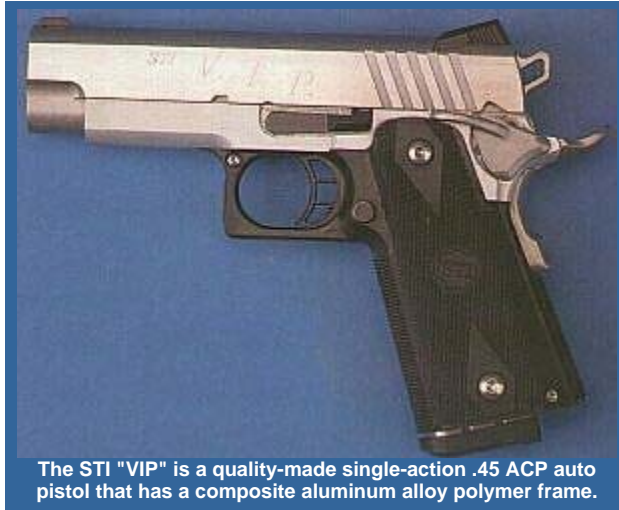




Handguns, December 2000

**FIRING LINE
REPORT**

BY DAVID W. ARNOLD



The STI "VIP" is a quality-made single-action .45 ACP auto pistol that has a composite aluminum alloy polymer frame.

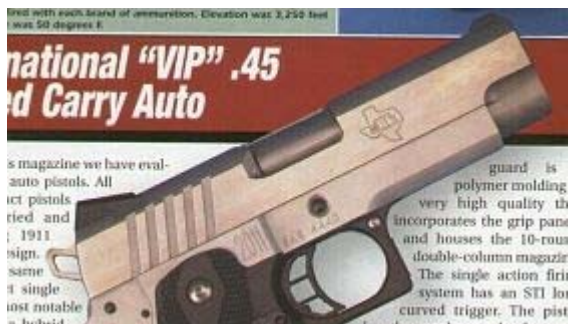
STI International "VIP" .45 Concealed Carry Auto

In past issues of this magazine we have evaluated several STI auto pistols. All have been compact pistols based on the tried and tested Colt/Browning 1911 Government Model design. The "VIP" follows the same single action firing trend being a compact single action auto pistol. Its most notable feature is that it uses both metal and polymer. This is a feature that was used in STI's first competition high-capacity auto pistols of some years ago.

**25-YARD BENCH REST ACCURACY PERFORMANCE
STI INTERNATIONAL "VIP" CONCEALED CARRY
.45 ACP AUTO PISTOL**

AMMO USED	GROUP SIZE (INCHES)		
	SMALLEST	LARGEST	AVERAGE
Black Hills 230-Grain JHP	1 1/2	3 1/4	2 5/8
COR BON 185-GRAIN JHP	3 1/2	5 3/8	4 5/8
PMC 230-GRAIN JHP	4 1/2	5 1/2	5

NOTES: Shooting was done at 25 yards from a seated bench rest using a sand bag rest in a ballistic tunnel. Groups are five shots measured center to center. Elevation was 3,250 feet above sea level. Temperature was 50 degrees F.



ACTION TYPE

The VIP is a locked breech design that uses the Browning swinging link system to lock the barrel during firing. Its hybrid frame consists of a modular upper body made of a tough aluminum alloy that houses the trigger mechanism and the rails that secure the stainless steel slide. The actual grip and trigger guard is a molding of very high quality that incorporates the grip panels and houses the 10-round double-column magazine. The single action firing system has an STI long, curved trigger. The pistol has the usual controls of manual safety, grip

safety, slide stop, and magazine catch. These include features like a beavertail grip safety and a slotted round spur hammer. The sights are fixed with the rear assembly being the popular Novak design that is adjustable for windage.

FIT AND FINISH

VIP comes in a lockable padded plastic case. The fit and finish same high quality displayed on STI autos that I have evaluated. The polymer grip is especially noteworthy in respect of the quality of its molding. The trigger pull was nice and crisp, breaking at just on four pounds. The sights provided a good clear sight picture. The grip was comfortable for my hands providing me with good access of the trigger and all the controls.

