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# Gun Digest 2013

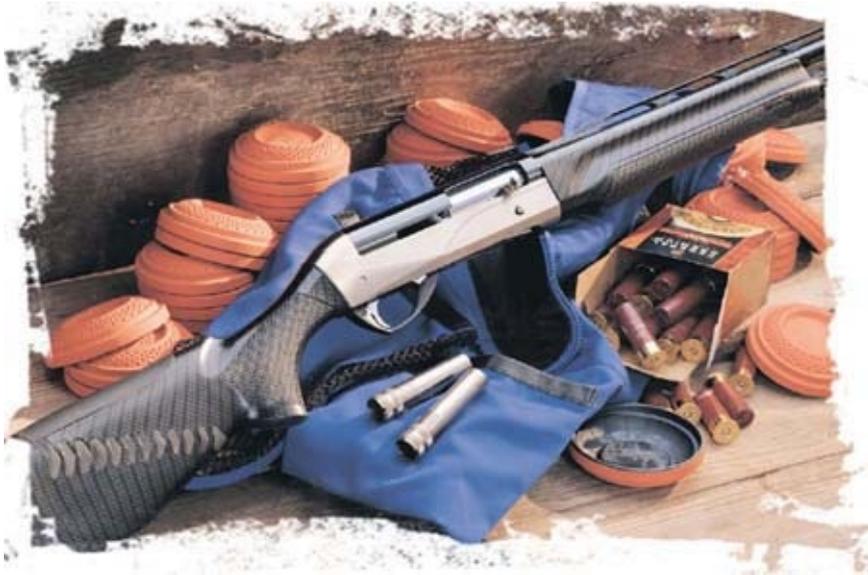
**67<sup>th</sup>  
EDITION**

- FEATURE ARTICLES
- NEW PRODUCT REPORTS
- ILLUSTRATED FIREARMS CATALOG



Edited by  
**JERRY LEE**

# Gun Digest 2013



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# 31ST ANNUAL

## *John T. Amber* LITERARY AWARD

**W**e are very pleased to announce that the recipient of the 31<sup>st</sup> annual John T. Amber Literary Award is Tom Turpin. A long-time contributor to *Gun Digest*, Tom is being recognized for two reasons: first, for his story in the 66<sup>th</sup> edition, “Fit For A Lady.” This story profiled Osa Johnson and a custom Mauser that was made for her more than 80 years ago. Osa and her husband, Martin, were adventurers who traveled the world filming documentaries of their journeys to Africa, Malaysia, and the South Sea islands from 1917 until the mid 1930s.

Tom is also being honored for his many years of devotion to the custom gun trade and his annual report in these pages—always well illustrated with excellent photography—of the finest examples of the gunmaker’s art. He was a protégé of the great John Amber himself, editor of *Gun Digest* from 1950 to 1979, and for whom our Literary Award is named. Amber played a major role in promoting the art of the custom gun within these pages as the trade began to grow in the 1950s. We asked Tom to give us his thoughts on John Amber.

“I distinctly remember when I first met John T. Amber. It was in April, 1978, at Alexandria Palace in London, England. I had known who Amber was since the early 1950s, when I first discovered *Gun Digest*. I corresponded with him in the late 1970s about writing an occasional piece for him, which led to our meeting. John and his entourage consisted of a good bit of firearms history. I met John, William B. Ruger, Don and Norma Allen, Al Lind and his wife, and Jim Wilkinson of Rifle Ranch fame, all at the same time. I was truly a kid in the candy store that day.

For some reason, JTA took a liking to me, and took me under his wing, nurturing my budding outdoor writing career along nicely. In addition to publishing some of my early work in *Gun Digest*, he also introduced me around the industry, advising me about who I needed to know, and perhaps more importantly, those I needed to avoid like the plague. His help was invaluable. Over time, he became almost a surrogate father to me.”

For this reason particularly, among many others, I am so deeply honored to receive this award carrying his name. I am also honored every year to provide, under my byline, John’s favorite part of *Gun Digest*, the custom gun and engraving section.”

