



The success of the **1301 Comp** model led to the Pro version making it ready for 3-gun matches from the box.

## REVIEW

# BERETTA 1301 COMP PRO GEN 2

A HIGH-PERFORMING, FUN TO SHOOT 3-GUN READY SHOTGUN

BY ARON BRIGHT, A51967

**T**he Beretta 1301 Comp Pro Gen 2 arrived at Parabellum in the hard case and disassembled. My mechanical abilities and gunsmith strengths are very limited; however, I was able to get the shotgun assembled without much difficulty. A tube extension was ordered for the shotgun because shooting a semi-auto shotgun with a low capacity is a little like shooting

revolver. The shooting is fun until you have to reload, and that was happening way too soon. A Nordic MXT extension was added to the shotgun to increase capacity to nine rounds in the tube. Other than the MXT extension, the gun remained in factory condition. This will be my first time dealing with “The Gauge” in the pages for USPSA Magazine. I’m looking forward to seeing how this journey goes.

The success of the 1301 Comp model led to the Pro version making it ready for 3-gun matches from the box. The 1301 Comp Pro includes a new polymeric stock with the Kick-Off Plus system consisting of two elastomer dampeners complete with return springs, positioned near the rubber insert, which effectively mitigates the first recoil peak, reducing the perceived recoil by up to 40 percent according to Beretta. A third elastomer dampener, located in the stock bolt, absorbs the impact of the slide against the stock, thus reducing the second recoil peak, muzzle jump and any vibrations caused by the movement of the slide. This was very noticeable while shooting the gun. It was comfortable to shoot, it was very stable and easy to swing with this stock.

The Beretta 1301 Comp Pro has an overall length of 47 inches with the extended magazine tube. The length of pull is 14 inches, which some shooters and firearms instructors think is a little bit long; however, this length of pull seemed perfect to me. (If you have alligator arms, 14 inches may be a little long for you.) The synthetic stock has an attachment point for a sling on the bottom about four inches from the butt pad, which is unlikely to be utilized in the competition world. The synthetic forearm is 10.5 inches long.

The B-Steady system divides the stock into two sections, butt and forearm. According to Beretta, the recoil absorption point is in an advanced position, moving in unison with the forearm. This makes it free to move back, leaving the butt stable and avoiding any annoying rubbing of the comb against the cheek. The cheek remains still and rests perfectly without ever losing the line of fire.

Beretta website states that for more comfort, the comb comes with Soft Comb, a soft insert which is gentle against the cheek. The rubber Comfort Grip improves sensitivity and pistol grip, and the spacers provided allow the drop and cast to be adjusted. The MicroCore recoil plate ensures perfect shouldering and maximum stability when shooting, and allows for the possibility to adjust the stock's length to suit your requirements using the two spacers provided. The ergonomic Comfort Grip forend, also made of polymer with a rubber

insert, offers maximum grip even in poor weather conditions.

The receiver of this Beretta 1301 is blue in color, is thick and has a rugged feel about it. It has been drilled to have a scope mounted on the receiver if one is desired. The four threaded holes can also be used to add a Picatinny rail. The bolt release is located on the right side of the receiver and sits at the forward end. The bolt release is rectangular in shape and a generous size, making hitting it simple. This bolt handle rides on the right side as well and is large and easy to grip in a hurry. Beretta states that “the blue anodized Ergal stock combines lightness with extreme robustness and reliability, and inside houses the reloading system, the ultra-tested gas system with rotating head B-Link closure system, which has a 36 percent faster cycling speed than any other semi-automatic; it is reliable and accurate round after round, even with light loads.”

