Reviewed by Peter Caroline

I am cursed with 20/20 hindsight. At the beginning of my freelance ad copywriting career, around 1990, I did some writing for Colt. I wrote ads, catalogs, spec sheets and PRs. It was a lot of fun, and I acquired a lot of Colt products. I never did get around to buying a Colt Mustang, however, and I lived to regret that omission. The .380 ACP cartridge, aka 9mm Kurz or Corto, had long been the Rodney Dangerfield of cartridges, garnering no respect. Seeing diminishing sales of its Mustang and .380 Government Models, Colt discontinued the line in the late 1990s. In recent years, however, some great new .380 pistols, along with much improved .380 defensive ammo, turned this former wallflower into the belle of the ball.

At the 2011 SHOT Show, I happened to be browsing through the Colt booth when I spotted a new Mustang. On the surface, it seemed identical to the old Mustang, but there’s a difference. The stainless slide and electroless nickel-finished aluminum alloy receiver are now CNC machined from bar stock, providing much closer tolerances. The weight, with empty magazine in place, is about 13.8 ounces, just a bit more than some of the polymer .380s. I picked up and hefted the sample gun, which was firmly tethered to the display. It felt just right, like a baby 1911 should. I put in my request for a sample to test, and in late October the gun arrived.

The hardcase that Colt provides for the Mustang is huge…15-1/2” x 8”. I suspect that it’s the same one they provide for long-barreled SAAs and full-size 1911s. Included is the obligatory Colt cable lock, instruction manual, orange chamber plug, $10 off on an NRA membership and a printed slip with a cheery message from the Massachusetts Attorney General, warning about all the horrific things that can happen as a result of firearms ownership.

Despite the abovementioned dire prophecies…“you’ll shoot your eye out” and all that…I was eager to get out to the range and try out this new puppy. And I brought along a large assortment of

“I missed out on buying a Mustang 20 years ago; I’m not going to make that mistake again”