GUN TESTS®

THE CONSUMER RESOURCE FOR THE SERIOUS SHOOTER

$5.95 March 2018/Vol. XXX, No. 3



HOT HANDGUNS

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DOWNRANGE

GUN LAWS IN THE NEWS



Todd Woodard

I **hate** to be a downer in these pages, but there's crazy anti-gun stuff going on all over the country. It seems that because gun owners don't have much to fear federally, gun-restrictive states are going their own way with new regulations, fees, and other infringements on the right to keep and bear arms. Here's a sampler of a few things that you might devote a couple of brain cells to:

● January 31 marked the official deadline for more than 370,000 handgun owners in the state of New York to register those guns with state police. For what: To build a comprehensive record of gun owners *a la* California. Anyone who took out a handgun license in New York before 2013 — when the state passed a landmark gun-control law — had to contact state police by Jan. 31 or risk criminal charges. That is just making criminals of the law-abiding citizen. But New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo, a Democrat, won't face political consequences for penalizing his own constituents.

● In Virginia, the House Militia, Police and Public Safety Subcommittee has considered a number of anti-gun measures. Very worrisome is House Bill 597/House Bill 819, which makes it a crime to knowingly possess a device that is designed or functions to accelerate the rate of fire of a semi-automatic firearm. This could potentially criminalize firearm modifications such as competition triggers and ergonomic changes that make firearms more suitable for self-defense. Another bad one is House Bill 814/House Bill 1019/House Bill 1052, which seeks to allow localities to prohibit law-abiding individuals from being able to carry a firearm for self-defense at lawful demonstrations, protests, parades, rallies, or other similar events.

● And in Washington State, a bill debated in the Senate Law and Justice Committee would require the holder of a concealed pistol license to get permission to bring a gun into another person's residence. Sen. Sam Hunt, D-Olympia, the bill's sponsor, called it a way to "protect someone's castle from unwanted firearms," according to a story in the *Spokesman-Review*. Decent manners should largely solve this; if I'm in someone's home and they don't want me armed, I'd respect their choice and either leave with my gun or leave my gun locked up in my car. And, I wonder, would this require an exemption for law-enforcement officers who often carry concealed weapons when off duty? **GT**

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GUN TESTS ACCEPTS NO COMMERCIAL ADVERTISING

GUN TESTS ® (ISSN No. 1042-6450) is published monthly by AG Media, Inc.; 111 Corporate Drive, Big Sandy, TX 75755-2446. Periodicals Postage Paid at Big Sandy, TX, and at additional mailing offices.

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Subscriptions: $49 (U.S.) annually. Outside the U.S. and Canada $72 (U.S.) for one year, $144 (U.S.) for two years. Single copies $7.50 (U.S.). Bulk-rate subscriptions for organizations and educational institutions are available.

Postmaster: Please send address changes to: ***GUN TESTS***, P.O. Box 8535, Big Sandy, TX 75755-8535, or ***GUN TESTS***, P.O. Box 39, Norwich ON, N0J 1P0. **Canada Publishing Agreement** #40016479.

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Touting a Blackhawk Holster

Reader Jim wants us to try out a revolver holster he really likes. Reader Gary shares his quiet solution for pest control, and it sounds cool. Also, no love for the Walther P22's looks.



Re "Revolver Holsters: Balancing Comfort, Speed, and Retention," February 2018

I would like to see a review, perhaps in the next batch, of the Blackhawk Compact (Col. Charles) Askins holster.

I have one for my S&W J-Frame Airweight, Model 360J, 1.875-inch barrel, 357 Magnum snubby fitted with XS Big Dot tritium sights and Pachmayr grips. I really like it. Nice, well-formed black leather, thick, well sewed and constructed. Attractive. Made in Italy.

I have owned and used quite a number of different Galco and Bianchi holsters, mostly for autos, and am quite satisfied with this one by Blackhawk. In fact, it is probably the best holster product I have seen coming from Blackhawk thus far, as I have owned others. Paid $54 at Cascade Farm & Outdoor where it was recently on sale there at 25 percent off!. I think it has pretty good retention and concealability. It's the Blackhawk No. 420506BK-R (right hand model; left hand also available). Retention is adjustable.

I am considering getting one of these for my Glock Model 23, converted and well modified in 357 SIG. (Size 02). And perhaps another for my 1916 Colt blue Gov. Issue 1911 (not an A1) and Colt Delta Elite SS 10mm first edition, with black ebony grips (size 01). I would not consider this as my only holster for these autos, just a very nice option for compact concealed carry. The Askins style makes a great option that rides high and close and clears quickly and smoothly while still providing reasonably good retention, given the Askins design, that suits "snubby" carry well.

Incidentally, the Smith Model 360J, although a handful when shooting 357 Magnum, is still not as bad in recoil as I expected it would be, and for me, it is quite shootable and controllable. And I do have some nerve damage in my shooting hand. That is what the Pachmayr grip is for. The 38 Special +Ps are appropriately stiff and make a good choice for everyday carry and quick, accurate follow-up shots in this revolver. Of course, I am thrilled to have this Smith and find the XS Big Dots to be a perfect enhancement over the stock manufacturer-supplied red ramp. **— Jim**

Jim: I have forwarded your request to Bob Campbell, though it seems you covered it pretty well already. — Todd Woodard

Pest Gitter Follow-up Follow-up

Todd, I shared the desire for quiet pest control as mentioned in the "Pest Gitter Follow-up" letter in your February issue. Last July, I settled for a Ruger Challenger 22 take-down semi-auto pistol with a

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.

10-inch threaded barrel. I put a Sparrow suppressor and a 2.5-10x44 Vortex Viper on it. It's compatible with all my other old 10/22 mags too. Taken down with the suppressor detached, it fits easily in my bug-out bag. It works for me! **— Gary**



Re "AR-10s in 308 Win. and 6.5CM: $995 E.R. Shaw Is a Best Buy," February 2018

Read your article in the latest magazine. Wondered why you did not include a PSA Gen2 PA10 18" Mid-Length .308 WIN SS M-Lok Rifle with ACS-L Stock & Overmolded Grip (pictured above) in your AR-10 test? You seem to gravitate to expensive firearms at the expense of very functional and much less expensive items. Thanks for listening. **— Bill**

Bill, it's not possible to cover every rifle out there, so we appreciate it when readers give us a heads up and suggestions like yours. With the boom in expensive rifles, we feel its our duty to find out if they are really worth the money. Indeed some are. Then again, we are mixing in rifles that cost much less. Evidence the 6.5CM AR-10 from E.R. Shaw and the Ruger Hawkeye VT 6.5CM, that in both cases shot lights out. (Ruger, by the way, is releasing this same action in a more contemporary package). It's a long way up the accuracy pyramid, and we're as anxious to see who's on top as you are — without breaking the bank. Thanks for writing. — Roger Eckstine





The Walther P22 Is Not a Looker

Dear Sirs: I am a 83-year-old subscriber to your magazine and emails, and, I always enjoy reading about your tests of various guns. However, the test of the Walther P22 contained the statement that it is, "a delight to the eye," which leaves me shaking my head in disbelief! It is an extremely ugly pistol cluttered with knobby protuberances throughout its design. I don't understand why Walther even made it when they have a nice-looking fixed-barrel 22 in the handsome Model PPK/s 22, shown below in comparison with the ugly P22. Speaking of Ruger's SR22, neither of these guns is as handsome as the Ruger Mark IV Standard with a 6-inch barrel, which I'm betting is more accurate than either of these guns. **— Robert**

Hmm. Robert, you're right, a side-by-side comparison of the two Walthers shows a cosmetic advantage going to the PPK/S 22. — tw

Re "Five-Shot 44-Caliber Revolvers From Ruger, S&W, and Taurus," January 2018

First, let me thank you and your staff for the effort put into what I consider the best publication of its kind out there.

I bought my first 44 Magnum back in the '80s, and I was hooked. My shooting friends don't call me "Big Bore Nut" for nothing. So when the January issue hit the mail box, I went straight to the "Five-Shot 44s" article. I was disappointed in the results and subsequent grade given to the Model 69. I think for any mass-produced firearm, any manufacturer can let an inferior piece slip through final inspections, and maybe you happened to get one. But in the case of the M69, I have to wonder because of my experience with them.

I live out in the boonies and carry a 44 daily. When the concealed-carry law went into effect here in Illinois, I signed up for the first class available and got my permit. The 5-inch 629 I carry at home just wasn't concealable, so I settled on a 1911 for my carry piece. When S&W came out with the Model 69, I thought the problem was solved, it would be one gun in my favorite caliber small enough to conceal and would work for home as well.

After a breaking-in period, my first M69 wouldn't shoot my favorite cast-bullet load; the accuracy just wasn't there. So, I bought another and got the same results. So being what's been called a little hard headed and being a big fan of S&W revolvers, I bought a third. I haven't had time to even shoot it, but one evening a friend and I were discussing my problems with the two I had shot. While examining one of them he, with better eyes than mine, noticed burrs around the muzzle. Upon further investigation, we discovered all three suffered from the same problem. Apparently, the muzzles hadn't been polished after the rifling had been cut, leaving burrs, some of them pretty large, scattered around the crown.

I'm now looking for a local gunsmith, or the tooling to do it myself, to see if polishing the muzzle doesn't fix



the problem. If not, I'm going to try a Taurus Tracker. In the meantime, the next time I get to the gun shop I'm going to take my glasses and look at the Smiths in the case, just to satisfy my curiosity. I may have to leave my all-time favorite manufacturer behind if their quality has fallen that low. Thanks again, keep up the good work. **— Greg**

I enjoy reading your comparisons in each issue, even if it is for something I'm not interested in owning. In the January 2018 issue, you compared a Ruger, S&W, and Taurus in 44 Special and 44 Magnum, which do interest me. I carry a 44 in the backcountry for grizzly, the minimum recommended. I don't carry a larger caliber (such as the 454 Casull) due to weight. I opt for a revolver over a 10mm because I want to be sure each time I pull the trigger, even if it is at an awkward angle, it will go boom. I had a Taurus Tracker 44 for a time, and it was very comfortable to carry. However, I found it had a short cylinder and was limited to 240-grain bullets. Everything I've read says this load is too small for dangerous, large animals such as grizzlies. I've since switched to Ruger Alaskan, in which I can load 300-grain-plus bullets. Perhaps you can measure and note such in future reviews where you mention using a particular load for dangerous animals. **— Mike P**



Mike, thank you for the insights on the Tracker cylinder. — tw

Re "Downrange," January 2018

I write to remark on Todd Woodard's Downrange commentary of January 2018 about "fixing" NICS. NICS does not need to be fixed. It needs to be abolished. Think of how crazy it is: A person who was given probation 30 years ago for check passing is treated the same way as someone who got out of prison for armed robbery last week. Is this on the same planet as "common sense" that gun-control activists are always talking about?



One could conceivably make an argument to change gun ownership disqualification based on scientific information about the probability of someone committing a violent crime in the future. That's not on the horizon.

The important matter is that this is a civil rights issue! NICS took $130 million out of the pockets of gun owners last year. This is oppression. This is anti-gun bigots putting their thumb on us and saying "You are unworthy." Gun control should be called out at every opportunity for the bigotry it is. **— Jim**

Jim, you are en fuego, *and I can't disagree with a single thing you said. Alas, until NICS is dismantled, I will still lobby to make it better. — tw*

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Hot Handguns and Cartridges From Springfield, Coonan, Glock

We test less-common cartridges for the pistol — 38 Super, 357 SIG, and 357 Magnum — against a Glock 17 in 9mm Luger to see which is the most practical for daily carry and other uses.

For more than a year, we have been testing and evaluating some of the most powerful and interesting self-loading handgun cartridges. These are the ubiquitous 9mm Luger, which we think has become the baseline against which all other handgun chamberings can be compared, and the far-less-common but still commercially viable 38 Super, 357 SIG, and 357 Magnum, the last of which is chambered in a Coonan handgun. The evaluation was the result of a reader request, and three of which, the 9mm, 38 Super, and 357 SIG, sometimes use the same bullets, but at different velocities.