The safety is enlarged to the point that it is as large as a fingertip. It sits at the top front of the trigger guard, which is a traditional location. Hitting the safety when picking up the shotgun is easy and nearly fumble-proof, due to its large size. If the shotgun is in the hands and the shooter has a good register position with the trigger finger, that puts the finger near the safety for smoothness when deactivating it. The Beretta 1301 safety's location and size are well thought out. The trigger is stainless in appearance and seems to be a solid hunk of steel. The trigger feels robust and durable to the touch. It breaks cleanly and is smooth. Perhaps a shotgun trigger is not as crucial as the trigger on a pistol or a rifle; however, this trigger is fine and will not disappoint. The shooting on the range made this clear and incontrovertible. The 1301 Comp Pro has a three-inch chamber, but uses an oversized 3.5-inch stock which facilitates cartridge loading, according to Beretta. Another feature that you cannot overlook is the ability to quickly load and do the quad-loads even easier; the loading gate has been enlarged and the lifter has a system which keeps it raised during loading operations, thus creating a sort of “chute” for the ammunition, which also eliminates the risk of the user pinching their thumb between the lever and the gate.



The Beretta 1301 Comp has a raised rib that is 23.5 inches long. A green fiber optic sight sits at the end of the barrel. There is a smaller metal post half-way back on the rib to aid in aiming. The Beretta website also lists that the ballistic performance of the 1301 Comp Pro takes full advantage of the Beretta Steelium barrel's exceptional features: “Created using Beretta's exclusive tri-alloy steel (Ni, Cr, Mo), deep drilling, cold hammer forging, vacuum distension and characterised by the elongated 80 mm double forcing cone. The internal profile of the OptimaBore HP barrels was designed and tested to guarantee excellent ballistic performance with all types of ammunition, lead, steel and High Performance steel. The result is pattern distributions which are always dense and perfect, partly thanks to the three interchangeable OptimaChoke HP Black Edition choke tubes it is supplied with, making it possible to adjust the choke depending on the competition.”

Overall, this Beretta 1301 Comp has a very traditional look about it. It has a black synthetic stock and forearm rather than wood furniture, but other than that it looks

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like a traditional shotgun. The 1301 is a fine-looking gun that appears functional without being over the top in any way. The safety, bolt release, and bolt racker are all located in good places in order to be user friendly. The 1301 is an ergonomic gun that feels good in the hands. Handling this gun at home in the gun room made my mouth water just a little in anticipation of shooting it.



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THE BEST IN HEARING ENHANCEMENT

The range session this time around was a little unusual because Jake was out of town and I was nearly on my own. I had young Royce Bright along to supervise and run the timer. The ammo used exclusively for this range session was Federal Field and Target shells. The shot size was seven and a half, 2-3/4 inches with 1-1/8 ounce of shot. The box claims 1200fps at the muzzle – I did not fire these rounds over the chronograph because I was not confident I could do it without destroying the chronograph. These shells ran flawlessly while the gun was in my hands; not a single malfunction at all. They were a little light for knocking down poppers at 15 yards, but that had nothing to do with the gun.

The first drill was to do some draws. I had both hands on the gun, safety on, stock on belt and the muzzle aligned with the target that was 15 yards distant. The times were 0.99, 0.78, 0.77, 0.64 and 0.75 seconds. Hitting the safety as the gun is coming to the shoulder was no problem at all. I was

trying to press the trigger as soon as the fiber optic sight was visible. Hitting the steel USPSA target was not an issue at all; better yet, I was not getting any pellets splashing back and hitting me. So far, everything was proceeding very well.

The next drill was to shoot three steel USPSA targets spaced out two yards apart at a distance of 15 yards with one round each. The shotgun was staged in a barrel with the safety on. I stood with hands below belt and directly behind the barrel. I have exactly zero 3-gun experience, and shooting a shotgun in such a manner is new to me. My shotgun experience is largely limited to Defensive Shotgun classes and shooting starlings and sparrows in the pasture or woods, which I have done many times. This shooting drill was a ton of fun and not a problem for a novice shooter. The times were 2.92, 2.38, 2.39, 2.36 and 2.47 seconds total time for the three shots. The gun came up smoothly and shouldered nicely. The length of pull on this gun suited me very well. The draw times on these runs were 2.20, 1.77, 1.76, 1.74 and 1.82 seconds respectively. I have no idea how strong or weak these draws and times are, but it was fun doing the shooting.

