

Modernizing an old favorite

By Paul Turpin



Colt's model 1911 pistol has been in service now for more than 93 years. It emerged as the world's premier fighting pistol, and it retains that title today. Elite military and police units throughout the United States continue to select the 1911 as their preferred defensive sidearm.

With the introduction of weapon-mounted light systems, it seemed the 1911 would be left behind, unless you were willing to lay out a considerable sum for a new model pistol with integral light rails. I was happy with the pistol I was carrying and merely wanted to equip it with one of the new light systems. I found the answer in a product produced by a new company, Urban Advantage. They make a Strike Plate Rail System (SPRS) for the 1911 and its clones that can be mounted in less than 60 seconds with no modifications to the pistol. The SPRS mounts by simply removing the old slide-stop pin, attaching the SPRS and

inserting the extended slide-stop pin that is provided. An Allen wrench is then used to tighten the tension screw, and the unit is ready for use. The unit is made of 2024 aluminum and weighs just 3.3 ounces, adding very little weight to the pistol. Balance of the weapon feels just a bit muzzle heavy, as would be expected. The overall length of the pistol is increased by one-half inch. I tried several light systems on the rail including the M3X and M6 by Streamlight and the P101, 111, and X200 by Surefire. Each model locked in place and was removed as well as the last.

The real test is, of course, on the range. I wanted to put the SPRS through a thorough test and still get some training value out of the experience. So I arranged to attend Gunsite's 250 – Defensive Pistol course with the designer of the SPRS, Brian Urban. For the test, I utilized a Kimber Tactical Custom II in .45 acp carrying a

Top - Author test firing the SPRS on his Kimber.

Right top - Strike Plate Rail System mounted on a Kimber Custom TLE II with a Streamlight M3X.

Right bottom - Urban Advantage's Strike Plate Rail System for the 1911 and its clones.

Surefire P101. Urban brought his Para Ordnance P-14 equipped with a Streamlight M6. We each used a holster produced by Blade Tech for Urban Advantage and the SPRS. We both chose the tactical thigh rig over the belt holster, as we both come from a tactical background and have more experience with this type of holster. Blade Tech also produces a belt holster for concealed carry or duty use.

My first impressions on the range were favorable. The holster and SPRS-equipped