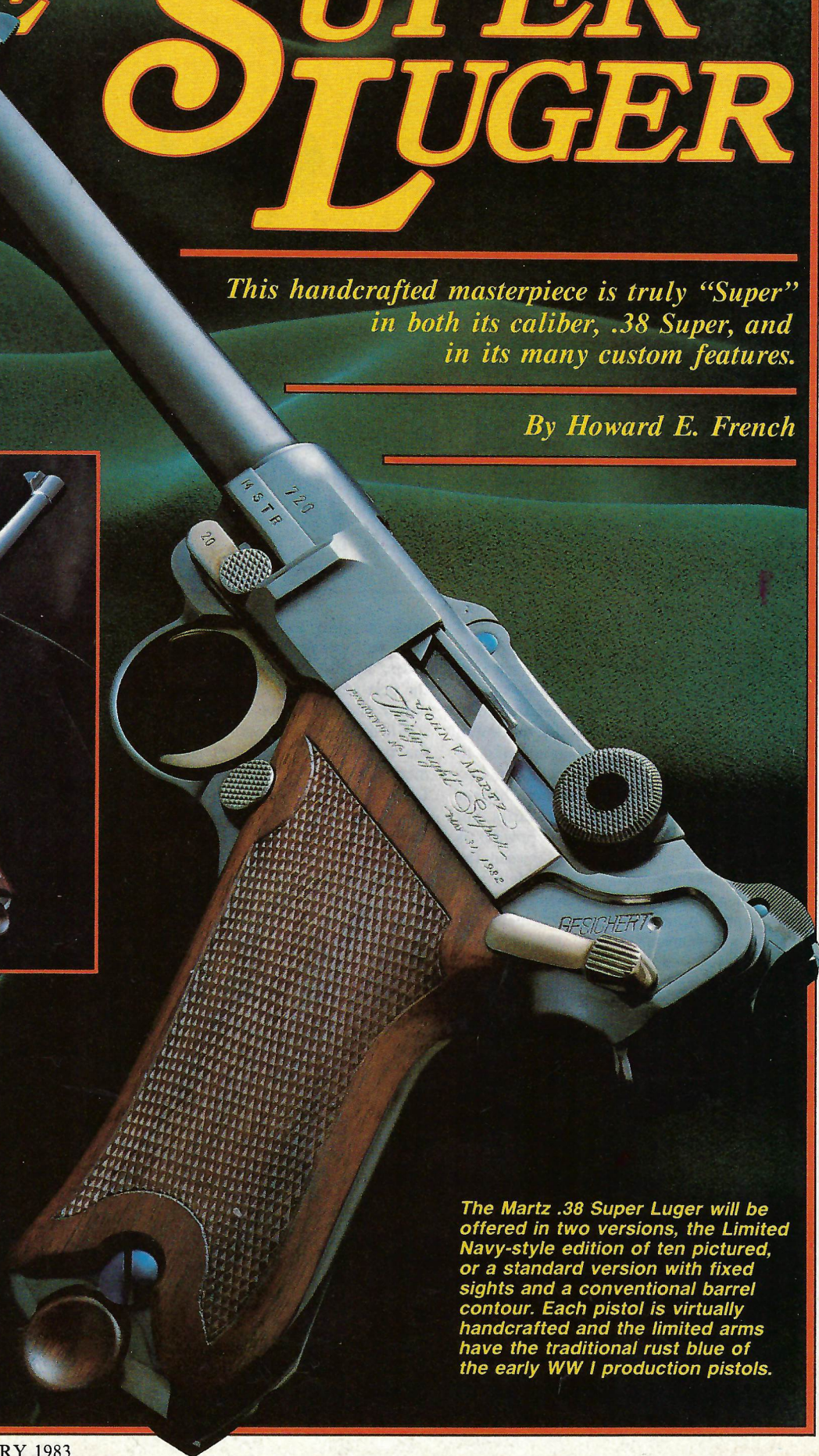
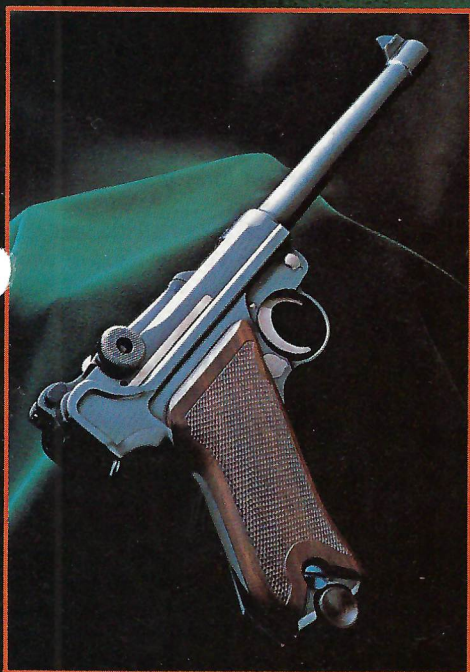


