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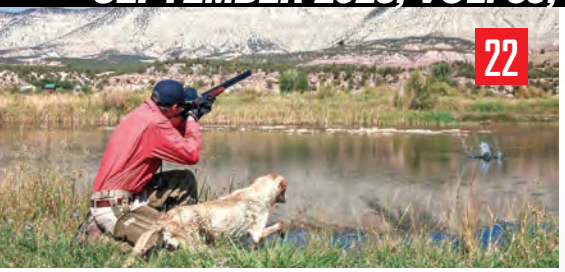
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ON THE COVER:
DAN WESSON DWX
Caught "Red-Handed!"
Will Dabbs, MD

SEPTEMBER 2023, VOL. 69, NUMBER 9, 825TH ISSUE







COLUMNS

8 CROSSFIRE
Letters To The Editor
GUNS Staff

18 HANDLOADING
.36 Caliber Percussion: Round Balls
John Taffin

20 RIFLES
Remington 721
Dave Anderson

22 SHOTGUNS
Don't Shoot The Dog
Tom Keer

24 MONTANA MUSINGS
.405 Winchester
Mike "Duke" Venturino

26 MAKE READY
Shoot Faster
Ken Koch

54 KNIVES
Steambow Knives KI
Pat Covert

62 THINK TANK
.375 Ruger
Jeff "Tank" Hoover

66 GUNS INSIDER
Gather Around The Campfire
Brent T. Wheat





DEPARTMENTS

28 SURPLUS & CLASSIC
Walther OSP
Payton Miller

55 QUARTERMASTER
- Axeon Absolute Zero
  Will Dabbs, MD
- Lapua Super Long Range 22 LR
  Mark Hampton
- Burris XT Pro Scope
  Mark Hampton
- Sage & Braker Case
  Rob Jones

56 2A DEFENSE
Don't Let The Demoralizers Win
Dave Workman

21 CUSTOM CORNER
58 NEW PRODUCTS
60 GUN OF THE MONTH
64 ADVERTISER INDEX

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32

Dan Wesson DWX

The CZ75 And 1911 Had A Baby …
Will Dabbs, MD

10 **CAMPFIRE TALES**
Remington Part 4: Single-Actions
John Taffin

14 **AYOOB ON HANDGUNS**
More Guns Of Harry Truman
Massad Ayoob

30 **DIY: NEW WALTHER PP SIGHTS**
Adjustable Sights For A Classic Mouse Gun
Roy Huntington

32 **DAN WESSON DWX**
The CZ75 And 1911 Had A Baby …
Will Dabbs, MD

38 **BENELLI ULTRA LIGHT 20 GAUGE**
Durable And Versatile Scattergun
Mark Hampton

42 **1886 WINCHESTER**
The Biggest, Baddest Lever Gun
Alan Garbers

46 **PYTHON GUTS**
Is New Better Than Old?
Clayton Walker

50 **THE GUNS OF UKRAINE**
Bringing The Heat, Soviet-Style
Will Dabbs, MD







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MORE BUG-A-SALT

I enjoyed reading Dr. Dabbs' article on the "Bug Assault Gun." There was a comment about this being a waste of space in a serious gun magazine. I disagree with that sentiment 100%. When we take the time to laugh at ourselves, we show the Left we are human, just as we do when we weep at sad situations. We show we are human by exhibiting emotion.

I used to read a monthly publication devoted to cars and enthusiast driving. Every April they had their April Fools road test. One year it compared the Concorde aircraft to the QE2 ocean liner. Another year it was a road test on a Snow Cat plow. An otherwise serious car magazine taking time to be human and show humor, and the level of writing, made it an enjoyable read. Other magazines cover the shooting realm but *GUNS* does so in a way the newbie and the very experienced feel like it's being written just for them. To be able to write for a novice and not be "talking down to them" or over their heads and yet relate to the experienced shooter is a gift very few writers possess — and you have an entire staff that does just that. Waste of space? I don't think so.

Bill Carmickle



THERE IS HOPE

In response to Duke Venturino's "Mr. Garand's Rifles," here's a pic of my 14-year-old grandson Jordan shooting my "loaded" Springfield Armory M1A at the annual field fire event at Cavendish, Idaho. We were banging metal at 641 yards.

Carl Thomas Zmuda

GUNS

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REMINGTON PART IV
SINGLE ACTION SIXGUNS

John Taffin

Colt or Remington? In the Civil War era, the Remington percussion sixgun was available both as an 8" .44 New Model Army and a 7 ½" .36 Navy Model. Percussion Colts were more readily available and in a greater profusion of models but the Remington cap-n-ball sixgun had several advantages over the Colt. The frame of the Remington was solid with the barrel permanently screwed into the frame. Meanwhile, the Colt sixguns were all open-topped with removable barrels held in place by two small pins at the bottom of the front of the frame and a wedge pin entering the barrel assembly from the side.

MORE ADVANTAGES

The Remington also had a better sighting arrangement with a "hog wallow" rear sight through the top of the frame mated up with an easy-to-see front sight. The Colt carried a brass front sight while the rear sight was a difficult-to-see notch in the cocked hammer.

The Colt did have two great advantages. Most pistoleros found it to be quicker from leather and slightly faster to handle with its easier-to-reach hammer and more comfortable grip. It also would shoot longer without jamming from fouling. However, Remington had a hammer with a solid face striking the percussion caps while the Colt had a notch that was more prone to suck fired caps off the nipple and cause a cap jam.



This pair of .45 Colt Remington Model 1890s has grips from Buffalo Brothers.



Remington 1890 and 1875 replicas chambered in .45 Colt.

When I first started visiting gun shops and my first gun show in 1956, I found it was very easy to find Colt single actions, both the 1873 Peacemaker as well as various cap-n-ball sixguns, but I rarely saw any Smith & Wesson or Remington single actions. Perhaps they were there and just perhaps my eyes had been trained by who knows how many B westerns to always see Colt above all else.

One of the great advantages of the Colt single action was not only the fact they were made for a longer period of time, 1873-1941 compared to the Remington from 1874-1896, but the Colt also won the numbers game with more than 350,000 compared to about 30,000 Remington revolvers. The Colt guns were also chambered in popular cartridges such as .45 Colt, .44-40 and .38-40 while the Remington models were not only in a much smaller supply, many were chambered in the obsolete .44 Remington.

My first encounter with a Remington of any kind was a replica 1858 percussion Remington revolver by Navy arms. It didn't take long to realize how comfortable the Colt Single Action Army grip frame makes the shooting of standard .44s and .45s, nor to notice the cramped (for my hand) grip frame on the Remington 1858 was not nearly as comfortable. Over the years I have added several Remington 1875 replicas to my collection but they also have not seemed to feel as good in the hand as my Colts.


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From the very beginning, when compared to the Colt, Remington was an inherently stronger design. Where Colt used three parts — mainframe, backstrap and trigger guard — bolted together, Remington forged a one-piece steel housing incorporating the mainframe and grip frame with no screws to loosen while shooting.

Unlike the open-top design of Sam Colt's percussion revolvers, the early Remington models had a solid top strap, which the United States Military insisted upon Colt using in their Single Action Army. It is quite obvious to me someone at Colt took a good look at the Remington percussion revolvers before the Colt 1871-72 Open-Top evolved into the Single Action Army in 1873. It is also obvious Remington engineers then looked back at the Colt of 1873 before the first Remington cartridge-firing revolvers arrived in 1874.

When one compares the percussion revolvers from Remington and Colt, we find them to be quite different. They are quite different as to look, feel and operation. However, when we come to the Colt Model of 1873 and the Remington Model 1875, we find them to be quite similar in appearance except for the web found under the barrel of the Remington. In fact, when Hollywood wanted the sixgun used in the movie to be a Remington, they simply added a pot metal Remington web under the barrel of the Colt. If one looks at close-up pictures of Westerns using Remington guns, it is easy to see how crudely these webs are attached to Colt single action movie guns.

Was the purpose of the web simply to give a distinctive appearance? Was it there just to carry on the look of the .44 Remington percussion revolvers? Was it designed as an aid for easy holstering? Did the Remington engineers think it provided extra strength? Whatever the reason, it is the one distinctive appearance factor of the Remington 1875 when compared to the Colt Peacemaker.

Somewhere between 2,000 and 4,000 Remington Model 1875s were produced over the next three years with a blade front sight, mostly without the lanyard ring and chambered in .44-40 and .45 Colt. Some minor changes were made in 1881 with between 4,000 and 5,000 being manufactured before the Model 1890 arrived. The last few, less than 1,000, were chambered in .44-40 with 5 ¾" barrels. In 1883, approximately 1,000 nickel-plated Model 1875s were purchased by the U.S. Government to arm the Indian Police.

E. Remington & Sons suffered a bankruptcy in 1888, the company name was changed to Remington Arms and a few "Model 1888" single actions were produced before the arrival of the Model 1890. The last of the Remington big-bore single actions were produced in .44-40 with less than 2,000 being manufactured before production ceased in 1896. Both barrel lengths were offered in the Model 1890, which is easily distinguished from the Model 1875 by the lack of the full-length web under the barrel.

In all of this time I have never had the privilege of shooting an original Remington. My friend and former editor, Jeff John, has this to say about the original Remington Model 1875: "Handling the 1875 is an odd experience. While it is roughly the same weight as the Colt SAA, the grip angle is awkward and the balance feels off. I found few who admire its handling characteristics, and I'm not sure I believe the few I've met."

Thanks to Hartford Armory, the original Remington in both 1875 and 1890 iterations came back and I have not only been privileged to shoot these new sixguns but also to handle the original Remington 1875 used as their pattern. Unfortunately, as we will see in the next installment, the Hartford Armory Remington did not last very long. GUNS



John's Navy Arms .44-40 Remington Model 1875 has been fitted with a bead rifle front sight in a dovetail. Targets shot at 20 yards with .45 Schofield loads (below, left) in the Remington Model 1875. Targets shot at 20 yards (below, right) in the Remington Model 1890 with .45 Schofield loads.





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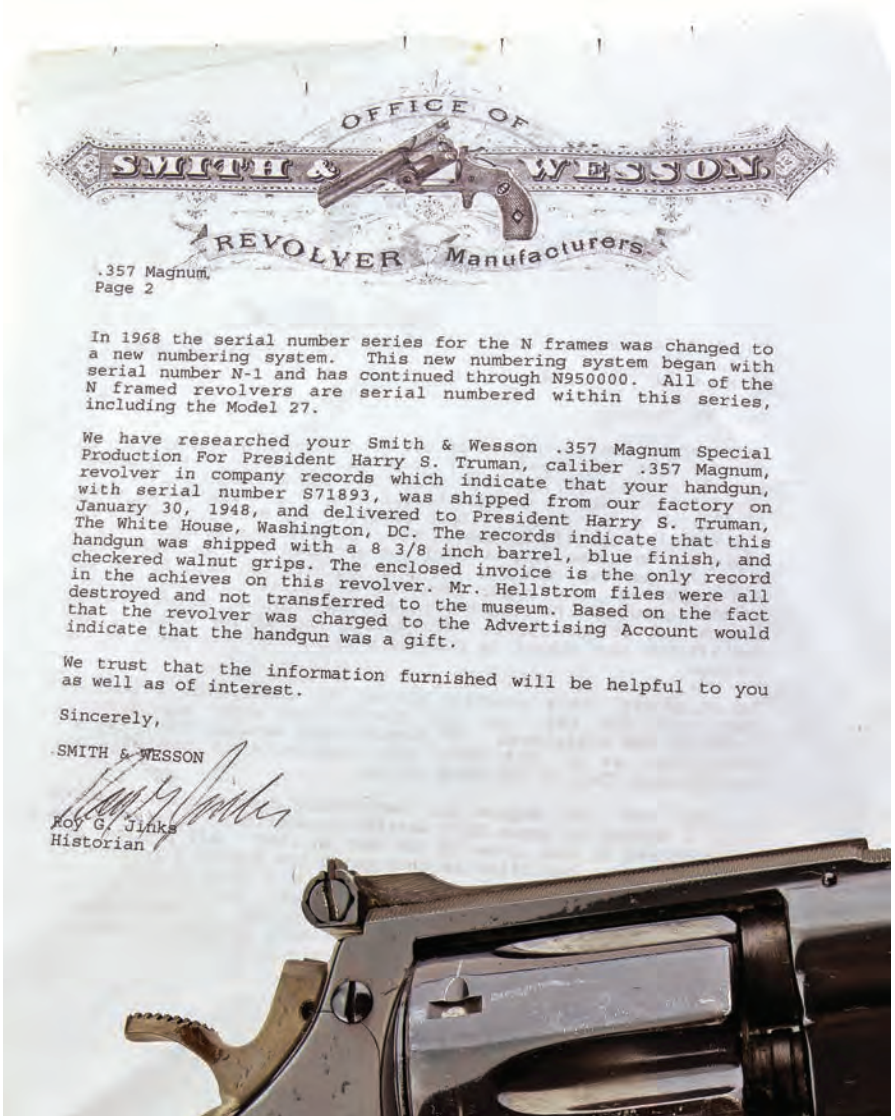
FOLDS of HONOR

MORE ON THE HANDGUNS OF PRESIDENT HARRY TRUMAN

THE REST OF THE STORY …



Truman brought a Colt 1917 like this one home from WWI.



OFFICE OF
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REVOLVER Manufacturers

.357 Magnum,
Page 2

In 1968 the serial number series for the N frames was changed to a new numbering system. This new numbering system began with serial number N-1 and has continued through N950000. All of the N framed revolvers are serial numbered within this series, including the Model 27.

We have researched your Smith & Wesson .357 Magnum Special Production For President Harry S. Truman, caliber .357 Magnum, revolver in company records which indicate that your handgun, with serial number S71893, was shipped from our factory on January 30, 1948, and delivered to President Harry S. Truman, The White House, Washington, DC. The records indicate that this handgun was shipped with a 8 3/8 inch barrel, blue finish, and checkered walnut grips. The enclosed invoice is the only record in the achieves on this revolver. Mr. Hellstrom files were all destroyed and not transferred to the museum. Based on the fact that the revolver was charged to the Advertising Account would indicate that the handgun was a gift.

We trust that the information furnished will be helpful to you as well as of interest.

Sincerely,

SMITH & WESSON

Roy G. Jinks
Historian

The Truman .357 is well documented. It would have been a 5-screw pre-Model 27 like this one.

Massad Ayoob

Awhile back, I made reference to the little-known fact Harry Truman was something of a gun guy. I mentioned the Colt .45 ACP revolvers he brought home from World War I, a 1917 revolver and a 1911 pistol that rest in the Truman Library museum. There is also a Smith & Wesson Chief Special reportedly presented to him and which there's reason to believe he may have carried when he left the White House.

We here at *GUNS* appreciate our readers, and one I particularly cherish right now is Ed Cornett. This distinguished gentleman is not just a fellow member of the Smith & Wesson Collectors Association (SWCA) but indeed a founding member: #15. After reading the column, Ed was kind enough to share his research at the Truman Library. It turns out I had merely touched the surface.

In the archives of the museum there was another 1917 .45 ACP revolver, this one a Smith & Wesson. Among other S&Ws were a top-break .44 Double Action and a spur-trigger single-action top-break in .38 S&W — and a couple of other six-guns that might cause any collector to salivate.

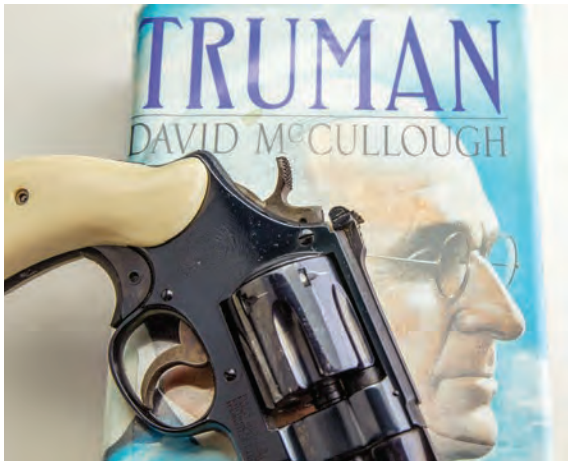
HST'S MAGNUM

In 1947, the then-president of S&W, Carl Hellstrom, let the White House know his company wanted to give Truman a revolver … or two. It was decided one would be the company's flagship handgun, the super-deluxe .357 Magnum, later known as the Model 27. The one put together for Truman had the longest available barrel, 8 3/8" and checkered walnut Magna stocks. The front sight had a red insert and the serial number was S71893.

At the suggestion of Truman's military aide, Army Major General

Harry S. Vaughan, the revolver was engraved on the right sideplate in capital letters with COLONEL HARRY S. TRUMAN. Why COLONEL and not PRESIDENT? Truman was proud of his combat service in WWI and his subsequent time in the Reserves. Hellstrom had an identical long-barrel .357 set aside for General Vaughan in gratitude for his assistance. Its serial number is S71852.

Cornett reports, "Mr. Hellstrom sought the services of Congressman Cecil R. King (D-California) to arrange the informal presentation of the revolver to President Truman. Congressman King was a close friend of President Truman from their years together in Congress. He was also a member of the Board of Directors of the National Rifle Association as well as a gun collector and shooter." The presentation was made the following year.



Except for grips and adapter, Truman's .357 would have looked like this.

