

HAILSTORM OF LEAD STOEGER'S P-350

>>>>> Cruiser-ready scattergun packing a magnum-



DEFENSE

sized **12 GAUGE PUNCH!**

The Stoeger P-350 Defense is a hardy and robust 3½" chambered 12 gauge shotgun capable of firing a wide-range of specialty loadings, making the pump-action scattergun an ideal LE tactical tool.

By Michael O. Humphries • Photos by Steve Woods

With a history dating back nearly a century, the name Stoeger is one that is very familiar in firearm enthusiast circles. From its earliest days importing German Lugers into the United States, Stoeger has built a reputation upon scouring the world for high-quality, unique products and bringing them here to the U.S. market. Currently under the ownership of Benelli USA and part of the Beretta family of firearm manufacturers, Stoeger continues its storied tradition through to today. And that tradition is still based upon the recognition that shooters here in the U.S. value well-made and robust firearms that are affordably priced. Although the bulk of Stoeger's offerings are geared toward the sporting market, it also imports



STOEGER'S P-350 DEFENSE



The curved pistol grip of the P-350 Defense features generous molded-in grasping grooves. The action release lever is in its forward portion of the triggerguard.



The synthetic buttstock features a 1" thick recoil pad to help absorb the potentially heavy recoil of the lightweight 3½" chambered P-350 Defense.

SPECIFICATIONS

STOEGER P-350 DEFENSE

Gauge: 12, 3½-inch chamber • **Barrel:** 18.5 inches
OA Length: 39.75 inches (pistol-gripped stock), 40.25 inches (traditional stock)
Weight: 6.4 pounds (empty) • **Stock:** Synthetic • **Sights:** Blade front • **Action:** Pump
Finish: Matte black • **Capacity:** 3+1 (3½-inch), 4+1 (3-inch), 5+1 (2¾-inch) • **Price:** \$329

a small but dedicated line of "Defense" firearms under its "Specialty Models" division. These weapons offer an excellent line of defense-oriented products that are designed to serve admirably while not breaking the bank.

GUN DETAILS

A terrific example of this is the P-350 Defense, a tough and reliable pump-action shotgun ideally suited for law enforcement use and quite reasonably priced. The P-350 Defense is based off of the company's P-350 Pump sporting shotgun. Like the sporting models, the P-350

Defense is manufactured in Istanbul by Stoeger Silah Sanayi AS (formerly known as Vursan). This company knows its way around quality manufacturing, having produced tough and reliable shotguns for around two decades.

Although affordable pump-action shotguns are not necessarily that revolutionary, the P-350 Defense does have a few aces in its corner to help set it apart from the competition. First and foremost is the chambering. The P-350 Defense is based off the Stoeger P-350, a tough, polymer-stocked shotgun designed for heavy-duty waterfowling as well as for turkey and medium-sized game hunting, it is cham-

bered for the 3½-inch 12 gauge shell, giving the maximum payload possible in a reasonably sized shotgun.

The P-350 Defense takes advantage of this characteristic, albeit in a much more compact, tactically oriented package. The result is a defensive-style pump-action shotgun that is capable of firing not only 2¾-inch and 3-inch shells, but also full-length 3½-inch shells. In this department, the P-350 Defense has few peers in the law enforcement shotgun market (apart from rare examples such as its



The thick-walled barrel of the P-350 Defense sports a fixed Cylinder Bore choke and a tall blade-style front sight.

cousins, the Benelli SuperNova Tactical and Benelli Nova Pump shotguns).

Apart from the P-350 Defense's chambering, one of the most surprising characteristics of the shotgun is its retail price—\$329. For this paltry price point, you can choose between two 18.5-inch barreled variants of the design: one with a traditional polymer stock and another with a more contemporary pistol-gripped polymer stock assembly. Both variants share the vaguely Benelli-like lines, which should come as no surprise considering the two companies' familial ties.

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STOEGER'S P-350 DEFENSE



The safety of the shotgun is a simple crossbolt push button assembly located at the rear of the triggerguard. Note the exposed red ring on the safety indicating the shotgun is ready to fire.

The pistol-gripped P-350 measures 39.75 inches, while the traditional measures 40.25 inches. Both shotguns weigh a feather-light 6.4 pounds, offering law enforcement users a powerful yet compact and handy scattergun that would be just at home in a cruiser's gun rack as it would in the hands of a SWAT operator.

I recently had an opportunity to test out the design for myself, in particular the conventional-stock variant. Upon first handling the gun, I was struck by its extremely light weight — particularly considering its powerful 3½-inch 12 gauge chambering. I also was struck by the apparent quality of the gun. This one just simply exudes attention to detail.

The P-350 Defense sports an evenly applied matte-black finish on all metal parts along with a black polymer stock set with a matching matte-black surface. The pistol grip portion of the stock of the shotgun sports generous molded-in ribs. The stocks of both the pistol-gripped and conventional-stocked variants feature a 1-inch-thick ventilated recoil pad.

