

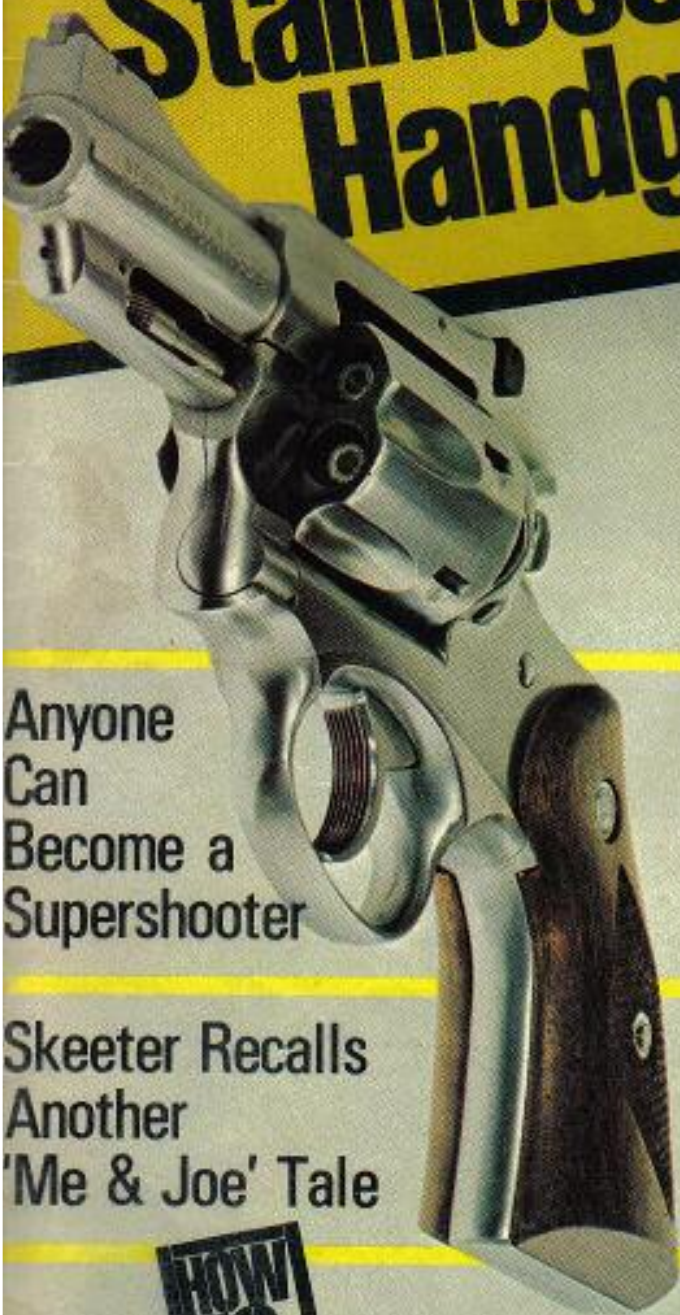
SHOOTING

SEPTEMBER 1973 75¢
08730 ICD

First Complete Roundup!

Stainless Steel Handguns

(SEE PAGE 50)



GUN TESTS

Anyone Can Become a Supershooter

Beretta M90 .32 DA Auto Pistol

Skeeter Recalls Another 'Me & Joe' Tale

Mossberg M472 .30-30 Lever Gun

HOW TO:

Make a Custom Knife for Under \$20!

First Complete Roundup:

Stainless Steel Handguns

Like the look and feel of stainless steel? You can choose a gun for every reasonable need — from ultrasmall .25 pocket autos, through police service and target revolvers, to an incredibly massive .44 auto.

By George C. Nante

Stainless steel is no stranger to the arms industry. Those who served during World War II saw it often — whether recognized or not — in the form of gas cylinders in the U.S. Rifle, Caliber .30, M1.

The use of stainless in that particular instance emphasized the advantages it possesses for firearms applications. The major drawback to gas operation of a military self-loader in those days was the ruinous effect of chlorate (corrosive) primer residues that were not quickly cleaned off of steel surfaces. Unless thoroughly removed, the chloride residue (a salt) soaked up atmospheric moisture and promptly promoted rust.


