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REMEMBERING R.L. WILSON
When the calendar page turned over to January 1900, the Old West didn’t disappear. In fact, it was very much alive and almost unchanged along the Mexican border towns with Texas, in the Oklahoma oil fields, throughout Arizona, Nevada, New Mexico and Colorado, just for a beginning. Thus, the new century was met head on by the old, and cowboys, lawmen and outlaws were mostly indifferent to the new year or the years ahead well into the 1920s. One of the things that changed by the early 1900s, however, was guns—not to the exception of traditional arms like the Colt Peacemaker and Winchester lever action, but rather the acceptance of new, more innovative guns like the Colt Models 1903 and 1908 Pocket Hammerless semi-autos, and the Model 1911. Of course, semi-autos had been around since 1896.

In the 1920s, another “concept” arrived on the scene and was quickly adopted by lawmen as a practical weapon for close-in work. And it, too, was not an altogether new idea, but rather a new approach to an old one, and the inventor was the Ithaca Gun Company, founded in 1883. As far back as the Civil War, percussion shotguns with shortened barrels had used by horse soldiers for close-quarters combat. In the 1870s and 1880s, sawed-off shotguns were carried by those on both sides of the law. Ithaca simply applied an old principle and updated it to the 20th century in 1922 when the double-barreled Auto & Burglar shotgun was introduced.

Fast-forward almost a century later and the same idea is still relevant, only in a more contemporary sense. The latest Pedersoli Howdah .45/.410 is based
on the original-style Ithaca, only with rifled barrels chambered for either .45 Colt cartridges or 2½-inch .410 shotgun shells. The hammerless double-barreled, double-trigger pistol is one of several guns that grace this issue’s cover. Another of extended heritage is Henry Repeating Arms’ Golden Boy, a .22 LR version of the legendary, brass-framed, Civil-War-era Henry repeater. And in this issue, Denis Prisbrey shot one more 28,000 times to test its durability! And I have to hand it to him, because he wore out his shoulder and wrist to prove a point. You’ll also notice a special Henry in these pages—an engraved, limited-edition Lever Action Octagon in .45-70 just waiting to be raffled. Read on to find out more.

The Old West has many iterations, especially through motion pictures and television. The first silent film was of Buffalo Bill’s Wild West show in 1894 starring William F. Cody and Annie Oakley; the first famous Western film, The Great Train Robbery, came in 1903; and one of the earliest black-and-white TV shows was a Western starring Hopalong Cassidy in 1949. By the 1950s, you had Westerns like The Life and Legend of Wyatt Earp, Gunsmoke and Bat Masterson. All three had distinctive Colt firearms: Matt Dillon’s 7½-inch-barreled, stag-gripped Colt SAA, Wyatt’s Buntline Special, and Bat’s nickel-plated, 3½-inch-barreled, stag-gripped SAA. And in this issue, we’ve revied a replica of the latter made by Pietta.

Real Old West guns come along from time to time as well, and when they have famous names attached to them, provenance becomes almost as valuable as the gun itself. Such is the case of outlaw Jesse James’ Merwin Hulbert, analyzed with scholarly acumen by author Frank Jardim. Was it Jesse’s or not?

The Old West can also be set in the future—at least that’s the case with HBO series Westworld, and author David Maccar will take you behind the scenes to look at the guns used by stars Ed Harris, Evan Rachel Wood and Rodrigo Santoro, all of which have ties to 1950s black-and-white television Westerns! And last, the past and present can coincide when old ideas and new ideas are blended. Take two concepts from Colt’s history: the octagonal barrel on the Model 1851 Navy and the frame of the Model 1873 Single Action Army, put them together, and you have one very unusual sixgun. “La Vista” Bill Bell shows us how well this combo works on Cimarron’s .45-caliber “El Malo.”

The really great thing about the Old West is that it never gets old, so settle back for another good read. You’ve got all the time in the world.
Semi-automatic handguns were unusual, but not unknown, in the latter days of the Old West. Colt was marketing the predecessors of the classic Model 1911, and foreign semi-auto handguns were making their way westward. If Tom Horn’s jail guard had been carrying a revolver rather than a state-of-the-art semi-auto, Horn might have been successful in his attempted jail break and escape. However, he was run down and captured as he attempted to fire his jail guard’s semi-auto pistol—he didn’t know about safety catches and was unable to fire the fully loaded, “on safe” pistol.

One of the earliest successful European autopistols was the Mauser C96, or “Broomhandle.” It earned this nickname because of its unusual pistol grip which was round and tapered toward the top with horizontal grooves for a secure hold, much like a handle on a broom. Invented in 1896, the Mauser C96 launched a jacketed, 86-grain, 7.63mm bullet at an unheard of velocity of 1,400 fps.

A young Winston Churchill chose the Mauser as his personal sidearm when going off to war. He purchased it from Westley Richards & Company in London to use in the Sudan while with the 21st Lancers. On September 2, 1898, in a battle near Omdurman, Churchill used his trusty Broomhandle to shoot his way out of an enemy envelopment. He later wrote his mother that the Mauser was the best handgun of all, and he went on to use the same gun in the Boer War.

**Umarex’s Mauser**

Not too long ago, Umarex unveiled a select-fire airgun called the Legends M712, a close copy of the Mauser C96. Pyramyd Air had these CO2-powered BB guns in stock at the time, and I immediately placed an order for one. While the semi-auto handgun used by Tom Horn in his unsuccessful escape attempt from the Cheyenne jail was most likely an early pre-M1911 Colt, it’s possible that it was a Broomhandle Mauser. And let us not forget the Hollywood connection, as Clint Eastwood used a Broomhandle Mauser in *Joe Kidd*.

The Umarex M712 closely matches the lines of the original Mauser, and it’s all metal except for the attractive wood-grain synthetic grips. It weighs 35 ounces unloaded. The only real difference here in terms of appearance is the extended removable magazine, which contains the 12-gram CO2 capsule and holds 18 steel, .177-caliber BBs.

To load the Broomhandle BB gun, you remove the magazine and insert the CO2 capsule in the well of the magazine, then
turn the “capsule-piercing screw” clockwise until the capsule is pierced. You then place the BB follower in the “load” position, insert 18 BBs and release the follower. Now you can insert the magazine and you’re ready to shoot. To fire, you cock the external hammer, pull the charging handle, put the safety in the “fire” position and squeeze the trigger. Depending on the position of the selector, you will fire a single shot or a full-auto burst, with the BBs traveling at 360 fps on average. On full-auto, the rate of fire is approximately 18 shots in three seconds, or 360 rounds per minute.

While the Umarex M712 has traditional sights with a tapered blade up front and an adjustable, V-notch blade in the rear, I used these in semi-auto fire only, so I seldom used them. My target of choice was an empty plastic bottle at 10 to 15 feet for full-auto point shooting. The magazine makes a perfect handhold for the weak hand, and holding this Broomhandle BB gun with a two-handed hold and shooting short bursts from the hip kept the target bouncing. Firing short bursts rather than a single 18-round burst gets a maximum number of shots out of a CO₂ capsule. The sound of the discharge is noticeably different when the magazine runs dry and it is time to reload.

No handgun is complete without a holster. I found it necessary to make a holster for my Broomhandle BB gun. I chose a period-correct, Slim-Jim-style rig with a decorative hand-stamped border. I want to thank Umarex USA and Pyramyd Air for making it possible for me to have so much inexpensive shooting fun with this full-auto Broomhandle copy.

**Spyderco Schempp Bowie**

There have been several times at CAS matches when my posse needed a knife to repair something and I volunteered my belt knife. While it has always done the job, a smaller knife would have been preferable—something like my new Spyderco Schempp Bowie folding knife, which I now keep clipped in my off-side pants pocket.

The Schempp Bowie is a locking folder designed for Spyderco by custom knifemaker Ed Schempp. It is constructed of state-of-the-art materials, including CPM S30V powdered stainless steel for the blade and handle liners while the handle scales are made of carbon fiber and G10. The 3.72-inch, clip-point, Bowie-style blade has a high flat grind for a razor-sharp edge with maximum strength. The round Spyderco hole in the blade provides for easy, fast, ambidextrous opening with either thumb, and the blade locks securely open with Spyderco’s LinerLock. The handle has fully skeletonized liners with scales of attractive, space-age, laminated carbon fiber and G10. The solid brass bolsters include a small but effective integral double guard. The handle is 4.73 inches long, and the knife’s overall length is 8.45 inches. A wire pocket clip, which may be mounted on either side of the handle, provides for secure, deep-pocket, blade-tip-up carry. The coffin-shaped handle is angled slightly downward from the blade axis to provide a natural wrist angle in one’s hand. My Spyderco Schempp Bowie knife weighs 4.6 ounces, and it is a small, handy, very sharp and attractive folder. It has found a permanent home in my pocket.
Raised by a firearms-enthusiastic father, I acquired my first magnum handgun at the age of 14. To feed my relatively new to the market Ruger .357 Magnum Blackhawk (known today as the Flattop model), I became the “chief bullet caster” for my dad, his shooting buddy and myself. Although we all owned .357 Magnum handguns, I don’t think we possessed a single .357 Magnum cartridge case between us, as we preferred to fuel our guns with reloads assembled with much more prevalent and inexpensive .38 Special cases.

Some 50-plus years later, I’ve owned a number of .357 Magnum firearms to date, but only a few have been subjected to much of a diet of .357 Magnum ammunition. Although I started competing in Cowboy Action Shooting (CAS) matches in the early 1990s with more traditional chamberings like the .45 Colt and .44-40, like many CAS competitors striving for easier shooting, cheaper ammo and faster times, I eventually switched to firing .38 Special cartridges through my .357 Magnum-chambered firearms.

Although firing .38 Special cartridges in .357 Magnum chambers is and has always been an accepted practice, doing so tends to form a deposit or ring just ahead of where a .38 Special case would end. This buildup can be particular difficult to remove during routine cleaning. But there’s a solution.

**SliX-Scraper**

Involved in the design and development of aftermarket parts and systems to improve the firearms used in CAS competition, TK4B Enterprises was started in 2006 by two dedicated Cowboy Action shooters, Ol’ #4 (SASS #41004L) and Tillamook Kid (SASS #65274), who were later joined by Big Iron Buster (SASS #9361L).

A recent addition to the company’s product line is called the SliX-Scraper, which is designed to safely remove those built-up deposits caused by firing .38 Specials in .357 Magnum chambers. Made of a blued, high-strength, heat-treated alloy, the SliX-Scraper sort of resembles a .357 cartridge case that has a screwdriver slot on the rimmed end and an 8x32-threaded extension on the other. For revolvers, simply insert the SliX-Scraper into an individual chamber and, utilizing a properly fitting screwdriver, lightly turn it a couple of times in a counterclockwise direction. For a lever gun, insert the SliX-Scraper into the chamber, slide a cleaning rod down the bore from the muzzle and screw it onto the threaded end of the Scraper. A few clockwise turns with a slight rearward pull on the cleaning rod scrapes away that accumulated crud. Crafted to stringent SAAMI specifications and designed to scrape—not ream—the SliX-Scraper is guaranteed not to damage your firearms’ chambers.

I currently compete in CAS matches using a pair of consecutively numbered 50th Anniversary Ruger Blackhaws and an Uberti-made Winchester Model 1873 replica, all chambered in .357 Magnum—but I’ve never fired a .357 Magnum-cased round through these guns. Although I regularly clean my cowboy guns after each shooting session, a quick look into the cylinders of both Rugers revealed darkened rings in each chamber where a .38 Special case would end. Even though both a factory and a reloaded .357 Magnum round would easily chamber in all holes in both cylinders, I ran the SliX-Scraper into each chamber followed by a quick pass with a dry bronze brush and a cleaning patch sprayed with WD-40. When complete, not a trace of a ring remained in either cylinder.

TK4B Enterprises recently added a .45-caliber SliX-Scraper to its product line,
and this has found great favor as a cleanout tool for mounted cowboy shooters who fire blackpowder blanks.

**J. Hornaday Dry Goods**

Probably best known for his “Cooler Cowboy Shirt,” Jimmy Murray (aka “Six-String Jimmy”) at J. Hornaday Dry Goods offers a plethora of other nifty products designed especially for CAS shooters, including the Hanger Concho.

No good cowboy would ever be caught without his trusty horse, and you’ll seldom see a CAS shooter without his or her trusty gun cart. These carts are designed to haul around the guns, ammo, lunches and other necessary accoutrements of the successful CAS competitor while moseying from vehicle to range, stage to stage and back again. The Hanger Concho from J. Hornaday Dry Goods is a cool-looking and very functional item that can be attached to virtually any flat surface up to about one-half inch or a little more in thickness by drilling a single hole. This makes it easy to hang shell belts and possibles bags, canteens, hats or anything else that needs to be hung. Two Hanger Conchos come in a pack with hanger stems and screws.

J. Hornaday Dry Goods also offers another must-have product. Made from remnants created during the manufacture of Cooler Cowboy Shirts, the company’s Gun Floss consists of strips of fabric measuring roughly 1 to 2 inches wide by 18 to 24 inches long that, when folded over one’s cleaning rod/jag, provide a much larger cleaning surface than the average cotton patch, reducing cleaning time and mess. Also handy for flossing around hard-to-get-at areas like triggerguards and hammers, the nature of the filament yarn used in this fabric will not shed or leave fuzz in your barrel or on the surface of your guns. Gun Floss bridges the gap between patches and bore snakes, and it is very inexpensive to use. With a little trimming, these strips can be used in firearms ranging in calibers from the diminutive .22 up through the most prodigious of buffalo guns and in smoothbores up to and including the mighty 10 gauge. Sold in quarter-pound bags containing about 20 to 25 pieces, I’ve found these strips to be another useful addition to my gun-cleaning arsenal.
THE LEGEND LIVES ON

EMF Company offers a tribute to Gene Barry’s portrayal of Bat Masterson.

BY DENNIS ADLER

Back in the days of black-and-white television, our heroes were larger than life, despite being confined to the small screen. In our house, our TV was a Packard Bell in a mahogany cabinet. It was a handsome-looking time machine that could, on a given night, travel back to Dodge City and follow the exploits of a man who represented law and order in a lawless town—Bat Masterson.

The real William Barclay “Bat” Masterson was a gentleman honed from frontier life as a roughneck, buckskin-clad buffalo hunter, skinner and cavalry scout—a life Masterson lived long before his days as sheriff in the Queen of Cowtowns. The Bat Masterson of TV fame was a song-and-dance man named Gene Barry who had the look, demeanor and style that the real-life Bat Masterson had publicized in his photographs and writings. Bat became a journalist after he hung up his sixguns, and a lot of what was portrayed on the television series was based on his real life. The same was true of The Life and Legend of Wyatt Earp, starring Hugh O’Brian as Earp. The stories were based on his real life, or his life as written by Stuart Lake. Both shows depicted the Old West as they could within the limits of television censorship and guidelines, meaning rarely did anyone bleed when shot, no one ever swore, and the seeder side of life was portrayed by manner-less characters planning unscrupulous crimes to rob banks, hold up stagecoaches, rustle cattle, steal land, embezzle and, of course, cheat at cards. The bad guys were thwarted each week by Bat’s cane, pistol, fists or wits. Buffalo Bill himself probably would have called it good theater of the West.

The real-life Bat Masterson had proven himself with both the Sharps rifle as a hunter and the Colt revolver as a U.S. cavalry scout hired in 1874 by Col. Nelson A. Miles. Masterson scouted for the cavalry until the spring of 1875, when he returned briefly to buffalo hunting. A year later, he was involved in his first shootout in Sweetwater, Texas, with a cavalry sergeant named Melvin A. King. The fight was over a woman named Mollie Brennan, and as Wyatt Earp wrote of the event, King walked into the Lady Gay saloon and opened fire on Masterson and Brennan, killing her and hitting Bat in the hip. Masterson managed to get his gun into action and cut King down with a clean shot to the heart. There are several versions of how the shootout unfolded, some with King ambushing Masterson and Brennan, others as a standup gunfight in the Lady Gay, but they all end the same, with Mollie Brennan killed, Bat severely wounded and the Bat himself back to Dodge City to recover. There was some truth in the tale, but the real story was even stranger. As the Bat himself once wrote, “I have always been a storyteller, and it’s with the truth that I have always made the best stories.”

Gene Barry (below left) based his portrayal of Bat Masterson (below right) on Masterson’s own writings and photographs. Barry was also correct in carrying his sixgun crossdraw-style with the butt forward. (Gun belt and holster courtesy Legends in Leather.)
wounded and King dead. The injury left Masterson with a permanent limp and thus the need for what would become his trademark cane.

**Taming Dodge City**

When Bat returned to Dodge City in the late spring of 1876, he found an unruly town with little law enforcement, a town that the *Hays City Sentinel* had christened “the Deadwood of Kansas…Her corporate limits are the rendezvous of all the unemployed scally-wagism in seven states. Her principal is polygamy, her code of honor is the morals of thieves, and decency she knows not.” The *Kinsley Graphic* newspaper was somewhat less kind, naming Dodge the “Beautiful, Bibulous Babylon of the frontier.” And it was in Dodge City where Bat Masterson, Wyatt Earp, Charlie Bassett and Bat’s younger brother, Ed, would earn their early reputations as lawmen by settling this untamed berg.

During his tenure in Dodge City, which was also the county seat and home to the Ford County Sheriff’s Office, Bat appointed many of his old associates as special deputies when situations became thorny. Ford County encompassed some 9,500 square miles, a large portion of southwestern Kansas—a lot of territory into which outlaws could quickly vanish. In their pursuit, Bat called upon Wyatt Earp and appointed his younger brother, James, and friend Bill Tilghman as deputy sheriffs. Bat’s other brother, Ed, had been appointed city marshal.

