

On Target

The Hunting & Shooting Buyers' Guide

October/November 2005

www.OnTargetMagazine.com

Cylinder & Slide



Super
Redhawk
Snubby

by **Bill Battles**

Whether it be fishing, hunting, mountain biking or hiking, the Fishpond chestpack and custom Gary Juilfs holster allow for quick access to our custom Ruger, should its services be required.



At this year's SHOT Show Ruger introduced the new Alaskan, a 2.5-inch-barreled version of their Super Redhawk hunting revolver. Available in .44 Mag., .454 Casull, or .480 Ruger, and priced at \$819, the Alaskan is specifically designed to provide dangerous-game protection for fishermen, hikers and other outdoor types in an easily carried package.

When we got our first look at the Alaskan, several of our staff members who own Super Redhawks with 7.5-inch barrels started talking about snubby conversions for their guns, and when we considered that there are tens of thousands of long-barreled Super Redhawks out there, the idea quickly grew into a full-blown Project Gun column that we could share with our readers.

Finding a top-quality source for this type of custom conversion, however, isn't easy, and finding one with the resources to handle a high volume of orders is even less so. Long story short, our search ended with Bill Laughridge, the head man at Cylinder & Slide, Inc. in Fremont, Nebraska (Tel.: 402-721-4277; Web: www.cylinder-slide.com), and the American Pistolsmithing Guild's 2005 Pistolsmith of the Year. Cylinder & Slide will customize virtually any quality handgun, but Ruger single- and double-action revolvers are a specialty of Bill's.

So we sent him a stock-standard Ruger Super Redhawk chambered in .454 Casull and asked him to clone the Alaskan for us—but at an affordable price. A few days later Bill called with the specs and pricing for a basic snubby conversion that would virtually duplicate the factory





Unmodified 7.5 inch barrel Ruger Super Redhawk .454 Casull Ammunition	Velocity f.p.s.	Energy ft.-lbs.
Hornady 240-gr. JHP XTP/MAG	1,816	1,758
Hornady 334-gr. JHP	1,589	1,682
C & S Modified 2.625 inch barrel Ruger Super Redhawk .454 Casull Ammunition	Velocity f.p.s.	Energy ft.-lbs.
Hornady 240-gr. JHP XTP/MAG	1,536	1,258
Hornady 334-gr. JHP	1,382	1,273
Velocity is the average of five shots, measured with an Oehler Model 35P chronograph placed ten feet from the muzzle. Abbreviations: JHP (Jacketed Hollow Point)		



We were pleasantly surprised to see that, according to our chronograph readings (shown above), velocity loss between the factory 7.5-inch barrel, and the Cylinder & Slide 2.625-inch modified barrel, were not as damaging as we had initially expected. Perceived recoil from the

modified Super Redhawk was about the same as with the factory length barrel, but with a little more barrel "torque" as the muzzle rose. Luckily, for practice purposes, the mild-recoiling .45 Long Colt cartridge can also be fired from the Super Redhawk .454.

Alaskan. His plan involved cutting off the barrel 1/8 inch in front of the frame (for a barrel length of 2-5/8 inches), recrowning the entire barrel face at 11 degrees, and installing a custom, dovetailed front sight to match the width of the frame's top strap. Total price, including test firing: \$230.75. Affordable, indeed.

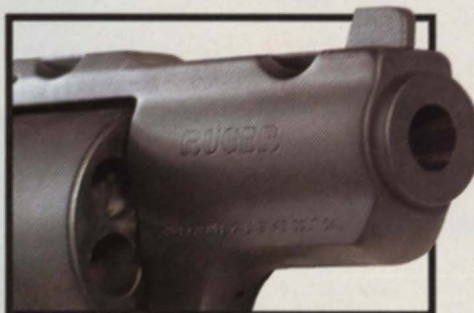
"But wait," said Bill, "I've got a dozen ideas on how to make this gun even better."

It's easy to get crazy when you're having fun—and Bill's enthusiasm for his craft makes him a fun guy to work with—so long story short (again), we signed off on every one of his additional recommendations.

A few weeks later the UPS man showed up at the front desk with a box from Cylinder & Slide, and the word spread through the office like a wild fire. The poor UPS guy hardly got his electronic thingy signed before five anxious gun guys descended on him, grabbing the box and hustling it off to the conference room to see what magic Bill Laughridge had worked. And what we found inside that box exceeded even our most optimistic expectations.

