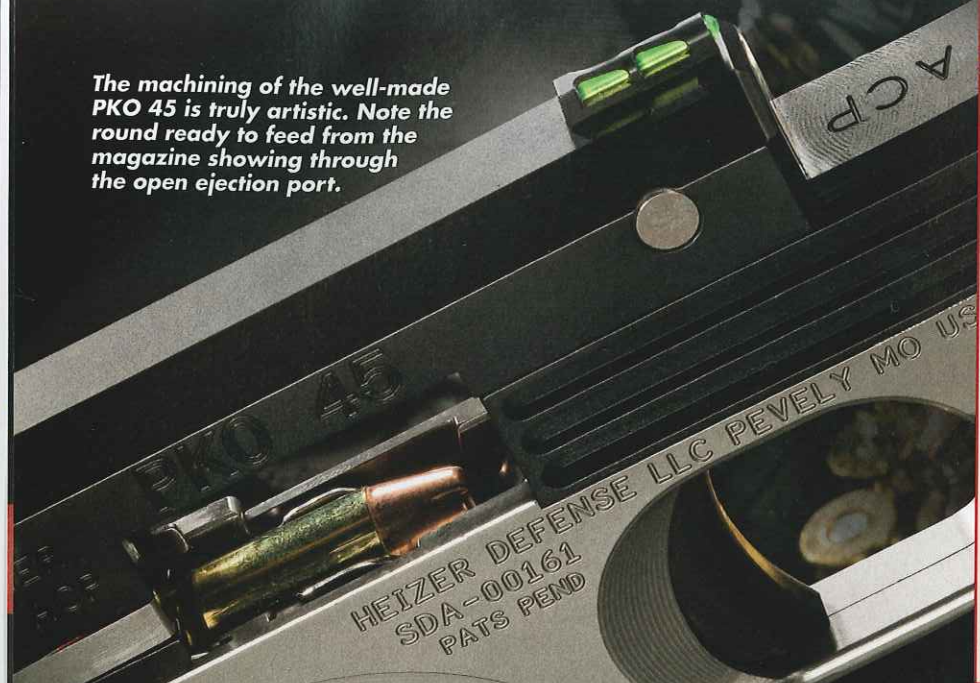


The machining of the well-made PKO 45 is truly artistic. Note the round ready to feed from the magazine showing through the open ejection port.



neously from the heavens. However, nothing about our world is even remotely perfect. Everything in life, to include our defensive handguns, is a compromise.

The PKO 45 is only 0.80" across. Heizer claims theirs is the thinnest production .45 ACP handgun in the world, and I have no reason to doubt this. Do the math. Subtracting 0.45" for the cartridge case only leaves 0.175" worth of handgun on either side. It really can't get any thinner.

Pressure is force per unit area. A modest force over a small area can produce a lot of pressure. Conversely, an impressive force spread over a wide area can produce very little pressure. Ergo, a 100-lb. supermodel in stiletto heels creates a massively greater ground pressure than does a

136,000-lb. M1 tank with its broad steel tracks. As it relates to the PKO 45, this means the little gun's prodigious recoil impulse is spread over a relatively small area.

### Trigger Time

Make no mistake, this gun isn't for fun. The action is direct unlocked blowback. This means all the .45 ACP horsepower transmits straight back into your sensitive mitts. However, the end result is preternaturally concealable and thoroughly reliable. The action is so simple there's just not much on the gun to fail.

The slide is easy to grip though the recoil spring is necessarily stout. The third finger presses the grip safety naturally in the manner of a second trigger. The bilateral manual safety is nicely positioned for easy manipulation. Learning to use it responsibly is the reason we train.

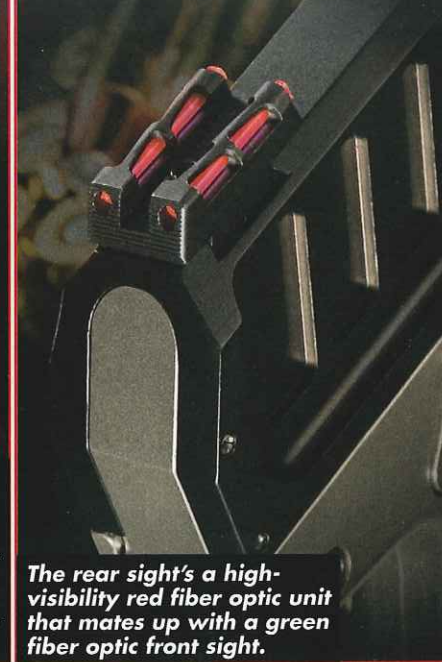
The short magazine is optimally concealable but leaves your fifth finger flapping in the breeze. Given the energy of the cartridge the longer 7-round version is much more pleasant. However, should you ever deploy this little pocket howitzer for real, you won't care how comfortable it is in your hand.

