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FIRST LOOK

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P. 34

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STAG ARMS' PURSUIT IN 6.5 PRC IS A
BOLT-ACTION SPORTER THAT CAN SHOOT
SUB-MOA EVERY TIME. P. 42



2024 SHOT SHOW PREMIERE

NSSF'S TRADE
SHOW SETS AN
ATTENDANCE
RECORD IN VEGAS!

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SUREFIRE XSC



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BODDINGTON
Part 1 of 2: The
Savage 110 story.



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JAMES
Navy Arms imports
French FR F2 sniper!



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WOOD
Veterans' Gun Rights
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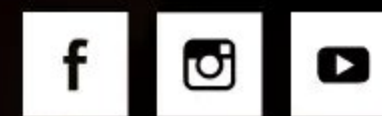
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PUSHING THE ENVELOPE

BY JAMES TARR

THE SHADOW SYSTEMS CR920X IS A SUBCOMPACT THAT SHOOTS WITH THE HANDLING OF A SERVICE PISTOL.



From maker of ARs to bolt-action rifles, the subscriber cover features the switch-barrel Stag Arms Pursuit in 6.5 PRC. It's scoped with a first-focal-plane Trijicon Tenmile HX in 5-25x50mm. P. 42

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2024 SHOT SHOW NEW PRODUCT PREMIERE

Las Vegas was packed as the industry rolled out its offerings to meet new trends.

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Guns & Ammo (ISSN# 0017-5684) June 2024, Volume 68, Number 6. Published monthly by Outdoor Sportsman Group, 1040 6th Ave., 17th Floor, New York, NY 10018. Periodical postage paid at New York, NY, and at additional mailing offices.

POSTMASTER: Send address change (Form 3579) to Guns & Ammo, P.O. Box 37539, Boone, IA 50037-0539. Return undeliverable Canadian addresses to: 500 R. 46 East, Clifton, NJ 07011. Canada Post Publications Mail Agreement No. 41405030.



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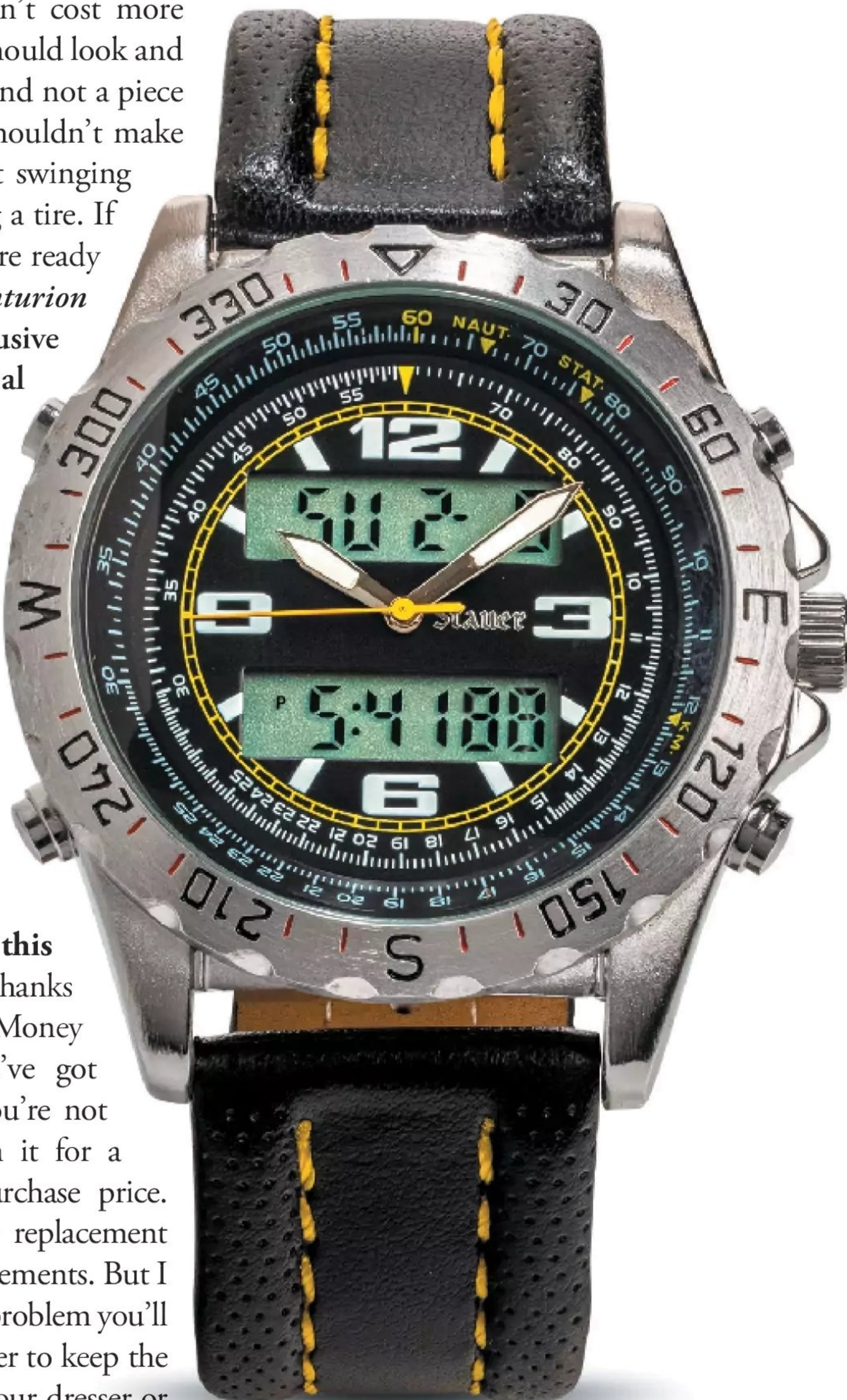
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DON'T FORGET HENRY!

I am a very enthusiastic Guns & Ammo reader, and I read every issue cover to cover. I take whatever G&A has to say as the gospel truth. However, I was disappointed with the review of the Smith & Wesson Response PCC ("Proof-house," February 2024). The review was well written and comprehensive, but the mention of other 9mm carbines omitted the Henry pistol-caliber carbine. I, like many readers, am considering purchasing a 9mm carbine. I have yet to decide, but I think it's important to be inclusive in articles such as this. Perhaps you can avoid similar omissions in future issues. Thank you for taking the time to read and consider my viewpoint.

J. Marshall McCall
Email

The missing mention of the Henry Homesteader 9mm (\$928, henryusa.com) was an oversight. However, you can find Tom Beckstrand's review of Henry's innovative, magazine-convertible carbine in Guns & Ammo's June 2023 issue.

— E. Poole

NRA VOTES

Thank you, Mr. Wood, for speaking the truth about the NRA. I'm over 83 and have been a Life member. When I vote for new Board members, the first ones to get my vote are new candidates who have never served before. Sadly, I know it's a futile act, more symbolic than anything.

Any self-respecting, morally honest, current Board member should resign and allow a new team to clean house and start afresh. The existing Board allowed LaPierre to function as he did, making them equally culpable. The NRA does fulfill an important role in areas of gun safety, performance, education, and protection of Second Amendment rights. The majority of the membership cares about the positive aspects of gun ownership and would love a Board that serves us properly. There are a large number of new gun owners who should be brought into the NRA. Until we show them it is not "business as

usual," only with a new cast of characters, we will be ignored to the NRA's detriment, and the detriment of all gun owners and the U.S.

Joe Mascia
Wexford, Pennsylvania

NEXT FOR NRA

I read "Spent Cases" in the April issue by Keith Wood. I was glad to see that Wayne LaPierre retired. I've been a member of the NRA for more than 40 years. I've not always agreed with the NRA's position on certain issues affecting our Second Amendment rights, and I wasn't always sure if the position that was being presented to members was that the Board is responsible for setting policy or was for Wayne's. Certainly, an audit is necessary.

Transparency is important these days, especially with the advent of "fake news." I have always wondered where the money went from the NRA's relentless solicitations. As a former CEO, I too have wondered how dysfunctional a Board of 76 members is. My experience with Boards much smaller was that it's difficult to keep all members adequately informed on important issues. Hopefully, the NRA will note Mr. Wood's comments and address its problems.

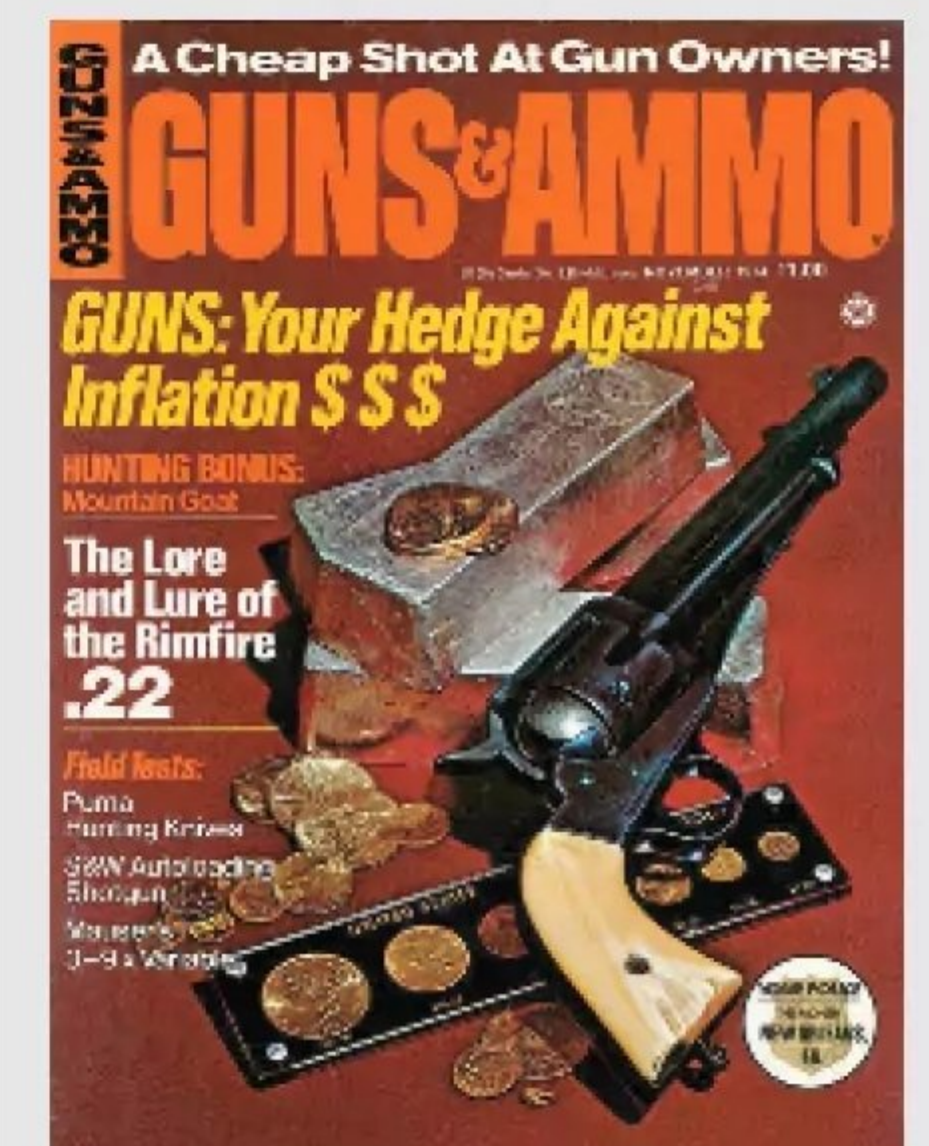
Greg Loeser
Lola, Wisconsin

READY TO STEP UP

I read a review by Joe Kurlenbach of the Kimber Triari 9mm micro. I am considering moving up to a 9mm from my Kimber .380 micro

NOVEMBER '74

Author Scott McMillan wrote "Guns: Your Hedge Against Inflation." Reflecting on the five-fold increase in the value of firearms spanning 10 years, McMillan compared the results against a savings account's 5-percent interest. Civil War, Indian Campaign, and Spanish-American War surplus increased tremendously with collector interest in Colt Army revolvers, dueling pistols, pre-'64 Winchester driving the highest profits. McMillan concluded, "The secret is to buy items that will appreciate rapidly."



though 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 are comfortable shooting 9mm, I believe that it is the better defensive choice. Regarding 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

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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

SPECIAL STORIES

Thanks to Garry James for the article on the Fitz Special. Not that I don't appreciate the newest gear — as a younger guy, I'm flush with polymer — but the history and stories of the older guns are what I've been drawn to reading lately. I inherited a "Detroit PD"-marked Colt Cobra, so knowing more about the variants of the Detective Special was intriguing.
Peter Toering
Attica, Michigan

WHY .45?

I'm a seasoned reader of Guns & Ammo. I'm confused, though, over Keith Wood's column, "Bowen's Bear Gun" (February 2024). Bowen rechambered a .44 Magnum for a .45? .45 Long Colt or .454 Casull? I think the .44 Mag. is more gun than the .45 Long Colt, so perhaps it was a mistake. Please clear this up for me.
Everett Kerns
Leeper, Pennsylvania

Mr. Kerns, excellent question. The .44 Remington Magnum is a fantastic cartridge capable of amazing performance in factory guns using factory ammunition. It is, in effect, the "easy button" when it comes to powerful handguns. The .45 Colt is capable of equal

or greater performance when handloaded. Though such loads should never be used in handguns that aren't designed to handle them, the cartridge is up to the task. According to Hamilton Bowen's "The Custom Revolver," "When deployed in tough, modern six-shot revolvers such as the Ruger Blackhawk and Redhawk, the .45 Colt loaded with heavy 300- to 325-grain bullets will produce .44 Magnum performance at considerably lower pressure." The .454 Casull is a .45 Colt with a slightly longer case. This dimensional change was not made to increase case capacity, but to prevent the cartridge from being inadvertently loaded into .45 Colt revolvers incapable of

handling the pressure. With a custom five-shot .45 Colt such as my single-action Bowen Classic Arms Nimrod, .454 Casull ballistics can be achieved — or even exceeded — thanks to the longer cylinder length used, especially with the long, heavy bullets that I prefer.
— K. Wood

SHOOTING FAVS

I have been a longtime reader of G&A and a military arms collector since 1958. In the April 2024 "Connect" column, Antonio Acitelli asked about our favorite calibers; I have several. I especially like the 6.5x55mm Swedish Mauser, for example. It performs well in my M1896 and M1938. The 7x57mm is another favorite in my bolt



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guns, and M49 FN ABL. The 8x57mm is a fine round but underloaded by American ammunition brands in deference to older arms. I handload the 8mm to its potential! All these serve me well in both jacketed and cast loads.

Ron Benjamin
Mansfield, Pennsylvania

OUT-GLOCKING GLOCK?

I saw Eric Poole's review in the March issue of the "new" 9mm semiautomatic pistol from a company by the name of Rost Martin. My first reaction was to let the company's principals know that a guy named Gaston Glock invented a similar polymer-framed pistol in 1982: The G17. Glock revolutionized the semiau-

tomatic pistol and enjoyed unprecedented success with each caliber, iteration, and generation. It's no exaggeration to suggest that starting with the G17, Glock pistols are no less an important innovation since John M. Browning's Model 1911 .45 Automatic. We will be served by new ideas, innovations and inventions as time goes by, but reinventing the Glock isn't one of them.

Tom McAlevey
Tulsa, Oklahoma

CALIBER WARS

The U.S. Army, Navy, Air Force and Marines all use 9mm pistols. Most Special Operations units, including the Green Berets, Rangers, and SEALs, do also. Federal agencies such as the FBI,

ATF, DEA and CIA follow suit. Does anyone still carry the .45 ACP? Anybody? I don't wish to malign the .45, but if you gotta have that caliber, consider the original Colt Model 1873 revolver cartridge. And let's get brutally honest about the 1986 FBI Shootout in Florida. Anytime you pack a handgun of any against felons armed with a Ruger Mini-14, you're seriously out-gunned. Even so, it was Agent Edmundo Mireles who prevailed and killed both assailants with his .357 Magnum revolver — not a .45 ACP pistol.

Michael Mackay
Mulvane, Kansas

POETIC EDC

Mr. Kurtenbach wrote a great article on Shadow

Systems MR920 War Poet. It's an outstanding handgun for all the reasons he cited. It's not risen to EDC status, however. I'm a SIG guy, starting with a P220 for duty in 1990, and later a P229 in .40. After winning the U.S. military contract, I bought a P320C in 9mm for the range. Then I replaced the grip module with Wilson Combat's. Then I went back to SIG Sauer for another slide equipped with its Pro-model red-dot sight and more factory mags. The P320 has been my EDC since. Because it accommodates the P320 with optic, I use a Vedder ProTuck. However, if I somehow lost my P320, I'd be happy with that Shadow Systems War Poet.

John Kiebusch
Email 



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PERFECT PATTERNS

I TYPICALLY SHOOT 20 TO 23 CLAYS out of 25 during a round of skeet. Don Sipes, NRA National Shotgun Coach Trainer, was an incredible mentor during my formative years competing as a member of the Dead Birds Society. When a shotgunner scored their first 25, Sipes would take their hat and throw it downrange as the rest of the team peppered it with No. 8s and 9s in recognition of that achievement. I only competed for 2 years, but I never managed to shoot a perfect round. It's nagged me ever since. I am certain that it was nothing more than a mental roadblock I put in my path.

I used to dread waterfowl hunting with my family. It's often bitterly cold, and I usually leave uncomfortably wet. Part of my loathing, if I'm being honest with myself, is that I rarely shot more than a bird or two, and in this career, I'm changing guns during the event, sometimes multiple times each day to evaluate them. My attitude got an adjustment in 2023 when Brian Kelvington of Federal Premium Ammunition loaned me his Benelli SBE3 during a trip to hunt ducks in South Dakota. It had been worked over by the gunsmithing services of Rob Roberts (robrobertsgunworks.com). Warming up with it on a trap range before heading out to our ground blinds, I shot a perfect run and nearly repeated it a second time. With an air of confidence, the action was like nothing I'd shot before. Hammering Green Heads, pintails, teal and wigeons, we met our limit each day in just a few hours using Federal Premium Black Cloud FS Steel with the new FliteControl Flex wad and Hevi-Metal Extreme. Bird after bird crashed into the field of decoys after being struck by one or two rounds. The success rate was like nothing I've experienced before. The location, calling, decoys and ammo each contributed to our success — but so did that shotgun.

As soon as I returned home, I learned that Rob Roberts offers services for all types of wingshooting, including turkey and upland hunting. Those who know, know, and so does Benelli. Guns & Ammo unveiled the SBE3 in the March 2017 issue. Two years later, Benelli announced its Performance Shop would offer tuned models for turkey hunting and waterfowl with parts and services by Roberts. These guns feature a HiViz CompSight installed on the carbon-fiber vent rib, three "RR" chokes, a paracord sling, as well as extra inserts for the sight and Benelli's 40-

position shim kit to further allow shooters to personalize cast and drop. Externally, Performance Shop semiautos are equipped with an enlarged bolt handle and bolt-release button, which make for quick, deliberate operation of the bolt. The secret sauce, however, is Rob Roberts' approach to the Crio System barrel. Inside each Performance Shop shotgun barrel is a lengthened forcing cone engineered to produce more uniform patterns.

The forcing cone service produced the most dramatic and measurable improvement for patterning and recoil reduction. It's the area in front of the chamber in a barrel that directs the shot load into the bore. Most shot-

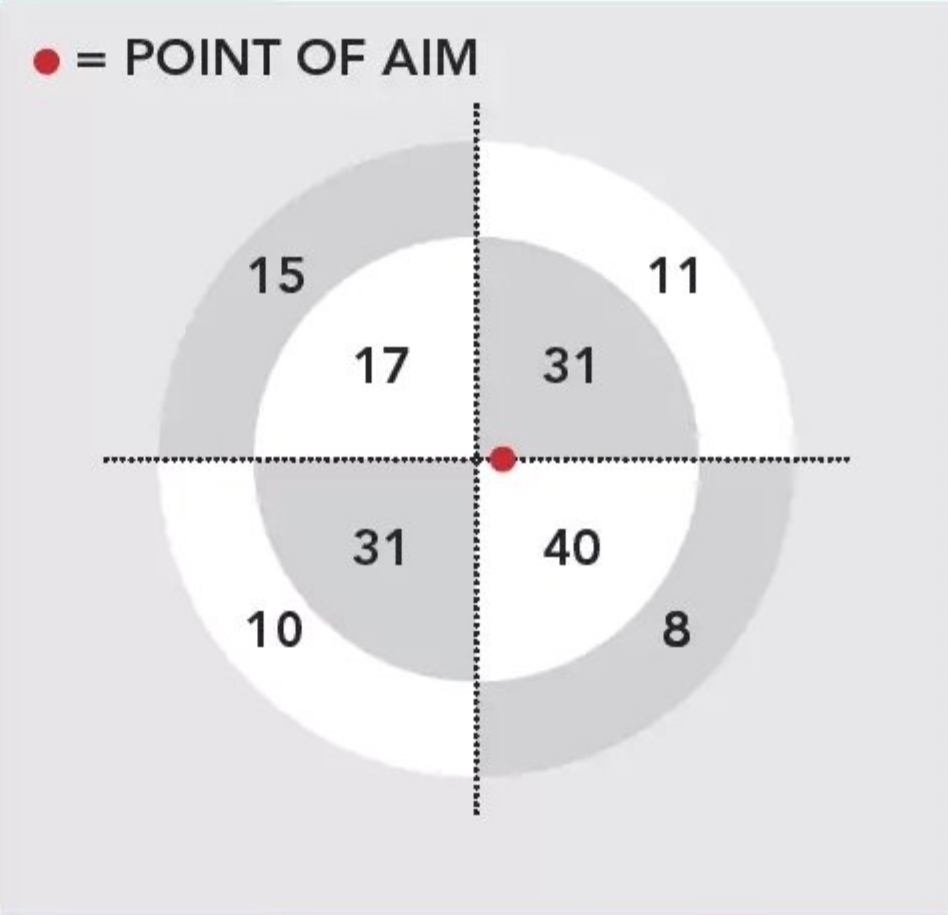
guns have a forcing cone that's short with a steep angle. Roberts lengthens this to 3 inches and polishes it. Velocity is increased due to less friction, and felt recoil is reduced because the shot load enters the bore more smoothly. Pellet deformation is also lessened.

Roberts carved a niche when he met a man who made a computerized pattern analysis

PERFORMANCE

FEDERAL BLACKCLOUD FS STEEL
12 GA.; BB SHOT; 1,450 FPS
AVERAGE PELLET COUNT: 170
AVERAGE OF 10 SHOTS AT 40 YARDS

ROB ROBERTS RR2 TUBE (95.9%)



21 1/4-IN. INNER CIRCLE 122 (72%)
30-IN. OUTER CIRCLE 41 (24%)
TOTAL HITS 163 (96%)

machine. It allowed the company to pattern guns faster and consider how individual guns respond to barrel modifications, different loads and choke constrictions. Testing continues into the field for each hunting season, whether it is for dove, duck, geese or turkey. The data collected evolves, and Benelli notices the results. The partnership between the brands offers serious wildfowl and turkey hunters a better shotgun. The Benelli Performance Shop delivers factory-backed custom guns for serious hunters willing to invest in their results. Here, I may have found my perfect score. **G&A**



BENELLI SBE3 WATERFOWL PERFORMANCE SHOP, 12 GA., MSRP: \$3,649



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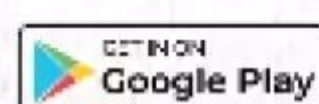


ACURA BLR10b Binocular Laser Rangefinder

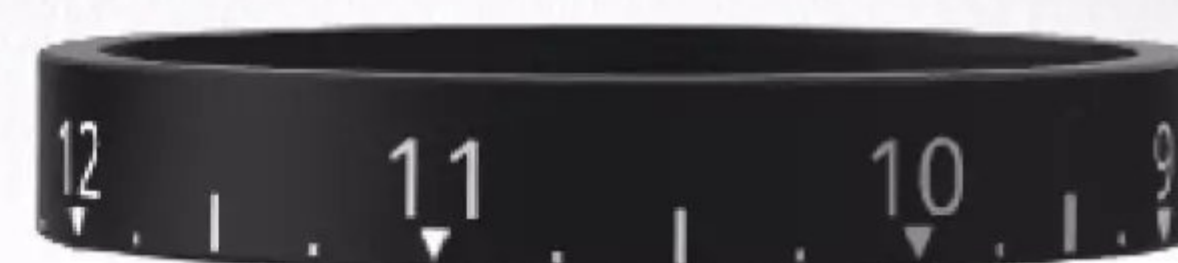
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IDENTIFICATION & VALUES



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NEW ITHACA GUN COMPANY DOUBLE CONVERSION



ITHACA DOUBLE CONVERSION

Q: This is an Ithaca New Model side-by-side shotgun. The interesting part is that it has a .38-56 Winchester sleeve, with an extractor that can be used in either barrel. Open sights appear to be factory, as does the sleeve. The sleeve has no markings, though, so I’ve been unable to find anything like it. Any help would be appreciated.

M. B.
Email

A: You do have a New Ithaca Gun Company model double shotgun, which, as you say, appears to be a relatively early incarnation. The gun has little finish and considerable pitting on the barrels, so it appears to me the good condition of the rear sight, plus the rather pedestrian mounting of same, indicates it is an aftermarket arrangement installed sometime after the gun had already seen considerable use. I have to

admit I have never seen a rifled insert tube quite like the one in your photos, so I’m going to open this one to Guns & Ammo’s readers for some feedback. I’m inclined to think it is not an Ithaca product. I can find no reference to such an accessory in early Ithaca literature and advertisements.