THE GUN PROTECTING THE PRESIDENT

Mr. Cornett learned in the same timeframe (1948) a most interesting 4" barrel Military & Police .38 Special was presented to President Truman. On July 23, 1947, Hellstrom wrote to Vaughn on S&W letterhead, "When we commenced production of our Victory Model revolver at the beginning of the recent war, we retained the first gun off the line, foreseeing its eventual value as an historic collector's item," and added his wish it be presented to Truman. The .38 in question had the smooth walnut grips of the Victory Model, but not its flat gray finish — this one had the commercial polished blue.

The serial number was V1, and therein lies a tale in which Cornett solved a mystery. He examined the gun and took it apart with the approval of Mark Beveridge before the latter's retirement from the Truman Museum. It turns out that V1 did not have the right parts or proofmarks for an early Victory Model, and was more consistent with production toward the end of the conflict or postwar. Roy Jinks, the acknowledged top authority on these guns and the official S&W Historian, agreed.

Were there two V1s? Did Hellstrom fudge the history of V1 a little









in his letter to the White House? Or did someone lower in the S&W hierarchy say "Good Lord, the boss wants to give a gun to the President and we can't find it? We'll have to make another!"

What we do know, thanks to Cornett and Beveridge, is S&W .38 Special number V1 had been kept loaded by President Truman in or on a bedside table until his death in December 26, 1972 at the age of 88. Ed Cornett told me, "After Truman's death, the Victory Model was removed from the bedside table and whoever did it was not gun-knowledgeable as to how to unload the revolver, so there are some scratch marks on the extractor from a pair of pliers they tried to use until more knowledgeable people intervened!"



The Truman Magnum was shipped with Magna stocks similar to this.

It is good to be reminded there was a time when Democrat Presidents understood the importance of self-defense with handguns, practiced it themselves, and didn't try to compromise their constituency's ability to do the same. A time when a Democrat Representative from California would serve on the NRA Board and facilitate the transfer of handguns to the White House. I am extremely grateful to Ed Cornett for sharing this information with us and our readers. GUNS

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LOADING FOR PERCUSSION SIXGUNS
PART ONE: .36 CALIBER ROUND BALLS

John Taffin

The Walkers and the Dragoons at 4 to 4½ lbs. were mainly used by the military and carried in pairs in pommel holsters. For most civilians they were deemed too heavy to even carry on a belt, let alone for fast work from a holster but the advent of the 1851 .36 caliber Navy revolver changed all that. With the arrival of this beautifully balanced full-sized, six-shot .36 caliber revolver, a holstered sixgun always immediately available became a reality. Carried mostly in crossdraw Slim Jim holsters, they were both fast from the leather and convenient to carry.

IN THE NAVY

The Colt 1851 Navy .36 in replica form has been offered by several manufacturers, including under Colt license in the 2nd Generation run beginning in 1971 and then the 3rd Generation Signature Series in the early 1990s. All of these were a cut above most replicas when it came to fit and finish. My 3rd Generation Signature Series Navy is beautifully finished and fitted with blue cylinder and barrel, case-colored mainframe, hammer and loading lever and silver backstrap and square back trigger guard. The action is smooth, the cylinder locks up tight and it shoots very well with either Goex FFFg or Pyrodex P.

Sights consist of a gold bead front sight that mates up with a notch in the cocked hammer serving as a rear sight. Just as with almost all other Colt replicas, the front sight needs to be taller as the point of impact for this 1851 Navy is 3" to 4" high at 50'.

Today the 1851 Navy Model is available from both Pietta and Uberti. All of the ones I have been privileged to shoot have shot anywhere from 6" to 10" high at 50'. These Colt replicas can be brought closer to hitting point of aim by replacing the front sight with a Remington New Model Army-style sight set in a dovetail. This sight is tall enough to be filed for elevation and can be tapped in either direction to correct windage.

Italian replica 1851 Navy models carry the same 7 ½" octagon barrel as the originals. They are well-balanced sixguns with one-piece walnut grips and case-coloring on frame, hammer and loading lever. They can be had with a brass backstrap and trigger guard or a silverplated blackstrap and trigger guard, either round or square backed. Actions are smooth and tight on all recent examples I have tried. Fast-handling with mild recoil and good accuracy make for very pleasant shooting.

Today's replica 1851 Navy sixguns leave little to be desired as far as fitting and finishing. However, they may require smoothing and tuning to shoot reliably. These days I automatically replace the factory nipples on every new percussion revolver with stainless steel SliX Shot nipples from SliX Springs. These are about $6 each and are a worthy investment to promote reliability and greatly lessen the possibility of fired caps jamming the action.

A big problem with replica percussion Colts is cap jamming and/or cap sucking. It is a rare out-of-the-box Colt replica that does not exhibit one or both of these problems. The former is caused by the fired percussion cap falling into the action while the latter



For shooting the .36 sixguns, John uses these four black powders above and these three black powder substitutes below.



comes from the face of the hammer pulling the fired cap off the nipple.

This was rarely, or never recorded with the originals and the reason was the caps in the mid-1800s were heavier and thicker than today's offerings. The SliX-Shots take care of this problem especially when combined with smoothing the face of the Colt hammer and also defanging it around the safety notch by removing any sharp edges that would seize the fired cap.

ARMY VS. NAVY

The Remington New Model Army is also available in .36 caliber. It is mostly referred to as the Model 1858 though there never was a Model 1858 and it would be better served if it was called the Model 1863. The original New Model Army .36 was slightly smaller in size than the .44; however, the modern version, probably due to manufacturing considerations, is built on the same size frame. It shoots so well I would hesitate to think a smaller-sized frame could do as well. This .36 has also had the factory nipples replaced with stainless steel SliX Shots.

For shooting my .36 percussion sixguns, I mostly use .375 Speer round balls along with the Remington #10 or CCI #11 percussion caps. If the powder charge allows, I insert a lubed wad over the powder before seating the ball. These round balls are swaged so they do not have a casting sprue. If cast bullets with a sprue are utilized, care must be used to make sure the sprue is either on the top of the ball or the bottom of the ball when it is loaded into the cylinder.

The reason for this is if the sprue is on the side, it can interfere with a tight seal and can lead to chain fires. All loads, whether using a wad or not, are lubricated by filling in the front of the cylinder over the ball with a homemade lube usually made of a 50-50 mix of beeswax and mutton tallow. For a softer lube I go with the same formula of beeswax and vegetable oil. Whichever is used, I just smear it over the end of the chamber



Targets fired at 20 yards with the Colt Signature Series Model 1851 (above). John routinely trades out the factory nipples for stainless steel SliX-Shots using the SliX-Springs nipple wrench. The SliX-Shots accept these three caps (below).



using something simple as a popsicle stick, butter knife (my preference) or a small pocket knife. Both the wad and the lube help to keep the barrel fouling soft; however, it is the tight-fitting ball that prevents chain fires (more than one chamber going off at a time).

The way to tell if the ball is tight enough is by the presence of a small ring of lead on the front of the cylinder when the bullet is seated. If the bullet proves not to be tight enough, .380" bullets are available.

If one looks at the paper ballistics, the .36, numerically speaking, has similar muzzle energy ranking it with the .32 ACP, while the non-Dragoon .44, at best is a .38 Special +P. That is only on paper and I don't buy it! Muzzle energy figures are just that, figures on paper. They do not take into account the alloy of the bullet, shape of the bullet and bullet diameter. GUNS

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REMINGTON 721
A RIFLE AHEAD OF ITS TIME

Dave Anderson

Seventy-five years ago in 1948, Remington released a new rifle and started trends we still see unfolding today. Prior to WWII, skilled labor was readily available and during the Depression, production of sporting firearms was slow. Manufacturers could keep only their best workers. Those workers in turn had no incentive to work fast, cut corners and put themselves out of a job. The incentive was to do the best work they could even if it took longer — especially if it took longer. Regular production models were virtually custom-made. Enthusiasts began to believe this was all quite normal when, in fact, it was a fluke of history.

WWII changed firearm manufacturing profoundly. Wartime pressure resulted in technology to manufacture guns faster and cheaper. A great deal was learned about steel production, stronger alloys, heat treating. The postwar economic boom resulted in unprecedented demand for all sorts of consumer goods.

LOOKING FORWARD

In retrospect, it seems management at Remington in the 1940s was eerily prescient. They saw the need to adopt new technology and reduce costs. Remington was ruthless in cutting models. They dropped the bolt-action 720, slide-action 141, semiauto 81. The excellent Model 31 pump action and Model 32 over/under shotguns were discontinued.





Instead of being made in one piece, the Remington 721 bolt (above) was made in three pieces brazed together — note the fine fit of the locking lug segment to the bolt body. Can't see the line, can you, Russ? The Remington 721 bolt (below) featured a recessed bolt face in which the cartridge case head was fully surrounded by steel. The extractor was a spring clip recessed in the bolt face, the ejector a spring-loaded plunger.

Remington designers introduced new models, which could be made faster and at lower cost, using the most recent technology. Among Remington's new models were the bolt-action 721 (long action) and 722 (short action). Many of the production steps could be performed on lathes. Receivers were made from round bar stock, bolts made in three pieces brazed together, barrels were button-rifled, stocks on standard models were uncheckered, bottom metal stamping had no hinged floor plate.

The rifles were well-adapted to scope use, just as scopes were becoming widely available. Circa 1950, the 721/722 rifles had a list price of around $75 vs. $110 for the much-admired Winchester 70. To put prices in perspective, in 1950 it took the average worker less than 49 hours of wages to earn the cost of the Remington vs. over 71 hours to pay for a Winchester.

RECEPTION

The 721/722 rifles were not exactly welcomed by hardcore rifle enthusiasts. Philip Sharpe, in *The Rifle In America* wrote, "The Remington 721 is truly a modern rifle, although in some respects it leaves a lot to be desired … among other things is the use of a pressed metal trigger guard, and many stampings …" Jack



The Remington 721/722 rifles were made to be workhorses, not show ponies. Maybe not as pretty but they were stronger, more accurate, adapted to scope use — but cost significantly less.

O'Connor in *The Big Game Rifle* (1952) after heaping praise on the Winchester 70, said of the Remington, "The model 721 is a production rifle, much easier to tool up for and much easier and cheaper to manufacture than the model 70. It is not a gun-nut's rifle but for the man who simply wants utility out of a rifle, it is a very good one." In 1958 Remington introduced the model 725, the same basic rifle but with a fancier, checkered Monte Carlo-style stock.

Some web sites claim total production of 721/722 rifles was about 118,000, apparently because someone mistook 722 production for total numbers. Remington, who ought to know, provides these figures: 721 — 173,124; 722 — 117,751; 725 — 16,635 for a total of 307,510 units. One of the biggest competitors, oddly enough, was Remington's own model 760 pump-action rifle introduced in 1952 and very popular with whitetail deer hunters.

The new Remington rifles quickly received the very best endorsement — word-of-mouth approval from satisfied customers. Paradoxically, the methods that made the 721/722 rifles cheaper and faster to make, also made them very strong and accurate — and even more importantly, consistently accurate.



Barrels of the Remington 721 series were button rifled, a process that was relatively quick, inexpensive and resulted in consistently accurate barrels. Recoil lug was a plate sandwiched between barrel and receiver.



Receivers of the 721 series were made of high-grade bar stock steel, machined on lathes and properly heat treated. Far less hand-fitting was required than with older designs.

ROOM 222

In 1950 Remington released the .222 Rem. cartridge. It was spectacularly successful as Remington apparently took great pains in making .222 ammunition. All the new Remington rifles were accurate but the Model 722 .222 Rem. rifles were especially influential. Right out of the box, and for not a lot of money, they outshot far more expensive rifles. They fostered the growth of both varmint shooting and bench rest competition.

In the '40s and early '50s a typical hunter owned a .22, a shotgun and a "big game" rifle. The moderately priced 721 series got hunters thinking they could specialize a bit. They didn't need to make do with the old '06 when they could have a M722 .222 Rem. *and* a M721 .30-06 for not much more than one Model 70.

The 721 action was a very strong one, both by design and from the use of high-quality steel and heat treatments. During the '50s and '60s, cartridge reloading became tremendously popular. More novice reloaders inevitably meant more reloading errors. The strong 721 action no doubt protected many a novice reloader from the consequences of his mistakes.

The 721/722/725 series were "discontinued" in 1962. In reality, with a few minor changes plus a redesigned stock, they were reborn as the Remington 700, still made today and with estimated total production of 5 million units. The trends introduced back in 1948 by the 721/722 — adapting to new technology, action length tailored to cartridge length, consistent accuracy, value for money, cartridge specialization — are all things we take for granted today. GUNS

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DON'T SHOOT THE DOG
KEEPING CANINE COMPANIONS SAFER

Tom Keer

I've never seen a bird dog get shot, but I hear of at least one instance per year. The stories unfold in pretty much the same way. A group of folks review a pre-hunt safety talk. All have heard it before, and all are in agreement. The dogs are cut loose, the hunt is under way.

The dogs are doing great. The days, weeks, months and years of training are paying off. There is a point followed by a back, it's go time. The handler announces, "get ready," and that's the last clear recollection anyone has about the event. The rest is a gray area that everyone wishes could be walked back.



Retrievers need to be steady when ducks are dumping into the spread. They shouldn't break for the retrieve until they are sent.

CAUSE AND EFFECT

In bird hunting, other hunters do not get shot — and in bird hunting, dogs shouldn't get shot, either. Leading causes for dogs getting shot include a hunter's excitement, inexperience leading to a quick trigger finger and birds that don't fly well. Shooting a dog is unforgivable because it's completely avoidable.

To keep from making this grave mistake, take a few moments to understand how the dogs on the ground work. Then, make it a priority to keep them safe. No game bird is worth a shot or peppered dog, so here are a few questions to ask when you get invited on a hunt over someone else's dog.

1. ASK TO WHAT LEVEL IS THE DOG TRAINED?

Pointing dogs of all breeds are trained to different degrees. If you're hunting with a buddy then you know a lot about his dogs and his training style. If you're new to the group, then know what level of dog work you'll likely see so you can be prepared to be safe.



Pointing and flushing dog combinations help reduce dog injuries.

Broke: A broke dog is steady to wing, shot and drop. After the flush and shots, the handler releases his dog from standing his point. It takes a lot of training time and good genetics to have a finished dog that stands its birds like a statue. Broke dogs are used on wild birds, on preserves and in field trials. When the bird flushes, these dogs simply won't move upwards of 99.9% of the time. This being said, we all have our days and there may be one day in 1,000 when a broke dog bolts.

Steady to wing-and-shot: These dogs lock up on point and remain so when the bird flushes. They also hold tight until shots are reported. At this point they'll break to pursue the downed bird and quickly get on the quarry for a retrieve. Dogs steady to wing-and-shot are used on wild birds as well as on preserves.

Steady-to-wing: Dogs steady to wing lock up on bird and hold their point until the bird flushes. Steady-to-wing is a common training method among wingshooters who focus on wild birds. These handlers train this way for a variety of reasons. First, the wild birds are up and gone at the flush. Wild birds don't hop like a preserve bird on a rainy day. The theory is a

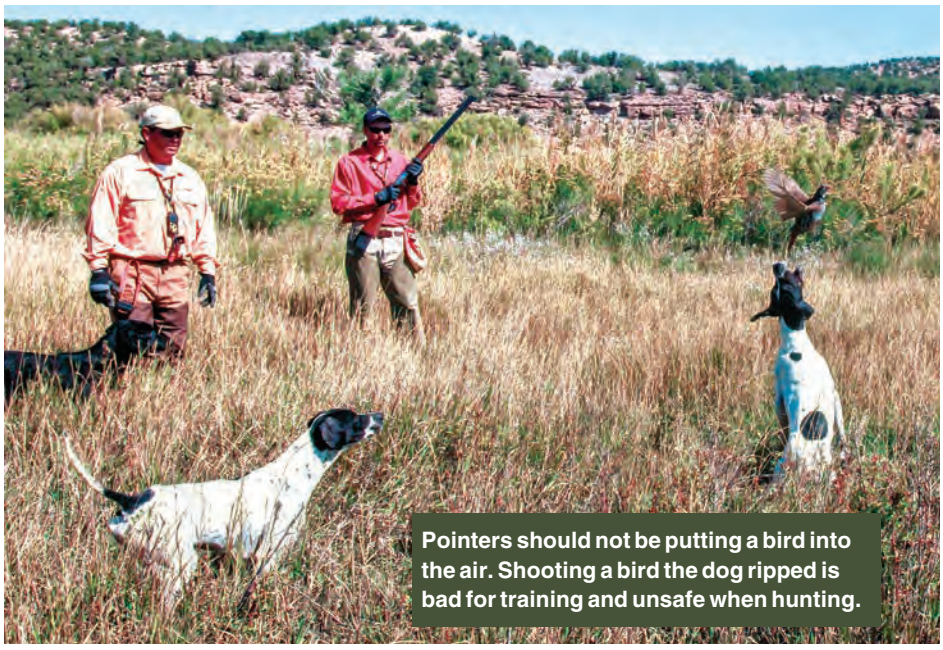
dog can quickly get up on a bird for a retrieve. Wing-tipped birds can run, so a dog quickly getting close to where the bird dropped easily picks up foot scent and returns with the bird.

2. POINTER-FLUSHER COMBINATIONS

Over the past few decades, the use of both pointing and flushing dogs has increased in popularity. It's with good reason, for cutting loose a big-running dog helps handlers find the birds. After the birds are found, the handler gets his hunters in position for a proper kill shot. When everyone is clear about his shooting lanes and safety protocol, a flushing dog is put on the ground to get the birds into the air. After birds tumble from the sky, the flushing dogs gather harvested game and then are picked up. The pointing dogs are released to find more birds.