In the TV series, Bat kept this all in check, dealing out law and order, which had been quite a bit more difficult in the Dodge City, Kansas, of the 1870s. On TV, he faced down countless cow-boys on rampages through Dodge and pursued murderers, bank robbers, cattle rustlers and thieves, and like the real-life Bat Masterson, Gene Barry’s Bat never killed anyone he apprehended. Many were wounded, but none were shot dead. His reputation for having killed 27 men as a peace officer was all legend. The real Bat Masterson had been wise enough to let the tales stand, as fear of his gun was as effective a weapon as the gun itself. Bat only killed one man in a shootout: Melvin A. King.

As noted by TV Western authorities Doug Abbott and Ronald Jackson, between 1949 and the end of the 20th century, there were more than 145 shows either based in the Old West, about the Old West or modernized to the present day but still Westerns at heart. The show *Bat Masterson*...
lasted for 108 episodes (which would be anywhere from eight to 10 seasons by today’s standards), but only aired from October 8, 1959, to September 21, 1961.

Bat Gets His Gun
It’s a shame that with so much documented history on Bat Masterson and his choice in firearms, no one writing, producing or directing the TV series was able to get it right when choosing a gun and holster for Gene Barry’s portrayal of Masterson. The real Dodge City lawman carried nickel-plated, 5½-inch-barreled Colt throughout the show’s 108 episodes. And adding insult to injury, rather than Colt’s handsome, black rubber Eagle grips, or Bat’s occasional preference for mother-of-pearl grips, the plain nickel-plated TV gun used stag grips. The latter was one of the most popular features of a hero’s gun during the great era of TV Westerns of the 1950s and 1960s.

Gene Barry’s nickel-plated Peace-makers were actually fitted with Franzite (molded plastic) stag-pattern grips that were durable, inexpensive and easy to replace if damaged. Franzite grips were hollow, which made them light and easy to break if the gun got dropped hard. But they were inexpensive, and an extra pair was always on hand for the prop man to replace. Of course, stag grips weren’t really used on Colt revolvers back in Bat Masterson’s day—they were either walnut, ebony, mother of pearl, hand-carved ivory or the latest Colt hard rubber Eagle and shield grips, introduced in 1882 and offered by Colt up to 1896.

More to the point, the characters in Western movies and TV shows were just that—characters—even the ones who were once real people like Bat Masterson
and Wyatt Earp. The subtle impact of that marvelous invention called television was that a lot of people took Westerns for historic gospel (especially shows like Bat Masterson and The Life and Legend of Wyatt Earp). Creating memorable TV Western character required three essential elements: a memorable gun, an interesting holster and an even more interesting hat. Bat Masterson’s real-life story supplied all three! And they almost got it right.

As for the holster Gene Barry used as Bat Masterson, it was strictly a fast-draw TV rig with a steep crossdraw cant and worn on a narrow trouser-width belt along with the seldom seen ammo slide that carried an extra dozen rounds. In the show, Bat was good with his fists and his cane, and he rarely reloaded. In real life, Masterson carried plenty of ammunition for his Colt Peacemaker and his famous “Big Fifty,” a .54-caliber Sharps rifle that was never too far from hand when he left the confines of Dodge City and headed out after an outlaw. Life during the Golden Age of TV Westerns, on the other hand, was a lot less complicated in 30 minutes.

**EMF’s Edition**

If you’re looking for a revolver like the one Gene Barry uses in Bat Masterson, EMF Company is now offering a “Bat Masterson” version of its Great Western II built by Pietta in Italy. Available for $705, the revolver comes with imitation stag grips, a 3½-inch barrel, a full-length ejector and a bright nickel finish with “W.B. MASTERSON” engraved on the backstrap.

To test the new revolver, I borrowed an exact copy of Gene Barry’s holster and belt from holster-maker Jim Lockwood, who has duplicated nearly all of the famous TV and movie Western rigs over the years. The Bat Masterson rig, as shown in the photos, is much like the one Gene Barry wore on the TV series. The 3½-inch-barreled revolver was a perfect fit—quick on the draw and easy to reholster.

The Great Western II’s construction is excellent, and it comes right out of the box with a tuned action. At the range, the hammer draw averaged a genteel 4.23 pounds with an average trigger pull of 4.53 pounds. The hammer offers four “clicks” when you thumb it back, just like a Colt Peacemaker, and the sights are as true as any short-barreled SAA, meaning the gun shoots a little low. There were no windage issues with the gun, and once I got a handle on the aiming correction, which was 6 inches above where I wanted the rounds to hit, (short of filing down the sight) the gun delivered very predictable accuracy with consistent five-shot groups measuring 1.75 to 2 inches.

I shot the entire test using Ten-X’s 165-grain, hollow-base, flat-point (HBFP) smokeless-powder cartridges. These are lightweight rounds suitable for Cowboy Action competitions or just plain plinking. I fired all of the groups one-handed, and despite the short barrel and rudimentary SAA sights, nine out of 10 rounds were in the 10 and “X” rings. This isn’t a target pistol, but at 10 paces (between 25 and 30 feet) it gets the job done, just like short-barreled Colt Peacemakers did back in Bat Masterson’s day. For more information, visit emf-company.com or call 800-430-1310.

**Bat Masterson had his name engraved on the backstraps of his guns (above), and Pietta copied this detail for the EMF gun.**
People come up to me all the time to talk about cap-and-ball revolvers. Surprisingly, despite their obvious interest, a lot of them say they don’t own any. When I ask them why not, the main reason they give me is anxiety over disassembling and cleaning them.

For many smokeless-powder shooters, cleaning only involves removing the cylinder, swabbing the chambers and bore, and squirting a little oil on the base pin. In fact, there are a few people I know, who, when the subject of gun cleaning comes up, give me a puzzled look that says, “Cleaning?”

Even though you can’t be that cavalier about cleaning a blackpowder gun, it isn’t as onerous a task as some people would have you believe. A lot of people think that you have to clean a cap-and-ball revolver the instant you finish shooting it or it’ll turn into a rusted hulk by the next morning. That isn’t true. You don’t want to wait a week, but if you live in Arizona, you probably could.

I usually clean my guns the day after I shoot them. I’ve gone as long as three days without cleaning without any rusting, and I live in a relatively humid part of the country. Even though you should get them clean as soon as you can, your blackpowder guns won’t rust away if you wait a day or two.

When you do get down to cleaning, you absolutely need to clean your gun’s bore, chambers and nipples along with all of the external surfaces every time you shoot it with black powder. But you don’t need to fully disassemble your gun every time you clean it. Very little fouling makes its way into the action parts of your revolver. Of course, “very little” isn’t the same as “none,” so occasional detail stripping and cleaning does need to be done. My rule of thumb is this: If I’m going to shoot the revolver again within a week, I won’t fully disassemble it—unless I have shot over 50 rounds through it. In that case I’ll break it down completely.

Obviously, at some point you’ll need to fully disassemble your revolver, and this is an area of high anxiety for a lot of people. But honestly, it isn’t that difficult. Most of you will either be shooting a Colt replica or one that is a high-quality replica.

Disassembling and cleaning cap-and-ball revolvers isn’t as difficult as you might think. With the right tools, cleaning products and know-how, it’s actually pretty simple.

Every cap-and-ball revolver needs to be completely disassembled periodically for a thorough cleaning. It might look daunting, but the process is easy.
based on the Remington design. They have a lot of similarities, but the differences are significant, so we’ll discuss each type, starting with the Colts.

**Way Of The Colt**

Colt-type guns have open-top frames. By popping out the barrel wedge, you can quickly break them into three major assemblies: the barrel and loading lever, the cylinder and the frame, which includes the grips. This is all the disassembly that you need for a basic cleaning. The only tools you’ll need are a plastic mallet to pop the wedge and a nipple wrench.

When you do the occasional complete disassembly and cleaning, you’ll also need a set of good-fitting screwdrivers. I use a Brownells Magna-Tip set. I have a complete set, but you can buy the heads and handles separately. You only need three tips to take care of cap-and-ball sixguns: the 180-3 head, the 340-4 head and the 240-4 head. These same tips will get you through a complete disassembly on either Colt or Remington cap-and-ball revolvers.

To completely disassemble a Colt, after you separate it into the three main assemblies, you’ll remove the three screws that secure the backstrap. The grips will come off with the backstrap. Next, loosen the mainspring screw, but don’t remove it. If you can slide the end of the spring out from under the hammer, do so. If not, don’t worry about it. The next step is to remove the triggerguard and expose the action parts. Remove the screw that holds the trigger/bolt spring in place. The trigger and the bolt are each held by long screw pins. Un-screw the trigger pin first and remove the trigger, then do the same with the bolt. The last step is to unscrew the hammer screw and remove the hammer and hand.

**Remington Disassembly**

With a Remington, the procedure is quite a bit different. Start with the hammer on half-cock. Then partially drop the loading lever, which lets you pull out the base pin until it hits the stop screw in the frame. Push the cylinder out of the frame to the right. This is all you need to do for a cursory cleaning.

To fully disassemble the Remington, remove the grip screw and take the grip panels off. In the frontstrap of the grip frame you’ll find a tension screw for the mainspring. Loosen it until you can remove the spring. A single screw secures the triggerguard to the frame; remove it to expose the action parts. Remove the

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Keep It Clean

bolt/trigger spring screw and take out the spring. On Remingtons, the trigger and bolt share a single screw pin. Remove it and take out the trigger, then the bolt.

The next step, removing the hammer, is the step that often frustrates new Remington shooters. There is a trick to it. Push the hammer down until the bottom of the hammer protrudes from the frame. You’ll see that the hand is screwed to the hammer. You have to unscrew it and take the hand out through the bottom of the frame. When the hand is removed, the hammer itself will come out through the top of the frame.

The actual cleaning is easy, but there are a couple of things you need to know. The number one thing is not to use smokeless-powder cleaning products like Hoppe’s No. 9. They do not neutralize the salts in blackpowder fouling. The key ingredient in blackpowder cleaning is water—everything else is window dressing. And you don’t need to use hot water; room-temperature water is fine. Hot water will pull all of the oils out of the pores in the steel, which can promote rusting after the gun is clean.

Instead of plain water, I prefer to use a mixture of Balistol oil and water for cleaning. I mix it with a ratio of 10 parts water to one part Balistol. Balistol is water-soluble oil that is very compatible with black powder. I spray everything down with the water/Balistol mix and wipe the fouling off. A water-and-Balistol-soaked patch is what I use to swab the bore and each chamber in the cylinder. Balistol has a very low surface tension, so it easily enters the pores in the metal. When the water evaporates, it leaves a microscopic coating of Balistol behind, which protects against rusting. There are several sources of Balistol, but I get mine from Midway USA. You can’t beat the company’s shipping options and customer service.

Before cleaning the cylinder, I remove the nipples using a nipple wrench from Track of the Wolf. Track’s part number for its revolver wrench is #NW-140. Track’s wrenches have bodies made of tempered, high-carbon steel. The handles are made from low-carbon steel. And these wrenches are head and shoulders above the ones you’ll find in big box sporting goods stores.

I soak the nipples in the water/Balistol mixture, then I go over them with a wire brush before wiping them dry. Before reinstalling them in the cylinder, I coat the threads with Birchwood Casey’s Choke Tube Lube. That provides an anti-seize barrier that will ensure that they come out easily the next time you clean the gun.

Back Together

As I reassemble the gun, I’ll lubricate the contact points on the action parts with pure Balistol. Next, the arbor on Colt replicas, or the cylinder base pin for
Remingtons, gets a liberal coating of pure Balistol. After the gun is fully assembled, I spray it all over with aerosol Balistol and put it aside for a few hours. This gives the Balistol time to really penetrate the pores in the steel to get maximum corrosion protection. Then I wipe the gun off and put it away until the next shooting session.

A cursory cleaning only takes about 10 minutes, and even the most leisurely detail cleaning won’t take you over half an hour, so if you’re interested in shooting cap-and-ball revolvers, don’t let cleaning scare you off.

Cleaning products designed for smokeless powder, like Hoppe’s No. 9, are not effective on blackpowder fouling.
America Remembers crafted this elegantly embellished Remington Model 1858 Army to commemorate Buffalo Bill and his Wild West show, shown with a copy of his holster and belt.
One hundred years ago, the first great theater of the American West ended. It did not end because the world was changing, though it was. It ended because the man who had created it died. William F. Cody, more commonly known as Buffalo Bill, invented the American West we all treasure today with his traveling Wild West shows from 1883 to 1917.

Much of what Cody portrayed on the stage, and later in open arenas around the world, was a theatrical version of his real life on the frontier. A true cowboy in the tradition of the American West, he was forced to grow up fast. Born in 1846, by age 11 Bill Cody was herding cattle and driving wagons across the Great Plains. In 1860, after a brief try at trapping and mining, he joined the Pony Express at 14. The Pony Express wanted young riders with stamina, few ties to family and a daunting sense of adventure. This perfectly defined young William Frederick Cody. Most of his time in the saddle was spent crossing Kansas, although occasionally he traveled into northeast
Colorado and cut north into Nebraska and Wyoming. His career with the Pony Express was, however, short-lived, as was the Pony Express, which suspended operations on October 28, 1861. By then America was engulfed in a war with itself.

Frontier Scout

With the nation divided between the North and South, Iowa-born Cody wanted to fight for the Union, but he was too young to enlist in the Army. The length of the Civil War, however, gave him time to age, and when Cody turned 17 in February of 1863, he joined the 7th Kansas Cavalry and found himself in one of the war's most famous conflicts, the Battle of Tupelo, in which Confederate General Nathan Bedford Forrest was forced to retreat. While Cody's actual role in the battle is undocumented, his background as a Pony Express rider, hunter and tracker made him an ideal candidate for the position of scout, although he ended up being more of a Union spy, wearing a Confederate uniform and riding well ahead of his regiment—a very dangerous job in which he could have accidentally been shot by Union soldiers or hanged as a spy if captured by the Confederates. It was during this period of his life that he met another spirited young man a few years his senior—Wild Bill.

James Butler Hickok had signed on as a Union scout and was doing essentially the same reconnoitering behind enemy lines. The two became friends, a friendship that would last for the rest of their lives, though Hickok's was much shorter. After the war, Hickok became a frontier lawman, and Cody hired on again as a scout for the U.S. Army. It was with the cavalry that he earned his reputation for buffalo hunting and the nickname “Buffalo Bill,” the result of his 1867 expedition for the Kansas Pacific railroad, where he killed 4,280 buffalo in eight months to feed the railroad workers. He was paid the handsome sum (for the time) of $500 a month.

Buffalo were big business out West—and big politics back in Washington. Hunters looking for an income shot buffalo to sell their pelts and trophy-mounted heads. For the white man, buffalo hunting was a sport. There were organized hunts for wealthy sportsmen and visiting foreign dignitaries, such as the Grand Duke Alexei Alexandrovich of Russia, who embarked on a lavish hunting expedition accompanied by General Philip H. Sheridan and George Armstrong Custer, with Buffalo Bill as their guide. Other expeditions for foreign dignitaries were led by Cody or “Texas Jack” Omohundro, who guided the Earl of Dunraven on a hunt in the early 1870s. But regardless of the reasons or rationales, hundreds of thousands of American bison were killed, and they were almost hunted to extinction by the 1880s. To bring about change, it took the work of men like Cody—one of the first to recognize that the American Bison was in danger—and Charles Goodnight, who began gathering and protecting herds on his ranch in Texas by the early 1870s. And of course, there was a wealthy young adventurer and hunter by the name of Theodore Roosevelt who not only recognized the need for conservation in the 1880s, but helped make it the law of the land when he became president of the United States in 1901.

Back in 1867, General Sheridan had been so impressed with Cody's skills as a hunter and tracker that he appointed him “Chief of Scouts” for the 5th Cavalry, and though a civilian, Cody participated in a
reported 16 cavalry engagements, earning recognition for “extraordinary good service as a trailer and fighter in the pursuit of hostile Indians.” He was awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor in May of 1872 for distinguishing himself in an action against a band of Indians who raided the McPherson Station near Fort McPherson in Nebraska. (In an act of Congress dated June 16, 1916, the medal was revoked, since, “at the time of the act of gallantry he was neither an officer nor an enlisted man, being at the time a civilian.” In 1989, Cody’s name was reinstated by the Army Board for Correction of Military Records. His Medal of Honor is on display at the Buffalo Bill Center of the West in Cody, Wyoming.)

On November 30, 1872, six months after being awarded the Medal of Honor, Cody astonished everyone, particularly General Sheridan, by relinquishing his position as Chief of Scouts in order to pursue an acting career. Cody’s decision was prompted by famed dime novelist and newspaperman Ned Buntline. He had already written newspaper articles and a book about Cody’s real-life exploits, though Buntline had so dramatized them that Cody, at least in print if not in reality, had become a larger-than-life character. He was certain Cody’s legend would become even greater on the stage, and Buntline would even write the first stage play in which Buffalo Bill would appear on December 17, 1872.

**Hitting The Stage**

Cody and Buntline had met purely by chance earlier in 1872. One of Buntline’s first plays, “Buffalo Bill, the King of the Border Men,” was being staged at New York’s Bowery Theater and had an actor portraying Buffalo Bill. While visiting New York in 1872, curiosity got the better of him and Cody went to see the play. When it was announced that the real Buffalo Bill was in the audience, the house went up in cheers and applause. After a good deal of discussion with Buntline and at the urging of his friend Texas Jack, a reluctant Cody agreed to portray himself in “The Scouts of the Prairie.” Cody’s first performance would be in Chicago that December, starring as himself opposite Buntline and Texas Jack.

Though lacking almost everything theater critics would call “theater,” the play was a success. People had never seen anything like it. The Chicago Tribune wrote, “Such a combination of incongruous drama, execrable acting, renowned performers, mixed audiences, intolerable stench, scalping, blood and thunder is not likely to be vouchsafed to a city a second time—even Chicago.”

The play toured eastern cities to sold-out audiences until June 1873, after which Buntline and Cody parted ways, with Buntline and Texas Jack. Though lacking almost everything thespian. Hickok found the footlights and the audiences unsettling, and Wild Bill’s theater career was short-lived—as was Hickok himself. On August 2, 1876, at the age of 39, he was murdered in Deadwood, Dakota Territory, by a drifter named Jack McCall, who shot Hickok in the back of the head.