Tom Turpin was born and raised in Kentucky. After graduating from what is now Eastern Kentucky University in 1959, thanks to the ROTC program, he was commissioned a 2<sup>nd</sup> Lt. in the United States Army. He entered active duty in the spring of 1960. Early in his army career, he shot competitively on

several rifle teams, ending up shooting in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Army matches at Fort Benning, GA.



Tom's nationally published writing career began in 1972 when Petersen's *Guns & Ammo* published his first article. At the time, he was living in Alaska, during a tour of duty with the US Army. Not long after that, he had a few articles published in *Gun Digest* and *Guns Magazine*. During the seventies and eighties, Tom was very busy balancing a military career, including a couple of tours in Vietnam, an outdoor writing career, and raising a family. He also served as a design consultant to the German firearms manufacturer, F.W. Heym and, from time to time, assisted the German optics company, Schmidt & Bender. Tom's military career ended in retirement as a Lieutenant Colonel after 26 years active duty, at the beginning of 1986.

These days, after more than 40 years in the writing business, several hundred published articles, three books and substantial contributions to several more, he is still at the keyboard. In addition to being a contributing editor to *Gun Digest*, he is a freelance contributor to many other publications in the field. His book, *Artistry in Wood & Metal*, originally published by Safari Club International, was reprinted by Krause Publications in early 2012, and is now on the market.

An avid hunter, he has hunted on four continents. A great fan of the late Jack O'Connor, Tom has found the sage advice contained in O'Connor's writings to be very accurate. As such, his favorite hunting caliber for most situations is the .270 Winchester. Tom and his wife Pauline live and work in the wonderful high desert community of Sierra Vista, Arizona, along with their two Labradors, three German Shorthairs, and 22 Japanese Koi fish. The elk steaks still taste wonderful, the scotch still provides a tranquilizing effect adding to the pleasure of life, and at the ripe old age of 73, Tom is looking forward to his next hunt, and his next story.

# INTRODUCTION

## WELCOME

### to the 2013 Edition of *Gun Digest!*

**W**elcome to the 67th edition of *Gun Digest*. It is a tremendous honor to find myself as the editor of the World's Greatest Gun Book. Like many of you, I feel that *Gun Digest* and I grew up together. When I first developed an interest in guns and hunting around the middle of the last century, *Gun Digest* was one of the few reliable sources to go to for information. There were the writings of Jack O'Connor, Warren Page and Pete Brown in *Outdoor Life*, *Field & Stream*, and *Sports Afield*, respectively, and occasional gun articles in adventure magazines like *True* and *Argosy*. NRA members had *American Rifleman*, and there was Stoeger's *Shooter's Bible*, which was a catalog with no articles or stories.

And there was *Gun Digest*. That was it. No purely "gun magazines" existed until 1955 when George von Rosen started *Guns* and three years later when Bob Petersen launched *Guns & Ammo*. I consider myself fortunate to have worked for both men.

As in all segments of the publishing world, the "shooting press" is highly competitive — some survive and many others do not. One of the icons, *Gun Digest*, is a survivor that has been here year after year. Now into its eighth decade, the publication started during the war years with the first edition coming out in 1944. Many legendary outdoor writers have written for the book and virtually every significant rifle, handgun and shotgun has been profiled within its pages. For many years, the subtitle has been "The World's Greatest Gun Book," and indeed it is. I pledge to do everything within my power to keep it that way.

#### **The 67th Edition**

I'm very proud of the content of this edition. Regular readers will see many familiar names along with a few bylines that have not appeared in the book for a while. The popular Reports From the Field section continues with contributor editors who have covered their categories for many years. The only exception is John Malloy who chose to give up the semi-auto pistol report. As he edges into his "golden years," he wants to devote more time to worthwhile projects like teaching shooting skills to Boy Scouts, for which we salute him. John will continue to contribute articles, like his story on "The Last Krag" in this edition. The semi-auto pistol section has been assigned to Gary Paul Johnston, a familiar byline in many books and magazines, and an

expert in handguns for law enforcement, competition and personal defense.