English springer spaniels, English Field Cockers and Labrador retrievers are frequently used as flushing dogs. The issue of a shot dog often comes when a flushing dog puts birds in the air. If the dog has strong prey-drive, which we hope they all do, then he might leap up after the bird. There are a lot of different solutions to this issue, all of which involve patience.

Hunters who wait for an extra moment will find gravity brings the dog back to earth. They also find the bird has gained extra height and hunters can take a safe shot with lots of blue sky between the dog and the bird. This degree of patience also means the shot can develop for another hunter in the group. His shot is probably safer, too.



Pointers should not be putting a bird into the air. Shooting a bird the dog ripped is bad for training and unsafe when hunting.

3. LOW BIRDS MEAN NO BIRDS

Sometimes birds fly low. Preserve hunts with recently liberated birds mean some of the pheasant, huns or quail might not be flight conditioned. They pop off the ground for a brief flight and then drop back down. It happens with wild birds on occasion. Every year I see a few migratory woodcock tired from a long night's flight pop up and then quickly drop down. In this situation there is only one answer: Don't shoot. Follow up the bird for another point, but the better idea is to move on and find another candidate.



Hunters and dogs make up one of the sweetest teams in the business.

4. DUCK, DUCK, GOOSE

Steadiness isn't just for bird dogs, it's for retrievers sitting in a duck boat or a blind, too. To win the National in 2015 and in 2020, Al Arthur, the owner of Sandhills Retrievers in Lincolnton, Ga. had to train his dogs to the highest level. To create rock-steady dogs, the Eukanuba pro trainer says, "My training is always black and white. I don't want there to be any confusion in what I expect my puppy to do. My ultimate goal is to have a bird or a duck fall at arm's length and not have my dog move, budge, or flinch. Puppies don't have to be steady when they're really young, but I do expect them to work perfectly at 50 to 75 yards. Lots of intense training goes into creating dogs that are completely steady."

If you're not excited when a dog is on point then you're probably not passionate about bird hunting. But it doesn't mean a dog should bear the brunt of your excitement. This season, let your shots unfold and only take ones that don't put a dog in harm's way. If you're in doubt of a shot — don't take it. This way you'll avoid a situation that is as miserable as it gets. GUNS

.405 WINCHESTER MODEL 1895
NOT FOR THE FAINT-HEARTED!

By Mike "Duke" Venturino • Photos: Yvonne Venturino

In my most humble opinion, the following is a conundrum about Winchester's Model 1895. Many people say they would only want one if chambered for the legendary .405 Winchester. Fewer are the people who want to shoot a .405 very often after obtaining one.

THE ANSWER IS …

Why? Again, in my opinion, it's because they kick like a mule! I know this for I have owned a .405 Winchester Model '95 for over 30 years. From benchrest it's a beast with factory ammo.

A good friend called me one day saying he had bought a vintage Winchester '95/405. I asked what buttplate it had. He replied it was Winchester's standard steel crescent type. Next, he asked how to obtain some factory loads with which to "give it a try." I directed him to Hornady which had revived factory .405 Winchester ammunition, but I told him not to stock up too much as he would be selling that rifle soon. I could tell he thought that was ridiculous. A short while later he called wondering if I was in the market for a good .405 Winchester. Why was he selling? Because it "kicked like a mule."



From left to right, the original Winchester .405 factory load, then Duke's handload with custom 280-grain gas-check flat nose, handload with Lyman mold #412263; 288-grain RN handload with Buffalo Arms mold #413-300; grain gas check FN and handload with Hornady 0.411" JSP.

My introduction to .405 Winchester as a cartridge came many years back when someone handed me a rifle and said, "You want to shoot this Remington .405?" According to my later research it was a Remington-Lee with the company's horrid rounded buttplate. Not overly macho even in my youth, I handed it back to its grinning owner after firing only three rounds. To the best of my knowledge, Remington was the only American commercial manufacturer of .405 Winchester rifles aside from Winchester Repeating Arms with its Model 1895 and Single Shot (aka Model 1885) "High Wall."

A MODERN MULE

We must not forget about the Browning/Winchester .405s made by Miroku in Japan. Here's an interesting and humorous insider story about them. After the company's success with the '95 in .30-40 Krag and .30-06, a third special run was inevitable. Some bright light there in Utah with authority but scanty gun knowledge decreed their next chambering would be .270 Winchester.

The company's gun-knowledgeable folks said, "Nay! Nay! No one wants a '95 chambering a cartridge it was not offered for during its history." The nay-sayers were overruled. When '95 .270 Winchesters had dismal sales, instead of the rest languishing in a warehouse, they were bundled up and shipped back to Miroku. There the .270 barrels were replaced with .405 Winchester barrels. When the revised '95s reached our shores, they sold like hotcakes.

SPECS

Winchester devised their .405 and introduced it in 1904. It uses a straight case 2.58" long with bullets of 0.411". Nominal factory load

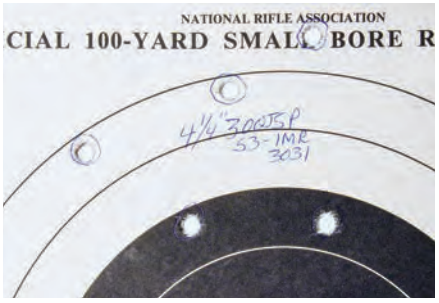


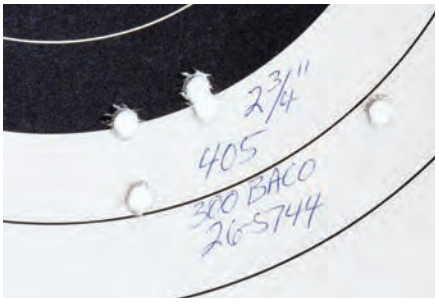
Top, the Browning/Winchester/Miroku Model 1895. Bottom is Duke's Winchester Model 1895 with Lyman #38 peep sight. Both rifles are .405s.

velocity was 2,200 fps. The .405 case is *almost* the same as the old .40-70 Sharps Straight from the mid-1870s which had a 2.50" case length with nominal 0.403" bullets. It's obvious Winchester made its .405 case a mite longer and bullets much larger in diameter to preclude someone getting them chambered in Sharps, Remington or Ballard single shots.

From the very beginning I was disappointed in my .405's 100-yard groups. With my own handloads or factory loads, most five shots clustered into 4" or more. This is despite the fine Lyman No. 38 peep sight my '95 wears. Originally, I assumed blame, thinking I was probably flinching due to heavy recoil. No matter how hard I concentrated on making a decent trigger pull, groups were never tight — then I got my hands on one of the Japanese-made '95 .405s.

Even with its open sights, the rifle gave groups in the 2" to 3" range. Cast bullets measuring 0.411" were tried in both rifles. They shot decently in the Miroku but still nothing improved with my .405. In fact, some of those cast bullets keyholed (tumbled), a sure sign of undersize bullets.





This large group (above) has been typical of groups fired with Duke's own Winchester Model 1895 .405 with 0.411" jacketed bullets. Once Duke obtained a bullet mold dropping suitably large (0.413") bullets, his .405 Winchester groups (below) tightened. This group is typical now.

That spurred me into slugging the barrel groove diameter. The first slug came out at 0.413". I tried again. This slug was 0.413". One more time — the third slug was 0.413". No wonder my rifle delivered only mediocre groups; jacketed bullets were 0.002" undersize. So in my infinite wisdom, I called my friends over at Buffalo Arms who make custom bullet molds. My request was for a 300/310-grain flat nose bullet dropping from the mold with a minimum diameter of 0.413". Those bullets were loaded over various charges of 5744 and instantly, good groups began happening. I settled on a charge of 26 grains for a velocity of about 1,400 fps that makes for very comfortable shooting. I finally began to like my .405. GUNS

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"SHOOT FASTER!"
IT DOESN'T MEAN WHAT YOU THINK

Ken Koch

Have you ever been told by an instructor, friend or even just the guy or gal in the next shooting stall you should "shoot faster"? I am willing to bet this sage advice came after the well-meaning person noticed your amazingly tight shot group placed perfectly over your point of aim on your target. But what did they mean by "shoot faster"? More importantly, how did you translate it into the action needed to shoot faster?

I've asked students this question for years and found it is almost universally interpreted as "pull the trigger faster." Unfortunately, this is the farthest thing from what any competent firearms instructor intends to communicate.



The time to go fast is during pistol presentation …



… but then slow down to "Brake" the shot.

TRAIN FOR THE FIGHT

Tight, impressive shot groups on your cooperative paper target are great for the ego and fist bumps with your pals. But for most of us, achieving those tight groups takes slower-paced shooting and a focus on marksmanship skills. Don't get me wrong, working on your marksmanship skills is important. But, when training for marksmanship, you take the time you need to place every round through the same hole.

Don't confuse marksmanship with the skills needed to end a gun fight. The ability to deliver reasonably accurate, debilitating hits with speed is what wins the day. Once the gun comes out, your attacker will be constantly trying to kill you. Everything you do delaying hits on target creates more time for him or her to shoot you. The kind of speed I'm referring to is determined by your current ability to get your hits faster than the other guy can shoot you.

"ACCELERATED ACCURACY"

I don't tell students "you can shoot faster" anymore. I've found this usually results in the need for another time-honored catch phrase — "quit jerking the trigger!" — which results in confusion. Instead, I teach them how to achieve "accelerated accuracy."

I explain to students I want them to do everything leading up to the first trigger press in an accelerated fashion. The first shot must be the first hit, as the first hit exponentially increases the odds of survival and success.

As for "jerking the trigger" in this process, you will very likely start jerking the trigger when someone is shooting at you so train for it! Just learn how to jerk the trigger without

disturbing the sight picture, by focusing on your grip and trigger control.

Over 20 years of teaching firearms, what I see most often is a student moving through their entire presentation with their trigger finger on the frame of the firearm. This is a must when presenting the firearm to low-ready or in any circumstance other than immediate firing. However, in a gunfight this wastes time.

Students wait until they've completed the presentation and have a sight picture, then touch the trigger, which usually disrupts the sight picture. They then take time to reset the sight picture before pressing the shot. This is where the sage advice of "shoot faster" comes into play. For their follow-up shots, they "pull the trigger faster." The result is always a delayed first shot and, in many cases, non-debilitating hits or even misses for following shots.

FINDING THE WAY

Accelerated accuracy starts with your reaction time to the threat, the presentation of your firearm from the holster and — most importantly — prepping your trigger for the all-important first shot. Remember, we are not talking about drawing your firearm to low-ready because you heard a bump in the night from your living room. We are talking about immediate action in response to someone trying to kill you.

Gunsite teaches a five-step process for the presentation of a firearm. It consists of *Grip, Clear, Rotate, Smack and Look*. The key to accelerated accuracy on your first shot is related to when you make first contact with the trigger during the presentation. We teach our students to touch the trigger at Smack, where you establish your two-hand firing grip on the firearm with your muzzle (and sights) oriented on the target.

As you move from Smack through Look, you smoothly take up the slack of the trigger until you reach "The Wall" — the point where you feel resistance from the trigger. This allows you to press the trigger as soon as you have an acceptable sight picture on the target. When done correctly, the result is the first shot breaking as you reach full extension in the presentation, or sooner if needed.

The cadence or speed of this process was best described to me by one of my mentors years ago as "Gas – Gas – Coast – Brake." You should be focused on smooth speed for Grip and Clear (Gas), Rotate and Smack (Gas) then touch the trigger as you establish your two-handed firing grip. You then *coast* through Look while taking up the trigger slack to the wall. As you achieve your sight picture, you press the trigger and break the shot as you *brake*. This is what Gunsite doctrine refers to as the "Compressed Surprise Break."



Students at Gunsite practice their "Accelerated Accuracy" shooting.



You can make extremely fast shots and still get good, debilitating hits on a bad guy. In the end, speed *and* accuracy count, because you "can't miss quick enough to win a gun fight …"

For follow-up shots, you rely on proper follow-through by managing recoil and muzzle flip with a strong grip, while resetting the trigger and returning to the wall. You reacquire your sight picture as fast as possible and once it is stable, you press the trigger through the wall and repeat as necessary.

"SMOOTH IS FAST" AND ACCURATE

Accelerated accuracy means a sacrifice of tight shot groups for effective hits delivered at a significantly increased tempo. It sounds like "Shoot Faster," but it's actually doing everything up to the trigger press faster.

You can't miss quick enough to win a gunfight, but you can hit slowly enough to lose one. The balance between accuracy and speed is the key. You will improve your first and subsequent shot times, while achieving acceptable accuracy, if you focus on high cadence for everything leading up to the trigger press — and not on pulling the trigger faster. This is "accelerated accuracy." GUNS

WALTHER OSP
STILL GETTING THE BEST OUT OF THE .22 SHORT.

Payton Miller

In terms of specialization for a specific competitive purpose, few pistols — if any — can hold a candle to the Walther OSP.

The German term *Schnellfeuer* is printed on the box and the cover of the instruction pamphlet. It means "rapid fire," which, as any historically knowledgeable shooter will recognize, is also the term used to describe the select-fire Mauser C96 "Broomhandle" of WWI fame.

LOOKS DON'T DECEIVE

But the Walther OSP is a semi-auto only rimfire — and one with Olympic credentials at that. Introduced more than 60 years ago, its Space Age appearance is striking even today. The OSP — along with Italy's *FAS OP 601 Domino* — literally defines the term "purpose-built." It simply looks accurate.

Designed solely for International 25-meter Rapid Fire, it was rendered obsolete when rule changes in 2004 no longer allowed a .22 Short chambering, wraparound grips and super-light trigger pulls. Cartridge-wise, it's now .22 Long Rifle only.

All of these features, unfortunately, were hallmarks of the premium competition single-action auto OSP.

It suffered the same fate as Smith & Wesson's more conventional appearing Model 41-1 (reviewed in the *GUNS* November 2022 issue). But, while the American pistol was never really a factor in going for the gold as only 1,000 were made, the thoroughly racy-looking Walther was a consistent medalist throughout and beyond its 1961-1994 production run. It was replaced by the Walther SSP in .22 LR. Fortunately, our resident rimfire fanatic, John Wightman, just happened to have a minty OSP to loan us.

Featuring a ported, weighted barrel, plus a very low bore axis, the OSP delivers just about the lowest recoil impulse achievable. This translates to a level of rapid-fire controllability required to compete in an exceptionally demanding event.

How demanding? Well, let's again review the parameters of Rapid-Fire competition:

The course of fire is a doozy, consisting of five shots fired at a series of five 25-meter targets — one-handed of course — under successive time constraints of 8, 6 and 4 seconds. The scoring zone for a "10" incidentally is a scanty 10 cm in diameter — this is 3.9" for the metrically challenged.

Felt recoil, as you might imagine, is virtually nonexistent, not surprising considering the OSP weighs 45 oz. and has an OAL of 11.8". The trigger pull on our gun was 2.1 lbs. — about at rock bottom of the allowable pull weight.

The distinctive walnut, textured grips were designed by Switzerland's *Morini Competition Arm .S.A.* Not to put too fine a point on it, but fitting your shooting hand to those grips is almost like slipping on a glove.

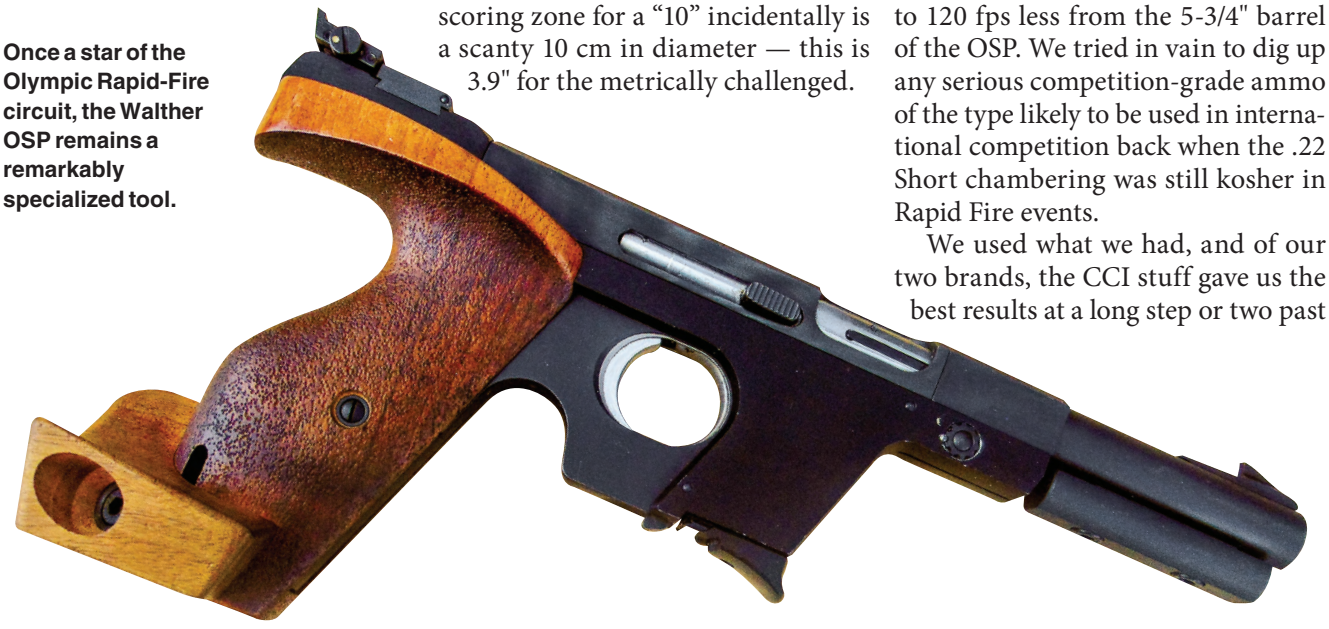
The sights are equal to the grips and trigger. The rear is fully adjustable and provides a great sight picture along with the front blade which, to be honest, is a bit on the skinny side for those of us used to conventional revolvers and autos!

