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P. 32



FIRST SHOTS

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TAURUS INTRODUCES ITS FIRST BOLT-ACTION
SPORTING RIFLE. IT'S TIME TO PLAN
YOUR NEXT ADVENTURE. P. 40



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BECKSTRAND

Behind the Scenes at
the Vortex Summit.



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HUNNICUTT

Remembering Browning's
Winchester Model 1904 .22



P. 23

NANCE

Viridian shrunk the C5L
for micro-compacts.



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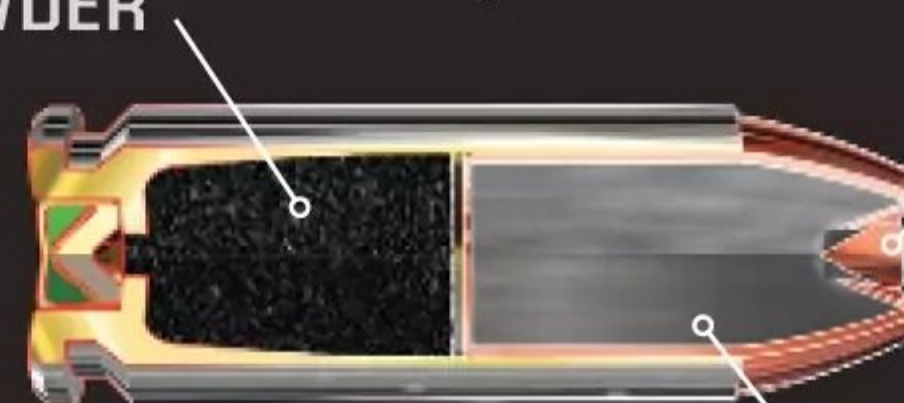
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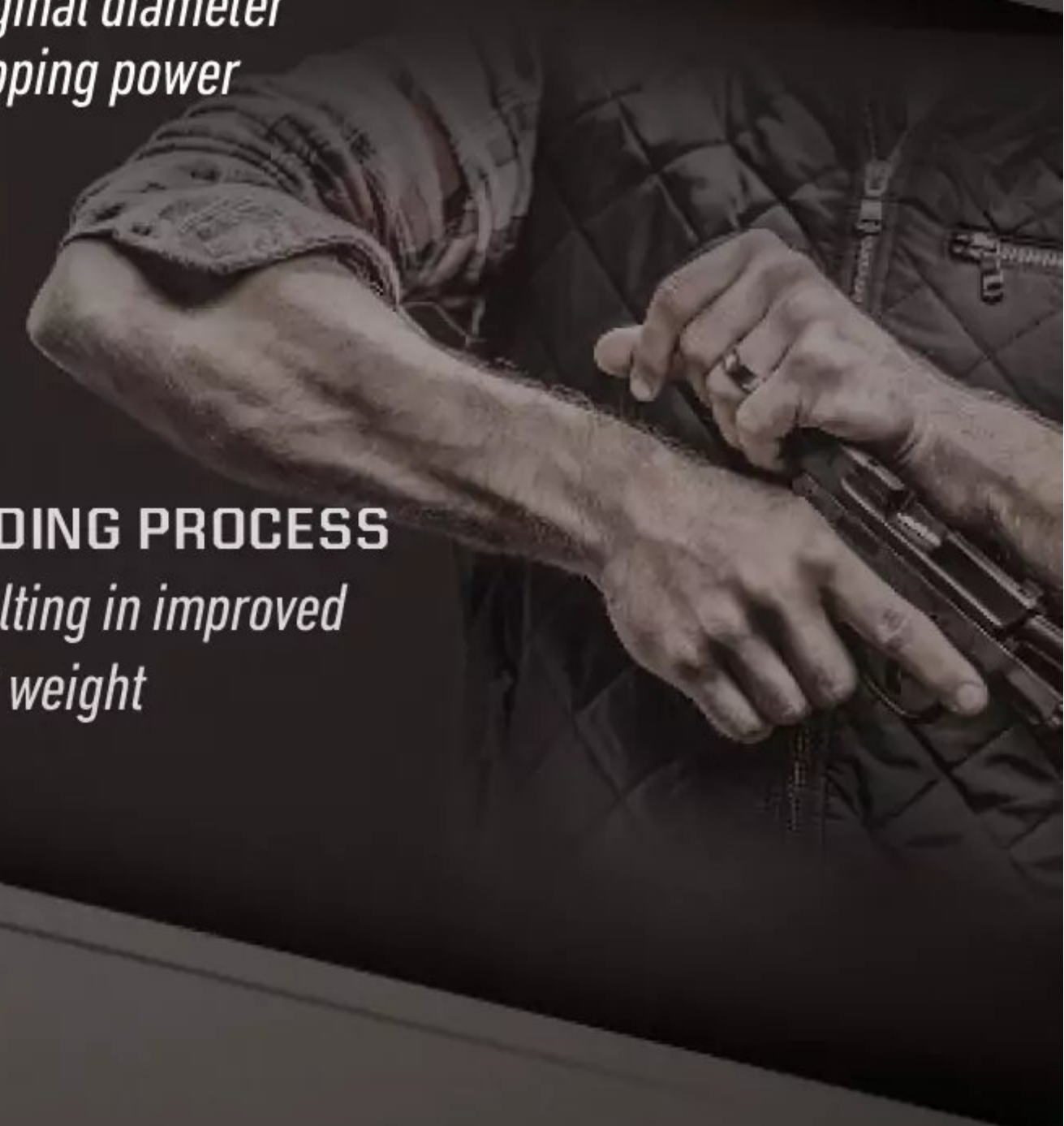
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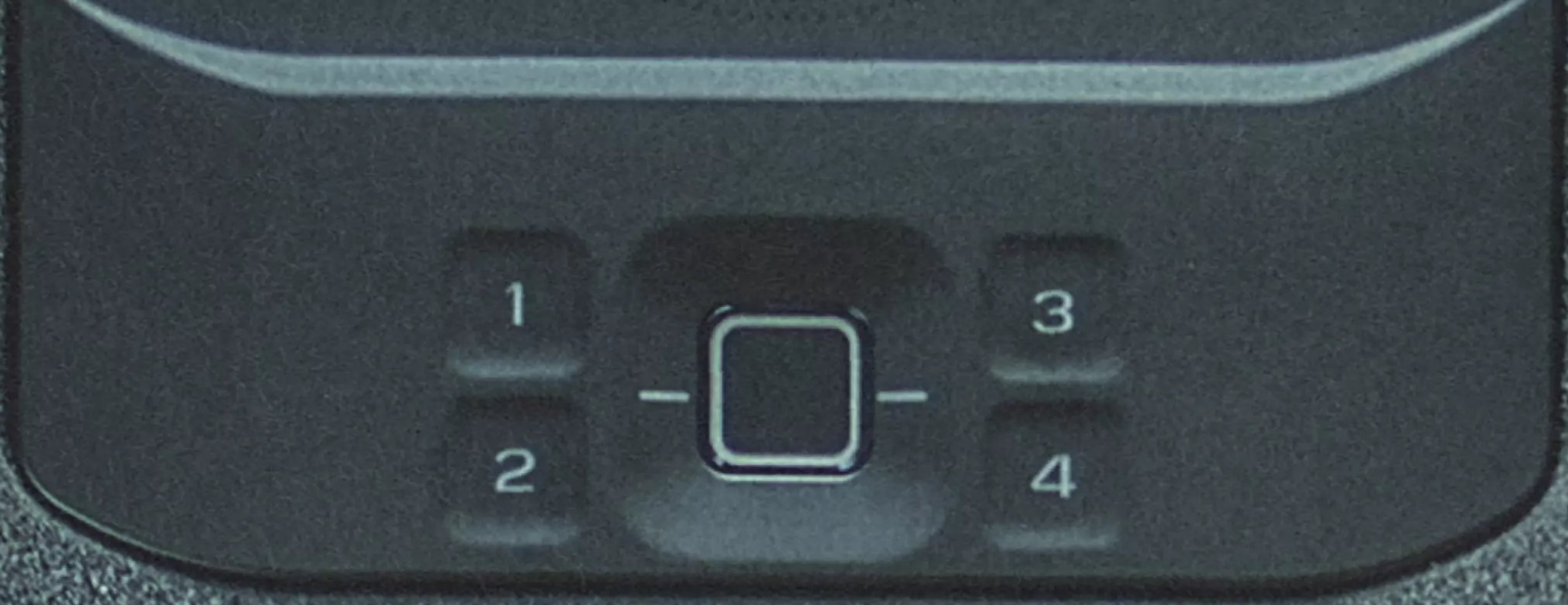
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UNCHARTED TERRITORY

The Taurus Expedition is an adventure into the bolt-action centerfire rifle market.

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BY TOM BECKSTRAND

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.400 LEGEND

Introducing Winchester's hard-hitting cartridge in a new Savage deer rifle.

BY CRAIG BODDINGTON

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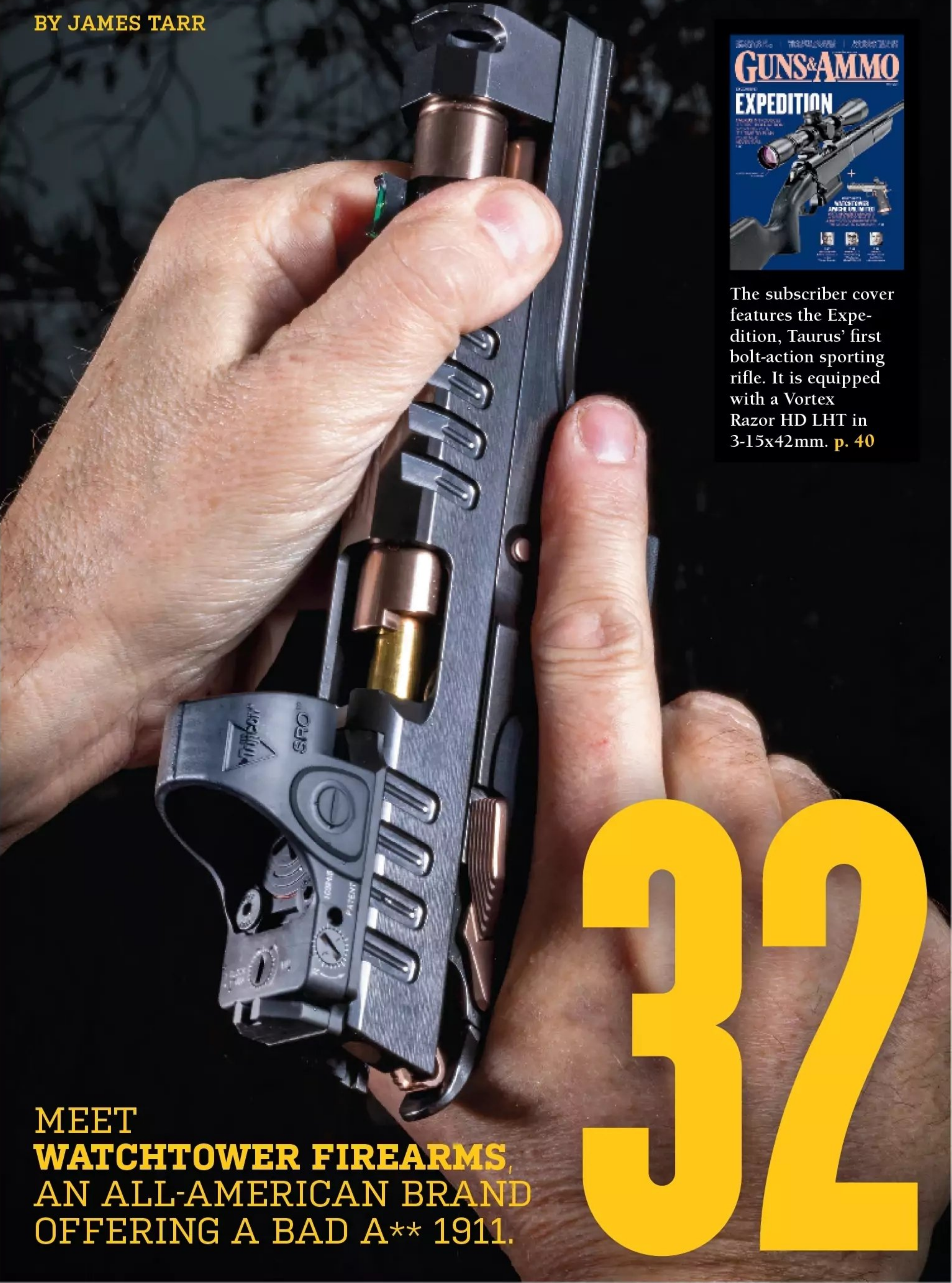
A BOY'S RIFLE

John Browning designs are highly regarded, but only a few have been more ubiquitous than his single-shot rimfire bolt-actions.

BY ROBERT W. HUNNICUTT

APACHE

BY JAMES TARR



The subscriber cover features the Expedition, Taurus' first bolt-action sporting rifle. It is equipped with a Vortex Razor HD LHT in 3-15x42mm. **p. 40**

MEET
WATCHTOWER FIREARMS,
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COVER PHOTOS: MICHAEL ANSCHUETZ AND MARK FINGAR; ABOVE PHOTO: MARK FINGAR

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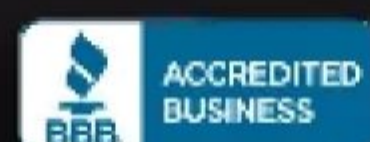
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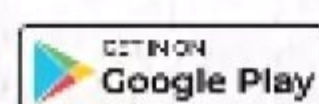


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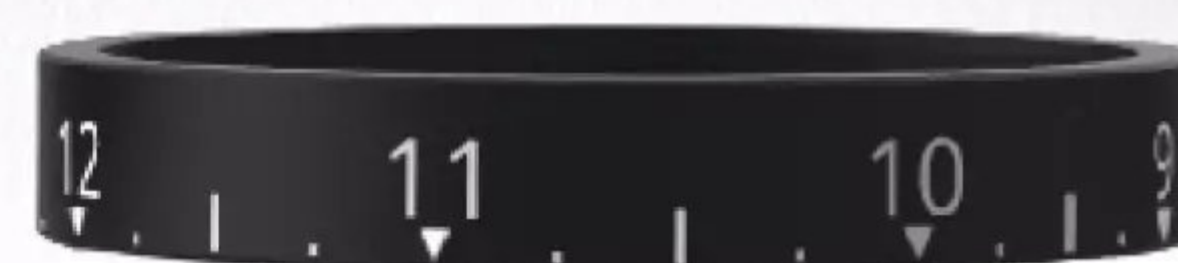
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PHOTO: MARK FINGAR

MEETING CLAPP

I was gratified to read the well-deserved tribute to Wiley Clapp, "The Handgunner" (February 2024), by Eric Poole. Several years ago, some colleagues and I held a private session at the back of a restaurant in Oregon. I went to my car to retrieve some notes and made my way back through the dining area. Lo' and behold, there sat Wiley Clapp! As politely and unobtrusively as I could, I excused myself and said, "Mr. Clapp? Wiley Clapp?" He — and those with him — showed surprise at the recognition. I briefly told him how much I enjoyed his writings and that it was an honor to meet him. He was polite, gracious, and down to earth. The encounter was all too brief, but is a wonderful, cherished memory that will last a lifetime. My only regret is that I didn't think to say something witty such as, "Now don't be thinking of that salad fork as a 'Fightin' Iron!"

Jim Cropper
Salem, Oregon

.32 H&R MAG.

Commenting on "Dead for Defense" by James Tarr, which appeared in the March 2024 issue: Tarr always writes interesting and informative articles, and this one did not disappoint. In it, he described the demise of the .327 Federal Magnum and wrote that those willing to put up with the blast of a magnum in a compact revolver were not willing to switch from the .357 Magnum to the .327. He did not, however, mention the .32 H&R Magnum, a lesser version of the .327. What I have read about the .32 H&R Mag. suggests that it is the

perfect round for a revolver; it shoots smooth, is accurate, and guns can often accept one more round in the same size gun. I would really like to move to a .32 H&R Mag., except that I cannot find one anywhere. There are a few revolvers available online in .32 H&R Mag. and .327 Federal Mag., but I don't want to spend the money on a revolver if I can't get ammo for it locally.

Jim Phelps
Greenwood, Louisiana

REMIND ME, AGAIN

Dave Emary: Wow, your stories hit home. My dad died in 2006 at 86, but

he joined the U.S. Army in 1942. He rose through the ranks quickly due to his military training, not by choice. He served for 26 years, both active and in the reserves. He wouldn't talk much about the war except for some of the lighter side. After joining the Rangers, 5th Ranger Battalion, Co. F, he said, "I got my free tour of Europe starting on June 6, 1944, as a First Sergeant." Dave, there are parallels between our dads, but I only thought of writing his story down later in his life, which was my mistake. I'm giving his stuff to my son, a Warrant Officer 3 with two years left to his 20. He's a maintenance test pilot for the AH-64 Apache helicopter. I have come to learn the history surrounding the 5th Rangers, but I'll have to stop now; there are too many stories to tell. Heck, I didn't write this much in school! Again, thank you for your wonderful articles. They make me think of my dad more.

Jack Hodgson
Loudon, Tennessee

READY TO STEP UP

I read a review by Joe Kurtenbach of the Kimber Micro 9 Triari. I am considering moving up to a 9mm from my Kimber .380 Micro and I wonder, given the time elapsed since the article was published, if he would have any new or different opinions on this.

Craig Dahlquist
Email

First, while .380 ACP ammunition has improved, if you

MARCH '19

Author Tom Beckstrand introduced Winchester's .350 Legend in "A Legend Makes Another." Developed for harvesting deer in states requiring the use of straight-wall cartridges, the low-recoiling .350 Legend revolutionized hunting with bolt actions and modern sporting rifles. Beckstrand was among the first to take a whitetail while hunting in Missouri with Winchester in 2018. Using a Winchester Deer Season XP 150-grain load, performance was validated between 25 and 200 yards.



are comfortable shooting 9mm, I believe that it is the better defensive choice. With regard to the Kimber Micro 9, I hold these in high esteem. The line of this model has been thoroughly evaluated and vetted through the years. The only knock on them could be its modest capacity. If you want more rounds in a similar size, consider the Smith & Wesson hammer-fired CSX or any base-model micro compact. If you are willing to move to a striker-fired platform, the SIG Sauer P365, Smith & Wesson Shield, and Springfield Armory Hellcat should be on your list of options.

— J. Kurtenbach

TARGET FOCUS

Regarding James Tarr's

column, "Pistol Caliber Wars" (December 2023): First, Jim, you wrote a great article. The 9mm cartridge has come a long way since I acquired a Browning Hi Power P.35 in 1970. Following your report on the 1986 FBI Shootout, I believe the agents did not die in vain. Training, equipment, and ammunition have improved as an outcome. However, too many people focus on enhancing technology for these products rather than improving their proficiency. Nothing replaces time on the range.

Gary Griffith
Huntsville, Texas

SURPRISE, SURPRISE

I just finished reading the March '24 issue. I was surprised and pleased to read

that two of the pistols featured were in a price range that the average shooter can afford! The Walther PDP Match Steel Frame was listed, however, at \$1,899, while the Smith & Wesson 2023 Spec Series M&P Metal 2.0 was priced at \$999, and the Rost Martin RM1C was at \$459. I also noted that the lower-priced pistols both had better range results than the most expensive model. This issue proved the point that paying exorbitant prices is not necessary to obtain excellent performance.

Douglas Oliver
Email

BRANCH OUT!

I'm writing in response to Antonio Acitelli's invitation for feedback in his February 2024 "Connect" column.

I'd love to read more about restorations of all kinds, including the remilitarization and refurbishment of sporterized surplus arms, as well as custom pieces. Chronograph work and accuracy tests provide useful information, but gun reviews start to blend.

Aaron Kiser
Email

UPPERCASE THE "P"

I just received the March 2024 issue and am enjoying it. While reviewing the Walther PDP Match Steel Frame in "Get Your Game On," Tarr mentioned "pepper poppers." Well, without the "p" in "pepper" capitalized, it sounds like an appetizer. I am proud to say that I knew John Pepper, inventor of the "Pepper

popper." John's design was the result of a challenge by Jeff Cooper. He sure was a character and I miss his insight. Since "Pepper" is a proper noun, I ask that you capitalize the "P" in his name to honor the man.

Ron Berg
Owings, Maryland

I just checked my submission to Guns & Ammo and "Pepper" was capitalized. Apparently, an editor decapitalized the name. I didn't catch it in my read-through of the final layout.
— J. Tarr

Guilty. Thanks for bringing this to our attention, Mr. Berg, and for sharing your story. Sorry Jim. We'll make a note to G&A's style guide.
— E. Poole 



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PLASTIC FANTASTIC

GASTON GLOCK, businessman and engineer, and the man behind the same-named pistol, died on December 27, 2023, at 94 years of age. Born in Vienna, Austria, in 1929, he was conscripted into the *Wehrmacht* in the final days leading to the end of World War II. He then studied engineering before founding Glock Ges.m.b.H. with Helga, his first wife, in 1963. It began as a side-business operated in the garage next to his suburban house. They made window hardware, door hinges, and curtain rods in the 1960s. Then they turned to making military knives for the Austrian army in the '70s, which provided him an understanding of cost-saving, computer-aided polymer manufacturing. After overhearing Austrian army colonels discussing a prospective military contract for a pistol at the Defense Ministry, Glock spent a year studying existing models and interviewing soldiers while designing the 17. He patented it in 1981, and the Austrian army adopted the semiautomatic pistol on November 5, 1982, placing an order for 20,000 in 1983. Glock also innovated a ferritic nitrocarburizing surface treatment, which is still used to prevent corrosion to metal surfaces on firearms. Glock, Inc. was established in Smyrna, Georgia, in November 1985, and quickly earned a reputation for reliability and safety.

The timing of the Glock 17 in the U.S. was fortuitous. Law enforcement agencies were urgent to transition away from issuing limited-capacity revolvers. Officers were "out-gunned" by organized crime and drug dealers, punctuated by the 1986 FBI Miami Shootout. Incidents were replayed during the nightly news, and violence was sensationalized through the entertainment industry, swaying and dividing public opinion to simultaneously support or condemn gun control while advancing police tactics and equipment.

Though the Heckler & Koch VP70 — an 18-round polymer-framed pistol — had been extant since 1970, the U.S. military Joint Service Small Arms Program (JSSAP) tested the VP70 in 1977, finding that it didn't meet accuracy

and reliability expectations. Subsequent XM9 tests in 1983 and '84 resulted in a win for Beretta's 92F and an honorable mention for the SIG Sauer P226. Glock was not a contender. He declined an invitation to submit 35 pistols to U.S. military specifications. Had Glock participated in the XM9 trials and failed to win, interest in the Glock 17 might have been delayed. However, in less than 10 years, more than 60 percent of American law enforcement would be issued a Glock.

Despite dissenters berating the pistol as a "Wonder Nine," the pistol evolved where it needed to.

The Glock 17 was first sold in a Tupperware-style container. Reports (or rumors) of loaded pistols going off inside the box due to the trigger being activated by the molded post inside of the triggerguard when the box was dropped led to the modern, stackable hard case.

Additionally, magazines in early Glock pistols did not reliably "drop free" from the grip when the magazine release button was pressed. Despite this characteristic being viewed as a feature in Europe, intended to encourage magazine retention, the complaint from American law enforcement resulted in

magazines that ejected from the grip during reloads.

Lastly, in 1998, the Gen 3 models introduced the accessory rail for mounting lights and lasers, again, evolving deployment tactics for another 15 years. "Glock" is now a term synonymous with a pistol that is publicly identifiable by its simple silhouette, overshadowing its inventor.

Gaston divorced Helga in 2011, stirring controversy, and married Kathrin Tschikof that same year. Gun control advocates regard Glock as a villain. Many who carry his pistols consider him a genius. Those who own a Glock are predisposed to own more than one, which is how he died a reclusive billionaire. Currently in its 5th generation, Glock's patent expirations and minimalist marketing strategy gave rise to clones and competing designs that continue to steer attention away from the brand. Still, the fundamental Glock pistol design lives on and continues to age well.