I'm especially proud to have a story in this edition on the guns of Robert E. Petersen. Petersen was the founder of a very successful magazine publishing empire that included titles like *Guns & Ammo*, *Petersen's Hunting*, *Motor Trend*, *Hot Rod* and many others. Pete, as he was known to his friends, was an avid hunter and gun enthusiast, and over the years put together one of the finest gun collections in the world. Following his passing in 2007, his widow Margie followed his wishes and donated about 400 items from his collection to the NRA's National Firearms Museum. The Robert E. Petersen Gallery opened in 2011 and has been called the world's best gun room. It is now a permanent exhibit at the museum, which is located at the NRA's headquarters in Fairfax, Virginia. No visit to the Washington, D.C., area is complete without spending a day at the National Firearms Museum. We are pleased to have Senior Curator Phil Schreier take us on a tour of this fabulous firearms collection. Phil's byline and face is familiar to many readers. He is a frequent contributor to NRA publications like *American Rifleman* and is co-host of the television program, *NRA's Guns & Gold*.

Must "mouse gun" be a pejorative term? Or, to filch a phrase, "Is a .25 in your pocket better than a .45 left at home?" Paul Scarlata provides an in-depth comparison of an even dozen small-caliber handguns including drills on the range to test accuracy and reliability. There are many myths associated with shooting and Tom Tabor calls our attention to 10 of them. It's great to have John Taffin's take on Bill Ruger's single actions in this edition, and if you like single actions, you'll like Rick Hacker's "Guns of the Westerns." He gives us an entertaining look at Hollywood guns and tells which ones were practical and those that were not.

How many times have you read a "gun test" and wondered what really was significant information and how it related to whether or not you should buy the gun? Jon Sundra is a veteran of hundreds of gun tests, most of them on rifles, and shares his take on the subject in these pages. Wayne van Zwoll takes us behind the scenes at Weatherby, Nick Hahn remembers the great Browning Auto-Five (the original, not the new one) and Massad Ayoob profiles an old favorite, the Broomhandle Mauser.

Few of today's outdoor writers know more about English and European shotguns than Terry Wieland and he provides a detailed look at the history and development of the English double. And guess what was the caliber of Jack O'Connor's last rifle? You're probably wrong. See Tom Turpin's story.

### **State of the Industry**

The SHOT Show (Shooting, Hunting and Outdoor Trade) in February of 2012 set a new attendance record of more than 61,000 people, including industry exhibitors and employees, buyers for wholesalers and distributors, and gun dealers. This was seen as an indication of how well the industry is doing, in spite of the continuing condition of the overall economy. Another positive statistic is that nearly 16.5 million background checks for gun buyers

were conducted in 2011. That is about 2 million more than 2010 and is a new record. At this writing, the trend is continuing into 2012. It's an election year, of course, which brings uncertainty about future gun legislation, at both the federal and local level. Most industry observers are predicting that fears about candidates who are not friendly to gun owners will continue to drive increases in sales.

Hot items continue to be concealable handguns, guns for home defense, and tactical rifles, particularly AR-types. Among the product introductions since the last edition we feel are worthy of mention are Ruger's first 1911, and the same company's very moderately priced bolt-action American Rifle. Browning has a new Citori over/under, the Model 725 with a totally new and shallow frame, and there is a new A-5 semi-auto shotgun, which is not anything like the original except for the squared receiver humpback. Colt has resurrected the Mustang Pocketlite .380, which has improvements over the earlier model, including a thumb safety that can be kept on while retracting the slide. Kimber also has a new .380 that looks somewhat like the Mustang.

Para USA has introduced the Stealth, a compact 1911 DAO .45. Shortly after the SHOT Show it was announced that Para had been purchased by the Freedom Group, parent company of Remington, Bushmaster, DPMS, Marlin, H&R and other industry companies.

