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+

## WORLD WAR II SNIPER RIFLE SERIES

PART III: MOSIN-NAGANT 91/30 PU, 7.62x54R

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2025  
SHOT SHOW  
PREMIERE

NEW PRODUCTS  
FROM NSSF'S  
CONVENTION  
IN LAS VEGAS!

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BECKSTRAND  
Visiting Leapers'  
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Release Barrel Tech

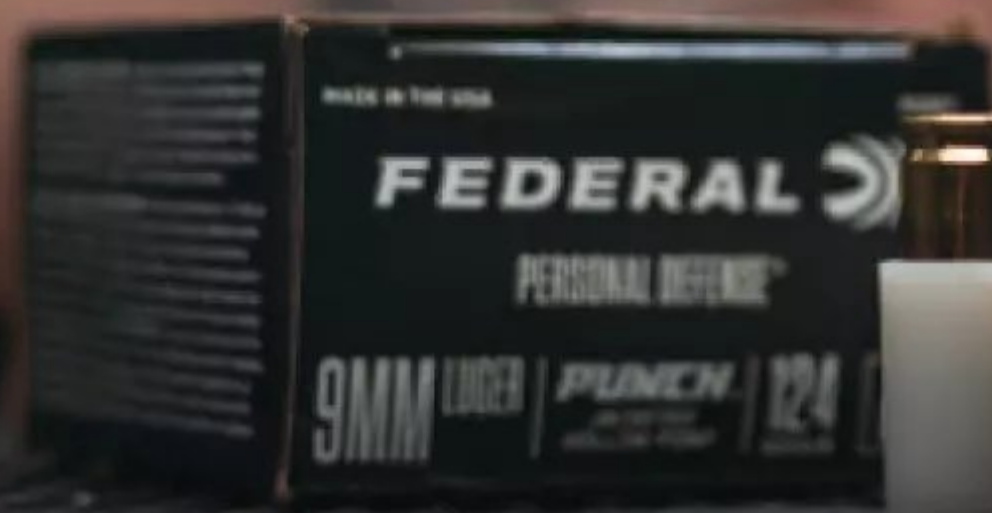


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POOLE  
Tested on Safari:  
Trijicon Credo HX 1-10X



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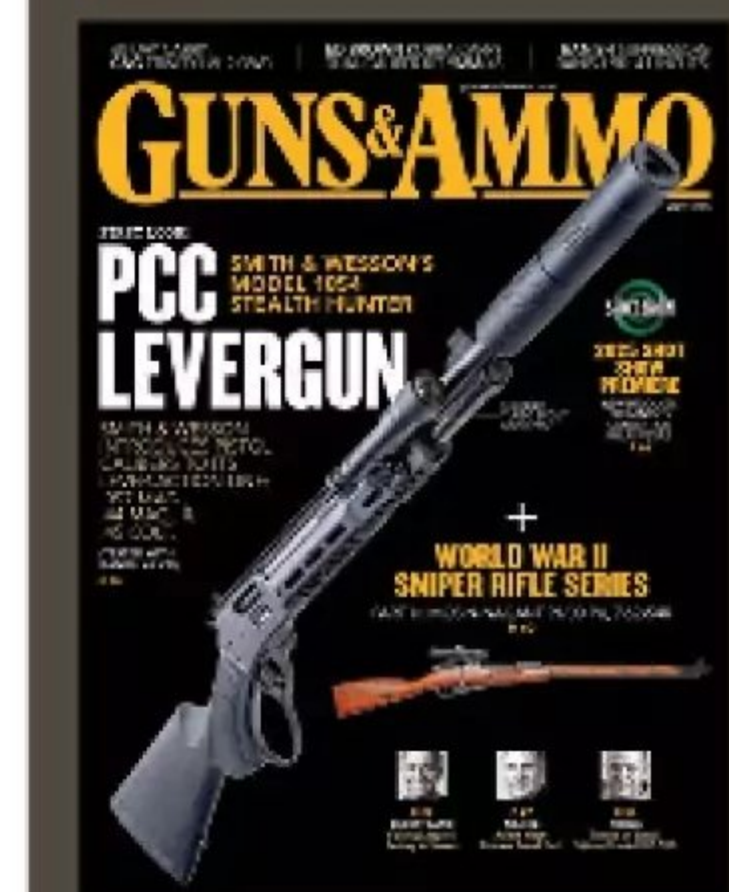




# 44 ALTER EGO

WITH BOTH 9MM AND .45 ACP SLIDE ASSEMBLIES INCLUDED, **ED BROWN'S KOBRA CARRY G4** PACKAGE SATISFIES DUELING PERSONALITIES. BY JAMES TARR

The subscriber cover features Smith & Wesson's all-black finished Model 1854 in .45 Colt. It is suppressed by a Banish 46-V2. **p. 36**



COVER PHOTOS: MARK FINGAR; ABOVE PHOTO: MARK FINGAR

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## STEALTH HUNTER

Smith & Wesson introduces pistol calibers and modern treatments to its Model 1854 lever-action.

BY TOM BECKSTRAND

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## I BELIEVE

Testing the Trijicon Credo HX 1-10X along the Limpopo River in Africa.

BY ERIC R. POOLE

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## ЧАЙПЕР

World War II Sniper Rifle Series, Part III: Mosin-Nagant 91/30 PU

BY DAVE EMARY

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## 2025 SHOT SHOW NEW PRODUCT PREMIERE

Take a look at these highlights from Las Vegas!

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## CONTRIBUTORS

Craig Boddington, Donna Boddington,  
A. F. Branco, Dave Emary, D. Faubion, Mark Fingar,  
Brad Fitzpatrick, Harry Fitzpatrick, Robert W. Hunnicutt,  
Alfredo Rico, Phil Schreier, Yamil Sued

## ENDEMIC AD SALES

SVP, ENDEMIC SALES

Michael Savino [mike.savino@outdoorsg.com](mailto:mike.savino@outdoorsg.com)

NATIONAL ENDEMIC SALES

Jim McConville (440) 791-7017

WESTERN REGION

Hutch Looney [hutch@hlooney.com](mailto:hutch@hlooney.com)

EASTERN REGION

Pat Bentzel (717) 695-8095

## NATIONAL AD SALES

SENIOR DIRECTOR, NON-ENDEMIC SALES

Kevin Donley [kevin.donley@outdoorsg.com](mailto:kevin.donley@outdoorsg.com)

NATIONAL ACCOUNT EXECUTIVE

Carl Benson [carl.benson@outdoorsg.com](mailto:carl.benson@outdoorsg.com)

DIRECT RESPONSE

ADVERTISING/NON-ENDEMIC

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### **.360 BUCKHAMMER OPTIONS**

I live in what used to be called a "border state." Now it's called a "straight-walled rifle cartridge" state. Of the qualified cartridge offerings, I have been interested in the .360 Buckhammer. However, I wish more modest-priced rifles for the .360 Buckhammer were available. The Traditions Outfitter G3 reviewed in "King of Deer" by Richard Nance (January 2025) is interesting, but it is a single-shot rifle without sights and has a suggested retail price of \$615. I would like to see one of the Spanish or Turkish companies produce a value-priced version of the Winchester Model 94. I have an old Model 94 in .30-30, and I'm guessing there are thousands more leaning inside closet walls of homes within straight-wall states. Please feature other affordably priced options for the .360 Buckhammer, if you find any.

**James Schreppler**  
Millsboro, Delaware

Henry has several models available chambered in .360 Buckhammer, including its Single Shot Rifle (\$597, [henryusa.com](http://henryusa.com)), Side Gate Lever Action Rifle (\$1,248), Lever Action X (\$1,124), and Steel Lever Action (\$1,088). I used the Single Shot Steel Rifle to test Remington's new-for-2025 180-grain Core-Lokt Tipped Lever Gun load, which produced an average muzzle velocity of 2,375 feet per second (fps) from its 22-inch barrel with 1-in-12-inch-twist rifling. At 100 yards, the Henry Single-Shot produced a best group of 1.14 inches and an average group of 2.1 inches from a sand-bag rest. If you prefer a

repeater, the Rossi R95 Lever Action in .360 Buckhammer (\$1,061, [rossiusa.com](http://rossiusa.com)) is another option.

— E. Poole

### **KUDOS TO RUGER**

I purchased a Ruger MAX-9, which appealed to me largely due to its size and 10-plus-one capacity. The pistol has good sights, a decent trigger, and I like everything about it. During the first trip to the range, I experienced a few failures to eject and feed. I returned it to Ruger and it was quickly turned around. I spoke to the same customer service representative each time I called. "Wayne" was personable and professional, and

assured me the MAX-9 would be thoroughly tested at Ruger's shop. Ten days later, the pistol arrived with a 12-round stainless magazine, a Ruger-branded zipper case and cleaning cloth. Ruger had performed an upgrade, and the performance was flawless. I give Ruger's customer service five stars. It was a pleasure doing business with them.

**Harold Schott**  
La Vernia, Texas

### **HEY, RUGER!**

I read Mr. Beckstrand's article on the .21 Sharp (February 2025) and saw coverage of the new round on G&A TV, but I don't have a use-case for one. However, should Ruger offer a .21 Sharp barrel for my 10/22 takedown, I may have to find one! (That's a hint, Ruger.)

**Jack Buchmiller**  
Georgetown, Kentucky

### **.21 SHARP IN A .22?**

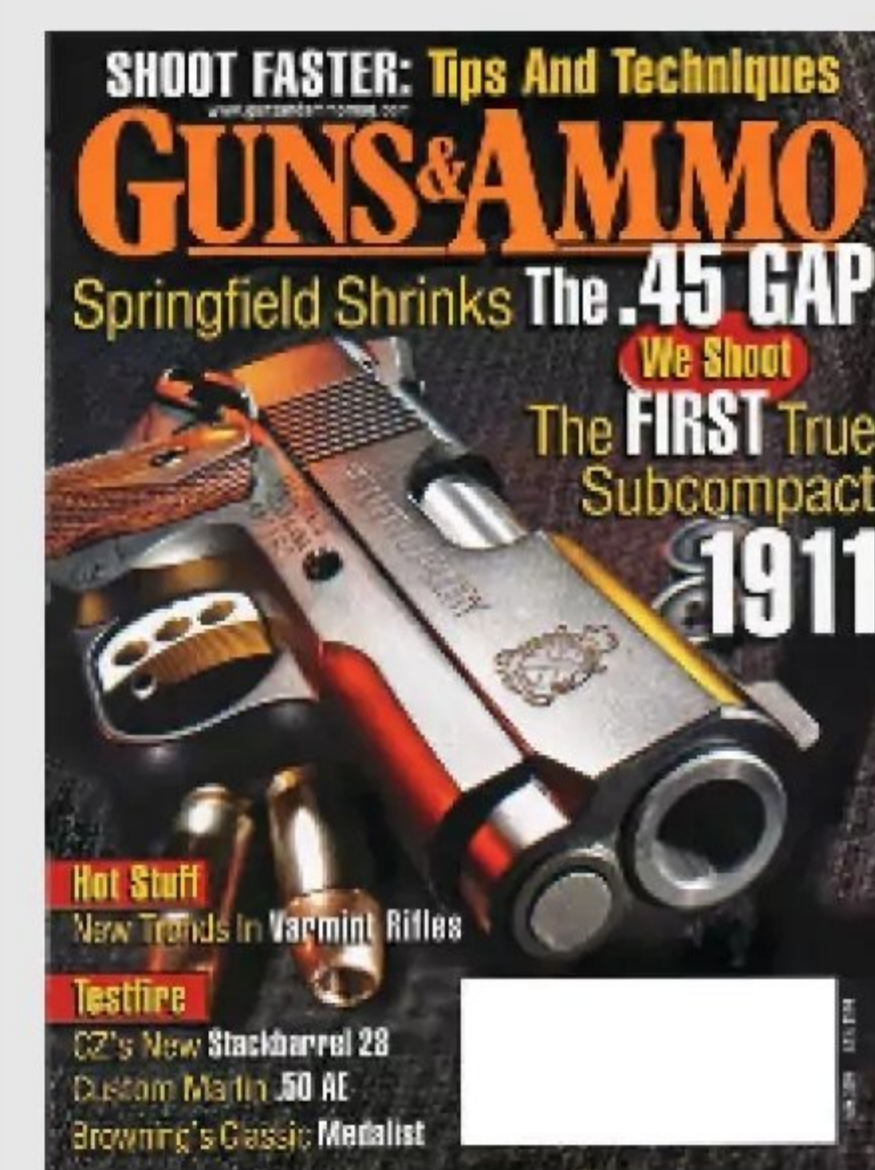
Tom Beckstrand's article on the .21 Sharp (February 2025) left out the obvious question: Is the new cartridge usable in .22-caliber rifles and pistols? Or do we have to purchase a gun in that caliber?

**Steve Dirkx**  
Dallas, Texas

The .21 Sharp uses a smaller projectile than the .22 Long Rifle cartridge, and .22-caliber cartridges will not readily chamber in a .21 Sharp barrel. Current rifle offerings in .21 Sharp include Savage bolt-action B Series (\$329-\$359, [savagearms.com](http://savagearms.com)), Savage

### **20 YEARS AGO MAY '05**

Author Garry James reviewed the Springfield Armory Defender in .45 GAP, a subcompact Model 1911. The truncated cartridge permitted a reduction in grip circumference, giving the Defender unique handling qualities for smaller hands. Developed in 2003 between Speer and Glock, the .45 GAP offered power equivalent to +P loads for the .45 ACP in smaller frames. As law enforcement moved to adopt firearms in 9mm and .40 S&W, public interest in the .45 GAP diminished.



Mark II (\$269-\$389), and Winchester Xpert (\$330-\$580, [winchesterguns.com](http://winchesterguns.com)). — T. Beckstrand

### **SAFE TO SHOOT?**

I inherited six boxes of Remington 12-gauge shotshells that are at least 70 years old. Would they be safe to shoot? Or should I dispose of them?

**Robert Anderson**  
Burlington, Kansas

Being that old, it is questionable for the condition of the powder. There would also be some question due to how the ammunition was stored during that period. If it were mine, I would dispose of it.

— D. Emary **GA**



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ERIC R. POOLE

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# BROTHERS IN ARMS

**GRIFFIN ARMAMENT** is a suppressor company first, rifle manufacturer second, and maker of optic mount solutions third. Building a successful and expanding business from a few hundred square feet of office space and 10,000 square feet of manufacturing is notable. In 2024, Griffin Armament expanded its footprint in Watertown, Wisconsin, to include more than 60,000 square feet and 100 employees.

In 2005, brothers Austin and Evan Green were serving in the U.S. Army when they started the business of making silencers with a few thousand dollars of deployment money to buy hobby-grade CNC machines. Their first product was the Checkmate rimfire suppressor, which remained in production until 2016.

With deployments to Iraq in their background — and a penchant for engineering — the Greens worked in the private security industry before returning to the Army. Both became snipers and deployed again. When not guarding principals or protecting compounds in Iraq, they were collaborating on designs for the business such as the 5.56 NATO Spartan, which saw use in Afghanistan. The aim was to improve on the sound reduction and reduce the point-of-impact shift they experienced when using military-issued cans on rifles and sub-guns.

By 2012, the Green brothers went full time with their business and built an international gun brand. Griffin Armament has been growing ever since. They evaluated every competing brand's suppressor to find the shortcomings on various platforms, which is how Griffin Armament has managed to create an enviable reputation for making

performance products. Profit was rolled back into the company and new machines were purchased to elevate their capabilities, allowing them to innovate products such as the Griffin Enhanced Gas Pocket bolt carrier group (BCG).

Evan and Austin are passionate for gun collecting, and both hunted with suppressors while growing up as kids around the midwest. Evidence for this appears inside the

new entrance of the factory, and within a concrete room protected by a thick bank-vault door. Just beyond the showroom of Griffin Armament products and 20th-century belt-fed machine guns, the vault encases historically significant firearms including suppressed pistols, sniper rifles, and carbines that inspire future product development and testing.

Demand for suppressors remains high, and Griffin Armament announced its Optimus 6 for 2025. Unique to this suppressor is that it features a serialized interface that is machined and attached to a 3D-printed extension containing an optimized flow-through core and endcap. 3D printing enables endless possibilities for engineers to move gasses within a can before they exit. Such

efficiencies mean that 3D suppressors can be shorter, smaller, quieter for the length, and lighter in weight. With the Optimus 6, if the 3D-printed component was ever damaged, Griffin Armament could replace the suppressor without having to replace the machined and serialized mounting interface. If suppressors/silencers are removed from the NFA, the Greens are going to have to increase their manufacturing footprint — again. 



Griffin Armament is a manufacturer of suppressors, firearms, and accessories in Wisconsin. New for 2025 is the Optimus 6, a low-backpressure 3D-printed can made of 17-4 stainless steel.



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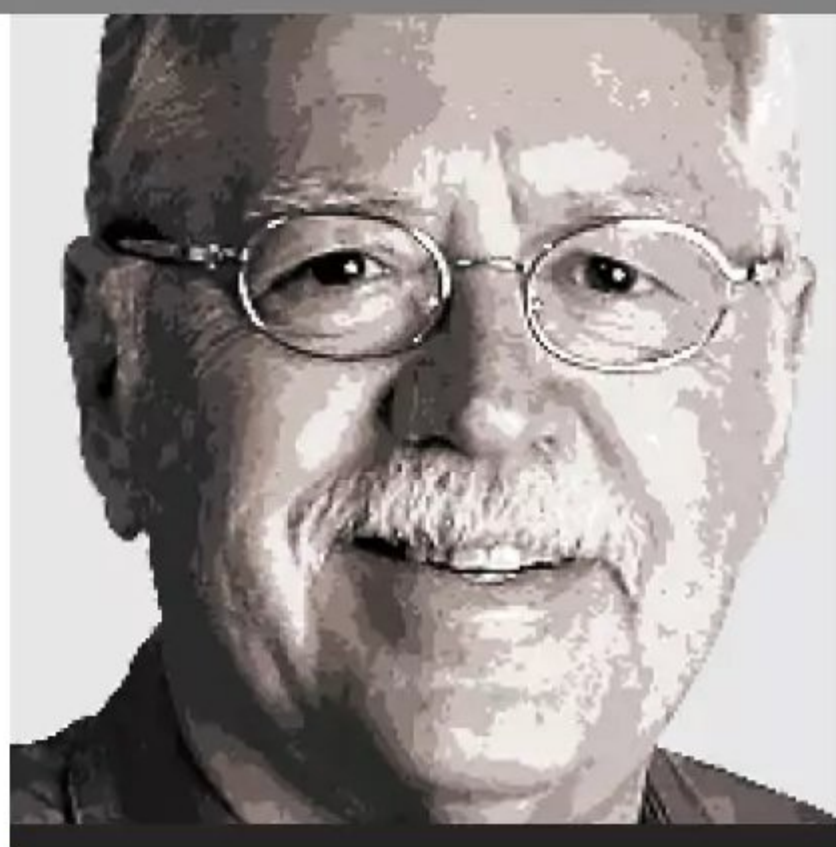
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*“Execution appears to be decent and restrained, however, exactly where it was done has me a bit mystified.”*

# IDENTIFICATION & VALUES



GARRY JAMES

GARRY.JAMES@OUTDOORS.G.COM



ENFIELD S.M.L.E. MK III, .303 BRITISH, <60%: \$750

## MARK III SMLE QUERY

**Q:** Please see the attached pictures of my 1915 BSA SMLE. I’ve owned this rifle for nearly 20 years and have always been fascinated by its many markings and apparent date stamps. The bore is not pristine, but I still have no problem ringing the small steel plate on the 200-yard range with it. One thing I’ve always been curious about is the story of this rifle’s buttstock. Though there are numerous forums, blogs and books available that readily discuss the meanings of the stamps and markings, I’ve never discovered anything discussing a stock in this configuration. As you can see, it appears to have been cut short, then repaired with a piece dovetailed back in. It’s nice solid work, but the grain direction of the added piece was not matched up with that of the existing one. The butt disc has also been removed and neatly filled in. Anything you can tell me about this buttstock, as well as any other interesting factoids about the rifle, in general, would be greatly appreciated.