We began with a number of goals. First, as always, reliability has to be foremost because the handguns were competing as personal-defense choices. We also viewed them as outdoors-carry choices for defense against feral dogs and big cats. We wanted to see how efficiently each cartridge delivered its power, with the idea that the 9mm set the floor. Increased flash, blast, and recoil may be counterproductive in the others, and as it turned out, we got more horsepower with less recoil than expected. The energy difference wasn't incremental; it was profound. We didn't choose average 9mm or 38 Super loads, but instead picked those loads that had given good results in the past. Only the top performers in 9mm and 38 Super are in this report. With the 357 SIG and 357 Magnum, we were on new ground and chose a representative sample of bullet weights. The 357 SIG and 357 Magnum enjoy an excellent reputation for terminal ballistics. The 9mm, less so, and based on previous data, we expected the 38 Super to be as effective or more than a 9mm Luger +P+ load. The primary consideration was personal defense, so control was important. The larger guns may not be ideal for concealed carry, but would be good handguns for field use or home defense. For those wishing to deploy a handgun with plenty of power and accuracy, the 357-caliber self-loaders are easier to control than Magnum revolvers. The self-loaders demonstrate less recoil due to the smaller charge of faster-burning powder and the movement of the action and compression of



Our contestants, clockwise from top left, were the Springfield Armory 1911 Mil-Spec 38 Super, the Coonan Classic 1911 100000-005 357 Magnum, the Glock 17 Gen5 9mm Luger, and the Springfield Armory XD9113HCSP06 XD Service 4-inch 357 SIG. The Springfield XD-357 is our pick as a go-anywhere, do-anything personal defense handgun. It is especially appealing for home defense with its light rail and night sights. The big Coonan is the most powerful handgun tested, but it isn't the best choice for all-round use due to its size and expense.



Cartridges shown side by side for scale are, left to right, the 9mm Luger, 357 SIG, 38 Super, and the towering 357 Magnum.

PERFORMANCE DATA

Gun: Glock Model 17 Gen5 9mm Luger	**Average Velocity (fps)**	**Muzzle Energy (ft.-lbs.)**	**Power Factor (pf)**	**Average Accuracy (in.)**	**Expanded Width (in.)**	**Retained Weight (gr.)**	**Penetration In Water (in.)**
9mm 115-gr. DoubleTap JHP	1340	458	154	3.0	0.83	113/98%	16
9mm 124-gr. Federal HST	1185	387	147	2.6	0.72	123/99%	14
9mm 124-gr. Hornady AG +P	1199	396	149	2.5	0.66	124/100%	17
9mm 124-gr. Winchester PDX +P	1214	406	151	2.6	0.65	124/100%	16

Gun: Springfield Armory XD-357 357 SIG	**Average Velocity (fps)**	**Muzzle Energy (ft.-lbs.)**	**Power Factor (pf)**	**Average Accuracy (in.)**	**Expanded Width (in.)**	**Retained Weight (gr.)**	**Penetration In Water (in.)**
357 SIG 115-gr. DoubleTap JHP	1516	587	174	3.0	0.82	115/100%	18
357 SIG 125-gr. DoubleTap JHP	1458	590	182	2.8	FRAG	90/72%	12
357 SIG 125-gr. Winchester SXT	1360	513	170	2.9	0.67	125/100%	18
357 SIG 147-gr. Hornady XTP	1198	468	176	2.5	0.56	147/100%	24

Gun: Springfield Armory 1911 Mil-Spec 38 Super	**Average Velocity (fps)**	**Muzzle Energy (ft.-lbs.)**	**Power Factor (pf)**	**Average Accuracy (in.)**	**Expanded Width (in.)**	**Retained Weight (gr.)**	**Penetration In Water (in.)**
38 Super 115-gr. DoubleTap JHP	1419	514	163	2.3	0.84	112/97%	18
38 Super 115-gr. Buffalo Bore JHP	1421	515	163	2.0	0.55	112/97%	18
38 Super 125-gr. DoubleTap JHP	1402	545	175	2.5	0.81	123/98%	16
38 Super 147-gr. Buffalo Bore JHP	1099	394	162	2.4	0.54	147/100%	24

Gun: Coonan Classic 1911 357 Magnum	**Average Velocity (fps)**	**Muzzle Energy (ft.-lbs.)**	**Power Factor (pf)**	**Average Accuracy (in.)**	**Expanded Width (in.)**	**Retained Weight (gr.)**	**Penetration In Water (in.)**
357 Mag 125-gr. Federal JHP	1570	684	196	1.5	FRAG	56/45%	12
357 Mag 140-gr. Federal Barnes	1448	652	203	1.6	0.40	140/100%	28
357 Mag 158-gr. Federal Hydra-Shok	1404	691	222	1.5	0.42	122/77%	30
357 Mag 158-gr. DoubleTap Bonded	1412	699	223	1.6	0.50	158/100%	28

Notes: *Average Velocity and standard deviation readings were obtained by firing four five-shot strings over a Competition Electronics Pro Chrono. Ambient temperature: 86 degrees. Elevation: 815 feet above sea level. ● The accuracy figures are the average of two five-shot groups. For accuracy, we fired the test gun from a benchrest at a 25-yard target. ● To calculate IPSC power factor, multiply bullet weight in grains by the velocity in fps, then divide by 1000. ● The retained-weight column shows the recovered bullet weight and the resulting percentage of the starting bullet weight.*

Ammunition sources: *DoubleTap 9mm Luger +P 115-grain Bonded Defense JHP ($29/20 rounds at CheaperThanDirt.com), Federal 9mm Luger 124-grain HST ($23.97/50 at AmmunitionDepot.com), Hornady 9mm Luger 124-grain +P American Gunner ($18.21/25 at CheaperThanDirt.com), and Winchester 9mm Luger 124-grain PDX +P ($21.49/20 at MidwayUSA.com).*

DoubleTap 357 SIG 115-grain JHP ($27.38/20 from CheaperThanDirt.com), DoubleTap 357 SIG 125-grain ($27.38/20 CheaperThanDirt.com), Winchester 357 SIG 125-grain SXT ($21.95/20 at AmmoToGo.com), and Hornady 357 SIG 147-grain XTP ($20/20 from SportsmansGuide.com).

DoubleTap 38 Super 115-grain JHP ($25.42/20 from DoubleTapAmmo.net), Buffalo Bore 38 Super 115-grain JHP ($28.79/20 from BuffaloBore.com), DoubleTap 38 Super 125-grain bonded JHPs ($25.42/20, DoubleTapAmmo.net), Buffalo Bore 38 Super 147-grain JHP ($29.80/20 from BuffaloBore.com), .

Federal 357 Magnum 125-grain JHP ($24.72/ 20 from CheaperThanDirt.com), Federal 357 Magnum 140-grain Barnes ($30/20 rounds at LuckyGunner.com), Federal 357 Magnum 158-grain Hydra-Shok ($13/20 at TargetSports.com), and DoubleTap 357 Magnum 158-grain Bonded Core ($23.74/20 at DoubleTapAmmo.net).

springs as the handgun is fired. So how would they compare to the revolver? As it turned out, these modern powerhouses outclass the 357 Magnum revolver, in our opinion, on many levels.

We collected a good supply of ammunition, five loads for each gun versus our usual three. We chose three powerful hollowpoint loads for accuracy testing, as is SOP for Gun Tests. We added a fourth load for ballistic testing to test penetration and expansion. We added an economical practice load for use in the combat-firing test phase. So, this was a thorough test requiring several months. We elected not to go lighter than 115-grain bullets in any chambering. The 357 SIG, 38 Super, and 9mm Luger are usually loaded with bullets in the range of 115 to 147 grains. We fired 125-, 140-, and 158-grain bullets in the 357 Magnum Coonan. Here are the results:

Glock 17 Gen5 9mm Luger, $545

This was a recent price from SCGunco.com for a new G17. We chose the Glock Gen5 as a well-known baseline of firearm and cartridge against the more powerful handguns. For personal defense, when pitted against the 38 Super, the 9mm didn't look that bad; but the 357 SIG outclasses the 9mm by 200 fps. We emphasize again that we did not compare average 9mm loads to the hottest load in other calibers, but rather the most capable in each caliber.

The Gen5 Glock features a modified trigger action that will not accept older aftermarket parts. The pistol features a true ambidextrous slide lock, a grip frame that fits most hands well, and a new-style flared magazine well that aids in rapid replenishment of ammunition. The orange-follower magazine holds 17 rounds and features a different basepad treatment compared to previous Glock pistols. The pistol's barrel isn't interchangeable with older Glocks and is rifled in the manner Glock terms as hexagonal

GLOCK 17 GEN5 9MM LUGER, $545

GUN TESTS GRADE: B-

The Glock 17 Generation 5 is a credible firearm, but the sum of its parts is not a great leap forward over previous handguns, in our view. We like the new Marksman barrel and the ambi safety. In this shoot out, the Glock 17 suffered when its power and accuracy were compared to the other handguns. We have recently tested the Glock 17 Vickers Tactical and liked it better.



Action	Safe Action/DAO
Overall Length	8.1 in.
Overall Height	5.5 in.
Maximum Width	1.34 in.
Weight Unloaded	25.0 oz.
Weight Loaded	32.1 oz.
Barrel	4.49 in. long, Marksman style steel; RH hexagonal twist 1:9.84 in.
Magazine	17-rd. detachable box
Slide	Steel; nDLC finish
Slide-Racking Force	10.5 lbs.
Frame	Polymer; ambi slide-stop levers; flared magwell
Frame Front Strap Height	2.5 in., no grooves
Frame Back Strap Height	3.5 in.
Grips	NA
Grip Thickness (max)	1.2 in.
Grip Circumference (max)	6.2 in.
Front Sight	White dot on steel post; 6.5 in. sight radius
Rear Sight	Standard white outline
Trigger Pull Weight	5.5 lbs.
Trigger Span, Single Action	2.7 in.
Safety	Trigger blade
Warranty	1 year
Website	Glock.com
Telephone	(770) 432-1202



We liked the Glock's new ambidextrous slide-release lever because it will benefit southpaw shooters.



Note recessed crown of the new Marksman barrel. The Gen5 barrels aren't interchangeable with any earlier models. Also, Glock hasn't announced plans for making threaded barrels for the new G17s and G19s.



We like the new flared and beveled magazine well, which should help shooters switch out magazines. Also, the new mags have orange followers.

SPRINGFIELD ARMORY XD9113HCSP06 XD SERVICE 4-INCH 357 SIG, $250

GUN TESTS GRADE: A-

The finish was well worn, but the used handgun worked well. One of the magazines turned out to have a problem; it failed to lock the slide open on the last shot. Function was faultless otherwise. This is a formidable handgun.



Action	Locked Breech Single-Action Semi-Auto
Overall Length	7.3 in.
Overall Height	5.5 in.
Maximum Width	1.5 in.
Weight Unloaded	30.0 oz.
Weight Loaded	35.0 oz.
Magazine	(2) 12-rd. stainless steel
Barrel	4.0 in. long; Melonite-treated steel, 1:16 twist; fully supported ramp
Slide	Blued
Frame	Black polymer
Frame Front Strap Height	2.3 in.
Frame Back Strap Height	3.5 in.
Grips	None
Grip Thickness (max)	1.3 in.
Grip Circumference (max)	5.9 in.
Sights	Dovetail front and rear night sights
Slide retraction effort	11.0 lbs.
Trigger Pull Weight, Single Action	6.0 lbs.
Trigger Span, Single Action	2.6 in.
Safety	Grip safety, firing pin block
Warranty	Lifetime
Made In	Geneseo, Ill.
Telephone	(800) 680-6866
Website	Springfield-Armory.com



The Springfield XD in our test was worn, which we ignored in our grading of its function. Though one magazine failed to hold the slide back after the last round, a replacement magazine was inexpensive and widely available.



The XD features a chamber-loaded indicator, shown here without a round in the chamber. A chambered round would push the front of the lever upward.



Faster-moving bullets, particularly the 115-grain SIG, seemed to erupt the first water jug in line. The 357 Magnum penetrated more deeply.

rifling. The barrel also features a recessed barrel crown, uncommon in service pistols. The sights are only slightly different from previous Glock sights. They sat higher and the rear notch is wider. While the sight picture is improved, the taller front sight also resulted in the pistol firing low with most loads, about 1 inch to 1.5 inches low at 15 yards. The pistol is supplied with four slip-on grip inserts that are held in place by a single pin. It isn't difficult at all to change the grip inserts. We used the pistol as issued for most testing, but in the end fitted a beavertail type insert, the thinnest issued. It seemed to aid control.

The incremental improvements, such as a coil spring replacing the flat spring on the take down catch, are appreciated but are not necessarily anything that would make us trade an older Glock for. On the other hand, a new Glock buyer should purchase this handgun rather than the older models, we believe. Another improvement we noted is the new tear-shaped striker. This avoids trapping debris in the firing pin channel. We have seen dirt and grit affect striker operation, and this area is generally overlooked in cleaning, so this is a good change.

Ammunition tested in the Glock included DoubleTap 115-grain JHP +P rounds ($29/20 rounds at CheaperThanDirt.com), Hornady 124-grain +P American Gunner ($18.21/25 at CheaperThanDirt.com),

Federal 124-grain HST ammo ($23.97/50 at AmmunitionDepot.com), and Winchester 124-grain PDX +P rounds ($21.49/20 at MidwayUSA.com). In firing 100 rounds of CCI Blazer 115-grain FMJ loads during the combat course, the pistol did well in practical terms. Recoil is modest and control is good. The trigger broke at 5.5 pounds, standard for a Glock. In comparison, we thought the Springfield 1911 in 38 Super was superior on the combat course, with the XD in 357 SIG being about equal. In firing from the bench, the Glock 9mm performed well enough, but it was not outstanding, only slightly

besting the Springfield XD. We failed to find an advantage in the new trigger action or barrel.

