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FIRST SHOT: At this writing, the COVID-19 pandemic, which held us hostage for weeks, has given way to rioting and violence over the murder of George Floyd by a rogue Minneapolis police officer. What began as righteous protests has devolved into random violence. Unbelievably, many city leaders have chosen to turn a blind eye rather

than make the tough political decision to enforce the rule of law, leaving law-abiding citizens to fend for themselves like never before. Fortunately for Combat Handgun readers, such an eventuality wasn't completely unexpected. Most have spent decades building the knowledge and skills necessary to protect themselves and their families. With fea-

tures like our current look at the 5,000-plus ways (that's what the engineers told us!) the new ZRODelta Modulus can be configured, we've offered the best content on handguns, tactics and gear available for the past 40 years. Given the current situation, such information is more relevant now than ever. Enjoy! —Mark Chesnut

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DRAGONIAN COVID-19 SHUTDOWNS
PROVED JUST HOW DANGEROUS
BUREAUCRATIC HURDLES CAN BE

BY MASSAD AYOUB



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When the coronavirus pandemic locked down America in the spring of 2020, many states wisely declared gun shops to be “essential” businesses under the umbrella of safety and security. But that didn’t prevent many lesser officials from ordering local gun dealers to close, triggering lawsuits from the Second Amendment Foundation and others.

That said, even if the shops were open, some states require waiting periods. In 2018, a RAND report stated, “A few jurisdictions impose a waiting period to purchase a firearm. For example, California and the District of Columbia require a 10-day waiting period before

buyers take possession of a new firearm. In Hawaii, buyers must wait 14 days to receive a permit to purchase a firearm. Other states impose waiting periods only for handguns or only for handguns and assault rifles.”

THE PERFECT STORM

During the virus shutdown, gun shops were swamped with customers, many of whom were first-time buyers. Why? The news was full of speculation that the economy and supply chain would collapse. Toilet paper and hand sanitizer had already disappeared from store shelves. Police departments were down as much as 20 percent in manpower in some areas. After all, cops are first responders who deal with the public,

including those infected with COVID-19, and when a single officer tested positive, many of his or her coworkers had to be quarantined, too. Thus, patrols and response times slowed. Clerical personnel who processed things like firearms permits were overburdened, short-handed and seen as “less essential,” causing some agencies to discontinue or postpone permit processing.

At the same time, activists demanded the release of criminal suspects from jails and convicted felons from prison, arguing that such confinement was a deadly petri dish in which the virus would spread like wildfire. Soon, at least 50 of the prisoners released from Rikers Island promptly committed new crimes. In Florida, one released prisoner was arrested for committing murder. Factor

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in these trends and it makes sense why people would want to be able to protect themselves. Yet some officials did all they could to deny them that ability.

During this period in 2020, many realized that gun-control laws had left them helpless at a very bad time. They wondered what would happen if they needed a gun while they waited for the bureaucracy to decide if they could in fact acquire one. But history has already answered that question.

A CLASSIC EXAMPLE

Carol Bowne, 39 years old, had the misfortune of being in a relationship with a brutal 45-year-old named Michael Eitel, who had a prior conviction for kidnapping. She eventually found the courage to get away from him, but his violent threats forced her to get a restraining order against him.

Perhaps she knew Michael would disregard the restraining order, so she decided that she needed a gun to protect herself. Unfortunately, she lived in

→
New Jersey resident Carol Bowne was murdered by her violent ex-boyfriend while she was waiting for her handgun permit to be approved.



New Jersey, where a citizen needs a permit just to purchase a handgun, let alone carry one. She filled out the necessary paperwork on April 21, 2015. As Fox News later reported, “New Jersey’s gun laws are among the nation’s strictest, but law-abiding citizens are eligible to purchase and possess handguns after filling out forms available at their local police stations, submitting to a background check on any possible criminal history or mental health issues, giving fingerprints and paying a fee. Once those steps are taken, local police conduct a 14-point investigation, and the chief is supposed to approve or deny for cause within 30 days.”

As she waited for approval, she had security cameras installed at her home. The waiting period dragged on. By June, she had still heard nothing, so she went to the police station to inquire about her permit to purchase a gun, only to learn that it had not been processed. New Jersey advocates for gun owners would later state that some police chiefs there allowed the permit process to drag on for months.

Two days later, Michael caught her in her driveway and stabbed her to death, all in front of her surveillance cameras. By the time the police caught up with him, he’d had the good grace to commit suicide in another ex-girlfriend’s garage. It was cold comfort for those who had loved Carol Bowne. The story’s headline should have read, “Unlucky stalker brings knife to gunfight.” Instead, it ended up reading, “Stalker murders helpless victim.”

WHAT CAN WE DO?

If you think you might ever need a gun, buy one now. Those who live in what seems like a perfectly safe bubble can become a stalker’s victim overnight and a home-invasion victim even sooner. Our experience with the pandemic shows that if you wait to buy toilet paper until after others have already bought out the entire supply in a panic—like waiting to buy a generator until you hear the emergency hurricane warning—you’re too late. The same is true of firearms and ammunition to protect self and family.

An especially cruel side effect of the pandemic was that the shutdown rendered most formal firearms safety and self-defense training courses temporarily unavailable to a public that needed it, especially first-time buyers. “Better to have and not need than need and not have” has always been a mantra of responsible gun owners, and it was never truer than during the pandemic.



“IF YOU THINK YOU MIGHT EVER NEED A GUN, BUY ONE NOW.”

“...GET A PERMIT TO CARRY BEFORE YOU THINK YOU’LL NEED IT.”

Another related lesson: Get a permit to carry before you think you’ll need it. Local and state governments often work slowly, and emergencies won’t wait. And we should support permit-less or “constitutional” carry, which allows law-abiding adults to carry loaded and concealed handguns in public without any special license. The “blood in the streets” predictions of those who oppose such legislation have not come to pass. Currently, Alaska, Arizona, Arkansas, Idaho, Kansas, Kentucky, Maine, Mississippi, Missouri, New

Hampshire, North Dakota, Oklahoma, South Dakota, Vermont, West Virginia and Wyoming do not require a permit to carry a loaded firearm concealed for any person of age who is not prohibited from owning a firearm. Permit-less carry in North Dakota and Wyoming only applies to residents; non-residents must have a permit to carry a concealed handgun in these states. All of the aforementioned jurisdictions do not require a permit to openly carry, either, except for North Dakota and certain localities in Missouri.

If you’re reading this magazine, you’re probably already a gun owner and hopefully able to carry, emergency or not. But remember all of those people who bought their first firearms during the pandemic? Those family members, neighbors and friends will now look to you as the resident gun expert. Please teach them how to be safe and prepared, and remind them of what we’ve discussed here. Your solid example could honestly mean the difference in their survival during the next unforeseen emergency. **CH**

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**WHAT'S
IN YOUR**



← Lena Miculek relies on guns that are mostly stock, including the 12-gauge Mossberg 940 JM Pro (left) and 9mm Sig Sauer P320 XFive Legion (below).

RANGE BAG?

LENA MICULEK GIVES US THE GOODS ON HER TOP GUNS AND GEAR

BY KAREN HUNTER

➔ Lena Miculek has been hitting the range and attending shooting competitions since she was three months old. But considering that she's the daughter of legendary shooters Jerry Miculek and Kay Clark-Miculek, this isn't much of a surprise. Shooting is very much a part of her DNA, and she competed in her first event, the Sportsman's Team Challenge, at just 8 years old. Not quite big enough for a shotgun at the

time, Lena competed with a .22 LR rifle and pistol, winning what she describes as "a big giant medal" for being the youngest competitor, which wasn't an actual category. Due to Lena's passion for competition, they later added a new "sub junior" category for her and others her age. It seems Lena was already making an impact at 8 years old.

Now she's one of the greatest competitive shooters of our time, yet she's easily the sweetest

and humblest person I've ever had the joy of meeting. Lena's the kind of person who puts you at ease and makes you feel like you've known each other for years—all while being the fiercest competitor you've ever seen. She currently shoots for Team Sig, and while there isn't enough space here to list all of her accomplishments, I narrowed it down by asking her for her personal favorite. Without any hesitation, she said it would have to be her

3-Gun National Shoot-Off wins. "You qualify through multiple matches, then at the end, you have to face off with a back-to-back shoot-off. I've won everything they've put on except for one match and one qualifying shoot-off. This type of competition is just in my blood. My adrenaline gets going along with my competitive nature, and it's on! So much so that I want to look my competitor in the eyes before we take off! I love it!"

THE FIREPOWER

For competitions, Lena uses a Sig Sauer P320 XFive Legion 9mm pistol that is pretty close to factory stock. She also uses a Sig MCX as well as a Sig MPX with a fully adjustable prototype stock that should become a factory option soon. Lena

is a mostly no-frills shooter who runs the same guns as the rest of us—just faster and more accurately. Her previous shotgun was a 12-gauge Mossberg 930 that she used to win world championships since 2012. But this year she switched to the new 940 JM Pro that Mossberg recently released.

What about the rest of her gear? Well, I'll be quite blunt and say that Lena is naturally talented and doesn't need much help from her range bag. But I peeked inside anyway to find something—anything—that would give an everyday shooter some hope of one day shooting like her. The closest thing I found would be some energy gummies that help her stay alert during matches. Outside of that, Lena had the basics that every shooter needs, including Oakley Standard Issue Tombstone shooting glasses, Peltor earmuffs, Fiocchi's 3G+JM birdshot and buckshot shells, and Sig Sauer rifle and pistol ammo.

For cleaning and maintenance, Lena carries and utilizes a full line of Hoppe's products. I also found some run-of-the-mill foam earplugs that Lena uses under her earmuffs to save her hearing as much as possible. Finally, I also found it endearing that she carries a set of hand warmers year-round because she's terrified of getting cold.

SAGE ADVICE

Obviously, I don't think her energy gummies have any magical powers, so I asked Lena to offer some



↑ To protect herself and her loved ones when she's off the range, Lena carries either a Sig P238 in .380 ACP (left) or a P365 in 9mm (right).

advice that might help us all improve our shooting skills, and she didn't miss a beat. "If you're new to owning a firearm, get training," she said. "I've heard more horror stories of bad experiences from a lack of training than anything else. The Sig Sauer Academy is a great option for a training facility with top-notch instruction.

"If you're new to competition shooting, my advice would be to try before you buy! Whatever you have, no matter what, just show up with it and use it. Don't

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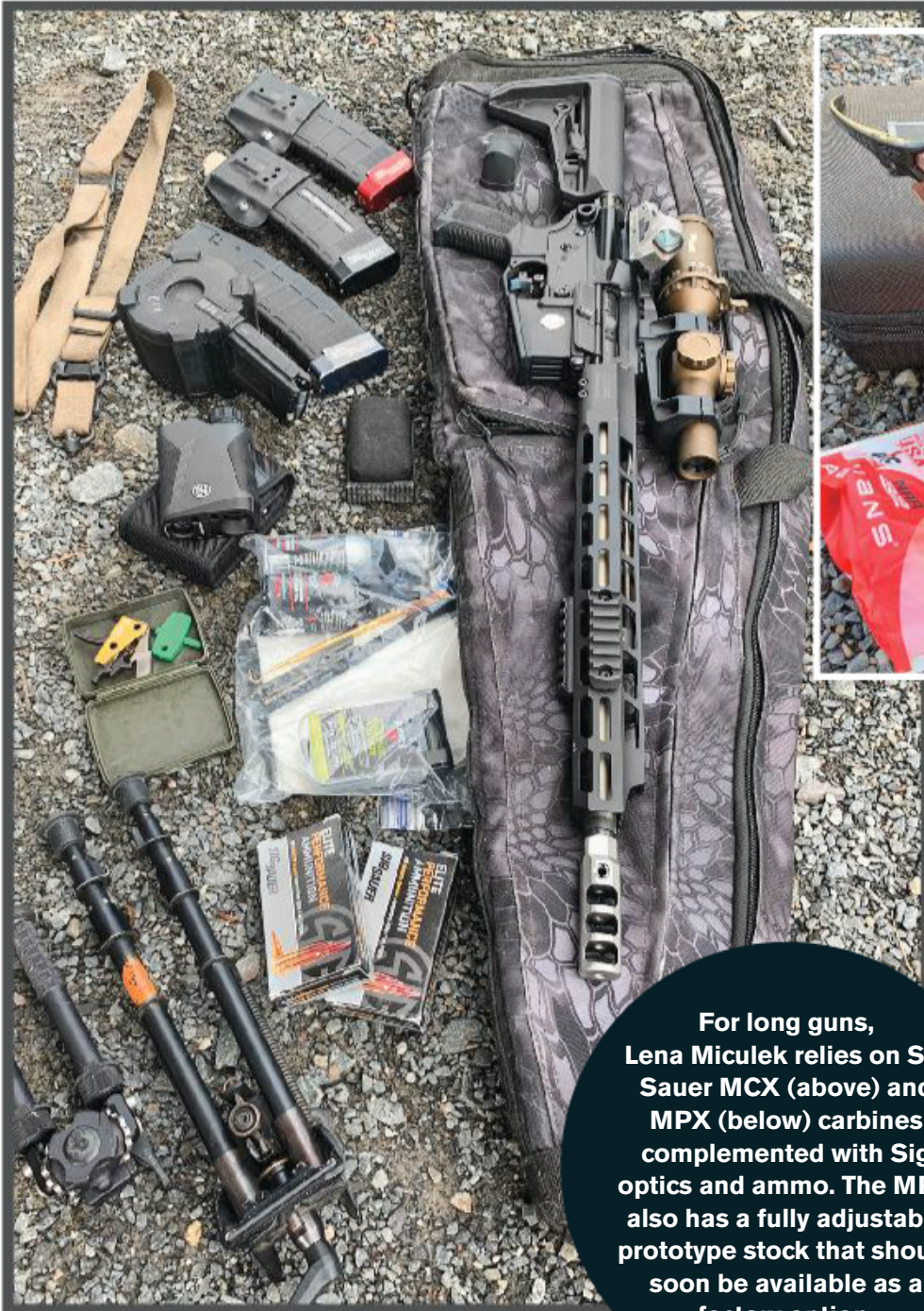


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For long guns, Lena Miculek relies on Sig Sauer MCX (above) and MPX (below) carbines complemented with Sig optics and ammo. The MPX also has a fully adjustable prototype stock that should soon be available as a factory option.

feel like there's a perfect standard. Show up and tell them you're new. Trust me. They'll be eager to put guns and products in your hands to try out. Most 3-Gunners are eager and excited to share, so it's a great way to discover new products without having to waste money on something that won't work."

In addition to being one of the best competitive shooters in the arena today, Lena is also

◀ Like other competitors, Lena uses Oakley Standard Issue Tombstone shooting glasses, and to protect her hearing, she wears foam ear-plugs under Peltor earmuffs.

a strong advocate for the Second Amendment, not only in voice but actively carrying daily. She currently uses two different guns for concealed carry: a Sig P365 in 9mm and a Sig P238 in .380 ACP.

When I asked her why she carried, her answer couldn't have been more honorable: "Guns and the Second Amendment have always been a part of my life. There have always been powerful people threatening to take away our gun rights. I'm hopeful that this won't happen. Right now, everyone seems to be losing it with this quarantine, but with my training and carry license, I'm confident I can protect myself. I feel that it is my duty to carry and protect myself because I have the training and the skills to do so.

"If I decide not to carry one day and something bad happens to someone else because they had to put their life on the line, that's on me because I didn't take responsibility for myself. To me, it's more stressful to call someone else to risk their life. I'm so thankful for our law enforcement officers and all they do, but I'd rather not have to always depend on them and instead be an advocate of my own safety. The worst possible scenario for me is to have the ability to be vigilant and prepared and just decide not to one day, then something happens that forces someone else to lay their life on the line. That's just never going to happen."



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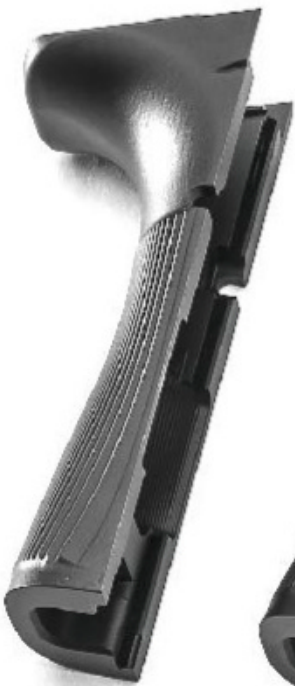


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THE MODULUS

A DETAILED LOOK AT ZRODELTA'S NEW MODULAR 9MM MASTERPIECE



New technology. Refined. The ultimate. These are all marketing catch-phrases we've come to expect in the gun world. I totally get it, and I'm very happy whenever the new product actually lives up to the hype. But one word is usually a buzzkill for me: modular. Whenever that pops up, I roll my eyes and shake my head. It's not that I don't think it exists—it's just that it never seems to be done well.

One of the challenges with modularity is that it all starts out with good intentions, then cascades into a void of nonessential possibilities and options that won't necessarily improve the shooter's experience. It creates a flood of options and parts but complicates things with no clear advantages of one over the other. That might not be true all the time, but I can think of few exceptions. Modularity in accessories or other supportive products is one thing, but a truly modular weapon is difficult to make. However, I believe ZRODelta has done just that with the Modulus.

THE SHAPESHIFTER

Taking the oversimplification route, I'll say that the Modulus might first pass for a Glock. There's no denying that by its looks, dimensions and operation, but it's not a Glock. It is its own design—one that has been thoroughly worked over to ensure that it's a solid-functioning pistol with a character all its own. That said, the Modulus is still compatible with aftermarket Glock accessories, including fire control components, Gen3 sights, Gen3 slides and Gen5 barrels.

The heart of the pistol is its Type III hardcoat anodized 7075-T6 aluminum frame, which supports the entire Modulus platform, including all of the interchangeable backstraps, frontstraps, magazine wells and dust covers. Changing any or all of these components results in a different configuration to fit your needs or desires and affects the size, shape, ergonomics and even magazine capacity. Want a compact everyday-carry piece? Try the Modulus. Want a full-size gun for duty or general shooting? The Modulus wins again. Or how about a large pistol

—| BY SEAN UTLEY |—



← ZRODelta currently offers three different slide assemblies for the Modulus (from left to right): Extended, Duty and Compact.

SPEC BOX

ZRODELTA MODULUS

CALIBER:	9mm
BARREL:	4, 4.5 or 5.31 inches
OA LENGTH:	6.85-8.15 inches
WEIGHT:	23.5 ounces (empty)
GRIP:	Aluminum
SIGHTS:	Fixed
ACTION:	Striker-fired
FINISH:	Black nitride
CAPACITY:	15+1, 17+1
MSRP:	\$919 (Compact)

PERFORMANCE

CONFIGURATION	VELOCITY	ACCURACY
Compact	1,097	3.00
Duty	1,135	2.72
Extended	1,154	1.70

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All three Modulus slide assemblies are pre-milled to accept today's most popular reflex sights.

that's ready for optics and competition? You guessed it: the Modulus.

However, even though the Modulus system has several components that can be switched out, everything is simple and well executed. For example, there are two frontstraps available—one with finger grooves and one without. Three different backstraps are available, too, including the standard version, another with a beavertail and an enhanced 1911 backstrap. Each one has a different grip angle and affects how your hand interacts with the pistol.

The Modulus can accept three different dust covers—Compact, Duty and Extended—that are 2.25, 2.72 and 3.56 inches long with three, four and six Picatinny rail slots, respectively. ZRODelta's special

locking design ensures that the dust covers fit properly and return to zero. Then there are the magazine wells. Again, Compact, Duty and Extended versions are available, and they're all made from 7075-T6 aluminum.

As you probably already guessed, there are Compact, Duty and Extended slide assemblies for the Modulus that come with cutouts for miniature reflex sights. ZRODelta offers mounting plates to support the U.S. Optics DRS, Trijicon RMR, Leupold DeltaPoint Pro, Vortex Venom, Shield RMSc and JPoint.

DIVING IN

Your first step to getting into the Modulus is buying the complete Compact. This Glock-19-sized pistol can be built up and added to because it has that all-important billet-crafted aluminum frame necessary for the system. The slide is made of 17-4PH stainless steel, and it uses a 4.01-inch barrel. The gun is 6.85 inches long and weighs 23.5 ounces unloaded. And I'll go ahead and say that it feels solid in your hand and is quite a smooth shooter. In fact, the Compact





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THE MODULUS



The heart of the Modulus system is the frame, which is crafted from durable 7075-T6 aluminum and includes the fire control unit.



from across the room and still have it seat properly. That's how easy it is to reload with this setup.

DEPLOYMENT READY

For this article, I received the complete ZRODelta Modulus "Deployment Kit," which includes everything you need to customize the pistol. All of the components come in a large case with the required tools. It's an almost overwhelming presentation, but don't worry—nothing's that difficult here.

I started out shooting the Compact and immediately loved it. I'm no fan of the Glock grip angle, but the Modulus' is different, making presentations much more natural. And no matter my

speed, fast or slow, the 9mm bullets went exactly where I wanted them to go. I figured I'd need time to get used to the pistol, but that simply wasn't the case.

The fact that the Modulus is all steel and aluminum played games with my head, too. I fully expected it to be a harsh, vibration-prone pistol since the grip is void of any polymer or rubber, but I was way off base. The Modulus is indeed one smooth operator, and it's extremely comfortable in the hand, regardless of the configuration.

After running the Compact, I headed to the back of my SUV and changed to the Duty length for several rounds, then switched to the Extended. I love the



configuration might actually be my favorite, especially since it's ready for optics.

The next size up is the Duty configuration, which features a 4.58-inch barrel for an overall length of 7.32 inches. While you can use the smaller magazine well of the Compact setup, the larger size of the Duty version allows for a protected 17-round magazine—meaning the magazine doesn't protrude from the bottom of the mag well. This slightly larger mag well has a 0.17-inch flare and is 1.28 inches tall compared to the compact's 0.63-inch height.

While it might sound crazy that you can literally swap mag wells out and not have serious tolerance issues, it's true. ZRODelta has created a "clip-n-click" system that means the structural integrity of the frame stays intact even with the different accessories and during hard use. The Duty model also features a longer dust cover to accommodate the longer slide, barrel and spring assembly.

Then there's the Mac Daddy of them all, the Extended version.

Everything is much grander here with the 5.31-inch barrel, which brings the overall length to 8.15 inches. This of course might be best suited for those competitive outings or just grins and giggles on the range. The mag well attachment adds another 1.72 inches to the pistol's height, and it has a generous 0.35-inch flare to accommodate extended magazines. OK, I'm being modest. You could probably throw a magazine into the gun



The frame accepts different backstraps, dust covers and magazine wells for the ultimate in customization.

massiveness of the Extended version coupled with the U.S. Optics DRS. With the humongous mag well on board, it was just too much fun. The Modulus has great handling characteristics and tracks extremely well. By the end of the session, I loved the Compact and was having a tough time deciding if the Extended configuration was better or not. It seems like a no-brainer that the larger would be the most fun, but the Compact configuration is so good.

For the sake of simplicity, I randomly chose one brand of ammo to use in each Modulus configuration for the accuracy and velocity testing: Hornady's 115-grain FTXs. I set up my target at 25 yards, which seemed like a good balance for all three configurations.

My best group with the Compact was 3 inches at that distance, while the Duty and Extended produced 2.72- and 1.7-inch groups, respectively. It's clear that having the optic mounted on the Extended setup made all the difference, especially in terms of consistency. That said, I would take the two smaller configurations' numbers with a grain of salt and presume much better results with an optic on board as opposed to the stock sights.

MODULAR MACHINE

I was a huge skeptic at first, but I can honestly say that the ZRODelta Modulus is a seriously kickass piece of kit. I really



↑
The author's best groups came with the gun set up in the Extended configuration, and the huge mag well made for lightning-fast reloads.




like it and loved shooting it. It's quite amazing to think that the entire gun is modular and can be truly set up the way you want it. It's accurate, solid and should remain that way for many years and rounds to come.

Many "cool" new products come to market every year, but the Modulus has to be one of the coolest and most usable. The Compact is the foundation for the Modulus and has an MSRP of \$919. The Duty conversion is an



"THE MODULUS IS INDEED ONE SMOOTH OPERATOR, AND IT'S EXTREMELY COMFORTABLE IN THE HAND, REGARDLESS OF THE CONFIGURATION."

additional \$665, and the Extended is \$725. Each conversion comes with a complete slide assembly (including the barrel and recoil spring), dust cover and magazine well extension.

If you want to be a baller, just man up and go for the full Deployment Kit, which goes for \$1,580 on top of the \$919 for the compact. This kit includes two extra slides, dust covers, two extra backstraps, one extra frontstrap and two mag well extensions. So, for roughly \$2,500, you can have it all—a truly customizable pistol with endless possibilities. It's modular done right. For more information, visit zrodelta.com. 

Editor's Note: For more video content on the Modulus for CH sister publication Ballistic, make sure you head to ballisticmag.com.



MIDSIZE NINE

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Fighter





IWI'S ALL-STEEL JERICHO 941 BRINGS THE SPEED AND ACCURACY FOR CONCEALED CARRY

— BY MATT BERGER —

Back in the early 1990s, I remember checking out the Magnum Research Baby Eagle, a sharp-looking piece in stainless steel. Unfortunately, it had a double-action first shot, and as a devotee of single-action pistols, I ended up passing on the gun after trying it.

The forerunner of the pistol was first imported by KBI of Pennsylvania, then by Mossberg as the Uzi Eagle. Magnum Research then began marketing it as the Baby Eagle (some were even marked “Desert Eagle Pistol”). More recently, IWI US began importing both steel- and polymer-framed versions as the Jericho 941 in 2015.

