GUN TESTS®

THE CONSUMER RESOURCE FOR THE SERIOUS SHOOTER

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308 WIN. TRUCK GUNS

Some of us want a little more oomph in a behind-the-seat rifle. So here's a look at Ruger's SR-762 versus Springfield Armory's Socom 16. ● Page 6



45-70 LEVER ACTIONS

In this match up we tested three good rifles. We would buy Winchester's 1886 Limited Series if we could find one, but we also liked Henry's H010 and Marlin's stainless 1895GS. ● Page 11



CARRY REVOLVERS

Our team wanted to know if a five-shot 357 Magnum wheelgun, such as an SP101 or a Model 60-15, had an edge over a six-shot Ruger in 327 Federal Magnum. ● Page 17



BUNTLINE REVOLVERS

Ruger's Single-Six Convertible and the Heritage Rough Rider Combo are hoots to shoot. ● Page 21

DOWNRANGE: 2 ● FIRING LINE: 3 ● LIGHT 45 ACP LOADS: 25 ● SHORT SHOTS: 28 ● COMING UP: 32

DOWNRANGE

'CHOKE POINT' CHOKED OFF?



Todd Woodard

In early August, the NRA's Institute for Legislative Action released a substantial explanation of how the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC) had recently disavowed its list of so-called "high risk" merchant categories, which had come to light as part of a Department of Justice program called Operation Choke Point. We reported on that effort to restrict financial services for firearms and ammunition business in the July issue.

According to NRA-ILA, the FDIC released a new Financial Institution Letter purportedly aimed at "clarifying its supervisory approach to institutions establishing account relationships with third-party payment processors (TPPPs)." That was an attempt to walk back another Financial Institution Letter from 2011, which included a list of so-called "high risk" merchant categories for which banks servicing TPPPs were instructed to be on alert. The risky activities, according to FDIC, included firearm and ammunition sales. The regulators, of course, could not plausibly portray firearm or ammunition sales as inherently fraudulent in the same manner as other activities on the list, such as Ponzi schemes. Nevertheless, they claimed the activities posed "reputational risk" to the banks because some people consider them personally or politically objectionable, NRA-ILA said.

According to a report by the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee, the Department of Justice (DOJ) then launched Operation Choke Point to increase regulatory scrutiny of banks doing business with merchants on the list. The banks, fearing compliance costs and bad publicity that could arise from DOJ investigations, in turn began denying or severing business relationships with customers in the listed industries. As a result, a number of firearm-related businesses lost or were denied access to credit, without regard to their individual creditworthiness or financial performance.

An FDIC spokesman publicly blamed "misunderstandings" and "misinterpretations" for the explanatory warning list, and said the agency never meant to prevent banks from conducting transactions or providing services to the types of businesses on its list.

Sorry, I don't believe a word of that. There were not "misunderstandings" or "misinterpretations" in what was happening. Operation Choke Point attacked gun businesses because the administration perceives gun owners to be political opponents. On pure party affiliation, that's wrong — plenty of Gun Tests readers align politically with the president — but we stick together on opposing new gun laws.

In Fast and Furious, DOJ/BATFE forced FFLs to play along and supply guns to known criminals. In Choke Point, DOJ/FDIC used regulatory threats to nudge financial firms into drying up funds for gun-related businesses.

What will be the next gun-related area to come under heightened federal scrutiny and enhanced regulation? My bet is we'll find out right after the congressional midterms in November. **GT**

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Remington R51 Follow Up

Our 'A' grade of this new self-defense pistol drew criticism from several readers. Now, the company is offering an exchange program for its first-production-run R51 pistols.

Remington R51 Follow Up

Several readers have contacted us about the review of the Remington R51 pistol in the August issue, most of them criticizing our grading the pistol as an **A**. Because Remington began offering an exchange program for dissatisfied owners after our review was printed, we can no longer recommend that our readers buy the R51, and we've amended our online content to change the grade to an **Incomplete**. Even though our pistol didn't have the function problems many other R51s have shown, we have returned our test gun to Remington as part of the exchange program offered by the company (see adjacent text), and we'll do a follow-up review once the R51 has been exchanged. Remington told our dealer that the new guns won't be available until October.

The Freedom Group Family of Companies' Manager of Press Relations Jessica Kallam pointed out that Remington's R51 exchange program is not a "recall" or a "safety recall." She said production of the R51 has been put on hold to fix performance problems some customers were having. She also pointed out that while the company recommended Remington and Barnes brands of ammunition, the R51 was "made to function will all ammo that is within SAAMI specifications for 9mm and 9mm +P."

To give this as thorough an airing as possible, we compiled all the points from readers who wrote in about the review and selected letters that represented those points. Then, for the sake of space, when a follow-up reader raised points already covered, we credited him, but we didn't duplicate covered comments.

First up is Remington's exchange program notice, sent to us by readers Brent Hoffbauer, Barry N. Schmidt, D.D.S., and James R. Wickman. — *Todd Woodard*

Remington Clarifies R51 Status

Earlier this year, we launched the innovative R51 subcompact pistol to critical acclaim. During testing, numerous experts found the pistol to function flawlessly. In fact, they found it to have lower felt recoil, lower muzzle rise and better accuracy and concealability than other products in its class.

However, after initial commercial sales, our loyal customers notified us that some R51 pistols had performance issues. We immediately ceased production to re-test the product. While we determined the pistols were safe, certain units did not meet Remington's performance criteria. The performance problems resulted from complications during our transition from prototype to mass production. These problems have been identified and solutions are being implemented, with an expected production restart in October.

Anyone who purchased an R51 may return it and receive a new R51 pistol, along with two additional magazines and a custom Pelican case, by calling Remington at (800) 243-9700.

The new R51 will be of the same exceptional quality as our test pistols, which performed flawlessly.

Where Did You Get Test Gun?

Having just purchased an Ithaca 1911, I was pleased to see your positive review with an **A** grade. However, I was disappointed to see the same grade given to the R51, considering the many negative reviews that

GUN TESTS REPORT CARD GRADING

Gun Tests Grade: A
A gun with this rating functions perfectly, shoots accurately, and exhibits comfortable, easy use for its owner. We may prefer one gun over others based on its unusual accuracy, superior performance, unusual features, or nice cosmetics. We recognize such a gun for these traits without regard to its cost.

Gun Tests Grade: B
We give this ranking to a gun that functions appropriately for its category, but which might not do as well in major areas as an **A**-ranked gun.

Gun Tests Grade: C
We may have reservations about some aspect of a gun's performance or pricing. We express those reservations so the reader can balance our concerns with his or her needs.

Gun Tests Grade: D
Some aspect of a gun's performance — in particular, safety, function, or accuracy — doesn't meet our standards and isn't easily resolved.

Gun Tests Grade: F
Some aspect of a gun's performance is dangerous, inappropriate for the category, or is likely to fail.

followed its introduction. What's the story? Did you get your test gun directly from Remington? If so, I suggest following the policy of *Consumer Reports* and buying from a gun shop. **—James Mamer**

FFL Product Coordinator Kevin Winkle purchased the Remington R51 from Military Gun Supply, a dealer in the Fort Worth, Texas area (MilitaryGunSupply.com). It was a dealer-to-dealer sale conducted at a Houston Gun Collectors Association Gun Show, and he paid $339.95 for it. Product Coordinator Winkle said, "I contacted Remington about the recall and waited on hold for 40 minutes. They told me the deal applied to all Remington R51 pistols. They only made one run of them. They told me they would send me a packet now if I wished and return the pistol at their expense. The packet would be good for 30 days. However, the soonest I would get a replacement pistol would be October." — tw

Enjoyed the article on the R51. I read the blogs and watched the videos over the past six months or so, and despite the many negative comments, I decided to give the R51 a try and bought one a few months ago.

I guess I was lucky and bought one manufactured in the middle of the week. I've had one failure to feed on round 63 and have fired approximately 400 rounds of ball and hollow points of various brands of factory ammunition, but no reloads. The pistol points well, sights are easy to acquire, trigger is different and requires a little getting use to, recoil is light, accuracy is better than I expected and what you reported, and it is comfortable to carry. Disassembly and assembly require care the first few times, but then becomes routine, Everything positive about the R51 you wrote I found was true. The negatives I have not experienced to the degree, or at all, that your staff and others have experienced.

There are owners who have obviously experienced problems with the R51, and there are those who, for whatever reasons, do not like the pistol, and that is true of about anything. I am glad to see Remington is addressing the problems. The R51 is affordable, a pleasure to shoot, and, in my experience, reliable.

— Vernon Carr
Always SAFE LLC
Universal City, Texas

I must take issue with your **A** rating of the Remington R51 (August 2014) and also join with letter-to-the-editor writer Charles Wilkins in my utter disappointment with this pistol, a term I use loosely describing this abomination. I experienced the exact same issues with this gun, and in addition to the fail to feed, fail to eject, and finally complete lock-up, I also find that the rear sight has drifted halfway out of the dove tail. I fired 30 rounds total, never more than four rounds in a row without a failure. I admitted defeat and boxed up the gun, took it home and finally got it apart.

The gun that "can't possibly be put together wrong" (from your article) was indeed put together wrong direct from the factory. Apparently, the little spring that retains the slide release will fit above or below the slide release and cannot be seen when putting the gun back together, so you must test the slide release by pushing up on it to see if it springs down to make sure it is in the proper position. If you do not do this correctly and the spring is on the wrong side of the slide release, the gun will in fact go back together (wrongly) and the action will work, though the slide is more difficult to retract. It will also fire and ultimately seize up after a few rounds.

I returned this gun to its place of purchase (Bass Pro Shops) and had them send the gun back to Remington for repairs or replacement. I also found out at the time that the only other R51 that BPS had sold was also sent back to Remington for the same issues. After six weeks and no word from Remington, I did a little investigating and found that there were numerous complaints regarding this pistol and little to no response from Remington. So, I initiated a BBB complaint and ultimately received a full refund for the gun. I visited several other gun stores in my area and found that they had to return every R51 they sold and were refusing to carry or even special order this gun for anyone, due to it's well known (apparently not to the Gun Tests reviewers) issues.

Lest you think I'm some noob who doesn't know which end of the gun the round comes out, I am a retired police officer/firearms instructor and departmental armorer, factory trained by Beretta, Glock, Remington (shotgun), and Colt (AR-15). I normally agree with your reviews and findings, many times knocking down a gun for very minor issues, but your testers were so off the mark on this gun, I began to think they had a man crush on this gun and glossed over its many shortcomings.

Gun Tests obviously did not do its due diligence in investigating the myriad of consumer complaints and reported issues involving this gun and now are faced with explaining how they came to a conclusion that a gun removed from production for safety and reliability issues would or could be rated **A** when the evidence and the gun makers own actions proved otherwise. I can't wait to read your response.

— Mark Hurley

Both Kevin Winkle and I were aware of problems users were reporting about the R51 prior to our publishing, and I communicated that to Ray when Kevin shipped the pistols to him. But that was only to alert Ray to potential problems, which simply didn't materialize in his handling of the pistol. So he did as we always do — report what happened and offer his team's impressions of a gun based solely on data they collected. There are substantial legal reasons why we don't allow internet buzz, rumor, and innuendo to color our evaluations

when our own physical experience with a product's performance don't bear out such criticisms. However, Charles Wilkins, a GUN TESTS *reader who bought an R51, told us why he didn't like it. That's fair game and valuable information for readers who might have considered buying one. Remington offered the exchange program around the date the August issue mailed, well past when the issue was printed. Had the exchange program occurred when we had a chance to consider it, we would have graded differently. — tw*

I found it very interesting that the August 2014 edition gave the Remington R51 an **A** rating when Remington just announced a recall of all sold R51s. This is not a criticism, rather it is an observation on the vagaries of mechanical devices like handguns. I will give you two examples of what I mean.

I purchased a Kimber Solo CDP LG to use as a carry gun here in Sarasota, Florida. It is easily concealed wearing my Sunshine State uniform of shorts and a T-shirt in an N82 holster. My gun will function with any decent 9mm ammo, even 115-grain loads.

One of my best friends liked the Solo so much he bought the identical model. His would not function with any ammo, jamming after three rounds. He sent it back to Kimber, and it is now reliable with two brands of defensive ammo.

I happen to like Paras, STIs, and other models of Kimber. I own four Paras, two STIs, and five Kimbers, and I have never had a problem with any of them in thousands of rounds of use. Yet I hear from gun-store staff and folks at the ranges how they are finicky and problem plagued and should be avoided.

— Roger J. Jambor

Your article on the Remington R51 and its ancestor, the Model 51, goes some way toward explaining the reasons for customer dissatisfaction with the new version. Most users seem to want a new gun to work with whatever ammunition they can buy cheaply, and the R51 seems to be ammunition sensitive.

It is obvious from the article that the writer really does not know how the guns work. That is not surprising, since the system is not simple or easily understood. There is no "floating chamber" and the slide is not "withdrawn" except in manual operation. Nor is it a "locked breech" in the conventional sense. The barrel is solid, fixed, and does not move, and there is no mechanical lock between the barrel and breechblock. Here is how the guns work.

First understand how a blowback pistol works. When the cartridge fires, the pressure of the powder gas within the case pushes the case backward as it pushes the bullet forward. In a true blowback, the breechblock (usually the slide) is heavy and its inertia will keep the cartridge motionless and the pressure in until the bullet leaves the bore. Then it will move backward under residual pressure and its own inertia to eject the case and cock the hammer/striker. Then a spring will force the breechblock forward into battery, picking up and chambering a fresh round on the way.

