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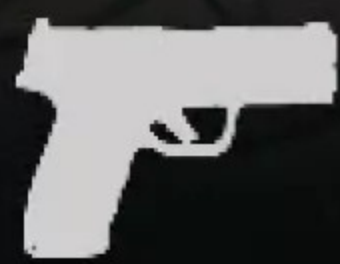
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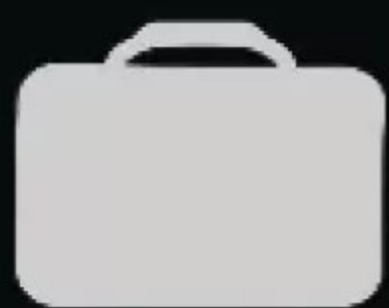
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Production Correction

I enjoyed Keith Wood’s article on the Beretta 92XI SAO Sabbia (December/January). His comment about use in USPSA was a bit off, though. Production division does not allow single-action only. The Sabbia is, however, suited for Limited Optics set up as he set it up. Without the optic, it would be Limited Minor.

TOM CHESTERMAN, ARIZONA

More Wheelguns!

I’d like to see coverage on more revolvers—the single actions and the cap-and-ball era—at least once in a while. I’m sure many of your subscribers are old guys like myself who still take part in keeping this portion of the shooting sports alive.

S. BROWN, GEORGIA

One Last Oddball

After reading your “Front Focus” in the June/July issue, I had to throw my favorite in the mix. Back in the late ’70s and ’80s I read everything I could find written by the late, great Bob Milek. I was especially mesmerized by the .30 Herrett and the Thompson/Center Contender. So in 1985 as a starving college student I scraped up the money to buy a Contender and a 14-inch .30 Herrett barrel and put a 4X Leupold scope on it. My handloads will consistently hold five shots in and around an inch at 100 yards. The .30 Herrett is considered by many to be a dead cartridge, but those who have used it believe it still has a lot of life left in it!

WILLIAM “BUD” FEICK

Thank You, Stan

This issue features the final “Back Page Beauties” by Stan Trzoniec. Stan’s been with the magazine for two decades, and his contributions over the years have been invaluable. Best wishes to Stan in his retirement. I’ll definitely miss working with him, and I’m sure readers will miss his appreciation for fine handguns and his excellent photography.—*Scott*



Handguns TV on Outdoor Channel

The popular “Handguns” television show, now in its 12th season, is currently airing on Outdoor Channel on Wednesday nights at 7:30 p.m. Eastern. So if you missed any of this season’s episodes when they aired on Sportsman Channel, you can catch them on Outdoor for the next few months. Remember, you can also watch past seasons of “Handguns”—as well as a ton of other shooting, hunting and fishing shows—via the My Outdoor TV app. Visit MyOutdoorTV.com to start your free trial.

Industry Intel Report

SMITH & WESSON recently unveiled its new S&W Academy at the company’s Maryville, Tennessee, headquarters. The new state-of-the-art facility boasts pistol and carbine ranges, rifle and multi-purpose flex ranges, and a two-story shoot house. Courses are open to the public and range from basic to advanced. You can learn more at SMITH-WESSON.COM; click on the “S&W Academy” tab at the top.



GLOCK recently announced it is discontinuing more than 50 model variants. While the company hadn’t officially said so at press time, most reports indicate at least some of them will be replaced by a new V Series.

These sweet 1911s from **SK CUSTOMS** will be auctioned off at the company’s benefit events. The pair was designed for a sporting clays charity shoot to raise money for Ronald McDonald House and local nonprofits in SK’s new St. Augustine, Florida, home.



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GIVE ME MORE .44!

A LOOK AT HISTORIC, WILDCAT AND CURRENT .44 CALIBER ROUNDS.

By J. Scott Rupp

BACK IN 2024 I WROTE A PIECE ABOUT one of my favorite cartridges, the .44 Special. One reader responded that I should do a deep dive into the .44 Magnum. I liked his idea, but I decided to take a different tack and look at the various .44 caliber handgun cartridges.

It's not all-inclusive; I skipped more obscure ones like the .44 Remington, for example. I tried to track down current guns, ammo and reloading supplies, but it's likely some sources got missed or availability has changed.

.44 S&W American (1869-70)

Our Army's first adopted metallic-cartridge handgun was a Smith & Wesson Model 3 top-break revolver chambered to this round, which was loaded with a .434-inch heeled bullet similar in design to a .22's. The

cartridge, also known as the .44/100, was itself a modification of the .44 Henry rimfire. It wasn't powerful: a 205-grain bullet at under 700 fps for just over 200 ft.-lbs. of energy.

Besides the military claim to fame, a Model 3 in .44 American may have been the gun Wyatt Earp used at the OK Corral. But you're welcome to go down that rabbit hole on your own. There are no current guns or ammo that I could find.

.44 Russian (1870)

When the Russian government wanted to place a large order for S&W Model 3s, it requested a change to the .44 American cartridge design—objecting to the American's lubricated heeled bullet on the grounds that it would attract dirt and debris. In response, Smith & Wesson ditched the heel and

changed the diameter to .429, which became the standard for .44 caliber handgun cartridges going forward.

The company also changed the standard load to a 246-grain bullet at 750 fps for more than 300 ft.-lbs. of energy. That boosted chamber pressure, and to avoid blowing up guns in ammo mixups, S&W also lengthened the Russian to .970 so it couldn't be chambered in .44 Americans. The Model 3 chambers had to be modified to handle the Russian as well.

Cimarron and Taylor's & Co. make reproductions in the caliber, and Black Hills and HSM load it. Lee Precision offers dies, and Starline sells brass.

.44 Colt (1871)

Developed for the Richards-Mason conversions that turned Colt

◀ Guns clockwise from top l.: S&W 629, Desert Eagle, Ruger GP-100, Ruger Blackhawk. Cartridges l.-r.: .44 Russian, .44 Special, .44-40, .44 Auto Mag, .429 Desert Eagle, .44 Magnum, .445 Super Mag.

cap-and-ball guns into cartridge guns, it used a .451-inch heeled bullet with a case length of 1.1 inches and an overall length of 1.5 inches. Some reports have it serving with the Army from 1871-73, and in that service it fired a 225-grain bullet powered by blackpowder to 640 fps and just over 200 ft.-lbs. of energy.

Buffalo Bore has a smokeless load: a 200-grain at 725 fps. Starline sells new brass for it, and according to an article in BLACKPOWDERCARTRIDGE NEWS.COM, reloaders can use .44 Russian dies adjusted to .44 Colt length.

.44-40 (1873)

Introduced as a rifle cartridge for the Winchester 1873, Colt picked it up for some revolvers—including the Single Action Army in 1878—and it became popular among frontiersmen who wanted the same cartridge for both rifle and revolver.

The .44-40, also known as the .44 Winchester or .44 WCF, began life as a blackpowder round. In today's smokeless form, it commonly pushes bullets in the 200-grain neighborhood. Hornady's Cowboy load, for example, is a 205-grainer at 725 fps out of a 7.5-inch test barrel. That yields 239 ft.-lbs. of energy.

The .44-40 lasted in original Colt revolvers until the early 1940s, and it maintains a following today among Old West aficionados and Cowboy Action shooters. As such, a number of repros are available from Uberti, Cimarron and Taylor's & Co. It's still loaded in factory ammo from Black Hills, Hornady, Winchester, HSM, Buffalo Bore, Grizzly Cartridge and Choice. RCBS, Lee and Redding sell dies, and Lyman has a bullet mold.



▲ The .44 Russian (l.) was the parent to the .44 S&W Special (c.), which in turn begat the .44 Remington Magnum (r.) ▼ The .44-40 (l.) was initially introduced as a rifle round but soon found a home in revolvers, while the .445 Super Mag resulted from a search for a better handgun silhouette

.44 S&W Special (1907)

The .44 Russian is its parent, with the case being lengthened to 1.16 inches to handle the bulkier smokeless powders of its day and also likely to prevent chambering the Special in older .44 Russian top-breaks. While it never achieved the status of, say, the .45 Colt, the .44 Special has had its share of fans—including such notables as Skeeter Skelton and Elmer Keith.

The .44 Special is not widely chambered. Not counting historical repros, today only Ruger and Charter Arms offer new-production models. Smith & Wesson and Taurus have produced Specials in the past.

There's no shortage of ammo, though, as most of the majors load it. Typical defensive ammo bullets range from 165 to 200 grains, with energies in the high 200s to mid 300s. You can also get hotter loads from some of the boutique makers. There are also plenty of options when it comes to load data, dies, brass and other components, making it a great handloader's cartridge.

.44 Remington Magnum (1955)

Why are there so many .44 Special loads when there are hardly any .44 Special guns? Probably because it



can be fired in revolvers chambered for the .44 Remington Magnum, the *ne plus ultra* of the .44 family. It's the brainchild of Elmer Keith, who had been messing with hot loads for the .44 Special for years. He worked with (some sources say badgered) Remington to produce a ".44 Special Magnum" and Smith & Wesson to build a strong revolver to handle it. Both companies came on board, with Remington lengthening the .44 Special case to 1.285 inches and calling it the .44 Remington Magnum. Smith & Wesson designed an N-frame revolver that would become the Model 29.

While the .44 Magnum was already popular by the time Clint Eastwood's "Dirty Harry" character called it (erroneously) "the most powerful handgun in the world," that movie catapulted the cartridge and the Model 29 into the strato- →

← sphere. It remains a staple as a hunting tool and a defensive option in bear country.

The .44 Magnum's initial ballistics were a 240-grain bullet at more than 1,500 fps for over 1,000 ft.-lbs. of energy—more powerful than previous .44s by several magnitudes. Today's 240-grain loads are a bit more sedate—in the 1,300 fps neighborhood for less than 1,000 ft.-lbs.—but even so most people find it way too much gun for everyday self-defense.

That's why folks like me primarily shoot Specials in our .44 Magnum guns. However, Federal introduced a new reduced load for self-defense, and I have some Garrett lower-recoil, hard-cast ammo designed as a controllable option for bear defense.

That's one big selling point to the cartridge: there's an immense variety of factory loads for every purpose. Handloaders also benefit from a broad universe of choices for loads and components. One benefit is the ability to download the .44 Magnum almost to .44 Special levels and not worry about the fouling buildup inside chambers that can occur with regular use of shorter .44 Specials.

.44 Auto Mag (1971)

The .44 Auto Mag or AMP is based on the .30-06 semi-rimmed case and was developed by Harry Sanford to put .44 Magnum power into a semi-automatic. That semiauto was the Auto Mag, which Sanford's company produced for a few years. The gun and its cartridge had a star turn in another Dirty Harry movie, 1983's "Sudden Impact."

There have been attempts to resurrect the Auto Mag, but none has proven successful, although there are later-model guns out there as well as originals on the used market. USA Firearms is currently chambering the .44 Auto Mag in



▲ Both the .44 Auto Mag (l.) and .429 Desert Eagle (r.) were designed to put .44 Magnum power in semiautos.

the Wildey Survivor semiauto. SBR Ammunition loads the .44 AMP with 240-grain Hornady XTPs, along with a 180- and 240-grain full metal jackets. Lee sells dies, and Starline is your brass source.

.445 Super Mag (1986)

Part of a family of "Super Mags" developed by Elgin Gates primarily for handgun silhouette competitions as well as for hunting, the .445 is simply an elongated .44 Magnum. But it is able to push similar-weight bullets faster and with more energy. The .445 Super Mag was briefly chambered by Dan Wesson, with the last guns coming off the line in 2007.

Buffalo Bore has two jacketed hollowpoint loads: a 180-grain at 2,050 fps for 1,679 ft.-lbs.; and a 240-grain at 1,700 fps for 1,540 ft.-lbs. Starline offers brass.

.440 Cor-Bon (1998)

This one pre-dates the .429 Desert Eagle and is essentially the same thing: a .50 Action Express necked down to .429. However, the two are not interchangeable. It was designed by Cor-Bon, and a few Desert Eagles were chambered to it. It pushed a 240-grain bullet to 1,825 fps for 1,775 ft.-lbs. of energy. It's no longer loaded commercially, and I didn't find any components or dies.

.429 Desert Eagle (2018)

Designed by Magnum Research's Jim Tertin, the cartridge is a necked-down .50 Action Express. Like the .50 AE, the .429 Desert Eagle was developed for the semiautomatic Desert Eagle, and the round pushes a 240-grain bullet at more than 1,600 fps for a muzzle energy around 1,400 ft.-lbs.

I've shot the .429 Desert Eagle, and recoil is significant but not bone crushing. The round is currently chambered in the Desert Eagle. Underwood Ammo and Glacier Ridge sell ammunition. Starline is the source for brass, and Lee Precision has dies.

.44/.454 JDJ Woodswalker

I'm including this one because it was in my edition of *Cartridges of the World*. Even though its parent, SSK Industries, no longer chambers it, when it comes to wildcat handgun rounds you can't really skip one that's associated with famed wildcat developer J.D. Jones.

According to *Cartridges*, the .44/.454 JDJ Woodswalker is a necked-down .454 Casull that pushes a 300-grain bullet to 2,100 fps or a 240-grainer to 2,300 fps. That works out to 2,937 and 2,819 ft.-lbs. of energy, respectively.

OLD SCHOOL | BY BOB CAMPBELL

ASTRA 400

THE ASTRA 400 PISTOL IS AMONG THE most important Spanish service pistols of the 20th century. A replacement for the Campo Giro pistol, it was designed by Pedro Careaga, and it was introduced shortly after World War I. It was in full production by 1921.

The pistol was purchased in great numbers by the Spanish military, and some were exported to Nazi Germany, others to Chile. Total production run was just over 106,000. Production ceased in 1950.

It was chambered to the powerful 9mm Bergmann-Bayard or Largo cartridge, which is midway between the 9mm Luger and .38 Super in power. Most pistols of this power are locked-breech design, but the Astra 400 is a direct-blowback gun.

An especially robust recoil spring is used due to the blowback action. Racking the slide is a challenge. I pull the pistol in close to the chest and use a push/pull motion to rack the slide. The recoil spring is so strong that a slight slip during disassembly might cause the recoil spring and barrel bushing to embed themselves in a wall.

The Astra has a hidden hammer. A strong hammer spring helps control recoil. Locking lugs are located on the bottom of the barrel, sliding into the frame in a fashion similar to the Colt 1903 and Savage 1907 lockup.

The Astra 400 features a back-strap grip safety that must be depressed to unlock the trigger. There is also a magazine safety. The safety is just behind the trigger guard and not the easiest to manipulate quickly.

