By Bud Lang

There was a time when the only competition open to revolver owners was paper punching, or bullseye shooting, a discipline not too many shooters were attracted to. When Practical Pistol Course shooting came around, things picked up a bit, as competition was a bit more realistic, what with the use of barricades, etc.

When IPSC-style combat shooting came into being about a decade ago, many handgunners accepted it with open arms, as it appeared to be even more realistic, or practical, than anything offered to date. But the founding gurus apparently didn't believe revolvers deserved a place on the firing lines, as many courses of fire decidedly favored pistols. If not that, then the fact that just about any handgun outside of a .45 ACP was labeled a "minor" caliber, and unless a competitor got nothing but X-ring hits, he was out to lunch, scorewise. But as you'll see, it took a while, but things began to change.

Around 1976, a band of pistoleros got together and staged the first handgun silhouette match in this country, as a take-off on rifle silhouette shooting that was imported from Mexico. Here was a sport that was to prove challenging to more handgunners than any to date, especially so to those who enjoy long range shooting. To silhouette shooters, hearing the clang of a bullet at long range, and watching the steel fall, is more exciting than punching holes in paper. While many silhouette shooters are using bolt action and break-top pistols, there are many using revolvers, and doing quite well with them.

What all this boils down to is there is plenty of action anywhere you go these days if you want to compete. If you own a revolver and want to punch holes in bulls, do some combat shooting, or knock over steel, you can do it. There's now a shooting discipline for

John Pride, veteran LAPD (CA) officer and PPC and IPSC shooter, practices with his Aimsight-sighted Model 14 Smith & Wesson.

This S&W Model 14 "4-screw" revolver has been in use for at least 30 years, but it's completely rebuilt and helps Pride win championships in IPSC-PPC competition.
Since all combat shooting is done double action, gunsmith Bill Jarvis bobbed the hammer on Pride's M14.

This M14 S&W is fitted with a six-inch, 1-1/4-inch diameter bull barrel. Muzzle is recessed for improved performance. Top is milled to accept the aluminum Aimpoint sight mount, which is interchangeable with PPC mount.

Every revolver owner, and the only reason one can give for not competing is either not having equipment, or just being too lazy to get away from the boob tube. But if you're a handgunner, you're bound to own some guns, so it can't be the first reason.

Naturally, just any kind of revolver won't suffice for any of the shooting sports we've talked about. Some guns are certainly better than others, and as we all know, most of these guns are modified to some degree to make them precision machines. What we've done here is contact some of the better gunsmiths and shooters in the country with the intent of telling you what they are using to win matches with. We'll be talking about the guns they use, why they chose them, what modifications were made, and the reasons why. The best equipment in the world isn't going to make anyone a champion, so don't believe it will. Inherent ability is half the battle, but having good equipment will make a difference for any of us. An old hot rodder I once knew, said "Speed costs money. How fast do you want to go?" Well, that also applies to shooting, in a sense. If you want to win, you have to have a good gun, and they do cost money.

What we'll be doing for the rest of this article is talking about some of the people involved in winning championship matches, or building guns for championship shooters, and what their equipment comprises. In no particular order, we'll take them one at a time.

John Pride, IPSC and PPC Shooter

An active competitor, John Pride has been a member of the Los Angeles Police Department for nearly 14 years, joined the LAPD pistol team 10 years ago, has been an LAPD firearms instructor for 8 years, and also works with their explosives unit in scientific investigation.

His handgun achievements include being a member of the Governor's Twenty (in California) for 8 of the past 9 years, and he's been rated #2 most of that time. In 1979, he was the Canadian Police Champion. In 1983, as a member of the LAPD revolver team, they won the team title at the Bianchi Cup as well as the California State Championship. Also, at the '83 Bianchi Cup shoot, John came in second overall, losing out by a single point.

At this time, Pride has three different revolvers with which he wins matches, so we'll cover each of them.

The first began life as a Smith & Wesson Model 14 4-screw, probably made in the late '40s. This is the one John shot in the '83 Bianchi Cup match (he came in second, one point behind winner Brian Enos), and also used in PPC competition with the Aimpoint sight removed.

This gun was customized by Bill Jarvis, a Huntington Beach, CA, gunsmith and former CHP officer. Bill installed a six-inch, 1-1/4-inch diameter stainless steel Atkinson barrel, and the scene of his M10 was built by Royce Waddell for Pride.

