

This is Chris Baker, Vice-President and Head Gunsmith at M.A.D. Custom Inc. with The Shooters Roost. I'd like to tell you a little about myself, my humble beginning as a gunsmith and how the company, M.A.D. Custom Inc. with The Shooter's Roost came to fruition.

In 1982 I developed an interest in guns beginning with a .177 CO2 pellet gun in the shape of .357 Colt Python that my dad had in a hundred pieces just sitting in a box. He told me, if I could put it together, I could have it. I was 12 years old and enjoyed every shot from then on.

Two years later I asked for my grandfather's double barreled shotgun, the stock was broke and repaired by my grandfather with a piece of wood to cover the opening. My dad said, if I could fix it, I could have it. At that time I didn't know about the wood types for firearms so I asked a furniture repair shop for help, they didn't have select woods for gunstocks so they gave me a piece of mahogany. I took that piece of wood cut to fit and shaped it to the stock to completely hide any signs that it was ever broken, my dad couldn't tell where the repair had been made. I then used a serrated steak knife to cut the checkering up into the new piece. Since then I've acquired the necessary checkering tools to hone that skill and woodworking craft.

I was introduced to competitive bulls-eye and exhibition shooting in 1991. Pete Lapika, my teammate and 40 year shooting coach, told me I had a gift of understanding firearms in a unique way and my passion shouldn't be wasted. He also said I was mechanically inclined and I should consider Gunsmithing as a hobby. I started reloading at the same time and spending a lot of money on three different hobbies became expensive. Roughly 10 months later I married my best friend Charnel Baker and we immediately had started a family (4 sons over 11 years), however my passion never diminished. My competitive shooting did stop in lieu of time and money spent for the matches around the state, but I kept up with the interest in Gunsmithing since I didn't have to leave for long periods of time.

In the mid 90's while working a full time job as a truck driver, I was expanding my knowledge part time from various sources to increase my abilities. Working on family and friends guns to gain the experience of different makes, models and designs. Creating parts to repair obsolete guns and doing stock work. Up to this point all parts were made by hand. I had a friend bring me a Colt Officer 1911 to install a Wilson Combat grip safety. I had to contour the frame so I bought my first real Gunsmithing tool (aside from screw drivers and punches) and that was it, that upgrade hooked me into a greatest love of the 1911 that I've ever had. I customize a lot of 1911's now because of that Colt. In 96 I met Clinton Nirdlinger a retired machinist from the Norfolk Naval Shipyard who took the time to teach me basic machining. There I learned the basics of Turning, Facing and Threading. Basic Milling machine set-up and calculations for machining. It is there where my creative mind started to take over. The machines made the parts I made by hand seem so simple. I started to create specialty tools to better assist me in the disassembly and assembly of specific firearms. Since then I've acquired machine tools and equipment to expand my Knowledge and services.

During my time as a truck driver my interest for Gunsmithing ran parallel, taking me to various shops and meeting different people all over the country learning anything they were willing to offer, taking odd jobs on the side at the local pawn shops to repair the broken guns that people brought in to sell. The best experience was my education on machine gun repairs from a class 3 dealer I found during my routes. I visited his shop as much as I could even when I wasn't working just to soak up the information. In 2001 I met Dennis Jackson a retired electrician line-man turned gunsmith. I hung around his shop until he grew tired at the end of the day. By this time I was competent in my ability, so a lot of the visits were hanging out with him and keeping him company, he was in his late 70's and had cancer. He taught me about life more than anything else. I miss you Dennis.

In 2006 I met Jay Bailey of The Shooters Roost I showed him my grandfather's shotgun and an L.C. Smith double barrel stock that I made by hand from raw material to exhibit my passion and seriousness of my work. I asked to come in part time as the gunsmith while gaining knowledge on refinishing metals. During that time I learned metal preparation, hot Bluing and Parkerizing. In 2007-08 The Shooters Roost moved away and I was back to the pawn shops and odd jobs. Still driving truck I was getting anxious about Gunsmithing full time. I gained a clientele that would prove there is a purpose in this field so I continued until the time was right. In 2012 with the help of my loving wife created our own company, M.A.D. Custom Inc. an unusual name of course but for good reason. During my adventure of learning and expanding my mind I did a lot of work for soldiers of our armed forces and their response to my work was; "that's mad custom". It kind of stuck in my mind, and came to pass as our name for the company. By-the-way, it means "Military", "Antique" and "Defense". Our motto is still Antiques to AR's. In April 2013 my good friend Jay retired from The Shooters Roost handing it down to join forces with M.A.D. Custom Inc. and In May 2013 I took an early retirement from my OTR driving job to pursue my Gunsmithing full time and now we offer full service Gunsmithing, Refinishing, Manufacturing and Sales.

I currently enjoy recreational shooting with my kids and friends. I enjoy helping shooters with their firearms so they can get greater enjoyment and success from them.