

WHY STEEL SHOT MAY BE A **TOTAL SCAM!**

GUNS & AMMO

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**EXCLUSIVE
REPORT...**

AMT

SLEEK & ACCURATE
THE WORLD'S FIRST AUTO PISTOL IN
.**22 MAGNUM R.F.!**

REVOLVER vs. AUTO
Handgun Recoil Is What **YOU** Feel!

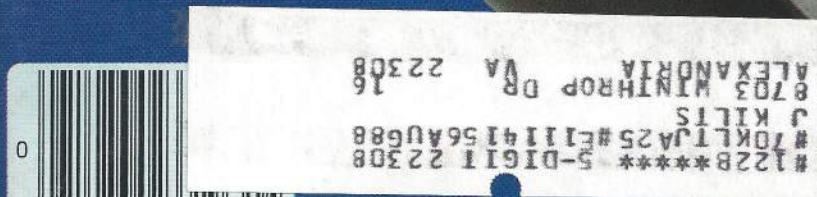
**ARE HI-TECH STOCKS
REPLACING WALNUT?**
FIND OUT IF
AND WHY!

**SCOPE-SIGHT
'INSIGHT'**
Separate
The Myths
From The Facts

**'WALLHANGER GUNS'
CAN BE SHOT...
HERE'S HOW
STEP BY STEP**

