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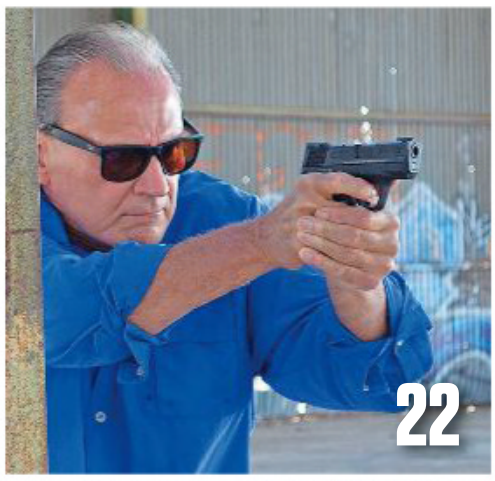

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FIRST SHOT: We produced this issue in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, as most Americans found themselves quarantined or sheltering in place to prevent the spread of the virus. Testing has started to ramp up, but the U.S. just became the global epicenter of the outbreak, with more than 180,000 confirmed cases—the most of any nation in the world. But, hopefully, if you're reading this, the virus has passed and we've started to rebuild our communities and economy. We sincerely hope that your family came through this unscathed, or is in the process of recovering. We value each and every one of our readers, so know this: We're all in this together. Look around and you'll find people supporting first responders and health care workers, delivering food to the elderly, checking in on family members. It might seem like a dire moment, but we Americans always pull through—because we pull together. Stay safe, and thank you for your support. —*The Editors*

ABOUT THE COVER: Springfield's coming up big in 2020 with the XD-M Elite 3.8" (shown with a Viridian C5L) and Ronin Operator 1911. Turn to pages 30 and 88 to learn more.

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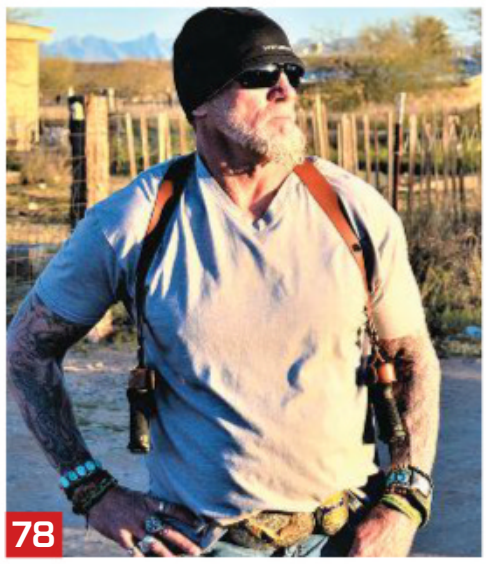

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WHEN DISASTER STRIKES

EMERGENCIES LIKE THE COVID-19 OUTBREAK MIGHT KEEP COPS BUSY, BUT LAWS STILL APPLY

BY MASSAD AYOOB

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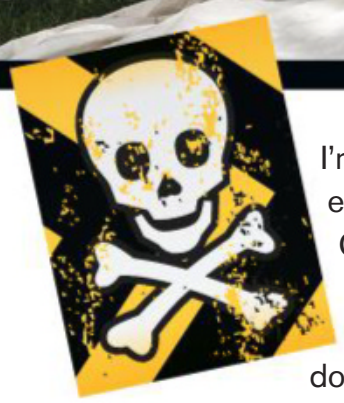

I'm writing this in the early stages of the COVID-19 virus panic. Schools are empty, theaters are shut down, many restaurants are closed, and whole areas are under "self-isolation" orders. In many jurisdictions, police are only responding to emergencies. Manpower among the emergency services is thin.

Chatter on the internet indicates many people believe that in times of such disaster, laws are somehow suspended just because the cops can't be there. Nothing is further from the truth. The rules governing justifiable deadly force are still the same.

History shows that such situations in this country will inevitably run their course and society will rebuild. Police will inevitably investigate shootings that occurred during the disaster. To make matters worse, if a justified shooting has occurred during the disaster in a community run by anti-gun politicians, they might feel a need to pillory honest citizens who did the right thing by making it look as if they became "self-appointed vigilantes."

PANIC PREVAILS

Case One took place in the Miami area after one of Florida's devastating hurricanes. A wealthy young professional bought a Smith & Wesson Model 640 "for protection" but didn't bother with training with it and had never even fired it. Shaken by the storm, which had caused significant damage to his home, he called in repairmen to fix the damage.

Early one morning, he was awakened when a vehicle pulled up in front of his home. In the pre-dawn light, he saw through his window someone coming toward his house, holding an object. Panicking, he assumed it was an armed looter and grabbed his gun. He fired out the window and shot one of the workmen he had forgotten he had summoned to come to repair the damage. The .38 Special bullet permanently injured the victim.

Somehow, the shooter avoided criminal indictment. But he was sued. In a pre-trial deposition, he said he had fired in "a rage of fear." He admitted that he had never fired his new revolver until the moment in question and had never sought firearms training in any way, shape or form. In fact, he became indignant about it, saying in effect that, after all, it wasn't as if he was going to go hunting or anything. He claimed that he had meant to fire a warning shot, but he pulled the trigger without aiming the gun in a safe direction.

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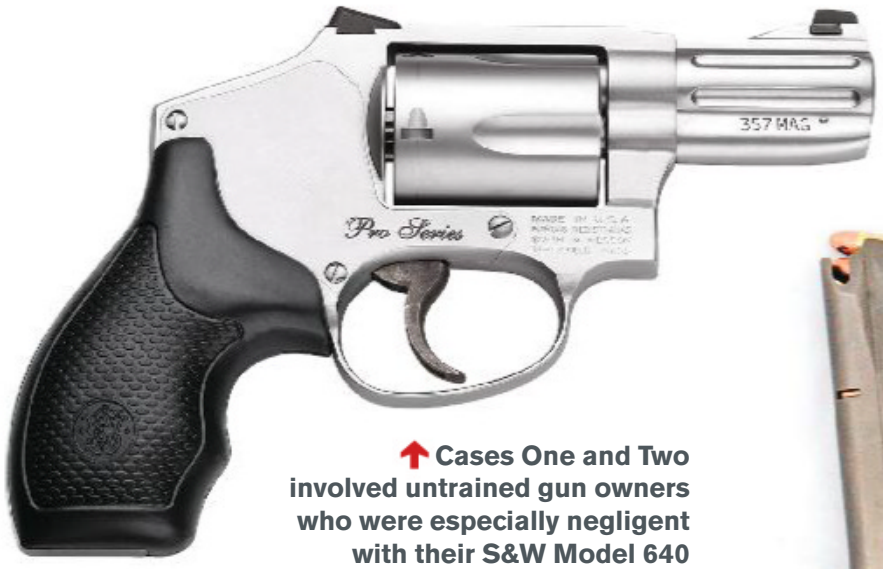

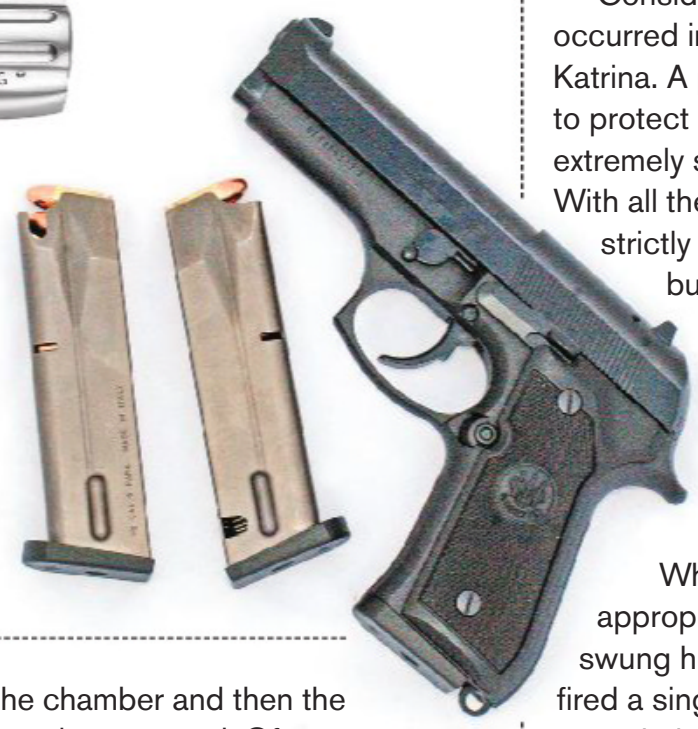

Cases One and Two involved untrained gun owners who were especially negligent with their S&W Model 640 (above) and Beretta 92 (right) handguns, respectively.

After the deposition, his disheartened attorneys advised him to settle the case. They did. The amount of the settlement, I'm told, was huge and would have bankrupted most people.

Lessons from Case One? Don't let panic override common sense. You must fully identify a threat before you drop the hammer. And even among people who have been trained in unaimed fire, point shooting has a spotty record in the field. If you can't see where the bullet is going to go, hold your fire. Finally, Case One illustrates the dangers of people who don't know what they're doing with guns. In times of disaster, your non-gun-owning friends might ask to borrow a gun from you. Do both of you a favor, and even if it may be legal to do so in your particular jurisdiction, don't lend them a deadly weapon unless you know they're competent with it and are cool-headed in emergencies.

ANOTHER ACCIDENT

The case we just discussed has a lot in common with **Case Two**, where a weather disaster damaged a restaurant's roof. Repairs were still underway when the restaurant opened for business. In the kitchen, employees excitedly discussed the ordeal they had all just been through, and things eventually turned to self-protection. One of the employees mentioned his CCW, a Beretta 92. Then a co-worker asked to see it.

You've probably already guessed what happened. The gun was unloaded out of sequence, with the round ejected from the chamber and then the full magazine removed. Of course, the act of removing the chambered cartridge fed another into its place, and the gun was still live with a "torpedo in the launch tube" when it changed hands.

A restaurant worker aimed the gun at the ceiling to "try the action" and pulled the trigger. *Bang!* The bullet tore through the ceiling, through the roof above it and into the body of the roofer who was up there doing repairs. The worker was permanently crippled by the gunshot wound. That case was also settled out of court for big bucks.

The lessons of Case Two echo those of Case One. Nervous, scared people unfamiliar with guns will be motivated to seek them out in times of panic. Be extra careful when one of them even asks to see yours. Always follow the four rules of gun safety: 1) Assume all guns are always loaded, and treat them as such; 2) Don't point one at anything you are not prepared to destroy; 3) Don't let a finger enter the triggerguard until you are ready to fire; and 4) Always be sure of your target and what is beyond it. In Case Two, three of those four rules were blatantly violated.

CAPTURING EVIDENCE

When society breaks down and emergency personnel can't arrive in a timely manner, even the most justified shooting can be twisted into something wrongful because evidence is likely to be lost before the designated professionals arrive to gather it.

Consider **Case Three**, which occurred in Louisiana during Hurricane Katrina. A police officer was assigned to protect a substation that contained extremely sensitive confidential records. With all the looting occurring, he was strictly ordered not to leave the building for any reason until he was relieved. He was on the second story when he saw a car pull up and two apparent looters emerge and move briskly toward the building, one holding a handgun.

When the officer shouted an appropriate command, the suspect swung his gun toward the cop, who fired a single shot from his privately owned, department-approved SIG556 patrol rifle. Hit in the torso, the gunman dropped his weapon and ran to the car with his accomplice, who drove him away. Because there was no longer a deadly threat, the officer appropriately held his fire and didn't discharge more than the single round. The man he shot was later found dead.

He immediately radioed in what had happened and was told that investigators and evidence technicians would respond when they could. Because police resources were spread so terribly thin during the hurricane, that took a very long time. Under orders to stay in the building, the officer did not go out to retrieve the dropped weapon. When backup finally got there, the offender's gun—dropped in the street during riotous looting—had disappeared. The officer was charged with murder and convicted. The verdict was later overturned, and he was acquitted after his second trial, but he had already served hard time and his police career was gone forever.

Lessons? When overworked cops can't get there, secure or document the evidence yourself. Stand over the bad guy's weapon if you have to. I normally don't recommend taking pictures or a video of a shooting you've been involved in because it makes you look like a serial killer collecting a trophy, but in such emergencies where an official response will be greatly delayed, it makes sense to at least photograph perishable evidence before it disappears. CH

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WHAT'S IN YOUR RANGE BAG?

CHEYENNE DALTON GIVES US THE GOODS ON HER TOP GUNS AND GEAR

BY KAREN HUNTER

Gun aren't gender or age specific. Some people claim that certain firearms considered "easier" or "smaller" are better suited for women or young adults. But that's not even close to reality. The truth is, guns are specific to each individual. One's speed, accuracy and abilities with a firearm are totally dependent upon the individual and his or her training. It certainly comes easier for some people. Others have to work harder to master their firearms. But Cheyenne Dalton is a beautiful example of natural talent coupled with great accomplishments at a young age.

Dalton is a junior shooter who competes in Rimfire Challenge, 3-Gun and USPSA matches. Her accomplishments include two Rimfire World Championships in the "Limited Lady" category (2014, 2016) along with countless state titles. While proud of each one, Dalton is especially excited to have won her first 3-Gun "High Lady" title last year at the Missouri 3-Gun Championship. And she's just getting started. Barely 19, her list of accomplishments is only overshadowed by her great reputation.

Dalton is a role model for young people and adults alike. At the risk of sounding cliché, I'll say she's a diamond in the rough. She entered the competitive shooting realm when she was just 12, but her talent was quickly noticed. Now she has a list of sponsors

> **"THERE'S A LOT OF ADVICE AND TRAINING OUT THERE. YOU NEED TO FIND WHAT WORKS BEST FOR YOU AND STICK WITH THAT."**

most can only dream of, with companies like STI, Volquartsen, Vortex Optics, Prime Ammunition, Kershaw Knives, Liberty Safe and many more. On top of that, she's become a strong Second Amendment advocate who has earned the respect of many people in the firearms industry. However, despite being thrust into the spotlight, Dalton has never wavered in her character or beliefs. Strong and independent yet humble, she is a powerful force that represents the industry well.

THE FIREPOWER

As for her guns, Dalton currently uses two different STI 2011 pistols. Her Combat Master is different from the production model. As a member of Team STI, she was able to get her hands on a prototype that incorporates an island barrel. Only five of these guns have been made, so hers is extremely unique.

Her second STI pistol is the all-new DVC L, which is the latest version of the DVC Limited. It was redesigned specifically to meet the demands of today's competitors while keeping true to the DVC heritage of accuracy, power and speed. The double-stack, Limited-class pistol has a 5-inch bull barrel and comes with a black DLC or stainless finish. The slide has new serrations and porting while the trigger is tuned for a crisp 2.5-pound pull. You'll also notice enhancements like adjustable sights and a built-in magazine well. But it's worth mentioning that both of Dalton's pistols are completely stock.

For 3-Gun matches, Dalton uses a Breda B12i shotgun, which she says performs great right out of the box, and a Core Rifle Systems CORE15 Hardcore X3 rifle with a UM Tactical compensator, an AR Gold trigger and a Vortex Razor HD Gen II scope. Finally, Prime Ammunition provides her with highly effective, clean-burning rounds for competition. The company's 9mm Hexagon Match+ hollow points, for example, are designed for extreme accuracy on the range with closed bases and heavy-metal-free primers.

MORE GEAR

Of course, the guns and ammo are only part of the equation. Dalton uses a few more products to keep her on top of her game, including Rudy Project shooting glasses. Rudy Project is a company known for making some of the finest sports-

"BARELY 19, HER LIST OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS IS ONLY OVERSHADOWED BY HER GREAT REPUTATION."

centric eyewear available, so it was only natural for it to dive into the shooting world. Dalton's shooting glasses are both lightweight and resistant to debris.

To carry her 2011s, Dalton uses a custom speed rig from Weber Tactical. These holsters are common among competitors because of their durability and ease of use, and Dalton's has a fun unicorn finish on the exterior to help her stand out. She also uses a PACT Club Timer III to work on her speed. This compact, lightweight unit fits in the palm of your hand but provides highly accurate timer functions to make you a better shooter. It's a great choice for any shooter and is exceptionally precise.

For hearing protection, Dalton turns to Harris & Sons Performance Inserts (HPIs), which are specifically designed for training and competing at the highest levels. These earbuds are programmed to increase critical sounds like range commands while cancelling out harmful noises like gunshots. They can even help you hear the timer better, not to mention bullet pings on steel targets hundreds of yards away. Finally, to keep her guns clean, Dalton uses a Pro Shot cleaning kit.

PRICELESS WISDOM

As we all know, products are products, and talent can't be bought. When I asked Dalton about her training regimen, I found out that she doesn't "burn down the range" five days a week. Instead, her response reflects her natural shooting abilities. She's also entered a new stage in life and is learning to balance all of her responsibilities.

"My training isn't intense as I wish it could be right now," she said. "I'm very busy with school and other aspects of life, so I have to keep a healthy balance and do the best I can at everything. I generally try to shoot my pistol a couple of times a week, as that is the skill that declines the most rapidly for me. To stay organized, I have a big planner, and I just lay out my days, making certain I have time to get everything done. In addition to shooting competitively and school, I have a bluegrass band, That Dalton Gang, which travels, performing at different festivals and shows. I'm busy and diverse but always try to keep everything balanced and controlled."

As for advice for new shooters, she said, "There's a lot of advice and training out there. You need to find what works best for you and stick with that. And remember, anytime you are successful at something, you will have haters. It really doesn't bother me anymore—it's just something that you have to learn to overlook. If you can do that, you will always remain confident and grow."

I was also quite intrigued to find out that Dalton's top role model in the industry is Julie Golob. As she put it, "I have always looked up to Julie! She is an amazing wife and mother as well as an incredible advocate for the Second Amendment. My ultimate goal is to be just like her!"

Anyone who knows Golob would have to agree that she is an exceptional choice. Dalton chose her mentor well, and I have zero doubt that she will continue to grow in a positive direction throughout her career and all the places life might take her. CH

Cheyenne Dalton's gear includes two STI pistols, a custom Weber Tactical holster with a unicorn finish, Prime 9mm ammo, Harris & Sons Performance Inserts and more.

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BY ZACK CARLSON

When I started working for Lone Wolf Distributors back in 2010, it wasn't that common to see reflex or red-dot sights installed on pistols. They interested me, but not enough for me to experiment with them.

That changed in 2014 with the introduction of Smith & Wesson's new M&P CORE pistol. It was one of the first to come from the factory with plates to mount a variety of red dots. My interest was piqued—so much so that I wrote an article discussing my testing with red dots versus iron sights. I evaluated a handful of optics against the standard iron sights and found that I was still faster with the latter. However, I wasn't properly trained to master a red dot at the time, so my interest quickly fizzled out.

Fast-forward six years and red dots are everywhere. Every major manufacturer has an optics-ready pistol in its lineup. A friend of mine told me about a red-dot-specific class he attended taught by a guy named Jedi, and again I was intrigued. This friend is a firearms trainer in the military, and he said that Jedi's class was the best he had ever taken. That was it: I had to seek out Jedi and master the red dot.

THE JEDI WAY

Scott "Jedi" Jedlinski is the man behind the Modern Samurai Project. After finding his website and reading

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"ONE OF THE MANY EPIPHANIES I HAD DURING THE WEEKEND WAS THAT I'VE BEEN GRIPPING A PISTOL WRONG MY WHOLE LIFE!"

Jedi helps one of his student's achieve the proper grip while bringing the red dot up to his eye level so he won't have to search for the reticle later on.

every piece of content on it, I was convinced that he could be the missing link between me and red-dot mastery. When I contacted him, I learned that he had a class coming up in May of 2019 five hours away from me in Seattle. I took that as a sign and registered.

As luck would have it, Glock announced its new G45 in September of 2018. I ordered one the very day it was announced, and when it arrived, I had my coworkers at Lone Wolf cut the slide to accept a Trijicon RMR.

I spent the next few months gathering up the needed gear. I didn't know what to expect from the class, but I didn't want to be "that guy" who shows up to class completely unprepared. And to prepare for the unlikely event that my new gun went down, I borrowed a Glock 19 Gen5 from Lone Wolf's gun cage and installed a Holosun 507C miniature reflex sight as a backup option.

May quickly came, and before I knew it, I was sitting in Jedi's classroom. He introduced himself and his assistant instructor, AJ Zito, and then all the students took turns introducing ourselves and sharing what we hoped to get out of the class. Jedi and AJ also gave the class some great tips about their experiences with specific brands of reflex sights and their quirks, then the range host went over the specific emergency medical plan, which was nice to see. After a safety briefing, it was time to hit the indoor range.

THE FORCE AWAKENS

The "Red Dot Pistol Fundamentals and Performance" class started with getting our red dots zeroed at 10 yards. Jedi explained that after you zero at 10 yards, you can learn holds for shots at 25 yards. After a few adjustments, our red dots were dialed in. We started up close, and Jedi taught us three different techniques to shoot up close without ever seeing the red dot. This was the first drill where Jedi's teaching technique became clear. He teaches you a few different methods, letting you shoot

Jedi demonstrates how proper body mechanics, including small tweaks to your leading foot, can almost align the shot for you after drawing.

in each fashion for a while before you decide which works best for you.

We continued our training with gripping and drawing our pistols, aligning the red dots and tracking them while firing. One of the many epiphanies I had during the weekend was that I've been gripping a pistol wrong my whole life! For a two-handed grip, Jedi teaches that the main gripping force is coming from the "drumstick" of your support hand, and the pinky finger of the support hand provides rotational force while gripping the gun. Essentially, the dominant hand is along for the ride, except for the index finger pulling the trigger straight back. He demonstrated how the thumbs don't really need to provide any support for the pistol. I'd been using a golf grip with thumbs overlapping each other, but once I changed to Jedi's grip style, I found instant success.

Another epiphany was just how much body mechanics matter. With proper mechanics, the shot almost aligns itself. The smallest of changes to your leading foot can lead your draw to be right on target or require you to readjust the pistol to get on target. This can translate to a shot that's fast and clean or one that's sloppy and full of wasted movement. We practiced this many times so we could see how small changes affected our aiming stability.

We were also introduced to the concept of binding. Essentially, if you try to shoot outside of your natural body mechanics, you'll feel your body binding. Like if you attempt to shoot too far left with your feet misaligned. Small tweaks in your foot positioning can lead to greater shooting comfort and faster transitions between targets.

PERFECT MECHANICS

Jedi is big on eliminating extra movements in the draw, and with his watch-

"...JEDI IS SOMETHING SPECIAL. HE HAS A VERY UNIQUE WAY OF COACHING INSTEAD OF JUST TEACHING, AND HE IMPROVED THE PERFORMANCE OF EVERY STUDENT IN ATTENDANCE."

For the course, the author brought along two Glock pistols,10 magazines, mag loaders, eye and ear protection, Federal 124-grain Syntech Training Match TSJ ammunition and more.

ful eye on my shooting motions, he quickly diagnosed an extra movement slowing me down. Unbeknownst to me, I was drawing the pistol up to my natural shooting position, but then dipping my head down to meet the dot. It was here that he cemented his concept of not doing something faster but sooner. If my head needed to be down to meet the dot, I should've put it there before the gun was even drawn. I needed to do it sooner, rather than trying to do it faster while also attempting to execute all of the other movements of the drawstroke.

In that same vein, Jedi said that you should get all of the drawstroke movements out of the way as quickly as possible before the gun enters your line of sight, then focus on the last portion with more care. This last segment is where the real action is happening: You're prepping the trigger, aligning the dot and pressing the trigger, so this is where your attention should be concentrated.

The two days of the Modern Samurai Project training course were jam-packed with so much content that I couldn't fit it all into a single article. We worked on transitions, moving while shooting, 25-yard shots, and even faced off in a mini competition course.

I've taken a handful of firearms training courses with several different instructors, and I can honestly say that Jedi is something special. He has a very unique way of coaching instead of just teaching, and he improved the performance of every student in attendance. There was so much more to this particular class that could be written about, but to do it all justice, you really need to experience it for yourself. After his class, I'm truly on my way to red-dot mastery. For more information, please visit modernsamuraiproject.com. CH

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SHIELD UPGRADES

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FAVORITE CARRY-READY SMITH & WESSON 9MM

By Mike Detty

Smith & Wesson introduced the subcompact M&P9 Shield in 2012, and the gun became an immediate success. While there are smaller and lighter 9mm pistols out there, the Shield hit the sweet spot between compactness and shootability at a very affordable price. I bought one retail a few years ago, and since then, the other subcompacts I used to carry have gathered dust in my gun safe. The Shield carries well—it's not overly big or heavy, and I can shoot it nearly as well as my full-sized M&P9. Carried in a Kydex appendix inside-the-waistband (AIWB) holster, the 9mm Shield has been my constant companion for the last three years.

Not resting on their laurels, the decision-makers at Smith & Wesson conducted extensive surveys to see how they could improve the Shield, and in 2018 they introduced the M&P Shield M2.0. Featuring a new grip texture, forward slide cocking serrations and an improved trigger pull, the new Shield is also comparatively economical. I had a chance to review the new Shields, both with and without the integral Crimson Trace laser, and found them to be completely reliable and, with the new trigger, even easier to hit with than my original Shield. Now I had a dilemma: Do I buy the new M2.0 version and ditch my original Shield, or simply retrofit the old gun?

The author turned to a few different companies, including Apex Tactical Specialties, TruGlo and Samson Manufacturing, to customize his Shield for everyday carry.