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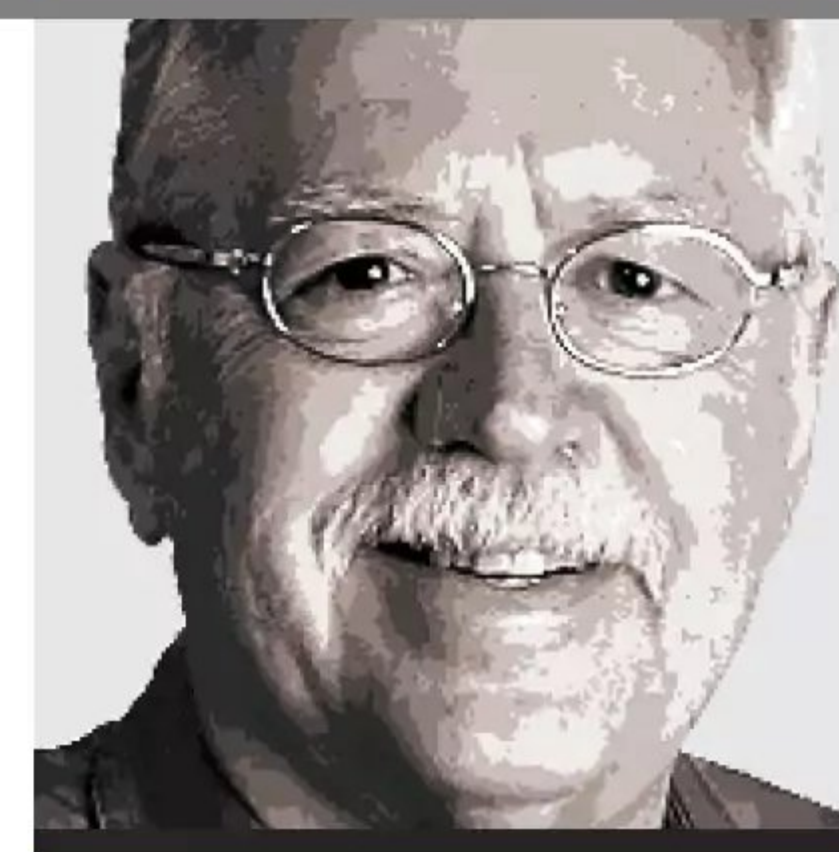
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“Quite a handsome looking piece! Workmanship seems to be quite good and, fortunately, it’s chambered in a popular caliber.”

IDENTIFICATION & VALUES



GARRY JAMES

GARRY.JAMES@OUTDOORSG.COM



CHAUCHAT MODEL 1918 .30-'06 MAGAZINE

MYSTERY MAGAZINE

Q: My friend gave me some old gun parts knowing I like to tinker, and the box magazine included the enclosed pictured magazine, which I was not able to identify. I recently saw an article based on a photo, and it looks like the magazine could be for a M1918 Chauchat. Do you agree? It needs to be cleaned and lubricated as the follower is very sticky, but it looks like it could be made serviceable with some work. I have no use for it and I was thinking that perhaps some collector might have a need for one, but I would not want to try to sell it without properly identifying the magazine. I would like to see someone get benefit out of it. Thoughts?

A. M. S.
Pontiac, Illinois

A: It is indeed for a Chauchat. It was used in the U.S. Model 1918 .30-'06 variant. It is only slightly curved as opposed to the hemispherical 8mm Lebel version generally employed by the French army. The differences in design result from the need to accommodate the severely tapered 8mm cartridge versus the relatively svelte .30-'06. Throughout its lifetime, the Chauchat was chambered in several different calibers.

MODEL 73 WINCHESTER MUSKET

Q: I inherited a lot of old firearms from my grandfather who was an FFL dealer and collector of firearms. I will send a dozen photos that include all of them, but my favorite one just says “MODEL 1873”. Can you tell me what it is? What caliber?

S. R.
Bennett, Colorado

A: You have a Third Model Winchester Model 1873 musket. The 30-inch barreled martial-style lever-action was intended to appeal to the military market, and some numbers were indeed sold to foreign countries. Caliber was .44 WCF (.44-40). Only about five percent of Model 73s

produced were muskets — a total of some 36,000 guns — and thus, are somewhat scarce. Unfortunately, your example has seen better days and is almost in relic condition. In its present shape, I cannot see it bringing much more than \$1,000 to \$1,200.

SNAKE EYES PISTOL

Q: I’m hoping that you can help me find out what this gun is. The bore measures out at 3/8 inch. It’s all brass and appears to be home-made, except the serial number (14XXX) looks factory marked. Some

pictures are attached. Can you figure out what this is and when it was made? I paid \$100 for it. Was that a good price?

J. H.
Email

A: You have a Classic Arms Snake Eyes Pistol. These double-barreled percussion pistols were first available in the 1970s and have not been made as finished arms in a number of years. For a time thereafter, Dixie Gun Works (dixiegunworks.com) offered them in kit form. I’d say you paid about right for that gun.

AUCTION BLOCK

A rare and beautiful Purdey 20 gauge over/under shotgun realized a worthy \$32,500 in a January 15, 2024, Sportsman’s Legacy sale. This impressive piece, completed in 1961 and supported by a history letter, has 26½-inch barrels; classic “gate-type” action that features an automatic safety; hand-detachable locks with gold-plated lockworks and cocking indicators; single gold-plated trigger; rolled guard; and color case. The heavily figured walnut stock displays appointments that include wrap checkering with partial Mullered borders, drop points, “straight hand” butt and a leather-covered recoil pad. The action, lever, tangs, guard and latch exhibit Purdey’s Large Scroll pattern in coverage. “Safe” is highlighted in gold. The condition of this special O/U is fine with bright bores, excellent mechanics and barrel finish exceeding 90 percent. Action colors are at least 50 percent with some minor flecking of surface lacquer. Blue over the guard and tang is approximately 70 percent. Wood is approximately 85 percent with some scattered rubbing. For more information about this and future sales, visit Sportsman’s Legacy at sportsmanslegacy.com.





RECOMMENDED READS

Dixie Gun Works Catalog, Dixie Gun Works, Union City, TN, 2024. When I was first getting into blackpowder shooting about a half-century past, my go-to source was Dixie Gun Works. Founded 70 years ago in 1954 by Turner Kirkland — who I later got to know quite well — it was a bold venture. Turner had the insight to recognize that muzzleloading shooting was expanding from a specialty avocation into one of much greater appeal. His initial offerings were somewhat meagre compared to what the company now stocks, but for the first time such items were eddied into the mainstream of the shooting sport. Through the years, the firm's catalog expanded into not only arms, equipment, loading supplies, parts, garb, and artillery, but included valuable sections on measurements, historical research, books and memorabilia. The 2024 70th Anniversary issue is no exception. It is a "wish book" for vintage firearm shooters, as well as offering products for sale that can be picked up for just a fun perusal. The Dixie Gun Works 2024 Annual is available at dixiegunworks.com. \$8

NAZI BELT BUCKLE PISTOL

Q: I found a rare Nazi belt buckle pistol in my dad's things. I want to know if you could help me to know more about this.

A. E.
Email

A: Interesting piece. Initially, I had a few thoughts of my own, but I also ran it by a couple of experts. We are all in agreement that it is a fake, though a relatively early one. The limited number of proper belt buckle pistols that are around have designations to the "SS". An example of a correct one may be seen at the National Firearms Museum in Fairfax, Virginia. It was previously the property of G&A Publisher Robert E. Petersen. He once allowed me to take it to the range and fire it in order to do a story. Caliber was 7.65mm (.32 ACP). It worked just fine though. Needless to say, accuracy was somewhat lacking. As they were intended for up-close-and-personal work, this is hardly surprising. Even though your buckle is not original, it's still probably worth \$3,000 or so as a curiosity.

A PAIR OF PYTHONS

Q: I know you usually only do one gun per submission, but I have a special request. I have a pair of Colt Pythons in .357 Magnum. Both are 6-inch models. One is blue with serial number V08XXX, and the other is nickel, number K32XXX. I would like to know what years they are and the values. I would say the blue one is between 70 and 80 percent. The



REPRODUCTION NAZI BELT BUCKLE: \$3,000

nickel one is 80 percent. I'm thinking that I should insure them, so any help with value would be great.

S. M.
Email

A: You didn't send any pictures, but assuming your description of the guns is accurate, an evaluation isn't too much of a problem. According to the "Forty-Fourth Edition Blue Book of Gun Values" (bluebookofgunvalues.com), the blued gun, manufactured in 1971, is worth between \$1,100 and \$1,400. The nickled one, made in 1981, is valued at \$2,250.

"GIMCRACK" IDENTIFIED

Q: I was pleasantly surprised and actually shocked when I opened my February 2024 issue of "Guns & Ammo." In the "Identification and Values" section, there was an inquiry about a mystery "gimcrack." I was a competitive flintlock shooter in the '60s. I shot

the nationals at Friendship, Indiana. Also, I shot at several Ohio clubs. Almost all had a traders row, so I'm not sure where I picked one up. Mine has a serial number etched in. In my possession, it was used to prime the flintlock pan on my match rifle. It's a very handy, useful tool, giving the flow of powder protection from wind and the elements. I used it effectively for many shoots to fire thousands of rounds. I believe that it was manufactured for this specific purpose.

D. B.
Email

A: Thanks for your response. Yours was one of several letters identifying the contrivance as a priming tool. I'm inclined to go with that assessment unless we come up with an alternative with more definitive information. Other correspondents reckoned it was anything from a tap alignment/auto-feed tool to a tobacco pipe tamper. Whatever it is, it generated a considerable amount of mail.

S&W MODEL 28 WORTH?

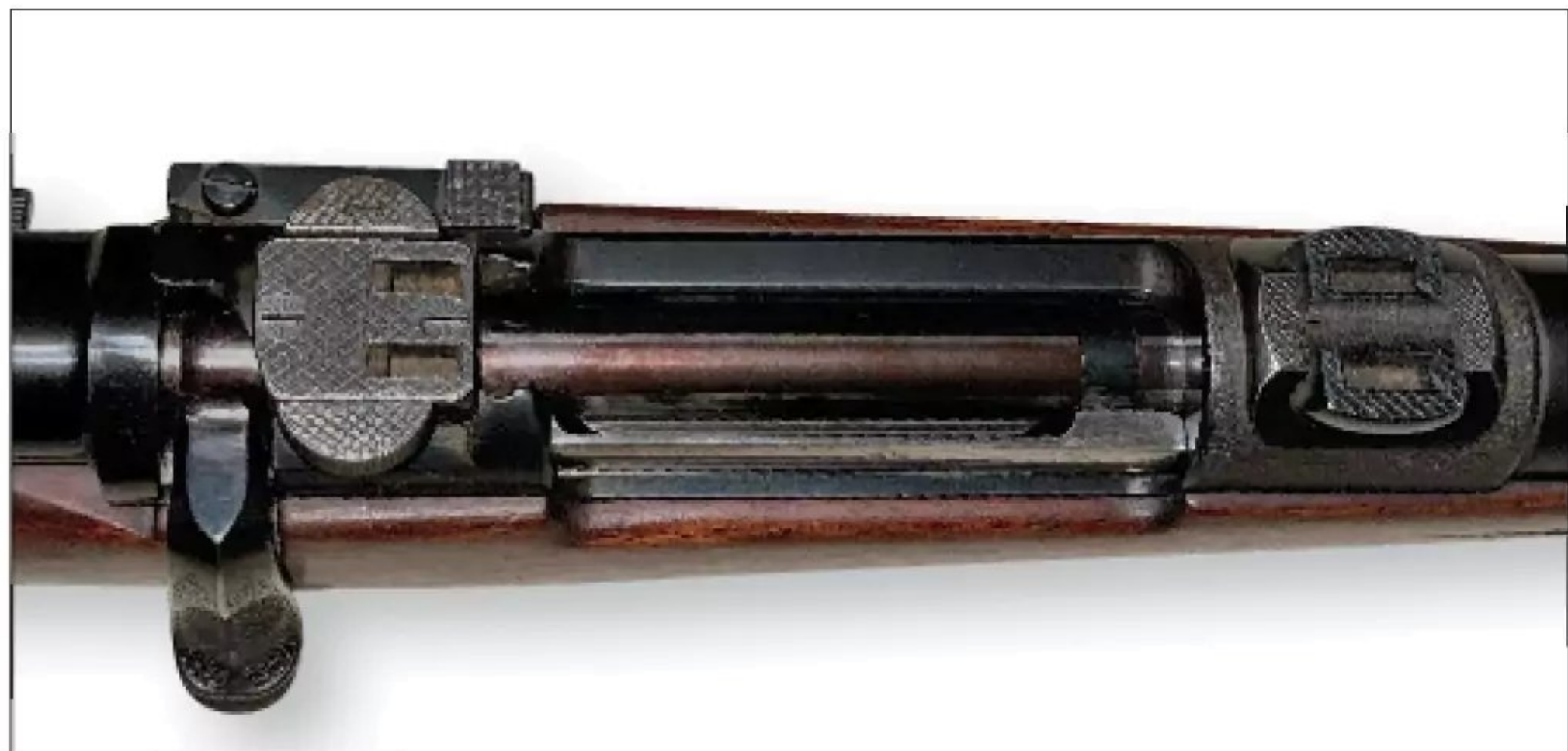
Q: This Smith & Wesson Model 28-2 was my first pistol, which I bought second-hand more than 50 years ago. I would like to know its approximate value. It was used 40 years ago only for target shooting with cast lead semi-wadcutters backed with 3.0 grains of Bullseye powder.

K. T.
Email

A: Yours is a very nice condition revolver and wonder-



CZECH MAUSER (SPRINGER CUSTOM SPORTER), .270 WIN., 95%: \$3,500



ful firearm in general. The Smith & Wesson Model 28 Highway Patrolman was introduced in 1954 and retired in 1986. According to the excellent "Standard Catalog of Smith & Wesson, 4th Edition" by Jim Supica and Richard Nahas, some few appeared a bit later, originating from the S&W Performance Center. The three-screw example pictured, which could have been manufactured between 1961 and 1987, in 98 percent condition, is valued by the 'Forty-Fourth Edition Blue Book of Gun Values" (bluebookofgunvalues.com) at \$800.

SPORTER MAUSER

Q: I have a rifle that I would like to get some information on and an approximate value. My sister-in-law's father had this made for him in 1950.

Since I do not know a lot about these rifles, I will send some bullet points of information she has gathered. The gun is inscribed on the top of the barrel with the following: "CUSTOM BUILT FOR B.V. BAKER", which is my sister-in law's father, "BY J.O.H. SPRINGER s ERBEN, VIENNA AUSTRIA 1950". The Mauser action was probably from Czechoslovakia, suggested by another "expert." It has a hair set-trigger, is in .270 Winchester with a 27-inch barrel length. The gun still has the matching scope with leather caps. Serial number on barrel is 37XX.

C. L.

Email

A: Quite a handsome-looking piece! Workmanship seems to be quite good and, fortunately, it's

chambered in a popular caliber. The fact the rifle has its scope and original claw mounts is a decided plus. Waffenfabrik Brunn was indeed a Czechoslovakian maker. The gun has been tastefully engraved and features some nice relief work on the floorplate. All-in-all, it's a class act. Depending upon the mounts and the quality of the glass, I'd rate the worth of the piece between \$3,500 and \$4,000.

M1903 HEAT TREATING

Q: I am sure I am not the first to point out an important omission in your response about the M1903 rework in the February 2024 issue. The rifle in the column was in the 179,000 serial number range. Any Rock Island '03 with a serial number under 285,507

is considered unsafe to shoot due to a brittle receiver from improper heat treating. I have one in my '03 collection of the same vintage. Mine has a 1919 barrel, which indicates that it made it through World War I without blowing up. Since it may or may not burst on the next firing, I do not risk it, and have tagged it as such.

B. McL.

Email

A: Thank you for your added info. I have had similar letters from readers who agree with your assessment.

MARLIN 336 MISPRINT

Q: I am looking for information about a Marlin .30-30 Model 336 RC that my father purchased in 1972 from an individual who said he bought the rifle in 1969. That is the only information I have on the rifle. I have two questions: First, was there a misprint in the Marlin name stamped on the barrel, and is it worth anything if it is a misprint? Secondly, do you know where I can purchase a rear sight elevator? As you can see, the one in the picture is too wide.

D. P.

Email

A: The Marlin 336 is a great rifle. Quite often I get questions concerning misprints on firearms. Unless it is something special, unlike coins, stamping anomalies do not affect a gun's value. Numrich Gun Parts Corporation, gunpartscorp.com, 914-679-4867, should be able to help you out with the rear sight elevator. 



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JAMES TARR

DAY(N)IGHT SAVINGS

XS SIGHTS announced the second generation of its R3D day/night sights (R3D 2.0) in July 2023, which got me thinking about iron sights on a pistol. I believe day/night sights are the best choice for handguns intended for defensive use, and the earliest ones I can think of also came from XS Sights circa 1996, the famed Big Dot and V-shaped rear blade.

I think a clarification is in order. As I'm using the term "day/night sights" for handguns, know that these can be used in any gradient light, day or night. These sights have glow-in-the-dark tritium inserts for use in no/low light, and a luminescent ring on the front sight that increases visibility from dawn to dusk.

The XS Sights Big Dot was inspired by the express sights used on some dangerous game rifles. The rear sight was a shallow "V" with a vertical white line — available with or without a tritium capsule oriented vertically — stretching down from the center of the V. The front sight was big and round with a tritium capsule in the center. Subsequent versions introduced white, orange, or greenish-yellow rings around the capsule. Big Dot sights are simple and quick to use; put the dot at the top of the shallow V, "dot the i," as some say, and pull the trigger.

Back in the day, I wasn't much of a fan of these sights because of how big and imprecisely round the front sight is. I preferred a traditional flat-topped front sight I could align with a standard rear notch. I remember getting into a loud, enthusiastic discussion with the late YouTuber James Yeager about these sights 10 years ago. Yeager was a big fan of the XS Sights Big Dot, and now that I've got some years under my belt, I realize he was right. At realistic defensive distances, as long as that big front dot is on the bad guy, rounds will land on target. The older I get — and the older my eyes get — the more I need a big, easy-to-see front sight to aim with.

Here I am at the point where we need another point for

clarification. Since red dots on handguns are increasingly popular, we will soon see people at the range who have only ever aimed handguns using optics — not irons. When using iron sights on a pistol, your focus should always be on the front sight; it should be crisp and centered in the rear sight. With irons, the rear sight is like a window frame; you should be looking through it, not at it. Anything on the rear

sight that draws your eye away from the all-important front sight is generally bad. If there are marks on the rear sight, such as dots, lines, etc., then whatever is on the front sight should be bigger and brighter. That's exactly what we get with the XS Sights Big Dot, but I wasn't the only person who wanted a highly visible front sight with a more traditional profile. Several companies have since responded.

Most companies selling day/night sights offer both an orange/red- and a yellow/green-color front sight option. Some shooters prefer the orange/red because they have deuteranopia and are unable to perceive "green" light, or are used to looking for a red dot in electronic optics. Technically, the yellow/green color appears brighter to most people's eyes on the color spectrum, and it stays visible longer in lower light. When it's dark, the concept is backed up by tritium inserts that glow for about 10 years.

It was in the 1970s and '80s when manufacturers started equipping pistols with prominent sights featuring marks, most commonly in the form of a three white-dot arrangement. The problem with most three-dot sights is that the front dot is often the same size as the pair of dots to either side of the notch on the rear sight. This means that the front dot appears smaller than the rear pair, given that the front sight is several inches farther away from the eye. That's the exact opposite of what you want in an iron-sight setup. Rear sights should not distract your focus from the front sight. You can agree with me, or you can be wrong.

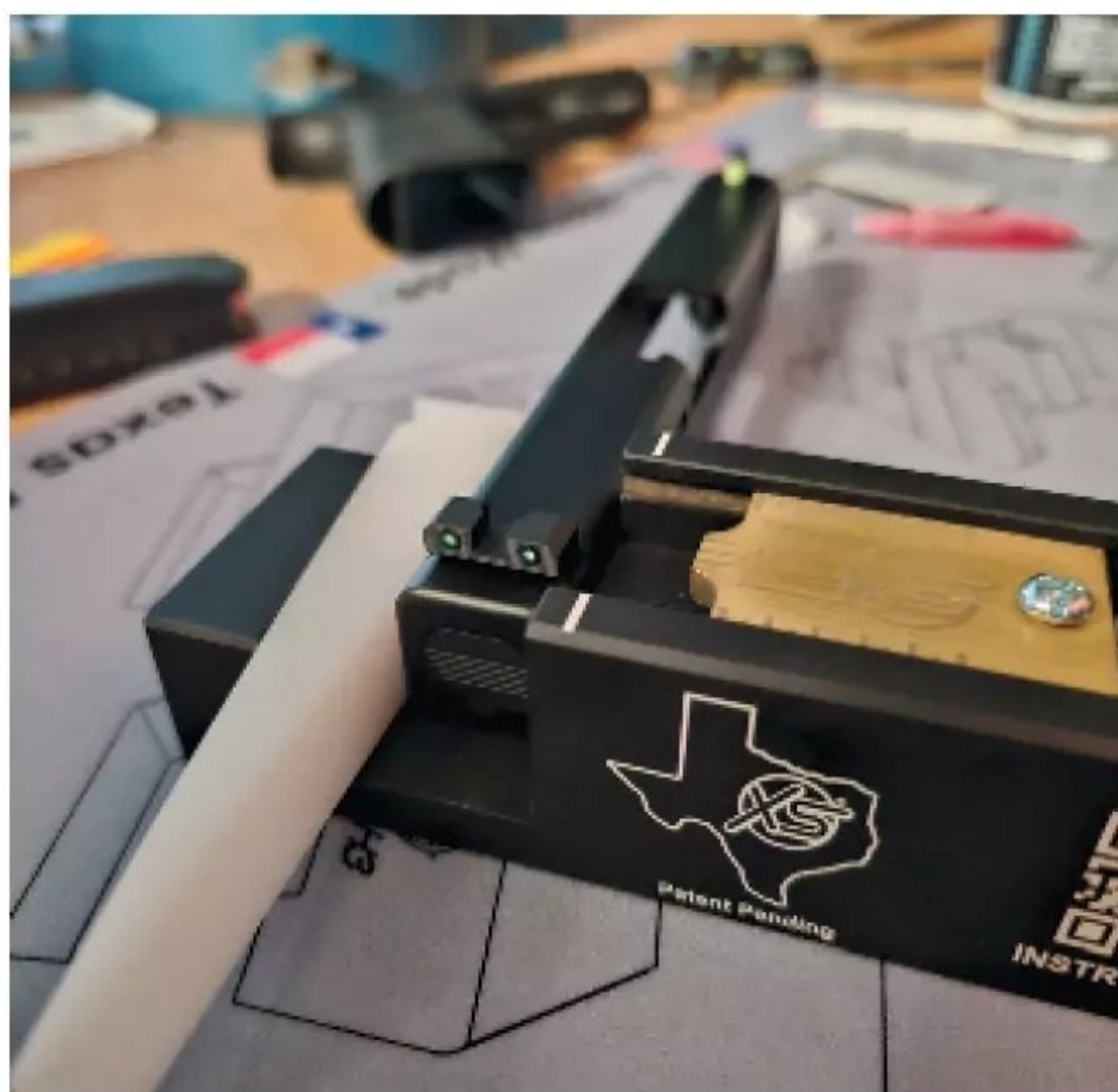
Day/night sights are now mainstream, and it seems most gun enthusiasts accept them as the best choice for a



Tritium-powered sights will aid effective shot placement. Evaluate your sights in low light at the range and see the difference.

defensive handgun. Consider the FBI's current duty pistols, the Glock 17M and 19M. Whoever spec'd these guns knew what they were doing, a pleasant surprise when referring to a government agency. In addition to a reduced trigger pull weight and a built-in magazine well, these guns come with day/night sights, the front sight having a tritium insert surrounded by a bright orange ring. The FBI's guns also feature a serrated rear sight with tritium inserts to either side of the U-shaped notch.