Our Team Said: The primary focus of the shoot out was to compare self-defense handguns and calibers, and the Glock 9mm is a better-than-average defensive firearm. In this case, however, we feel the good handling and power of the more powerful Springfield XD outclassed the Glock. The Glock is acceptable for personal defense, but would be behind the XD's and Coonan's curves for defense against feral dogs and big cats. In the 9mm Luger chambering, we would recommend the previously tested Vickers Tactical Glock 17 9mm Generation 4 ahead of the stock Gen5 Model 17.

Springfield Armory XD9113HCSP06 XD Service 4-inch 357 SIG, $250

The company website says of this series, "The XD 4-inch Full Size is the original XD offering from Springfield Armory, and the most basic XD. This is the XD that started it all." This is the price we paid for a used Springfield XD whose finish was worn on the slide. The model number listed above is for a night-sight-equipped 357 SIG XD that is no longer listed on the Springfield website. However, factory-new versions of this gun are available at retail. BudsGunShop.com recently listed this unit for $544.

The very similar XD XD9103HC is listed on the Springfield website, and it has dovetailed front and rear steel three-dot sights, but was listed as "out of stock" at Bud's. TombstoneTactical.com listed a price of $415 for the XD9103HC, but it was also out of stock.

Our test gun came with one 10-round and one 12-round magazine. We ordered a third magazine from SCGunco.com for $26.50. During testing, one of the used magazines fed well but failed to lock the slide to the rear and was removed from the test.

The Springfield features a hand-filling grip that accommodated most hands well. The grip safety prevents the pistol from being fired if it isn't depressed and also locks the slide. The trigger breaks at a decent 6.0 pounds.

SPRINGFIELD ARMORY 1911 MIL-SPEC 38 SUPER, $800

GUN TESTS GRADE: B

The Springfield had a lot going for it — reliability, good combat ability, and it is a 1911, which means it has a low bore axis and limited muzzle flip. However, the Springfield Mil-Spec 38 Super isn't currently in production, and it is pricey.



Action	Locked Breech Single-Action Semi-Auto
Overall Length	8.5 in.
Overall Height	5.4 in.
Maximum Width	1.5 in.
Weight Unloaded	39.0 oz.
Weight Loaded	43.5 oz.
Barrel	5.0 in. long; steel, 1:16 twist
Magazine	9-rd. detachable box
Slide	Parkerized steel
Slide Retraction Effort	12.0 lbs.
Frame	Parkerized steel
Frame Front Strap Height	2.6 in.
Frame Back Strap Height	3.2 in.
Grips	Laser-engraved wood
Grip Thickness (max)	1.3 in.
Grip Circumference (max)	5.4 in.
Sights	Iron, fixed
Trigger Pull Weight, Single Action	5.0 lbs.
Trigger Span, Single Action	2.5 in.
Safety	Slide Lock Safety, Grip Safety
Warranty	Lifetime
Made In	Geneseo, Ill.
Telephone	(800) 680-6866
Website	Springfield-Armory.com



The sights are larger than GI sights and offer a good sight picture. The Springfield Mil-Spec front sight is superior to the GI-type sight.



The Springfield Mil-Spec is common in 45 ACP but rare in 38 Super. The Mil-Spec pistol is well finished in a dull, businesslike manner. With cocked-and-locked carry and a grip safety, the Mil-Spec is a favorite among 1911 shooters.



The 38 Super Mil-Spec, top, and the Coonan 357 Magnum, bottom, shared similar handling characteristics despite their length and weight differences. Fired offhand, the 38 Super was controllable and the most enjoyable pistol to fire. The Coonan requires a lot of technique work by the shooter.

COONAN CLASSIC 1911 100000-005
357 MAGNUM, $1560
GUN TESTS GRADE: A

At a $1200 counter price, this used Coonan provided the best accuracy and the greatest energy of the handguns tested. It was reliable, provided we used the proper loading technique.



Action	Locked Breech, SA/DA, Semi-Auto
Overall Length	8.3 in.
Overall Height	5.6 in.
Maximum Width	1.3 in.
Weight Unloaded	42.0 oz.
Weight Loaded	48.0 oz.
Barrel	5.0 in. long; 4340 carbon steel, chrome plated; linkless
Capacity	7+1 (single stack)
Slide	Brushed 17-4 PH stainless steel
Frame	Brushed 17-4 PH stainless steel
Frame Front Strap Height	2.9 in.
Frame Back Strap Height	3.5 in.
Grips	Black walnut, smooth
Grip Thickness (max)	1.3 in.
Grip Circumference (max)	5.75 in.
Sights	Fixed, 3-dot
Slide-Retraction Effort	19.0 lbs.
Trigger Pull Weight SA	4.0 lbs.
Trigger Span Single Action	2.9 in.
Magazines	2; steel
Safety	Thumb
Warranty	Lifetime
Made In	USA
Website	CoonanInc.com
State Restrictions	CA, MA

The Coonan is a large and well-made handgun. Although based on the 1911, the Coonan is unique. The slide-lock lever, slide-lock safety, and grip safety are typical 1911 treatments.



Slide-to-barrel and bushing fit are excellent. This made for good accuracy. A bold front-post sight also helped.



The Coonan (in back) is this much longer than the Government Model 1911.



The stainless-steel Coonan magazine is well made and robust. The same could be said for the rest of the gun as well.



A trigger lever set in the trigger face prevents lateral-pressure discharge. The sights are good examples of combat sights. While dim, the night sights were functional. This was the only pistol tested with night sights. Forward cocking serrations aided in racking the pistol. The XD features an ambidextrous magazine release, a loaded-chamber indicator, and a cocking indicator. Take down is the easiest of the pistols tested.

Overall, the XD is a good example of a modern striker-fired polymer-frame handgun. During the initial evaluation, we began firing the combat course with SIG Sauer Elite FMJ ammunition ($22.97/20 from CheaperThanDirt.com). We drew the pistol from James Nelson's IWB neoprene-backed IWB holster (NelsonHolsters.com). The XD came on target quickly at 7, 10, and 15 yards. Combat accuracy was good. The pistol exhibited good control when firing DoubleTaps. There were no malfunctions, save the magazine's failure to lock the slide back on the last shot, which was the result of a worn magazine. The XD exhibited greater recoil than the 9mm Glock or the 38 Super Springfield 1911, but it wasn't uncomfortable to fire. Compared to the 9mm, however, firing strings were slower. You must practice good recoil control with this handgun or your combat results will be terrible. Once in rhythm, we had good results with the 357 SIG. Firing for accuracy at 25 yards, we used the DoubleTap 115-grain JHP ($27.38/20 from CheaperThanDirt.com), Winchester 125-grain SXTs ($21.95/20 at AmmoToGo.com), and Hornady's 147-grain XTPs ($20/20 from SportsmansGuide.com). We added the 125-grain DoubleTaps for ballistic testing ($27.38/20 CheaperThanDirt.com). Though it was the least-accurate handgun tested, the XD was accurate enough for personal defense, with 25-yard groups of 2.4 to 2.9 inches for five shots from the Bullshooters rest (Brownells.com).

Our Team Said: The XD 357 SIG pistol is reliable and accurate enough for most

VALUE GUIDE: RECENT SEMI-AUTO HANDGUN RANKINGS

GUN NAME	ISSUE	GRADE	COMMENTS
CZ-USA CZ P-10 C 91520 9mm Luger, $480	Feb. 2018	A-	Best Buy. Reliable and controllable in rapid fire. A good defensive handgun at a fair price.
Lipsey's Glock 17RTF2 Vickers FDE 9mm Luger, $630	Feb. 2018	A-	Our Pick. Advantages include the Vickers Tactical sights, the magazine guide, and base pads.
Arex Rex Zero 1 Standard FDE 9mm Luger, $634	Feb. 2018	B	Good fit, finish. No internal tool marks. Double-action trigger was heavier than we liked.
Beretta 92FS W/Wilson Combat Upgrades 9mm Luger, $550	Feb. 2018	B	Smooth, well finished, and the most accurate. Grip worked against the pistol in combat shooting.
Smith & Wesson M&P9 M2.0 11537 9mm Luger, $599	Dec. 2017	A	The M&P9 M2.0 is a refined striker-fire pistol with a crisp trigger, excellent grips, and good accuracy.
Springfield Armory XD MOD.2 4-In. Service 9mm Luger, $565	Dec. 2017	A-	An easy to shoot pistol due to the fiber-optic front sight, the thin, textured grip, and consistent trigger.
Ruger American Pro Duty 8605 9mm Luger, $579	Dec. 2017	B+	The American is quite capable and ran well with good accuracy. The grip inserts gave some trouble.
Colt Delta Elite O2020XE 10mm Auto, $1099	Nov. 2017	A	An excellent example of a full-size 1911 platform chambered in 10mm.
Smith & Wesson Model 1076 10mm Auto, $800-$825	Nov. 2017	A-	If you are in need of a compact 10mm pistol, a used 1076 is an excellent choice.
Coonan Classic 1911 100000-000 357 Magnum, $1540	Nov. 2017	A-	The Coonan is comfortable to shoot, accurate, and was reliable with all but one brand of ammo.
Kimber Micro 9 Desert Tan (LG) 3300168 9mm Luger, $659	Oct. 2017	A	The laser grip complements the large sights on this micro pistol. Edges are smooth for concealed carry.
SIG Sauer P938 Emperor Scorpion 9mm Luger, $639	Oct. 2017	A	With large sights, a crisp trigger and toothy grips, this pistol was easy to shoot and control.
Springfield Armory XD-E 3.3 XDE9339BE 9mm Luger, $519	Oct. 2017	B	Trigger geometry took some getting used to. Decocker was hard to manipulate in firing position.
Walther PPS M2 2805961 9mm Luger, $451	Sept. 2017	A	The Walther PPS M2 is a class act. It was the most expensive pistol tested, but it earned an A anyway.
Smith & Wesson M&P9 Shield 180021 9mm Luger, $394	Sept. 2017	A	Best Buy. Well designed grip checkering, good sights, a decent trigger action, and good reliability.
Glock 43 Subcompact Slimline G43 PI4350201 9mm Luger, $445	Sept. 2017	B	Accurate enough for personal defense, reliable, and fast handling.
Honor Defense Honor Guard Sub-Comp. HG9SC 9mm Luger, $449	Sept. 2017	B	The only defect was the problematic slide lock, which we found far too heavy to operate quickly.

Log on to **Gun-Tests.com** to read complete reviews of these products in the designated months.
Highly-ranked products from older reviews are often available used at substantial discounts.

VALUE GUIDE: RECENT SEMI-AUTO HANDGUN RANKINGS

GUN NAME	ISSUE	GRADE	COMMENTS
Taurus 709 Slim 1-709031FS 9mm Luger, $198	Aug. 2017	A	Best Buy. We would buy this gun, and we would carry it for personal defense.
Kel-Tec PF-9 9mm Luger, $257	Aug. 2017	A-	While the Taurus outshot the Kel-Tec, that doesn't mean the Kel-Tec is out of the running.
SIG Sauer P938 Micro-Compact 938-9-ESR 9mm Luger, $730	Aug. 2017	B	The pistol had enough break-in glitches to be rated down a full grade. We really liked the trigger.
Remington R51 96430 9mm Luger, $400	Aug. 2017	D	It simply refused to function with one type of ammunition. The trigger was poor.
Ruger American Compact 8633 9mm Luger, $579	July 2017	D-	We could not complete our tests without reseating the recoil assembly multiple times.
Honor Defense Honor Guard HG9CLE 9mm Luger, $499	July 2017	B+	Admirably fills the role of a highly concealable fighting gun that's inexpensive and fun to shoot.
Springfield Armory 1911 EMP PI9229L 9mm Luger, $1220	July 2017	A	The EMP delivered accuracy and ergonomics on par with more expensive custom guns.
EAA Tanfoglio Witness 10mm Auto, $665	May 2017	A	Best Buy. Offers comfortable shooting, is relatively compact and accurate, plus it is affordable.
Dan Wesson Bruin Bronze 1881 10mm Auto, $2194	May 2017	A	If you are in need of a 10mm hunting pistol, the Bruin is an excellent choice, despite its expense.
Kimber Custom TLE II 3200347 10mm Auto, $1028	May 2017	A-	An excellent version of a full-size 1911 platform chambered in 10mm. Grips chewed up our hands.
CZ-USA 75D PCR Compact 91194 9mm Luger, $546	May 2017	A	We like everything about the 75D except the absence of a light rail.
Tristar Canik 55 C-100 9mm Luger, $365	May 2017	C	The safety lever was so stiff as to be unusable. The double-action trigger was also heavy.
CZ-USA 75 P-01 9mm Luger, $576	May 2017	A	A Best Buy. The P-01 offers faultless reliability, smooth operation, and a good trigger action.
AREX REX Zero 1 CP 9mm Luger, $603	May 2017	B	It performed well during the combat test and had credible accuracy. Reliability was faultless.
CZ 75 B Matte Stainless 91128 9mm Luger, $500 used	Jan. 2017	A	Superb fit and finish. Handling is better than the Taurus and at least equal to the AT-84.
Action Arms/ITM AT-84S 9mm Luger, $450 used	Jan. 2017	B	The AT-84 is as desirable as any other CZ 75 of the era, and the excellent sights make it a fine shooter.
Taurus PT 92 AF 92B-17 9mm Luger, $360 used	Jan. 2017	C	Performed decently for the price, but we had reservations. Accuracy was poor with some loads.