But not in the Pedersen design. At rest, cams in the slide are holding the separate breechblock forward and down into a frame recess. Instead of the breechblock going backward under pressure, it is stopped by a sloped shoulder in that recess after about 2.5mm (.10 inch) travel. (The cartridge case may be said to act as a short-stroke piston.)

During that travel, the breechblock hits the slide a blow that starts it moving back. But the breechblock, being lighter, stops before the heavier slide really gets moving. At that point, the breech-

— continued on page 31

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308s: Ruger's SR-762 Versus Springfield Armory's Socom 16

We recently tested these two production rifles built on familiar, but vastly different, gas platforms to see which one we'd buy as a handy rifle for self defense, hunting, and all-round fun.

If you haven't noticed, what used to be called the AR-10 platform has made a comeback. Eugene Stoner's design in 308 Winchester (7.62x51mm NATO) has gone on to unprecedented popularity with military and civilian consumers. But many shooters prefer an even older military-style platform — a compact variation of the M1A rifle, with lineage credited to the John C. Garand M1 rifle. We recently tested two production rifles built on these different platforms, the $2200 Ruger SR-762 and the $1900 Springfield Armory Socom 16, to see which one we'd buy as a handy rifle for self defense, hunting, and all-round fun. Both had barrels around 16 inches long and used gas-piston mechanics to operate.

We began by breaking in each rifle using a variety of rounds featuring different bullet weights. We tried two different types of less-expensive 150-grain 7.62x51 NATO jacketed ball ammunition from MagTech and variety of rounds, such as Black Hills 175-grain boattail hollowpoints that have been known to excel in bolt-action rifles. We settled on three Black Hills rounds that shot the best, the company's 168-grain BTHP, 165-grain Gold Nosler Ballistic Tip, and 155-grain Gold Hornady A-Max ammunition.

For break-in and accuracy shooting, we used the same $310 Leupold FX-II 2.5X28mm IER (extended eye relief) Scout scope No. 58810 on both rifles. That was in part to accommodate the Socom 16, which offered only a short Picatinny rail above the forend. The Ruger SR-762 had a long top rail able to accommodate any type of scope. We could have added a receiver mount to the Socom 16, but, in our view, that would change the platform significantly. For accuracy, we fired five-shot groups from the 100-yard benches at American Shooting Centers in Houston (AMShootCenters.com).

Beyond accuracy and reliability we also compared the rifles based on practical handling. This included methods of loading and switching magazines as well as reviewing each gun's strengths and versatility.



In search of a deluxe semi-auto truck gun, we ended up with a comparison of the $1900 Springfield Armory Socom 16 (top) and the Ruger SR-762 carbine swaddled in Realtree Xtra camouflage seat covers with rifle loops from ILoveDrilling.com.



The Ruger was marked down for its poor trigger, and we'd can the magazines, too. But we'd still buy it, thanks to its well-made top end.



The Socom 16 was a reliable workhorse that was fun to shoot, and we think the traditional rifle stock rather than the Ruger's pistol grip makes the Socom 16 a better choice for the truck.

Ruger SR-762 No. 5601
7.62x51mm NATO/308 Win., $2195

The original version of the Stoner military rifle was chambered for 7.62 NATO and not for 223 Rem./5.56mm. Finding the rifle too heavy in the medium-bore chambering, the military requested chambering in a smaller cartridge that would be easier to carry in bulk and also needed a less substantial receiver. Subsequently, the AR-10 was changed to what became the AR-15, or in its military select-fire version, the M16.

The road back to the 30-caliber AR-10 began when

troops fighting in Iraq complained that 223/5.56mm was not providing the stopping power necessary for dealing with drug-enhanced enemy personnel in an urban landscape, where heavily walled structures were common. Several different chamberings have been tried, but the 7.62/308 bests them all as a combination of power, range, economy, and availability. The Ruger SR-762 brings with it not only increased firepower in America's favorite rifle, but also some significant advancements.

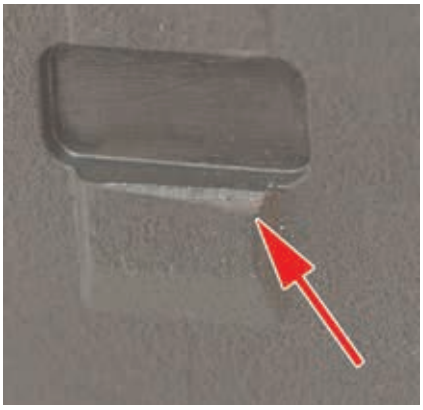
This includes gas-piston operation with a four-way adjustable port, including cutoff for single-shot manual operation. This added versatility makes it a candidate for mounting a suppressor, a feature that characteristically increases operating pressures. There was also a contoured handguard that was ventilated, comfortable in the hand, and easily adapted for attaching accessories such as lights, lasers, a vertical grip, or bipod. There was also a Hogue rubber grip, front and rear flip-up sights, three synthetic-bodied 20-round magazines by MagPul, and a soft-side carrying case.

The flip-up backup iron sights (BUIS) needed to be lifted into position manually. Both front and rear units had spring-loaded left-side release buttons to manually fold them down toward the rear. The rear unit offered a choice of small and large apertures and was windage adjustable from the right-hand side. The Picatinny rail was in three sections atop the gas block, hand guard, and receiver, measuring about 19 inches long in total. The hand guard offered three raised sections at 3 o'clock, 6 o'clock, and 9 o'clock that were smooth for better handling and less interference when working from support. Each of the raised areas was drilled and tapped to attach any or all of the five supplied Picatinny rails. Three 5.85-inch-long rails and two 3-inch-long rails were supplied.

The implementation of a piston-driven operating system offers several advantages over direct gas impingement found more commonly in today's AR platforms. To a large degree, this system is self cleaning, and it directs heat away from the bolt and the shooter. After 100 rounds of firing, the SR-762's bolt and lower receiver remained at or near ambient temperature.

Ruger's system is described as a two-stage design, wherein gas is metered in two successive impulses to the piston. The first impulse is smaller than the second, but with much of the inertia overcome, shock and vibration are reduced. This also spreads recoil sensation over a slightly longer time, creating some perception that the recoil is softer. At the range, we judged the Ruger SR-762 did offer less perceived recoil than the Socom 16. This helped offset the effects of the plastic buttplate — which we thought was an oversight.

The minimal weight and smooth loading of the MagPul magazines seemed to be a plus, but when inserting the magazine below an empty chamber, our habit of palming the magazine to make sure it was seated tended to push it past the proper seating position and prevent the bolt from closing. In our view, the catch lugs on the magazine body



The only failures we experienced during our tests were stoppages of the SR-762's bolt. This occurred when loading a fresh magazine and rapping on the base plate to make sure it was fully seated. After trying this procedure with steel magazines found at Houston's Armory Services and Supply, we confirmed that the polymer magazines were prone to being over inserted. This also made them difficult to eject. Note the wear on the lower edge of the magazine lug.

RANGE DATA

Black Hills Gold 308 Win. 155-gr. Hornady A-Max	**Ruger SR-762**	**Springfield Armory Socom 16**
Average Velocity	2541 fps	2545 fps
Muzzle Energy	2224 ft.-lbs.	2231 ft.-lbs.
Average Group	1.2 in.	1.3 in.
Black Hills Gold 308 Win. 165-gr. Nosler Ballistic Tip	**Ruger SR-762**	**Springfield Armory Socom 16**
Average Velocity	2594 fps	2490 fps
Muzzle Energy	2467 ft.-lbs.	2273 ft.-lbs.
Average Group	1.5 in.	1.4 in.
Black Hills 308 Win. 168-gr. BTHP	**Ruger SR-762**	**Springfield Armory Socom 16**
Average Velocity	2527 fps	2488 fps
Muzzle Energy	2384 ft.-lbs.	2270 ft.-lbs.
Average Group	1.6 in.	1.6 in.

To collect accuracy data, we fired five-shot groups from a sandbag rest using a Leupold FX-II 2.5X28mm IER (extended eye relief) Scout scope on both rifles. Distance: 100 yards. We recorded velocities using an Oehler 35P chronograph, with the first sky screen set 10 feet from the muzzle.

did not offer enough detent. A trip to Houston's Armory Management and Supply Services (AMSS-USA.com) allowed us try other magazines and confirm that the problem was indeed the supplied magazines and not the SR-762 receiver. Nevertheless, we were able to avoid this problem and complete our tests by foregoing our habitual rap to the bottom of the magazine.

We also learned that the trigger-pull weight was more than 10 pounds. Actually, it began much heavier but did wear in after about 200-plus rounds. Nevertheless, it continued to vary in pull weight and offered a marked duration of creep that made it seem like a two-stage trigger. We could find no information at Ruger.com mentioning a two-stage trigger. Oddly, we adapted to it.

Results from the bench showed the tightest groups were achieved firing the Black Hills Gold 155-grain ammunition, producing the only 1-minute-of-angle group of the test for either rifle. Average group sizes were 1.2 inches, 1.5 inches, and 1.6 inches center to center for the 155-grain, 165-grain, and 168-grain ammunitions, respectively. Head-to-head accuracy between the Ruger SR-762 and the Springfield Armory Socom 16 was a virtual draw.

Our Team Said: For most buyers, familiarity with the platform will likely be this rifle's greatest selling point. Our choice of using a low-power extended-eye-relief scope, rather than taking advantage of the lengthy top rail and mounting a true precision riflescope, likely penalized the Ruger. But, in our opinion, the rough and unnecessarily heavy trigger was likely a greater detriment to accuracy. So if we were to buy this rifle, we would plan on an adding an aftermarket trigger.

RUGER SR-762 AUTOLOADING RIFLE NO. 5601
7.62X51 NATO/308 WIN. $2195
GUN TESTS GRADE: B

The top end is a fine piece of equipment. The lower could use a better trigger.



Action	Semi-Auto Gas Piston	Length of Pull Max.	14.75 in.
Overall Length Min/Max	34.75 in./38.0 in.	Stock Drop @ Comb	2.1 in.
Overall Height w/o Scope	8.0 in.	Stock Drop @ Heel	2.2 in.
Weight Unloaded	8.6 lbs.	Stock Pitch	1.2 in.
Weight Loaded	9.1 lbs.	Bedding Block/Pillars	No/No
Capacity	20+1	Rear Sight	Dual Aperture
Magazine	Staggered Column	Front Sight	Post
Barrel	Chrome Moly Steel; 16.12 in. Long; 1:10 in. Twist	Sight Radius	18 in.
		Receiver Scope-Base Pattern	Picatinny
Metal Finish	Manganese Phosphate/ Hardcoat Anodized	Trigger Pull Weight	10.5 lbs.
		Safety	Two Position
Buttstock	Six-Position Composite	Warranty	Lifetime
Forend	Aluminum	Telephone	(603) 865-2442
Buttplate	Plastic	Website	Ruger.com
Length of Pull Min./Max.	11.5 in.	Made In	USA



Shooters rarely fit their AR-10s/AR-15s with an extended-eye-relief scope, but it was a natural fit. Had we used a slightly lower riser, we could have easily co-witnessed (adjusted to the same point of impact) the optic and the flip-up sights. We use a Swarovski spotting scope to watch our results downrange.



Advantages of the Ruger include extra rails for the hand guard and a 19-inch-long top rail. Here we are co-witnessing the supplied backup iron sights with the self-powered Trijicon RMR dot sight that never needs batteries, and thanks to tritium power, it is always on ($490 from Brownells).

Springfield Armory Socom 16 AA9625 7.62x51 NATO/308 Win., $1905

The lineage of the Socom 16 goes back to John C. Garand's design adopted as U.S. Rifle, Caliber .30, M1 by the U.S. Army in 1936. It was invented and perfected at the Springfield Armory in Springfield, Massachusetts. Springfield Armory of Geneseo, Illinois is a separate entity but continues making rifles in this tradition designated the M1A. Of the ten M1A models available, the Socom 16 is a basic carbine offering a 16.25-inch 1:11-twist barrel capped with a muzzle brake with synthetic stock (black or OD green). The front sight is by XS Sights and shows a tritium insert on the 0.125-inch-wide blade sitting between guards

SPRINGFIELD ARMORY SOCOM 16 NO. AA9625
7.62X51 NATO/308 WINCHESTER, $1905
GUN TESTS GRADE: B+

Great fun to shoot. Standard 308 Win./7.62x51mm ammunition doesn't overmatch this rifle's granite-like construction. This may be the ultimate ranch rifle.



Action	Semi-Auto Gas Piston	Stock Drop @ Heel	2.1 in.
Overall Length	37.25 in.	Stock Pitch	1.2 in.
Overall Height w/o Scope	8.2 in.	Bedding Block/Pillars	No/No
Maximum Width	3.0 in.	Rear Sight	Mil Aperture
Weight Unloaded	8.4 lbs.	Front Sight	Post w/Tritium Insert; 0.125-in. Blade
Weight Loaded	9.1 lbs.		
Capacity	20+1	Sight Radius	21 in.
Magazine	Staggered Column	Receiver Scope-Base Pattern	Picatinny Forward
Barrel	Carbon Steel; 16.25 in.; 1:11 in. Twist	Mount	
Buttstock	Fixed OD Green Composite	Trigger Pull Weight	5.75 lbs.
Forend	OD Green Composite	Safety	Two Position
Metal Finish	Manganese Phosphate	Warranty	Lifetime
Buttplate	Steel	Telephone	(800) 680-6866
Length of Pull	11.5 in.	Website	Springfield-Armory.com
Stock Drop @ Comb	2.0 in.	Made In	USA



Shooting the Socom 16 with its steel buttplate was not as uncomfortable as one might think. But the $52 rubber buttpad is a good upgrade.



