

GETTING A GRIP ON GRIPS

MASSAD AYOOB

So, our own John Connor tipped me off to Tuff1 grip sleeves, and now there's one of 'em on one of my Glock 17s. It's the Thin Blue Line model, because the "thin blue line" thereon sends a message that resonates with me. That, and they donate to COPS (Concerns of Police Survivors, a genuine group helping widows and orphans of police killed in the line of duty), and they work very well. Check their website for their broad variety of styles and textures.

When I was young, lots of folks' idea of custom "gun handles" was fragile, slippery mother of pearl, now known as "mother of toilet seat" in tactical circles. Today, we have "shoes for the baby" that combine good looks with functional feel. Some more I can recommend, in alphabetical order:

Alumagrips are modern-style with old-fashioned class. You see them in proprietary-to-the-gunmaker form on such marques as Nighthawk, and while they're made for Beretta and others, they're most often encountered on 1911 pistols. The slim grip format may be the most useful, especially for those with small hands. The set on my Nighthawk T3 compact .45 is going to stay in place.

Crimson Trace LaserGrips don't just help you control recoil in revolvers, they help you hit your target with any kind of sidearm, thanks to the

projected laser dot. They're particularly useful for small-frame, short-barrel revolvers. Their LG405 unit is my favorite, its backstrap piece cushioning recoil and giving me more trigger reach for better shooting leverage, without sacrificing concealability. One of those is on the J-frame in my pocket as I write this.

Eagle Grips cover the waterfront from durable, well-executed faux ivory, to hardwood shaped for the human hand, to real-deal "bone handles" in shapes that are actually useful for shooting. I have them on several of my guns.

Grashorn is a name to remember if you want "stag handles" on your six-shooter. Pat Grashorn's work is the gold standard there.

Herrett's stocks proved early on good looks and improved "shootability" need not be mutually exclusive. I have a pair of their beautiful,



Craig Spegel Boot Grips greatly improved handling and shooting of Mas' Cunningham Custom Colt Detective Special, with no loss of concealability.

functionally-checked Trooper stocks for one of my Colt Pythons.

Generations of shooters have been well served with the products from Hogue. A family-owned business, Guy Hogue's widely copied revolver stocks have won countless matches, and countless gunfights. The "rubber" versions are on more of my .357-and-down revolvers than any other brand, and a sweet pair of Hogue Cocobolo stocks has not only made my pet Ernest Langdon-tuned Beretta a better-looking pistol, but also probably helped me to win some matches with that gun.

Nil grips are another example of form combined with function, sacrificing neither. The P220 .45 ACP is my favorite SIG, and my favorite Langdon Custom P220 wears Nil grips. Perfect fit to the hand... no slippage in grasp at all even when rapid-firing .45 +P. And folks say, "Man, that's a handsome gun!"

Pachmayr is one of the oldest and most respected names in the business, and I suspect I've won more matches with Pachmayr-gripped handguns than any other brand. The soft backstrap cushioning on their heavy-duty models makes them my choice for almost all of my .44 Magnums, and Colt is still putting them on some of their high-end 1911 pistols... with good reason.

Spegel is another magic name in "handgun holding." Craig Spegel created the widely-copied Boot Grip, which Oregon cops turned me on to back in the day, and which have adorned many of my guns ever since, including my favorite Colt Detective



Crimson Trace LaserGrips, seen here on S&W Model 342, improve both hold and aim.

Special tuned by Grant Cunningham. Many have said that no gun fits their hand better than a Browning Hi-Power, and I can say that no gun better fits my own hand than a Browning tuned by Bill Laughridge, who insisted that I put Spegels on it. Laughridge was right.

Trausch is making a very nice set of replacement stocks for the Beretta 92/M9 pistol. I'm overdue to really put them through the wringer myself, but having seen at least one competitor kick major butt with them on his 92, they've earned my respect. The above but touches the surface of modern grip options. With the

pre-eminent polymer pistols, the tip of a soldering iron gives you a stippling job.

However, the brush doesn't make you an artist and neither does the soldering iron. The stippling on the Glock I have in reach at the moment was done superbly by Dave Maglio, who you can reach for an estimate at trnhard@gmail.com. The reshaping of Glock grips began with Robbie Barrkman at Robar, and can also be done by Rick Devoid at Tarnhelm and Dane Burns. I've used all their work, and all will give you a slimmer grip, more finger on the trigger, and in my experience, better control.

You wouldn't wear clothes that don't fit you well and make you look good. There's no reason to use a handgun that doesn't, either.

GUNS

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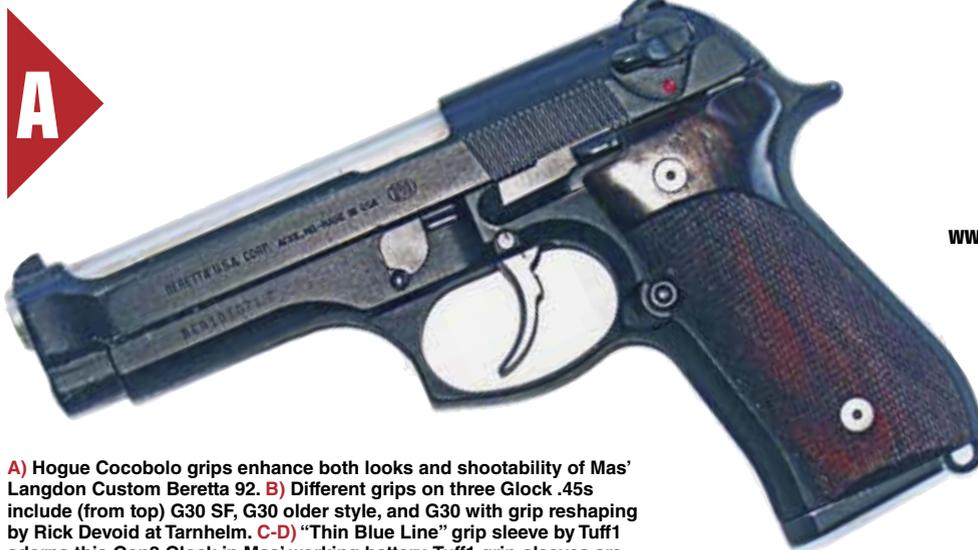
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A) Hogue Cocobolo grips enhance both looks and shootability of Mas' Langdon Custom Beretta 92. **B)** Different grips on three Glock .45s include (from top) G30 SF, G30 older style, and G30 with grip reshaping by Rick Devoid at Tarnhelm. **C-D)** "Thin Blue Line" grip sleeve by Tuff1 adorns this Gen2 Glock in Mas' working battery. Tuff1 grip-sleeves are available in a variety of texture options.

