GUN TESTS®

THE CONSUMER RESOURCE FOR THE SERIOUS SHOOTER

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A BIGGER STICK: AR-15 RIFLES IN 6.8 SPC





The 6.8 SPC adds power to the AR platform, but how does the round work in a Battle Rifle Co. BR4 Odin and an LWRCI M6A2? See them on... **Page 6**





SIG VS S&W SHOOT OUT

Is S&W's SW1911 E-Series pistol 'enhanced,' or is it just gussied up with 'fish scales?' And is SIG's TACOPS tactical and operational? We test them to find out. **Page 11**



28-GAUGE SEMI-AUTOS

Legacy Sport's affordable Pointer would make a good field companion, but Beretta's A400 Xplore Action is X-cellent. It's pretty spendy, though. Check them out on... **Page 17**



SPECIAL REPORTS

Ruger's $899 SR1911CMD-A 45 ACP is a Lightweight Commander without the Colt name — and it has a clever innovation or two. **Page 23**





Three companions we would take on the trail are the new 22/45 Lite, the Mora HD knife, and Scow Custom sheath. See why on... **Page 26**

DOWNRANGE: 2 ● FIRING LINE: 3 ● SHORT SHOTS: 29 ● COMING UP: 32

DOWNRANGE

DODGING A BULLET



Todd Woodard

Gun owners dodged a bullet — metaphorically, of course — when the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives announced that it intended to ban commonplace M855 ball ammunition as "armor-piercing ammunition" and then later withdrew the proposal.

When BATFE released its "Framework for Determining Whether Certain Projectiles are 'Primarily Intended for Sporting Purposes' Within the Meaning of 18 U.S.C. 921(a)(17)(c)" edict, that meant the M855 round's exemption to the armor-piercing ammunition prohibition null and void, and even worse, make future exemptions nearly impossible.

By way of background, federal law in 1986 prohibited the manufacture, importation, and sale by licensed manufacturers or importers, but not possession, of "a projectile or projectile core which may be used in a handgun and which is constructed entirely . . . from one or a combination of tungsten alloys, steel, iron, brass, bronze, beryllium copper, or depleted uranium." Because there are handguns capable of firing M855, it "may be used in a handgun." It does not, however, have a core made of the metals listed in the law; rather, it has a traditional lead core with a steel tip, and therefore should never have been considered "armor piercing." Nonetheless, BATFE previously declared M855 to be "armor-piercing ammunition," but granted it an exemption as a projectile "primarily intended to be used for sporting purposes."

More ominously, BATFE then said it will henceforth grant the "sporting purposes" exception to only two categories of projectiles: .22 Caliber Projectiles and All Other Caliber Projectiles intended for use in a single-shot handgun. ATF also retained to itself the discretion to deny any application for a "sporting purposes" exemption if substantial evidence exists that the ammunition is not primarily intended for such purposes.

In my opinion, the agency backed off when two things happened. The first was a story by Katie Pavlich, news editor at Townhall.com. She revealed in a March 6 story that BATFE's proposal to ban commonly used M855 "green tip" AR-15 ammunition under the guise of law-enforcement safety had apparently been in the works far longer. Evidence: The sporting-use exemption for the ammo was already removed in electronic copies of the 2014 ATF Regulation Guide, which was available in January 2015.

Pavlich reported that the 2014 ATF Regulation Guide clearly showed where "the exemption for the ammunition in question has already been stripped out of the 2005 regulation handbook moving forward and 'green-tip' has been reclassified as 'armor piercing.'" She produced copies of the affected areas showing how M855 and SS 109, along with U.S. .30-06 M2AP black tips, were no longer given a sporting exemption.

Responding to the Pavlich story only a few hours later, ATF tweeted at 6:12 p.m. on March 6: "Nothing to analyze here folks, just a publishing

— continued on page 31

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The Titan 6 Rifle Is a 'Roessler'

The importer of this fine bolt action checks in with a few fine points about our article. Reader Freeman likes him a bunch of Commanders. And handgun fitting for the fairer sex.

Re "Two Great Makers Shoot It Out: Remington Versus Colt 45 ACPs," April 2015

Being a fan of Commander-Sized 1911s, I was pleased to see your review on the Remington R1 versus the Colt Commander. I'm wondering, however, why you didn't choose the R1 Carry Commander for the comparison, as that would have been more of an apples-to-apples comparison. The R1 Carry Commander has a number of features that rival those of the Colt, among them: ambi-safety, bobbed and skeletonized hammer, three-hole trigger, slimmer grips, and better sights, including a Trijicon night sight front. It also has a melded treatment all over. Comparing the basic R1 with a Colt 1991 Commander might have been a closer comparison, as well.

I currently own a Ruger SR1911 LW Commander, a Colt LW Commander, a Remington R1 Carry Commander, an S&W 1911 SCE Commander, and a SIG Emperor Scorpion Commander. If you're interested in an informal comparison of them, I wrote about it in my blog. Find it at TexasGunPros.net, under the Blog Posts title at the top of the page.

Scrolling through the blog, you'll find some other articles about some of these guns. They all shoot well, and I shoot them all pretty well. The SIG is the one I shoot the best, but the easiest-carrying one (also the most expensive) is the S&W. I put some Rasco slim grips on it, and with the Scandium frame (it's really aluminum with a drop or two of scandium in the mix, I'm told) it's an easy all-day-carry gun.

I made note of this in my blog, but I honestly can't feel an iota of difference between shooting a series 70 versus series 80 gun. And the only time I have a problem with a full-length guide rod is at cleaning time, and then it's not really that much of a pain. I do appreciate your reviews, and I realize that it's always going to be somewhat subjective because no two guns are alike.

— David Freeman
President/CEO
Texas Gun Pros, Inc.
TexasGunPros.com

Bob Campbell responds: "I simply purchased the first Remington Commander I was able to find. Though I like some of the features of the high-end guns, for the most part, the heart and soul is the same. If the pistol is mechanically reliable and the action is good, it is the fitness of the shooter that will mean the most.



An R1 with its decent sights is a great gun. I am hoping to secure one of the Smith & Wesson Commander–size handguns soon."

I read the Gun Tests evaluation of the Remington R1 Commander with great interest, especially the part about the malfunction. I just had a similar malfunction with my partially

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.

broken in (~100 rounds) full-sized R1. I was using standard Remington UMC 230-grain ammo and an 8-round Chip McCormick magazine. You didn't say which magazine you were using. Do you think the magazine type could be a factor? Other than this one malfunction, I have been pleased with my R1. **—D. A.**

Todd, I read the very interesting and enlightening test of the Remington and Colt 1911s. The Colt interests me very much, but I question the mainspring housing material. Many years ago, I purchased a stainless Colt Combat Commander and discovered that the mainspring housing was made of some sort of plastic. I sold that gun and never went back to looking at Colt 1911s. I've owned a number of Kimbers since, as they are all steel or aluminum alloy. If the gun you tested is all metal, I may take a look at a Colt. **— Frank**

Hey Frank: All metal on the Colts we tested recently, either steel or aluminum alloy. We would mention other materials in the spec box. — tw

Re "Special Report: Roessler Titan 6 Bolt-Action Rifle," April 2015

I have just read your review of our Titan 6, and I commend you for your thoroughness. We are really pleased by the positive comments, and we are even more interested in the minor criticisms, which we will use in our consultations with Roessler to make the guns even better:

1) We've never had a firing-pin failure. I raised the firing-pin issue with Hannes Prückler, order and technical manager at Rößler Waffen GmbH in Austria, and here is what he said about the firing-pin concern mentioned in the article: "We never had problems with it. The worst case was that the firing pin was lightly deformed after an blow-through with a proof cartridge." So to address your point, we will henceforth provide free replacement firing pins during the entire five-year warranty period, and at cost thereafter.

2) Availability is not an issue — we have decent stock on hand right now — but we obviously need to step up our advertising. They are also available through Able Sporting Goods and soon, we expect, through our other dealer customers. In addition to the standard setups available 24/7 on our website, retail customers can order special setups by e-mailing us, with 24-hour price confirmation and 90-day delivery.

3) As your article was being written, we lowered our prices by about 9%, a response to the improved Dollar/Euro exchange rate.

Curiously, you invented a new spelling for the company's name. In German it is "Rößler." In English it is "Roessler." It's obviously too late for the print addition, but would it be possible to correct the spelling on your website? **— Chuck Lutz**
T R Imports Inc.
Fort Worth, Texas

Ray Ordorica responds: "Thank you for the update on your fine rifle. The general U.S. spelling of umlauted words is to insert vowels to get an approximation of the correct German sound, which I have never liked. As a long-term student of German I prefer the umlaut, but did not put an ess-zet in my report because the editor most likely would not have liked it." Mr. Lutz, thanks for getting with us. I've corrected the April online publications to "Roessler." — Todd Woodard

Re "Firing Line," April 2015; and "Mitchell's Mauser," March 2015

In the March article and related letters in the April Gun Tests, you omitted to state that the allegations of "force-matching" serial numbers, refinishing etc., have been made in reference to (so-called "Russian Capture") German-made K98k rifles from WWII — not the postwar Yugoslav (Serbian) M48 rifles from the 1950s.



As for U.S.-made 8mm ammo being a "soft load," there is a historical reason behind this fact. When the Germans first developed the 8mm cartridge circa 1888, the bore diameter was 0.318 inch, and early Mauser rifles were made to that specification for rather slow round-nose bullets. Prior to WWI, the diameter was changed to 0.323 inch, and the German military adopted a faster spitzer (pointed) bullet. Because earlier 0.318-inch-bore rifles had been brought into the U.S., American ammo companies made 8x57mm ammo with thick, soft copper jackets at a lower velocity, so the bullets could squeeze down to fit the 0.318-inch-bore rifles without causing excessive pressure. Foreign-made 8x57mm ammo designed for 0.323-inch-bore rifles is practically equal to the 30-06, per ballistic tables.

Though I've not made any purchases directly from Mitchell's, I have examples of the various M48 models, the first being a "BO" imported circa 1986, and I have read the "For Collectors Only" book on Yugoslav rifles published by North Cape.

The Yugoslav M48 rifles, I believe, are all original Serbian Gov't "surplus" and should make very nice shooters for people wanting a military-style 8x57mm rifle, regardless of importer.
—J. W. Mathews

When Ray Ordorica told a few local collectors that he had a Mitchell's Mauser, they all wanted to see it. Lots of interest in them.— tw

Re "Firing Line," April 2015

Todd and staff, please keep up the good work, your publication is outstanding! I see a Firing Line letter from Alan Witter about slide-retraction effort, and saying "we'll do it" creates a whole new set of hurdles on how to actually get it done consistently. I've attempted to measure this function myself on two different occasions, so I

can appreciate what you're going through. Finding a good digital gauge to measure the force of pull is a challenge right from the get-go. Trigger pull gauges typically don't scale up high enough, so I ended up with a variable torque wrench "shade-tree mechanic" set-up, that seemed to be just OK. Then there was the gripping function itself; where on the slide did it need to clamp, considering the factory serrations or whatever to accommodate the grip tool, and how much torque, or pressure, needed to be applied there to keep it from slipping… "pinch force" is what I called it. I think some semi-autos need more "crack pressure" to get the slide moving than others, and that can create another different force figure. It is a lot like a trigger-pull measurement, where you have other factors to consider, like travel distance, creep, gritty feel, and the break itself, plus reset on a trigger.

Well, I'm thinking you'll end up with terms for slides that you'll have to standardize and explain, as well. There may be a significant difference between a cold gun and a warmed-up gun, too. My brief foray into this topic seemed to lead me down that path, too. I'm glad it's being looked at, and by GT in particular, because I know you'll get it right. Many people with less hand strength than others simply cannot operate some of the firearms out there, and it's one more important piece of knowledge that you can spell out with your tests.

— Marc

Those are all good points, Marc. I appreciate your weighing in. —tw

Handgun Fitting for Women

I am unsure if you have done an article in the past reviewing which semi-auto 9mms and 40 S&W pistols are most comfortable for women. I have smaller hands, and I don't find many semi-autos are the right size for my grip.

Also, cleaning and slide release are difficult for me, too. Please let me know what your tests have concluded. **— Rebecca**



I've wrestled with this for years, because it's more of a size issue than a gender issue — that is, some men have small hands, too. Sad to say, I can't answer this question for you personally without being able to see your hands. Off the top of my head, I'd suggest a Commander or Officer's size 1911-style pistol in 9mm. Generally speaking, staggered-stack or double-stack magazines in higher-capacity pistols make them thicker in the grip, thus more difficult to handle for small hands. A single-stack nine, like Glock's new G43, would be worth looking at as well. If you use the Comparison Tool on Gun-Tests.com, check the various grip measurements that accompany each gun. Guns like the Springfield Armory Enhanced Micro Pistol No. PI9240LP in 40 S&W (shown left) have the dimensions you're most likely find comfortable: Front Strap Height, 2.1 inches; Back Strap Height, 2.7 inches; Maximum Width, 1.4 inches; Grip Thickness Max, 1.1 inches, Grip Circumference Max, 5.0 inches; and Trigger Span, 2.6 inches. Also, polymer handguns that have adjustable grip panels would allow you to tailor the grip circumference to your hand. Finally, find a store nearby that offers rental guns. There is no substitute for handling a pistol yourself. — tw

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A Bigger Stick: We Test AR-15s In 6.8 SPC from BRC and LWRCI

The intermediate chambering of the Stoner mechanism adds power to the 5.56's basic performance, but the BR4 Odin and the M6A2 are two versions of it we probably wouldn't buy.

