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2006

HANDGUNSTM



Beretta



*Cylinder & Slide
prepared this
Beretta M92 for
military match
competition.*

C&S BERETTA M92 9mm

An older military pistol gets a new match grade life!

By Rich Grassi

Bill Laughridge worked over a Beretta M92 for competitive match shooting and was to send it to us for a test. During the process, he showed it at the Tulsa Gun Show and a customer bought it on the spot!

Bill said that two people were interested in purchasing the pistol, but one of them was ready to buy on the spot. What caused such strong desire? Let's take a look.

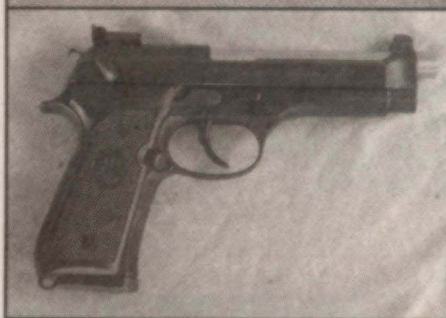
Gun Details

The current US service pistol is the M9, also known as the Beretta Model 92. For service competition, service firearms must be used. I've seen pictures of M9s that have been competing at Camp Perry. Like the 1911 of an earlier time, the match guns had little in common with the issued service handgun.

A general tightening needs to be done. The gun needs target adjustable sights. Adjustable sights allow the gun to be zeroed for each individual shooter or for varying loads. The sights have to be high above the gun and capable of a sharp focus. They are left black to allow a contrasting sight picture on the white of the target immediately below the bull, i.e., a "six o'clock hold." The trigger must be light and smooth, capable of precise accuracy at distances of 25 and 50 yards.

Often, the gripping surface of the piece is roughened to ensure control regardless of weather conditions.

Our test pistol is an older M92. The barrel was replaced with a Bar-Sto unit of stainless steel. It's closely fitted to the front of the slide to ensure tight



High adjustable sights, a custom-fitted Bar-Sto stainless steel barrel, a Cylinder & Slide trigger pull kit and stippling on the grip frame make a match ball gun out of the M92 Beretta.



The slide is tastefully engraved with the Cylinder & Slide marking.

C&S BERETTA M92 9mm

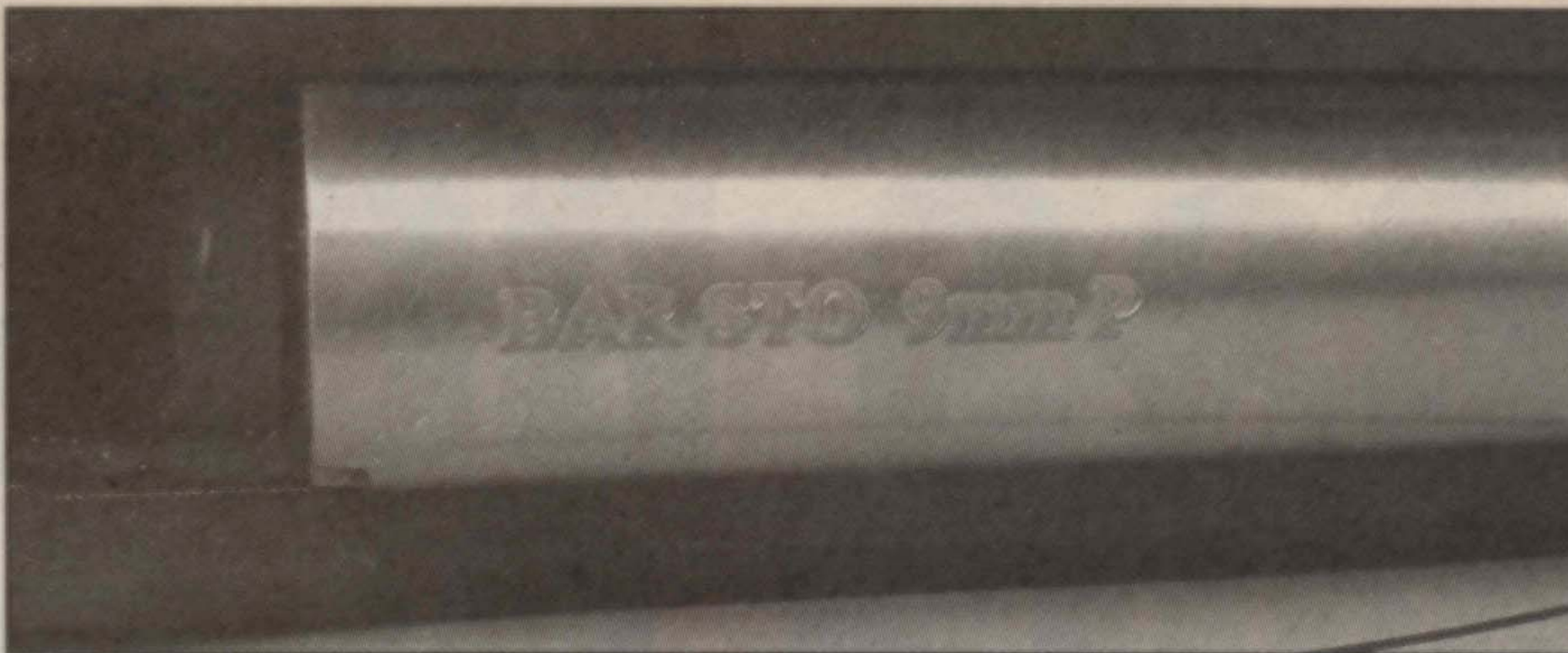
lockup out front, a "cone lock-up" arrangement.

