and I again bought the guides' services. This time we went in the darkness before dawn. If I had seen the terrain in the light I would have balked, but we made it. The decoys were set out, we were concealed in the brush, and the calling began. It wasn't long before we heard a turkey answering.

As I was sitting in that brush pile, well concealed with the camo covering my face, a strange feeling began. I couldn't

The Freedom Arms Model 83 in .357 Magnum. It's a Turkey Taker!



*Not only is he good eating,
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The Freedom Arms shoulder holster makes an excellent hunting rig.

understand what was happening to me, and then I realized I was hyper-ventilating under that covering of netting! Off it came and I could breath freely once again. We heard turkeys that day, but again no luck. That evening we saw them going to roost and figured out where to be the next morning. It was not to be. By now I was sick with the flu and there was no way I could walk back in the next morning.

Taffin Returns To The Fold

I got the message! The Spirits of the Hunt were angry with me for taking up the shotgun and leaving my sixgun behind! I sold the shotgun, got rid of the camo clothing, and looked for a better way. The better way was Texas — where a man can hunt turkeys with any type of weapon, including a sixgun. That was in 1995 and the plan was to hunt whitetails and turkeys outside of Uvalde. As I traveled south, I should have known that the jinx was continuing. Due to an ice storm, I spent Thanksgiving Day in the Dallas-Fort Worth Airport eating Snickers Bars instead of turkey. When I finally did get to the hunt, I never did see a whitetail buck, and although I did have two gobblers in the brush about 20 yards away, I never could get a clear shot at them. But things were definitely looking up! I had both seen and heard turkeys.

A year later I found myself back in Texas at the Penn Baggett Ranch outside of

Ozona, Texas, in Crockett County to hunt whitetail, javelina and turkey with friends and fellow writers Jim Wilson and Gary Sitton, and another good friend, Tedd Adamovich of BluMagnum Grips. In the company of these guys, the hunt would be successful even if I did not connect. The Baggett Ranch was established by Penn's grandfather in 1898 and has become a hunting mecca for gunwriters, mainly because we all like Penn and his family, which consists of his wife Lara and their daughter Leana. We love these people. Texas is full of fine friendly folks, and they don't come any finer than the Baggetts.

The Ranch itself is a large area perfect for hunting, with several closed in, high-up-in-the air stands. Quite a few cattle

roam the Baggett Ranch, as well as a sizable herd of wild Spanish goats. These are rarely hunted. The main hunting offering of the Baggett Ranch is whitetail, turkey and javelina. The Ranch is home to about 700 turkeys and is hunted both in the Fall and Spring, with Spring being the only time that calling is allowed to accommodate Wild Turkey Federation members. Baggett manages the turkeys carefully and only allows for the taking of 25-30 gobblers and 35-40 hens each year.

That first trip found everyone else connecting on turkey, deer and javelina. I not only never fired a shot, I never even came close to having an opportunity. The Taffin Turkey Jinx continued. It is now SHOT Show 1997, and the situation was



Black Hills 125 JHPs and the Freedom Arms Model 97 — a winning combination.

getting serious. Two things happened in that show that would lead to success. First, Freedom Arms unveiled its new Model 97 "Mid-frame" six-shot .357 Magnum revolver, and I talked with Penn Baggett about the late spring turkey hunt. The two seemed destined to go together. With the right sixgun, I could possibly break the jinx and connect on a gobbler.

Freedom Model 97

While I don't normally consider a .357 Magnum as a desirable hunting sixgun, it can be pressed into service for animals in the 100-pound range, and seemed to me to be ideal for turkeys. Once I test-fired the Model 97, I knew it would be. When hunting turkeys from a stand on the Baggett Ranch, shots are normally in the 50-yard range. Though too far for a shotgun, if the accuracy is there, it is certainly in the realm of possibility for a .357 Magnum. Boy, was it!

Three .357 Magnum factory loads were tested in a 7-inch Freedom Arms Model 97 fitted with a Leupold 4X scope. Hornady's 140 XTP-JHPs put five shots in 7/8 inch at 50 yards. The same brand of 125 XTP-JHP's went into 3/4 inch. And Black Hills 125 JHPs dropped five shots into 5/8 inch at 50 yards. I had the perfect turkey gun — if only the turkeys would cooperate. When Penn found out what I planned to use for turkeys, he said I would probably ruin a lot of meat. I explained that my concern was not meat at this point but rather breaking the jinx. Besides, if I only wanted meat, I could get a Butterball.

I didn't tell him that I didn't expect to waste any meat at all — because I expected to head shoot them!

I spent the first day in a ground blind both morning and afternoon and saw a total of two Jakes and one hen. The second morning resulted in absolutely



When the goal is to preserve that tender meat, a head shot is the plan. The B&L scope helps considerably.

nothing, while the late afternoon showed me two hens. The jinx continued. I was still hopeful on day three, especially after switching to a stand 10 feet off the ground. I was in it and ready to go a full hour before daylight. As the sun came up, I was watching a group of deer feeding about 150 yards away not paying much attention to what was going on around the stand. When I did look closer, I could not believe what I was seeing. There 50 yards away was a tom turkey, a gobbler, a jinx breaker!

Joyful Success

I had a good solid rest from the window of the blind and slowly pushed my arms out and lined up the crosshairs of the 4X Leupold on his head. As I started squeezing the trigger, I thought I better not chance it, and instead brought the crosshairs down to where the head meets the body. I was still hesitant and worried about breaking the jinx, so I gave myself a little more leeway and

came down another inch and squeezed off a Black Hills 125 JHP. At the shot, my gobbler went down immediately and never moved. The jinx was broken. The distance proved to be 44 yards, and the .357 Magnum hollowpoint had entered the turkey precisely where I had the crosshairs, taking the whole back of its head off from the top all the way to the base of its neck. The turkey literally never knew what hit it. That Black Hills load travelled 1,600 fps from my two main turkey takers, both Freedom Arms sixguns and both 7-inch .357 Magnums, one the above mentioned Model 97 and the other full-sized Model 83. Both were equipped with 4X Leupold scopes for turkey hunting.

The next year, I found myself back on the Baggett Ranch, again for turkeys. This time I had the Model 83 Freedom Arms .44 Magnum, as I also hoped to take a whitetail. My load was the Black Hills 240 JHP, which is my favorite Texas whitetail load. All of these turkey takers are carried in the Freedom Arms scoped model "shoulder holster," which actually rides more like a high cross-draw with the weight supported by both the shoulder straps and the pants belt. I have used this comfortable rig for hunting all types of game in many places. In addition to the .357 Magnum Freedom Arms sixguns, in Africa it carried a 7-inch .454. While in Missouri hunting wild pigs, it carried the 7-inch .50AE. For numerous whitetail hunts, a 7-inch .44 Magnum fit just as well. This holster is sturdy and well built of high-quality leather, and is just as good today as it was 10 years ago.

The first morning I found myself back in my favorite stand, which sits down in a hole opposite a dry creek bank. From this stand I've taken several whitetail bucks, whose heads now grace my office walls. A really nice javelina is now fully mounted and sitting on top of the television. That first turkey flies behind me even as I write. If there's such a thing as vibes, they



The .357 Magnum can be pressed into service for taking animals in the 100 pound class, such as these two Corsican Rams taken with the Freedom Arms .357 Magnum.

certainly felt right this particular morning.

The Secret Nap Technique

It is amazing when sitting in a stand how often game seems to materialize from nowhere. What is probably happening is that I was not paying attention or had taken a quick nap. In this case I had not seen them coming, but suddenly there were at least a dozen gobblers in front of me. That was the good news. The bad news was they simply would not stand still, and those red, white, and blue heads were bobbing all over the place. Perhaps a shotgun would work, but I needed a standing target for my .44 Magnum.

When it comes to patience, most of the time I am sadly lacking. After about 10 minutes, I could not take the frustration any longer and looked for the gobbler that was moving the least, lined up the crosshairs, squeezed off, and the turkeys, including my turkey, took off in every direction. That was not right. It was supposed to drop on the spot.

I climbed down from the stand to look for him. Most of the turkeys had taken off in the direction perpendicular to the front of the blind. I looked all through the brush and could find no sign of either the turkey itself nor any blood. I did not feel very good about that. So I climbed back up in the blind, resigned to waiting for my 11 a.m. pick up. It was just about 10 when things started going well again. There out in front of me were two gobblers, very relaxed, with heads that were barely moving. I took my rest, squeezed off, and the intended target dropped on the spot.

This time I climbed out of the blind to gather my turkey. Since I was down on the ground, and also had some time before I would be picked up, I decided to look for that first turkey again. Traveling through the brush all around the stand and a creek bottom revealed nothing. Then as I turned around to go back to the stand, there he was. The turkey that I would have believed had run off had gone exactly nowhere. When I shot him, he went up in the air, came down, and folded up inside a cutout in the bank of the creek. Now I had two gobblers and would never worry about being jinxed again. By the way, Texas allows you to take several turkeys, so two turkeys was not a problem.

While the .357 and .44 Magnums from Freedom Arms remain the No. 1 Taffin Turkey Takers, I have also taken them with the Model 97 in its prototype .41 Magnum form, and one long-range bird using the SSK Thompson/Center 6.5 JDJ. One of the .357 Magnums from Freedom Arms will be going back with me to the Baggett Ranch in the future, hopefully many times, for what is turkey hunting as good as it gets. Not only is Penn a great host, he also knows how to deep-fry turkeys to a fair-thee-well. Shoot 'em in the morning, cut 'em up in small pieces,



This is the "lost" turkey that ran off showing no sign of a hit. Like any good sportsman, J.T. didn't give up until he found him.

and deep-fry 'em in the evening for a perfect end to a perfect day.

A Young'un Gets His Bird

My favorite turkey story does not include a sixgun or even my taking of the bird. This occurred at one of the Handgun Hunts for the Hungry, sponsored by the Handgun Hunters Chapter of SCI and held on the YO Ranch. On this particular hunt, my guide's 10-year-old son was with us and hoping for a chance to take a hen turkey. We found one, of all places, standing on the edge of one of the cattle watering troughs. This is a large circular affair made out of stone, and the hen was walking around the edge. The young boy

had a .243 and settled down to take the shot. It seemed to me that he aimed for an eternity, but it was probably less than 5 minutes. There was no doubt he wanted to be sure about his shot. As he fired, the turkey dropped over into the water and to this day none of us are sure about whether he killed it with the shot or drowned it!



The Penn Baggett Ranch offers prime hunting experiences for turkey, white-tail and javelina. Readers can reach them at Highway 137 North, Dept. G, Ozona, TX 76943; phone: [915] 392-3436.



SELECTING YOUR FIRST



The atrocity of September 11, 2001, was a wake-up call for American citizens who never owned a gun. A huge number of people responded to the attack by purchasing their first firearm in order to protect themselves and their families.

Both their purchases and fears are valid. On that terrible day, the brave passengers of Flight 93 showed us all that the vigilance of the individual citizen who is willing to fight is our strongest bulwark against criminals of every stripe, including international terrorists.

Other nations besieged by terrorism have already learned this lesson. This is why the arming of schoolteachers in Israel, and in some parts of Peru and the Philippines, has made armed attacks on schools a thing of the past. In the wake of its own school shootings, the American public stubbornly resisted this lesson, as it has many others concerning the effective use of firearms. But the events of September 11 were, to many, a



WHAT EVERY NEOPHYTE NEEDS TO KNOW

BY MASSAD AYOOB

DEFENSIVE FIREARM

Don't be shy! Good gunshops like Southern California Gun (above and left), and American Shooting Center (right), staff their counters with qualified professionals who are happy to answer your questions.



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FIRST DEFENSIVE FIREARM



This ParaOrdnance LDA Companion will work perfectly with all these different .45 auto loads and bullet shapes. Not every auto pistol is so accommodating...but every revolver is.

slap in the face that woke them up.

In Israel, on Nov. 4, 2001, the value of the armed citizen was reinforced. Reported Nicole Winfield of the Associated Press:

"A Palestinian militant opened fire on a bus Sunday in a disputed part of Jerusalem, killing two people, one a 16-year-old U.S. native on her way home from school, before being gunned down. The terrorist's fire also wounded 40 others before he was shot and killed by an armed citizen. A witness who identified himself as Marcus told Israel radio he fired his own gun at the assailant:

"'He was standing there and shooting,' Marcus, a West Bank settler, told Israeli

radio. 'I got out of the car. I fired. I emptied an entire clip. He fell. Then two soldiers came and I showed them where he was and they shot him with their M-16s.'

"Jerusalem Police Chief Mickey Levy confirmed that a civilian fired, as well as a border guard and a soldier.

"'The response was very quick, and they prevented further wounding of innocent people,' Levy said."

Lt. Col. David Grossman, one of the United States' leading authorities on mass shootings and their prevention, has warned that our nation is at high risk of shooting attacks on houses of worship. He noted that

Palestinian terrorists have harbored a lust for revenge ever since the Hebron massacre several years ago, when an insane Israeli militiaman with a government-issue M-16 murdered Muslims in a mosque. Devout Americans, take note: It could happen here. Since Grossman's warning, it has happened in Pakistan. And there were no armed citizens amongst the congregation to stop the killing.

So, we see that modern history validates the existence of an armed citizenry.

A Defensive Long Gun?

In the old days, conventional wisdom said that a shotgun was the ultimate home-

defense weapon.

But alas, these are not the old days.

You can't take a shotgun to open the door at 2 a.m. because it might be a cop who's knocking. You can't use a two-handed gun and still manipulate a conventional flashlight, operate light switches and a telephone, and carry a baby to a safe room. You can't take your AR-15 outside to see where that scream in the night came from, unless you want your neighbors to call in the SWAT team. A handgun allows you to discreetly do all these things in your own home and on your own property, irrespective of the availability of concealed-carry permits.

Today, more Americans than ever have the option of being licensed to carry concealed in public. If they can purchase only one defensive gun, the handgun broadens their horizons tremendously. As superbly as some shotguns and rifles can defend the homestead, if there must be one gun for protection needs, the handgun is a far more effective all-purpose weapon.

The Age Old Debate

The double-action revolver with swing-out cylinder has long been the standard recommendation for inexperienced new shooters.

It still makes sense.

Many cops' revolvers have gone 30 years without having their sideplates removed and continue to adequately function. The revolver is less maintenance-intensive than the autopistol. If it hasn't been over-lubricated or shot without cleaning until coated with crud, it will survive the neglect to which it may be subjected by a new shooter who is under-motivated — or who is hesitant to take it apart for fear of not being able to put it back together. The rankest neophyte can quickly learn to open the cylinder, run a brush down the barrel and through the chambers, and clear powder fouling from under the ejector star.

I've run across horror stories of new shooters cocking their revolvers at the wrong time, which creates a dangerous "hair-trigger effect" at the worst-possible high-stress moment. Sometimes they accidentally discharge the gun. Sometimes they don't know how to uncock it without firing.

The best bet for the neophyte is a revolver that fires double-action only, which requires a long, heavy (read: "deliberate") pull of the trigger for every shot. Before they switched to autopistols, the police departments of Los Angeles, New York, Miami and Montreal found that modifying their service revolvers to double-action only reduced the chances of unintentional discharge. This modification can be done on any revolver by a good gunsmith or factory-trained armorer. It's about a \$35 job. If no such craftsman is available, the gun can be sent back to the factory for the modification. Get a quote first.

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their conventional service revolvers in double-action only on special order. Taurus and S&W both offer “hammerless” revolvers — the CIA and Centennial series, respectively. Both are double-action only and have internal hammers concealed in snag-free, streamlined frames.

If users in question have limited strength in their hands or upper bodies,

they might have difficulty manipulating the slide of a semiautomatic pistol. But they should have no trouble at all in performing necessary manipulations with a double-action revolver. The cylinder is easy to open and close for what we call administrative handling: routine unloading, loading, checking and cleaning.

A broad range of calibers is available, but

the most successful proven formula is .38 Special or .357 Magnum caliber. The .357 takes the .38 Special’s ammunition as well as its own, providing a huge option range within which to find ammunition of adequate power yet controllable recoil.

Today’s Taurus revolvers and Smith & Wessons come with integral key locks that freeze the mechanisms for anyone who



The S&W Model 66 is an excellent choice for a home defense gun. This example is made even safer by the inclusion of the MagnaTrigger conversion from Tarnhelm Supply.

FIRST DEFENSIVE FIREARM

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doesn't have a key. The Taurus design is locked at the hammer, while the S&W's lockwork is controlled with a keyway in the frame. This is reassuring to many new gun owners, particularly those whose households contain other people beneath the owner's level of responsibility.

Perhaps the ultimate safety for a handgun is available only for K-frame and larger Smith & Wesson revolvers. Called "MagnaTrigger," this conversion from Tarnhelm Supply allows the gun to be left fully loaded. It can fire only when held in the hand of someone wearing a special magnetic ring. Cost for the conversion of the S&W sixgun is \$350. Tarnhelm can also furnish new or reconditioned S&W revolvers in various calibers that have been fitted with new MagnaTriggers.

Semi-Automatic?

Seduced by the media's emphasis on firepower, many new shooters insist on semiautomatic pistols. When new shooters shoot semiautos, they'll probably shoot better than with revolvers. And this alone will sell them on semiautos.

But an autoloader is a more sophisticated mechanism that demands rigid attention to safety. As noted above, the slide mechanism requires some degree of upper-body strength — if the new shooter is to be able to positively, safely load and unload the gun, especially under stress. In the real-world assessment of needs, an autoloader's firepower — more cartridges in the gun to start with, and faster reloads if necessary — is third down on the semiauto pistol's list of real-world advantages.

Number one is better controllability. At equivalent power levels, an auto generally kicks less than a revolver. Its bore axis is lower to the hand, it tends to fit the hand better, and its semiautomatic mechanism tends to soak up some of the recoil. In most versions there is also a shorter, easier trigger stroke that makes it less likely for the shooter to jerk the gun off target in a stressful rapid-fire situation.

Number two is the proprietary nature to the user. Some autoloaders are equipped with a thumb-actuated safety catch. Case after case has shown that when unauthorized people gain control of an on-safe automatic, it takes them longer to turn on the gun than it would take them to point and shoot an off-safe pistol or a conventional revolver. Typical times with "average" people indicate 1.2 seconds to fire a point-and-shoot handgun, and around 17 seconds to fire an on-safe auto pistol.

Autos also have long bearing surfaces that must be kept lubricated. Even if the gun is never fired, gun oil is a liquid that can evaporate and drain away. The springs in some pistol magazines have also been known to take a set when left compressed for a long period of time, as will be the case if the gun is kept loaded. This can lead to a


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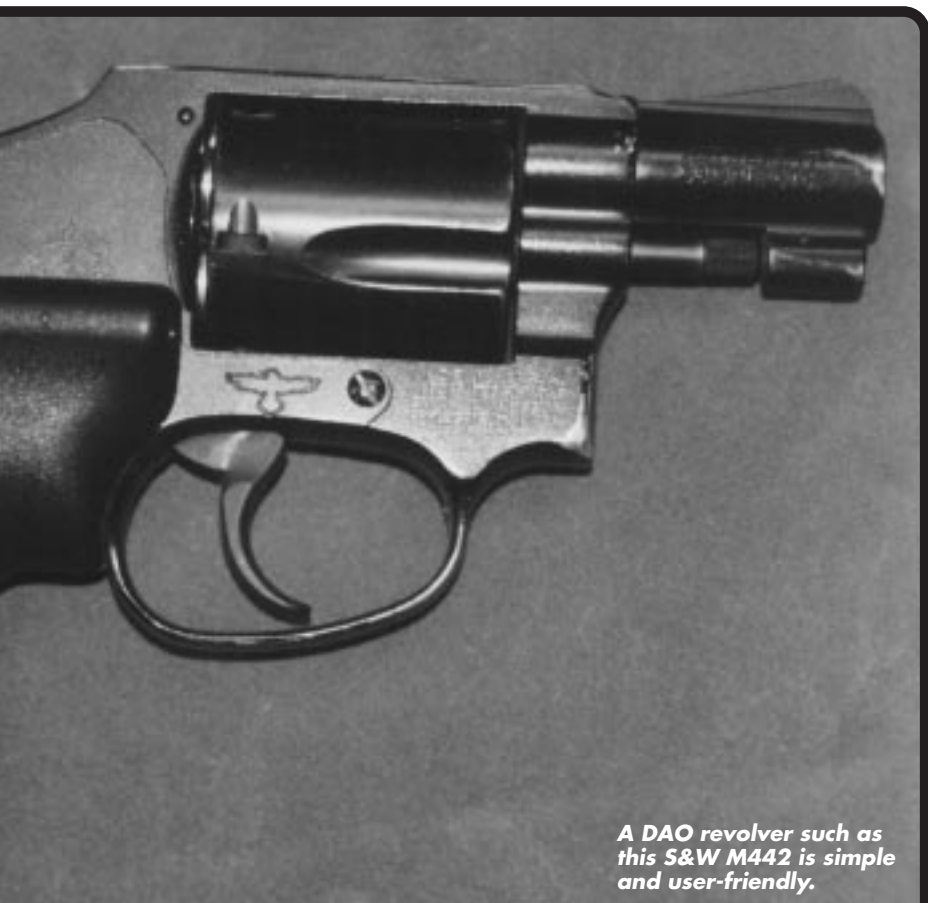


malfunction at the moment a handgun is desperately needed.

Most gun experts believe that providing a novice with a single-action cocked-and-locked pistol is unwise. The easier the trigger pull, the easier the gun is to shoot well. But simultaneously, the easier it is for it to be accidentally discharged by nervous, unfamiliar hands once the safety is off. This is why most military and police agencies have gone to autoloaders with double-action trigger mechanisms whose first shot demands a long, heavy pull of the trigger before the pistol cocks itself to single-action mode for subsequent shots.

Double-action only autopistols with a long pull for every shot are available from numerous manufacturers. Many feel that a double-action only gun with a relatively easy trigger pull gives the best of all worlds. Kahr, ParaOrdnance and Smith & Wesson make the most controllable double-action only autos.

Some consider the Glock pistol to be double-action only, while others deride it as "cocked and unlocked." As an instructor, I've found that the Glock is the easiest



A DAO revolver such as this S&W M442 is simple and user-friendly.

DEFENSIVE FIREARM

handgun with which to train a new shooter to shoot well in a short time frame. Its slide is very easy to operate, and it withstands absence of maintenance better than most other autos. If the Glock is chosen, I would recommend the New York Trigger (NY-1 option), which brings the pull weight up to around 8 pounds. This can be ordered from the factory, retrofitted by the factory, or installed by any certified Glock armorer. It is usually about a \$15 or \$20 job. By providing a firm resistance against the trigger finger from the very beginning of the pull, it fulfills its designed parameter of reducing accidental discharge potential. For those who want to go further, it costs around \$25 to have a Glock fitted with a manual safety catch (right hand only) by Joe Cominoli. I've tested his modification extensively on a Glock 17 9mm and been delighted with its performance.

The Right Ammunition

For self-defense, the handgun should be loaded with only hollowpoint ammunition. Those new to the gun may have been brainwashed by the media to believe that these

are evil "dum-dum" bullets designed to mangle and ensure death.

But virtually all police departments have adopted hollowpoints because these bullets are less likely to over-penetrate an offender's body and strike an innocent bystander. The bullets are also less likely to ricochet and endanger the innocent. They stop the fight quicker, which means that shooters are more likely to stop an assault in time to save innocent lives. Because offenders are stopped sooner, they are shot fewer times, and are therefore more likely to survive. Thus, the hollowpoint is more humane for all concerned — *including the offender who forces you to shoot him.*

While any quality revolver should handle any name-brand factory-produced hollowpoint ammunition, semiautomatics are more finicky. Your student may own an older or "mil-spec" autopistol that only feeds full-metal jacket round-nose ammunition. If that is the case, recommend the standard Remington brand (green and yellow box). In calibers .380, 9mm Luger, .38 Super and .45 Auto, the Remington JHPs (jacketed hollowpoints) are designed

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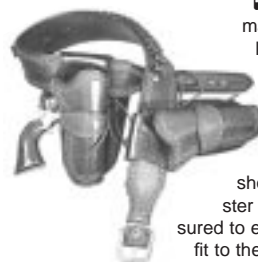
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to feed in any gun that will feed full-metal jacket round-noses.

I am leery of advising a new shooter to load-up with exotic high-performance ammunition that uses pre-fragmented bullets. They are too expensive to practice with, and shooters will never know whether these rounds will cycle their autopistol or not. They also have been known to fail to penetrate sufficiently to do their job.

The new shooter who wants high-tech modern bullets is better off with the latest "designer" hollowpoints offered by the big manufacturers. These all have good track records of feeding reliably through a wide variety of modern autopistols, and they are sufficiently affordable to demonstrate their reliability to your student. These include CCI/Speer Gold Dot, Federal Hydra-Shok, PMC StarFire, Remington Golden Saber and Winchester SXT. I also recommend smaller,

high-quality ammo manufacturers such as Black Hills and Pro-Load, both of which use the Gold Dot bullet.

Get Some Training

The simplest, least expensive gun in the hands of a highly-trained shooter will do more good than the most powerful high-tech gun in the hands of one who doesn't know what to do with it. If you don't feel that you're ready to shoot, check around at the local gun shops, gun clubs and police departments for training references. The NRA has a huge number of certified instructors around the country. To find one near you, contact the National Rifle Association at [800] 672-3888.

Safety

We always have to impress upon new shooters the importance of keeping their



Purchasing a firearm is just the beginning. This party is booking space at an indoor range for regular practice.

SIVET FIREARM

defensive firearm accessible while at the same time keeping it secure from unauthorized hands. That's a tough job. Several of us addressed this issue at length in the January 2002 issue of *GUNS*. If you don't have a copy, you can contact our back-issue department at [800] 537-3006.

Good luck. Speaking as a full-time instructor in weapons and the appropriate use of force, it is difficult to advise people as to how to best protect themselves and their loved ones. Just take your time.

And spare no detail.



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PHOTO BY: ICHIRO NAGATA

A black and white photograph of a man with short dark hair and glasses, wearing a light-colored button-down shirt. He is holding a handgun with both hands, aiming it towards the right. The background is slightly out of focus, showing what appears to be a doorway or a window frame.

Guns

By Andy Stanford

It has been said that you can't judge a book by its cover. Not always true. You can frequently identify a hard-core handgunner by his or her hardware.

Serious students of defensive and tactical pistolcraft tend towards a relatively small selection of fighting pistols and revolvers. These time-tested weapons comprise the majority of handguns carried by the armed professionals and trained private citizens of the free world.

When you strip away all the hype and Hollywood fantasy, a gun is just a tool. Bells and whistles don't win fights, people do, and smart people choose robust, reliable tools. I'd venture to say that the five handguns below comprise at least 75 percent of all handguns carried by those in the know and who are afforded the opportunity to choose their weapons.

Old Slabsides

Knowledgeable American handgunners have historically chosen the Colt 1911A1 .45 ACP and its clones for what Jeff Cooper calls "serious social purposes." There are any number of valid reasons for this. First of all, the weapon's long and successful service as a military sidearm virtually guaranteed it a significant place in the annals of personal weaponry. Nothing provides a verifiable track record better than extensive wartime service, and the .45 auto has served with aplomb during two World Wars and countless police actions.

Like virtually all of John Browning's designs, the 1911 combines a plethora of practical attributes in a package that is as functional today as when it was conceived. The key traits of any well-made 1911A1s include trouble-free functioning (once broken in), all the practical accuracy anyone needs in a gunfight, a potentially superlative single-action trigger, ergonomics par excellence, and a control-

Noted expert Ken Hackathorn has called the 1911: "The world's finest Close Quarters Combat handgun." Many experienced handgunners would agree.

of the Cognoscenti

A nationally-known firearms trainer shares his thoughts on five pistols you can trust.

lable cartridge conducive to accurate rapid fire. The aluminum-framed Commander model has an overall weight in the same range of today's alloy and polymer frame sidearms. Believers in big bullet ballistics take great comfort in the .45 ACP cartridge.

For many years, the Colt .45 Auto was the only reasonable alternative for use in practical pistol competitions. When I joined the South West Pistol League in 1977, the .45 held a virtual monopoly among IPSC shooters, and today double-stack variants by STI, Para-Ordnance, and other manufacturers still rule that action shooting game. More to the point here, a significant number of armed individuals currently choose the 1911A1, and many others would do so if they had a choice of what to carry.

A cocked-and-locked .45 in a quality holster is almost always a sign of a practiced pistolero — more so if the weapon in question is a custom piece worked over by one of the many talented pistolsmiths that specialize in this model. Sure, any law-abiding citizen with the money can buy a high-end .45, and I've had students come to class with \$3,000 pistols and little skill at all. However, nine times out of 10, a person carrying a tuned 1911A1 will evince above-average prowess on the range.

The .45 auto has achieved true cult status in the shooting world. It's no mystery why. The gun has dominated a variety of competitive disciplines for nearly a century. Countless American servicemen received at least a familiarization with the 1911A1 until it was replaced by the Beretta M9. Colonel Cooper and other trendsetting instructors and writers have lent their strong endorsements to this momentum. Other handguns have recently challenged this supremacy, but



This selection of five pistols represents the majority of handguns carried by knowledgeable individuals.

the .45 has a near religious following. Old Slabsides will doubtless soldier on for many years to come.

The Overseas Option

Outside the United States and former COMBLOC nations, the 9mm parabellum reigns supreme as the service handgun cartridge of choice. It's no surprise then that the pistol most carried by professionals worldwide in the 20th Century chambers the 9x19. I'm talking of course about the Browning P-35, the first

popular "hi-cap" auto, which has been serving military and civilian users around the globe for the better part of a century.

Sharing its John M. Browning parentage with the Colt .45 Auto, the 13+1 "High-Power" was the wondermine of its day. The P-35 has as much going for it now as then. In fact, it's the only common high-capacity autopistol for which full-capacity magazines are readily available at a reasonable price. Admittedly a subjective measure, the weapon actually feels slightly better in my smallish hand

than a 1911A1, something that can't be said for other double-stack guns. In addition to the standard requirements of high-visibility sights (I like the Ashley Outdoors Big Dot Express) and a crisp trigger, the P-35 can benefit from a larger thumb safety, and, if you rest your firing hand thumb on the safety lever as I do, an extended tang to prevent hammer bite.

An English friend of mine — who served in elite British Maritime special forces and counterterrorist units, then travelled the globe as a professional soldier and bodyguard before opening a tactical training school in the U.S. — carried P-35's on most of his assignments. Suffice to say, they served him well in numerous close quarters confrontations. No magic. Just pistols that went "bang" every time the triggers were pulled. Real deal professionals know that you don't need much more than that in a fighting handgun.

For what it's worth, my friend relates the "minor caliber" 9mm bullets worked just fine too, with even ball rounds ending the fight whenever he made multiple solid hits. The difference between the parablellum cartridge and the .45 ACP just doesn't amount to much in the real world — just 1/10 inch to be exact! In the words of Rangemaster honcho Tom Givens: "A pistol is a pitiful puny popgun. Even big Colt autos don't spit Thunderdeath, only small metal projectiles like any other handgun."

New Breed Blaster

At home and abroad, both the 1911A1



Controllability and reliability are two reasons for the Glock's success. The author is shown in the middle of a fast string of fire from the modern isosceles position.

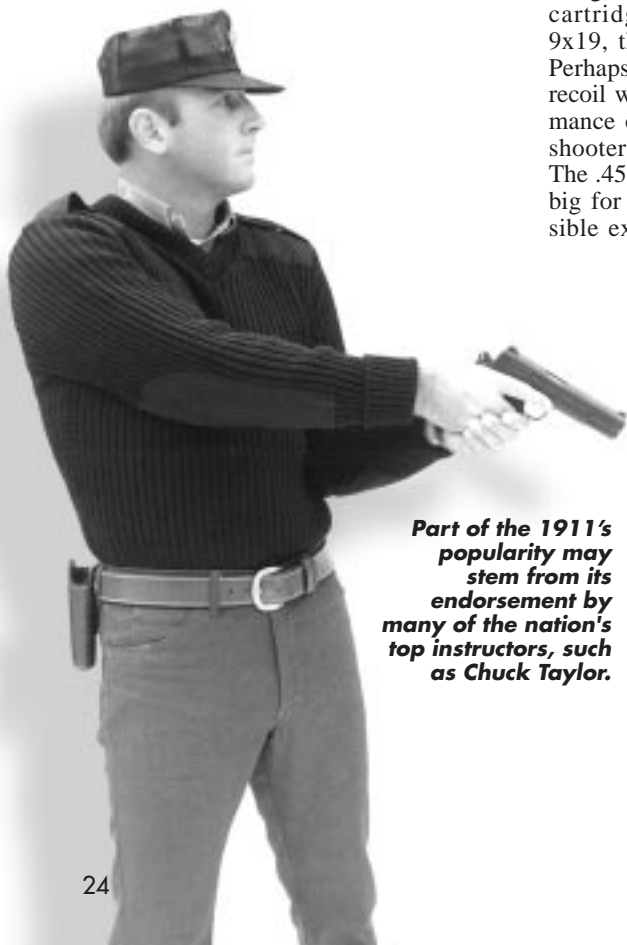
and the P-35 now face serious competition from Gaston Glock's line of polymer-framed pistols. A growing number of armed professionals are leaving their favorite single action autos in the safe, and are strapping on combat tupperware. Dirt simple and stone reliable, a Glock is hard to beat for serious use. It's taken awhile, but the Austrian autoloader has won the respect of the most serious constituencies — those who regularly go into harm's way.

The company sells a wide variety of pistols — different calibers and sizes on the same basic "safe action" design — but truth be told, the 9mm Glocks are the best of the breed. No real surprise since this is the round they were originally designed for. When you put a .40 S&W cartridge into the same package as a 9x19, the gun wears out more quickly. Perhaps more importantly, the increased recoil will noticeably degrade the performance of all but the most accomplished shooters, more so the .357 Sig models. The .45 and 10mm Glocks are simply too big for most folks' hands, with the possible exception of the new single stack

G36, and again, the kick is harder to handle for the average Joe or Jane.

For open carry, you might as well stick with the G17. Interestingly, with the original style frame, this full-sized pistol is actually better for those with small hands than the more compact versions, since the effective trigger reach is shorter. The mid-sized G19, a nice balance of size and ammunition capacity, has become *de rigueur* for plain clothes use among the new breed of operators who are not emotionally tied to the 1911A1. The sub-compact G26 is best reserved for size-critical applications such as ankle carry, since the G19 can be concealed almost as easily as its smaller sibling, and is noticeably easier to shoot well.

The best thing about a Glock is that you can take the pistol out of the box, load it, and it will function perfectly more than 99 percent of the time. The same cannot always be said of ANY production 1911-type pistol. The Glock is also a bit less expensive than most other service autos. Finally, it will hold up extremely well under extended use, giving reliable service for many tens of thousands of



Part of the 1911's popularity may stem from its endorsement by many of the nation's top instructors, such as Chuck Taylor.



While the Browning P-35 is an excellent pistol out of the box, it can be improved. This example shows Novak sights, an extended backstrap, a wide trigger, and texturing of grip and sighting surfaces.

rounds without parts breakage or measurable wear. No wonder those whose lives depend on their choice of sidearm are increasingly carrying Glocks.

Airweight Snubbies

Scorned by some, but a constant companion to others, the 2-inch barreled, alloy frame, 5-shot .38 revolver has a lot going for it. Incredibly light, yet chambering an actual service cartridge, air-weight variants of the stalwart Smith and Wesson Chief's Special are probably the most commonly carried handgun by the majority of CCW permit holders in the U.S. I prefer the concealed hammer Centennial version, with it's ability to be fired through a pocket or withdrawn snag-free when required. (The shrouded hammer Bodyguard accomplishes the same thing for those who wish to retain the ability to thumb-cock the piece.)

My personal weapon in this class is a model 342 Centennial Air Lite Ti (aluminum frame, titanium cylinder and barrel shroud), with compact Crimson Trace laser grips. At the earliest opportunity, I'm going to replace the stock-black, front-sight blade with a big dot tritium version from Ashley Outdoors sights. I chose the satin nickel finish for greater visibility to my opponent during a verbal challenge in low light.

Taurus unveiled their own version of the Centennial at the 2001 SHOT show in New Orleans — a small, titanium, 5-shot .357 dubbed the C.I.A. The initials stand for "Carry It Anywhere," and describe perfectly the rationale behind this class of personal weaponry. The first rule of gunfighting is "have a gun," and the simple fact is that the average permit holder is much more likely to carry a compact, lightweight handgun than anything significantly bigger or heavier. Though it might pain them to admit it, the same is true of a large number of more experienced hands.

At a recent IDPA Board meeting, one Director (who shall remain anonymous) made a comment about the inability to carry a full-sized gun while jogging. He noted that he'd finally settled on an air-weight S&W J-frame in a fanny pack as the best choice for this application. "Like this one?" inquired a fellow director, pulling an M442 Centennial from his front pants pocket. "Or this one?" another director asked, holding up his. "Or this one?" queried another woman, retrieving hers from her purse. And so on around the table — a unanimous vote of confidence by a number of very seasoned shooters.

Seecamp, Et Al

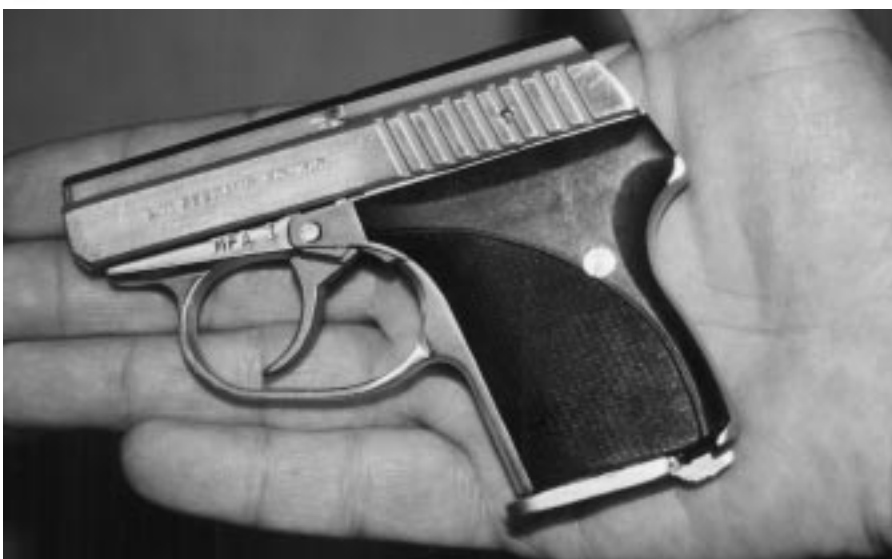
Few guns in the world merit the title of "status symbol" the moment they leave the factory. A Purdy shotgun or Holland and Holland double rifle qualify, on the



The Glock G19 has won wide acceptance from serious operators. This well used specimen sports Ashley express sights.



Three Centennial series "J"-frames from S&W. From left to right: M642, M442 and M342.



Despite its small size, the Seecamp LWS-32 has become a coveted possession among knowledgeable Pistoleros.



When the chops are down, it's the man — not the machine — that determines the outcome. A world class sidearm, like this Novak custom P-35, can be counted upon when needed.

basis of both quality and price. A few decades ago, the Smith and Wesson Model 29 .44 Magnum was much coveted, due to relative scarcity. Today, on the opposite end of the size spectrum, the Seecamp LWS-32 is placed upon a pedestal for much the same reason.

When Larry Seecamp figured out that he could make a .32 auto that was as small as most .25s, customers quickly beat a path to his door. Before long, demand far outstripped supply, resulting in a backlog of more than a year. In keeping with the principles every business major learned in Economics 101, the Seecamps already in circulation command scalper's prices.

Why is the gun so popular? For the same reason as the Airweight .38s described above. The LWS-32 can be concealed in places that a larger weapon simply cannot. Dropped into a pocket, it makes a perfect no-hassle backup to a larger firearm. In this application, I recommend carrying it accessible to the non-dominant hand, for weapon retention or knife defense scenarios that tie up your dominant side. It also has no equal as a last ditch hideout weapon for deep cover scenarios.

Because of the dearth of Seecamps on the market, several other makers stepped up to the plate and produced similar small .32 autos. NAA produces the Seecamp-clone Guardian, and Autauga Arms made a similar stainless-steel pocket pistol for awhile. But for my money, the best alternative to a Seecamp is the polymer framed Kel-Tec P-32.

Although the Kel-Tec is slightly taller and longer than the Seecamp, it is also noticeably flatter and lighter. The P-32 is still plenty small to fit in a pocket. Six of one, a half-dozen of the other. Unlike the Seecamp and its all-steel imitators, the polymer framed Kel-Tec is a locked breech design, which allows less slide mass than a straight blowback weapon. It can be equipped with a spring steel clip

that allows it to be tucked securely inside your waistband, much like today's popular folding knives.

The Final Weapon

The above guns are the weapons of choice for those in the know, but the armed professionals who carry them understand that equipment is only a means to an end. Reflexive skill and advanced tactical acumen are far more impressive than any custom pistol, and far more rare as well. The reason is human nature — most people are lazy, and choose to believe that they can buy defensive or tactical capability by simply purchasing the right hardware.

Acquiring a good 1911A1, P-35, Glock, Airweight .38, or .32 pocket auto is simply a matter of money.

Attaining the expertise to use these tools with unconscious competence in a lethal encounter requires an investment of time and sweat relatively few are willing to make. The true Cognoscenti have earned their place in the food chain not by the tools they carry, but by the skill with which they wield them. Without exception, these folks are the product of hundreds or thousands of hours of training, much of this under the watchful eye of world class instructors.

To be sure, when a firearm is required, it had better function flawlessly, but in the words of John Steinbeck: "The final weapon is the brain, all else is supplemental." Your firearm of choice is simply there to augment a proper mindset and sound tactics. Guns don't win fights, people do.



Jeff Cooper and his Gunsite academy has probably done more to popularize the 1911 than any other factor.

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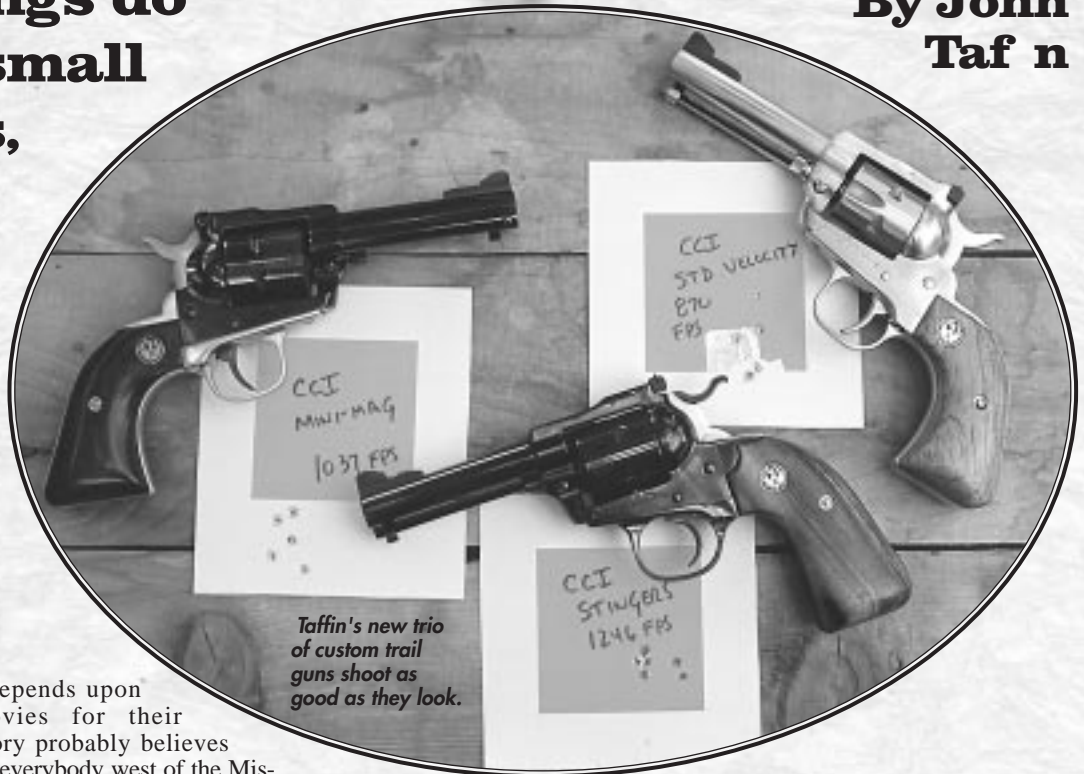
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A Trio of TRAIL GUNS From Andy Horvath

Good things do come in small packages, as these small-frame single actions prove.

