

# GREEN MEANS GO

## VIRIDIAN'S X5L IS A COMPACT LIGHT/LASER COMBO THAT WORKS.

### THE WP99L WEAPON-MOUNTED LASER

I reviewed last year was the first example of a Viridian product I'd encountered. I was impressed with its quality and with the daylight capability of the green laser, which was clearly visible in broad daylight out to 75 or 100 yards, depending on the color of the target. But as much as I liked the quality of the unit and its daylight capabilities, I didn't like that it was weapon-specific.

I discussed my concerns with Brian Hedeem, Laser Aiming Systems' media relations guy. He explained that the company prefers weapon-specific units because they can make each unit a perfect fit for the frame of the pistol they're made for. But he understood my concern and promised that a more versatile version was in the works.

One year later, he fulfilled that promise with the new Viridian X5

laser, X5L light/laser combo and the X5SC for subcompact pistols, all of which fit on Weaver, Picatinny and Universal rails.

Brian sent me the X5L light/laser combo for testing. The sleek new unit is designed to work on all three rail systems, so I mounted it on a Springfield Armory Lightweight Operator, Smith & Wesson M&P and a Glock 19 to verify that claim.

It did, indeed, work on all three, and installing it was as simple as removing the adjustable forward mounting pin and the rear pin, sliding the unit on, re-installing the front pin (the rear pin is optional), and tightening the pin adjustment screw. It takes longer to read than it does to perform.

With the laser mounted, I adjusted the windage and elevation screws until the laser hit on top of my front sight at 15 yards. Then I set out to try

to master its controls, which consist of a pair of buttons on each side of the unit.

The X5L comes pre-programmed with the buttons on the right side as the activation buttons and the buttons on the left as the selector buttons. The unit is ambidextrous; hold the top buttons down for two seconds to switch selector side.

Figuring out the selector takes a bit of study. For right-handed shooters, you would set it up so the right side switches activate the light and laser in whichever mode you have set up on the selector side (the top and bottom switch do the exact same thing—the one you choose is a function of hand size).

The top selector button allows you to choose between five laser modes: constant beam, low-speed pulse, medium-speed pulse, rapid pulse and off. The bottom selector allows

## Ed Brown 8-Pack Magazines

There is no shortage of 1911 magazine manufacturers. But there is a shortage of quality magazines. Ed Brown's magazines are among the best but, sadly, Ed offered only seven-round magazines until last year. His new eight-round, 8-Pack magazine was worth the wait.

The 8-Pack is built on a heat-treated, stainless steel body. The body has been slightly lengthened to accommodate the eighth round, though the magazine looks shorter thanks to a tough polymer base pad that wraps around the magazine tube. The pad slides off with the push of a button to facilitate disassembly for cleaning.

Like all Ed Brown magazines, the 8-Pack features a heavy-duty spring and a rounded, steel follower. The magazine body has a slick proprietary finish to facilitate faster reloads. It also repels dirt and powder. Witness holes are laser-engraved with the numbers 2 through 8 on both sides so you can see how many rounds are left in the magazine.

The base plate is also numbered with a digital, scoreboard-style 88. By filling in the appropriate "slots" on the eights with colored paint, you can number your magazines from 0 to 99.



Rodriguez particularly liked the 8-Pack's numbered witness holes and the magazine's slick finish.

I left my sample magazine in my range bag for the last four months. I used it in a variety of 1911s and ran about 350 rounds through it. I never cleaned it once, nor did I baby it, yet the 8-Pack never failed to feed or lock back the slide. I ejected it onto the pavement many times during my training sessions without issue, even though the magazine was often partially loaded.

A test of one magazine is hardly scientific, but quality of the 8-Pack's components was so good that I feel comfortable recommending it.—GR

Viridian's newest light/laser is a universal model that will fit any gun with a rail. The author's only real complaint was he wished the controls were easier to access.

you to choose between five light settings: off, high out-

put (100 lumens), medium, low and strobe (140 lumens).

Once you've selected your modes, each time you engage the activation switch it will come on in that mode. To switch to the momentary mode, hold the activation button down for three-quarters of a second and the Viridian will turn off as soon as you release the button. It is a bit complicated at first, but once you set it up it is good to go.

I played with the X5L off and on



for several weeks. I was impressed with its light weight and the quality of its construction.

The laser was bright and easy to see beyond normal defensive distances, even in bright sunlight. The light was bright enough to search a typical household room and more than

The X5L mounts on any accessory rail. The forward pin (top) fits in the rail's cross slot. The exposed adjustment screw (center) tightens the rail.

brilliant enough to temporarily disorient a bad guy in low light. On the range, it held its zero perfectly.

My only complaint has to do with the X5L's switches. They are very small and difficult to feel, which could cause some difficulty in high-stress situations. They are also a tough reach for my small hands and short fingers.

My taller friends fared better, but they weren't crazy about the switches either—agreeing they should be bigger and easier to reach. If possible, I would like to see the switches on the back of the light.

My ergonomic complaints aside, the X5L is an excellent tool. It is light, well-constructed and gives users in need of a light and laser a tool that meets their needs. And, unlike most of their competitors' lasers, the Viridian works as well under bright lights as it does in the dark.

For those of us who see the benefits of weapon-mounted lasers and lights, the 24-hour-capable X5L is a must-have.

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