SHOOTING PERFORMANCE

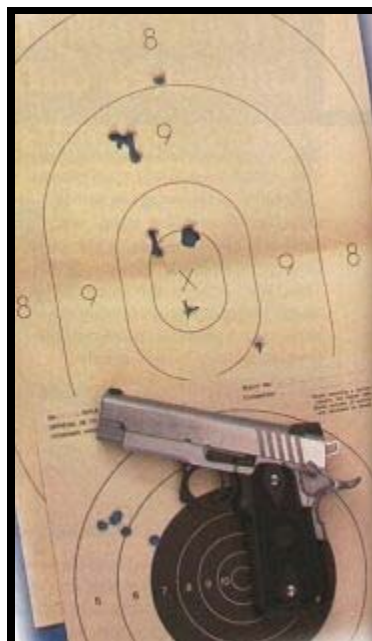
The VIP was shot for accuracy from a bench rest using the ammunition listed in the accompanying chart. The pistol delivered good combat accuracy with Black Hills delivering the best groups. The regulation of the sights grouped all the ammunition about two inches left and above my point of aim. Recoil was mild and the good trigger and sights made the pistol very easy and pleasant to shoot.

The VIP performed equally well on the combat range keeping all my shots within the nine ring of a B-27 target center back to 20 yards. Of these, six were in the ten ring. Recoil was mild making it easy to shoot fast, accurate two shot strings.

RELIABILITY

Initially there were some minor problems with the pistol. The pistol consistently locked open when one or two shots were still in the magazine. At first I thought I might have inadvertently engaged the slide stop with my thumb but as the same was not catching in the slide stop notch, this obviously was not the problem. I sent the pistol back to STI who returned it a few days later stating the problem was a bad magazine. I returned to the range and this time the pistol performed flawlessly with all of the ammunition.

Aside from a problematic magazine, the VIP is a quality-made compact pistol well suited for concealed carry purposes.

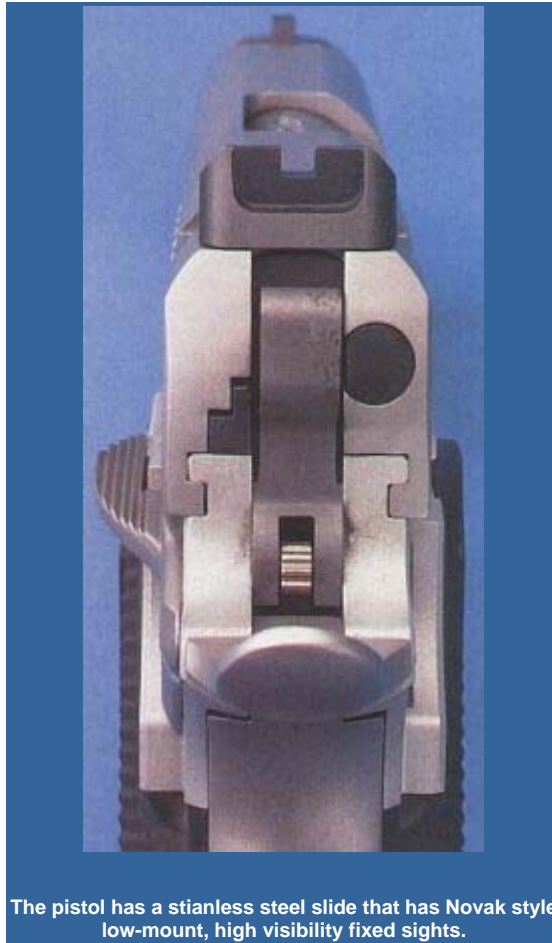


When shot from a bench rest, the pistol delivered good combat accuracy as shown by this 1 1/2 inch group shot with Black Hills ammo. The pistol performed equally well on the combat range keeping all shots within the nine ring of a B27 target center.

SPECIFICATIONS	
STI INTERNATIONAL "VIP" CONCEALED CARRY .45 AUTO PISTOL	
Maker:	STI International 114 Halmar Cove Georgetown, TX 78628 512-819-0656 sales@stiguns.com
Action Type:	Locked Breech semi-automatic
Caliber:	.45 ACP
Capacity:	10 + 1
Overall Length:	7.5 inches
Barrel Length:	3.9 inches
Weight:	25 ounces
Sights:	Fixed low profile
Trigger:	Pull - 4 pounds
Length of Stroke:	1/2 inch



Trigger reach:	2 1/2 inches
Grips:	Integral (part of polymer frame)
Finish:	Stainless slide black frame
Price:	\$1,699



STI - Designed to Perform

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