To accomplish this, the Bar-Sto barrel was turned down, threaded and a "sleeve" attached. The sleeve was turned down to fit the slide in a reverse cone. It is thicker at the front, causing a tight front lock-up, while it's thinner in the rear to allow the slide to retract and the gun to function. The muzzle is nicely crowned at 11 degrees.

The slide is "capped" with a new front sight. The original unit was trimmed and the new sight placed over the top of the old. A pair of roll pins holds the front sight cap in place. The front sight is very sturdily attached, and its back finely serrated.

The light slide of this early M92 doesn't have enough material to allow a dovetail to be cut for front sight placement, so the capping method was used.

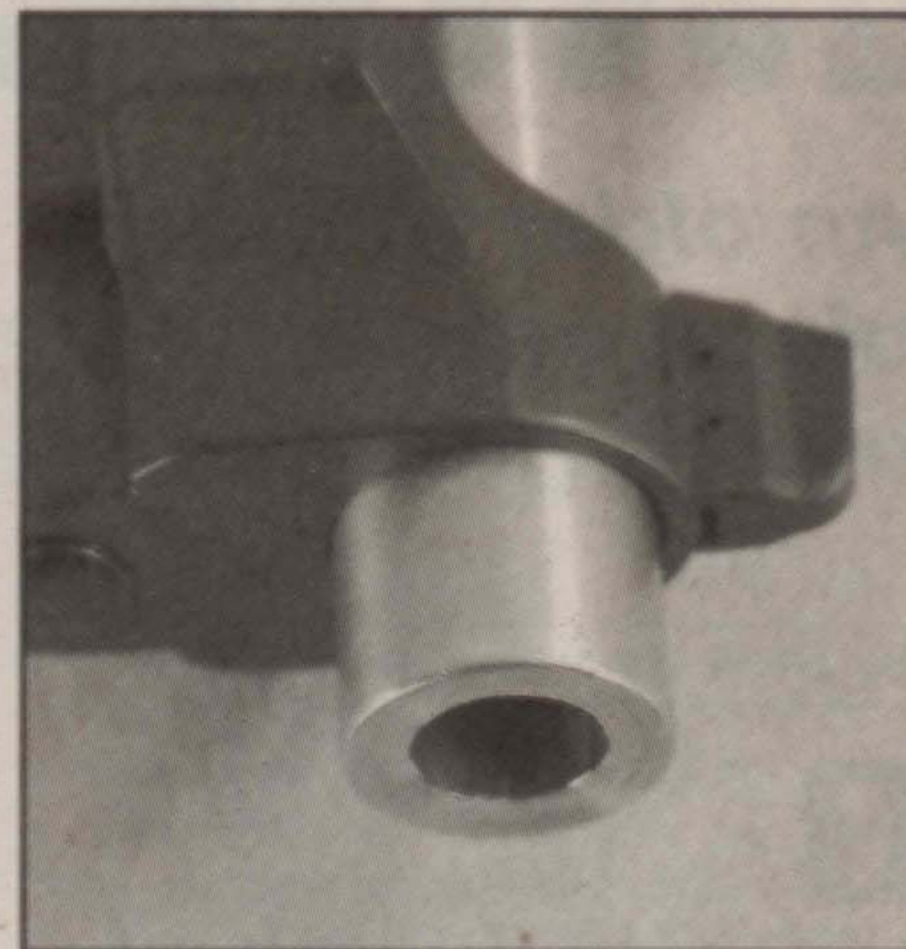
An adjustable rear sight, which appears to be made by LPA or MecGar, is fitted to a dovetail in the slide and finished in plain black and serrated to



