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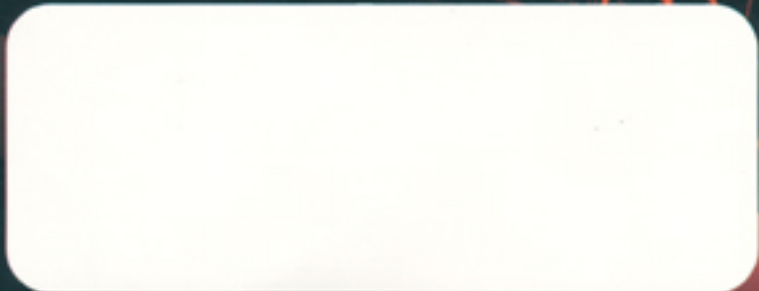
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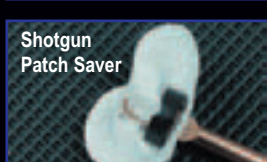
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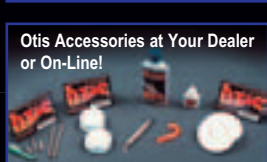
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are custom made with more and finer bristles than lesser brands. The belt-pack cases are made of ballistic nylon, with heavy duty zippers. The Bore Obstruction Removers are designed to avoid deforming a stuck bullet and will gently force it out of the bore with multiple taps from the Memory-flex rod. The Memory flex rod is nylon coated, aircraft-grade cable with compression welded fittings that will support over a quarter ton of pull force!

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**WIN THIS
COMBO!**

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WARNING: Firearms are dangerous and if used improperly may cause serious injury or death. Due to the inherent variables in the reloading of ammunition, be sure to verify any published loads with manufacturer's data. Products mentioned or advertised may not be legal in all states or jurisdictions. Obey all firearms laws. Always consult a professional gunsmith when modifying any firearm. Be a safe shooter!

SEPTEMBER 2003

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THE WORLD'S MOST ADVANCED AMMUNITION!

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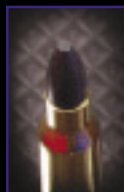
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In addition to Law Enforcement Only rounds, The ExtremeShock™ Explosive Entry Air Freedom Round Personal Defense ammunition is the best choice for home or urban carry. The rounds frangible and reduced ricochet characteristics provide a greater level of safety. A miss on a target wont penetrate through several walls, and potentially injure a sleeping family member. The pistol rounds comply with appropriate DOJ pistol caliber ballistic vest requirements, but are devastatingly effective against armed assailants. An officer can shoot a rabid dog on a playground with less worry that the bullet will penetrate, hit the ground, ricochet and injure or kill a bystander.

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EXPLOSIVE ENTRY
"AFR" CONTROLLED
PENETRATION

THE WORLD'S FIRST "SMART" MUNITIONS

The Extreme Shock Explosive Entry round is the world's first "smart" small arms munition. It fragments in logarithmic proportion to the hardness of the target it strikes. It more than doubles the rate of energy transfer of a typical hollow point round! It more than quadruples the rate of energy transfer of conventional ball rounds. If it is striking something brittle, it's Nytrilium-Tungsten core will disintegrate very rapidly, reducing shoot-through and ricochet.

When it hits softer organic targets, it fragments at a slower rate, with larger fragments dissipating into the target creating literally hundreds of wound channels. At right you can see the shock cavity a full seven inches in diameter!

A conventional round can penetrate most human torsos, dissipating a portion of the bullets energy into the target, and wasting the balance traveling into the area behind the target. The composite Explosive Defractor Core™ of the Extreme Shock Explosive Entry AFR Round acts as a perpendicular defractor plate that blows the fragments at virtual 90-degree angles to the wound channel! 100% percent of the energy is transferred into the surrounding tissue mass. This is the reason that the effective E-Shock wound channel is up to (depending on caliber) an astonishing 80 times the size of the entry wound!!



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Where a conventional round leaves a one-hole trauma cavity, The Extreme Shock Explosive Entry Round leaves a "shaped charge" trauma cavity with hundreds of individual wounds channels, causing Central Nervous System catastrophic overload. In video taped field tests with angry 300 lb Russian Boars, a single .380 round will incapacitate and kill in a matter of seconds! The 450lb Boar in the picture was taken with a single 9mm round. See our website or call for more information!



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CROSSFIRE LETTERS TO GUNS

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

I thought your July '03 issue was great and I especially liked Clint Smith's Cowboy Shooting Then and Now, but after reading through that article twice I still can't find the name of that pretty hombre (hombre-ette?) totin' that big .45 Colt. Is Clint Smith holding out on us?

Anyway, keep up the good work. You have a great magazine.

Ken Zwizanski
Collingdale, Pa.

The young lady whose photographs so well accompanied Clint's article is none other than Heidi Smith, and a lovelier, more pleasant soul you'd be hard pressed to find. Heidi has been in the magazine several times lately, and thus it slipped my mind to identify her. I apologize sincerely for the error. Ed.

Clint Fires 'Em Up

Your recent article on cowboy shooting puts us all in an unflattering light. What the f#\$% is wrong with you people? At a time when the liberals are attempting to divide and conquer, you idiots go and help them along! I guess you did not realize that many of your (now ex-) readers shoot cowboy as well.

There are many thousands of cowboy shooters in this country and I hope you will feel the loss of readership financially. I for one will write many of your advertisers and let them know that I cannot do business with a magazine, or its sponsors, that does not support all safe shooting sports.

Dennis Holmbeck
Via E-mail

Cheers For Clint

I have just finished reading your July issue and am thrilled that you have hired Clint Smith to your staff. He is an excellent teacher, great writer, and always has many words of wisdom. I especially enjoyed the article on CAS. I felt it was a good contrast, very informative, and factual. A check for my subscription is in the mail.

Joe Abernathy
Johnson City, Texas

Where To Begin?

The July issue is one of the very best yet; so much of interest that it's hard to

know where to begin. Clint's piece on cowboy shootin' is particularly well done, as we'd expect.

I enjoyed J.W. Hardin's lusty account of Elfege Baca; in the 3rd paragraph he cites 4 versus 5 at the OK Corral but when the shooting started it was 4 Earps vs. 3 cowboys. There are any number of guesstimates as to ammo consumption and duration of the dustup, but roughly 30 rounds in 30 to 35 seconds seems more or less the consensus. Evidently there were 15 hits, counting "edgers." At least that's the tally in Stuart Edward White's worshipful Earp biography.

Barrett Tillman
Via e-mail

Clint Is On Target

Clint Smith's Ranging Shots column on "Hallway Howitzers" was in my opinion right on target. There is nothing more intimidating than the sound of a pump gun racking a shell. I would like to add one thing. If you ever have to defend your life, use a sporting/hunting shotgun with blued finish and wood stock/forearm. If a prosecutor doesn't have an air-tight case against you, he'll attack your character.

A parkerized, synthetic-stocked, extended magazine tactical shotgun will be turned against you. You'll be portrayed as a gun nut waiting for a chance to kill your fellow man! The same goes for ammo, No. 2 bird shot works at bedroom distances and it's a hunting round.

Scott Thurman
Belleville, Mich.

J.T. Puts It In Perspective

I wanted to let you know that I thoroughly enjoyed your latest issue. I started at the back with John Taffin's inspiring article on Ron Elerick. It really made me think about what truly matters. You just don't see "big picture" articles in today's magazines.

After working my way forward, I got a serious bite from the Cowboy bug. We'll see if I recover or fully succumb to it. Also, the typeface on the article titles was attractive, legible, and not too over the top. It's just my opinion, but I say great job.

Steve Smith
Via e-mail

Helpful Reader

Your June, 2003 article concerning slug and buckshot loads for the .410 states on page 65 that nobody makes a buck load for the .410. This is incorrect. Winchester makes a "triple ought" .410 SuperX 2½-inch shell. (No. XB41000). This is listed in the new 2003 Winchester product guide.

I have purchased these and the accuracy (if you can call it that out of a Bond derringer) is much better than other loads I have fired.

Hope this helps some of your readers,

Dennis of Athens, Tenn.

How 'Bout That Cowboy?

I thoroughly enjoyed John Taffin's article Colt's Legendary SAA. I would enjoy reading an article comparing this revolver to the Colt "Cowboy" (if I have this correctly) which goes for less than half the price of the "real deal."

I receive a good number of magazines during a given month with *American Handgunner* being the first I would read and *GUNS* coming in second. When I do not receive *American Handgunner*; well, I guess that speaks for itself in volumes. Keep up the great work!

Glenn Siciliano
McDonough, Ga.

Manufacturers, Are You Listening?

My wish list is:

1) Marlin Guide Gun (.45-70) all stainless, but with synthetic stock instead of wood and also as a take down. I would gladly pay another \$100 for this option.

2) Ruger MKII in .17 HMR with an 8-inch bull barrel and picatinny rail for mounting optics.

3) Titanium-framed 1911 Commander by any reputable manufacturer with light rail in .45 ACP, .38 Super, and 9mm. Must have night sights.

4) Ruger Bisley, stainless steel with a 5- or 5.5-inch barrel. Keep the transfer bar safety but go back to the old style (Colt) loading. Calibers of .45 Colt and .44 magnum. How about a maximum frame in the new .500 S&W and factory porting?

I would buy every one of these guns upon release!

Michael Frangoudakis
Via e-mail



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ON A POSITIVE NOTE BY JIM GARDNER

Best Of The Best

Are you familiar with the Academy of Excellence Awards? Presented annually by *GUNS*' sister publication, *Shooting Industry Magazine*, these awards honor the most significant achievements of the year in the shooting and outdoor industries. Founded in 1992, the Academy of Excellence Awards have become a potent force promoting innovation in design and an emphasis on quality. Let me give you an example.

One of the Award categories is "Knife Of The Year." With perhaps a dozen really outstanding cutlery manufacturers in the country, there is fierce competition in this arena. Despite this, Benchmade Knife Company has won this award for six consecutive years. How could this happen? In short, it's the result of a determination to excel, and more than that, to continually raise the standards of quality and design.

Joe Verbanac, advertising and design manager for Benchmade touched on this when he said recently: "We looked back on the first Knife Of The Year award we

received in 1998, and realized that design wouldn't even be a finalist today." Benchmade's Travis Noteboom said of the Awards, "We're very competitive, and we like to win. We know our competitors can put out a good product, and so we're driven to offer ever better designs and materials."

Of course the final winner in this race towards improved products is the consumer.

The method by which winning products, companies or individuals are selected is beyond reproach. New product introductions are generally made at the SHOT Show. Shortly after this event, a huge

list of nominees in 12 different categories is compiled. With this list completed, preliminary ballots are mailed to the nearly 500 voting members of the Academy. These are persons in the firearms business, ranging from outdoor writers to storefront dealers to industry executives. All are people for whom shooting and hunting is both a livelihood and passion.

With the preliminary ballots tallied, final ballots showing the top contenders in each category are mailed. Voting on this final ballot determines which products, companies or individuals will earn a coveted Academy Of Excellence Award. The final winner in each category is revealed at the annual Awards presentation.

What makes these Awards unique, and what has caused them to assume such prominence in the industry is the fact that although sponsored by *Shooting Industry Magazine*, no one associated with *S.I.* nor its parent publishing group is even permitted to vote. That's right — no back room deals, no shady *quid pro quo* arrangements with potential magazine advertisers — just a straight-up vote from people like old Bob down at the local gunshop, offering his opinion on what new guns and gear are really worthwhile.

And that's why you should know about the Academy of Excellence Awards. Both final nominees and eventual winning products tend to be particularly excellent. Looking for a good rifle? Wondering what accessories have genuine merit? Thinking about a new handgun? Why not see which was voted the best in its category? For the scoop on 2003's Academy of Excellence Award winners, check out the Web site at: www.shootingindustry.com.

Is This Your Sharps?

Fine old single-shot rifles are one of my personal shooting passions. If you happen to share an interest in this subject, there's a great organization you should know about. The American Single Shot Rifle Association, founded in 1948, is dedicated to the use, study and preservation of both original and modern reproduction single shots. They publish a very fine periodical for members, the *Single Shot Rifle Journal*. Point your Web browser to: www.assra.com for more information.

For 2003, ASSRA is raffling off a magnificent custom Sharps Borchardt. Chambered in .40-70 SS, this beauty is the product of a collaboration by some of America's finest craftsmen. The action is from Al Story of the Borchardt Rifle Co., as is the excellent Badger barrel. Treebone Carving donated the stock wood upon which Bernie Harrell worked such delicate magic. The wonderful engraving is by Ken Hurst, the sights by Tom Axtell and the flawless rust blue and color case-hardening by Classic Guns. I've seen this rifle up close, and it's simply splendid.

Tickets are only \$10, and you may purchase as many chances as you wish. The drawing will be held August 30, 2003, so don't delay. To enter, send your name, address and telephone number along with entry fee to: Keith Foster, 15770 Rd. 1037, Oakwood, Ohio, 45873





ENTER TO WIN!

They Chose JUST ONE You'll Get ALL THREE!

The handguns shown here were picked as the top three for 2002 by industry professionals who represent the Shooting Industry Academy of Excellence. Kimber's Eclipse Custom II was selected as the Handgun of the Year. You can win it plus the other two in the Pride & Liberty Sweepstakes.



It was a great year for handgunners.

2002 saw the introduction of the Springfield Armory X-Treme Duty — an innovative, DAO polymer import, with a uniformly fine trigger action. This slick-shooting pistol is winning converts across the country.

2002 also saw the long awaited return of the Ruger Super Blackhawk Hunter. This is the sixgun John Taffin described as, "All the handgun hunter could ask for." Bull-strong,

rust-proof and equipped with excellent adjustable sights as well as quick detachable scope rings, the SBH Hunter is justly popular.

Perhaps the sexiest handgun to appear on dealer's shelves this past year is the Kimber Eclipse Custom II. This two-tone stainless beauty is shattering sales records for 1911 pistols. The Eclipse Custom II not only looks great, it'll make you look good as you examine that tight group on your target. Careful, close-tolerance construction and hand fitting where needed are the reasons for its outstanding accuracy and reliability.

To enter, complete the Entry Certificate and return it in the envelope attached. If Certificate is missing write to: Sweepstakes at P.O. Box 85201, San Diego, CA 92186





SHOTGUNNER^{BY} HOLT BODINSON

“Hey, This Is Fun!”

There's a lot of hand wringing going on in the shooting sports these days about the lack of participation of our youths. Every single rationalization has been given as to the reasons for the decline, including single-parent households, computer games, anti-gun pressures, urbanization, and you name it. I have another take on the problem.

I've never met a boy or girl who wasn't immediately interested in shooting if they were given a chance to hold a firearm, receive some sound instruction and supervision, and then actually shoot on the range. “Hey, this is fun!” is the comment most often heard. The problem is a lack of opportunity. The problem has been the lack of enough structured, entry-level programs that would attract participation.

Well, the shotgun community has risen to the challenge. It is a success story that has exceeded all expectations.

They Made It Happen

Coming together, the Amateur Trapshooting Assoc. (ATA), National Skeet Shooting Assoc. (NSSA), National Sporting Clays Assoc. (NSCA), and the National Shooting Sports Foundation (NSSF) have created and sponsor the Scholastic Clay Target Program.

The Scholastic Clay Target Program (SCTP) is a nationwide shooting program designed specifically for youths in grades 6 to 12. What better time than at the middle, junior and high school levels to involve our youth and future leaders in shooting? The program emphasizes safety, shooting skill development, commitment, responsibility, self-confidence, leadership, good sportsmanship and teamwork. Beginning its third year of operation, here's how this fabulous youth program works.

The basic building block of the program is a team or squad of at least five members. Youths in the 6th through 8th grades are organized into the Junior Division while

shooters in the 9th through 12th grades make up the Senior Division. Teams and competitions are also divided into Novice and Experienced categories. The Novice category is for youths who have never shot registered targets in the discipline they're newly registered for. The Experienced level is for those who have.

Each team must register in one division in either trap, skeet, or clays or any combination of those

disciplines at their home gun club or shooting facility. The team must have an assigned coach, and each team member is required to submit a parental consent form that is retained at the national SCTP office housed at the National Shooting Sports Foundation in Newtown, Conn.

Each team is backed by a sponsor. Sponsors today include gun clubs, businesses, Boy Scout troops, churches, 4-H and FFA clubs, and even individuals. The NSSF is actively helping to organize teams by offering coaching clinics and incentives such as Program Support Packages that can include hearing and eye protection, shell pouches, ammunition, clay targets, T-shirts and hats.

More Than Local

What I consider the most attractive aspect of the whole program is that the teams in each division and category can participate in State and National Championships under the rules of the ATA, NSCA, and NSSA. Typically, the youth teams participate right along with adult shooters at normally scheduled state and national shoots. State champion teams in the junior and senior divisions are actually awarded travel scholarships to attend the national championships and receive “State Champion” branded apparel.

In 2002, 515 team members from 36 states competed in the SCTP National Trap Championship held in conjunction with the Grand American. In the sporting clays and skeet events, 120 young shooters traveled to the National Shooting Complex in San Antonio to compete in the first SCTP Sporting Clays and Skeet Championships ever held. Can you imagine the excitement of just attending the Grand American as a teenage shooter!

And the prizes? National Champion Team members in both the Junior and Senior divisions receive a \$1,000 Savings “I” Bond for college scholarship purposes, branded “National Champion” apparel and other special prizes.

The growth and scope of the Scholastic Clay Target Program in two years has been phenomenal with 3,100 young competitors spread among 410 teams in 40 states. In the state of Nebraska alone, 68 schools already offer athletic letters to competing junior shooters.

So, no more hand wringing. Organize some SCTP teams through your local gun club and let's get these great young men and women out there competing with a gun in their hands. Sponsoring a youth program can also be great local publicity generator for your club.

NRA/ATA Youth Trapshooting Camps

Here is another opportunity for involving youths, albeit on a more limited basis. The NRA and the Amateur Trapshooting Association have inaugurated a Youth Trapshooting Camp program to introduce youths to the sport of trapshooting. The camps are one-day, weekend or multiple day shooting workshops operated typically by a local trapshooting club. Like the SCTP program, NRA/ATA Camp Program focuses on safety, the basics of trapshooting, the history and rules of the sport and overall skill development.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

Scholastic Clay Target
Program
[203] 426-1320
www.nssf.org/SCTP

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QUARTERMASTER

BY DAVID M. FORTIER

MercWorx Equatorian

This is a politically incorrect knife designed for politically incorrect tasks by a politically incorrect company. A beast of a knife, the Equatorian is handmade from start to finish by an individual knifemaker for MercWorx Knives. Never heard of them?

Well, hard data that you can print about this organization is a bit difficult to come by. They say that for almost two decades now they've been supplying gear and blades to elite military organizations. Recently though they began offering a limited selection of proprietary knife designs commercially. The Equatorian is the largest of these.

The Equatorian features an 8½ inch long hollow-ground blade that's sharpened along its back, and has a median thickness of 1/4 inch. Somewhat *Gladius* like in shape, the blade itself is engineered for maximum chopping and thrusting strength. It's also broad and wide to create a massive wound channel. For optimum edge retention and sharpening characteristics the blade is crafted from 154 CM stainless steel which is cryogenically treated to a 58 Rockwell. The lemon drop handle is complemented by smooth micarta scales.