Douglas barrel, aluminum scope mount, Mark III Aimpoint sight, bobbed the hammer, tuned the trigger, smoothed it and installed a trigger stop, and installed a pair of custom grips by John Hurst. Hurst is a retired LAPD officer, and (still) record-holding PPC shooter and former Olympic competitor.

Pride removes the Aimpoint and mount from this revolver, replacing them with an Arist-O-Crat sight system, when using the gun in PPC shooting.

The second gun in Pride's gun box is a later model M10 standard 3-screw. This is the piece he used in 1983 to take the Canadian National Police Combat match, the equivalent of the NRA Nationals in the U.S. His M10 was built by Royce Waddell, a retired policeman and respected gunsmith in Norman, OK. Designed for PPC work, the M10 features a 1-1/4-inch diameter stainless steel Atkinson barrel, Arist-O-Crat sight rib and John Hurst custom grips.

The heavy barrels both absorb recoil and help him get back on target fast. Waddell milled the Arist-O-Crat sight base to fit the heavy barrel, since it's much larger than the standard tube. One reason so many shooters use this sight is because it features three preset settings for 7, 28 and 60 yard shoot-
An inexpensive rubber eraser is glued to trigger guard of Pride's M10, acting as a stop for the polished and contoured trigger.

The red unique Buckhorn rear sight which can't be stressed too much.

An Atkinson barrel is concaved at muzzle rather than recessed. Arlo-Cramp ramp sight was milled to fit the barrel.

Custom wood grips by John Hurst are used by Pride on both his M14 and M10 revolvers. Backstrap of frame is exposed, allowing you to get a better grip on gun, and more finger on the trigger.

Brian Enos, 1983 Bianchi Cup Champion, fires from a barricade with his Frank Glenn customized S&W M10 Aimpoint-sighted revolver, during a practice session. Taking Enos is Rob Leatham, close friend and competitor (Rob finished 6th in the Bianchi Cup in 1983, and was the '83 IPSC National Champion).

Brian Enos, 1983 Bianchi Cup Champion, fires from a barricade with his Frank Glenn customized S&W M10 Aimpoint-sighted revolver, during a practice session. Taking Enos is Rob Leatham, close friend and competitor (Rob finished 6th in the Bianchi Cup in 1983, and was the '83 IPSC National Champion).

A 27-year-old import car mechanic in Mesa, AZ, Brian Enos has been shooting for 10 years, but only in the last four has he engaged in serious competitive shooting. But what a wild four years it has been. I feel it's safe to say that no other combat shooter in the world has come up as fast as this young man. While he may have outstanding equipment to shoot with, he's also a born shooter. He discovered what other shooters were using in combat matches when he got the urge to compete, and acquiring similar equipment, he then set out to do the best he could. This has always been foremost in his mind; do his best. And that meant practicing diligently, learning what he was doing right, and overcoming his faults. He claims to be a perfectionist, and this is certainly borne out in his accomplishments. Brian also openly gives credit where it's due. He states that former Olympic Team member and U.S. Shotgun Champion, John Satterwhite, has been very instrumental in teaching him the importance of mental discipline.

Take a look at his accomplishments. In 1981, he finished 21st in the Bianchi Cup, respectable for a new shooter. Then in the '81 Steel Challenge, a speed shooting event, he placed 5th, which is darn good. At the 1981 IPSC National Championships, he came in 13th, again respectable. Competing in the '81 Soldier of Fortune 3-gun match, he placed a very credible second.

In the 1982 Bianchi Cup Brian
Shooting a Frank Glenn customized S&W M10 (with 4-inch Python barrel), is Brian Enos. This is one of his favorite combat revolvers. The Davis Custom bull barrel PPC revolvers are based on Ruger, Colt or Smith & Wesson Model 10, 13, 64 or 65 (shown is the S&W M10) guns. This is Davis's Grade II which features an Apex heavy barrel of 1-inch outside diameter, Davis's sliding cam adjustable rib and front sight, trigger stop, Pachmayr grips and tuned action.

finished 2nd, one point behind three-time winner Mickey Fowler, who was shooting a highly modified Colt pistol. Needless to say, Brian's Aipoint-sighted revolver raised some eyebrows, and the fact that he raised his standing from 21st to 2nd in one year indicated he learned a lot about shooting and his gun in one year. A 7th place finish in the Steel Challenge meant he was still hot, while a 15th in the IPSC Nationals indicated he was still very competitive. He also entered the '82 Second Chance event, and came away with a 10th overall finish—highest ever—for a .38 Special revolver. Brian also placed 1st in the 4-inch unmodified revolver event.