C&S installed a Bar-Sto barrel in the Beretta M92.



The adjustable rear sight is fitted to the dovetail cut in the slide.



The muzzle is carefully crowned, at 11 degrees for match accuracy.

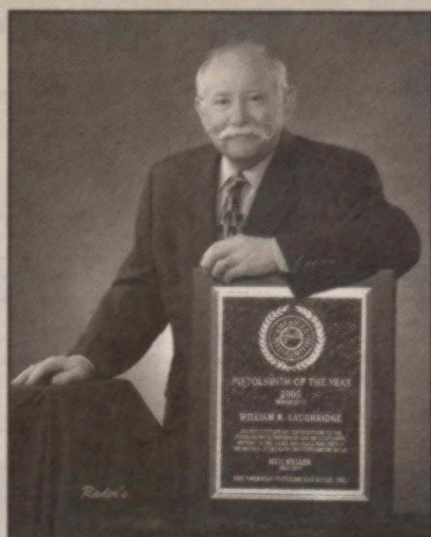
PRIZE WINNING PISTOLSMITH

Custom Combat Handguns had the chance to chat with Bill Laughridge, honcho at Cylinder & Slide, and the winner of the 2005 Pistolsmith of the Year award bestowed by the American Pistolsmith Guild. We wanted to find out more about the man, the company and the award. In our conversation, we discovered the following facts.

Bill Laughridge has been involved in gun work for around 35 years. He started out in general gunsmithing. "It started out as a hobby, then I worked part-time on guns to support my gun hobby." He went full-time working for a sporting goods store that was trying to build its gun trade.

He spent a couple of years in metal work at a foundry. His machine tool experience came from this era. "I was self-taught, as far as guns," he said. As his business took off, Cylinder & Slide became a factory repair and warranty station for gun companies.

Why a pistolsmith, as opposed to



Bill Laughridge, President of C&S, poses with his American Pistolsmith Guild 2005 Pistolsmith of the Year Award.

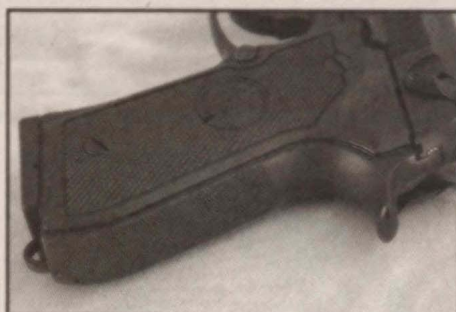
general smithing? "It's what I really like. Handguns are my real interest. I shoot and work on rifles and shotguns, but I really like handguns."

Cylinder & Slide, as the name reveals, has always been a pistol

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The front and backstraps are tastefully stippled.



The rear sight can be adjusted for varying loads or shooters.

prevent glare. A new hammer, lightened and modernistic in appearance, and a new sear and trigger pull set is also furnished.

The hammer and sear were cut from billet alloy steel plate stock by Electric Discharge Machining and finished on CNC machining centers. Heat-treated to 50-54 Rc completely through the part, tolerances are held +/- .0005 of

an inch. They were inspected and checked for proper heat treatment. The tiny dimple imprint made by the diamond point on the Rockwell Hardness Tester is found on each hammer and sear. The trigger pull was set at around 3.5 pounds for competition. Cylinder & Slide Beretta hammers and sears are sold to several military match arms shops for use in match pistols. They are built to meet their specifications for match guns.

