GUN TESTS®

THE CONSUMER RESOURCE FOR THE SERIOUS SHOOTER

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COMPACT 9MMS FROM GLOCK, HONOR, S&W, WALTHER

In this quartet, there are no dogs, and one just may become your pet pistol. The bottom line—all were reliable, which is a must, but some other factors led us to choose a hands-down Best Buy. ● Page 6





A TRIO OF UNUSUAL REVOLVERS

Reviewed: A Nagant M1895, a relic from the Russian Empire; the Smith & Wesson M929 9mm action-competition wheelgun; and a long-barrel Buntline 22 LR plinker from Chiappa. ● Page 15




PUMPGUN SHOWDOWN

What would happen when we pitted the largest-selling slide-action 12 gauge in history against another pumper with a 100-year-plus pedigree? The results were a lot closer than you might expect. ● Page 24

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

DOWNRANGE

SURPLUS 1911S MIGHT BE BACK



Todd Woodard

The U.S. House of Representatives has passed H.R. 2810, the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) for Fiscal Year 2018. Included in the bill is a provision that would make U.S. Army surplus 1911 45 ACP pistols available to the American public through the Civilian Marksmanship program (CMP), according to an NRA release.

In November 2015, then-President Obama signed the NDAA for Fiscal Year 2016 into law with language that authorized the Secretary of Defense to transfer 1911s no longer in service to the CMP for public sale. That language made the transfers subject to the Secretary's discretion and capped them at 10,000 per year. Unsurprisingly, no actual transfers were made under the program while Obama remained in the White House.

This year's language, however, would effectively make the transfers mandatory and would remove the yearly cap. Currently, the military has some 100,000 excess 1911s sitting in storage at taxpayer expense. Transfer of these historically-significant firearms would ease a burden on the government's heavily indebted balance sheet and help preserve important artifacts from the era when the U.S. military defended Western Civilization from worldwide fascism and aggressive Communist expansion.

The CMP's sales of 1911s would be treated as other retail sales under the federal Gun Control Act, including the attendant background checks and point of sale record keeping. The design of the pistols dates back to the late 19th century, and they come equipped with a seven-round magazine.

Sweet, Sweet Justice: Three University of Texas at Austin professors lost a lawsuit claiming that letting people carry firearms on their campus would have a chilling effect on speech. The suit was B.S., which to an Texas Aggie like me means "Bevo Stuff," which is the same thing as the more common meaning.

District Judge Lee Yeakel dismissed the suit, claiming the professors could present "no concrete evidence to substantiate their fears" and that their fears rest on "mere conjecture." The litigants were Professors Jennifer Lynn Glass (sociology), Lisa Moore (English), and Mia Carter (English).

One of the arguments was that the "possibility of the presence of concealed weapons in a classroom impedes my and other professors' ability to create a daring, intellectually active, mutually supportive, and engaged community of thinkers." I can't tell from that sentence structure whether that was an English major who wrote it, or a sociology major, or a lawyer.

Since August 2016, permitted folks like yours truly have been able to concealed carry in campus buildings within reasonable guidelines. Those guidelines vary from school to school. At UT Austin, guns must stay out of sight, and individuals professors can choose to make "gun-free zones" in their offices, provided they post their rules clearly. **GT**

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Editor.....W. Todd Woodard
Managing Editor..... Tracey Taylor
Sr. Product Coordinator..... Kevin Winkle
Contributing Editors.....R.K. Campbell
Roger Eckstine
Robert Sadowski
David Tannahill
Ralph Winingham
Sr. Tech Coordinator ..... John Taylor
Preproduction..... Cara Blake

TO CONTACT THE STAFF:
GunTestsEditor@icloud.com

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Grading the Grades

So, we're getting mixed messages from our readers on the suggestion that we fail more guns. Some prefer more nuance than others and like more gradations. Let us know how you lean.

Re "Firing Line," August 2017

A couple of comments regarding your reader's proposed revised rating method in the August issue. I agree that many gun manufacturers should have higher quality standards, but the market offers us a variety of quality and prices. With GT's help, enthusiasts soon learn which manufacturers offer premium quality as opposed to bargain guns.

I like your present rating methods, as you thoroughly explain the reasons for your downgrades—and I can accept or disregard your reasons as they apply to my individual needs.

I've bought three new guns requiring factory repairs because of obvious faults, but in the first case, the honorable dealer sent it back at his expense, and twice the manufacturers issued UPS pick-up paperwork, so there was initial disappointment, but all cases were resolved without any cost to me.

Your reader asks who would want to buy a gun rated at C? About 12 years ago, I bought a new CZ 83 pistol. You would have rated this particular pistol an F because of constant Failure to Fire and Failure to Eject problems. But after CZ sent it back, the gun has been 100% reliable and has become a favorite because it perfectly fits my old, extra-large, and arthritic hands, and provides excellent accuracy with modest recoil. I was pleased to see your A rating on this gun years later. I've found giving each gun a second chance to be a worthwhile practice.

— Wil

I just received my August 2017 copy of Gun Tests and read the letter from Larry, the quality engineer. I agree with him regarding A and F grades, particularly with respect to giving an F to any new gun that is not fit for purpose right out of the box. I had an experience recently with a brand-new Smith & Wesson M&P 9mm, from their Performance Center no less. In theory, this should have been a cut above the "standard factory" product, but, much to my dismay, it completely failed to fire, right out of the box. Inserted loaded magazine, released slide to chamber round, put sights on target, pulled trigger, and NOTHING! Just a very frustrating "click." There was apparently a problem with the firing-pin channel that was stopping the pin from contacting the primer when released by the trigger pull. Smith & Wesson, as you might expect, repaired the gun under warranty, and when I got it back, it worked fine. But it never should have left the factory in the first place, much less the Performance Center, in anything less than A+ working order. As a consumer, it is certainly helpful to get the information on problems that your testers encounter, but I agree with Larry that anything less than an "A-" grade is not going to be a firearm that I would consider adding to my collection.

— Curtis

The letter from Larry in your August 2017 issue was one of the best I have seen in 10 years of reading your publication. You have the most honest and complete reviews of weapons among the firearms-related magazines, but you seem to have a blind spot about the poor

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.

workmanship in many of the weapons you review. The very first article in that issue concerning the Remington R51 pistol demonstrates Larry's point. How could a major manufacturer such as Remington allow a weapon (or any other product) such as your test R51 pistol out of the factory in that condition? A malfunction of any type should earn an automatic F and public embarrassment for the manufacturer. If only the other firearms magazines were anywhere near as honest in their evaluations and reviews as your magazine is. Keep up the good work, but get tougher with the poor quality you see on a regular basis. **— George**

Re "Reproduction M1 Carbines: We Test Auto-Ordnance and Inland Manufacturing Models," February 2017

In re-reading your article on M1 Carbines in the February 2017 issue of Gun Tests, I noted a mistake. The 2nd sentence on page 10 stated: "Later models used a round bolt to reduce manufacturing time." The truth is that the original M1 design had a very strict weight requirement, and in order to help meet that "bogey," a few ounces of steel were removed from the bolt, resulting in a "flat top." Later, during WWII, the Army decided to make the weapon capable of selective fire (i.e., able to shoot full-auto). This version was called the M2. During development work, it was found that with the original lightweight M1 bolt, the full-auto fire rate was way too high and unacceptable.

By putting back the material that was originally milled from the M1 bolt, it was found that the added weight reduced the full-auto fire rate to an acceptable level. At the time, it was found that the M2 bolt functioned just as well as the M1 bolt in the M1 carbines, so a decision was made to use the M2 bolt in "all" future carbine production.

Yes, it saved manufacturing time, but that was not the real reason for going to the "round" bolt. Thank you for the review. **—Bill**

Re "Two New 9mm Compacts from Glock and Walther Square Off," August 2015

I'm a long-time subscriber who greatly enjoys your magazine and appreciates the consistent quality of your publication. I want to compliment you and your staff on the quality of your unbiased evaluations and articles. I'm very curious about your thoughts on the Walther CCP and its gas delayed-blowback design. Have you tested the Walther CCP 9mm? If so, I can't find the article in your archives. If not, do you have plans to test this pistol and, if so, when? Could you advise me on this please? Thank you for your help. **— Jerry**

Hey Jerry: We tested the Walther Concealed Carry Pistol CCP 5080300 9mm Luger in the August 2015 issue, page 6. We gave it a C grade. The CCP had good features we liked, but not enough to overcome its complicated takedown and its failure rate with good ammunition. Here's more from that review:

"The first impression of the Walther CCP was that the pistol is slightly larger than the Glock 43, perhaps in SIG P225 territory, although lighter. If you presently carry a Glock 19, either pistol is smaller and lighter. This isn't a bad place to be. The CCP pistol was slightly larger and heavier than the G43, as our measurements confirmed. However, the CCP wasn't a large handgun by any means, at just 6.4 inches long and 1.18 inches wide.

"The pistol was supplied with two 8-round magazines. The magazines were steel units with the body crimped in place rather than welded, as many magazines are. We like that. The 8-round magazine versus the Glock's 6-round magazine of course gives the CCP a two-cartridge advantage over the Glock 43, but there's a tradeoff, and as the comparison continued, we realized this more and more. The Walther CCP might be chosen over the Walther PPS because it shoots better. The Walther is just enough larger than the G43 that the CCP has more gripping surface and less muzzle flip. On the other hand, it is just enough larger that you may choose the Glock 43 9mm for concealed carry.

"The CCP had a polymer frame like the Glock, but the CCP featured a light rail for mounting a combat light or laser. We rated this a superior feature. While few may carry a compact 9mm with a combat light attached or even on the body, home defense is another matter. After carrying the CCP concealed during the day without the light attached, it was a simple matter to lock a Viridian combat light into place for home defense. We also preferred the Walther's grip texture and feel better than the Glock's. The front of the trigger guard was serrated and supplied more abrasion than the Glock, for shooters who like that hold. The top of the frame was smooth where it should be. The grip frame was nicely roughened with an aggressive pattern and three finger indentations, which gave excellent purchase when firing the pistol.

"Another feature superior to the Glock 43, we felt, was the CCP's trigger action. The Walther trigger broke at a smooth 5 pounds. There was considerable take up; however, the trigger action was very fast once the shooter managed a short acclimation period. For safety, a self-loading pistol must have take up and reset in the trigger action. The Walther CCP featured among the cleanest trigger breaks of any polymer-frame striker-fired pistol we have tested, once the slack in the trigger was taken up. This trigger action, along with the good sights, explains the superior performance of the Walther in accuracy tests.

"To field-strip the CCP, you must manipulate a lock on the rear of the slide. This plug is depressed to clear a hook on the CCP frame to allow the slide to be removed. A tool is supplied with the pistol that is designed to be used to press on the locking tab while the tab is unlocked, allowing the slide to be

removed. The supplied tool did not work despite our best efforts. We used a screwdriver. Our team noted that they hoped the pistol would not need to be cleaned often.

"When reassembling the pistol, the slide did not wish to go back in place. One rater became frustrated and handed the pistol to another shooter, who saw the pin or tab was not allowing the slide to close. The assembly had turned in its tunnel, and as the slide finally snapped home, the lock and tab were ejected by the striker spring. This is part of the procedure for cleaning the striker, but we were not intending to dissemble the pistol at that time.

"During the firing tests, we used two loads during the familiarization stage and three loads for accuracy. Initial firing was accomplished with the HPR 115-grain FMJs, an affordable loading well suited to breaking in a new firearm. We also used a smaller quantity of Winchester 147-grain Defend loads. The Walther proved reliable at the start, with no failures to feed, chamber, fire, or eject with 100 rounds of the 115-grain FMJs. The pistol was pleasant to fire. Fired offhand at humanoid silhouette targets at 5, 7, and 10 yards, the pistol gave excellent results for a handgun in this size and weight category. Combat reloads during combat shooting also went well. We wished we had had more magazines, as the crew enjoyed firing this pistol, only stopping to load magazines. It was clear to our shooters that the Walther was more pleasant to fire than the Glock.

"However, when we began firing Hornady Critical Defense 147-grain JHPs, we suffered four failures to fully go into battery, with much of the cartridge case exposed, before we could complete a box of 25. Was this a break-in malfunction? The pistol had fired hundreds of the 115-grain loads without problem.

