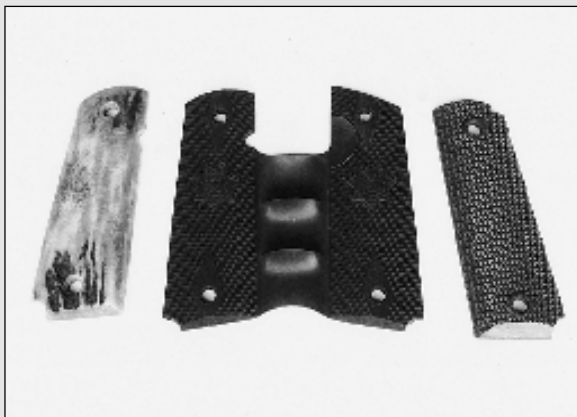


The Custom Stock Option

Though there are plenty of utilitarian budget stocks around, another option is to have custom stocks made. Custom makers, such as Herrett's Stocks, make their products fit the individual's hand precisely and specialize in providing for the needs of shooters with special needs, such as amputees and those with malformations or extraordinarily large or small hands. Herrett uses good-quality walnut for its regular orders, but can provide highly figured walnut on request. Asking what it



Above: The standard GI stocks (right) are often too thin for the shooter to grasp comfortably. The one-piece rubber grips by Bianchi (center) are slightly thicker and have the added benefit of providing finger grooves for better recoil control. Bianchi no longer catalogs these, but Pachmayr's Signature Combat Gripper is nearly identical. The stag horn grip (left) is almost twice the thickness of factory standard and is well rounded. It's from a set that was made for the author more than 30 years ago by a long out-of-business custom gunsmith. It's hand filling and helps distribute recoil well, but with this set in place, long fingers are needed to reach the trigger properly. Eagle

costs without knowing precisely what is wanted is like asking, "How high is up?" A detailed description of your requirements will get you an exact price, but plan on spending at least a C note for most choices.

Similarly, Eagle Grips specializes in providing exotic woods like teak, rosewood, and ebony, as well as staghorn, mother of pearl, buffalo horn, and other natural materials, but will do special orders on request. Custom or semi-custom stocks can make a remarkable difference in the pistol's shooting qualities, as well as its aesthetic appeal. Our personal preference in terms of exotic materials is staghorn.

Eagle's are usually about 30 percent thicker than GI issue and most commercial wooden stocks. It is becoming increasingly difficult to find quality stag, but at \$79.95, Eagle's stocks made of it for the GM are a bargain. I spoke with Eagle Grips Vice President Raj Singh about prices, and he advised that costs vary considerably for custom work, so it's best to contact the firm for a quote.