The slide locks open on the last shot but there is no slide lock. The



▲ Despite its ungainly looks, the Astra 400 is all Old World quality. It was well made of good materials, and it enjoyed a long service life.

magazine release is located in the heel, and it helps to slightly retract the slide in order to remove the magazine.

Close inspection of this example shows a handgun well made of the best material—a product of the times perhaps, when excellent handguns were affordable. Each individual part is nicely finished without tool marks inside or out.

The safety and hammer are nickel plated, and the finish isn't inexpensive phosphate but a nice blue. Cocking serrations are machined with a slight abutment at the rear to prevent slippage. Checkered plastic grip panels with the Astra emblem are properly fitted.

I have owned and fired several extensively, and the gun's U-shaped feed ramp feeds hollowpoint loads reliably. While it's more accurate than expected, it also features an uncomfortable grip angle, and it kicks more than most handguns chambered in 9mm Largo, although

the trigger press and trigger reach are good.

On one occasion I attacked an Astra bore with solvent until chemicals ran red from the breech, a common situation with pistols fired with corrosive ammunition, but most were restored to life and proved good shooters. I am not recommending this pistol as a shooter but simply as a collector gun.

The Astra 400 was a prized pistol on the cheap for many shooters a few generations ago, when it was widely available at surplus prices, seldom more than \$100. Today, boxed Astra 400 pistols go for around \$1,000, with unusually good examples in original packaging with some type of special interest commanding \$1,800 or more.

However, two were available in the same condition as the pistol illustrated here for \$500. It is a collectible and a must-have for those putting together a collection of European service pistols.

QUICK SHOT | BY J. SCOTT RUPP

SIG P238 TITANIUM RAINBOW

IT'S HARD NOT TO LOVE A GOOD-SHOOT-ing, easy-carrying micro compact, and that describes the resurrected SIG P238. Chambered to .380 ACP, it's a single-action semiauto that's about as small as they come.

Despite the tiny dimensions, it's incredibly easy to shoot well. For one thing, it weighs nearly 15 ounces due to its alloy-frame construction, so it's light but not too light. It also benefits from a crisp single-action trigger, which on this sample broke just shy of five pounds.

The SIGlite sights are among the best out there. They are steel, set in dovetails and feature tritium vials set inside large white outlines—providing a great sight picture in any light or lack thereof.

The Titanium Rainbow nomenclature stems from the PVD finish. It's not for everyone. On the set of "Handguns" TV it proved polarizing, with me in the minority of finding it cool-looking.

The rainbow finish is on the slide as well as the controls, which include a single-side thumb safety. The slide can be racked with the gun on or off Safe, and both the safety and slide stop are ideally sized. There is no grip safety.

I loved shooting this pistol. Even though it's not possible to get all your fingers on the short grip, I



▲ The P238 is a single-action .380, and the Titanium Rainbow model has a distinctive finish on its stainless steel slide and controls. ▼ The latter include a single-side thumb safety. The sights are SIG's excellent SIGlite day/night.



could still get accurate hits—fast—at practical defensive distances. But that short grip also makes it easy to conceal, and the slide is rounded and beveled for an easy draw.

Downside? Capacity is just six rounds, and the supplied mag has a flat base, where as other P238s offer an additional seven-rounder with a finger-hook extension for more real estate on the grip.

Still, if you're looking for something distinctive in a .380 single action that you'll be happy to carry every day, don't sleep on this one. 🎯

ACCURACY RESULTS | SIG P238 TITANIUM RAINBOW

.380 ACP	Bullet Weight (gr.)	Muzzle Velocity (fps)	Std. Dev. (fps)	Avg. Group (in.)
Lehigh Defense XD	68	1,063	29	2.2
Hornady Critical Defense	90	904	14	1.4
Fiocchi CovertX	95	923	11	1.8

Notes: Accuracy results are averages of four five-shot groups at 15 yards from a Ransom Multi Cal Steady Rest. Velocities are averages of 15 shots recorded 10 feet from the muzzle with a ProChrono DLX.

SIG SAUER P238 TITANIUM RAINBOW

TYPE: single-action semiauto

CALIBER: .380 ACP

CAPACITY: one 6-round mag supplied

BARREL: 2.7 in.

OAL/HEIGHT/WIDTH: 5.5/4.0/1.0 in.

WEIGHT: 14.7 oz.

CONSTRUCTION: rainbow titanium PVD stainless steel slide, anodized alloy frame, polymer grip

TRIGGER: 4 lb., 13 oz. (measured)

SIGHTS: SIGlite night front and rear

SAFETIES: manual thumb

PRICE: \$750

MANUFACTURER: SIG Sauer, SIGSAUER.COM

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CAPACITY: 18+1 rounds

FRONT SIGHT: HiViz® fiber optic front sight

REAR SIGHT: Adjustable

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CARTRIDGE: 9mm Luger

FRAME MATERIAL: Synthetic

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BARREL LENGTH: 4.6"

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LITTLE BIG LIGHT

SUREFIRE'S COMPACT XC3 OFFERS LOTS OF LUMENS IN A LITTLE PACKAGE.

SUREFIRE'S X300 WEAPON LIGHT HAS

been the standard for law enforcement and military personnel since 2005, and the release of the 1,000-lumen X300 Ultra in 2018 made that great light even better. However, while no one doubted the X300's quality construction or retina-melting output, many shooters wanted a slightly smaller light with all the same features.

That's why SureFire introduced the XC3. While it can't match the X300 Ultra's output, the XC3 does manage 550 lumens of LED light, which is outstanding for a compact weapon light.

The XC3 also produces 7,200 candela, a measure of luminous intensity in a given direction. That's a lot fewer than the X300 Ultra's 11,300, but while law enforcement may need that kind of power, for concealed carry all you really want or need is enough light to see whether an attacker is armed. In the home, you want enough light to identify a potential target and fully illuminate your surroundings—but not so bright that the light washes out the room and makes it difficult to see.

The XC3's 7,200 candela is a good compromise between light spread and throw, and SureFire's Hybrid beam has reflectors that produce a strong central beam and use remaining light to flood the surrounding area. The outer cone spills enough light to see all the darkened corners of your home or a dark alley, but the bulk of the 550 lumens is centered at 12 o'clock and is powerful enough to illuminate objects up to 185 yards.

With the light turned on in a 10x12-foot bedroom, from the middle



▲ SureFire's XC3 offers plenty of power in a smaller footprint that makes it ideal for concealed carry or home defense. ▼ The ambidextrous angled activation pads can be activated from behind or above.



of the room with the light pointed all the way to the left, I could see objects on the right side of the room.

In my basement it illuminated a 20x9-foot wall from top to bottom and side to side at 21 feet. In short, it's powerful enough that it illuminates to the ceiling in most rooms and at most practical defensive ranges even when the muzzle is pointed downward—a major safety consideration.

Tapping into this level of performance in such a small light is impressive. The XC3 weighs just 2.65 ounces with battery and measures

SUREFIRE XC3

Lumens; candela	550; 7,200
Beam length	185 yds.
Fit	universal and Picatinny/Sig rails
Body	hard-coat anodized machined aluminum
Length, width	2.6, 1.1 in.
Weight	2.65 oz.
Battery, runtime	CR123A, 1.75 hours
Activation	ambidextrous; constant on, momentary
Price	\$299
Manufacturer	SureFire, SUREFIRE.COM

2.6 inches long with a bezel diameter of less than an inch.

The light is powered by a single CR123A battery and boasts a 1.75-hour runtime. There's a lockout feature so you won't accidentally activate the XC3 and drain the battery.

The XC3 features a rugged machined aluminum body with a mil-spec hard-coat anodized black finish.

Gasket seals prevent water from entering the body, and the XC3 comes with an IPX7 waterproof rating.

Each XC3 light comes with two crossmembers. The universal (marked “U”) comes installed on the light, and there’s also a Picatinny/SIG (“P & S”) crossmember.

This allows you to swap between guns that might have different rails. You can also rotate the crossmember to adjust the positioning of the light forward or back on the rail. SureFire recommends pressing the crossmember fully forward in the rail slot to prevent any movement under recoil, in case the rail slot is slightly larger than the crossmember.

SureFire’s activation system is easy to operate. Quickly press and release the activation pads on either side of the trigger guard to turn on

continuous light. If you want momentary light, press and hold the activation pad for as long as you want, then release to turn off.


With the XC3 mounted on a Shadow Systems MR920 via the universal crossmember, I found the activation pad easy to use by pressing on the back of the pad or the angled top.

The pads are on both sides, so you can turn the light on with either your trigger finger or support-hand thumb, and I worked on activating the light with my trigger finger and deactivating with my thumb. My trigger finger almost always activated the rear of the pad. Because my thumb sweeps down from above and the pad is angled, I caught it every time.

Battery life exceeded the manufacturer’s promise, which is rare,

and the unit got warm but not branding iron hot like some rivals. I also dunked the light in a bucket of water for 30 minutes, and it turned on following the submersion.

With its narrow form factor, the XC3 fits a variety of holsters. That includes universal light-bearing holsters and many, but not all, TLR-7 compatible holsters. This means you’ll have plenty of options.

What the XC3 gives up in lumens and candela it makes up for in reduced weight and size. It’s a great option for compact carry lights. It’s not the cheapest available, but I believe it remains a good value based on its American design and manufacturing, impressive output and ease of operation. It’s the biggest thing to happen to little weapon lights in a long time. 

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IF YOU SIMPLY CAN'T GET ENOUGH GUNS and shooting, the My Outdoor TV (MOTV) app is a resource like no other, a curated treasure trove of firearms- and outdoor-oriented television shows and videos.

For example, MOTV offers nine seasons—102 episodes—of “Handguns” (formerly “Handguns & Defensive Weapons”) alone. The show focuses primarily on personal protection and includes plenty of recreational shooting activities such as plinking and action-shooting competitions.

It features reviews of the latest firearms, ammunition and shooting accessories, as well as advice on marksmanship, gun handling, self-defense techniques and a host of

other handgun-related topics.

But wait, there's more! There are 10-plus seasons of the popular “Guns & Ammo” television shows, encompassing more than 200 episodes available on the app. You can also check out past episodes of shows like “Gun Stories,” “The Gunfather,” “Hollywood Weapons” and “Shootout Lane.”


In addition to the HD episodes, there are short-form videos encompassing how-to instructional and gun history topics you can watch anytime, anywhere.

I think *Handguns* readers will really appreciate MOTV's short-form HD videos covering a wide variety of self-defense topics. These videos are perfect for sharing with family mem-

bers to reinforce the finer points of keeping yourself safe. Like the show episodes, the videos are true HD quality for the ultimate viewing experience.

And if your tastes run to the wider outdoor world—including hunting and fishing—there are a ton of shows and additional content covering these.

In addition to streaming video, you can take this content with you, downloading content for later viewing when you're without internet access.

MOTV is available on the Web, as well as Apple and Android platforms. Interested? Simply go to MyOUTDOORTV.COM and subscribe today. Monthly subscriptions are \$10, and you can get a year for \$99. 

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THE PACK IS BACK

FANNY PACKS, THAT IS. THEY CAN ADD VERSATILITY TO YOUR DAILY CARRY.

AS A YOUNG COP IN THE LATE 1990S, I often carried my full-size pistol in a huge fanny pack while off duty. At the time, fanny packs were a popular means of carrying a wallet, keys, and back then, even a pager. Of course, fanny packs were also a great way to comfortably hide a gun in plain sight. But when fanny packs went out of style, the mere fact that you wore one was cause for suspicion.

These days, fanny packs are popular again, and they remain well-suited for concealed carry. Since fanny packs don't require a belt like a traditional holster, you can carry your gun when wearing sweatpants or shorts—clothing you couldn't easily wear while carrying a gun. For many, a fanny pack is a comfortable and convenient alternative to carrying in a traditional belt-mounted holster.

First impressions are important, and the goal is for your fanny pack not to make one. Avoid a pack that appears overtly tactical. A pack that hangs from your belly button to your knees, or one with MOLLE webbing and emblazoned with gun-themed patches, will garner unwanted attention. While the interior of your fanny pack should be specifically designed for carrying a handgun, the exterior should look like any other pack.

You'll want to select a fanny pack with a holster to safeguard your gun and ensure it stays properly oriented for a smooth, consistent draw. The holster can be a belt holster with a clip that secures to the interior of the pack, or something as simple as a nylon strap with



▲ With fanny packs coming back in style—or at least being more accepted—they can offer a great way to conceal a handgun.

hook-and-loop attachment that will cover the trigger and hold the gun in place. Don't keep anything in the compartment with your handgun that could enter the trigger guard—potentially leading to an unintended discharge—or impede your draw.

Many fanny packs have integral nylon holsters that can be adjusted to secure a variety of handguns. If a hook-and-loop material is used, the holster can also be positioned exactly where you want to it and canted just right, so when you open the zippered compartment, your hand intuitively finds the grip.

There are quite a few fanny packs on the market designed specifically for concealed carry. Companies like Vertx, Falco, Elite Survival Systems, 5.11 Tactical, Eberlestock and others offer these types of fanny packs or sling bags.

Most fanny packs designed for

concealed carry also have compartments to store potentially lifesaving equipment like extra magazines, a flashlight, a knife, a tourniquet. Of course, there should also be room for your wallet, keys and cell phone.

Despite its name, a fanny pack should not be worn over your fanny, at least not if it contains a gun. That would make your pack harder to control and would significantly increase draw time. Think of your fanny pack like a Claymore mine and keep the front toward the enemy.

Something I didn't see back in the day was fanny packs being worn across the chest. It's a convenient and practical option for carrying a pack, and these days, it's not a tell that you're armed. To chest carry a fanny pack from the perspective of a right-handed shooter, loop your left arm and head through the strap. Ad-

just the strap as needed for comfort and height.

When you're using a fanny pack as a holster, the zipper initiates your draw. In this case, the zipper is comparable to a garment covering a belt mounted holster. If the zipper is too small, it will be difficult to reliably grab under duress. If it's flimsy, the zipper may bend or break with repeated use, leaving you with a gun that's difficult to access.

Regardless of the fanny pack and zipper configuration you settle on, expect to devote some practice time before using it to tote your gun in public. For safety, this should be done with an unloaded firearm or even a plastic "blue gun" version of your carry gun.

Practice unzipping the gun compartment and accessing your gun.

You should stage the zipper so you can quickly unzip it using only your non-dominant hand. Your dominant hand only has one job and one job only: grab the gun.

A right-handed shooter should stage the zipper all the way to the right so that once the zipper is grabbed, a single motion opens the gun compartment quickly and easily. A few practice draws should let you know whether you need to change the location or cant of the holster within the pack.

