



Photo Courtesy Matt Berger



The Professional shoots comfortably, controlling muzzle flip via a number of modifications that lend to a high hold on the grip frame.

# D&L SPORTS PROFESSIONAL MODEL

*Sophisticated, precision-smithed 1911  
with rugged .45 ACP elegance!*

**By Matt Berger**

**T**here are scores of gunsmiths across the country, with skill levels that range from nothing more than basic armorer to truly talented smiths. Very few achieve the notoriety and status of being well known and nationally recognized for their craft. One of those few is Dave Lauck of D&L Sports. Dave is a one-smith shop, not delegating work to others like most custom shops. With 30 years in the business, he feels this is the only way to maintain

personal standards and retain the type of quality control he demands, so he does all the work himself.

Lauck's Professional Model caught my eye, and upon picking up the gun, my first impression was that the fit and finish was impeccable. All sharp edges were expertly dehorned, if not melted. Forward and rearward travel was the only movement I could manage between the slide and frame. The beavertail was tightly fitted and blended. There were a lot of small, but significant touches and a lot of design factors and parts that were "overkill."

### Gun Details

Lauck introduced the Professional in the mid-80s as the ultimate non-compensated 1911. It begins life as a matched D&L

*D&L Sports Signature Professional Model boast excellent performance and handling qualities in a 1911-style pistol that is built to be durable and reliable by a craftsman and shooter who knows what needs to be done.*



*The frontstrap is cleanly checkered 30-lpi and the triggerguard is undercut.*

slide and frame—machined from heat-treated carbon steel forgings—hand-fitted for optimum fit and function. The slide is cut from 4340 carbon steel, the frame 4130. Both are hardened prior to any machine work. A D&L match barrel and bushing set are fitted for optimal accuracy and functioning. The 416 stainless barrel is fully chambered, throated and the ramp polished, and a heavy-duty bushing flange is used for durability. The crown of the barrel is protected by a recess. Length-wise, ball-milled flutes cut into the barrel over the chamber serve as sand cuts, which, in conjunction with sand cuts inside the slide, channel grit out from between the slide and barrel. A barrel hood inspection port allows for checking chamber condition.

Getting back to the slide, angled cocking serrations are cut in the standard rear location, as well as just forward of the opened, flared, and radiused ejection port. A traditional “internal” extractor is used, which is tuned, as well as the ejector. Dave uses a cut on the extractor claw that he refers to as a “tanto” cut, which he believes makes the extractor more durable under hard use. Sights are heavy-duty low-profile high-visibility units with three-dot tritium inserts. The rear sight is dovetailed into the slide, and set with dual hex screws—the sight has a significant shelf



*The controls—a single-sided, reasonably extended serrated thumb safety, heavy-duty, heat treated, fitted, serrated slide stop, and an extended checkered tactical mag release—are easily manipulated.*



*The rear sight is dovetailed into the slide, and set with dual screws. Note the dehorning and melting done to corners and edges.*

that may be used to fulcrum off of a solid object for one-handed cycling of the slide, is serrated on its rear surface, and all top edges are melted. The slide is broach cut for the front sight, which is secured by three hex screws. I also noticed that the firing pin stop was locked in place with a hex screw at the top.



*A D&L match barrel and bushing set are fitted for accuracy and functioning, and a bushing flange is used for durability.*

The frame continues with the trend of melted or dehorned edges, an undercut triggerguard and reinforced dustcover frame rail, which is integrally machined to accept light and laser accessories. 30 line-per-inch (lpi) checkering is cut into the frontstrap, as well as the arched mainspring housing, which is nicely blended at the bottom to function as part of a magazine well that is melted into a bevel from all four sides. A low-profile funnel is also machined as part of the frame, rather than being pinned or welded. A high swept beavertail grip safety with speed bump is tightly fitted and blended to the backstrap. Dave bolts on his plunger tube, rather than simply staking it on like most makers. This makes the attachment of the tube more solid and reliable.

Controls consist of a single-sided, reasonably extended serrated thumb safety, a heavy duty, heat-treated, fitted, serrated slide stop, and a checkered tactical magazine release,



*The adjustable trigger is D&L Sports' aluminum 3-hole unit with a serrated face.*



*Ball-milled flutes function as sand cuts to work grit and sediment out from between the barrel and slide. A barrel hood port allows for a visual chamber inspection.*

extended approximately 0.63 inches.

D&L's 3-hole aluminum long trigger, adjustable for overtravel is used in conjunction with high-grade tool-steel Commander-style serrated rowl hammer and sear, and tuned for long-term reliability rather than a target-grade pull. In this case, the trigger broke crisply at 5 pounds with little or no overtravel.

Lauck uses top-quality springs throughout the Professional Model for reliable function with service ammunition. This includes a heavy-duty firing pin spring that is used in conjunction with the internal “Series-80” firing pin block to increase safety and improve function.

A full-length guide rod and reverse guide rod plug are employed to allow the gun to run more smoothly and minimize the chances of slide set back and ejection of a chambered cartridge during close contact encounters.

Once Dave has performed all of the metal work on the pistol, standard finish is a matte hard chrome plate, which may then also be augmented with a CeraKote color in black, gray, or OD green. The grip frame is dressed up by checkered D&L signature Alumagrips, with integral slide guards.

Three premium 1911 .45 ACP magazines are included with each Professional Model. Magazine bodies are supplied by ACT-MAG, springs by Wolff, with the rest of the components being made by D&L Sports. They have been rated as the best by the American Pistol Guild, and all of Dave's Signature series items are covered by a lifetime service agreement.