"The trigger job got the pull down to about 3.5 pounds single-action," Laughridge said. It is a match gun. His preference on street guns runs more to around 4.5 pounds.

The frame's gripping surface is roughened front and back by stippling. While this isn't as abrasive as aggressive checkering, it allows stability in grip.

Bill noted that the gun put Winchester "white box" (USA brand) hardball into one ragged hole, but that

C&S BERETTA M92 9mm



The top four hits were the first four rounds out of the gun; author dropped a flier low into the second group fired with Winchester USA 147gr ball.

it hadn't been shot a lot. In keeping the gun reasonably pristine for its new owner, we didn't shoot it much either.

Shots Fired

Our only available range time without rain was a blustery Kansas day. The air temperature was around 48 degrees, but the winds were out of the west at around 20 MPH with gusts to 35! The target backer fluttered in the breeze. While shooting Remington 124-grain metal case ammo, the backer was actually lifted from its perch during a string!

The best five-shot group was scarcely over 2 inches, but this wasn't shot in a machine rest on a calm indoor range. It was handheld over a rest.

Using the best three hits of five-round strings, the Cylinder & Slide Beretta delivered a pair of sub 1-inch performances. Only two ammo types had nearly 2-inch sub-groups, but one was low-cost promotional ammo (Remington UMC 115-grain metal case) and the other is one of the accuracy loads for my constant carry compact 9mm (Hornady TAP Precision 124-grain CQ JHP). Not all guns have the same preferences and this one wasn't unusual in that.

The groups were shot at 25 yards from a seated rest and are measured in inches for five-shot groups and the best 3 of 5. The first round of each group was fired into the berm—rounds 2 to 6 went into the 25-yard bull's-eye target. This makes it a machine-cycled round for each shot for score.

Frankly, I was amazed at the precision in spite of the weather conditions. I wanted to do more with the pistol but I didn't want to shoot it outside of its intended purpose nor did

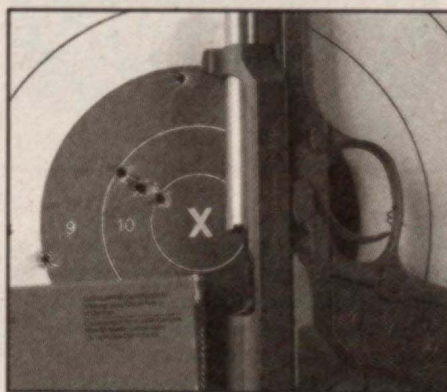
Performance: C&S Match Grade Beretta M92 9mm

Load	5-Shot	Best 3
Remington 124 Metal case	3.88	0.88
Remington-UMC 115 Metal case	4.50*	1.75
Hornady 124 CQ JHP	4.06	1.88
Proload 147 JHP** Subsonic	2.50	1.50
Winchester-USA 147 TCMC	2.63	0.88
CCI-Blazer 124 TMJ	2.25	1.00

Bullet weight measured in grains and accuracy in inches at 25 yards from a seated rest.
 (*) With one-shooter-induced flyer, four rounds went into 2.25".
 (**) Loaded with Speer Gold Dot HP bullets.



Four of the six loads tested in the C&S Beretta M92 are shown here.



Remington 124gr metal case (hardball) was a fine shooter, in spite of the fliers.

I want to do a "shoot to destruction" test on someone else's gun.

I went to the range's steel bay. Two 10-inch steel plates are suspended at 50 yards from the firing point. In spite of the wind, shooting one-handed after a few rounds to "get the range," I began to pepper the plates with Blazer 124-grain ball.

As the gusts buffeted the gun around, I used a post for a "barricade." That lost its allure, as it wasn't challenging. I then decocked the gun with its safety-decock lever, firing each round double-action. The little 9mm pills hit the plates when I did my part.

Final Notes

Bill Laughridge and his crew work on many different guns: revolvers for defense and Cowboy Action matches, semi-autos for competition and defense, even .22 Autos. Cylinder & Slide 1911 parts are popular with a number of different 1911-smiths. Hans Vang, of Vang Comp Systems shotgun fame, uses Cylinder & Slide parts in custom 1911s he now builds!

Whatever the handgun need, Cylinder & Slide is one-stop shopping for custom combat handguns.