Word of Wild Bill’s death came less than two months after the loss of Cody’s friend George Armstrong Custer at the Battle

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In the early 1870s, Buffalo Bill began carrying a Colt 1851 Navy cartridge conversion made for him by a custom gunsmith. Here you can see the original and its holster (right) as well as a copy of the gun, recreated by Walt Kirst, and the rig, copied by Chisholm’s Trail (above). (Far Left) Cody’s acting partners included Wild Bill (left) and Texas Jack (center).
of Little Bighorn in June of 1876, which prompted Cody’s return to the 5th Cavalry. He literally went into battle in his theatrical wardrobe, distinguishing himself once again on July 17 in a skirmish against the Cheyenne at Warbonnet Creek (actually Hat Creek), where he killed Hay-o-wei (Yellow Hair) in a face-to-face shootout. Ned Buntline could not have written a piece of fiction any better than Cody’s life at that moment. And it was not long after that moment that the call of the stage turned his head once more, only his message would now be closer to the real story of the American West he had lived.

Buffalo Bill began to make his plays more realistic, almost educational in the telling of their stories. His shows, which resumed in October of 1876, would eventually evolve from stage plays to open-arena extravaganzas. As R.L. Wilson and Greg Martin wrote in Buffalo Bill’s Wild West: An American Legend, “[Cody] wanted the public to understand and appreciate what the West was about: freedom, self-reliance, hard work, bravery, courage, stamina, sacrifice and opportunity.”

**Western Entertainment**

Despite his real-life contributions to American frontier history, Cody won his fame in show arenas around the world with an outdoor extravaganza staged on a scale more colossal than anything before it. Cody and his business partner, showman Nate Salsbury, staged the first “Buffalo Bill’s Wild West” in 1883. The sheer size and scope of the shows represented the birth of the Western as an entertainment phenomenon.

Using a cast of hundreds as well as live buffalo, elk, cattle and other animals for an amazing three decades, Cody delighted spectators with performances by the original “King of the Cowboys” Buck Taylor, legendary sharpshooters Johnny Baker (“The Cowboy Kid”), Annie Oakley and her husband Frank Butler, Lillian Smith, Doc Carver and Dr. Frank “White Beaver” Powell, among others. Cody’s Wild West played at venues from San Francisco to Madison Square Garden, then traveled around the world, from Great Britain to France, Spain, Italy, Belgium, the Netherlands, Germany and even the Vatican. Millions of people around the world learned of the American West through Cody’s shows, and perhaps through Cody’s eyes. It was the theatrical version of history—always a bit more entertaining but based on real life in the West. There were cattle rustlers, ropers and trick riders, stagecoach chases, a buffalo hunt, and Sitting Bull even played himself in Cody’s Wild West for one season in 1885.

By the turn of the century, Buffalo Bill was the most famous American in the world.

Over the decades, the show changed. The name even changed beginning in 1893 from “Buffalo Bill’s Wild West” to “Buffalo Bill’s Wild West and Congress of Rough Riders of the World.” Players came and went, the show joined with others, including Pawnee Bill’s Wild West, but Cody was there until the end, until all he could do was ride into the show arena and doff his hat. Though almost 70 years old by 1915, he appeared in 366 performances over 183 days and never missed a single show.

When William F. Cody died on January 10, 1917, in Denver, Colorado, his adopted son, Johnny Baker (who had been with the show since 1884) put the 1917 tour together as “Buffalo Bill’s Wild West Show & Circus.” The final show concluded in November of 1917, when the curtain fell for the last time on Buffalo Bill’s Wild West.

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**HONORING BILL’S LAST SHOW**

For the 100th anniversary of the last showing of Buffalo Bill’s Wild West, Uberti has commission a limited edition of hand-engraved and gold-embellished Remington Model 1851s with Buffalo Bill’s name on the right barrel flat. The left barrel flat has the dates “1917-2017” to commemorate the centennial. The backstrap has Cody’s signature in gold. (uberti.com)

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**THE LIFE & TIMES OF BUFFALO BILL**

**BUFFALO BILLS WILD WEST**

**HONORING BILL’S LAST SHOW**

**FOR THE 100TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE LAST SHOWING OF BUFFALO BILL’S WILD WEST, UBERTI HAS COMMISSION A LIMITED EDITION OF HAND-ENGRAVED AND GOLD-EMBELLISHED REMINGTON MODEL 1851s WITH BUFFALO BILL’S NAME ON THE RIGHT BARREL FLAT. THE LEFT BARREL FLAT HAS THE DATES “1917-2017” TO COMMEMORATE THE CENTENNIAL. THE BACKSTRAP HAS CODY’S SIGNATURE IN GOLD. (UBERTI.COM)
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Cimarron’s affordable El Malo revolver offers a crisp trigger, a smooth action and a stylish octagonal barrel, among other details, so you’ll have more than enough gun for your next duel.
Colt’s Model 1873 Single Action Army, also known as the Peacemaker, has been made in many forms and variations over the past 144 years, and it’s also one of the most cloned handguns ever produced. Back in the day, Colt was known to do almost any kind of special order request from a customer, so this could have happened, but as far as I know, the SAA was never made with an octagonal barrel. The majority of Colt percussion revolvers prior to the Model 1860 Army had them, and I’ve always thought they looked great, so I found it interesting when Cimarron Firearms came out with a new Uberti-made SAA reproduction with an octagonal barrel. It’s called El Malo, which is Spanish for “The Bad.”

A Good Kind Of Bad
The new El Malo is part of Cimarron’s Value line with a price of $545, joining the Uberti-made Pistolero and the Pietta-made Big Iron, which are also based on the SAA platform. But looking over this sixgun proved that it certainly wasn’t “El Cheapo!” My test gun’s fit and finish were on par with anything I’ve seen come from Cimarron and Uberti. The post-1896 frame is color casehardened with all the right hues of gray, brown, blue and straw, as is the hammer. The rest of the gun’s parts are deeply blued, and the whole thing is well polished. The bluing solution on the ejector rod housing might have been a little too hot, as it had a slight plum color.

A nice touch is the beveling on the front edges of the cylinder, making the gun easier to reholster. The octagonal barrel might look out of place to purists, but I like how it looks. “EL MALO .45 COLT” is engraved on the left barrel flat, while the top is engraved with Cimarron’s name and location. The usual patent dates are engraved on the left side of the frame, just forward of the triggerguard. The grip is made of one piece of smooth, plainly figured walnut, and the wood-to-metal fit on my test model was nice and tight.

As I worked the action in my hand, I was impressed at how smooth the hammer was to cock—it almost felt like it was helping me out. The trigger is a bit wider than that of the original Peacemaker, and it had a small amount of creep and take-up but broke clean at an average pull weight of 3.63 pounds per my Lyman digital trigger pull gauge. There was no noticeable overtravel.

The hammer spur is checkered for good purchase, and after working the action a bunch, I didn’t begin to see a hint of a ring on the cylinder, indicating the timing was right. The front sight is tall and about 0.1 inches wide, while the squared rear sight notch allows plenty of light on each side of the front blade for a good sight picture.

This is an all-steel gun—there’s no alloy grip frame or ejector rod housing—so it weighs 40 ounces unloaded.
1. The barrel is blued while the frame is casehardened. Note the tall front sight blade. 2. The plow-handle grip is made of smooth walnut, and the firing pin is riveted into the hammer nose. 3. Like original SAAs, a loading gate is mounted on the right side. 4. The front of the cylinder is beveled for easy reholstering.

This gun is so easy to cock and has such a good trigger that I decided to shoot in the ‘DUELIST’ category using only one hand.
The octagonal barrel gives it a little extra weight, as the standard weight on Uberti’s 5½-inch-barreled SAA is about 39 ounces. I felt the revolver balanced well with just a slight muzzle-heavy feel that I prefer. Speaking of the 5½-inch barrel, while my model came in .45 Colt, you can also get versions in .357 Magnum/.38 Special with 4¾- and 7½-inch barrels.

**Leather & Lead**

To carry the El Malo with some “Old West” flair, I turned to Triple K. The company’s Sonoran holster is a Mexican loop-style rig more in line with what real cowboys wore than some of the competition-oriented stuff commonly seen on the firing lines during Cowboy Action Shooting matches today. It comes in a walnut oil finish and is traditionally fashioned from top-grain saddle leather. There is no lining or fancy options; it comes in sizes to fit popular “Western” revolvers for right- or left-handed use.

This holster goes well with Triple K’s #100 cartridge belt, which is a Ranger-style gun belt with 25 loops for .22, .38/.357 or .44/45 cartridges. Made of fine saddle leather with a walnut oil finish and waxed-linen lock stitching, the belt is 2 inches wide with the ends tapering down to 1.5 inches. The belt is secured with a solid-brass, Western-style buckle.

I used three different types of .45 Colt ammunition to test the Cimarron El Malo. The first was from Aguila Ammunition, which is located south of the border, down Mexico way. These 200-grain, lead flat-point (LFP) rounds feature cannelured cartridge cases that look very much like original factory .45 Colt cartridges from bygone days. It’s also bargain priced, as a search of the Internet showed it selling for as low as $22.95 for a 50-round box. I also used HSM’s 200-grain, round-nose flat-point (RNFP) load, which uses new Starline brass, as well as Freedom Munitions’ “Leadville” 200-grain RNFPs. All of the ammo boxes had an “Old West” flavor to boot.

**Hittin’ The Range**

With highs in the lower 60s, I went out to the range to do some paper and steel punching with the El Malo. My first order of business was to see what kind of velocities I could get from the .45 Colt factory test ammo. I shot a representative sample through the sky screens of my Oehler Model 35P chronograph, and the results can be seen in the accompanying performance table.

My next task was testing the revolver’s accuracy. With Birchwood Casey Shoot-N-C targets set at 15 yards, I went about shooting five-shot groups with each of the loads using a sandbag rest on a bench. The smallest five-shot group with the Aguila ammo came to 1.29 inches. This load also produced the best group average of 1.71 inches for three 5-shot groups. The HSM cartridges produced the second best group of the day, which measured 1.45 inches. The overall average for all of the five-shot groups that day came to 1.92 inches, which isn’t bad at all for a revolver with...
fixed sights. The revolver’s tall front sight was putting the shots some 6 inches low at my 15-yard test distance, so I adjusted my aiming point accordingly.

I wasn’t able to use the El Malo for a local Cowboy Action match, but I did the next best thing and went to the back part of the range, where my CAS club has a target array. All of the steel targets were still in place for the six stages that were used in the previous competition, so I made up some scenarios as I went along and gave the El Malo a workout.

This gun is so easy to cock and has such a good trigger that I decided to shoot in the “Duelist” category using only one hand. Shooting a few trial shots on the first stage with a mix of the test ammo, I determined that if I put the front sight towards the top of the target, I’d get good hits at distances from 5 to 20 yards. I shot all of the stages starting from the holster; some of the steel targets were shot left to right, some right to left, with a “Nevada sweep” or whatever came to mind. At the end of my session, I’d recorded only one miss on the second stage, which is a rather small, oblong target. From the lack of bullet marks on it, I’d say a few others had missed it in the previous match, too! The Triple K leather-gear worked to my expectations, and it turned out to be a good day for burning powder.

I’ll have to say that I left the range with a very favorable impression of the El Malo. If the action of my test gun is indicative of all the production models, then you will be getting an outstanding value. My gun ran flawlessly during the testing and handled well with good “pointability.” Its weight also helped absorb the felt recoil, making for fast follow-up shots with just one hand. I didn’t find the low-shooting front sight to be a problem once

The author measured the El Malo’s accuracy at 15 yards by firing three 5-shot groups with each of the 200-grain test loads using a sandbag rest on the bench.

I knew where to aim, but you can always file it down to your liking. Windage-wise, these sights were on, so were I to keep this gun, I’d just leave them as is.

After all of the shooting, I still couldn’t see a trace of a ring around the cylinder from rubbing the bolt. Although the Cimarron El Malo barrel looks kind of unconventional, it certainly doesn’t lack in the performance department, and it’s a bargain, too. For more information, visit cimarron-firearms.com or call 830-997-9090.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Load</th>
<th>Velocity</th>
<th>Accuracy</th>
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</thead>
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<tr>
<td>Aguila 200 LFP</td>
<td>587</td>
<td>1.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Freedom Munitions 200 RNFP</td>
<td>749</td>
<td>1.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HSM 200 RNFP</td>
<td>862</td>
<td>1.45</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Bullet weight measured in grains, velocity in fps by chronograph and accuracy in inches for best five-shot groups at 15 yards.
America Remembers Presents

The Buffalo Bill's Wild West Tribute Revolver

Imagine yourself with a front-row seat for Buffalo Bill's Wild West extravaganza. Before your very eyes, real Indians launch an attack on the Deadwood stage, and real cowboys perform amazing feats of riding and roping. Buffalo and Texas longhorns shake the stands as they rumble past you in racing herds. At the center of the excitement is the legendary scout and frontiersman, Buffalo Bill himself, an unforgettable and mesmerizing figure in his long hair and buckskins.

It was only fitting for William F. Cody, later nicknamed “Buffalo Bill,” to introduce the saga of the American West to audiences around the world since throughout his lifetime he played a role in nearly every phase of the Western frontier. Despite his real-life contributions to American frontier history, Buffalo Bill won his greatest fame as a showman.

In the early 1880s, he unveiled an original and spectacular new form of entertainment that would bring to life the wonders of the American West for millions of people around the world. An outdoor extravaganza staged on a scale more colossal than anything that had gone before it, Buffalo Bill's Wild West represented the birth of the Western as an entertainment phenomenon.

Now America Remembers is proud to offer an exciting new Tribute, honoring the legendary Colonel “Buffalo Bill” Cody and his amazing Wild West extravaganzas: The Buffalo Bill's Wild West Tribute Revolver. This exclusive Tribute is the first ever issued by America Remembers to be featured on a recreation of the legendary Remington 1858 New Model Army Revolver, a particular favorite of Buffalo Bill himself. Craftsmen commissioned specifically by America Remembers for this historic issue have decorated the Tribute in stunning 24-karat gold artwork that stands out boldly from the blued steel frame and barrel.

Buffalo Bill's Trusted Revolver - "It Never Failed Me"

The Buffalo Bill's Wild West Tribute Revolver is a working recreation of the classic Remington 1858 New Model Army Revolver, produced for us by the master craftsmen of A. Uberti, who since 1958, have become world renowned as the premier makers of historical firearm recreations. This model Remington revolver is widely believed to be one of the first handguns William Cody owned, even before he earned the title of "Buffalo Bill."

Over the years, Buffalo Bill was honored with many spectacular presentation guns, but they could never take the place of the timbered Remington he had to trust. He is believed to have given a New Model Army Revolver to his best friend and Western general manager Charles Trego, with a note that read, "This old Remington revolver was carried and used for many years in Indian Wars and buffalo killing, and it never failed me."

An Exclusive Limited Edition

Only 300 Buffalo Bill's Wild West Tribute Revolvers will ever be produced and are available exclusively through America Remembers. Reservations will be accepted in the order they are received. As a working blackpowder firearm, the Tribute can be shipped directly to your home in most localities, but you must be of legal age to purchase the Tribute. If you are not completely satisfied with your Tribute after your personal inspection, you may return it to us in original unfired condition within thirty days for a complete and courteous refund.

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STILL GOLDEN?

See how a rimfire Henry fared after blasting through 28,000 rounds.

BY DENIS PRISBREY

To test the Golden Boy’s durability, the author ran 28,000 mixed rounds through it without cleaning it.

This is what the Henry looked like with its cover removed after firing 22,000 rounds.
Ever since the Henry Repeating Arms Company shipped its first humble entry-level Model H001 rimfire lever action back in 1997, hardcore lever-gun traditionalists have scornfully applied the pot-metal label to Henry’s rimfires based on their alternative construction design and materials. “They just ain’t steel! They can’t possibly hold up! Pot metal’s for cap guns!”

What exactly is pot metal, anyway? While there’s no set standard for pot metal as such, most definitions involve a blended, non-ferrous, low-melting-point metal with a high zinc content, typically used for low-stress, quick die-cast parts largely in applications where steel isn’t needed. The “pot” is a carryover and refers to odds and ends of various metals such as zinc, lead, copper, tin, aluminum and cadmium tossed into the old casting pot—not the metal formulation used to actually cast a pot. When I was a kid, pot metal was used in $1.99 cap guns that invariably broke with use. It is not commonly found in real guns because it doesn’t offer the strength and durability needed for the long haul, and the alloy formulation that Henry uses as an alternative to steel in certain areas is emphatically not “cheap pot metal.”

**Zamak’s Strengths**

What Henry uses in its rimfire lever guns is called Zamak, and unlike the vague and ambiguous “pot metal” label, Zamak does have well-defined standards, in several different levels of hardness. Zamak, a German acronym for zinc-aluminum-magnesium-kupfer (copper), dates back to 1929, and it’s held to specific properties for industrial production. Zamak 3 is the most commonly used variation today while Zamak 5 is one of the hardest and strongest in appropriate design applications, and that’s what you see in Henry’s rimfire lever actions.

Zamak 5 does share the quick die-cast benefits of true lower-grade pot metals, but it’s a far different composition when, where and how Henry applies the material than pot metal ever was in that old Mattel Fanner 50 some of us rem-
ember from the late 1950s and early 1960s. Proper mating of materials with design and intended function is the key to success here. What you see on a Henry rimfire lever gun is not the conventional solid receiver of a 19th century rifle—an outer receiver cover hides the true internal receiver. Both are large Zamak 5 parts produced in-house by a highly sophisticated $600,000 machine—state of the art for a high-pressure casting operation of this type. The system that creates those two parts has developed light-years beyond cranking out low-tensile-strength molded components for toys. Correctly designed for the functions that center around it, and not merely a copy of a 150-year-old pattern, the receiver is more than strong enough to connect and contain the barrel, action and stock, bolstered by the outer cover. I have raw castings of both the receiver and cover here, and they are surprisingly heavy and substantial chunks of alloy. There’s nothing cheap or inferior about them, and Henry says it engineers an additional 1.5 safety factor above the calculated specs needed for sustained stresses and operation into these guns.