Allow me to come full circle, back to XS Sights R3D 2.0. XS Sights still offers several variations of the Big Dot and, in my view, I don't know that there's a better choice for a day/night handgun sight. This is especially true for sub-compact pistols that would likely be used in defense at



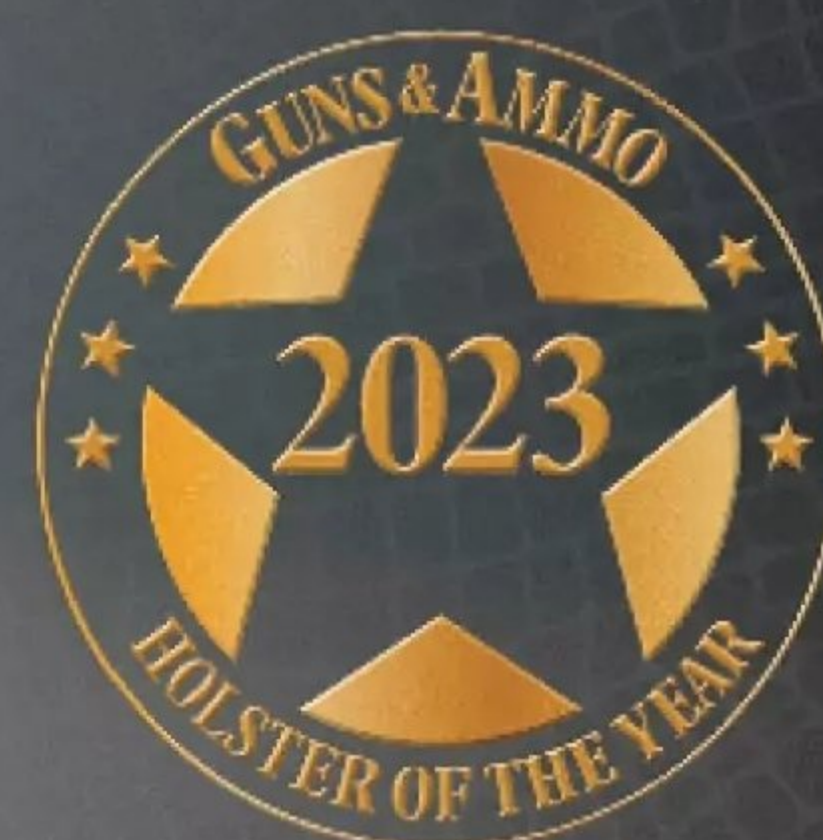
XS Sights offers hand tools and inline sight pusher kits for slides with dovetails. R3D sights can be bundled with tools. **\$80-\$330**



PHOTO: MICHAEL ANSCHUTZ

R3D 2.0 dual-illumination sights feature bigger and brighter rear tritium dots. A PVC ring surrounds the lamps for a defined edge. **\$138**

conversational distances. But if you are one who prefers the more traditional post/notch sight setup, the R3D 2.0 sights provide that. The R3D 2.0 sights were engineered to be a little stronger than the first generation, and are designed to install easier with its leading beveled edge. Whether you choose orange or that greenish-yellow hue, the bright ring around the tritium insert in the front sight is photoluminescent paint. Ultraviolet light, such as that from the sun's rays, energizes the molecules in the paint. No matter the lighting condition you may find yourself needing to defend yourself, you'll be able to see your sights. XS Sights offers a solution for just about every pistol made. Worth noting, XS Sights developed an easy-to-use sight installation tool — also available as a bundle with a set of R3D 2.0 sights — so you can DIY at home. Learn more at xssights.com. **GA**



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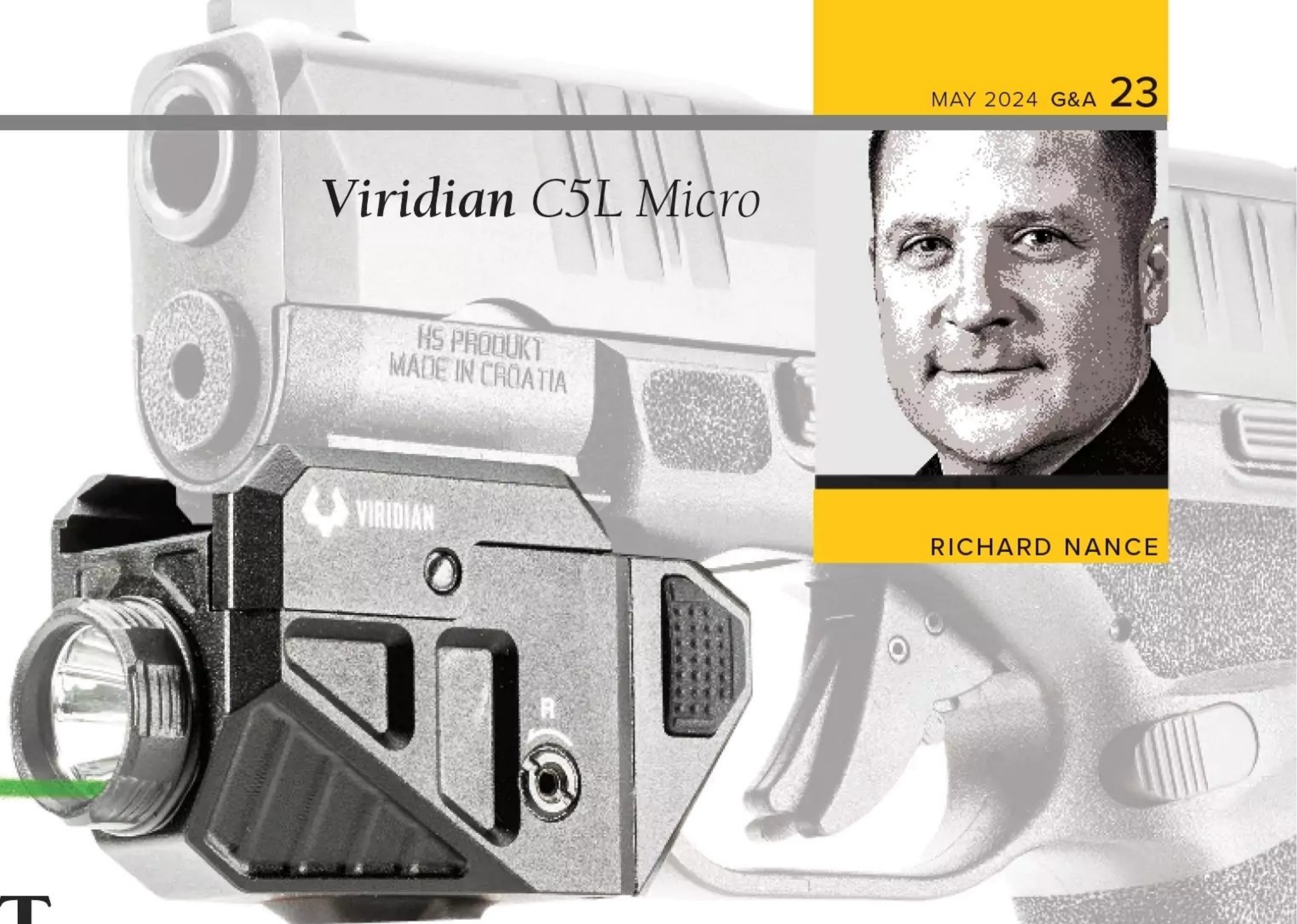
BURRISOPTICS.COM

Viridian C5L Micro

Made by Viridian Weapon Technologies, the C5L Micro with “SAFECharge” represents the latest iteration of the C Series, optimized for compact and micro-compact pistols. A ratcheting plate supports near-universal compatibility and the C5L Micro is powered by an internal battery with a magnetic port. In addition to a green aiming laser, light output is 550 lumens with a 60-minute runtime. When using an equipped holster, the instant-on technology activates the light and/or laser to one of eight user-programmed modes as it is drawn. \$229



RICHARD NANCE



BEYOND LIGHT

HAVING RELEASED its first green-laser product 20 years ago, Viridian’s C5 green laser sight and C5L light-and-laser combo was released in 2012. The C5L was the first compact green laser sight with a light. More than 10 years ago, the C5L projected 100 lumens of white light. The C5L Micro yields 550 lumens.

The Viridian C5L Micro extends these benefits to the compact and micro pistol segment of the defensive handgun market. The housing is sleek, controls intuitive, and it’s loaded with programmable functions. The housing is machined from 6061 aluminum and hardcoat anodized. For being small, the C5L Micro is robust and lightweight. It measures just 1.59 inches in length, 1.02 inches in width, and 1.15 inches in height. The C5L Micro weighs a mere 1.59 ounces and is rated to withstand drops of 1 meter.

The C5L Micro features a uniquely designed universal mount consisting of a ratcheting plate that slides back and forth to align a raised tab with the slot in an accessory rail. This fresh approach means that the C5L Micro can tuck tightly to a triggerguard. The positioning of the rubberized buttons is always within reach on both sides.

A single press of either button activates or deactivates the unit. There is no “momentary on” mode; it’s constant-on until you hit the button again to shut it off. When used with one of Viridian’s custom kydex holsters, the C5L Micro will turn on instantly when drawn. This has been a unique feature of Viridian holsters going back to the original C5 and C5L models, but the lights and holsters are more streamlined,

compact, and practical for everyday carry. To turn the C5L Micro off, simply reholster the pistol. The need to manually activate or deactivate the C5L Micro is eliminated with a Viridian holster. Finding a compatible holster with a pistol-mounted light and laser can be difficult, but Viridian offers kydex and leather options for both outside-the-waistband (OWB) and inside the waistband (IWB) carry.

The C5L Micro’s green laser is adjusted using the supplied wrench. With an unloaded pistol pointed in a safe direction, align the laser to the front sight as you aim it to obtain a rough zero. Then, take it to the range and confirm the zero by firing groups at various distances.

Eight modes manage light and battery output. The “High” setting provides 550 lumens, “Medium” offers 270 lumens, and “Low” projects 120 lumens for the longest runtime. Runtime is also affected when using both laser- and light-activation modes, strobing laser mode, and saved when used in the laser-only mode. To toggle between modes, press both activation buttons simultaneously and release. Once the desired mode is selected, press either button to turn the C5L Micro on or off.

The internal battery within the C5L Micro is rechargeable using the magnetic charging port connected to the supplied SAFECharge power bank. The SAFECharge works quickly, and you can even leave the C5L Micro on the charger until you need it. Should you need your C5L Micro inspected or repaired, it’s backed by Viridian’s limited lifetime warranty. Visit viridianweapontech.com to learn more. 

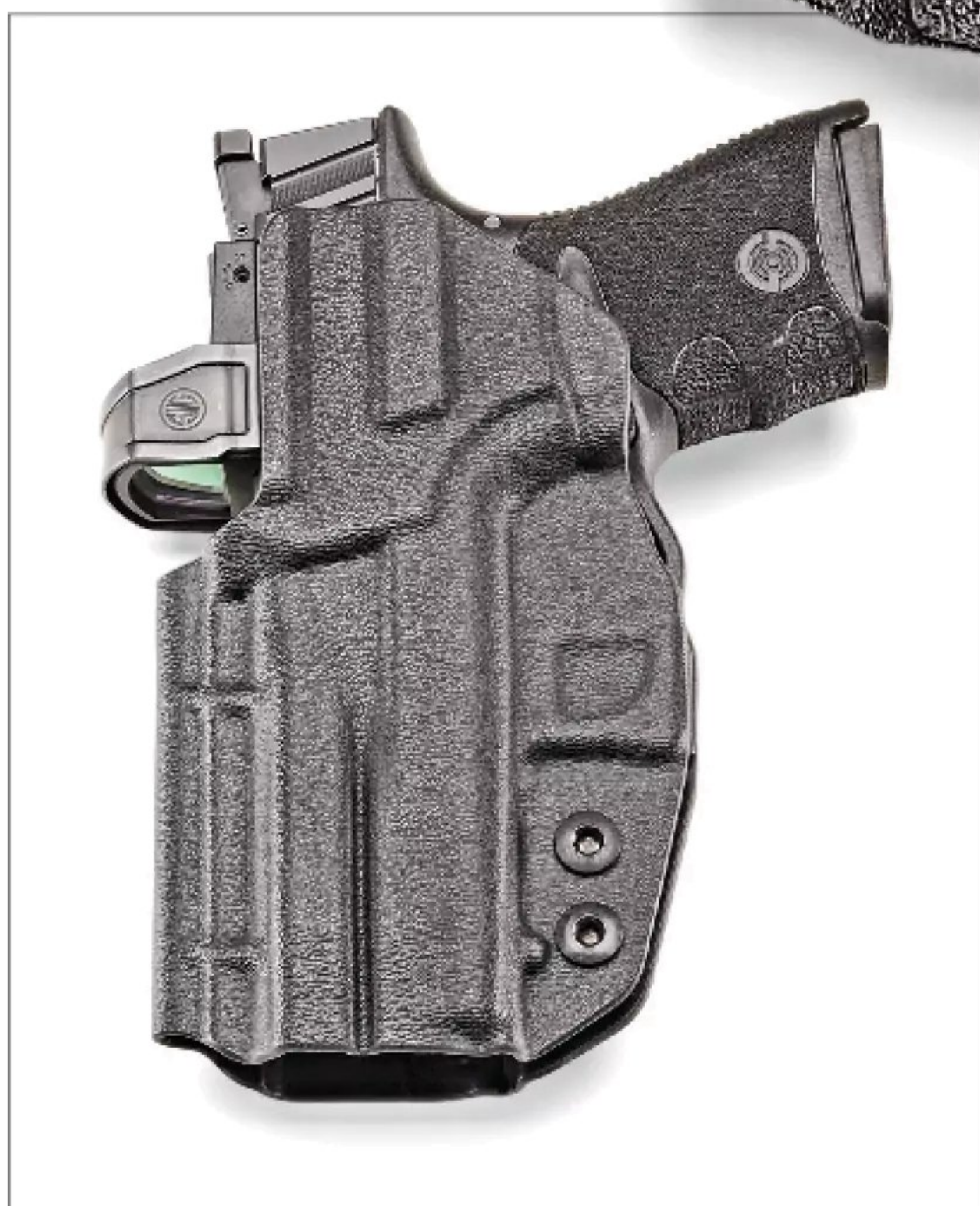


Charging the C5L Micro is straightforward. The magnetic charging cord can be plugged in without removing it from the pistol. The supplied power bank can be charged separately, on the go.

THE CARRY RIG

A modular IWB holster, upgradable for appendix carry.

C&G Holsters are entirely “Made in America” and are designed to accept all red-dot sight configurations. Introduced in 2024, Gen6 models include inside-the-waistband (IWB) and outside-the-waistband (OWB) Covert series for popular Glock, SIG Sauer, and Springfield Armory models. G&A tested the IWB Covert with a Glock clone. **\$60**



C&G COVERT GEN6

EVERYDAY CARRY HOLSTERS should have certain features in common. Pick up any C&G holster and you’ll find them: Precision-fit manufacturing, durability, and configurability. I would argue that they should also be made in the U.S.A. Why? Because more Americans carry a handgun for personal protection than any mass of citizens in the world.

Several other features rise to importance. Most holsters should be red-dot ready, for example. This means that the top of the holster above the slide should be notched to accommodate any reflex sight. The bottom of the holster should have an open bottom, too. An open muzzle means that the holster will allow for pistols with extended slides, threaded barrels and compensators. A modern holster must have a tall sight channel. Designed to allow alignment over a can, suppressor-height sights are a common solution for a sight system that backs up the potential for battery failure with an electronic reflex sight. They’re usually tall and sometimes sharp enough to snag on the draw.

Despite being engineered and CNC machined for a precision fit, a quality holster should still have adjustable retention. How much strength is required to snatch a pistol from a friction-fit holster is a subjective quality. Further, adjustable tension can be used to adapt a holster to a similar-fitting copy of a popular model.

An audible *click*, one that can be felt by the hand is a reassuring feature, as well. We don’t always realize when we’ve attempted to reholster a gun with a tuft of clothing.

For an OWB holster, having adjustable belt loops is useful, while a quality clip, or set of clips, can be pivotal for a clean drawstroke. There’s nothing more frustrating than drawing the holster with a pistol when you’re in a hurry.

One holster brand checked these boxes: C&G Holsters.

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C&G HOLSTERS GEN6 IWB COVERT/ALPHA KYDEX HOLSTER	
MATERIALS	Kydex (shell), steel (hardware), rubber (bushings)
CARRY TYPE	Inside the waistband (IWB)
RETENTION TYPE	Level 1; friction fit
ADJUSTABILITY	Yes
MSRP	\$60
HANDGUN FIT	Glock 43/48, including X/MOS models (Stoeger STR-9MC, tested)
ACCESSORY RAIL ACCOMMODATIONS	No
POSITIONS TO CARRY	IWB; 3 to 5 o'clock (right hand); AIWB w/ Alpha Upgrade (+\$20)
AVERAGE TIME TO ATTACH	45 seconds
COMFORT RATING	4/5
CONCEALMENT CLOTHING	Loose-fitting, untucked shirt
AVERAGE DRAW-TO-FIRE TIME	1.27 seconds
MANUFACTURER	C&G Holsters, 724-858-2856, candgholsters.com

Draw-to-fire time is the average of five clean draws producing an A-zone hit on a stationary target positioned at 21 feet.

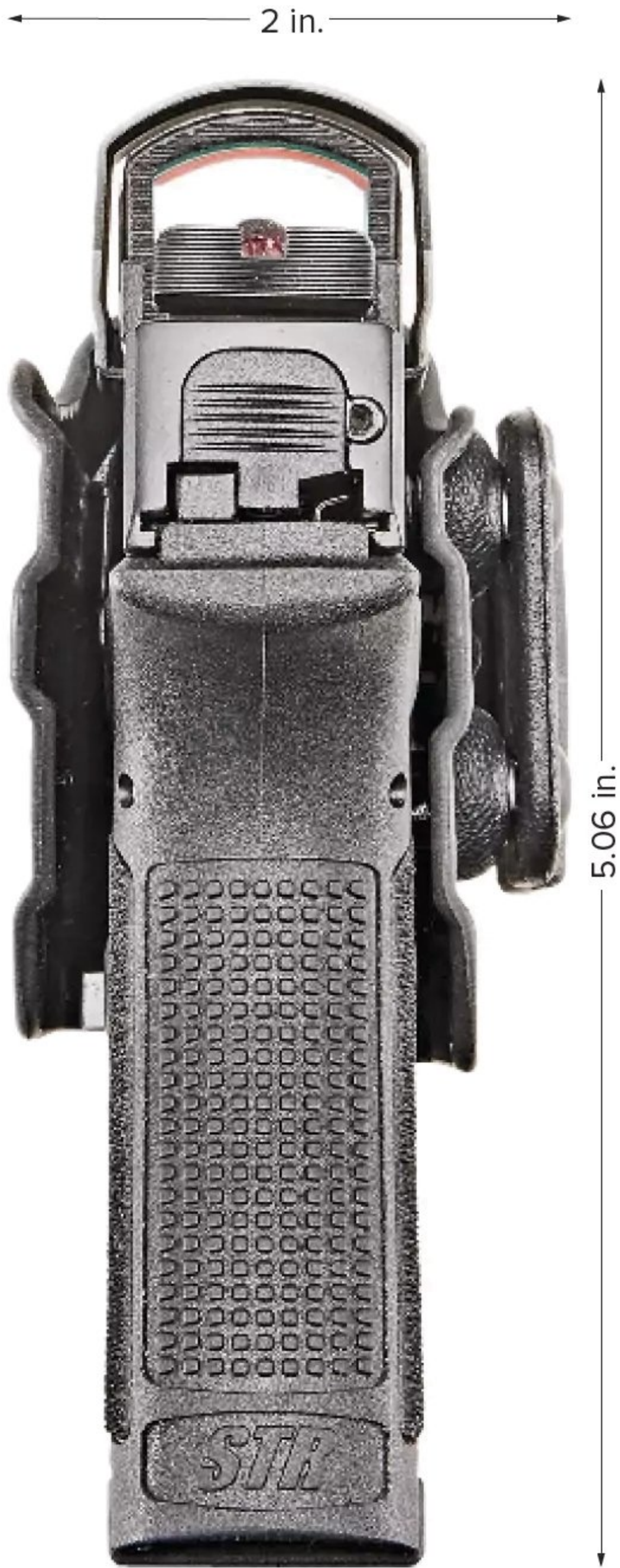
C&G Holsters introduced the Gen6 collection at the 2024 SHOT Show. The differences are subtle, but there are three new ribs down the center. These ribs push against the inside of a belt and increase security against the holster sliding fore and aft within the clips. On the inside, these ribs provide a little more relief to accommodate the right side of a large bilateral slide-lock/slide-release lever.

The mouth of the holster has also been modified from previous generations. The Gen6 mold features a pronounced funnel-like opening to make inserting a pistol a little easier. Guns & Ammo has thoroughly evaluated C&G Holsters' Covert models prior to this review (August 2023), and wearing the Gen6 models doesn't feel different, but these holsters didn't slide or rock on a quality, two-ply-thick gun belt. The Gen6 enhancements are largely about the subtle details.

Clips and concealment wings highlight the Covert holsters' modularity. Available as part of the order, or sold separately after the initial purchase, C&G accessories are interchangeable using a Phillips-head screwdriver. A single, top-mounted, large plastic clip is standard with the Covert, accommodating 1¾-inch belts. However, a pair of C&G-branded spring-steel clips can be specified for an additional \$20. The metal clips mount to the bottom set of holes, as does the IWB Dark Wing, a \$20 attachment designed to push clothing fabric away from the grip and reduce the risk of printing. The Alpha Upgrade Kit combines the C&G spring-steel clips and IWB Dark Wing. A testament to the quality of the C&G metal clips is that they were patented and tested for 30,000 hours of saltwater durability. It's doubtful that these steel clips will corrode.



The Gen6 Covert comes standard with a single polymer clip that is adjustable for ride height. The same holster can be enhanced with the Alpha Upgrade kit featuring metal clips and a concealment wing.



Both the single and double clips offer adjustability for cant. However, the single clip provides an additional quarter-inch of ride-height adjustment.

Both styles feature a tab to unhook the clips from the bottom of a belt, but the single plastic clip is faster to install when attaching the Covert holster to a belt. The two-clip style offers more security with separate attachment points, but you have to ensure both clips have engaged or disengaged the belt when putting the holster on or taking it off.

A distinctive feature of C&G IWB Covert holsters is the contoured back, which was shaped to aid in comfort against the body. There's also a bump-out at the bottom that pushes the muzzle away from the body, further tucking the grip close to the body for better concealment.

45-DAY CARRY

I've evaluated the previous generation of Covert IWB holsters for various Glock, SIG Sauer and Springfield Armory pistols. Activity and body type will determine if you will want the Alpha Upgrade. For extensive periods of sitting or driving, I preferred the standard clip configuration. When standing or moving, I valued the Alpha Upgrade. Though convertible, 45 days of real-world testing demonstrated that I preferred two holsters, one dedicated for each setup. I also learned that these will accept unlisted clones of the more popular handguns. **G&A** — E. Poole

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Vortex Defender-ST Micro Red Dot Vortex Venom Riflescopes



TOM BECKSTRAND

TO THE SUMMIT!

WATCHING PRODUCTS BEING BUILT, visiting factories, and being able to sit and talk with engineers and product managers about what I just saw are some of my favorite aspects of this job. Early in my career, I realized that attending these events is the best way to gain a technical education, which I ardently desired to properly write this column.

In December 2023, I attended the Vortex Optics Media Summit at the company's headquarters near Madison, Wisconsin. It was one of the best media events I've experienced. Dinner on the first night was a good time because it served as a mini-reunion with industry friends. It was also a chance to forge new relationships, a process that continues through the following days. Everyone laughed, ate lots of food, and stayed up too late.

The next morning, we pulled into Vortex where I was surprised at how big the place was. It's not just one building, it's about a dozen big buildings and warehouses sitting on tens of acres. Filing into the Vortex Experience center, a one-story building full of classrooms and indoor ranges, we started the day in a classroom. The ensuing PowerPoint presentation lasted a couple of hours, covering all the new-for-2024 products coming from Vortex. (It didn't suck.) Of course, it's important for gunwriters to pay attention, take notes, and start asking questions about what makes each product unique, distinguishing it from the competition.

VENOM 1-6x24mm SFP

The first product discussed was Vortex's Venom 1-6x24mm, a second focal plane (SFP) scope. This model is a mid-grade optic that should slide across the gun counter for around \$300. It's a big deal because no other low-powered variable optic (LPVO) is near this price point while offering a field of view of 126 feet at 100 yards on 1 power. There are certainly other scopes that offer a similar field of view — Vortex's Razor HD Gen III 1-10x24mm FFP (\$4,000, vortexoptics.com), for example — but they are far more expensive. LPVOs frequently get put on rifles that need to be shot

quickly, at multiple targets, or at close range, such as AR-15s and lightweight hunting rifles. Being able to see such a wide area makes a rifle useful under those circumstances.