Absent from the SHOT Show but shown off at IWA, Europe's big firearms trade show, is what can best be described as a double-barreled, twin-slide 1911 in .45 ACP. What's it for? That is yet to be answered and we mention it only as an oddity because unless U.S. gun laws are changed (highly unlikely), it will never be imported here. That's because both barrels will fire with one pull of the trigger, making it fit the definition of a machine gun. The AF 2011-A1 from Arsenal Firearms — an Italian company with a Russian partner — will no doubt be seen on one or more gun magazine covers, and I would wager it will soon star in a motion picture or TV program. But don't look for it at your local gun shop.

### **Meet The Editor**

I was born and raised on a farm in Texas, and have been interested in guns and hunting as long as I can remember. Some of my earliest memories are of me tagging along with Dad as he hunted doves with his single-shot 20-gauge. My job was to pick up the dead birds and put them in a paper bag or, as we called it in Texas, a paper sack.

I learned to shoot with that Eastern Arms 20-gauge and Dad's Remington 521T bolt-action .22. Soon I got my own .22 (a Winchester Model 67) and did my best to eradicate the jack rabbit population in central Texas, especially from our oat and wheat fields. With those three guns I made frequent contributions to the table with doves, squirrels and quail. I got my first deer with a borrowed .30-30 when I was 16. In the ensuing years I have hunted deer, antelope, upland game and waterfowl in several states but to this day my favorite hunting memories are from those days on our farm.

When I was still in my teens I began my first career, which was in radio broadcasting. From my college years into my 40s, I played the hits, wrote and read the news, interviewed celebrities, and held just about every job there is at a radio station, including general manager. Eventually I grew tired of the rat race and decided to switch to another media. I accepted an offer from the afore-mentioned George von Rosen to be advertising manager for his *American Handgunner* magazine and later was appointed editor of *Guns*, another von Rosen title. A few years later I was hired by Petersen Publishing in Los Angeles where for 16 years I was the editor of various gun titles with the Petersen group and its subsequent owners. These included *Petersen's Handguns*, *Rifle Shooter*, *Wing & Shot* and many *Guns & Ammo* special issues and annuals. I retired from InterMedia, current owner of the former Petersen magazines, in 2009 and now live among the beautiful rolling hills of north central West Virginia.

### **Meet Ms. Pearsall**

Jennifer L.S. Pearsall deserves a lot of the credit for this 67th Edition. She is book editor for several titles in the *Gun Digest* Books Firearms and Knives Group, and has worked in the hunting and firearms industry for more than 20 years. Her career began, one might say, on the front lines of the business with a lengthy stint in firearms retail sales, before being recruited by the NRA where she worked with several of its publications, including *InSights*, *Shooting Sports USA*, and *American Hunter*. Since her time there, Ms. Pearsall has had her essays and photography published in dozens of journals, including *Gun Dog*, *Gun Tests*, *Waterfowl*, and *Petersen's Hunting*, among many others. She has hunted her share of big game, upland birds, and waterfowl in more than a few of the Lower 48, as well as Canada and Mexico, though she confesses her favorite quarries are Wyoming antelope and whatever winged things her bird dogs have fetched up or have in front of their noses. Ms. Pearsall resides in Wisconsin with her retired English pointer, Highway. Her input, editing skills, long hours and positive attitude are greatly appreciated.

### **Dedication**

As reported in last year's edition, the previous editor of *Gun Digest*, Dan Shideler, passed away in April of 2011. He was at the helm of this book for three editions — numbers 64, 65 and 66 — and made a significant contribution to the continuing success of the world's best-selling firearms book. We dedicate this 67th Edition to his memory.