Throughout American history, citizens have adopted the military arms of the nation for civilian use. Today, the military-based semi-auto AR-15 platform is showing the genius of Eugene Stoner by being adopted for a multitude of uses, in particular as a hunting round for medium-sized big game. One cartridge particularly suited to this role is Remington's 6.8 SPC, an intermediate cartridge originally developed by the U.S. Army's Marksmanship Unit and Special Forces personnel to provide more power and penetration than the standard 5.56 NATO round, while maintaining compatibility with the AR-15 platform. The 6.8 SPC round, topped with appropriate hunting bullets, is currently being used in the field to harvest deer, hogs, and other large game. Thus, our interest in testing two very different rifles chambered in this cartridge, the LWRCI M6A2 and the Battle Rifle Company M4 Odin.

The 6.8 SPC is a cartridge that pushes the performance envelope for the AR-15 platform. Over time, there have been several specifications published for the chamber,







Top: The LWRCI 6.8 SPC was built like a tank. But do you want to carry around a tank? Bottom is the BRC BR4 Odin, with a keymod handguard. We had quite a few function problems with the rifle initially, but a thorough cleaning seem to solve them.

with a great deal of discussion regarding the compatibility between the different specifications. However, the available data shows the differences between chamber specs are minimal, so compatibility should not be a problem. It's worth noting, though, that one ammunition brand in this test, Silver State Armory, suffered two case ruptures. As there was one rupture in each rifle, and both failures were early in the testing cycle, we are inclined to think the issue was with the ammunition and not the rifles' designs or cleanliness. Having two ruptures in one test does not inspire confidence in the ammunition, so we wanted to mention that immediately.

LWRCI is headquartered in Cambridge, Maryland. The company says its mission is to provide "durable tools for the warfighter and law enforcement officer." According to the company's website, LWRC International (LWRCI) "was founded to pursue the development of

Left, top: The BR4 Odin preferred the SSA 115-grain loads. Left, bottom: The M6A2 liked the SSA 85-grain frangibles best. Hornady's load disappointed in both.

a short-stroke gas-piston-operated version of the AR-15/M16/M4 family of weapons." The company says it focused on eliminating the inherent shortcomings in the direct-impingement operating system, resulting in the family of M6 rifles and carbines.

The LWRC International M6 series rifles are rotary-bolt, magazine-fed, air-cooled, self-loading designs chambered in 5.56x45mm NATO and 6.8x43mm SPC. Some of the more common variations include the M6SL, a lightweight mid-length unit with polymer handguards; the M6A1, which has an A-frame front sight and quad-rail handguards; the M6A3, which has a four-position gas block, a mid-length action, and a mid-length quad rail; and the M6-SPR, which has a low-profile gas block and SPR configurable rail system. Our test unit was the M6A2 version, which has a low-profile gas block with a mid-length quad rail and heavy-duty polymer rail covers. The M6A2 retains about an 80% parts commonality with the direct-impingement carbine.

Battle Rifle Company was started in April 2010 and is based in Houston. The receiver on our rifle was stamped Seabrook, Texas. The company sells direct to the consumer or through its dealer network. The BR4 Odin gets part of its name from the Odin Works 12.5-inch keymod rail, which keeps weight down while allowing many accessory configurations. The BR4 designation is what the manufacturer gives all its guns with a 16-inch or shorter barrels. The 14.5-inch barrel has a Battle Rifle flash suppressor mounted permanently. The gun comes with a soft zippered case and one 25-round magazine. This was a direct-gas-impingement action, so it allowed us to compare it head to head with the piston gun for cleanliness, coolness, and function.

How We Tested

To collect accuracy data, we fired five 5-shot groups from a 100-yard concrete bench at a private range in Houston. The rifles were supported by a Caldwell Fire Control Front

6.8mm REMINGTON SPC RANGE DATA

Hornady Varmint Express 110-gr. V-Max #8346	**LWRCI M6A2**	**Battle Rifle Company BR4 Odin**
Average Velocity	2534 fps	2563 fps
Muzzle Energy	1568 ft.-lbs.	1604 ft.-lbs.
Power Factor	279	282
Smallest Group	1.4 in.	1.3 in.
Largest Group	2.9 in.	2.3 in.
Average Group	2.0 in.	2.0 in.

Silver State Armory #19457 85-gr. Frangible Lead-Free	**LWRCI M6A2**	**Battle Rifle Co. BR4 Odin**
Average Velocity	2895 fps	2963 fps
Muzzle Energy	2046 ft.-lbs.	2144 ft.-lbs.
Power Factor	318	326
Smallest Group	1.1 in.	0.9 in.
Largest Group	2.0 in.	2.3 in.
Average Group	1.4 in.	1.8 in.

Silver State Armory 115-gr. SSA HPBT	**LWRCI M6A2**	**Battle Rifle Co. BR4 Odin**
Average Velocity	2507 fps	2511 fps
Muzzle Energy	1535 ft.-lbs.	1540 ft.-lbs.
Power Factor	276	276
Smallest Group	1.0 in.	0.6 in.
Largest Group	2.6 in.	2.3 in.
Average Group	1.6 in.	1.5 in.

To collect accuracy data, we fired five 5-shot groups from the 100-yard bench at a private range in Houston using a Caldwell Fire Control Front Shooting Rest (MidwayUSA, $270, #956104) and sand bags. We recorded velocities using a MagnetoSpeed V3 ($400, Brownells #100-014-631WB) with the chronograph attached directly to the rifle muzzles. Weather was favorable with good light and temperatures between 79 and 91 degrees with no more than 10-mph wind.

Ammunition Sources: *Hornady Varmint Express 6.8mm Remington SPC 110-Grain V-Max #8346 (MidwayUSA.com #239229 $19.29/20); Silver State Armory 6.8mm Remington SPC 115-Grain SSA Match Hollow Point Boat Tail #SSA10072-115OTM (MidwayUSA.com #937887, $22.99/20); Silver State Armory 6.8mm Remington SPC 85-Grain Frangible Lead-Free #19457 (MidwayUSA.com #223572 $27.99/20). Factory specs for the Hornady 110-grain round were muzzle velocity, 2550 fps; muzzle energy, 1588 ft.-lbs. Factory specs for the Silver State Armory 115-Grain SSA Match Hollow Point Boat Tail were muzzle velocity, 2500 fps; muzzle energy, 1590 ft.-lbs. Factory specs for the Silver State Armory 85-Grain Frangible Lead-Free were muzzle velocity, 2828 fps; muzzle energy, 1509 ft.-lbs.*



Right: The SSA 115-grain match round produced groups like this in both rifles. The 85-grain frangible was slightly better in the LWRCI rifle.

Shooting Rest (MidwayUSA, $270, #956104) and sand bags. We used a Nightforce 5-25x56mm ATACR Riflescope with MOAR Reticle & Adjustable Parallax on both rifles. Each time, we shot confirmation groups before beginning an accuracy string. We cleaned the rifle bore between ammunition types. We aimed at Redhead 12-inch Sight-In Targets #135-997, which have 6-inch black center diamonds and four 3-inch-diameter black diamonds. They are available from BassPro.com. We tested with the following three varieties of ammunition: Hornady 110-grain V-Max and Silver State Armory's 115-grain OTM and 85-grain Frangible. Here's more of what we learned about these rifles:

LWRCI M6A2 Gas Piston Carbine M6A2R6B16 6.8 SPC, $2250

The price above was the out-of-stock price at ImpactGuns.com. Rockwell Arms had the rifle for $2240 and noted that it ships in 12 to 24 months. On Armslist.com, we found a handful of private sales offering this rifle for $1400 to $1600, some for an unfired NIB model, which doesn't account for FFL and shipping charges to the buyer, of course. The LWRC International M6A2U6B16 ships standard with a box and one 30-round magazine. Our private-sale gun, $1499 came with three mags, however. The website lists the available colors as black, flat dark earth, olive-drab green, and patriot brown.

LWRCI says its patented self-regulating short-stroke gas-piston system eliminates the venting of hot, carbon-laden gases into the receiver and bolt carrier group, thus eliminating the intensive cleaning regime of the "legacy" rifle. We found the LWRCI M6 easily field stripped and cleaned like any other piston AR. As is common with piston-driven rifles, the bolt showed little carbon fouling. A normal amount of carbon and copper fouling was in the bore.

Another supposed benefit of the company's short-stroke gas-piston system is improved handling

LWRCI M6A2 GAS PISTON CARBINE M6A2R6B16 6.8 SPC, $2250

GUN TESTS GRADE: A

We had a single feeding problem with one ammunition brand. This is a well-put-together gun with heavy-duty components. Hard to criticize it for being built well, but that turns into weight and cost that doesn't enthrall us.





The M6A2 has standard controls. The Magpul MIAD allowed for grip-size changes.



We suffered one case rupture in each rifle. This is a potentially dangerous malfunction that we couldn't diagnose or recreate.



A top view of the LWRCI shows the pop-up rear steel sight and the monolithic rail for mounting optics on top.

Right: The free-float quad-rail handguard allowed attachment of accessories, but was heavy.

Action Type	Semi-Automatic Short-Stroke Gas Piston; LWRCI Nickel Coating
Overall Length (Min/Max)	33.5 to 36.5 in.
Overall Height	10.25 in.
Weight Unloaded	8.2 lbs.
Weight Loaded	9.5 lbs.
Upper Receiver	Midlength Free Float Rail; Low-Profile Gas Block
Lower Receiver	Black Aluminum Alloy, Magpul MIAD Grip
Barrel	41V45 Steel Alloy; Match Grade, 16.1 in., 1:10 RH Twist, Target Crown
Muzzle Device	A2 Birdcage 5/8x24 TPI
Buttstock	Black VLTOR EMod, Adj. 4-Pos.
Length of Pull	11.4 to 14.5 in.
Handguard	Quadrail w/ 3 Polymer Covers
Magazine	(3) Barrett 30 Round
Rear Sight	LWRCI Folding BUIS
Front Sight	LWRCI Folding BUIS
Sight Radius	Up to 14.25 in.
Trigger	7.5 lbs., Mil-Spec Single Stage
Safety	Left Side 2-Pos. Lever
Cartridge Case Deflector	Yes
Dust Cover	Yes
Warranty	Limited Lifetime
Telephone	(410) 901-1348
Website	LWRCI.com
Made In/By	Maryland/LWRCI
Not Available	CA, CT, DC, HI, MD, MA, NJ, NY



BATTLE RIFLE COMPANY BR4 ODIN 6.8 SPC, $1495

GUN TESTS GRADE: B

This gun required a full cleaning to function properly. It was lighter, which makes it easier to carry. The Odin handguard feels trim and doesn't require covers to handle. We think there are better options out there, so we'd pass on this one.





Our rifle lacked a B.A.D. lever, but it did have a single-point sling attachment (arrow).



We had a number of malfunctions with the BRC until it was given a good cleaning. We usually don't reclean the action once we start a test.



The Odin keymod handguard is a much lighter way to allow accessory placement than quad Picatinny rails. But if you want to place a short Pic rail in a certain spot, the keymod allows one to be bolted on. The Pic rail shown is standard equipment.

Action Type	Semi-Automatic Direct Gas Impingement
Overall Length (Min/Max)	33.25 to 36.5 in.
Overall Height	10.0 in.
Weight Unloaded	6.9 lbs.
Weight Loaded	7.6 lbs.
Upper Receiver	Mil-Spec M16 Full Auto Carrier; w/Chrome-Lined Gas Key
Lower Receiver	Hard-Coat Anodized Black Aluminum Alloy, Ergo Pistol Grip, Magpul Extended Trigger Guard
Barrel	14.5 in., 1:9 RH Twist; Cryo Treated; Chrome Lined Bore and Chamber; M4 Feed Ramp Barrel Extension
Muzzle Device	A2, BRC Flash Suppressor
Buttstock	Hogue OverMolded, Adj. 6-Pos.
Length of Pull	10.9 to 14.0 in.
Handguard	Free-Float 12.5-in. Odin Works KEYMOD, w/1 5-Slot Detachable Pic Rail
Magazine	(1) 25 Rd. ACS St. Steel
Rear Sight	Magpul MBUS
Front Sight	Magpul MBUS
Sight Radius	Up to 17.0 in.
Trigger	8.5 lbs., Mil-Spec Single Stage
Safety	Left Side 2-Pos. Lever
Cartridge Case Deflector	Yes
Dust Cover	Yes
Warranty	Limited Lifetime
Telephone	(281) 777-0316
Website	BattleRifleCompany.com
Made In/By	Texas/BRC
Not Available	CA, CT, DC, HI, MD, MA, NJ, NY



This is the very aggressive muzzle fixture on the BR4. It's permanently attached, so the actual barrel length is 14.5 in.

characteristics, lighter recoil, and reduced muzzle rise. On our first testing day, our team started shooting the SSA 115 OTM with no failures, and our team commented on the rifle's even pulse and mild recoil. It was slightly more than a 5.56 round, we thought. We had no failures with the SSA 85-grain frangible and noted the same even pulse and mild recoil, which we thought was no more than a 5.56 round. The Hornady 110-grain V-Max likewise had no failures and felt the same as the SSA 115s. The brass fell in a 6-foot circle behind and to the right of the shooter. This short ejection distance may be important to handloaders.

We don't agree with the company's claim of improved handling. What we found with the M6A2 was a well equipped unit with an extensive rail system, rail covers, back up iron sights (BUIS) and a heavy-duty collapsible stock. All this equipment came at a price, as the rifle felt heavy enough that the testers would be less than enthusiastic about carrying it all day. Despite the weight, the rifle was well balanced and shot well from a variety of field positions, but we're not sure that qualifies as "improved."

The company talks a lot about its barrels. Because the tubes are dense and thick, "these barrels can take a lot more use and abuse than a standard barrel before any degradation in accuracy or loss of velocity." LWRCI says, "Our barrels can handle 20,000 rounds before replacement, as compared to 6,000-10,000 rounds on a standard M4." This is of obvious value on a "sandbox" rifle, but the domestic consumer may not want to pay the freight and tote the weight that results.

