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GUNS

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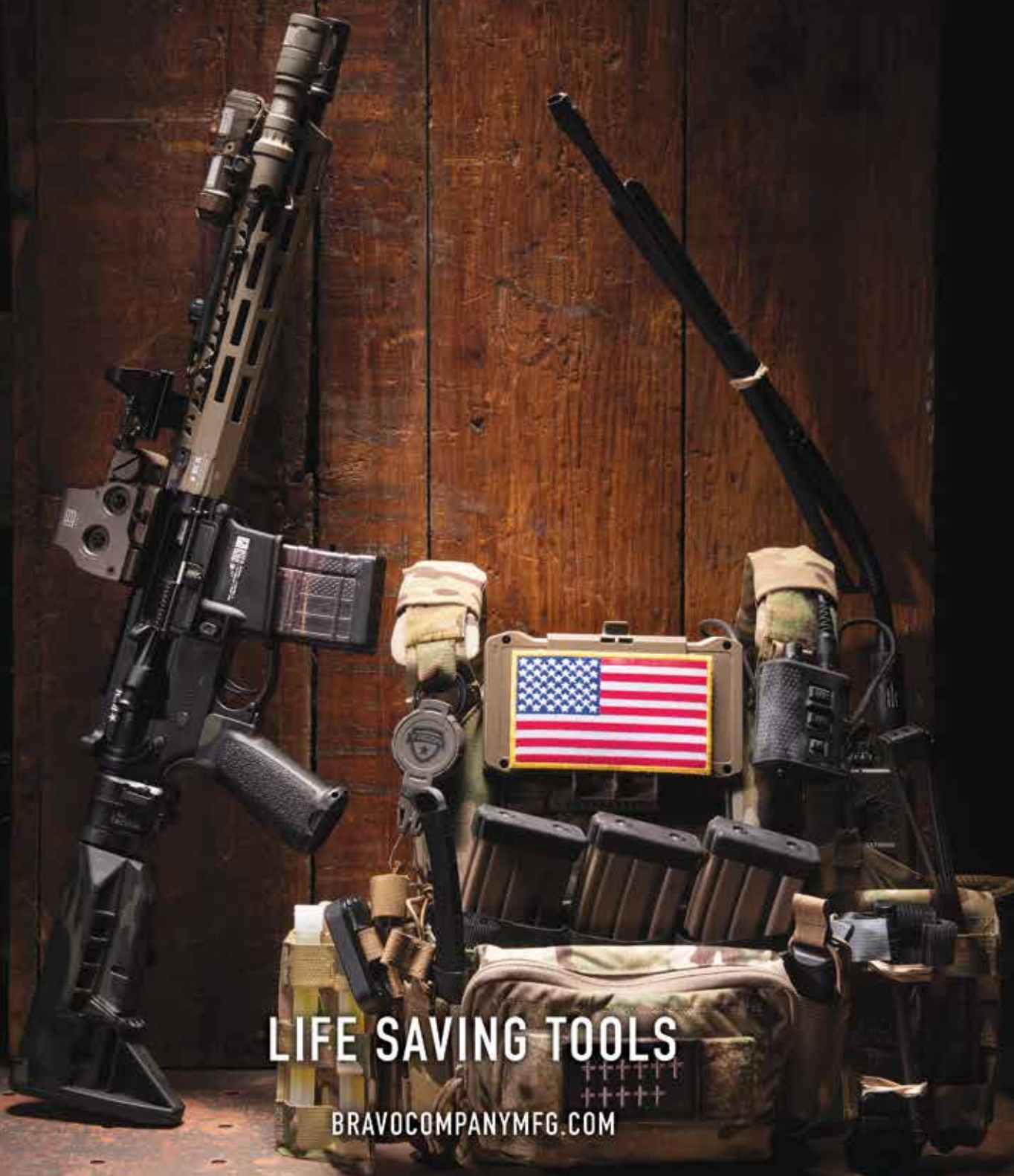
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CABOT GUNS
Bespoke On
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BIG BORES FOR BIG BULLS

Handguns That Have What It Takes
Mark Hampton

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CROSSFIRE

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IT CERTAINLY GOES BANG

I just got done listening to your podcast "Deadly Reloading Mistakes" with Tom McHale. You mentioned using a Lee Loader in the podcast. I started my reloading with Lee Loaders as well.

Well, you mentioned how a hammer is needed to seat the primers. Yeah, about that. As a young 15- or 16-year-old, I was using a Lee Loader in my parents' basement, which included a small tight workshop area. While attempting to seat a primer just a little bit deeper in the primer pocket, I apparently hit the little rod you place inside the case a little too hard.

Of course, that primer went off. It is amazing how loud it was in that small little workshop area. All I remember is turning around to see my father at the doorway very animated, red in the face and his mouth mouthing and moving but I couldn't hear a thing!

Yeah, you gotta be a little careful.



Mark Spisak

PIPE DREAMS

Since I am older than you, my pipe expedition dates to the Paleozoic. In my early days in a large San Francisco bank, roughly 25% of those partaking of the vile weed were pipe aficionados. Tapping into their extensive expertise put me on the delightful task of seeking the perfect pipe (as with guns, many must be acquired) along with the proper tobacco for the time of day and mood. I have many fond memories of enjoying a good pipe and a single malt. It puts one in a contemplative frame of mind.

Cigars: I am with you on this. Some were better than others and price was not a controlling factor — more like "luck of the draw." I had a friend who would send me a box of banned Cuban cigars from time to time. I figured if they were good enough for the President to break the ban, I could be no worse. In

my opinion they were highly overrated. Fidel should have enforced the ban. As far as I'm concerned, tobacco use has gotten a bad rap and the government should butt out!

Jerry Mandel

I'm the same way regarding Cuban sticks ... I suspect most of them are either counterfeit or the junk they foist off on Canadian tourists. I've had several presented with great flourish, then once you light them and your friend asks "whadda think?" ... I manage to choke out "Well, it's ... interesting..." —BW

PIPE DREAMS II

Tell Brent Wheat I enjoyed his article on smoking, especially the pipe.

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GUNS

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CORPORATE OFFICERS

Randy Moldé • Marjorie Young • Amy von Rosen

Editor: Brent T. Wheat

Associate Editor: Jazz Jimenez

Art Director/GFX Supervisor: Joe Novelo

Circulation/Production Director: Heather Arnold

Production Manager: Jim Kirschbaum

Digital Content Editor: Ashley McGee

Website Manager: Lorinda Massey

Special Projects Editor: Roy Huntington

Editorial Review: Consol Torres

CONTRIBUTING EDITORS

John Taffin, Dave Anderson,
Massad Ayoob, Mike "Duke" Venturino,
Will Dabbs MD, Dave Workman, Jeff "Tank" Hoover

FIELD EDITORS

Holt Bodinson, Payton Miller,
Mark Hampton John Sheehan,
Mike Cumpston, Alan Garbers

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Editor: Brent T. Wheat

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Editor: Erick Gelhaus

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Editor: Jade Moldae

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Editor: Tom McHale

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SUBSCRIPTION CUSTOMER SERVICE

866.820.4045

Email: subs@gunsmagazine.com

EDITORIAL

760.975.3832

Email: editor@gunsmagazine.com

ADVERTISING

North East: Amy Tanguay, amy.tanguay@fmghq.com

South East: Tom Vorel, tom.vorel@fmghq.com

West: Delano Amaguin, delano.amaguin@fmghq.com

PRODUCTION

Email: james.kirschbaum@fmghq.com

ONLINE TRAFFIC MANAGER

Lori Robbins

Email: lori.robbs@fmghq.com

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COMPROMISE PART 11: RUGER .32S

BIG PERFORMANCE IN A SMALLER CALIBER

John Taffin

Let us take a look at the Ruger .32s — namely the .32-20, .32 Magnum and .327 Magnum.

.32 WINCHESTER CENTERFIRE

The .32 Winchester Centerfire/.32 WCF is now mostly known as the .32-20 as it originally was loaded with 20 grains of black powder. Originally designed for the Winchester Model 1873, it was also chambered in the later Model 1892. Around 1890 Colt began chambering this magnificent little cartridge in the Single Action Army and it was the fourth most-popular chambering.

When Ruger brought out the full-sized Bisley Model in the mid-1980s, the original plans called for it to be chambered in .44-40, .38-40 and .32-20. However, none of this happened. Instead, they went with .45 Colt and the three Magnums, .44, .41 and .357. The only .32-20 to ever come from Ruger was the Buckeye Sports Convertible Blackhawk chambered in .32 Magnum with an extra cylinder in .32-20. What Ruger did not do was corrected by the late great John Gallagher.

John Gallagher has now gone home. However, over the years he made several very special sixguns for me chambered in .41 Special, .41 Magnum, .44 Special and .45 Colt. They are all superb examples of custom craftsmanship by a master gunsmith. The first sixgun John ever built for me was what I call my “Big Little Sixgun.” This is actually a big sixgun shooting a small cartridge.

To craft a premier custom .32-20, Gallagher started with a Ruger New Model Blackhawk and the cylinder is a custom-built 8-shot, which is made oversized to completely fill the frame window. It locks up tightly with no wiggle front-to-back or side-to-side and when the hammer is cocked, the smoothness is something that has to be experienced to be believed.

The Gallagher/Ruger can handle some pretty potent loads. Hornady's 100 XTP-JHP over 11.0 grains of #2400 clocks out at 1,405 fps. Speer's 100 JHP over the same load has a muzzle velocity of 1,372 fps, and the

same Speer bullet over 13.0 grains of H110 hits 1,300 fps. All three place eight shots in less than 1" at 25 yards. I use these loads sparingly, and not at all in the Colt Single Action. My normal load is 10.0 grains of #2400.



These stainless steel, full-sized Blackhawks with 5 1/2" barrels (above) are a 6-shot .357 Magnum and an 8-shot .327 Magnum. Below, .32 sixguns compared: .327 Bisley Model and .32 Magnum custom Single-Six .32 Magnum.



.32 MAGNUM

The first factory loads from Federal were very mild as the .32 Magnum arrived in Harrington & Richardson revolvers and this is why it is known officially as the .32 H&R Magnum. The old H&Rs were not what you would call especially strong. However, handloads for use in the Ruger Single-Six can be loaded much hotter.

The .32 Magnum is nothing more than an elongated .32 Long, a most pleasant-shooting and accurate cartridge especially when chambered in the Smith & Wesson K-32. My stable of Ruger .32 Magnums does not include a single factory version, but rather customized sixguns by Andy Horvath, Gary Reeder and Milt Morrison. I turned a 5 1/2" Single-Six over to Milt for some personal touches. To get a little weight out front, I had him install a full-length ejector and steel ejector rod housing and he also re-blued the entire sixgun.

Custom stocks from Tony Kojis were added and I have a one-of-a-kind Compromise Ruger .32 Magnum. My most-used loads for this revolver are assembled with cast bullets, the RCBS 100-grain SWC or the NEI Keith 100-grain over 8.5 grains of #2400 for over 1,200 fps. It makes it a great companion when traveling off the beaten path and able to handle anything I am likely to encounter.

.327 MAGNUM

If the .32-20 has one drawback, it is found at the reloading press. Case necks buckle easily and different brands of .32-20 brass cases can vary significantly in length. Both of these problems have been addressed and solved by .32-20 brass from Starline — it is significantly stronger than other brands and I have never lost a Starline .32-20 brass case when reloading.

In the 1980s we came very close to modernizing the .32-20. The .32 H&R Magnum took us to the brink but then drew back significantly. The .32-20 and the .32 H&R Magnum are both excellent cartridges but, at least in the mind of manufacturers, they have basically now been replaced by the .327 Federal Magnum.



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Targets fired at 20 yards
with the 5 ½" Bisley Model
.327 Magnum.



Reloading the .327 is as easy as any straight-walled cartridge can be. I use RCBS .32 Magnum carbide dies and the powders normally used with six-gun cartridges work with the .327 with my preference for heavy loads leaning to AA #9, #2400 and H110.

As far as .32 bullets, any of those previously designed for the .32 Magnum work just fine with my choices being for Hornady's 85- and 100-grain JHPs, Sierra's 90-grain JHC and Speer's 100-grain JHP. Speer introduced a 115-grain Gold Dot Hollow

Point specifically for the .327 Federal. The .327 Federal can be somewhat quirky sometimes with extreme spreads in muzzle velocity. However, I have found the best combination to be AA#9 powder and Magnum primers to overcome this.

Ruger chambered the Single-Six and .327 Magnum in both stainless steel and blued versions, with my 5 ½" Ruger being a blued Bisley Model. The recoil of the .327 can be somewhat heavy in the Single-Six, at least for my age-tendered hands but the Bisley Model grip frame helps to lessen felt recoil.

My favorite Ruger .327 for firing long strings or for packing is a rather rare sixgun. Ruger not only chambered the Single-Six in .327, they issued a small number of full-sized Blackhawks in stainless steel with 5 ½" barrels and an 8-shot cylinder. I do not mind the extra weight when this sixgun is carried in a proper holster and the extra weight certainly lessens felt recoil. It's definitely in the running for the title of Perfect Packin' Pistol.

GUNS



These .32 cartridges include (L-R) the .32 S&W, the .32 S&W Long, the .32 Magnum and the .327 Federal Magnum.

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LESSONS FROM THE LEGAL EAGLES

HOW TO STAY OUT OF TROUBLE

Massad Ayoob
Photos: Gail Pepin

As September 2022 flowed into October, I spent four intense days in Texas amongst some of the finest warriors of both the courtrooms and the legislatures. I was soaking up wisdom on gun laws and the culture war most commonly known as “gun control” as the State Bar of Texas hosted their annual Firearms Law Seminar in Austin for two days.

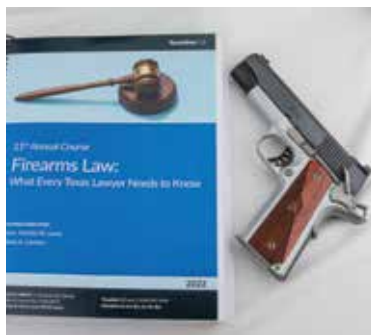
Then, in Dallas, Friday of that week was taken up by the Legal Scholars Conference and the weekend, by the Gun Rights Policy Conference at the same venue. I’ll try to hit the strongest take-aways from each.

BAR NONE

For the State Bar program led by Mark Correro, legendary Supreme Court lawyer and Second Amendment champion Stephen Halbrook spoke on 2A in the Supreme Court, a topic on which few have more experience. My impression — we’re winning on balance, but this is still going to be a long, expensive and complicated fight.

I gave a talk on how default strategies for upholding a client’s rights — never put him or her on the stand, withhold your opening statement until the prosecution has closed, claim accident or impairment — are sub-optimal for the genuine self-defense case. Judge Marilea Lewis moderated a panel that included attorneys Fred Adams and Roderique Hobson. The bottom line: Texas is a great state for gun people, but things still ain’t perfect.

Attorney Sean Healy spoke on regaining lost gun ownership rights. He noted it can be done, but it’s an uphill fight.



State Bar of Texas holds an annual Firearms Law Seminar. The pistol is a Springfield Armory Ronin light-weight 9mm.



GRPC — Second Amendment Foundation’s Julianne Versnel opens the Gun Rights Policy Conference, flanked by SAF founder Alan Gottlieb (left) and SAF president Mas Ayoob (right).

Hunter Smith and the redoubtable Darlene Payne Walker spoke on disposition of firearms in divorces and inheritances: Have your last will and testament in order in excruciating detail!

Lawyer Jim Willi focused on gun trusts, from which my big take-away was have the paperwork done by an attorney who specializes in that area and don’t try to do it yourself online. Other experts covered castle doctrine principles, and firearms and tort liability, the latter by the outstanding Sabrina Karels, whose lecture I had caught in the past.

The big lesson: Most homeowner liability won’t cover self-defense shootings, which are intentional acts and therefore generally excluded from coverage. Unfortunately, all this was on the second day, when I had to be in Dallas. However,

the paper version of Paul Martin’s lecture on post-self-defense support groups can be found here at tinyurl.com/mdaaz3tf.

LEGAL SCHOLARS CONFERENCE

The Second Amendment Foundation hosted this event with an all-star cast of Second Amendment champions like David Kopel and many more. Legendary 2A pioneers like Bob Cottrell and David Hardy were there, still plugging after all these decades, joined by some younger courtroom warriors who’ve been instrumental in legal victories. The “scholars” appellation derives from the fact SAF founder Alan Gottlieb was the visionary who in the 1970s began encouraging and funding scholarship in the legal journals, confirming the right to keep and bear arms was an individual right. This led directly to gun owners’ civil rights victories in *Heller v. District of Columbia* and *McDonald v. City of Chicago* leading ultimately to the June 2022 U.S. Supreme Court decision in *NYSRPA v. Bruen*, which sounded the death knell for the elitist “may issue” model of concealed carry permitting. Now the egalitarian “shall issue” model is the law of the land.

It was encouraging to hear from the insiders. Governor Hochul in New York State had responded to Bruen by ram-rod-rod-rod through legislation making concealed carry even by permit holders a felony in any establishment without signage expressly authorizing the practice — essentially rendering the permits null and void. All of us present agreed it was unconstitutional and most of us expected it to take a long time for it to be ruled so. But some of the insiders smiled and said it might be reversed sooner than we thought. They were right: Less than a week later, a Federal judge ruled Hochul's law unconstitutional and issued a temporary restraining order against enforcing it.

GRPC

Gottlieb and the late Joe Tartaro, giants in the fight for gun owners'



Longtime 2A warrior Stephen Halbrook lectured at all three events.

civil rights, created the Gun Rights Policy Conference to bring together everyone on our side of the fight. Hundreds attended for 2022, the first time in two years that we could do it in person instead of virtually. Pro-2A folks from local level and state level as well as national got to network

again in person. A live-stream was also available and at least 10,000 people tuned in to watch from home or office. I'm told it was broadcast on C-Span to many more. And I won't discuss it further, because you can watch it yourselves, archived on YouTube, from beginning to end, thanks to the efforts of 2A advocates Paul Lathrop and Charles Heller. Go to YouTube and type in "GRPC 2022." I urge you to watch it.

In the next of these columns, we'll go back to the topic of handguns. But we must all remember in order to keep those handguns — and the other firearms so many Americans died over the centuries to preserve our right to own in the first place — we all need to stay involved in the fight for gun owners' civil rights, and the fundamental human right of protecting ourselves and our loved ones. **GUNS**

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Mike “Duke” Venturino
Photos: Yvonne Venturino

Growing up back east, two things caught my imagination early on — guns and horses, both of which were not plentiful there. So, as soon as I was able, the logical thing was to move west where both could be enjoyed to the fullest. Of course, the natural path was eventually I’d discover the genre of firearm most associated with horses — the saddle ring carbine (SRC).

HISTORY

Such were produced by repeating rifle manufacturers starting with the Winchester Model 1866 and following through with all their lever guns models developed in the 19th century. However, it seems SRCs were most popular in the pistol-cartridge models. In the 1880s Marlin, Colt and Whitney/Kennedy and others followed. Actually, commercial firearms manufacturers did not pioneer saddle ring carbines. The horse cavalry did, but that’s another story.

What exactly is an SRC? They are lighter and shorter than standard rifles. It seems 20" round barrels were standard but on special order, barrels as short as 12" could be obtained from Winchesters. Whereas rifles had crescent steel buttplates, SRCs had wider, less-curved steel buttplates. Rifles had steel forend caps but SRCs had steel barrel bands. Sights were different also.

Rifles had buckhorn rear sights with stepped sliders for elevation and front sights dovetailed to barrels. SRCs had rear sights of a ladder style. When flat, there was a notched blade but when flipped up, there was another blade to slide up for elevation changes. Early on, SRC front sights were part of the front barrel band but later they were a stud atop the barrel.

