

GUNS & AMMO

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500

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**NEW GUNS FOR '70** *Page 32*

**FIRST LOOK AT THE ALL-NEW
44 MAGNUM AUTO!**

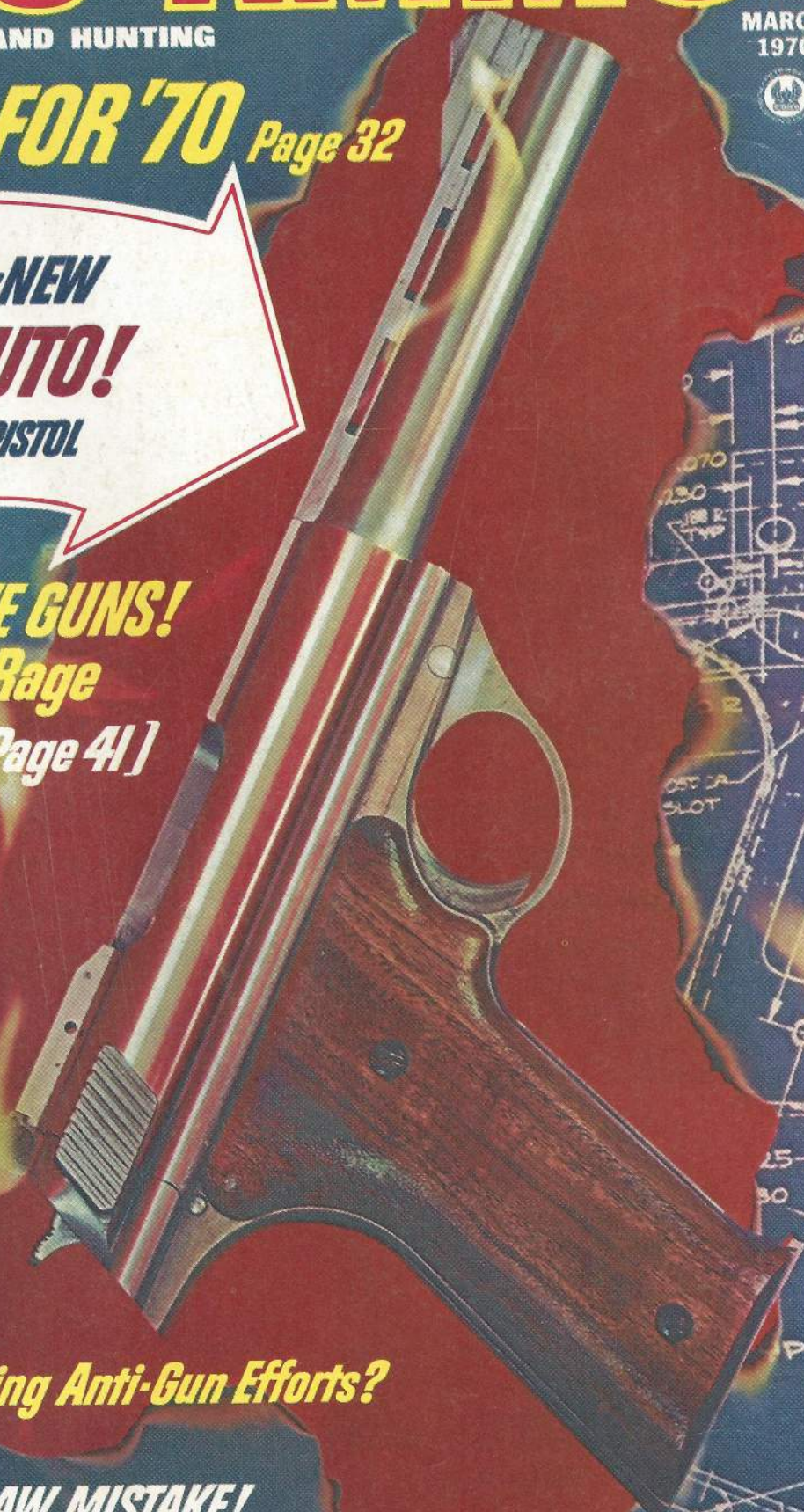
WORLD'S MOST POWERFUL PISTOL

COMMEMORATIVE GUNS!
Latest Collecting Rage
[First Color Photos Page 41]

.22 LR PACKS PUNCH!

Are Charity Funds Financing Anti-Gun Efforts?

SENATOR ADMITS GUN LAW MISTAKE!



Jeff Cooper Takes A FIRST LOOK At The World's Most Powerful Pistol!

