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Thanks

Steyr Pistol C-A1



Finally, the compact features of the S-A1 series with the full size grip of the M-A1 series has been blended to make a new compact carry pistol.

- Ergonomical improved grip with picatinny rail
- Low profile grip and virtually no muzzle climb
- Possibility to mount a sling on the grip
- Available in trapezoidal sights or traditional 3 dot style

Specifications

STEYR C-A1

| | |
|-----------------------------|---|
| Calibers | 9x19 |
| Length x Height x Width | 130 x 30 mm, 6.7" x 5.1" x 1.2" |
| Weight (without ammunition) | 1.6 pounds |
| Barrel Length | 92 mm (3.6 inches) |
| Magazine Capacity | 17 +1 rounds |
| Grip Frame | synthetic |
| Trigger System | Reset Action System (Double Action with Reset) |
| Trigger Pull | 4.0 mm (constant) |
| Safety | Automatic Trigger- Drop- Firing Pin Safety Integrated limited access lock with key Optional Manual Safety |
| Sights | Triangular-/Trapezoid or 3-dot |
| Extras | Right angle sights with Trilux |

2012 ANNUAL

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C9-A1



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TIMELY 9

The Steyr C9-A1 is the next progressive step.

It may not be the most popular polymer platform out there, but it has a cult following. When it was taken off the market in 2007 so that the company could reorganize its distribution in the U.S., the voracity of its followers rose from silence.

Last summer, Steyr Arms' polymer autos made their way back to the American market. "Almost every day for nearly two years, we received calls and e-mails from customers asking when we were going to bring back the Steyr M- and S-series pistols," says Steyr Arms CEO Scott O'Brien. "I am very pleased that today we can say, 'The time is now.'"

On March 29, Steyr Arms revealed the new C9-A1, a high-capacity handgun designed to improve on earlier generations for defensive carry purposes. It's very close in form and function to other contemporary Steyr M- and S-series pistols, but it does wear a few changes. (I say "contemporary" because Steyr Arms is more widely known for its 150-year history of forward-thinking rifle designs and a semiauto pistol line that started back in 1894.)

"The C9-A1 bridges the gap between compact carry and full-size shootability," says Steyr. "With its concealable-length slide and barrel of the S-series, and the hand-filling frame and high capacity of the M-series, the C9-A1 provides the best of both worlds."

MR. BUBITS

After the M-series' debut at the 1999 SHOT Show in Atlanta, Georgia, Wilhelm Bubits—the inventor—went on tour to demonstrate the performance capabilities and features of a new Steyr M40. One sample had fired more than 10,000 rounds without issue. His first stop at the Petersen Ranch was in the company of Payton Miller, Jeff John, Garry James and the late Dave Arnold. The pistol was so new at the time that patents were still waiting to be approved, so press photography of the internal components was prohibited.

Bubits didn't arrive to firearm design like most. He was an Austrian Customs official who served in both uniform and plainclothes capacities. He was a devoted handgunner with no formal training as a gunsmith. As noted by John



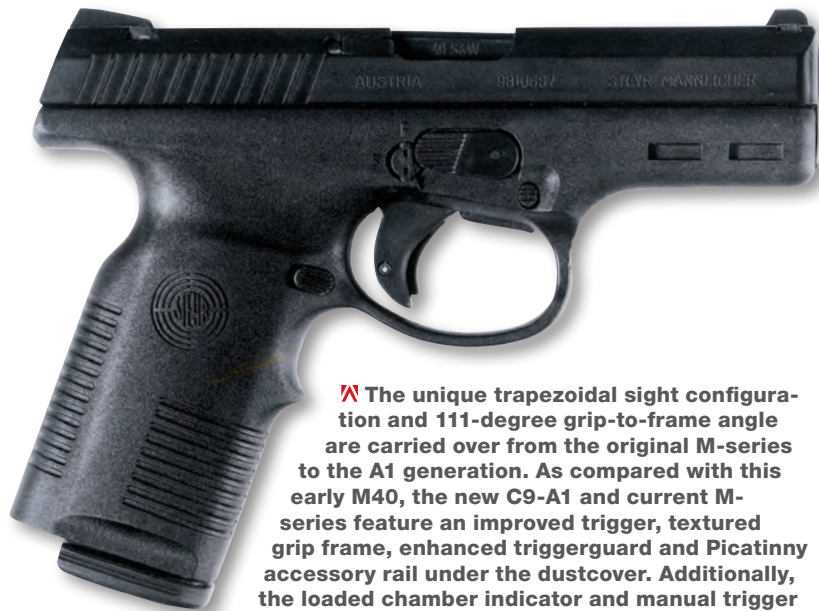
Wilhelm Bubits' designs continue to inspire the future of handgun technology. These days, you can occasionally find Bubits online. He visits his fans on steyrclub.com, answering direct questions from forum members in a folder of threads titled "Ask Bubits."



