Remington's New Model 1100 Competition Synthetic

By Nick Sisley

I'm not the only shotgunner who has thought the Remington 1100 semi-auto is one of the softest shooting shotguns ever produced. While there are those who don't seem to be bothered by recoil, at least to a significant degree, there is no question that a very high number of shotgunners are very big on recoil relief.

The first Remington 1100 was born in 1962, so next year will mark that gun's 50th year of production. The engineering brainchild of Big Green's Wayne Leek, said with the 1100's introduction that this one "….is going to revolutionize shotgun shooting."

Up until 1962 semi-auto shotguns were recoil operated—which meant the entire barrel moved rearward to eject the just-fired shell, release a shell from the magazine on to the carrier—and then the barrel slammed forward taking that next shell with it. Examples of such recoil-operated shotguns would be the Browning Auto-5, the Franchi 48 AL and others, including some of Remington earlier semis like their 11-48.

The soft shooting 1100 revolution was based on powder gases being bled off into two ports in the 1100's barrel band. Those gases then were captured along the outside of the magazine tube to perform the above tasks—i.e. eject the just-fired empty, release a shell on to the carrier, and then slam the bolt home with that shell going along for the ride into the chamber. It was this brief time sequence of what has just been described, as well as the powder gas bleed off, resulted in considerably less felt recoil. Since 1962 almost every shotgun maker that manufactures semi-autos has come out with gas-operated ones. Serious skeet gunners began gravitating to the 1100 right away. For a number of years it was common for such competitive shotgunners to shoot 1100s in all four skeet gauges.

Over the last 49 years, numerous model 1100 offshoots have been introduced, so many that you would get bored if I began to list them all. The one I'm currently testing is, of course, very new, plus this one is perhaps the culmination of Remington's incessant drive to produce a better and better competition semi. This one the company calls the 1100 Competition Synthetic.

Compared with traditionally-styled shotguns of yesteryear—well this one is not traditionally styled. Maybe futuristic better describes its looks, but this one still retains that recoil-absorbing gas-operated action—plus even more has been added to take the sting out of recoil with this new model.

The futuristic look comes from the synthetic stock which has been designed and made by Jack West—a frequent advertiser in these pages. We've all seen synthetic stocks before, but this one has a different look. Remington calls the stock looks "carbon graphite." (See photo.) Although one can't feel any "texture" to this look—the appearance of texture is there. That's what gives this stock its eye candy compared to a synthetic stock that might be totally black Plain Jane—or in camo.

The checkering on the fore-end has a traditional look, but at the pistol grip there's a new look that I'll call a "dappled" appearance. Does this new look add to feel? You'll have to pick up a Competition Synthetic yourself as opinions may vary. You will note the pronounced re-curve to the pistol grip.

While your eyes are at the grip area, gaze upward to the adjustable comb. A close examination here will reveal that this adjustable comb is also a "level comb," which further mitigates against recoil—such a stock design sending recoil past the face rather than up into the face.

At the rear of the stock is significantly added recoil reduction via Ken Rucker's Auto-Buster. Ken, of course, is the guy with recoil reduction most in mind—and his fulltime shop is right along Vender's Row at the National Shooting Complex. This recoil reducer is fitted with what Ken calls "medium" springs as this 1100 comes from the factory, but a set of light and a set of heavy springs is included in the package—should you want to change. Changing springs is easy. Remove the recoil pad with the hex-head wrench provided, and then use the easy to follow directions. In addition to recoil reduction with this Ken Rucker unit, the pad's position can also be changed—in case you prefer something different to a
recoil pad that comes straight back from the butt stock. Further, the recoil pad itself is one of the best—Remington's own design that they call the SuperCell.

Another possible recoil reduction feature of the 1100 Competition Synthetic is overboring and long forcing cones in the barrel.

I measured the forward part of the barrel at .736 with my Baker Barrel Reader, but directly in front of the chamber (forcing cone) the diameter was not only much greater than .736—I noted that this was a very long forcing cone—i.e. many inches. I've always thought that longer forcing cones and barrel overboring tended to produce more even patterns, but I do know that some claim reduction of recoil as well.

Instead of the traditional blued look so many 1100 variations have had, the Competition Synthetic has a bright nickel finish to the receiver. Will this finish be as scratch resistant as traditional bluing? Only time will tell. More importantly, all the critical internal parts wear Remington's Nickel-Teflon™ finish—including the magazine tube and the parts that ride on that tube. The company says this finish results in smoother operation. I would also assume that the Nickel-Teflon results in a harder, more wear-resistant finish. It is mainly through the Nickel-Teflon coating that the company has developed even more reliable function. It's important to note that this is not a 3-inch or a 3 ½-inch chambered shotgun. The chamber is 2 ¾ and this new 1100 has been tweaked for target-type loads. All barrels of this model are 30-inches.

Going back to the barrel—it is deeply blued. At top the vent rib is a metal mid-bead and a white bead at the muzzle. The rib measures .355 from stem to stern. While it has always been advisable to clean any 1100 every 100 rounds or so—the great thing about that job is that cleaning is so easy. This is not true for all semi-autos, although for some of them the number of shells fired between cleaning can be greatly increased. Still, with an 1100, simply remove the fore-end and barrel. Wipe away the crud build up on the magazine tube—with the bolt both open and closed—re-assemble and you're done. But again note that the smoothness of operation in this new 1100 is that the mag tube wears that Nickel-Teflon coating, so there's good reason to believe this one can go longer between the simple cleanings I have just described above. Further, the linkage system that rides above the mag tube—these are also Nickel-Teflon coated.

This 1100 also comes with five screw-in chokes by Briley. These are in Remington's ProBore design. Recall I mentioned that the bore measured .736. The Skeet screw-in went .733, the Improved Cylinder .730, the Light Modified .722, the Modified .719 and the Full went .700. The gun is fairly heavy, what many competitors prefer, at 8 pounds 14 ounces. The 30-inch barrel went 2 pounds 9 ounces, the fore-end 7.2 ounces. This one balances just a fraction in front of the rear of the chamber. I shot this one with several different steel and lead loads, including my light 1150 feet per second 1 ounce reloads in the Federal paper case. There were no malfunctions.

Specifications
Gauge: 12 gauge only at this time
Action: Gas-operated semi-auto with Nickel-Teflon coated parts to further insure reliability
Barrel: All are 30-inches
Screw Chokes: Five supplied, Skeet, Improved Cylinder, Light Modified, Modified and Full
Price: $1242
Manufacturer: Remington Arms, 870 Remington Drive, Madison, NC 27025 on the web www.remington.com

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