The rifle gave off a general sense of quality. The fit was tight and the finish showed consistent coloration. The controls were smooth and positive. The rifle was provided with three magazines manufactured by Barrett, which were clearly marked on the outside with the caliber. They locked and ejected easily. The bolt and bolt carrier were particularly nice, with a smooth and hard proprietary nickel





We don't particularly like big buttstocks like the VLTOR on the LWRCI, top. It adds weight to an already heavy gun. The BR4's Hogue stock, bottom, had good rubber placements and a locking feature to reduce rattling.

coating that provides permanent lubrication to the moving parts. It was very easy to clean. The single-stage Mil-Spec trigger at 7.5 pounds was nothing special, but the Mil-Spec rating in this case means "not great." It had a fair amount of creep, but it broke consistently within plus-or-minus 4 ounces of the average, and the reset was positive and short.

The LWRCI showed a preference for the Silver State Armory ammunition, shooting the 85-grain frangible lead-free bullets into 1.4-inch average groups and the 115-grain OMT into 1.6-inch average groups. The Hornady ammo lagged at 2.0 inches. The rifle proved completely reliable with boxed ammunition. The only failure encountered was during our initial familiarization drills — a ruptured case from a batch of bulk new ammo.

The Magpul MIAD grip was comfortable to grasp, and its adjustable backstraps made individual fitting possible. Up top, any Mil Std 1913 accessory can be mounted to the rail, and because the rail is monolithic, the shooter can bridge devices from the receiver to the rail.

Our Team Said: This is a well-built, reasonably accurate 6.8 SPC–chambered rifle. We gave it our top grade, but we need to be honest and say none of our testers wanted to buy it after the test.

Battle Rifle Company BR4 Odin 6.8 SPC, $1495

There were several variations between how the company specs the gun and what we tested. The website said the Odin comes standard with a Magpul stock; our was a Hogue OverMolded collapsible buttstock. This reinforced-polymer item had a rubber cheek rest and a rubber/polymer hybrid butt pad that provided snag-free rifle shouldering. It also had a snug anti-rattle friction fit that we liked. Company specs said the Odin comes with a Magpul B.A.D. lever, which our gun lacked. Company specs said the trigger was polished and adjusted to a 4- to 6-pound break, but ours let off at a heavy 8.5 pounds. It did have a single-point sling adapter on the buffer tube and an extended trigger guard (Magpul).

The Battle Rifle Company M4 was simply fitted and remarkably light. The testers really liked the design of the narrow Odin hand guard. It was lightweight and allowed good air circulation to help prevent heat buildup. The hand guard will allow the attachment of small rail sections in case the user feels the need to add accessories.

The fit was good and the finish was consistent. Balance was good with a very slight forward weighting. The rifle also came to the shoulder securely and consistently.

Overall the testers found this rifle easier to use from field positions than the LWRCI, a definite plus for a true hunting rifle. However, the trigger was very stiff and made accurate shooting much more difficult than it should have been. Also, due to its lighter weight, the rifle had more recoil than the LWRCI. Most of the testers found the recoil was still quite reasonable, although the teenage girl in the group found the LWRCI more comfortable to shoot.

The BRC also shared a preference for the Silver State Armory ammunition, consistently grouping within a few tenths of an inch of the LWRCI M6A2. The BRC shot the 85-grain frangible lead-free bullets into 1.8-inch average groups and the 115-grain OMT into 1.5-inch average groups, slightly better than the other gun. The Hornady ammo shot the same in the BRC — 2.0 inches — as it did in the LWRCI.

Our testers said the rifle seemed to group better with a very firm hold against the shoulder. The rifle ran coolly, probably due to the excellent hand guard design. All three rounds also showed greater velocity in the BRC than the LWRCI M6. However, that is where the good news stopped.

All three ammunition brands exhibited multiple types of failure in the BR4. We had failures to strip the first round with several magazines, failures to feed, failures to extract, and double feeds. We even had another ruptured case, this time with the factory SSA 115-grain ammunition. Specifically, in our first session, the SSA 115 OTM and Hornady 110 V-Max suffered no failures. But the SSA 85-grain had four failures to feed. In our second session, the 85 Frangible had five failures to feed with the bulk ammo and one FTE, so we re-lubricated the rifle. This proved ineffective, as we had an additional 15 failures of various types.

At this point, we field-stripped it for cleaning using the usual AR-15 procedures and saw that it was extraordinarily dirty. After cleaning, we function-tested the rifle again. The rifle digested 120 rounds of four different types of ammunition mixed at random in less than 10 minutes with no problem whatsoever.

We can only conclude that this particular rifle required a break in period, during which it was very sensitive to cleanliness.

Our Team Said: Based on its initial function problems, a heavy trigger, and middling accuracy, we think there are better choices out there than the Battle Rifle Company BR4 Odin. To its credit, however, the rifle is affordable and has some great features, such as the Odin handguard.

Written and photographed by David Tannahill, using evaluations from Gun Tests *team testers.* **GT**

Tactical 1911 Pistol Shoot Out: SIG Sauer Vs. Smith & Wesson

Is S&W's SW1911 E-Series pistol really 'enhanced,' or is it just gussied up with 'fish scale' serrations and whatnot? And is the SIG TACOPS tactical and operational? We shoot them to see.

The 1911 handgun has survived for more than one hundred years based on excellent ergonomics, great reliability, and its ability to chamber a fight-stopping cartridge. Modern 1911 handguns are much evolved from the Colt 1911 first issued to Army troops in 1911. However, a doughboy going to Europe in 1917 would be able to instantly load, make safe, fire and use a modern 1911 handgun. The ability of the platform to accept a weapon-mounted light was an inevitable part of the 1911's evolution, because a gun-mounted combat light is a good tactical addition. They allow for the identification of a threat, illumination of an area, and make fail-safe identification possible.





Two so-equipped full-size 1911s are the SIG TACOPS and the Smith & Wesson 1911TA E Class. The SIG Sauer 1911 TACOPS 1911R-45TACOPS, $1213 list, is a no-nonsense black tactical pistol. We found it at DefenderOutdoors.com for $1,080, at BudsGunShop.com for a cash discount price of $1,062, and for $910 at GrabAGun.com. Our test gun is part of the larger SIG 1911 family, which at our last count, had 31 members. Generally speaking, SIG 1911s have done very well in our evaluations. In the October 2014 issue, we graded a 1911 Carry Scorpion 1911CAR-45-SCPN as a B+. In the November 2013 issue, a 1911 Carry Stainless 1911CA-45-SSS earned an A- grade and a "Best Buy" nod. In the February 2009 issue, a 1911 C3 No. 19GS0031 earned an A grade. In the May 2006 issue, a Sigarms 1911 GSR No. 19GS0001 earned a Conditional Buy, mainly because of its price, not its functionality. We'd translate that to a B+ today.

S&W's SW1911 "E" Series pistols are supposed to be "enhanced, with tight tolerances, precision-fit trigger, chamfered and recessed muzzle, "fish-scale" scalloped slide serrations and other premium features commonly found on custom-made firearms. The standard E-series 1911s come in blued or stainless steel, and the model number with "SC" appended have scandium-alloy frames. The blued version we tested is #108409, while the stainless model is #108411. List for our test gun is $1399, and we saw it for sale at DefenderOutdoors.com for $1140, TombstoneTactical.com for $1099, and at BudsGunShop.com for $1065.

Smith 1911s have not matched SIG's level of performance in our tests. In the April 2010 issue, the S&W Model SW1911 No. 178017 in 9mm got a B+. A 45 ACP Smith & Wesson MSW1911 No. 108284 earned a B+ in the February 2010 issue. In March 2006, a 1911SC No. 108289 got a "Don't Buy" rating, as did a 1911PD No.

Top left: A 1911's ability to accept a light is part of the handgun's evolution. A gun-mounted combat light allows for the illumination of an area and fail-safe identification — an important consideration for home-defense use. Bottom: The pistols were fitted with a variety of lights during the test period, including these by NcStar on the all-black SIG TACOPS and an Insight Technology M6 LED on the Smith & Wesson 1911TA E Class. Each retails for around a thousand dollars.

108296 tested in the November 2005. Way back in April 2003, we tested the first-year version of the company's 1911 and said "Buy It" to a Smith & Wesson 1911 45 ACP.

But history isn't necessarily destiny at Gun Tests. Out of the box, the Smith & Wesson had more bling and eye appeal, no denying that. And at the heart of each pistol was a tight barrel-to-slide fit, which provided X-ring accuracy without sacrificing reliability. Just like you, we prefer to shoot good guns, and what we found here were two pretty good ones, though our team had its preference at the end.

SIG Sauer 1911 TACOPS 1911R-45TACOPS 45 ACP, $1213

The SIG TACOPS is the latest in SIG's development of the 1911. The Granite Series Rail gun was the original pistol, and it was the primogenitor of quite a few SIG-made 1911 handguns. SIG introduced a 1911 without a light rail to complement the GSR, compact versions, and the latest TACOPS pistol. The primary difference in appearance between this handgun and other 1911 handguns is the slide configuration. The slide is subtly different in appearance to preserve a resemblance to the highly successful SIG P-series pistols, such as the P220, P226, P229 and others. The resemblance is there, and some do not care for it. The primary consideration in purchasing the SIG is to be certain that the holsters you wish to use are available for the SIG 1911 slide design. Some leather holsters will accept the SIG when they are cut for the standard slide, and over time they will morph to fit the SIG. Others, well, no way and no how. Then there is the added complication of holstering a 1911 with a rail, and this applies to all guns with rails, which we'll call "rail guns" for short hereafter. Just be aware of the searching you may have to do to fit the SIG to a quality holster. Every holster maker does not have the mold.

The SIG features an external

SIG SAUER 1911 TACOPS 1911R-45TACOPS 45 ACP, $1213

GUN TESTS GRADE: A

The SIG TACOPS has a lot going for it. Accuracy and handling cannot be faulted. The pistol is reliable, accurate enough for any reasonable task, and has all of the features needed for a viable service-grade handgun.



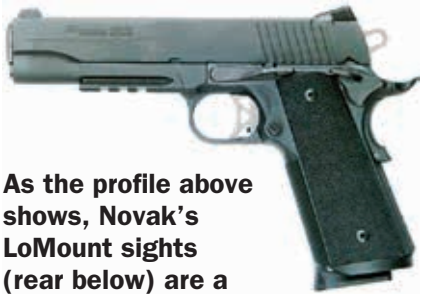


This upswept beavertail safety does what it is supposed to do — increase firing comfort, help activate the safety and unlock the trigger, and spread recoil over a wider area.



Above: Alien Gear's holster fit the SIG well. The SIG's slide makes finding holsters harder.

Action	Semi-Auto; Locked Breech Single-Action
Overall Length	8.5 in.
Overall Height	5.3 in.
Maximum Width	1.5 in.
Weight Unloaded	41.5 oz.
Weight Loaded	46.5 oz.
Barrel Length	5.0 in.
Barrel	Steel 1:16 Twist
Magazine	8-Rd. Detachable Box
Slide	Nitron-Finished Stainless
Frame	Nitron-Finished Stainless
Frame Front Strap Height	2.6 in.
Frame Back Strap Height	3.2 in.
Grips	Black Ergo XT
Grip Thickness	1.5 in.
Grip Circumference	5.5 in.
Sights	Novak's Lo-Mount Tritium Night Sights
Trigger	Skeletonized
Trigger Pull Weight Single Action	6.25 lbs.
Trigger Span Single Action	2.4 in.
Safety	Slide Lock Safety, Beavertail Grip Safety
Rail	3-Slot M1913
Warranty	Limited Lifetime
Telephone	(603) 610-3000
Website	SIGSauer.com
Made In/By	NH, SIG Sauer



As the profile above shows, Novak's LoMount sights (rear below) are a fine choice for a defensive pistol.



extractor. While the P-series extractors are trouble free, the 1911 is a different design of the same type. It worked just fine in our tests of the TACOPS and similar SIG handguns. The hammer is a skeletonized design. The sights are Novak low-mount units. These sights are never a bad choice for a fighting pistol, in our estimation. The Novak sights feature self-luminous tritium inserts in a three-dot arrangement.

There are slide serrations only at the rear and no forward cocking serrations. While some prefer that the forward serrations be deleted, for gloved-hand use and for the greatest leverage in clearing a stuck cartridge, the forward cocking serrations are a good bet. This was a demerit to the SIG because the Smith & Wesson does have forward cocking serrations.

The SIG features a positive firing-pin block. This drop safety keeps the firing pin from hitting the primer until the trigger is pressed completely to the rear. This device adds parts to the gun, and some feel that it adversely affects the trigger action. Here, the trigger action was smooth and crisp at 6.25 pounds and was a superior factory trigger, we felt. The trigger was a skeletonized version, unlike the solid triggers seen in most SIG advertisements.

The grip safeties were remarkably alike. In this day and time, they may come from the same vendor. The SIG grip safety was well shaped and gave good control, properly releasing the trigger about halfway into compression of the grip safety. Some of us like to use the thumbs-forward shooting grip, and this tends to lift the palm of the firing hand off the grip safety. The SIG grip safety gets high marks for fit and comfort and accommodating the high-thumbs grip. The ambidextrous slide safety likewise gets high marks. It was large enough for good control and indented sharply. The right-hand control was slightly smaller than the left hand's. On either side it was unobtrusive and a good design.

The grips were made by Ergo, available as an aftermarket item and previously tested at Gun Tests. They were good examples of tactical grips, offering good adhesion but not enough abrasion to be uncomfortable. The backstrap was serrated, and the frontstrap was nicely checkered at 25 lines per square inch. Underneath the grip frame was a conservative magazine well similar to the Wilson Combat Mag Guide.

