Reviewed by Peter Caroline

There’s nothing new about high-capacity pistol magazines. The venerable Mauser C96 broomhandle had a 10-round built-in magazine, and several broomhandle models actually had detachable 20-round magazines. Feeding new rounds was no problem; DWM and other manufacturers provided ammo in typical Mauser-style stripper clips. With the advent of the FN Browning High Power, reloading a Hi-CAP magazine became a one-round-at-a-time task. Then came the S&W Model 59 and Glock 17 and subsequent WonderNines. Hi-cap users employed brand- and model-specific magazine loaders, or had to rely on the old, slow, thumb-busting manual technique. It was not uncommon for shooters to carry a bag full of assorted mag loaders, one designed for each of their pistols.

I had seen the UpLULA™ Universal Pistol Magazine Loader advertised in The Blue Press (see Page 71). Quite frankly, my initial reaction was one of mild skepticism; it sounded like one of those “as advertised on TV” wonder products. One loader for virtually all single- and double-column magazines, from 9mm through .45 ACP? C’mon, you gotta be kidding! In January of 2009, however, while attending the SHOT Show in Orlando, I stopped at a booth where there was a representative from the Maglula company demonstrating the UpLULA. I watched and, lo and behold, this gadget actually worked! They let me try one myself. I will readily admit, I am not one of the world’s more manually dexterous individuals, and my right thumb has been damaged by several pocketknife mishaps, but I was able to load several different magazines quickly and easily. After that demonstration, I dug out my wallet and bought myself an UpLULA.

The “easily” part of the equation owes much to the UpLULA’s unique design. Unlike most mag loaders that push the top round down from the back, the UpLULA has a steel “beak” that pushes in and down from the front, so the next round can simply drop in, without having to push against the previous round or part of the loader. The beak is then raised and retracted with one quick motion, and the process is repeated until the magazine is full.

After a very little practice, the whole procedure becomes instinctive and very fast, even for a klutz like yours truly. And it works the same way on both single- and double-stack magazines, from 9mm on up, because it’s designed with a V-shaped positioner that centers the magazine in the loader. I tried it with both single- and double-stack mags for .45 ACP 1911-type pistols, with .38 Special mags for my S&W Model 52, with .40 S&W Taurus mags and with a variety of 9mm mags. The only 9mm mag that I couldn’t make it work with was the H&K VP 70Z 18-round mag, but that particular pistol is an odd duck in many respects. The UpLULA will not work with any magazine that has less than 8.0mm clearance between the lips, and it did not work with the Ruger LCP .380 magazine, apparently because that mag was too small to allow the beak to work properly.

I’ve owned brand-specific magazine loaders that worked for a while and then had to be discarded because they cracked under heavy use. There should be no such concern with the UpLULA. It is made of an extremely strong polymer, with steel used on key components. There’s a neat little locking device that holds the UpLULA in a closed position, so it’s more compact, and even a little ring down in one corner, so you can hang it on or in your range bag.

At my most recent range session, I used the UpLULA to fill a bunch of 12-round .40 S&W magazines, normally a tedious procedure. No problem at all, even getting the last one or two rounds into the magazine, which normally involves some effort and colorful language. The UpLULA is definitely one shooting accessory that is a pleasure to use!