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THE EIBAR "1910 BROWNING"

Seven shot, 7.65 mm caliber, BUFALO pistol; 85 mm barrel; Marked PISTOLA AUTOMATICA ESPAÑOLA PATS.62004 Y 67577 / "BUFALO" 7,65-32 CAL, logo "BC" (Beristain y C^a).

In Spain the initial manufacture of Browning 1910 based pistols may have been the "REX" pistol marketed by "Zulaica, Bolumburu y C^a" with this trade mark being registered in 1914; However, the largest production of this type was by the firm of "Gabilondos y C^a", successors of "Gabilondos y Urresti" and of "Gabilondos, Urresti y C^a", in Elgoibar; This firm, just as that of "Esperanza y Unceta" / "Unceta y C^a" in Guernica and that of Bonifacio Echeverria in Eibar, kept on improving the quality of its products, but is the only one of these firms lacking so far any published material regarding its history and production details; This may be due to the fact that, just as during the Great War many arms makers worked for them manufacturing the "RUBY" pistols, after the war it was "Gabilondo y C^a" that was willing to work for others.

The pistols produced for "Gabilondo y C^a" were marketed not only with this firm's trademarks (RUBY / DANTON / PLUS ULTRA / LLAMA) but also bearing the trademarks of those who contracted their production with them but wished to appear as being the manufacturers themselves, something frequently done by the area's arms makers; "Esperanza y Unceta" / "Unceta y C^a" and Bonifacio Echeverria also used different trademarks, although trademarks of their own property, not registered by other firms.

The BUFALO trademark was registered in 1902 by and was the property of "Beristain y C^a", an important Barcelona dealer and was used in the first "1910 Brownings" made by "Gabilondos y C^a" around 1920 and, despite "improvements" patented by the Barcelona firm, was a breach of the patents and of the "industrial model" which Fabrique Nationale had registered in Spain in 1911 and kept in effect by certifying that it possessed resources for its manufacture in Barcelona (??).

In this case "Beristain y C^a" did not wait for FN to take legal action and taking the initiative launched a suit intended towards the annulment of those patents, based on the fact that the design was not really being manufactured in Spain as required by law; F.N defended itself citing the Great War as "force majeure" and the suit was not resolved until 1926 when the 1910 Browning's "industrial model" registered by F.N, expired.

This resolution coincided with the cessation of “BUFALO” pistol production, although “Gabilondo y C^a” continued to make Browning 1910 based pistols under its own trademarks, RUBY and DANTON, the last one having been registered in 1923; In this same year “Unceta y C^a” started production of its ASTRA 700 SPECIAL also based on the 1910 Browning, as also were some of the pistols made by Isidro Gaztañaga under the trademarks DESTROYER and SUPER DESTROYER.

The arms industry in this period also marketed several models that only superficially resembled foreign designs such as the vague resemblance of the SUPER DESTROYER to a Walther PP or of Eduardo Shilling 1921 MODEL VICTORIA or of “Etxezarraga, Abaitua y C^a”s COLONIAL, and of “Alkartasuna S.A”s ALKAR to the 1910 Browning; In reality they are Eibar-type pistols mechanically based on the 1903 and 1906 Brownings; Gaspar Arizaga’s MONDIAL although superficially recalling a Savage, also has Browning innards.



Eibar-type pistols. Left: The 9 mm. caliber 1921 MODEL VICTORIA marketed by E. Shilling. Right: The 7,65 mm COLONIAL marketed by “Etxezarraga, Ebaitua y C^a” (Photo H. Meruelo)



Left: The Browning 1910 based, 9 mm caliber, SUPER DESTROYER pistol, marketed by Isidro Gaztañaga. Right: 6,35 mm caliber, MONDIAL pistol (1920) marketed by Gaspar Arizaga

