

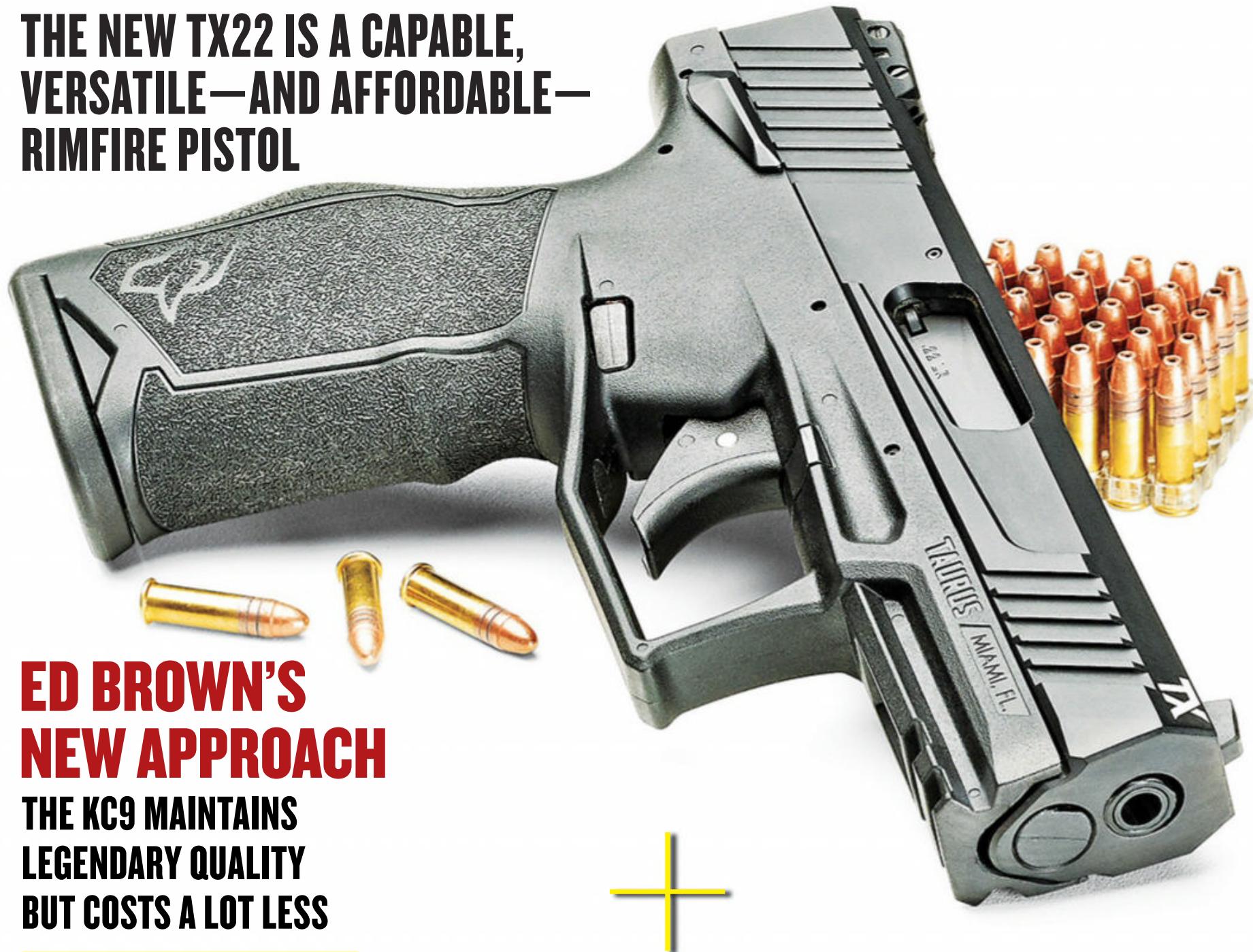
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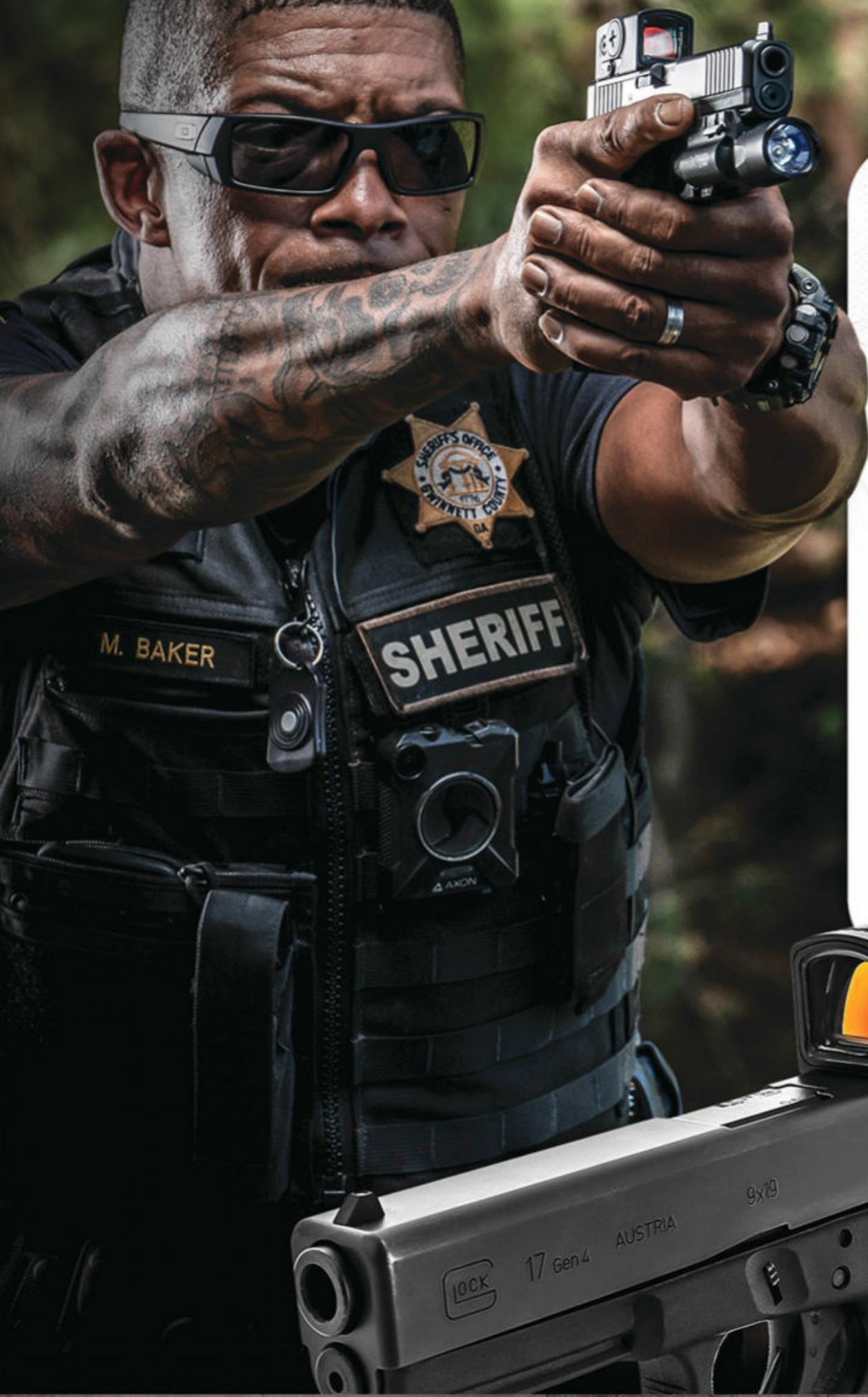


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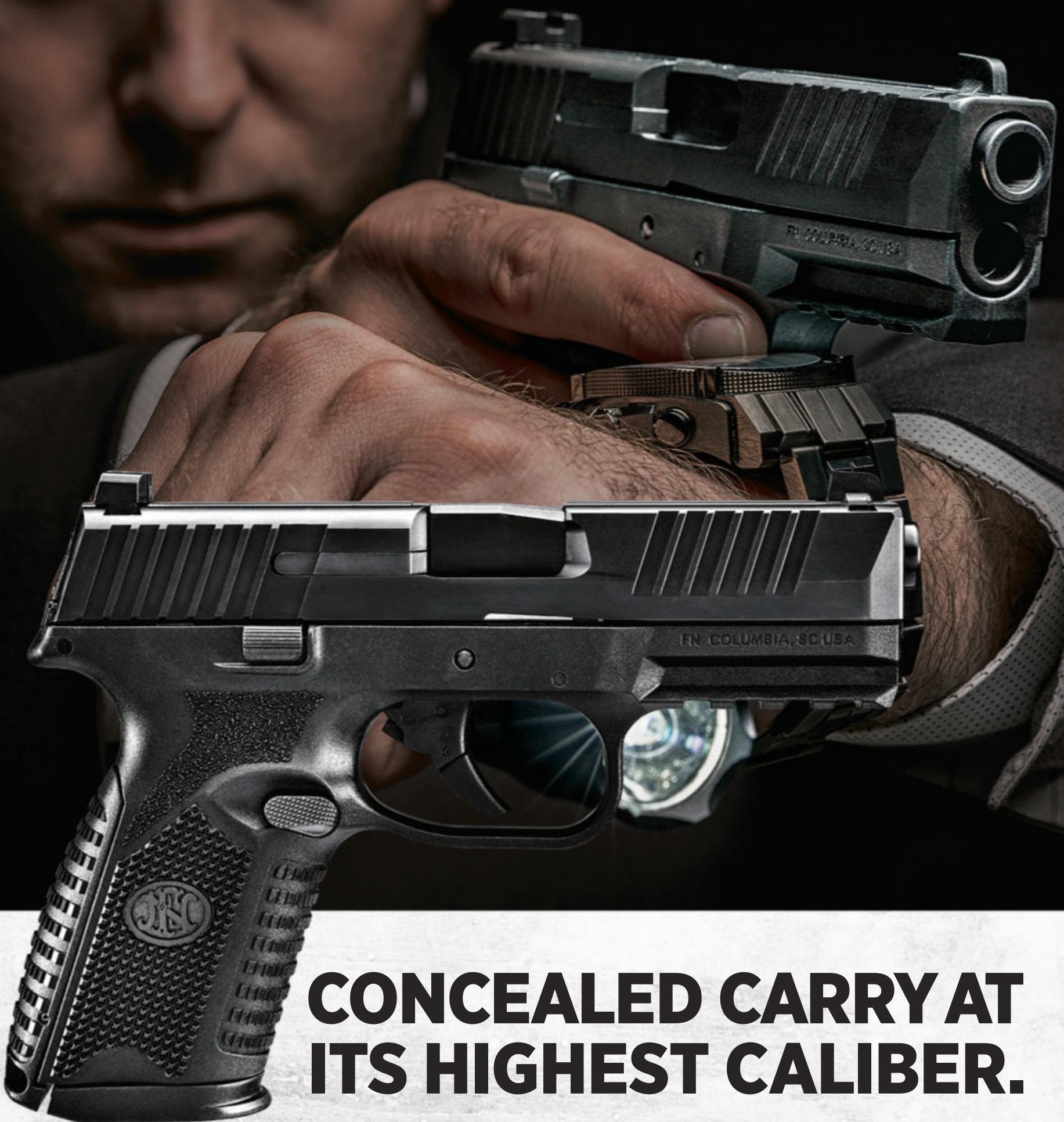
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HANDGUNS | LETTERS

Why Conceal?

I am fairly new to concealed carry, and I read articles in your magazine and others about how to prevent the gun from showing. Why? I would think if the potential bad guy knows I am carrying and am able to defend myself, he would be less likely to try to rob (or worse) this crippled old man. What am I missing?

MICHAEL CROW

SPRINGFIELD, AR

Mr. Crow: The biggest issue with your gun showing is it forfeits your element of surprise, which is one of the most critical aspects of self-defense. You're right that an exposed gun may serve as a deterrent to a potential assailant, but it could have the opposite effect and prompt someone to target you because they want your gun. From a legal standpoint, should your concealed gun become exposed, you could conceivably run afoul of the law because the gun's visibility might be construed as "brandishing."—Richard Nance

ing articles such as this, find out if the gun you're writing about is even available to the public.

GARY MOSCOWITZ,

THE VILLAGES, FL

Mr. Moscowitz: Very sorry you've been having trouble locating the Model 19 Carry Comp. I checked with my contact at Smith & Wesson, and he told me the revolver has been shipping since mid-2018 and is available for order.—Scott Rupp

It Really Is Super

Loved the letter in your last issue about the .38 Super. I couldn't agree more. The first semiautomatic pistol I ever shot was my dad's Colt .38 Super back in 1969, and I loved it from the get-go. While I own a number of handguns, my everyday carry is a Kimber .38 Super I purchased new in 2012. The .38 Super round is a flat-shooting and accurate round that has more punch than a 9mm. I keep mine locked and loaded with .38 Super+P JHPs. It's a nail-driver.

CHRIS KAZARIAN

BILLINGS, MT

Rimfire Error

In the article on the North American Arms True Black Widow (August/September), I wrote that you could shoot .22 LR ammo in the gun's .22 WMR cylinder. I have since learned that while .22 LR ammunition will feed and fire out of .22 WMR chambers, the practice is actually unsafe. The chambers of .22 WMR revolvers are actually larger, and firing .22 LRs in them can cause case bulging and other issues.—James Tarr

CONTACT US

For letters and comments on the magazine, contact us at HANDGUNS@OUTDOORSG.COM or write to us at Handguns, P.O. Box 271245, Fort Collins, CO 80527. Please include your town and state of residence. Letters may be edited for brevity and clarity.

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HANDGUNS & DEFENSIVE WEAPONS

AUGUST
12th
2019

Jim, Rich and Scott discuss what they look for in a CCW gun and why. Jim runs a homemade "Skills Drill" that teaches key skills, and Rich reviews reload techniques in "En Garde."



