



North American Arms .32 NAA Guardian

North American Arms and Cor-Bon developed a proprietary bottlenecked cartridge to get the most out of the Guardian pistol.

Originally known for its high quality mini-revolvers, North American Arms (NAA) first began production of semi-automatic pistols with its extremely small .32 ACP model. Building on the successful 2001 release of its .380 ACP Guardian pistol, NAA recently introduced the .32 NAA pistol and cartridge.

Developed jointly by NAA and Cor-Bon Ammunition, the .32 NAA is based on a .380 ACP case that is necked-down to hold a smaller .32-cal. bullet. Manufactured by Cor-Bon, the .32 NAA drives a

60-gr. proprietary Hornady bullet from the Guardian's 2½" barrel to velocities approaching 1200 f.p.s. thus generating 180 ft.-lbs. of energy—impressive performance for a carry or back-up gun.

The story behind the .32 NAA started with NAA President Sandy Chisholm. Long interested in improving the performance of pocket pistols, he drew inspiration from bottlenecked cartridges like the .357 SIG. Chisholm asked *Law and Order* Editor Ed Sanow to explore the feasibility of such a cartridge in a pocket pistol.

When Cor-Bon was brought into the project, its representatives

successfully argued that .380 ACP performance should be the starting point—if they could not do better than .380 ACP, then the whole exercise was pointless.

To maximize velocity in the .32 NAA, the standard .380 ACP case was lengthened to accommodate a heavier powder charge. The case head and body would remain unchanged, thus preserving the dimensions of the extractor groove and case body to ensure that the new gun could use the same slide, magazine and frame as the .380 Guardian. NAA's original goal was to match the energy of the .380 ACP. Cor-Bon worked with Hornady to develop

The *American Rifleman* has used the phrase "Dope Bag" since at least 1921, when Col. Townsend Whelen first titled his column with it. Even then, it had been in use for years, referring to a sack used by target shooters to hold ammunition and accessories on the firing line. "Sight dope" also was a traditional marksman's term for sight-adjustment information, while judging wind speed and direction was called "doping the wind."

WARNING: Technical data and information contained herein are intended to provide information based on the limited experience of individuals under specific conditions and circumstances. They do not detail the comprehensive training procedures, techniques and safety precautions absolutely necessary to properly carry on similar activity. Read the notice and disclaimer on the contents page. Always consult comprehensive reference manuals and bulletins for details of proper training requirements, procedures, techniques and safety precautions before attempting any similar activity.



SHOOTING RESULTS (7 YDS.)

.32 NAA CARTRIDGE	VEL. @ 15' (F.P.S.)	ENERGY (FT.-LBS.)	GROUP SIZE IN INCHES		
			SMALLEST	LARGEST	AVERAGE
COR-BON 60-GR. HORNADY XTP/HP	1166 Avg. 23 Sd	181	4.14	5.02	4.66
AVERAGE EXTREME SPREAD:					4.66

MEASURED AVERAGE VELOCITY FOR 10 ROUNDS FROM A 2½" BARREL. RANGE TEMPERATURE: 68° F. HUMIDITY: 32%. ACCURACY FOR FIVE CONSECUTIVE, FIVE-SHOT GROUPS AT 7 YDS. FROM A SANDBAG. ABBREVIATIONS: XTP/HP (EXTREME TERMINAL PERFORMANCE/HOLLOW POINT), Sd (STANDARD DEVIATION).



.32 NAA GUARDIAN PISTOL

MANUFACTURER: NORTH AMERICAN ARMS (DEPT. AR), 2150 SOUTH 950 EAST, PROVO, UT 84606; (800) 821-5783; WWW.NAAMINIS.COM
CALIBER: .32 ACP, .380 ACP, .32 NAA (TESTED)
ACTION TYPE: DIRECT-BLOWBACK OPERATED, DOUBLE-ACTION-ONLY SEMI-AUTOMATIC
RECEIVER: STAINLESS STEEL
BARREL: 2½" STAINLESS STEEL
RIFLING: 1:16"
MAGAZINE: SINGLE-COLUMN, SIX-ROUND CAPACITY
SIGHTS: FIXED, POST FRONT AND NOTCH REAR
TRIGGER PULL: DOUBLE-ACTION, 10¼ LBS.
OVERALL LENGTH: 4¾"
WIDTH: 15/16"
HEIGHT: 3½"
WEIGHT: 19 OZS.
ACCESSORIES: SPARE MAGAZINE, LOCKABLE CASE, OWNER'S MANUAL
SUGGESTED RETAIL PRICE: \$449

The .32 NAA Guardian is easily disassembled into four major components (left) via a semi-circular take-down latch recessed into the right-hand grip panel (right).