THE "SUPER" LUGER

This handcrafted masterpiece is truly "Super" in both its caliber, .38 Super, and in its many custom features.

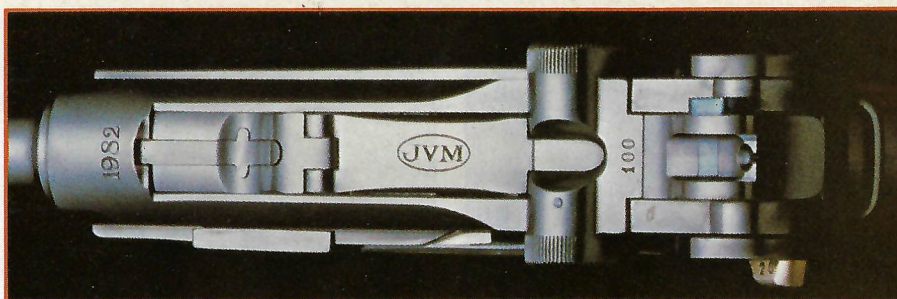
By Howard E. French



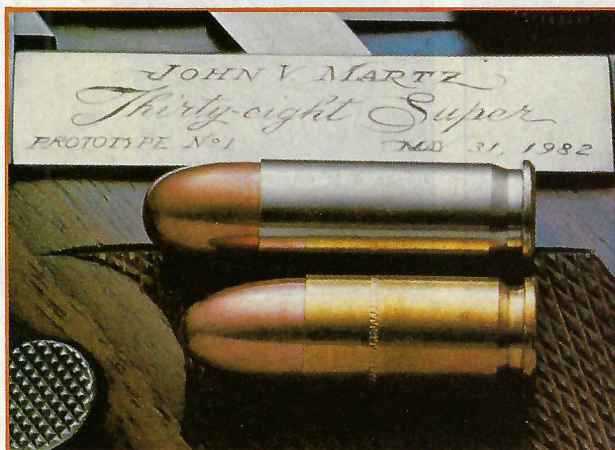
The Martz .38 Super Luger will be offered in two versions, the Limited Navy-style edition of ten pictured, or a standard version with fixed sights and a conventional barrel contour. Each pistol is virtually handcrafted and the limited arms have the traditional rust blue of the early WW I production pistols.

■ John Martz's custom handguns are certainly no strangers to the pages of *Guns & Ammo*. Several times we have featured the superb, custom Luger and Mauser pistols that he has lovingly handcrafted. Now John has come up with another in the line of his unique pistols, a .38 Super Luger!

