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DoubleTap™

DERRINGER

A 2-SHOT, DEEP-COVER GUN.

J. B. WOOD

The first cartridge-firing 2-shot derringer was made nearly 150 years ago. The Remington of 1866 had a long production run, all the way to 1935. Its .41 rimfire cartridge, weak by today's standards, still must have settled numerous gambling-table altercations. It was single action and therefore required the hammer to be fully cocked for each shot.

Even earlier, in 1861, Remington's William Elliot had designed other multi-shot derringers that were double-action-only, the "ring-trigger" models in .22 Short and .32 rimfire. They were mechanically complex and had problems, and were made for only a short time. Collectors now prize those still in working order.

Exactly a 100 years later, the High

Standard company introduced a 2-shot .22 derringer that was DAO, and it was made until 1983. In the mid-1980's, there was briefly a nice derringer of this type in .38 Special, designed by Bob Hillberg for the Bellmore-Johnson Tool Company.

This little history brings us to the ultimate space-age version, the DoubleTap. It has a DAO firing



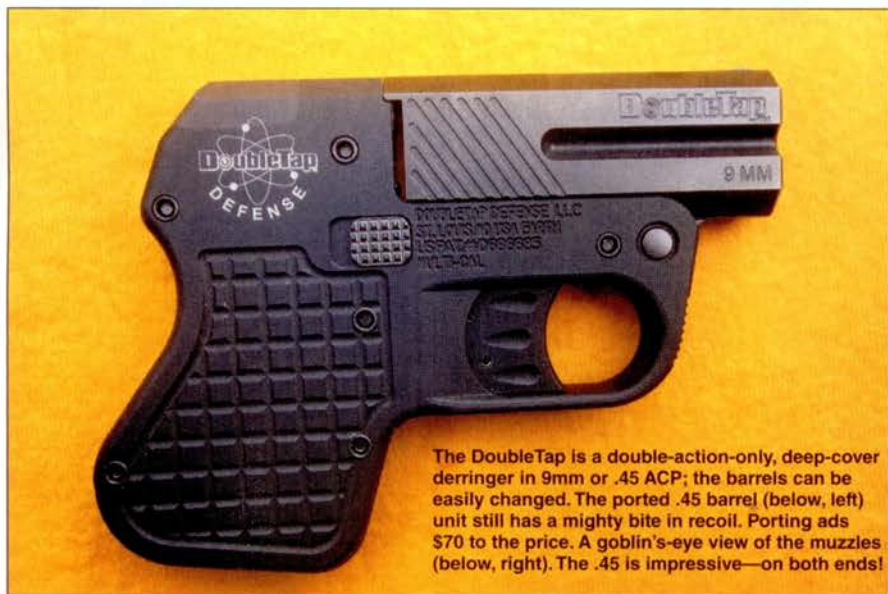
Two loading strips are provided with the DoubleTap, a 6-round for the pocket and 2-round one that neatly fits in the butt compartment.

system and is initially offered in two healthy chamberings: .45 ACP and 9x19mm. Actually, you can have it in both if you purchase an extra barrel unit. They are easy to change by simply pushing out the spring-retained pivot pin.

The maker of the DoubleTap, now an independent outfit, began as a division of a large high-tech company. The fit and finish are superb and there are several mechanical-design surprises. One example is the system used to alternately fire the two rounds: Two separate internal hammers. All of the other derringers use some variation of Elliott pivoting striker-piece in a single hammer. The DoubleTap system is stronger.

The latch that releases the barrel unit to spring up for loading is located at mid-frame, with low-profile buttons on both sides. Measuring across the buttons, the widest point width is 0.665-inch. For concealed-carry "flatness" in .45 or 9mm, I don't think anything can match it.

The sights will probably never be used, but they're there—a low ramped front, and a square-picture groove in the rear top of the frame. The frame is aluminum, and the barrel unit is stainless steel, both finished in matte black. There is cross grooving on the front of the triggerguard and grip-frame, and the sides have wide checkering. Side openings at the rear edge of the barrel unit let you see the rims of loaded rounds.



The DoubleTap is a double-action-only, deep-cover derringer in 9mm or .45 ACP; the barrels can be easily changed. The ported .45 barrel (below, left) unit still has a mighty bite in recoil. Porting adds \$70 to the price. A goblin's-eye view of the muzzles (below, right). The .45 is impressive—on both ends!