The ALL-NEW **.44 MAGNUM AUTO**

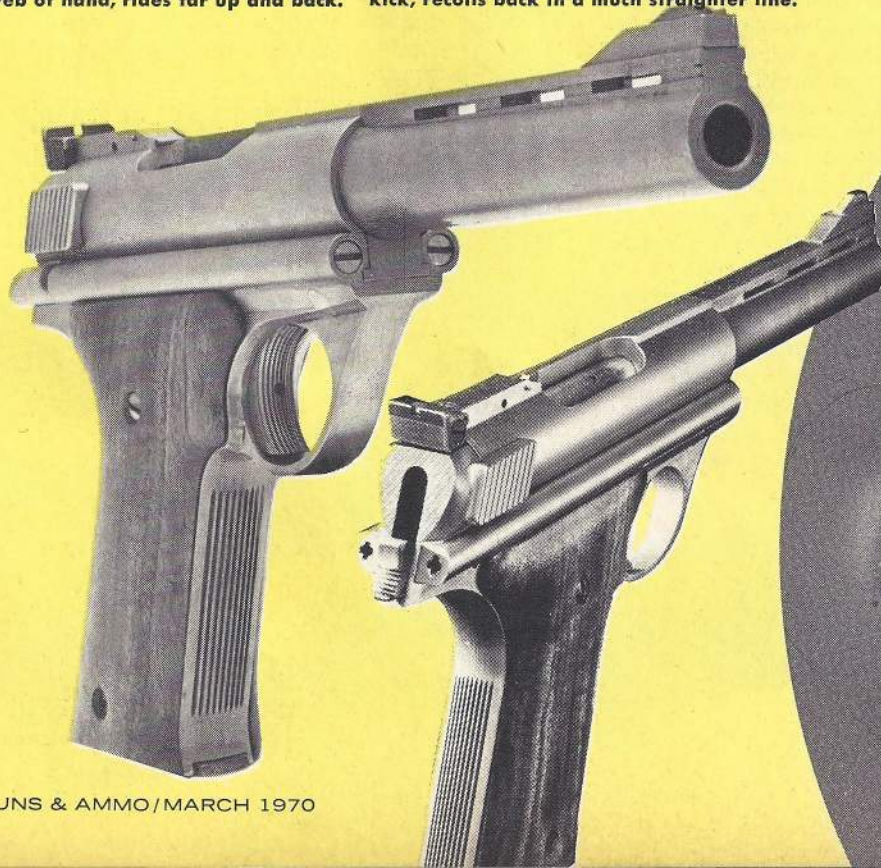
**Modern Design Genius Now Puts The
Power Of The .44 Magnum Cartridge Out
The Barrel And Not Up The Arm!**



The .44 Magnum revolver rocks back sharply into web of hand, rides far up and back.



The .44 Auto Mag absorbs much of its own kick, recoils back in a much straighter line.



Some years ago this magazine published a photograph of a pistol cartridge for which there was no pistol (G&A Vol. 1, No. 1 — Summer, 1958). It was a .308 case cut to the length of the .44 Special revolver cartridge, sized to .44 caliber, and loaded with a .44 pistol bullet. The idea was that a .44 automatic would be an interesting development. Harry W. Sanford, of 2480 East Colorado Blvd., Pasadena, California (91107), never saw that issue, but he now has the gun. *Really!* It is as yet in prototype form, but if the response of the shooting public suggests that it is a commercially

viable item, it can be produced for sale by the summer months. How about *that*, sports fans!

Certainly it is about time that we saw some significant progress in handgun design. The pistols we have worked very well, of course, but it seems pretty obvious that modern engineering can improve them. The Sanford project is an impressive attempt to do just that.

The prototype pistol is a large, handsome, solidly constructed, and almost "un-burstable" sidearm. It is a little smaller and two ounces heavier than a Smith and Wesson 6½-inch M-29. It is extremely powerful, now handloaded with a 240-grain jacketed bullet and 25 grains of 2400. (Factory loading will probably use a somewhat faster powder such as Herco, in order to suit the 6½-inch barrel.) Its design operating pressure is 45,000 psi, but it is safe at well over 55,000. With chamber walls some ⅜ of an inch thick, and an eight-lug,

fully-enclosed bolt similar to that of an M-16 rifle, breech pressure is just not much of a problem. You could almost use a full case of Bullseye, according to test results.