Perhaps the most modern upgrade found on the Socom 16 was the front sight by XS featuring a self-illuminating tritium insert.



that looked more like the horns of a steer than the typical "ears" found on the AR-10 platform. The rear sight was an aperture of more classic M1 design. The aperture rode between protective stanchions, on which were mounted a 1-moa-per-click elevation-adjustment dial on the left and a 1-moa-per-click windage-adjustment dial on the right-hand side of the unit.

The OD Green synthetic stock may not be traditional, but the hinged steel buttplate was. Swinging the plate upward exposed an access door revealing two cylindrical chambers for storing cleaning supplies and tools. These days, you could store batteries for a weapons light or even add ballast to change the balance of the rifle. We couldn't help but notice that a rubber buttpad was an option on several other M1A models. The rubber buttpad (No. MA6107SA) is sold separately for $52, and we'd definitely add it to the Socom.

The Socom 16 comes fit with a 4-inch-long Picatinny rail well forward of the receiver above the forend. The whole idea of a carbine is to be compact, and that's one reason why we declined to mount one of Springfield Armory's 4th Generation scope mounts, even though it would have allowed us to use any riflescope of our choosing. An aluminum mount sells for $125, the steel version costs $300. We tried a variety of red-dot reflex sights on the Socom, but without adding material to the stock comb, our shooters said the resulting head position was too high for optimum control. Instead, we fired with the Leupold fixed-power scout scope because it afforded us a tight cheek weld with the lowest possible mount.

Despite modest innovations, much of the Socom 16 remains true to its M1 battle-rifle heritage, and in light of this, comparison to the SR-762's AR-10 history, several of the Socom's operational features demanded reevaluation. The charging handle was right side only with a manual catch on the left side to keep the bolt open. Perhaps the thinking at the time (in between World Wars I and II) was that this would not interfere with the habit of working a manual bolt with a support hand beneath the forend. Left-hand shooters will need to pull the stock into the shoulder while pulling back the bolt. Otherwise, the stock was neutral in terms of cast, and the pistol grip lacked excessive





Top: Changing magazines on the Socom 16 requires grasping the magazine and pulling it out with a slight forward rotation. The magazine is continuously under the operator's control. Bottom: A new mag pops in after retention of the empty magazine, a common battlefield and law-enforcement practice. Removing the magazine and placing it in a pocket, behind the chest plate, or into a drop pouch may be easier with the Socom.



The Springfield Armory Socom 16 has roots extending as far back as the 1936 Garand rifle. Notice the stripper-clip guide above the ejection port and the aperture rear sight with 1-minute-of-angle click adjustment for elevation on the left and windage on the right. The forward-mount Picatinny rail limited optics to an extended-eye-relief scope or a 1X reflex sight. Receiver mounts ranging in price from $125 to $300 are available from the manufacturer. The fixed-power scout scope gave us the lowest possible profile and tightest cheek weld.

palm swell on either side. With greater stability thanks to its pistol grip and ambidextrous access to the changing handle, in our view the AR wins in this regard.

The safety was ambidextrous, but it required the trigger finger to push it rearward into the circumference of the trigger guard as close as 0.65 inches from the face of the trigger. Safety-off means putting the finger inside the trigger guard and pushing it forward. The trigger is a two-stage design with a firm take up followed by a second stage of 5.75 pounds of additional pressure. Actually, the trigger felt heavier, but it offered a smooth, even travel start to finish. The Socom trigger pull did not need to be lightened to enhance precision. Safe operation depended on familiarity and operator integrity.

Both the Ruger and Springfield magazines loaded easily. Neither could be single loaded by throwing in a round and shutting the bolt. But the Socom 16 magazine can be loaded through the ejection port with the bolt locked back. And the guide for a stripper clip was still in place. The Socom 16 arrived with one 10-round magazine and one 20-round magazine. We think top loading would likely be more appropriate for the 10-round magazine, not just because of its lesser capacity but also for its shorter profile. Naturally, this magazine made the gun smaller top to bottom and more convenient to shoot from support, but it was more difficult to grasp. To release the magazine, the shooter pressed the vertical lever at the rear of the magazine well. This motion was integrated with a natural grasp of the magazine, with thumb at the rear compressing the release while rotating the magazine forward and down. The motion and grip were the same when using either the left or right hand. The longer 20-round magazines were easier to remove because their length offers a better grip with the inside of the thumb naturally indexed upon the release lever. Inserting the magazine was just the opposite, leading with the forward edge of the magazine at about a 30-degree angle to the receiver rotating it into place.

We found reloading the AR-10 was faster and easier in only one situation. If you release the AR-10 magazine and are willing to let it fall, then another magazine can be in place almost before the empty magazine hits the ground. If you intend to retain the empty magazine, then it's a tie because in each case you must grab the magazine upon release and place it in a pocket or pouch. Be aware that the AR style may allow the magazine to shoot out of the receiver before you are ready. Ejecting the M1A magazines requires that you grasp and control it.

The Socom 16 gas system did not offer adjustability. This means that adapting a suppressor would not be as simple as on the Ruger. While Ruger puts its two-stage piston action front and center, the Socom 16 works with a delay of its own. The delay before the bolt is released was built in for safety and not necessarily to address recoil. Indeed almost every self-loader operates with a delay of some kind to make sure the cartridge case does not back out of the chamber while under pressure and rupture for lack of support. In the M1A design, the bullet is gone before the bolt unlocks. Recoil was a softer push than we expected, but we judged the Socom 16 to transmit slightly greater recoil than the Ruger SR-762.

Our Team Said: What the data do not show was that the Socom 16 was a ball to shoot. And if you cannot tell from the photos, this weapon was built like the proverbial brick you-know-what. If we were looking for a truck gun or other handy application, we think the Socom 16 is the deluxe model for chores that require stopping power. Top to bottom, the rifle is truly compact (more so with the smaller magazines) and throwing the Socom 16 to the cheek and shoulder was as fast as it was pleasing.

Written and photographed by Roger Eckstine, using evaluations from Gun Tests *team testers.* **GT**

Three Lever-Action 45-70s: Winchester, Henry and Marlin

In this match up we gave three good grades. Our pick would be the Winchester 1886 Limited -— if we could find one —but we also liked Henry's H010 and Marlin's stainless 1895GS.

Up for testing this month are three 45-70 lever-action rifles. Two, by Marlin and Henry, are made in the U.S. and are fairly handy carbine-length firearms. The third is a huge, heavy, octagonal-barrel copy of the original 1886 Winchester, bearing Winchester's name but made by Miroku in Japan. The Henry and Marlin have dull finishes. The Marlin is matte stainless steel and the Henry, blued steel. The Winchester has a glossy blued finish that we thought was superb. The two carbines have appropriately padded buttstocks, but the classy-looking Winchester has a hook-shaped buttplate of steel, entirely appropriate for the era and for the weight of the gun. There were some design differences we thought were mighty interesting, including an unusual safety system on the Henry, and three different types of iron sights. We tested them using their iron sights with Remington 405-grain soft points and with Winchester 300-grain jacketed hollowpoint ammo. Here is what we found.



Marlin Model 1895GS 45-70 Government, $837

We noted that Marlin does not call this the Guide Gun on the company website. That name is used only on the blued version. This matte-finished stainless-steel rifle had light-blond walnut butt and forend wood, very well checkered and fitted tightly to the action and the barrel. Each checkered wrist panel and the wrap-around forend checkering had an attractive diamond shape of uncheckered wood, a classy touch. The 18.5-inch barrel had a superb crown, and was fitted with blued iron sights that were a large gold dot front with



Shown in scale above and at left are the lengthy Winchester Model 1886 Limited Series, the Henry Repeating Arms Lever Action Rifle H010, and the Marlin Model 1895GS, all in 45-70 Government. We thought the latter two were best for handy field use, but for sheer class, the Winchester Limited had it all.

provisions for a (missing) hood, and a "semi-buckhorn" wide-angle, U-shaped rear with a small U in the middle. The rear sight folds out of the way if you want to put a scope on it. The receivers of both the Marlin and Henry are drilled and tapped for easy scope mounting, never mind that a scope would take away much of the handy, uncluttered convenience of these two rifles. There were no provisions on the Marlin for our first choice of rear sight, which is an adjustable aperture. Instead of the semi-buckhorn of the Marlin, we'd have been happier with a wide-angle V with no secondary notch and with a center line, but U.S. manufacturers seem to have great reluctance to use express sights. With the setup as it is, there is always a question about how much of the front bead should be stuck up above the rear notch. With a proper express sight, there is never such a question. The rifle was supplied to us by a dealer and arrived with the hood missing. The missing front hood did not help us get a good sight picture. The light caused the front sight to shine and blend with the target color. Hoods are there for a reason.

We found entirely too much information stamped into the barrel. The Marlin name, address, and caliber designations are fine, but to imprint a statement on the barrel that basically says, "This is a gun and it's dangerous" is a bit silly. The fit and finish of all the metalwork was just fine, we thought. The lever worked smoothly, and the rifle had an excellent trigger pull. The rifle was handy, relatively light at 6.8 pounds unloaded (lightest of the three test rifles), and good looking. The wood finish left a bit to be desired. It had open grain, which would probably take linseed oil quite well, and that would darken the stock, which might make the rifle all the more attractive. So maybe we ought not to complain. The direction of the wood grain in the forend and buttstock were excellent. This looked to be a very durable stock, though it was decidedly on the plain side. The trestle-style buttpad was a good one, soft and springy.

We found another feature on the Marlin we thought was a good idea. It was fitted with a cross-pin safety just in front of the hammer. Work the lever and chamber a round, and the

MARLIN MODEL 1895GS 45-70 GOVERNMENT, $837

GUN TESTS GRADE: B+

Short and light, no fuss nor muss, just a handy big-bore rifle that won't rust easily, the Marlin 1895GS was a solid rifle. If it had a lighter trigger and better sights, we'd have liked it a lot more.



Overall Length	36.5 in.	Action Type	Lever
Barrel Length	18.5 in.	Barrel Finish	Matte Stainless
Sight Radius	14 in.	Magazine Type	Tubular
Overall Height	7.8 in.	Stock	Walnut
LOP	13.3 in.	Trigger Pull Weight	6.7 lbs.
Weight Unloaded	6.8 lbs.	Warranty	Five-Year Limited
Weight Loaded	7.1 lbs.	Telephone	(800) 544-8892
Capacity	4+1	Website	MarlinFirearms.com
Action Finish	Matte Stainless	Made In	North Carolina, USA



The 1895GS was easy to load, was smooth and sure in its function, and didn't rattle. Workmanship was pretty good throughout, too. The cross-pin safety just above the trigger permitted easy and safe lowering of the hammer.



The thick, heavy forend appealed to some shooters more than the slim one on the Henry. This rifle was half a pound lighter and could safely handle one round more, and that might make all the difference.





Left: The Marlin had a large gold-bead front sight that was easy to see. Our test sample was missing its hood, which was a slight handicap on the target range. Right: Some of us thought this sight was an abomination, though it was not as bad at obscuring the target as the Winchester's rear sight. It folded, if you choose to put a scope on the rifle. We'd have preferred a wide-angle V with center line, essentially a classic express sight. A clever man with a file might be able to alter this to one of those.

HENRY REPEATING ARMS LEVER ACTION RIFLE H010
45-70 GOVERNMENT, $850

GUN TESTS GRADE: A

The clean lines of the Henry 45-70 gave it a business-like look that we liked. The sights were fast and accurate enough for fast work on big game at close to medium ranges, and all the work on the rifle was well done.



Overall Length	37.5 in.	Action Type	Lever
Barrel Length	18.4 in.	Barrel Finish	Matte Blued
Sight Radius	20.2 in.	Magazine Type	Tubular
Overall Height	8.1 in.	Stock	Walnut
Length of Pull	14.2 in.	Trigger Pull Weight	4.5 lbs.
Weight Unloaded	7.3 lbs.	Warranty	Limited Lifetime
Weight Loaded	7.6 lbs.	Telephone	(201) 858-4400
Capacity	4 Rounds	Website	HenryRepeating.com
Action Finish	Matte Blued	Made In	New Jersey, USA





Left: There's no loading port on the right side of the action. Ejection was positive, and worked every time. The rifle has a unique safety system. The hammer is either up or down, and the rifle won't fire unless the trigger is pressed. Right: The matte bluing was set off by the nicely checkered dark wood. Though drilled and tapped for scope use, we doubt many will use that option. The action was slick and smooth, and the trigger pull was also good.





Above: The Henry's large rear aperture sight was fully adjustable for windage and elevation. It's locked by two opposing screws in the sight base. A smaller aperture that could be removed would be an improvement for some folks. Right: The white line is a groove in the rear face of the front sight blade. The blade is integral with the base and the barrel band. Remember that if you lower it by filing.

hammer is then at full cock. But if you don't want to shoot immediately, you need to lower the hammer to half cock. It's non-rebounding, so there's a half-cock position. By first putting on that cross-pin safety, you can easily lower the hammer with complete safety. Without that cross-pin safety, on a cold day your thumb might slip, and that could fire the rifle. So the procedure is to put the safety on, chamber a round, lower the hammer carefully to the half-cock position, and then take the safety off. That way all you have to do is cock the rifle when you're ready to shoot.

Loading the rifle was accomplished by shoving each round against a spring into the right side of the receiver, and that was easy enough. The rifle held 4+1 rounds. The cut-rifled barrel looked just great inside. We though it would shoot very well, and as it turned out, we were not disappointed.