Then, there is the defining part making the carbine an SRC — a stud attached to the receiver’s left side containing a ring. Its purpose was a means to attach the carbine to a horse’s saddle so the two would hopefully stay together.

In an era when personal travel, aside from river boats and trains, was by



This ring is what SRCs are all about. This is a new Winchester Model 1873 SRC .357 Magnum.

animal power, every pound counted. When traveling by horseback such was even truer. Consider this: A Model 1873 rifle weighed about 8 ½ to 9 lbs. but a carbine cut the weight about 2 lbs. That was considered very desirable. My first horseback hunting with a 10-lb. Sharps rifle proved it to me. I started out walking, leading the horse with the rifle in a scabbard on its right side. When I looked back, the rifle was pulling my saddle off to the same side.

Marlin and Colt even made “baby carbines” that were extra light. I’ve had one of each and they didn’t even hit 5 lbs.

WEARING ONLY A THONG ...

Decades back at Montana gun shows you would often see saddle ring carbines with a simple length of leather thong (boot lace) tied in the ring. I



Three of Duke’s pistol-cartridge SRCs. From top, the .38 Special Model 1866 from Uberti, original .44-40 Winchester Model 1873 and original .38-40 Winchester Model 1892.

often wondered how it could possibly help keep the carbine secured to a saddle. Well, it would not. Collectors would put those thongs in the rings to keep them from marring the receivers' finish when being handled.

A simple piece of boot lace wasn't strong enough to keep a carbine attached very long to a saddle on a moving half-ton animal. What horsemen of old used was a thin strap of strong leather. Even then, it seemed to me a bare carbine dangling from a saddle's horn would beat the animal and the rider badly. Never mind it would get so filthy as to be dysfunctional.

Of course, they didn't just dangle loosely and weren't completely exposed to the elements. I've seen old photos of carbines in leather or cloth pouches hanging from saddle horns, not only secured by leather straps through saddle rings but also tied down with saddle strings. I imagine the innovation of saddle scabbards was a relief to armed horse travelers.



This photo shows how an SRC attaches to a saddle horn. Notice it's not by a thin leather thong but a sturdy leather strap. Of course, in use the SRC would need to be protected by a heavy cloth or leather bag.

THE END IS NEAR

SRCs didn't have a long life. As said, commercially they began in 1866 and in 1927 Winchester dropped saddle rings because automobiles had made them obsolete. In their heyday, SRCs actually cost less than standard rifles. Winchester's 1899 catalog has them priced \$1.50 less than rifles. Today if you see an SRC sitting next to a rifle of the same make and both in comparable condition, the SRC will be priced higher.

Where modern shooters are lucky is manufacturers in Italy and Japan are producing very good quality Winchester SRC copies. Collectively I've had replica and original SRCs chambered as .25-20, .32-20, .32-40 .38 Special, .357 Magnum, .38-40, .38-55, .44-40 and .45-70. Back when we shot cowboy action competitions, Yvonne liked her Model 1866 .38 Special due to its mild recoil. In my old age I like the gentle ones too, and just picked up a nifty .32-20 Model '92. **GUNS**

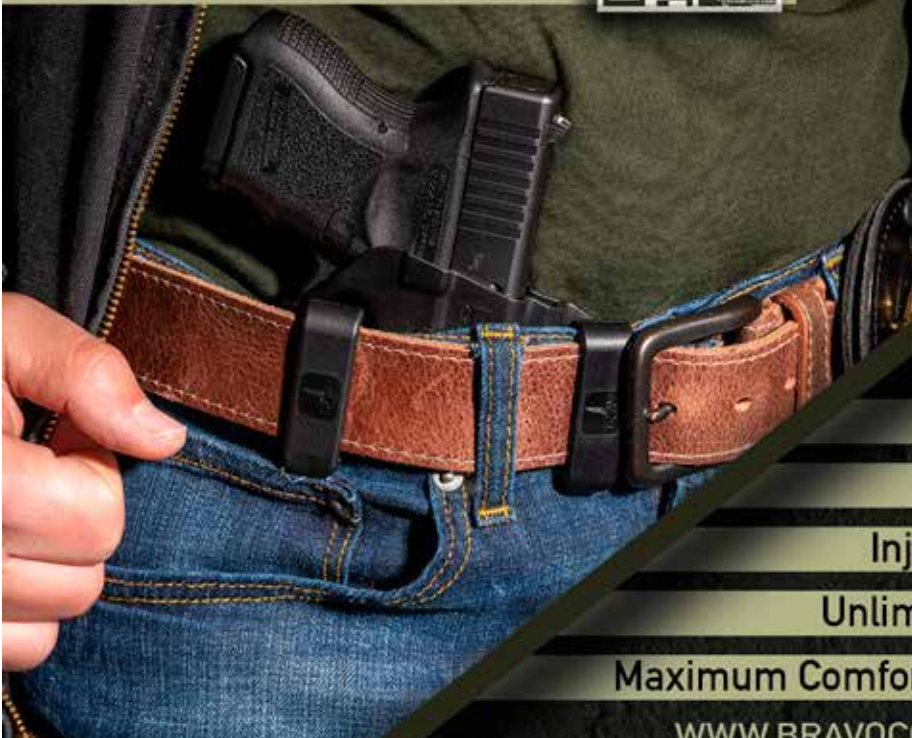
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FIELD OF VIEW

HOW QUICKLY YOU SEE AFFECTS YOUR HUNT

Wayne van Zwoll

We met by chance and exchanged miseries. The deer were beating us both. The wind was cold. To put a positive spin on our chat, he smiled and declared, "But I'm ready for 'em." He tapped the front of his scope, its bell broad as a can of tuna. At this, he trudged off into the thickets.

"A lot of scope for short shots," thought I. But, if he was smart and kept his scope at, say, 3x, its pie-plate

glass would wring bright images from dark places.

At that magnification, he'd also get a big field of view (FOV).

FOV increases as you dial down a scope's magnification. But it has almost nothing to do with the size of the objective lens.

GEOMETRY CLASS

FOV in riflescopes is commonly stated in feet at 100 yards. In binoculars and spotting scopes, it is feet at 1,000 yards or meters at 1,000 meters. Schmidt & Bender lists FOVs for its riflescopes in yards at 100 yards and meters at 100 meters (numbers are the same). SIG Tactical scopes also follow the path of binos and spotting scopes, with FOVs in meters at 1,000 meters.

These linear measures are the width of the "window" bracketing your view through the optic. You'll also find FOVs in angular terms. Some companies list the real or true angle and a linear

measure. This is common practice in binocular descriptions, albeit Zeiss has used it for riflescopes too.

Some binocular specs include "apparent" angle. I've yet to see this value listed for riflescopes. You'll get apparent angle by multiplying magnification by the real or true angle. So, an 8x binocular with a true FOV of 7.5 degrees has an apparent FOV angle of 60 degrees, same as a 10x binocular with a true FOV of 6 degrees.

One degree is a span of 52.36 feet at 1,000 yards, so given a true angular figure for FOV you can quickly determine its linear measure. For a 7x binocular with a 63-degree apparent angle: $9 \times 52.36 = 471$ feet at 1,000 yards.

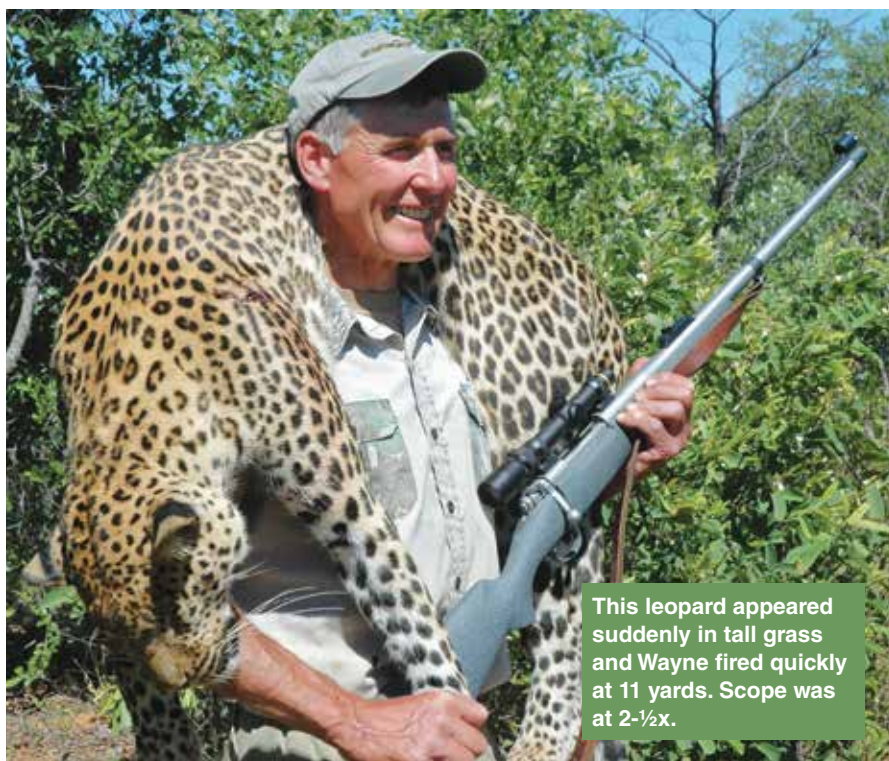
Binoculars with apparent FOV angles of 65 degrees or greater have been classed as "wide-angle." But this designation, once common, seems to have fallen out of favor, perhaps because it was carelessly used in marketing and became meaningless. You can't assume FOV angles from an optic's magnification or from its front glass diameter. Leupold catalogs 8x32 and 10x32 binoculars with the same 7.5-degree angular FOV. One 10x50 Leupold bino has a true measure of 5.8 degrees, while another comes in at 5.2.

Binoculars have broader FOVs than riflescopes because they needn't provide the eye relief keeping your noggin intact during recoil. Most scopes designed for receiver mounting on rifles have 3" to 4" of eye relief. Scopes with extended eye relief, for mounting on a carbine barrel or a handgun, have smaller FOVs.

Ocular lens diameter affects FOV. With your eye the optimal distance behind the lens (proper eye relief), a cone of view extends from your pupil to the lens perimeter. Say the cone angle is 24 degrees and the scope is 4x. What you see is a magnified image, so actual field is the 24-degree angle divided by the power. A 24-degree angle at 100 yards spans about 120 feet: $120 / 4 = 30$ feet. To enlarge that field, you could dial down magnification to 3x: $120 / 3 = 40$ feet. Or you could make the ocular lens bigger, the cone angle wider. Increasing the angle to 30 degrees



Internal design and ocular lenses — not the objectives — determine FOV, by angular and linear measure.



This leopard appeared suddenly in tall grass and Wayne fired quickly at 11 yards. Scope was at 2-1/2x.



Aim just below eyeline and fire (above, left). In some situations, a tight FOV slowing you down can be lethal! Photo: Tony Dyer. This nyala (above, right) won't tarry! You need a field of view that instantly shows what you see with the naked eye!

would bump FOV at 4x to 37 ½ feet and yield a 25-foot FOV at 6x. Finally, you could boost FOV with the eyepiece by engineering shorter eye relief into the scope. As your eye gets closer to the lens, the cone angle increases.

Remember when comparing linear FOV, the area of circles are proportionate to the squares of their diameters. A scope's FOV at 200 yards is four times the area of its 100-yard FOV. If you dial up a scope from 3x to 18x, linear FOV will shrink from roughly 38 feet to 7. You'll see about 1/29th the area!

As rifles, loads and optics evolved, shooters tested them at increasing distance. Scopes with top-end power of 14x, 15x, 16x and 18x trumped the 3-9x without sacrificing broad FOVs when dialed down. Magnification ranges grew: four, five, six times. A 4x scope was suddenly so yesterday. Land sakes, with a laser range-finder and an elevation dial matched to his load, any hunter could crank his scope to pester elk a half-day's hike from the muzzle! A smart phone with drift and drop data monitored and adjusted for conditions. A bipod steadied the rifle.

But game can appear suddenly, in sun's glare or deep shadow, when you're winded and have no time or place to set up a bipod. Rain and snow can distort and veil your quarry. Need a second shot? You must cycle coming out of recoil and re-establish aim instantly, perhaps on a moving animal.

Your scope's FOV, easy to ignore at the range, is now crucial!

IN THE FIELD

Can an FOV be too big? Perhaps. Peer through any 1x glass, and you may think the target image appears small, but it should match what you registered with your naked eye. I find a 2-½x scope most useful for fast, close shots in cover. To my eye, the image is just slightly larger than when viewed without glass, and sharper. FOV at 100 yards is, almost literally, broad as a basketball court. Keeping magnification in wide-range variable scopes above, say, 2x, can also reduce disturbing edge curvature.

We spot and recognize targets quickest when our view is least altered — i.e., when we see as we would without a sight to enlarge, distort, screen or block the target.

The function of a big FOV in a riflescope isn't to reveal more territory as might be argued for a binocular or more animals in a herd, though it can alert you to those you might wish to shoot or avoid. While it obviously helps you lead moving game, a generous FOV shines because it makes your aim as quick and as natural as a glimpse.

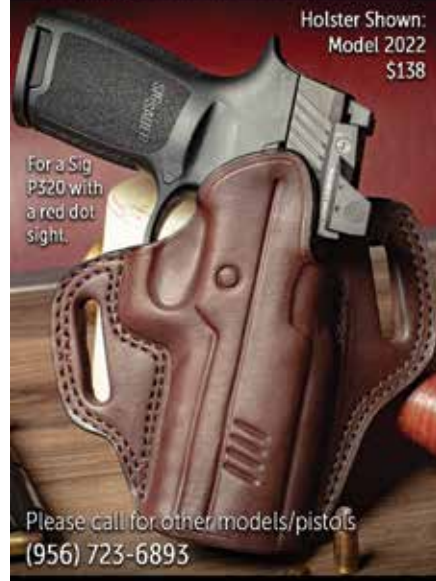
Having a generous field of view isn't the only thing helpful in a scope. But without it, the rest of the package may arrive too late.



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ADDICTIONS

SAYING 'NO' ISN'T ALWAYS EASY

Will Dabbs, MD

Addiction is an unfortunate and ubiquitous component of my day job. I have seen folks addicted to cigarettes, narcotics, sex, ice, alcohol and children. The very definition of addiction is tough to nail down. The Google definition is, "The fact or condition of being addicted to a particular substance, thing, or activity."

That's circular reasoning. It literally doesn't mean anything. What a cop-out.

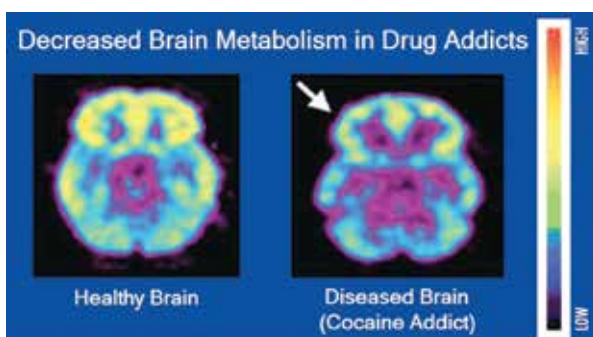
I must be forever on my guard against promoting, instigating, or perpetuating this unfortunate problem. If someone comes to the clinic requesting a specific controlled substance then my antennae immediately wiggle. No lie, I had a patient once steal a prescription pad and try to fill a prescription at the local Walmart pharmacy for "Mofeen (i.e. *morphine*), 1 gallon." The eagle-eyed pharmacist rightfully flagged this one as suspicious.

Identifying addiction is easier in others. Turning a laser-like focus inward is

frequently murkier. It's tough to admit such weakness in yourself. However, right here in this venue, I will do exactly that. I recently had an experience that led me to believe I might be suffering from a serious addiction.

THE DETAILS

The email had come from a dear friend who is an attorney. One of the



Will notes, "I'm afraid my brain actually looks like the addicted, diseased example on the right. I seem to be no longer capable of saying 'No.'"

many manifest fringe benefits to being a quasi-successful gun writer is that buddies reach out with their gun quandaries. I can seldom reliably estimate the value of Granddad's antique fowling piece,

but I do enjoy every query. This one was fairly benign.

My buddy was probating the estate of an old bachelor who was recently demised. I had actually known the man as a patient. He had no close relatives, so his stuff held no sentimental value. They preferred simply to get a check. Among the sundry detritus of life my pal was now tasked to liquidate was an old shotgun. He emailed me to see if I might be interested.

THE GUN

The weapon in question was actually a bolt-action shotgun. I had seen a few of these things before and appreciated their novelty. This gun was as big as a water ski and badly freckled. It sported some kind of weird poly-choke device on the muzzle. The gun was grossly intact, but the follower and follower spring from the internal magazine were AWOL.

The weapon was made by the Kessler Corporation per its markings. Curiously, the barrel and receiver were cut from a single long piece of steel. Additionally, the gun had no serial number. Prior to the 1968 Gun Control Act there was no requirement to serialize firearms. You could just sell guns through the mail to strangers. Weapons



Will exercises his right to keep and bear arms with considerable vigor. He really had no need for a broken antique bolt-action shotgun but bought it anyway.

like this Kessler were typically advertised in the backs of magazines and sold freely through the post. That's pretty hard to believe today.

Despite its undeniable novelty, this old Kessler shotgun was a total piece of junk. Any normal person would have looked it over and recommended my buddy cut it up to make tomato stakes or something similar. Not me, however. I dragged out my checkbook and bought the thing. I paid \$75 for a grungy old broken shotgun once owned by a guy I hardly knew.

Now appreciate the circumstances. I have been collecting guns since I was seven. I have two full-time jobs, one of which goes solely to support my firearms habit. My right to keep and bear arms is well exercised. I had exactly zero use for this craptastic old shotgun. I didn't even have a place to keep it — and yet I still bought it anyway. This might actually be a problem.

Addiction is a complex conundrum with both genetic and environmental components. Most folks who have beaten it tell me conquering addiction is an ongoing process requiring dedication and daily diligence. Those caught in the throes of addiction get up every morning determined to master that which holds such sway over them. It all sounds pretty hard. By contrast, I think I'll just go with it.

Apparently, I am destined to simply wallow in mine. My substance of choice is most anything old and greasy. A lever-action Daisy repeater was my gateway drug. Today each successive hit demands something older or greasier to get the same high. I frankly see no end in sight. There are no 12-step program or inpatient treatment facilities. Guys like me are pretty much on our own.

Like most addictions, mine can be both terribly expensive and take a dark toll on personal relationships. If my long-suffering bride finally kicks me out of the house over this, you'll know where to find me. I'll be the smelly derelict curled up over the heater grate on some big city sidewalk someplace. You'll recognize me as the bum with the Kessler shotgun stuffed into his pilfered shopping cart.

GUNS



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Kevin Michalowski's 3 Favorite Things
(USCCA Expo 2018)

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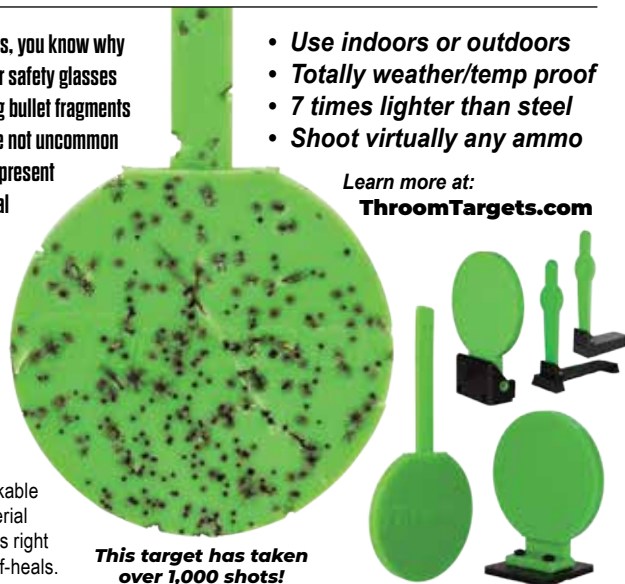
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Matching top levers to receivers is a delicate process.



