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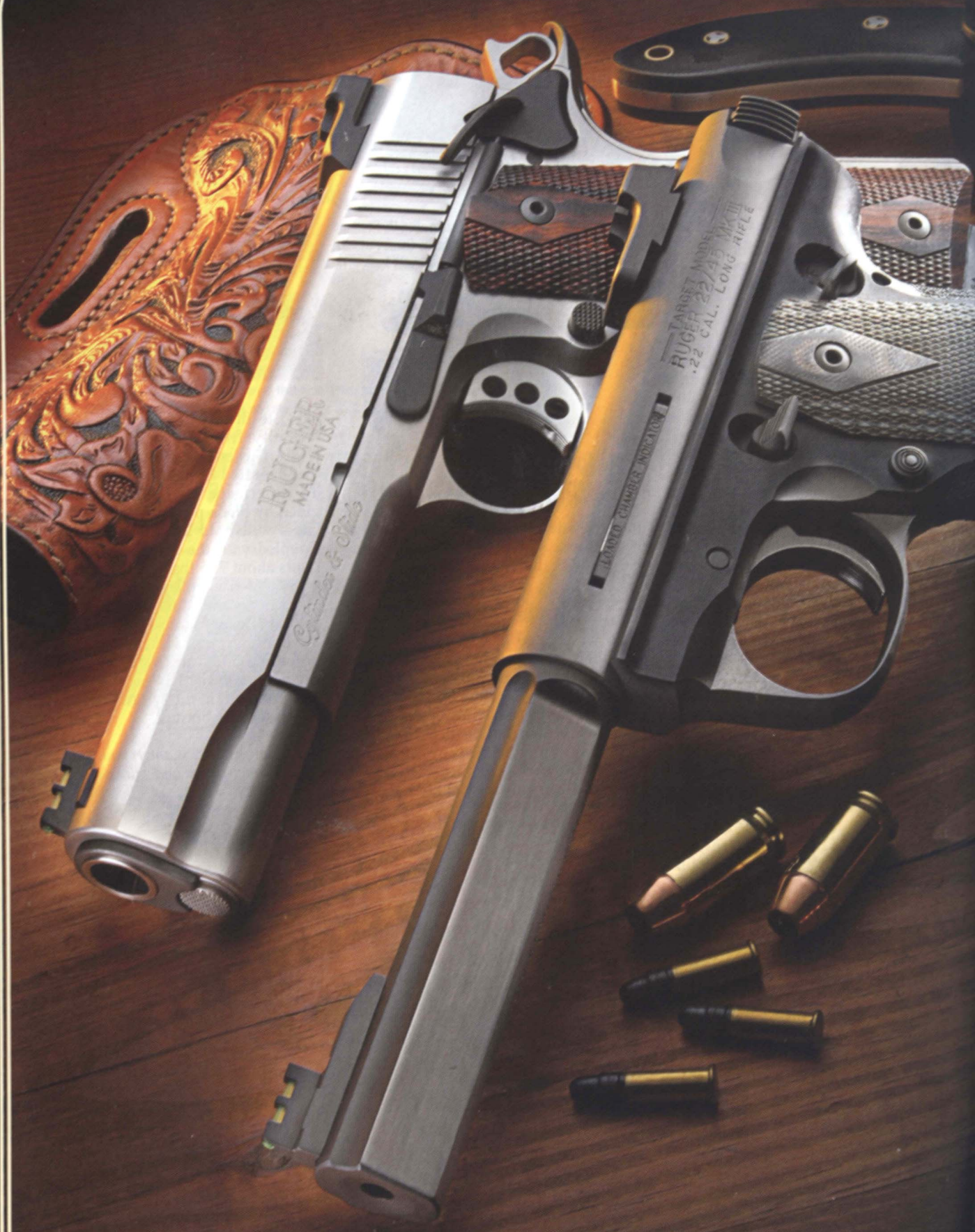
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# C&S RUGER TEAMMATES



## 1911/.22 COMBO KIT!

ROY HUNTINGTON  
PHOTOS: CHUCK PITTMAN, INC.

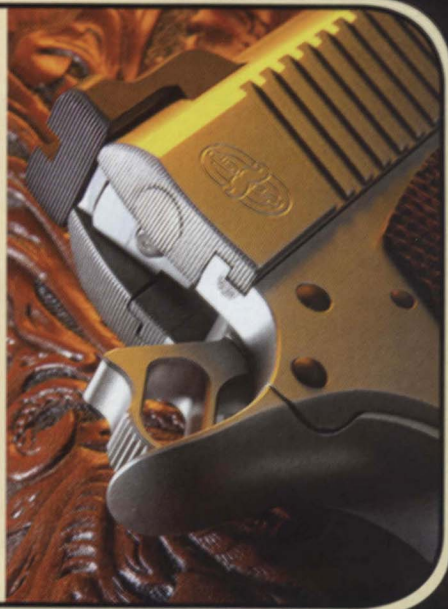
I've always been a bit smitten by the concept of pairs of guns doing specific chores, but complimenting one another. Think of a lever action .44 Magnum matched with a 4" S&W Model 29. Kind of the long and short of it in that case, but each does specific jobs, while together, they make a sensible working team. I have a Colt Ace .22 conversion unit and really enjoy the fact it can turn almost any of my 1911s into a fun plinker. But then I lose the original guns functionality until I "put it back together" again.