*Sincerely, Jerry Lee*

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### **About the covers**



## **CONTRIBUTING EDITORS**

Holt Bodinson: Ammunition, Ballistics & Components; Web Directory

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John Haviland: Shotguns

Kevin Muramatsu: Tactical Shotguns

Gary Paul Johnston: Handguns/Autoloaders

Tom Tabor: Rifles

Jeff Quinn: Handguns/Revolvers

Tom Turpin: Custom and Engraved Guns

Wayne van Zwoll: Optics

Larry Sterett: Reloading

# TABLE OF CONTENTS



Title Page

Special Offers

John T. Amber Literary Award

Introduction

## FEATURES

### **The Petersen Collection**

by Philip Schreier

### **Guns of the Westerns**

by Rick Hacker

### **Custom & Engraved Guns**

by Tom Turpin

### **More Than Purdey**

by Terry Wieland

### **Falling in Love with the .280 Ackley,**

by Corey Graff

### **Whatever Happened to the .41 Magnum?**

by Frank W. James

**The Truth About “Gun Tests”**

by Jon R. Sundra

**The Mauser C96**

by Massad Ayoob

**The Truth About Mouse Guns**

by Paul Scarlata

**.223 vs 5.56: What’s the Problem?**

by Patrick Sweeney

**A Lust for Levers**

by Wayne van Zwoell

**Browning A-5: A Gun with Soul**

by Nick Hahn

**Ruger: Sixty Years of Single-Action Sixguns**

by John Taffin

**The Novak NEXT Pistol**

by Gary Paul Johnston

**10 Shooting Myths Exposed**

by Tom Tabor

**The .450-400 Jeffery Double Returns**

by Jim Dickson

**Jack O’Connor’s Last Rifle**

by Tom Turpin

**50 Years Inside Weatherby**

by Wayne van Zwoell

**Brownells: A Family Legacy**

by Steve Gash

**Guns of the Hillsville Courthouse Tragedy**

by Thomas Cacecci

**SIG P210-9**

by Patrick Sweeney

**Bat Masterson’s Pocket Pistol**

by Duane Freeman

**Tightening Up the M1 .30 Carbine**

by Robert K. Campbell

**The 10-Gauge Magnum**

by L.P. Brezny

**“Weatherby Eye” Be Gone**

by Tom Tabor

**The Last Krag**

by John Malloy

REPORTS FROM THE FIELD

**New Rifles**

by Tom Tabor

**New Shotguns**

by John Haviland & Kevin Muramatsu

**New Semi-Automatic Pistols**

by John Malloy

**Revolvers (And A Few Others)**

by Jeff Quinn

**Blackpowder Update**

by Wm. Hovey Smith

**Ammunition, Ballistics and Components**

by Holt Bodinson

**New Optics**

by Wayne van Zwoell

**Handloading**

by Larry Sterett

**Rimfire Ammunition**

by C. Rodney James

ONE GOOD GUN

**The 33-Year Itch Colt**

by Andy Ewert

**Remington Model 514 Routledge Bore**

by Steve Gash

**The Miniature Wells Express**

by Holt Bodinson

**The Anschütz 1720**

by C. Rodney James

**Too Late or Too Soon?**

by Terry Wieland

**TESTFIRES**

**CZ Ringneck 16-Gauge**

by Steve Gash

**New Loads for the .410**

by C. Rodney James

**Winchester Super X3 Adjustable Sporting**

by Brad Fitzpatrick

**Ruger 77/357**

by Al Doyle

**Browning's New Scaled-Down 1911 .22 LR**

by Tom Tabor

**BALLISTICS TABLES**

Average Centerfire Rifle Cartridge Ballistics & Prices

Centerfire Handgun Cartridge Ballistics & Prices

Rimfire Ammunition Ballistics & Prices

Shotshell Loads & Prices

**HANDGUNS**

Autoloading

Competition

Double-Action Revolvers

Single-Action Revolvers

Miscellaneous

**RIFLES**

Centerfire – Autoloaders

Centerfire – Levers & Slide Actions

Centerfire – Bolt-Actions

Centerfire – Single Shots  
Drillings, Combination Guns, Double Rifles  
Rimfire – Autoloaders  
Rimfire – Lever & Slide Actions  
Rimfire – Bolt-Actions & Single Shots  
Competition – Centerfires & Rimfires

## **SHOTGUNS**

Autoloaders  
Pumps  
Over/Unders  
Side-by-Sides  
Bolt-Actions & Single Shots  
Military & Police

## **BLACKPOWDER**

Single Shot Pistols – Flint & Percussion  
Revolvers  
Muskets & Rifles  
Shotguns  
Smokeless Muzzleloaders

