

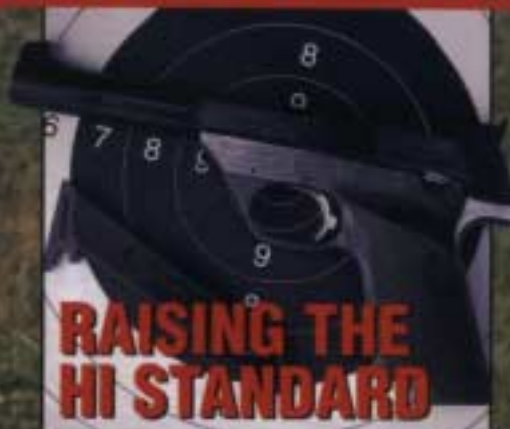
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JULY/SEPTEMBER 2002

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# Raising the Standard

## NEW GENERATION HIGH STANDARD AUTOLOADERS

**A** quick call from the editor and an even quicker call to Dick Haynes of Gold Coast Shooters Supplies resulted in a pair of new High Standard .22 autoloading pistols being shipped for review and evaluation.

The models supplied were a High Standard Supermatic Trophy and a Victor, both eminently suited to competitive target shooting within the Pistol Australia program.

Having been the owner of an original Supermatic Trophy, I was interested to have a look at the current range of High Standard target pistols as produced by the company's new owners.

While I knew that High Standard target pistols had been around for many years, (at least by Australian standards, where target pistol shooting history goes back to 1956), my research for this story revealed that the company was one of the first US firms to manufacture high quality .22 auto pistols suitable for serious bullseye target shooting.

The High Standard manufacturing company was established in 1926, originally as a machine tool manufacturer and acquired the Hartford Machine Tool Company in 1932, giving High Standard its introduction into the gun making industry. Hartford Arms and Equipment Company already had a .22 auto pistol in production, which became the High Standard Model B.

From that time, High Standard produced a wide range of .22 auto pistols for field, sport and target shooting use, as well as some special pistols for use in Olympic matches.

**TOP:** The Supermatic Trophy. Two 10-shot magazines are supplied. Accuracy is excellent and the pistol is well suited to any precision target shooting events.

**RIGHT:** The dismantled High Standard Victor shows the simplicity of the High Standard' take-down. The stud under the barrel is released by pressing the plunger in front of the frame.



specifically Rapid Fire. In fact, a .22 Short High Standard was one of the only US Made autoloaders ever to win an Olympic medal.

Over its lifetime, High Standard established a reputation for producing reliable and accurate target pistols with outstanding durability. In addition, the handling characteristics of the High Standards such as the Supermatic Trophy are considered superior to most other US made autoloaders. This is largely due to the good grip angle and relatively low bore to sight line.

The original High Standard company ceased operation in 1984, although spare parts appeared to be available after the company's demise. In 1994, the High Standard Manufacturing Company commenced operations in Houston, Texas, using original High Standard designs, which the new company had purchased along with the famous name.

All the early model High Standards are designated with a Letter Series designation (A, B, C etc). Later series used had a number series designation, but have been more commonly known by their given names

(Sport King, Field King, Olympic, Supermatic...).

Model variations occurred within some of these models, with variations coming in the materials of manufacture (some slides were alloy, some were steel), barrel configurations (length, provision for barrel weights, diameter, muzzle brakes) and grip angle.

All the later series pistols with which I am familiar had a trigger pull weight adjustment via a screw through the back of the frame, and a backlash adjustment on the trigger, as well as very good micro adjustable sights.

Another feature of the High Standards in

the later models is the very simple takedown system on the barrel. A spring-loaded plunger engaged a cup headed stud under the barrel and simply by depressing the plunger allows the barrel to be lifted out of the frame.

The new pistols certainly bore a strong resemblance to their predecessors. The Supermatic Trophy was identical in form to the original as far as I could tell, except for its stainless frame and stippled backstrap on the frame.