There's more to this blade than I can point out in this brief space. Every little detail was designed for a specific reason. From actual use I was impressed by the Equatorian's capabilities. It's extremely robust with plenty of lateral strength for prying. The fine polished finish is less porous than a bead blast finish and thus easier to maintain and less likely to rust in the field. The handle provides a secure grip, yet won't eat your hand under hard abusive use.



If you need to chop or hack your way through something or someone the Equatorian is a combat buddy you can count on. Inexpensive? Not a chance! But for \$425 you get an impressive blade handcrafted in the U.S.A. with a kydex multi-directional tactical scabbard.



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QUARTERMASTER

BY DAVID M. FORTIER

Norma Reloading Components

If you roll your own ammunition one name to consider is Norma of Sweden. Not only does Norma produce one of the widest ranges of cartridges in the world, they also offer a vast array of components for the serious reloader. Long held in high regard, Norma cartridge cases are available in a wide array of calibers including 6.5/284, .270 and .300 WSM, and .338 Lapua Magnum. For military collectors they offer brass for old warhorses such as the 6.5x52mm Carcano, 7.62x54R, and 6.5x50mm Arisaka. Plus they manufacture a line of Weatherby Magnum cases.

When it comes time to load your cases Norma also offers a line of propellants. As I shoot quite a bit of .308 Match, I found two of their powders in particular, Norma 202 and 203-B, of interest. Norma 202 was developed specifically for use in the 7.62x51 NATO, and it performs well with bullets up to around 180 grains. For pushing heavier 190-grain Match bullets Norma 203-B should be considered. These are both high quality powders offering consistent performance.

To top their propellants Norma offers a variety of projectiles to meet the needs of both hunters and competitors. The hunting line includes Norma's 'Oryx' bonded core bullet, the 'Alaska' which offers good penetration and expansion, and the 'Vulkan' which offers rapid expansion. For competition and long range use they offer a line of 6.5mm Match bullets both with and without Moly coating with a light film of carnuba wax (for reducing both friction and barrel wear). In particular they offer an impressive 130 grain



6.5mm Match bullet with a BC of .548.

While their components are not inexpensive they are of extremely high quality. When building the best in hand-crafted ammunition, it only makes sense to start with superbly made components. If you reload, check out what Norma has to offer.



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QUARTERMASTER

BY DAVID M. FORTIER

Angle Cosine Indicator

If you're a serious rifleman who demands the utmost from both your rifle and yourself this is a simple piece of gear you should know about. Designed by Ward Brien, the Angle Cosine Indicator is an aid for practical and tactical rifle shooters when engaging elevated or depressed targets. Under such conditions if the angle of the shot isn't taken into account a rifleman will overshoot his target. The Angle Cosine Indicator is designed to give you the angle cosine so you can quickly and easily correct for gravity's effect on your bullet's trajectory.

A simple yet rugged instrument, it's manufactured from aircraft grade aluminum and anodized either green or black. It mounts easily to your scope's tube via a standard scope ring. The face of the instrument has a dial showing the correct cosine for whatever angle the weapon's bore is pointed at. As the rifle is elevated or depressed the dial rotates.

In use the operator first ranges his target conventionally. Then, while aiming at his target he reads the cosine number shown on the ACI. The actual range is then multiplied by this cosine (example: 442 yards X .82 cosine = 362 yards) to correct the range for gravity. He then adjusts for the corrected range and fires. Simple. As the ACI is marked in 5 degree increments it can also be used to work out the actual angle of the shot (in the case of our example .82 = 35 degrees) making it compatible with the Mil Dot Master and other systems.

The Angle Cosine Indicator is rugged, silent in use, requires no batteries, and is unaffected by weather conditions. It's currently in



wide use by law enforcement and military snipers and has just been adopted for use by British snipers. Suggested retail price is \$69.95, and models are available that read either in cosine or angles. This is one piece of gear I not only use but also highly recommend.



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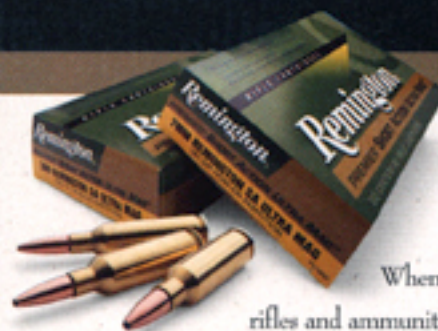
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HANDGUNS BY MASSAD AYOOB

Better Than Ever, In Every Respect, For CCW

Better Concealed Carry Leather

Elmer MacEvoy of Leather Arsenal is back going full-bore building great concealment leather. I've always liked the Leather Arsenal stuff. I was drawing a Government Model Colt .45 from one of his Bruce Nelson-inspired Summer Surprise holsters the year I did my personal best out of six times at the National Tactical Invitational. The rough-out, inside the waistband (IWB) scabbard had given me excellent concealment of the big autoloader coupled with the speed of a quick-draw match holster.

At the moment I'm wearing his latest, a brilliant design enhancement of the "tuckable" rig developed by Dave Workman that goes inside the waistband, behind the hip, and under a tucked in shirt. A thin slab of leather allows the shirt-tails to go between the IWB holster and

the trousers. The loop that attaches to the belt remains visible, however, but Elmer has ingeniously camouflaged this as a functional key-ring.

I'm sitting here with a Kahr PM9 under a tucked in Arrow dress shirt and tie. The pistol is simply invisible, and two movements — a tug on the shirt, followed by a conventional draw stroke — from being up and on target. For info contact Leather Arsenal, 27549 Middleton Rd., Middleton, Idaho 83644.

When I was young, holster options were far fewer than today. Bruce Nelson had not yet conceptualized the defining IWB that he and Milt Sparks would make famous as the Summer Special. Most IWB holsters were crappy things that appeared to be tangible proof that one could skin a chicken, tan its hide, and sew it into a pouch with quick-rotting cotton thread. It would then be "secured" inside the belt with a crappy snap on a flap of cheap leather, or perhaps a tenuously-grasping metal clip like the one that came on a 29-cent eyeglass case from Woolworth's.

Better Concealed Carry Guns

That PM9 is Kahr's latest polymer-framed sub-compact carry gun. At 15 ounces unloaded it's the same

heft as an Airweight five-shot .38 Special, but carries seven rounds of 9mm Parabellum and is much easier to shoot, even with the extremely effective 115-grain JHP hot-loads at 1,300 feet per second nominal velocity. Not so many rounds as a Kel-Tec or Glock 26, but shorter than the Glock and thinner than either, and very easy to shoot fast and straight.

This one recently put five rounds of Black Hills' economical "blue box" remanufactured 115-grain JHPs into about two and a quarter inches from the 25 yard bench rest. That "shootability" is tough to duplicate with an aluminum frame .38 revolver loaded with +P.

On the same day I signed the 4473 form for the PM9 at Jim McCloud's Manchester Indoor Firing Line range and gunshop in Manchester, N.H., I took delivery of the new Springfield Armory XD40 Tactical, that firm's answer to the splendid Glock 35 Tactical/Practical.

The owner's son, Jim Jr., was eager to shoot it, and he took it straight from the box to the range with 50 rounds of CCI Lawman in .40 S&W. Firing as fast as he could, he put every shot into the ten-ring of a B27 target at seven yards. A Glock man like his dad, he had never fired an XD before, but he and the gun bonded instantly and turned in a superb performance.

Dammit, we didn't used to have defense guns that were this "shootable." In the mid-'50s, your choices in serious defensive autos were the S&W Model 39 and the Browning Hi-Power in 9mm, and the Colt Government or Commander in .45. The first was horribly inaccurate in that early generation and didn't always work. The latter two had mediocre triggers, tended to bite the web of the hand with hammer spur or grip tang or both, and like the Gen One Smith Parabellum would feed only round nose full metal jacket ammo. Speaking of which...

Better Defensive Handgun Ammo

Yesteryear's hollow point ammo didn't always mushroom, especially when launched at reduced velocity from short-barrel concealed carry guns. That's over now. Today's hi-tech "premium" hollow points from all the big makers are expressly engineered to expand when fired from shorter barrel guns.

These include Tom Burczynski's StarFire (PMC) and Hydra-Shok (Federal) designs, the Gold Dot produced by Allen Jones' design team (CCI Speer), Alan Corzine's SXT that evolved from the Black Talon (Winchester), and Dave Schluckebier's Golden Saber (Remington). The new Taurus ammo with the Barnes X-bullet promises the same high performance even at lower velocity.

Better Concealed Carry Laws

We have more states with "shall issue" concealed carry licensing now than at any time in the last century. These dominoes continue to fall, with Ohio, Minn. and Miss. about to join the ranks of the "free states."

For those law-abiding citizens who choose to discreetly and competently carry concealed, loaded handguns in public to defend themselves, things have never been better. The old Madison Avenue jingle comes to mind. *You've come a long way, baby!*



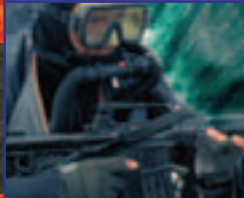
Elmer MacEvoy's new tuckable holster easily conceals PM9 under tapered, tucked-in dress shirt. **Below:** Smaller than most .380s, the Kahr PM9 is literally palm-size, but chambered for 9mm Luger ammo.



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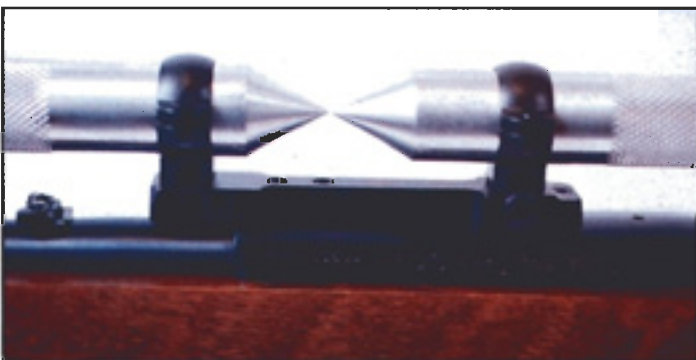
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HS-02



SCOPE MOUNTING

HERE'S HOW TO DO IT RIGHT THE FIRST TIME.





AND SIGHTING IN

By Glenn Barnes



Warped and bent scope bodies, scarred and marred finishes, cracked lens, lost turret caps, at least one scope mounted backwards, and certainly the wrong mounts and rings. Every year prior to hunting season, gun shops and gunsmiths are faced with doctoring the mistakes of incorrectly mounted scopes. Unfortunately, scope mounting *faux pas* like these are more common than you might imagine.

Degrees in nuclear science, physics, or engineering are not required to successfully mount optics on your hunting rifle. Anyone possessing basic motor skills (I barely fall into this category), and the ability to follow simple instructions can achieve professional results the first time.

All that's needed is a few simple tools, a place to work, and the desire to do it right. Let's examine the steps required to successfully and professionally mount your favorite optics on a hunting rifle. When we've completed this task, we'll visit the range and learn how to properly sight in our rifle.

A Clean, Well-Lighted Place

To start, we need a place to work. If you don't have a corner of the house that belongs to you, boldly commandeer the wife's kitchen table — just make sure she's not home. Next, we'll require a sturdy platform to work from. Having your brother-in-law hold the rifle steady while you work is asking for trouble, hurt feelings and scratched firearms. Gun vises abound on the market and are relatively inexpensive. Just make sure you choose one that holds the firearm securely and will not scratch your expensive investment.

Most rifles leave the factory with filler screws resting in the scope base holes. Remove them using a properly fitting screwdriver. Next, we'll want to clean any grease or oil that may have accumulated in the holes to insure the base screws thread securely. Aerosol gun scrubbers and blasters, manufactured by Birchwood Casey, Break-Free and others work well for this chore. It's also a wise idea after you've done this, to apply a thin coat of oil onto the receiver where the mount will rest, to prevent possible rust.

Quality Pays

There are many successful designs of scope mounts and bases on the market today. Most are very rugged and durable, sadly, some are not. Insist on nothing less than the best and forget about the cost. A quality set of mounts and rings is much cheaper than a missed shot on a Boone and Crockett whitetail.

By far, the most popular scope bases and rings are those manufactured by Redfield, Burris, Leupold, and Millett. The front scope ring twists into the base mount for a rock solid perch, while two large windage adjustment screws secure the rear scope ring.



Due to their popularity and quality, we'll mount a set of these on our rifle.

Open the package containing the bases for your weapon and wipe them off with a rag. Apply a thin coat of oil to the underside of the mount as well. More than likely, a proper fitting allen wrench was included with your bases. If not, make sure you use the correct size to prevent damaging the screws.

Base screws are rarely the same length, and instructions often neglect to inform us where each one should fit. So how do we determine what goes where? An easy solution is to drop the screws into the base holes, hold them up where you can see the threaded portion of the screws, and make sure there is an equal amount of each screw protruding from the base. They should all be approximately the same length. This method is far from scientific, but actually works well.

Now it's time to secure the bases to the receiver. Scope bases have an uncanny ability to work loose under heavy

recoil, which obviously wreaks havoc with accuracy. Murphy's Law dictates we only become aware of this after we've missed the buck of a lifetime, and watch him saunter over the horizon waving his white tail in salute. This malady is entirely preventable.

Place the front and rear base mounts in their proper place on the receiver. Before inserting and tightening the base screws, dab a little Loctite on the threads. This will prevent them from working loose under recoil. If you're out of Loctite, reach for a bottle of your wife's clear nail polish. It will suffice in a pinch.

Step Two: Rings

With our bases securely in place, it's time to mount the scope rings. Using your properly fitting wrench, remove the screws from the rings. Place them along with their corresponding ring halves on your workbench. The forward

continued on page 24





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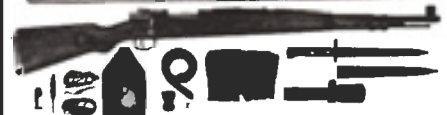
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ring mounts in a rotary dovetail. For a smooth installation, wipe a light coating of any good grease over the "feet" of the forward ring before inserting it into the base hole. You will notice it rests perpendicular to the mount.

Unless you were blessed with the power of Hercules, it's quite obvious you can't turn the ring with your bare hands. So what's the easiest way to perform this task? Brownells offers a 4-Way Scope Ring Wrench (part number 813-100-004) that includes slots for Leupold, Burris, Millett/Redfield, and 30mm Leupold rings.

Slide the correct slot over the ring and gently rotate to the proper position. The large handle provides plenty of comfortable twisting power. I've personally used one to mount well over 1,000 scopes in my shop. They are very durable. If you don't have one of these tools on hand and can't wait, try cutting a one-inch wooden dowel to approximately twelve inches. While not as fancy, this works equally well.

Using an appropriately fitting screwdriver, loosen the large windage screws on the rear scope base enough to slide the rear ring into place. Center it as close as possible. Now, tighten the windage screws enough to hold the ring in place; we'll tighten them securely in a moment.

Alignment Is Important

How can we tell if we've aligned the two rings correctly? Once again, the gunsmith's friend, Brownells, helps us out. They offer Scope Ring Alignment Rods (part number 800-730-000) which takes the guesswork out of alignment. Simply place the two aluminum rods, sharpened ends directed towards one another, onto the rings. Mount the upper ring halves on top and secure them with the screws. Adjust as needed until the two pinpoint ends touch. When you mount your scope it will be aligned perfectly.

What if you choose not to invest in this tool, is there a way to be fairly certain your scope is aligned correctly? Absolutely, and I'll bet more folks use this method for mounting a hunting scope than any other. Simply place the scope into the rings. Slowly rotate the scope. Did it turn freely? Could you feel any binding? If so, remove the scope, adjust the rings and try again. Perform this operation until the scope rotates freely in the rings. Once this is accomplished, your scope should be aligned correctly.

Now we're ready to begin mounting the scope. Place the scope into the rings, and lightly screw the upper halves to the lower rings. Not too tight, first we need to make sure our crosshairs are straight, and determine proper eye relief. To obtain the correct eye relief, shoulder the rifle and look through the lens. Adjust the scope back and forth until you're rewarded with a full field of view. If the scope appears out of focus, simply loosen the focus ring and adjust

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until you see everything clearly, then secure it there.

How do we determine if the crosshairs are straight? That's a darn good question, but I don't have a darn good answer to provide. If ten people look through the same scope, more than likely, all ten will see the crosshairs differently. Men and women, boys and girls, are not built the same. Each of us is different. Adjust the scope until you are satisfied the crosshairs are straight. You're the one shooting the rifle. Once this has been accomplished, tighten the screws firmly.

Bore Sighting

The only task left is to bore-sight, and head for the range to sight in. Many shooters still prefer the old-fashioned way of bore-sighting — remove the bolt, arrange the rifle in a steady rest, then aim through the bore at a target. Now adjust the scope's reticle to coincide with the target. This method is very simple and fairly accurate.

Serious shooters generally opt for something a little easier as well as more accurate, enabling them to save a few cartridges while "getting on paper." This method consists of using an "honest to goodness" bore-sighter or collimator. These units come in an assorted variety of shapes and sizes. Midway U.S.A. has a new gunsmithing catalog, and you'll find these collimators there, as well as other good tools for the home gunsmith.

These are very simple to use. Choose the correct caliber arbor for your rifle, attach it to the bore-sighter, which has a grid located in the lens, then slide it into the bore of your rifle. Remove the adjustment caps from your scope. Glance through the lens and you will notice the grid. Our objective is to center the crosshairs in this grid.

Saving A Little Windage

Using a properly fitting screwdriver, or a plain old nickel if that's all you have, turn the elevation screw until it aligns with the center line on the grid. If you will remember, we haven't yet secured the windage screws on our base. We'll do this now, and also save a few windage turns, or clicks, in the process. Insert the correct screwdriver into the base windage screw, and look through the scope. Using this coarse windage adjustment, move the crosshair as close as possible to the center of the grid.

We want the rear scope base to remain as close to center as possible, so don't over-do it. We're just trying to save a few clicks in case we need them while sighting in. Using your screwdriver, turn the windage screw, and move the crosshair as close as you can to the center. Tighten the windage screws firmly. Complete the process using the scope's adjustment. Replace the scope caps and you're done. You have successfully mounted and bore-sighted the scope on your rifle. Let's go to the range and sight it in.

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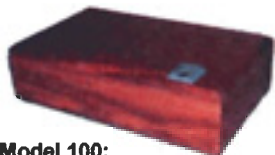
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If you're not a handloader, go to your favorite gun shop and purchase at least two boxes of the ammo you intend to hunt with. Insist all ammunition is from the same lot to insure consistency. Lot numbers are usually found on the inside flap of the box. Handloaders should also make sure their components are from the same lot, especially powders and primers.

On The Range

We've got a good supply of cartridges on hand so what next? Most ranges provide some type of stable platform, or bench, from which to shoot, so all we need is a quality set of earmuffs, shooting glasses, targets, staple gun plus plenty of staples, screwdriver for scope adjustment, and a bag type rest. It wouldn't be a bad idea to include a few screwdrivers to fit the rifle's action screws should they work loose under recoil.