With the holster properly oriented and adjusted for your gun, you should be able to draw your gun with speed and efficiency. To my surprise, I was nearly as fast drawing from my fanny pack as from a concealed, belt-mounted holster.

But in addition to providing rapid

access to your gun, certain types of fanny packs can even provide a degree of protection. Like some of their larger packs, the Vertx S.O.C.P. Tactical Fanny Pack will accept a Level IIIA soft panel from Premier Body Armor. While the coverage is limited by the size of the pack, the 8.5x5.5-inch ballistic panel could help protect your vitals when worn across your chest.

As fashion trends come and go, so has the use of a fanny pack for concealed carry. Not only are today's fanny packs more stylish than ever, but they're also more practical. Many are user-configurable and can be worn across the waist or across the chest, providing discreet carry and rapid access to your handgun and other potentially lifesaving gear.



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SPRINGFIELD'S SOFT SHOOTER

A NEW .380 VERSION OF THE HELLCAT DELIVERS ALL THE FEATURES YOU WANT, WITH LESS RECOIL.

BY BRAD FITZPATRICK

Springfield Armory probably has had to add a trophy room at its Geneseo, Illinois, facility to accommodate all the awards its micro-compact Hellcat pistol has earned since it was released five years ago. Until recently, the Hellcat was available only in 9mm, but the company recently announced it would add a .380 version to the family.

The Hellcat 9mm and .380 are both made in Croatia and look very similar, and the dimensions of the two pistols are close as well. Barrel length is three inches for both, and the overall length, grip width and height are the same. But at 16.1 ounces, the Hellcat .380 OSP's unloaded weight with flush-fit magazine is almost two ounces lighter than the 9mm version, which weighs 17.9 ounces.

The barrel is hammer-forged steel with a 1:10 twist and a Melonite finish. The .380's slide is billet-machined steel, also with a Melonite finish, and it features angular slide

serrations fore and aft that are large enough for positive operation and simple press checks. There's an externally mounted extractor and a chamber window as well.

The slide on the OSP model—currently the only version—is cut to accept optics on the widely available RMsC Shield footprint. But if you choose not to add a red dot, the factory iron sights are among the best of any micro-compact pistol.

The dovetailed sights are metal, not polymer. The Tactical Rack rear sight features a white U-notch and is designed in such a way that you can use it to rack the slide on a sturdy belt or flat surface in an emergency. The front sight has a green luminescent dot with a tritium insert, and the resulting sight picture is easy to see even in low light.

The Hellcat .380's frame is made from polymer and includes the Adaptive Grip Texture (AGT), which has been popular on other Hellcat models as well as Springfield's Echelon pistols. The Hellcat .380's →

SPRINGFIELD'S SOFT SHOOTER

← grip geometry is excellent, and the pistol is comfortable to shoot for extended periods. The beavertail is adequately large to prevent slide bite, and the finger grooves and textured finger pads are positioned for a firm thumbs-forward grip.

The pistol also has a universal-style rail with a single notch on the dust cover for mounting accessories such as lights or light/laser combos.

Capacity has become an impor-

tant consideration when selecting a micro-compact pistol, and the Hellcat leads the class in this category. As with the 9mm version, both 11- and 13-round metal magazines are included. The magazines ship with finger extensions, and there's a flush-fit mag plate that can be installed to make the pistol easier to conceal.

Controls include a slide stop positioned on the rear portion of the

frame, as well as a rotating take-down lever. There's an oval, reversible magazine release on the left side of the gun as well.

There is no manual thumb safety, at least not on the initial version. However, the Hellcat .380 does include passive safeties. There's a blade-style trigger safety as well as an internal firing-pin block safety. The design prevents accidental drops or unintentional, indirect pressure on the side of the trigger from causing the gun to fire—important considerations for a concealed-carry pistol.

The operating system includes a dual captive recoil spring and a full-length guide rod, and disassembly is safe and simple thanks to the rotating takedown lever. Even relatively new shooters will be able to field-strip this pistol with ease if they follow the procedures outlined in the manual.

For testing the Hellcat .380, I mounted a Shield RMSc red dot. With the optic in place, overall height increased to 5.25 inches, and unloaded weight with the 11-round magazine was 16.7 ounces. I carried the pistol in a belly band in the appendix position, but because the dimensions are identical it should



▲ The controls on the Hellcat .380 are the same as on the 9mm version, and the magazine release is reversible. There's also a viewing port on top of the chamber. The current model doesn't incorporate a thumb safety.



▲ The Hellcat is tops when it comes to capacity, with 11- and 13-round magazines. They come with finger extensions, and there's also a flush-fit plate for the 11-rounder for better concealability.

SPRINGFIELD ARMORY HELLCAT MICRO- COMPACT OSP

TYPE: striker-fired semiauto

CALIBER: .380 ACP (tested), 9mm Luger

CAPACITY: 11-, 13-round mags supplied

BARREL: 3.0 in., hammer-forged steel w/ Melonite finish, 1:10 twist

OAL/HEIGHT/WIDTH: 6.0/4.24 (11-round mag)/1.0 in.

WEIGHT: 16.1 oz.

GRIPS: polymer w/Adaptive Grip Texture

FINISH: matte black Melonite

TRIGGER: 6.25 lb. pull (measured)

SIGHTS: U-notch Tactical Rack rear w/ outline, green luminescent front w/tritium insert; slide cut for Shield RMSc footprint

SAFETIES: trigger blade, firing pin block

PRICE: \$653

MANUFACTURER: Springfield Armory,

SPRINGFIELD-ARMORY.COM

also work well with Hellcat holsters that you may already own.

Why purchase the Hellcat .380 instead of the 9mm version, if both share the same dimensions and capacity? Recoil reduction, primarily. The Hellcat .380 is more of a pussycat, and if you're someone who finds the recoil of a micro-compact 9mm a bit snappy, you'll appreciate the Hellcat .380's soft-shooting nature.

It has appreciably less recoil and muzzle rise, and that makes the gun flat-shooting and allows for fast follow-ups. I initially tested the pistol by shooting offhand groups at 21 feet to get a feel for it, and while my hands are not gargantuan, I do wear a large glove. However, I had no problems planting all my fingers on the gun using the 11-round magazine with pinky extension. If you are one of those shooters with oversize hands, the 13-round mag with pinky extension should still accommodate you.

Springfield pistols have an excellent reputation for reliability, and the Hellcat .380 OSP was no exception. Straight out of the box, the pistol fired a variety of .380 loads without issue. However, if you are a shooter who likes to ride your thumb on the slide stop 1911-style, you may inadvertently prevent the Springfield going to slide lock after firing the final shot in the magazine.

I was guilty of this on a few occasions, and each time the slide failed to lock back because I had placed too much downward pressure on the slide stop with my non-shooting thumb. In a real life-and-death situation that could slow your reload, so it's something you should learn to avoid. Other than that self-induced issue, there were no problems with the Hellcat .380's reliability.

Here at *Handguns* we accuracy-test pistols with barrels under four inches from a range of 15 yards, and while that's a relatively long shot for any pistol with a three-inch barrel, the Springfield managed quite well. The best five-shot group measured

1.6 inches, and other groups came in under the two-inch mark. That's rare for three-inch autoloaders of any chambering.

There seems to be a bit of resurgence in .380 popularity, and Springfield is following in the footsteps of the relatively new SIG Sauer P365 →



▲ The pistol doesn't come with a red dot, but it's simple to add one; the slide is cut for the Shield RMsC footprint. The U-notch Tactical Rack rear sight features a ledge for cycling the gun with one hand.



▲ The Hellcat has a universal rail on the dust cover for installing lights and lasers. Textured indexing spots are located on both sides of the frame.

ACCURACY RESULTS | SPRINGFIELD HELLCAT MICRO-COMPACT OSP

.380 ACP	Bullet Weight (gr.)	Muzzle Velocity (fps)	Std. Dev. (fps)	Avg. Group (in.)
Remington UMC JHP	88	991	19	2.5
Hornady American Gunner XTP	90	939	15	1.8
Hornady Critical Defense FTX	90	985	14	2.0
Speer Gold Dot JHP	90	907	14	2.5
Federal Hydra-Shok Deep JHP	99	874	12	2.2

Notes: Accuracy results are averages of four five-shot groups at 15 yards from a fixed rest with a Shield RMsC red dot. Velocity figures are 10-shot averages recorded on a Caldwell VelociRadar at the muzzle. Abbreviation: JHP, jacketed hollowpoint

SPRINGFIELD'S SOFT SHOOTER

← .380 and Smith & Wesson Bodyguard 2.0. Price-wise, the Hellcat .380 (\$653) sits above the S&W Bodyguard 2.0 (\$449) and the SIG P365 .380 (\$500).

If you want the smallest and lightest .380, then the Bodyguard takes the prize. It has a shorter barrel, it's narrower, and it's almost eight ounces lighter than the Hellcat .380. However, thanks to the irrefutable laws of physics, the Hellcat's larger dimensions mean it will be softer shooting than the Bodyguard 2.0. Also, you can mount an optic on the Springfield but not on the Smith, and the Hellcat offers an extra round of capacity.

The SIG and the Springfield are quite close dimensionally, with the SIG P365 .380 being slightly shorter. The SIG's slide is cut for optics just like the Hellcat. However, the SIG ships with 10-round magazines, so the Springfield offers increased capacity.



▲ Springfield's grip geometry is outstanding, and the Adaptive Grip Texture offers a solid hold on the gun.

It remains to be seen whether the Springfield Hellcat .380 will occupy a major portion of the expanding .380 market, but the gun earns very high marks in every major category. Reliability is superb, fit and finish are excellent, the sights are some of the best on the market, and the grip geometry is excellent.

It doesn't offer the same punch as

a 9mm Hellcat, and unless you are a Springfield collector or very sensitive to recoil it probably doesn't make sense to swap your Hellcat 9 for the new .380. However, if you prefer the .380 to the 9mm there's really no reason not to check out the Springfield. It's everything we've come to love about the Hellcat in a new, lighter, softer-shooting configuration. ○



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SACRED STONE OF THE SOUTHWEST IS ON THE BRINK OF EXTINCTION



Centuries ago, Persians, Tibetans and Mayans considered turquoise a gemstone of the heavens, believing the striking blue stones were sacred pieces of sky. Today, the rarest and most valuable turquoise is found in the American Southwest—but the future of the blue beauty is unclear.

On a recent trip to Tucson, we spoke with fourth generation turquoise traders who explained that less than five percent of turquoise mined worldwide can be set into jewelry and only about twenty mines in the Southwest supply gem-quality turquoise. Once a thriving industry, many Southwest mines have run dry and are now closed.

We found a limited supply of turquoise from Arizona and purchased it for our *Sedona Turquoise Collection*. Inspired by the work of those ancient craftsmen and designed to showcase the exceptional blue stone, each stabilized vibrant cabochon features



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UPPING ITS GAME

THE CZ P-10 C PORTED TAKES THE P-10 C TO NEW LEVELS WITH A COMPENSATOR THAT MAKES IT AN INCREDIBLY FLAT-SHOOTING DEFENSE GUN.

BY KEITH WOOD



modules, the polymer frame on the P-10 C Ported is the serialized part and cannot be swapped out. The frame is of a size that makes it concealable while allowing for a full-fingered grip, and it's molded with aggressive texturing for a secure hold. Certain areas of the frame are kept smooth to allow the hand to slide easily into position prior to drawing the gun before locking in on the texture. There are even textured panels on the frame where the support hand thumb resides.

The frame is molded for a high grip, including an undercut trigger guard, and the frame extends rearward over the web of the hand to ensure there's no chance for the slide to bite exposed skin. The dust cover doubles as an attachment point for a light or laser, which many people consider a must-have on a defensive handgun.

The backstraps are interchangeable, and three different sizes are included. Changing the backstraps requires removing a roll pin, which should be done with a proper roll pin punch to prevent damage to the pin. I'm sure the pin is a metric size, but a 1/16-inch punch works just fine. The outside of the pin is serrated to ensure it can't walk out of place during use. I chose the smallest of the backstraps since I tend to shoot handguns with smaller grips better.

The trigger, which features a safety lever in the blade, is one of the more attractive features of this handgun. The feel of the trigger is superior to many striker-fired handguns on the market. The one on my sample broke at 4.75 pounds with a tiny bit of creep, and it had a very short reset—0.16 inch to be exact.

The magazine release is made from steel and is checkered to prevent the thumb from sliding off during operation. Though not ambidextrous, the release is reversible and can be moved to the right side of the frame. The serrated →

There was a time in the not-too-distant past when handguns were bifurcated into two distinct categories: defensive handguns and competition handguns. Today, those lines are blurred to the point where one can scarcely be distinguished from the other. Optics, compensators, extended controls and other features that were once reserved for match guns are now at home on handguns kept or carried for protection. CZ's new striker-fired P-10 C Ported, optic-ready

and compensated, is just such a handgun.

Introduced to the U.S. market in 2017 after three years of development, the P-10 was CZ's entry into the striker-fired market. The compact P-10 C followed soon thereafter, and the new P-10 C Ported adds a compensated barrel and ported slide.

The P-10 C Ported is built around a fiberglass-reinforced polymer frame. Unlike many models on the market today that use a serialized chassis and interchangeable grip

UPPING ITS GAME

← slide stop is ambidextrous. Dual takedown levers are located above the trigger guard.

The slide is machined from steel, with five sets of flats creating the modern profile. Deep, angled cocking serrations are cut into the slide at both front and rear. Lateral serrations are also machined onto the top of the slide forward of the ejection port. These cuts are both practical, giving the user plenty of real estate with which to manipulate the slide, and aesthetically pleasing.

The P-10 C Ported is optic-ready, but CZ did not skimp on the iron sights; they are of good quality. The luminous irons are mounted in dovetails. These sights form a three-dot sight picture, day or night. The surfaces of both the front post and the rear blade are serrated to eliminate glare.

While no optic plate is included with the pistol, plates are available for all the common formats, including the Aimpoint Acro, Trijicon RMR, both Holosun footprints,

Leupold DeltaPoint Pro and others. The optic cut is covered with a steel plate that is held in place using two Torx fasteners.

The most obvious feature of the slide—the one that sets the P-10 C Ported apart from the standard P-10 C and P-10 C OR (optics ready)—is the single gas port just behind the muzzle. Coupled with the compensated barrel, this cut slide channels propellant gases upward to counteract muzzle rise. Although integral compensators can increase muzzle blast from the shooter's perspective, they are no doubt effective in making the pistol recoil flatter.

Some internet commandos may characterize such a feature as inappropriate on a defensive handgun. But a shooting buddy of mine—a former member of Delta Force who has been in dozens, perhaps hundreds, of gunfights on multiple continents—disagrees. He carried a compensated pistol way back in the 1990s.

