

**HANDGUNNER**

**AMERICAN**

JULY/AUGUST 2008

# HANDGUNNER

**EZ** EAA's  
**9**

**AFFORDABLE  
DEFENSE!**

**Bar-Sto's  
HI-CAP  
SHOOTER!**

**HANDGUN  
HUNTING:**

**.50  
B&M AK**

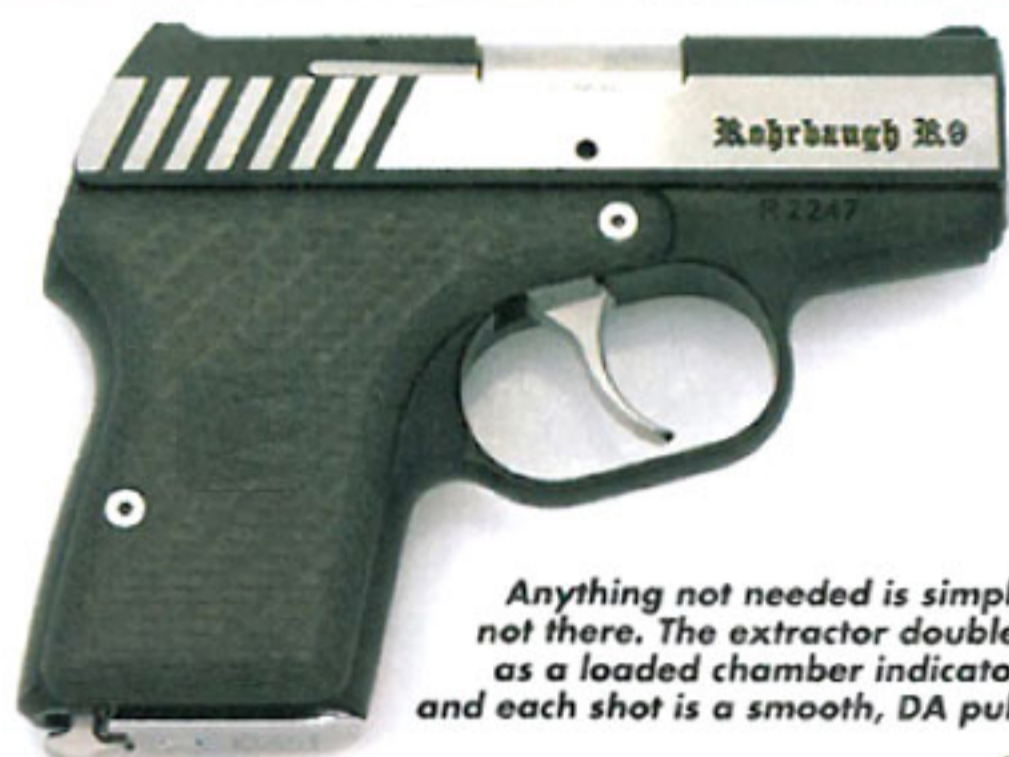
**.22**  
**RUGER'S  
CHARGER**  
p.26

**Rohrbaugh's  
R9 Series**

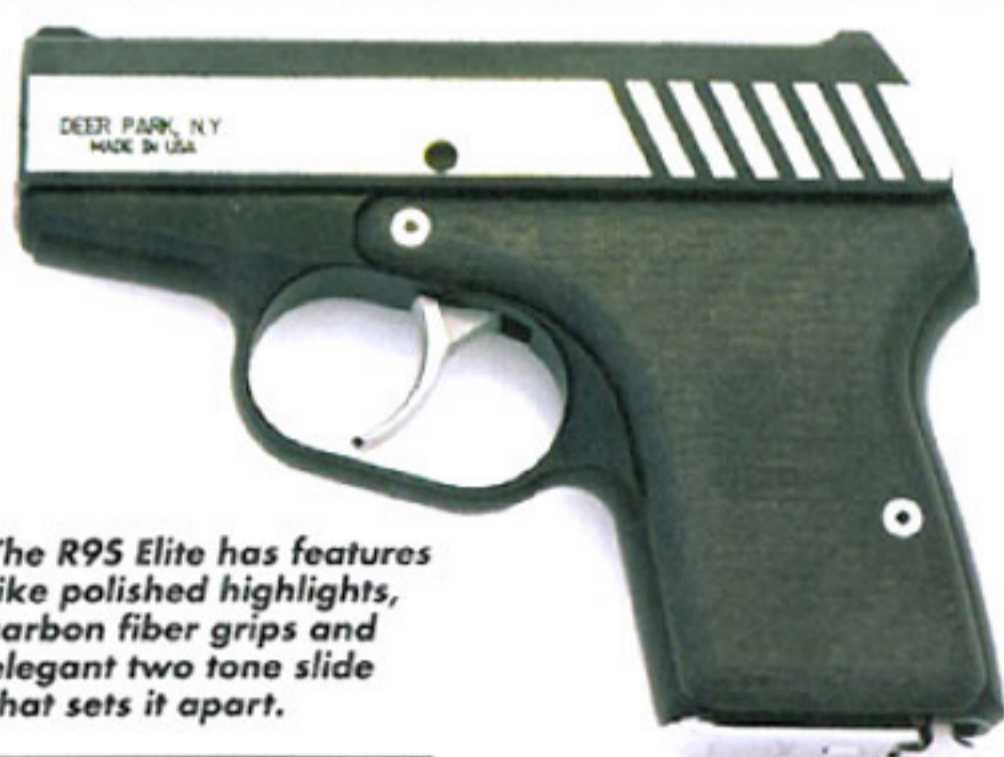
**FOCUS:**  
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# MUNCHKIN-IZED FIGHTING PISTOLS



*Anything not needed is simply not there. The extractor doubles as a loaded chamber indicator, and each shot is a smooth, DA pull.*



*The R95 Elite has features like polished highlights, carbon fiber grips and elegant two tone slide that sets it apart.*