D. P.  
Pennsylvania

**A:** During their lifetimes, many SMLEs have gone through rebuilding processes, both militarily and by home hobbyists. What I can determine from the photos of your Mk III, the rifle appears to have had a

long and varied service life. The workmanship bespeaks of arsenal refurbishing. Execution appears to be decent and restrained, however, exactly where it was done has me a bit mystified. In checking my

reference material, I cannot find a circled “W” or “M” similar to the one on the wrist. Perhaps one of Guns & Ammo’s readers can help us both out.

## RUSSIAN SHOTGUN ID

**Q:** An older gentleman at our local gun club would like to know if you can possibly identify his old double-barrel shotgun. Where was it made, and what could it possibly be worth?

J. P. S.  
Email

**A:** Your friend’s double-barrel shotgun was made at the Russian Tula factory. The triangular circle-“T” logos

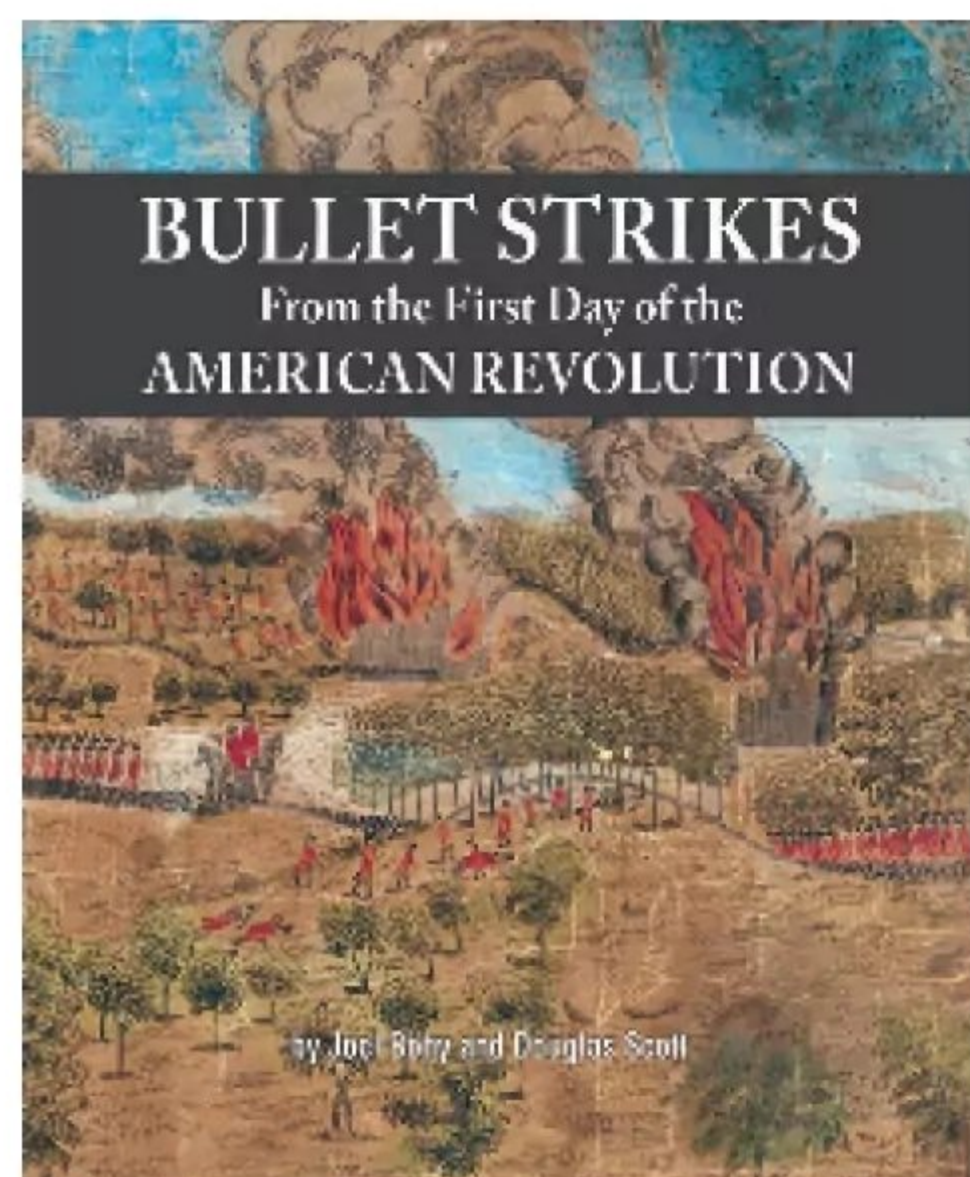


## AUCTION BLOCK

A wonderful example of a full-auto-only World War II British Lanchester Mk I submachine gun realized a respectable \$27,060, including premiums at the December 11, 2024, Morphy’s Auctions sale. Condition of the piece was exceptional. Dated 1942, this 9mm-caliber variant of the Bergmann MP18/MP29 systems features all proper period Sterling manufacturer’s markings and came with an original 50-round magazine, canvas cover and original sling. The bore is excellent, mechanics crisp, and the overall finish is fine. All-in-all, this is a superb specimen of a desirable SMG. For more information about this and future sales, visit Morphy Auctions at morphyauctions.com.







## RECOMMENDED READS

**“Bullet Strikes From the First Day of the American Revolution” by Joel Bohy and Douglas Scott; Mowbray Publishing, Woonsocket, RI, 2025; Softcover; 160 pages.** The 250th anniversary of the American Revolution is upon us. The great adventure began at Lexington Green, Massachusetts, on April 19, 1775, when Yankee colonists and British regulars first confronted one another. The initial event resulted in a series of affrays that would change the world forever. In their meticulously fashioned new book, “Bullet Strikes From the First Day of the American Revolution,” authors Joel Bohy and Douglas Scott forensically recreated details of the actions by examining extant bullet strikes on structures and objects at Lexington, Concord, and along the British retreat to Boston. Their endeavors, wonderfully researched and appropriately illustrated, include descriptions of weaponry, ammunition and bullet hits, abetted with careful shooting reconstructions, all of which offer the reader new insights into what likely happened on that fateful day. This reviewer was particularly impressed with information on varying firelock bore sizes and ammunition variances, along with contemporary ballistic details. “Bullet Strikes” is a fascinating study — one that holds the reader’s attention throughout.

This is an excellent forensic examination of one of the most important and far-reaching confrontations in history.

**\$35.99 (plus \$4.50 Shipping & Handling)**



U.S. M1 CARBINE, .30 CARBINE, <70%: \$525



on the barrels and Cyrillic letters on the innards of the action are dead giveaways. This gun was likely manufactured in the 1950s or '60s. Its value would be in the \$350 to \$450 range.

## MYSTERY M1 CARBINE

**Q:** I inherited M1 carbine serial number 964XXX from my dad several years ago. I think he probably bought it at a gun show in the '70s. It's in good condition and shoots great. It's very accurate. I would like to know when and where it was made, if it was a military issue, ever used in a war, and, of course, what the value of it would be. Any information you could give me would be appreciated.

**A:** It appears you have a refinished military-issue M1 Carbine. The serial number could have been used by a number of makers. The best way to determine the gun's origin would be to remove the dovetailed adjustable rear sight. The maker's name will be stamped on the rear of the receiver above the serial number. I'd value it from \$500 to \$640.

## DO-IT-YOURSELF DE LISLE?

**Q:** I just read your article in the January 2025 issue of Guns & Ammo about the De Lisle carbine. The original was made from a lot of rejected parts, but I imagine there aren't any rejected parts in the new ones. I remember something about an attempt to make a non-silenced version; a lookalike. That had to be at least 20 years ago or better. Then, someone was selling kits to make .45 ACP carbines from old Mauser actions, minus the action and silencer. There was even a .45 Winchester Magnum (WM) made with an M1 carbine and 15-round magazine, though it only held 10 rounds of the .45 WM. I hope this old firearms enthusiast has remembered some of this correctly.

**M. P. W.**  
Calumet City, Illinois

**A:** I must admit I'm not familiar with the older .45 ACP carbine conversion kits you are referring to, but a perusal of the internet turned up at least one modern firm, Rhineland Arms ([rhinelandarms.com](http://rhinelandarms.com)), which is offering Mauser .45 ACP kits. By the publishing time of this column, it should have De Lisle kits with dummy suppressors available. Rhineland products will be retailed

through Centerfire Systems (<https://centerfiresystems.com/45-acp-kits/>). I have not viewed its products personally. However, from what I can see online, they are intriguing.

## SABLE BABY REVOLVER

**Q:** I have a miniature revolver that I would like information on, such as the correct name, the year it was made, and possible value. I can supply several pictures. It has no trigger-guard. The trigger is forward, and it is a top-break DA/SA .22 short. All I have is that it is possibly a Sable Baby Model.

**H. O.**  
Email

**A:** These little Belgian .22 folding trigger revolvers seem to have been sold in the U.S. in some quantities in the 1950s. A check of my resources has failed to turn up the actual manufacturer of Sable Baby revolvers. Finishes were blue and nickel, with the latter seemingly the most common. Grips were plastic faux ivory. Current sales on Sable Babys run the gamut between \$100 and \$325. Values depend on condition and marketing. As yours appears to be in nice shape and has its original box, I'd put it in the \$250 to \$300 range. I found an old J.F.L. Galef &



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Son, Inc. advertisement for Sable Baby revolvers from several decades ago touting them as "The world's smallest and lightest .22 short revolver ever made!" The price was \$32, and the intended market was "for those excited by the new!" They are hardly "new." Similar revolvers were not uncommonly seen in Europe going back to the 1870s-'80s.

### P.38 ID

**Q:** My neighbor was a pilot in the U.S. Air Force stationed in Germany in the 1950s. While there, the Rod & Gun Club on base was selling a barrel full of Lugers, Walthers and Mausers for \$5 each! He bought several for his crew and kept a Walther P.38. After he passed away, his sons presented it to me. The pistol came with a holster and spare magazine. The magazines do not have serial numbers. What makes it different is that it has a nice blue finish, but military grips. Also, the Walther logo and other info on the left side of the slide were almost totally filed off and re-blued. The Walther logo is still visible, but "Waffenfabrik Walther Zella-Mehlis (Thur)" and the caliber below are barely visible. I am wondering if this was a commercial issue pressed into military service; why was it filed off? I am also wondering when it was manufactured. The takedown lever is of the newer ribbed type, and it has two "Eagle N" proofmarks. This puts it somewhere past April 1940. (I am thinking maybe 1941.) I would appreciate



WALTHER P.38, 9MM, <60%: \$325

it if you could give me an approximate value, even though it's likely adversely impacted by the filing!

H. J.

Email

**A:** Because this P.38 has been so heavily buffed and reworked, it is difficult to determine much about it. It appears to be assembled from a combination of military and civilian parts, but that's about as much as I can tell from your photos. As it sits, it has virtually no collector value. However, P.38s are great shooters, so assuming this one is in decent mechanical condition, at least it has that much going for it — plus the interesting story of its post-war history. I'd value it at \$275 to \$350.

### A PAIR OF ELABORATE 1873 WINCHESTERS

**Q:** I have a good friend who has two engraved Winchester Model 1873 rifles. One is a .22 and the other is in .44-40. We would like any information you could give us. The first pictures are of the .22 and the others are the .44-40.

J. S.

Email

**A:** Both rifles have been heavily reworked, refinished and renumbered. Even though the historical value has been compromised, the workmanship and engraving has been nicely done, though the case-hardening colors on the frames seem a bit too vivid, reminding me of similar work I have seen done using a blowtorch. I'm inclined to think their basic configurations haven't been altered all that much. However, since the original serial numbers have been effaced, there's no way we can get any original factory information on them. Still, the guns have eye appeal. I ran them by a couple of dealers familiar with these types of guns and they both reckoned the rifles to be worth around \$1,850 to \$2,250 each, assuming they have good bores and are mechanically sound.

### DRILL PURPOSE P.14 "ENFIELD"

**Q:** I'm hoping you can give me information about my

British .303 rifle. When I purchased it in 1990 at a Connecticut gun store, they told me this was a practice rifle due to the red-and-white stripes painted on the side and "DP" stamped on it. Many of the forums that talk about a Drill Purpose British .303 mention that the rifles were made to never be fired again for various reasons. However, I have shot many rounds through mine before I knew this information. Can you tell me why mine would still be able to fire?

D. L.

Email

**A:** I have seen some Pattern 1914 "Enfields" like yours that are able to fire live ammunition. Generally, drill purpose rifles have been reworked and altered to make them unserviceable, though later rebuilds using some DP parts are around. I would not recommend firing live ammunition in any rifle with "DP" markings. 



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## THE CARRY RIG

*C&G Holsters releases a belt-mounted Kydex system.*

C&G Holsters Trinity Belt Mounted Kydex Holster is a line of custom holsters available in many colors and with different attachment options. A rotating hood (shown) can be added to the holster for Level II retention. **\$100**



## C&G TRINITY

"TRINITY" describes the types of shooting for those interested in C&G Holsters' latest rig: Sport shooters, tactical, and professionals. Trinity is also an acknowledgement of the faith held by C&G Holsters founder Chris Burns — "Father, Son, and Holy Spirit." Three components make the outside-the-waistband (OWB) Trinity — the Kydex holster, a rotating hood, and the belt-mounted attachment system — and each can be custom configured.

If you visit [candgholsters.com](http://candgholsters.com), a list of drop-down menus offers numerous options. The Trinity can be ordered with either a right- or left-hand orientation, and the list of firearms supported include popular models from Glock, SIG Sauer, Springfield Armory and Staccato. Guns & Ammo was sent samples for the Glock 19 and Springfield Armory Echelon for this evaluation. Before considering the menu options, note that the Trinity starts at "\$69.99." There is no additional charge for black, but other colors

and camouflage patterns will increase the cost between \$6 and \$20. There is no additional charge for a short, medium or full-size sweatguard, but the medium is standard. There is also the option to accommodate threaded barrel lengths for no additional charge.

The Trinity can be upgraded with Level II retention by selecting "Yes" to the optional rotating hood (\$30), which was provided with G&A's samples. C&G designed the hood to meet IDPA Level II holster requirements, so it's legal for competition. A push-button lever is used to release the spring-loaded hood forward, neatly clearing the slide and optics before the draw. During testing, the hood cleared all red-dot optics.





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Despite its appearance, the serrated hood-release button is not actually a "button" that you push with your thumb. Most uniformed law enforcement whom are issued Safariland SLS holsters will need to consider time to relearn using this lever before wearing the Trinity on duty. The "button" on the Trinity functions more like a rotating lever that is most easily drawn to the rear with the thumb to release the hood. Once the hood is released, slide your thumb down to establish a full grip, and then draw. It is important to establish a full grip before drawing so the pistol doesn't have to be adjusted in the hands while presenting it to the target. I noted that draw times were slower than drawing the same pistol from an SLS-equipped holster due to the release system, which needs to be considered. I contacted Burns about this concern and was assured that the design is being reviewed.

The belt-mount assembly is attached to the holster



Blade-Tech's Tek-Lok belt-attachment was selected for evaluation, but other attachment options are available including DOTS, QLS and RTI. To thumb-release the hood, pull and rotate the lever rearward.

body with longer screws and spacers. The Trinity is standard with the Bladeteck Tek-Lok belt attachment, which fits up to a 2¼-inch belt and is MOLLE compatible. A DOTS belt attachment is also offered for up to 2-inch belts at no additional charge. A QLS Fork (\$15) or Fork and Receiver (\$30) are available, as is a Paddle (\$15), RTI Hanger (\$15), Tek-Mount 360 Insert Disk (\$7) or Insert Disk and Receiver (\$30). A Duty Drop and Offset set-up (\$21) is

yet another option.

As described, the Trinity holster is optic ready. The design wraps over the slide in front of the barrel hood, and the holster is flared and chamfered to accommodate wide adapter plates. During Guns & Ammo's 60-day evaluation, one sample was tested with a Springfield Armory Echelon with a Leupold DeltaPoint Pro, and a second holster carried a Glock 19 Gen 5 MOS with an Aimpoint ACRO P-2. The rotating hood cleared both optics flawlessly.

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| C&G HOLSTERS TRINITY          |                                                                     |
|-------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------|
| MATERIALS                     | Kydex (holster), polymer (hood, belt mount assy.), steel (hardware) |
| CARRY TYPE                    | Outside the waistband (OWB)                                         |
| RETENTION TYPE                | Level 2; friction fit (primary), rotating hood (secondary)          |
| ADJUSTABILITY                 | Yes                                                                 |
| MSRP                          | \$100 (tested)                                                      |
| HANDGUN FIT                   | Glock, SIG Sauer P320, Springfield Armory Echelon, Staccato         |
| ACCESSORY RAIL ACCOMMODATIONS | No                                                                  |
| POSITIONS TO CARRY            | OWB; 3 o'clock, right hand (tested)                                 |
| AVERAGE TIME TO ATTACH        | 1 minute, 20 seconds; up to 2.25-inch-wide belts                    |
| COMFORT RATING                | 5/5                                                                 |
| CONCEALMENT CLOTHING          | N/A                                                                 |
| AVERAGE DRAW-TO-FIRE TIME     | 1.65 seconds                                                        |
| MANUFACTURER                  | C&G Holsters, 724-858-2856, candgholsters.com                       |

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

60-DAY CARRY

The Trinity holster is molded to accept a tall, suppressor-height front sight, and features two spring-powered tension adjustment screws in front of the triggerguard and beneath the dustcover. Burns indicated that a light-bearing version is being developed, but only non-light-bearing holster configurations were available at the time of this review.

The engineering, quality of construction and materials are excellent. Favorable notes while testing the Trinity were that the pistol centered itself as it was holstered, and

was lighter than many Safariland SLS, QLS and G-Code belt rigs. If you wear an OWB holster for duty or defense of others, I recommend range time and performing hundreds of dryfire draws to ensure operating the hood-release lever is second nature. (Don't think of it as a push-button!) Once mastered, the Trinity is a more affordable and customizable alternative to existing Level II holsters. 

— E. Poole



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## Avient Composite Heat Release Technology



RICHARD NANCE

# KEEPING IT COOL

**WHEN A RIFLE BARREL HEATS UP**, accuracy suffers. That's because heat causes expansion, which leads to inconsistencies in bullet velocity. Avient Corporation's patent-pending multi-layer carbon fiber and ceramic composite technology utilizes thermal inertia to transfer heat from the bore. The result is a cooler and more accurate barrel.

Thermal conductivity has typically been the metric applied when a manufacturer selects a material for managing heat. Although thermal conductivity measures heat absorption, it does not account for heat dissipation. Thermal inertia, on the other hand, measures how quickly a material returns to ambient temperature after heating. Avient's deep understanding of composites and thermal management led to Avient's Composite Heat Release technology.

Avient's ceramic middle layer is designed to reduce thermal inertia and quickly transfer heat from the steel bore. Composite Heat Release technology makes a barrel heat up more slowly while shedding it quicker to cool down than all-steel, stainless steel, or carbon-wrapped steel and stainless barrels.

The ceramic- and carbon-fiber-layered steel barrel is also lighter than a solid steel barrel. All things being equal, a lighter barrel makes for a wieldier rifle. Of course, the

problem with a lightweight barrel is that it heats up faster than a heavier barrel due to differences in mass. Lighter barrels also expand more when subject to heat. The expansion can cause inconsistencies in velocity and harmonics, further hindering accuracy and trajectory. A cooler barrel is stiffer, meaning that it has less vibration and movement to negatively affect a bullet's flight.

As a proving ground, Avient Outdoor High Performance Business Manager Jesse Baird has used Composite Heat Release technology to win four Global Benchrest Association competitions. The competition entails firing five-shot groups at 1,000 yards. The fact that Baird's 8-pound hunting rifle outperformed much heavier competition rifles is a testament to the performance of Avient's Composite Heat Release technology. The half-MOA accuracy Baird achieves with his rifle also speaks to his talents, of course.

