

Classic design is seriously close to perfect ²¹

but I borrowed one anyway and I've convinced myself I'm going to buy it.

Shortly after the Browning BDA .45 hit – remember, I knew about the entire family of SIG-Sauer pistols from the publicity material I'd seen when the guns were announced to the press – I borrowed one from Browning. It was a dream gun from a standpoint of reliability and accuracy. I've never been that put off by heel-of-the-butt magazine releases as one of my other favorite handguns is the Walther P-38.

I've told this story many times, so I'll recount it only briefly. I've never been a sensational marksman, as I've often stated. So, after I got through shooting the BDA .45 and found it superb, I wanted to see how accurate it was. I lined up the services of a young marksman I knew from the great old gunshop and range known as Waukegan Outdoor Sportsman, in Waukegan, Illinois. I doubt it's there, functioning as a gunshop or range anymore. At any event, it was a fine indoor range and this young man, the Illinois State Indoor Centerfire Champion, was one of those rare shooters who shot as well or better than a Ransom Rest. At 25 yards, using a variety of ammo, including the old 200-grain Speer "Flying Ash-tray" rounds, he would cloverleaf his shots almost every time. When he didn't cloverleaf, we'd stop and run a patch down the bore and he'd be back to cutting another cloverleaf.

With one child already on the scene for Sharon and me and another on the horizon, I never bought that gun. Should have, but didn't. Sharon and I had silly things to do like eating.

Around Y2K, Sharon and I had some one or another stroke of good fortune and I acquired a pair of the short-lived SIG-Sauer P-245 pistols.

Not much larger than a Detonics CombatMaster, they were good guns, but less pleasant to shoot than a Detonics of similar size because of their alloy frames. They eventually went. For a good number of years, my only SIG-Sauer pistols were a brace of P-229s in .40 Smith & Wesson. They are great guns. Both have Crimson Trace LaserGrips and I have a goodly number of spare magazines. Additionally, I have a .357 SIG barrel that drops right in and have recently acquired a .22 Long Rifle Conversion Kit for the pistols.

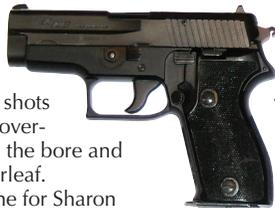
Some handguns just feel perfect in your hand, as if somehow the designer obtained the perfect

measurements of your hand and designed the grip accordingly. And, that is especially true with semi-automatic pistols. The old SIG 228 was that way, the 229 very close but not the same feel. A full-size 1911 feels that way. Walther P-38s, P-4s and P-38Ks have always felt that way, too. So does the SIG 220. Handguns that convey that feeling to the hand are almost akin to coming home to something familiar, something comfortable.

And, I like what the 220 does – aside from its accuracy and reliability. The basic SIG Classic pistol design, as far as I'm concerned, is seriously close to perfect. Much to the consternation of many aficionados of the 1911, I do not carry cocked and locked when I'm carrying a 1911-ish pistol (which I do pretty much daily). Never! And, I'm sure, much to the consternation of fans of double action semi-autos, I very rarely fire the first round from a double action semi-automatic double action, rather preferring to do what I do with a single action auto and thumb cock before discharging the first round.

I have always looked at the SIG-Sauer DA autos as pistols which allow safe hammer lowering, so I can have my pistol hammer down without manually lowering the hammer, as must be done with a 1911-ish pistol. I just work the hammer drop lever on a SIG and I'm in business. Lowering the hammer manually on a SIG obviates a safety feature. Don't do it. Use the hammer drop lever and always point the pistol in a safe direction, of course. One of the reasons that I find hammer down much more comforting to me is that I often find myself taking a pistol from the house to the glove compartment or from the glove compartment to the house, without bothering with a holster. I just shove the pistol in the waistband of my trousers and go. I would not do that with a cocked and locked pistol any more than I would do that with a Glock.

Although in the best shooting session of my life I couldn't hold a candle to that young marksman's abilities with that BDA .45 from more than 30 years ago in suburban Chicago, I seem to do my best auto pistol shooting with a full-sized .45, be that a Detonics USA Model 9-11-01, one of the various great shooting, fine looking Kimber pistols I've tested, etc. And, the SIG-Sauer P-220, although not a 1911, is still a good shooting, full-sized .45 for me. The P-220 is a pistol in which I have a great deal of confidence, and that, in itself, lest that confidence becomes stupidly overblown, is an asset when it comes to any weapon.



At top is the SIG-Sauer P-220, which started the entire SIG Classic line. The pistol at center is A SIG-Sauer P-6, sold in the USA as the P-225. This P-6 is a German police turn-in pistol from Century International Arms. The third pistol is a SIG-Sauer P-229.