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Bond Arms

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Refining the elements of derringer design



During the 1860s, the demand for both the original Deringer (aka derringer or pocket pistol) and copies of it exceeded supply. It was a situation that, at the time, was reported as unparalleled in the history of the highly competitive gun business.

Today, the company that is arguably the leader in production of quality derringer-style firearms is experiencing the same kind of demand for its guns that Henry Deringer Jr. experienced nearly 150 years ago.

Bond Arms increased firearm production by 30 percent last year, but is still struggling to keep up with consumer demand. The demand

GORDON BOND, LEFT, AND HIS BROTHER GREG TOOK THE CLASSIC DERRINGER DESIGN AND UPDATED IT TO THE WANTS AND NEEDS OF TODAY'S PROTECTION MARKET, AND BUSINESS HAS BEEN BOOMING.

for Bond guns is the result of founder Greg Bond's commitment to designing and building superior derringer-style guns.

Bond became educated about the pocket-pistol firearm segment when he was hired by a company to solve its manufacturing problems. During that stint, Bond

became focused on the derringer marketplace and firmly believed there was tremendous room for improvement to modern derringer designs.

After parting ways with the company, Bond honed his focus on developing the derringers he saw in his mind's eye and knew would become as successful as the historical gun, while providing a level of quality never before seen.

Working from home, Bond engineered improvements to existing designs. He traveled from machine shop to machine shop to determine how to tool and drill parts and have parts built. Simultaneously, he needed an income, so he designed and built custom-made derringers to survive.

But Bond hit a brick wall head-on that halted production for years—his previous employer dragged him

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into court, claiming Bond was using company secrets. They didn’t want Bond competing with them.

When most people would have tossed their dreams to the winds, Bond stood firm, even though he was unable to make a living. When most family members would have demanded change, Bond’s family, especially his wife, Mona, stuck with him, encouraged him and made sure he didn’t quit. They fought the fight together.

“They made it through by the grace of God,” admits Gordon Bond, Greg’s brother who now runs Bond Arms. “Church members and prayer helped. Then Greg was finally vindicated. The court dismissed the frivolous lawsuit and cut the invisible shackles.”

Finally, the inadequacies Bond identified in modern derringers could be addressed. Greg focused first on firing pins. In most designs, the pin is extruded into the chamber. Since most barrels were hinged designs, users loaded and closed the barrel down in a way that the firing pin and primer would come into contact. If a user slammed the gun closed, an accidental discharge was possible.

Bond spring-loaded the firing pin so it was flush, clear of the chamber until the hammer hit it when firing. After firing, the pin sprung back into position.

Many designs also required that the gun be half-cocked, for safety, to keep the hammer off the firing pin. If the gun was accidentally dropped, again, an accidental discharge was possible if the hammer was unseated.

So Bond designed a rebounding-and-locking hammer. When the gun is fired and the hammer hits the pin, it automatically jumps back into a half-cocked position and locks. The only way to fire the gun is by fully cocking the hammer, then squeezing the trigger.

Additionally, although many derringer-style guns were made from inexpensive and easy-to-mold zinc and alloy-type metals, Bond used only stainless steel—the result was a heavy-duty gun that could stand up to rugged use and hot loads. And because Bond Arms is also honed in on big calibers, the weight of the gun really helps reduce recoil.

“When Greg makes something, it’s as close to flawless as you can get,” Gordon says. “What he wanted to do was eliminate flaws and beef up the guns in a way that would allow users to feel safe and proud to own the gun.”

Shortly after the lawsuit against him failed, Bond found a financial backer and was officially able to launch Bond Arms. Unfortunately, times continued to be tough and the fledgling company struggled. The poor reputation equated with derringer-style guns plagued the company.

Bond turned to the Small Business Administration for a loan to pay off his financial partner and purchase much-needed manufacturing equipment. Almost simultaneously, terrorists attacked the United States and the fallout of 9/11 rendered the phones at Bond Arms silent.

“About a month later, the phones started ringing and orders were coming in,” Gordon remembers. “Greg’s amazing design improvements and his efforts traveling from gun shop to gun shop pitching his guns, displaying at trade shows and placing a few ads here and there started paying off. Most of the sales generated were word-of-mouth—one customer telling someone about us—the very best kind.”