Get comfortable and settle in at the bench. Carefully and slowly fire one cartridge from one hundred yards. Where did the round hit the paper, high and right, left and low? Move the scopes adjustment screws accordingly. Wrap yourself around the rifle and fire a three round group. Were these rounds closer to the bullseye? If not, let your barrel cool down a bit, adjust your scope and try again. Perform this ritual until your rifle is grouping where you want it.

For general big game hunting in most of the country, a 200 yard zero is sufficient for the majority of our needs. Sighted approximately two inches high at 100 yards, this zero will allow you to hold "dead on" from point blank range clear out to 250 yards.

If your particular hunting interests demand a different zero, or your cartridge and rifle combo are not suited to this zero, sight your rifle in according to your needs. Remington, Federal and Winchester offer ballistic tables in their ammunition catalogs that are invaluable in determining suitable zeros for different cartridges.

That's all there is to it. Any gunsmith worth the grease stains on his apron would be proud, or maybe even a little jealous of your professional job. By doing it ourselves, we've also saved enough money to buy a couple of extra boxes of cartridges, or enough to take the wife out to dinner for the use of her kitchen table. Not a bad trade-off, huh?



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Riflery: A Lost Art

At the beginning of each new rifle class here at the ranch, the staff and myself are awed at the amount of "stuff" people can hang on a rifle. Every imaginable light, sight, lighted-sight, laser-scoped-fiber-optic thing ever produced is mounted on top of what was supposed to be a lightweight rifle.

When queried, excuses range from "I have to use this," to "my eyes are bad," to "the sun, the moon, my wife my life," etc. Rather than being negative and going on about this, let's try this approach: mount anything you want on the rifle but *please* have a set of zeroed iron sights.

All the high-tech stuff mounted up and on the rifles seems to point to a universal lack of understanding of what is truly essential — the fundamentals of rifle marksmanship. What are these fundamentals you ask?

Aim or aiming of the sights is broken into two sections. First, **sight alignment** is the relationship of the front sight to the rear sight so that they are properly aligned with each other. For example, in an aperture type sight the front post is centered in the rear aperture.

The second section is **sight picture**, or the placement of the aligned sights onto or superimposed over the target itself. One should take into consideration range to the target, and because of the close ranges of many rifle fights, the mechanical offset of the sight. The height of the sight over the axis of the bore means the projectile may strike lower than the point of aim at close distances — a very important point in hostage or precision placement scenarios.

Hold or holding is the second element of rifle marksmanship. This relates both to holding the sights of the rifle on the target (maintaining sight picture) and hold or holding of the rifle in the context of physical contact of the body to the rifle. The shot that is fired is only as good as the platform it comes from.

Squeeze or squeezing of the trigger is the third element of rifle marksmanship. Simply put this is com-

pressing the trigger until the hammer falls *without* disrupting the sights on the target. As I grow older I'm convinced the squeeze of the trigger is more important than it is often given credit for. Many of the high-tech modern weapons have crappy triggers and many shooters are often in the hose 'em mode anyway. The concept seems to be fill the sky with lead and sooner or later we'll hit 'em.

To some degree that's possible. I mean even a blind hog will find a strawberry once in awhile. But here are some thoughts on the subject from the 1935 United States Marine Corps *Pistol and Rifle Marksmanship* booklet (page 23): "The secret of good shooting depends largely upon the good trigger squeeze. One of the principle differences between fair, good, and excellent rifle shots lies in their mastery of the trigger squeeze."

Okay, so that's one vote for good trigger control, but how about page 69 of the 1941 copy of *Rifle Marksmanship*: "The object is to let the shot off while the sights are in alignment with the target without disturbing such alignment by the pressure of the finger in squeezing the trigger."

The above are the documented elements of rifle marksmanship. They hold as true today as they did 100 years ago. There's one other little point worth mentioning. In reading Captain Edward C. Crossman's *Small Bore Rifle Shooting* (page 297), he mentions: "When you indulge in snapping practice or shoot with regular ammunition, make yourself hold for a *full second* after the hammer falls." The italics by the way were his.

I wonder if the good Captain has a point here? Could follow though be an issue of importance to rifle marksmanship? Are we sometimes so busy hosing the other guy with volley fire that we fail to realize if we would only look at the sight, hold on the target and follow though with the sight picture upon hammer fall we could get a hit? Don't hits help us win?

No matter how good the sights are or how good the hold is, if you yank or jerk on the trigger — no matter what kind of whiz-bang optical/electronic sights you have on your rifle — you'll probably miss. And on top of that if you don't follow though with the firing position — sights and hold of the rifle as it fires — you'll miss.

So do you *really* want to learn to shoot a rifle well? Good. Then go get yourself a single-shot muzzle loading flint or percussion rifle. With only one shot you'll learn to watch the sights, press the trigger and follow though with that baby or trust me, you'll hit zip! By the way the flintlock is the real test. No kidding, if you want to shoot your black AR, AK thing better — practice with a black powder round ball gun. You might be surprised at what you learn.

Right: If you really want to learn to shoot, Clint recommends the muzzle-loading rifle as a tutor. **Below:** "That's right Mac, this rifle's got everything! You're guaranteed to be a better shot if you've got the right accessories... trust me."



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RIFLEMAN BY DAVE ANDERSON

Stocking The Brass Locker

Not all of the new cartridges introduced in recent years are going to achieve popular success. We've all heard stories of shooters who 40 years ago bought a rifle in .225 Winchester or 6.5mm Remington, and who now haunt gun shows, paying exorbitant prices for a box or two of ammunition.

Let's say your gunshop has a nice rifle on display. It's chambered for the new 7mm Super Accurate Precision Highly Effective Antelope and Deerslayer (SAPHEAD). You really like the rifle and cartridge, but you're aware of all the other Sevens: WSM and RUM and SAUM, the proprietary sevens from Dakota Arms and Lazzeroni, the long-established Remington and Weatherby magnums.

Clearly it's a crowded market. As you handle the rifle you picture yourself sighting on a fine whitetail, or scrambling across a rockslide in pursuit of a noble bighorn ram. But another, less attractive picture also comes to mind. You see yourself 20 years from now, prowling gunshops and gun shows: "Does anyone here have a SAPHEAD? I need a box of Seven SAPHEADS! I'm desperate and will pay anything!"

Believe me, I've seen it happen. It's not a pretty sight. Here's what you do. Set the rifle back on the shelf and organize the cartridge case situation. Right now, while supplies are plentiful and prices reasonable, lay in a supply of cartridge cases. It doesn't matter whether you reload now, or ever intend to. Buy cases in bulk along with the appropriate loading dies and shellholder, package them up and store them where they'll be safe from rust, moisture, and temperature extremes.

Maybe the dealership sells bulk brass; more and more large gunshops do. If not, call the large national distributors or check their websites. Once you know your brass supply is secure, go back to the shop and make your deal.



Uncertain Future

Why do I worry about brass supply? Because as long as we keep the freedom to reload, I'm confident I can buy bullets of various diameters, powder and primers. But once a cartridge is discontinued brass supply goes down and prices go up. Yes, cases can sometimes be formed from other cartridges but the process is often laborious and case forming dies expensive.

Compared to 30 years ago, cases are amazingly cheap. In the early '70s I paid \$3.80 for a box of twenty .25-'06 unprimed cases. Since then the national average wage index has increased by a factor of five. If prices had gone up as fast as wages those same cases today would cost \$19, or .95 cents per case. Huntington's sells 500-packs of .25-'06 cases for \$141.80, a bit over .28 cents per case. Maybe they'll be even cheaper in the future. Maybe not. I prefer not to take the chance.

What's a reasonable supply? It depends on the caliber, your wallet and how much you intend to shoot. Target and varmint rifles get shot a lot; for those cartridges I think in terms of thousands.

For popular hunting rifle cartridges such as the .270 and .338 I'm comfortable with 250 cases on hand. The world's not going to run out of them anytime soon. For cartridges I shoot a lot but which aren't very popular, such as the .284 Win., I buy 500 cases for each rifle. On the other hand, while 6.5x54 cartridges for my 1903 Mannlicher-Schoenauer aren't common, I don't shoot it all that often. 200 cases should last my lifetime and then some.

From my basic supply I take 50 cases at a time. (Why 50? That's how many those handy MTM cartridge boxes hold). I'll keep shooting and reloading these cases (marking off each reloading on the box label). Since I tend to the conservative side in reloading I can usually count on 10 reloads per case. Of course these are for practice and load development. For actual hunting trips only once-fired, full-length resized cases will do.

I received a letter from a fellow who had inherited a fine rifle in .308 Norma Magnum from his father, and was thinking of having it rebarreled or rechambered. Yet for about \$150 he could buy a set of dies and 100 Norma cases, enough to keep it active in the hunting field for a long, long time. Makes more sense to me.



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EYES LIKE AN EAGLE

**STORY BY DAVID M. FORTIER
PHOTOS BY EMILY K. FORTIER**

When it comes to binoculars you invariably get what you pay for. However that doesn't mean you have to cough up \$1,000 plus for a European name. There are some good binoculars available at reasonable prices, if you consider reputable brands. What follows is an in-depth look at five different units. The idea being to test quality field binoculars, with 30 to 42mm objectives and 8x magnification, retailing for \$190 to \$350.

To this end we tested binoculars from Nikon, I.O.R. Valdada, Pentax, and Steiner. In addition we received one model from Leupold, but the suggested retail price was a bit higher at \$489. Being \$139 over our maximum the Leupold was a bit of a ringer. In the end though we decided to include it as well.

To properly evaluate a quality optic requires more than simply peering through it on a nice sunny day. So our test samples were carefully run through a battery of tests designed to scientifically evaluate them. All five models were tested simultaneously under identical conditions, side by side. We started by examining them for workmanship straight out of the box. Next we evaluated them optically using, in part, a Zeiss Test Pattern under bright lighting conditions.

Next we tested them indoors under controlled low-light test conditions utilizing a contrast chart obtained from Leupold. This chart consists of gray rectangles growing progressively lighter in color on a white background. They are arranged in two columns of nine each with the darkest labeled 70 percent and the lightest 1 percent.





Wind River



Steiner



Nikon

From here we moved to extensive field testing under bright and low-light conditions. Ambient temperature during field testing was 30 degrees F. During this portion of our evaluation they were carried in the field, banged around, and treated the way gear actually gets treated. In other words they were never babied, and we let the chips fall as they may.

Please keep in mind while reading the following reviews that no optic is perfect. By design every optical device is a product of compromises. Such as smaller objective lenses, which effects resolution and light transmission, for reduced bulk. Plus you may encounter some technical terms you may not be familiar with as we nit-pick at each model. Please refer to the included sidebar for explanations. Also take some time and carefully peruse the specification chart comparing the different models.

Another factor to remember is that the larger the objective lens the better resolution should be, theoretically. The same holds true for light transmission. So the 42mm models should have a large advantage over those sporting 30mm objectives. However, in the end it all comes down to the quality of the optical glass, how well it's polished, the lens coatings applied, the prisms and their phase coatings, and the blackening of the device's interior.

If you haven't noticed I purposely picked models which all had 8x magnification. While I like 8x (it provides a large FOV, useful low-light capability, with plenty of magnification for most purposes) I picked all 8x units to try to provide an apples to apples comparison. Nikon, Pentax, and Leupold all offer similar models sporting 10x if you're so inclined.



Nikon Sport Optics

One of the most respected names in optics today is Nikon. This Japanese optical giant first began producing precision optics in 1917. Binoculars soon followed and they produce a variety of models to this day. While Nikon is best known for their high quality 35mm cameras, it would be a mistake to dismiss their Sport Optic line.

After all, cameras were not introduced to the Nikon line until 1948 and optics, not cameras, have always been the foundation to Nikon's success. While Nikkor camera lenses are justly famous (more professionals use Nikon than all other brands of 35mm cameras combined) the same lens technology also makes Nikon optics equally impressive.

The philosophy of Nikon Sport Optics is "the best value for the price." To this end Nikon offers a number of price levels with their LX line being their flagship. While their 10x42 LX is truly capable of standing toe to toe with Europe's best, it's also priced at \$999. So we selected instead the 8x36mm Sporter I which retails for a more down to earth \$189.99.



This made it the least expensive unit evaluated.

This model is a roof prism design with 8x magnification, 36mm objective lenses, and features central focusing. The unit is rubber armored, water resistant, and sports helicoid (rather than push/pull) eyecups. The Sporter 1 was the smallest of the 5 models tested and tipped the scales at 25.3 ounces.

While it was the least expensive, the Nikon fared well even compared to units twice as costly. Color rendition was very good. Resolution though was the best of all units tested. Here the Sporter 1 resolved all the way down to the 6 block on the ZTP posted at 36 feet. Examining the Nikon we noted no astigmatism, curvature of field, rolling distortion, or pincushion distortion.

However, we did note that the image degraded towards the edges and some spherical aberration was present. We also noted a slight amount of barrel distortion. The Nikon also exhibited more internal flare than any of the other models. During low-light testing the Nikon performed well for its price range. I was able to discern down to the 20 percent mark with the 15 percent mark visible, but just barely.

In the field the Nikon proved light and handy. The body is comfortable in the hand and the center focus knob turns smoothly. The eyecups lock easily into place with a simple twist. All in all the Sporter 1 performed extremely well. I carried it the most due to its size, weight, and overall optical performance. Optically they gave better than they got in almost every case, excepting internal flare. For the money they're hard to beat.

SPECIFICATIONS

Model:	Nikon 8x36	Steiner 8x30	Pentax 8x42	I.O.R. 8x30	Leupold 8x42
Magnification:	8x	8x	8x	8x	8x
Objective Lens:	36mm	30mm	42mm	30mm	42mm
FOV@1000yds:	366'	390'	330'	440'	341'
Weight:	25.3oz	18oz	27.5oz	17oz	23oz
Eye relief:	20.5mm	20mm	22mm	14mm	17.8mm
Price:	\$190	\$199	\$279	\$350	\$489



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Steiner Optik GmbH

Founded in 1947 by Karl Steiner, this is a name well respected among armed professionals. A German company, Steiner Optik began as a one-man shop. It has since grown to where it now employs over 300 workers and technicians. During an Advanced Tactical Marksman Observer Course I attended, one of my instructors carried a pair of military-grade Steiner binos. He liked it not only for its optical quality but also its light weight.

From Steiner's extensive line we chose their 8x30mm Military/Marine which retails for \$199. This is a lightweight porro prism model featuring rubber armoring, independent focusing, and fold down rubber eyecups. Thoughtfully this model features attached objective lens covers and a cover for the oculars. These simple items go a long ways to protect one's investment. Folded this unit measures 6x4.5 inches and it tipped the scales at an ultralight 18 ounces.

Optically the Steiner performed well for its price range. Color rendition was very good and neutral. Resolution wise we were just able to resolve down to the 5 block on the ZTP. We noted no astigmatism, curvature of field, barrel distortion, or rolling distortion. However the image did degrade towards the edges and here we noted some spherical aberration. We also noted some slight pincushion. Looking in the direction of the sun we detected some slight internal flare present. During lowlight testing we were able to clearly discern down to the 15 percent mark.

The Steiner's were the second lightest of all the units tested. While one of the largest dimensionally, they're still small enough to tuck into a jacket pocket. The body is comfortable in the hand, but some may not like the independent focus. While not as sexy as a roof prism, the porro prism Steiner is a dependable unit made for the outdoors.

Pentax Corporation

Pentax's history dates back to 1919 when Asahi Optical Joint Stock Company of Tokyo, Japan was founded. Asahi Optical JSC began by making precision optical lenses for cameras. In 1932 they entered the military market, producing binoculars and rangefinders for the Manchurian campaign. After the war Pentax (the corporation's name being derived from the words 'Pentaprism' and 'Reflex') made many notable advances in camera design. Today they continue in both the camera and sport optic fields.

From the Pentax line we chose the brand new 8x42mm DCF HR II. This model was introduced at the 2003 SHOT Show and retails for \$279. A roof prism design, it sports central focusing, click stops on the eyepiece diopter, and helicoid eyecups. The body on this model is made from fiber reinforced polycarbonate and features rubber armoring. The lenses are fully multicoated using Pentax' SMC coating

and the prisms are phase coated for superior contrast and sharpness.

While this binocular is assembled in China, the prisms are actually shipped to Japan to be phase coated. Unlike the previous two models the Pentax is listed as waterproof (to 1 meter) rather than rain proof.

Optics in a Nutshell

- **Color Rendition:**
How accurately color is transmitted.
- **Resolution:**
The ability to see minute detail.
- **Curvature of Field:**
The image is blurred at the edges and cannot be refocused.
- **Spherical Aberration:**
The image is blurred at the edges but can be refocused.
- **Astigmatism:**
Inability to focus horizontal, vertical, and diagonal lines on the same plane.
- **Barrel Distortion:**
Straight lines near the edges of the image bow out away from the center of the image.
- **Pincushion Distortion:**
Straight lines near the edges of the image bow in towards the center of the image.
- **Internal Flare:**
Loss of contrast and sharpness caused by stray non-image forming light reflected from inner lens surfaces.

Optically the Pentax performed very well. Color rendition was quite good, and neutral. Resolution was also very good and the Pentax just managed to resolve down to the 6 block on the ZTP. It was one of only two binoculars to accomplish this. We detected no spherical aberration, astigmatism, barrel distortion, or rolling distortion during testing. As is the nature of the beast the image did degrade towards the edges and we detected some curvature of field and pincushion distortion. During lowlight testing those big 42mm lenses went to work and allowed us to discern all the way down to the 4 percent mark.

continued on page 72

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A SEASON WITH THE SHORTS

By Holt Bodinson

The 7mm WSM chambered in Browning's A-Bolt Stainless Stalker was a perfect combination for an early mule deer hunt in Utah. **Facing page:** .270 Winchester compared to the 7mm WSM and .223 WSSM. The 7mm WSM/Browning A-Bolt combination was the right medicine for this Wyoming antelope.



The explosion of new caliber cartridges based on the short, beltless magnum concept is one of the most interesting phenomena in the history of ammunition evolution. And the final chapter hasn't been written yet. Take for example, Winchester's surprise introduction of their wee "Super Shorts" in .223 and .243 this year.

As a hunter, I can tell you this story gets more interesting with every passing day. During the 2002-2003 big game season, I hunted with the .223 Winchester Super Short Magnum, the 7mm Win. Short Magnum and the .300 Remington Short Action Ultra Mag., and I want to share with you my experiences in the field; however, digressing a moment, it's interesting to speculate about the evolution of the high intensity short cartridge. It seems to have two branches of development — the civilian and the military marketplaces.

Early Examples

Along the civilian ancestral branch, I think the most notable commercialized "shorts" were the .250/3000 appearing in 1915 and the .300 Savage appearing in 1921, later to be followed in 1952 by the progressive development of Winchester's .243/.308/.358 family of compact cartridges based on the military's adoption of the 7.62x51mm case. Let's not forget the .284 Win. that debuted in 1963. Then stepping onto the stage were the first commercial "short magnums" in the guise of the .350 Rem. Mag. in 1965 and the 6.5mm Rem. Mag. in 1966, chambered in Remington's ultra-compact Model 600 and 660.

