

ning the hot-.45 realm, with much hotter factory .45 Long Colt loads available over the counter. We suggest that the shooter of this gun will be much happier in the long run with normal, not maximum, loads.

The trigger was wide and smooth, and the hammer was serrated, not checkered. We'd have preferred checkering, as on the easy-cocking Colt Cowboy. Sure you can hang your thumb over the top to cock it, but we'd rather not shift our grip to cock a single action, and this hammer lets our thumb slide off the side.

Another point of contention is the retention screw for the base pin. To remove the cylinder for cleaning, you need a screwdriver. That's not too handy in the field. Although a screw is better than a spring-loaded plunger for keeping the base pin secure under heavy recoil, we'd ask that Freedom consider a push-button release for this gun. That way you won't risk losing the screw if you have to disassemble the gun in the field.

Cimarron Model P

Our follow-up recommendation: This \$518 clone of a Colt SA looks great, fits the hand like a glove, and shoots well. However, we don't know how long it'll last, because our test shooting made it a whole lot looser than it was when it came in the door. Still, for the price it's hard to beat. Treat it well without lots of hot loads, and it'll probably last long enough.

Cimarron removes the finish from its "Original" finished Model P and distresses the wood to get it to look like an old, well-used Colt. The one-piece wood grips are here-and-there dinged up to look like the marks of honest usage. They fit the supporting metal extremely well. Everyone who saw this gun remarked how "authentic" it looks, but what they're actually saying is that it looks like an expensive old SA Colt that has seen lots of hard

ACCURACY & CHRONOGRAPH DATA			
Black Hills Cowboy Load, 250-gr. Lead RNFP	Freedom Arms 97	Colt Cowboy	Cimarron Model P
Average Velocity (10 ft.)	779 fps	719 fps	694 fps
Standard Deviation	6 fps	21 fps	7 fps
Muzzle Energy	340 ft.-lbs.	285 ft.-lbs.	270 ft.-lbs.
Smallest Group, 15 yds.	2.3 in.	1.2 in.	1.4 in.
Largest Group	3.2 in.	1.4 in.	4.9 in.
Average Group	2.7 in.	1.3 in.	2.9 in.
Remington 225-gr. Lead Semiwadcutter	Freedom Arms 97	Colt Cowboy	Cimarron Model P
Average Velocity (10 ft.)	934 fps	893 fps	842 fps
Standard Deviation	8 fps	10 fps	22 fps
Muzzle Energy	435 ft.-lbs.	400 ft.-lbs.	355 ft.-lbs.
Smallest Group, 15 yds.	1.1 in.	3.4 in.	1.7 in.
Largest Group	3.3 in.	5.4 in.	2.7 in.
Average Group	2.0 in.	4.4 in.	2.1 in.
Handload: 10.0 Unique CCI 300 primer, 250-gr. Lead RNFP	Freedom Arms 97	Colt Cowboy	Cimarron Model P
Average Velocity (10 ft.)	1055 fps	1032 fps	966 fps
Standard Deviation	33 fps	28 fps	27 fps
Muzzle Energy	620 ft.-lbs.	585 ft.-lbs.	520 ft.-lbs.
Smallest Group, 15 yds.	1.1 in.	1.0 in.	1.1 in.
Largest Group	2.5 in.	7.0 in.	3.0 in.
Average Group	1.6 in.	1.2 in.	2.4 in.

Note: The Freedom leaded, giving less than its expected accuracy.

use over the last 100 years or so, and instead of having the multi-thousand-dollar price tag of the old Colt, the Cimarron costs only \$518. Hey, I can afford it!

We can't fault the finish of the Cimarron because there is none, except for whatever they put on the gun to prevent rust. The overall metal fit is well done. However, cowboys didn't carry old guns by choice. Bank robbers and lawmen alike got the best and newest handguns they could find, because their lives depended on them. Their guns got old-looking with time. Still, the Cimarron does offer that aged look, with one big difference. The innards are brand-spanking new.

The gun fits the hand like it belongs there, thanks to the excellent fit of the one-piece wood grip with their smooth finish. The

Cimarron resembles an original Colt so closely, and feels so similar, that further comment on pointability or handling is needless. If you've handled a Colt SA, you've handled the Cimarron. Cimarron got lots of details on their Model P amazingly close to details of original Colts made around the turn of the last century. The trigger guard, for example, is rounded on the bottom like they were on Colt SAs of that period. The pattern of the checkering on the hammer is exactly right. The rounded fronts of the chambers are also precisely correct. Yet Cimarron could do two things to make this gun an even closer ringer for the old Colt. One is to offer a replacement base pin to avoid the look of the "safe" system mandated by import laws, and two is to make the firing pin