

PARA ORDNANCE PXT LTC .45ACP

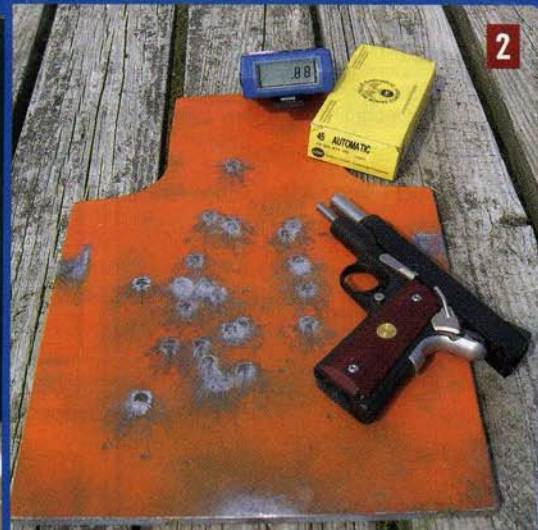
An updated and revised CLASSIC for the 21st CENTURY! By Mike Boyle

The new Para Ordnance PXT LTC is an optimum size 1911 suitable for concealed or open uniform carry.

There was a time in the not so distant past, when I considered the 1911 to be the only viable defensive pistol. The fact that new 1911s were only available from a single source, and required a touch of gunsmithing before being truly streetworthy, did little to dim my enthusiasm. This sentiment was hardly mine alone and John Browning's classic was top dog among shooters who preferred the self-loader. Much has changed over the last 25 years. Pistols have clearly pushed the DA revolver to the back burner. Various double-action, double-action-only, and striker-fired pistols now command a large portion of the defensive handgun market. But it's hard to keep a good design down, and the 1911 still has significant appeal for old hands and younger shooters alike. When you get right down to it, the fact remains

that the single-action 1911 is still the easiest gun to shoot to a high standard. Back when the earth was flat, domestically produced 1911s originated from a single source. Not anymore. Today, several different companies are turning out high quality versions of this timeless design. Many of these new generation 1911s incorporate various upgrades such as better sights, user friendly controls, and superior reliability into their most basic package. Few firms have contributed more to the evolution of the 1911 than Para Ordnance. Most notable among Para's innovations are the high capacity 1911 frame and LDA (Light Double Action) trigger. This year, Para has gone back to where it all began and has come out with a major innovation to the classic single stack.

1) This light bird really flies! Firearms instructor was very impressed with the LTC. 2) The LTC proved to be a capable performer in high speed combat drills. 3) This IWB rig from Mitch Rosen's Express Line was an excellent mate for the Para LTC 4) Tools of the trade: Para LTC, Spyderco Centofante III, American lightweight cuffs, and CorBon DPX ammo.



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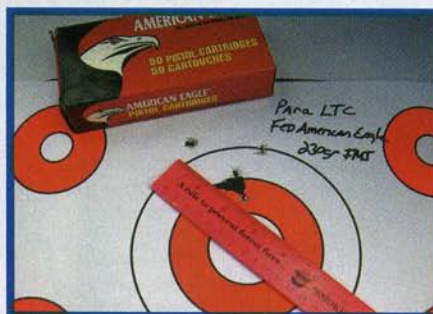
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PARA ORDNANCE PXT LTC



Our sample LTC posted its best single performance with Federal American Eagle 230gr FMJ.



Among the more constant performers in the LTC were ProLoad's 200gr +P Tactical load.

The new PXT (Power Extractor) series of .45ACP pistols is indeed a standout in a crowded field of 1911s. Para Ordnance has succeeded in incorporating a new extractor design into the 1911, which enhances system reliability in a very big way. A number of other frills, much in demand by seasoned shooters, have also been incorporated into the PXT line.

Not too long ago, I received a Para Ordnance LTC for test and evaluation. Slightly shorter than the full-size 1911, many professionals feel this configuration represents the ultimate carry pistol.