CHASSEPOT LOADING INFO

Q: The recent reply from Garry James regarding the



French Chassepot needle fire rifle was very interesting. My son obtained one of these a few years ago, and boy was it a learning experience! Here are some additional oddities of the Chassepot:

- 1. It uses tapered paper

- cartridges. My son uses brown craft paper to fabricate his.
- 2. The needle in the bolt pierces the bottom of the paper cartridge and ignites an upside-down musket cap glued to the bottom.
- 3. Bore and groove diameters are almost perfect for .45-caliber rifle bullets. My son uses .45-70 round-nose lead bullets.
- 4. Head spacing is on the bullet ogive; you must assemble the paper cartridge to exactly the right length for your particular action.
- 5. Reduced loads using cream-of-wheat filler can substantially lessen the recoil and make the Chassepot comfortable to

AUCTION BLOCK

Mondragón Rifle

A rare and desirable Model 1908 Mondragón semiautomatic rifle realized an impressive \$26,437 at the December 8, 2023, Rock Island Auction sale in Bedford, Texas. Invented by Mexican General Manuel Mondragón, this 7mm repeater was the first semiauto longarm to be officially issued to troops when 400 were delivered to the Mexico’s military, prior to the Mexican Revolution in 1910, after which, shipments were halted. Manufactured by SIG in Switzerland, the remaining rifles in SIG’s inventory were sold to Germany before World War I and saw some use in the Great War, especially in aerial combat. This example is in very fine condition exhibiting 90 percent of original finish. The recoiling stock is also in fine fettle, matching the condition of the metalwork. All-in-all, it is a fine example of a scarce and historically important firearm. For more information about this and future auctions, visit Rock Island Auctions at rockislandauctions.com.



shoot.

6. The front sight is integral with the barrel and immovable. The rear sight was originally silver soldered onto the barrel.

7. New needles and new rubber gas seals are available on the internet to bring back to life one of these ancient oddities.

E. O.

Email

A: Thanks for the info. I've loaded for my Chassepot (and Dreyse Zundnadelgewehr) for years and have had a great time shooting them. I must admit, though, that putting together the cartridges is a bit of a chore, as your Chassepot load recipe verifies.

MINTY S&W VALUE

Q: I wonder if you can give me some help on the value of a revolver that's been in my family for 70-plus years. I have seen various auction prices. I'm not looking to sell, just to insure. About 5 years ago, a gunshop would take it and display it for \$4,000, if I recall correctly. The gun is in its original box with the tools. It has never been shot.

T. L.

Email

A: Your photos show you have a minty .32 Smith & Wesson Double-Action 4th Model in extremely fine — almost mint — condition, with box and accessories. The condition, plus the



SMITH & WESSON 4TH MDL., .32 S&W, 98%: \$1,250

pearl grips and extras add considerably to the gun's value. They made 239,600 of these guns between 1883 and 1909, and they don't normally bring big money. Your example's shape raises its worth considerably. I'd say this whole setup is between \$1,000 and \$1,250.

SPRINGFIELD "TRAPDOOR" RIFLE

Q: I have a U.S. Model 1875 Springfield chambered in .45-70 that I inherited from my father-in-law. Its serial number is 108XXX. I would like to know any information and if it has any value.

B. J.

Email

A: Your Springfield "Trapdoor" is a Model 1879 rifle. These were made between 1879 and 1888. Somewhere in the neighborhood of 15,000 were produced, along with 15,000 Carabines, and 5,000 Cadet Rifles. From your photos, it appears that the piece is in excellent condition. As such, I'd value it in the \$1,500 to \$1,750 range.

WEATHERBY MARK V

Q: I have a custom .300 Weatherby Magnum rifle that was built by Weath-

erby. I have a letter from Mr. Weatherby, Jr. that he indeed built the rifle. He did not state who it was built for. My stepfather served in the U.S. Air Force for some 27 years until he retired. He was an avid sportsman and gun collector, and his pride and joy of all of his guns was this rifle. While stationed in Turkey at the Çigli Air Base, he said that they invited the Shah of Iran to hunt wild boar at the Rod and Gun Club, and that's who they had this rifle custom made for. The Shah was never able to go, though, and he never used the rifle. So, my stepfather purchased it from the Rod & Gun Club. It has never been fired outside of the Weatherby factory and has been kept in a gun vault through the years. I showed the gun to a good friend who thought you might find the rifle interesting and be able to value it. I will never sell the rifle but I would still like to know more about it.

D. F.

St. George, Utah

A: I ran this one by my expert on such things, Dwight Van Brunt of Sportsman's Legacy (sportsmans-legacy.com). He said this a

HOLLYWOOD HARDWARE

Great Gun Movies: "Arizona" (1940)

Today, Western film buffs are routinely used to seeing exotic firearms in their favorite films, mostly due to the fact that many heretofore scarce or collectible guns have been reproduced by various modern makers. In years past, however, moviemakers had to rely on original arms. Many, such as the Winchester Model 1892 and "Trapdoor" Springfields were altered to look like other guns. Not so in the 1940 film "Arizona," starring William Holden, Jean Arthur and Warren William. Directed by Wesley Ruggles, this atmospheric oater probably has more interesting, original, unaltered arms per foot of film than any other movie of its type! An entire town, "Old Tucson," now a theme park in Pima County, Arizona, was constructed for the picture. Scenes filmed there give a feeling of authenticity unmatched by any other of the time. Action takes place in the Arizona Territory around the time of the Civil War. Firearms seen are all original and deftly handled. They include a Model 1819 Hall carbine; Colt New Model revolving rifle; numerous plains rifles; Starr revolvers; Remington and Colt revolvers, including a nicked Colt 1860 Army with carved ivory grips carried by one of the villains; a percussion double-barreled shotgun; and a Henry rifle, among others. One scene even includes a scarce Blakeslee quick-loading device. "Arizona" is still available on DVD. The hardware seen therein will not disappoint, plus it's a pretty good yarn.



Street Scene in WESLEY RUGGLES' "ARIZONA" - Starring JEAN ARTHUR

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REMINGTON MODEL 1891 MOSIN-NAGANT CUTAWAY



very nice piece and valued it at between \$4,000 and \$6,500. Van Brundt affirmed your desire not to sell it, adding, "I believe this is a family treasure and do hope it remains in the family."

REMINGTON MOSIN NAGANT CUTAWAY

Q: I received this item many years ago from a friend to whom it had been passed down from his grandfather. There is no family history as to how it was originally acquired. The piece is fully functional and in excellent shape. The obvious difference between this and a stock Model 1917 is its stubby straight-bolt handle, which is similar to that of a vz. 24. Other than that, it's a match for my 1917 Eddystone. My guess is that it is a "one off"-produced post-World War I example used as a sales prop for potential buyers. I would be interested in any information you may have about how

many of these curiosities may have been made, what country the crest represents, and whether it has any value or collectible interest. Many thanks.
L. C.
Email

A: What an interesting item! You have what appears to be a factory cutaway of a Remington-made Model 1891 Russian Mosin-Nagant. During World War I, Remington and New England Westinghouse were contracted by Russia to produce Mosins to supplement a severe shortfall in existing rifles. Westinghouse was to make 1.8 million and Remington 1.5 million. After the Russian Revolution, the Bolshevik government canceled the contract. Subsequently, rifles still in the U.S. were employed for U.S. military training purposes, arming American troops sent to Russia during the civil war, and were sold on the civilian market. Cutaways are normally used for armorer instruction and training purposes. I must admit I've never seen a Mosin-Nagant cutaway like this one and can assume it is fairly rare. As no examples have come up for sale recently that I'm aware of, it is difficult to assign a value. In this case, I must demure.

CIVIL WAR REMINGTON

Q: I have an elderly acquaintance who has a privately owned Civil War museum in North Carolina. He recently obtained a pistol for the collection. He was interested in getting some feedback on it. I've attached photos of it for review. I took pictures of all areas of the pistol with engraved numbers, including the cartouche. I hope you can help him out.
R. S.
Email

A: Your friend has a Remington New Model Army revolver. These excellent percussion .44s were manufactured from 1863 to 1875. About 122,000 were turned out. It was a popular, highly regarded sidearm during the Civil War. Afterwards many were converted to handle rimfire centerfire metallic cartridges. The inspector's initials on the grips appear to be those of Benjamin Huger who inspected a number of different model handguns for the Yankees during the war.

HOLLYWOOD HARDWARE CORRECTION

Q: I look forward to reading your "Identification & Values" in every issue of Guns & Ammo. I enjoy

seeing the various firearms people are submitting and your take, not only the estimated value, but the history of the submittal. In the March 2024 issue, I noticed what I believe to be an error in the "Hollywood Hardware" piece. It is headlined "Remington-Keene, 'Joe Kidd' (1972)." In the article, it said it was used by Sam Elliot's character in "The Quick and Dead" (1987). As this is a favorite movie of mine, I have watched it numerous times and have never seen this rifle in the movie. However, I have seen what I believe to be this rifle being utilized by Brad Johnson as "Beau Dorn" in Tom Selleck's "Crossfire Trail" (2001).
N. R.
Email

A: Thank you for taking the time to write. As I recollect, the Remington-Keene was listed in the rental records for "The Quick and the Dead," however, it either wasn't ultimately used or ended up on the cutting room floor. You are correct that it never actually appeared in the film. I wasn't aware it was used in "Crossfire Trail." I'll give that one a look and find out. It'll be doubly rewarding as I really like Tom Selleck's films. 



REMINGTON NEW MODEL ARMY REVOLVER, .44 CAL., 50%: \$2,250

DEFENSE'S HOTTEST
CARTRIDGE

FEDERAL

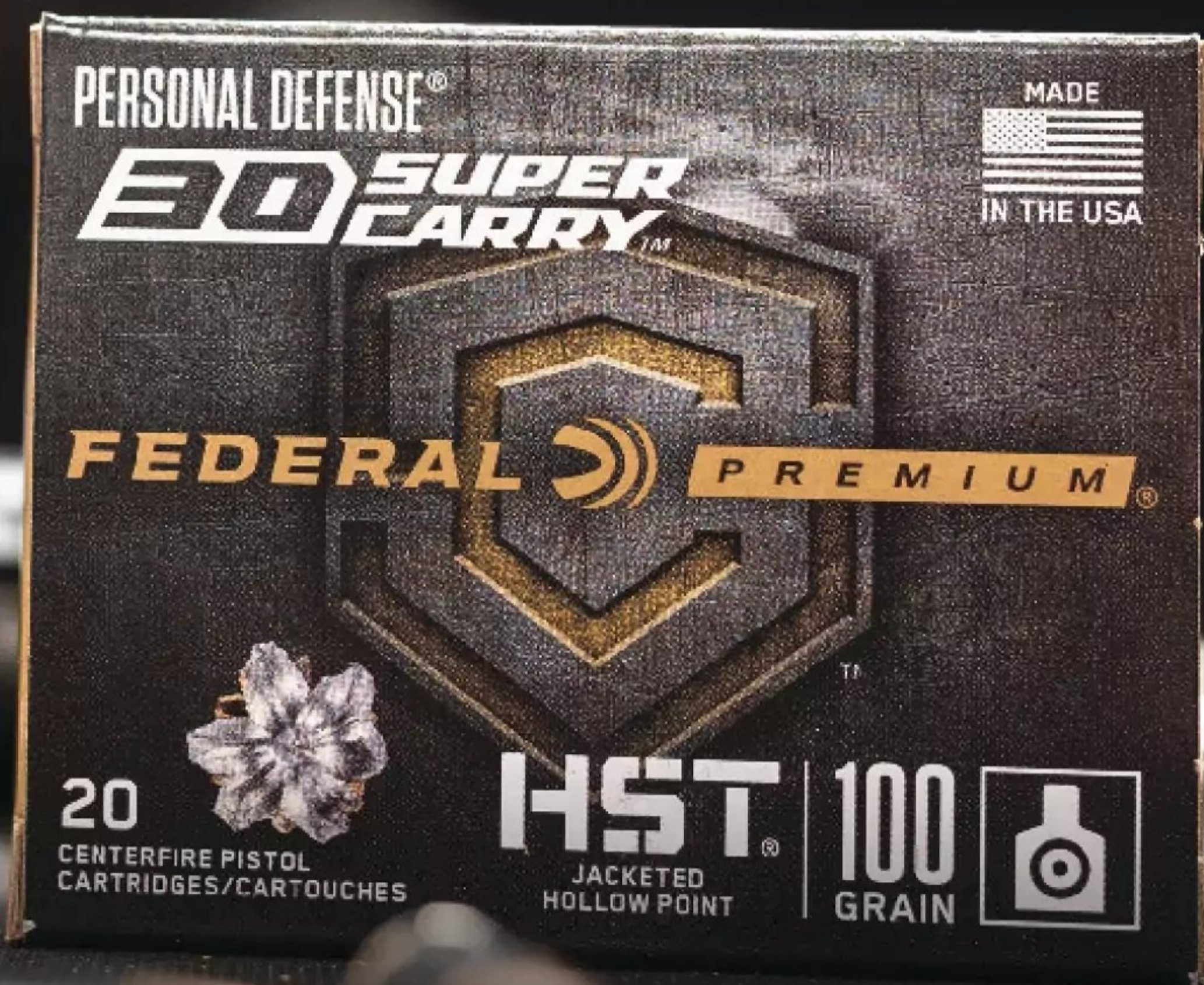
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Do you shoot alternative-metal cases in your pistols?



JAMES TARR

CASE METALLURGY

HAVING JUST RECEIVED Magtech's new zinc-plated, steel-cased 9mm ammunition (magtechammunition.com), I was reminded that a lot of shooters don't understand the differences between brass-cased and alternatively metal-case ammunition. Or what they know may be wrong because there's a lot of misinformation being circulated.

In terms of pistol ammunition, there is loaded ammo sold with brass, steel, or aluminum cases. You can also find a few brands loading ammo with two-piece hybrid-case technology.

Though this is the "Handgunning" column, I feel a need to mention rifle cases. With rifle ammunition, True Velocity has made a name for itself developing polymer-cased ammunition. These reduce weight and resist heat better than metal, and the U.S. military is very interested in this technology's potential. In the 1980s and '90s, there were some efforts to develop caseless ammunition, as well, most famously in the HK G11 military rifle concept. Polymer guns, the 10mm cartridge, and caseless ammunition were considered cutting edge firearms tech back then, which is why "Aliens" Director James Cameron outfitted the "Colonial Marines" in the 1986 movie with the polymer-bodied M41A Pulse Rifle firing "standard 10mm caseless, explosive-tipped light armor piercing" ammunition. The 10mm is enjoying a resurgence, but nobody has been able to make caseless ammunition work properly in small arms, unfortunately.

There were cartridge cases long before there was smokeless powder, so don't think the cartridge case is a recent idea. The first metallic case was invented in 1808, which had a copper base and either a paper or brass case body. Encapsulated cartridges as we know them today didn't become the norm until much later in the 1800s.

Why did brass become the standard for cartridge cases? It was common and not too expensive. Brass tarnishes

but it doesn't rust. Brass was stronger than copper and easier to work than steel. The metal in a cartridge case has to have some give and malleability, but not too much. It needs to expand upon firing to seal against the chamber wall in order to send as much of the expanding gas forward out the barrel. Brass stretches; it expands a bit as the

cartridge fires, then returns to, more or less, its original size, which is why extraction isn't typically an issue. It's also slicker than other metals, helping it to slide more easily in and out of chambers. Brass was the best choice for cartridge cases for decades, and ammunition engineers figured out how thick to make the case walls to provide the necessary performance. Brass, just as importantly, has no "memory," which means it can be stretched and formed many times without weakening. If you couldn't,

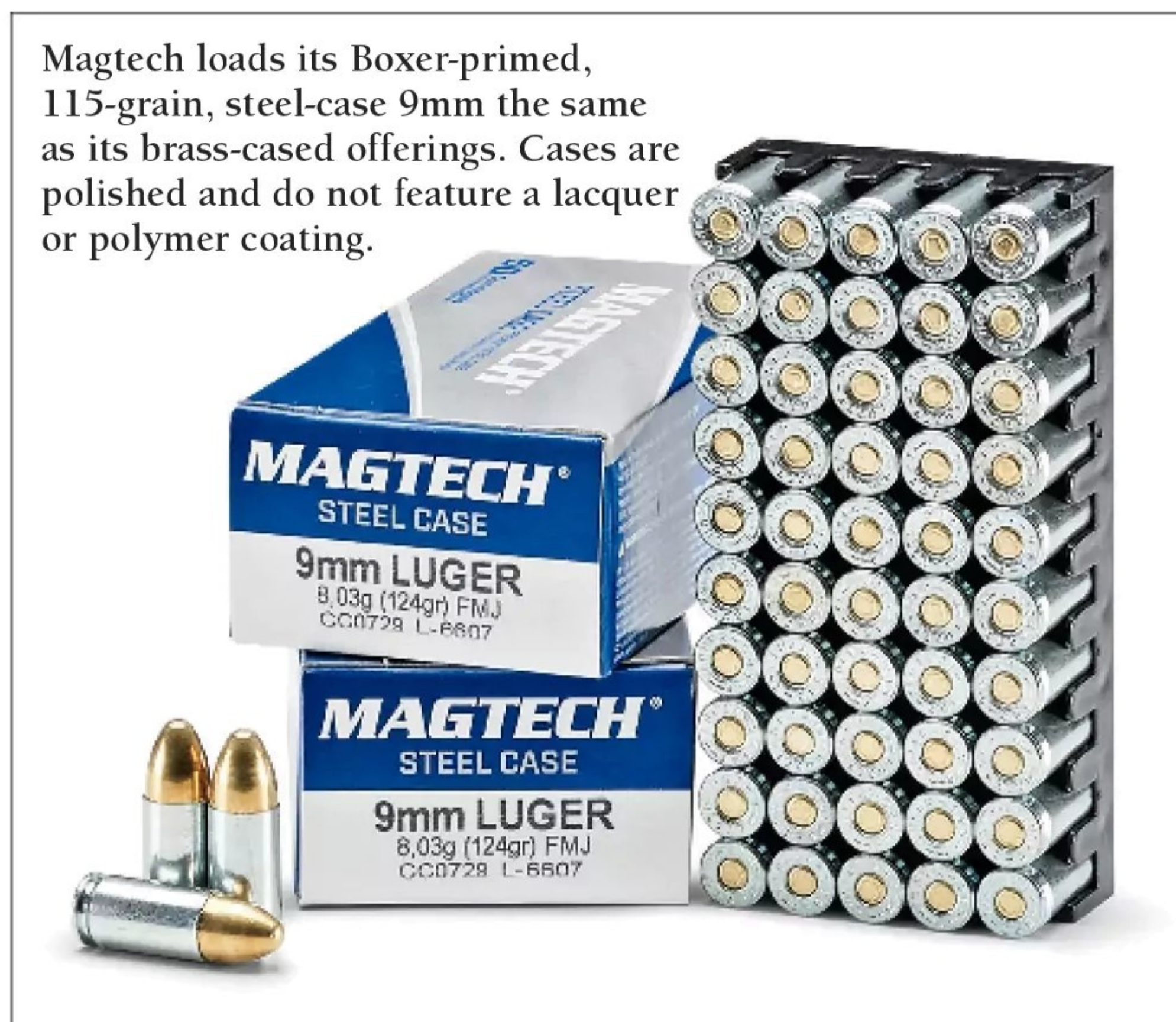
handloading with spent brass wouldn't be possible.

Why are there steel cases? A lot of reasons. During World War II, various metals were in high demand and short supply. Brass was considered a strategic metal, rarer and more expensive than steel. Almost every country involved in the war produced some ammunition with steel cases, and some countries never stopped.

Steel has its own issues, though. It is not elastic like brass. Instead of stretching, sometimes it splits. As a general rule, shooters don't reload spent steel cases.

Much of the steel-cased ammunition coming out of Europe and Russia is finished with a lacquer or polymer coating. This makes it a bit slicker, but the coating is mostly there to protect against rust, something you don't have to worry about with brass. There are stories about getting some rifles hot enough to melt the lacquer coating in the chamber, but I've seen AKs so hot the wooden handguards caught on fire without a functional issue feeding steel-cased ammo.

Magtech loads its Boxer-primed, 115-grain, steel-case 9mm the same as its brass-cased offerings. Cases are polished and do not feature a lacquer or polymer coating.



Most of the complaints about steel-cased ammo concern rifle use. For handgun cartridges, steel is a good alternative, though. Other than not being able to reload spent steel cases, steel ammo makes a lot of sense because it is less expensive than brass-cased ammo — sometimes significantly less expensive.

One worry a lot of people express about steel-case ammunition is that the harder steel will damage the chamber of their guns. Yes, steel is harder than brass, but it is softer than the steel of your gun. It's generally not pressed so tight to your chamber that it will cause damage during extraction. If it was that tight, the case wouldn't extract. Think about what's going on when you pull a trigger; the path of the bullet moving down the barrel is far more violent than the case entering and exiting the chamber. You'll shoot out your barrel before steel cases will damage the chamber.

Steel isn't as smooth as brass and doesn't shrink back once fired. If you have a rough or tight chamber, extraction might not be as smooth and you might get increased wear on your extractor. Again, this is mostly an issue with rifles, not pistols. Most people won't shoot enough to experience a difference — except in savings. Shooting steel-cased ammo can save a lot of money.

The only real difference in performance you're likely to see is a dirtier gun. Some might attribute this to "lower quality" powder inside the less-expensive steel cases, but truthfully, it's happening because the steel case isn't expanding as much as brass and sealing the chamber; there is more blowback into the chamber and action. For the price savings using steel-cased ammunition, cleaning your gun more often is a great trade-off.

The only issue I've experienced with differently metaled cases didn't involve steel cases, but rather aluminum. Aluminum is very light, softer than brass or steel, and less expensive than brass. Its softness almost makes it sticky, which can cause other concerns. I had a Glock consistently suffer extraction problems with aluminum-cased 9mm ammo. The case would get stuck in the chamber and the extractor would rip off the rim. It's not just me; split cases and case-head separations are more common with



Though appearances vary, many cartridges utilize brass for the case. However, some manufacturers finish the brass with nickel coatings. While appearing similar to nickelled brass, some cartridges are loaded using aluminum or a hybrid stainless steel/brass for the case design.

aluminum-cased ammunition. This means it is just fine for practice, but I wouldn't run it at a USPSA match where one jam means the difference between first place and the first loser. Not every pistol has a problem with aluminum-cased ammunition, though. I think it depends on the tightness of the chamber and the smoothness of the chamber walls.

In 2017, Shell Shock Technologies introduced its two-piece NAS3 (nickel-alloy stainless steel) case design. It paired a slick stainless-steel body attached to a separate base. With rifle cases, the base is stainless steel. With pistol cases the base is aluminum. The result was 50 percent lighter-than-brass cases while being stronger. It was advertised as being reloadable. As this is a proprietary design, I haven't seen a lot of ammunition loaded

with these cases yet, and the ammo I have shot came from smaller manufacturers making specialty loads such as Fenix Ammunition's Match Grade series intended to make USPSA Power Factor (PF) requirements. Shell Shock can convincingly argue its NAS3 cases are superior to standard brass cases. I'm not convinced yet, but they are definitely more expensive!

Brass is still, arguably, the best material for cartridge cases. So, why buy anything else? In a handgun, you shouldn't expect to see any performance difference between using brass and steel, but there is a difference in price. Checking around; Magtech's new polished steel-cased 9mm ammunition was at least a dollar-per-box cheaper than the brand's identically loaded brass-cased ammunition. That savings can add up quickly, especially if you're shooting as much as you should be. **G&A**



Cartridge case development has prioritized alternative materials for rifle rounds to lessen weight and cost of production.

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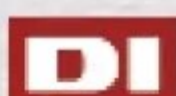
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Aimpoint ACRO S-2



RICHARD NANCE

WINDOW OF OPPORTUNITY

AS A WATERFOWL HUNTER and sporting clay enthusiast, I sometimes struggle with lead and follow-through. While I understand the concepts, more than 20 years of police firearms training prioritized the importance of focusing on the front sight over a target. That experience does not transfer well to wildfowl hunting or clay shooting. When I aim at flying targets, they have escaped my sight picture before the shot pattern arrives. Fortunately, Aimpoint offers a solution: The ACRO S-2 reflex sight.

BEING THE FIRST
Technician and inventor Arne Ekstrand developed the first reflex sight in 1974, a concept that resulted from looking through a toilet paper roll. The Aimpoint Electronic was the company’s first commercial product, appearing in 1975.

There is no denying the impact that Aimpoint has had with pistol and rifle shooters, and they have become smaller, longer lasting, and more reliable. The culmination of this technology is found in the ACRO series, which first appeared in Guns & Ammo’s November 2018 issue.

Red-dot-ready pistols and rifles are now common. Though Aimpoint introduced the Micro S-1 shotgun sight in 2017, it wasn’t until the 2024 launch of the ACRO S-2 that such a red dot made a bigger splash than a perfectly hit duck plummeting into a pond. Some traditionalists scoff at the notion of mounting a reflex sight to the rib of a sporting gun, but now they can. I can hear it now: “You don’t aim a shotgun, you point it while looking down the barrel toward the target.” While true, I have discovered that a reflex sight can be a tremendous help, even while shooting at birds or clays.

A RED DOT ON A SHOTGUN?
After measuring the rib of my Browning A5, I selected the appropriate mounting plate and positioned it about 4 inches forward of the forend. Then, I tightened it to the mount using the supplied Aimpoint wrench, which is also used to open and secure the battery compartment and to adjust the sight for windage and elevation. The 9 minute-of-angle (MOA) red dot appeared centered vertically; I only had to move it right to zero.