FEEDING TIME

The Walther OSP is fed via a 5-round detachable magazine seated in front of the trigger guard. The magazine release is at the bottom rear of the mag well. It's fairly minuscule and relatively tough to access, but since the OSP is obviously not designed for combat-type magazine changes, it's okay. Speedy reloads are not a factor. Speedy shooting is.

As far as .22 Short ammo goes these days, the selection available is far below the .22 Long Rifle. We had some Winchester Super-X 29-grain Copper Plated LRNs marked "Low Noise" at a rated 1,095 fps, along with some livelier 27-grain CCI HPs at a rated 1,105 fps. Both brands clocked at around 100 to 120 fps less from the 5-3/4" barrel of the OSP. We tried in vain to dig up any serious competition-grade ammo of the type likely to be used in international competition back when the .22 Short chambering was still kosher in Rapid Fire events.

We used what we had, and of our two brands, the CCI stuff gave us the best results at a long step or two past



Once a star of the Olympic Rapid-Fire circuit, the Walther OSP remains a remarkably specialized tool.

GUNS YOUR NEXT GUN STORY BEGINS HERE!



Sandbagged Shorts — CCI's 27-grain HP delivered the best 25-meter results with the Walther OSP. Payton didn't have the heart — or permission — to dip into the vintage boxful of Dynamit Nobel ".22 Kurz."



25 yards from a sandbag rest. Our best effort? Five shots in 1.5" with four of them in a 1" cluster. This made us even more curious as to what could've been achieved with match-grade ammo — and with a match-grade shooter behind the gun, of course …

Nevertheless, the sandbag-rest results must've gone to our heads, so in a reckless burst of hubris we tried the pistol offhand and one-handed at the same distance. We managed to stay within the confines of the 8 ring on a 12"x18" silhouette target for five shots. No attempts were made to fire the pistol "at speed."

No, we certainly didn't shoot up to the OSP's potential but we did develop a huge amount of respect for the skill level of Rapid-Fire contestants. In our defense, we've been shooting two-handed — usually in a leisurely fashion — for as long as any of us can remember.

If you can find an OSP, expect to shell out anywhere from a cool grand to $1,700 for it. There's nothing stopping you from trying replicate the Olympian feats of this super-cool artifact, or you can just employ it as a "high end" plinker or small game gun. GUNS



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Ricochet-Free Targets



Perfecting A WALTHER PP .22

Installing Adjustable Sights On A Classic!

Roy Huntington

Part of the charm of little guns is they're easy to carry, easy to shoot, are often surprisingly accurate and just plain handy. But alas … one of the pitfalls is the fact virtually none of the small autos such as the PP have truly adjustable sights.

Sure, you can knock a sight left or right to adjust for windage, but if your elevation is off, it's time for welding up the front and reshaping or filing things down. The downside to all this is you've now carefully zeroed for just one load, and we all know .22 ammo varies like crazy — chances are good the next load you shoot will stray off onto another bit of real estate.

About 40-odd years ago, I read an article by Skeeter Skelton where he mentioned MMC had made a tiny adjustable rear sight for his Walther PPK .22. But alas, MMC said it was so difficult to do, Skeeter's was to be a one-off. Legions of Walther fans sighed in despair.

I've wanted something like this sight for decades and have simply never found anything workable. Until now.

CASTING ABOUT

Over the years, I've collected countless little drawers full of assorted gun parts. Pins, screws, hammers, triggers, springs, rifle action bits, factory sights of a zillion sorts, sling swivels, flat spring stock, barrels … well, you get the drift. What amazes me more than anything is the fact my increasingly aged brain can still recall a specific part "I know I have" — even though it was acquired 35 years ago and stashed.

Need a front side-plate screw for an S&W Victory Model? My hand will reach instinctively to the right drawer. Hammer pivot pin for an 1895 Harrington & Richardson 1895 falling block? Oh, got it right here.

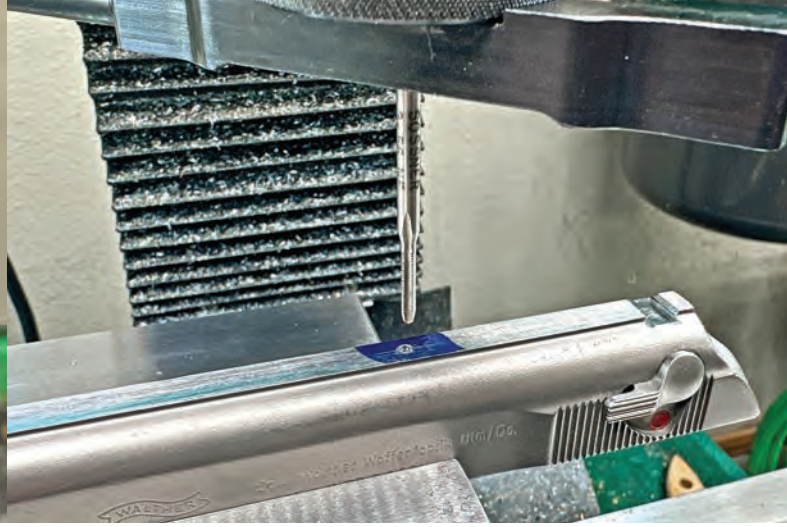
So I was digging in my "don't throw these away because they're not *that* broken" rear sight drawer and my eyes fell upon a smaller-sized S&W J-Frame adjustable rear sight assembly.

The underside of the J-Frame sight doesn't have the complicated T-slot screw of a K- or N-Frame sight, making this project much easier. The bottom of the elevation screw turns right onto the slide top.



Looking almost stock, the S&W J-Frame rear adjustable sight and Roy's shop-made front (left) turned the Walther PP .22 into something unexpected.





Roy needed to use a carbide end mill to get through the tough S&W sight steel. Tapping the holes in the slide for the two mounting screws went much smoother. The front dovetail had to be shallow and it was a bit stressful as the dovetail cutter worked its way through. Roy was hoping he'd measured correctly and the cutter wouldn't make a hole in the slide top. All went smoothly, though.

By a miracle of coincidence, my Walther PP .22 was lying on my bench right at hand.

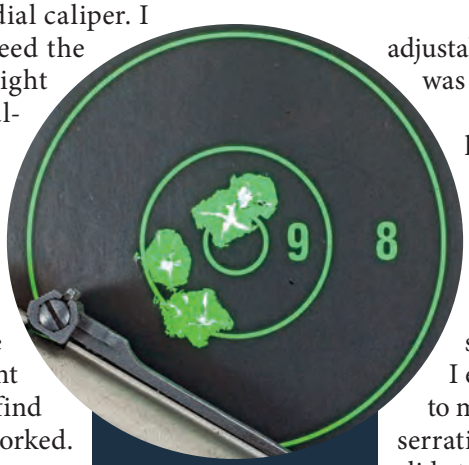
I looked at the sight, then at the Walther as my brain dusted off some ancient thought. Then I looked at the sight, then back to the top of the Walther's slide again as dawning swept over me. I admit my fingers trembled slightly as I reached for my Starrett dial caliper. I also noted the J-Frame rear didn't need the complicated T-slot cut a K-Frame sight needs. About one minute later, I realized — it just might work.

AND DID IT?

You bet. Some delicate filing on the rear sight dovetail on the Walther and drilling and tapping two tiny holes to hold the sight had the rear looking like it was factory-installed. Ha! The front was a bit more complicated as I could find nothing in my various stashes that worked. I milled out a tiny front, then cut a corresponding very shallow dovetail in the slide, muttering "Oh please, oh please" as the cutter worked its way through. There's not a lot of slide meat there. I pressed the rough sight home and Loctited it in. With a thumping heart, I donned my ear protection and glasses and loaded the magazine.

It worked.

A few trips back and forth to the mill to get the front sight height correct then a bit more work shaping it "just so," and my dream of an adjustable sight on my trusty Walther .22 was a reality. Double ha!



Here are five shots at 20 yards. Adding an adjustable rear and taller front made it easy to properly center groups, unlike with the stock "bumps." After a bit of filing on the original dovetail cut, the rear of the S&W (below) slipped right in. Drilling and tapping mounting holes finished the job.

I stumbled upon a couple of challenges. There's not much thickness to the slide, so the rear sight "strap" holding it on the slide needed two screws to keep things in place. Also, much to my surprise, the steel S&W uses on the strap ruined two twist drills before I ended up using a carbide end mill to make the holes. I also draw-filed the serrations from the sight plane on the slide top to get the rear to sit right firm.

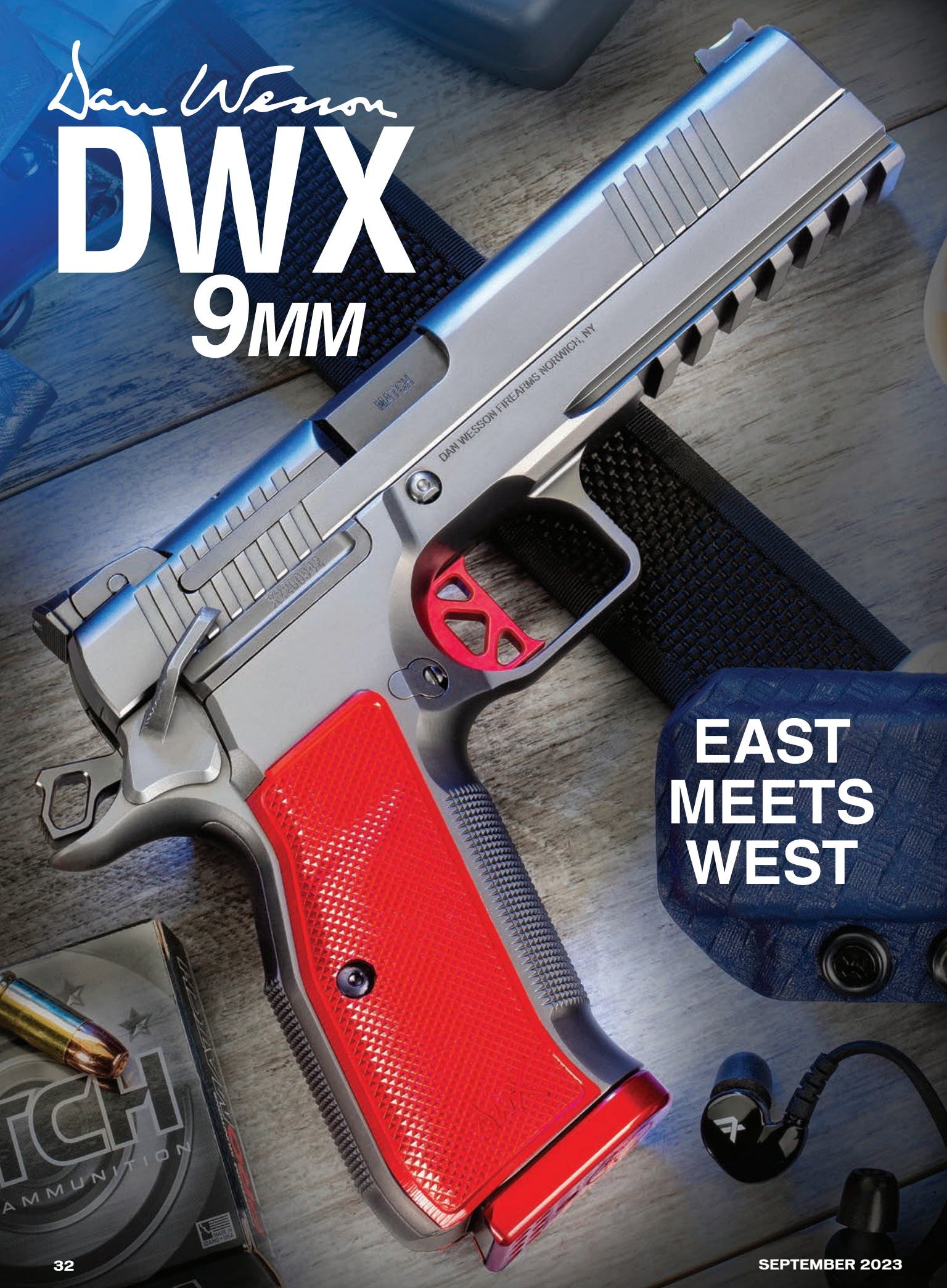
I also measured about 50 times (100?) before I took the front dovetail cut, and even then, my stomach was in a knot hoping the dovetail cutter didn't break through the slide top. Whew!

So, the moral of the story is if you have a bit of skill, the right tools and think outside the box at times, dreams can actually come true. I checked with Dusty, my young friend who builds custom 1911s and such, and he said he'd be willing to chat if someone wanted this same work done. The hitch is you'd need to locate an adjustable rear sight for an S&W J-Frame first, as they're not so common. I'm not sure what this work would cost, but keep in mind it may not be cheap!

I met Skeeter a time or two just before he passed away. I wish I'd had this gun to show him. I know he'd have smiled. GUNS



For more info: HS-Custom.com
hscustom34@gmail.com


Dan Wesson
DWX
9MM
DAN WESSON FIREARMS NORWICH, NY
EAST MEETS WEST



Will Dabbs, MD

The Dan Wesson DWX is the classic hybrid. Taking the good stuff from the Czech CZ75 and mixing it in with the secret sauce from John Moses Browning's archetypal single-action 1911 makes something that synergistically becomes greater than the sum of its parts. Whether you run the DWX out of the box or customize it to reflect your own unique personality, this pistol shoots like a laser while remaining as comfortable as a broken-in pair of old boxer shorts.

ORIGIN STORY

Back during the Cold War, the Czech CZ75 was a fistful of protest. Like the Borg of *Star Trek,* the Soviet Union gobbled up everything it touched, assimilating entire cultures into the overarching communist collective. However, here and there you could still find the stubborn flicker of independence. Sometimes the very expression of individuality was a protest against totalitarianism. The gleaming example was Czechoslovakia.

Building guns has always been a big part of the Czech ethos. Shooting is their third-most popular sport right behind football — the European sort — and ice hockey. Their reputation for innovation, industry and quality is well-deserved. In the interwar years, the Czechs brought us the ZB vz. 26 that eventually became the British Bren Light Machinegun. During WWII, the Czechs were forced to make armaments for the Axis. Their repurposed Bf-109 Messerschmitt fighter plane clones helped the Israelis win independence in 1948. However, the same year a communist coup d'état toppled the representative government in Czechoslovakia and ushered in four decades of authoritarian rule.

These subjugated nations typically adopted Soviet weapons and tactics. Licensed factories were constructed in most satellite countries to produce AK assault rifles. The standardization of weapons throughout the Pact made logistical and military sense. However, the Czechs simply refused to play along.

With literally half the world awash in Kalashnikov rifles, the Czechs clung dogmatically to their domestically designed Vz.58. The Vz.58 was a curious striker-fired rifle using a tilting-block locking system philosophically similar to the Walther P38 pistol. The Vz.58 fired the Combloc standard M43 7.62x39mm round and was lighter than the AK while remaining comparably reliable. It was arguably the better gun.



GUNS® MAGAZINE



DAN WESSON DWX GEAR LIST

Holster: Long's Shadow Huron Holster and Henning T1000 Belt Hanger; **Mag Pouches:** Long's Shadow Competition Single Mag Carrier with Henning T900 Belt Hanger



In 1975 the Warsaw Pact was up to its vodka-addled ears in Makarov handguns. The Makarov was a fairly uninspired 9x18mm unlocked blowback pistol, the design of which was clearly pirated from the German Walther PP. As combat handguns go, it was pure unfiltered milquetoast. Predictably, the Czechs followed a different path.

In the same year, Czech gun designer František Koucký came out of retirement with the mandate to design a new combat pistol. He eschewed both the Combloc standard 7.62x25mm and 9x18mm rounds in favor of the 9mm Parabellum. The resulting CZ75 was a supernova of innovation amidst an otherwise drab backdrop of Iron Curtain sameness.

For starters, the frame on the CZ75 rode outside the slide. This is backwards from basically every other combat pistol on the planet. This does decrease the amount of surface area you have to grab when racking the slide manually. However, it also maximizes slide-to-frame contact for optimized stability, repeatability and accuracy. The CZ75 also just felt great in the hand. The rest of the world took note.

Because of the curious antipathy defining the Cold War, František Koucký was unable to patent his innovative design outside of Czechoslovakia. Arms makers around the globe therefore enthusiastically pirated the salient innovations defining his radical gun. My first high-capacity 9mm was an inexpensive Italian-made copy of the CZ75 purchased back in the 1980s.

Normally, guns made in Eastern Europe during the Cold War stayed in Eastern Europe. However, U.S. servicemen could privately purchase the CZ75 through their Rod and Gun Clubs in Europe and legally bring them home. As this was the only way to land a genuine CZ75 back before the wall came down, it made those guns incredibly valuable. Combine their relative rarity with truly superlative design and they became the golden ring back in the day. The design retains a rabid following even now.

"I'M NOT REALLY SURE HOW THEY CAN PACK SO MANY BULLETS INTO SUCH A FINITE SPACE, BUT I TOPPED THEM OFF. THEY REALLY DO WORK."

Throughout it all, old John Browning's 1911 soldiered on in U.S. military service. Generations of American veterans left the military with an unbounded affection for the weapon. The single-action trigger and general mastery of human ergonomics turned the 1911 into "America's gun." Pistolsmiths customized the heck out of the thing, transforming a basic GI defensive tool into the embodiment of tactical art — which brings us to today.