THE UPLAND GUN COMPANY ARE YOU GUYS NUTS?

Tom Keer • Photos: The Upland Gun Company

What would you say if your spouse came home and said, “Screw COVID-19, I’m launching a new shotgun company?” You’d probably say the same thing the wives of the founders of the Upland Gun Company said — “Are you guys nuts?”

THINGS WORK OUT

Maybe this is what makes Jerry Havel say, “It’s funny how life works out. If you told me 30 years ago that Dan LaFond and I would be business partners, I’d say you were crazy. Back then, I was a Remington sales rep covering the Great Lakes region. Dan’s territory was pretty much the same and he repped Smith & Wesson, Mossberg, Connecticut Valley Arms, Under Armour and others. Being a Remington rep in Federal’s backyard was difficult enough but competing with Dan was even harder. We were always battling about something which usually involved shelf space.”

Over time, Havel and LaFond found they were more alike than different. “Dan and I became friends through a

mutual love of bird dogs, fine shotguns, grouse and woodcock hunting,” Havel said. “But being on the road so much took a lot of time away from my family. I turned our family hunting camp into a lodge and guide service called Pineridge Grouse Camp. I expanded my dog training and am now a Eukanuba Pro Staffer. But shotguns are as much a part of my DNA as dogs and birds and I was a bit restless. When I hunted with Dan I found he felt the same way and that’s how we came up with the idea to launch a new shotgun company.”

Many business models have shifted towards ecommerce and Havel and LaFond thought it might just work for shotguns. “These days, you can go online and build a brand-new car, so why not build a custom upland gun? And rather than start with a pre-designed shotgun that might have features a customer doesn’t want, we took the opposite approach. At UGC we start with a base cost and then build in upgrades at the customer’s request. Those upgrades increase the cost, but we’ve found they land under the MSRP of other modern brands.”

UGC carries no inventory and sell consumer-direct. “Every shotgun is built on an on-demand basis specifically to a customer’s wishes,” Havel said. “We currently offer six models, three of which are O/Us and three are SxSs. We communicate with every customer either in person, during a gun fitting, or on a video conference call. It’s whatever works best for our customers.

Designing a custom shotgun couldn’t be easier. Here are some of UGC’s options.

Models and base price point: There are three O/Us and three SxSs in the \$2,000, \$3,000 and \$4,000 range.

OVER-UNDER

The SK Field grade is available in 12, 16, 20, 28 and .410 bore for \$2,199. The SK Feather is built on a lightweight alloy frame and available in 12, 20 and 28 gauge for \$2,499. The SK One Sport is a premier clay target shotgun and available in 12-gauge and 20-gauge for \$4,499.

SIDE-BY-SIDE

The Zeus is a field grade boxlock for \$1,999. The Venus is a scaled-frame round body boxlock for \$3,299. The Minerva has external hammers for \$4,999.

MORE CHOICES

Customers then move on to select:

- Barrel Lengths: 26", 27", 28", 29", 30" with an extra fee for lengths over 30"
- Chokes: Fixed or 5 interchangeable



Precision machining of the hook ensures a smooth connection to the hinge pin. Careful attention to the barrel lump makes for a tight "bite."



Rota-Fausti Manufacturing (RFM Armi) craftsmen pay close attention to fit and finish.

- Stocks: Standard, Grade 2, Grade 2.5, Grade 3, Grade 4, Grade 5. The nicer the wood the more expensive the cost.
- Grips: Full Pistol, Half Pistol (Prince of Wales) or Straight English
- Forend: English splinter with a rounded tip or a Schnabel
- Checkering: Standard, Fine or Extra Fine

UGC can build stocks to dimensions provided by customers just as they can recommend a gun fitting with a gun fitter in certain regions. For a large enough group UGC will send a gun fitter to do private fittings along with shooting instruction. Customers can select one of three different stock finishes, options for ornamental scroll or deep-relief engraving, and second or more sets of barrels.

Once the design is complete, UGC sends the order to Rota-Fausti Manufacturing (RFM Armi). "We interviewed a number of Italian and Spanish shotgun manufacturers at the IWA trade show in Nuremberg, Germany," Havel said. "We noticed that RFM was booked solid throughout the entire show. We loved their quality and scheduled a visit to their factory a few months later. They're passionate about guns, so much so they consider themselves



When customers begin to build their custom O/Us and SxSs, they have a lot of wood options from which to choose.

artists instead of gunmakers. That's a characteristic of all of the world's best craftsmen, so we're thrilled to partner with them. At this point it takes six months to build the shotgun of your dreams. When finished, we have our gunsmiths perform a final inspection at our U.S. distribution center. Then we ship it directly to the customer's FFL holder of choice for pick up."

Lars Jacob of Lars Jacob Wing-shooting is one of UGC's custom gun fitters. "On a comparative basis in the \$2,000–\$4,000 price point, the UGC shotguns offer an incredible number of custom options," he said. "It's smart to start with the base price and build from there. These days, many shotgunners are environmentally conscious and prefer extractors to ejectors. So, a simple cost savings there can be used to pay for a gun fitting for a true custom experience. Can you think of another company where you can create a multiple barrel set that is affordable? Jerry and Dan's approach has made it very easy for me to sell guns."

UGC takes advantage of modern technology to create traditional, custom shotguns. Their scroll-back actions offer a quality fit and finish, their case-hardened triggers are a nice touch while 3" chambers add a contemporary touch. Sales have been so strong that UGC will launch its first rifle next year. "We're staying within the affordable nostalgia niche," Havel said. "We'll focus on double rifles for the American whitetail market with an MSRP under \$7,000. It's an exciting time for us. Folks don't think we're so crazy anymore, either."

GUNS

UplandGunCompany.com

BLACK POWDER .38 WCF

A COWBOY FAVORITE

John Taffin

In 1873 Winchester brought out their first WCF — Winchester Centerfire Cartridge — with the .44-40 chambered in their lever action rifle. The .44-40 is basically the same size as a .45 Colt cartridge case that has been necked down to .44. The next step in the early 1880s was for Winchester to neck the .44-40 down to .38.

With their bottlenecked shape, both of these cartridges feed exceptionally smoothly through Winchester 1873 and 1892 actions. Colt also chambered their Single Action Army in .38 WCF. However, experts can't seem to agree just when this happened. Probably in the early 1880s. The .38 WCF is now mainly known as the .38-40.

Just what was the .38-40? Experts can't seem to agree on this either. The normal conclusion would be it was/is a .38 caliber bullet backed by 40 grains of powder. The first problem begins with the caliber itself. Today's .38 Special is not a true .38 as it actually uses a .36 bullet and the .38-40 takes the same path in the opposite direction. Instead

of being a .38, it's actually a .40 caliber. So, should it have actually been called a .40-40? There are those who say the powder charge was not 40 grains but actually 38 grains, making it a .40-38. Whatever the case, it's still known as the .38-40. A most interesting sidelight is the relatively modern .40 S&W uses the same bullets as the .38-40 and is the ballistic twin of the .38-40 black powder cartridge.

With the .44-40, I have found sixguns with chamber mouths running anywhere from .424 to .433, which means bullets really have to be tailored to fit the cylinders. The .38-40 is held to better tolerances with cylinders running from .399 to .403. I normally use bullets in the .400-.401 size range and they work exceptionally well, turning the .38-40 into a most-accurate shooting sixgun.

BULLET CHOICES

Mostly, the two bullets I use today are the Oregon Trail 180 RNFP and the RCBS #40-180CM. The latter is especially apropos for the .38-40 with black powder loads as it not only has a



The 38-40 loads (above) work fine with the traditional bullets as well as the more modern Keith-style semi-wadcutters. John's most-used bullet (below) for the .38-40 today is the RCBS #40-180 CM.



crimping groove, it also has a wide, deep grease groove for holding black powder lube such as SPG or Lyman Black Powder Gold. Both help to cut down on the fouling caused by black powder.

The hard lube found in the Oregon Trails bullet is basically useless for black powder shooting as it does nothing to keep the fouling soft. So, when shooting these bullets, I am very careful to swab out the barrel with a commercial black powder cleaner or my solution of Moose Milk consisting of water and Ballistol. Doing this keeps the powder fouling from building up and keeps the sixgun shooting without excess fouling and binding with these bullets normally used with smokeless powder loads.

As I recall, the first box of .38-40 cartridges I purchased cost more than 10 times the price of a box of .22 Long Rifle cartridges. So my first .38-40 did not see much use until I started reloading. Lyman's .38-40 bullet is #40188 and this same bullet not only served me well in the .38-40, it was the first cast bullet I tried in both the .40 S&W and the 10 mm. Cast hard, these weigh about 170 grains, have a flat nose and no crimping groove.

Using today's modern .38-40 brass from Starline, 35 grains is about the



The 1st Generation Bisley Model (left) and Single Action Army Colt .38-40s; the Bisley grip has been modified to the Keith #5-style.

maximum charge that can be used with most traditional bullets. From a 7 1/2" barrel and using 35 grain charges of Goex FFg, Goex FFFg, Goex Cartridge, Pyrodex P and Hodgdon's Select, yield muzzle velocities of 976 fps, 1,043 fps, 925 fps, 1,118 fps and 1,033 fps, respectively. Note the Pyrodex is the most powerful loading at over 1,100 fps while the load using Hodgdon's Select is exceptionally accurate, producing groups just under 1" for five shots at 25 yards.

KISS AND SHELL

Even though the .38-40 is a bottlenecked cartridge and cannot be sized with a carbide sizer, I find using the steel sizing die and spraying the cases with something like Hornady's Spray Lube works just fine. Brass is expanded with just a kiss of the Lee Universal Expanding die, then primed with Magnum primers as this helps start the black powder burning correctly. Most of my black powder cartridges are now charged with powder using the Lee Powder Measure. The ones I find useful for loading .38-40 with Black Powder are 1.6cc, 1.9cc and 2.2cc, which dip 26.6, 30.0 and 35.6 grains, respectively, of FFFg black powder by volume. The 1.9cc/30.0 grains gets the most use.

My most-used .38-40 loads these days are assembled using 30 grains of either black powder or black powder substitutes. These loads were all fired in a San Marcos Hartford Armory 7 1/2" Model P using Starline brass. I have found this brass to be better suited for bottlenecked sixgun/lever-gun cartridges such as .38-40, .44-40 and .32-20 as I rarely ever lose a case while reloading. This does not seem to be true with older brass with very fragile necks.

The RCBS #40-180 with 30.0 grains of Pyrodex clocks out at over 1,000 fps while the same charge of Triple-Seven FFg is just under 1,000 fps with excellent accuracy, producing groups just over 1". I have also had excellent results with the Oregon Trail 180 RNFP over this same charge of Triple-Seven with groups right at 1 1/2". All of these make excellent every day packing loads.



This pair of Uberti 7 1/2" .38-40 Single Actions (above) wear grips from Gripmaker. Targets shot at 20 yards (below) with a pair of Hartford Armory .38-40 Single Actions.



Lyman's original #40188 is still an excellent choice as well as exceptionally accurate shooting. In the 7 1/2" Hartford Armory Single Action, 25 grains of Goex FFg clocks at 850 fps with a 1" group; 25 grains of Hodgdon's Select gives 832 fps and a group of 1/2"; 30 grains of Goex Cartridge, 962 fps and 1 1/4", 35 grains of Goex FFg, 976 fps and 1 1/4" and 35 grains of Hodgdon's Select clocks out at over 1,025 fps with a group under 1".

Switching to the 4 3/4" Hartford Armory Single Action results in 25

grains of Goex FFFg giving 785 fps; 25 grains of Select, 800 fps; 30 grains of Goex FFg, 855 fps; and 35 grains of Pyrodex 980 fps with all loads right at 1". The most accurate load with this easy-packing sixgun turned out to be 30 grains of Pyrodex for just over 800 fps and a 3/4" group. All of these loads were shot nearly 25 years ago in preparation for my book *Action Shooting Cowboy Style*. Both of these sixguns are still capable of the same accuracy — however, I am not always.

GUNS

SPRINGFIELD M6 SCOUT

A "SURVIVAL SPECIAL" IS STILL TOUGH TO BEAT

Payton Miller

In the firearms industry, there was a time when "survival" was a fairly common marketing buzzword. Maybe not as ubiquitous as "tactical" has become, but a slew of models had "survival" somewhere in their descriptive copy.

Most were rimfires of the take-down or folding variety and were designed for foraging, small game hunting, backpacking or what-have-you. Notable current specimens in the survival niche include the Henry AR-7 Explorer, Chiappa's Little Badger and the Savage Model 42 takedown .22/.410 combination gun.

THE ORIGINAL

However, the most bare-bones, purpose-built survival guns were patterned after the USAF M6 combination gun, which replaced the M4 bolt-action survival gun in the mid-1950s. The M6 has been offered variously by Springfield Armory, Chiappa and TPS Arms in various caliber/shotgun bore combinations, but the minty Springfield specimen we managed to get our greasy hands on was in the original issue USAF chambering — .22 Hornet over .410.

Springfield also offered it in .22LR/.410 and (the rarest iteration) or .22 Magnum/.410. The military originals featured 14" barrels but our

Survival simplicity: Befitting a true "survival" rifle, the all-steel M6 is a supremely bare-bones firearm but serves its intended purpose well.

break-open Springfield M6 Scout (made by CZ and so stamped) features BATF-compliant tubes a touch over 18". Springfield offered it from 1995 to 2004, according to our well-worn *Blue Book of Gun Values*.

Our particular specimen was purchased by shooting buddy John Wightman in 1995 and was new in the box — having languished as a pristine, if utilitarian — safe queen for decades. After suffering through a reasonable amount of guilt-tripping, John agreed it needed some range time and we were only too happy to oblige.

If you're a devotee of fine walnut, you're out of luck with the M6. It's made of stamped sheet steel aside from the forged O/U barrel assembly. Stainless steel models were available later in its production life. However, ours was Parkerized flat black.

The gun is hinged by means of a removable pin and folds into a single compact unit. Remove the hinge pin and you've got two pieces. When it's put together, the OAL is 32". Weight is 4.7 lbs., a bit more if you've flipped open the hinged steel cheekpiece and loaded up the ammo recesses with their full complement of four .410 shotshells (2.5" or 3") and a dozen .22 Hornet cartridges.

Control-wise, what you have is a beefy, industrial-strength external hammer with an integral pull-up knob for barrel selection — up for rifle, down for shotgun. Putting the knurled knob at midpoint puts you on "safe."

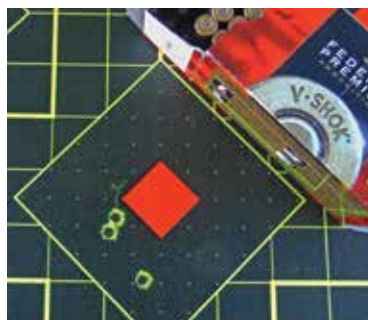
"TRIGGER" TIME

Next there's an interesting "squeeze bar" firing device in lieu of a conventional trigger. It's protected by a very large trigger guard for use with gloves or mittens. The original military version dispensed with the guard — quite possibly a first for any U.S.-issue military firearm.

If you're a connoisseur of crisp trigger pulls, the M6's squeeze bar will probably strike you as fairly horrendous, breaking at 10 creepy pounds with more starts and stops than L.A.'s 405 Freeway at rush hour. Oddly enough, despite this, the M6 Scout is capable of surprising accuracy in rifle mode.

The sights consist of a substantial blade front and a dual flip-up aperture/V-notch combo — the V-notch is for the .410 barrel while the peep is for the Hornet barrel. A Picatinny rail for optics was included on later models but not on ours.

Using a 3" load of Winchester Super X No. 6 shot, we got 55% patterns



Despite its tough-to-manage "trigger bar" at 60 yards, the M6 delivered nice results with Federal Premium 30-grain ammo.





The hinged cover atop the stock flips up to accommodate an ammo "reservoir" (above) for 12 .22 Hornet cartridges and four .410 shotshells. Remove the hinge pin and you've got two relatively short sections (below) that can fit into nearly every space, no matter how limited.



(about 80 pellets) at 25 yards on a 12"x18" silhouette target instead of a much larger 30" conventional circular patterning arrangement.

Miking the .410 bore, we discovered a .384 choke, which definitely classifies as a touch beyond standard full. Shotgun-wise, the M6 Scout would do pretty well for small game and upland birds within the .410's sphere of effectiveness — although the Scout is far better suited to "ground-bound" targets than aerial stuff. We found using the peep aperture for the shotgun barrel instead of the correct V-notch put things a bit low.

If you'd care to up the potency of the .410 barrel, there are several buckshot and slug loads in 2.5" and 3" trim. However, we opted to try some of Hornady's very interesting 2.5" Critical Defense loads, which consist of a lone .41 caliber FTX slug and two .35 round balls (nearly the equivalent of 000 buckshot pellets). These shot remarkably tight patterns at 25 yards — all three fairly formidable projectiles hit within 2" of point.

LIMITS

The Hornet barrel was an eye opener. The only two loads we had on hand were Winchester Super-X 45-grain SP and Federal's sizzling 30-grain V-Shok. Although the velocity disparity was

significant — 2,690 fps vs. 3,150 fps — at 60 yards using the flip-up peep sight, the differences in point of impact weren't all that earthshaking. Both grouped at an inch or slightly more. To fully explore the differences at longer distances would've required a more sophisticated sighting arrangement, plus more time and ammo than we had on hand.

In the emergency/survival mode for which this piece was conceived, about 100 yards would be about the limit for the rifle barrel. This is reasonable for anything in an unscoped Hornet's reach, particularly if you're trying to make the little .22 centerfire "punch above its weight." And as countless poachers proved back in the day, this would include deer-sized critters.

As cool as the Hornet chambering is, ammo is costly, harder to find and can be destructive on edible small game, which may account for the far greater number of .22 Long Rifle versions out there.

Today, a used Springfield M6 Scout can run from \$600 to \$800 on up. A current TPS specimen in .22 Hornet/.410 runs \$624, while Chiappa's specimens — which include larger calibers and shotgun gauges — can run things up to a grand or more.

Despite its decidedly unlovely appearance, the Springfield M6 Scout is worth seeking out if you have need for an exceptionally compact emergency tool for your plane, pickup or pack. **GUNS**

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My father was a pipe smoker and he taught us boys some salient maneuvers with the pipe. For one, it's a negotiating tool. When you need time to consider a proposition from an advisor or business associate, you simply go into your pipe smoking ritual and you have several minutes of thinking time as you appear to be too preoccupied to respond immediately. I also observed it could be a cooling off pause when in an upsetting situation.

I dabbled in pipe smoking and found the tobaccos that smelled great tasted awful and those that smelled terrible (what dad smoked) didn't taste half-bad.

Dennis Moran

Your comments reminded me of one of my old Captains at the Police Department. If he called you into his office, you knew how bad you had screwed up by the length of time it took him to finally get the pipe lit! Yeah, I'm laughing about it now.... —BW

PIPE DREAMS III

Pipe smoking is indeed a relaxing ritual. The tamping down of tobacco before lighting up and then re-tamping when it expands as it burns is part of the fun. A spent cartridge case of the correct diameter is a good tamping tool. If you are a reloader, I would recommend a case that can no longer be reloaded as it is starting to split or otherwise is unsafe. In any case (no pun intended, though appreciated), make sure it is not primed.