GUN DETAILS

In simplest terms, the new LTC is Para's spin on the highly regarded "Commander" concept. Ideally suited for open or concealed carry, the LTC incorporates any number of highly desirable features into its design. To the uninitiated, this may not seem like a big deal, but shooters old enough to remember black and white television will certainly appreciate it.

A generation ago, you laid down your hard cash for a 1911, and half as much again to a gunsmith to get it right. The Para Ordnance LTC gives you pretty much everything you need right from the box.

Like the John Browning original, the LTC is crafted entirely of steel. Metal surfaces of the PXT series pistols feature the new Para Kote Regal finish, which is highly resistant

SPECIFICATIONS

PARA ORDNANCE PXT LTC

Caliber: .45ACP • Barrel: 4.25 inches, ramped with solid bushing • Length: 7.7 inches
Height: 5.75 inches • Weight: 37 ounces • Grips: Cocobolo
Sights: 3-dot style, low profile rear, dovetail front • Action: SA
Construction: Steel • Finish: Para Kote Regal Black • Capacity: 7+1

to corrosion. Stainless steel controls such as the thumb safety, grip safety, magazine release and slide lock provide a striking contrast to the black Regal finish. Double diamond checkered cocobolo grips are held in place by a pair of hex head screws to complete the package. This is truly a very handsome pistol, which will appeal to shooters with traditional taste.

Weight of the LTC is a rock steady 37 ounces. This may seem a bit beefy to shooters who cut their teeth on polymer frame guns, but all-day carry is no big deal with the right belt and holster. In any event, the heavy metal effectively tames felt recoil of the hottest .45ACP loads.

Barrel length of the LTC is 4.25 inches and the entire package runs 7.7 inches. The match grade barrel is ramped to support the cartridge case and improve feeding. A full-length guide rod is utilized along with a solid barrel bushing.

Sights are of the popular 3-dot pattern and consist of a drift adjustable, low profile rear and dovetailed front. The dovetailed front has proven vastly superior to the staked variety found on many other 1911s.

The match trigger on the LTC features an adjustable over-travel screw. On our sample, the hammer fell with a bit over 5 pounds of pressure, which is just about right for a defensive pistol.

Other nice touches on the LTC included

a palm swell grip safety, slotted hammer and a flat checkered mainspring housing. This lefty would have liked an ambidextrous safety as well, but the LTC still represents a pretty good bang for the buck. A pair of 7-shot magazines, lock, bushing wrench, storage case, and instruction manual complete the package.

POWER EXTRACTOR

In coming up with the Power Extractor, Para Ordnance's Ted Szabo has taken yet another quantum leap in 1911 design. As many shooters know, the extractor is sometimes a source of trouble with 1911s. More than one gun plumber has gotten in over his head in an attempt to "tune" the extractor and the end result is often a more finicky gun. Szabo's redesign of this critical component goes a long way in enhancing reliability and effectively correcting this sometimes fatal flaw.

Most feed-related reliability problems with the 1911 fall into one of two categories: bad magazines or improper extractor tension. The new PXT features constant extractor tension, vital not only to extracting, but feeding as well. This is largely due to the greater range of movement which improves performance in both areas.

The claw of the extractor remains in constant contact with the rim of the case.

PERFORMANCE

PARA ORDNANCE PXT LTC .45ACP

Load	Velocity	Accuracy
CorBon DPX 185 HP+P	1015	4.13
Federal American Eagle 230 FMJ	819	3.13
Hornady TAP-CQ 230 JHP	792	3.75
ProLoad Tactical 200 HIP +P	957	2.75
Winchester SXT 230 JHP	790	2.88

Bullet weight measured in grains, velocity in feet per second (fps) by Oehler 35P Chronograph, accuracy in inches for an average five-shot group from Hornady Delta Rest at 25 yards.