But 1983 was his year. Enos came through with a third in the Steel Challenge speed event, 2nd in the IPSC Nats, 9th in the IPSC World Championships, and FIRST in the Bianchi Cup matches. Not only did he dominate the Bianchi Cup matches (took first in two of five events—something no other shooter did, and stunned everyone when he downed 505 falling plates in a row), but his performance there had a marked influence on many other competitors. While some thought his near dominance in '82 with a revolver was a fluke, many others didn't.

Facts: Seven of the top 10 finishers in the Bianchi Cup competition used Aipoint-sighted revolvers (14 of the top 20, too), the four-member LAPD team won the team event—all using Aipoint-sighted wheelguns; while 116 Bianchi competitors shot Colt .45s, 77 shot .38 Specials/.357 Magnums (revolvers?); and, John Pride, second place finisher (one point behind), also used an Aipoint-sighted revolver.

Brian Enos is currently using three different revolvers in competition. For Bianchi Cup shooting, he uses an S&W M10 built up by Frank Glenn of Phoenix AZ, renowned gunsmith and PPC competitor. One of the most talented smiths around, Frank installed a six-inch, one-inch diameter Douglas barrel on the M10, including a concave muzzle. Atop the frame is a MK II Aipoint sight and mount. He also bobbed the hammer and gave the gun one of his accuracy jobs, which involves smoothing up the trigger more than reducing pull. Grips are by Pachmayr. Brian can remove the scope and mount, replac-
changes in a matter of seconds. The Davis rib features an adjustable front sight with three instantly available positions (7, 25 and 50 yards). This allows you to preset your front sight for your particular sight picture and ammunition; when you change aiming points, simply push the front sight latch to your next position. It also allows you to use your rear sight for fine tuning.

Davis PPC guns are guaranteed capable of X-ring accuracy at 50 yards with factory ammo.

**Fred's Gun Shop PPC Guns**

A respected gunsmith in Mancheste, VA, Fred Schmidt specializes in PPC conversions, but also builds combat and undercover guns. One of his conversions, a Short Cylinder model, is quite unique, and to explain why it was developed will require some basic explanation of how the revolver functions.

The standard gun used in PPC shooting is usually a revolver. For the cylinder in a revolver to rotate freely, the gun must present a substantial amount of barrel-to-cylinder gap, which is usually around 0.004-0.006-inch. Cases such as the .38 Special/.357 Magnum headspace on their rim, and it's common practice for manufacturers to ream cylinder bores to just a fraction over maximum case length, leaving the area in front of the cylinder bore, the throat, necked down to approximately the same diameter as the bullet, or maybe 0.001-inch larger.

When a revolver is fired repeatedly, the cylinder heats up, thus closing the barrel-to-cylinder gap somewhat. But, because the gap is still there, unburned powder and lead tend to "spit" through it. Further, when a lead bullet encounters the barrel's forcing cone, it is slowed, while expanding gases in the case expand the hollow base of the bullet to seal those gases. This occurs while the base of the bullet is still in the cylinder throat.

It is Schmidt's contention these actions cause undue friction in the cylinder throat (as the expanded bullet drags on its walls), heating up the cylinder, and leaving lead residue on the throat walls. It is also his contention this heat buildup is what requires the use of such a large cylinder-to-barrel gap, from which the lead residue and unburned powder are spit. He also believes the bullet friction encountered at the small, stock forcing cone increases recoil and reduces muzzle velocity.

What we're building up to here is a patent Fred Schmidt has on a modified revolver that is illustrated herein, and the reasons for it.

Schmidt feels he has solved these problems with his "Short Cylinder" PPC revolver. It features a shortened cylinder, only 1.22-inch long (.003-inch longer than HBWC round), designed for use only with HBWC .38 Special ammo. Because the cylinder is almost exactly the same length as the HBWC cartridge, it precludes use of any other rounds. Further, Schmidt eliminates the cylinder throats entirely, leaving the few thousandths of throat left in the
Jerry Bartlett, one of the top silhouette shooters in IHMSA competition, shoots his stainless Ruger .44 Mag Blackhawk from the standing position. He just started using this gun, and has shot a 37 x 40 from the freestyle position, while his wife, Jo, has been shooting .38s and .39s with it.

cylinder bores at least .005-.020-inch larger in diameter than the bullets. Because the cylinders are shortened, barrels of these guns extend back through the frame, and come with a cylinder-to-barrel gap usually around .002-inch. Whereas stock forcing cones may be as shallow in depth as 1/8-inch, Fred builds his PPC guns with forcing cones between 1/2 and 5/8-inch deep.

