



L TO R: DEREK MOORE, DANA FARRELL AND TOMMY SEIBERT TEST THE BUMP BUSTER.

PERCEIVED RECOIL IS SUBJECTIVE...

...BUT IT'S CERTAINLY REDUCED WITH THE BUMP BUSTER SAYS **DANA FARRELL**

As someone who shoots several thousand rounds each year, my shoulder has paid the price for the pounding that recoil has given me over time. I sometimes feel the lingering soreness for days – especially if I go to a multi-day event. My modus operandi has been to simply man-up and ignore both the real time and lingering effects, but I wish I had a nickel for every time someone told me I was being

rocked so violently by my gun. Several years ago I developed a chronic lump on my shoulder that I know is a direct result of recoil, but haven't addressed this with my physician for fear he would advise me to lay off shooting! Lighter loads help a lot but I have been looking for something that would help soften the pounding my over/under gives me.

I first learned of Ken Rucker and Speedbump Stockworks a year

or so ago while researching another article for this magazine. Rucker's attention to detail and claim of returning a gun dimensionally identical to when he received it struck a chord. He has a shop on vendor's row at the National Shooting Complex in San Antonio and it so happened I had plans to make the trip to the NSCA Nationals this past October, so arranged to have him install his Bump Buster hydraulic system on

my Guerini Summit Limited while I was there. We set the deal up via email and since the installation would only take about 90 minutes, it was easy to work into my shooting schedule.

True Craftsman

Having worked with recoil systems since 2002, Rucker started out installing the spring operated GraCoil but soon widened his product line to include the hydraulic R.A.D. system – in fact for three years he was that product’s largest dealer. He liked the idea and functionality of a hydraulic device but wanted to improve upon the design, so he did what any smart, red blooded American entrepreneur would do – he rolled up his sleeves and designed his own.

Much of Rucker’s career was spent as an engineer for Boeing in Seattle, during which time he was

also a part time cabinet maker. While in the Seattle area, he became good friends with a gunsmith, a fellow Texan from Fredericksburg, who installed several adjustable combs on Rucker’s trap guns. “I sat and watched him, then went home, took a gun out of the safe and built a jig like his and I did an adjustable comb on it myself.” The gunsmith friend was amazed at the quality of Ken’s first attempt and viola! – a cottage industry was born. “I was around shooters who needed adjustable combs so I started doing them, then I started doing recoil pads.” One thing led to another and soon he was installing full blown recoil systems.

Two major components of the Bump-Buster (the stock and pad plates) are made of machined

aluminum and are manufactured for Rucker by Graco Corporation, the makers of the GraCoil system. “Tracy Mullen (General Manager of Graco) and I have about as good a working relationship as any supplier and distributor ever had. He puts up with all my whims and last minute calls,” Rucker says. The pieces Graco supplies start out as oversized pieces of aluminum stock that must then be shaped down to the exact outline of the butt of the shotgun – and that’s where the craftsmanship comes in.

Rucker knew a little something about working with aluminum, having learned from the best in the business (the Boeing aircraft company). He explained his aluminum working experience this way. “I used to travel

with Boeing’s AOG Team – *Aircraft on the Ground* – go out, set up a miniature factory on the end of a runway, or wherever the airplane was broken down, and fix it. As a tool engineer I had two or three jobs – one of them was to make aluminum parts. I used a bandsaw, a sander and a drill press – I’d like to say the Boeing Company taught me how to put in recoil systems” he says with a smile. “It turns out that they actually did, because I do the same things here that I did on those jobs.”

Rucker retired from Boeing and was doing gun work part time in Washington State when he decided to move back to his home State of Texas. He bought a trailer and traveled around the shoot circuit for a few years doing stock work. The first shoot he attended

BELOW: ROUGH TRIMMING THE UNIT ON THE BANDSAW. BOTTOM: RUCKER WITH ONE OF HIS JIGS.



LEFT: THE STOCK PLATE IS MOUNTED. BELOW: RUCKER DRILLING OUT STOCK TO FIT HYDRAULIC SHOCK ABSORBER.

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as a vendor was the World Skeet Championship at the National Shooting Complex in San Antonio in 2003. He found a permanent home for his shop there about four years ago, but says until a little over one year ago the grounds were closed except during shooting events. That policy has changed and he now holds regular 8am to 5pm business hours at his permanent shop on vendors row in San Antonio.

His customers include Vance Barnes, Rick Mein and World Skeet Champion John Castillo. Two time NSCA National Champion Bobby Fowler is also a dedicated user of the Bump-Buster and has them installed on all of his guns. He shoots Winchester Super Handicap 1250 fps. loads and says his Bump-Buster makes shooting the fast shells very do-able. "When you get a little older you start noticing recoil – I'd say over the age of 30 it starts having an effect on you. We have an endorsement deal, but even if we didn't have that deal I would still have it on every one of my shotguns. I'm thinking about shooting a new gun in the New Year and if I do that, the first thing I'll do is take it to Ken. I can't say enough about it – it's a great device and it sells itself."

Testing the Product

While at the Nationals I conducted a quasi-scientific experiment to measure the felt recoil reduction of my Bump-Buster by enlisting two other shooters and shooting three different loads, both *before* and *after* the recoil system installation. Tommy Seibert of Northbrook Sports Club, Derek Moore, fellow writer for ClayShootingUSA and I all shot 1oz. 2³/₄ dram, 1oz. 3 dram and 1¹/₈oz.



CAESAR GUERINI BARREL BALANCERS.



3¹/₄ dram loads for comparison. Because felt recoil is a subjective thing, it was hard to quantify my findings – but we all agreed that the gun was considerably more pleasant to shoot after the system was installed. Since the Bump-Buster is adjustable for tension, one setting is not necessarily optimal for all loads and a shooter would want to tune to his load of choice. I have found my set up now makes the gun extremely comfortable to shoot with 2³/₄ dram and 3 dram loads. If I was shooting real stout loads, I would tweak the tension accordingly.

The Bump-Buster comes in two basic configurations – with an adjustable butt plate or without. Since my gun fits me well, I did not need the adjustable butt. Besides, being adjustable for tension, all units provide over one inch of length of pull adjustment, so could

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be a good solution for a youngster who would need an increasingly longer LOP as he continues to grow. There are even powder-coated versions of the Bump-Buster available, including a red, white and blue model. The basic system adds about 7 ounces to the gun which in my case was a welcome side effect.

After the installation, I also chose to add the Caesar Guerini Barrel Balancers which can be placed at various places along the barrel to fine tune the balance of the gun to the shooter's preference. These weights are literally a snap to use, providing 3.2 ounces per set, and are mounted using a spring lock-up that slides into the slots on the mid rib of any of the Guerini target guns. The end result was tactically pleasant for me, providing an evenly balanced gun that points well without being too whippy.

The craftsmanship of Rucker's installation was nothing short of remarkable and I have to say he elevates the skills of metal work and woodworking to an art form that is simply a joy to behold. His basic unit goes for \$385 installed. ■

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