There are many ritualized activities that go with shooting. Smoking is indeed the perfect way to use tobacco to suit the minds of those of us who enjoy these rituals.

Albert Perez

PIPE DREAMS IV

Complaint: You are causing strife in my household. When "She Who Must Be Obeyed" brings in the mail, I grab the latest issue of GUNS from her and

CUB LOVE

The article on the Astra Cub .22 Short caught my attention. I have one and it has never jammed. Excellent little gun.

Some gun mag stories claim a high-quality .177 caliber air rifle shooting a 15-grain pellet at 900 fps is suitable for small game hunting. The .22 Short 29-grain bullet out of the Astra will do about 750 fps. Simple math says the Astra is quite a lot more powerful than the pellet gun. And, it's a six-shot rather than a slow-loading single-shot. Is the Astra Cub a better field gun than a pellet rifle?

Butch Gordo

Ballistically speaking, sure. However, the teeny-tiny barrel and rudimentary sights on the Astra would play hell trying to hit a rat behind the barn at 35 yards unless you're a supernatural shot.

Actually, a few years ago I participated in a made-for-TV squirrel hunting event using air rifles. Bottom line: It was awful and we were shooting diminutive southern piney squirrels. Our big, hulking Midwestern squirrels, the ones that aspire to play offensive line at the University of Wisconsin, would have probably just gotten angry and thrown the pellets right back at us, if not attacking outright. Thus, I'm skeptical of spring-powered air guns for varmint hunting. On the other hand, a PCP airgun such as my .25 caliber Umarex Gauntlet 2 will cause terminal heartaches on anything of reasonable varmint size. —BW



ignore anything else for the time it takes to read it cover to cover. For some reason, she resents this. Compliment: I really enjoyed the pipe smoking article since I have a 40+ year history with a pipe stuck in my face. Sadly, my doctor has made me quit but I still want it. Suggestion: Love the Gun Cranks! More if possible.

Lewis Wenger

On the smoking front, my various doctors are also less than enthused about my tobacco usage but I discovered because I smoke a pipe or cigar less than four times a week, I am considered by many authorities as a "non-smoker." Therefore, as I've been alive a little over 3,120 weeks to this point, I'm guessing I'm still a bit under the 12,480 smokes I could have smoked, thus I'm fine. See! Math is your friend! —BW

Great question. I did some quick research but couldn't find an answer. Maybe one of our readers has the inside scoop? —BW

SALTY ABOUT A RIFLE

Will Dabbs' article on the Bug-A-Salt Rifle is just begging for comments. First, it really isn't a rifle. It's a shotgun. We can forgive the designers because they are obviously engineers and not shooters. But Dr. Dabbs?

Come on. He didn't even pattern for group size. Does iodized salt shoot better than kosher? How about rock salt? Lots of unanswered questions for those of us who have enough time to get bored and complain. A natural prey would be garden slugs and he didn't even address that! Shame!

Keep up the good work.

John Mickel

SAFETY QUESTION

Could you explain why Heritage Arms has the only revolvers with a safety?

Richard Kelly, Sr.

I'll take the hit for calling it a "rifle." The company calls it the Bug-A-Salt "Gun" and at the last second I thought it needed a more descriptive moniker.

In hindsight, you are correct: It's more of a shotgun than a rifle.

Will did pattern the gat using his patented aluminum foil bug target but you're correct he didn't check various "types" of ammo. I might assign him a story to follow up; I'm thinking Himalayan Pink Salt might be just the ticket for dangerous game such as mud daubers! —BW

.....

YES, BUT ...

Bug-A-Salt! A waste of pages in a serious and excellent gun mag.

Jim Beasley

Ah, Jim, I partly disagree. I'll graciously accept we're an "excellent" gun mag, primarily due to our great staff of world-class writers and the unsung heroes at the home office who keep things on track. In fact, they make all this happen despite the editor!

I'll disagree we're a "serious" gun magazine. Whenever speaking publicly, I always try to point out: "Fun" and "Gun" are only one letter apart.

I'm dead-serious about safety, otherwise, shooting should be ... most times ... some flavor of fun and I hope GUNS reflects this. The Bug-A-Salt was just one of those silly "Let's have a

STIRRUP BANG?

Regarding Alan Garber's "Five Beans in the Wheel," I thoroughly enjoyed the article. In your research, did you ever find a frequent cause of accidental discharge of single-action pistols was adjusting the saddle? The person would put the stirrup on top of the saddle and then work on the cinch/straps/whatever. The discharge would happen when the stirrup fell off the saddle, landing on the gun's hammer and ruining the cowboy's day (or at least his pants and maybe boot). I think I read this in a gun magazine years ago.

William R. (Bob) Williamson, Jr.



bit of amusement"-type of articles. As I've said before, each issue should be like a great meal: a little of this, a little of that. In the last year we've covered \$30,000 custom shotguns, handgun hunting, lots of "How-to" and history, plenty of "black rifle" and "black pistol" stuff — and one silly little bug-killing "salt weapon." I daresay most readers enjoy the variety even if they don't like every single article in every issue. I think therein lies some of our charm. —BW

.....

BOOZY BLASTER

I laughed so hard at Will Dabbs' article on the Bug-A-Salt "Rifle!" In my little home town in Iowa, there is a business that has been around for decades selling guns and hunting equipment — and which also has a bar where you can order a beer or a mixed drink — a rare business combination that likely would never be approved by any authority these days.

The place is well worn and unpretentious and is frequented by many locals as an institution. In the summer, rather than use air conditioning, they often open the front and rear doors and let the air flow directly through. As you may guess, this allows a number of unwanted house flies to enter. On the bar, you will find one of these salt "rifles" available for any patron's use. I have availed myself of this weapon on numerous occasions and I can attest that it is an absolute blast (pun not intended, but appropriate!) to use, and, properly controlled, is deadly accurate. I have lost count of how many flies I alone have shot off that bar. When I am there, it is not long before there are no flies to be found. My range is about 12", which I have found to be very effective. I highly recommend this weapon to anyone with a fly or other large insect problem. Not only is it effective, it is pure entertainment!

Craig Rupert

GUNS

BIRD IN A WORD

Great magazine. I wish to comment on the great article by Will Dabbs (Feb '23) "Never Give Up." Being a Marine Rotorhead and working on helicopters for 50 years, I feel I must comment the helicopter pictured on page 27 is a CH-47A Chinook, not a UH-1H Huey. I hate to see any helicopter tore up!

Douglas Boody

You are correct, although the caption itself never claimed the bird in the photo was a Huey. Due to copy-right restrictions, there are

precious few pictures of a UH-1 crash we can use without licensing fee, so I found this public domain photo to illustrate Will's powerful story.

And, by the way, we'll avoid usage of the "alternative moniker" for the Chinook! —BW





UBERTI "EL PATRÓN"

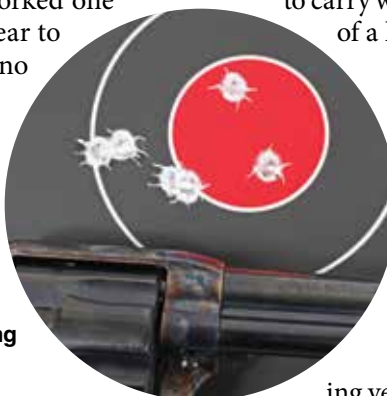
New 9mm SAA Is The Boss!

Roy Huntington

I grew up in South San Diego near the Tijuana border. Mexican food was a staple for me, along with Mariachi music, plenty of Hispanic friends — and knowing what “El Patrón” meant. I worked one summer for a gardener who made it clear to us he was “El Patrón” and there was no arguing the point, trust me.

Uberti’s excellent quality new single-action is aptly labeled “El Patrón” and for many good reasons. It’s a Colt clone, indeed, but the quality equals or

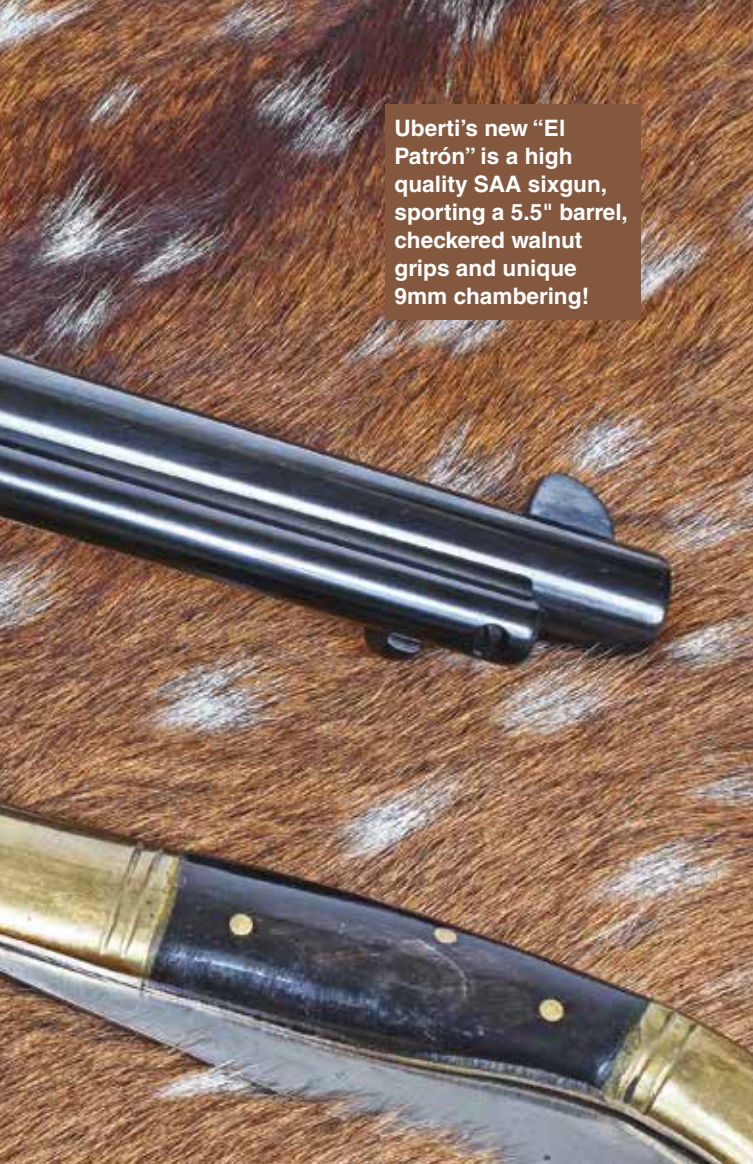
Accuracy was reliable and consistent, with 2" groups at 25 pretty much the norm. The bold, squared sights really helped along with the decent 5-lb. trigger. Auto pistols would flee in terror from such loads!



exceeds anything put out by Colt, even “back in the day.” Offered in .45 Colt, .357 Magnum and 9mm, it wears a slick, smooth action, high-quality finishes (blued and color-cased in our 9mm test gun’s case) and offers the longer “Army” style grip. With a 5.5" barrel, it’s still tidy to carry while offering the stability and pointability of a longer barrel.

There’s a unique handling trait of SAA guns when chambered in .357, 9mm or some other smaller caliber. Since there’s more steel left inside, they’re heavier by a few ounces and surprisingly, you can feel it. It subtly changes the way it rides in your hand and frankly, I like the change. Our gun is in a unique caliber for an SAA — 9mm.

It has a slightly heavier feel and the amazing versatility of chambering and shooting any



Uberti's new "El Patrón" is a high quality S&W sixgun, sporting a 5.5" barrel, checkered walnut grips and unique 9mm chambering!

The 9mm chambers leave plenty of steel around the cartridges. Roy thinks a 9mm rimmed load would work due to the arrangement Uberti uses to maintain headspace. Note the cases are "out" a bit, just the thickness of the rim.

9mm load you can feed it. While the traditional cowboy action shooters will frown and make pouty faces I'm sure, the more practical of us will smile and say, "What a great idea this is!"

Our sample weighs about 2.3 lbs., has an overall length of just at 11", a 6-shot cylinder and great 1-piece checkered walnut grips.

THINKING OUTSIDE THE BOX

I tried a wide cross-section of 9mm loads (only a small sample is shown in the pic), and it not only fired everything, but was consistently accurate at 25 yards with most groups in the 2" range and teased with some smaller groups. The sights are bold and with a more-square notch at the rear rather than the traditional rounded "U" shape. This alone makes aiming less a chore and the sights faster to acquire.



The options the S&W chambering a 9mm brings to the table are only limited by your imagination. Here's some sample rounds Roy put together — a stock 9mm load on left, followed by a 158-grain RNFP and a full 148-grain wadcutter.

I broke out some surplus ammo, which has always given me fits with misfires and hard primers. The big hammer on the "El Patrón" acted like the boss it is and fired every single one. This is an advantage of this platform I hadn't thought of — it goes bang, regardless.

The chambers are numbered, which means if you really want to, you could really test the accuracy of this gun. Based on my experience, I'd like to see an adjustable-sighted version. Heresy, you say? Tell it to Colt and their New Frontier model. This gun's a shooter and adjustable sights would really be great.

On a lark, I made some dummy loads using .38 Special bullets. I mean, why not? You're not limited to bullet shapes having to feed in an auto. So, a 148-grain wadcutter slipped right in. As did a 158-grain RN flat-point. Be still, my heart, at the possible options and ideas sure to spring forth. Speaking off the record, there seems to be enough steel here you could experiment to your heart's delight and stay out of trouble unless you're being a real idiot with loads.

A KEEPER OR NOT?

Very decidedly it's a keeper. While the days of five-cent surplus 9mm are dusty memories, 9mm ball is still among the cheapest centerfire shooting you can do. But I think the real gold here is the ability to load things like wadcutter bullets and such. What a great small game round it would be, and fun targeting, plinking and more.

At an MSRP of about \$729, the "El Patrón" is fun-quality and full of great potential!

GUNS



Uberti-USA.com

CABOT APOCALYPSE

Jeremy D. Clough • **Photos:** Rob Jones, The Imagesmith LLC

Taped inside my violin case — a pastime I abandoned in my 20s, perhaps as an act of mercy towards others — is a photocopied portrait of a violinist with the caption, “Paganini begins where our reason ends.”

Written by composer Giacomo Meyerbeer, the description is apt: Niccolo Paganini, famed violin virtuoso of the 18th and early 19th centuries, was gifted with such technical prowess that even today the staccato, lightning-fast 24 Caprices he composed both stun and terrify. There is little beauty to the music — it is simply a *tour de force* of skill without appeal to our innate sense of beauty. This is where his story diverges from Cabot Guns, whose best work picks up where others reasonably end ... but whose technical prowess has been in the service of beauty, rather than in spite of it.

BEGINNINGS

Cabot was founded in 2011 by Rob Bianchin when he learned local high-technology manufacturer Penn United was pursuing the manufacture of 1911 components built to the same standards as the extremely precise medical and aerospace parts they were making prior to the 2008 economic slowdown. Bianchin wanted to make a gun that didn't follow the usual standards, but rather, showcase the capability of the American craftsman working to the limits of available technology. Cabot 1911s were introduced to the public at the 2011 NRA Show in Pittsburgh, forever changing the face of the 1911.

Cabot pistols are both visually stunning and easily the most precisely made 1911 there has ever been. A bold statement, but true. Where others work in tolerances of

thousandths of an inch, Cabot goes as small as millionths — a thousandth of a thousandth. To them, “American-made” does not mean imported parts of the gun are finished in the U.S.; it means they even verify the U.S. origin of the billets of steel from which the guns are machined. There is no MIM and there are no castings. While most 1911s are painstakingly hand-fitted, Cabots are truly interchangeable. This is not to disparage other pistols but what Cabot does is unique.

Their flagship pistol upon entering the market was the Jones, named after Penn United's late founder Carl Jones. Now retired (a 2.0 is forthcoming), it featured distinctive touches like the star-pierced trigger and Trinity Stripe cocking serrations designed by architect Tom Pierce, intended as a respectful nod to the founder's Christian faith and its doctrine of the Triune God (Father, Son and Holy Spirit). While the gun was manufactured to the strict tolerances to which Penn United was long accustomed, Bianchin recognized there were some things only a human hand can do — in this case, polish. Even the Cabot pistols which aren't fully polished have at least 15 hours of hand finishing to remove tool marks. There is no machining process that produces such a perfect finish. Working under magnification, it takes a skilled polisher around 40 hours to produce

A The distinctive stainless steel Damascus slide, finished with Cabot's proprietary “Heritage Finish,” features 13-degree front and rear angled cocking serrations. **B** The one-piece extended magwell and mainspring housing complements the striking G-10 Tactile grips. **C** The superb flat trigger is set to 3.5 to 4 lbs., while the 24lpi rhombus-cut front strap checkering offers both sure grip and great styling.



A



B



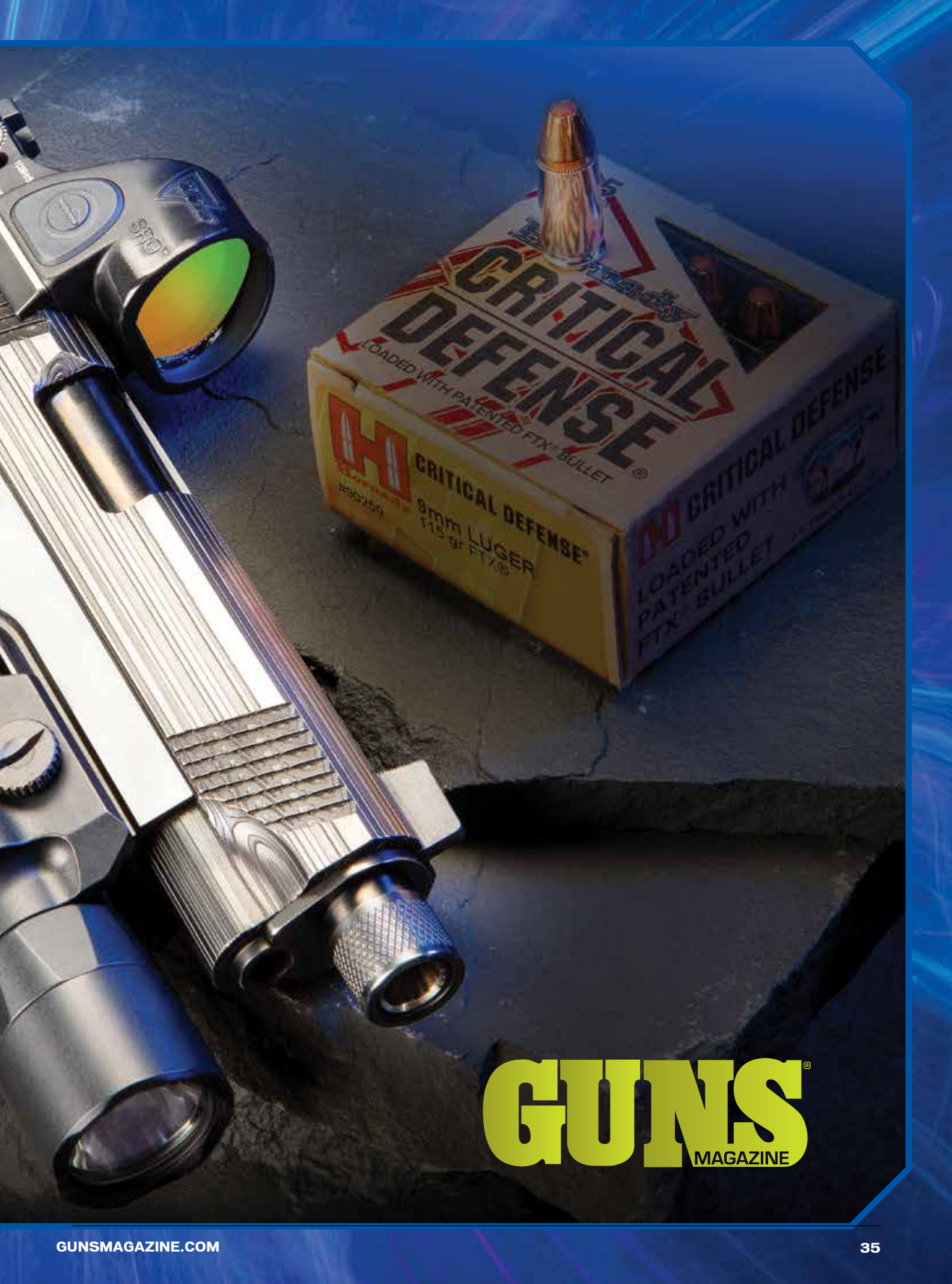
LYPSE

**BEGINNING
WHERE
REASON
ENDS**

The Cabot Apocalypse —
“Serious Fighting Iron” for the
discerning shooter who can
afford uncompromising fit,
finish, detail and performance.