The Nitron finish is a form of ferritic nitrocarburizing that is similar to case hardening. This finish diffuses nitrogen and carbon into the steel to add scuff resistance and resist corrosion. The finish was evenly applied and appeared businesslike, as well as being nonreflective. Compared to the Melonite finish of

45 ACP RANGE DATA

Fiocchi Extrema 230-gr. JHP 45XTP-25	**Smith & Wesson SW1911TA**	**SIG Sauer TACOPS**
Average Velocity	830 fps	845 fps
Muzzle Energy	352 ft.-lbs.	365 ft.-lbs.
Smallest Group	1.7 in.	1.6 in.
Largest Group	1.9 in.	2.2 in.
Average Group Size	1.8 in.	2.0 in.

Black Hills 230-gr. FMJ	**Smith & Wesson SW1911TA**	**SIG Sauer TACOPS**
Average Velocity	821 fps	842 fps
Muzzle Energy	344 ft.-lbs.	362 ft.-lbs.
Smallest Group	1.9 in.	2.3 in.
Largest Group	2.3 in.	2.6 in.
Average Group Size	2.1 in.	2.4 in.

Speer Gold Dot 200-gr. +P 23969	**Smith & Wesson SW1911TA**	**SIG Sauer TACOPS**
Average Velocity	1049 fps	1028 fps
Muzzle Energy	489 ft.-lbs.	469 ft.-lbs.
Smallest Group	2.1 in.	2.4 in.
Largest Group	2.4 in.	2.8 in.
Average Group Size	2.2 in.	2.6 in.

To collect accuracy data, we fired three five-shot groups from a sandbag rest at 25 yards. To capture velocity data, we used an Competition Electronics chronograph with the first skyscreen positioned 10 feet from the muzzle.

Ammo sources: Fiocchi 230-gr. JHP Extrema 45XTP-25 (MidwayUSA.com, $18); Black Hills 230-gr. FMJ (MidwayUSA.com, $16.87); Speer 200-gr. Gold Dot +P 23969 (CheaperThanDirt.com,$22.63).

The D&L Sports magazine carrier at right is designed for uniformed duty, but it sure makes gun testing easier. It holds four magazines.



the Smith & Wesson, the SIG finish is duller. If you like the nonreflective black-tactical look, you will like the Nitron finish.

At the firing range, the SIG came out of the box running, with no failures to feed, chamber, fire, or eject during the test program. The initial firing was done on the combat course with inexpensive Black Hills "Blue Box" 230-grain FMJ for familiarization. We also used modest-power handloads. A combination of a good trigger and excellent sights gave good results in fast-paced combat drills. The pistol was clearly an excellent performer as a defensive pistol.

On the line firing from a solid benchrest firing position, the SIG also proved accurate, and in this price range and with superior barrel fitting it should be. The single best group from the SIG TACOPS was fired with the Fiocchi 230-grain Extrema, which measured 2.0 inches. We were happy with that, but the Smith & Wesson outpaced the SIG by a margin. All in, the SIG TACOPS made a good showing with ball ammunition, a defensive JHP load, and also a +P defensive loading.

While shooting the SIG, we found it was easier to quickly load due to the extended slide lock. This slide lock doesn't put much of the steel where the support hand may contact the slide lock during firing and inadvertently lock the slide open during a firing string. This is a common complaint with 1911 handguns, but it never happened with this SIG. Coupled with the modest magazine-well guide, the ability of the shooter to keep the pistol in action was excellent. As a side note, we should credit the D&L Sports quad-magazine carrier for keeping the SIG and S&W chugging along smartly.

A consideration: While mounting lights on the handguns to check for fit, we encountered a bobble. The lights fit all guns in the house, including Glock, SIG Scorpion, SIG P250, SIG P226 MK25, CZ 75, and the Smith & Wesson SW1911TA. After mounting an Insight illuminator on the TACOPS, we had a difficult time

SMITH & WESSON 1911 E-SERIES SW1911TA
108409 45 ACP, $1399

GUN TESTS GRADE: A (OUR PICK)

The SW1911TA ran into formidable competition in the form of the SIG TACOPS and did not suffer in comparison. The Smith is a reliable and accurate handgun. Many features of the pistol were impressive. Although practical accuracy was only slightly better than the SIG, the sum makes the S&W the gun we would buy.



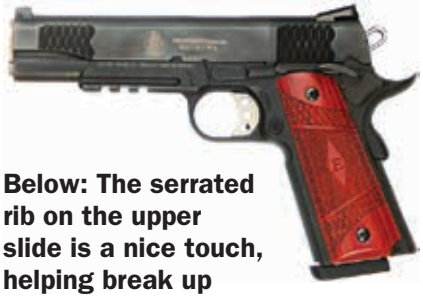


The more we used the SW1911TA, the more the serrations design impressed us.



Testing comfort in carry and having a smooth, fast draw is essential. The pistol performed well in this Alien Gear IWB.

Action	Locked Breech Single-Action Semi-Auto
Overall Length	8.5 in.
Overall Height	5.3 in.
Maximum Width	1.5 in.
Weight Unloaded	41.6 oz.
Weight Loaded	46.6 oz.
Barrel Length	5.0 in.
Barrel	Steel 1:16 Twist
Magazine	8-Rd. Detachable Box
Slide	Melonite-Finished Stainless Steel
Frame	Melonite-Finished Stainless Steel
Frame Front Strap Height	2.6 in.
Frame Back Strap Height	3.2 in.
Grips	Wooden Laminate E-Series
Grip Thickness	1.5 in.
Grip Circumference	5.5 in.
Sights	Novak's Lo-Mount Tritium Night Sights
Trigger	Skeletonized Aluminum
Trigger Pull Weight Single Action	5.75 lbs.
Trigger Span Single Action	2.4 in.
Safety	Slide Lock Safety, Beavertail Grip Safety
Rail	3-Slot M1913
Warranty	Lifetime
Telephone	(800) 331-0852
Website	Smith-Wesson.com
Made In/By	Springfield, Mass./S&W



Below: The serrated rib on the upper slide is a nice touch, helping break up barrel-heat mirage.



getting the light off the rail. Members of our team had to use a brass punch and hammer to carefully pry the foot off the TACOPS rail.

Our Team Said: When the final notes were studied and the individual scores tabulated, the SIG Sauer TACOPS had to receive an A rating. Accuracy, reliability and handling were faultless. However, the Smith & Wesson outpaced the SIG on features, and all of them are not just bling. The SIG also has advantages, including the fact that it is supplied with a total of four magazines versus the Smith & Wesson's two magazines. This was a close race, but our shooters rated the SW1911TA the better buy.

Smith & Wesson SW1911TA E-Series No. 108409 45 ACP, $1399

The E-class Smith & Wesson is the latest development of the SW1911 series and is a revamping of the line in many ways. The pistol remains a traditional 1911 in appearance, and holsters for the Colt or Taurus rail guns will also fit the SW1911TA. This is an advantage, we felt. The pistol's Melonite finish is comparable to the Nitron-finished SIG, although brighter than the SIG. The Novak sights with tritium inserts were identical. The beavertail grip safety of the SW1911TA was very similar to the SIG.

Also like the SIG, the Smith & Wesson features an external extractor. Engineers like to point out that coils are more reliable than leaf springs, and that reliability and repeatability are superior with this design. Whatever your preference, external extractors seem to be the wave of the future in the tactical 1911. This extractor is larger than some other designs, taking a bigger bite on the extractor groove.

The fit, feel, and finish quality of the SW1911 were similar to the SIG. The grip safety and the Novak sights are similar. The lightened trigger of the SW1911TA is a different design than the SIG, but it seems to accomplish the same thing. Trigger compression of the Smith & Wesson pistol felt similar to the SIG — both are smooth with little creep and no discernible backlash. However, an average of three trigger compressions showed the SW1911TA at 5.75 pounds was lighter than the SIG. We would have liked a 5-pound trigger on either gun, but the action was acceptable.

The SW1911TA does not have a beveled magazine well, the only thing the SIG has the SW1911TA does not, other than the firing pin block. The Smith & Wesson does not use the Swartz-style grip-safety-activated firing-pin block used by previous Smith & Wesson 1911 handguns. The SW1911TA utilizes a titanium firing pin and heavy-duty firing pin spring to ensure safety if the pistol is dropped on the muzzle. If you prefer a pistol without the drop safety, the SW1911TA is the one to pick. If you intend to add an aftermarket trigger set with a lighter competition-grade trigger, then this pistol offers less complication.

However, there are significant differences in how the pistols are appointed. The Smith & Wesson retails for one hundred dollars more than the SIG, but we feel that the Smith & Wesson offers more features than the small difference in price would imply. As one example, the SW1911's ambidextrous safety features an upswept component on either side, making it friendlier for left-hand use. Also, the safety intended for left-hander use is supported by the grip panel. We rated this design superior to the SIG's.

Some of the features of the SW1911TA are downright byzantine they are so nice, but in some handguns the effects dissipate when firing the pistol. This was not true with the SW1911TA.

The SW1911TA features a serrated or ribbed section in the top of the slide that runs from the front to the rear sight. One of the raters noted that this rib is very similar to that found on high-grade Smith & Wesson revolvers. If the SIG 1911 is made to appeal to P-series fans, the SW1911TA appeals to Smith & Wesson fans of all stripes, including revolver fans. This serration would be horribly expensive as a custom



This is the Smith & Wesson magazine on the left and SIG's mag on the right. They have slightly different basepad designs, but there was no practical difference. We swapped them between pistols.



The finishes seem rugged, but they show gunpowder residue differently. Notice the powder ash from several hundred rounds on the nose of each handgun.



The slide design of the SIG, top, is OK, but it makes it more difficult to find a suitable holster. The S&W's standard 1911 slide is easier to outfit with a suitable scabbard.



The SW1911TA suffered a break-in malfunction with the first magazine, but none after. The checkered frontstrap of the S&W is a first-class addition to the pistol.

option. If you look at the rear sight, the rear face and the rear of the slide are each serrated. This is a very nice touch.

The front of the slide also received some attention. The muzzle is nicely crowned and chamfered. This reduces the chance of damaging the barrel crown. The slide also features forward cocking serrations. These are the same fish scale or serpentine pattern as the rear cocking serrations. This is a tactically superior addition to the pistol, in our view. Generally, the forward cocking serration has a reputation for being abrasive and even destructive to leather holsters. The Smith & Wesson SW1911TA design manages to angle the cocking serrations so they do not abrade the holster.

The new SW1911TA extractor design is a heavier piece than the one used in the past, and it seems an improvement. The ejection port is slightly larger than most lowered types, and works well. The frame of the SW1911TA features a dished out portion under the trigger guard. This makes for greater comfort in firing and slightly raises the muzzle when the proper hold is used, resulting in a lower bore axis. When we fired the pistol in rapid-fire drills, the Smith & Wesson seemed to sit lower in the hand. This was subjective to some, but, objectively, the cut-out in the frame must work. We rated this an advantage over the SIG.

The grips are excellent, giving



The SW1911TA's rear serrations help keep glare to a minimum, but they do collect dirt and dust. A can of compressed air will knock out most of this stuff in a jiffy.



While the SW1911TA was designed to have a lot of show and to be visually appealing, the features that include frontstrap checkering and forward cocking serrations work well in practice.

good adhesion and comfort. They are laminated wood and were more attractive than the SIG TACOPS grips, we thought. With the same Fiocchi 230-grain Extrema load, the SIG was less accurate than the SW1911TA, with the average at 2.0 inches for five shots. This is still excellent by most standards. Overall, however, average accuracy for the SW1911TA was better than the SIG.

On the downside, while initially firing both Black Hills FMJ and a handload using the Montana Gold 185-grain JHP at 900 fps, the SW1911TA suffered a single failure to feed with the handload, in the first magazine fired. We rated this as a break-in malfunction because the malfunction did not repeat itself. Also, these handloads are lighter than



The geometry of the forward cocking serrations offer plenty of gripping surfaces but seem not to abrade holsters.

most factory loads. The malfunction did not appear to be magazine or shooter related.

Another note: The standard side slide lock of the SW1911TA was nicely checkered on the top, but it was not as quick in manipulation as the SIG, our shooters said. Some do not realize that the nice beavertail safety we all like for shooting comfort also slightly moves the palm outward, and it is possible to make manipulation of the slide lock more difficult. However, if the piece is used hard, our experience indicates the extended slide lock is more prone to a malfunction and is also more prone to snagging on leather holsters. If it is a problem, an extended slide lock may be added for around $50. We would not change the Smith & Wesson's.

Our Team Said: The SW1911TA is a pistol that keeps pace with both its competitors and customer expectations. The Smith & Wesson was more accurate in benchrest shooting, and it gave better results in addressing steel plates and other rapid-fire drills. We ran the pistols over a virtual Gymkhana on the range, and the SW1911TA was the superior in this regard. Though the SIG is a top-flight pistol, the SW1911TA made even challenging courses seem mediocre. We would pick the Smith & Wesson SW1911TA E-Series No. 108409 over the SIG TACOPS.

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

28-Gauge Semi-Automatics: Legacy Sport Versus Beretta

The 3-inch-chambered Pointer would make a good field companion, but Beretta's A400 Xplore Action is X-cellent: It shoots fast, patterns tight and balanced, and looks great.

Skeet shooting is probably the most popular of all shotgun sports, perhaps because in the opinion of many dedicated upland-bird hunters, skeet is the game that offers the most realistic preparation for a day in the field. This alone may be reason enough to play, but for anyone who has tried big-time tournament skeet shooting, finding the right equipment can lead to sticker shock. Here's why.

Skeet tournaments require at least four rounds of shooting with four different gauges of shotguns. If you've ever tried to sign up for a tournament expecting to compete in only the 12-gauge events, your entry will likely be relegated to a wait list behind all the competitors who are ready to shoot all four gauges. The serious tournament competitors must have a complete stable of shotguns, including 20 gauge, 28 gauge and .410 bore, as well as a 12 gauge. Some shooters opt to have their 12-gauge shotgun precision fit with tubes that convert the bore to fire the full list of smaller gauge rounds. But there's another way to solve the problem, and it's one that lead us to a whole new field of pleasure.