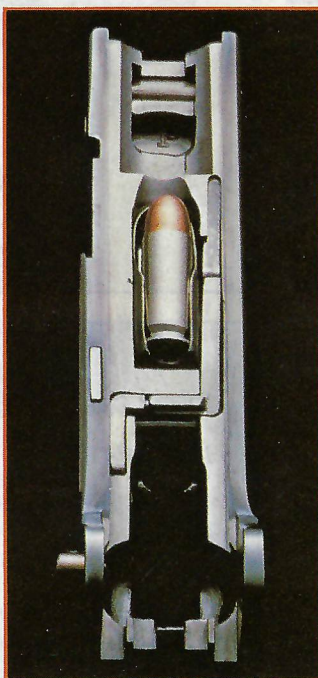
That's right, a .38 Super. John likes to take on the impossible and, at first glance, it would seem that this one was truly a "mission impossible" venture. A quick



All Martz .38 Super pistols will carry his logo engraved on the toggle and the date of manufacture on the slide.

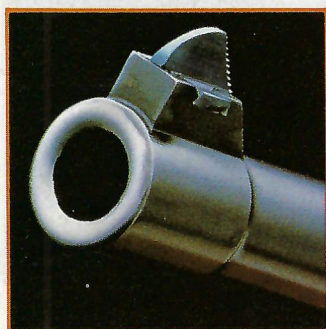


The limited edition pistols will have engraved stainless steel plaques. The Super .38 dwarfs a 9 mm Luger cartridge.

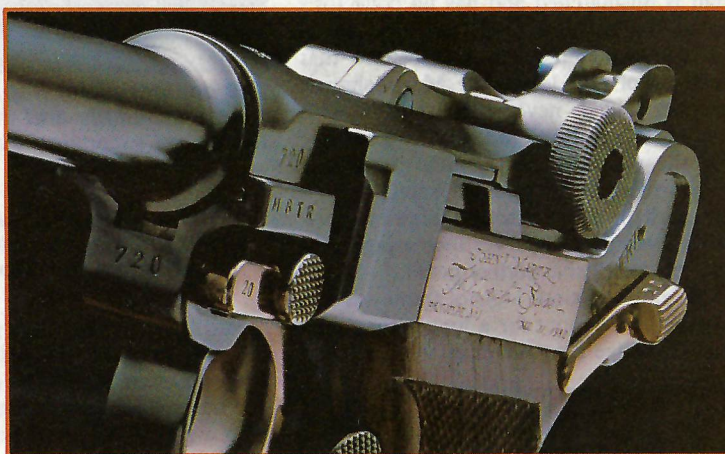


The stock lug is retained on this Navy-style pistol just as with the original German version of the Kriegs Marine.

Because of the extra length of the .38 Super cartridge it was necessary to use two Luger frames to form the "Super."



The front sight is dovetailed into an integral muzzle band. The six-shot custom magazine took an entire day to hand-form.



look at factory specs indicates that the 9 mm Parabellum case is .754-inch long while the .38 Super is .900-inch. There is no way you can cram the almost magnum-length .38 Super into a 9 mm Luger frame, right? Well, as usual with John Martz, he won't take no for an answer.

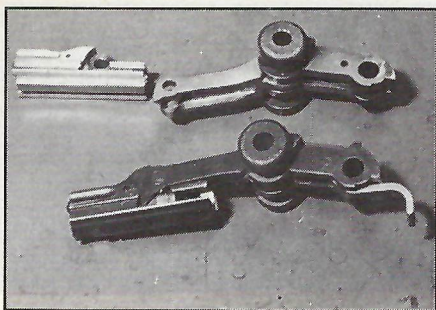
He ran into the same impasse before, when he tried to build his remarkable P-38 and Luger .45 ACP pistols. The solution was to use two frames to build a single behemoth-size pistol. The .38 Super represented a similar situation, although in terms of length, rather than girth.

