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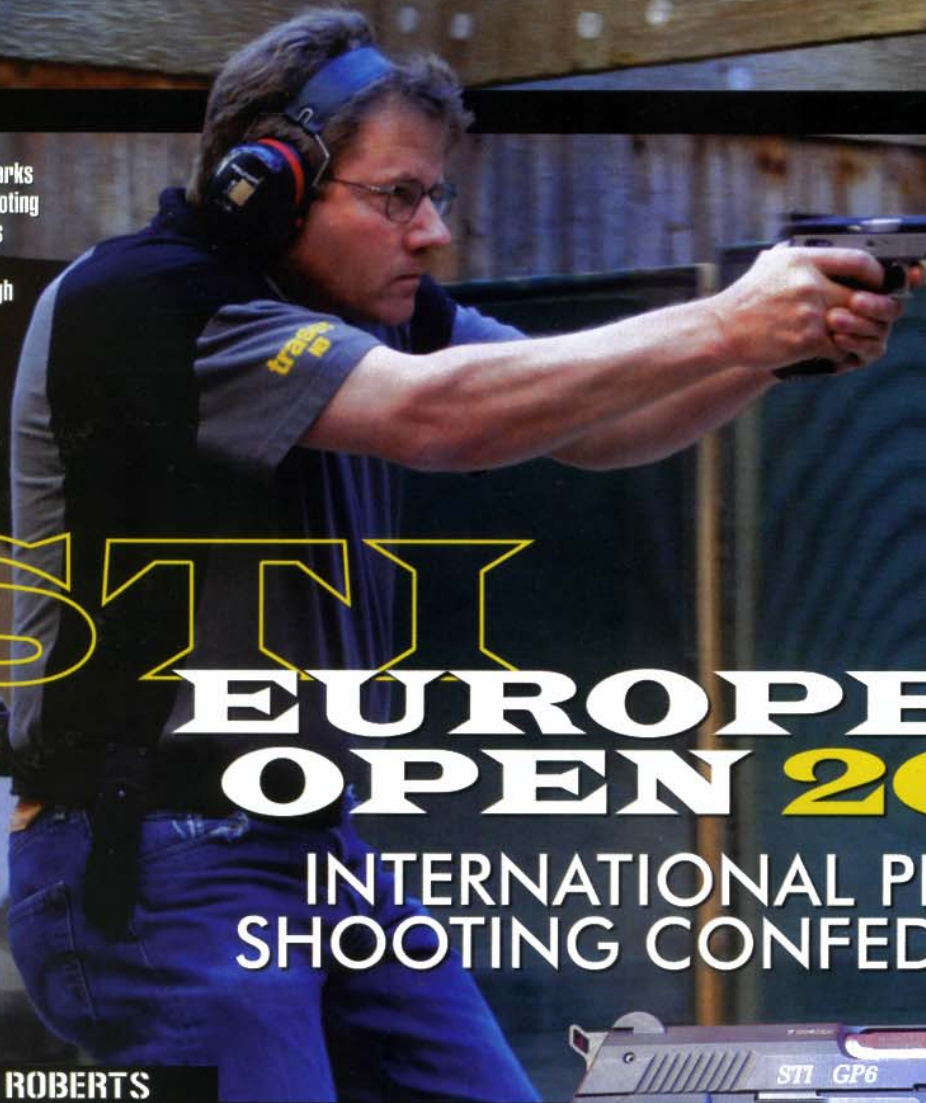
SURVIVAL HEALTH: MEDICINAL PLANTS PT.2

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Firearms

The muzzle flash sparks as Peter Heller, shooting as part of the Swiss Production Team, guns his way through the stage with a Sphinx 3000 9mm pistol



STI EUROPEAN OPEN 2008

INTERNATIONAL PRACTICAL SHOOTING CONFEDERATION

BY GREG ROBERTS

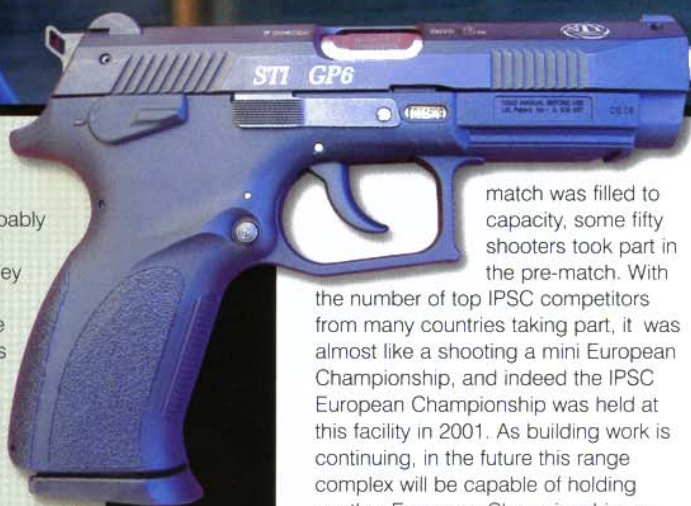
The 7th STI European Open, held in Philippsburg in Germany, became one of the main matches for many IPSC shooters in Europe this year, in the lead-up to the next World Shoot which takes place in Bali in Indonesia in October. The recent event was used by France and other European IPSC Regions as one of the matches for selecting their national squads for the Worlds.