Our first two shots were with some of the Buffalo Bore 45-70 Magnum loads, which aren't featured in this report, but we wanted to see how brutal this light rifle might be with those loads. The Buffalo Bore loads we tried featured a 350-grain flat-nose jacketed bullet at about 2150 fps. One shot got us a severe clout on our nose, and a second shot cut our lip nicely. We called it good enough. If you want those stomping rounds in your gun, which is an excellent idea in bear country, you might want to lengthen the pull just a touch. One of the slip-on recoil pads would do that easily, and also be kinder to your shoulder.

With our test ammo the rifle shot groups of 1.3 inches with the Remington and 4.8 with the Winchester at 50 yards. As noted, the front sight tended to disappear against the target. We believe the rifle will do better than that, but our testing was enough to indicate a strong preference for the heavier bullets of the Remington loads. We had to tap the rear sight about an eighth of an inch to the left to get it centered. The Remington ammo hit slightly high and the Winchester hit slightly low.

Our Team Said: We liked this little rifle quite a bit. The action was slick, and it fed and ejected positively every time. But the trigger was too heavy, and we'd prefer a better rear sight.

Henry Repeating Arms Lever Action Rifle H010 45-70 Government, $850

This matte-blued rifle had dark wood, which was in keeping with the overall dark look, just as the Marlin had a lighter overall look. The checkering was excellent, with three panels on the squarish forend and one on each side of the pistol grip. The checkering panels were decorated with curved lines, all in all an attractive job. The wood-to-metal fit was excellent, maybe better than Marlin's, but certainly no worse. The forend was slimmer. Some preferred this over the Marlin, but others thought the fatter Marlin forend gave better control. The wood finish appeared to be a synthetic product that filled the pores completely. No linseed necessary here. Again, a decent trestle-style buttpad was there to help cut the kick.

The action was as smooth as that of the Marlin, and again there was no looseness or rattling on the rifle anywhere. The Henry was fitted with a large aperture rear sight and a flat-top post front. The aperture was adjustable via opposing screws for windage, and by unscrewing the rear aperture post for elevation. The aperture post was locked by the windage-adjusting screws. Half a turn gave approximately an inch of elevation change at 100 yards. More on that later. The rifle weighed 7.3 pounds empty, half a pound more than the Marlin.

The front sight had a vertical groove or slot formed in its rear face, and it had white paint in it. The color could be easily changed as desired. This line helped us see the front blade in some kinds of light. The aperture was essentially a ghost ring. The eye does not see it in sharp focus. While it might be too big for really precise shooting, the rifle was set up for extremely fast use in the field, and in that light the sights were superb. Nitpicking, we would have liked to have both the front and rear sight elements set lower on the gun, or perhaps a straighter stock to get our eye up higher. We ended up having

WINCHESTER 1886 LIMITED SERIES 45-70, $1340

GUN TESTS GRADE: A

Long and lovely is the Winchester 1886, a product of Miroku of Japan. The quality of work and finish were superlative. This was a very accurate rifle, and one we'd love to own.



Overall Length	45.3 in.	Action Type	Lever
Barrel Length	26 in.	Barrel Finish	Blued
Sight Radius	21.5 in.	Magazine Type	Tubular
Overall Height	7.8 in.	Stock	Walnut
Length of Pull	13.3 in.	Trigger Pull Weight	5.3 lbs.
Weight Unloaded	9.6 lbs.	Warranty	None Written
Weight Loaded	10.4 lbs.	Telephone	(800) 333-3288
Capacity	8+1	Website	WinchesterGuns.com
Action Finish	Blued	Made In	Japan





Left: The sides of the Winchester's action were as smooth and flat as each facet of the octagonal barrel. The wood was plain but had excellent grain direction and was very well fitted to the metal. Right: Loading eight rounds was easy. The tang safety permitted safe loading of one more round in the chamber, as desired. Everything about this rifle was very well done, we thought.



We've seldom seen inletting like this. This is essentially flawless fitting of metal to wood, whether done by computer (most likely) or by hand.



The deeply recessed curved crown gives great protection to the muzzle of the Winchester. This rifle shot the best of the three test rifles.



The enormous wings of the buckhorn rear sight on the Winchester hark back to an earlier time when for some strange reason these were popular. Yet if one tries them in the field, you'll see there is no justification for such a target-obscuring abomination on a good rifle, except that in this case it matches the historical look.

RANGE DATA

Remington 405-grain SP	Winchester 1886 Limited	Henry H010	Marlin 1895GS
Average Velocity	1230 fps	1045 fps	1215 fps
Muzzle Energy	1359 ft.-lbs.	981 ft.-lbs.	1326 ft.-lbs.
Average Group	0.9 in.	3.6 in.	1.3 in.
Winchester 300-grain JHP	**Winchester 1886 Limited**	**Henry H010**	**Marlin 1895GS**
Average Velocity	1895 fps	1660 fps	1695 fps
Muzzle Energy	2390 ft.-lbs.	1834 ft.-lbs.	1912 ft.-lbs.
Average Group	2.5 in.	2.4 in.	4.8 in.

Velocity was recorded using an Oehler 35P chronograph with proof channel, with the middle screen 10 feet from the muzzle. Three-shot groups were fired at 50 yards from a machine rest.



This slot in the Henry's tubular magazine lets you load the 45-70 just like a tubular-magazine 22 rifle. We liked this setup.



A twist releases the inner brass magazine tube along with its spring. This lets you pull the tube all the way out for easy unloading, or just enough to open the loading port for loading up to four rounds.

to raise the rear sight significantly, which made it even more of a neck stretch. At any rate, the sights were fast as lightning. Poke the rifle at the target and all you see is the front post. Our bench testing would tell us what kind of accuracy we could expect, though we doubted the Henry with this setup would be a tack driver.

Next was the question of the Henry's safety. The hammer was either all the way cocked or all the way down. As we prepared to log the rifle in, our Idaho FFL man Joe Syczylo was muttering and grumbling about something to do with the Henry. He said, "There's no safety of any sort on it." We agreed there was nothing obvious about how to manage the hammer to prevent accidental discharges. The Henry manual stated that the rifle could not be fired unless the trigger were pressed on a cocked hammer. A blow on the lowered hammer could not move the firing pin and therefore would not set off a chambered round. If the hammer were to accidentally slip while being cocked, the gun could not fire. We proved that to our satisfaction by putting a primed cartridge case in the chamber and repeatedly slipping the hammer off our thumb just before it reached full cock. Nothing. We then cocked the hammer and pressed the trigger, and the primer fired. However, lowering the hammer on a loaded chamber was not quite as foolproof as with the other two rifles. We suggest you practice it with an empty rifle. You have to hold the hammer securely and press the trigger until the hammer moves slightly forward, then release the trigger and lower the hammer fully. If the hammer slips off your thumb with the trigger pressed, the rifle will fire, so always be careful.

On the range we were able to load four rounds into the tube, which operated just like a tubular-magazine 22 LR. Pull out the brass tube with its spring and plunger, expose the hole in the magazine, and drop in the rounds. There is no stop on the brass tube. It will pull all the way out, and in fact that's how you unload the magazine, which is a handy feature. It was possible to load one in the chamber and another into the tubular magazine, but that puts one's hand in front of the muzzle of a loaded rifle. We didn't like doing that, so called it just four rounds capacity, which Henry also does. No 4+1 here.

As expected from the coarse sights, this was not a tack driver. We got groups of 2.5 inches with the Winchester and 3.5 inches or so with the Remington at 50 yards We thought that was acceptable for hunting accuracy at limited range on big targets. Of course this was not intended to be a long-range tack driver. We suggest Henry give some serious thought to providing a screw-in, smaller aperture within the existing ghost sight ring. Then there should be no complaints. As we received the rifle, we found the sights to be way low. The Remington 405-grain bullets struck 8 inches low, and the lighter, faster Winchester rounds printed a full foot low at 50 yards. To get the Remington ammo on the paper at 50 yards, we turned the aperture up eight full turns, and that did the trick. Of the three rifles, this is the only one that showed a preference for the Winchester ammo. The other two shot their smallest groups with the heavier-bullet Remington stuff.

Our Team Said: Once again we found ourselves liking this rifle a whole lot. We suspect we'd take a file to the tall front blade if we owned this and had found that our chosen ammo printed too low. But we'd have to proceed with caution because the front-sight blade and base are integral with the front barrel band. The trigger pull was very much okay, and the action, feeding and ejection were all smooth and positive. Unloading this rifle was easier than most tubular-magazine rifles, and a bonus was that the bolt could be



On the Winchester, a tiny front bead had a rounded rear face that in some lights gives a false reading — okay from the bench, but not in the field.

easily taken out to clean the rifle from the rear. An instructive video came with the rifle explaining the entire takedown procedure. The workmanship and finish were beyond fault. The accuracy could be improved, we're sure, with a scope or smaller aperture if needed. Pretty much everything here was done just right, and the cost was reasonable.

Winchester Model 1886 Limited Series 45-70 Government, $1340

Winchester's website shows only the "Short Rifle" version of the 1886 available today. The Short Rifle has a 24-inch barrel. Our test rifle's is 26 inches with its recessed crown, and it was apparently a good deal thicker, too. Winchester gives the weight of the Short Rifle as 8.5 pounds, but our rifle weighed 9.6 pounds. Two inches of barrel would not weigh anywhere near a pound, so we guessed the barrel on our test rifle is also bigger across the flats. This rifle has "Limited Series" impressed into the barrel, so we assume you may not be able to get one of these just anywhere. From the literature that came with it, Winchester has arranged with wholesaler Davidson's, Inc., of Prescott, Arizona, to produce this limited series of rifles.

More's the pity that you can't get them everywhere, because this was a really beautiful rifle that anyone would be proud to own. For instance, the flats on the octagonal barrel were done perfectly. They had no waviness, just a smooth, shiny blued surface all in one plane from end to end, with the corners of the flats just off of being sharp, i.e., extremely well done. The sides of the action were equally flat, begging for the touch of an engraver.

The wood was solid, dark walnut with good strong grain running in the right direction. The matte finish on the wood appeared to be epoxy. It was water repellent, hard, and had no open pores. The wood-to-metal fit was, we thought, the best of the three rifles. The best fit of all here was on the steel crescent buttplate, which appeared to have the wood grown to fit it. The wood and metal fitting and workmanship was, everywhere, just phenomenal. We seldom see new guns made this well these days.

One feature the Short Rifle had that ours did not was that it was tapped for a side-mounted rear aperture sight. Ours had the original-type rear sight with huge "buckhorn" ears obscuring half the landscape out where the target would be. The huge U of the rear had another small U at the center. Elevation was adjusted by the spring and wedge system. For windage, both the front and rear sights were dovetailed into the thick barrel. The front sight was a tiny gold bead with, horrors, a rounded rear face that we predicted would give us fits on the range. There was no provision for a hood. Light bounces off rounded sights in a manner that's not predictable. A file might be able to fix that in a hurry, but we didn't own this one. Anyway, we thought we'd try it first before we did too much complaining.

There was a slight bit of sideways movement of the lever when the gun was closed. That was, we thought, insignificant compared to the sound and feel of the lever in operation. There was a positive "thunk" and a velvety smoothness to it that overshadowed the other two rifles. There was no checkering on the wood, which we believe is in keeping with original Winchester rifles. The higher grades used to have it, but not the working-man's 45-70. The original Winchester 1886s were made from 1886 to 1935 in what eventually became a handful of different calibers, largest being the 50-110. Today it's 45-70 or nothing.

Like the Marlin, the Winchester had an auxiliary safety. This was a smooth little tang-type, and again it permitted lowering the hammer (rebounding) in perfect safety. Unfortunately, the sliding tang safety was located where holes could have been drilled for a folding aperture rear sight. So one is faced with either using the sights that are on the rifle or drilling and tapping it for a suitable side-mounted rear sight.

On the range our 50-yard groups averaged just under an inch with the Remington ammo and 2.5 inches with the Winchester HP ammo. With the Remington ammo, the shots centered in the X ring with no adjustment needed. The Winchester rounds struck 2 inches higher. The massive barrel kept differences in recoil pulses and bullet-weight impact differences to a minimum on the target. The lever stuck closed after firing the first of the Winchester rounds, but we were unable to repeat that, and marked it off to a burr or tiny piece of dirt we didn't catch in our pre-shoot cleaning. The rifle felt really good, like a precision piece of machinery, and contrary to our expectations, the tiny gold bead was easy to see and gave a very good sight picture. We disliked the huge ears up in the air, but the sights did perform. Because of the rifle's apparent very fine accuracy potential, some might be tempted to fit an aperture rear sight, but for fun shooting, we'd leave it entirely alone. The trigger pull was clean and fully predictable despite its pull weight.

Our Team Said: This was a fine rifle in all respects. It cost more than the other two, might be harder to find, and was not in the same class as them for portability. The 1886 was never designed to be a handy guide's rifle. It felt great, looked great, and would provide many years of fun shooting along with ample pride of ownership to anyone lucky enough to find one.

Written and photographed by Ray Ordorica, using evaluations from Gun Tests *team testers.* **GT**

Snubnose Revolvers from S&W And Ruger: Which One To Carry?

Our team wanted to know if a five-shot 357 Magnum wheelgun — such as an SP101 and a Model 60-15 — had an edge over a six-shot Ruger in 327 Federal Magnum. Yes, ammo choices.

