



FROM LEFT TO RIGHT:
The PPQ .22 with temporary trigger stop (double sided foam tape) fitted.
The PPQ .22 has no conventional safety. The blade in the trigger does that job, preventing the pistol from operating until it is fully depressed.



In the previous (Oct–Dec 2014) issue of GUNS Australia, we reviewed Walther’s latest manifestation of its PPQ 9mm autoloader – the PPQ M2 - that delivered very good performance from this polymer-framed auto.

The Walther PPQ Family Has a New Baby

A new addition to the PPQ line arrived shortly after the M2’s testing was completed in the form of the PPQ M2 Competition .22 Rimfire. The family resemblance between the centrefire M2 and the rimfire version is obvious, but other than that, they do not share much in common with respect to their internal design and operation.

The growth of interest in autoloading handguns chambered for the .22 Long Rifle cartridge that look and handle like their centrefire high-power siblings is one of the growth areas in sporting handgun development.

Traditionally, .22 autoloading pistols that are designed for serious competition are highly developed shooting machines tailored for specific international target shooting competitions, and Walther has been a leader in the development of these specialised target handguns. The Walther SSP and GSP series are prime examples of these developments.

With the growth in participation in the practical pistol shooting matches – IPSC in particular – interest in rimfire handguns that handle in a similar way to the centrefire autoloaders used in these practical competition matches has increased significantly. This had been driven simply by cost and convenience as .22 Long Rifle ammunition is less than half the cost of hand-

loaded centrefire ammo used in these matches and does not require any time at the reloading bench.

While there are no practical matches that sanction the use of rimfire ammunition in competition, as far as I am aware, in Australia, there are no restrictions in using rimfire autoloaders for practice.

The Walther PPQ M2 .22 is not the pistol for a serious bullseye shooter and one only has to look at the specifications on the Walther SSP and GSP with respect to grips, sights, weight and trigger adjustments to draw that conclusion.

The internals of the PPQ .22 differ in a number of ways to the centrefire PPQ, the first logical difference being that the .22 has a simple blow-back operation with a fixed barrel while the centrefire PPQ is a locked breech design that is recoil operated via a cam on the barrel that disengages the barrel from the slide during the recoil cycle.

The other significant difference is in the firing mechanism. The PPQ M2 centrefire has a novel striker firing arrangement that utilises the striker from a semi-cocked position. The rimfire version uses a conventional internal hammer and

firing pin system and this has unintended consequences as far as the handling of the Walther is concerned.

The first shooting session with the PPQ.22 at my pistol club produced some disappointing accuracy results at 25m. I conscripted several of my member mates to do some precision offhand shooting with the Walther using several types of both standard velocity and high velocity ammunition.

Groups were not very impressive, being barely within the black 7 Ring of a 25m ISSF target. Although the sight of the PPQ .22 are mounted on the slide and are inde-



The grip on the PPQ is ambidextrous and big enough to provide a good hold in any position.

SPECS

WALTHER PPQ M2

Manufacturer:

Walther

Model:

PPQ M2 .22

Calibre:

.22 Long Rifle

Action:

Blowback semi-auto
– internal hammer

Weight:

640g empty

Trigger:

Single action 2200g
release weight

Grip:

Polymer with MIL) STD 1913
Picatinny accessory rail

Dimensions:

L/W/H – 206mm / 135mm / 34mm

Sights:

Red fibre optic insert front sight.
Adjustable rear sight

Magazine:

2X stainless 10-shot magazines

Slide release:

Ambidextrous

Magazine release:

Button on left side of grip - reversible

Slide:

Steel ventilated with front
and rear grip serrations.

RRP:

Around \$1000 – shop around

pendent of the barrel, the barrel to slide fit on the test pistol was relatively tight.

The PPQ's sights are great. The front sight has a optic fibre insert but also provides a very clear Patridge-type sight picture via the steel element surrounding the fibre optic tube.

Going back to basic principles revealed the potential weak link in the Walther PPQ rimfire's performance. Dry firing the Walther highlighted a handling issue that was impacting on its performance.

The PPQ .22 weighs around 700g. My RCBS trigger scale indicated that the trigger release weight was around 2 kg (actually 4.2lb). The conventional trigger system on the PPQ .22 has a crisp let off once the first pressure is taken up via the safety blade system used in the trigger system.

When the hammer falls, there is at least 6mm of backlash in the trigger till it hits the back of the trigger guard. The end result of this 2kg's of pressure to release the trigger banging against the back of the trigger guard of an item that only weighs around 30% of the weight of the trigger release, means that something has to give, and that is sight alignment.

It proved difficult to hold the sights in alignment when dry-firing the Walther because of this arrangement and this disturbance obviously flowed through to the shooting of live ammunition.

After the first shooting session, I thought a simple remedy was in order, using a high-tech system that has been used on other handguns that have been affected by similar handling issues – particularly my double action only S&W revolver. This system involves using some laminated sections of double sided foam tape stuck to the back of the trigger guard to cushion and limit the rearward travel of the trigger. Too much tape will significantly increase the trigger release

weight so a bit of fine tuning is required to get the best result.

