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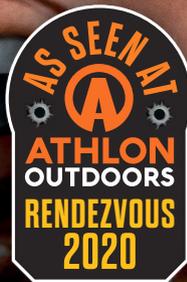
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ATHLON PUBLICATIONS

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ATHLON PUBLICATIONS



I'm the luckiest guy I know. I scored a wife who is way out of my league. I grew up dirt poor on a Midwest farm and I ended up traveling all over the world on the government's dime. And nowadays gun manufacturers send me all kinds of cool guns to shoot and test, and they even pay me to write up my opinion. And I never got blown up while I was in Afghanistan. Trust me, I'm pretty lucky.

So I was excited to be included in the fourth annual Athlon Outdoors Rendezvous held near Driggs, Idaho, and to have the privilege of meeting one on one with approximately 30 leading manufacturing companies to talk about their new

products, their histories and the directions their companies were going.

On the third day of shooting, talking, hanging out, telling stories and blowing up Tannerite, the writers were treated to a surprise. Magnum Research had brought along something special: a massive BFR revolver in .44 Remington Magnum with walnut grips, hexagon-fluted cylinder and octagonal barrel with "Athlon Outdoors" engraved on the cylinder. They drew a name out of a hat, and yours truly won. As a bonus, they even engraved "Robert Jordan" on the top of the barrel before they sent it to me. I told my wife she had to sleep on the couch because my new gun needed a soft place to lie close to me.





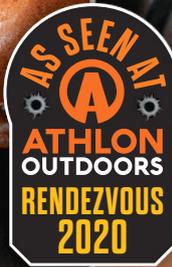
BIG & FINE. 44 MAGNUM

Winner, winner
a Rendezvous Custom
BFR dinner

BY ROBERT JORDAN • ALEX LANDEEN PHOTOS



BIG & FINE .44 MAGNUM



Magnum Research prides itself in craftsmanship that ensures the fit and finish of every part of the BFR is perfect. The author's revolver certainly lived up to that very lofty quality standard.

calibers. These include .30-30, 300 Blackout and even .50 Beowulf, among others. I once shot a BFR in .500 Linebaugh for another gun review. They say that round separates the men from the boys. When I was done shooting it, I hiked up my short pants, trotted my happy butt home and asked Momma for a "lolly," 'cuz I did not want to shoot it ever again.

Magnum Research's website allows you to literally design your own BFR, from caliber to barrel length to grips to cylinder profile and a lot more. The Athlon Revolver, as we came to call it, is an example of one of those custom pieces. And judging from the Athlon Revolver, and Magnum Research's fantastic customer service, you can probably personalize it even more if you have some ideas and give them a call.

BACKGROUND

Single-action revolvers are a far cry from the polymer pistols I carry daily as a federal law enforcement officer. I grew up on a small farm in southwest Kansas. I carried a single-action .22 revolver for a week every spring when I walked the cattle fence, driving in staples that had fallen out over the previous year, while my dad drove the pickup ahead and stretched the barbed wire. From the time I was eight years old, I shot anywhere from one to 10 rattlesnakes every year. Sometimes I saw them first, and sometimes they saw me. I must have gotten pretty good (or lucky), because I never was bitten. I used to practice my fast draw with an empty gun in the living room. We had a Hunter brand holster with some fancy engraving on it.

I would apply neatsfoot oil to the holster every year to keep it from cracking, snap it on my belt and tie down the bottom around my leg. I wore out three of those cheap single-action .22s before I left home for college. No handgun has ever felt so natural in my hand. It is almost as if Samuel Colt's design came from heaven above, and no design after will match it.

