

to about 30 mph and besides, let's face it, the drill with most military pistols is: aim at center of mass and keep squeezing trigger until mass falls over. The M88 provided a pleasant surprise; it hit exactly where it was pointed, and even maintained some fairly small groups from the bench, using plain old Winchester white box 115-grain FMJs. On a calmer day, at an improvised range in the desert, I shot several two-inch eight-round groups at 20 yards from my portable bench. About the eight-round part...that's the magazine capacity. I tend to load a magazine until all the witness holes show the presence of a cartridge. Oddly enough, when you stuff eight rounds, the rated capacity, into the M88 magazine, the bottom witness hole shows no cartridge. Don't try putting in another round; it won't fit. Go figure.

The three-dot sights are aesthetically challenged, but work quite well. The rear sight, for whatever reason, sticks up about 1/4" from the slide and is drift adjustable for windage. Recently, one of our many 1911 manufacturers made a big thing about the fact that the rear sight on one of their big-bucks editions could be hooked against your belt or whatever for one-hand cocking. Yeah, the M88 can do that, at less than one-sixth the price!

The M88's trigger pull is actually quite decent for what is essentially a service weapon. There's approximately 1/8" of light take-up,

then about a six-pound pull. It's not crisp, but it's not crunchy, either; altogether, very manageable. In fact, firing the M88 offhand, against two other 9mm pistols each costing about four times its price, I was able to achieve smaller groups with the M88.

Fieldstripping the M88 is simplicity itself. Push the slide-stop retaining clip (an old Tokarev feature) to the rear, remove the slide stop and then push the slide assembly forward and off the frame. It's all basic Browning-type stuff. Nestled in the frame, however, is a feature that John Moses Browning didn't come up with: the entire hammer and sear mechanism is housed in a single module that can easily be lifted out of the frame for cleaning. It's a bit of design genius that can appeal to the Mr. Gadget in all of us hoplophiles.

If you get the idea that I like the Zastava M88, you're right. What's not to like? It's a pleasure to shoot; it's chambered for a time-tested cartridge; it's simple, strong and reasonably compact and feels good in your hand. It delivers very acceptable accuracy, and you can't beat it at twice the price.

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