In addition to the basic snubby conversion outlined above, Bill's "other ideas" had turned our off-the-shelf Super Redhawk into the most sinister looking sidearm we had ever seen. In both form and function, he had created—quite literally—the Mother of all carry guns.

Every one of Mother's edges and corners (yes, that's what we call her now) had been carry



Quality of work, attention to detail and an eye for aesthetics make Bill and his crew at C&S second-to-none for this type of conversion.



The custom, snag-free Cylinder & Slide fixed rear sight and bobbed hammer were welcome additions. A snag while drawing on a charging grizzly is a scary thought indeed.



Chamfered cylinders on the modified Super Redhawk help promote quick and seamless reloads under stress. Note the contrast between the gun's black finish and custom, gold-bead front sight.

beveled, the hammer spur had been removed, the top of the hammer had been checkered to facilitate manual cocking, and a custom, rounded-and-beveled rear sight had been fabricated and installed. The result was a gun that could be drawn under stress without any possibility of snagging, a handy feature when a thousand-pound brown bear is in your face.

To enhance function, reliability and accuracy, Bill performed a complete action job, smoothed and polished all the trigger parts, chamfered and polished the chambers and chamber mouths, and polished the barrel throat. The action is now smooth as silk, with trigger pulls measuring 3 lbs. 6 oz. single-action, and 10 lbs. 3 oz. double-action. There is zero creep or stacking in the single-action pull, and the double-action pull stages smoothly and easily to cylinder lock. A scant 1/8 inch of additional trigger travel drops the hammer.

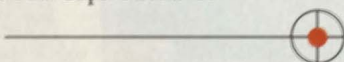
And then there are the grips. Bill took a pair of Ruger GP100 rubber grips with wood side panels and recontoured them to perfection. All edges and corners are radiused to reduce snagging, and to facilitate carry, the grip profile is considerably smaller than stock Super Redhawk grips. Bill's grips provide a comfortable, three-finger, strong-side wrap, with the web of the hand automatically centering in the backstrap, and the distal joint of the trigger finger falling directly over the trigger. He even inletted the left side panel to accept a Cylinder & Slide enamel medallion, and the bottom of the grips to permit a lanyard loop stud to pass through.

In the aesthetics department, Bill installed a gold bead on the rear face of the blade front sight. The combination of heavy front blade, fat gold bead, and custom square-notch rear sight provide instantaneous, two-eyes-open sight acquisition, even in poor light. As a striking final touch, he applied an HBS black matte finish to the entire gun—inside and out.

When the gun arrived it was accompanied by a custom leather holster made by Bill's

friend, Gary Juilfs (Tel.: 402-441-8897). Gary is a captain with the Lancaster County Sheriff's Dept. and is building up his custom leather business in preparation for retirement. He designed this holster specifically to carry Mother concealed within the outside zippered compartment of a Fishpond Double Haul chestpack (Tel.: 970-468-2056; Web: www.fishpondusa.com), providing both discrete carry and quick access when the chips start falling. Our fishing trips quite often take us into the heart of brown bear territory, Alaska, and the Fishpond chestpack—with its overbuilt construction and large-padded backpack straps—was the only chestpack we could find that was rugged enough to handle the added weight of a large-frame revolver and spare ammo. It's large front pouch, as it turns out, is also perfectly suited to Mother's dimensions. Mother's lanyard attaches to a nylon loop on the front of the pack and ensures that she won't be taking a swim if we happen to lose our purchase on her.

When you send your Super Redhawk to Bill for the \$230 basic snubby conversion, you'll get it back with your stock grips and factory rear sight. At a total cost of \$1,384, not many people will opt for the "Full Monty" treatment Mother got, but that's OK with us, because we like the idea of having the only example on earth. The great thing about working with Bill, however, is that you can pick and choose among the additional options to create just the gun you want, at the price you can afford. Check out the following accuracy and ballistics chart to see how little effect "chopping" the barrel had on our Super Redhawk.



BILL BATTLES is an avid Alaskan fly fisherman, with many years experience in dangerous game hunting and defense.

Additional Options	Price
Edges and corners carry beveled	68.25
Hammer spur removed	36.75
Top of hammer checkered	42.00
Recontoured GP100 grips with inlaid C&S medallion	89.00
Custom fixed rear sight	250.00
Gold bead insert in front sight	78.78
Action job	108.25
Trigger smoothed and polished	47.25
Chambers and chamber mouths chamfered	68.25
Chambers polished	60.00
Barrel throat polished	39.50
Lanyard loop installed	65.00
HBS black matte finish inside and out	200.00