Here are reasons for the above described modifications, if they aren't apparent. With the short cylinder, when the HBWC bullet contacts the beginning of the rifling in the deepened forcing cone, its base is still in the case mouth, and expanding gas pressure does not make the bullet base expand. Because the minute throat left in the cylinder is opened up, the bullet does not contact it as it leaves the case. Thus there can be no leading in the cylinder, and thereby lead buildup, excessive heat and spitting of lead. With less friction, velocity is improved, too. So much for theory. How does this system work?

Five of 20 shooters making the West Virginia Governors Twenty in 1983 shot Schmidt Short Cylinder PPC guns, including those in number two and three slots. In addition, two of five on the Honorable Mention list shot these guns. The Most Improved W. VA shooter boosted his score 49.8 points after switching to a Schmidt gun. Six shooters in Virginia used this Short Cylinder gun, and made the Governors Twenty in 1983, also.

M.B. Delaney, an NRA Master shooter from Michigan, put over 4000 rounds through his Short Cylinder Schmidt PPC gun the first year he had it (1981), and reports no trouble, no misfires, no leading, and a boost in his scores. He and another officer made the Michigan Governors Twenty in 1980 with these guns. Other users report similar results.

Relative to lead/powder spitting, Schmidt tested his first revolver by suspending tissue sheets on each side of the cylinder-to-barrel gap (one-inch away). After firing 40 rounds, the tissue revealed only powder marks, no lead splatter. A stock, unmodified revolver sprayed the tissue in subsequent tests, with both lead and powder.

Schmidt's #100 Short Cylinder PPC gun features a Douglas 1-10 twist premium grade 1.08-inch diameter, six-inch barrel, slugged to one-inch, tapped for all ribs (BoMar, Davis, Aristo-Crat, Mascot). The gun also features a yoke lock and cylinder lock to keep the cylinder in swung-out position while reloading. A smooth single and double action trigger, adjustable strain screw, spring loaded hammer nose, chamfered cylinder, and extractor under-cut finish it off. This model is built up on S&W, K, L, and N frame guns, as well as Rugers.

Fred has a #110 PPC conversion that includes all of the above except for the short cylinder, for those who don't wish to go that route. A long forcing cone in the barrel of these guns is specially shaped and highly polished to reduce leading and spitting, however.

Assisting Schmidt in the development of his Short Cylinder conversion was Sgt. L.E. Seigel, Henrico Co. Police Dept., VA. Schmidt produced the conversion, Seigel did the range testing, putting over 9000 rounds through the prototype, and 20,000 rounds through the first production gun. They discovered little evidence of leading in the barrel, cylinder charge holes or around the barrel extending into the frame. Occasionally the recoil plate was cleaned of powder residue, common to all revolvers.

Jerry Bartlett, Silhouette Shooter

Southern Californian Jerry Bartlett has been an active silhouette shooter for around five years now. So much so, in fact, that he's involved in just about every aspect of the game. He competes on a regular basis with the Inland Silhouette Club in Redlands, CA, shoots in Regional, State and International IHMSA matches, owns and operates the Iron Sight Gun Works, through which he sells silhouette guns and accessories, including his own metallic sights for a variety of handguns, and does gunsmithing to boot. Not only that, but he shoots in all categories at IHMSA matches, and is one of the top shooters in the country.

In the Revolver class, Bartlett shoots a Ruger stainless bull barreled .44 Magnum. Because this is a Production gun, modifications are very limited. Jerry gave it a trigger job, not so much to reduce trigger pull, but to smooth the action to a point where release is quick and crisp, the only internal modification permissible under IHMSA rules. He also installed a set of Pachmayr grips, famous for cushioning the fierce recoil of the .44 Mag. Jerry's favorite load for this gun is the 240-grain Sierra JHC bullet backed by 24 grains of W296, CCI 350 Magnum primer, and Federal brass. His best to date with this combo is 37-40.
This United Sporting Arms Seville revolver, in .357 Maximum, is used by 10-year-old J.J. Bartlett. He's shot a 38 x 40 with it, and 74 x 80 (including 20 rains) at the '93 IHMSA International Championships.