AUGUST
26th
2019

Team Smith & Wesson's Julie Golob joins Jim and Rich as they dive into the legendary 1911 platform. Julie runs a demanding version of the El Presidente drill, and Jim goes over light/laser operation methods.



SEPTEMBER
9th
2019

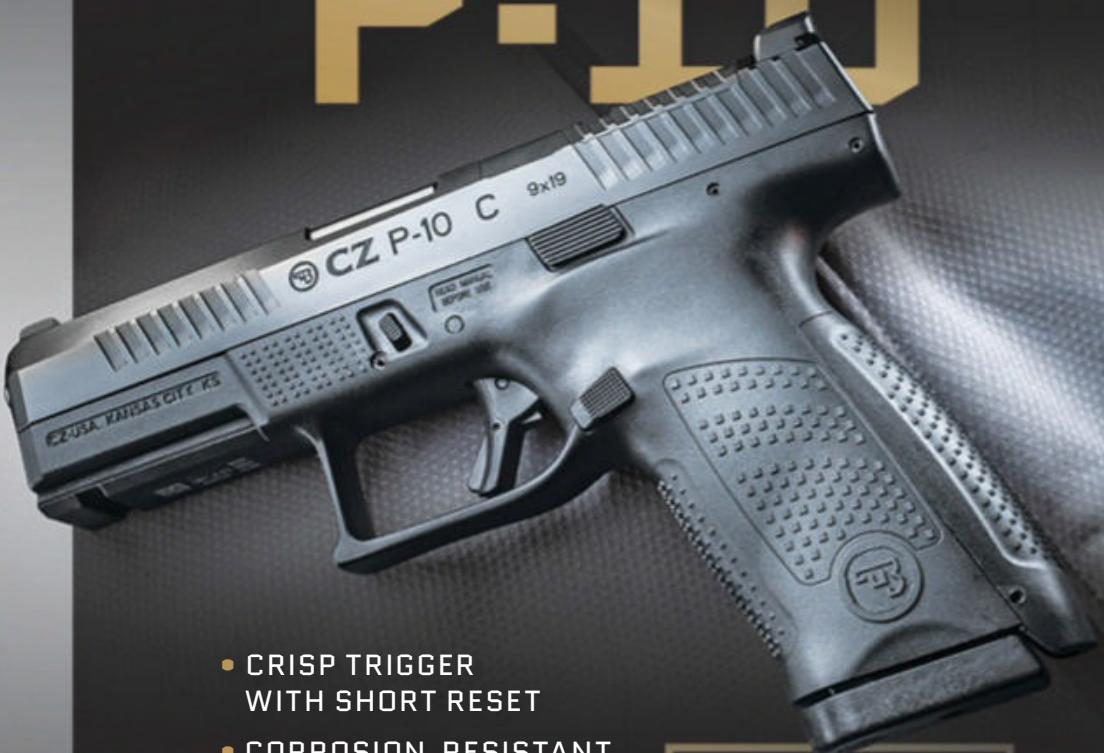
Scott, Jim and Rich have a blast with an assortment of revolvers—from concealable snubbies to big boomers. In "Zeroing In," Jim demonstrates proper 1911 fieldstrip techniques, and Rich runs the Triple Threat in "Skills Drills."

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GP100 DIY UPGRADE NEW GRIPS, NEW SPRINGS MAKE A WORLD OF DIFFERENCE.

By J. Scott Rupp

AS SOON AS RUGER INTRODUCED THE

GP100 in .44 Special, I bought one. A five-shot revolver with a three-inch barrel, I find it an excellent field gun—not heavy like my five-inch S&W .44 Magnum but with plenty of punch. I've shot it a ton, both at the range and on the set of "Handguns & Defensive Weapons," and it's well-behaved and accurate.

But I love to tinker with things, even though I'm not particularly good at it. One day the notion popped into my head to install different grips on it, just for something to do.

I settled on Altamont. The company offers both full-size and compact grips for the GP100, and since I already knew what the full-size grips felt like, I figured it would be interesting to see how smaller grips

affected how the gun handled. I chose the compact snakeskin combo, which consists of a rubber grip and rosewood "snakeskin" inserts. Cost was \$44, plus \$6 shipping.

Part two involved the springs. The trigger pull on the gun wasn't bad at all, but one day I was surfing the Wilson Combat website while fact-checking an article. I stumbled on the company's Custom-Tune spring kits for the GP100 (just \$10 plus \$6 shipping), and I ordered one.

All of what follows starts with an unloaded gun, of course. Changing the grips is a breeze. This version of the GP100 has a synthetic one-piece grip that's secured by a screw at the base. Remove the screw and the grip pops off. The screw threads into a swinging foot at the base of the frame (which, I discovered, is part of

Hogue's patent for a one-piece handgun grip). The foot is easily removed by sliding a fingernail underneath the spring clip and lifting it off the cylinder that supports the foot.

Remove the locator pin in the base of the Altamont grips by first popping off the rosewood inserts and then pushing out the pin. Slide the rubber grip onto the frame, run the locator pin through the holes in the grip and in the revolver frame, replace the wood inserts and use one of the supplied screws to secure the grips. Easy peasy.

On to the spring kit. Look, if Ruger's designers thought lighter springs would be better for the GP100, they would've used them. But they need to ensure the gun is 100 percent reliable with any appropriate ammo, and the springs are

correspondingly strong—producing a heavier double-action pull than people like me care for. Anyway, my larger point is you undertake the spring project at your own risk because you're going to void the warranty on your gun.

Ruger does an excellent job of describing the disassembly and reassembly processes you'll need for the job, and even I was able to accomplish them without too much trouble. If you no longer have your manual, you can download it at RUGER.COM—and of course there are multiple YouTube videos explaining these procedures.

Replacing the mainspring is super easy. Ruger supplies a disassembly pin in the grip, but if you've lost it, a small punch or Allen wrench will do. Cock the hammer, stick the pin or tool in the hole at the bottom of the hammer strut, trapping the spring and allowing that assembly to be removed. (Do yourself a favor here: Grab your phone and take a picture showing the position of the strut and seat, and how they sit in the frame.)

The Wilson kit comes with main-springs of eight, 10 and 12 pounds. Ruger uses a 12-pound spring in the GP100, and I replaced it with Wilson's 10-pounder.

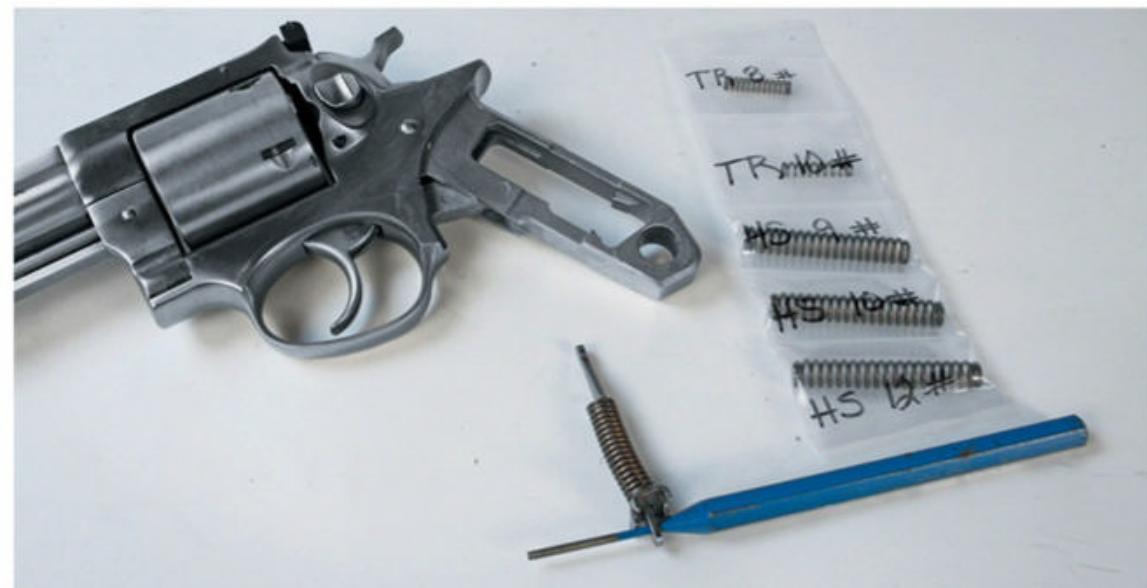
To replace the trigger return spring, after removing the main-spring you have to remove the hammer and the trigger guard assembly. Again, Ruger's directions are solid.

The only difficulty I encountered was one mentioned in the manual. The trigger guard lock plunger on my gun was stubborn. I had to place the revolver in a padded vise (padded!), and tap on the plunger lightly with a punch and small hammer.

That budged it and allowed me to swing out the trigger guard assembly. To replace the spring, drive out the small pin at the back of the →



▲ Replacing the grips was easy. Remove the "foot" (lower l.) to enable the new grip to slide on. Install the Altamont's locator pin through the rubber portion and pop in the wood inserts.



▲ To replace the mainspring, remove the grips, cock the hammer and insert a tool of some sort to trap the spring. Then simply withdraw it from the frame. The Wilson kit comes with several different weight springs to try.



▲ To get at the trigger return spring, remove the hammer and trigger guard assembly. The spring is behind the plunger at the rear of the assembly. Drive out the small pin, remove the stock spring and install one of the new ones.

← assembly, remove the plunger. The spring is in there. Wilson also gives you choices—eight, nine and 10 pounds—and I went with the 10-pound spring in this case, too.

Reassemble in reverse order, ensuring that when you reinstall the trigger assembly the transfer bar and pawl are correctly positioned. Replace the mainspring assembly and the grips, and you're done.

End result? The grips look great, fit my hand better than the originals, and they don't detract from recoil control even though they're smaller. And the gun is now more concealable as well.

The spring kit made a significant difference in trigger pull. With the stock springs the double-action pull was 11 pounds and the single-action pull was three pounds. With the Wilson springs aboard, the double-action pull dropped to eight pounds and the single-action pull went to two pounds, four ounces.

To test reliability, I fired 150 rounds through the gun in a single session. Loads included Remington Performance Wheelgun, SIG Elite, Hornady Critical Defense and Hornady XTP. I had just one light primer strike, which I can accept. Besides, if a round in revolver fails to fire, you just pull the trigger again.

The project wasn't perfect, though. The Altamont grips didn't fit completely flush on the right side, allowing the hammer pivot pin to back out of its recess slightly. A small shim seems to have fixed this.

I'm thrilled with how the project turned out. I went from merely liking my GP100 to absolutely loving it. In double action it feels like a different gun, and the Altamont grips improved the gun's looks and, for me, the handling. So there you go: two simple, inexpensive projects to improve a revolver.



VANQUISH MUFFS

THE VANQUISH IS CHAMPION'S LATEST

foray into electronic hearing protection, and the sample I got for test is one of two Bluetooth-capable models. (The Elite version, which I didn't test, comes with rechargeable lithium batteries and has active noise cancellation in addition to Bluetooth.)

At \$125 suggested retail, this is a good set of muffs, providing all-day comfort and excellent noise reduction. The omnidirectional microphones do a good job of picking up important sounds around you—like conversation and range commands—while suppressing gunfire noise.

The Vanquish doesn't do quite as good a job of minimizing wind noise as a pair of more expensive muffs I have, but at half the price I can live with that.

The controls are nicely laid out. The power button is easy to find with the muffs on, as are the separate volume controls. A triple beep lets you know when you've maxed out in either direction. The muffs paired quickly with my iPhone.

A green light lets you know if they're on or off. Run time with the four included AAA batteries is 150



▲ Champion's new Vanquish muffs are comfortable, effective and reasonably priced hearing protection.

hours, and the muffs will automatically shut off after three hours to save batteries. I would prefer exterior battery compartments, as opposed to the Vanquish setup, which requires you to pull the foam out of each side to access the batteries.

These are really comfortable. I've worn them for long stretches, and unlike some other electronic muffs I've used, the Vanquishes never made me feel like I needed to take them off for a break.—J. Scott Rupp



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HOW TO ADOPT A SHOOTING STYLE FROM AMONG ALL THE CHOICES.

IT'S OFTEN BEEN SAID THE MORE YOU

learn about something, the more you realize how much you don't know. This is certainly true of my experience with shooting. As a new police officer 22 years ago, I had virtually no shooting experience. I took as gospel what the firearms instructors in the police academy taught. As far as I was concerned, what I was learning was the right way and anything else was therefore wrong. Looking back, I realize I was not only blissfully ignorant but also unjustifiably arrogant. I didn't know what I didn't know.

As a gun writer for the past decade, I've had the opportunity to train with several top-level instructors. It's been an eye-opening and often humbling experience. It's easy to think you're better than you are if you aren't training with someone who's vastly more proficient.

While learning from many excellent instructors has made me a far better shooter, it presents its own conundrum. Each of these shooters has their own way of doing things that's proven effective. But what do you do when a technique you learned from one incredibly talented instructor contradicts what you've learned from another?

Last year, I participated in Kelly McCann's handgun instructor certification program.

The draw stroke he teaches was considerably different than what I was used to, but it made sense. Kelly draws the gun from the holster by raising his elbow as high as possible. Without lowering the elbow, he flexes the wrist to orient the muzzle to the threat.

From there, he marries his sup-



Alfredo Rico

A Different instructors teach different methods. Learn what they teach, adapt it to your personal style and then practice what works best for you.

port hand to the grip and drives the gun to the target, allowing the sights to intersect his line of sight. Kelly's draw stroke prevents "scooping" the muzzle as you extend your arms to shoot, and it enables you to pick up the sights faster.

So at Kelly's course I learned to draw his way. I see no point in spending time and money to take a course from someone if you aren't willing to fully commit to what they are teaching—at least while at the course.