Currently, Avient is working with firearm manufacturers who supply them with internal steel barrel bores made to Sporting Arms & Ammunition Manufacturers' Institute (SAAMI) standards. Avient then applies the ceramic and carbon fiber technology using its proprietary binding process.

OEM partnerships with Avient are in the works. I expect some to be announced soon. In the meantime,

Thunder Valley Precision ([thundervalleyprecision.com](http://thundervalleyprecision.com)) produces custom firearms featuring Avient's Composite Heat Release technology. Coincidentally, Thunder Valley Precision's owner-operator, Tom Sarver, happens to be a multiple world-record holder at 1,000 yards and 1 mile.

Visit [avient.com/shooting-sports](http://avient.com/shooting-sports) to learn more.

Patent-pending Composite Heat Release technology comes from Avient. A steel barrel with enough metal to support the pressure is given a ceramic layer to extract heat from the steel core. The outer layer is a carbon-fiber composite sleeve that covers the ceramic layer and gives the barrel its profile. The result is a cooler and stiffer barrel. These barrels also offer the benefits of being lightweight. The technology is available through partnered firearms manufacturers such as Thunder Valley Precision ([thundervalleyprecision.com](http://thundervalleyprecision.com)).







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*Leapers Integrix 6-36x56mm*

TOM BECKSTRAND

## TAKING THE LEAP

**I SPENT SOME TIME** traveling recently and toured an optics manufacturer that you've likely never heard about. Integrix is an optics company owned by Leapers (leapers.com) with manufacturing based in Michigan and Taiwan. Guns & Ammo sent me to Taiwan in August 2024 to observe the development of its newest scope, the Integrix 6-36x56mm. A number of details stood out during this trip, which bodes well for American riflemen.

Optics manufacturing is changing and improving faster than rifle manufacturing, from my perspective. Glass elements that used to be prohibitively expensive are within financial reach for many thanks to economies of scale. The influx of new rifle shooters and the money they've spent has allowed for the cost of these premium materials to come down. The growth in the consumer base has also fueled competition among optics manufacturers, improving optics and mechanics.

What makes Integrix unique is its ability to design and manufacture. The only other American optics company that can make this claim is Leupold. The new 6-36x56mm scope is unique to Integrix, having an optical design completed by an optical engineering firm explicitly for them. It is not a design purchased from one of the big Asian manufacturers. While it's not uncommon for scope enthusiasts to prognosticate about the lineage of a scope, this one is unlike any other.

Integrix didn't decide to pay for their own optical engineering for fun. I spoke with David Ding, owner, and asked him about this decision.

"I wanted to build a high-power scope that is practical and enjoyable," Ding said.

Ding came up with three priorities and then put people to work. The first priority was to offer high performance across the full magnification range. It's not uncommon for high-power scopes to become finicky at the top end. Images can darken, and more commonly it can become hard to maintain a full field of view because the eye box is tight. Ding made these disqualifying traits for Integrix, ones that would not be tolerated.

The second priority was to create the widest field of view possible, a feature that is frequently undervalued. A large field of view means the rifle doesn't have to be placed in as precise an orientation towards the target to allow the shooter to still find it through the scope. When combining a large field of view with a forgiving eye box, the rifleman also has a better chance of seeing where a shot lands because the scope allows the shooter to see even as the rifle recoils.

Another top priority was resolution. Integrix understands that it doesn't require much of a scope to see targets in broad daylight at the range.

However, difficult optical conditions such as objects in shadows or concealed targets on overcast days represent tough scenarios that require excellent contrast and resolution. To this end, Integrix uses premium lenses. As much as we'd all like an amazing scope for a few hundred dollars, it'll never happen because the tolerances and composition to which premium lenses have to be held require robust manufacturing capability that only Schott and Ohara can maintain.

With this list of priorities, most optics companies would start shopping for an optical design that best fit the goal, and then look for a manufacturing facility that could make it with their desired tweaks. Integrix, instead, chose to have its optical designer — whom has been doing the job for decades at a high level — lay out a scope suited to Integrix's manufacturing capability. By first doing a detailed factory assessment of how the mechanical aspects of the scope would be made, the optical engineering team created a prescription ideally made for it. Such close collaboration between the optical and mechanical components of the scope almost never happens. It's also a great way to create a high-performance scope that is efficient and cost-effective because there is no wasted effort.

The path to scope production for Integrix was only possible because of the company ownership. David and Tina Ding own Leapers and Integrix. They are committed







Parallax is adjustable to 10 yards and beyond 1,000 yards. This scope is not only useful on long-range rifles, but also to precision rimfires.



Standard set-screws secure the knurled turret cap. Once zeroed, it can be removed and replaced so that the "0" mark represents the actual zero.



The illuminated reticle is powered by a CR2032 battery under the cap of the parallax turret.



The premium glass used in Integrix optics are sourced from Schott and Ohara.



The ocular adjustment ring shares the knurling style with the turrets, while the power ring features an integral throw lever.



Each Integrix 6-36X scope includes a sunshade that attaches to the 56mm objective bell. Sunshades cut glare in bright daylight and guard the lens during wet weather.

to building products their consumers desire. Both David and Tina had parents that fled communist China to Taiwan after World War II, and both were students at Taiwan's Service Academy where they met. Again, they both served in Taiwan's police force. David is an avid rifleman and decided to start a company providing goods to the firearms industry. Leapers came first. In addition to its own product line, Leapers performs a lot of original equipment manufacturing (OEM) for many of the U.S. optics industry's best-known brands.

After decades of learning the industry and building

an enviable manufacturing capability with redundancy in Taiwan and Michigan, Integrix started making scopes a few years ago. The 6-36x56mm is new for 2025, and it is exceptional. The amount of engineering that went into building it — and the amount of testing and verification that it saw prior to production — exceeds the standards of many scope companies. As part of the verification process, Integrix built multiple versions and tested each against its competitors to assess performance. I've seen the instrumentation and watched the tests. I didn't see any 6-36x56mm riflescope beat this one consistently for



resolution or contrast. It's important to note that resolution testing consists of multiple iterations across the entire field of view, and off-axis viewing was also assessed. Some of the competitor's scopes cost twice as much, yet the Integrrix optic beat most of them. The performance that comes from the Integrrix 6-36x56mm scope is only possible because of the bespoke optical design that benefits from the company's manufacturing capability and tolerance-holding.

As of this writing, I still need to test this scope for lateral impact durability and tracking, but I left Taiwan impressed with its optical performance. In addition to great resolution and contrast, it has an excellent field of view and was a comfortable scope to sit behind. As common for pre-

mium optics in this magnification range, it offers 92-percent light transmission through the entire system — not just one lens — and it has a waterproof rating of IPX7 (i.e., 3 feet of water for 30 minutes). Expected availability of the Leapers Integrrix 6-36x56mm was March 31, 2025.

Integrrix is a new name in the premium optics world, but the scopes they produce will exceed expectations. There is no excessive overhead or board members trying to boost stock prices. Integrrix runs lean at the top and has leadership committed to making the excellent optics while keeping them as affordable as possible. **G&A**



Knurling on the Integrrix 6-36X is tactile, providing precise adjustment feedback. When zeroed, the cap can be set accordingly.



The Integrrix 6-36X is initially available with either the M1 or M2 MRAD reticles, both a mil-based design.

| LEAPERS<br>INTEGRIX 6-36X56MM |                                       |
|-------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| MAGNIFICATION                 | 6-36X                                 |
| OBJECTIVE                     | 56mm                                  |
| TUBE DIAMETER                 | 34mm                                  |
| ELEVATION<br>ADJUSTMENT       | .1 mil per click                      |
| WINDAGE ADJ.                  | .1 mil per click                      |
| RETICLE                       | M1 MRAD, M2 MRAD                      |
| LENGTH                        | 15.1 in.                              |
| WEIGHT                        | 39.5 oz.                              |
| EYE RELIEF                    | 3.54 in.                              |
| MSRP                          | \$2,900                               |
| MANUFACTURER                  | Leapers, 734-542-1500,<br>leapers.com |



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|---------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------|
| CALIBER                         | 9mm                                                           |
| THREAD PITCH                    | ½x28 and M13.5x1LH                                            |
| LENGTH                          | 4.1 in.                                                       |
| DIAMETER                        | 1.3 in.                                                       |
| WEIGHT                          | 2.7 oz.                                                       |
| MATERIALS                       | Titanium                                                      |
| FINISH                          | Cerakote, black                                               |
| MSRP                            | \$699                                                         |
| MANUFACTURER                    | Banish Suppressors,<br>877-904-5292,<br>banishsuppressors.com |

BANISH THE BOOSTER

**WEIGHING ONLY 2.7 OUNCES** and measuring only 4.1 inches in length, the Silencer Central Banish 9K suppressor may be small, but it's a really big deal. The Banish 9K is constructed of 100-percent high-strength, lightweight titanium using an additive manufacturing process commonly known as 3D metal printing. This process allows the production of complex parts by fusing layers of metal powder with a laser, resulting in a final solid shape otherwise impossible to manufacture using traditional CNC-machining or investment casting. Exotic high-performance metals such as Inconel, titanium, stainless steel and cobalt chrome are commonly used in the process. Banish has already had great success with its 3D-printed Speed-K 5.56mm in titanium and Inconel, and the lessons learned were being applied to the Banish 9K.

Taking advantage of 3D printing technology and clever engineering, the Banish 9K has an incredibly strong titanium unibody design composed of eight conical-style baffles featuring rows of U-shaped notches, ending with an

endcap. The one-piece structure is robust and reinforced in all critical areas and is rated for limited full-auto use with 9mm supersonic and .300 Blackout subsonic ammunition. A tapered rear section houses a beautifully machined

direct-thread interface in a choice of either ½x28 or 13.5x1LH threads. The 9K's small 1.3-inch diameter allows the use of most factory pistol sights and all slide-mounted mini-red dot sights. Molded into the design's exterior is the trademark twist pattern that not only looks nice, but it also helps with tightening and loosening the suppressor on the firearm.

A keen-eye will notice that there is no booster assembly in our testing. The Banish 9K is so lightweight, it has no need for a booster (also known as a Nielsen Device). Boosters are traditionally required for use with autoloading pistols with tip-up barrel designs to aid in the cycling of the action. Boosters are relatively big and heavy, adding around 2¼ inches of length and can easily weigh more than an entire Banish 9K. Boosters also require regular maintenance to function properly,





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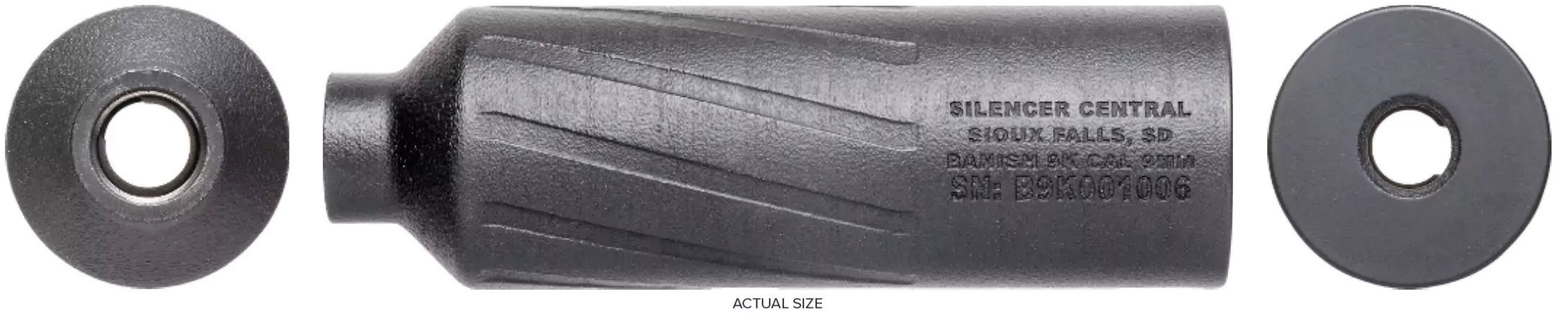
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since they get blasted with carbon and unburnt powder. If left unchecked, they quickly stop doing the job correctly. Furthermore, changing a traditional 9mm suppressor from a pistol to a sub-gun, or pistol caliber carbine (PCC) usually requires the removal of the booster assembly and the installation of a direct-thread adapter. It can be a pain, often requiring special tools, which will get filthy in the process. In contrast, a 1/2x28-inch threaded Banish 9K can quickly be swapped between .380, 5.7x28mm, 9mm and subsonic .300 Blackout ammo for firearms with a 1/2x28-inch thread pattern. No tools are required and no filthy hands. Users can simply unthread it and screw it onto another firearm. In my opinion, the absence of a booster might be the Banish 9K's best attribute.

Not only is the Banish 9K lightweight and strong, it's one of the shortest suppressors ever marketed. Incidentally, the "K" is a universal firearms abbreviation for "kurtz," or "short" in German. There are many benefits to a short suppressor, mainly maneuverability. Most 9mm pistol suppressors on the market are 6- to 8-inches long. That's a big object to swing around at the end of any firearm. Many 9mm suppressors are modular and can be taken down near the midsection and reconfigured as a shorter

version. While this is a good feature, if you really need a shorter suppressor, it's at the cost of several baffles and quite a few decibels. The Banish 9K fits eight baffles in 4.1 inches, making it an excellent choice for a nightstand pistol or PCC. You'll still want hearing protection for regular training, though.

A short suppressor usually means a loud one, but that's not the case with this suppressor. The Banish 9K's eight notched baffles are optimally designed to create turbulence, slowing gasses down and helping reduce sound to a published 132 decibels. That's a sound reduction of 32 decibels for most 9mm ammunition — amazing for some-

thing so small. There might be quieter 9mm suppressors out there, but I'm aware of nothing that comes close to the 9K's size and simplicity.

SHOOTING IMPRESSIONS

I eagerly headed to a gun club with a host of applicable firearms, including a Walther P-22, a Kimber R7 Mako Tactical, an HK SP5K, a Ruger LC Charger in 5.7x28mm and a SIG Sauer Rattler in .300 Blackout.

My objective was to get a good feel for reliability and sound reduction, and I tested several different types of ammo with each firearm. I also setup a Garmin Xero C1 chronograph to see what affect the suppressor had on bullet speed, if any. I didn't do any formal sound metering as I wanted to subjectively observe and hear, to my ear, how each firearm acted suppressed. I continued to be impressed with how incredibly light the 2.7-ounce 9K was. To give you an idea of how lightweight that is, a couple of AA batteries weigh about the same.

First up was the Walther P-22, but I wouldn't recommend regularly running rimfires through a non-serviceable suppressor. However, I was curious and shot a couple mags of 40-grain CCI Quiet 22 and Remington Subsonic. Since the barrel in a P-22 doesn't tilt, I expected everything to run fine suppressed. It did. Both types of ammo cycled and ran without a glitch. As expected, both were super quiet. If you do shoot a lot of dirty rimfire ammo, the 9K can be



Large pistol suppressors such as the Banish 45 (above, top) require a booster (middle) to aid in cycling. The Banish 9K does not require a booster for autos to operate, yet its sound reduction is near 26 dB.



10

**SUBCOMPACCURACY**

10



Subcompact. Optics ready. Flat-face trigger with extra-short reset. Crowned barrel. Ambi-slide releases. Ambi-mag releases. Slide-top anti-glare serrations. Forward and rear grip serrations. Oversize trigger guard. Metal sights. Light rail. Textured control points. \$469 MSRP. Tack-driving standard. RM1S.

 ROST MARTIN



cleaned by dropping it in an ultrasonic bath with a cleaner of your choice, then blowing it out with compressed air.

Next, I moved up to 9mm and put the can on the Kimber R7 Mako. The compact Mako makes an excellent suppressor host. Since the ejection port is on the side, the front lens on a red-dot optic stays clear of the extra back blast caused by most suppressors. I started soft with some handloaded 124-grain subsonic ammo tailored to run at about 900 feet per second (fps). They ran perfectly. Then, I switched to some UMC 124-grain FMJ ammo and worked my way up to a couple mags of 124-grain Federal Personal Defense HST. I didn't experience a single hiccup. Point of impact shift wasn't noticeable at 15 yards, probably because the pistol didn't know the suppressor was there. Out of curiosity, I added a little wire-pulling gel so that I could hear how it ran "wet": Again, not a single problem. I would say the 9K is definitely hearing-safe when run wet.

When I got done with the Kimber, I turned to the HK SP5K. The barrel threads on the HK run long, so I put an eighth-inch threaded spacer on first to give the 9K some breathing room. I ran a couple mags of my homegrown 124-grain subsonics into tight little groups, as well as the rest of the UMC ammo that I brought. As expected, it was impressively quiet, short, and it ranked high on the cool-scale. Hands-down, it was my favorite setup of the day.

Once I got done with the HK, I headed to the

outdoor rifle range where I attached the 9K to a Ruger LC Charger in 5.7x28mm. The 2.7-ounce suppressor was unnoticeable on the end of the LC Charger. The sound-reduction definitely put a smile on my face. While I couldn't feel a difference, the look was balanced.

In keeping with the full regime of calibers applicable with the 9K, I then attached it to a SIG Sauer Rattler in .300 Blackout. Unsuppressed, the Rattler's 5.5-inch muzzleblast is hard to tame, and I had a hard time getting my head around the little suppressor holding up. I brought along a couple boxes of Hornady's excellent 190-grain Sub-X Subsonic ammo, as well as a box of Freedom Munition's HUSH Subsonic 220-grain HPBT for some quiet plinking. The 9K did a better job than expected. The fact that the 9K only protruded from the handguard about a half inch was pretty nice, too. Of course, I had to put on a 5/8x24 to 1/2x28 thread adapter in order to mount the 9K, but it worked great and brought the sound down nicely.

As for the velocities, a suppressor typically would give you a bump in velocity sometimes as much as 20 to 30 fps. The 9K bumped velocities by around 10 to 13 fps across the board. This helped the auto-loading function when using lower-power subsonic loads. Would I recommend it? Absolutely. The little Banish 9K will leave you, too, with a big smile on your face. 

— M. Fingar



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# STEALTH HUNTER

**SMITH & WESSON** INTRODUCES PISTOL CALIBERS AND MODERN TREATMENTS TO ITS **MODEL 1854** LEVER-ACTION.

BY TOM BECKSTRAND | PHOTOS BY MARK FINGAR







The Model 1854 features a tomb-stone-style bolt face with extended extractor and slot on the opposite side to allow for the ejector. The bottom is ramped for reliable feeding from the lifter.



Cartridges are loaded through the gate beneath the ejection port and fed into the chamber as the lever assembly is racked. The status of the magazine is visible through the loading gate.

MODEL 1854 STEALTH HUNTER

|                |                                                     |
|----------------|-----------------------------------------------------|
| TYPE           | Lever-action, side eject                            |
| CARTRIDGE      | .357 Magnum, .44 Magnum .45 Colt (tested)           |
| CAPACITY       | 8+1 rds.                                            |
| BARREL         | 16.3 in., threaded                                  |
| LENGTH         | 33.25 in.                                           |
| WEIGHT         | 6 lbs., 4 oz.                                       |
| STOCK          | Polymer                                             |
| GRIP           | Textured                                            |
| LENGTH OF PULL | 13.35 in.                                           |
| FINISH         | Armornite (steel)                                   |
| SIGHTS         | Hi-Viz fiber-optic (front), ghost ring, adj. (rear) |
| TRIGGER        | 3 lbs., 9 oz. (tested)                              |
| SAFETY         | Crossbolt, two position                             |
| MSRP           | \$1,399                                             |
| MANUFACTURER   | Smith & Wesson, 800-331-0852, smith-wesson.com      |

**SMITH & WESSON** shocked many rifle nerds when it trotted out the Model 1854 lever-action rifle for the April 2024 issue of Guns & Ammo. It is a handy gun with all the features most riflemen look for: A short threaded barrel, optics-mounting options, great sights, and an excellent trigger. However, the feature that stood out the most to me — and that gets almost no discussion — is the receiver design. Smith & Wesson packed all of the strength of the Marlin 1895/336 into an action slightly smaller than the Marlin 1894. No small lever-action receiver is better-suited for hot-rodding than the S&W Model 1854.

