

The Ruger was the all-around champ. Its sight picture was the best compromise between the modern configuration and authentic period construction. The EAA Bounty Hunter actually has the best sights, but was hampered by a poor trigger that was ultimately painful to operate. Some groups were shot left handed in deference to the pain, but to our cowboy's credit, some of the best groups from the Bounty Hunter were the result. The Cimarron Model P was nearly the Ruger's equal despite having the vaguest sight picture. Had all three guns offered the latest Bo-Mar rib we can't be sure the pecking order would have changed, but groups would certainly have tightened. Because of the level of eye-strain experienced by the test shooters, the tightest group was more often than not the first group fired out of the five allotted per each brand of ammunition.

The biggest surprise was not that the Ruger shot the best, but that the tightest groups were recorded with rounds manufactured by the 3-D corporation. However, these were not the reloads that 3-D is known for, but instead were fresh ammo in Remington-Peters (R-P headstamp) cases. This 3-D Blue is a new product from the company. Black Hills' 250-grain RNFP were a tick behind and were very consistent for all three guns. The Federal Classic ammo (225-grain lead semi-wad-cutter hollow point) was the only brand that was packaged without period design. This round more closely resembled a hard-core defense load. It averaged a 2.5-inch group in all three guns and delivered hits at the highest energy level. Power factor for this ammo was at its highest fired from the Ruger Vaquero, computed to be above 205, about the same as a good bowling pin load.

European American Armory Bounty Hunter 44

Our recommendation: At only \$296, the lowest-priced gun in the test needs at least \$100

EAA Bounty Hunter 44

Retail Price...\$296

Our recommendation: Lacks fit and finish details. We'd pass.



SPECIFICATIONS

Warranty: Lifetime Ltd.

METAL FINISH	Blued/Case	SIGHT RADIUS	6 in.
WEIGHT (EMPTY)	40 oz.	CAPACITY	6 rds.
OVERALL LENGTH	10 in.	GRIP MATERIAL	Walnut
OVERALL HEIGHT	5.5 in.	OPTIONAL GRIPS	No
MAX. WIDTH	1.7 in.	ACTION TYPE	SA
BARREL LENGTH	4.5 in.	TRIGGER PULL Wt. SA	7 lbs.



Today's iron sights ask the shooter to align the target on or just above a three-dimensional jigsaw puzzle that includes the tops of the front and rear sight blades. The desired picture is one of a rectangle wider than taller that encloses two rectangular light bars evenly spaced underneath the desired point of impact. With its raised top strap the EAA Bounty Hunter comes closest to this modern design. The other two pistols combine the notch in their top straps with a thin front blade to challenge the eye to complete a triangle that features two slightly arched, rounded sides. (Editor's note: This photo was shot with a remote release; don't do this yourself.)

One of the EAA's biggest problems was the hammer, which bit the shooter's hand if he tried to move up on the grip. The trigger also needed recontouring.



worth of work, in our opinion. Though its fit was flawed, its accuracy was acceptable and could easily be improved.

This 4.5-inch revolver has all the

trimmings and looks like it will let you play cowboy, but it didn't really send us because we felt the case-hardened coloring looked too garish instead of antiqued. Likewise,