Now why, when we have a selection of excellent magnum revolvers, should we want a magnum auto? After all, the magnum revolvers are essentially sporting, not combat, arms, and the great advantages of the auto show up best on combat duty. The answer is very simple: *recoil*. The action of the Sanford pistol uses a short-recoil turning-bolt system deliberately designed to soak up energy, and it does. It transmits just over half the blow to the shooting hand that a revolver of the same weight does,



The .44 Auto is shown actual size at near left. Note the conveniently located thumb safety and slide release. Takedown button is above trigger guard, functions much like a P-38's. Like the rest of the gun all components of its integral adjustable sights are also stainless steel except for tension springs. The vent rib is machined in one piece with the barrel and upper receiver. Cartridges (l to r): .44 Magnum revolver, .44 Magnum Auto, 9mm-44 Auto (125-gr. bullet in necked-down .308 case), .30-44 Auto 100-gr. Views at far left show off side of gun. Machining and detailing was done by Auto Mag Corp.'s Design Manager, Max Gera.



Prototype .44 Auto compared with Gov't. Model .45 ACP. The .44 Magnum Auto is somewhat longer and heavier than the Colt, but fires a bullet that delivers almost three times as much power. Production .44s will have shorter cartridges, for smaller magazine wells and, because of that, more compact handgrips.

when loaded to identical ballistics. In test form, loaded hotter, it still kicks only $\frac{2}{3}$ as hard. I myself found this claim difficult to believe until I fired the piece. The results are clearly demonstrated in the photos. (While I do not advocate shooting any pistol with one hand only — unless you have a broken arm — I deliberately used old-fashioned offhand for testing in order to emphasize recoil. Neither pistol would move this much in a correct grip.) In essence, this puts the awesome power of the .44 Magnum within the control capabilities of anyone who can handle a full-house .357!

The pistol was designed by Max Gera, and incorporates all the "modern conveniences." Barrel and sights are in one rigid unit for target accuracy. The trigger linkage is similar in concept to the proven line of High Standard target pistols, permitting a very nice adjustment. The sights are fully adjustable and patridge type. The positive, hammer-locking safety is symmetrical and works on either side. Ejection is forward. An accelerator is provided to ensure reliable action in sub-zero temperatures. Though the prototype's frame is constructed of a standard chrome-moly alloy, the production model will naturally be made of stainless steel throughout.

With all these features you would expect the pistol to be out of the financial reach of ordinary mortals. The fact is, however, that cost studies indicate a sale price of right around \$200 (boxed with one extra magazine, of course). RWS

AM 44S 6½" Barrel

Empty Weight: 49 oz.
Overall Length: 10¾"
Cartridge: .44 Mag rimless
Sight Radius: 8 15/16"
Capacity: eight rounds
Adjustable rear target sight
Patridge type front sight
Vent rib
Field takedown instantly

S&W 29 6½" Barrel

Empty Weight: 47 oz.
Overall Length: 11⅞"
Cartridge: .44 Rem Mag
Sight Radius: 8½"
Capacity: six rounds
Adjustable rear target sight
Patridge type front sight
Solid rib
None

Performance With 240-gr. Bullet Standard Load

25 grains of 2400 powder
Muzzle velocity: 1640 ft/s
Muzzle energy: 1455 ft-lbs
Recoil: 11.7 ft-lbs
Penetration: fifteen ⅞th inch
pine wood boards 1 inch apart

Remington Factory load
Muzzle velocity: 1470 ft/s
Muzzle energy: 1120 ft-lbs
Recoil: 18 ft-lbs
Penetration: twelve ⅞th inch
pine wood boards 1 inch apart