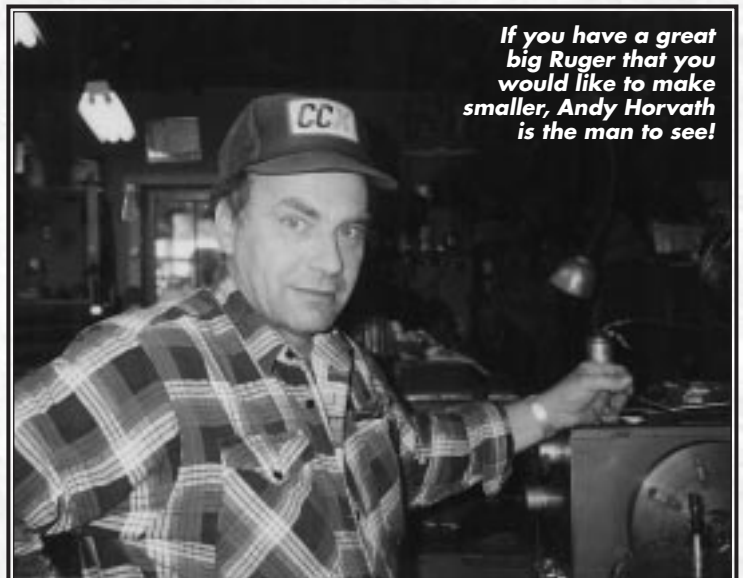
By John Taffin



Anyone who depends upon Western movies for their firearms history probably believes that just about everybody west of the Mississippi carried a Colt Single Action Army, except for a few independently-minded individuals who packed one of the .44 Smith & Wessons or a single action Remington 1875. In reality, there were many small pocket pistols that came along in the 1840s and 1850s that were more popular and widely used than the movies would have us believe.

Colt's first six-shot revolver was the very large 4½-pound Walker in 1847. One year later, the Walker was streamlined and improved to become the 4-pound First, Second, and Third Model Dragoons. These, of course, evolved into the Colt 1851 Navy, then 1860 Army, followed by the 1871-72 Open-Top, which was then followed almost immediately by the crowning glory of Colt's Single Action lineup, the 1873 Peacemaker. All of these were relatively large guns. However, Colt did not forget those that needed a much smaller revolver, and this need was filled by the Model of 1849 — a five-shot .31 caliber percussion revolver. Some of these small frame guns had barrels as short as 3 inches, and history tells us that they were enormously popular as hideout pistols in the gold fields as well as under the coats or vests of many gamblers.

Colt may have started building big guns with a side



trip to pocket pistols, however the first revolvers to come from Smith & Wesson were neither large nor were they of the percussion.

1857 saw the first Smith & Wesson, appropriately known as the Model Number One — a seven shot, tip up, spur-triggered, cartridge-firing revolver. This was not only Smith and Wesson's first revolver, it was also the first cartridge firing revolver, and the first firearm to be chambered in .22 rimfire. It was soon followed by Models Number One and a Half and Number Two, which were six-shot .32 rimfires. These little S&Ws were popular not only during the Civil War, but also the violent times that followed. Along with the 1849 Colt, these were very popular hideout guns especially as we became more "civilized." And it was not considered proper, in fact sometimes it was illegal, to openly carry firearms in town.

Smith & Wesson's spur-triggered single action .22 evolved into the solid frame, double action Ladysmith, which incidentally was popular with many types of ladies including ladies of the evening. Then in 1935, the emphasis was changed from hideout guns for gamblers, gunfighters and generals, not to mention those of the fairer sex, to guns for the outdoors or for the trail with the introduction of the beautiful little .22/32 Kit Guns. The word "Kit" refers to the use of these little .22s carried in a backpack, tackle box, or a kitbag. A popular song of the World War I era referred to these little carry-all bags with "Pack up your troubles in your old kitbag..." All these easy-carrying little guns are great companions for the trail when big bore sixgun power is neither needed nor desired. A great deal of .22 Long Rifle ammunition can be carried for the weight and space allotted to a relatively few rounds of .44 or .45 ammunition.

The Kit Gun platform was used to build S&W's first .38 Special pocket pistol, the Chief's Special of 1950. Today we might say that the idea of these little single actions from the 1850s is now found 150 years later in the very small double action five-shot revolvers offered by S&W in .38 Special and even .357 Magnum. We could also say that they live on in the superb L'il Trail Guns of Andy Horvath.

Taffin Takes Note

One of my great joys as a gun writer is to introduce relatively unknown craftsmen



The first L'il Gun built by Horvath, and eyed by Hollywood — the round-butt, short-barreled .44 Special.

to the shooting public. Such was the case with Horvath, when I discovered his little ad in a copy of the Handgun Hunters International club newspaper, *The Sixgunner*. At the time Horvath caught my eye, he was announcing specialization in .44 Special conversions. We made contact, and he sent a Ruger Old Model .357 Magnum that had been converted to .44 Special. He also sent a Model 1892 Winchester rescued from the bone pile, and also turned into a .44 Special for my examination and test-firing.

I was impressed enough with his work that I sent off a Ruger Old Model .357 Blackhawk with the request to make it into a .44 Special that was just a little different. The barrel, along with the ejector rod and ejector housing, was to be shortened to 4 inches, and the grips and grip frame to be round-butt. That was in 1985. I was so pleased with it that I took it to the first Shootists Holiday in 1986 and it was certainly well received among the knowl-

edgeable sixgunners in attendance. In fact, one very well-known gunsmith looked at it, worked the action several times, turned it over in his hands repeatedly, and then looked up and said: "I have to get better." I felt that was very high praise for Horvath's work.

The word spread and other sixgunners opted for the same type of sixgun from Horvath in other chamberings such as .45 Colt and .41 Magnum. The .44 Special, along with several other L'il Guns built by Horvath, was featured in the Sept/Oct 1990 issue of *American Handgunner*. And the fire was lit around the country, even in Hollywood. Either Don Johnson or Mickey Rourke or both saw the article and wanted my little .44 Special for a movie they were doing. There was no way I was about to turn my L'il Gun loose, but I did suggest that Horvath be contacted. As a result, he not only built guns for the movie, he also made personal L'il Guns for both Johnson and Rourke. Horvath has been busy ever since!

Sometimes Smaller Is Better

A few years later, I had Horvath build me two more truly little L'il Guns. This time we started with a Ruger .22 Bisley Model and a .32 Magnum Single-Six. The same basic work that had been performed on the .44 Special transformed these two small-frame Rugers into family heirlooms. In addition to the regular work, I had Horvath swap grip frames so



Regular practice with a pleasant .22 will pay big dividends in improving your field shooting.



I wound up with a custom .22 Single-Six and a Bisley Model .32. Both of these guns were written up in *American Handgunner* in the Sept/Oct 1995 issue.

Shortly after the creation of these little L'il Guns, I found myself on a varmint hunt out of Jarbidge, Nev. I was hunting with well-known writer Clair Rees and Rod Herrett of Herrett's Stocks. If I did not have them as witnesses, I would not dare to relate what happened.

We had tired of shooting with scope-sighted rifles and handguns and pulled out the iron-sighted .22s. The hunt was sponsored by Winchester and we were all shooting Winchester's .22 Power Point hollow point .22s. My .22 revolver was the Horvath custom .22 Single-Six. We were sitting on a slight hill overlooking a field with a dirt bank at the far end. Things had slowed down a mite so I asked them to spot for me while I shot at a small rock on that bank. I carefully aligned the sights, squeezed off a shot, and was told that it was just a little low. Holding up the front sight in the rear notch, and perching the rock on top of the front sight, I slowly squeezed off the second shot and heard: "You hit it!"

When they put the range finder on it, the reading was 181 yards. "Guys I'm ready if a squeaky comes out on that bank." A squeaky is a small ground squirrel, and sure enough, in just a few minutes, one came out. I lined up the sights the same as I had for the second shot on the rock, squeezed carefully, and nailed the squirrel. A lot of luck? Absolutely! Could I duplicate it? I doubt it! In fact, I learned long ago when a shot like this is made, the smart sixgunner immediately puts his sixgun away so there is no chance of being called upon to repeat such a performance. In fact I never fired that little .22 for the rest of the trip.

Horvath may be best known for his L'il Rugers, however he is a complete gunsmith and can do wonders with nearly any sixgun, including transforming double action revolvers into Fitz Specials. If you do not know who Fitz was, nor what a Fitz Special is, your sixgun knowledge needs an upgrade by reading about J. Henry Fitzgerald — who was Mr. Colt in the 1930s. His book, entitled simply *Shooting*, has been reprinted and is well worth reading. In this book, you'll even find a picture of Col. Norman Schwarzkopf, Chief of the New Jersey State Police, who was also quite a shooter and father of the famous Desert Storm general.

It is a fact that anyone who does not understand the past has no future, and as we have digressed into important books, I also recommend the following for those who would like an overall picture of sixgunning in the first-half of the 20th Century. These are all required reading: "*Sixguns by Keith*"; "*The*

Art of Pistol Shooting", Charles Askins; "*Fast and Fancy Revolver Shooting*", Ed McGivern; "*Experiments Of A Handgunner*", Walter Roper; and "*Pistols, A Modern Encyclopedia*", by Henry M. Stebbins. All grand reading and great information.

A New Collaboration

It had been quite a while since Andy and I had worked together on a project, and also new readers are always coming on board at both *Guns* and *American Handgunner*, so it seemed like the ideal time to showcase the talents of Andy Horvath once again. With that in mind, I contacted him with the idea of building a trio of Trail Guns. Not only would these be designed for easy packin' in desert, foothills, woods, or mountains — they would also be sixguns that could be easily handled and enjoyed by my grandkids. Yes, in spite of the ranting, raving, and outright lies of the out-of-step "mainstream media", and the totally misguided anti-gun factions, I'm doing everything I can to make sure that my eight grandkids are thoroughly immersed in the gun culture. It is the only future we have.

Three Single-Six model Rugers were sent off to Horvath at his Diagonal Road Gunshop to have him perform his L'il Gun magic. Now if you have been keeping track of the count, you realize that this would make six of the special little sixguns in my collection, and I have eight grandkids. The simple arithmetic reveals two more to be made in the future. Here is a look at the latest three, both as they were originally and what Horvath did to transform them.

Ruger New Model .22 Single-Six, stainless-steel, 6 -inch barrel: The barrel was cut to 4 inches, along with a corresponding reduction in the length of the ejector tube and ejector rod. A new base pin was fitted with



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SINGLE-SIX

LOAD	MV	GROUP*	MV	GROUP*
CCI Std. Velocity	878	1"	869	1½"
CCI Blazer	1067	1¾"	1046	1½"
CCI Stinger	1232	1½"	1246	¾"
CCI SGB	1092	1½"	1042	1½"
CCI Mini-Mag	1037	1"	990	1"
CCI Mini-Mag +V	1188	1½"	1157	1"
Winchester HV HP	1100	1½"	1075	1½"
Win. Power Point	1081	1½"	1038	¾"



.22 STAINLESS SINGLE-SIX

LOAD	MV	GROUP*
CCI Std. Velocity	870	1½"
CCI Blazer	1024	1¼"
CCI Stinger	1196	1¾"
CCI SGB	1049	1½"
CCI Mini-Mag	991	1¼"
CCI Mini-Mag +V	1145	1¾"
Winchester HV HP	1057	1½"
Win. Power Point	1033	1½"

.32 MAG. SINGLE-SIX

LOAD	MV	GROUP*	MV	GROUP*
Federal 85 JHP	957	1¾"	957	1¾"
Federal 95 LSWC	905	1½"	876	1¾"
8.5 grs. AA#9:				
Hornady 85 XTP JHP	1158	1¾"	1122	1¾"
Sierra 90 JHC	1138	2"	1131	1¾"
Speer 85 JHP	1220	2¼"	1174	1"
Speer 100 JHP	1183	1½"	1166	1¼"
8.5 grs. #2400:				
Hornady 85 XTP JHP	1131	2"	1087	1½"
Sierra 90 JHC	1046	1½"	1042	1¾"
Speer 85 JHP	1109	1¼"	1096	2½"
Speer 100 JHP	999	1¾"	1004	2"
BRP 100 SWC (.312")	1107	2½"	1073	2¾"
BRP 100 SWC (.313")	1127	2½"	1095	2½"
10.0 grs. H110:				
Hornady 85 XTP JHP	1179	1¾"	1127	1½"
Sierra 90 JHC	1147	1½"	1140	2½"
Speer 85 JHP	1155	1½"	1126	1"
Speer 100 JHP	1125	2¼"	1111	2"
5.0 grs. Unique:				
BRP 100 SWC (.312")	1176	1½"	1141	2½"
BRP 100 SWC (.313")	1169	1¾"	1147	3"
Bull-X 100 SWC (.312")	1133	2¾"	1107	1¾"
Bull-X 100 SWC (.314")	1139	1¾"	1104	1¾"
3.5 grs. Bullseye:				
Bull-X 100 SWC (.312")	1023	2"	997	2¾"
Bull-X 100 SWC (.314")	1032	1¾"	999	3¼"

***Groups are five shots at 50 feet.**

a larger, but shorter, head knurled for easy removal. The unsightly liability warning was removed from the left side of the barrel, and the stainless-steel grip frame was rounded at the heel of the butt, and the sharp edge removed from the toe. An extra nice touch was the

checking of the front of the ejector rod head. The factory ejector rod head is very small, often allowing the finger to slip off while ejecting spent shells. The checking prevents that.

Before sending these sixguns off I looked through my box of factory grips

for the best-looking Ruger factory stocks I could find. It would be more correct to say those I felt would look good after refinishing by Horvath. The factory grips, while often being made of quite attractive wood, are not finished in a way that highlights the natural

beauty of the wood grain. For this stainless-steel Single-Six, I found a pair of light-colored grip panels that appear to be of Goncalo Alves and that I felt would look good mated with the stainless-steel. After Horvath's careful attention, they certainly do.

Ruger New Model .22 Single-Six Bisley, blued, 6-inch barrel: All the same operations were performed on this Bisley model, however the altering of the grip frame and polishing of the warning label from the left side of the barrel necessitated rebluing, so the entire little .22 Bisley was refinished in a highly polished bright blue. The grips supplied for this project appeared to have a lot of attractive grain and Horvath's refinishing managed to bring it out beautifully.

I might mention that both of these .22's were excellent shooters in their factory trim, so much so that I hesitated to change them. However, I have never been a fan of 6-inch barrels on single action sixguns plus I wanted to build something truly special for the grandkids, so we entered the project hoping for the best. I was not disappointed as they are still excellent shooters. Another feature was also maintained. The stainless steel Single-Six is a convertible model with an extra .22 Magnum cylinder. I have heard of excellent shooting .22 Magnum Ruger Single-Sixes, however this was certainly not one of them! Before customization, it showed mediocre accuracy at best with the magnum cylinder in place and it still does. No matter, as I am perfectly satisfied with its use as a standard .22. If I



Matched pair of Horvath .32 trail guns — one Single-Six, the other a Bisley model.

feel I need more muzzle energy, I will go to the third member of the trio.

Ruger New Model Single-Six, .32 H&R Magnum, blued, 6½-inch barrel: This sixgun was found used in a gunshop this past year and at an incredibly low price for a high demand Single-Six. These little .32s are extremely hard to find. Its one drawback was that its accuracy was nothing to get excited about. So there was certainly nothing to lose here, and everything to gain. The good news is that it shoots a whole lot better as a short-barreled Horvath custom than it ever did in its original configuration.

As this gun was a blued model, Horvath also applied one of his beautiful blue finishes after removing the barrel warning. The grip frame, being alu-

minum alloy as on all the standard Single-Six models, was polished bright which looks very attractive when mated with the high polish bright blue. The factory grips chosen for this little sixgun were a reddish color and had originally been found on a stainless steel Vaquero. The completed pistol in bright blue, with the polished aluminum grip frame and reddish hued stocks, forms a very attractive sixgun portrait.

The early factory ammunition from Federal for the .32 Magnum consisted of an 85 grain jacketed hollow point, as well as a 95 grain lead semi-wadcutter. However, suitable bullets are available for reloading the .32 Magnum in weights from 85 grains all the way up to 120 grains. Another nicely added touch from Horvath was the inclusion of an extra tall front sight just in case the adjustable rear sight did not have sufficient range of elevation to accommodate the different bullet weights. All of the front sights for these little guns are held on with a screw, so they are easily changed.

Andy Horvath's work is totally top drawer. He not only makes great L'il Trail Guns, I am convinced he can do just about anything and do it right. I recommend him highly and without reservation of any kind.



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Stellar Pistols From The Lone Star State

By Dave Anderson
Photos By Ichiro Nagata

STI leads the way in high-capacity competition 1911s as well as Texas-tough carry guns.

STI is one of the most innovative and respected companies in the tough, highly competitive 1911 autopistol industry. The company (and the modular pistol which was its first product) has an interesting history.

Top IPSC competitor and two-time Steel Challenge champion Chip McCormick retired from competition in 1990 to devote his full time to his business: making and distributing a line of high quality parts and accessories for 1911-style pistols under his "CMC" trademark. Some of these parts were designed and made by engineers Virgil and Fred Tripp. McCormick and the brothers formed a working relationship, with Tripp Research, Inc. (TRI) doing the development and production, and CMC doing the promotion and marketing.

At the 1990 nationals McCormick saw that high-cap Springfield P-9 pistols had a definite advantage in the elaborate, high round-count field courses that were becoming the norm at IPSC matches. Early in 1991 McCormick pulled together a design team made up of Virgil and Fred Tripp and manufacturing engineers Sandy Strayer and Ed Minshaw to design a high-cap, 1911-compatible frame.

Truly Original Design

Using sophisticated computer-assisted design programs they created a modular concept, with a steel upper section fitted to a synthetic grip assembly. In an impressive feat of engineering they got it designed, built, debugged and into pro-





duction in a year and were able to display the first models at the 1992 SHOT Show. Top IPSC shooters immediately realized the impact the design would have on their sport. I well remember seeing top competitors handling and carefully examining the display models, then solemnly shaking McCormick's hand.

The new design didn't take long to fulfill its promise. In the fall of 1992 Jerry Barnhart used a gun built by Wilson on the modular frame to win the USPSA nationals. The modular design has been a dominant force in competition ever since.

Those first pistols were marked "CMC" on the right side of the grip, "TRI" on the left. When they first appeared we all called them "McCormick" frames. There have been changes in ownership of the design over the years. For a time the frames were marked TRI, then STI (for Strayer-Tripp International). In 1994 the Strayer-Tripp partnership broke up, with Virgil Tripp retaining the STI trademark while Sandy Strayer formed SV ("V" for Mike Voigt, pistolsmith, competitor, and current USPSA president).

STI needed additional capital to grow. Enter Dave Skinner, recently retired after selling a very successful electronics business which he and his wife Shirley had built into a seven-plant, 430-employee operation. An IPSC shooter and firearms enthusiast, Skinner had met fellow Texan Virgil Tripp at IPSC matches and the two had become friends. Like many an entrepreneur, Skinner found retirement a bore and was ready for another challenge. He purchased STI, and with Skinner and Tripp working together the company has prospered.

The Competitor's Choice

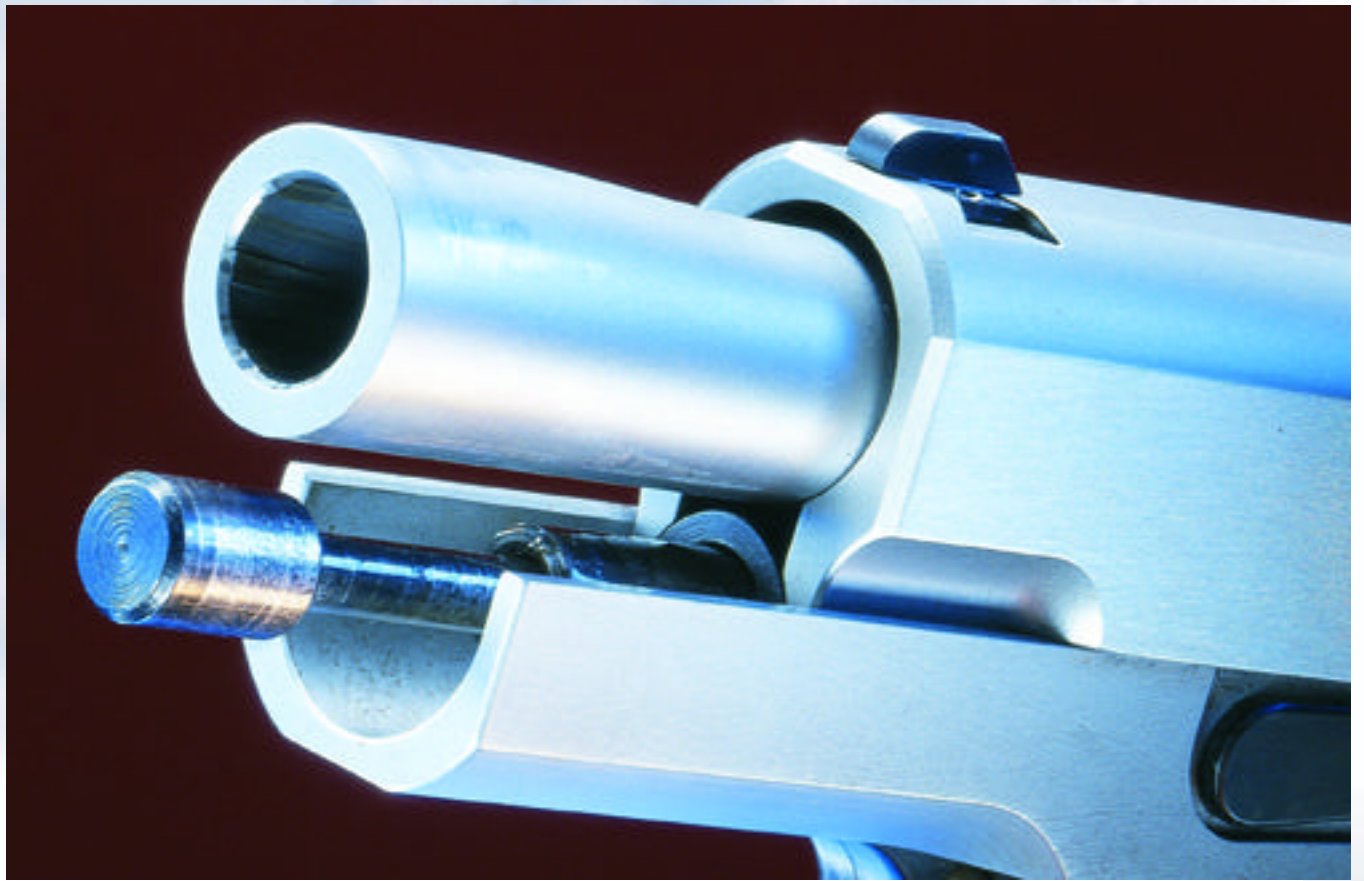
At the 2001 USPSA limited nationals, 41 percent of the competitors were using an STI pistol or frame; at the open nationals, STI pistols or frames were used by 57 percent of the field. There is no better testament to the basic correctness of the design or the quality of workmanship and materials. Top competitors fire more rounds in six months than most shooters will in a lifetime. They demand the highest level of performance, reliability and durability, and simply will not tolerate anything less.

The 1994 Crime Bill limiting new magazines to a capacity of 10 rounds was a serious blow to manufacturers of high-capacity handguns. Since STI's only product and the reason for its existence was the high capacity frame, many in the industry didn't see how the company could survive. But where others saw only problems, Dave Skinner saw opportunities.

What he saw was a dramatic increase in demand for compact defensive pistols, as state after state passed "shall issue" concealed-carry laws. He also saw that the







technology that made possible 16 and 18-shot full-size pistols could also make for extremely compact 10-shot pistols. Far from being wiped out by adversity, STI has prospered, selling every gun it can produce and expanding its product line.

I was able to assemble a selection of STI pistols, some of which were regularly-used competition models already owned by myself or shooting friends, others on loan from STI to offer you an overview of what the company currently has available.

Double Stack Pistols

The original modular frame was built around double-column/single feed magazines. Some double stack mags (for sub-machine guns, for example) stack the cartridges in two rows and feed rounds into the chamber alternately from the left and right. Most high-capacity magazines for handguns stack the cartridges in two rows but are tapered at the top so that all rounds are fed into the chamber from the center.

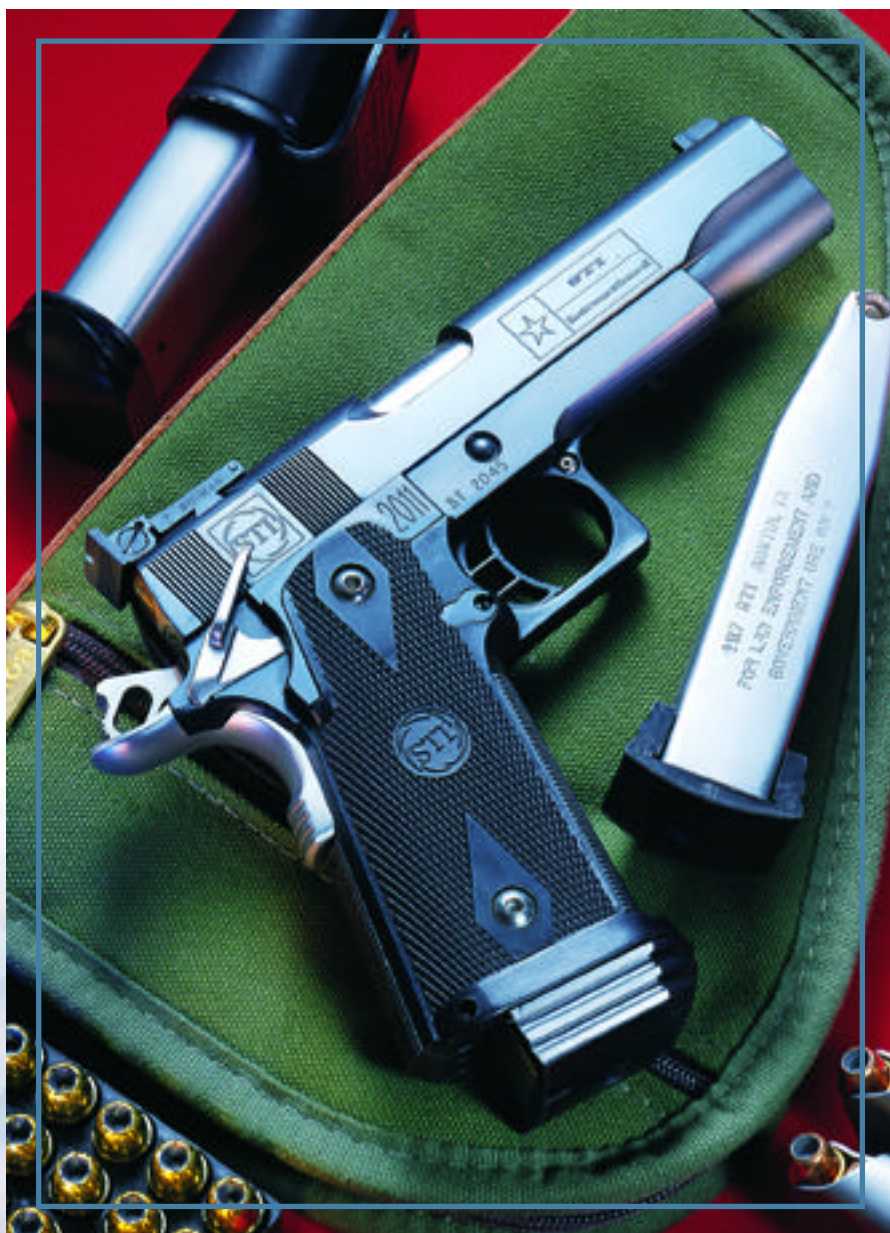
Magazines have to be well designed and carefully manufactured to ensure that rounds will move smoothly and properly from the sides to the middle without jamming. Many shooters tend to take magazines for granted and don't appreciate the difficulty in designing reliable mags and building them to the correct tolerances. One of the major reasons for STI's success was that they got the magazines right from the beginning.

Although new magazines with capacity greater than 10 rounds cannot be manufactured or sold (except for military and law enforcement purchasers), high-caps made prior to the 1994 Crime Bill taking effect can be owned and used. STI was able to make quite a few high-caps before the law took effect and though they aren't cheap they are available on the used market.

Competitors often use the less expensive and readily available 10-round mags for practice and some match stages, and reserve one or two high-capacity magazines for stages in which they are an advantage. It's not uncommon to see competitors pooling their resources, with the same set of high-cap mags being used by two or more shooters. As we've seen, STI's high-capacity 1911s continue to dominate IPSC competition. If you purchase a full-size STI for IPSC competition I'd suggest you organize the mag situation first just to ensure you have a couple high caps. At this time at least it's not that difficult.

The Competitor

The Competitor is STI's race-ready pistol. It comes with everything (including compensator and red-dot sight) needed for IPSC Open-class competition. It could literally be taken from the factory box, sighted in, and be capable of winning any match. The pistol used for this



article is a Competitor I purchased some years ago and which has fired many thousands of rounds.

The Competitor is built on a standard frame with black grip and the Classic 5-inch slide with front and rear cocking serrations. It is fitted with an STI 5.5-inch bull barrel, with a very well designed and effective multi-chamber compensator and a one-piece steel guide rod. STI parts complete the frame: stainless steel high-rise beavertail grip safety, ambidextrous thumb safety, slotted lightweight hammer and long carbon-fiber trigger.

The cavernous magazine chute is the STI aluminum model. Scope base is an Allchin design, also made of aluminum by STI. Sight options are the C-More (shown) or the OKO red dot. Empty, the Competitor weighs 44 oz. and is 11 inches overall.

Current list price is \$2,499, including your choice of dot sights. If you've ever

purchased or had built a full-house race gun you'll understand that this is a reasonable price for the features and workmanship provided. One reason why the price is kept down is that there are few options. All Competitors are built in .38 Super caliber. About the only options offered are a hard chrome finish and extended magazine release.

The pistol is set up for IPSC "major" loads which are hotter than most factory .38 Super ammunition. If lighter loads are used, say for steel speed shooting or to go with IPSC's reduced power factor, it is simply a matter of changing the recoil spring. As it came from the box the Competitor has been totally reliable with IPSC major handloads. The trigger pull was also very good — clean and a bit over three pounds. It has since been reduced somewhat in weight to suit personal preference but was certainly useable right out of the box. With reloads using quality

jacketed bullets it will shoot into 1 inch at 25 yards all day long.

STI offers two variations of the basic model. The TruBor Competitor is identical but uses the "TruBor" barrel, in which the entire barrel/compensator assembly is machined in one piece. Price is the same as for the basic Competitor.

The Grandmaster is functionally similar to the Competitor but is fancier in appearance and can be customized more for the individual. The trigger, for example, is the STI "gunsmith blank" which can be fitted with straight or curved inserts of different lengths. The slide has been flat-topped and lightened, with rear serrations only. The Grandmaster uses the TruBor barrel/comp unit. The mag chute is stainless steel instead of aluminum. A blue grip frame is standard, as is a hard chrome finish. Customers can request a special serial number provided it hasn't already been used (their name, for example, or their USPSA membership number). The Grandmaster lists at \$3,295.

The Edge

Like the Competitor, the Edge is built to be race-ready from the box, but for USPSA Limited class rather than Open class. Currently it is offered in 9mm, .40 S&W, 10mm Auto, and .45 ACP. For USPSA competition .40 S&W is the cartridge of choice as it is the smallest caliber that is scored major, with greater magazine capacity than .45 ACP.

The Edge is built on STI's long frame, in which the front extension of the frame extends right to the end of the slide. The purpose is to put more weight forward to reduce muzzle jump. The 5-inch slide lacks the normal scalloped lightening cuts at the forward end of the slide, again with the purpose of putting more weight out front. Even the one-piece guide rod is made of heavy tungsten rather than steel. Overall weight is 39 ounces.

The frame components (hammer, trigger, safeties, mag chute, mag button)



are the same as for the Competitor. Of course the Edge has no compensator or optical sight. Sights are a vertical post front sight and fully adjustable STI rear sight. The Edge currently lists at \$1,776 in blue finish with black grip.

The Edge pistol used for this article belongs to a friend and like the Competitor has fired many thousands of rounds with complete reliability. Hand-held groups run a bit larger, averaging around 2 inches at 25 yards. The difference in performance reflects the fact that iron sights are harder to shoot with great accuracy than are the electronic sights.

An increasingly popular variation of the Edge is the more recent Executive model. It came about this way: Dave Skinner wanted an Edge to use in USPSA Limited class competition. Not having a lot of time to spend in maintaining a blued finish, he had a new Edge hard chromed, and to make it a bit more distinctive he used a gray grip and trigger

and stainless steel mag chute. Finding the plain black front sight a bit hard for middle-aged eyes to pick up he had his gun fitted with a Dawson fiber optic front sight with a bright red insert.

The result proved to be a handsome, distinctive pistol. Skinner found that whenever he went to a match shooters would ask him to "make me one just like that." Eventually he decided simply to add it to the product line. The Executive is offered in .40 S&W only and lists at \$2,262. The sample shown has the optional extended magazine release.

The Executive on consignment has proven equally as reliable as the Edge, and seems to be a shade more accurate. This could be simply normal variation from one pistol to another, although both shooters testing the accuracy felt that the fiber optic front sight was an aid to their middle-aged vision.

The VIP

The VIP uses a shortened grip frame, barrel, and slide. With a 10-shot, double stack magazine it puts 11 rounds of .45 ACP in a compact package that has proven very popular for concealed carry.

The "frame" on STI modular pistols is actually the upper portion of the lower unit, the metal part that carries the serial number. The synthetic grip — the part you actually hold — is a separate component. The VIP frame is made of high grade structural aircraft aluminum. The shortened slide is made of stainless steel and carries a 3.9-inch bull barrel and a one-piece steel guide rod.

Sights are a ramped, non-snagging front sight and a Novak-style fixed rear sight neatly buried in the slide. Frame components (trigger, hammer, and safeties) are similar to those of the Edge, except there is no mag chute and the thumb safety is on the left-side only (an





ambi safety is optional).

The September/October issue of *American Handgunner* carried an evaluation of one of the early VIP's by Massad Ayoob. Ayoob reported outstanding accuracy and generally good reliability, but felt the trigger pull at under 3 pounds was too light for a defensive pistol. He also found that the gun shot several inches high at 25 yards with the fixed sights, and the slide would sometimes lock back on the last round in the magazine.

I also had an early VIP on hand and my experience was much the same as Ayoob's. As it happens I actually prefer light triggers, but Ayoob has argued convincingly that light triggers are not a good idea on defensive pistols, either in a tense situation or in the legal aftermath. The recoil spring on my sample was also rather heavy and with standard .45 ACP loads the slide sometimes wouldn't go back far enough to engage the slide stop on the last round. Instead, the slide would lock on the rear edge of the magazine follower making the magazine difficult to remove.

STI is a very responsible company and

immediately took action in response to Ayoob's concerns. I was able to compare the old model to a new VIP on loan for testing. The new model has a slightly higher front sight. For my eyes at least the fixed sights now shoot to point of aim at 25 yards. The new front sight is also narrower, which I much prefer. Most factory front sights are too wide, nearly filling the rear-sight notch and hence are rather slow.

The new VIP proved reliable, locking the slide back only when the magazine ran dry. On one single occasion the slide didn't go all the way to slidelock on an empty magazine, but that was with a light target load that was incompatible with the recoil spring, which was set up for full-power loads. Otherwise the new VIP was completely reliable in the course of firing some 200 rounds. Accuracy was the same as the older model, with five-shot groups running from 2 to 3-inches at 25 yards — outstanding accuracy for such a compact gun. The trigger pull is still clean and consistent, but now weighs a bit over five pounds.

The single criticism I have of the VIP is a sharp edge on the top right side of the

frame, at the front of the notch where the thumb lever of an ambi safety would be. A friend who shoots an Edge in competition tried some weak-hand shots with the VIP. When he brought his thumb down to grip the pistol, as he would on his Edge with its ambi safety, the sharp corner cut the thumb. If it were my gun I'd take a high speed hand grinder or a file and just round this corner off — it would take about two minutes.

The VIP weighs just 25 ounces, empty, but the hand-filling grip made it one of the most pleasant shooting light .45s I've come across. It puts 11 powerful rounds in a very neat package, and yes, if you have them available, it will accept high-cap mags. The VIP currently lists at \$1,699.

The Eagle 5.0 and 6.0

The Eagle 5.0 is STI's most popular model. Essentially it is a modern 1911 with the STI modular frame. It has the standard frame and slide with 5-inch bull barrel and steel guide rod. Empty weight is 34.5 ounces. It is offered in standard calibers 9mm, 9x23, .38 Super, .40 S&W, 10mm Auto and .45 ACP. The Eagle 5.0 lists at \$1,699. I didn't ask for the loan of an Eagle as it is very similar to the Edge except that it uses a standard frame and slide instead of the longer, heavier ones of the Edge. The Eagle 6.0 is identical except that as its name implies it uses a 6-inch bull barrel and slide to match. It lists at \$1,795.

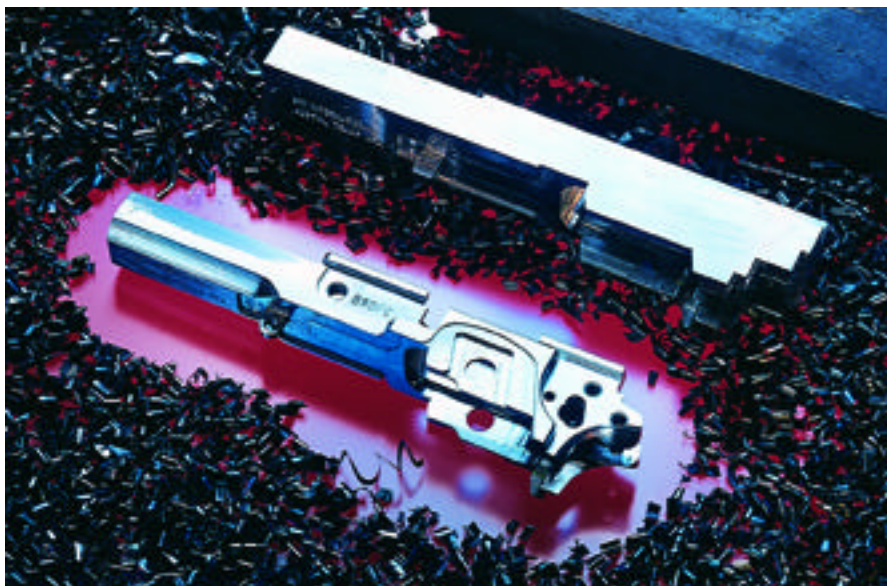
The Single-Stack Models

Recently STI has begun manufacturing more traditional 1911s, utilizing the standard single-stack magazine. There are a lot of good modern 1911s out there, but the voracious demand seems to be unappeasable. There's always room for a quality 1911, and quality describes these STI offerings.

The STI 1911s incorporate the features of the modern 1911; good sights, extended triggers, slotted hammers, high-ride beavertail grip safeties, extended thumb safeties. They also have a couple of unusual touches. Grip panels are made of thin rosewood, making for a flatter profile and slimmer grip that will suit some hands better. The frontstrap of the frame has a different and quite attractive scalloping which the company calls "STI-pling". Checkering of frontstraps has long been a favorite custom feature but some shooters feel checkering has its faults. It can be painful on the hand during long practice sessions and can snag on clothes. Well done it can be quite expensive, and badly done it looks terrible. The "STI-pling" looks good, doesn't snag, and provides a secure grip.

The Trojan 5.0

This is STI's basic full-size 1911. It's offered in 9mm, .40 S&W, .40 Super, and



Trojan 6.0 is identical in most respects but has a 6-inch barrel and longer slide, and is offered in 9mm, .40 S&W, .40 Super and .45 ACP. It lists at \$1,074.

The LS

Count on STI to do things differently. While the Trojan is a very well made conventional, full-size 1911, the LS stands out — or rather it doesn't stand out. This is the slimmest, flattest autopistol chambering full-power service cartridges of which I'm aware. One thing I've noticed about so many of our current autopistols is that they tend to be a bit wide across the beam. None seem to be as flat and slim as some of the old Colt and FN pocket autos.

The LS is a refreshing change. Across the slide and frame (which are the same width) it measures just .765 inch. Across the slim rosewood grip panels it measures 1.065 inches. Here is how it compares to a standard 1911 (which is one of the most slender full size autos made) and two of the best pocket autos from the first half of the 20th Century, the 1910 Browning and the Walther PPK:

Pistol Width: across slide, across grips

STI LS: 0.765", 1.065"

1911: 0.900", 1.260"

1910 Browning: 0.800", 1.070"

Walther PPK: 0.880, 0.920"

The LS is offered in 9mm and .40 S&W. Barrel length is 3.4 inches. Barrels have fully supported chambers. The recoil spring is a two-piece design, and there is an unusual cam block held in place by the slide stop pin that controls barrel locking and unlocking. The extractor is a large external design similar to that of most modern autos, and an improvement over the internal extractor of the standard 1911.

Thumb and grip safety of the LS are conventional 1911, except that engaging the thumb safety does not lock the slide closed. That means that unlike a standard 1911, the slide can be cycled for loading or unloading with the thumb safety engaged.

Front sight on the LS is a small ramp that is integral with the slide, and the rear sight is a compact, snag-resistant Heinie design. Sight picture was adequate though I found the front sight a bit small. The advantage is that the sights are small and resistant to snagging.

The long trigger on the LS was reasonably good, with some takeup and overtravel, breaking at about 5.5 pounds. The only minor change I would make to the operating controls would be to use a heavier spring in the magazine release button. For a carry gun I found it a bit easy to depress.

The test gun was a 9mm, holding seven rounds in the magazine plus one in the chamber. Between cold weather and

.45 ACP. In appearance it is a conventional "modern" 1911, and I mean that as a compliment. I think a well done modern 1911 is about the best looking and most useful handgun available. The .40 Super is a bottlenecked case, currently loaded by Triton to some impressive velocities.

The Trojan uses a standard 1911-style barrel with barrel bushing, making it legal for IDPA competition as well as IPSC production class. A one-piece steel guide rod is used. Sights are a post front and the excellent STI adjustable rear.

The sample pistol was in .40 S&W. Overall fit and finish was excellent. There is very little play in the fit of slide to frame, yet the slide cycles smoothly and consistently. Barrel fit at both the barrel hood and the bushing was likewise very good. There were no toolmarks visible; the blue finish was smooth and even. Overall it gave the impression of being a quality piece of equipment.

Functional reliability was perfect. Five-shot groups at 25 yards were in the 2.5 to 3-inch range, not quite as good as with the Edge and Executive, but certainly more than adequate. Operating controls — thumb safety, grip safety, magazine release, slide stop — all worked smoothly and properly. Thumb safety is on the left side only. Empty magazines dropped freely from the gun whether the slide was forward or locked back.

Although the thin grip panels look nice and do make for a more slender grip, I personally am so used to standard 1911s that for the shooting tests I fitted a set of synthetic Pearce grip panels, which required the use of longer grip screws. However I think most shooters will like the slimmer panels.

The Trojan is 8.5 inches long overall and weighs 36 ounces, empty. Current list price is \$970. This is a fine quality 1911 and I certainly consider it a fair value. The

When I first unpacked the little gun I disassembled it to examine the design, wiping off all traces of preservative oil with which it had been covered. I tried a few shots without lubing the gun and immediately had several failures to feed. Not really a fair test; I then lubed the gun properly and from then on it ran like a champ with both standard and +P 9mm ammunition. Functioning was reliable, the slide locked back on an empty magazine and the magazine would drop freely from the gun whether the slide was forward or locked back.

The LS is a bit heavy for pocket carry so I tried it in a Milt Sparks belt scabbard made for an Officer's ACP. It made for a slim, comfortable, easily concealable package. Height and length of a gun affect concealability, but thickness does as well and the flat LS is a leader in that category. The LS lists at \$746.

The BLS combines the short (3.4") barrel of the LS model with the full-size grip frame of the Trojan. Features are the same as for those two models. Offered in 9mm and .40 S&W, it weighs 30 ounces and lists at \$843.

The selection of standard STI offerings is ample to meet almost any defensive or competitive need, but for those who want something a little different STI can accommodate. Recently the company opened a custom shop. Options can be ordered from an extensive list and a pistol built to your order. Prices are only slightly greater than standard models, and STI is currently able to deliver your complete custom pistol in 8-12 weeks.