A combat soldier could tolerate a roughened bore due to lax cleaning, but a rusty gas cylinder would put him completely out of business. Thus stainless steel was chosen for the vital gas cylinder of the M1 Garand rifle. Its resistance to corrosion kept the cylinder free of rust and roughness without frequent cleaning and thereby helped make the U.S. M1 the first genuinely successful autoloading rifle in military history.

While there are compounds that will corrode good stainless steel, they aren't commonly encountered, and they certainly don't

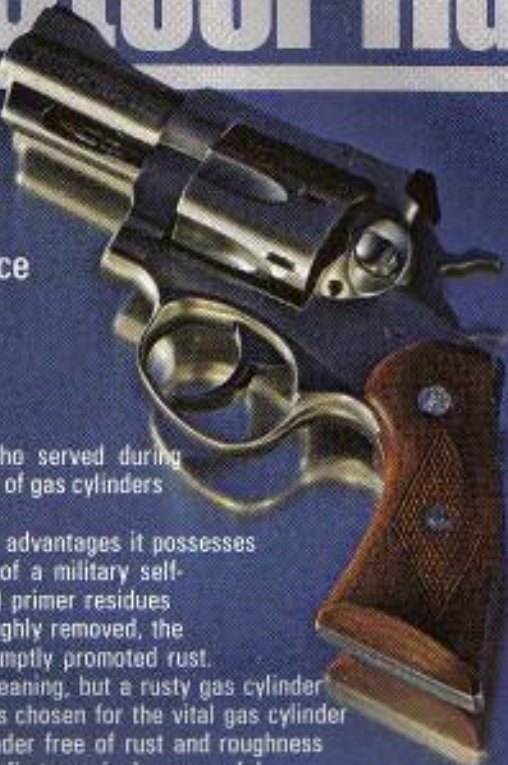
(Continued on Page 52)




Smith & Wesson
Combat Master-
piece M67
handles
all .38
Specials.



Tiny Bauer .25 auto
is smallest of all the
new stainless autoloading
pistols.



Left,
Security-
Six is
Ruger's first
stainless
production model.



Author's favorite of
small stainless
guns is this DA
Budischowski
chambered for

GUNS

The elite of the stainless
revolvers is this
S&W M66 .357 Combat
Magnum sixgun.



Walther-like Indian Arms
is the only .380 auto
available in
stainless steel.



Plainfield's
M71 is
unique with its
black-finish
stainless gun.



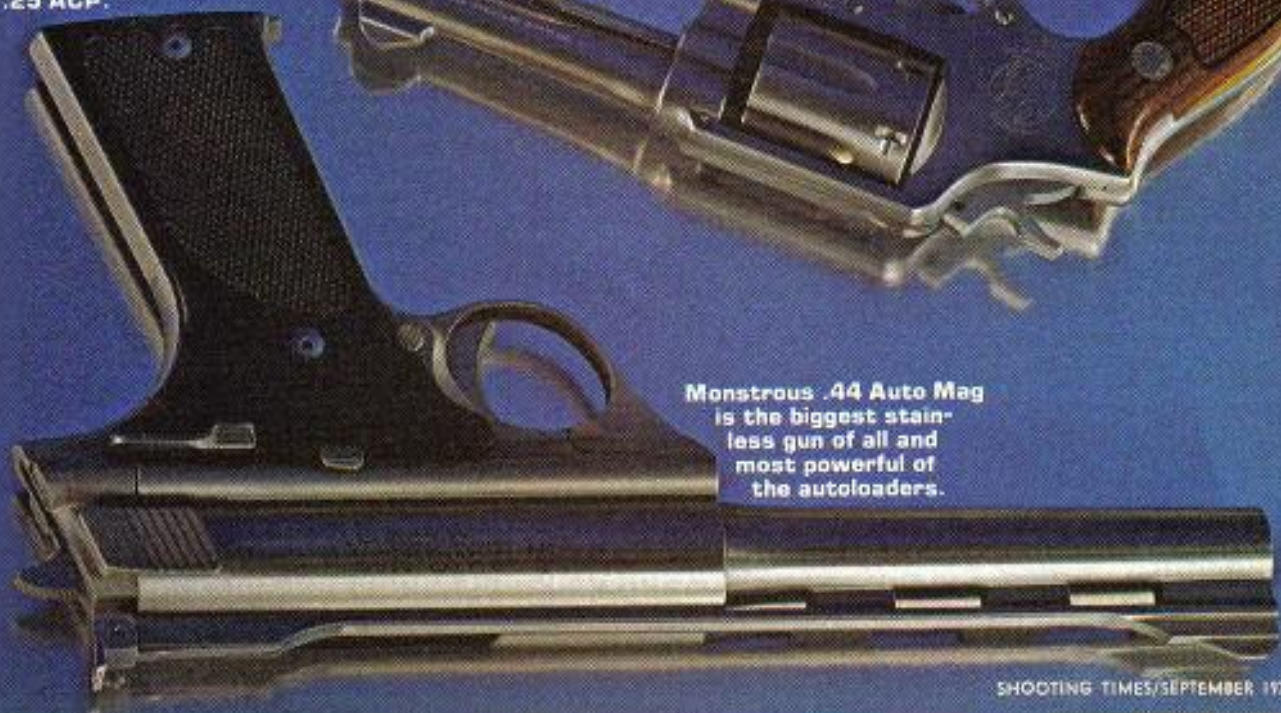
S&W M60 was the
first successful stain-
less-steel re-
volver to ever be pro-
duced in the world.