The red dot looked too intense, even for sunny conditions, so I turned down the brightness level using the down-arrow button on the left side of the aluminum housing. There are 10 intensity settings, and you can get more than 5 years of power out of one battery.

The 15x15mm aperture provides a clear, parallax-free view. Mounting the ACRO S-2 forward of the handguard makes it easier to see the target while maintaining awareness of the surrounding area. (Keep both eyes open.) As the clays flew laterally, I knocked them down with relative ease. The red dot showed me where the muzzle of my shotgun was in relation to the target, which improved lead, tracking and follow-through. While keeping the target and dot within the optic window, my hit ratio improved. Expert

shotgunners may not need such information, but moderately experienced wingshooters like me will find that the ACRO S-2 is a gamechanger. (I even went six for six on my local Sporting Clay’s rabbit target stage, which is a rarity.) The ACRO S-2 weighs just 2.6 ounces — including the mount. The extra weight on a shotgun rib is negligible. The housing didn’t obstruct my vision the way it did



The Aimpoint ACRO S-2 is a compact, lightweight reflex sight designed to mount to a shotgun’s ventilated rib. The closed emitter ACRO S-2 is waterproof, making it dependable for all hunting and sporting environments. **\$755**

AIMPOINT ACRO S-2	
TYPE	Illuminated reflex, closed emitter
MAGNIFICATION	1X
RETICLE	Red dot, 9 MOA, 10 day-light intensity settings
DIMENSIONS	1.9 in. x 1.3 in. x 1.5 in.
WEIGHT	2.6 oz.
BATTERY	One (1) CR2032; 50,000 hrs. on setting 6
MOUNT	Interchangeable baseplates
MSRP	\$755
MANUFACTURER	Aimpoint, 703-991-5528, aimpoint.us



Three ultra-low baseplates are included to accommodate most rib sizes, from .24 to .47 inch or 6 to 12mm.

initially for Alfredo Rico, my friend and a Guns & Ammo contributor. Rico is left-eye dominant, but shoots right-handed. At first, he struggled to see around the housing of the ACRO S-2 because he was squinting his left eye nearly closed to force his right eye to take over. When he opened both eyes and shot, he started busting clays. This was evidence that the ACRO S-2 can even benefit cross-eye dominant shooters.



Adjustments are made using the supplied T-10 universal Torx bit and handy Aimpoint spanner.



Ten levels of intensity can be controlled using the two buttons behind the battery cap.

The Aimpoint ACRO S-2 has performed well for Guns & Ammo's staff at the range and in the duck blinds. It fit most vent ribs measuring between 6 and 12 millimeters using ultra-low interchangeable base plates. The height of the optical axis measured .6 inches. Using the ACRO S-2 made me a better sporting clay shooter. If you're looking to improve your hit percentage, this may be the fix. Visit aimpoint.us to learn more. 



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AMMO & ACQUISITIONS

Who is the Czechoslovak Group?



JOE KURTENBACH

IN 1995, Czech entrepreneur Jaroslav Strnad founded Excalibur Army (excaliburarmy.cz), a business focused on the procurement, refurbishment and resale of Soviet armored vehicles including T-55 and T-72 tanks. Not unlike Bruce Hodgdon in cartridge powders, or Springfield Armory founder Robert Reese for firearms, Strnad saw the potential commercial value of government scrap and military surplus. However, his primary customers were government entities, not civilian consumers, and his supplies came from Cold War buildups rather than World War-era stockpiles.

Excalibur Army found success domestically and with international customers. As the company grew, so did the size and scope of Strnad's business. Key defense industry acquisitions bolstered existing operations while investment in aerospace, automotive, railway and radar firms offered new synergies, diversifying the organization's holdings. In 2016, the burgeoning Excalibur Group was reformed as the Czechoslovak Group (CSG), and, in 2018, Jaroslav entrusted the leadership of CSG to his son, Michal Strnad.

Under Michal's direction, CSG expanded. The group includes more than 100 companies and a workforce of approximately 10,000. Reported revenues for 2022 were nearly \$1.5 billion. A truly international organization, CSG does business in 70 countries and operates manufacturing facilities in the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Serbia, Italy, Spain, United Kingdom, India and the United States.

In March 2024, I joined CSG representatives and a handful of international journalists on tour through a variety of the company's Czech-based operations. Highlights included Prim, a luxury watchmaker; Retia, a company specializing in radar and communication technology; Job Air Technic, a place where commercial airliners such as Boeing and

Airbus receive maintenance and repairs; Tatra Trucks, one of the world's oldest automobile makers; and Excalibur Army's armor refurbishing facility, where the tour ended. I observed tanks in several phases of rebuild, ranging the fully disassembled to those completely refit and equipped for service. Armored personnel carriers were also serviced,

including the U.S. M113 armored personnel carrier; Excalibur Army is extending its operations to include vehicles of Western origin.

During the visit, my continental counterparts were keen to ask about the types and quantities of CSG-manufactured vehicles, the munitions and materiel being sent to the Ukrainian military. No specifics were

given, but my impression was that most of its defense sales have been to customers opposed to Russia. My primary interest, though, was to better understand CSG's growing presence in American ammunition manufacturing.

In 2022, CSG acquired Italian ammo maker Fiocchi, including its U.S. subsidiary and the ammunition and primer facilities in Missouri and Arkansas. The company also plans to purchase Vista Outdoor's The Kinetic Group, including its ammunition businesses: Federal, Remington, CCI, Speer, Alliant Powder, Hevi-Shot and Estate Cartridge Company. The purchase is valued at nearly \$2 billion and would make a foreign conglomerate the largest small arms ammunition manufacturer operating in the U.S. The CSG-Vista Outdoors deal has faced pushback from competitive

investment groups and some U.S. politicians who have raised strategic concerns, but the acquisition is anticipated to be completed in 2024.

Due to CSG's relative ambiguity, my goal in Europe was to learn about its businesses and get to know its people. That started with David Štěpán, a CSG director and head of the company's Ammo+ division, which includes Fiocchi. Ammo+ would take on the Kinetic Group business, as well.



The Excalibur Army Dana M1 self-propelled howitzer is available with 152 and 155mm guns. (CSG photo)



Founded in 1949, CSG owns PRIM, a company known for manufacturing and restoring watches.

CSG is led by a sharp group of businesspeople. These aren't foreign activists working to control America's ammunition supply. It's far simpler than that. CSG is primarily a defense company with 60 percent of its business tied to government and military contracts. Comparatively, the Kinetic Group has around 80-percent exposure to the consumer market. For CSG, the acquisition is a "two birds, one stone" proposition that would diversify its revenue sources and bolster existing initiatives. According to Štěpán, U.S.-based businesses and consumers would benefit, too. The goal of the acquisition is to grow consumer sales, so winning over American hunters and shooters is important to CSG's success. There are no plans to move manufacturing operations. Rather, there are long-term investment plans to grow the stateside businesses just as CSG has done with its European operations.

The incorporation of American leaders is also notable. During the trip, Paul Lemke was named CEO of CSG-USA.



The author's tour of CSG in the Czech Republic concluded at Job Air Technic, which featured a visit to an aircraft maintenance hangar.

The former U.S. Army lieutenant colonel will oversee the expansion of CSG's defense and security, industrial manufacturing, and aerospace businesses. Lemke joins another seasoned leader in David Blenker, president and CEO of Focchi of America. Blenker previously spent 30 years with the U.S. arm of Brazilian firearm maker Taurus in the roles of CFO and CEO.

The entrance of CSG into the American shooting and hunting market might be the kind of disruption the U.S. firearm industry needs. Outdoor "super groups" have been assembled before only to have parts of the company dismantled and set adrift. I'm not keen to see Federal go the way of Remington Outdoor Company, nor Remington repeat the brand's recent troubles. An entrepreneurial spirit paired with an invest-and-hold approach has allowed CSG to grow and prosper. With stateside leaders who understand America's sporting culture, CSG could become a major player in the commercial ammunition market. **GA**

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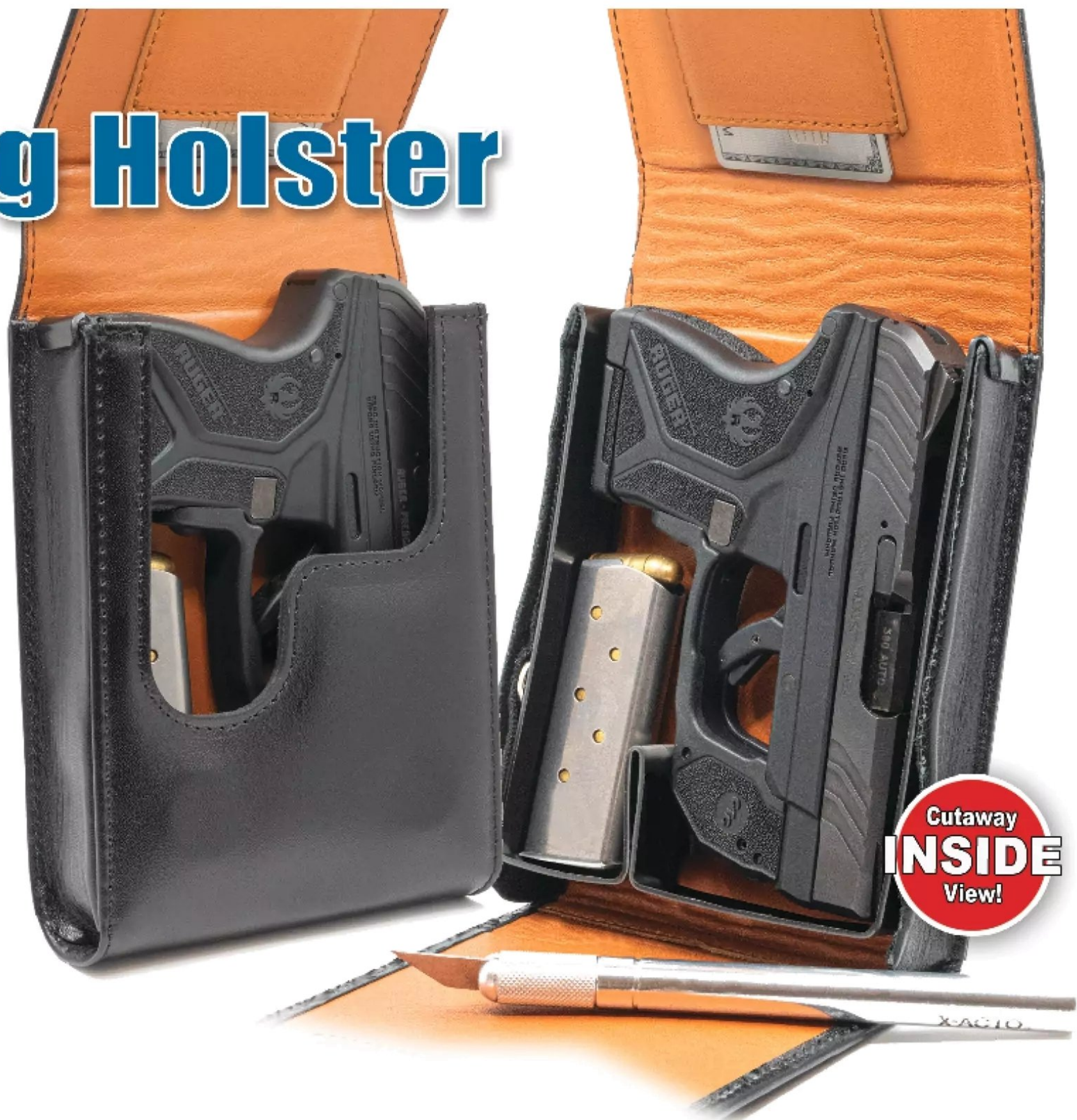
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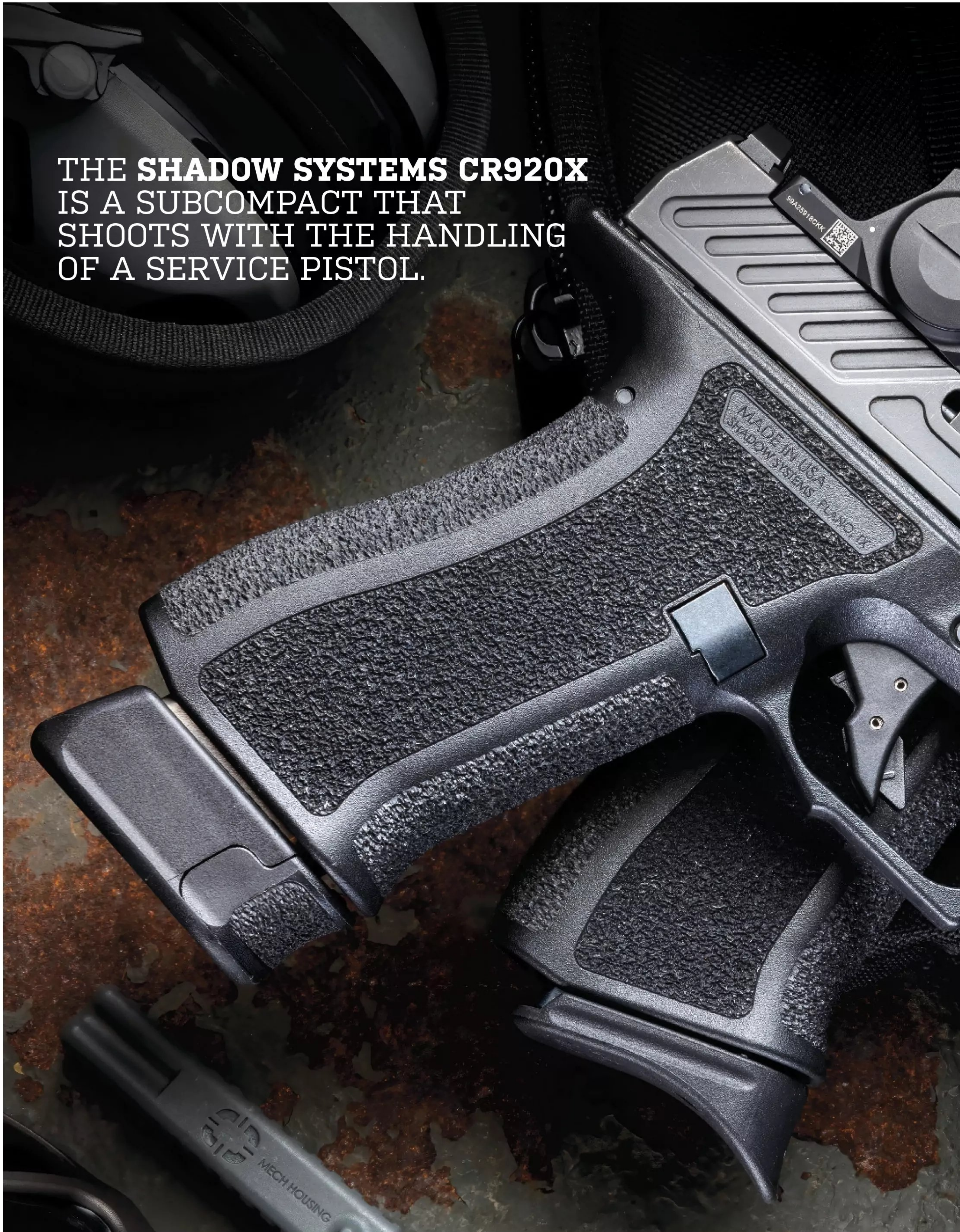
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The acquisition, ownership, possession and use of firearms are heavily regulated. Some models may not be legally available in your state or locale. Whatever your purpose for lawfully acquiring a firearm – know the law, get trained and shoot safely.



THE **SHADOW SYSTEMS CR920X**
IS A SUBCOMPACT THAT
SHOOTS WITH THE HANDLING
OF A SERVICE PISTOL.



PUSHING THE ENVELOPE

BY JAMES TARR | PHOTOS BY MARK FINGAR





While it has similar dimensions to a G43X, the CR920X possesses a 15-plus-one-round capacity, has a 5-pound trigger pull, and an optic-ready slide. There is also room for a compact light under the dustcover.



SHADOW SYSTEMS’ CR920, introduced by Keith Wood in *Guns & Ammo’s* June 2022 issue, has been a huge hit. That was followed by the CR920P, reviewed by Joe Kurtenbach in the July 2023 issue, and now this. As *G&A’s* Handgun Editor, I had first dibs to evaluate the new CR920X.

A brief summary, if you’ve never heard of Shadow Systems: Located in Plano, Texas, the company built a reputation for customizing Glock pistols. Now it is well-known for producing its own Glock-style handguns. In many ways, Shadow Systems pistols are superior to “G” factory guns. Every part and piece of a Shadow Systems pistol is made in the U.S.

The naming system is a bit confusing, though. As for the CR920 series, CR stands for “Covert Role,” and this is a 9mm pistol purpose-built for concealed carry. Think of the original CR920 as a pistol with the dimensions of the micro-compact Glock 43, but with the capacity of the Glock 26 due to the development of the steel, double-column magazine. Flush magazines for the CR920 hold 10 rounds, and extended magazines have a 13-round capacity.

The new-for-2024 Shadow Systems CR920X utilizes the same top end as the CR920, but it has a longer grip frame that accepts flush 15-round magazines like the G19. In short, the CR920X is a pistol with similar dimensions as the subcompact Glock 43X, but with 50 percent more capacity and better features. While testing the CR920 in the past, I found that I preferred shooting with the extended 13-round magazine. It allowed me to get my

SHADOW SYSTEMS CR920X	
TYPE	Recoil operated, striker fired, semiautomatic
CARTRIDGE	9mm
CAPACITY	15+1 rds.
BARREL	3.41 in., black nitride or bronze TiCN (tested)
LENGTH	6.37 in.
HEIGHT	5.2 in.
WIDTH	1.06 in.
WEIGHT	1 lb., 3 oz.
SLIDE	Stainless steel
FINISH	Nitride (stainless steel)
FRAME	Textured polymer
SIGHTS	Night Fision, tritium, green (front); serrated notch (rear); optic ready
TRIGGER PULL	5 lbs. (tested)
SAFETY	Trigger lever, plunging striker interrupter
PRICE	\$940
ACCESSORIES	One 15-round magazine, armorer’s tool, cable lock, soft case
MANUFACTURER	Shadow Systems, 469-458-6808, shadowsystemscorp.com

entire hand on the pistol. It’s not rocket science; smaller guns are easier to conceal but harder to shoot. The CR920X, with a flush 15-round magazine in place, is a quarter-inch taller than the CR920 with the extended 13-round magazine inserted.

BY THE NUMBERS

Like all of Shadow Systems’ pistols, the CR920X is a polymer-framed, striker-fired semiautomatic that’s only available in 9mm. It possesses all the features modern concealed carry users are demanding, too. As I

write this, Shadow Systems hasn’t announced this pistol. In fact, there isn’t even advertising for it. So think of *G&A’s* test guns as early production samples. I presume, like all the other models, the CR920X will be available in two versions: The basic Foundation model, and the fully loaded CR920X Elite, as seen in the accompanying photos. The Elite models have additional slide texturing and ports machined into the slide. All are available either with black barrels finished with a black nitride or a bronze titanium carbon-nitride (TiCN) finish.

The CR920X has a 3.41-inch barrel. Overall it is 6.37 inches long and 5.2 inches tall with the flush-size magazine in place. Empty, with magazine inserted, it weighs 19 ounces according to a digital scale. For comparison, the



Disassembling the CR920X reveals that the internal workings did not diverge far from popular striker-fired 9mm designs. Where it becomes distinctive is discovering that most parts are bespoke to Shadow Systems' pistols, featuring premium materials, machine work, fitment and finishes.



A Night Fision tritium-filled front sight is framed by a dovetailed and serrated rear notch that lacks flanking dots.



Shadow System barrels are available with a fluted, bronze TiCN finish. With the slide forward, the flare is tastefully visible through ports on each side of the slide.



The CR920X and CR920XP have optic cuts as a standard feature. The footprint supports the Shield RMSc and Holosun 507K pattern. When not in use, a coverplate is secured by two screws.

CR920 weighed 17.8 ounces.

The real news is in the width of the gun. The slim-line Glock 43X, according to my calipers, is 1.03 inches thick at its widest point. The CR920X, on the other hand, is 1.06 inches thick. My hands can't tell the difference between 1.03 inches and 1.06 inches. However, while being of similar width, the CR920X holds 15 shots whereas the G43X only holds 10.

This isn't magic. The G43X is fed by a large, single-column magazine. There's room for more ammo inside the grip, but Glock didn't engineer it that way. Shadow Systems did. Using a steel-bodied magazine with no wasted space, the nickel-Teflon-coated magazines provided had index holes at the rear corresponding to four, six, eight, 10, and 15 rounds. (Shadow Systems indicated that it will offer an extended 17-round magazine for the CR920X. Of

course, all magazines for the CR920X will fit the CR920.)

Shadow Systems is far from the first company to notice the capacity failure of Glock's single-stack magazines. Shield Arms makes an all-metal magazine for the G43X/G48 that increases capacity from 10 to 15 rounds, although you'll also need to swap out your magazine release to use them in the Glock. Shadow Systems didn't go with these magazines because they don't work with the reversible steel magazine release equipped in its guns.

MORE THAN AESTHETICS

The CR920X is a very flat gun. Most of the frame and slide measure less than an inch thick. Both the front and rear of the slide sport aggressive, flat-bottomed, angled serrations, but Elite models have directional, angled serrations on the top of the slide as well, in addition to spiral flutes



The triggerguard features a unique undercut at the rear for a high grip. Controls, including the slide, were designed to be low profile and serrated.



The serial number is located at the bottom of the dustcover. Compact lights are ideal for the short rail.

and ports in the slide. I wouldn't want ports in the slide of a pistol I was taking to a desert warzone, but for a domestic concealed carry piece that should be cleaned at regular intervals anyway, I don't see an issue.

One continued disappointment with Glock pistols is the standard sights. They are plastic and feature an improperly sized and positioned dot on the front sight. In contrast, Shadow Systems has always put great sights on its pistols. The day/night sights on the CR920 are steel, made for Shadow Systems by Night Fision. The front sight has a tritium insert, surrounded by a bright green ring. The rear sight is plain black and serrated, the corners bobbled to reduce snagging.

The CR920X Elite is optic-ready and delivered with a



Textured touchpoints are above and in front of the triggerguard, places to rest the trigger finger when not in use. The same texture also appears around the grip and on the magazine basepad.

steel plate mounted atop the slide. Remove that and you'll see the slide is set up for the direct mounting of optics having the Shield RMSc/Holosun 507K footprint. For accuracy testing, I mounted the new SIG Sauer Romeo-X Compact. It sat low enough that I could use the iron sights through the window, which was a good thing. When a battery dies, it'll likely be at the worst possible time.

Shadow Systems has spec'd a slightly heavier trigger pull for this gun than the larger models. It's still lighter than any factory Glock, though. The factory spec for the CR920 is a trigger pull between 4½ and 5 pounds. That's perfectly acceptable for a subcompact defensive pistol. The trigger shoe is polymer with a gently curving flat face, and the expected safety lever in the center.

Slide-to-barrel-to-frame fit has always been good with Shadow System's pistols.

The slide is machined from 17-4 stainless steel given a nitride coating.

The frame of the CR920X sports a number of upgrades, too. The raised texturing on the front, back, and sides of the grip is nicely aggressive. You shouldn't have any problems with it moving in your hand. There is identical



The CR920XP (above, top) features a short, steel compensator to reduce muzzle rise. The single-slot rail under the dustcover is longer on the -XP model to be flush with the compensator.



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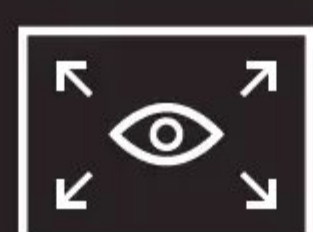


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PERFORMANCE

LOAD	VEL. (FPS)	ES	SD	BEST GROUP (IN.)	AVG. GROUP (IN.)
Federal HST 124-gr. JHP	1,044	30	18	3.1	3.8
Black Hills 115-gr. TAC-XP	1,151	26	16	3.2	3.6
Hornady Subsonic 147-gr. XTP	903	24	19	3.3	4.2
Magtech Steel Case 115-gr. FMJ	1,141	36	24	3.4	4.6

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 chronograph set 12 feet in front of the muzzle.

texturing on the front of the triggerguard, as well. You’ll also see texture given to the small lip on either side of the frame above the front of the triggerguard; this is where the thumb of your support hand goes while shooting with a two-handed grip. It continues the theme of “a little bit of extra control on a small gun.” Just like the CR920, the CR920X does not have interchangeable backstraps.

At the front of the frame is a single slot accessory rail. There’s enough room on the gun for compact tactical lights, which is a nice feature that would be useful if this gun pulls double duty as a home defense tool.

At the back of the frame, there is a beavertail that is reduced in size. Shadow Systems calls it an “intelligently designed beavertail.” It’s big enough to protect your hand from slide bite, but not so big it makes the gun print.

The magazine well opening in the frame is nicely beveled, and the front of the frame curves out slightly to support your pinkie finger. Unless you’ve got huge hands, you should be able to get all of your fingers on the grip. (Shadow Systems supplies a spare baseplate with a curved fingerhook.)

AT THE RANGE

The CR920X proved reliable. Even though it is slightly larger than the CR920, it’s still a small, light gun. Recoil was a bit snappy, especially when shooting +P ammunition. I see nothing wrong with choosing a quality standard-pressure defensive load for this pistol. Hits count; the more the better.