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SPYDERCO- From chopping to skinning, the Spyderco Lum Chinese folder can handle just about any chore.

By PAT
COVERT

NEW GENERATION GENT'S

THE NEW LOOK IN
HIGH-TECH TACTICALS

Since the invention of the edged weapon, man has made smaller versions to perform chores that require precision and meticulous hand work. Thousands of years ago, when mammoth and mastodon roamed North America, Paleo Man had a tool kit equipped with finely flaked micro-drills and slab sided thumbnail scrapers fashioned for cutting, fleshing, punching and other tasks. Even thumbnail scrapers are found, with fine engraving tips built into their design, possibly used for scribing into bone or tattooing.

By the early 1900s, in both the United States and abroad, the "gent's knife" had achieved a high level of sophistication. Solingen, Germany was the knifemaking capitol of Europe,



KERSHAW- Fresh Onions from Kershaw: The all steel Chive (top) and the slightly larger synthetic handled Scallion (bottom).

though fine pen knives were made in Britain. In the U.S., manufacturers Case Knife Company and Camillus Cutlery churned out exquisite multi-blade folders. The ultimate gent's knife featured two or three blades, exquisite pearl or abalone scales flanked by bolsters of bright nickel, and possibly sterling silver. Many patterns introduced then are still made today.

The gent's folder achieved perfection in the late 1980s.



DELTA Z-
Unusual and
slick, the
Delta Z
Osprey has
all the traits
of a custom
tactical, but
at a much
more afford-
able price.

Custom knifemakers, armed with computer technology and sophisticated machining equipment, produced the most breathtaking folding knives imaginable. This was the heyday of the interframe, a steel framed folder with precision inlays of natural materials such as gold-lipped pearl and exotic stones — jade and fossilized dinosaur bone. These were further accentuated with the exquisite engravings of a cottage industry who specialized in working under stereo-microscopes. The market for these fancy — and expensive — folders tanked in the early '90s due to a glut of the knives outpacing demand, and the lack of a secondary market for collectors.

Then the tactical folder, a relative new genre, took off. Custom collectors turned off by the interframe market turned on to tactical folders, which were more affordable and had a new novelty about them. Law enforcement and military users also enjoyed being catered to for a change, and many of the early tactical knifemakers came from these backgrounds. The knife manufacturers took note, and tactical folders gained wide popularity. They have been the darling of the cutlery industry ever since.

Cutlery manufacturers have done a remarkable job broadening the base for the tactical folder market by reaching more consumers than the custom knife industry ever could. Ironically, they have done so by collaborating with many of the top custom knifemakers — converting their existing models to production fare or designing new ones altogether. The increased demand by an ever

broadening base of consumers for tactical folders has created a need for both smaller and more upscale models of these knives. The new tactical knife customer wants an attractive, easy to carry folder that offers a certain degree of protection. These are today's gent's folders.

Though custom knifemakers have always offered fancy versions of their tactical folders, manufacturers need greater sales for the setup, tooling and overhead to be profitable. Fortunately, a growing number of companies are doing just that, and we now see interesting, slick, upscale gent's folders. What follows is a look at some of these new breeds of gent's tacticals.

Benchmade Osborne 770

Fans of the techno-industrial complex will love it! This is the second folder collaboration between Benchmade Knives and custom knifemaker Warren Osborne. It may just be their slickest knife yet. Osborne is one of the more successful makers to buck the downturn in the fancy folder industry almost a decade ago. He continues to make some of the finest gent's folders today, mainly because he keeps his designs fresh and makes a quality upscale folder. Benchmade has done an excellent job of transferring Osborne's strengths into a production folder.

A modest 3.6-inches closed, this is a small knife for tactical giant Benchmade. The handle (with the exception of the patterned stainless steel backspacer on the spine) is made of black carbon fiber, making for a light carry. The 770 has

hidden liners, but bucks the liner-lock trend. Instead, it features Benchmade's patented Axis lock, in which a spring-loaded, sliding button lock (ambidextrous) is used to disengage the blade from the open position. This locking mechanism itself is quite strong.

The 2.75-inch 154CM stainless steel blade is a long and sloping modified spear point with a false saber grind on the back that reaches virtually all the way back to the thumb stud. The blade is also offered partially serrated, and a black boron-coated blade is also available. The action is extremely smooth and snicks into place better than many custom folders I've handled. A slim 2.3-inch pocket clip graces the back side of the handle.

Beautifully designed and technically brilliant, the Benchmade Osborne 770 model is an excellent example of what a cutting edge gent's folder should be. Suggested retail for this knife is \$200. The boron-coated blade costs \$10 more.

Camillus EDC

The Camillus EDC (Every Day Carry) is one of the knives featured in our annual new knife review in the *2002 GUNS Combat Annual*. We'll review the two fancier versions of the knife here. The EDC is the second collaboration between Camillus and the incredibly talented mind of custom knifemaker Darrel Ralph.

Curvaceous yet sleek, the EDC is an all-metal folder with a strong frame-lock built into the design. At 3.8-inches closed, this knife fits in with the new wave of efficient tactical folders in a mid-size package. The

CAMILLUS-
Camillus' two
upscale versions of
the EDC are shown
here — in Talonite
(top) and black
nitride (bottom).





CRKT- Want an affordable gent's folder with a top flight Titanium frame knife? Check out the CRKT Viele Wasp.

stainless steel handle is skeletonized to reduce weight, and the EDC's 3-inch blade is recurved to add more slice — and it compliments the handle nicely.

The standard model is offered with a stainless steel blade, but for those who like to be on the forefront of technology, Camillus offers the EDC with a space-age Talonite blade. Not a steel, Talonite is an exotic Cobalt-Chromium alloy that is reported to have an edge-holding capability up to eight times longer than even the best stainless steels. Furthermore, because of its unique metallurgical makeup, Talonite is also 100 percent resistant to rust or corrosion.

Camillus has also released a special 125th Anniversary Limited Edition of the EDC that should delight collectors. Restricted to a run of only 1,000 units, these knives have a black nitride coating with gold anodized accents on the pocket clip, thumb studs and frame screws. There are also special markings connoting the significance of the anniversary model on the blade. The stealth-like quality of this knife makes for an appealing package. Hopefully, Camillus will offer a regular edition in black.

The 125th Anniversary model sells for \$89.95, just twenty bucks more than the standard EDC. The Talonite version retails for \$219.95, which sounds steep until you consider this knife will probably outlive your great great grandchildren. Regardless, the Camillus EDC model is an extremely well-built folder that deserves serious consideration for you

next purchase.

CRKT Viele Wasp

Columbia River Knife and Tool (CRKT) has always kept a smaller gent's sized folder or two in their line, but the Viele Wasp has to be their best effort to date. A collaboration with noted knifemaker Howard Viele (see *American Handgunner*, Nov/Dec 2001), this upscale folder has everything you'd want in a gent's tactical.

For starters, there's Viele's clean design. This talented knifemaker's designing talents rank with the best when it comes to clean, flowing lines. Then fold in the quality of fabrication. The Wasp has a state-of-the-art Titanium frame, attractive blue/black laminate G-10 scales, and a sweeping AUS 118 stainless steel drop point blade replete with Viele's signature mark — three-holes drilled into the back side of the blade. The thumb stud has a soft Kraton insert for ease of opening, and the action even mimics the smooth feel found on Viele's highly-prized handmades.

At 3.7-inches closed, the Wasp is sized nicely for an everyday carry. A larger, 4-inch model is also available, but we're focusing on the smaller, gent's version here. The blade (bead blasted to compliment the light frost finish of the Titanium scales) is 2.5-inches in length and can be had with a plain or partially serrated combo-edge. The blade stays put via a liner-lock that has a precisely milled leaf inset into the inner frame — with an unexpected notched thumb release. Well done!

Rounding out the equation is a Teflon-coated pocket clip that, incidentally, carries the Viele triple-hole design as well.

In a nutshell, the CRKT Wasp has many of the same features you'd look for in a custom folder at a fraction of the price. And you'll have to travel far and wide to beat a Howard Viele design. Suggested retail is \$114.99.

Delta Z Osprey

If you like a knife that commands attention, the Delta Z Osprey is the cock-of-the-walk. This is another design from the fertile mind of custom knifemaker Darrel Ralph, and Delta-Z held nothing back in the production of this unique knife. The Osprey has a very wicked look to it that defies the fact that it is very traditional in construction. In fact, this knife is an interesting blend of contradictions that pull together in a very interesting way.

The 4.2-inch handle uses juxtaposition to create interest. Handsome red burl wooden scales and traditional bolsters give way to a blend of modern and ancient curves capped off with a futuristic 5-hole pivot screw. The bolsters have a milled pattern that compliments the upswept curve found on the upper scales. This a liner-lock design with fine, strategically-placed notching around the edges that serve for both grip enhancement and ornamentation.

The 3.5-inch blade is a fusion of the Oriental tanto design with the upswept trailing point or "Persian" style. The blade is engaged via a teardrop shaped hole in the blade that runs the perimeter of the

blade grind. Three holes of diminishing size are also drilled through the blade and this pattern is mirrored on the slim pocket clip located on the back side of the handle. The bolsters are black anodized aluminum, the blade is black nitride coated to match.

The construction, fit and finish of the Osprey is excellent. The depth of the scales and bolsters add substance to the somewhat slim handle design. The action rivals that of a well-made custom folder to the point that it would be difficult to tell the difference if the knife were handled without knowing it is a production folder.

In essence, the Osprey is different. The styling of this knife exhibits the imaginative side of Darrel Ralph's styling (he is a big fan of fantasy artist Boris Vallejo's work). The radical nature of this knife compared to other production gent's folders means it will appeal to some and seem austere to others. Kudos to Delta Z for having the cajones to bring it out! Suggested retail for the Osprey reviewed here is \$179.95. A simplified version of this knife with black aluminum scales is available for \$79.95, or you can go full tilt and buy the Limited Edition Damascus model for \$395.

Kershaw Scallion/Chive

Kershaw's recruitment of custom knife-maker Ken Onion has proven to be a stroke of genius since their first collaboration several years ago. Onion's slick designs opened the door for Kershaw to become a serious contender in the tactical

folder market, but it was the knifemaker's inventive "Speedsafe" torsion-bar assisted blade opening system that kicked down the door. These knives are as close to being automatics as you can get without having the moniker.

Onion's first Kershaw folder, the Random Task, was so successful that it begat several other models, including the Blackout and Boa models. Now, Kershaw is broadening the base again with the introduction of two smaller models: the Scallion and Chive. A couple of modifications have been included more recently, and these newer models feature both. First off, a sliding safety (located on the bottom of the handle on these two knives) has been added to prevent the blade from accidentally engaging. Secondly, an "Index Trigger" (which actually allows the knife to be opened faster!) has been added to the back side of the knife adding even more spice to the mix.

The Scallion and Chive are essentially the same design, but they differ in size, materials and locking mechanism. The larger Scallion, 3.5-inches closed, has black Polyamide handle scales with steel liners and has a liner-lock mechanism for securing the blade. The more diminutive Chive, 2.8-inches closed, has an all steel frame and a frame-lock mechanism, which is actually a beefier design than that of its big brother due to the depth of the locking leaf. The Scallion has a 2.25-inch blade compared to 1.9-inches for the Chive — both in 420 high-carbon stainless steel and

available either plain or partially serrated.

The Chive, with its all steel construction, has a classier look and fits the gent's folder role better than the Scallion. It is, however, a very small knife so the Scallion may be a better choice if utility is an issue. True to Kershaw form, both of these folders are extremely well made and the noteworthy Speedsafe feature makes them truly distinctive in the production knife world. Take your pick, either are sure to please. Suggested retail for both models is a very affordable \$49.95. The Chive is also available in an all-black Boron finished model for \$79.95.

Spyderco Lum Chinese

Spyderco has never taken an orthodox approach to the cutlery industry, so why start now? The Spyderco Lum model is one of the most unique knives featured here. Spyderco knives, with their trademark round hole blade opener, have always looked a bit different, but they've also had the boldness to produce some of the more unusual designs by top custom knifemakers. The Bob Lum Chinese folder is an example of this.

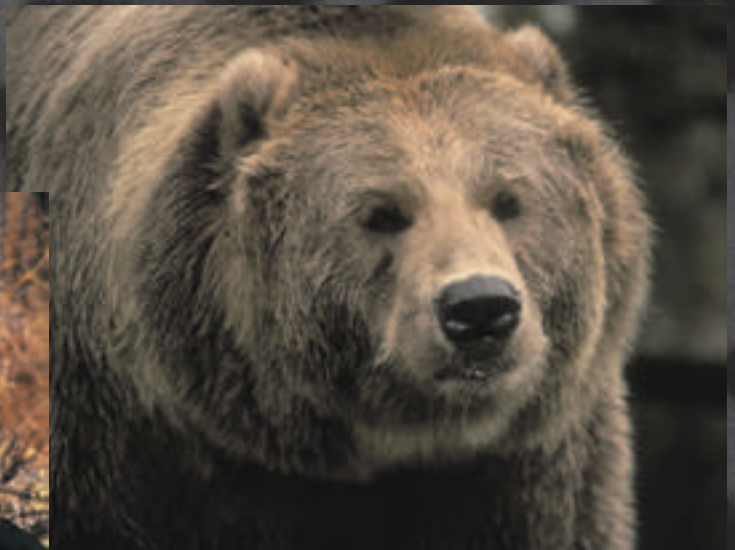
The first thing you notice about this knife is its wide, leaf-shaped blade. The shape is taken from an ancient Chinese design that was used for a wide range of utility. The 4.1-inch handle is a smooth, unadulterated design that literally flows off the blade, broken only by a detent for accessing the blade lock. The handle

Continued on page 111



HANDGUNS FOR THE WILD PLACES

Most days in the wilds are pleasant and peaceful, but the savvy outdoorsman knows that he can't dial 911 when danger threatens.



"Lions, tigers and bears - oh my!" Those grizzly cubs may be cute, but an unexpected close-quarters encounter with a grizzly can make any handgun you carry look mighty small indeed. In the moment of truth it's your skill and cool head that will save the day. No experienced handgunner would choose a puny .455 Webley but the famous African hunter John "Pondoro" Taylor saved himself from a mauling by a lion with the swift use of his .455.



If you want to get an argument going around the campfire, all you need to do is bring up the topic of using handguns against dangerous animals. I'm not talking about hunting such animals with a handgun, but rather using a handgun as an emergency defensive weapon against them. Of course, "dangerous animals" come in all sizes and shapes from small poisonous spiders to killer whales. For the purpose of this article the term "dangerous animals" is reserved for land animals that are large enough to severely hurt or kill a person with their teeth, claws, hooves or horns.

The carnivore group consists primarily of the bears, the large cats, the canine type animals, and the crocodile types. All have sharp teeth, sharp claws, or both, and would in many cases gladly have you for supper.

The herbivore group consists of animals that are dangerous because of their size, sharp horns, tusks or antlers, and aggressive behavior. The primary examples are the large wild bovines (such as



Many people carry handguns for protection against rattlesnakes, but the best option is to just walk away and give old croatalus his place in the wild.

The author holding the highly capable Glock G20 10mm, his first choice for field carry in an area with large dangerous animals.



the cape buffalo), elephant, rhinoceros and hippopotamus.

Besides the above, there are many other animals that are not considered to be particularly dangerous but can still kill you under certain circumstances. These include any large deer, antelope or wild hog. Given an avenue of escape, such animals rarely constitute a threat. However, if they are wounded, cornered or defending their young, they can be extremely dangerous.

Be Prepared

As far as I am concerned, an outdoorsman should never go afield without a handgun in any area frequented by potentially dangerous animals if he can legally do so. No one would disagree with the fact that a powerful rifle or a shotgun would be a better defensive weapon against such threats. However, if the outdoor activity is anything but hunting, such as fishing, camping, hiking, rock climbing, photography, backpacking, ad infinitum, then it may be

anywhere from impractical to impossible to pack a rifle or shotgun along. A powerful and capable handgun is the best reasonable alternative, though "bear repellent" pepper spray has its merits too.

How about those situations where you do have a rifle or shotgun and are hunting dangerous animals or you are hunting non-dangerous animals in an area where dangerous animals are present? Should a handgun be carried as a backup then? There are many who say absolutely not. Their reasoning generally runs along the lines of, "If you can't get the job done with a rifle or shotgun it is unreasonable to think that you can with a much less powerful and capable handgun."

I don't buy this reasoning, and I am in good company.

The Voice Of Experience

The incredibly experienced African hunter, the late John "Pondoro" Taylor, said in his superb book *"African Rifles And Cartridges:"*

"I personally know eight or 10 men

who have been mauled by lion, tiger or leopard, apart from those I have heard or read about, and in every case they are partially crippled.... Not one of these fools was carrying a revolver, tho (sic) from their own description of their mauling, it is apparent that they could each have saved themselves had they been doing so."

Taylor spoke with considerable authority. He survived an unprovoked ambush by a leopard that leapt on him from a tree. He dispatched the animal with a contact shot into its chest with his revolver while being mauled. Though Taylor was seriously injured, he survived without permanent damage.

In another incident, Taylor was charged at close range by a lioness. He shot her with his rifle and knocked her down but she was up and on him before he could chamber another round. Knocked down by the force of her attack, he blew the animal's brains out



In the pre-magnum days, many an outdoorsman saved his bacon by killing a threatening animal with a revolver like this beautiful old .44-40 Colt Single Action.

Thought must be given to how you will carry your handgun in the field. A fanny pack such as shown with this S&W M60 protects the gun and allows for carrying spare ammo and other necessities, but it is not as fast to access as some other options.



with his revolver at a range of just inches, just as she was about to close her mouth on his leg. Incredibly, Taylor came out of that incident without a scratch.

In yet another incident he killed another lion at extremely close range with his revolver as it prowled around his camp one night. Catching the animal by surprise, he shot it once in the side near its spine — dropping it — and he quickly finished it off with a shot to its head. He also killed a prowling hyena one night with his revolver in a similar situation on a different occasion.

It should be obvious from Taylor's examples alone that even when a rifle or shotgun is present, there are many circumstances where a handgun can still save the day. I should also mention that even if the presence of a handgun may not always save you if you get ambushed at close range by a grizzly or a lion, the fact that it might

save your bacon is reason enough to convince me to carry one.

An Intelligent Selection

If we can agree that it is a good idea to carry a handgun while in areas frequented by dangerous animals, which handgun should be carried? The answer to that question depends on many considerations, not the least of which is what you already have on hand. It is also important to note that in many places, such as Canada, most U. S. Federal Parks, and many countries overseas, there is no legal way to carry a handgun afield. The only reasonable alternative is one of the more powerful pepper sprays, though even this is forbidden in Canada and some other countries. Handguns can be carried afield in South Africa, Namibia, and other African and South American countries if arrangements are made in advance, as well as in Alaska and virtually anywhere in the continental U. S. where dangerous animals are found.

In many wilderness areas in the U. S., the primary dangerous animals are black bears and feral dogs. Both are far more dangerous than most people think. Black bears often enter camp sites looking for food, and unfortunately people are occasionally added to the menu. A recent case I just encountered was a camper who was killed by a black bear. When his remains were finally found, the bear had eaten over 90 percent of the body.

Feral dogs are dogs that have run away or been turned loose in the countryside by well meaning but misguided people. They will often revert to wild wolf like behavior and hunt in packs. They typically have no fear of man and are consequently quite dangerous. I have been in several places where feral dogs were a major problem and a very real danger. In one case, the young grandson of a colleague was attacked by such a pack and only survived because he was able to climb a tree. His rescuers had to shoot several of the feral dogs with their

handguns before the pack would break off the attack.

In the Pacific Northwest, which is where I live, cougars are also a big problem. The bunny-huggers have managed to get legislation passed to prohibit the hunting of cougars with dogs in California, Oregon, and Washington. As a result, the cougar population has skyrocketed and attacks by cougars are becoming more frequent. Not 10 miles from my home, in Oregon, a black-powder deer hunter was stalked and attacked by an adult cougar last fall. Fortunately he was able to kill the animal with the one shot he had in his muzzle loading rifle.

Just a couple weeks ago, as this is being written, not four miles from my home, a good friend was cutting firewood when he spotted an adult cougar only 20 feet away stalking him. We will never know its intentions, since my friend backed up to his truck keeping a running chain saw between him and the cougar while climbing to safety in his pickup.

Lest you think that cougars are not particularly dangerous, a rancher in the next county had a 350-pound steer killed by a cougar. When the cougar was eventually caught and killed it weighed 200 pounds! You do the math.

In areas that have brown and grizzly bears, these animals must be the major concern because they offer the most danger and are the hardest to kill or incapacitate. In Africa, the most dangerous animals are probably the leopard, the lion, and the crocodile. The hyena, which is notorious for attacking people in their sleep, is another potentially dangerous

animal in many areas.

Too Big To Tackle

When it comes to cape buffalo, rhinos, hippos, crocodiles, and elephants, it is unlikely that any handgun will help you survive a close range scrap with any of them. I have been unable to find a single instance where a handgun was defensively used successfully against such animals, except when the person was purposely hunting such animals with an extremely powerful handgun. Most of us have one or more professional hunters with rifles present when we are in areas frequented by these animals, so I won't dwell on using handguns against such beasts. Though if I was attacked by such an animal, and had a handgun present, I would probably try to use it.

Any handgun used as a defensive weapon against animals must be light and handy enough that you can carry it comfortably at all times afield. It also must be holstered securely but at the same time be instantly available, preferably to either hand at all times. I like the modern form fitting thermal plastic holsters with no safety strap for this role, but there are many other excellent options.

Revolver Or Auto?

The next question is whether or not your field handgun should be a revolver or an auto loader. Each have their advantages. Auto loaders are flatter, hold more rounds, offer less recoil and faster shot recovery for equal powered loads, and in many cases, thanks to polymer technology, are significantly lighter for their power level. However,

recent introductions of titanium and scandium alloy framed revolvers by Taurus and S&W have brought some incredibly light and powerful revolvers into the picture as well.

Among revolvers, it should be obvious that the double action variety is preferable over the single actions because they can be fired much faster, something that might be mighty important if a big animal is sitting on your chest. That being said, a single action revolver is far better than nothing if that is all you have.

Revolvers have a couple of advantages over autos. A revolver can be jammed right against the animal and fired. If this is tried with most autos the slide will be pushed out of battery and the pistol will not fire if the trigger is pulled. It is also not commonly known outside of forensic circles that if a firearm is fired with the muzzle firmly in contact with the animal, the effect and damage to the animal is much more severe than it would be otherwise. The reason is that the hot gases behind the bullet also enter the wound and inflict considerable additional damage.

Personally, I am completely comfortable with either a good double action revolver or auto loader in this role. However, since I shoot the autos more and can shoot them better and faster, they are my first choice.

The next question is, what chambering to choose? There are at least three different approaches that can



Not all emergencies occur at arms length. Practice careful shooting from field positions as well.



Even an inexpensive surplus handgun like this 7.62x25mm (Tokarev) Czech Vz52 pistol, commonly available for under \$150, can penetrate the skull of the biggest bear with ease using inexpensive surplus ammunition.

In spite of the 650+ fpe delivered by its 10mm rounds, the author's Glock 20 is quite comfortable to shoot with only moderate recoil, a major advantage of an auto over a revolver of similar power.



be reasonably taken. The first is made up of the standard service pistol type cartridges that produce at least 350 fpe at the muzzle, such as the 7.62x25mm Tokarev, 9mm parabellum, .357 Magnum, .357 SIG, .38 Super, .40 S&W, .44 Special (some handloads), .45 ACP and .45 Colt. There are many light and handy handguns in these chamberings.

The second approach is the middle ballistics group which produce in excess of 575 fpe. These include the 9x23 Winchester, some .357 Magnum loads, some .357 SIG loads, 10mm auto (full pressure loads), .400 Cor-Bon, .41 Magnum, .44 Magnum, .45 Colt +P, and .45 Super. All of these cartridges are also available in handguns that are relatively light and handy.

The third approach is what I call the super magnums that produce more than 1,100 fpe such as the .44 Magnum (some loads), .454 Casull, .480 Ruger, .475 Linebaugh, .500 Linebaugh, and .50 Action Express.

The immediate problem with the super magnum group is that most exam-

ples are chambered in large heavy handguns that typically go well over 50 ounces empty. They are not particularly handy and are burdensome to carry all the time. The ones that aren't have truly frightful recoil. Because of their extremely heavy recoil, all the super magnums are hard to shoot well. Most people find that it takes two hands to control them and they are impossible to shoot at a rapid rate because of long recovery time from recoil.

While they may be ideal for handgun hunting, the super magnums are probably not a good choice for routine carry as a defensive weapon against dangerous animals except by an extremely experienced handgunner, and maybe not even then.

John Taylor killed his two lions and leopard with his World War I souvenir Webley Mark VI .455 service revolver using full-jacketed military loads that launched a 265-grain bullet at only 650 fps. He recommended carrying light and handy service pistols for this purpose. However, he also emphasized the use of full-jacketed ammunition to achieve adequate penetration. It is also important to remember Taylor wrote his book in 1947 when the only magnum handgun was the .357 revolver.

In actuality, Taylor's general recommendations still make a lot of sense today. No conventional handgun other than possibly a super magnum is going to be effective quick enough against a large dangerous animal such as a bear or lion with a body shot, and possibly even the super magnum may not. I recently chatted with a witness to a fatal bear mauling where the person killed had put a solid hit into the chest of a brown bear at close range with a .300 Magnum rifle, but the bear still was able to maul the shooter severely before it succumbed. A .300 Magnum delivers more than double the energy of even a handgun super magnum. That should be a clue.

Anatomy Lesson

The only sure way to shut down one of these beasts quickly is a penetrating hit to the central nervous system, primarily the brain. All of the service-type calibers mentioned above can easily penetrate the skull of a bear or lion at close range if they have a full metal jacket or a very hard cast bullet loaded to full velocity. The logic here is that since a brain hit with any cartridge described above will do the job and a non-brain hit with any handgun cartridge probably will not, then

why not use the ones that offer lighter handgun weight, lower recoil, and faster rate of fire. Such a handgun is far more likely to be there when you need it than some behemoth magnum. Beside that, chances are that you already have such a handgun or you can easily acquire one at minimal expense.

While I have no personal experience using handguns against attacking dangerous animals, and hope I never do, this topic has interested me for many years. I have taken the trouble of reading every account of handguns used defensively against dangerous animals I could locate including even in pre-World War II magazines and books written before the age of the magnum handgun. I have found many examples where bears, leopards, lions, cougars and the like were killed with service type cartridges.

In one case a wildlife officer, part of whose job was to deal with problem bears, killed several grizzlies quite handily with a Colt .38 Super often under extremely dangerous conditions. Similarly there were a number of accounts of war souvenir 9mm parabellum pistols being used effectively against bears and other dangerous animals. The feeling I got from reading these accounts was that these 9mms were carried because that was all

that person had. Thanks to their full metal jacket bullet, high velocity and high penetration, they proved to be effective particularly with head shots. There were no lack of other successful accounts of handguns being used effectively against dangerous animals with other auto and revolver cartridges such as the 7.65mm Luger, .38-40, .44-40, .44 Special, .45 Colt, .45 ACP and .455 Webley as long as hard cast or full jacketed bullets were used. The same would apply today with many modern cartridges of similar or greater power.

The cartridges in the intermediate group offer most of the advantages of those in the service cartridge group, such as the availability in light and handy guns. The main disadvantage being moderately heavier to much heavier recoil. The main advantages of the intermediate group cartridges are that their higher velocities and energies allow the use of jacketed expanding bullets that can still be counted on to penetrate the skull of a big bear or lion. This way hits that miss the central nervous system will still do the maximum tissue damage. Alternately, these cartridges loaded with non-expanding bullets offer significantly superior penetration to the Group A cartridges.

Of the cartridges in the intermediate

group, several like the .44 Magnum have loads available that exceed 1,000 fpe. The problem is that in a light revolver these loads have too much recoil for fast, close-up work. However, there are factory loads and handloads available that are down in the 700 fpe range that would be a better choice since they offer adequate power and excellent penetration at much lower recoil levels.

Regardless of the cartridge being used, one point I should make is that by most reports one of the best targets on an animal attacking you with its mouth open ready to bite is the open mouth itself. In most cases, this offers direct access to the animal's brain with the least amount of bone to defeat on the way.

The Author's Pick

My personal choice for the single best handgun for carry and use against dangerous animals is the Glock 20 in 10mm loaded with the Winchester Silvertip 175 grain hollow point that delivers over 650 fpe. This incredibly capable pistol weighs only 29 ounces, is fast into action, has very moderate controllable



While most people assume that only an extremely powerful magnum handgun can be effective against dangerous animals like lions and bears, the late John "Pondoro" Taylor killed two lions and a leopard with a Webley .455 revolver like this one shooting a 265 grain FMJ at only 650 fps.

Moose are notorious for being aggressive if surprised, especially during the rut.



S&W offers a number of light and handy .44 Magnum revolvers like this one from the Performance Center. For revolver fans, such guns are great for carry afield, but the author recommends intermediate level loads to keep recoil levels tolerable.



When the author carried this S&W Model 60 as his field handgun, he carried a variety of different types of ammunition for taking small game, varmints, or other purposes.



Cougars have been involved in a number of fatal attacks in recent years.

recoil, and holds up to 15+1 rounds. The latter feature could be mighty handy if being attacked by more than one animal at the same time as with a pack of feral dogs. Most importantly, this load can defeat the skull of any bear, lion, or lesser animal. I find that I can get two or three aimed shots off with this pistol in the same time I can deliver just one aimed shot from a light .357 Magnum revolver, let alone a more powerful revolver.

If the maximum in light weight and handiness is needed, I would go with the Glock 29 compact 10mm. Other good choices in 10mm include the EAA Witness, a used S&W 1006 or 1076, or one of the Government Model or clone 10mm pistols. Also any .40 S&W chambered Government Model or clone is easily converted to 10mm with an aftermarket barrel and a heavier recoil spring.

Another easy way to get these type ballistics is by converting almost any quality .45 ACP to .400 Cor-Bon or to .45 Super with an after-market barrel and heavier springs.

Another excellent choice of cartridge for this role is the 9x23 Winchester. I have tested the Winchester factory "soft point" load on livestock and there is no doubt that it will easily defeat the skull of the biggest bear. Indeed it penetrates like hardball. This is another gun and cartridge combination that I can fire aimed multiple shots extremely quickly. Cur-

rently unavailable except in a custom gun, any quality .38 Super is easily converted to 9x23 Winchester by rechambering or rebarreling, along with the addition of a heavier recoil spring. The same is true with Government Models or clones in 9mm parabellum using .38 Super magazines.

In the revolver world, an obvious choice is one of the handier .357 Magnum revolvers. A friend recently made an informal survey of the handguns carried in Alaskan bear country. He found that the overwhelmingly most popular choice was the relatively light .357 Magnum revolver, for all the reasons given earlier.

In .44 Magnum, my top choice would be the 4-inch S&W Model 629, particularly in the Mountain Revolver version, loaded with one of the lighter recoiling mid-velocity loads.

The bottom line is that if you are afield where there are potentially dangerous animals, any handgun is better than none. A common service-type handgun and cartridge with the right kind of ammunition with high penetration FMJ or hard cast bullets can definitely save your bacon. Probably best of all are the more powerful middle ballistic cartridges in a light handy handgun.

But may neither you nor I never have to find out if I am right!



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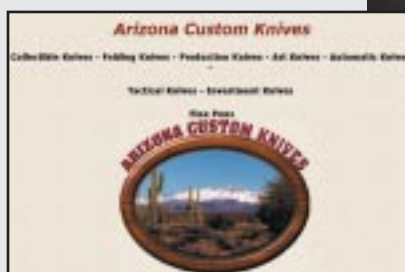
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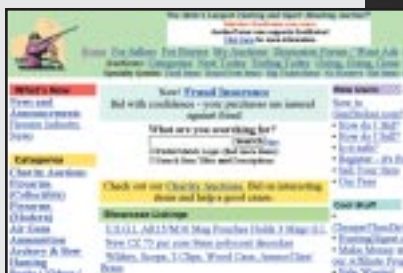
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Montana Gold Bullet

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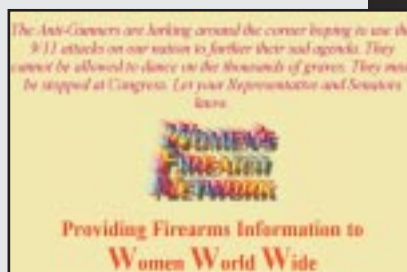
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www.taurususa.com



Two Artists

www.womenshooters.com/wfn



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By Jim Gardner

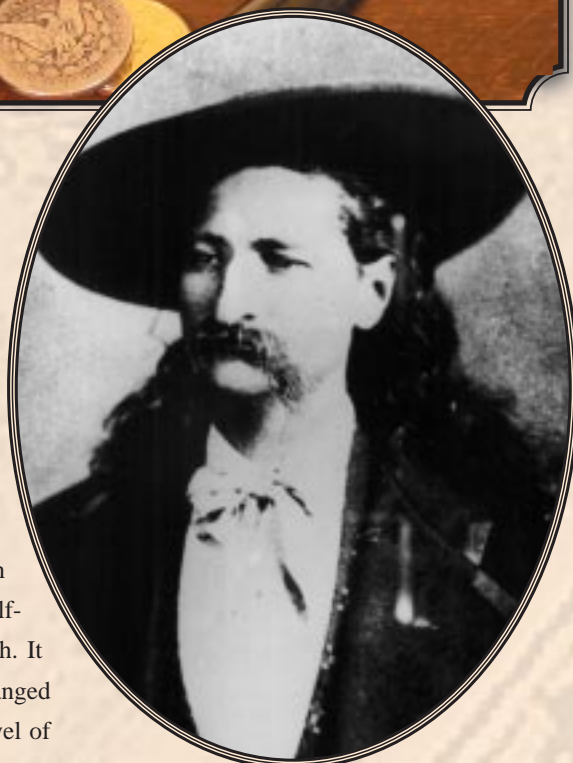
1851 Navy

The Gunfighter's Colt



*“God made men, but Col. Colt
made 'em equal”*

This saying was often heard in mid-19th century America. Despite its mild blasphemy, the expression succinctly echoed a pivotal change in the balance of power between men in the 1850s. Up until this time, despite the presence of early firearms, it was only the rarest of Davids who stood much of a chance in a defensive altercation with his personal Goliath. The edged weapon — not the firearm — was the most common and effective weapon of self-defense, and the edged weapon unquestionably favors size and strength. It was the emergence of Samuel Colt's perfected repeating pistol that changed this equation, and it can be argued that the first Colt to achieve this level of perfection was the .36-caliber Navy Model of 1851.



James Butler “Wild Bill” Hickok

Colt percussion revolvers changed the world, and the Navy Colt just may have been the best of that breed.

The most critical weakness of early firearms is that they were, for the most part, single shot weapons. Yes, there were a number of multi-barreled handguns, but most were famously inaccurate and frequently unreliable. No less a figure than Samuel Clemmons saw fit to make humorous comment on the complete lack of accuracy of an early "pepperbox" type pistol. To be an effective deterrent, single shot pistols needed to be carried in pairs at the least. And the prospect of toting about all of that hardware made the idea untenable for most. Add to this the questionable reliability of a single shot pistol that had set loaded and unfired for some time, and the possibility that in nervous, untrained hands that single available shot might easily miss, and you can see that the deterrent value of early handguns was rather low. Thus the edged weapon was the common choice for self defense. It was compact and easy to carry, it worked in any weather, and it was a threat even to multiple assailants.

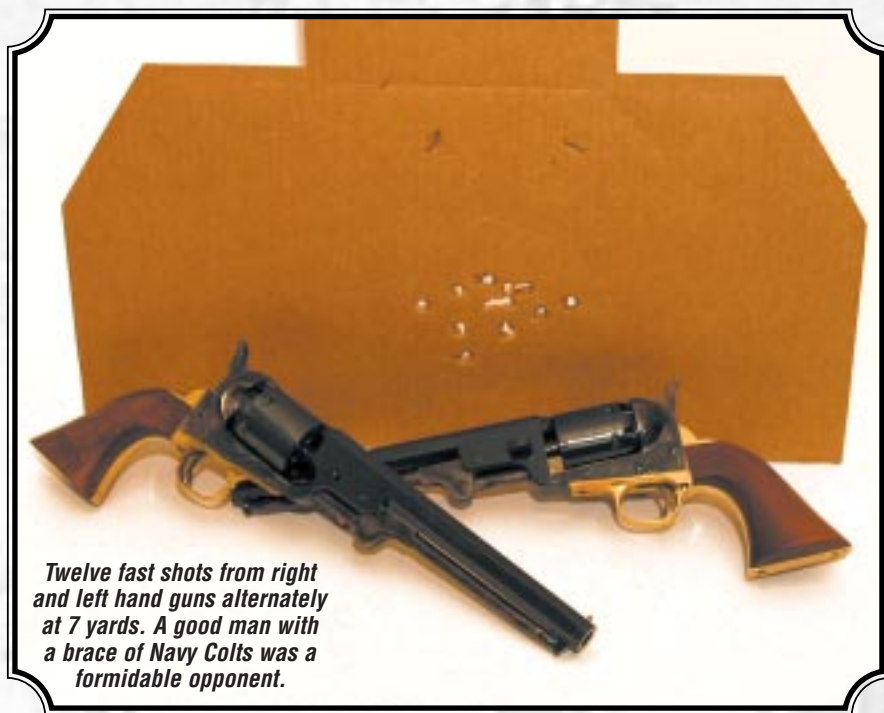
The problem though is that size and strength generally dictated the outcome among opponents armed with edged



Two indispensable aids for the percussion revolver shootist are a powder flask and an in-line capper.



At the Card Room distance of 7 yards, both of the Navy Arms '51s were more than satisfactorily accurate.



Twelve fast shots from right and left hand guns alternately at 7 yards. A good man with a brace of Navy Colts was a formidable opponent.

weapons. Skill could make a difference, but it was a rare individual that possessed the superior skill and lethal fighting instincts to come out on top of a one-sided fight with edged weapons. James Bowie was certainly one who fit that description, but his skill was sufficiently unique that his exploits are known even today.

Shadow Of Things To Come

A hint that this balance of power was changing came to national attention in 1844. In the untamed wilds of Texas, a force of 14 men led by Capt. John C.

Hays had engaged a group of some 80 hostile Comanches in a running fight near the Pedernales river. Normally, so unbalanced a skirmish in open country would have had only one possible conclusion. However, to what must have been the utter shock of the Comanches, who expected to overrun their foe after the initial shots were fired, these Texicans fought with pistols that fired more than once! The arms these men were using had been manufactured in small numbers in Patterson, New Jersey by Samuel Colt. They had originally been purchased as boarding pistols for the short lived Texas Navy, but Hays saw their potential and succeeded in acquiring a supply for his small force. In the battle, the Texans suffered two Rangers wounded, while the Comanches fled leaving 35 of their number dead or dying.

This was a landmark event, and Samuel Walker, a member of Hays' Rangers and a veteran of that fight, was assigned detached duty scarcely 2 years later. His mission was to secure additional Colt's patent revolvers as

well as to recruit a company of men to serve in the fledgling territory. This was not as simple a task as it may seem. By 1846, the Patterson factory had long since been closed in bankruptcy. If the Colt patent revolvers were such a superior fighting tool, why had Colt failed?

Colt's first repeating pistol, known today as the Patterson revolver, was a technological leap beyond the single-shot pistol, but it did have a number of failings. It had no trigger guard nor exposed trigger. The folding trigger dropped from the bottom of the frame only when the revolver was cocked. All but a very few of the Pattersons had no onboard means of reloading. To reload, the barrel had to be dismounted from the frame, and then a separate tool was used to seat the projectiles down over the freshly charged chambers. There was essentially no way to reload the pistol until back in camp. Calibers of the Patterson Colt ranged from .28 to .40, with five shot cylinders. In addition, the Patterson contained no less than 17 moving parts, all of which required a great deal of careful hand fitting to assure function.

Not one to fail in his assignment, Walker succeeded in meeting with Sam Colt, and by December of 1846, Colt had made a proposal to supply 1,000 repeating pistols of improved design at the sum of \$25 each. The resulting pistols, which were manufactured at Eli Whitney's works under contract to Colt, began trickling into the Government's hands by June 30 of 1847. These "Whitneyville Walkers," as they are known today, were a radical departure from the earlier Patterson design. There is much speculation as to how much direct influence Samuel Walker had on the design of these guns, but what is not open to debate is the fact that the Walker Colt was a far more serious fighting gun than the Patterson.

Ponderous Powerhouse

The Walker was conceived as a pistol for mounted fighting, and its weight and bulk show it. It measured over 15 inches in length and weighed over 4½ pounds. Its massive six shot cylinder would accept charges as heavy as 50 grains with a 140 grain round ball. Velocities were in the range of 1,200 fps. The pistol sported a loading lever so that the gun could be reloaded without the need to disassemble it. Loading was hardly a rapid process, but it could be easily done in the field, even from horseback. Perhaps the most significant departure from the Patterson was the least obvious. Colt — perhaps with the help of Walker — had greatly simplified the mechanism. The 17 rather fragile moving parts of the Patterson had been reduced to five much simpler, more robust components in the new design.

The Walker was not perfect, but it was a great leap forward. Its most





Just as in Sam Colt's day, the Italian replica Navy revolvers are available in several levels of engraving for presentation to your favorite scout and hunting guide.

damning flaw was the tendency of the loading lever to dislodge from its stowed position under recoil, tying up the gun. This flaw, and other improvements, were addressed in Colt's subsequent first, second and third model Dragoon pistols. These Colts were in such demand that they were reported to have sold for as much as \$500 in the California gold fields of the 1850s. As good as they were, they were just too large and heavy for constant daily carry. Colt remedied that problem with his beautiful pocket pistols of the late '40s, the 1848 "Baby Dragoon" and the '49 Pocket. These were splendid guns — reliable, easy to carry, and tremendously popular — but they were chambered in .31 caliber and thus were not sure fight stoppers.

Colt's next effort at producing a fight stopping pistol of reasonable size and bulk was the 1851 Navy in .36 caliber. Some have suggested that the .36 caliber was adopted because a conical bullet of that diameter could offer the same weight as the 140 grain ball of the earlier .44-caliber Walker and Dragoon pistols. Regardless of the motivation, it was a superior com-

promise, and tremendously successful.

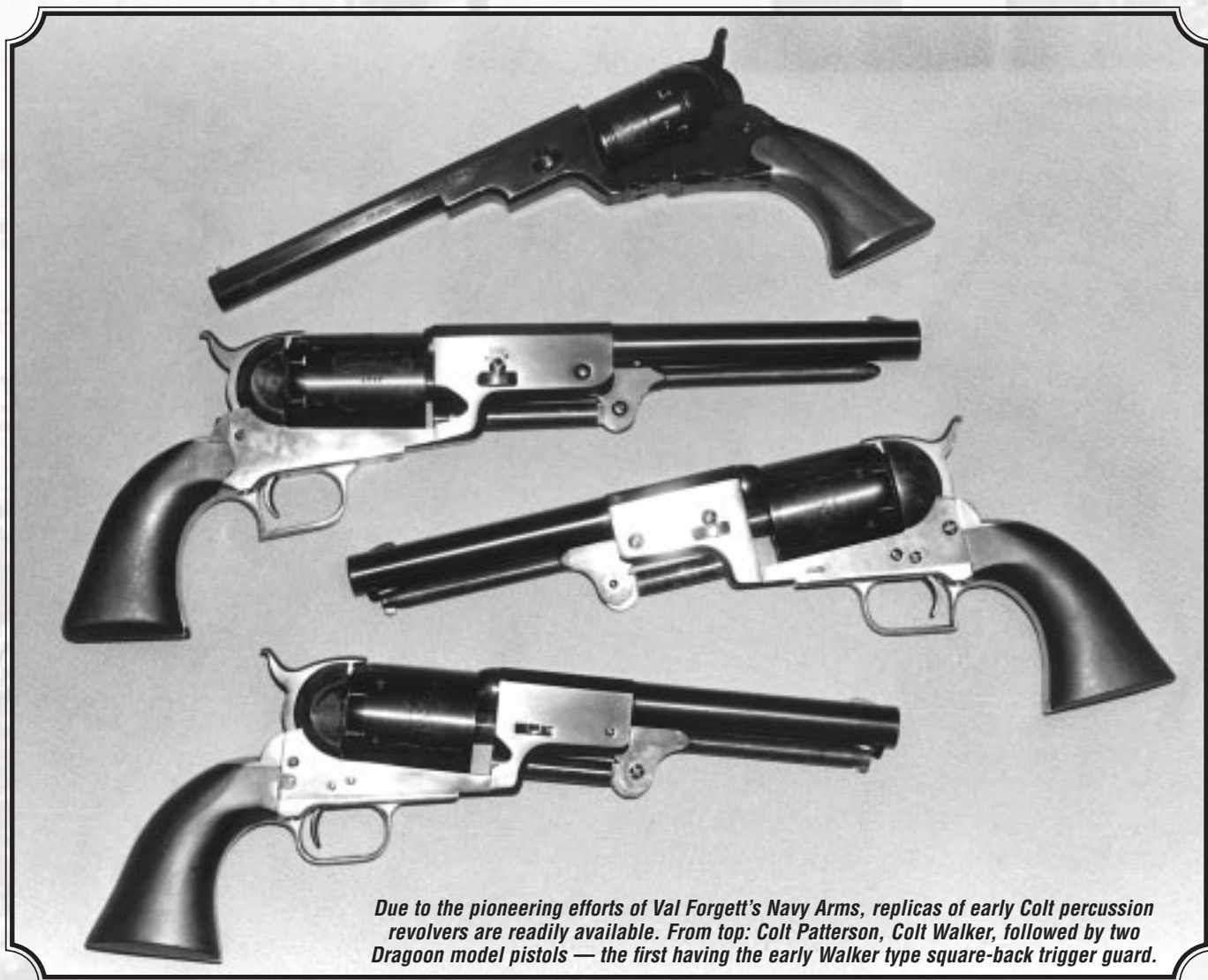
Here at last was the handgun that forever changed the equation of the defensive engagement. The Navy Colt was light and trim enough to be readily carried on a daily basis, whether mounted or afoot. Its modest weight also meant that it could be effectively used by persons of smaller stature or of lesser strength. Recoil was light, and with six fast shots at the ready, a person armed with a Colt Navy was a force to be reckoned with even against multiple assailants.