The 357 Magnum is an excellent defensive cartridge. Pair it with a lightweight, compact revolver, and that is what we would call an excellent choice as a conceal-carry handgun. Our team has tested variants of the Ruger SP101 and S&W Model 60, but the S&W Model 60 Pro Series in 357 Magnum is a variant we have wanted to get our hands on for a while. We also wanted to see if the caliber choice would sway our recommendation on the established Ruger SP101 model. The second Ruger SP101 we tested was chambered in 327 Federal Magnum, which was cataloged by Ruger from 2007 to 2011. As we noted in our first look at the gun in the April 2008 issue, Ruger and Federal teamed up to produce a cartridge/handgun combination that provided the power of the 357 Magnum but with less recoil and in a compact revolver that holds six shots rather than five shots. As a bonus, the 327 Fed Mag–chambered Ruger also accepts 32 H&R Mag, 32 S&W, and 32 S&W Long ammo. The footprint of the Ruger



We looked at two 357 Magnum five-shot revolvers for carry, a new Ruger SP101 Model #5718 ($659, left) and a LNIB Smith & Wesson Model 60-15 Pro Series ($799, top). We also tried another Ruger SP101, an SP101 #5759 (discontinued, but $500-$800 LNIB, bottom) chambered in 327 Federal Magnum that held six shots. We liked all three revolvers, but our team split between the two 357 Magnums on which one they would carry.

RANGE DATA

Winchester 357 Mag. White Box 110-gr. JHP	Ruger SP101 5718	S&W Model 60
Average Velocity	1222 fps	1078 fps
Muzzle Energy	365 ft.-lbs.	284 ft.-lbs.
Average Group	1.8 in.	1.3 in.

Winchester 38 Spl +P White Box 125-gr. JHP	Ruger SP101 5718	S&W Model 60
Average Velocity	880 fps	905 fps
Muzzle Energy	215 ft.-lbs.	227 ft.-lbs.
Average Group	1.5 in.	1.0 in.

Federal 357 Mag. Tactical 128-gr. Hydra-Shok JHP	Ruger SP101 5718	S&W Model 60
Average Velocity	1177 fps	1197 fps
Muzzle Energy	394 ft.-lbs.	407 ft.-lbs.
Average Group	2.0 in.	2.0 in.

Winchester 357 Mag. PDX1 125-gr. BJHP	Ruger SP101 5718	S&W Model 60
Average Velocity	1186 fps	1103 fps
Muzzle Energy	390.5 ft.-lbs.	337.8ft.-lbs.
Average Group	1.4 in.	1.5 in.

Federal 327 Fed Mag Tactical 100-gr. JHP	Ruger SP101 5759
Average Velocity	1363 fps
Muzzle Energy	413 ft.-lbs.
Average Group	1.4 in.

To collect accuracy data, we fired five-shot groups from a bench using a rest. Distance: 15 yards with open sights. We recorded velocities using a ProChrono digital chronograph with the first screen set 15 feet from the muzzle.



From left, the 327 Federal Magnum, 38 Special and two 357 Magnum cartridges are all about the same length.

SP101 in 327 Fed Mag is basically same as the Ruger SP101 in 357 Mag, with a few exceptions.

All three double-action revolvers are built from stainless steel with similar barrel lengths, give or take three-quarters of an inch. All had exposed hammers, so single-action firing is possible. A transfer bar was built into the revolvers for safety. All three were built to last, even under a steady diet of hot loads. The lock up was tight on all three, and the chambers were all aligned with the bore, which we assumed but also verified. Fit and finish was very good on all three revolvers and that was exactly what we expected. The workmanship in these guns make them worth the cost.

Ruger SP101 Model #5718 357 Magnum, $659

The SP101 was new back in 1989. The current model tested is the consummate snubnose revolver. The exterior of the revolver was smooth, with the only part likely to snag on a draw being the hammer spur. You can get the same Ruger without the hammer spur (Model #5720) for the same cost. The exterior finish was a matte stainless steel, except for the pinned serrated ramp front sight, which was matte black. The front sight could be replaced if needed. This SP101 did not have an adjustable rear sight; instead, a sighting groove was machined out of the top strap. The groove was stepped up at the rear to give the operator a deeper notch to index. The rear of the groove was milled out to help reduce glare. These rugged sights were well liked by the team. If we owned this revolver, we would add a smear of matte-black paint in the U-shaped cutout before the rear notch to eliminate any glare.

Like all Ruger DA revolvers, the cylinder catch is depressed to swing out the cylinder from the frame. It was smooth to operate. This small revolver locked up tight at the rear of cylinder into the back face of the frame. At the front a small detent in the crane snapped into the front of the frame. With the cylinder snapped into the frame, there was hardly any play. The shrouded ejector rod was smooth but did not fully eject 357 Mag empties; in fact, none of the revolvers fully purged empty cases from the chambers. A nice-to-have for the Rugers and the S&W would be chamfered chambers to aid in faster reloads.

The hammer spur was nicely checkered for a sure grip and the trigger was smooth. The team liked the trigger pull in both DA and SA, though they conceded the S&W was slightly smoother.

Testers felt the SP101 felt fuller in hand and liked the high grip. During firing, the rubber grip with ribbed polymer panels had less felt recoil than the S&W with the thin wood grip. A cut out in the left grip panel allowed use of a speed loader. When we conceal-carried the revolver, it was easier to reholster because the

RUGER SP101 MODEL #5718 357 MAGNUM, $659

GUN TESTS GRADE: A

The SP101 is an excellent choice in a traditional snubnose revolver. It felt solid in hand, wore a glare-free finish, was snag-free and accurate.





Action	Double Action
Overall Length	7.2 in.
Overall Height	4.5 in.
Maximum Width (Cylinder)	1.35 in.
Weight Unloaded	26 oz.
Weight Loaded	28.3 oz.
Barrel Length	2.25 in.
Capacity	5
Frame	Matte Stainless Steel
Cylinder	Fluted Matte Stainless Steel
Frame Front Strap Height	1.9 in.
Frame Back Strap Height	3.3 in.
Grips	Rubber/Ribbed Polymer

Grip Thickness (max)	1.2 in.
Grip Circumference (max)	4.6 in.
Front Sight	Grooved Ramp
Rear Sight	Fixed Groove
Sight Radius	3.9 in.
Trigger Pull Weight Single Action	4.6 lbs.
Trigger Pull Weight Double Action	12 lbs.
Trigger Span Single Action	2.6 in.
Trigger Span Double Action	3.2 in.
Warranty	None Written
Telephone	(603) 863-3300
Website	Ruger.com
Made In	Newport, NH



The SP101 offered easy access to the five-shot cylinder; we'd fill that U-shaped cutout at the rear notch with a matte-black paint or candle soot.



In the shooter's hand, the SP101 pointed well and the trigger span in double action fit most hand sizes.

SMITH & WESSON MODEL 60 #178013
357 MAGNUM, $799

GUN TESTS GRADE: A

The Model 60 is light, thin, and packs power. The longer sight radius and adjustable sights with night sight made this a useful revolver for conceal carry.





Action	Double Action
Overall Length	7.75 in.
Overall Height	5.25 in.
Maximum Width (Cylinder)	1.31 in.
Weight Unloaded	23.2 oz.
Weight Loaded	25.5 oz.
Barrel Length	3.0 in.
Capacity	5
Frame	J-Frame Stainless Steel
Cylinder	Fluted Stainless Steel
Frame Front Strap Height	2.06 in.
Frame Back Strap Height	3.5 in.
Grips	Checkered/Textured Wood
Grip Thickness (max)	1.15 in.
Grip Circumference (max)	5.37 in.
Front Sight	Serrated Ramp Night Sight
Rear Sight	Adjustable Notch
Sight Radius	5.06 in.
Trigger Pull Weight Single Action	2.6 lbs.
Trigger Pull Weight Double Action	12.5 lbs.
Trigger Span Single Action	2.3 in.
Trigger Span Double Action	2.8 in.
Safety	None
Warranty	One Year
Telephone	(800) 331-0852
Website	Smith-Wesson.com
Made In	Springfield, MA



The rear sight of the Model 60 was taller and more likely to snag. In the hand, the grip felt thinner, and the wood was textured just right.



The Model 60's grip was large compared to the grips of other S&W J-frame revolvers. It was half checkered and textured, giving it enough friction without it biting the hand. The wood and the grip's metal backstrap transferred more recoil in the palm and web of the hand than the Ruger 357.



The S&W's serrated front ramp had a night-sight dot embedded in the ramp — an excellent feature.



A cut out in the ejector-rod shroud lessened weight; note the detent that locks the end of the ejector rod.

muzzle was tapered. We would have liked to see more of a chamfer on the front on the cylinder so holstering would be even easier. At the range, it shot to point of aim at 15 yards, which suited testers just fine.

Our Team Said: The SP101 is an older design, but it is still an excellent carry choice. Half the team would carry the SP101 hands down due to the excellent rubber grip, big chunky sights, and pointability. The group did admit the trigger of the Smith was slightly better.

Smith & Wesson Model 60 #178013 357 Magnum, $799

The Pro Series is the line of guns that bridges the gap between S&W's standard line and Performance Shop guns. The J-frame Model 60 weighed almost five ounces less than the SP101 327. In hand it felt thinner and smaller than the Rugers. If the Rugers were muscle bound weight lifters the Model 60 was a sinewy long distance runner. The grip was large compared to the grips of other S&W J-frame revolvers and was half checkered and textured giving it enough friction without it feeling toothy. The wood however transferred more felt recoil in the palm and web of your hand with 357 Mag loads compared to the Ruger 357. The teamed like the 357s because they could also fire 38 Special and 38 Special +P ammo through the revolvers. The 357 Mag/38 Spl ammo combination was hard to beat as it was easy to find and relatively inexpensive.

The stainless finish was matte; the Rugers were a tad shinier. The barrel on the Model 60 was slab sided and a cut out was in the ejector rod housing to lessen the weight of the revolver. The top of the barrel was serrated. The muzzles on all three pistols were crowned, in the event the pistol was accidentally dropped on the muzzle. The front edge of the Model 60's barrel was sharper than either of the Rugers. We would rather it be rounded for ease in reholstering. We also want more chamfer on the cylinder for the exact same reason.

The sights on the Model 60 were the largest and most pronounced

of the three tested. We liked the serrated front ramp as it had a night sight dot imbedded in the ramp. We thought this was an excellent feature, especially when things go bump in the night. The rear sight was adjustable for windage and elevation and the rear blade had a square notch and was finished matte black. The base of the rear sight was also serrated to kill and glare. The rear sight, we felt, was more susceptible to snagging than either of the Rugers.

The cylinder could be swung out when the cylinder latch was pushed forward. It was easy to operate and gave us a confident feeling. The ejector rod was knurled at the end so it stuck to our palm of our non-shooting hand when we ejected empties. It also housed a detent hole so a detent locked the ejector rod into the shroud. The hammer spur was smaller than the Rugers' but still gave enough purchase for fast SA cocking. The trigger was smooth. Both the hammer and trigger were case colored and contrasted nicely to the matte stainless finish. The Model 60 was more comfortable to conceal carry than either of the Rugers due to less weight, and easier due to the thinner grip.

Our Team Said: This is an excellent choice for a concealable revolver because it is thin, lightweight, has an excellent trigger in both single action and double action, and has usable sights. The other half of the team would opt to carry the Model 60.

Ruger SP101 #5759 327 Federal Mag., $600-$800

The longer barrel on the 327 Fed Mag gave this Ruger SP101 a different balance in hand, making it slightly heavier at the muzzle. Along with the longer barrel, this SP101 was different from the 357 Mag SP101 in rear sights and cylinder capacity. The 327 had a rear sight adjustable only for windage. We would have preferred a rear sight adjustable for both windage and elevation like the S&W Model 60. The matte-black rear sight was as fast to pick up as the Model 60 and faster than the SP101 with the groove rear sight.

The 327 Fed Mag is a snappy cartridge; less recoil than the 357 Mag revolvers but still a bit snappy. The grip of the Ruger made felt recoil quite tolerable. Even though 32 H&R Mag and 32 S&W cartridges can be used in this SP101, the team felt that those cartridges are even more difficult to find than 327 Fed Mag ammo. Federal, Speer, and Buffalo Bore are a few of the manufacturers that load 327 Federal Magnum.

Our Team Said: The 327 Fed Mag produced more muzzle energy than any of our 357 Mag loads, but ammo availability and bullet choices are significant concerns. As a result, we preferred to carry the 357 Mags, even with one fewer round.

Written and photographed by Robert Sadowski, using evaluations from Gun Tests *team testers.* **GT**

RUGER SP101 #5759 327 FEDERAL MAGNUM, $600-$800

GUN TESTS GRADE: A-

The SP101 in 327 Fed Mag performed well, and the added capacity and adjustable rear sight made this a desirable revolver. Ammo availability might be an issue.





Action	Double Action
Overall Length	7.95 in.
Overall Height	4.8 in.
Maximum Width (Cylinder)	1.35 in.
Weight Unloaded	27.7 oz.
Weight Loaded	30.5 oz.
Barrel Length	3.05 in.
Capacity	6
Frame Material/Size	Stainless Steel/Small
Cylinder Material	Fluted Matte Stainless Steel
Frame Front Strap Height	1.9 in.
Frame Back Strap Height	3.3 in.
Grips	Rubber/Ribbed Polymer

Grip Thickness (max)	1.2 in.
Grip Circumference (max)	4.6 in.
Front Sight	Grooved Ramp
Rear Sight	Adjustable Notch
Sight Radius	4.4 in.
Trigger Pull Weight Single Action	4.9 lbs.
Trigger Pull Weight Double Action	12.8 lbs.
Trigger Span Single Action	2.6 in.
Trigger Span Double Action	3.2 in.
Warranty	None Written
Telephone	(603) 863-3300
Website	Ruger.com
Made In	Newport, NH



The 327 Fed Mag offers less recoil than the 357 Mag revolvers but it still has some pop. The pistol also chambers and fires 32 H&R Mag and 32 S&W, but they can be more difficult to find than 327 Fed Mag. We're guessing that Ruger discontinued this because it didn't sell all that well, but that's not fault of the handgun.