Shooting from a modified Creedmore position, this silhouette shooter uses a 10-1/2-inch barrelled Ruger Blackhawk in .357 Maximum caliber. Gun is unmodified except for improved trigger pull and an opened up forcing cone to prevent bullet shaving.

His wife, Jo, also shoots the same gun in IHMSA competition, and the same load. Don't tell Jerry, but his better half (Jo) has shot a pair of 38s and a 39 during the first three matches she entered with them. Jo also shoots in the other IHMSA categories, and takes many trophies on her own, and, combined with Jerry, the two have taken many team trophies.

J.J. Bartlett, Silhouette Shooter

Can't leave out J.J. Bartlett, 10-year-old son of the above couple. This little guy outshoots most of the adults he comes up against, and also is shooting all four categories in IHMSA competition. For the Revolver class, J.J. has chosen to shoot a 10-1/2-inch Seville chambered for the .357 Maximum cartridge. In his first three matches, J.J. came through with scores of 37 x 40, 38 x 40, and a 74 x 80 at the International Championships, taking down all 20 rains. When you consider the gun is almost as big as the kid, this is something. He not only takes on most of the juniors, and dominates them thoroughly, but most of the men. His favorite load is the 180-grain Sierra FPJ bullet and 21.8 grains of W680, Remington brass, and Federal 205 primer, which is an excellent combination. His dad gave this gun a trigger job, too.

Tim Zufle, Silhouette Shooter

When it comes to banging steel, Tim Zufle out of Gretna, Louisiana, is a veteran. He was one of a privileged few at the first-ever National Handgun Metallic Silhouette Championship staged by Lee Jurrus in Tucson, AZ, during September, 1975. Tim shot a standard Smith & Wesson six-inch Model 57 revolver, chambered for the .41 Magnum cartridge, and even though he was competing against a battery of Auto-Mags, had one of the best scores of the match.

At the Second Nats, held in El Paso, TX, the following year, Tim used the same gun. The rules were a bit different this time out, and 53 shooters showed up. This time out he shot a 14 x 40, respectable for a six-inch box-stock wheelgun.

During the summer of '78 Tim was shooting a Ruger Super Blackhawk in .44 Mag chambering, and IHMSA was now a reality. Silhouette matches were being held all over the country. He holds a Life Membership in IHMSA (#10), and his wife, Dianne, is #11. He also served two years as the Louisiana State Director, as well as Region II director for IHMSA. In July, '78, Tim shot a 33 x 60 in Production Standing class with his Blackhawk, using a 240-grain Sierra JSP, Federal case, 22.0 grains of 2400 (nice warm load), and a CCI large pistol primer. In August, 1976, he was shooting the same combo in Production AA class, and shot a darn good 29 x 40.

The next gun isn't a revolver, but we have to mention it. John Towle, famous for building up single shot pistols for Unlimited shooters, convinced Tim to go with a 15-inch Hart barrelled Wichita pistol, in full length .358 Winchester chambering. It was called the TNT .358, and Tim states it bit you at both ends. He shot a 37 x 40 with this combo in 1978.

He still shoots in IHMSA competition, but much of his time is now devoted to his gun shop and indoor range in Gretna, LA, where he also teaches civilians firearms training, and how to survive. In addition, he manufactures Silent Partner soft body armor for law enforcement and executive use.

Ichiro Nagata, Combat Shooter

A resident of northern California, Ichiro Nagata was active in Practical Pistol Course (PPC) shooting for a few years, then got caught up in the world of combat shooting, IPSC-style. For the first two years, he shot a modified
A 10 1/2-inch Ruger Super Blackhawk in .44 Magnum keeps this silhouette shooter happy. Leather leg shield is a must for the revolver shooters, due to the cylinder/barrel gap, otherwise flame would burn the leg. Shooting glove helps absorb some of the recoil.

Colt .45 auto, and while he figures the auto is easier to reload in combat matches (faster), there are some courses of fire where this speed isn't required. The Bianchi Cup, for one, where he experienced two jams last year.

When this occurred, he decided to buy a revolver for these matches, and what a revolver he chose. He owns one of two custom revolvers designed by Ron Power, gunsmith from Independence, MO. The other gun is being used by Mickey Fowler, also of California, and three-time Bianchi Cup champion and winner of the '83 Steel Challenge: the World Speed Shooting Championship.