BY ERIC R. POOLE • PHOTOS BY SEAN UTLEY



Most American consumers don't realize that the cavity located just behind the magazine well is designed to accept a Steyr-manufactured polymer buttstock. Historically, attaching a stock to a pistol can be traced back to the 18th century, but some of the more famous pistols that have accepted stocks include the British Royal Horse Artillery Pattern 1793, U.S. 1855 Pistol-Carbine, Colt SAA Buntline Special, Broomhandle Mauser C.96, Luger P.08 and Browning P.35 Hi Power.



The unique trapezoidal sight configuration and 111-degree grip-to-frame angle are carried over from the original M-series to the A1 generation. As compared with this early M40, the new C9-A1 and current M-series feature an improved trigger, textured grip frame, enhanced triggerguard and Picatinny accessory rail under the dustcover. Additionally, the loaded chamber indicator and manual trigger safety (located in front of the trigger) are absent in current models.



Unlike previous Steyr M- and S-series pistols that featured a trapezoidal sight configuration, the C9-A1 introduces a more conventional three-dot setup. Currently, they are not illuminated, and the front red dot is difficult to pick up. A roll pin located below the rear sight is new and goes a long way toward improving the pistol's trigger pull. The triggerguard no longer features a round profile, but still leaves plenty of room for a gloved hand. The dished-out recess for a manual trigger safety is still reminiscent of previous models, but external safety features impeding trigger use are still accessible by the user. Accuracy of both the M9-A1 and C9-A1 was very impressive at 25 yards, even when a Viridian C5 green laser/LED unit was used solely for sighting purposes.



in the first article published on the M-series, "In his capacity as a Customs official, Bubits had the opportunity to shoot and carry many different types of firearms. He formed opinions on the shape and ergonomics of his pistol based on his shooting experiences."

He started applying his innovative ideas while working at Glock. I could never pin him down to describe what he did or didn't contribute to the world's most prolific polymer auto, but many published accounts assert that Bubits offered his patents to Glock and was told that his concepts did not follow the company's philosophy of design. So he

moved on, and in 1997 he joined Steyr Mannlicher. There, Bubits worked closely with engineer Fridrich Aigner, who helped manufacture his concepts.

GUN DETAILS

The polymer frames of the M- and S-series have always been recognizable for the 111-degree grip-to-frame angle that produces a very natural point of aim and solid bone structure, particularly for one-handed shooters. International pistol competitors, as well as Olympic shooters, have long proven that such a grip-to-frame angle optimally orients the hand to the wrist to the forearm

for a more efficient energy transfer and control of weight, resulting in better marksmanship. The frame is contoured to encourage a high grip and low barrel axis that steadies muzzle rise as the pistol is fired. Consequently, the sensation among many is that the felt recoil pulse is less than that of any same-caliber, similar-size polymer pistol.

The model designation "C" was chosen for this new compact model. After the lettered series designation, the number representing caliber follows. On the top of the first produced M357, still owned by Bubits, is a Latin inscription, *Spiritus mundanus*

draconis. It translates, The spirit of the dragon lies above the world. "A short description to this," says Bubits. "When designing the Steyr pistol, before the license agreement with Steyr happened, I named the pistol 'Dragon.' Researchers showed that this name was already in use, so only the Latin word for dragon might have been possible: *draco*. After many considerations, I committed, together with Steyr, to the clothes sizes L, M, S with caliber designations. A similar situation occurred at the beginning of the last century in the German car industry, namely Horch Cars; the Latin word is *Audi*."

Since the C9-A1 falls between "S" and "M" in overall size, Steyr generated a new classification for these unusual, high-capacity carry guns. Just like all Steyr pistols, the C9-A1 carries a cold-hammer-forged barrel with conventional rifling and a fully supported chamber. The M-series was initially .40 S&W, followed by 9mm and .357 SIG. Why offer a .40 S&W before 9mm? It was to address the higher pressures and structural integrity related to chambering a pistol for .40 S&W. It's safer to dimensionally engineer a pistol for a more powerful cartridge than to start with a pistol designed for a 9mm and go up.

In response to the growing demand for handgun-mounted lights and lasers, these Steyr pistols now include a frame with a Picatinny-spec rail and notch. However, due to the forward angle of the triggerguard that permits more room for a gloved finger, I found that many popular illuminators, such as the SureFire X300 and X400, won't go back far enough on the C9-A1's rail for the illuminator's lug to engage the rail's notch. I did find that most of the compact light and laser units, such as the Viridian C5, had no problem attaching to the C9-A1 accessory rail properly.

