



## Gun Pro™ Sure Fire™ 1911 Magazines

### A Better Mousetrap?

*Product Review for M1911.ORG by Harwood Loomis*

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There's an old saying that if you invent a better mousetrap, the world will beat a path to your door. It is a constant source of amazement that, with astonishing regularity, either yet another manufacturer adds 1911 pistols to their existing product line, or another new manufacturer materializes out of nowhere offering 1911s. It's certainly a tribute to John Moses Browning's enduring design that, after more than 100 years, more and more companies are offering their versions of the classic 1911 pistol. It's also a source of amazement that so many companies think they are smarter than John Moses Browning; each claims to offer a better 1911 mousetrap, and each hopes the world will beat a path to their door.

Along the same line of thought, we have also noticed that there is a parallel increase in the number of companies offering magazines for the 1911. It isn't always clear whether a particular vendor is selling its own product, or if their magazine is just some other company's magazine in a different package, or if there's actually something new and different about a particular new offering.

Most, if not all, of the 1911 pistol makers sell spare magazines. A few make their own; some openly use independent magazine makers and freely admit to it; and others have their magazines manufactured by one of the few companies who actually make 1911 magazines, but the gun makers don't give out any information regarding whose magazines they use. Gun parts vendor Brownells recently began selling their own Brownells-branded 1911 magazines. Sarco, a firearms parts vendor from New Jersey and Pennsylvania, has just begun selling 1911 magazines made specifically for them. Novak, the sight people, have come out with a line of 1911 magazines. Considering how many "experts" have been proclaiming for years that the 1911 platform is obsolete, it's fascinating to see that "Old Slabsides" refuses to die.

All of which made it very interesting when John Caradimas (owner of the M1911.ORG forum and publisher of this on-line magazine) was offered an opportunity to evaluate a new 1911 magazine from a company called Gun Pro™.

Just a few days after a flurry of e-mails between John and the principals of Gun Pro™, a package arrived containing two 8-round Gun Pro™ *Sure Fire*™ magazines. It was an ugly, rainy day outside, so it seemed there was no better time to head down to the Dungeon of Doom and Diet Cola to see what was new and different about these new magazines.



## Magazines

Each magazine arrived in a clear plastic clamshell display package, suitable for retail display by hanging on a pegboard. Inside each display package was one magazine, and a bi-fold card from Gun Pro™ offering a cursory explanation of the benefits of the new magazine.

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The magazines we received are stainless steel, 8-round magazines with removable polymer base pads and "hybrid" style feed lips. They are extended magazines; the polymer bases will extend below the end of the magazine well, creating space inside the base and extended magazine tube for an extra round and for the lower end of the magazine spring.



*The two Gun-Pro magazines, sandwiching a conventional (flush) 1911 magazine*



*Two Sure Fire™ magazines and a standard, seven round, flush magazine*

The base, like many others, is a two-piece affair. The bottom of the magazine tube sidewalls is bent inward. A flat spring retainer/floor plate slides into the recess and retains the spring. The polymer base then slides onto the bottom lips, holding the floor plate in the tube. The polymer base is retained by a small button of the metal floor plate engaging a hole drilled in the center of the base.

The above observations, though, represent details. Thoughtful details, to be sure, but there didn't appear to be anything earth-shatteringly different about the magazines. They appeared to be of good quality and well finished. The weld up the spine was neat, smooth, and uniform. The thickness of the magazine body (measured with a micrometer) is 0.026 inches

Reading the accompanying literature (which can also be seen on the company's web site at [www.gunpro.us](http://www.gunpro.us)), I determined that the feature Gun Pro™ says makes the difference is their patent-pending "Nose Dive Control Spring." At first, this caused considerable confusion around the DoD&DC. The inventor of this variation on the 1911 magazine, Russ Kruse, sent an e-mail alerting us that the sample magazines had been shipped, but he added a footnote that he needed to confirm that the magazines sent to us contained their proprietary anti-nosedive spring. He subsequently confirmed that we had been sent the correct magazines so, when they arrived, we immediately took them apart to look at the magazine springs.

And what we found was that the springs appeared to be normal magazine springs in every respect. The followers in the Gun Pro™ magazines are a modified Devel style follower, which requires a different configuration for the top coil of the spring than a standard GI follower. We have seen Devel-type followers before, and these springs didn't appear to be anything out of the ordinary. We were, to put it mildly, puzzled.