NEXT-GEN STYLING

Based on the CZ 75, the Jericho 941 was named after its original chamberings: the 9mm and .41 Action Express. Eventually, the .40 S&W pushed the .41AE out of the market, and the caliber was dropped. And while previous iterations of the pistol used a

slide-mounted safety/decocker, IWI's current models have more ergonomic frame-mounted safeties that should appeal to American shooters, allowing for “cocked and locked” carry like a 1911. I personally prefer a single-action first shot, but this configuration offers the best of both worlds for those who prefer a long, heavy double-action pull at first as well. Just remember: This is a safety and not a decocker.

One of the first aesthetic differences you'll notice between the CZ 75 and Jericho 941 are the cuts along the latter's slide, shaving weight and bringing it to a thin, serrated top. The slide itself is machined from a forging, and the low-profile, drift-adjustable, three-dot sights are excellent for concealed carry. The ejection port has also been lowered and scalloped, and the extractor tension comes from an internal spring.

As with other CZ-75-style pistols, the Jericho 941's slide rides on rails set within the frame. This keeps the slide-to-frame fit very tight and lowers the bore axis for enhanced accuracy and reduced muzzle rise. But you also have a lot less real estate for overhand racking. However, the rear cocking serrations on the Jericho 941 are pretty deep and aggressive.

As I mentioned, IWI US offers both polymer- and steel-framed models, but I got my hands on the midsize, steel-framed 9mm, or FS9, for this article,



IWI US offers a few different versions of the Jericho 941, but the FS9 is an all-steel 9mm model with a shorter 3.8-inch barrel for everyday carry.



SPEC BOX

IWI JERICHO 941 FS9

CALIBER:	9mm
BARREL:	3.8 inches
OA LENGTH:	7.6 inches
WEIGHT:	31.2 ounces (empty)
GRIPS:	Polymer
SIGHT:	Three-dot
ACTION:	DA/SA
FINISH:	Matte black
CAPACITY:	16+1
MSRP:	\$655

PERFORMANCE

LOAD	VELOCITY	ACCURACY
Black Hills 124 FMJ	1,105	2.00
CCI Blazer 124 FMJ	1,112	3.00
Federal 124 JHP	1,138	2.63
Hornady 124 TAP	1,148	2.75
Magtech 124 FMC	1,129	2.00

Bullet weight measured in grains, velocity in fps by chronograph and accuracy in inches for best five-shot groups at 25 yards.



From the front, it's easy to see how the slide fits within the frame for a tighter lockup. Also note the accessory rail.

which has a fully ramped, cold-hammer-forged, 3.8-inch, chrome-moly-vanadium barrel with polygonal 1-in-10-inch-twist rifling. A full-length steel guide rod helps the gun run smoothly as well.

Beginning as a forging, the CNC-machined frame bears a full-length dust cover and an accessory rail. The backstrap is serrated and features an extended beavertail. Serrations also adorn the frontstrap and leading face of the triggerguard. The

controls, including the slide lock, thumb safety and magazine release, are all extended and serrated, but in a nice touch, all of their edges have been beveled. The triggerguard is also undercut significantly more than most CZ-75-pattern pistols.

The trigger itself is curved with a smooth, radiused face. The hammer narrows to a point at the rear and bears serrations on its cocking surface. This might come in handy if lowering the hammer on a live round is your thing.

The grips are made of polymer and don't really add much traction to the package, so I decided to replace them with a set of black/gray checkered Hogue G10 grips to really enhance the grip frame. I think they really boost the aesthetics, too.

Overall, the fit and finish are superb, and the machine work is extra clean. The external steel parts are finished in KG GunKote 446, which is resistant to abrasion, wear, heat and corrosion while being non-reflective and self-lubricating.



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The Jericho 941 FS9's controls are all large and easy to operate, including the thumb safety and serrated hammer.

“The felt recoil was very light thanks to the Jericho 941’s all-steel construction and low bore axis.”

TRIGGER TIME

I'll cut right to the chase and say that the Jericho 941's single-action trigger pull was nothing short of amazing. What's more, after dry firing only a dozen or so shots, the single-action pull smoothed up noticeably. The triggers on CZ-pattern pistols have the feel of a rolling break, as opposed to a crisp, linear type. With my test gun, the single-action trigger had about 0.13 inches of slack before I felt resistance, then about another 0.13 inches of creep until it broke at 4 pounds. This left between 0.06 and 1.13 inches of overtravel. The reset occurred after letting the trigger back out about 0.25 inches.

I must stress that all of these observations are from slowly viewing the pistol from the side and taking note of every stage of the trigger. The shoot-

er's perception behind the pistol is of a simple, incredibly smooth squeeze into that rolling break. For those who want a double-action pull on the first shot, the Jericho 941 has a long and heavy (beyond 8 pounds, the limit of my gauge) double-action pull that is smooth and has two stages. It honestly feels like a good revolver's trigger.

Working the slide revealed a very tight fit with barely any play between the slide and frame, and a ball-bearing smooth action. As I mentioned earlier, the rear cocking serrations are aggressive, and I had no problems racking the slide with my normal overhand grip. To be specific, I have a strong grip and large hands.

Before I hit the range, I quickly oiled the Jericho 941 with Wolf All-In-One Gun Oil & Cleaner, which I've been using for years because I've had good luck with its lubricating properties and corrosion protection, and it's made the U.S.A. To measure the pistol's accuracy, I set up my targets at 25 yards and proceeded to shoot several five-shot groups with loads from Black Hills, CCI, Federal, Hornady and Magtech. You can see the full results in the performance table, but my best groups came with the 124-grain Black Hills and Magtech rounds.

The felt recoil was very light thanks to the Jericho 941's all-steel construction



Ready to go right out of the box, the Jericho 941 comes with a Kydex paddle holster as well as a double mag carrier.





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and low bore axis. This in turn made it easy to get back on target for quick follow-up shots. The pistol's relatively compact dimensions made for quick draws and presentations as well. The three-dot sights were easy to pick up and align, and I didn't have any issues with snags on clothing.

For this test, I was lucky to use a Panther open-top rig from Craft Holsters. Made from 7-ounce cowhide, the pancake-style holster is perfectly formed to the gun and double stitched for retention and durability while offering a slight forward cant. Black and brown versions are available, but my latter version was quite handsome and performed very well. It's a quality holster at an unbeatable price.

Finally, reloading was quick and easy thanks to the large magazine well, and the slide would typically slam back into battery after I shoved a fresh mag into the frame. The frame-mounted safety clicked positively on and off, and provided more purchase than similar

guns without snagging or being abrasive during rigorous shooting.

Most importantly, I experienced zero failures to feed throughout my testing. And it's worth noting that some of my MEC-GAR +2 magazines fed flawlessly in the Jericho 941, but they sometimes

failed to lock the slide back after the last round was fired. However, the included magazines never had this problem.



While the author tested a model with a steel frame, IWI US also offers a polymer-framed version that is 5.6 ounces lighter as well.



GOOD TO GO

IWI's Jericho 941 FS9 takes everything great about the CZ 75 and packs it into a smaller, more ergonomic pistol. I really appreciate the frame-mounted safety, which allows for "cocked and locked" carry without getting

in the way. In fact, all of the controls that many shooters would spend extra on to replace with enhanced parts are already there. The Jericho 941 also has the best single-action trigger I've experienced in a pistol of this design, and a smooth (albeit long and heavy) double-action trigger pull for those who want a little added safety for concealed carry.

Between the ergonomics, single-action trigger and all-steel construction, IWI gives you a handgun that feels natural in the hand, has very little felt recoil and is so easy to shoot accurately that it feels like cheating. IWI has accomplished all of this in a proven platform that is resolutely reliable at modest price for its market. I'm surprised the Jericho 941 hasn't had more success in the U.S. market than it has, as those who try it will likely come to appreciate the same attributes that have helped it serve with the Israeli Defense Forces.

I honestly liked my test gun so much that I ended up buying it. The grips were my only point of contention, and I quickly replaced them. That's it. The rest of the gun was good to go. For more information, visit iwi.us.



The author's best five-shot groups at 25 yards came with the 124-grain Black Hills FMJ and Magtech FMC loads.

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DIY BUILD



KILLER

CLONE



CREATING A CUSTOM G19 WITH HELP FROM POLYMER80 AND RIVAL ARMS

BY JAY LANGSTON

I've always felt that Glocks are like hammers—they're useful tools that come in enough sizes, shapes and weights (calibers) to get the job done. I shoot thousands of rounds of pistol ammo every year, but I wasn't really bitten by the Glock bug until I got a chance to build a clone gun.

A few years ago, I hired a former Marine as a book editor for a small publishing company. He spent more than his share of time in Iraq hunting for bad guys. Since we were publishing gun books, we had a lot of time to discuss a broad array of gun-related topics and pulled triggers every chance we could. Ryan was a big Glock fan and told me that the first thing he did when he got deployed was get rid of his issued M9 and replace it with his own G17.

That got my attention. I had spent four years listening to a lot of M9s being fired in the factory testing chamber directly below my office at Beretta in Accokeek, Maryland, and I had a healthy respect for the 92-series pistols that were being cranked out on a daily basis. So it really struck me that Ryan had chosen a Glock when he could carry any pistol he could afford. But it was the DIY aspect that got me here.

THE FOUNDATION

A few months ago, I did a story on Polymer80, a company known for producing reinforced-polymer frames and receivers for Glocks and ARs that are 80-percent complete. You still have to drill out a few holes to complete each receiver, but Polymer80 supplies special jigs and tools for that, and once it's done, it doesn't need any special markings or serial number.

At the time, I got to work on an 80-percent AR-10-style receiver, but the company's national chief of sales, Dan McCalmon, who lives about 10 minutes down the road from me, first introduced me to Polymer80's Glock frames. Then it wasn't long before I received an assignment to check out Rival Arms' aftermarket Glock parts. I could already see a perfect storm of pistol parts brewing on the horizon.

I have a couple of pistol suppressors that don't get enough use, so I decided to build a 9mm G19 clone with components from Polymer80 and Rival Arms. Polymer80's line of pistol frame kits continues to expand and improve, but I settled on the PF940C 80-Percent Compact Pistol Frame Kit for my build. The PF940C is compatible with G19/G23 Gen3 components and features grip stippling reminiscent of skateboard tape. It also has an extended beavertail to help shooters with big hands like me avoid "slide bite," a double-undercut triggerguard and thumb grooves on both sides for better ergonomics and control.

Instead of buying a stock G19, the author decided to create his own suppressor-ready version with a Polymer80 frame, a Rival Arms barrel and slide, and more.



KILLER CLONE



Completing the frame just requires a few extra parts, including pins, the fire control unit, the magazine release and the slide stop.

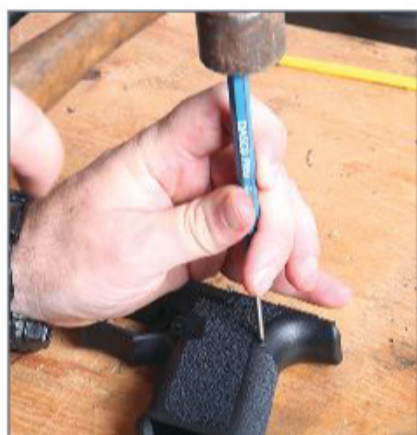
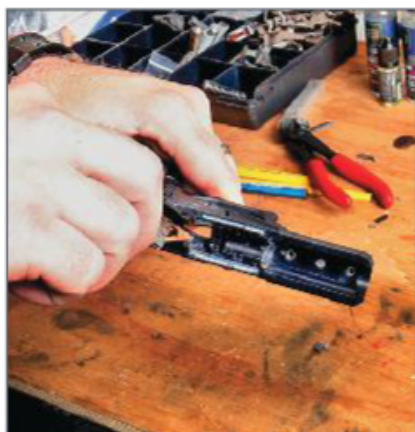
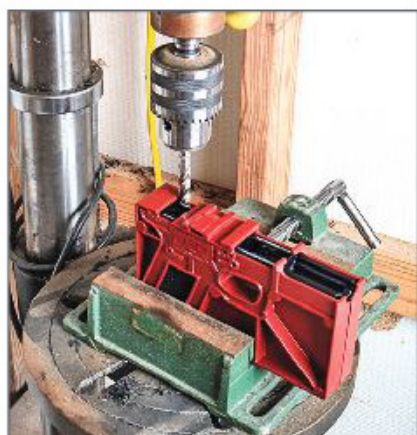
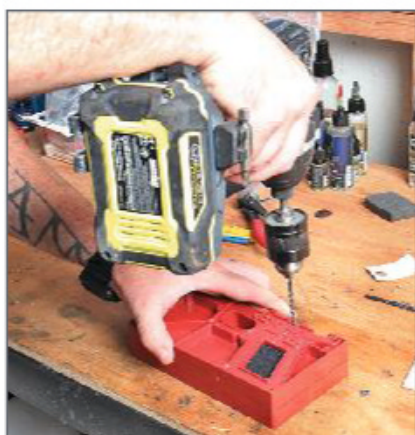


Completing the frame is pretty simple, but Polymer80 offers a few warnings. First, avoid drilling pinholes in the frame with a drill press. Instead, use a bench vise and a hand drill. And you should only use Loctite approved for contact with polymer-based products, and avoid penetrating lubricants that can damage the polymer.

Don't overtighten the jig in your vise, or you'll bend it and adversely affect the positioning of the pinholes, which are critical to the pistol's functioning. The jig isn't designed to be gripped along the top and bottom edges, either. Rather, it's best positioned in a regular bench vise with the pinholes oriented vertically.

Using the jig, first drill the holes for the pins on each side of the receiver using the supplied bits. Next, remove the barrel block and smooth out the top of the receiver, starting with 220 sandpaper and graduating to a finer grit until it's smooth. Then remove the front and rear tabs to allow for the installation of the Polymer80 Locking Block Rail System (LBRS) and Rear Rail Module (RRM), and install both rail kits.

A large end-mill bit is used to clear the rails along the top of the frame as well as barrel block and where the recoil spring assembly will eventually be installed within. I won't belabor the installation of Glock trigger parts, since that's easily found online. The LBRS is installed next, which includes the slide rails. Then use one of the provided pins to pin down the front legs of the locking block. Now slide the stainless steel RRM around the Glock trigger mechanism housing, which must be sourced elsewhere. Install the second pin or use a Rival Arms pin set like I did here. After you install the fire control group, slide lock and magazine release, the frame is done.



RIVAL PARTS

Once the frame was completed, I moved on to the slide assembly. Rival Arms is a company composed of designers, machinists and coaters who have earned a reputation for making quality firearms components. They balance accuracy and performance with good looks for the ultimate in customization.



Polymer80's PF940C 80-Percent Compact Pistol Frame Kit comes with everything you need to complete the frame, including a red jig with instructions and the required drill bits. Once you drill the pinholes, remove the barrel block and smooth out the top, it's time to install Polymer80's rail modules. It's honestly easier to do than describe, but plenty of videos are available online.

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Fully kitted, the author's G19 clone sports a SilencerCo Osprey 9 suppressor, a TruGlo Tru-Tec Micro reflex sight and tall Trijicon night sights.

For compatibility with the G19-Gen3-style frame, I chose Rival Arms' Glock 19 DOC Optic Cut slide. This match-grade slide is precisely CNC-machined from a billet of 17-4 stainless steel before undergoing a QPQ case-hardening process to resist wear and tear even in the harshest conditions. The stylish front and rear serrations make for easy slide manipulations, and three window cutouts help reduce weight and expose the barrel for better heat dissipation. The slide also accepts aftermarket Glock sights, but Rival Arms has also milled the rear area for a miniature reflex sight. While a version for the Trijicon RMR is available, the DOC cutout worked perfectly with my 3-MOA TruGlo Tru-Tec Micro, which allowed for co-witnessing with the suppressor-height Trijicon night sights I installed.

Rival Arms also supplied the threaded, spiral-fluted G19 barrel I used here. This match-grade barrel is

CNC-machined from 416R stainless steel with six-groove, 1-in-10-inch-twist rifling. To resist heat and carbon buildup, the bore is given a special BORSLICK boron-nitride DCD finish, then Rival

Arms wraps everything up with a bronze PVD finish for corrosion resistance.

Finally, for a little extra class, I installed Rival Arms' bronze-PVD-coated titanium frame pins. The trigger and a few other small components came from eBay, but after putting it all together and throwing in some Jagemann magazines, the gun was finally ready to hit the range.

RANGE TRIALS

My first task at the range was making sure the pistol functioned properly, so I ran a few different loads

through it. It took about 30 rounds for the slide and frame to find their groove, but the next few magazines ran without a hitch. Settling in, I set up an Oehler 35P chronograph to get some velocity figures. Black Hills' 124-grain hollow points had an average velocity of 1,134 fps and a standard deviation of 9 fps. Hornady's 124-grain Critical Defense ammo averaged 1,138 fps with a standard deviation of 14 fps.

After zeroing the TruGlo Tru-Tec Micro and Trijicon night sights at 15 yards, I backed off to 25 yards and started stacking rounds into five-shot groups. It was easy to keep all of my groups under 2 inches wide, with the best groups measuring 1.26 and 1.22 inches for the Black Hills and Hornady loads, respectively.

I really like how this new pistol functions and feels. That's why I carry it on a regular basis in a Blackhawk T-Series holster. It's worth mentioning that the Polymer80 triggerguard needed some filing to fit this particular rig, but now it's super slick. Attaching a suppressor just takes a few twists, and then the gun is even more versatile.

All told, my pistol cost a few bucks shy of \$1,000. The Polymer80 frame kit has an MSRP of \$160,

while the Rival Arms slide, barrel and titanium frame pin kit came to \$471, \$212 and \$33, respectively. The rest of the parts came to \$118. No, that price tag isn't exactly cheap, but I've created a high-end Glock 19 clone that can tackle any number of missions.

Now that I've been bitten by the DIY Glock bug, I'll have to look into adding a few more to my collection. These clones are quite easy to build, and you can't beat the pride that comes with creating your own accurate and reliable 9mm.

PARTS LIST

RIVAL ARMS CUSTOM GLOCK

Polymer80 PF940C 80-Percent Compact Pistol Frame Kit

\$160

Rival G19 Optic Cut Slide

\$471

Rival G19 Gen3/Gen4 Threaded Barrel

\$212

Rival Glock Titanium Frame Pin Kit

\$33

OEM Glock frame parts

\$48

Miscellaneous slide parts

\$70

TOTAL \$994

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EXCLUSIVE
Q&A



SPEED PHENOM

*ON THE FIRING LINE
WITH WORLD CHAMPION
KC EUSEBIO AND HIS
ZEV O.Z-9 COMPETITION*

SURE, WE ALL KNOW THAT GLOCKS are super-reliable pistols. But if you've ever used one straight out of the box, you also know that they're a bit lacking in certain areas. Thankfully, a few companies have picked up where Glock left off, and the biggest has to be Zev Technologies of Centralia, Washington, which truly perfected the platform by listening to what shooters actually want.

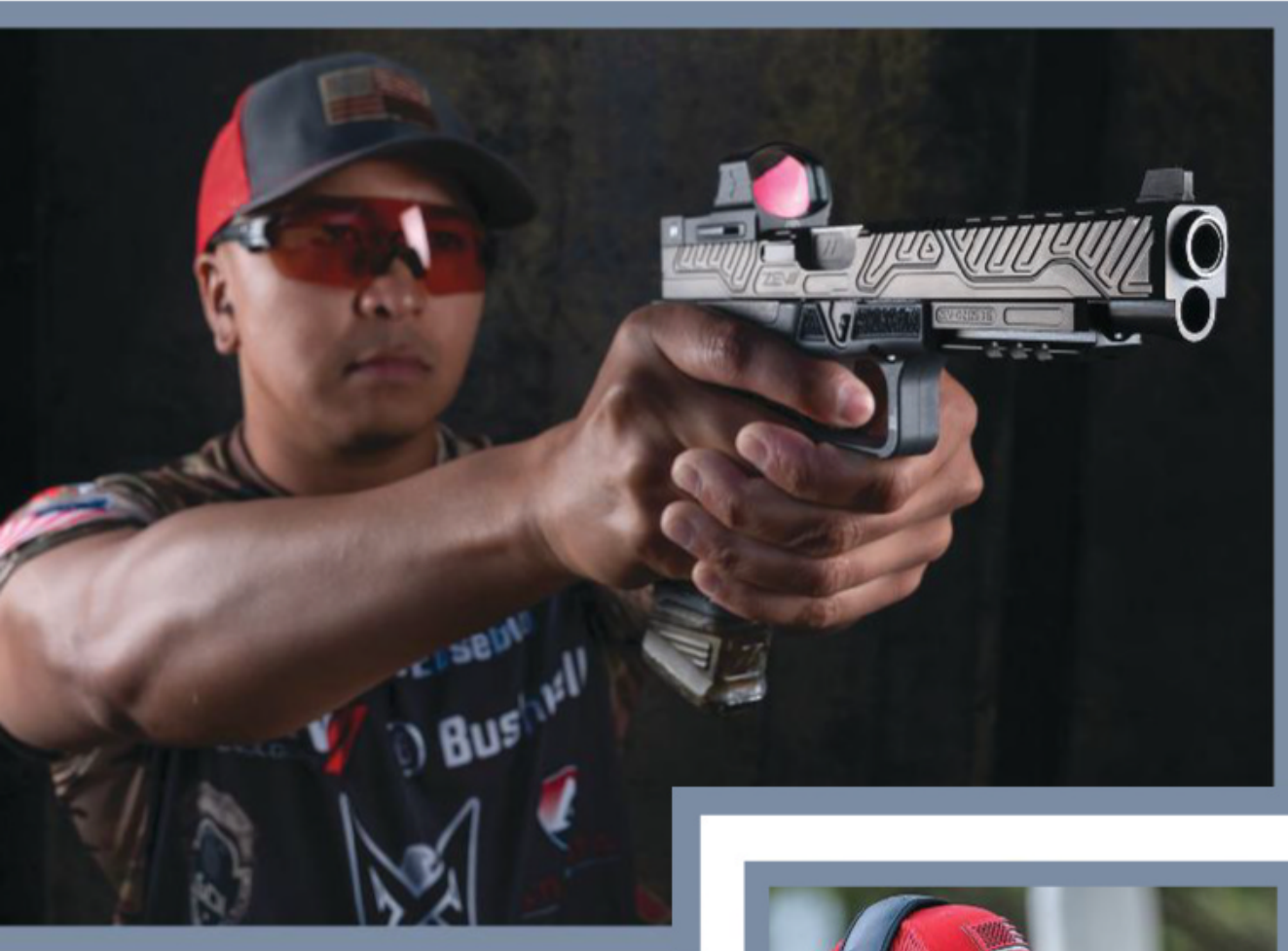
Then Zev turned heads by introducing the "Original Zev 9mm," or O.Z-9, series. With this modular, striker-fired platform, you can take one fire control unit and pair it with different frames, barrels and slides, creating entirely new pistols. You can also start with different base models, like the O.Z-9 Compact and O.Z-9 Covert. But one model that's really burning up the ranges is the O.Z-9 Competition, which I recently fell in love with after some range time with a Trijicon SRO installed.

But we can't talk about matches and Zev pistols without bringing up KC Eusebio, one of the world's highest-ranked competitive shooters. He's set numerous world records, including becoming the youngest USPSA Master at the age of 10 and Grand Master by the age of 12. It's awfully humbling looking at all of his accomplishments on his website (kceusebio.net). But when you actually talk to him, you'll find that despite all that, he's a very humble guy. He's a champion several times over, an Army veteran, a hunter, an angler and a great American with a sense of humor.

He's also been offering Zev Technologies his expert guidance for years now, and he was involved in the O.Z-9's development from the very beginning. Now the O.Z-9 Competition is KC's go-to gun for matches and home defense, and he's probably gotten in more trigger time with O.Z-9s than anyone else alive, so we figured it only made sense to talk to him about the platform and learn more about his life in general.



BY MITCH HARDIN



When did you begin shooting?

My father was an avid shooter, and I basically grew up on the range as a baby. I started shooting at the age of 8.

When was your first competition?

My dad had me work on gun handling/ safety first. I dry fired for about six months before I shot my first competition when I was 8. I wasn't nervous at all. I was very young but confident because of all my dry firing prior to the match. It also helped that I watched my dad shoot almost every weekend and understood the responsibility that came with competition shooting. He was my mentor, coach and gunsmith. I was super lucky to have him wear all those hats.

What advice would you give your younger self?

Shooting came naturally to me, and after I got my Grand Master card at the age of 12, I got lazy. I think I would like to tell my teenage self to not stop and continually work harder.

What advice do you have for younger shooters with similar aspirations?

I think the most important thing is to love your craft. Whether it's shooting, golf or



SPEC BOX

ZEV 0.2-9 COMPETITION

CALIBER:	9mm
BARREL:	4.48 inches
OA LENGTH:	8.75 inches
WEIGHT:	29.44 ounces (empty)
SIGHTS:	Fiber-optic front, black rear
GRIP:	Polymer
ACTION:	Striker-fired
FINISH:	Matte black
CAPACITY:	17+1
MSRP:	\$1,799

basketball, love what you do. You can't go wrong if you truly enjoy what you do.

How does it feel being a role model for other shooters?

I just appreciate all the young ones and parents who love the shooting sports. It warms my heart to see families out on the range keeping the future of the shooting sports strong.

Do you consider yourself a celebrity?