# ROHRBAUGH

# R9

# SERIES

**ROY HUNTINGTON**  
PHOTOS: DAVE "MCGPIXEL" DOUGLAS

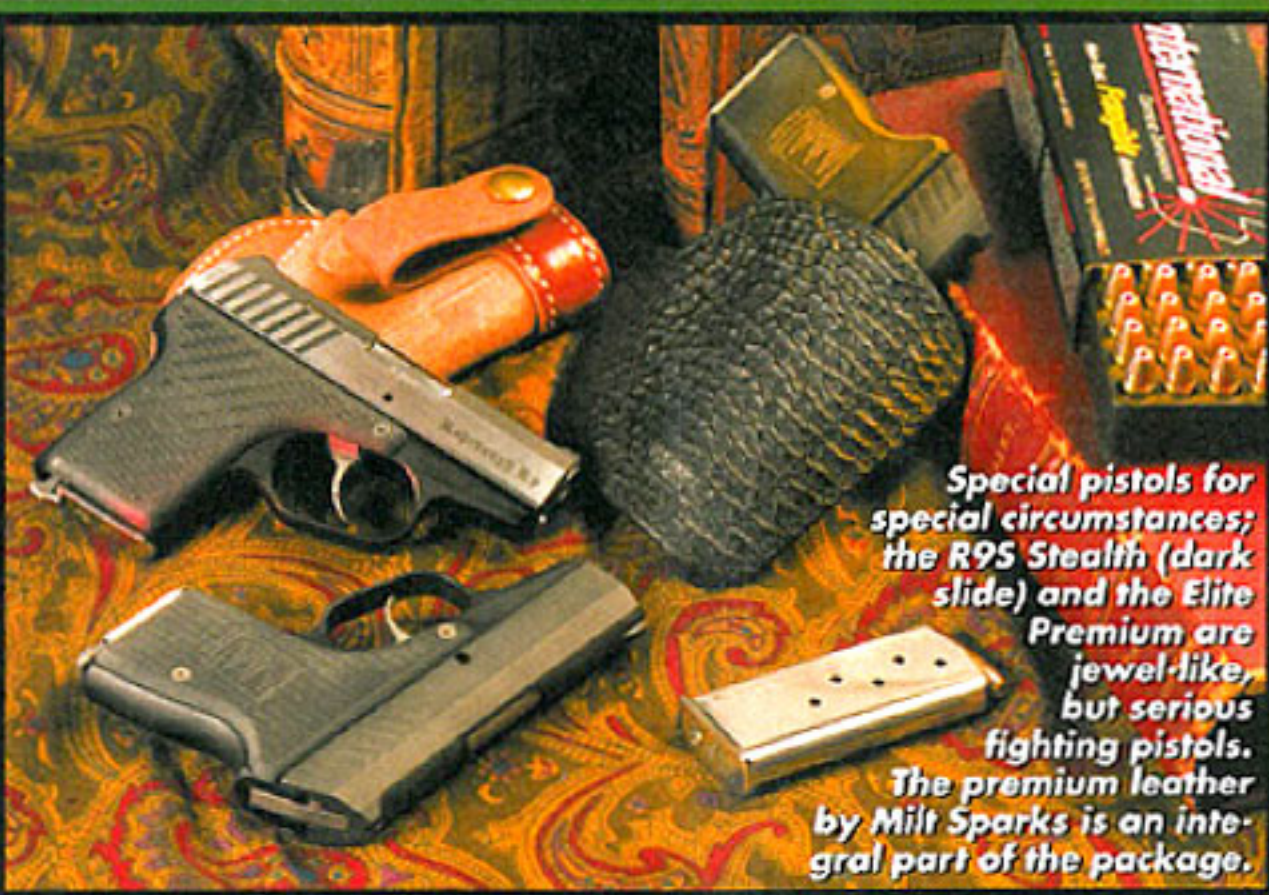


*G10 grips, sights or no sights and no external controls other than the mag, keep the Rohrbaughs tidy and efficient.*



The R9S with a S&W Model 36, Seecamp .32 and NAA .32 (bottom) gives you an idea of just how tidy this full-power pocket pistol really is.

It holds two more shots than the .38, and is slimmer and lighter.



Special pistols for special circumstances; the R9S Stealth (dark slide) and the Elite Premium are jewel-like, but serious fighting pistols. The premium leather by Milt Sparks is an integral part of the package.

Call these "dream" guns. When I was a cop in the late 1970s through the 1990s, most guys like me would have gladly paid a thousand dollars for a gun like this. Tiny, powerful, light and reliable, the idea was stuff that, indeed, dreams were made of — because we dreamt about it a lot.

We had airweight J-frames, and Detonics had their PocketNine; which, while certainly a smallish auto in 9mm, was basically a brick to carry, and on the fat side. Colt made the "Agent" and other D-frame light guns, sure, but all the wheelguns suffered from bulgy-problems in your pockets. The small autos were mostly .22s, .25s, old Colt 1903s in .32 or .380, Walthers (heavy), or were simply too cheaply made to warrant serious thought. In short — they just didn't cut it. The TP-70, an all stainless nifty pocket auto had big-gun features, but alas, was only a .25 or a .22. We dreamed on.

Now and again, somebody would launch a new "pocket pistol" like the Sirkis from Israel, a true 9mm pocket pistol. But they could never seem to get them launched effectively and the designs died, only to be launched once

or twice more with similar results. Then, the full-caliber 9mm pocket pistol niche rested, empty, for about ten years or so. Larry Seecamp up-graded his .25 to a .32, and recently into a .380, and as neat as they are (and they are neat), it still doesn't say "9mm" on the gun.

### Something New

Then, SHOT Show 2002 or 2003, as I recall, brought me in front of a modest booth manned by Karl Rohrbaugh. In front, he displayed a tiny auto with clean lines, compelling design features, and it immediately caught my eye. Remember that dream?

