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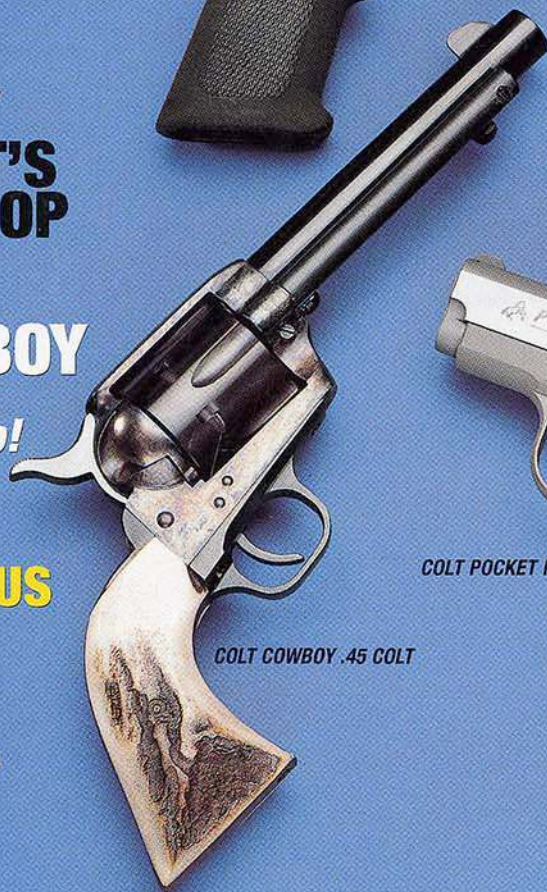
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The Colt® Magnum Carry™ shown actual size - Actual weight 21 ounces

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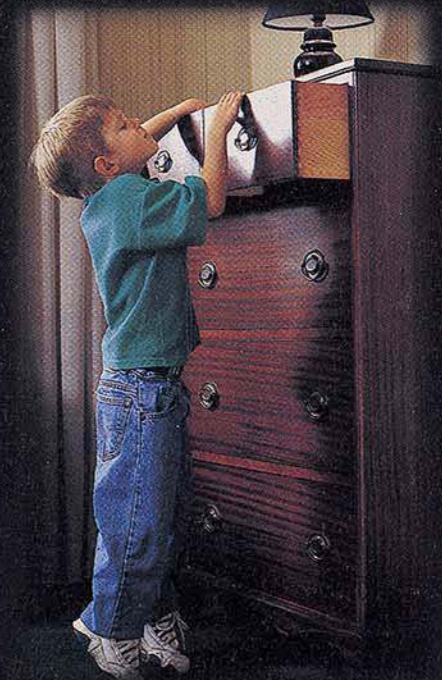
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Shown actual size

POCKET

COLT FIREARMS

1999

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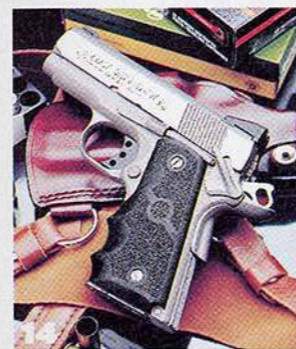
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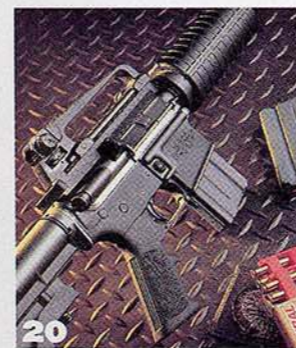


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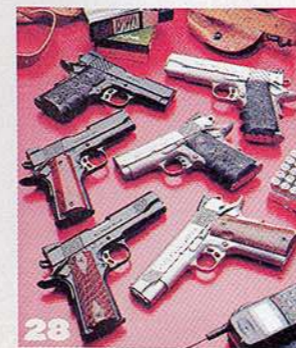
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COLT UPDATE

Annual Message from the President

Welcome to the new Colt



The magazine currently in your hands, Colt Firearms 1999, seems a fitting platform for Colt to showcase its readiness for the new millennium. The new products, technologies, marketing tools and members of the Colt firearms family introduced here offer a preview of exciting developments to come.

Innovation is nothing new for Colt. Our company has a long and deep tradition of excellence in arming the military, equipping law enforcement and providing consumers with the finest in small arms. Beginning with the Colt revolver in 1836, Colt has brought to market some

of the most respected and sought-after firearms in the world.

For the year 2000, capitalizing on our brand's historical currency, we are positioning Colt's as a leader in niche firearm marketing and, at the same time, launching a core brand extension with new technologies that we can project will generate significant new revenues within three years.

Here's what to expect in 1999:

We are putting the new single-action COWBOY into full production. It offers Cowboy Action shooters the same fit and feel of the original with the accuracy and affordability only modern manufacturing can deliver.

We just recently announced our newest 9mm concealed carry firearm—the sexy TAC NINE. When placed on dealer shelves along side the DEFENDER, the PONY, the CCO, the MAGNUM CARRY and the POCKET NINE; the TAC NINE gives Colt's Manufacturing one of the broadest concealed carry lines available.

Colt's Manufacturing Company now offers our first new product for the long gun category in almost 20 years. The acquisition of Ultra Light Arms infuses the Colt brand with quality sporting arms from Melvin Forbes, one of the world's most respected gunsmiths. Based upon Forbes' respected design, the new Colt LIGHT RIFLE will be offered at competitive prices.

This year, Colt's Manufacturing will open the doors to its Worldwide Performance Center. To the delight of collectors around the globe, it will offer handcrafted exotic handguns, custom finishing, and custom upgrades of Colt and non-Colt stock firearms.

Colt's, this year, launches a PC-based hardware and software product destined to become as valuable to the serious shooter as a good set of sights. HOMEFIRE will enable consumers to practice marksmanship, judgement, and weapons safety using laser inserts in conjunction with their own firearm linked to a computer monitor or TV. The price is comparable to the cost of a new handgun. Home is the range with HOMEFIRE.

Colt's Manufacturing Company has a vision for the 21st century that would make Sam Colt proud. We intend to develop and bring to market the best technologies available for firearms. We will keep you apprised of other news, products, and developments as they unfold in the months ahead. Thank you for your support.

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Steven M. Sliwa
President and CEO



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This Defender never rests.



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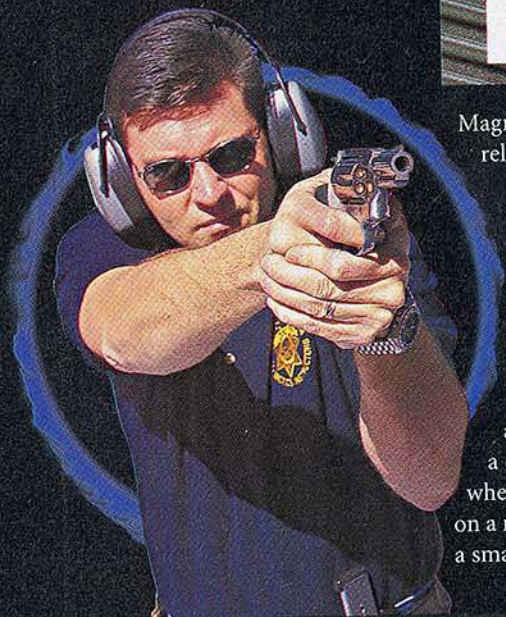


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master BLASTER

THE GRAND TRADITION OF COMPACT
EASY-TO-CARRY COLT SNUBBIES CONTINUES—
BUT THIS ONE'S PACKIN' A **MAGNUM PUNCH!**

By Wiley Clapp ■ PHOTOS BY STAN TRZONIEC

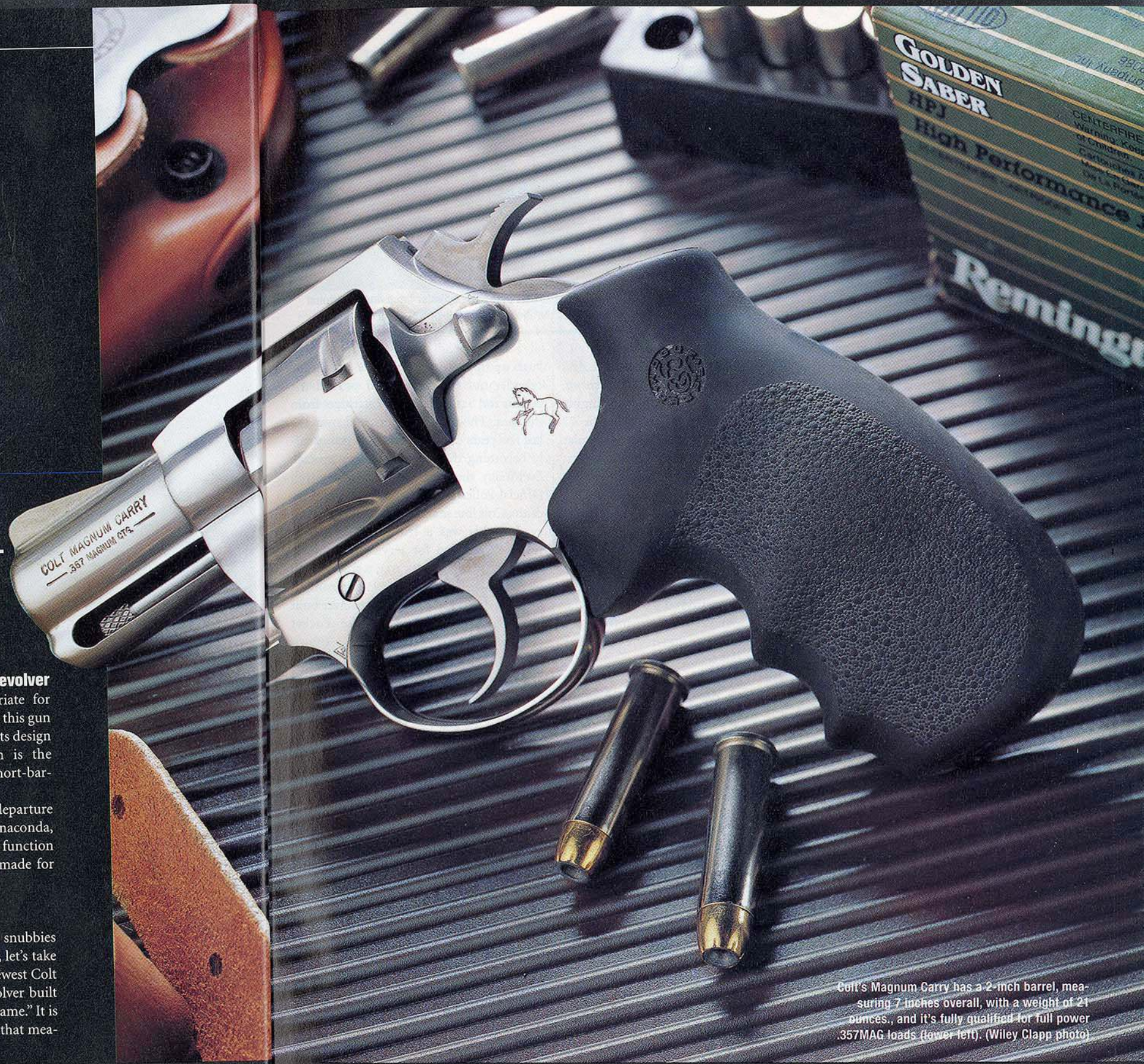


There's a completely new Colt revolver on the block—a gun that's appropriate for today's somewhat chaotic times. While this gun is new in name, lockwork and caliber, its design has a significant history. The gun is the Magnum Carry and is the latest in a long line of short-barreled revolvers made in Hartford by Colt.

While the Magnum Carry moniker is a departure from Colt's use of reptilian names—Python, Anaconda, etc.—it's an accurate description of the gun's function and purpose. It is a .357 Magnum and it's made for habitual carry as a defensive revolver.

Gun Details

Before we get into a brief history of Colt's snubbies and why they are so much used and respected, let's take a quick look at the Magnum Carry itself. The newest Colt wheelgun is an entirely stainless steel, 6-shot revolver built on a modernized version of the time-honored "D-frame." It is a small and pocketable revolver, fitted with a barrel that mea-



Colt's Magnum Carry has a 2-inch barrel, measuring 7 inches overall, with a weight of 21 ounces., and it's fully qualified for full power .357MAG loads (lower left). (Wiley Clapp photo)

sure just a fraction over two inches long. The cylinder has six chambers, cut deep enough to accept .357 Magnum cartridges. It's a cylinder that turns clockwise or "into the gun" as an old advertisement once said. Its grips are Hogue rubber and offer a cushioned wraparound on the backstrap, as well as shallow finger grooves on the front. Finished in a subdued silver color, the gun also has a long and pronounced ramp on the top of the barrel, which forms the front sight. In typical snubbie fashion, the rear sight is a plain notch machined into the top rear corner of the frame—fixed or non-adjustable sights. Here's a revolver that bears close resemblance to the greatest concealment revolver that Colt ever made—the Detective Special. It's an everyday packing gun if there ever was one.

Colt Snubbie Tradition

More than any other 19th century company, Colt built carrying guns that people liked. And they were among the first to

work a double-action trigger system into a snubbie revolver. The 1877 Lightning and Thunderer were respectively .38 and .41 caliber revolvers that combined the solid extraction system of the Peacemaker with a new bird's head grip contour and a double-action/single-action (DA/SA) trigger system. A year later, Colt came out with a bigger version of the same thing in the 1878 Frontier Model, which took larger cartridges like the .38-40, .44-40 and .45 Colt. Colt

authority Larry Wilson's books, *The Colt Heritage* and *The Book of Colt Firearms*, contain many illustrations of highly embellished snub-nosed versions of the '77 and '78 models. They were very popular small and medium-sized revolvers that presented only a single difficulty. The traditional one-round-at-a-time extraction and loading system was deemed too slow. They needed a more modern revolver with a means of simultaneous extraction of the fired cartridges from the cylinder.

In 1889, Colt introduced just such a gun in the New Navy Model, which had a swing-out cylinder much like that of the one on the Detective Special and current Magnum Carry. After opening the pull-back



Note traditional Colt pull-back cylinder latch and functional rubber grips that help control full-power magnum recoil.

latch on the left side, a shooter swung the cylinder out to the left and pushed the ejector rod back to eject all cartridges from the gun. The New Navy evolved over the last few years of the 19th century, eventually becoming the respected Army Special. Eventually, the name was changed to Colt Official Police and the gun was a mainstay of the Colt line for most of the 20th century. But this was a true medium-weight revolver intended for service use from a holster. For concealed carry, a smaller gun was in order. As early as 1893, the company offered an almost tiny .32 revolver built on what would be called the Pocket Positive frame. However, the best known Colt snubbie of all time is the Detective Special. It is a 2-inch version of the 1905 Police Positive Special. Something close to three-quarters of a million revolvers, most of them .38 Specials, were made on the D-frame foundation. Most of them were either Detective Specials or Police Positive Specials, but there were other variations, too—Agent, Cobra, Courier, Viper, Diamondback and possibly even others.

In considering the classic D-frame Colt, the production of which spans the entire 20th century, I am struck by the realization of what a workhorse this little gun really is. Naturally, there were minor changes over the years, but they were made only to improve the gun. One of the more sensible changes was made in the 1970s. Colt had suffered considerable criticism over the exposed ejector rod on all of their DA/SA revolvers—New Service, Official Police, Police Positive and Pocket Positive. The slim rod extended forward from the revolver frame and was prone to being

bent, particularly in the rough-and-tumble world of police service. Colt put a protective shroud on the bottom of the barrel. It provided a barrier to keep abuse from reaching the rod. It's found on all Colt DA/SA revolvers at present and it constitutes a very welcome improvement.

Colt has known for years that the basic D-frame could be adapted to more powerful cartridges, the most likely of which is the .357 Magnum. The Magnum Carry is Colt's first product to combine magnum power with a truly small revolver. Competition in a revolver of this size and weight come from guns made by Smith & Wesson, Ruger, Taurus and Rossi. While their small frames are a little smaller than the Colt, their cylinders are 5-shot. The Magnum Carry has, to paraphrase early Colt advertising, "the all-important sixth shot." Some critics have condemned this as sell-more-guns hype and contend that the extra shot has little practical value. One more round is a 20% increase in practical firepower and I'll take it if I can get it.

Among my collection of handguns, I

have a late production Detective Special in blue steel. This is the gun as it was made in 1978 and represents the D-frame revolver at its fully evolved best. Place this one next to a new Magnum Carry and the similarity is significant. Most of its lines and contours are alike, plus an operating manual of arms that is identical, making the older gun a dead ringer for the new one. But when you take a closer look and do some precise measuring, you find the Magnum Carry to be a little larger in several critical locations. The so-called "beefing up"

of the D-frame is necessary to create a long-lasting revolver that chambers and fires the potent .357 Magnum cartridge. It is a subtle upgrading of features that accomplishes its objectives.

The barrels on the two guns are the same length, but the Detective Special is slightly thinner than the Magnum. Diameter and length of the cylinder are identical, but the thickness of the frame is .56-inch in the Detective Special and .59-



Colt Magnum Carry (left) compared to its predecessor, the Detective Special—one's stainless, the other blue.

inch in the Magnum Carry. At the top strap, you'll find the biggest dimensional disparity and this one is visible to the naked eye. It appears that the two guns started from the same forging, but were machined to a slightly different contour where strength was required.