No, I'm definitely not a celebrity. I'm just a poor Filipino who loves to pull a trigger!

What made you decide to join the U.S. Army?

I've always loved the military. *Black Hawk Down* is one of my favorite movies because it shows the sacrifice and selflessness of soldiers. When I first competed against U.S. Army Marksmanship Unit (USAMU) members at 13 years old, I was told that I should try to join after I graduated high school. So, I did just that. I enlisted as an 11 Bravo (Infantryman) and joined the USAMU at the age of 18. I served for four years and was grateful to be a part of the U.S. Army.

Where do you see yourself in 10 to 15 years?

I see myself instructing military personnel and anyone who loves shooting. Military marksmanship instruction is one of my personal favorite things to do. I'm able to share my knowledge and make lifelong friends in the process. I'm also a sucker for the Army.

What's something you've learned in your career?

To look at the big picture in life. It's not about money, wins or being famous. I've figured out a way to leave a footprint and change the world by sharing my knowledge of marksmanship.

What are some of your favorite activities outside of shooting?

I love to work out, hunt and cook. I love to stay in shape and try to go to the gym five times a week. There's nothing better than being able to go out and grill your harvest from the hunting season.

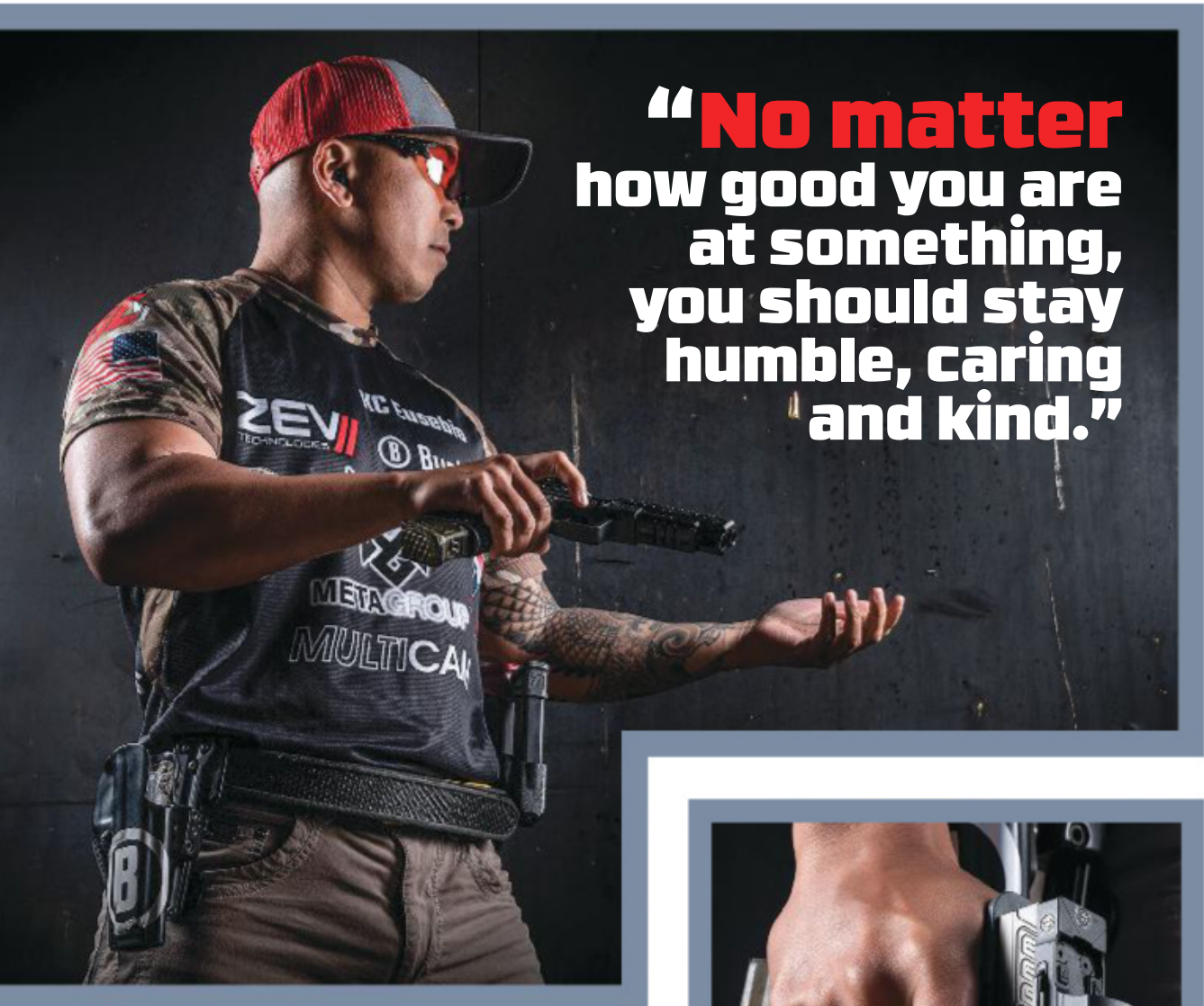
ADVENTURE

BEST ENJOYED QUIETLY

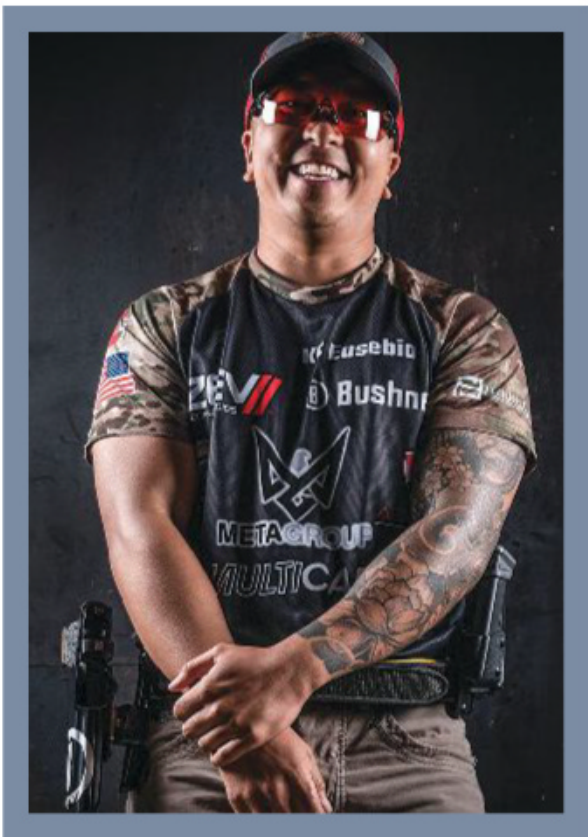


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“No matter how good you are at something, you should stay humble, caring and kind.”



Other than that, I'm a homebody since I'm outdoors most of my life.

What's your ideal firearm?

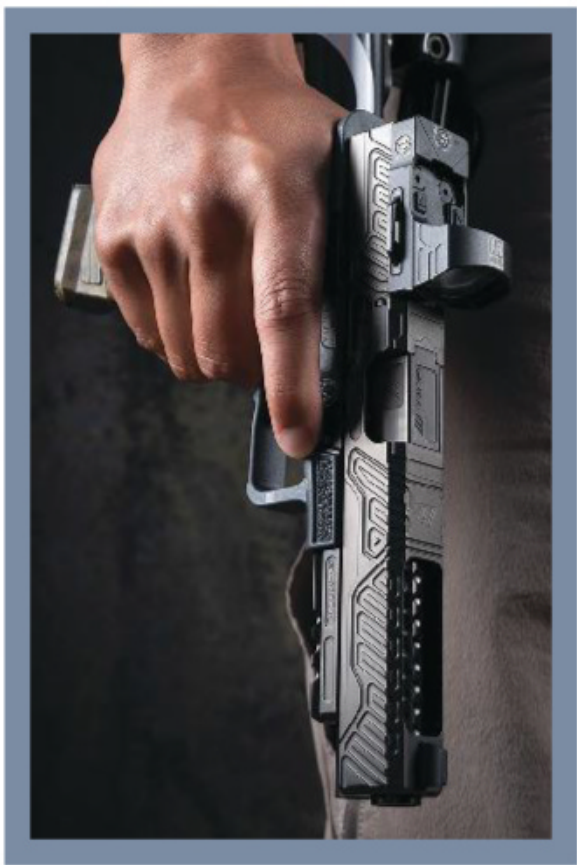
I love my O.Z-9. I literally clean it twice a year, but it keeps on going. I also use it to instruct since it's a striker-fired system that our military has adopted over the last few years, so it only makes sense that I would carry and compete with it.

What about for home defense?

I use a full-size O.Z-9 for home defense since size isn't an issue and I want to be able to have something similar to what I compete with.

What are some of your favorite features on the O.Z-9?

I believe what makes the Zev O.Z-9 so unique is the modularity the platform brings to its users. You can swap grips and frames in a matter of seconds. The gun also takes Glock parts, which makes it easy to upgrade or replace components, and it has a 1911-style grip angle while still using a striker-fired operating system.



Tell us more about Zev.

I've been using Zev products for about a decade now, and I'm a believer because the company feels like family. They have taken care of me over the years and truly care about their customers.

What advice would you offer people who are just getting into the shooting world?

Don't be afraid to ask questions or ask for help. Many new shooters are too nervous or have too much bravado to ask

simple questions. Do some research and find a good instructor who can truly help you with whatever goal you have in mind.


Got a message for our readers?

Share your love of firearms with someone who might be afraid, or those who think of guns in a negative light. Educate them tactfully so that they see how important firearms are in society.

Any parting words of wisdom?

I'll leave you with what my father shared with me: "Talent is a gift. Character is a choice." No matter how good you are at something, you should stay humble, caring and kind.

There you have it, straight talk from one of the world's best competitive shooters. Kind of makes you want to go out and buy an O.Z-9, doesn't it? Based upon what we've seen, it's well worth the cost. The O.Z-9 is like the Lamborghini or Maserati of the competition pistol market. It'll get you there fast and in style, leaving others wishing they had one.

Practice hard, practice often, eat your Wheaties, and you too can aspire to greatness. KC Eusebio sure has set the bar high for the rest of us. His dedication, winning attitude and humility in his profession have made him the world champion that he truly is. For more information, visit zevtechnologies.com. 

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TINY PDW TITAN

DANIEL DEFENSE'S
LATEST DDM4
WAS TAILOR-MADE
FOR VEHICLE AND
HOME DEFENSE

BY ANDY GROSSMAN

➔ The new DDM4 PDW offers 300 Blackout punch in a pint-sized package with several noteworthy features, including a 7-inch, cold-hammer-forged barrel.

← Despite its compact dimensions and larger chambering, the DDM4 PDW was still quite light on recoil from a variety of positions.

handguard is also flat to help keep the gun compact, and Daniel Defense includes an SLR Rifleworks hand stop on the bottom to keep your support hand locked in a safe position. If you're using the AR pistol for home defense, for example, the hand stop will prevent accidents in dark, stressful situations.

The upper and lower receivers are both crafted from 7075-T6 aluminum, and Daniel Defense includes an ambidextrous Grip-N-Rip charging handle as well as an ambidextrous safety selector. The pistol grip has Soft-Touch rubber overmolding for comfort and control, and you'll find a Maxim Defense CQB arm brace at the rear. This sweet add-on looks great and helped the DDM4 PDW achieve an overall length of just 20.75 inches. It rides on two rails and can be locked into four different length-of-pull positions, including fully collapsed against the receivers. With the brace extended, the pistol is 24.75 inches long.

ROUNDS DOWNRANGE

The first time I pulled the DDM4 PDW's trigger, it was love at first shot. The gun was also easy to control, which kind of surprised me considering its small form factor and larger 300 Blackout chambering. But it was quite easy to hit multiple steel plates set at various distances as quickly as I could.

The pistol grip is one of my favorite parts of the gun. It's definitely a step above the stock A2-style grip included on most AR-platform weap-

7-inch, Strength-to-Weight (S2W) barrel, the DDM4 PDW was still super compact. But for my testing back home, I was sent a standard model with a Linear compensator installed on the 5/8x24-tpi muzzle threading. Made from 17-4PH stainless steel with a salt-bath nitride finish, this highly effective device pushes the muzzle blast forward, away from the shooter. It's a great addition if you aren't going to run a suppressor.

Surrounding the barrel and pistol-length gas system is a 6-inch MFR XL handguard with a Picatinny rail on top and M-LOK accessory slots along the sides and bottom. The front of the

HANDS ON

I first got to shoot the new DDM4 PDW with a Daniel Defense Wave suppressor installed at the 2019 Athlon Outdoors Rendezvous in Driggs, Idaho. And even with the suppressor mounted on the cold-hammer-forged,



→ Daniel Defense is one company that never disappoints when it comes to firearms. American owned and operated, Daniel Defense has gained a reputation for incredibly crafted higher-end rifles over the past few years, and the company's recent foray into the AR pistol game continues that legacy. The new DDM4 PDW in 300 Blackout might very well be the best AR pistol on the market for home defense. It's small, lightweight, versatile and, thanks to some clever engineering, doesn't require any NFA paperwork. It's considered a large-format pistol—one that just screams "home-defense powerhouse," so I put it to the test to see if it would hold up to that title.



IT'S A HEAD-TURNER ON THE RANGE AND WILL DEFINITELY DO THE JOB IN MAKING A BAD GUY REALIZE HE MADE A BIG MISTAKE IF HE BREAKS INTO YOUR HOME."

↑ The collapsible arm brace can be locked into four different positions. Fully extended, the DDM4 PDW is only 24.75 inches long.

SPEC BOX

DANIEL DEFENSE
DDM4 PDW

CALIBER:	300 Blackout
BARREL:	7 inches
OA LENGTH:	20.75-24.75 inches
WEIGHT:	5.7 pounds (empty)
BRACE:	Maxim Defense CQB
SIGHTS:	None
ACTION:	Direct impingement semi-auto
FINISH:	Matte black
CAPACITY:	30+1
MSRP:	\$1,865

PERFORMANCE

LOAD	ACCURACY
Black Hills 125 TMK	0.50
Federal 150 American Eagle FMJ	0.65
Federal 220 American Eagle OTM	0.85
HSM 110 V-MAX	0.80
HSM 125 Pro-Hunter	0.75
HSM 208 A-MAX	0.90
Wilson Combat 110 TAC-TX	0.90

Bullet weight measured in grains and accuracy in inches for best five-shot groups at 50 feet.

↓ Daniel Defense includes a Linear compensator to push the muzzle blast forward and an SLR Rifleworks hand stop for additional safety and control.

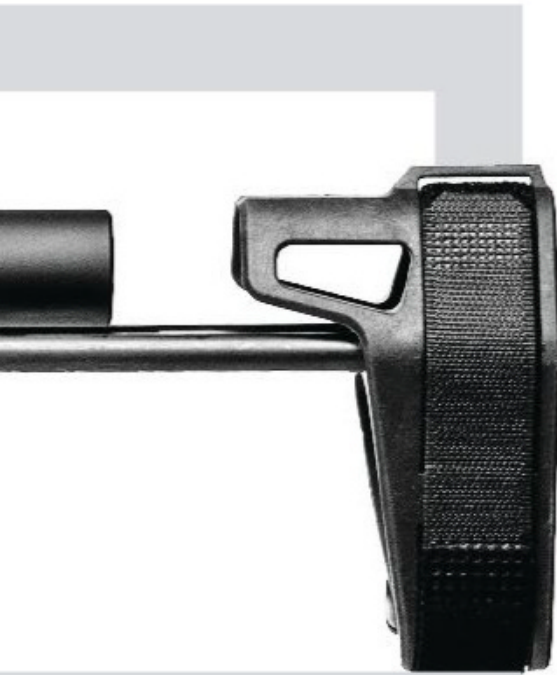
ons. With that nice rubberized feel to it and texturing almost like a vehicle tire, you can get a truly superior hold on this little blaster.

Shooting off-hand with no support, I was able to get some really tight groups at 20 yards before "walking" the DDM4 PDW out to 50 yards. My five-shot groups were typically less than an inch

wide from 7 to 20 yards, and they opened up just a little at 50 yards. At that distance, 2-inch groups were the norm with all of the test ammo, but again, I was shooting off-hand without any support. I don't own a .30-caliber suppressor, so all of my testing was done with the DDM4 PDW unsuppressed.

The pistol ate pretty much everything I fed it with the exception of two subsonic loads: Hornady's 208-grain Black A-MAXs and HSM's 220-grain SMKs. For some reason, those two rounds would not allow the gun to cycle properly. Every round would fire, but the bolt would not grab the next round. At first, I thought maybe the DDM4 PDW didn't like subsonic ammo without a suppressor installed, but it ran just fine with Federal's 220-grain American Eagle OTMs as well as a few other





came over to see what I was shooting to make so much noise. They described themselves as “very inexperienced with the AR platform” and had never shot anything so small. The instructor part of me came out, and I immediately started showing them how everything worked. Then I made their day when I handed them each a full 30-round magazine and told them to have fun. Their faces lit up as they dumped 30 rounds through an AR pistol for the first time.

One of the guys actually

aimed and was able to shoot a 4-inch group at 7 yards—not terrible for an AR virgin. The other guy just dumped the mag as quickly as he could pull the trigger. I can’t really blame him. After things calmed down a bit, I asked them what they thought. Their response describes the Daniel Defense DDM4 PDW perfectly: “That thing is frickin’ awesome!”

WORTH THE PRICE

There are a lot of reasons to own the DDM4 PDW.

Most people are familiar with operating AR-15s, and this gun is perfect for maneuvering in tight quarters, like inside a home or vehicle. It’s also user-friendly and light on recoil, no matter the setting. Sure, the pistol is a bit on the pricey side for this category. But, man is it fun to run! And it looks like a piece of art. It’s a head-turner on the range and will definitely do the job in making a bad guy realize he made a big mistake if he breaks into your home. For more information, visit danieldefense.com. **CH**

subsonic rounds. To make matters more confusing, the pistol ran HSM’s subsonic 208-grain A-MAX ammo just fine. So your guess is as good as mine on this.

Other than those rounds, the gun ran flawlessly with everything else I fed it. I slapped my EOTech EXPS2 Holographic Weapon Sight (HWS) on the DDM4 PDW and was produced sub-1-inch groups at 25 yards with numerous loads from Black Hills, Federal, HSM and Wilson Combat. I honestly couldn’t tell you which load I shot better because I was able to control them all very well. My favorite was probably Black Hills’ .300 Whisper 125-grain Tipped MatchKing (TMK) ammo, which offered very little recoil and consistently produced 0.5-inch groups at the very realistic home-defense distance of 7 yards. Yes, that’s pretty close, but I wanted to shoot very quickly at realistic distances.

At the range, some guys from a few lanes down



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TALE OF THE TAPE

WIDTH: 1.7 INCHES



HEIGHT: 6.13 INCHES



SMITH & WESSON MODEL 610

CALIBER
10mm

BARREL
4 inches

OAL LENGTH
9.5 inches

WEIGHT
42.6 ounces
(empty)

GRIPS
Synthetic

SIGHTS
Front blade,
adjustable rear

ACTION
DA/SA

FINISH
Stainless

CAPACITY
6

MSRP
\$987

OAL: 9.5 INCHES



TWO STAINLESS STEEL REVOLVERS SQUARE OFF FOR THE "PERFECT 10" TITLE

BY GARRETT LUCAS



If you scan magazines and the internet about the 10mm Auto cartridge and its place in firearms history, you'll inevitably see references to Jeff Cooper's role in developing the round as well as the iconic Bren Ten, which was featured in *Miami Vice*. You'll

also see copious mentions of the 1986 FBI shootout in Miami and how that led to the bureau briefly adopting the cartridge for its service pistols. But a less common thread that's been gaining a little bit of traction lately is using the 10mm in revolvers.

There's a dedicated and

vocal group of shooters running loose in the wild that enjoy rocking the powerful semi-auto cartridge through old-school six-shooters. Hey, who am I to judge? In response to those fanatics—er, um, I mean fans—Smith & Wesson and Ruger recently introduced wheelguns that

should satisfy even the most hardcore of aficionados.

THE 610 RETURNS

To the delight of many, Smith & Wesson reintroduced the venerable Model 610 in 2019 at the behest of consumers. The company's most recent offerings include 4- and 6.5-inch-barreled variants, and to compare apples to apples, I selected the 4-inch-barreled model for this review.

The Model 610 is built on S&W's large, beefy N-frame, most notable for hosting larger cartridges like the .44 Magnum and .45 Colt. Mostly composed of stainless steel, the 4-inch-barreled 610, with its full underlug and round-butt profile, tips the scales at a hefty 42.6 ounces unloaded,

10MM WHEELGUN SHOOTOUT

S&W MODEL 610 VS. RUGER GP100 MATCH CHAMPION

CALIBER

10mm

BARREL

4.2 inches

OAL LENGTH

9.5 inches

WEIGHT

37 ounces
(empty)

GRIPS

Hogue hardwood

SIGHTS

Fiber-optic front,
adjustable rear

ACTION

DA/SA

FINISH

Satin stainless

CAPACITY

6

MSRP

\$969



RUGER GP100 MATCH CHAMPION

while the 6.5-inch-barreled version weighs in at a hair over 50 ounces.

Based on its overall build and appearance, the 610 is set up more as an outdoorsman's gun. The hand-filling rubber grip is extremely comfortable, though it adds some bulk, and it will hold up to the elements and cold weather quite nicely. Additionally, the checkered hammer spur and smooth trigger shoe are a bit more utilitarian in that they are both wider than those found on the Ruger that I tested. However, that's not a negative because I really liked the ease of access and operation that came with the wider hammer spur.

The 610 still includes the standard frame-lock safety. It's located just behind the

cylinder release, and two matching keys are included. The revolver also incorporates a white-outlined rear sight that is adjustable for elevation and windage. The front sight is a serrated, ramped blade that is pinned in place, so it's interchangeable.

The 610 offered a very smooth but heavy trigger pull. The double-action (DA) pull weighed 11.38 pounds on average, while the single-action (SA) pull came in at 4.5 pounds. Overall, the

chunky revolver exhibited all of the customary quality I've come to expect from Smith & Wesson's products.

MATCH CHAMPION

Despite the 10mm's reputation for power, the Ruger GP100 Match Champion is all about speed. Originally built for the .357 Magnum, the GP100 incorporates a medium-sized stainless steel frame and barrel that are relatively light, with the entire gun

coming in at 37 ounces. It's also fairly easy to carry and conceal while still boasting a hell-for-stout build quality. This is due to the revolver's triple-locking system, where the cylinder is locked at the front, rear and bottom. The thick monolithic frame precludes the need for a sideplate, and the gun is highly regarded for its inherent strength.

The Match Champion comes with a 4.2-inch barrel, and upgrades for this specific model include an 11-degree



TALE OF THE TAPE



↑ Despite its smaller size, the recoil of the Ruger GP100 Match Champion was still quite manageable, and its fiber-optic front sight was easier to get on target.



target crown for accuracy, a fiber-optic front sight and a weight-saving half-underlug. Other refinements include a match-tuned and polished action with a centering boss on the trigger and hammer shims. All of this results in an exceptionally smooth trigger pull. According to my digital gauge, the SA pull on my test gun was extra-crisp with a hair of pre-travel, a 3.75-pound break and no over-travel. The buttery DA pull averaged 9.75 pounds with no hint of stacking.

Because of the medium frame size, I was a little surprised when I saw the six chambers in the cylinder. When I first learned of the 10mm GP100 Match Champion, I incorrectly assumed it would carry only five rounds, so that was a nice bonus. If you look closely, you'll also find that

Ruger has lightly chamfered the chambers of the cylinder for reloading ease.

Other appointments included serrations on the hammer spur and topstrap as well as a fully adjustable rear sight with a white outline. Finishing off the package is a slim, contoured Hogue hardwood grip that is very comfortable and ideal for concealed carry. It sports stippling to ensure a reliable grip, but unlike rubber grips, it won't catch or hang on clothing during the draw.

RANGE DUEL

I'll be honest and say that I was a little in the weeds when it came to understanding the need for a 10mm revolver, especially when more powerful options are available for the platform. But that's the beautiful thing

about guns and shooting: You don't have to need something to want it. One look at my collection will tell you that.

That said, I did enjoy shooting both guns once I got to the range. Each revolver ships with three moon clips for easier loading and unloading (and you'll really need to use them for .40 S&W rounds). I used some excellent 10mm ammunition for my testing, with loads from Buffalo Bore, Federal, Sig Sauer and Speer. For the get-to-know-you phase, I mainly shot Sig's 180-grain FMJs, which worked perfectly in both guns and was quite accurate as well.

With the 10mm's uptick in popularity, both Federal and Speer have recently introduced premium 200-grain defensive loads. The new 200-grain HST load was designed for optimum penetration and expansion without plugging up while passing through intermediate barriers. This translates to nearly 100-percent weight retention for optimal performance. The Speer Gold Dot boasts the company's Uni-Cor bonding process, which prevents jacket-core separation. According to Speer, it's applied one molecule at a time. I'm not sure how that works, but that guy must be getting a lot of overtime!

The HST load averaged 1,119 fps from the two revolvers, giving it a slight edge in velocity and energy over the Gold Dot's 1,038-fps average. Of these two loads, the Ruger shot the

best single group of 1.5 inches at 25 yards with the Gold Dots, though that was a bit of a fluke on my part. The Ruger's average group with the Speer load was about 2.45 inches. Whether it was me or the ammunition, the S&W seemed to prefer the HST offering with an average of 2.85 inches, although another shooter could deliver different results.

