



Rob Bianchin, president of the Cabot Gun Co., shows off one of the company's 1911 model pistols.

Penn United launches
Cabot Gun Co.

On Target

A project that began as a simple morale booster at Penn United Technologies Inc. has resulted in a whole new company — and possibly some of the best handguns in history.

Cabot Gun Co. LLC officially launched July 22 with four models of 1911 pistols after more than two years in development at Penn United in Jefferson Township.

But Cabot Gun first attracted the attention of the gun world in April during the NRA's annual meeting and exhibit in Pittsburgh.

"The reactions were very, very reaffirming," said Rob Bianchin, pres-

ident of Cabot Gun.

Bianchin, an entrepreneur, analyst and investor from Butler Township, said the creation of the Cabot Gun Co. can be traced to early 2009.

As a result of the slowdown in manufacturing during the recession, Penn United had an engineering team with a little extra time, he said.

Never a company to sit still, Bianchin said Penn United formed a focus group, which decided to develop and produce Penn United's own version of the 1911 pistol.

The 1911 — a piece of Americana that happens to be celebrating its

100th anniversary this year — is a semi-automatic .45-caliber pistol developed by legendary firearms designer John Browning.

It was the standard-issue sidearm of the United States military from 1911 to 1985, and some specialized branches continue to use variants of the gun today.

Also, because of the 1911's place in American history, as well as its performance, it is still popular among collectors and competitive shooters, Bianchin said.

Ray Rozic, who has worked at Penn United for seven years and is an avid hunter and shooter, said when he heard about the focus group, he jumped at the chance to volunteer and contribute.

"There are a lot of these guns on the market," he said. "We said, 'What can we do to make

ours better?'"

Rozic, now chief gun technician, said Penn United developed the gun as it would any other project, which means not compromising on quality.

As a result, he said the pistols are manufactured in such a precise manner that every component of every gun is completely interchangeable.

The main components of the gun — the frame and slide — are machined from solid blocks of steel instead of being forged or cast, he said.

Bianchin said a metallurgist on staff uses heat and cryogenic techniques to harden the steel, and every part is measured by lasers to ensure exact tolerances.

Penn United even built its own bluing stations to give the steel its final treatment, he said.

Bianchin got involved in the project after learning Penn United had a 1911 prototype in the works.

Bianchin said he has brought business opportunities to Penn United in the past and has always been a fan of the company's work.

So, he approached Penn United with the idea of starting a separate gun company.

Because much money had been invested, Penn United decided to manufacture the gun itself instead of letting a mass manufacturer produce the design.

Bianchin came on board in December, and in less than four months, he and Penn United assembled a team of legal, sales and marketing professionals to develop the brand.

"I understand how to

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UP CLOSE



Parts at different stages of production for the Cabot Gun Co.'s 1911 models.

Cabot Gun Co.

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WEBSITE: www.cabotguns.com

E-MAIL: info@cabotguns.com

PRESIDENT: Rob Bianchin

EMPLOYEES: 8

PRODUCTS: Four trim lines of 1911 pistols — the Mr. Jones, the RangeMaster, the GI/Classic and the CGI/Classic

QUOTE: "There are a lot of these guns on the market. We said, 'What can we do to make ours better?'"

— Ray Rozic, chief gun technician for Penn United Technologies

find talent,” Bianchin said. “It’s all about getting the right people involved.”

Bianchin said the popularity of the 1911 will drive demand for the gun. According to a 2009 report from the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, nearly half of the 500,000 .45 calibers sold in 2009 were 1911s.

“We don’t believe in driving blind,” he said. “We do our homework.”

However, the gun’s real selling point will be quality, he said.

Bianchin said the company coined the term “post-custom class” to describe how the guns come right off the production floor with parts fitting in a way only previously done by expert gunsmiths.

Most importantly, Bianchin said the goal is to build an enduring product that will be

passed down by generations of enthusiasts, collectors and competitive shooters.

“This will be the 1911 to own,” he said.

However, this level of quality will not come cheap. Prices range from \$4,350 to just under \$5,000.

The four models currently available are:

■ GI/Classic, an authentic tribute to the original military issue 1911.

■ CGI/Classic, a classic 1911 with contemporary features.

■ RangeMaster, designed with features specially catering to sharpshooters.

■ Mr. Jones, the flagship model, which pays tribute to Carl Jones, one of the co-founders of Penn United.

Bianchin said each gun takes four months to manufacture, and the first production run of 45

was completed in July.

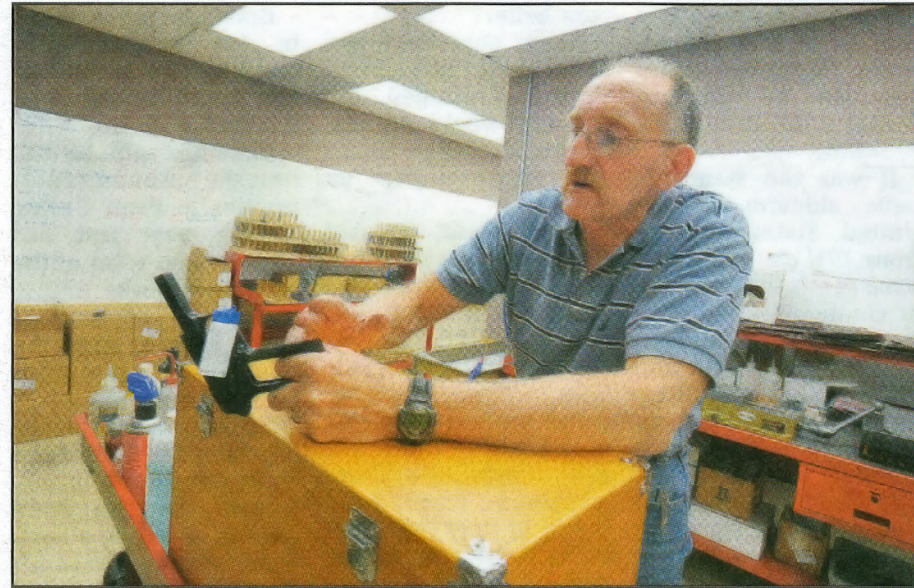
Now, production runs will be scaled from the dozens to the thousands based on demand, he said.

Along with ramping up marketing efforts, Bianchin said plans include introducing the brand to 25 markets by the fourth quarter of the year and 50 markets by 2012.

He also said Cabot Gun plans to have two more models in production by the end of the year: an all stainless steel 1911 and a left-handed model, which will be the only left-handed 1911 on the market.

Other models in the works are a thinner concealed carrier model and a women’s model, which will be re-engineered to have unique ergonomics, he said.

“We feel we can build a small arms manufac-



Ray Rozic, chief gun technician at Penn United, explains how the Cabot Gun Co.’s 1911 model pistols are made and assembled.

turer here in Western Pennsylvania,” he said, adding there is no other gun maker in the state.

“We feel there is opportunity to diversify significantly,” he said.

Bianchin said establishing a high-end gun brand will help increase Penn United’s name recognition.

More importantly, he said the venture is

another way Penn United is diversifying and strengthening its business while attracting attention to the high-quality manufacturing in our own backyard. ❖