For a permanent and precise adjustment, it would be a simple job to drill and tap the trigger guard and insert a hex set screw that could be precisely adjusted to limit the trigger movement on release.

The benefit of the temporary double sided tape technology was immediately evident when dry-firing the Walther, with the 2kg trigger release on the pistol no longer having any effect on the sight alignment.

The other characteristics of the Walther PPQ that make it well suited as a companion practice handgun to its Big Brother. Earlier PPQ centrefires has an unusual magazine release arrangement based on pulling the trigger guard down.

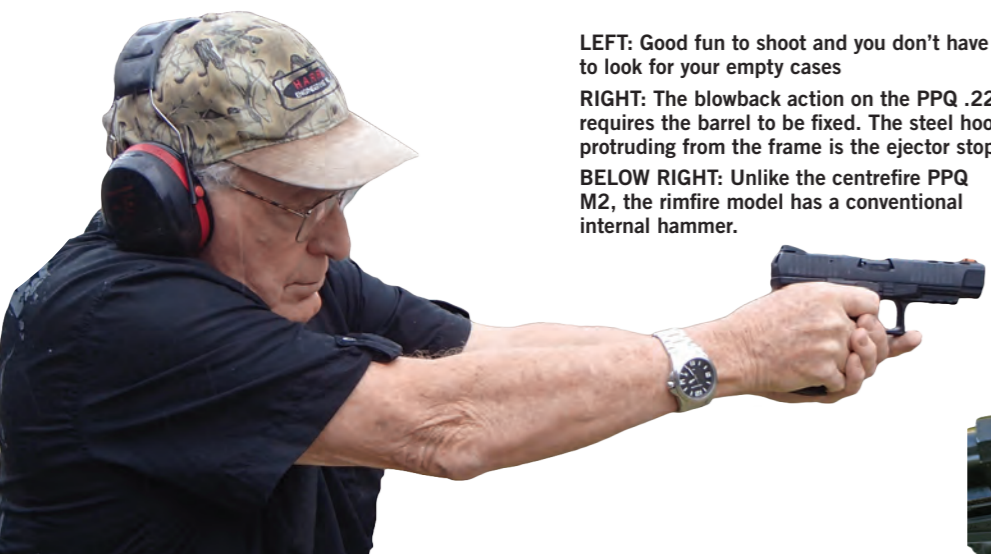
The later M2 versions have a conventional magazine release via a button on the left side of the grip at the root of the trigger guard that is reversible. This system is standard on the PPQ .22. The .22 comes with two very well made stainless steel 10-shot magazines and unlike the PPQ centrefire, its rear sight is adjustable for windage and elevation.

When doing some internet research on the PPQ .22, I came across a US site that stated that the PPQ .22's slide was manufactured from aluminium alloy. As a metallurgist in my previous life, I found this statement to be worth investigating as the top end of the PPQ .22 seemed to me to be all steel. This proved to be the case as a quick check with a magnet verified that as a fact. The slide is skeletonised to reduce its mass to accommodate its function on the blowback rimfire and as with all Walther products, the fit and finish of all the parts is very good. Another good feature of the PPQ pistols is their user-friendly ergonomics. The PPQ .22 has a very comfortable ambidextrous grip and handles well although it is quite a light pistol.

LEFT: Good fun to shoot and you don't have to look for your empty cases

RIGHT: The blowback action on the PPQ .22 requires the barrel to be fixed. The steel hook protruding from the frame is the ejector stop.

BELOW RIGHT: Unlike the centrefire PPQ M2, the rimfire model has a conventional internal hammer.



ABOVE: The Walther is easy to take down for cleaning to this level. The take-down latch is just in front of the trigger guard.

LEFT: The slide release lever on the Walther is ambidextrous. The slide stays open after the last round is fired from the magazine.

Apart from the accuracy issues in the first shooting session, the functional performance of the Walther was 100% with both Federal 714, CCI Standard and CCI Velocity HV ammo. One problem arose with one batch of Federal 714 ammo that had given problems in a number of other pistols. While it was relatively consistent (unfortunately), it was apparently loaded to a much lower velocity than a normal batch Federal Champion 714 standard velocity target ammo, and simply would not cycle the Walther at all.

Second time around, some very good groups were shot with the PPQ using another batch of Federal 714 ammunition, with two 10-shot groups holding the 10 Ring of an ISSF target at 25m. The adjustable sights allowed the PPQ to be quickly aligned and the high visibility fibre optic insert in the front sight accommodated all lighting conditions during the shooting tests.

The PPQ .22 is not intended for serious ISSF competition but anyone interested in shooting the practical matches with an autoloader would find the PPQ a very useful practice tool.

For more information on the PPQ .22 and other Walther firearms, contact the Australian distributor – Frontier Arms Company – www.frontierarms.com.au.

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