The P-10 C Ported has a slide-mounted external extractor, along with a frame-mounted fixed ejector. Polymer-frame semiautos designed before pistol-mounted optics became popular often suffer when it comes to mounting height because their extractor assemblies limit the depth of the optic cut, resulting in a mounting surface that is higher than on other handguns. The P-10 C Ported's extractor design does not suffer this malady and allows the optic to be mounted noticeably lower.

The P-10 C Ported uses a one-piece, cold-hammer-forged ported barrel. The new Ported's barrel is 10 percent heavier than the standard P-10 C barrel, adding weight to counteract recoil and muzzle rise. The barrel uses an integral ramp that feeds cartridges directly from the magazine and into the chamber. The muzzle, which sits flush with the face of the slide when in battery, has a deep radius at the crown.

The P-10 C Ported magazines



▲ The frame is set up for a high grip, and it's textured in key spots and smooth where it should be. The optic cut sits lower than on some competing designs, a key benefit.



▲ The defining feature of CZ's P-10 C Ported is the large single-port compensator. Wood found it to be very effective in controlling muzzle rise without producing significant blast.

CZ P-10 C PORTED

TYPE: striker-fired semiauto

CALIBER: 9mm Luger

CAPACITY: two 15-round magazines plus 2-round extenders supplied

BARREL: 4 in.

OAL/HEIGHT/WIDTH: 7.3/5.3/1.3 in.

WEIGHT: 26.8 oz.

CONSTRUCTION: black nitride-finished steel slide, textured polymer frame

SIGHTS: illuminated steel front and rear; optic-ready

TRIGGER: 4 lb., 12 oz. pull (measured)

SAFETIES: trigger, trigger bar, firing pin block

PRICE: \$549

MANUFACTURER: CZ, CZFIREARMS.COM

have stamped steel bodies with polymer base pads and bright orange polymer followers. Using steel instead of polymer is a benefit because polymer magazine bodies must be thicker to maintain structural integrity, which can limit capacity. Capacity for the CZ is 15+1, and two extended polymer base pads are included, along with steel replacement floor plates. Installing these base pads takes a few seconds and adds two rounds of capacity, bringing the total to 17+1.

The safety, or lack thereof, of striker-fired handguns is a hot topic these days. The P-10 C Ported has no manual safety but rather three passive safety devices. The trigger safety prevents the trigger from traveling to the rear unless depressed. The firing pin block does not allow the pin to move unless the trigger is pulled. Finally, there is a trigger bar safety. This combination of features prevents the pistol from being fired unless the trigger is pulled, including when dropped.

The recoil system on the P-10 C Ported features a polymer guide rod and a captive flat-wire spring.

The fit, finish and overall construction of the P-10 C Ported are very nice for a handgun in this category. The steel components are given a black nitride surface treatment. This process creates a rock-hard finish that is extremely resistant to corrosion. Reliability was 100 percent throughout testing, with the P-10 C Ported gobbling up three different bullet weights and profiles with ease.

I've owned a P-10 C for several years and, although I don't shoot it regularly, I felt like I had a good baseline for what shooting the P-10 C Ported would be like. I've fired numerous ported handguns that seemed to offer no noticeable reduction in recoil or muzzle rise. The P-10 C Ported was not one of those.

The P-10 C Ported is one of the flattest-shooting 9mm handguns I've fired in recent memory. I'm sure a

high-speed camera or microphone could prove that this compensator produced more muzzle blast, but I couldn't detect it. I also shot the pistol at twilight and didn't notice any flash. Perhaps the flash-suppressing chemicals used in some modern powders can take that credit.

I wasn't able to secure an optic plate in time for my review, and I'm at an age when clean focus on the sights is becoming a real challenge. Nonetheless, I was able to shoot tight groups from the bench, and shot the gun well at closer distances while evaluating the compensator's effectiveness. The P-10 C Ported proved to be both mechanically accurate and very shootable in practical scenarios.

With a suggested retail price of \$549 and a street price around \$420, this handgun is a steal. It combines proven reliability with modern features—particularly a superior optic mounting system and a very effective compensator—in addition to the great trigger and configurable grip the P-10 C already had.

If you're wondering why we're seeing more guns like the P-10 C Ported, with its competition-minded features, I think two factors are in play. One is technological advancement. Optics have become smaller and far more reliable, and battery life is measured in years rather than minutes.

The second is experience. In the two-plus decades of near-con-



▲ The P-10 C Ported ships with two 15-round steel magazines as well as two accessory base pads that extend the capacity to 17 rounds.

ACCURACY RESULTS | CZ P-10 C PORTED

9mm Luger	Bullet Weight (gr.)	Muzzle Velocity (fps)	Std. Dev. (fps)	Avg. Group (in.)
Hornady Critical Defense FTX	115	1,130	8	1.6
Sierra THD	124	1,092	6	1.7
Fiocchi Range Dynamics FMJ	147	993	14	2.7

Notes: Accuracy results are averages of four five-shot groups at 25 yards from a Target Shooting, Inc. Model 1500 rest. Velocities are averages of 10 shots recorded on a Garmin Xero C1.

UPPING ITS GAME

← stant combat that followed 9/11, many people gained enough practical experience to make informed decisions when it came to equipment. As it turned out, good guys in combat wanted to make fast hits on targets just as competitors did, and would take every advantage possible. That knowledge has been passed on to the civilian sector, and the firearm industry has worked to meet those needs.

When you combine these aspects with the reliability, value and simple operation of the polymer-frame striker-fired platform, you've got a gun occupying a valuable position in the handgun market.

As manufacturers seek to increase the options in their popular handgun lines, we will continue to see the addition of features such as compensators. In the case of the P-10 C Ported, this isn't merely a marketing gimmick but a truly effective upgrade to an already great handgun.



▲ Three interchangeable backstraps are included. Changing them requires removing a roll pin, a task best accomplished with an appropriately sized roll pin punch.

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POWER MOVE

THE INGLIS P-35 N IS A BROWNING HI POWER CLONE THAT DELIVERS GOOD LOOKS AND PERFORMANCE AT A LOW PRICE.

BY BRAD FITZPATRICK



forged components and a 4140 button-rifled barrel with a 1:10 twist.

The forged steel frame is similar to the original Hi Power—cast frames did not become common until the Mk III version in .40 S&W—and the gun features rear slide serrations and the traditional machine cuts on the slide and frame that narrow the front portion of the pistol for easier holstering and reduced weight.

The original Hi Power pistol had an internal extractor, but in the 1960s Browning switched to an external extractor. The Inglis P-35 pistols also feature externally mounted extractors.

The black U-notch rear sight of the P-35 N rests in a dovetail in the slide and is drift adjustable. The front sight is fiber optic—a modern addition to the P-35 design—and it too rests in a dovetail cut in the slide. As with other P-35/Hi Power pistols, the slide is not cut for optics.

The original Belgian P-35 was a fine pistol, but it wasn't without its flaws. First and foremost, improperly positioning your hand on the gun could result in a painful hammer bite when firing, and that more than any other drawback has probably put more people off the P-35. Inglis wisely addressed this issue by adding a “no bite” hammer with a round hammer ring and mild chamfering. Capacity was also bumped up from 13 on the original P-35 to 15, and the new Inglis guns come with a pair of metal 15-round magazines.

Almost certainly the most despised feature of the original P-35 was the magazine disconnect safety, a feature that the French military deemed essential on its sidearms. The Inglis has no such disconnect safety and will fire without the magazine in place.

The French also wanted a pistol with a manual safety, which the original P-35 offered. The Ing- →

When Browning discontinued production of the Hi Power in 2018, it didn't take other brands long to fill the vacuum left behind by the passing of this iconic pistol. The latest company to bring back the Hi Power is Inglis, which makes its Hi Power clones in Turkey and imports them to the United States at very reasonable prices.

The Inglis name will always be synonymous with the P-35 pistol. However, the Inglis that imports P-35 pistols from Turkey today is different than the original John

Inglis and Company of Canada. Following World War II, John Inglis and Company of Canada stopped manufacturing firearms and began making home appliances, and in the 1980s the company was acquired by Whirlpool. Inglis Manufacturing is owned by SDS Imports of Knoxville, Tennessee—the same company that owns Tisas, Tokarev USA, Military Armament Corporation and Spandau Arms.

Inglis currently offers four Hi Power clones: the P-35 N, P-35 B, GP-35 and the L9A1. The Inglis P-35 N 9mm I tested is built with

POWER MOVE

← The Inglis P-35 N incorporates an ambidextrous manual safety, so the gun is easier for lefties to shoot.

The Inglis website indicated that the P-35 N came with G-10 grips. But when I unboxed the pistol I was certain they were wood grips, and messaged Neil Sanders at SDS Imports to verify. The grips are wood, and the design and diamond-point checkering look very much like the grips on the original gun.

Dimensionally, the new Inglis

P-35 N is similar to the original Belgian P-35. The Inglis has a 4.7-inch barrel and weighs in at 31 ounces unloaded just like the original gun. Height is 4.9 inches, and the Inglis has a maximum width of 1.4 inches.

The forged steel frame and slide make this pistol heavier than competing polymer-frame pistols, but the weight and balance of a P-35 are ideal for accurate shooting and recoil management. I still believe that no gun feels better in the hand than the Hi Power and its clones.

The metal components are well-built and free of excessive machine

marks, and the matte electroless nickel finish looks very good. Slide-to-frame and barrel-to-slide fit are both good. There are a few minor aesthetic upgrades it could use, such as a serrated slide top, but overall the fit, finish and quality are solid for a working gun.

I like the black U-notch rear sight, too. The green fiber-optic front sight is functional kind of like a fanny pack, but as with a fanny pack I don't think it helps with overall aesthetics. The Inglis P-35 N is a classic pistol appealing to classic pistol fans, and I think a simple brass bead would have done nicely, but what do I know? Apparently fanny packs are back in fashion, too.

Accuracy was pretty good. Hornady's Critical Defense ammunition provided the smallest five-shot, 25-yard group of the day at 1.3 inches, but most groups hovered around 2.5 inches and a few topped three inches.

The gun was reliable for the most part. Federal's 135-grain Hydra-Shok Deep ammo twice failed to return the slide completely to battery, and one Wilson Combat round didn't chamber. But that was it, and the other ammunition ran just fine.

The trigger isn't awful, but you're not going to mistake it for a tuned 1911. Break weight was five pounds, 12 ounces, and I measured it after I was all done testing. It's got a gritty feel that might smooth out after more shooting.

Overall, though, this gun was fun to shoot. Three failures in the first 150 rounds isn't a bad record, especially for a new pistol, and the quality of the Inglis belies its price. This is a solid pistol that could use a better trigger, but I still consider it a bargain.

As a mostly faithful P-35 clone, the Inglis shines brightest when you're off the bench. The gun absolutely sits in your hand and handles beautifully. That's the →



▲ The Inglis hammer is designed to reduce the risk of hammer bite, and the gun features an ambidextrous safety.

INGLIS P-35 N

TYPE: single-action semiauto

CALIBER: 9mm Luger

CAPACITY: two 15-round mags supplied

BARREL: 4.7 in., button rifled 4140 carbon alloy steel, 1:10 twist

OAL/HEIGHT/WIDTH: 7.5/4.9/1.4 in.

WEIGHT: 31 oz.

CONSTRUCTION: matte nickel-finished forged steel frame and slide

GRIPS: checkered walnut

TRIGGER: 5.75 lb. pull (measured)

SIGHTS: black drift-adjustable U-notch rear, green fiber-optic front

PRICE: \$663

MANUFACTURER: Inglis Manufacturing, INGLISMFG.COM



▲ The Inglis P-35 N controls are classic Hi Power, although the gun dispenses with the much-maligned magazine disconnect safety.

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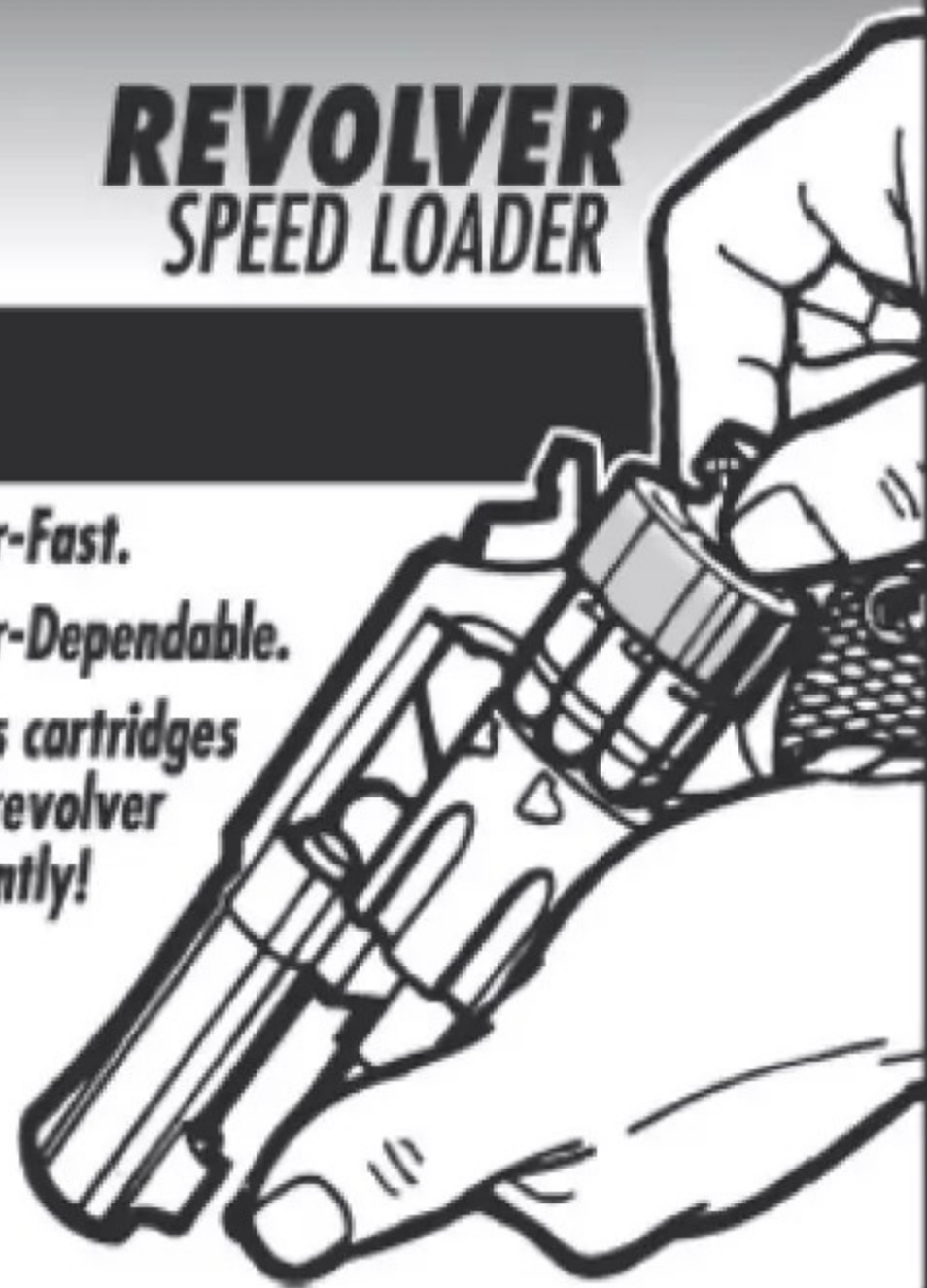
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← reason why people fall in love with the P-35 platform, and the Inglis doesn't disappoint. The grip is relatively large, and the pistol's low center of gravity—thanks to that forged steel frame—keeps it planted. If you want to shoot fast, this is a great 9mm option.