There was a significant difference between the two revolvers in terms of handling and felt recoil. As you would expect, the larger mass of the S&W definitely tamed the recoil much better than the Ruger. In the S&W, Sig's 180-grain FMJs felt like +P .38 Specials fired from a Model 686. The N-Frame even absorbed the recoil from the stiffer defensive loads.

That's not to say that shooting most of the 10mm rounds from the Ruger was unpleasant, but the recoil was sharper, and I could feel it more at the top of the backstrap. However, the lighter Ruger was nimbler and easier to get on target than the bulkier S&W. And because of its smaller grip circumference, I was able to wrap my hand around it more completely for better control. The GP100's bright fiber-optic front sight also helped with fast, accurate shots. The black blade on the 610 wasn't quite as easy to pick up and sometimes got lost on the target.

On the other hand, when I stepped up to the 220-grain hard-cast rounds from Buffalo Bore, I definitely appreciated the 610's extra-comfy synthetic grip. With the Ruger's smaller frame, those rounds felt pretty dang

10MM WHEELGUN SHOOTOUT S&W MODEL 610 VS. RUGER GP100 MATCH CHAMPION



↑ The Smith & Wesson Model 610's comfortable grip and extra weight made for a very comfortable shooting experience, even with hotter 10mm loads.

stout! As always, the Buffalo Bore rounds were extremely consistent and accurate, allowing me to shoot a 2.25-inch five-shot group off-hand at 20 yards.

THE VERDICT

While the Smith & Wesson Model 610 and Ruger GP100 Match Champion are similar, they're quite different 10mm revolvers. The S&W is larger and heavier, making it more suitable for outdoor carry and a better choice for higher-pressure loads. Conversely, the Ruger is sleek and responsive with its tuned

action, high-visibility sights and smaller profile, so it's ideal for match use and even concealed carry.

After spending time with both, I'm starting to understand the allure to a degree. With moon clips, they're faster to load than a standard revolver, and both deliver a powerful payload suitable for a variety of predators from city to field. Each delivers impressive accuracy and superb reliability while offer-

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ing best-in-class quality. The decision is simple. As long as you pick the right tool for the job, you won't go wrong with either one. **CH**

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**FN'S NEW 503
OFFERS STELLAR
PERFORMANCE
IN A SLEEK,
SINGLE-STACK
PACKAGE**

BY GARRETT LUCAS |

→
The 9mm FN 503 is primed for pocket or IWB carry with beveled edges, enlarged controls, highly effective grip texturing, low-profile sights and more.



THE HANDGUN MARKET operates on trends ranging from polymer frames to striker-fired operating systems to slide-mounted

optics. One of the latest and very popular trends is the surge of micro-compact 9mm pistols. Shooters want capable pistols that pack plenty of firepower without being too large or bulky for concealment. The trick is finding the right balance.

This brings us to *Fabrique Nationale* (FN), a storied company that has primarily focused on military and law enforcement weapons over the years with M4 and M16 rifles, the SCAR series and even the M249 SAW. Civilians can also get their hands on similar semi-auto versions built on the same production lines. But the company struck gold with its striker-fired FN 509 pistol, which was born out of the U.S. military's Modular Handgun System (MHS) trials. Now there's a wide range of 509s to choose from, and FN just unveiled a pint-sized version primed for concealed carry, the FN 503, to satisfy demand.

SLIM IS IN

I recently had occasion to briefly try out the new FN 503 and size up its capabilities in comparison to similar products on the market. While there's been new ground plowed with the development of high-capacity micro-compacts, FN went

with a single-stack form factor for the new FN 503. With a height of 4.6 inches, a width of 1.1 inches and an overall length of 5.9 inches, it occupies a significantly smaller footprint than the also-new FN 509 Compact MRD, making it much easier to secret away for concealed carry.

Like the 509 series, the FN 503 is a striker-fired pistol that sports an aggressively textured polymer frame. It ships with both a six-round magazine as well as an eight-round magazine, although the latter dramatically increases its overall height. The magazine and slide releases are also generously sized despite the gun's compact profile, making for trouble-free operation.

The FN 503's MSRP is \$549—a fairly low price for an FN pistol. For example, the FN 509 Midsize rings in at around \$679. That's a fairly big difference. Some cost-cutting measures found on the FN 503 include a lack of cocking serrations up front and the fairly pedestrian three-dot sights. However, the barrel features

SPEC BOX

FN 503

CALIBER:	9mm
BARREL:	3.1 inches
OA LENGTH:	5.9 inches
WEIGHT:	21 ounces (empty)
GRIP:	Polymer
SIGHTS:	Three-dot
ACTION:	Striker-fired
FINISH:	Matte black
CAPACITY:	6+1, 8+1
MSRP:	\$549

FISTFUL OF FURY



← The FN 503's aggressive grip texturing provides a rock-solid purchase while firing, and the included six- and eight-round mags come with extended basepads.

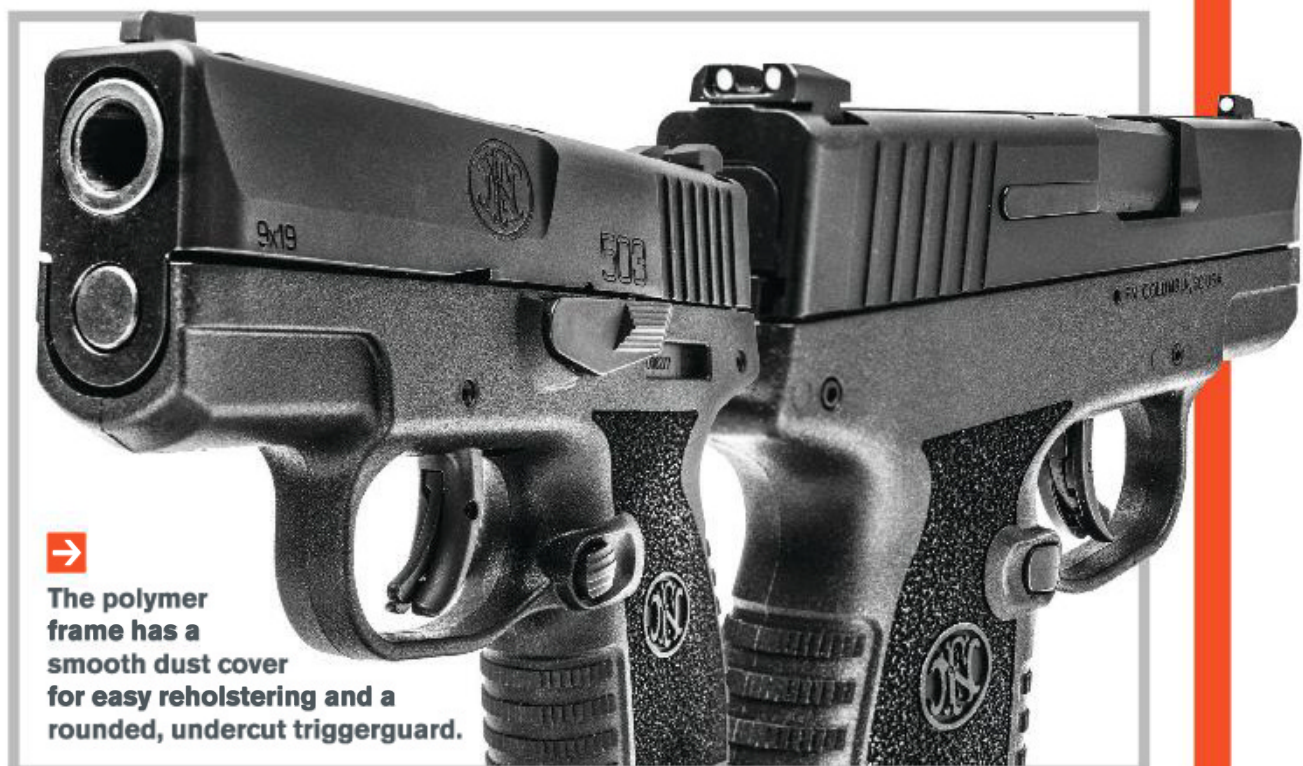
a recessed target crown, which promises good accuracy. It also has a polished chamber and feed ramp for reliable operation, which is something I focused on when I hit the range.

TRIAL BY FIRE

The FN 503 did not quite have the same rock-solid, bank-vault feel of the FN 509 Compact MRD that I recently reviewed, and of which I was a huge fan. That might have had to do with the FN 503's thinner width, or the fact that the grip felt longer than it should from the front-strap to the backstrap, making it feel just a tad awkward. This was also pointed out by a shooting buddy I had brought along for the range session. But when the shooting started, everything worked very well.

The trigger pull was relatively clean and broke at a reasonable average of 5.25 pounds. The reset was a little longer than I prefer, but that didn't impede fast, controlled fire

“As with all FN pistols I've reviewed, the FN 503's reliability was superb.”



→ The polymer frame has a smooth dust cover for easy reholstering and a rounded, undercut triggerguard.

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CROSSBREED CARRY

While the FN 503 is brand spanking new, CrossBreed Holsters began working with FN months ago to develop holsters and magazine carriers designed specifically for it. Now you can order 25 different products for the new 9mm, including ever-popular holsters like the SuperTuck, MiniTuck and Reckoning. Another great option is the Freedom Carry (shown), which CrossBreed calls the “most versatile holster” in its lineup.

The Freedom Carry IWB rig is comfortable thanks to its slim holster design and leather backing, which prevents the gun from contacting your body without being too bulky. The sturdy clip locks onto your belt, and you can adjust its cant to shift the entire rig’s position on your waistband.

The Freedom Carry works for strong-side, appendix and cross-draw positions—the choice is yours. The ordering process also allows you to stipulate the leather type (black cowhide, horsehide or Founder’s leather) and Kydex (black, Flat Dark Earth, Sniper Gray, olive drab or Tiffany Blue). Best yet, like every CrossBreed holster, the Freedom Carry comes with the company’s two-week “Try It Free” guarantee. Pair it with a CrossBreed mag carrier and your FN 503 will be good to go. (crossbreedholsters.com)



→ At the range, the FN 503 was accurate and reliable with all of the test ammo, printing tight groups at 7 yards.

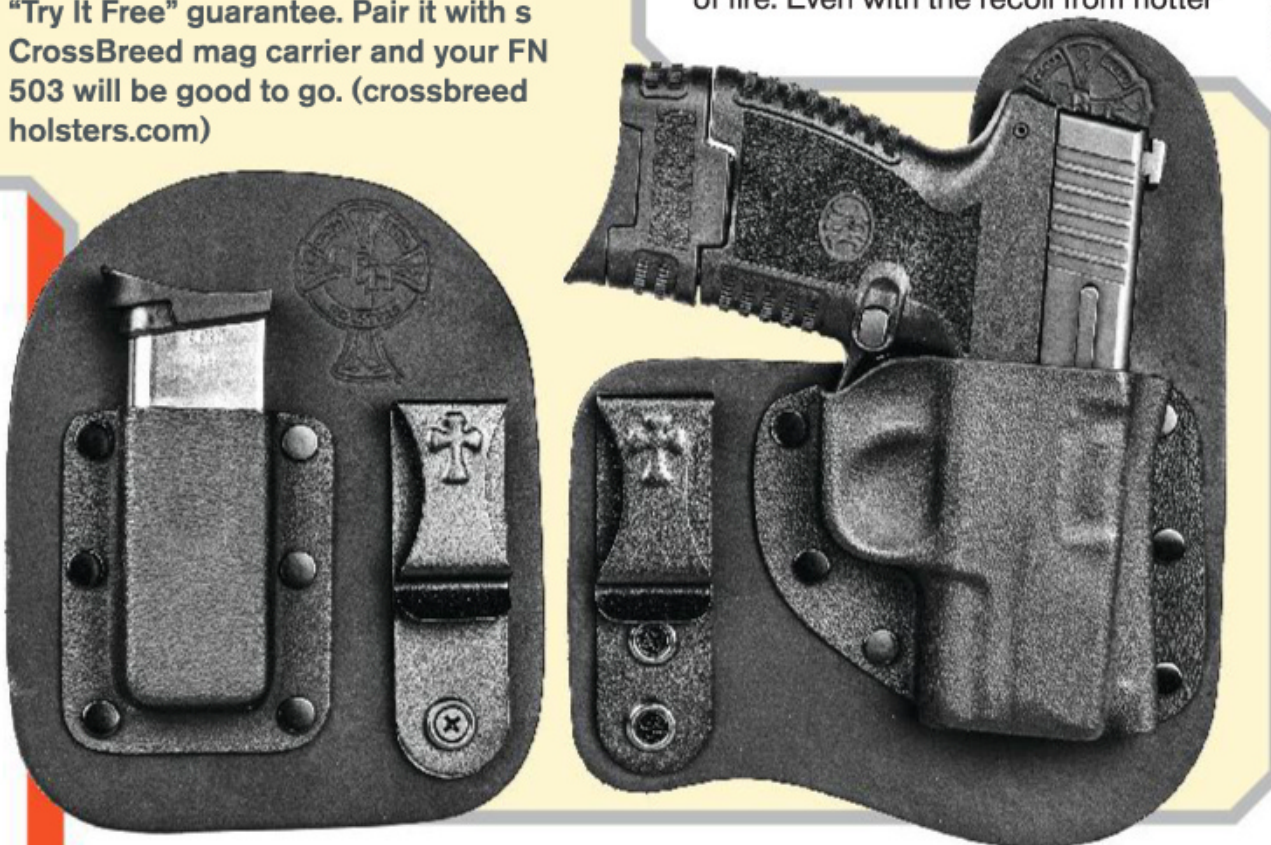
while a friend and I shot a few drills. And I was truly impressed with the FN 503’s accuracy. While the three-dot sights are a little small and not exceedingly fast to pick up, once we were on target, the FN 503 delivered the goods with consistent precision. Off-hand groups at 7 yards routinely measured 1 to 1.5 inches wide with slower, aimed fire.

Another strong point for the FN 503 is its aggressive grip texturing, which is similar to other 509 series pistols. The texturing provided phenomenal traction for better control during faster strings of fire. Even with the recoil from hotter

loads like Federal’s 124-grain +P HST ammo (1,078 fps) and Hornady’s 135-grain +P Critical Duty rounds (1,017 fps), it wasn’t hard to maintain a secure purchase on the pistol.

For those who are a little recoil sensitive, Sig Sauer’s 115-grain Elite V-Crown 365 JHP ammunition was designed specifically to get the most projectile velocity out of a short-barreled pistol without increasing its recoil. We tried a batch of it in the FN 503, and the load clocked in at 1,023 fps. Not only were these rounds very accurate, but they were also downright pleasant to shoot, making them an excellent carry choice for the FN 503.

As with all FN pistols I’ve reviewed, the FN 503’s reliability was superb. We didn’t experience a single jam or malfunction during our short review with six different types of ammunition. Oddly enough, however, the slide would not lock back on the last round for my shooting buddy every time he used the six-round magazine. But it would lock back whenever he used the eight-round magazine. For me, the slide locked back after firing the last round every time, no matter which magazine I used. The only thing I could surmise was that the longer magazine provided him a little extra leverage to reduce excess movement during recoil—something he wasn’t able to do with the six-round magazine.






Aside from this quirk, the FN 503 ran flawlessly. During my time with the FN 503, I had no qualms about carrying it on a daily basis. It tucked away quite nicely into a size-13 DeSantis Super Fly, which is by far my favorite pocket holster. The FN 503 worked well for pocket carry with the six-round magazine inserted. But

since I'm a big guy, it might work better for most folks in a standard IWB or OWB holster. That's just something you'll have to try for yourself.

MAKING THE GRADE

The new FN 503 is reliable, accurate and controllable—hallmarks of the storied company that produced it. That's

just what FN does. However, there are recent entries into the market of high-capacity, micro-compact pistols that are of a similar size and offer more features like accessory rails, front slide serrations and high-visibility sights for just a few dollars more. One has to wonder where FN's new micro-compact will find its footing.

Although the FN 503 doesn't bring anything new to the table, its performance lives up to the FN name. It also helps flesh out the company's line of pistols for the average concealed carrier by coming in at a more accessible price point than usual. This is a definite bonus for FN fans and for anyone else who appreciates a pistol that offers top-tier performance in a compact package. For savvy consumers who know what they are getting up front, the FN 503 definitely won't disappoint. For more information, visit fnamerica.com. 

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I've had a fairly long relationship with Ruger over the past 25 years and have owned more than 20 different Ruger firearms along the way. I only mention that to establish my bona fides as a Ruger fan and a true American. That said, when I first heard about the new Ruger-57 pistol, I thought, "What the hell?"

In a surprise move, Ruger decided to chamber the Ruger-57 for the hotly debated 5.7x28mm. Originally introduced by FN for the P90 submachine gun and subsequently the Five-sevenN pistol, the 5.7x28mm cartridge is a bottleneck design that pushes a .224-caliber bullet at relatively high velocities, which results in a very flat trajectory and very little felt recoil.

Despite the debate about the round's efficacy, there are quite a few die-hard fans out there. However, for a standard pistol form factor, those fans have been limited to FN's Five-sevenN pistol, which sports a MSRP of \$1,199. There are a couple of boutique shops



**RANGE TOY OR
FIGHTING TOOL?
THE RUGER-57
IS ANYTHING
YOU WANT
IT TO BE**

57

— BY GARRETT LUCAS —

that manufacture pistols in the caliber, but they're not exactly designed for slipping into a holster, especially for concealed carry. Well, Ruger decided to turn that niche market on its head by introducing the Ruger-57 at an MSRP of just \$799—almost half the price of the Five-seven. I guess Ruger was serious about making a splash.

A CLOSER LOOK

Looking a little like a 'roided-up Security-9, there's a lot of the same DNA present in the Ruger-57, with its glass-filled nylon frame, subtle grip texturing and through-hardened steel slide. In fact,

the Ruger-57 uses the same "Secure Action" trigger system as well. Borrowed originally from the LCP II, when the slide is racked, the internal hammer is partially cocked. The trigger pull then finishes cocking the hammer the last little bit before the trigger breaks. This results in a satisfyingly crisp break while maintaining a relatively light trigger pull.

Despite the similarities, the Ruger-57 has a few touches that distinguish it from the pack. Aside from the blade safety on the trigger, the Ruger-57 also features an elongated, ambidextrous thumb safety that is easy to access and manipu-

late. On my test gun, it was very snappy and positive. Additionally, the magazine release is reversible for left-handed shooters and is a bit more substantial than what you'll find on the Security-9.

Of course, the main difference is the hand-filling grip, which houses 20-round magazines. The 5.7x28mm is actually longer than the 10mm Auto. This necessitates a substantially larger-than-normal grip from front to back, though the grip circumference is kept under control because of the slender profile. However, even with its large form factor, the Ruger-57 is still a relatively lightweight pistol at 24.5

ounces unloaded, and it can easily be carried all day long with little concern or effort.

The slide wears attractive lightening cuts and is thankfully fitted with a fiber-optic front sight—a welcome feature for my aging eyes—and it sports a blacked-out, serrated rear sight that is fully adjustable for windage and elevation. If you want to increase its usability, the slide is also drilled and tapped for the addition of optics. As of this writing, Ruger sells an adapter plate for Vortex and Burris reflex sights, and I imagine other plates will be available in the future.

JUST PLAIN COOL

When I picked up the Ruger-57 at my FFL, I kept wondering who the Ruger-57 was for and what possible use it could have. Was it for hunting, pest control, plinking or home defense? Some refer to the 5.7x28mm as a glorified .22 WMR, while others defend its potential as a defensive caliber. There's got to be some merit to the latter, as the U.S. Secret Service employs the cartridge in some of its firearms, though they have access to particular ammo types that aren't available to most civilians.

As for plinking, 5.7x28mm ammunition isn't cheap, ranging anywhere from 40 cents to 80 cents per round depending on what type you buy. The cheapest I could find in my area was Federal's 40-grain American Eagle TMJ load at \$24 for a box of 50 rounds. This puts it squarely in the 10mm's wheelhouse as far as price is concerned, especially for practice training.



Talk about packing heat! The Ruger-57 can drive 5.7x28mm rounds to around 2,000 fps, creating huge fireballs with each shot.

REASONS

57 REASONS



1



2

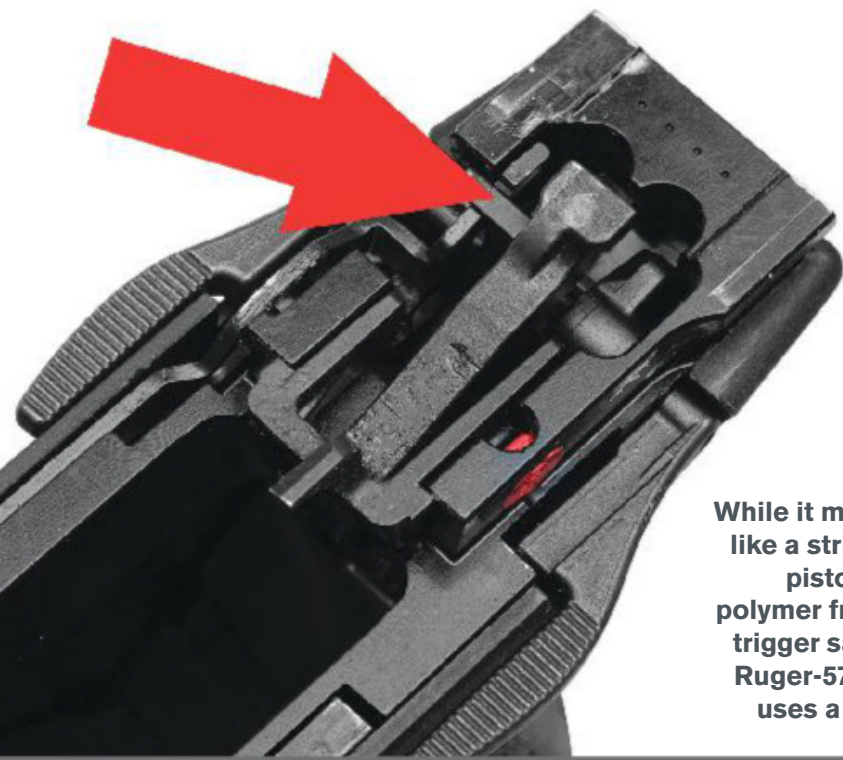


3



4

1. The Ruger-57 has slightly curved front and rear slide serrations as well as a fiber-optic front sight. **2.** Ruger includes an ambidextrous thumb safety with long levers for easier operation with either hand. **3.** The wide and comfortable trigger safety is quite an improvement over similar offerings, including the one on the Security-9. **4.** The rear sight is fully adjustable for both windage and elevation, and the top of the slide is also drilled and tapped for installing a reflex sight.



While it might look like a striker-fired pistol with its polymer frame and trigger safety, the Ruger-57 actually uses a hammer.

But then it hit me: So what? There are plenty of impractical and expensive cartridges on the market that might only get shot at the range, so why should this be any different? On its website, Ruger says that the gun is “just plain cool.” What more do you need than that? Part of shooting is just having fun, and that’s what we did when we took the Ruger-57 to the range.

On one of the occasions when a couple of us shot the Ruger-57, we took along our friend, Sarah, who had almost no handgun experience. She wanted to try out some different models before making a purchase, so we took six different pistols and revolvers in .38 Special, .380 ACP, 9mm, 10mm and 5.7x28mm.

Despite her small hands and the larger grip on the Ruger-57, it was far and away Sarah’s favorite pistol of the bunch. She liked the relatively light recoil, the trigger pull, and how easy it was to rack the slide and use the controls. With the long sight radius and prominent sights, she was able to shoot it more accurately as well. She felt like she had better control over the Ruger-57 than some

of the others she tried thanks to its ergonomics and effective grip texturing.

She wasn’t wrong in her observations. The trigger pull was exceptionally crisp and broke at an average of 4.12 pounds. The reset was slightly long, but it had a fairly audible and tactile *pop*. The slide serrations provided terrific traction to manually cycle the slide, and when it came to shooting, well, it was almost nirvana. With minimal muzzle rise and very little felt recoil, it was hard to believe that the Ruger-57 was driving some loads up to 2,000 fps.

Behind each tiny 5.7x28mm round is a significant powder charge that pushes it to rifle-like velocities out of the Ruger-57’s 4.94-inch barrel—complete with fantastic balls of fire. For instance, FN’s 40-grain V-MAXs clocked in at 1,704 fps, and the company’s 27-grain lead-free ammo (SS195LF) came in at 2,025 fps. According to the website ballisticsbytheinch.com, 40-grain .22 WMR rounds average anywhere from 1,780 to 1,934 fps out of a 16-inch barrel. While the 5.7x28mm is pricier than the .22 WMR, that doesn’t negate its poten-

SPEC BOX

RUGER-57

CALIBER:	5.7x28mm
BARREL:	4.94 inches
OA LENGTH:	8.65 inches
WEIGHT:	24.5 ounces (empty)
GRIP:	Glass-filled nylon
SIGHTS:	Fiber-optic front, adjustable rear
ACTION:	DAO
FINISH:	Matte black
CAPACITY:	20+1
MSRP:	\$799

PERFORMANCE

LOAD	VELOCITY	ACCURACY
Federal 40 American Eagle TMJ	1,554	2.55
FN 27 Lead-Free	2,025	2.46
FN 40 V-MAX	1,704	1.75

Bullet weight measured in grains, velocity in fps by chronograph and accuracy in inches for best five-shot groups at 25 yards.



tial in the field, especially with a good optic.