When Bill Laughridge (pronounced Lock-Ridge, since he's Scottish — think Loch Ness) was visiting my home not long ago teaching a 1911

build class here, we got to chatting about pairs of guns. Suddenly he said, "You know, we haven't really done much work on Ruger's new 1911, and maybe a matching .22 slide conversion would be cool?" I upped the ante, explaining how I get tired of taking a gun apart to make it into a .22.

"What if you simply did two guns?" I said. "Say, a Ruger 1911 and a 22/45, then sort of gussie them up as a team? The 1911 grip profile of the 22/45 would make the transition smooth from one to the other, and you wouldn't need to disassemble your 1911 to have a .22."

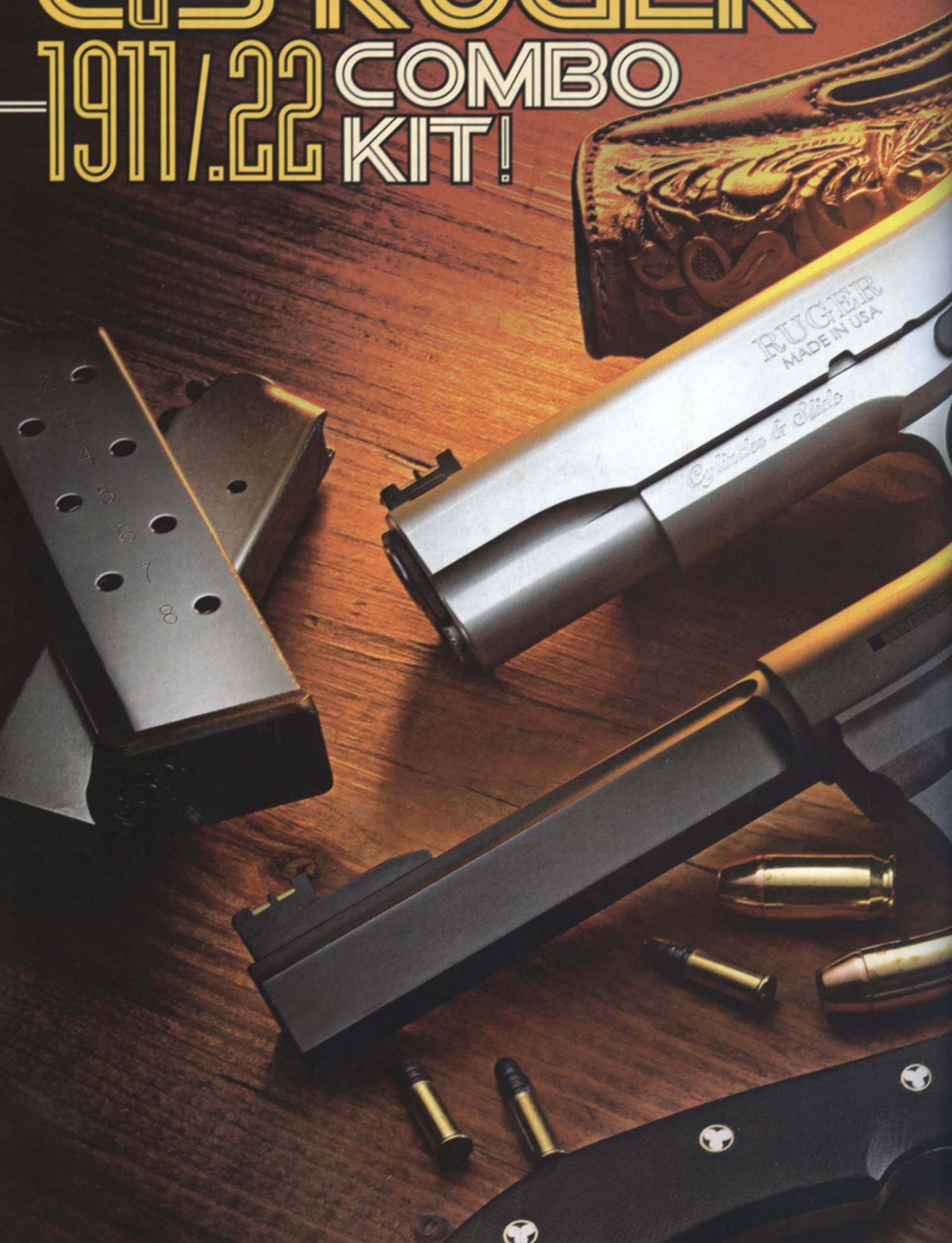
Bill twirled the ends of his near-legendary mustache and grinned. "Not bad for a magazine editor. I say let's





