

GUN TESTS REPORT CARD



Marlin Original Golden 39A Lever Action .22 LR, \$395 retail
GUN TESTS GRADE: C

All in, we think the Marlin Original Golden 39A is a good gun for an adult, mainly because its weight requires some strength to tote around and to work the lever. For those same reasons, we wouldn't recommend it for youths or smaller shooters, however. The supplied scope base and hammer extension cry out for this gun to be shot with optics, and if you add glass and find the right ammo, this might very well be a tackdriver, if our accuracy tests with two brands is any indication.



Browning BL-22 Grade II Lever Action .22 LR, \$567
GUN TESTS GRADE: B+

This was a lightweight, nice-handling product that has eye appeal. For juniors and small adults, we'd pick it over the Henry. The grooved receiver top, which would allow easy installation of a scope in rimfire rings, gives it an edge over the Marlin and Henry guns—it has better aesthetics than the Weaver mount on the Marlin, and the Henry really has no provision for mounting a scope. However, we dinged it because the front sight was so small that some testers needed optics to shoot it well. In our view, it has bet-

ter cosmetics than the robust Marlin, and some will say better than the Henry, whose ostentatious brass receiver is either very cool, or over the top, depending on your taste. Three things would really make this gun sweet: a thin black-rubber buttpad, which when installed could also change the stock pitch; a trigger job, and a scout-type low magnification scope. The price difference is significant, and perhaps larger than the MSRPs show. This gun was listed at \$695 retail at Fountain, a likely result of their scarcity, and that big price tag scared us off.



Henry Gold Boy Lever Action No. H004 .22 LR, \$480
GUN TESTS GRADE: A-

In many ways, this gun hit the middle between the Browning and the Marlin, and, accordingly it offers the best choice for many shooters. It weighed a little less than the Marlin but more than the Browning. It shot one ammo the best—the Marlin was best with two others, and the Browning wasn't great, nor horrible, with anything. It had great open sights, but no provision for mounting optics like the other two. But when it came time to buy or not buy, our team considered this gun first in fun. They had a blast shooting .45 brass off a log with it, and they loved the way it operated and handled. If you want to play

Gus McRae and Woodrow Call with your son or daughter on a small scale, then our team believes the Henry is the right choice.