Feeding is provided by a detachable, stamped-steel box magazine with a capacity of six rounds. When fully seated, the magazine's black synthetic floorplate extends slightly beyond the bottom of the frame to provide more gripping surface for the fingers of the weak hand. This is an important consideration, because the empty magazines do not fall out on their own; they must be pulled out. North American positioned the magazine release in a manner similar to that of the M1911 pistol—specifically, between the trigger guard and the synthetic grip panel on the left side of the frame. This means the release button is within easy reach of the firer's thumb. Other controls include a half-moon-shaped take-down latch recessed into the top of the right-hand stock panel.

As befits a carry or back-up gun, the Guardian's sights are rudimentary. They are fixed, and consist of a U-shaped rear notch and a Patridge front post.

Although it is technically external, the hammer is recessed into the rear of the slide and frame to prevent it from being purposely or inadvertently thumb-cocked.

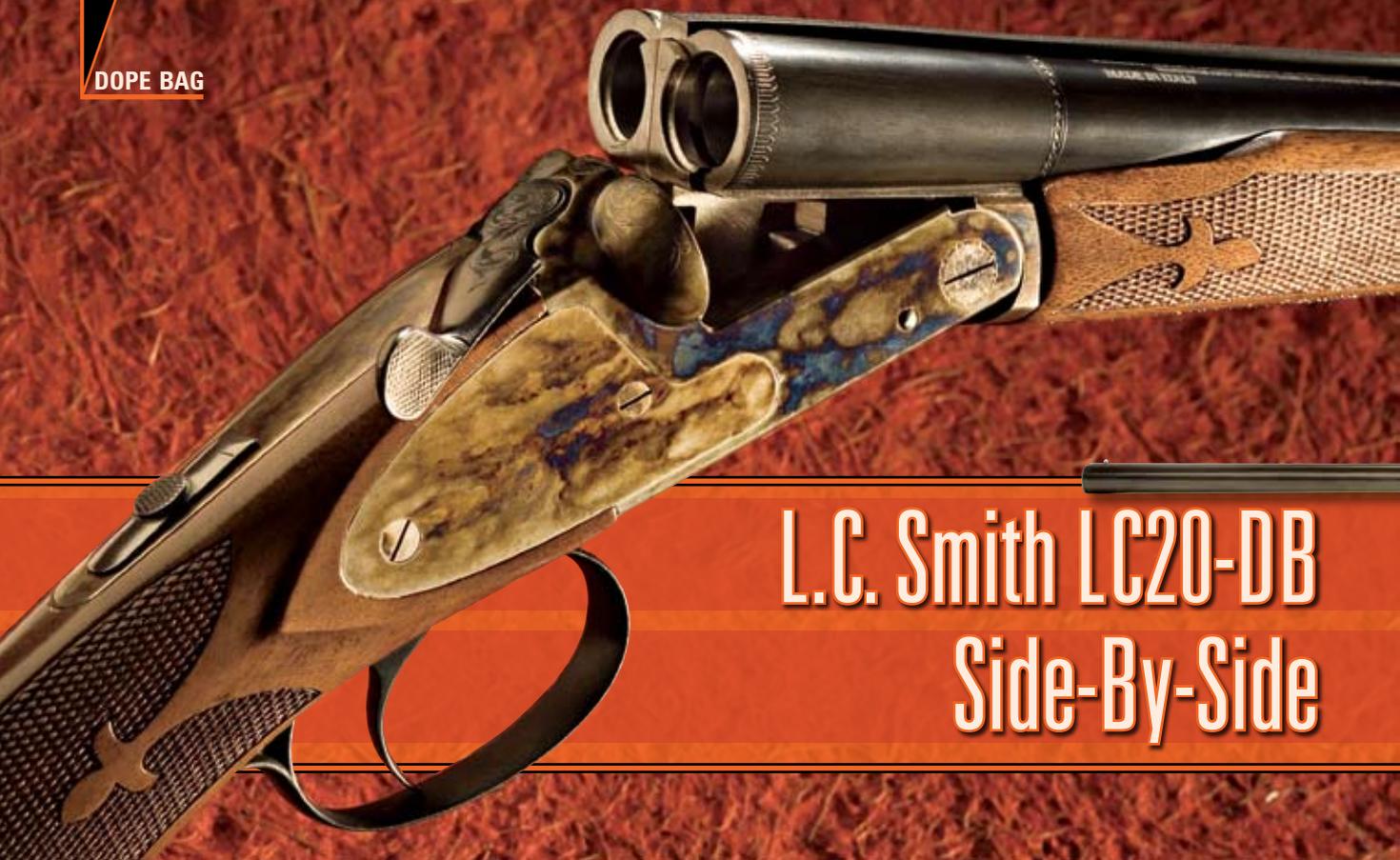
On the range, some shooters found that, despite the slide's deep

