



POPOFF GUNMAKERS
CRAFTSMANSHIP. PRECISION. RESTORATION.

BEFORE YOU REBUILD YOUR RIFLE

FIVE COSTLY MISTAKES SHOOTERS MAKE
BEFORE INVESTING IN CUSTOM WORK

A SHORT GUIDE BY
ALEXANDER POPOFF

2026

BEFORE YOU INVEST IN A REBUILD

Most shooters don't realize they're making critical mistakes before investing in a rebuild.

I've seen rifles with great potential turned into expensive disappointments — not because of the work itself, but because of the decisions made before it even started.

In many cases, the issue is not the rifle.

It's the assumptions behind it.

This short guide will help you avoid the most common and costly mistakes before you commit time and money.



ALEXANDER POPOFF
GUNMAKER • CALGARY • CLIENTS WORLDWIDE

MISTAKE 01

REBUILDING THE WRONG RIFLE

Not every rifle is worth rebuilding.

Sometimes, the right decision
is not to rebuild at all.



ALEXANDER POPOFF
GUNMAKER • CALGARY • CLIENTS WORLDWIDE

MISTAKE 01

REBUILDING THE WRONG RIFLE

One of the most common mistakes is starting with the wrong foundation.

Not every rifle is worth rebuilding – even if it seems like it at first.

In some cases, the action may already be worn beyond what makes sense to restore. In others, the barrel or overall condition limits what the rifle can realistically become.

The problem is not always visible at a glance.

What appears to be a simple improvement often requires a complete rethinking of the build.

A proper evaluation at the beginning can save time, money, and frustration later on.



ALEXANDER POPOFF
GUNMAKER • CALGARY • CLIENTS WORLDWIDE

MISTAKE 02

IGNORING STOCK FIT

A rifle can be beautifully built
and still feel wrong in the hands.

If the stock does not fit the shooter,
control, comfort, and consistency
all suffer.



ALEXANDER POPOFF
GUNMAKER • CALGARY • CLIENTS WORLDWIDE

MISTAKE 02

IGNORING STOCK FIT

Stock fit is often overlooked because the rifle may look right before it ever feels right.

But the way a rifle fits the shooter affects far more than comfort.

It influences control, repeatability, and the natural relationship between the body and the rifle.

If the fit is wrong, the shooter starts compensating.

That compensation may show up in position, recoil response, sight picture, or overall consistency.

What feels like an accuracy problem is sometimes a fit problem instead.

A proper stock should support the shooter naturally — not force the shooter to adapt around it.



ALEXANDER POPOFF
GUNMAKER • CALGARY • CLIENTS WORLDWIDE

MISTAKE 03

FIXING THE WRONG PROBLEM

What looks like an accuracy issue
is not always caused by the barrel.

Sometimes, the real problem
lies elsewhere.



ALEXANDER POPOFF
GUNMAKER • CALGARY • CLIENTS WORLDWIDE

MISTAKE 03

FIXING THE WRONG PROBLEM

Many shooters start with the part they suspect first.

They may assume the barrel is the problem, or that one mechanical change will solve what they are seeing on target.

But a rifle is a system.

Accuracy, reliability, and consistency can be affected by several connected factors – the action, bedding, stock fit, trigger, barrel condition, ammunition, and the way the rifle is being used.

When the wrong problem is corrected first, money is spent without solving the cause.

A careful evaluation helps separate symptoms from the real issue before work begins.



ALEXANDER POPOFF
GUNMAKER • CALGARY • CLIENTS WORLDWIDE

MISTAKE 04

UNDER- ESTIMATING THE SCOPE

What begins as a small fix
often reveals a much larger job.

Once the work begins,
the full condition becomes clear.

P

ALEXANDER POPOFF
GUNMAKER • CALGARY • CLIENTS WORLDWIDE

MISTAKE 04

UNDER-ESTIMATING THE SCOPE

What appears to be a minor repair is not always minor once the work begins.

In many cases, the true condition of the rifle is only revealed after it is opened up and properly inspected.

Wear, earlier modifications, hidden damage, or poor previous work can all change the direction of a project.

What begins as a simple correction may require additional work to restore function, consistency, or structural integrity.

This is why early assumptions can be misleading.

A proper evaluation helps define the real scope before time, money, and expectations move too far ahead.



ALEXANDER POPOFF
GUNMAKER • CALGARY • CLIENTS WORLDWIDE

MISTAKE 05

CHOOSING PRICE OVER OUTCOME

A lower price can look like a smart decision until the work has to be done twice.

The real cost is not the quote.
It is the result.



ALEXANDER POPOFF
GUNMAKER • CALGARY • CLIENTS WORLDWIDE

MISTAKE 05

CHOOSING PRICE OVER OUTCOME

Price matters. But it should never be the only measure of the decision.

Custom work is not just about replacing parts or making something look better. It is about whether the final rifle performs, fits, functions, and holds its value over time.

A cheaper solution may solve the visible problem while leaving the real issue untouched.

That is when the same rifle comes back for a second round of work — often with more damage, more frustration, and a higher final cost.

The better question is not “What is the cheapest way to fix this?”

The better question is “What outcome am I actually paying for?”



ALEXANDER POPOFF
GUNMAKER • CALGARY • CLIENTS WORLDWIDE

THE RIGHT WORK BEGINS WITH THE RIGHT DECISIONS.

A rifle should work for you —
not against you.

If you are considering a rebuild, restoration,
or a custom rifle, start with a proper evaluation.



ALEXANDER POPOFF

GUNMAKER • CALGARY • CLIENTS WORLDWIDE

INSTAGRAM: @POPOFF.GUNMAKERS

CONSULTATIONS BY APPOINTMENT