Both Rugers had a more hand-filling rubber grip that absorbed felt recoil.

22 'Buntlines': Heritage Rough Rider and Ruger NM Single-Six

The Heritage Rough Rider Combo and Ruger New Model Single-Six Convertible are both equipped with 9-inch barrels and come with an extra cylinder. These plinkers are a hoot to shoot.

A **Buntline** is commonly known as a Single Action Army (SAA) revolver with a barrel of 12 inches or more. They are mostly associated with Wyatt Earp of the gunfight at O.K. Corral fame and Ned Buntline, where the revolver gets its name. Buntline was a dime novelist who penned Western sagas about cowboys, outlaws, and other gunfighters. It is agreed that much of Buntline's writing was more fiction than fact, so if Ned could take some poetic license, so did we calling these long-barrel rimfires Buntlines. The Heritage Manufacturing Rough Rider and Ruger New Model Single-Six Convertible are scaled down Buntlines with 9-inch barrels — the Ruger actually has a 9.5-inch barrel. After the team stopped yukking it up about the odd-looking long-barreled revolvers and saying things like: "You need to tie a red warning flag to the end of the barrel" or "You need to



The Heritage Manufacturing Rough Rider Combo ($230) and Ruger New Model Single-Six Convertible ($569) are both equipped with 9-inch barrels and come with an extra cylinder. One cylinder is chambered in 22 LR and the other in 22 WMR. We found these single-action revolvers were fun for plinking and would do well for small-game hunting, but one had the deck stacked in its favor.

RANGE DATA

PMC Target 22 LR 40-gr. RNS	Ruger Single-Six	Heritage Mfg. Rough Rider
Average Velocity	894 fps	921 fps
Muzzle Energy	71 ft.-lbs.	75 ft.-lbs.
Average Group	0.8 in.	1.0 in.

Remington Thunderbolt 22 LR 40-gr. RNS	Ruger Single-Six	Heritage Mfg. Rough Rider
Average Velocity	972 fps	884 fps
Muzzle Energy	84 ft.-lbs.	69 ft.-lbs.
Average Group	0.7 in.	1.2 in.

To collect accuracy data, we fired five-shot groups from a bench using a rest. Distance: 15 yards with open sights. We recorded velocities using a ProChrono digital chronograph set 15 feet from the muzzle.

RANGE DATA

Remington Premier 22 WMR 33-gr. V-Max	Ruger Single-Six	Heritage Mfg. Rough Rider
Average Velocity	1669 fps	1553 fps
Muzzle Energy	204 ft.-lbs.	177 ft.-lbs.
Average Group	0.9 in.	0.7 in.

CCI Maxi Mag 22 WMR 40-gr. TMJ	Ruger Single-Six	Heritage Mfg. Rough Rider
Average Velocity	1359 fps	1241 fps
Muzzle Energy	164 ft.-lbs.	137 ft.-lbs.
Average Group	0.8 in.	1.1 in.

To collect accuracy data, we fired five-shot groups from a bench using a rest. Distance: 15 yards with open sights. We recorded velocities using a ProChrono digital chronograph set 15 feet from the muzzle.

move the target out a few more yards, the muzzle keeps hitting it" or "We're going to need a longer range rod," we all got back to our senses and found a lot to like in these long-barreled rimfires.

Both revolvers are blued, single action and came with two cylinders, one for 22 LR and one for 22 WMR. One thing to be aware of with a 22 rimfire convertible revolver is that the bore diameter for a 22 LR and a 22 WMR are different. Nominal dimensions are .220 for the 22 WMR, and .217 for 22 LR. Generally speaking, the 22 LR is more accurate than the 22 WMR, and there tends to be more consistent velocity and pressure on the LR rounds.

Ruger New Model Single-Six Convertible #0624 22 LR/22 WMR, $569

Before testing, we used a range rod to check the chamber alignment of all the chambers to the barrels in both cylinders for both revolvers. Our range rods from Brownells (Brownells.com) have a 10.5-inch handle with 2.5-inch heads, so we had just enough rod to get the job done. The Ruger had no issues. The rod freely slid through the bore and chamber, coming to rest on the recoil shield for both cylinders.

The New Model Single-Six Convertible in hand felt more substantial and hand filling than the Heritage. Testers liked the heft and feel. The Ruger sported a well-executed blue finish with a hammer and trigger that were both in the white along with black plastic grips. It was a sharp looking revolver. When cocking the Ruger, it felt more refined. It was tight on all chambers; no wiggle.

The sights were excellent, giving the user a thick front blade with just enough gap on the sides when viewed through the rear notch. The rear sight was adjustable for windage and elevation using a small flat-blade screwdriver. The hammer was serrated and gave the cocking thumb a good grip. The trigger was wider and had a comfortable curve.

RUGER NEW MODEL SINGLE-SIX CONVERTIBLE #0624 22 LR/22 WMR, $569

GUN TESTS GRADE: A-

The Ruger had excellent sights, and with the slightly larger grip, it was easier to shoot well. Loading and unloading were tedious.



Action	Single
Overall Length	15 in.
Overall Height	4.0 in.
Maximum Width (Cylinder)	1.4 in.
Weight Unloaded	39 oz.
Weight Loaded	43 oz.
Barrel Length/Twist	9.5 in., 1:14 RH
Capacity	6
Frame Material/Size	Steel/Small
Cylinder (22 LR)	Steel, Fluted
Cylinder (22 WMR)	Steel, Nonfluted
Frame Front Strap Height	2.1 in.
Frame Back Strap Height	3.0 in.
Grips	Checkered Plastic
Grip Thickness (max)	1.5 in.
Grip Circumference (max)	5.6 in.
Front Sight	Grooved Ramp
Rear Sight	Adjustable Notched Blade
Sight Radius	10.6 in.
Trigger Pull Weight Single Action	3.7 lbs.
Trigger Span Single Action	2.8 in.
Safety	None
Warranty	None Written
Telephone	(603) 865-2442
Website	Ruger.com
Made In	Newport, NH



The sight picture on the Ruger was excellent, plus it allowed a user to adjust the sights; the Heritage had fixed sights.



Ruger countersunk each chamber in the Single-Six's cylinder (left); Heritage countersunk the entire surface of the cylinder rear (right), leaving a ridge.



The grooved Ruger base pin (right) was easier to grasp than the finely knurled Heritage base pin (left).



The Single-Six has a transfer bar to block the hammer from hitting the firing pin. Both SA triggers were crisp and light.

HERITAGE MANUFACTURING ROUGH RIDER COMBO
RR22MB9, 22 LR/22 WMR, $230
GUN TESTS GRADE: C

The Rough Rider has a smaller grip and was much lighter than the Ruger. We thought the price was hard to beat.



Action	Single
Overall Length	14.3 in.
Overall Height	5.0 in.
Maximum Width (Cylinder)	1.4 in.
Weight Unloaded	33.4 oz.
Weight Loaded	37.4 oz.
Barrel Length	9.0 in.
Capacity	6
Frame Material/Size	Aluminum Alloy/Small
Cylinder (22 LR)	Steel, Fluted
Cylinder (22 WMR)	Steel, Nonfluted
Frame Front Strap Height	2.1 in.
Frame Back Strap Height	3.1 in.
Grips	Smooth Cocobolo
Grip Thickness (max)	1.3 in.
Grip Circumference (max)	5.0 in.
Front Sight	Flat blade
Rear Sight	Groove
Sight Radius	10 in.
Trigger Pull Weight Single Action	3.9 lbs.
Trigger Span Single Action	3.0 in.
Safety	Thumb
Warranty	1 Year Limited
Telephone	(305) 685-5966
Website	HeritageMfg.com
Made In	Miami, FL



The loading gate and the extra wiggle room of the cylinder made the Rough Rider easier to load than the Ruger, we thought.

Right: The ejector-rod lever was smaller than the Ruger's, but it was still usable. Magnum cases were the most stubborn to eject, but the ejection rod and gravity worked together to get them out.





Left: The recoil shield housed a thumb safety shown in "safe" position with hammer block up. Right: The thumb safety is shown in "fire" position with hammer block down. Neither gun had any failures to fire or function.



All was aces until we started loading. If we indexed the cylinder too much, we had to skip that chamber and go on to the next. It took longer to reload, until we got the rhythm down.

Unloading, we had the same issue. The ejector head was a small button; we had to make sure the tip of our finger didn't get burned after extensive shooting. A reverse indexing pawl would be an excellent addition to this Ruger. Loading the Ruger was a simple procedure: Open the loading gate and fill the chambers. No need to rest the hammer on a empty chamber as the New Model Single Six has a transfer bar built in that avoids accidental discharge if the revolver is dropped with a round under the hammer.

We noticed with both revolvers, after extensive shooting that dry lube on the cases and burned residue would get trapped under the rim of the cartridge. We needed to make sure the cartridge was seated all the way in the chamber, or we could feel the cartridge base scrap along the recoil shield when cocking the hammer and the cylinder rotated. We found the Ruger's counter-bored chamber became sticky sooner than the Heritage due to the rear design of the cylinder.

Swapping cylinders required the user to open the loading gate, press the base pin button, and pull the base pin free from the frame. The cylinder would then drop out of the right side (loading gate side)t of the revolver. This operation had no hitches and was fast and easy to execute.

Our Team Said: The Ruger was built better, in our estimation, which was reflected in the price. We would like Ruger to install a reverse indexing pawl like they do in their New Model Vaquero to make loading easier.

Heritage Mfg. Rough Rider Combo #RR22MB9 22 LR/22 WMR, $230

The Rough Rider had a tight lock up on most chambers; we did experience some being looser than others in both the LR and Mag cylinders. With the cylinder removed, the range rod slid freely through the bore with the

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head stopping on the recoil shield. When we inserted the cylinder and started to test the chambers, we noticed a very slight misalignment in the 22 WMR cylinder in which the rod did not slide freely through the barrel and into the chamber. The 22 LR was better. We did not think the alignment was so bad that we had to reject the revolver, but we expected to see some chambers not shoot as accurately, and we did.

This diminutive Buntline has a frame of aluminum alloy and a steel barrel and cylinder. A blued finish was nicely executed on the metal. The hammer was left in the white and contrasted agreeably. Grips were smooth cocobolo, and in hand, the revolver was much smaller than a traditional SAA. Testers thought this might be a nice revolver to start young shooters on because of the grip and the thumb safety, a feature missing on the Ruger.

On the left recoil shield was a safety lever that fell under a right-hand shooter's thumb. Rotated up, it blocked the hammer from hitting the firing pin; rotate it down to fire the gun. The thumb safety looked odd on a SAA-style revolver, but it added an extra level of safety. The trigger was centered in the frame, unlike a traditional SAA trigger. It was smooth with a slight curve that was comfortable to press. The hammer wore an aggressive checkering and made cocking the hammer slip free. The loading gate was easy to operate.

Changing cylinders was a simple task. The base pin wore a fine knurling. We would have preferred something a bit coarser so that after extensive shooting and crud build up, the pin is easier to pull free from the frame. The rear of each cylinder was recessed so when cartridges were inserted, the base of the cartridge was flush with the outer edge of the cylinder.

Load the Rough Rider like any traditional SAA revolver. To ensure the hammer rests on an empty chamber, first cock back the hammer to half cock, open the loading gate and load one chamber, skip the next chamber, load the rest. Loading small cartridges into the Rough Rider was easier than with the Ruger, we thought. There was more wiggle room with the cylinder in case you indexed the chamber too much. Unloading empties was a bit easier, too. Magnum cases were the most stubborn to eject, but the ejection rod and gravity worked together to remove them.



Loading the Ruger was tedious; if you indexed the cylinder too much, you had to move on to the next chamber then come back around. A reverse indexing pawl would be an excellent addition.

What we found with these long-barrel revolvers was that muzzle blast was way in front and was less noticeable, something else to think about when introducing new shooters to pistols. We also tested at 15 yards, since the Heritage had a fixed sight and the Ruger an adjustable one. We were quite pleased with the Heritage's accuracy. The slight misalignment seemed not to affect the performance most of the time, though we did notice we threw a shot per cylinder.

Our Team Said: Overall, we thought the Rough Rider was a fun gun to shoot, and it would be deadly on squirrels. We did see some of the bluing start to wear on the butt, and the front blade sight loosened but a dab of epoxy fixed the problem. The Rough Rider was hard to beat for the price.

Written and photographed by Robert Sadowski, using evaluations from Gun Tests *team testers.* **GT**

Light-Recoil 45 ACP Loads: Three Comfortable 'A' Choices

Not everyone is looking for a +P or a bear-killer load. Some are simply wishing to sustain their ability with a handgun that seems more difficult to handle than ever. Here are some choices.

The road in life isn't always straight and narrow. It can be winding and even out of control. Some changes are unwelcome, even fearful. Among the significant changes as we age is a loss of muscle mass. Shooters who once handled hard-kicking handguns now find them ever more difficult to handle. Arthritis and a culmination of old injuries make firing the big-bore pistol difficult. These individuals, along with young shooters who have adopted a lightweight pistol such as a Colt Commander, and slightly-built female shooters interested in a low-recoil load, are faced with difficult decisions. Once the decision is made to take advantage of the big-bore 45 ACP handgun, shooters are seldom willing to back down to the 9mm.

A knowledgeable reader asked for help in choosing a good factory load for his Commander 45 ACP, and this report is an answer. He had solved the problem of practice loads well. It isn't difficult to find a good lead-bullet load for practice. The Oregon Trail 200-grain semiwadcutter bullet and a modest charge of WW 231 powder will break 800 fps and function in most 1911s. But for personal-defense handguns, expansion is desirable, so that calls for a jacketed hollowpoint bullet to prevent over penetration and ricochet.