*Continued on page 91*

**PERFORMANCE:**

**D&L SPORTS  
PROFESSIONAL MODEL .45 ACP**

LOAD	ACCURACY
Federal American Eagle 230 FMJ	1.25
Remington Golden Saber 230 BJHP	1.31

Bullet weight measured in grains and accuracy in inches for 5-shot groups fired standing, off-hand from 25 feet.





The integral mag well is beveled with a smooth melt, and the mainspring is blended to function as part of that well.

### Shooting Impressions

One of D&L's customers had offered to allow me to "borrow" his pistol for my tests. This unorthodox situation brought with it a couple of caveats, namely that the customer wanted the piece back in two weeks and only granted limited use of the pistol. Normally, I'd prefer to run five or more types of ammunition through a pistol for testing purposes, but obviously, I was under the restraint of the owner's wishes.

I mounted some 25-yard sight-in targets, and took up position 25 feet back to fire 5-shot groups from a standing position, off-hand. In this case, the Federal American Eagle 230-grain FMJ scored a best group of 1.25 inches. The Remington Golden Saber 230-grain BJHP load's best pattern was 1.31 inches.

The Professional was comfortable to shoot; the high-swept beavertail and undercut triggerguard allowed a high hold while the memory bump on the beavertail ensured positive disengagement of the safety while using a high-thumb hold. Checkering made for a sure grip on the pistol, and the extended thumb safety further facilitated a high-thumb hold on the pistol during rapid fire; the pistol came back down on target rapidly with mini-

## SPECIFICATIONS:

D&L SPORTS PROFESSIONAL MODEL	
<b>CALIBER:</b>	.45 ACP
<b>BARREL:</b>	5 inches
<b>OA LENGTH:</b>	8.8 inches
<b>WEIGHT:</b>	41 ounces (empty)
<b>GRIPS:</b>	D&L Alumagrips
<b>SIGHTS:</b>	Fixed Night Sights
<b>ACTION:</b>	SA
<b>FINISH:</b>	CeraKote
<b>CAPACITY:</b>	7+1
<b>MSRP:</b>	\$3,800

## D&L SPORTS 45 CENTENNIAL 1911

By Gary Paul Johnston

For firearms enthusiasts, the centennial of the Model of 1911 pistol has been a grand celebration. One component of this is historical. It seems like at least one hundred of articles have been written this year on what is arguably the world's favorite pistol and its creator—small arms genius, John Moses Browning.

With a bow to the celebrated original, Dave Lauck has created a one-of-a-kind 1911 pistol called the 45 Centennial that can only be described as a masterpiece. Adorned with full coverage of superb floral engraving, this pistol is lavishly finished in sterling silver and 24-karat gold plate, topped off with handmade grips of legal elephant ivory.

Beneath the breathtaking artwork, however, lies an honest to goodness D&L .45 ACP 5-inch 1911 custom full-house Professional Model combat pistol capable of ultra match accuracy and total reliability.

### Gold-Plated Details

Up front is a gold-plated match barrel bushing surrounding the muzzle of a perfectly fitted stainless steel custom match barrel, and under this a hollow recoil spring plug supporting a full-length guide rod. Back up on top of the slide is D&L's own unique front sight system. A replaceable sight, this combat blade sits on its own elongated pedestal that is countersunk into the slide where it is secured by three hardened screws. As such, the sight is totally secured from fore and aft forces of the slide and also vertically by the three screws.

Along both sides of the slide is total floral engraving interrupted only by generous sections of matching front and rear slide cocking grooves. On the right side between these panels are the words



Photo Courtesy: D&L Sports

"PROFESSIONAL MODEL," and on the left side is stamped .45 ACP. Atop the slide between the front sight and the ejection port amidst more engraving are two banners, one on each side. The banner on the right side reads "1911 Centennial," and that on the left reads 1911—2011 with all lettering inlaid in 24-karat gold.

A beautifully beveled magazine well leads to a 30-lpi checkered frontstrap and up to the aluminum match trigger. Forward of the triggerguard is an integral frame rail allowing the mounting of lights and lasers. The final touch on the D&L 45 Centennial Pistol is a set of genuine legal elephant ivory stocks secured with gold plated hex screws. On the right stock is scrimshawed a flying American flag and on the left, the head of the American Bald Eagle. The 45 Centennial is slated for auction in the near future.

mal muzzle rise due to the aforementioned engineering features, and the high-visibility combat sights with the large, squared rear notch were easy to pick-up and quickly align. The excellent trigger made getting hits easier. Dave's expert dehorning and melting meant that handling the pistol as fast as possible, to include overhead grasps of the slide to rip it back for speed reloads didn't tear up the hands as with many pistols. I also found the checkering pattern on the Alumagrips to be positive, while comfortable.

Best of all, the Professional cycled and fed flawlessly throughout testing.

### Final Notes

The Professional acquitted itself well in testing. It handled well, shot comfortably, and controlled muzzle flip through a number of modifications that lent it to a high-hold on the

grip frame. It was plenty accurate, and went bang every time. In conversation, I mentioned to Dave that I liked the idea of how "overkill" the pistol was in its design and construction. "The Professional was developed over decades of shooting and seeing first-hand what breaks with heavy use, then coming up with redesigned sub parts to stop future breakages," said Dave. "I try to make every one better than the last."

The Professional Model gives superior performance in a pistol designed by a skilled craftsman and shooter to do it all stronger, longer, and in the most extreme of circumstances. If you want a 1911 that will give hell-and-back reliability, and are willing to pay for that level of quality, the Professional series from D&L Sports fits the bill handily. For more information contact D&L Sports by calling 307-686-4008 or visiting dlsports.com.