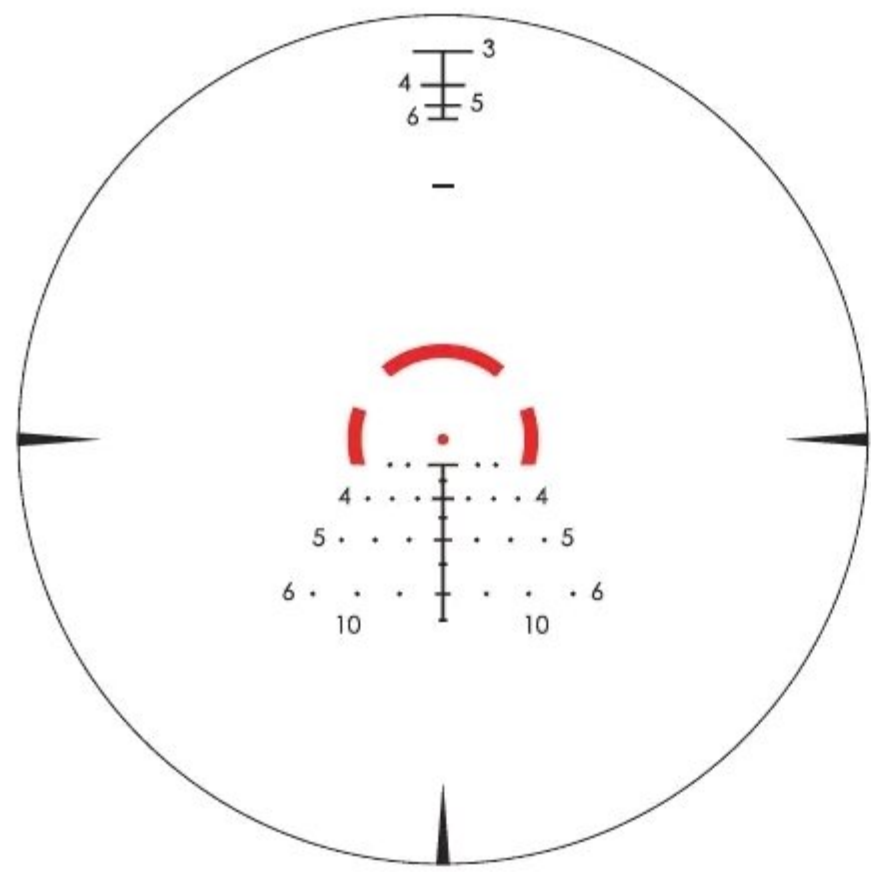
The Venom 1-6x24mm also features the AR-BDC3 reticle. This is an SFP-illuminated reticle etched onto the glass with a ranging feature, BDC sub-tensions, and 5-mph wind increments. The optic uses a CR2032 battery to illuminate the reticle, which I found visible in almost every lighting condition. The reticle features a floating dot with an interrupted horseshoe that's around and above the dot. Below the dot is a ballistic tree that was useful out to 600 yards. This reticle is meant to be zeroed at 50 yards with .223 Rem./5.56mm and .308 Win./7.62mm loads, which makes an almost point-and-shoot rifle out to about 200 yards. I found that the tree was accurate enough for ringing steel at the respective yard lines.



VENOM 3-15x44mm FFP

The next optic introduction was the Venom 3-15x44mm scope with a first focal plane (FFP) reticle. This scope will sell for around \$450, making it hard to beat for its features and performance. Vortex built its brand on giving customers what they wanted for a competitive price, and that philosophy rings true with the Venom series. (A 5-25x56mm FFP was the first scope in the Venom lineup, introduced in 2021 with a current retail of \$700.) The Venom models are some of the least expensive scopes available that offer an exposed elevation turret with a zero-stop, a capped windage turret, a "Christmas tree" reticle, and the ability to focus down to 10 yards. I spent some time with the new 3-15X at the range and was impressed by its optical quality and comprehensive feature set.

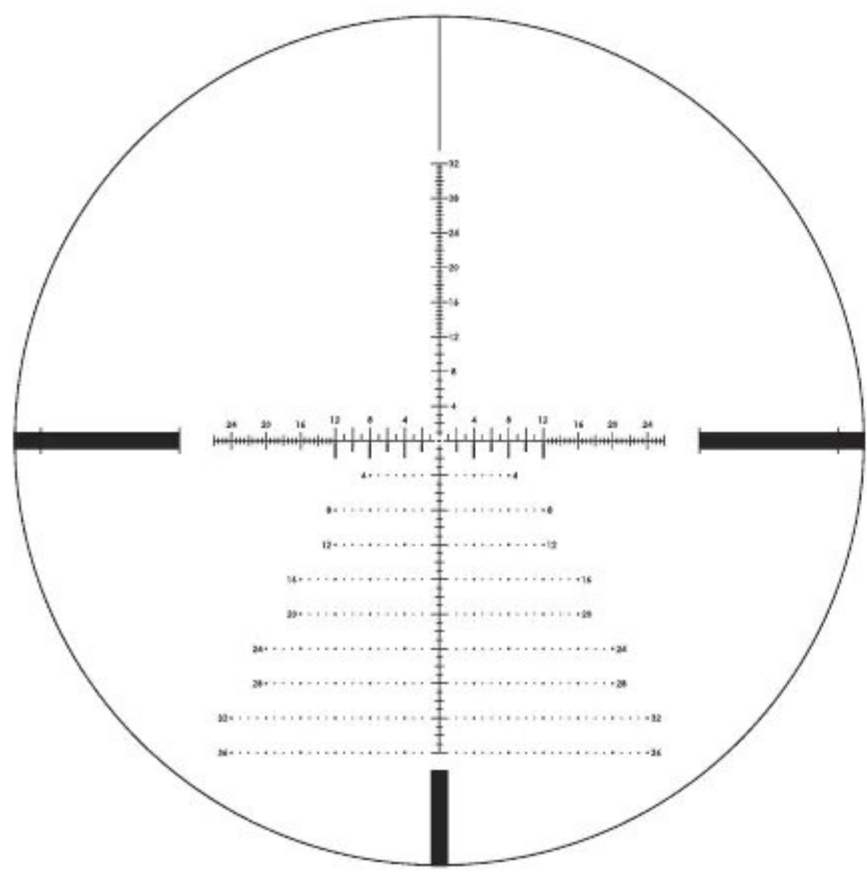
The exposed elevation turret is marked in either quarter-minute or tenth-mil increments, depending on the reticle. Many customers fuss over how the turrets feel because of the perceived quality. The Venom turrets are "clicky," which should keep the most fastidious customer happy. Vortex has some of the best reticles and, in my opinion,



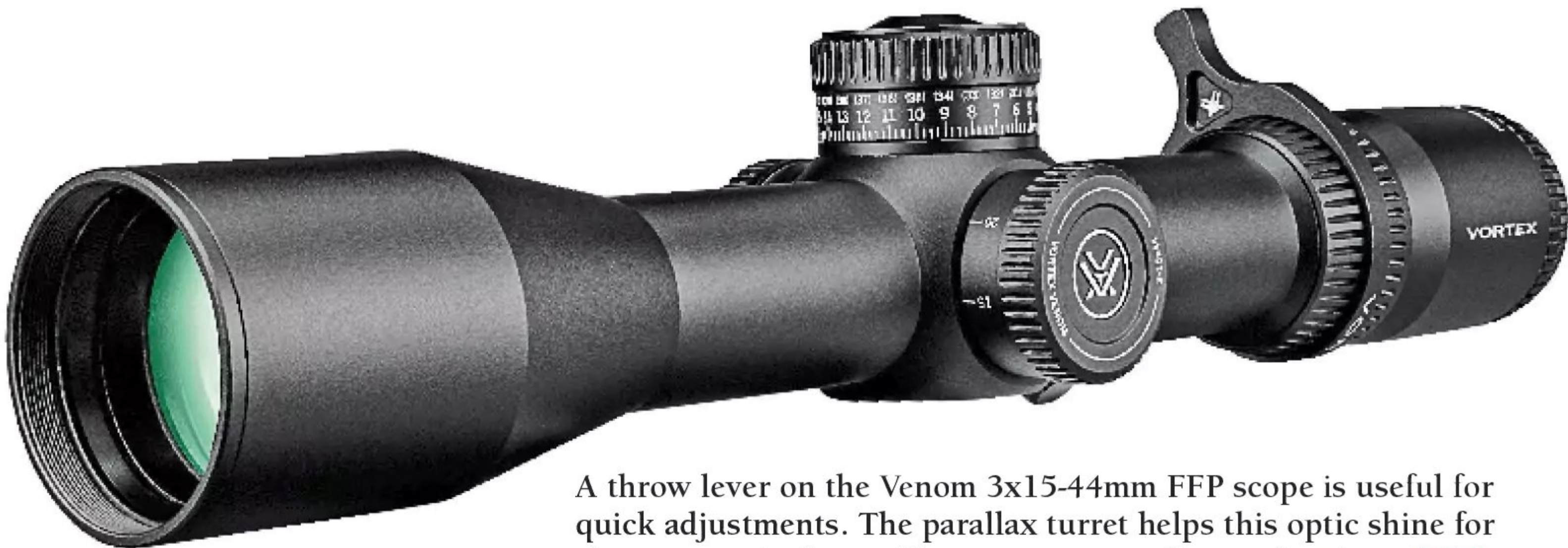
The illuminated AR-BDC3 reticle allows for quick target acquisition.



With an retail price of \$300, the Venom 1-6x24mm SFP scope is an affordable LVPO with a fantastic field of view at 100 yards. It is a workhorse of an optic, providing great glass quality for medium-range target engagements. **\$450**



The EBR-7C (Enhanced Battle Ready) reticle provides fast windage corrections.



A throw lever on the Venom 3x15-44mm FFP scope is useful for quick adjustments. The parallax turret helps this optic shine for short-range rimfire and long-range centerfire applications. **\$650**

one of the best was put in this scope. The EBR-7C long-range reticle has a floating dot for accuracy work and a horizontal crosshair that subtends in .2-mil increments. These are two of the most demanded reticle components used by precision rifle shooters today. Being able to focus the scope down to 10 yards also opens up the Venom for use on rimfire and air rifles. The Venom 3-15X scope is far nicer than anything I had on a .22 as a kid; it would be one of my top picks for such an application.

Perhaps the most enjoyable time at the 2023 Vortex Summit was at the range. Laying my hands on the two scopes was crucial because no amount of looking at specification sheets or reading the opinions of others (including mine) offers the same understanding as using a product as it was intended. Vortex presented several configurations available for our use, allowing us to make more informed opinions of each scope. Day one was a wrap at the rifle range.

DEFENDER-ST

The second day of the Summit was spent on a pistol range shooting the new Defender ST micro red-dot sight. Back at the Vortex Experience building, we just didn't do some shooting. Instead, training was provided by Vortex Edge instructors, including Pete Schreier, a former deputy sheriff and U.S. Army 10th Mountain Division veteran of Kosovo and Iraq, and Chris Urrutia, an Afghan and Iraq veteran who was also a North Carolina police officer and SWAT



The Defender-ST features a top-mounted battery and durable aluminum housing. Push-button controls are intuitive. **\$470**

sniper. These instructors were two of the best I've ever trained with. Instruction is usually pretty good at media events, but the function is biased toward supervision, ensuring attendees are being safe. However, Vortex's Edge training was fantastic. I was able to identify a few areas that I needed to work on. The entire day was spent shooting the Defender-ST, so we diagnosed errors and still had time to train and correct deficiencies.

While I appreciated the instruction, I loved the Defender ST micro red

dot. It has a glass lens that doesn't distort the image when looking through it. There is no blue tint visible, as with some red-dot sights, and it is available with either a 3- or 6-minute of angle (MOA) dot size. The dot shuts off after being stationary for 10 minutes to extend battery life, but it activates when moved. The durability and low cost of the Defender-ST is most attractive (\$470, vortexoptics.com). Vortex builds these red dot sights to pass all the military drop and impact certifications. The Defender-ST mounts using the Leupold DeltaPoint Pro footprint, thread- and recoil-lug pattern, meaning that it'll fit most optic-ready pistols.

Media events such as the Vortex Summit occur throughout the year, and they're how gunwriters get rapid access to new products while building relationships with the minds who create them. Networking is vital to learning about existing and future hardware, and these experiences are an important part of what makes it possible for me to share knowledge through the pages of Guns & Ammo. **G&A**

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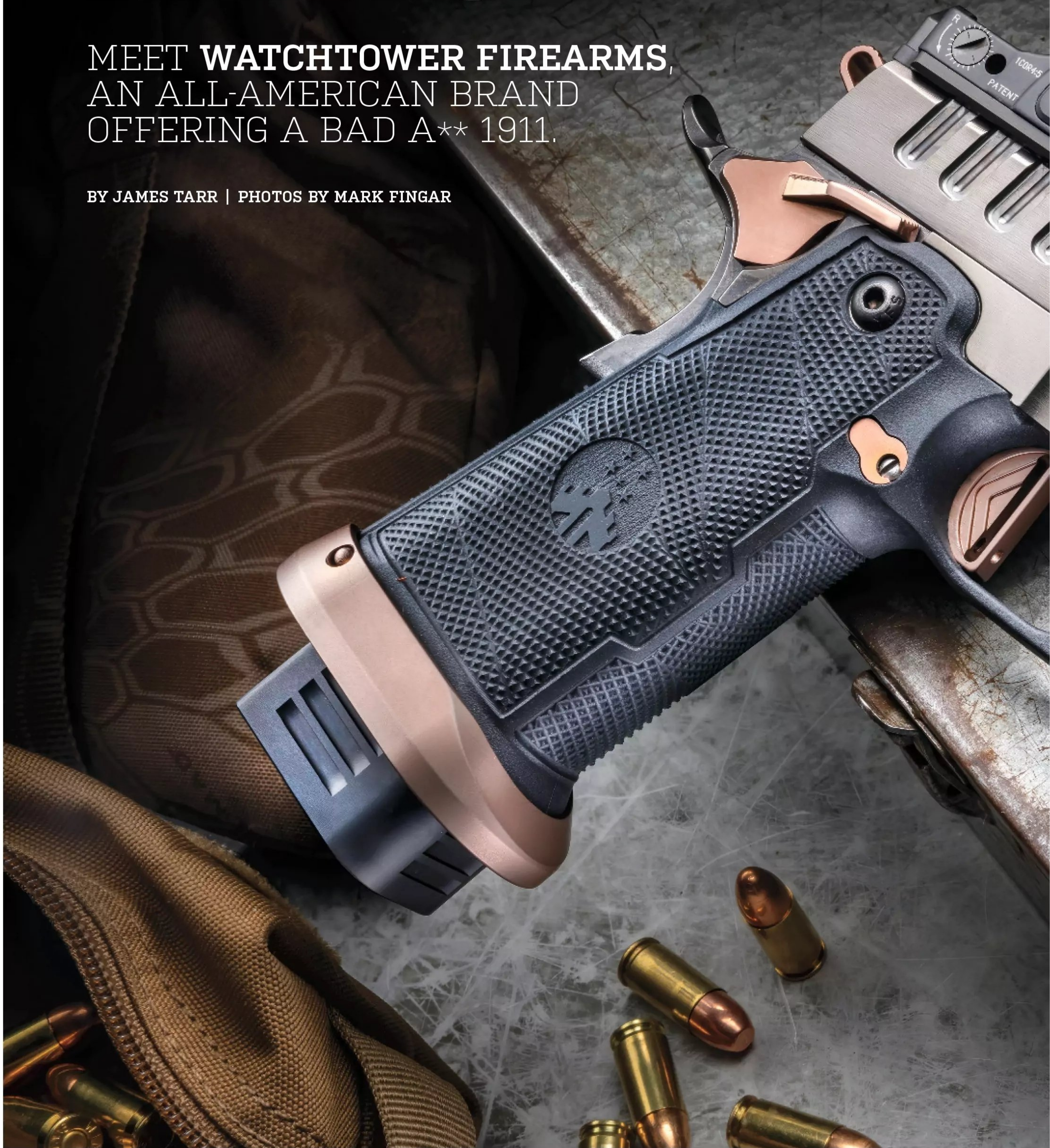
PURSUIT BOLT ACTION



APACHE

MEET **WATCHTOWER FIREARMS**,
AN ALL-AMERICAN BRAND
OFFERING A BAD A** 1911.

BY JAMES TARR | PHOTOS BY MARK FINGAR







THE FIREARMS WORLD is fascinating to me, and has been since I was a kid reading Guns & Ammo magazine in the 1980s. Now I’m a part of the industry, I review guns for a living. Still, I find that I’m unable to predict trends. Who knew the 10mm would see a resurgence? Not me. The sudden surge in popularity of the 5.7x28mm took me by surprise, also. The same goes for appendix carry. Demand for expensive, high-end double-stack 1911s has seeped from the competition scene to the mainstream, and I never saw that coming.

Watchtower Firearms (watchtowerfirearms.com) might be a new name for you, and while this veteran-owned company launched in 2023, it was built on an existing foundation: F-1 Firearms (f-1firearms.com). Located in Spring, Texas, it was named after Operation Watchtower, the codename for the Battle of Guadalcanal during World War II. Founder and CEO Jason Colosky is a second-generation Recon Marine, so he has an affinity for honoring military history. Watchtower Firearms now sells a number of different AR-15-based rifles, pistols and sup-

WATCHTOWER FIREARMS APACHE	
TYPE	Recoil operated, single-action, semiautomatic
CARTRIDGE	9mm
CAPACITY	17+1 and 20+1 rds.
BARREL	4.6 in., 416R, threaded
OVERALL LENGTH	8.6 in.
HEIGHT	5.6 in.
WIDTH	1.4 in.
WEIGHT	2 lbs., 8.8 oz.
SLIDE	PVD (frame, slide, barrel)
FRAME	Carbon fiber, composite
TRIGGER	3 lbs., 4 oz. (tested)
SAFETY	Grip safety, thumb safety
SIGHTS	Fiber optic (front), notch (rear); optic ready
MSRP	\$3,990 (\$4,540 with optic)
MANUFACTURER	Watchtower Firearms, 832-299-6100, watchtowerfirearms.com

pressors, but the Apache is the brand’s only handgun, and it’s a very high-end compensated double-stack 1911. The name pays tribute to Operation Apache Snow, or what most people know as the Battle of Hamburger Hill. Between the slide and the length of the compensator, this gun has the same overall length as a 5-inch Government Model, but it’s chambered in 9mm and fed by large-capacity magazines. One flush-fit 17- and one extended 20-round SV/STI-pattern stainless-steel magazine are included.

The Apache is a unique, full-size handgun. It’s advertised as a “competition pistol,” but with the current interest in comp’d, high-capacity 1911s, I imagine that few people will carry this gun. It wouldn’t surprise me to learn that Watchtower follows up this model with a compact carry version. I’ve carried double-stack 1911s this big before — both in .45 ACP and 10mm — but I’m weird. For most, the Apache is going to be relegated to the range, although it would make one heck of



The full length rail under the dust cover provides room for mounting high-lumen lights while also adding weight to the front of the pistol to mitigate recoil. SureFire X300U-B **\$359**

a home-defense gun with the 20-round magazine inserted and a SureFire X300 light clamped to the frame rail. If you’re new to high-cap 1911s, allow me to explain how a pistol with a frame the same width as a standard eight-shot .45 can hold so much ammo without feeling like a brick.

On Guns & Ammo's test gun, a copper PVD finish was applied to most externally visible components. The threaded barrel is made from 416R stainless steel, measuring 4.6 inches and comp'd. It's backed by a Dawson Precision tool-less recoil system.



The beavertail grip safety is finished in a graphite color and is perfectly blended to the curve of the frame. The extended thumb safety, hammer and extractor are finished in copper PVD.



The accessory rail and slide serrations visually complement the overall aesthetics, while the green fiber-optic front sight, ported compensator and full-length frame produce functional benefits.

The old-school 1911 has a metal framework, and then grips are attached to the outside of that frame to give it girth and contour. The grip section of the Apache is polymer, but in this case, it's a 3D-printed carbon-fiber composite, one designed in-house by Watchtower's engineering department. As this design eliminates traditional grip panels, there's room to accept a thicker magazine within the grip while having the same exterior dimensions. (Although, it is wider at the front and back.) The polymer grip is fastened to the steel frame at the top of the grip and the front of the trigger-guard. The 4140 stainless-steel frame, on which the slide rides, is the serialized part. The modular structure means a shooter can replace the grip with a hex wrench and no

paperwork. The "grip" is just a module.

As of this writing, there are two versions of the Apache, the only difference being color. Both feature a "graphite" Physical Vapor Deposition (PVD) coating on the slide and frame, but Guns & Ammo's test sample features copper accents. The other version has black accents. PVD is one of those modern "wonder coatings" that is eminently corrosion-resistant. It feels slick to the touch.

Cycling the slide by hand, the Apache yields a smooth operation. Say it's "like butter," or "like oil on glass," use whatever analogy you want, they're all apt. A lot of this is due to the fit and finish of the parts, handwork done in-house — but it's also the PVD coating. There is a little bit



Unlike most 1911s, the triggerguard and grip are a composite module. The flat-face trigger is adjustable for overtravel.



The "mag funnel" is included. Loading large, double-stack mags is an easy affair.



Co-witnessing the fiber-optic front and adjustable, tall, serrated rear sight is possible within the window of a Trijicon SRO, albeit at the very bottom.



of play between the slide and frame, but absolutely none between the barrel and slide. Ideally, for an accurate and reliable gun, it'll still run reliably even if it gets a bit dirty.

The graphite color of the PVD looks amazing; I hope that Mark Finger's photography shows it off well. The color is like a shiny steel finished in pewter gray. It almost makes the gun too pretty, but the great quality about PVD that it's durable. It has to be, because the Apache is built to run.

Up top is a 4¼-inch tri-topped slide. It has deeply aggressive and distinctive serrations, front and back. The top of the slide also has stylish serrations between the front sight and ejection port. At the front of the slide is a dovetailed steel front sight with a green fiber-optic insert. There is a slide cut for mounting optics, and you have the option of an optics plate or an adjustable rear sight on a base that fills the optics cut. The plate accepts optics with an RMR/SRO footprint, and it has an integral serrated blade rear sight. I tested it with a Trijicon SRO (\$783, trijicon.com), and with the optic mounted the sights were tall enough that I could just see the top of them through the window.

Forward of the slide is a single-port compensator. It marries with the front of the slide very well, and is mounted at the end of a 4.6-inch Clark/Para-pattern ramped bull barrel, which is made of 416R stainless steel. Full-house USPSA Open Division raceguns have long, multi-port compensators that completely eliminate muzzle rise. That's not what we have with the Apache, but it can still fit into holsters designed for 5-inch-barreled 1911s with full-length frame rails.

Compensators are the new hotness. They are a fascinating mix of science and technology. The port diverts expanding gases upward to counter muzzle rise. Because gases are shoving the muzzle down instead of back, there is less force acting on your slide. Hence, a lighter recoil spring. Watch-



The polymer grip module is secured to the 4140 stainless-steel frame structure with screws. Extended controls are handfitted.

tower provides 7-, 8-, and 9-pound recoil springs with the Apache, so you can tailor it to your preferred ammunition. The 8-pound spring is installed at the factory in a Dawson Precision Tool-Less recoil system. The recoil spring plug has an integral spring-loaded pivoting lever that allows you to capture the spring and remove the assembly from the gun during fieldstripping without tools.

If you want the gun to fit into standard holsters, the compensator can only be so big; single-port compensators like what you see on the Apache are the most effective. I've known Shay Akai of Akai Custom Guns (acguns.com) forever, and when I spoke to him about some gun tech, he gave me a huge education on comps.

"In general, and all things being equal, big ports are better than small ports," Akai said, "no matter how many there are. As the bullet passes through, the flat back of the bullet creates a vacuum force. The bullet pulls gases behind it. Large ports break that seal and divert gases better than small ports. Those big comps you see on competition guns



Though the lower frame design is unique to the Apache, the small parts are familiar to Model 1911 users including a fixed ejector, ambi safety lever, hammer, and protruding disconnector.