One thing that deeply pains Martz is the



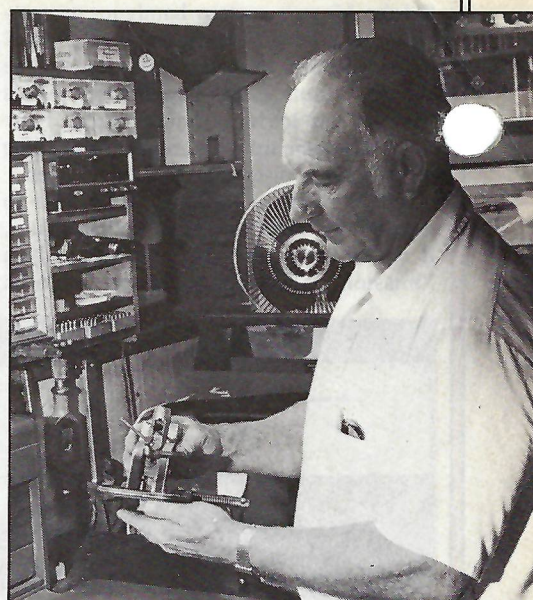
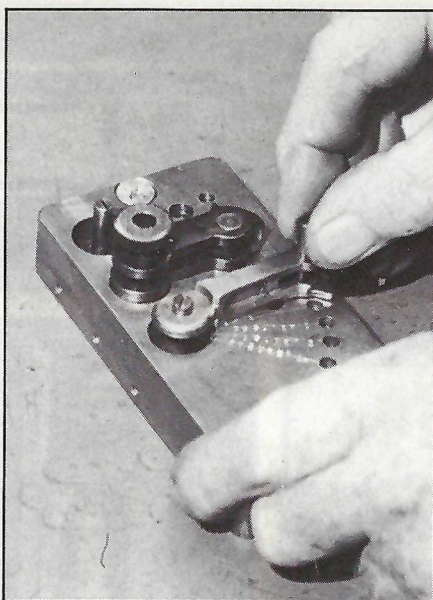
The trigger and safety arm are heat color-strawed. The rear sight has the traditional 100-200 meter Navy battle sight.

The "Super" Luger bears both the original German serial numbers and the No. 1 Martz designation of this prototype pistol.



The Luger toggle assembly must be custom matched to operate properly when using calibers other than the original 9 mm or 7.65 mm rounds.

While Martz Lugers are never made by mass production methods, John does keep a master jig to match the various toggle lengths necessary to properly tune his custom pistols in all the various calibers.

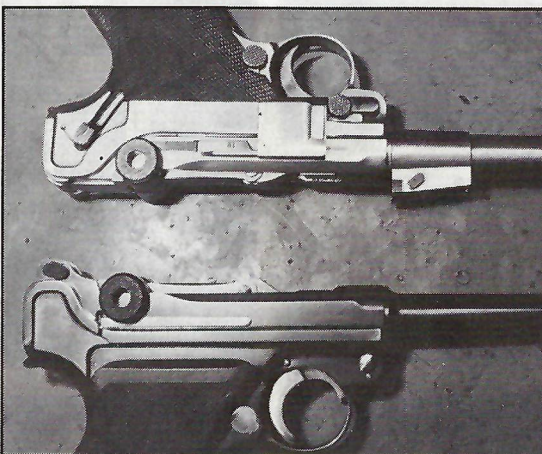


THE "SUPER" LUGER

thought that our readers might perceive him as a butcher of rare, exotic and eminently desirable collectors' arms. Nothing could be further from the truth! He will not touch such a piece, other than to do expert restoration. On the other hand he will not work on a piece of junk that has been badly pitted, buffed to a fare-thee-well or "enhanced" with a chrome plate job.

For his custom masterpieces, he looks for a pistol that is just a "shooter"—one that is mismatched and has no collector's value, but is still a viable basis for one of his one-of-a-kind projects. I believe that each pistol that leaves the Martz shop is unique. John is never quite satisfied with any of his creations and is always striving for the ultimate. Thus, each pistol that passes through his talented hands gains a bit, perhaps a tiny fraction more of excellence, because of his ever increasing probing for the elusive perfect pistol.

