

Life Beyond Ten Meters

Though ten-meter pistols are designed and produced of absolutely single-minded purpose, leave it to the Manic Compressive to convolute such high-minded equipment to my own perverse purposes. That ten-meter pistols so enable the pistol shooter to realize his or her full shooting abilities by minimizing ballistic, sighting and ergonomic excuses, no wonder this old pistolero finds them so irresistible. Also often impossible to resist souping-up to higher potentials, and/or modifying them for alternate applications.

For instance, I used my Walther LP3 single-stroke pneumatic ten-meter paper-puncher, that barely broke 300 FPS with light pellets, for **hunting** (of sorts). Virtue of its incredible trigger action, totally recoilless firing behavior and fine accuracy, the anemic LP3 proved an excellent 'weapon' for assassinating giant cockroaches on the back porch with minimal risks of damage to surrounding windows from light lead pellets ricocheting after impacting concrete.

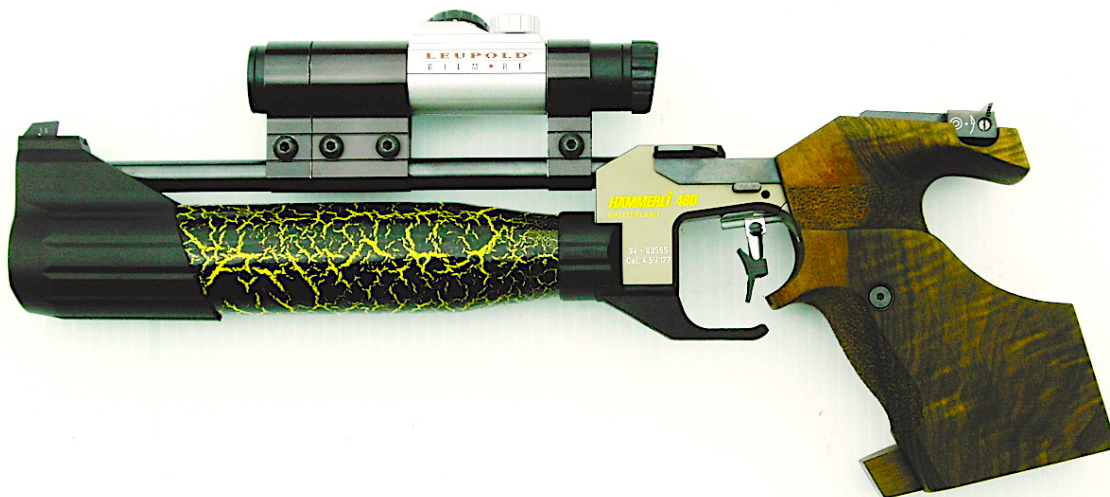
The many grip, trigger and sight adjustments typical of ten-meter pistols allow shooters to personalize the gun to individual tastes and preferences. So rather than requiring shooters adapt to the gun, the guns adapt to the shooter. ***Sweet!***

With each ten-meter pistol model having its own unique personality, what better excuse to own multiple examples than a quest for 'the perfect match'? And while that's not the excuse I use to justify my ten-meter pistol habit, it may work for others.

My excuse is an infatuation with **all things** projectile, and I find ten-meter pistols some of the most fascinating projectile-launching implements ever conceived. That every perceived advancement in the evolution of the species seemingly renders past generations virtually obsolete makes it possible to explore the 'obsolete' tools of the ten-meter game without (necessarily) mortgaging the farm. Many fine target pistols go largely overlooked once they fall off the front of the competition race. Works for me!

Carbon dioxide is a fascinating and recoilless airgun power source, and some Co2 target pistols have proven themselves outstanding classics. Hammerli carried the ten-meter Co2 ball until their airgun factory burned down in 1967. I find their Single and Master models to be irresistibly sexy, sixties-vintage, Euro-quality collectibles. Of meager power, they can be souped-up (a little) with stronger hammer springs.