I've had the opportunity to shoot other guns in the SDS family, and I've been impressed by them and think they offer exceptional value. I've recommended them to friends who were searching for guns that offered good quality at modest prices. But this was my first experience with the Inglis Manufacturing sub-brand, and while it's not perfect, the P-35 N is a solid P-35 clone that's fun to shoot.

I'm of the belief that no handgun collection is complete without one quality P-35/Hi Power firearm. The

Inglis fits that bill and does so at a \$634 price tag that's considerably lower than some competing P-35 pistols, and that makes it a winner in my book. 



 The wood grips are true to the original design, with quality checkering and a nice finish.



 The characteristic Hi Power machining on the front of the slide/frame assembly helps keep weight back in the hand. The front sight is a green fiber optic, a modern touch, but Fitzpatrick wished for something more traditional.

ACCURACY RESULTS | INGLIS P-35 N

9mm Luger	Bullet Weight (gr.)	Muzzle Velocity (fps)	Std. Dev. (fps)	Avg. Group (in.)
Hornady Critical Defense FTX	115	1,138	14	2.1
Wilson Combat XTP HP +P	124	1,143	14	2.4
Federal Hydra-Shok Deep	135	1,009	9	2.5
Fiocchi CovertX JHP	124	1,155	16	2.8
Federal Solid Core	147	1,091	11	3.0

Notes: Accuracy results are averages of four five-shot groups fired at 25 yards from a fixed rest. Velocity figures are 10-shot averages recorded on a Caldwell VelociRadar. Abbreviation: JHP, jacketed hollowpoint

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NEXT UP



KIMBER'S NEXT GEN 1911S LOOK GREAT, SHOOT GREAT AND OFFER A TON OF VALUE.

BY J. SCOTT RUPP

In the handgun world, the name Kimber has been synonymous with the 1911 platform for a few decades, and while most recently the company has put a lot

of focus on its full-size and compact double-stack 1911s, it hasn't forgotten the traditional single-stack fans among us.

With the new Next Gen models,

the Alabama-based company is delivering a Government-size 1911 in both .45 ACP and 9mm Luger that is within the financial reach of most folks. There are two base models—a stainless gun and a two-tone—with suggested retail prices right at \$1,000. For the more well-heeled there's also an embellished custom .45 version selling for twice that.

I tested the two-tone in 9mm, officially the Custom Two-Tone Next Gen (OR). It's right up my alley because I have a thing for two-tone 1911s and am a convert to the 9mm chambering in this platform. It's a sharp-looking pistol that incorporates both the old and the new.

The build is all stainless, with a black KimPro II-finished slide over a satin silver frame. The slide features the classic front-end cut, and it's essentially a tri-top configuration but with an additional, subtle bevel on each side. The flat top is serrated.

The front and rear slide serrations are angled, narrow and relatively shallow, with round bottoms. I wouldn't exactly call them subtle, but they're not overly sharp or aggressive either. They do, however, provide sufficient traction for racking the slide and doing press checks.

The slide is cut for optics, hence the optic-ready (OR) tag, and an adapter plate for the Trijicon RMR footprint ships with the gun. The C&H Precision slide cover plate has an integral plain black rear U-notch sight, and the rear pairs with a front blade set in a dovetail.

The front sight features a painted red dot. It's of standard height and will not co-witness with an optic, and I think that plays into why Kimber decided not to incorporate a rear sight into the slide, but rather on the slide cover plate instead. In other words, if you go the red-dot route, you're all-in.

The five-inch ramped barrel is stainless steel and is deeply crowned at the muzzle. The Next Gen employs the traditional short guide rod, which is also stain- →

NEXT UP

← less steel, and a 12-pound recoil spring. The recoil spring plug is smooth at the front, not checkered as you usually see, and that plus the crowned muzzle and the tri-top slide give the Next Gen pistol a sharp, distinctive look at the muzzle end.

While the Next Gen opts for the traditional bushing/GI guide rod, the extractor is external rather than internal. You can literally start a fight with John Browning purists over the internal versus external extractor. Makers like Smith & Wesson and SIG have long used the external extractor, and I recently reviewed two Ed Brown EVO models that had externals. So it's a proven approach, and

the external does have an advantage in ease of replacement, should that become necessary.

The Custom Two-Tone Next Gen's grip panels are an interesting combination of black walnut and G-10. The latter is an inlay with a solid black border, and it is perfectly fitted with the wood—not a gap or glitch in sight. The walnut itself shows attractive figuring and would've looked great all by itself, but the G-10 inlay complements it well. The panels are secured to the frame with black 3/32 Allen screws.

The frame boasts a rounded cut at the bottom for better concealment. If you've never tried one so configured,

you should. That rounded corner really helps clothing slide off and prevents printing. Plus I think it's stylish.

The mainspring housing is black and checkered at 30 lines per inch, and the frontstrap is likewise checkered in that pattern.

The black controls contrast nicely with the silver frame. The thumb safety is ambidextrous. The grip safety lacks a memory bump, although it does have a slight rise toward the bottom half.

The magazine release is a checkered round button, and in a nice custom touch the mag catch screw is an Allen, not slotted. It's a small detail I appreciate because if you like to mess with your 1911s, it's way too easy to bugger a slotted head when removing the mag catch.

The stainless steel magazines hold nine rounds. The witness holes in the sides are not numbered. The mags feature flat base plates that are adorned with "Kimber" in script.

Another nice touch is the unobtrusive disassembly notch in the slide. You actually have to tilt the



▲ The black controls make a nice contrast with the silver frame, and the new GT Performance trigger is excellent. The grip safety lacks a memory bump but still functions well.



▲ The pistol comes with an adapter plate for the Trijicon RMR footprint. The rear sight is integral with the slide cover plate; there's no rear sight on the gun's slide or the adapter plate. The extractor is external.

KIMBER CUSTOM TWO-TONE NEXT GEN (OR)

TYPE: 1911

CALIBER: 9mm Luger (tested), .45 ACP

CAPACITY: two 9-round mags supplied

BARREL: 5 in. stainless steel, ramped, crowned

OAL/HEIGHT/WIDTH: 8.6/5.4/1.4 (across safeties) in.

WEIGHT: 36.2 oz.

CONSTRUCTION: black KimPro II-finished stainless steel slide, satin silver-finished stainless steel frame

GRIPS: black walnut w/G-10 inlays

TRIGGER: GT Performance; 3 lb., 7 oz. pull (measured)

SIGHTS: U-notch plain black serrated rear on C&H Precision cover plate, red dot front; slide cut for optics, Trijicon RMR-footprint adapter plate supplied

SAFETIES: ambidextrous thumb, grip

PRICE: \$999

MANUFACTURER: Kimber, KIMBERAMERICA.COM

gun slightly to see it. Continuing the theme of custom looks at a production price, the takedown lever hole on the right side of the frame is counter-sunk, HRT style.

The trigger is Kimber's new GT Performance. Advertised break weight is four to five pounds, but the one on my sample was snapping sharply at just under 3.5 pounds. The take-up is smooth, and the break couldn't be crisper. While there's overtravel adjustment courtesy of the usual screw accessed through the trigger blade, adjustment wasn't necessary with this one. Reset was short and crisp.

There was a little slide-to-frame play that I would call in the acceptable range, and it didn't affect performance at all. Both the thumb safeties and the magazine release exhibited just the right amount of tension.

For testing I mounted Trijicon's new RMR Type 2 with 3.25 m.o.a. green dot (see sidebar) on the pistol via the provided adapter plate. Bench testing came first as usual, and the Next Gen proved to be a real shooter. As you can see in the accompanying chart, it produced great averages across the board, and I managed three sub-inch groups at 25 yards—two with Federal Punch and one with Fiocchi CovertX.

After that was done, I switched to a series of 5x5 drills, which has become my gold standard for test pistols that come with multiple magazines and for which I have a holster. The ammo for the drills was 115-grain hollowpoints from Fiocchi.

Boy, it's hard to beat a full-size, all-steel 9mm 1911 for putting solid hits on target in a hurry. Red dots that are too high above the bore can give me fits when it comes to finding the dot on the draw. Thanks to the execution of the slide cut, the RMR sat nice and low even with its adapter plate, and I had no problems acquiring the dot quickly.

The attractive G-10 panels could be a little more aggressive, but they do provide more traction than you'd

get if the grips were plain wood. The fine checkering on the frontstrap and mainspring housing helps anchor the gun in your hand.

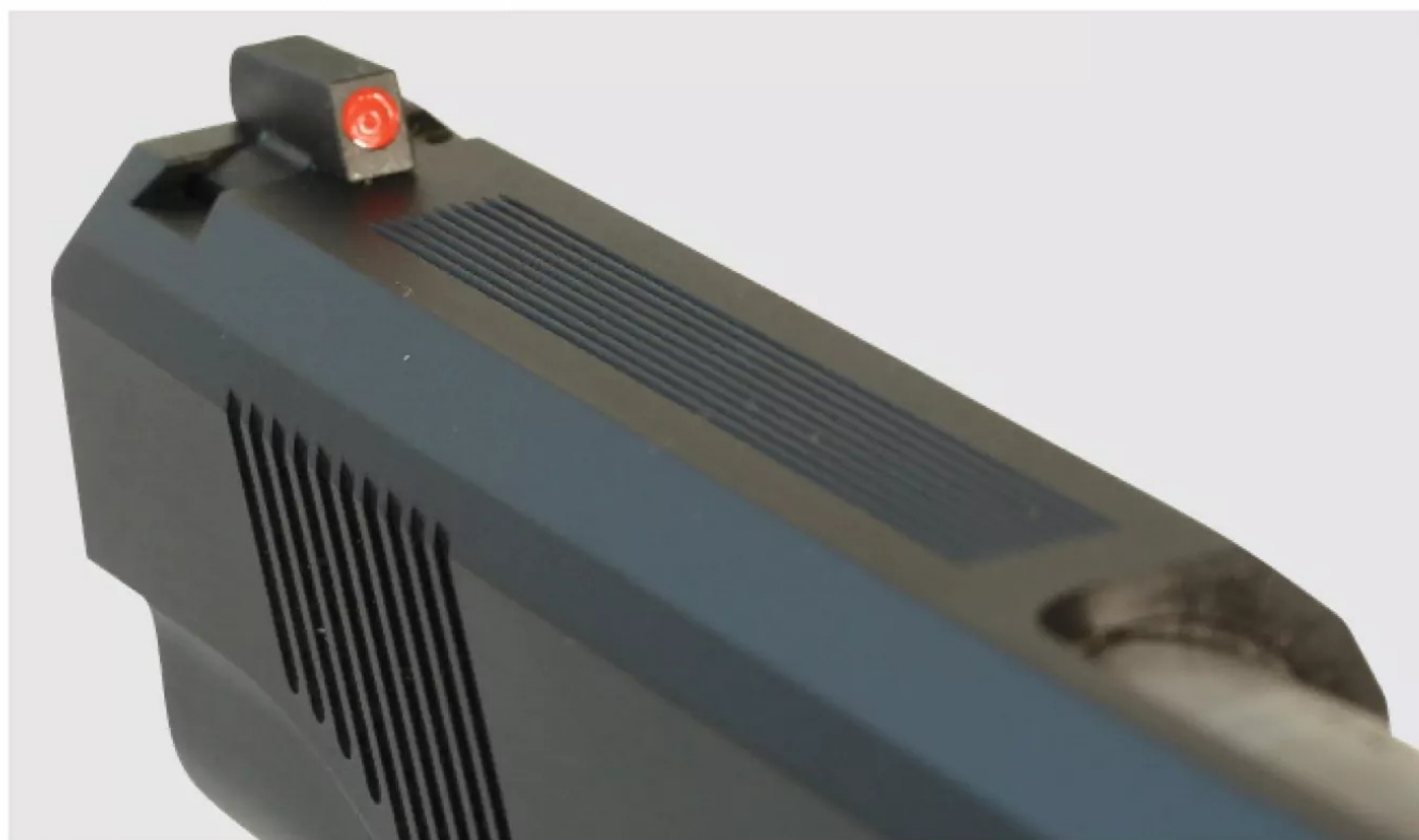
Reloads were no problem. The mags dropped free slick and easy, and the slight bevel on the magazine well helped insertions go smoothly. Despite the lack of a memory bump

on the grip safety, I never failed to deactivate it. The excellent break on the trigger was a big factor in getting hits on the "down zero" zones of the IDPA targets—especially the head box hits required on Stage 4 of the drill.

There were no malfunctions during bench testing or field shooting. →



▲ The beveled slide, combined with the smooth recoil spring plug and deeply crowned muzzle, gives the gun a distinctive look.



▲ The top of the slide is serrated to reduce glare, and the dovetailed front sight features a painted red dot.

ACCURACY RESULTS | KIMBER CUSTOM TWO-TONE NEXT GEN (OR)

9mm Luger	Bullet Weight (gr.)	Muzzle Velocity (fps)	Std. Dev. (fps)	Avg. Group (in.)
Black Hills HoneyBadger +P	100	1,240	13	2.0
Federal Punch	124	1,167	8	1.0
Fiocchi CovertX	124	1,166	19	1.3
Hornady XTP	147	1,053	20	1.8

Notes: Accuracy results are averages of four five-shot groups at 25 yards with a Trijicon RMR Type 2 green dot reflex sight from a Ransom Multi Cal Steady Rest. Velocities are averages of 15 shots recorded 10 feet from the muzzle with a ProChrono DLX.