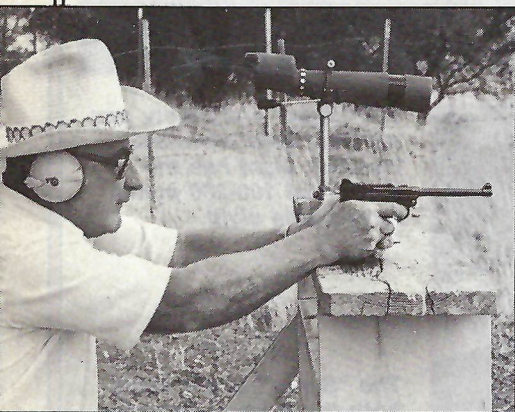
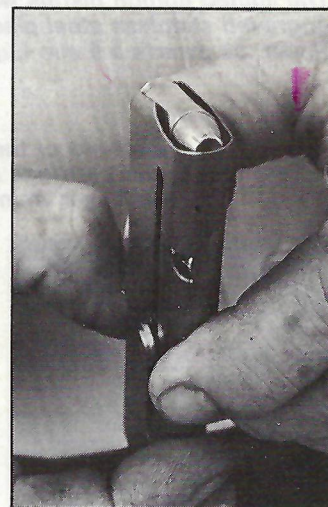
When he sections a pistol frame—in this case to make room for a longer than normal cartridge case—he does so by cutting



The custom pistol (top) has had both the toggle assembly and the camming surface on the barrel extension extensively modified.

The .38 Super Luger requires a stiff spring in the magazine to function properly and this limits the capacity to just six rounds.

This fixture holds the two different frame sections in proper alignment so that they may be heli-arc'd into a single piece.



John Martz extensively tests every one of his custom pistols to check both their accuracy and reliability.

through the center of the grip area of two different frames. Obviously the cuts are made off-center so that he can combine the two dissimilar pieces to create a new frame with a greater width to accommodate the .38 Super cartridge. Some have thought that he enlarges the frame by cutting horizontally through the frame, sort of like setting the pistol on its toggle and running it through a metal rip saw from muzzle to stock lug. Actually he cuts directly through the grip, best visualized as seeing the pistol lying flat and having a horizontal saw drawn from the top of the frame down to the bottom of the magazine well. He now has four pieces, two butt sections and two trigger sections, of the frames. Nothing goes to waste and all parts are saved. He has even restored rare Lugers whose stock lugs have been ground off by expertly inletting the stock lug from one of his spare

or leftover sectioned frames into the frame of the gun to be restored. This work is so perfectly done that it is almost impossible to see the joint.

John used this frame sectioning technique with the .45 ACP Luger as well, and naturally, ended up with both a longer frame and longer toggle link assembly. This proved advantageous on the .45 and John felt that the .38 Super, with its significantly higher pressures, would also benefit if the recoil-induced movement was spread out over a fractionally longer time period. For those not familiar with the Luger action, which is similar to the Maxim machine gun locking mechanism, the barrel extension, which contains the toggle assembly, moves rearward while still locking the breech until chamber pressure drops to virtually zero. Inertia continues to drive

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THE "SUPER" LUGER

continued from page 52

the barrel extension and the toggle/breech assembly to the rear where the toggles strike the cam on the frame which unlocks the action and ejects the spent casing. The main spring then forces the toggle assembly down, stripping a live round from the Luger's magazine and chambering it as the action closes.

Suffice it to say the .38 Super did not perform the way the .45 ACP did. In short, the Super, despite its superior ballistics, pooped out with the long custom toggle and would not cycle the action. I am not an engineer, but I would guess that the greater head diameter of the .45 ACP case gave increased thrust even though pressures were lower. Anyway, John figured out that if he used the standard rear toggle link that worked with the 9 mm, the Super might operate the action. *Voila!* It worked.

