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Right on Target

Reviewing Para's Todd Jarrett USPSA Limited Edition .45

By Peter Caroline

I'll readily admit, I'm a fan of Para-Ordnance pistols, and have been since I bought my first P12•45 back in 1994. Great gun...the only thing I could do to improve it was add an ambidextrous safety and have the trigger pull reduced to four pounds. Several years later, I had occasion to visit Para's factory in Ontario, Canada. It's one of those bright, relatively quiet CNC facilities where just about everything is made in-house, and only a faint aroma of machine oil reminds you that this is indeed a manufacturing plant. This was during the infamous Clinton magazine-ban years, and I remember they showed me a row of big barrels crammed with what appeared to be a 20-year supply of pre-ban magazines.

Over the years, I've reviewed – and purchased – a lot of Para pistols. I was initially skeptical about their new LDA trigger, but I've come to really like it. In fact, I now prefer it to any single-action 1911 trigger...with the single exception of a pistol that Para recently sent me for testing and evaluation.

Para's new Todd Jarrett U.S. Practical Shooting Association Limited Edition .45 is unusual in that it incorporates a number of parts that didn't originate in the Para factory. It has an Ed Brown match-grade barrel bushing, slide stop, main-spring housing and magwell; a Cylinder & Slide stainless Tactical II hammer, sear, and disconnector; a Dawson Interchangeable fiber optic front sight; and a Novak Extreme Duty® adjustable rear sight. The pistol comes with two eight-round magazines with alloy bumper pads.

This is a distinctive-looking pistol. It features a Duo-Tone Para Kote™ finish, with Sterling top and Covert Black frame. The slide is flat-topped, and the grips are laser-etched with a USPSA logo. There's an ambidextrous safety, and the Para extended grip safety features a speed bump.

When I took the USPSA .45 to the range and lined it up with a target, I was immediately impressed by the sights. They couldn't have been

clearer or sharper. The red fiber optic front sight insert stood out like a beacon. I once had a coach who constantly harangued me, "Watch the sights, watch the sights!" You can't help but watch these sights...they're *that* good. I wish all my pistols had these sights!

The trigger pull measures 4-1/2 pounds, which is probably ideal for USPSA competition. Todd Jarrett had a lot of input into designing this pistol, and he knows whereof he speaks. He is, after all, the only USPSA Triple Crown winner, and the only

Grand Master to have won national championships in all four USPSA handgun divisions.

The USPSA .45 comes with a test target displaying a five-shot group measuring less than 1-3/4" at 15 yards. The ammo used was plain old Winchester 230-gr. FMJ. From the bench, I was able to replicate and even improve those results using the same ammo. I like a gun that makes me look good. I tried some Win-



chester Super-X 185-gr. FMC match ammo with the same results. The only difference was, these lighter loads wouldn't let the slide lock back after the last round. I tried some 155-gr. high-speed lead wadcutter handloads that I'd made up some years ago for steel plate shooting. More noise, but same-size groups. This is a gun that performs at 100 percent straight out of the box.

Para provides a very tough, marine-green polymer case for its guns, and the USPSA .45 comes with all the usual extras...cable lock, bushing wrench, sight adjustment screwdriver, a pair of hex wrenches and a tube of Mil-Comm TW-25B lubricant. Also included are a couple of extra fiber optic "light pipes," one red and one green. They're more than twice as long as you need, so you'll probably never use up your supply.

The Todd Jarrett USPSA Limited Edition .45 has an MSRP of \$1599. Although that's not inexpensive, it's actually a lot less than you'd have to pay for any number of big-name custom handguns that don't shoot any better. In addition, a portion of the profits from the sales of this pistol goes to USPSA to help their Junior Shooter program.

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