 CABOT
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MAGAZINE

the dripping black finish on the Jones. Sure, you can hit a slide on a buffing wheel and get a hard shine in a few minutes, but to remove all the coarser marks, to keep the flats flat, and the lines crisp and not wandering, takes time.

CERTAINLY NOT CHEAP

It also costs money: The Jones debuted at an eye-watering \$5,000 over a decade ago. A more affordable model would come five years later with the S-Series. It hovered in the high \$3,000 range occupied by many premium 1911s. Matte instead of polished and with front strap checkering cut on the diagonal — less punishing to hands and clothes alike — the smooth grips were grooved in a distinctive arc pattern. Like the Trinity Stripes, they are more than they appear, which is a bit of a theme for Cabot. The spiraling curves follow the “Fibonacci sequence,” a mathematical ratio appearing in nature with surprising frequency.

The S-Series also brought new technology. Shortening autopistols is a dicey business, and while Commander-sized pistols — which have a 4 1/4" barrel instead of 5" — function well with a shortened slide stroke, Cabot felt they could do better. The S103 came with a 4 1/4" barrel but retained the full slide travel of a 5" gun, an option now available on all Cabot pistols. The system works, and it hits: My S103

put five rounds in a single hole at 7 yards. Not five holes touching to make a bigger one — no, a single half-inch hole.

The *tour de force* putting Cabot on most people's radar, of course, was the Big Bang set — a pair of 1911s made from a meteorite. They're not exactly common: Outside of the meteorite dagger found in King Tut's tomb, there aren't a whole lot of weapons out there made of space rocks.

Getting a big enough chunk of a meteorite is a challenge. Since they ain't from around here, scarcity makes even small chunks quite expensive but it's only the first problem. One does not simply open the McMaster-Carr catalog and flip to the meteor cutting tool section. Different materials require specific cutters, cutting speeds, feed rates, etc., characteristics well known for the various steel and aluminum alloys, but not so much for meteors. You have to figure that out by practicing on those extremely expensive fragments. Once you can mill, turn and broach the various parts (which often need to be hardened to different degrees), comes heat treating them correctly, lest you wind up creating the world's most expensive pipe bomb.

Apparently they got it right: The guns have been shot. Like many of Cabot's sets in the OAK series (One Of A Kind), the set includes a left hand 1911, a rare feat made possible by their modeling technology.

CABOT GUNS GEAR LIST

Ammo:

Hornady Critical Defense
9mm 115-grain FTX

Holster:

G-Code Incog Eclipse

Knife:

Emerson Sheepdog

Weapon Light:

SureFire X300U

Optic:

Trijicon SRO

Suppressor:

Gemtech GM-9



Nor is that the only difficult material they've challenged themselves with. There were earlier 1911s made by others with Damascus slides, but they were made of powdered Damasteel that gives the appearance of forged steel without the actual forging. It's pretty, but I've stood in the undulating orange glow of a forge and watched a man with a hammer pound hot bars of steel until the two shall become one, and it's not the same.

CHALLENGES

The problem with traditionally forged Damascus — of which Cabot was the first to use in a 1911 — is the technique can allow voids and inclusions. This isn't critical in a knife blade but can dangerously weaken pistol slides cycling at over 300 feet-per-second. Since it incorporates more than one type of steel, Damascus also complicates machining because you are working with something having the characteristics of more than one material, a process so painstaking Bianchin describes it as working with a machine full of pit vipers. This only sounds melodramatic if you've never seen what a mill can do to a piece of metal (or person) it decides it doesn't like.

Nonetheless, Cabot found a way. By partnering with artisanal metalworkers who not only made steel homogenous

enough to machine into gun parts, but could do intricate patterns well beyond the monochromatic, wood-grain look of most Damascus. Unique finishing and heat treatment brought new colors as well, brilliant blues and purples looking more like *mokume*, a technique similar to Damascus but using precious metals. And it's not just slides: Customers can spec out a gun with a Damascus slide, slide and frame, or slide, frame and small parts.

If you're thinking to yourself this must all be terribly expensive, you're right. Producing each Cabot requires an average of \$160 just in electricity to power the machines, not to mention the endless experimentation and development. Bianchin candidly admits they have lost money on "many, many" projects due to various technical challenges and the insistence on getting the end result right.

Several of these experiments converged in the Rebellion, a lightweight 9mm EDC pistol that explored possible improvements to the basic 1911 system — including a barrel with no locking lugs, scalloped slide rails to reduce friction and provide an offramp for any debris entering the slide/frame interface, and a pivoting extractor now being incorporated across the Cabot line.

WHIP IT OUT

The standard extractor is a known weak point in the 1911. It's essentially a bent piece of steel relying on the temper, curvature, thickness, material, etc., to provide tension on the case head during cycling. While many attempts have been made to improve on it, such as the now-defunct Para Ordnance PXT Power Extractor and a number of coil-spring-powered side extractors, the 1911 has not responded to those changes as well as the Hi-Power. It likewise started life with a straight extractor before being changed to a side version. The Cabot system, however, uses an internal pivoting extractor whose pivot point is further back, more closely approximating the travel of the original design.

The most recent representative expression of these innovations is the Apocalypse, our cover gun. High end but hard use, in your choice of 9mm or .45, the grey finish and deeply etched Damascus slide give it a worn, industrial look — the sort of thing Neo from *The Matrix* might have on the nightstand when he's back home at his apartment in Zion.

Much has changed since Cabot displayed those pricey black guns in Pittsburgh in 2011. The philosophy of exceptionalism remains and Cabot has reignited the Alchemy Arms shop for those who prefer more-traditional hand-fitted 1911s.

Any number of celebrities from the entertainment industry have been photographed with Cabots, from actors and MMA fighters to musicians like Kid Rock. Price notwithstanding, there's even a Cabot Of The Month club, a membership to which we should all aspire.

Normally, this is where I would hint toward what we can expect from Cabot in the future — but there's no way of knowing. The sky is literally not the limit. **GUNS**

MSRP: \$7,995 for the Apocalypse

CabotGuns.com

A high-end gun deserves a high-end optic — the optional Trijicon SRO fits into a standard RMR footprint with no adapter necessary.



QD OR NOT QD SCOPE MOUNTS?

Wayne van Zwoll



He had zeroed carefully. Checking at hunting camp two weeks later made little sense given the thick, dense foam in the case whose hard carapace would have endured a drop over Niagara. No baggage gorilla could defeat its envelope. But our professional hunter wanted proof so my pal settled in behind his Winchester, its fore-stock over a bag on the bench. The target was just 100 steps downrange.

The Shoot-N-C bulls-eye would have registered a hit instantly, so PH's silence after the blast was unnerving. Unbelievably, the paper was clean. No hole anywhere.

"How did you feel?" purred PH, therapist of the moment. Soft diplomacy is arguably more useful than bellowing, "How on earth could you miss that? My kid could drill it with a slingshot!"

The second bullet also whiffed. PH rolled his eyes to the heavens.

A Wayne has only to flip two levers to "clear the deck" for open sight use of this CZ 550 in .416 Rigby. It is scoped with a low-power variable in Alaska Arms rings. **B** The Weaver rail under these four-screw vertical rings also accepts rings that can be detached quickly — but return to original point of impact isn't certain. **C** Elegant, and so tidy it seems barely adequate, this rail mount for a Blaser scope fits it to a Blaser R8 by engaging notches in the hardened barrel surface. **D** The QD levers on these Alaska Arms rings lie horizontal after a quarter-turn to lock position. The slim but sturdy rings are made to fit the receiver of Ruger's flagship Model 77 rifles (here an Alaskan). **E** Alaska Arms offers low QD rings for Ruger receivers. They match the stock and natural alignment of iron sights on this Ruger Alaskan in .375 Ruger.



THAT IS THE QUESTION. ANSWER IT BEFORE YOUR HUNT!

My pal peered accusingly at his scope. He then noticed the front ring's thumb lever had relaxed a quarter turn. It wiggled to his touch.

IN THE BEGINNING

Quick-detachable scope mounts were common on hunting rifles when internal fogging, broken reticles and wayward W/E dials ensured a steady demand for iron sights. I've had QD mounts from Echo, Jaeger, Bausch & Lomb, Griffin & Howe and other popular post-war brands. Leupold hawked a Detacho Mount in the 1950s. Redfield had a Quick-Switch Mount that let the scope pivot on a pin-and-bushing hinge to the left, to clear the deck for iron-sight aim. Weaver's Pivot Mount, which I've used, is similar.

Instant — or at least quick — options appeal as back-ups and fail-safe alternatives, but also because they afford us a choice. Instead of making do, we can have just the right sight. During my youth, scope mounts permitting use of iron sights and scopes were welcome comfort for both reasons.

Carry the logic forward and you get variable-power scopes, illuminated reticles and arc-matched elevation dials. Who doesn't like choice?

"I don't want a sight to move until it cries 'Uncle' under my screwdriver. Even W/E dials should resist. Why would anyone want to fret over a dial, screw or nut that might move unbidden?" Verily, no hunter has said this to me. I made it up. But plenty of hunters, I bet, have kicked



Open sights on a Savage rifle in .338 Winchester sufficed for a 27-yard shot at this Australian buffalo. In some cover, scopes are superfluous. That's partly why QD mounts appeared.

themselves for installing QD or pivoting scope mounts. As when loading a pickup bed for back-country travel to hunting camp, you're smart to assume anything on a rifle that can shift *will*, sooner or later.

TIGHTEN 'ER DOWN!

When long ago I cinched 40-ton loads to the bunks of a '63 Peterbilt, I heaved mightily on the chain tighteners. The logs would squirm and shuffle and settle as the 335 Cummins tugged the tag axles over bumpy forest roads. A few miles on, and certainly before the pavement, I'd exit the cab, slip a pipe over the binders for leverage and give them another bite into the pine.

Checking those loads made driving more pleasant. Likewise, confidence in your rifle, sight and ammunition affects your shooting. You're more relaxed when you're sure those elements will perform as expected so you can focus on the target and shot execution.

These days, with most bolt rifles devoid of iron sights, QD mounts might seem pointless. On the other hand, irons still make sense on rifles for dangerous African game, and scopes help aging eyes aim those rifles at antelopes far across the veldt. Detachable scopes, even take-down rifles, can be easier to transport by air to distant game fields. And, scopes on some switch-barrel rifles ride the barrel so a QD mount lets you fit one scope to multiple barrels in the field.





The fiber optic bead on this Sauer rifle in 9.3x62 is adjustable for windage but securely fixed for the hunt. An excellent sight for a big game rifle when the QD rings come off! QD levers should be short and snag-resistant. Here Alaska Arms rings grip the 1" tube of a Nikon variable. Alaska rings are furnished with friction paper inserts to protect and secure the scope.

RIDING THE RAILS

Picatinny rails have made scope attachment easy on AR rifles and come standard on a growing number of turn-bolts. In my rack, a QD mount by Wilson Combat straddles the rail on a Wilson AR in 6mm Creedmoor. But the twist of a knob loosens its grip, and in seconds I can secure it on another rail.

You're always smart to check zero, but I've found steel rails and machined steel rings help return shots to or very near the original point of impact. Alloy rails and stamped metal can be less faithful and the more parts in the attachment, the more shift is possible.

QD rings by Talley, Leupold and Alaska Arms have short levers lying tight inside the curve of the scope rings to prevent hanging up in brush or a scabbard or getting bumped loose. I much prefer these to levers with longer wings.

Talley and Leupold QD rings are widely hailed not only for their handsome form, but their close-tolerance machining. Alaska Arms rings are also CNC-cut from steel bar stock to fit scopes snugly. Skin-tight contact ensures the tube won't slip when recoil from your .465 Rimless Mastodon compresses your eye socket and sends hairline fractures through your clavicle.

To make certain the scope remains in place and unmarred, Alaska Arms furnishes friction paper liners. Trim, with clean detailing reminiscent of old Tilden scope bases, each Alaska ring hugs the tube with a split band .700 wide snugged by four Allen screws. Levers on the rings secure or release the scope with a quarter-turn. "No loss of zero." Credit 35 years machining parts for aerospace and medical application, as well as the shooting industry. Semi-gloss black finish complements brushed stainless or blued steel.

Low, medium and high, for 1" and 30mm tubes, Alaska Arms rings are built to fit recessed Ruger and CZ receivers. Given the stocks on Ruger and CZ rifles — and the slender scopes I prefer — rings from Ruger and CZ seem

to me a tad high. Low Alaska rings on my .375 Ruger Alaskan rifle put a 1-4x Nikon Monarch a smidge above iron-sight line. Perfect!

TOP OF THE HEAP

The most remarkable QD scope mounts I've seen are made by the German firm of Blaser for its R8 and previous R93 straight-pull rifles. The rings are joined by a slim bar below, which is clamped to small dimples or notches in the hammer-forged barrel. Plasma nitriding makes the barrel's exterior very hard. Instead of levers, the base has folding tabs snugging it to the barrel. Tucked under the scope, these are almost impossible to snag.

Blaser rings fit so precisely, I was told: "You can remove the scope and replace it without losing zero." Given the rings' modest barrel contact, I doubted at first they would even hold a scope on barrels bored for the R8's stoutest cartridges, which include the mighty .500 Jeffery!

A test seemed in order. I'd been firing an R8 in .300 Winchester at a pail filled with chalky Texas rock 600 yards distant. After a series of hits, I removed the Zeiss 6-24x56 — a heavy scope with plenty of inertia. Then I set it back on the barrel and snugged the mount using only my finger and thumb. With the hold I'd used before in the light 9-o'clock breeze, I pressed the trigger. Blam! A jet of chalk dust from the pail preceded the smack of impact. Two more 600-yard hits proved this return to zero was for real!

As with bases and rings secured by multiple screws turned by wrenches, much more is asked of QD scope mounts now than was the case when the standard scope was an 11-oz. 2-½x Lyman Alaskan.

SUPERSIZE GLASS

Over the last five years, shooters have flocked to 50, 52 and 56mm front lenses, on tubes grown past 30mm to 34 and 35mm. In 2017 the Zeiss Victory V8 appeared with a 36mm tube. As a 4.8-35x60, it weighed 34 oz. Schmidt &



Folding tabs on Blaser's thumb-screws (above, left) dodge anything that might snare them. Hand-tightened, they defy even magnum recoil. Wayne found return to zero adequate for 600-yard hits on an 8" target! This excellent aperture sight by New England Custom Gun (above, right) quickly replaces a QD ring in the machined pockets of a Ruger 77 receiver.

“STILL, THERE’S A PLACE FOR SMALLER SCOPES AND IRON SIGHTS, AND FOR MOUNTS THAT MAKE BOTH QUICKLY AVAILABLE. MOSTLY, THIS PLACE IS WHERE YOU’LL FIND BIG GAME HIDING FROM THE HUNTERS PEERING THROUGH BIG GLASS AT EMPTY MEADOW AND VELDT.”

Bender's P/M 5-25x56 with 34mm tube scaled 37, as did Leupold's Mark 8 3.5-25x56, with 35mm tube. Nightforce's 40-oz. Beast, a 34mm 5-25x56, was half a pound lighter than the 34mm 4.5-27x56 Vortex Razor HD.

Custom rifle-makers have endured with mixed response the onslaught of heavier glass. It's borne much more ably by beefy long-range rifles — for which it's arguably appropriate — than by svelte walnut-stocked sporters and the carbon-fiber clan of “mountain rifles.” D'Arcy Echols has told me his customers can be hard to nudge toward lighter, more useful scopes on his exquisite bolt-action hunting rifles. “Cost and power seem deciding factors,” he says. “The more expensive a scope and the higher its magnification, the better it must be.”

Clients with bottomless pockets but limited field experience have insisted on scopes weighing nearly half as much as rifles as light and trim and well-balanced as D'Arcy's skills and modern components can make them. “Rings obligingly move with the rifle when jerked by recoil. A heavy scope, however, wants to remain where it is — especially when recoil is sharp as a karate blow from Zeus. Recoil can slip the rings on the tube, or test the union of rings and base, or base and rifle. The higher and more complex the mount, the less enthusiasm I have for installing ponderous scopes. And I have little enthusiasm for them to begin with.”

Besides, he agrees, hunting rifles handle better and are easier to shoot accurately with scopes of modest weight and magnification.

HIGH POINT

Scope weights may have hit a plateau, even as “digital intelligence” comes to optics. Swarovski's dS, introduced in 2019, is a 5-25x52 scope with a heads-up display and a 40mm tube — but weighs “just” 38 oz. You program the dS, adding load data with your smart phone. Press a button to read the range. The illuminated aiming point is then also correct for the power setting, temperature, atmospheric pressure and shot angle. And wind speed, should you care to add it.

A scope like the dS would seem oddly paired with iron sights, or perched on an interchangeable barrel. I've yet to see one in a QD mount, other than atop a Pic rail. But the lean to more powerful, more sophisticated sights is inexorable.

Still, there's a place for smaller scopes and iron sights, and for mounts that make both quickly available. Mostly, this place is where you'll find big game hiding from the hunters peering through big glass at empty meadow and veldt.

Just take a moment, now and then, to check those QD levers.

GUNS



ARCHANGEL

NOMAD 10/22 CONVERSION

Will Dabbs, MD

The Archangel Nomad conversion stock transforms your humble Ruger 10/22 plinking gun into the spitting image of a state-of-the-art HK G36 assault rifle. Featuring killer styling and bells and whistles aplenty, the young shooter thusly equipped instantly

becomes the coolest kid at the range. The Nomad also amps up the awesome for grownups as well.

The basic chassis is molded out of indestructible polymer and the parts are a drop-in fit. If you can change the oil in your car, you are grossly overqualified for this project. The end result will reliably increase your serum testosterone.



The Archangel dress-up kit transforms your pedestrian Ruger 10/22 rifle into the spitting image of an HK G36 assault rifle.



The Poor Man's HK G36

Slapping an Archangel Nomad kit over your favorite Ruger plinking rifle will not miraculously transform you from mild-mannered doc into an SAS commando, but it will make you look the part!

BEAUTY REALLY IS ONLY SKIN DEEP

All normal little boys dream of rolling in a really cool car. I got my driver's license at 15. I wouldn't trust today's 15-year-old boys unsupervised with rubber bands, much less an automobile, but apparently the human animal was somehow different back then. The apex predator back in my day was Thomas Magnum's fire engine red Ferrari 308 GTS.