DIVING IN

Because of the Shield's popularity, there are a number of aftermarket accessories available. I've never seen a carry gun that couldn't use improved sights and an upgraded trigger pull, and my old Shield was no different. If I could increase its capacity, shootability and ergonomics, I'd have no reason to abandon my original Shield. So, I set about upgrading the 9mm by collecting parts from Samson Manufacturing, Apex Tactical Specialties, Arachni-Grip and TruGlo.

Before we get started, let me present a disclaimer. This is not a "how-to" article, but rather a source for aftermarket accessories for the S&W M&P9 Shield. It's also worth noting that any modification you make to your pistol runs the risk of voiding your factory warranty.

The Real Avid Accu-Punch set features a hammer with interchangeable heads, 11 pin punches and an alignment tool, all in a case that stands up.

"If I could increase its capacity, shootability and ergonomics, I'd have no reason to abandon my original Shield."

Make sure that you test every safety—mechanical and manual—after performing any work on your gun. The editors and I will not assume liability for damage or injury that might result because of your work on your pistol!

Before I started this project, I purchased a Real Avid Accu-Punch hammer and punch set. If you work on guns a lot—especially polymer-framed guns—this is a must-have. It includes 11 solidly built precision pin punches along with a pin alignment tool. The kit also includes a hammer with an ergonomic handle and four interchangeable heads made from rubber, nylon, steel and brass. Also included is a bench block made from tough, engineering-grade resin that won't mar your gun or bench. It has non-slip outer rings that keep the block from sliding during use. And to keep those tiny pins from rolling away and getting lost, the block has an embedded magnet to keep them in place. The hammer and punches are housed in a durable plastic display with a kickstand that arranges all of the contents in an easy-to-see, easy-to-reach setup. (realavid.com)

1. TRUGLO TFX SIGHTS

The Shield I bought three years ago came with three-dot sights. There are a multitude of night sights available from many different manufacturers, and the dovetails on the Shield are very common. The idea of night sights on my gun was very appealing, but I also need to be able to see them in daylight. The best aftermarket sights I've found for my needs are TruGlo TFX sights.

These sights not only give my gun night-fighting capabilities, but they're also easy to see and use during daylight hours. They're arranged in the traditional three-dot pattern, and TruGlo hermetically seals a vial of Swiss tritium into each of the dots in front of a fiber-optic rod. In low light, the tritium makes the fiber-optic dots glow, and in daylight the fiber-optic dots gather ambient light, so they glow a brilliant green.

The front sight has a fluorescent orange ring placed around the vial to attract the eye's focus. TruGlo calls this the Focus-Lock. The rear sight features a deep U-notch, and aligning the sights is as easy as putting the "ball" in the "bucket." There's plenty of light on each side of the front sight for quick alignment, and the angled forward edge on the rear sight is designed for one-handed slide racking. Of course, because installing a new trigger kit involves replacing the firing pin/striker safety and spring located under the rear sight, I did not drive the TruGlo rear sight into its dovetail until I had finished replacing the trigger. (truglo.com)

2. APEX TACTICAL TRIGGER

Apex Tactical produces top-notch replacement triggers for many factory guns, and I ordered the Apex Action Enhancement Trigger and Duty/Carry Kit for my Shield.

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"Because of the Shield's popularity, there are a number of aftermarket accessories available."

This kit is made for the original M&P Shield in 9mm and .40 S&W, and will not work with .45 ACP models or M2.0 variants. It replaces the factory hinged trigger with a solid aluminum trigger that reduces the pre- and overtravel by approximately 20 percent. It also provides a smoother and more consistent trigger pull while reducing the pull weight and giving the trigger a firmer reset.

Installing the parts first requires a full disassembly of the gun's frame. If you're a knowledgeable hobbyist, this shouldn't be a problem. If you aren't confident in your skills, take your gun and kit to a competent gunsmith and have them install the parts. Once I had my frame disassembled, I used the opportunity to scrub the polymer shell and other parts to remove all the dander and lint that had accumulated in three years of carry use. Then I set up my laptop on my kitchen table and followed Apex's step-by-step installation video for performing each operation. It took about an hour of overly careful work, but I was very happy with the outcome. The final step was to replace the slide's firing pin block with the Apex part and spring. Then I pushed the new TruGlo TFX rear sight into its dovetail.

With the gun reassembled, the trigger pull had dropped from a spongy 6.5 pounds to 5.25 pounds with a crisper break and a firmer reset. In my opinion, it was well worth the time and money! (apextactical.com)

3. SAMSON MAGWELL & BASEPAD

Samson Manufacturing offers a number of Shield accessories, and I ordered

the Compact Magwell, which is designed to lengthen the pistol's grip frame and also aid in speedy reloads. It's machined from aircraft-grade 6061-T6 aluminum and hardcoat anodized. I chose a blue version to match the Apex trigger I had installed. The part attaches via a single screw and is rock solid.

Once the Samson Compact Magwell is in place, the gun can only be used with longer eight-round magazines, as seven-round magazines will be too short. But I also took the rubber collar off the factory eight-round magazine and installed a Samson Carry Contour basepad, which adds another round to the total. So now my Samson-equipped Shield has a capacity of 9+1. The factory eight-round magazine can also be used if you take off the rubber collar, and it'll fit flush with the bottom of the Samson Carry Magwell. This part really changes the feel of the Shield and makes it handle like a full-sized gun. With the Samson Carry Magwell installed, I can get all of my fingers on the frontstrap, which greatly improves the pistol's controllability, especially with hotter defensive ammunition. (samson-mfg.com)

4. ARACHNIGRIP SLIDE SPIDER

For this article, ArachniGrip provided me with a sample of its Slide Spider for the Shield. It's designed to provide a better purchase on the slide, wet or dry, for easier racking. The kit even comes with an alcohol prep kit to clean the slide surface before installation.

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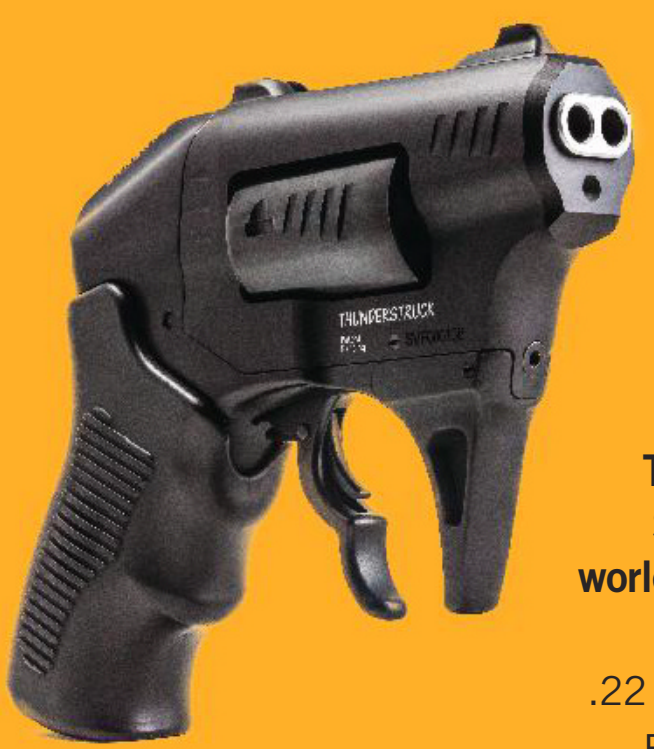

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After reassembling the Shield, the author tested it both off-hand and from a DOA Shooting Bench while using a Millett Benchmaster for support.

Applying the Slide Spider is simple and straightforward. Simply remove the backing from the grip, center it on the slide and fold the "spider legs" down into the cocking serrations. The texture is rough—almost like emery cloth, or the non-slip stickers you place in your bath-tub—and it makes it nearly impossible for your hand to slip off the slide. It's one of those small changes that can make a world of difference. (arachnigrip.com)

5. COMP-TAC eV2

Comp-Tac sent me one of its relatively new eV2 Kydex holsters for the Shield. Standing for "everyday at 2 o'clock position," this AIWB holster has a smooth finish for uninhibited presentations. It's also adjustable for ride height and retention, and its unique nylon belt clip allows the user to tuck his or her shirt in over the gun for maximum concealability.

The holster also has a Comp-Tac Kick, which is designed to push the pistol's grip into the carrier's body. This is especially desirable when you're using the Samson Manufacturing Compact Magwell and Carry Contour basepad, because they add length to the grip. The Comp-Tac eV2 is a well-made, lightweight holster that is comfortable to wear for extended periods of time. I highly recommend it. (comp-tac.com)

ALL TOGETHER

After I completed all my work on the gun, I made sure it functioned correctly and ensured the firing pin/striker and manual safeties both worked properly. I took the gun to the range to sight it in and test its reliability. At 15 yards, my groups printed just slightly left of the point of aim. I loosened the rear sight screw and used a brass punch to drift it just a hair, and my next group was centered on the target.

It cycled perfectly, and before I left the range, I cleaned the Shield, loaded it with my carry ammo and secured it in my Comp-Tac eV2 holster. Upgrading my Shield was a fun and rewarding project that made me glad I didn't abandon an old and trusted friend! CH

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ELITE

SPRINGFIELD'S XD-M IS BACK AND BETTER THAN EVER WITH 20+1 ROUNDS ON TAP

By Garrett Lucas

FIREPOWER

TO SURVIVE IN THIS WORLD, one must continue to adapt or evolve in order to meet the challenges presented by the current environment. The same is true for the firearms industry. Consumers have come to expect more for their dollar, and proactive manufacturers must constantly refine their products or introduce new ones to meet or even exceed those expectations.

If you dig into its original meaning and context in Greek, the word "meta" is about what comes after, or it's about going beyond. When "meta" is incorporated into the English language, it's often associated with change, with one thing becoming something else. For Springfield Armory, this has meant evolving the XD-M lineup to include new Elite series pistols with a META trigger system and more noteworthy upgrades.

META-MORPHOSIS

For 2020, Springfield has introduced four new pistols for its XD-M Elite lineup, including Precision and Tactical models as well as more "standard" offerings with 4.5- and 3.8-inch barrels. For this review, I got my hands on the XD-M Elite 3.8" model. And since I've had a good deal of experience with XD and XD-M pistols in the past, it was obvious from the get-go that something was different.

Building on the striker-fired XD-M platform, the Elite series hosts many improvements that facilitate better handling, increase comfort and boost speed of operation. The first improvement that I noticed was Springfield's new Match Enhanced Trigger Assembly (META) trigger. This trigger has a built-in safety toggle, a flat face and an integral overtravel stop.

I've always felt that the XD-M's trigger was underappreciated. It wasn't necessarily the crispest trigger on the market, but it was always very smooth and relatively light. The new META configuration just makes the trigger on the XD-M Elite 3.8" feel that much better. The pull on my test pistol measured 4.3 pounds on average before the break. It also had zero overtravel and offered a fairly short reset for follow-up pulls.

Another welcome improvement is the extended, flared and removable magazine well. Aside from aiding in speedier magazine changes, the flared well also felt very comfortable and helped to lock in my grip on the pistol. Speaking of which, my test model came with two interchangeable backstraps to help shooters customize the grip.

Other modifications include improved front and rear cocking serrations, an ambidextrous slide stop and a loaded-chamber indicator. Oh, and if that's not enough, Springfield also

The XD-M Elite 3.8" combines a shorter top end with a full-sized grip frame that provides excellent control while firing.

bumped up the magazine capacity. You can load the pistol with 20-round magazines or the extended 22-rounders that are standard for the Precision and Tactical models.

But wait, there's more! The XD-M Elite 3.8" also sports the excellent "U-Dot" sighting system—similar to the Hellcat's but with a fiber-optic insert up front. And although I didn't see it listed as an upgrade, the Elite series also includes a memory bump on the grip safety as well. There are those who dislike the grip safeties on XD series pistols, but I rather like it on a striker-fired pistol with no other manual safety. It adds an intuitive extra degree of security, and the added memory bump helps ensure positive activation.

In addition to the host of new features on the XD-M Elite 3.8", the pistol still retains many of the positive features

1. A loaded-chamber indicator is built in just behind the ejection port, providing an extra level of safety. **2.** While previous XD series pistols included grip safeties, those on the Elite models have memory bumps to ensure positive activation. **3.** The new and improved flat-faced trigger feels better and provides a bit more control as well. **4.** Along with ergonomic texturing and interchangeable backstraps, the grip also sports a removable magazine well that facilitates faster reloads under pressure.

"Flawless in its operation...this is a pistol I would gladly carry and use to defend my life."

SPEC BOX

SPRINGFIELD XD-M ELITE 3.8"

CALIBER:	9mm
BARREL:	3.8 inches
OA LENGTH:	6.75 inches
WEIGHT:	28 ounces (empty)
GRIP:	Polymer
SIGHTS:	Fiber-optic front, Tactical Rack rear
ACTION:	Striker-fired
FINISH:	Matte black
CAPACITY:	20+1
MSRP:	$559

PERFORMANCE

LOAD	VELOCITY	ACCURACY
Black Hills 100 HoneyBadger +P	1,234	1.81
Federal 124 HST	1,162	0.88
Hornady 124 XTP	1,139	1.31
Hornady 135 Critical Duty	1,098	1.88
Sig Sauer 124 V-Crown JHP	1,168	1.13
Sig Sauer 147 V-Crown JHP	1,031	2.50

Bullet weight measured in grains, velocity in fps by chronograph and accuracy in inches for best five-shot groups at 15 yards.

from the previous generation. The barrel is still hammer forged for greater strength and longevity. The magazine release is still ambidextrous as well, and the pistol still has a striker-status indicator at the rear of the slide, though I don't find much use for it myself, as it doesn't indicate if there is a round in the chamber or not.

One of my favorite aspects of all XD-M pistols is how slim their grips are despite their voluminous capacities. The undercut triggerguard and backstrap make it easy to get a full grip for a secure purchase on the pistol, especially with the Mega-Lock texturing. I will say, however, that when I first heard about the Elite series, I was hoping for the Adaptive Grip texturing found on the company's Hellcat, which I like very much.

Finally, the pistol still wears a black Melonite finish on the barrel and slide. This is a tough, time-proven finish that holds up extremely well to wear and the elements with its highly corrosion-resistant composition. Speaking of the elements, the triggerguard is generously sized for a gloved trigger finger, which is handy for those of us who still experience real winters. Up front, the frame also still includes an accessory rail for your favorite tactical light or laser module.

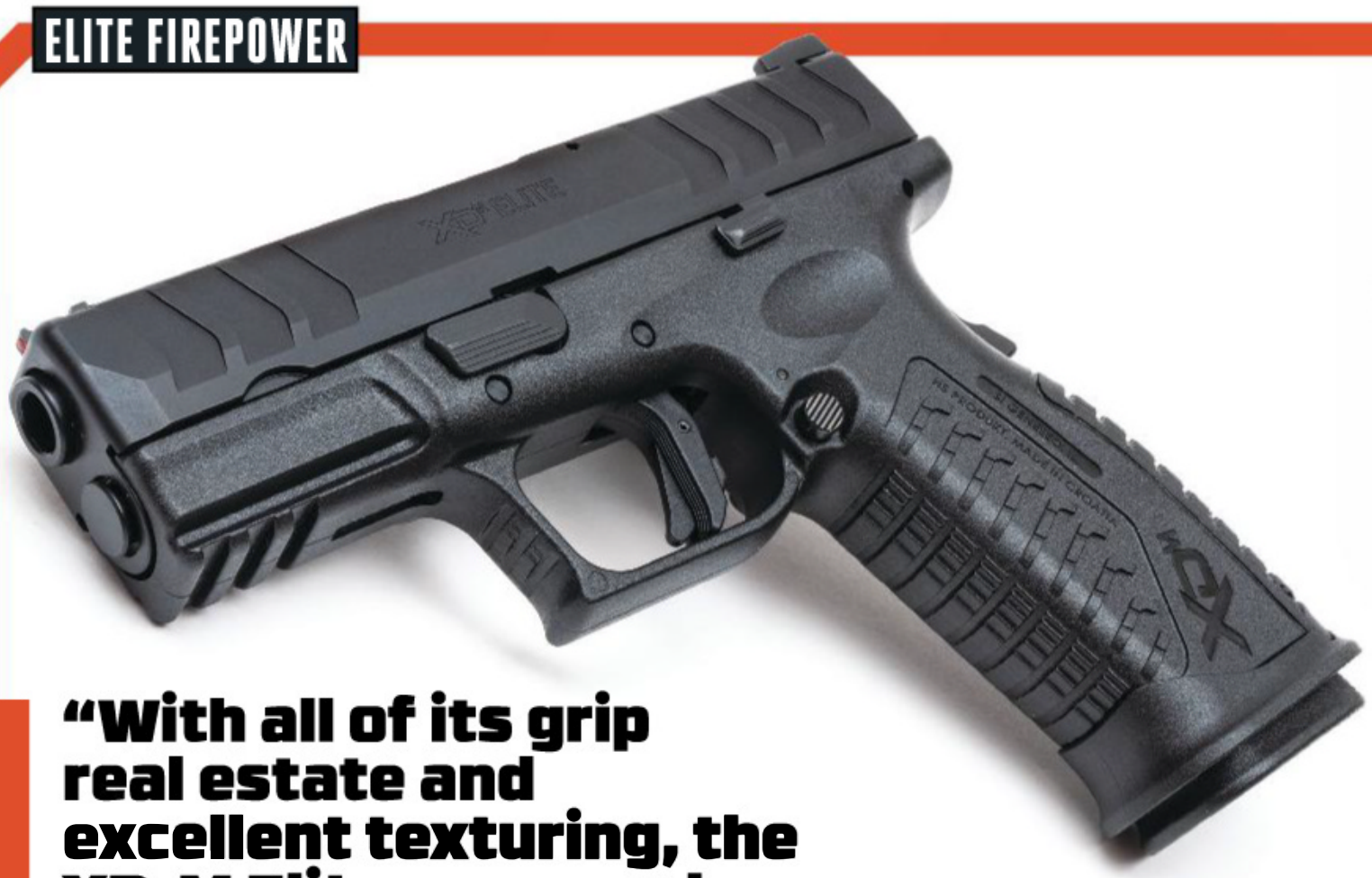
Of course, when you see "3.8" in this pistol's moniker, you might think of a petite carry pistol that can go wherever you go. But that's not really the case here. To house those 20-round magazines, the XD-M Elite 3.8" sports a full-sized frame that is somewhat at odds with its relatively short slide and barrel. Don't get me wrong—the pistol is quick to line up on target and nimble in the hand, but the tall frame makes it less than ideal for concealed carry.

The grip of a pistol is what protrudes more and is more difficult to conceal since the barrel will most often be parallel to the lines of the concealed carrier's body. The main exception to this would be when a pistol is carried in a shoulder holster, which seems to be a dying art form.

So, I had to question the practical applications for the XD-M Elite 3.8" to a degree. Certainly, the extra capacity makes it ideal as a home-defense gun. But if it's going to be used in that role, why not opt for a longer-barreled version like the XD-M Elite 4.5" model? Or the Tactical or Precision models? After a little consideration, my thinking is that the XD-M Elite 3.8" is best suited for a vehicle, where the short barrel offers extra maneuverability in such a confined space, yet you still have plenty of firepower if things go south.

PERFORMANCE

As always, evaluating a pistol's readiness for when things do go south relies on lots of practice to get familiar with the system, test its reliability, and find what works or doesn't work. I know, I know—it's hard work being a gun writer, but someone's got to do it. So, I rushed to the range with



"With all of its grip real estate and excellent texturing, the XD-M Elite was nearly effortless to control with most loads."

the new XD-M Elite 3.8" and a good variety of ammunition from Black Hills, Federal Premium, Hornady and Sig Sauer to give it a whirl.

First, my handling and shooting experience with the XD-M Elite 3.8" was extremely satisfying. As mentioned, the shorter barrel was quick on target, and the U-Dot sight arrangement was fast to acquire and line up. The fiber-optic front sight was quite visible, though I've grown accustomed to high-visibility halos surrounding tritium inserts up front like that featured on the Hellcat. Fiber-optic pipes are great for daylight but leave you hanging in low- or no-light conditions.

With all of its grip real estate and excellent texturing, the XD-M Elite was nearly effortless to control with most loads. Even the recoil of Sig Sauer's sizzling 124-grain M17 +P FMJs was easy to negotiate thanks to the high purchase afforded by the pistol's ergonomic grip frame. I also liked the feel of the new META trigger, though the pull and break were not entirely different from a regular XD-M's. It just offered more control and felt more refined as well.

What wasn't quite as impressive was the XD-M Elite's accuracy with the first few loads I tried. When I shot it from a CTK Compact Shooting Rest at 15 yards, the first few groups left a bit to be desired, with typically one shot out of five opening up the groups significantly. That happened with 100-, 135- and 147-grain loads that I've had good results from in the past, but that wasn't the case here. My eyes aren't the best anyway, so I wondered if I was just having a bad day.

Things improved dramatically when I dug into my MTM Ammo Crate and broke out some 124-grain loads from Federal, Hornady and Sig. The single best group at 15 yards—measuring just 0.88 inches—came with Federal's 124-grain HSTs. The average group size with that load was 1.31 inches, and the runner-up was Sig's 124-grain V-Crown JHP load, which had an average group size of 1.48 inches.

So, this test pistol exhibited more than serviceable accuracy with all of the loads at common distances for defensive encounters, but greatly

The ambidextrous slide release (left) is easy to reach, and the test pistol produced a 0.88-inch group (far left) with Federal's 124-grain HST ammo.

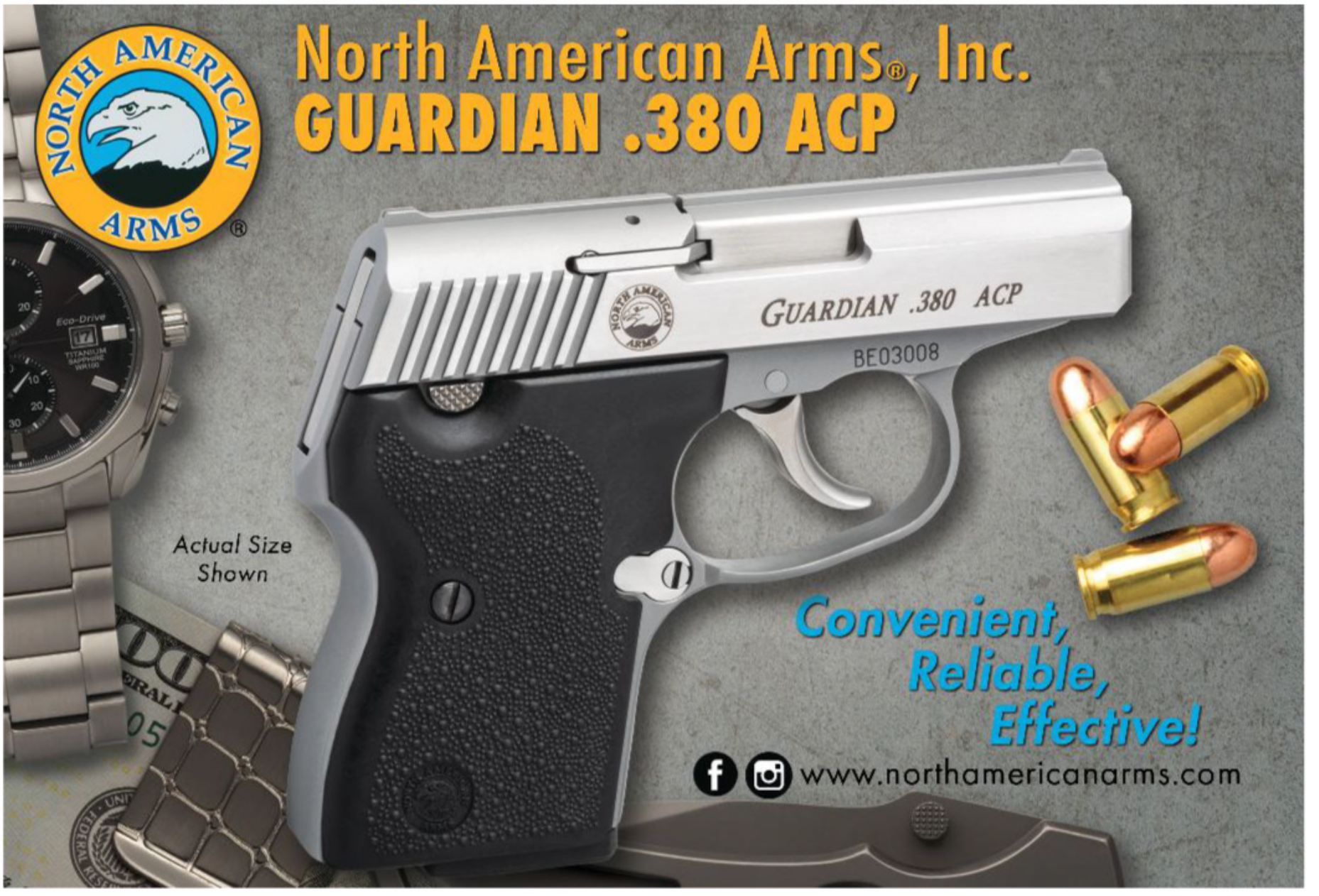
preferred 124-grain rounds for consistently precise shot placement. I would recommend testing a good assortment of ammo brands and types to find what your particular pistol likes best.