**The Golden Boy**

To address the doubters and dissers on just how well the modern Henry rimfire levers hold up, I borrowed a brand-new Golden Boy from Henry for testing with the full blessing of the company’s president and owner, Anthony Imperato, who also cheerfully provided most of the test ammunition. This Golden Boy, model H004, is a much fancier version than the basic H001, but both use the same basic receiver and cover design in the same Zamak 5 material, just with different finish processes. Before we get into the test, let’s talk about the gun itself.

 Entirely American, the Golden Boy is a multi-state assembly sourcing its various parts from Connecticut, New York, New Jersey, Michigan, Ohio, Tennessee, Illinois and Pennsylvania. Out of the high-pressure dies, the hollow receiver and cover go through a trim press to remove sprues and flashings left from the mold process, and through a horizontal CNC center to take the parts to their final form. Unlike an equivalent large machined-forged piece, very little material has to be removed or wasted; the CNC does its job much faster than a human machinist could, and to more precisely repeatable tolerances.

 The receiver is polished lightly, and that...
“brass” color is applied; the cover is polished, plated with nickel and gets its own “brass” coating. The nickel on the cover, incidentally, is there to provide shine through the outer coating, and the brass-colored finish is a proprietary secret, but I can tell you it’s hellaciously durable, whatever it is.

Several smaller internal parts are stamped and heat-treated as necessary. The bolt is machined from 4140 steel while the button-rifled, octagonal barrel is made from 1016 carbon steel and goes through a multi-step process during its manufacture. The lever is forged; the trigger, hammer and locking bar are metal-injection molded (MIM); the furniture is American walnut; and the barrel band and smooth buttplate are also Zamak 5, with the same finishes as the receiver and cover. The tall brass bead front and adjustable semi-buckhorn rear sights are made in-house by Henry, and the rifle uses a time-honored half-cock setup with no manual safeties.

Endurance Test
This wasn’t a strictly controlled lab experiment. This test was loosely constructed—just me shooting the hell out of the thing. The idea was to start with a new rifle, fire four different control loads at 50 yards for accuracy up front, blow through 20,000 rounds, and then test the gun’s accuracy again with the same four loads at the end.

Going in, I arranged with Henry’s Service Department to proactively send me spare replacements for the parts I expected to wear out, to have on hand if needed, including the magazine slide rubber O-ring, the firing pin, the extractor and spring, and the ejector and spring. All are simple kitchen-table fixes at home if one does go south.

The testing started in August, with the initial accuracy bench shooting. The endurance run itself was spread out over three months since it wasn’t physically possible to burn through 20,000 rounds in any one session, any one week or even any one month, using only me as the sole testing fixture. Summer heat was a factor in limiting individual sessions when the Henry got too hot to handle in near 90-degree temperatures, and so was shooter fatigue. I quickly learned a glove on the shooting hand was an absolute requirement for holding the receiver cover while loading and keeping blisters to a minimum in working the lever, and early on I left scorched DNA in three different spots on the barrel before learning not to touch it.

Toting 333-round boxes of Winchester 333 “white box” HP ammunition sent by Imperato to a local shooting pit each time, the sessions ran from a few hundred rounds to nearly 3,000 each depending on temperatures, how my wrist held up and how often and early in the day I could work the gun in among other concurrent projects. The extended sessions involved no real attempt to hit anything but the ground, and strictly loading and shooting as fast as possible. Immediately, I found I could outrun the lever in firing from the shoulder. The Golden Boy’s action will drop its hammer when the trigger’s pulled while the lever is in just about any position—neither the lever nor the bolt have to be fully closed or locked in battery. Other designs won’t do this, but the Henry will. That does not mean the gun can normally fire out of battery, however, as the action still has to be locked for the firing pin to strike a case rim for ignition.

Off my shoulder, I was running the action so fast I was occasionally tripping the trigger before the lever was completely closed, and dropping the hammer without igniting a round. Experimentation showed that I could manage the best cadence combining the fastest speed with the least number of shooter-induced “misfires” by anchoring the stock just inside my right hip, and changing the three non-trigger fingers to an outside grasp in curling them around the bottom section of the lever, knuckles out instead of in. With some practice—and I got plenty—I worked out the speed and muscle memory to the point where I could not only rival Lucas McCain of The Rifleman, but every hundred rounds or so I could even hit chunks of old
The author gathered some anticipated spare parts ahead of time, including a pair of firing pins, springs and pins.

lumber somebody had left on the ground, out to roughly 35 yards. From that point on, the testing was mostly a hip-shooting affair, which is faster, and the gun can get a little heavy in long continuous strings of fire held up on the shoulder. Note that regardless of how fast I worked the gun, it never had a feeding problem attributable to speed.

The gun’s heat buildup was substantial in August and September, and varied with the outside air temps. It wasn’t possible to hold the center cover section barehanded on the hottest days, and it was even uncomfortably warm through my gloves. Toward October, and shooting until dark on more than one occasion, the air cooled the cover enough to hold it barehanded. The barrel, though, was another matter; once past 200 rapid-fire rounds in any weather, it was far too hot to touch and stayed that way even traveling home at the end of a session.

More Ammo

On paper, 20,000 rounds seemed like a good workout for the Golden Boy, but in blazing through the five cases of Winchester 333s original shipping, the rifle was showing signs that 20,000 might not be realistic for a good test. As in, nothing was breaking. So, Imperato obligingly shipped another 5,000 rounds of Federal American Eagle solids, and the good people at Brownells agreed to provide an additional 1,500 rounds of Norma TAC-22 solids. Rummaging through dark corners in my basement turned up 1,500 rounds of aging mixed Remington and PMC boxes that included Remington Golden, Thunderbolt and Yellowjacket rounds as well as PMC Moderators and Sidewinders. The Remington Golden bullets, for some reason, had so badly oxidized that the “golden” was barely visible through the very grungy gray. All were fired, regardless of age or condition.

The idea behind the run was—short of dunking the gun in a creek overnight or dragging it along 40 miles of dirt road at the end of a rope—to create a worst-case wringout by deliberately subjecting it to harsh and unreasonable shooting conditions. Extreme heat, no lube until needed, no cleaning until needed and extended shoots without breaks for cooldowns.

Along the way, the Henry produced 30 misfires not attributable to either the gun or operator that either fired on a second hammer strike or when rotated slightly in the magazine and re-struck in a different spot on their rims, most of which occurred with the Winchester 333 rounds. With solid firing pin strikes all the way to the finish line, these were merely a byproduct of the spun-in rimfire priming process that doesn’t always reach a fully primed circle inside the rim and can’t be counted against the gun. The same goes for the 16 complete duds, also mostly Winchester rounds, with six bent cartridges and 10 empty primed cases. This Winchester ammo is bulk plinking stuff, so an occasional mistake is not totally unexpected.

The three older Remington loads indicated deteriorated powder in several that sounded and felt about half-power but still cycled perfectly through the Golden Boy. The Norma rounds were very waxy, which slowed down the loading sequence by being slippery in my fingers, but they did not gum up the action.

The Henry took off at a gallop right out of the box with no lube beyond what the factory put in it. At slightly over 1,000 rounds, the gun created three nose-up feeding jams and one nose-down misfeed, cured by spraying Break Free aerosol liberally through the ejection port. The gun was sprayed again just under 3,000 rounds later, when it started to repeat the high-nose misfeeds. And again about 3,300 rounds later when it started to repeat the high-nose feeding jams. And again about 3,300 rounds later when it started to repeat the high-nose feeding jams. And again about 3,300 rounds later when it started to repeat the high-nose misfeeds.

At just over 22,000 rounds, I got the first extraction failure, with a Federal American Eagle round. Three more followed, and spraying the front of the bolt and the rear of the chamber area through the ejection port didn’t cure it, so shooting was suspended until I could clean the rifle for the first time. You should hope-
Post-op telephone discussions with Henry predicted a weakened spring that pushes the locking bar up into a corresponding locking notch in the bolt. When the gun was disassembled and the locking bar removed, I discovered its spring hadn’t weakened—it had split into three separate pieces. How it managed to keep on powering that locking bar at all is a mystery to me, but it did. Once a new spring was installed, the bar and lever were back to their original loud “click” and strong lockup, and the gun could easily have gone on for a few thousand more rounds.

Context Is Everything
After burning through just over 28,000 mixed rounds, the Henry showed obvious internal wear, but no receiver cracks, no egged crosspin holes, no stripped screw holes and no frame failures whatsoever, and the “brass” finish was still intact despite being handled extensively with a glove. In fact, I thought it was ironic that the part that did fail was a $0.30 steel spring, and not the much-disparaged alloy receiver. “Cheap pot metal?” Horse puckey!

As for another controversial aspect of the rifle, MIM parts correctly done are perfectly valid, and here the MIM trigger, hammer and locking block all held up just fine. In fact, the trigger pull now has a very nice, self-polished, 2.75-pound break with no hammer push-off. As for extraction, Henry recommends cleaning the chamber at regular intervals, which I deliberately did not do. If I had, those seven extraction failures (out of 28,000 rounds!) probably would never have happened.

How about headspacing and rifling wear? After my part of the testing was done, the locking bar spring I’d temporarily scavenged from a low-mileage Golden Boy Youth model in the vault to troubleshoot the test rifle was removed, and the gun was returned to Henry for a thorough checkup. A phone call from the plant two weeks later told me everything was still in spec, the headspacing was perfectly fine and the bore was “well polished” but still showed crisp land edges. The only part replaced by Henry was that lone spring. One safety note here: Do not keep firing one of these if you notice a change in the lever and bolt lockup. Get it serviced as soon as possible. I intentionally pushed this one well beyond the point where it should have been exposed to professional examination.

As for the gun’s accuracy, as the chart shows, on average the four control loads were creating five-shot groups about an inch wider than before at 50 yards. But that’s with a still-uncleaned barrel. Surprisingly, no leading was visible, and the rifling, despite being worn, was still strong. Once cleaned, who knows? And no, I did not clean or re-shoot the gun. My wrist had enough.

The upshot? By the time you read this, that rifle, complete with all of its internal parts’ surface wear and external dents and dings, will be mine. I worked hard to get every single one of those dents, dings and scuffs on it, and I’m happy to pay for them. If you’re still on the fence about these rifles, it’s time to get off it. For more information, visit henryrifles.com or call 201-858-4400.

Essential test equipment: gloves, Break Free CLP and Gun Scrubber aerosol.
The DARING AND VIOLENT CRIMINAL EXPLOITS OF JESSE WOODSON JAMES made him world famous in his time and left a legacy in American popular culture that is as much myth as fact to this day. Jesse James continues to fascinate, and there are a large number of supposed Jesse James guns circulating around the collector world—way too many guns. His enterprising mother, Zerelda, is known to have purchased used guns for $5 or $6 and then “reluctantly” sold them as genuine possessions of her late son to interested fans who visited her at the family farm to see Jesse’s grave.

Today these weapons are collectable in their own right as historic objects and pieces of James family lore, but it is highly unlikely that any of them were ever owned or used by Jesse James himself. True Jesse James firearms are rare indeed. But there are two within the remarkable collection of the Frazier History Museum in Louisville, Kentucky. They stand out from the dubious crowd of Jesse James artifacts by virtue of their unique story whose documentation begins with the outlaw’s son, Jesse Edward James Jr., and touches lawmen, a doctor, lawyers, three members of Congress, car magnate Henry Ford, the 1939 World’s Fair and an American president.

Although the Frazier Museum’s two handguns share the same provenance, my story will focus only on one: the nickel-plated, .44-40 Pocket Army revolver, serial number 5704, from Merwin, Hulbert & Company (aka Merwin Hulbert). I was intrigued by a reference in the museum records that suggested many believed the Pocket Army revolver was used by Jesse James Jr. in a train robbery outside Kansas City, Missouri, on September 24, 1898.

Jesse’s Death
Our story begins on April 3, 1882, when Jesse James was murdered in his home by Bob Ford, a trusted compatriot. The details of the murder are not relevant for our discussion other than to note that it was an extralegal execution orchestrated by the governor of Missouri, Thomas Crittenden, who conspired with members of the outlaw’s gang to betray their leader for their own advantage. Also, witness accounts state that Bob Ford and his accomplice fled the scene with Jesse’s gun belt and two pistols. Both of those guns are accepted to be Smith & Wesson Schofields.

As a professional robber, firearms were the tools of Jesse James’ trade. It is reasonable to assume that he had more than just the ones on his stolen gun belt that fateful day, and that he would favor weapons of the best quality and design. However, we have no proof of this. We do know that his death left his family destitute. They auctioned off his
JESSE JAMES IDENTIFIED AS ONE OF THE ROBBERS

Son of the Noted Outlaw Pointed Out in Court.

KANSAS CITY, Feb. 25.—The most positive identification of Jesse James as one of the Leeds Train robbers was made in the courtroom by William J. Smith of Stokessberry, Mo., who was called by the defense. Mr. Smith testified that he saw Jesse James in the train station in Stokessberry after the robbery, and that he had a man holding him by the hair. He also stated that Jesse James had a large bandage on his head, which was placed on a revolver in the hand of the man holding him.

MIGHTY CHEER GOES UP OVER ACQUITTAL OF JAMES

Young James Declares He Is "Not Guilty"

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JAMES IDENTIFIED

As One of the Leeds Train Robbers

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"That man had something over his face"—

"He had nothing over his face"—

"How light was it? The light screamed out the "—

"Did you get a good look at the man?"—

"Yes, sir, I did, and I saw Jesse James"—

"I got a good look at him, and I swear he's Jesse James"—

"As for Jesse James, I know him—and I don't care who he is"—

"As soon as I saw that man in the courtroom, Mr. Smith pointed him out to me, and I said, "It's Jesse James"—

"I was there when the train stopped, and I saw Jesse James get off and walk down the street. I followed him, and I saw him get into a carriage. I followed him into the carriage, and I saw him get into the driver's seat. I followed him into the car, and I saw him pull the trigger of the revolver. I saw the bullet go into the man's head. I saw the man fall to the floor. I saw the man's blood flow out of his head. I saw the man die. I saw Jesse James kill that man."
possessions shortly after his death, hoping to use his fame to generate some income.

We also know that Jesse’s wife, also named Zerelda, loved him deeply. After his death, she never remarried. It is said that she wore black mourning clothes for the rest of her life, which ended in 1900. To the world, Jesse James was a murderer and criminal. To his family, he was beloved. His tombstone reads, “Devoted Husband and Father.” The family maintained that the outlaw’s remaining firearms were passed on to his son and namesake, Jesse Edward James. Again, we have no proof of this, but I believe it is reasonable that Zerelda would want to hold onto something personal from her late husband’s effects to pass onto his children. What could be more personal than the guns he used to steal the money he supported his little family with, and establish himself as a legend in his own time?

I posed this question to Phillip Schreier, the head of the NRA’s gun collector programs and well respected in those circles for his frank and critical analysis of firearm provenance. He pointed out that, in the 1880s, firearms were not considered heirlooms they are today. In fact, a fine pocket watch cost more than a gun and was more likely to be cherished and passed to the next generation. I accept that was true for average people, but I don’t think the James family were average people. In the 1882 poster that advertised the auction of Jesse’s possessions, a watch is listed, but only one small pistol. He lived and died by the gun, and it seems to me his wife would have wanted to keep some. Either way, it really doesn’t matter. This is all third-party speculation 134 years removed from the event, and therefore it’s pretty much worthless in establishing provenance. I offer it only as one possible bridge to what is really important regarding the authenticity of this pistol’s pedigree.

The most important fact in establishing this Merwin Hulbert Pocket Army (and its sister Colt Model 1873) as genuine is simply that the James family believed it to be so. It is known that Jesse Jr. had a display board showcasing his father’s guns: two Colt Model 1873 Single Action Army revolvers, a S&W Schofield, a Winchester Model 1873 carbine and a single-action, nickel-plated Merwin Hulbert Pocket Army with a 7¼-inch barrel, just like this one. He reportedly carried the display board around in his car and charged the curious a quarter to look at it. That was about the same cost of seeing an inexpensive motion picture show at that time. He also made photographs of it. In 1923, he autographed one for his friend and benefactor Thomas T. Crittenden Jr., the son of the former governor who had Jesse James Sr. assassinated.

**A Twisting Journey**

It is recorded in the *Excelsior Springs Herald* that on May 10, 1924, Jesse Jr. was involved in a serious car accident near Excelsior Springs, Missouri, where he injured his knee so badly that he needed immediate medical care and was taken to the office of Doctor J.F. Lowery. He had at least two pistols currently on display at the Frazier Museum in his possession at the time of the accident, and they ended up in the custody of Sheriff Joe Elgin afterward. Depending on who tells the story, Jesse Jr. either begged Sheriff Elgin not to take his father’s pistols or asked him to hold onto them for safekeeping and latter pass them on to Dr. Lowery as security for payment of his medical bills. In either case, this is the point at which the guns now at the Frazier Museum left James family control forever.

When Jesse Jr. asked for the guns back, Dr. Lowery refused to return them, citing his unpaid bills. On April 27, 1932, Jesse Jr.’s wife, Stella, filed a suit against Lowery for the return of the pistols. The suit was apparently dropped. Dr. Lowery appears to have had a keen interest in the James fami-
Peyton Hawes, the senator's daughter, kept files of correspondence that referenced the efforts of his ancestors, E.G. Liebold, communications with Hawes as his friend, U.S. Senator Harry B. Hawes from Missouri, for less than $135. Senator Hawes exhibited the pistols at the 1939 World Fair in New York, where they were insured for $1,000. In 1940, Henry Ford attempted to obtain these pistols for his museum. Ford's general secretary, E.G. Liebold, communicated with Hawes as well as Jesse Jr.'s daughter, Josephine Frances James, on the subject. Josephine wanted Ford to recover the pistols on behalf of the family, but when Hawes asserted his legal ownership of the pistols, Ford ceased active pursuit of them.