The match organisers took on the big task of allowing a total of 350 shooters to participate.

Over the past seven years, the STI Open has established itself as one of the premier IPSC matches in Europe, and all 350 slots were sold-out within a few weeks of opening of registration, which was six months before the match date.

The ranges at Philippsburg are probably among the best club ranges in Europe. They have been built on a former Bundeswehr military firing range complex, which became surplus to military requirements at the end of the Cold War. Shooters have overhead protection from the elements and the semi open range construction, with 180 degree backstops and multiple portable bullet traps, allows designers to build and shoot any stage imaginable. There are numerous wide 25 metre ranges, and two huge 50 metre ranges give the space needed to build any number of stages. This facility can easily handle a match of this size.

Held over the weekend of 9th to 11th May, this year's STI Open offered eighteen stages (plus chronograph) to shooters from some fifteen nations. The range officers and match organisation staff shot the pre-match on the Friday, allowing them to run the competitors through the match on the Saturday and Sunday. As the main



Above: We had the opportunity to examine and shoot the new STI GP6. STI Team members will use the GP6 in the German Production Nationals

match was filled to capacity, some fifty shooters took part in the pre-match. With the number of top IPSC competitors from many countries taking part, it was almost like a shooting a mini European Championship, and indeed the IPSC European Championship was held at this facility in 2001. As building work is continuing, in the future this range complex will be capable of holding another European Championship, or even a World Shoot.

18-STAGE MATCH

This year the count was an impressive 353 rounds for eighteen stages. There were a few small nine-round stages, but not too many. Most of the stages offered twenty rounds or more, so there were points to be had, and lost, on most stages. Due to the match attracting many of the top European practical pistol shooters across all IPSC Divisions, competition was tough across the board.

A total of 336 competitors completed the match. Standard Division was the most popular with 121 shooters, but



1: As well as shooting targets downrange, there were also many to the left and right. With portable bullets stops the stage designs could easily vary the direction of fire.

2: Holland's Desiree Van Noord produced an excellent performance to win the Ladies Open Division

3: Cleverly positioned barricades and windows forced the shooter to move quickly and adopt different positions while shooting the stages

4: Revolver Division continues to have its followers. This competitor is using a Smith and Wesson .357 Magnum revolver.

5: STI Team member Ralf K. Jensen engages the first set of targets in one of the large field matches in the competition.

6: In the USA the Glock dominates Production Division but in Europe you will see a lot more CZ and Sig pistols, plus the Swiss Sphinx 3000 Competition Production model, as used here by Thomas Binder

and windows forced the shooter to move quickly and adopt different shooting positions while shooting the stage. Lots of moving targets added sophistication and a degree of difficulty



Production Division continues to grow with 101 shooters finishing. Close behind was Open Division with 98 competitors. Both Modified and Revolver Divisions continue to have their devotees with sixteen and ten shooters respectively, in each division. This is what happens to a match that builds up a reputation as a great event over several years. There are now a few such events on the annual calendar in Europe.

STI IPSC TEAM

As well as sponsoring this match, STI International also fielded their European IPSC Shooting Team, that participates in the top level IPSC matches around Europe. The team comprises seven of Europe's top Open and Standard Division shooters; Emile Obriot, Irene Canetta and Saul Kirsch shoot in Open Division and Fabrizio Pesce, Gregory Midgley, Herbert Jakob and Ralf K. Jensen shoot in Standard Division.

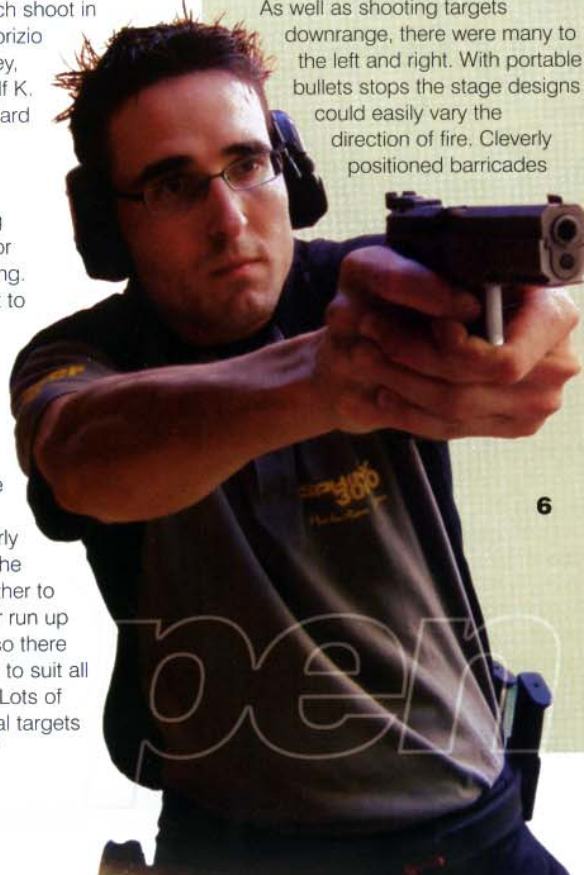
STAGES

This was a demanding match with the need for highly accurate shooting. There were targets out to 25 metres and lots of five to fifteen metre targets; many of these being partial targets or with no-shoot targets obscuring much of the shoot targets. The stage designers cleverly allowed the shooters the tactical choice of whether to shoot long distance or run up closer to the targets, so there were stages designed to suit all levels of competitors. Lots of small plates and partial targets added to the need for