However, when it came to reliability, the XD-M Elite didn't care what it was fed. Like all the XDs and XD-Ms I've tried and owned in the past, the gun fired, cycled and ejected without a single hiccup across 10 different brands of hollow-point and FMJ ammunition. Flawless in its operation, and frame size aside, this is a pistol I would gladly carry and use to defend my life.

FULLY ENHANCED

With a reasonable MSRP of $559, the XD-M Elite 3.8" offers a full complement of features that makes it a superb choice as a fighting pistol. I was a little surprised that it didn't come with a cutout for a reflex sight, as that seems to be more of a standard feature these days. However, Springfield offers that in OSP variants like the Elite Tactical OSP model, and I wouldn't be surprised if they came out with OSP models for the "regular" Elite carry pistols in the near future.

Rather than reinventing the wheel, Springfield Armory simply took the proven XD-M platform to the next level with carefully considered enhancements to improve the shooting experience. From a better trigger, to increased capacity, to a more ergonomic and universal interface for the shooter, the Springfield XD-M Elite 3.8" leaves nothing on the table and should definitely be at the top of your list. For more information, visit springfield-armory.com. CH



FULLY LOADED

HERE'S YOUR CHANCE TO WIN THE NEW SAR USA K-12 SPORT AND MORE

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BY ALEX LANDEEN

Every issue of *Combat Handguns*, we try to offer up the best guns and gear in our "Fully Loaded" giveaways. While past iterations have showcased some of the bigger names in the firearms industry, we'd like to remind you of a historic company that needs a bit more recognition on this side of the Atlantic.

Founded in 1840, Sarsilmaz is a Turkish company that is now considered one of the largest firearms manufacturers in the world. But until recently, its high-quality weapons were only available here through third-party importers. Now, SAR USA is working closely with Sarsilmaz to develop and import products specifically for the American market. Which brings us to the sweet gun up for grabs.

1 • SAR USA K-12 SPORT

The "crown jewel" of the SAR USA lineup is the K-12 Sport. Built for speed and accuracy, this single-action 9mm is made from forged steel and aluminum for a combined weight of 46.9 ounces unloaded. That weight helps absorb recoil, and the gun also has a crowned, match-grade, 4.7-inch barrel; a crisp trigger with an overtravel adjustment; and a full-length dust cover.

More features include an ambidextrous thumb safety, matte aluminum grip panels, a flared magazine well, an oversized magazine release and an adjustable rear sight. To top it all off, the K-12 Sport looks awesome thanks to its chrome finish as well as its wide front and rear slide serrations. Needless to say, this pistol is a race gun built for extreme handling and speed. (sarusa.com)

2 • SAFARILAND MODEL 577 GLS

This retention holster from Safariland features the company's Grip Lock System (GLS), which securely locks the pistol in place automatically as soon as it is holstered, but it's easily disengaged by the shooter's middle finger when gripping the pistol for the draw. The holster is also crafted

2

from SafariSeven, a proprietary nylon blend that can handle extreme temperatures and won't damage your firearm's finish. The injection-molded belt loops fit both 1.5- and 1.75-inch-wide belts. (safariland.com)

3 • ELITE RANGE BAG

Tough, well-built range bags are important for keeping all of your guns and accessories organized and safe. The Elite Range Bag from Elite Survival Systems is just that. Made from 1,000-denier nylon with YKK #10 zippers, wraparound carry handles and a padded shoulder strap, this range bag is super durable. It also comes with a fortified inner tote featuring padded compartments that lifts out for quick access to your gear. The front pocket has a modular Velcro pouch for six magazines, and the external MOLLE webbing allows for more customization. (elitesurvival.com)

4 • SIG SAUER ELITE V-CROWN JHPs

Of course we had to throw in some ammo to feed the K-12 Sport! For this giveaway, we're including Sig Sauer's 124-grain V-Crown JHPs, which are designed for consistent, controlled expansion in a self-defense situation. Sig also uses low-flash propellants and a cannelured shank, resulting in maximum weight retention without destroying your night vision. These rounds are rated for 1,165 fps at the muzzle. (sigsauer.com) CH

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*No purchase required. Open to U.S. residents only and void where prohibited. Prizes worth $1,131. Sponsored by SAR USA. Starts 5/5/20 and ends 6/29/20. Visit personaldefenseworld.com/win-sarusa for details, eligibility and a complete list of official rules.

P320 PERFECTED

THE XFIVE LEGION

TAKES SIG SAUER'S STRIKERS TO A WHOLE NEW LEVEL

By Greg Lickenbrock

Alex Landeen Photo

The P320 XFive Legion has a number of cutting-edge features, including a tungsten-infused grip frame that adds recoil-absorbing weight.

Honestly, I blame Keanu Reeves. Without the *John Wick* movies, I don't know if the firearms industry would be so obsessed with competition-centric guns that help everyone shoot faster and more accurately on the clock. Not that I'm complaining (and please don't get the wrong idea, Mr. Wick). I personally love seeing any machine souped-up for speed, be it a car, power tool or handgun. What red-blooded American wants to settle for the standard model when an "Elite Turbo 3000" edition is available?

This brings me to the P320. When Sig Sauer debuted its first striker-fired handgun in 2014, I was immediately intrigued, and I know a lot of other shooters who took notice. Here was a truly modular handgun where you could move one serialized fire control group between different barrels, slides and grip modules. So, in essence, you can create guns of different sizes and calibers using the same trigger. And I was very impressed to see Sig actually go big and support the platform. How many times have we seen "modular" products come and go without any extras to help you transform the base weapon?

The U.S. military took notice and eventually adopted the P320 to replace the aging Beretta M9. Sig's platform won the Modular Handgun System trials by, well, offering the only truly modular handgun. (Sorry, Glock.) Since then, Sig has expanded the P320 line by leaps and bounds.

I picked up my first P320 back in 2017. I chose a standard Nitron Full-Size model without any extras. I actually tested a number of polymer-framed, striker-fired pistols, but the P320 won out because it fit my hands well, had a nice trigger and sights, and didn't have a trigger safety. I also liked the gun's modular nature. It'd only be a matter of time before I built a full P320 kit that could adapt to any need or environment.

A CUT ABOVE

Then Sig Sauer introduced the P320 XFive Legion, and I was immediately smitten. When I first got my hands on the new 9mm at the 2019 Athlon Outdoors Rendezvous in Driggs, Idaho, it was a match made in heaven. I couldn't run enough ammunition through it. Thankfully, Sig later sent me another sample for an extended testing session back home.

A few other writers have reviewed the Legion on its own, but here I'd like to compare it to the standard P320 Nitron Full-Size. This might help you see why the Legion is so special.

First off, the P320 XFive Legion stands out in a sea of black guns with a Legion Gray PVD

SPEC BOX

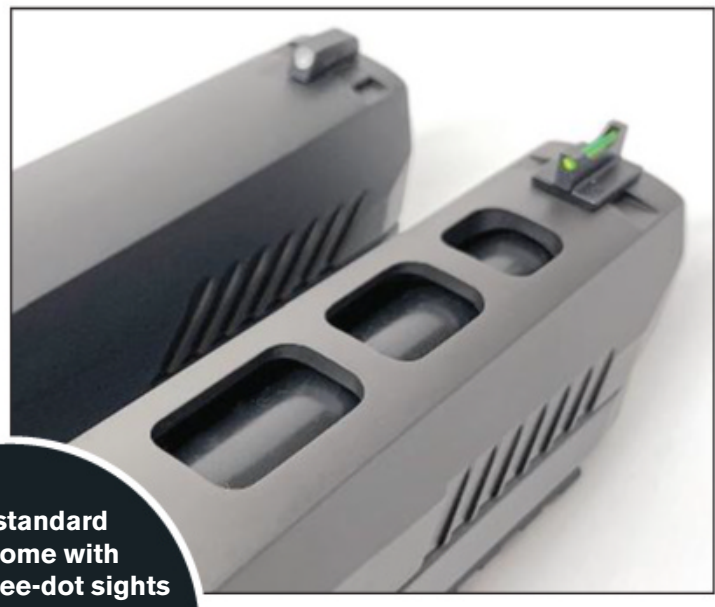
SIG SAUER P320 XFIVE LEGION

CALIBER:	9mm
BARREL:	5 inches
OA LENGTH:	8.5 inches
WEIGHT:	43.5 ounces (empty)
GRIP:	Tungsten-infused TXG
SIGHTS:	Fiber-optic front, adjustable rear
ACTION:	Striker-fired
FINISH:	Legion Gray
CAPACITY:	17+1
MSRP:	$900

PERFORMANCE

LOAD	ACCURACY
Black Hills 125 HoneyBadger	2.18
Federal 135 Hydra-Shok Deep	2.63
Sig Sauer 124 V-Crown JHP	1.80
Sig Sauer 147 FMJ	2.20
Sig Sauer 147 Match Elite JHP	1.10

Bullet weight measured in grains and accuracy in inches for best five-shot groups at 20 yards.



While standard P320s come with SIGLITE three-dot sights that glow in the dark, the Legion features a fiber-optic front sight and a fully adjustable rear sight.

finish on the slide and a matching polymer frame. The slide has three lightening cuts on top, Dawson Precision sights instead of the standard three-dot SIGLITE units, and that awesome Legion logo. Sig includes red and green pipes for the fiber-optic front sight, and the fully adjustable rear sight is part of a cover plate that, once removed, allows you to install a miniature reflex sight like Sig's ROMEO1PRO. Compared to the standard model, the Legion's front and rear slide serrations are a touch wider for positive traction, and "XFIVE" is engraved on the left side. Both slides are still angular and sexy as all get out. The Legion's is just longer, lighter and cooler.

Internally, the Legion comes with a 5-inch bull barrel compared to the standard 4.7-inch barrel. The new barrel is thicker and heavier for greater consistency and longevity. Also, while the standard P320 uses a dual recoil spring assembly like other striker-fired guns, the Legion comes with a more traditional recoil spring and guide rod. This allows you to swap out the spring and tune the gun for your preferred ammo. The gun comes equipped with a purple 14-pound recoil spring, and Sig includes an orange 12-pound spring as well.

But the greatest change comes with the frame, or grip module. Many competitors favor heavier handguns that help absorb recoil, which in turn translates to faster follow-up shots. To that end, the Legion comes with a special TXG grip module where tungsten has been blended into the polymer. This creates a heavier frame that is also more durable and flexes less while firing. I expect to see other manufacturers copying this innovation soon. On top of that, you'll find a removable tungsten weight in the rear of the magazine well.

The TXG grip module comes with a removable magazine well funnel for faster reloads under pressure. Also note the enhanced texturing and extended beavertail.

P320
CARRY OPTIONS

Own a handgun long enough and you'll accumulate a few different holsters for it. Such is the case with my P320 Nitron Full-Size. So let me share some rigs that have proven themselves.

1 • Alien Gear Cloak Shoulder Holster: Who doesn't love a good shoulder holster? Well, this model from Alien Gear is one of the best. It's fully adjustable and customizable. I ordered mine with a removable double magazine pouch that allows you to adjust the magazines' cant and retention, just like the holster pouch itself. (aliengearholsters.com)

2 • BlackPoint Tactical Kydex OWB: While Mitch Rosen supplies all of Sig Sauer's leather holsters, BlackPoint Tactical is Sig's choice for Kydex. I obtained this holster right after purchasing my P320 in 2017 and have been happy with it ever since. You can adjust the retention and use belts up to 1.75 inches wide. Newer versions are cut for slide-mounted optics, too. (blackpointtactical.com)

3 • Blackhawk T-Series L2D: This Level II retention holster would be perfect for those who serve and protect. A thumb release on the inboard side locks the pistol in place until you need it. Then, simply obtain a grip like you normally would, and hit the release to draw. It's simple, and the holster is super durable. Various mounting options are available. (blackhawk.com)

—Greg Lickenbrock

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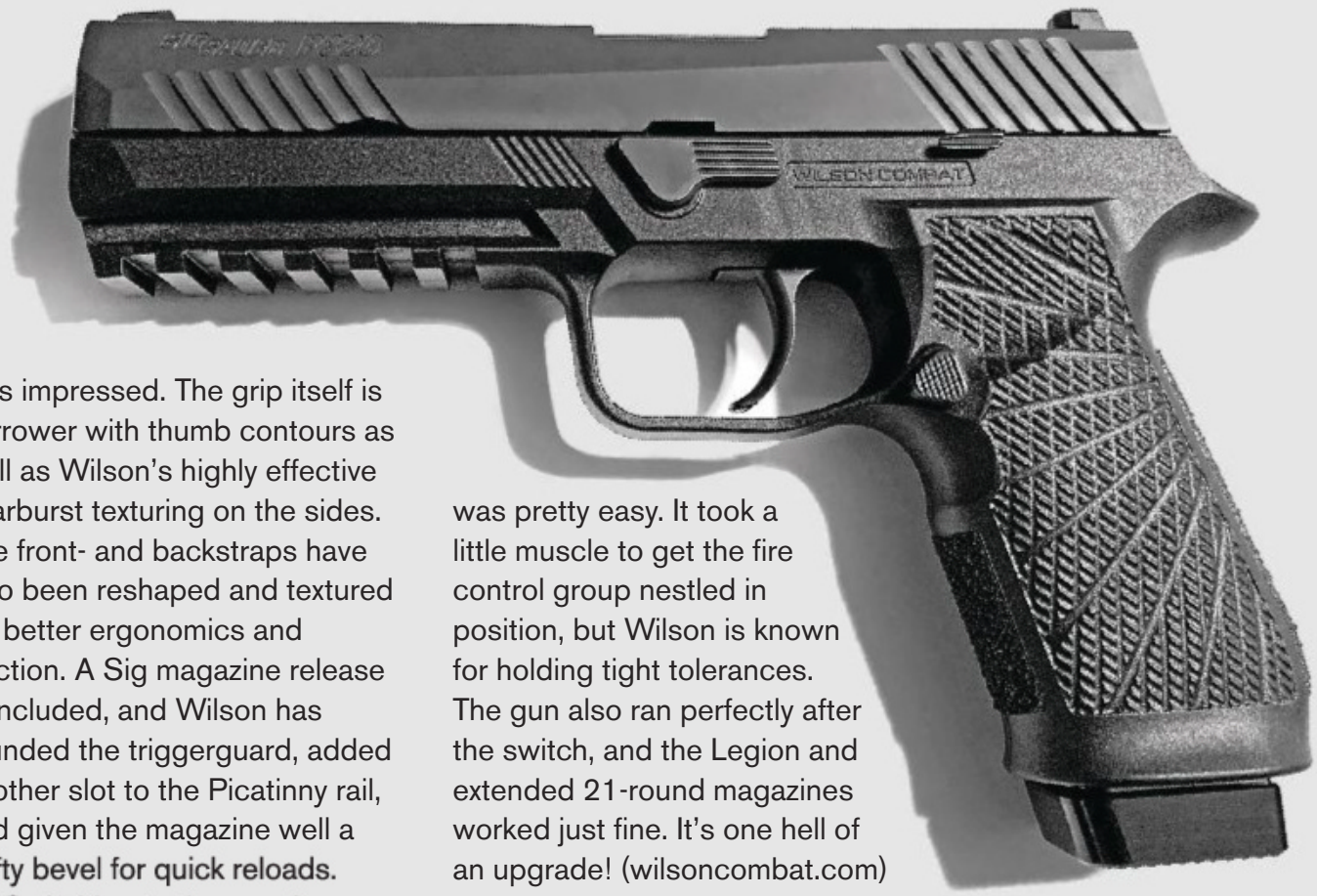

You can judge a weapon's popularity by its aftermarket support. Think of Glocks. But a number of companies are now offering kits and components for P320 series pistols, and now you can add Wilson Combat to that list with its new WC320 grip modules.

These new polymer frames are currently available in black and tan for Full-Size and Carry variants with and without thumb safeties. I got my hands on a black Full-Size version for this article, and let me just say that I was impressed. The grip itself is narrower with thumb contours as well as Wilson's highly effective Starburst texturing on the sides. The front- and backstraps have also been reshaped and textured for better ergonomics and traction. A Sig magazine release is included, and Wilson has rounded the triggerguard, added another slot to the Picatinny rail, and given the magazine well a hefty bevel for quick reloads.

Switching to the new frame was pretty easy. It took a little muscle to get the fire control group nestled in position, but Wilson is known for holding tight tolerances. The gun also ran perfectly after the switch, and the Legion and extended 21-round magazines worked just fine. It's one hell of an upgrade! (wilsoncombat.com)

—Greg Lickenbrock

Along with wider front and rear slide serrations, the PVD-finished slide also has lightening cuts that expose the 5-inch bull barrel.

The Legion's X-Series grip styling does away with the standard model's thumb cutouts in favor of more texturing, and a molded-in shelf prevents you from accidentally hitting the slide stop. The beavertail is also noticeably larger. Of course, P320s are known for their high bore axes, so slide bite has never really been an issue. (Some complain about the P320 platform's high bore axis, but I'm used to it. I think it provides plenty of space for my thumbs while firing, and I'm sure the modularity and styling require it.) The Legion's larger beavertail feels good and adds to its overall appeal. Then you have the removable magazine well funnel. If you somehow miss the magazine well with this bad boy in place, something's wrong.

The rest of the frame components are the same, including the Picatinny rail, takedown lever and reversible magazine release. The Legion's ambidextrous slide stop is slightly extended so it's easy to reach and use. The trigger is another point of divergence. The Legion's flat, skeletonized trigger is just exceptional in every way. It's extremely light and crisp with a super-short reset. I can't think of a better upgrade for competition, and the cool thing is that you can drop it into any other P320 grip module. It's easy to mix and match components if you have more than one P320. That said, I'd probably stick with the standard curved trigger for everyday carry.

The Legion comes in a nice hard case with three 17-round magazines. Each magazine has a special squared-off aluminum baseplate with checkering and the Legion logo on the bottom. The gun also ran well with Sig's extended 21-round magazines, but my Nitron Full-Size's 17-round mags wouldn't lock in place, presumably because of the Legion's magazine well funnel.

BUILT TO PERFORM

The Legion pistol, with all of its upgrades, is only the tip of the iceberg. Buy one and you

"Once I had the ROMEO1PRO dialed in, it was too easy to keep punching the same spots on my Rite in the Rain paper targets."

can join Sig's exclusive Legion program, which grants you early access to special events as well as Legion-branded gear. I'm talking holsters, lights, lasers and apparel, not to mention a free challenge coin as well as a 5.11 Tactical range bag that'll hold your gun and plenty of spare mags. It's pretty neat, and I'm excited to see the Legion program continue to expand with training and meet-and-greet opportunities.

Before I hit the range, Sig also sent me one of its new ROMEO1PRO reflex sights. Nestled in a protective steel shroud, this 3-MOA red-dot sight is super easy to use. Two buttons on the side allow you to adjust the dot's brightness and turn the sight on or off. Sig's MOTAC technology also activates or powers down the sight when it senses movement. The aluminum housing is water- and fog-proof, and I had it mounted on the slide in just a few minutes. Finally, the battery compartment is accessible from the top so you won't have to remove the sight once it's installed.

But enough chitchat. You want to hear about the range session, right? Well, as you probably guessed, the Legion ran flawlessly with five different 9mm loads, including Sig's new 147-grain Match Elite JHPs, which were designed in collaboration with Max Michel and Lena Miculek. In the Legion, these rounds were super light on recoil, and I was able to produce a five-shot group at 20 yards measuring just barely over an inch. Bear in mind that I was shooting off-hand, and I'm not a professional shooter. I consider myself just a notch above average, but John Wick would be a laser with this gun and ammo combination. And it's hard to overstate just how much the grip adds to the overall package here. The extra heft dampens any and all recoil. Paired with the high-visibility sights and crisp trigger, you'll have to remind yourself to stop grinning.

The rest of the ammo, including Black Hills HoneyBadger and Federal Hydra-Shok Deep rounds, ran flawlessly and produced groups in the 2-inch range. Once I had the ROMEO1PRO dialed in, it was too easy to keep punching the same spots on my Rite in the Rain paper targets. The gun is obviously more accurate than me—to the point where I could immediately tell if I pulled a shot. I honestly don't see how a skilled competitor could go wrong. But even if you aren't a match champion, this gun will help you feel like one. That's why I'm keeping it. For more information, visit sigsauer.com. CH

PISTOL-CALIBER POWERHOUSE

THIS NEW 9MM FROM PRIMARY WEAPONS SYSTEMS CAN HANDLE A NUMBER OF MISSIONS

BY MITCH HARDIN

Primary Weapons Systems (PWS) is a well-known firearms manufacturer located in Boise, Idaho. The company entered the marketplace back in 2007 with its legendary long-stroke gas piston system for AR-platform rifles.

Since then, PWS has evolved into a titan with firearms in chamberings like the .223 Wylde, 6.5 Creedmoor, 7.62mm NATO and even the 9mm. That last chambering is important because PWS recently unveiled a kickass pistol-caliber carbine (PCC) in both rifle and pistol variants. I got my hands on the latter for this review.

UNDER THE HOOD

According to PWS' president, Dean Sylvester, the decision to stick with an AR-style design was easy. It keeps things simple instead of reinventing the wheel. However, while the controls and ergonomics might be the same, the PCC stands out in a few different ways. First off, it uses a simple straight-blowback system rather than PWS' long-stroke gas piston system. This is simply due to the 9mm chambering.

This leads us to the next noteworthy feature: The PCC feeds from Glock magazines. Why? Well, Glock magazines are literally everywhere, and this setup allows you to use the same magazines in your PCC and handgun, and you can easily share ammo with your buddy in a crisis, for example. On top of that, with the PCC, the bolt locks back after the last round is fired—a useful feature that isn't quite common among other 9mm ARs on the market.

> "AFTER SENDING 1,000 ROUNDS DOWNRANGE, IT SEEMED LIKE THE PCC PISTOL WAS JUST GETTING WARMED UP. THIS GUN WAS BORN TO RUN."

The 9.5-inch, 41V50 steel barrel features 1-in-10-inch-twist button rifling and a proprietary compensator. According to PWS, "This muzzle device delivers superior muzzle stabilization for quick follow-up shots." After my extensive testing, I can certainly attest to that. The 9mm is already pretty light on recoil, but the PCC is exceptionally smooth.

Surrounding the barrel is an 8.75-inch-long, free-floating M-LOK handguard. The upper and lower receivers are both made from billet 6061-T6 aluminum. PWS also equips the PCC with a Radian Raptor ambidextrous charging handle as well as the company's own enhanced buffer tube and Ratchet Lock castle nut. Inside the buffer tube is an

The author tricked out his test pistol with Diamondhead backup sights, a Holosun HS507C and Crimson Trace's LiNQ light/laser system.

SPEC BOX

PWS PCC PISTOL

CALIBER:	9mm
BARREL:	9.5 inches
OA LENGTH:	25-28.5 inches
WEIGHT:	5.94 pounds (empty)
BRACE:	Pistol Mounted Solutions PSD
SIGHTS:	None
ACTION:	Blowback-operated semi-auto
FINISH:	Matte black
CAPACITY:	17+1
MSRP:	$1,350

PERFORMANCE

LOAD	VELOCITY	ACCURACY
Black Hills 124 JHP	1,341	0.94
Federal 115 American Eagle Syntech TSJ	1,324	0.88
Federal 135 Hydra-Shok Deep	1,124	0.63
Federal 150 Action Pistol Syntech TSJ	992	0.69
Hornady 135 Critical Duty	1,174	0.98
HSM 147 XTP	1,137	1.17
MEN 124 FMJ	1,186	0.91
Sig Sauer 124 FMJ	1,337	0.84

Bullet weight measured in grains, velocity in fps by chronograph and accuracy in inches for best five-shot groups at 15 yards.

Unlike other PWS weapons, the PCC uses a more traditional straight-blowback operating system tuned for greater reliability with 9mm ammunition.

extended, steel-bodied buffer chosen specifically for the PCC. The proprietary end plate also sports a quick-detach (QD) socket mount for slings, and the PTFE-coated trigger is tuned for a 5.5- to 6-pound pull.

At the rear, the PCC Pistol features a Pistol Storage Device (PSD) from Pistol Mounted Solutions. It's an odd-looking brace, but it'll definitely grow on you, especially since it holds a spare magazine. I kept a 15-round Glock magazine there throughout my testing, and it didn't get in the way or catch on any of my gear.

THE ACCESSORIES

When I first saw the PCC Pistol, the hamster in my head spun his wheel into high gear. I knew it could pull double duty for personal and home defense, so I only added accessories that would help in those pursuits.

Every good weapon needs backup iron sights, or BUIS. Your iron sights are lifesavers, especially if your optic breaks or its battery dies. Quality options are quite affordable these days as well,

The PCC Pistol ran flawlessly at the range, shrugging off extremely cold conditions during a polar vortex.

and for this test, I chose to install Diamondhead's Hole Shot flip-up sights. They're easy to deploy and lie super flat when they're no longer needed. I've been using this setup for years and can't recommend them enough.

Of course, backup sights are, well, backups. I needed an optic, so I turned to Holosun for a HS507C reflex sight, which I installed using an American Defense Manufacturing QD mount. The HS507C will run on one CR2032 battery for up to 100,000 hours, and shooters can choose to aim with a 2-MOA dot, a 32-MOA ring or both. The bright yet crisp red LED offers 10 brightness settings, and there are two separate night-vision settings as well. The sight's Shake Awake technology powers the sight down when it isn't being used but reactivates it as soon as it senses motion. On top of that, the HS507C has a small solar panel on top to supplement the battery.

The PCC Pistol features a lengthened buffer machined from steel (left) that absorbs recoil and aids in reliability. The Pistol Mounted Solutions PSD brace (right) holds a spare magazine.