Many classic and collectable ten-meter Co2 pistols are viable platforms for alternative applications beyond ten-meters. My .177 caliber Walther CP3 and .22 caliber Tau Model 7 both perform well in silhouette competitions and against small game, so remain among my most prized airgun possessions despite a current lack of local competitions. But decades ago the .22 Tau 7 snatched a Texas State Champion silhouette title in a field of 22 shooters, the other 21 guns all being .177 pneumatics. And all it took to soup the .22 Tau up to 8 foot-pounds for excellent small-game capabilities was an easy swap to a stronger hammer-spring. No accuracy was lost in the hop-up.



As I understand it, the unique-looking Hammerli 480 model is one of few ten-meter Co2 guns to make the transition to PCP. Another was the Steyr LP-1 (pictured below, top).



*The Steyr LP-1 illustrates a problem encountered when scoping most ten-meter guns; vertical-opening loading levers require very high scope mounts. One reason I've put up with so much Tau Mk 08 aggravation is the fact their **side-lever** loading allows much lower scope mounting for the lower centers-of-gravity and tighter trajectories I prefer.*

I feel the Walther CP3 represents the highest state of the art and evolution in Co2 pistols not only in function, but mouth-watering aesthetics. This lovely example of European craftsmanship is an absolute joy to shoot, handle, or simply admire. Mine having also benefitted from a stronger hammer-spring swap and equally-simple, lighter trigger-spring, the CP3 is a fine example of brilliantly simple design and execution. The hot-rod Walther now breaks 560 FPS with medium weight .177 pellets, with a trigger action that breaks like glass at just four ounces. Equipped with a red-dot scope, it's a small-game and pest-sniping pistol extraordinaire.

I've recently learned some lessons relating to one of the most important evolutions of the species in decades, pressure regulators. The most poignant lesson is this major evolution in velocity consistency can come at the price of reduced reliability and serviceability! Case in point- in the process of composing this book, three regulated PCP ten-meter pistols showered with high praise have turned on me most vexingly!

The Benelli Kite that captured a 2012 field target National Champion title sprang a leak behind the regulator that, lacking a proper tool and trade secret, I could not access without doing more harm than good. Thankfully a source remains for service in the United States; as in ONE source. So I was at the mercy of that one and only source.

On return from service, the Kite no longer leaked, but velocity spreads exceeded **200 FPS!** Much wrangling with the Benelli outfit, who did not believe me or my two chronographs, finally resulted in returning them the gun at my expense. It supposedly tested just fine for them, but I insisted they keep it awhile and test at different temperatures and charge pressures. After a few months of silence, then no further issues they'd admit when I called them, the Kite returned (again at my expense). After confirming it back to normal, I emailed the outfit to inform them the Kite is now fine and ask if they'd done anything at all about the wanky consistency. They are **unresponsive**.

However it took even more digging to uncover a source to service two Tau MK 08's that decided to start dumping the whole air charge on the first shot after charging. I suspected the problem to be regulator related, but could not locate a schematic for the guns to shed any light on the subject whatsoever. At that point I was feeling very much up the proverbial creek without a paddle with the Taus; one of which had undergone Allen Zasadny modifications (that don't come cheap). Thankfully I located the only individual in the United States with parts to service the Taus, and he used the last of his parts doing so. Typical of my karma, the AZ gun has since taken another dump!

The most modified ten-meter pistol I've owned, that also demonstrates the fickle nature of regulated guns, was a Steyr LP-1 that I sent to Allen Zasadny for customization into what I considered the best field target competition pistol possible. The list of AZ customizations seemed to have accomplished that objective. The AZ Steyr won its first match... before going **haywire**, and back to Allen. Karma strikes again!



Top- No longer distributed (or serviced) in the U.S., the regulated Tau MK 08 proved very accurate; however also temperamental. Both the author and Allen Zasadny found it incapable of hopping-up beyond 10 foot-pounds, and 9 FP is a much better sweet-spot.

