

# DOUBLE P45 COLT JUSTICE



**Pair of Pietta's  
new Lawman  
SINGLE ACTION  
ARMIES!**

The most traditional pairing of SAAs for lawmen were the 7.5" and 3.5" barrel lengths; the latter offering the best choice for close up confrontations with drunks, drovers, and ruffians; and the accuracy of a 7.5" barrel for longer distances. A brace of Colts wasn't bad in a shootout either.



☆☆☆ | BY DENNIS ADLER | ☆☆☆

**TO** CARRY TWO GUNS YOU GENERALLY need two holsters. Most Old West historians will note that rarely did a lawman or an outlaw wear two gun belts, it's more of a western cinematic cliché, but that's not to say Sheriffs, Marshals, and lawmen of all stripes never strapped on a brace of guns; most did, with one usually having a shorter barrel for close up work and a second longer barreled six-shooter for distance. Short guns ended up in a pocket, a shoulder holster (by the 1890s), a custom belt holster, but mostly just tucked into a pant's waist. Legendary El Paso, Texas, City Marshall Dallas Stoudenmire carried a short-barreled Colt



D. Stoudenmire, El Paso, Texas.

**\$800  
WARD**

the \$300 offered by the Sheriff of t

for the capture and delivery of George Little, alias Dick Fellows, custody of the Sheriff of Kern county. Said Perkins, together with the night of the 9th inst. is about 5 feet 9 inches high, heavy built, blue eyes auburn hair and full beard same color. He was of a manner, right leg was broken near ankle.



The double gun belts and holster rigs worn by the author were hand-crafted by Montana holster maker Rick Bachman of Old West Reproductions. Bachman copied late 1880s styles made famous by saddlers F. A. Meanea and R.T. Frazier.



.44 conversion turned butt forward in his leather-lined left front trouser pocket, and a full-size Colt on his right side.<sup>1</sup>

The most practical pairing of six guns was a 7.5-inch Colt and either a 4-inch or 3.5-inch model, the latter generally without ejector housing. Either barrel length often required a special holster made to fit the shorter gun. Among famous American holster makers who produced classic Mexican double loop rigs for Colt Single Actions with 3.5- and 4-inch barrels (appropriately named the Sheriff's Model), was R.T. Frazier Saddlery in Pueblo, Colorado. The rig with the Pietta Sheriff's Model is an authentic copy of a Frazier holster circa 1885-1890, handcrafted by Rick Bachman of

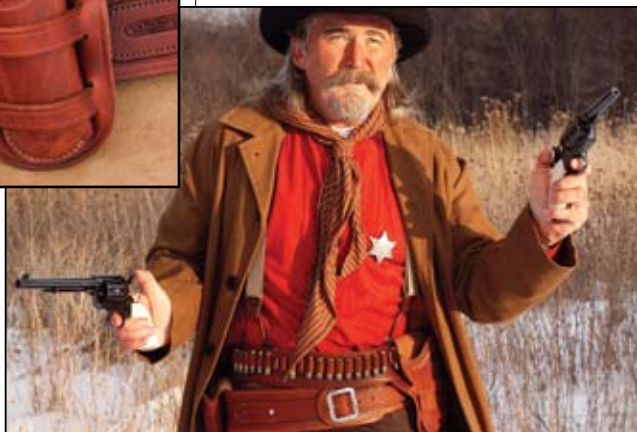
Old West Reproductions. Bachman also made the copy of the famous F. A. Meanea Cheyenne, Wyoming, double loop holster, and F. A. Meanea Money Belt cartridge belt with the Pietta Lawman 7.5-inch SAA. Both belts have clipped corner buckles; the 3.5-inch cartridge belt is also border stamped on the top and bottom, while the lined Meanea 7.5-inch holster is both border stamped and hand tooled, with a

sewn-in toe plug. The graceful little Frazier rig is border stamped, and tied (behind the skirt) to prevent the short pouch from backing out of the bottom loop. Both rigs and cartridge belts suit the well-crafted Pietta SAAs, providing both an authentic look and a quick draw.

**Gun Details**

The Lawman set is a matched pair of SAAs with a deep, high-polish blue-black finish, contrasted by white Micarta grips. The pair is typical of the guns carried by peacekeepers in the 1880s; the standard 7.5-

inch and a short-barreled 3.5-inch model without an ejector. Aside from being eye-catching, both Pietta revolvers come with standard factory tuned actions that are very impressive for out-of-the-box six guns. To get a revolver with a glass smooth hammer that positively clicks through each step and a trigger pull of 1.5 pounds (7.5-inch model) and 2.4 pounds (3.5-inch), usually requires a trip to the gunsmith's shop. While the 7.5-inch model's average of well under 2 pounds would be regarded as a hair trigger in most circles, the 7.5-inch Pietta proved delightfully consistent, with the trigger breaking cleanly shot after shot with only 3/16th of an inch take-up. The factory



action on the Pietta is commensurate with those of specially-tuned guns.

Another factor often overlooked is hammer draw, which on most SAA models averages 6 pounds. The Pietta Lawman set averaged 3.9 pounds for the 7.5-inch revolver, and 4.1 pounds for the 3.5-inch, which is substantially better than most guns with tuned actions. This is one of the reasons that SASS/Wild West Performing Arts Society 2009 World Champion Johnny "Hot shot" Tuscadero (Jonathan A, Mincks hot-shotperformer.com) uses a pair of Pietta SAAs in his world-touring act.