After learning that we could compete with a 20-gauge shotgun in the 12-gauge round and shoot the 20-gauge events with a 28-gauge shotgun, we decided to try shooting all but the .410 events with a 28-gauge shotgun. As a result we found out that we liked shooting 28-gauge shotguns a whole lot, specifically the semi-automatic ones. We chose to shoot a semi-automatic rather than an over-under shotgun for two reasons. First, top-quality semi-automatic shotguns are still much less expensive than many medium-priced over-under shotguns. Maybe its because less hand-craftsmanship and fitting is required. Second, we have a variety of people on staff, and semi-automatic shotguns are easier to fit. The angles of cast and drop on the semi-autos can be changed to suit each shooter quite easily with the use of shims and templates installed between the receiver and the buttstock. Furthermore, it is well known that recoil from 28-gauge ammunition is relatively mild, so fatigue or injury over the course of a long practice session is far less likely than from the effects of 12-gauge or even 20-gauge ordnance. That goes about double for the gas operated semi-automatic shotguns that bleeds pressure from ignition and dampens recoil.

The two semi-automatic shotguns we chose for this evaluation fit different ends of the price range in this

Below: Selling for $1398 ($1550 MSRP), the 28-gauge Beretta A400 Xplore Action was so precise and easy to handle, we wanted to spend all day on the skeet range at American Shooting Centers in Houston. Unlike many other semi-automatic shotguns, including the Pointer, the Xplore Action relayed little or no hint of the action cycling.



Below: The Beretta's pistol grip was fashioned with fine, consistent checkering. Shooting 50% above and below dead center out of the box, the extra plate and shims were for tuning the gun to the shooter. Checkering around the trigger guard was a nice touch, and sling swivels should come in handy when prowling the fields for game.



category. The Turkish-made Pointer shotgun is imported by Legacy Sports International of Reno, Nevada and carries a suggested retail price of $701, but typically sells for about $650. The Pointer line of shotguns, both semi-automatic and over/under, is not to be confused with the Japanese-made Charles Daly products of the same name from several years back.

The Beretta A400 Excel Action manufacturer's suggested retail price was $1600, but we found one for $1398 MAP (Manufacturers Advertised Pricing) at the Pro Shop at American Shooting Centers in Houston (AMShootCenters.com). The Pointer was capable of chambering 3-inch as well as 2.75-inch shells, but the Beretta's barrel listed only 2.75-inch loads. Otherwise, both guns featured gas operation, walnut stocks, alloy receivers, a rubber-like butt pad, 28-inch ribbed barrel with light-gathering fiber-optic beads, crossbolt safeties, and magazine cutoffs so the bolt need not be worked to empty the gun. A selection of five flush-fit choke tubes, including Full, Improved Modified, Modified, Improved Cylinder and Cylinder bore were supplied with the Pointer shotgun. The Beretta shipped with only three: Full, Modified and Cylinder bore chokes.

Tests were performed at American Shooting Centers. With six Skeet and Trap fields, a separate field offering 12 stations of "self-pull" throwers, and as many as five different Sporting Clays courses to choose from, we limited our shooting to rounds of 5-Stand and Skeet. Over the course of our tests, the 28-gauge semi-auto shotguns showed at least one advantage. With test shooters ranging from beginners to accomplished shooters, we can't recall any of the missed targets being blamed on raising the head from the stock prematurely due to flinch, a bad shooting habit commonly driven by heavy recoil.

Before heading to our first shooting station, we patterned each shotgun with three test loads. They were Fiocchi 28GT8 2.75-inch No. 8s, Winchester Super Sport 2.75-inch

BERETTA A400 XPLORE ACTION J40AA88
28 GAUGE, $1550
GUN TESTS GRADE: A

Very responsive with rapid cycling, this handsome shotgun was a pleasure to shoot. Dense patterns indicated greater long-range capability than one might expect.





Shotguns are supposed to be pointed rather than aimed (unless you are hunting with slugs or working against a pattern target). Helping this was the Xplore's light-gathering filament, which was bright, clear, and firmly attached.

Action Type	Gas-Operated, Semi-Automatic
Chamber Size	2.75 in.
Overall Length	48.5 in.
Capacity	2+1
Weight Unloaded	5.4 lbs.
Barrel Length	28.0 in.
Barrel	Blue
Receiver	Bronze Anodized Alloy
Choke Tubes	Full, Modified, Cylinder Bore
Stock	Walnut Checkered
Buttstock Length of Pull	14.5 in.
Buttstock Drop @ Comb	1.35 in.
Buttstock Drop @ Heel	1.9 in.
Forearm	Walnut Checkered
Front Bead	Fiber-Optic
Rear Bead	NA
Rib Width	0.20 in.
Trigger	5.5 lbs.
Warranty	1 Year (3 Years with registration)
Telephone	(800) 929-2901
Website	BerettaUSA.com
Made In/Assembled In	Italy



The quality of the Beretta's wood and the way it is sculpted was gorgeous. Despite the forend being almost entirely checkered except for company's logo, the distinctive multi-color wood grain showed through.

Below: The combination of grain color and surface texture added in our view to the value if not the pleasure of shooting the Beretta. Sculpting capped with an open cell foam buttpad contributed to shooter comfort.





Above: The word Blink appears on the bolt. Indeed, trigger response and cycling was so quick and crisp the Beretta Xplor Action felt more like an over/under than a semi-auto.



The Beretta featured a rotating bolt, dual action bars, and large ports to keep the system clean.



The Beretta threw a tight pattern of the Estate 7½ shot Super Sport Competition Target load. Note the amount of shot landing on top of one another. Given the tight shot pattern, we probably could have backed off on constriction from the Modified choke for shooting skeet.



Fiocchi, the best performer in the Pointer shotgun, also registered a solid pattern when fired from the Beretta. There was some feathering, but the core remained strong. The Fiocchi appears to have printed higher, but the shooter was actually aiming high.



Printing slightly left but 50/50 in terms of height, and within shooter's error, the Winchester shot produced a lot of holes touching. Based on the scores, most of our staff preferred this load on the skeet field.

No. 9s, and Estate 2.75-inch No. 7½s. The Estate Super Sport Competition Target Loads were rated at a velocity of 1200 fps. The Fiocchi and Winchester boxes listed velocities at the 1300 fps mark. Patterning was performed at 20 yards with a Modified choke tube installed. Three consecutive shots were registered on each target.

Neither shotgun malfunctioned during our tests, so we had to wonder in what other way might one gun earn its spot above the other. Given the difference in price between our two test guns, we think it's natural to expect the more expensive gun to excel. But how noticeable would the difference be, and where would such aspects first appear? Let's find out.

Beretta A400 Xplore Action Semi-Auto J40AA88 28 Gauge, $1550

The Beretta shotgun arrived in a lockable takedown hard case that was well made but was probably not substantial enough for air travel. If there was any doubt why this shotgun should cost more, this notion was erased on first sight. The wood stocks showed a burl-like pattern of dark and light with a mild grainy texture. That the grain pattern was not all of one color and glossed meant the buttstock and forearm had to be fashioned from the same section of wood for it to match. The pistol grip was checkered in three contours on each side. The forearm was wrapped with checkering, and the underside featured the Beretta emblem of three arrows inside an oval, or as described in the owner's manual, an elliptical motif.

Additional contours to the stock included a relief leading from the lower edge of the buttstock, a significant narrowing before the pistol grip, and a shallow relief forming a grip along both sides of the forearm. The buttstock offered a solidly mounted swivel stud. Forward connection for the sling swivel was at the top of the magazine cap. A set of detachable sling loops was supplied. The A400 Xplore Action shotguns typically feature a compressible recoil-reduction system installed within the buttstock. But when chambered for the milder 28-gauge ammunition, recoil is handled only by a buttpad composed of open-cell polymer foam. One option that was available was a shorter 26-inch barrel, which would make it even lighter and more compact for an easy day in the field.

The supplied choke tubes were Beretta's Optimachoke configuration. The receiver was a bronze color, and its topside was machined with four mounting points, specifically for Beretta's proprietary scope rings. Seated flush on the left side of the receiver was the magazine cutoff switch. Pushing one side inward, this enabled the shooter to pull back the bolt and eject a live round without drawing a fresh round from the magazine. It also allowed the elevator to be pushed upward so that the magazine can be unloaded manually. For where it is required by law, a stainless-steel magazine plug that turned the Beretta into a single shot was supplied. Cycling was achieved by gas vented from a small cylinder driving a short-stroke piston with enough pressure to drive the rotating bolt. This system was also designed to drive out debris, keeping the cylinder clean.

The Beretta trigger had virtually no creep and little if any discernible take-up. We would compare it to the type of trigger that might be found on a match rifle, but



The Pointer threw the Estate No. 7½ shot consistently high and to the right.



The Pointer's best performance was when we shot Fiocchi No. 8s. The resulting shot density was the best of our three test loads.



Firing the Pointer in combination with Winchester No. 9 shot, the core of the pattern was dense, but the pattern was also quite narrow.

our scales told us that the pull weight registered a full 5.5 pounds. Measured repeatedly, trigger-pull weight did not vary.

There was a second aspect that did not become obvious until we tried the Pointer shotgun. Firing the Pointer, we felt the action of the bolt added to the sense of recoil. In comparison, the Beretta Xplore Action shotgun felt more like an over/under shotgun, devoid of secondary movement after ignition. Referred to as the Blink system, we'd bet this was just what Beretta had in mind.

The Beretta was shipped with two plastic shims and a steel connector plate that can be applied so that the stock is cast for right- or left-handed shooters as well as for a range of drop angles. The pistol grip was neutral in terms of palm swell or other contour, and the gun arrived cast for a right-hand shooter. At the pattern board we learned that the shot was very close to 50/50. This means that about half the pellets hit the target above our point of aim. The Estate 2.75-inch 7½ shot Super Sport Competition Target load showed a tight pattern, with so many hits overlapping we were beginning to doubt if chambering 3-inch shells would be an advantage after all. Certainly, we could have changed to a lighter constriction for the Skeet field.

After several rounds of skeet, our shooters agreed that the Winchester ammunition was the best choice. Looking back at our HunterJohn pattern targets, we found that preference for the Winchester rounds could have been predicted by the results. While all three test rounds produced solid patterns, the Winchester target showed its primary density described nearly a perfect circle, even as the shot pattern thinned toward the edges.

The 28-gauge Xplore Action weighed in at only 5.4 pounds, and with the 28-inch-long barrel, we expected the gun to be whippy. But the Beretta felt rigid once shouldered, more like a rifle than a lightweight shotgun. Yet not one shooter on our staff or any of our guest shooters complained about discomfort from recoil. Our most experienced skeet shooter noted that with the smaller pattern of the lesser gauge, you really had to be right on.

Our Team Said: The 28-gauge Beretta Xplore Action shotgun sets a high standard. Not only is it a very handsome shotgun, but its cycling impulse was much less apparent than other self-loading shotguns we've tried. Beginning with the trigger, this shotgun offers a very precise, rigid feel to its construction. In terms of setup, the shotgun produced a 50/50 high/low pattern out of the box. The supplied shims and plate allowed us to fit it however we wanted. Indeed, these extras were supplied to adjust the pattern to the shooter's preference, not to make up for any shortcomings. If there was any negative observation at all, one tester would have preferred that it weigh more, yet no one, including this particular shooter, found this shotgun to be whippy or easy to overswing. Despite being limited to 2.75-inch shells, we found a lot of performance in the 28-gauge Beretta Xplore Action shotgun.

Legacy Sports Pointer Semi-Auto KPS28A028W 28 Gauge, $701

The Pointer 28-gauge semi-automatic shotgun was distinguished by its glossy walnut stock accented with a series of pleasingly angular designs. The rubber buttpad offered greater depth by forming a V-shape or checkmark shape inlet into the buttstock. Similar angles were described by cuts at the pistol grip and at the front of the trigger guard. The contour along the upper half of the forearm also followed an open V-shaped line. Grip

LEGACY SPORTS POINTER KPS28A028W 28 GA., $701

GUN TESTS GRADE: B

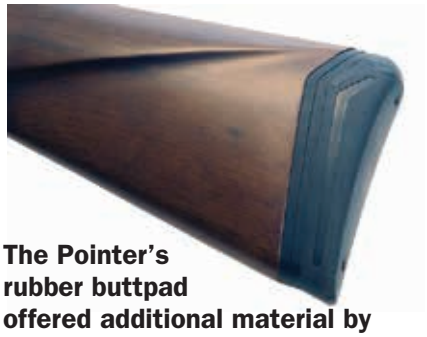
Capable of chambering 3-inch shells, this is a solid field gun. But a longer LOP and no casting shims limits its adjustability.



Action Type	Gas-Operated, Semi-Automatic
Chamber Size	3 in.
Overall Length	48.6 in.
Capacity	5+1 (2¾ in.); 4+1 (3 in.)
Weight Unloaded	6.0 lbs.
Barrel Length	28.0 in.
Barrel	Blue
Receiver	Blue Anodized Alum. Alloy
Choke Tubes	C, IC, M, IM, F
Stock	Walnut
Buttstock Length of Pull	14.75 in.
Buttstock Drop @ Comb	1.2 in.
Buttstock Drop @ Heel	1.8 in.
Forearm	Knurled Walnut
Front Bead	Fiber Optic
Rear Bead	NA
Rib Width	0.25 in.
Trigger	7.0 lbs.
Warranty	5 Years
Telephone	(800) 553-4229
Website	LegacySports.com
Made In/Assembled In	Turkey



The receiver wasn't fancy, but the brushed satin blue finish and subtle sculpting were still quite pleasing. The polymer trigger guard continued the angular styling.



The Pointer's rubber buttpad offered additional material by reaching into the stock with a V-shaped pattern.



We would recommend cleaning the Pointer's gas system regularly. The action was black after about 100 rounds.



The Pointer's pistol grip and forend were knurled rather than checkered. Some thought the grip itself was too thin.