Of course, that was just the start. The magazine was painstakingly crafted from sheet metal by John to fit both the cartridge and the new magazine well of his experimental Luger. Numerous other fine tunings were necessary before John was satisfied that his new baby was ready to be displayed before the critical eye of a gun writer. When he did deem that his new creation was ready, he gave me a call and invited me to shoot his latest custom offering. Needless to say, I was delighted and arranged to meet him at the Sacramento Airport. During the short drive from Sacramento to the central California town of Lincoln, John filled me in on the problems that he had encountered in making his "Super" Luger.

They were quite complex and only overcome because of John's almost fanatical fervor to produce a quality pistol that would be a monument to Georg Luger. I innocently asked why he did not use investment castings for the complex Navy-style rear sight. He visibly bristled. "Because the Germans did not do it that way," he explained.

Incidentally, there are a few operations that John just does not have the equipment to handle, and these are farmed out to a small group of other dedicated craftsmen. Some do it just as a favor to John and shun all mention of their actual addresses. Others do have commercial ties and will handle work for the general public.

Gale C. Morgan, P.O. Box 1437, Los Altos, CA 94022, crafted the walnut grips and also did the authentic rust blueing on the "Super" Luger. John Schick, trained in the fatherland, mills the Navy sights just like they were built during the Kaiser's reign. John is retired and contributes his skills on a part-time basis just to help out on these exotic projects. Richard Bell, 2226 K Street, Sacramento, CA 95816, did the hand engraving on both the side plate and the toggle. Ed Korda also prefers to hide behind the lathe, so to speak. He is the one responsible for the matchless Navy barrel

on the Super Luger that features an integral front sight base, just like the originals.

This is not to denigrate John Martz's role in designing these custom arms, or to minimize the countless hours of work that he personally puts into each and every pistol. Certainly he is the guiding light behind them, but he is also first to acknowledge the assistance of these other craftsmen.

On the range the pistol performed as well as it looked. The magazine holds but six rounds and is rather difficult to load. The magazine spring is mighty stout and I used the edge of the shooting bench to assist in retracting it during loading. The Luger pistol is not noted for its fine trigger pull—it is really a nightmare of levers—however, this pistol had a superb letoff. The two-position Navy sight, 100 and 200 meters, was just like the original, consisting of a front inverted "V" with the usual rear "V." Great for authenticity but not as easy to hold as more modern sight systems.

I doubt if many people will ever buy a pistol like this for serious field shooting, as they are just too expensive and finely finished for this use. But it is comforting to know that practicality has not been sacrificed in building these arms.

The so-called standard model Super Luger will be made from original WW I, WW II or 1920 commercial Luger components. These will not have the Navy sight but will have a standard six-inch barrel with fixed sights. John will furnish the guns with either a blue finish or his own custom satin white finish. The latter is a hand operation that takes many hours to complete. It resembles stainless steel but is just the bare metal worked over to this finish. As such, it has no protective surface and must be kept greased or oiled to prevent tarnishing or rusting. Each of these pistols will bear a chamber date corresponding to the year in which it is made and will also have the JVM logo engraved on the front link. These will be made to order at a price of \$2,900 per pistol.

In addition to this standard model, John Martz will put out a Limited Edition of just ten pistols. These pistols will feature the classic Navy sight system and Gale Morgan rust blue. The walnut grips will be hand checked and will have a border encircling them. They will also have a stainless steel plate attached to the left frame panel engraved as follows: JOHN V. MARTZ, THIRTY-EIGHT SUPER, LIMITED EDITION 1 OF 10. The Navy configuration is being used on the Limited model as most Luger aficionados feel that that model had the most pleasingly aesthetic lines of all the Luger series. Price of the Limited pistol is \$3,700.

Obviously these are not for everybody. They are unique, and they certainly merit a place in any collection of fine custom arms. Not many people will ever own a Martz pistol, but those that do will be members of an exclusive club.

For further information contact John Martz, 8060 Lakeview Lane, Lincoln, CA 95648.

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