PEOPLE POWER

Phill Price tries a very special 1911 from SIG

The Colt 1911 holds a near mythical place in the hearts of many handgun shooters around the world. The original design was incredibly clever and even to this day is one of the more respected actions you can buy. Because of this, it's been customised a million times to become everything from hard-working service arms, to fancy things that live in glass cabinets which will never be fired. Americans, in particular, love this gun and SIG Sauer has a new CO2 version that screams patriotism. It's called 'We the people' invoking the preamble to the American constitution in which the right to bear arms was established.

It's easy to assume that this gun is like many other 1911 CO2 replicas in a fancy set of clothes, but it's much more than that. The first thing that strikes you is the 'weathered' finish that gives the pistol a battle-worn appeal. Next, the cast-metal grip panels grab you with each displaying 25 raised stars that add up to the 50 states of the American union, but don't let that make you think that this gun is an old-fashioned one with nothing to offer but looks. All the modern features a combat pistol needs have been fitted to make a high-performance, very modern gun.



The handling was classic 1911 and spot on for my tastes.

CLASSIC 1911 SHAPE

When you lift the pistol from its box, you immediately notice just how heavy it is and at 2.2lbs it feels like a centrefire handgun straight away. The grip shape and angle are so familiar to 1911 fans and, for me, the pistol comes to the aim as naturally and instinctively as I could wish. The grip is slender by modern standards, which goes back to the cartridge the gun was developed for – the .45ACP (Auto Colt Pistol) was fat compared to the more common 9mm so was stacked in a single, straight column. Today, you more commonly find 9mm guns with double-stack magazines that carry many more rounds, but make for a wide grip. Some people like that whilst others, like me, feel the classic 1911 shape is the best. In a very nice touch, the front of the grip



It shot well with both steel- and copper-coated lead BBs.


The mag' holds 17BBs and a 12 gramme CO2 capsule.


The extended beaver tail positioned my hand perfectly.


The popular two-handed combat hold suits this pistol perfectly.

is chequered, as is the back strap, a feature only found on expensive custom guns and one that adds a great deal to the feel, especially when shooting at speed.

COMPLETELY AUTHENTIC

The 1911 has an unusual feature in the form of the grip safety. This is a section of the grip that moves forward as you take your grip, and without it depressed the gun will not fire. Custom versions of this have an extended 'beaver tail' that performs two jobs. Firstly, it helps to position the web of your hand correctly on the grip, even when you draw the pistol quickly from the holster. Secondly, it eliminates 'hammer bite' which is when the web of your hand is placed between the top of the beaver tail and the hammer. As the slide cycles, it drives the hammer back to cock it and if you leave some skin in the way it gets pinched and hurts like hell. The longer grip safety prevents this from happening, which is a very good thing.

Above this we find a smart, ambidextrous safety lever and in front of that an extended slide release. Again, these are the features we want from a customised handgun because they aid proper handling and increase speed. Just like the real thing, when the last shot has been stripped from the magazine, the slide locks back. This is the clearest indication that you need to load a fresh magazine. A quick press of the release button drops the magazine free so that you can slam another into its place. If you then thumb the slide release lever, the gun will go into battery, cocked and ready to fire. This functionality is exactly the same as the firearm and is completely authentic.

"This is without doubt one of the best CO2 pistol triggers I've ever used"

SOMETHING SPECIAL

The feature that makes this gun stand out most for me is the action of the trigger. It slides directly backwards like the firearm, rather than swinging from a pivot at the top, the way most CO2 replicas do. This allows the use of a skeletonised trigger blade which looks great and, better still, delivers a superb feel and break. This is without doubt one of the best CO2 pistol triggers I've ever used. Like the real thing, the trigger is single-action only meaning that you must cock the hammer for the first shot, after which the rearward movement of the slide cocks it for each successive shot.

The blow-back is nice and punchy with a really quick cycle that makes double-taps great fun. This is helped by the excellent combat sights that are bright and clear even in low light. I was pleased to find that it cycled my favourite copper-coated lead BBs perfectly, although they did shoot low compared to steel BBs, which allowed me to shoot this pistol at my gun club where steel BBs are banned.

I've tested a lot of CO2 pistols in my time and I can honestly say that this is really something special in terms of its handling and performance. The looks won't appeal to everybody, but the way it shoots most certainly will. ■



The distressed finish appealed to many of my clubmates.

TECH SPEC

Manufacturer: SIG Sauer
Model: 1911 We The People
Power: 12 gramme CO2
Action: Blow-back
Length: 8½"
Weight: 2.2lbs
Magazine capacity: 17