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JULY 2017

# .380

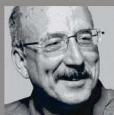
## SCCY's NEW 10+1 CPX-3



GARRY JAMES SHOOTS

## FRANCE'S MAS-36

PAGE 74



23

### PATRICK SWEENEY

Colt's SAA vs.  
Bill Ruger's  
Blackhawk



31

### CHRIS MUDGETT

Must-Have  
Warne Scope  
Mounting Tools



33

### TOM BECKSTRAND

Debunking the  
Objective  
Lens Myth



54

### ERIC R. POOLE

FN's M249S:  
200 Rounds of  
Belt-Fed Fun

# REACH FOR THE SCCY

A CARRY-WORTHY .380  
FOR CHUMP CHANGE?

WORDS BY TOM BECKSTRAND | PHOTOS BY MARK FINGAR





**REDUCED-SIZE CARRY PISTOLS** are always hot sellers. As the world turns increasingly violent, the capability to defend ourselves becomes increasingly necessary. Under these conditions, a pistol remains a critical component to a defensive strategy. The first rule is to have one, and the second is to know how to use it.

Acquiring and learning how to use a pistol requires time and money. Since those two commodities are always in short supply, it's best to be efficient with both.

**Return of the .380** Developed by John Browning in the then-new Colt Model 1908 hammerless pocket auto, the .380 ACP continues to enjoy a wave of popularity that began building momentum a few years back. Many consider the cartridge to be sufficient for self-defense use, and it works well in compact pistols. It should have been the king of concealed carry, but history has proven differently.

Unfortunately, many of the .380s produced are so tiny that shooting one could prove painful if more than a few rounds are involved. While the projectile is lighter and slower moving than the 9mm, the .380 still generates enough recoil to punish hands when chambered in thin, subcompact pistols.

SCCY's new CPX-3, chambered in .380, is a strong choice for many shooters in a pistol destined for concealed carry duty. The polymer frame on the CPX-3 is wide enough to remain comfortable for range days involving more than 100 rounds, is large enough to get two hands around the grip and is small enough to conceal. Lastly, we all know that if a gun company makes a firearm that's fun to shoot, the firearm stands a much better chance of actually being carried.

Last year, I visited SCCY's manufacturing operation in Florida and witnessed the development of the CPX-3 firsthand. I found that it is well made and most of its metal parts are machined from billet metal, with the exception of the springs and a handful of



#### SCCY CPX-3

**Type:** Recoil operated, double-action only, semiautomatic

**Cartridge:** .380 ACP

**Capacity:** 10+1 rds.

**Barrel:** 2 in.

**Overall Length:** 5 in.

**Weight:** 14 oz.

**Grip:** Textured polymer frame

**Sights:** Three dot, white; drift adj.

**Trigger:** 8 lbs., 1 oz. (tested)

**Finish:** Matte stainless or black

**MSRP:** \$230

**Manufacturer:** SCCY, 866-729-7599  
sccy.com

flat metal parts that are stamped. There are no metal injection molded (MIM), cast or even forged parts on this pistol. Most impressive is the price: less than \$250.

Before delving too deep into how so much machining goodness got crammed into such an inexpensive package, it helps to understand the target demographic for the CPX-3 and how its dimensions and operation are ideal for many. The pistol measures 5½-inches long by 4½-inches tall by 1-inch wide. This small size makes the CPX-3 easy to conceal but doesn't make it unshootable.

The pistol features fixed three-dot metal sights, a 2-inch barrel and comes with two 10-round magazines. It is also a true double-action only (DAO) pistol. There's an internal hammer shrouded by the slide, which means that it incorporates a benefit of striker



The CPX-3 has an aluminum machined-from-billet frame that provides generous and rigid frame rails.



The adequately sloped feed ramp into the barrel aids in reliable operation with all types of .380-bullet profiles.



The DAO trigger pull is the reason this pistol is so well suited for concealed carry and new shooters.



The .380-chambered CPX-3 features a grip that's smaller than the CPX-2 in 9mm. It still fills the hand enough to be comfortable without being too large for deep concealment.

pistols in that it will not snag its hammer spur while drawing from a holster. With a magazine capacity of 10 rounds, it doesn't suffer from diminutive capacity either. Consider that the Beretta Pico, Colt Mustang, Glock 42, Kahr P380, Kel-Tec P-3AT, Ruger LCP, SIG Sauer P238, Smith & Wesson Bodyguard, Taurus TCP and Walther PPK offer six- or seven-plus-one-round capacity. The magazine in the Walther PK380 only holds eight. The number of rounds on tap with the CPX-3 makes this .380 a fair selection for self-defense, but this model's DAO operation has earned the CPX-3 my recommendation for new shooters searching for their first pistol. Please, allow me to explain.