Log on to **Gun-Tests.com** to read complete reviews of these products in the designated months.
Highly-ranked products from older reviews are often available used at substantial discounts.

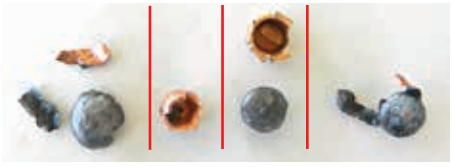
chores and is the lightest handgun tested. When the excellent ballistics of the 357 SIG are figured in, this is a Best Buy handgun for carry or home defense.

Springfield Armory 1911 Mil-Spec 38 Super, $800

This handgun was produced in 1986 and at SCGunCo.com, it was new-in-the-box unfired. So, of course, we obtained and fired it. We added Mec-Gar magazines to round out the two supplied with the gun ($19.38 each from Brownells.com). The fit and finish of this Mil Spec handgun are good. The finish is evenly applied, and the dark checkered grips are a good match for the GI appearance. The sights are an improvement over the GI guns. So is trigger compression at a smooth 5.0 pounds even. The safety demonstrates a sharp indent. The pistol is a standard Government Model length 38 ACP Super pistol with a 5-inch ramped barrel. Initial evaluation was accomplished with the SIG Sauer 130-grain FMJ loading ($22.97/50 at AmmunitionDepot.com). We experienced an odd malfunction, with the hammer falling but no marks on the primer. We wrote this off to the pistol being stored for many years, unfired, as it happened twice with the first magazine and did not repeat. However, the owner hedged his bets and replaced the firing-pin spring with an extra-power spring from Brownells ($31.95 for the extra-power function pack) to ensure the pistol functioned properly. The pistol exhibited the best trigger and the least felt recoil of any of the handguns. The pistol is fast on target and combat accuracy is good. DoubleTaps and speed drills provided excellent results. There is little muzzle flip due to the low bore axis of the 1911, and the steel-frame pistol was comfortable to fire. Reliability was faultless after the two odd FTF incidents. Ammunition for the 38 Super included Buffalo Bore 115-grain JHP ($28.79/20 from BuffaloBore.com), Buffalo Bore 147-grain JHP ($29.80/20 from BuffaloBore.com), DoubleTap 115-grain JHPs ($25.42/20 from DoubleTap.com, and DoubleTap 125-grain bonded JHPs ($25.42/20, also from DoubleTap.com).

In bench-rest accuracy, the Springfield was accurate, but not quite as accurate as the Coonan. The best group was a tight 1.9 inches. The Mil-Spec proved faster to an accurate first shot than the other handguns and only slightly behind the Coonan in absolute accuracy. The Mil-Spec proved more accurate than a Rock Island 38 Super previously tested. While we consider the 38 Super to be an excellent defense cartridge with more power than the 9mm Luger, the 357 SIG outperformed the 38 Super in water ballistics. The 115-grain 357 SIG load was 97 fps faster than the 38 Super. The 125-grain load had a more modest advantage, at 37 fps faster. The 357 SIG 147-grain XTP load, however, was 99 fps faster than the 38 Super Buffalo Bore 147-grain load.

Our Team Said: Considering the 357 SIG has a greater magazine capacity and was fired in a pistol with a shorter barrel, we felt compelled to rank Springfield's XD above its Mil-Spec. If you like the 1911 platform, the Springfield Mil-Spec is a formidable choice, but cartridge for cartridge, the shorter, but faster 357 SIG is the more powerful cartridge. If outdoors use is important, the extra velocity with the 147-grain bullet indicates the 357 has more utility



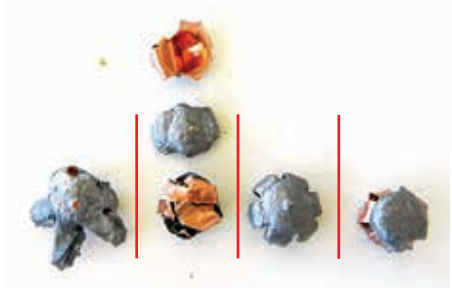
The 357 Magnum loads we tested partitioned left to right in their expanded state. They are the Federal 125-grain JHP, the 140-grain Federal Barnes, the Federal 158-grain Hydra-Shok, and the DoubleTap 158-grain bonded. As you can see, the lightest fragmented, limiting expansion. The others penetrated deeply into the water jugs.







The Glock 17 turned in excellent combat groups. Control is the long suit of the 9mm. Above, the Hornady 124-grain XTP +P exhibited good results in water, retaining 99% of its unfired weight while expanding to 0.72 inch in diameter. Right, DoubleTap's 115-grain 1340 fps load turned in an excellent showing, expanding to 0.83 inch in diameter and retaining 98% of its starting weight.



Left to right are the remains of the 357 SIG rounds after impacts with water. They are the DoubleTap 115-grain bullet, DoubleTap's 125-grain fragments, the Winchester 125-grain mushroom, and Hornady's hard-hitting 147-grain outcome.









Top left: DoubleTap's 115-grain 38 Super JHP gave good results, as did the Buffalo Bore 115-grain load, top right. Bottom left is the 125-grain DoubleTap bonded JHP. Bottom right is the Buffalo Bore 147-grain 38 Super, which clocked 1099 fps.

and predicted effect. This answered several of our questions. Also, the Springfield Mil-Spec was much more expensive than the Springfield XD.

Coonan Classic 1911 100000-005 357 Magnum, $1200

None of the raters had previous experience with this big handgun. The Coonan is a 1911-style pistol very similar to other 1911s, but with important differences. The hammer, slide lock, slide-lock safety, and grip safety operate in the same manner as the 1911. The barrel doesn't use a swinging link but instead uses angled camming surfaces. The trigger pivots like a Browning Hi-Power according to Coonan, but no Hi-Power trigger was ever this smooth. The extractor is an external type. The grip is longer than the Government Model 1911 due to the need to handle a magazine that holds seven 357 Magnum cartridges.

On this used gun, the trigger breaks at 5.1 pounds, and the sights are good, if not outstanding. Fit and finish of this stainless steel handgun are excellent. The barrel and slide are a monolithic type. The Coonan handled more quickly than we would have thought. The pistol balanced well and the heft is good. One rater likened the Coonan to a long-slide 1911 45 ACP. All controls, including the slide lock and magazine release, were crisp in operation. The Coonan was lubricated according to factory specifications prior to firing. It is important to properly lubricate the pistol and to load the magazines properly. The procedure is to load five cartridges and then angle the sixth and seventh cartridges in with the noses tipped upward, and then slip the cartridge to the rear, preserving the staggering of the cartridges necessary to feed a rimmed cartridge. If not properly loaded, when the magazine is tapped home with the slide locked to the rear, the top cartridge will fly out of the magazine and out the ejection port. Coonan advertises that this isn't the gun for your first gun, and we agree. The pistol demands attention to detail from its owner. We never experienced a firing malfunction, but we did experience a shell being ejected from the top on loading, and it was the tester's fault.

The pistol wasn't the most pleasant of the handguns to fire. It is more comfortable than a 357 Magnum revolver, but there is plenty of recoil. We fired three loads for accuracy, the Federal 125-grain JHP ($24.72/ 20 from CheaperThanDirt.com), the Federal 140-grain Barnes ($30/20 rounds at LuckyGunner.com), the Federal 158-grain Hydra-Shok load ($13/20 at TargetSports.com), and added the DoubleTap 158-grain Bonded Core load for ballistic testing ($23.74/20 at DoubleTapAmmo.net). Initial firing on the combat range was accomplished with Fiocchi 158-grain JHPs, an affordable load ($23.75/50 from LuckyGunner.com). The pistol must be held in a solid grip. If you do not maintain this firm grip, your combat scores will be lousy. For those who practice, the pistol is controllable in rapid fire to an acceptable extent; however, the other handguns gave better combat scores. The philosophy is to get a hard first hit, recover, and get another, if needed, with the Coonan. You must learn how to balance this handgun. Splits between shots would have been slow, but you fire for accuracy and control recoil as the pistol resets its trigger. Fired from the bench rest, the pistol gave good results. Its most accurate group was a 1.25-inch five-shot group with the Federal 158-grain Hydra-Shok.

Our Team Said: The Coonan cost much more than the other handguns, but then it is unique. The pistol kicks the most of anything tested, but it is the most powerful. Spare magazines are $60 plus shipping. It certainly isn't for the casual shooter. The Coonan would be a great outdoors handgun for defense against feral dogs and the big cats. We rated the pistol an A on all functional counts — it's accurate, powerful, reliable. But the potential owner will have to gauge if it's simply too much to haul around for every-day carry.

Cartridges: The Bottom Line

We learned the 9mm is okay as far as it goes, but it comes in a long way behind the best 38 Super and 357 SIG loads. The 9mm DoubleTap 1340 fps 115-grain load is impressive for personal defense, but the 38 Super at 1419 fps even more impressive. The penetration and expansion of the 115-grain 1519 fps 357 SIG load makes it a benchmark for personal defense in a compact handgun. The 357 SIG 125-grain DoubleTap load fragments early, and we felt it wasn't the best choice for self defense. The 357 SIG Winchester PDX load is a credible load with modest recoil, good accuracy, and notable downrange performance. The Hornady 147-grain XTP is a great performer for those carrying the 357 SIG into the wild, with 24 inches of penetration and no fragmentation and 100% weight retention. Among the three standard pistol calibers, 9mm, 38 Super, and 357 SIG, the 357 SIG obviously holds the best cards, and as a bonus, the Springfield XD is light and concealable. The 357 Magnum Coonan is another stratum. Ammunition performance was impressive and interesting. The Federal 125-grain load fragmented in 12 inches of water. We would have preferred the slower Buffalo Bore 38 Super loads to this load, but then a lot of energy was dumped in that foot of water. The Coonan generated 100 to 200 fps velocity increase over a 6-inch-barrel Taurus 357 Magnum revolver we had on hand for comparison, an important consideration. The Federal 140-grain Barnes load demonstrated excellent velocity and penetration, but failed to expand. Perhaps it would be better suited to a rifle. The Federal Hydra-Shok and DoubleTap bonded core 158-grain loads were neck and neck with 30 inches of penetration. These are excellent all-round outdoors loads with power and penetration for defense use.

Our Team Said: In the end, the 357 SIG gets the nod as a go-anywhere and do-anything handgun cartridge.

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

Bolt-Action Hunting Rifles for Compact and Youth Shooters

Tested: A Browning A-Bolt Micro Hunter in 7mm-08 Remington, a 7.62x39mm CZ 527 Carbine from CZ-USA, and a garish, but good, Savage Muddy Girl Camo in 243 Winchester.

Not every shooter averages 6 feet in height. Some people are physically closer to tank drivers than football defensive ends. With children and the increasing number of women participating in the shooting sports and in the hunting fields, there is growing need for rifles for more compact shooters. Therefore, we tested three compact centerfire hunting rifles in three short-action chamberings: the Browning A-Bolt Micro Hunter in 7mm-08 Remington, the CZ 527 Carbine in 7.62x39mm, and the Savage Axis II Compact in 243 Winchester.

As usual, we shot each rifle with three different kinds of ammunition. After sight in and chronograph testing with the Magnetospeed V3 chronograph, we shot five 5-round groups with each kind of ammunition from the bench using a Caldwell FireControl rest. Our shooting panel was a little differently configured than usual. Along with some of the usual testers, we had a youth group ranging from 8 to 17 years of age participating. You can imagine our fun with this enthusiastic group of testers! We also included some experienced women shooters. These two groups provided useful and sometimes surprising input. As two very different types of shooters tested this rifle, we will provide two sets of recommendations to reflect the different needs and experience of each type of shooter. Let's see if one of these rifles belongs in your gun safe.







Above, top to bottom: The CZ 527 Carbine in 7.62x39mm, the Browning A-Bolt Micro Hunter in 7mm-08 Remington, and the Savage Axis II Compact in 243 Winchester. All three had votes in their favor, but we prefer the Muddy Girl unit, even in pink.