The bottom of the slide reveals that the Apache is more akin to a Series 70-type operating system, lacking a Series 80 plunger safety that interrupts the firing pin, making triggers feel worse.

will reduce muzzle rise 80 percent or more. Generally, 'carry-comps' will reduce muzzle rise 15 to 30 percent."

Compensators are more popular than ever because so many shooters want a red dot sight mounted to their pistol. The biggest problem for people using optics is losing track of dot sight as it moves out of the optic's window during recoil. Compensators keep the muzzle flatter, reducing the chance you'll lose the dot.

The Apache sports a full-length frame. The front of it and the compensator are cut at a slight angle, which I think looks great and is better than a straight and vertical front end. The full-length rail has five slots for mounting a light if you want, but that long frame also adds weight out where it will do the most to reduce the effects of recoil. With the flush magazine inserted and no optic on the plate, G&A's Watchtower weighed 40.8 ounces — empty.

The beavertail grip safety has a graphite PVD finish, but all the other parts have a copper PVD finish. It's a nice color contrast, which includes the recoil spring plug, the firing pin block, and the extractor. The thumb safety is extended and bilateral, and it *clicks* nicely both up and down. The checkered magazine release is a tiny bit extended, but it's not oversized.

The trigger is a unique piece with a flat face. It is technically a medium-length trigger made of aluminum, but with the flat face I think the center of the trigger is nearly the same distance from the frame as the center of a long-curved trigger. The trigger on the Apache was advertised as being between 3 and 4 pounds; our sample was excellent; just a tiny bit of takeup before a crisp 3¼-pound break. From personal experience, I know that after one to 2,000 rounds, the trigger pull will likely drop another quarter pound.

If you're thinking that a 3¼-pound trigger is "too light" to carry, well, that's a topic for a future issue. Allow me to point out the obvious: Lighter trigger pulls allow us to shoot faster and more accurately, which seems to me a characteristic that's as important for self-defense as competition. As long as the gun is mechanically sound, and you've internalized the "Keep your finger off the trigger until your sights are on the target" gun safety rule, a 1911 with a manual thumb safety and grip



The ejection port is lowered and flared, allowing clearance for spent cases. A subtle bullet nose relief also makes room for extracting unfired cartridges, and large optics don't interfere.

safety levers is mechanically safer from misadventure when drawing/reholstering than a striker-fired pistol with no external safety besides that the lever in the trigger. That's something to keep in mind, especially if you're carrying appendix and pointing that gun at the most valuable real estate you possess.

The original SV/STI frames that the Apache was derived from had a few more corners than what's on the Apache. Watchtower has done an excellent job combining the texture with the beveled edges. The texturing may not look like much, small raised diamonds, but it's nicely aggressive. The harder you grip, the more the texture digs in.

At the bottom of the grip frame, you'll notice an aluminum magazine well with the copper finish. On the inside, the lines of the funnel blend well with the angles inside the polymer grip. This so-called "tactical" magwell isn't as large as some seen on Open raceguns. The polymer frame has a bit of a flare and a funnel, and I could easily see Watchtower leaving it unchanged in future carry models.

As this is more of a competition pistol than an EDC pistol, when I headed to the range I brought some dedicated competition ammunition in addition to defensive hollow-points to see just how flat the Apache's muzzle would lay when shooting proper Minor Power Factor loads.

The loads you prefer in a traditional pistol might not



be the ones you like in a comp'd gun. Pressure is what compensators like, so you may find a light bullet traveling at +P velocities keeps the muzzle as flat as a standard pressure 147-grainer. I tested the Apache with all of it, and it was very happy; it ate through everything. The gun was completely reliable with soft full-metal-jacket (FMJ) competition ammo, and +P jacketed hollowpoints (JHP). The only issue was that after a short while, the follower of the 20-

round magazine didn't lock the slide back, but many know this is actually common with wide-body 1911s.

On a target 10 yards away, with most ammunition, the front sight rose about 10 inches in recoil before dropping right back down. To me, this meant recoil and muzzle rise were minimal. The dot was just barely leaving the window with each shot, at least with my grip.

High-capacity 1911s have been prevalent in competition circles since they were introduced more than 30 years ago. Initially, they were only available as frame kits, which meant you'd need a gunsmith to build up a gun; that tempered interest. For decades, high-capacity 1911s

were a niche item, mostly ignored by the mainstream gun-owning public. Now, they are no longer niche. I don't know if STI/Staccato's PR campaign through the 2000s was the sole reason for this, or if it was simply the most

successful design, but mainstream interest has piqued. The Watchtower Apache was designed to capitalize on this interest, built to run out of the box, and it does, all while looking better than the competition.

PERFORMANCE

LOAD	VEL. (FPS)	ES	SD	BEST GROUP (IN.)	AVG. GROUP (IN.)
Hornady Custom 124-gr. XTP	1,060	28	14	1.6	2
Federal GM Action Pistol 147-gr. FMJ	943	24	11	1.8	2.2
Federal Syntech 130-gr. PCC	1,021	26	13	2.1	2.7
Magtech Steel Case 115-gr. FMJ	1,121	30	18	2.4	3

Notes: Accuracy is the average of four, five-shot groups at 25 yards from a sandbag rest. Velocity is the average of 10 shots measured with an Oehler Model 35P, 12 feet from the muzzle.

WATCHTOWER

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STREAMLIGHT

hand crafted 1911

TRP™

Based on Springfield Armory's Professional 1911 chosen by the FBI's Hostage Rescue Team, the TRP™ family of pistols was created to deliver a premium, hard-use 1911 platform. Available in 6 new models, the forged slide and frames are hand selected for fit and finish and feature upgrades typically reserved for custom 1911's.

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- ✓ Ambi Thumb Safety
- ✓ CeraKote Finish
- ✓ Skeletonized Hammer
- ✓ Forward Serrations
- ✓ Gen 2 Trigger
- ✓ Two-Piece Magwell
- ✓ Hydra VZ Grips
- ✓ Tritium Three-Dot





YOU ONLY GET ONE CHANCE to make a first impression. If the buzz circulating the Taurus Expedition is any indication, the brand's first foray into the bolt-action market is going to be a success, an introduction no one saw coming. The Expedition was one of the most talked-about new products unveiled at the 2024 SHOT Show, and the Taurus booth was constantly crowded by those who caught wind of the announcement and wanted a closer look. Taurus CEO Bret Vorhees is an avid hunter, so it shouldn't have been a surprise that he would eventually create specifications for a rifle designed in-house.

The Expedition is evidence that Taurus has its finger on the pulse of the shooting community. Handguns have always been Taurus' wheelhouse, but its parent company

— Taurus Holdings, Inc. — also owns Heritage Manufacturing and Braztech International, i.e., "Rossi." You can safely assume that Taurus has access to some impressive riflemaking capabilities. The Expedition proves that this handgun brand can successfully crossover into the hunting rifle market.

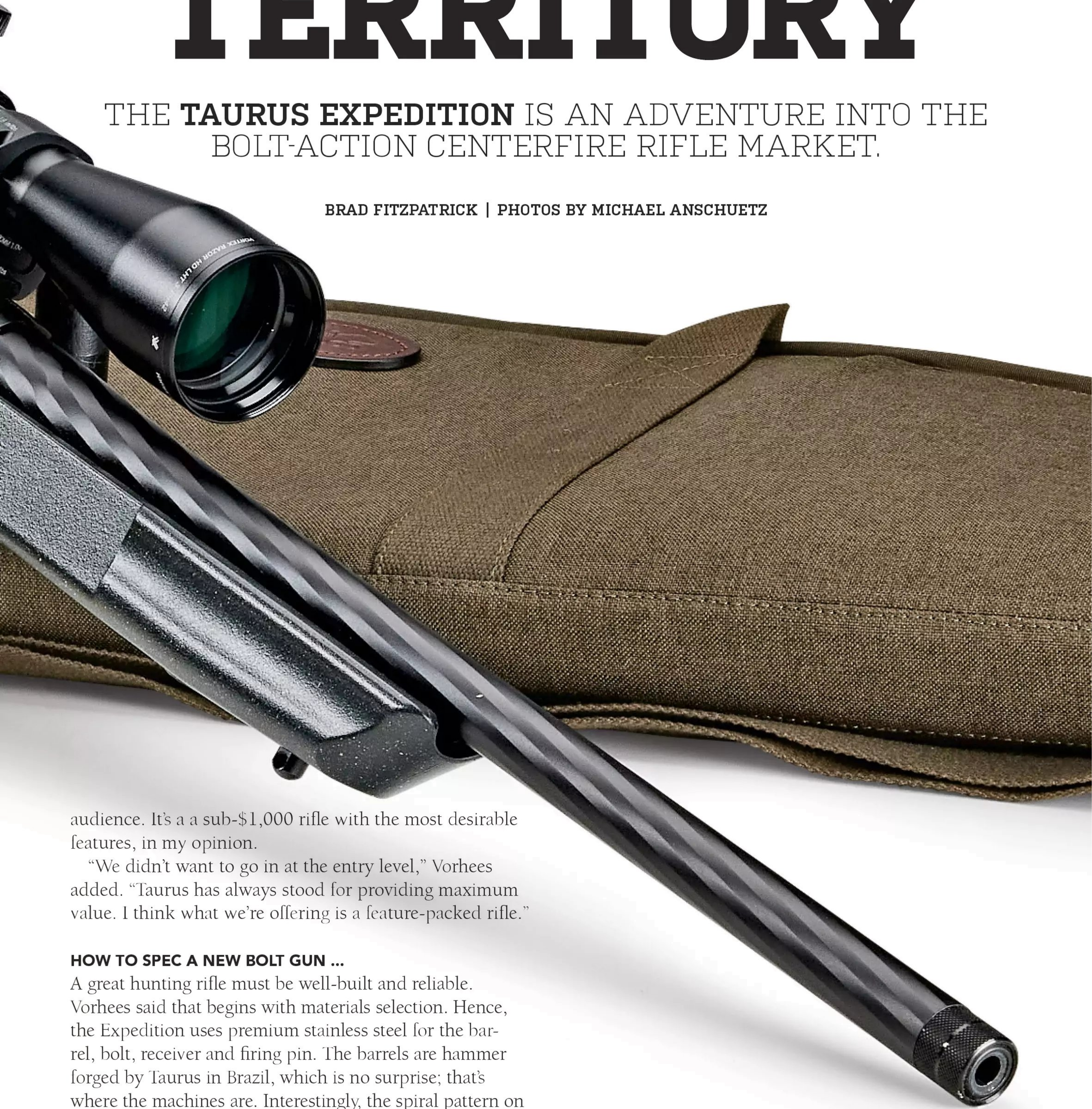
"We've been strong in the self-defense world for a long time," Vorhees told Guns & Ammo. "But we wanted to speak more directly to hunters."

The Raging Hunter revolver has maintained a loyal following among handgun hunters all the way back to the late-1990s introduction of its Raging Bull. But handgun hunting is a relatively niche market. In contrast, the new Expedition bolt-action is designed to appeal to a broader

UNCHARTED TERRITORY

THE **TAURUS EXPEDITION** IS AN ADVENTURE INTO THE BOLT-ACTION CENTERFIRE RIFLE MARKET.

BRAD FITZPATRICK | PHOTOS BY MICHAEL ANSCHUETZ



audience. It's a sub-\$1,000 rifle with the most desirable features, in my opinion.

"We didn't want to go in at the entry level," Vorhees added. "Taurus has always stood for providing maximum value. I think what we're offering is a feature-packed rifle."

HOW TO SPEC A NEW BOLT GUN ...

A great hunting rifle must be well-built and reliable. Vorhees said that begins with materials selection. Hence, the Expedition uses premium stainless steel for the barrel, bolt, receiver and firing pin. The barrels are hammer forged by Taurus in Brazil, which is no surprise; that's where the machines are. Interestingly, the spiral pattern on the exterior of the barrel is a natural result of the forging



The hammer-forged, stainless-steel barrels are manufactured by Taurus in Brazil. The .308 test rifle featured a 1-in-10-inch twist rate complete with 5/8x24 threads and a knurled thread cap.



The short-action, .308 case-head bolt features an external extractor, plunger-type ejector, and three locking lugs for a quick-cycling 60-degree bolt lift. Abundant fluting saves weight.



The Model 700-style round short action includes M700 bases, recoil lug and barrel nut. The trigger and safety assembly are also interchangeable with M700-pattern components.



Disassembly of the Expedition is familiar, following the removal of the bolt assembly and two action screws. The bottom metal is actually polymer, a one-piece design containing the triggerguard and mag well. The barrel has a tapered contour and threaded muzzle.

process. Taurus could have opted to finish the barrels to a round profile, but, instead, chose to leave the markings on the exterior of the barrel and bead-blasting a smooth finish before coating it in Taurus' Diamond-Like Coating (DLC).

Barrel diameter was also a matter of debate during the design of the rifle. Instead of a pencil-thin, ultra-light profile or a bull barrel, Taurus decided to use what Vorhees called a "semi-weight barrel profile." At its widest point, just ahead of the barrel, it measures about 1.1 inches. Where the threads begin at the muzzle, that point measures .74 inches. Barrel length is 18 inches on the .308 Winchester rifle sent to G&A for testing, so the twist rate is 1-in-10 inches. The

muzzle is threaded 5/8x24 and includes a thread protector.

The stainless-steel, spiral-fluted bolt has three locking lugs, reducing bolt lift to just 60 degrees. The lugs ride at nearly the 3-, 9-, and 12-o'clock positions, with the external extractor positioned between the top and right lugs. A plunger-type, spring-powered ejector extends through the recessed bolt face. Like other stainless-steel components on this rifle, the Expedition's bolt is also finished with DLC. The bolt handle is machined flat and slotted, while the bolt body is fluted. It's easy to grasp the also-spiral-fluted conical bolt knob when working the action. If you ever want to change this tactile feature, the knob is removable using a quarter-inch hex wrench.

At the rear of the bolt, a stainless-steel cocking indicator extends through the bolt shroud. This offers the user a visual indicator of the rifle's condition without having to get out of a shooting position.

A nut is used to secure the barrel to the receiver. The receiver has a wider opening than some competing rifles built using a solid-top receiver. It's similar to a Remington Model 700's. The purported advantage of the tubular receiver with reduced action opening is that it provides increased rigidity and improved accuracy. Testing demonstrated that the Expedition

has no issues with accuracy. The advantage of the open-top receiver design is that it is much simpler to single-load the rifle; I attempted this several times at the range and didn't experience an issue versus having to weave the cartridge into a narrow receiver opening. The bolt lugs run smoothly in channels cut into the left and right walls of the receiver, and there's a bolt stop/release button located on the rear left portion of the receiver.

Taurus injection molds the stock of its Expedition, and aluminum pillars are integral. The barrel is free floated above the stock, and the barrel channel is slightly oversized to prevent shape shifting due to heat. The stock design is

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Along the bottom of the forend are multiple sling and bipod attachment points, including two M-Lok slots, an integrated Spartan Precision attachment and a sling swivel stud.



The pistol-grip contour is ideal for hand positioning when target shooting from the prone position. The back-turned bolt handle is within easy reach.



Mimicking a precision stock, the Expedition features an elevated comb that slopes down for eye positioning behind a scope. Underneath, the stock can be gripped or bagged for support.

one of the aspects that impresses me most about the Expedition. Hunting stocks have evolved from the sporter-style common in my youth toward a target shooting-oriented stock. Unlike stock aesthetics that are more concerned about beauty, the modern hunting rifle's stock is more of a practical tool that helps to improve performance. Multiple attachment points for slings and bipods allow us to firm up unusual shooting positions in the field, and contours to better position our wrist so that we can manipulate the trigger more carefully, for example. Taurus has largely hit the nail on the head with its first design. The rear of the forearm is flattened on both sides for approximately 4 inches in front of the receiver. Vorhees confirmed my suspicion that this slab-sided profile was intended for shooters who use tripods like the BOG DeathGrip (\$200, boghunt.com). The stock allows the forend to ride securely in the clamp without rotating as you fine-tune your position. In front of the squared-off portion of the forearm, there's a more traditional finger groove.

TAURUS EXPEDITION	
TYPE	Bolt action, push feed
CARTRIDGE	.308 Winchester (tested)
CAPACITY	5 rds.
BARREL	18 in., hammer forged, 5/8x24 threaded, 1-in-10-inch twist
OVERALL LENGTH	38 in.
WIDTH	3.12 in.
HEIGHT	6.67 in.
WEIGHT	7 lbs.
LENGTH OF PULL	14 in.
STOCK	Composite, black
FINISH	Black DLC (stainless steel)
SIGHTS	None
MSRP	\$985
MANUFACTURER	Taurus, 229-515-8464, taurususa.com

Attachment points to the underside of the forearm are a point of contention among rifle shooters. I'm not sure there is a right answer, but when asked which is best, Taurus answered, "All of them." The Expedition provides several points to secure just about any accessory. There's a sling stud up front and at the back of the stock; an adapter for a Spartan Precision-style bipod adapter; and a metal strip with two M-Lok slots. Vorhees said this feature has become relatively common on European rifles, but it hasn't become as widespread on American rifles yet.

Since Taurus was molding its own stocks, the addition of the Spartan mount was a relatively simple way to increase the versatility of the rifle without adding excessive cost.

The stock's pistol grip features more of a target-style angle. It offers a wide palm swell for a relaxed hand surrounding the grip. Target grips are another feature that's transitioned to hunting rifles.

At introduction, the only stock available for the Expedition is not adjustable. However, the comb was molded with serious elevation to properly position one's head behind a scope. The comb angles slightly down toward the front of the rifle, which helps the stock design be accommodating for shooters of different sizes.

Underneath the stock, an angled bag cutout exists, which is unusual for a composite sporter stock. Like the vertical grip, this feature enhances shooting from the prone position on bags. Given that the bag cutout is angled upward, shooters have some

leverage when adjusting the rifle's elevation by squeezing the bag. Small elevation corrections are much simpler.

Contrary to the forearm, there's just one attachment point on the underside of the buttstock, and it's for a sling swivel stud.



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308 WIN CBX Precision (CBX-HV24CGA-308)

6.5 Creedmoor CBX Precision (CBX-HV26CGA-65C)



A stainless-steel cocking indicator protrudes from the rear of the bolt when cocked. The safety lever is to the right.



The bolt-release is a lever pinned to the left side of the receiver. With the action open, press it to remove the bolt.



The smooth-face trigger was tested at 4 pounds. The triggerguard is open and the magazine release lever is easy to reach.



Capacity is five rounds when utilizing the one included magazine. However, the action and stock was designed to accept AICS-pattern magazines, which have an existing reputation for reliability.

The single-stage trigger is curved and adjustable. This is a Taurus design, but it was engineered on a familiar pattern to be compatible with aftermarket Model 700 triggers. You can easily swap out the factory trigger assembly for another of your choice. The test trigger on G&A's sample averaged 4 pounds for 10 pulls; it was a little heavy, but not too heavy.

The receiver is also drilled and tapped to accept Model 700 bases. Further, a two-position rocker-type safety is present — forward to fire — and the rifle can be cycled with the safety engaged to ease unloading.

Expedition rifles come with a five-round detachable magazine. Only one magazine is included — Come on, Taurus! — but the Expedition also accepts popular AICS magazines. The large, flat, paddle magazine release is located at the front of the triggerguard. It's easy to reach, too, and the mag goes in the rifle without drama.

Unloaded, and without an optic, the Expedition weighed 7 pounds. Overall length measured less than 38 inches. This rifle is suitable for hunting in a blind or tree stand, and the short overall length is great for suppressing the threaded barrel and carrying it afield.

AT THE RANGE

I mounted a Vortex Razor HD LHT 3-15x42mm scope using Vortex rings. I also shot it with a Silencer Central Banish Backcountry suppressor. Unloaded, the weight of the rifle with the optic and suppressor was 8 pounds, 14 ounces; that's still manageable for hunting or shooting from a bench.

Accuracy was good, but the Expedition in .308 favored certain ammo. It performed best with Hornady's Precision Hunter load with 178-grain ELD-X bullet. It produced three-shot groups as small as .55 inch at 100 yards. This load averaged .68 inch.

The Expedition also shot an average of less than an inch with Black Hills' ammunition firing Lehigh's Controlled Chaos 152-grain bullet, which produced a single three-shot group of .77 inch. Remington Core-Lokt Copper also resulted in a single group under an inch, but it was a three-shot .99-inch cluster. The 1-in-10-inch twist rate stabilizes 150-grain bullets, but Vorhees told me that Taurus tested bullets as light as 130 grains without issue.

The Expedition is well laid out and comfortable to shoot. Taurus spent a lot of time perfecting the stock geometry, which is evident because the ergonomics are excellent. The pistol grip is properly angled, and there is ample room to rest the thumb in a forward-facing position.

The raised comb and bag cutout are worthwhile features, as is the squared-off forearm. Of the Swiss Army Knife-like options, I am only surprised that the rear of the stock only possesses a single sling stud. If I could go back in time and talk to those engineers, I would have asked for side-mounted QD cups on both sides of the stock.

I believe that most hunters will find the factory trigger perfectly suitable. Even at 4 pounds, there was no creep. Of course, it's adjustable and it can be easily swapped for a superior Timney Trigger (timneytriggers.com) for less than \$200 or a Triggertech (triggertech.com) for a bit more.

The safety is smooth, easy to find when in position, and operate. The option to lock the safety would be nice, though, especially for hunters who drag their rifles through brush and don't want the action flopping open.

Mechanically, though, the gun worked well. The magazine fed properly, spent cases extracted and ejected

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without issue. The only hang-up I experienced occurred on three occasions when the bolt handle required extra effort to retract after firing a shot. It didn't feel like the "sticky" sensation of an overpressure cartridge, rather, it simply required extra effort to cycle. Unfortunately, I was never able to diagnose this issue because it was rare and sporadic.

The fit and finish of the rifle are good. I like most of the aesthetics, especially the spiral fluting on the bolt and the spiral hammer forging marks on the barrel. I also like the stock color. What impressed me is that the Expedition is functional at a good price without looking cheap. There are no radical lines or strange angles that attempt to make it look avant-garde.

BEST VALUE?

Taurus set the suggested retail price at \$985. Therefore, it's competing against the similarly configured Browning's X-Bolt Max SPR (\$940); Franchi Momentum (\$799); and

PERFORMANCE

LOAD	VEL. (FPS)	ES	SD	BEST GROUP (IN)	AV. GROUP (IN.)
Hornady Precision Hunter 178-gr. ELD-X	2,429	35	10.7	.55	.76
Black Hills Dual Performance Controlled Chaos 152-gr. Copper HP	2,711	50	16.1	.77	.87
Remington Core-Lokt 150-gr. Copper HP	2,657	58	15.4	.99	1.17
Hornady Outfitter 165-gr. CX	2,485	60	16.6	1.06	1.25
Fiocchi KnockDown 150-gr. Copper HP	2,710	35	10.8	1.19	1.31

Notes: Accuracy is the average of five, three-shot groups at 100 yards from a fixed rest. Velocity is the average of 10 shots recorded by Labradar placed adjacent to the muzzle.

the Ruger American Rifle Generation 2 (\$729). The Expedition features a hybrid hunting stock like the Browning, but the X-Bolt features an adjustable stock. The Expedition presents the shortest overall length of these rifles in .308, but it's a quarter-pound heavier than the Franchi

and Ruger, and 5 ounces lighter than the Browning. I'm a fan of the Taurus Expedition, and I think it's a solid debut for the brand's entry into the hunting rifle segment. The Expedition's highlights are that it offers a short overall length and target-centric stock design that many contemporary shooters want. Since it utilizes Model 700 components — stock, optic bases, and trigger — it's versatile with aftermarket parts readily available, and the ability to use easy-to-find AICS magazines is a plus. G&A's test rifle shot under an inch at 100 yards with factory .308 ammo; that's the standard for hunting rifles today. Led by a team of sportsmen, Taurus set out to provide shooters with a rifle that they would use, one that offers everything they want at a fair price. That's exactly what they've accomplished. 