**Striker-Fired Strikes** We live in an age where striker-fired pistols are thriving, and it's easy to think that this type of pistol is a good choice for *everything*. Many police officers use the system in their Glocks and Smith & Wesson M&Ps, competitive shooters are often choosing them over Model 1911s, and even the military is on board in replacing the hammer-fired M9 with the new striker-fired (X)M17. Nearly every pistol manufacturer offers one, so there must be some logic behind the operation.

One of the reasons striker-fired pistols are so popular is because they are typically less expensive,

and they're reliable. When striker-fired pistols became prolific following the Glock's stateside introduction in 1985, a striker-fired pistol cost a couple hundred bucks less than almost every other similar-sized semiautomatic pistol on the market. Part of the savings came from the handful of internal parts required for a striker-fired gun and the fact that the often-molded polymer frame was easier and quicker to manufacture in volume than the more common aluminum and steel frames, which have to be machined. One can imagine that squirting plastic in a mold saves a company a truckload of cash and increases a product's profitability. The double- or single-action lockwork features a more complicated mechanism, which also bumps up the price.

While striker-fired pistols are still the most popular action type introduced in a new-model pistol today, they may not be ideally suited to newer shooters or for concealed carry use. For example, a striker's trigger usually includes a safety lever that must be deactivated before the trigger can be pulled. After the trigger's safety lever is pressed, it usually takes only 4 to 7 pounds of pull and about a quarter-inch of movement to fire a round. My concern with striker-fired pistols is that a few people across all levels of proficiency are caught on YouTube shooting themselves in the leg when clothing





or their trigger finger manages to bundle up inside the triggerguard while reholstering. External safeties can minimize the risk associated with this issue, but they require training to master under stress.

New shooters also need to be extra vigilant around striker-fired pistols and remember to observe the four NRA safety rules. Though we all know the second rule to “Always keep your finger off the trigger until ready to shoot,” we also know that violations happen frequently.

Officially introduced at the 2017 NRA Annual Meetings in Atlanta, the SCCY CPX-3 eschews the striker-fired mechanism and features a DAO operation. This means that the CPX-3 can be as safe as any revolver but offers fast reloads and a larger capacity in its class of compact, magazine-fed semiautos.

As long as the trigger pull weight isn't too high, a DAO pistol can be used with little tactical disadvantage when compared to striker-fired pistols. And DAOs remain less prone to negligent discharges when carried concealed or fired under stressful circumstances. The reason is that DAO-operated pistols require a deliberate action of a shooter's finger in applying the 7 to 9 pounds of pressure against the trigger throughout its lengthier



trigger travel before the gun fires.

**Cost Cutting** How does SCCY offer a DAO pistol that costs a couple hundred dollars less than a comparable striker-fired pistol? The answer is design and a higher manufacturing IQ.

The CPX-3 comes with the ubiquitous polymer frame that was responsible for all the cost savings associated with striker-fired pistols. Even with the wonders of

modern manufacturing, molding polymer is still the best method for a brand to pass some savings along to its customers. However, G&A has observed that not all polymer frames are created equal.

Many polymer frames have steel inserts molded-in to serve as frame rails. The fundamental design of the Glock, which started this trend, maintains this construction more than 30 years later. The inserts are small and are the *only* surfaces on which the slide rides. Should one of those rails work loose (and it happens), the

entire frame is ruined, which means it's time to buy another gun.

SCCY's pistols have an aluminum receiver machined from 7075 T6 aluminum billet that sits *inside* the polymer frame. The receiver carries the serial number and has rails on which the slide travels. Rather

## VIKING PISTOL TARGET

The new Viking Pistol Target features 6-inch and 10-inch steel gongs, which can be shot with any handgun that generates less than 1,000 foot-pounds of muzzle energy. That translates to about .45 caliber and under. The target is 34-inches tall and is powder coated for excellent durability. It also resets itself, is stable and won't tip over. Visit [vikingsl.com](http://vikingsl.com) to learn more. \$60



than pieces of bent metal molded into a plastic frame, the CPX-3 has a solid chunk of machined billet aluminum that sits securely within the plastic frame. The receiver rails run about half the length of the slide and are integral to the single solid block of aluminum. Therefore, it's easy for SCCY's pistols to feature strong and stable frame rails that run parallel to one another.



