

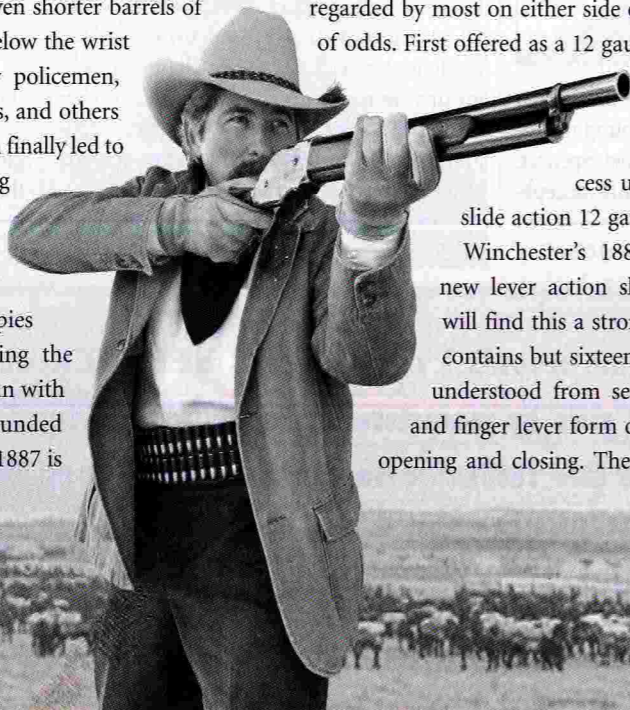
# WINCHESTER MODEL 1887 SAWED OFF 12 GAUGE

BY DENNIS ADLER

**Immortalized in Cowboy Action competition for its SPEED and RELIABILITY!**

**THE** WINCHESTER MODEL 1887 AND MODEL 1901 lever action shotguns became eminently successful in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, both as a hunting arm, when fitted with the long 30¼-inch barrel, and as a fearsome defensive and offensive weapon in the hands of lawmen and railroad guards when sporting the lever gun's shortened 22.25-inch barrel and a magazine full of double aught buckshot. Fully loaded the Winchester had the capacity of a six-shooter and in a practiced hand nearly the speed, but with far more deadly results for those on the wrong end. Sawed off models with even shorter barrels of 12 to 18 inches, and stocks cut off just below the wrist were wielded by sheriffs, marshals, city policemen, prison guards, Texas and Arizona Rangers, and others on both sides of the law, the latter of which finally led to the National Firearms Act in 1934 limiting the barrel length of a rifle or shotgun to no less than 18 inches for civilians.

More than 125 years later ArmiSport Chiappa began introducing striking copies of the Winchester Model 1887 including the most recent version, a sawed off guard gun with an 18½-inch barrel and stock cut and rounded off at the pistol grip. This latest Chiappa 1887 is