Running the PKO 45 unleashes a lot of power from a relatively small platform and is fairly explosive. The same comfortable-seeming recoil impulse in your favorite tuned 1911 is now distributed over maybe half the area in the PKO 45. While hardly recreational, the effect does not cross the boundary into self-abuse. Most any .44 Magnum is markedly worse. I'm a skinny guy, and I managed it fine. You do have to hang onto the gun, however, particularly with the stubby magazine in place.

The barrel is rigidly affixed to the



The fixed barrel of the PKO 45 is below the recoil spring assembly. Note the teeny, tiny rail section on the dustcover below it.



The rear sight's a high-visibility red fiber optic unit that mates up with a green fiber optic front sight.

frame, so accuracy is very nice for its genre. Hornady's Critical Defense 180-gr. FTX rounds printed four of five as a big jagged hole at 7 meters. The radical orientation of the barrel underneath the guide rod places the line of recoil into the web of the shooter's hand. This feature mitigates muzzle flip and

transforms the impulse into more of a push than a twist.

At proper defensive ranges the PKO 45 runs quickly and well. Follow-up shots are fast, and magazine changes are not bad for what's in essence a .45 ACP pocket gun. The controls are well reasoned if small. However, this isn't a service pistol. This is a deep cover defensive weapon that comes out fast and offers instant fire superiority.

### Ruminations

So what's the PKO 45 really like? Viscerally speaking I would rate it someplace between running an orbital sander and stubbing your toe. The gun is not quite painful, but it's hardly fun.

At 21 oz. the PKO 45 feels surprisingly heavy. However, this is still roughly half the weight of a 1911. A little mass is a welcome addition when trying to tame the esteemed .45 ACP in such a tidy package. The gun tucks easily into a purse, the center console of your car or inside your belt. This powerful .45 ACP gun will ride comfortably in most any holster that will carry a GLOCK 43.

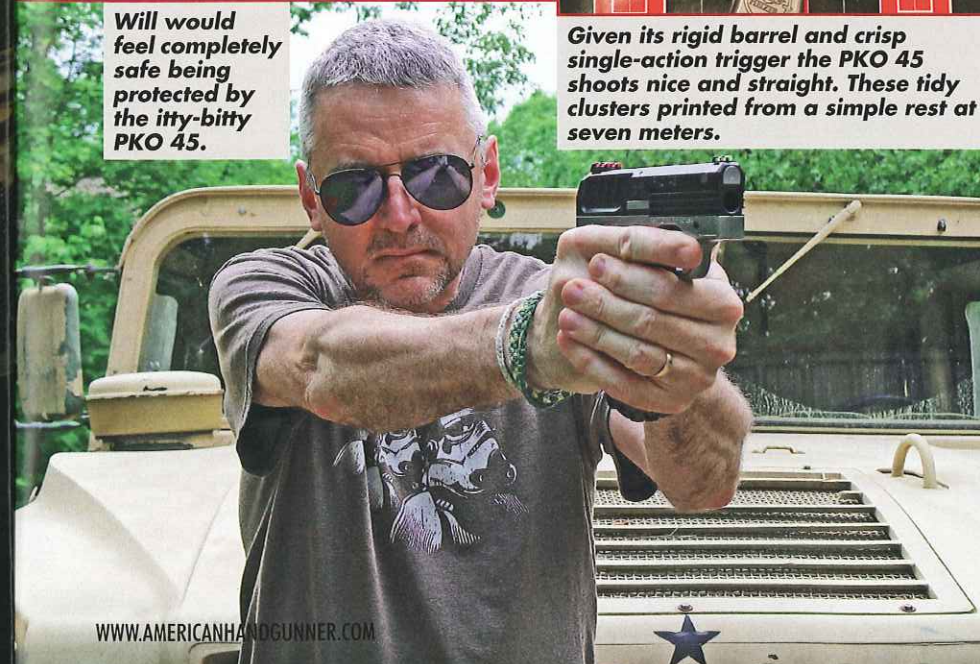
Everybody and their aunt churns out locked-breech, recoil-operated plastic pistols these days. Only Heizer makes something like this. Recoil is not to be discounted, but the PKO 45 is easier to pack than most any other .45 ACP gun on the market. The best defensive pistol is always the one you have on you when you need it. If it's too big or too heavy you will invariably leave it at home. This puts the Heizer PKO 45 in a class of its own.

For more info:  
www.americanhandgunner.com/index;  
Heizer, Ph: (888) 965-0972.

The pistol comes with a flush-fitting 5-rounder mag as well as an extended 7-rounder (shown). See the little forward grip safety just below and behind the trigger guard?



Will you feel completely safe being protected by the itty-bitty PKO 45.



Given its rigid barrel and crisp single-action trigger the PKO 45 shoots nice and straight. These tidy clusters printed from a simple rest at seven meters.