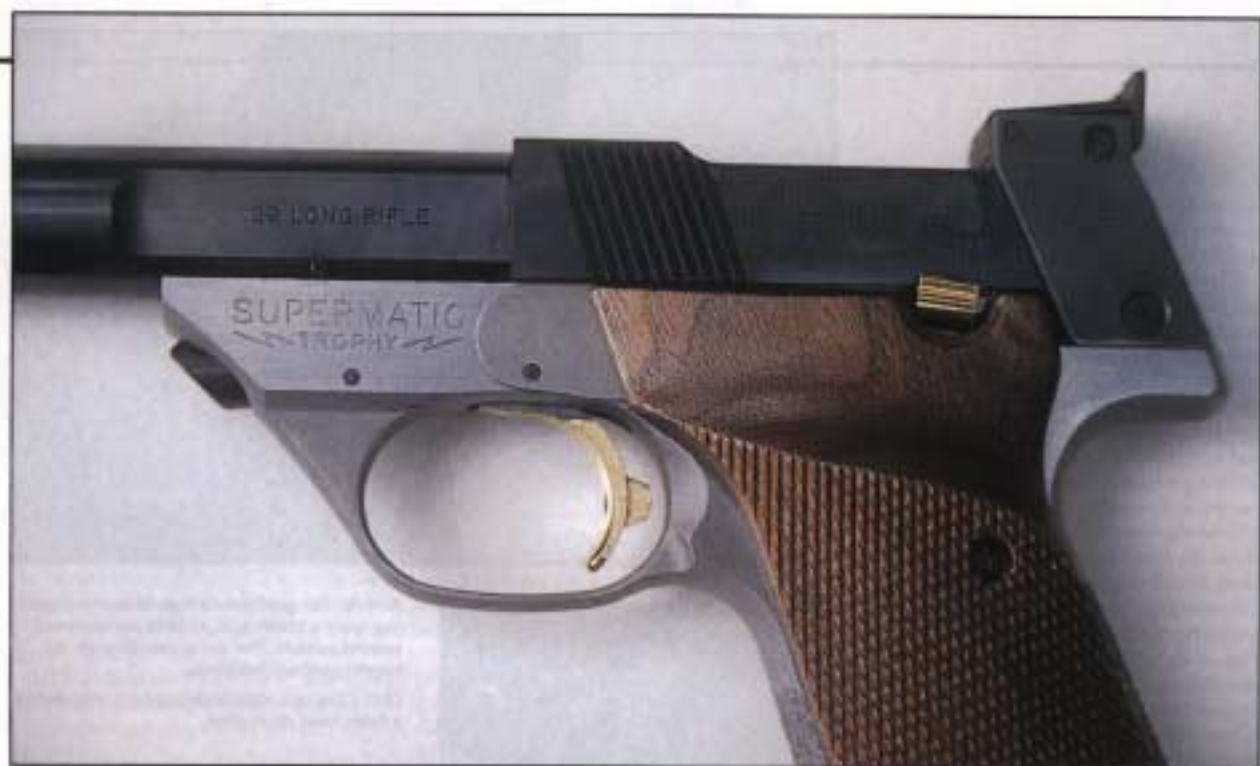
The rear sight on the Trophy sits on a bridge attached to the frame and the slide cycles underneath it. The Victor has an extended ventilated rib that carries the rear sight and the slide is designed to operate



**LEFT:** The flat-topped ventilated rib of the Victor is well suited to the fitting of optical sights, for which it is drilled and tapped.

**BELOW:** The High Standard Victor was the last of the original High Standard line of .22 target auto's and the new models continue the tradition. The grip angle and general good handling characteristics make the High Standard one of the best of current US-made rimfire target pistols.





within the confines of the relatively heavy full length rib.

Both the Victor and the Trophy have holes drilled and tapped in their barrels, presumably to allow the attachment of scope mounts and optical sights.

One great feature of earlier model High Standards that has been carried forward to the new models is the sights. The Partridge type front sight is sharp and slightly narrower than many European pistol sights, and the rear sight notch is quite deep. This provides, to my eyes, one of the best sight pictures in the business for precision shooting.

Careful scrutiny of both High Standards indicated that their reputation for quality fit and finish had not been compromised and both are as good as any target handguns produced in the USA.

Both pistols are supplied in compact plastic moulded carry cases and a comprehensive set of documentation and a spare magazine is supplied with each gun.

The magazines have a 10 shot capacity with a red plastic butt plate, making it easy to see if the magazine is in the pistol, or not.

The Supermatic Trophy has a 145 mm round bull barrel, while the Victor has a slab sided, vent rib barrel of similar overall dimensions. Both pistols weigh around 1200g, which is about right for target pistols of this type. The main functional difference between the Trophy and the Victor is that the Trophy has a completely open topped breech area, while the Victor is covered over the top of the chamber with the bib extension.



There is potential for ejected empties to be more easily caught in the Victor's chamber area than with the Trophy, as the Trophy

**ABOVE:** The Supermatic Trophy has a stainless frame and quality of manufacture is equal to any of the earlier generation of High Standards. The gold plated catch on the left of the frame is the safety catch. High Standards are one of the few autoloaders to have the slide release on the right side.

**LEFT:** High Standards are one of the few US autoloading target pistols with adjustable triggers. The set screw in the rear of the frame adjusts trigger pressure.

**CENTRE:** High Standard pistols have always had excellent sights and the new generation are no exception, providing precision adjustments and a very good sight picture.

**BOTTOM:** The High Standard Supermatic Trophy barrel is drilled and tapped to allow barrel weight attachment if more up-front weight is required.

has nowhere for ejected cases to get caught. This may not be an issue in practice. My pistol club has several Supermatic High Standards of ancient vintage as club pistols, and their pistols continue to give good service and rarely give any trouble with feeding and functioning.

I was able to use the excellent facilities at South West Sydney Firearms and Range, at Cordell Park, Sydney, to test both pistols. Darren MacAurthur who is the proprietor also deals in High Standard pistols and generally has some in stock for those interested in having a look at a new model.