DWX PARTICULARS

The 9mm Parabellum Dan Wesson DWX bins the linked short recoil locking system of the 1911 in favor of the simplified ramp style lockup of the CZ75. The slide and frame are both cut from forged steel and the dust cover has Picatinny rail for miles. The 18-degree grip-to-frame angle will feel homey and comfortable to anybody who grew up on American handguns. The factory grips are anodized aluminum, but the DWX will accept any standard aftermarket CZ75 furniture.

Magazines fit flush and hold a whopping 19 rounds in the box for a total of 19+1 onboard. I'm not really sure how



A The rear sight is a low-profile model mounted via a CZ Shadow 2-style cut so there are plenty of aftermarket sight options. The beavertail and ambi thumb safety will feel comfortable to 1911 diehards. B Despite the CZ75-like frame, the controls are set up like a standard 1911. C Will says the flat-faced K-Trigger feels like "pure 1911" and will ruin you for lesser triggers. The 25 lpi checkering provides a firm grip regardless of the circumstances.

they can pack so many bullets into such a finite space, but I topped them off. They really do work.

The slide/frame interface mimics the CZ75 but there are deep gripping grooves cut into the slide both front and rear to ensure ample charging space. The slide is cut for a 1911-style dovetailed front sight if aftermarket sights are your bag. The rear sight is mounted via a CZ Shadow 2-style cut. The front sight has a fiber optic insert, while the adjustable rear is adjustable for height and offers a serrated rear face for glare reduction. The stock sights are undeniably superb but if you wanted to swap them out for something flashier, it is a fairly straightforward chore. The top of the slide also features a serrated rib to reduce glare.

The extended magazine release is readily reversible and the barrel is legit match-grade. The DWX eschews a barrel bushing in favor of a perfect uncorrupted mechanical interface between slide and barrel. The single-action trigger is flat-faced, absolutely divine and pure 1911. They call it a K-Trigger because it, well, looks like a "K." It will ruin you to lesser triggers. The oversized thumb safety is perfectly replicated on both sides of the gun and the left-sided slide stop is extended and contoured to perfection. The mainspring housing is nicely checkered at 25 lines per inch for reliable purchase even when sweaty or terrified. The CZ75 grip contour puts your hand up high and firm to mitigate muzzle flip. The gun feels like a CZ75 but runs like a single-action 1911. This is one beautiful pistol.



A sample group shot by Will off a simple rest at 12 meters.

SO WHAT'S IT GOOD FOR?

This gun weighs nearly 3 lbs. At 45 oz., you could carry the DWX concealed, but there will certainly be more comfortable options. Top-end customized competition pistols pack more technology than the space shuttle with a comparable price tag. Some bargain basement heaters aspire to become paperweights. By contrast, the DWX strikes a lovely balance.

The innate quality to the piece is obvious the first time you cycle the slide. These guys make simply magnificent handguns. That means accuracy, controllability and reliability. These attributes will hold you in good stead competing in a combat course at the range or during those times when you hear glass breaking downstairs at two o'clock in the morning.

Slap a Streamlight TLR-8G combination light and laser on the rail and you have an all-weather home defense gun with the capacity and capability to win a proper firefight. Tuck a spare magazine someplace handy and you've got enough ammo to get yourself out of any reasonable jam along with most of the unreasonable sort as well. The DWX can be had in either 9mm or .40 S&W. The DWX is old-school-cool and isn't cut for an optical sight.

I know I shouldn't care, but the DWX really is a pretty pistol. The red trigger, grips and mag baseplate offer just a splash of dichromatic dissonance to create an attractive aesthetic synergy. The gun balances well and shoots like a dream. The ample heft thoroughly tames recoil and muzzle flip. When fired from a simple rest at 12 meters, the gun typically printed contiguous jagged holes.

Plastic guns are obviously all the rage these days and most everybody makes them. However, there yet remains something to be said for the heft, controllability and ruggedness of good old-fashioned steel. It won't wear out in half-a-dozen lifetimes and, particularly slinging 9mm Para, is an absolute joy at the range. The MSRP is $2,099. The Dan Wesson DWX is where classic iron meets the Information Age. GUNS

DanWessonFirearms.com

Benelli ULTRA LIGHT 20-GAUGE

Buy two, or be prepared to share!

Mark Hampton

If you really want to see how well a shotgun can withstand a constant pounding and still keep on performing, Argentina wing shooting will do the trick. Karen and I were in the La Pampa region last year chasing water buffalo and wild boar. Our good luck early in the hunt yielded a few days free for other activities. Herman, our outfitter, suggested we take a little time and enjoy some of the finest wing shooting in the world. Count me in!

He gave us a couple of Benelli 20-gauge shotguns and a case of shells. Surely, we won't shoot 500 rounds! Well, the doves and pigeons were plentiful to, say the least. It wasn't long before I was asking for more ammo! Now I understand why so many shotgunners flock to Argentina. Heck, I could probably shoot more doves in a week there than I could in a lifetime here at home.



Mark's first experience with the Benelli Ultra Light 20 gauge was a busy day full of wing-shooting action in Argentina.



Mark's wife Karen took this big Missouri gobbler on opening morning with the 20-gauge Ultra Light shooting Federal's 3rd Degree ammo … even though it's "not a turkey gun!"



CHOICES

I asked Herman why he chose Benelli shotguns for his clients. "It's one of the only semi-auto shotguns that can handle high-volume wing shooting for long periods," he replied. My follow up question, "What do you consider high-volume?" Herman informed me, "If you can stand 1,000 rounds a day, it's possible here." You can imagine how many rounds these shotguns go through in just one season — the numbers could be downright staggering compared to wing shooting here in the U.S.

This was my first experience with Benelli's 20 gauge and I was hooked.

I have a good friend, Ron, who has invited me to go bird hunting here in the states and I couldn't pass up the opportunity but unfortunately, I didn't own a good upland shotgun. Most of my scattergun needs revolve around turkey hunting. So I started searching and it didn't take long to settle on the Benelli Ultra Light. This is truly an ideal semi-automatic shotgun for upland bird hunters.



To shave weight, especially in the barrel for easier mounting and swinging, the Ultra Light uses a carbon fiber rib crowned with a fiber-optic red bar front sight.

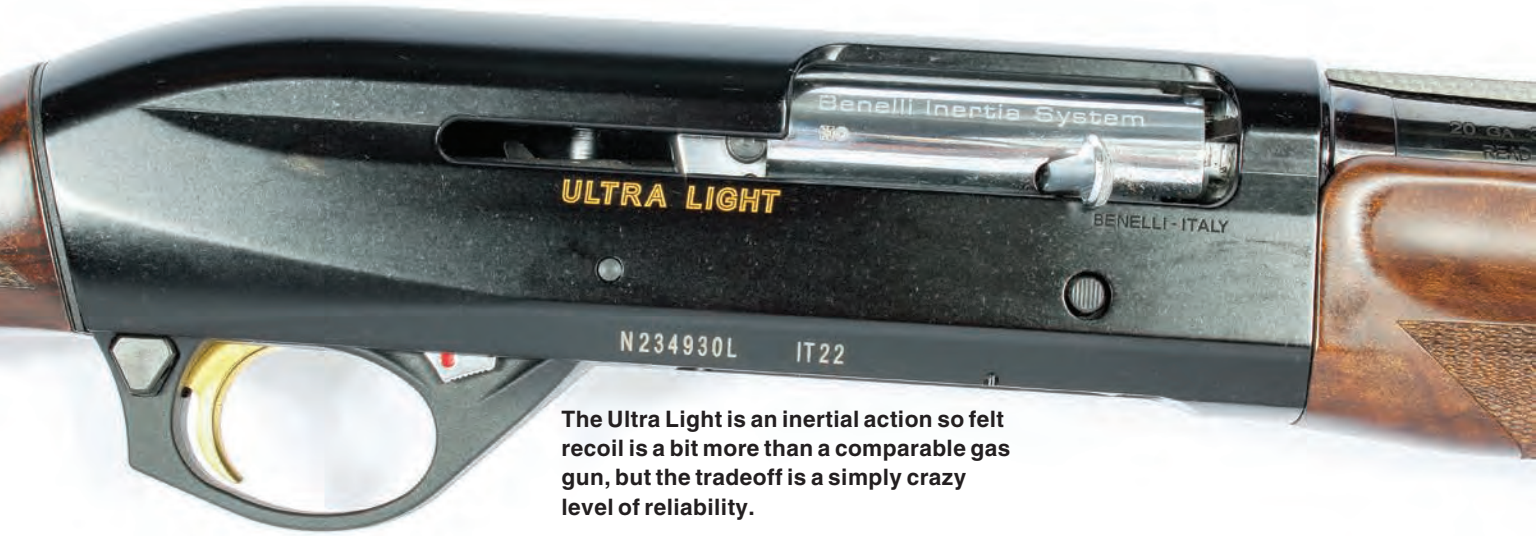
The shotgun came shipped with a real nice hard case that's even lockable. Inside were three choke tubes, C, IC and Modified. Benelli cryogenically treats the barrel and tubes with their proprietary "Crio" system of cryogenic treatment. Benelli states this Crio technology provides greater patter consistency. Who am I to argue?

The 20-gauge comes with a 24" gloss blued barrel with a superlight carbon fiber rib featuring a red bar front sight. A center bead is situated on the rib as well. The featherweight alloy receiver features an anodized finish. The satin walnut stock and forend was most eye-pleasing with a Benelli "Weathercoat" finish.

Another user-friendly feature is the adjustable stock drop and cast. Changing shims with this kit provides a custom fit for the specific needs of any shooter. The 14 ⅜" length of pull fit me perfectly while wearing a light-weight shooting vest. The Ultra Light has a 45.6" overall length and tips the scales a tad over 5 lbs. Benelli really trimmed the fat off this shotgun. The lighter magazine tube holds two rounds, with a third in the chamber. If I need more than three rounds, I'm wasting ammo. The Ultra Light shoots both 2 ¾" and 3" shells.

ON FOOT

The first day in the field, Benelli's Ultra Light was a pure joy to carry — in fact, it may be an understatement. The dogs were working hard and it wasn't long



The Ultra Light is an inertial action so felt recoil is a bit more than a comparable gas gun, but the tradeoff is a simply crazy level of reliability.



Benelli's Ultra Light in 20-gauge offers durability, light weight and adjustability, everything an upland — or turkey — hunt could want. Photo: Benelli.
Benelli's 20-gauge Ultra Light (below) is perfectly suited for those long days of quail hunting when boot leather is the most critical piece of gear!



before quail flushed and the Benelli swung into action. The lightweight nature of the gun makes for fast handling — another understatement. The gun comes up lightning-fast, points great and it was very easy swinging to and through the birds.

I was using Federal's 7 ½ field load and the Benelli functioned perfectly. I thought recoil would be an issue due to the light weight. It wasn't — the integrated inertia driven system helps. No gas injection with this model. The soft recoil pad is welcome and appreciated too. In the spirit of transparency, I did miss a few birds but it certainly wasn't any fault of the gun.

The Ultra Light is perfectly suited for the long walks associated with upland bird hunting. It is not necessarily intended for duck blinds and goose pits. Benelli is well-established with the hard-core waterfowl crowd and their Super Black Eagle 3 models.

Later in the season, Ron asked me if I wanted to shoot pheasants. What a silly question, of course I did! Changing the improved cylinder choke to modified and switching to Federal's field load with #6 shot, I was anxious to see how the 20-gauge would perform. I really didn't know what to expect but it didn't take long to see the gauge is perfectly capable of filling the game bag with cacklebirds and chukkers. I was well-pleased with the overall performance of the Ultra Light — and didn't second guess my choice of an upland shotgun.

Then I made the mistake of sharing my overall satisfaction with the Benelli to my wife. Karen immediately took a liking. Since the Ultra Light was much lighter than the 20 gauge she had been packing around previously, I believe the weight issue tipped her over the edge. She informed me it would be going turkey hunting with her.

JUST SAY "YES"

I asked her, "Are you on drugs? This is not a turkey gun — it's designed for upland game, you know, quail, chukker and pheasant?!?" I was wasting my breath. She was intent on taking the Ultra Light turkey hunting. So, with Federal's 3rd Degree turkey loads, we hit the Missouri woods opening morning.

It was chilly and windy, not the best morning for turkey hunting. We heard two different birds gobble, once. I started calling from our blind with decoys situated 25 yards out in front. It got quiet, except for the wind. I called a couple of more times and shut up. A lone hen came in to inspect the decoy. About 45 minutes later, Karen jabbed her elbow in my ribs and pointed to her left. Not 50 yards away was a big gobbler in full strut. He never made a sound and slipped in silently. What a beautiful sight!

For some reason, he stayed just out of range, strutting frequently but never gobbling. The lone hen didn't pay any attention to him. It seemed like an eternity but eventually, the big tom slowly strutted his way toward the decoy. When he reached the 30-yard mark, I tapped Karen on the leg, signaling to shoot when the opportunity knocks. As the gobbler meandered a few more steps, he stopped and threw his head up. Karen touched one off and the bird dropped like a sack of bricks.

Now I'll never be able to keep this Ultra Light from going turkey hunting!

Despite my wife's emotional attachment to the Ultra Light as her new turkey gun, this ultra-reliable, smooth-cycling 20 gauge is ideally suited for upland game. Benelli has been extremely innovative over the years, providing discriminating shotgunners premium firearms for anything that flies. I'm just thankful turkey season doesn't coincide with upland game hunting in the fall! GUNS

MSRP: $1,669

BenelliUSA.com

WINCHESTER MODEL 1886

Classic Shock And Awe

Alan Garbers

It was an arms race and Winchester was way behind. In 1873 the U.S. Military made the single-shot .45-70 Springfield Trapdoor their standard rifle. The same year the Springfield Trapdoor was issued, Winchester introduced their Model 1873 lever-action rifle in .44-40. At the time, the .44-40 was a powerhouse. The .45-70 dwarfed it, but no repeating rifle could handle the round — yet. The race was on.

Three years later, Winchester offered the Model 1876. The '76 sold in a wide range of powerful cartridges, but none were the .45-70. Some claim the pins of the toggle-link system of the '76 couldn't handle the energy of the larger cartridge but in reality, the geometry of the toggle-link system limited cartridge length. The '76 was just a larger version of the Henry, the '66 and the '73. Making an even larger receiver would make the rifle ungainly.

MEANWHILE, MARLIN …

In 1881 Marlin came out with their first repeater, the Model 1881, with an action long enough and strong enough to handle the .45-70 with ease and grace. The



The geometry of the Winchester 1886 action allowed longer cartridges like the powerhouse .45-90. Photo: Collection of Mike Short

With the action open, the critical locking lugs of the '86 can be seen at the bottom.

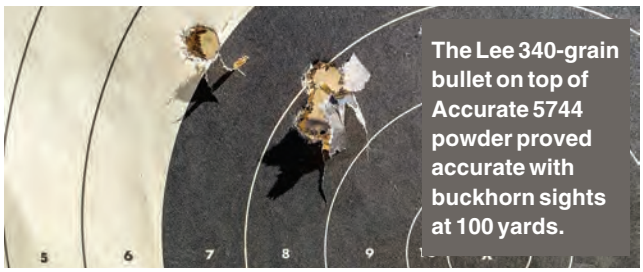
military was impressed and included the Marlin 1881 in their trials. The rifle performed well and, in one test, fired 10 shots in seven seconds! But the rifle suffered a catastrophic failure when a cartridge went off inside the magazine tube. The failure and other issues killed any interest by the military.

In the mid-1880s, a new "white" powder came on the market. Besides being smokeless, the powder generated much higher pressures and velocities than black powder. The pressure was on Winchester to produce a rifle in keeping with the recent developments.

As luck would have it, Winchester's vice-president Thomas Grey Bennett paid a visit to John Moses Browning to purchase the rights to what would become Winchester's Model 1885 single-shot rifle. During the visit, Browning showcased a new design for a repeating rifle. The concept was different from Winchester's toggle-link design — long enough and strong enough to handle the .45-70 and then some. Bennett leaped at the opportunity and paid Browning $50,000 (equivalent to $1.5 million today) for the exclusive rights to what would become their Model 1886.

Browning's design did away with most of the weaknesses of Winchester's previous lever-action rifles. The biggest was the ability to chamber the longer cartridges like the .40-82, .45-90, and of course, the .45-70 Government.

The design of the '86 also did away with the weaker toggle-link system. In many ways, the new design used the strengths of the old falling block rifles like the Sharps.



The Lee 340-grain bullet on top of Accurate 5744 powder proved accurate with buckhorn sights at 100 yards.



The .45-70 Government (left) was the most common '86 loading while originals are frequently found in .40-82 WCF (center). The .45-90 (right) is highly sought after but modern copies are available. The .45 Colt shown for comparison.

The ’86 split the falling block design into two interlocking lugs keyed into the bolt and the receiver.

The pesky dust cover was no longer needed because the bolt was sealed against the barrel face. And the moving brass elevator also vanished as everything was done internally, eliminating an entry point for dirt and debris.

The .45-70 was the most important chambering, and the ’86 could handle both the 405-grain load and the shoulder-bruising 500-grain load. Winchester also offered the .40-82-260 and the .45-90-300 in a slightly longer case. Their designation was the caliber, powder charge and bullet weight. As time went by, they added the .38-56-255, .38-70-255, .40-65-260, .40-70-330 based on the .45-70 and .45-90 case. (The case head was the same, but the cartridges varied from 2.1" to 2.4" in length.) Because of the ability to handle long cartridges, Winchester even offered a .50-100-450 and a .50-110-300. They were essentially the same cartridge with different bullet weights.