**TINY, BUT MIGHTY.** Back in the day when lever-guns were new, the carbine concept was developed alongside advancements in ammunition. One goal was to accommodate new “smokeless” powder cartridges that operate at much higher pressures to make higher velocities. The design of the Model 1854 traces back to Marlin’s Model 1889. It was the first side-eject lever-action rifle,

and it fit traditional rifle cartridges of the day. It also had a square bolt with a corresponding cut into the side of the receiver. The 1889 begat the 1893, with a slightly longer receiver, a stronger bolt and a two-piece firing pin that prevented out-of-battery fire. The 1893 then begat the 1894, it being a miniaturized 1893 to feed pistol cartridges. Marlin continued to improve the 1893 to accommodate higher pressure rifle cartridges, making slight changes in design before releasing the Model 1936, then the Model 36, and the Model 336 that I grew up with. The Model 336 was Marlin’s most advanced and strongest lever-action produced. It was easily recognizable by its round bolt and enclosed

receiver, other than the ejection port and loading gate. This history matters because the Model 1854 is much like a miniaturized 336. As far as pistol-caliber lever-action carbines are concerned, the 1854 gets my nod as the strongest. I’ll double-down on the “strongest pistol-caliber levergun” statement by adding that the 1854’s receiver is made using stainless-steel forgings. Combining the round bolt with massive



The machined aluminum forend is well ventilated with M-Lok slots available on each side. The handguard also features a step-down taper near the center for comfortable handling.





The bolt assembly can be accessed by unscrewing a single fastener and removing the forged lever. The steel receiver, lever and small parts are finished in Armornite.

The Model 1854 Stealth Hunter's barrel is threaded  $1\frac{1}{16} \times 24$  and protected by a cap. A suppressor can be threaded on such as the .460-caliber Banish 46 V2 used during testing. **\$1,299**

lug engagement at the bolt's underside with a forged-steel receiver means the 1854 can handle pressure. The highest-pressure cartridge initially offered in the Model 1854 was the .44 Remington Magnum, having a maximum pressure of 36,000 pounds per square inch (psi), so it's good to that level. Interestingly enough, Hornady conducted extensive high-pressure tests with the Marlin 336 when it developed the .308 Marlin Express (ME) cartridge. G&A's Dave Emary was Hornady's head ballistician at the time, and he told me that the 336 could handle pressures up to 47,000 psi before extraction got sticky. It backed the maximum pressure to 46,500 psi for the .308 ME and called it good. I would always encourage readers to abide by loading manuals for safe handloading procedures, but design and material selection of the Model 1854 show promise for those interested in exploring the upper limits of ballistic performance from pistol-caliber lever actions.

Two other features of the Model 1854 that I love don't get much coverage: The two-piece firing pin and the cartridge carrier that isn't too fussy about cartridge length. The two pieces of

the firing pin only align when the locking lug is completely closed and supporting the rear-most piece of the firing pin, like the Marlin's. It ensures the rifle cannot fire unless the action is closed. As cartridge pressure climbs out of the low 10,000s pounds-per-square-inch (psi) for most factory .45 Colt ammunition, and into the 30,000-pound range (or higher) of factory .44 Magnum ammo, ensuring the action is completely closed before firing becomes a high priority. A partially closed action could allow the case to rupture, blowing gas and debris back to the shooter.

The second aspect of the 1854 receiver that merits discussion is the cartridge carrier. Marlin's (and now S&W's carrier) has always been able to accommodate cartridges of various lengths as long as rounds don't exceed SAAMI maximum overall length (OAL). While less important in rifles chambered for the .45 Colt, such as the Stealth Hunter featured in this review, it is a big deal in rifles chambered in .44 Magnum. Those 1854s can fire .44 Magnum, .44 Special and — theoretically — .44 Russian.

Even with the flexibility in cartridge length







The lever locks the action when closed, and prevents it from firing when unlocked. The trigger face is flat with a subtle hook.



The magazine tube can be removed from the front by rotating the knurled knob counter-clockwise and pulling it out the front. This means that users don't have to cycle and load the chamber to unload.



Underneath the receiver, behind the action screw, is a small metal tab. Press it forward to engage the magazine cutoff.



An extended and serrated thumb-lever is included. It can be attached to the serrated hammer spur for right- or left-hand use. It helps to manually cock the hammer when a scope is mounted.

offered by 1854s chambered in .44 Magnum, I still prefer the new-for-2025 1854 Stealth Hunter chambered in .45 Colt. There are fewer factory offerings in .45 Colt, but any handloader can get more performance out of a .45 Colt than a .44 Magnum. Before anyone gets too worked up, my goal is not to trash the .44 Magnum. It is a fine cartridge that is readily available. It's just that math and experience prove the .45 Colt can offer handloaders significant performance gains versus the .44. Nowhere are those gains better realized than in a lever-action rifle such as the Model 1854.

The .44 Magnum has a diameter of .429 inch compared to the .45 Colt's .452 inch. The case diameter of the .44 Magnum is .457 inch, compared to the Colt's .480 inch. When loaded to the same pressure, the .45 Colt will drive a bullet of the same weight much faster than the .44 Magnum. This article doesn't have enough space available to delve into an argument with detail, but I encourage readers interested in the topic to Google "Ross Seyfried .45 Colt" and start reading. Seyfried is a Guns & Ammo alumnus who ran this topic to ground decades ago. (Just to whet your appetite, he was killing Cape Buffalo with a .45 Colt at a time when parachute pants were in style.)

## GOOD MANNERS

Spending time at the range with the new Stealth Hunter showed the little carbine has excellent manners. Aluminum forends are popular on lever guns because they accept accessories that were once problematic to attach: Cartridge holders, bipods and forend lights such as the SureFire Turbo Scout Pro (\$409, [surefire.com](http://surefire.com)) that I use are now feasible on a lever-gun's forend. However, most of these aluminum handguards are "squarish" extrusions that feel clunky and more cumbersome than I'd prefer. The Stealth Hunter's handguard is radiused so that it sits comfortably in the hand and becomes slenderer towards the muzzle. It feels like a forend instead of a block of perforated aluminum.

Lever-actions rifles are not equal in terms of maintenance. Here, the Model 1854 shines. Remove the screw holding the lever in place, and the lever pulls out the bottom of the receiver. Hold the hammer down and the bolt slides out the back of the receiver allowing a straight shot down the bore with a cleaning rod. Use some needle-nose pliers to lift the ejector out through the ejection port, if desired. This is as far as routine maintenance should require. Occasional detailed maintenance is also a breeze. Remove one screw to get the stock off, and the hammer spring and clip come out.





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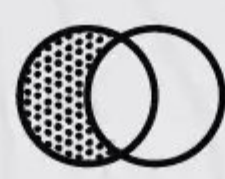
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Removing two more screws allow the receiver's lower plate to come out with the trigger, and the hammer can be pulled free. One more screw and the locking block and cartridge carrier are removed. The only time I'd take the rifle down this far, though, is if it fell into a river and I wanted to clean out all the sand and moisture. This is as easy as detailed disassembly gets for any lever-action rifle.

Unusual for the Model 1854, though, is the combination of a loading gate in the side of the receiver along with a removable tubular magazine. The rifle can only be loaded through the gate in the receiver, however, the removeable tube allows the rifle to be unloaded without running ammunition through the action. It's easy to remove the forend and magazine so that only a barreled receiver remains. There is no nook or cranny of the Model 1854 that is not available for cleaning and inspection when disassembled this far.

Other notable features are the threaded muzzle, Hi-Viz sights and extended Picatinny rail along the top of the receiver. The .357 Magnum version features a muzzle with 5/8x24 threads, while the .44 and .45 muzzles are threaded 11/16x24. Just about any .45-caliber handgun suppressor can be made to thread on the barrel of G&A's sample. (We tested it with a new Banish 46-V2.) Above it, the Hi-Viz front sight is a yellow/green fiber optic that does well in bright and low light. At the back is an optic rail with a ghost-ring aperture.

AT THE RANGE

Time with the Model 1854 Stealth Hunter proved that



PERFORMANCE

| LOAD                                 | VEL.<br>(FPS) | ES | SD   | BEST<br>GROUP<br>(IN.) | AVG.<br>GROUP<br>(IN.) |
|--------------------------------------|---------------|----|------|------------------------|------------------------|
| Blazer 200-gr. JHP                   | 1,121         | 39 | 12.5 | 1.33                   | 2.04                   |
| Hornady LeveRevolution 225-gr. FTX   | 1,056         | 45 | 13.1 | 2.18                   | 2.65                   |
| Hornady Critical Defense 185-gr. FTX | 1,374         | 49 | 15.4 | 2.3                    | 3.15                   |

Notes: Accuracy is the average of three five-shot groups at 100 yards from a rest. Velocity is the average of 10 shots measured with a Garmin Xero C1 Pro chronograph placed adjacent to the muzzle.

this rifle would make an excellent hunting rifle and woods gun. The .45 Colt showed good accuracy when tested for five-shot groups at 100 yards. Recoil of the .45 Colt, no matter the load, was mild. Future range time will include

ammunition from Buffalo Bore and Grizzly to see how the +P heavy hard-cast lead bullets fare in the rifle. Stay tuned.

Whomever is calling the shots for lever-action product development at Smith & Wesson deserves a gold star next to their name. S&W knows lever-gun history and it has capitalized on the last 130 years of tradition and evolution, all while adding a dose of the company's own treatments. Smith & Wesson picked up the lever-action ball and ran downfield with it like we haven't seen in years. Bravo, and thank you! **G&A**



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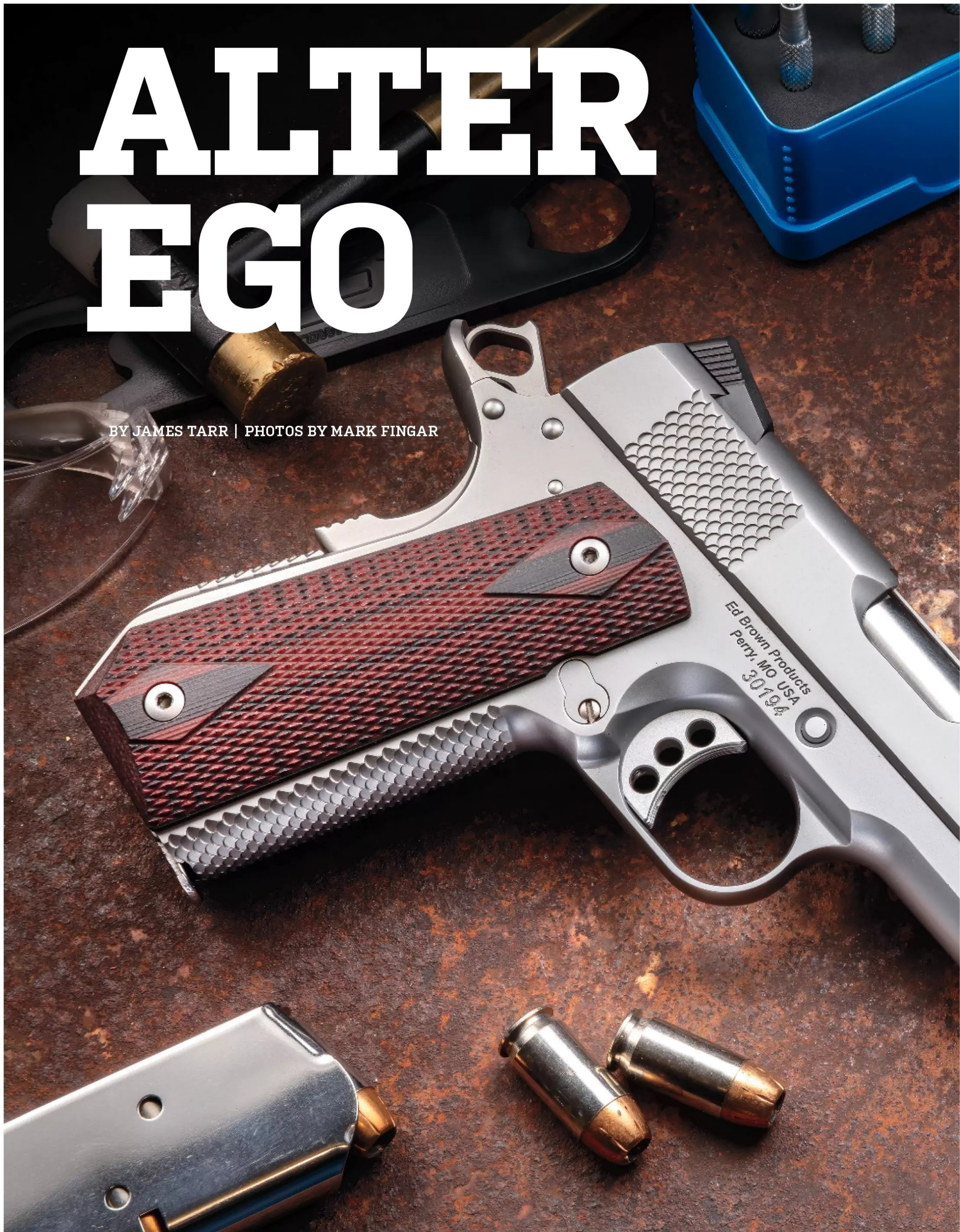
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# ALTER EGO

BY JAMES TARR | PHOTOS BY MARK FINGAR



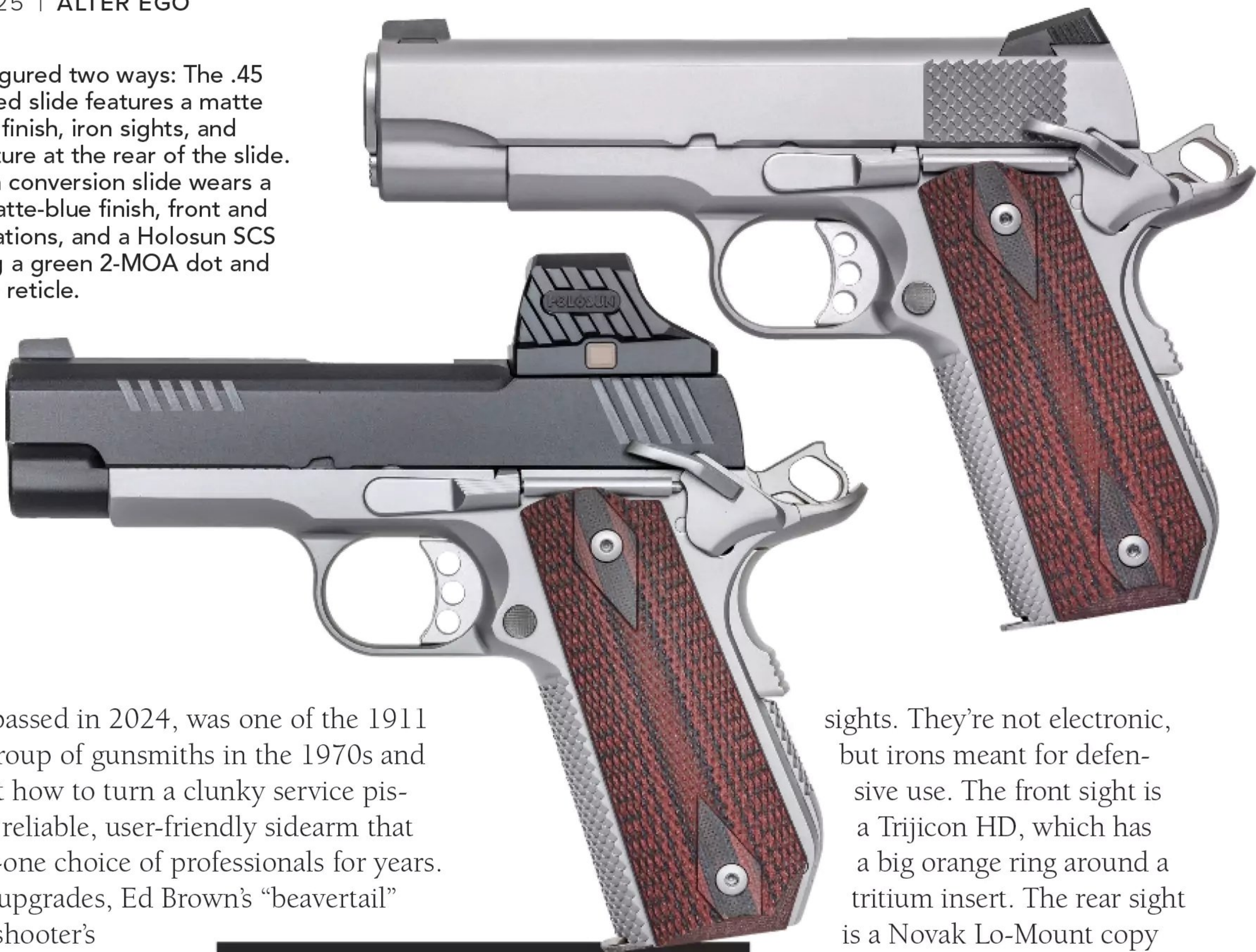


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One gun configured two ways: The .45 ACP-chambered slide features a matte stainless-steel finish, iron sights, and Snakeskin texture at the rear of the slide. The EVO 9mm conversion slide wears a contrasting matte-blue finish, front and rear slide serrations, and a Holosun SCS 320 containing a green 2-MOA dot and 32-MOA circle reticle.



**ED BROWN**, who passed in 2024, was one of the 1911 Illuminati, a small group of gunsmiths in the 1970s and '80s who figured out how to turn a clunky service pistol into an accurate, reliable, user-friendly sidearm that became the number-one choice of professionals for years. Among many other upgrades, Ed Brown's "beavertail" grip safety puts the shooter's hand higher on the gun than any previous design, and he invented the "Speed Bump" at the bottom to ensure deactivation, which is now copied by many. Twenty-five years ago, Brown launched the "Bobtail" featuring a cut to the corner off the frame bottom, the part of the gun that prints under a covering garment when concealed.

The Kobra Carry Dual Caliber is as much a flex by Ed Brown Products, Inc., to show off what it can do. It's a fascinating package for the discerning Model 1911 fan. It starts with the popular all-stainless Kobra Carry, a Bobtail Commander-size pistol in .45 ACP, and adds a complete 4-inch 9mm EVO top end with a Holosun optic, ejector and slide-stop.

**THE KOBRA CARRY**

The all-stainless .45 ACP Kobra Carry pairs a full-length frame with a 4¼-inch Commander-length barrel. With an empty magazine, it weighs 37.3 ounces. It includes two seven-round .45 ACP magazines and two nine-rounders. The stainless-steel mags fit flush to the grip, also made by Ed Brown.

For the .45 ACP caliber, you get ramped, Novak-style

sights. They're not electronic, but irons meant for defensive use. The front sight is a Trijicon HD, which has a big orange ring around a tritium insert. The rear sight is a Novak Lo-Mount copy designed to not snag on a cover garment. It's plain black — no dots — and I'm okay with that. The rear sight is a window frame; look through it, not at it. You don't want anything that distracts your eye from the front sight.