The SureFire XSC micro-compact LED handgun light features a rechargeable B12 lithium battery and 350 lumens. **\$359**

SIG SAUER ROMEO-X COMPACT



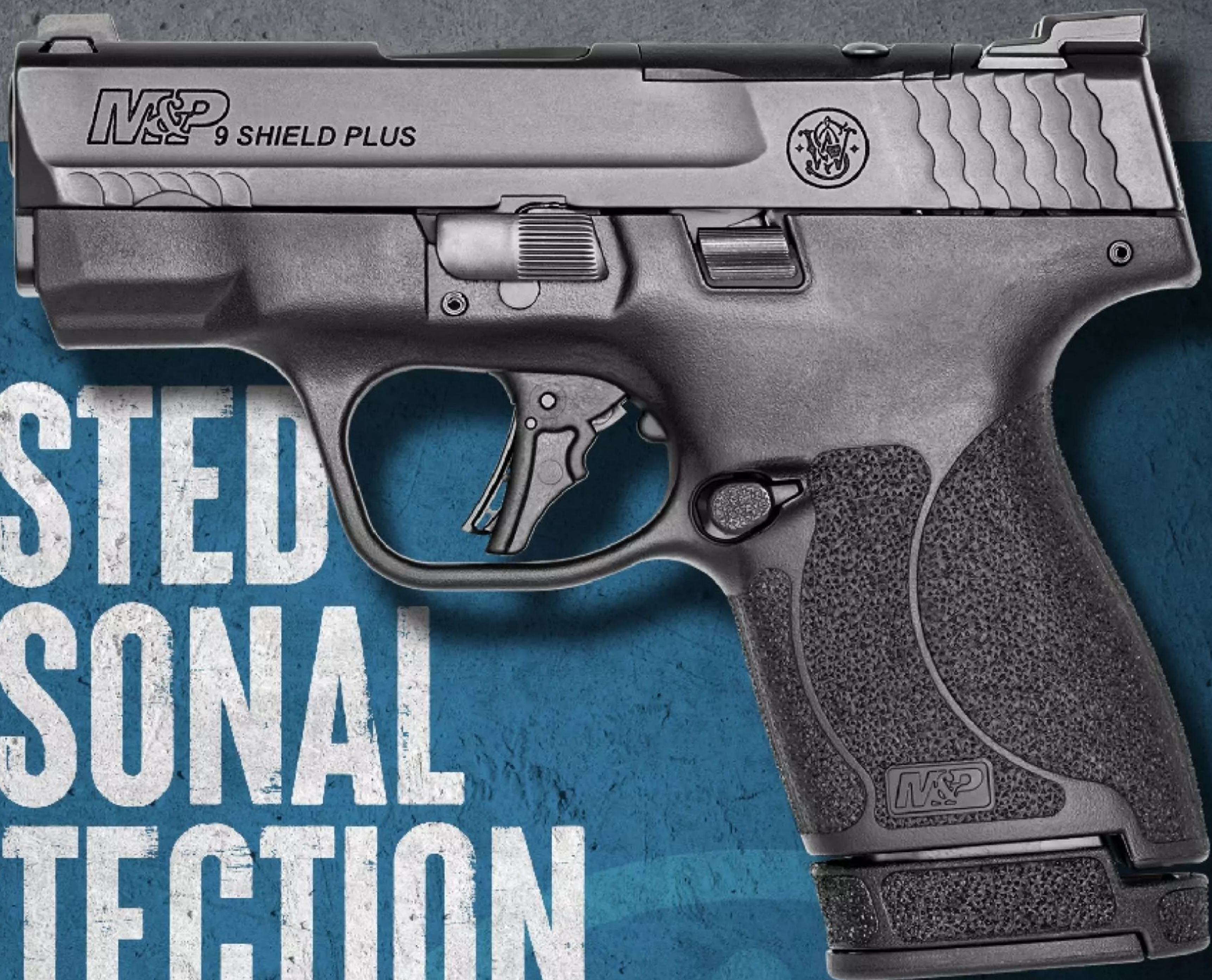
SIG Sauer Romeo-X Pro and Compact models grew out of the Romeo-M17 optic, which was approved by the U.S. military for the M17/M18 service pistols. Andy York, president of the SIG Sauer Electro-Optic Division said, “We wanted to build the ultimate optic for the M17, M18. It has every improvement you could possibly want: Side mount battery; low deck height; bottom mount; fully enclosed argon-purged to several atmospheres; circle or dot emitter; night vision compatible with a separate switch; and it works with standard iron sights. We designed it to be the ultimate purpose-built red dot.” All of the tech SIG Sauer invented for the military sight was applied to the new Romeo-X. Two versions are available, the Compact and the Pro. The Romeo-X Pro features a DeltaPoint Pro footprint. The

Compact has an RMSc footprint. Featuring a CNC machined 7075 aluminum housing, the Romeo-X is an open-emitter sight. The Romeo-X offers three reticles: 6-MOA dot, a 32-MOA circle, and a 2-MOA dot inside the circle. One CR1632 battery mounts to the side of the aluminum housing. The emitter is SIG Sauer’s highly efficient point source LED that has a 20,000-hour of runtime at the medium brightness setting for the dot reticle. There are 15 brightness settings, with three suitable for night vision. Romeo-X optics feature an integrated fixed rear sight for backup and the MOTAC system that shuts off the reticle when it hasn’t moved in a while. It powers on when motion is sensed. Visit sigsauer.com to learn more. Romeo-X Pro **\$450** Romeo-X Compact **\$400** —J. Tarr

THIS OR THAT?

The CR920 and CR920X are offered with compensators, the CR920P and CR920XP. The steel compensators add about half an inch in length. Compact “carry comps” tend to reduce muzzle rise. Interestingly, the CR920 and CR920P use the same frame. The CR920XP, on the other hand, has a unique, longer frame that reaches to the end of the compensator. Shadow Systems prices its pistols competitively against Glock offerings. To even compete with the retail price of the CR920X, you’d have to buy a 43X, round up a couple of Shield magazines, purchase a new magazine release — and you’d still have to upgrade the sights and trigger. Glock is famous for giving consumers 90 percent of what they want. With Shadow Systems you get that extra 10 percent — and a lot more. **G&A**

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PURPOSE DRIVEN

EXAMINING STAG ARMS' PURSUIT IN 6.5 PRC.

BY TOM BECKSTRAND | PHOTOS BY MARK FINGAR





THIS IS A STRANGE-LOOKING RIFLE, no doubt. However, it looks the way it does for a lot of important reasons. Stag Arms’ Pursuit is a versatile and modular rifle equipped with the most sought-after features. These are comprehensive and come to us from the competitive shooting scene. Some casual riflemen might not value all of the features, but as shooters and hunters learn about the utility they offer, many will.

ABOUT THAT STOCK ...

... Pick the Pursuit up in a gun shop and the stock will likely be the first component that you notice. It is of an unusual construction with an aluminum center section having the forend and stock attached to it. The stock detaches from the rest of the rifle by sliding a single captured pin left to right and then lifting the stock away

STAG ARMS PURSUIT	
TYPE	Bolt action
CARTRIDGE	6.5 PRC (tested)
CAPACITY	3+1 rds.
BARREL	22 in.; 416 stainless steel, LW profile, spiral fluted, 1:8-in. twist, threaded
OVERALL LENGTH	41.5 in.
WEIGHT	8 lbs., 14 oz.
STOCK	Adj. comb riser, adj. length of pull, M-Lok, ARCA
LENGTH OF PULL	13.75 in.
FINISH	Cerakote Elite
SIGHTS	None; 20 MOA rail
TRIGGER	TriggerTech Primary, adj. 1 lb., 8 oz. to 4 lbs.; 3 lbs., 8 oz. (tested)
SAFETY	Two-position lever
MSRP	\$1,899
MANUFACTURER	Stag Arms, 307-269-0061, stagarms.com

from the receiver. That rear disassembly pin is a nod to the brand’s history in building AR-10-pattern rifles. At the other end, removing the barreled action from the stock is as simple as loosening two action screws and separating the two components. One aspect of the Pursuit that will draw complaints is the weight. The buttstock of the Pursuit alone tipped the scale at 1 pound, 13 ounces. I weighed the center section and forend assembly and it, too, weighed 1 pound, 13 ounces. In total, the furniture checked in at 3 pounds, 10 ounces, which is about average for most of today’s chassis-type systems.

Complaining about the stock’s weight, though, isn’t fair without considering what it offers. The rifle has an adjustable comb and length of pull. A single Allen-head screw controls tension on the comb riser, which offers about



A captured AR-10 pin secures the stock and grip to the chassis. It’s a detail that calls back to Stag Arms’ history in making ARs.



The stock features sling attachment points and a removeable bag rider. The comb is adjustable, and spacers adjust length of pull.



The triggerguard and magazine well — typically the “bottom metal” — are integral to the chassis design.



The Pursuit was designed to accept AICS/AW-pattern magazines. The 6.5 PRC model feeds from a three-round Accurate Mag.

1.2 inches of height adjustment. The length of pull is adjusted using a combination of provided spacers. Two come installed on the Pursuit, and there are two additional spacers in the box. The total length-of-pull adjustment is 1½ inches.

The grip has a palm swell and is almost vertical. The stock also comes with a bag rider attached to the toe. It provides a flat surface for a rear bag when sighting in and accuracy testing, but with the removal of two Allen screws it comes off for field use. The stock also features two quick-detach (QD) flush cups on both sides of the stock, as well as another near the toe. The QD cups on the side allow the rifle to sit flat against the shooter's back when slung, which is the most comfortable slung position I've found. The cup near the toe is for conventional sling use and carry.



An adjustable height mag catch allows the Pursuit to be tuned for specific magazines.



Like the stock, the forend features QD sling sockets on both sides of the rifle.

THE MIDPOINT & BEYOND

The center section and forend are packed full of meaningful details that not only impact how the rifle shoots, but how it feeds and how it's used in the field. The center section is a single piece of aluminum, so the “bottom metal” is integral. This allows for precise control of magazine height relative to the receiver. Stag Arms also put an adjustable-height magazine catch on the Pursuit. Just about every bolt-action rifle that takes magazines uses the AICS pattern for .308 and 6.5 Creedmoor chamber-

ings; the Pursuit is no different and includes Magpul's AICS mags. For the Pursuit in 6.5 PRC, a metal Accurate-Mag is provided.

High-end chassis manufacturers started putting an adjustable-height magazine catch on flagship chassis designs about 2 years ago. It allows shooters to eliminate potential feeding issues, but also optimize feeding from any magazine. Making subtle changes in magazine height makes the difference between a round bouncing out of

the magazine and into the chamber versus a round that finds a straight, clean path into the chamber. Think about the difference in diameter between a 6.5 Creedmoor and a 6.5 PRC. Both feed from AICS-pattern magazines. Both also need to sit at different heights for the smoothest possible loading experience. The Pursuit makes this possible.

Other convenient features of the center section are the ambidex-



Picatinny, M-Lok, and ARCA rail; it's all here, under the forend of the Pursuit. The flat bottom lets the rifle rest on bags or stabilizers well when bipods and tripods are not available for support.



Ballistic Advantage manufactures the lightweight-profile barrel. Spiral fluting reduces weight while enhancing aesthetics. It is threaded 5/8-24 for attaching muzzlebrakes or suppressors.



The Model 700 action features a pinned recoil lug between the receiver and barrel. G&A's sample was chambered in 6.5 PRC that produced sub-MOA accuracy with most loads.

trous magazine release incorporated around the triggerguard, captured action screws, and a small barricade stop built around the magazine well. The captured action screws mean no dropped or lost action screws when disassembling the rifle. The barricade stop allows the shooter to set the rifle across a fence and then push it forward into the fence for recoil management without the fear of inducing a feeding malfunction from binding the magazine. The barricade stop protects the magazine and keeps field supports from interfering with its function.

The forend shows continued good sense in both design and execution. Stag Arms kept the bottom flat and used a spigot mount forward of the forend for a section of Picatinny rail. Mounting a bipod to the spigot puts it out close to the muzzle, but also keeps the rail off the forend. Keeping the underside of the forend flat allows the rifle to ride nicely across a backpack. It also makes it comfortable to shoot off-hand because some of us still do that. There is a 3-inch section of ARCA rail that sits just forward of the magazine well. This is a good spot because that's where a rifle should attach to a tripod, but it's also low-profile; it settles comfortably in the hand when carrying the rifle. The underside of the forend has a metal section with M-Lok slots cut into it. This allows for more use of ARCA or rail, should the shooter desire.



The three-lug bolt head is inter-changeable. Flanking the extractor, dual ejectors ensure cases exit the receiver.



The TriggerTech Primary trigger is compatible with 700 actions such as the Pursuit. It is adjustable from 1½ to 4 pounds. **\$175**

THE BARRELED ACTION

Guns & Ammo's test rifle was chambered in 6.5 PRC with a 22-inch barrel. The barreled action alone weighed 5 pounds, 5 ounces. About 2 pounds of that weight is action; the remainder is the barrel.

The receiver uses a pinned recoil lug, and the scope base is attached by four screws. The bolt has a Remington 700 footprint, three lugs, and a 60-degree bolt lift. The bolt

head is removable, though, so swapping chamberings from the 6.5 PRC to 6.5 Creedmoor, for example, is as easy as installing a different barrel, appropriate bolt head and magazine. The Pursuit takes any pre-fit barrel cut to the Zermatt Origin pattern.

Pertinent to any rifle hunter — in addition to the ability to easily change calibers and cartridge chambering — is the simple maintenance the Pursuit offers. The bolt



A sear-blocking safety lever is part of the TriggerTech trigger and located just behind the bolt handle. The oversized bolt handle provides excellent leverage, and the short bolt lift was fast.

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TRIJICON TENMILE HX 5-25X50MM



The Trijicon Tenmile HX First Focal Plane (FFP) riflescope is new for 2024. Previously offered as a Second Focal Plane (SFP) riflescope, the 5-25x50mm optic was designed to fit between the 3-18X and 4.5-30X in terms of magnification and weight. For the magnification range, it is one of the lightest available at 29 ounces. It also provides some insight into what today's long-range hunter wants in a scope. The reticle is illuminated, it has an exposed elevation turret, and it subtends and adjusts in minute of angle (MOA) increments. It would be difficult to find a more ideal scope for those desiring an FFP reticle in MOA, which happens to be a lot of the long-range hunting community. The reticle has a floating dot and the horizontal stadia subtends in 1-MOA increments. Accurate hold-offs for wind are not difficult with this reticle. It also has a reticle that works well at the lowest magnification, an unusual feature for FFP reticles with wide magnification. The etched reticle is illuminated in both red and green, and powdered by a CR2032 battery. The illumination is visible in all but the brightest conditions.

What makes the Tenmile HX unique is Trijicon's durability testing. No commercial scope is tested to such rigorous standards. Such testing is usually limited to optics destined for military use. The Tenmile must first survive 10,000 rounds of simulated recoil on the same simulator used by the U.S. Army's Picatinny Arsenal. That's 5,000 rounds of M4 recoil and 5,000 rounds of SCAR-Heavy recoil. The Tenmile HX can survive all of it.

Then there is the thermal and shock tests where the scope is rapidly moved from a cool -20 Fahrenheit (F) to 140 F. This is to see if any lenses can crack from improper mounting. Drop testing comes next. Scopes are mounted to stock blanks that are weighted as heavy as a rifle and then dropped at heights from 18 inches to table-top distance. They are dropped onto hard-packed earth and plywood laid over concrete. Scopes have to maintain zero with no cracked glass, and must still be functional. The following crucible is vibration testing. The Tenmile scope is mounted in something resembling the paint-shaker at a hardware store and taken for a ride. Finally, the 3 meter submersion test in water for 30 minutes.

Tenmile scopes must survive all of these challenges before they're made available to you. For hard-use long-range hunting, the Tenmile HX is hard to beat. Guns & Ammo's sample provided excellent image quality, demonstrated a high durability, and possessed all the features we desire. Discover more at trijicon.com. **\$2,190**

— T. Beckstrand

features tool-less disassembly. This is helpful in a situation such as when a firing pin pierces the primer, allowing fouling to enter the bolt's firing pin channel. To access this area, just twist the Pursuit's bolt shroud to pull the firing pin assembly out of the bolt body. Push one pin to the side to remove the bolt head and the shooter has unfettered access to the bolt's nooks and crannies.

The other useful feature is the trigger hanger. The hanger houses the TriggerTech Primary trigger and allows it to



PERFORMANCE

LOAD	VEL. (FPS)	ES	SD	BEST GROUP (IN.)	AVG. GROUP (IN.)
Hornady Match 147-gr. ELD-M	2,796	42	19.3	.86	1.07
Horn. Prec. Hunter 143-gr. ELD-X	2,814	22	9	1	1.18
Federal Terminal Ascent 130-gr.	3,105	61	22.7	1.36	1.62

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

slip out of the receiver by removing one screw. Keeping a spare trigger and trigger hanger available is useful because, in the event of a trigger failure — the most common type of failure — changing them requires little time. If you're taking a flight to go hunting, this is a low-cost contingency plan that could save the hunt. The TriggerTech trigger adjusts between 1½ and 4 pounds of pull weight.

Stag Arms describes the best process for barrel break-in in its owner's manual; I'd recommend everyone follow it. The process involves cleaning the new barrel; shooting 50 to 60 rounds through it; and cleaning it again before doing any accuracy testing or load development. I followed this procedure, but took notes about group sizes along the way. The 6.5 PRC and 6.5 Creedmoor have excellent chamber designs and tight free-bore dimensions. Great accuracy is possible, even out of fresh barrels. A good chamber design is not enough to avoid performing the procedure Stag recommends. I cleaned the barrel and then shot a 15-round group at 100 yards, which measured about 2.1 inches. I let the barrel cool completely and fired another 15-round group. It measured about 1½ inches. After cooling. I shot another 20-round group about the same size. Finally, I cleaned the barrel and started G&A's accuracy protocol.

FINAL SHOTS

Stag Arms' Pursuit has a unique look, but offers features found nowhere else. Thanks to the easily detachable stock, it is highly transportable. It offers effortless feeding from the detachable box magazines, regardless of chambering and it is easily swappable from one cartridge to another. If you want one rifle capable of handling several tasks, the Pursuit is a safe choice. **G&A**



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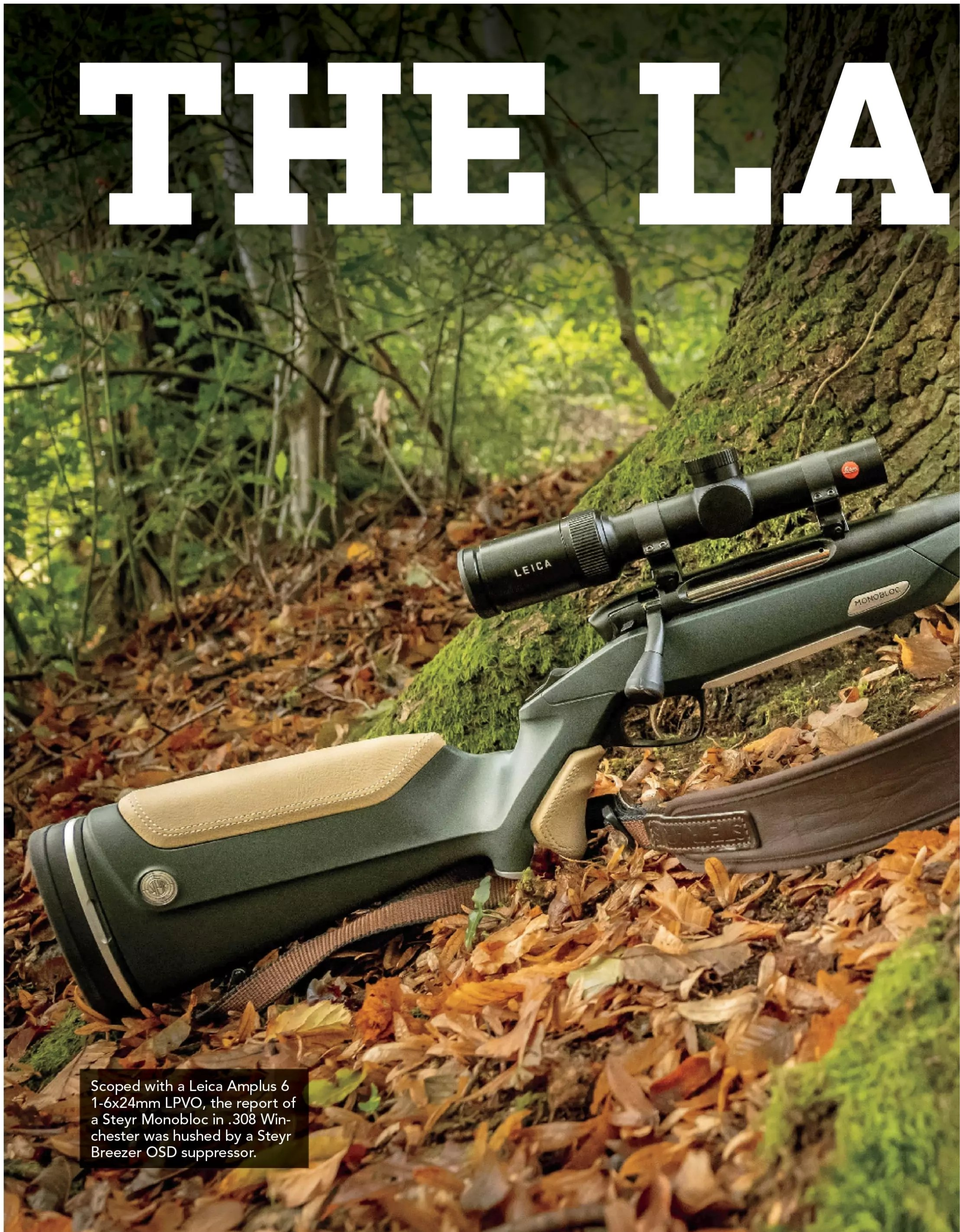
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THE LA



Scoped with a Leica Amplus 6 1-6x24mm LPVO, the report of a Steyr Monobloc in .308 Winchester was hushed by a Steyr Breezer OSD suppressor.

ST BITE

EXPERIENCING THE **LEICA** AMPLUS 6 RIFLESCOPE, CALONOX 2 THERMAL AND GEOVID PRO 10X42 AB+ BINOCULARS ON A TRADITIONAL GERMAN DRIVEN HUNT.

BY RICHARD NANCE | PHOTOS BY SIMON BARR

FOR HOURS, I stood on the hillside, a Steyr Monobloc rifle in hand, while using a pair of binoculars to scan the area below and across the gulch. Two German Wirehaired Pointers and their handlers stirred up game in the heavily wooded area adjacent to a golf course. Over the sound of golf balls being struck — *whaaack* — and landing on the green behind me — *thud, plop* — I could hear the dogs barking as they chased unseen animals toward other hunters in my group, seemingly away from me.

Suddenly, a mature roe deer, made its way down the hillside and toward the gulch, attempting to evade the pursuing hounds. I hesitated to

ensure it was a doe because bucks were not in season. With a suppressed .308 in my shoulder, I tracked the deer through a Leica Amplus 6 low-power variable optic (LPVO).

The Amplus 6 1-6x24mm scope features a crisp illuminated dot. The generous eye box makes Leica's LPVO a very forgiving scope.

Of course, the suppressor promoted a sort of field etiquette, preventing my shot from disturbing the nearby golfers. Suppressor use is quite common in Europe, and even mandated in certain areas. The report of my .308 wouldn't be much louder than the *ping* of a golf ball struck by the face of a club.



Simulated hunting scenarios tested a hunter’s ability with rifle, optic, and suppressor at Schiesskino Wachtberg, a shooting cinema, helping prepare participants for the next day’s driven hunt.



Until that moment, I was more expecting an encounter with a wild boar rather than a deer. To earn my German hunting license, I qualified with the rifle the day prior by firing live rounds at projected images of running boar in various hunting scenarios at Schiesskino, a shooting cinema in Wachtberg. It was an excellent opportunity to familiarize myself with the rifle and scope, but the deer I was tracking moved much differently than the simulator’s boar.

The doe traversed left to right. It was about 50 yards away. Once I confirmed the backdrop was safe, I took a breath and steadied myself. Then I pulled the trigger. *Crack!*

The deer stumbled but didn’t go down immediately. It galloped while quartering away, so I cycled the bolt and delivered another shot. Boredom gave way to nervous anticipation, and then relief. Firing the suppressed .308, it was a 170-grain Lapua bullet that did the job. It was well placed.

I wasn’t in Germany just to hunt, though, but that would have been reason enough for me. Even better, I was part of a small delegation touring Leica’s factories. The event kicked off a few days earlier at the Leica factory in Porto, Portugal. The state-of-the-art facility belies the company’s humble beginnings within an apartment in 1973. At that time, the Portugal factory was manufacturing mechanical and optical components for the brand’s R3 and R4 cameras. Fifty years later, Leica-Portugal is a near-20,000-square-foot facility last expanded in 2013. Leica-Portugal works with 280 glass types and produces lenses for cameras, riflescopes, binoculars and digital laser rangefinders, among other components, the latter being a technology that Leica developed.

After the factory tour and dinner, we visited the



LEICA AMPLUS 6 1-6x24mm	
POWER	1-6X
OBJECTIVE	24mm
TUBE DIAMETER	30mm
ELEVATION ADJUSTMENT	.1 MRAD
WINDAGE ADJ.	.1 MRAD
RETICLE	L-4a (crosshair), illum. dot
LENGTH	10.7 in. (w/o sunshade)
WEIGHT	1 lb., 1 oz.
EYE RELIEF	3.5 in.
MSRP	\$1,299
MANUFACTURER	Leica, 800-480-5422, leicacamerausa.com

The Steyr Monobloc and Leica Amplus 6 1-6x24 proved to be an effective pairing.

prestigious Taylor Fladgate, one of the oldest of the founding Port wine houses. Of course, I partook in port tasting. As satisfying as it was, though, the big day ahead meant that I couldn’t afford to overindulge. The next morning, we made our way to Germany. Our home base for the week was a 900-year-old castle, Burg Honrath, in Lohmer.