Shooting Impressions

After several hundred rounds of mixed loads through the gun with no visible evi-



Close up reveals handsome brushed finish, serrated hammer for enhanced control, rounded edges—Colt quality!

Performance: Colt Magnum Carry .357 Revolver

AMMO USED	VELOCITY	STANDARD DEVIATION	GROUP SIZE
Federal 125 HiShok JHP	1210	37	3.50
Remington 125 SJHP	1125	28	4.09
Speer 125 Gold Dot JHP	1166	34	3.99
Pro Load 125 JHP	1250	10	3.62
Hornady 125 HP/XTP	1124	26	3.93
CCI Blazer 125 JHP	1047	41	3.81
Remington 125 Golden Saber JHP	1100	13	3.11
Federal 140 JHP	1105	22	3.69
Hornady 140 HP/XTP	1250	17	3.43
Winchester 145 Silvertip JHP	1126	11	2.97

Bullet weight measured in grains, velocity in feet per second (fps) on Oehler 35P, accuracy in inches results based on a 12-shot group fired at 25 yards with the pistol mounted in the Ransom Rest



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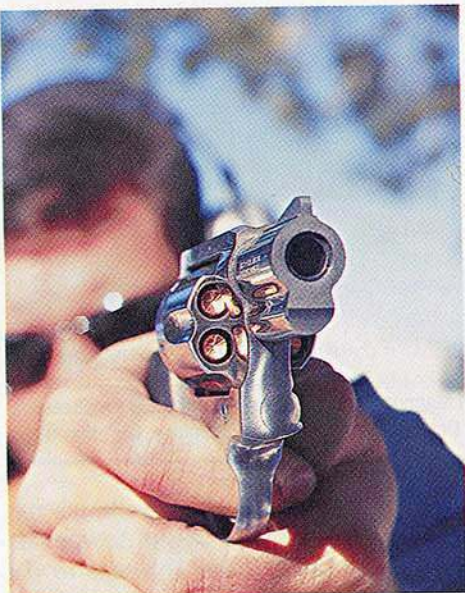
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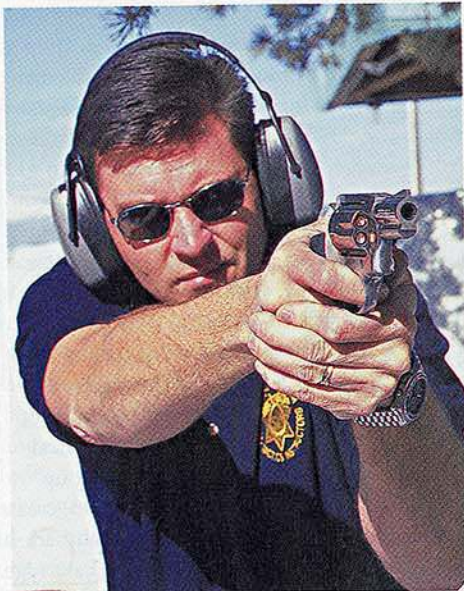
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Long 158-grain JHPs from Pro Load almost fill the cylinder. An intimidating sight from this angle.



Best used with the Weaver stance, the Magnum Carry has plenty of power for defensive shooting.

dence of battering or excessive wear, I am obliged to conclude that the new Colt Magnum Carry is more than adequately strong for any .357 Magnum load you want to fire through it. Remarkably, the weight of the old and new guns is identical at just over 24 ounces. For the practical purposes of carrying as a defensive firearm, the Magnum Carry gets the nod for its rust-resistant stainless steel construction and .357 Magnum power.

Within the last few years, Colt has made some Detective Specials dubbed the DSII. The major difference was improved lockwork. To be sure, the old Colt "V" spring action is a survivor, but it was improved when the engineers worked a modern and safe transfer bar into the gun. The firing pin used to be mounted on the hammer, but

now it's in the frame. The action is easier to manufacture with this practical addition. Some shooters feel the trigger pull is a little lighter and smoother with the transfer bar. Its major value is safety. Since the bar works off the trigger, the gun can't fire unless the trigger is pressed. Even dropped from considerable height, the gun won't fire.

The good handling characteristics of the original guns are still there, but actual firing is better because of the improved muzzle-forward heft. I measured the trigger pull at just over three pounds in single-action and under 12 in double-action. That DA pull, by the way, is typical Colt—very smooth, but also having a slight stacking at the end of the trigger movement. It's also appar-

ent that the excellent rubber grips add a great deal to the comfort and efficiency of managing the gun. They're Hogues with that famous "cobblestone" surface, so there's no way they will ever slip in your hand.

For the Magnum Carry's intended purpose, the sights are just fine. It's obvious the long ramp front sight was developed in order to avoid any possibility of snagging on clothing or equipment as the handgunner presents the little revolver in a draw

sequence. If I were going to make this one a permanent "packin' iron," I would probably remove the hammer spur and have a good gunsmith make the gun a double-action-only (DAO). The hammer spur is very sharp and would probably snag badly. Colt used to offer a hammer shroud that enclosed the hammer completely, but they are long out of print.

Part of my shooting evaluation of the gun was hand-held at close range, since I wanted to look at the Magnum Carry's performance in close-combat scenarios. In no time at all, it became apparent that the new Colt took some skillful management. Recoil in this rather small revolver is sharp with most kinds of .357 Magnum ammunition. At one point, I pattern-loaded the cylinder with five different kinds of ammunition. Bullet weights started with a

110-grain load and worked through 125-grain, 140-grain, 158-grain and 180-grain loads. The 110-grain ammo is specifically loaded for low recoil in small guns and it was not unpleasant to shoot. But the most



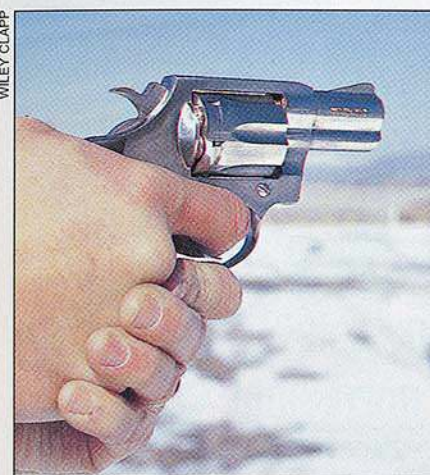
The new Colt Magnum Carry continues the great Colt tradition of compact, easy to carry revolvers.

popular .357 Magnum bullet weight is 125-grain and a shooter who fires one immediately notices the sharp punch in the palm of the hand. Stepping up to a 140-grain load, the punch is severe to the point of being uncomfortable, and when you go to a 158-grainer, it's painful. Although it is intended for use in much heavier hunting .357s, the 180-grain load may be safely fired in the Magnum Carry. However, it is not an experience you will rush to repeat.

If you want combat gun performance, the lighter 125-grain loads have an out-

standing reputation for stopping power. One of these or a hot .38 Special +P is a far better choice for everyday carrying. Most of us can learn to put up with recoil, but the inevitable muzzle rise is not consistent with good combat shooting, i.e. fast controlled pairs or the standard two-shot "hammers."

As is my custom, I also made an evaluation of the Magnum Carry in terms of its pure mechanical accuracy. With the revolver securely mounted in the Ransom Rest, I ran a series of 12-shot groups at 25 yards. The vast majority of the 10 loads used the more popular 125-grain bullets. At



The Colt Magnum Carry is a chunky, solid handgun that's controllable with full-power loads.

the same time, I clocked all of them with an Oehler Model 35P chronograph. Twelve-shot groups tell you a little more about the gun's accuracy than a smaller number because twelve rounds constitutes two revolutions of the cylinder. Happily enough, I found the gun to be accurate and completely reliable. The groups averaged in the 3-plus inch range, as measured from the center of the two most widely spaced shot holes. At 2.97 inches, the best single group came from Winchester's 145-grain Silvertip load. For a gun that's most likely to be fired inside seven yards (and commonly a lot less than that), the accuracy is very good.

On balance, the Magnum Carry is a very sturdy combat revolver manufactured to a level of quality that has made the name "Colt" synonymous with the best in Yankee firearms manufacturing—and that's a world-wide reputation. This new .357 obviously now has jumped to the preeminent position in 6-shot concealment revolvers. ♦

"Concealed" Has Never Been Less Complicated



Galco's New J Hook - has been added to three of our most popular concealment inside the pant holsters; the Scout, Deep Cover and Push Up. All three holsters are constructed rough side out for additional grip and faster draw. The Scout and Deep Cover feature sewn in sight rails and are reinforced around the top portion for easy re-holstering. The J Hook attaches to your belt with one simple motion, no need to remove your belt. The unique injection molded design also provides positive retention of the holster for a smooth and swift draw. All models are available in right and left-handed designs. The Scout is priced at \$55.00 + S&H, the Deep Cover is \$64.95 + S&H and the Push Up is \$36.00 + S&H.

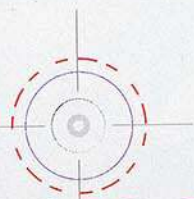


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Close up reveals snag-proof sight, shrodded ejector rod.



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Continuing the great Model 1911 Colt tradition this light, compact .45ACP is one sweet-shootin' sureshot!



.45ACP

BY WALT RAUCH

If someone shopping for a personal defense handgun is asked what they are looking for, they'll generally agree they want the gun to be as small as possible yet accurate and reliable—and it should shoot a large-caliber cartridge. The handgun must have good sights, night sights preferably, and the gun should be as lightweight as possible for everyday carry. It should also be able to withstand everyday wear and frequent practice sessions without the need for extensive maintenance. The Colt Defender nicely fulfills all these requirements.

The stainless steel and alloy Defender is a very-much-modified 1911 and looks to be a variation of the Colt Officer's ACP. But, on closer examination, you'll find the Defender to be a whole new approach to a compact 1911.

In comparing the Defender with the Smith & Wesson Chiefs Special revolver, you'll see that the Defender is only fractions of an inch longer and taller. Of course, the Defender weighs more at 22.5 ounces, but it holds eight

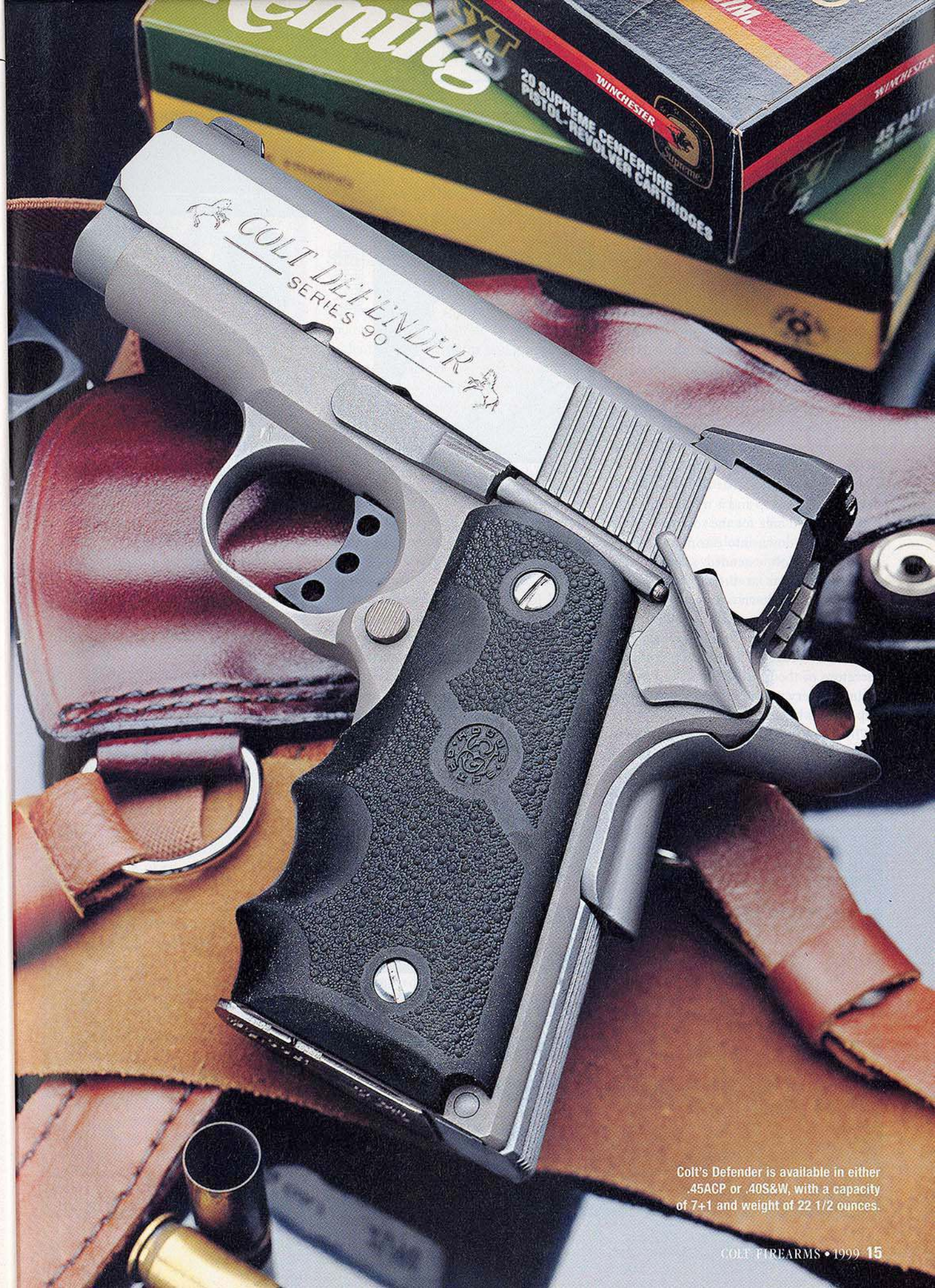
carbon steel parts. The slide is stainless steel, as are the slide stop, thumb and grip safeties and magazine catch. The trigger and the mainspring housing are polymer. Sights, hammer and internal parts are carbon steel. The slide retains the Series 80 passive firing pin safety, providing two active safeties and one passive safety.

The slide has rear, diagonally-cut finger grooves and, on its forward face, all four corners are radiused, a much-needed treatment for carry. The top of the slide is bead-blast finished and the ejection port has been lowered and relieved, often a custom feature on many 1911s but standard on this gun.

The bead-blasted 1911-style alloy frame fea-

rounds total, seven in the magazine and one in the chamber, versus the Chief's five .38 Special rounds. And the Colt shoots the bigger round.

Gun Details



Colt's Defender is available in either .45ACP or .40S&W, with a capacity of 7+1 and weight of 22 1/2 ounces.

NEW COLT DEFENDER .45ACP

tures Hogue-brand finger-grooved and pebble-textured black wraparound grips, which give more than adequate shooting control. The trigger is long, black-colored polymer with three "lightening" holes. Colt wisely dispensed with the overtravel adjustment screw, as these have shown an annoying and possibly fatal habit of tightening up to where the gun won't fire. The trigger pull initially broke at a clean six and one half pounds. The trigger pre-travel, or "take-up," weighed out at three pounds before sear and hammer movement. After extensive firing, the pull now measures five and three-quarter pounds, which is sensible for a self-defense gun.

Colt uses its own Colt Competition grip and thumb safeties on the Defender. The tactical thumb safety is extended, grooved and works positively. The grip safety has more of an up-sweep and is nicely rounded, with a relieved area for the rounded hammer to move down into during the firing cycle. Prior Colt extended safeties were more rectangular at the beavertail and curved over and down onto your shooting hand. The center area of the grip safety has been raised and runs vertically from the lower center edge up to the most inward curvature of the grip surface. This almost ensures a very positive depressing of the grip safety when the gun is grasped.

To complete the lower frame, there's a



Joe Venezia's best was five in three at twenty-five — five shots into a 3-inch group at 25 yards.

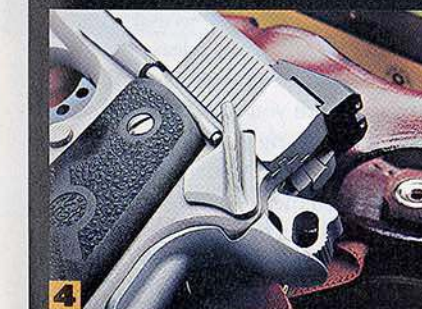
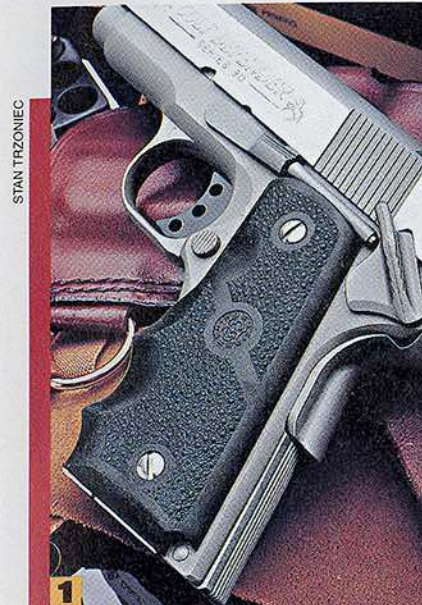
flat, nylon, vertically-grooved mainspring housing, which is colored similarly to the stainless and alloy parts that are light gray in color. The magazine well is slightly beveled for easy magazine insertion. The magazine, although the same length as the Officer's ACP, holds seven rather than six rounds. Colt managed this by using 11 coils rather than the 13 found in the Officer's magazine spring and the wire diameter is .045 of an inch, while the OACP diameter is .047 of an inch. Colt also

changed the follower to a hollow plastic design. (And colored it orange so that you can more easily verify whether a magazine is in the gun.) This hollow follower, coupled with the thinner diameter 11-coil spring, gets the space needed for the seventh round. So far, after over 1000 rounds, the mags have worked with every type of Jacketed Hollow Point ammunition I've accumulated. (NOTE: On the latest Defenders, Colt has changed the follower to the McCormick design used in all Colt 1911 magazines. Although metal, it is also colored orange.)