grasping grooves, racking it was a challenge. Many were tempted to shift the gun into their weak hands so they could work the slide with their strong hands. Like most small-caliber pocket guns of this type, the slide of the Guardian is short both in terms of length and height, so there is not much surface area for the hand to grasp; and despite the fact that the recoil springs are nested, they are still very stiff. The muzzle energy of the .32 NAA and the light weight of the slide means they have to be.

Thankfully, the Guardian was free of other problems that plague many small guns, such as dropped magazines and balky feeding.

Velocity results, as shown in the accompanying table, were impressive. Accuracy was comparable to other pocket guns we have tested in the past. North American Arms advised us that .32 NAA ammunition could be hard to find. If your dealer does not carry it, you can order it directly from North American Arms.

Given that it produces more velocity and energy than .380 ACP +P, those looking to get the most from an ultra-compact, small-caliber defensive pistol would be well advised to consider the .32 NAA Guardian pistol.



L.C. Smith LC20-DB Side-By-Side

One of the great names from the golden age of American side-by-sides is L.C. Smith. Known to generations of sportsmen as simply "Sweet Elsie," these American sidelocks were made first by W.H. Baker & Co. from 1878 to 1890 and then by Hunter Arms Co. from 1890 to 1950. What many don't know is that the Marlin Firearms Co. bought Hunter Arms in 1945 and later offered L.C. Smiths from 1968 to 1972. In 2004, Marlin brought back the L.C. Smith in the forms of a side-by-side and an over-under, both available in either 12 or 20 gauge.

The new L.C. Smiths are made by the well-respected Italian maker Fausti Stefano in Marcheno and imported by Marlin. Faustis have developed a reputation as simple, solid guns for the money, and other guns made by the firm are imported under the Traditions and Weatherby names. The new L.C. Smiths are boxlocks—not sidelocks like the originals—and we selected the 20-ga. LC20 side-by-side for evaluation.

The frame, which is sized appropriately for a 20, is attractively

color-casehardened and has been externally re-contoured to accommodate false sideplates that closely follow the lines of the original guns. The sideplates are retained by a small screw on each side toward the front and a single transverse screw at the rear.

The color-casehardening on our sample was attractive with varied hues of brown and gray, as well as some rich royal blues, some even going as dark as navy. The trigger, trigger guard, safety button and top lever are blued steel. The only decoration is light scroll engraving on the trigger guard and top lever, the name "L.C. Smith" in script on the bottom of the receiver, and light engraving around the monobloc/barrel joint and on the barrels near the breech.

The trigger is single, non-selective and mechanical. The tang-mounted safety has a rounded button on its top, and moving it rearward prevents the sears from releasing the hammers when the trigger is pulled. Sliding it to the rear also reveals an "S" on the tang.

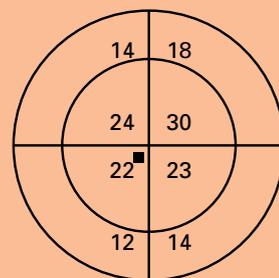
Breaking open the Anson & Deeley-style action pushes on

rods passing through the bottom of the action that cock C-shaped hammers. The hammers are powered by stout mousetrap springs and held cocked by long sears mounted in the bottom of the action. When the trigger is pulled, it lifts a connector to raise the tail of the right sear, causing the hammer to drop and fire the right barrel of the loaded gun. When the trigger is released, the connector drops down and pivots back to catch the tail of the left sear for the next shot.

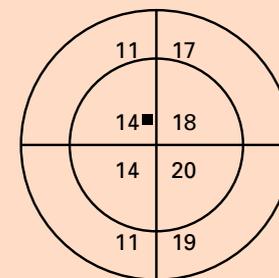
Stout lockup is provided by the proven double under-lump system with the lumps protruding downward from the monobloc's underside. Two locking bolts mate with recesses in the rear faces of the lumps and are drawn rearward by pressing the top lever to the right. The base of the rearmost lump protrudes into a recess on the receiver's underside. The gun has extractors and ejectors, the latter of which are selective automatic.