The next drill got a little tougher. I added four mini-poppers to the three-steel-target array, for a total of seven rounds needed to complete the shooting. The distance for all targets was 15 yards, and the width of the targets was 11 yards from left to right. The start position was shotgun in barrel with safety on, hands below belt, standing behind the gun. I shot the array from the left to the right every time. This order of engagement had me starting on the mini poppers and finishing on the full size targets. The times were 5.03, 4.33, and 4.56 seconds. The draw times were 2.04, 1.85 and 1.83 seconds. All targets were hit during these runs. One mini



popper failed to fall on the second run, so a bonus run was completed. The bonus run was 4.68 seconds with all four poppers down. The Beretta 1301 was running great, the shooting was a ton of fun, and I was burning through ammo pretty fast. Perhaps 3-Gun or Multi-Gun competition should be explored?

The next shooting test was shooting the same four-popper array, and then dumping the shotgun back into the barrel and engaging the steel USPSA targets with a handgun with two rounds each. The target array was at the same 15 yards of distance and 11 yards of width. The shotgun started in the barrel with the safety on and the same starting position that had become the norm. The times were 7.90, 6.85, and 6.61 seconds. The times for the first shot with the Beretta were 2.03, 1.83 and 1.78 seconds. I was using the M&P Pro in 9mm as the handgun. All hits were accomplished with both the shotgun and handgun. Manipulating the controls on the shotgun during these shooting exercises was not a problem because the controls are at an appropriate size and located in user-friendly locations on the gun. I re-engaged the safety as I dumped the shotgun. Even someone without any experience would have no problem making this gun run smoothly the first time on the range. This speaks to the quality of the Beretta 1301 and the engineering behind it.

The next shooting exercise was the ubiquitous Bill Drill. Start position was stock on belt, safety on, eyes looking past the muzzle at the target. Normally, Bill drills are shot at seven yards; however, shooting steel at seven yards did not seem attractive, so I just stayed put at 15 yards. The times were 2.01, 1.94 and 1.98 seconds. The fastest first shot was 0.88 seconds on the last run; the slowest first shot was 0.93 on the first attempt. The shooter had best set their feet and lean into the gun hard, or the gauge will push you around during such shooting, even with light loads. I wish Bill drills were so easy with a pistol. The next drill was to shoot a steel USPSA target with three rounds and then a second target

with three rounds, starting with the stock on the belt and the safety engaged. The times were 2.18, 1.92, and 2.02 seconds. The first shots were recorded as 0.88, 0.88, and 1.04 seconds. There seems to be a speed advantage starting with the gun in your hands. Imagine that! The last shooting drill was standing behind a barricade with the safety on and the muzzle resting on top of the barricade. I shot from the box directly behind the barricade around the right side. I engaged the three steel targets with one round each at the 15 yard distance. My times were 2.12, 1.85 and 1.86 seconds. This shooting position was a bit more awkward than the other drills, yet the gun was comfortable to shoot and ran just fine. At this point I was out of shells and so the shooting was done by default.

This was one of the more enjoyable shotgun sessions that I have had on the range. In order to have more fun, shooting birds would have to be included in the range time. I am thinking the tube loaded with number four shot and a pond at an apartment complex overrun with Canada geese would be an absolute blast, if not highly illegal.

The Beretta 1301 Comp ran for me without a hiccup. In the spirit of full disclosure, Royce shot around a dozen rounds as well, but experienced two malfunctions. He was using the same ammo, and the round in the chamber fired, but the gun did not cycle the next round to the chamber. I am certain that the issue was his 99 pounds of body weight and getting pushed around by the gun. Once I told him to set his feet and lean in harder, the gun ran for him as well. (Mass is a thing; any semi-auto gun has to have something to push against in order to run.) As I have stated, the gun ran without flaw in my hands even when leaning around the barricade at awkward angles. The Beretta 1301 was fun to shoot and it ran very well. The Nordic MXT extension also operated without a flaw.

If you are looking for a fun shooting semi-auto shotgun for 3-gun or just for fun, give the Beretta 1301 Comp Pro model a serious look. ■

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