For more information, contact:

Cylinder & Slide, Inc., 245 East 4th Street, Dept CH, Fremont, NE 68025; 402-721-4277; www.cylinder-slide.com

Bar-Sto Precision Machine, P.O. Box 1838, Dept CH, Twentynine Palms, CA 92277; 760-367-2747; www.barsto.com

Beretta, 17601 Beretta Dr., Dept CH, Accokeek, MD 20607; 800-636-3420; www.berettausa.com

Prize Winning Pistolsmith

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shop. In existence for over 28 years, the shop's business focus has moved along with the times.

The company started in the IPSC era. As such, a preponderance of work was done on competition firearms. "We've always done revolvers too." As time passed, the majority of American states passed "shall issue" concealed carry laws. The trend moved to the defensive pistol.

"We don't actively pursue the competition market," he said. CCW made competitive pistols "a niche." Coincidentally, Cowboy Action Shooting began to grow. As it did, a number of "one man shops" sprang up to work on the antique iron and replicas thereof. "It's a good part of our business," he said, "and we're really going to start after it. People are demanding better work."

The single-action guns he's seen through the shop include the wildly popular Ruger Vaquero, Colt, US Fire Arms and Beretta Stampede revolvers.

He feels that the new guns with transfer bar actions are better suited for the weekend pistolero. Refraining from calling them "safer," he noted that duffers can forget. What about the shooter who owns the old technology as well as transfer bar guns?

"Treat them all like original design single-actions." That means five beans in the wheel with the hammer down on an empty chamber. "Put your burying money in that empty chamber."

A great deal is made of the end user's intentions for the newly customized handgun. "That's critical," Bill said.

"I've had people tell me that the gun will be used for informal target shooting. I'll ask, 'will you carry it for protection,' and often, I'll hear 'yeah, I'll keep it by the bed in case.'" He sighed. "That's a defensive gun. We'll modify it differently than we would if it was a range gun."

The modifications are tailored to your use. The gun will be safer and perform better. If you need a gun "just for target shooting," get one gun for that purpose and use it only on the range. "Compromise means that something will suffer."

He won't provide a 3.5-pound trigger for self-defense. "A defensive pistol is not a '1-inch at 50 yards' gun." Cylinder & Slide sells an extensive line of trigger pull parts for

the 1911 and High-Power. "Some of that is for competition only," he said. "I just don't recommend their (competition gun parts) use in personal protection guns."

As to the various safety devices added by manufacturers in the past few years, Bill makes his policy simple. "We won't remove any safeties." The 1911 Series 80 works, he noted. "It's one of the safest pistols ever." Similarly, he hasn't seen the grip-safety-activated firing pin safeties break, either.

Oh, and on the revolver front, he also commented on S&W. "Safety hammers don't lock by themselves. They're designed not to come on by themselves." In fact, he's noticed that guns generally are held to closer tolerances now than ever before. The advent of CNC machining technology, machined investment castings, and MIM parts means that tolerances can be more closely held.

"It used to be that labor was cheap and materials were expensive. Now, it's the other way around."

S&W, for example, is providing the finest revolvers they ever made in terms of maintaining close tolerances.

The Cylinder & Slide Shop knows about manufacturing. Their parts are CNC machined from premium bar stock and properly heat-treated. Each part is certified after it's checked for appropriate hardness.

"I really only sell service," Bill said. "You only buy this hammer and sear set one time. The gun will wear out before these parts will." Aside from Browning safeties and triggers and 1911 parts, Bill sells screwdriver sets for the cowboy crowd.

As Cylinder & Slide sells parts with their logo, they also sell parts made by other companies. How does Bill select the products he'll sell?

"If I'll use it in my personal gun, I'll sell it. They have to meet my specifications or I won't sell it. It's my reputation on the line and I believe you give 'em the best you can."

Is it harder to get a decent trigger on a gun with "new" safety features that came along far after the gun was originally designed? "With the Series 80 1911, you are not going to get a 1.5-pound trigger. The only use for that trigger is a high-speed racegun anyway. A 4.5-pound and up is a defensive trigger and that's easy with the 1911 Series 80."

And the High-Power with its firing pin safety? "We can easily go to 4.5 pounds with the improved sear lever. Without it, we can get 5.5 pounds."

Custom Combat Handguns congratulates Bill Laughridge and Cylinder & Slide.