The Pointer would be a versatile hunting companion as well as a good candidate for the skeet field. The Pointer's gas system was not self-cleaning, but disassembly for maintenance was simple and the chrome parts cleaned up easily.

was enhanced both at the forearm and at the pistol grip by knurling embossed (we would suspect) into the wood. The magazine cap that holds the barrel and forearm in place was bullet shaped.

The barrel was blued and topped with a ventilated rib that was wider than the Beretta's by about 0.05 inches and appeared to be a little taller as well. Engraving along the left rear of the barrel was somewhat crude, reading "Made In Turkey by Armsan," but the blue satin finish of the alloy receiver was expertly applied. So was the chrome finish on the elevator, bolt, bolt handle and the bolt-release button. The trigger was also chromed, with a narrow profile and rounded face. The right side of the receiver showed the head of a pointer-type dog, thus the name, and the words "Ultimate Shooting Pleasure" along with the brand name, laser engraved. The left side of the receiver was blank, making the brushed satin finish all the more evident. The release lever for cutting off the magazine for safe unloading was on the left side as well.

The Pointer arrived in a cardboard box with a complete selection of the five most-common choke tubes. Of the flush-fit variety, they appeared to be quite short, shorter than the Beretta-supplied flush-fitting chokes. According to Legacy Sports, the Pointer semi-automatic shotguns will also accept the Beretta or Benelli Mobil-series flush-fit chokes. The Mobil choke-tube series is available from several makers other than Benelli and Beretta, but we were warned that the extended Mobil chokes might not be usable due to the position of the threads inside the barrel.

The Pointer's trigger offered the slightest hint of take up and then a clean break. The shooter was not entirely insulated from the sensation of the bolt cycling, producing, in our view, greater felt recoil than with the Beretta. Nevertheless, we found shooting the Pointer to be quite pleasing. At the pattern board, we discovered

that nearly two-thirds of the shot was hitting above dead center.

The Pointer was delivered with only one stock spacer, and it was rather thick. Length of pull was long, as much as 14.75 inches. The shotgun appeared to be set up favoring the right-hand shooter, but without shims or plates at our disposal, we were unable to modify point of impact. In checking with Legacy Sports, we learned that casting shims are not part of the package with this shotgun.

Each choice of ammunition resulted in a slightly different pattern. The Estate brand shot produced the most vertical stringing, with flyers both high and low. The Winchester produced more than a few stray holes as well, but, overall, the pattern seemed to produce a circle with noticeably less density in the lower portion of the arc between 8 o'clock and 4 o'clock. The Fiocchi ammunition proved to be the best fit for the Pointer, producing an even pattern with relatively few stray hits.

Our Team Said: The Pointer is not necessarily at the low end in terms of price, nor should it be. The wood is very nice and the bluing quite handsome. Patterns were not first rate throughout, but we did find one round (the Fiocchi) that was more than acceptable, and overall shooting might be improved with higher-quality choke tubes. The longer length of pull might make this shotgun prohibitive for some moderate size shooters, so while its price tag may be inviting, it would certainly need modification for the young beginner. But given its reliability, the option of shooting 3-inch loads, and the Pointer's moderate price tag, some personalization would be worth the effort.

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

GUN TESTS VALUE GUIDE: SUB-GAUGE SEMI-AUTO SHOTGUNS

GUN NAME	ISSUE	GRADE & COMMENTS
Benelli Ultralight 28 Gauge, $1760	Dec 2012	**Grade A:** The only downside we could find with the Benelli was the price tag.
CZ-USA Model 720 Reduced Length 06039 20 Gauge, $499	Oct 2012	**Grade A:** Our junior shooter preferred the CZ 720 Reduced Length shotgun because it kicked the least.
Browning Silver Hunter Twenty 011350605 3-inch 20 Ga., $1079	April 2009	**Grade A:** It was a joy to carry all day, and the company resolved a trigger problem promptly.
Mossberg SA-20 No. 75771 3-Inch 20 Gauge, $496	March 2009	**Grade A:** The stock dimensions were comfortable for most of our shooters, including Lefty, since there was no cast.
Browning Silver Hunter Micro Midas 011389605 20 Ga., $1179	Oct 2012	**Grade A-:** We would prefer a recoil pad with a wider print that was less grabby.
Benelli Montefeltro Combo 10832 20 Gauge, $1299	Oct 2012	**Grade A-:** The cast and drop shims would go a long way in setting up the gun.
Remington 11-87 Sportsman No. 29825 3-inch 20 Gauge, $757	March 2009	**Grade A-:** The added weight did make the gun slower, but we can't think of a target we missed because of that.
Remington Premier 1100 Sporting 82846 20 Gauge, $1385	April 2009	**Grade B+:** We loved the 1100 Premier's fit and finish, the outstanding case, and the well-fitted Limbsaver pad.
Browning Silver Mossy Oak Duck Blind 011366604 20 Ga., $1064	March 2009	**Grade B:** We liked that the Browning was easier to load from the bottom of the gun than the other two.
Remington Model 1100 Sporting 28 Gauge, $1300	Dec 2012	**Grade C+:** The Remington's firing pin did not make center hits on the primers of both the Rio and B&P ammunition.
Beretta AL 391 Urika 2 Gold J39TB26 3-inch 20 Gauge, $1550	April 2009	**Grade F:** Our sample had long take-up and creep in the trigger and was a jam-o-matic with one hunting load.

Log on to **Gun-Tests.com** to read complete reviews of these products.

Ruger's Lightweight Commander

The company's new $899 SR1911CMD-A, as it is designated, is your basic Lightweight Commander without the Colt name — and it has a clever innovation or two we think makes it better.

Colt still makes the Lightweight Commander (O4860XSE, $1104), but no longer makes one of our favorite carry guns, the CCO, or Colt Concealed Officer's model. We thought this Ruger looked enough like the Colt CCO that a comparison was in order. In this first-look report, we take a good look at the new Ruger and briefly see how it stacks up to a custom CCO on hand.

We shot the Ruger with 230-grain FMJ "hardball" by Black Hills and Winchester, Winchester's 200-grain BEB, and with Federal 185-grain JHP Hi-Shok. We tried a few rounds of Cor-Bon 185-grain JHP, but found the recoil to be much too fierce. Here's what we found from our first look at the new Ruger.

Ruger SR1911 CMD-A 6711 45 ACP, $899

The Ruger came with slim, wood grip panels, excellent Novak sights, a Commander-style hammer, beavertail extension, and a decent trigger right out of the box. The black-anodized frame fit the slide very snugly. There was no side-to-side play at all, nor was there any apparent movement of the barrel at the muzzle nor at the breech within the slide. Other things we liked included the deburring done almost everywhere — Ruger missed a few spots — the extended, single-side thumb safety, and the lack of a firing-pin-blocking mechanism, which can play hob with the trigger pull. Contrary to website claims, the gun did not come with a hard case, but instead had a zippered soft-carry case, along with two 7-round magazines.



We very much liked the new Ruger, and in comparison to the customized Colt CCO (right), it came off quite well. It needs none of the many custom touches put onto the CCO to make it holster ready. We would make the front strap checkered, and if we had our choice we'd undercut the trigger guard a bit to put the gun lower in the hand. But for most customers, it's probably fine as it is.

The edge breaking, or dehorning, was outstanding by comparison to much of today's 1911 crop. The bottom edge of the slide, the front of it and the barrel bushing, and even the slide stop had beveled edges. Missing this feature were the rear edge of the exit port and the front of the frame extension. The magazine well was beveled as well.

The wood quality of the slim grips was excellent, and we liked the ultra-slim profile these gave the gun. They make for slightly better concealment and give the gun a pointing quality that many appreciate.

The Ruger has vertical serrations on the front strap. We believe it needs checkering there, like it already has on the mainspring housing. Half the cuts have already been made, so a quick job with a checkering file would give us what we want. There are fluids to reblacken the aluminum, so it would not be necessary to leave the checkering in the white, as it is on the CCO.

The big difference between the CCO and the Ruger is the grip length. The Ruger, like the Colt Commander, has a full-length grip. The CCO has a shortened grip, like that of the Colt Officer's ACP model, but has the Commander-length slide. This theoretically gives the full-length grip a one-round advantage, but our CCO holds the same seven rounds as the Ruger. Of course, one can get 8-round mags for the full-length gun, but full-length magazines also work perfectly in the CCO.

We appreciate that Ruger has concealed the "Read instruction manual..." warning by putting it in small



letters beneath the forward part of the frame. This leaves the slide tastefully marked with only the Ruger name over "Made in USA" on the left side of the slide, and only the Ruger logo on the right. There are no other markings or blemishes on the slide. The slide is matte stainless, essentially a low-glare finish. The frame is dull-black anodized aluminum. The two magazines are shiny nickel-plated ones, which does not offend. Ruger's version of the Videki trigger had its stop properly set, and a dull-nickel finish. The fixed Novak sights are dovetailed, and provide an excellent sight picture with three white dots. The Ruger even had a one-side-only extended thumb safety, something many cherish. In short, there is nothing about this gun's appearance we did not like.

On the range, the Ruger put its shots with hardball essentially dead center of point of aim at 15 yards. One cannot ask for more than that. Even better, the Ruger averaged 1.7 inches for five shots from our bench at 15 yards. It did about the same with Federal's Hi-Shok, though they landed slightly higher on the target. Winchester's BEB made a group of 1.1 inches, and then we discovered the grips had come loose. All four Allen screws needed a good bit of snugging up. There were no other problems with the gun, except for one picky item that we encountered.

In our shooting over a rest from the bench, our thumb bounced off the safety and flipped the safety to the On position. In normal shooting, this never happened. The picky shooter could remove the safety and slightly deepen the retention hole with an appropriate tool.

We took the gun apart to inspect another of Ruger's tricks. One of the complaints heard now and then about aluminum-frame 45s is the wear or battering they can receive from extended us. Ruger has inserted a polished titanium plate, which becomes the feed ramp to prevent that possibility.

Another clever trick is the plunger tube is integral with the frame.

RUGER SR1911 CMD-A MODEL 6711 45 ACP, $899

GUN TESTS GRADE: A

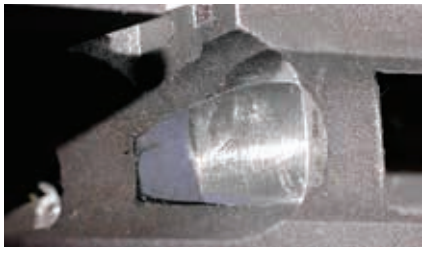
There's not a lot to dislike about the Ruger. Good looks, decent accuracy, a good trigger, perfect function, and nothing that doesn't belong.







The CCO has much-increased traction on its front strap from checkering. The Ruger will get it shortly. Despite its longer grip, the Ruger held the same number of rounds as the CCO.



Ruger anticipated the threat of battering of its feed ramp by inserting a titanium plate. We wonder how it's held in place.

Action	Single Action Semi-Auto, Series 70
Overall Length	7.8 in.
Overall Height	5.5 in.
Barrel	4.25 in. Long, Stainless Steel 6 Grooves, 1:16 RH Twist
Front Strap Height	2.6 in.
Back Strap Height	3.2 in.
Weight Unloaded	26.3 oz.
Weight Loaded (8 rds. 230-gr.)	32.2 oz.
Capacity	7+1
Magazines	2 Stainless Steel
Maximum Width	1.3 in.
Grip Thickness	1.1 in.
Grip Circumference	5.3 in.
Frame	Matte-Black Anodized Aluminum
Slide	Matte Stainless Steel
Grip	Thin Wood
Trigger	Skeletonized Aluminum w/Overtravel Stop
Trigger Pull Weight	5.2 lbs.
Trigger Span	3.4 in.
Sight Radius	5.9 in.
Rear Sight	Novak LoMount Carry, Windage Adjustable
Front Sight	Dovetailed Steel Post
Warranty	None Written
Telephone	(603) 865-2442
Website	Ruger.com
Made In	USA
California Approved	No



Classic takedown, classic parts. Ruger did this one right. There are things we'll change for taste, which we'll report on soon. A clever trick we noticed in disassembly is the plunger tube is integral with the frame.

That's neat, we thought. These are commonly staked or riveted in place, and often come loose. This one never will. The plunger tube holds the spring and stops for the safety and slide stop. The recoil spring was straightforward, no full-length guide rod that requires tools to take apart. It also simplifies thumb-index-finger press checking, which those of us who were brought up on basic IPSC several decades ago still utilize. Finally, we noted the magazine release is somewhat higher out of the frame than commonly seen. It is also checkered, something the owner of the CCO did to his gun, to improve traction for quick reloading. We could not seriously fault the new Ruger lightweight 45. It looked really good to us, and performed extremely well. There was not really much we would do to this one to satisfy our picky selves to make it ready for serious carry.

In contrast, when we first encountered the Colt CCO, it had quite a few things we didn't like, starting with the wrap-around rubber grips. They went instantly, replaced with Kim Ahrends custom wood panels. While the original rubber grips with their finger grooves would have helped keep a good grip on the light gun from recoil, with the wood panels on it we found it necessary to add checkering to the front strap. That's why we know the Ruger will need that too, because the CCO and the new Ruger are the same weight, 26.0 ounces for the CCO and 26.3 for the Ruger. As noted, the CCO's magazine release was serrated, not checkered like the Ruger's. The CCO's finish was basically identical to the Ruger, though the Colt's slide has become shiny on one side from daily carry for two decades. But none of the sharp edges were knocked off, and it gouged our Bachman Slide holster badly. We took a file to it and dulled the now-shiny bits with a simple etching solution. Its ejection port had the same sharp edges as the Ruger's. The Colt didn't have a relieved magazine well either, so we did that with a file. The Ruger's is

RANGE DATA

Black Hills 230-gr. FMJ	**Ruger 6711 CMD**	**Colt CCO**
Average Velocity at 10 ft.	830 fps	905 fps
Muzzle Energy	351 ft.-lbs.	418 ft.-lbs.
Average Group Size	1.7 in.	1.8 in.