About now, I must apologize to the scores of unheralded wildcatters who shortened, blew out, necked down, and otherwise modified assorted cases during this same period to produce some of the finest shorts ever conceived, but your

products just didn't make the commercial cut.

German Wellspring

Over on the military branch, it's the "super shorts" that are the most fascinating. The cartridge that sparked so many later developments was Germany's 7.92x33mm Kurz — a severely cut-down 8x57mm case that yielded 2,250 fps with a 125-grain projectile. Developed in 1940-41 and chambered in the high-tech MKB42 and Stg-44 Sturmgewehr assault rifles, it made such an impression on the Russian front that the Soviets were quick to develop their own famous 7.62x39mm cartridge for the SKS and later AK-47 (although they deny the German cartridge and assault rifles were influential in any way).

Russians should get credit for necking down their 7.62x39mm round around 1974 to make the 5.6x39mm cartridge that became the parent case for the .22 and 6mm PPC benchrest cartridges. More often than not, the new lineup of commercial short and super short magnums is compared to the PPC case in terms of case design, efficiency and accuracy, so you understand my logic here.

Where The Credit Lies

In 1995, I started hunting with the commercial cartridge that really started the short magnum ball rolling — John Lazzeroni's 7.82 (.308) Patriot. In fact, the New Mexico mule deer I took that fall was the first head of big game ever taken with the Patriot. With an overall case length of 2.050 inches, a 30-degree shoulder, and a head size of .580 inch, the Patriot looks ever so much like a blown-out PPC case formed on a 416 Rigby body.





Above: Winchester's 64-grain game bullet in the .223 WSSM performed splendidly on this Texas whitetail. **Below:** Nilgai bulls are 500 pounds of muscle but no match for the .300 RSAUM firing Remington's new bonded core, 150-grain Core-Lokt Ultra loading.



The Patriot ranks as the hottest .30-caliber shorty going and easily pushes a 180-grain bullet along at 3,184 fps. Building on the success of the Patriot, Lazzeroni has expanded his short magnum line to include the .243, 6.5mm, 7mm, .338, and .416 calibers. In terms of sheer velocity and performance, the Lazzeroni short magnums lead the pack.

What put the short, beltless magnums on the world map, however, was Winchester's introduction of the .270, 7mm and .300 Winchester Short Magnums (WSM), then the .223 and .243 Win. Super Short Magnums (WSSM), and Remington's release of the 7mm and .300 Remington Short Action Ultra Mags. Mated with light, portable, affordable Winchester Model 70s, Browning A-Bolts, and Remington Model Sevens and 700s, with other gun makers like Ruger, Savage, Kimber and Howa now falling in line, the short magnums have proved to have several endearing qualities.

Efficiency

Caliber-for-caliber, the new, short, beltless magnums, using less powder, produce velocities that are equal to standard belted magnums, like the 7mm Rem. Mag. and the .300 Win. Mag. In theory, the squat, fat, sharp-shouldered cases provide improved powder combustion within the case body itself. The facts seem to support the theory.

Years ago, when I was testing out various barrel lengths with the Patriot case, there was no significant velocity gain to be made by going from a 23-inch barrel to a 26-inch tube, although I think it is a mistake that some companies are currently offering barrels as short as 20 inches. Also, these new short magnum cases are designed to operate routinely at pressures in the 65,000 psi range. Strange as it might seem, the report of a short magnum in the field even sounds different to me, which I subscribe to better combustion of the powder charge before the bullet exits.

Accuracy

Without exception, Winchester, Remington and Lazzeroni short, beltless magnums, like their benchrest PPC equivalents, have proved to be inherently accurate. The



short, fat cases facilitate loading densities of 95 to 100 percent, resulting in more uniform ignition and less shot-to-shot variations in velocity.

One of the negative aspects of a traditional belted case has been the overly generous variations one finds when measuring the width of the belt from maker-to-maker and from lot-to-lot. Don't take out your vernier caliper. Don't do it. Ignorance is bliss. You'll give up on belted cases if you do, even though they can be very, very accurate.

Merits Of Going Beltless

Upon first firing, that belt determines headspace, and if headspace is sloppy, accuracy can be and is affected. The Americans fell head over heels for the belted H&H type magnum case. Although the Brits invented the H&H belt, they still went on to give us some of the finest beltless magnums ever produced such as the .404 Jeffery, .416 Rigby, .425 Westley Richards, .500 Jeffery and .505 Gibbs. The Germans, too, focused on totally beltless magnums such as the 6.5x68mm, 8x68mm, and 9.3x64mm.

Headspacing as they do on the shoulder, rather than on a belt, the new short magnums are more uniform in terms of headspace tolerances and as a result, more consistently accurate from shot-to-shot. In addition, the shorter actions in which they are chambered are more rigid, stiffer than longer actions which also helps to enhance accuracy.

Handling

Today's short magnum model rifles typically sport 22 to 24-inch barrels and weigh between 6.5 and 6.75 pounds. In the super short chamberings, Model 70s and A-Bolts with 21 or 22-inch barrels are running about 6 pounds. In short, taken as a group, short magnum rifles are compact, light, fast-handling little beauties.

One of the universal observations by shooters who have fired the short magnums is their surprisingly mild recoil compared to standard magnums. Using less powder coupled with improved combustion, a .300 WSM or .300 RSAUM in a rifle weighing less than 7 pounds delivers a level of felt

recoil on the order of a .30-'06 rather than that of a .300 Win. Mag.

Remington has gone one step further to diminish felt recoil by installing their revolutionary R3 recoil pad on their synthetic stocked Model Sevens and 700s. Made by LimbSaver and commercially available for a variety of shotgun and rifle models, this new pad is the finest yet.

I have shot two identical Model Sevens chambered for the .300 RSAUM side-by-side. One was equipped with the R3 pad — the other with Remington's traditional rubber pad. The difference in felt recoil with the R3 pad was dramatic. Try one. In fact, I just retro-fitted my Model 700 in .338 Ultra Mag. with an R3 pad. It's just a simple screw-driver exchange.

Designing The Shorts

To achieve the necessary internal case volumes in a shorter case, Winchester and Remington chose to use a standard H&H rim measuring .534 inch to fit a conventional magnum bolt, and a large base measuring .551 to .555 inch, resulting in a rebated rimmed cartridge. Base measurements



The evolving super shorts: Left to right: 7.92x33 Kurz; 308x1.5; 7.62x39; 5.6x39; 6mm PPC; .223 WSSM and .243 WSSM.



2 EXCITING MATCHES

5 EXCITING STAGES

1 EXCITING EVENT



are greater than those of a .404 Jeffery (.544 inch), which is often and erroneously listed as the parent case, and actually approximate the base diameter of a .348 Win. case (.553 inch).

Again, by pushing the shoulder forward at a sharp 35-degree angle, internal powder volume was maximized. The 7mm and .300 RSAUM cases with a length of 2.015 inches are slightly shorter than the WSM cases that measure 2.10 inches. Actually, the maximum overall loaded lengths of the WSM series cartridges measure 2.860 inches which is longer than the maximum OAL of the .308 Win. cartridge (2.80 inch), and they will not fit in a standard .308 magazine box.

When Winchester created the .223 and .243 Super Short Magnum cases, they reduced the length of their basic WSM case to 1.670 inches while keeping the rim and base measurements the same. However, they found there was too much rejected brass when drawing the smaller caliber case to a shoulder angle of 35 degrees. Consequently, a milder shoulder angle of 28 degrees was selected for the WSSMs.

One point to remember if you are reloading the short magnums is that premium hunting bullets in the medium weight range for the caliber being loaded are optimal. Sticking a 175-grain bullet in a 7mm, or a 200-grain bullet in a .30-caliber short magnum case for example, simply displaces too much internal powder volume to be an efficient load.

Here are the factory velocities of the Winchester, Remington, and equivalent Lazzeroni (Laz.) short magnums. Because the factories are now using different zeros for their trajectory tables, please refer to the manufacturers' catalogs or web sites for down range drop and energy values.

Load	Bullet	Velocity
.223 WSSM	55 gr.	3,850 fps
.223 WSSM	64 gr.	3,600 fps
.243 WSSM	55 gr.	4,060 fps
.243 WSSM	95 gr.	3,250 fps
.243 WSSM	100 gr.	3,110 fps
.243 Laz. Spitfire	70 gr.	3,812 fps
.243 Laz. Spitfire	85 gr.	3,618 fps
.243 Laz. Spitfire	100 gr.	3,419 fps
.270 WSM	130 gr.	3,275 fps
.270 WSM	140 gr.	3,125 fps
.270 WSM	150 gr.	3,120 fps
7mm RSAUM	140 gr.	3,175 fps
7mm RSAUM	150 gr.	3,110 fps
7mm RSAUM	160 gr.	2,960 fps
7mm WSM	140 gr.	3,225 fps
7mm WSM	160 gr.	2,990 fps
.284 Laz. Tomahawk	120 gr.	3,563 fps
.284 Laz. Tomahawk	140 gr.	3,379 fps
.284 Laz. Tomahawk	160 gr.	3,152 fps
.300 RSAUM	150 gr.	3,200 fps
.300 RSAUM	165 gr.	3,075 fps
.300 RSAUM	180 gr.	2,960 fps
.300 WSM	150 gr.	3,300 fps
.300 WSM	180 gr.	3,010 fps
.308 Laz. Patriot	150 gr.	3,363 fps
.308 Laz. Patriot	180 gr.	3,184 fps

For sheer performance, the Lazzeroni series still shines. Choosing between the WSMs and the RSAUMs really doesn't come down to an issue of performance. It's what make and model rifle you happen to like. Now that all major rifle manufacturers are chambering the short magnums, the choice one has is great indeed. So let's go hunting.

The .223 WSSM On Deer

Back around 1989-1990, Winchester introduced a deer load for the .223 Win. featuring a controlled expansion, 64-grain Power-Point bullet. I was so intrigued with the new loading that I drove over that fall to a friend's ranch in the Hill Country of Texas where I took two very nice whitetail bucks at not more than 100 yards with classic heart/lung shots.

The 64-grain Power-Points were recovered under the skin on the off side of both bucks. They were picture, ad copy, perfect mushrooms, so I was intrigued once again when the opportunity arose to use the 64-grain loading in the new .223 WSSM.

Having tags for one whitetail buck and three whitetail does on the sprawling King Ranch is akin to hitting the Texas lottery. I was shooting a super short-actioned Browning A-Bolt Classic Hunter mounted with Cabela's brilliant 3.5x10 Alaskan Guide series scope. The whitetails were taken from 75 to 100 yards.

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On broadside shots, the 64-grain Power-Points broke through ribs, hearts, and lungs and exited completely leaving 1-inch exit channels. On frontal brisket shots, the Power-Points destroyed lungs and were not recovered. No whitetail moved more than 15 yards after being hit. At the end of the hunt, six hunters had taken 24 deer with the .223 WSSM with no lost or wounded animals.

Is the .223 WSSM with the 64-grain Power Point suitable for smaller deer and antelope? Where legal and when used for carefully placed shots under 200 yards, the answer is an unqualified yes. Traveling at 3,600 fps, Winchester's 64-grain deer bullet held together, and even I was surprised by its ability to penetrate completely on broadside shots.

As an aside, I might add that a good part of this hunt was experienced under intermittent showers. I was testing Cabela's Microtex camo clothing. After a shower, the Microtex would dry in a matter of minutes plus it is totally quiet yet durable. It's a wonder fabric.

The .300 RSAUM On Nilgai

A mature nilgai bull is 500 pounds of tough muscle on the hoof, and I was hunting him on the 777 Ranch in Texas for the purposes of testing Remington's new 150-grain bonded Core-Lokt Ultra bullet in the .300 RSAUM. On this hunt, three bulls were taken with three shots, and only one of the

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new bonded Core-Lokt bullets was recovered. Clocking 3,200 fps out of a Remington Model Seven SS synthetic and delivering minute of angle accuracy, Remington's new 150-grain Core-Lokt Ultra bullet is probably the optimal load for the .300 RSAUM.

Working With The 7mm WSM

It was mule deer in Utah and antelope in Wyoming using a Kahles-mounted Browning A-Bolt Stainless Stalker, and a Winchester Model 70 Featherweight in 7mm WSM. My ammunition on both hunts was Winchester's 140-grain Ballistic Silvertip Supreme loading that moves along at a snappy 3,225 fps.

The mule deer was taken with a neck shot as he came over a rise not more than 75 yards away. The antelope on the other hand was a classic 330-yard shot across Wyoming's windy sage country. Both animals dropped at the shot. Again, I think a 140-grain bullet is optimal for the 7mm short magnums, and it's only a matter of matching the construction of the bullet to the game animal being pursued.

Final Word

Probably the most valuable quality of the new short magnums is that they permit a shooter who is accustomed to a .243 Win., .270 Win. or .30-'06 to step up to true magnum level performance without a

noticeable increase in recoil and with a rifle that is lighter, handier and inherently more accurate. And that's saying a lot.



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ICHIRO NAGATA PHOTO

STORY BY DAVID M. FORTIER

PHOTOS BY ICHIRO NAGATA AND EMILY K. FORTIER

BULLET

A look at Para-Ordnance' C7.45 Carry Option LDA.

It was a glorious winter day, the kind that makes you happy just to be alive. After weeks of snow and sub-zero weather, the cold had finally relented. With temperatures sky rocketing to 40 degrees I decided to enjoy this new found warmth on my range. There, despite being in snow well up past my knees, it was warm enough beneath the brilliant blue sky to shed my heavy coat for a light shirt. Unencumbered, I got to work.

In my hands was a compact Para-Ordnance C7.45 Carry Option LDA, and I was busily shooting failure-to-stop drills. Boom, Boom... Boom. Boom Boom... Boom. While the small .45 auto jumped hard, it also poked big holes in the cardboard IPSC targets I was practicing on.

Inserting a fresh magazine I began again: Boom, *clunk*. What the hey? Glancing at the ground I noticed the magazine had puked it's contents into the snow. "How inconvenient," I mused, and so went on testing Para's compact .45 auto.

Versatile Favorite

There is no more loved handgun in the United States than Browning's venerable M1911. While approaching the 100-year mark this design simply seems to be improving with age. Perhaps the M1911 has proved so enduring thanks to its versatility. Not only does it make a reliable service pistol, but with careful modifications it will also perform well in different competitive sports. And we Americans do





ICHIRO NAGATA PHOTO



GUNS
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While Europeans tend to be happy with an out-of-the-box SIG, Beretta, or Makarov, every American has his own opinion on what constitutes a proper fighting pistol.

love to modify and personalize our firearms. This is perhaps why we love the M1911 so much — it's relatively simple to modify to suit one's needs and desires.

While Europeans tend to be happy with an out-of-the-box SIG, Beretta, or Makarov, every American has his own opinion on what constitutes a proper fighting pistol. So over the years the basic M1911 has been chopped, hacked, and modified to no end. From fully automatic variations to drastically chopped 'hide out' guns, if you can think of it someone's probably modified an M1911 in such a manner. One company that has done quite a bit to stir the M1911 pot is Para-Ordnance, Inc.

I first heard of this now popular company many years ago when they introduced an M1911-style frame redesigned to hold high capacity double-stack magazines. From this humble beginning Para-Ord soon moved to manufacturing

complete full-size pistols. These early models were followed by a variety of full size, commander length, and compact models in different calibers.

A Politically-Correct 1911?

In the recent past Para-Ordnance again showed their ability to think outside the box by introducing their Lightning Double Action series. The LDA effectively opens up a whole new market to M1911 pistols. While most police departments are unwilling to allow single-action M1911 pistols to be carried by officers, double-action autos are good to go. In addition, some legally armed citizens don't feel comfortable carrying a cocked and locked M1911. Recognizing this Para-Ordnance set out to produce a reliable double-action M1911.





While double-action M1911s are certainly nothing new, Para-Ordnance is the first to market them successfully. Today their LDA system is no longer new, it has been around just long enough to prove its worth.

Careful Inspection

Our review sample C7.45 Carry Option LDA arrived with one magazine, plastic barrel bushing wrench, three Allen wrenches, manual, lubricant, cable lock and instructional video — all packed in a hard plastic storage case. Chambered for the .45 ACP cartridge, it sports a short, 3.5-inch barrel and abbreviated grip. Simply handling it shows this is no target or competition piece.

Rather, this handgun is intended solely for personal protection where a compact, yet full power pistol is desired.

C7.45 CARRY OPTION LDA

Model: CC7.45SN

Caliber: .45ACP

Barrel Length: 3.5 inches

Weight: 34 ounces

Capacity: 7+1 rounds

Length: 7 inches

Height: 5.25 inches

Sights: High profile 3-Dot tritium

Stocks: Slimline cocobolo

MSRP: \$1,009

ACCURACY AND VELOCITY CHART

LOAD	VELOCITY	25 YARDS
<i>Aguila 117-gr. IQ HP</i>	<i>1,421</i>	<i>3.54"</i>
<i>Black Hills 185-gr. JHP</i>	<i>899</i>	<i>4.12"</i>
<i>Black Hills 230-gr. +P JHP</i>	<i>879</i>	<i>4.31"</i>
<i>C&R Ammo 155-gr. First Shot</i>	<i>1,139</i>	<i>3.91"</i>
<i>MagSafe 68-gr. SWAT</i>	<i>2,015</i>	<i>3.62"</i>
<i>Taurus 185-gr. Copper Hex</i>	<i>907</i>	<i>4.58"</i>
<i>Triton 230-gr. QuickShok</i>	<i>875</i>	<i>4.25"</i>
<i>Wolf 230-gr. FMJ</i>	<i>784</i>	<i>4.0"</i>

When someone chooses a handgun for self-protection they are staking not only their life, but possibly the lives of their loved ones on its performance. This sample was reviewed with these sobering thoughts in mind.

In the hand, you instantly notice its fairly small size, yet hefty weight. Dimensionally it's not substantially larger than my own carry gun, a Glock 23. It's significantly heavier of course, tipping the scales at 34 ounces. Available only in stainless steel, the Carry Option is a handsome piece. The flats of the slide are polished while the rest of the handgun features a matte finish. This contrasts nicely with attractive diamond-checked Cocobolo stocks. All in all it's a handsome .45 auto.

Handsome is fine, but to be useful, a pistol must wear good sights. The Para's rear sight is reminiscent of the

Novak unit and is snag free. It sports two green tritium dots as well as horizontal serrations to reduce glare. The front sight — with green tritium dot and well rounded at the front to prevent snagging — is securely dovetailed into the slide.

It's on the pistol's frame though where things really get interesting. The most obvious being the thin smooth trigger that screams LDA. Then there is the spurless hammer that reduces bulk and is the epitome of "snag-free." With the hammer spur completely removed there's no longer any chance of hammer bite, so Para-Ordnance thoughtfully blended the grip safety tang to the frame.

Controls consist of a simple yet functional standard length thumb safety, slide release, and magazine release. Feed is from a seven round, single-stack detachable box





magazine. While this unit is approximately 1/2-inch shorter than a standard M1911 magazine, it retains the normal seven round capacity through the use of a patented follower.

Experience soon showed that stripping the Carry Option is slightly different than taking down a standard M1911. This is due to its two-piece recoil spring guide, which necessitates the use of the largest Allen wrench supplied with the handgun. After dismounting the recoil spring guide field stripping is basically the same as for any M1911. During reassembly however, one must also verify the plunger lever, to the right of the hammer, is in the down position.