Smith & Wesson M64
is a plain fixed-sight
working gun
for police
use.



Monstrous .44 Auto Mag
is the biggest stain-
less gun of all and
most powerful of
the autoloaders.



exist in the combustion byproducts of modern ammunition, nor in the environments to which sporting and military arms are exposed.

Back in the early 1960s when the first stainless-steel revolver was under development at Smith & Wesson, a specimen was chained to a piling on the New England coast, exposed to salty sea spray for weeks. Some were dunked daily in brine, and others subjected to the cruelly abusive military salt-spray and high-humidity tests. The conventional-steel guns rusted solid and became totally inoperable, but the stainless samples functioned normally.

While stainless steel possessed ideal qualities for insuring continuing serviceability of firearms under the most severe climatic and environmental conditions, it also presented characteristics which did not endear it to gun manufacturers; characteristics which were known from the earliest attempts to make stainless rifle barrels during the teens and 20s. Contemporary authorities spoke highly of Poldi Anticorro rifle barrels, but commented disparagingly on their prohibitive cost and invariably rough bore finish.

Stainless, in its many forms, is not a free-machining material. It does not cut cleanly. One fabricator says it "cuts like sticky cheese"; another likens it to "cutting wood with a dull chisel."

avoided costly polishing and grinding.

All of these techniques have resulted in making stainless-steel guns economically feasible. Where years ago a stainless rifle barrel cost roughly five times the price of its plain counterpart, we now have all-stainless revolvers priced at only about 20 per cent above the identical model in plain steel. And now a few metal-cutting experts predict the price differential can be trimmed down to 10-15 per cent in the near future.

As this is written, companies offering stainless-steel guns are Smith & Wesson with four models; Ruger with one; Indian Arms, one; American Firearms, two; Bauer Firearms, one; Plainfield, one; Auto Mag, one; and Noramco, one. Also, other makes and models are expected to be introduced.

There is now a stainless handgun for virtually every reasonable need; from an ultra-small .25 auto hideout gun up through police service and target revolvers — to the immensely powerful, two-hand, Auto Mag hunting auto. The complete range of calibers from pipsqueaks to magnums is represented.

In long guns, the situation is less impressive. We know of no stainless shotguns likely to be available soon; and the few rifles which have been announced are either far from production reality or have been dropped entirely from



The massive Auto Mag is the most impressive of the stainless-steel guns now available.

These difficulties result in poor surface finishes, problems in holding tolerances, low cutting-tool life, and increased piece rejection.

Under polishing the surface acts "gummy" and ripples or flows, somewhat like rubbing a finger across nearly dry paint.

Most shooters demand highly polished and blued external surfaces, but it is impossible to blue bare stainless. It can be blued only by first plating it with a ferrous metal, then bluing that coating — which is a paradox, since it amounts to coating a rust-free metal (which is why it is used in the first place) with an easily rusted metal. A quite acceptable substitute for bluing is black-chrome plating — at a substantial increase in cost.