 **PROOF HOUSE**

- 1911-A1 9mm
CONVERSION UNIT
- F.I.E. .22 AUTO RIFLE
- STERLING .177
AIR RIFLE



**SLEEK &
ACCURATE**

AMT

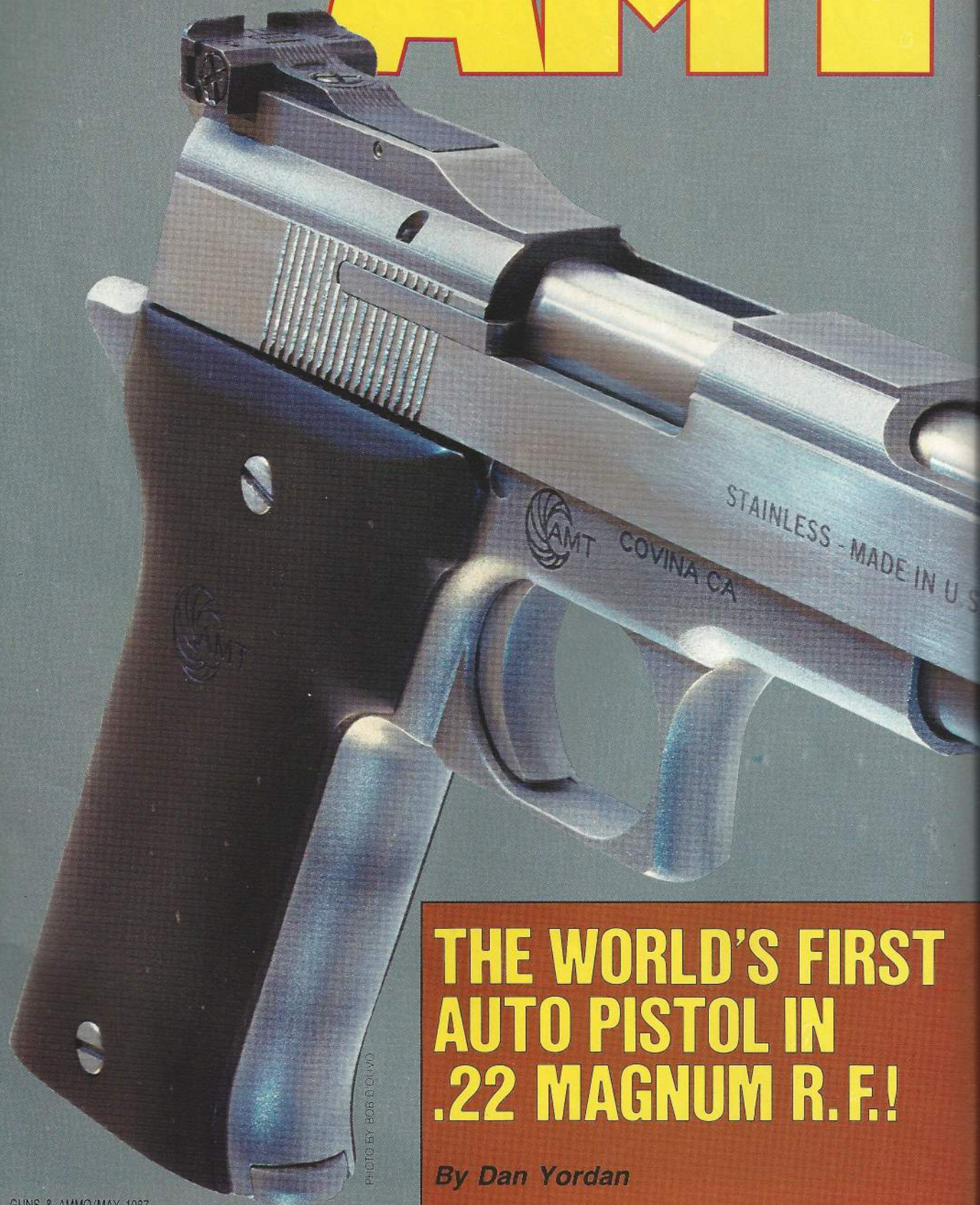


PHOTO BY BOB BROWN

**THE WORLD'S FIRST
AUTO PISTOL IN
.22 MAGNUM R.F.!**

By Dan Yordan

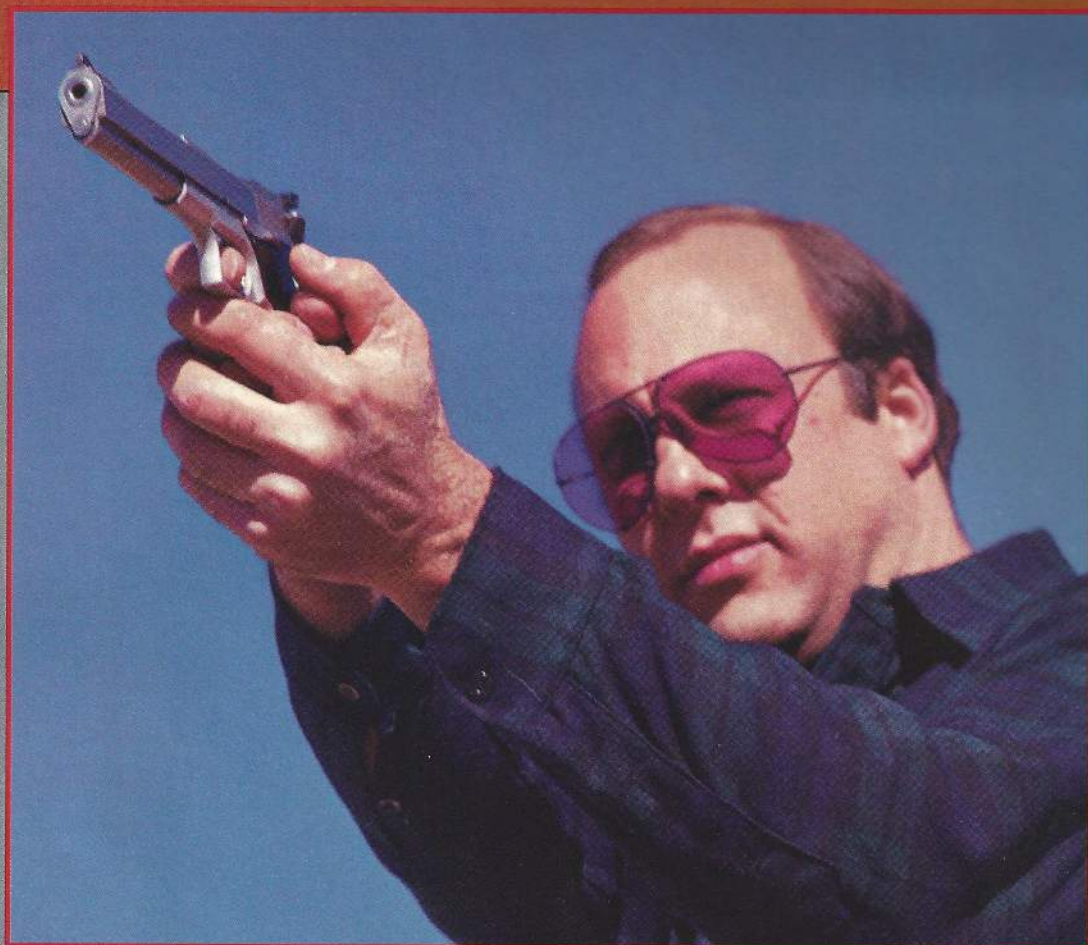


PHOTO BY LYNNE A. MCCREADY

Sleek new Automag II from AMT of Covina, Calif. offers shooters sizzling performance, MOA accuracy in the world's first successful .22 Magnum R.F. semi-auto pistol.



