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2007

# HANDGUNS<sup>TM</sup>



Ultimate Personal Gun

# CYLINDER & SLIDE R&D .45ACP

**No-Frills M1911  
boasts performance  
plus that won't bust  
a budget!**

By Rob Garrett

Vice-President Thomas Marshall summed up the situation when he said, "What this country needs is a really good five-cent cigar." This quote is what came to mind during a recent visit with Bill Laughridge of Cylinder & Slide. Laughridge explained that he wanted to offer a custom shop 1911 package that would be a solid duty/self-defense pistol for under \$2,000. In other words, a basic "go to war" self-defense pistol that does not have to be pampered to run, is user friendly, and has quality parts. Bill and I spent several hours discussing and debating what features had to be included, what features should be included and what could be left off. One issue Bill was adamant about was there were to be no MIM parts in the pistol! The end result is the C&S Recreation and Defense, or R&D, 1911.

## Gun Details

The R&D turned out to be a full-featured, custom shop pistol, one that came at an extraordinary price, based on Springfield's excellent GI 1911A1. In my experience and opinion, there are no better entry-level 1911s than those offered by Springfield. Their slides and frames are forged, not cast, and the fit and finish is consistently good. From their basic GI and Mil-Spec guns to the Professional Model used by the FBI, Springfield has something for everyone.

The shop starts with a complete reliability job that includes throating the barrel and polishing the feed ramp, breech face and center rail. The factory extractor is radiused and properly tensioned for positive extraction. Bill then installs his own C&S 24/7/365 Hammer, Sear, and Disconnector Set for a consistent trigger pull of 4.5 pounds when it leaves the shop.

A short explanation is in order about why C&S parts are some of the best



*The author took five rounds from 15 different loads and randomly loaded seven magazines. The R&D digested the mixture with no problems.*



*The R&D is capable of two to three-inch groups at 25 yards. Quarter size groups were the norm from 10 yards.*

offered today. Every C&S hammer, sear, and disconnector is cut from special alloy billet steel using a CNC Wire EDM process and finished at a CNC machining center. Each part is then heat treated to a Rockwell hardness of 50 to 54C, which hardens the part throughout instead of just a surface treatment. The parts are individually inspected and tested for hardness using a certified testing machine. Each part receives a small dimple made by the diamond penetrator of the test machine. Every part comes with a certificate that documents the exact hardness of that specific part. How good are they? Bill offers a lifetime guarantee on his parts so long as they remain unaltered.

One of the big secrets is the quality of Springfield's factory barrels. I found it significant that Bill says the R&D is capable of 2-inch groups at 25 yards



# CYLINDER & SLIDE R&D .45ACP



*The carry bevel on the R&D is subtle but very functional. Notice the difference in the dust covers between the R&D (top) and the Springfield Professional.*

with the stock barrel. The factory barrel is re-crowned to 11 degrees and a National Match bushing is properly fitted to maximize the accuracy potential. If necessary, Bill will install a long barrel link to ensure that the pistol locks up properly. A Wolff 18.5-lb. recoil spring finishes out the inside work.

Externally, all corners and edges are rounded in a subtle but functional man-

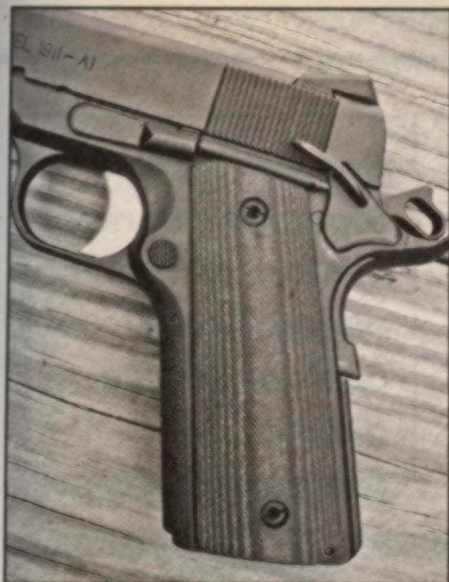


*The C&S R&D starts life as a basic GI Springfield 1911. Shown here with Springfield's Professional Model (top). Note the more rounded edges of the R&D*