"In accuracy testing, we used three loads. The Cor-Bon 95-grain DPX is a superior defense load using a solid-copper Barnes bullet. With this round, we found recoil was the heaviest of any load tested, but it wasn't prohibitive from a load clocking faster than 1350 fps from a 3.5-inch barrel. With the DPX, the HPR 124-grain JHPs, and Hornady's 115-grain Critical Defense FTX hollowpoints at 15 yards, we noticed the CCP required attention to detail to produce good accuracy due to the short sight radius and light weight. Accuracy for five-shot groups ranged from a smallest group of 1.6 inches to a largest group of 2.6 inches. As far as personal-defense accuracy at this range, we thought the pistol performed well. However, the pistol failed to cycle with the Cor-Bon load on three occasions and failed to extract that round twice.

"We didn't fail the CCP for these malfunctions because of our experience with the similar Heckler & Koch P7M8, which in the hands of one of our testers has been perfectly reliable for more than a decade with 115- and 124-grain standard-pressure loads. So, we simply say the Walther was finicky about the loads it liked, whereas the Glock wasn't — a big edge for the Austrian.

"Our Team Said: The Walther CCP was accurate, handled well, featured a manual safety and a light rail, and offered two more rounds of magazine capacity. It was larger and heavier than the Glock, so it is better suited to holster carry than as a pocket handgun. But even with its positives, the malfunctions during the combat firing stage and during the accuracy stage made us doubt its reliability with the full range of defensive ammunition available. Also, its takedown process earned it a demerit. Whether our final rating was a C or a D doesn't really matter to us. We wouldn't buy the CCP."

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We welcome mail from our readers. To send us comments or questions about previous articles in the magazine, email us at: **GunTestsEditor@icloud.com.** *If you'll include the month and year of the article you're writing about, it's a big help. Also, please include your name, address, and phone number. We won't publish your personal information other than your name, but we may need to contact you about material in your letter.* **GT**

Compact 9mms from Glock, Honor Defense, S&W, Walther

In this quartet, there are no dogs, and one just may become your pet pistol. The bottom line—all were reliable, which is a must for a defensive pistol, but some other factors led to a winner.

Our retailer friends tell us that the most popular carry gun in America is the compact 9mm self-loading pistol with a single-column magazine. These handguns are handy, concealable, and powerful enough for personal defense. They deliver acceptable ballistics without harsh recoil and are affordable. Most are based on service-size handguns. The engineering in downsizing the pistols has been faultless in many, but not all, renditions, so everyone wants to know if Compact Pistol "A" is as reliable for practical use as any full-size pistol. And if Compact Pistol "A" is that reliable, it makes it easier to narrow down the many choices to the best choice for you. We get a lot of questions about such handguns, and this lineup includes four handguns readers have asked us to test.

The Smith & Wesson and the Glock, are based on service guns, while the Honor Defense Honor Guard and Walther PPS are purpose-designed compacts with no service-size big brother.

When we first tested the Glock 43 Subcompact Slimline G43 two years ago (August 2015), it earned a B+ in our evaluation when it was paired with the Walther CCP head to head. In that evaluation, we noticed that the slide was narrow and nicely beveled. Glock did not simply stick a Glock 19 slide on a slim frame. The locked-breech operating system and trigger action are preserved. Anyone owning a Glock of any size or frame will be able to use this handgun in the same manner because the action is identical to all other Glock pistols. The sights were standard Glock, with a white outline



The Walther, left, features Glock-like takedown, as shown. The Walther was easier to disassemble due to longer levers with easier grasp than the Glock, right.



From top are the Glock 43, Honor Defense Honor Guard Sub-Compact, the Smith & Wesson M&P9 Shield (shown with a CRKT folding knife for scale), and Walther's PPS M2, all competing for top honors in a very competitive field—carry 9mm pistols. We can work with a heavy trigger and different types of grip treatment or other preferences, but reliability cannot be a concern. And this time, it wasn't. When the smoke cleared, the scorecards favored the Walther for performance and the Smith & Wesson for value. The Honor Defense 9mm was most accurate and easiest to shoot accurately. The Glock 43 gave acceptable performance and is the smallest and most concealable.

RANGE DATA

American Eagle Syntech 115-gr. FMJ	**Glock 43**	**Honor Defense Honor Guard**	**Smith & Wesson M&P9 Shield**	**Walther PPS M2**
Average Velocity	1009 fps	1034 fps	990 fps	998 fps
Muzzle Energy	259 ft.-lbs.	272 ft.-lbs.	250 ft.-lbs.	254 ft.-lbs.
Smallest Group	2.8 in.	2.0 in.	2.9 in.	2.3 in.
Largest Group	3.6 in.	2.8 in.	3.3 in.	2.9 in.
Average Group Size	3.3 in.	2.4 in.	3.1 in.	2.7 in.

Black Hills Ammunition 115-gr. JHP +P	**Glock 43**	**Honor Defense Honor Guard**	**Smith & Wesson M&P9 Shield**	**Walther PPS M2**
Average Velocity	1187 fps	1216 fps	1190 fps	1204 fps
Muzzle Energy	359 ft.-lbs.	377 ft.-lbs.	361 ft.-lbs.	370 ft.-lbs.
Smallest Group	3.3 in.	2.2 in.	2.6 in.	2.2 in.
Largest Group	3.9 in.	2.8 in.	3.4 in.	2.8 in.
Average Group Size	3.6 in.	2.5 in.	3.0 in.	2.5 in.

Hornady XTP 147-gr. Hollowpoint	**Glock 43**	**Honor Defense Honor Guard**	**Smith & Wesson M&P9 Shield**	**Walther PPS M2**
Average Velocity	920 fps	880 fps	909 fps	900 fps
Muzzle Energy	276 ft.-lbs.	252 ft.-lbs.	269 ft.-lbs.	264 ft.-lbs.
Smallest Group	2.6 in.	1.9 in.	2.6 in.	2.3 in.
Largest Group	3.7 in.	2.5 in.	3.0 in.	3.0 in.
Average Group Size	3.2 in.	2.3 in.	2.8 in.	2.6 in.



Notes: Average velocity readings were recorded by firing five-shot strings over a Competition Electronics Pro Chrono. The muzzle was 10 feet from the first skyscreen. Ambient temperature: 45 degrees. Elevation: 815 feet above sea level. The accuracy figures are the average of three five-shot groups. For accuracy, we fired the test gun from a benchrest at a target 15 yards away. ***Ammunition details and sources:*** *American Eagle Syntech 115-gr. full metal jacket ($13.49 /50 rounds from SportsmansGuide.com); Hornady 147-gr. XTP ($19.25/25 rounds from LuckyGunner.com); and Black Hills Ammunition 115-gr. JHP +P ($15.10/20 rounds from VenturaMunitions.com).*

Top to bottom are the Black Hills Ammunition 115-gr. JHP +P, Hornady 147-gr. XTP, Blazer 115-grain FMJs, and American Eagle Syntech 115-gr. FMJ.



rear and white dot forward, the same as the test gun this round. They proved adequate for combat firing and were reasonably good for accuracy work at 15 yards. We also noted then that there is a shelf under the slide on the frame that protects the slide lock from a finger contacting the slide lock during recoil. It is common for the support-hand thumb to bump the slide lock

When fired offhand on the combat course, the Walther turned in good-to-excellent combat hits. The only pistol that bettered the PPS in the combat runs was the Honor Guard, and only by a slight margin. Our Team Said: We prefer the Walther PPS to the Honor Guard, Glock 43 or Shield overall. The vote was close, with the Honor Guard receiving high marks as well.

and lock the slide to the rear when firing a hard-kicking compact. The shelf seems to eliminate this problem, then and now. Also, the Glock frame does not incorporate a light rail for a combat light.

In both guns, the Glocks featured a spring-within-a-spring guide rod that we feel does an excellent job of containing recoil. Once on target, however, the Glock was handicapped by a 6.75-pound trigger pull. This time around, the G43's pull was more than a pound lighter. Two years ago, we also noted that due to its polygonal rifling, you should rule out lead-bullet handloads.

In November 2016, we looked at a specialized version of the gun, a Glock G43 Limited Edition ProGlo TALO Edition UI4350501. TALO is a wholesale buying cooperative that creates special edition firearms, which have to be ordered from a local dealer. On this Glock 43, the pistol's slide was standard save for the sights, which were made by AmeriGlo and featured a brilliant orange post around a white-insert tritium front. The rear sight featured a U-notch for rapid target engagement, and the rear face of the rear sight was serrated to reduce glare. Even with these upgrades, we gave the Glock a B grade.

Our only time to have tested an S&W M&P9 Shield 9mm Luger was in the March 2013 issue, so this update is overdue for a handgun that so many people seem to like. Four years ago, we called it a pleasant, compact, slim, nicely made handgun. Then, as now, we said it was easy enough to get it into a pocket of reasonable dimensions. There was nothing sticking out of the Shield to get caught on clothing. The magazines were easy to get out and back into the gun. They had a somewhat staggered design that made them more compact for their capacity. The gun was matte black with semi-slick pebbly inserts on front and rear of the grip straps.

The Shield had an external safety on its left side. The sights were excellent, dovetailed into the slide, and tritium is an option. The rear was

GLOCK 43 SUBCOMPACT SLIMLINE G43 PI4350201
9MM LUGER, $445
GUN TESTS GRADE: B

Accurate enough for personal defense, reliable, and fast handling, the Glock performed well. It isn't as accurate or as light kicking as the larger pistols, but neither is it inaccurate or a hard kicker.



Action	Locked Breech DAO Semi-Auto
Overall Length	6.26 in.
Overall Height	4.25 in.
Maximum Width	1.08 in.
Weight Unloaded	16.2 oz.
Weight Loaded	22.4 oz.

Barrel Length	3.39 in.
Barrel	Steel
Magazine	6-Rd. Detachable Box
Slide	Steel
Frame	Polymer
Frame Front Strap Height	1.5 in.
Frame Back Strap Height	2.5 in.
Grips	N/A
Grip Thickness (max)	1 in.
Grip Circumference (max)	5.2 in.
Sights	Plastic
Trigger Pull Weight	5.5 lbs.
Trigger Span Single Action	2.5 in.
Safety	No Manual Safety
Warranty	Lifetime
Website	US.Glock.com
Phone	(770) 432-1202
Made In	Austria



The pistol features a flat magazine release (arrow) that is hard to activate by accident. Also, the slide lock is buried by a protecting swell in the grip.



The Glock pistol field strip is easy and familiar.



The Glock has a distinctive appearance and feel, and it is a singular design well suited for personal defense.



The Glock slimline 9mm Luger magazines proved reliable with all ammunition tested. We encountered zero problems.



The Glock pistol's field-strip process is easy and familiar. Much research went into shielding the slide lock from inadvertent locking, including the raised area in the frame (arrow).



The Glock 43 was carried in a DM Bullard cross draw holster. There's no rail, which makes it a smooth, easy pistol to holster.



The Glock 43 frame offers good adhesion when it is being fired. The raters never experienced a malfunction.



The Honor Guard, right, was the tallest pistol, compared to the Glock 43, left. The Honor Guard was the better shooter; the Glock could be tucked into a pocket.



These are typical Glock sights–they work okay, but could be more refined for precision shooting.

secured with a screw so you could adjust the windage. The front was held solely by friction in the dovetail. The trigger pull was heavy and consistent at about 7.5 pounds, and the trigger rebound was short.

Takedown required locking the slide back and applying manly force to the takedown lever to rotate it 90 degrees. Then the slide could be let down to its normal position, the trigger pulled, and the slide comes off the front. Removing the captive double recoil spring was extremely easy. There's no danger of parts flying across the room, or losing an eye when you put it all back together. We noted a significant fillet on the hook of the S&W's extractor. It also had a slight pocket to help catch the incoming rounds as they feed from mag to chamber. The striker-locking safety plunger inside the slide is cammed upward by the trigger arm, which actively forces the plunger out of the way.

We first tested the Walther PPS 9mm in the October 2008 issue, so it, too, would be due for an up-to-date test, but the product here is the M2 version, which we haven't tested heretofore, along with the Honor Guard Sub-Compact. Let's see how these current models stack up when we shot them side by side.