One major complaint with the Officer's ACP was the barrel bushing and recoil spring plug design. Many shooters viewed it as too flimsy to hold up for much shooting and, unfortunately, this was sometimes validated when the two parts would leave the gun as it was being fired. In fairness, I also know of many Officer's ACPs that work well and have never failed. With the Defender, Colt eliminated the traditional barrel bushing, recoil spring and spring plug.

In the Defender, the barrel is cone or trumpet-shaped, with a large-diameter muzzle that locks into the slide without a bushing. The barrel diameter decreases to the rear, and the upper portion of the barrel, starting just to the rear of the muzzle, is relieved so that the barrel can unlock during the firing cycle.

Colt uses a version of the dual recoil spring and guide system found in Para-Ordnance and GLOCK sub-compact pistols. The Colt system has a full-length guide rod encircled by a narrow-diameter,



- (1) The Defender's enhanced grip and thumb safeties make operation easy. The Hogue rubber grips enhance control.
- (2) Two-dot rear with front dot offers a clear and well-defined sight picture.
- (3) Trigger has three lightening holes. Note magazine release below.
- (4) Close-up of grip/thumb safeties reveals rounded edges. Note Commander style hammer at full cock.

“Carrying the 1911 'cocked and locked' has **PROVEN TO BE THE QUICKEST** and most accurate means of firing first and subsequent shots from a semi-auto handgun.”



full-length recoil spring. A metal sleeve encircles the front half of the inner, smaller-diameter recoil spring and guide rod. A non-captive, larger-diameter recoil spring surrounds this sleeve and abuts a flange such that the larger spring extends rearward only the length of the metal sleeve. This design has already proven itself and, for me, significantly dampens muzzle lift and felt recoil when compared to the Officer's ACP or Lightweight Commander. The very thin rear flange, retained on the guide rod by a semi-circular flat metal clip, doesn't look substantial, but there are no signs of wear after the extensive shooting we did while testing this gun.

The recoil assembly is retained by a reverse recoil spring plug inserted and removed from the rear of the slide. The top of the plug is crescent-shaped and bears up against the barrel—a strong, positive means of installation.

Disassembly/Reassembly

With these changes, disassembly and reassembly differ from the standard 1911 procedure. The best method is to read the instruction manual, which explains the details of disassembly. To begin, after ensuring the magazine is removed and the chamber is empty, move the slide rearward until the small take-down notch on the slide is over the top rear of the slide stop. The stop is removed by pushing out on it from the right side of the frame. The slide is then moved forward and off the frame. Compress and lift up on the recoil spring system to remove it to the rear of the slide. The reverse recoil spring plug can now be removed from the slide and, with the barrel link folded forward, the barrel can be removed from the front.

Reassembly is somewhat difficult in that after the recoil system barrel and reverse plug are assembled in the slide and you slide it onto the frame, two things need to be done. Since the Defender has the Series 80 passive firing pin safety, the pas-

sive firing pin operating lever in the top rear of the frame must be kept flush so that the slide moves fully rearward. With the slide on the gun, the barrel link must be aligned so that the slide stop captures it properly. I get this done by using a small probe to line up the link or by shaking the gun with the muzzle up.

How It Shoots

And, finally, the best part—this little gun is more accurate than any Officer's ACP or Commander I've fired in the last 10 years! Shooting from a seated gun-bag rest, five rounds of just about any quality ammo shoots into 3 to 4 inches at 25 yards, with some 2-inch groups appearing when everything goes right. This level of accuracy would get even better with a lighter trigger. Pressing six and one half pounds repeatedly during accuracy work wears on me after a while. But, while it's nice to know the Defender is capable of this accuracy on demand, the trigger weight, as previously mentioned, is just fine for self-defense.

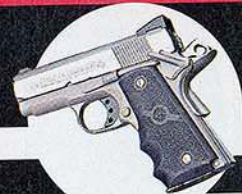
Usually, the definitive accuracy test is to shoot CCI Blazer or Gold Dot 200-grain JHPs, rounds that have the reputation for not working in all 1911s consistently. The Defender shot these with no problem. I also had some old Winchester 185-grain SWC FMC Match target loads. Its short, stubby bullet doesn't work in most 1911s



The Defender's all-round smoothed edges and ergonomic grip ensures shooter comfort and guarantees accuracy with full-power loads.

Performance: COLT DEFENDER

AMMUNITION



VELOCITY

	DEFENDER 3" barrel	1911 5" barrel
CCI BLAZER 200 JHP	809	929
CCI BLAZER 230 TMJ	724	845
BLACK HILLS 230 JHP	744	838
COR-BON 165 +P JHP	1074	1255
COR-BON 230 +P JHP	836	967
FEDERAL HYDRA-SHOK (PERSONAL DEFENSE) 165 JHP	944	1107
FEDERAL HI-SHOK 185 JHP	919	1066
HORNADY 230 +P JHP	811	915
REMINGTON UMC 230 JRN	756	849
REMINGTON GOLDEN SABER 185 +P JHP	971	1114
WINCHESTER SILVERTIP 185 JHP	791	913
WINCHESTER 185 SWC FMJ TARGET	691	NA

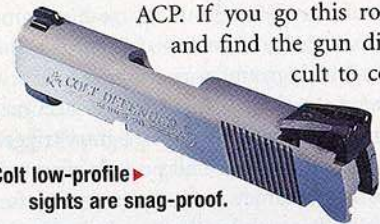
Bullet weight measured in grains, velocities in feet per second (fps) based on five-shot averages. Temperature 40 degrees; Pro-Chrono chronograph; 300 feet above sea level. Colt Defender, 3" barrel; Colt Commercial 1911A1, circa 1950, 5" Bar-Sto barrel.

NEW COLT DEFENDER .45ACP

unless they are set up for the round. It's also loaded on the low side and often won't cycle through a standard 1911. (The target guns use lighter recoil springs.) No problem for the Defender. It fed, fired and ejected these, too.

In my opinion, if it works with these, it will work with almost any factory .45ACP round. As noted elsewhere, the velocity does drop off when you cut two inches off the barrel. The results show that +P ammo doesn't add much when fired from the 3-inch barrel. One last note on reliability. The Defender will reliably feed, extract and eject empty cases all day long.

I removed the Hogue rubber grips and replaced them with Hogue figure-grained custom-checked wood grip panels and fired some more CCI Blazer 230-grain JRN ammo. The gun did torque more in my hand because the front strap is smooth beneath the rubber finger-grip area, but not as much as when shooting the same ammo in a Lightweight Officer's ACP. If you go this route and find the gun difficult to con-

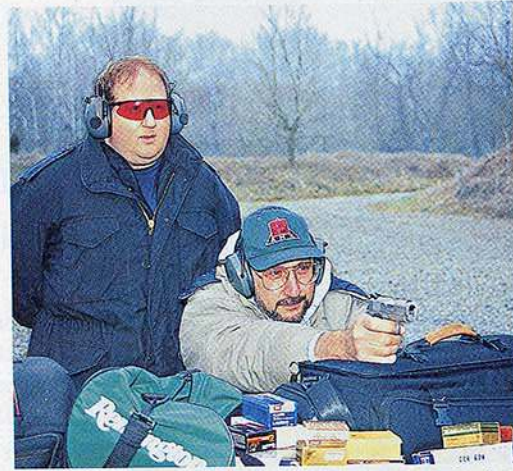


Colt low-profile sights are snag-proof.

trol, some skateboard tape on the front strap is a quick fix.

Holsters that fit the Officer's ACP will also accommodate the half-inch-shorter Defender. The holster choices are almost limitless. Inside, outside, shoulder and ankle rigs that work for any compact 1911 will also fit the Defender. I would not recommend carry in a fanny pack, though. Should the gun move in the bag, its safety can be dislodged or depressed.

I'm a great fan of the 1911 handgun, but 1911s are not for everyone. At the same time 1911s are both simple and complex guns. The 1911-design handgun offers advantages for the experienced shooter, but also disadvantages for those who want a "buy it and forget it" gun. Carrying the 1911 "cocked and locked" (chamber loaded, hammer back and safety on) has proven to be the quickest and most accurate means of firing first and subsequent shots from a semi-auto handgun. In the cocked-and-locked mode, all that's necessary to fire the 1911 is to grip the gun firmly, push down on the thumb safety, then press on the trigger with four and one half to six pounds of pressure.



Marty Keane spots as Joe Venezia shoots the Defender.

The cocked-and-locked 1911 carry mode presupposes that you are right handed or have installed ambidextrous thumb safeties and carry the gun in such a manner that the manual thumb safety remains in the "up" or "on" position. Also, when you go to fire the gun you must not mix up the firing sequence. By this, I mean you can fire a 1911 by pressing the trigger and then pushing the manual safety into the off position. The gun fires as the safety comes off! When using a 1911, it's necessary to understand that only a little pressure on the trigger is required for it to fire.

Final Notes

Is the 1911 the "best" gun for defensive carry? No, not for everyone. A short trigger stroke affords a very clean, relatively-light trigger break from the first to last shot. However, this benefit comes at a price. You must learn to reflexively release the manual safety and must also keep your finger off the trigger until you've made the decision to fire the shot right now! I've carried a 1911 Government Model since I was a teenager (legal then)—both as my primary handgun and as a back-up gun in the military, law enforcement and the private sector. I do the above actions reflexively. If you don't care to spend the time necessary to become proficient rather than just familiar with this type of action, you and everyone else will be better served with another choice of handgun.

However, the Defender can be a one-size-fits-all gun for anyone who appreciates and learns to use John Browning's finest work, the 1911. It's a true continuation of a great Colt tradition. ♦



The Defender, disassembled. The flared barrel and dual recoil spring enhance performance.

Backup...



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M4 STORY



THE COLT

Evolution of the 5.56mm CARBINE

FROM ITS ORIGINS IN VIETNAM TO NEWEST VERSIONS IN SERVICE WITH MILITARY AND POLICE TODAY!

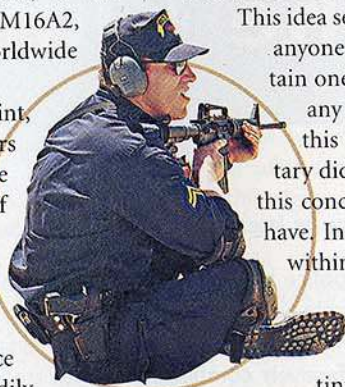
By Chuck Taylor

Since the early 1960s, Colt Firearms has been on the cutting edge of 5.56mm fighting rifle technology. From the first M16 and its commercial counterpart, the non-select fire AR15, to the improved M16A1 and, finally, the M16A2, Colt has established itself as a worldwide leader in assault rifle technology.

In fact, from a historic standpoint, they're credited with being the pioneers of the concept outside what was once the Soviet Bloc. With the exception of its infamous counterpart, the AK47, more M16s have been made than the total of all other assault rifles combined. This in itself is a glowing testimony to Colt's vision, persistence (because the assault rifle wasn't readily accepted in U.S. military circles) and innovative technological expertise.

Along the way, a couple of variations on the basic AR15/M16 theme have also appeared. Originally, Colt had envisioned the weapon we now know so well as being one of several in a multi-

weapon system. This system included not only an assault rifle, but a heavy-barreled squad-auto weapon, a survival rifle, a submachine gun, and even a belt-fed light machine gun, all based on the AR15/M16's central receiver design.



This idea served a good end since it enabled anyone who could operate and maintain one of these weapons to do so with any of the others. The advantages of this are apparent, but the U.S. military did not, and still has not, embraced this concept while other military powers have. In fact, the idea was so good that within 10 years it was adopted by several major international arms manufacturers and a dozen major armed forces, who continue to use it to this day.

Although the assault rifle version, which upon military acceptance became known as the M16, was the first to be adopted, U.S. Special Forces operations demonstrated special needs, necessitating numerous modifications to the M16. To satisfy these needs, most of the characteristics of two of

Colt M4 carbine predecessor was Colt XM177E2, also known as CAR15 (left center) as depicted in Vietnam-era Hollywood film (Chuck Taylor photo). Colt M4 (right) became immediately famous for its superior balance that makes for easy handling in the most diverse training scenarios (bottom).



PHOTOS BY STAN TRZONIEC

the guns within the system—the survival rifle and submachine gun—were combined, resulting in the now-famous CAR15 (known in U.S. Army jargon as the XM177E2 and in USAF terminology as the GAU5).

The CAR15 featured a 12-inch barrel and round rather than elliptical handguards that had been correspondingly shortened, as well as a retractable buttstock assembly. This reduced the overall length so significantly that it was actually shorter than many first-generation submachine guns such as the Thompson.

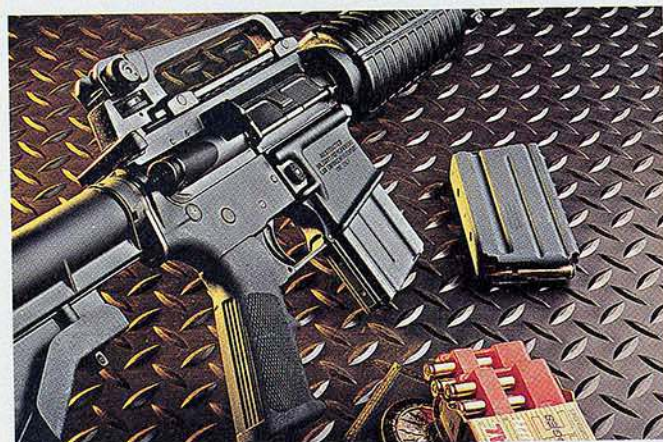
the vast majority of officers (many of whom were Vietnam Veterans and had used the weapon during that conflict) thought well of the weapon, it failed to gain the acceptance it deserved.

16-Inch Barrel Carbine

By the late 1970s, Colt had solved the problem by abandoning the 12-inch barrel and sound-moderator. In their place, they installed a 16-inch barrel of the same diameter. The new weapon was designated in its select-fire versions as the M16 or M16A1 carbine and in its non-select fire civilian version as the AR15 carbine. This configura-

tion was lightweight and handy to carry and thus quickly replaced the XM177E2/GAU5 in military inventories. These same characteristics also made it immensely attractive to both individual police officers and agencies alike, both of whom began to purchase the new gun in noteworthy quantities.

Over the next 20 years, the 16-inch barrel carbine saw much service and generally performed well. However, some felt that its trimly contoured barrel caused it to be a bit too light, giving the weapon a neutral feel. Also, by the middle 1990s, changing mission-requirements dictated that it again be



Right side of Colt M4 (above left) shows rear sight atop carry handle, forward bolt assist, magazine release. Left side of Colt M4 (above right) shows bolt release and "safe"/"semi" safety (fully automatic is available to military and law enforcement only), trigger. Below, butt stock can be extended.

The CAR15 was an immediate hit with USSF troops. By 1970, it had also come into wide use with conventional combat arms troops (commanders, radio operators, et al) whose mission didn't require a full-sized M16.

Handy as it was, however, the CAR15's 12-inch barrel produced some serious muzzleblast. The blast was serious enough that a special mini-silencer called a "sound moderator" was quickly added to reduce the decibel levels it produced when firing a round to bring it in line with a regular M16. This change added a few inches to the overall length of the gun, but U.S. military personnel didn't consider this a problem. However, under Title II of U.S. Code, the little device was classified as a silencer, thus requiring a separate set of BATF papers in addition to those already required for the weapon itself.

This made the CAR15's use by law-enforcement agencies a more complex and time-consuming exercise. And although

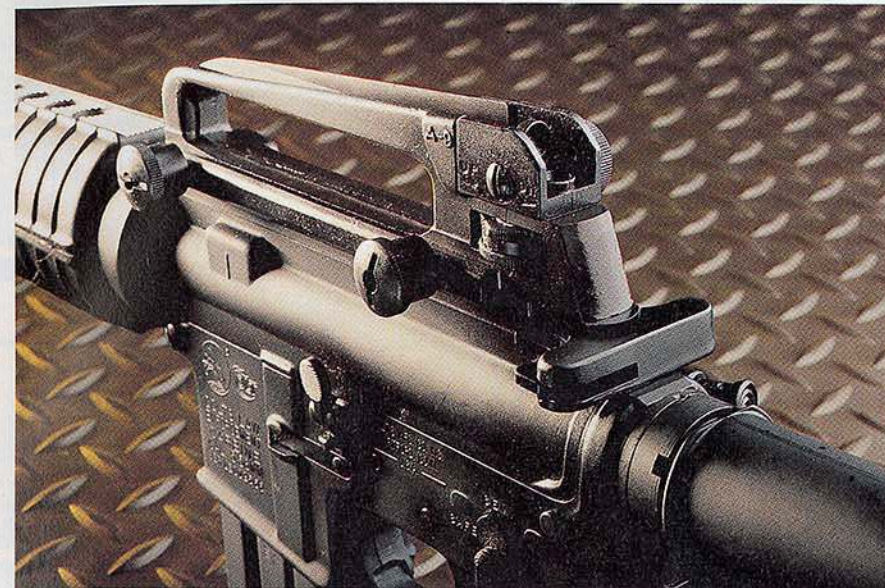


upgraded to allow the handy use of night-vision devices or other sighting devices.