The castle is run by brothers Ansgar and Gereon Holtschneider who, in addition to being excellent hosts, are talented hunters, artists, brewers, and cooks. The brothers hosted a beer tasting, followed by a tour of the castle. We found our way to the cellar where candles were the only source of light.

Despite the late night, Leica introduced its new products early the next morning, including the Calonox 2 thermal sight and camera — available

with a laser rangefinder upgrade — and the Geovid Pro 10x42 AB+ binocular, which has an on-board rangefinder and Applied Ballistics Elite program.

CALONOX 2

Building on the foundation of the Leica Calonox line, which was released in 2020, and the more affordable Calonox Sight SE, released in 2023, the Calonox 2 possesses the latest generation of the company’s thermal imaging technology for wildlife observation and ethical hunting. The Calonox 2 View is a handheld model while the Calonox 2 Sight mounts ahead of a scope.

Each Calonox 2 model is also available in a standard configuration, as well as a laser rangefinder version. The letters “LRF” designate the laser rangefinder models, which offer a maximum ranging capability of 1,312 yards. All

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four models feature Leica Image Optimization (LIO) software for ideal thermal performance, as well.

Ergonomically engineered for intuitive operation, the Calonox 2 is designed and made in Germany. Compact and lightweight, the Calonox 2 handles like a luxury automobile with information presented with the precision of a timepiece. The Calonox 2 produces sharp, high-contrast photos and video, largely due to a sensor with 640/480 pixels and a 12-micron pixel pitch.

The Calonox 2 View and the View LRF were completely redesigned; not one part was carried over from the original Calonox line. The Bluetooth- and Wi-Fi-enabled LRF model was developed to be used with the Leica Hunting app, thereby providing a ballistic calculator companion.

The Calonox Sight and Calonox 2 Sight mount in front of a scope, turning the host optic into a thermal imaging scope combination. However, unlike the original, the Calonox 2 Sight requires no additional zeroing. Think of it as an accessory to the scope. No zeroing also means the Calonox 2 Sight can be easily transferred from one rifle to another using the appropriate adapter to lock it in place. An optional remote switch even enables the shooter to control the unit changing grip of the rifle.

All Calonox 2 models feature software that can be updated over the air. Day/night modes are customizable through the Leica Hunting app. As versatile as the Calonox 2 is, though, it's not the right tool for every job.

GEOVID PRO 10x42 AB+

Sometimes what you need is a set of quality binoculars. If you demand the best image quality, wide field of view, and ballistic functions, the Geovid Pro 10x42mm AB+ should be on your shortlist. As you'd expect from Leica, the glass is perfect and clear. Clarity matters, especially near dawn and dusk, or under a canopy or trees. Diminished light makes it difficult to distinguish important details about an animal or the environment. The Geovid Pro 10x42mm binos that I tested were equipped with Applied Ballistics (AB) technology for the benefit of hunters and shooters.

Leica incorporated an Applied Ballistics Elite calculator featuring shot probability analysis that helps to determine whether a shot is feasible. The laser rangefinder's maximum range of 3,200 yards is what distinguishes the Geovid Pro 10x42 AB+ apart. Results are also fast.



The Calonox Sight was designed to be clipped ahead of a rifle-scope's objective lens, giving the user thermal imaging and an integrated laser rangefinder beyond the scope's reticle. **\$4,199**

LEICA CALONOX SIGHT	
TYPE	Thermal
OBJECTIVE	42mm
MOUNTING	Riflescope only
SENSOR	VOx, 384x288 pixels
DISPLAY	1024x768 pixels, OLED
RANGE	2,187 yds.
DIMENSIONS	6.5 x 2.6 in. (length/width)
WEIGHT	1 lb., 6.2 oz.
BATTERY	Integral, USB-C; 8-11 hrs.
MSRP	\$4,199
MANUFACTURER	Leica, 800-480-5422, leicacamerausa.com



The Calonox 2 View LRF functions like a handheld laser rangefinder, though a high-resolution OLED screen gives users a clear thermal image for observation or camera work. **\$3,199**

LEICA CALONOX 2 VIEW LRF	
TYPE	Thermal, camera, video, laser rangefinder
OBJECTIVE	42mm
MEMORY	32 GB
SENSOR	VOx, 640x840 pixels
DISPLAY	1280x960 pixels, OLED
RANGE	1,312 yds.
DIMENSIONS	5.5 in. x 4.3 in. x 2.4 in. (length/width/height)
WEIGHT	1 lb., 6.9 oz.
BATTERY	Integral, USB-C; 6 hrs.
MSRP	\$3,199
MANUFACTURER	Leica, 800-480-5422, leicacamerausa.com

A .3-second measurement time with accuracy within half-a-yard out to 218 yards is what you can expect.

The Geovid Pro 10x42 AB+ is supported with enhanced connectivity. It's compatible with a Garmin watch and a Kestrel. With the BaseMap app, you can use GPS tracking to mark locations such as tracks you find in a field or shots at an unknown-distance range. The Geovid Pro 10x42 AB+ surpasses the technology performance and user-friendliness of Leica's older models.

LETZTER BISSEN

The trip to Portugal and Germany impressed upon me an appreciation for Leica's history, innovations, premium products, and passion for the shooting sports. Hunting in Germany showed me that there is more to a European-driven hunt than the taking of game. Never have I

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Roe deer are small. Even the mature bucks grow short antlers.



As with tradition, successful hunters placed a branch in their hats.



Each species of game taken during a European driven hunt are honored with their own song played through horns.

experienced such reverence for the animals harvested. After they were dressed, each animal's carcass was ceremoniously placed on a bed of pine branches in a specific manner, signifying rank. Even the hunters and dog handlers stood in clearly delineated positions around the animals. In keeping with the “tableau” tradition, the most coveted animal taken, a large boar was positioned first, next to the fire pit. Then, the deer were aligned from biggest to smallest, all placed on their right side. A small pine branch was placed in each animal's mouth, in what's referred to as “the last bite” or “*letzter bitten*.” A branch was also placed over the wound. For males, the cut end of the branch faces the head. For females, the cut end faces the tail.

The title, “King of the Hunt” is bestowed upon the hunter who harvests the most coveted animal or the largest number of animals. On this hunt, Leica's interim U.S. Director of Sporting Optics Dan Esquinas earned that honor. After brass horns played a tribute to the animals, giving thanks for a safe and successful hunt, Esquinas approached Huntmaster Gereon, who also served as a dog handler. A piece of the branch atop the boar that Esquinas harvested was

LEICA GEOVID PRO 10X42 AB+	
TYPE	Binocular, rangefinder
MAGNIFICATION	10X
OBJECTIVE	42mm
FIELD OF VIEW	342 ft. @ 1,000 yds.
EYE RELIEF	.63 in.
PRISM	Perger-Porro
RANGE	10 yds. to 3,200 yds.
DIMENSIONS	4.6 in. x 6 in. x 2.8 in.
WEIGHT	2 lbs., 2.2 oz.
MSRP	\$3,499
MANUFACTURER	Leica, 800-480-5422, leicacamerausa.com



The Leica Geovid Pro 10x42 AB+ is a laser rangefinding binocular with a range of 3,226 yards. Of interest to sportsmen is the shot probability calculator, which presents the odds for a successful hit.

placed into a small opening on the right side of his hat, signifying ownership of the animal. Other hunters, including myself, followed suit. Each was greeted with a handshake from Gereon, who exclaimed, “*Waidmannsheil!*,” German for “happy hunting.” The phrase is also used in congratulations following a successful hunt. The pageantry of the hunt was unlike anything I've experienced.

LEICA'S LEGACY

No visit to Leica is complete without a tour of Leitz-Park in Wetzlar. The Leica museum is there where you can learn about the company's history, which dates back to 1913 when the the Ur-Leica 35mm camera prototype was developed. “Leica” got its name from the first three letters of the founder's surname, Ernst Leitz, and the first two letters in the word camera, “ca.” From the first portable camera and the first digital laser rangefinder to its inventive riflescopes, binoculars and thermal imagers, Leica is continuing a tradition of innovation and premium performance. **G&A**

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A French légionnaire with FRF2 in Afghanistan.

French infantrymen, one carrying an FRF2 while serving in Africa.

SNIPING ÉLAN

THE FRENCH FRF2 LONG-RANGE
MILITARY RIFLE WAS AN
EFFECTIVE COMBINATION OF
INNOVATION AND STYLE.

BY GARRY JAMES | PHOTOGRAPHY BY PHILIP SCHREIER



COURTESY NAVY ARMS

The FRF2 features a centrally mounted rotating bipod. It can be folded and adjusted for height, permitting considerable aiming flexibility.



COURTESY NAVY ARMS

French snipers training with FRF2s. The rifles proved accurate, rugged and user-friendly when pressed into combat.



The French Fusil à Répétition modèle F2 (FRF2) rifle is a svelte, stylish presentation that blended older and newer features for a military sniper.



The FRF2 action (above, top) is a re-engineered, enhanced version of the French modèle 36 service rifle (below), which was simple yet effective.



The FRF2 bipod can be lowered into position using buttons on each leg. The legs are extended by spring-mounted detents.



The FRF2 has a 10-round magazine released by a generous lever sited on the lower portion of the side on the action where it is operated by the shooter's thumb. It is secured in position by an internal flange that snaps into a small recess on the magazine body.

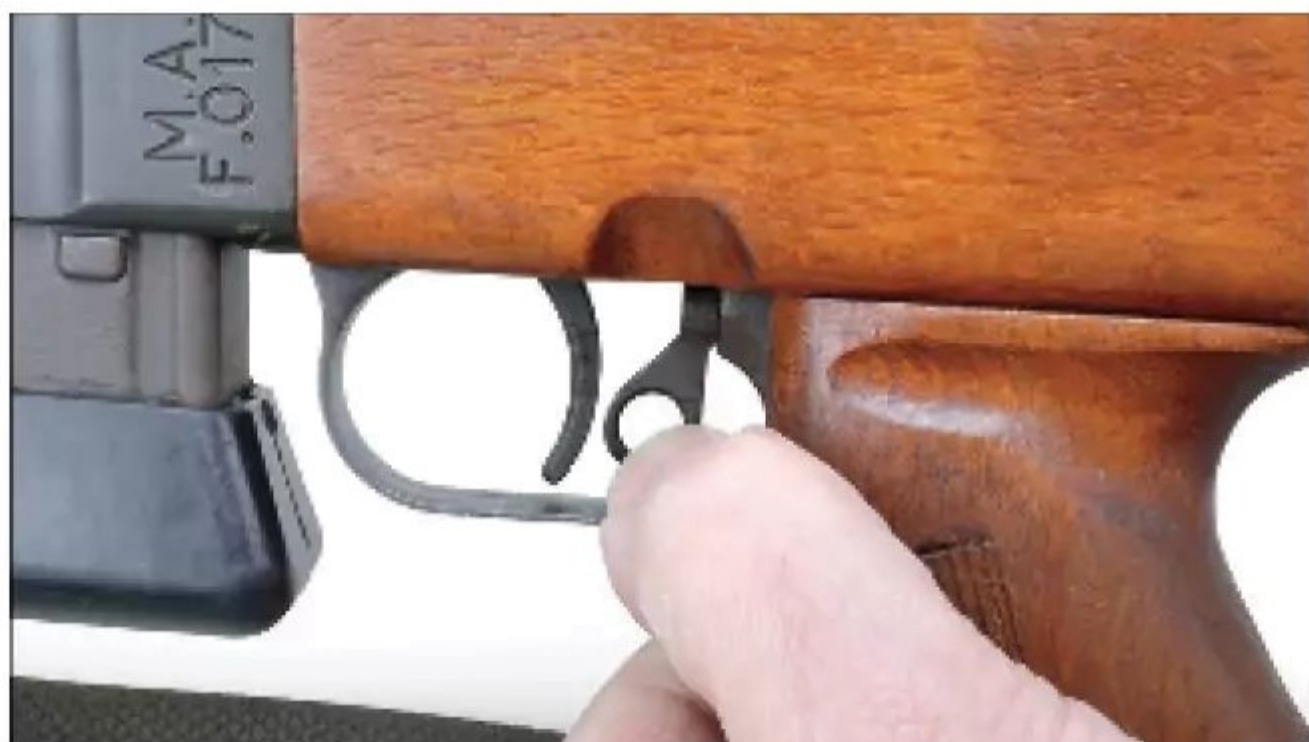
IN THE FIELD OF FIREARMS TECHNOLOGY, I think it can be argued that, when the subject of great sniping rifles is discussed, those offered by the French are rarely considered. This is unfortunate. While precision military rifles produced by that nation are relatively few compared to examples developed by, say, Germany or the United States, a careful study of Gallic long-range military shooting reveals some interesting, innovative entries. As we shall see, the subject of the article, the relatively recent *Fusil à Répétition modèle F2* (FRF2) is easily one of the most intriguing, subtly elegant, and effective of its type.

The lineage of French sniper rifles hearkens back to World War I where, like those of other nations, an arm was cobbled-up from an existing battle rifle, in this case the Mle 1886 M93 “Lebel” 8mm bolt action. Fitted by various methods with an optic adopted from one used on artillery pieces, the gun proved effective enough, especially

when the scope was serially upgraded to reflect the needs of the battlefield. Useful though it may have been, the limited numbers in which it was issued reflected a lack of enthusiasm on the part of the authorities. They were elusive in Great War trenches and, thus, today are rarely encountered on the collector market.

Throughout the inter- and immediately post-war years, France produced no sniping arms of significance. It was not until circa 1971 that a scoped arm built on the MAS 49-56 MSE semiautomatic repeater appeared, though it was not actually intended for combat use but as an international service rifle competition arm. Unfortunately, its abilities were somewhat hampered by a mediocre scope, the 3.85X APX L806 (03).

Cognizant of the ’49-56 MSE’s inadequacies as a precision rifle, the French embarked on a new program, resulting in the FR (*Fusil à Répétition*)



As the MAS-36 action, upon which the FRF2 is based, had no internal safety, this was the same in the sniper’s mechanism. To rectify the situation, the FRF2 was fitted with a simple rotating lever that, when set, mechanically arrests the trigger.



The Scrome scope/base is removed by a sidelever on the action. The integral rail and base are arranged so the scope may be set at different positions to accommodate the shooter.



The Scrome J8 8x40mm scope reticle is adjusted using two dials. Initials on the top are B (Bas for "down") and H (Huit for "up") and on the side, D (Droit for "right") and G (Gauche for "left").



series. Commencing in 1966, rather than using an existing platform, the French decided to produce an entirely new arm. As we shall see, features seen on previous service arms were judiciously melded into the project.

The subject gun's action was a beefed-up version of the French MAS-36 service rifle, "MAS" being the initials of its maker *Manufacture d'Armes de Saint-Étienne*. It was an unusual slab-sided affair that accommodated a one-piece bolt with odd-looking but surprisingly ergonomic dog-leg handle. Designed in 1936 for use in conjunction with a 7.5x54mm rimless round, which was originally intended for machine guns, the bolt was simple and robust enough to ably perform its task. Employing dual rear locking lugs, a sturdy extractor and minimal internals, it was easy to disassemble and service. Like earlier French military rifles, the '36 had no safety. Unlike the MAS-36 action, which had a solid floorplate, cartridges being loaded through its top, the modified receiver accommodated a 10-round removable magazine, the magazine catch being a robust, accessible lever sited on its left side.

Due to the action's physiognomy, a two-piece stock consisting of butt and forend defined the arm's overall silhouette. The stock maintained some features of the '49-56 such as an added pistol grip, easily removable

plastic cheekpiece and stock-lengthening wooden inserts. A folding bipod arrangement, employing dual height-adjustable legs was attached on either side of the rear of the forend.

While the basic MAS 36 action was used as a model for the new *Fusil*, its new incarnation, as noted, was strengthened to improve its accuracy. A simple, manually operated rotating lever is found at the rear of the triggerguard to provide the rifle with a positive safety without having to alter any of the action's internals. Turning the lever into the downward position effectively blocks the trigger from

moving completely backward and tripping the sear. Trigger pull was lightened to between 4.4 and 4.8 pounds, and the 21.8-inch barrel, which jutted out a considerable distance from the gun's abbreviated forend, was free-floated and tipped with a flash hider that could be revolved to align the hider's apertures with the grooves of the rifling. Sighting included improved adjustable iron sights and a variant of the 3.85X APX L806 scope.

The *Fusil à Répétition modèle F1* (FRF1), as the new piece was called, was adopted by the French military in 1966. Deemed a creditable piece of hardware, it was hampered by mediocre optics and a proprietary round. While an OK service cartridge,



A simple notch-and-blade arrangement is molded into the rifle's polymer handguard so the rifle could be used without a scope.



The flash suppressor is adjustable and properly aligned with the barrel's lands/grooves for optimum accuracy and ballistics. A rubber enclosure between the suppressor and handguard is another safeguard against thermal deflection.



The bolt is easily removed by opening it and moving it to the rear while the trigger is in the rearward position.



An FRF2 bolt is easily disassembled by simply pushing in on the knob at the rear and rotating it clockwise until it disengages. The spring and striker can then be removed.



The bolt features rear locking lugs and a generous, sturdy extractor.

it did have somewhat less potency than the 7.62x51mm NATO round. Though the FRF1 was used by French forces for a number of years as its principal sniping rifle, in 1980, by which time France had joined NATO, new priorities were set. These included a rechambering of the gun to 7.62 NATO, a complete revamping of its optics and a reconfiguring of a number of features to those deemed desirable. Accordingly, work was begun on the successor to the FRF1.

It was decided that an entirely new scope would be employed. Patriotically, it was designed and produced by a French optics manufacturer. Requirements were 8X fixed-power magnification; it would have to be able to be easily focused and the reticle incorporate a rangefinding arrangement. As there were few optic makers in France, selecting a contractor for the successor to the APX L806 was not all that difficult. The chosen company was Scrome, a firm heretofore known for providing optical devices for such arms and pieces as artillery, mortars and cameras. Up to this time, Scrome had never essayed a riflescope.

What was finally adopted was a worthy, steel-body scope, the Scrome J8 8x40mm. It was easily adjustable vertically and horizontally in mils using a pair of dial turrets, and incorporated a traditional eyepiece focus.

Fitted with an integral mount that allowed the scope to be easily attached and removed to a rail atop the receiver, the rail and mount arrangement was also set up to allow variable positioning for correct eye relief.

The lens of the J8 included a clever reticle that permitted the shooter to determine and correct for ranges from 200 to 800 meters. At first glance, the display looks a bit complicated. When one gets accustomed to its eccentricities, it is revealed as a simple and extremely practical arrangement.

As successful as the J8 was, there were others in the French military who preferred alternatives. The air force adopted a 6x42mm Schmidt & Bender, for example, the *Gendarmerie* a 3-12x50mm Schmidt & Bender or 10x42mm Leupold, and the navy commandos a 1.5-6x42mm Schmidt & Bender. All could be handily adapted to the new arm.

The *Fusil à Répétition modèle F2* (FRF2), while basically retaining most of the F1's action mechanics, was otherwise given a considerable make-over. Now chambering 7.62 NATO, the F1 receiver was appropriately modified. The floating barrel concept was retained, though it was enclosed within a polymer thermal heatshield forend, the front of which was fitted with a flexible enclosure between it and the flashguard to capture any hot air generated during firing. Molded



The FRF2 cheekpiece is held in place by a simple rubber gasket-and-pin arrangement. It can be readily replaced.



The stock can be extended to suit the marksman by adding a dovetailed wooden insert of the desired length. It is secured by a bolt through the butt.



STILL MAKING HISTORY.



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308 WIN CBX Precision (CBX-HV24CGA-308)

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



As well as original-condition FRF2s, Navy Arms offers refurbished versions. Each gun, no matter the variation, comes complete with a scope mount that enables the rifle to be fitted with optics of the shooter's choice.



Each FRF2 comes complete with an accessory pack, which includes instructions in French.



The thermal handguard/shroud has a detachable rubber base that allows the gun to be securely rested on a desired platform without use of the bipod.

into the top of the shield was a rudimentary blade-and-notch sight arrangement to enable the rifle to be fired at close range, sans optics.

The FRF2 bipod employs two sturdy, easily height-adjustable legs within a swivel set-up mounted between the action and the handguard. It permitted fluid movement of the rifle without causing the shooter to have to alter the positions of the legs. As well, the underside of the handguard has a removable rubber cover that gives a shooter a non-slip surface to quickly enable the firer to rest the rifle on an opportunistic platform without having to deploy the bipod.

The final product was a svelte, stylish longarm, looking quite unlike anything else in the inventories of other nations. The overall length was 44½ inches, barrel length 24 inches, and weight 11 pounds. Adopted in 1986, the FRF2 service period continued for some number of years thereafter, eventually being replaced by the FR.G series of sniper rifles. Issued four per infantry platoon during its service life, the FRF2 was employed in Afghanistan, the Gulf War, Mali and other venues. No more than about 3,000 were ultimately manufactured, however.

After being removed from service and put into *Gendarmerie* stores, the arms were held back from civilian sales until recently when they were finally ferreted out and rescued by Val Forgett, president of Navy Arms who, relying on contacts enjoyed by old family connections, managed to strike a deal with the French and purchase what arms were available. Unfortunately, due to bureaucratic regulations and red tape, the guns' original Scrome telescopic sights were not included in the deal.

Concurrently with FRF2 negotiations, Navy Arms was also able to score a cache of No.4 Enfields used by the French resistance during World War II, as well as a quantity of MAC Model 1950 pistols, all of which are purveyed by Navy Arms (navyarms.com).

The lack of glass caused Forgett to figure out an alternative. With the help of Curt Wolf of U.S. Armament, a firm known for reproducing Gatling

Gun and 1903 Colt copies, among others, a replacement mount with Picatinny rail was sourced, thus permitting users to handily fit any preferred scope of choice to the unit.

In time, the French government decided the Scrome scopes could be released to the civilian market, so Forgett acquired what was available. Unfortunately, there were

not enough to equip every rifle purchased, but his foresight in building new rail mounts paid off, ensuring that any FRF2 sold by Navy Arms would be capable of accepting an optic, be it an original Scrome or commercial substitute.

When purchasing the FRF2, Navy Arms realized that some number of the rifles would be in good enough condition to sell as-is, while others would need some sort of tidying-up. The guns were graded, dealt with, and priced accordingly. Refurbished rifles cost \$8,995 — sans glass — and cost of an original varies depending upon condition and whether or not they are scoped. All guns sold by Navy Arms have been carefully inspected and tested for functioning, so there are no concerns about performance.

Whether redone or as-issued, each rifle comes with an accessory pack that includes the U.S. Armament steel scope mount; steel bipod with adjustable legs; two removable wood stock



The original 7.5mm chambering (above, left) used in the MAS-36, and other earlier battle rifles and snipers, was replaced in the FRF2 in favor of 7.62x51mm NATO (above, right).

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With a French-issue Scrome J8 8x40mm, the original condition FRF2 shot well, resulting in consistent long-range hits and superb 100-yard accuracy. Recoil was light and optics were fine once the reticle intricacies were learned.

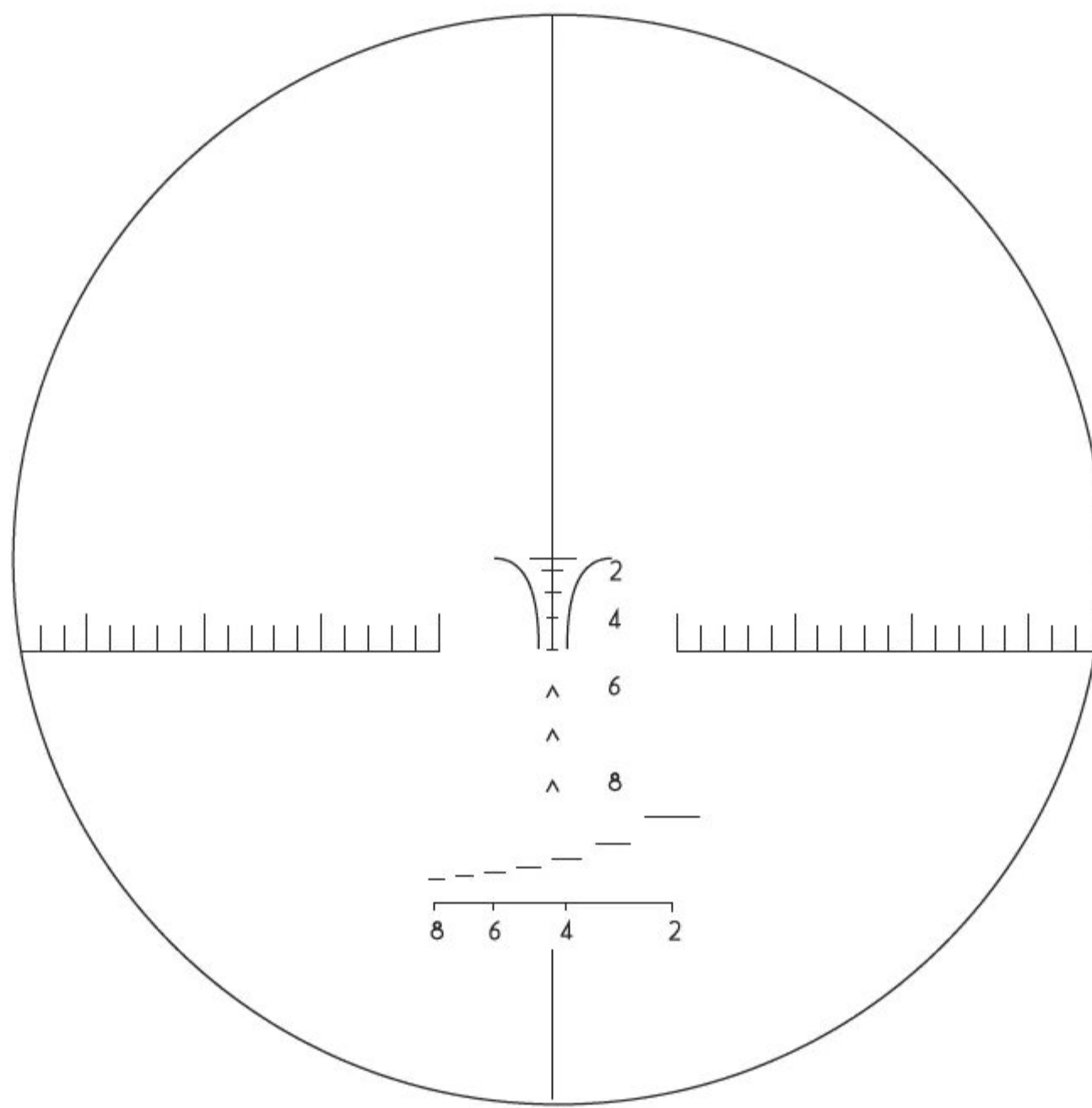
spacers; two removable black plastic cheek pieces; two removable 10-round magazines with black rubber bases; a nylon two-mag pouch; field carrying bag; nylon sling with snap connectors; plastic oil bottle; cloth pull-through with brass lead; angled steel takedown tool; nylon pouch for carrying pull-through; takedown tool; and original field manual in French.