"Pietta's talk about new metallurgy techniques, making springs stronger and the care and dedication to precision and authenticity are impressive. But I have one requirement; I want guns that anybody can

**SPECIFICATIONS**

**Pietta Lawman**



**Caliber:** .45 Colt  
**Barrel:** 3.5 inches, 7.5 inches  
**OA Length:** 9.01 inches, 12.75 inches  
**Weight:** 33 to 40 ounces (empty)  
**Sights:** Blued steel front blade, rear square notch  
**Action:** SA • **Finish:** High-polish blue/black • **Grips:** White micarta  
**Capacity:** 6-shot • **Price:** \$510 (as tested)

**66**  
**Legendary El Paso**  
**Marshall DALLAS**  
**STOUDENMIRE**  
 carried a short-barreled  
**COLT .44 conversion**  
 in his left front trouser  
 pocket, and a full-size  
**COLT** on his right side.  
**99**

buy," Mincks explained in a recent interview with the author. "Basically right out of the box, not custom made guns and the Pietta factory action job is on par with action jobs I've paid top dollar for on other pistols. These are smooth as butter and lock up tight every time."

During 2009, Mincks put his pair of nickel-plated 4.75-inch .45 Colt Pietta SAAs through the ringer. "Performing in front of a live audience there are no second chances. No double takes. After performing about 50 tricks of spinning, flipping and twirling and running through a fast draw demo and five or six other trick shots, and I'm drawing a bead on my last target for an over the shoulder mirror shot, I simply need the pistol to work... every time, five shows a day, weeks on end. There is no room for a cylinder that doesn't lock up or a light hammer spring not setting off the primer. And I'll be the first to admit, I'm rough on guns. I power through my fast draw with little finesse. I use way too

4/C AD



Top-notch fit, finish, and standard factory tuned actions make the Pietta Lawman set a great choice for SASS and Old West reenactments. The guns are also available with color cased frames and hammers, and carved walnut grips.





(Left) The new Pietta Lawman set provides a matched pair of high-polish all blue/black finished SAAs with white Micarta grips. The guns come out of the box with factory-tuned actions.

(Below) A John Wesley Hardin moment during the gun test resulted in this nicely perforated five of hearts shot from 33 feet with the 7.5" SAA and Ten-X 200-gr. RNFP .45 Colt.



much hammer pull on just about every fast shot I do. If you are a competitive shooter you wouldn't want me using your guns in my work," says Mincks with a chuckle.

Our test demands are a lot less rigorous than a showman's, so the pristine pair of all blue SAAs in the walnut cased Lawman set were certainly up to the task. Both guns exhibited excellent fit and finish, and look really sharp in the burgundy velvet lined presentation box. Priced at \$510 each, the guns come standard with either walnut or white Micarta grips. The presentation box is an additional \$160.

**Range Test**

For the test we elected to use smokeless ammunition, Ten-X 165-grain HBFP (hollow base flat point) and 200-grain RNFP (round nose flat point). The two cartridges chronographed slower than the factory specifications but were still clocking respectable speed, especially from the 3.5-inch barrel. The 165-grain rounds cleared the ProChrono traps at 480 feet per second (fps) and the heavier 200-grain loads at 440 fps. The same combination through the 7.5-inch revolver recorded average speeds of 600 fps and 680 fps, respectively. The ambient temperature on this particularly cold afternoon was 38 degrees and dead calm. And yes, cold temperatures do have a mild effect on muzzle velocity.

Our initial test set up used 50-foot slow fire pistol targets at a distance of 33 feet for

the 7.5-inch barrel and 21 feet for the 3.5-inch barrel. All shots were fired freehand using a Weaver stance. I also had a John Wesley Hardin moment with the 7.5-inch revolver, placing a five of hearts in the center of the target. The net result was six rounds at a maximum spread of 1.5 inches with two sets of two overlapping.

As for consistent accuracy, you can't ask for much more than the 7.5-inch Pietta delivered from 33 feet fired freehand. Best 5-round group measured 0.53 of an inch, the second best group 0.88 of an inch with all shots overlapping their edges. The 3.5-inch gun deposited 10 rounds over a spread of 2.75 inches with three cutting one jagged hole at one o'clock in the 7-ring, and four grouping under an inch in the 8 and 9 rings.

**Final Thoughts**

I can remember when F.lli Pietta (F.lli is the abbreviation for Fratelli "brothers") started manufacturing Colt-style SAA revolvers in 2002, they were not this well refined or accurate. In less than a decade the company has improved fit and finish (polishing and bluing techniques), metal-



The Pietta Lawman set can be ordered with a burgundy velvet-lined presentation case.

lurgy, internal quality (just as important as how the gun looks on the outside), and is now making production-priced SAAs that come out of the box with standard features and finishes you'd traditionally pay extra for. While we run a couple of hundred rounds through a test gun and then move on to the next one, and the next, professionals like Johnny "Hotshot" Tuscadero put thousands of rounds through a single pair of guns, and when those guns continue to work without fail they have passed the toughest test of all. After a year says Mincks, "I haven't even changed a part or made an adjustment to them the whole time."<sup>2</sup>

If the new Pietta Lawman set is any indication of things to come from this long established Italian armsmaker, the bar has just been raised another notch. And Cowboy Action Shooters will be the biggest benefactors. ✪

**FOOTNOTES**

<sup>1</sup> Texas history tells two versions, the second being that Stoudenmier's right hand gun was an S&W .44 topbreak, not a Colt SAA.

<sup>2</sup> Jonathan Mincks, (Johnny "Hotshot" Tuscadero)'s show tours the world and Mincks' is now the Official Product Tester for F.lli Pietta.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:**

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