As both military and police SpecOps personnel began to utilize tactical vests with integral body armor, it was noted that the additional bulk added to their upper torsos made the weapon's retractable buttstock feel either too long or, if retracted to compensate, too short for fast, convenient weapon handling.

Enhanced Features

So, in 1997, Colt unveiled a new version of the weapon, featuring a contoured and heavy 16-inch barrel with elongated handguards and a four-position (two in between fully open and fully closed) retractable buttstock. To prevent dust and dirt from being stirred up if the gun were fired from the prone position, the closed-bottom flash suppressor/muzzle brake was installed on the long-accepted M16A2. The most innovative feature was the flat-top



Upper left side of Colt M4 shows removable carry handle, secured by two knobs, which can accommodate a variety of optics, and charging handle at rear base of carry handle.

receiver, upon which either a Night Vision or other optical sight or regular M16A2 sights (mounted in a detachable carrying handle assembly) may be utilized.

The modification of the M16 was instantly accepted by the U.S. Military and was designated the M4, while Colt called their non-select fire model, the "Law Enforcement Carbine". To avoid confusion, there is virtually no difference between the two outside other than the fact that the military model is select-fire, while the police version is not.

So, how does the M4 stack up against its predecessors? First, it feels better in the hands due to its heavier barrel. This moves the center of balance further forward. Second, its four-position, retractable buttstock allows operators of virtually any physique and arm length. Those wearing a tactical vest and/or body armor can use it quickly and conveniently.

Third, the M4's flat-top receiver allows a much lower mounting of a Starlight scope, which on both the XM177E2/GAU5 and AR15/M16/M16A1/M16A2 carbines had to be mounted in the carrying handle. This position made it noticeably top-heavy and therefore awkward to utilize. Fourth, as long as its dual mounting clamps are tightened snugly, the dual aperture, adjustable sights within the detachable carrying handle assembly do return so close to zero that with iron sights any difference

cannot be noticed.

Fifth, the M4's elongated handguards are more hand-filling, giving the gun a more confidence-inspiring feel. And finally, though more important for full-auto missions, the integral heat shields inside are constructed of heavier-gauge sheet-metal, thus providing better heat dissipation and resultant support-hand protection.

Shooting Impressions

Accuracy is no problem after these modifications. With Winchester 55-grain soft-points, my M4 consistently produces groups of just over 1 MOA (about 1.1 inches) per 100 meters. It also shoots Hornady TAP (Tactical Application, Police) and Federal American Eagle 55-grainers well with groups in the range of 1.4 to 1.5-inch, 100 meters being the norm.

Why the difference? This may be due to the M4's 1-in-9 rifling twist, which changed from the 1-in-12 twist of the XM177E2/GAU5/M16A1 and 1-in-7 twist of the M16A2 carbines. A 1-in-9 twist allows use of the full range (40 to 75-grains, including soft-points) of bullets for the 5.56. Though it stabilizes 40 to 55-grain bullets well, a 1-in-12 twist is unsuitable for heavier bullets like the military 63-grain M855 (SS109), 69-grain match boat-tails or 75-grain penetrators. Conversely, a 1-in-7 twist is so rapid

that it causes many frangible bullets to disintegrate while passing down the bore. This makes its accuracy erratic, unpredictable and therefore unsatisfactory. The M4's 1-in-9 twist is the best of all worlds because it handles everything without a hitch.

Its accuracy is solid, but what about its reliability? The M4's mechanical reliability is excellent. To date, I've experienced no stoppages of any kind, even though my M4 has digested over three thousand rounds of various 5.56 rounds without a major cleaning.

The weapon comes stock with a tactical sling, cleaning kit, two law-enforcement only 20-rd. magazines along with instruction and maintenance manuals. It is finished in a soft, eggshell black with its steel parts coated in matte manganese phosphate. All in all, it presents an appealing combination of aesthetics and functionality while reflecting Colt's cognizance of the need to blend human requirements (ergonomics—user



A versatile, combat proven carbine, the Colt M4 is currently in service with both military and law enforcement in the United States and worldwide.

friendliness) with manufacturing quality and design engineering. As such, the M4 is a well conceived, well executed rifle. More than any other weapon of its type, it offers a unique combination of light weight, good balance, unsurpassed user friendliness, ease of operation and ruggedness.

Final Notes

As one who has used every version of the AR15/M16 on four continents and in every imaginable combination of natural and tactical circumstance, I find the M4 to be everything Colt says it is—the *raison d'être* of compact AR15/M16s and a rifle well worth betting your life on. I can't see how anyone can give a better endorsement than that. ♦

Colt's of the RICH & FAMOUS

The rich can afford the best and they tend to buy Colts.
Their reasons go far beyond the superficial.

BY MASSAD AYOUB • illustrations by ken laager

You don't want to buy what the rich and famous have because you're pretending to be them. You can't help but notice, however, that celebrities who can afford quality, buy quality, generally after seeking out expert advice. Looking back over the decades, it's striking how many famous people who could defend themselves with anything they wanted, chose Colts. Let's take a look at a few of Colt's most famous customers.

Gary Cooper
with Colt Single
Action Army



Sir Winston Churchill was a man who appreciated fine weapons. As a young officer, he used a broomhandle Mauser to good effect. Later, however, he became a Colt man. British firearms historian Richard Law has unearthed some fascinating information with that regard.

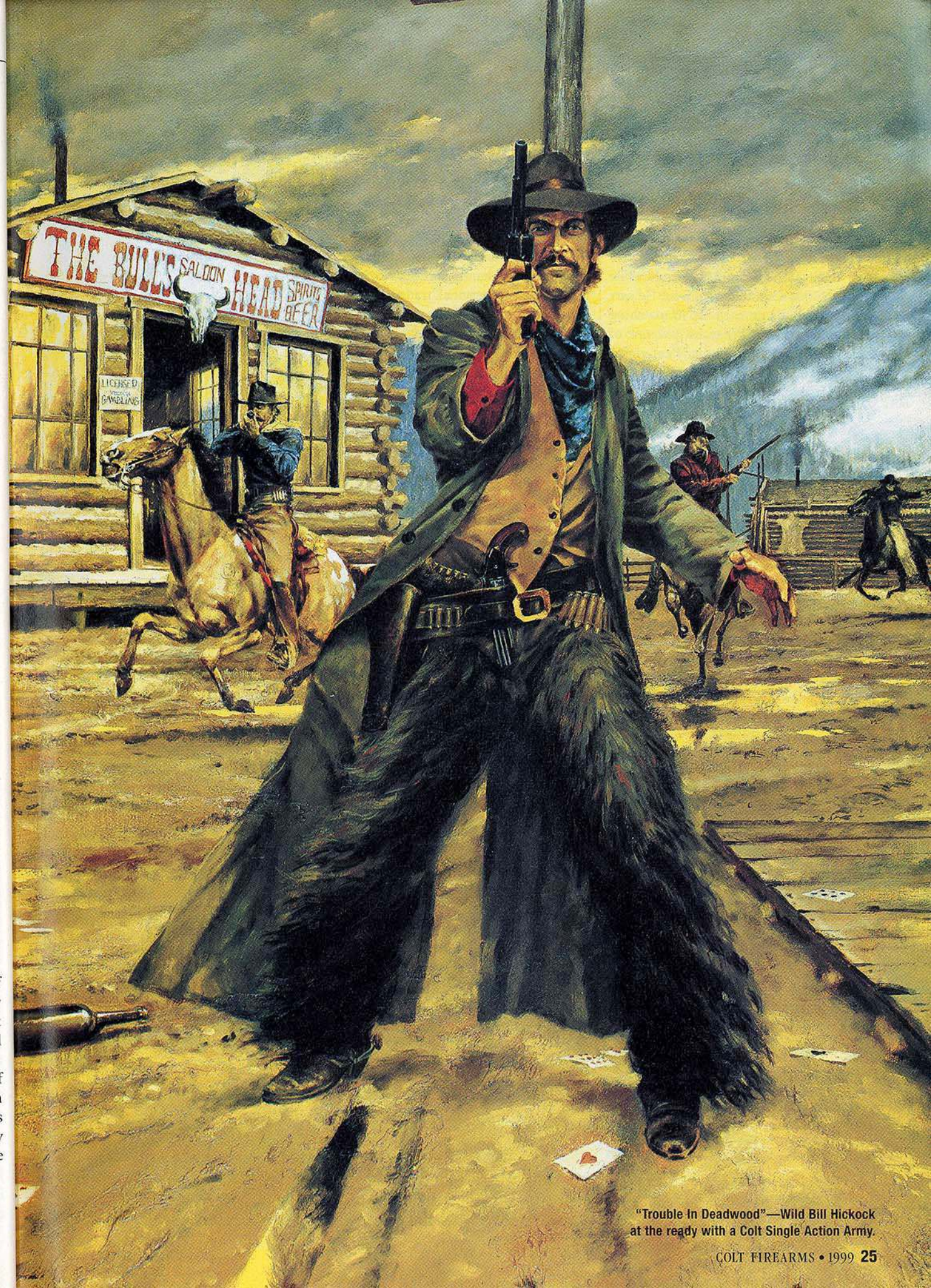
Knowing he had been targeted by Hitler's agents for assassination, Churchill always went armed, his bodyguards notwithstanding. He kept a Thompson submachinegun loaded in a rack within easy reach in his official limousine. Discovering that his chief bodyguard carried a little .32 Webley, Churchill ordered a new Colt Government Model .45 for his head of security.

A short time later, the Prime Minister asked the lead bodyguard how he liked the new pistol. Chagrined, the

man replied that he was still carrying the .32 because the Colt automatic was too heavy. "Give it to me, then," snapped Churchill. The bodyguard did so. Checking the magazine and determining it was loaded, Churchill racked the slide to chamber a round, thumbed the safety lever on, and shoved the cocked and locked Government Model into the pocket of his overcoat. This became the great leader's personal carry gun until the end of the war.

Around 1950, Colt announced the introduction of their lightweight Commander Model. Churchill, Law tells me, immediately acquired one of the first. This Colt Commander .45 was the pistol Sir Winston Churchill kept handy for personal protection until his death.

General George S. Patton was not only a master of the battlefield, but a master of small arms ranging from the fencing foil to the handgun. He proved these skills early in his career as a Pentathlon winner. Of the many firearms he owned and used, half a dozen sidearms are the most famous...and four of them were Colts.



"Trouble In Deadwood"—Wild Bill Hickock
at the ready with a Colt Single Action Army.

"John Wayne came to modern legend with Colts in his hand."

The "trademark" Patton Colts were twin Single Action Armies purchased while he was stationed in the Southwest. He carried them boldly on each hip in matching S.D. Myres holsters. When he gave one of these .45 Colts to a famous lady entertainer he admired, he filled the empty space with a Smith & Wesson .357 Magnum with 3 1/2-inch barrel.

Almost never unarmed, he often carried something smaller and lighter when he didn't feel the need to demonstrate high-visibility leadership. Of the three small carry guns he was pictured with, two were Colts. A .38 Colt Detective Special was a frequent companion of the General's, as was a 1903 Pocket Model. (A large number of these small, flat Colt autoloaders in calibers .32 and .380 found their way onto the hips of the highest ranking US officers in WWII.) Patton also sometimes carried the similar Remington Model 51 .380, which he once emptied futilely at a low flying Nazi fighter plane.

All six of the General's most frequently carried handguns bore ivory grips, another personal trademark. When a journalist unclear on the concept asked him why he wore pearl-handled guns, Patton explosively replied that they were ivory, not pearl, adding that "only a New Orleans Pimp" would carry a pearl-handled firearm.

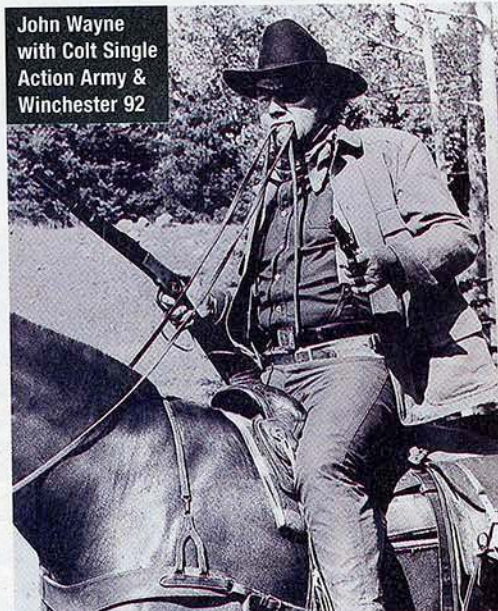
Theodore Roosevelt wielded a solid-frame Colt in caliber .38 Long when he led the charge up San Juan Hill. Prior to that, as an outdoorsman and sometime law enforcement officer, his preferred weapon was the large-bore Single Action Army. He utilized that powerful sixgun as his constant backup on safari in Africa.



General Patton with Pearl Handled Colt SAA

As police commissioner of New York City, Roosevelt armed the NYPD with an official standard-issue revolver for the first time. He chose the Colt New Police .32, introduced in 1892.

It is said that he generally carried a handgun for personal protection, even while president. The story goes that on one occasion, he and a companion left the White House for an evening constitutional. The stroll had gone only a short distance before TR was seen slapping his pockets. He exclaimed, "Good Heavens, I've forgotten my gun!" He strode briskly back inside, retrieved his pocket revolver and continued his walk. That carry gun is believed to have been a "New



John Wayne with Colt Single Action Army & Winchester 92

Pocket" .32, Colt's short barrel, round butt version of the .32 New Police that Roosevelt had adopted for the NYPD.

Movie Stars

Colts and action movies have gone together since the first silent films flickered across the silver screen. Some of the actors actually knew their guns. Some chose Colts.

Humphrey Bogart used Colt pistols and revolvers to the virtual exclusion of every other brand in his many movies. Perhaps this was because while escorting a prisoner during his tour with the US Navy, he used a Colt 1911 .45 to shoot that prisoner as he attempted to escape. The famous scar on Bogart's mouth was a souvenir of the assault with which the prisoner began his ill-fated escape attempt.

Gary Cooper handled guns adroitly in his movies. This was due in no small part to the fact that he was an avid hunter and outdoorsman, and an excellent shot. He seems to have liked the Colt Single Action Army as much as a personal gun as did the reluctant sheriff he played in "High Noon." He bought many of his firearms at Abercrombie and Fitch in New York. The Colt Woodsman .22 pistol was said to be a particular favorite of Cooper's. He enjoyed tinkering on his own firearms; in fact, Larry Swindell described him as a "gunsmith" in his biography "The Last Hero."

Sammy Davis, Jr. was tap dancing on the stage to enthusiastic applause at an age when most kids aren't ready for kinder-

garten. His tremendous dexterity stood him in good stead when his hobby became quick draw and the fancy handling of single action Colt sixguns. Demonstrations filmed during that time show him to have been a competition-class fast draw artist.

Tom Mix was reputedly a real cowboy and Western lawman before he became one in the movies. He was said to have been in

(and won) at least one real-life shootout. The majority of his personal handguns were Colts, and he appears to have been partial to the heavy-duty Army Special, the double action .38 Special, progenitor to the classic Official Police revolver.

Elvis Presley had a huge collection of fine guns. He generally went armed, often carrying a tiny derringer tucked into his

tight costume even while performing. Most of his movies that involved guns were Westerns, and naturally, genuine Colt single actions were his choice.

Presley's biographers say he was lavish with gifts to those who won his thanks or affection. These presents seem to have fallen primarily into three categories. How much "the King" liked you was measured in karats, Cadillacs, or Colts.

Frank Sinatra shepherded Sammy Davis, Jr. from journeyman entertainer to superstar. In partial return, Davis taught Sinatra quick draw with the single action Colt revolver, and the "chairman of the board" became reasonably good at it.

John Wayne came to modern legend with Colts in his hand. They were normally Single Action Army revolvers in Westerns. Even as a modern detective in the film "Brannigan," he carried a four-inch barrel Colt Diamondback .38 Special.