Finally, I added the Crimson Trace LiNQ light and laser system. Designed for ARs, the LNQ-100G includes a control grip and a small rail-mounted module with a powerful green laser and a 300-lumen white light. The grip wirelessly controls the module so you can activate the light, laser or both. For those who wear a bit too much tinfoil in their hats, there's nothing to fear if the wireless signal gets interrupted. The module has controls on its backside for manual manipulations with your support hand. Altogether, this a simple, robust piece of gear.

TORTURE TEST

It's always good to know the limitations of one's tools. For this test, I was able to run the PCC Pistol smack dab in the middle of a polar vortex. It was so cold that my magazine followers froze. I'm serious. Whenever it was time to reload empty magazines, I had to bang them against a hard surface to break the followers free from being frozen.

But, despite the brutally cold weather, the pistol didn't complain. I was very impressed with how the PCC handled, especially with its 9.5-inch barrel. When I asked Dean Sylvester if PWS would offer versions with shorter barrels, he said the company hasn't ruled that out. That said, two different test loads came screaming out of the PCC's barrel at just north of 1,300 fps—roughly 200-fps faster than from a Glock 17 utilizing literally the same exact magazine. So that extra bit of dwell time really gets the most out of the 9mm. After sending 1,000 rounds downrange, it seemed like the PCC Pistol was just getting warmed up. This gun was born to run.

If you're looking for an exceptionally reliable AR-style pistol, you definitely have to check out the PCC from Primary Weapons Systems. I set mine up for personal and home defense, as it is predominantly designed for close quarters. But the bonus is that I can travel with it in my car when I drive out of state. After all, it's considered a concealed pistol, and if you have the proper license to carry it, you'll be just fine. Just check your state and local laws. For more information, visit primaryweapons.com. CH

TALE OF THE TAPE

CZ SHADOW 2 ORANGE

CALIBER
9mm

BARREL
4.89 inches

OA LENGTH
8.53 inches

WEIGHT
46.5 ounces (empty)

GRIPS
Aluminum

SIGHTS
Fiber-optic front, adjustable rear

ACTION
DA/SA

FINISH
Nitride

CAPACITY
17+1

MSRP
$1,999

TWO MATCH-GRADE 9MMS WITH HISTORIC LEGACIES DUKE IT OUT AT THE RANGE

BY GARRETT LUCAS

If one were to make a list of the most recognizable and iconic pistols of the past 50 years, the CZ 75 and Beretta 92 would probably make the top 10. Both pistols were products of the "Wondernine" era and saw extensive use in militaries around the globe. While both models were high-capacity specimens that used double-action/single-action (DA/SA) operating systems, they had their own unique features and flair that made them the epochal platforms that we know and respect today.

Multiple variants, clones and custom iterations of the CZ 75 and Beretta 92 have been issued by factories and gunsmiths over the past several decades. The vast majority of these have been tailored for defensive purposes. However, for this installment, we'll compare the latest competition models, which represent the best of their respective platforms.

FROM THE SHADOWS

Like the Beretta 92, the CZ 75 is no stranger to military service. However, CZ has also enjoyed tremendous success at competitive events as well, with one of the most popular competition pistol platforms in the world. Based on the original CZ 75 design, the new CZ Shadow 2 Orange sticks to the basics when it comes to a competition pistol—and for good reason.

Similar to the Beretta 92, the CZ 75 (and thus, the Shadow 2) has its own proprietary slide design. Most pistols have slides that fit over and ride outside of the frame's rails. The CZ

CALIBER
9mm

BARREL
4.9 inches

OA LENGTH
8.7 inches

WEIGHT
47.61 ounces (empty)

GRIPS
Polymer

SIGHTS
Fiber-optic front, adjustable rear

ACTION
DA/SA

FINISH
Nistan

CAPACITY
15+1

MSRP
$1,399

BERETTA 92X PERFORMANCE

75's slide rides inside the frame rails. This achieves a better frame-to-slide fit, which improves accuracy. Taking that a step further, the Shadow 2 Orange's slide and frame are hand-fitted for optimal operation and superior accuracy. On top of that, this new CZ is fitted with a barrel bushing to wring out that last bit of accuracy potential.

To further enhance the performance, CZ has custom-tuned the trigger and built in a very short reset. And when I say custom-tuned, the DA pull on my test pistol averaged 6.25 pounds, and the SA pull was a mere 2.86 pounds. The pistol can also be carried "cocked and locked" like a 1911 thanks to its thumb safety, and the all-steel construction makes it hefty at 46.5 ounces, but this helps tame recoil for faster splits.

The engineers at CZ retained the excellent ergonomics of the original CZ 75 while offering an extended beavertail in the process. The triggerguard and backstrap are undercut to promote a high grip for enhanced control. Additionally, aggressive checking on the front- and backstraps provides exceptional traction. And for a little extra flair, the Shadow 2 boasts thin aluminum grip panels and magazine baseplates that will definitely stand out in a crowd. Three 17-round magazines are included with the gun.

Front and rear cocking serrations are cut into the slide, although they are a little tricky to engage because of the low-profile nature of the Shadow 2's slide. Serrations also adorn the top of the slide as well as the rear sight to help reduce any possible glare. The pistol has a robust nitride finish, a reversible magazine release and an extended thumb safety on the left side.

BERETTA'S BEST

The 92X Performance shares 99 percent of the original 92's DNA and retains all of its design aesthetics. In fact, when I picked it up for the first time, I was dumbstruck by the pistol's two-tone sex appeal. The 92X Performance is easily one of the best-looking factory pistols that I've seen in the past decade.

The CZ Shadow 2 Orange's ergonomic grip helps promote a higher hold for more control and less muzzle rise. CZ also includes three 17-round magazines.

The Beretta 92X Performance was both reliable and light on recoil. Its die-hard construction also ensures it'll stand up to years of hard use.

The Performance model departs from a standard 92-style pistol in that it is built on an all-steel Vertec frame as opposed to aluminum alloy. This, combined with the heavier Brigadier slide, increases the pistol's weight significantly to 47.61 ounces. The increased weight is a benefit for a competition pistol since it helps reduce recoil for faster follow-up shots. The slide and frame are also treated with Beretta's "Nistan" finish, which blends nickel and other elements for exceptional durability and lubricity.

Another change for the 92X Performance was the integration of an extended, ambidextrous, frame-mounted safety that allows the pistol to be carried "cocked and locked." Standard models include a slide-mounted safety/decocker that requires the user to flip the lever up for "fire." That's a little counterintuitive for most and difficult for many to reach and manipulate easily. The new safety can also be engaged when the hammer is down for DA mode as well. However, the lack of a decocker means that the user must lower the hammer (when cocked) the old-fashioned way. Similar to a 1911, the user would point the pistol in a safe direction and slowly lower the hammer while pulling the trigger.

The 92X Performance is still a DA/SA pistol, meaning that when the hammer is down, the first trigger pull is heavier and longer. Not to worry, though. The folks at Beretta performed a little magic on the action, and the DA pull was a sinfully smooth 7.1 pounds on my test pistol. The SA pull averaged just 2.88 pounds. Even better, Beretta has also incorporated its new Extreme-S trigger system that yields a phenomenally short reset. With just a few millimeters of travel before the tactile and audible *click*, it's one of the shortest resets I've ever experienced on any style of pistol.

Other appointments include a fiber-optic front sight and a blacked-out rear sight that's adjustable for windage and elevation. The slide is adorned with fore and aft sawtooth serrations that proved to be exceptionally effective, as did the serrations on the front- and backstraps. The frame also features oversized controls, including the reversible magazine release, slide release and match takedown lever. Rounding out the features are the skeletonized hammer, the extended beavertail and the extra rubber padding on the two supplied 15-round magazines to protect them during speedy reloads.

RANGE DUEL

The MSRPs for the CZ and Beretta are $1,999 and $1,399, respectively. That's a substantial difference between two pistols aimed at the same customer. The CZ comes with a few extra parts and a third magazine, all of which could justify close to $100 of that difference. However, the Beretta has a true oversized, ambidextrous safety. Left-handed shooters would have to pay CZ an additional $88 plus shipping for an extended right-side safety, so in my book, that's pretty much a wash.

The rest of the differences between the pistols are subtle and highly subjective. For instance, the CZ felt a little better balanced in the hand, but the Beretta offers a perfect spot (at least for me) with the match takedown lever to index my support hand without slipping during fire. The CZ's trigger was objectively lighter and the trigger geometry was better for my style of grip, but it was only slightly better than the Beretta's trigger—not $600 better.

Conversely, the Beretta's slide action was buttery smooth, and the serrations provided exceptional traction. The slide on the CZ isn't as tall, nor is it as easy to engage. The serrations aren't as aggressive or as effective as the Beretta's. That said, the CZ's frame offered a bit more control thanks to the undercut triggerguard and backstrap. This translated to more consistent shot placement with the CZ when shooting off-hand. The Beretta's grip felt just a little "girthy," but it was the more comfortable of the two pistols since it was more rounded and the checkering wasn't as aggressive.

While the CZ seemed to have a slight edge in off-hand accuracy at times, that edge mostly disappeared when shooting from a rest. The Beretta held its own and shot very similar groups. At 15 yards, it created a 0.38-inch group with Hornady's 124-grain +P XTPs. Without question, it's an inherently accurate pistol. The limiting factor for comparisons at longer distances was my vision, since I wasn't running a Ransom rest or the like.

As expected, both pistols were just as reliable as they were accurate, chewing through nine different loads from Black Hills, Federal, Fiocchi and Sig Sauer without fail. Due to their weight, both were exceptionally soft shooters, even with +P loads, and I didn't notice any appreciable difference in recoil or muzzle flip. The controls were generously sized, positive and easy to manipulate on both pistols.

When you get down to it, the key factors that will probably end up pushing a buyer one way or the other will be price, looks and feel. An equally valid argument could be made for each pistol since each has strengths over the other in certain areas. The good news is that either choice will net you a phenomenal pistol that is the ultimate version of its iconic platform and will last for generations to come. What could be better than that? CH

FOR MORE INFORMATION

BERETTA
beretta.com

CZ-USA
cz-usa.com

Several companies currently produce 10mm Auto semi-autos and revolvers for hunting. Ruger's 10mm Super Redhawk is big, brawny and a pleasure to shoot.

PERFECT 10 HANDLOADS

HOW TO CREATE THE BEST 10MM AMMO FOR HUNTING AND RANGE PRACTICE

BY STAN TRZONIEC

Lately, there seems to be a resurgence of interest in the 10mm Auto cartridge. Most of the major ammunition manufacturers are producing 10mm rounds in a variety of bullet weights and velocities. When it comes to handguns in this chambering, you'll find semi-autos from Dan Wesson, Glock, Nighthawk, Sig Sauer and Wilson Combat. If you want to scratch the itch with a revolver, Ruger and Smith & Wesson offer the Super Redhawk and Model 610, respectively, which both use half-moon clips.

The 10mm almost runs neck and neck with the .45 ACP, and it's hard to notice any difference in recoil between the two when firing similar 1911s. With the .45 ACP and a 185-grain bullet, you're looking at around 1,140 fps and 534 foot-pounds of energy (fpe). With the 10mm and a 180-grain bullet, I clocked 1,150 fps with 529 fpe. However, the 10mm starts to pull away when you factor in the ability to ramp up powder charges for higher velocities with higher bullet weights.

Revolvers chambered for the 10mm often require the use of moon clips.

BRASS & POWDER

The history of the 10mm Auto is long and winding, with many ups and downs. You can read all about it online or in previous issues of this very magazine if you don't already know it. Just know that the 10mm eventually spawned the .40 S&W, and while it's popularity has waned, it's currently more popular than ever thanks to handgun hunters who need that extra *oomph*. So let's talk about handloading for it.

When I first started to reload the 10mm, the cartridge was new and everything from brass to bullets to new handguns was hard to get. As I remember, Norma brought out factory ammunition, and then Winchester tried to fill the void. With production going full tilt, brass was nearly non-existent. The boys at Winchester helped me out by shipping a box of once-fired brass for my articles. Checking catalogs, brass is now readily available from a number of sources, including Starline, Sig Sauer, Winchester and Wisconsin-based Jagemann. The 10mm uses standard large pistol primers—easy to find at any gun or sporting goods store.

When it comes to powders, the 10mm is easy to please. In working with the 10mm over the years, Accurate No. 7 is a favorite simply because it gives a good fill ratio, which leads to good accuracy and velocities. While Alliant Power Pistol, Hodgdon CFE Pistol and Accurate No. 9 might give slightly higher velocities depending upon the bullet weight, Accurate No. 7 still remains a good powder for the best accuracy downrange. For example, 12.5 grains of Accurate No. 7 will push a 150-grain Sierra hollow point to 1,301 fps, and I've created 0.5-inch groups using this combination at 25 yards. Using 10 grains of Power Pistol gave me 1,421 fps with a 0.88-inch group, while Alliant Blue Dot powder came in at 1,335 fps with 1-inch groups. In all my testing, the gun was cinched in a Ransom rest secured to the range bench with hefty "C" clamps.

When it comes to charging the cases with a number of different powders, here is a tip that might help. This works especially well when working with one

TRS

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The 10mm Auto is versatile because of all the different bullet types available. You can also use a variety of powders, but the author has found the best results using Accurate No. 7. Just remember to employ a taper crimp when it's time to seat the bullets.

cartridge and bullet, as the differences in powder charges can go back and forth from 0.5 grains to a full grain over the entire run. With your list in front of you and using Power Pistol for example, go up and down the list using this powder in all your loads. Starting at the lowest charge, pick out all the loads with this powder, fill the cases with this one particular loading, set the bullets, taper-crimp them all, mark them for the range and move on to the next load. When all of the test loads have been exhausted with that one powder, move on to the next. In this way, I can stay with one powder, allowing me only minute adjustments to the measure instead of constantly changing powders as I move to various bullet weights.

MORE LOADING TIPS

At the bench, I use the Redding T-7 turret reloading press in concert with a good set of dies from RCBS. Along with this, a taper crimp die from CH Tool & Die takes care of the final assembly after all the bullets have been seated. Some die sets include this die in the seater, but I prefer to do the taper crimping as a separate operation, as it allows me to fine-tune the crimp.

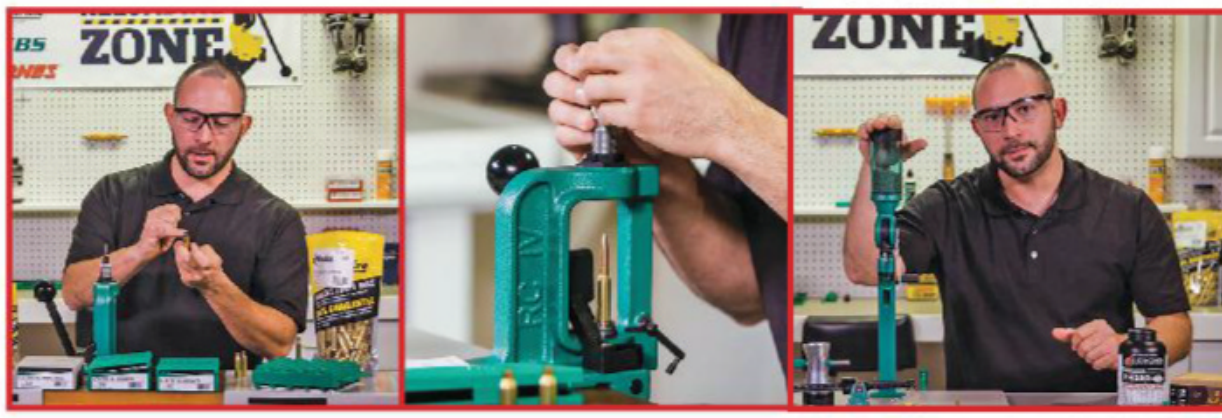
Whether brand new or once-fired, I full-length size every cartridge case before priming and charging. After sizing, each case is inspected for cracks before moving on to belling or expanding the mouth. To ensure perfect functioning in my semi-auto pistols, I seat the bullets to an overall length of 1.25 inches regardless of the bullet. I did try seating some of the bullets out to 1.26 inches but had some trouble loading those rounds into a magazine. Trouble there could lead to reliability issues later.

Many .40-caliber bullets are available now, and your end goal determines what type, design and weight will be right for you. If you want high velocities, a lighter 150- to 155-grain bullet might be best, especially for hunting smaller game. Faster velocities produce a straighter trajectory—just the thing for clean kills on game from 50 to 100 yards. Moving up the scale, 170 to 200 grains might be the right combination for medium game or range practice, which will help you better protect your home or loved ones with factory rounds.

Visiting gun shows, I take note that the 10mm Auto is indeed coming into its own again. It's versatile, accurate and easy on powder. Just remember: If you want your gun to be 100-percent reliable, you've got to pay attention to all of the details. With that in mind, and if you're looking for an excuse to buy a new gun, here it is! CH

ATHLON OUTDOORS ORIGINAL SERIES

RELOADING ZONE



TAKE OUR VIRTUAL RELOADING COURSE

As this issue was heading to press, the world was in full global-pandemic mode. Gun sales were surging to all-time highs, and the latest toilet paper and ammo famines were kicking into overdrive. But those who already reload ammunition were unfazed, knowing full well that they weren't going to run out of fodder for their firearms.

No, COVID-19 didn't spur us on to create the free "Reloading Zone" video series on tactical-life.com. We've been working on it for a while. In fact, it's a spinoff of our annual *Complete Book of Reloading* print publication, which is currently available for purchase at outdoorgroupstore.com. And now you can watch season one of "Reloading Zone" online for even more content.

SHOW OVERVIEW:
Handloading is an enjoyable and rewarding activity that can help you save money while creating ammunition that's tailored for your particular firearms. That means enhanced accuracy and customization to handle whatever mission is on deck, whether it's hunting, range practice, competition, etc.

Join Athlon Outdoors content creator and host Frank Melloni as he takes viewers through the basic steps of reloading to get them up and running. From equipment selection to reading a detailed loading manual, Melloni thoroughly explains the process and demonstrates how to make rounds best suited for your pistols and rifles.

In this series, we set up our Frankford Arsenal reloading bench with RCBS equipment to create some high-quality ammunition using Starline brass, Hodgdon powder and Barnes bullets. Broken down into four parts, the series guides the new reloader from the gun store to their workshop, through the process, and back to the range.

Episode one covers the basic starter equipment, and episode two cuts to the chase with the topic of resizing brass. Powders and primers are the focus of episode three, and episode four caps things off with bullet seating and crimping tutorials. But we have to warn you: Reloading your own ammo can become an addiction that you'll never be able to shake. Check out tactical-life.com/ReloadingZoneSeason1 to watch it for yourself, and visit outdoorgroupstore.com to see our virtual newsstand. CH

TX
TAURUS / MIAM

THE DO-IT-ALL TX22

TAURUS CREATES A ROCK-SOLID RIMFIRE FOR PLINKING, PRACTICE AND PEST CONTROL

Let's face it: Taurus hasn't had the greatest track record when it comes to semi-auto handguns. I've owned a few Taurus revolvers over the years with no complaints. But when it came to semi-auto handguns, I always strayed away from the company's products. That is until now.

The Taurus TX22 is one badass little plinker. It'll be the one gun you play with all day, use to teach people how to shoot a handgun and show off to your friends at the range. In fact, the TX22 may very well be the best handgun Taurus has ever produced. Chambered in .22 LR and weighing in at only 17.3 ounces unloaded, it ships with a pair of 16-round magazines as well as a threaded barrel adapter and retails for only $349. The TX22 feels great in any hands, shoots incredibly well and has an excellent trigger. And the gun is so easy to operate that even my 5-year-old can do it, from loading the magazine and racking the slide to pulling the trigger.

By Andy Grossman

"The TX22 feels great in any hands, shoots incredibly well and has an excellent trigger."

ALL THE FEATURES

First and foremost, the grip is excellent. Taurus engineers worked on the grip design over a two-year period to ensure optimal wrist alignment, control and overall conformity for all hand sizes. The grip reminds me of the new Walther PPQ grip, and I'd say it's perfect. The grip's geometry, combined with the optimized slide weight, helps reduce what little recoil the .22 LR offers.

It also has low-grit texturing that ensures positive hand placement and retention without being overly aggressive. This is great for beginning shooters who might not be used to more aggressive stippling patterns. The squared triggerguard is also undercut to promote a high grip, and Taurus includes a Picatinny rail for lights and lasers. Altogether, the full-sized polymer frame should be both comfortable and efficient for practically everyone.

The Taurus TX22 also utilizes the brand-new Pittman Trigger System. The 5-pound trigger is easy to stage, and its reset is nice and short with a spring assist so shooters can deliver quick follow-up shots while maintaining their sight picture. Honestly, everyone who fired this handgun at the range loved the trigger. I even had some competition shooters try out the TX22, and they all said they needed to get one.

The slide is made of hardcoat anodized 7075-T6 aluminum, while the bolt face is hardened steel. Everything feels sleek and streamlined, including the front and rear cocking serrations. On top of the slide you'll find three-dot sights. The front sight is a fixed blade while the rear sight is fully adjustable for windage and elevation. Nothing fancy, but they'll get the job done.

My test TX22 also came with an ambidextrous thumb safety—the only

With its 16-round magazines, the TX22 will have you burning through way more ammunition than you might expect.

SPEC BOX

TAURUS TX22

CALIBER:	.22 LR
BARREL:	4.1 inches
OA LENGTH:	7.06 inches
WEIGHT:	17.3 ounces (empty)
GRIP:	Polymer
SIGHTS:	Three-dot
ACTION:	Striker-fired
FINISH:	Matte black
CAPACITY:	16+1
MSRP:	$349

The TX22 is extremely easy to use, as the author's 5-year-old son proved at the range, and comes with a threaded adapter for suppressors.

component I'm not a fan of. While I like that it has levers on both sides for right- and left-handed users, I find them to be a little too low profile for easy activation.

Finally, the 4.1-inch barrel is innovative because, while it's a fixed designed, it can easily be removed for cleaning or replacement, and Taurus includes an adapter with 1/2x28-tpi threading as well as a thread protector. Thus, it's pretty easy to add a muzzle device like a sound suppressor.

TRIGGER TIME

When the TX22 arrived, I really didn't know what to expect. The gun came wrapped inside a bag and covered in nasty-smelling packing oil inside its case. I immediately wiped off the excess oil and played with the gun a bit, then headed to the range.

For my first range session, I only planned on putting 100 or so rounds through the brand-new pistol, but I'm glad I brought 300 CCI copper-plated hollow points along just in case. And I burned through all 300 of those rounds in less than an hour. I really tried to shoot slowly and deliberately, but the TX22 is just way too fun and easy to shoot. I only used one target at the indoor range as well, moving it from 15 to 35 yards as I tried to "shoot out the star" like I was at a carnival. I carved out the center section of the target with four full magazines. I then began trying to write my name and draw smiley faces, because the TX22 was that awesome.

For the next range session, I brought along some friends. I like to see how shooters of various sizes and experience levels do with a gun. This gives me a real feel for its capabilities and how different shooters might react to it. And everyone who shot the TX22 loved it. Not only that, but they shot it extremely well and ended up wanting one for themselves. We sent about 500 more rounds downrange without cleaning the TX22 before it was time to add the SilencerCo Spectre II.

SilencerCo hit a home run when it released the Spectre II, which combines an easy-to-clean monocore with a very quiet Click-Together Assembly (CTA) baffle system. This breakthrough design provides nearly the same effectiveness as a true K-baffle while still being very easy to maintain. The suppressor weighs only 6.8 ounces and measures just 6 inches long, making it a perfect partner for the TX22. It's also extremely quiet.

We ended up firing 400 more rounds through the pistol and only experienced a few malfunctions with Remington's cheap Thunderbolt rounds. I blame the ammo there. The gun itself was fully reliable. Just make sure you are careful not to let any rounds nose-dive when you load the magazines. The addition of a speedloader—which I have been told now comes with the TX22—will definitely eliminate that problem.

Finally, the gun can be disassembled just like a Glock. Make sure it's completely unloaded and the magazine is removed, then pull the trigger, pull back slightly on the slide and pull the tab in the triggerguard down. The slide will slide forward slightly and then just lift off.

ONE GUN FOR EVERYONE

The TX22 was created to satisfy the needs of shooters of all sizes and experience levels, without any compromises. In my testing, it impressed competition-level shooters while being a perfect option for smaller-framed and beginning shooters.

My son is 5 years old and loves guns. Because I'm a firearms trainer, he's grown up around them his entire life. But it's difficult to teach a young child to shoot. I struggled to find a firearm that would work well enough for him to handle—until I came across the TX22. Under supervision (obviously) my son can top off the magazine, load it into the gun, rack the slide, aim and pull the trigger all by himself. And I might be a bit biased, but he also looks awesome doing it. The TX22 is just awesome for those getting into pistol shooting.

If you're a hunter and want to plink some squirrels or rabbits when you're out in the woods, the TX22 would be a perfect sidearm for the job. It's fast and accurate enough to smoke a squirrel on a branch or a rabbit on the run. It's also great for beginners, recreational shooters, experienced shooters and even competition shooters. You won't notice any recoil, and the trigger is quite good right out of the box. Add in the threaded barrel and 16-round magazines and you can't help but hit the range. For more information, visit taurususa.com. CH

SILENCER SHOOTOUT

SIX RIMFIRE SUPPRESSORS FACE OFF FOR A PLINKING FREE-FOR-ALL

Most shooters started out with .22 LR firearms, and these days, a rimfire suppressor is also a logical first suppressor. We are in a golden age for rimfire suppressors, with many options depending on your needs. I recently tested six suppressors that paired well with my two host pistols—a custom-threaded Beretta 21A Bobcat and a new Taurus TX22. After loading up the "cans," pistols and a large box of CCI ammunition, the showdown was on.