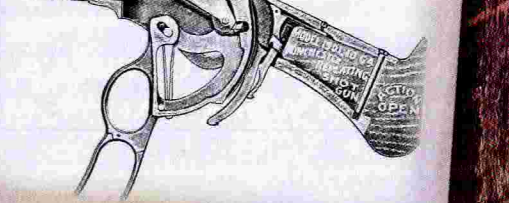
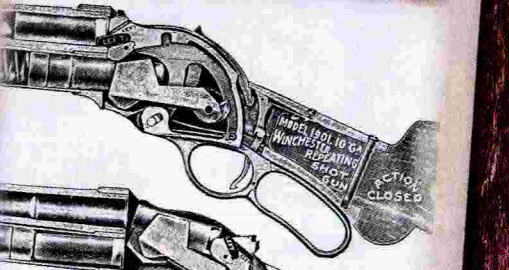
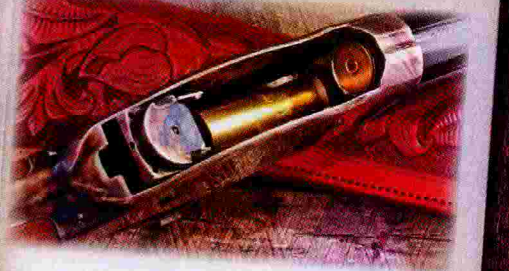
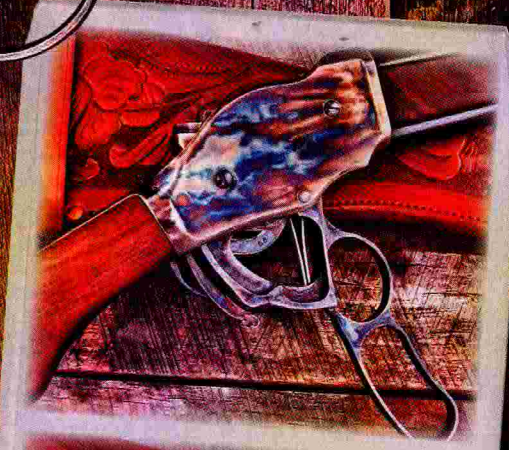
offered in three models; Deluxe with color casehardened receiver and lever, high-polish blue barrel, walnut stock and forend — much as they would have appeared in the late 19th and early 20th centuries — an all-blued model with wood grip and forearm (similar to the Model 1901, which did not have a color casehardened receiver), and a more contemporary matte black with a soft touch rubberized finish on the shortened pistol grip stock.

In the 1890s and early 20th century American West, the Winchester lever gun, designed by John Moses Browning, was regarded by most on either side of the law as the great equalizer of odds. First offered as a 12 gauge in 1887 and then in both 12 and larger 10 gauge models, the Winchester lever action shotgun was an unrivaled success until the advent of Winchester's slide action 12 gauge shotguns in 1893 and 1897. Winchester's 1888 sales catalog described the new lever action shotgun as follows: "Sportsmen will find this a strong, serviceable arm. The system contains but sixteen parts in all, and can be readily understood from sectional cuts. The breech block and finger lever form one piece, and move together in opening and closing. The hammer, placed in the breech



Note magazine retainer is a steel band that partially encircles the barrel and is secured by a screw.