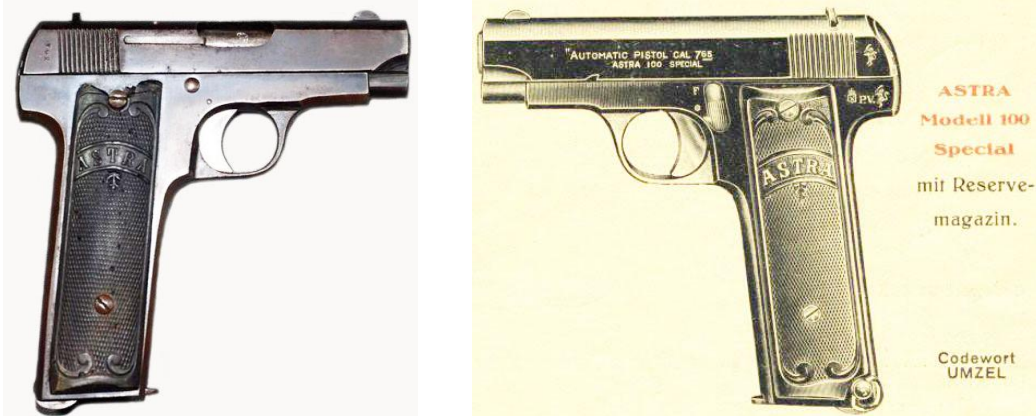
Probably because of the RUBY pistol's popularity during the Great War due to its 9 shot capacity, several models with even larger magazine capacity were introduced during the 1920s; "Gabilondo y C^a" produced its DANTON with a 12 round capacity; "Astra y Unceta" its Eibar-type "ASTRA 100 SPECIAL" also with a 12 round magazine and, "Beistegui Hermanos" with its ROYAL, all three of them with elongated grips; "Gabilondo y C^a" established a record with its Eibar-type RUBY EXTRA and PLUS ULTRA, registered in 1928, with a 22 shot magazine; It is said that the PLUS ULTRA, which was also marketed by "El Trust Eibarres S.L." as the "TRUST", was adopted by the Imperial Japanese Air Force.



Twelve shot 7.65 mm caliber DANTON pistol; 100 mm barrel; Marked AUTOMATIC PISTOL WAR MODEL CAL 7,65 (32) / "DANTON" PATENT 70724-TESTED, logo "GC" (Gabilondo y C^a).



Twelve shot 7.65 mm caliber ASTRA 700 SPECIAL pistol; Marked "ASTRA 700 SPECIAL" Cal 7,65 (32), logo "ASTRA U C" (Unceta y C^a). (Fotos H. J. Meruelo)



Left: Twelve shot, 7.65 mm caliber ASTRA 100 SPECIAL pistol; Right: ASTRA 100 SPECIAL publicity ad. (Foto H. J. Meruelo)



Twenty-two shot 7.65 mm caliber PLUS ULTRA pistol; 90 mm barrel; Marked PLUS ULTRA, Cal. 7.65; Logos "PLUS ULTRA" and "GC" (Gabilondo y C^a)



Colt 1911 based, 45 caliber pistol, made by "Gabilondo y Comp^a" under the PATENT RUBY CAL. 45 trademark; In their Catalogue # 25 it was also offered in 9 mm caliber. (Photo Leonardo M. Antaris).



Left: 9 mm Largo “LLAMA” EXTRA pistol, marked: GABILONDO Y Cia. ELGOIBAR (ESPAÑA) CAL 9 m/m 38 “LLAMA” on the left slide and “LLAMA” EXTRA on the right slide and the intertwined GC, Gabilondo y Cia logo, mimicking the Guardia Civil logo, on the right frame; This specimen; SN 30416, bears no year code letter”; Right “LLAMA” EXTRA publicity ad. (Foto H. J. Meruelo)

During the 1920s “Gabilondo y C^a” made a Colt 1911 based .45 ACP model which they marketed under, among others, the RUBY trademark; In Ignacio Ugartechea’s catalogue it was listed as the IÑAKI; They then commercialized their “Colt 1911” pistols in 38 Super, 9 mm Largo and 7.63 mm Mauser under the LLAMA trademark, which was registered in 1932, and reserved their RUBY brand for the production of swing-out cylinder revolvers.