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night. Bill Laughridge didn't wake up one day and say, "Hey, I'll open up a gunsmith shop." It had its roots in the middle 1970s when Bill, a life-long gun nut like most of us, and proficient gunsmith, went to work for Lou's Sporting Goods in Fremont, Neb. Bill was the resident gunsmith and did general gunsmithing for the store. In about 1978, Lou's shut down the gunsmith portion but Bill still operated there as a self-employed gunsmith. After a few years, Bill moved from the basement of Lou's — to a converted filling station.

The shop eventually moved to Bill's home for a while, then to the current location (since much-expanded). Bill was one of the earliest advertisers in *American Handgunner* (and still does), and has since built the C&S Shop into one of the most successful custom and general gunsmithing establishments in the business. The C&S parts business has also established itself as a go-to source for high quality after-market parts for 1911s, Browning Hi-Powers and a host of other needs.

Today, the C&S staff concentrates on custom guns, with a focus on 1911s, Browning Hi-Powers, Kahrs and other high-quality guns of all types. But, according to Jon Tank, "We also handle general gunsmithing and modifications. And, being a true custom shop, if someone wants something, we can pretty much deliver the goods,

do it." I said let's do it too.

Ken Jorgenson at Ruger supplied the two pistols, then I chatted with Jon Tank, Bill's seasoned veteran gunsmith and general manager at C&S, to work out the details. I told Jon what the project was all about and he got it immediately. "We're on it. I'll send you a list of what I think we should do to the duo, take a look at it, add or subtract anything you like, then we'll get to work. I'll have a good guy we have here, Sean McSheehy, handle it all personally. One man, both guns. Should be interesting I'd say?"

Jon's build sheet needed no improvement, and I told him so. The game was, as they say — afoot.

### **The Shop**

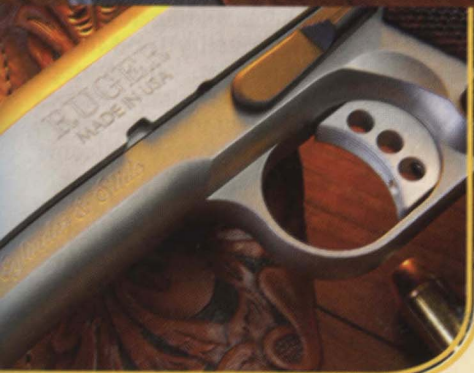
A place like the Cylinder & Slide shop didn't just magically appear over-







**"KEEP IN MIND, THE MODS DONE TO THESE GUNS WERE THINGS THE MANIACS AT THE C&S SHOP CAME UP WITH."**



regardless of what their imagination might drum up. However, we don't do repair or modifications to inexpensive, general consumer guns like old, broken .22s or low-quality handguns." Jon was quick to point out that wasn't because they're snobs, but simply a matter of being practical. "Nobody wants to pay shop rates to fix a bent magazine tube on a .22 rifle worth \$75!" Makes sense to me.

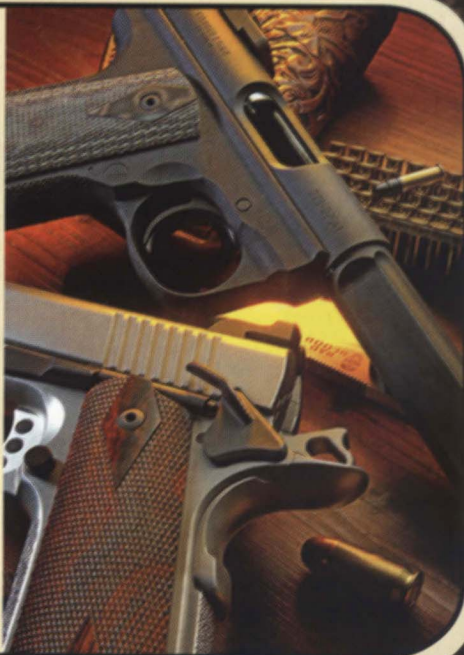
### **The SR1911**

Since its introduction a few years ago, the Ruger SR1911 series has grabbed a reputation for high-quality build, performance and reliability. In typical Ruger fashion, it's affordable

(around \$829 MSRP from Ruger, but more like \$700 in the real world) and built like a tank. It's also fairly complete as-new, with things like extended safety, beavertail, titanium firing pin and Series 70 construction as standard. But like anything "stock" — sometimes the need to customize takes over. And that's where the C&S Shop entered the picture here.