Middle- The unregulated Crosman 1701P Silhouette/ten-meter pistol is so wonderfully simple that it is also wonderfully affordable, wonderfully user-serviceable, wonderfully customizable, wonderfully accurate, and in the author's opinion, pretty handsome. After a very easy drilling-out of the transfer port, the 1701P produced 700 FPS with 10.3 grain JSB heavies, and sub-1" groups at 50 yards. A subsequent B Staley tune (hammer-debounce modification) increased the shot count from 15 to 22 consistent shots per charge, at a cost of 40 FPS. The Crosman 1701P is a PCP pistol best buy.

Bottom- The author considers the Walther CP3 pistol to be top of the heap in vintage collectable Co2 guns, of similarly simple design and execution to the Crosman 1701P. Being Co2 powered, the Walther maxes-out around 560 FPS with 8.4 grain JSB Exact pellets (in hot temperatures). I find red-dot sights an excellent choice for offhand work.

Allen messed with the customized Steyr quite a lot before getting it back to a respectable level of velocity consistency. But shortly after its return home, the Steyr sprang a leak that required another return to Zasadny. Upon returning home yet again, a couple FT matches, and a lot of testing to confirm it healthy and shooting correctly, the AZ-modified Wunderpistol found a new home. But to give credit where credit's due, in the time between coming home the second time and finding a new home that air pistol posted the best 50 yard single group and average group sizes I've achieved in decades of accuracy testing. As taken from my fourth book, ***Airgun Chronicles-***

7/15/14- Five consecutive five-shot groups at 50 yards with 8.4 grain JSB Exacts averaged .56" center-to-center. The best group measured just .34" c-t-c!

The regulated-PCP issues described herein serve to remind what a **joy** it is to work on and modify Crosman's wonderfully simple, unregulated PCPs. **MYSELF!**

Also marketed as a ten-meter pistol, before hop-up my 1701P Silhouette pistol got 76 very consistent shots per 3000 PSI charge with an extreme velocity spread of 25 FPS and a standard deviation of just 3! By the way, as with all unregulated precharged pneumatics, extreme spreads and standard deviations are easily reduced by slightly reducing charge pressure and accepting fewer shots per charge.

Even with absolutely zero experience tearing into Crosman's PCP pistols, it took less than 30 minutes to disassemble my 1701P, drill out the transfer port, and reassemble the gun to return 11.2 foot-pounds of energy with 10.3 grain JSBs at 705 FPS. J-u-s-t t-h-a-t e-a-s-y!!! So tuned, the 1701P returned 15 consistent shots per 2900 PSI charge. FWIW, my home-modified Crosman 1701P Silhouette pistol is as accurate as high-dollar, regulated target pistols.

It really warms my heart to see Crosman resurrect itself from a decades-long, plastic-crap devolution by producing excellent precharged pneumatics. And it warms my wallet to see those excellent PCPs selling for **extremely** reasonable prices. The Crosman 1701P is a perfect example of an adage I quote all too often in this digital age; "SIMPLICITY is the hallmark of good design!"

Good on ya' Crosman! With the fine and wonderfully **simple** 1701P, you've made life better at 10 meters. And in the case of this old airgun-rodger, life beyond 10 meters.

WAY beyond!

Obviously the .22 caliber Tau 7 Co2 pistol gives up no silhouette competition worthiness to .177, but is enough more powerful to have excellent small-game hunting capabilities.



*This Steyr LP-1 regulated PCP, modified by Allen Zasadny for field target competition, wears a 3-9X Weaver rifle scope. It returned 34 extremely consistent shots per charge with 8.4 grain JSBs at 760 FPS, and **averaged** .56" c-t-c five-shot groups at 50 yards! As these 25 yard groups show, the Benelli Kite and Tau MK 08 are capable of one-hole groups well beyond ten meters. The .16" c-t-c group below, **barely 1/2 minute-of-angle**, reminds why I've put up with the Tau's recurring bullshit. Anyone know a good exorcist?*