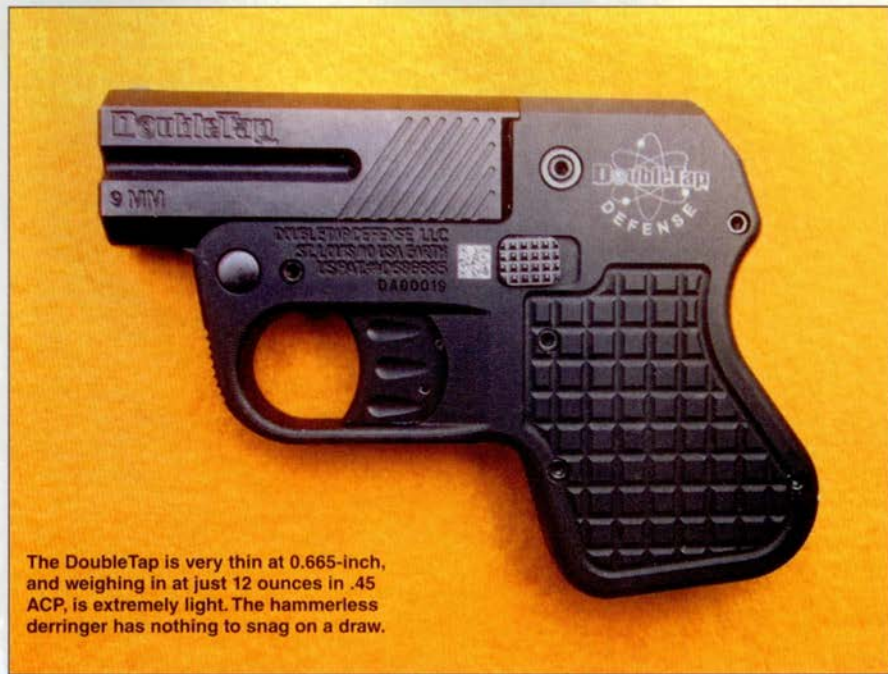


The DA pull of the sliding trigger is fast and easy. However, if you need to carefully aim, a slow pull will allow you to use a slight hesitation-point at the end of the stroke. Some gun-people advise against “staging” the trigger in this way, but I see nothing wrong with it. It could be useful in some situations.

Along with the DoubleTap you also get two “loading strips” in 2-round and 6-round capacity. The 2-round strip fits neatly into a closed compartment in the butt of the frame. With the gun in hand, it is instantly accessible for a quick reload. Near the compartment latch in the backstrap, a recessed crosspin lets you attach a lanyard.

My DoubleTap came with a ported .45-barrel unit, and I had also requested a regular 9mm unit. I knew in a 12-ounce pistol, the felt recoil of a .45 was going to be fierce. Wearing a glove, with a 2-hand hold, I fired it twice at the 8-inch black of a Champion VisiShot target. At 7 yards, both shots were in the black, 5 inches apart.

At that point, I decided my hand-bones—nearly 80 years old—should not be subjected to further stress. So, I removed the .45 barrel unit, and installed the one in 9mm chambering.



The DoubleTap is very thin at 0.665-inch, and weighing in at just 12 ounces in .45 ACP, is extremely light. The hammerless derringer has nothing to snag on a draw.

This operation is extremely simple. You open the barrel unit push out the spring-retained pivot pin, take off the unit, put the other one in place and put the pin back.

With 9mm, the felt recoil was still brisk, but not as fearsome as the .45.

All of the groups had the two rounds in a 2- or 3-inch measurement. One of them, with the trigger “staged,” was dead center and measured 1 inch. I doubt I could do that again. Even so, for a derringer, it’s surprising accuracy.

DOUBLETAP

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Action: O/U Derringer, **Caliber:** .45 ACP or 9mm, **Capacity:** 2, **Weight:** 12 ounces, **Length:** 5.5 inches, **Height:** 3.9 inches, **Width:** 0.665 inch, **Finish:** Matte black, **Barrels:** Stainless steel, **Frame:** Aluminum (tested) or titanium, **Price:** \$499 (base model)



An opening at the breech face (above) lets you see when chambers are loaded. A surprising 1-inch group (below) with the 9mm barrels fired at 7 yards. The DoubleTap can really shoot.



The suggested retail price of the standard DoubleTap is also surprising—just \$499. And for this sort of high-tech precision, not bad at all. The price of an extra barrel unit is \$199, and if you want porting, that will add about \$70. A titanium-frame version is available, and as you would expect, it costs quite a bit more.

I think it's inevitable the DoubleTap will be later offered in other chamberings, and I'd like to suggest one: .327 Federal Magnum. That would also allow the use of three other .32 cartridges. One of them, the little .32 S&W, could even be used as a "practice" round.

No one, of course, is going to carry a 2-shot derringer as a primary carry. The DoubleTap, though, would be a superb backup piece. And, in regard to the substantial recoil, I'm sure it's true what they say—in a moment of extreme peril, you simply won't notice it.

GUNS