I tested the SR1911 a bit before I sent it to C&S. The factory trigger pull on our sample gun was 5.4 pounds and a bit gritty, and I got about 2.5" average groups at 25 yards, depending on ammo. Not actually too bad for a stock 1911 at all. Then the C&S Shop did some mods to it representing what might be called a "fairly complete build" on a 1911 (short of a match barrel). The reason I liked the idea of

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# C&S RUGER

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this build, is the fact it's a good representation of what someone with a stock, good quality gun might expect for about half the cost of a full build.

## **Custom Touches**

Jon felt it best to start off by replacing some parts like the thumb and grip safety, including fitting and blending the new grip safety. Gunsmith Sean McSheehy installed the multiple-part C&S machined bar-stock Hammer set, and set the new long aluminum trigger right at 4 pounds to match the 22/45. Sean did a complete reliability package, including internal de-burring and polishing, throat and feed ramp polish and crafted a bullet nose relief in the ejection port. A C&S extractor was installed and tensioned correctly.

Applying tungsten carbide to the frame rails helps with wear resistance and tightens frame-to-slide fit. The slide top was serrated for eye appeal and glare resistance due to the silver color, a stainless steel mainspring housing was fit, stippled and round-buttled slightly, matching the stippling on the front-strap. Sean increased the factory mag-well bevel and serrated the back of the slide, both for looks and for traction should you need to bump the slide forward with your palm.

For accuracy, a match barrel bushing was carefully fitted to the factory barrel, a long forged link was fitted and the barrel was crowned at exactly 11 degrees. A Heinie Ledge rear sight and green fiber optic front rounded out the top-end. The guys at C&S thought a nice set of double-diamond cocobolo grips from Hogue would set things off, and I agree.

What did we gain with all this? Right off the bat, we gained accuracy. My testing with the new Nosler Match Grade .45 ACP ammo (a 185 JHP) and AYSM's 185-gr. Match JHP) showed groups hovering around 1.5" to 1.75". I also think the much-improved trigger pull (at just under 4 pounds) helped a good deal. I also ran some defensive HP ammo (Black Hills and Federal) through it for functionality, and the gun ran fine. I noted the transition from feed ramp to barrel had exactly the correct amount of "shelf" visible, assuring HP bullets would not hang-up at the lip of the barrel ramp.

The gun shot just fine, and the stippling was just aggressive enough to help with a firm hold, but not annoyingly sharp like some checkering can be. I really liked the feel of it. It seemed as if the gun had had the edges softly "broken" before Sean had done the final soft bead finish. Interestingly



enough, Sean is in charge of the C&S polishing program for their limited edition, first-production run Colt 1911 reproductions, which are, in a word — stunning. His skill shows in the quality of his handwork in all facets of this gun build.

## **The 22/45**

Originally conceived as a target pistol for 1911 bullseye shooters, the 22/45 mirrors the grip contour and angle of the classic 1911. As it turned out, the pistol became hugely popular with virtually anyone owning a 1911. Ruger has turned out many variations of the 22/45, and ours began life as a polymer-framed model, with adjustable sights, called the Target Rimfire Model. I didn't shoot it before sending it off, but most seem to shoot around an inch at 25 with the right ammo. Sometimes a bit better if you're lucky. I didn't expect the modifications to enhance accuracy, just shootability, gun handling and looks.

And I was right on all accounts. When I opened the returned box I saw a transformed 22/45! The "coffin cut" on the barrel — hogging off a good deal of steel — really changed the feel, turning it from a muzzle-heavy, slightly ponderous-feeling target pistol, into a fast-handling field gun, that could still deliver target-grade accuracy. Plus, it looks cool, and in spite of what we may like to think — that's important too.

Sean radiused and tensioned the extractor, throated and polished the feed ramp, crowned the barrel to 11 degrees, serrated the top of the slide and barrel, along with stippling the front and backstraps. The trigger was set at about 3.5-4 pounds to match the 1911s, and ours tested right at 3.8 to 4 pounds every time. The take-up and overtravel was set neatly too. Some might say the pull is a bit much for a .22, but the goal here was to have a set you could switch between and keep the same general feel. Sean did it, and the gun shot like gangbusters for me — so it didn't seem to slow things down one bit.

The back of the bolt was serrated, just because it looks good, the barrel surface polished so it looks shiny through the port (like a bit of lipstick on a pretty girl?) and Sean even "clocked" the plug screws on the top of the receiver so they all lined up fore-to-aft. A nice bit of old-school gunsmithing, and an elegant touch, indeed. It's all in the details, and if you keep getting surprised by what you see — then it's working.

Get ready for two subtle bits of hand work sure to delight. Sean created a custom, extended bolt stop/release and extended thumb safety, to better mirror the controls on the 1911. I've always been fumble-prone with the