Arcadia Machine and Tool Inc., located in Covina, California, has been at the forefront of stainless steel automatic pistol manufacturing for well over a decade now. Beginning with the .44 Automag, AMT as it is known, under the leadership of the company's president, Harry Sanford, has consistently sought to be first by giving the shooting public what it wants well before the larger arms manufacturers get around to it. AMT was the first company to manufacture a stainless steel Colt Government type of .45 ACP pistol. They

called it the "Hardballer." They followed this up with a Long Slide version of the same gun for those who favor these type of "bowling pin" oriented actions. Then came a shortened

Combat Government model. As if all this wasn't enough, a small pocket auto pistol was also offered called the "Back Up" in either .22 LR or .380 ACP. In addition, AMT currently offers a line of stainless auto pistols and a rifle in .22 LR, a stainless "Steady

AMT .22 MAG

Grip" device for pistol stabilization and a very accurate electronic powder measuring scale that is capable of $\frac{1}{20}$ of a grain sensitivity (see G&A September 1986). You can see that there is a lot going on in this firm.

Their latest offering is an all-stainless .22 Magnum automatic they call the "Automag II." As these new pistols are still in the early stages of production, I

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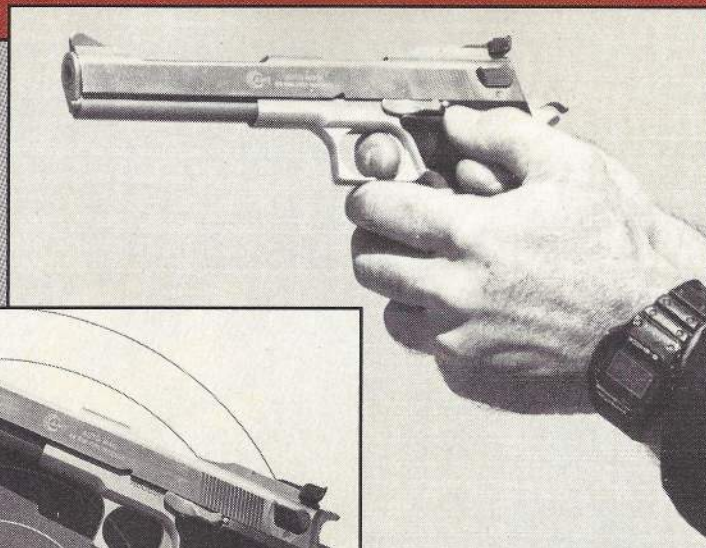
was given a "toolroom prototype" for my evaluation session at the Petersen Ranch. This pistol had some small differences from the actual production guns, the most apparent of which was that the frame was aluminum alloy rather than steel. Larry Grossman, Design Engineer at AMT and developer of the Automag II, explained to me that this had been done for ease of machine work during the earlier stages, but that all production guns would be stainless. In addition, the black synthetic plastic grips which were flat and smooth on my prototype would have horizontal grooves in them for a better hold on the pistol in the production auto-loaders.

When I first saw the advertisement heralding the coming of this new pistol I was pleasantly surprised. I've always been fond of the powerful little .22 WMR cartridge and gained respect for its accuracy and what it can do on small game and varmints. With hollow points, small critters suffer more than a little damage. With solid points, the .22 Mag., as it is

generally referred to, is a fine game caliber, destroying very little edible meat and having sufficient power to bring down many smaller animals. Up until now only revolvers and rifles have been made and sold successfully in this caliber because of the design difficulties in dealing with the .22 Magnum cartridge. Larry told me that the problem has always seemed to boil down to bulges in the case head area. Many other firms have tried and failed to develop a pistol that could handle the .22 Mag. AMT's approach is a novel one. To avoid this problem Larry Grossman has drilled a total of 18 tiny holes in 3 circular series of 6 holes each that radiate outward from the chamber area of the pistol. They do not go all the way through to the outside of the barrel, and Larry admits that he's not completely sure why it works, it just does. In my shooting session with the Automag II I examined all of the fired