But my BFR was no .22. Even the renowned quick-draw Bill Jordan said the .44 Magnum was a bit too much gun to handle

SPECIFICATIONS

MAGNUM RESEARCH AO CUSTOM BFR

CALIBER:	.44 Remington Magnum
BARREL:	4.9 inches
OA LENGTH:	11 inches
WEIGHT:	3 pounds, 2.2 ounces (empty)
SIGHTS:	Iron, adjustable
ACTION:	Single-action
CAPACITY:	6

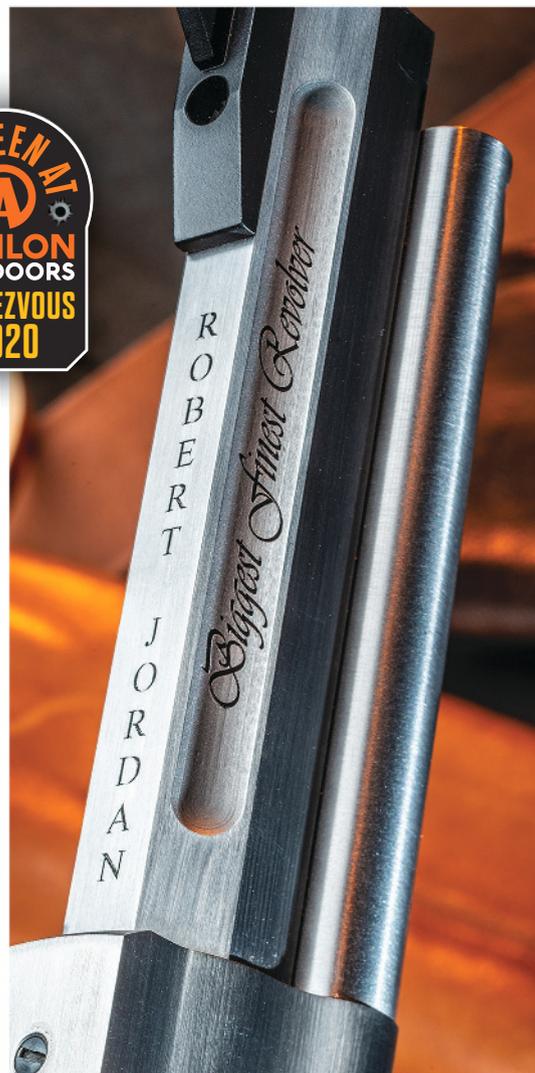
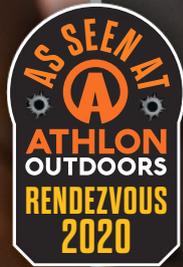
HISTORY OF THE BFR

Magnum Research was started in the late 1970s. However, it wasn't until the early 2000s that they began making the BFR (Biggest Finest Revolver or Big Frame Revolver, depending on who you talk to). The design wasn't simply a copy of the classic Colt Single Action revolver. This is a proprietary single-action design made for the largest pistol calibers and even some rifle calibers. You don't have to put it on half cock to rotate the cylinder and load or unload it. You simply swing open the loading gate, and this lets the cylinder turn freely. Opening the loading gate also locks the hammer so you cannot cock it. The BFR comes in short cylinder for normal pistol calibers, and in long cylinder for traditional rifle





BIG & FINE .44 MAGNUM



A Leopold FX-II 4x28 scope assisted the author in shooting some amazing groups at 25 yards with the BFR.

enjoyably, but he never fired a BFR. The BFR is *big*. All that steel does a wonderful job of sucking up that .44 Magnum recoil. Sure, it still has some muzzle flip, but no one ever cries after they shoot it. I first got some A-Zoom Snap Caps and started practicing my dry fire around the house. It was like traveling back to my youth.

Then I realized I needed a good holster. I called up Joby Goerges at Magnum Research and asked him who makes the best holster for the BFR. He didn't hesitate, and told me to contact Diamond D Custom Leather in Alaska. I talked to Mike Barrett at Diamond D about how I needed a good drop-leg holster. He explained that the BFR is a heavy pistol (over 3 pounds, for my gun) and that I might like a chest rig better than a hip holster that pulled my pants down. I love it when I get sound advice from someone more experienced and knowledgeable than I am.