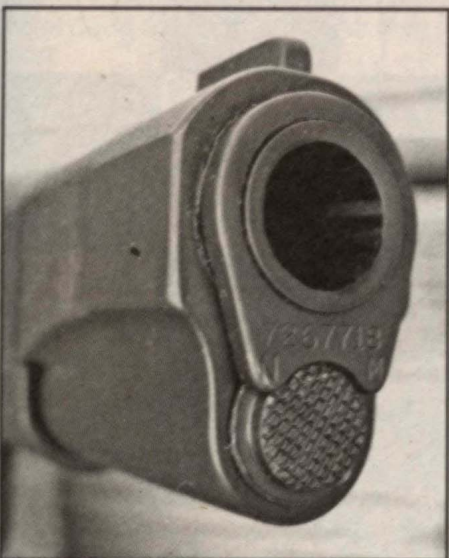
ner. The ejection port has been lowered for more reliable ejection and the front of the port has been relieved. This is an essential modification that's often overlooked. Not only does it enhance reliability but it is also a safety issue that

allows a live round to clear the pistol in a positive manner. A Novak Lo-Mount rear sight has been paired with a C&S dovetail black front sight. For those who press check via the front of the slide, the R&D has cocking serrations





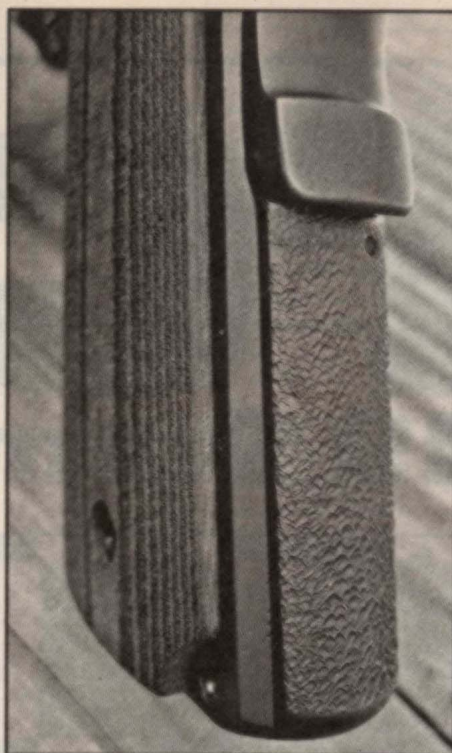
*Low profile, linen micarta stocks from VZ Grips are standard on the R&D.*



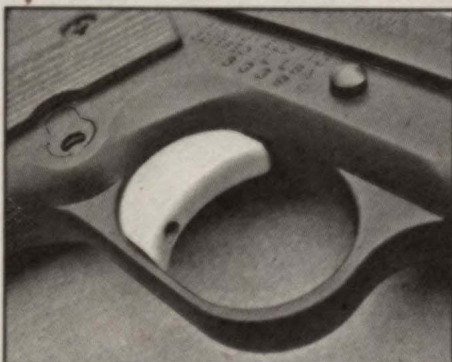
*The R&D is fitted with a NM bushing to obtain the maximum potential from Springfield's excellent factory barrel.*

machined into the front of the slide. For those who do not care for this option, the R&D can be ordered without the serrations at the customer's request.

The frame receives significant attention as well. The magazine well is beveled and a C&S Tactical Safety replaces the factory unit. Machine stippling is applied to the frontstrap and mainspring housing to provide a positive yet not overly aggressive, gripping surface. C&S has developed a method of applying stippling that can be completed in half the time of hand stippling. A Smith & Alexander Beavertail Grip Safety is installed to allow a higher grip and prevent hammer bite. One welcome accessory is the C&S solid aluminum trigger that features a smooth face and an overtravel stop. The smooth trigger will not chafe the trigger finger during extended range sessions. VZ Grips' slim line stocks finish out the frame. They are CNC machined from linen



*The edges of the mainspring housing also receive machine stippling. In addition, the edges are neatly radiused.*



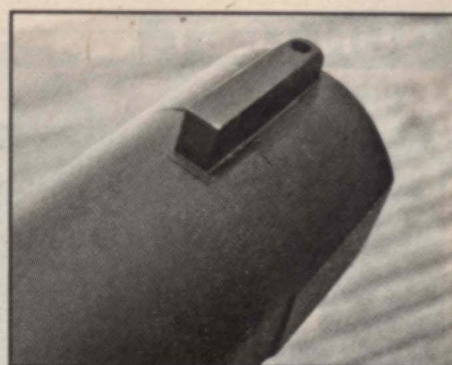
*C&S developed a solid aluminum trigger for the R&D. Front of trigger is smooth and corners are radiused to provide comfort during range sessions.*



*C&S has developed a process to machine stipple the frame. The finish is attractive, functional, and can be completed in half the time of hand stippling.*

micarta and are then bead blasted to provide a positive gripping surface.

