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New Springfield XD45 Compact

JUNE 2007



COMBAT TEST

CYLINDER & SLIDE R&D 1911 .45ACP

Accurate and reliable, a custom quality package that won't bust a budget!

By Charlie Cutshaw

Photos by Chris Rohling

The only handgun remaining from the early part of the 20th century is the M1911. All the others that were considered state-of-the-art and "most influential" at the time have long since faded into obscurity except as historical collector's pieces. The M1911 from one manufacturer or another continues in service with many special operations units, numerous law enforcement organizations and civilians who are serious about self-defense. There are more manufacturers of M1911s today than ever. Some are mass-produced, but there is a thriving market in custom 1911s for the discerning user and one of the most notable custom makers is Bill Laughridge of Cylinder & Slide. Bill usually builds "high end" custom 1911s,



Author sends rounds downrange and brass flying. R&D 1911 proved 100% reliable and delivered good accuracy.



Cylinder & Slide R&D 1911 is packed in Kraft board box reminiscent of that of "issue" M1911A1s of World War II, complete with oil paper.

C&S R&D 1911 .45ACP

but the subject of this evaluation is what is best described as a "subtle" custom 1911.

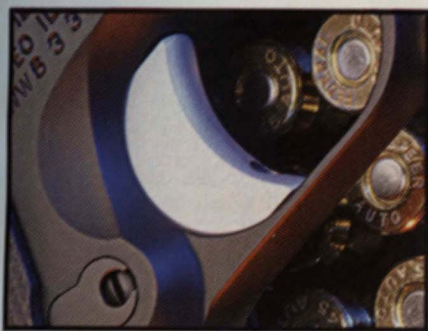
Gun Details

At first glance, the C&S R&D 1911 doesn't appear to be anything unusual. It is only when one sees the list of modifications that Bill has made to Springfield Armory's GI Model 1911 that the true nature of this pistol can be understood and appreciated. Yes, a subtle modification but still an enhancement on Springfield's base GI Model.

As an old Army vet, the term "R&D" for some 30 years meant "research and development," but this isn't the case with the C&S R&D. The term "R&D" as interpreted by Bill Laughridge stands for "recreation and defense." What Bill has done with his latest creation is to build a serviceable, reliable and affordable 1911 that can be used for informal target shooting, tactical competition such as IDPA and serious defense work. The R&D 1911 has tolerances that ensure traditional 1911 reliability while maintaining good groups at 25 yards, not to mention many custom features. So to understand how Bill has achieved this



Comparison between Springfield Armory GI 45 and Cylinder & Slide's R&D shows subtle differences between base GI 45 and custom R&D 1911. Note grips, grip safety hammer, trigger, ejection port, front slide serrations and subtle "melt" of sharp edges.



R&D 1911 lightweight trigger has no holes to attract grime, or grooves to get uncomfortable during a long day's shooting.



Ejection port has not only been lowered and flared, but opened at front to ease in clearing unfired cartridges when unloading—a nice touch.

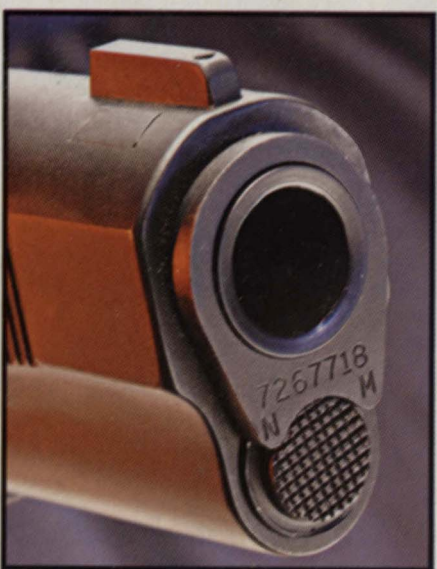
subtle 1911, let's take a tour beginning at the top.

The GI 1911 sights have been replaced with Novak Low Mount Carry at the rear and C&S' proprietary improved ramp-type dovetail sight at the business end. These give one a smooth draw with rapid sight acquisition for defense use, while at the same time allowing a precise sight picture for precision target engagement. The ejection port has been enlarged and a bullet nose relief added at the front to help clear live rounds quickly and safely. The slide edges have been slightly "broken" and radiused, features that aren't readily apparent until one puts Bill's R&D 1911 alongside an original Springfield pistol. These facilitate comfortable operation and concealment. At the business end of the R&D 1911, the stock barrel bushing has been replaced with a fitted GI national match component and the barrel muzzle crowned at 11 degrees. Slide serrations have been added at the front to facilitate press checking the pistol to determine load status.

Moving down to the frame, Bill has continued in the same theme as he did with the slide. Subtle changes that significantly enhance the pistol's function and handling are the order of the day throughout the R&D 1911. First, Bill dumped the original fire control entirely and replaced it all with C&S components, the C&S 24/7 Professional hammer, sear and disconnecter CNC



Close-up of Micarta grips shows handsome pattern and subtle stippling of front strap, matched by identical pattern on mainspring housing.