Magnum, P.I. ran from 1980 through 1988. The brain-child of Donald Bellisario and Glen Larson, this wildly popular TV show orbited around the adventures of a former Navy SEAL-turned-private investigator named Thomas Magnum played inimitably by Tom Selleck. Magnum mooched off of a lyrically successful though faceless novelist named Robin Masters. Watching the show also planted a seed about how cool being a rich and famous writer might be. Trust me, after writing professionally for some three decades now myself — reality can be a cruel mistress.

Magnum lived for free on Robin Master's expansive estate, driving his cool cars and generally being a human leech. In retrospect, I suppose he seemed more like O.J. Simpson's professional house guest Kato Kaelin than

an actual productive citizen. Regardless, for a skinny awkward 15-year-old in 1981, Magnum's red Ferrari was my key to popularity, girls and general all-around awesomeness. Obtaining such a car for a guy like me working as a janitor in a local drug store, however, was another thing entirely.

I actually researched it back when I was 16. That car would have set me back \$58,550 new in 1982. That's around \$200,000 in today's money. I made \$56.26 every two weeks working every afternoon and every Saturday at the drug store. I would have had to save every penny I made for 40 years to make the sexy beast my own. As I am 56 now I guess had I just been patient this magnificent ride would have been mine right about now. Considering this was admittedly somewhat impractical, I considered my alternatives.

The next best thing was a kit car. I pored over those things in the classified ads of *Popular Mechanics* in a manner flirting with unseemly. These mail order kits usually consisted of a fiberglass body kit somehow bolted onto a VW Beetle, making it look like a high-end supercar in dim light. Alas, the end result would still sound like an asthmatic cicada on the road and would only accelerate



The real-deal HK G36 is indeed a superlative military-grade assault rifle. However, you won't be picking up one of these puppies at your local gun emporium.

properly if dropped off a cliff. However, it would look cool, and for a 16-year-old in desperate need of a proper date, this was all that mattered.

In the end, my dad helped me land a 1970 Buick Skylark convertible. My metallic blue Skylark was the only ragtop in my small Mississippi town. As such, my car always led the Christmas parade underneath whatever bit of nicely adorned female hotness had been laboriously selected

that year. While hardly a Ferrari 308 *Quattrovalvole*, the car did help me snag a cheerleader of my own. Now four decades and three kids later, I'd say the old Skylark rendered admirable service.

So why all this vapid jabber about teenaged dream cars? Because there are, believe it or not, some serious parallels for the modern American gun nerd desirous of adding a proper Information Age assault rifle to his



The beating heart of the Nomad conversion is a standard Ruger 10/22 rifle.



stable. Landing a real-deal Heckler and Koch G36 entails either investing in a viable Class 3 firearms business, tracking down an expensive Tommybuilt semiauto clone or enlisting in the German Army. For those unwilling or unable to follow one of those three paths, the Archangel Nomad is the next best thing.

TECHNICAL DETAILS

The Nomad is brilliantly executed. The general morphology and mechanical particulars are just spot-on. In dim light the Nomad really will pass for a G36. The top-mounted charging handle and selector switch are molded in just for looks, but the side-folding stock and optics mounting system are just like the real deal.

The stock itself weighs 3.4 lbs. When complete, this gives the rig enough heft to feel serious in the hands. The kit comes with an extended and enhanced bolt release, an extended mag catch and a folding polymer sight with two selectable apertures. The side-folding stock inexplicably includes a generous rubber recoil pad and the gun can be fired in the folded state. There is a full-length aluminum-reinforced optics rail up top along with a detachable lower forearm accessory rail up front. There are three steel-reinforced sling mounting sockets and two cool hidden compartments for a little extra ammo or a survival stash of M&Ms.

Archangel is a subsidiary of Pro-Mag. The Archangel engineers spent some extra time on the little aesthetic things making the rifle look right. The first glaring defect is the lame anorexic barrel sticking out front. The kit comes with a slip-on cast aluminum flash suppressor held in place with a roll pin. The cooler option, also included in the kit, is a slip-fit polymer fake suppressor. With the faux can in place, the resulting rifle looks like it should be SAS-issue.

The other sticky issue is the skinny 10/22 magazine. The Archangel remedy there is an oversized mag body including Archangel's proprietary 25-round 10/22 mag. This magazine looks right and mounts to the gun in the same manner as an original high-cap version.

Mounting up the rifle in the chassis is best done over a little Netflix. That's where I seem to do my best gun work. Just lay out the parts on a handy table, pull up something gratuitously violent on the tube and prepare to kill a delightful evening. At the end of the session, you'll have the coolest plinking rifle in the world.



Thomas Magnum's cherry red Ferrari 308 GTS was the sexiest ride on the road back in 1982. Will took this picture himself to document a friend's mid-life crisis.



This is Will's 1970 Buick Skylark convertible — the ultimate teenager car. The little guy on the hood is Will's baby brother. He is 6' 3" and a federal prosecutor today.

THE HOST

Bill Ruger and Harry Sefried II designed the Ruger 10/22 in 1964 back during the Johnson Administration. More than 7 million copies later, the 10/22 is the most popular rimfire rifle in the country. Countless adult shooters got their start behind this reliable inexpensive little plinker. The unit cost for the base rifle when it was introduced was \$54.50. That would be about \$512 today.

The MSRP for a base model 10/22 nowadays is \$379. Modern manufacturing techniques and an economy of scale help keep prices down. The standard Ruger rifle comes with a patented rotary flush-mounted 10-round magazine, though there are lots of higher capacity options available. The 10/22 is one of the most customized rifle designs ever created. Nowadays a complete 10/22 rifle can be built from aftermarket parts without using a single Ruger component.

One of the linchpins to the success of the 10/22 is the gun's innate modularity. The 10/22's unique two-screw, V-block system allows barrels to be exchanged easily without a gunsmith. The rifle also comes from the factory drilled and tapped for an included scope mount. The rifle's rear sight folds out of the way to accommodate an optic.

As of 2015, Ruger offered the 10/22 in 11 different models. The standard model 10/22 features an 18.5" barrel and is available with either a hardwood or black synthetic stock. While there are bull barrel versions available, you'll



The Archangel Nomad (top) is a superb facsimile of the HK G36 assault rifle shown below.

want a standard thin barrel no-frills version to serve as the Nomad host.

The 10/22 can be adorned to resemble a G36, a German MG42 belt-fed machinegun, an M1 Carbine, or an M1 Garand. Of all the dress-up kits I have encountered in my travels, however, the Nomad is hands-down the best executed.

THE DONOR

The HK G36 was originally designed in the early 1990s as a replacement for the time-tested 7.62x51mm G3. The weapon was first adopted by Germany's contingent to the NATO Quick Reaction Force in 1997. The modern G36 design has followed a curious path.

With the fall of communism came the death of the radically advanced HK G11 caseless rifle. This extraordinary weapon would have changed the way the world made combat rifles had it not fallen to post-Cold War budget cuts. However, it did ultimately lead, albeit indirectly, to the G36.

The original designation was the Project 50 or HK50. Once the design was ready for prime time, it was redesignated the G36. By combining the rugged piston-driven action of the short-lived ArmaLite AR-18 with the same sort of injection-molded gun technology that brought us the GLOCK pistol, HK engineers produced an unusually reliable combat rifle without a lot of extraneous mass.

Most of the HK G36 is crafted from carbon fiber-reinforced polyamide that is both rugged and light. The

stock, forearm, receiver and fire control components like the hammer, trigger and sear are all formed from polymer. The bolt assembly, barrel, gas system components, pins and springs are made from steel. The optics rail is aluminum.

The G36 is a truly modular design you can transform from an assault rifle into a stubby close combat tool or a heavy barreled light support weapon all by pushing out a few pins and swapping out components. While there were allegations the G36's accuracy degrades when the barrel gets hot, the weapon nonetheless enjoys a stellar service record. The action is just slippery smooth.

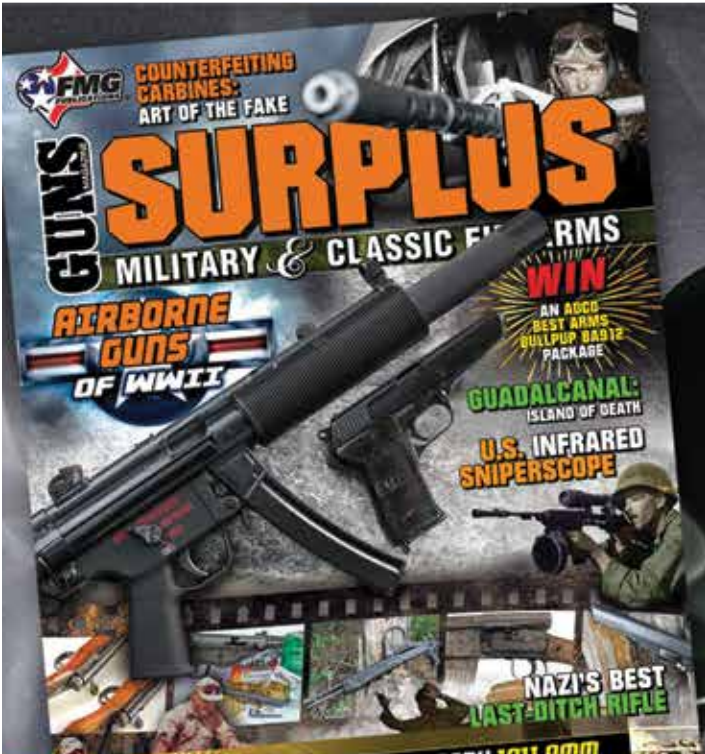
RUMINATIONS

At the end of the day, despite its striking good looks, the Nomad is still just a Ruger 10/22 rifle at heart. The baseline accuracy and reliability of the platform is neither better nor worse. However, thusly adorned it does look just super slick.

If you've always wanted an HK G36 rifle but just couldn't bring yourself to enlist in the Bundeswehr, the Archangel Nomad might just scratch your itch. Sweet, sleek, fun and cool, the Nomad makes your great gun even greater. It's the replica supercar of rimfire plinking guns.

GUNS

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BIG BORES *For* BIG BULLS

Mark Hampton

TWO THINGS

Back in 1983 on my first African safari in Zimbabwe, I took a cape buffalo with a T/C Contender in .45-70. Not sure how to explain the experience on my hunting life, but it left a profound, indelible impression. There was something unique, distinctive perhaps, about the challenge, the adrenaline rush of the nerve-wrecking encounter. When you get inside of 50 yards from these large bovines, it's definitely a heart-pounding situation. After the memorable hunt was finished, I knew this would not be my last buffalo hunt.

Over the years I've had the good fortune to hunt multiple buffalo species including those huge water buffalo bulls in Australia and South America plus I've taken all the different sub-species in Africa. I am by no means a buffalo hunting expert but I've done my fair share and have learned to appreciate and ultimately respect these magnificent creatures.

As a dyed-in-the-wool handgun hunter, I've taken all these buffalo with big bore handguns. No, it's not a stunt by any stretch! After experiencing many hunts for these large beasts, I can confirm big-bore handguns are perfectly capable and decisively effective with the right combination of caliber and bullet. However, before we dive into calibers and details, there are two very important criteria not to be overshadowed — accuracy and penetration.

Proper shot placement on dangerous game can eliminate a lot of headaches and knowing the anatomy of the game is essential — you must know exactly where to place your shot regardless of angle or how the bull is standing. Even mammoth calibers such as the .500 Nitro Express will not compensate for a poorly placed shot.

Secondly, penetration is crucial. Cape buffalo are big animals with large bones, massive muscle tissue and thick, tough hide and the bullet must be capable of busting



***Handguns That
Have What It Takes***



Mark and Karen are all smiles after days of hard hunting in the rain forest of Cameroon. This dwarf forest buffalo, taken with a T/C Encore in 373 JDJ, represents the most challenging of Africa's buffalo.

through all this before reaching the vitals. Premium bullets designed for this very task are not cheap. If you're looking to cut costs on this type of hunt, look somewhere else. Proper bullet performance is your friend.

In many African countries, the .375 caliber is a minimum requirement for buffalo and similar game. In Africa

for example, the quintessential .375 H&H is wildly popular and has taken so much game from the smallest antelope to the largest living terrestrial animals. So, when discussing big bores, we can begin our journey with the .375 caliber.

In handgun hunting circles, the 375 JDJ has a long, successful track record for taking large and dangerous game. The cartridge was designed by JD Jones and is based on the .444 Marlin case. For years, I shot Hornady 270-grain Spire Points and when heavy lifting arose, the 300-grain round nose. After taking all members of Africa's Big Five plus hippo and croc, along with a wide variety of other large or dangerous game with the 375 JDJ, I have a ton of confidence in its effectiveness.

Many other handgun hunters have experienced stellar performance from this round launched from T/C's Contender, G2 or Encore platforms. The late Ken French of T/C Arms had an Encore barrel built for me back in the day of Fox Ridge, T/C's Custom Shop. This handgun has proven itself countless times and I'll go to the grave with it, even though it's cost me dearly — it has been responsible for keeping the taxidermist, his wife, girlfriend and three daughters all driving expensive sports cars and flying private jets to their summer homes in Jackson Hole, Wyo.!

While hunting the famed Zambezi Valley in Zimbabwe, I took a dandy bull with the 375 JDJ shooting Hornady 300-grain FMJ. These solids will definitely penetrate with most broadside shots and still leave an exit hole. The cape buffalo was in a herd but it was easy to detect this old bull from the others. Shots on buffalo are seldom long range and this one entailed a 60-yard

Freedom Arms Model 83 in .454 Casull was responsible for this big cape buffalo. The revolver features a T'SOB base with four Weigand rings holding a Leupold 2.5-8x scope. The 300-grain Buffalo Bore Dangerous Game ammo provided a one-shot affair.



poke. This incident occurred almost 40 years ago and I still remember the 375 JDJ working so well.

There are several sub-species of buffalo on the African continent, all worthy of pursuit. In Benin, the West African Savanna buffalo is smaller than the cape buffalo in body and horn but just as much of a challenge. Further west in Uganda, the Nile buffalo can be found. On the 10th and final day of our hunt, we followed tracks of two bulls deep into the forest. Luck was definitely with us on this last day when we snuck up to both bulls resting in the shade within 40 yards.

The dwarf forest buffalo is the smallest built African buffalo but the most difficult and challenging to hunt. I struggled with extreme heat and humidity during a 10-day hunt in the rainforest of Cameroon. To the untrained eye, following tracks in this jungle-like environment is humanly impossible. Experienced trackers are necessary if you have any hopes of seeing a bull in the gauntlet of undergrowth.

After days of sweating like a pig and walking for miles in unbearable heat, we finally caught up to a lone bull. You can't see very far in the rainforest — 25

yards would be a long shot in most cases. The shot was close and I couldn't actually believe we pulled this off as very few dwarf forest buffalo have been taken with a handgun.

As mentioned earlier, the .45-70 is likewise capable of tackling big bulls. During my first hunt in Zimbabwe, I was shooting 500-grain Hornady solids in a Contender I borrowed from JD Jones. He had opened up the chamber so the bullets would fit.

The .45-70 penetrates well and packs an authoritative punch on both ends — recoil with heavy bullets loaded to the max will do more than get your attention!

SIXGUN TIME

You can also successfully face down 15 hundred pounds of attitude and horn with a revolver. Several years ago, I was in the middle of nowhere in a very remote part of the Central African Republic. This is wild Africa in the truest sense. At one time, this country was a mecca for big game but unfortunately, Sudanese poachers have decimated much of a thriving wildlife population.



Magnum Research's BFR in .460 S&W Mag is a superb candidate for hunting large or dangerous game.



Mark's 375 JDJ Encore has proven effective on all of Africa's buffalo species, plus a wide variety of other large and dangerous game.

A Freedom Arms Model 83 in .44 Mag was riding in a Barranti Northwest Hunter holster when we bumped into a lone bull. In this hot and humid region, this sub-specie is recognized as Central African Savanna buffalo and they can vary in size, coloration and horn configuration. We spotted the bull early in the morning while he was walking across a small clearing. After a mean game of hide and seek, we snuck up behind him using sporadic patches of thick bush, closing the distance to 75 yards or so.

The trackers set up shooting sticks as the PH imitated some sort of buffalo sounds that made the buffalo turn around to look. The .44 Magnum held five rounds of Buffalo Bore 305-grain hard cast bullets and I sent one just behind the bull's shoulder. This was all it took. We all were a bit shocked but elated nevertheless. Others have taken cape buffalo with the .44 Mag, but personally, I prefer a bit more punch.

My most recent hunt for cape buffalo yielded another exciting encounter. This time I was packing a Freedom Arms .454 Casull fitted with a Leupold 2.5-8x scope. Buffalo Bore 300-grain Mono bullets from their "Dangerous Game" series filled the cylinders.

Earlier in the hunt we encountered a couple of herds but only cows, calves and young bulls were seen. On the third day we decided to watch a water hole late in the evening.

Sure enough, as the sun was dropping behind the African horizon, a large herd of buffalo appeared. There were two big old bulls in the mix and I would have been a happy camper with either of them. The problem was getting a clear shot. There were always other buffalo in front or behind one the big bulls, eliminating any possibility of an unobstructed shooting path.

Finally, at 47 yards, one of the bulls stood broadside away from the others, offering a prime, picture-perfect shot. When I tugged the trigger and the hammer dropped, buffalo instantaneously took off in every direction and kicked up so much dust you couldn't see the target bull any more. However, the shot felt good — and within a matter of 60 seconds, we heard the death bellow.

The bull hadn't gone 40 yards and was down for keeps. Previously, the trackers and PH were a bit skeptical about the revolver's capability but when they found the bullet had made a clean exit passing through his vitals, everyone was pleasantly surprised. The .454 Casull has proven to be a worthy option for the biggest critters on this planet.

GO BIG

When Smith & Wesson first introduced their .500 S&W Mag. I took the large-frame revolver to Zimbabwe for buffalo using Cor-Bon 440-grain hard-cast ammo stuffed into the iron-sighted wheelgun. After a few days of following tracks to no avail, our luck abruptly changed.

