



THE BOND ARMS STORY

This year Bond Arms Inc., celebrates its 20th Anniversary on a high-note, having overcome so many obstacles during its early years, that it has become a classic example of good old American entrepreneurship, perseverance and family values. In 1995 Greg Bond, a former Texas Instruments engineer and tool and die maker, incorporated Bond Arms with the idea that the Remington Model 95 over-under, single-action derringer could be converted from an Old West anachronism that was basically known as a cheap, dangerous, throw away type gun into a modern, safe, dependable, and well-built defensive handgun.

The Gun that Almost Wasn't

Bond had become interested in pocket pistols after being hired by a gun-maker to solve some manufacturing problems. While working at that gun maker he became very aware of the many limitations of the guns themselves. After 8 months with that company and after solving their manufacturing issues, they fired Greg. At that point Greg decided that he would design and build a safer, dependable, innovative upgraded derringer-style gun, which delivered unprecedented quality, safety and be more user friendly.

Bond spent many months engineering improvements, trying to figure out how to make the types of improvements that he envisioned. Once Greg completed his design, since he had no machine shop or machines to do the work on, he went from machine shop to machine shop begging for time on the machines to build his design. Greg's savings that was funding this project were disappearing fast.

Finally, after many setbacks, Greg was ready to go to his first Shot Show to introduce his creation and the company whose manufacturing issues he had solved dragged him into court claiming Bond was using their company secrets to launch his new endeavor. It looked as though his former employer wanted to force a potential competitor out of the firearms market.

With nothing but the support of his family, his church community and a lot of prayer, Bond held firm and fought the suit. He was brilliantly vindicated when the lawsuit against him was dismissed as "frivolous." He was broke and a bit battered but got back to work.

Not Your Great Granddad's Derringer

Most derringer-style guns were made from zinc and alloy metals, which are inexpensive and easy to form. But Bond decided to use only stainless steel to create a rugged, sturdy gun that could stand up to heavy use and the big calibers that he wanted this handgun to handle.

Next, he focused on the flawed firing pins found in modern derringers. In most designs the pin is extruded into the chamber with the hammer resting on them. This made those types of derringers extremely dangerous and could accidentally go off if dropped or mis-handled. 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, it could accidentally discharge.

Bond spring-loaded the firing pins so it was clear of the chamber until the hammer hit it when firing. After firing, the pin sprung back into position. Bond also designed a patented rebounding and locking hammer. When the gun is fired, and the hammer hits the firing 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 and then squeezing the trigger. This was a serious safety feature missing from all derringer-style guns.

Bond also thought that this type of handgun needed a trigger guard, which had never been used on this type of handgun before and he became the first ever to add a trigger guard to this type of handgun.

In addition to his stainless steel components and his precision machined parts, Bond decided on spectacular value add: interchangeable barrels, with all barrels fitting all gun frames with a lifetime warranty.

The Deadly "D" Word

With no legal issues standing in his way, Bond found a financial partner and launched Bond Arms in Granbury Texas in January of 1995, knowing he had a product far superior to any derringer style gun on the market. But Bond Arms guns were slow to catch on and the company was floundering.

The small company had a big problem. It seemed almost impossible to overcome the truly terrible reputation equated with derringer style guns. The derringer classification was proving deadly, but Bond was determined to persevere.

After 4 to 5 brutal years of hardly being able to give the guns away, Bond ended up getting a SBA loan, and bought out his financial partner. To add insult to injury his restructuring occurred simultaneously with the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001 and their aftermath. Prospects were grim but again Bond didn't give up. He knew he had a winning product and he believed God would get him through this even though it had already been an extremely painful experience.

Finding the Market – A Family Affair

Greg Bond forged ahead, traveling from gun shop to gun shop pitching his guns out of his 20 year old beat up Toyota Corolla. Behind the scenes he had some help from his brother, Gordon, who had strengths perfectly complementary to Greg's. While Greg was an engineer with a vision, Gordon was a businessman with marketing savvy. Gordon bought the first Bond Arms banners and took Greg to his first SHOT Show.

Finally Bond Arms started to find its market and sales began to pick up. Then the SASS (Single Action Shooting Society) started calling and telling Bond "hey I just won the World Championship with your gun" and Bond didn't even know there was such a thing. Now a Bond Arms handgun has won the World Championship 15 years in a row!

Greg's amazing design improvements, going to gun shops, displaying at trade shows and placing a few ads in the right places started paying off. "Most of the sales generated were word of mouth – one customer telling someone about us – the very best kind," remembers Gordon. Greg had created an amazing product but after so many hard years of trying to bring it market Bond had no interest in running the business anymore. So Gordon bought the company from Greg in 2007 and the leadership shifted from one Bond to another.

Bond Arms Today and Tomorrow

Gordon Bond has never backed away from his original point of view that if you can get the guns into the hands of a potential buyer, they will sell themselves. But he also saw many ways to grow the product line and his market. He introduced many new models including the Ranger, Ranger II and Texas Ranger. He also added the USA Defender, the Back-up, the MINI's as well as two models (Brown Bear and Big Bear) that he has finally gotten approved for sale in California.

Gordon saw that the market was changing and instead of just a Snake gun, or a recreational gun to blow things up with, or a cowboy action type gun, people were wanting a simple, easy to use, dependable and powerful personal protection handgun and when Gordon changed the company's direction to address those needs, things took off.

One of his big moves was to broaden his target market with the introduction of two "Mini" models – one designed specifically for women. And Bond Arms website and You Tube channel features video guides to purchasing a first firearm.

Gordon Bond doesn't say his guns are the best trail guns and personal defense conceal and carry products in the marketplace. His customers say it for him. Unsolicited testimonials pour in weekly from buyers so thrilled with their Bond Arms purchase that they had to let the company know.

Many of the testimonial writers call their Bond Arms Handgun *"A work of art," and the "best built handgun I've ever owned."* Others were very surprised by their handguns' feel and usefulness. *"WOW, What a Hand Cannon, but the recoil was less than I thought it would be"* and *"I bought this Bond Arms handgun as my backup to my carry gun, but I liked it so much it has become my primary carry"*

The other thing Gordon Bond doesn't say is the word "derringer." He believes the "D" word is still a hindrance to winning new customers and refers to his products simply as "double barreled handguns." And he is still trying to get his product into as many hands as possible, confident that the guns sell themselves.

As for the future? Bond is looking ahead to the next 20 years with some big ideas. "We haven't even scratched the surface of our existing market, let alone where we can go with our line," he says. He promises to grow sales of his existing product line and to add new products that "fit our personality and meet the needs of our customers. We're in a great place right now."

Happy Birthday Bond Arms.