For my shooting evaluation, Navy Arms supplied Guns & Ammo with two rifles, a handsome original in untouched condition with Scrome scope, and a nicely restored refurb topped with a Nightforce NXS 2.5-10x42mm. The Scrome scopes are sold separately from rifles and offered in three grades. Pricing ranges \$3,350 for A1, \$2,995 for A and \$2,540 for B. All have the original mount installed for quick attaching and come in the original factory hardside carry case complete with spare adjustment knobs, sunshade, lens cap, rubber eyecup, adjustment tool, and brush. A hardside field case is also provided.

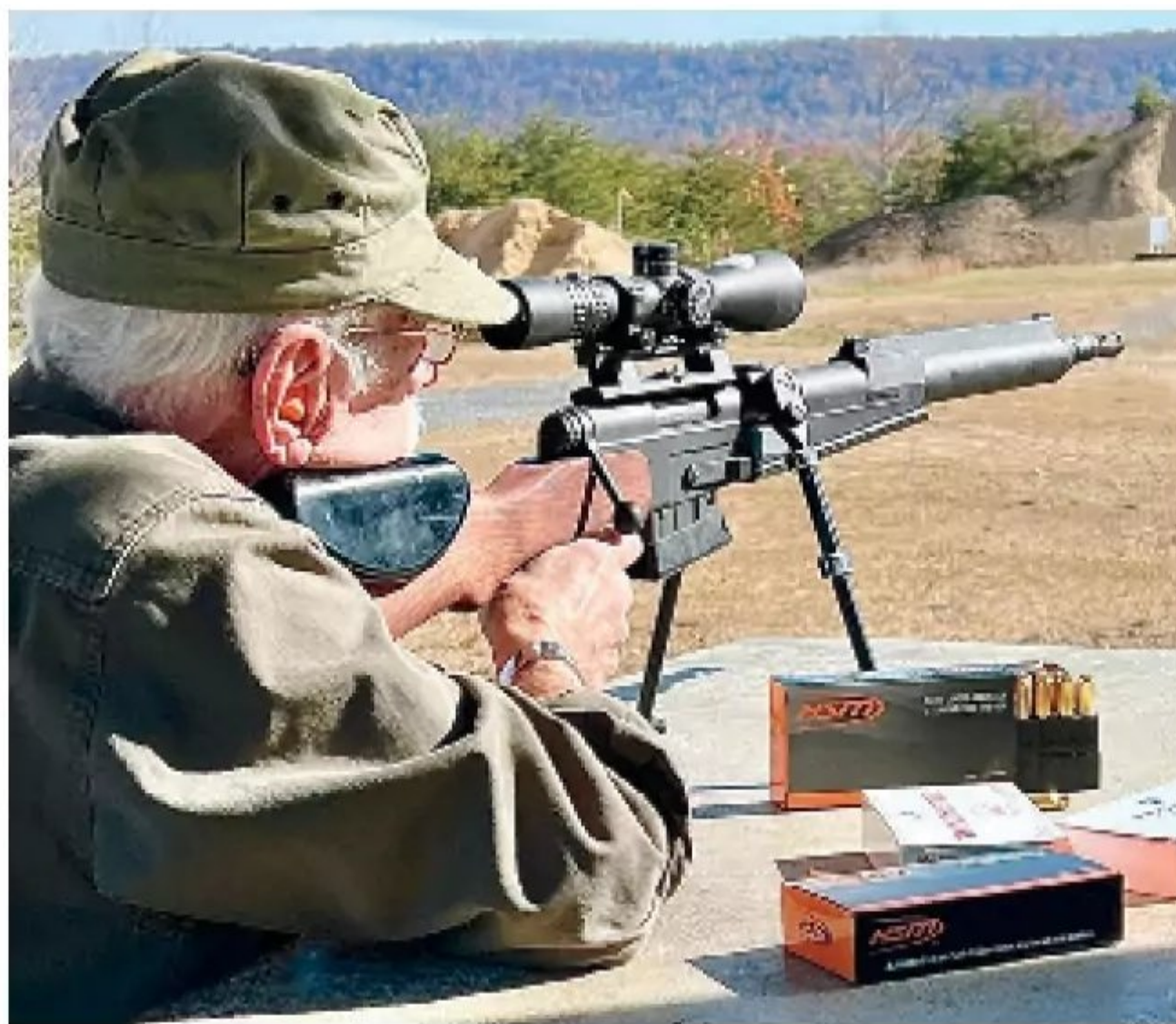
Initial inspection of the arms revealed both had two-stage triggerpulls with a crisp 4½ pounds. Scopes using either the military or new mounts were easily removed and secured with no change in zero.

The bipod allowed excellent flexibility on the bench or in the prone position. I was able to easily select and install the cheekpiece appropriate to my particular hold. The buttstock lengths on both were perfect, so it was not necessary to alter them. While inspecting the dovetailed block extender arrangement, I could tell that it would not present any problem to make an adjustment.

The guns' unique silhouette and unfamiliar action style did cause some interest and conversation from other shooters at the range. When I later let a couple handle the



The J8 mil-dot reticle may appear complicated, but it is actually easy to use. The ranging marks at the bottom are based on the height of an average soldier, allowing the shooter to determine the range at which a target is standing. Central lines and inverted "V" shapes are aiming points. The lines from 200 meters to 400 meters also act as rangefinders; they indicate the width of a person's shoulders. Dual curved lines draw the shooter's eyes to the center of the reticle.



The author evaluated long-range shots with a refurbished FRF2 scoped with Nightforce NXS in 2.5-10x42mm. Performance was excellent and the U.S. Armament mount worked to perfection.



A not untypical half-inch, 100-yard group achieved by the original condition FRF2 with the French-issue scope and using HSM 168-grain, .308, HBPT match ammo.

rifles, they both eventually extolled the virtues and admitted it was definitely not at all as alien as it appeared when first viewed.

Both F2 samples were run-through at the range. Chosen ammo was HSM 168-grain hollowpoint boattail (HPBT) match .308, Federal 149-grain full-metal-jacket (FMJ) 7.62 NATO and Winchester 147-grain FMJ 7.62 NATO. I suspected that the real challenge would be to navigate the Scrome reticle setup. With a little practice, we found it was quite easy to manage, effective and easily adjusted. The crosshairs of the Nightforce were straightforward and required no learning curve. We soon had both rifles consistently ringing 300-yard gongs — the farthest distance at our disposal — with all three brands of ammunition. The task was performed effortlessly. The rifles were comfortable

and shouldered well. Ten rounds could be run through the mags with no hang-ups; feeding was impeccable.

Moving to 100 yards, more serious accuracy testing was essayed with both F2 rifles living up to our expectations. Best spreads were achieved with the HSM ammo, but only by a skosh over the other two brands. The most fun was had with the Scrome scope; mastering its interesting sighting arrangement was a kick and not at all difficult. Five-shot groups averaged 1¼ inches with the HSM and 1½ inches with the Winchester and Federal loads. Several spreads were sub-one-inch. Neither setup disappointed.

Unquestionably, for its time, the FRF2 was a quality sniper, and one that can still provide considerable joy in the field or at the range. It would be an interesting conversation piece in any gun room. For more information about pricing and availability of FRF2 rifles, visit Navy Arms at navyarms.com. **G&A**

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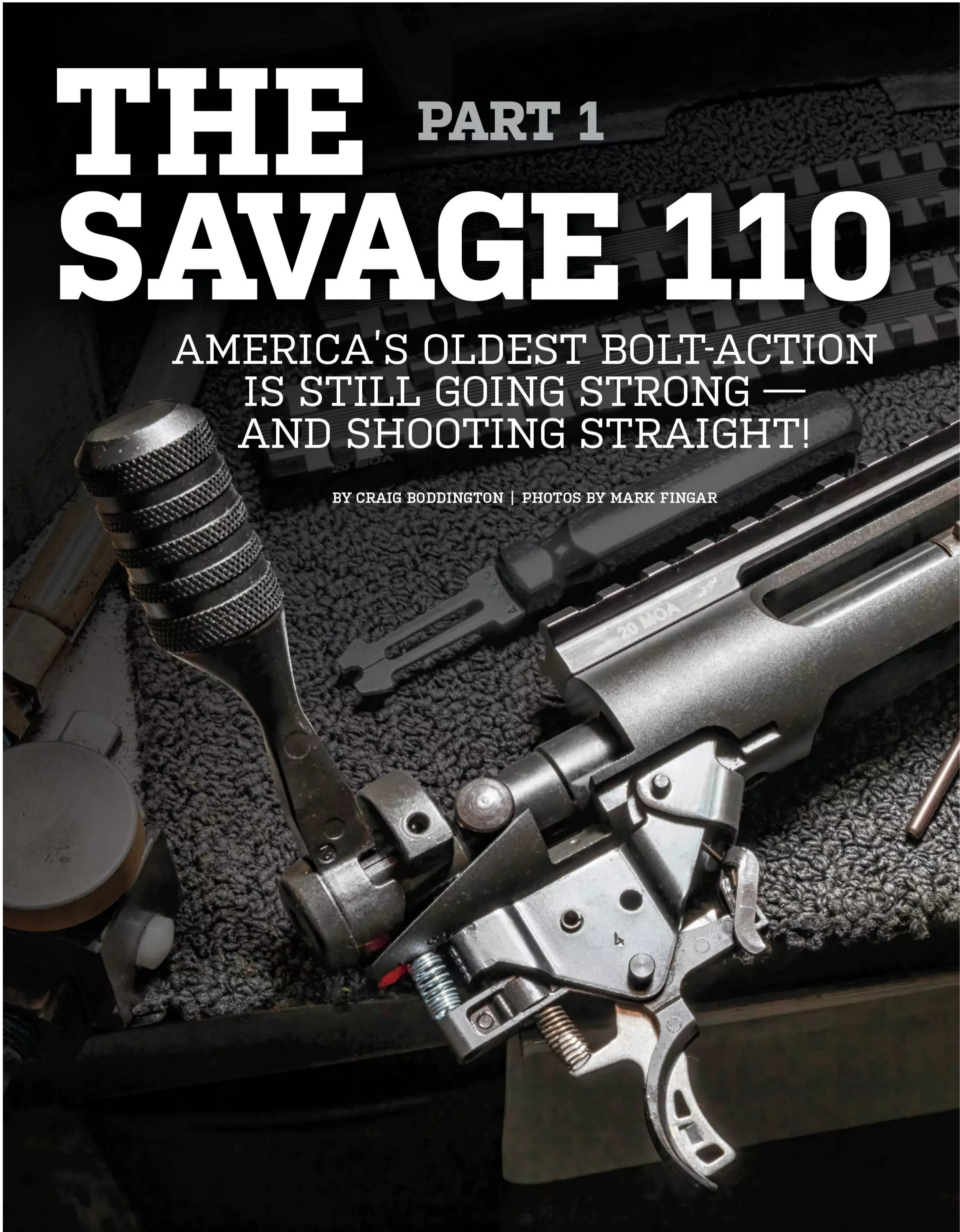
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THE PART 1 SAVAGE 110

AMERICA'S OLDEST BOLT-ACTION
IS STILL GOING STRONG —
AND SHOOTING STRAIGHT!

BY CRAIG BODDINGTON | PHOTOS BY MARK FINGAR





IT WAS 1958 and Dwight “Ike” Eisenhower was in his second term as president of the United States. Bobby Fischer, 14, became the U.S. chess champion. Pizza Hut was founded in Wichita, Kansas, and Private Elvis Presley was inducted into the U.S. Army. Robert E. “Pete” Petersen added Guns & Ammo to his growing publishing company, and Savage Arms of Westfield, Massachusetts, introduced a new bolt-action rifle: The Model 110.

Model designations are often confusing. Many

denote the year of introduction, as seen in the Winchester 1894, while some appear meaningless. You can assume they held meaning for the manufacturer and were probably long-argued at conference tables.

The Savage Model 110 was named for its introductory suggested retail price: \$109.95. It was a great price for a bolt-action centerfire in 1958. Yes, 65 years later prices have gone up a bit, but the Savage 110 remains one of the great bargains in the world of sporting rifles.



The 125th Anniversary Model 110 was released in 2019 to celebrate the brand's history. Production was limited to 1,894 rifles to honor the year Savage was founded. It was built according to modern machining and materials, but presented a traditional appearance. Each rifle carried a manufactured suggested retail price of \$1,499.

A PRODUCTION MARATHONER

The Savage 110 was designed by Nicholas L. Brewer. Four patents were assigned posthumously to him between 1961 and '64. Initial chamberings were, naturally, .270 Winchester and .30-'06. A year later, a short-action version was introduced, chambered for .243 and .308 Winchester.

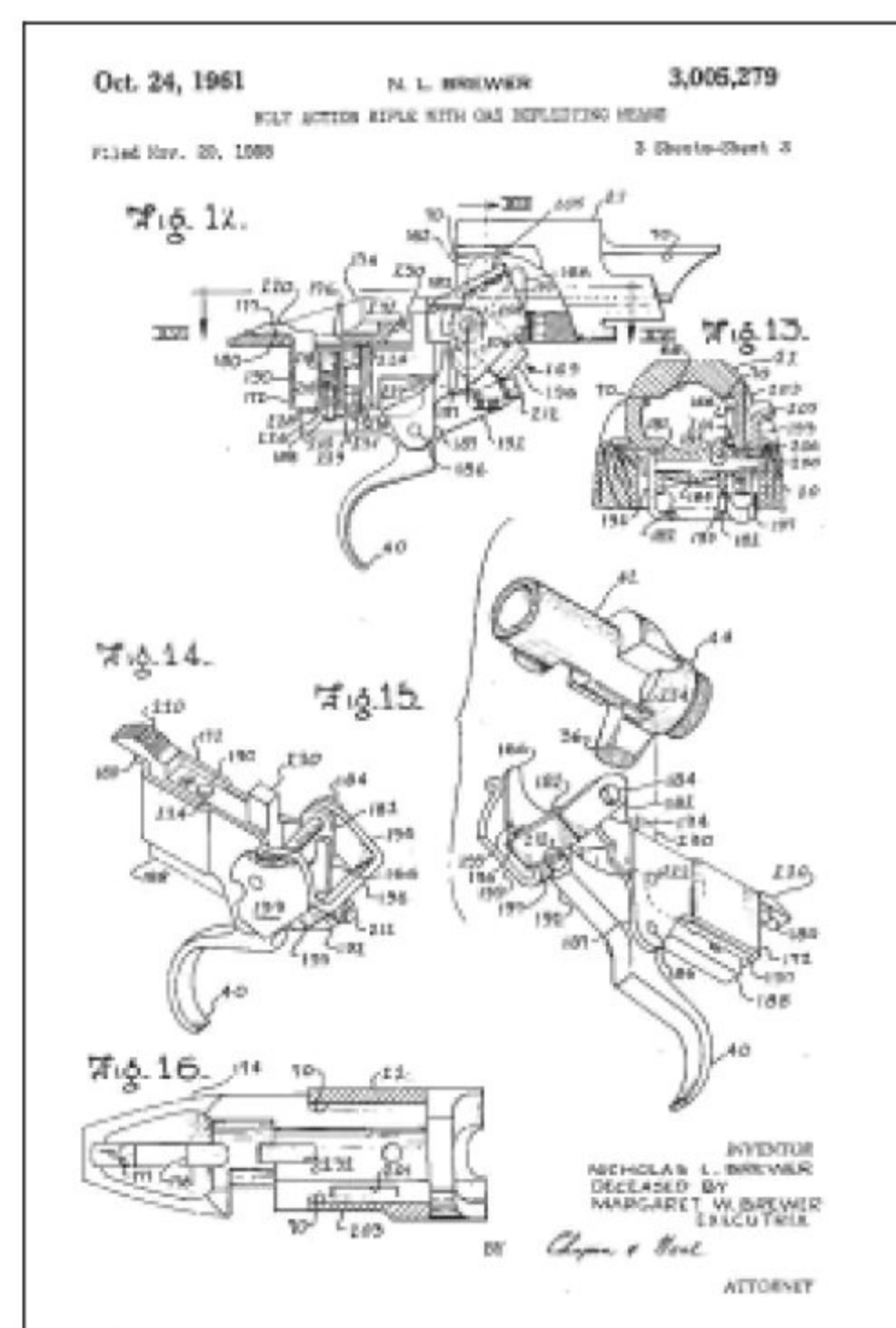
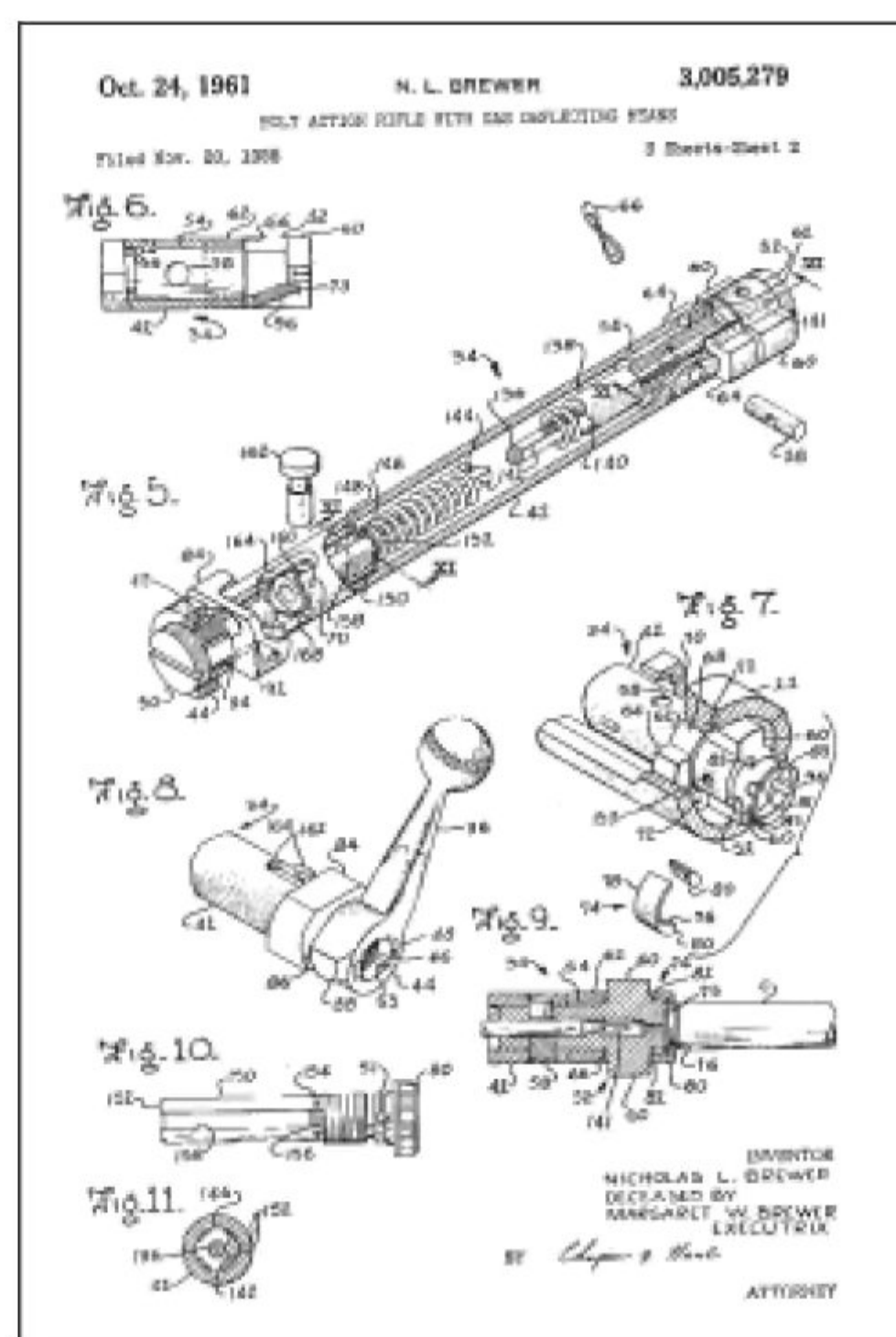
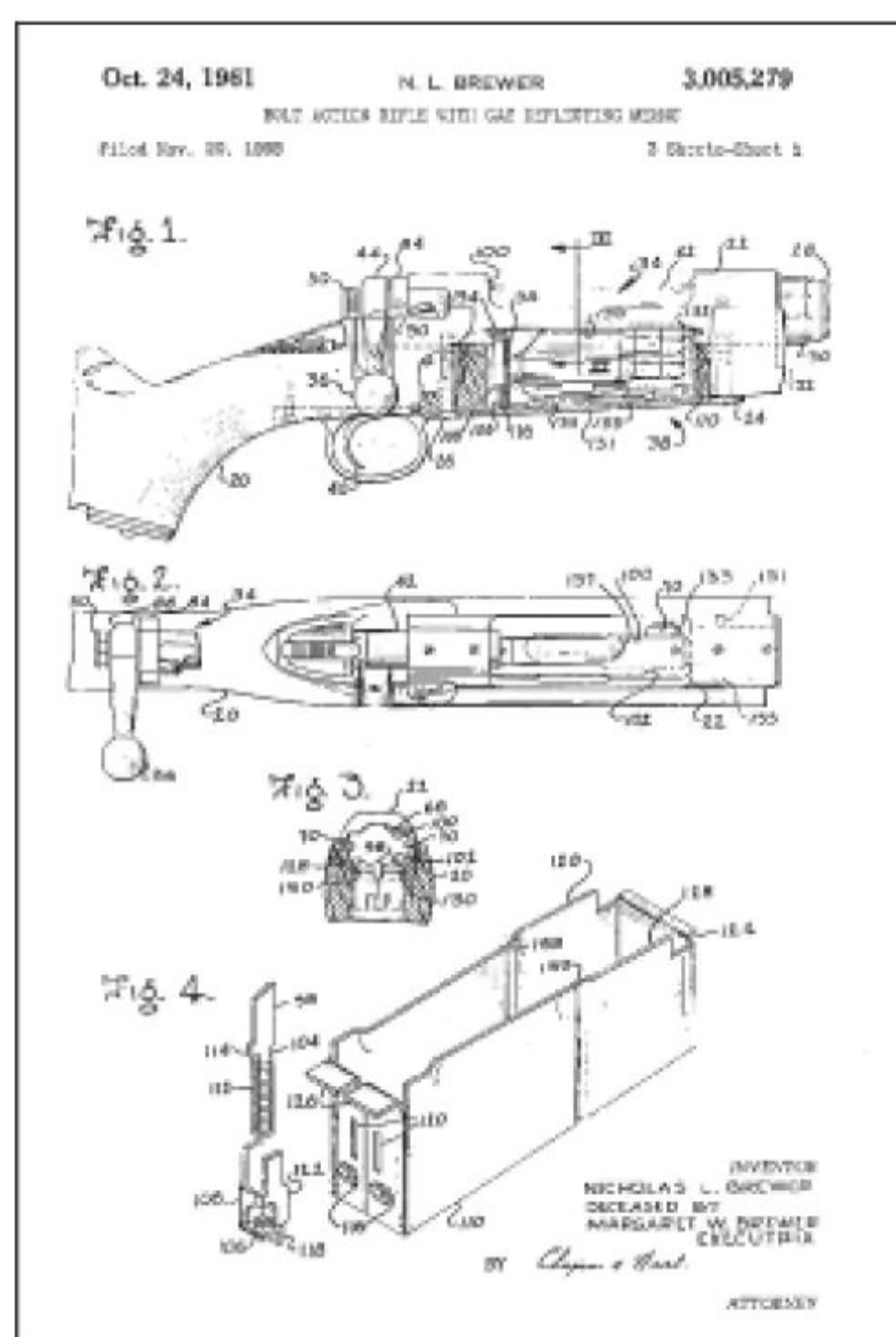
Of particular interest — at least to this southpaw scribe — the Savage 110 became the first production bolt-action to be offered in a mirror-image left-hand action (1959).

The Savage Model 110 has remained in production since 1958, which makes it America's longest continuously produced bolt action, exceeding Winchester's Model 70 (1936) due to breaks in its production. It also exceeded the Remington Model 700 (1962). That the 110 has remained — and still is — in production is almost a miracle.