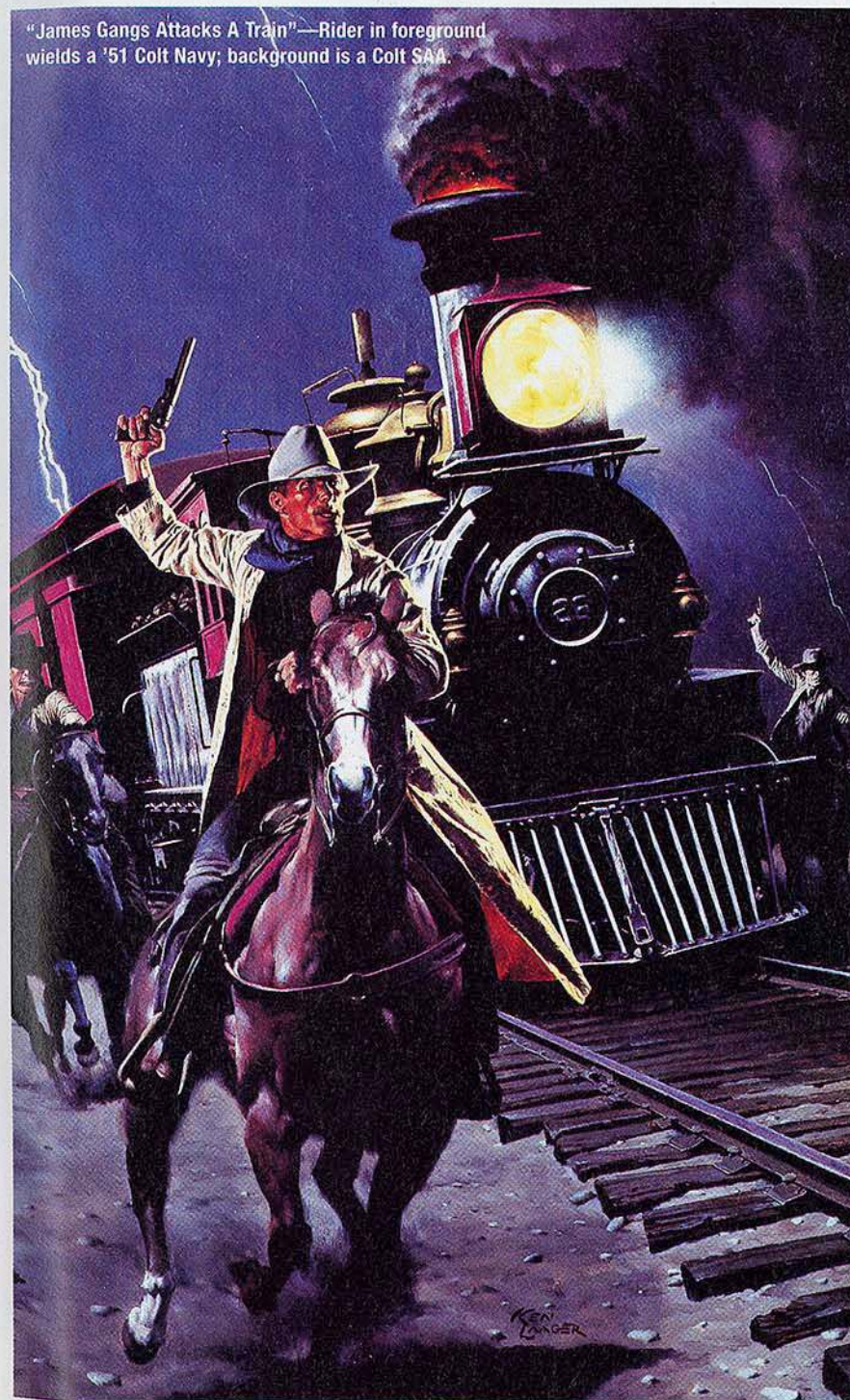
Perspectives

When you go back further into gun-fighting history, it's almost all Colt. Bat Masterson, Bill Hickok, Doc Holliday and so many more. Wyatt Earp told his biographer Stuart Lake that the gun he used in the OK Corral shooting was a Colt Single Action Army .45 with a 7 1/2-inch barrel.

Let's go back to where we started. Do we buy guns because we saw one in a movie? That's been known to happen, but not with the kind of people who know enough about guns to stay current by reading publications like this one. It means more when people who have money to burn, need guns for personal reasons, and have access to the highest paid experts, settle on one particular brand.

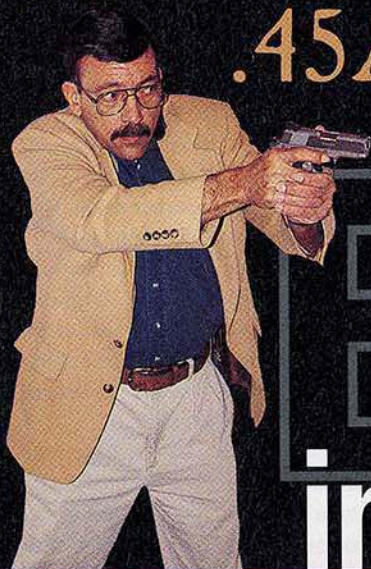
That's what we're talking about with the "guns of the rich and famous" theme. It's not about buying the prestige of some clueless star's endorsement. Churchill had the British Commandoes to advise him. He went Colt. Theodore Roosevelt had enough personal experience that he didn't need advisors. He went Colt, too.

I'm not rich or famous or powerful, and neither are most of those reading this publication. What you and I can take from the historical vignettes above is this: if what we chose was what the most highly paid experts who sat at the feet of the rich and famous advised them to buy, our choice has been validated by both expertise and history. ♦



"James Gangs Attacks A Train"—Rider in foreground wields a '51 Colt Navy; background is a Colt SAA.

NEW COLT
.45ACP/.40S&W



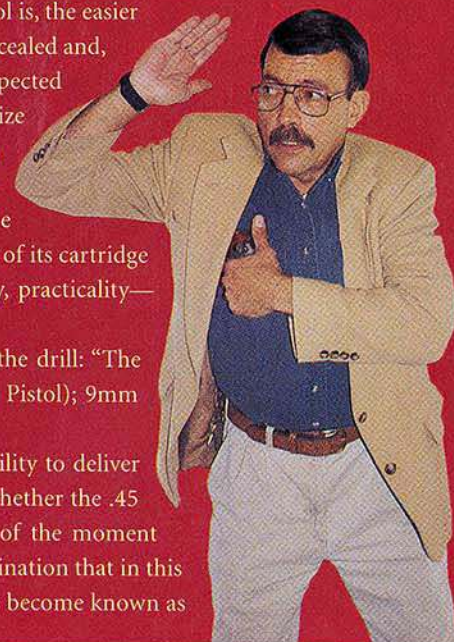
BIG
in a small way

COLT BIGBORE AUTOPISTOLS HAVE BECOME MORE AND MORE COMPACT—GET THE CONCEALED CARRY EDGE!

In concealed carry handguns, “size matters.” It’s an issue for two reasons. First, the smaller and lighter the pistol is, the easier and more convenient it will be to wear constantly concealed and, therefore, constantly accessible in case of an unexpected life-threatening emergency. The other way in which “size matters” is in caliber. Power. Jeff Cooper had it right when he said that the cartridge is the important thing, and the pistol is merely its delivery platform. Cooper became the high priest of the Colt .45 automatic because of the power of its cartridge first. The gun’s other advantages—ergonomics, reliability, practicality—were largely in the nature of fortuitous coincidence.

The arguments have gone on for decades. You know the drill: “The Revolver of the Day versus the .45 ACP (Automatic Colt Pistol); 9mm versus .45; .40 versus .45; .357 versus .45.” And so on.

Note one constant theme in all of these. When the ability to deliver optimum defensive power is an issue, no one questions whether the .45 is adequate. The question is always, can the challenger of the moment equal or exceed the Colt .45 auto and its cartridge, a combination that in this century of two world wars and a whole lot more strife has become known as



By Massad Ayoob



Big bore Colts that are compact and easy to carry? Yes! From top left down, Defender .45ACP, Officer's ACP, Combat Commander; from top right down, Concealed Carry Officers, Defender .40S&W, Commander.

a "legendary manstopper."

Colt has understood this from the beginning. Samuel Colt's own "baby" Paterson was contemporary with his huge Walker Dragoon. Throughout its long, rich history Colt made small concealment weapons along with big, heavy duty service handguns. The company has spent half a century trying to let you have your cake and eat it too, refining and then producing ever smaller and lighter pistols that still delivered full .45 auto "oomph." They have succeeded to a significant degree.

After all, Colt had introduced the .45



Demand from police caused Colt research and development to come up with this Defender in .40 S&W. Magazine is by MecGar.

ACP cartridge in 1905 with their original Military Model, and had defined the .45 automatic as we know it today with their 1911 model. From the beginning, they had the advantage of the most experience and feedback.

Let's examine these developments in chronological order.

The Commander

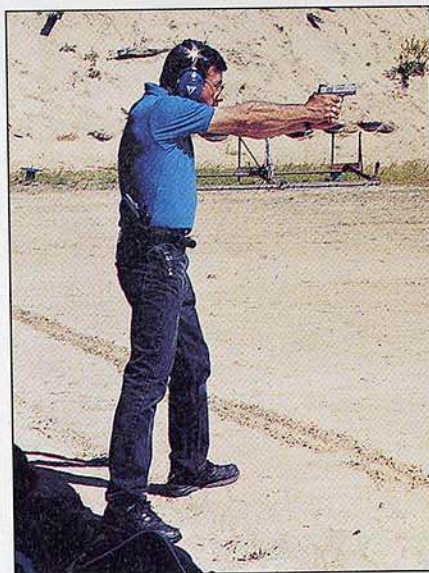
Exactly fifty years ago, in 1949, Colt engineers were looking at ways to reduce the size and especially the weight of the "army automatic" that had served with such distinction through the two great wars. A simultaneous thrust of their research was producing the gun in 9mm for ammo compatibility with our European military allies, though a strong military contingency insisted on retaining the powerful .45 round that had been the key to the American handgun's perceived dominance over all others on the battlefields.

The new pistol was put on the US commercial market and christened the Commander. It was an instant success

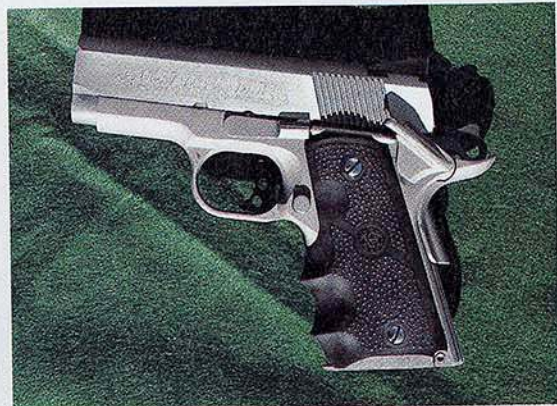
among gun-savvy pistol packers. Among these was Col. Cooper, who would almost single-handedly lead the handgunning renaissance that brought the 1911 pistol to unimagined heights of popularity. In his classic volume, *Cooper on Handguns*, he wrote, "The Commander...is the 'chopped and lightened' .45. It is three-quarters of an inch shorter and one-third lighter than the Mark IV (Government Model). Like the .357 snubbies, it is a pistol designed to be carried much and shot seldom, as the full size gun is much more pleasant to shoot.

The recoil of the .45 Commander approaches that of the magnum revolvers, and while it is quite controllable in practiced hands, it may startle a novice." (1)

While some liked the shorter barrel, that "one-third lighter" part was what really sold shooters on the Commander as a carry gun. Concealment holsters and corresponding leather were not, in those days, what they are now, and a full size Government Model was considered too big and heavy to carry concealed by most people. The lightweight aluminum frame, plus the shortening of the barrel from 5 to 4.25 inches with corresponding slide reduction, had indeed brought the unloaded weight down from 39.5 ounces (1911A1/



Today's small Colt .45s aren't hard to control. Note mild recoil as author fires Defender.



Defender embodies many updated features. Ergonomic grip tang gives faster draw, stronger hold, better distributed recoil. Reshaped grip safety makes it work more positively. Ditto larger thumb safety. Note also design of trigger and guard. High visibility sights give faster, surer hits.

Government Model) to 26.5 ounces in the Commander.

Concerns about recoil (and about this unknown quantity in handgun construction, aluminum) were soon put to rest. Col. Cooper and his followers established what Cooper called "the modern technique of the pistol," and these isometric grasps and stances were promulgated and taught by others. The light Commander was quickly understood to be a very controllable weapon in skilled hands. Moreover, torture tests of thousands and thousands of rounds by such noted experts as Charles "Skeeter" Skelton showed the aluminum frame would stand up to constant pounding.

In 1970, Colt introduced the Combat Commander, the same 4.25-inch barrel package but in all steel construction, weighing 36 ounces. It kicked less, of course. Many felt the shorter barrel and slide gave it the best balance in the hand of all the Colt .45 autos. With this new steel Commander out, the original was re-named the LW (lightweight) Commander. Later, to make the gun more manageable, Colt would eventually fit the guns with extended-tang grip safeties and soft "rubber" grips, bringing the Lightweight Commander up to 27.5 ounces.

The Commanders have always had the full-size 1911A1 gripframe. This made them easier to shoot and allowed them to take GI magazines. Many who carried under short jackets in scabbards attached outside their belts appreciated the shorter barrel/slide, which enhanced concealment. But some wanted a pistol even shorter in the barrel, and more wanted one shorter in

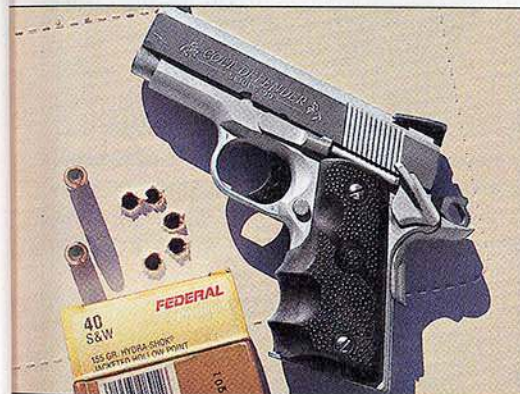
the butt for less bulge under a jacket. Thus came the next development.

Officer's ACP

By the early 1970s, the rage among gun enthusiasts was Colt .45 autos even shorter at both ends. Military armorers made them for generals as prestige service pistols (a job description previously filled by Colt 1903 Pocket Models) and such private-sector pistolsmiths as Armand Swensen picked up the concept on the home front.

Colt introduced their variation on this theme in 1984 and dubbed it the Officer's ACP in homage to the pistols the Army's gunsmiths had built for the generals. With 3.5-inch barrel and proportional slide, and the butt reduced at the expense of one round of magazine capacity, weight was down to 34 ounces in all steel configuration. Inevitably, a Lightweight Officer's followed, at 24 ounces.

Any new concept requires the manufacturer to follow field results and "tweak" the



"Small" needn't mean inaccurate. At 25 yards, author shot this 1.25" 5-shot group with Federal 155-grain Hydra-Shok from this experimentally produced Colt Defender in caliber .40 S&W.

design accordingly. This happened with the Officer's pistols, which were continually improved over the years. Perhaps the most important change was incorporating the Officer's design features and size envelope into Colt's new economy line, the 1991A1 series. There, the little .45, now sporting a "plain Jane" gray finish, was known as the 1991A1 Compact.

In the mid-1990s, in a brilliant stroke, Colt hired master pistolsmith Bill Laughridge as a consultant. He had recently announced his own masterpiece of 1911

miniaturization, a custom-made Colt he called the Adventurer.

The stage was set for the most profound improvement in the history of the factory down-sized Colt .45 auto.

The Defender

In 1997, Colt announced their Defender pistol. At a quick glance, it was the Laughridge Adventurer, rendered by Colt in an affordable mass-produced version. The barrel was now down to three inches even, with a proportionally shorter slide. Where the Adventurer's butt was even shorter than an Officer's, with proportional custom magazine, Colt had chosen to stay with the Officer's size in that dimension. This (a) allowed commonality with existing Officers' magazines made over the previous 13 years, and (b) with Colt's use of a newer style magazine follower, it allowed the shooter to still have the traditional "seven in the mag, and an eighth in the chamber" of the full size Governments.

(The same type of magazine brought Government and Commander pistols up to nine rounds total of .45 ammo on board.) With the light alloy frame, the Defender's weight is in the 23-ounce range, unloaded.

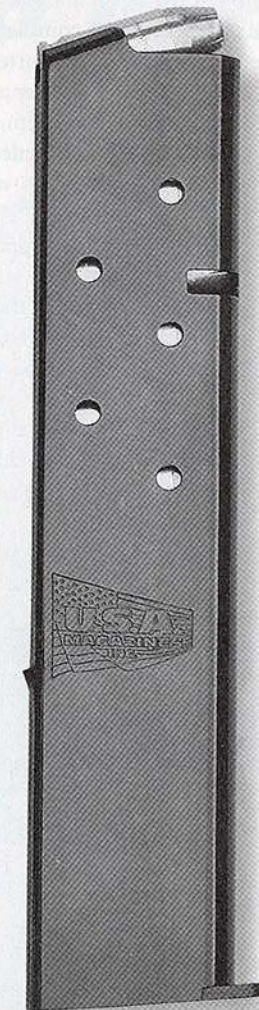
Accuracy was phenomenal! Historically, shortening the barrel and slide of a 1911 type gun had also reduced accuracy. But when Joe Cartabona brought the Defender up to Lethal Force Institute for testing, it pumped five Remington Match .45 bullets into a group of 2 5/8-inches, the best four in exactly an inch, and the best three of those measuring half an inch center to center. This was at 25 yards from standing "right hand barricade" position.

The accuracy wasn't just with match grade target ammo. Five rounds of 230-grain jacketed .45 hollowpoint went into an inch and five-eighths.

This was not a freak. I've seen a lot of Colt Defender .45s since. They all exhibited this excellent accuracy. (They also exhibit superior reliability. The test Defender mentioned above went through 1200 rounds without cleaning and without malfunctions.)

In the Colt Defender, the minimum size/weight 1911 .45 reaches its perfection thus far. It is simply an excellent pistol.

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Saga of The COLT SIXGUN

From the M1873 Single Action Army to modern Cowboy, this American classic gets set to span three centuries as the world's most popular revolver.

It all started with the first Paterson cap-n-ball revolvers, the sidearms during the 1840s of Jack Hays' Texas Rangers, and since then, the name, Colt, has called out to man's spirit of adventure as the defender of the underdog.

During the Civil War, Colt percussion revolvers had achieved an unrivaled level of refinement and reliability, and with the end of the War, Colts were in even higher demand by pioneers heading west.

It was in 1873 that a new firearm first appeared, the ramifications of which would ripple across America and around the world well into the next millennium. It was the Colt Single Action Army (SAA) revolver.