Browning A-Bolt Micro Hunter 035020216 7mm-08 Rem., $578

This was a recent price from BudsGunShop.com. As the predecessor to today's X-bolt line, the Browning A-bolt first came out in 1984. The 7mm-08 Remington Micro Hunter we tested is a shortened and lightened version of the rifle, having a 20-inch barrel with recessed target crown. Our rifle weighed in at 6.33 pounds, had a very straight stock with little drop, and a length of pull of 13.3 inches and a total length of 39.4 inches. These dimensions placed the Browning in the middle of our test rifle lengths.

Brownings have usually been considered a premium factory rifle and typically display above-average fit and finish. Our test rifle was no exception. Despite our test rifle having extensive real-world field experience, the quality of the rifle showed through, displaying good stock fit with straight, densely grained black walnut and a nice

satin finish that has held up well to the rigors of hunting. The metal work has a nice, even matte-blued finish. The action has a distinctively sloped shape that helps it stand out from other rifles in the gun rack. The three-lug bolt is also unusual and works with a short 60-degree lift that is fast and helps with scope clearance. Every tester complimented the sleek and comfortable bolt handle and its flattened circular end for ease of use. Some testers stated that it was their favorite bolt handle on any rifle regardless of cost.

All controls were easy to operate. The safety is located on the tang and moved forward to fire. This shotgun-style safety is naturally ambidextrous and quick to snick off in the field.

The bolt release is a basic Mauser-style lever. Even the younger children found the bolt release and safety easy to work with their smaller, weaker hands. Inside the floorplate rests a removable box magazine holding three rounds of 7mm-08 Remington. This is useful in the field as best safety practices encourage the unloading of rifles when entering vehicles and going over fences or through streams. The trigger was the lightest in the test averaging 3.5 pounds over five pulls. It was smooth and consistent, with very little take-up, but showed some over-travel. As some of the testers were young and had weaker hands, the light trigger was a benefit to them.

The testers generally enjoyed shooting the Browning. The 7mm-08 Remington is a very well regarded hunting cartridge. This particular rifle is the property of a young lady who, while still in high school, cleanly put several Colorado cow elk into the freezer, so it does not lack for power. Some of the testers thought it was a little heavy to carry and hold. Recoil was noticeable, though the weight, along with a very good rubber butt pad, made the rifle reasonably comfortable to shoot. We noticed that many of the younger shooters found the recoil tiresome by the end of the evaluation session, so the recoil is something to keep in mind. For new shooters, we recommend

BROWNING A-BOLT MICRO HUNTER 035020216
7MM-08 REM., $578

GUN TESTS GRADE: A- (ADULTS)
GUN TESTS GRADE: C+ (YOUTH)

Probably too much rifle and recoil for the youngest shooters; otherwise, it's a great choice for an experienced shooter who's small of frame or any shooter wanting a light, compact rifle.



Action	Bolt, 3 lug; matte blued steel; 60-degree bolt lift	Fore-end	Rounded black walnut
Overall Length	39.4 in.	Trigger Style	Single stage
Overall Height w/o Scope	7.5 in.	Trigger Weight	3.5 lbs.
Maximum Width	1.9 in.	Safety	Tang-mounted 2 position, Fire forward; ambidextrous
Weight Unloaded	6.33 lbs.	Magazine Type	Hinged floorplate w/detachable box
Capacity	3+1	Magazine Release	Front of trigger guard; ambidextrous
Barrel	20 in. long; 1:9.5 twist; matte blued carbon steel; recessed target crown; sporter contour	Bolt Release	Mauser lever
Buttstock	One-piece satin-finish black walnut with semi-pistol grip; rubber buttpad	Sights	None supplied
Buttstock Length of Pull	13.3 in.	Receiver Scope Provisions	Drilled and tapped
Buttstock Drop @ Comb	0.6 in.	Warranty	NA
Buttstock Drop @ Heel	0.5 in.	Telephone	(800) 333-3288
		Website	Browning.com
		Made In	Japan

The three-lug bolt works with a short 60-degree lift that is fast. The sleek and comfortable bolt handle and its flattened circular end got high marks for ease of use.



The buttstock was very straight, with little drop at the comb or heel, and a length of pull of 13.3 inches. Despite our loaner test rifle having extensive field experience, the quality of densely grained black walnut and a nice satin finish has held up well to the rigors of hunting.



The metal work has a nice, even matte-blued finish. The action has a distinctively sloped shape that helps it stand out from other rifles in the gun rack.



CZ-USA CZ 527 YOUTH CARBINE 03050 7.62X39MM, $650

GUN TESTS GRADE: A- (ADULTS)

GUN TESTS GRADE: B+ (YOUTH)

All said and done, the CZ 527 Youth Carbine was a tool we would trust to work over a lifetime of hard use.



Action	Bolt, 2 lug; blued steel
Overall Length	37.4 in.
Overall Height w/o Scope	7.5 in.
Maximum Width	1.9 in.
Weight Unloaded	5.94 lbs.
Capacity	5+1
Barrel	18.5 in. long; 1:9.5 twist; blued carbon steel; recessed target crown
Buttstock	Turkish walnut, carbine style, rubber buttpad
Buttstock Length of Pull	13.5 in.
Buttstock Drop @ Comb	1.5 in.
Buttstock Drop @ Heel	2.0 in.
Fore-end	Turkish walnut
Trigger Style	Single stage
Trigger Weight	5.5 lbs.
Safety	Action-mounted 2 position, Safe forward
Magazine Type	Detachable Box
Magazine Release	Right-side tab
Bolt Release	Mauser lever
Front Sight	Ramped interchangeable blade
Rear Sight	Windage adj. U-notch
Sight Radius	13.5 in.
Receiver Scope Provisions	Integral base and rings
Warranty	5-year limited
Telephone	(800) 955-4486
Website	CZ-USA.com
Made In	Czech Republic

The action is dovetailed with an integral base for the CZ-supplied rings. The rifle also came with a sturdy steel front post and rear U-notch open sights. We liked having the iron sights in reserve.



The rifle wore a one-piece Turkish walnut stock with a semi pistol grip and a quarter-inch-thick rubber buttpad. The stock showed moderately grained wood that was straight through the wrist. Even with honest field wear, this rifle has held up well.



While testing the Federal Fusion in the CZ, we experienced two misfires. We were able to disassemble the bolt at the bench without tools, clean out the grunge, and reassemble the bolt, and start shooting again in just a few minutes.



that you keep the shooting sessions short. While a little too heavy for the smallest shooters, more experienced shooters found the Browning performed well in our snap-shooting drills, which consisted of shooting five times at a paper dinner plate at 50 yards off hand starting from the hip. The Browning consistently placed five out of five well-centered hits with this drill.

Though not a competition benchrest rifle, the Browning's accuracy is certainly adequate for its intended purpose. This example has the virtue of consistency, averaging 2- to 2.5-inch groups with all three types of ammunition. That consistency could come in handy if the user had to pick a different brand off the shelf on her way to a hunting trip. The Prvi Partizan boat-tailed soft point and Hornady Interlock both averaged 2.4-inch five-shot groups at 100 yards. The best ammunition in our test was the Federal Fusion, with the smallest individual group of 1.3 inches and an overall average of 2.1 inches. This testing took place during the height of a South Texas summer, which exposed the one weakness in the rifle. Despite the fact we never shot the rifle hotter than we could comfortably grab the barrel, this example exhibited some slight vertical stringing tendencies during the heat of the day and the end of the longer strings. Most shooters would probably never see this issue arise, but that is one of the reasons we test so vigorously. Because a shooter would likely never see this in the hunting fields, we did not consider this to be a significant issue. The rifle was flawlessly reliable, exhibiting no functional issues of any kind.

Our Team Said: While the rifle and recoil as tested were too heavy for the smallest shooters, the Browning is a great rifle for an experienced compact shooter or any shooter wanting a lighter, more compact rifle.

CZ-USA CZ 527 Youth Carbine 03050 7.62x39mm, $650

This was a recent price listed at BudsGunShop.com. Ceska Zbrojovka, more commonly known

RANGE DATA

PPU 7mm-08 Rem. 140-gr. Pointed Soft Point Boattail	Browning A-Bolt Micro Hunter
Average Velocity	2750 fps
Muzzle Energy	2350 ft.-lbs.
Power Factor	385
Smallest Group	2.1 in.
Largest Group	2.7 in.
Average Group	2.4 in.

Hornady Interlock 7mm-08 Rem. 139-gr.	Browning A-Bolt Micro Hunter
Average Velocity	2727 fps
Muzzle Energy	2295 ft.-lbs.
Power Factor	379
Smallest Group	1.6 in.
Largest Group	3.3 in.
Average Group	2.4 in.

Federal Fusion 7mm-08 Rem. 139-gr.	Browning A-Bolt Micro Hunter
Average Velocity	2745 fps
Muzzle Energy	2325 ft.-lbs.
Power Factor	382
Smallest Group	1.3 in.
Largest Group	3.4 in.
Average Group	2.1 in.

To collect accuracy data, we fired five 5-shot groups from a Caldwell FireControl rest. Distance: 100 yards. We recorded velocities using a MagnetoSpeed V3 Ballistic Chronograph.

RANGE DATA

Prvi Partizan 7.62x39 123-gr. Pointed Soft Point Boattail	CZ-USA 527 Carbine
Average Velocity	2367 fps
Muzzle Energy	1530 ft.-lbs.
Power Factor	291
Smallest Group	2.0 in.
Largest Group	3.1 in.
Average Group	2.8 in.

Hornady Interlock 7.62x39 123-gr. Z-Max Tipped Hollowpoint	CZ-USA 527 Carbine
Average Velocity	2363 fps
Muzzle Energy	1525 ft.-lbs.
Power Factor	291
Smallest Group	1.6 in.
Largest Group	3.0 in.
Average Group	2.6 in.

Wolf 7.62x39 124-gr. Hollowpoint	CZ-USA 527 Carbine
Average Velocity	2441 fps
Muzzle Energy	1640 ft.-lbs.
Power Factor	303
Smallest Group	1.4 in.
Largest Group	3.4 in.
Average Group	2.4 in.

To collect accuracy data, we fired five 5-shot groups from a Caldwell FireControl rest. Distance: 100 yards. We recorded velocities using a MagnetoSpeed V3 Ballistic Chronograph.

as CZ in the states, was first established in 1936 and has been responsible for the design and manufacture of many excellent firearms, including the famous CZ-75 9mm pistol. Here we test the company's bolt-action compact hunting rifle, the Model 527 Youth Carbine. The CZ 527 Youth Carbine uses a smaller and lighter version of the famous Mauser-controlled-feed bolt action. This renowned action has seen military and hunting service for more than 100 years and has a well-deserved reputation for safety and reliability. The action is dovetailed with an integral base for the CZ-supplied rings. The handle for the two-lug bolt was bent down to improve scope clearance. While the rifle is also available in 5.56 NATO and 6.5 Grendel, our sample was chambered for the 7.62x39mm (aka 7.62 Soviet) round. The action and light-profile 18.5-inch barrel were evenly blued steel and had a recessed target crown. Unique in our test was the sturdy steel front post and rear U-notch open sights with a 13.5-inch sighting radius mounted to this rifle. The experienced testers liked that the rifle had these iron sights in reserve. Interestingly, some of the younger shooters liked the iron sights more than the scope, probably due to head position on the stock. The rifle features an in-line detachable metal magazine holding five rounds that is released via a small tab on the right side of the rifle. As mentioned above, the removable magazine is a plus. The safety was also on the right side of the action and had two positions, forward for Safe and rearward for Fire. The bolt release was in classic Mauser style on the left side of the action. The rifle wore a one-piece Turkish walnut stock with a semi pistol grip and a quarter-inch-thick rubber buttpad. The CZ 527 Youth Carbine was the lightest rifle in the test at just under 6 pounds and the shortest at 37.25 inches in length. The stock showed moderately grained wood that was straight through the wrist. Our test sample was another loaner rifle that had experienced honest wear but has held up well and still looked good.

Most testers found the controls easy to use. The one exception was the left-handed shooter in the group who found that the safety and the magazine release were not easily accessible. The more experienced shooters did not care for the safety having to be moved to the rear to fire as it was awkward and counter to most of

RANGE DATA

Prvi Partizan 243 Winchester 90-gr. Soft Point	**Savage Axis II**
Average Velocity	2966 fps
Muzzle Energy	1757 ft.-lbs.
Power Factor	267
Smallest Group	1.5 in.
Largest Group	3.5 in.
Average Group	2.5 in.

Prvi Partizan 243 Winchester 100-gr. Soft Point	**Savage Axis II**
Average Velocity	2855 fps
Muzzle Energy	1809 ft.-lbs.
Power Factor	286
Smallest Group	0.9 in.
Largest Group	2.5 in.
Average Group	1.5 in.

