

*Product Review: Precision Target Pistols from Tilo Dedinski
Precision and quality have long been hallmarks of German manufactured
goods from automobiles to machine tools and everything in between; now we can add
muzzleloading target pistols to the list.*

by Eric A. Bye

Beyond Friendship

Mr. Tilo Dedinski, a gun maker in southern Germany, recently sent us two of his precision muzzleloading target pistols for testing and review. Both are variations on the traditional under hammer design that became popular in New England and elsewhere in the nineteenth century. These pistols have already proven their capabilities by winning many important matches overseas.

The *Optimum* model, with no trigger guard, at first looks a bit unconventional. Despite the flawless finish, engraving, and checkering, this pistol's real beauty is in its performance. The grip, which resembles an artistic (but functional and comfortable!) wood sculpture, situates the pistol low in the hand; the web between thumb and trigger finger is in line with the bore, and recoil sends the pistol straight rearward with minimal muzzle jump. I find this an advantage in follow-through and confidence -two essential ingredients in shooting well.

The windage on this pistol was perfect as received; the rear sight (a flat-topped V-notch) needed just minor, routine adjustment for elevation. With a dozen grains of FFFg powder, this .36 pistol shoots round balls exactly where they are aimed at 25 yards; fifteen grains of FFFg does the same at fifty.

Despite limited experience with this pistol, it has improved my scores dramatically. At the awards ceremony at a recent Territorial match, someone jokingly told me, "You ought to send your medals to Germany;" there may be more truth than hu-

mor in that, for much of the credit goes to the equipment!

The second pistol, the *Billingshurst*, also in .36, loads and performs much like the *Optimum*. Esthetically, it's a bit handsomer, presumably because we are more accustomed to firearms with trigger guards. This pistol has the finest trigger I have experienced on a handgun, and in the limited time I will have these pistols I probably won't come close to tapping its potential for matchwinning scores.

On both pistols, the trigger is light and perfectly crisp, with no overtravel. The sights are spaced the maximum distance apart; the post front sight drifts left and right in its dovetail to control windage, and the rear sight is adjustable for elevation. There are no clicks, but the sight moves up and down in a tight sleeve that assures precision. The literature accompanying the pistols specifies how changes in the point of impact correlate to sight adjustments.

The pre-cut patches supplied with the pistol are precisely the same diam-

eter as the muzzle of each pistol, and this makes it very easy to center them. The .354 balls and .010" patches are a tight fit; however, the rifled barrels are smooth as glass inside, and from the very first shots there was no trace of roughness, tight spots, or tool marks, and all recovered patches are in perfect condition. I also fired .350 and .345 balls with equal success and slightly enhanced ease in loading.

The pistols are supplied with a fine quality loading/cleaning rod, a fulllength brass loading funnel, a drift for removing the barrel pin, and a nipple wrench. The barrel and breech plug are secured to the frame by a single tapered pin; driving it out disassembles the pistols in a matter of seconds for quick and easy clean-up.

The pistols supplied for testing have some exquisite options: top-of-the-line wood, sharp, flawlessly executed checkering, and tasteful engraving. I think the grips are comfortable as supplied, but at extra cost, they can be custom-shaped at the factory to fit individual hands. Gold inlay is also an available option.

These pistols behaved flawlessly in testing, and were very satisfying to shoot. They are understandably expensive -but what kind of price can one possibly place on a victory at a national or international championship?

More information about Mr. Dedinski's products, including two other target pistols and an offhand rifle, is available on line at www.dedinski.com; the mailing address is Tilo Dedinski, Heugasse 10, 95326 Kulmbach, Germany. MB