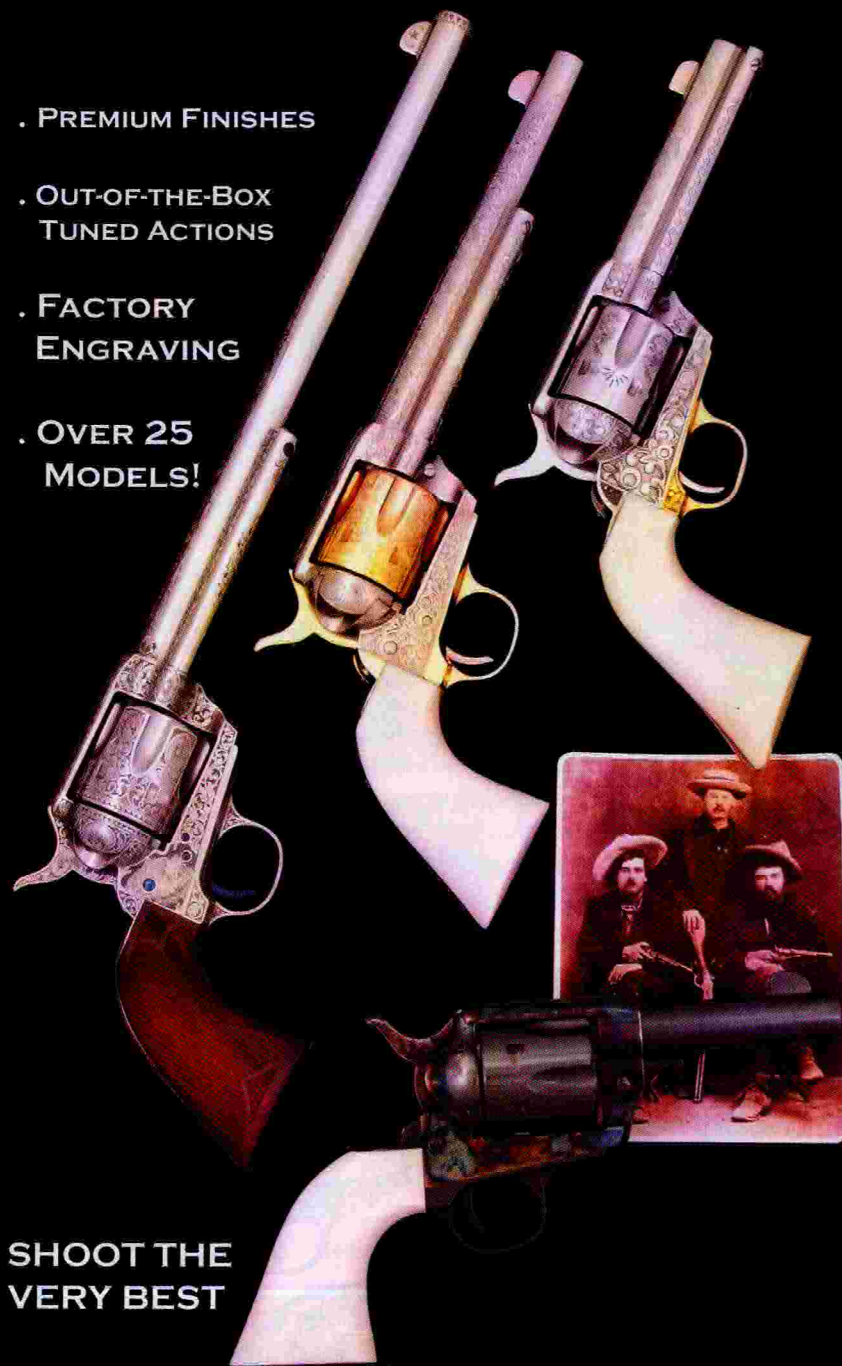
A cut down Winchester Model 1887 was one of the most feared and respected weapons of the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The Chiappa 1887 sawed off shotgun is an authentic reproduction. (Scabbard by Chisholm's Trail Leather)



The Chiappa design features a lifter that allows a second shell to be staged for a quick reload in SASS and Cowboy Action Shooting events where only two shells may be loaded.

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**WINCHESTER MODEL 1887**



The attention to fine detail in fit, finish, and working parts, makes the Chiappa Model 1887 the finest reproduction western shotgun on the market. The example at left is a real Winchester Model 1887; the Chiappa is on the right and at the bottom!

block, is automatically cocked during the closing motion; but can also be cocked or set at half cock by hand."

"The trigger and finger lever are so adjusted that the trigger cannot be pulled prematurely, and the gun cannot be discharged until closed. The barrel can be examined and cleaned from the breech. The magazine and carrier hold five cartridges, which with one in the chamber make six at the command of the shooter." In designing the Model 1887 John Browning utilized a rolling block-like action, which followed the arc of the lever in its movement, with the internal mechanism dropping down from the receiver. With the breech exposed, it was easy to load a single shell into the gun if necessary.

Six shots could make anyone on the wrong end think twice. The 1887 was quickly

adopted by lawmen like Cochise County, Arizona Sheriff John Slaughter, stage coach and railway guards, and most anyone who wanted the most firepower then available in a shotgun. Even after Winchester introduced the slide action shotgun in 1893, (which was also designed by Browning) the 1887 remained in production until it was replaced by the Model 1901.