The ’86 was big medicine and an instant hit with scouts, hunters, lawmen, bandits and Native Americans. It was the rifle made for the West. In a suitable chambering, it could handle bison, elk, grizzly bear, moose and more. For proof, one has to look no further than Dr. William Allen’s journal *Adventures With Indians and Game*. In it, he related his hunting in the wild Rocky Mountains, during which he proved the worth of the ’86 against the single-shot rifles of his companions.



The locking lugs of the 1886 model were an evolutionary step from the falling block system used on Sharps rifles. The lugs keyed the receiver and bolt together for unmatched strength.

Browning may have been influenced by the design of the Sharps rifle in creating the Winchester1886 as they use the same lug principle for strength.



Teddy Roosevelt was a huge fan of Winchester rifles from his youth. He liked big-bore guns and used them for hunting in the American West and Africa. The 1886 rifle was one of his favorites due to the powerful cartridges and the rapid follow-up shots. Roosevelt was a man of high taste and carried a deluxe .45-90 version with many custom features. He used his 1886 extensively and set it back to Winchester to be refinished five times! Roosevelt also gifted Winchester 1886 rifles to those people he admired.

In 1895 Winchester started offering their rifles with the new, more robust nickel steel to handle the new smokeless powders. The barrels were marked “Nickel Steel” or “Winchester Proof Steel.”

The Winchester ’86 even saw service in WWI. Great Britain purchased Winchester rifles in .45-90 to use in their defense against German Zeppelins. Special incendiary cartridges were developed to ignite the hydrogen-filled airships.

After producing just under 160,000 Model 1886 rifles, Winchester ended the model in the mid-1930s. But almost immediately, they revamped the design to handle the powerful .348 Winchester cartridge, calling it the Model 71. The Model 71 lasted until the late 1950s and brought the total up to 200,000 rifles.

With America’s love affair with the Old West renewed in the Golden Age of TV and silver-screen westerns, collectors started snatching up any originals available. These days, rifles with no rifling still command a hefty figure.

Luckily, in the 1980s, Browning contracted with Miroku Firearms in Japan to produce a new generation of ’86s and not long after, Italian companies started offering them as well. Now, shooters wanting to carry an 1886 in the field for bear, moose or elk, or compete in

The toggle-link design of the Henry Rifle (above) was used in the Winchester '66, Winchester '73 and the Winchester '76. It worked very well, but it had limitations in strength and cartridge length. To make it easier for the buying public, cartridges were often labeled for which model of gun they were for (below).



long-distance cowboy matches, can do so without worrying about degrading a piece of history.

Miroku, Pedersoli, Uberti and Chiappa offer their versions of the venerable '86. But, shooters need to be aware of some limitations and changes that can impact their use. There have been production runs made for "Black-Powder Only." Some makers have added a thumb safety the originals didn't have. If you're using the rifle for hunting, the safety has value. If the gun is used in competition, the safety can cause problems if it is accidentally engaged.

Like the originals, the new offerings come in many configurations, including a pistol grip, shotgun buttstock, round barrel, octagon barrel, carbine length, rifle configuration, crescent buttstock, etc. The calibers also vary, with the .45-70 being the most common, but there are .45-90 rifles out there for those who enjoy just a little bigger shoulder bruise.

KEEPING SCORE

When I went shopping for a new 1886 for use in competition, I decided on the model made by Chiappa and offered by Cimarron Firearms in .45-70. It has the same straight stock and 26" octagon barrel configuration the originals had, so it only takes a little eye squinting to make me feel I'm back in the Old West. The color-case hardened frame is spectacular. Many competitors use a tang-mounted peep sight, which gives them the edge over traditional buckhorn sights. Luckily, the Cimarron Arms 1886 receiver comes tapped for tang sights.

The .45-70 with 26" barrel and full-length magazine holds eight rounds so I only need to load two rounds on the clock. While shorter magazines are available, it means more time spent reloading on the clock.

While I use my rifles in speed competitions, the same attributes I want are beneficial for hunting. I have an original Winchester 1886 made in 1890, and just holding it makes me giddy with the history it has experienced. I get much of the same feeling with my new '86. Hopefully, we have a long history of being in the winner's circle. GUNS

PYTHON CUTS

Understanding Colt's Best Revolver Yet

Clayton Walker



In 2005, Colt committed the unspeakable by discontinuing its iconic Python. For many, the decision portended the end of an era — indeed, the company's next chapter would be dictated by CPAs and MBAs, the chasing of government contracts, and almost total indifference to the civilian market. For 15 years, shooters lamented the Python's loss.

Today, there's a new sheriff in town. A reborn Colt kicked the saloon doors wide open in 2017, reintroducing the Cobra and seeking to once again win the hearts and minds of serious shooters. You'd think just about everyone would have whooped and hollered with joy when it was announced — at long last — the Python was returning.

But human nature is an interesting thing. As soon as this news broke, so began a great round of bellyaching and pontificating. "They won't make 'em like they used to," the internet grumbled. "Doubt it will ever be as good as the old ones," many opined. Nearly three years later, an aura of suspicion continues to surround the revolver.

As a shooter of Colts across several generations, I felt entitled to an opinion about the new gun's quality. However, to get an even better understanding of the platform, I talked to Justin Baldini, Colt's head of product development, and Michael Heffron, head gunsmith of Heffron Precision who will have worked on more than a thousand of the new Pythons by the time this article goes to print.

Putting it all together, I can say this: It's true this new Python is indeed different from the guns of yesterday — it's flat out better.

IT'S STRONGER

Perhaps the biggest Achilles heel of the old design was its tendency to go out of time. Vintage Colts are praised for their "bank vault" lockup. However, to achieve this result, Colt designed the hand to press against the cylinder throughout the recoil process. It was a foregone conclusion this part would eventually need to be replaced by skilled hands, of which there are far fewer these days.

On the old Pythons, magnum loads and aggressive DA shooting accelerated timing issues. I asked Mike how quickly a user would run into these telltale problems

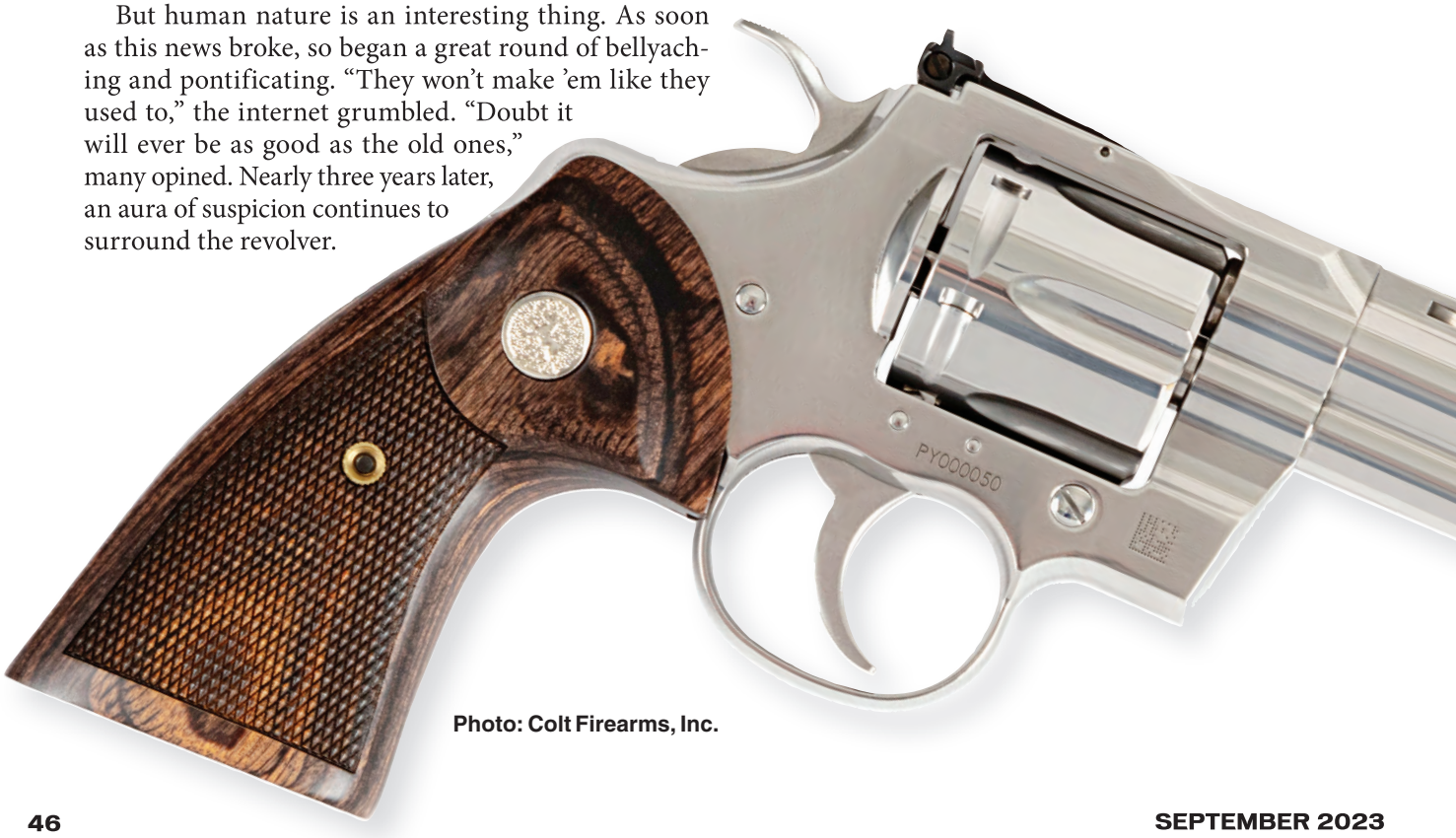


Photo: Colt Firearms, Inc.



Photo: Colt Firearms, Inc.

on vintage guns if fed max-power ammo. "Typically within three or four thousand rounds," he said, "although if you're running the guns hard in double-action, it could be as few as two to three thousand."

Mike did mention an older Python of his has digested 71,000 rounds over a matter of decades. "Of course, I've had to re-time it 14 times," he added. By way of comparison, Mike's magnum round count on his new Python sits at 17,000. "Tight as the day I acquired it," he said.

This durability can be explained largely by the quality of the Python's internal parts. If they aren't forged — like the hammer and trigger — they're formed through aerospace-grade metal injection molding (MIM). Mike tells me his tests of these parts astounded him. Simply put, most MIM parts are surface-hardened but far softer below. The Python's MIM parts, however, are nearly uniform in hardness.

The new Python is also a little beefier. As Justin explained, "In testing of original Pythons we found some frame stretching when we got into higher round counts. By redesigning the rear sight, we were able to add material back into the top strap, which is really what gives the new Python the additional strength."

The key takeaway: This gun will not quit on you. Feed it as much magnum ammo as your budget and wrists allow. Dry-fire it to your heart's content.



IT'S MORE ACCURATE

Vintage Pythons are unequivocally praised for their accuracy. They were so revered, in fact, numerous gunsmiths in the '70s and '80s created "Smythons" and "Cugers" mating Python barrels to S&W and Ruger wheelguns, respectively. They were ugly, but they could shoot!

I asked Mike what Ransom Rest testing revealed about the accuracy potential of the new guns. He did not mince words. "New Pythons, as consistent as can be, will shoot more accurately than the old ones," he said. Credit today's era of CNC manufacture for this phenomenon. Colt's barrel-making prowess is alive and well, but accuracy is further aided by greater dimensional uniformity of forcing cones and cylinder throats. How good are we talking? Suffice it to say a 2" group at 100 yards is within the mechanical capabilities of a well-tuned snake.

THE DOUBLE ACTION IS BETTER

Some have praised the "buttery smooth" DA trigger of the vintage Python, though I've never shared this enthusiasm. The double action of a Colt E/I frame is smooth, true, but most of them are predictably heavy, long and prone to a phenomenon where the weight of pull sharply increases at the end of the trigger's travel. This is known as "stacking."

Most of the stacking issue was caused by the "V" spring of previous Colt generations. It has since been redesigned into a "U" shape, and the rest of the lockwork has been revised and simplified — addition by subtraction, if you will. The result is a clean and consistent DA pull I think is one of the best on the market.

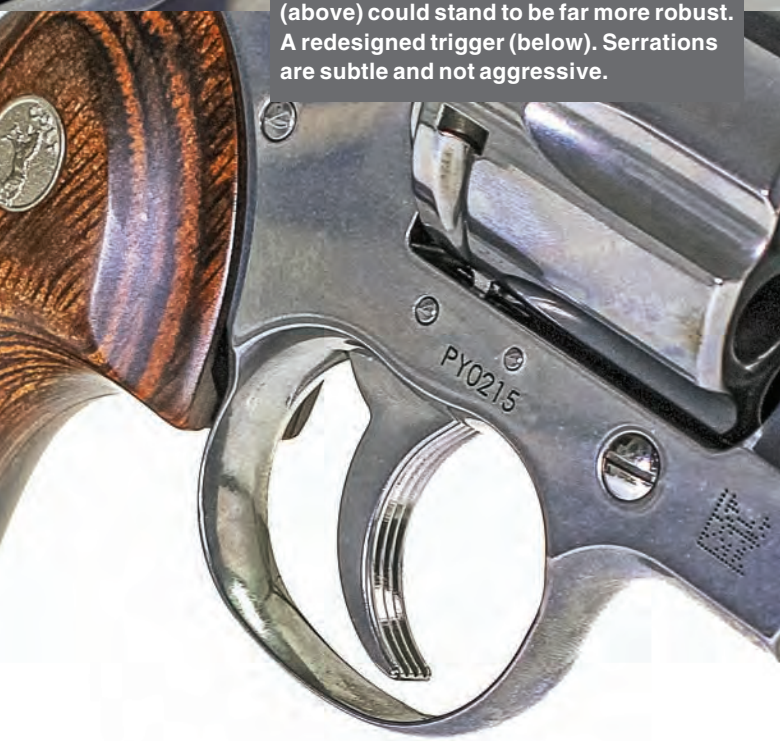


The new Python boasts a recessed target crown, another aid to its extraordinary accuracy.

The 2020 Python (left) with its allegedly "superior" ancestors. Clayton owns them all and says: The new Python can hang with the best! The infamous "V" spring of the old Python (inset, right) was changed to a "U" shape to prevent "stacking." Also note the differing thickness of the backstrap — the new Python is significantly stronger in several areas.







As delivered, the 2020 Python's rear sight (above) could stand to be far more robust. A redesigned trigger (below). Serrations are subtle and not aggressive.



BUT — A FEW CONCERNS

Not all is rosy. The double-action trigger is excellent, but the factory single-action trigger measured 5.5 lbs. on my Wheeler scale with some creep — serviceable, but not astounding. We shooters have various government entities and their drop testing requirements to thank for this state of affairs.

Additionally, the rear sight is underwhelming. I didn't like its lack of positive click adjustments and the unit requires a 'lil baby Allen wrench to tighten a set screw. If the screw backs out, which it did during my second range session, the rear blade will drift. Some of this is fixable with Loctite, though it somewhat spoils the benefit of an adjustable sight, no?



Thankfully, the aftermarket comes to our rescue. Gunsmiths like Mike are becoming very, very familiar with the geometry of the new Colts and can deliver a sweet trigger without issue. Additionally, Wilson Combat has released a set of front and click-adjustable rear sights for the Python that effectively solve all complaints of the factory design. Beyond functionality, I'd argue the gold bead front sight adds a touch of class and elegance especially befitting this new Python. These sights should be the factory default.

Some will consider my assessment of the new Python incomplete if I fail to mention the gremlins affecting exceedingly few numbers of early models, such as light strikes and the possibility of the hand slipping off the ratchet if the sideplate was loose. While I feel this problem was overblown — in part because of two YouTubers — Colt proactively rectified both issues to make them both virtual impossibilities on current guns.

A NEW LEGACY

Everyone seems to have an opinion on this new Python. However, it's become clear over the last three years not everyone has a qualified opinion. I've said it before, and I'll say it again: The Colt Python (of any vintage) is a gun living in the shadow of its own reputation. To properly assess this new model requires stripping away the mythos and nostalgia of the Python and to instead evaluate what the revolvers have been and are now.

As an owner of Colt, Ruger, S&W and Manurhins scattered across more than 100 years of manufacture, I felt the reintroduced Python was a home run. Now having evaluated the gun from a mechanical, metallurgical and engineering perspective, and thanks to the insights of those who know more than I do about the platform, I have all the more faith in my initial assessment. This new generation of the Python is the best yet. GUNS

MSRP: $1,499

Colt.com

The Guns Of UKRAINE

Bringing The Heat, Soviet-Style

Will Dabbs, MD

Serg is a 30-year-old Ukrainian soldier and a friend. He has been fighting Russians and Russian-backed separatists since 2014. Throughout his entire adult life, this young man has known nothing but war.

On 23 February 2022, Serg's world seemed stable. After years of fighting, his thoughts wandered to family and a future. And then, the following day, Putin's Army rolled across the Ukrainian frontier with some 120 Battalion Tactical Groups organized into four armored spearheads. Since that moment Serg and his fellow Ukrainian patriots have been fighting for their very survival.

Serg's mother is Ukrainian. His father is a former Soviet military officer still living in Russia. Putin's invasion created a wound in that family that will literally never heal. Serg and his father no longer speak.