Speaking of that, the Ruger-57's accuracy was quite impressive with most loads, which made shooting it even more fun. The pistol definitely preferred the 40-grain V-MAX load, with an average group size of 2.38 inches from a bench at 25 yards using just the iron sights. With the 27-grain rounds, the groups opened up a good bit for an average of 3.16 inches. It's hard to say whether those groups were more me or the pistol.

DEFENSIVE DRILLS

We also ran some drills with the Ruger-57 to test its efficacy as a defensive weapon. One drill had us drawing for a quick shot at the center-mass of a Thompson HALO reactive target at 7 yards, then transitioning to a precise shot to the head. I did this 10 times on one target and came up with some impressively tight groups. The center-mass shots stayed within 2.25 inches, and the cranial shots covered just over 1.06 inches.

Another off-hand drill included drawing and shooting timed double-taps at 15 yards to further test the Ruger-57's accuracy and get a good feel for the trigger's reset. As mentioned, the reset is a little long but not overly onerous, and I was able to quickly deposit five pairs of shots into a 4-inch ring with no muss or fuss. No, I wasn't as fast as Jerry Miculek, but I got the job done, and throughout the hundreds of rounds fired, there wasn't a single malfunction of any type.

Also, it's worth mentioning that Speer just announced its first 5.7x28mm ammo



designed specifically for self-defense. The company's new 40-grain Gold Dot hollow points are manufactured using the company's Uni-Cor

bonding process, which prevents core-jacket separation. At an MSRP of \$52 per box of 50, it isn't cheap. But if it performs as well as Speer's other Gold Dot products, it's definitely worth checking out if the Ruger-57 is going to be carried on your person or rest on your bedside table.

Despite my initial confusion over the Ruger-57, I have to admit that I've seen the light. While I still don't know what exact role it would play in my collection, there's no question that I want one of my own. I really dig the fireballs, even if I do hear the sound of the cash

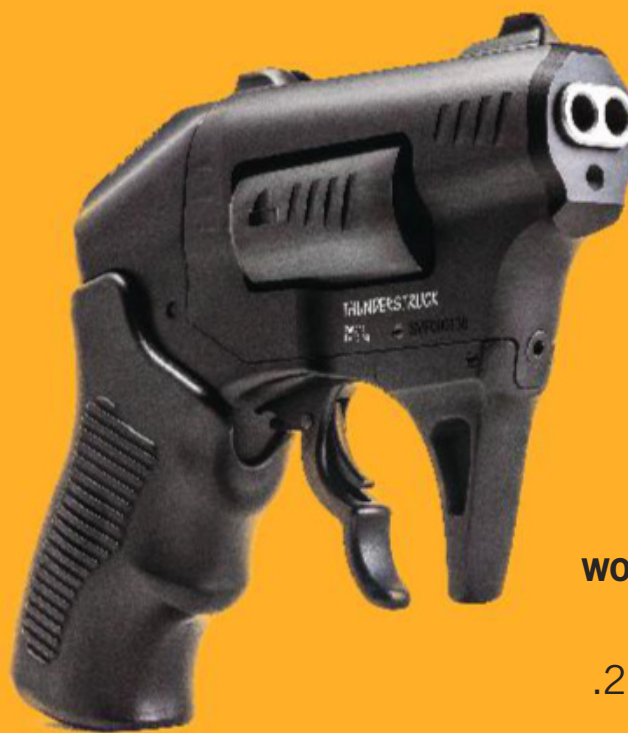
register ringing with every shot. It's extremely comfortable to shoot, utterly reliable, surgically accurate, holds 20+1 rounds and, well, it's just plain cool.

If you've always wanted to try out the 5.7x28mm but couldn't swing nearly \$1,500 to make it happen, then the Ruger-57 just might be what you've been waiting for. No matter the reason you decide to pick it up, once you start shooting, you're going to have a hell of a good time. What could be a better reason than that? For more information, visit ruger.com. **CH**

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OPTIMIZE YOUR HANDGUN FOR FASTER FIGHTING IN LOW-LIGHT CONDITIONS

BY DR. MARTIN D. TOPPER

➔ Tritium sights significantly improve your ability to shoot accurately in low light, but they have some drawbacks. They aren't very bright in twilight, and it's possible to misalign the front and rear dots. Several remedies have been tried to resolve these problems, but I've not been aware of any night sights that address all of them—until XS Sight Systems introduced its new RAM night sights.

ALWAYS GLOWING

XS Sight Systems is known for its rugged, dependable and innovative sights, and the new RAM (RadioActive Material) series is no exception. These sights are designed to overcome the problems that beset traditional three-dot tritium sights.

To get around that faintness in twilight, the front sight has a wide photoluminescent ring surrounding the tritium lamp. This material is continually charged by the light given off by the lamp. That alone is a good idea, but XS has gone further.

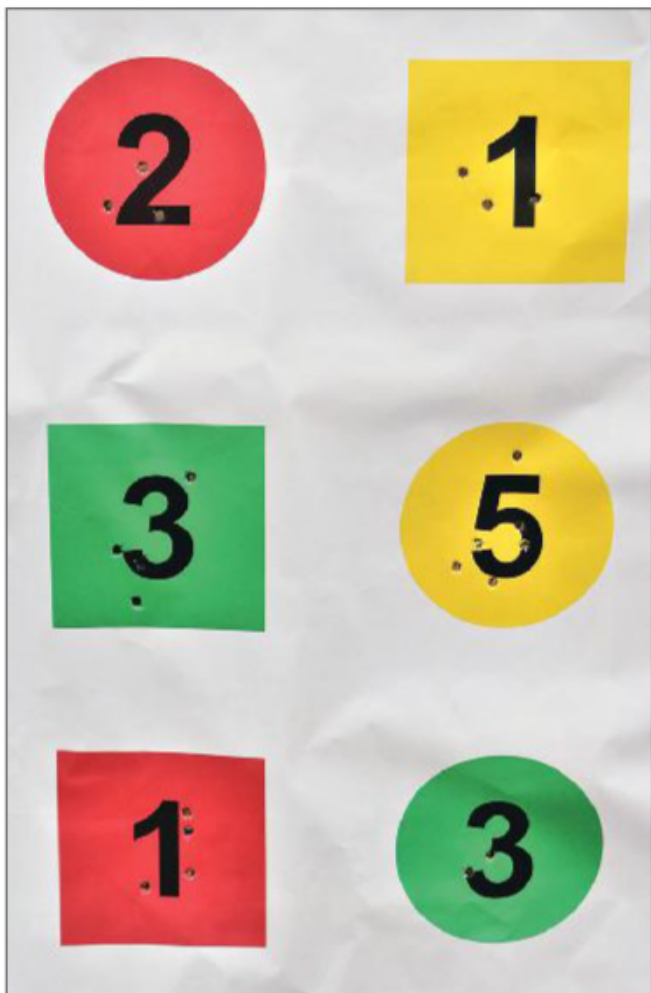
The photoluminescent ring is large, making it easy to align with the rear sight, and it's also convex in shape, which reduces glare and provides more surface area for ambient light to charge it. You can also use an LED flashlight if desired. The front sight ring is available in either bright orange or green. I chose the latter for this review because I've become accustomed to all-green night sights over the years.

The rear sight also has several modifications. Its tritium lamps are counter-sunk below the rear surface, which has

a non-reflective matte finish. In addition, there are no white rings around the rear sight's tritium lamps—something that can cause misalignment with other sights. Furthermore, the U-shaped rear sight notch is extra-wide at 0.17 inches. This leaves considerable room on either side of the 0.145-inch-wide front sight blade for quick targeting.

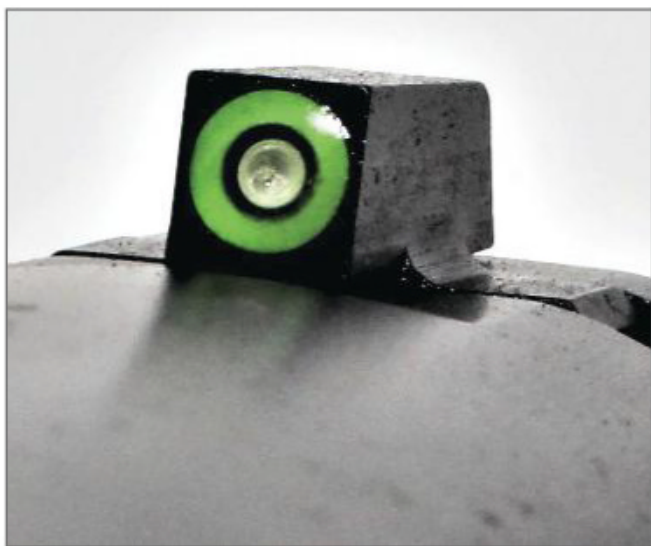
Perhaps the best part is that these sights can be installed by the buyer. However, I've been involved in DIY projects in the past and know my limitations. So, I had Ben Kenney at the Florida Gun Exchange install the RAM sights on my 9mm Sig Sauer P229 Select Compact while I watched.

There are two ways to mount these sights. The first involves placing the slide in a padded vise and using a hammer and brass punch to carefully tap the new sights in place, frequently stopping to use a digital or dial micrometer to make sure the sights are centered in their dovetails. The second and easier way is to use a universal sight pusher, but a good one can cost between \$300 and \$400. Before he used a pusher, Ben



As the author learned while drilling with his Sig P229, the XS RAM sights are noticeably brighter and easier to align than other night sights.

“THESE SIGHTS ARE DESIGNED TO OVERCOME THE PROBLEMS THAT BESET TRADITIONAL THREE-DOT TRITIUM SIGHTS.”



used hand pressure to start the sights in their dovetails and quickly found that the rear sight needed a little fitting, which he easily did with a small file. Now it was time to hit the range.

LIVE-FIRE TESTING

For this test, I kept my Sig pistol stoked with Sig’s 124-grain V-Crown JHPs, and I didn’t have any malfunctions or problems. After getting acclimated to the sights, I started with a simple drill with a Discretionary Command Training Target from Action Target placed 7 yards away. To run the drill by yourself, choose three numbers, start your shot timer, draw from concealment at the signal and shoot the three chosen aiming points as fast as you can in sequence without missing. I ran five different strings for record, and my times ranged from 6.04 to 6.81 seconds, with an average time of 6.53 seconds. No shots were outside the colored areas. Afterwards, I ran several additional untimed drills for the camera, and one shot landed barely outside the green No. 3 circle.

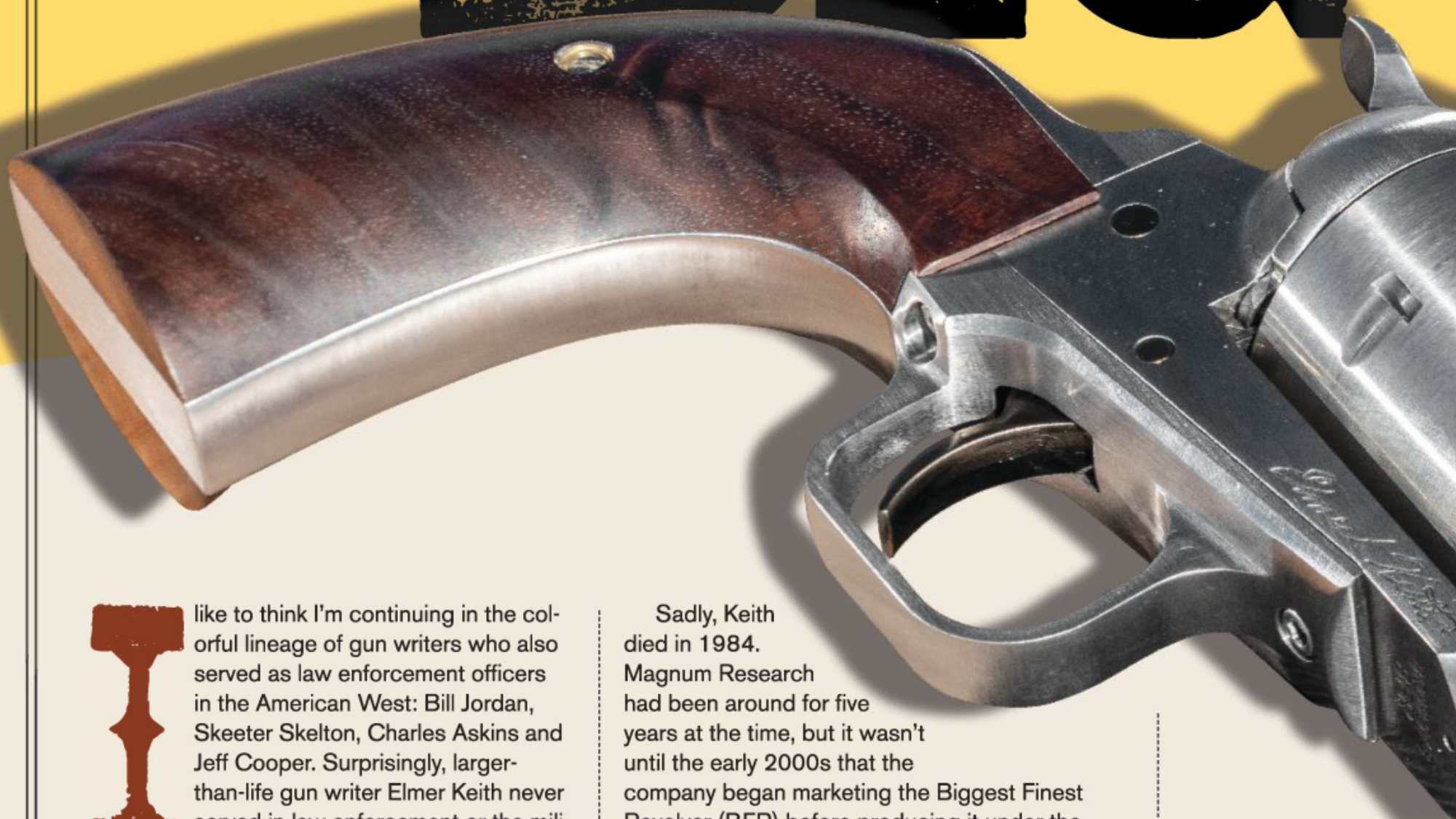
The second test involved using the Sig for the rapid-fire stage of the Army “L” course at the Flagler Gun Club’s weekly Bullseye match. Using an isosceles stance, I ended up with a 90-1X score and no hits outside the 8-ring.

Finally, I compared the RAM night sights to three other styles in an interior closet. It was definitely easiest to see the RAM front sight in total darkness, even with the photoluminescent ring charged only by the front tritium lamp. Then I charged the RAM’s front sight with a 600-lumen SureFire light for 20 seconds. For 25 minutes, it remained brighter than when it was uncharged, and it was still brighter than the front sights on the other three handguns.

The XS RAM sights perform as advertised. Even when the photoluminescent ring wasn’t charged, the front sight was brighter than competitive models. Overall, the XS RAM night sights are easy to align and quite accurate. Like other XS sights I’ve used in the past, these sights do the job they’re intended to do, and they do it well. For more information, visit xssights.com.



BIG



I like to think I'm continuing in the colorful lineage of gun writers who also served as law enforcement officers in the American West: Bill Jordan, Skeeter Skelton, Charles Askins and Jeff Cooper. Surprisingly, larger-than-life gun writer Elmer Keith never served in law enforcement or the military. However, his influence was every

bit as great. Before World War II, he developed the .357 Magnum by lengthening a .38 Special case. Then, in the 1950s, he did the same thing with a .44 Special, creating the .44 Magnum. In the debate over small, fast bullets versus larger, slower bullets, Keith always wanted to make large bullets go fast, too. Consequently, "Elmer Keith" and "big bore" became synonymous, and his influence is still felt today.

Keith's influence didn't end with cartridges, either. He designed bullets, holsters and shooting positions while being a prolific gun writer. When he voiced an opinion, shooters and manufacturers listened. He was a crack shot with pistols, rifles and shotguns, an avid hunter and was renowned for his love of big-bore revolvers.

Sadly, Keith died in 1984. Magnum Research had been around for five years at the time, but it wasn't until the early 2000s that the company began marketing the Biggest Finest Revolver (BFR) before producing it under the guidance of gunsmith Jim Tertin, who was instrumental in its design. Now the BFR is available in several different configurations, with short cylinders for normal pistol calibers and long cylinders for traditional rifle calibers. You read that right. Want a .30-30 revolver to go with your lever action on your next deer hunt? Yep, that's a standard option for the BFR.

THE RENDEZVOUS

When I met Magnum Research's Joby Goerges at the Athlon Outdoors Rendezvous in Driggs, Idaho, last year, he showed me the company's first Elmer Keith commemorative BFR. Beautifully manufactured, the stainless steel gun was a work of art. Every piece fit together perfectly without any gaps or tool marks.



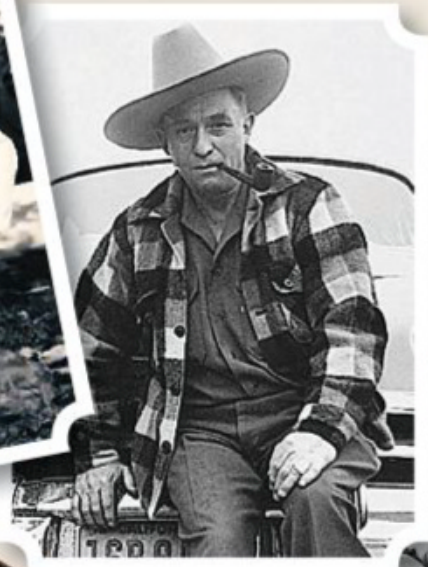
The Magnum Research Custom Shop chambered its first Elmer Keith commemorative BFR for the .500 Linebaugh, a cartridge Keith would've loved for its raw power.

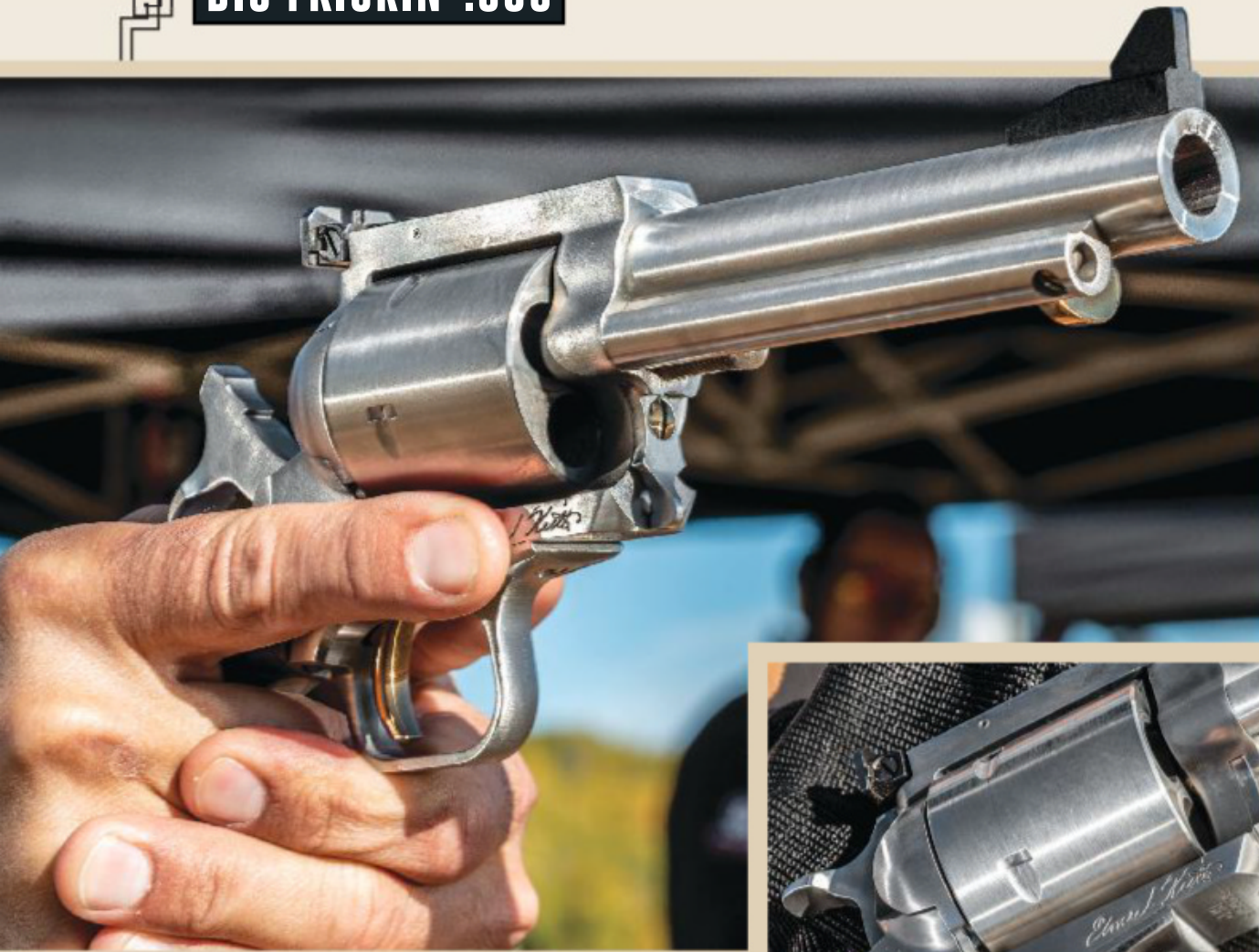
FRIGIDIAN

55000

MAGNUM RESEARCH CREATES A BFR FIT FOR THE LEGENDARY ELMER KEITH

— BY ROBERT JORDAN • ALEX LANDEEN PHOTOS —





thumb to easily cock the hammer for the next shot. Elmer's design still allows the gun to rotate in your hand, but to a smaller degree.

According to Joby, the Elmer Keith revolver also has a standard BFR trigger, but it's brass colored to match the head of the ejector rod. Then there's the front sight, which is extra tall and made from aluminum. It's paired with an LPA adjustable rear sight. The frame is deeply engraved with Elmer Keith's signature on one side and the caliber on the other. In this case, it said ".500 LINEBAUGH," but since it's a true custom gun, it can be made in virtually any caliber.

The rest of the gun is all BFR. Magnum Research uses 416 stainless steel for the barrel and 17-4 stainless steel for the cylinder and frame. The higher-quality steel manufactured and used today allows for much more powerful cartridges than back in Elmer's day.

It's also worth noting that you don't need to thumb the hammer back to the half-cock position



→ The custom BFR has Elmer Keith's signature along the frame as well as a cylinder-release system of his design.

SPEC BOX

MAGNUM RESEARCH ELMER KEITH BFR

CALIBER:	.500 Linebaugh
BARREL:	5 inches
OA LENGTH:	11 inches
WEIGHT:	3.13 pounds (empty)
GRIPS:	Micarta
SIGHTS:	Blade front, adjustable rear
ACTION:	SA
FINISH:	Stainless
CAPACITY:	5
MSRP:	\$2,875

PERFORMANCE

LOAD	VELOCITY	ACCURACY
Buffalo Bore 435 Hard-Cast LBT-LFN	1,011	3.25
Buffalo Bore 435 LBT-LFN	1,059	3.31
Buffalo Bore 525 Hard-Cast LBT-LFN	1,049	3.15

Bullet weight measured in grains, velocity in fps by chronograph and accuracy in inches for best five-shot groups at 25 yards.

Magnum Research also delved into the Keith mystique to design the gun. First, the base pin lever and lever release bar are of Elmer's design. They work great, and no tools are needed. The lever is also held in place by a spring-loaded catch. Swing it out 90 degrees to the side and the base pin springs forward, allowing the cylinder to be removed for cleaning. The enlarged head on the base pin is also grooved to make it easier to pull forward. The base pin comes forward until it hits the brass-colored head of the ejector rod. This is a fantastic feature because it keeps the ejector rod from being removed from the gun and lost.

Joby explained that the new BFR's Bisley-style grip—originally called the "Keith No. 5" style—was another favorite of his. This grip style originally debuted on the Colt Bisley, a target-grade Peacemaker, in 1894. It allows the gun to slide and rotate in the hand as it recoils, aligning your

to release the cylinder and allow it to rotate. Instead, you simply open the loading gate, and the cylinder is freed for loading and unloading. Close the gate and the cylinder locks back up. By the way, the cylinder rotates clockwise, like it should. I say that tongue in cheek because I've owned a fair number of Smith & Wesson revolvers through the years that continue to serve me well, despite their cylinders rotating the "wrong way."

POWER TRIP

After the Rendezvous, Joby agreed to let me test the same Elmer Keith BFR back at my home range in Montana. But they definitely don't stock .500 Linebaugh rounds at Walmart, even with all the grizzlies in the state, so I turned to the good folks at Buffalo Bore, who sent me two 435-grain loads and one



While the BFR was quite a handful at the range thanks to the mighty .500 Linebaugh recoil, the author was still able to produce tight groups.



525-grain load. And I'll just say that you can forget the bears! Having fired all three loads now, I feel 100-percent confident that they could take down a charging rhino...behind an elephant... behind a cement wall.

I decided to test the BFR's accuracy at 25 yards. I set up my DOA Shooting Bench, pistol rest, LabRadar and targets and settled in. And I should mention that I try to let every round I fire surprise me to maximize my accuracy, with a hard focus on the front sight and a slow, smooth trigger press to the rear. I also hold the gun lightly to negate any human wobble. But that's obviously incredibly hard to do when you're holding a gun that kicks sig-

nificantly harder than a 12 gauge shooting 3 1/2-inch magnum shells.