The 1887 models had beautifully color casehardened receivers and levers, and barrel lengths of 30 1/4 inches in 12 gauge and 32 1/4 inches in 10 gauge. Custom barrel lengths were also offered and short barrel versions were available for lawmen, guards, and messengers requiring a lighter, more maneuverable shotgun. Most guard guns had a 22 1/4-inch barrel. Late in 1897 Winchester added another variation cataloged as a Riot Gun. Noted the factory, "The Winchester lever

**SPECIFICATIONS**

**Chiappa Model 1887**



Gauge: 12 • Barrel: 18 1/2 inches • OA Length: 28-3/5 in.  
 Weight: 6.8 pounds (empty) • Stock: Deluxe walnut • Sights: None • Action: Lever  
 Finish: Deluxe color casehardened receiver/blued barrel • Capacity: 5+1 • MSRP: \$1,295

action 'Riot' gun is made with a 20-inch, rolled steel barrel, cylinder bore barrel, bored expressly to shoot buckshot... They are far superior to a revolver for shooting in the dark, where aim is uncertain, as a buckshot cartridge contains nine bullets to one contained by a revolver cartridge."

The forend design is one of the Winchester shotgun's most distinctive features. It is of two-piece construction, divided by the barrel and magazine tube and held together with one screw on early models and two

on later production. The two series also differed in the type of magazine retainer used. The early examples had a stud secured to the underside of the barrel with a screw holding the retainer cap in place. This was changed around serial number 28,000. The improved retainer used a steel band that partially encircled the barrel and

was secured by a screw. A second retention screw passed completely through the end of the magazine. A version of the later forend and magazine retainer designs are used on the Chiappa 1887 reproductions.

Built for black powder shells, the original Winchester models were discontinued after approximately 64,855 examples had been produced, and replaced by the improved Model 1901, which was built to withstand the added pressures of smokeless powder shot shells. The 1901 model used

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**WINCHESTER MODEL 1887**

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**Modern Models**

One of the more versatile alterations of the historic Winchester lever shotgun, the new Chiappa sawed off 1887 is suitable for Cowboy Action Shooting (if you dare with only an 18½-inch barrel and no shoulder stock). Original shortened 1887 models, loaded with a variety of shells from #7½ (1-ounce of shot) or #8 heavy game loads (1-1/8 ounces of shot), to buckshot rounds ranging from #4 buckshot (34 pellets) to 00 buck (9 pellets), made them easy to carry on horseback or even shouldered in a scabbard. The same applies to the modern version from Chiappa, which is shown being carried in a custom made saddle scabbard based on an original early 20th century Heiser & Heiser Saddlery pattern recreated by Alan and Donna Soellner of Chisholm's Trail Leather.

Weighing 6.8 pounds and measuring only 28-3/5 inches in overall length, the Chiappa sawed off 1887, starts at around \$995. The sawed off model is easy to handle, surprisingly well balanced and no harder to lever than a full stocked shotgun.

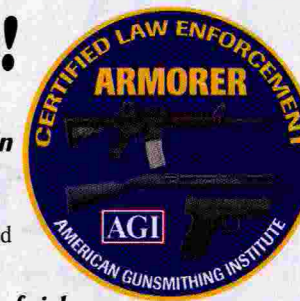
While the fundamental advantages of a sawed off shotgun in the late 1800s and early 1900s were ease of use on horseback or quick maneuverability in close quarters such as a sheriff or railway guard facing down several armed outlaws, or a city lawman turning back an angry crowd bent on a lynching, the modern implications, outside of Cowboy Action Shooting, vary little from a century ago. The Chiappa is still (Please turn to page 75)



Pounding 00 buckshot loads downrange from 45 feet and 15 feet, the sawed off Chiappa 1887 delivered tight groupings with the best measuring 3.25 inches.

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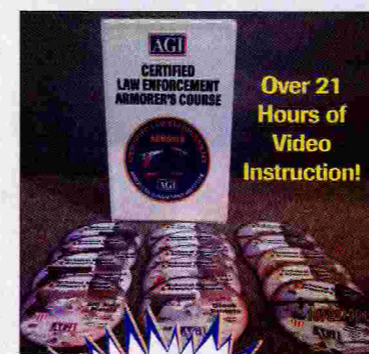


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