Fit, Finish And Good Leather

Out of the box the Carry Option looked as serious as a heart attack. Quality of fit, while good, was not perfect. There was a noticeable gap between the left side of the plastic mainspring housing and the frame. In addition the left grip panel protruded slightly below the bottom of the frame. On a more serious note I did detect a slight gouge at the lower right edge of the barrel's feed ramp. Pressing down on the hood of the barrel produced only very slight movement. Slide to frame fit was loose and the pistol rattled with a good shake.

To properly test the Carry Option would require quality leather gear, so I called Michael Punzone at High Noon Holsters. He shipped one of his "Spanky" adjustable paddle holsters, "Topless" belt holster and a "Tie Breaker" magazine carrier. While very tight at first, the High Noon leather gear soon broke in and worked well throughout testing. It displayed quality leather and fasteners combined with top notch stitching. I was especially impressed with the Tie

Breaker magazine carrier which was simple in form, carried comfortably, and performed well.

As the Carry Option is a simple down-and-dirty carry gun for self protection I chose test ammunition with this use in mind. Few agree as to what constitutes the perfect load for self defense, so I utilized a wide range of ammunition running from 230-grain +P JHPs to 68-grain frangibles. Loads chosen consisted of Aguila's 117-grain IQ HP, Black Hills Ammunition's 230-grain +P JHP and 185-grain JHP, C&R Ammo's 155-grain First Shot frangible, Mag-Safe's 68-grain Super SWAT frangible, Taurus' 185-grain Bronze HP, Triton's 230-grain QuikShok, and Wolf Performance Ammunition's 230-grain FMJ.

Pokin' Holes

To check the pistol's intrinsic accuracy it was fired off the bench at 25 yards. Four consecutive 5-shot groups were recorded with each load. Velocity readings were measured 12 feet from the muzzle with an Oehler 35P chronograph at an ambient temperature of 42 degrees F. From the bench the Carry Option produced service grade accuracy, shooting more than well enough to perform its intended function.

Surprisingly the best accuracy came from the exotic specialty loads. Aguila's IQ averaged 3.54 inches at 1,421 fps, Mag-Safe's SWAT load averaged 3.626 inches at a blistering 2,015 fps, and C&R Ammo's First Shot averaged 4 inches at 1,139 fps.

Point of impact was fine vertically but noticeably to the left. Loosening the rear sight's locking screw and sliding the sight over fixed that. We did notice the Para exhibited the typical 4+1 grouping tendency, even after having several

hundred rounds put through it to break it in. Reliability was less than perfect, but more on that in a moment.

Zero To One Hundred

Moving from the bench it was shot extensively in various drills from 2 to 15 yards. During this testing it was deployed using two hands, right handed and left handed, as well as strong and weak hand only. Here we noted a number of things.

The first was that the DAO trigger on our review gun is very good. It's light and smooth, stacking slightly just prior to release. Resetting the trigger required letting it go almost 3/8-inch forward — almost twice the distance required with a Glock. Even so the Para performed well. The sights were quick to pick up and align at speed, and the controls all functioned smoothly. Empty magazines ejected cleanly with the push of a button.

Recoil and controllability are subjective matters with a number of variables. Stoked with Black Hills 230-grain +P JHP the little .45 was quite a handful. Controllability with the lighter loads was superior, yet even so this gun jumps. Still, with practice, very good rapid-fire work can be done with the Carry Option. While the gun jumps it does return nicely and punches big .45 caliber holes every time it barks. Practice consistently with the Carry Option and controllability should not be an issue. Stick it in a

drawer to be forgotten until a desperate moment and you might be better off with a 'Smith Model 10.

Practical accuracy was very good with rapid head shots easily made at realistic distances. To see just what the Carry Option was capable of, I posted a standard IPSC target at 100 yards and engaged it offhand. Holding off to compensate for the weapon shooting to the left I fired 8 rounds and then walked down range. I found 6 big holes in the chest with 2 misses. Accuracy wise this pistol is well capable of performing its intended mission.

Test firing was also conducted in near total darkness. Under these conditions the night sights performed well allowing easy hits at typical handgun ranges. Muzzle flash was large, spherical, and very bright. It only took a few rounds for the brilliant muzzle flash to begin to affect one's night vision. While it varied from load to load it was an issue with all ammunition tried.

Houston, We Have A Problem

A carry gun must function with 100-percent reliability to be acceptable, and this particular Para-Ordnance Carry Option had some issues. First, the weapon would often refuse to chamber the first round, whether from slide lock or by manually running the slide. Instead it would jam it, nose down, into the feed ramp. This occurred with a variety of loads, including

230-grain ball, using a variety of magazines. It would also occasionally fail to feed during a string.

Second, the factory magazine would frequently fail to lock the slide back after the last shot. Third, prior to the completion of testing the baseplate of the factory magazine broke off, sending the contents spilling to earth.

Examination showed this was due to faulty fabrication. It's worth noting this magazine had seen less than 500 rounds when it failed. In addition to these problems the rear of the slide's hold-open notch showed peening. This was quite noticeable by the end of testing. Lastly the ejection pattern was erratic, often bouncing a hot empty off the shooter's forehead.

Customer Service Comes Through

Para-Ordnance pistols have a fine reputation, nevertheless I wouldn't trust my life, or yours, to this particular pistol. So what to do? Rather than calling my public relations contact at Para-Ordnance, I did exactly what you would do — I called the Customer Service Department and complained. A nice lady listened to my tale of woe and told me to ship them my pistol for repair.

When asked how long this might take she said to expect about two weeks. So I paid to overnight it back for repair and waited to see what would happen, how long all this would take, and most importantly how much I was going to get

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soaked. I was very interested in seeing how the average customer was treated.

Eight days later it arrived back on my doorstep. Somewhat surprised I popped the package open and had a look inside. A repair ticket sitting atop the pistol listed the work performed.

1. Replaced Magazine
2. Adjusted extractor
3. Throated and polished barrel
4. Removed peening from slide stop notch
5. Adjusted ejection pattern
6. Test fired with Ball and JHP ammo, all functions okay

Price? That was listed simply as n/c. Pulling the .45 apart revealed obvious work performed and a nicely polished feed ramp. While the weather outside was nasty — the day having started with snow, which turned to rain — I just had to know. So I grabbed 200 rounds of various standard pressure and +P JHPs running in weight from 155 to 230 grains. Setting some silhouettes up in the snow I burned all 200 rounds through the gun as fast as I could reload magazines.

Back In Business

The result? Rounds now fed smoothly and chambered properly. Ejection was consistent and I experienced no more hot empties to the face. Though hot and dirty, the little gun performed the way it was intended to with one exception. The factory replace-

ment magazine still failed to lock the slide back after the last shot some 50 percent of the time. J. D. Jones once told me he takes any magazine that fails to function properly and pounds it flat with a big hammer. These are words of wisdom to live by. If this was my pistol I would take the factory 7-round magazine, with its proprietary follower, and pound it very flat. I would then replace it with a reliable unit from a different manufacturer and call it good.

I carried a Detonics Combat Master daily for quite some time a decade or so ago, so I well understand the allure of a compact M1911. For day in and day out concealed carry a small handgun is most desirable. One chambering the venerable .45 ACP cartridge certainly adds peace of mind. However with that peace of mind comes the need for more frequent practice to be able to fully exploit a small .45's capabilities and performance.

For someone willing to put in the time, the Para-Ordnance C7.45 Carry Option LDA offers a number of nice features such as being relatively snag free, possessing a good trigger and excellent night sights. While it failed to perform out of the box, Para-Ordnance's customer service department earned their pay and got this pistol up and running in short order. So the ending to our story is a happy one, the pistol does work reliably now, but it took a bit to get here.



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"When I get out, I'm getting a Browning safe."

Inmate #8390027, a.k.a. "Sledge"

Sledge is currently serving a seven to 15-year sentence for his fifth conviction on breaking and entering an occupied dwelling (he has plea bargained away over 20 other "B and Es" and admits that he has done more than he could count in his 13-year criminal career). In a letter to Browning written from his cell, Sledge freely admits, "My partner and I broke into hundreds of houses, many with so-called gun safes, and after we tried to get into a Browning gun safe, it was the last thing we ever wanted to see."

In his letter, Sledge cites a previous advertisement for Browning gun safes under the headline, "The Competition Hates Our Guts." He responds, "Now that I see what goes into your safe, I see why I could never open one. The competition isn't the only one who hates your guts!"

Sledge can't stay locked up forever. Isn't it nice to know that your valuables can?

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While names, inmate numbers and mug shots have been fabricated, written excerpts are taken from an actual letter received by Browning. Do not assume that any safe is impervious — it is not. A knowledgeable thief can get into virtually any safe with the appropriate tools and enough time. A safe is a deterrent and a delaying device. You can make it even more effective by placing it in the right location and anchoring it to the floor and wall.

CZ 550

In a departure from the norm, I'm going to give you the bottom line right from the start: The CZ 550 Safari Magnum is an excellent rifle. Anyone wanting a practical, dependable, big-bore hunting rifle could hardly do better at any price. At the suggested retail price of \$833 it's an outstanding value. Now, let me tell you why...

CZ rifles are relative newcomers to the American hunting scene, but in fact they go back quite a way. According to Frank de Haas in his fine book *Bolt Action Rifles*, prior to 1918 the Austro-Hungarian government had an armament shop located at Brno, in what is now the Czech Republic. In 1918 when World War I ended, several ex-military

officers took control of this plant and began manufacturing rifles based on both Mannlicher and Mauser designs.

In 1924 the plant was named the *Ceskoslovenska Zbrojovka A.S.* (Czechoslovakian Arms Factory Ltd.), commonly known as CZ. The company made military rifles and carbines for a number of countries, most notably the VZ-24 Mauser rifle. For a time in the 1930s they also made fine quality sporting rifles on VZ-24 actions.

Over the years the company went through several reorganizations and name changes. Following World War II, and the eclipse of the bolt action rifle as a primary military arm, production shifted to sporting

firearms. The Brno ZG-47 was a good quality hunting rifle made from 1947 through the mid-1960s.

It was replaced (around 1965, deHaas suggests) by the ZKK series; the 600 standard (i.e., .30-'06 length) action, the 601 short action and the 602 magnum action. These gained an excellent reputation with hunters worldwide but for many years were virtually unknown in the U.S.

Cold War Embargos

The reason, I believe, is because its production coincided with the Cold War era, when importation to the U.S. of products



Safari Magnum

BY DAVE ANDERSON

from Soviet-bloc countries — especially firearms — was restricted. Even as international relations improved and restrictions eased, for a considerable time arms with rifled bores were not allowed, only shot-guns.

It's human nature to want what someone says you can't have. Demand for ZKK rifles (and the fine CZ-75 pistols) grew, both for their obvious quality and for their rarity. For a time, individuals were able to import these firearms for personal use, though import duties were very high. Other examples may have come in as actions alone.

I recall coming across a ZKK-601 short



Well-styled drop magazine and excellent scope rings are two features Anderson appreciates.

action rifle at a gunshop around the mid-1970s. It was barreled to .243 Win. and the asking price was \$200. Why I passed it up I'm at a loss to explain. It's near the top of my list whenever stories about "guns I should have bought/kept" are being exchanged.

It was the big ZKK-602 action, though, which created a near cult following. Here was a true magnum action, designed and built for big cartridges, not a standard action opened up. Through the '80s and '90s as the U.S. economy prospered and as interest and participation in African hunting increased, demand for big cartridges and big rifles grew dramatically.

How Refreshing

The current CZ 550 is functionally identical to the ZKK-602 with a few minor changes. In this case, I'm glad to say, the changes really are improvements. I was able to compare the 550 rifle to a ZKK-602 made in 1989. In every case where the two rifles differ, the new CZ 550 is superior.

Let's look at the features of the 602/550 action. Receivers are made of forged and machined steel. As nearly 40 years of production have demonstrated, the quality of steel used, heat treatment, and overall

workmanship is high. In features and operation the action is based largely on the classic Mauser 98.

CZ rifles provide controlled round feeding, with a large external claw extractor and fixed mechanical ejection. The slot on the bolt face for the ejector is below the left locking lug. I like this arrangement better than that of Mauser 98 actions in which the left locking lug is split to accommodate the ejector. Unlike Mauser military actions there is no thumb slot for clip loading in the left receiver wall, making for a more rigid action.

Original Mauser 98 actions have an internal collar in the front receiver ring. When a Mauser barrel is properly fitted the end of the barrel tightens up against this collar at the same time the barrel shoulder tightens against the front of the receiver.

When the bolt is closed the nose of the bolt fits inside the collar, flat against the end of the chamber, with the cartridge enclosed in barrel steel right up to its extraction groove. The right side of the collar is slotted for the extractor. Looking into the receiver the collar looks like the letter "C".

Some Mauser derivatives have been made with the collar slotted on both sides, in order to make it easier to broach the locking lug raceways in the receiver. While this





system has proven satisfactory, most Mauser enthusiasts feel the collar should be left as Mauser designed it. The CZ actions retain the C-ring design.

Details Large And Small

The bolt stop on the left rear of the receiver is similar to that of the Winchester Model 70, unobtrusive, simple and reliable. The receiver has integral receiver bases for scope rings. Early ZKK actions had a neat pop-up peep sight in the receiver bridge. I've seen these on 600 and 601 actions but never on 602 actions, even in pictures.

A notable feature of the magnum CZ action is the drop box magazine. The test rifle in .375 H&H magnum caliber has a magazine capacity of five rounds. Even with the big .416 Rigby round, the magazine holds four cartridges. CZ accomplished this while keeping the rifle's lines attractive and nicely proportioned.

Head-To-Head Inspection

So how does the current 550 differ from the older ZKK-602? As it happened a friend purchased a new-condition 602 in .375 at the same time I had the test rifle on

CZ 550 SAFARI MAGNUM

Caliber: .375 H&H. *Other calibers offered:*
7mm Remington, .300 Win., .458 Win., .416 Rigby

Magazine capacity: 5 rounds (4 rounds calibers above .375)

Barrel length: 25 inches

Overall length: 46.5 inches

Weight: 9 pounds 6 ounces

Trigger pull weight: unset 60 ounces, set 12 ounces

Stock dimensions: drop at comb 3/4 inch, drop at heel 1 1/2 inches, length of pull 14 inches

Suggested retail: \$833



consignment. The first difference noted was the safety. The 602's safety lever operates by pushing forward for safe, back to fire, opposite to the generality of American-made bolt rifles.

The 550's safety operates in a pattern more familiar to American shooters; back for safe, forward to fire. The two-position safety locks both sear and bolt. Another change is the shape of the cocking piece. The 550's cocking piece is much more streamlined and attractive in appearance. Bolt disassembly is easy. Depressing a small button on the left side of the cocking piece allows the firing pin to be easily removed for inspection or cleaning.

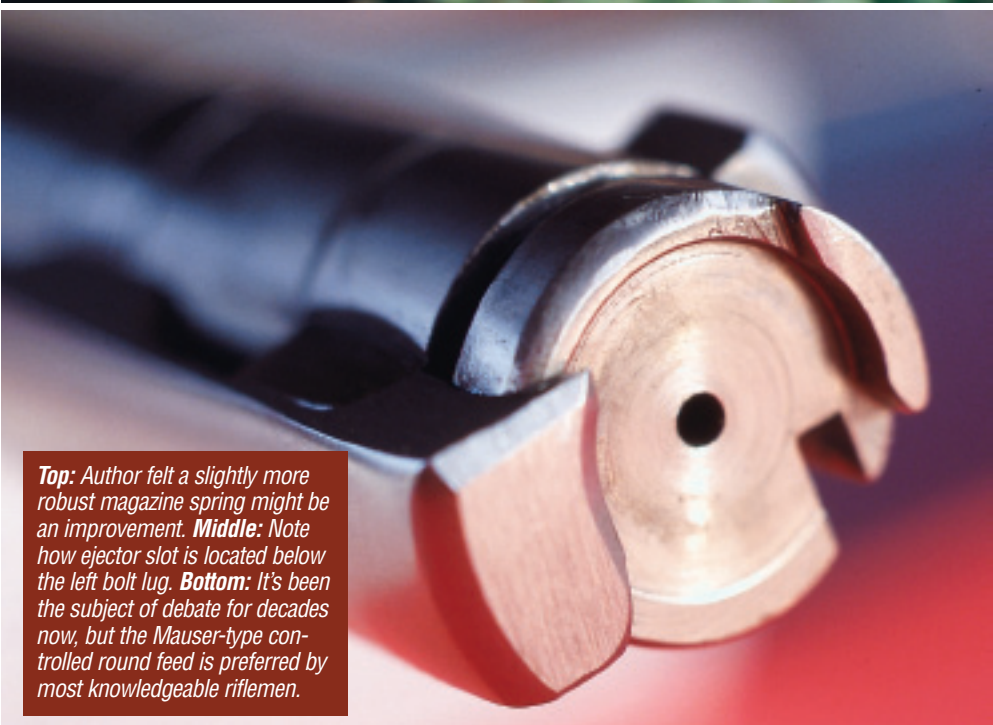
Metal finish on the 602 is a business-like matte gray. The 550 is more highly polished and finished in a handsome satin blue. Overall, the 550 action appears better finished, sleeker and more attractive. Bolt operation of the 550 was noticeably smoother. The owner of the 602 advised he has had reliability problems with cartridge feeding, while the 550 operated smoothly and reliably.

A complaint sometimes heard about the 602 was cracking of the stock in the tang area from recoil. The 550 adds a heavy stock reinforcing screw in this area that should end such complaints. Checkering, finish, and overall appearance of the 550's stock is considerably better than the older 602.

To The Range

Range sessions with the 550 Safari Magnum were a pleasure. This is no light-weight rifle (around 9 pounds, 6 ounces depending on wood density) but it is nicely balanced and handles well. Functioning proved completely reliable. Cartridges fed smoothly from both sides of the double-stack magazine.

Mauser actions are designed to feed from the magazine. When firing single shots on the range, proper procedure is to load the



***Top:** Author felt a slightly more robust magazine spring might be an improvement. **Middle:** Note how ejector slot is located below the left bolt lug. **Bottom:** It's been the subject of debate for decades now, but the Mauser-type controlled round feed is preferred by most knowledgeable riflemen.*





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cartridge into the magazine, so as the bolt is closed the cartridge rim can slide behind the extractor claw. However on the CZ rifles the extractor claw is beveled and relieved. In an emergency situation a single cartridge can simply be dropped into the chamber and the bolt slapped shut. The extractor will snap over the cartridge rim.

This procedure does stress the extractor and should be avoided when time permits. Generally with my Mauser-type rifles I load the magazine to capacity and then close the bolt to chamber a round. If I want the rifle loaded to full capacity the procedure is a bit different.

Load the magazine to capacity; drop a round into the chamber; depress the top round in the magazine while pushing the bolt forward so the bolt doesn't pick up another round. With the bolt forward, reach under and around the receiver with the left hand and press the external extractor tight against the bolt, then lower the bolt handle with the right hand. Pressing the extractor against the bolt cams the extractor claw outward, making it easier to slip over the cartridge rim.