Each R&D comes with two C&S Extreme Duty 7-round magazines that are equipped with a small Pachmayr bumper pad. This allows for positive



*A solid black, dovetail, front sight is neatly contoured to match the slide. This attention to detail sets the R&D apart.*



*A solid black, dovetail, front sight is neatly contoured to match the slide.*

seating of the magazine while maintaining a low profile for concealability. These pads are attached with screws to ensure they will not come off during the rigors of competition or tactical use. This also allows them to be removed if the need arises. It is this attention to detail that sets C&S's work apart. Form is dictated by function and reliability. The entire pistol is then refinished in a very attractive satin matte blue.

Presentation is a matter that Laughridge has also considered. The R&D comes in a reproduction Colt style chipped board box. The lid has been stamped with the C&S logo, Cylinder & Slide, and "CS R&D 1911 45ACP". Bill inscribes each pistol's serial number on the lid prior to shipping. Opening the box finds the pistol wrapped in the rust retardant wax paper, just like the old days. In addition, each pistol comes with a cleaning rod, bore brush and trigger lock.

Bill is big on educating his customers and includes the original Springfield operating manual along with a set of operating instructions and an ammunition advisory. There is also a 3-page technical bulletin on proper lubrication that should be required reading. This bulletin is an excellent source of information on how to keep your pistol running to ensure both reliability and long life. This bulletin, along with others

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# CYLINDER & SLIDE R&D .45ACP

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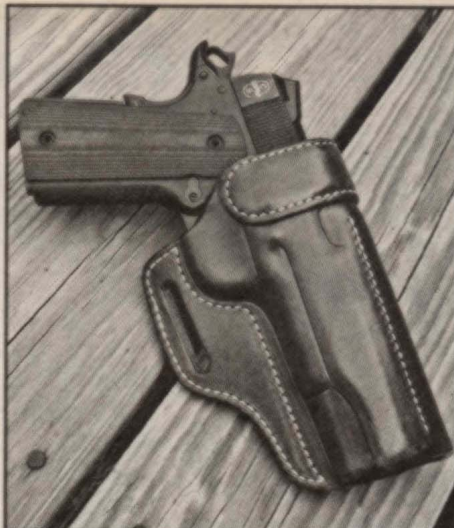
on proper cleaning of a handgun, how to safety check a 1911 style pistol, and zeroing fixed sighted handguns are available from C&S.

## Shooting Impressions

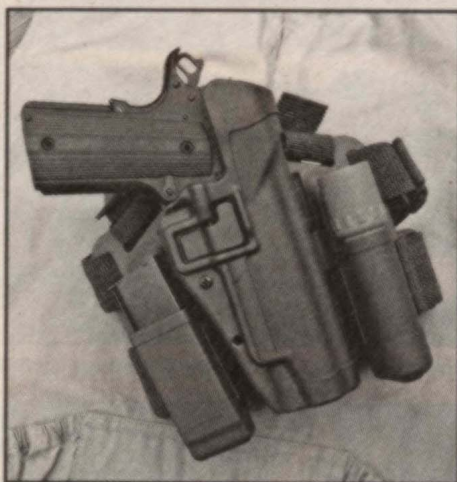
Range time with the R&D brought no surprises. The pistol digested a variety of factory loads without any problem. Those who handled and shot the R&D were quick to comment on the great feel of the stippling and slim VZ Grips. On the first range trip, I was able to easily put five rounds in a group the size of a quarter from 15 yards. The Novak/C&S sights are solid black, which is a change from the three dot tritium sights on my Springfield Professional. They provided a crisp sight picture that my 50+ year-old eyes actually enjoyed. Tritium inserts, as well as gold beads, are offered as an option on the R&D and most of Cylinder & Slide's pistols.