Nonetheless, the gun was very accurate. I'm sure I could get smaller groups if I had (a) used a scope instead of iron sights, and (b) not been wondering each time I fired the gun if it was going to hurt so badly my unborn grandchildren would feel it. I began to wonder if the .500 Linebaugh rounds would be able to pierce an armored truck or hurl it down the street. I also made a mental note to drive to Cody, Wyoming, find John Linebaugh and kick his butt.

Normally, after testing a gun's accuracy, I'll run some tactical drills with it to see how it operated in the real world, under stress and in adverse conditions. But I didn't with the BFR. I made notes on my range sheet

as I tested its accuracy: "Sharp recoil," "Don't put your elbows on the table" and "This is soul-crushingly painful." I kept a running log of the number of times the barrel came back and smacked my forehead (four) despite knowing what was coming.

Is the Elmer Keith BFR amazing? Absolutely! Even more than words can describe. Is it for everyone? No. This gun is for the aficionado, the history buff, the meat-eater alpha who wants to hunt American bison or Cape buffalo on their turf with nothing but sheer will and the finest piece of steel Americans have ever produced. That said, I must admit that the .500 Linebaugh simply isn't for me. I'm sending the Elmer Keith BFR back to Magnum Research. But there is something about it that makes me go back to my writing room every day and pick it up and hold it and cock it and aim it again and again. This is a gun that intertwines with your soul. I always thought magnum revolver guys were a crazy lot of old masochists. But today, I get it. I just think I might prefer it in .44 Magnum. For more information, visit custombfrrevolver.com.



Want to change up the caliber or grips? Those are just two of the many options at custombfrrevolver.com.



When it comes to hunting small game or varmints, the name of the game is accuracy. While the rimfire crowd seems to be in tune with factory ammunition, those who hunt with centerfire weapons have various components and resources available to maximize their capabilities with tailor-made handloads.

Over my lifetime, I've hunted small game with everything from short rimfires, centerfires, and even with factory shotshell ammunition for barn swallows or game birds. When it comes to guns, I've tried just about all of them, too—from single-shots to revolvers and semi-autos. I like single-shots like the Thompson/Center Contender and Encore because they're easy to feed and built for optics. They're also easy to adapt for various cartridges and are quite deadly in the backwoods.

I mostly use revolvers, and my writing assignments allow me to try just about every make and model. While I have no particular favorite, I love most of them for varmints. The medium-frame Smith & Wesson Model 14 or Model 19, the older Dan Wesson guns with a variety of barrels and, of course, the famous Colt Python or Ruger Blackhawk with a 4X Leupold scope all make hunting a pleasure. When it comes to semi-autos, the Smith & Wesson Model 41 is a charmer in .22 LR, and I'll still use the company's now-discontinued Model 52 with wadcutter bullets. Other than that, though, guns chambered for the .45 ACP seem to be handicapped in the field simply because of the larger bullets and short trajectories.

For my use here in the eastern U.S., revolvers get the nod. I like to tuck a .38 Special wheelgun in a high-



Combating VARMINTS

**HOW TO ROLL YOUR OWN
.38 SPECIAL AND .357
MAGNUM AMMO FOR
LASER-LIKE ACCURACY**

BY STAN TRZONIEC



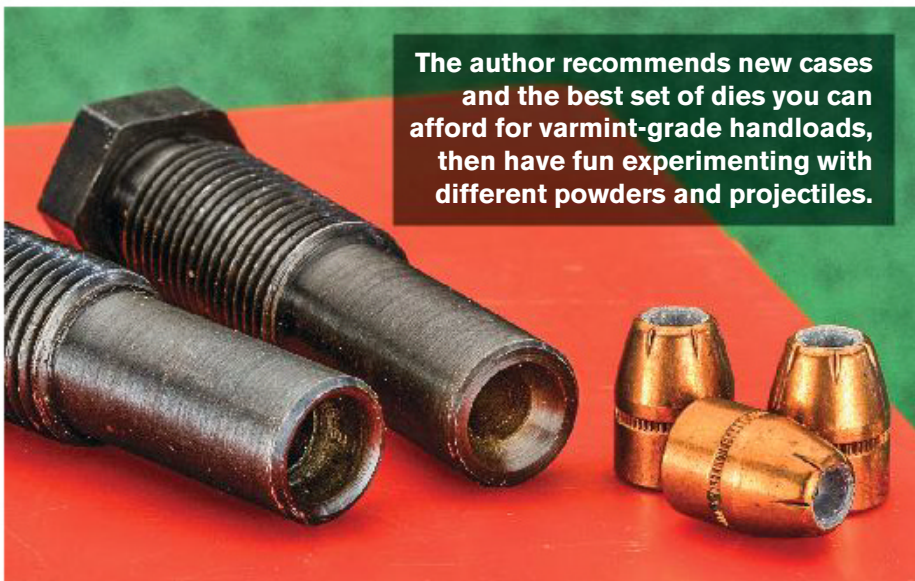


The author prefers to hunt varmints like groundhogs with revolvers. The Ruger Blackhawk (left) and S&W Model 14 (below) are his favorite guns for the task.

ride holster because the distances are short. If they're longer, I'll resort to a .357 Magnum. But with the woods so thick in most places, something quick and accurate fills the bill perfectly.

Working with the .38 Special, I really enjoy the Smith & Wesson Model 14 with oversized grips.

Since it's only chambered for the .38 Special, it's my go-to gun for casual varmint hunting. Working with most any 0.357-inch, 110-grain bullet, I like to get them up to at least 1,000 fps and zero my gun at 25 yards. Then the bullet drop at 50 yards amounts to only 1.5 inches. You can do this with 5 grains of Bullseye powder or about 6 grains of Unique without putting undue stress on the gun or shooter. With the same bullet weight, you can achieve a comfortable velocity of 1,400 fps with a Ruger Blackhawk or Colt Python in .357 Magnum



The author recommends new cases and the best set of dies you can afford for varmint-grade handloads, then have fun experimenting with different powders and projectiles.



with 12 grains Accurate Arms No. 7 or 18 grains of Alliant 2400. With a 50-yard zero, the drop at 100 yards is only about 5 inches.

THE COMPONENTS

Our primary goal is accuracy, so it's important to pay attention to the details in every step of the loading process and only use the best components. Of course, everyone has a different definition of accuracy, so it's crucial to set your goal and work toward it, especially when it comes to hunting smaller targets using a handgun.

Cases come first. Working with a new gun, I like to use brand-new cases from any of the major players in the field. These will last for many excursions before you get to the point where you might see the accuracy start to decline. Cases do get weaker during extended uses, and when you notice the accuracy start to suffer, it could be from what experts call "bullet pull." This is nothing more than a measurement dealing with how much effort is required to draw the bullet from the case. The more consistent this is, the better the powder com-

bustion and ignition. Since we're dealing with smaller targets—squirrels and such, or woodchucks at closer distances—it's a good idea to make a trip to the range every year to ensure your groups haven't opened up with the same combination of case, primer, powder and bullet.

There are many powders to choose from. With light bullets, most charges are small with faster-burning powders, leaving you with many reloads per pound. If you use Bullseye, for example, with a 5-grain load, you'll get about 1,400 rounds per pound.

For the .38 Special, I've found Bullseye, Titegroup, Winchester 231 and Unique to my liking. For the .357 Magnum with a lighter 110-grain bullet, I turn to Power Pistol, Accurate No. 7 or Aliant 2400 for my 1,400-fps loads. With the .38 Special, regular primers do the trick. However, .357 Magnum loads with heavier powder charges might need magnum primers.

When it comes to bullets, it's anyone's guess on what you like or don't like about a particular projectile in your gun. Over time, I've shot hundreds of bullets from all



BECAUSE YOUR TARGETS IN THE FIELD ARE SMALL AND QUICK, YOU WANT VERY TIGHT GROUPS AT THE RANGE.”

makers and have narrowed it down to the Sierra or Hornady 110- or 125-grain bullets for small game and varmints. Just remember that different guns will shoot different groups, and that's what it's all about with this type of hunting. What you get at the terminal end is what you will go into the field with.

THE PROCESS

You should also use the best loading equipment you can buy. Carbide sizing dies from numerous manufactures are a good investment and do away with messy lubricants. There's no need to even consider neck sizing for a revolver case, as full-length sizing is the only way to go. You should also be careful when it comes to bellling or expanding the mouth of the case so it doesn't lose its tension over time.

For the most part, seating and crimping the bullet to the factory cannelure works best, especially with the shorter overall dimensions of lighter bullets below the cannelure. A medium to heavy crimp, depending upon the caliber, is ideal and is best viewed when holding the finished case toward any light. The roundness of the crimp will show here. I find it best to seat the bullets, then go back and crimp them all in a separate operation.

Finally, testing is a very

important part of handgunning for varmints. Use a good rest, specifically a Ransom rest if you can get one. The goal is to test the gun, not your shooting skills. Because your targets in the field are small and quick, you want very tight groups at the range. Load and test your rounds until you get it right! Then, when you're in the field, look for a rest—perhaps a big rock or a dead stump—to steady your shot.



Consider using magnum primers for your .357 Magnum handloads.

Hunting with a handgun is an art, and while I favor the .38 Special for varmints, there's no reason why you can't use another cartridge that fits your needs. It takes patience, you have to stalk

closer and, in many states, this sport can be done almost year-round with nothing more than a gun in your holster and lunch in your backpack. That sounds good to me! **CH**



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1911 TEST

ROCK

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**ROCK ISLAND ARMORY DEBUTS
A BUDGET-MINDED .45
THAT STILL PACKS PLENTY OF FEATURES**

— BY MIKE DETTY • ALEX LANDEEN PHOTOS —

ROCK ISLAND ARMORY (RIA) recently introduced a classic, full-size, stainless steel 1911 chambered for the legendary .45 ACP round. The

“Rock FS Tactical SS” name is a little clunky, but RIA’s newest addition possesses many of the features savvy 1911 shooters seek, and it comes with a price tag many would consider to be in the budget price range.

Our story begins with **Arm Scor**, which has a long, storied history in the Philippines, with the company establishing its first office in 1905 under the name Squires, Bingham & Company. In 1952, the company was acquired by Don Celso Tuason, who obtained one of the first firearms manufacturing licenses and opened plants across the country.

In 1980, the company was reorganized as the Arms Corporation of the Philippines. Then, in 1985, Arm Scor Precision established an office in Nevada and soon acquired the RIA 1911 brand. Today, the affable Martin Tuason represents the third generation to run the company, which opened a plant in Montana to produce ammunition and now imports all of its firearms, including revolvers and shotguns, under the RIA name. But the company’s mainstay remains 1911 pistols.



LIKE A ROCK

The Rock FS Tactical SS is a true 1911, and those looking to switch out or upgrade parts won’t be disappointed. Nearly all aftermarket parts built for 1911s will work with the RIA pistol. It’s a Series-70-style design, so you won’t find a firing pin safety.

The slide and frame are machined from stainless steel forgings, and the former has wide, deep cocking serrations at the front and rear. The ejection port has been lowered and flared for reliability, and the rollover cut prevents the ejected case mouths from being dented. That’s something handloaders, especially competitors, will find appealing. The slide also wears Novak-style sights installed in Lo-Mount-dimensioned dovetails. The low-profile sights can be drifted for windage.

While my test gun came with a standard recoil spring guide rod, RIA’s sales materials specify a full-length recoil spring setup. The 5-inch barrel and bushing are crafted from stainless steel, and the chamber and feed ramp are both polished. The gun also uses a standard internal extractor made from stainless steel.

The full-size frame has a flat mainspring housing as well as a high-swept beavertail grip safety. An ambidextrous thumb safety is installed, and while the levers might be long and wide enough for competition use, they’re possibly too big for concealed carry. This is where aftermarket parts or a hand grinder might come into play. The stainless steel used in these parts makes alterations easy to clean

STAR



← Despite its price point, you won't find any sharp edges on the Rock FS Tactical SS. Just look at the subtly beveled mag well.



↑ The Series-70-style pistol has an all-black rear sight, a Commander-style hammer and extended, ambidextrous thumb safety.



→ The 5-inch barrel is paired with a traditional stainless steel bushing, and the entire gun has a simple bead-blasted finish. Also note the dovetailed front sight and stylish slide serrations.



up with simple bead blasting, as the slide, frame and smaller components all possess a matte finish.

The Rock FS Tactical SS also uses an elongated Commander-style hammer and a lightweight trigger. The trigger on my test sample broke consistently at 5.75 pounds with a slightly gritty take-up and some overtravel. Unfortunately, the trigger is not adjustable for overtravel. Finally, RIA includes a set of checkered wooden grips that add some color to the otherwise all-silver gun.

PERFORMANCE

Overall, I was impressed with what the Rock FS Tactical SS has to offer. I had some criticism of the fit and finish, but then again, I had to remind myself that this is a budget-priced gun. For those with an intimate knowledge of the 1911, an hour's worth of judicious polishing would make this good pistol into an outstanding gun. But for the purposes of this evaluation, I chose to do all of the testing without making any changes since you can't buy a budget-priced gun and expect Les Baer or Wilson Combat performance. Nonetheless, if you have the patience, knowledge and experience, you can transform this gun into something truly special.

I obtained my test sample just in time for a trip to Gunsite. This trip wasn't to take one of the excellent classes, but Ken Campbell, Gunsite's chief operating officer, had made a range and shoot-house available to me for *Ballistic's Best*, where I evaluated 10 new 1911s on the

market. I threw the RIA into the mix and shot it right alongside the others.

Campbell allowed me to use Gunsite's North range, which has a ramada covering the firing positions. Shooting from the shade was especially appreciated during my testing in the high desert, and it also made it easier to get a great sight picture.

To measure the Rock FS Tactical SS' accuracy, I fired five 5-shot groups at 25 yards with three different .45 ACP loads. The smallest five-shot group for each is listed in the accuracy table. I shot every group from a DOA Shooting Bench while resting the gun's dust cover on a Millett Benchmaster, and the average group size for all three loads was



just 1.28 inches. But honestly, I know the gun is mechanically more accurate than that. I believe that a crisper, lighter trigger and a thinner Patridge-style front sight would have resulted in groups under 1 inch.

I put 200 rounds through the gun while at Gunsite and another couple hundred rounds after I returned home. I have yet to experience a stoppage with this

gun. All of the rounds fed, cycled and ejected flawlessly. On top of that, the gun handled very well, too. Controlled pairs in Gunsite's "Fun House" shooting simulator were on top of each other when I did my part. The sights were easy to see, and the thumb safety snapped on

and off with the crispness and certainty that every 1911 should exhibit.

It's also worth mentioning that this gun—unlike many of the others I tested at Gunsite—didn't have any sharp edges to cut my hands. The edges on the slide, sights and safety were all slightly rounded or beveled. If you don't think that's a big deal, just take a class at Gunsite or any other training center. Repetitive drills, especially those designed to clear malfunctions, will often leave students searching for Band-Aids. This seemingly small detail is indicative of the care and attention to detail RIA devotes to its products.

At Gunsite, I paired the RIA pistol with a new holster from 1791 Gunleather. It's an interesting hybrid design that combines traditional steerhide with a carbon-fiber weave. Called the Project Stealth, 1791 claims the holster is stronger, lighter, more durable and more abrasion resistant than conventional leather

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“Overall, I was impressed with what the Rock FS Tactical SS has to offer.”

SPEC BOX

RIA ROCK FS TACTICAL SS

CALIBER:	.45 ACP
BARREL:	5 inches
OA LENGTH:	8.56 inches
WEIGHT:	40 ounces (empty)
GRIPS:	Checkered wood
SIGHTS:	Dovetailed
ACTION:	SA
FINISH:	Matte stainless
CAPACITY:	8+1
MSRP:	\$799

PERFORMANCE

LOAD	VELOCITY	ACCURACY
Armscor 230 JHP	832	1.26
Black Hills 230 FMJ	849	1.33
Hornady 220 Critical Duty +P	982	1.24

Bullet weight measured in grains, velocity in fps by chronograph and accuracy in inches for best five-shot groups at 25 yards.



holsters. While the holster body is constructed from heavy leather, it did break in and become more comfortable with use. However, the carbon-fiber element won't stretch with use, so you don't have to worry about the weapon's retention or protection. I found the Project Stealth provided a stable platform for the Rock FS Tactical SS, and my presentations were fast and unhindered. It held the gun securely, even while negotiating obstacles, and looks good, too!


READY TO CUSTOMIZE

There are several small modifications I'd make to turn this into my ideal carry and match gun. First, I would replace

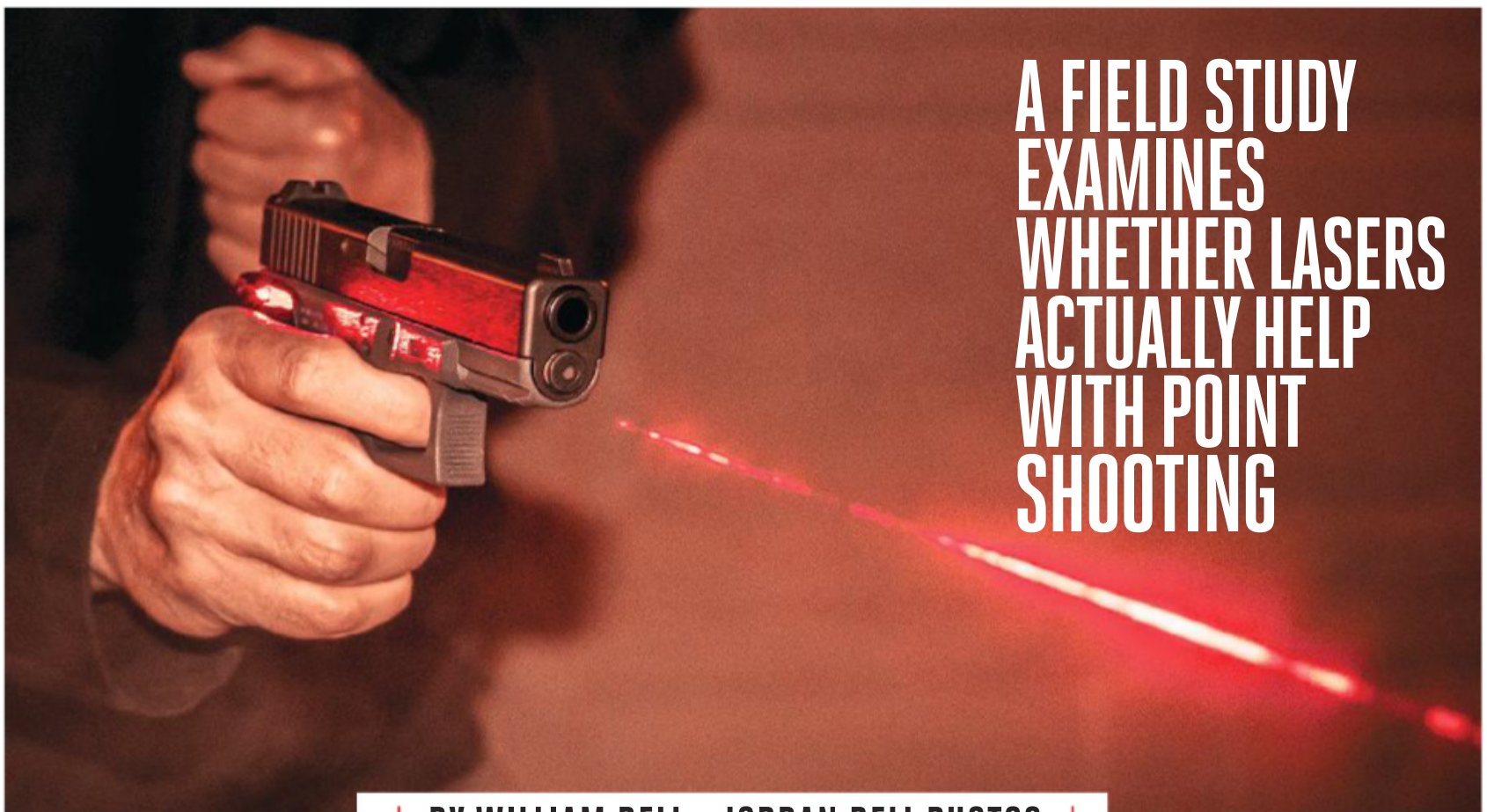
the sights with something my old eyes can see more easily. I'm a huge fan of Trijicon HD sights, and my primary carry gun wears a set. The tritium front sight is surrounded by a brilliant orange ring so the front sight can be easily picked up in nearly any lighting scenario. I'm also a fan of TruGlo's TFX Pro sights.

Secondly, I would replace the gun's trigger. The current trigger has some vertical and horizontal slop, and you can't adjust the overtravel. Wilson Combat makes a lightweight aluminum trigger that is adjustable for overtravel, and Brownells also sells a replacement trigger under its brand name. Both are slightly oversized for a quick and easy fit to your gun. Several companies also offer drop-in trigger kits that include hammers, sears, disconnectors, sear springs and mainsprings for a lighter, crisper pull. Nowlin Arms, Cylinder & Slide and Fusion Firearms are all companies whose products I have used and recommend.

Finally, I'd add a magazine well funnel for quick and certain reloads. For many years, I've outfitted my match and carry guns with Smith & Alexander Mag Guides that replace the mainspring housing and provide a funnel that effectively doubles the size of the magazine well opening. These are robust, foolproof designs that won't fail like two-piece options on the market. I also recently ordered an SI magazine well from chencustom.com and was extremely impressed with its fit and finish.

I have to admit that I see potential when I look at a 1911 like the Rock FS Tactical SS. A gun like this would be perfect for someone itching to test the waters of competition. Whether you choose to shoot in IDPA or USPSA matches, the RIA gun would be a good, economical selection for this purpose. As your skill develops, you might decide to upgrade parts. Or if you're an experienced shooter, it might make a great backup gun for when your primary match gun has a catastrophic failure. Lastly, for those who prefer to use a 1911 as a carry gun, the economical price of the Rock FS Tactical SS will leave some change in your pocket for those personal-preference modifications that every 1911 aficionado needs! For more information, visit armscor.com. 

ON POINT!



**A FIELD STUDY
EXAMINES
WHETHER LASERS
ACTUALLY HELP
WITH POINT
SHOOTING**

BY WILLIAM BELL • JORDAN BELL PHOTOS

I recently read an article from a top gun writer on point shooting. Like me, he believes that the technique is still relevant in today's world, but then he began to tell readers how much practice and ammunition it was going to take to become truly proficient. In the past, I probably would have agreed with him, but things have definitely changed for the better.

People have been upgrading their handguns with laser sights for decades, and many are now tailored for the grips themselves. With Crimson Trace models, for example, you simply grip the pistol and the laser activates instinctively. When you release your grip, the laser

shuts off. So where am I going with this? I wondered if installing a grip-type laser sight on a handgun could help one master point shooting in less time and with a fraction of the ammunition.

SQUARE ONE

Point shooting has also been described as "hip shooting." Watch any Western TV show and you'll probably see two tough hombres square off for a quick-draw shootout. Usually, the fastest gunslinger is the winner, and the guns themselves are rarely raised higher than waist level. The sixgun is fired one-handed just as it clears leather, unless the gunman is going to use his off-hand to "fan" some rapid shots.

You see, back in the day, there wasn't much difference between target and combat shooting. The handgun was held in one hand and shot from a standing "duelist" position. In some cases, natural instinct would enter the picture and the shooter, in order to make himself a smaller target, would adopt what some have called the "gunman's crouch." This became codified in early law enforcement firearms training and was generally restricted to up-close-and-personal distances. When the FBI came up with its Practical Pistol Course (PPC) around 1940, hip or point shooting was required at the 7-yard line, the closest distance on the 50- to 60-round course. This 21-foot distance might not



The author installed Crimson Trace Lasergrips on his Glock 19 and S&W Model 442 and a Hogue Red Laser Enhanced Monogrip on his S&W Model 19 (center).



seem like much, but it generally took lots of practice and ammo to consistently make telling hits in the K-zone or X-ring of the target.

Today, firearms experts have realized that many shooting situations occur at 3 yards and in. And yes, misses are possible even at seemingly point-blank ranges, especially when the target is firing back. Firearms training and qualification courses now reflect this knowledge, and the combat shooting course of one large federal agency I'm familiar with starts at 3 yards. Most often, the handgun is raised to almost eye level, and if the sights aren't used, the top of the gun is sighted over and the front sight comes into the peripheral view for a "flash" sight picture. The old-fashioned "gunman's crouch" is generally discouraged. Some training involves firing from

a retention position, with the handgun held close to the body after it's drawn to prevent it from being snatched by the bad guy. Today, as in the days of the Old West, the shooter getting off the first shot is often the winner.

Personally, I grew up watching Westerns and learned everything I could to make my draws as quick as possible. This carried into my law enforcement career, which started in the mid-1970s. But I also learned the proper fundamentals of marksmanship, including establishing a proper grip and sight picture when possible. Laser sights were never a crutch for me.

That said, I've never had a minute's trouble with a grip-type laser sight. I've been using them since Crimson Trace sent me a set of Lasergrips to test around 1991. They're still on the Smith & Wesson

J-Frame that I used back then and run just as well now. I've had an improved set on my S&W Model 442 for many years and had no troubles with them, either. The same goes for the Crimson Trace Lasergrips on my Glock 19.

I have a Hogue Red Laser Enhanced Monogrip on my 2.5-inch-barreled S&W Model 19 as well. I haven't had as much experience with this device, but that all changed with this project. All of my laser sights are currently red as well. While they're harder to see in bright daylight compared to green lasers, they work well in low light out to about 10 yards. Any farther than that and I'll use my pistol's iron sights.