accuracy even on the shorter distances, and yet there were also several stages of close up high speed running and gunning type stages.

As well as shooting targets downrange, there were many to the left and right. With portable bullets stops the stage designs could easily vary the direction of fire. Cleverly positioned barricades



to many of the stages. There were swingers, bobbars and drop and turn targets. This match has among the most activated targets as any Level III IPSC Match in Europe. The stage designs were very good. The high accuracy requirements added a lot to the match as well.

In Stage Four there were props that are not often seen in European events. These were drop and raise no-shoot targets. This type of arrangement has a no shoot target placed in front of a shoot target, and when activated the no-shoot drops allowing a brief full view of the shoot target and then raises back up to obscure the shoot target. Stage Four had three of these targets in a row. When in the raised position a small portion of each shoot target was still visible. This created many choices

Firearms

and options for the competitor.

Stage 12 was the one part of the match that everyone was talking about. This stage had two huge wheels with small shooting windows, which were set in motion by knocking down two steel pepper poppers on either side of the stage. As the wheels spun, the targets behind them became visible and then were covered up again. It was extremely difficult to shoot through these fast appearing / disappearing windows, which were edged with no shoot targets, to make things more difficult. Most competitors opted to activate the revolving wheels and then shoot a centre bank of targets leave the revolving windows to shoot through last, when they had slowed down.

RESULTS

Open Division winner of the match was the current European and World

7: In Standard Division STI Team member Gregory Midgley took the top spot, with Czech Petr Znamenacek second and Rodger Zobrist from Switzerland third

8: In Modified Division the top spot went to Zdenek Henes of the Czech Republic with Germany's Juergen Flass and Frank Arnolds taking second and third respectively

9: Karl Prommersburger, STI's German distributor, improves the trigger pull on a STI Executive pistol.

10: In Standard Division for the second year running Germany's Petra Tutschke took the top spot fellow German Anja Klingberg took second place, with



Following the family tradition in IPSC competition, Joshua Heller from Switzerland took the top position in Junior Open Division.

Champion Eric Grauffel. STI team member Saul Kirsch and Martin Kamenicek form the Czech Republic came in second and third. In Standard Division, STI Team member Gregory Midgley took the top spot, with Czech Petr Znamenacek less than two percent behind him. Rodger Zobrist from Switzerland was third. In Production Division, Adam Tyc took the top spot, with Richard Roorda from the Netherlands and Czech shooter Vaclav Vinduska coming second and third. In

Austria's Elizabeth Strasser third

11: Every year STI donate a pistol for a draw during the awards ceremony at the end of the match. This year it was won by Jacky Van Koolwijk from the Netherlands



Open Division winner of the match was the current European and World Champion Eric Grauffel. Saul Kirsch and Martin Kamenicek came in second and third



Modified Division, the top spot went to Zdenek Henes of the Czech Republic and Juergen Flass and Frank Arnolds took second and third place respectively.

In the women's Open Division, Desiree Van Noord from the Netherlands improved her game to take the top spot, with Gabriele Kraushofer from Austria in second place and STI Team member Irene Canetta in third place. In Standard Division, for the second year running Germany's Petra Tutschke took the top spot and fellow German Anja Klingberg was in second place, with Austria's Elizabeth Strasser in third place. Following the family tradition in IPSC competition, Joshua Heller from Switzerland took the top position in Junior Open Division.

SPONSORS

STI proprietors David and Pauletta Skinner travelled over from STI's Texan base to see the competition that their company sponsors. The organisation of this match was made possible by the generous help that was received from STI, STI's German distributor Karl

Pommersburger, Double Alpha Academy, and the German distributors of Bilsom, C-More, CED, Eric Grauffel and Ghost, amongst others. Every year STI donate a pistol for a draw during the awards ceremony at the end of the match. This year it was won by Jacky Van Koolwijk from the Netherlands.

Events like this one do not happen by themselves; they require a lot of effort from dedicated individuals to make them happen. Most of the top IPSC competitors in Europe were present, across all the divisions. The match ran smoothly thanks to the hard work of the range crew. As well as shooting the match, STI team member Herbert Jakob spent the weekend heading up the match administration, which kept everything ticking over properly.

The organisers of the 7th STI European Open ran an excellent competition and here's looking forward to the 8th Open. To see the full set of results and information about the match, visit the competition web site www.sti-euro-open.de