Glock 43 Subcompact Slimline
G43 PI4350201
9mm Luger, $445

This was our price recently at CheaperThanDirt.com. The Glock 43 single-column magazine thin-frame version of the proven Glock 9mm handgun has proven very popular, even outperforming the Glock 26 9mm in sales, according to our gun-shop contacts. The Model 43 is light enough at 18 ounces. The grip frame fits most hands well. With the extended magazine in place, the grip was good for all but the largest hands, while with the flush-fit 6-round magazine in place, the small finger hung over. The other handguns, in contrast, offered a full firing grip with either type of magazine. The pistol is supplied with one flush-fit and one extended magazine, although the capacity is the same with either magazine. (Measurements in the specification box for each pistol reflect overall height and strap measurements with the extended magazine in place.) The trigger action breaks at exactly the specified 5.5 pounds, one-tenth of a pound lighter than a Glock 43 carried by a rater. The pistol features a flat magazine release that isn't likely to be inadvertently struck. The smaller the handgun the more likely of a problem in handling the slide lock or magazine release. The Glock flat magazine release is a good design. The slide lock is buried by a protecting swell in the grip frame. We like this a lot. When firing small-frame handguns with an appreciable kick, the thumb sometimes rides into the slide lock and locks the slide to the rear during a firing string. This isn't going to occur with the Glock. Yet, with practice, the magazine release could be quickly manipulated.

The sights are standard Glock white-outline rear

and white dot front. There are no forward cocking serrations. The rear serrations are adequate, and the slide isn't difficult to rack. The grips are lightly pebbled, the simplest treatment of the four pistols tested. Overall, the pistol cannot be faulted on simplicity or function.

We tested the pistol with four types of ammunition. During the offhand-firing evaluation stage on the combat course, we used Blazer 115-grain FMJs ($10.99/50 rounds Brownells.com). For the accuracy evaluation, we used the American Eagle Syntech 115-grain round, the Black Hills Ammunition 115-grain +P ammo, and the Hornady 147-grain XTP. We also fired the Black Hills +P load during the offhand-firing evaluation. We felt that it was important to confirm reliability and control with a range of bullet weights and with a +P loading. We were surprised to find that the Black Hills Ammunition +P load averaged 1200 fps from the short-barrel 9mm handguns and delivered 360 or more foot-pounds of energy. This load gives the shooter confidence in the stopping potential of the 9mm handguns. However, this load was more controllable in the heavier guns and demands practice to master.

We began the firing evaluation with the Blazer FMJ loads. Drawing from a D. M. Bullard crossdraw holster, we fired at silhouette targets at 5, 7, and 10 yards. (As an aside, we found this holster is a good choice, especially when moving on the range and setting up targets and moving tools and notebooks. The handgun is out of the way when holstered.) The Glock gave acceptable results. However, toward the end of the firing test, the short grip began to slip in the hand and recoil was more noticeable. We fired a magazine of the +P loading in all pistols to evaluate recoil. The Glock 43 did not sting the hand or twist uncomfortably in recoil, but it would take an experienced shooter to control +P loads in this handgun. Firing from the benchrest, we found the Glock was consistent in accuracy, with five-shot groups averaging 3

HONOR DEFENSE HONOR GUARD SUB-COMPACT HG9SC 9MM LUGER, $449

GUN TESTS GRADE: B

The Honor Guard 9mm is a good-shooting pistol. It was the most accurate in the test and the handgun that was deemed most comfortable to fire. The sights are good, and the other features are well thought out. The trigger is the heaviest of the handguns in the test, which leaves us wondering what type of shooting we may have done with a lighter trigger compression. The only defect was the problematic slide lock, which we found far too heavy.



Action	Double Action Only
Overall Length	6.1 in.
Overall Height	4.8 in.
Maximum Width	1.2 in.
Weight Unloaded	22.0 oz.
Weight Loaded	26.5 oz.
Barrel Length	3.2 in.
Barrel	Steel
Magazine	8-Rd. Detachable Box
Slide	Steel
Frame	Polymer
Frame Front Strap Height	2.45 in.
Frame Back Strap Height	3.2 in.
Grips	NA
Grip Thickness (max)	0.9 in.
Grip Circumference (max)	5.3 in.
Front Sight	Steel
Rear Sight	Steel
Trigger Pull Weight	7.2 lbs.
Span Single Action	2.6 in.
Safety	No Manual Safety
Warranty	2 years
Website	HonorDefense.com
Telephone	(678) 943-8035



We like the big, handy takedown lever of the Honor Guard. The frame features a built-in trigger stop.



The Honor Guard features a bright-orange front sight, which allowed for greater visibility when looking at the target.

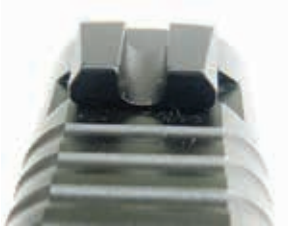


Spring-within-a-spring technology helps limit recoil.



The Honor Guard pistol features robust construction and desirable, well-thought-out features. Grip design and adhesion are excellent.





Left: We liked the Honor Defense Honor Guard's U-shaped notch and bright-orange front sight for speed, and it also delivered good accuracy. The rear sight features a flat surface that allows the user to butt the sight against an object, such as a belt or boot heel, and rack the slide. Considering the stiffness of the slide lock, butting the sight onto a hard object and releasing it to load the pistol may be required for one-hand operation.



The pistol has locked open on the last shot. It's a natural pointer.

inches on average at 15 yards, making it the least-accurate pistol tested. It was controllable, but the other pistols were easier to shoot well, our testers said.

Our Team Said: If you need a truly compact handgun from these four, the Glock 43 is the lightest handgun tested and the most compact. It is the only pistol that might be acceptable for pocket carry, given large pockets.

Honor Defense Honor Guard Sub-Compact HG9SC 9mm Luger, $449

This was our price from CheaperThanDirt.com. The Honor Guard is a purpose-designed 9mm compact based designed from the outset as a carry-sized 9mm handgun. Honor Defense also states that the pistol is designed for +P loads. The Honor Guard features aggressive cocking serrations, including forward cocking serrations. The sights are well thought out, with two white dots in the rear and a single red painted front dot. The sights are designed to allow easy cocking on the belt if needed. We like the Honor Guard takedown, which is performed by rotating a lever, more than the Glock or Walther takedown. The lever is easier to use well, and the pistol need not be decocked for field stripping, another plus. The frame is aggressively stippled, and this treatment is superior to the Glock and Smith & Wesson, but only equals the Walther, and some preferred the Walther treatment. The extended magazine holds eight rounds, giving the pistol a two-round advantage over the Glock and a cartridge over the other handguns. The trigger breaks cleanly enough, but it was the heaviest handgun at 7.2 pounds. Trigger control was aided by a trigger stop molded into the frame.

Using the same mix of ammunition as in the other handguns, the pistol felt controllable in rapid fire. Felt recoil was the lightest of the handguns tested. The heavy trigger was controllable, aided by the frame-mounted trigger stop. Reset is good. Control is good, and the trigger feels fine, but it suffers in comparison due to its heavy press. While it was the most accurate handgun tested, we wondered what we could have accomplished with a lighter trigger. Still, the heavy trigger is a safety feature in a handgun with no manual safety. Considering the accuracy performance, perhaps we should not complain, but the trigger's weight isn't subjective, it is measureable. One rater felt that the Honor Guard was more of a tactically minded handgun than the others, designed to maximize the slim 9mm platform.

The only other drawback to the Honor Guard was the slide lock. We like a buried slide lock that isn't easily activated inadvertently. However, you should be able to operate the slide lock. Honor Defense stresses that the control is only a slide lock and is not designed as a slide release. We were able to grasp the unloaded Honor Guard and lock the slide to the rear without problem by pressing the slide lock upwards. The slide lock is ambidextrous, which seemed a plus. Once the firearm fired empty and the slide locked open on the last shot, most of the raters were unable to drop the slide by actuating the slide lock. We tried several speed loads with the other handguns, and the slide locks functioned normally as a slide release, with no real difference between them. None of the raters, from a female with a small but long thumb to a rather strong individual, could drop the slide of the Honor Guard after loading a fresh magazine using the slide lock. After a monumental effort, one rater did manage to trip the slide. This is a drawback, we feel. But then, it is operating as designed.

When firing the Honor Guard there were no failures to feed, chamber, fire, or eject. The pistol offers the lightest recoil of any handgun tested, although none of the handguns were uncomfortable to fire. The difference was most pronounced when firing +P ammunition. The Honor Guard offered good control when fired off

hand and seemed the most sure when firing combat drills. Firing with one hand and the Black Hills Ammunition +P loading, the pistol really demonstrated its light recoil. Firing the Honor Guard off a solid bench rest for accuracy, the pistol was the most accurate handgun tested.

Our Team Said: The score card was impressive. The Honor Defense Honor Guard is the most controllable handgun and the most accurate. The frame treatment provided excellent adhesion when firing. This is balanced against the fact that this is the heaviest handgun tested and the largest in some dimensions. Hand fit was deemed excellent by most raters. If purchasing the handgun for home defense, the Honor Guard is the obvious choice. For concealed carry, the Honor Guard isn't large and heavy, but it is heavier than the other handguns, and this is a consideration. The slide lock was a drawback, and this needs to be redesigned, we felt. Based on the problem with the slide lock, we rated the pistol down a grade. Just the same, this is a desirable handgun.

Walther PPS M2 2805961 9mm Luger, $451

This was our price from BudsGunShop.com. The Walther is the most expensive handgun tested (by a small margin of $2), so the PPS would have to live up to its cost. We like the ease of takedown of the handguns that use a lever for takedown, including the Honor Defense and Smith & Wesson pistols. The Walther uses the Glock-type takedown. However, the Walther takedown levers are easier to use than the Glock, and takedown was easier. In common with the Glock, the trigger must be pressed to remove the slide for disassembly.

The slide is well finished and barrel fit is good. We like the sight picture the best of any of the handguns tested. It is more open than the Glock, and the three white dots offer a good aiming point. The trigger action isn't the lightest tested, but it breaks cleanly at 6.5 pounds, about a pound heavier than the Glock. The frame treatment drew mixed reviews, all good but varying in enthusiasm. None found

WALTHER PPS M2 2805961 9MM LUGER, $451

GUN TESTS GRADE: A

The Walther PPS M2 is a class act. All controls and the sights and grip frame seem well thought out. Some did not like the bumps on the grip frame at the first examination, but they came to like the grip's abrasion and adhesion during firing. The PPS is almost as accurate as the Honor Guard handgun. In the end, it is the most expensive pistol tested, but it earned a hearty A rating anyway.



Action	Double Action Only
Overall Length	6.375 in.
Overall Height	4.75 in.
Maximum Width	1.1 in.
Weight Unloaded	22.0 oz.
Weight Loaded	24.5 oz.
Barrel Length	3.4 in.
Barrel	Steel
Magazine	7-Rd. Detachable Box
Slide	Steel
Frame	Polymer
Frame Front Strap Height	2.4
Frame Back Strap Height	3.0 in.
Grips	NA
Grip Thickness (max)	0.93 in.
Grip Circumference (max)	5.25 in.
Front Sight	White dot
Rear Sight	White outline
Trigger Pull Weight	6.5 lbs.
Trigger Span	2.75 in.
Safety	No Manual Safety
Warranty	Limited Lifetime
Website	WaltherArms.com
Telephone	(479) 242-8500



The Walther PPS's controls are well laid out and easily reached by the firing hand.



Most of the raters felt the Walther's frame treatment was ideal and was the preferred solution among the pistols tested.



The rear sights offer rapid sight acquisition. The Walther's conventional square notch rear sight gave good results in all test firing.



The Walther's front post sight is shaped well for quick acquisition at close range.



Fired from the retention position, the Walther drew praise from most of the raters, who felt the frame treatment was ideal and preferred among the pistols tested.

Below: The Walther was controllable in rapid fire.





it uncomfortable. Measurements are not everything, and our female rater narrowed the choice down to the Walther versus the Honor Guard, and in the end did not like the bump in the PPS grip. Another rater preferred the PPS grip and treatment to all other handguns. The magazine release and the slide lock are well protected. Just the same, they worked well for all hand sizes. The slide lock proved positive in operation and did not present a difficulty for any of the raters.

When fired offhand on the combat course, the Walther turned in good-to-excellent combat hits. The only pistol that bettered the PPS in the combat runs was the Honor Guard, and only by a slight margin. Fired off the benchrest for accuracy, the Walther turned in good groups. The best effort at 15 yards was a 2.25-inch five-shot group with the Hornady 147-grain XTP. The pistol was controllable in all firing situations, off the bench or offhand, but recoil was noticeably increased with the +P loading.

The pistol was just behind the Honor Guard in accuracy. We liked the forward cocking serrations of the Walther; they are good to have. The rounded trigger guard of the Walther makes for easier pocket carry than the squared Glock trigger guard, some felt. While all magazines dropped free when the magazine release was struck, with the PPS the magazine was ejected, it seemed, it left the frame so quickly. Speed loads were rapid.

Our Team Said: We prefer the Walther PPS to the Honor Guard, Glock 43 or Shield overall. The vote was close, with the Honor Guard receiving high marks as well.