G&A UPDATE —

LATEST .44 MAGNUM AUTO DEVELOPMENTS

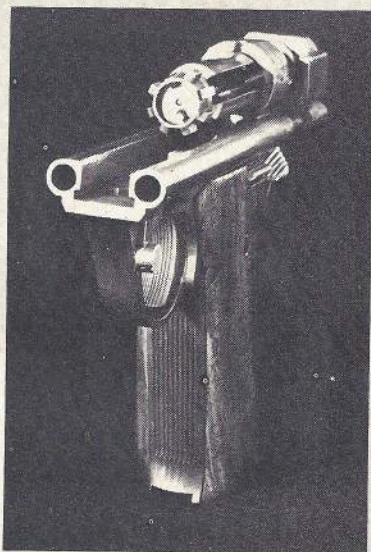
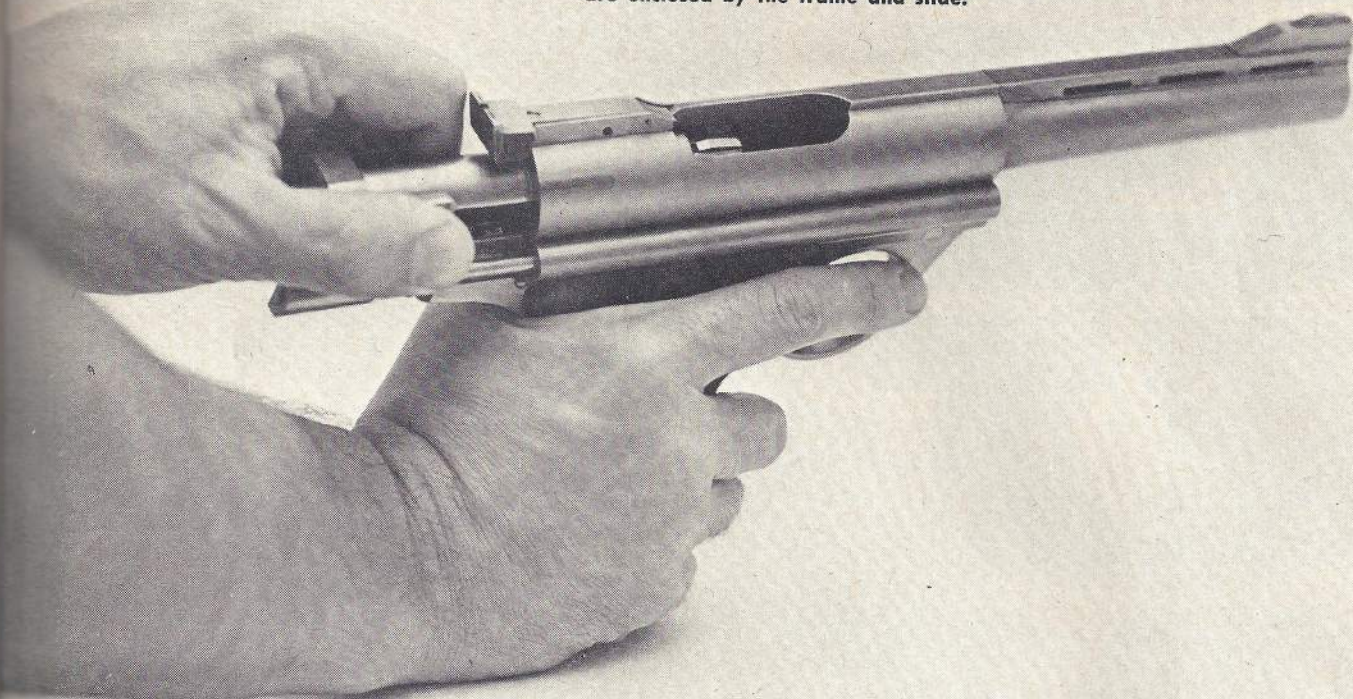
In today's fast-breaking scene of new developments in sporting arms, the .44 Auto Mag is no exception. Since the inception of this article, the big pistol has undergone further development and load tests. Auto Mag designer Max Gera — also Design and Engineering Manager of Sanford Arms and the Auto Mag Corporation — states that both 9mm and .30-caliber versions of the .308-based Auto Mag cartridge have been made. Among the 300 and more orders already in for pistols, many have requested that possible development be done on these calibers as well as the original .44.

The production .44 Auto Mags will have a cartridge 1/10-inch shorter than the samples shown in this article. It was found that shortening the case to 1.200-inch, permitted a 2/10-inch reduction in grip size and magazine bulk. This serves to add reliability to the already fine action functioning, as the bolt has a shorter round to strip and feed, while going through the same long, smooth cycle.

As of this writing, the ideal load for .44 Auto Mag is believed to be 22 grains of H110 powder and the 240-grain Norma Tri-Clad flat-point bullet. This is a half-case capacity load and the brass/action combination will take much higher pressures, according to the new arms maker. Still, this load burns completely clean and is the most accurate so far. Velocity is a sizzling 1680 fps, with the 240-grain bullet. For comparison only, the Winchester-Western .44 Magnum revolver load is quoted by its maker as 1470 fps, for 1150 ft.-lbs. of muzzle energy. The Auto Mag velocity computes to 1505 ft.-lbs.

These and other detail changes have been fed into measurements taken for pilot-plant drawings. As of press time, initial production of saleable Auto Mags, in the standard .44 Auto Mag chambering, is reportedly set for spring, 1970.

The .44 Auto is big, but average hands can function the action with no difficulty. Lock-up of multi-lugged bolt is tight, then 'breaks' open smoothly when progressive pressure to the rear is applied. Recoil springs ride in outlying channels, another point reminiscent of the Walther P-38, although that pistol's springs are enclosed by the frame and slide.



Channel through bolt body is camming surface which rotates assembly during recoil. Recessed bolt face and spring-loaded ejector are shown.



Field-stripping can be accomplished in three seconds. Then, all reciprocating parts are completely open for maintenance. The hole in the center of the grooved trigger is for precise trigger adjustment. Barrel, rib, upper receiver and bolt-locking shoulders are all machined from one piece.