Hornady 243 Winchester 95-gr. Hollowpoint	**Savage Axis II**
Average Velocity	2872 fps
Muzzle Energy	1739 ft.-lbs.
Power Factor	273
Smallest Group	1.6 in.
Largest Group	2.4 in.
Average Group	2.0 in.

To collect accuracy data, we fired five 5-shot groups from a Caldwell FireControl rest. Distance: 100 yards. We recorded velocities using a MagnetoSpeed V3 Ballistic Chronograph.

their experience. The trigger had some grit on take up but very little overtravel. The trigger felt lighter than its average pull weight of 5.5 pounds. The bolt travel on this rifle was particularly smooth and had a 90-degree lift. As a true Mauser action, the bolt is easily assembled and dissembled without tools.

The CZ seemed to be the happy middle ground for our testers. Not too heavy in either weight or recoil, most of our testers (youth and adult) found the CZ to be their favorite from field shooting positions, as long as time in position and the round count was kept reasonably low. While the 7.62x39mm Soviet will not win many long-distance competitions, its power is roughly equivalent to a 30-30 Winchester and is perfectly adequate against medium game (deer, hogs, coyotes) at commonly encountered hunting distances (under 200 yards). The 7.62x39mm also has the virtue of being one of the cheapest centerfire cartridges to shoot, with surplus ammo being plentiful. This can be a critical factor as increased shooting experience tends to promote increased shooting skill. While the CZ 527 was the least accurate of the three rifles with the ammunition tested, the accuracy was still effective for its intended purpose. The CZ 527 secured five well-centered hits out of five times with the snap-shooting drill, though the groups were slightly larger than the Browning. The most accurate ammunition was also happily the least expensive tested: the Wolf 124-grain jacketed hollow point. The Wolf averaged a 2.4-inch group, with the largest being a 3.4-inch outlier and the smallest 1.4 inches. The 123-grain Federal Fusion followed closely at an average of 2.6 inches with the largest of 3.0 inches and the smallest being 1.6 inches. We would probably choose this excellent controlled-expansion round for hunting. The PPU 123-grain soft point trailed with a 2.8-inch average with the smallest group being 2.0 inches and the largest group at 3.1 inches. One thing we noted in our shooting log was the first round often shot a little low. We did experience a couple of issues with this rifle. The younger shooters found the fourth round was consistently balky to load into the magazine. It didn't affect reliability but was a little frustrating for some of the younger shooters. The more significant issue occurred while testing the Federal Fusion. We experienced two misfires while shooting for groups. This was where the Mauser design shone. We were able to disassemble the bolt at the bench without tools, clean out the grunge, reassemble the bolt, and start shooting again in just a few minutes. (While we can't know for certain, we suspect that a lot of surplus ammo has cycled through this rifle and may have contributed to this malfunction.) We experienced no other malfunctions once we cleaned up the bolt interior.

Our Team Said: Though a little more accuracy would be appreciated, the CZ 527 Youth Carbine proved to be a pleasant, reliable, and effective tool for its purpose and was well liked by most testers. The CZ 527 was the favorite of the adult shooters looking for a light and compact rifle that was affordable.

Savage AXIS II XP Compact 243 Winchester

Founded in 1894 by Jamaica-born Arthur Savage, Savage firearms have built a variety of civilian and military firearms over its history. The rifle we tested from Savage was the Axis II XP Compact in 243 Winchester. This particular model wore a synthetic one-piece stock with a textured and grooved fore-end and a very thick rubber buttpad. Our sample was in the pink Muddy Girl camouflage pattern. Girls were our largest test group. They all loved the stock. (The 8-year-old boy did not. Go figure.) One knock on the hollow stock is that the stock is noisy when struck. This could be an issue in the hunting fields. The action was drilled and tapped and came with a serviceable Weaver 3-9x scope. The fact that a scope came with the rifle as a combo provides a clear economic advantage for the Savage.

The Savage had the greatest drop at the comb at 1.7 inches. This made it a little difficult for some of the smaller shooters to get good sight alignment with the scope. For youth shooters, this could be easily and

cheaply fixed with some tape until the shooter grows up. However, this could be a more significant comfort factor for mature shooters. The Axis II possesses a user-adjustable AccuTrigger, which was universally liked by all the testers as it came out of the box. The AccuTrigger is easily recognized by the internal lever set in the middle of the trigger shoe. This lever must be depressed before the trigger can be pulled. This additional part allows for a light and consistent trigger pull (4.3-pound average) with very little take up or over travel. All this happens naturally without a second thought from the shooter, while still allowing a greater margin of safety.

The Axis II has a matte-black carbon-steel action, a two-lug bolt, and a 20-inch barrel with a rounded crown. The bolt handle has a slightly flattened profile. Bolt travel was smooth, but some of the younger shooters found it occasionally difficult to close. The bolt release required the simultaneous pressing of the small and stiff bolt-release lever and pressing the trigger. Every shooter found this awkward, but the shooters with smaller hands found it very difficult to operate. Youth shooters would almost certainly require assistance to remove the bolt. The rifle features a plastic four-round detachable magazine with the release latch on the front that pressed inward. At first, the release tab was a little balky, but it quickly broke in and caused no further trouble. The serrated plastic safety is mounted on the tang and was easy for all testers to use. The testers liked the fact that it was ambidextrous and that it slid forward to fire. While some of the testers didn't care for the fact that the safety was plastic, the design of the tang allowed for some protection for the safety button.

As to be expected for a rifle in 243 Winchester, the recoil from the Savage was the lightest in the test. Everyone enjoyed shooting the rifle, but the youngest and lightest shooters strongly preferred the recoil of the Savage. For the other two rifles,

SAVAGE AXIS II COMPACT MUDDY GIRL 22230 243 WINCHESTER, $490

GUN TESTS GRADE: B (ADULTS)

GUN TESTS GRADE: A (YOUTH)

The lightest-recoiling and most-accurate rifle. Clear winner as a youth rifle — in particular for young ladies. For adults, this rifle might actually be too light. We couldn't locate the source of the occasional flyer.



Action	Bolt, 2 lug; matte-black steel
Overall Length	39.75 in.
Overall Height w/o Scope	6.6 in.
Maximum Width	1.9 in.
Weight Unloaded	6.5 lbs.
Capacity	4+1
Barrel	20 in. long; 1:9.25 twist; matte-black carbon steel; button rifled; rounded crown
Buttstock	One-piece composite w/semi-pistol grip; Pink Muddy Girl camo; rubber buttpad
Buttstock Length of Pull	12.9 in.
Buttstock Drop @ Comb	1.75 in.
Buttstock Drop @ Heel	1.75 in.
Forend	Rounded composite; textured, grooved
Trigger Style	Single stage
Trigger Weight	4.3 lbs., adj. AccuTrigger
Safety	Tang-mounted 2 position, Fire forward; ambidextrous
Magazine Type	Detachable Box
Magazine Release	Front of magazine; ambidextrous
Bolt Release	Trigger and tab
Sights	Boresighted Weaver 3-9x scope & rings
Receiver Scope Provisions	Drilled and tapped
Warranty	1-year limited
Telephone	(800) 370-0708
Website	SavageArms.com
Made In	U.S.A.



Bolt travel for the Savage was smooth, but some of the younger shooters found it occasionally difficult to close. As to be expected for a rifle in 243 Winchester, the recoil from the Savage was the lightest in the test.



The action was drilled and tapped and came with a serviceable Weaver 3-9x scope — a clear economic advantage for the Savage.



The Savage had the greatest drop at the comb at 1.7 inches. This made it a little difficult for some of the smaller shooters to get good sight alignment with the scope.

VALUE GUIDE: BOLT-ACTION RIFLES (MULTIPLE CHAMBERINGS)			
GUN NAME	**ISSUE**	**GRADE**	**COMMENTS**
Desert Tech SRS-A1 6.5 Creedmoor, $4495	Nov. 2017	A	Test results proved the SRS-A1 is at the top of the pyramid.
Ruger Hawkeye Mark IV VT 17980 6.5 Creedmoor, $1139	Nov. 2017	B+	Rough bolt action, but in terms of accuracy, the Hawkeye deserved an A.
Legacy Sports Howa HCR 6.5 Creedmoor, $1450	Nov. 2017	C	The HCR should grade higher based on its ergonomics and simplicity.
Remington Model 700 SPS Tactical 85538 308 Win., $600	Oct. 2017	B+	This short rifle isn't the most accurate, but the overall handling is superb.
Remington Model 700 SPS Varmint 84218 308 Win., $606	Oct. 2017	B+	Hard to find a production rifle that is capable of greater practical accuracy than the SPS Varmint.
Savage Axis 19223 308 Winchester, $240	Oct. 2017	C	Accuracy wasn't the best. The rifle was dogged by a heavy trigger that we chose to fix.
Remington Model 783 #85847 308 Winchester, $340	March 2017	A	Best Buy. This was the most accurate rifle tested, and there were no demerits to topple the 783.
Remington 700 SPS 85538 308 Winchester, $655	March 2017	A-	If you're looking for a maneuverable choice, there are few that are nearly as handy as this one.
Savage Axis XP 19231 308 Winchester, $390	March 2017	B	Accuracy wasn't the best, but accuracy was acceptable with the provided Weaver riflescope.
Mossberg 100 All-Terrain Rifle 27230 308 Win., $200 (Used)	March 2017	C	The rifle did not misfeed. We liked the cheek rest. The primary problem was accuracy.
Thompson Center Compass No. 10071 22-250 Remington, $399	Feb. 2017	A	Simple, straightforward, and inexpensive. Delivered sub-minute-of-angle groups with all rounds tested.
Browning X-Bolt Micro Midas 035346209 22-250 Rem., $860	Feb. 2017	B+	This is a super-handy rifle for the whole family, and it can fit just about anywhere.
Log on to **Gun-Tests.com** to read complete reviews of these products in the designated months. Highly-ranked products from older reviews are often available used at substantial discounts.			

many of the test shooters were happy to stop after five rounds. With the Savage, the test shooters wanted to keep shooting even after 20 rounds. This is a really important factor for new shooters because they are likely to get more quality practice with the Savage than with the other two rifles. Though the Savage kept all five shoots on the paper plate during our snap-shooting drills, the spread was greatest with the Savage. Our testers attributed this to the light weight of the rifle making it less steady (more whippy) for the shooter performing the snap drills. Of course, shooters with less upper body strength might find this rifle's weight and balance to be perfect. As a prospective buyer, we would recommend that you try some gun-mounting drills in the shop before you purchase the rifle to see how the rifle performs for you. That being said, the Savage proved to be the most accurate rifle from the bench. The Prvi Partizan 100-grain soft point was the star of the test, with an average group size of 1.5 inches at 100 yards. Smallest group was 0.9 inches, with the largest group measuring 2.5 inches. With speeds in excess of 2800 fps, energy was above 1800 foot-pounds. The next-best cartridge was the Federal 95-grain Fusion, with very similar velocity and energy results as the Partizan 100-grain soft point. This consistent round averaged right at 2.0 inches, with a best of 1.6 and a worst of 2.4 inches. This is a well-constructed bullet with plenty of energy, so it should perform well on medium-sized game if the shooter

VALUE GUIDE: BOLT-ACTION RIFLES (MULTIPLE CHAMBERINGS)			
GUN NAME	**ISSUE**	**GRADE**	**COMMENTS**
CZ USA 557 Sporter Short Action 04806 243 Winchester, $792	Feb. 2017	B+	The 557's refined looks belied its rugged durability, but its heavier weight did not seem to tame recoil.
Legacy Sports Howa Mini Action HMA90622MCC+ 6.5 Grendel, $855	Feb. 2017	C	This otherwise top-grade rifle was spoiled by weak magazine retention.
Ruger Precision Rifle 18008 6.5 Creedmoor, $1599	Nov. 2016	A	This is another solid effort by Ruger. They took an already good gun and made it a touch better.
Blaser R8 Professional 30-06 Springfield, $3787	Sept. 2016	A-	The R8 was pricey, but it offered interchangeable barrels, a safe firing system, and good accuracy.
Mauser M12 30-06 Springfield, $1799	Sept. 2016	A-	The M12 performed well and had a smoothly operating bolt, but the wood looked dated.
Mossberg MVP Long Range (LR) 27697 7.62 NATO/308 Win., $945	July 2016	A-	The MVP LR is well suited as an entry-level rifle for long-range shooting..
Howa Alpine Mountain Package HMR33143+VX 308 Win., $1577	July 2016	B+	Lightweight and accurate, but we thought the mag release may be an issue for some hunters.
Ruger Precision Rifle 18001 308 Win., $1399	April 2016	A	Out of the box, this is an easy-to-shoot rifle that is very accurate for the price point.
Tikka T3 CTR 308 Winchester, $950	April 2016	A-	If you want a rifle to both hunt and do long-range shooting, then the CTR would be a good choice.
Savage Arms Model 12 LRP 19137 6.5 Creedmoor, $1252	Jan. 2016	A	The Model 12 LRP shot the smallest groups of the test with every round we tried.
Ruger Precision Rifle 18005 6.5 Creedmoor, $1399	Jan. 2016	A-	Adjustability and AR-15 ergonomics make this rifle appealing and easy to shoot
Howa 24-Inch HB 6.5 Creedmoor, HKF92507KH+AB $1000	Jan. 2016	B+	Many of the benefits of a heavy-caliber hunting rifle with very little of the punishing abuse.
Log on to **Gun-Tests.com** to read complete reviews of these products in the designated months. Highly-ranked products from older reviews are often available used at substantial discounts.			

does his or her part and would be our choice for field work. Coming in third was the Partizan 90-grain soft point, with a still-respectable 2.5-inch average group. At almost 3000 fps muzzle velocity, the largest group came in at 3.5 inches and the smallest group was 1.5 inches. While pleasant and relatively cheap to shoot, we would probably pass on this round in this particular rifle. While the rifle did shoot well, when reviewing the targets and shooting logs, we did note that many groups experienced a flyer (a round hitting away from the main body of the group). This happened with all three types of ammunition we sampled. However, analyzing our shooting logs, we could not find any pattern to the flyers. While not a significant issue, the frequent flyers did somewhat reduce our confidence in the rifle if we needed to make a particularly demanding shot. The rifle was very dependable, and we experienced no functional issues while testing this rifle.