Chambered for the equally new caliber .45 Long Colt cartridge, the new revolver was by far the best Colt to date. With its strong, solid frame, 7-1/2-inch barrel and one-piece walnut stock, the Colt SAA was as graceful as it was utilitarian.

Immediately adopted by the U.S. Army, the Colt SAA prevailed over all competitors. Carried in the holsters of the U.S. Cavalry, the SAA saw

action at the Little Bighorn and was there when Geronimo surrendered to General Crook. It patrolled the Mexican border, went to China during the Boxer Rebellion and came back with the Army to charge up San Juan Hill in the Spanish American War.

The Cowboy And The Colt

As with most other things past and present, the adoption of the Colt SAA by the army sparked interest among civilians who could afford a gun of such quality. Where the military aspect of the new sixgun didn't provoke interest, the "dime novel" took over, inspiring even more young men to go west with a Colt. So great was the cry for .45 caliber Colt SAA revolvers that the company quietly condemned guns that had been slated for delivery to the Army in order to fill commercial orders. However, .45 Colt was not the only caliber in which the SAA was offered.

In the same year the Colt SAA was introduced, Winchester debuted its new Model 1873 rifle

BY GARY PAUL JOHNSTON

PHOTO BY STAN TRZONIEC

A true copy of the original, the Colt Cowboy has the classic SAA profile, with authentic blue color-case finish, staghorn grips, 5 1/2-inch barrel, and it's chambered for .45 Colt.

SAGA OF THE COLT SIXGUN



PERFORMANCE: COLT COWBOY

Cartridge	Velocity	Small Group	Large Group	Average
BLACK HILLS 250 RNL	719	2.19	3.97	3.29
BLACK HILLS 180 FNL (SCHOFIELD)	722	3.08	3.91	3.36
FEDERAL 225 HPL	886	2.87	3.73	3.28
HORNADY 255 RNL	715	3.15	5.91	4.06
PMC 250 RNL	789	2.99	4.33	3.58
REMINGTON 255 SWC	792	3.76	5.25	4.14
WINCHESTER 255 RNL	784	2.98	4.41	3.63

AVERAGE FOR BOTH COWBOYS = 3.62

Bullet weight measured in grains, velocity in feet per second (fps) with Oehler P35, accuracy in inches for average of five 6-shot hand held 25-yard groups. Elev. 6300 ft., Temp. 53°, Humid. 28%

chambered for the first of a family of new pistol-size black powder cartridges, the .44 Winchester Center Fire (WCF), more commonly known as the .44-40. Seeing the opportunity to offer a revolver that fired the same ammunition as a rifle, in 1878 Colt added the .44-40 caliber to its SAA line.

Following Winchester's development of the .32 WCF (.32-20) and .38 WCF (.38-40) calibers for its 1873 rifle, Colt added

these calibers to the SAA in 1884. When the Winchester Model 1892 rifle was introduced to replace the Model '73, it was offered in these same calibers. These combinations provided the cowboy and rancher with the ability to use the same ammunition for both his revolver and rifle at ranges from point blank out to 200 yards or so. Where a pistol-size cartridge would do the job, this pair became quite popular.

For the cowboy, calibers of choice in the Colt SAA were .45 Colt, .44-40, .38-40 and .32-20, and .41 Colt. On the rare end of the spectrum, only one SAA was made in .32 rimfire. Barrel lengths ran from 2-1/2 to 16 inches, with 4-3/4, 5-1/2 and 7-1/2 inches being standard.

SAA Variations

In addition to its 30 calibers and military contract guns, the Colt SAA has seen nearly 100 variations during its production life. Barrel lengths ranged from 2-1/2 to 16 inches, with 4-3/4, 5-1/2 and 7-1/2 inches being standard. Grips furnished over the



Colt Cowboy has all the classic features along with modern safety and shootability as well.



A variety of 1st, 2nd and 3rd Generation Colt Single Action Army revolvers surround Colt's latest offering, the new Cowboy Single Action Revolver.



An original Model 1873 Colt Single Action Army .45 Colt and accouterments that served with U.S. 6th Cavalry trooper Rasmussen.

years included one-piece walnut, two-piece checkered walnut, checkered hard rubber, ivory, mother of pearl and other custom materials. Finishes ran from the standard blue color-case, to all blue, nickel, silver-and-gold, and original engraving patterns found the Colt SAA are many and varied. Along the way there were evolutionary changes in almost every part of the Colt SAA including the frame, hammer, cylinder, barrel, ejector and housing, and back and front straps.

Cowboy Action Shooting

In 1980, Harper Craig and some friends, who had grown tired of modern action shooting competition, began competing informally with Colt SAA revolvers and other Old West style firearms, and Cowboy Action Shooting (CAS) was born. Soon the Single Action Shooting Society (SASS) was formed, with members issued numbered SASS badges and taking aliases of famous characters from the Old West. Harper Craig's alias is "Judge Roy Bean," and he wears SASS badge #1.

The grand guru of SASS, The Judge lives his role to the fullest, and is even a fully licensed Justice of the Peace, who can

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SAGA OF THE COLT SIXGUN

perform "cowboy weddings!" Along with SASS's "Wild Bunch," The Judge rules this governing body of CAS that now counts well over 20,000 members worldwide. Offering a category for everyone, CAS combines shooting fun with history and an endless variety of costumes, welcoming all ages, races and genders, and is the fastest growing shooting sport in history.

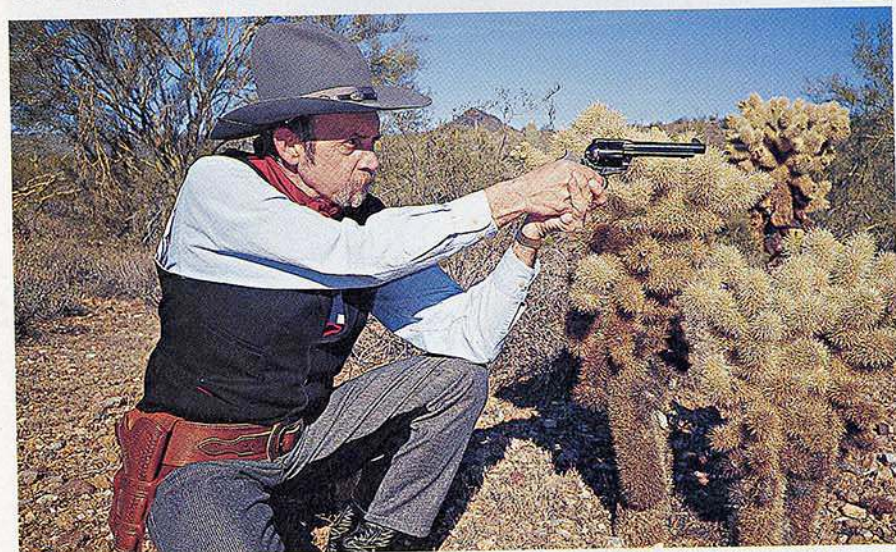
With SASS clubs in high gear across America, hundreds of Cowboy Action Shoots are held monthly in addition to regional matches and the National and World Championship shoots at Winter Range in Phoenix and End Of Trail in California. If it hasn't happened already, there will soon be a CAS event coming to a range near you.

The Colt Cowboy

As never before, Cowboy Action Shooting has sparked a renewed interest in single action revolvers. Extending far beyond the



Colt Cowboy boasts SAA profile, rich blue color-case finish.



Longtime Colt collector and Cowboy Action Shooter Jim Fischer (SASS alias Nueve Dedos Jaime) tries out Colt's new Cowboy under Arizona skies. "It'll do just fine," he said.



Hollywood cowboy actor Harry "Dobe" Carey, Jr. poses with his SAA and its target. A veteran of John Wayne films, "Dobe" thought the Cowboy shot just like the real thing.

actual participants in the sport, this new customer base has spawned an entire new group of copies of the Colt Single Action Army, all of which are less expensive than the real thing.

Noting the popularity of Cowboy Action Shooting, Colt has developed a less expensive rendition of its famous SAA that's geared to the rigors of CAS competition. While designing this new single-action revolver took considerable deliberation and testing, choosing a name for it couldn't have been easier—the Colt Cowboy.

The new Colt Cowboy boasts a number of improvements over all previous generations of Colt Single Action Army revolvers. Stronger than a forging, the frame and other parts are investment cast of the finest steel. Although the Cowboy is nearly identical to the SAA, and will fit in standard SAA holsters, its cylinder is 15 thousandths of an inch greater in width. As the Cowboy's cylinder walls are thicker than the



Note Colt Cowboy's Old-West staghorn grips.

SAA, it can handle hotter loads. Meanwhile, the Cowboy's cylinder stop notches have been cut deeper to allow for the rougher duty they'll encounter in Cowboy Action Shooting.

Although there's no safety notch on the hammer of the Colt Cowboy, there is a half-cock loading notch, and the Cowboy loads the same way as the Colt SAA. However, unlike its famous predecessor, the Colt Cowboy can be safely carried loaded with all six rounds.

Retaining the loading notch on the Colt Cowboy was a good idea, especially for Cowboy Action Shooting. In the speed and stress of this competition, the thumb of more than one shooter has slipped off the hammer during cocking, and with a single-action without a half-cock, he/she more than likely "lost" that chamber, which had to make a complete revolution before it could fire, losing several seconds. With the Colt Cowboy, the hammer would more likely catch on the half-cock notch, allowing the shooter to regain control, losing only a half-second or so.

Shots Fired

Shooting the Colt Cowboy is no different from shooting a Colt SAA. With the same shape, size and weight as the SAA, the Cowboy not only looks and acts like a Colt, it is one! From the time the Cowboy is taken in the hand until the empty brass is

unloaded, there's no mistaking it for anything but the real McCoy.

In the accuracy department, the Colt Cowboy puts its shots where the front sight is pointing. Typical 6-shot groups at 25 yards hover about 3-1/2 to 4 inches, allowing the gun to hit 12-inch steel plates with ease. Shooting the Colt Cowboys in standard CAS stages, carried in a new pair of Old West holsters made by Alfonso's Of Hollywood, I found both test guns the performance equals of any of my Colt SAAs and better than some.

Taking both Colt Cowboys down to Arizona, I let my old compadre, Cowboy Action Shooter Jim Fischer (SASS alias Nueve Dedos Jaime) try them out. Jim liked the guns a bunch and said they'd do just fine.

I've owned some 30 Colt Single Action Army revolvers in my life, and still have quite a few, and being the proud owner of these guns, it would take quite a bit to make me part with 'em. However, while I'll continue to shoot all of my Colt SAAs for pleasure, I won't be competing with these guns any more. Nope, from now on, partner, you'll likely be seein' Colt Cowboys fillin' my holsters and my hands! ♦

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Tyrone, NM 88065
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Dept. Colt, North Hollywood, CA
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Tombstone Leather

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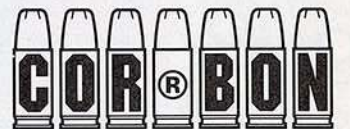
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Colt's MIGHTY MINIGUNS

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FOR THE MOST POWER IN THE
SMALLEST AUTOPISTOLS, YOU CAN'T
BEAT THE .380 & 9MM COLTS.



By Massad Ayoob • PHOTO BY STAN TRZONIEC

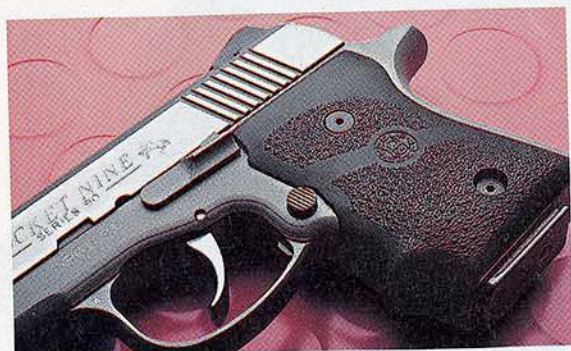
Some of us have lifestyles and dress codes that allow us to carry a full size Government Model .45 all (or at least most) of the time. But consider the undercover narcotics or vice officer who needs a truly tiny pistol that can be concealed deeply enough to escape the crude search of a criminal who has temporarily gained the upper hand? What about the law abiding private citizen who, for reasons of employer policy or political correctness, needs a small handgun that can be hidden as deeply as the narc's?

Colt is our longest-experienced manufacturer of pocket size semiautomatic pistols. They began making their famous .32 caliber Pocket Model in 1903, and in caliber .380 five years later, at which time they also debuted a smaller .25 caliber version. This sleek "hammerless" design became the generic image most Americans visualized when someone said, "automatic pistol."

Colt Pocket Model .32s and .380s were widely used through WWII by OSS agents and by general officers of the American military. When production ceased in 1945, the gun was in its third major design format.



COLT'S MIGHTY MINI-GUNS



The Pocket Nine DAO trigger proved 3"/75' accurate.

That institutional memory has contributed to the excellent design and function of today's smallest Colt autoloaders.

Baby Colt .380s

If minimum weight and bulk are what you need, you will spend many an hour poring over the catalogs and still not find a .380 pistol smaller, lighter and thinner than the Colt offerings. Colt makes nothing smaller for the personal defense market. This is with good reason.

Most experts agree that .380 ACP (Automatic Colt Pistol, the US designation for a round known in Europe as 9mm Kurz or 9mm Corto, i.e., 9mm Short) is right at the edge for minimum potency. Some experts say it misses the cut, while others consider it acceptable as an absolute minimum baseline. Let's take a look at the ballistics and see why. In the following table, "fps" stands for "feet per second" velocity, and "fpe" stands for "foot pounds of energy," both measured at the muzzle (See Chart #1).

A quick perusal of the below shows us several things. First, the .380 auto is many times more powerful than a .25 auto.

Second, it is dramatically more potent than the .32 auto, even when the .32 is loaded with Winchester Silvertips, widely considered the most potent hollowpoint available for the caliber. Third, the .380 can be loaded to equal or exceed the potency of the Soviet service pistol round, the supposedly more powerful 9mm Makarov. Finally, if you want more power than this in a small auto, you need a small

auto that is chambered for the 9mm Luger cartridge. (As we'll see shortly, Colt has you covered on this, but we're still on .380s at the moment.)

If you go with the .380, the Winchester Silvertip hollowpoint, Remington Golden Saber hollowpoint, and Federal Hydra-Shok are all good loads that help you take advantage of the .380's mild kick. If more recoil won't be a problem, the +P ammo by Triton or Cor-Bon will give you the maximum raw power you can get from a conventional .380 cartridge. Colt rates all its modern .380 pistols as approved for +P, an indication of their confidence in the strength of even their smallest handguns.

Five currently available Colts cover a broad spectrum of .380 needs.

The Colt Government Model, six inches long overall and weighing some 21 ounces in its all-steel format, is comparable to snub-nose .38 Special revolvers in

weight and most dimensions, but is flatter and carries eight shots including the chambered round. Many petite women find this pistol to fit their hands as perfectly as the larger, more famous Colt of the same name fits so many of their brothers. Though light enough for daily portability, the solid steel frame reduces recoil and makes the gun more comfortable to shoot for extended periods of training.

The Government Model .380 is a single-action auto and, again like its namesake, designed to be carried cocked and locked. This has made it a natural for thousands of users of both genders who favor the big Colt .45 for home defense, target shooting, on duty wear, or concealed carry under heavy clothes, but need something



The Pocket Nine was flawless with standard ammo.

much smaller at times for hideout or backup use. Having two pistols that operate the same way delivers a life-saving element combat instructors call "commonality of training."

Shrink the Government Model .380 at both ends (going from 3.25-inch barrel to 2.75-inch, and shortening the butt at the expense of one less round in the magazine) and you have the Colt Mustang. The lesser amount of ordnance steel in the Mustang brings weight down to 18.5 ounces before loading. This tiny .380 is still remarkably controllable.

Even more appealing to the "size matters" client is the Mustang PocketLite. It has the same elfin dimensions as the all-steel Mustang, but the frame is made of the same lightweight aircraft-grade aluminum that the famed Colt Commander .45 has proven for half a century will "stand the gaff" of much more power than a .380 round can generate. The PocketLite weighs

a mere 12.5 ounces. That's only two ounces more than even the Seecamp, the smallest and lightest pistol available for the distinctly less potent .32 ACP cartridge. The Colt Mustang PocketLite .380 weighs 2.5 ounces less than a Raven .25 automatic!

All of the above are single action pistols. Colt's patented Series '80 passive, internal firing pin lock design makes them "drop-safe" if carried with a round in the chamber, the hammer cocked, and the thumb safety in the "on safe" position. Many of us believe an on-safe pistol is an advantage if the legitimate user is in a struggle for the gun. I've documented many cases where such a feature saved innocent lives.

However, there is an opposing school of thought that suggests the gun should be capable of simple "point and shoot" function in an emergency. Colt has them covered with two .380 autos that are "DAO"—Double-Action-Only, that is, with nothing but a long, firm, deliberate trigger pull required to fire the gun for each and every shot, and no manual safety that needs to be manipulated.

The standard Colt Pony boasts a spurless hammer and otherwise snag-free exterior. Its slide rides low to the hand to minimize muzzle jump, and Colt designed in an extended grip tang to prevent the slide from contacting a fleshy gun hand during firing. Another reason this Colt kicks less than most other .380s is that while the typical pistol in this caliber is a straight blowback design, the Colt fires from a locked breech, a stronger design that also delays, and thus seems to reduce, the recoil impulse. I've found this pistol to be extremely reliable. When carried loose in a pocket, you don't have to worry about contact with the body accidentally pushing off the safety, and it gives me more peace of mind when packed in that location.