SILENCERCO SWITCHBACK 22

If you're only going to buy one suppressor, you probably want it to have the most positive qualities wrapped into one unit. If you agree, then you should look closely at the SilencerCo Switchback 22 for $499. It's rated for .17 HMR, .17 WSM, .22 LR, .22 Hornet, .22 WMR and 5.7x28mm ammunition. The Switchback 22 is also a modular design with two main body sections that can be reconfigured into four different configurations. The serial number information is on the rear mount, making the reconfiguration possible. That also helps if there's a mishap and the sound suppressor needs to be repaired.

At its shortest length, you only use three baffles with the short body section. Here it is a scant 2.5 inches long and weighs only

By Zack Carlson

1. Dead Air Mask
2. Q Erector
3. SilencerCo Switchback 22
4. Q El Camino
5. CGS Siren
6. Bowers Bitty

3.2 ounces. If you can stand for it to be a little longer, you bump up to the medium configuration, which uses five baffles. That brings the length up to 3.59 inches and the weight up to 4.3 ounces.

The long configuration can be made into two orientations—the default configuration with all baffles facing the same direction or the rifle-optimized version, which flips the last five baffles backward. This rifle-optimized configuration is meant only to quiet rifles and is not preferred with pistol hosts. The long configurations use nine baffles and make the suppressor 5.75 inches long and 6.5 ounces in weight.

The Switchback 22 worked well in every scenario I threw at it, including the two pistols tested and various rifles. I appreciate that the baffles are stainless steel, which makes cleaning a breeze. The included wrenches make swapping configurations simple without marring the finish. I found the natural titanium finish attractive contrasted against the gray stainless caps and blast baffles.

On a pistol, SilencerCo claims 142.4, 128.5 and 114 decibels in the short, medium and long configurations, respectively. In my testing, CCI's Clean22 and standard-velocity ammo was very pleasant to shoot in all configurations. The short configuration wouldn't be my first choice for sound suppression on a pistol host, but it works fantastically on rifles. (silencerco.com)

The tiny Bowers Bitty (top) is about the same size as the Silencerco Switchback 22 in it's most compact configuration (above).

"...these days, a rimfire suppressor is also a logical first suppressor."

In its longest configuration (right), the Switchback 22 is comparable in length to the Dead Air Mask (far right). Both are highly effective.

DEAD AIR MASK

The Mask from Dead Air Armament is a $449 rimfire powerhouse rated for .17 Mach2, .17 HMR, .22 LR, .22 WMR and 5.7x28mm ammunition. The Mask is stout at 5.1 inches long and 6.6 ounces, but Dead Air claims a 115.1-decibel rating on a 4.4-inch-barreled pistol. From my testing, I have no reason to doubt that. The Mask is known for its lack of a first-round "pop"—something many other suppressors produce.

The stainless baffles have a unique tabbed system wherein each baffle aligns to the one in front of it via a tab. Assembling the baffle stack is a piece of cake, especially with the included front cap tool. The body features an attractive satin black Cerakote finish. I find myself gravitating to the Mask when it's range day since it does just about everything well. (deadairsilencers.com)

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Q EL CAMINO

Speaking of baffle design making disassembly easy, the El Camino from Q might take that prize. This $425 suppressor weighs 4.3 ounces and is 5.95 inches long. Its titanium and stainless steel construction is similar to the Switchback 22's, but it has a baffle-stack design where the baffles seal against each other, keeping them clean.

A standard ½-inch socket removes the front cap, then the whole stack slips right out easily. There's no dedicated blast baffle, so there's no specific order to reassemble the seven baffles. I found the suppressor's 0.99-inch diameter also made the El Camino feel very svelte as well.

The El Camino is rated for .22 LR, .17 HMR, .22 WMR and 5.7x28mm ammo. Q rates it at 114 decibels. During my testing, I found the El Camino to be very pleasant to shoot. I like that Q puts a little more attention into the details like the finish. The El Camino features a titanium tube coated in an attractive PVD finish. (liveqordie.com)

The CGS Siren looks great and weighs just 2.2 ounces thanks to its carbon-fiber and aluminum construction.

The modular and tubeless Q Erector (far left) is a far cry from more traditional designs like Q's El Camino (left).

Q ERECTOR

The $449 Erector is quite a departure from every other model in this roundup. While the Switchback 22 is a modular suppressor in many senses, the Erector is about as modular as you can get. The baffles all screw into each other to create the suppressor—there's no independent stack to slip into an outer tube. This lack of an outer tube creates a very light suppressor weighing in at just 2.6 ounces in its longest configuration. In my testing, its 0.99-inch diameter and 7.6-inch length made me do a double-take when I held it in my hand. It was hard to believe just how light the Erector is for its length.

The recommended configuration is with the aluminum rear mount followed by the single stainless blast baffle, then between one and nine additional aluminum baffles capped off with an aluminum front cap. I tested the Erector starting at the minimum configuration all the way to its full length. I found that at around six baffles, the can really started to take on a pleasant tone. However, I recommend going with the full-length setup, as the weight is not a deterrent.

The Erector is only rated for .22 LR ammo and smaller rounds. Using 10 baffles on a 3.5-inch barrel, it's rated at 115 decibels. During my testing, I found the Erector to be incredible. The sound was pleasant with most baffle configurations, and without an outer tube, it heats up quickly but also cools quickly. Nine of the 10 baffles are aluminum, which means they can't be placed in an ultrasonic cleaner. The material choice is the sacrifice to get that incredible weight, but it does take more care when cleaning.

Q also provides some pretty ingenious tools with the Erector. The two blue plastic vise clamps allow you to properly assemble the suppressor. They have molded in ½-inch wrenches to take off the end cap. The clamps also have two pins that interface with the grooves in the exterior of the baffles. The pins lock the baffles and allow you to apply torque to assemble or disassemble the suppressor. (liveqordie.com)

CGS SIREN

I stumbled across the CGS Siren during a visit to my local dealer, Larson Weapon Systems. The Siren is 5.25 inches long and 1.06 inches wide, but it weighs a scant 2.2 ounces thanks to its carbon-fiber tube, aluminum end caps and aluminum baffle stack. For $399, you get a high-tech sound suppressor with some neat features besides the obvious carbon-fiber outer tube.

Similar to the Switchback 22, the Siren puts all the serial number data on the rear cap, so in the event of a mishap, CGS can repair the suppressor and get it back to you in short order. The tube itself is sound-deadened thanks to its resin-impregnated carbon fiber. The Siren also utilizes a "pop reducer" before the first baffle. The rest of the baffle stack can be interlocked every 90 degrees, allowing for different alignments and sound signatures.

CGS includes a specialized tool to unscrew both the front and rear caps. Disassembly is easy because the pop reducer and baffle stack shield the tube from fouling and debris. CGS doesn't offer a decibel rating for the Siren, but in my experience, it's on par with the

The author tested every suppressor with a mix of CCI ammo, and an orange Lakeline speedloader made it easier to fill the Taurus TX22's magazines.

most effective cans in this roundup. I believe the carbon-fiber tube provides a unique tone compared to its metallic counterparts. (cgsgroup.com)

BOWERS BITTY

Last but not least in our roundup is the Bowers Group Bitty, which is exactly what it sounds like. It's a 2.6-ounce, 2.8-inch can that has the tagline, "No wet, no wipes, no equal." Bowers says it's the shortest magnum- and full-auto-rated silencer in its class.

At $325, the Bitty is rated for .22 LR, .22 WMR, .22 Hornet, .22 TCM, .17 HMR, .17 WSM and 5.7x28mm ammo. Bowers doesn't list a decibel rating for the Bitty, but in my testing, it wasn't the quietest can—it's quiet for its size. Its signature is on par with the Switchback 22 and Erector in their shortest configurations. Also, while the Bitty looks great and is hearing safe on handguns like the Beretta, it really shined on a few different .22 LR rifles I tested.

Bowers includes a flat wrench to remove the aluminum front and rear caps. Once the caps are unthreaded from the titanium tube, the aluminum spacer and three steel baffles can be removed. The baffles simply snap to each other 180 degrees from one another. The Bitty is a simple yet effective design. (bowersgroup.com)

GIVE 'EM A TRY

If you don't have a suppressor yet, there's no reason not to start with a rimfire model. They are some of the most affordable suppressors available and provide the shooter with ear-to-ear grins with each pull of the trigger. With six great options like these, take your pick. You'll quickly wonder how you shot before owning a suppressor. But be careful: Once you have one, you'll find reasons to purchase more. CH

GOVERNMENT
MODEL
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CALIBER .45

WARHORSE REBORN

NIGHTHAWK TEAMS UP WITH COLT TO CREATE AN INSTANT .45 ACP CLASSIC

By Rob Garrett

It's fair to say that 1911 aficionados have very particular tastes. We have our favorite brands and specific preferences when it comes to beavertails, sights, triggers and the like. Some like modern styles, but others stick to more traditional pistols. And while there are a number of companies that make outstanding guns, most of us will admit that, given the choice, we would prefer to see "Colt" and "Harford, Conn. U.S.A." on the frame. A Colt is the only true direct descendent of John Moses Browning and his iconic pistol.

Colt's journey in past years has been one of trials, tribulations and some triumphs. Focusing on the positive, in 2017, Ken Hackathorn told me that current-production Colt 1911s are some of the best pistols the company has made in years. That's high praise. Other custom gunsmiths have told me the same thing. That doesn't mean the pistols are perfect, however. They still have sharp edges as well as plastic triggers and mainspring housings. But they're solid guns.

More recently, Colt introduced the 1911 Classic model. It's a remake of the Commercial Government Model and features the old-style roll markings

Nighthawk installs a match-grade trigger as well as a metal mainspring housing with a radiused bottom edge.

"Nighthawk takes the stock Colt, breaks it down and gives it a complete overhaul."

on the slide. The 1911 Classic also comes with a National Match barrel, a Series 70 firing system and checkered, double-diamond grip panels made from rosewood. The 1911 Classic stays true to the original Commercial model and is a very unassuming pistol. It's the perfect canvas for a custom build.

That's what the great folks at Nighthawk Custom thought, too! Of course, this sort of project isn't new to Nighthawk. Many will remember that in 2015, Nighthawk partnered with Browning to offer fully customized Hi-Powers made from pistols fresh off the assembly line. The project was very successful until Browning stopped producing those iconic 9mms. However, Nighthawk's customized versions can still be found on the secondary market for premium prices. And Nighthawk has now performed the same feat using the new Colt 1911 Classic as a base.

The National Match barrel is paired with a match-grade bushing, and Nighthawk installs a Harrison Retro rear sight as well as a retro-style hammer.

THE BUILD

The concept for the new Colt actually came from Nighthawk's Custom Shop, after a customer sent in one of his own 1911 Classics for some upgrades. He wanted an attractive, retro-themed build that was practical, reliable and looked good at the same time. Once the pistol was completed, the Custom Shop gunsmiths knew that this build could have a wider appeal to those who like both Nighthawk and Colt. So, they took the idea to Mark Stone, Nighthawk's head honcho, who agreed. After a few tweaks, they finalized a semi-custom build that looks awesome and runs like a dream.

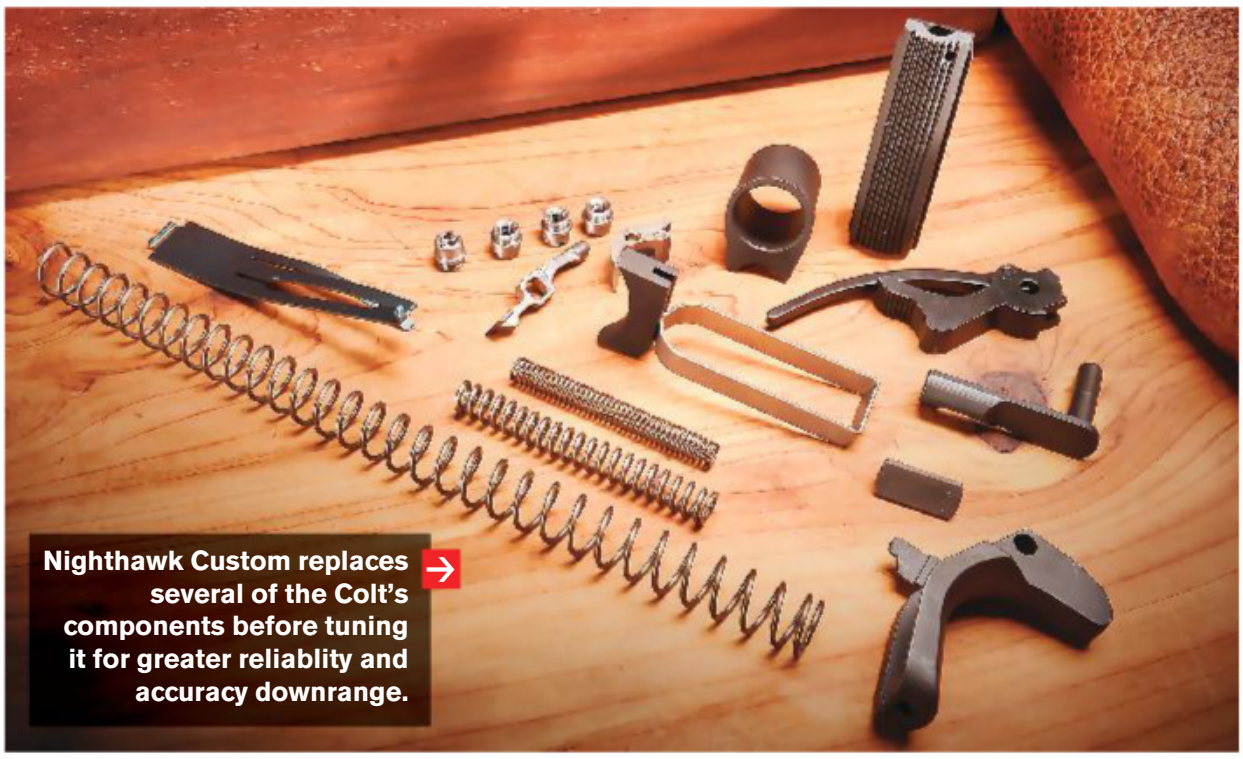
Nighthawk takes the stock Colt, breaks it down and gives it a complete overhaul. By my count, Nighthawk replaces 12 major parts. Starting with the frame, the Colt plastic trigger and fire control components are replaced with a short and solid match-grade trigger as well as a machined disconnector, sear, hammer strut and pin. The original hammer is replaced with a retro-style hammer with a bobbed spur. Nighthawk also replaces the standard grip safety with a nicely blended, low-profile beavertail unit.

The original mainspring housing is replaced with a machined housing that features five vertical serrations. The butt of the mainspring housing is also radiused to eliminate that sharp edge. Nighthawk chose to retain the original slide stop, magazine release and tear-

drop thumb safety as well as the original Colt rosewood grip panels, which are held in place with flathead screws. The magazine release is tuned and polished for easier operation, and the frontstrap is cut high with vertical serrations—a very welcome modification.

The top end of the Colt receives a complete reliability tune-up. While the National Match barrel remains, Nighthawk installs a match-grade bushing and an appropriate-length link. The breech face is trued and polished, and the feed ramp is throated to the proper dimensions and then polished. The production Nighthawk Colts also come with crowned barrels that fit flush with their bushings, but my test pistol, an early prototype, did not have that feature.

The factory extractor is also tuned and polished, and the recoil and firing pin springs are upgraded. I should also note that in order to keep the price at its predetermined point, Nighthawk does not modify the slide-to-frame tolerances.



Nighthawk Custom replaces several of the Colt's components before tuning it for greater reliablity and accuracy downrange.

However, a full-length French border is machined into the slide on both sides, providing a subtle touch of class.

To maintain the theme, Nighthawk chose to replace the factory rear sight with John Harrison's Retro rear sight. The rear of the blade has 50-lpi serrations to reduce glare. Overall, this sight is both functional and durable. The new front sight features a 14-karat gold bead with a nicely blended base that has been contoured to the radius of the slide.

The customized Colt is more ergonomic thanks to its high-cut frontstrap, and the Smoked Nitride finish looks great. Also note the French border on the slide.

The entire gun is dehorned, and specific edges are beveled by hand. The final touch is a subdued "Smoked Nitride" finish that is softly distressed. Finally, "Nighthawk Custom" is subtly engraved on the right side of the dust cover to indicate that this isn't just another 1911.

LIVE FIRE

I'm typically not a fan of the new "battle-worn" finishes offered by many companies. Purchasing a new pistol that already looks like it has been abused just doesn't appeal to me. That was true until I received the Nighthawk Colt. First, I find the dark gray finish to be rather attractive. The coating actually looks like well-worn bluing, not a nitride finish. Second, the distressing is done tastefully on the edges and appears to be the result of good, honest wear and use. The dehorning also gives the pistol that bar-of-soap feel. The overall pistol is understated and uniquely unassuming.

Getting ready to head to the range, I grabbed three premium personal-defense loads and a couple of boxes of Super Vel 230-grain FMJs. The pistol ships with a single Colt magazine, so that's what I used for most of the shooting. The rest of the ammunition included Hornady 185-grain Critical Defense, Remington 230-grain Golden Saber Bonded and Gorilla 230-grain Silverback loads. I'll save you some suspense and say that I didn't experience a single issue or malfunction with any of the loads, either. All three loads also shot well and produced groups between 1.5 and 2.5 inches at 15 yards.

The National Match barrel and match-grade bushing guarantee that this is an accurate pistol. From the bench, steel plates at 50 yards seemed easy. The fixed rear sight and gold bead front sight produced a very clean sight picture. I appreciated the rear sight's wide notch, which provided plenty of daylight on both sides of the front post. This setup was very conducive for tracking the sights through recoil and making follow-up shots.

I also liked the shorter trigger, which broke cleanly at 4 pounds with no overtravel. The slide-to-frame fit on my pistol, while not as tight as a fully custom Nighthawk's, was very good. Also, after about 200 rounds, the right grip screws started backing out. It was convenient to be able to tighten the screws with the rim of a .45 ACP case—just the way Browning intended. And when I field-stripped the pistol after three range sessions, I found that the wear was even and consistent, indicating proper tolerances and fitting.

PARTING SHOTS

When I evaluate pistols, I tend to list their likes and dislikes or things I'd change. With the Nighthawk Colt Series 70, I really liked the sights and low-profile beavertail as well as the spur hammer. The gun was also very easy to carry and handle thanks to its lack of sharp edges—something common to Colts. Finally, I really appreciated the retro styling and subdued finish, which make the gun look like an old warhorse. Interestingly enough, on the range, the Nighthawk attracted very little attention. Everyone just assumed it was another worn 1911, and that's OK with me!

SPEC BOX

NIGHTHAWK COLT SERIES 70

CALIBER:	.45 ACP
BARREL:	5 inches
OA LENGTH:	8.75 inches
WEIGHT:	39 ounces (empty)
GRIPS:	Rosewood
SIGHTS:	Gold bead front, Retro rear
ACTION:	SA
FINISH:	Smoked Nitride
CAPACITY:	7+1
MSRP:	$2,599

PERFORMANCE

LOAD	VELOCITY	ACCURACY
Hornady 185 Critical Defense	1,015	2.50
Remington 230 Golden Saber Bonded	854	2.20
Gorilla 230 Silverback	811	1.85

Bullet weight measured in grains, velocity in fps by chronograph and accuracy in inches for best five-shot groups at 15 yards.

The Nighthawk Colt Series 70 isn't some safe queen. At the range, it produced tight groups at 15 yards, making it a great carry option with quality leather.

The new grip safety blends perfectly into the frame, and the mainspring housing has vertical serrations to match the frontstrap.

What would I improve on? First, Colt ships the 1911 Classic with only one magazine. Second, the edges of the magazine well were not modified. In a recent conversation with Nighthawk, I suggested including a second magazine and beveling the magazine well. Both are minor issues but would improve the package, especially if this is a customer's first 1911.

The Nighthawk Colt Series 70 can best be described by the phrase "The whole is greater than the sum of its parts." The folks at Nighthawk Custom have another winner that will appeal to both Colt and Nighthawk fans. So if you're in the market for a classic 1911 that's ready to go right out of the box, I suggest giving this Nighthawk build a try. For more information, visit nighthawkcustom.com. CH

While SCCY is known for its subcompact pistols, the CPX-4 stands out because of its .380 ACP chambering, ambidextrous thumb safety and Roebuck Quad-Lock system.

SCCY MARSHAL

THE CPX-4 PROVES THAT IT'S MUCH MORE THAN JUST A BUDGET BLASTER

BY KAREN HUNTER

While it's true that SCCY offers pistols in practically any color you could want, the company has a lot more to offer now. This includes its first striker-fired model, the DVG-1, optics-ready variants for its full lineup, and the CPX-4. The CPX-4 is essentially a line extension of the CPX-3 in .380 ACP with an ambidextrous thumb safety, but there's a lot more in store.

I was quite intrigued when the opportunity arrived for me to cover this new gun. I've had a few chances to run SCCY firearms, but nothing that allowed for any extensive testing and evaluation. Thankfully, I got a head start on my assignment when I came across the CPX-4 at the 2019 Athlon Outdoors Rendezvous in Driggs, Idaho, and several aspects of the gun really surprised me.

FULL OF SURPRISES

The SCCY CPX-4 is a hammer-fired, double-action-only (DAO) pistol chambered in .380 ACP. The trigger has been specifically designed for a consistent 9-pound pull that, while relatively heavy, feels smooth and consistent. I'm not a competition shooter by any means—my focus is entirely on defensive handguns—and when it comes to trigger preferences, I always prefer a lighter trigger. But this is one area where the CPX-4 pleasantly surprised me. I actually enjoyed the trigger and could run it easily. The initial pull felt heavy for me, but each pull after that was exactly the same. After I found my rhythm, I noticed that the heavier trigger pull didn't bother me, given the smoothness and consistency it offered. Some shooters also prefer heavier triggers to prevent accidental discharges.

The CPX-4 also features SCCY's patented Roebuck Quad-Lock system that links the barrel and slide in four different areas for a tighter lockup and greater consistency. I believe this system, coupled with the smooth trigger, helps make the gun so accurate. Throughout my entire evaluation, I was able to produce groups in the 1- to 2-inch range with the CPX-4. I utilized Hornady's

Despite its low MSRP, SCCY ships the CPX-4 with three 10-round magazines as well as a special triggerguard lock with two barrel keys.

90-grain Critical Defense FTXs, Federal's 90-grain Hydra-Shok JHPs and some bargain-basement rounds to see how the CPX-4 would handle various ammunition types. Firing a mix of just over 500 rounds, I had zero issues.

Another pleasant surprise with the CPX-4 is that it has very minimal recoil. More often than not, you can expect .380 ACP pistols to be a little jumpy. But that isn't the case here. I believe this also has a lot to do with the Zytel polymer grip frame. SCCY changed things up a bit with the CPX-4 by giving it a wider grip with ergonomic finger grooves. This is dramatically different than the SCCY pistols that preceded it, allowing you to get a much better purchase on the gun to manage recoil.

The CPX-4 ships with three 10-round magazines—one with a finger extension installed and two with flat baseplates. The barrel is machined from bar stock with 1-in-16-inch-twist rifling. The slide is made from stainless steel and is available with a natural stainless or black nitride finish. The recoil spring system is all steel, and it's captured for easier disassembly. The slide release is also worth mentioning because it's relatively large, easy to use and made from steel with Zytel overmolding, making reloads that much better. Finally, the CPX-4 has three-dot sights, and the steel rear sight is adjustable for windage using a single locking screw.

Safety is also paramount for SCCY Firearms, and along with that heavier trigger pull, the CPX-4's internal hammer uses an inertial firing pin to prevent accidental discharges if the gun is dropped.

SPEC BOX

SCCY CPX-4

CALIBER:	.380 ACP
BARREL:	2.96 inches
OA LENGTH:	5.7 inches
WEIGHT:	15 ounces (empty)
GRIPS:	Zytel polymer
SIGHTS:	Three-dot
ACTION:	DAO
FINISH:	Matte black
CAPACITY:	10+1
MSRP:	$305

But what about safe storage? Instead of the typical cable lock most manufacturers provide with firearms, SCCY went the extra mile and delivers the SCCY with a custom-designed triggerguard lock that completely protects the CPX-4's trigger and makes it childproof. Two barrel keys are included.

MY FIRST .380

Overall, the SCCY CPX-4 is a great gun. It's reliable, safe and ready for concealed carry. It's certainly worth checking out, even if a .380 seems to be "outside of your norm." I believe it's important to be familiar with a range of guns in a range of calibers. This will help you become more well versed in firearms, and thus a better shooter.

Of course, training with each firearm is an absolute must. For me, the SCCY CPX-4 will be my go-to .380. This is the first DAO gun that I ran this well, and that was quite enjoyable to me. Consequently, I'm adding the CPX-4 to my collection, making it the first .380 I've ever owned. For more information, visit sccy.com. CH

RIMFIRE RUMBLE

THREE OF THE NEWEST .22 LR SEMI-AUTOS FROM GLOCK, RUGER AND TAURUS FACE OFF

BY PAUL SCARLATA

The .22 Long Rifle is without a doubt the most popular metallic cartridge in the world today. More .22 LR rounds are manufactured, sold and fired annually than all other non-military cartridges—rifle, handgun and shotgun combined. And the reasons for its popularity are easy to understand.