In our Gun Tests ammunition evaluations, we have stressed that when the power factor of a load reaches 200, then the handgun becomes more difficult to use effectively in personal defense. As an example, the standard 230-grain 45 ACP hardball load at 850 fps breaks 195 in power factor. The 185-grain JHP at 1000 fps hits 185. Few hardball loads actually clock 850 fps, but most of the 230-grain JHP loads do. For comparison, we listed the performance data of several +P hollowpoints on page 27.

Are there load choices that will diminish the recoil of full-strength 45 ACPs and still produce acceptable performance — not exactly -P loads, but ones that are easier to handle than most and give a shooter with tired muscles a fighting chance at handling a big-bore handgun with accuracy and speed?

We went looking for some loads that produce reasonable recoil coupled with good downrange ballistic

Right: Students who are not challenged handling standard-pressure 45 ACP loads are sometimes startled by the recoil of +P loadings.



The Kimber CDP is a great pistol, but it is light and the laws of physics indicate it will have a hard push when fired. A light load can make it more controllable.



With proper technique, a full-size 45 and light loads aren't that difficult to master. But with heavy loads, the equation changes.



45 ACP LIGHT LOADS

Gun: Kimber CDP with 4-inch barrel	Average Velocity (fps)	Standard Deviation (fps)	Muzzle Energy (ft.-lbs.)	Average Accuracy (in.)	Power Factor (pf)	Expanded Width (in.)	Retained Weight (gr.)	Penetration In Water (in.)
160-gr. Cor-Bon DPX	1080	24	414	1.0	173	.70	160/100%	15
165-gr. Cor-Bon Pow'Rball	1109	20	450	2.25	183	Frag	25/15%	10
165-gr. Federal Hydra-Shok	950	17	330	1.5	157	.70	158/96%	12
185-gr. Winchester Silvertip	890	22	325	1.5	165	.72	173/94%	13

Notes: *Average Velocity and Standard Deviation readings were recorded by firing 10-shot strings over a Competition Electronics Pro Chrono chronograph. The muzzle was 10 feet from the first skyscreen. Ambient temperature: 77 degrees. Elevation: 815 feet above sea level. ● The accuracy figures are the average of three five-shot groups. For accuracy, we fired the test gun from a benchrest at a 15-yard target. ● To calculate IPSC power factor, multiply bullet weight in grains by the velocity in fps, then divide by 1000. ● The retained-weight column shows the measured recovered bullet weight, then retained weight as a percentage of the actual bullet weight. All prices from MidwayUSA.com.*



Left to right: We tested four loads — the Winchester Silvertip, the Cor-Bon Pow'RBall, the Cor-Bon DPX, and the Federal Hydra-Shok Low Recoil. Performance was better than we expected. These are specialized loads, and you should carefully consider the performance of each one before making it your daily carry. But there's a good argument for carrying what you practice with.

effect while functioning with standard recoil springs. Our test guns were a 4-inch-barrel Kimber CDP, the personal-defense pistol of one of our raters and a SIG Sauer P250 45-caliber compact. For comparing the recoil of +P loads to our controlled-recoil samples, larger pistols, including the FNH 45, were used. Here are our recommendations.

Federal 165-Grain Hydra-Shok JHP, $26.99

Of all the loads tested, the Federal is the only choice specifically designed as a low-recoil load. As such, it has a lot of research behind it. It is the slowest of the 160- to 165-grain loads by a margin, but this is not reflected in the Hydra-Shok bullet performance. Expansion was good, although we did have one failure to expand. The price is right, and the performance is ideal for this scenario. There is little room for discussion: this is the only purpose-designed low-recoil load tested, and our tests show it is a top choice based upon low recoil and affordability. We were looking for low recoil and reasonable performance, and the Federal load with a power factor of 157, makes the grade.

Gun Tests Grade: A/Best Buy



The 165-grain Hydra-Shok performed well in 14 of 15 instances, with one bullet that unaccountably did not open. We do not clock every round during a test, and the pistol's recoil felt normal.

Winchester Silvertip 185-Grain X45ASPD, $21.49

The Silvertip is often overlooked, perhaps because it is perceived as an old-generation loading. This isn't really true, as there have been several versions of the Silvertip. The current generation offers a good balance of expansion and penetration. The power factor is less than full-power 230-grain load, yet penetration performance of 13 inches in water leaves little to be desired. By reputation, the alloy-coated Silvertip isn't as accurate as other loads, but the accuracy demonstrated by this loading is more than adequate. If full-power 230-grain JHP loads or +P loads tire you, this is a good place to start looking. This isn't a bonded-core load, and the jacket was lost during testing, but expansion to .72 inch was reliable.



Gun Tests Grade: A

Cor-Bon 160-Grain DPX, $34.99

This is purpose-designed as a short-barrel load, not

HIGH-VELOCITY 45 ACP +P HOLLOWPOINT PERFORMANCE DATA (APRIL 2010)

MANUFACTURER & BRAND	Average Velocity (fps)	Standard Deviation (fps)	Muzzle Energy (ft.-lbs.)	Average Accuracy (in.)	Power Factor (pf)	Expanded Bullet Width (in.)	Retained Weight (grains)	Penetration In Water (in.)
Cor-Bon 165-gr. JHP SD45165, $29.48/20	1233	19	550	3.0	203	Fragmented	130 79%	Fragmented
Cor-Bon 165-gr. Pow'RBall PB45165, $30.14/20	1160	16	555	2.6	191	0.72	160 97%	12.0
Cor-Bon 185-gr. DPX DPX45185, $40.94/20	1090	12	488	1.7	202	0.81	185 100%	11.5
Federal 185-gr. Hydra-Shok P45HS2G, $35/50	1101	22	497	2.0	204	0.69	181 98%	13.0
Remington 185-gr. GS GS45ACP, $26.79/25	1126	19	520	2.3	208	0.75	185 100%	12.5
Cor-Bon 185-gr. +P SD45185, $29.48/20	1139	21	530	1.8	210	1.00	177 96%	11.0
Speer 200-gr. Gold Dot 23969, $23.99/20	1050	14	489	1.6	210	0.72	199 100%	13.0
Black Hills 230-gr. D45N6, $49.99/50	930	15	441	1.5	213	0.68	230 100%	16.0

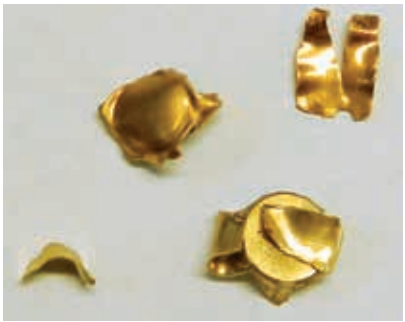


as a low-recoil load. The DPX load is expensive but then all loads using the Barnes X bullet are. Performance is excellent, however, with particularly good penetration. Accuracy is the finest of any load tested. While lighter than many 45 fans like, the DPX bullet is quite simply a rule breaker, changing many shooters' minds about bullet weight and performance. This is a solid choice and is arguably the top performer based upon wound potential. Unless recoil is the overwhelming consideration, this is a top choice for those that are looking for a load with less recoil than the 230-grain 45 ACP.

Gun Tests Grade: A

Cor-Bon 165-Grain Pow'RBall +P, $26.99

This is a +P load, but with the 165-grain bullet, we thought recoil might be light. As it turned out, the power factor is a whopping 183 due to the high velocity. The Pow'RBall has its points, but it is not the low-recoil load we were looking for. This load was tested as a counterpoint to heavy, slow loads. This is the lightest kicking +P we are aware of. (If you use an older aluminum-frame pistol, we won't argue that the frame will take 5,000 rounds of use. However, a wide-mouth JHP gouges aluminum frames. That is why Evolution Gun Works tooled up to produce their excellent frame repair insert.) The Pow'RBall feeds like hardball and will not gouge the frame, so it is a qualified choice for use in a treasured old Commander. This load exhibited fragmentation. Our raters found that it is a good counterpoint for those who might deploy the Glaser Safety Slug. More accurate, less expensive, and nearly as frangible as the Glaser, the Pow'RBall is an interesting design. The 25 grains retained weight is the largest single piece we found.



Gun Tests Grade: B

Our Team Said

The Winchester Silvertip has a lot going for it, including availability and price. It is the stepping-off point for those struggling with a 230-grain load or a +P loading.

The Cor-Bon Pow'RBall is a great choice for those using older aluminum-frame guns, as it feeds in any pistol that will feed hardball, won't gouge the feed ramp, and fragments if you like fragmentation. However, recoil is heavy because it is a +P.

The Cor-Bon 160-grain DPX is the best performer tested as far as its balance of expansion and penetration. It is pricey, but as of this writing local stores are asking forty bucks for twenty rounds of any 45 ACP.

The Federal Hydra-Shok may be readily available, and it offers good performance. Of the two top loads, the Hydra-Shock wins as a Best Buy while the Cor-Bon is the best based on performance. Either should make a recoil-shy person confident.

Written and photographed by R.K. Campbell, using evaluations from Gun Tests *team testers.* **GT**

SilencerCo's 12 Gauge Silencer

Utah company releases modular Salvo Suppressor.

Suppressor manufacturer SilencerCo has released what is says is the first commercially-viable shotgun silencer. The new product, named the Salvo 12, is a modular design that allows the shooter to add or remove sections to balance length, weight, and sound-suppression needs. It arrives as a 12-inch suppressor, but can be reduced to 10-, 8-, and 6-inch configurations as needed.

"The Salvo 12 represents a revolution in silencers, not just an evolution," asserts Joshua Waldron, chief executive officer for SilencerCo. "There is a huge installed base of shotgun hunters and shooters that has been waiting for a product like this for a long time."

SilencerCo's sales angle is to protect the hearing of shotgun owners just as the record-breaking proliferation of rifle and handgun



suppressors do for those users.

The Salvo 12 is made for 12-gauge shotguns, and at its full 12-gauge length, measures 12.19 inches and weighs 32 ounces, according to company specifications. It is 2.21 inches wide and is 2.96 inches tall.

More important, sound levels at the shooter's ear is 132.0 dB for the 12-inch configuration, 134.1 dB for the 10-inch configuration, and 137.0 dB and 140.6 dB for the 8-inch and 6-inch set-ups, respectively.

S&W Pays $2M Civil Penalty on SEC Charges

Smith & Wesson Holding Corporation (NASDAQ Global Select: SWHC) announced on July 28 that it has reached an approximate $2 million civil settlement with the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC).

The settlement is related to a 2010 inquiry stemming from a Department of Justice (DOJ) investigation, which was later dropped by the DOJ. The company consented to the settlement without admitting or denying the findings of the inquiry.

In an administrative order, the SEC said that Smith & Wesson offered improper payments to foreign government officials to get or keep business from 2007 through 2010, violating the Foreign Corrupt Practices Act. The SEC said S&W used third parties to pay bribes to foreign officials in Bangladesh, Indonesia, Nepal, Pakistan, and Turkey.

The SEC order said the company failed to design and implement a system of internal controls or an appropriate FCPA compliance program.

President and CEO of Smith & Wesson James Debney said, "We are pleased to have concluded this matter with the SEC and believe that the settlement we have agreed upon is in the best interests of Smith & Wesson and its shareholders. Today's announcement brings to conclusion a legacy issue for our company that commenced more than four years ago, and we are pleased to now finally put this matter behind us."

The company's brands include Smith & Wesson, M&P, and Thompson/Center Arms. Smith & Wesson facilities are located in Massachusetts, Maine, and Connecticut.

Ruger Introduces Striker-Fired LC9s Compact 9mm Pistol

Ruger has produced a new striker-fired version of the LC9 pistol, dubbed the LC9s. The different ignition system separates it from the already established hammer-fired LCP and LC380 in 380 ACP and the LC9 chambered in 9mm Luger.

The LC9s uses the same holsters, extended magazines, lasers and accessories as the LC9 and features a blued, through-hardened alloy steel slide, a one-piece glass-filled nylon grip frame with aggressive checkering, a grip-extension magazine floorplate, and a windage-adjustable 3-dot sight system. Ruger claims the LC9s's newly designed trigger mechanism has a short, light, crisp trigger pull.

Chris Killoy, Ruger president and chief operating officer, said, "The



LC9s follows the success of the LC9, yet provides a new option for shooters who prefer the short, crisp trigger pull of a striker-fired pistol."

The compact, 17.2 oz. Ruger LC9s pistol has a 3.12-inch barrel, the same as the LC380 and LC9 and slightly longer than the 2.75-inch barrel on the LCP.

The LC9s has an overall length of 6 inches, a height of 4.5 inches and a 0.9-inch width. That makes it the same length and height as the LC380 and LC9 and slightly longer and taller than the LCP (5.16 inches long, 3.6 inches tall).

Factory specs say it weighs 17.2 ounces empty and had a 7+1 capacity. That's the same round count as the LC380 and LC9 and practically the same weight as those pistols. The LCP (9.4 ounces) weighs about half of the LC9s and carries one fewer round in the magazine.

The LC9s's six-groove alloy-steel barrel twist rate is 1:10 RH, as found on the LC9 and LC380. The LCP spins its bullets at a slower 1:16-inch rate.

The LC9s offers modern safety features such as an integrated trigger safety, manual safety, magazine disconnect, inert magazine for safe disassembly and a visual inspection port that allows for visual confirmation the chamber's status.

The LC9s No. 3235, $449, ships with one 7-round magazine, a soft case and a cable locking device. It is not currently approved and certified for sale in Massachusetts or California.