Just like the M- and S-series, the C9-A1 is particularly attractive to

safety-minded shooters. On the A1 models, an integral trigger safety and striker safety system is carried over, but one former safety feature is notably absent that used to appear on previous generations: a manual safety located on the frame above the trigger. Before, if this safety feature was actively engaged, the shooter would have to place the trigger finger inside the triggerguard and push up on a long, protruding button to disengage it before drawing the trigger rearward. Although this extra step has been eliminated on American models, the recessed relief cut is still present on each side of the frame above the trigger.

The C9-A1 still carries the keyed safety lock of earlier models. Use one of the supplied keys to rotate the two-holed notch cylinder (positioned just behind the takedown lever) counterclockwise toward the 9 o'clock "S" position and the pistol is rendered useless.

Steyr Arms recently redesigned the Reset Action System (RAS) mechanism in the M-A1 and S-A1 handguns to improve the pistol's trigger pull. Now a small pin beneath the rear sight bisects the striker firing-pin channel. A small roller on this crosspin allows the striker to move much more smoothly during the compression stage of a trigger pull.

As a result, the takeup is much more continuous in feel and consistent shot-to-shot. Both the M9-A1 and C9-A1 used during this performance review demonstrated a respectable and consistent five-pound pull.

In the current generation of these pistols, Steyr has become synonymous with a sight regarded as a trapezoidal configuration. To obtain sight alignment, center the drift-adjustable white triangle up front within the rear notch marked by a pair of



C9-A1
When drawing from a holster, the shortened slide and barrel of the new C9-A1 (left) enables a shooter to clear the muzzle faster than more traditional high-capacity, full-size models like the M9-A1 (right). As observed in testing, practical accuracy wasn't compromised in obtaining this subtle benefit.



thin, 45-degree-angled white lines. Some shooters love these trapezoidal sights and suggest that they can shoot faster and more accurately with them. It's a different experience for most, so the C9-A1 is now offered with a three-dot, square notch configuration. The front dot is red, and the two dots on the rear sight are white.

RANGE REPORT

I bought into the Steyr M-series during my senior year of college at the Virginia Military Institute. Once a month I left the confinement of VMI's barracks and drove to Johnson City, Tennessee, for a drill weekend. After reading Jeff John's summary in *Guns & Ammo*, I purchased a Steyr M9 and became quite proficient with it. For two years it was my carry gun.

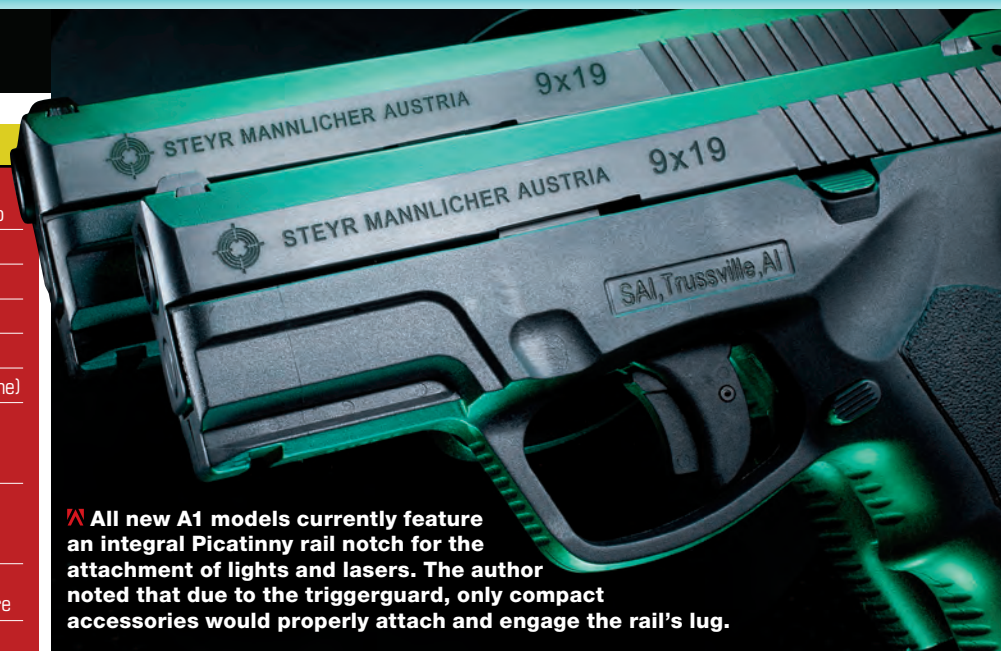
Recently, I had the opportunity to review the new C9-A1, and for comparison I ordered a new M9-A1. Since the frame of each is similar, getting reacquainted with the handling characteristics of the C9-A1 was brief. After attending a recent handgun course at Gun-site, the significance of the shortened slide and barrel was quickly appreciated in drawing from a holster. It shaves an av-

