

BALLISTIC BASICS
WOMEN SHOOT 1911s, TOO!

CONCEALED CARRY

MAGAZINE

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SPECIAL 1911 ISSUE!

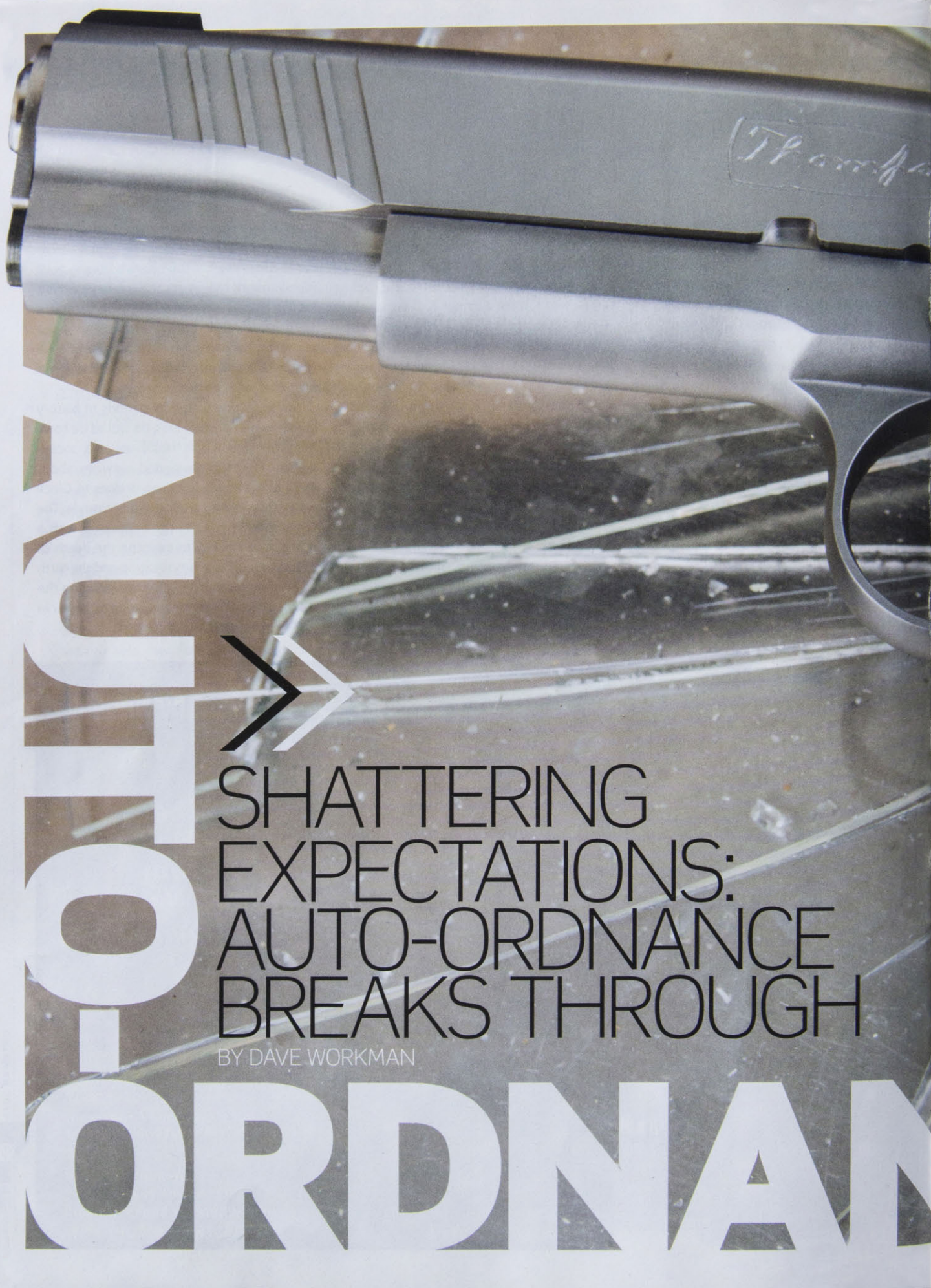
Still on Top!

AFTER
100
YEARS

GREAT 1911s
THAT WON'T
BREAK THE BANK

REVIEWS
ITHACA | RUGER
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Thompson



SHATTERING EXPECTATIONS: AUTO-ORDNANCE BREAKS THROUGH

BY DAVE WORKMAN

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ORDNAN

» A/O's Thompson Custom
1911 Pistol is loaded
for performance.



ICE

»**DEFENSIVE HANDGUNS** are pieces of emergency survival equipment, and those who carry sidearms for a day they hope never comes want the firearm on their hip or hanging from a shoulder harness to be reliable and accurate.

Auto-Ordnance has produced, or should I say "re-introduced," a new variation of what many believe is the finest proven combat pistol on the planet in its Thompson Custom 1911. It is built on the Model 1911 platform, but with improvements discovered and developed over more than a century of research, trial and error.

