

Kimber Classic Custom

Retail Price...\$657



Our recommendation: Solid; a good second pick.

The Kimber's first firing pin (center) was a full half-inch too short, likely a result of its being a display gun that is required to be non-functional. Kimber supplied the correct firing pin at left, and the gun then worked perfectly.

SPECIFICATIONS

Warranty: 1 year

METAL FINISH	Matte Blued	SIGHT RADIUS	6.7 in.
WEIGHT (EMPTY)	37.2 oz.	CAPACITY	7+1 rds.
OVERALL LENGTH	8.7 in.	GRIP MATERIAL	Rubber
OVERALL HEIGHT	5.4 in.	ACTION TYPE	SA
MAX. WIDTH	1.4 in.	TRIGGER PULL WT.	3.5 lbs.
BARREL LENGTH	5 in.	TRIGGER PULL REACH	3.3 in.



half-inch too short. It hadn't broken: The end had been carefully rounded. We called Kimber. Ryan Busse, Kimber's national sales manager, apologized for the gun having left the factory in that condition. He told us the gun was almost certainly a "show gun," intended for display at the SHOT Show, where guns are required to be non-functional so the public can handle them without the possibility of the gun firing. He overnighted us the correct firing pin, and the gun then worked perfectly.

On the Kimber, the radius at the intersection of the underside of the trigger guard and the front strap of the frame was noticeably smaller than on the other two guns. This helped get the second finger higher on the gun, gave a more comfortable grip, and thus was a very de-

sirable feature. The Springfield also had some of this relief, but the Colt 1991 had the original-design large radius at this intersection that forced the second finger lower on the grip, and was much less comfortable, in our view. The Kimber came in a foam-lined hinged plastic case with a takedown tool, instructions, and only one magazine.

At the range the Kimber went right to work. Our average five-shot group was 2 inches, with a smallest of 1.3 inches. Our first groups were 2 inches right at 15 yards, which wasn't a surprise because the rear sight was visibly too far right. We loosened the Allen screw and bumped the Novak left, actually centering it in the slide, and then the gun shot where it looked. Elevation was perfect. Feed and function were perfect with all loads. In fact

our only complaint was a personal thing about the rubber grip panels, because they hang up on clothing. Yet they were entirely serviceable.

Colt 1991A1 Series 80

Our recommendation: With a price of \$556, the Colt didn't have any of the features knowledgeable shooters have come to expect on a 1911-style gun. In spite of its good name and very decent accuracy, the Colt would have to be worked on to be fully competitive with the other guns in this test.

Unless the prospective buyer planned to spend lots of money to make this into a custom piece, and wanted it to be a genuine Colt underneath, we'd pass on it. This gun was supposed to be an extension, with a few nods to inexpensive manufacturing methods, of the Colt 1911A1 line, picking up the serial number list where Colt left off a few decades ago. To that end they made it just like they were back then, including the long hammer and trigger, sights, etc. While this might have looked like a dandy marketing scheme to Colt's, most shooters probably don't give a hoot. Today's 1911 owner wants a gun he can shoot efficiently, and the last few decades have defined certain features that every 1911-style .45 ACP autoloader ought to have. This 1991A1 has very few of them. In this design, the old-style long hammer cuts the web of many shooters' hands from pinching between hammer and grip safety. The safety can't be easily operated by most thumbs. The front of the long trigger is absolutely smooth, and gives no tactile sense to the finger. It's also slippery. The sights are great to the eye, but brutal to the properly instructed pistolero when he tries to clear a jam or perform a tap-rack-bang drill. Hurrah to Colt's for putting a flat mainspring on the gun, but why not flare the ejection port, like reloaders want? We ap-