Smith & Wesson M&P9 Shield 180021
9mm Luger, $394

This was our price from CheaperThanDirt.com. The Shield is the least expensive pistol tested, with the other handguns about $50 to $60 more. The Smith & Wesson, however, doesn't cut corners. A first look shows the Smith & Wesson features better sights and a better frame treatment than the Glock G43, in our estimation. The Shield doesn't have forward cocking serrations, which the Honor Guard and the Walther PPS feature. However, if the pistol is carried in a leather holster, these serrations may wear on the holster. You have to weigh the merits of forward cocking serrations carefully. The Smith & Wesson's pebbled grip treatment received high marks from all raters. The sights are good examples of combat sights, and the controls are easily worked. We like the takedown-lever function better than the Glock-type takedown of the Glock and the Walther. The trigger is acceptable at 6.5 pounds. One advantage that cannot be overrated: the Shield features a manual safety. Those preferring a manual safety need look no further.

In firing the Smith & Wesson, comfort was good. It

Left: During the offhand-firing evaluation stage on the combat course, we used Blazer 115-grain FMJs. Drawing from a D.M. Bullard crossdraw holster, we fired at silhouette targets at 5, 7, and 10 yards.

was rated easier to use well in the combat course than the Glock and close to the Walther. As we have noted, the heavier Honor Guard has advantages. Recoil with the +P loads was controllable, and they are a viable option with the Shield. In actuating the magazine release and quickly dropping a magazine, then slapping a new magazine home, we hit the slide lock and dropped the slide, ready to fire again. The controls are easily accessible to the firing hand without shifting the grip.

The pistol gave good results from the bench, where we found the four pistols were in a fairly narrow range of accuracy. However, the results were also very consistent with the Honor Guard, the most accurate, followed by the Walther PPS. The Shield is more accurate than the Glock 43. We feel that this is a result of the combination of a more comfortable firing grip and good sights. There is much to consider in features and merit, and the debate pro and con on the Smith went on for some time.

Our Team Said: While we prefer the overall efficiency of the Walther, price is a consideration. The Smith & Wesson M&P Shield never failed to function and gave acceptable results. This earned the Shield a Best Buy grade.

All in, we would buy any of these handguns. However, we feel that some have superior features. The Glock 43 is reliable, and as mentioned, it is the most compact, which means a lot in some applications. The Smith & Wesson M&P Shield features a manual safety, which is important to a number of shooters. The Walther PPS is perhaps the most refined. The Honor Guard is easy enough to use well, with modest recoil and good performance. The Honor Guard is the pistol for shooters and will reward a practiced shooter with good accuracy and combat groups. It is quite accurate and offers a superior firing grip. The nagging slide-lock problem was a distraction with the Honor Defense 9mm handgun to half the raters, but the other half deemed it a good feature for a carry gun—there is no chance of inadvertently locking the slide back during a firing string with this handgun. Each 9mm tested has a personality that will appeal to the individual shooter. We've laid out what we believe you can expect with each handgun, so go get yourself one and get to it.

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

SMITH & WESSON M&P9 SHIELD 180021
9MM LUGER, $394
GUN TESTS GRADE: A (BEST BUY)

The Smith & Wesson Shield 9mm featured a happy combination of desirable design elements, including well designed and executed grip checkering, good sights, a decent trigger action, and good reliability. The Shield wasn't the most accurate handgun tested, but it was more accurate, overall, than the Glock 43, which was our baseline for performance. The manual safety is a plus in the minds of several raters. The Shield was the least expensive pistol tested.



Action	Double Action Only
Overall Length	6.1 in.
Overall Height	4.6 to 5.0 in.
Maximum Width	0.9 in.
Weight Unloaded.	21 oz.
Weight Loaded .	25.5 oz.
Barrel Length .	3.1 in.

Barrel	Steel
Magazine	7 or 6 round
Slide	Steel
Frame	Polymer
Frame Front Strap Height	1.8 in.
Frame Back Strap Height	2.8 in.
Grips	NA
Grip Thickness (max)	0.9 in.
Grip Circumference (max)	5.25 in.
Front Sight	Fixed
Rear Sight	Fixed
Trigger Pull Weight Single Action	5.5 lbs.
Span Single Action	2.75 in.
Safety	Manual Safety
Warranty	1 year
Website	Smith-Wesson.com
Telephone	(800) 331-0852





Left: The manual safety of the Shield is in the Safe position. Right: Down is for Fire. The controls are easily accessible to the firing hand without shifting the grip.



The Shield carried well in this Galco Carry Lite holster.

The Shield field-strips easily. The barrel is well made, and the feed ramp allows good feed reliability. We like the takedown-lever function better than the Glock.



Worth the Money and Trouble? A Trio of Unusual Revolvers

Reviewed: A Nagant M1895, a relic from the Russian Empire; the Smith & Wesson M929 9mm action-competition wheelgun; and a long-barrel Buntline 22 LR plinker from Chiappa.

Most gun owners want firearms they can shoot and have fun with, even their life-and-death carry guns. Some of us also want the unusual because we like a walk on the wild side, irrespective of whether it has any use beyond messing around with or plinking. In this Special Report, we take a look at three wheelguns for which there are little or no match ups to find, so head-to-head testing isn't possible. But even without something to shoot beside them, we can learn plenty about whether some unique, or nearly unique, handguns are worth the time and trouble to find and add to your collection as a real, firing item.

Herewith then, we look at the Nagant M1895 7.62x38mmR, the Smith & Wesson Model 929 9mm Luger, and the Chiappa Buntline 22 LR.

Nagant M1895 7.62x38mmR, $200-$400

First up is the Nagant M1895 revolver, which first came into service with the Russian Imperial Military in 1895, hence the name, and was used by the Tsar's Russian Military, as well as with rebels during the Russian Revolution. It also served with Soviet forces in WWII and was manufactured well into the 1950s. This revolver has seen use far and wide in conflicts as old as the Boxer Rebellion and as recent as the Vietnam War. It was still issued early into the 21st century.



The Smith & Wesson Model 929 was plenty accurate for action shooting. At the range, we found it was particularly fond of 147-grain Atlanta Arms ammo.



Pictured is the Nagant M1895 with surplus 7.62x38mm and HotShot 7.62x38mm. This relic from the Russian empire earned a B- rating from our testers. Maybe it's something you want to collect.



Earning an A rating because it was fun to shoot, the Chiappa Buntline was a well-made revolver. With a long sight radius, this revolver would be good for a novice shooter. Most felt it was a dedicated plinker because the barrel was much too long to tote on the trail. With a dedicated shoulder holster, this could be a great hunter for small game.

The revolver was designed by Leon Nagant, a Belgium industrialist who, along with his brother Emile, produced everything from firearms to automobiles. Emile co-designed the Mosin-Nagant rifle used by the Imperial Russian troops. The Nagant revolver under various model names and slightly different configurations was in wide use in the late 19th century by military and police forces in countries like Sweden, Poland, Greece, and Norway. The Russian M1895 model was produced in the millions, and we are sure there are still Nagants in nightstand drawers and under pillows back in the Motherland. In the past 20 years, these revolvers were imported into the U.S. by the crate full, making them fairly common at gun shows and online auctions with a cost of about $200 to $400, depending on arsenal markings and condition. Most of these examples have had little to any use.

The Nagant revolver is unique in its gas seal. The design helps reduce lost muzzle velocity from the gap between the cylinder and rear of the barrel, a trait of all revolver designs. The Nagant uses a recoil shield to push the cylinder forward. Relief cuts in the cylinder around the front of the chambers allows the cylinder to mate up with the rear of the barrel and forcing cone when the revolver is cocked in SA or in DA use, and in essence, closes the gap to help minimize lost pressure. This translates into better muzzle velocity. The 7.62x38mmR or 7.62mm Nagant cartridge is also unique in that the bullet is seated below the mouth of the cartridge case, and a obvious crimp makes the cartridge look as if it was pinched off at the mouth. Between the revolver's cylinder design and the cartridge design, it was discovered muzzle velocity increased up to 75 fps. In American terms, the 7.62x38mmR cartridge has similar energy and muzzle velocity to the 32 S&W Long, which was a popular cartridge back at the turn of the 20th century. The 7.62x38mmR pushes a 98-grain bullet at about 740

NAGANT M1895 7.62X38MMR, $200-$400

GUN TESTS GRADE: B-

The M1895 is a old-world revolver that offers a unique design and fires an equally unique cartridge. It is a fairly inexpensive collectible, at best.



Action Type	Double action
Overall Length	10.5 in.
Barrel Length	4.5 in.
Sight Radius	6.0 in.
Overall Height	5.2 in.
Maximum Width	1.5 in.
Weight Unloaded	16.7 oz.
Weight Loaded	16.9 oz.
Cylinder Gap	NA
Capacity	7
Frame Finish	Blued
Barrel/Cylinder Finish	Blued
Frame Front Strap Height	2.4 in.
Frame Back Strap Height	3.4 in.
Grip	Coarse checkered wood
Grip Thickness (max)	1.2 in.
Grip Circumference (max)	4.2 in.
Front Sight	Ramped blade
Rear Sight	Fixed notch
Trigger Pull Weight (SA)	15.4 lbs.
Trigger Pull Weight (DA)	6.4 lbs.
Safety	None
Warranty	NA
Made In	Russia



Pictured at left is a field-stripped M1895. The ejector rod (arrow) screws into the rear of the frame and keeps the cylinder pin in place.



Grip panels attach to the frame with screws on the inside of the frame; the backstrap has a wood insert to help provide a better grip. It uses a flat-spring main spring for action operation.



The elongated firing pin is needed because the cylinder moves forward to mate up with the forcing cone. This unusual design provides a smaller cylinder gap, which improves power by letting less gas escape during firing.





Top: The Nagant's ejector rod needs to be unscrewed and then (bottom), pivoted to the right to allow the ejector rod access to the chambers; at full stroke, empties are shucked clear.



Here's a fired cartridge from the Nagant (left) compared to a live cartridge (right). Note how the brass case is above the tip of the bullet in the live round. Also, note how the crimp nearly blows out flush with the case wall on a fired round (arrow).

7.62MM NAGANT RANGE DATA

HotShot 7.62x38mmR (7.62mm Nagant) 98-gr. FPJ	**Nagant M1895**
Average Velocity	641 fps
Muzzle Energy	89 ft.-lbs.
Smallest Group	0.4 in.
Average Group	0.5 in.

Surplus 7.62x38mmR (7.62mm Nagant) 100-gr. FPJ	**Nagant M1895**
Average Velocity	913 fps
Muzzle Energy	185 ft.-lbs.
Smallest Group	1.0 in.
Average Group	1.1 in.

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





Note the gap between the cylinder and forcing cone when the Nagant's hammer is fully forward (left) compared to no gap when the hammer is cocked.

fps with a muzzle energy of about 118 foot-pounds. The 32 S&W Long pushes a 97-grain bullet at about 800 fps with a muzzle energy of 138 foot-pounds. The 32 S&W Long was chambered in Smith & Wesson's Hand Ejector revolver series and in Colt New Police models, both of which saw widespread use at the turn of the 20th century. Importer manuals recommend only firing the 7.62x38mmR round through the M1895.

Ammunition is still easily acquired. European ammunition manufacturers like Fiocchi and Prvi Partizan, to name two, manufacture the ammo in 50-round boxes (MidwayUSA.com). We acquired one of these revolvers with a flap holster and cleaning rod as well as surplus and new manufacture ammunition and found these firearms are more relic than revolver.

Since this was a surplus item, we were especially carefully to check the chamber and bore alignment with a 32-caliber range rod (Brownells.com, 080-617-032WB, $39). We found that all chambers were spot on. No need for a gap test due to the M1895 design.

Our specimen had a good blued finish, about what you would expect from a military arsenal and little use. There were no tooling marks. The unfinished wood grips had more of a diamond pattern than checkering, which was done well, better than some modern firearms we've reviewed. The lanyard loop was attached to the butt. Ours was marked with a star-with-arrow arsenal stamp and 1938 below, indicating this M1895 was built at the Tula factory in 1938. There were also numerous inspector marks as well as the recent importer markings.