cases and there was no bulging of any kind. As these holes form a sort of orbit around the chamber at three points (near the cartridge base, in the middle, and just past the forward rim), I cannot see how they could be affected by any gases directly as no gas is tapped from the barrel as a function of the mechanism. But what I think is happening is that upon ignition the case walls of the cartridge are expanding and momentarily being gripped by 12 of the 18 holes long enough to retard the case extraction until pressures have dropped. I believe Colt used a number of small circular ribs inside the chamber of their older model .38 Special Gold Cup target pistol for the same purpose. The rest of the design is a bit more conventional, being a blend of a number of successful blow-back designs. The barrel is stationary as in a Beretta. The frame and slide are of

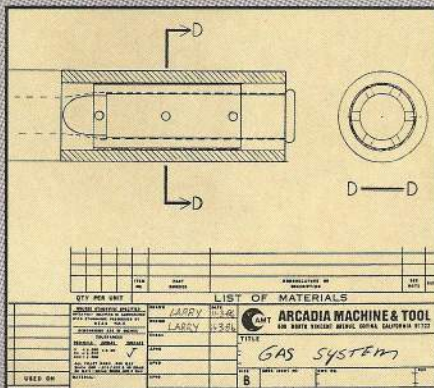
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Top: Balance and feel of new stainless .22 Mag. was superb. High-profile Millett sights made for fast target acquisition. Left: Accuracy of the Automag II was impressive. At 25 yards, 2-inch groups were readily obtainable offhand.



Takedown of prototype was different than production guns will be; however, component parts shown are the same.



Unique chamber design has 18 equally spaced holes in 3 sets of 6 each. These retard ejection of spent case.

SPECIFICATIONS

AMT AUTOMAG II .22 MAGNUM PISTOL

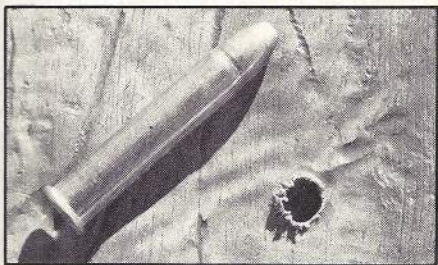
Manufacturer: AMT (Arcadia Machine and Tool Inc.)
536 N. Vincent Ave.
Covina, CA 91722
(818) 915-7803

Caliber: .22 WMR (.22 Magnum)
Capacity: 10
O/A Length: 9.5 inches
Barrel Length: 6 inches
Grips: Black synthetic with horizontal grooves

Weight: Est. 36 ounces
Finish: Stainless steel
Sights: Millett fully adjustable
Price: \$298

the Browning type. Unlike the Browning-type autos though, when the slide is being held back by the slide stop, drawing the slide to the rear will not release the slide stop and allow the slide to go forward into battery. Instead, you must push down on the slide release and allow the recoil spring to push the slide forward.

The sights on the pistol are high-quality Millett White Outline, and during my shooting session I was able to dial them in to the point where, using a sandbag rest, 1-inch groups were easily obtained. Of course I don't normally carry a sandbag around in my back pocket, but off-hand at 25 yards I was still able to get 2-inch groups with relatively little effort. This is an extremely accurate handgun, and I can't help thinking what the possibilities might be if it were topped with a fine scope for reaching out there a bit. Iron sights are fine to a point, but this autoloader is capable of distance work on prairie dogs, and I think most would agree with me that a scope is the way to go when doing this kind of precision work. When I was a teenager, my father and I used to go hunting ground squirrels, and I can still recall the skill with



Entrance hole of high-velocity .22 Magnum in a block of ductseal is not much larger than the round itself going in.

which he dispatched them. Using a Smith and Wesson Model 53 topped by a then-new Bushnell Phantom scope he rarely missed. He would make 50-yard offhand shots look easy. I gained a lot of respect for the .22 Mag. back then, and it hasn't been until now that I've handled another pistol in this caliber capable of this kind of accuracy other than a single-shot. And an autoloader at that.

On the morning that I arrived to do my shooting, it was around 40 degrees, and although the winds on the previous day had been gusting at almost 50 mph, there was only a steady 6-7 mph breeze to greet me. As I was determined to have a little fun at this shoot, I had stopped off at my local market the day before and picked up a number of fruits and vegetables, as well as ice blocks and a six-pack of soda pop. I was determined to demonstrate the explosive power of the .22 Mag. HP, and at the

same time meet the challenge of outdoing Gallagher's "Sledgematic" (a large wooden mallet used by the comedian to smash fruit).