Our Team Said: Our lightest-recoiling and most-accurate rifle, the lightweight Savage would be our clear choice for a youth rifle. The young ladies in the group loved this distinctive stock. For adult mature shooters, this rifle might actually be too light. For more experienced shooters who are truly capable of a high level of precision, the occasional flyer presented by this sample prevents it from being our first choice.

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

Non-1911 Magazines: We Test A Passel of Them Head to Head

In this hard-core test of impact and function, we followed the same criteria we used in testing 1911 magazines, except this test was more diverse in both handguns and cartridges.

You can never have enough magazines. Modern pistol shooters practice hard; compete in IDPA, IPSC, and Three Gun matches. They need reliable equipment. Personal-defense shooters need reliable, functional magazines at a fair price. In this installment, we are testing magazines for fit, function, reliability and durability. In common with recoil, striker, and hammer springs, magazines should be replaced from time to time. While new springs may help magazines retain some function, there is a time when cracked or bent feed lips demand the magazine be discarded.

In this test, we followed the same criteria we used in testing 1911 magazines, except this test was more diverse in both handguns and cartridges. The handguns used in the test were proven examples, with few function exceptions. Since the firearms had long-ago proven reliable, there would be no confusion as to which part was responsible for the malfunction, the pistol or the magazine. We also used good-quality ammunition to test the magazines. In each case, we used at least two magazines of each type to bang on.

Using proven criteria and a team of experienced raters, we learned some magazines were durable and service grade; that is, we would be comfortable putting them into "service" in critical situations. We also learned others were okay for range use, but not critical use. In all of these cases, we recommend spending a little more for service-grade magazines across the board for all uses. We don't think it's advisable to mix low performers with high performers in this critical area of function.





Modern pistol shooters need reliable, functional magazines at a fair price, so we tested a bunch for fit, function, reliability, and durability. We visually checked each magazine as well as function-checked them in a variety of ways, including after a bruising drop test, right, which caused unexpected malfunctions.

Criteria

To test the magazines, our shooters first performed a visual inspection of fit, finish, welds, and other external factors. Then, we had shooters fit the loaded magazine into the magazine well and lock it in place with the slide closed. Next, we assessed the difficulty of ejecting an unloaded magazine when the release button is pressed, and then the difficulty, if any, of dropping the slide on a loaded magazine. Next, we checked feed reliability. Also, ease of loading and lack of follower binding were noted. We tested the magazines with standard full-metal-jacket bullets, jacketed hollowpoints, and +P loads when possible, depending upon the cartridge. We fired one full magazine load of each type in each magazine. After firing, the follower was checked for excess wear.

Next, we loaded the magazines and dropped them on a concrete pad from 4 feet, attempting a drop on the base of the magazine. Each magazine was given two drops. Then we left the surviving magazines fully loaded for six months with the proper ammunition. They had to come up shooting. Our experience in leaving 1911 magazines loaded for 12 months led us to believe that six months is more than adequate for this type of low-load testing.

Following, then, are several pistols for which we located aftermarket magazines and put the accessories through the wringer:

Tokarev TT33 7.62x25mm

The Tokarev pistol is surprisingly popular and is even an occasional carry gun of one of our raters. The field of replacement magazines isn't particularly broad with this pistol. The pistol itself was a used TT33 Romanian-build handgun made in 1953. To test its function, we fed it Sellier & Bellot 86-grain full-metal-jacket rounds (FMJs) and Wolf 85-grain jacketed hollowpoints (JHPs). We had three sets of magazines: original Tokarevs, 1953 manufacture, supplied with the Romanian pistol; "Made in Taiwan" magazines (and otherwise unmarked) obtained





Other than the 1953-issue magazine scuffed at left, the Tokarev magazines had good finish. The Tokarev magazines are similar, but not identical. There was a slight dimensional difference in the Taiwan type that lead to them not locking back the slide reliably.



The Mec-Gar magazine for the Browning Hi-Power on the left is new. The one on the right shows wear, but not a lot, from a decade or more of use.



Above is a corner of a Browning Hi-Power magazine bent during the drop test. It continued to work as designed.



Above: The John Inglis Hi-Power magazines performed without fail. However, the Mec-Gar magazines had an anti-friction coating that allowed for easier loading.

at a gun show, $22; and unmarked Tokarev magazines obtained from JGSales.com for $20 each.

The original and the J&G Sales magazines appeared identical, save the J&G Sales magazine was as new. The original was well worn. The gun show magazine with the made-in-Taiwan sticker was similar; however, the weld line was rougher. The base pad seemed thicker as well. Fit and finish were good with all magazines. The magazines passed all testing, save one trial the Taiwan magazines failed. They would not lock the slide back after the last shot about half the time. We invested an extra 20 rounds, firing two at a time, to discover and isolate this defect. Because there are better, more reliable options for the same money, we don't see a need to buy the unbranded version.

Romanian Tokarev Original
GUN TESTS GRADE: A
J&G Sales
GUN TESTS GRADE: A
Taiwan-Made Unmarked
GUN TESTS GRADE: F

Browning Hi-Power 9mm Luger

The Browning Hi-Power is widely used for personal defense and is still in service in the Middle East and Afghanistan. Two of our raters have Hi-Powers on the front line for personal defense.

Our test gun was a Browning Hi-Power, 1977, Kareen ex-Israeli military model. Ammo choices were Winchester USA 115-grain JHPs and Winchester USA 124-grain PDX +P. The magazines were three Mec-Gar 13-round units from Brownells.com, $20 each; three Canadian John Inglis original 1944-manufacture units; two FNH Hi-Power units from Gunclips.net, $60 each; two 1977-issue original Hi-Power magazines; two additional Israeli-issue magazines that came with the Kareen pistol; and two 22-round Triple K units from Triplek.com, $36 each.

We noted a difference, an anti-friction coating, between the Mec-Gar magazines and others. During the act of loading magazines, as a cartridge rolls against the metal of the springs and magazine body and other cartridges, friction is produced. Mec-Gar claims you can actually feel the difference the anti-friction feature makes during loading, and we agree. Bottom line: All the magazines worked well, save for the Triple K. We could load only 19 rounds in the Triple K magazines, although they were advertised as 22-round magazines. We thought it would be fun to fire an extended magazine for the Hi-Power, but after several tries, we gave up. The magazine looked okay in finish and fit, but it refused to function to its promoted specifications. Also, we never got more than four cartridges in a row to feed in the Triple Ks, even after spraying lube in the magazine body and on the cartridges. Triple K magazines were not subjected to the 6-month test. All other magazines passed the test. We graded the FNH magazines down a half slot based on their high price. The Inglis magazines cannot

be graded down based on poor finish because they are more than 70 years old. We also noted that the Hi-Power fed properly designed JHP loads without malfunction of any type, including the John Inglis.

Mec-Gar 13-Round
GUN TESTS GRADE: A (OUR PICK)
John Inglis 1944
GUN TESTS GRADE: A
FNH from Gunclips.net
GUN TESTS GRADE: A-
Browning 1977 Issue
GUN TESTS GRADE: A-
Kareen Original
GUN TESTS GRADE: A-
Triple K
GUN TESTS GRADE: F

CZ-75 9mm Luger

We have used a lot of CZ handguns in several Gun Tests features, and a number of our raters use these handguns as carry guns. Across the board, magazines we surveyed for this pistol were each well made and well finished, but some were better than others.

Our test pistols we used to check function include a CZ-75B 9mm, a pre CZ-75B 9mm, a CZ-P01 9mm, a CZ-75 D 9mm, and a Canik 55 9mm. Ammo used included Winchester USA 115-grain FMJ, Fiocchi 115-grain Extrema, handloaded Hornady 124-grain XTPs over Titegroup powder to produce 1090 fps, and Double Tap 115-grain JHP +Ps. As far as magazines, we started with the broad class of factory magazines from our test guns, basically using those magazines as standards. We also bought two factory CZ compact 9mm magazines from GalatinInternational.com, $44 each; two CZ-75 full-size magazines made by Mec-Gar from CheaperThanDirt.com, $20 each; and two CZ-75 compact magazines, also by Mec-Gar, $20 each from MidwayUSA.com.

Factory-new magazines are much more expensive than the aftermarket Mec-Gars. Canik-brand pistols use Mec-Gar magazines, and we confirmed that Mec-Gar compact CZ magazines lock, load, and function in the full-size CZ-75 and the CZ-75 compact. A note on CZ-75 magazines: The original CZ-75 used a single locking slot in the magazine. Modern magazines use two. Modern magazines fit and function in older pistols, but not vice versa. While original types are available, if you own both types, it is best to order the modern magazines. We tested function using an AT-84 CZ-75 clone. While the magazines are unmarked and the level of fit and finish is not up to current Mec-Gar standards, they worked fine. The CZ magazines appeared identical to the Mec-Gars; however, new production CZ magazines have a black follower, while Mec-Gar features a blue follower. Whoever actually manufactures the CZ-75 factory magazine, it is high quality, but pricey. All magazines passed the test, including the unmarked AT-84 magazines. The Mec-Gar magazines are better finished, but the older AT-84 magazines gave up nothing in performance. We rated the factory CZ magazine down a half grade based on the high price. The AT-84 magazines were rated down a half grade based on finish. We particularly liked the Rami's compact magazine with finger shield that allows a longer grip and use of a longer magazine without drawback. Also, we like bumper-pad magazines in a service or holster gun. While they add to the height of a compact concealed-carry handgun, they make a difference when striking concrete.

As an example, one of the older CZ-75 base plates cracked during the drop test, but we did not notice it until well into the test. The question was, should we rate it down for cracking (because of abuse in the test)



Among the magazines we really liked was this extended magazine for the CZ RAMI, actually a CZ-P01 magazine.



We initially did not like the appearance of the drop pad on this original CZ-75 magazine. After the test, we loved it!



The follower of the CZ-75 design magazine rides completely in the magazine and is the least likely of any design tested to snag, we felt.



The CZ-75 Mec-Gars with anti-friction coating are left, the Compact 10-round unit and right, the 17-round flush fit.

or leave it alone because it worked in every test after cracking? We chose the latter.

Mec-Gar CZ-75 Full-Size Magazine
GUN TESTS GRADE: A
Mec-Gar CZ-75 Compact Magazine
GUN TESTS GRADE: A
Canik 55 9mm Luger Magazines
GUN TESTS GRADE: A
AT-84 Used Gun Magazines
GUN TESTS GRADE: A-
CZ-75 Factory Magazines
GUN TESTS GRADE: A-

Glock 17L

The Glock 17 has become an icon for reliability, despite its magazines having been through several generations. The current Glock 17 magazine is arguably among the most reliable feed devices ever manufactured. For a magazine to compete with the factory Glock magazine, the aftermarket unit would have to be less expensive or offer some advantage, as well as working perfectly. Of course, we used Factory Glock Magazines, $20 each, and we also tested MagPul 9mm 17-round magazines from MagPul.com, $16 each; KNS 9mm 17-round magazines from JGSales.com, $13 each; and ProMag 17-round magazines from CheaperThanDirt.com, $13 each.