NEXT UP

← Granted, this gun had already been broken in some by a prior tester, but it digested the entire spectrum of 9mm bullet weights without hanging up, and that's a testament to the Next Gen's reliability.


Complaint time, and the first one is totally subjective. The grip had a chunky feel to it. I say it's subjective

because I measured the grip from every possible angle and could not find a single dimension that was significantly fatter than your regular everyday 1911. It simply feels that way to me, and I can't explain why.

I also wish there was an undercut behind the trigger guard for a higher grip. My final gripe concerns the

front sight. While I didn't spend a ton of time shooting the gun with irons, the red-painted dot doesn't stand out as well as other types. And frankly I think it looks cheap on what is otherwise a distinctive, attractive 1911. It's not a huge deal because replacing a dovetailed 1911 sight isn't hard, and there are plenty of aftermarket options.

As I said earlier, the Next Gen's cost is within reach of most shooters. At \$999 it's on the low end of Kimber's single-stack 1911 stable, with only the aluminum-frame LW series costing less. In the wider 1911 market, if you don't count the true budget pistols, the Kimber is on the low/middle part of the price spectrum.

For that grand, the Next Gen offers on-point features like the optics-cut slide, rounded frame and sharp looks. When you combine those features with its great trigger, terrific accuracy and 100 percent reliability—along with the undeniable panache that comes with the Kimber name—I think it offers excellent value for any 1911 shopper, particularly to those looking for their first or second single-stack. 



A The black walnut grip panels have G-10 inserts that add a bit of traction, plus they look great. The frame corner is rounded for better concealment.

Trijicon's RMR Goes Green

Trijicon's RMR reflex sight has been an industry-leading sight for a long time, and the company recently added to the RMR Type 2 family with a new green-dot version (\$810, [TRIJICON.COM](http://trijicon.com)). Built on a forged aluminum body and weighing just 1.2 ounces, it features an automatic brightness mode in addition to the ability to increase or decrease the intensity of the 3.25 m.o.a. dot via plus and minus buttons on the sides. There are eight brightness settings, two of which are for night vision devices, and you can lock out the manual adjustments if you want to run the sight solely on automatic.

Green dots are much easier to see than red dots, but they've lagged behind because they're more power hungry. However, technology is catching up, and this new sight promises two years of continuous use for its single CR2032 battery at 70 degrees at setting 4.

As an Adjustable LED model, the sight can be turned off when not in use. And it has a battery conservation mode that will automatically adjust the dot to ambient light conditions—powering down to the lowest setting, for example, in a safe, drawer or soft case—after 16.5 hours. The Type 2 sights do not have a top-load battery cap, so you'll have to remove the sight and reconfirm zero after changing batteries.

The RMR adjustment system is the best one out there, with well-marked elevation and windage adjustments that have tactile and audible one m.o.a. clicks. You don't need any special tools, and the rim of a cartridge works as well as anything.

It's harder to find brighter shooting conditions than the cloudless summer day on the high plains when I tested the Kimber. Red dots can be a little hard to pick up under such intense light, but the RMR's green dot really stood out against the cardboard IDPA targets I was using for drills. That was the case whether I was running the sight on auto or manual brightness. The multicoated lens provided an excellent view of the IDPAs, as well as the targets I used for bench testing.

If you've been thinking about making the move to green or are in the market for a sturdy, reliable reflex sight that will excel in all conditions, this new green-dot RMR from Trijicon is definitely worth considering.—*JSR*



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TAG TEAM



WALTHER AND PARKER MOUNTAIN MACHINE COLLABORATE ON THE BEST WALTHER PDP PRO-X PISTOL YET.

BY RICHARD NANCE | PHOTOS BY YAMIL SUED

Walther is no stranger to firearms manufacturing. Carl Wilhelm Freund Walther started a rifle making business way back in 1886. Years later, Carl's son Fritz Walther became interested in semiautomatic pistols and convinced his father that pistols should be the focus of their business. In 1908, the father and son team produced a prototype pistol dubbed the Model 1. In 1911, they received a patent and began production.

Now, 115 years later, Walther is one of the most respected pistol manufacturers in the world. Yet far from resting on its laurels, the company continues to innovate. The latest example of Walther ingenuity debuted in 2025. It's a feature-packed line extension of its PDP Pro-X family, of which there are 25 variants.

The PDP Pro-X PMM is a collaboration between Walther and New Hampshire-based Parker Mountain Machine (PMM), a company that makes its own firearms as well as components for several prominent gunmakers. That list includes Beretta, CZ, FN, Glock, HK, SIG Sauer, Smith & Wesson, Springfield Armory, Ruger, Staccato and, of course, Walther.

The PMM compensator is the most notable upgrade on the PDP Pro-X PMM pistol, which is available in full-size and compact versions. I tested the latter.

These days, compensators are popular and trendy. But some are more form than function, and a compensator should do more than look cool. It should make a pistol easier to control during rapid strings of fire, as may be required in competition or for self-defense.

The Pro-X PMM's 4.6-inch barrel is capped with an anodized aluminum compensator that attaches to the threaded barrel and is secured with Rocksett Engineering Adhesive. The compensator interfaces with the slide so it's locked in →

TAG TEAM

← place when the pistol is in battery. This prevents the compensator from rotating or coming loose.

The single-port compensator provides significant recoil reduction, while blending seamlessly with the contours of the pistol. It's optimized for +P ammunition, which many people choose for duty or defensive use.

But the custom compensator isn't the only feature that sets the PDP Pro-X PMM apart from the rest of the PDP Pro line. Walther pistols are known for their smooth, clean-breaking triggers. The PDP's Per-

formance Duty Trigger is a case in point. It seemed to me even better than the trigger on the now-extinct PPQ.

The trigger on the PDP Pro-X PMM is better still. The Dynamic Performance Trigger has a factory tuned engagement sear for a smoother pull. The trigger on my test model broke between 4.5 and five pounds.

There was little take-up to the wall. From there, the trigger broke cleanly with very little creep. Reset was short and easy to detect. Overall, the Dynamic Performance Trig-

ger is one of the best stock triggers you'll find on a striker-fired pistol.

The Pro-X PMM doesn't have a manual safety. However, the pistol is designed to fire only when the trigger blade is depressed.

Like the PDP, the PDP Pro-X PMM is a modular pistol, but unlike semiautos with a steel chassis that can be swapped into various grip modules, the PMM comes in either a compact or full-size polymer frame, with the frame being the serialized component. The difference between the two is that the full-size version has a longer grip. The Pro-X PMM is stamped either "Compact" or "Full Size" as appropriate, on the left side of the frame, behind the slide-stop lever.

The compact version ships with three 18-round magazines. Each features an aluminum base pad. The compact model's magazines have extended base pads, while magazines for the full-size model have shorter base pads. In a departure from the original PDP, the Pro-X PMM features a heavily beveled aluminum mag well that makes loading easier. All Pro-X PMM magazines are metal and eject cleanly from the pistol when the magazine release button is depressed.

The compact model will accept the longer, 20-round magazines that ship with the full-size model, but the full-size model will not accept the 18-round magazines that come with the compact model. Ten-round magazines are available with either model for states with capacity restrictions.

As with its predecessors, the Pro-X PMM's slide is constructed of Tenifer-coated steel. Tenifer adds durability and corrosion resistance—two important characteristics of a pistol designed for hard use. The slide is beveled to prevent excess weight and bulk, and it also contributes to the pistol's aesthetics.

The slide features Walther's angled SuperTerrain slide serra-



A The Pro-X PMM retains many of the features found on the PDP family, including the SuperTerrain serrations on the slide, the reversible mag release and the ambidextrous, extended slide-stop lever.



A The anodized aluminum compensator comes from Parker Mountain Machine. It's secured with Rocksett Engineering Adhesive and butts up against the slide for a solid fit.

tions front and rear. Unlike most serrations, which are recessed, SuperTerrain serrations protrude from the slide to provide an optimal grip for slide manipulation.

Both the compact and full-size models have the same slide configuration, with the 4.6-inch barrel housed in a four-inch slide atop a five-inch dust cover. Each has a five-slot accessory rail that will accommodate a variety of full-size lights or light/laser combo units. Lights not only aid in target identification, they also add weight toward the muzzle, which helps mitigate whatever recoil forces escape the compensator.

The Pro-X PMM uses Glock-pattern sights, so there's no shortage of compatible aftermarket options. The sights are standard height, but because the optic cut is deep in the slide, the sights will be usable through the bottoms of many optic windows, should the optic fail. I tested the pistol with an AmeriGlo Haven. This has a thick base, and the irons would not co-witness through it.

The Pro-X PMM ships with a cover plate with matching SuperTerrain serrations. Six mounting plates are available through Walther's "redeem a plate" program, which entitles you to a free optic plate of your choosing. The fact that the Pro-X PMM doesn't ship with multiple plates may seem inconvenient, but it's a cost-saving measure that many shooters will appreciate, especially considering most will use only one plate.

The Pro-X PMM is optimized for red-dot sights, as evidenced by the flare at the bottom of the frontstrap. The flare makes a nice handle for your pinky to apply pressure up and back. This brings the optic down slightly, enabling you to see the top of the optic window, where the red dot likes to hide from shooters. Pinky pressure also helps mitigate muzzle flip.

With so many polymer-frame pistols on the market, it's easy to assume

they're all the same. Not so with the Pro-X PMM. The ergonomic grip design, which includes subtle swells on either side of the grip, sets this pistol apart from the competition.

But design only goes so far. The Pro-X PMM is also well executed. Take, for instance, something as seemingly trivial as grip texturing. Walther's Performance Duty Texture covers the sides of the grip and the backstrap, providing a positive, non-slip surface for maximum control even in inclement weather or when wearing gloves.

This tetradedral (triangular pyramid) texture first appeared in the steel-frame Walther Q4 and Q5 and has carried over into the PDP series. It's aggressive without being abrasive. It stays locked in your hands but is comfortable enough to carry in an inside-the-waistband holster. The frontstrap features checkering rather than the Performance Duty Texture. The combination works well.

The oversize trigger guard is big enough to accommodate a gloved trigger finger. The front of the trigger guard is dished and checkered for those who prefer to wrap the index finger of their non-shooting hand for additional control. The beavertail and undercut trigger guard enable you to grip high on the pistol, which helps tame recoil.

If you're starting to recognize a theme, it's because everything about the PDP Pro-X PMM is designed to reduce felt recoil—a benefit to shooters of all skill levels.

Three interchangeable backstraps ensure you get the best fit possible. The backstraps have varying degrees of swell, and the largest has a more pronounced arch and a longer beavertail. Since the backstraps are rubberized, they are more comfortable than polymer backstraps and, you guessed it, they dampen felt recoil.

Controls are well executed and user-friendly. The elongated, triangular slide-stop lever is easy to

use as a slide release. Lefties—and righties operating the pistol left-handed—will appreciate that the slide-stop lever is ambidextrous. Its size, shape and serrations provide a positive gripping surface, so your thumb won't slip off when locking the slide open or sending it forward into battery.

The magazine release button is big and round, with checkering for traction. The area below the button is raised to prevent accidentally ejecting a magazine from the pistol. While not ambidextrous, the →



▲ The tetrahedral grip texture on the side is complemented by checkering on the frontstrap. The integral mag well makes reloads a snap.

WALTHER PDP PRO-X PMM COMPACT

TYPE: striker-fired semiauto

CALIBER: 9mm Luger

CAPACITY: three 18-round mags supplied

BARREL: 4.6 in., compensated

OAL/HEIGHT/WIDTH: 8.5/5.7/1.4 in.

WEIGHT: 24.7 oz.

CONSTRUCTION: Tenifer-coated steel slide, polymer frame w/interchangeable backstraps

SIGHTS: 3-dot white; optic cut, no adapter plate included

TRIGGER: Dynamic Performance; 5 lb. pull (measured)

SAFETY: trigger blade

PRICE: \$999

MANUFACTURER: Walther, WALTHERARMS.COM

TAG TEAM

← slide stop is reversible, another nod to the southpaws, who are no longer forced to struggle with pistols designed exclusively for right-handed shooters.

The extractor doubles as a loaded-chamber indicator. When a round is chambered, the extractor protrudes slightly from the frame, and a red line is visible. It's nice to have both visual and tactile indication of the status of the chamber.

The Pro-X PMM disassembles like most other striker-fired pistols. After removing the magazine and ensuring it's unloaded, allow the slide to go into battery. Then, with the muzzle pointed in a safe direction, press and release the trigger. Pull down on both sides of the takedown lever simultaneously. Pull the slide back slightly, then slide it forward and off the frame. From

there, you can remove the integral recoil spring and guide rod.

The barrel can't be removed without removing the compensator, but it can be angled to clean the bore. Reassembly is just a matter of reversing this process.

I shot the Pro-X PMM for accuracy from a bench rest at 25 yards, then for speed offhand at 10 yards. As reliable as Walther pistols are, compensators can cause issues with certain ammunition types. In fact, Walther's website lists recommended loads and loads to avoid.

Bullets of 115 to 124 grains are recommended over 147-grain bullets. The website indicates that most 147-grain bullets will run in the Pro-X PMM, but performance may decline due to the decrease in velocity.

I tested 115- and 124-grain bullets.

With Fiocchi's 115-grain full-metal jacket load—ammo that's on the recommended list—the pistol incurred two stovepipe malfunctions early on. There were no other malfunctions during the testing.

Hornady's 124-grain Critical Defense +P and Walther's 124-grain THD jacketed hollowpoints seemed to benefit most from the compensator, which really softened felt recoil and muzzle flip. The Fiocchi load wasn't as snappy to begin with and, as a result, the advantage of the compensator was less apparent. That said, the lighter Fiocchi load did produce tighter groups.

Walther and Parker Mountain Machine didn't join forces for the Pro-X PMM to be slow-fired from a bench. A compensator really shines when you're shooting fast offhand. Even a pistol with heavy recoil can be accurate in slow fire. But during fast shooting, recoil makes a pistol harder to control. With a worthwhile compensator, the pistol will recover predictably after each shot, which speeds aiming for the next shot.

The Pro-X PMM felt like an extension of my body. It pointed naturally, and when I drove the pistol to the target, its ergonomic design helped ensure the red dot landed on the sweet spot. Once that first round impacted the target, it was simply a matter of controlling the trigger. With the Dynamic Performance Trigger, that was easy to do.

Collaborating with Parker Mountain Machine helped Walther make the PDP Pro-X even better. Good luck finding a full-size or compact pistol that's compensated and optic ready, with excellent ergonomics and an even better trigger, for less than the PDP Pro-X PMM's \$999 suggested retail price.

There's more to the Pro-X PMM than the addition of a compensator. Not only does the pistol exude a clean, contoured vibe, but the individual components contribute to a firearm that performs better than the sum of its parts.