First, .22 LR ammo is affordable. While its price has gone up, even the most prudent shooter can afford a couple of boxes without endangering the weekly budget. Also, .22s don't make a lot of noise or recoil, making them a natural choice for teaching new shooters. As for hunting, the .22 LR is powerful enough for taking small game and larger vermin depending on the circumstances, and with good ammo, .22 LR firearms are capable of extraordinary accuracy. What's not to like?

Well, in recent months, Glock, Ruger and Taurus have all introduced .22 LR pistols built on polymer frames. Two are duty-sized pistols, while the third is a subcompact model. Let's look closer at each one in detail.

RUGER LITE RACK LCP II

THE CONTENDERS

Over the years, I've been known to say, "A Glock is a Glock is a Glock." By this I mean that every Glock pistol has the same operating drill, functions the same way, is disassembled in the same manner, and many of the parts are interchangeable. So it will likely come as no surprise to readers that the new G44 looks just like every other Glock. It has the same squared profile, matte black finish, Safe Action trigger—you get my drift. But its most radical departure from the breed is in its construction and operation.

With the G44, the slide is a two-piece component with steel rails and a polymer shell that contains the firing pin mechanism and Glock Marksman barrel. On top you'll find a white-dot front sight and a fully adjustable, white-outlined rear sight. The polymer frame is identical to other Gen5 models, and the pistol uses an ambidextrous slide stop and a reversible magazine release.

The G44 is dimensionally identical to the G19, which means it's compatible with all holsters intended for the G19. The 10-round magazines also share the dimensions of their centerfire brethren, which means you can use the same magazine pouches, and load-assist tabs are built into the sides so you can easily depress the followers while adding rounds. Finally, the G44 is disassembled in exactly the same manner as its centerfire predecessors.

Ruger's new Lite Rack LCP II is the smallest of this bunch. Its ergonomic frame is made of glass-filled nylon with alloy inserts to provide additional strength. The slide is machined from alloy steel and features a blued finish as well as fixed sights. But this pistol's most notable feature is the Lite Rack system, which includes dual slide serrations, cocking "ears" at the rear of the slide and a lighter recoil spring. Combined, these features make it extremely easy to rack the slide. Thus, the gun is ideally

NEW RIMFIRES

>>>>>	GLOCK 44	RUGER LITE RACK LCP II	TAURUS TX22
CALIBER:	.22 LR	.22 LR	.22 LR
BARREL:	4.02 inches	2.75 inches	4.1 inches
OA LENGTH:	7.28 inches	5.2 inches	7.06 inches
WEIGHT:	12.63 ounces (empty)	11.2 ounces (empty)	17.3 ounces (empty)
GRIP:	Polymer	Glass-filled nylon	Polymer
SIGHTS:	Fixed	Three-dot	Three-dot
ACTION:	Safe Action	DAO	Striker-fired
FINISH:	Matte black	Matte black	Matte black
CAPACITY:	10+1	10+1	16+1
MSRP:	$430	$349	$349

Richard Cole Photos

suited for new shooters or those who struggle with heavier recoil springs.

This Ruger also uses an internal hammer for reliable ignition, and the Secure Action fire control makes the trigger feel like a single-action unit with a smooth pull, a crisp break and a positive reset. You'll find a thumb safety and slide stop on the left side of the frame. The magazine release is in the proper position, and Ruger has included a magazine-disconnect safety, which means the gun cannot fire unless the 10-round magazine is fully inserted. Finally, the magazine's extended baseplate provides a full, three-finger grip for enhanced control.

Taurus' TX22 is similar in size to the company's 9mm pistols, which makes it an excellent choice for training new shooters before they transition to heavier-recoiling centerfire pistols. The TX22's most notable feature is its Pittman Trigger System (PTS), which provides a short, spring-assisted trigger reset that allows the shooter to deliver quick follow-up shots while maintaining good sight alignment. The trigger on our test pistol broke crisply at 4.5 pounds, and the reset was tactile and audible.

The TX22 is available with or without an ambidextrous thumb safety, and there's also a striker block and trigger safety. The barrel comes with an adapter featuring 1/2x28-tpi threading so you can add a suppressor, and Taurus includes a thread protector as well. The slide is made from lightweight aluminum with a separate steel breech face. The three-dot sights include a fixed front post and a fully adjustable rear unit.

The TX22's magazines hold 16 rounds, but 10-round magazines are available for those shooters who live in restricted states. It also comes with a loading tool that allows you to quickly fill magazines to capacity without tearing your fingernails in the process.

RANGE RULES

Once we had the test pistols in hand, my wife, Becky, and I zeroed the Glock and Taurus at 15 yards, and both proved capable of producing groups under 2 inches. As in past "Battle Royales," my friends Dick Jones and Richard Cole joined us, and we decided to run the pistols through two different drills. The first involved running four racks of six 8-inch steel plates at 10 yards with each pistol. Since the .22s did not consistently tip over the plates, we figured it'd be OK just to "ring" them for score, which included the total time for four runs plus a five-second penalty for any misses.

We then set up two IPSC cardboard combat targets. From 7 yards (5 with the Ruger) the shooter would lift the pistol and engage one target with 10 rounds, then reload and engage the second with 10 rounds. The drill would then be repeated, with the score being the total time for both runs plus a five-second penalty for any misses.

By the time we were finished, we had fired well over 600 rounds through each pistol. Thankfully, Winchester and Federal kindly supplied all of our test ammo. The Target Barn provided our IPSC cardboard targets, and we

timed our drills with a Competition Electronics Pocket Pro. Finally, as in previous "Battle Royales," each pistol was graded on a 1 (worse) to 5 (best) scale in seven different categories: reliability, ergonomics, trigger control, recoil control, sights, off-hand accuracy and reloading ease. These were then added together to give each pistol a final score in each category, with 15 being a perfect score.

IN-DEPTH RESULTS

Reliability: Rimfire pistols are known for being particular when it comes to ammo, and this trio was no exception. We experienced a number of failures to extract and light strikes when firing Winchester ammo through the Glock and Ruger, but fewer with the faster-stepping Federal rounds. The Ruger had more malfunctions as it became fouled, and on occasion, the last round in the Glock magazines would nose-dive and not feed. The Taurus ran like gangbusters the whole time except for two failures to feed towards the very end of the test firing, which we believe were related to fouling.

Ergonomics: The Ruger suffered here primarily because of its small size and, to be fair, comparing it to the other two was like comparing apples and oranges. One of us referred to the Taurus as the "Goldilocks Gun" because it was big enough for excellent control but small enough for concealment. In addition, its grip shape and angle made it point naturally, allowing fast, accurate follow-up shots. It was also the easiest gun to shoot and load. We all agreed that the Glock tended to point high upon presenting it.

Richard Cole Photo

COMBAT DRILL	DICK	PAUL	RICHARD
GLOCK	9.4	12.9	13.5
RUGER	21.7	20.4	15.3
TAURUS	10.3	11.1	13.2

PLATE RACK DRILL	DICK	PAUL	RICHARD
GLOCK	6.1	5.3	7.2
RUGER	11.5	7.5	8.1
TAURUS	4.1	4.8	5.9

Note: *Time results in seconds.*

Trigger Control: The Taurus owned this category thanks to its light trigger pull. As with most Glocks, the G44's trigger felt gritty and required a bit of nursing. The little Ruger's trigger was also a bit gritty, but it proved suitable to the task.

Recoil Control: Thanks to its slightly heavier weight and superior ergonomics, the Taurus edged out the Glock in this category. For all practical purposes, comparing the Ruger to the other two was unfair. Two of us felt its grip frame was too short even for a subcompact pistol, but a third said the extended magazine basepads helped significantly.

Sights: The Taurus ran away with this category because its three-dot sights were "big enough to actually see and use." The Glock's sights were also fast to acquire but rather coarse for precise aiming. It goes without saying that the Ruger's small sights were difficult to use, but when you consider that this pistol was designed for close-range engagements, they were more than adequate.

Off-Hand Accuracy: We were all surprised at how well we could hit plates with the little Ruger. In fact, we usually hit all six with the 10 rounds the pistol held—barring malfunctions. The Glock's sights hindered fast target acquisitions, resulting in slower runs. The three of us rang steel with the Taurus with metronome-like regularity.

Reloading Ease: The Glock beat out the Taurus here, as the latter's magazine release was very close to the frame, making it difficult to access. Also, the mags sometimes didn't drop free. As you are unlikely to make speed reloads with the Ruger, its magazine release was once again suitable to the task, but its magazines had sharp lips.

THE FAVORITE?

I always enjoy putting my friends on the spot, so I asked them which was their favorite pistol. Needless to say, for concealed carry, the Ruger won hands down. But for all-around uses, the TX22 won out. Richard said, "I didn't expect to choose the Taurus, but its positive features left me no choice. Nice surprise." Dick agreed: "The TX22 is a really pleasant pistol. It's utterly reliable and comes at a great price. The 16-round capacity is great as well. Taurus is going to sell a lot of them!"

And while I'm a Glock fan of long standing, in this case, my vote made it unanimous for the Taurus TX22. I felt it had superior ergonomics, a great trigger, nice sights and proved utterly reliable. What more could you ask for? CH

TALE OF THE TAPE

	GLOCK 44	RUGER LITE RACK LCP II	TAURUS TX22
RELIABILITY	9	4	15
ERGONOMICS	13	5	15
TRIGGER CONTROL	11	10	14
RECOIL CONTROL	14	9	15
SIGHTS	11	7	13
OFF-HAND ACCURACY	11	8	15
RELOADING EASE	15	6	14
TOTAL	84	49	101

Note: *15 is a perfect score for each category, while 105 is a perfect total score.*

FOR MORE INFORMATION

GLOCK
glock.com

RUGER
ruger.com

TAURUS
taurususa.com

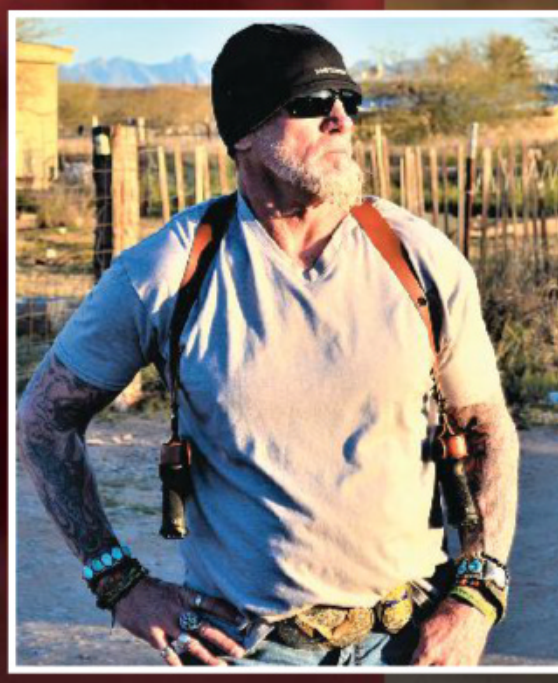
ROUGH & READY

JAY DOBYNS PROVES THAT TWO GUNS ARE ALWAYS BETTER THAN ONE

JAY DOBYNS is a 27-year veteran undercover agent of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (BATFE). His career includes being shot on his first week of work—before even attending the academy—and again before he celebrated his second work anniversary. His most documented exploit: He was the first federal undercover agent to be patched into the Hells Angels. Operation Black Biscuit, a two-year investigation, accounted for 55 biker arrests.

In the world of undercover operatives, Dobyns is a rock star, and his daring exploits have been widely documented. As I learned during our recent interview, his transformation from a standout college wide receiver to a "white trash, trailer-living, debt-collecting hitman" is nothing short of astonishing. When pro football didn't work out for him after college, Dobyns decided he'd like to become an undercover agent.

"At the time I was trying to figure out what to do, *Miami Vice* was very popular," Dobyns said. "Sonny Crockett's running around South Beach, and he's got a Hugo Boss suit on, and he's driving a Lamborghini. He's going to mansions, meeting slick kingpins, and he's negotiating for a ton of cocaine on a barge in Miami harbor on its way from Colombia. There were cigarette boats, Learjets and strippers, and I was like, 'Oh, man, I think I could do that!'"



Despite being shot and nearly killed during his first week of work and then again almost two years later, Dobyns' enthusiasm for undercover work never faltered. So, when he was asked to be the lead agent on the Hells Angels investigation, he committed himself 100 percent. When I asked Dobyns about his undercover armament, I expected him to say he carried a small pocket semi-auto or an equally concealable revolver. "That's not my style," Dobyns said. "I carried twin Glock 19s in a Galco shoulder rig!"

The shoulder holster he's referring to is the Miami Classic—the same holster that put Galco on the map in the mid-1980s when viewers of *Miami Vice* watched Don Johnson's character, Sonny Crockett, chase bad guys with his Bren Ten, and later a Smith & Wesson Model 645, held securely in the horizontal shoulder holster.

"I liked the modularity of the holster," Dobyns said. "I bought an extra left-handed holster and attached it where the mag pouches would normally go. As much for flash as anything else, I wanted them to be seen. I'm not a gun guy, to be quite honest with you, but I picked the Glock for two reasons: It carried a lot of bullets, and I liked the fact that it was a point-and-shoot gun without a manual safety. Having been in combat shootings, I knew those were the two things I wanted. I didn't want safeties or decockers. I just wanted to draw it and shoot it."

BY MIKE DETTY
ALEX LANDEEN PHOTOS

While the standard Miami Classic comes with one holster and a double mag pouch on the other side, Galco also offers the rig with two holsters instead.

If you decide to build a two-gun rig, remember that one of the holsters must be left-handed so the thumb break is in the correct position. The system can also be outfitted with anchor straps that go from the bottom of the holsters and attach at the belt to keep the guns from bouncing. When I asked Dobyns if he used these straps, he shook his head. "I wanted the ability to put the guns on as quickly and as easily as I put on a jacket."

For our photo shoot, we returned to the same dilapidated area of Tucson, Arizona, where Agent-in-Training Dobyns was shot some 33 years ago. Wearing a borrowed vest and gun, he admitted to me that he had never actually held or even fired a real gun back then. "Dogpatch" is the unofficial name of the impoverished area located south of Tucson's International Airport. According to Dobyns, the neighborhood hadn't changed much since his shooting.

After Dobyns donned the guns in the Miami Classic Raid Rig, photographer Alex Landeen got busy adjusting lights and taking pictures. Apparently, the

"JAY DOBYNS...WAS THE FIRST FEDERAL UNDERCOVER AGENT TO BE PATCHED INTO THE HELLS ANGELS. OPERATION BLACK BISCUIT...ACCOUNTED FOR 55 BIKER ARRESTS."

GALCO'S RAID RIG

For our photo shoot, I contacted Mike Barham, Galco's media relations manager, and asked if many customers carried two guns in this manner. "It is surprisingly common," he said, "enough so that we unofficially call the two-gun setup a 'Raid Rig.'"

Barham sent me everything I needed to replicate the Miami Classic Dobyns wore while undercover. Constructed from premium saddle leather, the Miami Classic's secret to amazing comfort is its ability to distribute the weight of the guns. All four parts of the spider harness pivot independently and are connected at the clover-shaped swivel backplate. The harness is completely adjustable, and the guns can be carried from the armpit level down to mid-rib. It will fit users chests up to 52 inches wide.

The holsters offer adjustable retention, and thumb breaks secure the guns.

The C-1 Dual Appendix Holster from NSR Tactical is adjustable for both ride height and retention, and a strap secures the holster to your belt.

These tricked-out Zev G19s sport Orion (left) and Omen (right) slides as well as match-grade barrels, new triggers and stippled frames.

sight of three white men—one of whom was wearing twin Glock 19s and sporting a badge—aroused the suspicions of local residents. Their ad hoc neighborhood watch swarmed us, taking pictures and video and spreading the word throughout Dogpatch that there were some unwanted visitors.

"It's a shame," Dobyns said. "There are definitely some good, hardworking folks who live here and can't afford better. But it's also a rough area, and we have definitely disrupted the drug trade here this evening!"

ANOTHER OPTION

Galco has made a number of famous movie holsters over the years, including the one used by Nicholas Cage's character, Castor Troy, in the 1997 movie *Face/Off*. This leather holster was designed to carry Troy's twin gold-plated Springfield Armory 1911s at the small of his back with the grips turned outward. I can't imagine it would be comfortable to sit for any amount of time with two 1911s pressing into your back, but, when used with a jacket or covering layer, the big guns would be effectively concealed. While not a cataloged item, Galco's Custom Shop can build you a twin-gun, small-of-the-back (SOB) holster. A quick internet search turned up dozens of manufacturers making similar dual-gun holsters.

NSR Tactical makes a neat two-gun system that rides at the appendix position. Constructed from Kydex, the C-1 Dual Appendix Holster is designed to sit inside the waistband and is anchored to the belt with a strap. The C-1 is adjustable for retention and ride height, and NSR makes the holster for several different guns. I'm guessing the C-1's concealability is dependent on the wearer's build and cover garment, but if you're comfortable with appendix carry and would rather carry a second pistol instead of extra mags, it looks to be an effective means of dual carry.

THE GUNS

The folks at Zev Technologies let us borrow a couple of their guns for this project. One gun was built on a Glock 19 Gen5 and used Zev's Omen slide. The other was a Glock 19 Gen4 with Zev's new Orion slide. Both of the slides are uniquely sculpted with rounded cocking serrations for an aggressive look. They're also milled to accept reflex sights, and Zev includes fiber-optic front sights and drift-adjustable rear sights. The Omen slide also has window cuts on both sides to reduce the reciprocating weight and give the gun proper slide velocities for reliable feeding.

The Omen slide is paired with a bronze-finished barrel with 1/2x28-tpi muzzle threading and a Zev Pro V2 compensator, which eliminates nearly all of the muzzle climb normally associated with the G19. Zev barrels are machined from 416R stainless steel with proper match-dimensioned chambers. The barrels are cut-rifled with 1-in-14-inch, left-hand twist rates.

Both guns proved to not only be 100-percent reliable but also capable of great accuracy, producing groups from 1.25 to 2 inches wide at 25 yards. This is partially due to their amazing triggers. The Omen's trigger broke at a crisp 4.75 pounds, while the Orion's broke right at 4 pounds. On top of that, the frames both wear one-piece magazine wells for fast and certain reloads.

As you can tell, these guns have all the critical components of any successful competitor. In fact, Zev Technologies began with a focus on competitive shooters and, over time, has grown its line of Glock accessories to service elite military and law enforcement customers as well. And last year, the company started manufacturing its own striker-fired pistol, called the "Original Zev 9mm," or O.Z-9. Check out the company's website.

MORE TO COME

Be sure to read my full interview with Jay Dobyns in the upcoming June/July 2020 issue of *Ballistic* magazine. You'll learn how he was betrayed by the very agency he risked everything for and was targeted for death by those he investigated, with his BATFE supervisors acting as willing accomplices.

But Dobyns decided to take a stand and refused to be silent. His daring exposé of the BATFE's immoral and unethical management brought the full weight of the government's resources down on him. Dobyns' story is one of great strength, perseverance and sacrifice, and it's told with extraordinary humility and candor. CH

FOR MORE INFORMATION

GALCO
galcogunleather.com

NSR TACTICAL
nsrtactical.com

ZEV TECHNOLOGIES
zevtechnologies.com

REVOLVER TUNE-UP

TACKLING GUNSITE'S 250 REVOLVER CLASS WITH THE TAURUS MODEL 692

BY WILLIAM BELL

JORDAN BELL PHOTOS

In today's shooting world, revolvers are somewhat passé. In fact, many newer handgun enthusiasts have never fired one. That said, I wasn't too surprised when I recently showed up at Gunsite Academy for the 250 Revolver class and noted that all of the participants were somewhat "long in the tooth," and several, like myself, were retired law enforcement officers. Gunsite's 250 class is a week-long training course that builds on the introductory 150 class but has more than twice the shooting and adds simulators like "The Donga" and "Playhouse."

This particular 250 class is built around revolvers, using many of the same principles as the regular 250 for semi-automatic pistols and Lieutenant Colonel Jeff Cooper's "Modern Technique." The revolver class is only offered once a year, and I wanted to update my decades-old revolver training and put a recently acquired revolver through this "acid test" to see if it would hold up. Consequently, I made arrangements to attend the course.

GUN & GEAR

Back in June of 2019, I tested the Taurus Model 692. This medium-frame wheelgun comes with easily interchangeable, seven-shot .357 Magnum/.38 Special and 9mm cylinders. A few different variants are available, but I tested a matte black model with a ported, 3-inch barrel; a red ramp front sight; a fully adjustable rear sight; a wide, smooth-faced trigger; a target-style hammer; a rubber grip; and Stellar clips for loading 9mm cartridges.

When I originally tested the revolver, I used four

"...I LEANED A HELL OF A LOT AT GUNSITE, EVEN FOR AN 'OLD DOG,' AND WOULD HIGHLY RECOMMEND THE 250 CLASS TO ANYONE..."

The author carefully "slices the pie" around corners and doorways inside one of Gunsite's shoothouses during the 250 Revolver course.

different .357 Magnum loads and three 9mm loads. Between measuring the revolver's accuracy and running a couple of combat/qualification courses, I put about 200 rounds through the Taurus. The tightest five-shot group from 15 yards, using a sandbag rest, measured 1.68 inches with the .357 Magnum cylinder. Using all .357 Magnum ammo, I also scored 337 out of 350 points on the combat course. The best part: There were no malfunctions, and I couldn't find much to criticize about the revolver. I was so impressed that I kept the revolver. The only thing I changed was adding a Hogue Monogrip.

In too many circles, Taurus handguns aren't held in high esteem. I believe that's a mistake, especially with the company's revolvers. I've tested and used Taurus revolvers for decades, and their quality and accuracy have been right on par with the "big boys." I decided that my new Model 692 was going with me to Gunsite with the .357 Magnum cylinder in place—let the chips fall where they may!

This course called for 1,000 rounds of ammo, plus 50 frangible rounds. But my right hand is developing arthritis, so shooting 1,000 rounds of full-bore .357 Magnum cartridges didn't seem appealing. I contacted Black Hills to obtain some .357 Magnum Cowboy Action Shooting rounds that use 158-grain, flat-nose bullets. I checked this load's accuracy before the trip, and my best five-shot group at 15 yards was 1.48 inches. The frangible ammo is for use in the shoothouse simulators, so I found out that some 77-grain Inceptor ARX cartridges I had in .38 Special would fit the bill.

I also used some tried-and-true leather gear. I chose VersaCarry's Underground Premium double-ply belt and a Simply Rugged Sourdough Pancake holster. The latter is a hand-fitted, open-top rig that rides high on the waist with three belt slots. I also added an old Brauer Brothers cartridge slide to the belt so I could top off a partially empty cylinder when necessary. It came in handy during the course.

Gunsite also stipulates six speedloaders for the class. As I'm most familiar with HKS products, I decided to use the HKS Model 587-A, which holds seven .357 Magnum or .38 Special cartridges. A knob at the top of the loader is turned to lock the cartridges in or to release them into the charging holes of the cylinder. To hold the speedloader, I modified a black plastic HKS carrier to fit, since the

587-A is just a hair larger in diameter than the standard six-round speedloader.

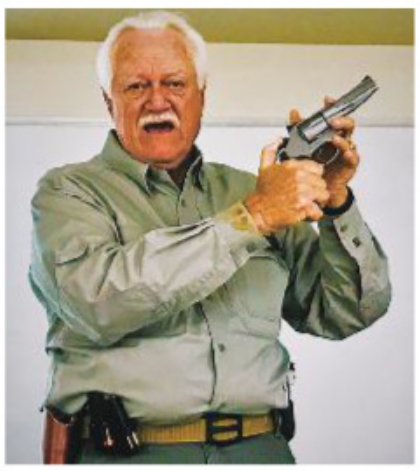
BACK TO SCHOOL

The first day of this five-day course began in Gunsite's main classroom, where our instructors—Jerry McCown, Ed Head and Jay Tuttle—explained our objectives, Jeff Cooper's "Modern Technique," safety precautions and how we'd eventually gain the skills necessary to feel "peace of mind" when using a revolver for defensive purposes. We also covered topics like practical marksmanship, the proper stance and grip, and sighting in. Thrown in were some revolver dos and don'ts, along with a discussion of dry practice and speedloaders.

Then we headed to the south range to burn some powder.

Most of our square-range shooting was at 3, 5, 7, 10 and 15 yards. Our targets were Gunsite's camouflage-pattern silhouettes. The instructors led us through some exercises to ascertain our basic marksmanship skills. They quickly concluded that with few exceptions, the student body was well above average. A big obstacle for me was the Gunsite method for drawing and getting on target. I had spent years doing it other ways and using a two-handed hold that wasn't really recommended. But I was determined to learn some new tricks! The instructors could also turn the targets using an incredibly precise computerized system where we sometimes had only 1.5 seconds to shoot.

Tuesday morning found us on the range, where we started by practicing the "School Drill," which we'd shoot for time and score later. On the principle of "speed is built with practice," we began slowly and finally used the turning targets at more realistic intervals. That was an eye-opener. We also went over shooting around walls, "slicing the pie," one-handed shooting and handgun retention. After lunch, we practiced loading and reloading with two rounds at a time and malfunction drills—something I'd never heard of before. Late afternoon saw us back in the classroom with a discussion on ballistics, stopping power and revolver maintenance.