If you aren't going to a course with the proverbial empty cup, you'd be better off staying home and saving your money. Even more importantly, if you don't give the "new" techniques you're learning a chance, how do you know they aren't better than your "old" ones?

Currently, I'm preparing for Dave Spaulding's handgun instructor course, so I'm in the process of

unlearning Kelly's draw stroke and learning Dave's. There's nothing wrong with Kelly's way, mind you. It's just that at Dave's course my draw stroke needs to be executed his way.

Dave advocates initiating the draw stroke by moving the elbow straight to the rear and letting the hand "go along for the ride." This will place your hand in the proper position, whether your gun is worn on or to either side of your hip.

Then the elbow folds to extract the gun from the holster. When the gun is drawn, the elbow moves downward, placing the pistol in front of your face, where you join your support hand and drive the gun to the target.

A neophyte wouldn't be able to tell the difference between Kelly's draw stroke and Dave's draw stroke, especially when each is performed at speed. However, the seri-

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ous student understands there is a pretty significant difference between the two techniques, both of which are highly effective.

After Dave's course, I can decide which components of his curriculum to adopt to my shooting style. Nothing says I have to do everything just like Dave, Kelly or anyone else for that matter. I tend to take what I like from various sources and blend it with what I already do.

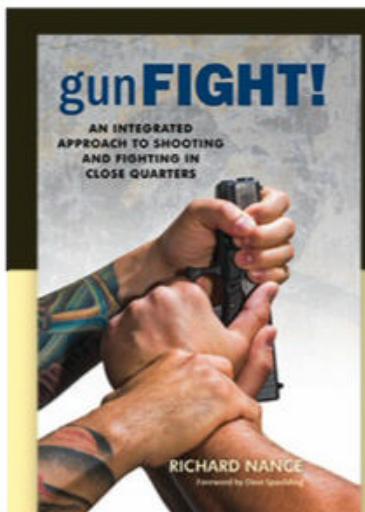
The Risk

But mixing and matching from various curriculums can be risky. If you're not careful, your draw stroke, or any other shooting technique, can become a hodgepodge of several methods that's not nearly as effective as any of the methods as they are taught. When borrowing from several sources, you have to understand the "why" behind the technique in addition to the "how."

Don't get me wrong. I'm not suggesting you learn one way and close your mind to everything else. But at some point, you need to decide what makes the most sense to you and run with it.

Do your homework and see what different instructors are teaching. Then don't be afraid to jump down the rabbit hole and immerse yourself in the nuances of what's being taught. Practice diligently to transform that knowledge into physical skill. Once you're confident in your ability to protect yourself with your handgun, you can scale back your search for the holy grail of shooting methods.

At some point your journey has to become more than a constant quest for knowledge. It should be less about learning and more about mastering what you already know. Just don't become smug and think that what you settle on is better than everything else out there.



gunFIGHT!

by **Richard Nance**

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TV Host - Handguns & Defensive Weapons
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GOING FOR GOLD

SPEER'S EXCELLENT GOLD DOT G2 IS NOW COMMERCIALLY AVAILABLE.

THE SPEER GOLD DOT 147-GRAIN 9MM

+P has been considered the defensive round against which all others should be judged for almost two decades. But almost two decades is forever when it comes to ammunition. And Speer knows it, which is why it began looking for a successor a few years ago. Enter the Speer Gold Dot G2.

The G2 has actually been around since 2014 or so, long enough for tactical YouTubers to gel test it. In every test I saw, the 9mm Gold Dot G2 was a failure: lack of expansion combined with overpenetration. So when I received a press release a few years ago about the “new” Speer Gold Dot G2 round, I reached out to Speer and learned the firm had re-engineered the round and was reintroducing it.

While you could find the G2 ammo here and there at various retailers, officially it was available for sale only to law enforcement. Recently, though, Speer has begun selling the Gold Dot G2 commercially, in three flavors: a 147-grain 9mm, 180-grain .40 S&W and a 230-grain +P .45 ACP.

This second generation of the Gold Dot features a shallow hollowpoint cavity filled with a nearly clear elastomer. Through the elastomer you can see internal reinforcing ribs for the petals of the bullet, but there's no gold dot at the bottom of the cavity, which gave the original bullet its name.

Modern bullets featuring polymer in the hollowpoint cavity do so to prevent the cavity from filling up with clothing, drywall and other materials as they pass through. When the cavity gets filled, it tends to inhibit or prevent expansion.



A Initially available only through law enforcement channels, the new Gold Dot G2 is now sold commercially. At bottom, bullets were fired through (from l.) bare gel, plywood, drywall and sheet steel.

The exterior of the G2 features vertical lines delineating the petals of the hollowpoint, and just below them there's a line running around the bullet like an equator. The copper jacket is molecularly bonded to an alloy lead core to ensure the bullet stays together, and cases are nickel plated.

To help with some of this testing on the 147-grain load, I engaged the services of Black Hills Ammunition's ballistics lab. Using FBI standard gel blocks, the folks there tested the 9mm G2 for me under controlled conditions. I also performed additional testing using various FBI-ish barriers and Clear Ballistics polymer blocks I got from Brownells.

Whatever issues the first gen-

eration of the G2 had, they've been fixed. Out of the Black Hills test barrel, the 147-grain 9mm Speer Gold Dot G2 sped out at 946 fps, which is about average for 147-grain loads. The temporary cavity began almost immediately upon striking the block and stretched for 8.5 inches. The maximum diameter of the temporary cavity was 2.25 inches, and that max diameter stretched for 2.125 inches. This is par for the course with low-velocity pistol rounds.

The bullet penetrated 14.5 inches—beating the FBI protocol minimum of 12 inches while comfortably under the 18-inch maximum—and expanded to an average diameter of 0.608 inch, with a maximum diameter of 0.617 inch. That is →

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excellent performance, and the bullet itself blossomed into a pretty lead flower. It did not fragment at all, and the recovered weight of the bullet was 146.8 grains.

For my own “FBI-ish” testing, I placed various barriers 18 inches in front of the block: two layers of half-inch drywall 3.5 inches apart; a single sheet of 3/4-inch plywood; and two pieces of 19-gauge sheet steel (slightly thicker than FBI specs) 3.5 inches apart.

From my Glock 19 the G2 provided 942 fps. In bare gel it penetrated 16.25 inches and expanded wonderfully. The recovered bullet showed 100 percent weight retention, and expansion was 0.63 inch.

The plywood barrier beat up the G2 a bit, which is typical. While penetration was 13.5 inches, half

of the nose of the recovered bullet was peeled open while the other half was pushed in a bit. Recovered weight was 100 percent, though, with the diameter 0.53 inch.

The drywall test was a tough go for the G2. After punching through the double layer the G2 bullet penetrated 27.5 inches. The cavity of the hollowpoint opened slightly, but there was no real expansion.

You might not think two layers of drywall is much of a barrier, but I've seen this before with other ammunition, and I've found drywall often screws up a bullet's performance more than plywood or steel.

When fired through the steel, the G2 penetrated 13.75 inches, and the bullet showed a blunted nose, which happens to just about every bullet fired through steel. Recovered

bullet weight was exactly 147 grains, with a diameter of 0.46 inch.

So in my tests the 9mm G2 performed as advertised and met FBI standards in bare gel, through plywood and through sheet steel. Penetration was more than you'd want when fired through drywall.

Ammo makers are leaning toward heavier bullets these days in 9mm duty ammo because the weight helps the bullets achieve the depth necessary to perform well in the FBI protocol. But unlike early designs, which often demonstrated a lack of expansion, modern projectiles like the Speer G2 provide much better performance. And now that Speer is selling the Gold Dot G2 commercially, you have another quality option for home defense and concealed carry.



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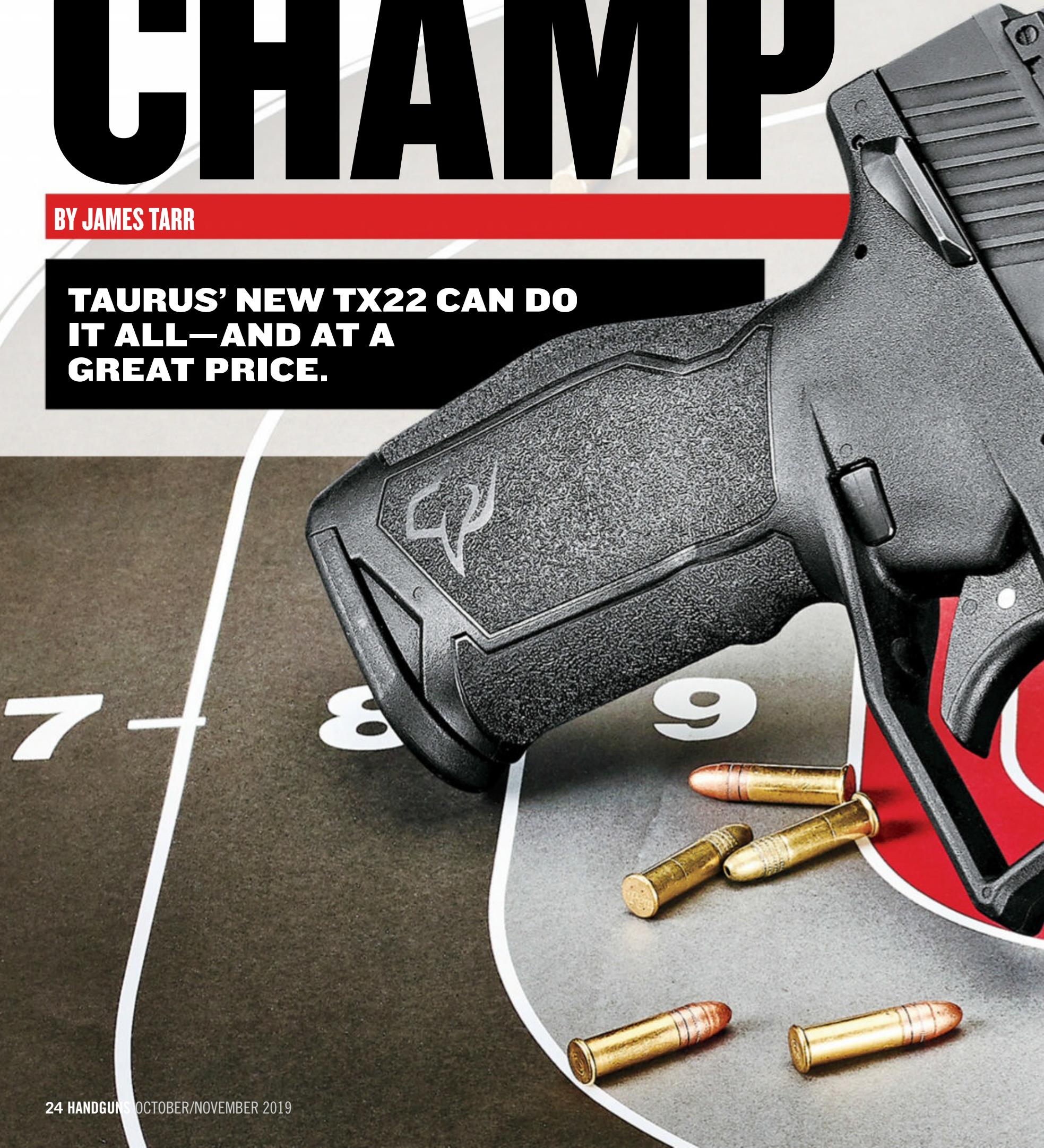


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VERSATILITY CHAMP

BY JAMES TARR

**TAURUS' NEW TX22 CAN DO
IT ALL—AND AT A
GREAT PRICE.**



One of Taurus' newest pistols is the TX22, a polymer-frame striker-fired semiauto .22 Long Rifle that is a very interesting piece. I first got a chance to shoot the prototype of the TX22 in April 2018. At the time, Taurus hadn't even

picked out a name. While the finish work on the pistol was rather rough (prototype, remember), it ran all day without any problems. When production models of the pistol were finally available, I made sure to get a sample because I was curious how the finished gun compared →



VERSATILITY CHAMP

→ to the prototype I had shot.

The TX22 measures 7.1 inches long by 5.4 inches tall, and it's 1.25 inches wide at the safety. The slide is 7075 aluminum with a matte black anodized finish. Between the polymer frame and the aluminum slide, the total weight of the pistol is just 17.3 ounces, and that's with an unloaded

magazine inserted. It has excellent balance.

It comes with two 16-round magazines; guns destined for states with restrictions come with 10-rounders. The magazines aren't quite double stack, but they're not single stack, either. Think stack and a half.

One of the first things you'll notice



▲ A jack-of-all-trades pistol, the TX22 features a standard control layout—mag release, slide lock lever and thumb safety in the usual spots—so it would work as a trainer.



▲ Taurus is justifiably proud of its new trigger system. The safety lever is actually the trigger shoe, and it produces an excellent pull without compromising safety.

ACCURACY RESULTS | TAURUS TX22

.22 Long Rifle	Bullet Weight (gr.)	Muzzle Velocity (fps)	Standard Deviation (fps)	Avg. Group (in.)
Remington Golden HP	36	963	20	2.7
Federal HP	36	1,105	25	3.7
CCI Clean-22	40	1,014	20	3.4
Winchester Super X	40	1,003	19	4.1

Notes: Accuracy results are averages of four five-shot groups at 25 yards from a sandbag rest. Velocities are averages of 10 shots measured with an Oehler Model 35P set 12 feet from the muzzle. Abbreviation: HP, hollowpoint

about this pistol is the excellent trigger pull. Single-action pistols typically have the best trigger pulls—provided they are not overburdened with safeties that add extra parts to the fire-control system. The TX22 has an internal safety, an external manual safety lever and a trigger safety lever, but they don't affect the quality of the trigger pull.