Muzzle end shows more subtle differences between C&S product and original.

machined from bar stock and heat-treated for maximum service life. The frame, of course, is original Springfield Armory as is the slide and barrel. Springfield Armory has an enviable reputation for building quality 1911 pistols and their pistols are in use by the US Marine Corps MEU-SOC units, FBI Regional SWAT and others. We carry a Springfield MC Operator when we are on duty as a reserve officer at our local police department, as do several other officers of our acquaintance. The bottom line is that Bill Laughridge could have chosen pistols from any of a number of 1911 manufacturers to use as a baseline for his R&D 1911, but he chose the Springfield Armory GI Model and, knowing Bill's penchant for perfection, that says a lot in our estimation.

The front strap is lightly stippled in an attractive pattern, as is the flat mainspring housing that replaces the arched housing of the original. The stippling is just as effective in enhancing grip as is fine line checkering, costing much less. As important, it doesn't get uncomfortable during a long day's shooting.



BlackHawk CQC Holster belt slide is ideal for concealed or open carry.

SPECIFICATIONS:

CYLINDER & SLIDE R&D 1911

Caliber: .45ACP
Barrel: 5 inches
OA Length: 8.5 inches
Weight: 40 ounces
Grips: VZ Grips
Sights: C&S improved ramp-style dovetail front, Novak Low Mount Carry rear
Action: SA
Finish: Matte re-blue
Capacity: Two 7-shot mags
Price: \$1695 (Manufacturer's Suggested Retail Price)

The original GI grip safety was replaced with a Smith & Alexander beavertail with a palm swell/memory bump to ensure that the grip safety is disengaged when the pistol is gripped. The beavertail also prevents hammer bite, sits the pistol slightly lower in the shooter's hand, reducing felt recoil and muzzle rise somewhat, while at the same time spreading recoil forces more evenly on the shooter's hand, improving feel and control. A C&S smooth face aluminum trigger was substituted in place of the original short GI type, hand fitted for optimum feel and release. The smooth face, again, is designed for long days on the range and is intended to prevent discomfort. The trigger also lacks any holes that tend to gather grime. Factory specification for the R&D trigger pull is 4.5 pounds and our test pistol's average pull weight was 4.5 pounds. It isn't too often that we test a firearm whose trigger pull is exactly what the manufacturer states it to be, but the R&D's is, as our British colleagues used to say, "spot on" with zero creep or backlash and a break like the proverbial snap of a glass rod.

Grips, made of linen Micarta, are manufactured on CNC machinery by VZ Grips and are finished by blasting them with 320-grit so they can stand up to long periods of shooting while giving

Performance: CYLINDER & SLIDE R&D 1911 .45ACP

Load	Velocity			ES	SD	Accuracy
	High	Low	Average			
Black Hills 230 FMJ	862	801	838	61	19	2.00
Extreme Shock 185 EPR	1181	1136	1158	45	12	3.00
Remington 230 GS JHP	893	855	877	38	11	2.25
Wolf 230 FMJ	859	807	843	52	15	3.50

Bullet weight measured in grains, velocity, ES (extreme spread) and SD (standard deviation) in feet per second (fps) by Oehler 35 Chronograph, accuracy in inches for average of two 5-shot groups from Pistol Perch Rest at 15 yards. Temperature: 58 degrees.



No disassembly surprises. The R&D 1911 breaks down in the traditional 1911 way. No tools are necessary. TW25B lubricant improves operation of any gun we have tested. A little goes a LONG way!



Best group of day was from Black Hills 230gr full metal jacket ammo. Group was almost exactly 2".

the shooter the kind of grip and control he or she needs. As a final touch, the magazine well has been chamfered to provide a funnel to facilitate magazine changes. The entire pistol is finished in matte blue rather than Parkerizing. The contrast between the green Micarta grips and the dark, almost black, blued surface is a very attractive package.

The R&D 1911 comes with two C&S 7-round magazines and packed in a cardboard box similar to the boxes that original M1911A1s were shipped in some 65 years ago, but with the C&S Logo. Like the original, the serial num-

ber of the pistol is written on the box in pen and ink, and the pistol is wrapped in oil paper. The current R&D also ships with a 0.75-gallon bucket of DUNK-KIT gun cleaner that has a retail value of \$49.95. About the only point with which we disagree with Bill's execution of this excellent pistol is the 7-round magazines, which are claimed to be the most reliable on the planet. Perhaps they are, but we have been using quality 8-round magazines from several manufacturers and have never had a failure to feed in any of our numerous 1911-type pistols. While at one time 7-round magazines may have had a reliability advantage over 8-rounders, our experience with the latter has convinced us that there is no longer a reason to use 7-round magazines. Before the 1911 purists out there take me to task over my opinion in this matter, don't bother. We have been using 8-round magazines for over 10 years and never had a failure from any magazine from a quality manufacturer. Most manufacturers today ship their 1911-type pistols with 8-round maga-

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