The key to the P-350 Defense's light-weight is its receiver, manufactured from 7012-T6 aluminum alloy. To allow for the use of aluminum in the receiver, the P-350 Defense employs a steel barrel extension into which the steel bolt of the shotgun locks. The bolt itself, manufactured from SAE 4140 steel, employs a multi-lugged rotating bolt head that locks into a recess machined into the steel barrel extension.

VERSATILITY

Flexibility is a recurring theme with the P-350 Defense. With its long 3½-inch chamber, it is fully capable of firing shells ranging from the lightest 2¾-inch birdshot shell to the most powerful 3½-inch buck-shot or slug shell. In addition, the fact that

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STOEGER'S P-350 DEFENSE

it is a pump action makes it capable of firing law enforcement-specific shells, such as less-lethal and other specialty loadings.

At first glance, the P-350 Defense would likely appear to most to be a semi-automatic due to its lengthy forend that extends fully back to the forward portion of the receiver. This design has many advantages, offering added protection for the steel magazine tube under the barrel as well as extra purchase for the support hand of the user. The forend itself, manufactured from black polymer, features generous grasping grooves molded directly in to the body of the part.

With the extended length of the rear portion of the forend, a "forend slider" unit manufactured from aluminum sits around the rear portion of the magazine tube just forward of the receiver. This sturdy block acts as reinforcement for the rear portion of the forend as well as a guide for the twin action bars of the shotgun to help prevent binding.

Although twin action bars are the norm these days, the P-350 Defense's deserve



Note the "forend slider" extension forward of the receiver designed to act as guides for the twin action bars as well as a support for the extended-length forend.

rear sight. However, the top of the alloy receiver does have a grooved sighting plane along its top.

Under the barrel is the tubular magazine, extending roughly $\frac{3}{4}$ of the length of the barrel. Total shell capacity of the steel tube is three ($3\frac{1}{2}$ -inch), four (3-inch) or five ($2\frac{3}{4}$ -inch) shells.

Topping off the tube is a sturdy aluminum magazine cap with an integral steel sling swivel stud that works in concert with an integral sling attachment point in the bottom of the buttstock.

Operation of the P-350 Defense is simple and straightforward, as is the norm with most pump-action shotguns. To load the shotgun, one feeds shells up through the bottom of the action and into the tubular magazine.

Primary controls of the shotgun are made up of a simple crossbolt safety located in the rear portion of the polymer triggerguard. To *(Please turn to page 98)*

note. The bars are part of a one-piece design that Stoeger dubs the "slider." Manufactured from SAE 4140 steel, this one-piece unit measures 14.75 inches in overall length and is connected at both ends for rigidity and embedded directly into the forend.

OPERATION

The front end of the P-350 Defense is made up of an 18.5-inch barrel with very thick walls. The barrel sports a fixed cylinder bore choke and is topped off with a blade-style front sight with no matching

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STOEGER'S P-350 DEFENSE

Continued from page 68

take the gun "off" safe, one simply pushes it from right to left — exposing a red ring around the button that indicates the shotgun is ready to fire. An action release lever is located in the forward right portion of the triggerguard.

RANGE TIME

I took the P-350 Defense out to the range with some 3-inch Federal Premium Vital Shok 00 buckshot to put it through its paces, as well as a few boxes of 2¾-inch and 3½-inch buckshot shells from several manufacturers to test for function.


As I suspected would be the case, the light weight of the shotgun combined with the powerful chambering made the P-350 Defense a handful in the recoil department — particularly with the longer shells. During patterning at 25 yards, I discovered that the P-350 Defense loaded with the Federal Premium shells exhibited consistently even patterns that kept well within a 22-inch circle.

I did note in particular that I had a tendency to hit a little low with my patterns, no doubt attributable to the extremely tall front sight and no matching rear sight. A ghost ring rear sight unit would have been a welcome addition, or simply a bead front sight sitting lower on the barrel.

The handling characteristics of the P-350 Defense were excellent with the curved-grip stock and thick recoil pad helping keep the lively gun as manageable as would be possible with so much power. All controls function positively, although I did note that the safety button and the action release lever were a little small.

The functioning of the P-350 Defense was also excellent, with all three lengths of shells functioning well in the shotgun, although I would recommend downloading the tube by one shell when using 3½-inch shells, as I had a few double feeds at the start when I had it loaded with four shells in the tube.

FINAL NOTES

For those looking for a high-quality tactical shotgun that does not cost a lot of money, the Turkish-made P-350 Defense should make for an excellent choice. Combining excellent quality control, good performance, robust reliability and the capability of firing a wide range of 12 gauge shells, the P-350 Defense would be right at home in any law enforcement, tactical or self-defense role. Check it out at stoegerindustries.com or call 800-264-4962. 

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