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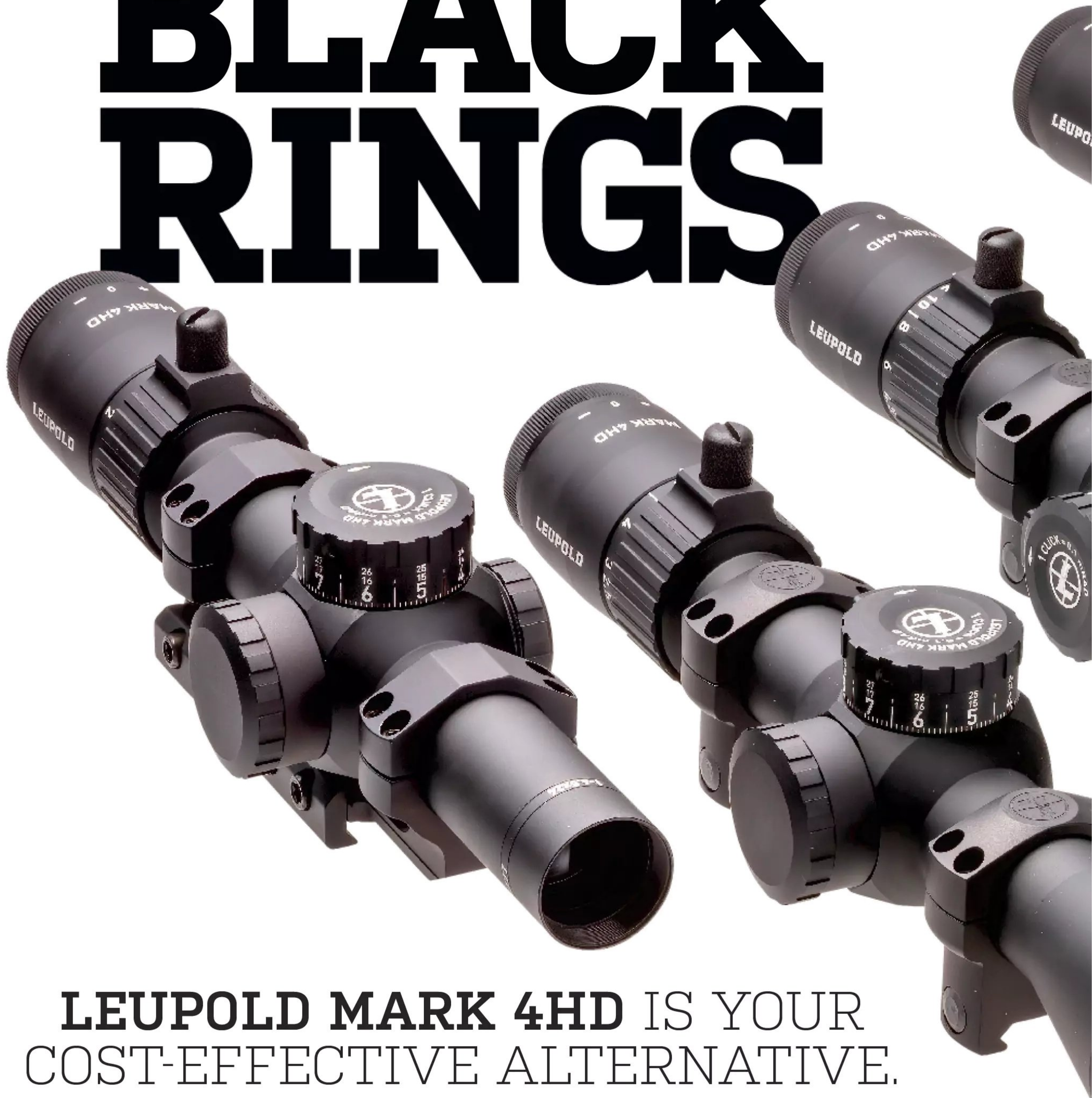
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LEUPOLD MARK 4HD IS YOUR COST-EFFECTIVE ALTERNATIVE.

BY TOM BECKSTRAND | PHOTOS BY MARK FINGAR

I HAVEN'T BEEN THIS EXCITED about a new line of riflescopes in forever. I get pretty jazzed about flagship optics because they offer unparalleled capabilities. What gets me about the new Leupold Mark 4HD series is the amount of performance offered for the price. Starting at \$999, Mark 4HD scopes represent what's possible when an American company does all of its engineering and manufacturing in-house. However, to understand what the new Mark 4HD models offer requires a short analysis of — and comparison to — the Mark 5 HD.

MARK 4HD VS. MARK 5HD

A quick glance at the Mark 4HD scopes may cause some confusion because they look similar to those in the Mark 5HD family. That assessment is more accurate than the price differences might indicate; the Mark 5HD line starts at \$2,000. Ahead of this review, I obtained four of the new Mark 4HD scopes, three having near identical magnification ranges when compared to the Mark 5HD scopes. Optically, the new Mark 4HD scopes are identical to the Mark 5HD scopes, which is significant.



Leupold kept the optical performance high by using the same source for glass and similar coatings in both the Mark 4HD and Mark 5HD. Next, Leupold moved from a 5X erector assembly and a 35mm maintube, which appears in the 2-10x30mm, 3.6-18x44mm, 5-25x56mm and 7-35x56mm scopes to a 4X erector assembly in the Mark 4HD line. Built on 30mm and 34mm maintubes, the

Mark 4HD line currently includes the 1-4.5x24mm, 2.5-10x42mm, 4.5-18x52mm, 6-24x52mm and 8-32x56mm. By the numbers, these may not seem that different, but the 4X erector assembly is a lot easier to manufacture because the lenses inside the erector assembly don't need to move as much. Leupold took that savings from streamlining its manufacturing to make the Mark 4HD more affordable.

There are optical advantages with a 4X erector assembly.



LEUPOLD MARK 4HD 1-4.5x24mm	
POWER	1X-4.5X
OBJECTIVE	24mm
TUBE DIAMETER	30mm
ELEVATION ADJUSTMENT	.1 mil per click
WINDAGE	.1 mil per click
RETICLE	TMR-Illuminated (tested)
LENGTH	10.7 in.
WEIGHT	1 lb., 2 oz.
EYE RELIEF	3.7 in. to 3.9in.
MSRP	\$1,000
MANUFACTURER	Leupold, 800-538-7653, leupold.com



The elevation turret is exposed for quick range adjustments. Once zeroed, the windage turret is capped for protection. Multiple elevations dials are available.



Battery life is preserved with Motion Sensor Technology (MST). Reticle illumination is automatically deactivated and reactivates if a sensor detects movement.



A removeable, low-profile throw lever makes for quick magnification adjustments. A thread protector plug is included if you decide not to use it.

Regardless of the scope manufacturer, wider magnification ranges make the light work more as it passes through the scope. The more a scope manipulates available light, the harder it is for the scope to maintain its optical quality potential. Light consists of numerous colors, each with its own wavelength, and each wavelength bends differently. Unless light bends to the same point at the same time, the image suffers. Moving from a 5X erector to a 4X erector — if everything else remains the same — yields better image quality. The 4X erector beats the 5X in this category for this reason.

To keep optical performance and lower the price, Leupold also made the scopes slightly longer. Making a scope longer allowed engineers to bend light less aggressively. Again, being gentle on manipulating light is a key component to creating a scope with great image quality. The Mark 5HD scopes are shorter, bend light at greater angles, and require more lenses to correct the problems this approach creates. That said, if a shooter needs a shorter scope, the Mark 5HD is the way to go. Both scope lines offer similar levels of image quality, but the Mark 5HD scopes are almost always shorter than the Mark 4HD models.

PRICE-POINT ISSUES

Riflescopes at the \$1,000 to \$1,600 price range are

where customers expect to find premium features, even though this isn't really where premium pricing starts. Manufacturers desperately want to give customers what they want (because that's how they sell scopes and stay in business), so we enter the land of compromise. The price range of the Mark 4HD line is where it isn't hard to find scopes with desirable reticles, good optical quality, exposed elevation turrets with zero-stops, and side focus. The Mark 4 HD scopes possess all of these features at appropriate magnification levels.

However, it's details such as "off-axis viewing," "stray light management," "tube thickness," and "eye relief" that will come back to haunt you if you're a consumer who isn't doing homework. The Mark 4HD price point competes against mid-grade Japanese production and high-end Philippine production because scopes imported from these locations share similar features at similar pricing. Where Leupold has a significant advantage is that they maintain total control of its design and production of the Mark 4HD. The Mark 4HD suffers from none of those issues.

Take any scope in this price range, mount it to a rifle, and then look through the scope and acquire a full field of view. Slight head movements to the left and right, or up and down, can often cause the image to blur before it disappears. Being able to





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LEUPOLD MARK 4HD 2.5-10x42mm	
POWER	2.5X-10X
OBJECTIVE	42mm
TUBE DIAMETER	30mm
ELEVATION ADJUSTMENT	.1 mil per click
WINDAGE	.1 mil per click
RETICLE	TMR (tested)
LENGTH	12.5 in.
WEIGHT	1 lb., 5 oz.
EYE RELIEF	3.6 in. to 3.9 in.
MSRP	\$1,000
MANUFACTURER	Leupold, 800-538-7653, leupold.com



The 2.5-10x42mm variant of the Mark 4HD has a fixed parallax, which is set at 150 yards by Leupold. There is no parallax turret on the left side of these scopes.



All Mark 4HD scopes feature an adjustable diopter around the ocular lens. It focuses the reticle as seen in the scope.



The 2.5-10X models in the Mark 4HD family are built on a 30mm maintube, allowing for 85 MOA of elevation and windage adjustment.

see the reticle, even when not perfectly centered behind the scope, is called “off-axis viewing.” (Unfortunately, this often gets lumped into the ambiguous term “eyebow.”) The Mark 4HD scopes all keep the image clear and sharp through the entire range of off-axis viewing. This allows the shooter to be in a less-than-ideal shooting position and still shoot accurately; it’s a nice feature to have when shooting quickly from field positions. Mark 4HD scopes have this capability because Leupold engineers made it happen.

Another area where Mark 4HD scopes are distinguished is with stray light management. Leupold has an optical engineer devoted exclusively to this task. I know of no other scope company that can make the same claim. Stray light management becomes important when the sun is low on the horizon, shining into the objective lens. It’s usually the time when your rifle is oriented towards a target and the sun is coming up or going down. Scopes in the Mark 4HD price range almost always struggle with stray light management because the image seen through the scope becomes hazy and sometimes washes out. It’s almost like looking into a bright white fog bank. The Mark 4HD excels at stray light management. It’s the only scope in this price range that I’ve seen do so.



Tube thickness is another area that haunts scopes of this price point. Since none of us are going to cut a scope in half to see how thick the walls are, the best indicator of tube thickness is the torque value for scope rings that come from the scope manufacturer. Leupold recommends 22 to 25 inch-pounds (in.-lbs.) of torque on ring screws to secure the Mark 4HD. Leupold can do this because they make the tube thick and know that scopes on hard-recoiling rifles can move if not held tightly enough. I get nervous when I see scope manufacturers recommend 15 to 18 in.-lbs. for the scope rings. It tells me the tube isn’t thick and anything heavier than 18 in.-lbs. may deform the tube, damaging the scope. Scopes that are held lightly in rings are also more susceptible to point-of-impact (POI) shifts from incidental contact because a blow to the scope can cause it to shift in the rings. The tubes on the Mark 4HD models are thick enough to torque tightly, eliminating movement under recoil and reducing the probability of scope movement from incidental impact.

The final detail that Leupold got right (where many brands go wrong) is the eye relief. Most variable-powered scopes have eye relief set at about 3½ inches. Leupold increased the distance between the scope and the shooter’s eye to 3.8 to 4



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Leupold Mark 4HD scopes feature a zero stop for a quick return to the baseline. The elevation turret features three revolutions of adjustment. With each revolution, a protruding tactile indicator recedes into the top of the turret cap.

inches. Leupold pays a small price for a slightly tighter field of view to do this, but doing so minimizes risk to the shooter when firing hard-recoiling rifles or when shooting from unconventional field positions.

1-4.5x24mm

This low-power variable optic (LPVO) model is available with three different reticles, all in the second focal plane (SFP): FireDot BDC illuminated, FireDot TMR illuminated, and HPR-1. Two models are illuminated and feature Leupold’s FireDot fiber-optic system. The FireDot illumination system guarantees the dot will be visible in all lighting conditions. These scopes are ideal for use on hunting rifles where shots will likely be inside 400 yards. They’re also great for AR-pattern rifles and carbines used for self-defense, competition, training or range work. The exposed elevation turret allows precise shot placement to extended ranges, too, which is a feature not normally found at this magnification range.

2.5-10x42mm

There are four models of this scope, two with illuminated reticles. Three scopes have first focal plane (FFP) reticles and one has an SFP reticle: PR1-MOA,



LEUPOLD MARK 4HD 4.5-18x52mm	
POWER	4.5X-18X
OBJECTIVE	52mm
TUBE DIAMETER	34mm
ELEVATION ADJUSTMENT	.1 mil per click
WINDAGE	.1 mil per click
RETICLE	PR-2 (tested)
LENGTH	14.6 in.
WEIGHT	1 lb., 12 oz.
EYE RELIEF	3.6 in. to 3.9 in.
MSRP	\$1,400
MANUFACTURER	Leupold, 800-538-7653, leupold.com

TMR (Mk) illuminated FFP, TMR illuminated SFP, and the TMR (Mk). Parallax on all of these scopes is set at the factory for 150 yards. This magnification range and exposed elevation turret make the 2.5-10X family of scopes ideal for dinging steel out to 1,000 yards. It’s also great for hunting at distance, so long as the shooter feels comfortable with the shot.

4.5-18x52mm

There are four models in this magnification range, all of which are FFP. However, there are two mil-based reticles and two MOA reticles with one of each being illuminated: PR1-MOA illuminated, FFP, PR1-MIL illuminated FFP, PR2-MIL FFP, PR2-MOA FFP. These scopes are going to be a great

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Though parallax distances are laser engraved to the parallax turret, the cap can be removed and zeroed for precise clarity at an exact distance.



Zero can be easily set with the Mark 4HD, and custom turret dials can be ordered to ballistically match the drop for a particular load.

choice for competition shooters and hunters who prefer FFP reticles. If you increase the magnification, the reticle appears to grow with the image. The reticle subtension will remain true across the entire magnification range. All of these models have side-focus turrets, too, and an exposed elevation turret. The windage turret is also exposed and can be locked.

6-24x52mm & 8-32x56mm

These two scopes each have three reticles, all FFP: PR2-MIL, PR2-MOA, and PR3-MIL. There are no illuminated reticles available because these scopes are aimed at competition and range use within the Mark 4HD price range.



LEUPOLD MARK 4HD 6-24x52mm	
POWER	6X-24X
OBJECTIVE	52mm
TUBE DIAMETER	34mm
ELEVATION ADJUSTMENT	.1 mil per click
WINDAGE	.1 mil per click
RETICLE	PR-3 (tested)
LENGTH	14.6 in.
WEIGHT	1 lb., 12 oz.
EYE RELIEF	3.8 in. to 4 in.
MSRP	\$1,500
MANUFACTURER	Leupold, 800-538-7653, leupold.com

LEUPOLD MARK 4HD 8-32x52mm	
POWER	8X-32X
OBJECTIVE	56mm
TUBE DIAMETER	34mm
ELEVATION ADJUSTMENT	.1 mil per click
WINDAGE	.1 mil per click
RETICLE	PR-3 (tested)
LENGTH	15.6 in.
WEIGHT	1 lb., 14 oz.
EYE RELIEF	3.9 in. to 4.2 in.
MSRP	\$1,600
MANUFACTURER	Leupold, 800-538-7653, leupold.com

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.400 LEGEND

INTRODUCING **WINCHESTER'S** HARD-HITTING
CARTRIDGE IN A NEW **SAVAGE** DEER RIFLE.

BY CRAIG BODDINGTON | PHOTOS BY MARK FINGAR

THE DOE WASN'T HUGE, but we were getting down to the end of the season and I was a bit light on my self-imposed rule: "Take at least one doe for every buck." The shot was quartering slightly to, 80 yards, so I held on the point of the shoulder. I expected her to crumple in her tracks, but, instead, she ran to the left, immediately out of my window. I waited and then walked up to check. There was no blood where she stood. Another big trail went to the left, so I figured she'd gone that way. Nope, nothing there either.

I retraced and went to the corner of the thick woods between the two trails. Instantly, I saw bright crimson on a winter-drab oak leaf; I had taken the wrong line. From where I stood, I could see her down, 25 yards into the trees. Between me and the deer, the trail looked like someone spilled a can of red paint. She was my first deer

taken with the .400 Legend.

Back in early Summer 2023, Guns & Ammo Editor Eric Poole asked if I was interested in reviewing the .400 Legend. Perplexed, I asked, "The what?"

The .400 Legend was announced in the Spring of 2023 by Winchester Ammunition. Savage quickly joined Mossberg, Ruger and Winchester in chambering the new round, but I had missed the news completely. I had some catch-up work to do, but as it turned out there was no rush. In fact, products were not available until after Thanksgiving 2023, the time when I would be hunting Kansas' deer season. (That was unfortunate because the .400 Legend missed

Winchester's first load for the .400 Legend features a 215-grain Power Point bullet atop 33.8 grains of an unspecified ball powder. The semi-spitzer bullet has an unimpressive G1 BC of 0.206, which makes little difference for a cartridge intended for short-range use.

most of what should have been its first deer season.) Alas, the .400 Legend cartridge is here now, and it's a thumper out to a couple hundred yards — without rattling teeth at the other end!



In the blackpowder era, .40-caliber rifle cartridges were common. In modern times, there are few: .400 Legend (2023); .401 WSL (1910); .405 Win. (1904). The .400 Legend is similar to the .401 WSL. Although obsolete, it would fit modern straight-wall criteria. The .405 Win. does not, however, on grounds of case length.

STORE TO STAND

Savage's long-awaited test rifle arrived to me in November 2023, a Savage Axis XP Stainless (\$589, savagearms.com). Developed on the familiar Savage 110 action, it features stainless metal in a black synthetic stock with a detachable box magazine; it has a capacity of four rounds for the .400 Legend. The Axis XP model is what Savage has long-called a "package" rifle, complete with a Weaver 3-9x40mm scope already mounted in Weaver-style rings on Picatinny strips on both receiver rings. In fact, these scopes are also boresighted to the rifle. Savagearms.com describes the package as the "fastest way to go from the store to the stand." The rifle and optic are a great combination, and it's probably true, but folks, please don't try this at home; it's important to confirm a rifle's zero and accuracy potential at the range before hunting with it.

Though the promise is that the Savage Axis XP is factory boresighted, I would only expect that shots should land on paper with some final adjustments required. When I received the new rifle and cartridge, it was already the eighth day of the 12-day Kansas rifle season. I was anxious to get on stand, but not so anxious that I didn't visit the bench first.

At that time, the initial (and only) load available was a Winchester Power Point with a 215-grain semi-spitzer projectile rated at 2,250 feet per second (fps), which yielded 2,416 foot-pounds (ft.-lbs.) of energy. The boresight looked perfect, so, to save ammo, I took a poke at a big steel plate set at 50 yards.



The .400 Legend is flanked the .350 Legend, above left, and the .450 Bushmaster, right. All three were designed to be AR-compatible and fit straight-wall cartridge criteria for hunting. The .400 Legend produces about the same energy as the Bushmaster, but with less recoil.



The soft-tipped, copper-jacketed, 215-grain Power Point is a classic hunting bullet. It makes sense that it would be the first to appear in the .400 Legend line.



Wow!

It was dead center.

It must be a fluke, I thought. So I tried a smaller plate.

Dead center!

The .40-caliber slug made an impressive divot in the steel, too. No adjustments were made, so I moved to a 100-yard target.

Good grief. It was spot-on again at 100 yards. The Axis XP Stainless was genuinely ready to go straight from store to deer stand with no adjustment needed. My first group of

three shots measured 1¼ inches. Again, please, don't try this at home!

My suspicion, verified later by the folks at Savage, was that somebody had taken G&A's test rifle to the range prior to sending it to me. I get lucky, but I don't expect boresighting to be that perfect. In fact, that was probably the only time in my 50 years of gunwriting that I've taken a new, freshly-scoped rifle — regardless of who mounted the scope — to the range and found it was set up perfectly, without one click of elevation or windage needed.

I was so impressed that I passed the rifle around among some friends. Everyone hit small gongs at 100 yards. Then, adding a few inches of holdover, we even hit the steel coyote target at 200 yards. My young friend, Richard Charlton, was bolder than the rest of us. We figured a rough "Kentucky elevation" correction, and he hit a steel, 400-yard whitetail target in the vitals — three times! That was fancy shooting, but that's well beyond the range the .400 Legend was designed for. Within the hour, the .400 Legend was on a deer stand, in a spot where shots would stay within 200 yards.





For 20 years, Savage has been installing the AccuTrigger in its rifles. The AccuRelease lever must be depressed before the rifle can fire.

The flush-mounted detachable magazine on the Savage Axis XP is unusual in that the magazine release is integral.

STRAIGHT-WALL STUFF

Winchester introduced the .350 Legend in Guns & Ammo's March 2019 issue. It has been an amazingly successful cartridge that's now loaded by multiple ammo brands and chambered in numerous bolt-actions and semiautomatic rifles. Although the .350 Legend was developed to be AR-15 compatible, its claim to fame was that it was designed to fit all the criteria in the five "straight-wall" states for hunting, at the time of its launch. Confusing folks who don't live in one of them, they include Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Michigan, and Ohio. Hence, these states allow "straight-wall" centerfire rifle cartridges for deer hunting, some only in certain areas and seasons that were formerly "shotgun only." The intent was to enable the use of more accurate and efficient firearms without necessarily increasing effective range. This idea was completely opposite to the widespread interest other rifleshooters have for shooting at longer ranges. Remember, however, that millions of American deer hunters live in the East and Upper Midwest, and many were restricted to hunting with shotgun slugs only. The rationale was to limit the travel of potential stray projectiles.

SAVAGE AXIS XP .400 LEGEND	
TYPE	Bolt action, push-feed
CARTRIDGE	.400 Legend
CAPACITY	4+1 rds.
BARREL	20 in., 1:16-in. twist, button rifled, carbon steel
OVERALL LENGTH	40.5 in.
WEIGHT	7 lbs., 1 oz.
LENGTH OF PULL	13.75 in.
STOCK	Black synthetic
FINISH	Matte black (steel)
TRIGGER	Savage AccuTrigger, adj.; 2 lbs., 8 oz. (tested)
SIGHTS	None
MSRP	\$479
MANUFACTURER	Savage Arms, 800-370-0708, savagearms.com

It was a simple concept, but then it got complicated. Criteria varies from state to state, and some regulations specify case length, bullet diameter, and more. For example, Michigan's "Limited Firearms Zone" — formerly "shotgun only" — now allows "Rifles chambered for straight-walled cartridges .35 caliber or larger, with a minimum case length of 1.16 inches and a maximum case length of 1.80 inches." Handgun cartridges such as the .357 and .44 Magnums, long chambered in rifles, also fill the bill. However, old-timers including the .38-55, .375, .405 Winchester — and .45-70 — do not because the cases are too long.

Geezers like me look lovingly at these old, classic cartridges and wonder what this straight-wall stuff is all about. It's simple: Those five states are important deer-hunting states. Thousands of shotgun-toting deer hunters were interested in an accurate centerfire rifle. Michigan led the way in 2014. Other than handgun cartridges, just about the only "modern" and currently-chambered rifle cartridge that fit all criteria was the .450 Bushmaster.

Also, let's face it, in our industry new stuff drives sales.



The Savage Axis is a push-feed design with a two lug bolt assembly. Requiring a 90-degree lift, the bolt is easy to manipulate.



The safety is a two-position switch atop the stock's thumb rest. To the right of the receiver is the bolt release for easy removal.



The synthetic stock sports modern styling, but is non-adjustable. The length of pull is fixed at 13¾ inches.



The button-ripped barrel measures 20 inches for the Savage Axis XP in .400 Legend. It's complete with an 11-degree target crown.

Ruger quickly chambered the bolt-action American to .450 Bushmaster, for example, a popular product in Michigan alone. The .450 Bushmaster is a great cartridge, similar to the .45-70. The problem is that it's too much of a good thing for many, especially youngsters and petite women. Recoil is considerable and can be downright ferocious in light rifles. The .350 Legend was designed to fit all straight-wall criteria and be AR-compatible, yet deliver adequate bark without as much bite.

Remington's .360 Buckhammer, introduced in January 2023, was also designed to fit straight-wall criteria. Based on the .30-30 Winchester case, straightened out, it's an old-school rimmed cartridge. It is a bit faster and slightly more powerful than the .350 Legend, but it's too soon to tell if its popularity will be limited by its lack of AR compatibility. It's primarily found chambered in Henry lever-actions and a Traditions Outfitter G3 single-shot.