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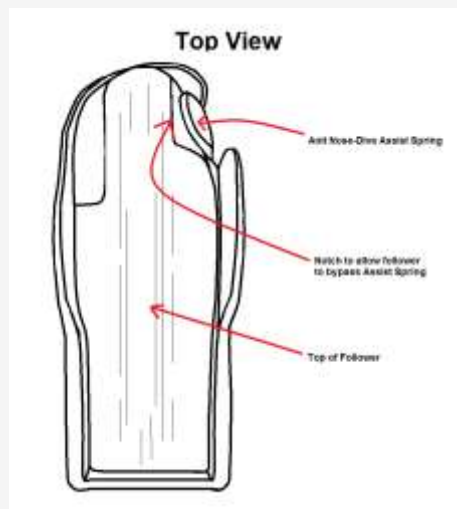


*Close-up view of the modified, Devel-type follower*

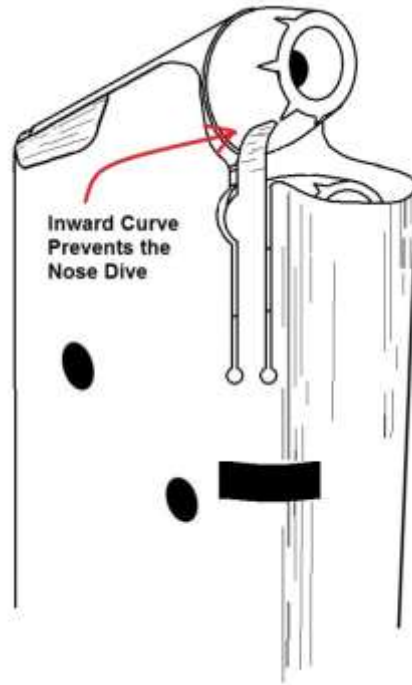
What were we missing?

## Details

There is an oft-repeated line from the movie *Cool Hand Luke*, "What we have here is a failure to communicate." And that's exactly what was happening between your humble servant and Mr. Kruse. Over the course of several e-mails he consistently referred to an anti-nosedive "spring." It just wasn't getting through—until he sent us a pair of sketches showing how these magazines are supposed to cure (or at least alleviate) nosedive during the feeding cycle. The sketches provided the "aha moment" that had been missing.



*Top view, showing the location of the anti-nosedive spring*



*Drawing of the anti-nosedive spring at the right front of the magazine tube*

Although at first glance the Gun Pro™ magazines look like any number of other good quality 1911 magazines, there is a difference. At the right front of the magazine tube, above the slot for the magazine catch, there are two vertical cuts, or slits, in the tube. These slits are cut all the way up to the upper edge, creating what I would categorize as a tab. This tab is what Mr. Kruse refers to as the anti-nosedive "spring." I suppose that, if the magazine tube is of the right quality and right temper of steel, a tab would tend to spring back to its original position if deflected, so it's not entirely wrong to call it a "spring." To the author it looks like a tab. Semantics. It is this spring/tab thingie that differentiates the Gun Pro™ magazines from other 1911 magazines.



*Close-up of the Sure Fire™ anti-nosedive spring*

In a nutshell, the intent of this tab/spring is to make contact with the underside of a round as it feeds if the round begins to nosedive, providing supplemental support and preventing nosedive.



We decided it's an interesting theory, so we set out to try to determine whether or not it works.

Other features of the new magazines include an extended tube to better accommodate eight rounds without having to make compromises with the follower or magazine spring. The magazines are fitted with a polymer base that partially wraps around the bottom of the magazine tube, disguising the added length. Witness holes are in the traditional, staggered pattern but clearly numbered in a straight line vertically, unlike standard 1911 magazines. At the top rear of the tube, the notch or cut-out that allows the disconnecter rib to pass through the magazine is rounded rather than having two sharp corners; this is to avoid cracking, which has been a problem with more than one brand of 1911 magazines. All-in-all, the magazines are well thought out.



*Standard 1911 magazine between two Sure Fire™ magazines, showing the rounded notch*

## The Testing Conundrum

The problem we faced was how to demonstrate whether or not these new magazines actually perform better than standard magazines. One issue that discouraged firing a boatload of ammunition through these magazines in a series of test pistols was simply that ammunition doesn't grow on trees. We keep seeing articles proclaiming that the ammunition shortage has ended. If that's true, vendors in this area haven't received the memo. We can find .45 ACP ammunition to shoot, but it generally won't be brands that anyone has ever heard of, and it will pretty much all be 230-grain FMJ. In short, exactly the type of ammunition that almost never creates a feeding problem in a 1911. We needed a different approach.

