

SIG Sauer's new **P320 X-Five pistol**

by Rod Pascoe

The P320 X-Five is one of the latest in a line of US-made SIG Sauer pistols. While the German side of the business is still producing fine handguns, SIG Sauer is manufacturing a range of items in the US for the military, government,

law enforcement, self-defence and sporting markets.

In the 1980s SIG set its sights on arguably the largest sector of the firearms industry - 9mm self-loading pistols. In order to be closer to the biggest market outside Europe, SIG opened its first US facility under the name Sigarms. Two years later the firearms importer and distributor relocated to a larger factory in the state of Virginia where their classic handguns P220, P230, P225 and P226 were imported and assembled. Sigarms expanded in 1990 by opening a new manufacturing plant in Exeter, New Hampshire and in 2005 changed its name to SIG Sauer.



Looking the part.



In 2014 SIG Sauer developed a corporate HQ in Newington, New Hampshire where it's now one of the fastest-growing firearms manufacturers in the US. More recently SIG Sauer won a lucrative contract to supply the US Army with its state-of-the-art P320 handgun. The flagship of the SIG range, the P226, was already in service with the US Army's special forces for many years. The firearm for this review was provided to **Australian and New Zealand Handgun** by Australian distributor Outdoor Sporting Agency.

The SIG P320 X-Five is based on the standard full-size P320 and is the first striker-fired model to be added to SIG's product range. The X refers to the Polymer grip module with its extended beavertail. The P320 X-Five is a mechanically-locked, short-recoil operated self-loading pistol with a short trigger reset. As the name suggests the X-Five has a 5" (127mm) bull barrel that has six rifling grooves with a 1:10 twist and is supplied in 9mm Luger (9x19mm) and comes with four 10-round magazines.

Incorporating a striker safety lock and out-

of-battery disconnect safety, it's not fitted with a manual safety. A slide release is provided on both sides of the frame and the magazine catch can be configured for left or right-hand operation. It has a flat, straight trigger that breaks at 90 degrees to the horizontal. Straight flat triggers are beginning to appear on new pistol models from other manufacturers as well as after-market accessories. The racking action of the slide is firm but smooth and the flat-wire recoil spring and guide rod are combined in a single unit and should not be separated. As the slide retracts it resets the trigger and striker spring.

The gun is well made, reliable and rugged and presumably this was a major consideration for the US Army in choosing it for its latest military sidearm. For the competition shooter it needs to have a high degree of reliability and not be prone to malfunction.

The P320 is well balanced and the comfortable grips with the extended beavertail allows for quick target acquisition and easy alignment. The X-Five comes with Dawson

Precision sights. The rear-sight has screw-adjustable windage and elevation and the fibre optic front-sight is dovetailed into the slide. Spare red and green fibres are provided. The rear-sight can be removed and replaced with SIG's branded Romeo I micro reflex optical sights.

Serrations in the slide, front and rear, allow for a couple of racking options but I found them a touch on the shallow side. There are three large cuts behind the front-sight to further lighten the aluminium slide and the reduction in weight in this part of the slide would be more to do with shifting the gun's balance rather than reducing the overall weight, which at 900 grams is light enough.

The trigger group should, more accurately, be called a chassis and is technically regarded as the firearm frame. It's the only part of the gun that carries the serial number and apart from the fire control mechanism itself, the unit also houses the slide release, ejector and rails on which the slide travels.

Dismantling is straightforward. Remove the



magazine and retract the slide and hold it with the slide catch. Rotate the take-down lever clockwise then release the slide catch, at the same time easing the slide forward off the frame. SIG Sauer calls this the 3-point take-down safety system. There's no need to pull the trigger to de-cock the pistol before field stripping, just push the recoil spring forward and lift it from the barrel, which itself can be removed from the slide.

To go a further step in dismantling, push out the take-down lever from the right-hand side of the frame, allowing the chassis to be eased out of the polymer grip. The magazine catch and a balancing weight in the backstrap are the only metal parts remaining in the grip once the chassis is removed. Removing the chassis would not normally be required for routine cleaning.

I took a number of handloads to the range for testing. I use a couple of these loads in other pistols for both power factored matches such as Service Pistol and the World Association (WA) 48-shot match and those not requiring a specific power factor such as Steel Challenge, Service



Some of the bullet types used in testing.