A second more extended range trip was cut short with one of the "scattered thunder storms" summer in Georgia is known for. However, I was able to run 15 different loads through the R&D to check the reliability of the pistol. These ranged from 230-grain ball to Winchester, Speer, Federal, and Remington 230-grain +P law enforcement loads. I was unable to benchrest the R&D from 25 yards but managed to get several off-hand groups that measured around 3 inches. I am sure the pistol is capable of better. Toward the end of the day, I took five rounds from each ammo represented, mixed them up and randomly loaded them into seven magazines. I then emptied each magazine as rapidly as I could, keeping the shots in the Shoot-N-C bull's eye at 10 yards. During this test, I experienced one failure to feed and one failure to eject. The failure to feed was from an old Colt magazine, and the failure to eject was shooter induced. The pistol ran perfectly with the C&S magazine.

Upon returning home, I used Cylinder & Slide's Dunk-It to clean the pistol and disperse any water that had accumulated inside the frame and slide. Dunk-It is an excellent product used by military units that operate in hostile and wet environments. It is a proprietary formula that displaces water, removes loose debris, and loosens carbon and powder fouling. In addition, it leaves a thin film of lubricant on the pistol. It is also excellent for flushing dirt and grit



*Sparks 55BN has been favorite concealment rig of the author. Smooth edges of the R&D made carry a pleasure.*



*R&D is in BlackHawk's Tactical SERPA, one of the best tactical holsters.*

(along with water), from magazines. As an added bonus, every R&D will come with three-quarters of a gallon of Dunk-It.

I am always looking for a better range/gear bag. During the 2006 SHOT Show, I had an opportunity to visit with Tim Tang of Maxpedition Hard-Use Gear. Tim was helpful in sending me one of their Multi-Purpose Bags for test and evaluation. The MPB is shaped similar to an attaché case in that it is tall and narrow, measuring 14x10x6 inches. It features 22 independent carrying compartments to include an external document pocket on each side and accessory pockets on each end. The internal compartment has a hard divider that uses Velcro attachments to hold a handgun, magazines and other gear. A padded strap helps to distribute the weight across the shoulder. Most of my range bags are large rectangles that can be bulky and awkward to carry.

I have used the MPD for my range trips for the past several months and have been very satisfied. It is also ideal for firearms and other related gear. Two larger versions, the Operator Tactical

Attaché and the last resort Tactical Attaché, are available and have similar features. These allow larger items, such as laptop computers, to be carried. Maxpedition products are well thought out, and constructed to take the abuse of the real world.

So what is the verdict on the R&D? I didn't care for the black sights and bright C&S markings on the pistol. To be fair, I received the first R&D to be completed and since it was to be photographed for this article, Bill etched the Cylinder & Slide name and logo on the pistol after it was blued. Future pistols will be etched prior to bluing to reduce the profile. As for the sights, any combination is available.

On the plus side, I became very fond of the solid trigger and appreciate both the retro appearance and the comfort factor. While I do not suffer from an MIM phobia, I also appreciated the quality of the internal parts and have no doubt that they will last a lifetime. Every shooter commented on the quality of the stippling. Whatever "magic" the C&S shop uses to cut the time and cost in half, it works and works well! I will be sending at least two pistols to C&S for this treatment.

## Final Notes

Cylinder & Slide has established a reputation not only for quality work, but for standing behind their pistols when problems do occur. To his credit, Bill Laughridge inspects every pistol before it is shipped as well as taking phone calls from customers on a daily basis and answers e-mails in a reasonable time. This personal attention and commitment to quality is what places Cylinder & Slide, and the R&D, head and shoulders above the others. The R&D is well suited to wear Bill's famous mustache logo.

## For more information, contact:

**Cylinder & Slide**, 245 E. 4th Street, Dept CH, Fremont, NE 68026; 402-721-4277; [www.cylinder-slide.com](http://www.cylinder-slide.com)

**BlackHawk Products Group**, 4850 Brookside Court, Dept CH, Norfolk, VA 23502; 757-436-3101; [www.blackhawk.com](http://www.blackhawk.com)

**Maxpedition Hard-Use Gear**, P.O. Box 2366, Dept CH, Palos Verdes Peninsula, CA 90274; 310-768-3070; [www.maxpedition.com](http://www.maxpedition.com)

**Milt Sparks Holsters**, 605 East 44th St., Dept CH, Boise, ID 83714; 208-377-5577; [www.miltsparks.com](http://www.miltsparks.com)

**Springfield Armory**, 420 W. Main St., Dept CH, Geneseo, IL 61254; 800-680-6866; [www.springfield-armory.com](http://www.springfield-armory.com)