On the way to a water source to look for tracks, a lone big bull walked across the dirt path. We eased our way up to the point where he crossed the road. To our disbelief,

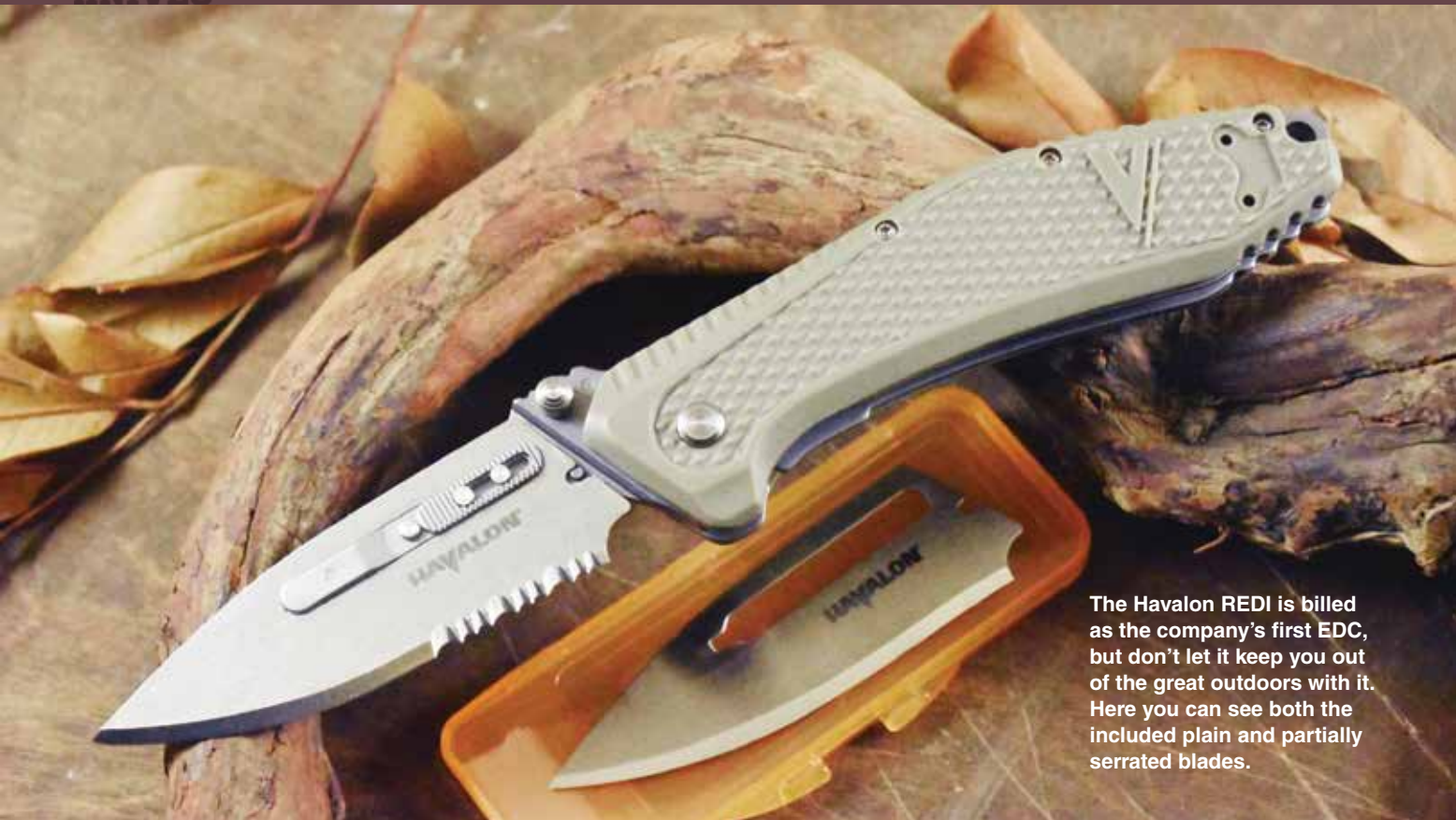


In Uganda, this big Nile buffalo (above) was taken on the last day of Mark's hunt with his 375 JDJ. Smith & Wesson's 500 S&W Mag. (below) took this dandy cape buffalo in Zimbabwe. Mark was shooting a Cor-Bon 440-grain hard cast bullet and took this bull with one shot.



the bull was standing 55 yards off the road, looking askance. The trackers expeditiously put the shooting sticks in place as I rested the revolver. When the sights leveled on the bull's shoulder, I sent the massive slug toward this monster. Before we could recover from the unexpected encounter, the death bellow insured the shot was true and our bull was down. A single shot from the .500 S&W Mag put the skinners to work.

Big bores and buffalo go together like vanilla ice cream and mom's homemade peach cobbler. Hunting these large bovines with a handgun is very exciting and exceptionally rewarding. If you have an insatiable thirst for adventure, a longing for challenge and heart-pounding exhilaration, big bores and buffalo will check all the boxes. **GUNS**



The Havalon REDI is billed as the company's first EDC, but don't let it keep you out of the great outdoors with it. Here you can see both the included plain and partially serrated blades.

HAVALON REDI THE BLADE TRADER

Pat Covert

In the past few years, hunters and anglers have been discovering Havalon replaceable blade systems and apparently like what they saw. Their Piranta folding knife, released in 2005, introduced hunters and anglers to the ease and precision medical scalpel blades offer when dressing game or cleaning fish — and when one blade was used up, a new one could replace it within seconds. Once the concept took off, Havalon added larger models, multi-blade models, and more recently a multi-tool using their scalpel system. We bring you here the Havalon REDI, the company's first scalpel-based EDC.

The REDI uses larger and thicker replaceable blades than normal scalpels. Two 3.0" Drop Point style blades come with the REDI — one is plain edge and the other is partially serrated. The AUS-8 stainless steel blades are proprietary to the REDI and the thicker steel allows them to be re-sharpened. The REDI is treated to a beefier new

slide locking system, which keeps the blade positively locked into place at all times. A liner-lock inside the frame keeps the blade assembly rigid when deployed. The REDI's 4.4" handle, available in green or black, is nicely sculpted reinforced nylon with checkering for enhanced grip — and there's a tip-up pocket clip on the backside, positional for right- or left-hand carry, to keep the REDI at the ready.

WHY YOU'LL LIKE IT

Kept within its parameters, the REDI will serve you well. This is not a knife you can beat up. You do not want to stress or twist the blade laterally — or any blade for that matter. This said, the REDI is a straight up slicing machine. Although it's billed as an EDC, I suspected it could dress decent-sized game and a spokesman for the company confirmed he had indeed used the REDI on his hunting trips. While not an exotic steel, AUS-8 stainless is time-proven to be a very



The Havalon REDI's sliding blade-locking system is much beefier than those found on typical replaceable scalpel blade knives.

competent and easy-to-sharpen steel, and refills are readily available from Havalon. Better yet, the REDI checks in at a very affordable \$54.99, which includes a 2-pack with both a plain edge and partially serrated blade. At this price you can get your feet wet with a versatile, replaceable blade knife without shucking out a lot of dough. Thumbs up to that!

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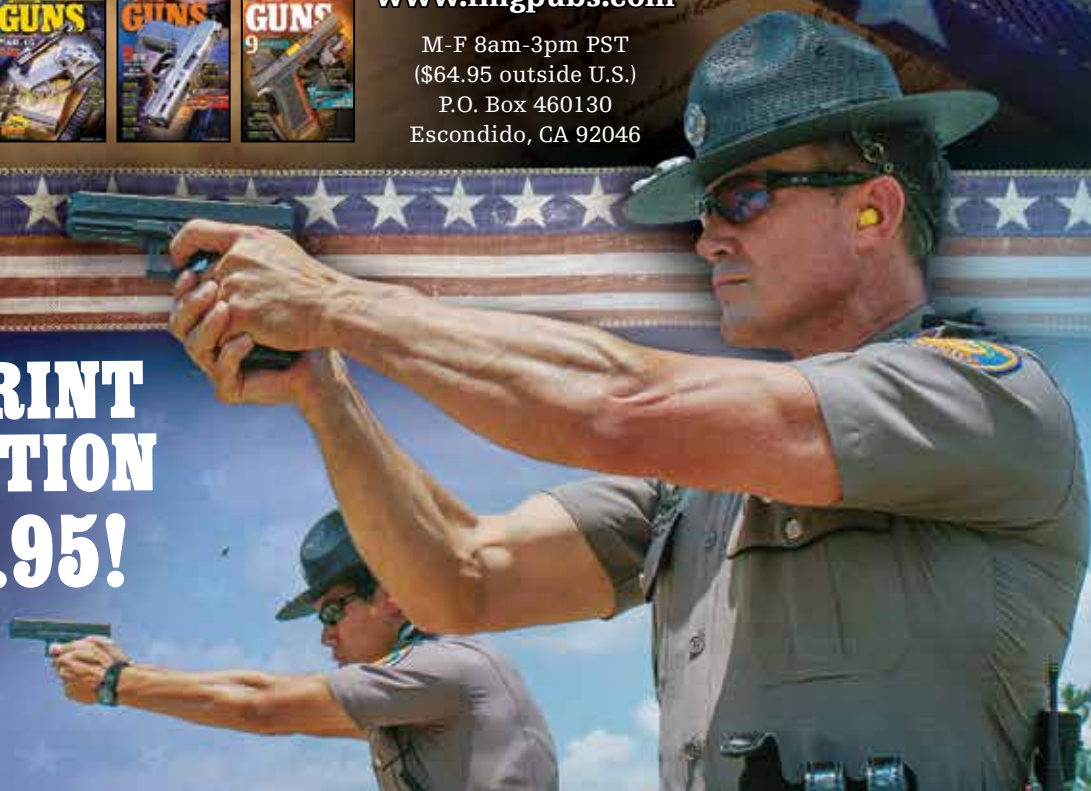
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CAMPAIGN '24 HAS BEGUN

THE CYCLE STARTS ANEW

By Dave Workman

Like it or not, the campaign for 2024, from the presidency on down through the U.S. Senate and House, assorted state governorships and legislative offices, has begun and you are on the playing field.

Last fall gave gun owners a lesson about allowing themselves to be gulled into not voting because too many expected a “red wave” would take care of business so they didn’t have to. Those who didn’t vote forgot they were part of the anticipated wave. When they shirked responsibility, the wave turned into something less. Don’t allow it to happen again.

There are threats to your gun rights even with Republicans controlling the U.S. House, and you better take them seriously. When Joe Biden lost half of Capitol Hill, it only emboldened him to try skirting Congress. His intention is still to ban so-called “assault weapons” and maybe even 9mm pistols.

THE GAME PLAN

If you care about the outcome, now is a good time to start paying attention to candidates who are already emerging. We’re not talking about where perennial candidate Beto O’Rourke is going to jump in next, but people who may be in office now and are looking to step up the ladder or just cling to their current positions — and other people who want to replace them.

Those considering a run for public office will be making their intentions known by forming “exploratory committees” and figuratively sticking their toes into the water, then start raising money. Donald Trump announced his candidacy for a return to the White House more than five months ago and along came his first fund raising effort.

VOTING ON YOUR RIGHTS

Quite possibly the most worrisome political development is the billionaire-bankrolled citizen initiative.

Measure 114 in Oregon, passed by voters last November, was immediately challenged in federal court with lawsuits, but remember this wasn’t the first rodeo for the wealthy elitists who engage in this sort of activity. The Oregon initiative, and two before it in neighboring Washington, were challenged with lawsuits but whether those measures are eventually nullified on constitutional grounds by the courts isn’t really the point.

initiative campaigns to get preemption on your ballot.

About 42 states had preemption laws at this writing, and removing such a law isn’t really a direct Second Amendment issue even if you think it is. Right now is when signature gathering begins so they can have a measure on this fall’s ballot. Pay attention, watch the news in your area and don’t be caught off-guard.

You cannot legally interfere with such initiative efforts, but there is no



The point is financial attrition — i.e., anti-gunners have boatloads of cash and every time they put forth one of these campaigns, it costs a small fortune to fight them. This is money the billionaires can afford to spend, where opponents are lucky if they can raise a campaign fund one-tenth the size to fight back.

A second point is more ominous: Anti-gunners learn from these efforts. Where they might have gone after guns and magazines, the next target may be state preemption. Gun prohibitionists hate those statutes and just because they’ve only been successful one time — in Colorado — to repeal a preemption law, watch out for well-funded

law against launching an education campaign to tell your side of whatever story they pander.

Make the issue about your rights and common sense. Take the high road and make a forceful argument for the wisdom of gun law uniformity. Your position is against turning back the calendar to a time of confusing and conflicting local ordinances. You want to go forward and protect not only gun law uniformity, but also defend the Legislature as the only legitimate body where state gun control laws should be debated and set.

Watch for attacks on other rights, such as efforts to tighten up concealed carry laws in your state. This could come in the form of legislation or by

the initiative process, and remember, people who promote such efforts rely on emotion rather than common sense — and they are very good at it.

SHAMELESS EXPLOITATION

The gun prohibition lobby shamelessly exploits every gun-related tragedy leading the 6 o'clock news. Every camera from every news agency will rush to the scene to capture images of crying eyes, faces of fear and body bags.

You needn't show up for a man-on-the-street interview, but what you should do is watch every newscast, find out what anti-gunners say and put together talking points to refute them. Pay attention to how such stories are reported and be prepared to correct any false impressions or outright falsehoods.

Don't think you're gathering information just for the sake of responding to a mass shooting or some other gun-related crime. You are also gathering notes and anecdotal information to use if you have an opportunity to chat with emerging candidates. Question

them. Put them on the spot and don't let them dodge and weave their way out of a conversation.

I've been to several Q&A community gatherings over the years. I've had the chance to engage would-be politicians with to-the-point questions regarding Second Amendment issues. I have also publicly corrected them and they don't like it. Some learn, others stubbornly amp things up.

About 14 months ago, early in 2022 when then-new Seattle Mayor Bruce Harrell appeared at a press conference to complain about Washington's preemption statute, he said a remarkably foolish thing. Harrell claimed Washington is one of a handful of states with preemption and I immediately called him out.

The Citizens Committee for the Right to Keep and Bear Arms issued a statement to the press noting more than 40 states have such laws and Harrell should know it. I also wrote a couple of news stories that got fairly wide circulation via social media. Harrell never repeated his mistake, but he also did not drop his

effort to repeal the law. However, his position was weakened.

Lastly, create an organization for the purpose of being able to legitimately put together candidate questionnaires. Get these people on the record. Produce a report about their answers and don't forget to identify candidates who don't bother to reply.

And when you ask questions, make them generic:

- How should we address the problem of crime involving guns?
- Should we make it more difficult to buy firearms?

You can call your group just about anything — "Citizens for Common Sense" comes to mind. Don't identify yourselves as a gun rights group because too many office-seekers will dismiss your group as a bunch of "gun people."

None of this will be easy. Defending your Second Amendment rights is never easy. But it has to be done and because you've taken the time to read this far, you're probably the person who can get it done.

GUNS



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KETCH GRIPS & KNIVES

I've covered what Ketch does before but this latest is so cool, I had to share again. If you like supporting the classic one-man shop, here's your guy. Ketch makes every set of grips by hand, hand sands, finishes and fits them one by one. He's done several sets of grips for me for my Star and 1911 autos and recently sent me these for my Star PD. The little knife he included is just the right size for all those little daily jobs like opening boxes, cutting string, carving a hunk of beast off the roast in the fridge or even de-skinning that deer if you had to.

Ketch can make a set of custom grips for any Star you have, any 1911 and possibly other makes, but check with him first on that. Grips start in the \$65 range, with knife models starting in the \$80 range. Ask about exotic woods and such for your own matching grip/knife project!

KetchsKreations.com



INFINITY X1 LIGHTS

When tactical lights first came out, we all thought the 50 lumens they offered was astounding and could never get better. I mean, who needs more than 50 lumens, right? Well, it turns out we all do. This latest, from Infinity, simply blows the doors off of the "affordable consumer" lighting concept. The 5,000 (!) lumen model is only \$89 while the 1,500 lumen model is a wallet-friendly \$59. For this you get lights able to run off of the included USB rechargeable or AA batteries for the alternative battery packs. The 5,000 uses nine AA batteries and the 1,500 uses six. Runtimes are two hours at 5,000 lumens and 1.5 hours for the 1,500-lumen model. Both also offer lower power modes. How bright is 5,000 lumens? I have about four acres outside my back door — it lights it all up like daylight. Who needs a light saber? Simply astounding.

InfinityX1.com

TERRA CELL GAME CAM

Okay, so I thought this would be a silly waste of time. I mean, who "needs" cellular service for a game camera, really? Call me sold on the idea now. For as little as \$119 (this model) and a \$10 a month service charge, you can get unlimited photos sent right to your phone. The app shows you battery life, cellular signal strength, photos taken, etc. and you can adjust quality, numbers of pics in a burst and other options from the app. I keep mine on a tripod and move it around the property to see what's going on. It's always fun to check the app and see a close-up of some deer giving you the eyeball. Great for security too.



WildGameInnovations.com



HUNTERS SUPPLY

These are just about the nicest people you'll ever deal with. The staff is a tiny handful of hard working, skillful craftsmen making high-quality cast bullets in small batches. Based in New Mexico, they make just about every cast lead bullet weight and style you can imagine, from .25 caliber on up to the biggest you'd ever need. They also cater to the amazing world of high performance air guns with cast slugs for the big bore air rifles. I've used their .25 slugs for my Airforce and unlike .22 pellets, these knock squirrels clean out of a tree.

If you need muzzleloader bullets, cowboy bullets, buckshot, slick-coat bullets or hunting bullets of all kinds, you've found your source. They're affordable and almost always have the product in stock and ready to ship. When you call, you'll likely chat with Regina, so let her know where you saw this and she'll take great care of you!

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MAXIM 9 AIRSOFT PISTOL SILENCERCO/KRYTAC

SilencerCo announces an airsoft version of their iconic Maxim 9 integrally suppressed pistol will be released by KRYTAC. The *Maxim 9 Airsoft Pistol* is constructed of a reinforced polymer frame with an anodized aluminum slide and baffles. It is also micro-dot optics ready. The Maxim 9 Airsoft can be fired in semi-auto or full-auto. Available as a green gas or CO2 powered gas blowback pistol. MSRP: \$220. For more info: Kryptac.com



VERDIGRE COLLECTION CODE OF SILENCE

Code of Silence announces the release of its *Verdigre Collection* of hunting clothing. The series gives hunters an edge with the camouflage design on their pants, hoodie, glove and cap. Made of fleece/wool, the Verdigre line offers breathability during activity and warmth during colder hunts. It's also silent. MSRP: \$140 for the hoodie; \$130 for the pants. For more info: (308) 249-7561, CodeOfSilence.com



PIVOT TRAILBLAZER FIREARMS

The *Pivot* from Trailblazer Firearms is a semi-automatic 9mm ultracompact folding rifle. Patented technology allows the Pivot Rifle to collapse in a unique way, maximizing portability when folded and function when unfolded. It is 20.9" long (folded) with a full 16" threaded barrel plus extendable stock. The Pivot uses GLOCK-compatible magazines. MSRP: \$1,795. For more info: (888) 647-3647, TrailBlazerFirearms



AR-6 STINGER II COMPACT STEAMBOW

Lightweight, extremely fast and strong, the Steambow *AR-6 Stinger II Compact* offers crossbow performance in a pistol-style package. This model measures 17.5" wide and under 22" long while tipping the scales at just 2.55 lbs. It boasts the fastest rate of fire of any repeating crossbow on the market. The AR-6 Stinger II Compact is constructed of shock- and UV-resistant polymer. MSRP: \$299.99. For more info: (833) 464-2697, Steambow.com



RANGER SERIES RIFLE SUPPRESSORS ADVANCED ARMAMENT COMPANY

AC's *Ranger Series Rifle Suppressors* were developed for AR-15 and AR-10 platform rifles. The Ranger 5 and Ranger 7 have a compact design and reduced weight to deliver reliable performance for tactical or sporting applications. Made of Inconel 718 high-strength nickel alloy and 17-4 H900 stainless steel, the Ranger series can withstand harsh conditions and high-volume operation. MSRP: \$899.99 for both. For more info: (800) 581-1610, Advanced-Armament.com



RF750 E-BIKE ROGUE RIDGE

Rogue Ridge's *RF750 E-Bike* is equipped with a 750-watt motor and 13 amp hour battery. It can handle long rides with plenty of power to blast up steep hills. The e-bike has a range of up to 35 miles, a charge time of just 2.5 hours and its fat tires easily tackle any terrain. The RF750's aluminum folding hardtail frame weighs 55 lbs. and is load-rated for 300 lbs. MSRP: \$3,499.99 to \$3,599.99. For more info: (844) 471-4868, RogueRidge.com



DIVIDED AMMO CRATE MTM CASE-GARD

The *Divided Ammo Crate* from MTM Case-Gard is a modular storage solution with a spacious interior divided into four compartments separated by three removable partitions. The modular partition construction allows for custom storage to fit multiple items like ammo boxes, magazines and cleaning supplies. MSRP: \$27.98. For more info: (800) 543-0548, MTMCase-Gard.com

A/T MID BOOT 5.11 TACTICAL

The *A/T Mid Boot* utilizes 5.11 Tactical's A.T.L.A.S. technology to distribute weight, improve stability and return energy for all-day support, performance and comfort. Now offered in a new coyote color, this customer-favorite features a 3D-molded TPR toe and heel for protection, a welded-mesh upper and a high traction outsole. The *A/T Mid Boot* is part of the company's expanded lineup of footwear. MSRP: \$150. For more info: (866) 451-1726, 5.11Tactical.com



PROTAC 2.0 STREAMLIGHT INC.