Irons And Optics

CZ barrels are hammer forged and have a reputation for accuracy. On the Safari Magnum the rear sight is a wide V-notch, sighted for 100 yards, with additional flip-up leaves for 200 and 300 yards. Whoever sighted this particular rifle must see the sights and hold the rifle the same as I do, for the basic sight shot to point of aim for me at 100 yards.

CZ scope rings are well made of machined steel. The rear ring fits a notch in the rear base to prevent movement. I very much like the quality, fit and strength of these rings. I wish, though, they were available in low and medium heights. I assume the reason CZ offers only high rings is because European hunters are more accustomed to low-light shooting and prefer scopes with large objective lenses.

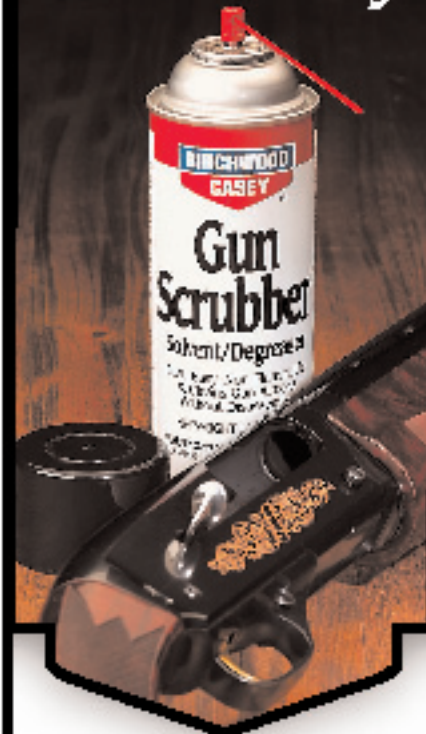
If CZ rings don't meet your needs there are alternatives. Conetrol™ offers "Daptar" bases to fit the integral receiver bases and can be used with the full line of fine Conetrol rings. Burris and Talley also make rings to fit CZ bases.

I fitted an old steel-tube Weaver 1.5-4.5 scope using CZ rings to fire a series of three-shot groups at 100 yards. Using 270-grain softpoints by Federal and Winchester, groups averaged 1.25 inches. The rifle's weight, stock shape and the fine Pachmayr Decelerator™ recoil pad combined to handle recoil very well.

All Safari Magnum rifle stocks feature select Turkish walnut. The 18 lines-per-inch checkering on pistol grip and forearm is hand cut. It's not up to custom standards with a few overruns and flattened diamonds but is pretty good by factory standards.

Butt stock shape shows considerable European influence with a curving "hog back" top line and squared-off cheekpiece. Other CZ models, notably the "American,"

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feature a stock design more in tune with American tastes. Appearance notwithstanding I found the Safari Magnum stock comfortable, easy to handle and shoot.

Single-Set Trigger

Trigger on the Safari Magnum is a single-set design. The rifle can be fired simply by pulling the trigger, as with any other rifle. Alternatively, pushing the trigger forward sets it for a much lighter break. Unset, the trigger on the test rifle broke at 60 ounces (3.75 pounds), with considerable creep and some overtravel. Set, it broke cleanly at 12 ounces. The trigger mechanism is adjustable and appears to be simple, safe and reliable.

If the rifle were mine I think I'd take it to a gunsmith and have the regular pull worked on a bit. Weight of pull is acceptable, I'd just like to have the creep and overtravel eliminated to give a crisper break.

Hard To Criticize

Personal preferences aside, I can hardly find a thing about this rifle to criticize. The magazine spring on my friend's old 602 was noticeably stiffer than on the new 550. I'd like to see the 550's spring a bit stronger so there's a surplus of pressure to push the last round in the magazine up the bolt face. It did work reliably but a stronger spring would increase my confidence.

The fixed sling swivels have detents so the swivel can't touch and possibly mar the stock wood. I prefer studs and detachable swivels, and (especially on the bigger calibers) it wouldn't be a bad idea to have a barrel band for the front swivel.

Depending on scope and ring weight, overall rifle weight with scope, rings, ammunition and sling will exceed 10 pounds and can approach 11 pounds — on the heavy side for a .375 H&H. Certainly though the weight would be welcome in the heavier calibers, .416 Rigby and .458 Winchester.

As this is written CZ hasn't added the new .458 Lott cartridge to the choice of chamberings, though the action would certainly handle it. If that's what you want, rechambering a .458 Win. to .458 Lott should be a straightforward and inexpensive operation.

Objective data doesn't always give the full picture. This is a superb rifle. It operates with a solid, smooth efficiency that instills confidence. The Mauser-type action is well proven; quality of workmanship is excellent. I highly recommended it!



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How To Blow Up A Rifle

One part of my work that truly fascinates me, is the examination of firearms that have failed catastrophically. They almost always have a story that may not be supported by observable facts — you know — the dog ate my homework sort of stuff, but the painful truth is weird harmonics or powder detonation which often get blamed don't have much in the way of science to support the story.



Examination will usually show that excess pressure is the cause. And more often than not the handloader, not the butler, “done it.” Very often the story has lots of, “I don’t know” lines followed by, “I couldn’t have done” this or that. So when we find a handloader who not only figures out what happened, but is honest enough to admit it, this is a golden opportunity to learn.

“Bring Your Camera”

It all began with a call from a local gunsmith who suggested a visit might be in order. “Bring your camera,” he said. When I got there I found a Howa 1500 action that had been fitted with a custom barrel in 6.5-’06. Actually there were 29 pieces of it. Not too long ago a buddy came up with a new acronym that perfectly describes the condition: SCLID. Which stands for Spontaneous Catastrophic Load Induced Disassembly.

The receiver ring was split into two parts leaving the barrel completely separate. One receiver rail was turned at a 90-degree angle away from the bolt, but perhaps the most noticeable thing was the deposition of brass along the bolt and deep into the hole where the extractor used to be. Much to my surprise, the remnant of the cartridge case was still in the chamber although there was a substantial portion of the base missing, some of which was deposited on the bolt.

Sequence Of Destruction

Most of the other pieces were there and when laid out in the proper order you could clearly see how it came apart. The initial failure was obviously the cartridge case and it ruptured at about 3 o’clock, which is the area right under the extractor. Since this is the part with most clearance, the case began to expand toward the path of least resistance.

With the extractor blown away the pressure peeled the receiver rail back to the right and, at the same time, split the receiver ring in two in an upward direction. Laying the parts back together as closely as possible you really could see the progress of the destruction although it would have seemed instantaneous to an observer.

After I had studied the wreck awhile the gunsmith told me the rest of the story. The owner needed to fireform some new brass and went to a local indoor range capable of handling major centerfire rifle calibers. The 6.5-’06 is a simple wildcat made by necking the old .30-’06 down to 6.5mm and fireforming. That procedure is usually done with a fairly mild load — somewhere in the starting range of loading data.

He had done this before and settled on a load of 46.0-grains of H-414 and a 120-grain bullet. He reports that the first shot produced the wreck you see here, and he was left holding only the butt portion of the stock. The barrel was approximately 10 feet downrange. The

shooter was uninjured but one lens of his shooting glasses was severely pitted and almost surely prevented an eye injury.

Detective Work

Most of the pieces were retrieved and the shooter set about finding out what went wrong. It wasn't hard. He had made one of the most human of errors. Instead of the H-414 he wanted, he picked up H-4227 and loaded the cases with 46.0 grains

of it. The magnitude of the error is huge. On a recent burning rate chart H-414 is number 95 on a list that goes from 1 to 122. The order is from fastest to slowest. H-4227 sits at number 56. Even though there is a similarity between the package labels the powders themselves could hardly be more different. H-414 is a dark spherical (ball type) powder while H-4227 is a small grain extruded type.

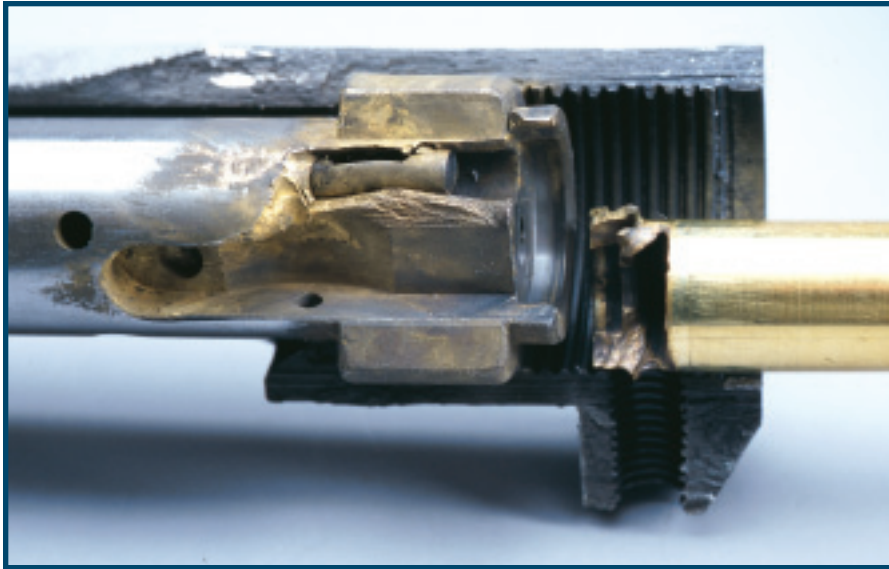
Using the *Quickload* computer program I estimated the pressure of the destructive

load at over 107,000 psi. That's more than twice that of an average high-intensity centerfire cartridge and more than enough to cause the damage seen here.

This is a great opportunity to learn something and, since all good stories have morals, there are a couple here. This is almost one of those, "there but for the grace of God go I" events, for I know I have picked up the wrong can a time or two. I'm sure he was in a hurry and got on "autopilot" to crank out a few rounds. So the first lesson is to always double-check everything.

But the most important lesson comes from the example the shooter gave us. He figured out what was wrong and owned up to his mistake. He didn't make excuses or try to find somebody to sue. Rather, he took responsibility for his own actions.

And, since clouds sometimes have silver linings, there's one here. The way the case and action failed turned the barrel loose early in the sequence of events so, with the exception of a couple of dings where it bounced on the concrete, the expensive custom barrel is unhurt. It is most common to see chambers that look egg-shaped after events like this but careful measurement found nothing out of specifications. I suspect that the gunsmith will set it back a couple of threads to get a clean new chamber, but he could also just screw it into a new action and carry on.



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Guns In The Classroom?

By John Taffin

One of the phrases used by the gun grabbers is, “guns are too easy to acquire and are readily accessible, especially to kids.” That won’t wash with anyone in my generation who grew up when guns really were accessible.

Way back in those dark-age days we didn’t have lockers in the hallways but rather a cloak room at the back of the regular classroom. The cloak room is also where we stored our shotguns and .22 rifles to be used on the way home. Many kids brought their guns to school on the school bus. No one thought anything about it. There was no violence associated with firearms whatsoever.

Today, possession of a pocket knife on the school grounds is sufficient reason for expulsion. In my school years, every boy had a pocket knife. It was an absolutely necessary piece of equipment. How could anybody take part in playing mumblety peg at recess if he didn’t have his own pocket knife?

In the fourth grade I received a brand-new, three-bladed pocket knife for Christmas and was given the official title of Keeper of the Blade by the teacher. It fell to me to open any packages that needed the assistance of a sharp blade or to cut any string or rope. Again, no violence was connected with that knife or any of the other knives stored in so many pockets.

When I made the journey from grade school to high school — we didn’t have junior high in those days — I found the same gun friendly atmosphere. The high school library had a large stock of hunting books — that’s how I discovered Robert Ruark and all of the monthly outdoor magazines. My English teachers knew that practically every paper I wrote would have something to do with guns, hunting, shooting or the outdoors, and they encouraged me in my interests.

Student Becomes A Teacher

I started my own teaching career during the 1964 school year when guns were still “good,” at least in most parts of



the country. When the National Education Association came out strongly in favor of gun control, our Idaho State Association passed a resolution against the stand taken by the NEA.

Schools, at least in my area, remained gun friendly. Through the cooperation of the school library, several gun magazines were received and placed in the magazine rack each month. As teachers we were given the opportunity to select books each year for the school library. I was always able to select gun and hunting books.

When Elmer Keith was honored by the local State University by having a scholarship established in his name, I placed both of his autobiographies in our junior high school library. The Reading Department placed them on the recommended reading lists. The most popular projects in Industrial Arts were rifle racks in woodshop and rifle scabbards, holsters, and cartridge carriers when the kids were taking leather shop.

The History Department actually taught history in those pre-Humanity days. When the studies revolved around the Civil War period and the gunfighter era that followed it, Civil War collectors would be invited into the classroom to bring weapons from the mid 19th-century. Although a mathematics teacher, I would be invited to bring in sixguns and holsters contrasting the real article with Hollywood-type gun rigs and helping the students to separate fact from fiction and myth from reality.

It was not unusual for students in the history classes to choose as their class projects the making of a muzzleloading rifle or pistol. Each year during the last week of school we held a special celebration for the graduating ninth graders with a rodeo, square dancing, chuck wagon feed, folk singers etc., all in the yard behind the school.

Even though the school was right on the edge of the city limits I was able to get special permission from the chief of police to shoot black powder arms. I brought the sixguns

and another teacher brought muzzleloading rifles to the show the kids how the guns worked and shot, with me dressed as an 1870s gunfighter, and my fellow teacher as a mountain man.

One day a parent came up to see me. Rather than being irate he was overjoyed. For the first time in memory his son was actually working and doing well in math. He wanted to know my secret.

It was simple. The young student and I had a common interest in guns, shooting, and hunting, and if he did his work on time and also succeeded on tests he had unlimited access to my library of gun magazines. Our bond and those magazines turned him from a "C-" to an "A" student. He was not the only one over the years, as many boys who had done poorly in other years were willing to work and do their best for me simply because we had a common interest.

Students weren't the only ones affected by guns in the classroom. Six teachers in my school purchased their first firearm from me. Several of the ladies sought me out for advice on selecting a handgun for concealed carry. In several cases I was able to take them shooting after school, allowing them to try various types of revolvers and semiautomatics in order to find out what best suited them.

A Sea Change

I retired from teaching in 1995, and by that time the climate had started to change. As shootings occurred around the country, "experts" pinpointed the problem not as a very few bad kids, but rather that all guns were bad. (Have you ever noticed how every problem and crisis brings out more "experts" than fleas on a mangy dog?) Guns in the classroom were now bad.

The paranoia grew worse and worse as zero tolerance policies were adopted. Zero tolerance is nothing more than



a covering for those that do not believe they are smart enough to make individual decisions. Schools became Gun Free Zones. Pity the student found with a pocket knife, a table knife in his lunch sack or even a playful boy who might point his finger at his friend simulating a gun. Expulsion or perhaps worse yet, a visit to the school psychologist would be the likely result.

Then, quite recently, something happened. A crack opened in this wall of irrationality. My friend Ray Walters happened to mention to a teacher acquaintance that we were going on a buffalo hunt in Kansas. The teacher grabbed onto this and asked Ray if we would be willing to come to school and talk about buffalo, buffalo hunting, and Indians. When he asked me about it my response was only if we could bring guns into the classroom.

Ray did not want to pass up the opportunity even if we couldn't bring in the guns. I really didn't want to pass it up either however, my suggestion was that we at least try and see what would happen. The teacher took the idea to the principal. The principal had no problem whatsoever with us bringing guns to school, and in fact wrote a letter stating we had special permission to do so.

The principal happened to be a lady who showed more intestinal fortitude than most men in her position would probably be willing to display. Perhaps the one who said, "the best man for a job is usually a woman" was right!

Crisis Of Confidence

We were asked to come and make a presentation before three classes. I assumed we would be talking to sixth graders, which would be piece of cake after three decades of teaching ninth grade students. Sure, I was confident.



Having dealt with several thousand kids over those years with rarely a problem, why wouldn't I be?

That confidence disappeared quickly upon arrival when I found we would be talking to second graders. With no experience with this age level, except for grand-kids, I was not so sure of my kid-handling abilities. Not to worry. All three classes were perfect — totally attentive and full of questions. Perhaps it was just that they had never seen anything quite like us before.

Even as we unloaded our equipment I was still wondering if we would really be able to pull this off, especially as we unloaded all the gun boxes. We were both dressed appropriately for the 19th-century and stirred up plenty of interest among kids on the playground. In addition to our costuming we also took hunting pictures, a buffalo robe, a real buffalo "chip," and enough buffalo burger patties so that every kid could taste real buffalo meat. They really enjoyed that part.

For firearms we had examples of virtually everything from the era of the buffalo hunter. Long guns displayed included an 1860 Henry, 1866 Yellow Boy, 1873 Winchester, 1886 Winchester, Springfield Trapdoor, and of course, a Sharps. Sixguns included an 1858 Remington, 1860 Colt Army, and an 1873 Peacemaker. These kids, though only seven to eight years old were tremendously interested in all of these firearms. The guns were not handled by the kids, however, we did have dummy car-

"Are guns good or bad?" was a question posed to the kids. Even though we live in the West, where possession of firearms per capita is very high, the majority of the kids said guns were bad.

tridges to pass around for them to see and hold. They really enjoyed that part.

History And Safety

Using the classroom map of the United States we were able to show the main area where buffalo were found in great numbers and tried to paint a vivid picture in their minds of the great herds. We talked about how important the buffalo was to the Indian and also how the buffalo were decimated mainly to subdue the Indian tribes. The kids were able to come up with almost every use to which the buffalo was put by the Indian tribes. The only one they didn't know was the use of buffalo chips.

We talked about the various ways buffalo were taken by both the Indians and hunters, and of how the Indians would ride up behind a buffalo using the bow before they had firearms, and also how they would wrap themselves in a buffalo hide to be able to get closer to the herd. A mental picture was painted of an old buffalo hunter as we showed them how cross sticks worked and explained the meaning of a stand.

We talked about how tough conditions were and how difficult it must have been for the skimmers especially. The great piles of buffalo hides in places like Dodge City were discussed and we talked about the tremendous waste that took place and also how poorly the Indians were treated. These kids may have been very young, but they definitely understood the things we were talking about.



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"Are guns good or bad?" was a question posed to the kids. Even though we live in the West, where possession of firearms per capita is very high, the majority of the kids said guns were bad. They've obviously watched a lot of television in their few short years. We were able to use this and talk about the fact that guns were neither good nor bad, only people were good or bad.

"We must do everything possible to reach our kids."

We spent a lot of time talking about gun safety and what to do if they were ever in some friend's home and found a gun, or if they happened to be out playing somewhere and found a gun. They all passed the test with a resounding "Leave it alone. Go find an adult."

We were also able to convey to them that every firearm should always be considered loaded. "If you find a gun, how do you know if it's loaded or not?" None of them got trapped with this one as the answer came back, "Leave it alone. Go find an adult." If we accomplished nothing else, 75 children now know what to do if they ever encounter a firearm left in the wrong place.

A week after our visit we received a packet of letters from the teachers and kids. Some of the comments were priceless:

"I learded that a baby buffloo wood be as big as Mr. Taffin"

"I really loved you being here. Thank you for showing us the guns and the pichers. I really loved the food you gave us and the buffalo fur."