The all-steel Pony weighs a very manageable 19 ounces, and is but 5.5 inches in overall length, with the same short butt and six-round magazine capacity as the Mustang. If lighter is still more important—and for many, it is—we come to the final and most recent of the Colt .380s, the Pony PocketLite.

Unloaded weight is 13 ounces on the nose with this aluminum-frame DAO pis-



The Colt Pony boasts snag-free controls and sights.

tol. It is manageable with those Triton .380 +P hollowpoints that give "9mm Makarov and beyond" ballistics. I found that I could carry this gun hidden in a camera case. Not the bag in which you put your leather-or-plastic-encased 35mm, but that form-fitted case itself. Try that with a .38 Special short barrel revolver, or virtually any other .380.

The Pony PocketLite is my own favorite among Colt's stable of .380s, but that's a matter of the individual's personal needs. The Pony guns do have a heavy trigger pull for each shot. People with very limited hand strength would be better served with the Government Model or Mustang single-actions. These not only require minimal strength for releasing the safety or pulling the trigger, but because their design allows the safety to be on and the hammer cocked while working the slide, mainspring tension that usually holds a pistol's slide forward is now alleviated. This makes guns like the Mustangs much easier to handle in terms of slide retraction by people with impaired or below-average hand strength.

The Miniature Colt 9mm

You say you want the size and weight of a little .380 auto, but you're not willing to settle for any less power than the 9mm Luger (Parabellum)? You'll get no argument from me. The American police establishment and the US military (and NATO before them) came to the same conclusion about stopping power baselines.

If that's where you're at, has Colt got a pistol for you! It's only very slightly larger than the Pony, operates identically from a shooter's perspective, and weighs but seventeen ounces.

Colt calls it the Pocket Nine. This pistol is virtually identical to the Walther PPK

#1

PERFORMANCE: Colt Pocket Guns

CALIBER	MFR.	BULLET	VELOCITY	ENERGY
.25 ACP	Remington	50 gr FMJ	760 fps	64 fpe
.32ACP	Remington	71 gr FMJ	905 fps	129 fpe
.32ACP	Winchester	60 gr STHP	970 fps	125 fpe
.380ACP	Federal	90 gr JHP	1000 fps	200 fpe
.380ACP	Remington	95 gr FMJ	955 fps	190 fpe
.380ACP	Remington	102 gr GSHP	940 fps	200 fpe
.380ACP	Winchester	85 gr STHP	1000 fps	189 fpe
.380ACP+p	Triton	90 gr JHP	1050 fps	220 fpe
9mm Makarov	Federal	90 gr JHP	990 fps	185 fpe
9mm Luger	Remington	115 gr JHP	1155 fps	341 fpe



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COLT'S MIGHTY MINI-GUNS

.380 in round count, length, height, and perhaps most importantly thickness, yet is chambered for that full potency 9mm Luger round instead of the 9mm "Short." The elegant Walther has defined the standard for a thin, very compact .380 double action pistol since 1931. The Pocket Nine equals the PPK's size envelope including slimness, weighs a quarter pound less and offers nearly twice the power per shot!

You'll recall the earlier power comparisons between the .380 and other cartridges that bracket it on the power scale. Let's amplify on the 9mm Luger's ballistics at this point (See Chart #2).

Note that all the 9mm Luger rounds are dramatically hotter than all the 9mm "Shorts." Note that two in just this short list of Parabellum ammo options—Winchester's Silvertip hollowpoint and the +P jacketed hollowpoint from Triton—at least double the mathematically-computed energy of the standard .380 cartridge. Finally, note that the hot Triton more than doubles the power of the hottest .380 +P on the list.

The hottest 9mm ammo—+P, +P+, and NATO class—is not for every gun, every shooter, or every need. Still, the 9mm Parabellum even in its "standard pressure" loadings is a quantum leap beyond any .380.

(One note concerning the above. Velocity readings, hence energy computations, come from the ammo factories, who generally use 4-inch barrel guns or 4-inch vented barrels in testing. The shorter barrel pistols discussed here may deliver slightly less. However, the difference should be reasonably uniform between calibers and loads.)

Suffice to say, a "Baby Colt" in 9mm Luger was welcome news to me and many

#2 PERFORMANCE: Colt 9mm Luger



	9mm LUGER	Winchester SXT	147 gr JHP	990 fps	320 fpe
	9mm LUGER	Remington	124 gr JHP	1120 fps	346 fpe
	9mm LUGER	Federal	115 gr JHP	1180 fps	345 fpe
	9mm LUGER	Winchester	115 gr STHP	1225 fps	383 fpe
	9mm LUGER	Triton +P	115 gr JHP	1325 fps	448 fpe

others. The Colt Pocket Nine won me over almost as soon as I started shooting it.

It is said that such small guns can't be accurate. My test Pocket Nine put five rounds of Winchester SXT 147-grain hollowpoints into exactly three inches at 25 yards, shooting two-handed from a Millett pistol rest. That is unexpectedly good accuracy from a gun this small.

It is said that pistols so tiny as the Pocket Nine can't be reliable when chambered for a full-size service pistol cartridge. Hogwash. Hundreds of rounds of standard pressure service ammo, from 147-grain subsonic to 115-grain in the 1100 fps range, have gone through my test Pocket Nine with no malfunctions whatever. That's right, 100% function. The one jam I've had, and that only once, was with one of the +P+ velocity hot loads, which I think cycled the lightweight slide faster than the magazine could keep up with.

It has been said that a 17 ounce, .380 size gun would be uncontrollable, and unbearably painful to shoot. More hogwash. The Pocket Nine comes right back on target out of recoil, one handed or two, for anyone who knows how to shoot. I shot a 60-round, 4-to-15 yard qualification

with this gun on the Police B-27 target. Score was 300 out of 300 in "Qualification" mode—100%. On the tougher IPSC target it would have been a 299 (99%) and on the B-27's still tougher competition rings, a 591 out of 600 points (98%). That's controllable in anyone's language.

This gun is controllable even with "+P+" ammo—which, by the way, Colt spokesman Joe Cartabona gives you the green light to shoot in

this pistol. There are a lot of much larger 9mm autos whose manufacturers forbid you to shoot +P and up in them, for fear of breakage.

A streamlined, snag-free 9mm DAO the size of the classic small .380. It shoots. It works.

If you're getting the impression that the Pocket Nine is my favorite of these ultra-small, mid-caliber Colts, you're absolutely right. I'm one of those who is more comfortable with something that packs more punch than a .380. The Pocket Nine will have a permanent place in my armory for the rare occasions when I can't carry anything bigger than a typical .380.

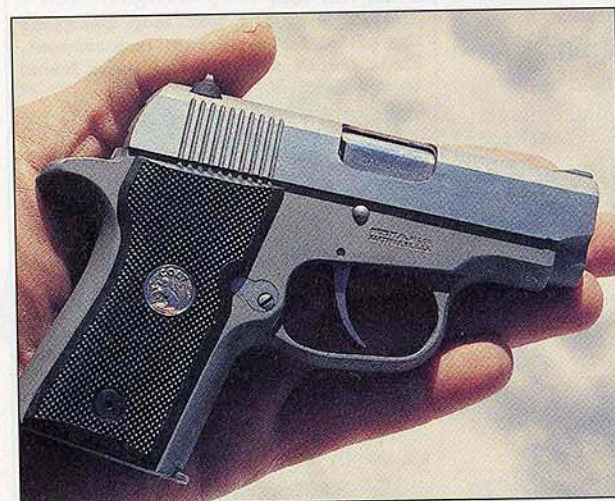
I've found it to work particularly well in an overcoat or vest pocket. It was great in the elastic bellyband holster, which goes between the underwear and a tucked-in dress shirt and doesn't require a jacket to hide it. And, yes, it just barely fits in my old Nikon camera case.

Bottom Line

If you feel the .380 cartridge meets your needs, you'll search in vain for a pistol that's smaller, thinner, lighter and more reliable in that caliber than the Colt PocketLite. If cocked and locked, single-action design is your preference, the Mustang is your choice. If you like the simple function and the civil liability elements of the more recently popular double action only design, the Pony was made for you.

You want the tiniest full-power 9mm that actually works? Enter the Colt Pocket Nine. There are other reliable, top quality 9mm subcompacts, but few are this small, only one is this light, and none are this thin. As a rule, the others will be more expensive, too.

For those who need the very smallest pocket autoloaders of adequate quality, you might save time shopping for Colt's .380 autos and their Pocket Nine before you look elsewhere. ♦



Pony .380 is smaller than an average male hand.

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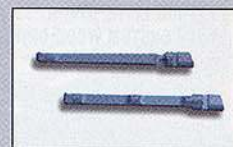
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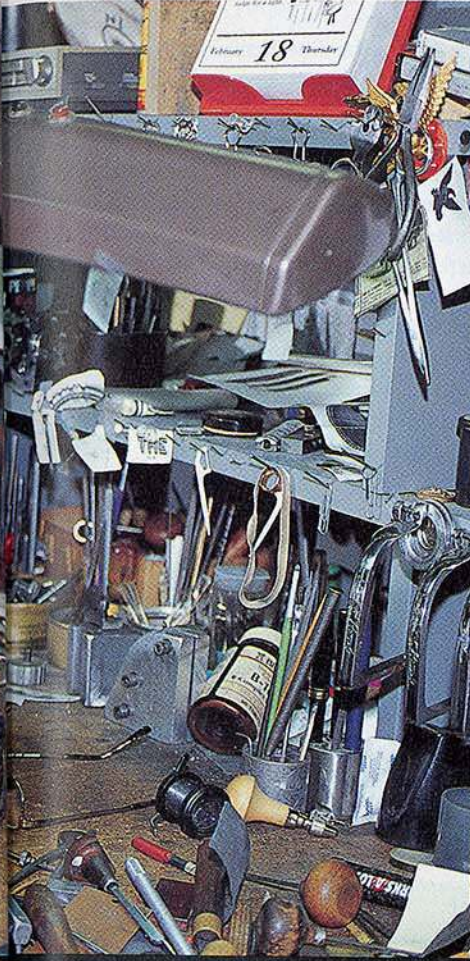
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Close up of finished engraved Colt Single Action Army, and engraving, left, and polishing, lower right, that are part of the Custom Shop package.



WHEN A CUSTOM SHOP HAS BEEN TURNING OUT ONE-OF-A-KIND QUALITY FIREARMS GOING INTO ITS THIRD CENTURY, YOU COME TO EXPECT MASTERPIECES THAT WILL ENDURE. AT COLT, THAT'S JUST WHAT YOU'LL GET.

BY WALT RAUCH
Photos by Stan Trzoniec

"ART FOR GUN'S SAKE"

Gents, Please send me one of your Nickle plated Short .45 Calibre revolvers. It is for my own use and for that reason I would like to have a little Extra pains taken with it.

"I am willing to pay Extra for Extra work. Make it easy on the trigger and have the front Sight a little higher and thicker than the ordinary pistol of this Kind. Put on a gutta percha handle and send it as soon as possible. Have the barrel about the same length that the ejecting rod is. Truly Yours, W.B. Masterson PS. Duplicate the order by sending two." Bat Masterson, 1885. (Note: Capitalization and spelling are as written in the original letter.)

By the time the above letter was received in 1885, the Colt Custom Shop had already been in existence for several generations, dating from the founding of the company when Sam Colt traveled worldwide to present engraved and embellished samples of his guns to customers to favorably impact the sales of his products. In addition to this promo-

tional use of fine Colt firearms, customers were likely to ask that their purchases be personalized with sight changes, initials on the gun or grips, or fine engraving and finishing.

In the aforementioned letter, excerpted from the book *Bat Masterson* by Robert K. DeArment, the author points out that Masterson "ordered his first custom Colt-tailored, personally-inscribed weapon...in 1879." It was a silver-plated gun with Mexican Eagles carved in the mother-of-pearl handles. In subsequent years, he ordered seven more Colt sixguns, either for friends or for his personal use. In at least one letter, he specifically requested that special care be taken with the front sight. The order, written on the stationery of the Opera House Saloon in Dodge (Kansas) was dated July 24, 1885.

To this day, examples of Colt custom artisanship continue to be prominently displayed in museums and gun collections worldwide. Certainly no one article can do justice to this artistry or the engravers and the craftsmen who do this work. The subject matter has been well-covered in a number

of books, including *Colt Engraving*, by R.L. Wilson.

The world-class tradition of engraving, insetting of precious metals and general embellishment of Colt handguns continues today under the supervision of Michael Reissig, Vice President of Custom Services, an 18-year veteran of the company. Jan Gwinnell, Expert Engraver, along with George Spring and Steve Kamyk, Master Engravers, have a total of over 70 years at their craft. Surely these master craftsmen will join past masters who plied their art in the Colt Custom Shop, their names taking their rightful place alongside such luminaries as Gustave Young, Carl Helfrecht and the best known engraver of them all, L.D. Nimschke.

Recently, I was privileged to visit and tour the Colt Custom Shop, where they had just finished recreating the "Sultan of Turkey" Third Model Dragoon revolver. The original gun, considered a work of art, is on display in the New York Metropolitan Museum of Art and has been valued at \$250,000. The re-creation, done for an anonymous client, is

"ART FOR GUN'S SAKE"

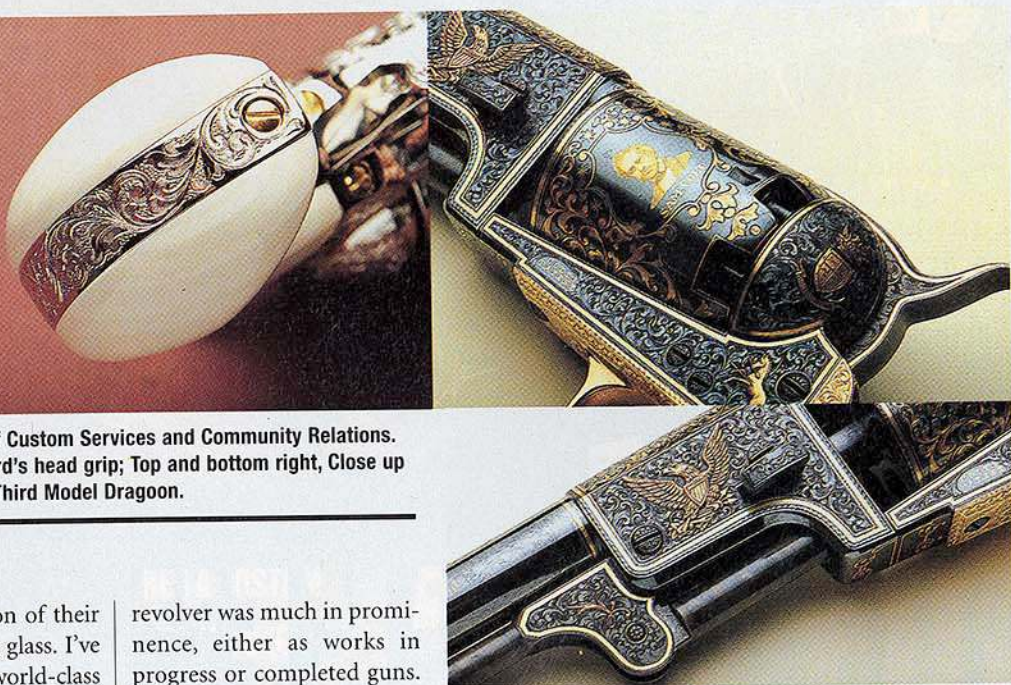


"There are no 'high tech' tricks, just the artistry of masters."

correct to the smallest detail. Amazingly, the craftsmen were able to exactly replicate the work using only photographs of the original gun!

Surveying the other shop activity after admiring this work of art, I noted that the engravers work with nothing more than the centuries-old hand tools of the trade. They meticulously wield their gravers and small hammers as they make the necessary cuts, inlays and inscriptions. Some prefer to work standing, others seated at a bench.

nature of the fine artwork done in the Custom Shop, an ongoing relationship with the customer is quickly established by phone and by mail. To ensure the correctness of the desired work, photographs of work in progress are often sent to the customer. This is of benefit to both the artisan and the customer, for he may well "remember" details that he didn't include in his original work request. This avoids any misunderstandings and dissatisfaction with the finished product.



Above left, Mike Reissig, Director of Custom Services and Community Relations. Above center, Single Action Army bird's head grip; Top and bottom right, Close up of engraving on "Sultan of Turkey" Third Model Dragon.

They welcomed close examination of their craft with my strong magnifying glass. I've had the opportunity to examine world-class engraving in the arms section of the Tower of London, the work of Paul Jaeger of Jenkintown, PA, and the engraved drillings and rifles imported from Germany at Flaig's Gun Shop, in Millville, PA (both long out of business). The Masters' work at Colt need not take second place to anyone else's work. There are no "high tech" tricks, just the artistry of masters. Based on the samples I examined, the results are worth the wait.

Speaking of engraving, four standard types of engraving are regularly done. The amount of engraving on the gun is represented by letters A, B, C and D, which denote 25, 50, 75 and 100% coverage. This range of coverage can be ordered for all blue, nickel, case-hardened and blue, stainless, or a combination of finishes. The customer's single-action can also be re-case hardened (done in the main plant) using the original method of heated animal bone and charcoal, followed by quenching.