.350 VS. .400 LEGEND

Other than the name, shared straight-wall compliance, and AR-compatibility, the .350 and .400 Legends have nothing in common. Both are based on unique, new case dimensions, with no parent cases. The .400 Legend has a rebated

.422-inch rim. Its case is AR-compatible, but the bolt face must be opened up. The case length is 1.65 inches, so it is straight-wall compliant.

The .400 Legend has a bullet diameter that is also unique: .4005 inch. At five ten-thousandths undersize, one could handload the .40 S&W's true .40-caliber, .400-inch bullets for practice, but at the .400 Legend's velocity — which is nearly double — it's best to use proper rifle bullets for hunting.

Although common in the blackpowder era, there have been few modern .40-caliber smoke-

less centerfires. Best-known is the .405 Winchester; it features a straight-taper but is way too long. Under the heading of "Nothing new under the sun," the .400 Legend is most like the old .401 Winchester Self Loading (WSL) cartridge, a straight, semi-rimmed cartridge only chambered in the Winchester Model 1910 semiautomatic. With a 1.5-inch case and firing a .4065-inch bullet, the .401 is among the few older rifle cartridges to fit all straight-wall criteria. One could accuse Winchester of "reinventing the wheel" with the .400 Legend, but that's not entirely fair.

The .401's semi-rimmed case could not be adapted to a modern sporting rifle, and it has





A black and white photograph of a Walther PDP Match Steel Frame handgun, shown from a side profile. The handgun is positioned diagonally across the frame, pointing towards the bottom left. The background is a dark, textured surface with a series of vertical, slightly curved lines that create a sense of depth and movement. The lighting is dramatic, highlighting the contours of the handgun's frame and the texture of the grip.

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Boddington's first game taken with the .400 Legend was a white-tail doe in Kansas. The 215-grain Winchester Power Point load provided excellent penetration and bullet expansion.

PERFORMANCE

LOAD	VEL. (FPS)	ES	SD	3-SHOT GROUP (IN.)		5-SHOT GROUP (IN.)	
				BEST	AVG.	BEST	AVG.
Winchester 215-gr. Power-Point JSP	2,290	68	21.3	.43	.69	1.67	2.05

Notes: Accuracy is the average of five, three- and five-shot groups fired from a 100-yard benchrest. Velocity is the average of 10 shots recorded by a Garmin XERO C1 Pro chronograph placed adjacent to the muzzle.

long been obsolete. The longer-cased .400 Legend is faster and more powerful.

The best way to describe the .400 Legend? It lies almost exactly between the .350 Legend and .450 Bushmaster. More power than the former; less recoil than the latter. There is no increase in range. All three — plus the Buckhammer — are essentially 200-yard hunting cartridges, which is what the straight-wall cartridges are all about. The .400 Legend drops below 1,000 ft.-lbs. of energy before it gets to 250 yards, then it starts to drop like a rock. The straight-walls are not about distance, but 200 yards is plenty of range for whitetail hunting, and most hunts for black bears and wild hogs.

Although frontal area is less, actual energy is similar to the Bushmaster, thus similar to .45-70. If you like numbers, Winchester reckons recoil is 20 percent less than the .450 Bushmaster, and much less than 12-gauge shotgun slugs. Energy is 25 percent greater than the .350 Legend, 20 percent more than .30-30, and nearly double that of a standard 12-gauge slug load.

Although I've never lived nor hunted in a straight-wall state, I've hunted with all four of the primary straight-wall rifle cartridges in the last few seasons. After all, I get asked to write about new stuff, right? The .450 Bushmaster is powerful and effective; its recoil doesn't bother me, but it is substantial, more than necessary to get the job done.

The real beauty of the .350 Legend is that it's pleasant to shoot and its report is noticeably mild. I've used the .350 Legend for deer, wild hogs and black bears. I haven't had

a problem, but I've seen several problems with big hogs. After multiple hunting seasons, my judgment is that the .350 Legend is a deer cartridge, and on the light side for large hogs, marginal for black bears. Obviously, when an animal isn't recovered, we can't know exactly what went wrong. Was it shot placement? Bullet performance, or both? The .350 Legend will do the job, but there's little margin for error. I'm not suggesting power makes up for shot placement. However, I am convinced the greater frontal area and increased energy of the .40-caliber provides a measure of insurance, especially on larger game.

SAVAGE AXIS XP

Savage jumped into the .400 Legend pool with both feet, now chambering fully a dozen bolt-action variants. The Axis XP is just one, but I like this version of the tried-and-true Savage 110. The barrel is 20 inches, nice and compact. Although the hole down the middle is big, the barrel is medium in contour, giving the rifle a reasonable weight of 7 pounds with excellent balance. The AccuTrigger is readily adjustable, with a tool supplied for adjustment. I've never been big on detachable magazines, but I like this one. The release is integral to the front of the polymer magazine, seats flush, and is positive and trouble free.

Recognizing that the .400 Legend is a 200-yard cartridge, accuracy was better than it needed to be. A costlier, more powerful scope might tighten the average of five, five-shot 100-yards groups a bit. The 215-grain Winchester Power Point averaged 2.048 inches. Within the five-shot groups, four sub-MOA three-shot clusters appeared, two under one-half inch. The average of three-shot groups was .688 inches; that may be more indicative of this rifle's real accuracy.

As for loads, that may take more time. Winchester has announced the Deer Season XP with its 190-grain Extreme Point bullet and a Super Suppressed 300-grain, open-tip, target load. Likely, more choices will come. Before that happens, more of us need to jump on the .400 Legend bandwagon.

MORE PUNCH, LITTLE MORE PAIN

Here's what I liked the most about the .400 Legend: The 215-grain Power Points consistently exited on whitetails. Damage wasn't extreme, but the wound channels were noticeably larger — so more leakage. Increasingly, I'm hearing that the .350 Legend is a cartridge that requires careful shooting. If you feel that way, then the .400 Legend may be the answer. For me, it's definitely a better choice for hogs and black bears. It kicks but isn't nearly as painful as shooting the .450 Bushmaster. Maybe we don't need all that extra energy. If you do, however, or think you just might, then the .400 Legend is a brand-new in-between option — whether you live in a straight-wall state or not.

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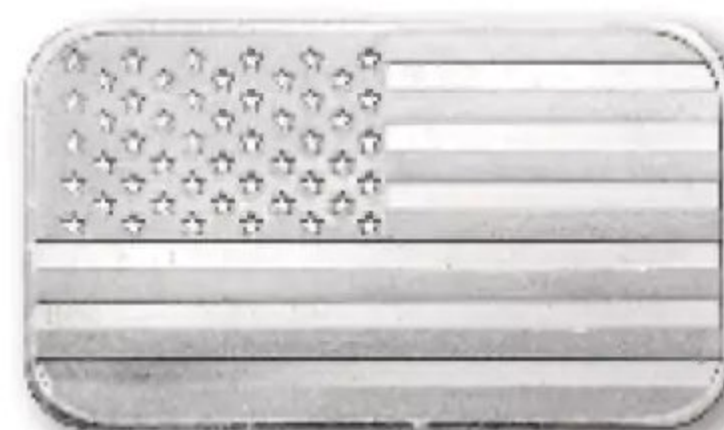
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A BOY'S RIFLE

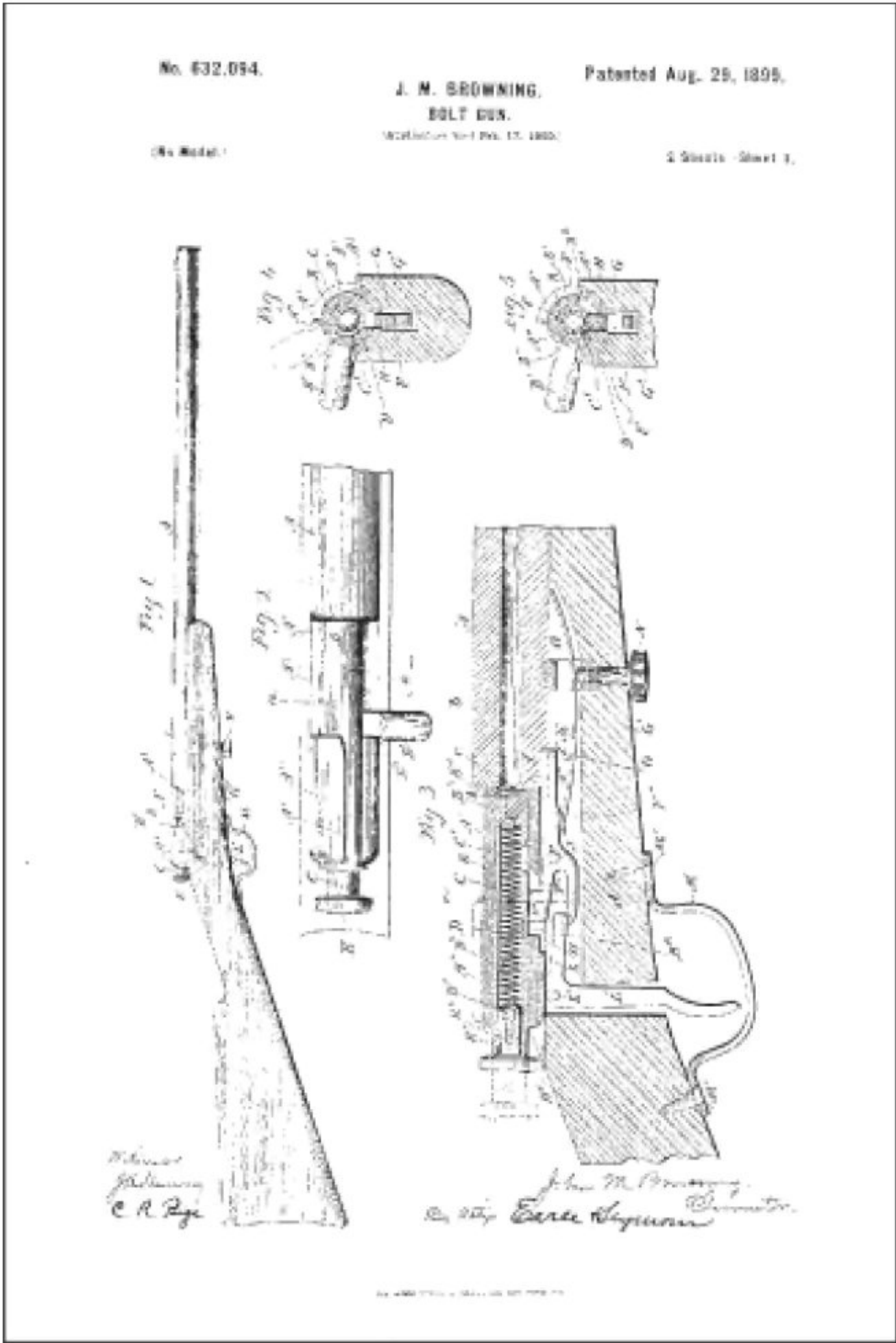
JOHN BROWNING DESIGNS ARE HIGHLY REGARDED, BUT ONLY A FEW HAVE BEEN MORE UBIQUITOUS THAN HIS SINGLE-SHOT RIMFIRE BOLT-ACTIONS.

BY ROBERT W. HUNNICUTT | PHOTOS BY MICHAEL ANSCHUETZ

WINCHESTER made plenty of inexpensive guns for mass-marketers such as Sears and Montgomery Ward, and to feed the hardware-store trade. Many inspired indifference, and even scorn, such as with the 200-series rimfires made after 1964. But should they? Would you turn up your nose at a rifle designed by John Moses Browning at the very pinnacle of his abilities, even if more than a million were sold at a time when the U.S. population was less than a quarter of its current size? I thought not.

In 1899, Winchester sought an affordable .22-caliber rifle to market as a plinker and for small-game hunting. Browning filed the patent for the Model 1900 in February 1899, and the design was purchased by Winchester. A few months later, Winchester announced it on a flyleaf attached to the August 1899 catalog. Inexpensive, the rifle was sized for young boys and

destined to become an ideal first rifle. Designed as a takedown rifle during a time when the .22-caliber rimfire cartridges were still evolving, it would chamber .22 Short, .22 Long, and later, .22 Extra Long. These were cartridges that a kid could have found in just about any country store in those days. The .22 Extra Long round, which dated to 1880, has been long forgotten except by cartridge collectors. It was longer than the .22 Long Rifle (LR) with a case length of .750 inches to the Long Rifle's .613 inches, and an overall length of 1.16 inches to the .22 LR's 1 inch. As some guess, guns chambered for .22 Extra Long can fire .22 LR ammo, but not vice-versa. Since you are a lot more likely to find the gun than the ammo, this is no great problem. Be aware that lots of these guns were extensively fired with corrosive .22 Shorts, which tend to erode a ring inside the chamber, leading to hard extraction.



The patent application was filed February 17, 1899, and U.S. Patent No. 632,094 was granted on August 29, 1899. The original model is at the Browning Firearms Museum.

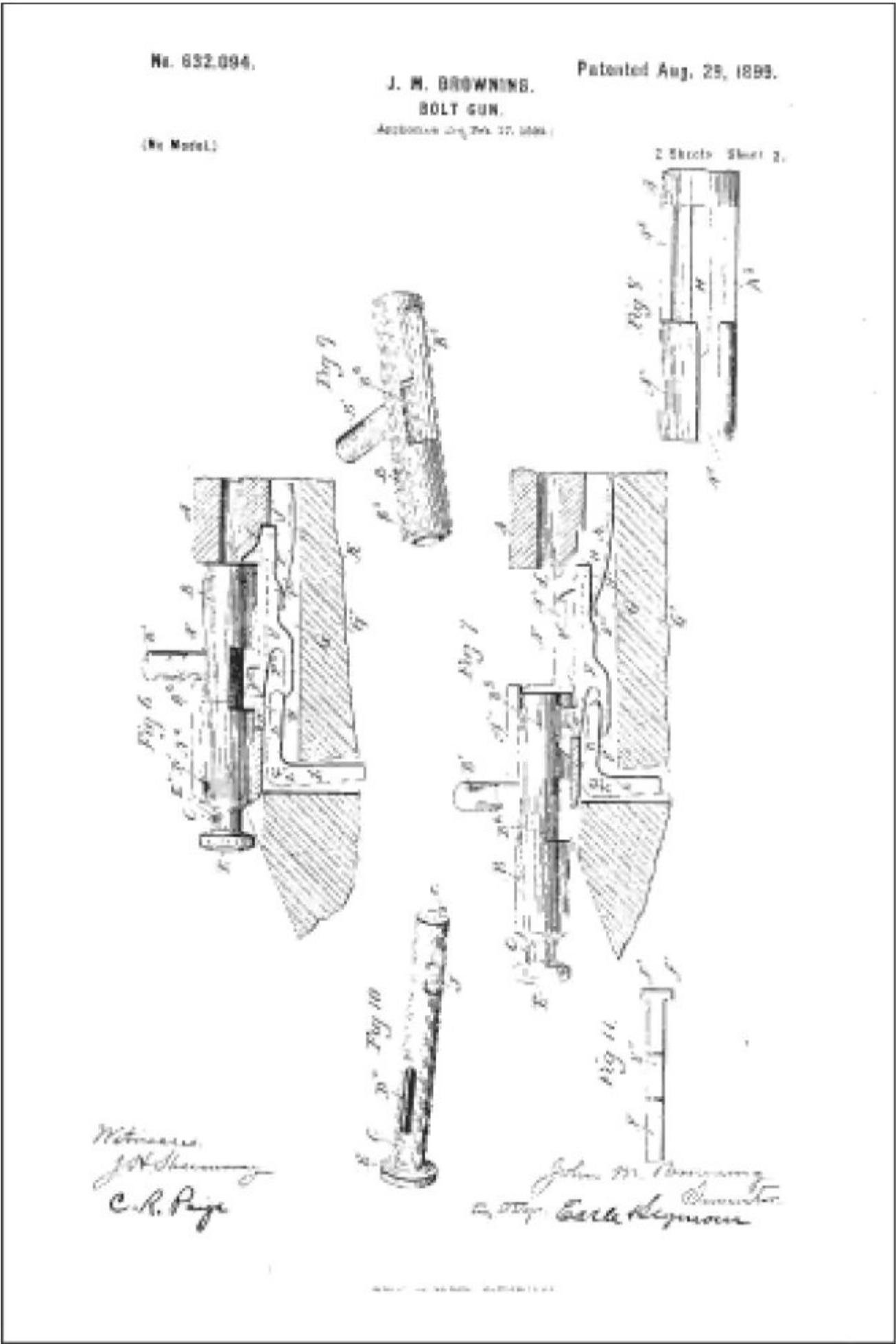
The barrels of Models 1900, 1902 and 1904 are secured to the stock with a coin-slotted thumbscrew in front of the triggerguard. This allows for easy takedown with a penny. The thumbscrew engages a threaded block dovetailed to the underside of the barrel. That part helps retain the sear spring, which, at its front, engaged a notch in the barrel. At the rear, it presses up on the sear/ extractor.

There is no separate receiver; the barrels were gun-drilled from the rear to accommodate the bolt body. After the pilot hole was bored through the length, rifling would have been cut. Longitudinal notches and slots give passage at the top for the bolt handle, as well as the bottom for the sear/ extractor. Cross-milled openings provide access to the loading port.

The trigger is an L-shaped piece pinned into the stock. It engages a recess milled into the sear/extractor and pressed down on that part when pulled, releasing the firing pin.

Cocking is manual, a great feature for a boy’s gun. The bolt does not cock the rifle when it’s cycled. Instead, pull back on the knurled knob at the rear of the bolt to cock. To uncock, keep a firm grip on the cocking knob and pull the trigger to ease it forward under control — but watch your muzzle while doing this! Browning’s approach allows the rifle to be carried loaded, but not cocked, which was especially useful when hunting.

The sear/extractor moves forward and back in its slot during bolt operation. Retracting the bolt pulls it rearward,



extractor pressed forward because it won’t remove the empty if you do.

If you want to remove the bolt, you’ll need to remove the action from the stock and pull down on the sear/ extractor to release the bolt. This also provides access to the breech for cleaning the bore with a cleaning rod from the rear.

Before 1968, rimfire rifles were not required to have serial numbers, so dating these rimfires is approximate, at best. What’s helpful is identifying the changes between models and considering significant years of development.

MODEL 1900
 If you look closely, you’ll see that the Winchester Model 1900 was awarded its patent on August 19, 1899. The unassuming piece was intended as a boy’s rifle priced at \$5, or the equivalent of \$183.58 in 2024 dollars. To get

to that price point, the Model 1900 was simple in design, sporting an 18-inch barrel with an uncrowned muzzle.

Having a length of pull of 12¾ inches, the straight-gripped stock was made of gumwood, or sometimes a substandard walnut with an oil finish. The original drop at comb measured 1½ inches with 2¾ inches of drop at the heel. The early buttplate was rolled into the shape, with texture. After about 20,000 guns were produced, shotgun-style buttplates were added, many with the Winchester brand later. Once production past 89,000 guns, hard-rubber buttplates appeared exclusively. The Model 1900 was discontinued in 1902 with about 105,000 produced.



The M1900 series fired various .22 cartridges. Gallery projectiles were compressed metal powder to avoid ricochets.

with the extractor hook removing the spent case. It will eject if operated smartly; if you crank it softly, you’ll need to invert the rifle to dump the empty. When loading, leave the cartridge on the extractor and push the bolt home; don’t load it with the

WINCHESTER MODEL 1904	
TYPE	Bolt action, single shot
CARTRIDGE	.22 Short, .22 Long Rifle, .22 Extra Long
BARREL	21 in., round profile
OVERALL LENGTH	36 in.
WEIGHT	4 lbs.
STOCK	Gumwood, straight grip
FINISH	Blue (steel)
SIGHTS	Bead (front), V-notch (rear)
TRIGGER	6 lbs.
SAFETY	None
MANUFACTURER	Winchester
DISCONTINUED	1946



Model 1904 Deluxe rifles featured a globe front sight and a Lyman 55RWS rear sight. (Courtesy of Rock Island Auction Co.)



Assembled Winchester Junior Rifle Corps kits were offered between 1904 and 1931. (Courtesy of Rock Island Auction Co.)

It was Winchester's first action cocked by pulling rearward on the knurled firing-pin head, a Browning invention that has since been employed by most firearms manufacturers. The 1900 was replaced by the Model 1902 single-shot.

MODEL 1902

First delivered on June 4, 1902, the Model 1902 introduced a shaped triggerguard with the rear extended and curved to support the small of the stock's function as a pistol grip. The trigger pull was also shortened, and a blued steel buttplate was added. At the muzzle, the barrel was made heavier than on the Model 1900. Early versions of the Model 1902 retained the barrel weight of the Model 1900, with a diameter of .531 inches at the muzzle. After about 70,000 guns were produced, muzzle diameter was increased to .594 inches. Chambering changed to .22 Short, .22 Long and .22 Extra Long, interchangeably, in 1914. It changed again in 1927 to .22 Short, .22 Long, and .22 Long Rifle, and the steel buttplate was changed to a composition buttplate in 1907.

The 1902 was followed by the Winchester Thumb Trigger and Model 1904 rifles. The Thumb Trigger model simplified the gun even more by making the trigger a

sliding piece in the top of the grip, operated by the thumb. This allowed the deletion of the finger trigger and the triggerguard. This peculiar system was more popular than you might think, too. Some 75,000 were made from 1902 to 1923.

The Model 1902 was a sales success with 640,300 made by the time it was discontinued in 1931. Notably, a few employees made target pistols using the 1902 action for their own use.

MODEL 1904

Sensing a demand for a "man-sized" version of its boy's rifle, Winchester added the Model 1904, which was first delivered on July 5, 1904. This was fitted with a 21-inch barrel in a somewhat larger stock that featured a subtle, but distinctive, Schnabel forend. The rifle was heavier than the Model 1902 by a pound, too. Like the Model 1902, the steel crescent buttplate was changed to a hard rubber buttplate in 1925 and discontinued in 1931. The triggerguard on the Model 1904 was enlarged in proportion to the larger stock, and the 1904 featured a rear sight adjustable for elevation with a small, slotted screw. The price of the Model 1904 was slightly more than the Model 1902 and, therefore, not as successful. Some 302,850 were made before the Depression laid waste to the Winchester line in 1931.

WINCHESTER JUNIOR RIFLE CORPS

The Winchester Junior Rifle Corps Range Kit No. 1 was first offered in 1920, featuring the Model 1902. The Range Kit No. 2 included the Model 1904. Winchester's Model

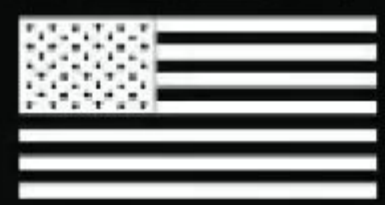
1902 and 1904 were the staple of the Winchester Junior Rifle Corps, a post-World War I effort to promote shooting among the younger set. In keeping with the arrival of women's suffrage at about the same time, the first member of the Corps was Ruth L. Russell of



The barreled action was notched to accept a simple bolt. The striker wasn't cocked until the action was closed and the knurled knob was pulled back.



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In 1904, a curved steel triggerguard was added to the design. Though originally blued, this one has been case hardened.



A single, captive, thumb screw secures the barreled action to the stock. It is slotted for tightening with a penny.

New Haven, Connecticut.

Corps members could buy the cunningly packaged Range Kits that incorporated these smallbore rifles, as well as everything a young shooter would need to get started shooting: Cartridges, cleaning tools, grease, oil, rust remover, targets and belt pouches for notepads and pencils. The one-screw takedown was handy with this configuration because the young rifle owner could quickly disassemble these rifles into two pieces for convenient stowage in the case. One of these sold at a Rock Island Auction on December 1, 2018, for \$2,588, sure to have provided the top bidder a fascinating time tunnel back to the past. The Winchester Junior Rifle Corps lasted until 1931, and it was influential in inspiring the NRA Marksmanship Qualification Programs that continue today (<http://mqp.nra.org>).