Hawes kept files of correspondence that referenced the efforts of Jesse Jr.'s daughter and Henry Ford to get the pistols while they were under his control. Curiously, the pistols' serial numbers didn't appear in any of the documents I examined until 1952, when they were bequeathed to Peyton Hawes, the senator's daughter and the fourth owner since Jesse Jr.

After Hawes, the subsequent movements of the pistols were well documented, but nothing further was added to their provenance until 1994. At that time, the great-great grandson of the outlaw, California Superior Court Judge James R. Ross, wrote an affidavit stating that he grew up in the home of his grandfather and grandmother (Jesse Jr. and Stella James), and he recalled conversations about the pistols between his grandparents and mother (Josephine) and their attempts to secure their return. Unlike his ancestors, Ross claimed to have no interest in seeking the return of the pistols to the family, only hopes that they might someday be exhibited in the Jesse James Museum in Kearney, Missouri.

As provenance goes, the James connection to this pistol is only written testimony and hearsay made credible by the James family's documented actions. It leaves no doubt in my mind that they really believed these were the guns of their famous ancestor. We will never know when, where or even if Jesse James Sr. used this Merwin Hulbert revolver. However, contrary to collector lore, I am certain that his son never robbed a train with it.

Train Robbery?

Young Jesse Edward James Jr. had a tough childhood that probably contributed to the mental health problems he had in his adult life. He was home the day his father was murdered. He heard the shot and found his dying father cradled in his mother's arms. He saw the blood and heard her anguished cries. It was only after his father's death...
that he learned their real names, which had been concealed for years to maintain a degree of safety for the family.

At 11, he went to work full-time to support his mother and sister. He earned the respect of his employers as an honest, hard worker. He also had many friends, including the son of former Governor Crittenden, who, as a Jackson County court clerk, awarded young Jesse Jr. the exclusive right to operate a profitable tobacco concession stand in the county courthouse in January of 1898. Up until that time, Jesse Jr. maintained a good reputation, and it came as a surprise to the community when the handsome 23-year-old was arrested at his stand and taken to jail. He was indicted for orchestrating a spectacular night robbery of the Missouri Pacific railroad where the express car was blown to fragments that scattered for 2 miles. The story was so big that it was reported in papers from coast to coast in minute detail. His friends rallied to his defense, and he was acquitted. Thus, if he never robbed the train, he probably didn’t use the pistol. However, lots of guilty men go free, and I needed to look into the details of the case more thoroughly before I could dismiss the myth surrounding this pistol.

I discussed the case with Kansas City attorney Ralph A. Monaco II, author of Son of a Bandit: Jesse James & the Leeds Gang. An authority on the case, Monaco has conducted historical courtroom reenactments of it. His analysis is that Jesse Jr. was a victim of his name recognition and his casual associations with some seedier characters from the city’s notoriously lawless Crackenek region. These ruffians idolized his outlaw father and sought Jesse Jr.’s friendship because of his name and family identity. But associations don’t make a case—witnesses and evidence do.

Monaco found that the authorities fabricated their case through blatant witness tampering with one goal in mind. Pinkerton agents hoped to convict a James and at least partly redeem the damage their reputation took for the bombing of the James farm in January 1875 that blew off the arm of the outlaw’s mother and killed his eight-year-old half-brother Archie. The agents, rather than police, took custody of suspect William F. Lowe and sweated him for three weeks in the
Savoy Hotel. When they were through, Jesse Jr. was the gang’s mastermind. Ultimately, the jury found the testimony of the prosecution witnesses unbelievable. It included such implausible claims as a passenger walking up to the outlaws around the express car and identifying Jesse Jr. before being ordered away.

In the testimony, no mention was made of the make of the pistols used by the robbers. The man said to be Jesse Jr. had a shotgun and two revolvers. One witness testified about the pistols, saying he had, “one that looked bright and new and another that looked old.” A nickel-plated revolver might look bright and new, and the Merwin Hulbert is nickel plated, but so were a lot of pistols at that time. Had the witness identified it by make, it might have made for a stronger case. When the prosecution failed to convict Jesse Jr., they dropped all of the charges against his co-defendants as well, some of whom very likely were the actual robbers.

In my research for this story, I found that in 1910 newspapers across the nation reported that William Lowe confessed to perjuring himself when he said Jesse Jr. was involved in the robbery. The history of this Merwin Hulbert while Jesse James Sr. owned it will remain the stuff of imagination, but it seems that whatever life of crime it may have had, that ended on April 3, 1882, in the James family living room.
This 7½-inch-barreled Umarex Peacemaker fires .177-caliber pellets through its rifled barrel. The pellets are held in silver cartridges that load just like centerfire .45 Colt cartridges.
ALTHOUGH SAMUEL COLT HAD PATENTED THE FIRST SUCCESSFUL SINGLE-ACTION REVOLVER IN 1835, and had been responsible for the design and manufacturing of the greatest percussion revolvers of the mid 19th century, he would have no part in creating the most enduring single-action revolver of all time, the Colt Model 1873 Single Action Army, also known as the Peacemaker.

After Samuel Colt passed away in January of 1862, the design and manufacturing of pistols and long arms fell to Colt’s closest friend and factory superintendent, Elisha King Root. He had laid out the company’s factory in Hartford, Connecticut, and designed and patented much of the machinery used to build the weapons from the late 1840s up until the Civil War. It was Root’s innovative machinery—some of which performed multiple tasks like today’s CNC machines—that gave Colt the capability of manufacturing interchangeable parts, establishing an industry standard for American arms-makers.

And then, as they say, the whole thing went up in flames, literally, on the morning of February 4, 1864. The fire at the Colt factory destroyed most of the tooling and the buildings where handguns were produced. The company was rebuilt, but handgun manufacturing was severely hampered for the remainder of the Civil War. Root oversaw rebuilding of the factory and the direction of the company through the remainder of the Civil War, but he passed away late in 1865, two years before the new factory would be completed.
The mantle of superintendent of the armory and chief designer was passed to two men: Charles B. Richards and William Mason. Mason joined Colt in 1866 and was appointed superintendent of the armory. Together, C.B. Richards and William Mason would set the course for Colt’s post-Civil-War future, the design of cartridge-firing revolvers and create the Peacemaker. Mason would leave Colt in 1882 to go to work for the Winchester Repeating Arms Company, but he will always be remembered as the man who designed the most famous Colt revolver in history.

Mason’s new six-shot, .45 Colt revolver was known by several names including “Peacemaker” and “Single Action Army,” or the military’s often used SAA contraction, but no matter what name was used, the new Colt was destined to become the longest-living pistol design ever, now spanning more than 145 years of nearly continuous production.

**The Mason Patents**

William Mason had received his first patent for the Peacemaker on September 19, 1871. A second was issued on July 2, 1872, and a third on January 19, 1875. To this day, these dates are still stamped on the left side of the frame. Almost all of the early models were sold to the U.S. military and adopted as the standard-issue sidearm from 1873 until nearly the end of the 19th century. The government continued to order the new revolvers until 1891, accounting for some 37,000 guns, with another 107,000 produced for the civilian market from 1874 to 1891. By the turn of the century, Colt had sold more than 192,000 Peacemakers.

Over the past 145 years since Single Action Army manufacturing began, there were very few changes to the fundamentals of the William Mason design. One of the most notable was the way in which the cylinder arbor was retained. Mason’s original patent design, now referred to as the “blackpowder frame,” used a retain-
ing screw in the bottom-front portion of the frame to lock the cylinder arbor in place. Removing this screw was necessary to take the cylinder out of the frame when cleaning the Peacemaker. Beginning in 1892, the Mason design was altered by Colt, and the retaining screw was replaced by a new transverse cylinder latch in the side of the frame, just below the barrel, which simply needed to be depressed in order to release the cylinder arbor and allow it to slide out. This was arbitrarily called the “smokeless-powder frame” version, although Colt did not guarantee its revolvers for use with smokeless-powder cartridges until 1900.

This later transverse latch design is the version used by Umarex today in building its groundbreaking, .177-caliber airgun reproductions. Licensed by Colt and introduced in 2015 with a 5½-inch barrel, the latest nickel-plated, 7½-inch-barreled, pellet-firing model shown was introduced late in 2016.

**New Peacemaker**

This barrel length is significant. The very first Colt Peacemaker, serial number 1, had a 7½-inch barrel. All of the original SAA models issued to the Army had 7½-inch barrels. This barrel length was also preferred by the vast majority of early SAA owners, particularly lawmen, even when Colt began offering shorter barrels of 4¾ and 5½ inches in 1875. As for the finish, in 1877 the standard blued finish was replaced by nickel plating as the standard. The original blued finish, with a color-casehardened frame and hammer, became an option. The nickel finish proved to be more durable.

The .177 Umarex measures up with the
same external barrel length of 7½ inches (measured from the front of the cylinder to the muzzle) and the same frame height of 2½ inches, but it comes in a hair lighter at 36 ounces unloaded compared to 40 ounces for a similarly configured Peacemaker chambered in .45 Colt.

This is a well-balanced and handsomely finished revolver that looks more like a .45 Colt than it does a CO2-powered, pellet-firing revolver. But there is one little detail about the new pistol that has a lot of folks scratching their heads: The method used for measuring the barrel length.

In order to have an accurate copy of the original .45 Colt SAA model, the barrel has to be 7½ inches long, measured from the muzzle to the forcing cone, just in front of the cylinder. This replica, however, appears to have been measured from the front of the frame to the muzzle, 6¾ inches, but that is not the reason the gun is listed as having a 6¾-inch barrel on the Pyramyd Air website.

The nickel-plated Umarex Peacemaker feels virtually the same in the hand as a .45 Colt, right down to those four famous clicks when you cock the hammer.
the muzzle to the front of the cylinder, and the Umarex Colt’s barrel is close to that measurement—a little shorter because the forcing cone for the airgun is a little smaller than a cartridge gun’s. But the revolver’s rifled, .177-caliber barrel is actually recessed inside the .45 Colt barrel by 11/16ths of inch. This totally hides the .177-caliber barrel’s muzzle so the gun looks like a .45 Colt from the front. When combined with the slightly shorter forcing cone, the actual internal length of the .177-caliber barrel liner is 6¾ inches (or within a very small fraction of that measurement). So both barrel length numbers are technically correct.

From the exterior, there are very few quick tells that this is an air pistol. The most obvious is how the hammer sits back from the frame, almost like an SAA on half-cock, and, of course, the shape of the firing pin, which is shorter and spring loaded. Then there is the shape of the transverse cylinder latch, which actually has a small retaining screw inside of it. The greatest difference on the 7½- and 5½-inch models is the manual safety, most discreetly hidden under the frame forward of the triggerguard.

The trigger pull averages 2.52 pounds, and you still get four clicks when you thumb back the hammer, though they come closer together. The pistol sights just like a real SAA, and you can even use the ejector to punch out the empty cartridges.

One more piece of realism: Since the Colt pellet cartridges load from the rear, placing the pellet where the primer would normally go, placing the hammer at half-cock, opening the loading gate and turning the cylinder tells you at a glance which cartridges have been fired. All that’s missing when you pull the trigger is .45 Colt recoil.

Because of the longer barrels on these airguns, I expected the velocities to be higher than the 5½-inch-barreled models, and I headed down to the target range with RWS Meisterkugeln Professional Line 7-grain, lead, wadcutter pellets; Umarex 12-gram CO² capsules; and a dozen of the airguns’ silver pellet cartridges.

For the test, I set a cardboard IPSC silhouette target at a distance of 25 feet and fired all of the shots using a two-handed hold to measure the revolvers’ best off-hand accuracy. The results were as satisfying as handling these remarkably authentic 7½-inch-barreled Umarex Colt Peacemakers. The RWS Meisterkugeln wadcutters cleared the long barrel of the nickel-plated model at an average velocity of 416 fps, and the best six-round group measured 1.25 inches in the A-zone of the IPSC target.

The Peacemaker has been built by Colt longer than any other revolver manufactured anywhere in the world, and remains to this day the indisputable icon of the American West. Umarex’s new 7½-inch-barreled, pellet-firing models add to that ongoing history in ways that even William Mason couldn’t have imagined.

In testing, the best six-round group measured 1.25 inches at 25 feet.

Range Performance
I actually had the opportunity to test two new 7½-inch-barreled models, the nickel-plated version sold by Pyramyd Air and a limited-edition NRA model sold exclusively by Umarex with a lightly weathered finish.

This version has an NRA coin medallion inset into each of the wood-grained grip panels, and “the right of the people to keep and bear arms, shall not be infringed” is inscribed along the backstrap. Like all of the Umarex Colt SAA models, the new 7½-inch-barreled NRA version bears the Colt patent dates (September 18, 1871, July 2, 1972, and January 19, 1975) on the left side of the frame, the “rampant Colt” emblem and an NRA emblem at the rear of the frame. This pellet-firing model also has a fully rifled barrel to offer greater accuracy and velocity.

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Wham! Whoomp! Thud! The Crossdraw Kid’s butt bit the dust once again. His horse, a beautiful young palomino named Golden Rule, had, as he always did, thrown The Kid into the mud and sand of the old Los Angeles River. The Kid, a good rider taught by the best, had never ridden his horse without getting thrown at least once. It seemed to The Kid that a nefarious plot was working against him. He might have been right.

All the facts on how the Kid acquired his colt have never really been known, and may never be. As the story grew over the years, Wild Bill Elliott lost him in a card game to Sonny Tufts at The Kid’s house one Saturday in June. Not having a place to keep him, Sonny traded the palomino, on the spot, to either Ward Bond, Clark Gable or Yakima Canutt for a 12-gauge Mossberg over/under shotgun that Sonny coveted. Whoever did the trade, they missed one small detail. The shotgun in question was hanging over the fireplace in The Kid’s living room. Needless to say, it belonged to The Kid’s dad, who at that moment was on his way home from working on a Western for Republic Pictures in Apple Valley.

The rotgut haze had lifted by the time the missing shotgun was discovered. Apparently neither Yakima, Clark or Ward would admit
Success in the rodeo world led Yakima to star in several silent Westerns before he began to focus primarily on stunt work. He worked on several classics and eventually earned an Oscar for his achievements.
to the deed. So, somehow, The Kid ended up with Golden Rule, the horse from Hell. Because of the events to follow, the Kid always felt that Yakima was probably the savvy horse trader. He obviously recognized the devil in horseflesh, and a poor, unsuspecting 12-year-old’s ego and rear end suffered for several years because of it.

Enos Edward “Yakima” Canutt, a Hollywood actor, stuntman and action director, was first and foremost a cowboy—one of the very best among the early roughstring riders. Born in Colfax, Washington, November 29, 1895. He was reared on a ranch and couldn’t recall when he was ever without a horse. When he was 11, he rode his first bucking bronco—one that had just thrown his older brother—and he “made a good horse out of a bad one.” At 16, he won the five-day Colfax County Fair bronco-riding contest, his first such event. After serving stateside in the Navy during WWI, he returned to his first love: rodeoing.

Enos got his moniker after mentioning that he would hold up the reputation “of Yakima” in the bucking horse try-outs at Pendleton, after three disastrous attempts to qualify by riders who bragged they were “from Yakima.” After his success, the announcer and local press began to call him “Yakima” Canutt. The nickname stuck. Following an extraordinary 10-year period when Yak won the “All-Around Championship of the World,” work led him to Hollywood.

A rodeo in Los Angeles culminated in a meeting with Tom Mix, who got him work as a cowboy extra. Canutt’s skill as a rider and stunt fighter led to a contract starring in a series of over 40 Western silents. However, a case of flu had damaged his vocal cords, and when sound came into vogue, his raspy voice was unsuited to the heroics performed by cowboys in sound films. He focused on stunt work and, although he continued to play roles as heavies, quickly became known as Hollywood’s...
Premier stuntman during the 1930s. He and John Wayne created a new technique for filming screen fights more believably, and Canutt created or refined most of the stunt techniques used in Westerns and action films for years to come. Canutt was severely injured performing stunts in *Boom Town* and again in *Old Oklahoma* in 1943, and after that film he retired from active stunting and concentrated on directing second units, the crews responsible for filming stunts, action sequences and other scenes not necessarily requiring the principal cast members. He created some of the most dynamic and memorable action sequences in film history, culminating in the famed chariot race in *Ben-Hur*. He was awarded a special Oscar in 1966 for his contributions to film.

**Learning To Ride**

Sometime between working together in *Gone with the Wind* in 1939, when The Kid was really just a baby, and *The Showdown* in 1949, Yak also had the kindness and found the time and patience to help teach Crossdraw and the rest of the kids on the Republic lot how to ride. Every time The Kid watches some old Western he was in from the early 1950s, he can almost hear Yak and the crew laughing in the background. It never failed. Thanks to Yak, The Kid was always riding the biggest, most barrel-chested horse in the whole San Fernando Valley. With his short little legs—one wearing a post-polio, high-topped shoe/boot and sticking almost straight out to the side—The Kid looked a bit like a broken wishbone in a cowboy hat. But again, thanks to Yakima, he could ride like the wind.

None of this impressed The Kid the first time he faced death on the back of Golden Rule. But we're getting ahead of the story. To pay the boarding fees at his orthodontist's small farm, The Kid cleaned the stables on weekends, after he had his wires tightened. The doctor's farm was between Lankershim and Vineland Boulevards, about halfway between the Universal and Republic Pictures studios. A trail led down to the riverbed that ran alongside both studios.

The Kid's dad, the good doctor and Yakima (still causing trouble) all decided that it was time to geld the palomino, and The Kid drew the short straw. Did anyone ever notice that when you're 12 and dealing with grown-ups, *all* the straws are short?