Of course, the Colt Single Action (SA)

revolver was much in prominence, either as works in progress or completed guns. Most of the requests for this work come through the regular Colt distribution network, wherein the customer goes to a dealer and so on up the line until the work arrives at the Custom Shop. Of course, the customer can, if he chooses, deal directly with Colt. By the way, the original SA in blue, gold or nickel and chambered for the .45 Colt or the 44-40 round is only available through the Custom Shop.



A Custom Shop Pony with minimum engraving, with a personal signature.

Because of the individual and costly

Although the Single Action Colt in all its permutations has been and is the backbone of the Custom Shop, Colt also traditionally offers the option of short runs of 100 to 250 guns in variations of the regular production firearms. They also offer limited runs of Commissioned Editions and Commemoratives. Two Commissioned Editions were in progress while I was there. One was for the New Jersey State Police, who ordered six-inch barrel .38 Special Colt Official Police revolvers. The other was for the Texas Rangers, who are getting a Government Model 1911 chambered in .45ACP. Each has the appropriate commemorative markings, gold inlays and unique features as specified by the law enforcement agencies.

One Commemorative on display was a richly inlaid, ivory-gripped International Practical for .45ACP. It's a very good contemporary example of the shop's work since

it has engraving, inlays and ivory grip panels with the IPSC logo inset into them. Colt has been doing Commemoratives almost since the company's inception. In modern times, per the yearly listings in Ned Schwing's 1998 Standard Catalog of Firearms, the Collectors Price & Reference Guide, 166 commemorative handguns have been made from 1961 through 1989.

In addition to these areas of expertise, a customer can individualize any gun purchase. He can choose from custom finishes such as matte blue, standard blue, royal blue, nickel, ultimate "bright" stainless, color case, ColtGuard, gold or silver. He can then have the grips done with scrimshaw, an age-old art of line drawing on ivory, horn or bone. Or, he can choose carved grips personalized with initials, multi-colored birds, animals, steer heads, special symbols, and family or other crests. If desired, precious stones and metals can be inlaid into the carvings. All this work can be done on a wide range of materials such as standard walnut, rosewood, ebony, ivory, stag, mother-of-pearl and compos-



Finishing touches are applied to M1911 at Custom Shop. Quality comes from the details.

ite. If none of these selections are satisfactory, the Custom Shop will work with customer-supplied material if it's appropriate to the desired work.

The Colt Python, long considered the Rolls-Royce of Colt double-action revolvers, is now a custom item so that the time and expertise necessary to uphold its world-famous reputation can be applied. The Python, too, can have all the aforementioned features included where appropriate.

The Center doesn't neglect the Government Model 1911, or "Model O" (it's official Colt designation), either. The Gold Cup Trophy and three levels of Custom Tactical Models are offered.

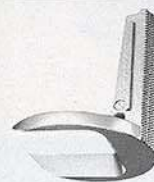
Finally, for those who want to document and research their Colt firearms, a historical service research is offered by the Colt historian who will, if at all possible, provide a letter of provenance to authenticate both older and modern Colt firearms (Some early records were destroyed during a fire in 1864.). The pricing for this service varies, based on the type of gun being researched. The customer receives a water-marked letterhead embossed with Colt's official seal that lists the basic specifications of the firearm as it was originally shipped.

This is what Colt's Custom Shop is doing now. Future plans include expanding its function to do additional limited runs of production guns, such as the Tactical 1911 and the Tactical Pocket 9mm. These guns will offer such added features as the choice of different finishes and night sights. In addition, the construction of a Colt Firearms Museum and Visitors Center in downtown Hartford, Connecticut, which will house an enlarged collection of Colt firearms, is anticipated. For more information and a catalog, call 1-888-301-COLT. ♦

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Training with the Dream Team

Colt 9mm SMG at the NRA's Instructor's School—the New Untouchables!

By Dan Goodwin



The summer of '77 was fairly significant for me: I graduated high school, saw Star Wars and left home for basic training.

The latter event led to my introduction to the Colt M-16 during firearms training at Lackland AFB in San Antonio.

A Firing Range Far, Far Away

Like other teen-agers, I was familiar with the M-16 because of television news out of Southeast Asia during my formative years, then got to see the

Colt product on TV cop shows like SWAT and Police Story.

As a confirmed junior gun nut, I was excited at the chance to fire the full-auto weapon that looked as futuristic as those carried by Imperial stormtroopers in that summer's hit movie.

But the colorful man in charge of the Lackland firing range soon let it be known that full-auto came at a price.

"You'll notice the weapons

you are holding have a selector position called 'full,'" said the rangemaster, gaudily dressed in knee-length leather mocassins, red suspenders and an old cavalry hat worn like Cpl. Agarn on TV's F-Troop.

"I encourage you to go ahead and cut loose on full automatic if you like, but you need to know it will result in your being washed back two weeks.

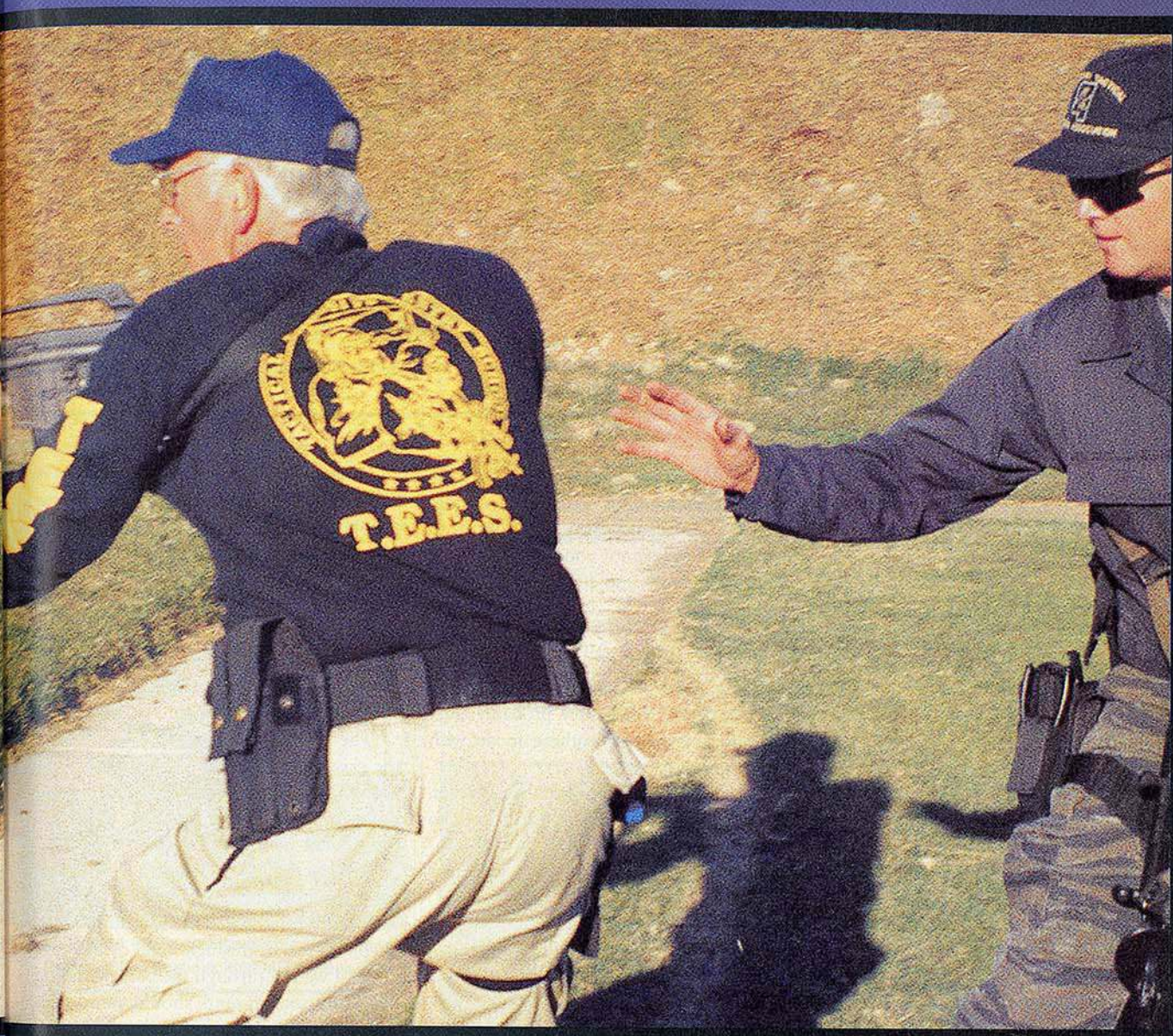
"Any other violation of safety rules will be dealt with more harshly," he said menacingly.

Well, I wasn't about to spend an extra two weeks in Basic, so my selector went no farther than semi that day.

Because of my dad's instruction, I went 60 for 60 in the kill zone at 100 yards with the full-power service ammo we fired that day. They didn't award marksmanship rib-



With Colt SMG cradled securely, trainee prepares to take targets under fire as instructor observes.



bons in Basic, but I was proud when the wildly dressed instructor dogged out a couple of my flight members who were headed to Security Police school.

"This guy's going to work on planes and he shoots better than y'all," he scoffed.

What he didn't know was that I actually wanted to be an SP, but at 17 had to specialize in what my parents wanted in order to get in the service.

It took me 15 years, but I finally got into law enforcement at the age of 32.

In fairly short order, I became a firearms instructor and have been fortunate to attend several schools in that vein over the succeeding seven years.

I also got some Colt AR-15s of my own, first a Colt Lightweight Sporter in 7.62X

39mm and then an HBAR in 5.56mm. Both were solid, accurate weapons.

I also finally got to fire a Colt M-16 full-auto a bit when training with our FAST team, and then got introduced to the Colt 9mm SMG at John Shaw's Mid-South Institute of Self-Defense Shooting just south of Memphis in Southaven, Miss.

Last fall, I got to attend the NRA's Law Enforcement Submachine Gun Instructor Development School at Parchman Prison in Mississippi.

I knew the firearms would be provided by the NRA, which in turn used weapons supplied by Colt during this training session.

Getting significant trigger time on the little Colt SMG was something I looked forward to, so I was pleasantly surprised

when chief instructor Clive Shepherd produced two cases of the stubby black guns.

Colt provided the NRA with its standard 9mm subgun, with collapsing stock (two position), sling and three magazines each.

Good Enough for Folks 'Round Here

I have to tell you the little Colts impressed me mightily by the time my week in Parchman was over.

We didn't clean the guns all week, and each had more than 1,000 rounds run through it by that Friday. Far as I could tell, there were no malfunctions that were not shooter-induced.

The stubby Colt, whose controls are like riding a bicycle for any U.S. veteran of

the past 30-odd years, had a quality which I value more highly than any other in a firearm. Like my personal Colt carbines, it went bang every time I pressed the trigger.

By the time we did break them down for cleaning, carbon fouling was thick as Mississippi Delta mud in the action, but reliability was never compromised.

I can think of no better replacement for the patrol officer's 12-gauge pump than a Colt 9mm capable of semi-auto fire only. You'd have lower recoil, more accuracy and less liability from buckshot flying randomly about. The fact you can get three Colts for the price of one European "status" SMG might prove important for some departments.

The Course

Shepherd is a retired member of Her Majesty's Royal Marine Commandos, and considers his goal now to be ensuring American law enforcement officers win gun-fights. He stressed he was there neither to



Disassembly of Colt SMG is elementary and should be familiar to any former serviceman.

preach NRA politics or push Colt products, but you could see he plainly believed in both.

Shepherd feels far too many law enforcement agencies in his adopted homeland fail to pass muster when it comes to firearms training—submachine gun or otherwise.

"We line these people up, have them fire 50 rounds from 3 to 25 yards away whilst standing and facing the target," Shepherd said, while illustrating with a Colt 9mm SMG. "Our training is designed to defeat a cardboard target that cooperates. It is nothing but a Mickey Mouse accuracy test.

"Bad guys will not stand perfectly still, squared to us and wait to be shot. They are not cooperative."



Colt provided their excellent 9mm SMGs for the NRA instructor school. Clay birds and dummy rounds made courses of fire challenging.

Couple that unrealistic, once-a-year qualification with poor initial training, and you have cops who don't want to shoot, cops who shoot poorly on the range and on the street, and cops who do everything they can to duck range work, Shepherd believes.

"They don't see the relevance in training," he says. "Punching tight groups in paper, which they probably can't do anyway, has nothing to do with fighting."

The final insult, Shepherd preaches, is when an obnoxious instructor who screams at them for shooting badly confronts poor performing, once-a-year shooters.

"The best shooter won't always be the best coach," the feisty Englishman counsels. "The effective coach has the knowledge and ability to shoot well, perhaps a bit better than the student.

"But more importantly, an effective coach has the communications skills so they can impart the knowledge, a positive attitude, patience and is enthusiastic."

When Shepherd made that statement, I flashed back to my screaming Basic Training rangemaster. I shot well because I already knew how, but my buddies were probably traumatized by the instructor's performance.

The Song Remains the Same

If it sounds like Shepherd spent a lot of time on instructional philosophy rather than rapping out hundreds of full-auto rounds through the little Colt, you're right.

Guess what? Shepherd will tell you there is little difference in teaching an officer how to handle a Colt 9mm SMG or a Colt 1991A1 pistol.

"The closed bolt submachine gun is managed no differently than the semi-auto pistol," Shepherd opines. "All practical handling techniques are virtually the same."

Home on the Range

Yes, much emphasis was placed on instructor development, and rightly so. But we also got tons of trigger time on the delightful little Colt subguns.

The first half of each day was spent in the classroom discussing instruction techniques and methodology, the second half doing practical range exercises to ensure the student-instructors were up to speed.

After verbally and physically ensuring we knew how the Colts worked, its controls and how to load and unload it, Shepherd ran us through a full drills.

First we ran through the basic standing SMG positions in semi: shoulder and sternum mounts, extended sternum or CQB position, high assault (tucked under the firing arm) and mounted against the belt buckle. We also practiced high kneeling and squatting (rice paddy prone) offhand, low kneeling with knee support, and prone out at 50 yards.



Trainee fires burst from sternum position. Un sighted fire can be work at CQB distances.

Then we ran the same positions on full-auto and finished with the obligatory 30-round burst at 3 yards to get the buzz bug out of our systems. Yeah, it was 22 years later, but I finally got to rock 'n' roll real hard with a Colt.

Training on the Delta

I could spend several hundred column inches explaining all the training tips and techniques Shepherd imparted to us, but I've got a better idea: call up NRA Law Enforcement Activities Division at (703) 267-1627 and get this year's training schedule. If you've got range and class facilities, Shepherd may even come to your agency and put on a school for your instructors.

Tapping into the Royal Marine's grab bag of instruction aids and cheapo reactive target ideas is worth the price of admission.



Lt. Skipper Phillips, rangemaster at Parchman Prison, was a gracious host and a crack shot.

And speaking of price, NRA instructor development schools cost about half what an operator class costs at one of the "name" shooting or factory schools.

If you're lucky, Shepherd will bring a case or two of Colt's fine little 9mm SMGs along with him for your school.

Back to the Future

Twenty-two years haven't changed much about me or my interests. I can't wait to see the latest Star Wars saga this year, and I still feel pretty good whenever I get to shoot a Colt military weapon—no matter the caliber.

When it comes to accurately directing a swarm of 9mm slugs through a target, or a hostile, in short order, the Colt 9mm SMG takes a back seat to no other current weapon system. ♦

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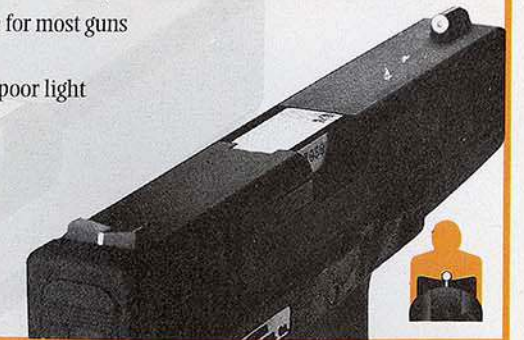
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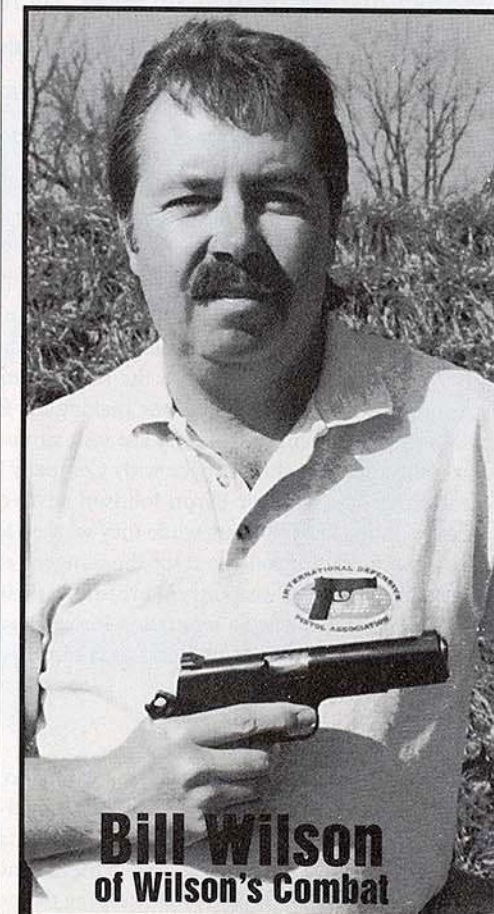
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