All of these factors added up to prohibitive cost factors. Not until Smith & Wesson solved the machining problems in 1965 did we get the first all-stainless revolver. And, except for a few early highly polished guns, its cost was manageable only by use of a matte-like finish.

To avoid the high cost of machining stainless parts, other makers have made maximum use of investment casting processes and techniques to produce frames, slides, and other major components requiring very little internal machining and none on the outside. They also settled for an etched-appearing finish and have

future plans. On the other hand, the major makers and many independent shops offer genuinely superb stainless rifle barrels of almost unbelievable accuracy.

To bring you up to date, we've gathered together all the stainless steel handguns available today. Some we've already shot extensively and reported on them in past issues of ST; others we've only just received and will report on in depth in future issues once we've had an opportunity to examine and shoot them adequately. For these reasons we can't report on all guns with the same amount of detail. (Manufacturers are listed in alphabetical order.)

American Firearms .25 Auto

American Firearms was the first independent firm to offer an all-stainless autoloading pistol following S&W's introduction of the M60 revolver.

The basic gun is designated simply "Stainless .25 Auto" and is a very simple number incorporating older features. It's a blowback design with a recoil spring beneath the barrel, and has fixed sights and an eight-shot magazine.

If it lacks the refinements of some more modern guns, it makes up for them in simplicity and compactness. It's the smallest of the new .25 autos and is priced at \$67.50.

The company also produces a stainless



From the biggest to the littlest of stainless guns available today — the .44 Auto Mag and the tiny .25 Bauer.

variation of the old Remington spur-trigger, over-under derringer in .38 Spl. Prices are \$69.95 and \$67.50 respectively.

For more information, see ST, July 1971, p. 58, or write to American Firearms Mfg. Co. Inc., 12008 Warfield, San Antonio, Tex. 78216.

Auto Mag .44

This is one of the century's most controversial handguns, not only because of its concept, but because of the many troubles that beset its makers from the beginning. Designed from scratch to be built entirely of stainless steel and be the world's most powerful autoloader, it is purely massive.

This original design is a rotary-bolt, recoil-operated, locked-breech, autoloader meant for use with ammunition loaded to hitherto abnormally high pressures.

At present, the Auto Mag's future is uncertain. Less than 3000 guns were built before the original company folded, and a new company, T.D.E. Inc., is assembling that many or more from original parts.

The sheer massiveness of its stainless frame, barrel, and barrel extension is most impressive. Next to that is its big .44-caliber, straight, rimless cartridge, reputed to outperform the .44 Magnum revolver round.

The barrel, its fixed extension, and the bolt recoil upon the main frame which contains the lockwork and magazine. The gun also has an exposed hammer and dual recoil springs. We will present a detailed test on this gun before the year is out.

The Auto Mag is not only the first stainless-steel big-bore autoloading pistol to be introduced in this country, it also has the dubious honor of being the biggest and heaviest handgun ever produced in quantity here.

At \$298 it's high priced, but it does appeal to the pistol fancier who wants the most impressive one-hand (?) gun available.

The Auto Mag is assembled and distributed by T.D.E. Inc., 11609 Vanowen St., N. Hollywood, Calif. 91605.

Bauer .25 Auto

Called simply ".25 Automatic" with no model number, this all-stainless-steel self-loader looks exactly like a late-production Baby Browning, and that's just what it is, a copy.

Its design is utterly simple. Takedown is by drawing the slide back $\frac{3}{16}$ of an inch, then rotating the barrel counterclockwise. Barrel and slide then slip off forward, and the barrel slips easily out of the slide. The gun is



This Indian Arms' .380 has the most unique feature of any handgun offered today — an integral key-lock type safety.



The Indian Arms' .380 is designed after the Walther PPK (right), except for the use of stainless steel and sharply squared muzzle.



Pulling down Indian's trigger guard allows slide to be drawn rearward and disengaged from frame. Then after being lifted up at the rear, the slide may be moved forward and off frame, exposing barrel and breech and recoil spring.

also hammerless, using a straight-line striker with a cocking-indicator pin protruding rearward. The magazine catch is at the butt, the recoil spring is under the barrel, and the manual safety rides ahead of the left grip. Shooting Times carried a test on this gun in the October 1972 issue and more information may be obtained by writing Bauer Firearms Corp., 345750 Klein Ave., Fraser, Mich. 48028.