The sights consist of a front blade dovetailed into the barrel. Windage can be adjusted via a hammer and punch. The rear sight is a notch in a built-up area of metal at the top rear of the frame and a groove milled into the top of the frame. Rugged, combat-style sights typical of the late 19th century, we had a hard time finding the tiny blade at times in bright sunlight. To load, the loading gate is swung open, which allows the cylinder to rotate freely clockwise. The trigger can be operated with the loading gate opened. There are no mechanical safeties in the M1895, just common sense. To unload cases, an ejector rod is unscrewed and pivoted to the right side of the frame. The rod can then eject stuck empties. During testing, we found cases typically fell out of the chambers with gravity's help. This, we surmise, is due to the cartridge/revolver design efficiently using the energy of the round and leaving behind little residue.

In hand, the grip is short and just fits all fingers of an averaged-size shooter's hand. The M1895 points well. The mechanism was fairly smooth, not a S&W nor a Colt of the same time period by any means, but okay. The DA trigger pull was well over 15 pounds; in SA it measured about 6 pounds. The DA pull was far too much to be accurate at distances approaching 25 yards unless you had hands like Hercules. It was serviceable at 15 yards. In SA we were surprised to find the M1895 had good accuracy. HotShot ammo gave us a less-than-0.5-inch group with five rounds using a rest and firing SA. Hotter surplus ammo's best group was just over an inch. Felt recoil was nil due to the cartridge.

Our Team Said: The Nagant is an interesting piece of military history. By today's standards, the cartridge is obsolete and weak as a defensive round, but the revolver could work as a defensive gun in a pinch. We would buy one only for its place in military history and unique mechanism and cartridge and plink with it when we were feeling nostalgic.

Smith & Wesson Performance Center Model 929 170341 9mm Luger, $1189

The next gun could not be more different from the Nagant. The M929 is a new 8-shot 9mm all-stainless-steel N-Frame revolver designed from the grip up for action pistol competition, and it comes with the Jerry Miculek signature. For the record, Jerry made a 1,000-yard shot with the 929 on an episode of Shootout Lane.

When it comes to serious revolver competition shooting, the type you will find at Bianchi Cup, U.S. Practical Shooting Association (USPSA), International Practical Shooting Confederation (IPSC), International Confederation of Revolver Enthusiasts (ICORE), and Steel Challenge, the top dog has been the Smith & Wesson Model 625 in 45 ACP (we reviewed one last year and gave it an A-), in the Revolver Major division, while the S&W Model 627, in 38 Spl/357 Mag., is popular in Revolver Minor. The S&W Model 929 is a new

SMITH & WESSON MODEL 929 9MM LUGER, $1189

GUN TESTS GRADE: A

The Model 929 offered all the bells and whistles one would expect in a S&W Performance Center competition revolver.



Action	Double Action
Overall Length	12.25 in.
Overall Height	6.0 in.
Maximum Width	1.7 in.
Weight Unloaded	44.2 oz.
Weight Loaded	47.4 oz.
Cylinder Gap	0.006 in.
Barrel Length	6.5 in.
Capacity	8
Cylinder Material/Finish	Titanium/matte gray
Frame Material/Finish	St. steel/matte stainless
Frame Front Strap Height	2.2 in.
Frame Back Strap Height	4.3 in.
Grips	Textured synthetic, finger grooves
Grip Thickness (max)	1.2 in.
Grip Circumference (max)	5.3 in.
Front Sight	Patridge blade
Rear Sight	Adj. notch
Sight Radius	7.3 in.
Trigger Pull Weight Single Action	4.3 lbs.
Trigger Pull Weight Double Action	10.7 lbs.
Trigger Span Single Action	2.6 in.
Trigger Span Double Action	3.1 in.
Safety	None
Warranty	1 year limited
Telephone	(800) 331-0852
Website	Smith-Wesson.com
Made In	Springfield, Mass.



The clearance around the ejector, plus the chamfered chambers, are designed to decrease reload time. Bigger bullets with more taper are easier to align, we learned.



We found these 9mm moon clips were easier to load and unload and were less susceptible to bending. A fully loaded moon clip makes reloading fast, but aligning all eight rounds into the chambers can add time.



Rounds could be loaded one at a time, but they could not be ejected successfully. If you already use a 9mm Luger-chambered pistol for competition, it makes sense to have a revolver chambered in the same cartridge.

9MM LUGER SMITH & WESSON 929 RANGE DATA

Hornady Steel Match	**Smith & Wesson**
9mm Luger 115-gr. HAP	**Model 929**
Average Velocity	1180 fps
Muzzle Energy	356 ft.-lbs.
Smallest Group	0.44 in.
Average Group	0.49 in.

Winchester White Box	**Smith & Wesson**
9mm Luger 115-gr. FMJ	**Model 929**
Average Velocity	1117 fps
Muzzle Energy	319 ft.-lbs.
Smallest Group	0.38 in.
Average Group	0.67 in.

Atlanta Arms	**Smith & Wesson**
9mm Luger 147-gr. FMJ	**Model 929**
Average Velocity	854 fps
Muzzle Energy	283 ft.-lbs.
Smallest Group	0.25 in.
Average Group	0.35 in.

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



The 929's compensator was a single oblong slot; it helped reduce muzzle flip a lot during fast runs. The top of the barrel was serrated.



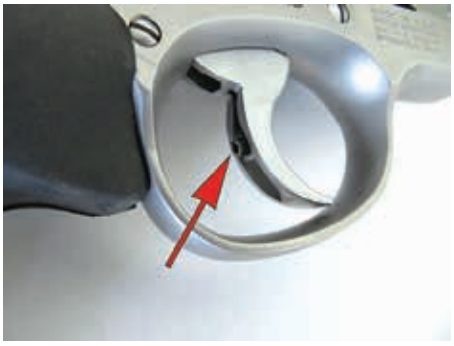
On a black target, the 929's black-on-black adjustable rear and front post sights were lost. But on cardboard or lightly colored steel, they work fine.



The 929's synthetic grip had a nice palm swell, but the finger grooves did not fit all hand sizes. The 929 uses a flat mainspring; DA trigger pull was excellent.



The Smith's hammer is chrome plated and tear shaped, with plenty of texture for cocking.

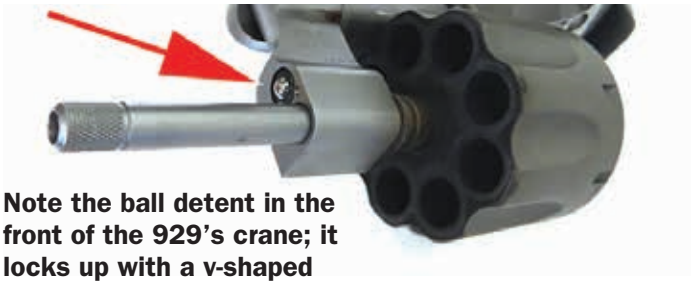


The 929's trigger stop decreased the overall travel of the trigger, allowing for faster trigger reset.





A wrench fits into the hex-head bolt below (arrow) to remove the compensator, left. A false muzzle for the 929 is also supplied.



Note the ball detent in the front of the 929's crane; it locks up with a v-shaped groove in the frame.

competitor designed to compete in Revolver minor.

A recent change in USPSA Revolver Division was the addition of an 8-shot minor category, making revolver mirror Single Stack Division somewhat. Competitors in Revolver Division can choose to shoot Major power factor (PF), in which case they must reload after 6 shots, or Minor PF, in which case they must reload after 8 shots. Some competitors opt for more rounds before the reload, trading points for non-A hits for time saved reloading. This is just one of the sweet spots we saw right off the bat for the S&W Model 929 revolver, since this revolver is unique. We looked at the 929 for exactly what it was designed for, a revolver dedicated for competition and, as such, will appeal nearly exclusively to that segment of competitive shooters.

Without getting too deep into the weeds of competitive revolver shooting, we do think a bit of revolver strategy will help put this revolver into perspective. Continuing with USPSA competition, let's take a quick look at strategy. Target arrays or groups are basically limited to 8 rounds required per group, with course design making room for reloads and movement. With a 6-shot revolver, this will require extra reloading, unless the course is set up to be 6-shot neutral. In addition, having to reload after 6 shots causes the competitors to do a lot more strategic planning regarding which targets to shoot and where to shoot them from. With an 8-shot revolver, there is more freedom to engage targets on an "as and when visible" basis, without worrying too much about making additional reloads. So you can see there can be an advantage to an 8-shot revolver, depending on your strategy.

We also looked at 929 as a companion to your 9mm semi-auto pistol, both sharing the same ammo, which is convenient. The 929 offers more target shooting features than the current offerings of 9mm revolvers, which are typically concealed-carry defensive snubnose models.

Before any moon clips were loaded, we placed the 929 through our battery of tests and found all the tuning we expected from the Performance Center. This revolver was tight and well made, with no cylinder movement. The cylinder gap was 0.006 inches, which well within spec. Since this is an N-Frame and designed for long cartridges like the 44 Mag., the barrel was screwed deep into the frame, so the 9mm bullets had less free flight in the cylinder before engaging the forcing cone and bore. S&W uses a similar set up on some revolvers chambered in 45 ACP.

The 929 features a 6.5-inch barrel with a full-length, tapered underlug to help reduce the effects of felt recoil and a compensator to minimize muzzle flip. The compensator can quickly and easily be removed and replaced with a false muzzle. This is a feature we liked since not all revolver competitions are alike, with some divisions not allowing a compensator. On top of the barrel was an adjustable rear sight with a plain, matte-black notch. The front Patridge sight was also matte black. On





Above: As we noted earlier, the 929 is accurate with 147-grain Atlanta Arms ammo. The Hornady Steel Match, not so much. Right: The smooth trigger face was fast to operate.



Right: Crane-to-frame lock up on the 929 was tight.



We found these 9mm moon clips used in the 929 were easier to load and unload and were less susceptible to bending.



Here's where the rubber meets the road on the 929. It didn't require a fully covered grip to be comfortable to shoot. Grip girth was suitable for most shooters.

a black target, these sights did get lost. On cardboard and painted steel, they showed up much better. We liked the fact the front sight was pinned, so it could be replaced with a sight more suited to the user. Under the rear sight, the 929 was drilled and tapped so a reflex or red dot sight could be mounted. Again, depending on the division and type of competition, the ability to mount a sight was a plus. The finish of the frame and barrel was a matte stainless with no glare when used in bright sunlight.

The 8-shot cylinder is constructed of lightweight titanium. The ejector was cut for use with moon clips, and all the chambers were chamfered. Although 9mm cartridges could be loaded into the chambers and fired, the ejector did not shuck them out. A rod was required to eject the case. We doubt competitors would ever load cartridges one at a time, so be sure to have plenty of moon clips on hand. The moon clips were easy to load and unload without the use of a tool. They did not bend as easily as with 45 ACP clips we have used in the past.

The crane had a ball detent that snapped into a V-shaped groove in the frame. This set up locked up the 929 consistently tight and is a common gunsmithing modification for competition revolvers. The cylinder latch was the type cut for use with a speed loader, and since the 929 uses moon clips, it was out of way and did not impede a fast reload. We did find that it took slightly longer to load this 8-shot revolver compared to a 6-shot 45 ACP revolver because the holes in the cylinder of a 45 ACP are larger, with more space in between chambers.

Both the trigger and hammer were chromed plated. The hammer was tear-drop shaped and offered plenty of traction to thumb-cock the 929. The smooth-faced trigger included a trigger stop, which we liked for a competition revolver. The 929 had a nice trigger, what we expected from the Performance Center. In DA mode, the pull seemed less than what it measured at 10.7 pounds.

The grip was typical of a large-frame S&W of late, rubber with finger grooves, which either shooters like or hate. Our group was evenly divided on the grips. Again this is a feature that is easily user modified, but at additional cost.

At the range, with an assortment of ammo from Hornady, Winchester, and Atlanta Arms, we started shooting for accuracy using a rest and found the 929 preferred the 147-grain Atlanta Arms ammo, giving us the smallest 5-shot group of the test at 0.25 inches at 15 yards. A target revolver the 929 is, but for fast-paced action shooting. So we moved onto shooting fast at tombstone style NRA D-1 targets set up on P3 target stand from CTK Precision (ctkprecision.com). Our drill was shoot 8 rounds, reload and shoot two more rounds, all while trying to keep hits in the 8-inch A-ring while shooting as fast as we could. Most shooters found the 929 smooth to shoot, with little felt recoil, even with the heavy 147-grain Atlanta Arms ammo. The 115-grain ammo from Winchester and Hornady was much easier for all shooters to fire fast and accurately. We assume that if this was to be used in competition, the shooter would reload ammo with lightweight bullets to help reduce felt recoil and muzzle rise. The comp provided less muzzle rise in fast DA shooting compared to not using the comp. The hang up we encountered was with the reload. Since the 9mm rounds in the moon clip are small and there are eight of them, it took some time to align the rounds with the chambers. We eventually got the hang of it and our overall time decreased. The cartridges with more of a taper to the bullet loaded a smidgen faster until we got our game on. The grips were definitely too large for some testers, but they tolerated them. They could not get a consistent grip, which slowed them down. Removing the finger grooves would provide a better universal grip, we believe. The trigger was excellent, with no stacking, smooth and consistent throughout the pull—again, what we expect from the Performance Shop. Overall, the revolver was fast on target, had a smooth DA trigger pull, and provided enough heft to dampen felt recoil.