The '51 was the right balance of size versus performance. It was generally offered with a 7½ inch barrel of octagonal shape, although shorter lengths are known to have been occasionally produced. It weighed in at just 3½ pounds, a vast improvement over the ponderous Walkers and Dragoons. It was light and

easy to carry, but was it sufficiently potent? It's production figures of approximately 215,000 might be seen to answer that, but we must remember that the diminutive .31 caliber pocket Colts, despite their marginal stopping power, were phenomenally successful, selling over 340,000 copies. As better evidence, we have contemporary reports as to the effectiveness of the .36 caliber Colt Navy.

First Hand Accounts

The late Elmer Keith lived at a time



Due to the pioneering efforts of Val Forgett's Navy Arms, replicas of early Colt percussion revolvers are readily available. From top: Colt Patterson, Colt Walker, followed by two Dragoon model pistols — the first having the early Walker type square-back trigger guard.



Interior of the Sawtel ranch. The various arms date the photo to the mid-1870s. Despite the presence of such later designs as a S&W American revolver, a Colt '51 Navy is prominently displayed at the left of the fireplace lintel. (National Archives)

when veterans of the Civil War were still present and willing to share their experiences with an eager young listener. In his excellent work, *Sixguns by Keith*, Keith describes the reports of two battle-hardened veterans who were forced to trust their lives to their skill with the Colt Navy.

One of Keith's '51 Navies had been owned by the Confederate Maj. R.E. Stratton, and he shared with Keith that his preferred fighting load was the 80 grain round ball backed up by a chamber full of FF G powder. Stratton carried a brace of Navy model Colts even after the war during nine years of service as a Texas Ranger. If they had somehow failed to measure up to the task, Stratton would have long since discarded them.

Samuel Fletcher, who had served with the Second Illinois Cavalry, shared with Keith that for most uses, he also preferred the round ball to the issue paper cartridges which featured the conical bullet. His report was that the ball would take the fight out of enemy cavalrymen more reliably than the conical bullet, and that he preferred the latter only when shooting cattle for meat, due to the



In a day when single-shot rifled muskets dominated the battlefield, a six-shot Colt percussion revolver was a prized possession. The central figure is Samuel Walker. (Library Of Congress)

slightly superior penetration.

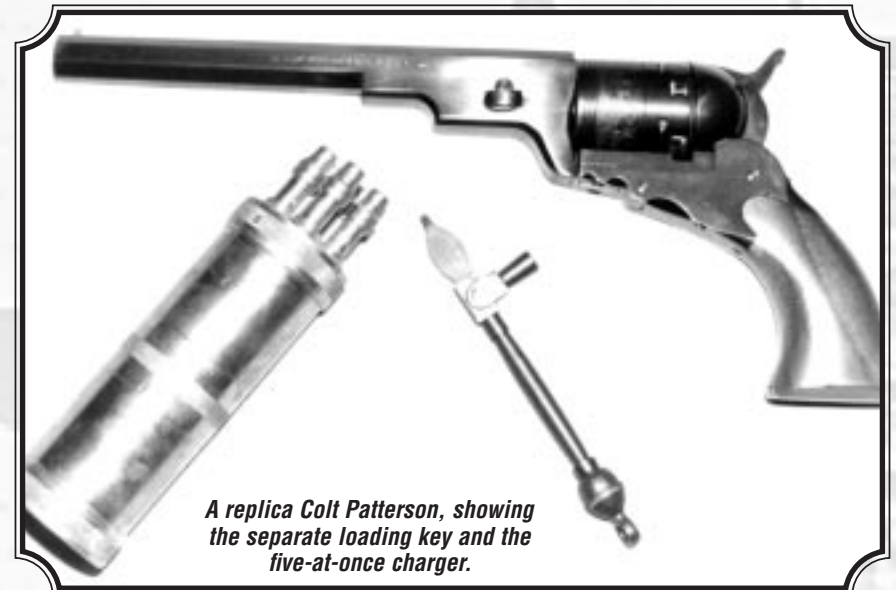
The introduction of later models such as the .44 caliber 1860 Army Colt did little to lessen the popularity of the '51 Navy. Even the gradual entrance of revolvers firing self-contained cartridges could not completely obsolete the Colt Navy. The '51 Colt was one of the most common guns of the western expansion. It was reliable, it was readily available, and for many men hardened by the bitter years of the recent war, it was a trusted companion. Such men would not soon abandon the Navy Colt.

Wild Bill And The Colt Navy

One who would not abandon his Colt Navies was James Butler "Wild Bill" Hickok. Hickok was a gunman of the first order, and was probably unequalled in his skill with the pistol except perhaps by John Wesley Hardin.

Like most of the gunmen of the period, Hickok had a rather checkered history. He had been acquitted of his actions in what might best be described as a feud in Nebraska that resulted in at least one killing by Hickok's hand. The subsequent tensions resulted in another shooting, the famous "long range duel" between Hickok and one Dave Tutt.

Hickok had served as a scout with the Army and was quite well acquainted with George and Libby Custer. His notoriety was such that his service as scout was requested on a private hunting expedition by Senator Henry Wilson of Massachusetts. Senator Wilson later presented Hickok with a beautiful brace of engraved and silver plated Colt Navies, which Wild Bill carried proudly throughout the balance of his life. Hickok served as a peace officer in the wild cowtowns of Kansas and added several more men to his score during this time, including his own



A replica Colt Patterson, showing the separate loading key and the five-at-once charger.

deputy, Mike Williams.

Accounts of the incident vary, with some saying that Williams merely stumbled into the line of fire as Hickok shot the gambler Phil Coe. The more common version is that Hickok, having shot Coe, heard someone rapidly closing on him from behind and presuming it to be an accomplice of Coe's, he turned and immediately snapped off a shot, killing his deputy. Regardless, Hickok's career as a peace officer was finished.

Stories of Wild Bill's skill with the pistol range from the impressive to the absurd, but what seems to be well documented is that Hickok practiced regularly. In fact, it is said that his daily ritual was to shoot one of his Colts dry, carefully clean and reload it, then repeat the process with the second gun. Even though he lived into the age of the self-contained cartridge, Hickok seemed to have greater faith in his carefully loaded and maintained percus-

sion revolvers. Hickok was killed in Deadwood, South Dakota in 1876.

The Cap And Ball Colt

It is only due to the pioneering efforts of Val Forgett and his Navy Arms Co. that you and I have the opportunity to shoot Col. Colt's percussion revolvers today. Original revolvers in good shooting condition are far too valuable to risk firing. With the availability of modern reproduction Colt revolvers, you and I can share a hands-on glimpse into the days when the '51 Navy was the gun-fighter's choice. Simple loading and maintaining of these guns is straightforward, but a little experience with them soon shows some of the hazards that faced our forebearers of the 19th century.

For a look at the current state of reproduction firearms, two Navy Arms 1851 Colt replicas were ordered. The guns are

Continued on page 72



One hundred years after its introduction, the '51 Navy was once again in demand.



Luciano Amadi (Right) was instrumental in arranging the first Navy Arms production in Italy.

History of Navy Arms

The opportunity recently arose to interview Val Forgett III of Navy Arms. Forgett is rightly proud of the Navy Arms history, and he soon turned the topic of conversation to his father's early adventures in founding the company and creating the modern replica firearm. Here is a fascinating glimpse inside the history of Navy Arms.

AH: Val, isn't it true that your father started Service Armament selling surplus arms? Why the move to replica arms? Were they more in line with his personal interests?

V.F. III: You are correct about Service Armament selling surplus. While my father always enjoyed this business, it was really a means to an end to finance his dream of reproducing black powder guns. In fact, in his high school yearbook, where each student would state his 'goal in life', my father actually wrote: "To manufacture and sell replica firearms." So, yes, you could say that this was a life long dream of his.

AH: It seems as though it was a tremendous leap of faith to bring in the first reproduction arms. Doubtless there were those who thought it was a foolish idea. Was there anyone who encouraged your father in the notion that this was an idea whose time had come?

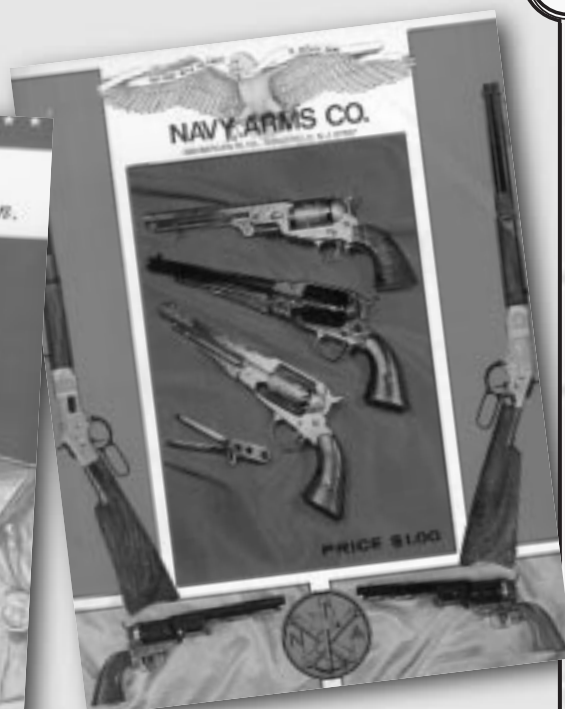
V.F. III: No doubt, it was a leap of faith and, yes, there were many people who thought it was crazy. Quite frankly, even the Italians I know who helped my father in the beginning and who are now elder statesmen tell me that at the time, they all thought my father was crazy and that if they were lucky, they would recoup their tooling investments. The thinking was this was much more of a small niche market where perhaps a few hundred guns could get sold. This is part of the reason why none of the large factories my father visited with his idea (FN, Webley & Scott, Beretta) would agree to work with him. The only one who

did was a man by the name of Gregoreli, who worked for Beretta. He was introduced to my father by Luciano Amadi. It was Gregoreli and Amadi that put this deal together, with the help of another man, Aldo Uberti.

During my last visit to Italy in October, we actually took out Uberti gun book No.1 and looked at the delivery dates. It was on August 14th, 1959 that the first 100 1851 Navy revolvers were booked out to Navy Arms in Bogota, New Jersey. Nobody bothered with the business until it became successful. Then, of course, competitors came out of the woodwork. But, as my father always says, "I've seen dozens of them come and go." And, he's right. Navy Arms has been around for 45 years because my father understands guns, understands shooters, and understands service. Navy Arms is the premium brand in the replica field because of this. In 1977, Dad was knighted by the Italian Government due to



A very early Navy Arms catalog showing the Yank and Reb models.



his life's work in creating the replica field that every major manufacturer now competes in.

AH: Any idea how many '51 Navy replicas Navy Arms has sold? How many replica arms total?

V.F. III: Number of replica's produced, in total? The exact numbers produced in Italy are as follows:

*Revolvers: 2,600,000 since 1959, of which Navy Arms I can safely say has sold over 1,000,000 of.

*Rifles: 1,100,000 since 1960, of which Navy Arms I can safely say has sold over 250,000 of. (These are Italian government numbers we have going back to the 1920s and published each year.)

In addition, my Dad has produced domestically several hundred thousand guns, so to wrap it up, you could say he's sold over 2,000,000 replica guns in his day.

AH: Which of the vast variety of replica arms that you have offered is your father's favorite? Why?

V.F. III: My Dad has a soft spot in his heart, I would think, for the LeMat and the Schofield. Part of the reason is that he was a LeMat collector and wrote the book on LeMats. Both the LeMat and the Schofield he is proud of because they are complicated guns that people said could not be built. His attitude was if they could build it 100 years ago, why can't it be built today? As usual, he proved

the skeptics wrong and both are commercial successes.

AH: What should we expect to see from Navy Arms in the future?

V.F. III: Navy Arms will continue to lead in new and innovative products. The gun we are most excited about is our reproduction Colt Lightning rifle, which we are in the final stages of engineering. The Lightning was an idea that we had about six years ago, but my father would not green light the project because he said the timing was not right. Last year, he said "OK, now is the time." I recently asked him what made this time right and he responded that the lever-gun market is beginning to mature, and that nearly all the line-extensions on 66s and 73s have been done. He also told me that from a technological standpoint, the Italians were not ready as they were still using a mix of CNC and manual equipment.

The Lightning will be a revolution in Cowboy Action Shooting, I am certain.

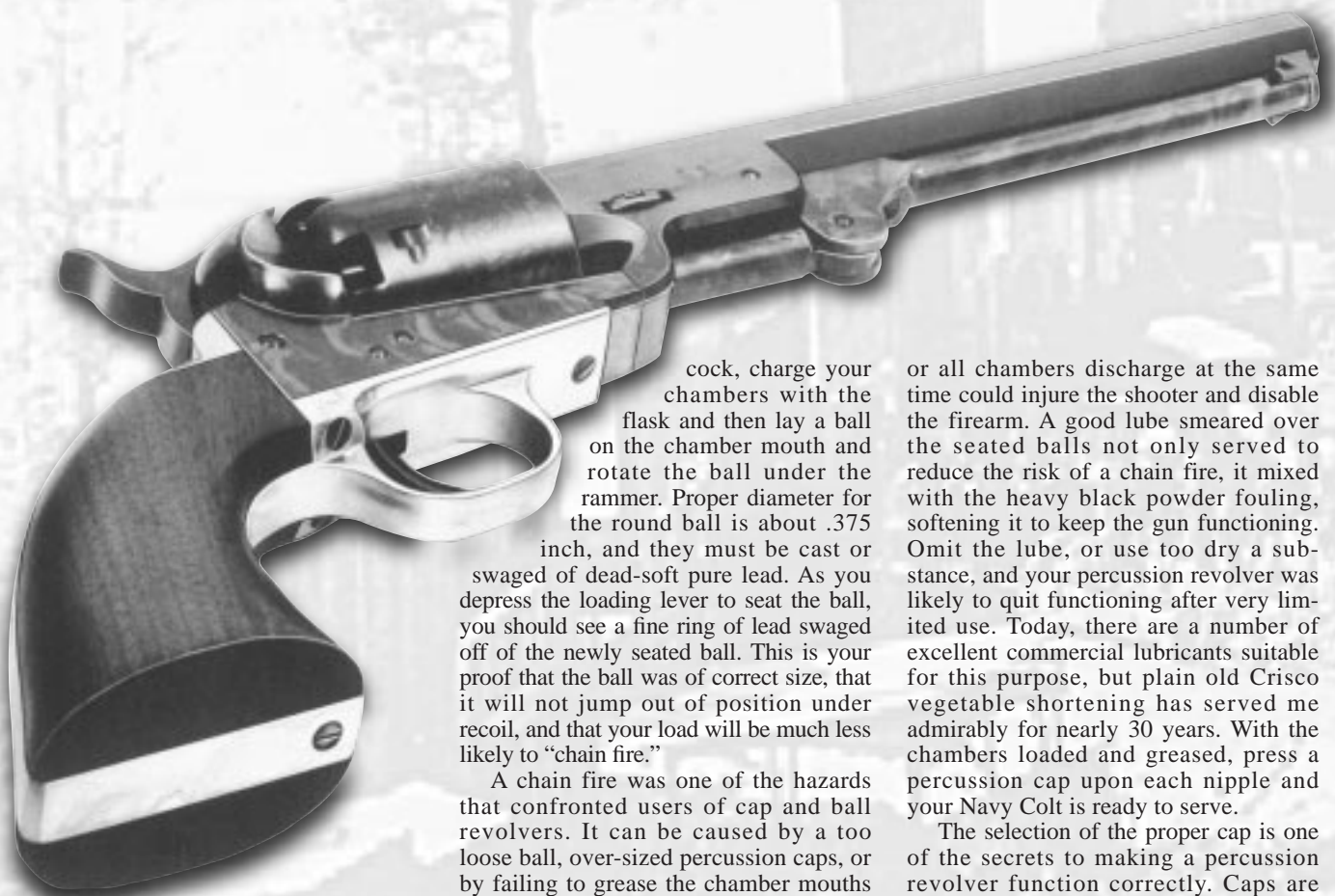
The exterior will be identical to the original, but we are already engineering a cut-off, internal hammer block, and other features that will make the gun safe, but look like the real deal to Cowboy Action Shooters. We have already invested a great deal into R&D and our total up-front investment will be several hundred thousand dollars. But the result will be yet another great gun by Navy Arms.

We have other plans as well, but beyond this, I think we'll keep it to ourselves.



The most exciting news from Navy Arms is the soon to be released Lightning chambered for .45 Colt.

Vintage photos courtesy of Navy Arms



made in Italy by Pietta, and are nothing short of beautiful. The barrels and cylinders are excellently blued over a good level of polish, and just like the originals, the cylinders carry the roll marked scene of a battle between the Texas Navy and Mexican warships on May 16th, 1843. The frame, loading lever and hammer are very nicely color case hardened and the trigger guard and back strap are made of brass.

Attractive firearms are a joy, but the real measure of their virtue is how they shoot. The timing of the test guns was spot on. The actions exhibited occasional rough operation, but they did smooth out after a bit of use. The cylinder gap on one revolver was far too tight. A little careful work with a mill file soon had that gun working much better. The trigger pull of each pistol was weighed prior to use, and they were found to be closely matched at 3½ pounds with a substantial amount of creep.

Loading is a simple process, made more so by the use of a powder flask and straight line capping tool. The proper propellant is FFF G black, and the correct charge weight to fill the chambers just leaving room for the ball is about 25 grains. Yes, other propellants are available, such as Pyrodex and Hodgdon's excellent new Triple Seven, but to experience the life of the 1850s, we must confine ourselves to the period correct propellant. Having snapped a cap on each nipple to clear any oil, draw your hammer to half

cock, charge your chambers with the flask and then lay a ball on the chamber mouth and rotate the ball under the rammer. Proper diameter for the round ball is about .375 inch, and they must be cast or swaged of dead-soft pure lead. As you depress the loading lever to seat the ball, you should see a fine ring of lead swaged off of the newly seated ball. This is your proof that the ball was of correct size, that it will not jump out of position under recoil, and that your load will be much less likely to "chain fire."

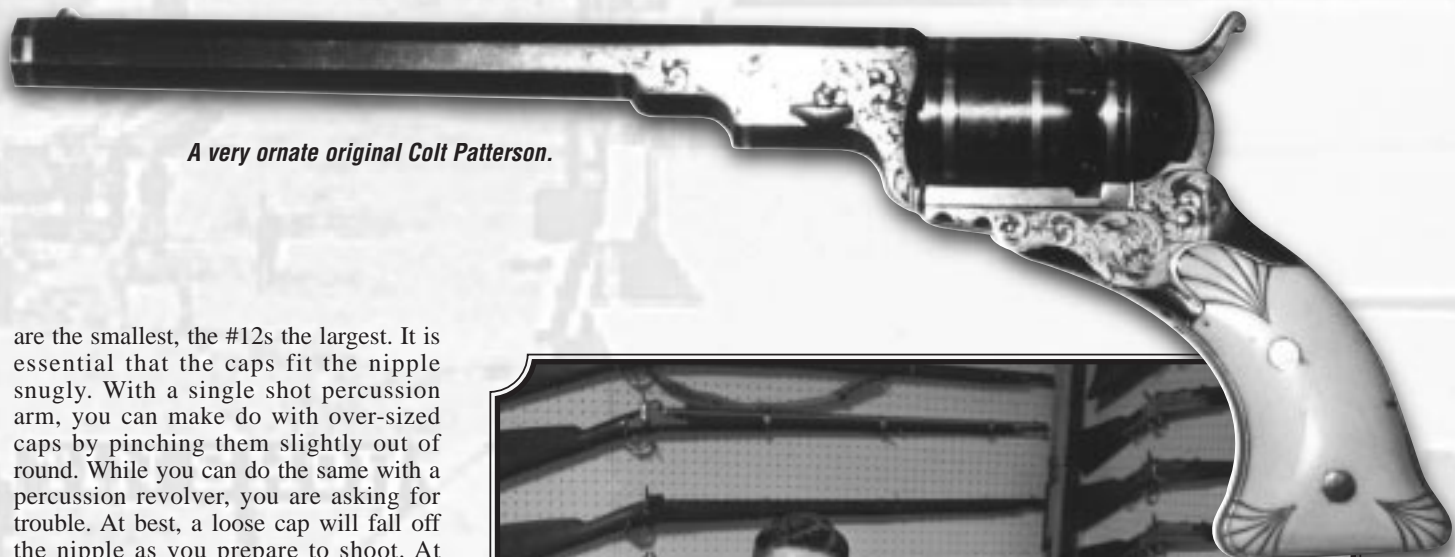
A chain fire was one of the hazards that confronted users of cap and ball revolvers. It can be caused by a too loose ball, over-sized percussion caps, or by failing to grease the chamber mouths after seating your projectiles. A chain fire was spectacular, and having several

or all chambers discharge at the same time could injure the shooter and disable the firearm. A good lube smeared over the seated balls not only served to reduce the risk of a chain fire, it mixed with the heavy black powder fouling, softening it to keep the gun functioning. Omit the lube, or use too dry a substance, and your percussion revolver was likely to quit functioning after very limited use. Today, there are a number of excellent commercial lubricants suitable for this purpose, but plain old Crisco vegetable shortening has served me admirably for nearly 30 years. With the chambers loaded and greased, press a percussion cap upon each nipple and your Navy Colt is ready to serve.

The selection of the proper cap is one of the secrets to making a percussion revolver function correctly. Caps are sized as #10 through #12, with the #11 size being far more common. The #10s



Hickok was a celebrated scout, and was well acquainted with George Armstrong Custer, seen here. (National Archives)



A very ornate original Colt Patterson.

are the smallest, the #12s the largest. It is essential that the caps fit the nipple snugly. With a single shot percussion arm, you can make do with over-sized caps by pinching them slightly out of round. While you can do the same with a percussion revolver, you are asking for trouble. At best, a loose cap will fall off the nipple as you prepare to shoot. At worst, by not sealing the nipple of an unfired chamber, it may contribute to a chain fire. The nipples of the Navy Arms Colts were found to be best suited to the use of a #12 cap.

Caps also contribute to the greatest weakness of these percussion Colts as a fighting gun. Upon firing, the percussion cap quite frequently splits into a ragged mass and will readily fall between the hammer and the frame as the gun is cocked for another shot. When this occurs, a failure to fire of that next shot is the most likely result as the fragmented cap cushions the hammer fall. The secret to preventing this is a behavior that most of us have grinned at when watching early western movies. View a scene of an early cowboy actor such as William S. Hart or Tom Mix firing their revolvers, and odds are that you will see them raise their muzzles skyward and bring the entire revolver up over their shoulder as they cock the gun for a second shot. While this practice would be frowned upon (or worse) at your local range or in a modern cowboy match, it is a valid means of assuring that any cap fragments fall out of — not into — the action as the revolver is cocked. W.S. Hart in particular was serious about his silver screen portrayals, and consulted the old Pinkerton agent and gunman Charley Siringo on matters relating to shooting technique.

The original percussion Colts, including the 1851 Navy, were commonly sighted quite high, usually striking as much as a foot above point of aim when fired at 25 yards. The reproduction Colts are generally faithful in copying this tendency, and the sample Navy Arms pistols are no exception. Groups, however, were more than adequate and the long sight radius made fast hits on man-sized targets at 25 yards an easy proposition. Light and handy, the revolvers point well and are astonishingly effective when used for fast point



A young Val Forgett, who would bring affordable replicas of all types to the American shooter.

shooting at conversational distances.

The replica arms are not only great fun to shoot and a fascinating insight into the past, they are also a real bargain. The Navy Arms 1851s retail for a modest \$165. Shooting them is inexpensive as well. Black powder can be purchased in bulk lots for as little as \$8 per pound. Caps are inexpensive, and even the very precisely made Hornady swaged round balls are dirt cheap at \$6 per 100. You can enjoy an entire afternoon of perforating cardboard bad guys for about the cost of one box of factory center fire pistol ammo. Great fun!

When introduced, Colt's 1851 Navy was the right balance of size, weight and power. It was eagerly seized upon by men both good and bad, by Northerners who preserved the Union as well

as by Southerners who felt they were preserving a way of life. It was not soon abandoned by men whose trust it had earned. Even our newly made copies seem to bear the tangible weight of history. And if, as you recock your Navy Colt with white smoke swirling around you, you feel the approving presence of Hickok, Col. Colt, or some other grizzled spirit...Don't be surprised.

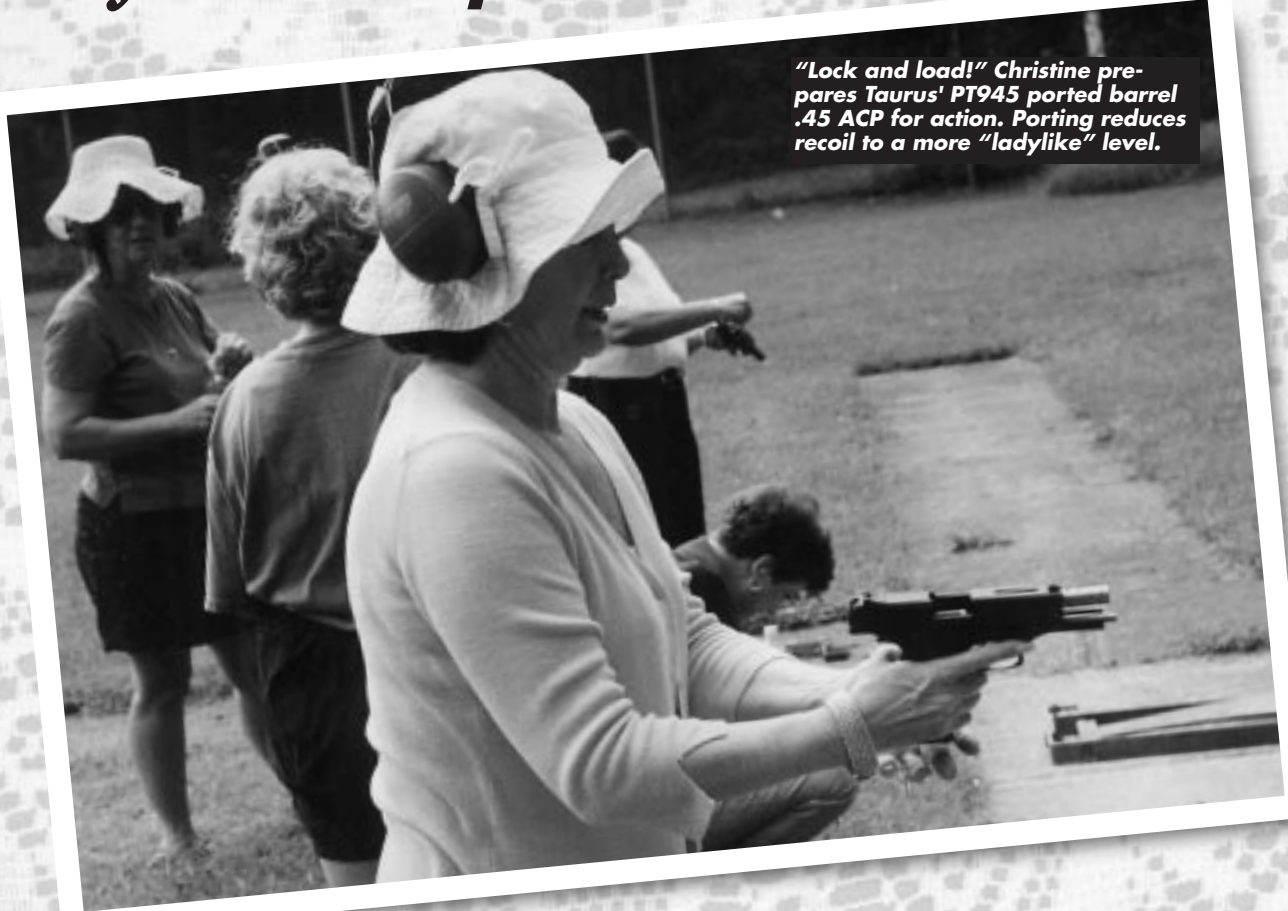


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NAVY ARMS Co.
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www.navyarms.com

***Purty little guns for purty little ladies,
way down deep in Dixie.***



"Lock and load!" Christine prepares Taurus' PT945 ported barrel .45 ACP for action. Porting reduces recoil to a more "ladylike" level.

Alabama's *Steel Magnolias*

By Charles Cutshaw

Northwestern Alabama, where I make my home, is not exactly a hotbed of violent crime. Perhaps it's because this region is one of the most gun-friendly places in our beloved country. For example, Florence Ala., (Population 50,000 — one of the "Quad Cities" that includes Sheffield, Muscle Shoals and Tuscumbia, which taken together make up the largest population center in the region) supports no less than three gun stores. The most notable feature of the Quad Cities area is Wilson Dam, which has the highest single lift lock in the world. The area is also noted for being the home of Helen Keller and W.C. Handy, who left Florence in the early 20th century for nearby Memphis, where he became world-renowned as the originator of Blues as a music form.

The Quad Cities do have their share of criminal activity,

albeit to a far lesser degree than, say, Washington D.C., Chicago, New York, and other cities whose residents are barred from providing themselves with the means of self-protection. The citizens of Northwest Alabama, on the other hand, are generally able and ready to take on and subdue any would-be stickup artist, rapist or "hot" burglar. Although rape and armed robbery are rare, they're not totally absent. Because of this, many people, especially women, thus feel the need to be able to protect themselves. Unfortunately, there is no training immediately available in the area to provide them with the knowledge and skills they require.

Shall-Issue Alabama

Alabama is a "shall issue" state. Obtaining a concealed-



Learning the basics — Dianne (farthest from camera) demonstrates two-handed isosceles position. At this early stage of the training, some of the ladies had not yet warmed up to the idea of shooting practice.

carry permit (CCW) is as simple as going down to the local court house, making an application, having fingerprints taken for a background check, and paying \$10 for the permit once a "clean" record is verified. Unlike many other shall-issue states, Alabama has no CCW training requirement. I believe that this is a mistake, and my law-enforcement friends tell me that this situation will soon be rectified by the state legislature. But in the meantime, there

is no training requirement to obtain a CCW in Alabama.

I have been a resident of the region for just over a year, and because of the nature of my business, I have made the acquaintance of local law enforcement early on in my residency. Since then, the neighbors have informed me that they take some comfort in the regular presence of police cars in the driveway when local officers stop by for a cup of coffee and to see what new "toys" are on hand for test and evalu-

ation. Police officers also regularly participate in my test and evaluation of new firearms and accessories. Again, because of the nature of my business, a few local ladies approached my wife and I about conducting some personal protection training and handgun instruction for them.

It is appropriate to point out that while neither my wife nor I have ever been in law enforcement, we do both have military experience. I am a former Army infantry officer and Vietnam veteran, while my wife ran weapons test and evaluation programs for the Army and Marine Corps. We are both NRA-certified instructors in personal protection and have graduated from a number of tactical handgun, shotgun and rifle courses, including Blackwater and Gunsite. We also were certified CCW instructors in the Commonwealth of Virginia, where we lived prior to moving to Alabama, and where CCW training is mandatory.

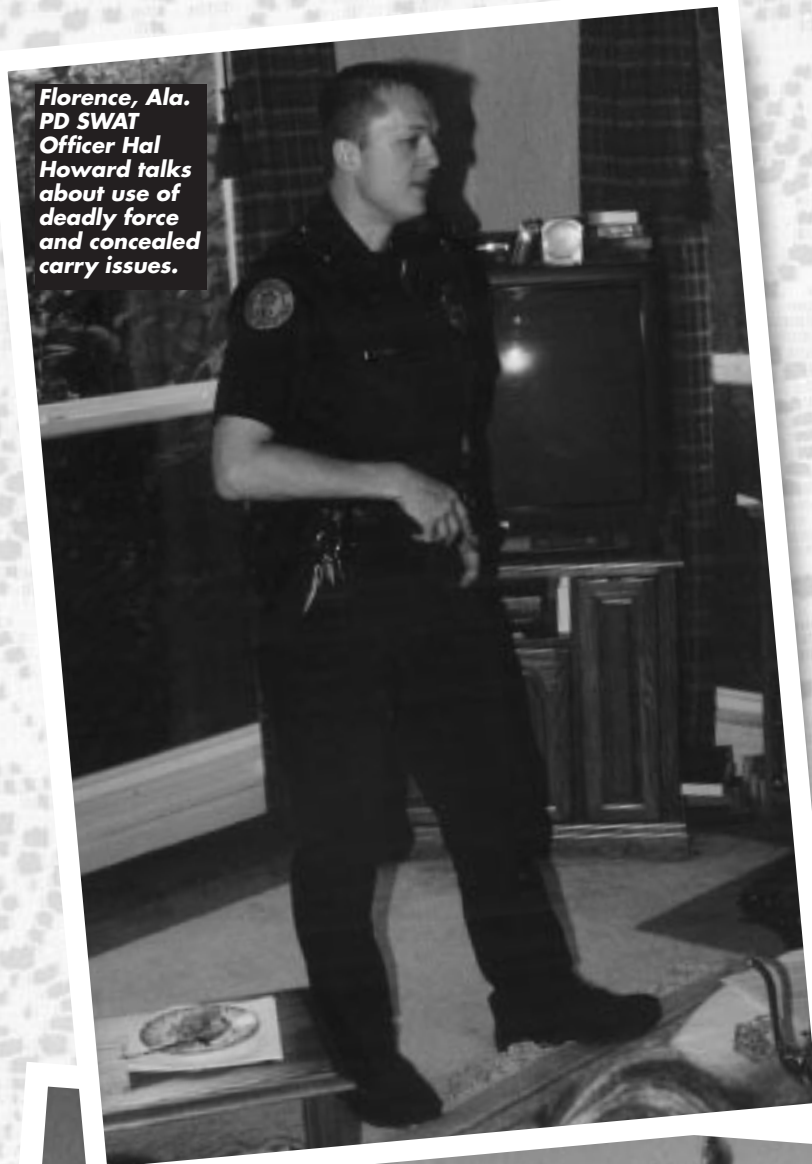
Enter Steel Magnolias

Thus, when these ladies approached us about a weekend training course in the basics of personal protection and handgun proficiency, we agreed to conduct the course at no cost. None of our prospective students owned handguns of any type, so all were uncertain as to what type of handgun — pistol or revolver — might be best for them.

Caliber? Not one lady had a clue as to even the most fundamental aspects of ammunition. Since we didn't have sufficient pistols and revolvers appropriate for the course, we contacted our friends at Taurus USA, which agreed to provide us with the handguns we needed for the training. These included two 9mm pistols — a medium-framed PT911 and a small polymer framed PT111 Millennium.

Taurus also provided two .38 Special

**Florence, Ala.
PD SWAT
Officer Hal
Howard talks
about use of
deadly force
and concealed
carry issues.**



caliber short-barreled revolvers — both M85 variants. One was Taurus' Total Titanium, and the other was a conventional stainless-steel model. Both little revolvers are +P rated and ported to reduce the "snappy" recoil. We also had two Taurus .45 ACP pistols on hand: One was the commander-size PT945 with ported barrel and the other the new and innovative PT145 Millennium that puts 10 rounds of .45 ACP into a very compact package.

Black Hills and Wolf provided ammunition. Black Hills provided us with .45 ACP full-metal jacket (FMJ) ball and .38 Special wadcutter cartridges, and we used Wolf 9mm FMJ. We chose .38 Special wadcutter because none of our students had ever fired a handgun before, and it has relatively mild recoil. Wolf's 9mm FMJ ammo is very reasonably priced and non-reloadable. It is also clean and accurate and is a good training round.

A Visit From Officer Friendly

We enlisted Florence Police Officer Hal Howard, a SWAT team member, to spend a short time explaining the rules of deadly force and concealed-carry laws in Alabama. A local gun store owner provided purse sized OC spray at his cost for those who wanted it. Every student bought this simple but effective less-lethal self-defense item. Range facilities were provided courtesy of the Florence, Ala., Police Department. SWAT Officer Jeff Standfield volunteered his off-duty time to act as range officer.

Our female students came from varied backgrounds and had several reasons for



Proper pistol instruction for Southern Belles begins with tea and pastries.



Taurus' "Steel Magnolia" Handguns

Model	85TB2C	85SS2	PT111B3	PT911SGR	PT145B4	PT945B4C
Caliber	.38 Spec+P	.38 Spec+P	9mm	9mm	.45 ACP	.45 ACP
Finish	Bright Blue	Stainless	Blue	Stainless	Blue	Blue
Shots	5	5	10+1	10+1	10+1	8+1
Bbl Length	2 in.	2 in.	3.25 in.	4 in.	3.27 in.	4.5 in.
Grips	Soft rubber	Soft rubber	Polymer	Rosewood	Polymer	Rubber
Weight	15.4 oz	22.5 oz	18.7 oz.	28.2 oz.	23 oz.	29.5 oz.

wanting to learn more about personal protection and self-defense firearms. Deborah is a bank vice president and has concerns about robberies and leaving her office after working late. Linda is a real-estate broker who travels into some very lonely areas of the county. As a realtor, she also works odd hours and sometimes doesn't return home until well after dark. Christine operates a small grocery chain with her husband. She frequently closes one of the stores late in the evening and has to carry the day's cash proceeds

across a dark parking lot. Karen's husband travels often on business and is usually gone for a week or longer.

But all of these women were keenly aware of not only their vulnerability, but also that they had no way to defend themselves against robbery or rape. All had some concerns about their ability to even successfully fire a handgun and hit the target. Linda, for example, is a tiny woman about 5 feet in height. Both Christine and Karen have hand and wrist osteoarthritis that physically limits their

ability to grasp.

Cutshaw's Classroom

Putting their apprehensions aside, our "Steel Magnolias" had a desire to learn and wanted to be able to shoot what they were aiming at.

We began over coffee and pastry by making our students aware that because of the limited time we had, we could only scratch the surface of our subject. After that, it was up to them whether or not to pursue further training or obtain a CCW.

We further cautioned that owning a handgun for personal protection is not for everyone because some people cannot take a human life. This is a question that everyone, male or female, who owns a handgun for protection must ask himself or herself. In addition, we emphasized that the use of deadly force was a last resort only after running away or using less lethal means of defense had failed. We also strongly advised that if any participant did buy a gun and obtain a CCW, that they attend one of the several training facilities located within about a 2-hour drive and take a real tactical handgun course.

We showed them a few "dirty tricks" of hand-to-hand fighting that require no special physical skills and only a small amount of practice. Techniques that, when used properly, can inflict sufficient pain on an attacker to enable the victim to escape. Using Surefire high-intensity lights, we amazed them as to how extremely bright light can be used as a defense. We followed this up with one of the videos that we used during our training course in Virginia. Once the "classroom work" was completed, we conducted a range safety briefing, and set out for the range.

It is an unfortunate fact that in our society females are usually conditioned with the misconceived notion that "nice girls don't play with guns." This, perhaps, is why so many women are supportive of gun control. They have simply been conditioned since childhood that "guns are bad — nice people don't play with them." When my wife and I met, for example, she would not allow guns in her house, would not allow her children to play with toy guns, nor with any other "violent toys." She since has undergone an epiphany and not only approves of guns, but she is also a Gunsite and Blackwater graduate, an NRA-certified firearms instructor, and has a CCW. She also is an avid International Defensive Pistol Association (IDPA) enthusiast. Having once been a member of the misguided, "If we can just get rid of guns, the world will live in peace" movement, she is now much more attuned to women's concerns and apprehensions than men, as well as women who grew up with guns and never had an aversion to them. In short, after serious reflection, she now understands why many women fear guns, and she works with them to overcome that fear.

Prospects, And A Progidy

As mentioned, none of the women in our little class had ever fired a handgun. One of them had fired a .22 rifle as a girl, but that was the sum total of the group's experience. One, Linda, brought an old S&W Model 36 that she had never fired. It still had the original small wooden grips that actually made the little revolver more difficult to manage,



"Aim!" Note that these "steel magnolias" have become better accustomed to their handguns. No more bent elbows, although we can't recommend Christine's "thumb over" position that we missed while on the range. (No, the slide never hit her!)

even for an experienced shooter. Linda immediately grew tired of it, even when shooting light Black Hills wadcutters. She found that the Taurus soft rubber grips were much more comfortable. All of the ladies liked the Taurus revolvers' grips. These grips, which are similar to Hogue's, not only contribute to the pointing abilities of the revolver, but they also help absorb recoil.

All of the ladies had apprehensions prior to coming to the range. Christine and Karen were concerned that the guns would be too heavy for them to hold because of their slight disability and that the recoil would actually be painful. The ladies were also worried about not being able to hit the target. Dianne's ingenious approach solved that problem. She put up a target with the blank side facing out. All that was necessary for immediate success was to get "on paper." At 10 yards, that was easily and

immediately accomplished by everyone.

The next goal was to reduce group size. As with any group, some learned faster than others. Petite Linda, for example, turned out to be a natural good shot, and after only a couple of practice rounds, she had her five-round groups of .38 Special and 9mm down to the size of a man's fist. It was now time for her to turn her target over and start working on accuracy. Linda was one of those rare individuals who took to shooting like the proverbial duck to water. Within a few minutes, she had comprehended the fundamentals of handgun shooting and was achieving excellent accuracy, even with .45 ACP pistols, despite her tiny size. The others soon followed suit and before long, all of the neophyte Annie Oakleys were putting most of their rounds into the circles of the "FBI" target... except Linda, who was putting ALL of her rounds into



"Fire!" Christine's Taurus PT945 in full recoil. Note that the .45's recoil is not excessive and is easily manageable.

the circle and was virtually jumping up and down with glee and excitement.

Real Purty Firearms

The ladies' taste in handguns was generally similar. Most preferred the simplicity of the revolver, but liked the magazine capacity of the semiautomatics. From a woman's standpoint, light and pretty are definitely positive features and attract the potential female handgun purchaser. For example, everyone was quite taken with the beautiful, almost sky-blue finish of Taurus' Total Titanium revolver and the PT911's polished stainless-steel gold highlights and rosewood grips. They also liked the little revolver's light weight, which didn't add an extra burden to their purses. They were less taken, however, with the added recoil of the titanium revolver in comparison to its heavier stainless-steel counterpart.

Both the PT911 and 945 were on the large size for "purse guns," particularly the latter. For those who do not know the Taurus product line, these pistols are medium-framed semiautomatics, while the M85 series are similar in size and appearance to Smith & Wesson J-frame revolvers. The small size and lightweight PT111 and PT145 Millennium series semiautomatic polymer-frame pistols were also favorites, with the general consensus going to the 9mm PT111 because of its lighter recoil in comparison to the .45 ACP PT145.

