

BRILEY VERSATILITY UPDATE

The Briley Versatility .45 ACP, reviewed in the May 1997 issue, is a fine example of a current 1911-style handgun far outshining the original Colt Government model. The Versatility, which is now priced at \$950, offers a CNCed McCormick frame and slide, Bo-Mar sights, a beveled mag well, Hogue fancy hardwood grips, and the Briley spherical bushing over a full length guide rod.

We recommended the gun six months ago, but extra time with it has pointed out a couple of flaws. We recently added an S&A magazine well, which cost \$75. But it is difficult to blend in the well when the receiver is already beveled. In our view, Briley should make the magazine well a permanent change in the gun.

We've been shooting the Versatility in weekly IPSC and Bullseye matches for several months now, and we found it fits low in the hand and easily presents the front sight. The grip safety needs a raised area on it to contact the hand and ensure positive firing, so after trying to attach some sort of bump to it, we simply taped it shut with grip tape.

Also, the trigger is heavier than we like for competition and has too much creep as it comes from the factory. To solve this, we applied the poor man's trigger job—dry firing it 20,000 times. That smoothed it out and removed much of the creep, but we've also noticed that when the Briley gun is dirty, the trigger reverts to its creepy feel. Thus, the gun needs a bath every 800 rounds.

Also, slide-to-frame fit has definitely loosened up, but not so it's a problem. The gun's accuracy is still there as long as the trigger is clean and controllable. After 1,200 rounds it is surely in the "broken-in" mode.



Above: The Versatility benefitted from the addition of a full magazine well.