I tried both pistols out with a variety of standard velocity and high velocity ammunition. The Supermatic Trophy was the first cab off the rank, and after putting a box or

two of ammo through the gun at a 25 metre bullseye target, I remembered why I had one in the first place.

The High Standard trigger is very good and few US made autoloaders could better it. Out of the box, the trigger released at about 1100g with very little discernible creep or backlash. While only shooting with open sights, both offhand and off a two-handed rest, accuracy was very good and I had no trouble keeping a magazine full of .22 target ammo in the 10 Ring out a 25 metre ISSF target.

I shot a number of rapid fire strings to assess the handling of the Trophy for Standard Pistol timed fire events, and by US .22 auto standards, the High Standard is superior in this respect. It has plenty of mass, a good grip angle and a relatively low bore/sight line.

Shooting the Victor produced similar accuracy performance, but the testing was interrupted by a number of malfunctions, related to feeding problems. I switched magazines and found performance to be improved, but with both the magazines supplied with the Victor, both standard and high velocity .22 ammo had a tendency to foul the top edge of the chamber.

I had a close look at both pistols and it looked like the cartridges were being presented to the chamber at a higher angle on the Victor than in the Trophy, which did not have any such problems.

I called Dick Haynes and at the speed of light (via Darren's fax machine), a detailed instruction sheet arrived headed "Magazine Adjustments". It is worth reproducing this information here, as by applying the information, High Standard owners will ensure that their pistol will always work reliably with any selected ammo.

The document states:

The High Standard magazine that is manufactured today is essentially the same in dimensions and specification as all High Standard magazines that have ever been produced. The only basic changes that have been incorporated in today's magazines simply provide for changes that have occurred in .22 Long Rifle target ammunition.

Several things should be noted with new High Standard magazines:

1 Older frames of the Model 106, 107, ML Series and MH Series could have a radius in the top, rear of the magazine slot. The magazines produced today could stop 1/4" short of locking into these frames due to this radius. To correct this, the radius must be removed from the frame by machining.

2 All magazines are gauged to be under 0.360" wide. However, if you receive a mag-



**ABOVE:** The gold plated High Standard trigger has been a trade-mark on both previous and current models. The set screw through the trigger controls backlash.



**LEFT:** The new High Standards are supplied in a foam lined carry case.

azine that is wider than 0.360", you can easily correct this with the use of a dial caliper and a pair of pliers or vice grips.

3 Magazine feeding is very sensitive to the particular ammunition that is being used. Due to the wide variance in ammunition specifications, the width of the magazine feed lips must be adjusted for the particular target ammunition being used to obtain maximum reliability. The basic dimensions should be 0.230" wide for the rear of the front lips and 0.185" for the front of the rear lips. The front and rear lips should also be kept parallel.

4 Magazines should always be kept clean and well oiled.

**NOTE 1:** The 0.230" dimension is fairly constant for all ammunition. The 0.185" dimension should be increased if the bullets are feeding too low, and decreased if they are feeding too high. This adjustment can be done with tools like needle-nose pliers. You can also make your own tool with a piece of 1/4" x 1/2" flat stock, by sawing a slot in the end.

**NOTE 2:** Due to the overall length of some .22 LR ammunition, it may be impossible to get the magazine to feed 10 rounds properly.

**CAUTION 1:** The magazine lips are heat treated and will break if they are bent too much at one time.

**CAUTION 2:** Magazine feed lips may drag on the slide feed rail if decreased in width too much.

I removed the barrels from both pistols to check the chambering. As stated earlier,

barrel removal simply requires the plunger to be pushed in at the front of the frame (with the slide locked to the rear).

I tested the chambers by simply dropping a cartridge into the vertical chamber and see how far it would go in, unassisted. For autoloading pistols, the High Standard chambers proved to be quite tight, with Winchester XTR ammo being close to an interference fit, with most rounds requiring a gentle nudge to fully seat them in the chamber.

Tight chambers are a pre-requisite for accuracy in .22 rimfires, and this characteristic on the High Standards no doubt contributes to the good accuracy of these pistols.

The new generation High Standards are retailing for around \$1300, which is considerably less than many European target guns. For serious club use, these pistols will shoot better than most of their owners and are particularly well suited for Sport Pistol.

Because of the easily interchangeable barrels, there is the option of obtaining longer barrels for use in Rimfire Silhouette. The Trophy is listed as having a 7.5" barrel option.

Of the two pistols, I liked the Supermatic Trophy because of its slightly front-heavier feel than the Victor, but that is but a personal preference, possibly influenced by fond memories of my original Hartford, Connecticut made High Standard Supermatic.

High Standard pistols are distributed in Australia by Gold Coast Shooters Supplies, 15/34 Dominion Rd, Ashmore Qld 4214. Ph: 07 5597 3220.

## HI STANDARD

NEW SHIPMENT of Victors in

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Starline 50 AS - Pkt 100 ..... \$80

Winchester 458 Mag - Pkt 50 ..... \$42

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