Winchester 230-gr. FMJ	**Ruger 6711 CMD**	**Colt CCO**
Average Velocity at 10 ft.	700 fps	690 fps
Muzzle Energy	250 ft.-lbs.	243 ft.-lbs.
Average Group Size	2.1 in.	2.8 in.

Federal 185-gr. Hi-Shok	**Ruger 6711 CMD**	**Colt CCO**
Average Velocity at 10 ft.	885 fps	905 fps
Muzzle Energy	321 ft.-lbs.	336 ft.-lbs.
Average Group Size	2.0 in.	1.8 in.

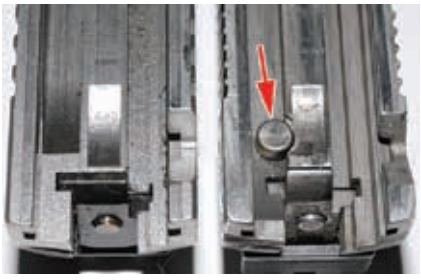
Velocity was recorded using an Oehler 35P chronograph with proof channel. Five-shot groups were fired at 15 yards from a bench rest.



The Ruger and Colt both have dovetailed sights. The CCO, top, has a full-length rib on top that has added file cuts to cut glare. This was a feature added by the handgun's owner.



The Colt CCO, top, has a clever rear sight that gives an additional quarter inch of sight radius over the Novak sights on the Ruger (bottom). The CCO also has added custom file cuts to the back of its slide.



The CCO on the right has the firing-pin block that must be pushed out of the way by the trigger. Even so, the CCO had a 4.5-pound trigger, thanks to The Robar Companies. The Ruger's Series 70 design at left has no such contraption.

opened. The Colt CCO had a trigger that needed work, which we had the Robar Companies' Robbie Barrkman do for us, and despite its plunger-type firing pin lock, the CCO has a better trigger pull than the factory Ruger setup. Robbie also put his NP3 finish on the CCO's innards to keep the many formerly blued parts of the gun from rusting. The CCO had a raised panel on top of the slide that we thought was shiny, so we used a fine checkering file to dull it. And of course, the CCO has been engraved.

Our Team Said: We note that many of the things we did to the CCO would also have to be done (to satisfy us) to the LW Colt Commander, which is still available. That custom work would add $200 to the Colt's cost. With the CCO having become rare and in demand, a less-costly carry gun might be in the offing for the CCO's owner. If that happens, his new carry gun will be this Ruger. With excellent accuracy, perfect function, easily carried weight, great sights and trigger, there's nothing to not like.

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

Three Trail Companions We Like

We take a look at Ruger's new 22/45 Lite in 22 LR and the Mora HD knife and Scow Custom sheath as pack-along items.

The avid woodsman or outdoorsman, be he/she hunter, hiker, camper, or what have you, has certain necessary items that must always be packed along on the trail. Whether going into the Eastern woods for a few days or into the Western mountains, those companion items will always go along with us: water, fire makings, rope, shelter, and the like. Many of us also want a pistol and knife. In this report we take a close first look at Ruger's new 22/45 Lite in 22 LR and the Mora HD knife and an accompanying Scow Sheath as trail companions.

We must comment that lately we now consider taking quite a few more items for our forays into the bush, thanks to a fellow who is one of the more serious outdoorsmen we've encountered. This is one David Pearson, who has posted nearly 100 rather lengthy, intelligent, thoughtful, educational, and highly entertaining videos on YouTube under the moniker reallybigmonkey1. With his heavy and pleasant Appalachian accent, Mr. Pearson shows in great detail how he deals with the varied aspects of serious camping in his neighborhood of northwest Georgia. This includes making off-the-ground beds, low-cost heated shelters of a great variety, dealing with fires and cooking, the use of rather large knives, and making much of his own equipment, all dealt up with a great deal of self-effacing humor — and absolutely no swearing. Mr. Pearson calls his educational videos "Fun in the Woods."

Though some of us are essentially outdoorsmen, we have learned quite a bit from Mr. Pearson. More to the point, one of Pearson's videos gave us a heads-up about Duane Scow, whose custom sheath for the Mora knife was shown in one of Pearson's videos. But for now, we'll look at the packable pistol from Ruger, then address the qualities of the knife and sheath.

Ruger 22/45 Lite 3908 22 LR, $515

The new blue Ruger looks like a Buck Rogers pistol with its cutaway barrel and Picatinny-like top rail. The





Right: We found the new Ruger 22/45 Lite to be much to our liking, along with the gorgeous Duane Scow sheath and the Mora knife inside it. That's a ferro rod in the sheath's hoop.



Right: We actually scraped some chips from this log with the Ruger's barrel cutouts. The knife can add some shavings, and with luck the ferro rod will give enough sparks to get a fire going.

gun is also available with a Cobalt, or gray, finish with holes drilled in the barrel shroud instead of the deep cuts of our test sample, but the Cobalt one does not come with a sight rail. We see the blue Ruger as a light, efficient, outdoorsman's pistol, so the idea of sticking a scope on it was not for us. Yet we recognize that many shooters need that option. For fun and because we could, we tried the rail with a 30X Weaver target scope on it, but for the bulk our testing, we took off the scope and the top rail, which was attached with three short screws. We appreciate that Ruger makes it easy to mount a scope on the blue pistol, but with the rail, the gun would not fit into a Bachman Slide holster. With the rail off, the gun fit nicely.

The pistol came with a soft zippered case and two magazines, plus an Allen wrench to remove or tighten the top rail. We noted the gun will not fire with the magazine removed. It is also possible to work the bolt with the safety in the On position, so one can load and unload the chamber with an added degree of security. There was a key for the integral action lock. The 22/45 Lite was made exceptionally well, and it always worked properly.

As most readers know, the grip angle of the Ruger 22/45 is essentially identical to the Colt 1911 pattern. The controls to release the magazine and operate the safety are in the same places as on the big 45s. The Ruger's frame is Zytel polymer. The front grip strap is horizontally serrated and the rear strap is checkered. The side panels are rubber. Grips from the Ruger Commander reviewed previously looked like they might fit, but they didn't.

The cuts in the side of the barrel housing have relatively sharp rear edges. These are like a coarse rasp. In all seriousness, if one were desperate, one might be able to shave some wood into easily ignited tinder using those cutouts. Then the Mora and a few sparks from its ferro rod would give you fire.

We shot the Ruger using its excellent adjustable sights — they gave a perfect sight picture for our eyes — using Federal Gold Medal Premium Match, Eley Tenex Ultimate EPS match, Blazer, and CCI MiniMags. We had trouble with the Eley match ammo, which did not want to feed reliably in this brand-new pistol. We'll try it again after more rounds have gone through the Ruger, but we can't dun the new pistol for that. The Eley ammo's recoil is exceptionally light, which seemed to have been the problem. The Tenex bullets came out at about 900 fps, and all the other ammo including the Federal Match was significantly faster.

At 50 feet with the iron sights, we shot our very best group with Blazer rimfire rounds, 0.6 inch. That ammo averaged under an inch, the best of this test, followed by the Federal Gold Medal and Tenex average groups, 1.4 inches, and the MiniMags at 1.2 inches. A long-eye-relief, low-

RUGER 22/45 LITE 3908 22 LR, MSRP $515

GUN TESTS GRADE: A

With its 1911-like grip that is essentially the same size as the big 45s, the new blue Ruger fit our 45 holsters. That makes packing it easy. We took off the scope rail for most of our testing. All the controls are in the same places as found on the 1911 45s.







Overall Length	8.4 in.
Overall Height	5.5 in.
Barrel Length	4.4 in.
Weight Unloaded	22.8 oz.
Weight Loaded	24.0 oz.
Capacity	10+1
Maximum Width	1.1 in.
Grip Thickness	1.1 in.
Grip Circumference	5.2 in.
Frame	Black Polymer
Barrel	Stainless Inside Aluminum
Grip	Black Polymer
Front Strap Height	2.7 in.
Back Strap Height	3.5 in.
Trigger Pull Weight	4.6 lbs.
Trigger Span	3.2 in.
Sight Radius	6.5 in.
Warranty	None Written
Telephone	(603) 865-2442
Website	Ruger.com
Made In/By	U.S./Sturm, Ruger

We liked this fully adjustable sight. It was sturdily mounted and gave a perfect sight picture with the upright front blade. Sorry, no tritium inserts.



The front of the 22/45 Lite unscrews for a silencer, if you need one. The barrel itself is slim. Most of the rest is aluminum and much of that has been cut away.

RANGE DATA

Federal Gold Medal 40-gr. RN Match	Ruger 22/45 Lite
Average Velocity	975 fps
Muzzle Energy	84 ft.-lbs.
Average Group	1.4 in.

Blazer 40-gr. RN	Ruger 22/45 Lite
Average Velocity	930 fps
Muzzle Energy	77 ft.-lbs.
Average Group Size	0.9 in.

CCI MiniMag 40-gr. RN	Ruger 22/45 Lite
Average Velocity	1015 fps
Muzzle Energy	91 ft.-lbs.
Average Group	1.2 in.

Eley Tenex 40-gr. RN Match	Ruger 22/45 Lite
Average Velocity	905 fps
Muzzle Energy	73 ft.-lbs.
Average Group	1.4 in.

Velocity was recorded using an Oehler 35P chronograph with proof channel. The first screen was 10 feet from the muzzle. For accuracy testing, we fired five-shot groups at 15 yards from a bench rest.

power scope or any of the floating-dot sights would be ideal for those whose eyesight requires help.

Other than the too-light ammo in a crisp new gun, we had no trouble at all with the Ruger. Its trigger pull was excellent, crisp and clean. It broke at 4.6 pounds. We noted how easy it was to get pinched by the closing bolt, so rather than ease it forward with our fingers, we simply took to letting its own spring slam it closed. We'd rather deal with the gun that way than have the extra-wide ears that were on earlier versions of this pistol.

Our Team Said: We can't fault the new Ruger 22/45 Lite rimfire pistol, and we'd buy it instantly for most of our smallbore needs. Though it's not inexpensive, we thought it's an ideal gun for packing along.

Mora of Sweden Moraknif 11746 Robust Companion MG Heavy Duty Carbon-Steel Knife, about $20

We got ourselves one of the heavy-duty Mora carbon-steel knives on eBay. The Mora is unquestionably one of the greatest bargains in today's outdoor-tool market. This knife is made in Sweden, and sells with a usable plastic sheath for what amounts to a song. With a 4-inch-long, ⅛-inch-thick fixed blade of high-carbon Swedish steel, the knife comes with a mirror polish and a very comfortable, sturdy, and easily-gripped handle. The knife is also available in stainless steel, which is a better choice if you plan to use it for food preparation, though it may not hold its edge as well as the carbon version. We first tried our carbon-steel Mora on a piece of wood, making many shavings, basically cutting completely through a 2-inch piece of pine with our whittling. The knife was still razor sharp.

We have worn the Mora knife in Duane Scow's sheath (see below) every day since it came in the door, and we continue to find uses for the knife, from splitting small sticks to opening our mail, or cutting boxes down for fire starting. On a day in the woods, the handy Mora cuts twigs or shaves sticks for fire starting, and can also tend to all the kitchen chores, although as noted, a stainless blade would be better for dealing with food preparation. Mora makes stainless versions, and also ones with thinner blades and in different styles.

Our Team Said: Over a few weeks, we cut something every day with the Mora, and no matter how badly we abused it, the edge required only the slightest touching up, often with only a bit of stropping on an old leather belt, to keep its razor-like edge. To keep it shiny, we put on a coat of wax, and that has kept the knife looking like a mirror.

Duane Scow Custom Sheath, $50-$75

The sheath keeps the blade in place by careful molding, no straps, so it takes a good tug to remove it and a good push to get it back in. The brown-leather sheath has the same add-on accessory we saw in Pearson's video, a hoop or ring on its blade side into which a ferro rod has been placed. The entire sheath, especially its edges, are beautiful. It has a large loop to go over the belt. We've found this sheath to be far more comfortable than the plastic sheath that came with the Mora. Scow's double-row stitching is even, firm, and clean. The knife and the ferro rod fit snugly. The sheath has three baked-in coats of conditioner.

Scow makes his sheaths as custom orders, so if you don't want the ferro rod, tell him. Many options are available, and he works with the individual to give the customer just about anything. We've seen photos of his sheath for one of the big 10-inch Ontario blades, with mating smaller sheath for a companion knife that attaches to the front of the big blade's sheath. Another setup shows a big Ka-Bar in a fitted sheath with top pivot ring and leg strap with a quick-detach fastener.

At this writing, Scow is capable of making just about anything you might need in a knife sheath, though if he gets much busier he might have to change that policy. We're reminded of the work of Ned Christiansen, the brilliant gunsmith of Michiguns Ltd., who makes whatever the customer specifies. But Christiansen has a backlog now of more than seven years, and he is not taking new orders because of the demand for his work. We suspect Scow will also get into that rarified atmosphere. We predict he'll soon be inundated with requests for his marvelous work. Scow tells us he's also working on a holster idea or two, so stay tuned. We furiously hope there's a "Scow Slide" for 45s in the near future.

Our Team Said: The Scow sheath makes for an attractive and comfortable carry of a very useful tool, and it'll go on all our future excursions. To order, contact Scow at: LastDitchLeatherworks@aol.com

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

Glock's New Single-Stack 9mm

The company says the G43 addresses issues that many shooters face with existing concealed carry pistols. We'll see about that.

Glock has released a new single-stack slimline 9mm pistol, the Glock 43. The frame width of the G43 is just over one inch, and the slide width measures 0.87 inch. The overall length is 6.26 inches. For those who have smaller hands, the trigger span from backstrap to trigger face is 2.6 inches. The single-stack magazine holds six rounds.

