



PISTOLSMITHING

THE INSIDE SCOOP ON PISTOLSMITHING TECHNIQUES

Article from American Handgunner Magazine

July-August Issue

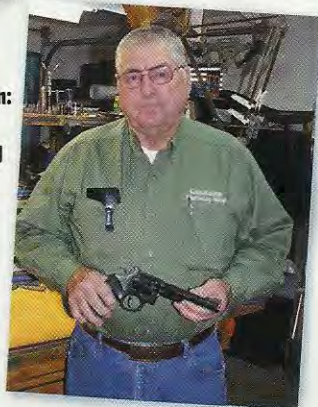
ALEX HAMILTON

BLACK MAGIC

To get this sort of final result, you need talent, experience, the right tools, enough money, plenty of time — and just maybe a touch of good luck!



An actual magician: Clarence Ansley owns "Gun Bluing Specialty Shop" and can, indeed, perform magic on guns.



We gun-guys are very fortunate these days to have many choices for metal finishing. We have bluing, which can be broken down into hot caustic blue, charcoal blue, slow rust blue and Nitre blue. There are lots of other excellent choices for metal coloring, such as the wonderful, durable polymer coatings, hard chrome, nickel, lacquer, color casing, Phosphate and water-transfer imaging. But for good looks on beautiful guns, nothing tops a gorgeous blue finish on highly polished metal, like we used to see on the old Colts, Smiths and other works of gun-art.

High quality finishing is probably the single most expensive item when building a high value firearm. Preparing the metal for bluing consumes hours of expert handwork just to get the metal to the point where it can be dropped into the caldron of caustic bluing salts for coloring. Modern polymer finishes don't require excessive hand polishing, making them much

more economical for typical, run of the mill guns used as tools for law enforcement, military and civilian carry.

Preparation for polymer finishes normally requires the surface be degreased and blasted with 120 grit media, so gunsmith labor is held to a minimum. Bluing, on the other hand, requires time and talent beyond the norm, and in many cases is the basis for "stand-alone" businesses such as the one I use in Aubrey, Texas, run by a talented man by the name of Clarence Ansley.

Clarence owns Gun Bluing Specialty Shop, and is one of the few remaining men who do nothing but perfect the art of polishing and bluing gun metal without rolling corners, wallowing out screw holes and obliterating lettering. I have searched a lifetime for men who can complement the work of talented custom gunsmiths, and my 42-year search has been mostly in vain. But Clarence can do the polishing, bluing and other coloring with dedication, precision and perfection. He can be contacted by phone at (214) 316-3503.