Unlike most of its competitors' pistols, Taurus Millennium series polymer-frame handguns have grips that are large enough to accommodate a large-handed male, such as myself, while at the same time being sized so as to be comfortable in a woman's smaller hands. Taurus works this small "magic" act by using all-steel double-stack magazines in its compact pis-

tols rather than steel-lined polymer magazines, which are so thick that the grip must be enlarged to accommodate them.

Every one of our students was able to manage every handgun we brought, even the .45 ACP automatics. This negated the notion that a .45 is too much for a woman to shoot. That said, they preferred the lighter recoil of the .38 Special and 9mm handguns. Although they were not painful, the .45's recoil was more than our ladies wished to contend with on an extended basis.

Armed & Ready

At day's end, all of the Steel Magnolias agreed that the experience had been an enlightening and entertaining one. Linda has developed a love of shooting and is considering joining with Dianne in IDPA competition. All commented that they were much less afraid of handguns now that they had a better understanding of them and how they were used. All also commented that they felt more confident in their ability to travel with greater "situational awareness" and a few "tools" to help protect themselves.

All were impressed with their ability to stay on the range for over two hours and shoot, collectively, about 300 rounds. Even Christine and Karen, who were especially concerned about the weakness in their hands, were proud of themselves. Christine admitted that her hands were tired, but she also stated that she now knew she could defend herself. If attacked, she would only need a few rounds and a few seconds. In addition, the ladies learned some positive aspects of the "gun culture," rather than the negativism and vilification usually found in the popular media. Perhaps their biggest surprise was that shooting could be fun. They truly enjoyed themselves. Moreover, our Steel Magnolias will now have a better understanding of gun-related topics.

And finally, for the guys whose wife or "significant other" has been inculcated with the erroneous notion that "nice girls don't play with guns," that guns are innately evil, or that guns are only for men, our Steel Magnolias might prove to be a positive example.



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www.taurususa.com

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Gunsmiths such as Rick Corbin usually work alone and strive to average around \$45 per hour.



When a customer — such as Milton Menjivar here — looks on, the rate must go to \$65 per hour.



*Take an inside
look at the life of
the gunsmith from
the other side of
the counter.*



When the customer tries to help, the hourly wage jumps to \$85 per hour.

STATE OF THE GUNSMITH

By Alex Hamilton

Solitary gunsmiths — who usually work alone in a small cluttered shop surrounded by steel tools and parts of all descriptions, solvents ranging from acid to caustic, big machines, small hand-held machines, and hundreds of files — have changed very little over the last 500 years. Back then, they used to make everything by hand from raw materials. Today, the only real change in gunsmiths' shops are the electrically powered equipment that they use to drive the same tools.

For those of you who would like to see how gunsmiths used to build rifles and tools during the 18th and 19th centuries in the United States and Europe, there is a excellent one-hour video titled "The Gunsmith of Williamsburg." Filmed in the 1970s at the old gunsmith's shop in Colonial Williamsburg, Va., you can order the video directly from the Colonial Williamsburg Bookseller by calling [757] 565-8450. This excellent video has been aired on television's PBS channel and costs \$19.95.

The film shows Wallace Gussler, the wonderfully talented Williamsburg gunsmith, single-handedly building a flintlock rifle from raw materials into one beautiful, deadly and accurate work of art. He cuts the stock from a sugar maple tree he felled in a nearby forest. Gussler hammer-forges the barrel from iron he smelted in his shop. He even sand-casts

the brass butt plate and other parts, and makes the lock and screws. The rifling of the barrel was performed on an old-style wooden rifling machine that Gussler constructed himself.

In the video, when the parts are finished, he engraves the patchbox and other parts, finishes the wood to a magnificent soft luster, and takes his superb creation to the woods to knock the charcoal bullseye from a wooden target.

Instead of making parts one at a time by hand, today's talented one man shop gunsmith buys most of the parts he uses from vendors who specialize in a narrow variety of high quality components. Handgun barrels come from quality makers such as Kart, Bar-sto, Clark Custom, and others. Precision internal parts come from a myriad of makers, such as MGW (Maryland Gun Works), which cuts close tolerance pieces using the EDM (Electric Discharge Machining) process. Sights are available from many makers such as MMC (Fort Worth, Texas), Heinie, BoMar, and Novak, all of which manufacture fixed and adjustable front and rear sights in just about any configuration imaginable. Rear sights such as Richard Heinie's excellent Slant Pro are available in serrated, white-dot or various night inserts.

Evolution of the Gunsmith

Independent-minded gunsmiths in our

modern high-tech times fall into about three or four categories that define them as either a general worker, custom gunsmith, or a super gunsmith/manufacturer.

General gunsmiths usually work in obscurity in the back of a retail gun store. Customers rarely see or meet them because they are kept out of contact with their customers, so that all of their time can be spent repairing and installing parts for the betterment of the gunshop.

These gunsmiths are more than likely talented people with a love for what they do, but have little experience in running a business and dealing with customers. They may have little experience in gunsmithing as a profession, possibly to the point where they have just graduated from a reputable gunsmithing school. They make somewhere around \$18,000 or less a year, which is not much, but the gun business itself is a very-low profit business.

In order for the shop to make money on it's gunsmithing services, in-house gunsmiths must be able to do such varied tasks as installing recoil pads quickly and replacing broken parts with efficiency and speed, no matter how complicated the firearm. There is little time for these talented individuals to work on custom projects that require tens of hours of time.

Custom gunsmiths are what most, if not all, general gunsmiths strive to be.

In many cases, life long friendships develop between the gunsmith and customer.



Kelly, Bill Oglesby and Ron Power. Their products are a result of having “been there and done that,” of seeing a need and filling it — at great financial risk.

The super gunsmith is the ultimate business entrepreneur who has a gift for common-sense business management and uses it to build a business producing quality products for the shooting public. Many of these super gunsmiths got their start as custom pistolsmiths, enhancing pistols and revolvers for customers around the world. One day they saw a need for a pistol that had all the custom work already per-

formed, and one a customer could order and receive in a very short time rather than having to wait months. The super pistol — with precise metal checkering, Brown high-rise safety, trigger job, target sights, and many other items that used to be installed by the custom pistolsmith — was born and now dominates the market.

It's A Tough Trade

There will always be work for gunsmiths in the future, with several million guns per year still being sold that will eventually need repair or custom work. However, today's gunsmith must work harder as a businessperson in order to keep his or her business solvent and legal. The initial investment in a shop, proper equipment, a computer set up, office space, Federal Firearms License, local licenses, and a myriad of other things makes it very tough for beginning gunsmiths to get started. But that is the case for any person starting his or her own business. You must have the burning desire and ambition to get the job done.



Regular readers of American Handgunner will know Alex Hamilton from his column "Pistol-smithing." For quality custom work, check with Hamilton at his shop:

***Ten Ring Precision
[210] 494-3063
www.tenring.com***

Many custom gunsmiths have a day job and start doing custom work for friends and relatives at night for free, or for the cost of the parts. They start out with little attention to making money at it until they begin working on guns that belong to strangers who were referred by friends. At first these talented gunsmiths' prices are timidly low because they have no idea of what to charge, and there is still the embarrassment of charging for their work.

Sometimes it takes a gunsmith years to get out of this stage and to wrestle with the question of whether they are going to attempt to make a living doing what they love to do. In order to do this, they are going to need business experience and organizational skills, and their prices are going to have to be raised to the point where they can subsist. Many gunsmiths find themselves working late into the night on guns after laboring all day at another job. The stress on their family is great, too, so they often decide to see if they can build guns full-time. Some make it, but sadly, most do not.

It takes more than just skill to make it as a full-time custom gunsmith. This unfortunate fact is often discovered within a few months after the decision to leave the full-time job. There are business expenses, licenses, expensive tools to buy, customers phone calls to answer, and, as in any single proprietor business, a large requirement of self discipline.

A new gunsmith must learn very early that he can't sit around and “shoot the bull” with friends and customers when he

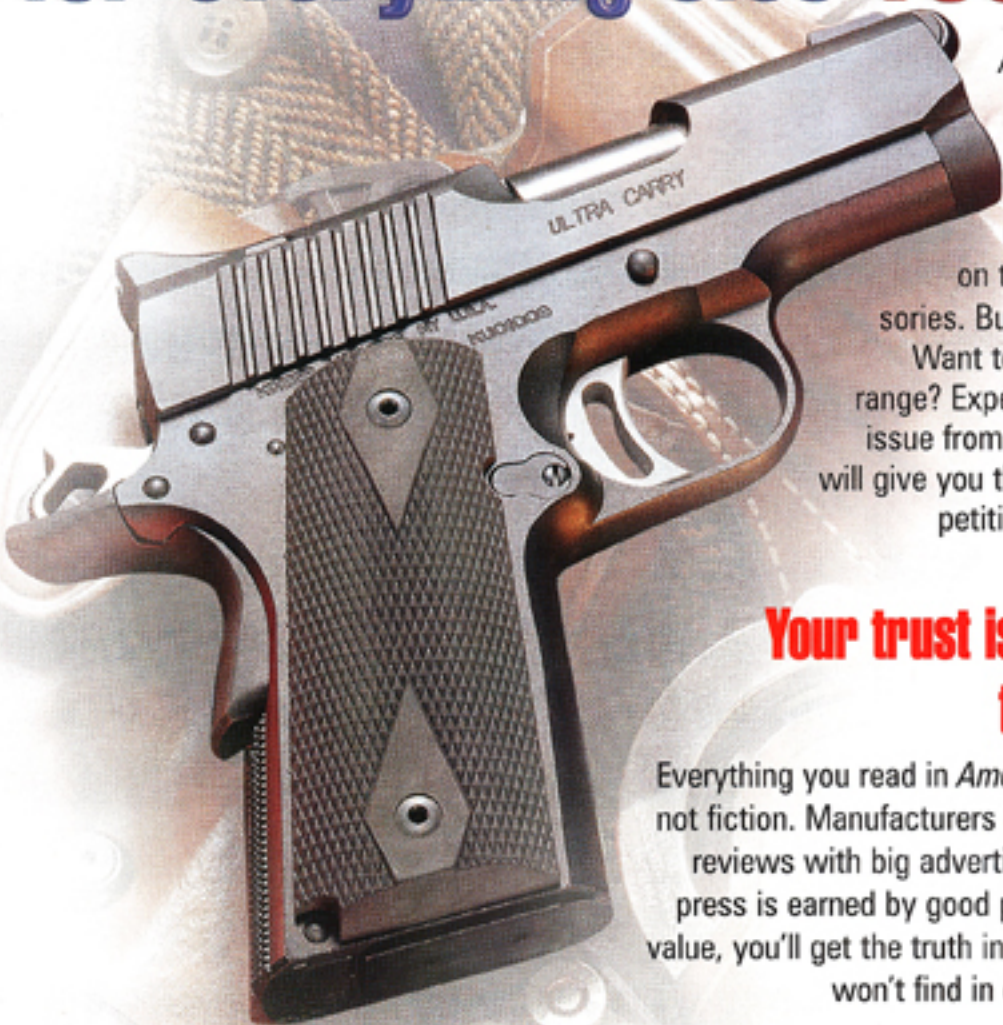
should be working on customer guns. The pitfalls are many for the new independent gunsmith, just as they are for all of us who wish to start our own businesses. Sadly, in today's hostile anti-gun and highly competitive business atmosphere, custom gunsmiths can seldom make it on their own.

Most custom gunsmiths attempt to earn around \$45 an hour. If gunsmiths work everyday, eight hours a day, five days a week, and 45 weeks a year for a total of 1,100 hours, they have potential earnings of \$81,000 a year. Sounds good you say?

Since most custom gunsmiths work alone, they have to answer the phone, which amounts to an astounding four hours per day of talking with customers and suppliers. If they waste productive time talking with friends who come by the shop on their day off and just want to pass their free time, the lost hours add up fast. That cuts productive time down to around 550 hours a year or \$40,500 gross. Now you subtract the high cost of tooling such as files, drills, milling cutters, parts, loan interest and overhead, and you're looking at a net profit for the year of around \$20,000 to \$30,000 in the best-case scenario for gunsmiths who have established themselves for about 10 years.

Then there are the super gunsmiths who are blessed with a high level of skill, drive, inventiveness, business savvy, and are willing to take risks — street-wise individuals such as Ed Brown, Bill Wilson, Jim Clark, J.D. Jones, Larry

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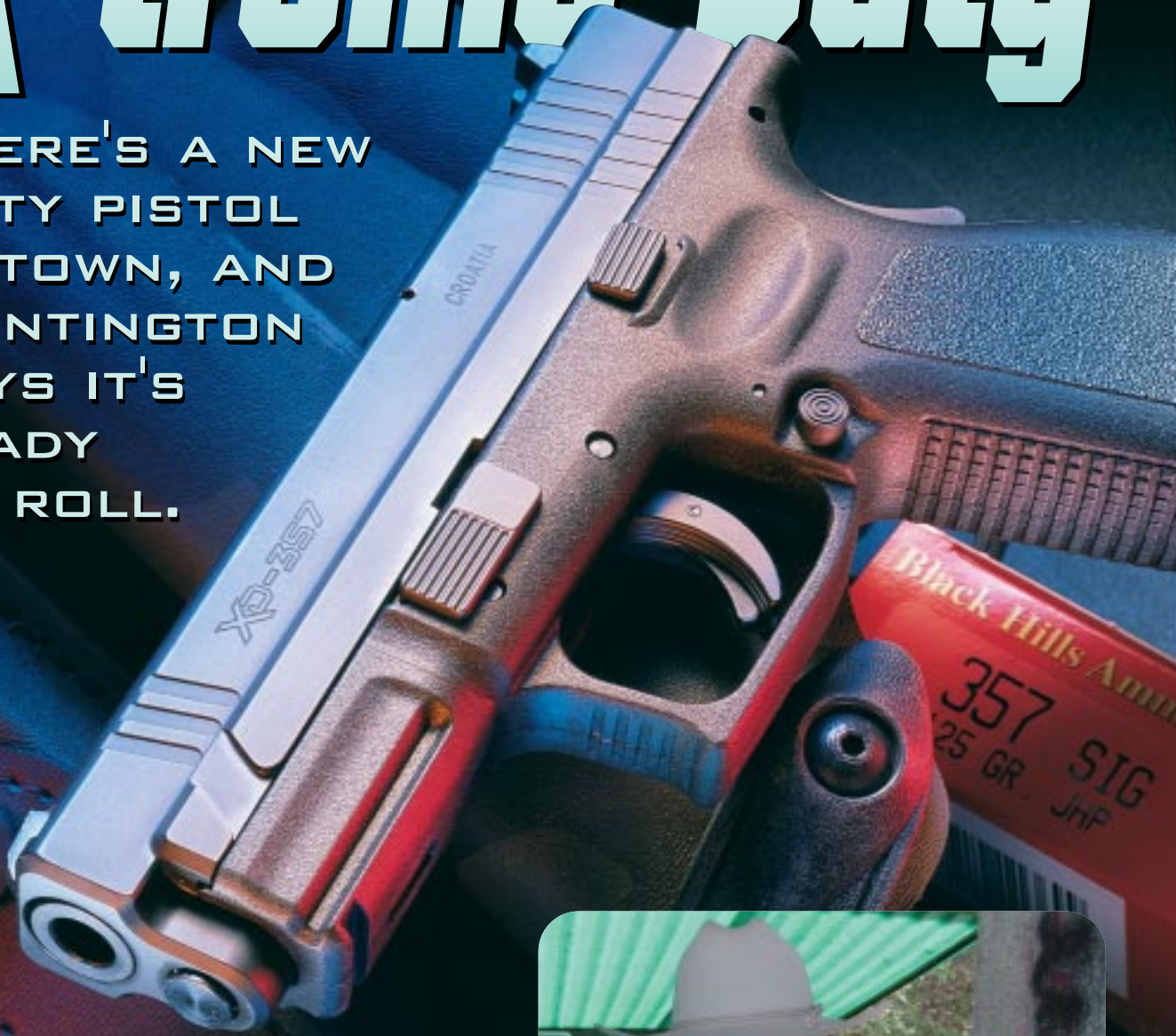
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Springfield Armory's *X-treme Duty*

THERE'S A NEW
DUTY PISTOL
IN TOWN, AND
HUNTINGTON
SAYS IT'S
READY
TO ROLL.



BY ROY
HUNTINGTON



I'll be frank. I expected to be underwhelmed by these guns. I remembered seeing some press on them a while back when they were briefly imported by another company, but had never before seen one in the flesh. Black, plastic pistols? Hey, there's an original thought; and from Croatia to boot. Yeah, I know. I thought the same thing. Serbo-Croatian technology, eh? Aren't they the ones who made the Yugo? But, after a thorough going-over, I came away dutifully impressed. No foolin'.

These really are first class pistols. And no matter how hard I tried, I couldn't fault their design, workmanship, or quality of construction. As Dennis Reese, co-chairman of Springfield Armory (the exclusive importer of the XD handguns), said: "Dave Williams, the director of our custom shop, traveled to the Croatian factory. He came back very impressed with their quality control. Everything is CNC machined and is either the right way, or no way."

And He Was Right

Springfield Armory is famous for their historic name, their line of 1911-style handguns and, of course, the M1A. Springfield has built and maintained a reputation for quality, customer service and performance. The newest Springfield, the XD (for Extreme Duty), will find a ready niche in their lineup and on the hips of cops and shooters.



The forward portion of the dust cover on the frame has integral rails molded in. They are geared to fit any light that can be mounted on the Glock family of pistols.



Note the one flyer and the rest clumped together like a squadron of B-17s enroute back from a raid on Berlin. This "4+1 syndrome" didn't matter to me one bit, and in the real world these are still bragging groups!



The forward portion of the grip strap has very functional checkering molded into the polymer material. No need for skateboard tape here!



The XD 40 and the XD 9 seem right at home mixed in with all this duty gear. The author's old duty leather jacket has seen a thing or two in its day and he wishes he'd had the Al Mar knife and Sure Fire light during those dark nights on the streets.

But Why?

I asked Dennis Reese that very question.

"We were looking for the best match-up of quality and features in a police duty gun but until the XD, we simply hadn't found it," he said. "After grueling testing, we found the XD lived up to our expectations. We decided it was the one. We developed some additional features and new model variations, like the 5-inch model and the ported models, and are planning on a sub-compact next fall," he added.

As much as we all seem to revere the 1911-style pistols, they simply are not always the top choice when it comes to duty handguns for cops. These days, many, if not most, working officers are not "gun people," and simply carry their duty gun as a tool. It takes a dedicated gunner to keep current on a 1911, and most simply won't put the time and effort into it. Also, most agencies can't afford the training time and dollars to accommodate the 1911.

In order for Springfield Armory to market a viable police duty pistol, they had to reach out for some cutting-edge design features. The XD is full of them. A striker-fired, double action only (DAO) design; the addition of a long but light trigger "take-up" before the sear is engaged; and the addition of a grip safety, all of which turn this simple

design into a new animal. In order to fire, the XD has to be in a proper firing grip. No more worries about a holster's loose thumb-snaps pushing triggers as you re-holster. And, the superior ergonomics exhibited by the grip profile that bears a strong resemblance to the Browning Hi-Power makes the XD feel as good as it performs.

The Details

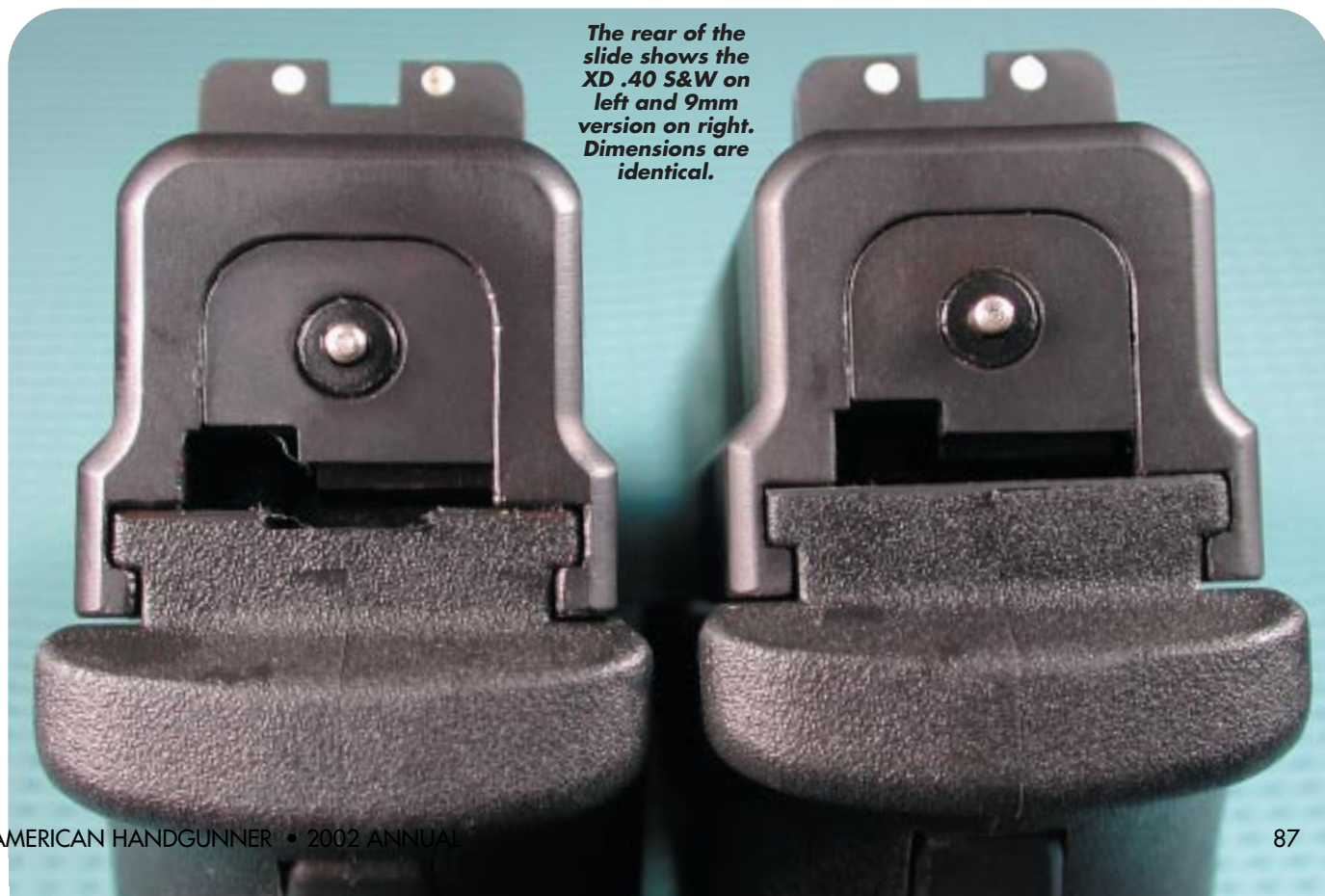
The test pistols come in two flavors, 9mm and .40 S&W. There is also a .357 Sig available. Let's just say it out loud... they sorta' look like those other black, plastic pistols that we all know so well. But, there are significant differences.

One is grip safety. Coupled with a trigger safety called the "Ultra Safety Assurance Trigger," the combination goes a long way towards helping to prevent that bane of striker-fired handguns — unintentional discharges. In the past, some designs have caused a certain number of "problems" during and after an agency's firearms transition. The grip safety on the XD prevents discharge and also locks the slide, preventing it from fully opening from battery, unless the safety is fully depressed. The advantages are clear.

The XD has a cocked indicator and a loaded chamber indicator. The tail of the striker extends out of the rear of the slide when the pistol is cocked, and is obvious at a glance. If you run a finger across the rear of the slide, you feel the "bump" and know the XD is ready to go.



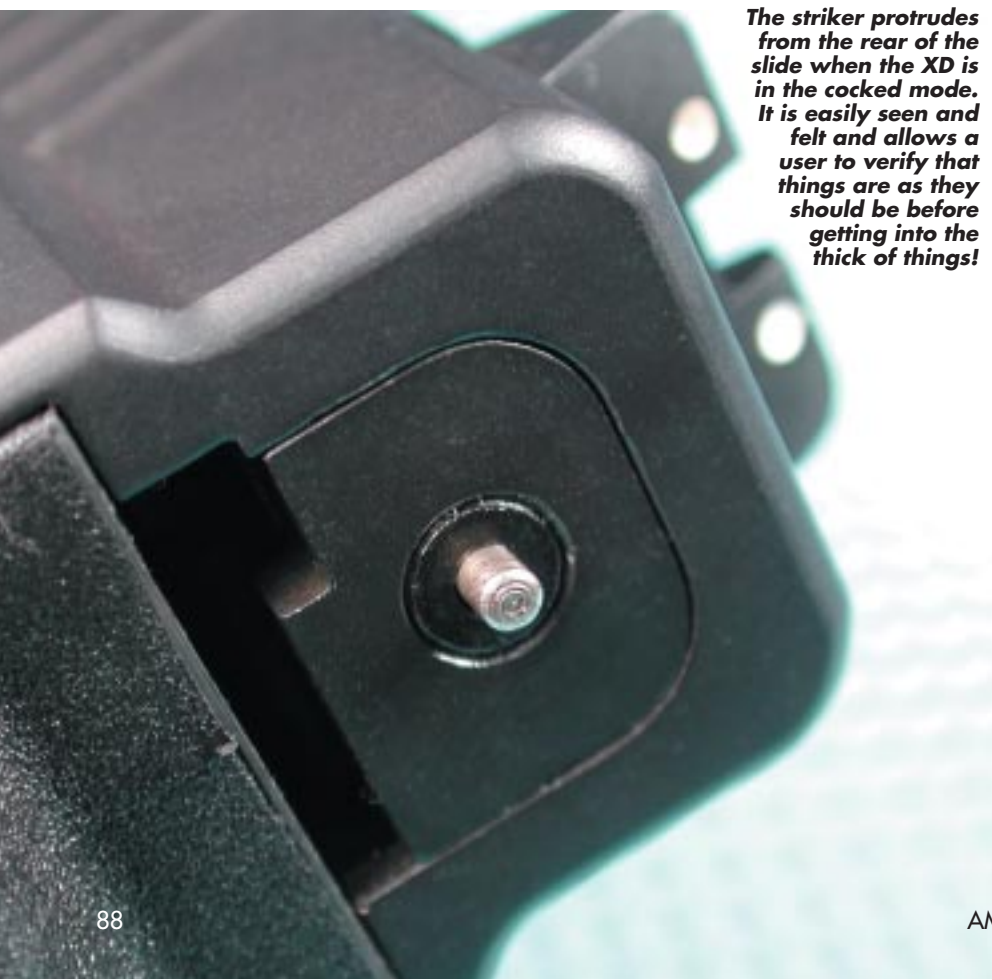
The case head is well-supported and the integral ramp and barrel show top quality machine work.



The rear of the slide shows the XD .40 S&W on left and 9mm version on right. Dimensions are identical.



The Ultra Safety Assurance trigger system has a safety lever integral with the trigger.



The striker protrudes from the rear of the slide when the XD is in the cocked mode. It is easily seen and felt and allows a user to verify that things are as they should be before getting into the thick of things!

The loaded chamber indicator is a small lever located on the top of the slide at the back of the breech area. When a round is chambered, it protrudes and is also easily visible and obvious to the touch. The combination of the two is a powerful tool, and anyone can appreciate their value while they crouch in that dark alley as their heart pounds in their chest. These are exclusives in this type of design and important features for any street cop or average “Joe or Jane” who needs a reliable handgun for self-defense and home protection.

An ambidextrous magazine release is accomplished by having the cutout for the detent located on the front face of the magazine. No need to change the mag button from one side to the other, as it comes with two already installed. The XD is virtually ambidextrous as it comes out of the box. This will make legions of range masters happy, indeed.

A light/laser accessory rail is molded into the front of the frame and accepts accessories sized to fit the Glock. This feature is virtually de rigueur for a duty pistol today — and just plain makes good sense. If you’re going into the fray, it will likely occur at night. And a gun-mounted light works gobs easier than juggling a gun in one hand and a light in the other. I speak from experience.

Sight dovetails (front and rear) are

SPEC SHEET:

CALIBERS: 9X19MM, .40 S&W, .357 SIG.

CAPACITY: 10+1 (15 RD. LE AND EXPORT
FOR 9MM, 12 FOR .40 AND .357 SIG)

BARREL: 4.08"

SIGHTS: DOVETAIL FRONT & REAR

SIGHT RADIUS: 5.9" (FIXED SIGHT)

SIZE: 22.88 OZS., 7.2" OVERALL

WIDTH: 1.29"

TRIGGER PULL: 5.5-7.7 LBS. SINGLE ACTION,
STRIKER FIRED (USA TRIGGER SYSTEM)

MAGAZINES: 2 (CHROME PLATED)

MSRP: \$489.00



OTHER DETAILS:

LIFETIME WARRANTY

CALIBERS: 9MM, .40 S&W, .357 SIG

ACTION: SHORT RECOIL, LOCKED BREECH

MECHANISM, SELF-LOADING

DOVETAIL REAR SIGHT (STEEL)

LOADED CHAMBER INDICATOR

DOVETAIL FRONT SIGHT (STEEL)

MUZZLE PROTECTOR FIXED GUIDE ROD SYSTEM

(CAPTIVE DUAL RECOIL STRING GUIDE

ASSEMBLY)

FRAME/DUST COVER (WITH LIGHT RAILS FOR

ACCESSORY LIGHTS AND/OR LASER)

DAO STRIKER FIRED, USA TRIGGER SYSTEM

AMBIDEXTROUS MAGAZINE RELEASE

CHECKERED FRONT AND BACK STRAP

GRIP SAFETY

FIRING PIN (STRIKER) STATUS INDICATOR

LIGHTWEIGHT, ULTRA HIGH-IMPACT POLYMER

FRAME

OVERSIZED, HEAT TREATED SLIDE RAILS

ALL STEEL PARTS COATED WITH PROPRIETARY

BRUNIRAL FINISH



This 15-yard group from the XD 9 shows the curse of some autoloaders. The first round from the magazine would wander off on it's own, about an inch or so away from the rest of the pack. Then things would settle down nicely. Does it matter? Not a bit. These aren't target guns, although they shot as if they were.



The rear sight is the classic two-dot with the front making the complete three-dot picture. Dovetails cut to fit SIG sights can be retrofitted with any tritium or adjustable sight that would fit a SIG.

cut to accept SIG sight dovetails, so anything that will install on a SIG will fit the XD. That makes after-market tritium and/or adjustable sights an easy option. The factory sights are standard three-dot pattern — all steel and tank tough.

The front and back strap exhibit molded-in checkering (no more need for skateboard tape), and the forward portion of the slide has milled-in serrations to assist in double-checking a loaded chamber. The front of the trigger guard is squared for those who still put fingers up there, and the magazine well is nicely beveled for speedy insertion. Supplied magazines are chrome plated with a

capacity of 10 rounds, but high-caps are available where allowed. The 9mm versions accommodate 15 rounds; the .40 and .357 magazines carry 12 rounds.

Survivability

One of the most important features of the XD series is the “stand-off recoil spring housing” that prevents the slide from moving out of battery when pressed from the front. Virtually every other semi-auto pistol will fail to fire if you press against the front of the slide, moving the slide out of battery. The distance necessary to render the pistol inoperative can be as little as a 16th of an inch! Don’t believe me? Get that trusted 1911 of yours and push the slide back about an eighth of an inch and pull the trigger (make sure the damn thing’s unloaded first). It may go “click,” but that’s all it will do.

Chances are, if you have to deploy your handgun, it will be at toe-to-toe distances and might very easily turn into a fight for your life, on the ground nonetheless. At that moment, most people have a natural tendency to stick that handgun into the belly of their antagonist and start pulling the trigger. With most autos, that’s the worst thing you can do. The XD, however, gives you a fighting chance. This is a feature not to be casually dismissed. It’s a real innovation and a first-line feature on a fighting pistol. Kudos to Springfield for seeing that.

There’s also a firing pin safety that



will only disengage when the trigger is pulled all the way back. Okay, let's count for a minute. There's a grip safety, trigger safety, firing pin safety, deliberate trigger pull, and the stand-off recoil spring housing, all effectively making sure the XD only works when you want it to. Not bad for a duty gun, and not shabby for anyone who needs a safe handgun.

Is it a dangerous pistol? You bet... but only when you want it to be.

Construction

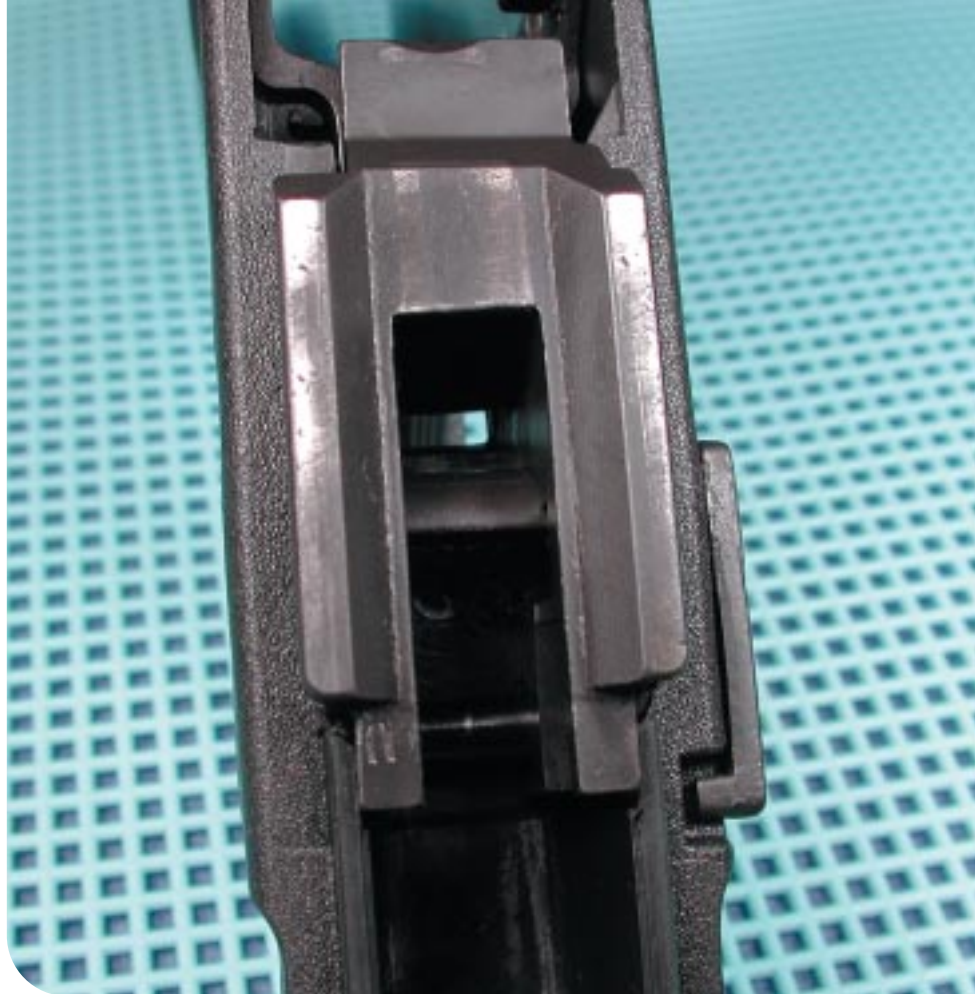
If it sounds like I was impressed by these guns, I can be as shameless as the next fellow and say: "Yup, you're right." The more I shot them, handled them and passed them around, the more popular they got. Part of the reason is the way they are put together.

Unlike some polymer pistols, the XDs have an authoritative feel to them. They rest comfortably in the hand, no doubt thanks to that grip profile I mentioned. They seem to fit a wide range of hands, from tiny-girl hands to the baseball-mitt sized hams of a 6'-4" game warden I know, ("I like these, lots," he said).

The slide is forged steel and milled with a degree of care and attention that would do a custom hot-rod, even the space shuttle, proud. Actual steel being actually machined, and virtually no machining marks were visible on my test guns. Imagine that. The slide release is steel and beefy and only dwarfed by the takedown lever, which exercises its right to be there in equally bold form.

The short-recoil system is tried and proven and the barrel shows sharp, cleanly cut rifling and excellent machine work. The recoil spring guide rod operates as a "captive" system, and as mentioned does double duty to prevent the slide from moving out of battery when pressed from the front. There's no plastic visible here and a magnet sticks to every-thing!

The frame is polymer with crisp edges and sharp detail work. An important point is the all steel mono-block that anchors the trigger assembly, takedown lever, slide stop and is the main portion that the slide runs in. These are no tiny pieces of metal imbedded in the plastic frame, but rather robust steel rails cut into the block. Rails molded into the polymer grip frame guide the rear of the slide. After several hundred rounds, they appear to have



The beefy steel mono-block insert is the anchoring point for most of the action parts. The slide runs in the machined rails on the block and is additionally aligned with rails molded into the rear of the frame.

The XD in .40 S&W was tested with a moderate number of loads and digested them all with aplomb. It particularly liked the Blazer TMJ ammo with which it delivered the best groups of the lot.



virtually no wear and are only polished, so it is obvious all the fuss occurs around the steel guide rails.

I tried a magnet on the frame assembly and found the only thing it wouldn't stick to was the frame itself. All the bits (trigger, grip safety, magazine releases, take down lever, slide stop, etc.) grabbed the magnet. The XD is built like the proverbial brick privy yet only weighs in at around 24 ounces for the .40 (according to my sorta' accurate) kitchen scale. That's without the magazine in place.

The .40 feels just a tad "bigger" in the hand than the 9mm, but I was hard-pressed to prove it with my measurements. Maybe it's just me, or maybe it's true.

All I know is I can hardly wait to see the compact versions.

But Marge, Does It Shoot?

In a word? Yes. If there was a glitch at all it was that both the 9mm and the .40 S&W I tested exhibited that tendency to throw the first



The all-steel grip safety also serves to keep the slide in battery until it's fully depressed. Molded-in traction surfaces are visible adjacent to the safety.

hand cycled round about an inch away from the main group. Test groups at 15 yards hovered around the 1 to 1½ inch range depending upon the ammo used, but there was almost always that first shot standing out from the others. Does it matter? Nope, not a bit. Hell, I can't hold that well in the field to ever notice that anyway, and who can? Okay, maybe Robbie Latham, but we'll let him worry about it, eh?

The best group of the day with the

9mm was the Federal Tactical, 147 grain sub-sonic load (chronographed at an average 968 fps) at just 1 inch. In the .40, it was the Blazer 155 grain TMJ at a chronographed average of 1,146 fps for about the same. I don't get too caught up with exact details with these things because this isn't a match pistol. If you were looking for a lengthy list of group sizes, all measured down to the nearest millionth, you're gonna' get bored soon because it isn't going to happen.

The interior of the slide shows first-rate machining in this all-steel forging.



An interesting aside here, in the "I'll be damn" department, is the fact that the Speer 165 grain Gold Dot JHP in the .40 chronographed at: 1,105 fps; 1,101; 1,107; 1,104; and 1,104 showing almost unbelievable consistency. The range gods were with Speer that day. It near stunned us all.

I ran a total of about 750 rounds through both guns combined and that included some grungy 9mm junk ammo. I had one failure to completely chamber one of the junk rounds (green and grimy), so no foul there. I limp-wristed 'em, shot 'em upside down, weak-handed, with the slides against a barricade, and generally abused the snot out of them. Hell, they weren't my guns so I was trying to break them in a gentle sorta' way. All I did was use up perfectly good ammo and give myself a blister. They ran like my 1940 Packard does, smooth and reliably.

I expected some break-in problems like you would with any auto pistol, but none surfaced. I plan on shooting these a great deal more and if anything lets-go, you'll be the first to know. Well, Dennis Reese at Springfield will be the first, so you'll be the second.

The trigger pull tested out at between 6 and 7 pounds for both pistols, according to my RCBS trigger pull gauge. After the initial take-up, let off was crisp and predictable and I found both guns easy to shoot off-hand, from a rest, and when I tried to move and shoot and otherwise make a fool of myself. They felt right at home and reminded me a great deal of shooting my old duty SIG P-225, but on single action mode every time.

For what it's worth, I banged away at 50 and 75 yard steel gongs and hit them

enough to make the fellow next to me take notice. I was feeling full of myself until I realized he took notice due to the fact that my hot, dirty brass was landing on the brim of his light gray Stetson. We're still friends, but it took a minute of smoothing ruffled feathers to keep it that way.

Takedown

There's an important point about to be made here so listen-up. In order to take this pistol apart it forces you to make sure the chamber is clear first. Okay, I'll say it again. Unlike most auto pistols where you can just start taking it apart (or some, heaven forbid, where you have to pull the trigger first), the XD series makes you open the slide and lock it open as step one in the take down process. This method makes it infinitely less likely to hear one of those embarrassingly loud noises at the most inopportune time.

The drill is this: Magazine out, slide locked to rear with slide release (while noting the empty chamber now), take-down lever rotated up, slide released to go forward until it stops, then pull the trigger and the slide slips forward and off the frame neat as pie. Then the captive recoil spring comes out, lifts out the barrel, and you're finished. Put the bits back into the slide, slip the slide back

onto the frame and lock it back, lower the take-down lever, and you're good to go again. It takes a lot longer to explain it than to simply do it.

I'd estimate you'd have to be pretty much a fool and a klutz to fail to notice if the gun was loaded with this procedure. The only way I can figure one can mess it up is to leave a loaded magazine in the gun while you try to do this. But then again, there are those people who insist on not believing signs that say things like "Wet Paint" or "Danger, Mad Dog." So let's hope if Darwin's Theory of Natural Selection proves true, it doesn't cause anyone undue concern at the time.

Holsters

As is always the case with new guns, holsters can be a problem. We're lucking out with the XD. Springfield was thoughtful enough to arrange a couple of manufacturers to gear up. Safariland said they will make a duty holster for it and Bianchi has already said they have some fits for the XDs in concealment gear. They said duty gear will follow accordingly as the need arises.

The XD looks a bit like a Glock but it has just enough differences to make holster selection an "iffy" proposition if you think it will fit in your current rig. The

bold takedown lever, squared trigger guard and light rail need to be taken into consideration. Of course, just a phone call away, there is always custom gear from the many small shops.

The Final Word

As it stands right now, if I woke up in a nightmare and found myself back in a patrol car in uniform I'd ask my boss if I could carry the XD. It appears to be a genuine fighting pistol. It has all the advantages of the polymer frame idea, all the reliability of quality steel forgings and careful CNC machine work, as well as some nifty design features all to its own. Short of bashing 'em against brick walls, I put the two handguns through a pretty thorough test and unlike many new offerings, the manufacturer didn't have to apologize for anything. Nothing came flying off, broke loose, cracked, peeled, or just went "click" when it was supposed to go "bang."

And you can't beat that
now, can you?



MORE INFO

Springfield Inc.

[800] 680-6866

www.springfieldarmory.com



The XD is virtually custom-tailored as a police duty pistol. From the grip safety, lightweight polymer frame to solid steel forgings, it is rugged, reliable and accurate.

PRACTICAL HANDGUN HUNTING

By J.D. Jones

Handgun hunting is a challenge that demands you properly prepare for it.

The skill level necessary to successfully hunt with a handgun varies almost as much as the variety of suitable guns and animals to hunt. There are no easy answers, formulas, or other advice that will turn you into a successful handgun hunter unless you are willing to put in the necessary time on the trigger in order to learn how to shoot effectively.

I frequently hear from individuals who are interested in buying a handgun for hunting, and want advice. They may not own a handgun, or at best, own a self-protection type handgun. When I suggest that they buy a high quality .22 revolver or auto pistol, good ear protection, 10,000 rounds of ammo — and then learn to use it before getting into something more effective for hunting purposes — a stunned silence is usually the first result. A single shot simply won't do because the necessity of reloading after every shot, for a beginner, is sure to get tedious in a hurry. Obviously, if you are proficient

***Definitely not for the beginner!
Mark Hampton and his brown bear
taken with a .375/'06 JDJ Encore.***

S&W Model 629 Classic mounted with a Bushnell Holo Sight is a good short range rig according to the author.



Used with skill, handguns have taken the toughest game. Shown is the skull of a cape buffalo taken with a .375 JDJ.





Hogs, dogs and a handgun — a winning combination for a fun hunting experience.

with a handgun already, a different suggestion would be appropriate for you.

It Takes A Lot Of Shooting

To a beginner, 10,000 rounds sounds like a heck of a lot of ammunition, and in fact it is — but if you embark on a regular practice schedule, 10,000 rounds won't last long.