A The PDP Pro-X PMM's deep optic cut enables the standard-height sights to be used with most optics. A free optics adapter plate can be ordered with each gun.

ACCURACY RESULTS | WALTHER PDP PRO-X PMM COMPACT

9mm Luger	Bullet Weight (gr.)	Muzzle Velocity (fps)	Std. Dev. (fps)	Avg. Group (in.)
Fiocchi FMJ	115	1,173	15	1.6
Walther THD JHP	124	1,166	9	1.9
Hornady Critical Defense + P	124	1,219	2	2.3

Notes: Accuracy results are averages of four five-shot groups at 25 yards with an AmeriGlo Haven red dot from a Caldwell Handy Rest NXT. Velocities are averages of 10 shots recorded on a Garmin Xero C1 Pro chronograph. Abbreviation: FMJ, full metal jacket; JHP, jacketed hollowpoint

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OPTIC FOOTPRINT GUIDE



ONE SIZE DEFINITELY DOESN'T FIT ALL WHEN IT COMES TO MOUNTING OPTICS. HERE'S A RUNDOWN OF WHAT FITS WHAT.

BY BRAD FITZPATRICK

If you've purchased a semiauto pistol in the last five years or so, odds are it came with a slide that was cut to accept optics. However, mounting an optic on your handgun isn't always a straightforward process, and it's complicated by the fact that there are so many different optic "footprints" on the market today.

An optic's footprint essential- →

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ly describes the pattern of holes and sockets that are used to secure the optic in place on your firearm. If everything doesn't line up right, your optic may not fit, or it might fall off your firearm while you're shooting.

Some pistols employ various adapter plates to fit these foot-

prints, others have their slides cut to a single footprint. More recently we've seen systems of interchangeable, movable pins to accommodate different patterns. Regardless of the approach, you need to know the footprint of your particular optic. Here's a look at the primary optic footprints available today.

Aimpoint/Glock A-Cut

Glock and Aimpoint designed the unique A-Cut to accept Aimpoint's new COA red-dot optic. The cut itself is unique because of the way the optic secures to the pistol. A-Cut slides have a cutout at the front that interfaces with a wide lip on the front of the optic. The COA sight is slipped into the cutout and then lowered onto the slide—similar to inserting your foot into a ski boot. Another lip at the rear of the sight housing is held in place by a pair of screws that also secure a co-witness rear sight in place.

It's a robust and rugged system that reduces the risk of losing an optic. And Aimpoint's and Glock's exclusive partnership ends this year, so other pistol manufacturers can adopt the A-Cut for COA optics if they want.

Aimpoint Acro

Fully enclosed red dots are all the rage these days, but you can't use traditional screws that enter through the deck of the sight. To address this, Aimpoint developed a unique footprint that's similar to a Picatinny rail. The footprint has a cutout to accommodate the sight's lug. To install, loosen the screws on the side, align the lug and cutout, and rotate the optic into position just like you would a riflescope on a Pic rail. When the system is tightened down the optic is secured on the sides, and the lug prevents



▲ The Trijicon RMR (l.) footprint has sockets only at the front, while the Leupold DeltaPoint Pro (r.) has them front and rear. Socket-to-hole and hole spacing are also different. The sights' deck heights and screw layouts dictate the types of screws necessary.



▲ The Shield RMSc (l.) is one of the most popular footprints out there, and the Holosun K (c.) is a modification of the RMSc with two sockets instead of four. The Docter/Noblex/Burris (r.) is also widely used.

HANDGUN OPTIC FOOTPRINT CHART

Footprint Name	Number of Sockets	Example Optics
Aimpoint A-Cut	0*	Aimpoint COA
Aimpoint Acro	0**	Aimpoint Acro, Burris Fastfire E, Steiner MPS, Viridian RFX45
C-More RTS/STS	2	C-More RTS and STS, Vortex Razor, SIG Romeo3, Romeo3 MAX and Romeo3 XL, Kahles Helia RD
Docter/Noblex/Burris	4	Burris FastFire 2/3/4, Vortex Venom and Viper, Sightmark Mini-Shot M-Spec, Hex Dragonfly
Holosun K	4	Holosun K models
Leupold DeltaPoint Pro	4	Leupold DeltaPoint Pro, Bushnell RXS-100, Vortex Defender, Holosun SCS 320
Shield RMS/RMSc	4	Burris FastFire C, Vortex Defender CCW, SIG RomeoZero, Sightmark M-Spec M3
SIG-LOC	2*	SIG Romeo-X SIG-LOC Pro, Romeo-X SIG-LOC Compact
Trijicon RMR	2	Trijicon RMR and SRO, Holosun 407C X2 and 507C X2, Viridian RFX35, Riton 3 Tactic PRD 3
Trijicon RMRcc	0	Trijicon RMRcc

* These optics also utilize cuts on the slide and an extension on the optic to stabilize the sight.

** Uses a lug.

it from moving back and forth. It's a simple, effective mounting system that holds up well to hard-hitting calibers. In addition to Aimpoint's Acro sight, Viridian's RFX45 (Acro footprint model), Burris Fastfire E and Steiner's MPS also use this footprint.

C-More RTS/STS

The C-More is rugged but simple, with a pair of 3mm sockets. In addition to the C-More sights, other optics that utilize this footprint include SIG Sauer Romeo3, Romeo3 Max and Romeo3 XL; Vortex's

Razor; and the Kahles Helia RD. C-More adapter plates are also available for Glock MOS pistols.

Docter/Noblex/Burris

The Docter/Noblex/Burris footprint is one of the most popular options available today. It's so common that if a single optic plate is included with a gun, it is often this one. The layout of the Docter footprint is simple but sturdy, with sockets in each corner.

Many optics fit this pattern—including, of course, sights from Docter, Noblex and Burris. Other popular sights using it are the Hawke Reflex and Frontier; Springfield Hex Dragonfly; Leica Tempus and Tempus 2; Sightmark Mini Shot M-Spec and A-Spec M1; Viridian RFX25; and the Vortex Venom and Viper.

Holosun K

A modification of the RMSc, the Holosun K uses the same general pattern but does away with the rear sockets. It fits Holosun's 407K X2 and 507K X2.

Leupold DeltaPoint Pro

The DeltaPoint Pro looks very much like an RMSc footprint, but close counts only in horseshoes

and hand grenades—and you can't mount a DeltaPoint Pro footprint optic on an RMSc plate. It'll fit on the plate, but because the sockets on DeltaPoint Pro optics are larger in diameter (4.2 mm) than the lugs on an RMSc plate (3.9mm)—and with slightly larger screw holes—it won't be as secure as it should be.

However, the socket design allows the DeltaPoint Pro to function on thin, concealed-carry handguns, and it's a solid system that holds the optic at all four corners. In addition to Leupold's DeltaPoint Pro, the Vortex Defender, Bushnell RXS-100, Holosun SCS 320 and SIG Romeo-X Pro use it as well.

Shield RMSc

The Shield RMSc has become the standard footprint for compact carry guns, and it functions well on narrow slides. Because the RMSc footprint has become so popular, many handgun manufacturers design the optic cut on their slides specifically to fit this footprint. Several of the most popular micro-compact 9mms like the Springfield Hellcat, SIG P365 and Ruger Max-9 are RMSc compatible in this way.

The layout for the RMSc includes four 3.9mm sockets at each corner, with two 4.0mm holes for screw attachment. In case you're wondering, the Shield RMS and RMSc footprints are the same. Instead, it's the optics themselves that differ, but the socket spacing remains the same.

It's worth noting that some Holosun sights are listed as having an RMSc footprint. That's true, but the Holosun does not have rear sockets, and the front sockets are shallower than on the RMSc. In some instances, this means you'll have to remove the rear lugs on an RMSc plate to accommodate those Holosun sights, and you may have to shorten the lugs in front to fit properly in the sockets.

There's a long list of red-dot optics that fit the RMSc footprint, including, among others, the Burris →



J. Scott Rupp photo

▲ The Aimpoint Acro footprint shares some characteristics with a Picatinny setup you might find on a rifle, using a lug and a screw-in rail fitting that secures the sight.



▲ Many guns use adapter plates for attaching optics. Some, like Smith & Wesson's C.O.R.E. shown here, ship with multiple plates. Others include a single plate or require ordering the plate for the optic of your choice.

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← FastFire C; Vortex Defender CCW; Sightmark M-Spec M3 and A-Spec M3; Meprolight Mepro MPO Pro-S, S and DS; SIG RomeoZero and Romeo-X Compact; Springfield Hex Wasp; Crimson Trace CT RAD Micro; and Viridian RFX15 and RFX 11.

SIG-LOC

The SIG-LOC (Leverage Optimized Connection) varies slightly from traditional footprints. For starters, the screws that hold the optic in place are inserted from the underside of the slide. To install a SIG-LOC optic you must remove the slide from the gun, align the front “wedge” (an extension of the optic) into the corresponding cutout on the gun, align the lugs on the optic with the sockets on the slide cut (one front right, one left rear) and then secure it by inserting and tightening screws through the underside of the slide.



▲ Guns like the Ruger RXM shown here, as well as several Springfield pistols, use a slide cut that can be configured via a pin system to accommodate many different red-dot sights.

With five anchor points, the SIG-LOC optic system offers impressive security. Currently only the P365 Fuse pistol is available with the

SIG-LOC system, but SIG Sauer has promised integration across the P365 and P320 platforms in the future. →



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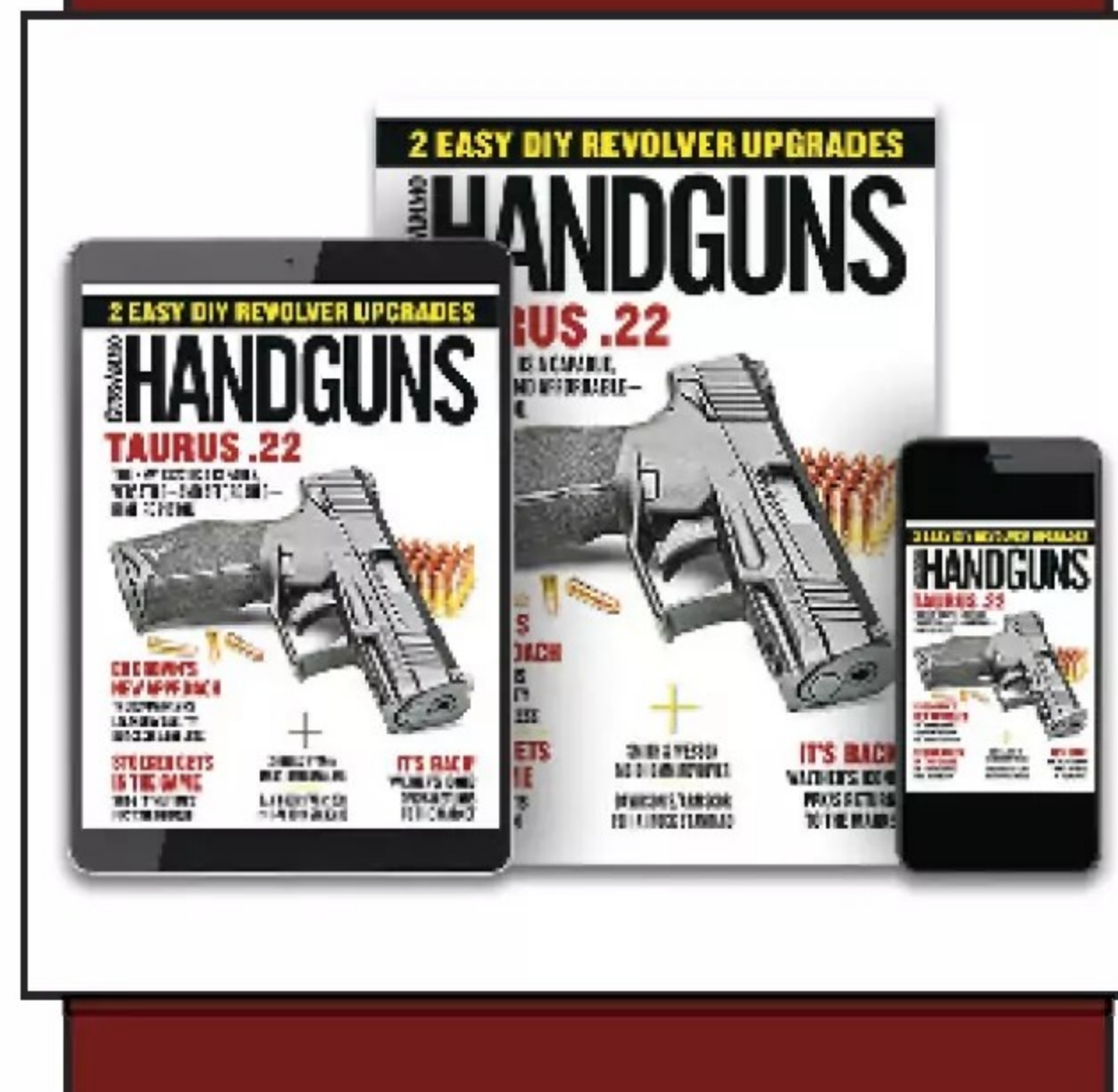
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← Trijicon RMR

The Trijicon RMR is certainly one of the most popular footprint options available today, and it has proven to be reliable, robust and secure. It's designed with only two sockets in the front and a pair of holes for screw mounting. The sockets on the Trijicon optic are larger than the sockets on Docter optics (3.9mm and 3.0mm, respectively) and the Trijicon sockets are more widely spaced.

In addition to the Trijicon RMR and SRO, optics that fit the RMR footprint include Holosun 407C X2, 507C X2, EPS, 508T and 509T X2; Meprolight MPO Pro-F, MPO-F and MPO-DF; Riton 3 Tactic PRD 3; Viridian RFX35 and others.

Trijicon RMRcc

Trijicon has brought out its own micro footprint, the RMRcc. Though the RMRcc is similar in overall size to the RMR, it's a unique design.

Screw This

Finding the right screws to mate your optic to your pistol can be a challenge, so I contacted Ryan Muckenhirn, consumer sales manager at Vortex Optics, to ask for advice.

"We've found the easiest thing to do is to ship our optics with a variety of screws included," he said. Since thread pitches vary and often change without notice, adding extra screws made it easier for customers to mount Vortex red dots on a variety of guns.


As a writer who installs, removes and swaps optics frequently, I dearly appreciate all those options. Odds are they will fit, but if

they're too long you may have to grind down the screws to match your firearm.