While the offending adults held Golden Rule, Crossdraw mimicked a scene he had witnessed in fascination many times. A quick slash with an odd curved bladed knife, a wack in the vacated area with a hot tar brush amidst a flurry of flashing hooves, and the deed was done. It escaped The Kid's attention that while he was causing the colt to lose his stallionhood, Golden Rule was looking The Kid right in the eye. The events that followed proved elephants aren't the only animals that never forget.

It was also decided that because it was his horse and he was the smallest and lightest, The Kid would have the great pleasure of saddle-breaking the young colt. Much to The Kid's surprise, this went very well. (This was all part of the devil horse's evil plan!) Soon, it was obviously time to ride right on over to Republic and show Yak and the wranglers his handy work.

**Getting Back On**

At almost exactly the point of no return in the riverbed, and also the only really wet and rocky area in miles, the colt threw...
Yakima spent five months staging the chariot race for *Ben-Hur*. He even trained Charlton Heston (far right) to do his own steering.

The Kid into the water like a dead tick and raced back to the barn. Dazed, The Kid picked himself up and tried to decide what to do. Now he had a choice: start walking to the studio and face the jeers of the heroes of his youth, or go back to the farm and kill and eat the horse? No contest. By the time he got back to the barn, Crossdraw was so wet and miserable he had forgotten about his vendetta.

The dreaded old “Get Right Back On” syndrome took effect, and for days, weeks and eternity, The Kid tried in vain to ride the whole way to the studio. Short of tying himself to the saddlehorn, he could never stay on board. But here’s when the horse from Hell’s devilment really started. The doctor, Clark Gable, The Kid’s dad, Yak and everyone he knew offered to ride along and see what on earth The Kid was doing wrong. Yep! Nothing ever happened. That horse would ride like he was in the Rose Parade. But the second he was alone with The Kid—BAM!—into the water.

Sadly, there is no happy ending to this saga. Crossdraw’s dad finally sold the colt and put the money “in the bank” for him. A lifetime later, The Kid’s wife will every once in a while wake him from a terrible nightmare. He keeps screaming over and over, “Which bank, Dad? Which bank?”

Golden Rule is still compounding The Kid’s misery daily. But The Kid did have the privilege of standing in the shadow of the finest cowboy stuntman who ever lived, Yakima Canutt, and call him a friend. Two of his children, Tap and Joe Canutt, followed him into the stunt profession. Yakima Canutt died in 1986, the most famous and respected stuntman of all time.
IN MEMORIAM

REMEMBERING R.L. WILSON

Celebrating one of the firearms world’s well-known historians and authors.

BY DENNIS ADLER

The world of firearms lost its brightest star on December 11, 2016, and I lost one of my very best friends. I could tell you about the more than 50 books on handguns, Colts, Winchesters, Rugers, Berettas and the art and history of firearms engraving that R.L. Wilson wrote during his career, but you can find that online. To me, he was just Larry, a friend of over 20 years without whose help and encouragement I would not be writing this or have written any of my own books on Colts, Winchesters and the American West. Larry introduced me to almost everyone I know in the firearms industry, from the most legendary of writers, book editors and publishers to the men who worked out of their homes in Italy, engraving guns for some of the finest arms-makers in the world. Larry was a conduit through which much of the history he wrote about passed to others. I was fortunate enough to be one of those people.

His achievements were legendary, from his books to his relationships within both the firearms and automotive worlds, with sportsmen, hunters, writers, racecar drivers, the great Luigi Chinetti Sr., who co-founded Ferrari and built the Ferrari image in North America, his son, Luigi Chinetti Jr., who remained one of our many shared friendships over the years, along with the late Robert M. Lee, Colt Blackpowder Arms founder Lou Imperato, his son Anthony, and a seemingly endless cast of famous and unforgettable people, not to mention Larry’s long friendship with the Roosevelt family and Tweed Roosevelt.

Ferrari & Beretta

Rather than explain who Larry was, it is better to explain what he was, and to do that I simply need to tell a story of how I met Ugo Beretta in September of 1997. Larry and I were both working on new books. I was starting a second book on the history of Ferrari and also working on my first gun book, Colt Blackpowder, for Blue Book Publications, and Larry was working on the history of Beretta for Random House as well as research for a book on Buffalo Bill. Interestingly, at the time, Disneyland Paris was the only place on earth where you could go to see a reenactment of “Buffalo Bill’s Wild West.” It made sense then that we should travel to Italy and France together, along with our mutual friends Luigi Chinetti, Jr. (who helped with my entrée to Ferrari in Maranello), and my publisher and friend Steve Fjestad, who had also published the second edition of Larry’s most significant work, The Book of Colt Firearms.

You might hear that someone “wrote the book” on a particular subject, but it is more often just an expression than an actual fact. Well, R.L. Wilson literally wrote the book on the history of Colt, and he was setting out to do the same with Beretta. Our trip to Italy was a mutual excursion into the worlds of Beretta, the oldest arms-maker in the world, and Ferrari, the most famous sports and racecar builder in the world. It was a trip worthy of a book itself. But with Larry it was also an adventure and a misadventure, because Larry was Larry, and he had his own way of moving through the world.

At Ferrari, he was my guest as we toured the factory in Maranello, and Luigi’s guest as we retraced his father’s history with Ferrari. There was nowhere we could stay or eat where the Chinetti name was not known. Luigi was like an ambassador. The roles switched at Beretta, where Larry was already a legend chosen to write the most important history of any arms-maker in the world. But the night before we were to travel from Maranello to Brescia to visit Beretta, the four of us had a (Please turn to page 80)
THE FORGOTTEN

On the eve of the Civil War, when the muzzle-loading military rifle was at the apex of its development, the U.S. government took an interest in a unique breech-loading .50-caliber carbine invented by Gilbert Smith. Smith was an upstate New York doctor with a penchant for firearms design. His new carbine was a single-shot break action with a conventional external hammer and percussion cap ignition, but a rubber cartridge case was used to contain the powder and bullet. The unique rubber cartridge was easy to handle, durable, fairly moisture resistant and created an excellent gas seal where the carbine’s breech locked together. By the time the war was over, the Army bought just over 30,000 of these carbines at about $24 each, and nearly 14 million rounds of ammunition.

Though the Smith was the fourth most numerous breech-loading carbine of the Civil War, it did not earn praise from the troops like the Sharps and Spencer carbines did. The Smith’s unique cartridge was the root of the trouble, and it actually caused more problems than it solved. For one thing, rubber had to be imported from South America, making it an expensive commodity. Cases could also be made from gutta percha (a form of natural, plant-derived thermoplastic), but that also had to be imported. Alternative cartridges were made of foil, paper and even metal.

Reports from the battlefront say the Smith’s
SMITH

Resurrecting a RARE .50-caliber carbine from the Civil War. BY FRANK JARDIM

... chamber was susceptible to fouling from the cartridge case materials and would have to be cleaned after firing a few dozen rounds. Ironically, the Smith carbine is much more popular among modern shooters than it ever was in its day. Modern plastic makes a near perfect...

In case you’ve never heard of the Smith, EMF is now offering authentic Pietta-made replicas of those used in the Civil War.

Sharps and Spencer carbines stole the limelight among soldiers in the Civil War, and problems with the Smith and its ammo only hurt its popularity.
Loading and firing the single-shot Smith carbine is relatively simple: 1. Press the brass finger plunger inside the triggerguard, just in front of the trigger, to release the spring holding the action closed. 2. Break the action open. 3. Load the round carefully into the breech face. 4. Snap the action closed. 5. Take aim and fire when ready.
The Pietta replica features a brass front sight (right) and an unmarked ladder-type rear (below).

The Pietta replica features a brass front sight (right) and an unmarked ladder-type rear (below).

and reusable, cartridge that doesn't gum up the chamber like the earlier materials. The Early & Modern Firearms (EMF) Company in Los Angeles, California, imports an excellent replica of the 1857 Smith carbine made by Italian gun-maker F. LLI Pietta. EMF began specializing in historic reproduction firearms back in 1956, and it remains an industry leader in the field. The company’s past president, the late Boyd Davis, played a major role in founding the Single Action Shooting Society (SASS), too. EMF’s close relationship with Pietta has resulted in a number of well-executed replicas, and the Smith carbine I examined and tested for this article is no exception.

Meet The Smith

Operating the Smith is simple. A heavy milled spring on top of the action bridges the barrel and receiver and connects them by snapping over a precisely machined square boss on the top of each part. The Pietta replica locked up like a bank vault. To open the action for loading and unloading, the spring is lifted off the boss on the receiver by pressing up on the brass finger plunger inside the triggerguard, in front of the trigger. The big spring on top of the action is the only thing that holds it closed, and it takes some strength to push it up with the finger plunger. My wife couldn’t do it. Once a fresh round is loaded into the barrel, the action is snapped closed; the spring popping over the boss on the receiver locks it shut.

With the action open, you can see that about a quarter of the chamber is actually recessed into the receiver. Having a quarter of the cartridge sticking up from the barrel gives shooters some purchase when pulling out spent cases. Inside the barrel, there’s a thick shoulder in the chamber where the cartridge case headspaces. The chamber mouth on the barrel has a tapered male flange that mates with a corresponding female bevel on the receiver to form a mechanical gas seal. The high degree of machining precision needed to create a perfect gas seal was impractical in mid-19th century. The rubber cartridge case did a good job of taking up the slack. I noted no gas leakage on the Pietta Smith during the testing. I didn’t shoot it like a muzzleloader, with loose powder and ball, as the Confederates were said to have utilized captured Smiths. Fired in that manner, a spent cartridge case was needed to seal the action from gas leakage, which would be at best distracting and probably more than a bit dangerous to the shooter.

The 21-5/8-inch barrel is rifled with three broad lands and grooves. It has an internal diameter of 0.507 inches from land to groove, with all surfaces of the bullet showing contact with the bore. The barrel has a 1-in-66-inch twist rate.

The sights are faithful to the original. The front sight is a brass blade, and the rear is a V-notch, ladder-type unit without graduations, but it’s adjustable for windage by virtue of its dovetail mounting to the barrel. When folded down, the sight notch gave me a 50-yard point of impact about 11 inches higher than my point of aim. I found the sights easy to use; perhaps the relatively short sight radius
(only 16 inches long) made them easier for my old eyes to focus on.

Overall, the Pietta replica is great-looking gun showing nice metal-to-metal and wood-to-metal fitting. The walnut stock and forend seem to be sealed with satin polyurethane, which is great for weather resistance, but it does fill in the texture of the grain. If you don’t like it, there’s nothing stopping you from stripping it off. The receiver, trigger and hammer are color casehardened, and the balance of the metal is blued to the point of nearly being black. Pietta also went through the trouble of reproducing the patent, manufacturer and distributor stampings on the left side of the receiver. During the war, three companies made the Smith. The Pietta replica is stamped "MASS. ARMS CO. / CHICOPEE FALLS," representing the Massachusetts Arms Company. Poultney and Trimble of Baltimore, Maryland, managed the military sales. Carbines were issued to cavalry and artillery units. The cavalry model had a single sling attachment ring attached to the receiver by a metal bar. The artillery model—the variant I tested—has conventional oblong sling swivels on the buttstock and forend.

Very few Smiths were sold to private citizens before and during the war. After the war, it was apparent the brass cartridge case was the future of ammunition, not the Smith’s rubber cartridge, so there was no peacetime demand for new Smiths. On top of that, the military sold off its inventory as surplus, and many went west with the settlers. One found its way into the Dampier Hotel in Northfield, Minnesota, and on September 7, 1876, Henry Wheeler used it to shoot two members of the James Gang as they attempted to rob the town’s bank. He killed robber Clell Miller and wounded Cole Younger, firing only three rounds from the second-story window of the hotel.

Smiths got a reputation for ease of use and accuracy among contemporary shooters in the North-South Skirmish Association (NSSA), and reproductions were being made by the early 1970s as they became popular among competitors.

Making Ammo
Lodgewood Manufacturing in Whitewater, Wisconsin, specializes in U.S. martial arms and parts from 1750 to 1899. And when it comes to Civil War firearms, the company knows what it takes to keep them shooting straight. Lodgewood’s owner, David Stavlos, had exactly what I needed to shoot the Pietta Smith. The company stocks authentic-looking black plastic cartridge cases ($0.40 each) that you can easily push a bullet into with just thumb pressure. The mouth holds the bullet tight and should last for years as long as you don’t
store them loaded for long periods of time and stretch out the necks.

Lodgewood also has heavy lathe-turned brass cases ($2.50 each) that got my attention. David explained that some Smith reproductions had overly large flash holes that simply burned up the vent hole in the back of the plastic cases and ruined them in short order. For those guns, a brass case was the best option. The brass cases required a little bit of fitting in my test gun before the action would close fully. All that was needed was to remove a few thousandths of an inch from the mouth of the case to reduce its overall length. This was easily done with a few passes across a sheet of 220-grit sandpaper laid on a flat surface. The brass cases also hold less powder than the black plastic cases do. The plastic ones seem to hold about 35 grains of FFFg powder while the maximum for the brass cases is about 27.5 grains of FFFg, which is a recommended target load.

The inside diameter of the brass cases is 0.515 inches, making larger bullets hard to push in. Lodgewood sells a handheld seating tool ($40) that allows you to press the bullets straight down into the case with just hand pressure. Lodgewood also developed a new 360-grain bullet design for target shooting and teamed up with Lee Precision to make a double mold ($45). The ones I cast came in a bit lighter (averaging 354 grains) because I wasn’t using pure lead. They came out of the mold with 0.516-inch diameters.

I’ve never claimed to be a great bullet caster, so I contacted Patrick Kaboskey at Bulletman Bullets to see which of his competition-grade, pure-lead projectiles he would recommend for the Pietta Smith. Pat has been shooting Civil War guns for over half a century and has won 1,500 medals in the process. Using an old Lyman 515139 mold, he cast, lubed and sized the bullets to my barrel. (He recommended a 0.515-inch diameter.) No surprise, his bullets shot better than mine. Pat’s willingness to help shooters solve accuracy problems and share his knowledge and experience is worth far more than the cost of the custom cast and sized bullets he makes.

Live-Fire Testing
The Smith’s original loadings varied but were on the order of a 363-grain bullet moving at about 950 fps. In my test loads, I determined my charges of Geox FFFg black powder by actual weight rather than volume. I used standard musket-sized (top hat) percussion caps. I took off the nipple, cleaned the oil out of the vent path and fired a cap to see how much flash I was getting in the chamber. There was plenty. (For safety I did this test with a mirror rather than looking directly at the vent.)

All of my test-firing was done from a rested prone position at 50 yards. Pat Kaboskey’s soft-lead, 368-grain rounds turned out the best groups, averaging 3.25 inches. The best group was 3 inches, and the velocity averaged 782 fps. The harder 354-grain rounds I cast from the Lodgewood mold were tested with both 28.5 and 27.5 grains of powder, with brass cases for the latter. The average group size was 4.13 inches, and the average velocities were 861 and 716 fps, respectively.

The carbine I tested had a creepy, 22-pound trigger that certainly didn’t contribute to accurate shooting. With a little trigger tuning, I am sure the size of these groups could be cut in half. The 7.72-pound carbine, combined with my relatively light loads, resulted in mild recoil. Best of all, after shooting 50 rounds, it took me less than 10 minutes to clean the gun. The Smith’s break action makes the barrel a snap to clean without drowning every other part of the gun in soapy water.

For more information, visit emf-company.com or call 800-430-1310.

Editor’s Note: If you mention this article to EMF Company, you can save $55 off the purchase of an EMF Smith Artillery Carbine.

At 50 yards, the EMF Smith Artillery Carbine created respectable groups with the three test loads, and it was very easy to clean after the range session.

By the time the war was over, the Army bought just over 30,000 of these carbines at about $24 EACH, and nearly 14 million rounds of ammunition.
The classic .45-70 Government caliber is one of those golden oldies rooted so deep in both lore and utility that it refuses to die, and while there may have been dips and droughts in popularity during its 144-year history, it's managed to long outlast many more "modern" and flashier entries along the way by simply doing what it does best—lobbing a big ol’ heavy chunk of metal at moderate speeds, with relatively moderate recoil levels, to make a distinct impression on anything it connects with at the far end of the rainbow.

Today, the old buffalo-stomper is more popular than ever, and we who put the long .45 to any number of uses, from mild Trapdoor Springfield loads on up to bone-busting grizzly medicine in both jacketed and lead projectiles, have a wide-open field in bullets and factory ammunition. Ammo makers produce a good range of rounds for off-the-shelf shooters, and the straight-walled case is easy to find, affordable to buy in bulk and simple to handload for the basement ballisticsian at home.

Launching platform options may not be quite as ubiquitous as those for the more mainstream bottlenecked calibers like the .30-06 and 7mm Magnum, and there’s a distinct shortage of high-capacity, semi-auto .45-70s with 30-round detachable box magazines. But considering the nature and history of the old caliber, most of us are able to force ourselves to be satisfied with one of the traditional single-shots, or one of several lever-actions either based on older designs or more modern adaptations.

In lever guns, the .45-70’s well represented as an import in Italian products that run the gamut from fairly faithful reproductions to upgraded versions that take the Winchester Model 1886 pattern into modern territory with weather-resistant finishes, optic rails and rubber recoil pads, and both Browning and Winchester have offered high-quality Japanese-made 1886 reproductions in the caliber for several years.

Henry’s shiny, octagonal-barreled lever action might just be one of the classiest .45-70s out there!

By Denis Prisbrey • Photos by Sean Utley
Keep your eyes peeled! This special-edition Henry .45-70 Lever Action Octagon with custom Guns of the Old West engraving will soon be raffled off to one of our faithful readers.
Here at home, if you're looking for an American-made .45-70 lever action, your choices are either the current iteration of the Marlin Company in Ilion, New York, or Henry Repeating Arms in Bayonne, New Jersey. Of those two, while Marlin offers more .45-70 options in its long-running steel-framed 1895 line, Henry has by far the most style points in its brass-framed .45-70 Lever Action.

