Benchmetal Hand Tools and Metallurgy

One of the greatest skills a gunsmith can have is the ability to do fine hand work. In Gunsmithing Hand Tools, we will be covering not only use of hand tools, but how to make your own high quality tools, such as chisels and screwdrivers. We will also work on basic metallurgy including steel identification, selection, forging, soldering, brazing, and heat treating. The tools that we will be covering are based on what would be found in just about every gun shop across America, from major manufacturers to home hobby shops. These tools include the use and care of files, vises, torches, hammers, pliers, and some power tools such as drill presses and belt sanders.

Fred Weisenborn grew up in the Ozark hills of Missouri, where his father introduced him to the art of blacksmithing. As a teenager, Fred joined the local blacksmith association, where he worked with artists and craftsmen throughout the country and developed a passion for creating things from metal. He spent the summer of 2002 at the Touchstone Center for Crafts in PA, where he was able to work with many master smiths like Raymond Rybar Jr. and Bill Fiorini. When the time came to choose a career, Fred decided to attend Trinidad State Junior College's gunsmith program. In the next two years, Fred was taught everything from basic machining to building his own 50 caliber rifle. After college, he worked for two years as a gunsmith for Gander Mountain in Foreset Lake, MN. He decided to make a career change in 2007 and moved to the St. Louis area in the hopes of more career opportunities in the firearm business. In 2010 he began working for Midwest Gun Works in Pevely, MO as a gunsmith. Fred enjoys the daily challenges that come with his trade, and believes that through hard work and the ability to collaborate with others, no problem is too big to solve. Fred designs and makes knives and pens in his spare time and still enjoys creating work over the forge. He sells items online as well as at local craft shows and consignment shops. He and his wife and their three children reside in the small town of Columbia, IL, just outside of St. Louis, MO.

Recommended Tools and Materials List

6” adjustable wrench
Aluminum oxide polishing cloth 180, 240, and 400 grits
Assorted files with handles smaller sizes 6" or 8" may be most useful
Gunsmith screwdriver set.
Hammers (4oz&16oz)
Long pants are required – no shorts please
Pliers- heavy duty to hold material while forging
Safety glasses (Required)
This list reflects minimum requirements. If you have other tools or supplies that maybe useful, bring them because you can never have enough tools.