"Thank you for comeing to our school. I lerd a lot of stuff today. I lerd not to play with guns"

"Thank you. Buffalo are cool. I liked it when you showed the class the guns."

"Thank you for the meet and for comeing to sher. I lorned a lot. I want to go buffalo hunting."

"I learned that you never touch a buffalo unless it is ded then you can touch it. And also that you should never touch guns either. My favorite part was the buffalo chip."

"I'm a carivore so I loved the meat. I learned that buffalo were dumb. I also learned that guns are just guns."

"Dear Mr. T, I liked the buffalo to eat. I use to live in texes." Please tell us about a nuther hunt some uhertime."

"Thank you for spending time with us."

"I think you guys did a good job."

And one sad note: *"The guns were bad for me. My mom and my dad will get made at me."*

We spent most of the day with these young kids and it was a great experience for us. From reading all their letters they obviously enjoyed it and remembered much of what we told them. Somehow we must do everything possible to reach young kids and convey the message to them that guns are not bad, and neither is hunting. What we have accomplished here is somewhat like trying to empty the reservoir outside of town with a teaspoon. However, if every gun owner and hunter combined their teaspoons we could at least lower the level of the reservoir.

Some of you are the present, many of you like me are closer to being the past. Kids are the future, not only for themselves but also the key to how society will perceive firearms in this new century. I hope this presentation we were able to give is only the beginning. Perhaps other teachers and other principals will also step out, opening the doors of their schools and classrooms to the proper use of firearms. Seventy-five kids is not very many — but it's a start.



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REMINGTON'S 332

***A new gun,
a good dog
and bob
whites –
Charley
spends a
morning in
Paradise.***

I knew that the bobwhite hustling toward a nearby thicket was going to be lunch long before I touched the trigger. The gun and my eye were as one, and easily moved toward a spot in the sky that bird and shot would occupy at the same time. It was one of those flowing, natural things that happens when the gun handles and fits right. The gun was a prototype of Remington's new over/under shotgun; the model 332. The location was the lovely White Oak Plantation in Tuskegee, Ala.

You know it's going to be a good day when the very first shot ever out of a new gun does what I just described and the second barrel does the same thing. It only gets better when, after a few more of those, the guide gives you a big grin, "you's done this before ain'tcha?" But the crowning glory is when the pointer turns around and gives an approving look and tail wag before he trots off to pick up another bird. If hunting gets better than that I've never heard of it.

I've been hunting bobwhite quail since my granddaddy took me with him at age 10. A few years later I got to carry a gun and today — half a century later — I will still go anywhere for a chance to hunt nature's most wonderful game bird.

***By Charles E. Petty
Photos by Bob Maddox***

The Feel Of History

The way a shotgun feels is one of those instantaneous things. You don't have to debate or get a second opinion, you just *know*. And that sort of stuff ain't easy for a gunmaker to accomplish. History is the best teacher and Remington has actually made quite a few over/unders since 1931. There is

a substantial legion of shotgunners who believe that their first, the Model 32, was the best over/under ever made. Today they command top dollar from competitive shooters in all the shotgun sports even though they haven't been made since 1947.

Next was an updated version called the Model 3200 that was made for 10 years from 1973 to 1983. Most would say that both the



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32 and 3200 fell victim to a combination of rising cost and relatively small demand. One reason for that was their relatively hefty weight which largely limited them to clay target shooting rather than the hunting field. In those days, unless you sold many thousands of a model it wasn't always profitable to manufacture. That was especially true of guns like these because of the extensive hand fitting they required.

Another 10 years went by before Remington began an odyssey with the over/under that led to three different models between 1993 and 2000. They were the Peerless, Model 396 and Ideal 300. I got to use all three and while none were bad, they didn't sing to me either.

The public must have felt the same way for they were short lived and the combined sales of all three didn't come close to the over 42,000 model 3200s sold in it's 10 year life.

The new 332 I shot that wonderful day was stocked in the Remington Custom Shop and had a stock that had been faithfully copied from the 32. Quite literally they took an old gun and duplicated it.

In The Game To Stay

Some time has passed since that first trip and the 332 is now a production gun. But at the Remington writer's conference last October when the formal announcement was made I was taken aback when Remington's executives admitted that the last three models had been flops. Someone might well have asked, "why bother?" So I did and Remington's president Tommy Millner was candid in his reply. "If someone wants an over/under shotgun we want them to have the opportunity to buy a Remington."

In today's bottom line driven businesses products sometimes do not get a chance to become profitable before they go away, but Millner expressed a strong commitment to give this one a chance. "We know it isn't going to be profitable right away but we're in this for the long haul," he said. VP Jay Bunting followed up, "Being in the break action business is strategically important to Remington in the long term. It makes us a more complete company."

If I had to characterize the Model 332 I would use words like "versatile" and "utilitarian." The production model, which is



Above: Combo safety/barrel selector makes choke selection fast and easy. **Below:** Generous checkering graces the wrist of the 332.



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competitively priced, will do a lot of things well. I've used it for skeet, sporting clays and quail hunting and with the exception of swapping a few Remchoke tubes there has been no need to mess with it.

The "utilitarian" label has two sides. The stock is nice, but plain, American walnut and the metal finish is a matte blue. Yes, both of these help keep costs down but they also make the 332 a shotgun you needn't be afraid to actually use for fear of scratching the stock or metal.

**"If someone wants an
over/under shotgun we want
them to have the opportunity
to buy a Remington."**

-Tommy Millner

There is a definite effort to make the 332 look like the 32 down to identical gun dog engraving on both sides of the receiver. The action is a modified box lock with a typical monobloc for the barrels. The vent rib has the classy two-bead sight pattern. The single selective mechanical trigger has a selector that is a movable segment of the safety. This looks a bit different at first but works well. The 332 has 3-inch chambers and auto ejectors that are both positive and forceful. Empties fly nicely. With a gun of this type it's almost silly to even bother to mention that there were no malfunctions.

The 332 is available with 26, 28 or 30 inch barrels and weighs between 7½ and 8 pounds depending on the barrel length.

My wonderful quail hunt was with an early prototype that had a gorgeous piece of wood. The production gun I have now is much more plain but all the important details that contribute to good fit are just right. The stock dimensions are 14 inch length of pull to a thin black recoil pad. Drop at the comb is 1½ inch and at the heel it's 1½ inch.

But you don't need to know any of that stuff if you can handle the gun. If you start with the gun at a low position, as you would in the hunting field, and bring it smartly to your shoulder your eye should be looking straight down the barrel with your cheek firmly in touch with the stock. If it does that automatically as it should, the gun will shoot where your eye is looking. And when it does, woe be unto the bird — clay or feathered — that tries to occupy that spot.



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EYES LIKE AN EAGLE

continued from page 37

The Pentax were the largest and heaviest, at 27.5 ounces, of all the units tested. I liked the styling of this model and for \$279 the quality was quite good. Optically I was impressed by the Pentax. The overall image quality was very good. All things considered, it's a good value for the money and a model I could be quite happy with.

Industry Optic Romania

For the past three years or so my personal field binoculars have been an I.O.R. 8x30mm. This year I.O.R. slightly improved this model so I was eager to get my hands on the new design. For those of you unfamiliar with I.O.R. they are a Romanian optical manufacturer which has been producing precision optics since 1936. One of the largest producers of military optics in the world, they employed over 8,000 individuals at their height.

Over the years I.O.R. has maintained very close ties with Carl Zeiss, Hensoldt, and Leica. Their lenses are manufactured in Romania from optical glass produced by Schott Glaswerk of Germany. Schott, a Carl Zeiss subsidiary, produces optical glass that is widely regarded as the finest in the world. The lenses are coated with the T-3 system as developed by Carl Zeiss. This consists of fully multi-coated lenses with anti-reflex treatment to eliminate glare and maximize light transmission.

I.O.R.'s 8x30mm are a very traditional European-style porro prism military binocular. The Romanians have updated the classic Zeiss design though with rubber armoring, objective lens covers, and rubber eyecups. Unlike the Steiner, the I.O.R. is a true military grade binocular and fully water and fog proof. It features independent focus and sports two unobtrusive rangefinding reticles. One is calibrated in Mils and the other is a telemetric scale calibrated to range an 18 inch target from 200 to 800 meters. Price is \$350.

I.O.R. optics have a reputation for being quite good and this 8x30mm upheld the tradition. While the color rendition was almost but not quite perfect, the resolution was quite good. I was able to resolve cleanly down to 5 on the ZTP, but could not quite fully discern the 6 block. The image was very flat and clean right to the edges.

Unlike all the others, I detected no apparent optical deficiencies in the I.O.R. No spherical aberration, curvature of field, astigmatism, rolling distortion, barrel or pin-cushion distortion, or anything else for that matter. However, I did note some internal flare. During lowlight testing I was able to discern down to the 15 percent block. Optically this is a good piece.

A true military binocular, the I.O.R. will withstand abuse that will knock the prisms out of alignment in lesser designs. Small and handy, at 17 ounces it was the lightest of all units tested. It also sported the largest FOV by far. While not as racy looking as a modern roof prism design, it's simple and robust. As such, this classic design is timeless.

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Leupold & Stevens

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We tested an 8x42mm Pinnacle from Leupold's Wind River line. This model is manufactured in Japan and retails for \$489. As such it's \$139 over our maximum, so please keep this mind. A roof prism design, it features central focusing, click stop adjustable eyepiece diopter, and nicely contoured push/pull eyecups. Optically the Leupold sports fully multi-coated lenses, silver sputtered and phase coated prisms, and Rain-Shed coating.

**Hans Lippershey
is known to
have produced a
binocular tele-
scope as early as
the year 1608.**

Dimensionally the Pinnacle was the second smallest of all the units tested. Considering it sports 42mm objectives, this was fairly impressive. Aesthetically it exuded quality, the controls all operated precisely, and the rubber-armored body was nicely contoured. This model is also water and fog proof.

Optically the Leupold has its strength and weaknesses. While color rendition is very good, resolution is only acceptable. I was only able to resolve down to the 5 block on the ZTP. Keep in mind that the I.O.R. and Steiner were able to do this with lenses 12mm smaller in diameter. I noted no astigmatism, curvature of field, rolling distortion, or barrel distortion. However the image did degrade towards the edges and I noted some spherical aberration present. Focused on a straight edge, pincushion was also very evident. During lowlight testing though the Leupold impressed me with a very bright image. Here I was able to discern down to the 2 percent mark, besting all the others.

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well-made, and sport nicely contoured eye-cups. Optically the Leupold is not bad, it's just not as good as I think it should be.

So there you have it, an in-depth look at five different models. They all performed well and no problems of any kind were encountered during testing. If you're in the market for a binocular buy the best you can, protect their lenses, and enjoy them. They'll serve you well for a lifetime.



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OUT OF THE BOX

CZ'S 527 CARBINE

By Jim Gardner

“I’m telling ya’ man,” there was a short pause while he chomped another bite from his sandwich, “try one, you’ll like it!” I had been lamenting to my pal Dave Fortier the current state of affairs in California. Self-loading .223 carbines like my AR-180, AR-15 and FNC, which once made such great camp guns for desert excursions, are all *verboten* now. As a possible replacement, Fortier was singing the praises of the CZ 527 Carbine.

Well, the rascal was right — the handy CZ 527 is a peach of a gun, and being bolt action, it’s a rifle that won’t raise eyebrows,

even in (*yech*) California.

The 527 Carbine is a mere 37 inches long overall, with 18-inch barrel. Weight is a tidy 5 pounds, 13 ounces. That may not seem feathery in an age of titanium and Kevlar, but it’s pretty darn trim. Length of pull is 13½ inches.

The first two things to catch your eye on the 527 are the very Euro-looking iron sights, and the distinctive single column, detachable magazine. The sights sit rather high, and thus work well with a comb height designed with scope sights in mind. And speaking of scope mounting, the 527’s receiver features neat integral dovetail bases.

But when did it become mandatory to sling a pound of glass on every bolt-action rifle? While I might be happier with a good aperture rear, I think the big bold open sights of the CZ 527 will suffice for my needs, but more on that later.

That racy magazine, as mentioned, is quick detachable. This has merit for a number of reasons, including making safe before climbing back into the truck. Capacity is only five rounds, but I think that’s enough. If I had my druthers, the rifle would stow one spare magazine neatly inletted into the belly of its nicely checkered walnut stock, but maybe that’s a winter project.

For an American, the safety will take some accommodation. We’re used to forward for “fire,” and back for “safe.” The situation is reversed with the 527 Carbine. You must roll the safety back towards the butt to put it into “go” mode.

The trigger is both dreary and delightful at the same time. How can that be, you ask? Cycle the action and try the trigger. You’ll note it’s acceptably light (3¾ pounds) but

TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS


Model:	CZ 527 Carbine
Caliber:	.223, 7.62x39mm
Weight:	5 pounds, 13 ounces
Barrel:	18", 1:12-inch twist
Capacity:	5+1
Stock:	Checkered walnut
MSRP:	\$588



horribly creepy, with perhaps eight gritty little stops and starts between take-up and discharge. Ah, but all is not lost. Push the trigger forward into the set mode, and you’re rewarded with a true “glass rod” break at roughly 1¼ pounds pressure.

Now, how about accuracy? From the 100-yard bench, and using Black Hills’ superb 52-grain match HP and 50-grain V-Max loads, groups ran 1½ to 2 inches. Most groups showed four shots clustered tightly and one straying perhaps ¾ inch from the main group, which I attribute to pilot error. These were fired with an ancient Weaver 4x scope in place.

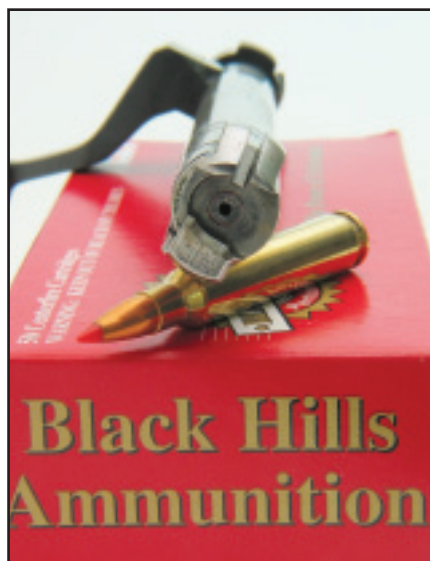
With that out of the way, I pulled the Weaver from the rifle, and found the resulting groups opened up only a little. These are very good open sights, much better than the semi-V sights we usually see. With no scope in place, the CZ 527 is a delightfully handy little package, and if you can hit as well with the irons, why make it more bulky than it needs to be?

The bottom line? Good sights, a great set trigger, pleasing accuracy and handsome appearance make the CZ 527 Carbine a real winner. 

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GUNS MAGAZINE



OUT OF THE BOX

EMF'S GREAT WESTERN II STAINLESS

By Dick Williams

I have long thought a well made, stainless steel, 1873 single action Colt replica would be well received. EMF apparently thinks so too because this year they have introduced a stainless version of their Great Western II Model 1873.

As you have guessed, this is a replica of the old peacemaker, built in Italy by Pietta and imported by EMF. If you're concerned about the "well made" part, let me say the Italian manufacturers of cowboy handguns seem to have resolved their quality problems over the years. The guns I've handled recently, both black powder and smokeless powder replicas, have looked and functioned beautifully.

My test gun was actually stainless steel plated, but I'm told all-stainless guns are on the way. My sample in .45 Colt with the short, 4.75-inch barrel is really very, very nice. Metal to metal and wood to metal fit is excellent with no mismatched edges or sharp corners. Grips are dark walnut with an attractive grain and have a light oil finish. Cylinder lockup was so tight there was absolutely no rotational wiggle and just a fraction of end-to-end play. Like the original Colt, there is no transfer bar system so only five of the cylinder's chambers should be loaded and the gun carried with the empty chamber under the hammer.

To pass the import safety laws, the

Below (top-bottom): Dual position cylinder pin allows gun to pass import safety laws. The handsome stainless Great Western II with five rounds of a favored handload.



TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS

Model: EMF Great Western I

Caliber: .45 Colt

Barrel: 4.75 inches

Capacity: 6 shots

Weight: 35 ounces

Material: Stainless steel

Sights: Fixed blade and notch

MSRP: \$600

cylinder rod can be locked in two positions by the spring-loaded cylinder release pin. Pushed all the way into the frame, the rod blocks the hammer from reaching the frame. With the rod in the normal position, the hammer-mounted firing pin can reach through the frame and strike the cartridge.

The Great Western II has the standard flat main spring but incorporates a coil spring for the hand. A minor change but major improvement is the wide rear sight notch with parallel sides and wide front blade that replaces the skinny "V" shaped sights on the old guns. What a boon to older eyes! It's not exactly a Patridge sight, but it's a huge improvement. Otherwise, the gun looks the way cowboy shooters want it to look.

The shooting session was short, sweet, and effortless. Dipping into my ammo can of .45 Colt handloads (255-grain SWC Bull-X cast bullets over 6.0-grains of Hodgdon Titegroup) produced two to three-inch groups at 35 yards. This load clocks 771 fps from the short barrel of the Great Western II and is a joy to shoot. The target was a paper plate stapled to a downed log, and all firing was done standing with a two-hand hold.

The groups were located near the bottom edge of the plate, but windage was perfect. Corrective options include some filing on the front sight, working with my sight picture, or trying different loads. The only problem encountered was that the extractor rod needed a tap to start moving and eject the first case after firing a cylinder full of ammo. I never learned the cause of this because the problem went away after firing a dozen or so rounds. To paraphrase a much-used quote, "Maybe this is the gun Sam Colt wanted to make."



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OUT OF THE BOX

A NEW CONTENDER – FNP-9

By Jim Gardner

Scanning the current listings of semi-auto pistols, it's difficult to accept the diversity we see. It hasn't really been that long ago that if you wanted a self-shucking pistol, your choices were limited to perhaps three domestic designs and a trickle of strange and rather suspect foreign guns. Well, no more.

We have a bumper crop of new offerings, each with a different set of features designed to make them safer, easier-to-use sidearms. With all this variety, the ball is in your court to select the best match to your personal requirements. That being said, here's a contender you should know about.

Adjustable Frame

The FNP-9, manufactured in Columbia, S.C., by FNMI, fits the modern mold for a duty/defensive pistol. The polymer frame is tough and lightweight as well as being maintenance free. A very nice feature is the interchangeable backstrap. Both flat and arched versions are included, and may be interchanged in a moment. This feature not only permits you to tailor the frame for comfort,

but also aids in attaining proper trigger "reach" for your hand size. A light rail molded into the dust cover accepts a variety of accessory light and sighting units.

At roughly 7½ inches, overall length is fairly compact. Barrel length is right at four inches. Sights are dovetailed front and rear, making for easy replacement. Sights on the test sample were of the white, three-dot pattern, however tritium night sights are available.

The FNP-9's magazines look to be particularly well made, with a capacity of 16 rounds for LE use, 10 rounds for mere civilians. They dismount quickly for cleaning, something usually not as well appreciated as it should be. Two are included with guns destined for the civilian market.

