

about each wheelgun. Here's what we found:

H&R 1871's Sportsman 999

Our recommendation: Conditional Buy. Most inexpensive guns are just not worth buying. That's not the case here. The Sportsman 999 retails for only \$280 and could make an ideal first gun, especially for a youngster. The downside is that compared to the others, the 999 is a little rough.

Skeptical as we were about a break-top revolver that opens by pushing up the rear sight, the Sportsman 999 from H&R 1871, Inc. proved itself worthy of our attention. Listed as gray in color, its finish is a case-hardened look with subtle, well-executed engravings and venting machined into the top strap. The company lets the buyer know that this gun is made totally in the USA, and to our eyes, the metal work appears to be quite good.

Pins and stakes that protrude from the frame have been peened in such a way to give the gun a hand-made look. The two-piece wood grip is highly polished and blended expertly onto the frame. As old-fashioned as this gun is, a trigger stop is provided. A telltale sign of a cheap firearm is rough edges, but even the most squared-off surfaces found on this gun were smooth.

Another sore point on cheap guns is a poorly finished crown, but happily the muzzle on this gun is properly finished and wisely inset with a rounded finish. The sides of the rear sight were lined to provide grip when pushing it up to unlatch the cylinder and barrel portion from the frame. After the assembly is tipped up past the loading point (at a 45-degree angle), the ejector rod begins to protrude and push out the empty shells. They can then be picked out or easily shaken to the ground once the gun is broken in.

The rear sight is adjustable for windage with a push-pull system controlled by an Allen screw on each side. We are not a big fan of

H&R 1871 SPORTSMAN 999

Price....\$280



Our recommendation: Worth a look. This is a good beginner's gun, and it's affordable.

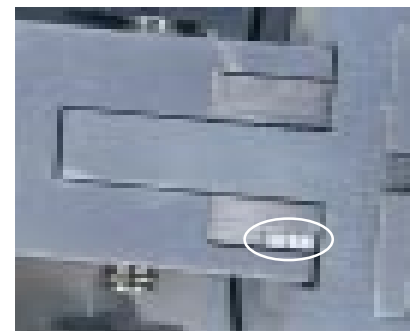
1.5 in. Grip Thickness
5.2 in. Grip Circumference
3.5 in. Back Strap Height

SPECIFICATIONS

WARRANTY	1 yr. or Lifetime
METAL FINISH	Gray
FRAME MATERIAL	Steel
WEIGHT	24 oz.
CAPACITY	9
GRIP MATERIAL	Walnut
ACTION TYPE	SA/DA
TRIGGER PULL DA	12 lbs.
TRIGGER PULL SA	2.5 lbs.



To open the 999, unlock the topstrap by raising the rear sight (top and middle), and lift the action open.



The release catches the top of the frame, scarring it.

The 999 requires the shooter to use a low grip. Otherwise, the hammer hit the web.