Our Team Said: The 929 is a unique revolver, and if we were looking for a revolver for action shooting competition, we would consider the 929. As a sunny-day plinking revolver, we think it is overqualified and overpriced for that role.

Chiappa 1873 SAA 22 Buntline, Model: SAA1873-22, 22 LR, $339

Our third revolver is manufactured by Chiappa in Italy and is part of a line of single-action rimfire revolvers called the 1873 SAA 22 series. One has a foot-long barrel and is named the 1873 SAA 22 Buntline.

We used a range rod to check the chamber alignment of all chambers to the bore with a range rod. The cylinder-to-barrel gap was a tad over spec at .010 inches on the Chiappa, and we thought we would experience a louder blast and might feel it on our shooting hand. We did not expect any splatter because the chamber-to-bore alignment was good. The Chiappa cylinder had very little front-to-back and up-and-down play.

The Buntline has a substantial feel in hand. It felt solid and slightly smaller than a traditional centerfire SAA. The hammer cocked back with three distinct clicks, and the hammer came back quite far. A meaty-handed shooter might get the web of his hand pinched between the hammer and backstrap, but our testers had no issues. The hammer had good checkering on the spur. We had no thumb slips during range time. When we removed the grip, we found a traditional flat main spring. Cocking was smooth and easy. Not a lot of thumb strength was required.

The barrel was heavy and made of steel like the fluted cylinder. The frame and one-piece grip were made of Zamak alloy, which is a combination of zinc and aluminum. Many die-cast metal parts are made from this alloy. The entire revolver wore a matte-black finish that was done nicely. The finish did not wear, even

on the sharp edges, during testing. The grips were checkered plastic with an inset brass emblem that was tastefully done. The grips overlapped the frame by about 0.125 inches but blended smoothly along the front and rear grip straps. Some daylight could be seen between the ejector housing and barrel. Overall, testers thought the Buntline was well made for the price.

The Buntline operated much like a traditional SAA. Place the hammer on half cock, open the loading gate to load each chamber. There was plenty of wiggle room to load a cartridge, even if you went a bit too far rotating the cylinder. If this revolver is to be carried loaded, the hammer should rest on an empty chamber. The firing pin is built into the frame. There is a safety lock that blocks the hammer from contacting the firing pin. A key is used to rotate the lock into place. While in lock mode, the revolver can still be loaded and unloaded and the hammer snapped, but it will not contact the firing pin. This is a lock one might use when storing the revolver.

The skinny trigger had noticeable creep before it broke at a little over 3 pounds on average. The break was consistently crisp, and as some of our accuracy data shows, the Buntline was a straight shooter. The ejector-rod head was crescent shaped and rotated away from the barrel, which is a good thing as the barrel heated.

The sights consisted of a plastic ramp front that was plenty rugged and screwed to the barrel. The rear adjustable sight was also plastic and also rugged. The sight was marked so you knew if you were raising or lowering the notch or going left or right. This is a nice feature we've come to expect on revolver sights. The surface of the rear sight that faced the shooter was serrated to cut glare, another nice feature.

To field strip, the hammer is put on half cock, the loading gate opened, and the basepin button pushed to withdraw the cylinder rod. The cylinder then falls out of the loading-gate side of the frame. The cylinder

CHIAPPA 1873 SAA 22 BUNTLINE, MODEL: SAA1873-22, 22 LR, $339

GUN TESTS GRADE: A

The Buntline offered all we expected in a rimfire Buntline plus a reasonable price.



Action	Single
Overall Length	19.9 in.
Overall Height	5.2 in.
Maximum Width	1.6 in.
Weight Unloaded	44.8 oz.
Weight Loaded	48.8 oz.
Cylinder Gap	0.010 in.
Barrel Length	12.0 in.
Capacity	6
Frame Material/Finish	Zamak alloy/matte black
Cylinder Material/Finish	Steel/matte black
Frame Front Strap Height	2.1 in.
Frame Back Strap Height	3.0 in.
Grips	Checkered plastic
Grip Thickness (max)	1.5 in.
Grip Circumference (max)	5.7 in.
Front Sight	Ramp blade
Rear Sight	Adj. notch
Sight Radius	13.3 in.
Trigger Pull Weight Single Action	3.3 lbs.
Trigger Span Single Action	2.8 in.
Safety	None
Warranty	1 year
Telephone	(937) 835-5000
Website	ChiappaFirearms.com
Made In	Italy



Under the Buntline's grip panels was a traditional flat hammer spring.



The firing pin is built into the frame (arrow). Note the back side of the rear sight is serrated to decrease glare while the shooter is aiming the sights.



A meaty-fisted shooter might get a hammer pinch because of how far back the spur travels. However, we did not experience that. Note the lock safety with the two red dots.



Loading was similar to a traditional SAA, plus there was plenty of wiggle room in cylinder rotation to load and unload.



The base pin button and base pin were easy to remove and replace, with plenty of texture on the base pin to grab onto.



The ejector head pivoted away from the hot barrel so your finger has less chance of getting burned.



The rear adjustable sight was made of plastic and was easy to adjust. The sight picture worked well, making it fast to acquire a target. The ramp front sight was made of polymer and screwed onto the barrel.





The cylinder used a bushing like a traditional SAA revolver.

22 LR CHIAPPA BUNTLINE RANGE DATA

Remington Thunderbolt 22 Long Rifle 40-gr. RNS	**Chiappa Buntline**
Average Velocity	914 fps
Muzzle Energy	74 ft.-lbs.
Smallest Group	0.6 in.
Average Group	1.7 in.

PMC Target 22 Long Rifle 40-gr. RNS	**Chiappa Buntline**
Average Velocity	879 fps
Muzzle Energy	69 ft.-lbs.
Smallest Group	0.2 in.
Average Group	0.6 in.

CCI Mini-Mag 22 Long Rifle 40-gr. RNS	**Chiappa Buntline**
Average Velocity	1034 fps
Muzzle Energy	95 ft.-lbs.
Smallest Group	0.5 in.
Average Group	1.0 in.

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

had a removable bushing like a traditional centerfire SAA. We thought the bushing was not needed on a rimfire revolver since the bushing was traditionally used to combat fouling from black-powder cartridges. Rimfire cartridges can be messy to shoot, so the bushing does have some value, especially if the revolver is not frequently cleaned. We had no issues with fouling, even with the boxes of ammo we put through the Buntline.

At the range with PMC Target ammo, we were able to get groups that consisted of one ragged hole. The barrel length moved the muzzle blast away from the shooter, and we did not experience any excessive blast due the cylinder gap. The sights were easy to use, though black sights on a black target can mean the sights might momentarily get lost when aiming. We had no issues with the Chiappa. Unloading this rimfire revolver can be tedious if the cylinder is rotated too far, but the Chiappa's cylinder had plenty of rotation back and forth before a new chamber was exposed, so inserting the ejection rod in the chamber was a simple task.

Our Team Said: The Chiappa Buntline was a well-made revolver that was fun to shoot. With long sight radius, this revolver would be good for a novice shooter. Most felt it was a dedicated plinker because the barrel was much too long to tote on the trail. With a shoulder holster, this could be a great hunter for small game.

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

Pumpgun Showdown: Remington 870 Vs. Norinco's Wild Bunch

What would happen when we pitted the largest-selling slide-action 12 gauge in history against another pumper with a 100-year-plus pedigree? Closer results than you might expect.

The 12-gauge shotgun remains the most effective home-defense weapon available. While some prefer the handgun for convenience or the 223-chambered rifle for low recoil, all give a nod to the awesome power and simplicity of the pump-action shotgun. The shotgun is also the most common home-defense weapon for non-firearms-passionate individuals. Everyone should learn to use a tool well. But the home-defense shotgun is often treated with the same respect and purpose as the spare tire and jack in the vehicle. If we need it, it is needed badly, but otherwise we tend not to think about it. Non-gun folks, including far north aviators and sailors, keep a shotgun handy just in case they have to deal with angry animals or bad people. As long as the pump-action shotgun is in good repair and functions well, the exact choice may not be as important as the terminal ballistics. But there are differences in handling that are interesting, and every advantage should be taken.





During our testing, we found that these two shotguns were an excellent match up. The 870 (pictured in action at left) is an affordable gun that just works, performing flawlessly in our testing. The Wild Bunch (pictured above spewing smoke) was rated a step ahead because of its ability to be loaded rapidly. In unloading the shotgun, we also gave the Norinco a higher mark. The Wild Bunch put up a good fight, but in the end was rated down because of its abuse on a tester and an issue with spent shells landing in the ejection port.

We decided to look at the subject of a number of reader requests for reports on affordable pump-action shotguns. Some used guns are out of production, and others are earlier versions of popular shotguns. Some are just used and only a few months old.

We picked two popular shotguns, including one of the most popular ever made, the Remington 870. We found a used Remington pumpgun stamped "Mobile Police Department" for $225 at Scgunco.com. We counted this as a good deal. It's very similar to a shotgun Remington still offers through its law enforcement side, the 870P Standard pump action.

We also found a used Norinco Wild Bunch shotgun for $299 at the same outlet. It was as new and also counted a good buy. But that isn't the whole story—they were purchased months apart, one for a backup truck gun and the other as a Wild Bunch Cowboy gun. Naturally, they were thrown together by the raters from time to time, and the question came up about how suitable the Wild Bunch gun was for home defense. The owner answered by saying it was already his favorite home defender despite a safe that held more-modern guns.

When you are looking at older pump-action shotguns, the concerns include maintenance, supply of parts, and perhaps ergonomics. When you look at the handling of the shotguns and the sights, well, it is what it is. There are a few add-ons for the Remington, but we might as well purchase a more highly developed shotgun in the beginning if that is what is desired. So, we stuck with the shotguns as issued and took at hard look at each for personal defense. The results were interesting, and

in the end we respect both shotguns, but have greater respect for just one.

Remington 870P 12 Gauge, $225

We purchased this used at Scgunco.com. The Remington is a clean design. There is nothing extraneous on the shotgun or the stock. The metal receiver is blued steel and so is the barrel. There were the usual freckles and light rust in the finish. There was one small dent in the receiver, typical of police trade-in shotguns. The wood showed no dents or large chips, and the cocking serrations on the forend were in good condition. We examined the knurled nut that holds the action together, and it was also in good condition. The action was smooth, typical Remington 870. The front bead sits atop a post. The receiver is milled in the top. This almost allows a form of sighting or at least alignment. There is no provision for mounting a red dot or optical sight. (Modern Remington shotguns are a different matter.) We tried the action before purchase and found the straight-to-the-rear pump action was free of binding.

The shotgun had been cleaned and was in overall very good condition. When we tested the trigger action, we found it broke at an even 4.0 pounds. The shotgun is lighter than some other shotguns we have tested, as the raters noted during the initial evaluation. The Remington 870 breaks the scales at 6.0 pounds. As a comparison, a Remington 870 with Adaptive Tactical AR-type buttstock and Wraptor forend with light weighed 7.6 pounds. During dry fire, we found the 870 handles quickly and is fast to get on target. The front bead sight is adequate for centering the pattern on a target at typical engagement ranges of 5, 7, and 10 yards. While 10 yards is useful for evaluating a shotgun, few homes will have a 30-foot hallway.

The major makers offer several choices of home-defense buckshot. We chose Hornady and Federal 12 gauge loads. We used Federal 2¾-inch 00 buckshot ($5.67/5 shells from CheaperThanDirt.com) and Hornady Critical Defense buckshot ($12.71/10 shells from Brownells.com). We used the Federal TruBall slug ($3.79/5 shells from SportsmansGuide.com) and the Hornady American Gunner slug.($6.49/5 shells Brownells.com) The plan was to fire five buckshot shells of each loading at 5, 7, and 10 yards. We would pattern the average of each load on a single piece of paper as well. We also fired for speed, firing 25 buckshot shells in each shotgun. The last test would be to fire slugs for a pattern at a long 15 yards.