The Brass Henry
Henry actually makes two .45-70 Lever Action models: the H010, which has a pistol-grip stock, a steel frame and a round barrel, and the H010B, which features a straight wrist, a brass frame, an octagonal barrel and an oversized loop lever. While the steel-framed model is a perfectly fine working gun in itself, it's the brass-framed version that unquestionably grabs your eye the hardest between the two.

Introduced back in 2015, it didn't take long for this rifle to put itself squarely on the map for those looking for a big-bore rifle with a shade more flash than most other members of the .45-70 pack. A lightweight deer rifle it ain't, but if there's a touch of the magpie in your ancestry and a disposition toward plated sixguns and silver concho d gun belts, this one should be a natural match for you. Built around a highly polished hardened brass alloy frame, along with a curved carbine-type buttplate and front forend cap of the same material, the deep bluing on the rifle's well-polished, 22-inch, octagonal barrel adds another touch of nostalgia, and the oversized lever in Henry's own distinctively shaped pattern is another standout on the gun's profile. Once you get past those, you’ll also notice the American walnut furniture, the tall brass bead front sight, the adjustable semi-buckhorn rear sight, the sling swivel studs and the missing loading port below the frame’s ejection port. Like all but one of Henry's lever guns, this big bore loads just like the rimfires—through a cutout in the magazine tube.

All About That Brass
You might wonder, if you haven't already, just how well the brass frame holds up. Admittedly, it’s not as strong as a line-by-line counterpart in steel, but for all practical purposes in .45-70, it doesn’t have to be. A straight-walled rifle case is typically a lower-pressured load than a bottlenecked case to begin with, and the larger case diameter of the .45-70 creates less bolt thrust in conjunction with those lower pressures. In simple terms, Henry engineers a safety factor into the brass frame well above the relatively mild 28,000 psi specifications set for the caliber by SAAMI, and that

## Specifications

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Henry .45-70 Lever Action Octagon</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Caliber:</strong> .45-70 Government • <strong>Barrel:</strong> 22 inches</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>OA Length:</strong> 40.4 inches • <strong>Weight:</strong> 8.1 pounds (empty)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Stock:</strong> American walnut • <strong>Sights:</strong> bead front, semi-buckhorn rear</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Action:</strong> Lever • <strong>Finish:</strong> Brass, blued • <strong>Capacity:</strong> 4+1 • <strong>MSRP:</strong> $950</td>
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includes loads up into the heavyweights that specialty outfits like Buffalo Bore and Garrett produce. You can safely run the gamut from lead rounds at 1,200 fps on up to jacketed rounds at 2,000 fps, all with a clear conscience to mate your load to your needs, whether it's plinking Cowboy Action steel at the local weekend match or hunting grizzlies in the low mountains.

A side issue with all that shiny brass territory is that you can easily keep it polished to stay that way for a field-expedient shaving mirror out on the range, or you can let it gracefully age to the patina of a well-used lever gun from the late 1800s. Henry's rimfire Golden Boy lever actions use a different alloy with a gold-toned coating on their receiver covers that'll retain their shine just short of forever, but the brass centerfires use solid frames with bare-naked surfaces that can and will dull up nicely with long-term use. You can stay with bright and tin-horn shiny or go with seen-it-all/done-it-all subdued. Your choice.

Shootin' Time
This brass-framed rifle, with its octagonal barrel, is not a lightweight at 8.1 pounds unloaded. That can work off some calories if you carry it on a long trek, which may be a slight negative for some, but when it comes time to let it roar with modern ammunition, it's a bonus on the shoulder, especially with a solidly non-cushioned buttplate. Henry wisely did not go with a crescent buttplate here, and between the more gentle curve of the carbine-style pattern and the overall weight of the rifle, it was much less of a slammer off the bench than I was expecting with three different factory loads at 100 yards.

On a cold December day in calm conditions, the rifle produced groups certainly hunt worthy, as it held the best three-shot...
We at Guns of the Old West appreciate your business, and we’re glad to see that you followed us over the years. To show our appreciation, we’ve commissioned a specially engraved, brass-framed Henry .45-70 with our logo through Henry Repeating Arms and Baron Technology. It’ll be raffled off in a future issue, so keep an eye out for details.
groups under 3 inches, with one going under 2 inches. The Remington 405-grain JSP rounds were powderpuffs by modern .45-70 standards, the Winchester 300-grain JSPs created tight groups, and the relatively new, high-performance, all-copper Barnes 300-grain VOR-TX TSX load is beginning to set new expectations for a very old caliber. These loads cover a wide spectrum of both uses and prices, and the Henry handled them all more than well enough to ride the river with.

The groups could possibly have been even tighter in better lighting; under a canopy at a state-owned rifle range with totally overcast skies that have combined to defeat iron sights on other guns in the past, the sights were not all that easy to see, but the big brass bead out front covers lots of variation in lighting conditions far better than many all-black blades do.

The action was not quite as smooth as a Henry rimfire’s, but it’s a different design and shouldn't be expected to be, and it should slick up a shade with more use. The glove-sized loop lever is uncommonly handy in 18-degree temperatures. The 5.25-pound trigger was at least a pound heavier than I’d ideally prefer, but it had zero creep and zero overtravel with one of the cleanest let-offs I’ve encountered in a factory trigger in a long time. And for those of us not overly fond of a manual safety device on a lever gun, the in-hammer transfer bar safety provides for worry-free carry through hell or high water with the hammer down behind a live chamber all day long.

Way back when, I politely suggested to Henry owner Anthony Imperato that he reconsider that rimfire trombone loading system when he was first developing the centerfire lever guns and leaning towards it. He politely stuck to his guns (literally), and quite honestly, after working with several over the years, it doesn’t bother me. If I ever reach the point where I decide I do need a quick-reloading .45-70 as a primary battle implement, I’ll just sell the house and pick up a Gatling gun. In the meantime, loading through the magazine tube instead of a frame port isn’t an issue in a big-bore hunting rifle.

Shine On

Of the two .45-70s that Henry produces, this one gets my nod. I’m not usually a shiny-gun guy, but the overall looks of the rifle just pull up Saturdays in front of the TV as a kid from the dim recesses of childhood memories, and growing up here in the West, it’s more of a traditional fit for me than the more modern-looking steel version. It doesn’t hurt that it’s a good shooter and not much of a thumper at the back end.

Should you be in the market for a new big-bullet bear-buster, give this one a hard look. Rumor has it that you could even take moose, elk and Texas jackrabbits with one, too. For more information, visit henryrifles.com or call 201-858-4400.

...it didn’t take long for this rifle to put itself squarely on the map for those looking for a BIG-BORE RIFLE with a shade more flash than...other members of the .45-70 pack.
Pedersoli’s new .410/.45 Colt Howdah draws on the classic styling of its double-barreled forebears while adding a few modern touches.
Pedersoli’s new double gun packs a one-two .410/.45 COLT PUNCH.

By Dennis Adler

The new Pedersoli Howdah double pistol is an historic design with a lineage that dates back to late 19th century Europe and the development of the first Howdah-style double-barrel pistols carried by big-game hunters in India and Africa. The double pistols were built in both side-by-side and superposed (over/under) versions, and those that found their way to our shores were quickly copied by gunsmiths as well as those with little more than a hacksaw, an idea and a shotgun.

In late 19th century America, the handful of Howdah-style percussion and later cartridge-firing pistols from British makers like Holland & Holland and J. Purdey & Sons were rare finds; a Howdah...
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pistol was a far more elegant sidearm than a sawed-off shotgun, as is the new Pedersoli Howdah, with its double triggers and hammerless action.

Doubling Down
From the 1870s until the turn of the century, the market for double guns in the U.S. flourished with models from Colt and Remington in addition to a wide variety of high-quality shotguns from Parker Bros., L.C. Smith, Ithaca and, of course, the Lefever Arms Company, founded by Daniel M. Lefever, who created America’s first hammerless double-barrel shotgun way back in 1880.

Even though the hammerless was late to the game, it was certainly a player in the last two decades of the 19th century. So, lest we think the hammerless double gun is a 20th century invention, it is very much a part of the American West.

In the early 1920s, Ithaca developed a hammerless shotgun known as the Auto & Burglar. It was, for all intents and purposes, a handsomely made, sawed-off, 20-gauge shotgun. This was the inspiration for the new Pedersoli Howdah, with its design based on the 10-inch-barreled Ithaca Flues Model. The Ithaca was introduced in 1922 and manufactured through 1925. The most significant difference between the original Ithaca and the Pedersoli Howdah is that the Pedersoli uses 10½-inch rifled barrels chambered for .45 Colt cartridges (making it a pistol, not a shotgun) as well as 2½-inch, .410-gauge shotshells, just like Bond Arms derringers, for example.

A Closer Look
The Pedersoli Howdah uses an integrated boxlock action based on the Anson and Deeley design developed in 1875 for the Westley Richards Company. The silver welded barrels have a monobloc with two lugs and a horizontal wedge inserted on the frame that fits inside the lugs when the action is closed.

For easy handling, the Pedersoli Howdah’s grip shape is nearly identical to the early 1920s-style Ithaca models, including the integrated spur to stabilize the gun in the hand during recoil, a design seen on many European Howdah pistols in the later 19th century. The grip and forend are nicely hand checkered for better traction. The Pedersoli also uses a sliding tang safety and break-open lever like a shotgun. Because of the integrated, hammerless boxlock action, the Howdah has a slightly longer wrist than the original Ithaca pistol, slightly increasing the trigger reach. Another change is the addition of a folding rear leaf sight to allow better accuracy with .45 Colt cartridges and .410 slugs. The center rib between the barrels also holds a ramped, silver-dot front sight. The receiver is color case-hardened while the barrels, triggerguard, trig-

**SPECIFICATIONS**

**Pedersoli Howdah**

**Caliber:** .410/.45 Colt  
**Barrels:** 10½ inches  
**OA Length:** 17 inches  
**Weight:** 4.1 pounds (empty)  
**Grip:** Walnut  
**Sights:** Bead front, leaf rear  
**Action:** Break  
**Finish:** Blued, casehardened  
**Capacity:** 2  
**MSRP:** $1,350
Most of the original Ithaca smoothbores were chambered in 20 gauge, although other gauges were produced, including approximately 20 in .410 gauge like the Pedersoli Howdah. Ithaca built 4,500 double-barreled Auto & Burglar models in two variations: the elegantly-styled first version, also referred to as the Model A, and the New Improved Double (NID) or Model B from 1925 to 1934, with a revised pistol grip and longer 12.2-inch barrels capable of chambering 2¾-inch shells. The Model A was chambered for 2½-inch shells while the new Pedersoli can handle 3-inch shells. Around 1,500 of the NID versions were sold through 1934, the year the National Firearms Act (NFA) was implemented, which brought an abrupt end to the Auto & Burglar.

You never want to be caught on the wrong end of a double gun, and criminals back in the 1920s knew that, too. An old Ithaca advertisement about the Auto & Burglar stated, “Detective Harry J. Loose... first induced the banks in and around Chicago to use it, then its use spread to sheriffs, police departments, paymasters, watchmen, express messengers, and it’s a wonderful home protector.” Indeed, with today’s excellent personal-defense-oriented .45 Colt ammo like Hornaday’s 185-grain Critical Defense FTX rounds, and the option of loading one of many .410-gauge 000 buckshot and self-defense loads like Winchester’s PDX1 410 Defender—combining a dozen plated BBs with a trio of plated “defense discs”—the concept of the Howdah and old Ithaca double pistols still works in the 21st century.

Considering that the only significant difference between the 1922 Ithaca and the Pedersoli is the rifled barrels, one wonders why Ithaca didn’t see the possibilities of a rifled-barrel .45 Colt/.410 Auto & Burglar back in the 1930s. Fortunately, for enthusiasts of this classic design, now you have an option to try for yourself.

For the range test, I ran everything previously mentioned through the Pedersoli plus Remington’s HD Ultimate Defense 000 buckshot and Federal’s Personal Defense 000 buckshot. These 2½-inch-long shotshells deliver four .36-caliber lead...
pellets. My final test load was Hornady’s .410 Triple Defense ammo, which packs a .41-caliber FTX slug in front of two .35-caliber lead balls.

This was a close-quarters evaluation, meaning I set the test targets at 7 yards for the .410 rounds and 15 yards for the .45 Colt cartridges. With its 10½-inch barrels and 4.1-pound weight, the recoil with the .45 Colt rounds and Federal 000 buckshot was moderate. The heavier-hitting combo loads—the Hornady Triple Defense and Winchester PDX1—required a strong support-hand hold with my fingers wrapped over the sides of the barrels. The recoil, as expected, was heavy but still manageable, and the Pedersoli did not ride back in the hand due to its grip angle and grip spur, which kept the pistol centered in the web of the shooting hand. The best hold on the gun is with the strong-side arm extended (a Weaver stance works well) with the support hand firmly grasping the forearm.

The trigger pull averaged 4.2 pounds between the front and rear triggers. I shot two sets of rounds with each brand of ammo, and the five-shot groups with the Hornady .45 Colt rounds measured 2.25 and 3.25 inches, all in the center-mass of the target. The barrels were also well regulated at this range, with the left and right barrels splitting the distance from the point of aim. The Remington 000 buckshot clustered its shot into 2.5 inches, and the lighter-recoiling Federal load created 1.5- and 2-inch groups. The Hornady Triple Defense load slammed into the target, with the FTX slug and lead balls clustered into 2- and 2.25-inch groups, and the Winchester PDX1 load was simply the most devastating with its trio of plated discs creating a 1.75-inch group surrounded by a full pattern of BBs.

In terms of handling, the Pedersoli is about as basic as it gets—think double-barrel shotgun scaled down to pistol size—but with the same manual of operation. Use the lever to open the action, load two rounds, close it, slide the tang safety forward (it resets to “safe” every time the action is opened), and the gun is ready to fire.

As a .45/.410, the Pedersoli is a lot easier to shoot than an old Ithaca 20 gauge, and with modern .410-gauge shotshells, it’s nearly as effective at close range. Drop in two hard-hitting Hornady .45 Colt FTX or .410 Triple Defense rounds and this becomes a double-barrel pistol any early 20th century lawman would have been willing to carry. The Pedersoli Howdah is imported by the Italian Firearms Group and has a suggested retail price of $1,350. For more, call 800-450-1852 or visit italianfirearmsgroup.com. ✪
Since it premiered in October of 2016, HBO’s new series *Westworld* set its viewers’ imaginations alight with the possibilities of blending futuristic technologies with our desire to live out our fantasies, both wholesome and dark, in a nostalgic world from the past. The mind-twisting revelations from the final few episodes of the first season were enough to make viewers glad the future isn’t now.

The series revolves around the premise that in the near future, a company and some innovative programmers create a monstrous theme park called “Westworld” set in the American frontier of the late 1800s. The park is populated by “hosts” who are synthetic people playing parts that will seem familiar to gamers who have explored titles like “Red Dead Revolver.”

**How It Works**

When the park began, they were robots that looked like people, but by the show’s main timeline, the hosts are biological and extremely lifelike, created on 3D printer-like machines. And, of course, since the world is set in the Old West, there are plenty of firearms around and gunplay is plentiful. See, the whole purpose of the park and the hosts themselves is to entertain the “guests,” who pay exorbitant sums to be completely immersed in the fake world and pretty much do anything they want with and to the hosts, up to and including gunning them down.

First, it’s important to get an idea of how the guns work in the show. The park allows hosts to shoot hosts, and for guests to shoot hosts, but if a host shoots a guest, the bullets somehow don’t hurt them. The technology hasn’t been explained yet, but the park officials can also remotely disable guns in the park if it becomes necessary.

A hallmark of any Western is a host of sixguns. As expected, there are a slew of Colt Single Action Army revolvers with various barrel lengths. One striking example is a gun that repeatedly ends up in the hands of Dolores Abernathy (Evan Rachel Wood). It’s a Cavalry model SAA with a 7½-inch barrel and a dark blued finish.

**Converted LeMat**

But what do you do when you’ve got a bad guy and you need to give him a distinctive sidearm that stands out in a sea of SAA wheelguns? The show opted to go even older school and give The Man in Black (played by Ed Harris) an eye-catching LeMat 1861 revolver.

In reality, the LeMat was a blackpowder cap-and-ball gun only, as it’s age and design made it incompatible with later cartridge conversions. In the show, however, Ed Harris carries a customized cartridge-firing model, which isn’t technically anachronistic for the show itself,
HBO’s hit sci-fi Western wouldn’t be the same without its classic weapons.

One of Westworld’s colorful characters, The Man in Black (played by Ed Harris), wields a unique LeMat revolver.
The LeMat design’s most distinctive feature was a chamber for an additional 20-gauge round in the center of the cylinder. This was fired through a separate smoothbore barrel located beneath the pistol barrel. When the hammer was cocked, a button dropped the striker to a lower position, where it would fall on the shotgun shell’s primer, necessitating only one trigger. The sidearm saw service with the armed forces of the Confederate States of America during the American Civil War and during the Franco-Prussian War.

The LeMat in the show retains the original’s nine-round cylinder and the 20-gauge center chamber, but while the real gun was chambered for a .42- or .36-caliber ball ammunition, the show’s pistol is chambered for .38 Short Colt rounds. In the second episode, we get a great view of Ed Harris taking the gun apart and loading it in bright sunlight, and the markings can be seen on the back of the cartridges.

Harris loads what looks to be a 20-gauge, all-brass shell in the center chamber and fires it only once over the whole season, using the buckshot to shoot through a small wall at an enemy taking cover.

It’s worth noting that the LeMat would be a difficult gun to operate in most circumstances compared to other available pistols, as it must be disassembled to reload, which is obviously slow and cumbersome, but it somewhat makes up for this with its slightly larger capacity than the typical sixgun. In the second episode, we get a brief glimpse of what appears to be an additional LeMat barrel and cylinder carried behind the holster on Harris’ gun belt, presumably for a faster reload, though he’s never seen using it. In the season finale, we see an earlier version of his gun belt with four 20-gauge cartridges stored at the small of his back.

**Winchester Model 1873**

As with the SAA, a Western practically demands a number of Winchester Model 1873 lever actions being worked with speed, taking advantage of their high capacity for the time.

