

## The true story behind the Baumkircher Billinghamurst pistol

Shortly after my apprenticeship, 1973-1974 a fellow co-worker infected me with the "black powder" virus.

For me as an able gunsmith it was out of the question and against my professional pride to "buy" a muzzleloader firearm. So I built a traditional side-lock pistol (picture1) I did not receive any help from my new colleague so I was on my own.

To build side-locks and set triggers, were routine in my daily work as an able gunsmith. So I start to build my first muzzleloader pistol, going after my intuition and feel for form and design. And the outcome of my work was a success, both in looks, and performance. With this pistol I started to participate in competitions in my area. Of course my fellow shooters could not hide their interest in my pistol, since most, or if not all, only used mass produced Italian replicas. Also the performance of the pistol awoke their interest.

Keeping in mind that it took about 150 working hours to build this pistol and the quality was comparable to that seen on an antique original, the price I had to ask for such a pistol was out of range for most.

Later, to some lucky circumstance I made the acquaintance of a pistol shooter from the vicinity of Heilbronn/Neckarsulm, whom I learnt to know and to appreciate. The other lucky thing was, I got my hands on a book "Underhammerguns" written by Herschel Logan as from now on referred to as the "Bible"

After many hours of discussions and thinking with my friend and intensive studying of the "Bible" we came to the conclusion to build an underhammer pistol.

The advantage we saw were as followed, long and low sight length, short hammer drop, direct ignition into the powder chamber, insuring a lightning fast and sure ignition, compared to traditional side-lock pistols. And last but not least the plain design lowering production cost to an affordable level.

The first prototype was ready to be tested between the years 1981/1982. After an intensive and promising test period and long discussions some improvements were made and resulted in prototype 2 (see picture2)

That pistol, prototype 2, I gave for further testing to Mr. Bernd Kühnle at a meeting in annual Schwäbisch Hall. His first trials were impressive after sighting in the pistol, his results ranged from 98 to 99, out of one hundred possible. After further trials of my "test pilot" we gathered to evaluate trials and found out that the grip and trigger could be improved. Trigger pull lighter and grip should support the fingers in a better way, and it should be a saw grip handle type.

After further intensive studies of the "Bible" we came to was that the pistol that had all we were looking for was the Billinghamurst pistol. That is how the Baumkircher-Billinghurst came about.

During 1987 the production began, and the first competition achievements started to come in .

During the World Championship in Pforzheim Germany the Swiss competitor Mr. Karl Menden won the gold medal with a Baumkircher-Billinghurst and ever since then the success of my pistols continued, as you can see on my website [www.baumkircher.at](http://www.baumkircher.at) under "Hall of Fame".

After Mr. Menden's success, and the publishing of a test and review of my Baumkircher-Billinghurst (on my website under "press" Schweizer Waffenmagazin 1991, the first copycats appear on the scene.

It is flattering if your work is copied, it also happened to the mastergunsmiths before, but it is a nuisance regarding the commercial aspect of it.

You have to consider, that all I had available during the recreation of these pistols were old pictures out of different books and a vague description of the mechanism and functions. Meaning, I had to recreate the pivot points and the lock geometry and right notch angles from scratch. Even for me as a "Ferlach Mastergunsmith" it took considerable time and effort.

As for a copycat it is simple just get hold of an existing, pistol make the measurements, and if you are a gunsmith or mechanic, it is easy to copy. But even so many of the copycats can't do it right, or cut corners to cover up for the lack of skill.

The list of copycats has grown considerable over the years but there is only one "Original" Baumkircher Billinghurst



**Baumkircher number 1**



**Prototyp 1 Baumkircher underhammerpistol**



**Prototype2**



**Baumkircher\_Billinghurst Standart**



**Finally Baumkircher-Billinghurst Classic**