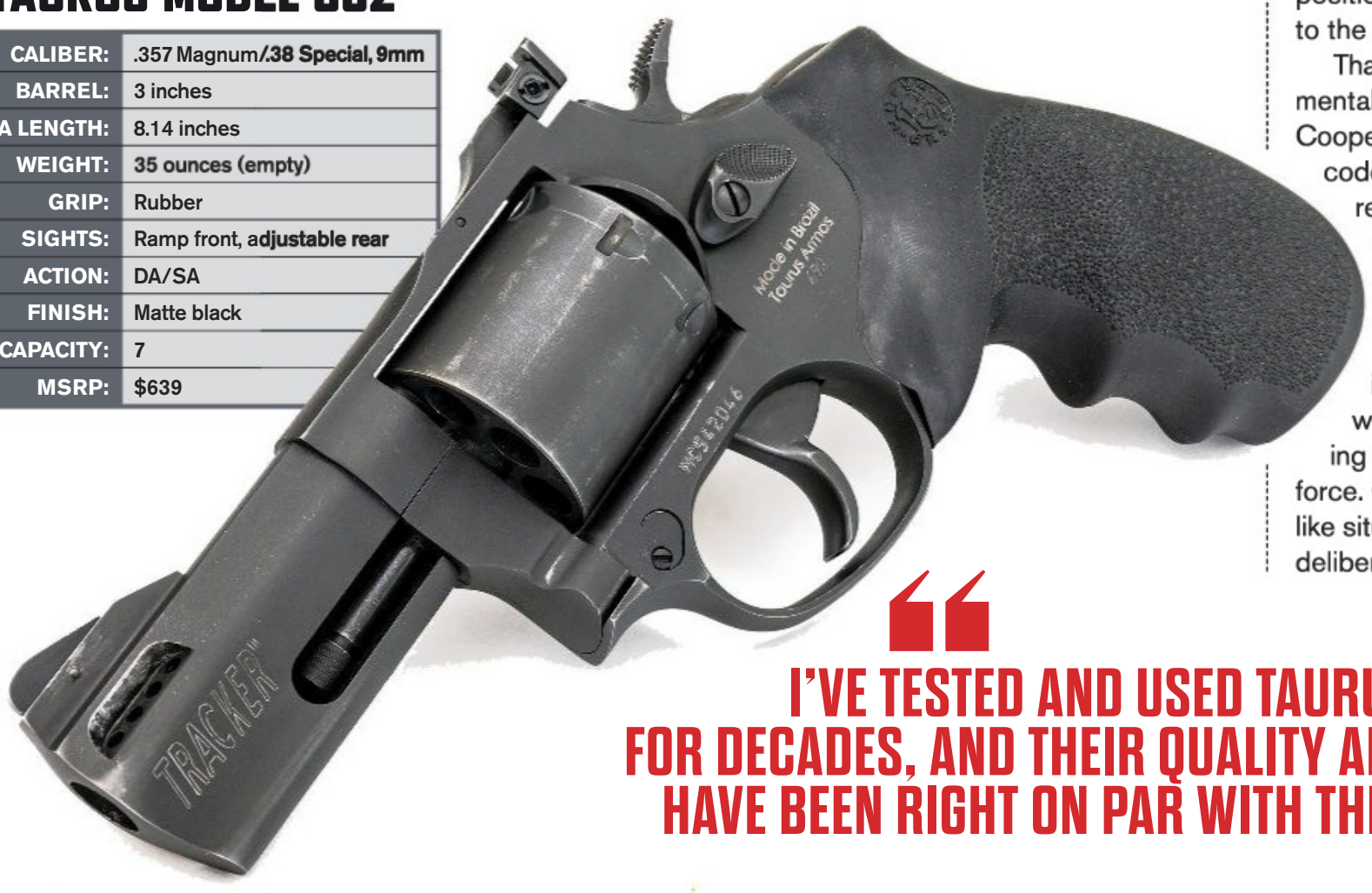
Wednesday started on the range with more of the School Drill, then we moved on to firing from two kneeling positions and learning how to safely turn 360 degrees and shoot. Both of these skills are included on the graded skills test at the end of the week. We also received a demonstration on shooting from the prone position and an introduction to the simulators.

That afternoon covered mental conditioning. Jeff Cooper's well-known color code was discussed and reinforced by a vintage video of Cooper giving the lecture. Your "mindset" is considered one of the most important subjects when it comes to deciding if you can use deadly force. Critical principles like situational awareness, deliberate action, alertness,

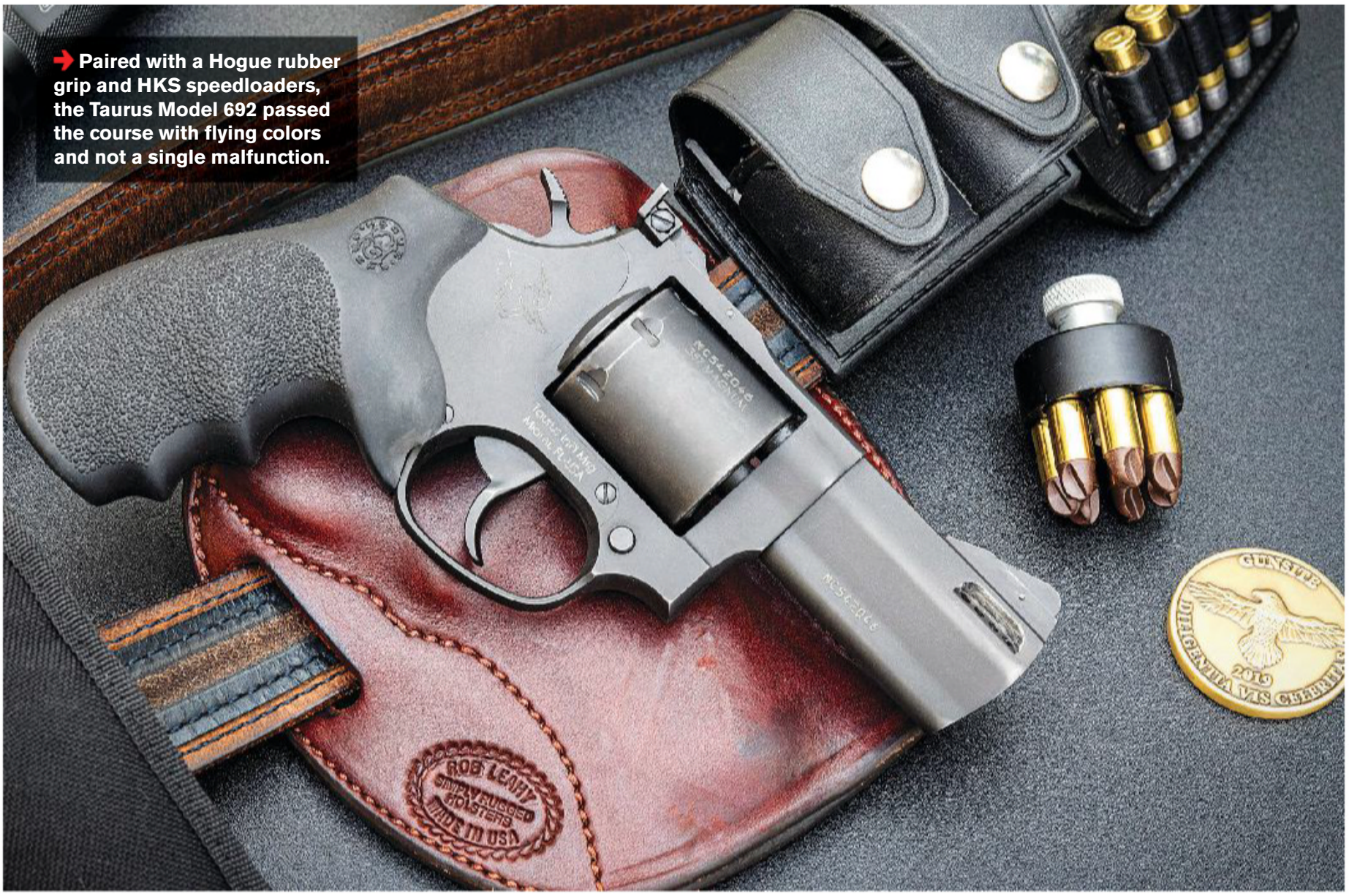
SPEC BOX

TAURUS MODEL 692

CALIBER:	.357 Magnum/.38 Special, 9mm
BARREL:	3 inches
OA LENGTH:	8.14 inches
WEIGHT:	35 ounces (empty)
GRIP:	Rubber
SIGHTS:	Ramp front, adjustable rear
ACTION:	DA/SA
FINISH:	Matte black
CAPACITY:	7
MSRP:	$639



"I'VE TESTED AND USED TAURUS REVOLVERS FOR DECADES, AND THEIR QUALITY AND ACCURACY HAVE BEEN RIGHT ON PAR WITH THE 'BIG BOYS.'"



Paired with a Hogue rubber grip and HKS speedloaders, the Taurus Model 692 passed the course with flying colors and not a single malfunction.

decisiveness and aggressiveness were covered, along with channeling anger to the threat, being quick while keeping a cool head, and interrupting the "OODA loop" of an attacker.

On Thursday, we rotated through the simulators, with half the class shooting The Donga, an arroyo concealing various steel targets, and the other half clearing rooms in the Playhouse. Then we switched simulators before running more School Drills on the square range, shot some steel falling targets, practiced the graded "El Presidente" drill and were introduced to the two flashlight methods taught at Gunsite. We first practiced these techniques in the daylight. Then, that evening, we came back to the south range for low-light and night shooting.

Friday was the test and graduation day. We again split the class and went through the simulators, then shot the School Drill, the El Presidente and had a man-on-man shoot-off. Earlier in the week, I'd won a man-on-man event called the "Duck of Death," which earned me a 2019 Gunsite challenge coin. But I didn't perform as well during the last shoot-off. We then returned to the classroom, and certificates were passed out. A real treat was a tour of Cooper's home, the Sconce, located on the property.

LESSONS LEARNED

First off, the Taurus Model 692 ran very well. There were no malfunctions, and the somewhat short ejector rod didn't cause any cartridge cases to get stuck under the star and jam the gun. I did have to knock a case or two out manually, but that was mostly due to bad technique on my part.

With the mild loads I was using, I don't think the barrel ports really helped. They blackened the red front sight, which I had to continually wipe off. I also made a good move in installing the Hogue rubber grip. The HKS speedloaders caused me some angst with the too-tight carrier; pulling them out sometimes caused me to twist the knob slightly and dump the rounds. I also concluded that a stiffener sewn into the top of my Simply Rugged holster would help keep it open for reholstering.

All of that aside, I leaned a hell of a lot at Gunsite, even for an "old dog," and would highly recommend the 250 class to anyone who wants to gain the skills and confidence to defend themselves with a handgun. CH

FOR MORE INFORMATION

GUNSITE ACADEMY
gunsite.com

TAURUS
taurususa.com

LARGE & IN CHARGE

THE BEST NEW FULL-SIZED PISTOLS AND REVOLVERS MAKING WAVES THIS YEAR

By Andy Grossman

In a market flooded with small, compact, easily concealable pistols, sometimes people forget about the full-sized market. I happen to love full-sized handguns. My all-time favorite pistol is a 1911. So, this year at SHOT Show, I was very interested to see what manufacturers had to offer in this somewhat forgotten handgun category. Here are the highlights.

BERETTA 92X PERFORMANCE

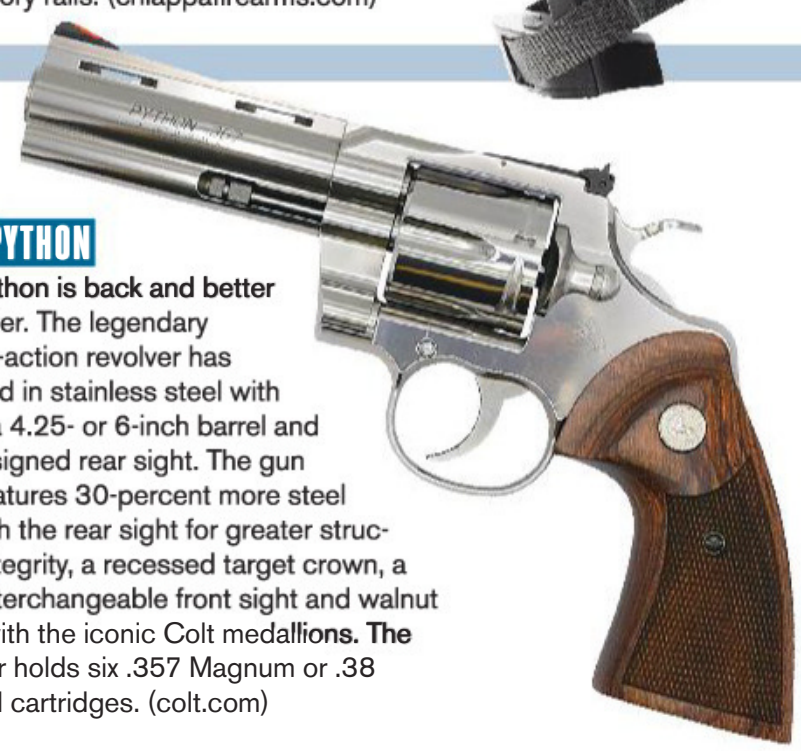
This new competition pistol was created for speed and accuracy, combining one of the most reliable locking systems with a steel Vertec frame, a heavier Brigadier slide and more. This heavyweight tack driver also weighs in at 47.61 ounces unloaded to help reduce recoil and muzzle rise. The skeletonized hammer is paired with a match-grade hammer spring, and the new Extreme-S trigger mechanism ensures the pistol is completely drop safe while reducing the reset by 40 percent. In short, this pistol is an instant classic right out of the box. (beretta.com)

CHIAPPA CBR-9

The new 9mm CBR-9 from Chiappa is a semi-automatic pistol with an improved blowback operating system that uses a bolt half as heavy as competitive models. All of the mechanical components are in the upper receiver while the lower includes the polymer grip and arm brace. The CBR-9 also uses proprietary 18-round magazines, and two are included. The top rail makes it easy to add optics, though fiber-optic sights are included, and the design provides a very low bore axis, which translates to less recoil and muzzle rise. On top of that, the forend has short accessory rails. (chiappafirearms.com)

CHRISTENSEN A-SERIES 1911s

Christensen Arms crafts some of the finest 1911 pistols on the market, and the new A4 and A5 are no exception. Currently available in 9mm, each frame is machined from 7075-T6 billet aluminum and assembled using only premium components, including a tunable match-grade trigger. After machining, each newly designed slide is hand-fitted to its frame to guarantee a smooth and accurate handgun. Both models feature skeletonized hammers and triggers, checkered frontstraps and mainspring housings, G10 grip panels and full-length guide rods. A railed version of the A5 is also available. (christensenarms.com)



COLT PYTHON

The Python is back and better than ever. The legendary double-action revolver has returned in stainless steel with either a 4.25- or 6-inch barrel and a redesigned rear sight. The gun also features 30-percent more steel beneath the rear sight for greater structural integrity, a recessed target crown, a user-interchangeable front sight and walnut grips with the iconic Colt medallions. The cylinder holds six .357 Magnum or .38 Special cartridges. (colt.com)

KIMBER K6s DASA COMBAT

Last year, Kimber took its double-action K6s to a new level by offering the "DASA" version with an exposed hammer that allows you to fire the gun in single-action mode as well. Now the company has debuted the K6s DASA Combat, which uses a heavy 4-inch barrel, three-dot sights and special combat grips with three finger grooves and diamond checkering. The all-stainless model also has a serrated backstrap and a subtly fluted cylinder. (kimberamerica.com)

EAA WITNESS MATCH XTREME

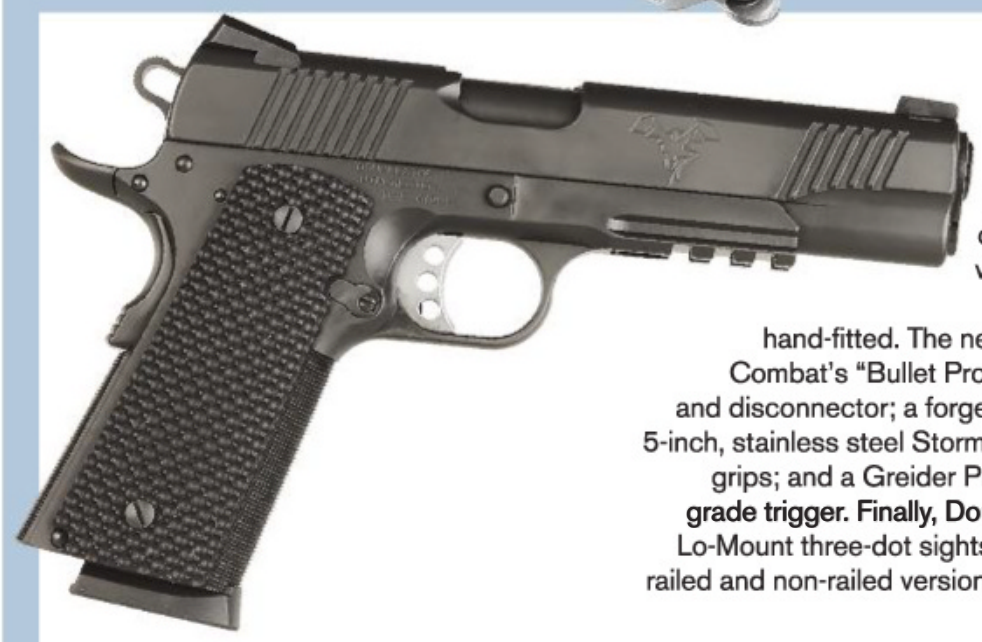
Every Witness Match Xtreme pistol is hand-tuned by the master gunsmiths from Tanfoglio's Custom Shop in Italy before being imported by European American Armory (EAA). The gun features a custom, hand-tuned trigger; a 6-inch barrel with polygonal rifling; a two-toned ceramic coating; the Xtreme-series aluminum grips, hammer and firing pin; a fiber-optic front sight; a fully adjustable rear sight; an ambidextrous thumb safety; and large slide serrations for easier operation. EAA offers the pistol in 9mm, .40 S&W, .45 ACP and 10mm, and the gun ships with a cleaning kit, two recoil springs and three spare magazines with Xtreme aluminum basepads. (eaacorp.com)

KIMBER RAPIDE BLACK ICE

Kimber is known for making attractive guns, and the company definitely did not disappoint with the addition of the Rapide Black Ice. Available in 9mm, 10mm and .45 ACP, this is a truly unique 1911 with stepped cocking serrations, slide lightening cuts for faster lock times, a striking KimPro II finish and a DLC-coated barrel for extreme durability. The frontstrap has Kimber's Stiplex treatment, and the G10 grip panels have new accents for extra traction and style. The gun also features TruGlo TFX Pro sights and a V-cut aluminum trigger. (kimberamerica.com)

RUGER-57

The all-new Ruger-57 is so named because it's designed around the ultra-fast, light-recoiling 5.7x28mm, which leaves the pistol's 5-inch barrel at well over 2,000 fps. Despite this cartridge's length, Ruger designed the grip so it's still ergonomic and holds 20-round magazines. The gun also has a polymer frame; a fiber-optic front sight; an adjustable rear sight; an ambidextrous, 1911-style thumb safety; a reversible magazine release; and a slide drilled and tapped to accept a miniature reflex sight. (ruger.com)



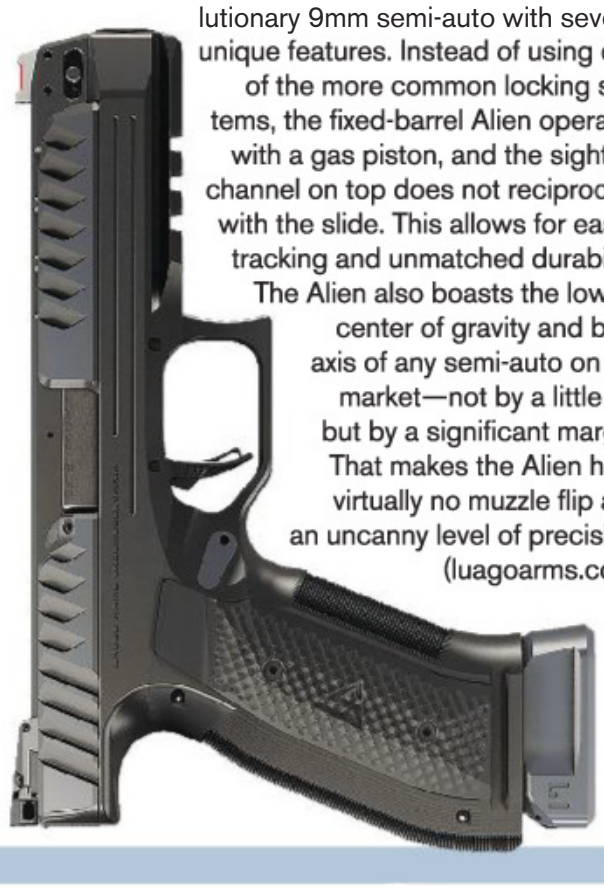
DOUBLESTAR C2G

DoubleStar's new C-series 1911s are designed to be truly in a class of their own. That's why every high-end component is meticulously hand-fitted. The new C2G features Wilson Combat's "Bullet Proof" forged hammer, sear and disconnector; a forged frame; a match-grade, 5-inch, stainless steel Storm Lake barrel; VZ Gunner grips; and a Greider Precision V-Series match-grade trigger. Finally, DoubleStar includes Novak Lo-Mount three-dot sights on top of the slide, and railed and non-railed versions are currently available. (doublestarusa.com)

DIAMONDBACK DBX57

Diamondback has joined the 5.7x28mm game with its 8-inch-barreled DBX57. The gun has aluminum, AR-like upper and lower receivers and uses 20-round magazines styled after the FN Five-seveN's. The DBX57 comes with an AR-style pistol grip, safety and magazine release, an M-LOK handguard and a full-length top rail. That said, the gun is only 1.25 inches wide, and the charging handle can be switched to either side. The rear of the lower receiver also has a vertical rail for adding an arm brace that ships with the gun. With the brace installed, the gun weighs 3.7 pounds unloaded. (diamondbackfirearms.com)

LUAGO ALIEN



The Alien from Luago Arms is a revolutionary 9mm semi-auto with several unique features. Instead of using one of the more common locking systems, the fixed-barrel Alien operates with a gas piston, and the sighting channel on top does not reciprocate with the slide. This allows for easier tracking and unmatched durability. The Alien also boasts the lowest center of gravity and bore axis of any semi-auto on the market—not by a little bit, but by a significant margin. That makes the Alien have virtually no muzzle flip and an uncanny level of precision. (luagoarms.com)

STI STACCATO XL

The new Staccato XL features a 5.4-inch bull barrel, the longest barrel available in STI's lineup, and either a chrome- or black-DLC-finished slide with new lightening cuts and serrations for easier racking in stressful conditions. It also sports an ambidextrous thumb safety, a Dawson Precision fiber-optic front sight and recoil system, a fully adjustable rear sight and a 2011 G2 grip frame with a Tactical Advantage magazine well for quick, fumble-free reloading. (stiguns.com)

RUGER AMERICAN COMPETITION

Building on the strengths of Ruger's original American Pistol, the new 9mm Competition variant has a nitrided 5-inch barrel with six-groove, 1-in-16-inch-twist rifling optimized for lighter-weight match bullets. The slide is also ported for faster lock times, and you can easily add a miniature reflex sight for quick targeting. The fiber-optic front sight is paired with a fully adjustable rear sight as well. Ruger also includes two 17-round magazines, an ambidextrous slide stop and magazine release, a Picatinny rail for accessories and interchangeable backstraps to help you customize the grip frame. (ruger.com)

SIG SAUER P320 RXP XFULL

Along with debuting pistols like the M18 and P365 XL, Sig Sauer has expanded its reliable P320 series of modular pistols to include models that come standard with ROMEO1PRO reflex sights already installed. These new RXP variants include compact and full-sized models with standard and X-Series grip modules. The P320 RXP XFull also features a Nitron-finished X-Series slide, X-RAY3 day/night sights, a flat trigger, an extended, ambidextrous slide stop and a 4.7-inch barrel. Two 17-round magazines are included. (sigsauer.com)

SPRINGFIELD RONIN OPERATOR

Available in 9mm and .45 ACP, the new Ronin Operator from Springfield Armory combines classic 1911 styling with more modern features today's shooters demand. The two-tone pistol has a forged stainless steel frame and a blued carbon-steel slide. The Gen 2 Speed trigger is streamlined, skeletonized and tuned for performance. You'll also find a fiber-optic front sight, a Tactical Rack rear sight, a hammer-forged barrel, smooth and checkered Crossed Cannon grip panels, and front and rear slide serrations. Best yet, the pistol's suggested retail price is just $849. (springfield-armory.com)