The world expected the war to be one-sided, bloody and short. In the opening hours President Biden offered his Ukrainian counterpart Volodymyr Zelenskyy a helicopter to spirit himself and his family out of the country to safety. In what will go down as one of the most epic comebacks in the history of politics, Zelenskyy famously responded, "The fight is here; I need ammunition, not a ride." Now more than a year later, Vladimir Putin is getting schooled in the remarkable capabilities of a desperate patriotic people deftly led.



This is Will's buddy Serg, a Ukrainian soldier. His life is very different from ours.

Western weapons are keeping the Ukrainian defense alive and Putin's troops are getting tired. The Russians are fighting a tyrannical war of conquest. The Ukrainians are fighting for their homes, their families and their freedom. This indomitable fighting spirit helps offset a shortfall in tanks and planes.

Small arms have flowed into Ukraine from around the world alongside such stuff as tube artillery, HIMARS multiple launch rocket systems, and now, Western



When the media refers to an AK-47 they most commonly mean this, the stamped-receiver AKM.



This is a Chicom Type 56. We would typically call it a Type 2 AK-47. It was the first Kalashnikov rifle to see widespread issue.

armor. While it has made for a most eclectic amalgam of weapons along with no end of headaches for the logisticians, most Ukrainian soldiers battling in places like Bakhmut and Kherson are wielding Cold War-era Combloc weaponry. Here are the major infantry arms in use in Ukraine today.

COMRADE KALASHNIKOV'S KILLER

Mikhail Timofeyevich Kalashnikov was supposedly an uneducated peasant who first imagined his eponymous assault rifle while in a hospital in 1941 after having had his T34 tank shot out from under him by the Wehrmacht during the Battle of Bryansk. According to legend, the youthful Soviet tanker had seen how his fellows suffered against the German Blitzkrieg armed with bolt-action Mosin-Nagant rifles and PPSh submachine guns. He therefore scrawled out the design for his gas-operated assault rifle as a tool to help defend the Motherland against the Nazis. The tale reads like a movie script. In fact, it sounds a wee bit too scripted.

Reality is most modern mechanical contrivances are designed by committees of some sort, and the Germans had fielded a crackerjack new assault rifle of their own around the same time Kalashnikov supposedly had his near-religious epiphany. Regardless, the gun bearing his name went on to shape the affairs of men in ways more profound than most anything save the cellular telephone. The outline of the AK rifle even made it onto the national flag of Mozambique.

The Kalashnikov rifle went through several evolutionary iterations. Early versions were all chambered for the 7.62x39mm M43 intermediate round. What the media calls an AK-47 is actually an AKM. What we call



Shots fired, Ukraine-style (left to right): the German 7.92x33mm kurz, the Soviet M43 7.62x39mm, the Combloc 5.45x39mm, the 5.56x45mm NATO and the 7.62x51mm NATO.

the Type 2 AK-47 would have actually been the AK-49 to the Soviets. Tedious semantics notwithstanding, the gun began as a failed stamped-receiver design evolving into a milled-receiver rifle in 1951. This weapon eventually became the stamped-receiver AKM in 1959. This was the definitive model produced by the tens of millions around the globe during the Cold War.

In 1974, Comrade Kalashnikov, then 55 years old, redesigned his ubiquitous assault rifle to accommodate the radical new 5.45x39mm round. This weird little cartridge sported an unnaturally long bullet with a curious air pocket underneath the jacket in the front. This placed the center of gravity well to the rear and



The bulbous muzzle brake is the AK-74's most distinctive feature.

The AKM (top) fired the M43 7.62x39mm round. The subsequent AK-74 supplanted it in Russian service. Most of the Kalashnikov rifles in use in Ukraine today are AK-74s.

created vicious wounds as a result of the round's tendency to destabilize in flesh. It was the Soviets' answer to the 5.56x45mm NATO.

The resulting AK-74 differed from the previous AKM in several interesting ways. The AK-74 retained the time-proven stamped receiver along with its rugged long-stroke gas piston-operated action and clunky ranch gate safety selector. While there were a few esoteric tweaks to the design, the most obvious departure was the bulbous muzzle brake mounted on the snout. This inspired contrivance redirected muzzle blast out the sides and back, very effectively counteracting recoil while also reliably clearing the sinuses of anyone unfortunate enough to be standing alongside the rifle when it was fired.

The AK-74 is a personal favorite. The weapon runs like a souped-up .22 yet still hits hard downrange. The long skinny bullet has plenty of reach by assault rifle standards. It is also lightweight and easy to carry in bulk. Magazines have to be rocked in and out, but a zillion unwashed terrorists have figured it out easily enough.

The latest version of the AK-74 is the AK-74M. This weapon features synthetic furniture and feeds from a 30-round polymer magazine. It renders reliable service in the trenches in Ukraine as I type these words.

THE PLATOON LEADER'S ARTILLERY

The GP-25 *Kostyor* ("Bonfire") is a muzzle-loading 40mm underbarrel grenade launcher, Russia's answer to the American M-203. Unlike the M-203, the GP-25 snaps on and off readily using the host rifle's bayonet lug. Loading the launcher involves inserting a caseless round in from the muzzle until it snaps in place.

The GP-25 has a long double-action trigger allowing for a second shot in the event of a misfire. There is an adjustable sight affixed to the left side of the chassis. The GP-25 can be fired separately from the host rifle if desired.

High-explosive VOG-25 grenades have a lethal radius of six meters. The GP-25 weighs 3.31 lbs., sports a 4.7" barrel and the sights are adjustable between 100 and 400 meters. The GP-25 has been in service since 1978.

ONE SLEEK SAW

The RPK was first adopted in 1961 as a squad automatic weapon version of the standard Kalashnikov rifle. The original RPK fired the same M43 7.62x39mm round but had a longer, heavier barrel, beefier club-foot stock and pressed steel bipod. The receiver of the RPK was also formed out of 1.5mm sheet stock, where the AKM was only 1mm. The RPK fed from 30- and 40-round box magazines as well as 75-round drums and offered supporting fire on a scale not available through the standard infantry rifle.

The RPK-74 was introduced simultaneously alongside the AK-74 and reflected the same concept as the previous RPK, only now chambered in 5.45x39mm. The RPK-74 did not use a drum but rather was issued with





The GP-25 Kostyor underbarrel 40mm grenade launcher (left) offers short to medium range indirect fires down to the squad level. It loads from the muzzle and is readily removable from the host rifle. The rifled barrel of the GP-25 (right) helps stabilize the caseless grenade when it is fired.

elongated 45-round box magazines. While the added capacity was a boon, these long magazines made firing from the prone a challenge. From fixed defensive positions, troops were trained to excavate a hole underneath their weapons to accommodate the bulky box.

The most obvious difference between the RPK and RPK-74, aside from the magazine, is the addition of a simple birdcage flash suppressor. This slotted attachment is similar to the original M-16A1 rifle and includes slots all around its circumference. The RPK-74 weighs 10 lbs. empty and is 41.7" long. The gun cycles at around 600 rounds per minute.

The RPK-74 has been surprisingly popular on both sides of the line in Ukraine. I have seen pictures of a field-expedient carbine version made by cutting the RPK-74's heavy barrel back to the gas block and losing the bipod. The RPK-74 shares a common manual of arms and magazines with the AK-74 rifle, so training is simplified.

THE KALASHNIKOV CARBINE

The AKSU-74 carbine first saw combat service in 1979 during the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. Essentially a shortened SMG version of the AK-74 rifle, the AKSU-74 features a stubby 8.1" barrel, a side-folding steel strut stock and a unique redesigned gas block and muzzle booster. The muzzle booster consists of an expansion chamber that helps maintain back pressure for reliable cycling, along with a conical flash suppressor of marginal effectiveness.



Disposable antitank weapons like this RPG-26 clutter the modern battlefield. Such unguided rockets give the individual infantry soldier a serious punch.

Unlike the AK-74, the top cover on the AKSU-74 carbine is hinged at the front and positively retained on the chassis. This makes reassembly much easier over the standard AK-74 rifle. The forearm is also slightly shortened over the parent rifle. The AKSU-74 uses a modified version of the long-stroke, gas piston-driven AK action and cycles at around 650 rounds per minute.

The AKSU-74 suffers from all the same problems as the short-barreled 5.56x45mm AR variant rifles on our side of the pond. However, it is nonetheless a compact and effective personal defense weapon for special forces, aircrews, artillerymen, tankers and the like. Osama bin Laden famously kept an AKSU-74 equipped with a long 45-round RPK-74 magazine handy in the background of his propaganda videos before U.S. Navy SEALs shot him through the forehead.

RUMINATIONS

As I type these words the war still teeters. Putin threatens global thermonuclear war about every 20 minutes, Western nations keep pouring weapons and supplies into the war zone and Ukrainian patriots like Serg skillfully wield them to help defend their homes and their families. Zelenskyy and the Ukrainians have their warts as do we all. However, this is a battle for freedom not philosophically unlike our own epic scrap back during the American Revolution.

Putin's Special Military Operation was crafted to subjugate the Ukrainian people and create a buffer zone between the despotic darkness of the Russian Federation and the thriving liberty of the European Union. It turned out the Ukrainian people did not much care to be assimilated into the Russian collective. Apparently 45 years of living under the Russian boot was enough. GUNS



The Steambow K1 is cleanly styled, mid-sized Drop Point that lets its Bohler N690 steel do the talking. The K1 here is shown with the light stonewashed finish.

STEAMBOW K1
A CLEAN MACHINE

Pat Covert

Steambow is an Austrian archery manufacturer specializing in crossbows and also offers knives in their accessory line. The manufacturer has offices in Denver, Colo. and we're featuring their Steambow AR-Series K1 fixed-blade here. The K1 fixer was manufactured in Italy, factory undisclosed, but when a manufacturer contracts with an Italian cutlery company, it is typically for their excellent quality.

The first thing that hit me when I laid eyes on the Steambow K1 was its sanitary styling. No curb feelers here. At 9.0" overall, the K1 is a mid-sized fixed-blade capable of a variety of tasks without being unwieldy. The 4.3" business end is upscale Austrian Bohler N690 Cobalt-enriched stainless steel known for being both tough and stain resistant.

The K1 blade — available in a light or dark stonewashed finish — is a gently-sloped, V-ground Drop Point with a saber grind along the rear spine. There is 2.25" of jimping splitting spine-time between the blade and rear handle. The 4.7" handle is topped in black polymer scales with a modest bit of palm swell while Steambow also offers optional colors in Orange, O.D. Green and Sand or you can opt for genuine Walnut.

The company took a unique approach to the sheath with swappable main housings for both right or left hand carry options and, just like the K1, the whole system is sparing in design.

WHY YOU'LL LIKE IT

The Steambow K1 is a crossover cutter just as comfortable as an urban fighter or a field workhorse. Indeed, in the cutlery industry Bohler N690 stainless steel is found on both urban EDCs and for tough field chores. If you don't care for a bunch of jujubes hanging off your knife, you'll really like the K1's clean styling. MSRP for the crisp, clean and capable Steambow K1 is $179.99. GUNS



The K1 comes with two sheath housings designed for right or left hand belt carry. All the necessary parts and hardware are included as well as an Allen wrench for assembly.

Steambow.com

AXEON ABSOLUTE ZERO

WILL DABBS, MD

Zeroing weapons is a reliably tedious chore but Axeon has the solution. The patented Axeon Absolute Zero is a dedicated scope-sighting tool accommodating either 1" or 30mm scope tubes as well as any handy Picatinny rail. It consists of a pair of red lasers precisely oriented within a rugged metal housing. Once mounted, make sure everything is square and align the laser dots onto an included target grid from a rest at 25 meters. Now fire a single round.

Using the laser dots to hold the weapon steady, you then adjust the scope reticle over the bullet hole and the weapon is zeroed at 25 meters. You'll obviously have to account for the individual weapon's ballistics to get it on target at other ranges. Easy, fast and intuitive, the Absolute Zero takes the pain out of that initial zero.



MSRP: $49.95
AxeonOptics.com

LAPUA SUPER LONG RANGE 22 LR

MARK HAMPTON

The name Lapua conjures up accurate rimfire ammunition — a reputation well-earned over many years of shooting and competition. At this point, Lapua has been around for 100 years and have been providing shooters premium rimfire ammunition for top-notch accuracy. The company has just introduced two new offerings for 2023 — Lapua Long Range and Super Long Range.



This 40-grain top-tier ammo is designed for rimfire disciplines such as PRS, Rimfire Benchrest and Long Range. I grabbed my 10" Freedom Arms revolver and engaged targets from 25, 50 and 100 yards. Five-shot, 50-yard groups held steady under ½". The 1.170" group from 100 yards impressed me with a revolver fitted with a handgun scope set on 4x. I wonder what this ammo is capable of with a good rifle and some adequate magnification?

MSRP: $24 per 50
Lapua.com

BURRIS XT PRO SCOPE

MARK HAMPTON



For serious competition shooters, Burris offers their newest XTR PRO. The optic has all the features needed for demanding PRS type competition including a tool-less zero stop, quick detach race dial, and a throw lever. I chose the 5.5-30x scope with 56mm objective and SCR 2 Mil reticle. The XTR PRO comes with a 34mm tube and is First Focal Plane with 1/10 mil click value. With a 20 MOA base, shooters have plenty of elevation with the optic's 90 MOA/26 Mil elevation adjustment.

Mounting this optic on a 6 Dasher, I found windage and elevation adjustments repeatable and consistent. The SCR 2 Mil is ideal for me as it's not too busy but provides ample adjustments for corrections. You can write your drops on the speed dial with an erasable pin for quick dialing when engaging multiple targets. The XTR PRO is a winner — though for me, all bets are off!

MSRP: $2,640
BurrisOptics.com

SAGE & BRAKER GUN CASE

ROB JONES

I believe a new, custom rifle needs a special case. For the same reason you don't carry your $6,000 Nighthawk in a $19 nylon holster, my newly restored, color case-hardened rifle needed a handcrafted case. An internet search brought me to Sage & Braker. Their Unscoped Rifle Case fit the bill perfectly as it is stylish and beautifully constructed.

The case exterior is constructed using Crazy Horse Leather and waxed canvas. The interior is a padded, quilted wool to protect the rifle and both canvas and wool interior are water repellent. A padded leather shoulder strap, with several mounting points is included. The case has both a full-width end flap and a full-length zipper while the hardware appears bulletproof. It is obvious this case is meant to be an heirloom.



MSRP: $395
SageAndBraker.com

BEWARE THE DEMORALIZER

THEY'LL SAY ANYTHING TO KEEP YOU OUT OF THE FIGHT

Dave Workman

About five months ago, an online publication essentially admitted how Democrats in Colorado plan to target Congresswoman Lauren Boebert for defeat next year.

"Demoralization is the key here," the article stated. "The Rocky Mountain Values, and other Democratic Party-backed groups like theirs, understand this fact. If these groups can demoralize enough Republican voters in Boebert's district (and they wouldn't need much to demoralize them), the Democrats can take Boebert's critical district."

BAD AND NATIONWIDE

This sort of thing isn't just confined to the Centennial State where Boebert has become a lightning rod and barely won re-election last year. Next time around, they expect to replace Boebert — a staunch Second Amendment vote on Capitol Hill — with an anti-gunner. It'll be one more vote to silence gun rights activism and offer no representation at all in Congress for westside Colorado gun owners.

As we get closer to the 2024 campaign, watch out in your own district for this sort of effort. You'll be repeatedly told your vote doesn't count. You'll hear rumors about the pro-gun conservative running in your district who "isn't really pro-gun" after all and is just waiting to betray you — or that they are "too far right to get elected." Some will fall back on the Joe Biden strategy of branding them "MAGA Republicans," as if that were akin to being lepers. It's just another form of social bigotry for which self-described "progressives" invariably get a pass from the establishment media.

The article in question generously observed, "A majority of Republican voters still do not consider themselves 'MAGA.' They view themselves as 'conservative.'" However, by the time the election rolls around, rest assured all of those conservative Republicans will have been viciously portrayed as "MAGA" whether they like it or not and so will the candidates they support. Remember, when one side of a debate resorts to name-calling, they don't have any real arguments.

On the other hand, gun owners can be their own worst enemies because too often they sit out an election and only



seem to get concerned after the fact, when they suddenly realize they are in a lot of trouble. In my home state of Washington, far too many conservatives didn't bother to vote in last year's election and Democrats gained even more seats in the Legislature. The result: They passed legislation banning so-called "assault weapons" and the state was promptly sued in federal court by the Second Amendment Foundation and separately by the National Shooting Sports Foundation with support from the National Rifle Association. They passed another bill requiring people to prove they've taken safety training within the past five years in order to buy a gun. In other words, the law demands the equivalent of a "literacy test" to exercise a constitutional right. This is clearly unconstitutional, say Second Amendment advocates, and by the time you read this, possibly other legal actions will be in the works challenging this nonsense.

STICK TOGETHER OR HANG …

Do you want to know the single most important difference between liberals and conservatives? Liberals fight their internal battles privately, while conservatives make a habit of fighting amongst themselves in public and sometimes making a spectacle of it. This sends a message to voters in the middle — the people you need on your side in order to win — that you're not very well organized, thus you probably should not be put in charge.

What pro-Second Amendment citizens don't seem to grasp is that if they had stuck together and voted in the first place, and taken the Legislature away from the gun control party or at least balanced the odds, none of this would have happened. Anti-gunners cannot pass laws if they're not in office or if they are the minority party. It is monumentally frustrating to encourage people to vote, only to have them sit on their apathy and then complain on social media about how major gun rights organizations didn't prevent anti-gunners from winning.