REJUVENATION

Dad inherited a Model 1904 from his uncle, and I used it extensively as a boy while riding a bike in the New Mexico desert. I shot at any target of opportunity when the chance offered. Any sort of store, including a lot of gas stations, sold rimfire and shotshell ammo in those days, and I recall a box of .22 Shorts costing about 50 cents. The firing rate of the Model 1904 matched my buying power just right.

In time, I inherited the rifle. Somewhere in those

years, the flat sear/extractor spring broke, rendering it non-firing. Checking the usual parts sources showed the supply of replacements was long gone. I suppose I could have had a blacksmith make a replacement, but that project never got off the ground.

I was about to drop it off at a local gun store for use as a parts gun when Guns & Ammo Editor Eric Poole mentioned his '04 had a flat spring but was missing other parts. Using it to 'coon hunt with as a kid, Poole's had a stock that had been sawed off to fit a 10-year-old's frame. It didn't take a genius to know one working rifle beats two parts queens, so I handed mine over to get his going. Knowing that it would never be a collector's dream, Poole packed them off to Houston gunsmith Bruce Lohman (lohmangunsmith.com).

Lohman's shop provides a full range of services for all sorts of firearms. With some patience, Lohman charcoal-blued the barreled action, enhanced the crescent steel buttplate

and triggerguard with color-case hardening, and skillfully shaped a Schnabel-forend stock out of a figured piece of walnut. The result is probably the fanciest Winchester Model 1904 in captivity.

There is no great need to benchrest a gun like this; it's intended for the field shooting of small game, target shooting, and plinking. Sights are an open rear and a .065-



Standard sights were a post/notch arrangement, both dovetailed to the barrel. The muzzle is flat faced without a crown.

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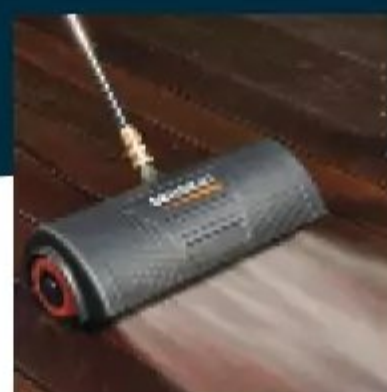
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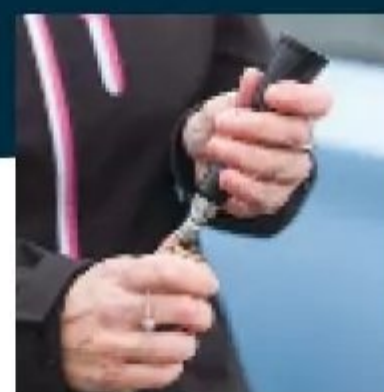
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Though developed as a boy's rifle, and intended for plinking, the author found the M1904 useful as a garden gun.

inch bead front. You wouldn't have wanted these at Camp Perry, but they are just fine for a youngster in pursuit of small game. I did give it a function test, though, with both .22 LR ammo and CB caps. Both were digested easily when the proper loading procedure was applied.

The trigger is still no great shakes by today's standards, but it's perfectly usable for pounding a steel spinner target at 25 yards offhand. I missed only when I got cute and tried to hit the very top edge of the target to spin it hard. The rifle shot about an inch to the right at that range, a condition that would be corrected by driving the rear sight a bit to the left or the front sight to the right.

I find that shooters under the age of 40, or so, are often puzzled by how to use a rifle with a crescent buttplate. They've spent their shooting careers firing AR-15s and other modern sporting rifles with the low-elbow stance that's popular today. That doesn't work so well with the classics of a century back. These were intended for the high-elbowed stance needed for a firm cheekweld, especially with stocks having a substantial drop. Hold the Model 1904 in this manner and it's a breeze to shoot.

A box of 100 .22 LR cartridges and a handful of CB caps kept three of us shooting busily for about an hour on a warm spring day. Shooting this single-shot brought back memories of a time before I had ever heard 30-round mag dumps pollute the typical range experience. The Model 1904 raises the question: What's the rush? **G&A**



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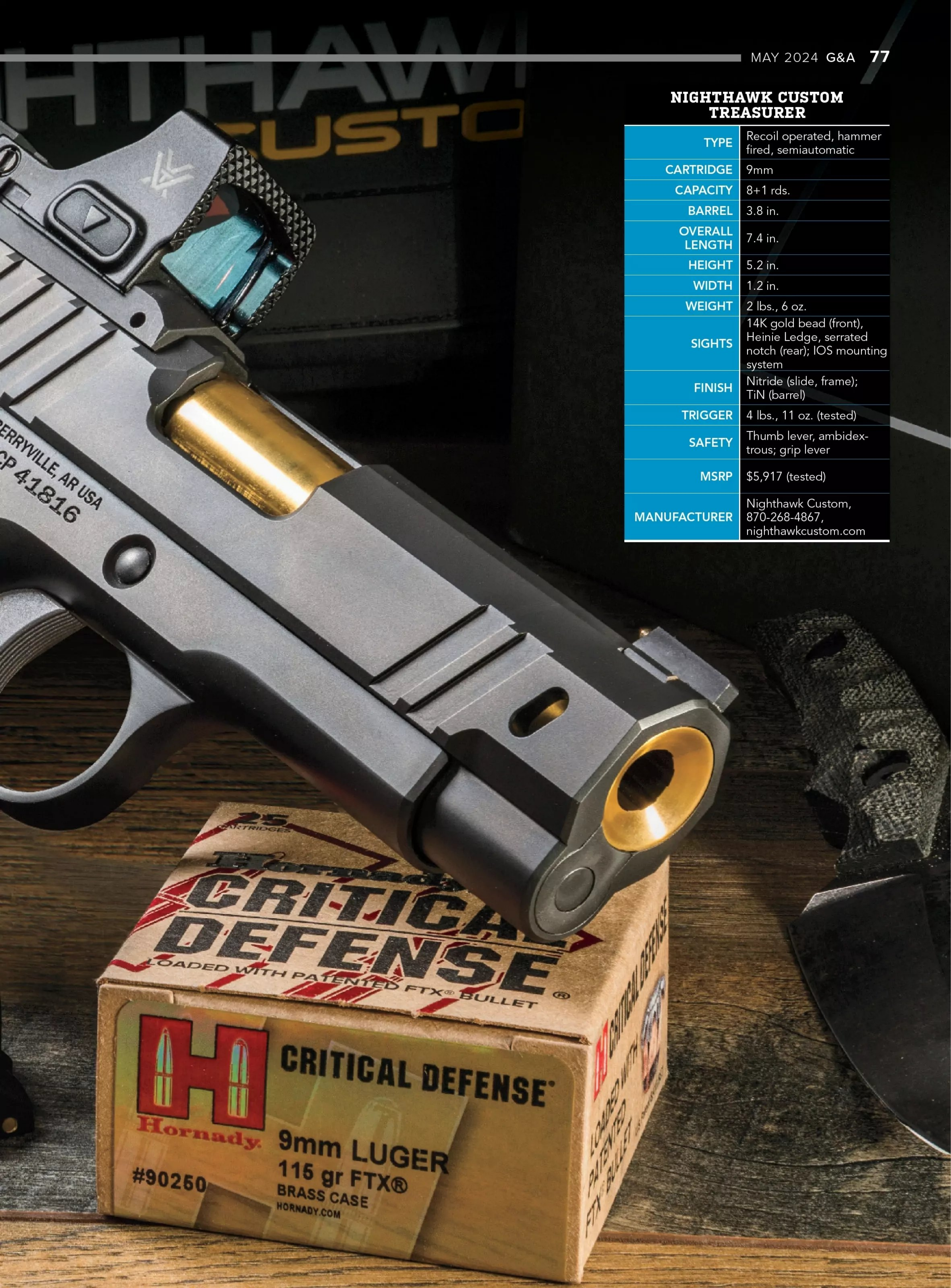
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CALIFORNIA GOLD

WHEN WE first opted to review the Nighthawk Custom Treasurer, Guns & Ammo's California-based contributors expressed excitement. Besides the "One Gun, One Gunsmith" tagline, it was the ability to personalize it through Nighthawk Custom's Express

Gunsmithing Initiative (EGI). The EGI program allows California residents to buy one of the brand's California-compliant models and then customize it with features. Milling the slide to mount a red dot, for example, is quite popular.





NIGHTHAWK CUSTOM
TREASURER

TYPE	Recoil operated, hammer fired, semiautomatic
CARTRIDGE	9mm
CAPACITY	8+1 rds.
BARREL	3.8 in.
OVERALL LENGTH	7.4 in.
HEIGHT	5.2 in.
WIDTH	1.2 in.
WEIGHT	2 lbs., 6 oz.
SIGHTS	14K gold bead (front), Heinie Ledge, serrated notch (rear); IOS mounting system
FINISH	Nitride (slide, frame); TiN (barrel)
TRIGGER	4 lbs., 11 oz. (tested)
SAFETY	Thumb lever, ambidextrous; grip lever
MSRP	\$5,917 (tested)
MANUFACTURER	Nighthawk Custom, 870-268-4867, nighthawkcustom.com

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The dovetail-milled slide allows for repeatable zero. The IOS plate is indexed with a retainer pin, which is secured by tightening a set screw.



With Nighthawk's innovative IOS mounting system, you can interchange iron sights for optics without compromising zero.

III, T3, Talon, and Talon II. The EGI program offers Californians the option to customize a California-compliant model with features similar to other Nighthawk Custom products. EGI is limited to a few models, though: GRP, Talon, and T3, and only on new pistol orders. The customizations are also limited, but too numerous to list here. Visit nighthawkcus.com for details. The cost of the service is \$599 plus the cost of the parts you are upgrading to.

EGI is not skirting the UHA because the pistol you are buying and receiving is a California-compliant model. Once you fill out ATF Form 4473 and wait the obligatory 10 days to pick it up, send the California-compliant model to Nighthawk Custom for customization. Nighthawk Custom provides a return shipping label and has a five-day in-house turnaround for the upgrades.

The model used to evaluate this process was ordered with concealed carry in mind. After this, an ambidextrous safety, Integrated Optic System (IOS), and an IOS RMR plate were added. Once the T3 was received, it was immediately shipped to Nighthawk Custom. Nine days later, the Treasurer-like T3 was ready for evaluation.

THE TREASURER'S UPGRADES

The custom work swapped out the T3 Commander slide chambered in .45 ACP for a tri-cut Officer slide with a gold titanium-nitride (TiN) 3.8-inch crowned barrel chambered in 9mm. The slide serrations are widely spaced, and there are a few lightening cuts on the front of the slide that further reveal the gold-looking barrel. A complement to that "bling," the front bead sight is made of 14-karat gold. Other welcomed usability features are the one-piece flared mainspring housing and Railscales Ascend G10 grips.

The Treasurer's frame and slide are steel, giving it a nice heft that benefits handling and recoil. Other features include a beavertail grip with raised pad, 25 lines-per-inch checkering, and honeycombed-dimpled grips. The frame's weight and grip texture keep the handgun firmly planted in the hands. The flared magwell helps to make mag changes snappier, and its rounded rear doesn't dig into the user's side when carried on the hip.



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Chambered in 9mm, the Treasurer barrel is crowned and bushingless.



The Treasurer slide assembly features a TiN-finished barrel, and captive recoil spring and guiderod assembly.

Sitting atop the slide is a Heinie Ledge solid-black serrated sight mounted to the IOS plate. The IOS plate slides onto the unique dovetail-milled slide. It is held in place by a retainer pin and set screw, which is easy to replace with a standard sight arrangement while still retaining zero if you decide to go back to the optic. On our test sample, the rear iron sight was swapped with a Trijicon RMR mounted on Nighthawk Custom's RMR-compatible IOS plate. The RMR plate has a rear sight at the front of the plate, giving the shooter a back-up sight option should the optic quit.

The upgrade included two, stainless-steel, 8-round 9mm magazines with a base plate. The magazines are designed with an integrated feed lip. The lip angles the bullet nose close to the barrel's feed ramp, improving the pistol's reliability.

The cost of the California Treasurer amounted to \$5,917, not including sales tax or the optic. This price does include the cost of the T3, the cost of the Treasurer parts, the \$599 EGI fee for the custom work and shipping, \$120 for the ambidextrous safety, \$350 IOS upgrade, and \$149 for the RMR ISO plate. Although this package is pricey, it is on par with spec'ing similar custom 1911s. Since Nighthawk Custom performs custom work, the total cost only applies to the example reviewed by G&A. Call Nighthawk Custom for



The one-piece mainspring housing and magwell blend with the grip.



The frontstrap features a high-grip undercut and 25-lpi checkering. Touchpoints, such as the trigger, grip, and mag release are tactile.

details on your build, and yours may be priced differently.

WORTH IT?

The quality of a Nighthawk Custom 1911 is more than superficial; it's also about the feel of the fit. Nighthawk Custom starts by making all the parts in-house — with the exception of a few springs — and machining them oversized so they can be filed, blended and polished to fit with

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SKS PHENOLIC STOCK SET

1960s Original

\$99.95 #SKS100

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Includes new mnfr. M7 Scabbard.

Bayonet marked AFII \$89.95 #BAY211

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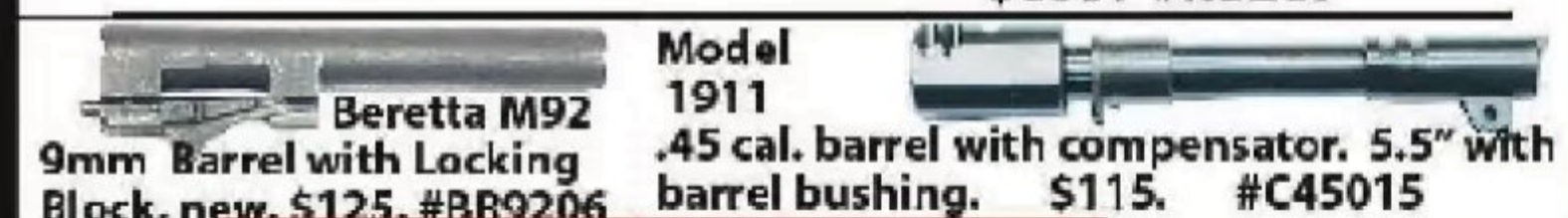
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#HERE WE GO
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The Treasurer enhances the Nighthawk Custom T3 into a more contemporary carry option.

tight tolerances. One gunsmith does all the fitting, and his signature can be found on the build sheet, frame, slide, and barrel. The result is a handgun that feels like a steel extension of your hand, but the action works smoothly. There is no rattling, or play in the slide even as you retract and twist it. The slide even moves effortlessly when performing a two-finger press check from the front of the slide.

The Everlast Recoil System gets part credit here, too. Its resistance is consistent through the slide travel without ramping up heavily as its retracted. Barrel lock-up is secure, as evidenced when pressing the breech of the barrel through the ejection port; there was no wiggle, which aids precision. The fit of the grip safety was perfect, no side-to-side play in the slide, and the mainspring engaged immediately with slight pressure. Exterior sharp edges were eliminated, and the black nitride finish provides corrosion protection to the frame and slide.

AT THE RANGE

Spending three range days shooting 14 types of training and self-defense ammo featuring a multitude of nose shapes, velocities, and bullet weights showed G&A's staff that this handgun loves to run. It fired every load.

Muzzle rise was minimal, and



A build sheet documents each order.

follow-up shots were fast due to the guiderod and pistol weight helping the red dot settle quickly on target. The grips and frame checkering offered confident control without much effort. There were a couple of failure-to-feeds during testing, but caused by user error. Since the pistol was so easy to shoot, some staff started to relax their grip, failing to apply pressure to the grip safety. Once corrected, no issues were encountered for two more range days.

The Model 1911 trigger is often the standard for judging other handgun triggers. Nighthawk's trigger work did



The Officer slide with IOS, and 3.8-inch barrel of the Treasurer upgrade made this CA-legal configuration excellent for EDC.

PERFORMANCE

LOAD	VEL. (FPS)	ES	SD	BEST GROUP (IN.)	AVG GROUP (IN.)
Hornady Crit. Defense 115-gr. FTX	1,093	39	11	0.89	1.32
Federal Punch 124-gr. JHP	1,106	58	19	0.93	1.31
Hornady Critical Duty 136-gr. FlexLock	974	34	9	0.97	1.40
Federal Hydra-Shok 135-gr. JHP	1,002	34	9	0.98	1.47
Hornady Amer. Gunner 124-gr. XTP	1,180	47	15	1.42	1.76

Notes: Accuracy is the average of five, five-shot groups fired at 25 yards from a bagged benchrest. Velocity is the average of five shots measured by an Oehler Model 35P chronograph set at 6-feet in front of the muzzle.

not disappoint. Despite measuring 5 pounds, 3 ounces, it felt lighter due to how smoothly it released the hammer. By the end of G&A's range tests, the pull weight was measured again and discovered to have improved to an average of 4 pounds, 11 ounces.

Five, five-shot groups, featuring defensive ammunition, were shot at 25 yards while seated at a bench and resting on sandbags. The results were impressive: The average group size for most of the ammo measured 1½-inches or less. All but one load produced at least one group that measured less than 1 inch.

As a carry test, the Treasurer was holstered in Black-Point's Tactical Mini Wing IWB Holster on a Versacarry Classic Carry Belt. The belt is thick and holds heavy pistols without sagging. Carried for three days in California, this setup provided assured confidence. While there was some worry that the Railscales' aggressive grips would feel rough against the skin, the handgun proved rather smooth and easy to carry. No one was uncomfortable.

CONCLUSION

Nighthawk Custom's Treasurer performed even better than it looked. When compared to other California-compliant handguns, the pricey Treasurer is superior in accuracy, fit and finish. It's more of an investment than an expense. **G&A**

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RRA 1911 CUSTOM SERIES



CALIBER		DESCRIPTION	CALIBER	ACCURACY
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	PS6000	RRA 1911 POLYMER PISTOL	.45 ACP	2.5-INCHES AT 50 YARDS
	PS2050	RRA 1911-A1 NM HARDBALL	.45 ACP	2.5-INCHES AT 50 YARDS

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ANTONIO ACITELLI

SHOW STOPPERS

I'M SURE that many Guns & Ammo readers are familiar with how rumors and rumblings can develop at work. The firearms and hunting industry is no different, especially for those of us on the media side of things. There are frequent whispers anticipating new products, factory expansions, ammunition, and brand acquisitions outside of closed doors. When big events such as the National Shooting Sports Foundation (NSSF) Shooting, Hunting, and Outdoor Trade (SHOT) Show take place, it can feel like a pressure cooker going off. New stuff has been revealed, and some rumors were confirmed or debunked. At the 2024 SHOT Show, G&A editors took in as much as time allowed. You will find many new releases at gunsandammo.com and on G&A TV. There was so much content that a new webpage was created just for show coverage.

While SHOT Show is an industry-only event, there are many conventions



Guns & Ammo's digital team recorded from the SHOT Show floor. Take a look at some of our interviews and coverage featuring new releases for 2024.



that welcome the public to the show floor. I've attended the National Wild Turkey Federation (NWTF) Convention in Nashville, and the 2024 NRA Annual Meetings & Exhibits will take place from May 14 to 17 in Dallas.

Live events are important because like minds can gather, learn and compare new products before buying.

While manufacturers send out press releases and sell sheets, it's an entirely different experience to handle new products in a gun-friendly environment.

Unexpected opportunities and conversations can appear at shows and events in ways one may not expect. While attending an Aimpoint event near Huntsville, Alabama, one of my first live events after being hired by Guns & Ammo, an opportunity to learn new defensive handgun techniques using a red dot became available. Those lessons, taught by Duane "Buck" Buckner were impromptu, but changed how I shot handguns with red dots moving forward. Now that the pandemic has subsided, I encourage you to seek out opportunities to gather together, share experiences and learn from each other.

TOP COMMENTS

In response to the Brad Fitzpatrick's "10 Underrated Hunting Cartridges."

"Great article about the 10 cartridge choices. My gal has shot a lot of deer after 50 years with her .30-30. She now shoots the 7-08 and [is] just as good with it as her old gun. How about the old .35 Remington? That's another one that people have forgotten in favor of the fancy new rounds.

Since I'm an old fart that has used most on the list, in my opinion, I'll stick to [the] tried-and-true rounds."

— Joe Z., Wisconsin

In response to the February 2023 Connect, "You Asked for It!"

"Yes, I'd like to see more articles on restoring firearms. Please include options for the restoration of hunting rifles, also."

— Anthony M., email



THE GUNSITE SERVICE PISTOL 1911

Inspired by Col. Jeff Cooper's specifications for a heavy fighting pistol, the Gunsite Service Pistol is a modern 1911 in .45 ACP being produced on-site by Finks Custom Gunsmithing (finksguns.com).



A HISTORY OF CARRY: 40 YEARS ARMED

From a newly-minted deputy to renowned — and mostly retired — handgun instructor, Dave Spaulding recounts 40 years of carrying revolvers and pistols.



SOUND OFF

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KEITH WOOD

If given a blank check, I'd run right through this list.

10 GUNS I'D LOVE TO OWN

ELMER KEITH'S #5 REVOLVER This Colt SAA was extensively customized by R.F. Sedgley, Harold Croft and Neal Houchins around 1928. Keith wrote about this sixgun in .44 Special extensively. A photo of the #5 appeared in the December 1967 issue of *Guns & Ammo*. It sold in 2021 through Rock Island Auction for \$253,000.

Ernest Hemingway's Westley Richards Double Rifle in .577 Nitro Papa's single-trigger Westley Richards was built in 1913. Hemingway took it to Africa on a four-month safari, alongside his wife Mary, in 1953. That trip inspired the novel "True At First Light." Any Westley double is a treasure, but this one takes that definition to the next level. This great rifle is in the collection of Bill Jones.

Singer M1911A1 These, the rarest examples of USGI M1911A1s, were built in 1940 by the Singer Sewing Machine Company. Only 500 were produced before Singer shifted to producing aviation components. Some examples survived the war and made it into civilian hands. Serial No. 1 sold for \$80,500 in 2010. The finest condition example sold for \$414,000 in 2017.

Colt Walker .44 Produced in 1847 and named after famed Texas Ranger/U.S. Army Captain Samuel Walker, these were Colt's first six-shot revolvers. Eli Whitney produced 1,100 of them in Colt's name, and Samuel Colt sold the 100 overrun guns to finance his manufacturing empire. A cased Walker, known as the "Danish Sea Captain" revolver, sold for \$1,840,000 in 2018.

Bob Petersen's Holland & Holland .700 & .600 Sidelock Ejector Rifles These two rifles, both thematically engraved by Phillippe Grifnée, were part of a set of rifles built by Holland and Holland for G&A's creator. I had the privilege of handling the entire set before they went to auction. This pair sold for \$575,000 in 2019.

FG 42 The *Fallschirmjägergewehr 42* was a select-fire rifle designed for use by German paratroopers during

World War II. In my opinion, these are among the coolest military firearms ever designed. Few transferrable examples exist, and the demand for them is extremely high. Rock Island Auction sold a Krieghoff for \$411,250 in 2023.

Frederick Courteney Selous' Gibbs Selous acquired his .461 Gibbs-Farquharson in 1880 and used it extensively during his travels.

The stock on it broke under heavy use, leading Gibbs to develop steel side-plates to reinforce stocks at the wrist. I own a Selous-plated .461 No. 2, but there's no reason to believe that it ever crossed his path. Selous' gun is also part of the Bill Jones collection.

Smith & Wesson Registered Magnum "Club Gun" Only a handful of pre-production Registered

Magnums exist. These zero-prefix guns were among the first factory .357 Magnums ever produced, and they were distributed to shooting clubs for marketing purposes. These are among the rarest of the rare for Smith & Wesson collectors. It's possible that I could afford one, but I currently refuse to pay the prices they command.

Jim Corbett's .275 Rigby Mauser Corbett, the famous hunter of man-eating tigers and leopards, received this rifle as a gift after killing the Champawat man-eating tigress in 1907. Even without the provenance, this would be a \$15,000-to-\$20,000 rifle in today's market. His name would add a zero to those figures. Corbett's rifle has been in the collection of John Rigby & Co. since 2015.

Lee Harvey Oswald's Carcano Model 91/38 6.5x52mm This rifle, including the scope, sold for \$19.95 in 1963. With it, Oswald changed the course of history. The rights to the rifle were sold by Oswald's widow in 1965. After much litigation, the courts determined that it wasn't hers to sell. The rifle resides at the National Archives and Records Administration Building in College Park, Maryland. No word on the rifle from the grassy knoll. 



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