IZ132 Rifle Upgrades Coming This Year

If the import ban on certain Russian products ever gets lifted, shooters can look forward to an updated IZ132 rifle from Concern Kalashnikov.

The standard IZ132 rifle has a gas-operated, rotating-bolt action chambered in 7.62x39, high-impact polymer hunting butt and forend, and a 16.3-inch barrel. It will now be joined by three 922(r)-compliant upgrades for 2014-2015. The following upgrades also fit Saiga's Model IZ240.

The IZ132 Saiga upgrade includes





an improved polymer stock and handguard as well as integrated ergonomic pistol grip. The upgrade accepts traditional 30-round double-stack magazines.

The SU2 Saiga upgrade, which will be introduced in the fall, also accepts 30-round double-stack magazines while adding a Command Arms Accessories (CAA) skeletonized collapsible stock with rubber recoil pad and ergonomic extension design, a rubberized pistol grip with interchangeable back straps and finger grooves, and hand guard complete with Picatinny rails.

The SU3 Saiga upgrade includes a fully adjustable CAA stock (SRSNL) with 10-position extension adjustability, adjustable cheek piece for height and eye relief, and vertically adjustable rubberized butt pad. Its rubberized grip includes six interchangeable finger groove and backstrap inserts. Storage is also available in the grip system and secured by a snap cap. Rounding out the SU3 upgrade is a 5-Picatinny-rail system capable of handling tactical lighting, hunting, and shooting accessories. The upper-receiver dust cover can be manipulated and removed without dismantling the rail system. The SU3 is designed to accept a 30-round double-stack magazine. This model will be introduced to the marketplace in early 2015.

RWC Group LLC was established in June 2011 and began operations in January 2012 as the exclusive U.S. Importer of Izhmash Saiga rifles and shotguns. In September 2013, RWC became the exclusive U.S. Importer of Concern Kalashnikov products. Currently, these product lines consist of Izhmash and Baikal rifles and shotguns.

In July, President Obama signed an executive order targeting Russian oil, natural gas, finance and defense companies, including Saiga and Baikal firearms.

Product Recall Notice: Hornady 9mm 135-Grain Ammo

Hornady Mfg. Company is recalling one lot of 9mm 135-grain +P Hornady Critical Duty Ammunition, Item #90226, Lot #3141635. This lot was shipped between the dates of 6-5-14 and 7-16-14, the company said. The lot number can be found printed on the underside of the box label.

Hornady ballisticians have determined that some cartridges from Lot #3141635 may exhibit light or no powder charges. Use of this product may result in firearm damage and/or personal injury. The company advises shooters not to use Hornady Critical Duty 9mm Luger 135-grain +P, Lot #3141635.

This notice only applies to Lot #3141635. If you own this lot number or have any questions regarding this recall, please call 800-338-1242. Hornady Mfg Company will make all arrangements associated with this return and replacement of the product.

Any other lot numbers or item numbers are not subject to this recall and require no action.



Four New Desert Eagle 1911s Available from Cabela's

Magnum Research, Inc. has announced four exclusive new designs for its Desert Eagle 1911G and Desert Eagle 1911C pistols offered through Cabela's.

The first two models are the .45 ACP "G" and "C" pistols, model numbers DE1911GSBCAB and





Left: Magnum Research, Inc.'s Desert Eagle "CH" pistols feature a case-hardened carbon-steel frame using the Turnbull bone-charcoal process. This is the DE1911GCH. Right: Magnum Research, Inc.'s Desert Eagle 1911G DE1911GSBCAB has a precision-cast frame of machined carbon steel. The exclusive Gray frame is treated with a high-temperature ceramic Cerakote coating. The DE1911G models feature a 5-inch barrel length and an overall length of 8.625 inches.

DE1911CSBCAB. The frames on both are precision cast, machined from high-quality carbon steel, and the slide is machined from solid billets of steel and then finished in a matte black. The exclusivity of this model is the commanding gray frame, which has been treated with a high-temperature ceramic Cerakote coating and is accented with black appointments. MSRP on either model is $948.

The second two new models in the Cabela's offering are also .45 ACP "G" and "C" pistols, model number DE1911GCH and DE1911CCH. These pistols feature a case-hardened carbon steel frame using the Turnbull bone charcoal process. MSRP is $1,120. Both DE1911G models feature a 5-inch barrel length and an overall length of 8.625 inches. The DE1911C models feature a 4.33-inch barrel length and an overall length of 7.87 inches.

All four models offer a slide width of 1.28 inch and slide thickness of 0.92 inch and grip thickness of 1.30 inch. The overall weight on the "G" models is 36.2 ounces, and the C models weigh in at 33.9 oz.

The high-profile sculptured sights are drift adjustable for windage, with a pinned-in serrated front-sight blade. Other features of the MRI pistol lines include a high-ride beavertail grip safety, extended magazine release, beveled magazine well, aluminum trigger with an over-travel stop, stainless steel full-length guide rod, extended thumb safety, enlarged ejection port, and double-diamond-checkered wood grips.

CMMG Adds 5.56mm Caliber to New AR Pistol Line-Up



CMMG has added a 5.56mm version to its recently released line-up of Mk4 K AR Pistols.

Aside from the caliber, the most notable difference in this new Mk4 K AR Pistol in 5.56mm is that it features a 12.5-inch barrel, compared to the 8.2-inch barrel found on the .300 AAC Blackout and 9mm versions.

The company says the increased barrel length will allow shooters to attain greater accuracy and reliability with the popular 5.56mm cartridge.

The Mk4 K AR Pistol comes with a Magpul MOE pistol grip and stock, an A2 muzzle compensator and features an ambidextrous rear sling mount.

Other features include CMMG's RKM11 free-floating KeyMod hand guard. The KeyMod slots are located at the 3, 6 and 9 o'clock positions and allow users to mount compatible accessories directly to the hand guard.

For accessories that are not yet compatible with the KeyMod system, CMMG offers separate 5-slot rails that attach to the hand guard. For mounting sights or optics, a 1913 Picatinny rail runs across the top of the firearm.

MPA Rolls Out 6mmBA and 6.5mmBA Bolt Action Rifles

MasterPiece Arms (MPA), manufacturers of the MPA MAC Line of semi-auto pistols, carbines, suppressors and MPAR Rifles, is now producing bolt-action rifles in 6mm and 6.5mm calibers.

The MPA 6mmBA Bolt Action Rifle and the MPA6.5mmBA Bolt Action Rifle are built on an MPA tactical aluminum chassis with a Stiller's Precision TAC Series action and MPA/Spencer hand-lapped barrel.

The MPA chassis is produced from 6061 aluminum with a v-bedding system, which provides additional clearance for glass-bedding action and the straight section of the barrel. The MPA buttstock comes with an adjustable cheek riser, length of pull adjustment, and monopod.

The 6mmBA and 6.5mmBA also feature a front-mounted bridge with Picatinny rail and a lower mounted Picatinny rail, plus a 20 MOA scope rail. The body has a Cerakote finish of either black or flat dark earth. The MPA 6mmBA and 6.5mmBA are compatible with any AICS or AW compatible magazines.

The 6mm rifles are available in various 6mm chamberings, including 6mm Lapua, 6mmXC, 6mm Creedmore, 243 Winchester and others. The 6.5mm rifles are



available in 6.5mm x 47 Lapua, 6.5mm x 284 Lapua, 6.5mm Creedmore, 260 Remington and others.

MasterPiece Arms' main offices are located in Carrollton, Georgia.

Compiled by Gun Tests *staff.* **GT**

— continued from page 2

block cannot unlock, in spite of the sloping surfaces, because it is held down by cams built into the slide. Now, as the slide comes back, the locking cams pull away and other slide surfaces pick up the breechblock, lifting it out of the frame recess and carrying it back.

When the slide reaches its full rearward position and begins to move forward, it carries the breechblock along until the point is reached where the breechblock can again be cammed down into its frame recess. The slide will continue forward into position for firing the next round. A conventional disconnector prevents the hammer from falling if the slide is not all the way forward. Note that since the cartridge case is allowed to move partway out of the chamber, cases must have a certain head thickness to prevent blowout. Almost all do, but some very cheap 9mm cartridges use thin or weak head cases to save material.

So why go to all that trouble? Why not just use a slide with a built-in breechblock, as was done on the Colt pocket Model M? Well, Mr. Pedersen had a problem, shared in those days with other would-be pistol designers — he found himself having to figure out ways to circumvent the patents of one John Moses Browning. And Browning had patented (or rather Colt's attorneys had patented on his behalf) the idea of a solid breechblock made as part of the slide. He also patented the idea of holding the stocks of an auto pistol on with screws, which is why the Model 51 (like other American pistols of the time) has a complex, and fragile, grip attachment system.

So, while the Remington-Pedersen design has advantages, some of which were mentioned in the article, the real reason for the complex design was to get around Browning's patents.

— Jim Keenan

Mr. Keenan makes interesting points about patents and the proper functioning of the action. He is correct that the chamber does not float and the barrel does not move. The breechblock floats, not the chamber, as I mistakenly said in the article. — Ray Ordorica



The bulged case you showed in the picture was probably not a result of "firing the wrong kind of ammo in the R51" but more than likely was an "out of battery" firing. That is to say, the gun was not locked up when the firing pin struck the primer and ignited the powder charge. This caused the case to bulge, not the fact that it was the wrong brand of ammo being used in the gun. **— Michael Chero**

You say that our case bulged because the gun fired out of battery. It can't do that, as Mr. Keenan explains above. Every case of that ammo showed a slight bulge, as we later found. We just hadn't noticed it. — Ray Ordorica

While I am happy that your pistol worked with the "approved" ammunition as a self-defense pistol and a pistol that I'm sure we will see on the firing line soon, I was shocked to see you award a **Gun Tests Grade**: **A** for it.

My reasoning has nothing to do with the people on YouTube or even the fellow whose letter was published in the same volume. It has everything to do with the caveat "but must be fed the right ammo."

For a modern firearm in a very popular caliber that can only be relied upon when fed one of two very specific and sometimes quite unavailable brands of ammunition, the assignment of an A is not, in my opinion, justifiable. That said, what grade should it get? How about a bifurcated grade such as function **A** usability **F**? Or maybe a caveat that says "**A** with approved ammunition/**F** with non-approved ammunition"? Or maybe "Look, Feel & Function **A**/Usability **F**."

The reason I'm so hard on the ammunition-related grade is that most people do not read their Owner's Manual (OM) with the possible exception of Field Stripping, unless something goes wrong. I have been involved with shooters for 50 years, and I can tell you that very few have ever read the OM. Giving an A without a warning in bright-red bold letters might get someone hurt, or worse.

In addition, the limitation on ammunition precludes reloaders from creating safe ammunition to use in their own firearm. I didn't notice this stated in your article.

My personal opinion is that this firearm should not have been issued with such a restriction to the brand of ammunition it uses, and your testing provides very solid validation to this opinion. I refer to the photo of the casing on page 10. Possibly the best thing would have been, "We are withholding a grade until sufficient data is published to ensure that people can produce reloaded cartridges for this firearm."

— Art Nickel
NRA Certified Instructor
NRA Chief Range Safety Officer

Readers Robert Frischer, Art Sweisfurth, Michael Oliver, Greg Pryor, and Toby Threet raised similar points. — tw

I'm not sure why you graded the Remington R51 as you did. In your review, you mentioned three issues or concerns that should have knocked it down at least one, if not two, letter grades, in my opinion.

1. It is finicky about ammo. (I don't care if the manufacturer admits it.)

2. The accuracy is poor if not horrible — 4-inch groups at 15 yards. I would consider that kind of accuracy almost a deal breaker.

— continued from page 31

3. You got some abrasion on your hand, but that's not a problem if you don't shoot as much as y'all do. But, what if I do intend on shooting the pistol a lot?

You're not the first reviewers to notice these three serious flaws, and your peers were not as forgiving as you were. Quite frankly, I consider the review to be more disappointing than the firearm. I've been a subscriber for several years, and you have given much more superior handguns, in my opinion, grades of **A-** or **B**. If the R51 deserves an **A** grade, then the Kahr CW9 should get an **A+** and the Glock 26 Gen 4 an **A++**.

— Edmund Hughes

Gabor Kovacs raised similar points. — tw

I have to agree with reader Charles Wilkins and disagree with your **A** grade on the Remington R51 pistol. If it were ammo specific and designed for target or range use only, I would concur with an A grade, but knowing that a firearm is only useable with a small selection of ammunition and not suitable for regular (SAAMI-spec) quality ammunition is a flaw for a defensive pistol. Had Remington not figured out what ammunition does work with their pistol, you'd have downgraded the reliability aspect of this pistol, and even with their ammo designation I think a **B** is generous. In my opinion, you should not have considered the ammo caveat in your criteria. It would be no different than a company like Glock advertising 13-round capacity but qualifying it as only reliable when loaded with 12. I think you should reconsider the grade. **— Mark Forster**

COMING UP IN GUN TESTS

- Can Bushnells' entry into the military tactical market — the Elite Tactical Scope ET45305ZA with HR59 reticle — compete with scopes that cost much more? Is the Horus reticle too busy for most shooters?
- S&W 642 Before & After: Cracked Frame Warranty Check.
- Bargain Hunter: Used Full Size 40s. Ruger SR40 vs. S&W 4003 TSW, $300.
- 4-inch 6-Shot 357 Magnum Revolvers for Competition: S&W 686 SSR Pro Series Stock Service Revolver and Ruger GP 100 Match Champion Model 1754.
- Firing Line: Gun Tests Readers Sound Off.
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