Budischowski TP-70 .25 Auto

If there are nonstainless parts in this gun they aren't apparent. Aesthetically and from a design viewpoint, this is the most appealing .25 auto to come down the pike yet. It is smaller than the highly regarded (and unavailable) Walther TPH and possesses features the Walther does not, along with most that it does.

Of blowback design, it has an external slide stop which holds the slide open after the last shot, a quick takedown lever, a hammer-dropping manual safety on the slide (which shrouds the firing-pin safety), a magazine safety, wood grips, good sights, and double-action capability.

Stripping is simple. Remove the magazine (and clear the chamber, of course); draw the slide back to align the right-side dismount notch with the takedown lever; rotate the lever 180 degrees forward; ease the slide/barrel/spring unit forward off frame; invert the slide, lift out the recoil spring, and lift out the barrel.

To operate, draw the slide back and engage the slide stop; rotate the safety downward; insert a charged magazine; depress the slide stop; the slide will run forward and chamber the top cartridge; the hammer will fall safely and the gun cannot be fired or cocked. To fire DA, rotate the safety upward and pull trigger through. To fire SA, disengage the safety, thumb-cock the hammer, then pull the trigger.

The TP-70 contains a separate ejector and doesn't rely on the firing pin as so many .25s do. For a DA gun it contains few parts and works well.

The combination of stainless-steel construction and being the smallest DA auto available make it highly desirable, even at its stiff price of \$100.

The gun is manufactured and distributed by Noramco (Norton Armament Corp.), 41471 Irwin, Mt. Clemens, Mich. 48043.

Indian Arms .380 Auto

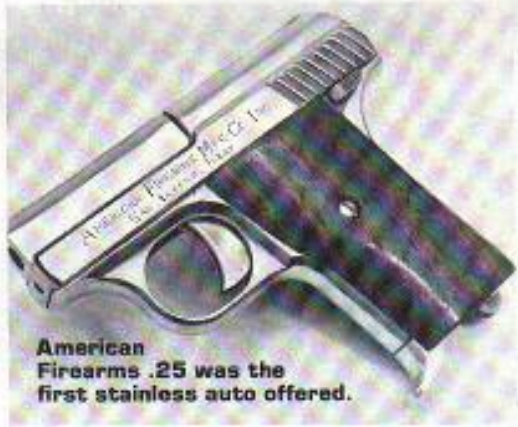
At first glance this gun looks like a stainless-steel copy of the venerable Walther PPK (PP), but it is not. It differs externally in having an integral, serrated, ventilated rib with



S&W's M67 Combat Masterpiece is the only target-sighted .38 Spl. in stainless steel.



Budischowski TP-70 .25 auto.



American Firearms .25 was the first stainless auto offered.



One of the early production S&W stainless Chief's, M60, has a bright-polished finish.

the fixed sights. Also the front of the slide is squared off sharply, as opposed to Walther streamlining and radiusing.

Another obvious difference is a key-operated lock in the right end of the safety shaft. When locked, the gun cannot be cocked, fired, or even opened.

The internal design has been simplified

and changed and offers increased mechanical advantage for easier and smoother DA functioning.

Takedown, handling, and operation are the same as for the entire PP/PPK/PPK/S line.

Best of all is the caliber — an honest .380 ACP (9mm Browning Short).

(Continued on Page 75)

Stainless Steel Handguns

Stainless Steel Handguns

(Continued from Page 53)

This is an excellent gun and it is priced at \$135 — a figure substantially less than the plain Walther.

For more information, turn to page 91, or contact Indian Arms Corp., 13503 Joseph Campau Ave., Detroit, Mich. 48212.

Plainfield M71 .22 LR/.25 ACP Auto

A year and a half ago Plainfield Machine Co. introduced its M71 stainless-steel, pocket-size autoloader, but a few problems delayed production and the first guns are only now being shipped.

This gun is unusual not only in design, but in finish. Externally it appears to be blued, though by what process I don't know. It is also of composite construction, stainless steel being used only for the major components.