I began my session just handling and pointing the Automag II. I was trying to remember what other handgun it most felt like to me. It's a very well balanced pistol and extremely thin. Finally it came to me that it felt very much like an old Star Model FRS that I had once owned. That old pistol had a certain feel to it that was comfortable and reassuring. The Automag II has the same kind of feel to it. Although the grip is somewhat wide to accommodate the caliber, its thin contour avoids causing the feel of trying to hold onto a log. It fit my normal-sized hand very well, and my trigger finger didn't have to do any reaching. Production magazines will hold 10 rounds. Mine held 8. The magazines seemed well made. Mag release is located at bottom, rear of grip. The grip angle was right as well, and I found I was able to bring the pistol up rapidly and obtain a natural point on the target as though the barrel was an extension of my own finger. Overall length of the Automag II is 9.5 inches. As the frame of my pistol was of alloy rather than stainless steel at the time of this writing, I was unable to get an accurate total weight for the new autoloader, but my estimate is that it will be in the neighborhood of 36 ounces.

The safety is of the pivoting block type and completely protects the firing pin from being struck by rolling up underneath to block it. The hammer remains cocked and does not drop as it does for instance on the Walther PPK types.

I began my shooting with a test of different types of ammunition. I had along CCI, Winchester, Federal, and RWS, both solid and hollow points. I was really curious about the velocity that might be obtained from the pistol, as being an autoloader there was no cylinder gap to lose escaping gases to. I had hopes of 1,500 fps (feet per second). After setting up the chronograph and firing ten rounds of each type of ammo I was a little disappointed. Only the RWS gave me the results I was hoping for. It consistently punched through in the upper 1,400s, the solid points being the faster. All the other ammo registered in the 1,200s. In addition, because the pistol I was firing was the prototype and different tension recoil springs are still being tried, I found only the hotter RWS ammo to consistently eject, especially as my session wore on and the pistol began to become fouled with an accumulation of powder and gunk. This was my first use of RWS ammunition in this caliber, and I can't help but wonder why the U.S. companies don't follow suit and offer a little hotter loading. My guess is that it has something to do with product liability.

Towards the end of my accuracy tests, I noticed a distinct "bite" I was beginning to get as the web of my hand began to

creep up the backstrap of the grip. I was getting the infamous "hammerbite." Now I'm a little pudgy between the thumb and forefinger, and this may of course be my fault, but I think if the hammer were to be shortened just a small amount it would alleviate the problem. I also began to experience some failures to extract. I ran a patch through the bore, and the problem went away.

It finally came time for me to make salad out of the various items I had brought with me. I began with a grapefruit. It turned the inside to juice, but was highly undramatic. Next I tried a small melon. The same result, cantaloupe juice, but the outside remained intact. Apparently I was trying to push the .22 Mag. too far. I backed off and presented the caliber with a tomato. Whoosh! No more tomato. Now that's dramatic! Next I tried a



Exit hole of .22 Mag. hollow point in duct-seal block displays the tremendous destructive power of this cartridge.

can of soda pop. Whoosh! Not bad! I was getting the hang of it. The blocks of ice were next. I squeezed off another HP. Ice crystals dispersed into the air in a shower of glittering pieces. Now that was the best of all. Don't ever let anyone tell you the .22 Mag. is "only a .22." This cartridge is a hot caliber, capable of doing severe damage.

Despite the few malfunctions that occurred, I think that this is one fine autoloader. It felt good in my hand and balanced well. It's capable of fine accuracy, and will come from the factory with quality high-profile Millett sights. I can't think of any "customizing" that would need to be done on the Automag II. It's right as it is. Larry at AMT tells me that in the future they're planning to stretch the 6-inch barrel on the model now in production to 8 inches and offer both lengths to the shooting public.

As it was the prototype, stripping for cleaning and maintenance was not at all the same as it will be on the production guns, which will take down in a manner similar to the Colt 1911A1.

The AMT Automag II overall was a pleasure to examine and shoot, and I have to admit, I'm more than just a little attracted to this new autoloader. Any handgun that can deliver this kind of accuracy is one that I have to take more seriously than some of the rest. Coupled with the well thought out decision to make the pistol in .22 Magnum, I think AMT has a winner on their hands. I know I was impressed.