You don't see the trigger safety lever because the trigger shoe is the safety lever. When you pull the trigger, the shoe pivots and disengages the safety before any parts of the actual trigger (the trigger bar, the striker and so forth) even get involved. But while the trigger shoe/safety lever pivots, the actual trigger inside it moves straight backward, which is what you'd expect in a single-action trigger system.

The Taurus factory trigger pull spec is five pounds. On my sample, after a short take-up that required about two pounds of pressure, the trigger broke crisply and cleanly. Total trigger pull weight was four pounds even, and reset was short, approximately an eighth of an inch.

Taurus calls this the Pittman trigger system, named after Jason Pittman, the lead designer on the TX22 project and the person who designed the trigger system. If I had designed a trigger this good, I'd want credit for it as well. Taurus, if you're listening: If you can put this trigger system into all of your semiauto striker-fired centerfire pistols, do it.

The slide sports aggressive cocking serrations at the front and back. You'll spot ambidextrous safety levers on the rear of the frame, right where the thumb safety is on a 1911. Up for Safe, down for Fire, but you can engage the safety only if the striker is cocked. Future models will be offered without the manual safety lever.

Your sight picture is the traditional three-white-dot setup: a post front combined with a fully adjustable rear. The sight bodies are polymer, which I rail against on duty guns →

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VERSATILITY CHAMP

← but find perfectly acceptable on a .22. The fully adjustable rear sight is interesting in that both windage and elevation adjustment screws are on the right side of the sight: elevation screw at the back, windage at the front.

The texturing on the grip is moderately aggressive, and between the texturing, the finger groove, grip shape and the light recoil of .22s, the pistol stays locked into your hand. Taurus' press release on the TX22 spent paragraphs talking about how much time designers spent designing the grip to make it as ergonomic as possible, maximizing the "biomechanical geometry." While those are

fancy marketing words, the result of the company's efforts is pretty evident.

The gun also has a few features you'd want in a high-end tactical/defensive gun. The large, reversible steel magazine release is protected so it can't accidentally get pushed, and there are cutouts on the bottom of the frame so you can strip out a stuck magazine if necessary.

In terms of overall appearance, I'd call the TX22 "generic tactical" but with a subtle sci-fi/futuristic flair. I like the looks of it, and I was surprised to find out a fellow gun writer thought it was hideous. Everyone has different tastes.

The TX22 is suppressor ready, but it has a little different setup. The barrel itself is threaded and comes with a thread protector installed. However, you can't mount a suppressor directly to the barrel because the muzzle is flush with the slide. No worries, because Taurus also supplies a suppressor collar adapter, which is threaded 1/2x28. Simply remove the thread protector with a 3/8-inch wrench, install the adapter and screw on the suppressor of your choice.

I think the number of people who buy suppressor-ready pistols because they're cool far outweigh the number of buyers who actually have suppressors to mount on them, and the TX22 isn't burdened with those unnecessary extra-tall sights people think you need with suppressors.

Not only are rimfire suppressors getting so thin they don't block standard sights—models like the Surefire SF Ryder 22, for example—but also if you're shooting a handgun with both eyes open as you should be, even if the suppressor body blocks the sights your brain will superimpose the sights over the target.

When I received my test sample, the first opportunity I had to try it was on the set of "Handguns & Defensive Weapons" TV show at the famed Gunsite Academy. The pistol ran just great...for the first 50 rounds or so. Then we started having some feeding issues, which we immediately →



▲ The rear sight is unique in that both windage and elevation adjustments are on the same side of the sight. The gun has an ambidextrous thumb safety.

TAURUS TX22

TYPE: striker-fired, single-action semiauto
CALIBER: .22 Long Rifle
CAPACITY: 16+1
BARREL LENGTH: 4.1 in.
OAL/HEIGHT/WIDTH: 7.1/5.44/1.25 in.
WEIGHT: 17.3 oz
CONSTRUCTION: anodized 7075 aluminum slide, polymer frame
SAFETIES: drop, trigger lever, ambidextrous thumb
SIGHTS: 3 dot; fully adjustable rear
TRIGGER: 4 lb. pull (measured)
PRICE: \$349
MANUFACTURER: Taurus, TAURUSUSA.com



▲ The TX22 is designed to handle a suppressor via an adapter. Remove the thread protector, install the adapter and you're all set for a can.

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← traced to one of the two provided magazines. The follower seemed to be binding inside the body of the mag. We set the problem magazine aside, and the pistol went back to running perfectly.

Later, when I got home, I pulled the problem magazine apart and banged it on a hard surface, and all sorts of particulate matter fell out—some sand, but mostly bullet shavings. After reassembly, the magazine worked just fine. There's a lesson in this: Don't lube the inside of this or any magazine because the lube will simply attract grit, and this is especially true with .22 Long Rifle ammo, which is notoriously dirty.

The magazines for the TX22 are manufactured of polymer components, except for the spring, and I think polymer magazines don't shed the grit as well as metal magazines do. You might have to stay up on magazine maintenance to keep your pistol running smoothly, especially if

you're shooting in the desert.

Disassembly of the magazines has one step more than usual. Use the tip of a pen or similar tool to push in the detent on the magazine base pad. The base pad will then slide off, and you'll see a small plastic insert that fits to the bottom of the spring and acts as the detent holding on the base pad.

The plastic insert and spring pull

right out of the bottom of the magazine. The follower will slide down to the bottom of the magazine body, but like many .22 magazines, there are tabs on either side of the follower to help you load it. Those tabs are actually a cylinder of plastic, and when the follower is all the way at the bottom of the magazine, the cylinder slides out to either side, allowing →



▲ The TX22's grip fits the hand nicely, has good texturing and even features cutouts at the bottom of the grip to help you strip out magazines.

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VERSATILITY CHAMP

the follower to then drop out of the magazine.

As for disassembly of the pistol, it should be familiar to anyone who has field-stripped a modern striker-fired pistol. After removing the magazine and ensuring the pistol is unloaded, pull the trigger to deactivate the striker. Pull down on the takedown lever just forward of the trigger and the slide will then come off forward and up from the frame.

The TX22 isn't the first Taurus pistol both designed and manufactured in the United States. That distinction goes to the recent Taurus Spectrum. But my experiences with the Spectrum and the TX22 are similar. Both are fun to shoot, well made and reliable, leading me to hope these and future U.S.-produced Taurus firearms will be free of the quality-control issues that have sometimes plagued the company's Brazilian imports.

The market is full of purpose-built

target .22 handguns like the Smith & Wesson SW22 and Ruger Mark IV. Those guns have fixed bull barrels and will be inherently more accurate than the TX22, but they're also more expensive. The TX22 isn't trying to be one of them.

The TX22 isn't a specific lookalike of any existing centerfire semiauto on the market, although I think it's closer in looks to the HK VP9 than anything else. With its control layout and accessory rail for a light and/or laser, it could very well serve as a "trainer," but this wasn't Taurus' specific aim.

The company refers to the TX22 as a "sporting pistol" aimed at the "shooting enthusiast market," meant to have "broad consumer appeal." These quotes come from Taurus' marketing materials, and in this case I'd say they accurately describe the TX22. I found it just fun to shoot, no matter what kind of shooting I was doing.

Additional 10- and 16-round TX22 magazines are available from SHOP TAURUS.COM for just \$22 apiece. Taurus doesn't offer any holsters for it, but I found holsters designed for the TX22 from Crossbreed and Forged Tec online.

The TX22 is not a dedicated target gun or trainer or meant for kids or new shooters. Instead, the TX22 is meant to be suitable, to one degree or another, for all of those shooting endeavors. It has a great trigger and adjustable (if somewhat basic) sights. It is light, well balanced and as soft-recoiling a .22 as you can find. Last but not least it's designed and made in the USA at an affordable price. ◉

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RETURN OF A CLASSIC

BY JAMES TARR



WALTHER'S ICONIC PPK/S IS BACK, AND NOW IT IS MADE IN THE USA.



The original Walther PP (*Polizeipistole* or police pistol) has been around since 1931 and has seen use by a lot of police and military officers in its long history. The PP had a 3.9-inch barrel and offered a seven-round capacity in .380 ACP (it was also chambered in .32 ACP). The PPK variant came about shortly thereafter, and it combined a shorter 3.3-inch barrel with a 0.4-inch shorter grip frame, which reduced capacity by one.

The PPK/S version made its debut in 1968 and was a direct result of our Gun Control Act of 1968. The GCA banned the import of pistols that didn't meet certain "sporting" criteria based on size, weight and features, and the PPK was too small. In order to meet the GCA criteria, the PPK/S (the "S" stands for sporting) combined the short PPK slide with the larger PP frame.

For decades, the PPK and PPK/S were the carry guns of professionals (and a certain famous spy, see sidebar), and after a lull of a few years, Walther is once again offering the PPK/S and PPK.

New versions of both models are currently being built in the United States by Walther Arms, which is why the PPK can be sold here now. I secured a sample of the new PPK/S for review.

The PPK/S is a traditional double-action/single-action pistol chambered in .380 ACP (the only chambering offered) with a decocking safety lever on the left side of the slide. The barrel is 3.3 inches long. It's an all-steel pistol, and unloaded with an empty magazine, the Walther tipped my electronic scale at 23.7 ounces. The pistol measures 6.1 by 4.3 inches and comes with two seven-round magazines—one flush and one with an extended polymer finger hook.

You have your choice of black or silver. The black pistol has a carbon steel slide and a stainless steel frame, and both have a Melonite finish. The silver pistol is all stainless with a natural brushed finish and is the model I secured for this test. While this pistol isn't as light as most of the modern polymer-framed pistols, it is wonderfully corrosion resistant.

This pistol is so size-efficient I'm surprised John Browning didn't design it. It is super flat—the slide is just about 0.8 inch thick, and the grips are the fattest part of the gun at just 1.1 inches. The barrel is low, which contributes to less muzzle rise and felt recoil. It's a fixed barrel, with the recoil spring fitting around the barrel.

I found a gun magazine from 1998 that contained a review of a customized Walther PPK/S. Customize a PPK/S? While lots of people carried one—it was, after all, the only reliable .380 Auto on the market in the 1980s and '90s—

they didn't like the horrible trigger pull and the sharp edges on the frame and slide that hurt the web of your hand when you fired the gun. To quote from that gun review: "The trigger [of the PPK/S] was, and still is, among the worst of any pistol, and it has an annoying tendency to bite the hand that holds it."

With the new American-made PPK/S, Walther has certainly addressed the trigger pull. Advertised trigger pull for these guns is 13.4 pounds double action and 6.1 pounds single action. My sample did better than that: 12.25 pounds double action and 4.75 single action. The double-action pull was smooth with no stacking, and the single-action pull was crisp.

The double-action pull on the PPK/S is somewhat short compared to other DA/SA and double-action-only semiautos, making it feel lighter than it is. Walther advertises trigger travel as 0.4 inch in double action and 0.2 inch in single action. After taking up just a tiny bit of slack, double-action trigger pull length on my pistol was 0.625 inch and single action just 0.125 inch.

It should be no surprise that as a gun whose design originated in the 1930s this pistol is a bit old school when it comes to controls and features. There is no slide release, for instance. After reloading you have to work the slide by hand to release it.

Unlike many European pistols with magazine release levers in the heel of the gun, the magazine release on the PPK/S is a small checkered button on the left side of the frame just below the slide, a little higher than you might be used to.

RETURN OF A CLASSIC

← The sights are simple, and they're machined all of one piece with the slide. There is a red dot on the front sight post and a corresponding dot at the base of the notch in the rear sight. They're a bit small, but they work.

Between the front and rear sight, the top of the slide has wavy pattern serrations. They're ostensibly to reduce glare, but I think it's just a way to add a little bit of

style on an otherwise businesslike pistol.

The grips are checkered black plastic and are held in place by one screw. At the rear of the slide, just underneath the rear sight, you'll spot what looks like a dot. That is simply a steel rod that acts as a loaded-chamber indicator. When the pistol is loaded, the rod protrudes from the rear of the slide about 1/16 inch.



▲ The return of the PPK/S, as well as the PPK, is thanks to Walther building these guns at its Arkansas facility.



▲ While Walther addressed one of the main complaints on the original PPK/S with a much improved trigger, the pistol still has some sharp edges that can make shooting less fun.



▲ The PPK/S's controls are a bit different from what many of us are used to. There's no slide-lock lever, and the magazine release button is just underneath the slide.

ACCURACY RESULTS | WALTHER PPK/S

.380 ACP	Bullet Weight (gr.)	Muzzle Velocity (fps)	Standard Deviation (fps)	Avg. Group (in.)
Winchester Silvertip JHP	85	898	21	2.8
Hornady Critical Defense FTX	90	920	15	3.8
Black Hills JHP	90	871	11	3.9
Winchester Defend JHP	95	867	22	3.4
Federal HST JHP	99	909	19	3.0

Notes: Accuracy results are the averages of four five-shot groups at 25 yards from a sandbag rest. Velocities are averages of 10 shots measured with an Oehler Model 35P set 12 feet from the muzzle. Abbreviation: JHP, jacketed hollowpoint

Because the Walther has a fixed barrel, the takedown process is probably different than you're used to, but it is simple. After locking back the slide, removing the magazine and ensuring the pistol is unloaded, pull down on the front of the trigger guard. Then pull the slide backward and lift the rear of it. The rear of the slide will clear the frame rails, and the whole slide will come off the front of the barrel. You'll find the recoil spring around the barrel. Reassembly is in reverse order.

Unlike some modern .380s that are designed to be easy to operate by those with compromised grip strength, the Walther has a strong recoil spring to soak up the recoil forces. This makes cycling the slide a bit of work, but it helps handle the recoil because as an all-steel gun there's no frame flex to absorb recoil.

For my first trip to the range, I wanted to see if the engineers at Walther had tweaked the feed ramp of the PPK/S for hollowpoints. My FFL—Double Action in Madison Heights, Michigan—has a huge selection of ammo, and I told them I wanted some .380 with the biggest hollowpoint cavity to go along with the hollowpoints I already had on hand.