THREE-GUN TESTING

I decided that the only way to really see if lasers could help with point shooting

was to hit the range. For this project, I used the laser-equipped S&W Model 442, Glock 19 and S&W Model 19 that I just mentioned with 110-grain .38 Special +P JHP, 135-grain 9mm FMJ and 158-grain .357 Magnum LSWC ammo, respectively. Since all of the shooting would start from the holster, I donned open-top, pancake-style belt models for each gun in the 5 o'clock position behind the hip. I also wore a heavy jacket so I could draw from concealment. For targets, I used 3/4-scale humanoid silhouettes.

When my Pact CT2 timer beeped, I drew and fired five rounds at 3 and 7 yards using a true point-shooting stance, then lifting the gun near shoulder level at 10 yards. At each step of the way, I fired five shots—four to the chest and one to the head—with the laser sight turned off, then five with the laser activated. I recorded my times and scores at every distance, which would demonstrate whether or not the laser



GLOCK 19



S&W MODEL 442



S&W MODEL 19

sight improved my speed and accuracy in a close-range shooting situation.

At the 3-yard line, I didn't miss any of my shots with any of the handguns while the lasers were turned off. I was honestly a bit surprised at how fast I was able to engage the target with the S&W Model 442. The gun's light

weight and short barrel made it quick to get out of the holster and on target. The Glock 19 actually won with a time of 2.35 seconds without the laser. However, it suffered the only loss of points at this distance.

The S&W Model 19 was overall the slowest with and without the laser.



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“Speed is fine, but accuracy is final.”



Again, it was the Glock 19 that came in first with 3.45 seconds without the laser at 7 yards. In second place was the Model 442, again without the laser, and the Model 19 crawled in for a third-place finish once more.

My scores and times really reflected the difference at 10 yards. Not unexpectedly, the Glock 19 came in first place with 3.51 seconds for hits without the laser. For this same exercise, the Model 19 beat the Model 442 for the first time with a run time of 4.18 seconds versus 5.17 seconds. As one might expect, I had the most misses when it came to hitting headshots at all three distances. But I wasn't done at the range.

At a shooting school I attended a while back, one exercise involved transitioning from an AR to a pistol and shooting two “bad guy” targets behind a “hostage.” I felt I might have done better with a laser-equipped pistol during this exercise, so I decided to set up a short experiment at 5 yards to prove or disprove the notion. I used the same guns once again, but only one shot was fired with and without the laser sight activated. The results? With the S&W Model 442, my run times were 2.96 and 3.21 seconds with and without the laser, respectively. The Model 19 and Glock 19 clocked in at 4.14 and 4.05 seconds, and 2.19 and 3.04 seconds, with and without their lasers, respectively.

THE SMOKE CLEARS

As you can see, the Glock 19 won the hostage scenario without the laser. With the laser, the S&W Model 19 took the prize. The time was slow at 4.15 seconds, but the bad guy was hit in the head while the other two guns missed or hit the hostage. Extra time, raising the gun a bit higher and looking over the sights made the difference. Speed causes misses or dead hostages, so in truth, I didn't see a big advantage for the laser in this exercise. It also pointed out to me just how much that little red dot jiggles when you're attempting to be both fast and accurate.

After the first couple of stages with the S&W Model 442, I had to don a shooting glove to save my thumb for more strong-hand-only shots. The gun weighs just over 24 ounces, and every shot with +P ammo was starting to take a chunk out of my thumb knuckle. The recoil from the 158-grain .357 Magnum rounds also slowed me down with the Model 19. Further, the shape and length of the Hogue Red Laser Enhanced Monogrip, coupled with the difficult-to-push activation switch, also had to be factored in for higher times and lower scores.

At short distances like 3 yards, there were no real speed or accuracy savings with the lasers. As the distances increased, the laser added to the time taken and actually took away from my accuracy. At 10 yards with the Glock 19, using the laser added 4.01 seconds to my time, and I still lost 10 points. I concluded that at 10 yards (or with hostages at any distance), accuracy trumps speed, and a two-handed hold with sights is the best way to go.

Looking at my data, it's hard for me to state that there is any advantage to having a laser sight on a handgun. At very close range and given my training and experience, the times and accuracy are too close to call for shooting center-mass only. Headshots are just plain tough to make at speed, and the laser did help in two cases. So if you're shooting for the head—hopefully one sitting still—good luck! A laser tends to bounce around on a target like a high-powered scope at distance, so it's tough to hold it still with just one hand. The difference isn't noticeable at 3 yards, but at 7 and 10 yards, I'd go with a point-shoulder stance and look over the sight, perhaps even using the sights at 10 yards. Speed is fine, but accuracy is final.

Grip-type lasers do have some advantages. They offer a certain intimidation factor, and you can see them on the target when you might not be able to see your sights or be able to

hold your weapon in a more conventional stance due to a compromising position. As far as making it easier to point shoot or using up less time and ammo, I don't think my supposition quite holds up in this real-world, albeit limited, examination. Personally, I'll stick with my laser sights; you'll have to decide for yourself. **CH**



HEAD WEST:

Want more on-point editorial content related to Old-West-style gunfighting? Check out *CH* sister publication *Guns Of The Old West*, which is on sale now at outdoorgroupstore.com.



CZ P-10 F
FDE

In addition to the crisp trigger and engineered ergonomics that have made the P-10 platform a favorite, the full-size frame of the F brings a longer sight radius, longer barrel and longer grip for increased consistency and control.



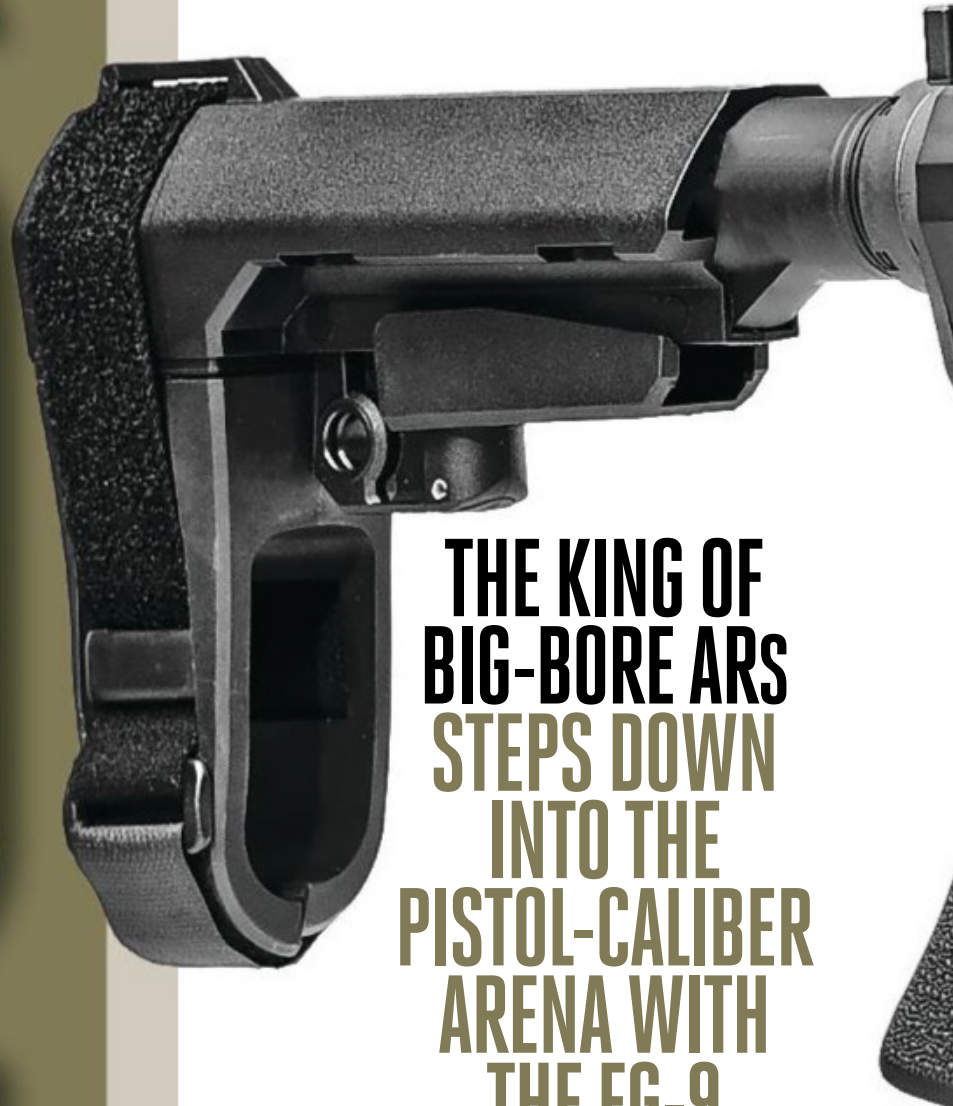
CZ P-10 F
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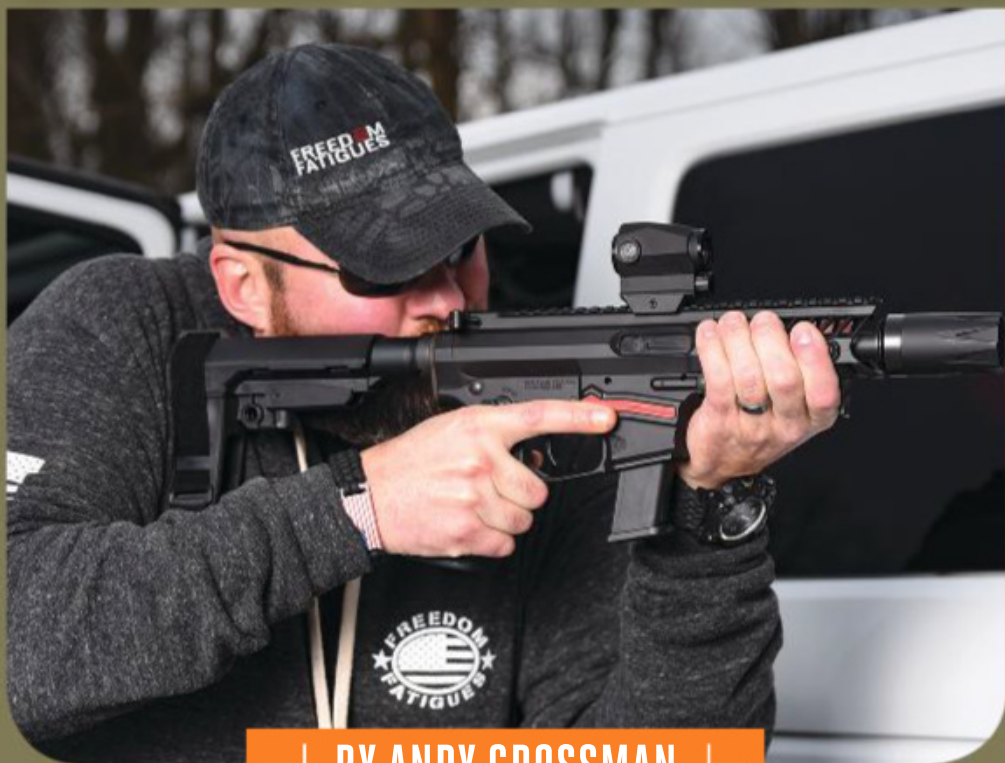
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THE FALKOR



**THE KING OF
BIG-BORE ARS
STEPS DOWN
INTO THE
PISTOL-CALIBER
ARENA WITH
THE FG-9**

HAS LANDED



— BY ANDY GROSSMAN —

PISTOL-CALIBER ARs have been all the rage the past few years. Such weapons can be excellent tools for a number of applications, including training, competition, plinking, and vehicle and home defense. Personally, I love having a 9mm AR as a truck gun for a number of reasons. They're usually extremely portable, utilize some of the most popular pistol magazines and are just so damn fun to shoot. They also offer very little recoil, so they're ideal for training new shooters.

So when I first heard about the FG-9 from Falkor Defense, I knew I had to get my hands on one and see if it lived up to the hype. The FG-9 is a bit on the pricey side for this category with an MSRP of \$1,499, but I wanted to know if the gun was actually worth the investment.



→
Are you ready to defend yourself and your family when you're on the go? Falkor Defense kept the FG-9 compact and portable for just that mission.

SMOOTH OPERATOR

The FG-9 is Falkor Defense's first entry into the 9mm AR game, and you can tell that the company came to impress. You'll immediately notice the FG-9's high-quality materials and top-notch craftsmanship. And unlike some other blowback-operated pistols out there, the FG-9's bolt is designed to lock back after firing the last round. Falkor Defense's patent-pending design in this regard is extremely robust and offers better compatibility with Glock magazines. So there's no need to buy proprietary or hard-to-find magazines. Thus, you can quickly switch from your sidearm to your AR, or vice versa, without having to locate different magazines

or worry about multiple calibers. But there's a lot more at play here.

While Falkor Defense's website says the FG-9 comes with a muzzle brake, my test sample featured a flash can, and surrounding the barrel is a very cool 5-inch handguard. Falkor Defense also throws in its very own hand stop on bottom of the handguard for a little added protection since the barrel is so short.

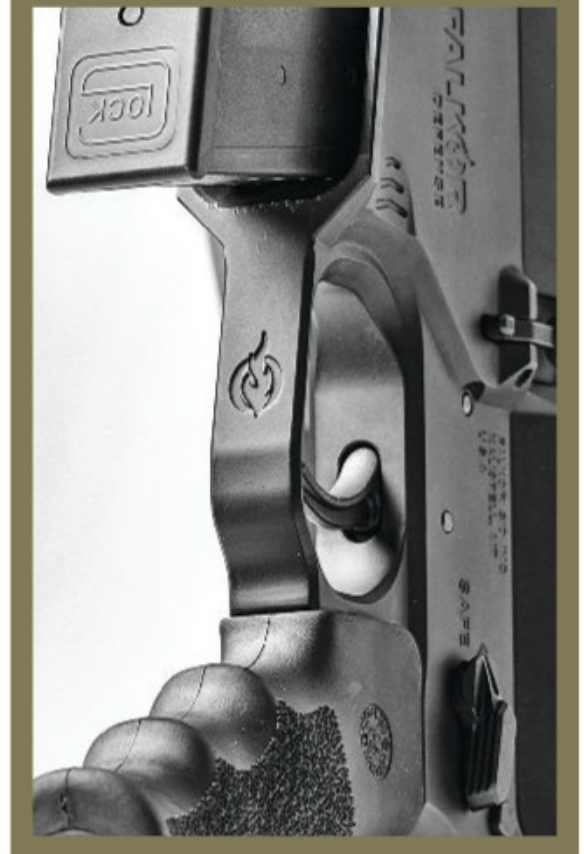
The upper and lower receivers are actually crafted as a matched set for a precise, rattle-free fit. And to suit righties and lefties, Falkor Defense includes one of its MACH 15 ambidextrous charging handles as well as a Radian ambidextrous 45-degree safety selector, which I absolutely love. Then



THE FALKOR 9 HAS LANDED



The ultra-skeletonized handguard comes equipped with a sturdy hand stop to keep your support hand safely away from the muzzle.



SPEC BOX

FALKOR DEFENSE FG-9

CALIBER:	9mm
BARREL:	5.5 inches
OA LENGTH:	20.5 inches
WEIGHT:	4.9 pounds (empty)
BRACE:	SB Tactical SBA3
GRIP:	Hogue rubber
SIGHTS:	None
ACTION:	Blowback-operated semi-auto
FINISH:	Matte black
CAPACITY:	17+1
MSRP:	\$1,499

PERFORMANCE

LOAD	ACCURACY
Aguila 117 JHP	0.55
Federal 115 American Eagle Syntech TSJ	0.90
Hornady 124 Critical Duty +P	0.50
HSM 147 Plated RN	0.85
Remington 124 Golden Saber Black Belt	1.00
Sig Sauer 115 Elite 365 FMJ	1.15
Speer 147 Gold Dot	0.80
Wilson Combat 115 HAP	0.75

Bullet weight measured in grains and accuracy in inches for best five-shot groups at 30 yards.



Along with an ambidextrous safety and charging handle, the FG-9 has an oversized magazine release and an expertly beveled mag well for quick reloads. Also note the finger grooves sculpted into the front.



there's the large, bright red magazine release, which adds a fun pop of color, the integral triggerguard, the reinforced bolt release and the heavily flared magazine well, which makes for quick and easy reloads. As you can see, Falkor Defense has done a lot to overcome problems traditionally associated with 9mm ARs.

Finally, the lower receiver features an ergonomic Hogue rubber overmolded pistol grip as well as an SB Tactical SBA3 arm brace installed on an adjustable buffer, which is great for those who want to run a sound suppressor.

The fact that most of the FG-9's components are made in-house really raises its value in my book. The gun just feels better than any other 9mm AR pistol I've handled in the past. There's no rattle, and all of the parts work well and look great together.

BORN TO RUN

Before I hit the range with the FG-9, I installed a Sig Sauer ROMEO5XDR on top. This little red-dot sight proved to be a perfect companion thanks to its small size and similar styling, matching the sleek look of the gun.

At the range, I started by sighting in at 25 yards before the testing really commenced, and I was immediately able to produce 10-shot groups off-hand that measured less than an inch wide



For his range session, the author installed a Sig Sauer ROMEO5XDR red dot, which will run for 50,000 hours on a single AAA battery.

“Even the most recoil-sensitive shooter can run this pistol without any issues, and it’s easy to deliver fast, accurate follow-up shots.”

anywhere from 10 to 30 yards. Honestly, it seemed almost too easy. The FG-9 ran smoothly and flawlessly throughout all of my testing, and the bolt locked back every time I ran out of ammo as long as I was using Glock magazines. For some reason, the bolt wouldn’t lock back when I ran aftermarket KCI magazines.

Nonetheless, as I mentioned, I didn’t have any feeding, firing or extraction problems, indoors or outdoors, with a range of ammo from Aguila, Federal, Hornady, HSM and Sig Sauer. The FG-9 digested around 1,200 rounds without any hiccups, and that’s without any cleaning or oiling. This thing just wants to run, and you can’t help but appease it.

There’s very little muzzle rise and minimal setback. Even the most recoil-sensitive shooter can run this pistol without any issues, and it’s easy to deliver fast, accurate follow-up shots. To test this, I handed the FG-9 to a few different people at the range, including men and women with various levels of experience, to see what they thought.

And everyone loved it. Less-experienced woman in the group seemed to really enjoy shooting the FG-9 once they fired the first few rounds and gained confidence. One of the women had never shot an AR at all, so she was a bit intimidated by the look of the FG-9. But I walked her through the entire process to make her more comfortable, and she was asking me how to buy one before the first magazine was empty.


Finally, the FG-9’s accuracy was excellent, both supported and off-hand. Even on a cold, windy Michigan winter day, I had no problem banging a 12-inch steel plate at 50 yards. The groupings definitely opened up a little more at 50 yards, but all of my shots were still on target. It really didn’t matter what ammo I ran, either, as I always got the same results. On top of that, the barrel never got too hot. I fed 250 Aguila FMJs through the FG-9 in about 15 minutes without stopping using 17- and 33-round magazines, yet the muzzle brake was barely warm afterward. Upon

leaving the range, I felt so good about the Falkor Defense FG-9 that I reloaded it and stored it in my truck.

VEHICLE DEFENSE

I used to overlook the importance of a good urban vehicle gun. I carried my 9mm pistol, a backup and always had another pistol in my truck. What more could I have needed? Well, I started really looking at scenarios and situations across the country a few years back and changed my opinion on the vehicle gun idea. The Falkor Defense FG-9 fits my needs perfectly for that purpose. It will increase my chances of breaking contact with any violent people I cannot avoid and, in extreme cases, help me survive multiple attackers.

The FG-9 is easy to maneuver and use in small spaces, like inside vehicles and buildings. It also takes the same ammunition and magazines as a G17 or G19, which makes things much easier when you have to grab your gear and move quickly. And being able to install accessories like optics, flashlights and lasers is just icing on the cake.

The Falkor Defense FG-9 looks great and performs even better. It’s an incredibly well-balanced and well-thought-out AR pistol that will fill many roles for many different shooters. For more information, visit falkordefense.com. 

→ No, you won't lose your "man card" for wearing a fanny pack—they're great solutions for carrying guns when traditional rigs won't work, like taking your dog for a run.

ELITE SURVIVAL MARATHON GUNPACK

Wearing lightweight running shorts and a tank top can present a challenge for the active concealed carrier, but the Marathon GunPack from Elite Survival Systems is a great solution. This runner's belt holds a compact semi-auto and two hydration bottles. The large pack fits popular compact pistols like the G19, S&W Shield, Walther PPS, Sig P365 and similar-sized guns. The fully adjustable belt has a quick-release buckle, and the water bottles each hold 7 ounces. Then there's the phone pouch, which has a pass-through port for earbuds. The pack is fully ambidextrous, has dual ripcords for quick-opening zippers and retails for \$60. (elitesurvival.com)

Packs ARE BACK

NEW FANNY PACKS THAT'LL KEEP YOU ARMED WHEN OTHER CARRY OPTIONS WON'T WORK

BY MIKE DETTY • ALEX LANDEEN PHOTOS



Fanny packs are often derided as uncool or nerdy. But perhaps this is unfair when you consider how effective they are at carrying everyday essentials, including firearms. Let's face it: There are times when we can't don our favorite OWB or AIWB holsters because of what we're wearing. This brings us to the good ol' reliable fanny pack. Afraid the "nerd tumor" might alert the fashion police? Maybe the "belly purse" will draw giggles from your kid's teammates at a Little League game? What's the alternative? I think most of us would rather be branded a geek than go about unarmed.

For years, I made my living doing gun shows. The fanny pack I used had a secret compartment with quick access to a handgun. I'd usually have between 10 and 15 tables and up to eight employees at a gun show, and the fanny pack that I wore contained all of **that cash**. For each sale, my employees brought me cash, and I'd make change from the fanny pack. At the end of a really good show, I'd have as much as **\$50,000 on me**, but someone would

have to kill me to take that fanny pack off me. I didn't have to worry about someone stealing a stationary cash box or employees pilfering a stationary register.

About 10 years ago, I had just started dating a beautiful young lady who came to visit me at one such gun show. When she saw my fanny pack, she started to laugh. "You look like a nerd," she said. Well, I unzipped the bag to show her my weekend's loot and asked, "How do I look now?" Her eyes grew big, and she never teased me about it again.

There's no arguing that the fanny pack is a very convenient way to carry everything you need for an outing, including your wallet, ID, cell phone, keys and other items. The products mentioned here are all designed specifically to carry a hidden handgun as well as those necessities. Let's take a look.



► RIGHTEOUS RIGS

ELITE SURVIVAL AVENGER GEN 2

Elite Survival Systems sent me two more American-made packs for testing, and the Avenger Gen 2 is one of the most versatile carriers I've seen. It's so user-adaptable that it can be carried as a sling bag or worn on the belt. The Avenger Gen 2 can hold full-size semi-autos, and the Omni Carry Belt Panel allows it to be worn vertically or horizontally on the strong or support side. Constructed from heavy-duty nylon, it features a carry handle on its back and silent zippers with easy-pull tabs. The main compartment also has a Velcro-mounted adjustable holster and magazine pouch. Additionally, there's an accessory pocket for things like your wallet, keys and credit cards. But the best part is that it doesn't look like a gun bag! It's available in a range of colors for \$60. (elitesurvival.com)



ELITE SURVIVAL LIBERTY GUNPACK

The Liberty GunPack is a versatile carrier that can be worn in the vertical or horizontal position or attached to just about any MOLLE platform. It's constructed from heavy-duty 1,000-denier nylon, and the main compartment conceals the adjustable, removable holster and magazine loop. The phone pouch will hold most smartphones securely with an elastic Velcro strap. Ripcords attached to a heavy-duty zipper allow quick access to the firearm compartment.

The Liberty GunPack fits most subcompact and compact semi-autos and small-frame revolvers. It's ambidextrous and available in black, coyote tan and wolf gray. It measures 7 by 5 by 2.5 inches. It has a pocket for everyday essentials like cash and credit cards, and another pocket for bigger items like flashlights and knives. It's priced at a very reasonable \$50. (elitesurvival.com)



BLACKHAWK FANNY PACK

Made in three different sizes for a wide range of guns, the Blackhawk Concealed Weapon Fanny Pack is constructed from heavy-duty 1,000-denier Cordura nylon. Understanding the weight of a gun can make the fanny pack sag on the waistband—a dead giveaway to observers—Blackhawk has incorporated two button-snap belt loops on the back of the pack. The universal holster will accommodate most semi-autos and revolvers, and a strap keeps the gun from moving. There are also two adjustable loops for securing extra magazines.