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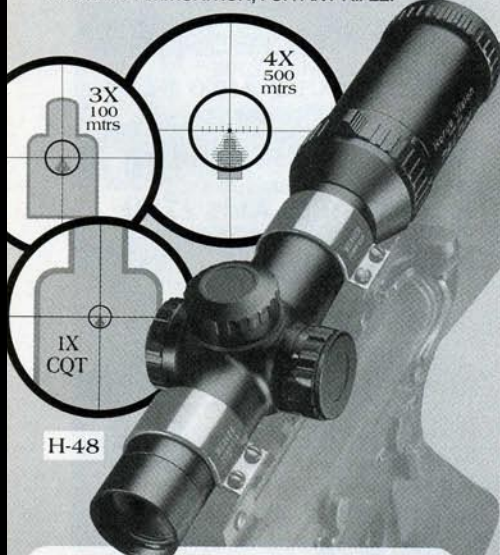
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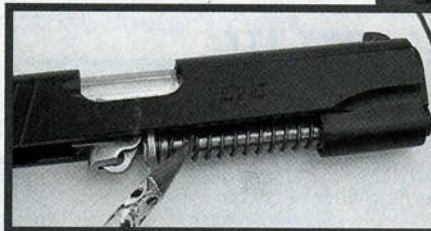
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PARA ORDNANCE PXT LTC

(Right) Checkered cocobolo grips are a nice touch. (Below) A full-length guide rod is standard on the LTC.



By doubling the surface area of the claw, Szabo has created an extractor that functions more reliably in both the feeding and extracting cycles. Para Ordnance remains quite confident that their new Power Extractor will carry the 1911 well into the 21st century.

HOW IT SHOOTS

At the range, our sample LTC held little in the way of surprises. Quite frankly, I expected this pistol to be a shooter and it was!

The Para LTC was given the usual shakedown, which included an informal test for accuracy potential and some high speed combat drills. A representative sample of popular .45ACP loads were fired from the LTC through an Oehler 35P Chronograph to measure muzzle velocity.

As with any number of other pistols, the LTC showed a preference for certain loads. Winchester's 230-grain SXT and Pro-Load's 200-grain +P Tactical both printed clusters right around the 2-inch mark. My single best 5-shot group was posted with Federal American Eagle 230-grain ball and came close to being a proverbial "one holer." By and large, accuracy was on par with my pair of customized Commanders. Sharper eyes and a steadier hand may have very well yielded even tighter groups.

All-steel construction certainly kept felt recoil with the LTC in check. I touched off quite a few +P .45s from the LTC and came away from the experience no worse for wear. He doesn't really explain the reason behind "+P" of .45s. Excellent terminal performance can be obtained with standard velocity loads such as the Winchester SXT, which are very easy to manage.

In fast-paced combat drills on both paper and steel, the Para LTC rose to the occasion. Its sights are very good and fast to pick up. I'll confess to not shooting a 1911 nearly as much as I did in the past and the LTC quickly brought me back to my com-

fort zone. The hits do indeed come easy. Other than a failure to feed the last round from the magazine when firing from the bench, performance was picture perfect. This stoppage occurred in the first 50 rounds and no other malfunction of any type was noted. I wouldn't feel the least bit put out trusting my life to the Para Ordnance LTC.

FINAL THOUGHTS

In a market rich in 1911 pistols, it's awful tough to put your own spin on this classic, but Para has done it right with the LTC. The new Para Power Extractor represents a milestone in the evolution of the 1911 right up there with the high capacity frame, and the LDA trigger system.

Initial PXT series offerings included not only the LTC reviewed herein but a full-size 1911 as well. In the not so distant future, you can look forward to an alloy frame LTC too. Since the introduction of the PXT series, Para has revamped their high capacity line and these pistols will now include the Power Extractor also.

Is there anything I would change in the LTC? This southpaw would have to bolt on an ambidextrous safety before the LTC was truly streetworthy. I would also consider a set of tritium night sights. To their credit, Para Ordnance has included a coupon for factory night sights at a very reasonable price with a quick turnaround time and free return shipping.

Nearly a century after its introduction, the 1911 remains an extremely popular pistol, a record unlikely to be eclipsed by any cartridge firing handgun. The design remains much in demand by special ops military folks, law enforcement, as well as armed citizens. There is no doubt that the PXT will appeal to the discriminating user. The PXT extractor system, optional size, and enhancements make this a hard pistol to pass up.

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