Power chose the Smith & Wesson Model 686 stainless .357 Distinguished Combat Magnum revolver as the basis of these Grand Master Deluxe guns, two of the finest combat guns you'll ever see. The guns feature a 6-inch Douglas premium grade barrel, counter-bored with a target type crown, and milled sides. A stainless ejector shroud/barrel weight is also employed on the underside of the barrel. Power bobbed the hammer, gave the Smith an action job, and contoured and polished the trigger.

Other custom touches include numbering the cylinder bores, stippling of the backstrap, Hogue custom one-piece grips, slight scroll engraving on the barrel, satin finish on both gun and barrel, and installation of a one-piece vent rib with fully adjustable sights. This unit, the Power Custom Grand Master rib, features a multi-range rear sight that permits rapid sight changes with the turn of a wheel, from four different fixed ranges. Nagata carries his Power Custom revolver in Ted Blocker leather, designed specifically for this gun.

Mark Duncan, PPC and IPSC Shooter

Mark Duncan runs his own sporting goods shop in Wilkesboro, NC, which keeps him pretty busy, but every chance he gets, you'll find him practicing for local and national PPC and combat matches. While he shoots a Colt .45 ACP in most of the combat-type matches, he uses revolvers exclusively for his PPC shooting and the Bianchi Cup competition. He has been involved in handgun competition for six years now, and is definitely one of the better shooters in the country.

In PPC shooting he competes in two different classes at times. If a snub-nose match is scheduled, Mark breaks out his Ruger Security-Six snubby, a stainless gun with Pachmayr grips, bobbed hammer, and an action job. Leonard Baity, in Mark's hometown, does all the work on Duncan's guns, including the Ruger .357 Mag. This is also Mark's "carry gun," when he finds it necessary to do so.

Mark also uses a Smith & Wesson M15 with six-inch Douglas 1-in-14 twist bull barrel. Baity also bobbed the hammer on this gun, gave it an action job, installed Pachmayr grips as well as a Bo-Mar sight.

Shooting this gun in National Marksman Association competition, Mark has taken six state and three regional championships, set six national records, and placed third, second, third and fifth in the last four Bianchi Cup matches. Now, this is...
One of the guns Duncan shoots is a Ruger Security-Six in .357 Mag chambering. This snubby features nothing more than an action job bobbed hammer, and Pachmayr grips. It’s used in PPC snub-nose events, and as a “carry gun.”

doing some pretty hot shooting. In the Bianchi Cup ‘83 matches, he placed second right behind Brian Enos, eventual winner of the entire match, in the Moving Target stage. Duncan estimates he’s put 150,000 rounds through this gun in both practice sessions and actual competition, and it’s still going strong. While it was designed for PPC work, as you can see, it fares well in IPSC shooting, too.

The final gun in his shooting box is another S&W M15, but this one is a plain service gun, sporting Pachmayr grips and an action job. Shooting ammo from Atlanta Arms & Ammo, Mark set a NMA national record with it. He shoots both wadcutters and 158-grain RN ammo through it.

Ron Power Custom PPC Guns

Like a lot of custom gunsmiths, Ron Power of Independence, MO, literally cut his teeth on guns. At the tender age of eight, he was given his first rifle, a thoroughly used Remington Model 12 pump that only fired in the single shot mode—and Ron was on his way to becoming a gunsmith. When he turned 12, his dad gave him an H&R .22 revolver, which he proceeded to shoot so much he had to repair or replace (with handmade parts) just about everything in it during the next two years.

Over the years Power learned a lot more by working in a nearby gunshop as a ‘smith, and a stint in the U.S. Army where he discovered the Colt .45 auto, and how to make it work. Back in civvies, he met Herb Binsbacher, who was also working with him at Troost Avenue Gunshop in Kansas City, MO. Herb, who recently retired from the K.C. PD, is a partner with Ron in Power Custom, Inc., and does most of the custom action work, while Ron does the machining and precision fitting of parts, each complimenting the others precision workmanship.

Ron Power displays one of his Special Edition Ruger Redhawk, one of a 1 of 200 series built for members of the Ruger Collectors Association. This Grand Master Deluxe revolver is a “full house” piece, built for “show or go.”