Featuring a matte finish with a laser-etched Thompson bullet logo on the left side of the slide, this stainless beauty has custom-level features found on more expensive pistols, and its good looks go well beyond the surface.

Beauty is not just "skin deep" in this case, because the Thompson Custom 1911 definitely has what it takes on the inside.

Auto-Ordnance's Frank Harris gave me the basics during the Houston gathering of the National Rifle Association. For openers, the pistol is made from 420 stainless steel with a cast frame, while the slide is machined from a billet. The stainless construction makes it particularly suitable for humid or damp environments like the Pacific Northwest, the Gulf Coast, the entire Southeast, New England, the Great Lakes and Alaska.

It will handle the Midwest snow and cold in the winter, and stack up to the heat of summer all along the Mississippi and Missouri river country.

The Thompson Custom is no lightweight, hitting the scale at 39 ounces empty, but that weight helps soak up some of the recoil of the .45 ACP. Auto-Ordnance designed the slide with wide, slightly-angled front and rear cocking serrations, black dovetailed sights fore and aft, an adjustable medium-length skeletonized trigger, 20 lines-per-inch checkering along the front strap of the grip, a checkered surface on the flat synthetic mainspring housing, beavertail grip safety with a bump, a firing pin safety, and a skeleton-type hammer.

The Thompson Custom's match-grade five-inch barrel rides above a full-length recoil spring guide rod. It rides in a well-fitted barrel bushing that provides a tight fit in battery, which I am certain contributes greatly to this pistol's accuracy—that, along with the crown (which is recessed with something of a bevel).

The magazine well is beveled for quick magazine changes, and rail-to-rail fit is properly tight. That is, not so tight one

cannot cycle the slide without cocking the hammer, but tight enough for a solid lock-up and no rattle. The thumb safety has an extended tang for positive operation, too.

Checkered double-diamond laminate grip panels have a distinctive Thompson bullet medallion, and that surface doesn't slip in wet palms.

One more feature we've come to expect on a decent carry gun is a lowered and flared ejection port, and it's there on the Thompson Custom 1911. Every one of my spent cases flew high, right and to the rear, landing anywhere from two to four feet away.

Auto-Ordnance supplies the Thompson Custom with a single seven-round stainless steel magazine, but as any fan of the Model 1911 knows, there are loads of after-market eight-round magazines from Wilson Combat, Mec-Gar, Chip McCormick and others.

It comes with a cable lock and padded hard-cover carrying case that may also be locked for airline travel or security around the house.

That's all the good stuff. Now for the better "stuff." This pistol simply rocks when it comes to accuracy and overall performance. During my evaluation, there were no jams or failures to feed.

Out of the box, using a spare Wilson Combat eight-round magazine, I put the very first shot high and right, adjusted my sight picture, dropped the second round slightly lower and near center, and then put the following seven rounds through a single large jagged hole at the five o'clock position of the X-ring at 15 yards off a sandbag rest. And this was with standard 230-grain "ball," otherwise known as full-metal jacket.

If it gets better than that, please tell me how.

Naturally, my groups opened up when I began shooting off-hand with just a two-hand hold and no rest, speeding up my shots. Still, at 15 yards, I put every round in the black with the same 230-grain FMJ ammunition. When I switched to 185-grain JHPs I did equally well.



TYPE SEMI-AUTOMATIC
SINGLE ACTION
CALIBER .45 ACP
FINISH STAINLESS STEEL
BARREL 5 INCHES
WEIGHT 39 OUNCES (EMPTY)
SIGHTS FIXED/DOVETAILED
GRIPS CHECKERED LAMINATE
CAPACITY 7 OR 8 ROUNDS
MSRP \$813.00



AUTO-ORDNANCE
THOMPSON
CUSTOM 1911

By coincidence, I had the opportunity to test this pistol with a relatively new load, the Tac-XPD from Barnes. These Plus-P rounds feature a 185-grain all-copper hollowpoint featuring a sliver-black Techni-Crom plated surface. This bullet has a massive cavity and opens up with six sharp petals for maximum tissue damage.

Muzzle velocity on the box is advertised at 1,000 fps, but over my chronograph, the best I got was 981.7 fps, which is hardly disappointing, considering that the all-copper bullet will perform at lower velocity. I ran four rounds through the pistol over the chronograph with a target behind at 15 yards and discovered to my delight that Barnes has a very accurate cartridge! For concealed carry, the Tac-XPD is a serious choice.

I also had a couple of boxes of 230-grain loads from Black Hills and Remington, clocking 785.5 fps and 840.9 fps, respectively.

After more than a century of service, nobody can doubt the ability of a Model 1911-type pistol to stop a fight. In a world of synthetics—sacrificing recoil-ab-

sorbing weight for a lighter carry—the Thompson Custom 1911 may seem like something of a throwback, but by the time one expends his eight (or nine, depending upon the magazine capacity) rounds, you've gotten someone's undivided attention.