The 26" barrels are blued and are joined by a barrel rib. An unvented top rib tapers from 0.35" to 0.27" at the muzzle. Its top is grooved to

SHOOTING RESULTS



MODIFIED
CHOKE TUBE



IMPROVED CYLINDER
CHOKE TUBE

AVERAGE OF 10 PATTERNS @ 40 YDS.

■ = POINT OF HOLD
FEDERAL PREMIUM 20-GA., 2¾", 1½ OZ.
NO. 6 SHOT COPPER-PLATED LEAD
AVERAGE PELLET COUNT: 253

TOTAL HITS (LEFT BARREL) 157 (62%)
21" INNER CIRCLE 99 (39%)
30" OUTER RING 58 (23%)

TOTAL HITS (RIGHT BARREL) 124 (49%)
21" INNER CIRCLE 66 (26%)
30" OUTER RING 58 (23%)

L.C. SMITH LC20-DB

MANUFACTURER: FAUSTI STEFANO SRL,
VIA MARTIRI DELL'INDIPENDENZA 70,
MARCHENO, ITALY 25060

IMPORTER: THE MARLIN FIREARMS CO.
(DEPT. AR), 100 KENNA DRIVE,
NORTH HAVEN, CT 06473; (203)
239-5621; WWW.MARLINFIREARMS.COM

GAUGE: 12, 3"; 20, 3" (TESTED)

ACTION TYPE: SIDE-BY-SIDE, BOXLOCK
SHOTGUN

RECEIVER: COLOR-CASEHARDENED STEEL
BARRELS: 26" BLUED

CHOKES: INTERCHANGEABLE; FULL,
MODIFIED, IMPROVED CYLINDER TUBES

TRIGGER PULL: SINGLE, NON-ADJUSTABLE,
NON-SELECTIVE, MECHANICAL: 4 LBS., 12
OZS. RIGHT BARREL; 5 LBS. LEFT BARREL

STOCK: EUROPEAN WALNUT: LENGTH OF
PULL, 14¼"; DROP AT HEEL, 2¾"; DROP
AT COMB, 1¼"

OVERALL LENGTH: 42⅞"

WEIGHT: 6 LBS., 14 OZS.

SUGGESTED RETAIL PRICE: \$2,109

reduce glare, and there is a single 0.13" brass bead near the muzzle. Three interchangeable choke tubes (improved cylinder, modified and full) are supplied, as is a choke-tube wrench. The bores on our sample measured 0.621" for the left barrel and 0.622" for the right.

The fore-end is of the beavertail style and is wide enough to protect the hands during a serious dove shoot, but still thin enough to be graceful in the hands. Its right, left and bottom are machine-checked in a bordered point pattern at 18 lines per inch with fleurs-de-lis at the rear on both sides, and on the front and rear on the bottom. Fore-end retention is via an Anson-style push rod, grooved at its front, that engages a single hanger formed as part of a 4"



The top of the L.C. Smith's buttstock (above) is radiused for no-sag mounting, and its color-casehardened action (left) is properly sized for its 20-ga. chambering.

section of bottom rib soldered between the barrels.

The European walnut buttstock is attached to the action's rear by a single throughbolt. The stock is topped by a black, ventilated, rubber recoil pad and a black line spacer. The pad's top is radiused to aid in a smooth mount from the ready position, but there is no insert at the heel. The wrist of the pistol-grip stock bears similar checkering to the fore-end and has a pair of inward-facing fleurs-de-lis as well.

The L.C. Smith was function-fired at both American skeet and five-stand. In the hands, the gun is far more lively than one would have expected with its pistol-grip stock and beavertail fore-end. It handled well and, despite its field-gun 26" barrel length, swung well on fast crossers. Of the more than 200 rounds fired, there were no failures of any kind, and ejection was extremely positive. The triggers, in particular, were quite crisp.

Marlin and Fausti have done a fine job in replicating the appearance of the original field-grade

L.C. Smith guns. It is not a "best-quality" gun, nor does it pretend to be one. Rather, it is a fine-handling yet rugged side-by-side that is more than worth the asking price. But the name L.C. Smith doesn't cost any more—or hurt one bit. 🦋

Lumps protrude downward from the underside of the monobloc to provide stout lockup. The foremost lump has a lug that mates with a recess in the bottom of the receiver.