Pictured on top is the Remington 870 12 gauge (rated a Best Buy in this test) The classic design rang true and continued to impress our team. Pictured below is the Norinco's Wild Bunch, a clone of the Winchester 1897 shotgun. Despite it being marked down a grade, we still found it efficient for self-defense purposes.

We summarize our target results here: At 10 yards, the Remington loaded with Federal 2¾-inch buckshot produced a pattern of 6x6 inches compared to the Norinco's 4x5-inch pattern. With the Hornady Critical Defense, the 870 fired a 4.5x3-inch pattern compared to the Norinco's 6x5-inch hole. In terms of point of impact, the Remington shot to point of aim, whereas the Norinco shot 4 inches high.

Using slugs at 15 yards, the Hornady American Gunner fired groups of 2.0 inches in size in the 870 and 1 inch (basically one hole) in the 1897, with the 870's point of impact hitting 2 inches right and the Norinco hitting 3 inches high. With the Federal TruBall slug, the Remington fired groups of 1.9 inches compared to the Norinco's 1.2-inch groups, with the Remington hitting 1.5 inches right and the Norinco 2 inches high.

While this is further than any conceivable home-defense range, some use the shotgun for area defense, and the shotgun should be viable for defense against large animals if used as a truck gun or camp gun.

The Remington was loaded with four buckshot shells, full capacity, in the magazine. The Remington 870 was held at low ready and brought up to the shoulder. We racked the shotgun and made it ready, simulating a home-defense situation where the shotgun should be kept ready with the chamber empty. After firing four shells, a fifth was quickly dropped in the chamber and fired, simulating a popular tactical drill. We also loaded the shells into the tube quickly for the last two sets, comparing the shotguns' ability to be quickly reloaded. The rubber recoil pad supplied with the shotgun kept recoil from being painful, but recoil is heavy even with loaded-down personal-defense loads. Just the same, the most important shot, the first one, was well centered. Fast follow-up shots were good as we shucked the pump-action and took aim. Four fast shots with a 6-pound shotgun gets the measure of any shotgunner.

We rotated raters between the shotguns. It would not have been fair to take a man that had fired 25 buckshot loads and then shove another shotgun his way to repeat. Cumulative recoil, and a sore shoulder, would have affected the rating. Sometimes a rater began with the Remington and sometimes with the 1897 shotgun. The final test was firing offhand with the slug loads. The table at the end of the report enumerates ammunition performance.

It is important that the shooter learns how to unload the shotgun and make it safe if a round is chambered and not fired. With the Remington, a release lever in front

of the left side of the trigger guard unlocks the bolt. The bolt is pumped slightly to the rear and the chambered shell is removed and caught in the hand. The shell in the magazine follower is pressed down and the bolt closed over an empty chamber. This was smooth enough. The safety is a pushbutton type. Never reach through the trigger guard to place the piece on safe, but rather reach behind the guard. The trigger finger has no difficulty in quickly actuating the safety by moving the shotgun safety to the left and off safe.

Our Team Said: The Remington gave good results. The action is smooth, there were no problems encountered, and the pattern was tight enough for good results.

Norinco Wild Bunch Shotgun 12 Gauge, $300

This was our price at Scgunco.com. The very lightly used Norinco exhibited good workmanship, fit, and finish. The receiver and barrel are nicely finished blue. The stock and the forend are finished as well as the Remington. The forend has fewer lines as cocking grooves with wider bands between them than the Remington. The forend isn't large but works fine with good leverage. The front bead is simply screwed into the barrel. The action operates in the same basic manner as the Remington. There is a difference, however. The Winchester 1897 action the Norinco is a direct copy of requires the pump action be pressed slightly forward to unlock after firing. Usually all that this needed is the firing action's recoil. This was more noticeable in dry fire. The Wild Bunch shotgun has an exposed hammer, so there is no manual safety. The trigger action broke at 7 pounds, but it was relatively clean and 3 pounds heavier than the Remington. (We have previously tested the same 1897 design under a different logo, the Cimarron Wild Bunch gun, and the trigger broke at 4.75 pounds. This gun, imported by Interstate Arms, has a heavier trigger.) If desired, the hammer may be lowered on a loaded chamber by carefully pressing the

REMINGTON 870P STANDARD 12 GAUGE, $225

GUN TESTS GRADE: A (BEST BUY)

This is a simple, economical shotgun that works well. The patterns were good, and some experimentation may find a load that offers even better performance. The 870 performed well and gets a solid recommendation as a home-defense shotgun.



Action Type	Pump	Choke	Fixed, Cyl.
Overall Length	38.25 in.	Action	Steel
Overall Height	3.25 in.	Stock	Wood
Capacity	4+1	Forend	Wood
Weight Unloaded	6. 0 lbs.	Sights	Bead front post
Weight Loaded	6.9 lbs.	Trigger pull weight	4.0 lbs.
Barrel Length	18.0 in.	Warranty	None
Barrel	Steel	Telephone	(800) 243-9700
Chamber	2.75 in.	Website	Remington.com
		Made In	USA



This simple bead on a post worked well.



Slugs were devastating on target. The Remington was not the most accurate shotgun we have tested.



Replacement barrels for the Remington are plentiful, an opportunity not available on the Wild Bunch scattergun.

IAC (NORINCO) WILD BUNCH SHOTGUN
12 GAUGE, $300
GUN TESTS GRADE: B

The Model 97 copy is an iconic design that has much appeal to those with a sense of history and emotional attachment. We found the shotgun reliable, save for an odd malfunction. Tactically, the design leaves some other shotguns in the dirt. It is fast to load and even faster to empty the magazine by simply holding the trigger as you pump the action. While the Wild Bunch shotgun is a formidable home defender, its idiosyncrasies in handling and design put it in second place.



Action Type	Pump	Action	Steel
Overall Length	39 in.	Stock	Wood
Weight Unloaded	7.0 lbs.	Forend	Wood
Weight Loaded	8.0 lbs.	Sights	Bead front post
Barrel Length	20 in.	Trigger Pull Weight	7.0 lbs.
Barrel	Steel	Warranty	None
Chamber	2.75 in.	Telephone	(800) 243-3006
Choke	Fixed, Cyl.	Website	IACShotguns.com
Capacity	5+1	Made In	China



There was a single, rather odd malfunction in the Wild Bunch shotgun. A shell flipped back into the chamber backwards. Couldn't duplicate it if we tried.



One rater was cut by the bolt. With scars on his knuckles and defensive knife wounds he simply added another honor.



The Wild Bunch shotgun features a generous ejection port. It wasn't difficult to drop a shell into the massive ejection port during tactical drills.

trigger and manually lowering the hammer. Next, bring the hammer back to a half-cock notch for safety.

The Wild Bunch shotgun isn't difficult to load. The loading gate is larger and more generous than the Remington. When loading the two shotguns, the Remington's shell carrier has to be pushed up in loading, while the Winchester design offers a straight shot when loading shells because the carrier design is different. We rated the Norinco copy of the Winchester 1897 a step ahead in rapidly loading the magazine. In unloading the shotgun, we also gave the Norinco a high mark. When the chamber is loaded, simply press a push button on the right side of the receiver to release the bolt and bring the bolt to the rear. The shell is easily removed from the extractor, and the bolt will shut on an empty chamber as the bolt has not been brought completely to the rear. It is important to not only be able to quickly load the shotgun but to safely unload it, we believe, and the Norinco received high marks. The sole demerit in handling during dry fire was the need to lower the hammer to make the shotgun safe, but some shooters like an exposed hammer. In any case since the shotgun should be kept ready with the chamber empty and unloaded after action or a false alarm, the need to lower the hammer manually isn't a critical defect. Another advantage of the Norinco is that the magazine holds five shells to the Remington's four. This is a clear advantage when capacity is already limited. This gives the Norinco a maximum of six shells versus the Remington's five.

During the live-fire drills, the Norinco was easily racked and made ready to fire. When firing at silhouette targets, the shotgun handled well, and we were able to punish the target with well-directed fire. The extra pound of steel and wood would seem to limit recoil; however, the lack of a recoil pad canceled the advantage. (The previously tested Cimarron also had a recoil pad.)

The Norinco action isn't as smooth



A shotgun that served in a half dozen wars and police actions just has to be tactical. The Wild Bunch shotgun gave good results in all drills.

as the Remington. The action required more effort to operate. We discovered another advantage of the '97 type during the combat drills. The receiver's shell-ejection port is larger and more open than the Remington. During the rapid replenishment drill, dropping a single shell into the chamber, the Norinco was faster due to the design. It required less dexterity, even for trained shooters, and less effort to quickly drop a single shell into the chamber with the Norinco.

When the action is operated, the shell carrier drops below the receiver. The bolt protrudes beyond the rear of the receiver at the same time. Naturally, some find this charming and iconic. With this exposed action, it would seem that the Winchester 1897 action copied by Norinco in the Wild Bunch shotgun would be more vulnerable to foreign matter and jamming. Yet the design does not have a reputation for anything but rugged reliability in action for its entire service life, and the Norinco seems comparable. Due to the age of the design, parts supply may be a concern and the more modern accessories and accoutrements are not available for the Norinco. This is something to consider, but the shotgun proved reliable and capable of making solid center hits with the buckshot used. Patterns were good, perhaps due to the slightly longer barrel. Firing slugs with a bead-sighted shotgun isn't a recipe for accuracy; however, the Norinco proved accurate enough for defense use. Against dangerous feral dogs and the big cats and small bears, either shotgun gives users a fighting chance. The Norinco was more accurate than the Remington with slugs, but then this differs among shotguns. The Norinco also has a design feature that set it apart from the Remington. There is no disconnect. This means that if you keep the trigger pressed and pump the action, the Norinco will keep firing as long as there are shells in the action. We debated the value of this trait and decided to give it a test in addition to the regular test fire. We simply fired each shotgun as quickly as possible to empty the magazine. At the first try, we were not certain we were in control of the Norinco, but at the second try, firing at a 7-yard range, we found that we could fill the target with holes very quickly. Even experienced shooters firing the Remington conventionally, waiting for the trigger to reset after each shot, could not match the Norinco's speed. We fired each shotgun from below shoulder level and found the Norinco fast indeed. This is kind of a stunt. Perhaps a takeover robbery or gang action might present a need for this type of fire. It is an interesting option.

The need to pull the forend about 1/8 inch forward to unlock in dry fire is simply different; some raters did better than others. We also found that the Norinco will benefit from grease in the long bearing areas. Disassembly of the Norinco is limited to the magazine tube, where the Norinco is a copy of the solid-frame Winchester 1897 and the barrel is permanently screwed into the receiver for practical purposes. This doesn't make maintenance particularly difficult, but it makes the shotgun less versatile. In contrast, replacement barrels with greater length and choke tubes are available for the Remington, but then these are economy guns that are not likely to be upgraded. During the test, the Wild Bunch shotgun exhibited a single malfunction. Firing the last Federal slug, the spent case flipped in the air and landed back in the action, with the brass head toward the chamber. We tugged it out. One rater noted that if we had not left the action open on the last shot this would not have occurred, or not during a normal loading sequence. Perhaps true, and an odd thing to happen, but a malfunction is defined as an action that is not desirable and which may impede function. A rater also cut his knuckle on the bolt when holding the shotgun in the left hand and racking the bolt. The hand was not in a proper firing grip, but then this would not have happened with the Remington. As a result of these occurrences, we rated the Wild Bunch gun down a grade.

As far as shotshell performance we think the Winchester 97 clone might have an advantage, but it would be wise to test a few loads for the most consistent performance. The results were clearer in slug performance, with the Wild Bunch giving a better showing.

Our Team Said: In overall performance, the Wild Bunch gun was faster to load and also faster in the tactical loading portion, shoving a shell in the chamber to do a fast chamber load. Speed was a close tie. Both shotguns were fast, but the Remington was smoother. The Wild Bunch gun did not bind; it simply seemed to require more effort. We rated the bead on a post front sight of the Remington superior, but when it came to shooting, it wasn't better than the Wild Bunch gun.

Two telling problems brought down the Norinco's score. First, one of the raters ran afoul of the bolt and picked up a cut. Sure, it was operator error in one way, but in another it could be avoided with a more modern design. We did not like that an ejected shell landed in the ejection port. That generous port that made loading easier in a tactical sense may also invite such missteps. So, in the end the Norinco Wild Bunch shotgun earned a B grade. It is clearly a formidable shotgun. Anyone using the Wild Bunch shotgun in Cowboy Action shooting would certainly be well armed and fast and efficient in a home-defense situation. But the Remington 870 cost less and never stuttered. We rate this a good shoot out, and the Remington earned its Best Buy award.