Internally it differs from any other pocket-size gun. It's a completely original design with a separate and removable breech bolt fitting inside the rear of the slide and held in place by a crossbar, which is, in turn, held in place by the spring-loaded, hinged rear sight. In a matter of seconds, the sight may be raised, the crossbar pushed out, the gun stripped, and its caliber changed from .22 LR to .25 ACP (or vice versa).

Very simple.

Later, we are told, a .32/.380 ACP version will be offered, as will a double-action variation.

This is a hefty gun with a rather good feel, but it is rather bulky and boxy for pocket use. As a .25 gun for defensive use it is oversize, being nearly as big as some .380 guns because the basic design is for the .380 cartridge.

In single caliber it is priced at \$69.95, while a complete .22/.25 kit retails for \$91.50.

We'll carry a full test report in a future issue and further details are available from Plainfield Machine Co., Box 251, Middlesex, N.J. 08846.

Smith & Wesson M64 and M67 .38 Spl. and M66 .357 Magnum

Nearly a decade ago S&W sent us the first "Stainless Chief," the M60, which to this day cannot be produced fast enough to keep abreast of an ever-increasing demand.

The M60 in .38 Spl. is the ubiquitous Chief's Special (M36) reproduced in stainless steel throughout. Where the first specimens were polished bright at great expense, current production has a matte finish.

In the M60 S&W pioneered stainless steel for all parts of modern revolvers, and the trail was an arduous one requir-

(Continued on Next Page)

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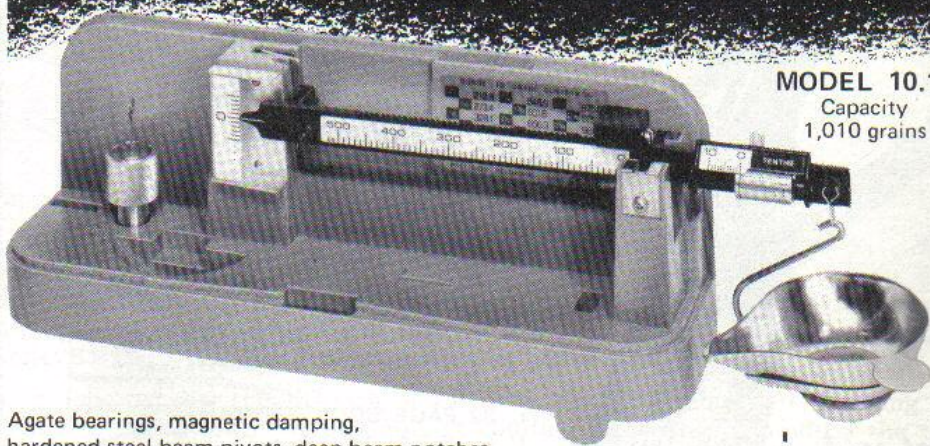
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ing much investigation of cutting processes, materials, coolants, etc. Where most makers since have made extensive use of investment castings to avoid expensive machining, S&W went the traditional route with forgings. Apparently it was worth the effort, for the M60 is a top seller and gives unusually trouble-free service.

With all the bugs out — so to speak — of the various processes, S&W added three new stainless-steel revolvers to its line in 1972. They are the M64 M&P Model, the M67 Combat Masterpiece, and the M66 Combat Magnum. (See ST, March 1973, p. 64 for a full report on the Combat Magnum.) All are precise copies of their blued-steel counterparts and have that brushed bare-metal finish.

We've found no fault with our



Ruger's new stainless Security-Six has a fully adjustable rear sight.

samples, except for the brightness of their sights — which should be blackened. All have clean, crisp, smooth actions in both SA and DA modes, and are finely accurate with all ammunition we've fed them.

The single adverse comment we've heard to date is that some galling occurs on internal parts, and at least one custom pistolsmith cures this by chrome impregnation of the contact surfaces.

All in all, the four S&W stainless revolvers are well made and well thought out. Buyers, particularly police officers, flock to them like bees to honey. Prices are on the high side: M60, \$120; M64, \$120; M66, \$175; M67, \$137.50 — but they don't seem to be holding anyone back.

It seems logical to expect more stainless guns from S&W, perhaps in the autoloader field, now that they have revolvers well covered.

More information may be obtained by writing to Smith & Wesson, 2100 Roosevelt Ave., Springfield, Mass. 01101.