But shouldn't there be a standard? Yes, in theory, but since thread pitches and thread lengths are at the discretion of the manufacturers, the ball is in their court. European gun manufacturers oftentimes use M4 screws, but U.S. domestic manufacturing is a grab bag that includes a bit of everything. Muckenhirn also mentioned that firearm manufacturers sometimes swap thread pitches or lengths without notifying optic manufacturers.—BF

Most notably, it lacks the lugs traditionally found on optic plates and relies instead on oversized threaded posts to secure the optic in position. The lack of traditional lugs may raise eyebrows, but I have carried an RMRcc on a Glock G43X MOS for two years and haven't had any issues.

Pistol-Specific Optics

Some optic companies offer red dots that are cut specifically to match certain pistols. Examples include Holosun and Noblex sights for Glock's MOS models. Holosun also makes sights specifically for HK, S&W, SIG and Walther guns, and these mount directly to the slide. 

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SMITH & WESSON SPEC SERIES V M&P9 METAL HD

THE FIFTH VERSION OF SMITH & WESSON'S Spec Series pistols has been in my stable of firearms for several months. It appeared in multiple episodes of “Handguns” TV and was a favorite of

SMITH & WESSON SPEC SERIES V M&P9 METAL HD

TYPE: striker-fired semiauto

CALIBER: 9mm Luger

CAPACITY: three 23-round mags supplied

BARREL: 4.9 in. w/Strike Industries compensator

OAL/HEIGHT/WIDTH: 8.8/5.8/1.7 in.

WEIGHT: 40 oz.

CONSTRUCTION: gray Armornite-finished steel slide and frame; blue PVD accents; polymer grip w/four interchangeable palm swells

TRIGGER: flat-face aluminum; 4.0 lb. pull (measured)

SIGHTS: suppressor-height green night sights; C.O.R.E. optics system

PRICE: \$1,699

MANUFACTURER: Smith & Wesson,

SMITH-WESSON.COM

the cast, so when it came time to officially evaluate the gun for the magazine, I was no stranger to the Spec Series V. I knew it to be a smooth-shooting, stylish 9mm that stands out in a crowded field.

The Spec Series V doesn't stand out just because of its performance potential, although this gun certainly shoots and handles well (more on that later). It's also one of the best-looking factory 9mms currently available.

The steel frame and slide sport a matte gray Armornite finish. Other components—the barrel, steel optic cover plate, slide stop, magazine release and steel magazine well—feature a multi-hue PVD finish. The mag well and other components appear blue under most light, but the finish has a prismatic effect that makes it look purple or yellow depending on the angle of the light.

The Spec Series V is stylish, but it's also a very practical pistol. The steel slide has lightening cuts and aggressive front and rear slide serrations. There are also a pair of “ears” on the

rear of the slide that offer an anchor point when cycling the action. The M2.0 spiral-fluted 1:10-twist barrel measures 4.9 inches long and comes with a Strike Industries compensator installed. A thread protector is included with each pistol.

With a frame made from machined steel, the Spec Series V is heavier than Smith & Wesson's polymer-frame guns, but that weight is designed to keep the gun planted under recoil and allow for faster follow-up shots.

Four grip inserts—small, medium, medium-large and large—are included for a secure, comfortable grip, and there's a black checkered insert in the front of the grip. This is an S&W Performance Center gun, so the flat-face, bladed aluminum trigger is tuned and offers a crisp break and short reset.

Most semiauto pistols are cut for optics, but no other optic plate matches the panache of this Smith & Wesson. The plate features a blue PVD finish and a prominent M&P logo. But if

you remove the plate you can mount most pistol optics on the market using the supplied C.O.R.E. system, which includes a variety of polymer mounting plates and screws that work with most red dots.

For those who prefer to run irons, the gun features M&P Tall C.O.R.E. green night sights. These will co-witness with most optics for the best of both worlds.

The Spec Series V comes in a hard case with three 23-round extended metal magazines. Also included are the C.O.R.E. plates and screws, a thread protector, a limited-edition S&W Spec Series challenge coin and a folding knife.

With its metal frame, nearly five-inch barrel and included compensator, you might expect that this gun shoots fast. You'd be right. I shot the Spec Series alongside two other 9mm autoloaders—one with a compensator, one without—and the Smith & Wesson was the smoothest-shooting gun of the bunch.

Muzzle rise is minimal, and the trigger is smooth and offers a short reset. The Spec Series V feels like a race gun and will punch holes or ring steel plates as quickly as your skills allow. Reliability is excellent, with the robust external steel extractor taking a substantial bite on the rim of each spent case.

Accuracy was very good with the various loads tested. From the bench at 25 yards, groups measured between 2.0 and 2.5 inches on average while shooting with a Viridian optic.

Off the bench the gun is outstanding and fun to shoot, and with a 23-round magazine capacity and robust, machined components you could certainly make the case that this blinged-out autoloader makes a suitable bear defense handgun with modern loads like Hornady's Backcountry Defense and Federal's Solid Core, both of which are available in 9mm.

My complaints with this gun are few. The trigger is good with a consistent break weight of four pounds, but I don't think it's quite as good as the flat-face



▲ Many components on the Spec Series V come with a blue PVD finish, and its C.O.R.E. plate system accommodates a variety of optics.



▲ The Strike Industries compensator is the primary reason this gun is so smooth-shooting. The compensator is removable, and a thread protector is included.



▲ The mag well allows for fast, reliable reloads, plus it has an eye-catching blue PVD finish.

ACCURACY RESULTS | SMITH & WESSON SPEC SERIES V M&P9 METAL HD

9mm Luger	Bullet Weight (gr.)	Muzzle Velocity (fps)	Std. Dev. (fps)	Avg. Group (in.)
Hornady Critical Defense FTX	115	1,155	9	1.8
Federal Punch JHP	124	1,132	13	2.1
Fiocchi CovertX JHP	124	1,170	11	2.1
Federal Hydra-Shok Deep	135	1,011	9	2.0
Hornady Backcountry Defense DGH	138	1,160	10	2.5

Notes: Accuracy results are averages of four five-shot groups fired at 25 yards from a fixed rest. Velocity figures are 10-shot averages recorded on a Caldwell VelociRadar at the muzzle. Abbreviation: JHP, jacketed hollowpoint

trigger in the new SIG P320 M.O.D. Also, the C.O.R.E. system plates are made of thin plastic, and while I've never had issues with plastic plates, some shooters prefer metal. The metal frame and grip are also fairly large for concealed carry. And this gun isn't cheap; suggested retail is \$1,699.

It isn't cheap, but it looks great,

shoots wonderfully and boasts a whopping magazine capacity. It will also appeal to the Smith & Wesson collector because it is a limited-edition pistol that we may never see again—although it was still for sale as we went to press. Its disappearance as a cataloged gun would be a shame because this is an excellent 9mm.



RUGER LCP MAX—MANUAL SAFETY

WHEN RUGER INTRODUCED THE COMPACT, reliable LCP handgun in 2008, the company probably had no idea how successful it would become. A handgun that is small enough to slip into a pocket is incredibly handy, which means it is more likely to actually get carried rather than left behind.

The LCP Max carries forward all the attributes that have made the LCP series of handguns a success, but with the added benefit of various upgrades, including better sights and a 10+1 round magazine capacity. And now it's available with a manual safety, which will appeal to many buyers.

The LCP Max is a single-action handgun with an internal hammer—the trigger does not cock the hammer, the slide does—a polymer frame and a stainless steel slide. The slide is available in a matte stainless finish, matte with polished flats or with a black nitride treatment.

My test pistol had the stainless

steel flats polished to a brushed finish. Sharp edges on the slide have been removed to make the LCP Max a comfortable handgun to carry and operate. This prevents the pistol from tearing clothing and slashing skin.

The LCP Max uses a ramped and fully supported 2.8-inch barrel. Ruger engineers have improved the ramp and magazine feed lip geometries to enhance reliability. They also altered the barrel camming surfaces to delay unlocking, which the designers did to reduce felt recoil.

An external extractor is pinned into place and powered by a coil spring. The ejector is part of the steel chassis inside the frame. The recoil spring assembly has a full-length guide rod.

The sights on the standard LCP and LCP II are fairly small, but the LCP Max is equipped with excellent sights for a handgun in this class. The front sight is a large tritium dot outlined in white, and it's highly visible in any lighting condition.

RUGER LCP MAX

TYPE: single-action semiautomatic

CALIBER: .380 ACP

CAPACITY: 10+1 (12+1 available)

BARREL: 2.8 in.

OAL/HEIGHT/WIDTH: 5.17/4.12/0.75 in.

WEIGHT: 10.6 oz.

CONSTRUCTION: stainless steel slide, polymer frame

TRIGGER: 5 lb., 14 oz. pull (measured)

SIGHTS: drift-adjustable rear, tritium front

SAFETIES: manual (as tested), trigger bar

PRICE: \$379

MANUFACTURER: Ruger, RUGER.COM

The rear sight features a U-shaped notch on a black serrated blade. The front face of the rear sight is square so it can be used to rack the slide one-handed. The slide is cut with sight dovetails that accommodate sights designed to fit the S&W Bodyguard series of handguns, so aftermarket options are available.

The glass-filled nylon frame is →

kurz *adj.* Deutsch. 1a. A comparatively short length.
1b. **Kompakt.**



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← actually a module that serves as the grip. The serialized frame is a steel chassis that sits inside the nylon module. The frame is textured just enough to provide a gripping surface without being too aggressive.

The frame-mounted magazine release is reversible. The slide stop is located on the left side of the frame. The release is fairly small, and I found it easier to rack the slide than to use the slide stop as a release during live fire.

The trigger on the LCP Max is decent for a handgun of this size. There is quite a bit of take-up, followed by a wall with a bit of creep and then a break. It's better than it sounds. My test sample's trigger broke at 5.9 pounds. Because it's a single-action semiautomatic, this handgun has no restrike capability.

The prospect of carrying a handgun with a round in the chamber is unnerving for some folks, but the dual safeties on the LCP Max should provide an extra layer of comfort—and that's why Ruger has now added the manual thumb safety, which is mounted on the left side of the frame and can be disengaged quickly.

The LCP Max also has a trigger-bar safety that prevents the gun from being fired unless the trigger is pulled. One might even consider the longish trigger pull as a safety feature.

The LCP Max is built around a unique dual-column magazine that tapers to a single-round to feed into the chamber. This magazine has a 10+1 capacity, and Ruger has 12-round mags available.

Most shooters will not be able to obtain a full-fingered grip using the 10-round mag and its flat base. But with the included finger extension installed, or with the optional 12-round magazine, a full grip is possible.

My supply of test ammo in .380 ACP was limited, but both Hornady defensive loads fed, fired, extracted and ejected with 100 percent reliability. Ac-



▲ New for the LCP Max is a manual thumb safety that can be activated quickly. The gun also has safety lever in the trigger face.



▲ The U-notch rear sight can be used to rack the slide one-handed, and the front sight features a large tritium dot outlined in white that's highly visible in any lighting condition.



▲ The tapered dual-column magazine holds 10 rounds, with 12-rounders available. A finger extension ships with the gun so you can get a full grip with the 10-rounder.

ACCURACY RESULTS | RUGER LCP MAX

.380 ACP	Bullet Weight (gr.)	Muzzle Velocity (fps)	Std. Dev. (fps)	Avg. Group (in.)
Hornady American Gunner XTP	90	866	16	2.1
Hornady Critical Defense FTX	90	919	15	2.2

Notes: Accuracy results are averages of four five-shot groups at 15 yards from a Target Shooting, Inc. Model 1500 rest. Velocities are averages of 10 shots recorded on a Garmin Xero C1.

curacy was excellent, given the barrel length and sight radius. Felt recoil was quite manageable. Overall, this was a comfortable handgun to carry and shoot. Ruger includes a small black pocket holster that does a great job of securing this little handgun.

Ruger's LCP was a groundbreaking handgun at the time of its release

and, years later, it has maintained its relevance. The LCP Max is simply a more capable version of the original model. The addition of truly usable sights, more magazine capacity and a slightly larger grip makes this a shootable pistol that is ideal for concealed carry, and the new thumb safety version is a great addition to the line. ●



KUNA™



The all-new Kuna™ pistol from Springfield Armory® is a PDW built to deliver exceptional performance in a portable package. Featuring a roller-delayed operating system and precision manufactured for optimal fit and function, the Kuna is chambered in 9MM with 30-round magazines. The small profile, nimble handling, and prolific capacity make it a fierce personal defense platform. The Kuna from Springfield Armory - ready to roll.



ED BROWN KOBRA CARRY SIGNATURE

WITH MORE THAN 50 YEARS IN BUSINESS, Ed Brown continues to be a good choice for a custom pistol, especially when it comes to the 1911. The company has made significant investments in all areas of metal technology, using state-of-the-art equipment to ensure the customer gets what he or she asked for.

When it comes to special guns, the Ed Brown Kobra Carry Signature Edition fits that mold perfectly. The original Kobra Carry, a Commander-size gun that celebrated its 25th anniversary last year, introduced shooters to two Ed Brown innovations: the Bobtail frame and the Snakeskin pattern on key metal parts. The Signature version retains these elements and so would serve quite well as a carry gun, but it's the relief engraving and attention to the finer details that make it a standout collector 1911.

The flats on both sides of the slide

are hand engraved with an intricate scroll-relief pattern by a true master of the craft, James White. The slide's engraving is interrupted only by the Snakeskin rear slide serrations and, on the right side, "Custom By" in a sans serif font and "Ed Brown" below that in script.


The special high-polish slide is flat on top with serrations. The top is relieved on both sides to create the appearance of a raised rib, and this rib guides your eye to a gold bead front sight. The back of the slide below the black rear fixed sight is serrated at 50 lines per inch.

The frame is also extensively engraved. A smooth section with "Ed Brown Products, Perry, MO USA" is on the right side above the trigger guard. Engraving coverage extends to the slide stop; the flat of the single-side carry profile thumb safety; the right side of the mag catch; and the sides of the memory-bump grip

safety. Even one of the two supplied magazines is engraved.

The undercut grip frame features the Snakeskin serration pattern on the fronstrap as well as on the Bobtail mainspring housing. The grip panels are a dark brown cocobolo secured to the frame by engraved grip screws.

As a Commander model, the barrel length is 4.25 inches, with the crowned muzzle flush with the bushing. The hammer is skeletonized, and the three-hole trigger broke cleanly at four pounds. The gun is available in .45 ACP only.

As I'm sure you've guessed, with a price tag of \$8,295 this gun is an investment. So in the end do you purchase this gun for a defensive partner or a safe queen? Probably the latter. I do like the Kobra Carry design, and a "plain" one bought on the secondary market would serve as a valuable piece on my hip. 

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