It's a matter of public record that, in 1988, when the Model 110 was turning 30, Savage Arms was in trouble. Savage was in bankruptcy and the situation looked hopeless. A new hero rode into town by the name of Ron Coburn. Originally from Northern Ireland, his leadership and determination saved Savage. Coburn served as CEO from 1988 to 2013.

As Coburn himself put it, "I took all the costs I could out of the company, and I went from 11 product lines down to one. I picked the Model 110 because it was the only one out of the 11 that was reasonably tooled. Fixtures and gauges were in place. All the other products were in dismal condition as far as the machinery, tooling and fixtures went.

"The other thing I liked about the Model 110 was that



After two years of development, Nicholas Brewer's patent application for a "bolt-action rifle with gas-deflecting means" was submitted on November 20, 1958. It was granted October 24, 1961.

it had a terrific reputation for accuracy, something that I thought was understated. I knew that I could rebuild the business initially on price advantage alone for a little while, but what I really needed to do was emphasize the accuracy to make us stand out and advance our market position."

Coburn pulled it off, focusing production solely on the 110. The great American brand founded by Arthur W. Savage in 1894 survived and prospered under Coburn's 25-year leadership. In 2013, Coburn retired and Savage was acquired by ATK, now Vista Outdoor. Savage Arms remains headquartered in Westfield, and rollmarks on current 110s state "WESTFIELD, MA", as they have since '58.

CONCEPT & OPERATION

Though it took a long time for Savage's manufacturing challenges to become overwhelming, the signs had already been present. In 1958, Savage's flagship was the Model 99 lever action. Some might argue that even then the popularity of the lever action was passing, but a larger problem was that the great Savage 99 was expensive and complicated to make and assemble, requiring a lot of hand-fitting and trial and error. The Model 110 was designed to be



The Model 110 bolt features dual opposing locking lugs. Behind the lugs is a rotating forward baffle that prevents binding.



The Model 110 offers an easy-to-lift bolt and smooth cycling. With two bolt lugs, the handle easily lifts 90 degrees.

simple and economical for both manufacturers and consumers. From the start, smaller parts were stampings or investment-cast, and the 110 was designed to be easy to assemble into an accurate platform.

With its push-feed action, the rifle's bolt looks like a Mauser clone with two dual-opposing locking lugs — but there are differences. Behind the locking lug is a rotating forward baffle, serving primarily as an anti-bind device. There is also a rotating rear baffle ahead of the bolt handle, functioning as a gas shield. Purists argue that these add up to a lot of parts, but the bolt is simple to make, and it works.

Since the forward bolt head is replaceable, the Savage Model 110 can be rebarreled and the bolt head exchanged for a bolt face of a different case-head diameter. The extractor is a broad hook on a locking lug.

From the beginning, the 110's safety has been a three-position, tang-mounted sliding lever. Forward is "fire", rear is "safe" with the bolt locked. There is also an intermediate position where the rifle is "on safe," but with the bolt unlocked. The basics have never changed, but there have been significant updates these last 65-plus years.

Initially — as indicated on one of Brewer's patents — the mechanical ejector was part of the internal box magazine. In 1966, this was changed to a spring-loaded ejector on the bolt face. This allowed the introduction of a detachable box magazine, which is now standard. For many years, there was also a hinged floorplate version. That same year, 1966, Savage introduced the rifle's first adjustable trigger.

One of the more significant changes came in 2003 with



Boddington's first Savage Model 110 was a walnut-stocked example in 7mm Remington Magnum. The first animal taken with it was a caribou in Northwest Territories in 1980.

the introduction of the AccuTrigger. The 2003 patent describes a "Trigger Assembly Having A Secondary Sear." The AccuTrigger is easily adjustable. Its vertical "skeleton plate" in the center of the trigger serves as a secondary safety. The sear can't drop, and the trigger squeeze doesn't start until the plate is depressed flush with the trigger. The AccuTrigger has always been crisp and clean, and is simple to tune.

For many years, the bolt-release lever was on the side of the action ahead of the bolt handle. Today, the bolt release is in the forward bow of the triggerguard. To remove the bolt from the receiver, simultaneously press the lever rearward and depress the trigger. I find this easiest to do with the first two fingers of one hand.

Unlike most bolt-actions wherein the barrel is screwed into the receiver, the Savage Model 110 secures the barrel to the action with a large lock nut, visible just ahead of the forward receiver ring. It's still done that way, but historically the lock nut was knurled and, well, that was not very attractive. Today, the lock-nut is smooth. In my view, that change greatly enhanced the lines of the rifle.

MANY VARIATIONS

Seemingly endless (and somewhat confusing), the Savage 110 has been chambered in an array of cartridges from .204 Ruger to .338 Winchester Magnum, with some experimental rifles in .375 H&H and larger. Savage was early to the game with both stainless steel and synthetic stock models, and was a leader in offering "package" rifles that included mounted scopes. Now comes the confusing part.



A vintage hydraulic press is used to achieve perfect barrel straightness, a task left to skilled human experience.

In 1998, Savage started a new numbering system. Variants became 111, 112, 114, 116 and more. The short actions became double digits, as in the Model 10, 11, 12, and so on. I am not a conspiracy theorist, but I wonder if this came from long-time Savage employees accustomed to the alphabet soup that the many Savage 99 variants had become. I won't attempt to describe the differences in the numbers, but they are for action length, stainless, synthetic, barrel and more. Please accept that all are based around the Savage 110 action, however numbered.

Honestly, I couldn't recall the numerical designations of some of the Savage 110s that I've owned and used, but I remember them well. My first Savage 110 was acquired in 1978. It was my first rifle chambered to 7mm Remington Magnum, and it was my first left-hand action rifle.

Like most lefties, I grew up shooting right-handed bolt guns, reaching over the top to work the action. That Savage 110 changed my thinking and, truly, my life. Since then, all of my personal rifles have been left-hand actions. In those days, factory synthetic stocks didn't exist, but that Savage 110, with an aftermarket Chet Brown stock, also became the first rifle I ever owned with a synthetic stock.

Some 110s that came through my hands were varmint rifles, others were standard hunting rifles in various calibers. I recall a Weather Warrior .30-'06 in stainless and synthetic. It was a package rifle with a scope mounted in Weaver-type rings and bases. Okay, it was an inexpensive scope, but the price was great.

We were filming an elk hunt for an episode of "Petersen's Hunting Adventures." It was a late-season hunt and



Barrel marks and machining scars are removed by hand using industrial polishing wheels. The resulting finish is flawless.



Once threaded, a precision machined barrel nut and lug is installed to each Savage barrel before it is joined with the action.



Boddington shot this elk on a late-season hunt during minus-20-degree temperatures. The rifle used was a Savage 110 Weather Warrior model in .30-'06, complete with mounts and scope. The bull dropped to a 180-grain Barnes bullet loaded by Federal.

extremely cold. I was thinking, "Do I really have to use that scope?" At the range, the rifle shot okay, but it didn't like some of my favorite handloads. I tried this and that, and finally landed on Federal Premium with 180-grain Barnes bullets. Behold, it produced genuine quarter-inch groups out of the box. A few days later, I crept over a frozen ridge at minus-20 degrees Fahrenheit and pole-axed a nice bull on the edge of a big herd.

PART 2

Vista Outdoor sold Savage Arms in 2019 to investors, including employees, led by Al Kasper, who managed the company for decades and retired in 2023. Chris Bezzina is the current CEO. Next time, I'll review new models, how the 110 is made, and how they get them so accurate. 

A close-up photograph of a person's hand holding a black Walther PDP Match Steel Frame handgun. The hand is wearing a dark suit jacket and a black watch with a metal link bracelet. The handgun is held in a ready position, pointing upwards and to the left. A red dot sight is mounted on the rail. The background is blurred, showing what appears to be a staircase or a similar architectural feature.

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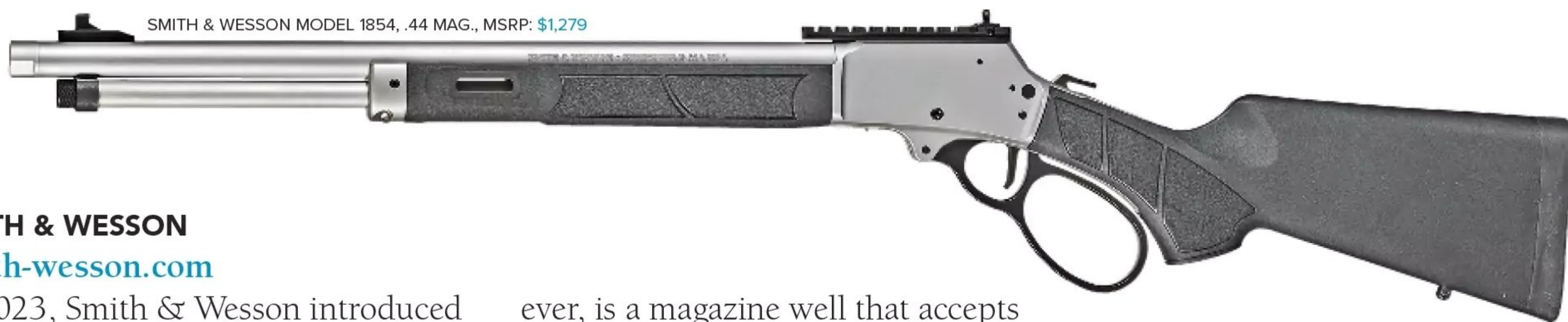
2024 SHOT SHOW NEW PRODUCT PREMIERE

LAS VEGAS WAS PACKED AS THE INDUSTRY ROLLED OUT ITS OFFERINGS TO MEET NEW TRENDS.

STAFF REPORT

NEARLY 14 MILES of aisles were lined with exhibitor booths and demonstrations at the 46th Shooting, Hunting, and Outdoor Trade (SHOT) Show, which was filled with manufacturers' representatives, dealers, distributors, executives and media. From Tuesday, January 23, to Friday, January 26, 2024, just more than 55,000 people visited the annual gathering in Las Vegas to explore new firearm-related reveals, a National Shooting Sports Foundation (NSSF) event that broke the previous attendee record.

Guns & Ammo's staff was scattered throughout the show floor, monitoring the latest industry developments. The Outdoor Sportsman Group (OSG) editorial staff, including titles such as Guns & Ammo, Firearms News, Handguns, Rifleshooter, Shooting Times, Petersen's Hunting, and others, developed plans for coverage while each brand's digital team fed OSG's various social media accounts, including live SHOT Show updates. To view SHOT Show-related video coverage, visit gunsandammo.com. What follows are the highlights.



SMITH & WESSON

smith-wesson.com

In 2023, Smith & Wesson introduced the Response pistol caliber carbine (PCC), an AR-styled platform designed to run using commonly available semiautomatic pistol magazines. A direct-blowback action powers the Response models, but what sets it apart from most PCCs is the interchangeable magazine well. Mag wells are easy to swap with this gun, and the Response includes both the option to feed from M&P and Glock-pattern 9mm magazines. New for 2024, how-

ever, is a magazine well that accepts SIG Sauer P320 mags.

Announced in Guns & Ammo's April 2024 issue, the Model 1854 in .44 Magnum proved to be an absolute show stunner and kept traffic flowing through Smith & Wesson's booth. Drawing inspiration (and name) from Horace Smith and Dan Wesson's early patents and Volcanic lever-action firearms, the Model 1854 combines an all-new design, modern materials and manufacturing for a rifle that

wears the ergonomics of familiar pistol-caliber lever-actions. To maximize its utility, though, the polymer furniture and stainless finish provide all-weather durability while an optic rail and flat-faced trigger account for modern tastes. As a new platform for the brand that's now manufacturing firearms in Tennessee, this rifle indicates a healthy future for one of America's most iconic brands.

BALLISTIC ADVANTAGE BARRELS

ballisticadvantage.com

Ballistic Advantage is a Florida-based barrel maker that engineers and manufacturers top-quality barrels for major firearm manufacturers, small-shop gunsmiths and us, the commercial end user. Ballistic Advantage pioneered profiled barrel blanks and experimented with a barrel's mass and contour to determine the perfect combination of features for the best performance. Looking forward, Ballistic Advantage indicated that they are working on a weight-saving carbon-fiber barrel and will stay ahead of new chamberings such as barrels for the 8.6 Blackout. Additionally, custom Glock barrels are now available.



STREAMLIGHT

streamlight.com

Streamlight has new options for lights on firearms, as well as storage. The TLR-7 line of pistol-mounted lights received the "X" and "USB" designations, which indicate that they now have increased brightness and can be charged using a USB cable. The TLR-7 was introduced in 2018 and became an instant success for its versatility across popular compact carry gun platforms and overall value. This series has also expanded to include the TLR-9 for larger-frame pistols with longer accessory rails.



With government agendas pushing for safe-storage mandates throughout the U.S., Streamlight also responded with the Speedlocker. Speedlocker provides fast, direct access to a firearm for those interested in safe-storage products. It is a portable safe with a carry handle to increase mobility, and its mechanical keyboard can be operated with one hand. Richard Nance reviewed the Speedlocker in G&A's January 2024 "Gun Tech" column, making note of both its portability and ease of access.

ARMSCOR/ROCK ISLAND ARMORY

armscor.com

Armscor and the Rock Island Armory (RIA) brand of handguns have branched from its popular 1911-based models with innovative designs. First, the striker-fired STK100 in 2021 featuring an aluminum frame and Glock magazine compatibility. Then, the square-barreled RIA 5.0 in 2023, which was a unique competition-ready pistol. The year 2024 appears to be another important one for RIA as both pistol lines receive updates with the "E" for enhanced version, including an optic-ready RIA 5.0E and an extended family of STKs. The STK series will now include an update to the full-size SKT100, as well as the compact STK200 and hybrid STK150 additions to the lineup.



WATCHTOWER FIREARMS

watchtowerfirearms.com

Many new companies appeared at the 2024 SHOT Show, but the standout was Watchtower Firearms. Stemming from the purchase of F1 Firearms, new ownership quickly capitalized on its strengths to develop the Apache, a custom, double-stack Model 1911 recently evaluated by Handgun Editor Jim Tarr for Guns & Ammo's May 2024 issue. The team is packed with talent and guided by a proven group of executives with military experience and leadership at the highest levels. Note the naming convention of its brand and firearm products refer back to military operations to pay homage to American military history. Watchtower Firearms aims to be the next great American firearms manufacturer, one that is entirely owned and operated by Americans, made in America using American-made components and services.



STAG ARMS PURSUIT, MULTI CAL., MSRP: \$1,900

STAG ARMS
stagarms.com

Stag Arms continues to cater to the hunting crowd with purpose-built AR and bolt-action rifles optimized for that purpose. The Pursuit AR Pro is new and incorporates leather into the cheek pieces, as well as a leather wrap on the handguard. It not only looks

stylish, but it also protects the hand from the cold steel and deadens the sound that can occur when resting the handguard on a blind or the rail of a stand. It is available in .223 Wylde — meaning that the match chamber will

accept both .223 Remington and 5.56 NATO cartridges — as well as .350 Legend for the dedicated deer hunter in straight-wall-only states.

WARNE SCOPE MOUNTS
warnescopemounts.com

Warne Scope Mounts unveiled several new red-dot riser mounts. One of the challenges experienced when mounting a red dot to some long guns is achieving the optimal height setting. These mounts include spacers to adjust the height to fit any individual's preference. Warne also introduced a universal rib mount to attach red dots to shotgun ribs. Many turkey shotguns don't feature an optic rail, so this mount gives hunters and clay shooters access to the entire rib on a shotgun for mounting a reflex sight. Hunting turkey with a red-dot sight can be a game changer.

Warne Scope Mounts upgraded



WARNE 6106M RED-DOT RISER, MSRP: \$105



WARNE 7912M SKYLINE LITE BIPOD, ARCA INTERFACE, MSRP: \$280

its popular line of Skyline bipods to include the new Skyline Lite with three different options for ARCA, Picatinny rail and quick-detach (QD) rail mounting. The Skyline Lite bipods feature 13 micro adjustments to fine-tune rifle height: 0-,

45-, and 90-degree leg positions. The universal-type head accepts multiple mounting configurations, and it is built from premium aluminum and steel materials. The Skyline Lite bipods offer all the modern features expected while keeping weight low.

FN
fnamerica.com

Every year is a busy year for FN, and 2024 is no different. The FN 509 pistols received factory compensators for its barrels, for example. FN will also offer barrel and compensator accessory packages so existing owners of a 509 pistol can incorporate the update, as well.

FN is also pressing forward with its suppressor line. The FN team was eager to talk tech, and there was a lot of it engineered into the Rush Ti suppressor design. New for 2024 is a can for rimfires, the FN Catch 22 suppressor.



FN 509 TACTICAL FDE, 9MM, MSRP: \$1,104



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WINCHESTER XPR EXTREME TRUETIMBER MIDNIGHT MB, MSRP: \$879

WINCHESTER AND WINCHESTER REPEATING ARMS

winchester.com

winchesterguns.com

The resurgence of lever-action rifles continues, and Winchester Repeating Arms has brought back the Ranger name in the form of a .22 LR lever-action. It proved that it was great fun to shoot at the SHOT Show Media Day at the Range on Monday, January 23, 2024. Winchester also revealed a new variant of the XPR Extreme bolt action,

which is clad in TrueTimber Midnight camo and available for left-hand use.

Straight-wall shooters rejoiced as another cartridge was announced: .400 Legend. Not content with the success of the .350 Legend, Winchester developed the .400 Legend, which bridges the gap between the .350 Legend and the .450 Bushmaster

in terms of power. Best of all, the .400 Legend produces less felt recoil than the .450 Bushmaster. Field Editor Craig Boddington reviewed this new cartridge during a Kansas deer hunt. Boddington's impressions were published in Guns & Ammo's May 2024 issue. There were no problems in finding success with the .400. **G&A**

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MORE POWER!

TEN-MILLIMETER PISTOLS are more popular than ever. Nearly every firearm manufacturer offers at least one handgun chambered in this interesting caliber. Smith & Wesson, however, released a pistol just as interesting as the cartridge: A 5.6-inch 10mm M&P longslide from the Performance Center.

The Performance Center is S&W's in-house custom shop. Generally, this does not involve gunsmithing. Rather, the team upgrades firearms with enhanced

parts and features not found with other models. The Performance Center M&P10 M2.0 was designed on the large-frame M&P, and sized up to support cartridges closer in size to the .45 ACP. For 2024, there are two standard M&P 10mm models with 4- and 4.6-inch barrels. These pistols received a few additional exclusive features.

The biggest visual difference between the Performance Center's M&P10 and standard M&P10 models



Stainless-steel double-stack magazines accommodate 15 rounds of 10mm. The dimensions required the M&P10 M2.0 frame be made larger. The frame features grip support and large magwell.



A loaded chamber port appears at the top of the slide and barrel. When a round is loaded, the user is able to see the rim of the cartridge under the barrel hood.



The end of the barrel is shrouded by a vented slide extension that mimics the appearance of a compensator. The suppressor-height front sight co-witnesses with popular red-dot optics.



is the longer barrel and slide assembly. The barrel of the Performance Center M&P10 was stretched to 5.6 inches and ported. Two oval ports were cut into the top of the barrel, parallel with the muzzle. These vent through a faux compensator milled into the slide. The extended slide also has slots milled into it, exposing the barrel, two on the top and three on either side. Only the top two are functional; the ones on the sides are just for looks.

**SMITH & WESSON
PERFORMANCE CENTER
M&P10 M2.0**

TYPE	Striker fired, recoil operated, semiautomatic
CARTRIDGE	10mm
CAPACITY	15+1 rds.
BARREL	5.6 in., stainless, ported, 1:10-in. twist
OVERALL LENGTH	8.6 in.
HEIGHT	5.6 in.
WIDTH	1.3 in.
WEIGHT	1 lb., 15.4 oz.
SLIDE	Stainless steel, Armornite finish
FRAME	Polymer, textured, stainless chassis
SAFETY	Thumb safety, internal striker drop safety, trigger safety lever
SIGHTS	3-dot night sights, optics ready
TRIGGER	4 lbs., 12 oz. (tested), flat-face M2.0
ACCESSORIES	Two 15-round magazines, optic mounting plates, four backstraps, cable lock, lockable hard case
MSRP	\$749
MANUFACTURER	Smith & Wesson, 800-331-0852, smith-wesson.com



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The Performance Center M&P 10mm is only available with a manual ambi thumb safety. Other controls are serrated and low profile.

Between the long barrel, tall sights, and full-size grip, this is a full-size gun. The PC M&P 10mm measures 8.6-inches long, 5.6-inches tall, 1.3-inches wide, and weighs 31.4 ounces. This pistol arrives with two flush-fit 15-round stainless-steel magazines. Currently, every 10mm M&P from Smith & Wesson — not just this model — is optic-ready. It features a bilateral thumb safety lever and suppressor-height sights that will co-witness with most red-dot optics.

Both the barrel and slide of the pistol are made from stainless steel and given an Armornite finish, S&W's nitride formula. On the left side of the slide, the model details are written out: "M&P 10MM", "Performance Center", and "M2.0", the latter indicating this pistol is based on the second-generation M&P.

Smith & Wesson introduced the M&P pistol on the cover of Guns & Ammo's December 2005 issue. The "M&P" (Military and Police) moniker was revived for these autos as a nod to the brand's history, which included M&P revolvers from 1899 to 1945. Modern M&P pistols paired a striker-fired action with a polymer frame. The slide rides on a stainless-steel chassis



Interchangeable backstraps feature the aggressive M2.0 texture. Palmswells support four different grip profiles.

inside the polymer frame, extending to the railed dustcover. The M&P 10mm carries all of the improvements developed for the second-generation, known as the "M2.0," introduced in G&A's March 2017 issue. The trigger was enhanced from the original M&Ps from 6½ to 5½ pounds, and a tactile reset was added. The magazine release was made reversible, but most notable was the M2.0 texture. It is nearly as aggressive as hand stippling. S&W added a fourth (medium-large) backstrap to the "S," "M," and "L" offerings, and eliminated the beaver-tail on the back of the frame. Serrations were added to the front of the slide, as well.

The chassis inside the polymer frame is much longer on the 2.0 than the original M&P, and it, too, wears an Armornite finish. The original chassis didn't extend past the front of the triggerguard, which allowed flex. The M2.0 doesn't flex if pressure is



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The three slot rail accepts even large pistol lights and laser devices. Within the polymer frame and rail is a stainless-steel chassis.

applied to it, or if you attach a light or laser to the rail.

With the original M&P, the laser-engraved serial number was on the side, so a window was slotted into the polymer at the rear. With an extended chassis, the M2.0 models located the serial number on the chassis within the dustcover's rail, visual proof the chassis extends much further.

Performance Center models are known for having improved details, such as triggers. The M&P 10mm is no different. Inside the M&P 10mm is an improved Performance Center sear, as well as a redesigned plunger safety. The combination of the two provides a better-than-standard trigger pull that tested at 4¾ pounds. The trigger shoe is made of polymer, and features



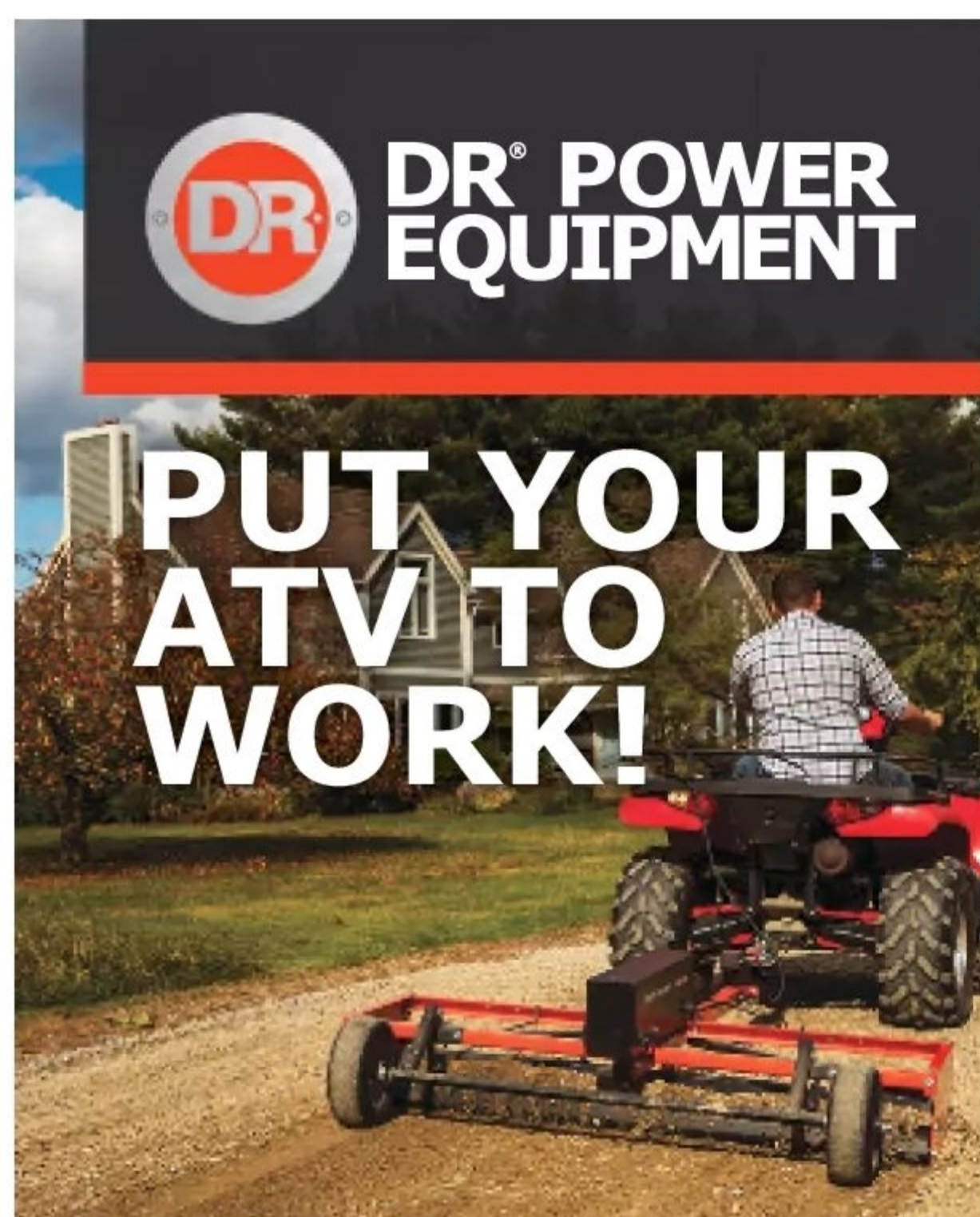
Performance Center trigger safeties collapse when pressed to a flat-face. When pressed, the trigger breaks at nearly 90 degrees.

a straight face that releases close to 90 degrees.