I ended up buying two boxes of ammo, both Winchester: 85-grain Silvertips and 95-grain Defend jacketed hollowpoints. These loads feature similar bullets, with large hollowpoint cavities. In addition, I fired 99-grain Federal HST jacketed hollowpoints, the Black Hills 90-grain jacketed hollowpoint, Hornady's American Gunner 90-grain XTP and Hornady's Critical Defense 90-grain FTX.

I am happy to report the pistol ate everything without a hiccup. However, I wasn't so happy at the end of the range session, as the PPK/S still has a lot of sharp corners and edges at the rear of the gun. I ended up getting slide →

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RETURN OF A CLASSIC

← bite on the side of my thumb, and I had a sore spot on the web of my hand from the corners of the frame. That said, I probably shot more rounds through the PPK/S in the first range session than most people will in a year.

Let's just say the pistol points

naturally, has a great trigger and an impressive resumé, but it isn't perfect. The bottom edges of the slide, forward of the magazine release, are beveled. I wish the bevel extended all the way to the rear of the slide, as it would eliminate slide bite.

I mentioned Walther provides two magazines, one of which has a finger-hook extension. With the PPK/S, most people won't need that extension to get all their fingers on the gun—at least I didn't. Along with the larger capacity, this will be a selling point for many people →

WALTHER PPK/S

TYPE: DA/SA semiauto

CALIBER: .380 ACP

CAPACITY: 7+1

BARREL LENGTH: 3.3 in.

OAL/HEIGHT/WIDTH: 6.1/4.3/1.1 in.

WEIGHT: 23.7 oz.

CONSTRUCTION: brushed stainless steel slide and frame (as tested)

TRIGGER: 12.25 lb. pull double action, 4.75 lb. pull single action

SIGHTS: post front, notch rear

SAFETY: manual, internal firing pin block

PRICE: \$749

MANUFACTURER: Walther, WALTHERARMS.COM



▲ The pistol comes with a flush-fit magazine and a magazine with a finger-hook extension. Tarr found he could get a full firing grip even with the flush-fit mag.

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RETURN OF A CLASSIC

← to choose the PPK/S over the shorter-framed PPK—although the latter is slightly easier to conceal.

The first time I fired a Walther PPK/S was at a media event where they had a remote-controlled dummy for us to shoot. At some point the operator would have the dummy charge us, and our job was to place accurate rounds on a moving target at realistic defensive distances.

What I remember was not having to worry about my shooting. Even though I wasn't used to the double-action first shot, the Walther points so naturally and has so little muzzle rise all I had to do was get my sights on the target and the hits took care of themselves. Four shots, four hits.

My PPK/S sample showed itself to be reliable and accurate, with a great trigger but with a few rough edges (literally) that are completely expected given its old-school

origins. As it is, it is a functional piece of history, and by buying one you can get a gun better than what James Bond carried.

However, I'd like to see a tweaked version of the PPK/S (and PPK, for that matter) from the Walther factory that caters to the discerning concealed-carry crowd. It wouldn't take much—a variant with aggressively rounded frame edges, modern sights, a fully beveled slide, a frame that's checkered front and back, and a beveled magazine well. These changes would address what I found lacking when compared to modern concealed-carry guns and bring the PPK/S into the 21st century. ◎

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I SPY

You can't do a proper review of PPK pistols without mentioning that damn British spy. Over the past 50 years or so, Walther has sold literally tons of these pistols in America chambered in .380 ACP because of Bond, James Bond. But people forget a few things about Bond and the Walther, common to both the original novels and the first movies.

- James Bond didn't like or want to use the Walther originally, but he was forced to give up his Beretta .25 by his boss, "M," after it failed him during a mission.
- James Bond didn't carry a Walther PPK in .380, he carried one in 7.65 Browning (.32 ACP). In the scene in "Dr. No" when Bond is ordered to switch to the Walther, the armorer tells him the cartridge hits so hard it's "like a brick through a plate glass window."—JT

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.50 AE | 5" Barrel



DE429SRMB
.429 DE | 6" Barrel



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A STANDOUT 1911

BY KEITH WOOD

WITH THE KC9 ED BROWN PRESENTS AN EXCELLENT CARRY 1911—FOR A LOT LESS MONEY THAN ITS OTHER PISTOLS.



Carry guns can be curious things. Plenty of shooters own tuned, high-grade 1911s that stay in the safe while less-expensive production handguns fill their everyday carry role. While there's nothing wrong with this practice—and some practical reasons to adopt it—wouldn't it be a good idea to stake their lives on the handgun they shoot best?

If you are a 1911 shooter, your ideal carry gun just might be a compact and lightweight handgun that retains the performance, balance and controls of America's favorite side-arm. That's exactly what Ed Brown Products has developed in its new KC9.

Years ago, Ed Brown turned the 1911 world on its head with the introduction of the Kobra Carry. This Commander-length handgun incorporated Brown's patented Bobtail grip and Snakeskin grip treatment on the front-strap, mainspring housing and slide. The Kobra Carry has maintained great popularity among 1911 fans ever since and is still in production.

For 2019, Ed Brown wanted to evolve that proven platform into a new handgun, and the KC9 was born. "We wanted to build a new gun, something a little outside the box," John May, Ed Brown's head of sales and marketing told me. "We kept going back to wanting a cool, shootable carry gun. Nothing feels as good in the hand as a little 1911; the balance of this gun is off the hook."

The gun is part of Ed Brown's EVO (for Evolution) series, the company's next generation of handguns that build upon the 1911's fundamentals. The KC9 differs from its Ed Brown predecessors in several meaningful ways, the most notable being its price. The suggested retail price on the KC9 is \$1,895, which is a tremendous value in the custom 1911 market. By comparison, the Kobra Carry retails for \$3,000.

Ed Brown incorporated several features into the design of the KC9 to maintain its price point, each of which I will cover in detail.

One way to cut costs is by making every gun the same way. The KC9 is available only with a stainless steel frame, and the only options are the buyer's choice of finish and front sight.

Ed Brown builds the entire KC9 in-house with the exception of tritium sights, springs and the grip panels. Not only does this →

A STANDOUT 1911

allow the company to control quality, but also it can cut down production time since it isn't reliant on outside vendors to provide critical components.

Slides and frames are milled from forgings, and smaller parts are made from bar stock on CNC machinery. There are no MIM or polymer parts on the KC9, and regardless of finish, all the guns are built from stainless steel.

Before I dig too deeply into the internals of the KC9, let's examine the basic external dimensions. One of the things you notice immediately when handling this gun is how narrow the slide is. Because of the KC9's 9mm Luger chambering, the engineers at Ed Brown were able to design a slide that is a full 0.06 inch narrower than that of a traditional 1911. At its widest point, the KC9 is

narrower than the milled-off sections on a Kobra Carry with "carry cuts" at the muzzle end of the slide.

The barrel is four inches long, a quarter-inch shorter than on traditional Commander-length handguns. The result of these decreased dimensions is a handgun that weighs 34 ounces unloaded and balances perfectly. The seven-top slide is milled so the top of the slide profile is actually a series of flats. Coupled with the unique rear and front cocking serrations, it's a cool look.

Two primary features allowed Ed Brown to control production costs and maintain such a low price point on this handgun. One of them is the external extractor. John Browning's 1911 extractor is a beautiful thing when properly executed, but to be done right it must be fitted by

skilled hands. Skilled hands add significant cost, so the decision was made to adopt the more modern external extractor on this handgun. The extractor on the KC9 is CNC milled from 17-4 stainless steel bar stock and requires no hand-fitting.

The second cost-saving feature on the KC9 is the bull barrel, which does not require a bushing. No bushing means, once again, no handwork. Virtually every handgun designed after the 1911 eliminated the barrel bushing, so this is hardly a radical concept.

The stainless steel barrel is fluted and tapers up to full diameter at the muzzle, allowing it to lock up securely on the internal diameter of the slide. The barrel locks into battery via a single lug forward of the chamber, another first for an Ed Brown pistol. The barrel uses a traditional 1911 feed ramp arrangement, and the chamber is unsupported, meaning the cartridge is not completely encased when in battery.

The final piece in the puzzle in terms of streamlining production and keeping down costs is the front sight. The sight attaches to the slide using a TP6 Torx head screw in lieu of a milled dovetail. This arrangement was chosen because it allows the end users to decide which sight suits them best and then fit it without the aid of a gunsmith.

At the time of this writing, Ed Brown offers six different front sights: black, green fiber optic, red fiber optic, HD XR orange/tritium, HD XR yellow/tritium and a gold bead. My test pistol came equipped with the Trijicon HD XR orange/tritium front sight, which was highly visible both day and night.

The rear sight is fit into a dovetail and secured using a Torx screw and is drift-adjustable for windage. The rear surface is lightly serrated, and the sight is made with a small ledge to allow for one-handed racking of the slide. The notch is U-shaped so the entire ring of the HD XR



A The cocobolo grips are done in a Labyrinth pattern, and the frontstrap and mainspring housing get Ed Brown's Snakeskin treatment, which provides good control without being too abrasive.

ACCURACY RESULTS | ED BROWN KC9

9mm Luger	Bullet Weight (gr.)	Muzzle Velocity (fps)	Standard Deviation (fps)	Avg. Group (in.)
SIG 365 FMJ	115	1,158	21	1.4
Fiocchi FMJ	115	1,141	23	1.9
Super Vel SCHP	115	1,255	11	2.0
Federal Premium Hydra-Shok JHP	124	1,102	15	1.7

Notes: Accuracy results are averages of four five-shot groups at 25 yards from a sandbag rest. Velocities are averages of 10 shots using a LabRadar chronograph placed adjacent to the muzzle. Abbreviations: FMJ, full metal jacket; JHP, jacketed hollowpoint; SCHP, solid copper hollowpoint

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sight is visible. The sights on this gun are simply wonderful and made life simple when it came to hitting things on the range.

The KC9's frame provides the full grip length of a 1911, although the Bobtail cut makes the gun a bit easier to conceal. Both the front-strap and mainspring housing are textured with Ed Brown's proprietary Snakeskin pattern, which provides lots of grip without being too abrasive. The grip texturing is as functional as it is attractive.

A beavertail grip safety allows for a high grip and, thanks to its raised pad with memory grooves, engages positively without any effort on the shooter's part. The extended thumb safety allows plenty of operating surface without adding any unnecessary width to the handgun.

The slide stop hole on the frame is tastefully chamfered, and the recessed slide stop fits flush with a slight bevel to aid its alignment with the barrel link.

The KC9 uses a full-length recoil spring guide rod and a flat spring

cushioned by a polymer buffer. The flat recoil spring allowed the gun's designers to put more functional spring tension into a smaller space.

Due to the narrow slide, the half-moon slide stop notch is a bit more difficult than normal to see, but disassembly is a simple task. The slide is drawn to the rear, and the slide stop is removed laterally once in the proper position.

The slide comes off the frame and the recoil spring assembly, including the plug, can be removed. The barrel link is then articulated forward, and the barrel is removed from the slide. Assembly is accomplished by reversing the procedure.

The trigger is one of those things that separate a great gun from the pretenders, and this one hits the mark. The skeletonized aluminum trigger on my test gun broke cleanly and consistently at 4.25 pounds, which strikes a nice balance on a carry gun. Trigger reset was almost imperceptibly short, allowing for fast, precise shooting when multiple rounds were in order.



▲ The rear sight has a serrated face and a ledge to allow one-hand racking, and the front sight can easily be swapped out. The adoption of an external extractor reduces costs.

pistol

The Labyrinth-pattern grips are made from imported cocobolo, and the design, like the Snakeskin treatment, provides plenty of grip without being overly aggressive. The magazine well is slightly beveled, and the 9mm chambering allows for an extra round in the single-column steel magazine. Standard 9mm 1911 magazines are compatible with the KC9, and its capacity is 9+1.

The KC9 is available in either satin stainless steel or in the G4 version, which uses the company's own polymer black Gen 4 finish. My test gun was a G4 model, which meant all parts were coated black with the exception of the stainless steel barrel and aluminum trigger. The overall fit and finish on the gun were excellent.

Since this is a carry gun, I began my range time by running a full magazine into an IDPA target at 10 yards to get a feel for it. It was immediately apparent that this gun was special. It has all the familiar controls and overall feel of a tuned 1911, but in a smaller and lighter package.

Five fast rounds went into a group the size of a golf ball before I put two pairs into the target's “-0” head zone. Recoil and muzzle rise were gentle thanks to a high grip on the gun, its 9mm chambering and the slightly front-heavy balance →

ED BROWN KC9

TYPE: 1911
CALIBER: 9mm Luger
CAPACITY: 9+1
BARREL: 4 in.
OAL/HEIGHT/WIDTH: 7.5/5.6/1.3 in.
WEIGHT: 34 oz.
CONSTRUCTION: black Gen 4-coated stainless steel frame (as tested)
GRIPS: Labyrinth pattern cocobolo
SIGHTS: Ledge rear, Trijicon HD XR front (as tested)
TRIGGER: 4.3 lb. pull (measured)
SAFETIES: grip, single-side thumb
PRICE: \$1,895
MANUFACTURER: Ed Brown Products,
EdBrown.com

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A STANDOUT 1911

→ provided by the bull profile barrel. I was immediately impressed.

After that, I did the accuracy testing, and my results are found in the accompanying chart. Though the gun's mechanical accuracy potential was great, the KC9 really shined during practical drills on steel and cardboard targets where the gun's

excellent sights and trigger made hits look easy.

Most importantly, the gun ran with every load I fed it without any hint of a malfunction. The 9mm cartridge's taper makes it want to feed and extract, and that's certainly part of the gun's reliability equation. I actually had a case-head failure

on my second to last round of Super Vel ammunition during the accuracy testing, and the gun cycled nevertheless. I was wearing my shooting glasses, so no harm was done.

