

MONTANA MUSINGS

MIKE "DUKE" VENTURINO
PHOTOS: YVONNE VENTURINO

PEACEMAKER SPECIALISTS

Ultimate Weapons

Eddie Janis, the fellow so many of us single-action revolver shooters know as The Peacemaker Specialist has devised a package for the Colt Single Action Army he says turns them into "the ultimate weapon." In fact that's what he has named them.

After handling and firing them, I must agree the brace he sent me to check out are exceptional specimens. These Peacemakers are perhaps the most altered ones I've ever handled and yet still retain their graceful traditional look. They are built to be accurate, entirely reliable, and beautiful to look upon whether their intended purpose is cowboy competition, protecting your home, or just plain shooting.

For Ultimate Weapon Peacemakers Janis starts out with an ordinary 3rd Generation Colt SAA and installs his Accuracy Package, Action Package and Cosmetics Package.

Nuts & Bolts

Let's look at the accuracy thing first. Colt SAAs, especially in .45 Colt caliber don't have a sterling reputation for accuracy. This is mostly caused by Colt mounting them with barrels of .451" groove diameter, but cutting the



These are the Peacemaker Specialist "Ultimate Weapon" Colt Single Action Army .45 Colt revolvers. They are sighted in with Black Hills .45 Colt "Cowboy" factory loads.

cylinders with .456" (or larger) chamber throats. Janis' remedy for this fault is to rechamber .357 Magnum cylinders so they indeed have proper chamber throats. His specs call for .452" chamber mouths matching .4515"-barrel-groove diameters. Furthermore, he cuts an 11-degree forcing cone; a move in my own experience almost always enhances a 3rd Generation Colt SAA's accuracy, especially with lead alloy bullets.

In the Action Package Janis does his complete Gunslinger Deluxe Action Job. This entails mating the bolt to the cylinder's locking notches to remove both lateral wobble and end shake. Nothing irritates single action shooters more than picking up a handgun and feeling it rattle when handled. The special bolt head is also designed to prevent the annoying "skip-over" sometimes happening with single actions whose actions have been lightened. At the same time the hand rotating the cylinder is also adjusted so there is no over-travel when the sixgun is cocked. When the hammer stops its

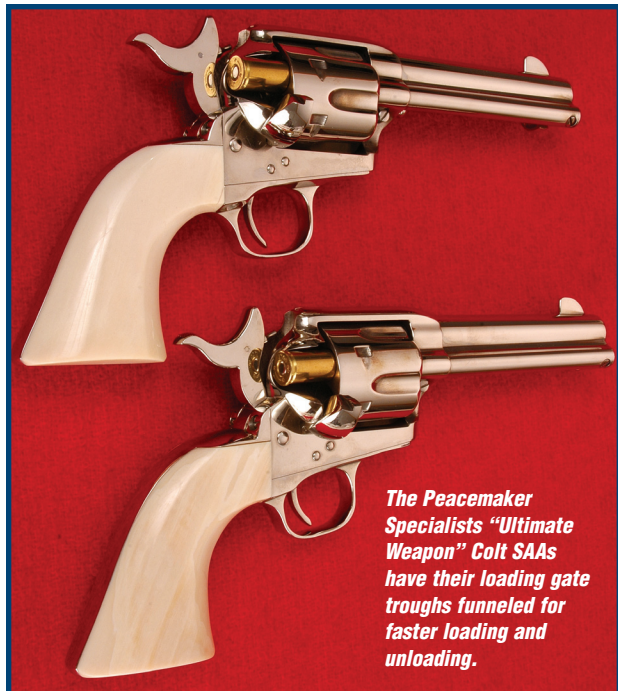
rearward travel is precisely when the bolt locks the cylinder.

No Bust-o-matic

A commonly held belief is Peacemaker's "break" a lot. That is to say, their leaf springs are not as reliable as the coil springs used in some "modern" single actions. In my life-long experience as a single action shooter, this has been a non-issue. About a half dozen bolt springs have broken in 38 years during my shooting literally scores of thousands of rounds through hundreds of SAAs. Nevertheless, for the "Ultimate Weapon" Peacemakers, Janis installs custom main springs and sear and bolt springs. These are lighter in their strength, consequently giving less resistance when cycling the revolvers' actions, and therefore having a longer life.

This is done to make the "Ultimate Weapon" SAAs better shooters and makes them more shoot-able. In my opinion one of the most important things is having your Peacemaker perfectly sighted in. Any experienced single-action shooter can testify not many fixed-sight single actions of any make actually hit point-of-aim right out of the box. Since the type of ammo and especially the weight of the bullet heavily influence a handgun's point-of-impact, Janis has settled on Black Hills Ammunition's .45 Colt Cowboy Load as standard. It features a 250-grain .452" bullet at a nominal 800 fps.

Now let's look at the specifics of the brace of Colt Peacemakers Janis sent



The Peacemaker Specialists "Ultimate Weapon" Colt SAAs have their loading gate troughs funneled for faster loading and unloading.

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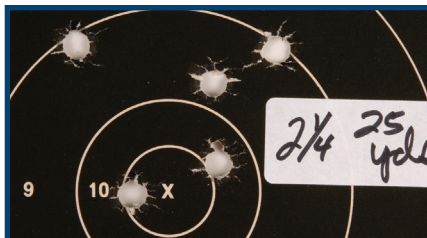
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me. Simply stated they are beautiful handguns, fully nickel-plated with one-piece elephant ivory stocks perfectly fitted to the grip frames. Barrel length is 4 3/4", and barrel cylinder gaps on both guns would accept a .003" feeler gauge but not a .004" one. I averaged the trigger pull weights of both guns for five test pulls and they came out at 35 ounces for one revolver and 36 ounces for the other. That's about as close to identical as one could expect.

Old West "Melt"

One part of the Cosmetics Package is instantly apparent on handling them. That is, all sharp edges have been "melted." There is just no way to peel hide off your hands and fingers no matter how fast you manipulate these single actions. This even includes beveling the heel and toe of the grip frame. Another bevel that doesn't affect shooting but sure looks nice to us traditionalists is that the bevel of the cylinder flutes is like early 1900s Peacemakers instead of the abbreviated bevels on stock Colt SAAs today.



Duke found the Peacemaker Specialists "Ultimate Weapon" Colt SAAs indeed shot well and to point of aim with Black Hills .45 Colt "Cowboy" factory loads.

A modification unseen until the loading gate is opened is the "funneling" of the channel through which the empty cartridge cases are ejected. No effort or time need be expended in lining up the chambers with the channel for fast case ejection. Cases can be punched out as fast as the cylinder can be rotated and the ejector button pressed.

At my range from 25 yards, both of the sample guns Janis sent grouped Black Hills 250-grain load into about 2" for five shots. That is give or take a 1/2" once in a while. They also printed extremely close to point of aim. I won't say perfectly to point of aim because obviously Janis sighted these guns in for himself, and we shoot very slightly differently. Both guns were joys to handle.

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