Control Layout

The pistol's controls — all frame mounted — consist of a takedown lever, slide stop, magazine release and ambidextrous decocking lever. The magazine release is reversible. Slide stop and takedown lever are neatly recessed/shrouded by the frame's contours to prevent inadvertent operation.

Takedown, by the way, is straightforward and as easy as it could possibly be. The slide stop, although shrouded, is easy to access, even when locking the slide open without a magazine in place.

The decocking lever on the other hand is just a touch difficult to control. It protrudes above the frame by only a sixteenth of an inch or so. With dry hands, it's easily operated, but I wonder how it would be to try to employ it with a wet,

TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS

Model: FNP-9

Caliber: 9x19mm (.40 S&W soon)

Capacity: 10 + 1 (16 for LE)

Sights: 3-dot (tritium available)

Weight: 25 ounces

MSRP: \$561



slippery hand or while wearing gloves. Initially, it required significant pressure at the bottom of its stroke to trip the hammer, but this has smoothed up nicely with use.

The FNP-9 utilizes a traditional double/single-action trigger. The DA stroke from the hammer at rest position is long but smooth. After the first shot, the pistol transitions to single-action operation. SA trigger break was crisp and light at just under three pounds. It's a delight to use, but may be a touch light for a duty pistol.

100 Percent Function

On the range, the FNP-9 functioned without a hiccup. Test ammunition included both standard pressure and "+P" loadings. Offhand groups at 25 yards ran about 2 to 2½ inches. The gun was nicely sighted — hot +P ammunition shot perhaps an inch high at 25 yards, the standard pressure loadings a bit higher. Windage was spot on. Controllability was good. Several magazines worth of fast pairs from the ready position at 10 yards grouped into a playing card-sized cluster.

The FNP-9 functions perfectly, shoots well, and offers a number of good features. If you're in the market for a defensive pistol of the modern type, visit your local dealer and give it a look.



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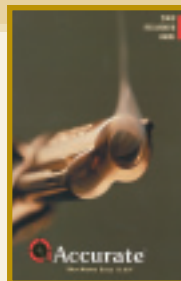
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.17 HMR Revolver From Taurus

Taurus International's new Model M17 eight-shot revolver is chambered for the hot .17 Hornady Magnum Rimfire cartridge. The 17-grain polycarbonate filled hollow point boat tail bullet delivers a muzzle velocity of about 2,500 fps. The .17 HMR is nearly half the size of the .22 Long Rifle and 25 percent more powerful than a .22 Magnum. Contact Taurus Inter'l, 16175 NW 49 Ave., Miami, FL 33014, telephone: [305] 624-1115, FAX: [305] 623-7506, Website: www.taurususa.com

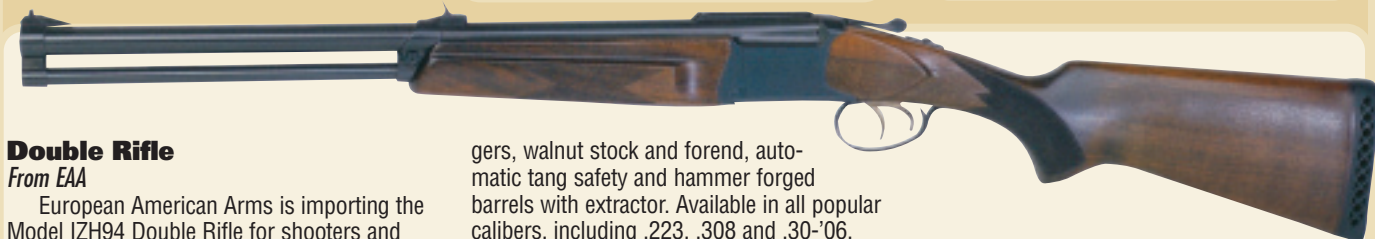
Ti-Lite Folders From Cold Steel

Cold Steel has added the new Ti-Lite folder to its line of lightweight, high-performance tactical knives. Reminiscent of the 1950s styled-switchblades and legal to carry in most states, the Ti-Lite features a super sharp AUS 8A stainless steel blade and forged titanium handle in choice of traditional finish or polished blue anodized finish. Contact Cold Steel, 3036-A Seaborg Ave., Ventura, CA 93003, telephone: [651] 631-1098, FAX: [651] 631-2561, Website: www.coldsteel.com



New Ammunition From Berger Bullets

Berger Bullets has expanded its line to include new custom competition and varminting bullets, from .17 through .30 caliber. Berger now offers an expanded selection of .20 caliber bullets, in 30, 35, 40 and 50-grain boattail with velocities from 3,000 to 3,950 pfs. All Berger products are offered with conventional or moly-coated technology. Contact Berger Bullets, 4275 N. Palm St., Fullerton, CA 92835, telephone: (714) 447-5456, FAX: (714) 447-5407, e-mail: eberger@aol.com, Website: www.bergerbullets.com



Double Rifle From EAA

European American Arms is importing the Model IZH94 Double Rifle for shooters and hunters who appreciate Old World classic design and performance at a reasonable price. Key features include mono block construction with machined receiver, double trig-

gers, walnut stock and forend, automatic tang safety and hammer forged barrels with extractor. Available in all popular calibers, including .223, .308 and .30-06. Contact European American Armory, P.O. Box 1299, Sharpes, FL 32959, phone: [321] 639-4842, FAX: [321] 639-7006, e-mail: eaacorp@bv.net, Website: www.eaacorp.com



Optima Muzzleloader From CVA

The Optima Pro 209 is a new break-action muzzleloading rifle from Connecticut Valley Arms. Unlike conventional in-line muzzleloaders, the Optima

Pro 209 has no receiver. Features include a 29-inch fully fluted barrel, choice of .45 or .50 caliber, nickel or matte blue finish, black fiber grip or Mossy Oak break-up camouflage ambidextrous stock and solid aluminum loading rod. Contact

Connecticut Valley Arms, 5988 Peachtree Corners East, Norcross, GA 30071, telephone: [770] 449-4687, FAX: [775] 242-8546, e-mail: sales@cva.com, Website: www.cva.com

Internal Gunlocks From GSI International

GSI International is new internal tamper-proof gunlocks are designed to render semi-auto handguns inoperative by unauthorized persons. The gunlock is inserted into the magazine and locked in place. No modifications are necessary. Available for .45 caliber 1911-style pistols, Glock 9mm and .40 and the .357 Sig. Contact GSI International, 7750 Evans Rd., Ste.2, Scottsdale, AZ 85280, telephone: [480] 951-1890, FAX: [480] 951-1891



Aged Ivory Polymer From Eagle Grips

Eagle Grips has added a new Aged Ivory polymer to its line of Secret Service grips for compact revolvers. Pictured is the Aged Ivory polymer on a Smith & Wesson Model 649 revolver. The Secret Service grips are also available in rosewood and deep ebony. Contact Eagle Grips, 460 Randy rd., Eagle Business Center, Carol Stream, IL 60188-2120, telephone: [620] 260-0400, FAX: [620] 260-0486, Website: www.eaglegrips.com



Muzzleloading Matched Set From BrazTech

BrazTech is importing the new Rossi Muzzleloading Matched Set from Brazil. The trio includes the .50 caliber inline muzzleloader, a .270 WSM barrel and a .17 HMR barrel. The Rossi rifle is designed for use with Pyrodex pellets, solid copper sabot bullets and 209 shotgun primers to

deliver the style and feel of a muzzleloader and the reliability and accuracy of modern powder, primer and bullet technologies. Contact Shari Fix at BrazTech, 16175 N.W. 49th Ave., Miami, FL 33014, telephone: [305] 474-0401, FAX: [305] 623-7506, Website: www.rossiusa.com



New Spitfire .38 Ammo From Polytech

Polytech has designed a new line of patented polymer cased Spitfire ammunition. Polytech's .38 special ammunition's polymer casings offer natural insulation that cools the chamber or cylinder during firing. Unlike traditional brass casings, the lubricated polymer will not damage the barrel, delivering safe indoor and outdoor performance and increased accuracy and performance. Designed and manufactured in the USA. Contact Polytech Ammunition Co., 101 Dutch Harbor Ave., Minden, LA 71055, telephone: [318] 459-5881, FAX: [318] 459-5884,



Firearms Restorations By Doug Turnbull

Master craftsman Doug Turnbull specializes in the accurate recreation of historical metal finishes on period firearms. Turnbull's services also include bone-charcoal case hardening, charcoal bluing, rust bluing and nitre bluing, new wood replacement to match factory original stocks and grips, case color finishing

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Street Combat Holster

From El Paso Saddlery

The Model 88 "Street Combat" holster from El Paso Saddlery features a specially designed tension strap system in the muzzle area for maximum security and weapon retention. Hand crafted from premium quality leather, the Street Combat features a forward cant design with open muzzle and suede lining. Fits on belts with 1½ inch slots. Accommodates most semi-auto pistols and both single and double action revolvers. Pictured with optional extra fancy floral carving. Contact El Paso Saddlery, 2025 E. Yandell, El Paso, TX 79903, telephone: [915] 544-2233, FAX: [915] 544-2535, Website: www.epsaddlery.com



Baikal Side-by-Side

From European American

European American Armory is importing the Baikal Model MP213 side-by-side 12-gauge shotgun. Available in choice of 24, 26 or 28-inch hot hammer forged barrel, the MP213 features a removable double trigger assembly with coil springs, polished walnut

stock and forend, rubber recoil pad, internal screw chokes, rich bluing and hand cut checkering. Contact European American Armory, P.O. Box 1299, Sharpes, FL 1299, telephone: [321] 639-4842, FAX: [321] 639-7006, e-mail: eaacorp@eaacorp.com, Website: www.eaacorp.com



3 New Folders

From Mercworx

Mercworx announces the additional of three new tactical folding knives to its product line. Inspired by ancient Greek mythology, the new folders are the Clotho, the Lachesis and the Atropos. All feature a titanium liner and a slim design for a racy and attractive appearance and functional

and dependable performance. The Clotho has a 3½-inch blade the Lachesis a 3½-inch blade and the Atropos a four-inch blade. Contact Mercworx, 235 Main St., Ste.287, telephone: [908] 619-1013, e-mail: info@mercworx.com, Website: www.mercworx.com

Take-Down Rifle

From Arms Tech

The Model TTR-700 take-down rifle from Arms Tech delivers match grade accuracy and is easy to assemble and disassemble. Key features include 16-inch fluted stainless steel barrel, Remington Model 700 action glass embedded into a Choate folding sniper stock, raised cheek piece, OD green pistol grip and forearm and one-inch rubber recoil pad. Comes with rugged black soft Cordura carrying case. Contact Arms Tech, 5133 N. Central Ave., Phoenix, AZ 85012, telephone: [602] 272-9045, FAX: [602] 272-1922



Fusion Take-Down Rifle

From Volquartsen Custom

Volquartsen Custom introduces the new Fusion take-down rifle, a semi-auto featuring interchangeable barrels between .17 HMR and .22 WMR. The Fusion features a Picatinny rail machined into the top of the receiver along

with an additional accessory rail mounted to the bottom of the barrel shroud. It is drilled and tapped for a standard swivel stud to accept a bipod. Contact Volquartsen Custom, 24276 240th St.,

Carroll, IA 51401, telephone: [712] 792-4238, FAX: [712] 792-2542, e-mail: info@volquartsen.com, Website: www.volquartsen.com





Win Prizes Selected "Best of the Year!"

The prizes featured here were judged best of the year for 2002 by the Shooting Industry Academy of Excellence. The manufacturers are celebrating by giving you a chance to win their award-winning products.

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*2002 Gun of the Year Nominee

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* Ruger Super Blackhawk Hunter .44 Mag.

* Springfield Armory X-Treme Duty 9mm

RIFLE of the Year Prize



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You Can Win This **TAURUS PT 100** *MercWorx Package*

The PT99 (9x19mm) and PT100 (.40 S&W) series autopistols have been stars of the Taurus line for many years now. No polymer plastic here — these feature tough but light forged aluminum frames and carbon or stainless steel slides. Big, easy to see three-dot sights combined with a hand-filling grip and traditional double/single action make for excellent accuracy.

The PT100 has a lot going for it — 10 plus one capacity in .40 S&W, excellent reliability, easy field stripping, the Taurus Security System and Taurus Lifetime Repair Policy — but perhaps the best feature is the safety design. The safety is mounted on the frame, just as it should be, with a de-cocking feature and the capacity for “condition one,” cocked-and-locked carry. It's a system that gives you the maximum flexibility to choose how you desire to carry or stow the pistol.

With a 5-inch barrel, an overall length of 8½ inches and a weight of 34 ounces,

this is no puny pocket pistol, rather, it's a full-sized duty gun and an accurate, dependable companion. To see the entire line of Taurus products, visit the Web site: www.taurususa.com, or call [305] 624-1115.

Not only will the lucky winner receive the Taurus PT-100, he or she will also win a sleek Mercworx “Vorax” knife. Crafted from 154CM, the blade of the Vorax is hardened to 58 on the Rockwell “C” scale. Subsequent cryogenic treatment (freezing to as low as -300 degrees) removes stress and stabilizes the metal for ultimate toughness.

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The scales are of micarta, nicely contoured. Two

hollow pins permit lashing the blade for survival use. In the hand, the Vorax is lively and fast. You'll find it especially comfortable when used with a reverse grip. An excellent cordura sheath, kydex lined, is included.

For the full rundown on Mercworx knives, including the new folders, call [908] 619-1013, or see the Web site: www.mercworx.com.



TO ENTER CONTEST: Use a postcard (no envelopes, please) and follow sample. Send to GUNS Magazine, GOM SEPTEMBER, P.O. BOX 639033, San Diego, CA 92163-9033. Entries must be received before OCTOBER 1, 2003. Limit one entry per household.

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CAMPFIRE TALES

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willing to see this project, which had taken on such additional meaning, proceed to completion. He ordered 52 special Ruger Bisley .22s and the Shootists/Tom Ruger Commemorative was turned over to one of the Ruger engineers.

Initially Bill Sr. was told it couldn't be done. Only this past year I learned from a retired employee very close to him, that when Bill Ruger heard this he got on the phone with a blistering message making it very plain this was *his* factory and they could darn well do anything he asked.

Murbach soon received word the project was a "go" again, and in a few months we received word that 52 Shootists' Sixguns would be made. All would go to Tedd Adamovich of BluMagnum Grips and T&T Engraving for special engraving. Two of this number were to go back to Ruger to be retained by the family.

This rarest of Rugers is a .22 caliber, stainless steel Bisley with a barrel length of 4 1/4 inches. This made it the only stainless Bisley ever, as well as the only .22 Bisley of that length ever factory built. Grips are standard Bisley wood with Ruger medallion. Sights are black, rear adjustable and ramp front. It is pictured on page 267 in Wilson's book, *Ruger And His Guns*.

The top of the barrel is engraved: "IN MEMORY OF OUR GOOD FRIEND TOM RUGER, THE SHOOTISTS 1994." Each backstrap is engraved with the individual Shootist's name in script and the two sent back to Ruger are marked "Bill Ruger, Sr." and "Bill Ruger, Jr." The serial number range for these special sixguns is 263-018XX for 46 of them and 262-973XX for the other six. The two that returned to the Ruger family are in the 263-018XX range of numbers. Beware of fakes!

When I received my Bisley, I called grip-maker Charles Able to see about ordering some special grips. I was unable to reach him but the next day I arrived home to find a package on my doorstep. Able, who is a Shootist, had made a special pair of grips for his Shootists' Special Bisley and decided to make a matching pair for me. They are ivory micarta with a Pronghorn Antelope scrimshawed on the right side. A most welcome gift from a special friend.

This rarest of all Ruger sixguns is certainly sought after by Ruger Collectors. Presently all of these stainless Bisley .22s, except one, are in the hands of Shootists. One Shootist found his back to the wall during a divorce and had to sell his Shootists' Bisley. Since I am the only Shootist who is also a member of the Ruger Collector's Association, I'm also the only RCA member, or possibly one of two, with this rarest Ruger in his collection. I intend to hold onto it, and the memories that go with it, for a long time.



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CAMPFIRE TALES

BY JOHN TAFFIN

THE RAREST RUGER

Elmer Keith. Skeeter Skelton. Bill Jordan. Col. Rex Applegate. Col. Walter Walsh. Col. Jeff Cooper. Never in my wildest young dreams did I ever envision I would someday know these larger than life men. All members of the Greatest Generation and unless something happens to change the direction of this country, we will never see their like again.

I must admit to a little bit of hero worship on my part where they are concerned, and even a condition of being somewhat awestruck. An outstanding member of this group was certainly Bill Ruger Sr. Not so many years ago, I found myself in his office interviewing him and the plan was for me to then go to his home and spend the night. Here I was talking with the Old Man himself and actually being invited to spend the weekend with him. Let's back up a mite and see how all things came together.

If we are fortunate, we each have at least one great idea in our lifetime. Mine was given to me from on High nearly 20 years ago and resulted in the forming of The Shootists. By inspiration, I had written a fictional piece concerning a dozen sixgunners gathering together for a week of shooting and sharing of ideas on a Colorado ranch. Those

involved all agreed that we should make fiction into fact, and the result was the gathering of 25 sixgunners for the first Shootists Holiday held on a ranch 10 miles north of Freedom, Wyo. in 1986.

Those in attendance wanted to continue what we found at the first gathering. So everyone present became a charter member and we have continued to grow and meet each year — rendezvous-style — to shoot, fellowship, and pick each other's brains. Members of The Shootists include gunwriters from the major magazines, custom gunsmiths and gunbuilders, industry people, and others who simply enjoy sixguns and sixgunners.

During the past decade and a half, The Shootists Holiday has truly become the Mecca for sixgunners. Attendance is by invitation only as we have grown to the point we simply cannot handle any more in the current rendezvous space we have in New Mexico.

Over the years, as we gathered in the evenings to fellowship and rest up from long days of burning powder, we talked about coming up with a special sixgun just for Shootists. We talked and talked, and never really did anything about it until Terry Murbach, now of Cor-Bon, took the project to heart. After talking with several Shootists, Murbach decided the Shootists' Sixgun should be in everyone's favorite caliber — the lowly but beloved .22 Long Rifle. It would be a gun everyone could afford to own and shoot, and it would be a single action.

To this end Murbach contacted Tom Ruger to explore the possibility of Ruger doing something they had never done before, namely make a very small special run of one-of-a-kind sixguns for some very special sixgunners. Tom Ruger was favorable to the idea. This was in the spring of 1992.

During that summer my duties with *American Handgunner* Magazine took me to the Ruger factory and I found myself sitting in the office of Bill Ruger Sr. Express orders were given to his secretary we were not to be disturbed. As we talked about things in general, the phone that was not supposed to ring did so. Bill Ruger was noticeably irritated that his instructions not to be disturbed were not carried out. However I could tell by his end of the conversation this was a very serious and important call.

When he got off the phone he shared the unfortunate news that Tom Ruger was terminally ill. In less than six months, shooters everywhere lost a valued friend. I'll never forget that day and I've felt a special bond with Bill Ruger ever since. You don't share something like this with a man and not be touched.

This could easily have been the end of the Shootists' Special project but Murbach and I discussed it and it was decided he would write Bill Ruger to see if it was possible to get it back on track. The Senior Ruger was more than



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