SCCY's manufacturing capability comes from the leadership of Joe Roebuck. Roebuck started out as a tool and die maker, a passion he maintains to this day. His apprenticeship began at 8 years old when his parents allowed him to use the machine shop behind their house. His dad was an immigrant and a tool-and-die maker who began assigning Roebuck projects that had to be completed on time and meet his father's quality standards. Roebuck worked in that shop until he was 18. After graduating high school, Roebuck continued to work in manufacturing and has been running his own companies since he was 23 years old.

Roebuck's experiences early in life taught him how to manufacture. Most companies employ teams of engineers to design parts and then machinists to run machines that make them. The two groups rarely get along. The engineers blame the machinists for

not knowing how to follow their design, while the machinists blame the engineers for designing theoretical parts that are too complicated to manufacture. SCCY doesn't have this problem because Roebuck does both jobs. He calls the process "concurrent engineering." Every part is designed with ease of manufacture in mind. As an example, Roebuck designed the aforementioned receiver block that sits in each one of the SCCY polymer

pistol frames to be simple, strong and easy to manufacture. He then carried that theme throughout the remainder of each pistol.

**Inexpensive is rarely rewarding.** The majority of inexpensive firearms that I've handled are utilitarian implements. Some get the job done and nothing more. They are rarely exciting, and there isn't much pride in ownership. The CPX-3 qualifies as an inexpensive firearm, but it was so fun to shoot that I kept at it until my supply of .380 ammunition was completely expended. That is perhaps the strongest indicator to my conclusion.

I appreciate the design efficiency with the physical dimensions of the CPX-3 and believe that it's the ideal size for an all-around self-defense-oriented .380 intended for everyday carry (EDC). The CPX-3 is so comfortable to shoot that I'm even going to

encourage my reluctant wife to give it a try. The lack of recoil and simple controls are a combination that I know she'll like.

The DAO trigger stroke isn't as much fun as a striker-fired pistol tasked with "burn it down" range operations. The trigger pull measured just an ounce over 8 pounds on my trigger-pull gauge, and it was very smooth with no stacking. I found that the CPX-3 was easy to maintain sight alignment while pulling the trigger, as well. Given its 8-pound pull, the only way this pistol will fire is with deliberate effort from the shooter. To me, that's comforting.

The CPX-3 features SCCY's new Roebuck Quad-Lock system that secures the front and rear of the barrel in a V-shaped internal bedding block. The system is clever and simple, while ensuring that the barrel returns consistently to battery each time it's fired.

The fixed sights on G&A's test sample were not regulated with



## PERFORMANCE

LOAD	VELOCITY (FPS)	ES	SD	BEST GROUP (IN.)	AVERAGE GROUP (IN.)
Hornady XTP 90-gr. JHP	854	42	18	2.2	2.88
Barnes TAC-XPD 80-gr. HP	944	51	19	3.14	4.03
SIG Sauer 100-gr. FMJ	885	52	20	3.27	4.09

Notes: Accuracy is the average of five, five-shot groups at 25 yards. Velocity is the average of five shots across a LabRadar chronograph positioned at 15 feet. FMJ = full metal jacket; HP = hollowpoint; JHP = jacketed hollow point; XTP = eXtreme Terminal Performance.

enough to rate our attention. When combined with the knowledge that this pistol is made *entirely* in the U.S. and almost exclusively machined from steel billet, the CPX-3 becomes a big deal. I can find no other DAO semiautomatic pistol with a better cost-to-performance ratio than those offered by SCCY. **GA**

the round's point of impact. When properly aligned, my rounds impacted several inches high and a couple of inches left of the point of aim. Your first range visit may require some trial and error to drift the rear sight and dial it in.

Accuracy testing the CPX-3 at 25 yards seemed a little unrealistic in my mind for a compact .380, but such testing protocols are the rules of Guns & Ammo's editorial staff. For such a small pistol in a small caliber, group sizes were acceptable for me, with most five-shot groups measuring a little more than 3 inches.

The design, performance and price of the CPX-3 are