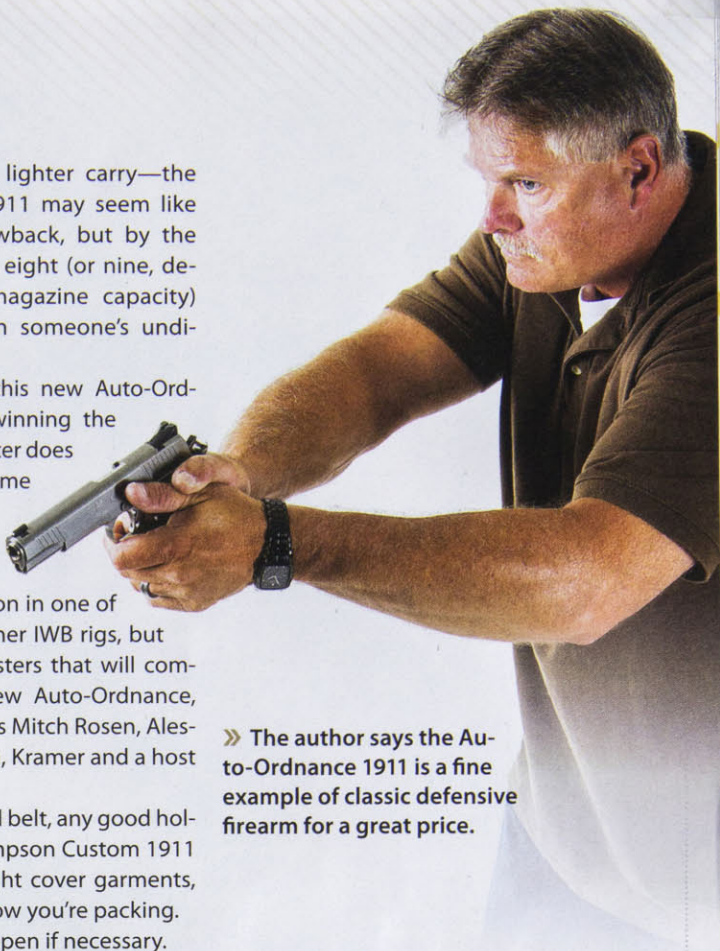
In a pistol match, this new Auto-Ordinance is capable of winning the day, provided the shooter does his or her part. For home defense, you're all set.

What about a holster? I carried the pistol for a while off and on in one of my own D&D Gunleather IWB rigs, but there are loads of holsters that will comfortably house the new Auto-Ordinance, from such luminaries as Mitch Rosen, Alessi, DeSantis, Blade Tech, Kramer and a host of others.

Coupled with a good belt, any good holster will keep the Thompson Custom 1911 snug, and with the right cover garments, nobody is going to know you're packing.

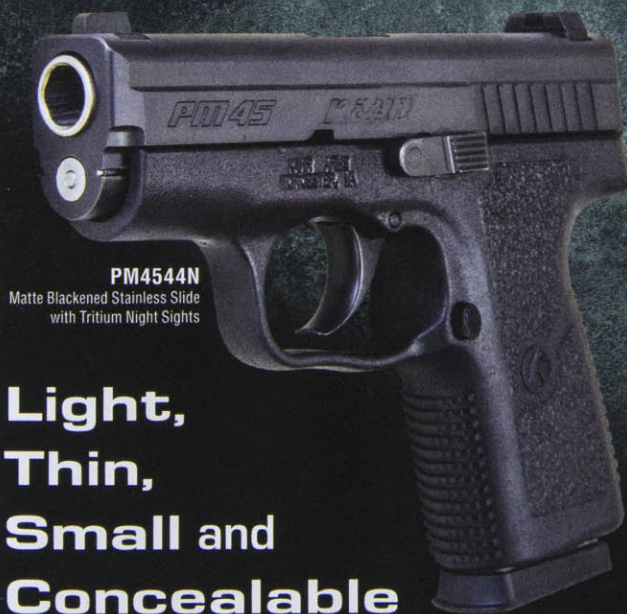
That would only happen if necessary.

» The author says the Auto-Ordinance 1911 is a fine example of classic defensive firearm for a great price.



PM SERIES

CONCEALED CARRY Micro Polymer Frame Pistols



PM4544N
Matte Blackened Stainless Slide
with Tritium Night Sights

.45 ACP

Barrel Length: 3.24" | O/A Length: 5.79"



PM4543 / PM4543N*

Matte Stainless Slide

PM4544 / PM4544N*

Matte Blackened Stainless Slide

.40 S&W

Barrel Length: 3.0" | O/A Length: 5.47"



PM4043 / PM4043N*

Matte Stainless Slide

PM4143 / PM4143N*

Matte Stainless Slide
with External Safety & LCI

PM4044 / PM4044N*

Matte Blackened Stainless Slide

9 MM

Barrel Length: 3.1" | O/A Length: 5.42"



PM9093 / PM9093N*

Matte Stainless Slide

PM9193 / PM9193N*

Matte Stainless Slide
with External Safety & LCI

PM9094 / PM9094N*

Matte Blackened Stainless Slide

* N = Tritium Night Sights



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