

reliability. It's our first choice.

The strikingly attractive Springfield had fully checkered wood stocks and a high polish to the sides of its blued receiver and action. The slide top and the rest of the gun was matte black. There were no plastic parts on this gun. It had a long aluminum Videki trigger, a beveled magazine well, extended safety, a skeletonized Commander-style hammer, a Novak rear sight and a highly visible front sight. The gun had a flat steel mainspring housing with vertical serrations. The beavertail grip safety had a big, hand-filling bump on the bottom, which we liked a lot. The Springfield came in a fitted plastic storage/carry case with a spare magazine, cleaning rod, and full instructions. Although it looked great, the Springfield front sight was not dovetailed into the slide. We feel dovetailing is the most foolproof, if not the best-looking, method of attaching a front sight. The Springfield had the now common front slide serrations. The top of the slide permitted easy stovepipe clearing. Like the Kimber, the Springfield's feed ramp was highly polished and the chamber throat was widened to ease feeding. This gun had a much higher polish in these areas than the Kimber.

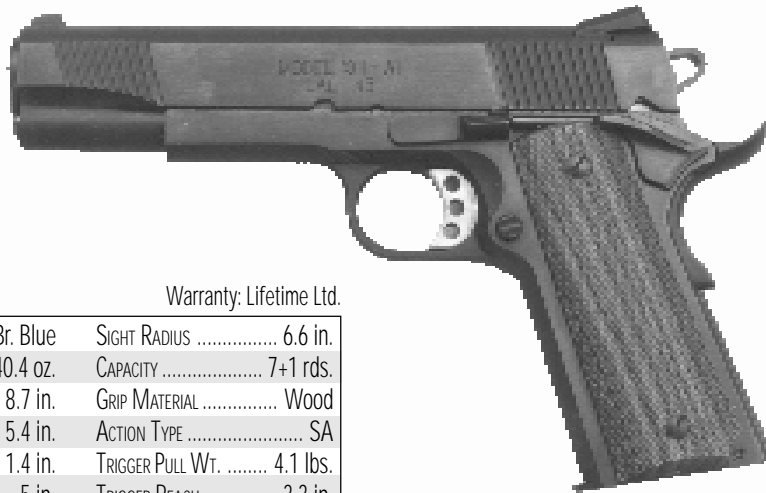
At the range, the Springfield handled all ammo with aplomb. There were no problems whatsoever. Our average five-shot group size was 2.5 inches at 15 yards, and the smallest was 1.4 inches with the Winchester hardball. This gun didn't like the Speer Lawman 230-grain FMJ, getting a 3.5-inch group as the smallest. We were quite impressed with the Springfield. In spite of its having a half-pound heavier trigger pull than the Kimber, the Springfield's pull felt lighter. There was absolutely no creep, and overtravel was minimal yet adequate. The gun felt precise.

**Kimber Classic Custom**

Our recommendation: At a

**Springfield "Loaded" 1911-A1**

Retail Price...\$565



**SPECIFICATIONS**

Warranty: Lifetime Ltd.

METAL FINISH .. Matte/Br. Blue	SIGHT RADIUS .....	6.6 in.
WEIGHT (EMPTY) .....	CAPACITY .....	7+1 rds.
OVERALL LENGTH .....	GRIP MATERIAL .....	Wood
OVERALL HEIGHT .....	ACTION TYPE .....	SA
MAX. WIDTH .....	TRIGGER PULL Wt. ....	4.1 lbs.
BARREL LENGTH .....	TRIGGER REACH .....	3.3 in.

Our recommendation: Great features for the dollar. Buy it.

*Among the Springfield's exterior charms were its long aluminum Videki trigger, a skeletonized Commander-style hammer, a Novak rear sight, a beavertail grip safety with a big, hand-filling bump on the bottom, and front slide serrations. There was also a noticeable lack of plastic parts.*



competitive \$657 price tag, this gun offered lots of good features, making it one of the top two guns in our test.

During our testing, we noticed the Kimber had a shade of trigger creep and a bit of off-color bluing, but was otherwise excellent. We didn't like its plastic trigger and mainspring housing, but loved its accuracy and reliability. The Kimber looked very promising when we first got our hands on it. It had a 3.5-pound trigger pull with a bit of creep. This matte-black finished gun had a beavertail grip safety and a Commander-style hammer, a nicely contoured and smooth-fronted rear sight, and forward serrations on the slide. It had an extended thumb safety and a long trigger. The flat plastic mainspring housing was checkered. The trigger also was plastic. The hammer was

a skeleton-type rounded Commander-style spur. The magazine release was checkered, which we prefer to simple serrations; however, some of us thought it stuck out too far. The ejection port was lowered and flared. Black rubber grip panels contributed to the business-like look. The only blemish was that in strong light the slide was of a slightly different hue than the frame. All in all it looked like a shooter, and we were eager to try it.

Imagine our surprise when our first attempt at shooting this gun resulted in only a loud click. We tried it again, and discovered the firing pin wasn't marking the cartridge. We attempted to disassemble the gun in the field, but were unable to get the firing pin out with just our fingers. At home we used a drift punch to remove it, and found that the firing pin was a full