Performance Center engineers replaced the original safety plunger in the slide with one designed to smooth out the trigger's travel. Instead of a near-square profile with radius edges, the plunger is nearly round on the M&P 10mm. Replacing the plunger improved the trigger



Tritium inserts make the sights useful in low-light. They are tall enough for co-witnessing with many slide-mounted optics.



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as if it were one of the aftermarket upgrades available for striker-fired guns. However, replacing the plunger on an M&P requires one to remove the rear sight. Getting the Performance Center M&P 10mm saves some of us from having to modify it later.

This PC M&P 10mm is offered with night sights. There are tritium inserts in the front and rear sights. In daylight, you can see the three white rings on the sights, and in low light the glowing power of tritium inserts supplements aiming.

Those interested will likely want to mount an optic, which this package allows. The Competition Optic Ready Equipment (C.O.R.E.) feature provides the option of mounting a red dot to the rear of the slide. As it comes from the factory, there is a polymer plate on the slide covering the mounting area. Smith & Wesson provides seven polymer



Then Smith & Wesson C.O.R.E. system includes seven polymer adapter and spacer plates, supporting the majority of available optic-mounting solutions.

adapter/spacer plates with accompanying screws to fit nearly every type of pistol optic there is to the slide, including Trijicon RMR/SRO, Docter, Vortex Venom, Burris FastFire, C-More STS, and so on. Depending on the height of the optic, though, you might not have full view of the standard sights through the window.

Inside the slide is a single flat-wire recoil spring around a stainless-steel guiderod.

The spring is not unduly strong, so those who have dexterity issues shouldn't struggle with racking the slide.

At the rear of the frame is an ambidextrous thumb safety lever. Its operation will be familiar to anyone who has used a 1911; it pivots at the rear, up for safe, down to fire. Unlike a 1911, though, the M&P's safety can be engaged whether or not the striker is cocked.

One of the peculiarities of the M&P is the slide stop

PUSHING THE LIMITS

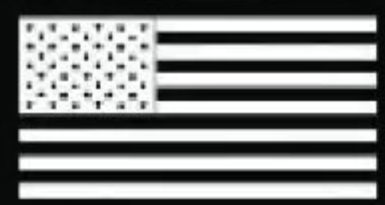
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PERFORMANCE

LOAD	VEL. (FPS)	ES	SD	BEST GROUP (IN.)	AVG. GROUP (IN.)
Hornady 155-gr. XTP	1,373	14	4	1.8	2.5
Wilson Combat 180-gr. XTP	1,182	11	4	2	2.8
SIG Sauer Elite 180-gr. FMJ	1,232	34	20	2.3	3.1
SIG Sauer Elite 180-gr. JHP	1,229	23	15	2.3	3.6

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 set at 12 feet from the muzzle.

lever. You can push up on either side of the lever to lock the slide back, but pushing down on the right-side does nothing. If you want to drop the slide, only the left-side lever works for that.

What looks and acts like a minimal magazine guide at the bottom of the frame — a small wedge of plastic — is actually the base of the “frame tool,” which holds the backstrap in place. Once the gun is unloaded and the magazine is out, twist the frame tool to get a better grip on it, and pull it out the bottom of the gun. The backstrap then pops right off the rear of the gun, base first. Reassembly is in reverse order. The entire process only takes a few seconds, meaning you could experiment with grip profiles at the range. Sometimes it’s only while shooting that you can determine which palmswell works for you.

The frame of the M&P 10mm is both longer and wider than the M&P9/40 models. There is a longer reach to the trigger, so you’ll likely prefer one size smaller backstrap on this gun than with standard 9mm and

.40 M&P pistols. Designed in the 1980s, the 10mm Auto was intended to become the “ultimate” self-defense cartridge, providing the best balance of power and magazine capacity. It is the same overall length as a .45 ACP, a long straight cartridge with a large primer at the back and a .40-caliber bullet at the front. The original 10mm loads from Norma were very powerful, though. The 200-grain bullet was loaded at 1,200 feet per second (fps), and 180s at 1,300 fps. Most modern 10mm loads aren’t quite so beastly, but you’ll still understand why people think the 10mm is a good choice for defending against charging grizzlies.

At the range, the M&P 10mm was appropriately accurate. The lighter Performance Center trigger helped G&A’s staff keep the groups tight, and the long barrel provided a small increase in velocity. The pistol proved completely reliable during testing. It was a bit of a handful, but controllable. While we didn’t have an unported 10mm pistol compare, testing other pistols has shown porting can reduce muzzle rise 15 to 20 percent.

You’ll pay a little extra for this Performance Center M&P 10mm, but at \$750 it represents a solid value, and is quite distinctive.

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Mauser K98 Bolt, Complete Assy. 8mm Turned Down Bolt Exc. \$195. #MSR637

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15.43 inches AK74 Barrel \$125. #AK088

Sten Mk2 Barrel, 9mm \$53. #STN108

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Ruger LC Carbine .45 ACP

PISTOL-CALIBER AWESOME

THE "LC" IN THE RUGER LC Carbine name stands for "light" and "compact." The first LC Carbine was chambered in 5.7x28mm, reviewed in Guns & Ammo's April 2023 "Proofhouse" column. The diminutive centerfire cartridge offers high velocity and low recoil with 27- to 40-grain bullets. Ruger ran all the way to the other end of the bullet-weight scale with the new-for-2024 variant chambered in .45 ACP. Shooters now have an LC Carbine that shoots bullets ranging from 185- to 230-grains in weight.

The boost in firepower is a welcome addition to such a short and relatively light package. The LC Carbine in .45 tipped the scales at a svelte 7.1 pounds while featuring an extended length of 30½ inches with the stock extended. Collapsed length is 28½ inches, and folding the stock further reduces overall length to 22½ inches. The barrel length is a steady 16¼ inches, including a .578-28 threaded

muzzle. Measuring from the top of the receiver to the bottom of the magazine's basepad shows this LC Carbine is only 6.3 inches tall without an optic.

The LC Carbine runs on a direct-blowback system. The slick two-piece bolt design puts a lot of the bolt's weight above the barrel, too. This places the carbine's balance point near the trigger instead of behind the trigger. Spreading the weight across the length of the receiver makes the LC Carbine comfortable to hold while quickly transitioning from one target to the next. If Ruger had opt'd with the traditional method of putting all the bolt's mass behind the breech face, it would have made the LC Carbine much bigger and longer. The .45 ACP generates quite a bit more force than the 5.7x28mm, so the decision to manufacture a two-piece bolt and to push mass forward of the breech and around the barrel was wise. It's what allows it to have a slim profile.



Glock 21 magazines feed the LC Carbine 13 rounds of .45 ACP. Given the availability of G21 mags, finding spares should not be an issue. A key feature to the LC Carbine, magazines are loaded into the grip as if it were a pistol.



Ruger Rapid Deploy folding sights are included with the LC Carbine. They are adjustable for windage and elevation. They flip up when the release button is pressed and locked in place when pressed down.



The balance point of the LC Carbine in .45 ACP is located just ahead of the triggerguard. This area also features a rail section, which would be convenient for attaching a bipod, flat rest, angled grip, light, laser, or other accessory.



The optic rail over the receiver is a separate piece that appears almost seamless with the rail attached over the handguard. The serrated charging handle is reversible for either right- or left-hand use.

RUGER LC CARBINE

TYPE	Blowback operated, semiautomatic
CARTRIDGE	.45 ACP
CAPACITY	13+1 rds.
BARREL	16.25 in., 1:16-in. twist
OVERALL LENGTH	30.5 in. (extended), 22.5 in. (folded)
WEIGHT	7 lbs., 2 oz.
STOCK	Adj. length of pull; folding
LENGTH OF PULL	12.5 to 14.5 in.
GRIP	Textured, polymer
FINISH	Hardcoat anodized (aluminum)
TRIGGER	4 lbs., 2 oz. (tested)
SIGHTS	Flip up, post/aperture
MSRP	\$1,009
MANUFACTURER	Sturm, Ruger & Co., 336-949-5200, ruger.com



The 7½-inch handguard has M-Lok slots throughout to mount lights, lasers, foregrips, or bipods. Three screws secure the handguard to the receiver. A two-piece section of Picatinny rail combines for a measured 19½ inches along the top of the handguard and the receiver. This allows for mounting any type of optic, magnifier or night vision device the shooter

desires. Guns & Ammo's staff evaluated the LC Carbine using a magnified optic for accuracy testing, and red dot sights for function tests. With optics absent, Ruger's standard-issue polymer flip-up post/aperture sights are a welcome feature. The front sight can be adjusted for elevation while the rear sight adjusts for windage.

The stock folds and can be made to



M-Lok mounting points surround the sides and angles of the handguard, functioning as both attachment points and ventilation.



Besides collapsing for length of pull, the stock is hinged on a rail to fold neatly for convenient storage or transporation.



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fold either to the right or left side. It is adjustable for length of pull from 12½ to 14½ inches. The receiver extension inside the stock looks proprietary, but it accepts aftermarket stocks designed for most AR-15s. If the shooter has a strong stock preference, it will likely fit on the LC Carbine. Additionally, the stock attaches to the back of the receiver by way of a vertical section of Picatinny rail. Any aftermarket stock that attaches to a rail can be mounted to the back of the LC Carbine. If the stock is too girthy, though, it might not fold flat. Completely removing the stock exposes a round opening at the back of the receiver, which allows for cleaning the barrel from the breech.

Controls are completely ambidextrous on the LC Carbine. The charging handle is reversible and can ride on either side of the receiver. There is a polymer handgun-like grip frame that attaches to the bottom of the upper receiver. The magazine inserts through the grip, holding 13 rounds. This is the same magazine used with Glock 21 pis-



The stock features an adjustable length of pull, from 12 to 14½ inches. The stock also offers a sling-cup socket and a vertical slot to thread the rear attachment point of a sling.



tols, so aftermarket magazines are plentiful.

The LC Carbine comes set up for a right-handed shooter, but the magazine release is reversible for left-handed shooters.

There is an ambidextrous thumb-safety lever on the LC Carbine that is equally accessible from both sides. The bolt release — yes, it locks the bolt to the rear after the last shot is fired — is also ambidextrous, but the location changes based on the right or left side. Right-handed shooters will find the most accessible bolt release just forward the triggerguard on the right side of the carbine. A quick press with the index finger of the firing hand is all it takes to get the bolt into battery. Left-handed shooters will either need to use the reversible charging handle to release the bolt, or they'll need to use the thumb of the firing hand to hit the release on the left side of the carbine.

Disassembly of the LC Carbine was simple. There is a captured pin that holds the grip frame to the receiver. Push the pin to the side and the grip frame can slide rearward

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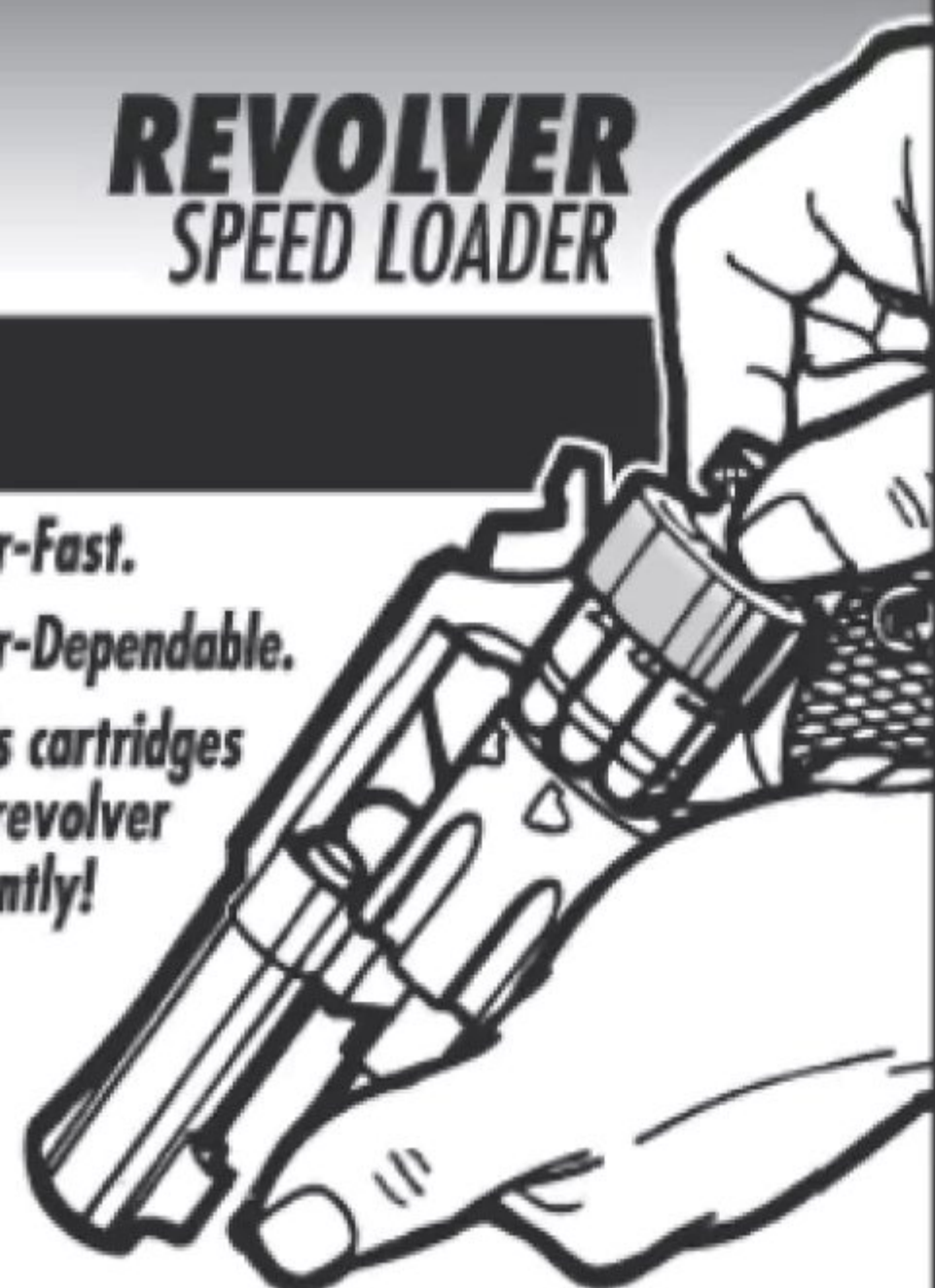


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Ruger's Secure Action fire-control system combines a protected internal hammer design with a bladed-safety trigger. The LC Carbine can be disassembled using a provided wrench.



Despite being a carbine, controls are positioned similarly to a pistol: Trigger safety, mag release, bolt release and safety lever.

about a quarter of an inch. Lift the grip frame out. It can be cleaned like any other striker-fired pistol frame. Pull the charging handle to the rear and lift the rear of the bolt up and out of the receiver. Push forward on the buffer assembly and lift it out of the receiver. The buffer, recoil spring, and guiderod are a captured assembly that easily lifts out of the carbine. Finally, slide the forward portion of the bolt rearward and lift it out of the receiver.

Like its predecessor, the LC Carbine in .45 is ideally suited for suppressor use. It comes threaded from the factory and is chambered in a cartridge that is almost always subsonic. Bullet weights range between 185- and 230 grains for .45 ACP. The 230-grain loads were subsonic, even when tested in the 16¼-inch barrel. One step to be sure to do prior to



Working the charging handle does not require significant effort. The handle, reversible to either side, is convenient to use.

mounting a suppressor is to remove the rubber O-ring that sits under the thread protector. Leaving it in place can push the mounted suppressor off-axis. It's always preferred to have a solid shoulder against which to mount a suppressor. Remove the O-ring and thread the suppressor on until it seats tightly against the shoul-



The LC Carbine in .45 features a 16¼-inch barrel with a .578-28 thread pattern. If suppressing it, remove the O-ring to seat it.



PERFORMANCE

LOAD	VELOCITY (FPS)	ES	SD	BEST GROUP (IN.)	AVG, GROUP (IN.)
Remington Golden Saber +P 185-gr. JHP	1,241	87	35.3	1.62	1.8
Speer Lawman 230-gr. TMJ	898	96	40.5	2.19	2.83
Black Hills 230-gr. FMJ	881	52	21.5	2.22	2.63

Notes: Accuracy is the average of five, five-shot groups at 50 yards. Velocity is the average of 10 shots recorded by Labradar placed adjacent to the muzzle.

der behind the threads.

Accuracy was good with inexpensive ball ammunition that Guns & Ammo used for function testing. High-quality defense ammunition was more accurate. Also of note, the LC Carbine can digest a steady diet of +P loads; those wanting higher velocities can have it without drawbacks. The LC Carbine .45 is a great fit for anyone desiring a slim and compact carbine chambered in a cartridge capable of ringing steel out to 100 yards, or for effective defense inside 100 yards. **G&A**



The mag release is extended and easy to reach. G21 magazines readily insert into the magazine well, which is flared and funneled.

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What's your shooting budget?



NAME YOUR PRICE

OFTEN, readers submit opinions of the various firearms and accessories they read about in Guns & Ammo. The letters often discuss the performance, materials and features, but the factor mentioned most is usually price. Therefore, it shouldn't surprise you to know that the cost of a firearm (or its ammo) is one of the most heavily weighted considerations we make when planning an issue.

Those in the market to buy a gun tend to set an upper price limit while considering what they want to use the gun for. Hunting, self-defense, and competition all place differently in the hierarchy of spending, depending on who you ask. Some of G&A's most popular articles have featured budget options. Online at gunsandammo.com, the recent roundup of micro defender 9mm handguns under \$400 was considered a good start for the fiscally minded who want to protect themselves. In the January and February 2024 issues, Dave Emary also penned a great two-part piece on how to shoot at distance on a budget.

New and niche cartridges tend to be associated with the high cost of a firearm, which can be true. However, manufacturers have been adapting



Interested in seeing a roundup of new cartridges but don't want to spend thousands on a firearm? Check out G&A's list of bolt actions that have proven accurate and affordable.

classic bolt-actions to new cartridges such as the 6.5 PRC, 6.8 Western, and .400 Legend. Brad Fitzpatrick essayed an article on affordable rifles that chamber these new rounds for G&A's website.

I have had a love-hate relationship with the 5.7x28mm, but not due to performance. The cartridge is fun to shoot, but it cost nearly a dollar a round. I hear that quiet *ka-ching* of a cash register each time I pull the trigger. Fortunately, there is an effort in the industry to make the 5.7mm more affordable with new handguns, carbines and ammunition driving the price-per-round down.

For many, not every article needs to consider a tight budget. G&A reviews

all types of firearms and pricepoints. Robert "Bob" Hunnicut submitted his thorough review of the Cosmi shotgun imported by Nighthawk Custom; entry-level models cost more than \$20,000! While that was an unusual example for G&A, it was interesting and informative. In fact, some readers were willing to spend a premium for that gun, which offers quality, uniqueness, and performance to match the price.

Where do you stand on the price of your guns? Do you have a different budget for various types or uses? We'd love to know! Email your thoughts to gaeditor@outdoorsg.com

TOP COMMENTS

In response to the April 2024 "Connect" column, "A Question of Caliber":

"I would like to see an article about the 6.8mm SPC in the Spec II chamber. At one time, it was a popular round but it has lost some appeal. I would think that some of [Guns & Ammo's] readers might not be aware of its qualities and are missing out on a very good cartridge. Mine shoots sub-MOA and has better ballistics (velocity, energy and accuracy) than the more popular 7.62x39 Russian, its closest ballistic competitor. Also, the 6.8mm is American-inspired and designed. There is plenty of energy for deer-sized game to 300 yards. That range/energy would not work for those who think they have to shoot into the next county, but it is more than enough for the realists.

I have found the Hornady 110-grain V-MAX, 110-grain HPBT and 120-grain SST [rounds] to be very accurate. Also, in that same vein of accuracy is the Sierra 110-grain Pro Hunter. I've developed a handload with that bullet, which is equally impressive.

I probably should not name the poorer performing commercial ammo, but I will say my rifle is the Stag Arms Model 7 Hunter with the 20.77-inch barrel. It is a joy to shoot."
— Steven G.



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KEITH WOOD

Is the VA prohibiting veterans from purchasing or possessing firearms?

FEAR & LOATHING

ACCORDING TO THE U.S. CENSUS BUREAU, there are some 16.2 million veterans living in America. More than 3 million veterans served after September 11, 2001, many of whom deployed to combat zones in Afghanistan and Iraq. A great number of these men and women returned with wounds, both seen and unseen, and too many have taken their own lives.

Brown's Watson Institute for International and Public Affairs estimated that 30,177 active-duty personnel and veterans committed suicide between 2001 and 2021. Suicide rates are an epidemic among veterans. According to the Veteran's Administration (VA), there were 6,146 veteran suicides in 2020 alone. Suicide was the second leading cause of death among veterans under age 45.

This is a real problem, one that we as a society should be working to fix. The good news is that light is being cast on this concern, and some progress has been made. From 2018 to 2020, suicide rates fell by 9.7 percent. Still, we can do more to serve veterans. There is one problem that stands in the way of many veterans who might seek professional care: The threat of losing their gun rights for post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) claims.

Several veteran readers have indicated they avoid the VA's claim and examination process that could result in mental health treatment and possibly prevent a number of these tragedies. The fear is that the VA will report them to the National Instant Criminal background check System (NICS) without notice, which would eliminate a veteran's ability to purchase or lawfully possess a firearm.

Startling about NICS referrals from the VA: First, the referrals are often not the result of a clinical diagnosis. Rather, they are based on a veteran's ability to manage his or her finances. When such a determination is made by a VA Disability Claims representative, the administration invokes the Gun Control Act of 1968. Under that law, a

person is "adjudicated as a mental defective" if, among other things, it is determined that he "lacks the mental capacity to contract or manage his own affairs." What's worse, is that there is no judicial review or credible due process under the current VA system. The determination is more-or-less automatic, and there is no clear-cut path to

appealing such a decision.

We can debate the justification and efficacy of so-called "Red Flag" laws, but at least those require a court order. In the situation with the VA, veterans can be stripped of their Constitutional rights, and not by mental health professionals or judges, but by unelected bureaucrats.

"Every other American gets that [due process] benefit, except for the ones who signed up to defend

the United States of America," said Stacey-Rae Simcox, professor of Law and director of the Veterans Legal Clinic at Stetson University. "That doesn't make any sense."

Some in Congress have taken exception to the practice. Representative Mike Bost (R-IL) has introduced H.R. 705, the Veterans 2nd Amendment Protection Act. Sixty-nine of his colleagues have signed on as co-sponsors to the bill. This legislation would prohibit the VA from transmitting information to NICS "without the order or finding of a judge, magistrate, or other judicial authority of competent jurisdiction that such beneficiary is a danger to themselves or others."

In cases of a veteran being a true danger to the community, the bill indicates that prohibition may be lawfully applied by the courts, but an administrator wouldn't have the authority to make that decision. Similar legislation has been proposed before, but none have received serious consideration.

"It is a tragedy and extremely unjust, in my opinion," Simcox added. Let's hope that this time, legislation to protect veterans' gun rights gets the attention it deserves. The VA should be doing everything it can to encourage veterans to seek support, and not steer them away. 



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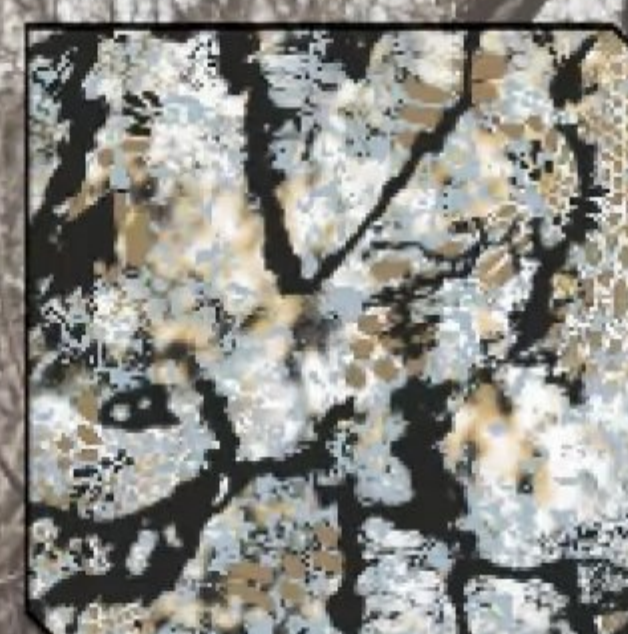
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