The spring and its guide rod are one unit.



Stripped to the basic components.



Cuts to lighten the slide.

Pistol Unrestricted and the WA 150-shot match.

Power factor is a product of bullet weight multiplied by muzzle velocity then divided by 1000. For example, a 124gr bullet leaving the barrel at 976fps has a power factor of 121. Some matches, and divisions within matches, have required power factors that must be met.

I was particularly interested to see how my lighter loads would function in the gun. As it turned out, anything with a power factor under 115 would not cycle the P320 reliably and consistently in its original out-of-the-factory configuration so that resulted in two of my



Take-down lever, slide and magazine release.

handloads being eliminated. Those loads that had enough energy to make the pistol cycle properly were sensitive to bullet type and weight. While that's not uncommon it does

highlight the need for comprehensive load development as some loads gave promising results while others needed more development.

The flat straight trigger was a bit of a novelty but I wasn't conscious of it feeling in any way different. There was a little bit of spongy creep in the trigger followed by a reasonably crisp let-off. It was a pleasure to shoot and sat firmly in the hand during recoil, even with 125 power factor loads.

I enlisted the help of a club member for his impressions of the P320 in his particular discipline. Gary White is an elite International Practical Shooting Confederation (IPSC) shooter whose experience and skill has earned my respect, IPSC being a discipline that requires a combination of power, speed and accuracy.

While the power is a factor of the ammunition and is predictable, speed and accuracy are very much up to the shooter and the equipment, as a hundredth of a second can be the difference between winning and losing. It's not just a matter of how quickly you put the shots away but how swiftly you can draw, acquire the target, re-align the sights after firing, change magazines - sometimes on the move - and reposition for the next target.



The serialised chassis partially removed from the grip.



Gary was impressed by how smoothly magazines could be changed and he put that down to the ease at which the metal magazines slid into the Polymer channel he believes is quicker than metal-to-metal or plastic-to-plastic combinations. I watched him change magazines with his eyes closed and he also felt the angle of the pistol's grip suited his reloading style.

On the down side Gary took issue with the magazine release button not being big enough. However, he did like the low profile, smooth contour of the rear-sight, which suited his style of racking the slide from the rear. His overall impression: "Worth the money - four out of



five." Gary also provided some factory and handloads for testing that would typically be used in IPSC and that reached the required power factor of 125.

He and I agree that overall the SIG P320 X-Five is a more than suitable pistol for most applications. At less than a kilo the P320 can be a handful with 125 power factor loads and may therefore not suit shooters with small hands or light frames. The pistol is appropriate for a number of target shooting disciplines but before committing to any competition pistol, always consult the rule books for the match you want to shoot as the specifications can, and do, change. At time of writing the P320 X-Five is compliant for Service Pistol, WA1500, Action Pistol, Steel Challenge and also complies with IPSC Production Division. ■

Factory and handloads

Powder Charge	Projectile	Average Velocity	Group Size at 25m
4.3gr AP70N	Top Score 115gr Round Nose	1104fps	65mm
Geco	124gr Copper Plated lead Round Nose	1025fps	68mm
3.8gr AP70N	Hawkesbury River 115gr Round Nose	1001fps	75mm
3.1gr APS450	Hawkesbury River 126gr Flat Point	943fps	77mm
4.2gr AP70N	124gr X-Treme Copper Plated Round Nose	1080fps	80mm
3.6g AP70N	147gr Frontier Copper Plated	878fps	85mm
Winchester	147gr Silver Tip	955fps	87mm
American Eagle	115gr TSJ Round Nose	1123fps	90mm
3.1gr APS450	Hawkesbury River 131gr Pointed SWC	947fps	95mm
3.5gr APS450	X-Treme 124gr Copper Plated Round Nose	962fps	105mm
Highlands	115gr Jacketed Hollow Point	1030fps	130mm

Specifications

Product: SIG Sauer P320 X-Five
Calibre: 9mm Luger (9x19mm)
Length: 216mm
Height: 147mm
Width: 40mm
Barrel length: 127mm
Rifling: 6 grooves 1:10 twist
Sight radius: 172mm
Weight: 900g
Trigger: 2270g
Magazines: 4x10 round - double stack
Distributor: OSA
RRP: \$1750