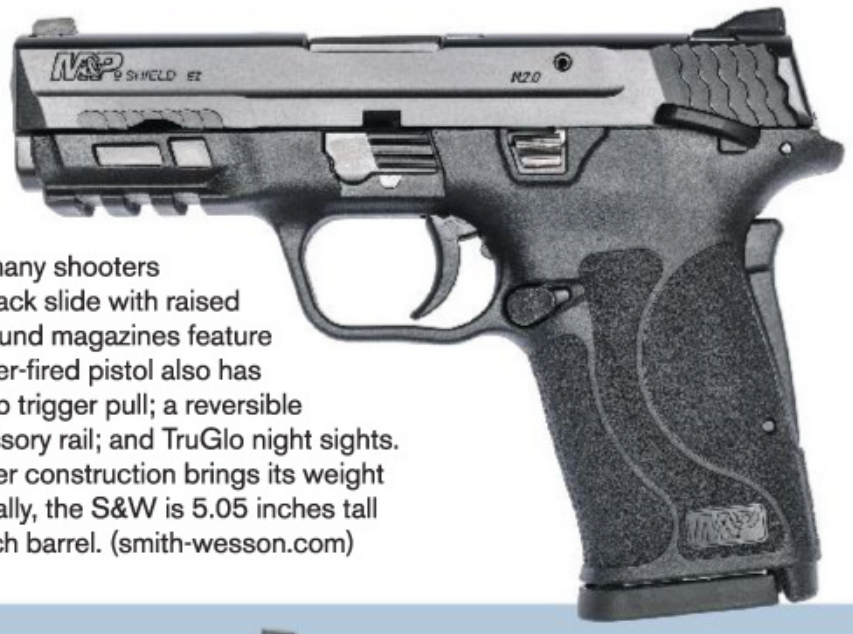
RUGER PC CHARGER

While you might have heard of Ruger's PC Carbine, which accepts both Glock and Ruger SR-series magazines with special interchangeable magazine wells, the company has gone a step further by introducing the PC Charger. This 9mm was born for home or vehicle defense with a durable polymer chassis, an aluminum M-LOK handguard, a factory-installed hand stop, a Picatinny rail for sights and an ergonomic pistol grip. Like the PC Carbine, the Charger also disassembles easily for quick stowage and transport. (ruger.com)

TAURUS DEFENDER 856

Taurus currently offers six different versions of the Defender 856, but they all utilize DA/SA trigger systems, six-shot .38 Special +P cylinders and 3-inch barrels with full-length underlugs. The frames are either aluminum or stainless steel, and the finish options include matte black, stainless or tungsten Cerakote (shown). They all have "Night Orange" front sights and fixed rear sights, and the grips are wood, G10 or rubber. (taurususa.com)

SMITH & WESSON M&P9 SHIELD EZ



While it might be smaller than the other guns in this roundup, the EZ version of the 9mm Shield is still worth mentioning because of how many shooters can get behind it. It has an easy-to-rack slide with raised "ears" on the sides, and the eight-round magazines feature load-assist tabs. This internal hammer-fired pistol also has grip and thumb safeties; a light, crisp trigger pull; a reversible magazine release; a Picatinny accessory rail; and TruGlo night sights. The gun's stainless steel and polymer construction brings its weight down to 23.2 ounces unloaded. Finally, the S&W is 5.05 inches tall and 6.8 inches long with its 3.68-inch barrel. (smith-wesson.com)

SPRINGFIELD XD-M ELITE 4.5" TACTICAL OSP

Springfield Armory recently upgraded its XD-M line to include Elite models with enhanced META triggers, removable magazine wells, larger magazine capacities and redesigned slides. The XD-M Elite 4.5" Tactical OSP comes with a threaded barrel, taller suppressor-height sights, a Flat Dark Earth polymer frame and a matching Cerakoted slide. Springfield includes two 22-round magazines for this 9mm, which has a Melonited barrel and slide for extreme corrosion resistance. (springfield-armory.com)

STOEGER STR-9

Stoeger is known for its durable, dependable shotguns, but its new STR-9 is a striker-fired 9mm that comes packed with features you'd expect in a gun costing twice as much. The STR-9 has an accessory rail, a reversible magazine release, three-dot sights and an ergonomic grip frame. The slide also has deep, aggressive slide serrations that ensure a firm grip in any weather for rapid cycling with or without gloves. A few different STR-9 packages are available, but the cheapest is just $329. (stoegerindustries.com)

WILSON COMBAT EXPERIOR FULL-SIZE

Wilson Combat's new eXperior series 1911s are all crafted from match-grade slides, frames and barrels made in-house and fitted by hand. The Full-Size model features Wilson's new TRAK grip texturing for superior traction in wet or humid conditions, and the frame rails have WAVE clearance cuts for less friction in adverse environments. Both 9mm and .45 ACP variants are available, but the 9mm's barrel locking system has been upgraded for reliability with lighter loads. Also be sure to check out the rest of the line, which includes a wide range of single- and double-stack models. (wilsoncombat.com)

WALTHER Q4 STEEL FRAME

Following up on the award-winning Q5 Match Steel Frame, Walther's new Q4 variant has a shorter top end while still possessing a tank-tough, recoil-reducing frame. The all-steel 9mm pistol has Walther's Quick Defense trigger, ergonomic grip texturing, an ambidextrous slide release, three-dot sights, a dust-cover rail and a durable Tenifer finish throughout. The beavertail is also extended to prevent slide bite, and the front and rear cocking serrations are subtle yet effective. On top of that, an optics-ready version is also available. (waltherarms.com) CH

BRAND-NEW AMMO

THE LATEST LOADS TO HANDLE ALL OF YOUR HANDGUNNING NEEDS

By Dr. Martin D. Topper

NEARLY 19 MILLION AMERICANS NOW HAVE CONCEALED-CARRY PERMITS, AND MILLIONS MORE KEEP HANDGUNS FOR HOME DEFENSE. Consequently, it's easy to understand why companies both here and abroad frequently develop new and improved handgun ammunition. Many of these new loads also meet the needs of law enforcement officers, increasing the customer base even more. Like last year, the 2020 SHOT Show featured a number of new loads for personal protection and law enforcement. But defensive ammo isn't the whole story. This year brought additional new handgun ammo for hunters and competition shooters as well. Let's take a look.

BLACK HILLS HONEYBADGER

Black Hills has expanded its HoneyBadger line to include a new 127-grain .357 Magnum load. Each round features a fluted, all-copper bullet that is designed to produce a larger temporary wound cavity while reducing the risk of over-penetration. The muzzle velocity is rated at 1,378 fps for 530 foot-pounds of energy (fpe). The load penetrates a maximum of 18.5 inches in ballistic gelatin and is very good for personal defense or hunting. (black-hills.com)

BARNAUL FMJs

MKS Supply of Dayton, Ohio, is now importing Russian Barnaul ammunition for semi-auto pistols. All of the loads use full-metal-jacket (FMJ) bullets, polymer-coated steel cases and non-corrosive primers. The ammunition includes 94-grain .380 ACP, 94-grain 9x18mm Makarov, 115-grain 9mm, 165-grain .40 S&W and 228-grain .45 ACP loads. Consider them affordable alternatives to brass-cased ammunition for those who engage in high-round-count training. (mkssupply.com)

BLACKWATER 9MM AMMO

Blackwater Ammunition, or BWA, appeared on the scene last year. This year, it's offering three new American-made 9mm loads: 115-grain Training Grade +P FMJs, 147-grain Freedom Grade +P jacketed hollow points (JHPs), and barrier-blind, 124-grain Contractor Grade +P monolithic hollow points. These rounds all use the increasingly popular Shell Shock cases, which pair steel case walls with aluminum case heads. The MSRPs for all three loads are quite reasonable as well. (blackwaterammo.com)

CCI MAXI-MAG SEGMENTED HP

This .22 WMR load's innovative, 46-grain, polymer-coated lead bullet splits into three equal pieces when it impacts the target, creating three distinct wound channels, at much lower velocities and longer distances than other rounds in the same category. The polymer coating also reduces copper and lead fouling in barrels and suppressors, and the bullet geometry is optimized for much better reliability and accuracy. (cci-ammunition.com)

CCI BLAZER BRASS

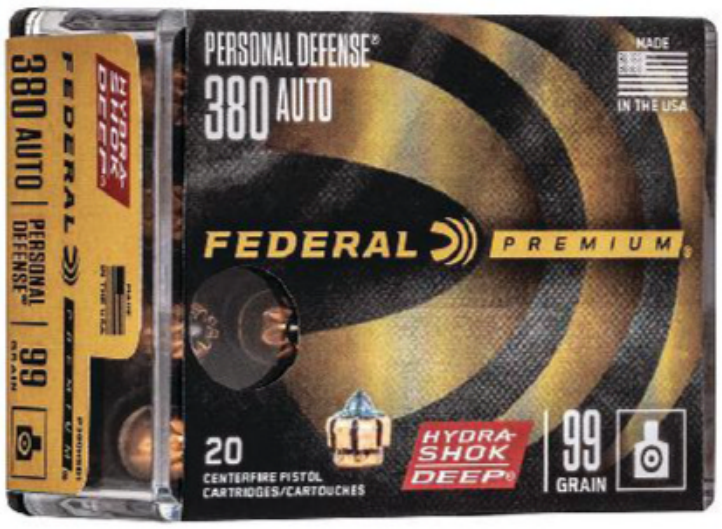
CCI has introduced two new loads to its Blazer Brass line. The first is a 180-grain 10mm Auto load that uses FMJs designed for training and target practice. The second is a 9mm load that uses 147-grain jacketed round-nose (JRN) bullets designed to duplicate the performance of the 147-grain 9mms used by law enforcement agencies. Both options are super affordable, and the brass cases are easy to reload. (blazer-ammo.com)

FEDERAL FUSION HANDGUN

The new 10mm Auto Fusion Handgun load from Federal uses a 200-grain bonded jacketed soft point (JSP) bullet with a skived nose for rapid expansion on big game and an electro-plated jacket that prevents jacket-core separation. With a muzzle velocity of 1,200 fps, it generates 634 fpe at the muzzle, giving the shooter the full performance the 10mm Auto cartridge was originally designed to provide. (federalpremium.com)

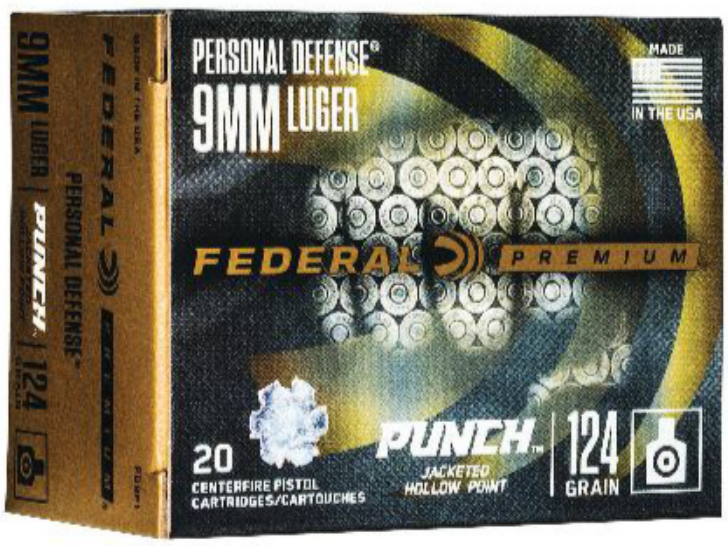
CCI CLEAN-22 STEEL CHALLENGE

This highly reliable .22 LR load drives a 40-grain, polymer-coated lead round-nose (LRN) bullet to 1,235 fps, and it's the official choice of the Steel Challenge Shooting Association (SCSA). The bullet's polymer jacket is designed to leave barrels and suppressors much cleaner than both plain and copper-plated LRN projectiles, and it doesn't leave any polymer residue. (cci-ammunition.com)



FEDERAL HYDRA-SHOK DEEP

This year, Federal Premium is introducing a .380 ACP Hydra-Shok Deep load that consistently penetrates at least 12 inches in both bare ballistic gelatin and gelatin covered with heavy clothing. This new load features a 99-grain bullet that leaves the muzzle at 1,000 fps. (federalpremium.com)

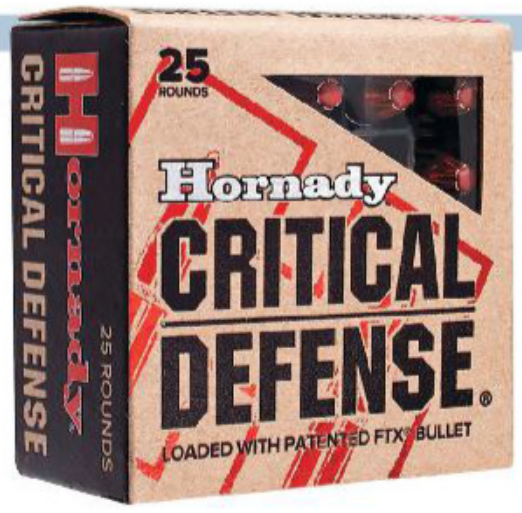


FEDERAL PERSONAL DEFENSE PUNCH

This new line of JHP pistol ammunition delivers good expansion and penetration at a very attractive price point. The bullets feature skived jackets, soft lead cores for reliable expansion, nickel-plated brass cases for easy feeding and extraction, and sealed primers for ignition. Currently, Federal Premium is offering .380 ACP, .38 Special, 9mm, .40 S&W and .45 ACP loads. (federalpremium.com)

FORT SCOTT MUNITIONS TUI SERIES

Fort Scott Munitions has added three new Tumble Upon Impact (TUI) loads worth mentioning. The first two are both 115-grain 9mms rated for 1,140 fps. What sets them apart are their cases, which are either nickel plated or coated in black TPD for improved feeding or corrosion resistance, respectively. The company's new 200-grain .44 Magnum rounds also use the same solid-copper TUI projectiles and are rated at 1,600 fps and 1,138 fpe. (fortscottmunitions.com)



HORNADY CRITICAL DEFENSE

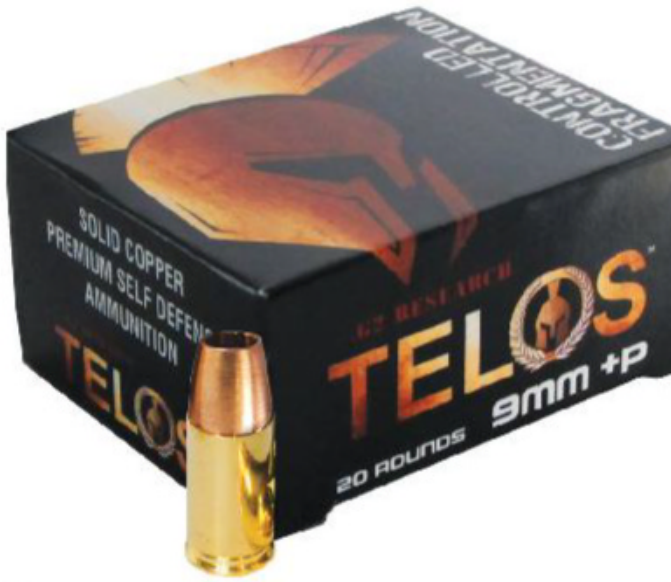
The latest addition to Hornady's Critical Defense line is a .327 Federal Magnum load that uses 80-grain FTX hollow-point projectiles designed for rapid expansion. The nickel-plated cases also help promote extraction despite the .327's higher 45,000-psi pressure levels. This is what allows the .327 to approach the .357 Magnum's velocity and energy levels when fired from a short-barreled revolver. The lighter 80-grain bullet should help keep recoil controllable as well. (hornady.com)

FIOCCHI BLUE GUARDIAN

Fiocchi has introduced three new lead-free loads in its Blue Guardian line. The "SC" rounds use solid-copper hollow points that expand rapidly and penetrate deeply. The "HP" ammo uses hollow points that fragment in soft tissue and on hard surfaces, reducing the risk of collateral damage from overpenetration and ricochets. It's especially useful for CQB training, since it disintegrates when it hits hard surfaces like AR500 steel. Finally, the "FR" load is frangible training ammo. All three loads are available in .380 ACP, 9mm, .40 S&W and .45 ACP. (fiocchiusa.com)

G2 RESEARCH TELOS

G2 Research has expanded its Telos lineup to include two new 9mm +P and .357 Magnum loads. The first load uses a 92-grain, solid-copper hollow point that break into six fragments called "trocars," which generally penetrate 4 to 5 inches diagonally from the path of the bullet base, which travels 10-plus inches. The muzzle velocity and energy are rated at 1,210 fps and 299 fpe, respectively. The new .357 Magnum ammo uses a similar 105-grain bullet that exits the muzzle of a 4-inch barrel at 1,300 fps and delivers 394 fpe at the muzzle. (g2rammo.com)



HORNADY HANDGUN HUNTER

Hornady's new Handgun Hunter line for revolvers and semi-autos features seven new loads for the 9mm, .357 Magnum, .40 S&W, 10mm Auto, .44 Magnum, .454 Casull and .460 S&W Magnum. All seven loads feature deep-penetrating, copper-alloy MonoFlex bullets with elastomer inserts in their hollow points and deep skives to promote rapid expansion. As the name implies, these loads should be especially useful for those who hunt with handguns or carry a handgun when hiking in the backcountry. (hornady.com)

HORNADY SUBSONIC HANDGUN

Hornady has added three new pistol loads to its Subsonic line. The 147-grain 9mm, 180-grain .40 S&W and 230-grain .45 ACP loads all use Hornady's versatile XTP projectiles as well as low-flash powders to help eliminate your firearms' report. These rounds should perform well for the growing group of American shooters who use suppressed firearms. (hornady.com)

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The Omega 36M eats 9mm to .338 Lapua
and nearly everything in-between.

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NORMA RANGE & TRAINING FRANGIBLE

Norma's new 9mm, .40 S&W and .45 ACP Range & Training Frangible loads use frangible polymer/copper composite bullets that literally turn into dust when they strike a hard surface like a steel plate. This capability makes these loads an excellent choice for steel matches and training on indoor ranges. (norma-ammunition.com)

NORMA SAFEGUARD

Norma's new Safeguard line of JHP ammunition is designed to expand quickly, penetrate reliably and dump a lot of energy into the target. Currently, Norma is offering .38 Special, .357 Magnum, .45 ACP and 9mm loads that range in price from $20 to $30 depending on the chambering. (norma-ammunition.com)

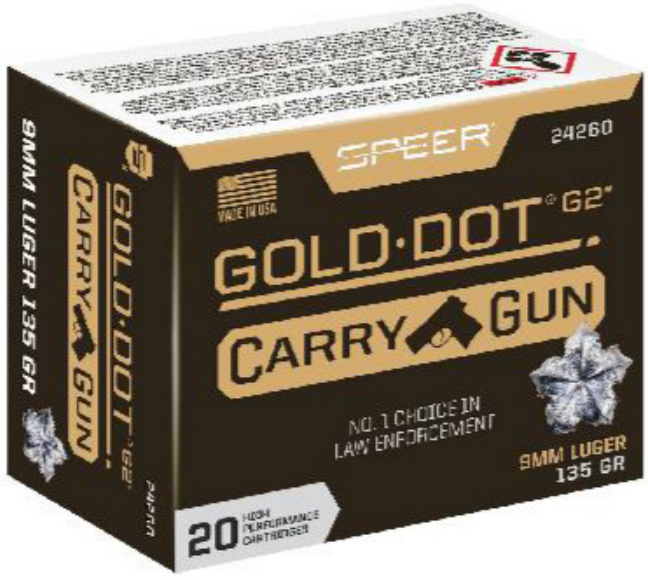
"LIKE LAST YEAR, THE 2020 SHOT SHOW FEATURED A NUMBER OF NEW LOADS FOR PERSONAL PROTECTION..."

REMINGTON SUBSONIC

Remington's new Subsonic .22 LR ammo uses copper-plated hollow-point bullets and clean-burning powder to reduce leading in rimfire sound suppressors. The bullet's hollow cavity is constructed to expand at low velocities, and the cartridge was designed from the outset for tight velocity control to achieve the goal of eliminating any supersonic sound signature. Handgun hunters should find both of these factors of significant benefit for hunting small game at close range. (remington.com)

SPEER GOLD DOT CARRY GUN

Speer's new Gold Dot Carry Gun ammo offers reliable expansion and functioning in concealed-carry semi-autos thanks to an exclusive elastomer-filled nose. On impact, the material is forced into engineered internal fissures to initiate expansion. Currently, Speer is offering 135-grain 9mm, 165-grain .40 S&W and 200-grain .45 ACP +P loads. (speer-ammo.com)



WINCHESTER SILVERTIP

Winchester is reintroducing eight loads in its well-known Silvertip line of personal-defense and law enforcement ammunition. Six popular calibers for semi-autos will be included, from the .380 ACP to the .45 ACP, and there will also be Silvertip loads for revolvers in .38 Special and .357 Magnum. Every load is made here in the U.S. as well. (winchester.com)

WINCHESTER ACTIVE DUTY

Winchester's new Active Duty 9mm ammunition is loaded to the same specifications as the M1152 round developed for the U.S. military. It uses a 115-grain flat-nose bullet designed for smooth cycling, maximum reliability and superior accuracy. It also has a military-grade primer and a muzzle velocity of 1,320 fps, which produces 445 fpe. (winchester.com) CH

The Constitution only protects what judges say it does

On June 28, 2010 outside the US Supreme Court building all smiles because of a historic Second Amendment victory, left to right, are attorney Alan Gura, plaintiff Otis McDonald and Second Amendment Foundation founder Alan Gottlieb. Gura argued both the Heller and McDonald suits.

That's why the tax-exempt Second Amendment Foundation (SAF) is supporting some 40-plus federal and state lawsuits to define the First, Second, Fourth and Fourteenth Amendments to the Constitution.

That's why SAF supported the 2008 *Heller* suit that the judges said guaranteed an individual right to keep and bear arms, and why our Foundation financed the 2010 *McDonald* suit that applied the Second Amendment rights assured in Heller to all the states and municipalities in America.

That's also why we financed the *Moore v. Madigan* case which forced the Illinois legislature to finally enact a concealed carry licensing system so Illinoisans could protect themselves from criminal predators, and *Ezell v. Chicago* to force the city to allow gun ranges.

That's also why SAF supported *Palmer v. DC,* to force the city to issue concealed carry licenses and *Wrenn v. DC* to ensure equality of concealed carry licensing for all residents of Washington, DC.

The list goes on as we strive to get judges to read the Constitution as we believe it should be read.

That's why we are constantly pushing the legal envelope in state and federal courtrooms on issues involving firearms access for average Americans, ex-patriot Americans, foster parents, public housing tenants, legal aliens, young people, workers and businessmen.

Over 80% of Second Amendment case law has been won by SAF and our attorneys. You can read about all of our lawsuits on our website: www.saf.org.

And you can support the Second Amendment Foundation's legal action campaign to win freedom one lawsuit at a time by making a tax-deductible contribution or becoming a member for as little as $15 a year. Your contribution makes you an active defender of civil rights.

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LOOSE ROUNDS

STRAIGHT TALK ON CURRENT EVENTS, POLITICS AND MORE

BIDEN HIS TIME

At this point, all signs are pointing toward "Shotgun Joe" Biden being the Democratic candidate to run against President Donald Trump this November. Just a few days before this writing, Biden showed us again how classy he really is by telling a factory worker he was "full of shit" for saying Biden wanted to ban guns. Biden even told the man he had no intention of banning his "AR-14s" [sic] if he became president.

Jerry Wayne, the auto worker cursed by Biden, later told Breitbart News that he continued to stand his ground on the issue and push Biden on purpose. "I was going to let him dig that hole," Wayne said. According to reports of the incident, Biden even asked Wayne if he wanted to step outside. While he's plenty feisty, Biden's propensity to want to fistfight political opponents who could be his constituents some day is yet another reason he should be flatly rejected on election day.

BETO REBOOT

To make matters worse, Biden recently announced who he would put in charge of running his gun-control program if elected. If a possible Biden presidency didn't already scare you enough, Biden recently tabbed failed presidential candidate and proud gun-ban advocate Beto O'Rourke to head his administration's gun-control efforts. If there *was* such a thing as an AR-14, O'Rourke would undoubtedly be in favor of banning and confiscating it, given what he's said about AR-15s in the past.

As many *Combat Handguns* readers probably remember, when asked about so-called "assault weapons" during a debate late last year, O'Rourke raucously proclaimed, "Hell yes, we're gonna take your AR-15, your AK-47."

TOO COOL FOR...

➔ It might not have been the coolest new product at this year's SHOT Show, but the **Triclops** pistol sight was damn **close.** In fact, it finished second in voting for the most innovative new product at the show.

As the company puts it, "A compact, skeletonized cage houses not two, but three fiber-optic elements. Merely center the front sight in the glowing triangle, cover the target and press the trigger. Nothing could be more simple—or natural."

While the sight has a different look to it, most shooters know that different isn't always bad. New innovations might seem strange at first, but many become must-have products once they have caught on. The sights are currently being shipped for Glocks, with Springfield and S&W soon to follow. I've got a set ordered and will report back on how they work. (triclopssights.com)

GOING VIRAL

➔ With COVID-19 making all the headlines and pretty much taking over social media at the time of this writing, please don't take it as a reason not to visit your range, if it's open and not crowded, for regular training. With goods like toilet paper becoming scarce, you might need to be able to protect your stash.

While I say that partially tongue in cheek, everyone who has ever done any "prepping" knows that in a real SHTF situation, it will almost certainly be the strongest and/or meanest who survive. If you have your own compound, good teammates, plenty of food and adequate water to live for months, it won't do you any good if some bad guys kills you and takes everything you've held onto.

Since we sometimes have to laugh to keep from crying, I might point out that at least the virus has spurred some funny new memes and quips. For instance, the line, "We better get rid of the virus before tick season comes, or we'll be having Corona with Lyme" put a silly smile on my face for way longer than it should have. CH

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