This pistol uses the original — not full-length — recoil spring, guiderod and barrel, just as John Browning intended. It has a swinging link and no ramp. I found that interesting because of the 9mm slide assembly. Traditionally, 9mm 1911s have integrally ramped barrels to improve reliability with the shorter cartridge. A slot must be cut in the frame to accommodate the ramp. Brown's 9mm barrel is throated and polished, but it feeds from the ramp in the frame, just like the .45.

| ED BROWN<br>KOBRA CARRY DUAL CALIBER |                                                                                                  |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| TYPE                                 | Recoil operated, hammer fired, semiautomatic                                                     |
| CARTRIDGE                            | 9mm, .45 ACP                                                                                     |
| CAPACITY                             | 9+1 rds. (9mm), 7+1 rds. (.45 ACP)                                                               |
| BARREL                               | 4 in. (9mm), 4.25 in. (.45 ACP)                                                                  |
| LENGTH                               | 7.5 in. (9mm), 7.75 in. (.45 ACP)                                                                |
| HEIGHT                               | 6.25 in. (9mm), 5.5 in. (.45 ACP)                                                                |
| WIDTH                                | 1.35 in.                                                                                         |
| WEIGHT                               | 2 lbs., 4.4 oz. (9mm);<br>2 lbs., 5.3 oz. (.45 ACP)                                              |
| SLIDE                                | Carbon steel (9mm), serrations;<br>stainless steel, snakeskin (.45 ACP)                          |
| FRAME                                | Stainless steel, snakeskin texture                                                               |
| SAFETY                               | Grip lever, thumb lever                                                                          |
| SIGHTS                               | Black post (front), Holosun SCS 320 (9mm); Trijicon HD XR (front) no-snag black (rear) (.45 ACP) |
| TRIGGER                              | 4 lbs., 4 oz. (tested)                                                                           |
| ACCESSORIES                          | Two 9-rd mags. (9mm), 7-rd. mags. (.45 ACP), soft case, cable lock                               |
| MSRP                                 | \$4,995                                                                                          |
| MANUFACTURER                         | Ed Brown Products Inc.,<br>573-565-3261, edbrown.com                                             |

**MODEL 1911 ARTWORK**

The Kobra Carry is a high-end 1911 made by a custom gunsmith shop, meaning the pistol includes upgrades and extras; some are obvious, others not so much. For example, the bevel along the bottom of the slide prevents the user from slicing his thumb when running the gun with a proper thumb-high hold over the thumb safety. In fact,



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The G10 grips feature a double-diamond pattern without logos, medallions or labels, secured with six-lobe stainless fasteners.



Ed Brown invented the "Speed Bump" at the bottom of the Beavertail grip safety to ensure positive and reliable deactivation.



Ed Brown's signature Snakeskin texture is directional and covers the frontstrap. During recoil it bites into the fingers for control.



Both the skeletonized combat hammer and thumb safety lever are machined from stainless steel with serrated touchpoints.

every corner on the pistol was rounded. The right side of the slide-stop pin is machined flush with the frame where the hole has a beveled edge. There's a heavy target crown on the barrel and serrations on the sides of the rear sight, should your fingers move up while racking it. Then there's the fact that you don't even feel the disconnecter when cycling the action.

Two things make a Kobra Carry .45 stand out: The Bobtail frame and Snakeskin slide and frame texturing. The Snakeskin texture on the .45 slide is not that aggressive, although it looks stylish. The Snakeskin texture on the frontstrap and mainspring housing, however, is something else entirely.

Ed Brown's Snakeskin texture is a fascinating example of what you get when artists are left to their own devices. Run your finger up the frame and the Snakeskin is just



Chambering either .45 ACP (shown) or 9mm, the dual-caliber kit requires the user to change ejectors.

a little bumpy. Run your finger down the frame and every edge of that texture bites and doesn't want to let go. To me, it feels as aggressive as hand-cut checkering. Directional texturing is meant to only grab you when the pistol is recoiling. Genius. I do wish the texture went further down on the mainspring housing to the curve of the Bobtail, but if that's how it was applied, it could chew up a cover garment.

Having shot a number of 1911s with carry cuts to the bottom of the mainspring housing, that lack of a corner alters the grip angle and presentation. The difference is not a lot, but if you've had any time behind a 1911, you'll note that the Bobtail makes the grip angle a little more vertical.

The trigger pull on Guns & Ammo's sample was excellent, as expected. Even with full-power springs everywhere in the gun, the trigger pull measured a crisp 4 pounds, 4



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Both 9mm and .45-caliber slides were hand-fit and finished to the frame, and each part was tuned for one specific frame. The last two digits of the serial number are hand-etched to certain parts, certifying the marriage.

ounces, with minimal take-up and overtravel.

#### THE TOP-ENDS

The 4-inch 9mm slide assembly is distinctively finished black, as is the 9mm ejector. At the front and rear of the slide, there are subdued cocking serrations that are both angled forward and cut in at the top. It isn't just shorter, as this is Ed Brown's EVO upper. The slide is actually narrower. The 9mm EVO slide is .855-inch wide according to my caliper, while the .45 ACP Kobra Carry slide is .92 inch. That's why there are different serrations at the top corners. There's just not enough metal on the sides for serrations to be deep enough to be functional.

The Kobra Carry was configured with a plain black front sight on the 9mm EVO slide assembly. At the rear, the slide was provided with a Holosun optic featuring a green circle-dot reticle. (It is the SCS 320, originally designed for the SIG Sauer P320 pistol. This sight retails for \$470 at [holosun.com](http://holosun.com).) The SCS has an aluminum housing and a solar panel on top. The optic has an onboard battery that is not replaceable, but Holosun indicates that — with just moderate exposure to bright light — you should never run out of power. With the optic-equipped 9mm top end installed and an empty magazine in place, the gun weighed 36.4 ounces.



The .45 ACP slide and crowned barrel utilizes a hand-fit bushing, which is secured by the checkered plunger.



The .45 ACP slide features iron sights. A Trijicon HD XR orange front sight aligns within the ramped rear notch sight.



The Holosun SCS is slightly wider than the 9mm slide. The reticle is higher than iron sights, so presentation is affected.



The 9mm slide incorporates a crowned, bushingless bull barrel, full-length guiderod and spring, and bored plunger.

As for changing the two slide assemblies, it's as simple as fieldstripping the gun — or would be, if you didn't have to replace the ejector. That one detail is why other companies haven't offered this package before. When compared to the fat boy (the .45 ACP), the 9mm cartridge is both shorter and thinner. A differently machined breech face is necessary

— hence the separate slide — an extractor in a different location, and a repositioned ejector. However, the ejector is mounted to the frame — not the slide.

The ejector slides down into the top of the frame and is oriented with two integral pins, one larger in front and a smaller one in back. On the 9mm ejector, I noted a tiny groove in the front of the forward pin. A check of the Kobra Carry's frame showed me that there is a narrow roll pin through the top of the frame. Punch out that roll pin, and you can swap out the ejector. You'll need a 5/64-inch punch, but a roll pin starter punch does the job right.





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Here’s my biggest complaint with this package: Everything needed to change one upper for the other should be included at this price, including punches. Ed Brown Products does have a YouTube channel and a 2-minute how-to video on this process. It’s a simple process provided you’ve got the right tools. Unless you do a lot of gunsmithing, you may not, meaning you’ll need to spend a few bucks to buy the tools.

Having to change the ejector makes the caliber conversion on the Kobra Carry a 5-minute job rather than a 2-minute job. You physically can’t mount the 9mm slide to the frame with the .45 ejector still in place, so that’s a mistake you don’t have to worry about making.

The slide-to-frame-to-barrel fit on the 9mm top end was just as tight as with the .45. The 9mm barrel mated flawlessly with the polished ramp of the frame, and I found the differences between the two uppers fascinating. The .45 ACP has a traditional barrel with a bushing, and the original recoil spring setup. The 9mm has a bushing-less fluted bull barrel, but — unusual for a 9mm — no ramp. The 9mm also uses a full-length stainless recoil spring guiderod and a flat-wire recoil spring, both more modern choices. The .45 ACP has the original internal tensioned extractor as Brown-ing designed, too. The 9mm has an external extractor with tension pro-

vided by a spring. The spring-powered external extractor is arguably a superior design, which is why that’s what we see used in almost every modern pistol. It’s just not as common when describing the various Model 1911 pistols.

AT THE RANGE

There were no surprises. The pistol was a joy to shoot and completely reliable in both .45 ACP and 9mm. All-steel 1911s seem heavy until you start touching off .45s, and then you appreciate the weight. When I shot the 9mm EVO slide assembly, recoil was minimal unless I loaded the gun with stiff +Ps. The gun was as accurate as expected from an Ed Brown 1911. The full-length grip allows you

to get your entire hand on the gun, and the Snakeskin locks it into place.

Regarding terminal performance, individual .45 ACPs perform as well as any other standard pistol cartridge on the market — including 9mm. The downside to the .45 has always been increased recoil and lower capacity. Both of those are important considerations when you understand that pistols are poor fight stoppers, and you will likely need multiple hits to put a bad guy down. One-shot stops do occur, but they are the rare exception and not

the rule. In comparison, 9mm 1911s have less recoil and increased capacity, which is especially important when you’re dealing with single-stack magazines. This leads me to my only other complaint. Apart from the tools needed

to do the caliber conversion — which should be included but aren’t — my only other complaint is with the magazines. The seven-round .45 and nine-round 9mm are the capacities of original magazines. Modern flush magazines up both of those capacities by one, and guys like me are going to want those. You’ll probably want to spend a little cash on higher-capacity 1911 magazines and a few tools.

In total, the Kobra Carry Dual Caliber model is an interesting pistol-and-a-half. Ed Brown Products has figured out how to give us the two most popular but physically different calibers in a 1911 that was built for concealed carry. And it runs! **GA**

PERFORMANCE .45 ACP

| LOAD                                 | VEL. (FPS) | ES | SD | BEST GROUP (IN.) | AVG. GROUP (IN.) |
|--------------------------------------|------------|----|----|------------------|------------------|
| Black Hills 230-gr. FMJ              | 834        | 22 | 9  | 1.8              | 2.3              |
| Wilson Combat +P 200-gr. XTP         | 984        | 25 | 17 | 2.3              | 2.8              |
| Hornady Critical Defense 185-gr. FTX | 879        | 28 | 12 | 2.4              | 3                |

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

PERFORMANCE 9MM

| LOAD                                 | VEL. (FPS) | ES | SD | BEST GROUP (IN.) | AVG. GROUP (IN.) |
|--------------------------------------|------------|----|----|------------------|------------------|
| Hornady Critical Defense 115-gr. FTX | 1,143      | 25 | 11 | 1.8              | 2.4              |
| Fiocchi 158-gr. FMJ                  | 847        | 22 | 11 | 2                | 2.5              |
| Winchester Active Duty 115-gr. FMJFP | 1,286      | 29 | 15 | 2.2              | 2.6              |
| Federal Train & Protect 115-gr. JHP  | 1,139      | 24 | 16 | 2.7              | 3.1              |

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 using an Oehler Model 35P chronograph set at 12 feet in front of the muzzle.





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# I BELIEVE

## TESTING THE **TRIJICON CREDO HX 1-10X** ALONG THE LIMPOPO RIVER IN AFRICA.

BY ERIC R. POOLE | PHOTOS BY MICHAEL ANSCHUETZ

AT THE DISTANT END of a sandy two-track road, outfitter and Professional Hunter (PH) Rhuan Barnard caught a glimpse of a ringed-horned sable, mature with a dark body, a moment before it disappeared into thick acacia. Sitting in the right-hand seat, he slammed the shifter into first before racing down the path. Josh Lyall and Eddie Stevenson grabbed the steel cage surrounding the Land Cruiser's elevated rear seat and held on as we neared a field of dry grass known as a "veld." Without speaking, we quickly bailed from the vehicle and I grabbed my rifle, a Gunwerks Nexus in .300 PRC. I chambered a round and engaged the safety as I had made habit of after exiting the truck. Trailing the PH on foot, I reached down as we moved into position, feeling for the repositionable adjustment knob of the scope magnification ring. I ensured it was on the left side. Without looking, I knew the Trijicon Credo HX was set between 1X and 3X. Never again will I face the setback of shouldering a rifle, looking through the scope for quarry only to find that I failed to turn down the magnification after last using it.

The veld covered hundreds of acres and was dotted with a herd of juvenile sable wearing black and brown coats; a few buffalo meandered at the opposite end, too. Glassing, none of these were the sable Barnard saw, or the one I once had fever dreams about. Through hunting and conservation efforts, the population of sable has been brought back to the Limpopo region, and they are known for having tough, bullet-busting skin with a mane along its neck. Males and females have horns that symmetrically arch rearward, but mature males can have horns that nearly rake their back. The bull sable is among the most beautiful creatures in the world, and they are almost as elusive as the kudu.

At sunset, we hiked back when, in the corner of our eyes, we saw a mature sable bull watching us. Not to reveal our intent, we continued marching down the path until cover behind a mopani tree was available. Light was diminished, so I rotated the reticle illumination knob one click to "R4." Barnard deployed my hickory shooting sticks

and I mounted them with purpose. At 1X, it was quick to find the sable and cover its shoulder with the Credo's illuminated, segmented reticle. Suspicious of our intent, he turned and moved deeper into the brush some 200 yards. We continued to stalk his movements until managing to set up within 150 yards. I dialed up the power to ensure a precise shot, and I didn't hesitate to press the trigger when instructed to. That single 212-grain Hornady ELD-X bullet dropped my first sable. When the euphoria subsided, I looked down at the scope and noticed that I had fired the shot using a little more than 6X magnification.

### THE "DO-ALL" OPTIC

Introduced ahead of the 2024 SHOT Show, Trijicon developed the Credo and Credo HX 1-10x28mm riflescopes to be a multi-purpose low-power variable optic (LPVO). A younger version of me grew up believing rifles needed dedicated scopes. I stalked the mountains of southwest Virginia with a 3-9x40mm on a Remington Model 7400 before shooting an M16 and M4 carbine with either a Trijicon ACOG or RMR. During my service in Iraq as a U.S. Marine, I also carried a .50-caliber Barrett M82A3 with a fixed 10X scope. The Trijicon Credo 1-10X would have covered all these subjects.

The Credo 1-10X is a first focal plane (FFP) scope, which simply means that the reticle adjusts in size and detail as the magnification changes. Though typically associated with more expensive optics, the FFP reticle is ideal for speed and precision in an LPVO. Based on the U.S. Marine Corps Squad Common Optic (SCO) variant of the Trijicon VCOG, the reticle in the Credo is a segmented circle that surrounds a cross-dot duplex-style crosshair. At 1X, the reticle appears akin to a segmented donut within a larger crosshair. If you didn't have time to dial the magnification, it is precise enough to shoot a relatively close-range target with both eyes open and then quickly transition to another mid- or extended-range target. This shooting technique is the Bindon Aiming Concept, pioneered by Trijicon founder Glyn Bindon. Even at 1X to 3X, the reticle could be used to strike a distant target with a high probability of success. The outer, heavy bars of the crosshair





The elevation turret is exposed for adjustment to accommodate distance, but the windage turret is capped. The Credo features .1 mil adjustments, while the Credo HX has .25 MOA adjustments per click.



The left-side turret houses the on-off dial, featuring five red intensity levels, five green intensity settings and an off position between each. Illumination is powered by a capped CR2032 battery.



The ocular lens is shrouded by a reticle focus adjustment ring with a rubberized cap. The Credo has a .32- to .11-inch exit pupil with full field of view visible with 3.2 to 3.9 inches of comfortable eye relief.

don't contact the field of view edge until 3X, and are not consumed until 6.5X, so the bracketed reticle simulates the speed and precision of a reflex optic between 1X and 3X. From 3X to 10X, the view functions more like a duplex reticle — but with elevation and windage stadia for hold-offs.

The reticle includes up to 30 milliradian (MRAD) of windage and elevation holds for those who don't want to dial adjustments for a successful engagement. ("MRAD" is also abbreviated "mil.") For shooters who prefer to dial adjustments for distance, the exposed elevation turret offers clearly visible index marks and numbering. Rotating the dial in either direction produces crisp and tactile *clicks*. The total elevation travel is 29 MRAD, and the turrets return to zero in a precise and consistent manner.

The reticle features a dual, user-selectable red or green LED illumination color with an "off" position between each setting for fast adjustment while managing battery life. In the 1X to 3X range, the reticle imitates a reflex sight with a segmented circle and center dot. Between 3X and 10X, the

| TRIJICON CREDO/CREDO HX |                                                                   |
|-------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------|
| POWER                   | 1X to 10X                                                         |
| OBJECTIVE               | 28mm                                                              |
| TUBE DIAMETER           | 34mm                                                              |
| DIMENSIONS              | 10.1 in. (L), 3.2 in. (W), 2.4 in.                                |
| WEIGHT                  | 21.2 oz.                                                          |
| ELEVATION ADJUSTMENT    | .1 MRAD (Credo); .25 MOA (Credo HX)                               |
| WINDAGE ADJUSTMENT      | .1 MRAD (Credo); .25 MOA (Credo HX)                               |
| RETICLE                 | Segmented Circle Enhanced Reticle, FFP; LED illum., 5 red/5 green |
| EYE RELIEF              | 3.2 in. to 3.9 in.                                                |
| EXIT PUPIL              | .32 in. to .11 in.                                                |
| FIELD OF VIEW           | 116.6 ft. to 11.7 ft. @ 100 yds.                                  |
| MATERIAL                | 6064 aluminum                                                     |
| FINISH                  | Anodized (aluminum); matte black (Credo), satin black (Credo HX)  |
| BATTERY                 | (1) CR2032                                                        |
| MSRP                    | \$2,258 (Credo); \$2,258 (Credo HX)                               |
| MANUFACTURER            | Trijicon, 248-960-7700, trijicon.com                              |



The objective lens measures 28 millimeters and is secured against vibration, shock and submersion within the 34mm maintube. The scratch-resistant lenses wear broadband, anti-reflective coatings.

reticle appears as a more conventional precision reticle with illuminated center crosshair that is surrounded with a segmented circle near the edge.

To go from the fast-action 1X to 3X magnification to the more precision-oriented 3X to 10X range, the magnification ring was engineered with what I'll describe as a "medium" amount of drag. To overcome the resistance, a removeable knurled knob is included for leverage of the power ring. What I like about this amount of friction is that you won't unintentionally move beyond the power you want as can happen with a magnification ring having light resistance. Adjusting the magnification of the Credo feels precise.

The focus ring at the rear of the ocular housing has what I would describe as "heavy" resistance. Looking at an all-white target or into the sky in a safe direction, you can adjust the ocular ring to sharpen the appearance of the reticle. It has a rubber bumper behind the knurling, presumably to protect your eye against "scope bite" if a hard-recoiling rifle gets the best of you.





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On the banks of the Limpopo River, an exceptional bushbuck with dark coat was taken at less than 15 yards with the Trijicon Credo HX set on 1X.

Forward of the 3½-ish-inch long ocular housing assembly is the maintube, which steps down to 34mm. Within the muzzle end of the scope's barrel is a 28mm lens that's set back .654 inch in the objective. It's threaded to accept the addition of a sunshade or other accessory such as an aftermarket screw-on scope cap. The most important aspect of both lenses, though, is that they are multi-coated with anti-reflective glass. Despite the fact it doesn't have a flared objective bell larger than the maintube diameter, the Credo 1-10X has excellent light transmission qualities. The lenses and coatings provide accurate detail and faithful color with no distortion.

