

# THE HEIZER PKO 45

Will Dabbs, MD

Photos: R. Jones/The Imagesmith, LLC

**A**midst a veritable sea of well-reasoned pistols littering the defensive handgun landscape, the Heizer PKO 45 is refreshingly different. Cut from a solid slab of stainless steel and sporting a remarkably anorexic architecture, the PKO 45 puts .45 ACP power into a package breathtakingly trim. Unlike 95 percent of the handguns on the planet, the PKO 45 doesn't claim parentage tracing back to John Moses Browning. Old JMB contrived the gun's man-stopping cartridge of course, but this skinny little heater hails from fresher spaces.

## Feeding Obsessions

It's the very beating heart of our modern culture. It fills tabloids, sells clothes, saturates our senses and drives a certain lamentable percentage of us to the brink of suicide and beyond. As we hurdle headlong into the Information Age we Americans are obsessed with being skinny.

It's not always been thus. There was a time in human history when being thin meant you lacked sufficient food. Back then having a little meat on one's bones indicated a certain commendable social status. Not so much anymore.

A plastic surgeon buddy once opined he treated depression with a knife. We cut stuff off, build other stuff up, and slurp out unwanted fat with a tool. Butts, boobs, bellies and brows serve as both palette and canvas for the plastic surgeon with talent. Given our utter obsession with almighty skinniness, is it any wonder this spills over into our working firearms? In the Heizer PKO 45 we find a reliable defensive handgun that embodies this ethic. The end result can be a handful on the range, but it's small enough to be there when you need it.

## Radically Different

Heizer has a storied history of packing insanely powerful cartridges into sundry pocket pistol chassis. Each of their previous little cellphone-sized pistols included a tilting barrel, ultra-slim architecture and a trigger set on roller bearings. Chambering options include .410/.45LC, .223 and, believe it or not, 7.62x39mm. These guns put the "holy" into "holy snot."

The rifle caliber versions include progressively ported barrels to help ameliorate recoil. Sights are fixed and tiny, but don't fret overly. (I've shot these guns. At reasonable ranges if you don't connect with the bullet the muzzle flash will reliably set your assailant on fire.)

The newest semiautomatic Heizer PKO 45 rethinks the defensive handgun. The slide is cut from a solid piece of steel and overhangs the barrel, and the guide rod is on the top with the barrel below it. The barrel itself sports a square external profile grooved longitudinally to minimize weight while looking cool. Everything that interfaces with your skin is nicely smoothed. All the controls are intentionally crafted to melt into the exterior of the gun so there is nothing to snag.

## Weirdly Awesome

The Heizer PKO 45 is what would happen if the Terminator mated with

a waffle iron. Broad brush, the gun is fabulously well executed. A well-made firearm just sits a certain way in the hand, and the workmanship on the PKO 45 is clearly top-flight throughout.

Festooned with gripping grooves and scalloped bits, the gun sports an unnaturally low bore axis along with a nice single-action trigger. The low-profile sights include fiber optic inserts both front and rear, and the gun sports an unobtrusive bilateral manual safety. The magazine release is in the expected spot, and there is a small left-sided slide stop if you're man enough to run this powerful little gun fast. Additionally, there is a splendidly unobtrusive reverse grip safety on the front strap which is just neat as can be.

The gun feeds from modified 1911 magazines and comes with two. The abbreviated 5-round sort fits flush with the bottom of the frame. An extended version with a polymer sleeve packs seven in the box and is much more comfortable on the range. You'll inevitably tote it with the small mag but practice with the big one. The mag release button is almost flush with the frame so you have to be intentional about it. There is a loaded chamber indicator built into the right aspect of the which can be seen as well as felt.

The frame is formed of two halves held together with plenty of flush-fitting hex screws. The approach to the trigger is nicely beveled on both sides, and all the sharp edges have been mercifully excised. There is technically a tiny piece of rail on the front of the frame, but it's frankly the most minuscule I have ever seen. There's likely a light out there someplace small enough to fit, but you may have to look among your GI Joe action figure accessories to find it.

Stripping the PKO 45 involves locking the slide to the rear and then rotating and removing the takedown latch. Keep your finger over the end of the guide rod lest you launch it into the mesosphere. Slip the guide rod assembly out the front and then remove the slide to the rear. The mechanics of the gun are the very image of simplicity.

## Everything Is Physics

In a perfect world the ideal defensive gun would be lightweight, powerful, accurate, concealable, reliable, comfortable and simple. In this perfect world I also wouldn't have to work for a living, people would treat others with kindness, recreational machine-gunning would be a recognized competitive sport replete with professional cheerleaders and peanut M&M's would rain down sponta-

*The Heizer PKO 45 is easy to tote and easy to retrieve. For proper power in a pocket chassis little else compares.*

# THIS IS IN