"The G43 addresses a variety of issues that many shooters face with pistols in the concealed carry category," said Glock VP Josh Dorsey. "It will be the pistol of choice for law enforcement and civilians. The G43 sets a new standard for concealed carry pistols."



Heizer Defense Launches PAK1 "Pocket AK Pistol" in 7.62x39 at NRA Show

At the NRA Show in Nashville, Heizer Defense debuted the new PAK1 Pocket AK Pistol in 7.62x39. The pistol is the next caliber offering in the Heizer Defense Pocket Pistol family, which includes the PS1 Pocket Shotgun chambered in 45 LC/.410, the PAR1 Pocket AR chambered in 223 Rem., and the Hedy Jane Empowered line, geared to women.

The pistols are multi-caliber with interchangeable barrels. Accessory barrels will be shipping along with the PAK1 Pocket AK. Consumers can purchase any Heizer Defense Pistol and now have two additional calibers to choose from, and additional calibers will be offered throughout 2015. On the Gun Tests Facebook page, readers were skeptical about the Heizer lines.



T.R. said, "Looks pretty useless to me. I'll keep my rifle cartridges in my rifles." Bob said, "Recoil is horrible in 9mm and 45. This is a shove-it-in-the-gut-and-fire-only weapon. I would not wish to fire a rifle caliber [in a handgun] unless it was a 22 or 32-20."

Remington Makes Several Military/LE Products Commercially Available

Remington Arms Company has announced that certain Remington Defense products formerly reserved to military units and LE agencies are now available to civilian consumers. The initial Defense offerings are the Remington Gas Piston Carbine R4GP, the R4E Enhanced Carbine, Modular Sniper Rifles Models PSR and MSR, and the M2010 Sniper Rifle, the U.S. Army's replacement for the M24. Prices weren't immediately available.



The operator hidden in the bush is reclining alongside the Remington Defense PSR Precision Sniper Rifle 86642 with a side-folding stock. Remington Defense is now offering a handful of its formerly military/LE-restricted lines to civilians.

Remington's Defense Division has its own research and development engineers as well as its own dedicated unit of manufacturing personnel, who do not perform any other work at Remington except for their Defense Division duties.

Many of these operators and armorers are former U.S. Special Operations personnel who brainstorm, build, and sell these weapon systems domestically and to allied nations around the world.

The R4 RGP's monolithic upper receiver can drop in on M4/M16-series lower receivers without modification. The gas-piston operating system allows for suppressed and unsuppressed fire without a regulator, and Remington claims it is easier to maintain than gas-impingement offerings. The short-stroke piston design features a self-aligning op rod and disassembles forward, without the use of tools. Components include Remington's Monolithic Free Floating Modular Tube, Magpul ACS stock, and the 51T AAC Flash Hider Adapter.

Key features on the Remington Defense R4E Enhanced Carbine include a billet lower with ambi QD cups, selector, mag catch, and bolt catch; a hammer-forged 4150 CM steel barrel with Melonite treatment; Mil-Spec M16 bolt carrier and receiver extension; a 7075-T6 RAHG handguard with steel threaded inserts, and a Geissele match trigger.

Winner of the US SOCOM PSR competition and type-classified as the Mk21, Remington's MSR/PSR rifles (Modular Sniper Rifle and Precision Sniper Rifle, respectively) come as packages with interchangeable barrels chambered in .308 Win, .300



Remington's R4 RGP (Remington Gas Piston) Carbine 86550 is chambered in 5.56 NATO and has a 16-inch civilian-legal barrel.



The Remington Defense R4E Enhanced Carbine is independently assembled by the most specialized Remington gunsmiths.





The lighter MSR-LW 86279 (left) has a shorter handguard and more skeletonized stock than the MSR 86282 (right).



The Remington M2010 bolt-action sniper rifle 86438 is chambered in 300 Win Mag, has a 24-inch barrel, and comes outfitted with a Leupold Mark 4 riflescope, a Hardigg Hard Case, and a soft case.

Win Mag, and .338 Lapua Magnum and are said to allow user changes in less than a minute. They all have right-folding adjustable buttstocks. The PSR doesn't come with the Leupold MK4 M5 reticle riflescopes that come with the MSR rifles. The actions are machined billet titanium receivers with ambi bolt releases and are topped with 20-MOA full-length monolithic top rails.

Remington was awarded the U.S. M2010 Army Enhanced Sniper Rifle (ESR) contract in September 2010 to reconfigure its M24 Sniper Weapon Systems. The M24 and subsequent M2010 are based on the Model 700 and 40-X designs.

The action is a TriNyte-coated titanium alloy with an ambi bolt release seated into a Remington Accessory Chassis System (RACS) stock. There's a ferric-nitro carburized finish on barrel, receiver, and bolt for maximum life and corrosion resistance.

A 20-MOA full-length monolithic top rail provides a customizable optics-mounting platform. The buttstock is right folding and is adjustable for cheek height, LOP, and buttpad height. The silencer is an AAC Titan QD model.

Beretta's 92FS Now Available with Internal Guide Rod Laser

Beretta's 92FS full-size 9mm pistol is now available from the factory with an internal Guide Rod Laser from LaserMax preinstalled. LaserMax is the only manufacturer of an internal guide rod laser sight.

Advantages: The Guide Rod Laser installs as close to the pistol bore line as possible, ensuring a consistent relationship between point of aim and point of impact (POA/POI) over all shooting distances.

The LaserMax pulsed laser sight comes factory aligned at 20 yards. MSRP for the lasered 92FS wasn't available, but a Green LaserMax Guide Rod Laser (LMS-1441G) for the pistol runs another $450 MSRP. The red LMS-1441 is $400 MSRP.



Browning Adds Cynergy 20 Gauge to Micro Midas Line; Also Grows X-Bolt Rifle Line

Browning has introduced a new Cynergy Micro Midas 20-gauge over-and-under shotgun that weighs only 6 pounds and has a compact 13-inch length of pull to better fit smaller shooters. Suggested Retail: $1,870.



Top to bottom are Browning's new Micro Midas Cynergy 20 Gauge, the X-Bolt Eclipse Target in 6.5 Creedmoor and 308 Win. chamberings, and the X-Bolt Eclipse Varmint in 204 Ruger, 223 Rem. and 22-250 Rem.

To help reduce felt recoil, the Cyngery Micro Midas features a soft Inflex Technology recoil pad. Three ¼-inch spacers are included to adjust length of pull. The Cynergy Micro Midas will be available with 24- or 26-inch barrels.

The Cynergy features Monolock Hinge technology for a low-profile receiver, which can help control recoil. The Cynergy also includes the Reverse Striker ignition system, a mechanical trigger system that uses an actuator to reverse the direction of the impact force from the pin to the striker. It is said to offer a crisper feel and lighter pull, reduced locktime, and little overtravel.

Browning will likewise expand its X-Bolt rifle line for 2015 to include the new X-Bolt Eclipse Target and Eclipse Varmint models, $1,070 MSRP. Both models feature a laminated gray satin-finish stock that has a thumbhole grip with Monte Carlo cheek piece.

The X-Bolt Eclipse Target will be offered in 6.5 Creedmoor and 308 Win. chamberings. The 28-inch bull barrel provides excellent accuracy. The X-Bolt Eclipse Target rifle has an adjustable Feather Trigger that is factory set at 3 to 3½ lbs.

The X-Bolt Eclipse Varmint will be offered in 204 Ruger, 223 Rem. and 22-250 Rem. The X-Bolt Eclipse Varmint rifle features a 26-inch bull barrel.

Other standard features found on all X-Bolt rifles include a detachable rotary magazine, adjustable Feather Trigger, 60-degree bolt lift, bolt unlock button and Inflex Technology recoil pad.



New Walnut Stocks for Magnum Research 22 LR/Mag Semi-Auto Rifles

Magnum Research has upgraded its Magnum Lite 22 LR and 22 WMR semi-auto rifles with a new Barracuda American black walnut gun stock. The new stock replaces the heavier laminate stocks in Barracuda Pepper, Nutmeg and Forest Camo colors. These rifles utilize the Ruger 10/22 trigger group and 10/22 rotary magazines. MSRP for the MLR22BW is $824 and the MLR22WMBW is $941.

The Magnum Lite MLR22BW and MLR22WMBW with the black-walnut stock uses a lightweight thumbhole design paired with a comb height designed for optics. It also features a semi-palm swell on both sides of the pistol grip and a molded-to-fit rubber buttplate. The new rifles will be equipped with the Magnum Lite graphite bull barrel. The lighter barrel weight (by 13 to 16 ounces lighter, depending on length) dissipates heat up to 43% faster than steel.

Additional features of the MLR22 include Bentz target chambers designed specifically for semi-automatics, full-floating barrels, CNC-machined receivers made from 6061-T6 aircraft aluminum forgings, integral Weaver-type rails, and a black-anodized metal finish. The MLR22BW weighs 69.3 ounces, has a barrel length of 17 inches, and an overall length of 35.5 inches. The MLR22WMBW weighs 71.2 ounces, has a barrel length of 19 inches, and an overall length of 37.5 inches.

Howa Introduces Mini Action Rifles

The action and bolt on Howa's new Mini Action are 20 percent shorter

— continued on next page

— Downrange continued from page 2

mistake. No AP ammo exemptions revoked…." Included in the tweet was a link to a longer statement:

NOTICE OF PUBLISHING ERROR

On Feb. 13, 2015, ATF released for public comment a proposed framework to guide its determination on what ammunition is "primarily intended for sporting purposes" for purposes of granting exemptions to the Gun Control Act's prohibition on armor piecing ammunition. The posted framework is only a proposal, posted for the purpose of receiving public comment, and no final determinations have been made.

Media reports have noted that the 2014 ATF Regulation Guide published online does not contain a listing of the exemptions for armor piercing ammunition, and conclude that the absence of this listing indicates these exemptions have been rescinded. This is not the case.

Please be advised that ATF has not rescinded any armor piercing ammunition exemption, and the fact they are not listed in the 2014 online edition of the regulations was an error which has no legal impact on the validity of the exemptions. The existing exemptions for armor piercing ammunition, which apply to 5.56 mm (.223) SS 109 and M855 projectiles (identified by a green coating on the projectile tip), and the U.S .30-06 M2AP projectile (identified by a black coating on the projectile tip), remain in effect.

The listing of Armor Piercing Ammunition exemptions can be found in the 2005 ATF Regulation Guide on page 166, which is posted here.

The 2014 Regulation Guide will be corrected in PDF format to include the listing of armor piercing ammunition exemptions and posted shortly. The e-book/iBook version of the Regulation Guide will be corrected in the near future.

ATF apologizes for any confusion caused by this publishing error.

Sorry, but that did not, and does not, ring true to me.

Simultaneously, gun owners mobilized and flooded the agency's public-comment line with comments about the proposed M855 5.56 NATO ban. According to a story by Stephen Gutowski, staff writer for the *Washington Free Beacon*, the ATF received more than 310,000 comments from the public. "We've received more than 310,000 public comments," said Ginger Colbrun, a spokesperson for the ATF was quoted in the story. "We [were] still receiving some letters which are postmarked prior to the end of the comment period, March 16th."

In addition to encouraging their members to submit comments opposing the ban, several of the largest gun rights groups launched campaigns against the ban. The National Rifle Association organized a letter to the ATF opposing the ban signed by 53 senators and 236 congressmen. The Second Amendment Foundation launched a nationwide radio and television ad campaign against the ban in addition to threatening legal action.

Then, on March 10, ATF announced that it would not pursue the proposed ban on the M855 ammunition.

In sum, I'm happy that this regulatory overreach by BATFE was pushed back, but I don't think this issue is going away. The reality is, most centerfire rifle ammunition will punch through soft body armor, almost irrespective of the bullet construction. If it self-delegated the authority to ban any round that would penetrate those materials — which seems to be where the agency wants to go — BATFE could outlaw just about all hunting rounds. In my opinion, Congress needs to strip the agency of any further ability to make mischief in this area. **GT**

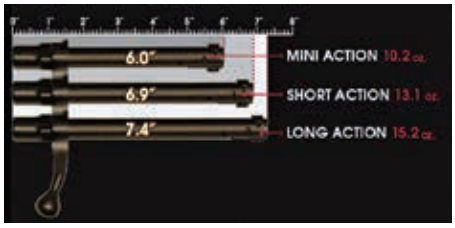
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than standard 308-size short actions, which results in a shorter bolt throw when chambering a round. Available initially in .223 Rem. and .204 Ruger (with other calibers promised for the future), the rifle features a 20-inch hammer-forged barrel, a three-position safety, a HACT two-stage trigger, and a 5-round detachable magazine. This rifle without scope weighs just over 5.5 pounds with a 20-inch barrel. Howa claims its "drawn" barrel produces better accuracy than a forged barrel, because they are not extruded and stretched, and do not begin with billet stock.

They begin as extrusion tubes that are swaged, drawn and then roll leveled before cutting. Drawn barrels are also heat treated.

The Howa Mini Action Rifles are factory equipped with ten-round, synthetic, detachable magazines and have a lightweight composition stock. Scope packages are also available with the Howa Mini Action rifles.

Howa Mini Action riflestocks are available in OD green, black or camo



dipped in Kryptek Highlander with lightweight, standard and heavy barrel options. Lightweight and heavy barrels measure 20 inches, and standard barrels are 22 inches in length. Lightweight barrels are a #1 contour, Heavy barrels are a #6 contour and Standard barrels are a #2 hunting contour. MSRPs range from $608 to $782 depending on package.

Hoppe's Introduces 1.2.3. Done! Cleaning Kits

Hoppe's new gun cleaning kits seem like a good idea. The 1.2.3. Done! kits include a caliber/gauge specific Hoppe's BoreSnake along with 2-ounce bottles of Hoppe's No. 9 bore cleaner and Hoppe's high-viscosity lubricating oil. $26.45.

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

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