It took a while, but we tested that initial design in *Handgunner's* pages in the Sept/Oct 2004 issue. I found the pistol to be everything I had hoped for all those years before. It was tiny, but manageable, lightweight (12.8 ounces), one version had useable sights (I liked that even in a pocket gun), held 6+1 rounds and was made of high quality aluminum, stainless, carbon fiber and other reliable materials. I was smitten. And, it shot like the dickens.

I'm still getting flack about the sub-3" groups we were getting at 25 yards,

but we did it again and again, and we had witnesses. The R9 has no sights, and the R9S has tiny, but very useable sights. It's ammunition sensitive when it comes to accuracy, so try a mix to find out what it likes best if you want to bust bunnies "out there." Also, make sure you only use standard velocity ammo as it's not rated for +P, but who cares anyway. I particularly liked the subsonic 147 gr. stuff from Federal and Winchester. It was mild, accurate and very reliable. It's what I would carry.

One thing: change the recoil spring about every 100 rounds. Yes, every 100 rounds. They cost about \$5 on their Web site, so buy a few if you're going to shoot the gun. A 9mm in such a tiny gun demands a lot from the frame and slide, so the spring does super-duty to keep things from breaking into little, tiny pieces of Rohrbaugh. Just change 'em.

### Today

Karl and I have remained friends over the ensuing years as I've watched him continue to keep his company afloat. These aren't inexpensive guns (start at about \$1,100), but like a Mercedes or a

*Continued on page 89*



Left: The heel mag release is stone-cold reliable, and assures no mag can come loose in your pocket. It holds 6 + 1 of full-caliber 9mm.



The sights are integral and surprisingly useful. My personal gun can indeed be relied upon to hit a 6" paper plate at 25 yards if I do my stuff.

## ROHRBAUGH

Continued from page 69

Snap-On tool, you get what you pay for. And since the R9 series delivers performance in the real world, maybe that's why the design has proven to have legs in the marketplace.

Karl was kind enough to send me a new production model for a quick review. I was curious to see how the design has morphed over the past few years. I was surprised to receive a box of four handsome handguns. Rohrbaugh has added a couple of collectible models to their line-up, but these are very limited so if you like what you see you'd better call fast.


The sample guns showed the same attention to detail as the originals, and I'd expect as much from a small, boutique gun maker. Each one is the product of careful hands and it shows. Nothing goes out until Karl goes over it himself, point-by-point, one at a time. It's got his name on it, so it's right or it doesn't ship — period. Like he told me, "It's personal with me." There you go.

### Contented

I just bought a Rohrbaugh pistol, an R9S. It's the one shown in the photo comparing sizes with other small handguns. After all these years, all those dreams, all the small guns I've gone through during my searches over the years, all the frustrations when I've found them to be wrong; I can honestly say I found *the* gun for this role. I readily admit it's just *my* opinion, and I would be disappointed if everyone agreed with me. But I have to tell you, this is one very nifty pocket gun, and it delivers everything it promises — and a bit that's intangible.

Think about the feeling you have when you finally get *that* special pocket knife you've always wanted. The one with ancient ivory scales, Damascus blades, gold inlay and your name on it. It's safe, clipped to your pocket, and you are aware it's there at some level and you feel just a bit ... what? ... smug? And, you probably also feel, well, contented? You find yourself smiling for no particularly good reason. A mini-version of "All is right with the world." At least your world — at that moment.

Which is exactly how I felt when I put the R9 in the pocket of my jeans — contented.

Thanks Karl. It seems you may be a fulfiller of dreams for at least one retired cop. But I'll bet there's still a few more dreamers out there? Hello?  Are you listening?

For more info: [www.rohrbaugh-firearms.com](http://www.rohrbaugh-firearms.com), (631) 242-3175; *Milt Sparks Holsters*, [www.miltsparks.com](http://www.miltsparks.com), (208) 377-5577; *Hoffners*, (877) 463-3637, [www.hoffners.com](http://www.hoffners.com).

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