With today's threat of active shooters, I'm no longer satisfied carrying a handgun that only allows me to make hits at short range. The threat has evolved, and so must our tools and methods. With this in mind, I loaded a half-dozen FMJs into the magazine and shot at a 12-inch steel plate at 90 yards from the seated position, resting my arms across my knees. I was able to hit the plate four out of six times, which tells me the gun is up to the task.

With a slide that is a quarter-inch shorter than other Commander-size 1911s, the KC9 may not be fully compatible with all holsters designed for that handgun. This isn't an issue because Ed Brown has commissioned a holster designed specifically for the KC9. Made by S&S Leatherworks, this hand-tooled black leather and crocodile pancake-style OWB holster retails for \$225. For the record, though, the KC9 worked fine in the Commander-length holsters I tried it in.

Although the KC9 is not available for sale in California, Golden State fans of Ed Brown who own a Kobra Carry are in luck. Ed Brown is offering an upgrade program whereby existing Kobra Carry handguns can be retrofitted to the KC9 format. Once this conversion is completed, Kobra Carry owners will have the option of using their handguns with either the .45 ACP or the more compact 9mm upper just by swapping slides.

For those who desire a premium carry gun, one that embodies the best features of the 1911 but in a more agreeable package in terms of concealment, the KC9 is worth some serious consideration. The solid construction, excellent sights, great trigger, dependable reliability and impressive accuracy provide a level of confidence that is tough to match at this price.



▲ The slide is machined with a series of flats, giving the pistol a unique look. The bull barrel dispenses with the traditional bushing, which saves hand-fitting expense.



▲ The flat-wire spring allows the gun's designers to put more functional spring tension into a smaller space.



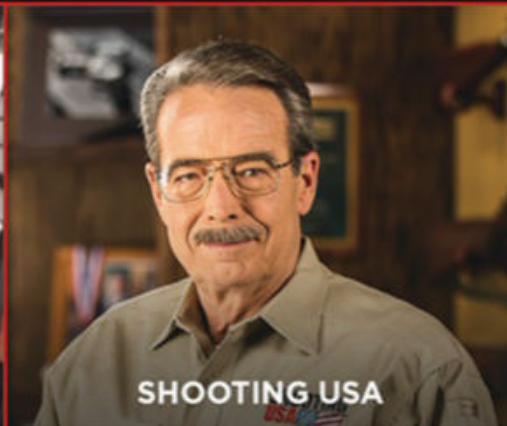
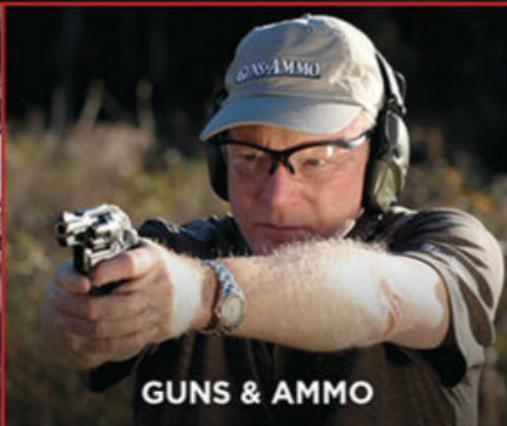
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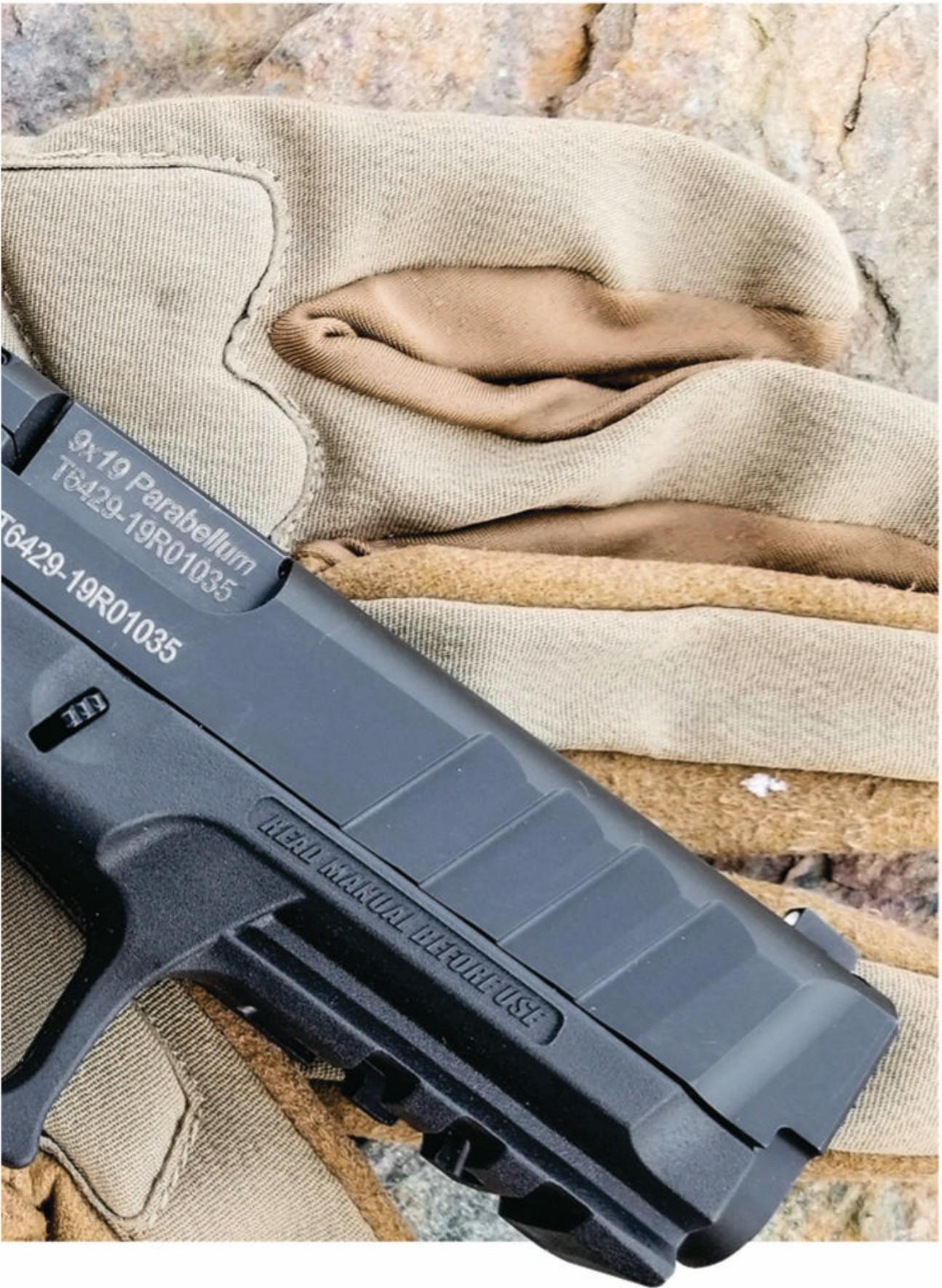
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STOEGER THROWS A STRIKE

BY BRAD FITZPATRICK



THE STR-9, THE FIRM'S FIRST STRIK- ER-FIRED 9MM, IS READY TO PLAY IN THE BIG LEAGUES.

For years, Stoeger, a member of the Benelli family of firearms, has offered reliable semiautomatic shotguns at blue collar prices. But recently the Benelli family—of which Franchi is also a member—has been branching out. Benelli now offers a line of over/under shotguns in addition to its ultra-successful semiautos, and last year Franchi entered the rifle market with the new Momentum bolt-action. Now it's Stoeger's turn to explore new horizons, and the company's latest product is the highly anticipated

STR-9, a striker-fired 9mm semi-auto pistol.

There's no shortage of competition in the polymer-framed striker gun market, and with so many options available today, Stoeger has to bring something special if it hopes to make the STR-9 stand out from the competition. To do this, Stoeger is borrowing from its shotgun playbook: Give buyers a reliable gun that's loaded with features at an affordable price.

The STR-9 features a carbon-steel slide with a matte black nitride finish. The corners of the slide are rounded to make the gun ride comfortably when carried, and the front and rear slide serrations are deeply cut and sharply angled—almost a shark fin shape when viewed in profile. Since the serrations are wider than those on most competing guns, there are only four of them at each corner of the slide.

An angled machine cut at the muzzle end of the slide gives the gun a stylish look, and it blends with matching scallops on the front portion of the frame. There's a beefy, spring-powered extractor on the right side of the slide and a loaded-chamber indicator just aft of the chamber opening that offers a visual and tactile reference regarding the pistol's condition.

The front and rear steel three-dot sights are dovetailed into the top of the slide, and the rear sight comes with beveled corners and a flat front ledge suitable for one-handed cycling.

A 4.2-inch barrel gives the Stoeger an overall length of just under 7.5 inches. Height from the base of the magazine pad to the top of the slide is 5.25 inches, and at the widest point on the grip, the STR-9 measures 1.3 inches. The slide itself measures just over one inch wide.

These figures place the STR-9 close to the 9mm Ruger American pistol and the Glock 19 in terms of overall size. The American is slightly longer than the Stoeger,

STOEGER THROWS A STRIKE

← and the Glock is just 0.2 inch shorter overall. Length of pull—measured from the top of the grip to the face of the trigger—is all but identical between the Glock and the Stoeger, measuring just under 2.8 inches. With an empty magazine in place, the STR-9 weighed 26.4 ounces on my scale, less than the Ruger American but slightly more than the Glock.

The STR-9's polymer frame comes with an accessory rail and a

well-proportioned grip that borrows elements from several existing designs. Shallow finger grooves and a deep undercut in the trigger guard seat the shooting hand in the proper position, and the grip angle promotes a high hold on the gun.

Additionally, the removable grip panels feature a slight palm swell that comfortably fills the hand when firing. Three interchangeable backstraps and three magazines come standard on the STR-9 model

I tested, which carries a suggested retail of \$389.

If you want to save a few bucks, the basic version comes with a single stainless magazine and one backstrap at a suggested retail price of \$329. However, having the ability to swap out grips for a perfect fit—not to mention two additional 15-round metal magazines—warrants spending the extra money if you can stretch your budget a bit.

Street price for the base model should be around \$300 and roughly \$350 for the upgraded model. There's also a top-end version with tritium night sights, three backstraps and three grip modules with a suggested retail price of \$449, which means it will likely be priced around \$400 at your local gun shop. I think all three versions are excellent bargains.

Internally, the STR-9 is similar to many competing striker-fired guns. There's a single recoil spring on a stainless guide rod, and the barrel



▀ The STR-9's controls are minimal but functional, just what you want in a carry gun. It has a locking plate takedown system with pull-down tabs in the frame.

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features heavy-duty lugs. Takedown is simple and fast, and it's similar to that of Glock pistols in that the trigger must be pulled (after ensuring the pistol is unloaded, of course) and the slide slightly retracted to allow the locking plate to be lowered, via two tabs that extend through the frame. The slide assembly is then moved forward for removal.

Controls are minimal. There's a serrated rectangular slide stop on the left side of the slide and a long, rather narrow serrated magazine release. The magazine release, which can be reversed to accommodate left-handed shooters, is accompanied by a raised polymer ridge on the grip. The ridge offers some level of protection against accidental magazine dumps.

There are shallow thumb depressions on either side of the polymer grip itself, and the texturing on the frontstrap and sides of the grip is rather mild but effective while the backstrap checkering is more ag-

gressive. It's not painful like those cheese grater-inspired grips on some guns, and it provides a firm hold. There's no manual safety, but there is a passive trigger safety. The trigger itself features a serrated, angled face and broke at 7.6 pounds on average.

Stoeger spent considerable time developing the STR-9's grip geometry, and it shows. It's comfortable to shoot even for extended periods, and the high grip position and low

bore axis make recoil manageable and minimize muzzle flip. The trigger guard undercut, finger grooves and texturing on the back of the grip module maintain proper hand position and wrist angle when firing.

The rear sight is drift adjustable for windage, and while most shooters either love or loathe traditional white three-dot sights, the Stoeger's irons are functional. They're tall enough to be easily seen but short enough they aren't prone to →



▲ The most striking feature on the STR-9 is the raked slide serrations. They give the gun a bold look and are also a big help in working the slide—especially with gloves.

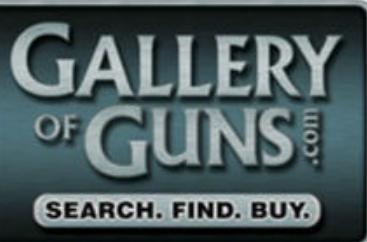
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STOEGER THROWS A STRIKE

→ snagging. The tactical ledge is large enough to function effectively, too. If you simply can't live with the plain white dots there's always the option of upgrading to the tritium-sight model.

Black nitride finishes are all the rage because they're durable and won't chip or flake, and the STR-9 has an evenly applied matte black finish that will hold up well to repeated drawing/holstering and corrosive perspiration. The lettering on the left side of the slide did begin to fade slightly after time, though.

The STR-9's minimal controls make it comfortable to carry, and despite being a double-stack pistol, it's not difficult to conceal under a cover garment. The grip angle helps position the hand properly for a consistent draw, and there's plenty of room in the oversized trigger guard to fire this pistol while wearing gloves. The trigger itself has a rather tight, short take-up and started the test rather heavy, but after a couple hundred rounds, pull averaged seven pounds, indicating that after its initial break-in the trigger lightened.

Despite the fact that the trigger is

heavier than some of the competition, it's consistent and predictable, and I grew to like the shorter take-up. When the trigger becomes taut, a simple press fires the gun, and while the reset is longer than on some competitors' guns, there's an audible and tactile indication that the gun is ready to fire again.

One area where the Stoeger shines is accuracy. At 25 yards from a rest, this gun shoots quite well, printing groups that are on-par with more expensive models. Hornady's Critical Defense and SIG Sauer's V-Crown averaged less than two inches, but I was surprised at how consistently this gun performed with all five loads with average groups ranging from 1.9 inches to 2.4 inches, as you can see in the accompanying chart.