| SPECIFICATIONS | |
|------------------------|---|
| TYPE: | Recoil operated, double-action semiauto |
| CALIBER: | 9mm |
| CAPACITY: | 17+1 |
| BARREL LENGTH: | 3.6 in. |
| OVERALL LENGTH: | 6.7 in. |
| WEIGHT: | 1.6 lb. (w/empty magazine) |
| SIGHTS: | Drift adj., three-dot configuration (red front, white rear) |
| TRIGGER: | Reset Action System (DAO with integrated safety), 5 lb. |
| GRIP: | Reinforced polymer, anti-slip stippled texture |
| FINISH: | Mannox |
| MSRP: | \$649 |
| MANUFACTURER: | Steyr Mannlicher GmbH, Kleinraming, Austria |
| IMPORTER: | Steyr Arms Inc. 205-655-8299 steयरarms.com |

erage .2 second from my concealed draw time in presenting and firing a single round on target.

With the C9-A1's three-dot configuration, I don't care for the red-colored dot on the front. It's not illuminated, so it doesn't immediately grab your eye's attention when you present the pistol downrange. In low light, it's even harder to discern. Although some shooters have trouble getting adjusted to the M9-A1's trapezoidal sights, I find that they are better suited for carry than the three-dot system on the C9-A1. If the C9-A1 had a white dot or a night sight up front, I'd be more inclined to carry it this way. In terms of the trap sights, I still believe that they are useful in obtaining a more precise shot, but my eyes struggle in pinpointing the exact tip of the front sight in relation to the rear, so it can slow down my ability to draw and shoot quickly. I know many will disagree.

On a square range, I evaluated the performance of the C9-A1 in tandem with the M9-A1. For what you gain in speed from the draw with the short-



All new A1 models currently feature an integral Picatinny rail notch for the attachment of lights and lasers. The author noted that due to the triggerguard, only compact accessories would properly attach and engage the rail's lug.

ened barrel length, the most you'll give up with loads between 115 and 147 grains is 50 fps. Also, I measured negligible difference in accuracy between the two pistols at the bench. When you study the accompanying charts, if the M9-A1 seems to be a little more accurate than the C9-A1 you might consider my earlier points regarding the sights and the fact that with the longer slide you will benefit from the longer sight radius.

What did surprise me was that when I incorporated the use of the



Viridian C5 green laser for sighting only—without the aid of either pistol's sights—my accuracy was almost exactly the same. If I depend on either Steyr for personal protection, the Viridian C5 will certainly be utilized for more probable low-light or no-light defensive situations. In daylight conditions, I found the Viridian laser's visibility to be bright enough well beyond either pistol's practical defensive range—I was repeatedly hitting eight-inch steel plates while

standing from 100 yards.

I fired well over 500 rounds from a hodgepodge of ammunition sources in testing the M9-A1 and C9-A1 without a single incident. I didn't apply any oil before commencing with evaluation at the range, and I was very surprised in breaking it down to see little to no wear on the finish after cleaning it—not like you'd expect to see on a pistol that had been effectively broken in. Consider the details of each pistol in the accompanying photographs. I think that the details are often overlooked in determining the relationship of critical parts and the quality of the Mannox finish applied to steel parts.

CONCLUSION

The M-A1 is the current generation of the full-size original with a four-inch barrel and 17-round magazine capacity. The S-A1 is a more compact series with a 3.6-inch barrel. Currently available in either 9mm or .40 S&W, the M-series and S-series have developed a cult-like following within the course of the last decade, and for good reason. Steyr has a history of daring introductions and defying normal convention. If you are considering a carry nine, the time to try a 17-plus-one-capacity Steyr C9-A1 is now. ☉

| ACCURACY CHART | | | |
|------------------------|------------|-------------------|-----------------|
| STEYR C9-A1 | | | |
| LOAD | BULLET WT. | MUZZLE VEL. (fps) | AVG. GRP. (in.) |
| Federal Hydra Shok | 147 gr. | 900 | 2.57 |
| Remington Golden Saber | 125 gr. | 1,118 | 2.44 |
| Winchester FMJ | 115 gr. | 1,109 | 2.31 |
| Winchester PDX1 | 147 gr. | 934 | 3.16 |
| STEYR M9-A1 | | | |
| LOAD | BULLET WT. | MUZZLE VEL. (fps) | AVG. GRP. (in.) |
| Federal Hydra Shok | 147 gr. | 925 | 2.44 |
| Remington Golden Saber | 125 gr. | 1,157 | 2.04 |
| Winchester FMJ | 115 gr. | 1,142 | 2.28 |
| Winchester PDX1 | 147 gr. | 944 | 2.53 |



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