The pack's side wings aid in distributing its weight, and each wing has a small zippered compartment for things like keys, fobs, IDs and credit cards. There's also a front pocket for larger stuff like a knife, a cell phone or a flashlight. Blackhawk also uses silent YKK zippers with pulls for quick and quiet access. The MSRP is just \$70. (blackhawk.com)





IT'S TIME



TO FEEL THE DIFFERENCE

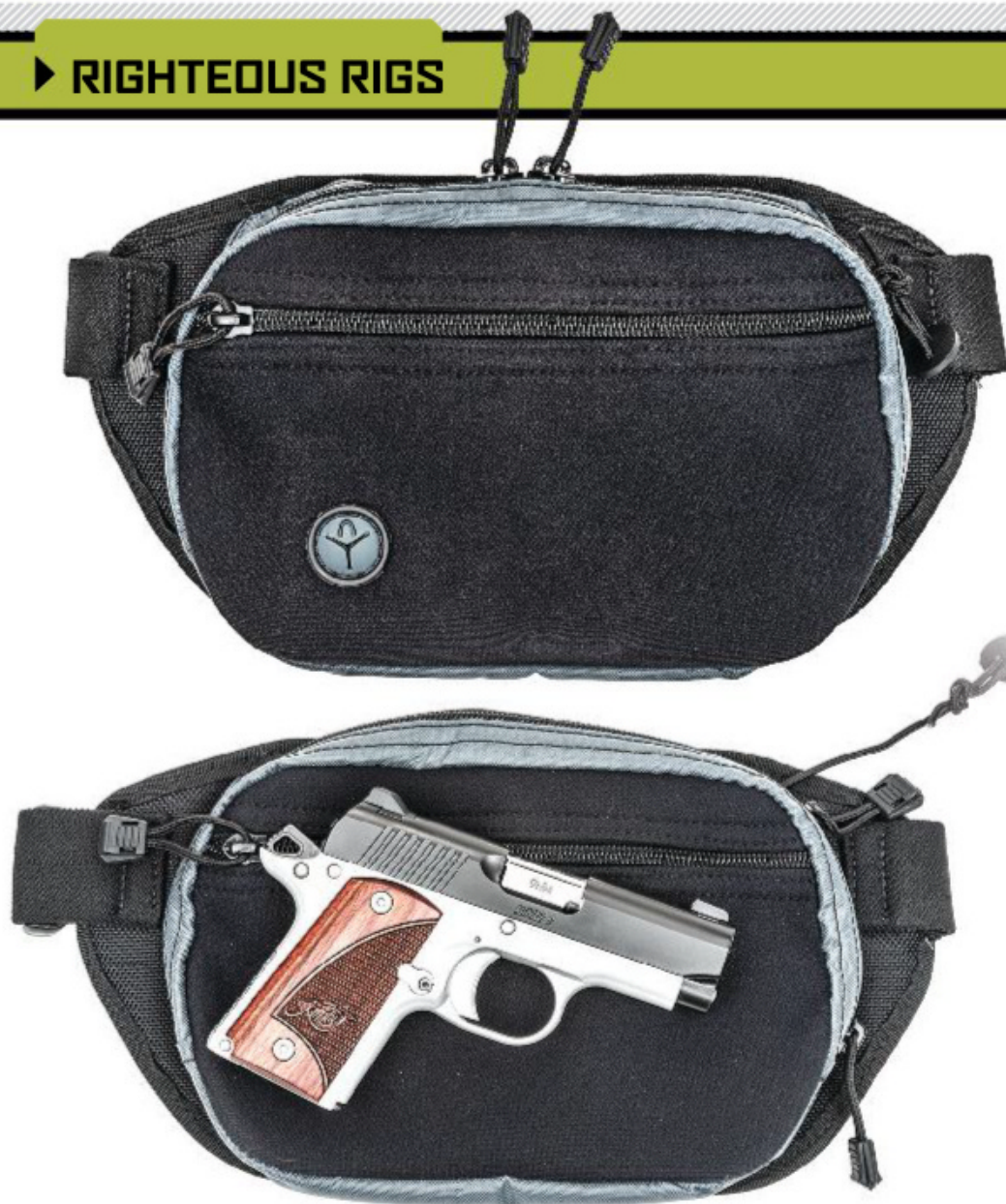
The modular O.Z-9 was designed and created for balance. It's one of the first things you notice when holding this pistol. Balance equates to what every shooter is looking for; a more controllable pistol with less felt recoil, less muzzle flip and faster, more accurate follow-up shots.

Competition, Standard and Compact sizes offered in Black and FDE, threaded and non-threaded barrel, with additional grip sizes and colors available. Get one in your hands today and feel the difference.

100%
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GALCO FASTRAX PAC

When I walked into Galco's booth at the SHOT Show this year, I was greeted by Mike Barham, media relations manager, who said, "Fanny packs are back in a big way." He quickly strapped Galco's new FasTrax PAC around his waist, retracted the zipper with one and pulled the activation cord with the other, presenting an inert blue gun ready to draw. It was so fast and smooth that I asked him to do it again.

Galco's design uses a pivoting holster inside the fanny pack, and the activation cord lifts the gun for the user to grasp. The synthetic holster itself is adjustable, and Galco sells the FasTrax PAC for both compact and subcompact guns. The compact model handles the S&W Shield, Glock 43, Sig P365 and similar-sized guns. Subcompacts would be guns like KelTec's P32, Ruger LCPs, Kahr's P380 and similar models.

The FasTrax PAC also features a breathable comfort-mesh back panel to keep the user comfortable, even during long hikes and jogs. It also has an elasticized belt for comfort and a plastic buckle for easy on and off convenience. The neoprene front face has a pocket for everyday items like a phone, car keys, a wallet and a pass-through port for earbuds. Of course, you don't want to put anything else in the gun pocket, as that might interfere with the pivoting holster. Available in an innocuous gray/black combination, the FasTrax PAC retails for \$89. (galcogunleather.com) 

SKINNER'S CHURCH DEFENDER



In recent times, we've seen a number of horrific church shootings. To combat this, many churches have established their own security teams with armed parishioners. It's no longer taboo to take a handgun into a church service.

Skinner Sights, a company best known for its aftermarket sights for lever-action rifles, is now offering the Concealed Carry Bible Cover, which allows you to be armed with more than just faith. Though it isn't a fanny pack, it is an effective off-body means of covertly having a firearm with you. As Skinner Sights' owner, Andy Larsson, says, "Don't let your parish perish!"

The Concealed Carry Bible Cover will hold a large Bible on

one side and up to a 4-inch-barreled revolver or G22-sized semi-auto and a spare magazine on the other. Its internal dimensions are 7 by 9.5 inches. Constructed from premium materials, the nylon case features a heavy-duty zipper and a carry handle. On the outside is a zippered mesh pocket that's perfect for holding a key fob, ID or even a church bulletin. It's a discreet, effective means of off-body carry, and if you're not using it for church services, it's also an effective way to carry a day planner or tablet. (skannersights.com)

—Mike Detty



You're a sitting duck



in a gun-free zone

Public safety is a critical part of the education campaigns of the Second Amendment Foundation, and with good reason. Without a self-defense option, we are all at greater risk.

The facts support our concerns about gun-free zones. The Crime Prevention Research Center (CPRC) recently finished updating a list of mass public shootings worldwide.

FACT: Over the course of 18 years, 1998 to 2015, the CPRC found 2,354 attacks and at least 4,880 shooters outside the U.S. and 53 attacks and 57 shooters within this country. The study found the U.S. makes up 1.49 percent of the murders worldwide, 2.20 percent of the attacks, and less than 1.15 percent of the mass public shooters.

FACT: Most gunmen are smart enough to know that they can kill more people if they attack places where victims can't defend themselves; 98 percent of mass public shootings since 1950 have occurred in places where citizens are banned from having guns. In Europe, every mass public shooting in history has occurred in a gun-free zone. And Europe is no stranger to mass public shootings. In the past eight years, it has experienced a per-capita casualty rate 50 percent higher than that of the U.S.

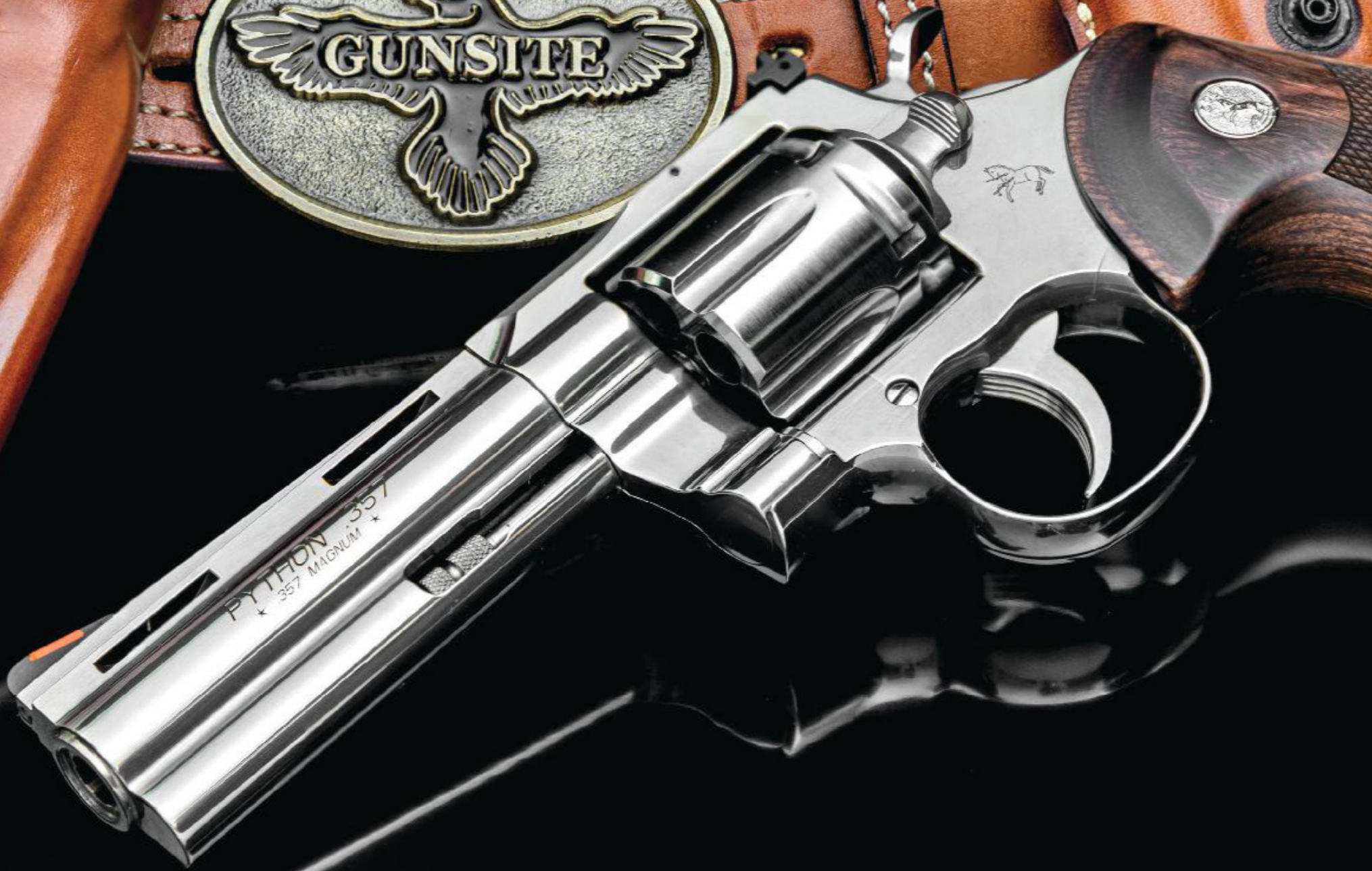
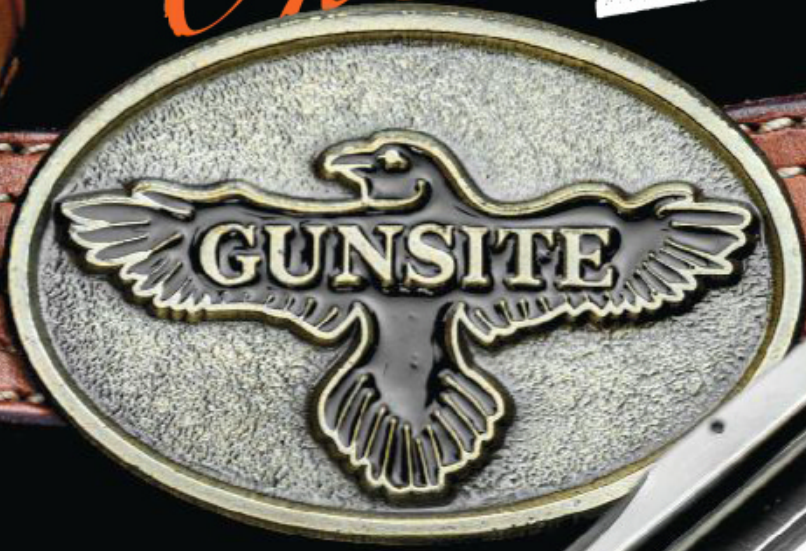
FACT: The U.S. is a relatively safe place from these shooting attacks precisely because so many attacks are thwarted by legally armed good Samaritans.

FACT: The evidence shows that gun-free zones are not the answer. Truth is, they are an added danger because they prevent legally armed citizens from defending themselves and their neighbors. It's time to get rid of gun-free zones. The U.S. has tried them for more than 20 years and evidence shows that gun-free zones actually increase the danger. Nobody wants to be a sitting duck in a maniac's shooting gallery.



The Second Amendment Foundation
12500 NE Tenth Place • Bellevue, WA 98005 • 425-454-7012
www.saf.org

SNAKES *On A* RANGE



After a 17-year hiatus, the Colt Python is back with a few updates that should please shooters and collectors alike.

Back in the day, the Officer's Model, in its various configurations, was the premier target revolver offered by Colt. That all changed in 1955 with the introduction of the Colt Python. This Rolls-Royce of Colt revolvers had as its most distinguishing feature a heavy vent-rib barrel and a full-length ejector rod shroud. A tapering ramp led up to a Baughman-style front sight, and the rear sight was fully adjustable for both windage and elevation.

It was built on basically the same E-Frame as the Officer's Model, but due to its floating, frame-mounted firing pin, the platform was designated the "I-Frame." Much attention was lavished on the double-action/single-action (DA/SA) mechanism, giving it excellent trigger pulls. It also had a six-shot cylinder chambered for .357 Magnum cartridges and standard barrel lengths of 2.5, 4 and 6 inches. Blued, nickel and, later, stainless steel versions were available. Checkered walnut target grips came on the 4- and 6-inch-barreled models, while the 2.5-inch-barreled model wore service-style grips. There were a number

of variations over the years, but the final Python rolled out of the Colt Custom Shop back in 2003.

A STRONGER SNAKE?

Thankfully, Colt got back into the revolver business in 2017 with the Cobra, which was an immediate success. Now the company has revived a few more models, and 2020 marked the reintroduction of the Python in .357 Magnum.

Naturally, aficionados are going to immediately compare the new Python to the original model. In my case, the Python nestled in my gun safe is 45 years old. A quick glance at the two wheelguns side by side reveals that they're pretty close in appearance, but further inspection points out a number of differences. The biggest is the action, which is much simpler on the new gun. There are less moving parts inside the gun now for greater reliability and less required maintenance. Colt tested this with over 40,000 trigger pulls on a single Python, which were lighter and more consistent due to less internal friction.

Externally, the hammer spur is a bit shorter than the original's, and it has serrations instead of checkering. The trigger has also been redesigned, but the face still has three deep serrations. On the new Python I tested, the SA pull was crisp and weighed 5.75 pounds while the DA pull was 11.38 pounds without any stacking. In contrast, my old Python had 4.93- and 8.63-pound pulls in SA and DA modes, respectively.

The new frame is nearly identical to the original's in size and shape, but due to the changes in the trigger mechanism, some of the screws and pins have been repositioned. The gun still has a square-butt grip frame as well, but the backstrap is smooth instead of serrated. On the left side of the frame, the new model has no apparent cylinder stop like the original because the internal redesigns don't require it. The cylinder release is similar to the original design, and you'll find the "Rampant Colt" just below it.

COMPARING COLT'S BRAND-NEW PYTHON AGAINST ONE MADE IN 1975

BY WILLIAM BELL • JORDAN BELL PHOTOS



← Compared to an original model (far left), the new Python (left) has a slimmer grip, a smooth backstrap and an interchangeable front sight.

My middle-aged Python has an Eliason-style adjustable rear sight,

while the new version has the same rear sight used on the new King Cobra Target revolver. Its shape reportedly allows a 30-percent increase in the cross-sectional area of the topstrap, making for a stronger frame. The stainless steel alloy used to build the new Python is also reportedly stronger.

Both Pythons have barrels similar in appearance. The new model has a 4.25-inch barrel to allow importation into Canada. Both have a “step down” at the muzzle—the new model has a recessed crown, while the older model’s is much less pronounced. The front sight on the 2020 Python is held in place with a setscrew, making it interchangeable. The factory-supplied blade is black with a red insert. My old “snake” has a red ramp front sight that is pinned in place.

The barrel stampings are very close in appearance between the guns, but “Colt” is a bit more stylized on the new model. The front edges of the cylinder are also beveled just like the original’s, but the new model has slightly larger bolt cut leads. Here the most obvious differences are the shapes of the ejector star ratchets, due mainly to the differences in the actions.

The two-piece grips on the new Python are made from walnut with very precise checkering on the side panels and silver Colt medallions. As for the shape, the curvature of the frontstrap isn’t as pronounced on the new gun, and the rear of the grip panels are flattened,

especially near the butt. The old Python has more traditional walnut grips with checkering that actually protrudes and gold-colored Colt medallions.

RANGE BATTLE

Before I hit the range, I scrounged up a few different .357 Magnum loads from CorBon, DoubleTap (including Colt Defense JHPs), HSM and Remington. I also obtained a Galco DAO Strong-side/Crossdraw Belt Holster that looks a lot like the holsters I wore as a law enforcement officer in the 1970s and 1980s. Made from premium steerhide, it rides high on the belt and offers adjustable retention, a safety strap and 1.75-inch belt slots. I paired this holster with a Galco 2x2x2 Ammo Carrier to hold six extra cartridges.

Colt also mentioned that the new Python accepts old Python grips, so I

obtained some exact replicas from Deer Hollow Enterprises. I tested a third-generation set that match the grips on my 1975-era Python. They look and feel great, with the same type of checkering and gold Colt medallions, and fit the 2020 Python like a glove.

Finally, I hit the range on a sunny, fairly warm day in March. I started by getting some velocity figures using an Oehler Model 35P chronograph, and then it was time to compare the old and new Python side by side. This involved shooting six 5-shot groups at 25 yards in SA mode with each Python using Black Hills’ 148-grain .38 Special hollow-base wadcutters (HBWCs). I placed each gun in a Hyskore rest to take out some of the human factor, and the velocities came in at 724 and 793 fps for the old and new guns, respectively. The average group size for the 1975 Python was 2.52 inches, while the 2020 Python’s was 2.17 inches. The smallest group was 1.95 inches.

Next, I shot three 5-shot groups from the new Python—in SA mode and using a sandbag rest for support—with each of my .357 Magnum test loads at 25 yards. Surprisingly, the best group of the





SPEC BOX

COLT PYTHON

CALIBER:	.357 Magnum
BARREL:	4.25 inches
OA LENGTH:	9.75 inches
WEIGHT:	42 ounces (empty)
GRIPS:	Walnut
SIGHTS:	Ramp front, adjustable rear
ACTION:	DA/SA
FINISH:	Stainless steel
CAPACITY:	6
MSRP:	\$1,499

PERFORMANCE

LOAD	VELOCITY	ACCURACY
Colt Defense 158 JHP	1,393	2.38
CorBon 110 JHP	1,367	2.67
DoubleTap 200 Hard-Cast	1,316	1.98
HSM 158 LSWC	1,179	2.78
Remington 125 HTP	1,570	2.08

Bullet weight measured in grains, velocity in fps by chronograph and accuracy in inches for best five-shot groups at 25 yards.


day came with the hardest-hitting load in the bunch: DoubleTap's 200-grain Hard-Cast solids. The cluster measured 1.98 inches, and the load left the muzzle with 769 foot-pounds of energy (fpe). I had a fantastic four-shot group that measured 0.82 inches with the CorBon JHPs, but a flyer opened it up to 2.87 inches. Only one group was over 3 inches wide, so I was pleased with the results.

Shooting for groups isn't my forté anymore, so I decided to run the Pythons through a 30-round combat qualification

course using my Galco leather gear and a mix of ammo. I set up some PJI-USA "bad guy" targets and began each stage with the gun loaded and holstered. I also kept six extra rounds in the 2x2x2 pouch. I started by firing 12 rounds at 3 yards using a one-handed, point-shoulder stance, six rounds with just my right hand, then six with just my left hand. After reloading, I fired a double-tap and body-armor drill at 7 yards with a two-handed grip, then, reloading again, I moved back to 15 yards to fire six shots behind a barricade. Both guns performed well, and all of my shots went where I wanted them to go, fully disabling the "bad guys." Neither one would've been able to walk away.

There were no malfunctions, either. I have heard some criticism about the length of the Python's ejector rod, but I learned how to positively eject brass from revolvers at the Border Patrol Academy in 1982, and using this technique, I didn't have any problems.

The red ramp front sight on the 2020 Python isn't as sloped as the original's, and I found it easier to see and faster, too. The new grips did just fine, but my hand really liked the Deer Hollow

Enterprises reproductions better—they'll no doubt end up on this sixgun. But in the end, if you can find one of these new Pythons near the MSRP, you better scoop it up. They'll sell out quickly. And thank you, Colt, for bringing back this classic wheel-gun! For more information, visit colt.com. 



→ The new Colt (right) looks very similar to the original (far right), but a keen eye will spot the differences in the grip, frame, trigger and hammer areas.

LOOSE ROUNDS

STRAIGHT TALK ON CURRENT EVENTS, POLITICS AND MORE

ARMED & ABLE

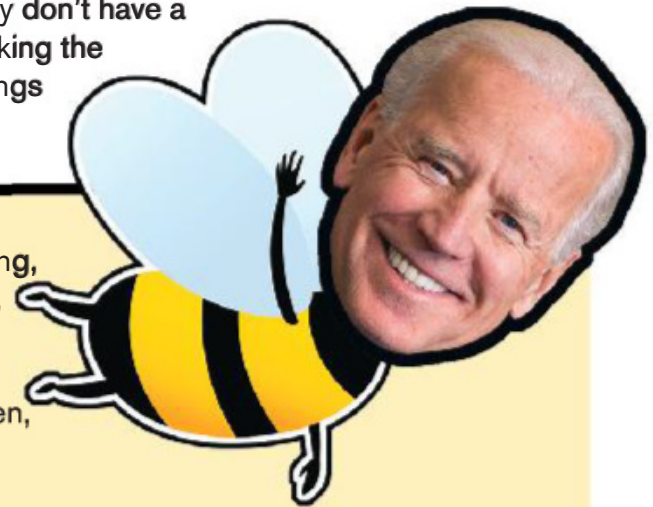


Since last issue's "Loose Rounds" column, not much has changed—that is, except for a worldwide pandemic, complete dismantling of the American economy, record-breaking gun sales in the U.S., wildly controversial shelter-at-home directives and a further divide in opinion over who's trying to kill us and who's trying to save us.

Through it all, one thing remains constant: It's better to have a gun to protect yourself and your family and not need it than to need one and not have it. Don't let the gun-banners convince you otherwise with their snarky comments like "Where are all the zombies?" or "Are you really going to shoot your way out of a pandemic?" Those little nuggets of B.S. are simply diversions because they **don't have a** good response to frightened citizens logically seeking the means by which to protect themselves should things continue to go to hell in a handbasket.

BIDEN BUZZ

In late April, while buzzing, around in his basement, former Vice President and Democratic presidential hopeful Joe Biden, released "The Biden Plan to End Our Gun



Violence Epidemic," a document which left no doubt of his intentions to wreck the Second Amendment. Highlights of Biden's plan include repealing the Protection of Lawful Commerce in Arms Act (PLCAA), **banning so-called "assault weapons" and "high-capacity" magazines**, and requiring **background checks for all gun transfers**, including loans between friends and family members. None of those proposals are new for Biden, but they're certainly things we should let all of our fellow gun owners know about as Election Day quickly approaches.



Stock Photos

VOTE THE BUMS OUT

With elections just around the corner, one good way to decide who to vote for is by seeing how your representatives at every level treated the right to keep and bear arms during the pandemic lockdown. If your representative pushed to keep gun stores and shooting ranges open during the pandemic, he or she likely deserves your vote. If, however, your elected officials pushed hard to further chip away at the important rights protected by the Second Amendment, dump them like a hot rock. And get involved at the grassroots level! Sure, your vote counts, but supporting a pro-Second-Amendment candidate might push them over the top—and push a gun-hater out to pasture.

CALIFORNIA DOES IT AGAIN

In 2016, California voters passed Proposition 63, which banned "high-capacity" magazines and forced ammo buyers to undergo background checks. Well, U.S. District Judge Roger Benitez originally struck down that latter part of the law before the U.S. Court of Appeals reinstated it while the case is considered. In his opinion, Benitez wrote, "The experiment has been tried. The casualties have been counted. California's new ammunition background check law misfires, and the Second Amendment rights of California citizens have been gravely injured." We'll see if the appeals court eventually agrees. Stay tuned.



MARLIN TURNS 150

Big congrats to Marlin Firearms for celebrating its 150th anniversary this year. Such a milestone deserves a special commemorative gun, and Marlin has obliged with a special Model 60. This popular little .22 has been around for 60 years, with 10 million sold over those six decades. The commemorative model sports a special serial number, a stainless steel barrel and an American black walnut stock with a 150th anniversary medallion inset into it. Commemorative ammo is also available. (marlinfirearms.com) **CH**



PURPOSE
BUILT
POWER

SAINT[®] **VICTOR**
PISTOL

— NOW AVAILABLE IN .308 —

Introducing the SAINT[®] Victor Pistol in .308, a workhorse firearm with a host of premium features and duty-grade components to bring .308 power down to size. With a 10.3" barrel and five-position brace the all new SAINT Victor Pistol in .308 is built for easy maneuverability, rugged dependability and is available now only from Springfield Armory[®].