Quite awhile ago I bought a S&W Combat Masterpiece .22 4-inch barreled revolver and a case of 5,000 rounds to begin learning aerial shooting. A few weeks later, the entire case was gone and I still had a long way to go. Another 5,000 rounds went down the tube and I was beginning to feel fairly confident of my ability, which was at a level of being able to hit empty shotgun shells about 90 percent of the time, bottle caps about 70 percent. And I could count on putting four rounds through a thrown tin can before it hit the ground. (Never did hit it six — five too many times to count, but never six.) At this point the revolver was pretty loose from the fast double action beating it had taken but it was still suitable for this kind of work.

Graduating to a S&W Highway Patrolman 6-inch .357 and shooting .38 wadcutters required another couple thousand rounds of practice to even get close to what I was doing with the .22, although the

.38s produced much more satisfying hits. I was far from a beginner when I started that experience and frankly it took me around 15,000 rounds total to feel confident of my ability, which incidentally was at a level far below that of the professional shooters operating at that time but good enough to jump and shoot running cottontails.

With careful practice, a beginner will see rapid progress in his ability to align the sights and get off a shot with confidence in where it is going. You can help yourself by beginning your shooting at close ranges, so hits are easy to make as you become familiar with the workings of your gun. Later on, after you have achieved good proficiency, bullseye and silhouette competition can help sharpen your accuracy skills. Everyone looks good when merely plinking in the field — but if you want to know what your skill level really is you must shoot paper targets and evaluate your progress.

Graduating To Optical Sights

After a couple thousand rounds of practice using iron sights, one might come to the realization that optical sights could improve accuracy. That is a correct assumption — the better you can see the better you can shoot. In addition, an optical sight is more likely to show you exactly what kind of trigger control you have. If the crosshair jumps when you pull the

trigger, you have to practice on achieving a smooth trigger pull. Any laser sight that will attach to your gun is an excellent training aid for trigger control — that jumping dot tells you exactly what's going on as you pull the trigger. Unfortunately, laser sights have practically no use in the field. A non-magnifying red dot sight such as the Ultra Dot is a viable replacement sight for those who have difficulty focusing on iron sights. The dot is fast to use as well as an accurate sighting system.

When you are ready to experiment with an optical sight on your handgun, I would recommend a Leupold 2X scope. It is an excellent, user-friendly, beginner's scope. A big mistake many shooters make is to look through the scope and then try to find the target. Wrong. Use a scope like iron sights. Look at the target. Put the sight between you and the target just as you do with iron sights with both eyes open. Practice and it becomes easy.

Two other mistakes are using a scope of too much power, and incorrectly using a variable. Variable power telescopes on low power have only about one half as much field of view as a comparable fixed power. Shooting from a rest or sandbag position is of good value to learn sight alignment and trigger pull, as well as getting used to an optical sight.

When you get good enough to make this work, I've found that a one, two, three system works well in achieving con-

sistency and good hits. As you locate a target, mentally count one; as you raise the gun and align the sights, the two occurs with final sight alignment. Trigger pull occurs simultaneously with the mental three count. Dry firing practice with this system works very well to begin with, and when comfortable with the system switch to live ammo.

Repeat a few hundred times and as you become more familiar with the system you will find that your accuracy and speed will also improve.

Graduating to a more powerful gun and becoming familiar with its recoil and ballistic characteristics is next on the agenda. Everyone used to recommend getting a .357 revolver and shooting it with .38 special ammunition before graduating to the heavier recoiling .357 loads. This still isn't a bad idea. But if you intend to hunt with a single shot, the Thompson/Center Contender offers interchangeable barrels in many easy to learn on calibers with little recoil that are completely capable of harvesting game from squirrels and rabbits to long range varmints and deer. Two excellent choices are the .223 Remington and the .300 Whisper(r). Of course literally dozens of other calibers are available.

Selecting The Hunting Handgun

The type of hunting you are interested

in as well as state caliber regulations should influence your decision of what caliber to select. If your state regulation specifies something like ".35 caliber or larger straight wall case" it could include the .38 Special, .357 Magnum, .41 magnum, .44 magnum, .45 Colt, .454 Casull, .480 Ruger, .475 Linebaugh and a couple of .50s. It may also include .375 Winchester, .444 Marlin, .475 JDJ, .50-70 and .45-70 depending on the individual state's interpretation. All of these calibers may be had in single shot pistols which normally offer greater accuracy, higher velocity, and better handling with optical sights than revolvers.

The old saying of "use enough gun" should be tempered with "don't use too much gun" if you cannot handle it. If your recoil tolerance is for cartridges with modest recoil such as the .357, you will do far better with that than by using a .44 Magnum that scares the hell out of you, causes misses, and gives you a practically incurable flinch. Always remember — accuracy is more important than power.

After six months to a year, a few new guns and a lot of practice, you will feel ready to hunt. Varmints are a fine place to start. Groundhogs, prairie dogs, jackrabbits and nutria are good hunting and provide good experience as well as being an enjoyable pastime for those who have them available to hunt. As a beginning hunter, even for varmints, you should pay

Continued on page 106



SECRETS OF A PROFESSIONAL SHOOTER

SECRETS OF A PROFESSIONAL SHOOTER: PART 1

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Pioneers of Pistolsmithing the Government Model Colt

By:
Charles E. Petty

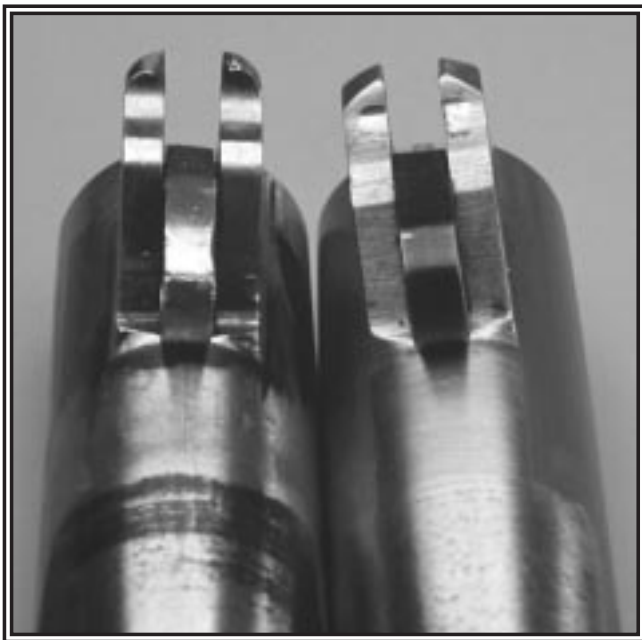
A LOOK BACK AT THE GENESIS OF THE CUSTOM 1911 PISTOL.

History does not record if any one man really developed the accuracy job for the Government Model pistol as we know it today. It is much more likely a blending of ideas from a number of people, but the origins date back to the years immediately before World War II. The earliest reference I've found is from a Gil Hebard Guns catalog dated 1961. He reports that in 1930 a U.S. Treasury pistol team using guns accurized by Pachmayr had set a significant record in a team match. It does not state what modifications were done to those guns.

The first factory offering of a target-grade 1911 came in 1933 when Colt introduced the First Model National Match. According to Colt, it had a: "Super-smooth, hand-honed target action, selected 'Match' barrel and two-way adjustable rear target sight." A study of several of those pistols reveals that the slides fit considerably better than standard guns, but there are no other modifications that we would recognize as accurizing techniques. To be sure, the internal parts are beautifully polished and the

*Two guns by
Alton S. Dinan*





Properly fitted barrel on left, poorly fitted on right. Note on the right barrel the small area of contact with slide stop.

trigger pull is much better than average. But that's about it. Actually a good trigger, which has nothing to do with the mechanical accuracy of the pistol, makes it possible to shoot even a mediocre gun more accurately.

The Move To Autoloaders

I had always thought that the rise of the autoloader in bullseye competition was driven by returning GIs. And to a point that's true. But there is a different perspective. In an article in the February, 1986 issue of *The American Rifleman*, the late Jim Clark says that it was due to a change in the rules to allow alibis. For those who have no experience with bullseye shooting, an alibi is a second opportunity to fire shots that you were unable to deliver during the normal time limits due to equipment malfunction. In the early days when everyone shot revolvers, there was no need for alibis. But the less-than-flawlessly reliable autoloaders of the time did. It's a chicken-egg question over whether the rule was changed to accommodate the use of autoloaders, or they became popular as a result of the rule change.

When I began looking for references and history, there wasn't much to find. In the December, 1940 issue of *The American Rifleman*, an article by Fred C. Ness mentions the work of some men whose names we know. But it also says: "It has frequently been found that where it is possible to fit barrels on the trial and error system, filing the selected barrel for a close length-fit, about as much improvement can be obtained as the average shooter is capable of utilizing." My bet is that Ness liked revolvers.



Dinan rear sight



Distinctive rear sight and rib from Giles

By September 1941, things seem to have improved. In an article entitled, "The .45 Automatic at the National Matches," Capt. Charles G. Rau outlined the steps taken to "remodel" the 1911. He describes making and fitting a tight barrel bushing and using a "hand made and closely fitted tool steel link," which is a simple — albeit temporary — accurizing method still used today.

What Is Accurizing?

The beauty of Browning's design was its reliability under difficult conditions. One means of achieving this was to allow generous tolerances between the moving parts. An accuracy job could be nicely summarized as reducing these tolerances to a minimum. Techniques were developed to tighten the fit of the slide to the frame and that helped a little, but the

real dramatic improvement came with making the barrel lock up better and more uniform. The bottom barrel lug was built up by welding so that it could be fitted to provide solid contact with the slide stop pin when in battery. The head-space extension was also built up to fit more snugly in the slide.

The barrel bushing could be made to fit the slide tighter by putting several spots of brazing metal on the outside diameter and then filing it down, although some gunsmiths actually reamed out a GI bushing and made an insert that was silver soldered into the bushing that allowed a tighter fit. At some point commercial oversize barrel bushings were offered. The first one that I remember was made by Micro, but the availability of a bushing that could be fitted to both barrel and slide was a great help.



A young Charles Petty was an Air Force armorer. He knows the subject!

It is impossible to give credit to any one gunsmith from the pre-war period but there are many names to consider: Pachmayr, Berdon, King, and Dinan. All did some work with the gun in the early days but it wasn't until bullseye pistol competition took off after the war that we find reports of things that constitute the accuracy job as we know it today.

Today's shooter can buy off-the-shelf parts to fit, but back then there were none of those and all you had to work with were the original parts. The most important thing was to build up the barrel lugs by welding. When you talk about that today, you get shocked expressions from folks who fear that the necessary heat would destroy the barrel but that simply wasn't the case. Barrels don't need to be terribly hard and judicious application of the torch could do the welding without heating the rest of the barrel too much. When I learned this job we used old coat hangers for welding rods — they worked perfectly well — and I still have several pistols built that way that are just as accurate as those built with modern components.

The Golden Days Of The Service Teams

In the years immediately after the war and all through the '50s and '60s, the real impetus for accuracy work came from the military. All the services had active competitive programs. The National Matches at Camp Perry thrived. The National Trophy matches, both team and indi-

vidual, called for the use of a "service pistol" shooting service ammunition.

In order to meet the demands at Camp Perry for such a pistol, Springfield Armory began, in 1955, to build National Match pistols that were moderately accurized GI guns. When you went to Camp Perry, you could check one out for use at the matches and they could be purchased at the end of the match for a very reasonable price. A new issue came out every year and a complete set would be a collector's treasure. One of the spin-offs of the National Match pistol program was

that contracts were issued for the special parts needed to build the guns. All at once, there were NM barrels and bushings, barrel links, triggers and sights. Things got a lot easier.

The biggest advance was the availability of barrels that were manufactured oversized in the lugs and headspace extension. Just being able to fit the barrel without welding was a great advance as far as time was concerned. I remember when we first got them at the Marksmanship School. Colt made them on contract and the first ones I saw were called "Shively"



Original Colt National Match .45

barrels. One common misconception is that these barrels are somehow superior, but testing and precise measurements indicated that the Shively barrels were no more accurate than a standard Colt GI barrel. Their advantage was purely on the outside. They were not marked any differently than other Colt barrels of the time and the only good clue was the presence of a small area at the muzzle that was about .005 to .010 inch larger in diameter than the rest of the barrel. This allowed the barrel to move more easily in a fitted bushing once it tipped down to unlock. The availability of ready-to-fit barrels was like dying and going to heaven for an ungifted welder. Over the years there have been variations in dimensions and barrels made by different contractors. But the oversize barrels made it possible to build guns more quickly, although not necessarily better, for the job still required the same amount of skill.

By the time I got to the USAF Marksmanship School in 1959 and began my gunsmith training, the what of the accuracy job was very well established — although the how was still evolving. And there was a whole culture of competitive shooting in all the services, although the Air Force and Army had by far the largest programs.

The Marksmanship School was the baby of General Curtis E. LeMay, who was quite the shooter and hunter. But there were also political motives. In those Cold War days, competition between U.S. and Iron Curtain athletes

Top: Giles .45
Middle: Shockey .45
Bottom: Clark .38
Super conversion



took on a new level of importance. I saw the general a time or two at Lackland AFB, but many years later I had the opportunity to interview him for a story. When I asked about the reason behind the foundation of the school, his answer was characteristically straightforward: "To beat the Russians... and while we're at it, whip the Army too." As you might expect, we had more chances against the Army. But we whipped them both now and then.

When we went to matches in those days, it was common for one or more gunsmiths to go along. We could shoot the match, but were primarily available to fix anything that went wrong with a

team gun. And, if time permitted, we'd help any civilian shooter we could. Normally, these would be simple fix-it jobs like touching up triggers or trying to correct a function problem. For me it was the first opportunity I had to see the work of gunsmiths outside my own circle of Air Force gunsmiths. I'd always ask the shooter who built his gun, and then study it to see if there was anything different in the job.

The Big Four

Today you can find any number of good local gunsmiths who can do an accuracy job, but in those days that wasn't true. Four names came up most often: Clark, Dinan, Giles, and Shockey. Most of you probably know of the legendary Jim Clark, but the others may well be strangers. And at about the same time there were a few other 'smiths making names for themselves, but whose guns didn't show up in my circles.

I must confess a somewhat provincial attitude about this, but there was no doubt in my mind that Air Force guns — especially those built by Bob Day — were the best of all. But I had to grudgingly admit that some of the civilian guns were pretty good. Honesty compels me to mention that the Army and Marine Corps built pistols too. Over the years, I've accumulated examples of guns that were made by some of these pioneers and it has been enlightening to go back and study them again.

With apologies in advance, because I know I'll miss some, let's make a list: F. Bob Chow, James E. Clark, Alton S. Dinan, John E. Giles, Frank Pachmayr, R.L. Shockey and Armand Swenson. I do

Continued on page 104



Armand Swenson

By Jim Gardner

As a young man, I was given a treasured gift by a family friend. Bob Farnsworth recognized my interest in shooting and presented me with an edition of *The Gun Digest*. It was filled with wonderful information on all manner of firearms, both vintage and new. For some reason, I was drawn to a very brief review and photo of a 1911 pistol extensively customized by Armand Swenson. I read those words over and over, and spent hours studying the custom work shown in the photo. Little did I realize that 25 years later, I would have the privilege of knowing Swenson.

Swenson was well known as "Mr. .45," but he was a remarkable craftsman and his creative talents were not limited solely to semiauto pistols. I had the pleasure of inspecting a number of custom rifles he had built in the '30s, and the craftsmanship was as fine as that of anyone before or since.

Swenson lived a fascinating life. He worked on the last steam-powered mail boat to sail Lake Tahoe, was a professional boxer ("Before I knew better," he admitted), and designed large ocean-going yachts and race winning hydro-foil boats. Most of all he was a kind, generous man and a master of the "sea story."

I can still hear Armand when, after having been interrupted by someone who



Armand Swenson checking the alignment of a freshly installed front sight.



Two views of a "Swensonized" Colt Gold Cup. The slide and barrel have been shortened, and the pistol features S&W K-sights, Swenson's signature hard-chrome finish and 60 degree checkering. The latter is very unusual for a Swenson gun.



wanted to shake his hand and say hello, he would resume our conversation with: "Now what lie was I telling you Laddie?" We would often meet at a local practical match and many were the times that I paid the match entry fee but never fired a round. It was simply too much fun sharing stories with Swenson to be bothered with shooting.

The majority of Swenson's work focused on the 1911 and Browning Hi-Power pistols. While he could build a tight shooting bullseye gun with the best, his specialty was building fightin' guns. His most requested features were all external: beautiful hand checkering, usually 30 lpi; his custom narrow-arched mainspring housing; flared and lowered ejection port; magazine well bevel; texturing on the top of the slide and tasteful French borders engraved into the slide flats. The most distinctive modifications were the squared and checkered trigger guard and the installation of S&W "K-sights." Perhaps Swenson's most lasting contribution to the combat auto was his development and production of the ambidextrous thumb safety.

Few innovations are really new, and I won't try to tell you that no one ever built an ambi-safety before Swenson. What Armand did however was to develop a producible design, patent the idea, and go through the long and arduous process of having the moulds made for the first commercial production. If you have an ambi-safety, regardless of what name may be stamped on it, you can thank Swenson for it.

Swenson's most popular features may have been external, but I've yet to run across a Swenson gun that is less than 100 percent reliable. I have also inspected some of his accurized pistols that contain



This late ambi-safety is stamped "A.D. Swenson Fallbrook, Calif." Early versions were marked with a Gardena, Calif. address.

some of the most remarkable, ingenious modifications designed to improve accuracy. Much of Swenson's work was done in the days when there were no commercial match grade components available and it took real inventiveness to modify existing components to improve performance.

Swenson had a soft spot in his heart for our men in uniform and always gave servicemen's guns top priority. I once asked him about a detail I had noticed in his work. When installing S&W K-sights on his early guns, Swenson completely filled the existing dovetail so as to make it invisible. On later guns, I noticed that the dovetail filler was vertically serrated to make it stand out. When I asked him about this, he told me that he had made this change after a

report from a GI in Vietnam.

It seems that this soldier had damaged the blade of the S&W sight, thus putting his Swenson .45 out of action. Armand made the change so that: "If one of my boys has this problem, any armorer should be able to remove the broken sight, drift out the filler, and replace it with a regular service rear sight." Swenson was adamant that the pistols he built to safeguard the lives of "his boys" should be as tough as the men using them.

Swenson was a very special individual. He brought more creativeness and ingenuity to the pistolsmithing game than any of our current very skillful practitioners. If you own a "Swensonized" pistol, you are fortunate.



Swenson's work was often featured in American Handgunner and GUNS magazines. This Swensonized Government Model is surrounded by special shop-made cutters and prototype safeties from Armand's shop.





**Dinan-built .38
Special Kit gun.**



Giles



Shockey



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PIONEERS

Continued from page 101

not have guns from Chow or Pachmayr to look at today, but I've got one or more from the rest. Swenson was a large influence on the West Coast. See the sidebar.

When I was a youngster, I remember seeing Bob Chow's little ad that ran every month in *The American Rifleman* and I've spoken to shooters who visited his San Francisco shop. His reputation was that of a first-rate gunsmith.

I met Jim Clark way back in the late '50s, and by then he was well established primarily as a builder of .38 Special conversions. Clark did more than anyone else to popularize Supers, although he credited Howard Peters and A.E. Berdon with the basic development. Today's shooter probably thinks of IPSC when he hears .38 Super, but what Clark did was to convert a .38 Super Colt to shoot the .38 Special match wadcutter load. There was something more than a little challenging to get a rimmed cartridge to work in an autoloader. Clark accomplished this with a modified barrel and magazine. He stated that conversions accounted for as much as 75 percent of his work until the bowling pin and IPSC craze began in the '70s.

One of the innovations usually credited to Clark was the "long slide". Here, a 1-inch addition was welded onto the slide. The extra length of the slide allowed a 6-inch barrel and really changed how the gun felt. While many assumed that the longer barrel improved accuracy, I've never seen much to suggest that. But to the shooter it certainly seems to be true. This is because of the longer sight radius, which does lead to more precise sight alignment. It was my good fortune to count Jim Clark as a friend, and over the years we hunted together a few times and would always spend an hour or two shooting the breeze at the SHOT Show.

Alton S. Dinan ran a shop in Caanan, Conn., and was one of the names I always heard mentioned among the other prominent pistolsmiths of the time. My knowledge of him comes mainly from examination of two guns in my collection and a small mention in *The American Rifleman*. The workmanship on those two guns was very good.

Of the men included here, John Giles was probably the one about whom I heard the most. He had a novel sight of his own manufacture and led the way in the use of slide ribs and extended front sights. Again I have two guns to study — a .45 and a .38 wadcutter conversion — and they show both the very best and worst workmanship. The way Giles fitted slide to frame was superb and without flaw, but the fit between barrel lugs and slide-stop


pin is almost non-existent. I believe the guns I have were built in the early '60s. It's hard to tell how much they've been shot but there's evidence of considerable use. There is absolutely no wobble in the slide fit and the rails are nicely polished with wear along the entire length. This is silent testimony to very careful fitting.

Perhaps the most innovative of the pistols I've got to work with is one built by R.L. Shockey of El Reno, Okla. He is one of the people who were actively working on Government Model accuracy before World War II. Sadly though, there isn't much documentation of that and the features of the pistol seen here came much later.

Shockey made an odd-looking weight that attached to the dust cover, but the most unusual modification can't be seen. Shockey patented an "Accuracy Improver and Recoil Reducer" that most of us called a mousetrap. A spring and roller arrangement was attached to the recoil spring plug and the theory was that the tension of the spring would provide further lockup to the barrel and the roller — as the barrel went back in recoil would slow things down a little and alter the felt recoil a little. The workmanship on the Shockey pistol is very good.

Collector's Sleepers

In a way, I'm surprised that more people don't collect these older accurized pistols. One reason is that it isn't always possible to identify who did the work and there are plenty of nice guns out there that were built by people we've never heard of. Not all the big names marked their guns. Sometimes you'll get lucky and have something like an invoice or other paper. Clark marked his on the inside of the slide, as did Shockey. None of the Giles or Dinan guns I remember have markings on the frame or slide, but most of the Giles guns had his distinctive sights or rib, which provide easy identification. Many of the Dinan guns I've seen used a barrel hushing that was marked "Dinan". Most Swenson guns carry his tidy little stamp either inside or on the slide.

There's another point — some of these can be absolute bargains for a shooter. If you look at the current prices for custom guns, you know that it's not unusual for prices to be over \$2,000 — sometimes far over. So while an older pistol won't have some of the fancy bells and whistles we see today, it won't carry the same sort of price tag either. And there's one thing the new guns won't do — that is shoot better. The principles of accurizing that are standard today are just exactly the same as those laid down 50 years ago by some of these pioneers. So if you hear some new guy claim that he invented this or developed that, be sure to look up to see that flock of pigs flying overhead. 



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HUNTING

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some attention to mental control. Of course hunting is exciting, but the type of excitement that results in a shot of adrenalin to pump up your blood pressure and cause the heart to start pounding is one of your worst enemies. Maintain a calm emotional balance and do the job that needs to be done. Remember the basics of sight alignment, trigger control and focus on getting off a good, accurate shot.

Just jumping into hunting deer if you haven't been around them much often leads to the "buck fever" excitement situation that results in misses and an excitement level that can become dangerous to fellow hunters. Often an excited individual sees what he wants to see and what is not actually there. A bush being pushed aside by another hunter can in his mind become a huge buck.

Hunting preserves are good places to gain field experience in seeing and evaluating animals. In most preserves there is no pressure on the hunter to shoot. Seeing animals enables the new hunter to get over the excitement and thrill of finding an animal. Guides are usually experienced and willing to help you. A wide variety of animals are available to hunt. Russian Boar is near the top of the list and provides a good hunt in most places. Prepared properly, the meat is certainly edible.

Setting Limits

I imagine that even in the time period when David slew Goliath with a smooth round rock from his sling that guys were bragging about how far away they could hit something. It's still that way today, only the slings and rocks have become modern handguns and rifles. In my mind, hunting and long range shooting are two separate sports. The first deals with the skill of the hunter. The second the skill of the individual as a shooter. The first deals with the humane harvesting of an animal — the latter doesn't.

What is long range is a fair question. For a beginner who has little or no control over his mental state of excitement, a standing animal at 10 feet might be too far with any combination of firearm and ammo. Street combat statistics reveal a lot of misses at ranges even shorter than 10 feet. For an experienced hunter — warm and cozy in a blind, with a good rest and with an iron-sighted revolver, a 75-yard shot may be his maximum. Add a good scope along with practice in its use and he may stretch his effective range to 100 or 125 yards. The same hunter with a hot cartridge in a scoped single shot pistol may be capable of shooting at 200 yards under the same conditions. Change the conditions and this equation changes completely. A responsible hunter may also not take a shot if he is cold to the bone and shaking him-

self to pieces. Nor will he shoot if physical exertion has his heart beating like a trip hammer. A responsible hunter will take the shot only when he encounters a situation where he is mentally confident that his abilities are up to the challenge.

Knowing the anatomy of the animal hunted is essential. Generally, it is optimal for the bullet to pass through the animal at a level 1/3 of the way up the body above the lower line of the body. Angle shots from front or rear must be directed to make the bullet pass through the center of the chest cavity. Shooting from an elevated position or at an elevated target requires the shot placement to be adjusted according to the angle presented. For example — if you are in a tree stand and a deer is standing broadside at a downward angle of 45 degrees and you hit him at a point 1/3 of the way up from the bottom of the body, the shot will not penetrate enough of the vital area to result in a clean kill. In this case, for the bullet to pass through the maximum amount of vital area, an aiming point 1/3 down from the top of the back may provide the proper bullet passage. Instead of being broadside the animal may present an angle that will require adjustment of the aiming point. A common sense approach to the problem is to remember the bullet should penetrate the maximum amount of the center of the chest as is possible.

A very common error on the part of the hunter is to forget to look closely enough or being unable to determine if the animal is really standing broadside or is actually at an angle. If the animal is facing toward you slightly, a shot aimed to hit just at the back of the leg may only clip one lung, resulting in a long and difficult recovery. Move the aiming point six inches further forward to the front edge of the shoulder and the result will normally effect a much faster recovery of the animal. The bottom line is that you must see the animal not as a flat two dimensional target, but in three dimensions. Establish where the center of the vital area is in relation to the animal's position — be it quartering away from you, towards you, above or below your position — and you will then know where the proper aiming point is.

The Responsibility Is Yours

You are the only one who can determine if the animal is too far to shoot at. Practice on animal targets primarily designed for bow hunters is the best thing I can recommend. Start out placing them in the open. Then graduate to setting them in the woods or in tall weeds or whatever setting you are likely to encounter in your hunting. You will soon see that iron sights block out a large portion of the animal at relatively short range, while a low powered scope will provide a precise aiming point at far greater distances which results in a much

Continued on page 110

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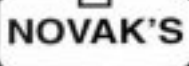
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Continued from page 107

greater chance of making a successful shot. While iron sights provide wonderful accuracy on the range, when used in the field at unknown distances and on animated targets, they fall down miserably as distances exceed 50 yards. If you look at an animal over the sights and you are not absolutely confident that you can make the shot — you are better off not taking it. A scope will often show you branches in your line of fire that might deflect your bullet that cannot be seen with the naked eye. When you look at the shot and you know you can make it — that's the time to shoot.

Shooting position is very important. If you are in a strained position you are unlikely to shoot well. If you are shooting from a blind or tree stand, practice a comfortable way of shooting and plan where you can and cannot shoot. If possible, use a rest to steady yourself when practical. However, don't think you will always have a rest in the field. Practice offhand, sitting, standing while leaning your forearm against a tree and any other practical way of shooting in your area. Make a habit of evaluating your surroundings in the field and choosing your spot to stand and watch an area. Predetermine where you can take a shot and where you must pass one up. In the excitement of the moment, what looks like an open shooting lane where that big buck just appeared may, if evaluated calmly beforehand, contain enough small branches to make it nearly impossible to get a bullet to him. By having carefully examined your hunting location in advance and planning what areas offer good shooting access, you'll have the confidence to wait until he moves to a clear area. The result will be a rack on the wall instead of the possibility of a lost animal.

As a handgun hunter, you have stepped up to the challenge of hunting in a more difficult fashion. Only you can determine when your skills have evolved to the point that you are ready to take to the field. For a self evaluation of "am I good enough," try shooting 6-inch diameter discs at varying and unknown ranges. If 25 yards is the limit of your ability to hit such a target every time, then 25 yards is your hunting range limit, and you must hunt accordingly. Seldom will a system combination that includes a revolver be found that will consistently stay on the 6-inch disc at 100 yards from field positions. The system of course is the whole nine yards — gun, ammo, optics and most important of all — you. 

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NEW GENT'S

Continued from page 51

scales are lightweight aluminum with a striking Imperial Green Almite finish. The liners are lightly satin-finished and offer a nice contrast to the scales. This is a liner-lock design with fine notching on the leaf along the thumb detent area for a surer grip when releasing the blade.

The 3.2-inch blade is of VG-10 stainless steel with a long V-grind that extends its entire width save for a tasteful false grind along its spine. The blade on the model shown is fully serrated to within one-half inch of the tip and is delivered with a razor-sharp serrated edge in the Spyderco tradition, but a plain edge is also available. A reversible 2-inch pocket clip graces the handle's backside.

The fit and finish of the Lum Chinese folder is impeccable. The beveled edges of the handle are smooth and comfortable, the action strong and positive. The knife is unexpectedly light in weight for its size, which is about as large as you'd like a gent's folder to be. A smaller version would compliment this current model nicely. If you're looking for something out of the mainstream but don't want to give up good old fashioned utility, the Spyderco Lum Chinese model is for you. Suggested retail is \$175.95.



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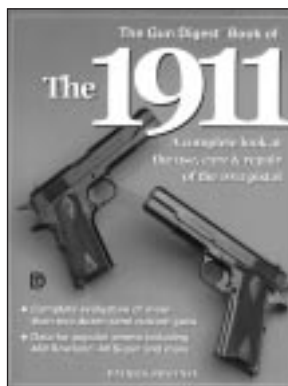
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REVOLVERS

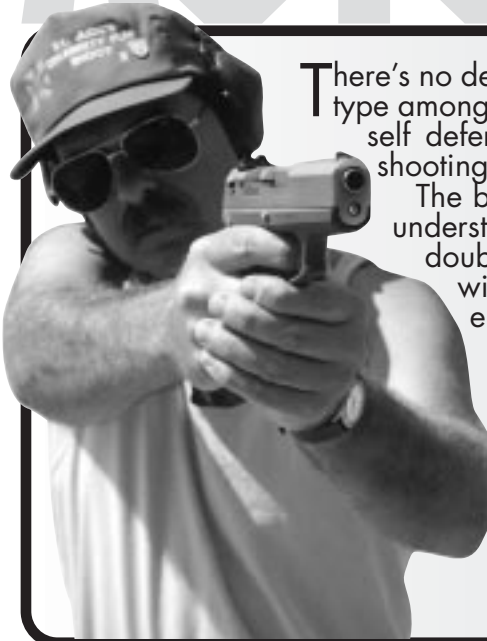
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VARIOUS

This intriguing category includes replicas of 19th century derringers as well as highly specialized competition and hunting pistols. Extremely versatile, several of these designs accept interchangeable barrels in a staggering variety of calibers and lengths.

AUTOMATICS



There's no denying that the semiautomatic pistol has become the most popular type among modern shooters. While usually thought of as a good design for self defense, many autopistols are extremely well suited to competitive shooting and hunting as well as informal recreational use.

The biggest factor to choosing the best semiauto pistol for your use is understanding the three main action types — single-action, traditional double-action, and double-action only. Your local firearms pro shop will help you answer any questions you have regarding the differences between these options.

Bear in mind that semiauto pistols require a slightly greater investment of effort on your part to learn their correct safe operation and necessary maintenance.

The *American Handgunner* selection guide will show you the most common uses for each type of firearm. Self defense (SD), recreation (R), competitive shooting (C), or hunting (H). While most firearms can be used for all of these purposes with greater or lesser success, the selection guide will show you the most common uses for each model.

TYPE SD R C H

E.A.A. IZH35

Caliber: 22LR
Capacity: 5 rounds
Barrel Length: 6"
Weight: 2.3 pounds
Grips: Walnut target style
Sights: Fully adjustable target sights
Misc: Integral grip safety; manual trigger bar disconnect safety; detachable scope mount; made in Russia
Price: \$539



TYPE C

ED BROWN CLASSIC CUSTOM

Caliber: 45 ACP
Capacity: 7 rounds
Barrel Length: 5"
Finish: Low gloss, glass bead frame; polished slide
Grips: Hogue exotic checkered wood
Sights: Bo-Mar adjustable rear, fixed front
Misc: Ambidextrous safety, commander style slotted hammer
Price: \$2,895



TYPE SD R C

ED BROWN KOBRA

Caliber: 45 ACP
Capacity: 7 rounds
Barrel Length: 5"
Finish: Non-glare matte finish
Grips: Hogue exotic checkered wood
Sights: Novak night sights, LMC low mount rear, dovetail front
Misc: Grip safety, extra dehorning, commander style slotted hammer
Price: \$1,795



TYPE SD R C

ED BROWN KOBRA CARRY

Caliber: 45 ACP
Capacity: 7 rounds
Barrel Length: 4.25"
Finish: Non-glare matte finish
Grips: Hogue exotic checkered wood
Sights: Novak night sights, LMC low mount rear, dovetail front
Misc: Grip safety, extra dehorning, round-butt modification
Price: \$1,995



TYPE SD R C

ACCU-TEK MODEL AT-32 & AT-380

Caliber: 32 or 380
Capacity: 5 rounds
Barrel Length: 3"
Weight: 20 to 26 ounces
Grips: Black combat
Sights: Windage adjustable
Misc: External hammer; manual thumb safety; firing pin and trigger disconnect
Price: \$221



TYPE SD R

ACCU-TEK MODEL HC-380

Caliber: 380
Capacity: 10 rounds
Barrel Length: 2.75"
Weight: 26 ounces
Grips: Black checkered
Sights: Windage adjustable, blade front
Misc: External hammer; manual thumb safety; firing pin and trigger disconnect; satin stainless
Price: \$231



TYPE SD R

ACCU-TEK MODEL BL-9 & XL-9

Caliber: 9mm Parabellum
Capacity: 5 rounds
Barrel Length: 3"
Weight: 22 ounces (Model BL-9) to 24 ounces (Model XL-9)
Grips: Black pebble
Sights: Fixed (Model BL-9) or 3-dot windage adjustable (Model XL-9)
Misc: Double Action Only (BL-9 and XL-9)
Price: \$232 to \$248



TYPE SD R

AUTO-ORDNANCE 1911A1

Caliber: 45 ACP
Capacity: 7 rounds
Barrel Length: 5"
Weight: 39 ounces
Grips: Checkered plastic with medallion
Sights: Adjustable rear, blade front
Misc: Available in blue or Parkerized finish, Deluxe model has 3-dot sights and textured rubber wraparound grips
Price: \$447 to \$462



TYPE SD R C

BAER 1911 CUSTOM CARRY AUTO PISTOL

Caliber: 45 ACP
Capacity: 7 or 10 rounds
Barrel Length: 5"
Weight: 37 ounces
Grips: Checkered Cocobolo
Sights: Baer improved ramp-style dovetailed front; Novak low-mount rear
Misc: Available in Standard or Comanche length, in blued or stainless; double serrated slide (full size only)
Price: \$1,640 to \$1,995 (Comanche, stainless, aluminum frame)



TYPE SD R C

BAER 1911 CONCEPT I, II, III, IV AUTO PISTOL

Caliber: 45 ACP
Capacity: 7 rounds
Barrel Length: 5"
Weight: 37 ounces
Grips: Checkered rosewood
Sights: Dovetail front; Bo-Mar deluxe low-mount rear
Misc: Baer beavertail grip safety; checkered slide stop; tuned extractor; extended ejector; deluxe hammer and sear; Concept III has forged stainless steel frame with blued steel slide
Price: \$1,390 (Concept I);
\$1,390 (Concept II with Baer adjustable sight);
\$1,520 (Concept III);
\$1,499 (Concept IV with Baer adjustable rear sight)



TYPE SD R C

BAER 1911 CONCEPT S.R.P. PISTOL

Caliber: 45 ACP
Capacity: 8 rounds
Barrel Length: 5"
Weight: 37 ounces
Grips: Checkered Cocobolo
Sights: Tritium night sights, front and rear
Misc: Similar to FBI contract gun but uses Baer-forged steel frame; all parts Mag-na-fluxed
Price: \$2,240 (Government or Comanche length)



TYPE SD R C

BAER 1911 NATIONAL MATCH HARDBALL PISTOL

Caliber: 45 ACP
Capacity: 7 rounds
Barrel Length: 5"
Weight: 37 ounces
Grips: Checkered Cocobolo
Sights: Baer dovetail front with undercut post; low-mount Bo-Mar rear with hidden leaf
Misc: Forged steel frame, double serrated slide and barrel with stainless brushing; lowered, flared ejection port; polished feed ramp, throated barrel
Price: \$1,335



TYPE SD R C

BAER 1911 PREMIER II AUTO PISTOL

Caliber: 9x23, 38 Super, 400 Cor-Bon, 45 ACP
Capacity: 7 or 10 rounds
Barrel Length: 5"
Weight: 37 ounces
Grips: Checkered rosewood, double diamond pattern
Sights: Baer dovetailed front; low-mount Bo-Mar rear
Misc: Deluxe Commander hammer and sear; aluminum speed trigger with 4 pound pull; extended ambidextrous safety
Price: \$1,428 (blued) to \$1,558 (stainless); \$1,595 (6" model, blued)



TYPE SD R C

BAER ULTIMATE MASTER COMBAT PISTOL

Caliber: 9x23, 38 Super, 400 Cor-Bon, 45 ACP (others available)
Capacity: 10 rounds
Barrel Length: 5", 6"
Weight: 37 ounces
Grips: Checkered rosewood
Sights: Baer dovetail front; low-mount Bo-Mar rear with hidden leaf
Misc: Full-house competition gun; Baer triple port tapered cone compensator
Price: \$2,440 to \$2,690 (Compensated with Baer optics mount)



TYPE SD R C

BERETTA U22 NEOS

Caliber: 22 LR
Capacity: 10 rounds
Barrel Length: 4.5" and 6"
Weight: 31.7 ounces and 36.2 ounces
Grips: Plastic
Sights: Fully adjustable target rear sight
Misc: Integral accessory rail; vertical grip configuration
Price: \$256 to \$299



TYPE R

BERETTA 92/96 VERTEC

Caliber: 9mm, 40 S&W
Capacity: 10 rounds
Barrel Length: 4.7"
Weight: 32.2 ounces
Grips: Plastic
Sights: Adjustable rear, removable front sight
Misc: Integral accessory rail; vertical grip configuration
Price: \$712 to \$762



TYPE SD R C

BERETTA 9000 SERIES

Caliber: 40 S&W, 9mm
Capacity: 10 rounds
Barrel Length: 3.5"
Weight: 25.7, 26.8 or 27.5 ounces
Grips: Plastic
Sights: 3-dot
Misc: Type F models are available in double and single action and have a hammer decocking feature. Type D models are DAO
Price: \$551



TYPE SD R

BERETTA BRIGADIER 92FS, 96

Caliber: 9mm (92FS) or 40 S&W (96)
Capacity: 10 rounds
Barrel Length: 4.9"
Weight: 34 ounces (92FS) to 36 ounces (96)
Grips: Rubber, checkered
Sights: 3-dot dovetailed to slide, adjustable for windage
Price: \$731 to \$771



TYPE SD R C

BERETTA COUGAR MODEL 8000/8040/8045/8357

Caliber: 9mm (8000), 40 S&W (8040), 45 ACP (8045), .357 SIG (8357)
Capacity: 8 rounds (8045) or 10 rounds (8000/8040/8357)
Barrel Length: 3.5"
Weight: 27.6 ounces (Mini Cougar 8000/8040) to 33.5 ounces
Grips: Checkered plastic, walnut optional
Sights: Blade front, rear adjustable for windage (3-dot system)
Misc: Slide-mounted safety; exposed hammer; matte black finish
Price: \$709 to \$764



TYPE SD R C

BERETTA BOBCAT MODEL 21

Caliber: 22 LR or 25 ACP
Capacity: 7 rounds (22 LR) or 8 rounds (25 ACP)
Barrel Length: 2.5"
Weight: 11.8 ounces (22LR) or 11.5 ounces (25 ACP)
Grips: Plastic or walnut
Sights: Fixed
Misc: Blue, matte, or stainless finish
Price: \$252 to \$307



TYPE SD R

BERETTA TOMCAT MODEL 3032

Caliber: 32 ACP
Capacity: 7 rounds
Barrel Length: 2.4"
Weight: 14.5 ounces to 16.9 ounces (Titanium model)
Grips: Black plastic, checkered
Sights: Fixed blade front, drift adjustable rear
Misc: Tip-up barrel for direct chamber loading/unloading; Polished, matte, blue or Titanium finish
Price: \$340 (matte), \$370 (blue), \$418 (stainless) and \$572 (Titanium)



TYPE SD R

BERETTA CHEETAH MODEL 80 SERIES

Caliber: 22 LR or 380 ACP
Capacity: 22 LR: 7 rounds; 380 ACP: 8 rounds or 10 rounds
Barrel Length: 3.8" (84 and 87 Cheetah), 4.4" (86 Cheetah), 5.9" (87 Target)
Weight: 20.1 oz. (87), 21.9 oz. (85), 23.3 oz. (84 and 86), 40.9 oz. (87 Target)
Grips: Black plastic or optional wood
Sights: Drift adjustable rear, fixed front
Misc: Various models (84, 85, 87) with slightly varied features available
Price: \$589 to \$669



TYPE SD R

BERETTA CHEETAH MODEL 86

Caliber: 380 ACP
Capacity: 8 rounds
Barrel Length: 4.4"
Weight: 23.3 ounces
Grips: Walnut
Sights: Adjustable rear, fixed front sights
Misc: Features a tip-up barrel for first-round loading, Bruniton finish
Price: \$591



TYPE SD R

BERETTA MODEL 92FS

Caliber: 9mm
Capacity: 10 rounds
Barrel Length: 4.9"
Weight: 34.4 ounces
Grips: Checkered plastic or rubber (wood optional)
Sights: Adjustable rear, blade front sights
Misc: Squared trigger guard, matte or stainless finish
Price: \$676 to \$2,082 (470th Anniversary Edition)



TYPE SD R C

BERETTA MODEL 96

Caliber: 40 S&W
Capacity: 10 rounds
Barrel Length: 4.9"
Weight: 34 ounces
Grips: Checkered plastic
Sights: Fixed or 3-dot sights
Misc: Similar to Model 92
Price: \$676 to \$734



TYPE SD R C

BERETTA MODEL 950 JETFIRE

Caliber: 25 ACP
Capacity: 8 rounds
Barrel Length: 2.4"
Weight: 9.9 ounces
Grips: Checkered plastic or walnut
Sights: Fixed
Misc: Tip-up barrel (similar to Model 21), matte or stainless finish
Price: \$226 to \$267



TYPE SD R

BERSA THUNDER 380, 380 DELUXE

Caliber: 380 ACP
Capacity: 7 or 9 rounds (Thunder 380 Deluxe)
Barrel Length: 3.5"
Weight: 22 to 25.75 ounces (Thunderer)
Grips: Black polymer
Sights: Drift adjustable rear, fixed front
Misc: Double action; blue or nickel finish
Price: \$249 to \$292 (Thunder 380 Deluxe blue)



TYPE SD R

BROWNING BDA-380 DA

Caliber: 380 ACP
Capacity: 10 rounds
Barrel Length: 3.2"
Weight: 32 ounces
Grips: Walnut with medallion
Sights: Adjustable rear, blade front sights
Price: \$564 (blue) to \$607 (nickel)



TYPE S D R

BROWNING BUCK MARK 22

Caliber: 22 LR
Capacity: 10 rounds
Barrel Length: 5.5"
Weight: 32 ounces
Grips: Black molded plastic (Plus laminated wood grips)
Sights: Adjustable rear, ramp front
Price: \$265 (blue), \$312 (nickel), \$324 (Buck Mark Plus)



TYPE R C H

BROWNING BUCK MARK SILHOUETTE

Caliber: 22 LR
Capacity: 10 rounds
Barrel Length: 9.875" or 9.9"
Weight: 53 ounces
Grips: Walnut
Sights: Pro Target Cup rear, hooded adjustable blade front
Price: \$448



TYPE R C H

BROWNING BUCK MARK TARGET 5.5

Caliber: 22 LR
Capacity: 10 rounds
Barrel Length: 5.5"
Weight: 35.5 ounces
Grips: Walnut with thumbrest
Sights: Adjustable front and rear
Price: \$425 to \$477 (Gold and Nickel models)



