

QUARTERMASTER

FEATURING: JOHN CONNOR

RELOADING GEAR & GOODIES

Shoot 'em, reload 'em and shoot 'em again!

Having lost most of my reloading gear to fire and the rest to flood a few years later, I've spent the last decade-plus in a Rip Van Reloader state of "handloading coma." When I finally awoke, I found first, thankfully, reloading is kinda like riding a bike; once you get aboard and pedaling, the basics all come back to you—though it's like going from a single-speed Schwinn cruiser to a 24-speed mountain bike. And second, adjusted for inflation, you can get into reloading better, faster and safer now for about the same start-up bucks as 15 years ago!

While I was dozing, the good got better and the best got fantastic! Whether you're a first-time hand-loader, a Rip Van Reloader like me or an established hull-stuffer looking for upgrades, you'll find something tempting here. (And also in this issue, see my "Odd Angry Shot" column for more handloading tips and tools.)

Unless you're loading small numbers of a single-caliber cartridge, a single-stage reloading press will quickly leave you longing for more speed and flexibility. So, why not start

out with a setup that will bang out 250 rounds per hour? The recently-expanded Classic Turret Press Kit by Lee Precision has all the hardware you need except a set of dies, and it's all top-quality gear at a bargain price. You even get Richard Lee's second edition of *Modern Reloading*, which has everything but crock-pot recipes! If you're short on space, check out Lee's compact, 3-legged Reloading Stand too.

When you're ready to step up to a progressive reloading press capable of



Hornady's Lock-N-Load AP (above) is a very efficient high volume press. The iSD Powder Dispenser and Scale by SmartReloader USA (below) has a digital memory and much more.



producing 500 professional-quality rounds per hour, the Hornady Lock-N-Load AP is just the ticket; an auto-indexing 5-station ammo factory. One of its best features—among many—is the Universal Case Retainer Spring, which allows you to handily remove and reinsert cases of any size at any point in the process. Too, the powder dispenser has an "idiot-proof" feature which stops it from dumping gunpowder if you forgot to insert an empty cartridge! Yeah, I admit it; I like that—and need it.

Here's another winner that will quickly pay for itself in time saved: The digital iSD Powder Scale and Dispenser from SmartReloader USA. It is accurate to .1 grain with all standard smokeless powders, with a 1,500-grain-scale capacity and 1-pound-plus hopper capacity. You can create and store up to 50 custom loads for instant recall, and you can name and number them yourself. It



Lee Precision's Classic Turret Press Kit is a "best buy" for beginning reloaders.



Berry's 400 Tumbler gets high marks for quiet running and ruggedness.



Lee Precision's Ergo Prime takes hand priming to a new level.



The Giraud Power Case Trimmer: Precise, efficient and fast!

measures in grains, grams, carats and ounces, and runs off 110V or 220V. You can even electronically adjust the trickle rate.

The big, clear display is nice, and the iSD is fantastic for working up "ladder loads" by small fractions at a time. I don't think this was even dreamed of when I fell asleep! Shop around, because I found the iSD for \$120 under the retail of \$349.95 at "Cheaper Than Dirt" online. SmartReloader offers lots of well-designed reloading gear including an excellent tumbling media separator, so check 'em out thoroughly.

Cleaning brass in my old rotary tumbler was slow, noisy and messy. There are many good vibrating tumblers available now, and Berry's 400 is one of the best. It's quiet, rugged and reliable, with a big 4-quart bowl and a smooth-running efficient motor. Using crushed walnut hulls or ground corncob media, the grungiest brass comes out slick and spanky-clean. Capacity is 1,000 9mm or 600 .45 ACP hulls, just for example. Many reloaders rate Berry's 400 higher than far more expensive tumblers; good to know, right?

The performance of the Giraud Power Case Trimmer just stunned me. If you shoot and reload lots of bottle-

neck rifle cartridges, you know case trimming, chamfering and deburring is the most laborious, time-consuming, curse-worthy chore in the whole process. I used to do all that by hand, and it was a real pain. With the Giraud unit, you just push the case in for a second or two and you're done! The finished case is precision-trimmed, chamfered, deburred and smoothed in an instant! The brass shavings are even trapped in a clear lexan cylinder. Changing calibers only requires changing cutter heads and case holders, and setups are available in 68 calibers, from .17 K-Hornet through .243 Ackley Improved to .50 BMG!

All good reloading press setups include a primer seating function, but I've always preferred priming my cases by hand, so I have a sure tactile feel for seating them properly without crushing them. This is especially true if you work with military brass which had crimped primer pockets. And, a good hand primer makes the process faster than working on a press. Lee Precision's new ErgoPrime gives you the speed, sure feel and consistency you need with an easy-on-the-hand ergonomically contoured grip. If you're changing calibers or primer sizes, it's a snap; just swap shell holders and visible primer trays, a quick, no-tools-required operation. So yes, Darryl, you can watch TV in the living room while priming cases and you won't even disturb the Missus!*

You just loaded a hundred rounds with the right amount of the wrong powder? Or the wrong amount of the right "ka-bloooey dust"? No problem!



The Magnum Inertia Bullet Puller is just one of Lyman's great reloading products.

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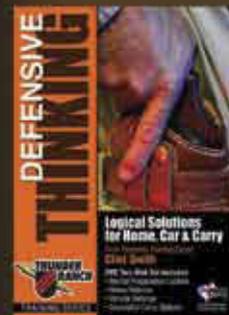


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"Then hit 'em with the red can."

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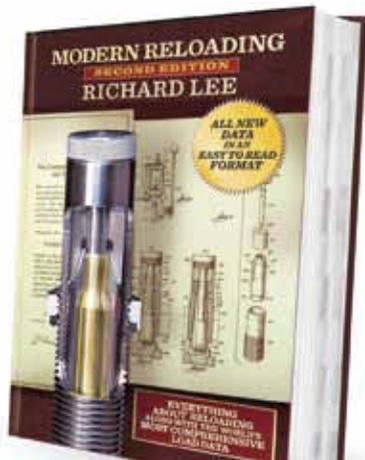
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We haven't even covered reloading dies, powders and several other



Thinking about reloading? First read Lee's *Modern Reloading* to get all the basics.

categories of goodies, and if you're just thinking about getting into reloading, you might feel a little overwhelmed already. Don't be; it's really not that bewildering. First, just get a good manual; not one that only lists loads, but one that explains the whole process. Two good choices are *The ABC's of Reloading* by Rodney James, and the 2nd edition of *Modern Reloading* by Richard Lee. You might even find 'em in your local library, if the PC Police haven't found and burned them. Then take a deep breath, pick up your chin and whisper, “OK, bucko, let's make some munitions! Good luck! Connor OUT

My buddy Darryl wanted to sit on his sofa and enjoy a little TV with his Missus—and also get some case priming done. He brought his 30-pound reloading press in from the garage and C-clamped it to the coffee table. To Mrs. R's credit, she didn't say a word—though she may have been in shock—until he gave the lever a mighty pull. The mechanical Clank-CLANK! was bad enough, but it was followed by the crash! as the coffee table, a vase of flowers and assorted porcelain tchotchkes overturned onto the deck... then she spoke. A couple of years later, he bought a quiet little Lee hand primer. The lesson: Don't do a Darryl.* **GUNS

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