I told Mike I was worried a chest rig would interfere with my bino harness when I was hunting, but he assured me that it would sit lower and they would work fine together. I ordered the holster and waited impatiently for it to arrive. It was worth every minute. The craftsmanship was amazing, and it fit the gun perfectly without any neatsfoot oil or shoe wax or break-in. The perfectly spaced stitching, buffed edges and comfortable design were the perfect complements to my beautiful BFR.

PERFORMANCE

MAGNUM RESEARCH AO CUSTOM BFR

LOAD	VELOCITY	ACCURACY
CCI Blazer 240 JHP	1,084	1.66
Federal 240 Fusion Soft Point	1,399	1.70
Hornady Custom 240 XTP	1,419	1.62
Hornady Handgun Hunter 200 MonoFlex	1,296	0.63

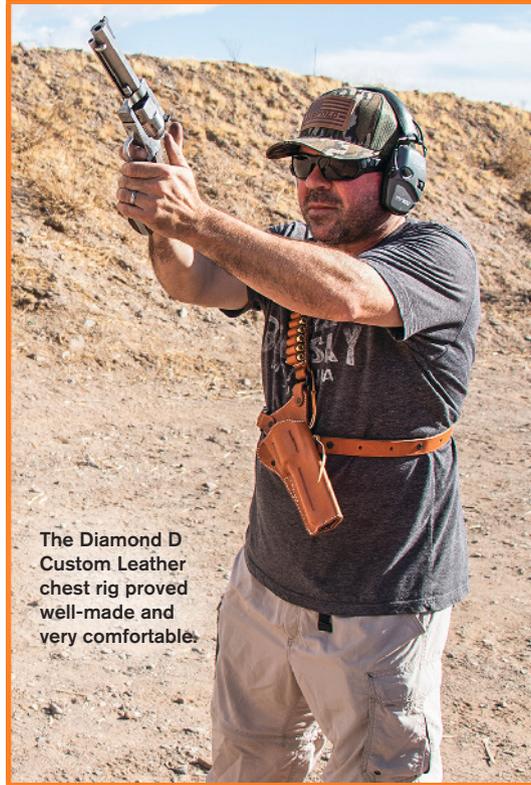
Bullet weight measured in grains, velocity in feet per second by Doppler radar and accuracy in inches for best five-shot groups at 25 yards.



RANGE REPORT

I contacted Hornady, Federal and CCI for ammunition for test firing the BFR. Ammunition sales have gone crazy, but each company provided what they could. I switched out the crisp, adjustable iron sights for a scope mount from Magnum Research and mounted a Leupold FX-II 4x28mm handgun scope for testing accuracy.

On a beautiful morning at the CowTown Range just north of Phoenix, Arizona, I set up my LabRadar on my shooting bench and settled in for a few hours of testing. I never tested a gun that felt so perfect in my hand. I was giddy just shooting the BFR Athlon Revolver on this quiet range. The scope worked great, and the 25-yard groups were incredible. One group measured a stunning 0.63 inch. After the accuracy test, I removed the Leupold scope and re-installed the iron sights. I strapped on the Diamond D holster and started practicing as if I was being run down by a grizzly while hunting elk in Montana. That grizzly never had a chance.



The Diamond D Custom Leather chest rig proved well-made and very comfortable.

THE TAKEAWAY

I fully expect some people will read this article and simply not understand. I normally write about modern tactical guns and equipment. I talk about cutting-edge technology and protecting your life with the best tools available today. This article isn't written for everyone. It is a homage to my youth, and those of many people who grew up in simpler times and simpler conditions. It is a tribute to the single-action revolver and the natural beauty it conveys. It is an endorsement of how good that platform can be with a company like Magnum Research using the finest modern CNC machines, the best steel and cutting-edge design to produce a true work of art like the BFR.

I apologize if this isn't my normal description of how to equip yourself for the modern gunfight. This article wasn't for you. It was for me. And it was for everyone who yearns to hold and shoot the finest manifestation of a classic today.

For more information on the BFR, visit magnumresearchcustoms.com.

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