One of the most notable on the show is a specially configured Model 1873 carried by the mostly villainous Hector Escaton (played by Rodrigo Santoro) in a scabbard on his back. The rifle has had the barrel and magazine tube shortened and the stock sawed off, leaving a wooden handle. The configuration is known as the “Mare’s Leg” and it’s purely a Hollywood invention.

The original Mare’s Leg was created by the makers of the TV show *Wanted: Dead or Alive* (1958-1961) for Steve McQueen’s character. It was made by cutting down a .44-40 Winchester Model 1892 so it could fit in a drop-leg holster and be shot one-handed. McQueen also had it fitted with a duck-bill hammer and an enlarged lever loop.

Escaton uses his Mare’s Leg repeatedly during the different versions of the bandit raid on Sweetwater. Again, since the gun exists in pop culture, and is actually made today by a number of companies like Chiappa and Rossi that make them chambered in modern handgun cartridges like the .44 Magnum and the classic .45 Colt, it’s technically OK for it to exist in the park, though it’s out of place for the setting.

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**One of the show’s villains, Hector (Rodrigo Santoro), uses a cut-down Mare’s Leg replica like Steve McQueen.**

**In one episode of *Westworld*, Teddy Flood (James Marsden) breaks out of captivity and uses an 1865 Gatling gun mounted in a cart to shoot his way to freedom.**
The LeMat in the show retains the original’s nine-round cylinder and the 20-gauge center chamber, but...chambered for .38 Short Colt rounds.

Which isn't to say someone in the Old West couldn't have had the same idea and had a gunsmith cut down his or her rifle.

Armistice (Ingrid Bolsø Berdal) also uses a full-sized Model 1873 during the raid on Sweetwater, though hers is a bit more battered than the Mare’s Leg or Teddy’s rifle, which he uses a number of times as well through the first season. Berdal gets to fire a bunch of guns during the town raid, including a 10-gauge, lever-action Winchester Model 1887 shotgun and, at another point in the raid, a Winchester Model 1897 pump-action shotgun, which seems a bit anachronistic for the time, but again, the man who ran the park, Dr. Robert Ford (Anthony Hopkins) didn’t seem to care about that.

Teddy Flood (James Marsden) has died perhaps more times on screen than any other Westworld character. He also gets to play with a range of weapons, including the aforementioned Model 1873 rifle and his constant sidearm, a 5½-inch-barreled Artillery model SAA. During one scene, as he and The Man in Black infiltrate an Army camp disguised as soldiers, Teddy mans an 1865 Gatling gun mounted on a cart to mow down almost every soldier. The scene shows that the usually gallant Mr. Flood does indeed have a darker side.

Modern Guns
But for all this, there are some “modern” firearms in the show. The park officials are, of course, operating in the present day of the show, which is slightly in the future. The go-to sidearm of the park's security team is the Beretta Px4 pistol, and the head of the team, Ashley Stubbs (Luke Hemsworth), carries his in a cross-draw appendix holster. On the occasions he has unholstered the small pistol, we can see that the barrel is colored red, so it's obvious which guns are “park guns” and which ones are lethal, real-world firearms.

Another Beretta makes an appearance in one episode from the first season in the hands of Clementine Pennyfeather (Angela Sarafyan), the U22 Neos, a semi-auto .22 LR target pistol that was clearly chosen for the show because of its futuristic appearance.

For more firepower, the park’s security squad is equipped with the select-fire FN P90 TR, which is first shown in the first episode. They’re all fitted with accessory rails holding weapon lights, and they all feature red paintjobs that presumably serve the same purpose as the as the red barrels on the handguns—to designate them as real lethal firearms.

Audiences can only speculate as to where this show will go or what can be expected for the second season after the many revelations at the end of the first, but one thing is for sure: There’s going to be plenty more gunplay in the future of Westworld.
This J.S. Collins rig is representative of the late 1880s yet still shows remnants of the California pattern with its deep recurved throat, contoured main seam and sewn toe plug.

Photo Courtesy Rick Bachman

Showing a faint rolled border and unusually slanted loops, this early 1880s holster has an early form-fitted California-pattern body. Created by E. Gottlich of Miles City, Montana, it bears a deep recurved throat, a contoured main seam and an open toe.

Mexican loop holsters of the early to mid-1880s had gone from scabbards specifically fitted to particular gun models to gently tapered pouches with semi-contoured main seams. This early 20th century holster, with its shield-shaped loops, houses a Colt Model 1900.
Although the open-topped, form-fitted “California-pattern” holster had been in vogue for a couple of decades, the coming of the self-contained metallic cartridge brought about the need for a new breed of sixgun leather. It was the revolutionary advent of the metallic cartridges themselves that was most responsible for the major changes in the design and construction of gunleather. Now a ready supply of cartridges could be carried on one’s person rather than in a separate container, such as a packet of pre-made, combustible paper cartridges or a powder flask holding loose gunpowder with a supply of percussion caps, lead balls, etc. Almost immediately after the introduction of practical, big-bore ammunition and handguns came the practice of packing extra cartridges on the waist belt, in fitted leather loops—possibly creating the first true “gun belt.” However, the new “cartridge” gun-toting Westerners quickly discovered that a new type of holster would be needed, since the small belt loops provided on backs of the California-pattern scabbards of the percussion age didn’t fit over these bulkier, and often wider, cartridge-laden belts.

Simply making a larger loop on the back of the California-style scabbards wasn’t enough, since the narrow loop on the holster’s backside allowed for too much “play” and caused the holstered pistol to hang loosely at the side, flopping around uncomfortably when the wearer was active, such as when riding horseback. The answer to the problem of fitting a sixgun’s holster snugly to one of these cartridge belts was solved sometime during the mid-1870s in a simple yet rather ingenious way.

Called the “Mexican loop” holster, the design is suspected to have come from northern Mexico or the American Southwest. While maintaining the general lines of the California-pattern holster, with the scabbard retaining a contoured main seam as well as a recurved throat and triggerguard area,
1. Typical of late 19th century styling, this basket-stamped, single-loop holster was made by Theodore Steubing of San Antonio, Texas, between 1900 and 1910.

2. Produced by Charles Swope of Montrose, Colorado, this early 1890s double-loop scabbard was originally made with a simple rolled border and a maker’s cartouche. However, a cowhand later repaired it at the top with thong lacing and added heart-shaped conchos and nicked harness spots.

3. Today’s cowboy shooters can have top-quality replicas of frontier gunleather, like this exquisite example of an early Cheyenne-style rig from Old West Reproductions.

4. The abundance of rawhide-laced holsters that originated with the Denver and Pueblo, Colorado, manufacturers indicates a regional preference for this look. Here are three distinctly different Mexican loop rigs dating from around the early 20th century.

5. Arguably the most famous name in Mexican loop holsters is F.A. Meanea of Cheyenne, Wyoming. This circa-1890 Meanea holster is typical of the era with its fancy tooling, contoured main seam, buckskin lining and “Cheyenne” sewn toe plug.

6. The so-called “Texas jockstrap” holster appeared in the late 1890s. This specimen was produced by Charles E. Collins of Globe, Arizona, around 1914.

this new arrangement differed in that it consisted of a single piece of leather that formed the scabbard, backing and holster body’s retaining loops.

**Down Mexico Way**
The Mexican loop design features the traditional holster portion that has been sewn shut vertically along the main seam, as with the California pattern. However, the top-back side of this pouch is not cut off; rather, it has been pattern-cut to form a skirted backing, then folded over and down horizontally, behind itself. This forms both a belt loop and a skirt between the body of the wearer and the holster itself. The backing has two or more slots cut into it (depending on design and length) through which the scabbard portion is then passed, creating skirt straps or loops that hold the body of the holster to the skirt backing. This design created both a wide upper loop through which the cartridge belt could pass, securing the holster firmly in place over the belt, while the skirt loops helped to keep the pouch portion
Initially, loop holsters were longer, largely reflecting the 1870s-era, cartridge-firing Colts, Remingtons, S&Ws and other big-bore revolvers that were often produced with 7½- to 8-inch barrels. Early scabbards were turned out with teardrop-shaped toe plugs that helped maintain the holster’s shape in the lower portion of the sheath, while later specimens either left the toe open or continued the main seam closure through the toe area. Generally, the skirt backings of the first loop holsters tended to extend only halfway down the pouch, while those sheaths produced later usually feature ¾- to full-length skirts.

Local Designs
Following the metamorphosis of the California holster, the Mexican loop holster of the early to mid-1880s had gone from a scabbard specifically fitted to a particular model gun to a gently tapered pouch with a semi-contoured main seam. The newer version was so produced to enable a single holster to conform to a number of large-framed revolvers, rather than each sheath being cut for a given model. This gave most gun rigs of this breed a similar appearance. Nevertheless, there were a couple of Mexican-loop-style holsters that became identified with specific areas of the frontier, and they maintained the earlier California look up into the early 20th century.

By far, the best known was the so-called “Cheyenne” loop holster, created in the early years of the breed by such regional saddlers as F.A. Menea, E.L. Gallatin and possibly J.S. Collins. The Cheyenne holster is readily identified by its contoured main seam, fashioned with a slight bulge between the skirt loops—so created to hold the scabbard portion securely in place while the sixgun is being withdrawn. Interestingly, regardless of vintage, Cheyenne-style holsters are nearly always encountered with the sewn-in toe plug. Occasionally called a “Cheyenne plug,” cowhands of the Great Plains felt that besides helping keep the holster’s shape, this addition was also an aid in preventing the gun’s barrel from being clogged with snow—a problem not to be overlooked on the northern ranges. The Cheyenne holster remained popular from the time of its inception in the 1870s well into the 20th century, and it has enjoyed a revival of interest with replica holster-makers of modern times.

Down Texas way, another unique variation of the Mexican loop holster appeared in the late 1890s, but this style held a much more limited appeal to Westerners, although a small number were produced by well-known holster-makers throughout the West. Called “Texas jockstrap” holsters, the most prominent features of the form is from riding up when drawing the weapon.

While most loop holsters utilized skirt loops that were simply cut into the backing, a number of them—predominantly those manufactured in Texas and Montana—sometimes preferred loops that were separately sewn or riveted. Regardless of how they were crafted, these loops could be fashioned as straight or curved cuts. Some were shaped with scalloped edges, but regardless of style or embellishment, they remained an integral part of the loop holster’s functional design.
and S.D. Myers of Sweetwater, Texas, rank among the craftsmen of the area credited with originating this style. The Texas jockstrap loop holster enjoyed a modicum of popularity until sometime in the 1940s.

By the time of the introduction of the Mexican loop holster, the trend in gunleather adornment had already shifted from the heavily carved or incised floral motifs to simpler, border-stamped designs. These smaller, less flamboyant embellishments usually followed the outer edge of the scabbard portion of the holster, with additional stampings found on the edges of the skirt loops and perhaps around the outer border of the skirt itself. Periphery designs could vary from single or multiple lines to that of a small repeating pattern, stamped to follow the general contours of the holster, loops and back skirt. It was quite common for a saddler to incorporate several different patterns into one design to create the finished border. Sometimes a stamped rosette or geometric motif might be added on the upper portion of the scabbard. The maker’s cartouche was frequently stamped in this spot, or on one of the loops. Some maker stamps were worked into the central portion of a floral embellishment, thus disguising it to some degree.

While border stamping appears to have accounted for the greatest number of loop holsters throughout the period of the Mexican loop holster’s greatest prominence (late 1870s to 1920s), by the 1880s, the more elaborate floral-carved versions could again be found in fair numbers. However, in keeping with the looks of the times, the hand work on these so-carved sheaths would generally be contained within a pattern-stamped border, rather than the simple lined edge so prevalent in the percussion age.

Holsters hailing from south of the Rio Grande were often decorated with embroidery rather than stamping or carv-
ing. This delicate work was accomplished with fibers from indigenous plants as well as silken or metallic threads, and included such designs as the Mexican national eagle and snake motif, geometric and Aztec art, along with floral patterns.

Sometime around the mid-to-late 1880s, basket stamping made its appearance on holsters. Within a few years, improvements in leather-working equipment brought about inexpensive machine-stamped and rolled-on border designs, embossed floral work, fish scale, basket stamping and other full-coverage embellishments. By the turn of the century, as cowboys and other sixgun packers took to adding their own brand of trimming to their holsters, new ways of adorning gunleather was getting the attention of saddlers everywhere. Alternatives to the stamped or carved scabbards included laced-on conchos, nickeled brass studs (called “harness spots”) that sometimes simply bordered the rigs, while other times virtually covered them. Also, main seams and borders that were sewn with contrasting rawhide thongs could be found. Before the first couple of decades of the 20th century had passed, the loop holster could be had in more configurations and with a greater array of decoration than any other gun scabbard in history.

Western Classic

Despite the passing of the wild and woolly frontier, the coming of the motion pictures in the early 20th century gave renewed life to all things Western while adding to the myth and lore of the cowboy and his tools. Like the 10-gallon hat, sixgun and silver-mounted spurs, the Mexican loop holster—with all of its silver-screen flamboyance—was assured a permanent place among the Westerner’s classic gear. The style readily lent itself to the newer “buscadero” rigs where the holster hung from a slot in the cartridge belt, rather than slipped over it. After all, where would this celluloid gunslinger pack his six-shooter if not in his garishly carved and studded buscadero outfit?

Although some loop holsters were produced for modern semi-auto pistols—especially the time-honored Model 1911 and its variations, it is the Western revolver that this gunleather form is most associated with. From its early years of packing iron on the frontier, through the action-packed Western films of Hollywood, to the gun ranges of today’s Cowboy Action and Cowboy Mounted shooters, living history reenactors and other Old West fans, the loop holster says “cowboy” in any language. Whether sporting a simple border-tooled design or gussied up beyond the 19th century frontiersman’s wildest imagination, the Mexican loop holster remains the classic Western holster!

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long dinner that went well into the evening, at which point Steve wisely suggested we return to the hotel in Maranello and start out fresh at 7:00 a.m. to make the two-hour drive to Beretta. Larry, however, always full of energy, decided we should drive that night and be in Brescia by midnight, get a good rest and be at the Beretta villa in Gardone promptly at 9:00 a.m. in the morning.

Steve and Luigi decided to go back to the hotel, and Larry shrugged and said, “Okay Dennis, let’s go.” And with that Steve shook his head and I thought, just for a moment, that I’d rather go back to Maranello, but I couldn’t let Larry make the drive alone. So off we went in our cars, Steve and Luigi back to Maranello and Larry behind the wheel of his rented Fiat with his trusted navigator, who, in point of fact, has no sense of direction. Larry knew the way, so off into the moonlit night we went on the Autostrada.

The Autostrada is like a turnpike in America, rather than a freeway, so there are no exits every mile or two. After about an hour and a half, we needed gas and pulled off at a filling station. There we grabbed a couple of bottles of water before heading back onto the road. I had asked Larry how much farther it was to Brescia and he wasn’t sure, but there were very few cars on the highway by midnight. As I stared out the windshield into the moonlit night, I was certain I could see snow-capped mountains in the distance. We were headed to Switzerland. Upon this realization, Larry hit the brakes, and as he did so, he squeezed his legs together and squirted half his bottle of water into his lap. In all the years I had known him, this was the first time I heard Larry swear; he was, after all, the son of a Presbyterian minister. We pulled to the side of the road, he composed himself and said sheepishly, “I’m sorry about that.” Almost speechless, I shook my head in acknowledgment and we raised our bottles, though Larry’s was half empty.

It took another 30 minutes to find an exit where we could get off and get back on to reverse our direction. There was a toll booth when we reentered the Autostrada; only it wasn’t a toll booth—it was a guard station with several armed officers inside wondering why two Americans were driving in circles after midnight. Neither of us spoke Italian, and English was not the guards’ second language. With a little hand gesturing and the words “wrong,” “direction” and “Brescia” understood, the one officer smiled and, pointing in our new direction, said, “Brescia, Brescia,” waving his hand repeatedly, implying a long drive. We silently headed back out into the moonlit night. We immediately headed to Beretta. Larry said goodnight and, pointing in our new direction, said, “It’s nine o’clock!”

Two rooms were ready, and at 3:30 in the morning, Larry said goodnight and that he’d get me up at 7:00 a.m. so we would have time for a quick breakfast before heading to Beretta.

It was light when the pounding on my door woke me. “Dennis, Dennis, we have to go!”

I sat up and yelled to the door, “What time is it?”

Silence for a second and then frantic words: “It’s nine o’clock!”

We arrived at Beretta 30 minutes late. Steve and Luigi, having had a good night’s rest, had made the drive in less than two hours, arriving at 9:00 a.m. sharp. Luigi used to be a racecar driver.

After a short meeting with Christian Verhuyck, the commercial sales manager for Beretta, who was more interested in talking about Ferrari with Luigi than about Beretta, Larry and I had the time to pull ourselves together before moving on with a tour of the factory, the engraving department and lunch with the Beretta family in the Beretta villa. And that is how I met Ugo Beretta in 1997.

Daring Greatly

Afterward, Larry and I headed to Paris to attend Buffalo Bill’s Wild West. Steve stayed in Italy to visit gun manufacturers, and Luigi headed off to Switzerland on the next leg of his trip. There were many other trips to follow over the years as we went about our various assignments around the world. It was Larry and the publishers he introduced me to, however, that would begin my career writing books on firearms in the late 1990s, and ultimately lead me to Guns of the Old West in 2005.

Larry had his demons, and like everyone who achieves greatness, he had his ups and downs, and he paid dearly for some of them, but he always came back with twice the enthusiasm and drive and did something even greater. It was his nature. I think the best way to describe Larry is a quote from Teddy Roosevelt that honestly defines everything behind the name R.L. Wilson: “It is not the critic who counts...The credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena; whose face is marred by dust and sweat and blood; who strives valiantly...who, at the worst, if he fails, at least fails while daring greatly; so that his place shall never be with those cold and timid souls who neither know victory nor defeat.”

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