TYPE R C H

BROWNING BUCK MARK VARMINT

Caliber: 22 LR
Capacity: 10 rounds
Barrel Length: 9.875" or 9.9"
Weight: 48 ounces
Grips: Walnut
Sights: No open sights, full-length scope base
Price: \$403



TYPE R C H

BROWNING HI-POWER

Caliber: 9mm or 40 S&W
Capacity: 10 rounds
Barrel Length: 4.75"
Weight: 32 ounces
Grips: Hand checkered walnut or black Polyamide
Sights: Fixed or adjustable rear, fixed front
Misc: Magazine safety, fixed rear sights available
Price: \$579 (Mark III, fixed sights, ambidextrous safety);
\$615 (Fixed sights, walnut grips);
\$668 (Adjustable sights, walnut grips);
\$684 (Silver chrome finish, adj. sights, Pachmayr grips)



TYPE SD R C

CALICO M-110

Caliber: 22 LR
Capacity: 100 round rotary magazine
Barrel Length: 6"
Weight: 3.7 pounds (loaded)
Grips: Molded plastic
Sights: Fixed rear notch, adjustable post front sight
Misc: Aluminum alloy frame; flash suppressor; ambi safety; helical feed magazine
Price: \$432



TYPE R

COLT DEFENDER

Caliber: 45
Capacity: 7 rounds
Barrel Length: 3"
Grips: Wraparound rubber finger groove grips
Sights: Fixed
Finish: Brushed stainless
Misc: Extended thumb safety and upswept beavertail with palm swell
Price: \$773



TYPE SD R

COLT GOLD CUP

Caliber: 45 ACP
Capacity: 8 rounds
Barrel Length: 5"
Weight: 39 ounces
Grips: Black wraparound
Sights: Dovetail front, Bomar-style rear
Misc: Stainless frame and round top slide
Price: \$1,116



TYPE SD R C

COLT 1991 SERIES

Caliber: 45 ACP
Capacity: 7 rounds
Barrel Length: 4.25" (Commander) or 5" (Gov't 1991)
Grips: Checkered rubber composite
Sights: Fixed
Finish: Matte black or matte stainless
Price: \$645 (blue), \$800 (stainless)



TYPE SD R C

COLT XSE SERIES

Caliber: 45
Capacity: 8 rounds
Barrel Length: 4.25" (Commander and lightweight Commander) or 5" (Gov't)
Grips: Checkered, double diamond, rosewood
Sights: Fixed
Finish: Stainless brushed
Misc: Adjustable 2-cut aluminum trigger
Price: \$950



TYPE SD R C

COONAN 357 MAGNUM & 41 MAGNUM PISTOLS

Caliber: 357 Mag. or 41 Mag.
Capacity: 7 rounds
Barrel Length: 5"
Weight: 42 ounces
Grips: Smooth walnut
Sights: Interchangeable ramp front, rear adjustable
Price: \$735 to \$1,014 (6" compensated barrel)



TYPE SD R

CZ 75 B, 75 BD & 85

Caliber: 9mm Para., 40 S&W
Capacity: 10 rounds
Barrel Length: 3.9" (75 B Compact), 4.7"
Weight: 32 to 35 ounces
Grips: Checkered plastic
Sights: Square post front, rear adjustable; 3-dot system
Price: \$419 to \$526



TYPE SD R C

CZ 83 B

Caliber: 32 ACP, 380 ACP or 9mm Makarov
Capacity: 10 rounds
Barrel Length: 3.8"
Weight: 26 ounces
Grips: Checkered plastic
Sights: Removable square post front, rear adjustable; 3-dot system
Price: \$378



TYPE SD R

CZ 100

Caliber: 9mm Para. or 40 S&W
Capacity: 10 rounds
Barrel Length: 3.7"
Weight: 24 ounces
Grips: Grooved polymer
Sights: Blade front with dot, white outline rear drift adjustable
Price: \$432



TYPE SD R C

DAVIS P-32 & P-380

Caliber: 32 ACP and 380 ACP
Capacity: 6 rounds (P-32) and 5 rounds (P-380)
Barrel Length: 2.8"
Weight: 22 ounces
Grips: Laminated wood (P-32) or black composition (P-380)
Sights: Fixed
Misc: Black Teflon or chrome finish
Price: \$88 (P-32) and \$98 (P-380)



TYPE SD R

E.A.A. WITNESS DA

Caliber: 38 Super, 9mm, 40 S&W or 45 ACP
Capacity: 10 rounds
Barrel Length: 4.5"
Weight: 35 ounces
Grips: Checkered rubber
Sights: Adjustable rear, undercut blade front
Misc: Compact models available; blue or chrome finishes available
Price: \$449 to \$489



TYPE SD R C

ENTREPRISE ELITE SERIES

Caliber: 45 ACP
Capacity: 10 rounds
Barrel Length: 3.25", 4.25", 5"
Weight: 36-40 ounces
Grips: Checkered rosewood, double diamond pattern
Sights: Tactical
Misc: Flared ejection port, flat mainspring housing
Price: \$740



TYPE SD R C

ENTREPRISE TACTICAL SERIES

Caliber: 45 ACP
Capacity: 10 rounds
Barrel Length: 3.25", 4.25", 5"
Weight: 36-40 ounces
Grips: Checkered rosewood, double diamond pattern
Sights: Low profile Novak or ghost ring
Misc: Dehorned slide and frame, matte black oxide finish
Price: \$979-\$1,049



TYPE SD R C

ENTREPRISE MEDALIST SERIES

Caliber: 45 ACP, 40 S&W
Capacity: 10 rounds
Barrel Length: 5"
Weight: 40 ounces
Grips: Checkered rosewood, double diamond pattern
Sights: Bo-Mar low mount rear adjustable
Misc: Tighter tolerances and numerous custom features
Price: \$979 add \$120 for .40 S&W caliber



TYPE SD R C

ENTREPRISE TOURNAMENT SHOOTER MODEL (I,II,III)

Caliber: 40 S&W, 45 ACP
Capacity: 10 rounds
Barrel Length: 5", 5.5"(TSM III only), 6" (.45 ACP only)
Weight: 40-44 ounces
Grips: Checkered rosewood and rubber
Sights: Bo-Mar low mount rear adjustable
Misc: Designed for ISPC competition
Price: \$2,000, add \$300 for TSM I, add \$700 for TSM III



TYPE R C

GLOCK 17, 20, 21 & 22

Caliber: 9mm (17), 10mm (20), 45 ACP (21) or 40 S&W (22)
Capacity: 10 rounds
Barrel Length: 4.5"
Weight: 22 ounces (17 and 22), 26 ounces (20), 25 ounces (21)
Grips: Black polymer
Sights: Fixed or adjustable rear; fixed front
Misc: Double action trigger; mechanical firing pin safety
Price: \$616 to \$800



TYPE SD R C

GLOCK 19 & 23

Caliber: 9mm (19) or 40 S&W (23)
Capacity: 10 rounds
Barrel Length: 4"
Weight: 21 ounces
Grips: Synthetic
Sights: Fixed or adjustable rear
Misc: Compact versions of the Glock 17 and 22 also available with ported barrels
Price: \$616 to \$646



TYPE SD R C

GLOCK 26, 27 & 31

Caliber: 9mm, 40 S&W or 357 SIG
Capacity: 9 rounds (40 S&W) or 10 rounds (9mm)
Barrel Length: 3.5"
Weight: 21.8 ounces
Grips: Integral; stippled polymer
Sights: Dot on front blade, fixed or fully adjustable white outline rear
Misc: Mini-Glocks will accept magazines (including high capacity) from the larger, similar caliber Glock models
Price: \$616 to \$644



TYPE SD R

GLOCK 29 & 30

Caliber: 10mm (29) or 45 ACP (30)
Capacity: 10 rounds
Barrel Length: 3.75"
Weight: 24 ounces
Grips: Integral; stippled polymer
Sights: Dot on front, fixed or fully adjustable white outline rear
Misc: Subcompact Glockes will accept magazines (including high capacity) from the larger, similar caliber Glock models
Price: \$668 to \$697



TYPE SD R

HAMMERLI MODEL 208S

Caliber: 22 LR
Capacity: 8 rounds
Barrel Length: 5.9"
Weight: 36.7 ounces
Grips: Walnut with adjustable palm rest
Sights: Blade front, open fully adjustable rear
Misc: Adjustable trigger; imported by SIG Arms, Inc.
Price: \$2,201



TYPE R C

HAMMERLI MODEL 280 TARGET PISTOL

Caliber: 22 LR, 32 S&W Long WC
Capacity: 6 rounds (22 LR) or 5 rounds (32 S&W)
Barrel Length: 4.5"
Weight: 34.6 ounces (22LR) or 41.8 ounces (32 S&W)
Grips: Match style walnut with stippling, adjustable palm shelf
Sights: Interchangeable match, micrometer adjustable
Misc: Interchangeable trigger is adjustable for pull weight, take-up weight, let-off, and length; comes with interchangeable metal or carbon fiber counterweights; imported by SIG Arms, Inc.
Price: \$1,643 (22 LR) to \$1,853 (32 S&W)



TYPE R C

HECKLER & KOCH MARK 23

Caliber: 45 ACP
Capacity: 10 rounds
Barrel Length: 5.9"
Weight: 42.5 ounces
Grips: Stippled and checkered black polymer
Sights: 3-dot system; optional laser aimer
Misc: Threaded barrel; polygonal bore; single or double action; mechanical recoil reduction system
Price: \$2,444



TYPE SD R C

HECKLER & KOCH P7M8

Caliber: 9mm
Capacity: 8 rounds
Barrel Length: 4.13"
Weight: 29 ounces
Grips: Stippled black plastic
Sights: Adjustable rear, fixed front; 3-dot system
Misc: Unique squeeze cocking system; gas-retarded action; blue finish
Price: \$1,472



TYPE SD R C

HECKLER & KOCH USP COMPACT

Caliber: 45 ACP, .357 SIG, 40 S&W or 9mm
Capacity: 10 rounds
Barrel Length: 3.5" to 3.8" (45 ACP)
Weight: 27.5 ounces (40 S&W) to 26.5 ounces (9mm)
Grips: Stippled black plastic
Sights: Fixed Patridge style, adjustable for windage and elevation; 3-dot system or optional tritium
Misc: Universal mounting grooves for installing accessories
Price: \$786 to \$909



TYPE SD R C

HECKLER & KOCH USP45 & USP45 TACTICAL

Caliber: 45 ACP
Capacity: 10 rounds
Barrel Length: 4.92"
Weight: 2.24 pounds
Grips: Non-slip stippled polymer
Sights: Blade front, rear adjustable
Price: \$1,124



TYPE SD R C

HECKLER & KOCH USP EXPERT

Caliber: 45 ACP or .40 S&W
Capacity: 10 rounds
Barrel Length: 5.20"
Weight: 2.3 pounds
Grips: Synthetic
Sights: Adjustable target
Misc: Has patented recoil reduction system
Price: USP expert \$1,533 USP expert \$1,499



TYPE SD R C

HIGH STANDARD SUPERMATIC CITATION

Caliber: 22 LR
Capacity: 10 rounds
Barrel Length: 5.5"
Weight: 44 ounces
Grips: Checkered hardwood with thumbrest
Sights: Undercut ramp front, rear adjustable
Misc: Push-button barrel takedown system, blue or Parkerized finish, 22 Short conversion kit available (for \$309)
Price: \$468



TYPE R C H

HIGH STANDARD SUPERMATIC CITATION MS

Caliber: 22 LR
Capacity: 10 rounds
Barrel Length: 10"
Weight: 54 ounces
Grips: Checkered walnut with right-hand thumbrest
Sights: RPM sights, fully click-adjustable for windage and elevation
Misc: Comes in a matte blue finish with nickel accents; features push-button barrel takedown system; barrel is drilled and tapped for mounting scopes or optics
Price: \$632



TYPE R C H

HIGH STANDARD SUPERMATIC TROPHY

Caliber: 22 LR
Capacity: 10 rounds
Barrel Length: 5.5" to 7.25"
Weight: 44 ounces
Grips: Checkered hardwood with thumbrest
Sights: Undercut ramp front, rear adjustable
Misc: Push-button barrel takedown system, adjustable trigger pull, blue finish and gold-plated accents; a 22 Short conversion kit is available
Price: \$510 (5.5") to \$650 (7.25")



TYPE R C H

HIGH STANDARD VICTOR

Caliber: 22 LR
Capacity: 10 rounds
Barrel Length: 4.5" to 5.5"
Weight: 46 ounces
Grips: Checkered hardwood with thumbrest
Sights: Undercut ramp front, rear adjustable
Misc: Comes in either a blue or Parkerized finish with gold accents; features a push-button barrel takedown system, adjustable trigger, and drilled and tapped receiver; 22 Short conversion kit available; 4.5" is scope base model only
Price: \$532 to \$591



TYPE R C H

KAHR ARMS K9/40

Caliber: 9mm Para or 40 S&W
Capacity: 7 rounds (9mm) or 6 rounds (40 S&W)
Barrel Length: 3.5"
Weight: 25 ounces
Grips: Wraparound, textured soft polymer
Sights: Blade front, rear drift adjustable; bar-dot combat style
Misc: Double action only; matte black finish; all steel; also available in nickel with wood grips
Price: \$538 to \$836 (Duo-Tone with tritium night sights)



TYPE SD R

KIMBER PRO CARRY

Caliber: 45 ACP or 40 S&W
Capacity: 7 (45 ACP) or 8 rounds (S&W)
Barrel Length: 4"
Weight: 28.3 ounces
Grips: Black synthetic, high beavertail grip safety
Sights: Low profile blended combat sights; dovetail mounted
Misc: Match grade trigger group; beveled magazine well and slide serrations; lowered and flared ejection port; tactical ejector; bushingless bull barrel, aluminum frame
Price: \$773 to \$808 (matte blue); \$845 to \$881 (stainless steel slide); \$1,142 (CDP Series)



TYPE SD R C

KIMBER CUSTOM 1911 PISTOLS

Caliber: 45 ACP or 40 S&W
Capacity: 7 to 10 rounds (depending on caliber and frame)
Barrel Length: 3", 4" and 5"
Weight: 24 to 38 ounces
Grips: Black synthetic; hand-checked rosewood; hand-checked walnut
Sights: Dovetail mounted fixed; adjustable or Tritium 3-dot night sights
Misc: 40 different models available; standard features include match grade barrels and chambers and match grade trigger groups; high beavertail grip safety; Commander-style hammer
Price: \$730 and up; many custom options available



TYPE SD R C

KIMBER POLYMER MODELS

Caliber: 45 ACP
Capacity: 10 round magazine; (14 round available where legal)
Barrel Length: 3", 4" and 5"
Weight: 24 to 34 ounces
Grips: Polymer frame with stainless steel or 7075-T7 aluminum frame insert; impressed positive checkering
Sights: Dovetail mounted, fixed or adjustable
Misc: Stainless steel beavertail grip safety
Price: \$745 to \$1,177



TYPE SD R C

KIMBER ULTRA CARRY

Caliber: 45 ACP or 40 S&W
Capacity: 7 round magazine
Barrel Length: 3"
Weight: 24 ounces (Ultra Ten II) to 25 ounces (single stack)
Grips: Black synthetic
Sights: Dovetail mounted fixed with low profile combat
Misc: Dual captured low-effort spring design for easy operation; accepts all quality Officer's-type magazines
Price: \$808 to \$847 (matte blue); \$886 to \$931 (stainless); \$1,142 (CDP series); \$896 (Ultra Ten II)



TYPE SD R

LLAMA MAX SERIES, MICROMAX, MINIMAX, MINIMAX SUBCOMPACT

Caliber: 9mm, 45, 40 S&W, 32 or 380, Micromax in 380
Capacity: 6, 7 or 8 rounds
Barrel Length: 3.5"
Weight: 23 to 36 ounces
Grips: Checkered rubber or high impact polymer
Sights: 3-dot combat
Misc: Minimax, Micromax, Max models available in matte, chrome or duo-tone finish; extended slide release; distributed by Import Sports Inc.
Price: \$282 to \$350



TYPE SD R

MAGNUM RESEARCH DESERT EAGLE

Caliber: 357 Mag., 44 Mag. or 50 AE
Capacity: 9 rounds (357), 8 rounds (41 and 44) or 7 rounds (50)
Barrel Length: 6" or 10"
Weight: 4 pounds, 6.5 ounces (6"), 4 pounds, 15 ounces (10")
Grips: Plastic, Hogue rubber/wood (optional)
Sights: Fixed combat, Millett adjustable (optional)
Misc: Also available: Custom finishes, chrome, nickel, gold and titanium gold
Price: \$1,199 (6"), \$1,699 (10")



TYPE R C H

MAGNUM RESEARCH BABY EAGLE

Caliber: 9mm, .40 S&W or .45 ACP
Capacity: 10 rounds
Barrel Length: 4.72", 3.7", 3.5"
Weight: Steel- 2 pounds, 6.5 ounces (4.72"), 2 pounds, 4.4 ounces (3.7"), 2 pounds, 1.9 ounces (3.5") Polymer 1 pound, 13.1 ounces (3.7"), 1 pound, 11 ounces (3.5")
Grips: Plastic
Sights: Fixed compact
Misc: Steel frame also available in chrome or titanium gold finishes
Price: \$499 (standard), \$724 (chrome), \$999 (gold)



TYPE SD R C

PARA-ORDNANCE P10

Caliber: 9mm, 40 S&W or 45 ACP
Capacity: 10 rounds
Barrel Length: 3"
Weight: 24 ounces (alloy) or 31 ounces (stainless steel)
Grips: Textured composition
Sights: 3-dot system
Misc: Black or stainless finish available
Price: \$740 to \$799



TYPE SD R

PARA-ORDNANCE P12

Caliber: 45 ACP
Capacity: 10 rounds
Barrel Length: 3.5"
Weight: 26 ounces (alloy) or 34 ounces (stainless steel)
Grips: Black plastic
Sights: Low mount rear, dovetailed front
Misc: Stainless or black finishes available; steel or alloy frames; high capacity magazines available
Price: \$740 to \$799



TYPE SD R C

PARA-ORDNANCE P13

Caliber: 45 ACP
Capacity: 10 rounds
Barrel Length: 4.25"
Weight: 28 ounces (alloy) or 36 ounces (stainless steel)
Grips: Black plastic
Sights: Fixed rear, blade front (3-dot system)
Misc: Alloy, steel or stainless frame; black or stainless finish; high capacity magazines available
Price: \$740 to \$799



TYPE SD R C

PARA-ORDNANCE P14

Caliber: 45 ACP
Capacity: 10 rounds
Barrel Length: 5"
Weight: 31 ounces (alloy) or 40 ounces (stainless steel)
Grips: Black plastic
Sights: Adjustable rear, dovetailed front
Misc: Alloy, stainless or steel frame; black, duotone or stainless finish; high capacity magazines available
Price: \$740 to \$799



TYPE SD R C

PARA-ORDNANCE P16

Caliber: 40 S&W
Capacity: 10 rounds
Barrel Length: 5"
Weight: 40 ounces
Grips: Black plastic
Sights: Adjustable rear, dovetailed front
Misc: Steel or stainless frame; high capacity magazines available; black or stainless finish
Price: \$750 (black) to \$799 (stainless)



TYPE SD R C

PARA-ORDNANCE 7.45 LDA

Caliber: 45 ACP
Capacity: 7 rounds
Barrel Length: 5"
Weight: 39 ounces
Grips: Checkered rosewood standard, black optional
Sights: Adjustable rear
Misc: Available with black carbon steel or stainless frame
Price: \$775



TYPE SD R C

PARA-ORDNANCE 14 LDA, 16 LDA & 18 LDA

Caliber: 45 ACP (14 LDA), 40 S&W (16 LDA) or 9mm (18 LDA)
Capacity: 10 rounds (18 rounds in 18 LDA)
Barrel Length: 5"
Weight: 40 ounces
Grips: Black plastic
Sights: Fixed
Misc: Double action, steel frame and stainless or black finish; Model 18 LDA for law enforcement or military only; high capacity magazines available
Price: \$775 to \$824



TYPE SD R C

PARDINI ARMS MOD SP STANDARD PISTOL & MOD HP CENTERFIRE PISTOL

Caliber: 22 LR (SP) or 32 WC (HP)
Capacity: 5 rounds
Barrel Length: 4.75"
Weight: 38.9 ounces
Grips: Adjustable; stippled walnut match type
Sights: Fully adjustable rear, interchangeable blade front
Misc: Adjustable match trigger; imported by Nygard Precision Products
Price: \$950 (SP) to \$1,050 (FHP)



TYPE R C

PHOENIX ARMS HP 22/25

Caliber: 22 LR (HP 22) or 25 ACP (HP 25)
Capacity: 10 rounds
Barrel Length: 3"
Weight: 20 ounces
Grips: Checkered composition
Sights: Adjustable rear, blade front
Misc: Available in satin nickel or polished blue finish
Price: \$116



TYPE SD R

RUGER 22/45

Caliber: 22 LR
Capacity: 10 rounds
Barrel Length: 4", 4.75" or 5.5" (bull bbl.)
Weight: 28 to 35 ounces
Grips: Synthetic
Sights: Adjustable or fixed rear, blade front
Misc: All blue or stainless steel with fixed or adjustable sights
Price: \$275 to \$359



TYPE R C H

RUGER MARK II STANDARD

Caliber: 22 LR
Capacity: 10 rounds
Barrel Length: 4.75" or 6"
Weight: 35 to 37 ounces
Grips: Checkered composition grip panels
Sights: Fixed, wide blade front, fixed rear
Price: \$289 (blue) to \$379 (stainless)



TYPE R C H

RUGER MARK II TARGET

Caliber: 22 LR
Capacity: 10 rounds
Barrel Length: 5.5", 6.9", 10"
Weight: 42 ounces
Grips: Checkered composition grip panels
Sights: Blade front, micro-click rear
Price: \$349 (blue) to \$445 (stainless)



TYPE R C H

RUGER MARK II GOVERNMENT TARGET

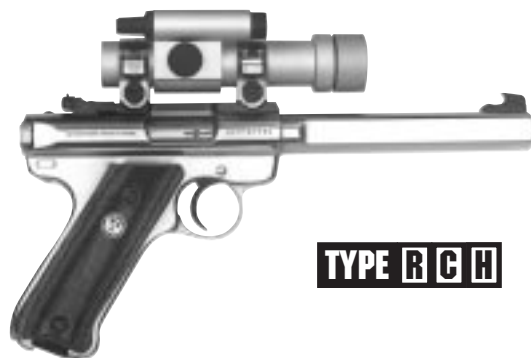
Caliber: 22 LR
Capacity: 10 rounds
Barrel Length: 6.9"
Weight: 46 ounces
Grips: Checkered composition grip panels
Sights: High profile adjustable rear, fixed front sights
Price: \$405 (blue) to \$485 (stainless)



TYPE R C H

RUGER STAINLESS GOVERNMENT TARGET SLAB SIDE

Caliber: 22 LR
Capacity: 10 rounds
Barrel Length: 6.9"
Weight: 45 ounces
Grips: Checkered laminated thumbrest grip panels
Sights: Open sight; drilled and tapped for scope mounts
Price: \$529



TYPE R C H

RUGER P-89

Caliber: 9mm
Capacity: 10 rounds
Barrel Length: 4.5"
Weight: 32 ounces
Grips: Grooved black resin grip panels
Sights: Square post front, square notch rear adjustable
Misc: Alloy frame, black matte finish; DAO, decocker and safety models available in blued or stainless steel
Price: \$475 (blue) to \$525 (stainless)



TYPE SD R C

RUGER P-90

Caliber: 45 ACP
Capacity: 8 rounds
Barrel Length: 4.5"
Weight: 33.5 ounces
Grips: Grooved black resin grip panels
Sights: Square post front, square notch rear adjustable
Misc: Stainless steel, decocking or manual safety, Blued model available in manual safety only
Price: \$425 (blue) to \$565 (stainless)



TYPE SD R C

RUGER P-93

Caliber: 9mm
Capacity: 10 rounds
Barrel Length: 3.9"
Weight: 31 ounces
Grips: Synthetic, grooved
Sights: Post front, adjustable rear
Misc: Available in decock-only or DAO models
Price: \$495 (blue) to \$565 (stainless)



TYPE SD R C

RUGER P-94/P-944

Caliber: 9mm or .40 auto
Capacity: 10 rounds
Barrel Length: 4.25"
Weight: 33 to 34 ounces
Grips: Synthetic, grooved
Sights: Post front, adjustable rear
Misc: Available in decock-only, DAO or manual safety models
Blued model available in manual safety only
Price: \$495 (blue) to \$ 575 (stainless)



TYPE SD R C

RUGER P-95

Caliber: 9mm
Capacity: 10 rounds
Barrel Length: 3.9"
Weight: 27 ounces
Grips: Synthetic, grooved
Sights: Post front, adjustable rear
Misc: Available in decock, DAO models and safety models
Price: \$425 (blue) to \$475 (stainless)



TYPE SD R C

RUGER P-97

Caliber: 45 ACP
Capacity: 8 rounds
Barrel Length: 3.9"
Weight: 30.5 ounces
Grips: Synthetic grooved
Sights: Post front adjustable rear
Misc: Available in decock-only and DAO models
Price: \$495 (stainless)



TYPE SD R C

SEECAMP LWS 32

Caliber: 32 ACP
Capacity: 6 round magazine
Barrel Length: 2"
Weight: 11.5 ounces
Grips: Glass-filled nylon
Sights: Smooth, no-snag, contoured slide and barrel
Price: \$425



TYPE SD R

SEECAMP LWS 32 "CALIFORNIA EDITION"

Caliber: 32 ACP
Capacity: 6 round magazine
Barrel Length: 2"
Weight: 11.5 ounces
Grips: Glass-filled nylon
Sights: Smooth, no-snag, contoured slide and barrel
Misc: Has manual trigger mounted safety
Price: \$525



TYPE SD R

SEECAMP LWS 380

Caliber: 380 ACP
Capacity: 6 round magazine
Barrel Length: 2"
Weight: 11.5 ounces
Grips: Glass-filled nylon
Sights: Smooth, no-snag, contoured slide and barrel
Price: \$850



TYPE SD R

SIG SAUER P-210

Caliber: 9mm
Capacity: 8 rounds
Barrel Length: 4.8", 5.9"
Weight: 32, 33.9 and 37 ounces
Grips: Wood
Sights: Target
Misc: Blued finish
Price: N/A



TYPE SD R C

SIG SAUER P-220, P-220ST

Caliber: 45 ACP
Capacity: 7 rounds or 8 rounds
Barrel Length: 4.4"
Weight: 27.8 ounces
Grips: Checkered black plastic
Sights: Drift adjustable rear, blade front
Misc: Blue finish or ILAFLON finish and night sights available; imported by SIG Arms Inc.
Price: \$810 (blue) to \$969 (stainless and night sights)



TYPE SD R C

SIG SAUER P-226 & P-229

Caliber: 9mm, 40 S&W or 357 SIG
Capacity: 10 rounds
Barrel Length: 4.4" (226); 3.9" (229)
Weight: 28.3 or 30.6 ounces (226); 28.1 or 29.5 ounces (229)
Grips: Plastic
Sights: Adjustable rear, blade front
Misc: Double action only model available; blue, two-tone or Nitron finish available; imported by SIG Arms Inc.
Price: \$851 to \$994 (Nickel/Nitron, DAO and night sights)



TYPE SD R C

SIG SAUER P-232

Caliber: 380 ACP
Capacity: 7 rounds (380)
Barrel Length: 3.6"
Weight: 16.2 ounces (20.8 ounces in stainless steel)
Grips: Plastic (Hogue on selected models)
Sights: Adjustable rear, blade front
Misc: Blue, stainless, two-tone finish available; imported by SIG Arms Inc.
Price: \$518 (blue) to \$579 (two-tone, night sights)



TYPE SD R

SMITH & WESSON MODEL 22A/22S

Caliber: 22 LR
Capacity: 10 rounds
Barrel Length: 5.5" Bull
Weight: 38.5 ounces
Grips: Dymondwood or rubber
Sights: Patridge front, adjustable rear
Misc: Matte black finish, 22S has aluminum frame
Price: \$320 (22A) to \$379 (22S)



TYPE R C H

SMITH & WESSON CS9, CS40 & CS45

Caliber: 9mm (CS9), 40 S&W (CS40) or 45 ACP (CS45)
Capacity: 6 rounds (CS45) or 7 rounds (CS9 & CS40)
Barrel Length: 3" or 3.25"
Weight: 20.75 to 24 ounces
Grips: Hogue wraparound rubber
Sights: 2-dot white rear, post with white dot front
Price: \$648 (CS9) to \$683 (CS40 & CS45)



TYPE SD R C

SMITH & WESSON MODEL 41

Caliber: 22 LR
Capacity: 10 rounds
Barrel Length: 5.5" or 7"
Weight: 44 ounces
Grips: Checkered walnut with modified thumbrest
Sights: Adjustable rear, Patridge front
Price: \$801



TYPE R C H

SMITH & WESSON MODEL 410

Caliber: 40 S&W
Capacity: 10 rounds
Barrel Length: 4"
Weight: 28.5 ounces
Grips: One-piece Xenoy wraparound with straight backstrap
Sights: Post front, fixed 2-dot rear
Misc: Blue carbon steel slide and alloy frame
Price: \$563



TYPE SD R C

SMITH & WESSON MODEL 457

Caliber: 45 ACP
Capacity: 7 rounds
Barrel Length: 3.75"
Weight: 29 ounces
Grips: One-piece Xenoy wraparound with straight backstrap
Sights: Post front, fixed 3-dot rear
Misc: Matte blue carbon steel slide and alloy frame in blue finish
Price: \$563



TYPE SD R C

SMITH & WESSON MODEL 908

Caliber: 9mm
Capacity: 8 rounds
Barrel Length: 3.5"
Weight: 26 ounces
Grips: One-piece Xenoy wraparound with straight backstrap
Sights: Post front, fixed 3-dot rear
Price: \$509



TYPE SD R C

SMITH & WESSON MODEL 910

Caliber: 9mm
Capacity: 10 rounds
Barrel Length: 4"
Weight: 28 ounces
Grips: One-piece Xenoy wraparound with straight backstrap
Sights: Post front with white dot, fixed 2-dot rear
Price: \$509



TYPE SD R C

SMITH & WESSON MODEL 3913

Caliber: 9mm
Capacity: 8 rounds
Barrel Length: 3.5"
Weight: 26 ounces
Grips: One-piece Delrin wraparound with straight backstrap; textured surface
Sights: Post white dot front, Novak Lo Mount Carry 2-dot rear
Misc: Stainless finish and ambidextrous safety, extra magazine included
Price: \$662 to \$724



TYPE SD R C

SMITH & WESSON MODEL 3913LS LADYSMITH

Caliber: 9mm
Capacity: 8 rounds
Barrel Length: 3.5"
Weight: 26 ounces
Grips: Straight backstrap gray; ergonomically correct for a woman's hand
Sights: Novak Lo Mount Carry 2-dot rear, white dot front
Misc: Stainless finish and single side safety; extra magazine included
Price: \$744



TYPE SD R C

SMITH & WESSON MODEL 4006

Caliber: 40 S&W
Capacity: 10 rounds
Barrel Length: 4"
Weight: 38.5 ounces
Grips: Xenoy wraparound with checkered panels and straight backstrap
Sights: Adjustable 2-dot rear, white dot front
Misc: Stainless slide and alloy frame; ambidextrous safety; tritium night sights available
Price: \$864 to \$991



TYPE SD R C

SMITH & WESSON MODEL 4046 DAO

Caliber: 40 S&W
Capacity: 10 rounds
Barrel Length: 4"
Weight: 39.5 ounces
Grips: Straight backstrap
Sights: White dot front, Novak Lo Mount Carry 2-dot
Misc: Stainless steel slide, slightly bobbed hammer and double-action only
Price: \$864 to \$991



TYPE SD R C

SMITH & WESSON MODEL 5906 TSW

Caliber: 9mm
Capacity: 10 rounds
Barrel Length: 4"
Weight: 37.5 ounces
Grips: Curved backstrap
Sights: Post white dot front, Novak Lo Mount Carry or adjustable 2-dot rear
Misc: Stainless slide and frame; ambidextrous safety; traditional DA
Price: \$861



TYPE SD R C

SMITH & WESSON MODEL 5946

Caliber: 9mm
Capacity: 10 rounds
Barrel Length: 4"
Weight: 37.5 ounces
Grips: Curved backstrap
Sights: Novak Lo Mount Carry or adjustable 2-dot rear, post white dot front
Misc: Stainless slide and frame and .260" serrated hammer; DAO
Price: \$822



TYPE SD R C

SMITH & WESSON ENHANCED SIGMA SERIES

Caliber: 9mm or 40 S&W
Capacity: 10 rounds
Barrel Length: 4"
Weight: 24.5 to 24.75 ounces
Grips: Integral black polymer
Sights: White or tritium dot front, fixed or tritium 2-dot rear
Misc: High capacity magazines available for law enforcement or export orders; unique, recontoured angle grip; integral accessory grooves, melonite or stainless finish
Price: \$447 to \$657



TYPE SD R C

SPRINGFIELD CHAMPION 1911-A1

Caliber: 45 ACP
Capacity: 7 rounds
Barrel Length: 4"
Weight: 28 to 34 ounces
Grips: Checkered walnut
Sights: Novak night sights
Misc: Pistol comes "loaded" with value added features; available in a Parkerized, stainless or matte finish and also in a light weight
Price: \$817 (Parkerized); \$867 (lightweight matte); \$870 (stainless)



TYPE SD R C

SPRINGFIELD COMPACT LIGHTWEIGHT 1911-A1

Caliber: 45 ACP
Capacity: 6 rounds
Barrel Length: 4"
Weight: 26 ounces
Grips: Checkered walnut
Sights: Novak night sights
Misc: Pistol comes "loaded" with value added features; available in a stainless or matte finish
Price: \$826 to \$900



TYPE SD R C

SPRINGFIELD FULL-SIZE 1911-A1

Caliber: 9mm, 45 ACP, 40 S&W
Capacity: 9 rounds (9 mm), 7 rounds (45 ACP) or 8 rounds (40 S&W)
Barrel Length: 5"
Weight: 38 ounces
Grips: Checkered walnut
Sights: Novak patented low mount or fully adjustable rear
Misc: Pistol comes "loaded" with value added features; available in stainless, blue, Parkerized or matte finish and in a V-12 or light weight model
Price: \$770 to \$878



TYPE SD R C

SPRINGFIELD LONG SLIDE 1911-A1

Caliber: 45 ACP or 45 ACP Super/45 ACP
Capacity: 7 rounds
Barrel Length: 6"
Weight: 41 ounces
Grips: Checkered walnut
Sights: Fully adjustable target
Misc: Pistol comes "loaded" with value added features; comes with a stainless finish and is available in a Trophy Match or V-16 model
Price: \$1,002 to \$1,399 (Trophy Match)



TYPE SD R C

SPRINGFIELD MIL-SPEC 1911-A1

Caliber: 45 ACP
Capacity: 7 rounds
Barrel Length: 3.5" (Ultra Compact), 5"
Weight: 32 ounces (Ultra Compact) to 35.6 ounces
Grips: Checkered black plastic
Sights: 3-dot Hi-Viz Fixed Combat
Misc: Pistol comes "loaded" with value added features; available in a Parkerized finish
Price: \$559 to \$682



TYPE S D R C

SPRINGFIELD TROPHY MATCH 1911-A1

Caliber: 45 ACP
Capacity: 7 rounds (8 rounds in Armory Kote model)
Barrel Length: 5"
Weight: 38 ounces
Grips: Checkered walnut
Sights: Fully adjustable target
Misc: Pistol comes "loaded" with value added features; available in blued or stainless finish and in a high capacity or long slide model
Price: \$1,115 to \$1,225



TYPE S D R C

SPRINGFIELD ULTRA-COMPACT 1911-A1

Caliber: 9mm or 45 ACP
Capacity: 6 rounds (8 rounds in 9mm model)
Barrel Length: 3.5"
Weight: 25 to 32 ounces
Grips: Plastic
Sights: Novak patented low mount or Novak night sights
Misc: Pistol comes "loaded" with value added features; available in Parkerized, stainless, bi-tone or matte finish and in V-10, bi-tone or stainless steel models
Price: \$817 to \$884



TYPE S D R C

SPRINGFIELD FULL-SIZE HIGH CAPACITY

Caliber: 45 ACP
Capacity: 10 rounds (13 rounds available to law enforcement)
Barrel Length: 5"
Weight: 38 ounces
Grips: Checkered black plastic
Sights: Novak patented low mount
Misc: Pistol comes Parkerized
Price: \$807



TYPE S D R C

SPRINGFIELD TACTICAL RESPONSE PISTOL TRP FULL-SIZE & TRP OPERATOR MODEL

Caliber: 45 ACP
Capacity: 7 rounds
Barrel Length: 5"
Weight: 37 ounces
Grips: Checkered walnut
Sights: Novak night sights
Misc: Pistol comes "loaded" with value added features; available in Armory Kote, or stainless finish; TRP-PRO MODEL is the FBI's pistol for their SWAT Hostage Rescue Team
Price: \$1,265 to \$1,395



TYPE S D R C

SPRINGFIELD ULTRA COMPACT HIGH CAPACITY

Caliber: 45 ACP
Capacity: 10 rounds (12 rounds available to law enforcement)
Barrel Length: 3.5"
Weight: 33 ounces
Grips: Checkered black plastic
Sights: Novak patented low mount
Misc: Pistol comes Parkerized
Price: \$870



STEYR M-SERIES

Caliber: 40 S&W, 9X19 or 357 SIG
Capacity: 10 rounds
Barrel Length: 4"
Weight: 28 ounces
Grips: Advanced ultra-rigid synthetic
Sights: Triangle/trapezoid sighting system
Misc: Three user selectable safety conditions, integrated limited access lock with key, reset-action trigger system and true direct loaded chamber indicator
Price: \$610



STEYR S-SERIES

Caliber: 40 S&W; 9x19
Capacity: 10 rounds
Barrel Length: 3.58"
Weight: 22.5 ounces
Grips: Advanced ultra-rigid synthetic
Sights: Triangle/trapezoid sighting system
Misc: Three user selectable safety conditions; visual/felt indicator
Price: \$610



TAURUS PT-22 & PT-25

Caliber: 22 LR (PT-22) or 25 ACP (PT-25)
Capacity: 8 rounds (PT-22) or 9 rounds (PT-25)
Barrel Length: 2.75"
Weight: 12 ounces
Grips: Rosewood, wood or mother of pearl
Sights: Fixed
Misc: Features exclusive tip-up barrel; available in blue with gold trim, nickel or duo-tone finish.
Price: \$190



TAURUS PT92

Caliber: 9mm
Capacity: 10+1 rounds
Barrel Length: 5"
Weight: 34 ounces
Grips: Checkered rubber, rosewood or mother of pearl
Sights: 3-dot fixed
Misc: Ambidextrous 3-position safety
Price: \$575 (blue) to \$670 (polished stainless steel)



TAURUS PT99

Caliber: 9mm
Capacity: 10 rounds
Barrel Length: 5"
Weight: 34 ounces
Grips: Checkered rubber, rosewood or mother of pearl
Sights: 3-dot adjustable
Misc: Ambidextrous 3-position safety
Price: \$575 (blue) to \$670 (polished stainless)



TYPE SD R C

TAURUS PT111 & PT138

Caliber: 9mm (PT111) or 380 (PT138)
Capacity: 10 rounds
Barrel Length: 3.25"
Weight: 18.75 ounces
Grips: Checkered
Sights: 3-dot fixed
Price: \$425 (blue) to \$500 (matte stainless)



TYPE SD R

TAURUS PT957, PT911, PT938 & PT940

Caliber: 357 Sig (PT957) or 9mm (PT911),
380 ACP (PT938) or 40 (PT940)
Capacity: 10 rounds
Barrel Length: 3.75" (PT938), 3.6" (PT957 and PT940) or 4" (PT911)
Weight: 26.75 to 28 ounces
Grips: Checkered rubber, rosewood or mother of pearl
Sights: 3-dot fixed, night sights available (911, 940)
Misc: 3-position ambidextrous safety; PT957 is ported
Price: \$505 to \$600



TYPE SD R C

TAURUS PT945

Caliber: 45 ACP
Capacity: 8 rounds
Barrel Length: 4.25"
Weight: 29.5 ounces
Grips: Checkered rubber, rosewood or mother of pearl
Sights: 3-dot fixed
Misc: 3-position ambidextrous safety
Price: \$525 (blue) to \$655 (polished stainless)



TYPE SD R C

WALTHER P-5

Caliber: 9mm Para.
Capacity: 8 rounds
Barrel Length: 3.5"
Weight: 28 ounces
Grips: Checkered plastic
Sights: Blade front, adjustable rear
Price: \$900



TYPE SD R C

WALTHER P-88 COMPACT

Caliber: 9mm Para
Capacity: 10 rounds
Barrel Length: 3.93"
Weight: 28 ounces
Grips: Checkered black polymer
Sights: Blade front, drift adjustable rear
Price: \$900



TYPE SD R C

WALTHER P-99 & P-990

Caliber: 9mm Para., 40 S&W or 9mm x 21
Capacity: 10 rounds (12 and 16 available to law enforcement)
Barrel Length: 4"
Weight: 25 ounces
Grips: Polymer
Sights: Blade front, micrometer rear adjustable
Price: \$749 (990) to \$799 (P99)



TYPE SD R C

WALTHER PP

Caliber: 380 ACP
Capacity: 7 rounds
Barrel Length: 3.8"
Weight: 23.5 ounces
Grips: Checkered plastic
Sights: Fixed; white markings
Price: \$999



TYPE SD R

WALTHER PPK

Caliber: 380 ACP or 32 ACP
Capacity: 6 rounds (380 ACP) or 7 rounds (32 ACP)
Barrel Length: 3.27"
Weight: 21 ounces
Grips: Checkered plastic
Sights: Fixed; white markings
Misc: Blue or stainless finish; made in USA, distributed by Walther USA
Price: \$540



TYPE SD R

WALTHER PPK/S

Caliber: 380 ACP or 32 ACP
Capacity: 7 rounds (380 ACP) or 8 rounds (32 ACP)
Barrel Length: 3.27"
Weight: 23.5 ounces
Grips: Checkered plastic
Sights: Fixed; white markings
Misc: Blue or stainless finish; made in USA, distributed by Walther USA.
Price: \$540



TYPE SD R

WALTHER TPH

Caliber: 22 LR or 25 ACP
Capacity: 6 rounds
Barrel Length: 2.25"
Weight: 14 ounces
Grips: Checkered black composition
Sights: Adjustable rear, blade front
Misc: Stainless or blue finish; made in USA, distributed by Walther USA
Price: \$440



TYPE SD R

WILKINSON "SHERRY" AUTO

Caliber: 22 LR
Capacity: 8 rounds
Barrel Length: 2.125"
Weight: 9.25 ounces
Grips: Checkered black plastic
Sights: Fixed, groove
Misc: Blue finish or blue slide and trigger with gold frame available; Cross-bolt safety locks the sear into the hammer
Price: \$195



TYPE SD R

WILSON COMBAT KZ-45 TACTICAL CARRY PISTOL

Caliber: 45 ACP
Capacity: 9 rounds (compact), 10 rounds (full-size)
Barrel Length: 4.1" (compact), 5" (full-size)
Weight: 29 ounces (compact), 31 ounces (full-size)
Grips: Checkered plastic
Sights: Tritium Nite-Eyes
Misc: Includes an instructional video, nylon pistol rug and 2 extra magazines
Price: \$1,030 to \$1,130



TYPE SD R C

WILSON CUSTOM PISTOLS

Caliber: 45 ACP
Capacity: 8 rounds
Barrel Length: 5"
Weight: 26.5 to 48 ounces
Grips: Checkered wood
Sights: Lo-Mount adjustable, Tritium Nite-Eyes or Tactical Combat
Misc: Finish varies by version
Price: \$1,199 to \$3,495



TYPE SD R C

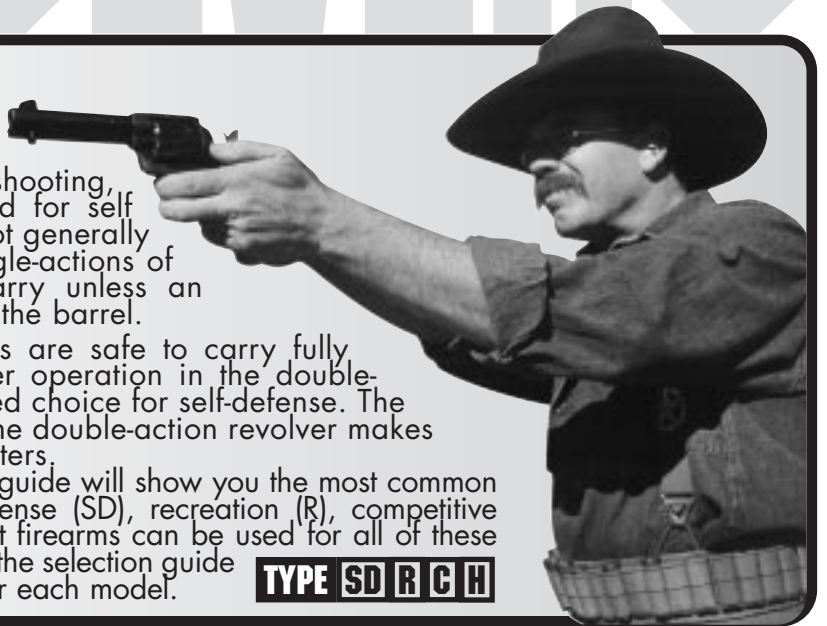
REVOLVERS

A good revolver, depending upon caliber, frame size, action type and barrel length, is the most versatile of all handguns. It can be used for recreational shooting, competitive shooting, hunting and self defense. Once used for self defense, single-action revolvers are not generally preferred for that purpose. Many single-actions of traditional design are unsafe to carry unless an empty chamber is placed in line with the barrel.