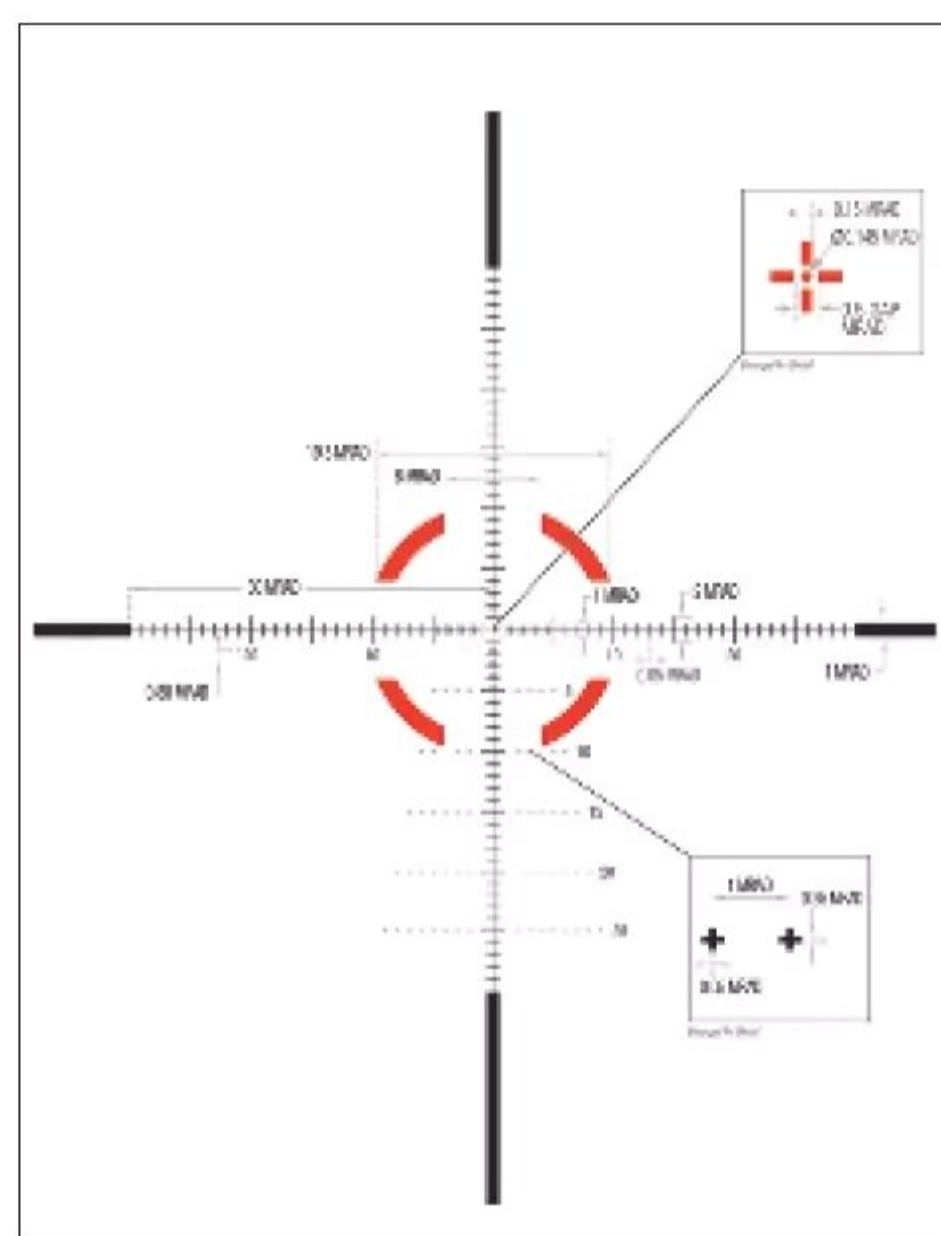
The Credo is made in Japan and tested to U.S. military standards for optics, complete with a durable matte hardcoat anodized finish. The Credo HX is satin black. Controls are easy to grip, and the adjustments are intuitive. Durability was ensured by subjecting the Credo to 5,000 rounds of heavy cartridge testing. There was no reticle shift, and I've never experienced any. Trijicon refers to the protocol as "Solid Zero Testing." The scopes were also shock and vibration tested against recoil, field abuse and water immersion. To prevent internal fogging, all Trijicon scopes are dry nitrogen filled.

#### THE AFRICA TEST

Trijicon advertises that every model is



A sable antelope fell to a single 212-grain ELD-X bullet fired from a Gunwerks Nexus in .300 PRC steadied on sticks at just less than 150 yards. Magnification of the Credo HX was set at 6X.



"Africa-to-Alaska" tested to ensure performance from -20 degrees to 140 Fahrenheit (F). I've been involved in several of these tests during my career. I tested the Credo HX, for example, on safari in 2022 to the Limpopo River with Trijicon's Josh Lyall and long-time friend Eddie Stevenson who's agency also represents Trijicon.

I mounted a Credo HX 1-10X to a Gunwerks Nexus rifle in .300 PRC (\$6,475, [gunwerks.com](http://gunwerks.com)). It's more expensive than my old Remington, but after discovering its lightweight versatility and accuracy, I sold several rifles to afford this one. At Guns & Ammo's test range, I used the rifle-scope combination to print .28-inch groups from 100 yards — and then sub-1-inch groups at 200 yards. It's the most accurate magnum-chambered hunting rifle I've tested.

The Limpopo is the second-largest African river after the Zambezi. Some 30 miles from where I felled my first sable, we explored the riverbanks along Botswana's border. Crocodile bathed in the waters near the shore, and game were spooked as we slowly passed in the truck. We came to a halt as our tracker Moses pointed in awe to the largest spiral horns on kudu we'd ever seen. It ran down the bank and trotted across a shallow

part of the river, causing Barnard to burst out laughing and say, "We call those gifts from Botswana!"

Spotting a number of solitary bushbuck, we dismounted and followed several tracks into a canopy of woods. Most of this evidence led to juvenile males and females, but movement from another tracker who alarmed a mature buck over a hill that crossed my path. With one swift motion, I rotated my torso and used the opposite riverbank as my backstop. As soon as the rifle touched my shoulder, I managed to

stop the dark antelope with ivory tips on its horns with one shot at less than 15 yards. Surrounded by PHs, several trackers and friends, we looked at the scene in disbelief. My eyes moved again to the scope where I saw the magnification ring set to 1X. The action unfolded in a matter of just a few seconds. Had the Credo not functioned in that moment like a reflex sight, the opportunity to take a book-worthy Cape bushbuck would have escaped me. Thus, with this hunt, the Trijicon Credo HX earned a permanent place on my rifle. **G&A**

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# СНАЙПЕР

## WORLD WAR II SNIPER RIFLE SERIES, PART III: MOSIN-NAGANT 91/30 PU.

BY DAVE EMARY | PHOTOS BY MARK FINGAR

**THE SOVIET'S MOSIN-NAGANT 91/30 PE/PEM/PU** sniper rifles were a paradox. To some, the 91/30 rifles appeared akin to a 2-by-4. Many had poor fit and finish, a rough action and a horrible trigger. The sniper rifle variants were equipped with a crude scope: Either a 4x20mm PE model, a modernized PEM scope or the PU 3.5x20mm scope. The 4x20mm PE entered service in November 1931 and was produced by the Leningrad factory No. 357 until 1940. The modernized PEM scope was made from 1937 to 1940 and 1942 to 1943, and the PU 3.5x20mm scope was made from 1941 and into the post-war period.

Most first impressions of the Mosin-Nagant 91/30 sniper are true until you get used to the trigger and seriously shoot it. With some time behind a 91/30 PE or PU, your preconceived opinions might change. The 91/30 sniper rifles have earned a reputation for accuracy. My original 91/30 PU did not disappoint during Guns & Ammo's evaluation. The scope's simplicity is one of its best features and works well with the rifle.

To that end, the perception I had of Soviet Bloc ammunition as "cheap" and "poor performing" was proved untrue. The three types of ammunition used to evaluate our sample 91/30 PU performed very well.





The Soviet-made 3.5X PU scope measured 6.65 inches in length and weighed 9.52 ounces. It was developed for sniper use with the semiautomatic SVT-40.



The large, knurled, slotted scope-base screw at the back secures the PU scope mount to the receiver scope bracket. Two screws, one above and below, eliminate the play in the mount.



Two screws on each windage and elevation turret can be loosened. Once the rifle has been zeroed to a load, loosen the screws to lift each turret and rotate to "0" to zero the markings.

### SOVIET SNIPER RIFLES & OPTICS

The Soviets had the most successful employment of snipers during World War II because of their sniper training program, which was established during the early 1930s, and the standardization of a sniper rifle at the same time. The Mosin-Nagant 91/30 sniper rifle was accepted in 1932 and originally fitted with the 4X PE scope. The PE scope was a copy of a German Zeiss design, with optics supplied by Zeiss from Germany. It went through several manufacturing simplification changes during the eight years it was produced. Unlike the depiction in the movie "Enemy at the Gates" (2001), sniper Vasily Zaitsev used a 91/30 PE rifle — not a 91/30 PU — during his service in Stalingrad.

With hostilities in Europe in full swing, Zeiss stopped delivering optics for PE/PEM scopes in 1940, and production of the 91/30 PE sniper rifle stopped in the summer of 1940. The Russians, though, foresaw the loss of German suppliers for critical wartime materials and had begun a program to produce a simplified scope that culminated in the entirely Russian-produced PU scope designed in 1940. The PU scope was fitted to the semiautomatic SVT-40 rifle, and for a period longer than a year the SVT-40 was the only production sniper rifle available to the Soviet

army. The loss of many sniper rifles in combat during late 1941 — and the forced relocation of many critical manufacturing facilities due to the German advance — resulted in serious shortages of sniper rifles through most of 1942. In early August 1942, the SVT-40 was deemed to have unacceptable performance as a sniper rifle and production was stopped in October 1942. From mid-'41 to mid-'42, the Soviets were developing a simpler and easier-to-produce scope mount for the 91/30 rifle to accept the PU scope. The Model 1942 Kochetov was the resulting mount. The 91/30 PU rifle was accepted in late August 1942 and production was scheduled to begin in September, but Tula Arsenal did not begin production until December. Izhevsk Arsenal produced only a few rifles by the end of 1942. Tula produced rifles until May 1944, and Izhevsk stopped production in December 1944. Izhevsk produced approximately another 2,500 rifles in 1947. Exact production numbers are unclear, but from historical evidence, it is believed that around 100,000 rifles were produced.

The PU scope is short with simple optics and mechanics, and a 28.7mm constant diameter. It used a sharply pointed and slender post reticle to provide precise aim-





Once windage was zeroed at 100 yards, only the elevation turret was adjusted for subsequent groups. Elevation adjustments were precise and repeatable to 500 yards.

Mosin-Nagant 91/30s selected to be sniper rifles were retrofitted with turned-down bolt handles. The two-lug bolt was also serialized to match the number of the receiver.

ing, even with the lower power of 3.5X. The scope has friction elevation and windage turrets with adjustment scales that can be easily loosened and slipped to provide precise turret zeroing. The scope mount is a rugged design that attaches to the side of the receiver. The mount has a base that screws to the side of the receiver with a ball-hemisphere detent in the front of it, offsetting screws for gross elevation adjustment at the rear of the base, and a large screw that clamps the rings to the base. The scope rings have metal tabs that are captured under the large screw in the base. It can be filed or shimmed to achieve a windage turret zero in the middle of the scope's optical field. The scope rings have a ball on the forward end that inserts into the detent in the base. This setup allows gross adjustments of the scope for elevation and windage in the base to get the scope turrets to zero and center within the optical center of the scope. It's a simple but robust scope mounting that allows easy adjustment for centering of the scope. Getting a zero with the 91/30 that maximizes the elevation and windage adjustment of the scope is easy.



Having two lugs, the bolt of the 91/30 features a 90-degree throw that requires little effort to lift. When the turned-down bolt handle was lifted, it did not interfere with the mounted scope.



The cocking knob is used to re-cock the rifle during a misfire without working the bolt; pull it back until the sear engages it. Turn it counterclockwise to engage the safety.



Zeroing the PU scope turrets is also simple. Each turret has two small screws on the top that are loosened as you hold the turret, and the elevation or windage scale is slipped to zero. The screws are then carefully tightened, making sure the turret is not turned. Then you're done. The elevation scale has a tab on it that provides a zero-stop.

The elevation turret is calibrated to an optimistic 1,200 meters for the 148-grain light-ball 7.62x54R round. Mosin-Nagant 91/30 rifles selected for conversion to a sniper rifle

were chosen based on their accuracy when tested at the factory. Triggers were reworked to lighten the pull weight and improve the trigger's crispness. A longer bent bolt handle was also added to the bolt. Despite the crude appearance, poor fit and finish, and horrible trigger, the 91/30 PU was a rugged and dependable rifle. After getting used to the trigger, it also proved to be accurate.

In his personal memoir, "Notes of a Russian Sniper" (1956), Zaitsev described many of his engagements in Stalingrad, most inside 300 meters with several engagements around 500 meters. Josef "Sepp" Allerberger, a German sniper who started his sniper career with a captured





The serial number appears on many parts of the 91/30, including the magazine floorplate, bolt, buttplate and receiver. According to its markings, the author's test rifle was manufactured in 1944.



Test ammunition for the Mosin-Nagant 91/30 PU included (above, left to right): 1945 148-gr. light ball; 1971 Bulgarian 147-gr. steel core light ball; and 2020 Red Army Standard 148-gr. light ball.

Russian 91/30 sniper rifle, recalled an engagement with the rifle in his memoir "Sniper on the Eastern Front" (2005) where he shot a Russian soldier sunbathing on a river beach at what he estimated to be 600 meters. He also wrote that most of his shots were inside 400 meters. These ranges are well within the capability of the 91/30 sniper rifle, as observed during Guns & Ammo's test results. (Claims for the number of kills and feats of Russian snipers during the war were heavily overlayed with Soviet propaganda and exaggeration.)

My test rifle is an original 1944 Izhevsk 91/30 PU that went through a refurbishment after the war with a 1953-produced scope. As good as the bore is, I'm not sure it was ever issued. I did nothing to the rifle other than clean it up. The trigger was mushy with a very light second stage that broke consistently at 3 pounds, 7 ounces. It took some getting used to. The gun and scope combination came in at a reasonable weight of 10.2 pounds.

### 7.62x54R AMMUNITION

The principal load of the Soviet army during World War II was the 148-grain spitzer, flat base, lead core, light ball load. A 182-grain heavy ball load was also issued and primarily used in machine guns. The elevation turret on the PU scope is calibrated for the light ball load. Russian snipers made regular use of a high-explosive incendiary (HEI) round that had a firing pin, incendiary mix and a small explosive charge. It weighed 160 grains. Allerberger noted that captured HEI rounds were coveted and used for high-value targets. The Russians also had armor pierc-

ing (AP), armor piercing incendiary (API), tracer, and armor piercing incendiary tracer (API-T) loads, but none were as accurate as the light ball load. I have not encountered any reports of Russian special sniper ammunition in World War II. For this evaluation, I acquired a small quantity of Russian 1945 light ball ammunition, 1971 Bulgarian steel core light ball, and 2020 light ball from Red Army Standard.

### AT THE RANGE

Testing was done on a known-distance (KD) range with targets at 100, 200, 300, 400 and 500 yards. The B27 human silhouette target was used to match the sight picture that would have existed in view of a sniper. With all loads, we only fired three-shot groups at each distance due to the limited supply of ammunition. We zeroed the 91/30 PU with a handload consisting of a Sierra 174-grain .312-inch MatchKing bullet and 45.7 grains of IMR 4064 with several five-shot groups. We then fired three-shot groups at the increasingly distant targets by dialing the elevation turret for range. The calibration of the elevation turret settings was right on with the issued ammunition.

Editor-in-Chief Eric Poole was the trigger man, and I spotted and gave him wind calls. We did not try to dial for wind because that's a good way to get into trouble with these old scopes. There is a small amount of crosstalk between the windage turret and the elevation turret in the PU scope, and by "crosstalk" I mean that making a windage adjustment will also move the scope's elevation. Other than the minor crosstalk in the PU scope, we found the adjustments were precise and repeatable. As with all old





The 91/30 triggerguard features a relief for the middle finger at the rear. The latch to release the floorplate is at the front.



The horizontal bar is a spring pressed into the lower forend of the stock, which applies pressure to the barrel band.



The Type 2 hooded post sight was used on the 91/30 and is unmarked except for an alignment index mark on the front.



The 91/30 rifle stock was made at the Tula Arsenal. The crossbolt is secured by a nut at the rear of the inletted finger groove.



The Izhevsk Arsenal mark is a circle containing the hammer and sickle in a wreath. Sling slots replaced swivels in 1910.

scopes, we needed to adjust in the same direction or go beyond the desired setting and come back to it in the same direction every time. This is due to backlash.

Our standard practice was to shoot in the same wind condition as the other sniper rifles being compared. Wind calls were based on wind flags and observing vegetation. It was too windy to read mirage, unfortunately. We succeeded most of the time, but several of the groups showed an obvious miss of a wind condition. With the low-power scope, wind corrections were generally “hold right side,” “hold right-edge of silhouette,” and “hold right-edge of cardboard.” Greater resolution wasn’t possible beyond 400 yards. Every time we had a group size that didn’t fit with results at ranges on either side of the target, we had a bullet out either left or right. Elevation was always much better than the windage of the group, particularly at 500 yards.



## PARTING SHOT

We felt the Mosin-Nagant 91/30 PU was an accurate sniper rifle with Soviet-issue light ball ammunition. Accuracy was on the order of 1½ minute of angle (MOA). We determined that this was a rather stunning performance from a World War II-period rifle, scope and ammunition. Head shots were predictably realistic to 300 yards with the 91/30 PU, and body shots were effective

to at least 600 yards. In better wind conditions, a body shot could be likely to 700 yards. With the sharp and slender post reticle, target resolution of a human-size target is good at 500 yards. Overall, the shooting experience with the 91/30 PU with period ammunition was surprising and satisfying. This was a lethal and effective sniper rifle.

In Part IV of Guns & Ammo’s “World War II Sniper Rifle Series,” we will review the history of the Springfield Armory Model 1903A4 sniper rifle and evaluate its performance using several period loads of ammunition. **G&A**





# 2025 SHOT SHOW NEW PRODUCT PREMIERE

TAKE A LOOK AT THESE  
HIGHLIGHTS FROM  
**LAS VEGAS!**

STAFF REPORT



## **BROWNING X-BOLT 2 & CITORI 825**

[BROWNING.COM](https://www.browning.com)

We can always expect unique SHOT Show exclusives from Browning. For 2025, we saw many new variations of the Browning X-Bolt 2 bolt-action rifle. The X-Bolt 2 Speed with dark maple stock was a distinguished

example. The satin-finished AAA-grade maple catches the eye in the normal lineup of walnut stocks and boasts all the updates featured in the X-Bolt 2 lineup.

In addition to new rifles, the Citori

825 shotgun also caught the attention of editors. With 10 models ranging from a fine sporting models to the fully adjustable Trap Max, no one has ever questioned the performance of a Browning over/under.



