a notch in the hammer for the rear. Colt also produced many engraved presentation pieces with different finishes, but the most common Navy was as described.

We believe the makers today are trying to produce guns that are too inexpensive. If a shooter doesn't balk at spending over $500 for a good clone of a SAA, why would he want a poorly made copy of a Navy? The least expensive of our test guns had a suggested retail of $119, and at that price you can't expect a world-beater. However, this gun at least shot, and was lots of fun. We remember a man and his son some years ago trying to make a poor-quality percussion revolver work, but the gun was so badly made they couldn't even make it fire. This didn't do anything for the youngster's enjoyment or confidence, and totally spoiled the day for both father and son.

The grips of both the original 1851 Navy and original Colt SAA are essentially the same size and shape. Many gun makers produce excellent copies of the SAA, so you would think it would not be a big deal to produce the identical grip, in either steel or brass, for an 1851 Navy revolver. You would be wrong.

The sides of octagonal barrels are supposed to be completely and absolutely flat, and the corners should be sharp. Not one of the guns offered this, and the most expensive was the worst offender.

The Guns

We tested four copies of the Navy, two of them supposed "London" models. The guns were the $120 Cabela's 1851 Navy (made by Pietta in Italy), the $400 Colt BP Signature Series London Model (assembled by Colt BP in New York from Armi San Marco parts), Cimarron's $259 London Navy (by Uberti of Italy), and EMF's $135 version (made by Armi San Marco). The weights of all four guns were within 1.5 ounces of each other.

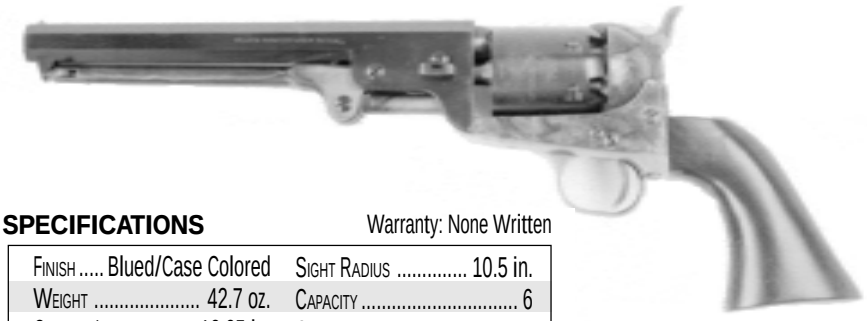
We first disassembled each gun into its three major components by pulling its barrel pin, removing the barrel assembly, and taking the cylinder off the base pin. We then cleaned out all the oil from the chambers and wiped the gun all over with solvent, and then rubbed the entire gun, inside and out, with Ox-Yoke Originals' Wonder Lube 1000 Plus, a black-powder lubrication that in our experience has proven to be a superior product for all muzzle-loading firearms. It gives easy cleanup and fine protection for all parts of all muzzleloaders. We greased the base pins with Lubriplate, then assembled the guns for our shooting and evaluation.

Loading

The usual recommended method of loading percussion revolvers today makes for a big mess, and is entirely unnecessary. It consists in seating the balls firmly over the powder charge, then filling the remaining space with grease to prevent cross-firing. The grease attracts all manner of dirt. If the powder charge is light, there's up to half an inch of grease within each chamber, and if the gun gets hot that grease will run out, creating an even bigger mess.

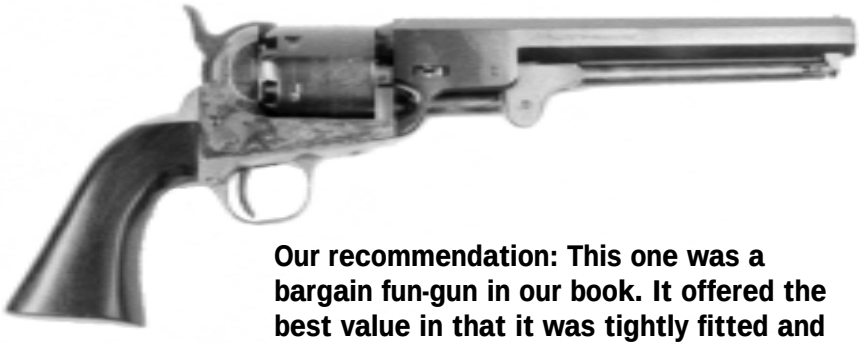
Long ago Elmer Keith wrote up the correct method of loading cap-and-ball revolvers in his book "Sixguns," and we adapted his method using modern and very effective components. We used only GOEX FFFg black powder in 15-, 20-, and 25-grain loads. We covered the powder with a pre-lubricated No. 3600 Ox-Yoke Wonder Wad, then rammed the ball down tightly on top of that. We used NO grease

CABELA'S 1851 NAVY .36 PERCUSSION — *Price.....$120*



SPECIFICATIONS Warranty: None Written

Finish	Blued/Case Colored	Sight Radius	10.5 in.
Weight	42.7 oz.	Capacity	6
Overall Length	13.25 in.	Grip Material	Wood
Overall Height	4.9 in.	Action Type	Single
Maximum Width	1.54 in.	Trigger Pull Wt.	5 lbs.
Barrel Length	7.5 in.	Trigger Reach	3 in.



Our recommendation: This one was a bargain fun-gun in our book. It offered the best value in that it was tightly fitted and shot well, though the grips were a bit off.