Streamlight Inc. has launched the 2,000-lumen *ProTac 2.0*, a rechargeable handheld tactical light offering extreme brightness and long run times. This latest addition to the *ProTac* series of tactical handheld lights gives first responders, outdoor enthusiasts, technicians and other users an ideal light for everyday use. The *ProTac 2.0* is 6.10" in length and weighs 8.25 oz. and comes with one SL-B50 rechargeable battery. MSRP: \$195. For more info: (800) 523-7488, Streamlight.com



ADJUSTABLE TARGET/ TACTICAL REAR SIGHT FOR THE COLT 2020 PYTHON AND ANACONDA WILSON COMBAT

Wilson Combat's *Adjustable Target/Tactical Rear Sight for the Colt 2020 Python and Anaconda* is a rugged, fully adjustable replacement rear sight of hardened chromoly steel. The sight has an improved sight picture, reliable adjustments and a superior fit to your revolver's frame. The USA-made, heavy duty sight can make a great gun even better and allows for easy adjustment in the field. MSRP: \$109.95. For more info: (800) 955-4856, ShopWilsonCombat.com



SMALL BREAK-IN KIT CRAFT HOLSTERS

Leather holsters look great and are comfortable to carry, but require break-in before first use. Craft Holsters has introduced the *Small Break-In Kit* to make this chore more bearable. The kit includes a vial of break-in liquid, a wool dauber and microfiber cloth. MSRP: \$9. For more info: (855) 844-5400, CraftHolsters.com



SKULL SYSTEM FULL RANGE HANGING SYSTEMS

Constructed of strong, durable steel, the *Skull System* from Full Range Hanging Systems features four points of contact to the skull for the most secure attachment when displaying your trophy. It offers a wide range of motion to achieve the right angle for showcasing the skull in any space. MSRP: \$65. For more info: FullRangeSystems.com

TWO-MAN TREE STAND REPLACEMENT SEAT THERMASEAT

ThermaSeat's *Two-Man Tree Stand Replacement Seat* now features a folded design to make carrying and installing even easier. Available in two different thicknesses, these stealthy seats feature Silentouch fabric in Mossy Oak or Realtree camo. They're constructed of Softek closed-cell foam to repel water and provide freeze-proof protection in any conditions. MSRP: \$84 to \$89. For more info: (603) 784-5671, ThermaSeat.com



VAULT BLIND BAG ALPS OUTDOORZ

Alps OutdoorZ's *Vault Blind Bag*, is the ultimate "workstation" for serious waterfowlers. The technical pack was developed for hunters pursuing birds in flooded timber and wet blind environments. Inside the bag's main compartment are zippered and elastic storage pockets for stowing motorized decoy wings and accessories. MSRP: \$229.99. For more info: (800) 344-2577, AlpsOutdoorZ.com



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THE SMITH & WESSON PERFORMANCE CENTER COMPETITOR PACKAGE

According to Smith & Wesson, the Performance Center M&P9 M2.0 *Competitor* is built for competition right out of the box. Designed to give competitive shooters the edge, the metal-framed 9mm pistol has a 5" barrel, an enhanced sear for lighter, crisper trigger let-off and a flared magazine well for fast and efficient reloads. The aggressive lightening cuts on the top and sides of the slide reduce the amount of weight in front of the chamber and in turn help improve the recoil balance point. The stainless steel slide is cut for optics and includes a green fiber optic front sight as well as blacked out serrated rear sight. The *Competitor* comes with a reversible oversized mag release for both right- and left-handed users. Choose from models with capacities of 10+1 or

17+1 rounds in Tungsten Gray Cerakote or black Armornite.

The WX VAPOR from Wiley X offers 100% UVA/UVB protection with distortion-free clarity to shield your eyes from the sun's glare. The shatterproof Selenite polycarbonate lenses meet MIL-PRF-32432A ballistic standards to protect your eyes from injury. Its semi-rimless frame is lightweight with rubber-tipped temples to keep the glasses from slipping. If you're the type who needs durable eyewear, these glasses are for you.

Like its name implies, Kershaw Knives' *Cargo* is a must-carry during everyday travels. It has a mid-lock, making the 3.25" D2 tool steel blade easy to open manually with the thumb stud and to securely lock in place. The glass-filled

COMPETITOR

Manufacturer:

Smith & Wesson
Smith-Wesson.com
(800) 331-0852

Caliber: 9mm, Capacity: 10+1
or 17+1; **Barrel Length:** 5"

OAL: 8.25"; **Weight:** 29 oz.

Value: \$999



WX VAPOR

Manufacturer: Wiley X

(800) 776-7842

WileyX.com

Value: \$125





PACKAGE GIVEAWAY

nylon handle reinforced with steel liners has contouring, texturing and rounded edges. With an OAL of 7.5", the Kershaw Cargo proves well-executed simplicity gives users the edge over work tasks.

For sure, the S&W Competitor, WX VALOR sunglasses and Kershaw Cargo knife are prizes you'd want to win! And you can only win if you enter the giveaway. So join now! Go to GUNSMagazine.com/giveaways. Another option is to mail a post card! —Jazz Jimenez **GUNS**



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CARGO

Manufacturer: Kershaw Knives
(800) 325-2891
KershawKaiUSA.com
Value: \$71.99



A “RUSSKIE” SCOUT?

RUSSIAN CHAMBERING IS AS AMERICAN AS IT GETS!

Jeff “Tank” Hoover

Fresh from a Gunsite media event hosted by Rob Leahy of Simply Rugged Holsters and Andy Larsson of Skinner Sights pumped me up, rejuvenating the 12-year-old voice in my head. You know the one, we all have it! Over time the “voice” never changes but we’re shocked seeing our dad’s face staring back at us from the mirror. Where’d the baby-faced kid with cow-licked hair go?

SCOUTS RULE

Besides being introduced to all kinds of cool products, part of the event — and my favorite — included using the Scrambler and Military Crest shooting trails designed specifically for Jeff Cooper’s Scout Rifle concept. I borrowed Matt Olivier’s Scout rifle, which he recently bought from Ed Head. I was honored using this rifle on the same courses Ed had walked hundreds (thousands?) of times before.

Regardless, I wanted a Scout Rifle built just like Ed’s/Matt’s rifle, only in 7.62x39 caliber. The main reason being I already had one. I’d earlier written about the Russian-chambered rifle using cast bullet loads. The rifle was like all Ruger American rifles I’ve shot — extremely accurate from the factor — but its coolness factor and versatility would go up substantially converted into Scout Rifle guise.

Ammo is still relatively cheap during these trying times, and besides, I hand-load for it using my cast hollow-point



Famed Military Crest range at Gunsite Academy. The range offers shots out to 300 yards on 22 different targets and Tank’s American Ranch “Scout” proved perfect to tackle the challenge.



Part of the charm of the Ruger American Ranch rifle is its accuracy with just about every type of ammo. The Simply Rugged Alaskan sling and polymer bolt knob are welcome additions for a fast-handling rifle.

loads. The conversion process is relatively easy. Most of the fixins can be had from Andy Larsson’s Skinner Sights. They make a Scout Rail just for the Ruger American series requiring drill/tapping two holes in the barrel — that’s it.

Friend Ken Kelly of Mag-na-port did the honors as my needs for the holes coincided with our yearly visit consisting of the best damn chili and fried perch at the Adair bar. Adding the rail accomplishes two things. First, it adds

iron sights to the bare Ruger American barrel in the form of a rear peep-sight and M4 A2 front sight.

Secondly, the rail allows forward mounting of a long-eye-relief scope, the most iconic trait of a Scout Rifle. The forward-mounted scope provides a wide field of view while looking through the scope with both eyes open. It also allows easier loading of the magazine with the scope forward of the magazine.

THE SCOPE

Andy Larsson had an older fixed 2.75x Burris Scout scope mounted on his Scout rifle. It was perfect to my way of thinking. Compact, its overall length was 9.2" and weight a scant 7 oz. Main tube is 1" and a generous 8.5-14" eye relief provides convenient mounting options. I used lightweight no-name rigs to mount the scope.

You’d think a fixed 2.75x power scope would limit you for longer shots. It doesn’t. For the type of shooting the Scout rifle is designed for, it has more than you’ll ever need. Hitting steel silhouette targets from over 100–400 meters is not difficult while contorting yourself amongst the scrub juniper or resting your rifle on one of the gnarly limbs when shooting from the different stations on Military Crest Trail.

I added an oversized bolt knob to provide more leverage and positive grip when working the action. A drop of oil makes slipping on the polymer knob easier while protecting the knob from rust. I ordered a few from Amazon for around \$10 each.



Tank’s Ruger American Ranch rifle in its previous stock, factory form.



Turning the American Ranch rifle into a Scout clone (above) is a simple conversion anyone can do to end with a light, fast easy-to-carry rifle chock-full of versatility. These 50-yard targets (below) show the accuracy potential of the Ruger Ranch Rifle fitted with a 2.75x Scout Scope.



Lastly, I added a Simply Rugged Alaskan sling to the rifle for a simple, lightweight means of carrying the rifle, while aiding accuracy when wrapped around your arm.

FACTORY & HOMEGROWN FODDER

I had two brands of ammo on hand. First was Hornady's 123-grain SST ammo. Velocity runs around 2,350 FPS and accuracy was extremely good with 50-yard groups running under an inch with the 2.75x Scout scope. The second was Belom ammo from Serbia. It is 123-grain FMJ also running around 2,350 FPS. It shot as well as Hornady's load. Both factories use boxer-primed brass so handloads are possible with the empties — something important for these dire times.

For a handload, I used an MP Molds 132-grain HPGC slug sized to 0.311"

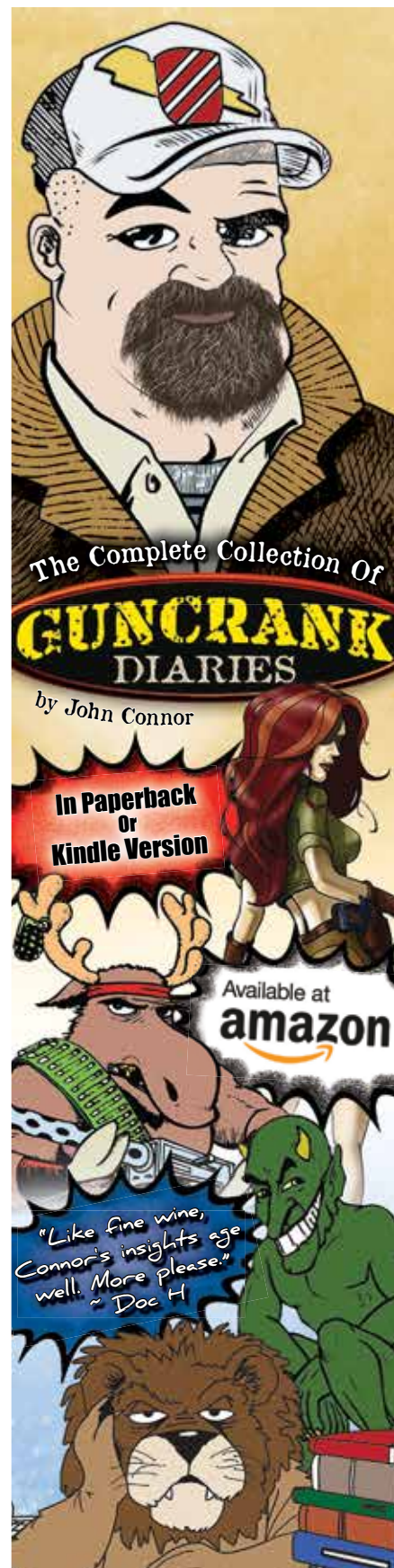
seated over 22.0 grains of AA 1680 and Winchester LR primers. Velocity runs just over 2,100 FPS from my rifle. Three shots easily shoot under an inch at 50 yards.

RANCH RIFLE/ RUSSIAN DRESSING?

Here's a rugged Ruger Scout Rifle chambered in a cartridge made famous by the Russians. Since the Ruger American Ranch rifle is economically priced, I'm not afraid of shooting steel-cased ammo in it. I know from previous experience it shoots this ammo accurately, too! Converting your Ruger American to Scout Rifle form is a fun, economical project you can do — and it's easy too!

GUNS

Ruger.com
SkinnerSights.com
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GUNS INSIDER

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pinky would merely aggravate while a .22 Long Rifle to the brainstem does a pretty good job of cancelling your lifetime subscriptions. This demonstrates the fact bullet placement is the key to personal safety rather than magic Magnums or some other voodoo cartridge.

Thus, our question is no longer, “What is the biggest/best gun we can carry?” but “What can I use most effectively to put a bullet into a physiologically important spot on a bad guy under intense stress in sub-optimal conditions?” Once you answer this question, you’re ready to face the mean streets of Main Street USA.

Unfortunately, this is one of those “simple but not easy” situations. In “real life” it’s nighttime, cold, raining, you need to use the bathroom, you’re carrying a bag of groceries, your kids or grandkids are underfoot and you were badly surprised. Your pistol got hung up in the holster, you missed the safety catch the first time and now there are odd, strange snapping noises you recognize to be bullets whizzing past. Things might be factually simple but definitely not easy.

NINE IS FINE

This idea of getting hits is why the 9x19mm Parabellum has achieved such popularity after being considered a black sheep until the 1980s. Back when I started pointing guns at bad people, the 9mm was considered European and even vaguely communistic. Nobody packed a nine except that one weird detective you knew who carried a Hi-Power or maybe an S&W Model 39.

This was the status quo because at the time all the “serious” gunfighters were using, at minimum, a wheelgun in .357 Magnum, a .41, a .44 Special or maybe even the vaunted .44 Mag. On the other side, the esoteric crowd was carrying a 1911 in .45 ACP. At the time, the 9mm, especially in the 115-grain FMJ, really did tend to poke holes rather than stop people. Agencies like the Illinois State Police, that adopted

the 9mm in 1968, discovered it didn’t really carry the mail where it counted — downrange.

Fortunately, the situation has reversed. The 9mm, with bullets of modern design, is on terminal performance on par with rounds such as the .45 ACP, the former gold standard. Where it isn’t equal is ease of shooting, carry and capacity. This is where the 9mm shines — it’s easier to shoot and you can carry more rounds in a smaller gun. If there is no difference in the end results, why carry a heavier caliber?

I’m not saying all this to disparage the .45 ACP. I carry both calibers regularly, have seen people dead or dying from each and therefore don’t feel over- or under-gunned with either. My meta-point is the fact both are a good choice — and there are others, *if* your shooting is up to par. Heck, nowadays there are semi-adequate self-defense rounds in .380 and even .22 LR. One of my backup pistols is one of the micro-revolvers from North American Arms in .22 Magnum.

Would I carry this cute baby gun intentionally into a gunfight? Heck no! But if things have gone horribly wrong, my other bigger guns don’t work or were lost and all I’ve got is the nearly microscopic revolver in my shaking mitt, you’d bet I’d put it up to somebody’s eye socket and pull the trigger if the situation warranted. Mouse gun or major caliber, it’s all about the hit rather than the miss.

TAKEAWAY

This column is my roundabout way of telling you anybody who claims a specific caliber, bullet design — or firearm or shooting technique — is the one true Holy Grail to solve all your lethal problems, while making your whites whiter and your teeth brighter, is completely and utterly full of (expletive deleted). Sorry, but they are, which is why I sometimes get a little jaded and cynical about this whole gun media business.

After all — never forget we’re the guys who brought you the whole “Ultimate Manstopper” nonsense in the first place.

GUNS



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THE ULTIMATE MAN-NOT-STOPPER

WORD GAMES WE SHOULDN'T PLAY

Brent T. Wheat

It happened again today: I saw the term “Ultimate Manstopper” and my head exploded. Fortunately, I was able to get all the gray matter stuffed back inside my cranium before it got cold. It was close.

The incident occurred during a humorous series of text messages among the *GUNS* staffers when somebody used the aforementioned phrase in a sarcastic way. This is the only time the term is allowed to be uttered around here because it has otherwise been banished except for ironic purposes. Let me explain.

PREHISTORY

You might remember back in the early Mesozoic era, when feathered lizards were learning to fly and gun magazines still ruled the earth, the term “Ultimate Manstopper” was first coined by some forgotten editor. It was the natural result of two related but monumental events.

First was renewed research efforts into “terminal ballistics,” the field of science dealing with what happens when bullet hits quivering flesh. This became a topic of extreme interest following the 1986 FBI Miami Shootout where two bad guys suffered non-survivable wounds but inconveniently forgot to die as they killed and wounded several agents. The research eventually led to the “FBI Ammunition Protocol,” one of the first modern science-backed ammunition specifications for law enforcement.

When the FBI — the 900-lb. gorilla in the cop world — sets standards for things like ammo, the industry

pays attention. Rushing to meet the standards, ammunition companies used the data and specifications to design bullets that punched above their weight class when applied to people who were doing very bad things. This started a major revolution in handgun ammunition and began the ascendancy of the 9mm from “almost good enough” to “no major statistical difference.”

Predictably then came the now-trite series of “9mm versus .45: The Ultimate Shootout” articles in every firearms publication. Sadly, Your Faithful Correspondent might even have written one or two back in the day. As new ammunition technology made its way to market, soon all sorts of bullets, calibers and cartridges were being heralded in the popular press as “The Ultimate Manstopper” — apparently female felons require a different sort of bullet — and soon the term was emblazoned across the covers of countless publications

in 300-point neon font accompanied by six exclamation points.

Every gun writer worth his or her salt, even those who had been officially declared dead for several years, were producing stories in this regard and I’m fairly sure every commercial cartridge manufactured after 1870 has, at some point, been claimed to be “The Ultimate Manstopper” (TUM). It was, and still is, a bit over-the-top and wholly ridiculous.

THE BIG REVEAL

Before we go any further and without the slightest hesitation or

indecisiveness, I’m going to tell you here and now what is truly the ultimate manstopper. I very rarely declare myself as the ultimate authority in such cases but this information is based upon my direct observation and is not open to debate or argument. Thus, without further discussion or dragging this out longer for dramatic effect, I declare The Ultimate Manstopper to be — the 1998 Kenworth semi-tractor pulling a 52-foot reefer carrying 55,000 lbs. of frozen chicken hearts. You get smacked by one of those babies at highway speed and the fire department doesn’t even try to collect the remains, they just hose you off the road. I’ve seen it.

I’ll also accept high-explosives, asteroids, lightning and Wrath of the Almighty as nominations for best-in-class. Most everything else, including all handgun cartridges, are members of the “almost, nearly, but-not-quite” manstopper category.

FAILURES HAPPEN

Let’s examine this. First off, anyone with more brain cells than a Kardashians realizes there is virtually no “ultimate” anything. Everything is subject to failure in certain circumstances, which is why we have Viagra, spare tires and military-grade underwire brassieres. Likewise, a betting person takes the “under” on whether a tiny piece of high-speed metal is capable of stopping a rampaging 350-lb. machete-armed man who believes himself to be the reincarnation of Vigo the Carpathian.

So, assuming we intuitively understand a mere handgun bullet cannot fix all life-threatening problems instantly, what is the key to stopping these nasty men or women or the non-binary they/them/thee version? This question is far easier to answer: bullet placement.

At extreme over-simplification, it’s been noted a .50 caliber round to the



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