## **AIRGUNS**

Handguns  
Long Guns

## **REFERENCES**

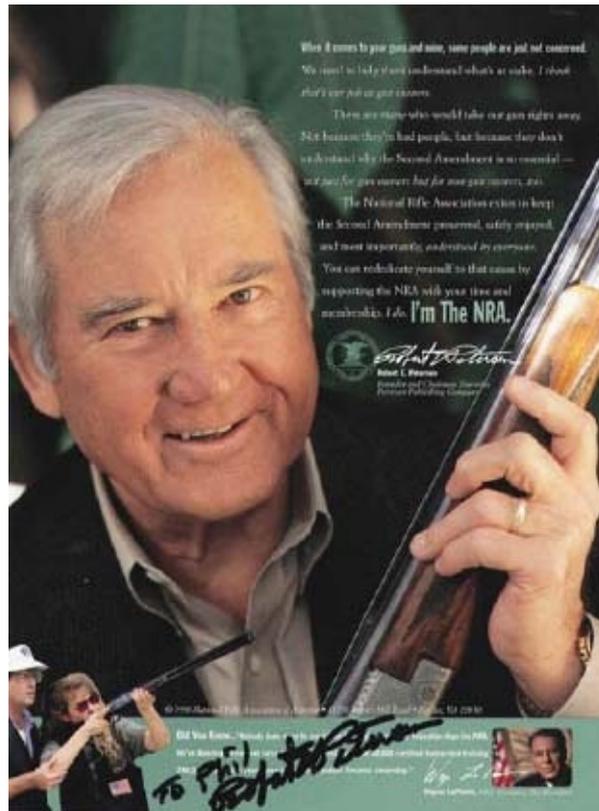
Web Directory

# Robert E. Petersen's Gift To The NRA Museum Sets A New Record The PETERSEN COLLECTION

BY PHILIP SCHREIER  
Senior Curator,  
NRA's National Firearms Museum



A view of Bob Petersen's gun room. Cased sets were located in the drawers below the main display counter.



In 1998, Robert Petersen appeared in a series of NRA membership ads. This second generation of “I’m the NRA” ads were hugely successful.

The NRA’s National Firearms Museum, established in 1935, proudly boasts a collection of nearly 6,000 firearms and twice that number of accoutrements and related items. The overwhelming majority of the museum’s holdings have come from the more than generous contributions of members, friends, and industry. Recently, a gift from the estate of Robert E. Petersen, of Los Angeles, set a record in philanthropy to the National Rifle Association, with a nearly \$20 million gift, the largest in the 140-year history of the NRA.

Through the generosity of Mr. Petersen’s widow, Margie Petersen, 425 firearms from his lifelong collection of historic, rare, and extraordinary sporting arms were given to the National Firearms Museum, with the only requirement being that anything gifted to the museum must be displayed. The museum staff proudly opened its newest exhibit, The Robert E. Petersen Gallery, to the general public on October 8, 2010. The opening marked the culmination of Petersen’s dream of sharing his extraordinary collection of firearms with the world. The collection is on permanent display at the museum, where it will be preserved for the education and enjoyment of future generations.



**The Gatling Gun exhibit in the Robert E. Petersen Gallery represents the largest collection of Gatling guns on public view in the world.**

Husband, father, veteran, publisher, restaurateur, outdoorsman, automobile enthusiast, philanthropist, and friend are all words that partially describe Robert E. Petersen. Born in 1926, in Barstow, California, he proudly served in the U.S. Army Air Corps during World War II. Following his service in the war, he started a hobbyist magazine for car racing enthusiasts entitled *Hot Rod*. From that initial venture he built the Petersen Publishing empire that included 39 monthly periodicals by the time he sold the company, in 1996. Petersen published a number of iconic American magazines including *Hot Rod*, *Guns & Ammo*, *Sports Afield*, *Petersen's Hunting*, and *Motor Trend*, just to name a few. He hunted on nearly every continent and was credited with being the first person to ever take a polar bear with a .44 Magnum handgun. (Both the revolver and the bear are on exhibit in the museum.) He also served as Commissioner of Shooting Sports for the XXIII Olympiad, held in 1984, in Los Angeles.