

## A BLAST FROM THE PAST EAA Zastava M88



By Peter Caroline

Wandering around the SHOT Show, I stopped at the European American Armory booth, and spotted a pistol that brought back memories of a Russian Tokarev TT-33 pistol I owned back in the '60s. EAA's Zastava M88, as it turned out, is indeed an updated version of the original Tokarev or its later Yugoslavian version, the Zastava M57. There are several obvious points of difference: the M88 is chambered for 9mm Parabellum, not the original 7.62x25mm; the M88 barrel is about an inch shorter than that of the Tokarev; the M88 has a thumb safety at the left rear of the slide, while the original Tokarev had only a half-cock safety; and the rear of the M88 frame and slide has a very slight spur, unlike the rounded appearance of its ancestor. Unlike the Tokarev, the M88 has a finger rest on the bottom of the magazine.

So what, you might ask, is so special about the Zastava M88, other than it being a Serbian "Commander" version of a 78-year-old Browning-derived design? For one thing, the price. MSRP is \$275, which is quite a bargain for an all-steel commercial version of a military pistol still in

active service. For another, it just feels right in the hand, somewhat reminiscent of the old Colt 1903 .380 Pocket Model, the same length but a bit heavier at 27.5 ounces.

Reading the manual (I write manuals, so I tend to read them), I discovered that the M88 has a magazine disconnect safety, which blocks the trigger and prevents firing if the magazine is removed. While this is perhaps an unusual feature for a military pistol, it is an integral part of one of the most ingenious and simple home storage features I've ever seen: there is a 1/8" hole going through the left grip and frame. When the magazine is removed, a small padlock (included) can be slipped through this hole and locked, preventing the magazine from being inserted in the pistol. No magazine = no shoot. Brilliant! Another interesting feature is the method by which the grips are secured to the pistol. Rather than conventional grip screws, the M88 grips feature internal locking plates, which can be swung out of contact with the frame to release the grips.

The first time I took the M88 to the range, I did not have high expectations. The wind was gusting