

# P.08 "Luger" Parabellum Pistol

its parts to interact properly. So, in 1938, the P.08 was officially replaced by the P.38 pistol, a double-action/single-action pistol designed by the Walther company in Germany to be more economically produced. Still, Lugers continued to be produced through 1942 as substitute standard arms, albeit with much less attention to fit and finish.

World War Two marked the "official end" of Luger production, although Mauser has produced some limited runs and a stainless steel version was made for a while in the United States. One enterprising gunsmithing outfit in the U.S. produced a few .45 ACP Lugers, replicating the original prototypes made in Germany. A friend of mine, an avid Luger collector, has one. I have

also of Suhl. Two non-German companies, Vickers-Armstrong Ltd. in England and Waffenfabrik Bern in Switzerland have also manufactured Lugers. Although most commonly encountered in 7.65 and 9mm Parabellum, other known chamberings include .32 ACP, .380 ACP, and the aforementioned .45 ACP. There are also a few .22 Long Rifle, 4mm and 6mm conversion units extant.

The Luger is very pleasant and instinctive to shoot. Its grip angle allows one to point it like a finger, and it settles on target easily. The trigger, because of its convoluted design, is somewhat mushy, not to the taste of those of us weaned on the excellent 1911 pistol trigger. The gun is inherently accurate, since it is so closely fitted.

Although some have claimed that it's not always reliable, the ones I have owned have been quite reliable, given proper ammunition loaded to stout power levels. Underpowered ammo will often not have the "oomph" necessary to operate the toggle mechanism. Really excellent examples should probably not be shot, although they could be. In the interest of maintaining value, better specimens should be considered as "safe queens" and objects of art rather than working guns.

Although the pistol itself is quite complex, takedown into the major components is quite easy. After unloading, push the muzzle against a solid object, twist the takedown lever down, take off the side plate, pull the barrel and receiver forward out of the grip frame, remove the rear toggle pin, and the pistol practically disassembles itself.

Cleaning the barrel through the breech end is important and recommended.

The Luger has been featured in innumerable Hollywood and foreign films, usually in the hands of guys and gals who needed the mystique of this sleek and sinister-looking pistol to enhance their "bad" images. It's profile is unmistakable, and surviving specimens are in high demand world-wide. Many collectors specialize in the Luger, and fantastic and expensive collections have been built. It does seem that most are always seeking one or more rare variations to "complete" their collections, although that pinnacle may never be reached. Even run-of-the-mill P.08s will now run over \$1,000 in value. If you have one or more, they are treasures. Steeped in history and mystique, the Luger will always be a true classic handgun. It's a "must include" on anyone's list of unique firearms.

handled it with awe – it was perfectly made and fitted to the highest standards. Needless to say, it was very expensive to manufacture and to acquire. Please don't write and ask where to obtain one, because that was a long time ago, and I don't remember where he got it. I mention it only as a very special piece I was privileged to view and handle.

Lugers have been bought and used by Germany, the United States, Bulgaria, Switzerland, Brazil, Chile, China, Holland, Iran, Luxembourg, Mexico, Norway, Portugal, Rumania, Russia and Turkey. In addition to DWM and Mauser, Lugers have also been produced by the Erfurt and Spandau arsenals in Germany; Simpson & Company (Suhl, Germany); and Heinrich Krieghoff Waffenfabrik,