In addition to their evident talents, we must point out that Power Custom has been represented at every NRA National Championship PPC Match (as competitors, not on-lookers) since that first match in 1962. They claim they didn’t invent the sport, but were there when it started. While both earned an early reputation for their accuracy work with .45 Autos, they’re probably better known today for their custom revolvers, most built on Smith & Wesson and Ruger frames. Power Custom is recognized as the firm that first used a custom heavy ribbed barrel on a PPC gun, the first to build “full house” competition guns, as the designer of patented sighting systems (manufactured by Wichita Arms), the builder of high grade custom revolvers for both PPC and Bianchi Cup shooting, and as the designer and manufacturer of more than 30 different products and tools for the pistolsmith (sold through Brownell’s, Montezuma, Iowa, and Power Custom).

Because Power Custom makes many different custom guns, we can’t
This S&W Model 10 as modified by Campbell Irwin is a far cry from the piece it once was. It's a combo gun that the owner, Russ Dillon, can use for PPC work or hunting. Barrel is by Douglas, grips are custom, and it's completely accurized.

Campbell Irwin testfires a bull barreled custom Model 10 S&W he just finished for a customer. Every gun he builds is tested for functioning and accuracy before being delivered to make sure it's perfect. It's a contoured and polished trigger, and overtravel screw.

If you order a Grand Master Delux for PPC shooting, your gun will come with a Power custom vent-rib sighting system, in stainless, with blue sights front and rear. This unit is Power's variable range system wherein the front sight post is protected with twin sight guards, and is click adjustable for elevation changes. At the rear, you can pre-set the sight for four different ranges, then by turning a cammed wheel, you can immediately "dial in" the exact setting for a different range without having to count clicks. Winding corrections are made at the rear sight.

If you're interested in Bianchi Cup type shooting, then your gun will be equipped with conventional sights and the Power Custom Aimpoint mount. This unit can also be used for bullseye shooting and hunting. The reason Power installs conventional sights on these guns is that his Aimpoint mount is a see-through type.

We could ramble on all day, but other features of these guns include custom Hogue monogrips, stippled backstrap, mainspring, adjusting screw, non-glare sighting surfaces, and a brushed satin finish. Power Custom builds only complete guns, and many are the champion shooters who rely on them. They built their name by relying on old world craftsmanship with modern technology.

**Campbell Irwin Combat Guns**

A veteran shooter and hunter, Campbell Irwin, of East Hartford, CT, participated in handgun, rifle and shotgun competition for years, before business demands got the best of him. In recent years, he's so busy building custom guns for customers both in the States and overseas, that he's missed out on more than one hunting season, something he regrets. Not so much because he's filling tags, but because he loves the outdoors and all that it offers.

Cam states that he works on all types of firearms, of every make, but he is known for producing some of the slickest revolvers around. Unlike many 'smiths, he doesn't limit himself to one particular make of revolver, nor does he produce guns incorporating specific features, so that every one is identical to every other. He modifies Smith & Wesson's, Colt's and Ruger's, plus a few others, although most of his work involves the "big three".

In his own words, Cam states that he "builds guns for the individual. Everybody's hand is shaped differently, they stand differently while shooting, and they look down the sights differently. There are other ramifications that come into the situation, and in my estimation we cannot make one gun for everybody. I've always been a believer that the gun has to fit the man, otherwise he won't shoot it, or at least, won't shoot it well." In keeping with this theory, let's take a look at a Smith & Wesson Model 10 Campbell Irwin custom built for one of his customers, Russ Dillon.

Dillon wanted a combination gun, one he could shoot pins with, steel plates, and if he wanted, rapid fire bullseye matches. He's also a "portholder", so he had to take this into consideration.

After disassembling the gun, Cam polished the inside of the frame until it sparkled, removing every trace of machine marks and burrs. He also polished the pivot spindles for the hammer and the trigger, then stoned and polished their notches so they were ultra-smooth, using extreme care not to change their angles. Then all parts were put on matching blocks so that all

(Continued on page 78)
had placed his sights high up on the neck of a buck that was standing 3/4 facing him about 140 yards off. He had sighted his Redhawk for 125 yards, so his hold was just right. The big slug punched its way right through the neck, and out the right shoulder. His trophy went down so quick, John said it didn't know what hit him. After taking care of the carcass, Rucker hauled it out to a friend's ranch and hung it in a shed to cool, then returned to cheer me on.

The area we were hunting was on private land, and fortunately, there are few hunters on it at any one time. Unlike some wooded areas I've hunted deer on, where there's a hunter (or so it seems) for every square yard of land, out there it was a hunter for every couple of square miles. Still, we heard gunfire echoing across the land, which kept the pronghorns on the alert, and forever moving about. As it turned out, a couple of days went by before I got a chance to make a killing shot. On the second day of our hunt, I did make a long shot, at about 175 yards, that completely missed a nice buck. When I saw dust kick up just beyond him, and he started to move out, I knew I was out of luck for that day.