### FN REFLEX XL FNAMERICA.COM

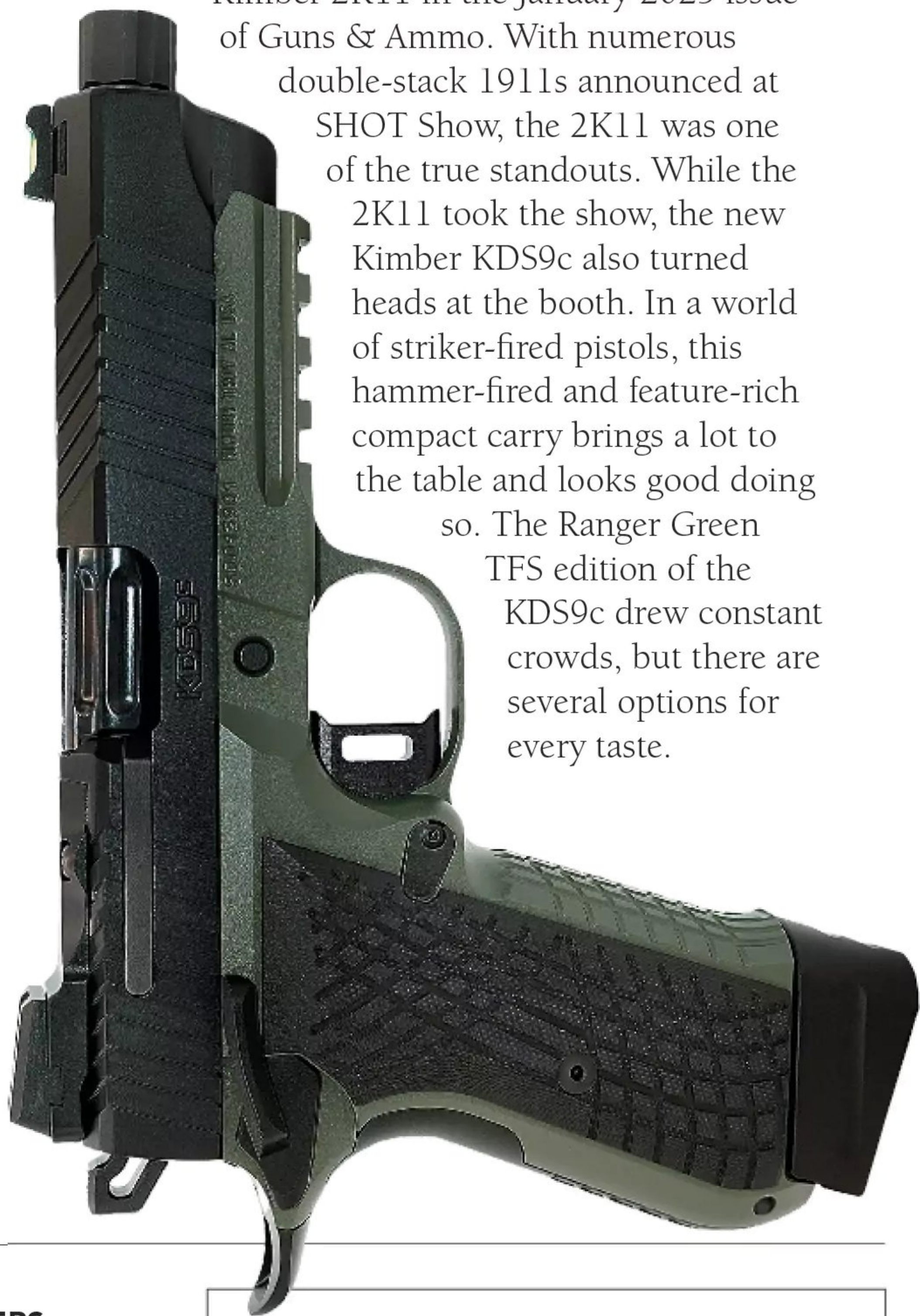
One of the most exciting line extensions announced at the 2025 SHOT Show was the FN Reflex XL MRD. A natural evolution of the Reflex, the XL model hits the sweet spot of shootability and concealability. Being an “MRD,” it includes tritium sights and an optic-cut slide that accepts popular reflex sights.

The Reflex XL boasts an impressive 18-round capacity with the extended magazines, plus the mag release is reversible for left-handed shooters. Like the Reflex, the XL was designed around an internal hammer to provide a smooth trigger and easy-racking slide. Available in black or flat dark earth (FDE), it's hard to beat.



### KIMBER 2K11 & KDS9C KIMBERAMERICA.COM

Handgun Editor Jim Tarr reviewed the double-stack Kimber 2K11 in the January 2025 issue of Guns & Ammo. With numerous double-stack 1911s announced at SHOT Show, the 2K11 was one of the true standouts. While the 2K11 took the show, the new Kimber KDS9c also turned heads at the booth. In a world of striker-fired pistols, this hammer-fired and feature-rich compact carry brings a lot to the table and looks good doing so. The Ranger Green TFS edition of the KDS9c drew constant crowds, but there are several options for every taste.



### WARNE HYPERLITE RINGS WARNESCOPEMOUNTS.COM

Looking to shed ounces for an upcoming mountain hunt? The Warne HyperLite scope rings were an exciting new SHOT Show solution that won't “tip the scales” in the best way possible. For example, the Warne HyperLite 34mm High rings weigh less than 3 ounces, which Warne accomplished by using its Magna-Fusion Alloy. The unique alloy offers an impressive 35-percent weight reduction to comparable aluminum-construction rings, yet they're still strong enough for hard work in the backcountry. Despite the metallurgy, you'll find any of the Warne HyperLite rings — whether 1 inch, 30mm or 34mm in high, medium or low — for less than \$120.

### MAGVIEW S1/B1 ADAPTERS MAGVIEWGEAR.COM

You know it can be tricky to get a quality photo through a spotting scope or pair of binoculars. With “S” for spotting and “B” for binocular, these unique digi-scoping adapters offer endusers the ability to easily attach common smartphones to spotting scopes and binoculars while keeping them in an optimal position. In addition to better photos, attaching a smartphone to a spotting scope to scan for game or groups at the range is often easier and more comfortable than actually looking through the glass. Available for multiple models and sizes of phone and optical combinations, the Magview S1 and B1 adapters are great tools to keep with you in the field.





**ROCK ISLAND ARMORY  
TAC ULTRA & STK SERIES**  
[ARMSCOR.COM](http://ARMSCOR.COM)

We always expect excellent 1911s from Rock Island Armory (RIA), and it continues with the TAC series. RIA added the TAC Ultra models in a number of unique varieties. In addition to a fine 17-round-capacity double-stack model and a range-fun .22 LR TAC Ultra, a feature-rich 10mm Auto TAC Ultra with a manufacturer suggested retail of \$839, which was closely examined by G&A staff.

RIA also introduced several new pistols in the STK line of striker-fired handguns. In particular, the STK200 is a must-see optic-ready model with included suppressor-height sights that should leave gun-store shelves for less than \$500.



**STREAMLIGHT MEGASTREAM &  
PROTAC RAIL MOUNT HP-X PRO**  
[STREAMLIGHT.COM](http://STREAMLIGHT.COM)

Streamlight never fails to bring must-have new products to SHOT Show. For 2025, Streamlight revealed developments for handheld and rifle-mounted lights. First, the Streamlight Megastream. It lives up to its name by producing a 1,800-lumens of output in a compact, rechargeable package that's just more than 5 inches. Despite the output, Megastream still produces a 2-hour runtime at full output, and SL-B34 rechargeable batteries are available from Streamlight for quick battery changes on the go.

The ProTac HP-X Pro is also notable for those of us who put lights on long guns. The low-lumen, high-candela light will illuminate more than 600 meters at its 105,000-candela peak output.



**TAURUS GX2 & 850**  
[TAURUSUSA.COM](http://TAURUSUSA.COM)

Taurus introduced a number of quality and budget-friendly options at the 2025 SHOT Show. The GX2 striker-fired semi-automatic 9mm and 850 revolver are two of these. Guns & Ammo readers found a complete review of the GX2 in the April 2025 issue written by Digital Editor Antonio Acitelli. For revolver enthusiasts, the sub-\$500 Taurus 850 is available in black or stainless steel with either a 2- or 3-inch barrel. Editors noted that the 850 has an impressive double-action trigger that was quite smooth with a clean break. Chambered in .38 Special, the 850 is an ideal mix of classic style with a few modern touches.





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**SMITH & WESSON  
STEALTH HUNTER &  
M&P9 SPEC SERIES V  
[SMITH-WESSON.COM](https://www.smith-wesson.com)**

Few expected Smith & Wesson to launch a line of lever-action rifles in 2024, yet its popularity led the brand to expand its lineup to include the Stealth Hunter extension of the Model 1854. Be sure to read Rifle & Optics Editor Tom Beckstrand's full review on page 36.

G&A editors have been impressed with S&W's new SPEC Series of M&P9 pistols. The new-for-2025 Series V is the first all-steel pistol — not to be confused with S&W's "all-metal" aluminum models. Three 23-round magazines are included, and blue-PVD-finished barrels are fitted with a compensator. The slide maintains S&W's C.O.R.E. optic mounting system backed up by and steel suppressor-height sights. The SPEC V represents the pinnacle of engineering in the M&P's lineage.



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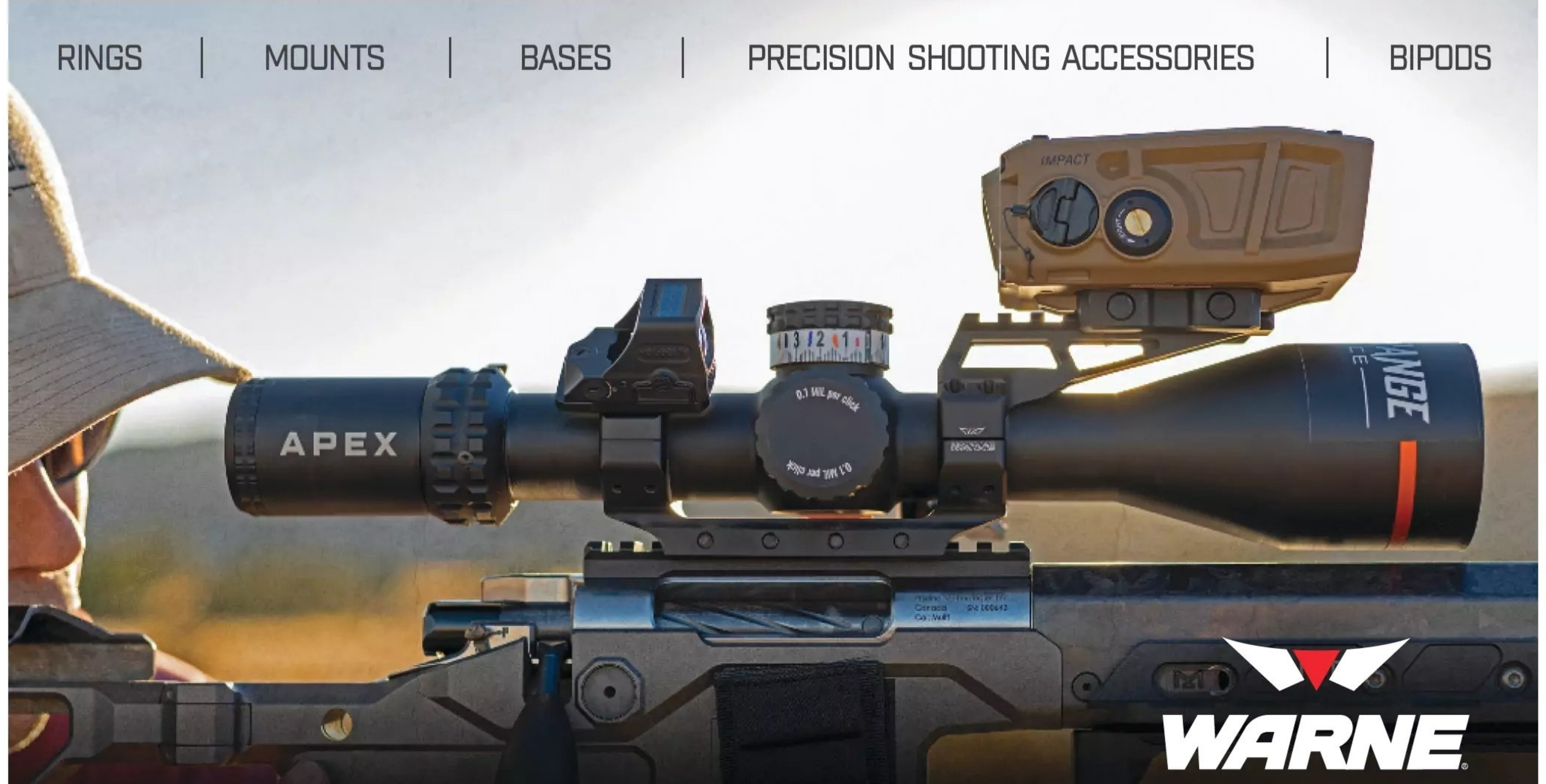
**WINCHESTER LONG BEARD TSS & .21 SHARP****WINCHESTER.COM**

Tom Beckstrand sparked a lot of interest in review of the .21 Sharp cartridge in the February issue. Whether or not you've been looking for a new rimfire, Winchester drew a large crowd to its booth with many getting a close-up look at the non-heeled bullets used in loading the .21 Sharp. It allows use of modern jacketed bullets and provides an affordable, non-toxic rimfire alternative to the .22 LR.

Turkey hunters were pleased to see Long Beard TSS. Available in 12, 20, 28 gauges, and .410 bore, the 60-yard patterns were impressive. Using a buffered payload with either #8 or #9 shot, Long Beard TSS is lethality without compromise. 



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*Henry Supreme Rifle .223 Rem./ .300 Blackout*

## MAG-FED LEVER

**ONE OF THE LIMITATIONS** of the classic lever gun is the tubular magazine. The design limits the number of rounds a rifle can hold and slows the reloading process for most users. We love exercising our Right to Bear Arms with firearms that can hold a lot of bullets and shoot fast, which is why the AR-15-pattern rifle became one of the most popular types in America. Many would agree, though, that gun safes are already saturated with AR-15s, and the evolution continues to produce the next greatest "tactical" rifle. Addressing this, Henry broke the mold with its 2025 release of the Lever Action Supreme Rifle. It combines many traditional aspects of a lever action, but is fed by AR-pattern magazines. Henry is famous for its lever guns, but the company tested its engineers with a new design challenge.

Owning an AR-pattern firearm is prohibited by state law, as well, in Illinois for example. Many of

these states also have magazine-capacity restrictions. With the Lever Action Supreme and its standard 10-round magazine, an individual residing in one of these restricted states can still enjoy it at the range or configure it for personal defense. Henry introduced two variants of the Supreme at the 2025 SHOT Show, one chambered in 5.56 NATO/.223 Remington and the second chambered for .300 Blackout.

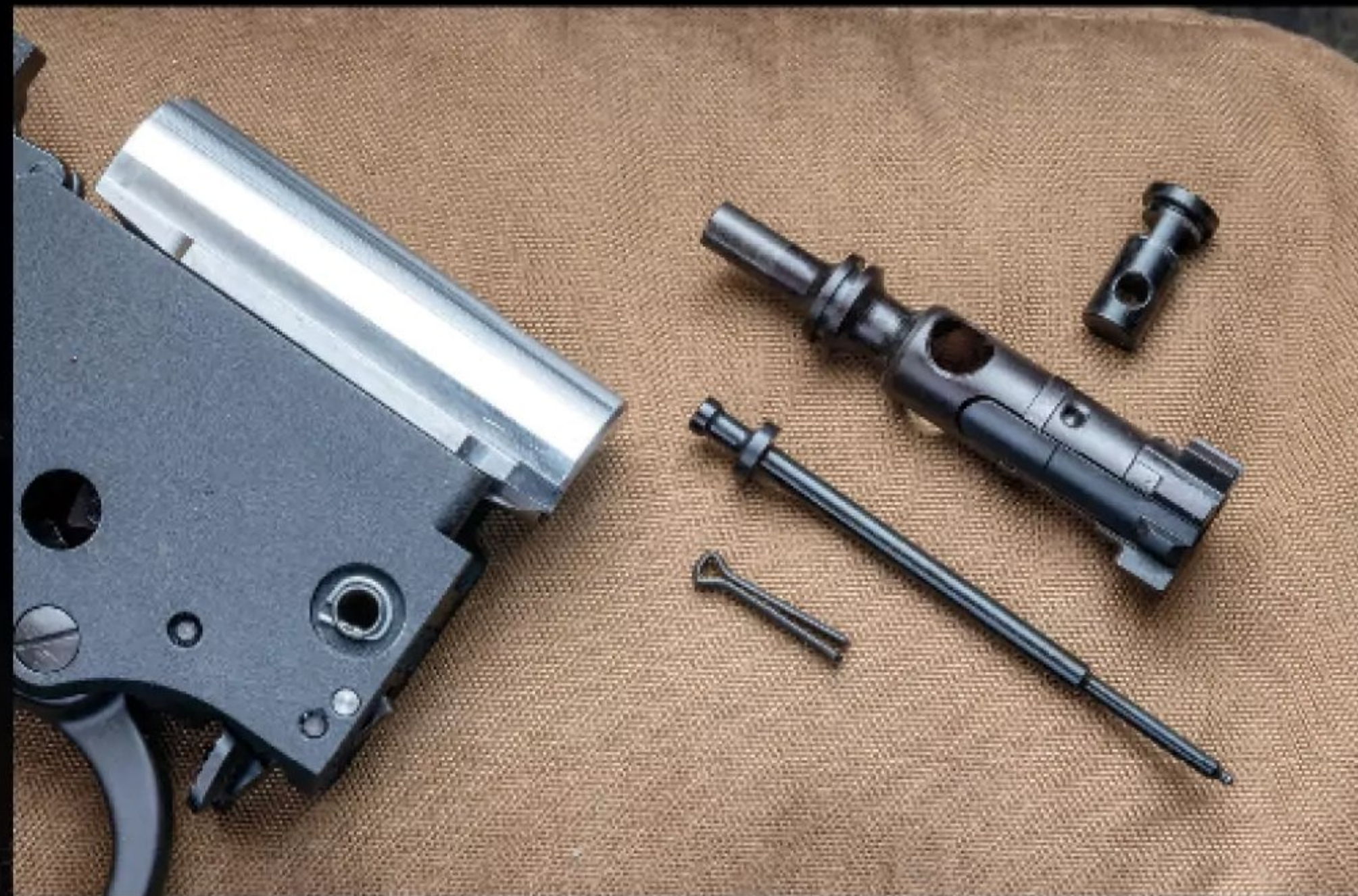
### SPEC'ING THE SUPREME

Henry Repeating Arms has been a manufacturer of lever-action rifles in the U.S. since 1996. It has produced a variety of models and calibers, ranging from the Classic Lever Action .22 LR to the Large Frame Lever Action Rifles in .45-70 Government. The company has also produced lever-actions that take detachable, box-fed magazines with the Long Ranger line. Henry has demonstrated its experience.





The Supreme features a modified bolt carrier assembly featuring a camming, rotating and locking bolt assembly. The carrier also contains a firing pin with a cotter-pin-type retainer.



The bolt and firing pin are from the AR-15, less gas rings. A unique quad-bar linkage and slider-crank mechanism works to cycle the action, and an enclosed hammer strikes the firing pin.



The Supreme was tested in both .223 Rem. and .300 Blackout using both the supplied 10-round magazine and an aftermarket 30-round PMag. The 30-round PMag didn't interfere with cycling.

### HENRY LEVER ACTION SUPREME RIFLE

|              |                                                                                                |
|--------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| TYPE         | Lever action, magazine fed                                                                     |
| CARTRIDGE    | .223 Rem./5.56 NATO, .300 Blk.                                                                 |
| CAPACITY     | 10, 20, 30 rds.                                                                                |
| BARREL       | 18 in., 1:8-in. twist (.223 Rem.);<br>16.5 in., 1:7-in. twist (.300 Blk.)                      |
| LENGTH       | 38.15 in.                                                                                      |
| WEIGHT       | 6 lbs., 9 oz.                                                                                  |
| STOCK        | American walnut, rubber recoil pad                                                             |
| FINISH       | Blued (steel);<br>anodized black (aluminum)                                                    |
| SIGHTS       | Blade (front), trapezoidal notch, adj.<br>(rear); drilled, tapped for Weaver<br>63B-type mount |
| TRIGGER      | 3 lbs., 2 oz./3 lbs., 6.5 oz. (tested)                                                         |
| SAFETY       | Tang switch                                                                                    |
| MSRP         | \$1,299                                                                                        |
| MANUFACTURER | Henry Repeating Arms,<br>866-200-2354, henryusa.com                                            |



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Besides caliber, the other difference between G&A's two test samples was barrel length. The .223/5.56mm featured an 18-inch, free-floated, tapered, blued, chrome-moly steel barrel. The .300 Blackout version had a 16½-inch barrel, same features. Both were threaded to accept a suppressor or muzzle device, but a suppressor is ideal for the Supreme. With no gas escaping the ejection port, a shooter can run the Supreme "tactically" without fear of backblast. Plus, there is no need to consider adjusting a gas block or fear of short-stroking an action due to subsonic

The iron sights were well designed. The front sight is a tapered blade that is high enough to work in conjunction with most suppressors. The rear sight is what Henry describes as "trapezoidal and fully adjustable." This extended positioning supports a shooter's focus on the front sight and allows for fast acquisition of a target.