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- **A simple barrel-locking mechanism** that is spring loaded and eases opening and closing of the barrels for quick reloading and cleaning;
- **Heavy-duty stainless steel** components for a lifetime of service;
- **Precision machined** parts for consistent fit;
- **Fourteen interchangeable barrels** in .45 LC/.410, .45 Colt, .45 ACP, .44 Spec, .44-40, .45 Glock, 10 mm, .40 S&W, .357/.38, 9 mm, .32 H&R and .22 LR.
- **All barrels can** fit all frames;
- **Lifetime warranty;**
- **Handmade in Texas**

Success was finally becoming a reality. Sales quadrupled. However, Greg was an engineer—a creator—not a businessman. He derived little joy from running a business and became weary of the daily grind. For several years, he looked for someone to take

Continued on page 62



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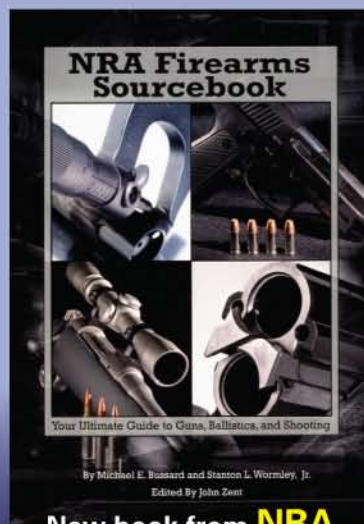
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from page 45

over the company. He needed only to look to his brother Gordon, who was searching for a company to buy.

Gordon was one of Greg's biggest supporters from early on, and was involved in the company at arm's length. He bought the first company banners and drove Greg to his first Shooting, Hunting and Outdoor Trade (SHOT) Show.

"Greg and I have always supported each other in our endeavors," Gordon says. "But working side by side was never an option. We're both too headstrong. We'd probably have killed each other. So when Greg was ready to semi-retire, buying his business seemed like a great fit.

"I'm not the firearms fanatic that Greg is. I think he was born with six-shooters in his hands. But I enjoy guns and always felt Greg's design was amazing and offered an incredible 'cool' factor. It was a tremendous product line for me to get involved with, and one that would allow me to use my marketing skills."

Gordon now calls the guns double-barrel handguns because they're so un-derringer-like. Bond Arms guns are substantial, heavy-duty—built like tanks. However, despite the heft, they're small and easy to carry. They're the perfect choice for personal protection and are favorites on the cowboy action shooting circuit.

Greg doesn't hesitate to say that his company's guns are the best-quality derringers on the market, and he's proud when he hears dealers tell their customers, "If you're going to buy a derringer-style gun, get a Bond."

The Snake Slayer IV is the company's most popular offering. It takes defense to a whole new level by offering the capability to shoot .410 shot or .45 Long Colt ammo. Whether the user is facing a poisonous snake afield, an intruder in the car or at home, a charging bear or a charging bad guy, they're covered. When compared to other manufacturers' firearms that offer the same potential, Bond's gun is significantly smaller and lighter for easier concealed carry.


"In these uncertain times, and because most (human) altercations occur within a seven-foot range, having a compact handgun that shoots either a .45LC or a .410 shotgun shell has major appeal," Gordon says. "Several folks have told us that potential carjackings were averted when they simply showed the double-barreled handgun. The assailants took one look at the two big holes pointed at them and fled."

Bond recently introduced The Ranger model, which is enjoying rave reviews, and several new models are in the works to be introduced over the next two to three years.

Bond offers 14 different barrels for its guns, which result in 22 different caliber combinations. Changing barrels is a snap—all it takes is an Allen wrench and 45 seconds. There are also approximately 25 grips (stag, ivory, giraffe, etc.) from which to choose.

A Bond design change to the traditional derringer-style grip has also helped bolster the company's sales and is very popular with Bond owners—a small lip at the bottom of the grip that allows shooters to get an extra finger on the grip for added stability. The difference between the standard two-finger grip and this three-finger design is like the difference between night and day. The feel is fantastic.

"We're also one of a few manufacturers that still builds exclusively in the U.S. and uses American-made parts for all our handguns," Gordon reports. "We like to say, '100 percent Texas Made.' Even our grips and holsters are made in the U.S.A."

If you're convinced a Bond Arms derringer is the gun for you, remember that they can be difficult to find—but not impossible. If you're unable to find a gun at your local retailer, Gordon requests that you call the company. Chances are he can find you a gun in relatively short order. However, if you do find you have to wait a few weeks, remember this—Bond Arms guns are worth the wait. 

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