That's more accuracy than most will require from this gun, but compared to other four-inch striker-fired guns, the Stoeger gives up nothing in overall accuracy. Off the bench this gun is great fun to shoot. It performed well on shooting failure and hostage drills, and the tall white-dot sights proved to be easy to pick up quickly when transitioning from target to target. The grip provides total control on the gun, and this pistol stays planted even when firing one-handed with powerful defensive loads.



▲ Stoeger gets high marks for the STR-9's comfortable grip design. It sports finger grooves and great texturing, along with a slight palm swell that helps fill the hand.

STOEGER STR-9

TYPE: striker-fired semiauto centerfire

CALIBER: 9mm Luger

CAPACITY: 15+1

BARREL: 4.17 in.

OAL/HEIGHT/WIDTH: 7.4/5.25/1.3 in.

WEIGHT: 26.4 oz.

CONSTRUCTION: black nitride-finished steel slide, textured polymer frame; 3 grip panels (as tested)

TRIGGER: 7.6 lb. pull (initial measured weight)

SIGHTS: dovetailed white three-dot

SAFETY: trigger lever

PRICE: \$389 (as tested)

MANUFACTURER: Stoeger,
STOEGERINDUSTRIES.COM

The pistol also proved reliable overall. There were two malfunctions—stovepipes—early in the test, but nothing else. The feed ramp is smooth, and the gun ran through the series of bench and offhand shooting tests without any other problems. Both of the stovepipe jams occurred early in the break-in process, and once you put this gun through the paces and clean and lubricate it properly, it should work just fine.

The STR-9 is a lot of gun for the money. The interior of the gun is free from unfinished machine marks, and the slide-to-frame fit is good. All the provided metal magazines dropped free from the pistol when the release button was pressed, and the 15-round metal magazines themselves appear well built and include numbered ports that provide visual reference regarding the number of rounds remaining.

In addition to the trio of magazines and backstrap insert modules that come with this version of the gun, there's also a basic speedloader to help top off those 15-round mags. Stoeger currently offers a Kydex holster for the STR-9, and companies like Clinger are also selling STR-9-specific holsters. Each STR-9 pistol is covered by a five-year manufacturer's warranty, too.

Stoeger is entering uncharted ter-



A The STR-9 is no slouch in the accuracy department, and it shot well with a variety of loads. There were two stovepipes early in testing, but after that, its operation was flawless.

ACCURACY RESULTS | STOEGER STR-9

9mm Luger	Bullet Weight (gr.)	Muzzle Velocity (fps)	Standard Deviation (fps)	Avg. Group (in.)
Federal Hydra-Shok Deep	135	1,019	11	2.4
Hornady American Gunner XTP	124	1,170	6	2.4
Hornady Critical Defense FTX	115	1,138	8	1.9
Sig Sauer V-Crown JHP	124	1,170	7	2.0
Winchester Defender	147	917	13	2.1

Notes: Accuracy results are the averages of four five-shot groups at 25 yards from a sandbag rest. Velocities are averages of 10 shots measured with an Oehler Model 35P set 12 feet from the muzzle. Abbreviation: JHP, jacketed hollowpoint

ritory for the brand with the STR-9, but it's obvious this gun was well thought out and engineered. It manages to maintain a reasonable price and yet still performs and functions the way most shooters demand. Time will tell whether or not these Turkish-made striker guns become best-sellers, but based on my experi-

ence with this gun, it offers a lot for the money, which should come as no shock to fans of the Stoeger brand.

Who knows? If the STR-9 takes hold as it could, you might be seeing the Stoeger name more and more frequently in the pages of this magazine. So how long before we see a compact carry version?

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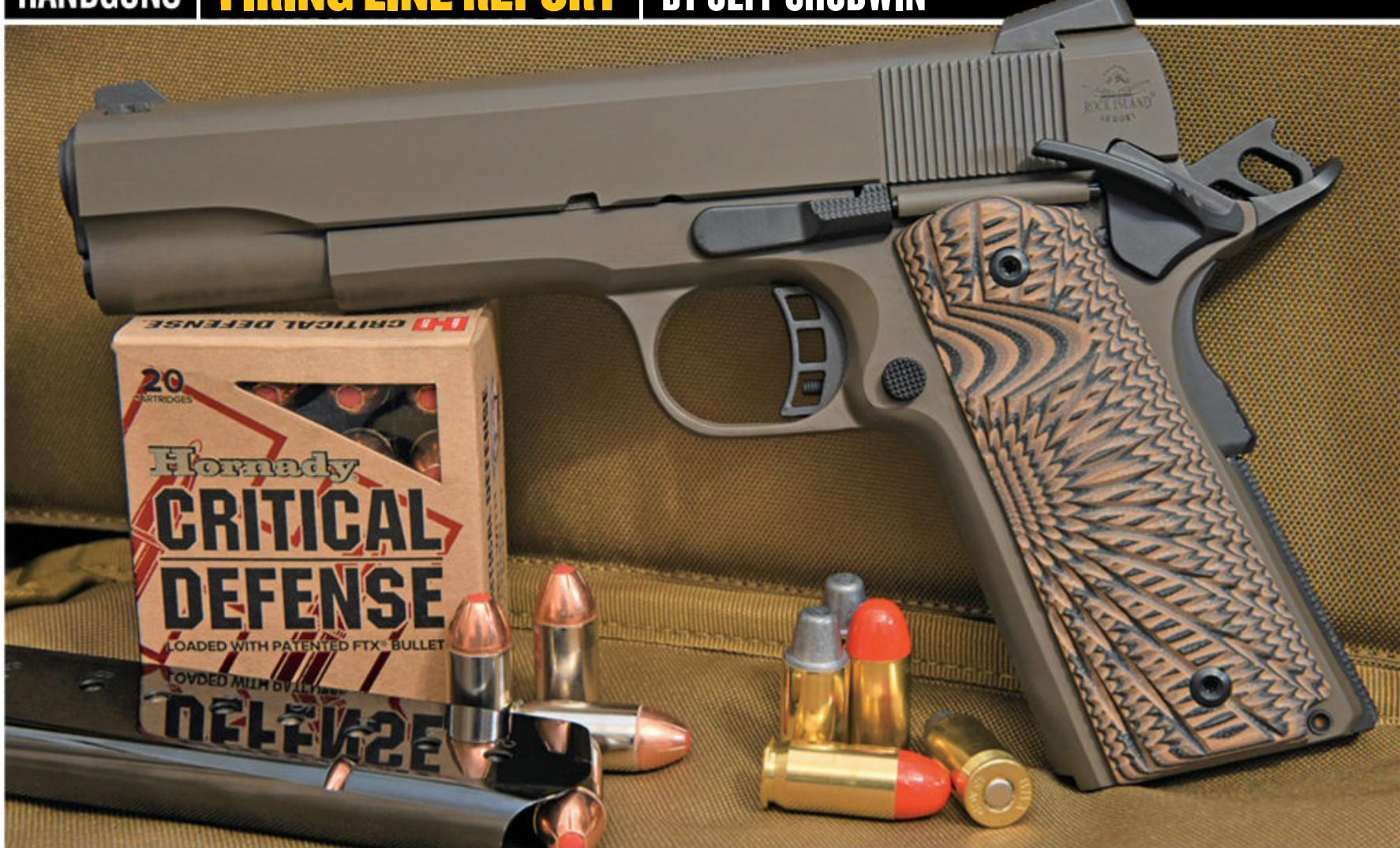
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DAVIDSON'S ROCK ISLAND ARMORY 1911-A1 ROCK STANDARD FS DS

DAVIDSON'S IS ONE OF THE BEST-KNOWN firearms retailers in the country, having been in the gun business for more than 60 years, and its Gallery of Guns is one of the best sources for Internet firearms sales. A recent arrival to the 1911 scene is an exclusive collaboration between Davidson's and Armscor/Rock Island Armory: the 1911-A1 Rock Standard FS DS.

I spoke with Bill Bennett, Davidson's director of marketing, and asked what the concept was for this 1911. He said Davidson's wanted a full-featured Government 1911 with a unique look that stood out as to price point and performance—one that also gives a salute to those who served in our military.

Armscor—a Philippines-based company that markets 1911s under the Rock Island Armory brand—took its 1911-A1 FS DS and added Cerakote's Patriot Brown finish to the slide and frame. The blend

of brown and bronze gives the pistol look that says it's ready for hard use, and the application of the finish is evenly applied. The metal finish of the slide and frame is further set off by matte-blue controls.

Both the slide and frame are 4140 steel and are cut on CNC machinery to ensure close tolerances, so the pistol demonstrates minimal play between the slide and frame. The slide houses a full-length recoil spring guide and sports GI serrations on the rear only.

The frame and the barrel feed ramp are polished, and the ejection port is lowered and bevel-cut to ensure brass is kicked out cleanly. The ejector has an extended tip for positive ejection and is pinned to the frame.

The frame features a high-swept beavertail grip safety that distributes the recoil across the web of the hand and prevents hammer bite. The grip safety

DAVIDSON'S/ROCK ISLAND ARMORY 1911-A1 ROCK STANDARD FS DS

TYPE: 1911

CALIBER: .45 ACP

CAPACITY: 8-round magazine supplied

BARREL: 5 in.

OAL: 8.6 in.

WEIGHT: 39.8 oz.

CONSTRUCTION: Cerakote Patriot Brown-finished steel slide and frame

GRIPS: G10 Desert Storm

SIGHTS: no-snag, adjustable for windage rear; post front

TRIGGER: medium-length, skeletonized; 5 lb. pull (measured)

SAFETIES: ambidextrous thumb, grip w/ memory bump

PRICE: \$609

MANUFACTURER: Armscor

RETAILER: Davidson's, GALLERYOFGUNS.COM

has a memory bump to ensure it gets depressed deep enough to fire even if you're wearing gloves.

The grips are sandy brown G10 Desert Storm with black highlights and →

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HANDGUNS | FIRING LINE REPORT

feature a raised starburst pattern. Between the fit and the aggressive texture, the grips lock the pistol to the shooter's hand with even the heaviest of loads. The left grip is relieved around the mag release.

The mainspring housing is checkered at 20 lpi, and the checkering is perfectly cut. The magazine release button and slide-lock lever are similarly checkered



A The combination of the Cerakote Patriot Brown finish, G10 Desert Storm grips and matte-blue controls make this gun a real looker—and one ready for action.

for non-slip operation. The high-cut frontstrap features multiple deep vertical serrations.

The ambidextrous thumb safety is wide enough for easy manipulation but slimmed down for concealed carry. It has substantial detent spring pressure for that positive on/off click I look for in a 1911.

The slide is the classic 1911-A1 type, and the bottom edges have been

dehorned. The sole marking on the slide is the Rock Island Armory logo that is neatly etched into the rear left corner.

The sights have a non-reflective matte-blue finish and are a combination of a dovetail cut front sight and a no-snag, Novak-style rear sight with a setscrew for windage adjustments.

The Rock Standard FS DS is a Series 70 gun, meaning there is no firing pin safety. The trigger is a medium-length,

ACCURACY RESULTS | DAVIDSON'S/RIA 1911-A1 ROCK STANDARD FS DS

.45 ACP	Bullet Weight (gr.)	Muzzle Velocity (fps)	Standard Deviation (fps)	Avg. Group (in.)
Black Hills Honey Badger +P SC	135	1,169	17	2.68
Super Vel +P JHP	185	1,100	16	3.33
Black Hills LSWC	200	831	15	2.05
Hornady Critical Duty +P FTX	220	930	16	3.59
Federal Syntech RN	230	769	10	3.43

Notes: Accuracy results are averages of four five-shot groups at 25 yards from a Caldwell pistol rest. Velocities are averages of two 10-shot strings recorded on a ProChrono placed 10 feet from the muzzle. Abbreviations: JHP, jacketed hollowpoint; LSWC lead semi-wadcutter; SC, solid copper

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skeletonized, target type with a properly adjusted overtravel screw. The trigger on my sample broke cleanly at just under five pounds—a good trigger weight for use as a defensive handgun.

I shot 300 rounds of SIG Elite 230-grain full-metal-jacket rounds in rapid-fire drills along with and followed with multiple types of defensive ammo and competition reloads at distances from five to 25 yards—about 1,000 rounds in all. Feeding was 100 percent from the supplied magazine, as well as from mags from Wilson, McCormick and Brown.

As the accompanying accuracy chart indicates, at 25 yards, the Rock Standard FS shot nearly all ammo tested into three-inch groups. Many of the groups had three and four rounds in a cluster of less than two inches with a flyer or two that I must claim. The best of the three-round groups had every round touching. All loads tested shot well, with accuracy



A The pistol sports a loop-style “combat” hammer and a memory bump on the grip safety.

on a par with far more expensive 1911s I have used.

Overall, this 1911 performed very well, and my only criticisms are that it should come with an additional magazines, and I would like to see an extended mag well for faster reloads.

Retailing for just over \$600, the Davidson's exclusive 1911-A1 Rock Standard FS has all the features you want for sport shooting or defensive carry. The exclu-



A The Davidson's/RIA 1911 features an ambidextrous thumb safety that operates with proper tension.

sive finish and grip design add to both the look and the feel, and the fact that it pays homage to our military adds to its appeal. And as a bonus, the pistol is covered by Davidson's lifetime replacement warranty. 

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SMITH & WESSON MODEL 610

ONCE LEFT FOR DEAD, THE 10MM AUTO
cartridge is going gangbusters today. The resurgence started in the 1911 platform, and the round is now moving into striker-fired guns. But wheelgunners aren't being left behind, thanks to Smith & Wesson's Model 610.

Built on the legendary N frame, the Model 610 I received for testing has a 6.5-inch barrel; a four-inch version is offered as well. The barrel is a one-piece affair and sports a full underlug.