The adjustable rear sight makes sighting in the Supreme simple. If an elevation correction is necessary, use the provided Allen wrench to loosen the locking screw. Then, use the same




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**2020**  
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The upper receiver is drilled and tapped for optic mounting configurations, including rails. When a rail is attached, the standard post-notch iron sights are not visible to the shooter.



Due to the placement on the barrel, the standard sights have an extended and relatively short sight radius. The rear is adjustable.

wrench to raise the sight and adjust the bullet's impact, or lower the sight to move groups down. Windage corrections follow the same process. The ability to adjust the rear sight makes zeroing more efficient.

With the progression of optic sights and availability, shooters may want to mount one. The top of the receiver is drilled and tapped in a Weaver 63B

configuration. If a lighter weight is desired for close-to-medium distances, as in "zero to 150 yards," a reflex sight would be a great choice. In the event magnification could be advantageous, a low-powered variable optic (LPVO) is another option.

The stock and forend were shaped from American walnut, making these rifles stand apart from the number of polymer stocks on a gun-store's rack. Both the forend and wrist of the stock were checkered with a 20 lines-per-inch (lpi) borderless diamond pattern, and the stock sports a rubber buttpad to help mitigate felt recoil. The lever is larger than many typical leverguns, but it's smaller than the large-loop style. It balances function and accessibility for gloved hands. It attaches to two arms on the interior of the rifle







The magazine clears the movement of the lever when racked and displays little movement due to the engineered shape within the magwell. Press the paddle lever behind the magwell to remove.

and then to the bolt carrier, which is where the similarities to the AR are apparent.

The bolt carrier assembly functions similarly to an AR's bolt carrier assembly, but it is slightly different. Unlike the AR bolt carrier, the lever action eliminates the need for a gas key or extra length that would typically push against the AR buffer and recoil spring. The bolt, cam pin, firing pin and firing-pin retaining pin are influenced by the AR, however. The barrel extension on the Supreme

also appears similar to one on an AR. It allows the bolt lugs to rotate and lock into place before firing, and then unlock and eject the case as the lever is manipulated.

#### AT THE RANGE

For out-of-the-box testing purposes, the .300 Blackout sample was evaluated with factory sights. The .223 Rem. model was equipped with a discontinued Leupold VX-6HD 1-6x24mm CDS-ZL2. Accuracy testing was done at a 100 yards from a Caldwell Precision Turret Shooting Rest.

The .300 Blackout was most consistent with the Hornady Subsonic 190-grain SUB-X bullet, producing an average group size of 3½ inches. Federal's 150-grain Power-Shok JSP finished second in accuracy with an average group size of 5½ inches. The Barnes Precision 125-grain OTM displayed the greatest spread of 6½ inches. The accuracy data showed us that this rifle was more accurate and consistent with heavier bullets.

For the .223 Remington-chambered rifle, Hornady's Varmint Express 55-grain V-MAX bullet performed the best overall with an average group size of 2.08 inches.

However, the Winchester Match 69-grain MatchKing hollowpoint boattail (HPBT) was not far off with an average group size of 2.13 inches. Though the average group size was slightly larger, the Winchester ammo had the smallest group size with a .9-inch spread.

Few things are worse than a firearm that has a heavy, gritty or mushy trigger. A bad trigger can negatively effect accuracy, too. The trigger on the Supremes is described as an "adjustable match trigger." It lived up to the description, producing a clean break with almost no take-up. As far as trigger weight, it is adjustable from 3 to 4 pounds. G&A's sample .223 had an average trigger-pull weight of 3 pounds, 6.5 ounces, and the .300 Blackout was 3 pounds, 2 ounces.

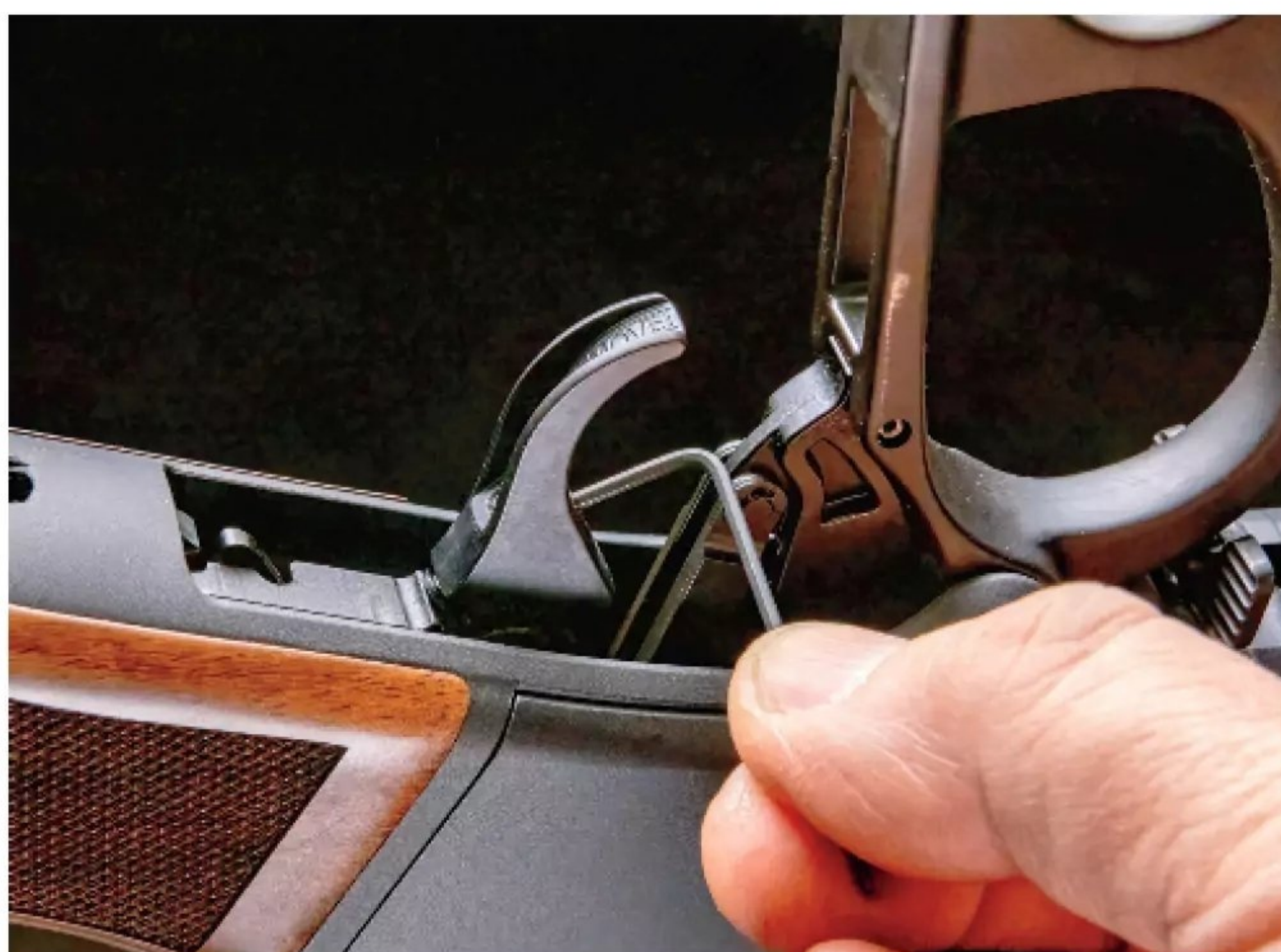
Not only are these rifles accurate, but the actions proved smooth to cycle. For a new lever action, it was impressive

that these actions had little resistance when chambering a new cartridge and extracting a spent case. Many new lever rifles require extra time on the range to work out a stiff action, but both Supremes were ready to run smoothly out of the box.

The Supreme design does not put a left-handed shooter at a disadvantage. (The primary evaluator is left-handed.) Unlike traditional lever actions with crossbolt safeties, the Supreme has a tang safety. The tang safety lets a left-

handed shooter engage or disengage the safety without breaking their grip. The magazine release on rifles is sometimes challenging for left-handed shooters, as with an AR. The mag release on the Supreme was centered on the bottom of the rifle in front of the triggerguard. It is a paddle design similar to an AK-style rifle, so when it is pushed forward, there is a noticeably positive release of the magazine. This neutral location allows a left-handed shooter to drop an empty magazine just like a right-handed shooter. The ambidextrous design eliminates the need to buy after-market parts to make it more efficient for lefties.

Reliability in a rifle is not solely based on design, though. A rifle that is difficult to take apart, or is time consuming to clean, can be a factor, too. The Supreme is simple to take apart and can be cleaned with the same tools used to clean an AR. To disassemble the rifle, there are two non-directional pins in the receiver that need to be pushed out. Once the upper and lower have been separated, the bolt carrier, bolt, chamber and barrel can be easily cleaned. Unlike traditional lever-actions, any concern of getting solvents in the trigger group is not an issue.



The curved trigger is adjustable using the supplied Allen wrench. Both Supreme models tested by G&A were tested with a pull weight of less than 4 pounds.





### PARTING SHOT

The ground-up engineering behind the Henry Supreme improved upon the limitations of the classic lever-action design. Unlike the tube magazine and barrel band on a traditional levergun, the detachable mag allows for the designers to free-float the barrel, improving its accuracy potential. The combination of AR-style internals paired with an AR-pattern mag was not only practical, but also made for a smooth, reliable and functionally fast action.

For hunting or personal protection, the Henry Supreme provides an accurate, reliable rifle with a classic appearance. The popularity of the Supreme line will only grow with the release of different calibers and configurations. **G&A**

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# GUNS&AMMO

## QUICK RESPONSE

### GIVE IT A SCAN!

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ANTONIO ACITELLI

**LEAPS IN TECHNOLOGY** create conveniences, but they can also become too frequent and overused. QR codes, for instance, are helpful to quickly arrive at a website instead of typing out a long URL, but I've visited more than a few restaurants where a QR code has (frustratingly) replaced a paper menu. That is why, as we consider how to integrate QR codes into Guns & Ammo, we'd like to invite the opinion of G&A's readers. Are you even interested in using them?

All of us understand the annoyance and concerns of being asked about data usage when visiting a new website, and the word "cookie" is seared into the brains of many internet-savvy users. One of the most thorough ways of getting the opinion from a large group of people is through surveys, but those can be time consuming and a hassle to fill out. That is why we have an easy solution for asking this question. The main QR code in this article simply leads to gunsandammo.

### LONG-RANGE TIPS FROM THE PROS

Contemporary shooting techniques that benefit competition, plinking, and hunting:



com, but we can learn how many times it's scanned by readers of the magazine. If you enjoy following up on reviews through QR codes, just give the above code a scan. It will count as a tally on the board.

If you're interested in more content-rich QR codes, G&A contributors have written several follow-on shooting guides based on field experience or training that they've attended. For example, Managing Editor Jack Oller recounted his experience training with SureFire products in Texas, learning how to move efficiently and effectively while firing on the move. For a more stationary shooting experience, Alfredo Rico attended a class with CS Tactical on long-range shooting. The tips and tricks shared by the instructors not only benefit long-range plinkers and competition shooters, but they might prove useful for hunters.

All that said, we'd appreciate it if

### SHOOTING ON THE MOVE

You don't need to set up a custom USPSA course each time you want to practice shooting and moving. Here are some simple range training concepts to get started:



you gave the QR code a scan if you're interested in using these. If not, we'd welcome your opinion as to why. Email us at [gaeditor@outdoorsg.com](mailto:gaeditor@outdoorsg.com) with feedback or suggestions!

## TOP COMMENTS

### In response to December "Connect" column, "Tools of the Trade":

*Dear Mr. Acitelli, I'm 76, a veteran, shooter (mainly CAS), instructor (primarily of young girls 10-18) at a local indoor club, and at an upstate outdoor range (adult women). I concentrate on women and girls to encourage people in a growing — but still generally underserved — group of influential people. Since I learned from my Minnesota father in the Virginia woods, I know the fun, adventure and sense of self and purpose firearms can bestow.*

*I always start with .22s, my first gun, a Ruger Single-Six Convertible, then go to a Ruger Wrangler Bird's head, and a Taurus double action — all loaded with even rounds despite that they all have transfer bars; safety first! With the younger girls, I stick with .22s. However, with the older girls and the women, I move to centerfire revolvers in .32 ACP, .32 S&W Long, .32 H&R Magnum, and a .327 FM Single-Seven for the most adventurist women. If they want to go to a semiauto as well, again I start with .22s and move to .32, .380 and maybe 9mm. All the time, I concentrate on their hand placement and comfort.*

*I think Guns & Ammo needs a series of articles for girls and women since their hands and comfort levels are quite different from men, who are the targets of 99-percent of the articles. If you could find a woman editor, it would give extra validity to her words. We need more encouragement, support and participation by our female population. I helped another girl get into college on a full scholarship for a rifle team, making another lifelong, firearms supporter. We need more. — Harding D., Email*

G&A editors Donna Boddington and Lisa Beuning took notes. — A. Acitelli



### SOUND OFF

Respond to articles, find community and join the conversation in the Guns & Ammo forums and by engaging with us on social media:



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KEITH WOOD

## The .32 H&R Magnum is making a comeback!

# REVOLVER REVIVAL

IN GUNS & AMMO'S JULY 2024 ISSUE, I wrote a feature on the history and virtues of the Smith & Wesson J-Frame revolver. In that piece, I mentioned the 632UC, which was developed in collaboration with Lipsey's, a firearm distributor known for several interesting special projects.

On the advice of some respected friends, I decided to order a 632UC for my own use (\$759, lipseys.com).

The "UC" stands for "Ultimate Carry," and this revolver includes several features that make it suitable for concealed-carry use. The 632UC is an aluminum and stainless-steel revolver chambered in .32 H&R Magnum. It has a six-round capacity thanks to that cartridge's dimensions, and it uses a 1 $\frac{7}{8}$ -inch barrel.

Instead of the narrow, steel integral sights found on traditional J-Frames, the UC has highly visible sights made by Texas-based XS Sights (xssights.com). The .140-inch front post uses a round green circle that surrounds a small tritium lamp. The drift-adjustable black rear sight is a .160-inch U-shaped notch. The combination of the two creates a functional sight picture that is fast and precise.

For the grips, the design team turned to VZ Grips in Florida to create G10 grips built specifically for this handgun (vzgrips.com). These grips fill the hand and create a high grip to control recoil and muzzle rise. They are a great complement to the real-world shootability of this handgun.

The folks at Smith & Wesson chamfered the charge holes on each chamber to make the UC easier to load, and the action was tuned for a smooth double-action trigger pull. Special springs were used alongside titanium pins engineered to enhance durability for a long service life.

The sights were designed to regulate with Lost River Ammunition's 100-grain Polycoat Wadcutter load, which

leaves the muzzle at almost 800 feet per second. I've taken deer with similar handloads out of a single-action Ruger Bisley, so I am confident in the performance. Federal Premium just announced a 68-grain Hydra-Shok Deep load in this chambering for 2025, which I plan to test. Recoil was controllable, especially when compared to +P .38 Special or .357 Magnum loads used in similar-weight revolvers.

My friend Jim Wall at Milt Sparks Holsters (miltsparks.com) made an inside-the-waistband (IWB) holster specifically for this J-Frame.

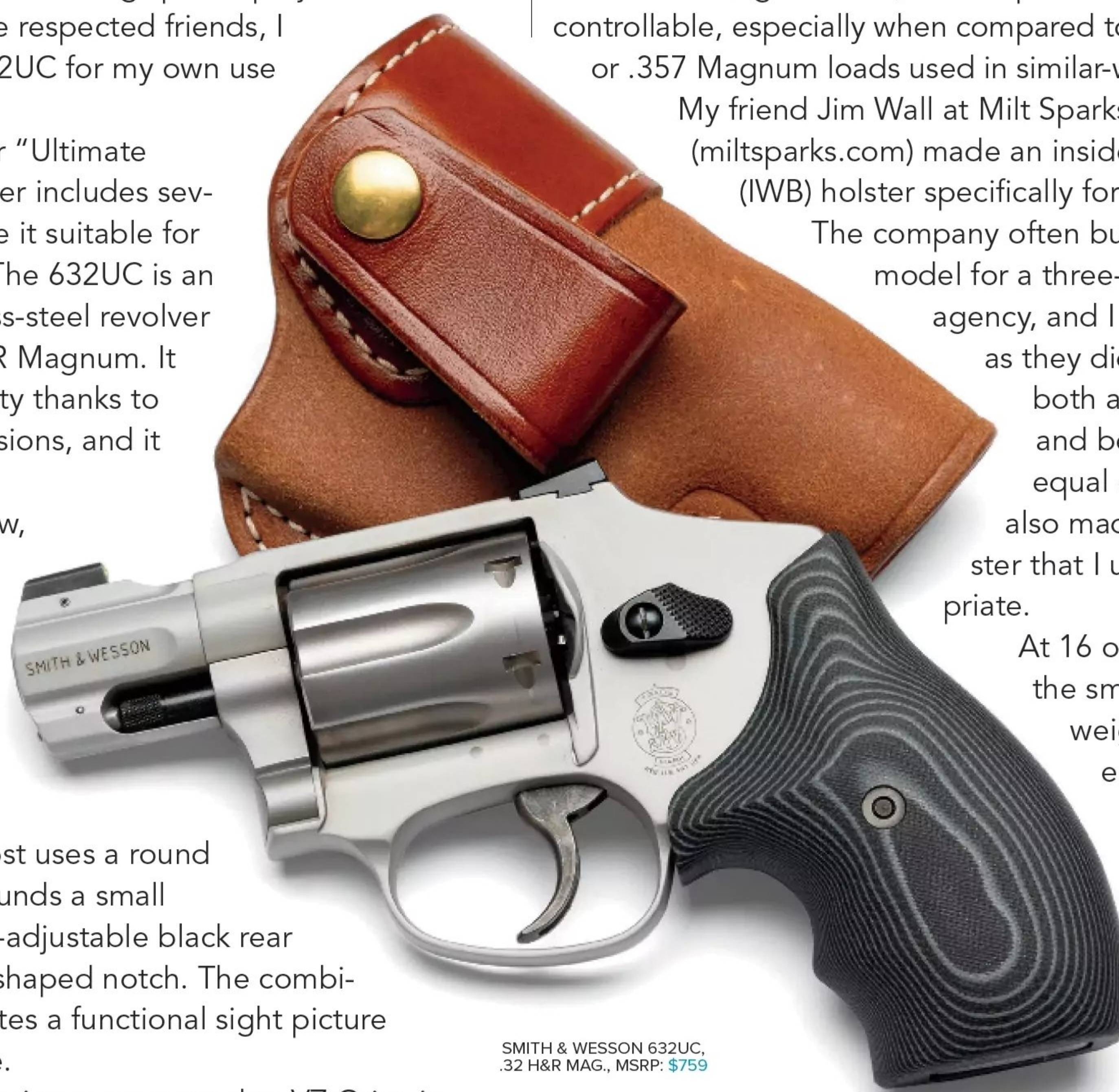
The company often built this same model for a three-letter intelligence agency, and I find it as useful as they did. I've carried it both appendix-style and behind the hip with equal comfort. Sparks also made a pocket holster that I use when appropriate.

At 16 ounces unloaded, the small and light-weight revolver is easy to conceal in almost any clothing combination. If you're weight-obsessed, Lipsey's also released a 2025 version

built on a titanium frame instead of an aluminum one; it shaves another 3 ounces.

Despite its size, this is a highly shootable revolver. The combination of the comfortable grips, great sights and smooth action make it the most user-friendly J-Frame that I've used.

There are some extremely capable self-defense handguns on the market that offer significant capacity and power advantages versus a snub-nose revolver. That said, sometimes I just want a gun. When I'm headed out the door and simply want to be armed, this is now what I reach for. 



SMITH & WESSON 632UC,  
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