About the same time Democrats were planning their campaign to demoralize Boebert voters in Colorado, *Rasmussen Reports* released a survey revealing "Nearly a third of American voters would consider voting for a third-party candidate in next year's presidential race, and Democrats are more open to the idea than either Republicans or independents." The survey revealed 31% of likely voters said it was "somewhat likely" they would vote for a third-party candidate. But 59% are not so likely to do that, and 32% said it is "not at all likely."

Don't sucker for it. Democrats may say that now, only to lull voters into believing they're not really interested in creating one-party dominance. They are delighted when disillusioned conservatives vote for a third party, no-chance candidate, thus splitting the conservative vote and propelling liberals into office. Once there, these "progressives" quickly demonstrate how unfriendly they are to your rights. Look at Michigan. Look at Minnesota. Look at California, New Jersey and New York. Don't forget Illinois, Washington and Oregon. How many examples do you require before the light goes on and you ultimately conclude the only way to put these people out of your misery is to vote them out of office.

Like it or not, there is one party that protects your rights and one that is trying to erase them. For those who want a third-party victory, it's going to take a lot of work that involves more than just wishful thinking and social media. First, vote the liberals out of office, because if moderates and conservatives have the majority they control the legislative agenda. Once you've accomplished this, you gradually work in the third-party choices if this is your goal. Be willing to spend years getting this done, and in the meantime, don't allow yourselves to be beguiled by some smooth-talking anti-gunner.

CHANGEUP

Let's shift gears just a bit. Ten states have banned so-called "assault weapons." If this cannot be undone by the federal courts, the only other way is to have a huge voter turnout targeting lawmakers in "swing" districts and run electable challengers to displace the people who banned your guns. Make sure they know you expect them to repeal these bans and restore your gun rights.

Earlier this year, a troll began posting messages on one of the various gun rights social media pages I monitor. His job evidently was to discourage gun owners by arguing how the "majority" of poll respondents want more gun control, including background checks and gun bans. Take these people on and shut them down. Never forget two important principles:

Constitutional rights are not subject to popularity polls.

This battle is not about guns, it's about rights.

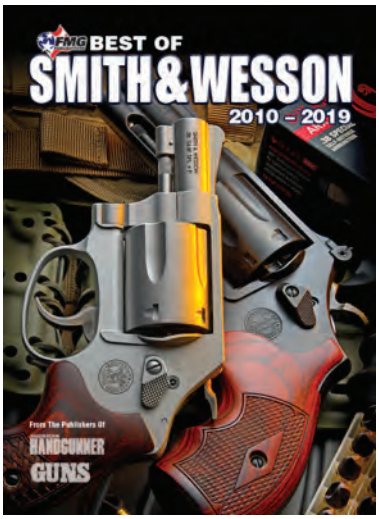
Don't indicate even the slightest degree of willingness to surrender a little ground, because history has demonstrated repeatedly how the gun prohibition movement will accept your compromise, only to come back later and demand surrender. During debates, they will "make nice" with you, as if this is just a disagreement among friends. Don't be lulled into believing it. They have one goal and it is to crush the Second Amendment and turn a fundamental right into a government-regulated privilege.

To paraphrase the old "Smokey Bear" advertisements, "Only YOU can protect the Second Amendment." GUNS

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Taylor's & Company adds a 10mm to their 1911 family with the launch of the *Full Size (FS) Tactical.* With an OAL of 8.75" and weighing 2.29 lbs., this pistol has a 5" barrel, custom G10 grips, an ambidextrous thumb safety, combat hammer and skeletonized trigger. An extended beavertail grip safety lets you get a high and tight grip without worrying about slide or hammer bite when firing. The FS Tactical is chambered in 10mm — a much more modern caliber than the original military 1911s. MSRP: $699. For more info: (540) 722-2017, TaylorsFirearms.com

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American Buffalo Knife and Tool Co. expands its line of Roper Knives with the *Sunset Series Trapper.* The vintage trapper style knife sports a pair of 1065 carbon steel blades with brass liners. Measuring 4.125" when closed, the Sunset Series Trapper is finished with a colorful, unique Western stylized handle. MSRP: $29.99. For more info: (423) 337-7423, ABKT.com



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Savage Arms

SAVAGE 110 TIMBERLINE RIFLE PACKAGE

If you win the September 2023 giveaway of *GUNS Magazine*, you'll get the *Savage 110 Timberline* in .270 Win. The rifle allows you to attain low temperatures, dry air, low pressures and long shots. It is built to maximize accuracy with a fluted barrel, overmold surfaces, target crown and omni-port muzzlebrake. The Model 110 action is secured three-dimensionally along its entire length within the AccuStock internal chassis. The AccuFit system lets hunters customize length-of-pull and comb height of the Realtree Excape synthetic stock. Its user-adjustable AccuTrigger offers a crisp, clean pull critical for making precise shots at extreme distances. The OD Green Cerakote on the





CKAGE GIVEAWAY

barrel, receiver and other critical parts protects against corrosion and harsh terrain.

Load the Savage 110 Timberline with HSM Ammunition's *Tipping Point .270 Win.* With a bullet weight of 140 grains, you'll get match grade accuracy combined with a payoff of extreme terminal results. Made of the best materials, this hunting bullet from Sierra Bullets is formulated to achieve maximum accuracy. Two boxes of the ammo are included in this giveaway.

The *CQB Tool w/ Kydex Sheath* from Spartan Blades is aptly named and specially designed for close quarters battle. A ring dagger with a kydex sheath, the design concept of the CQB tool originates with Greg Thompson, an instructor of close quarters fighting techniques (hand to hand) for the U.S. Special Forces.

Savage Arms' 110 Timberline Rifle, HSM's Tipping Point .270 Win. ammo and Spartan Blades' CQB Tool will help defend hearth and home. Join now for a chance to win these prizes! Go to GUNSMagazine.com/giveaways. Or mail a post card! —*Jazz Jimenez* GUNS

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SpartanBladesUSA.com
Value: $175



TIPPING POINT .270 WIN.

Manufacturer: HSM
(406) 777-2106
HSMAmmunition.com
Value: $71.98

THE .375 RUGER
A 16-YEAR DREAM CATCHER

Jeff "Tank" Hoover

We all live through our guns in one way, or another — and there's nothing wrong with that. Heck, it's even fun. Guns have the power of making us promise of one day using them in faraway lands for the hunt of a lifetime. This dream keeps us focused and working hard to make it a reality. In a sense, guns are a motivator. There's a line you can tell your spouse after buying your next shooter. Basically, we live and dream through our guns.

PAYING THE PIPER

Whenever thinking of a faraway adventure, I'll buy the "right" gun, making it more "real." It's why I bought the .375 Ruger in this article. Sure, it took 16 years getting the gun to Africa with me in tow, but there's no sense waiting for the last minute.

Besides, the action is buttery smooth from 16 years of working it as I faced charging Cape buffalo and rhinoceroses in my basement. There are other guns, but those are for another story.

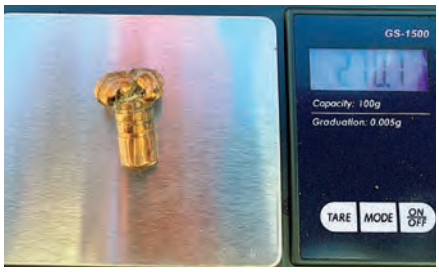
RUGER HAWKEYE AFRICAN

The folks at Ruger saw fit to design a dangerous game cartridge, releasing it in 2007 and calling it the .375 Ruger. Its parent case was the 404 Jeffery, which means it doesn't have a "magnum" belt forward of the case head. Initially, I had mixed thoughts about the cartridge but bought one anyway. I should have never doubted it.

The .375 Ruger provides 150 fps over standard .375 H&H loads and fits in standard long-action rifles. While the .375 Ruger lacks the history of the .375 H&H, sometimes it's good to say "history be #!@*&%"!" Ruger offered the cartridge in the nice-looking Hawkeye African model consisting of either walnut/blued steel or a stainless/synthetic configuration, calling it the Alaskan model.



Warthogs are tough critters but no match for the .375 Ruger. They're tasty too!



Weight retention was 100% along with a little meat still sticking to the bullet.

My African model stock is a nicely figured chunk of walnut, slim, trim and perfect for a walk-about rifle. Topped with a Leupold VX 3.5-10X40 CDS-ZL scope, it makes for a fast-shouldering stalking rifle that swings and tracks game beautifully, and powerful enough for hunting dangerous game too.

WORTHY WONDER

While hunting in South Africa, I used the .375 Ruger Hawkeye African to take over a dozen head of game on a cull/trophy hunt. Shots varied from 60, to over 350 yards with splendid results. Even at longer distances, the .375 Ruger is a hard hitter. Waiting 16 years made the performance sweeter as I packed many years' worth of shooting into the two-week hunt.

It was pure pleasure loading, carrying, working the bolt and shooting so often as it gave me the chance of getting intimately acquainted with the rifle. There's no better feeling than bonding with a gun while hunting with it. The memories alone are worth it.

RIFLE ENVY?

I was getting nervous the way my host, Tim Sundles, of Buffalo Bore Ammo kept eyeing the rifle. Believe me, Sundles knows guns! The slim/trim package impressed him — high praise for the rifle indeed! Sundles is already a fan of the .375 Ruger cartridge, knowing its capabilities as his wife, Kim took a beautiful blond Alaskan grizzly last fall with one.

Tim's also taken several heads of big game with the .375 Ruger too, over the years. With endorsements like these, you can see why the cartridge has become a favorite of mine.



A black wildebeest fell to Tank's .375 Ruger at over 350 yards. The copper Barnes TSX bullets used in the Buffalo Bore ammo (below) are wonderful bullets indeed! Copper makes a dandy bullet and provides deadly results.



THE LOAD

For the African hunt, I used Buffalo Bore Ammo consisting of 270-grain Barnes TSX bullets at a listed 2,750 FPS. Whenever doing my job, the bullets worked perfectly, racking up many one-shot kills. Over a dozen animals fell to this rifle/ammo combo, with only two bullets being recovered. Both were from tough warthogs shot stem to stern, the bullets recovered in the far back ham after penetrating approximately 36".

I shot several black and blue wildebeest during the cull, as well as impala, kudu, zebra, red hartebeest and warthogs. I'll just say I fell in love in Africa — and with the .375 Ruger rifle/cartridge combo. It took 16 years of flirting with the rifle, but it was well worth the time.

Follow your dreams by buying the guns you'll need to make them possible. One day you'll get there, and you'll be glad you did! GUNS

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ADVERTISER	PAGE
American Handgunner Subscription	17
Armscor/Rock Island Armory	11
Bravo Company USA	67
Cimarron Firearms Co.	25
Colt	13
D & L Sports Inc.	21
Emerson Knives	63
Federal Ammunition	9
Fiocchi Ammunition	5
FMG Smith &Wesson Book	57
HSS Corp.	21
Kirkpatrick Leather Co.	19
North American Arms	15
Ruger	7
SK Arms VA	2
Spartan Blades USA	16
Speer	3
Springfield Armory	68
Spyderco	63
Throom Targets	29
Walk The Talk America	64
WRB Inc.	19
XS Sights	16

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GUNS INSIDER

continued from page 66

"that" guy who has never met a name he couldn't drop or a lie he couldn't top. Even if you've recently been elected pope, the blowhard will work tirelessly to top your story, usually with a statement like, "Pope, huh? That's nice; it reminds me of the time I was hunting in the Zambezi with the king of Sweden. As usual, I started the day with a half-slice of toast…."

Periodically remaining quiet is good manners but when the rule is enforced by being unable to get a word in edgewise, it ruins the mood for everyone. If the blowhard doesn't figure out why nobody else is speaking — and they often don't — the best response is to simply slip away for a fresh beverage or a quick irrigation of the local flora and then never return. I once drove home from Africa for this reason. Away from the fire, I'll also often make productive use of the time by slipping a scorpion into the bunk of the blowhard.

What you must *not* do is succumb to the urge to sneak up from behind and crush the blowhard's skull with a large river rock. Nothing ruins a good hunt more than a police interrogation. However, I will not discuss the matter further because my public defender tells me after an acquittal, you're not required to talk about it anymore.

Thirdly, be aware politics can be a fraught topic. While a good political argument can be enjoyable and even enlightening, in today's climate it usually ends up with two hunters fighting it out with flaming boughs. This can be exceptionally dangerous as it often leads to one or more beers getting kicked over. If things look like they are heading a contentious direction, it's best to change the topic to something less hateful such as race relations.

Fourth and finally, keep the firebug under control. We've all been in a camp where one member of the group has a fascination — verging on an unhealthy obsession — with building a fire. He's easy to spot as he'll instantly volunteer to build the fire even though you just arrived in camp and it's mid-afternoon in August in South Florida.

Once he does have the fire going, he'll pester and poke at it relentlessly like a hyper-caffeinated toddler until the wood supply is finally consumed around 8 p.m. It's doesn't matter if you start with four cords of seasoned oak, he'll burn it all within a few hours. The only upside is the fact it is possible to get a little iron ore smelting done as you wait for dinner.

"HE'S EASY TO SPOT AS HE'LL INSTANTLY VOLUNTEER TO BUILD THE FIRE EVEN THOUGH YOU JUST ARRIVED IN CAMP AND IT'S MID-AFTERNOON IN AUGUST IN SOUTH FLORIDA."

As pointed out earlier, a fire isn't a requirement for a good hunting camp discussion but the synergy it creates is profound. As the fire goes from a cheery leaping blaze to a somber glowing pile and eventually a cold gray ash pit, so does the natural course of the conversation. With a firebug in camp, sitting around the smoldering corpse of a fire just past dusk results with everyone drifting off to bed so early you might not even be hungover in the morning — another grave breach of hunting camp etiquette.

FINAL THOUGHTS

Ahh, the evening campfire. It's a source of cheer, a social lubricant equal to Kentucky Holy Water and the focal point of most camps. It serves to keep us warm, cook our dinner, dry our socks, light up the night and keep the bogeyman at bay. It stirs primal memories and inspires pondering. It can be an amigo, colleague and maker of the most transcendent memories. Honor it, revel in it and remember it.

And, if necessary, use it to burn the fingerprints off large river rocks. GUNS



GATHER AROUND THE CAMPFIRE
HUNTING CAMP AND FLAME A MAGICAL COMBO

Brent T. Wheat

For the diehard, there are few places more magical than hunting camp. And, if you peel away the outer skin, the very beating heart of the place is actually the fire ring.

I'm writing these words from one such hunting camp in the west Texas Hill Country. Your Faithful Editor held up the collective honor of the *GUNS* family by taking a dandy Axis buck with a single shot from my new-but-classic Marlin 336 in .30-30. The big male went 15 yards and fell over dead, a 150-grain bullet having cashed his chips nicely. It was good and fine and honorable.

As the sun went down, the twilight found us all sitting around the fire pit resolving the problems of the world as hunters are wont to do after a great day afield. During our conversations I posed a question to Steve Jones about the most memorable campfire chat during his 40 years as a globe-trotting professional hunting guide. Without missing a beat, he said "Well, tonight may be it." He meant it in a nice way — mostly.

DON'T LET HIM TALK

Steve and company were experiencing my somewhat unique "brand" of worldly insight. I wasn't trying to be, or do, anything out of the ordinary but it's been claimed my general outlook is markedly different — as in "Boy, you ain't right in the head!" — from most hunters or anyone else not residing in a locked psychological facility. Thus, it's not uncommon for my opinions to draw strange looks and this inspired Steve's comment.

I suppose it's good to be number one at something.

Sitting there in the dark, not sure if I should be insulted or thrilled, I further pondered the meaning and memories of the whole situation. While I've enjoyed comradeship and conversation around countless fire rings in fishing camp, on backpacking and canoeing trips into true wilderness and sometimes just in backyards for the sake of making s'mores, it is the hunting camp where the most profound memories are made, the richest experiences relived and best recollections honed.



Back around this fire, I had the group alternatively laughing hard to draw tears then rolling their collective eyes so severely I was afraid a couple of them might get serious ocular cramps. This last was in response to my obstinate claims Zeno of Citium was far more readable than Marcus Aurelius. Had I gone forward and shared the story of the time I had a major episode of intestinal distress during a commercial flight, and then blamed it on the innocent young child sitting next to me, someone might have suffered a major infarction. I demurred and figuratively passed the torch.

Others took their turn at the conversational helm. Between cans of Shiner Bock and Lonestar, punctuated with floating exclamation marks courtesy of a Dominican cigar, new topics flew through the humid night like a flock of insomniac gambrel quail. Each new flight would start with someone throwing out a statement or idea, then it would ping-pong around the circle as each person took a swipe at keeping the idea in play. Eventually the notion would land somewhere and things would grow quiet. Everyone considered the matter while sipping at their lukewarm lager and listening for coyotes, waiting for next metaphoric covey to pop above the scrub.

HUNTING (CAMP) REGULATIONS

For the young and inexperienced, if you've read this far, I'll assume you are interested in putting down the Eyeball Gouger 5000 video game to go outdoors to make your own real memories around a campfire. However, there are some rules you should be aware of before attending your first hunting camp.

First off, surprisingly, you don't need a fire. It's your choice. I tend to run a "cold camp" because I'm too lazy and curmudgeonly to fart around with building a fire, but if you feel it necessary, I won't stop you. In fact, I'll even try to grudgingly enjoy it.

Secondly, if there is an inveterate blowhard in the group, try to convince them to forget the fire and use the time to go clean their gun, talk to the cook about their special dietary needs or — much preferably — accidentally direct them into the nearby grizzly den.

Nothing kills a good campfire fat-chewing session than sharing it with

continued on page 65


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