All modern double-action revolvers are safe to carry fully loaded. This factor, along with faster operation in the double-action mode, makes them the preferred choice for self-defense. The simple, safe method of operation of the double-action revolver makes it particularly well-suited to new shooters.

The American Handgunner selection guide will show you the most common uses for each type of firearm. Self-defense (SD), recreation (R), competitive shooting (C) or hunting (H). While most firearms can be used for all of these purposes with greater or lesser success, the selection guide will show you the most common uses for each model.

TYPE SD R C H



CENTURY MODEL 100

Caliber: 30-30, 375 Win., 444 Marlin, 45-70 or 50-70
Capacity: 6 rounds
Barrel Length: 6.5", 8" or 10"
Weight: 6 pounds (loaded)
Grips: Smooth walnut
Sights: Millett rear, ramp front
Misc: Manganese-bronze frame, blue cylinder and barrel
Price: \$1,250



TYPE R H

CIMARRON ARTILLERY MODEL

Caliber: 45 Colt
Capacity: 6 rounds
Barrel Length: 5.5"
Weight: 39 ounces
Grips: Walnut
Sights: Fixed
Misc: Case-hardened frame and hammer, Italian-made Colt reproduction
Price: \$499



TYPE R C H

CIMARRON U.S. CAVALRY MODEL

Caliber: 45 Colt
Capacity: 6 rounds
Barrel Length: 7.5"
Weight: 42 ounces
Grips: Walnut
Sights: Fixed
Misc: Color case-hardened frame and hammer, rest charcoal blue, Italian-made Colt reproduction
Price: \$499



TYPE R C H

COLT SINGLE ACTION ARMY

Caliber: 44-40 or 45 Colt
Capacity: 6 rounds
Barrel Length: 4.75", 5.5" or 7.5"
Weight: 40 ounces
Grips: Black composite Eagle stocks
Sights: Blade front, notch rear
Finish: Blue with color case-hardened frame or full nickel
Misc: Available with gold grip medallions, This is the original Colt Single Action Army.
Price: \$1,938 to \$2,125



TYPE R C H

DAN WESSON SUPER RAM SILHOUETTE

Caliber: 22 LR, 357 Mag., 357 SuperMag/Maxi, 41 Mag., 44 Mag., 414 SuperMag or 445 SuperMag
Capacity: 6 rounds
Barrel Length: 8"
Weight: 64 ounces
Grips: Hogue rubber fingergroove
Sights: Bo-Mar target sights with hooded front
Misc: Available in blue or stainless; SRS-1 laser engraving
Price: \$1,149 to \$1,295



TYPE R C H

DAN WESSON ALASKAN GUIDE

Caliber: 445 SuperMag
Capacity: 6 rounds
Barrel Length: 4"
Weight: 54 ounces
Grips: Hogue rubber fingergroove
Sights: Target sights
Misc: Ported barrel
Price: \$995



TYPE SD R H

DAN WESSON SMALL FRAME SERIES

Caliber: 22 LR, 22 mag., 32 H&R, 32-20, 357 Mag
Capacity: 6 rounds
Barrel Length: 2.5" to 10"
Weight: 32 ounces to 58 ounces
Grips: Hogue rubber fingergroove
Sights: Target sights
Misc: Available in blue or stainless; SRS-1 laser engraving
Price: \$599 to \$729



TYPE SD R H

E.A.A. WINDICATOR

Caliber: 357 Mag., 38 Special
Capacity: 5 rounds
Barrel Length: 2"-4"
Weight: Under 2 pounds
Grips: rubber
Sights: Fixed
Misc: Double/Single action, made in Germany
Price: \$259



TYPE SD R

E.A.A. BOUNTY HUNTER

Caliber: 22 LR/22 WMR, 357 Mag., 44 Mag. or 45 Colt
Capacity: 6 rounds
Barrel Length: 4.5" to 7.5"
Weight: 38 ounces
Grips: Smooth walnut
Sights: Blade front, grooved topstrap rear
Misc: Blue or nickel finish; hammer-forged barrel
Price: \$269 to \$399



TYPE RCH

EMF DAKOTA 1875 SINGLE ACTION

Caliber: 357 Mag., 44-40 or 45 Colt
Capacity: 6 rounds
Barrel Length: 7.5"
Weight: 46 ounces
Grips: Smooth walnut
Sights: Blade front, fixed groove rear
Price: \$300



TYPE RCH

EMF 1890 POLICE SINGLE ACTION

Caliber: 357 Mag., 44-40 or 45 Colt
Capacity: 6 rounds
Barrel Length: 5.5"
Weight: 40 ounces
Grips: Walnut
Sights: Blade front, fixed groove rear
Price: \$600



TYPE RCH

EMF HARTFORD SINGLE ACTION

Caliber: 22 LR, 32-20, 357 Mag., 38-40, 44-40, 44 Special or 45 Colt
Capacity: 6 rounds
Barrel Length: 4.75", 5.5" or 7.5"
Weight: 45 ounces
Grips: Smooth walnut
Sights: Blade front, fixed rear
Misc: Bullseye ejector head and color case-hardening on frame and hammer
Price: \$375 to \$500



TYPE RCH

EMF 1875 OUTLAW SINGLE ACTION

Caliber: 357 Mag., 44-40 or 45 Colt
Capacity: 6 rounds
Barrel Length: 7.5"
Weight: 46 ounces
Grips: Smooth walnut
Sights: Blade front, fixed groove rear
Price: \$575 to \$590



TYPE RCH

FREEDOM ARMS MODEL 252

Caliber: 22 LR
Capacity: 5 rounds
Barrel Length: 7.5"
Weight: 59 ounces
Grips: Black and green laminated hardwood
Sights: Express sights, notched rear, brass bead front
Misc: Extra fitted 22 WMR cylinders available for an additional \$264; other custom options available
Price: \$1,527



TYPE R C H

FREEDOM ARMS MODEL 97

Caliber: 357 Mag. or 45 Long Colt
Capacity: 5 or 6 rounds
Barrel Length: 5.5" or 7.5"
Weight: 40 to 42 ounces
Grips: Hardwood or black micarta
Sights: Adjustable rear, ramp front
Misc: Available in fixed sight mode, stainless steel with brushed finish
Price: \$1,391 (fixed); \$1,492 (adjustable)



TYPE R C H

FREEDOM ARMS FIELD GRADES

Caliber: 454 Casull, 50 AE, 44 Mag., 357 Mag., 41 Mag. or 475 Linebaugh
Capacity: 5 rounds
Barrel Length: 4.75", 6", 7.5" or 10"
Weight: 50 to 52 ounces
Grips: Pachmayr
Sights: Fixed or adjustable rear; ramp front
Price: \$1,322 to \$1,400



TYPE R C H

FREEDOM ARMS PREMIER GRADES

Caliber: 454 Casull, 50 AE, 44 Mag., 357 Mag., 41 Mag. or 475 Linebaugh
Capacity: 5 rounds
Barrel Length: 4.75", 6", 7.5", 9" or 10"
Weight: 50 ounces
Grips: Hardwood
Sights: Adjustable rear; ramp front and fixed
Misc: Stainless steel; optional cylinders in 45 Colt, 45 ACP, and 45 Win. Mag. with 454 only available for \$264
Price: \$1,663 to \$1,820



TYPE R C H

HERITAGE ROUGH RIDER

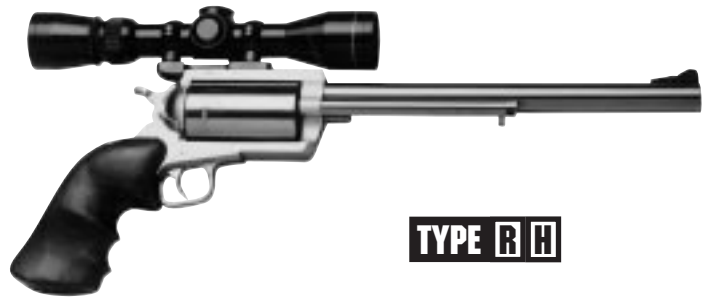
Caliber: 22 LR or 22 LR/22 WMR Combo
Capacity: 6 rounds
Barrel Length: 3.5", 4.75", 6.5", 9"
Weight: 31 to 38 ounces
Grips: Exotic hardwood
Sights: Blade front, adjustable sight or Red Dot Reflex versions available
Price: \$135 to \$239



TYPE R C H

MAGNUM RESEARCH BFR REVOLVER

Caliber: 22h, 444, 45LC/410, 450 Marlin, 454, 45/70 Government, 480 Ruger
Capacity: 5-shot
Barrel Length: .22h 7.5/10", .444 10", .45LC/410 10", .450 10", .454 6.5/7.5/10", .45/70 7.5/10", .480 7.5/10"
Weight: Long cylinder 4 pounds (7.5") and 4.36 pounds (10") Short cylinder 3.2 pounds (6.5"), 3.5 pounds (7.5"), 4.36 pounds (10")
Grips: Plastic
Sights: Factory, adjustable rear
Misc: (scope mount rings not included)
Price: \$999



TYPE RCH

NAVY ARMS 1873 COLT-STYLE SAA

Caliber: 44-40 or 45 Colt
Capacity: 6 rounds
Barrel Length: 3", 4.75", 5.5" or 7.5"
Weight: 36 ounces
Grips: Walnut
Sights: Blade front, groove in topstrap rear
Price: \$385



TYPE RCH

NAVY ARMS 1875 SCHOFIELD

Caliber: 44-40 or 45 Colt
Capacity: 6 rounds
Barrel Length: 3" (Hide Out Model), 5" (Wells Fargo Model), 7" (Cavalry Model)
Weight: 39 ounces
Grips: Walnut
Sights: Blade front, notch rear
Misc: Cavalry, Hide Out and Wells Fargo models available in either caliber
Price: \$695



TYPE RCH

NAVY ARMS "BISLEY MODEL" SAA

Caliber: 44-40 or 45 Colt
Capacity: 6 rounds
Barrel Length: 4.75", 5.5" or 7.5"
Weight: 40 ounces
Grips: Walnut
Sights: Blade front, notch rear
Price: \$405



TYPE RCH

NAVY ARMS FLAT TOP TARGET MODEL SAA

Caliber: 45 Colt
Capacity: 6 rounds
Barrel Length: 7.5"
Weight: 40 ounces
Grips: Walnut
Sights: Spring loaded front, adjustable rear
Price: \$425



TYPE RCH

NAVY ARMS NEW MODEL RUSSIAN

Caliber: 44 Russian
Capacity: 6 rounds
Barrel Length: 6.5"
Weight: 40 ounces
Grips: Walnut
Sights: Blade front, notch rear
Price: \$745



NORTH AMERICAN ARMS MINI-MASTER

Caliber: 22 LR or 22 WMR
Capacity: 5 rounds
Barrel Length: 4"
Weight: 10.75 ounces
Grips: Checkered hard black rubber
Sights: Blade front, white outline rear adjustable, or fixed
Misc: Heavy vent barrel, full-size grips, extra cylinders available
Price: \$286 (fixed) to \$304 (adjustable); \$324 to \$343 with extra cylinders



NORTH AMERICAN ARMS BLACK WIDOW

Caliber: 22 LR or 22 WMR
Capacity: 5 rounds
Barrel Length: 2"
Weight: 8.8 ounces
Grips: Black rubber
Sights: Millett fixed or adjustable rear, blade front
Misc: Extra cylinders available; heavy barrel, full grips, vent ribbed barrel
Price: \$256 (fixed) to \$274 (adjustable); \$294 (fixed) to \$312 (adjustable) with extra cylinders



NORTH AMERICAN ARMS MINI

Caliber: 22 Short, 22 LR or 22 WMR
Capacity: 5 rounds
Barrel Length: 1.125" or 1.625"
Weight: 4 to 6.5 ounces
Grips: Laminated wood
Sights: Blade front, notch fixed rear
Misc: Extra cylinders available
Price: \$186 to \$240



ROSSI MODEL 851

Caliber: 38 Special
Capacity: 6 rounds
Barrel Length: 4"
Weight: 38 ounces
Grips: Rubber
Sights: Adjustable
Misc: Double action, blue steel, and +P rated, integral key lock action
Price: \$298



ROSSI MODEL 971/972

Caliber: 357 Mag.
Capacity: 6 rounds
Barrel Length: 4" or 6", heavy
Weight: 40 ounces
Grips: Rubber
Sights: Adjustable
Misc: Double action, stainless or blue steel, +P rated, integral key lock action
Price: \$345 (Blue) to \$391 (Stainless)



TYPE SD R H

RUGER BISLEY

Caliber: 357 Mag., 44 Mag., 45 Colt
Capacity: 6 rounds
Barrel Length: 7.5"
Weight: 48 ounces
Grips: Rosewood with Ruger medallion
Sights: adjustable rear, fixed front
Misc: Unfluted cylinder and roll engraving
Price: \$535



TYPE R C H

RUGER BISLEY SMALL FRAME

Caliber: 22 LR
Capacity: 6 rounds
Barrel Length: 6.5"
Weight: 41 ounces
Grips: Rosewood with Ruger medallion
Sights: Adjustable rear, fixed front
Misc: Unfluted cylinder and roll engraving
Price: \$422



TYPE R C H

RUGER BISLEY-VAQUERO

Caliber: 44 Mag., 45 Long Colt, 357 Mag.
Capacity: 6 rounds
Barrel Length: 5.5" and 4.625"
Weight: 39 to 40 ounces
Grips: Smooth rosewood with Ruger medallion
Sights: Notch rear, blade front, fixed
Price: \$535 (blue) to \$555 (stainless)



TYPE R C H

RUGER BLACKHAWK

Caliber: 30 Carbine, 357 Mag., 41 Mag or 45 Colt
Capacity: 6 rounds
Barrel Length: 4.625", 6.5" or 7.5" & 5.5" (30 Carbine and 45 Colt only)
Weight: 38 ounces to 44 ounces
Grips: American walnut with Ruger medallion
Sights: Ramp front, micro-click adjustable rear
Price: \$435 to \$530 (depending on caliber and finish)



TYPE R C H

RUGER SUPER BLACKHAWK

Caliber: 44 Magnum
Capacity: 6 rounds
Barrel Length: 4.625", 5.5", 7.5", 10.5"
Weight: 45 to 51 ounces
Grips: American walnut
Sights: Ramp front, micro-click adjustable rear
Price: \$519-\$529 (blue) to \$535-\$540 (stainless)



TYPE RCH

RUGER SUPER BLACKHAWK HUNTER

Caliber: 44 Magnum
Capacity: 6 rounds
Barrel Length: 7.5"
Weight: 52 ounces
Grips: Smooth black laminated wood
Sights: Adjustable rear / replaceable front blade
Misc: includes set of 1" medium scope rings
Price: \$639



TYPE RCH

RUGER NEW BEARCAT

Caliber: 22 LR
Capacity: 6 rounds
Barrel Length: 4"
Weight: 24 ounces
Grips: Rosewood
Sights: Blade front, fixed notch rear
Price: \$379 to \$429 (stainless)



TYPE RCH

RUGER REDHAWK

Caliber: 44 Mag. and 45 Long Colt
Capacity: 6 rounds
Barrel Length: 5.5" or 7.5"
Weight: 49 to 54 ounces
Grips: Goncalo Alves, square butt
Sights: Adjustable rear, Patridge-type front
Price: \$585 (Blue) to \$645 (Stainless) also with 1" scope rings: \$625 (blue) to \$685 (stainless)



TYPE SD RCH

RUGER SUPER REDHAWK

Caliber: 44 Mag., 454 Casull, 480 Ruger
Capacity: 6 rounds
Barrel Length: 7.5" or 9.5"
Weight: 53 and 58 ounces
Grips: Patented Ruger cushioned grips with laminated grip panels
Sights: Adjustable rear, interchangeable front inserts
Misc: Heavy extended frame, stainless steel
Price: \$685 (Stainless) to \$775 (Stainless Target Gray)



TYPE RCH

RUGER SUPER SINGLE-SIX

Caliber: 22 LR or 22 WMR (available with extra cylinder)
Capacity: 6 rounds
Barrel Length: 4.625", 5.5", 6.5" or 9.5"
Weight: 32 to 35 ounces
Grips: Rosewood with Ruger medallion
Sights: Adjustable rear, ramp front
Price: \$389 (blue) to \$469 (High Gloss Stainless)



TYPE RCH

RUGER VAQUERO

Caliber: 357 Mag., 44-40, 44 Mag. or 45 Colt
Capacity: 6 rounds
Barrel Length: 4.625", 5.5" or 7.5"
Weight: 39 to 41 ounces
Grips: Smooth rosewood with Ruger medallion
Sights: Blade front, fixed rear
Price: \$535



TYPE RCH

RUGER BIRD'S HEAD VAQUERO

Caliber: 45 Long Colt
Capacity: 6 rounds
Barrel Length: 3.75"
Weight: 38 ounces
Grips: Black micarta
Sights: Blade front, notch rear fixed
Misc: Available in stainless steel or color case finish
Price: \$576



TYPE RCH

RUGER GP-100

Caliber: 357 Mag. or 38 Special
Capacity: 6 rounds
Barrel Length: 3", 4" or 6" (heavy barrels available)
Weight: 35 to 43 ounces
Grips: Patented Ruger cushioned grips with laminated grip panels
Sights: Fixed or adjustable
Price: \$489 to \$539



TYPE SD RCH

RUGER SP-101

Caliber: 22 LR, 32 Mag., 38 Special +P or 357 Mag.
Capacity: 5 rounds (38 Special, 357) or 6 rounds (22 LR & 32 Mag.)
Barrel Length: 2.25", 3.6" or 4"
Weight: 25 ounces to 34 ounces
Grips: Patented Ruger cushioned grips with laminated grip panels
Sights: Fixed; adjustable rear on 22 LR and 32 Mag.
Misc: Stainless steel small frame, DAO version, with one spurless model available
Price: \$482



TYPE SD R

SMITH & WESSON AIRLITE TI

Caliber: 32 H&R Mag. or 38 S&W Special
Capacity: 5 rounds (38 S&W) or 6 rounds (32 H&R)
Barrel Length: 1.9"
Weight: 11 to 12 ounces
Grips: Uncle Mike's Boot or Dymondwood Boot
Sights: Pinned black serrated ramp front, fixed notch rear
Misc: Titanium cylinder; aluminum alloy frame, barrel shroud and yoke; stainless steel barrel liner
Price: \$682 to \$699



TYPE S D R

SMITH & WESSON MODEL 10/64

Caliber: 38 Special
Capacity: 6 rounds
Barrel Length: 2", 3" or 4" (Model 10 in 4" only)
Weight: 30.5 to 36 ounces
Grips: Uncle Mike's Combat
Sights: Fixed
Misc: Finishes: Model 10 (blue); Model 64 (stainless)
Price: \$420 (Model 10) to \$454 (Model 64)



TYPE S D R C H

SMITH & WESSON MODEL 65LS

Caliber: 357 Mag.
Capacity: 6 rounds
Barrel Length: 3"
Weight: 31 ounces
Grips: Rosewood, round butt
Sights: Serrated ramp front, fixed notch rear
Misc: Stainless with frosted finish; smooth combat trigger; service hammer
Price: \$539



TYPE S D R C H

SMITH & WESSON MODEL 66

Caliber: 357 Mag. and 38 Special
Capacity: 6 rounds
Barrel Length: 2.5", 4" or 6"
Weight: 36 ounces
Grips: Soft rubber
Sights: Red ramp front, micro-click rear adjustable
Misc: Satin stainless finish
Price: \$545 (2.5") to \$551 (4", 6")



TYPE S D R C H

SMITH & WESSON MODEL 629

Caliber: 44 Mag. or 44 S&W Special
Capacity: 6 rounds
Barrel Length: 5", 6.5" or 8.4"
Weight: 47 to 51 ounces
Grips: Hogue rubber combat or wood combat
Sights: Adjustable rear, interchangeable front
Misc: Stainless finish
Price: \$670 to \$888 (Classic DX)



TYPE S D R C H

SMITH & WESSON MODEL 36/37/60

Caliber: 38 Special +P or 357 Mag. (Model 60 only)
Capacity: 5 rounds
Barrel Length: 1.9" (Model 36 & 37), 2.13" or 3" (Model 60)
Weight: 15 to 24 ounces
Grips: Soft rubber, rosewood or Uncle Mike's Combat
Sights: Serrated ramp, fixed notch
Misc: Finishes: Model 36 (blue steel); Model 37 (blue aluminum alloy) and Model 60 (stainless steel)
Price: \$406 to \$536



TYPE SD R

SMITH & WESSON MODEL 38/649

Caliber: 38 Special or 357 Mag.
Capacity: 5 rounds
Barrel Length: 1.9" to 2.13"
Weight: 14.5 (Model 38) to 20 (Model 649) ounces
Grips: Uncle Mike's Combat
Sights: Pinned black serrated ramp front, fixed notch rear
Misc: Finishes: Model 38 (blue) and Model 649 (stainless)
Price: \$462 to \$502



TYPE SD R

SMITH & WESSON MODEL 60LS LADYSMITH

Caliber: 38 Special or 357 Mag.
Capacity: 5 rounds
Barrel Length: 1.9"
Weight: 21.5 ounces
Grips: Rosewood
Sights: Fixed
Misc: Stainless finish
Price: \$539



TYPE SD R

SMITH & WESSON MODEL 317 AIRLITE

Caliber: 22 LR
Capacity: 8 rounds
Barrel Length: 1.9" to 3"
Weight: 10.5 (rubber grip) to 12 ounces
Grips: Dymondwood Boot or Uncle Mike's Boot
Sights: Front serrated ramp, rear fixed notch
Misc: Clear Cote Aluminum finish; Airlite Ladysmith also available
Price: \$508 to \$568



TYPE SD R

SMITH & WESSON MODEL 337 CHIEFS SPECIAL AIRLITE TI

Caliber: 38 S&W Special
Capacity: 5 rounds
Barrel Length: 1.875"
Weight: 11.2 ounces
Grips: Uncle Mike's Boot; Dymondwood Boot
Sights: Black serrated front; fixed notch rear
Misc: Aluminum alloy frame, barrel shroud and yoke; titanium cylinder; stainless steel barrel liner
Price: \$682



TYPE SD R

SMITH & WESSON MODEL 442/640/642

Caliber: 357 Mag. or 38 S&W Special +P (Model 442 & 642 in 38 Special +P only)
Capacity: 5 rounds
Barrel Length: 1.9" to 1.25"
Weight: 15 to 25 ounces
Grips: Uncle Mike's Boot or Uncle Mike's Combat
Sights: Serrated ramp, fixed notch
Misc: Finishes: Model 442 (blue); Model 640 & 642 (stainless); Concealed hammer; Full lug barrel on 357 Mag.; LadySmith version also available
Price: \$505



TYPE SD R

SMITH & WESSON MODEL 686

Caliber: 357 Mag.
Capacity: 7 rounds
Barrel Length: 4", 6" or 8.4" (Model 686 also comes in a 2.5" barrel)
Weight: 34.5 ounces
Grips: Hogue rubber
Sights: Adjustable rear, red ramp front
Price: \$534 to \$550



TYPE SD R C H

SMITH & WESSON MODEL 617

Caliber: 22 LR
Capacity: 6 to 10 rounds
Barrel Length: 4", 6" or 8.4"
Weight: 42 ounces
Grips: Hogue rubber
Sights: Adjustable/black rear, pinned Patridge front
Misc: Stainless steel with satin finish
Price: \$524 to \$578



TYPE R C H

SMITH & WESSON MODEL 625

Caliber: 45 ACP
Capacity: 6 rounds
Barrel Length: 5" or 4"
Weight: 46 ounces
Grips: Hogue rubber combat, wood optional
Sights: Adjustable/black rear, Patridge front
Price: \$636



TYPE SD R C H

SMITH & WESSON MODEL 629 CLASSIC & 629 CLASSIC DX

Caliber: 44 Mag. or 44 Special
Capacity: 6 rounds
Barrel Length: 4", 5", 6", 6.5" or 8.4"
Weight: 41.5 to 54.5 ounces
Grips: Hogue rubber combat or wood combat
Sights: Adjustable rear; interchangeable, red ramp or Patridge front
Misc: Stainless finish; chambered cylinder; full lug barrel and drilled and tapped for scope mount; Classic DX model features five interchangeable front sights
Price: \$670 (Model 629) to \$888 (Classic DX)



TYPE SD R C H

SMITH & WESSON MODEL 657

Caliber: 41 Mag.
Capacity: 6 rounds
Barrel Length: 6"
Weight: 48 ounces
Grips: Hogue rubber combat
Sights: Adjustable rear, pinned black ramp front
Misc: Stainless finish
Price: \$564



TYPE SD R C H

SMITH & WESSON MODEL 686

Caliber: 357 Mag.
Capacity: 6 rounds
Barrel Length: 2.5", 4", 6", 8.4"
Weight: 41 to 46 ounces
Grips: Hogue black rubber
Sights: Adjustable rear blade, pinned fixed front
Misc: Stainless steel with full lug ported barrel
Price: \$514 to \$564



TYPE SD R C H

TAURUS MODEL 44

Caliber: 44 Mag.
Capacity: 6 rounds
Barrel Length: 4", 6.5" or 8.4"
Weight: 45 to 57 ounces
Grips: Soft black rubber
Sights: Micro-click adjustable rear; serrated ramp front
Misc: Features include a compensated barrel; a heavy, solid rib on 4" or vent rib barrel on 6.5" and 8.4"
Price: \$500 to \$575



TYPE SD R C H

TAURUS MODEL 82 & 82SS4

Caliber: 38 Special
Capacity: 6 rounds (7 rounds in Model 827)
Barrel Length: 4"
Weight: 36.5 ounces
Grips: Soft black rubber
Sights: Fixed
Misc: Heavy, solid rib barrel and key lock
Price: \$325 (Model 82 blue) to \$375 (Model 82SS4 stainless)



TYPE SD R C H

TAURUS MODEL 85 & 731

Caliber: 38 Special and 32 Mag. (731)
Capacity: 5 rounds and 6 shots (731)
Barrel Length: 2"
Weight: 17 to 24.5 ounces
Grips: Soft rubber, rosewood, mother of pearl
Sights: Fixed
Misc: Matte, blue or stainless finish; key locks, concealed hammer and Ultra-Lite versions available;
Model 731: 32 H&R Mag., 6 rounds, 2" barrel, weighs 17 ounces with matte stainless steel finish
Price: \$345 to \$445



TYPE SD R

TAURUS MODEL 94 & 941

Caliber: 22 LR or 22 Mag.
Capacity: 8 or 9 rounds
Barrel Length: 2", 4" or 5"
Weight: 18 to 27.5 ounces
Grips: Soft rubber
Sights: Adjustable
Price: \$325



TYPE SD R H

TAURUS MODEL 445 & 617

Caliber: 44 Special (Model 445 only) or 357 Mag. (Model 617)
Capacity: 5 rounds (Model 445) or 7 rounds (Model 617)
Barrel Length: 2"
Weight: 20 to 28 ounces
Grips: Soft black rubber (617), Ribber (445)
Sights: Fixed
Misc: Options include key locks, ported barrel and concealed hammer; heavy, solid rib barrel on Model 445, also available in titanium
Price: \$345 to \$500



TYPE SD R

TAURUS MODEL 605 & 817

Caliber: 357 Mag. (Model 605) or 38 Special (Model 817)
Capacity: 5 rounds (Model 605) or 7 rounds (Model 817)
Barrel Length: 2"
Weight: 21 to 24 ounces
Grips: Soft rubber
Sights: Fixed
Misc: Available with ported barrel, concealed hammer, key lock and an Ultra-Lite version; comes in a blue, matte or stainless finish
Price: \$345 to \$440



TYPE SD R

TAURUS MODEL 608

Caliber: 357 Mag.
Capacity: 8 rounds
Barrel Length: 4", 6.5" or 8.4"
Weight: 44 to 56 ounces
Grips: Soft rubber
Sights: Adjustable
Misc: Available with ported barrel with solid or vented ribs; in a bright blue or matte stainless finish
Price: \$445 to \$525



TYPE SD R C H

TAURUS RAGING BULL SERIES

Caliber: 454 Casull, 44 Mag. or 45 long Colt
Capacity: 5 or 6 rounds
Barrel Length: 5", 6.5" or 8.4"
Weight: 51 to 63 ounces
Grips: Soft rubber
Sights: Adjustable
Misc: Features a key lock and ported barrel
Price: \$575 (blue) to \$855 (matte stainless)



TYPE SD R C H

UBERTI 1873 BUCKHORN

Caliber: 44 Mag. or 44 Mag./44-40
Capacity: 6 rounds
Barrel Length: 4.75", 5.5" or 7.5"
Weight: 38 ounces
Grips: One-piece smooth walnut
Sights: Blade front, groove rear; fully adjustable rear available
Price: \$410 (steel backstrap) to \$475 (convertible)



TYPE R C H

UBERTI 1873 CATTLEMAN

Caliber: 22 LR/22 WMR, 38 Special, 357 Mag., 44 Special, 44-40 or 45 Colt/45 ACP convertible
Capacity: 6 rounds
Barrel Length: 4.75", 5.5" or 7.5", 44-40, 45 Colt also with 3", 3.5" and 4"
Weight: 38 ounces
Grips: One-piece smooth walnut
Sights: Blade front, groove rear; fully adjustable rear available, Bisley model available
Price: \$365 (brass backstrap) to \$435 (steel backstrap)



TYPE R C H

UBERTI 1875 ARMY OUTLAW

Caliber: 357 Mag., 44-40, 45 Colt or 45 Colt/45 ACP convertible
Capacity: 6 rounds
Barrel Length: 5.5", 7.5"
Weight: 44 ounces
Grips: Smooth walnut
Sights: Blade front, notch rear
Price: \$435 (blue) to \$475 (convertible)



TYPE R C H

UBERTI 1890 ARMY OUTLAW

Caliber: 357 Mag., 44-40, 45 Colt or 45 Colt/45 ACP convertible
Capacity: 6 rounds
Barrel Length: 5.5" and 7.5"
Weight: 37 ounces
Grips: American walnut
Sights: Blade front, groove rear
Price: \$435 (blue) to \$475 (convertible)



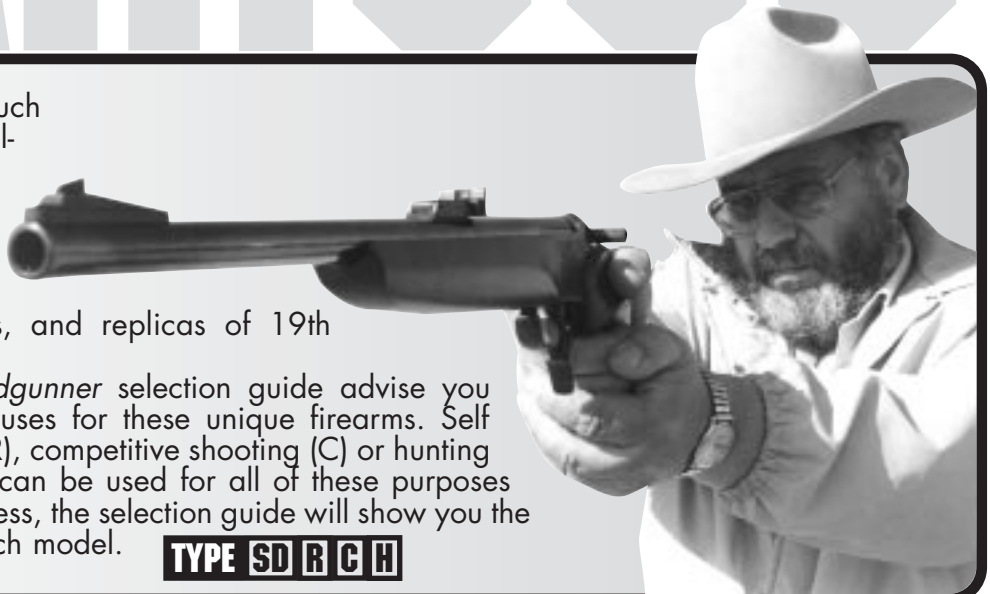
TYPE R C H

VARIOUS

This category includes such things as highly specialized, extremely powerful single-shot handguns designed for hunting or long-range competitive shooting. Versatile multi-caliber single-shot pistols, and replicas of 19th Century derringers.

Let the *American Handgunner* selection guide advise you about the most common uses for these unique firearms. Self defense (SD), recreation (R), competitive shooting (C) or hunting (H). While most firearms can be used for all of these purposes with greater or lesser success, the selection guide will show you the most common uses for each model.

TYPE SD R C H



AMERICAN DERRINGER MODEL 1, 7 & 10

Caliber: Available in almost any pistol caliber from 22 LR to 45-70 Gov't.
Capacity: 2 rounds
Barrel Length: 3"
Weight: 7.5 (Model 7), 10 (Model 10 and 11) or 15.5 ounces (Model 1)
Grips: Zebra or rosewood
Sights: Blade front
Price: \$260 to \$400



TYPE SD R

AMERICAN DERRINGER MODEL 4

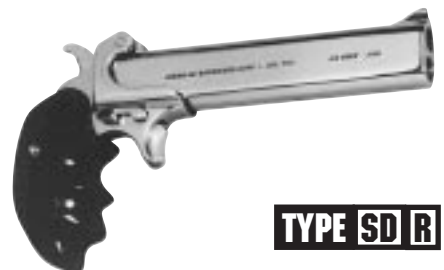
Caliber: 45 Colt/410 ga. (3" shells), 45-70, 44 Mag. or 357 Mag.
Capacity: 2 rounds
Barrel Length: 4.1"
Weight: 16.5 ounces
Grips: Rosewood
Sights: Blade front
Price: \$365 (45 Colt/410 ga.) to \$445 (44 Mag.)



TYPE SD R

AMERICAN DERRINGER MODEL 6

Caliber: 22 WRM, 357 Mag., 45 ACP or 45 Colt/410 ga. (3")
Capacity: 2 rounds
Barrel Length: 6"
Weight: 21 ounces
Grips: Rosewood
Sights: Blade front
Price: \$365 to \$375 (45 Colt/410 ga.)



TYPE SD R

AMERICAN DERRINGER LADY DERRINGER

Caliber: 32 H&R Mag., 357 Mag., 38 Special, 45 Colt or 45/410
Capacity: 2 rounds
Barrel Length: 3"
Weight: 15.5 ounces
Grips: Scrimshawed synthetic ivory
Sights: Blade front, Diamond ramp front on 14 kt. Engraved Model
Misc: Fitted French jewelry box included
Price: \$290 to \$365



TYPE SD R

AMERICAN DERRINGER DA 38

Caliber: 22 LR, 9mm Para., 38 Special, 357 Mag. or 40 S&W
Capacity: 2 rounds
Barrel Length: 3"
Weight: 14.5 ounces
Grips: Rosewood, walnut or other hardwoods
Sights: Fixed
Price: \$325 to \$365



TYPE SD R

BOND ARMS SUPER DEFENDER

Caliber: .450 Bond Super, .45 ACP, .45 Super
Capacity: 2 rounds with rapid reload
Barrel Length: 3" (interchangeable)
Weight: 20 ounces
Grips: Rosewood or black ash
Sights: Blade front
Misc: With removable trigger guard, additional interchangeable barrels from \$129
Price: \$359



TYPE SD R

BOND ARMS CENTURY 2000(C2K) DEFENDER

Caliber: .410 shotshell, .45 Colt, .45 Schofield
Capacity: 2 rounds with rapid reload
Barrel Length: 3.5" (interchangeable)
Weight: 21 ounces
Grips: Rosewood or black ash
Sights: Blade front
Misc: With removable trigger guard, additional interchangeable barrels from \$129
Price: \$379



TYPE SD R

BOND ARMS TEXAS DEFENDER

Caliber: 15 interchangeable calibers from 22LR to .410 shotshell
Capacity: 2 rounds with rapid reload
Barrel Length: 3" (interchangeable)
Weight: 20 ounces
Grips: Rosewood or black ash
Sights: Blade front
Misc: With removable trigger guard, additional interchangeable barrels from \$129
Price: \$359



TYPE SD R

BOND ARMS COWBOY DEFENDER

Caliber: 15 interchangeable calibers from 22LR to .410 shotshell
Capacity: 2 rounds with rapid reload
Barrel Length: 3" (interchangeable)
Weight: 19 ounces
Grips: Rosewood or black ash
Sights: Blade front
Misc: Additional interchangeable barrels from \$129
Price: \$359



TYPE SD R

BOND ARMS COWBOY CENTURY 2000(CCK) DEFENDER

Caliber: .410 shotshell, .45 colt, .45 schofield
Capacity: 2 rounds with rapid reload
Barrel Length: 3" (interchangeable)
Weight: 20 ounces
Grips: Rosewood or black ash
Sights: Blade front
Misc: Additional interchangeable barrels from \$129
Price: \$379



TYPE SD R

DAVIS DERRINGER

Caliber: 22 LR, 22 WMR, 25 ACP or 32 ACP
Capacity: 2 rounds
Barrel Length: 2.4"
Weight: 9.5 ounces
Grips: Laminated wood or pearl
Sights: Blade front, fixed notch rear
Price: \$100



TYPE SD R

Downsizer WSP

Caliber: 45 ACP or 357 Magnum (Also fires 38 special)
Capacity: Single shot
Barrel Length: 2.1"
Weight: 11 ounces
Grips: Textured polymer
Sights: None, smooth snag free top
Misc: Overall size is smaller than a playing card
Price: \$459



TYPE SD R

HAMMERLI 160/162 FREE PISTOLS

Caliber: 22 LR
Capacity: 1 round
Barrel Length: 11.3"
Weight: 47 ounces
Grips: Target style walnut
Sights: Fully adjustable match rear, changeable front blade
Misc: Model 160 has mechanical set trigger; Model 162 has electronic trigger; Precision target pistols for Free Pistol event of UIT competition; Imported by SIG Arms, Inc.
Price: \$2,085 to \$2,295



TYPE R C

M.O.A. MAXIMUM SINGLE SHOT

Caliber: Most calibers from 22 LR to 375 H&H
Capacity: 1 round
Barrel Length: 8.5", 10.5" or 14"
Weight: 3 pounds, 8 ounces (8.5"); 3 pounds, 13 ounces (10.5"); 4 pounds, 3 ounces (14")
Grips: Walnut
Sights: Adjustable rear, post front
Misc: Tapped and drilled for scope mount; extra barrels available
Price: \$799 (blue) to \$883 (stainless)



TYPE RCH

PARDINI ARMS MOD K22 FREE PISTOL

Caliber: 22 LR
Capacity: 1 round
Barrel Length: 9.75"
Weight: 34.6 ounces
Grips: Wraparound walnut; adjustable match type
Sights: Interchangeable post front, fully adjustable match open rear
Misc: Imported by Nygord Precision Products
Price: \$1,295



TYPE RCH

RPM XL SINGLE SHOT PISTOL

Caliber: Available in a wide variety of calibers from 22 LR to 45-70
Capacity: 1 round
Barrel Length: 8", 10.75", 12", 14" and 15"
Weight: 60 ounces
Grips: Smooth Goncalo Alves with thumb and heel rests
Sights: Hooded front with interchangeable post or Patridge; ISGW rear adjustable.
Price: \$1,600



TYPE RCH

SAVAGE STRIKER 516 SERIES

Caliber: 223 Rem., 22-250 Rem., 243 Win., 7mm-08 Rem., 308 Win.
Capacity: 2 rounds
Barrel Length: 12" barrel and 2" Adjustable muzzle brake
Weight: 5.5, 5.75 pounds
Grips: Synthetic or wood
Sights: Drilled and tapped for scope mounts
Misc: Stainless barreled action, left-hand bolt, right-side action
Price: N/A



TYPE RCH

THOMPSON/CENTER ENCORE

Caliber: 22-250, 223, 7mm-08, 243, 308, 270, 30-'06 or 44 Mag.
Capacity: 1 round
Barrel Length: 12" and 15", tapered round
Weight: 64 to 64.5 ounces
Grips: Walnut with finger grooves, walnut forend
Sights: Blade on ramp front, adjustable rear, or none
Price: \$555 (12") to \$562 (15")
\$611 (stainless) to \$619 (stainless)



TYPE RCH

UBERTI ROLLING BLOCK

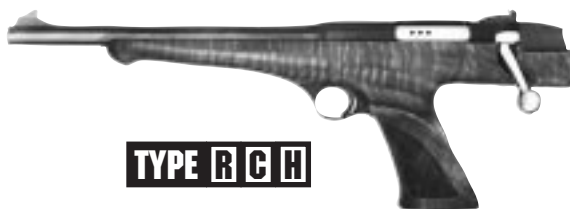
Caliber: 22 LR, 22 WMR, 22 Hornet, 357 Mag. or 45 Colt
Capacity: 1 round
Barrel Length: 9.9"
Weight: 44 ounces
Grips: Walnut grip and forend
Sights: Fully adjustable rear, blade front
Price: \$410



TYPE R C H

WICHITA CLASSIC SILHOUETTE

Caliber: All standard calibers with maximum overall length of 2.80"
Capacity: 1 round
Barrel Length: 11.25"
Weight: 3 pounds 15 ounces
Grips: AAA American walnut with oil finish, checkered
Sights: Adjustable rear, post front
Price: \$3,450



TYPE R C H

WICHITA INTERNATIONAL

Caliber: 22 LR, 22 WMR, 32 H&R Mag., 357 Mag., 357 Super Mag., 7R, 7mm Super Mag., 7-30 Waters or 30-30 Win.
Capacity: 1 round
Barrel Length: 10", 10.5" or 14"
Weight: 3.125 pounds
Grips: Walnut
Sights: Adjustable rear, fixed front
Misc: Stainless steel; extra barrels available
Price: \$775 to \$875



TYPE R C H

WICHITA SILHOUETTE BOLT ACTION

Caliber: All standard calibers with maximum overall length of .280"
Capacity: 1 round
Barrel Length: 14.94"
Weight: 4.5 pounds
Grips: Walnut with oil finish
Sights: Wichita Multi-Range sight system
Price: \$1,800



TYPE R C H



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TROJAN **Carry/Compete**

.45 ACP, .40S&W, 9 m.m.
5" barrel, 36 oz.



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.45ACP, .40S&W,
.38S, .357SIG, 9 m.m.
3.9" barrel, 25 oz.



EXECUTIVE **Carry/Compete**

.40S&W
5" barrel, 39 oz.



EAGLE

Carry/Compete

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5" barrel, 34 oz.



RANGER **Carry**

.45ACP, 3.9" barrel, 29 oz.



EDGE **Compete**

.45ACP, .40S&W, 9 m.m.
5" barrel, 39 oz.



LS/BLS **Carry**

.9 m.m., .40S&W, 3.4" barrel, .765" wide, 27 oz.



GRANDMASTER **Compete**

.38 Super, 11" OAL, 38-43 oz.



COMPETITOR **Compete**

.38 Super
10.5" OAL .43 oz.



XCALIBER .450+ SMC **Hunt**

.450 SMC, 6" barrel, 40 oz.



TROJAN .40Super **Hunt**

.40Super, 9" OAL, 36 oz.

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.-)



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