We were both using metallic sights on our Rugers, but I'm considering going to optics for long range work. The old eyes ain't what they used to be. But then I'll have to contend with mirage which can be pretty bad on hot days, especially if you use a 4X scope or higher. So, maybe I'll stick with a Redfield 1.5X scope since it will give me the clear picture I need without distorting the distance so much. I've always felt that high power scopes on rifles often give the shooter a false sense or range, because of their magnification, and the user then misjudges distance and misses good shots.

In summation, I should point out that many states do legislate what caliber of handgun you can use on big or trophy game. In Wyoming, they allow the following handgun calibers only: .41 Remington Magnum, .44 Remington Magnum, .45 Auto Mag, .45 Winchester Magnum, and .454 Casull; and that's it. So, if you know where you want to hunt, make sure your cartridge is legal before you buy a new revolver and decide to try your hand in the field.

Sureshooting Accuracy

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The interior of this M19 S&W looks standard, but it's completely polished and refined by Campbell Irwin, using all factory parts.

firm. He installed a Douglas barrel on Russ's Smith, with a customary deep throating job. He always believed that accuracy will be enhanced where a bullet can make a nice, easy entry into the bore, instead of abruptly hitting a shallow forcing cone. Once the M10 was completed, Cam tested it for functioning, then took it out to a range and put a few hundred rounds through it. He declares that while the DA pull is a lot lighter, all of his guns perform as reliably as factory models when it comes to ignition. Customers can also alter the mainspring adjustment screw setting in the butt to change the amount of pull.

When Dillon took delivery of his Smith M10, he couldn't believe it was the same gun (it wasn't). He reports that the action is ultra-slick, and the gun really groups now, and he can use it in different shooting disciplines; it's a real combo gun.

Before signing off, we have to touch on a few modifications Irwin made to the Colt Trooper MK III recently, in what appears to be a real combat revolver. Due to lack of space, we'll just hit the highlights.

First, Irwin replaced the Trooper's barrel with a four-inch Python tube, which really improved weight and balance. The trigger was narrowed, highly polished and contoured on the finger side for better contact and control. DA pull was 14 pounds, and S.A. let-off was 8 pounds. These were altered to 7 pounds D.A., and 2 1/2 pounds S.A. The DAO trigger and hammer were replaced with MK V units, which offer a shorter lock time. The mainspring and strut were also changed to give a smoother D.A. pull. Now when the trigger is pulled, it doesn't move back to a certain point, then get hard. The interior of the frame and the trigger assembly components are all polished to remove all possibility of drag and the barrel has had its forcing cone taper lengthened. Like many combat guns he builds, the finish is a non-glare type.

From what we've offered here, it's plain to see that Irwin believes in highly polished interior components, done to produce guns that are free to function smoothly. He also performs action jobs that allow the trigger/hammer to work smoothly. With a proper set of grips, and good sights, the shooter should have a gun that will work for him. If that happens, his scores are bound to improve. And that's what this entire article has been about. Shooters, gunsmiths, and their guns. What they're using, what they're doing to them, and how they're performing. We've given you a broad cross-section of guns and people from across the nation, and we think you have something of value here. If you do, we succeeded in our efforts.

Best of the Imports
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front, by a catch in the top of the crane. Both are simultaneously released by a thumbpiece in the traditional location. In .44 Magnum with the longest barrel, the Super Comanche is a massive gun, and the well-shaped walnut grips with raised checkered panels are a real advantage for maintaining a steady hold. I tried the Llama, with both .44 Magnum and .44 Special loads, by Federal, and found it pleasant to shoot even with the Magnum rounds. Like the other target-length revolver, it did bet-

Here are the addresses of the import firms mentioned:

Allen Fire Arms
1107 Pen Road
Santa Fe, NM 87501

Taurus International
4553 SW 71st Avenue
Miami, FL 33155

Interarms, Ltd.
10 Prince Street
Alexandria, VA 22313

F.I.E. Corporation
Postoffice Box 4866
Hialeah, FL 33014

Stoeger Industries
55 Ruta Court
South Hackensack, NJ 07606

RG Industries
2845 NW 20th Street
Miami, FL 33142

Beeman Precision Arms
47 Paul Drive
San Rafael, CA 94903