The rear sight is fully adjustable and has a white outline on the rear notch. The front is a ramped blade, plain black, that's pinned to the barrel, and the flat barrel top is grooved to reduce glare. The barrel, frame and fluted cylinder are stainless steel.

The grips are black synthetic. I have a Model 629 Classic .44 Magnum, also an N frame. My 629 is several years old and came with a Hogue Mono-grip, which doesn't fully wrap around the frame's backstrap. The 610's grip

does. Also, the finger grooves on the 610 are much more subtle, and the indentations don't extend back on the grips.

On the one hand (pun alert), I like the 610's grip better because the shallow grooves allow me to position my hand and fingers exactly where I want them, and the full wrap prevents the bare metal of the frame from stinging the web of my hand, which can happen with full-power .44 Magnum loads in the 629.

But on the flip side, the deeper, extended grooves on the 629 essentially produce a smaller grip circumference. I have medium-size hands, and the 629 fits me a little better. In other words, whether the grips on the 610 suit you depends on your hands. Fortunately, the grips are easy to change if you don't like them. Turn out an Allen screw on the right side, and the two halves of the grip can be separated.

Double-action trigger pull was

11 pounds, 15 ounces, and it was consistent with almost no stacking. Single-action pull averaged four pounds, five ounces, with about five ounces of variation over 10 pulls. →

SMITH & WESSON MODEL 610

TYPE: double-action centerfire revolver

CALIBER: 10mm Auto

CAPACITY: 6; 3 moon clips included

BARREL: 6.5 in. (as tested)

WEIGHT: 50.1 oz.

OAL/HEIGHT/WIDTH (AT CYLINDER): 12.25/6.0/1.7 in.

CONSTRUCTION: stainless steel.

GRIPS: black synthetic

TRIGGER: double action, 11 lb., 15 oz. pull; single action, 4 lb., 5 oz. pull (measured)

SIGHTS: fully adjustable white-outline rear, black ramped blade front

SAFETY: tool-operated trigger block

PRICE: \$969

MANUFACTURER: Smith & Wesson,

SMITH-WESSON.COM

Leading Acid Reflux Pill Becomes an Anti-Aging Phenomenon

Clinical studies show breakthrough acid reflux treatment also helps maintain vital health and helps protect users from the serious conditions that accompany aging such as fatigue and poor cardiovascular health

by David Waxman

Seattle Washington:

A clinical study on a leading acid reflux pill shows that its key ingredient relieves digestive symptoms while suppressing the inflammation that contributes to premature aging in men and women.

And, if consumer sales are any indication of a product's effectiveness, this 'acid reflux pill turned anti-aging phenomenon' is nothing short of a miracle.

Sold under the brand name AloeCure, it was already backed by clinical data documenting its ability to provide all day and night relief from heartburn, acid reflux, constipation, irritable bowel, gas, bloating, and more.

But soon doctors started reporting some incredible results...

"With AloeCure, my patients started reporting less joint pain, more energy, better sleep, stronger immune systems... even less stress and better skin, hair, and nails" explains Dr. Liza Leal; a leading integrative health specialist and company spokesperson.

AloeCure contains an active ingredient that helps improve digestion by acting as a natural acid-buffer that improves the pH balance of your stomach.

Scientists now believe that this acid imbalance is what contributes to painful inflammation throughout the rest of the body.

The daily allowance of AloeCure has shown to calm this inflammation which is why AloeCure is so effective.

Relieving other stressful symptoms related to GI health like pain, bloating, fatigue, cramping, constipation, diarrhea, heartburn, and nausea.

Now, backed with new clinical studies, AloeCure is being recommended by doctors everywhere to help improve digestion, calm painful inflammation, soothe joint pain, and even reduce the appearance of wrinkles – helping patients to look and feel decades younger.

FIX YOUR GUT & FIGHT INFLAMMATION

Since hitting the market, sales for AloeCure have taken off and there are some very good reasons why.

To start, the clinical studies have been impressive. Participants taking the active ingredient in AloeCure saw a stunning 100% improvement in digestive symptoms, which includes fast and lasting relief from reflux.

Users also experienced higher energy levels and endurance, relief from chronic discomfort and better sleep. Some even reported

healthier looking skin, hair, and nails.

A healthy gut is the key to a reducing swelling and inflammation that can wreak havoc on the human body. Doctors say this is why AloeCure works on so many aspects of your health.

AloeCure's active ingredient is made from the healing compound found in Aloe vera. It is both safe and healthy. There are also no known side effects.

Scientists believe that it helps improve digestive and immune health by acting as a natural acid-buffer that improves the pH balance of your stomach.

Research has shown that this acid imbalance contributes to painful inflammation throughout your entire body and is why AloeCure seems to be so effective.

EXCITING RESULTS FROM PATIENTS

To date over 5 million bottles of AloeCure have been sold, and the community seeking non-pharma therapy for their GI health continues to grow.

According to Dr. Leal, her patients are absolutely thrilled with their results and are often shocked by how fast it works.

"For the first time in years, they are free from concerns about their digestion and almost every other aspect of their health," says Dr. Leal, "and I recommend it to everyone who wants to improve GI health without resorting to drugs, surgery, or OTC medications."

"I was always in 'indigestion hell.' Doctors put me on all sorts of antacid remedies. Nothing worked. Dr. Leal recommended I try AloeCure. And something remarkable happened... Not only were all the issues I had with my stomach gone - completely gone – but I felt less joint pain and I was able to actually sleep through the night."

With so much positive feedback, it's easy to see why the community of believers is growing and sales for the new pill are soaring.

THE SCIENCE BEHIND ALOECURE

AloeCure is a pill that's taken just once daily. The pill is small. Easy to swallow. There are no harmful side effects and it does not require a prescription.

The active ingredient is a rare Aloe Vera component known as acemannan.

Made from 100% organic Aloe Vera, AloeCure uses a proprietary process that results in the highest quality, most bio-available levels of acemannan known to exist.

According to Dr. Leal and several of her colleagues, improving the pH balance of your



stomach and restoring gut health is the key to revitalizing your entire body.

When your digestive system isn't healthy, it causes unwanted stress on your immune system, which results in inflammation in the rest of the body.

The recommended daily allowance of acemannan in AloeCure has been proven to support digestive health, and calm painful inflammation without side effects or drugs.

This would explain why so many users are experiencing impressive results so quickly.

REVITALIZE YOUR ENTIRE BODY

With daily use, AloeCure helps users look and feel decades younger and defend against some of the painful inflammation that accompanies aging and can make life hard.

By buffering stomach acid and restoring gut health, AloeCure calms painful inflammation and will help improve digestion... soothe aching joints... reduce the appearance of wrinkles and help restore hair and nails ... manage cholesterol and oxidative stress... and improve sleep and brain function... without side effects or expense.

Readers can now reclaim their energy, vitality, and youth regardless of age or current level of health.

One AloeCure Capsule Daily

- Helps End Digestion Nightmares
- Helps Calm Painful Inflammation
- Soothes Stiff & Aching Joints
- Reduces appearance of Wrinkles & Increases Elasticity
- Manages Cholesterol & Oxidative Stress
- Supports Healthy Immune System
- Improves Sleep & Brain Function

HOW TO GET ALOECURE

Due to the enormous interest consumers have shown in AloeCure, the company has decided to extend their nationwide savings event for a little while longer. Here's how it works...

Call the AloeCure number and speak to a live person in the US. Callers will be greeted by a knowledgeable and friendly person approved to offer up to 3 FREE bottles of AloeCure with your order. AloeCure's Toll-Free number is **1-800-809-0023**. Only a limited discounted supply of AloeCure is currently available.

Consumers who miss out on the current product inventory will have to wait until more becomes available and that could take weeks. They will also not be guaranteed any additional savings. The company advises not to wait. Call **1-800-809-0023** today.

HANDGUNS | FIRING LINE REPORT

There's a safety mechanism just above the cylinder latch. Turning it with the provided key blocks the hammer, preventing unauthorized use.

It's a six-shot revolver, and Smith & Wesson includes three moon clips to accommodate the rimless 10mm.



A Chambered for the 10mm Auto, the Model 610 is a serious revolver, but it's also a lot of fun to shoot. The gun comes with three moon clips.



A The flat top of the 610's barrel is grooved to prevent glare. It's an accurate revolver, although Rupp wishes the front blade was something more visible than plain black.

Twenty-five yard accuracy was great, as indicated in the accompanying chart. These days there are plenty of 10mm loads to choose from, and the Model 610 liked all the ones I tried.

I got the tightest groups with Winchester's 175-grain Silvertips—an excellent hunting load I've used in other calibers—and the average would've been better except for a few flyers. Those may have been me, or maybe they weren't, but unless I definitely call a shot out it stays in the calculation for the average.

As you would expect for a large-frame revolver with a long barrel, it's a hefty piece of hardware and weighs 50.1 ounces. Between the overall weight and the full underlug that puts more mass out front, recoil of the 10mm is tamed to what I think is the perfect level. You know you're firing a serious cartridge, but you're not being punished for it, and shooting the gun double action was a ton of fun.



A The grips on the 610 are black synthetic, feature subtle finger grooves and wrap fully around the frame. They're easily changed by removing an Allen screw on the right side.

Winchester's USA load in particular was a real pussycat in the 610, and that's great because it's relatively inexpensive and makes for excellent practice. I should note here the gun can also handle the .40 S&W cartridge—essentially a shortened version of the 10mm Auto—which would produce even less recoil. And .40 S&W ammo can be had at lower prices.

The only thing I didn't like about the revolver was the plain black front sight, which got lost on some targets. Yes, it's easily changed because it's pinned, but I think Smith & Wesson should've gone with at least an orange insert in the ramp or, better yet, a fiber optic—especially if the gun was to be used for hunting.

We don't cover hunting per se in *Handguns*, but this would indeed be an excellent choice for medium-size game such as deer and wild boar. With its 6.5-inch barrel you're going to wring out every bit of velocity the 10mm is capable of. The aforementioned Winchester load generates just under 570 ft.-lbs. of energy, which while not on the level of, say, a 240-grain .44 Magnum is still serious medicine.

And although you would lose some of that velocity and energy with the Model 610 with a four-inch barrel, that version would be ideally suited as a defensive tool for home or trail—against two-legged and four-legged threats alike.

It's great to see Smith & Wesson offering the newly popular 10mm Auto in a wheelgun. And depending on your needs (or, be honest, wants), the fact the Model 610 is available in two barrel lengths means there's something for everyone.

ACCURACY RESULTS | SMITH & WESSON MODEL 610

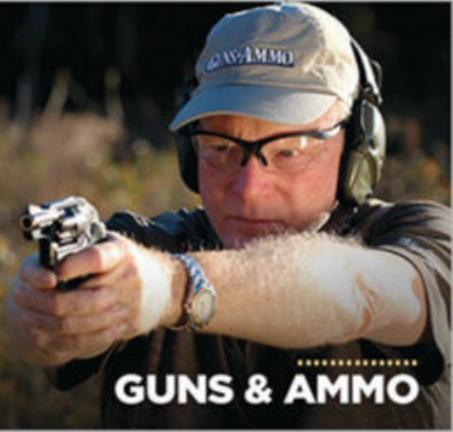
10mm Auto	Bullet Weight (gr.)	Muzzle Velocity (fps)	Standard Deviation (fps)	Avg. Group (in.)
Winchester Super-X Silvertip	175	1,209	15	2.1
Winchester USA FMJ	180	1,035	21	2.3
Hornady XTP	180	1,229	24	2.4
SIG Elite FMJ	180	1,286	19	2.7
Remington UMC FMJ FP	180	1,125	20	2.9

Notes: Accuracy results are averages of four five-shot groups at 25 yards off an MTM pistol rest. Velocities are averages of 10 shots recorded on a ProChrono chronograph set 12 feet from the muzzle. Abbreviations: FMJ, full metal jacket; FP, flatpoint

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made, with tons of guns from both major makers and custom shops. SIG's Stainless Super Target, for example, is all set up for the job with special features and precision adjustable sights.

Chambered for .45 ACP, it's superbly made and tight as a drum, and it was a consistent shooter no matter the ammunition I fed it.

For shooters who are used to the rounded configuration of the 1911, while the gun has rounded corners, the overall appearance is square. It boasts matte-finished stainless steel with the SIG logo and a "racing stripe" down the middle of the slide on the left side.

Topside slide serrations aid in quelling unwanted reflections so you can take full advantage of the sighting system. On the rear is a modern sight fixture adjustable for both windage and elevation with a

wide notch and a blade rounded off for combat-type shooting. Up front is a green fiber optic.

Both the frontstrap and mainspring housing are checkered for a sure grip. And what really sets this gun apart is a set of custom-made birch grip panels with a more-than-ample supply of checkering, and a palm swell on each side for both right- and left-handed shooters. They also feature the SIG medallion.

There's a flare at the base for positioning the hand, and it acts as a mag-well funnel for quick reloads. The only minor criticism I found on the gun is this part of the gun was left unfinished, and I would give it a light coat of TruOil to keep it fresh looking, moisture proof and help combat wear. The magazines themselves are chromed for durability and come with heavy base pads.

This pistol has ambidextrous safety levers, and while they're on

the small side, they have enough width for sure operation. Because of the target grips, the magazine release has been extended, and it has a serrated non-slip surface.

The beavertail safety is polished stainless and features a memory bump. The hammer, like the trigger, is serrated and skeletonized. I have to say the trigger pull weight was a bit disappointing—a tad over five pounds—but it breaks with only a little slack before the sear trips.

Ejection of spent rounds never missed a beat thanks to a tuned mechanical ejector. The extractor is long and fits precisely within the side of the frame and flush with the ejection port. This well-designed feature will ensure positive ejection in rapid-fire events.

For the serious competitor, the SIG Stainless Super Target is hard to beat. For the recreational shooter, it will bring pure fun.

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