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

Springfield Armory Rolls Out New RO Elite 1911 Pistols

The company has launched four new versions of the trusted Range Officer line with significant upgrades and more spend.

Springfield Armory has launched four new RO Elite models, expanding the 1911 Range Officer line.

The new RO Elite line adds multiple premium components and details for both competition shooters and defense-minded citizens, in both 9mm and 45 ACP versions. Every new RO Elite series pistol wears a Black-T treatment specified on Springfield Armory 1911s built for the FBI's regional SWAT and Hostage Rescue Teams. The Black-T coating is self-lubricating and highly corrosion resistant. RO Elite models also include: Springfield Armory's newly designed Gen 2 triggers, ambidextrous thumb safeties, and custom thin-line G-10 grips designed.

"The original 1911 Range Officer line remains a huge success with serious shooters," says Dennis Reese, Springfield Armory's CEO. "It made professional-level performance more affordable. The new RO Elite models are more of the same: premium features, high performance, affordable price."

The RO Elite Target is engineered for accuracy. Forged steel match-grade frame and slide are precision-fit for fluid-smooth function. The 5-inch stainless steel match-grade barrel, adjustable rear target sight, fiber-optic front sight, and GI recoil system.

The RO Elite Operator also has a 5-inch match-grade stainless-steel barrel, Picatinny rail for accessories, and slanted serrations on the front and rear of the slide. The Operator has a GI recoil system, along with a tactical ledge, white-dot rear sight and fiber-optic front sight.

The RO Elite Champion features a 4-inch stainless steel match-grade barrel, captured in a forged steel slide with flat wire captive recoil system. The full-height, forged lightweight aluminum alloy frame is light and strong. The RO Champion is topped with a tactical ledge, white-dot rear sight and red fiber optic front sight.



Top to bottom are four of Springfields new RO Elite pistols: The 1911 Range Officer Elite Champion PI9136ER, the 1911 Range Officer Elite Compact PI9126ER, the 1911 Range Officer Elite Operator PI9131ER, and the 1911 Range Officer Elite Target PI9128ER.

The RO Elite Compact carries a 4-inch stainless steel match-grade bull barrel with fully-supported ramp and a flat wire captive recoil system for ultimate reliability. The compact frame is forged aluminum alloy, maximizing concealment and minimizing weight. A low-profile, tactical ledge, white-dot rear sight with fiber optic front sight sits on a forged steel slide, allowing quick and accurate target acquisition.

Kahr Arms Introduces Two New Guns

Kahr Arms has partnered with Gallery of Guns to offer two new limited-edition exclusive pistols in the new Cerakote Patriot Brown finish. The Kahr CW3833PBR and the Kahr CW9093PBR can only be purchased through Gallery of Guns website for a limited time.

The CW3833PBR is offered in 380 ACP and features a 2.5-inch conventional rifled barrel, an overall length of 5 inches, a height of 3.9 inches, and weighs 10.2 ounces. The pistol has a Desert Tan frame and a stainless steel slide, trigger slide-stop



Kahr CW9093PBR



Kahr CW9093PBR

lever, all in Cerakote Patriot Brown.

The pistol features a lock breech, modified Browning type recoil lug, and utilizes Kahr's seven patents including the "safe cam" action found in all Kahr pistols. The micro-compact pistol also has a drift adjustable white bar-dot combat rear sight and a pinned-in polymer front sight. It has a 6+1 capacity and comes with one 6-rd magazine. Gallery of Guns offers this gun at $449.

Also available in Cerakote Patriot Brown is the Kahr CW9093PBR. This pistol is offered in 9mm and features a 3.5-inch barrel, overall length of 5.9 inches, height of 4.5 inches and weighs 15.8 oz. Like the CW3833PBR, this gun also has a drift-adjustable white bar-dot combat rear sight and a pinned-in polymer front sight. It has a 7+1 round capacity and ships with one 7-round magazine. It too has a Desert Tan frame, and the stainless steel slide, trigger, and slide stop lever are Cerakote Patriot Brown. Gallery of Guns offers this pistol at $498.

Bog-Pod's New Rapid Shooting Rest

The all new Bog-Pod Rapid Shooting Rest (RSR) is compact, collapsible, and portable. The Rapid Shooting Rest features Bog-Pod's Switcheroo Ultimate Shooting Rest, giving the shooter 360 degrees of target acquisition. It's constructed of heavy-duty cast aluminum and polymers, and the tripod legs sport non-marring rubber traction feet. There's a twist-lock main elevation adjustment. It has a minimum height of 7 inches with a maximum height of 11 inches, and it collapses to 12.8 inches in length and weighs 21.6 ounces.





Bog-Pod Rapid Shooting Rest

SIG Sauer Introduces MCX Virtus

SIG Sauer, Inc., has unveiled the MCX Virtus in 5.56 NATO and 300 BLK. In ancient Rome, "Virtus" stood for virtue, courage, bravery, and excellence, in case you were wondering.

"SIG has supplied firearms to meet the unique demands of specialized units for decades," said Ron Cohen, President and CEO of SIG Sauer. "Similar to the P320 pistol, the MCX Virtus was created to be the ultimate modular platform, a design that will change the demands of the modern rifle for years to come."

The added features and enhancements of the MCX Virtus include increasing accuracy, delivering additional modularity and providing a service life of more than 20,000 rounds without a single part replacement. Between barrels, stocks, handguards, and colors, the MCX Virtus can be configured more than 500 different ways.

Available in Patrol, Pistol and SBR variants, in Stealth Gray or FDE color, the MCX Virtus utilizes a short-stroke piston system and unique internal recoil system that eliminates the M4-style buffer tube.

Cold hammer-forged barrels, available in 9-inch, 11.5-inch, and 16-inch lengths, feature an interchangeable design and can be exchanged at the operator level. To increase accuracy, the barrels are a heavier profile. Also assisting with accuracy is the new SIG Matchlite Duo trigger, a two-stage unit that provides the shooter with a crisp, clean feel. A new tapered bolt lug design results in smoother cycling and extends the bolt life. Capping off the upgrades are eight new free-floating M-LOK handguards available in standard and suppressor-ready configurations.

Hogue's New X1-Microflip

Hogue Knives has introduced the X1-Microflip button lock flipper. "The X1-Microflip is an amazing piece of precision manufacturing," said Hogue lead knife engineer Scott Bruhns. "Our customers have been demanding a streamlined sub-3-inch Allen Elishewitz-designed knife. This knife is so full of features it has to be held to fully appreciate the cohesive



MCX Virtus



design and execution by Allen and the Hogue team."

The Microflip features Hogue's button lock mechanism along with the patent-pending blade retention device. This unique instrument retains the blade in the closed position, allowing the user to create stored up kinetic energy culminating in the firing of the blade. With an intuitive press of the lock button, the knife can be easily closed with one-hand without placing fingers in the path of the closing blade like standard liner lock flippers. "This knife contains no springs. It is a manual flipper yet acts surprisingly like an automatic," said Bruhns.

Designed specifically as an everyday-carry pocket knife, the X1-Microflip is the first knife in the Hogue line with a blade measuring under 3 inches. The 2.75-inch drop point blade profile comes either stone wash tumbled or with a black Cerakote finish. Made from 0.120-inch-thick CPM154 steel, the blade offers superior corrosion resistance while providing excellent edge retention. It is cryogenically heat treated to 57-59 RC then hand sharpened and honed.

The Type III hardcoat anodize 6061-T6 aluminum frame offers one-handed deployment. The frame is patterned with an escalating indent texture for additional grip traction and includes a pointed impact pommel. Models are available in matte finished black, grey, flat dark earth or aquamarine. The frame includes a reversible clip and filler plate for ambidextrous tip up carry. The X1-Microflip sports MSRPs from $149 to $159.

All Hogue Knives are designed by former Recon Marine Allen Elishewitz and made in the USA by Hogue, Inc.

HM Defense Announces Avenger M308 rifle

HM Defense's all-new HM10 Monobloc rifle, the AVENGER M308, was designed and developed by HM Defense in response to demand for a larger 308 Win/7.62 NATO model of the HM15 Monobloc rifle.

"The Avenger offers the same high level of innovation and capability found in our HM15 rifle now in the larger HM10 platform," said Clay Barker, General Manager at HM Defense.

The foundation of the Avenger rifle is an all-new, custom HM10 billet lower receiver developed for low weight and maximum rigidity. Attached to the forged upper is HM's Monobloc integral gas block barrel designed to minimize recoil and enable sub-MOA accuracy.

The Avenger M308 includes the following premium features:

- HM Monobloc 308 Win barrel, 4150 Chromoly steel, 18-inch length with threaded end, 1:10 twist ratio, rifle-length gas system.
- HM 15-inch freefloat 1913 Picatinny rail with MAGPUL M-LOK mounting system.
- HM designed billet 7075-T6 lower receiver.
- Velocity 3-pound AR trigger.
- Stainless-steel barrel nut.
- HM custom CNC muzzle brake.
- HM lightweight stock.
- MAGPUL MOE Grip.
- Custom charging handle.

The Avenger M308 is offered in three Cerakote finishes: Black, Midnight Tungsten, and Field Dark Earth (FDE).

HM Defense has set the MSRP of the Avenger M308 at $1895. For more information visit HMDefense.com.

All HM Defense products are made in Mt. Orab, Ohio.



HM Defense Avenger M308

SIG Enters Rimfire Suppressor Market

With their introductory rimfire suppressor—the SRD22X—SIG Sauer has built a versatile can for 22 LR fans.

Sporting a titanium tube and a stainless-steel baffle setup, the SRD22X will likely be a highly-durable option in the rimfire category. It will run on either pistols or rifles as a direct-thread can. That means simplicity while at the range or in the field. Its compact build (5.8 inches in length and 5.1 ounces in weight) won't unbalance your chosen rig. Rated for 22 LR, 22 Magnum, and 17 HMR, this user-serviceable SIG attenuates sound down to 110 dB. It comes with a silencer pouch for transport, a disassembly tool for maintenance, and a user manual. Price from the Silencer Shop is $400.



SIG Sauer SRD22X

Sturm, Ruger Introduces New LC9s with Stainless Steel Slide, New 10/22 Configuration

The new Ruger LC9s with stainless steel slide and black polymer frame offers improved corrosion resistance and an two-tone configuration. The stainless-steel LC9s model includes a left-side manual safety lever, and is striker-fired, featuring a short, light and crisp trigger pull with positive reset. At 17.2 ounces, all LC9s models are compact and include one 7-round 9mm Luger magazine.

Ruger has also introduced a 10/22 Takedown Rifle with a Mica Bronze





Synthetic Stock. Model Number 21181 has an overall length of 35 inches and a barrel length of 16.40 inches. It weighs a scant 4.4 pounds and has a suggested retail price of $439.

The Takedown rifles enable quick separation of the barrel from the action for ease of transportation and storage. Takedown is as simple as locking the bolt back and verifying that the rifle is unloaded, pushing a recessed lever, twisting the subassemblies and pulling them apart. Simple reassembly allows for a secure connection of the barrel and action and returns the firearm to zero, even when receiver-mounted optics are used. A combination scope-base adapter for both Weaver-style and 22 tip-off scope mounts is included.

The front sight is a gold bead ahead of an adjustable rear sight. The threaded barrel has a 1/2"-28 pattern so you can attach your favorite accessories, such as the SIG can mentioned previously. The rifle also includes a carry-case that provides ample storage room for magazines and accessories.

COMING UP IN GUN TESTS

● **Revolver Holsters:** Alien Gear Cloak Tuck IWB, Garrity Gunleather IWB Standard Holster, Galco Carry Lite, Tagua Gunleather Paddle Holster, DM Bullard Combat Holster, Jeffrey Custom Leather R1 Ranger, Banshee IWB, Tauris Holsters Semi High Ride (Practical Carry), Barber Leather Works Pancake, Gunmate Hip Holster, Jason Winnie 121, SWAPRIG Holsters Cargo Pocket Holster, Lobo Deep Cover Holster, Lobo Gunleather Pocket Holster.

● **38 Super Ammo Showdown:** We tested SIG Sauer's 125-grain round, Fiocchi's 129-grain selection, the Prvi Partisan 130-grain ball, the Winchester 130-grain unit, Buffalo Bore's 115-grain JHP, 124-grain JHP, and 147-grain rounds; Cor-Bon's 100-grain Pow'RBall, a 115-grain JHP, and the 125-grain DPX. From Federal, we picked up some American Eagle 115-grain JHPs, and several more rounds you'll want to read about.

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