After overheating a few scarce gray cells, it was finally decided to limit the testing to a single pistol. Since it is generally accepted that pure, military issue GI 1911s were designed to fire FMJ ("ball") ammunition and often choke on JHP self defense rounds, we decided we needed a true GI pistol. Having a friendly range/shop owner available has its advantages. In short order we came up with a very well worn but apparently 100 percent functional Sistema Model of 1927. Some readers may know that the Sistemas are absolute clones of the M1911A1, built in Argentina under license from Colt. A Sistema M1927 is about as close as one can get to a Colt USGI M1911A1 as it gets, unless you actually have a Colt USGI M1911A1.



*Our Sistema test pistol, with the two Gun Pro™ magazines*

With the firearm question resolved, the next issue was to find an assortment of ammunition types to try—without spending a year's worth of lunch money. In the end, we turned to reloading to replicate some scarce factory rounds.

We had a very limited number of rounds of Federal 230-grain Hydra-Shok JHP. We also had a full box of Tul-Ammo 230-grain FMJ and a box of Blazer Brass 230-grain FMJ. And we had a plentiful supply of handloaded 230-grain plinking ammunition, using Berry's 230-grain plated lead round-nose bullets, loaded to the same overall length as Winchester USA 230-grain FMJ. But we needed more variety. We found exactly one on-line source that had some Winchester 230-grain JHP bullets in stock, so we ordered a couple of hundred of those. The same web site showed that they also had Hornady XTP bullets in stock but, by the time we called, those were gone.

We loaded up a box of cartridges using the Winchester JHP bullets, using a left-over factory Winchester round to establish the overall length. And we then loaded up a batch of cartridges based on Berry's 200-grain plated lead semi-wadcutter bullets.

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*The test ammunition arrayed in front of the test pistol*



*The test ammunition*

## Getting Down to Business

With a pistol and ammunition available, we set out for Chris' Indoor Shooting Range to see what trouble we could get into. And here is where our carefully thought-out testing protocol failed completely. We had two samples of the new Gun Pro™ magazines. The Sistema had one Argentinean factory magazine, but we were informed that the feed lips were so fatigued that the magazine was unusable. There was a fairly new-looking Metalform magazine in the pistol, so we used that as the baseline for comparison. Our protocol was to first fire one magazine of each ammo type using the Metalform magazine, and then to shoot the remainder of each ammo type through the two Gun Pro™ magazines, alternating as we went so that each new magazine would see approximately the same number of rounds.

We are pleased to report that there were no malfunctions with any of the ammunition types with either of the Gun Pro™ magazines. That's certainly good news; they work.

The failure of our protocol, however, was that the Sistema with a standard Metalform magazine of unknown age or round count also shot everything we fed it with no malfunctions. The Sistema was chosen in the hope that it would be a jam-o-matic, at least

with the hollowpoint and semi-wadcutter ammunition. That didn't happen, so at the end of the day (Lord, how I loathe that phrase—forgive me for using it, but it fit) we had demonstrated that the new Gun Pro™ magazines functioned reliably, but we couldn't prove that they function any better than a standard 7-round magazine with a standard GI follower. We put a couple of hundred rounds through the old Sistema, mostly with the new magazines, and we left the range wondering what (if anything) we had demonstrated.

## Evaluation

The Gun Pro™ Sure Fire™ magazines came through our testing with flying colors, and our detailed examination showed that the construction is of excellent quality. The subtle refinements compared to standard GI-type magazines or compared to newer, eight-round magazines (flush base or extended) demonstrate that Gun Pro™ put a lot of thought into this product; it wasn't just whipped up overnight.

The tab (as the author continues to think of it) that comprises the anti-nosedive spring is possibly the most innovative change to the 1911 magazine we have yet seen. The author is one of those purists who rant and rail about people who try to out-think John Moses Browning. Here is a case where someone may actually have succeeded. We regret that we weren't able to come up with a worse performing test pistol, which might have given us conclusive proof that the Gun Pro™ Sure Fire™ magazines will perform where others fail. Unfortunately (ironically), our old war horse Sistema performed much better than expected. We had anticipated that it would probably balk at the JHP and semi-wadcutter rounds. It didn't. So much for theory.

## Acknowledgments

We are grateful to Chris Dogolo, owner of Chris' Indoor Shooting Range, for his gracious cooperation in allowing us the use of the range for testing.

Please go to this thread on the M1911 Pistols Organization discussion forum to discuss this pistol and this review: <http://forum.m1911.org/showthread.ph...187#post979187>



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