Our test handgun was a Glock 17L fed with Federal American Eagle 115-grain FMJs, Federal 150-grain HST bullets, and Federal 9mm Luger 115-grain JHP +P+ rounds. We also fed the mags into an MPA 9mm pistol configured to accept Glock magazines and put TomKat 158-grain roundnose lead bullets and Black Hills 115-grain FMJs into it. The MPA pistol was only tested with Glock , KNS, and MagPul magazines. The good news is the Glock and the big Masterpiece Arms pistol functioned perfectly with all loads.

We felt that it was important to test the magazines with both the subsonic and +P loads preferred by different users. Subsonics have less recoil impulse, and the +P+ loads increase slide velocity and challenge the magazine to feed properly. The factory Glock is the best-made magazine as far as feel and finish and integrity. The ProMag was the cheapest in appearance. However, the drop test was not kind to the ProMag. The ProMag base plate, follower, and spring separated in both magazines, one on the first drop and the other on the second. Oddly, the 15 cartridges went to the left of the standing rater, and the follower was found about 5 feet away on the right. There are bushes and trees around the test site, but the magazine spring would have had to travel 10 feet or so to have been lost, but we never found it.

The MagPul suffered a qualified failure. After passing all firing tests, the MagPul failed the drop test. The cartridges were cocked in the feed mouth. Evidently, the magazine spring was depressed by the load of cartridges under inertia, and when it returned to full strength, the cartridge was pointing straight up. This occurred half



After passing all firing tests, the MagPul failed the drop test. The cartridges were cocked in the feed mouth. It required some shaking to get it back into action.



This is what the ProMag Glock magazine looked like after it failed the drop test. The ProMag base plate, follower, and spring separated in both magazines, one on the first drop and the other on the second.



Glock magazines suffered dents and nicks after the drop tests, but they continued to function.

the time. The drop test did not damage the MagPul, but it required some shaking to get it back into action. The KNS magazine suffered a number of short cycles with the +P+ ammunition. In many cases, professionals have recommended that a service magazine have the same name as the gun. In this test, that recommendation is given validity. For service use, we would recommend using Glock magazines in the Glock 17.

Factory Glock Magazine
GUN TESTS GRADE: A (OUR PICK)
KNS 17-Round
GUN TESTS GRADE: B
MagPul 17-Round
GUN TESTS GRADE: C
ProMag 17-Round
GUN TESTS GRADE: D

Glock 22

The handguns we used for this section included a Glock 22 and a Glock 35, both chambered in 40 S&W. The ammo used included Winchester 155-grain Silvertips, Black Hills Ammunition 180-grain JHPs, and Federal 180-grain SynTechs. The magazines were Glock Factory

magazines, $35 each at Cabelas.com; Elite Tactical Systems magazines, $17 from CheaperThanDirt.com; Scherer extended 29-round magazines, purchased from a vendor at a gun show for $20 each; and the KNS extended 29-round magazine, purchased for $15 each, also at a gun-show vendor.

To cut to the chase, Glock factory magazines passed every test without fail and without question, even though the ones that came with our Glock 22 test gun are at least 10 years old. This old service pistol and its original magazines keep plugging. The Elite Tactical Systems magazine is affordable and features translucent plastic construction. It locked in place and seemed to fit and function well. Firing tests were good, with positive function. However each of the Elites failed the drop test. The magazine simply fell apart and ejected the cartridges. We were able to put one back together by really hammering the baseplate. On the second try, it failed as well. The Korean-made KNS magazines suffered short cycles, usually toward the middle of the magazine load. In addition to the short cycles, these magazines failed to lock the Glock 22 back about half of the time with all loads. We suffered one of the oddest malfunctions ever when dropping the KNS magazine. The top round sprung loose and reversed the nose to the rear. This odd problem never repeated itself. It is the type of thing that keeps gun testing interesting and even baffling. During the drop tests, this was the only failure. The short cycles cannot be tolerated for service, and neither could the failure to lock. As far as design goes, we really liked the magazine-roughening treatment on the side of the magazine body.

The Scherer magazine has only one locking cut-out, while the Korean magazine has two. The Glock has one cut-out. The Korean magazine has a metal insert similar to, but not equal to, the Glock. The Scherer does not. At any rate, the Scherer gave superior function and feed, but it did not hold the slide open half of the time. We did not subject any of the three aftermarket magazines — Elite Tactical, KNS, or Scherer — to a six-month test since they failed the function testing. Also, the Elite Tactical Systems magazines were destroyed during testing anyway.

Glock Factory 40 S&W Magazine
GUN TESTS GRADE: A
Scherer Extended 29-Round Glock Magazine
GUN TESTS GRADE: B-
KNS Extended 29-Round Glock Magazine
GUN TESTS GRADE: C
Elite Tactical Systems Glock Magazine
GUN TESTS GRADE: F

Taurus PT92 AF

Our test handgun for this section was a used Taurus 92AF 9mm. We function-tested the magazines with Black Hills Ammunition 115-grain FMJs, Tomkat 158-grain RNLs, Federal HST 124-grain JHPs, and



We tested three 40 S&W Glock aftermarket magazines with poor results. From top are the Elite Tactical Systems clear magazine, the Scherer extended-round magazine, and the KNS extended magazine.



There is a fun factor with a clear magazine loaded with Federal Syntech loads, and it was feed reliable. The Elite Tactical magazine isn't service grade however. The Elite Tactical Glock 40 S&W magazine came apart during the drop test.



The KNS 40-caliber magazine was prone to malfunction with all loads. We could get a string of rounds out of the KNS magazine, but not a full load.



Although the Scherer Glock 40 S&W magazine, right, lacks metal inserts, it performed better than the KNS at left. In repeated drops, the Scherer magazine suffered a shifting base plate, but did not fail outright.



Factory Taurus PT92 magazines are recommended over the Taiwan-marked types.



Note pinched body of 1911 magazines, downsized in order to properly feed the 9mm Luger cartridge.





We used Ruger 9mm magazines both with and without the warning sticker removed. There were no problems of any type. Inset: The second Ruger 9mm handgun suffered a minimal number of break-in malfunctions that were not attributed to the magazines, and they cleared up on their own.

Winchester PDX 124-grain +P rounds. Purchased separately, Taurus-brand 17-round 9mm magazines are $27 at CheaperThanDirt.com. We couldn't identify the manufacturer of the Taiwan-marked mags, so we're unable to price them.

This pistol was purchased used with four magazines, two Taurus and two magazines marked Taiwan. This is our first experience with these latter magazines. During the test program, the Taurus magazines functioned and passed all testing. However, the Taiwan-marked magazines did not lock the slide open on the last shot in every instance in which we fired the pistol. Also, they failed the drop test, losing five to seven rounds in each drop. We tried downloading the Taiwan magazines to 15 rounds, and this did not help with the drop test. They never failed to feed, but we rated them down two grades for a failed drop test and a failed slide lockback.

Taurus PT92 AF
Factory Magazine
GUN TESTS GRADE: A
Taiwan-Marked
PT92 AF Magazine
GUN TESTS GRADE: C

1911 9mm Magazines

We did not test 9mm magazines during the 1911 magazine test, largely based on space and time. The 9mm is immensely popular, and we felt that we would be remiss not to test these magazines at some point. As it turned out, there are a number of excellent choices.

We tested with a Citadel Compact 9mm supplied from the factory with flush-fit Metalform magazines. We also used two Ruger SR1911 9mms and a Springfield Range Officer 1911 9mm. Ammunition included Black Hills Ammunition 115-grain FMJs, 115-grain Hornady XTPs over WW231 for a 1160 fps handload, and a +P handload with Hornady 115-grain XTP and WW231 for 1340 fps. Our test magazines included Ruger SR1911 9-round units, $40 each from Ruger.com; Checkmate 1911 9mm magazines, $22 each from

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TopGunSupply.com; Metalform 1911 9mm 10-round mags, $29 each from MidwayUSA.com; Mec-Gar 1911 9mm 9-round magazines, $18 each from MidwayUSA.com; and Metalform Officers Model magazines supplied with the Citadel 9mm pistol.

The 9mm Ruger-branded magazines showed excellent fit and finish. It was difficult to load nine rounds into them at first; we gave up and after a break-in period, we found that nine rounds could be loaded. A tight spring is beneficial to proper feeding. Just be aware of how stiff these springs really are. These magazines are great performers. However, we rated them down a half grade based on price. These magazines are manufactured by Checkmate for Ruger. Simply order the Checkmate and save money. The Metalform 10-round magazine attempts to stuff as many rounds as possible into the 9mm 1911. The magazines are well made and always function. The last round is a little hard to load. With 10 rounds in the Metalforms, it was sometimes difficult to slam the magazines home. They work well and are well made, but are not our favorites. We would be happy using a 9-round magazine plus one in the chamber for an easy-to-remember 10 total round count. The extra effort in slapping the magazine home isn't worthwhile, we felt. With the pistol at slide lock, the problem did not exist, simply slam in ten rounds and begin shooting. The Mec-Gar magazines are a good buy and work well in all pistols tested. They offer a good price point. The Metalform magazines supplied with the factory Citadel pistol gave excellent performance. They are stainless steel and are comparable to the Ruger magazines.

Checkmate 9-Round 9mm Luger Magazines
GUN TESTS GRADE: A (BEST BUY)
Ruger SR1911 9-Round 9mm Luger Magazines
GUN TESTS GRADE: A
Mec-Gar 9-Round 9mm Magazines
GUN TESTS GRADE: A
Metalform 1911 9-Round 9mm standard
GUN TESTS GRADE: A
Metalform 1911 10-round 9mm
GUN TESTS GRADE: A-

1911 38 Super Magazines

As with the 1911-style 9mm Luger magazines, we thought it worthwhile to check out the 38 Super chambering as well. For this section, we used two RIA pistols chambered for 38 Super and one Ruger SR1911 converted to 38 Super by Bar-Sto Precision. Into the guns we fed Federal American Eagle 115-grain JHPs in 38 Super, as well as SIG Elite 125-grain FMJs and SIG Elite 124-grain V Crown hollowpoints. The magazines were Colt Factory 1911 38 Super models that came with the RIA pistols and Mec-Gar 1911 38 Super units, which cost $15 apiece from CheaperThanDirt.com, and Triple K 15-round 38 Super magazines, $38 each from TripleK.com.

The Triple K 15-round magazines failed to lock the slide open on the last shot and were rated down and not tested in the long-term program. Colt Factory magazines are well made, but on occasion when loading, the follower scraped the inside of the magazine body and seemed to take a dive against the front of the magazine body. They never failed and passed all testing. The Mec-Gars caused no problems, so they get the nod as the best buy.



The Mec-Gars caused no problems, so they get the nod as the best buy among the 38 Super choices. Colt Factory magazines are well made, but the follower scraped the inside of the magazine body.



SIG Sauer's P220 magazine is an excellent design, but it is pricey. The ACT Mag did not have the same quality of finish, but its functional performance cannot be faulted.

Mec-Gar 38 Super Magazine
GUN TESTS GRADE: A
Colt Factory 38 Super Magazine
GUN TESTS GRADE: A-
Triple K 15-Round Extended Magazine
GUN TESTS GRADE: B

SIG P220

The SIG P220 45 ACP is a popular handgun. Short-barrel 45s have substantial slide velocity, and short cycles may occur with heavy loads if the recoil spring isn't strong enough and the magazine spring's ability to feed is outstripped by slide velocity. We examined a SIG P220 factory magazine in 45 ACP available from Brownells.com for $50 apiece and an ACT Mag Nickel P220 replacement magazine, which cost $20 from TopGunSupply.com. We slid them into a SIG Sauer P 220 Elite and function-tested with Hornady 185-grain Critical Defense and Hornady 230-grain XTP +P. In this case, the magazines tested gave excellent results. The SIG factory product is stainless steel and shows excellent workmanship. The ACT Mag did not have the same quality of finish, but its performance cannot be faulted. The much less expensive ACT Mag passed every test for half the money.

ACT Mag Nickel SIG P220 Magazine
GUN TESTS GRADE: A (BEST BUY)
SIG P220 Factory Magazine
GUN TESTS GRADE: A

Written and photographed by Gun Tests Staff. **GT**

New Shotguns for 2018

Here's a sampling of recently introduced scatterguns of note.

Gun Tests reporters and editors on the scene at SHOT Show 2018 in Las Vegas scoured the show for new rifle, pistol, shotgun, and accessory entries for our readers to consider this year. Here's a rundown on quite a few just-introduced scattergun choices for 2018, some of which we'll be looking at for further examination later this year.

Browning

The Citori CXS (shown below) and Citori CXT Adjustable Comb models are multipurpose over/under 12-gauge shotguns for various target-shooting endeavors. The CXS features a blued finish receiver with gold-accented engravings. The ported barrels are topped with a floating rib, and the stock and forearm are gloss-finished Grade II American walnut, with an adjustable comb and Schnabel-style forearm. The CSX is intended as a crossover shotgun for hunting, sporting clays, and skeet. SRP: $2540.



Also new is the Silver Field Mossy Oak Shadow Grass Blades 12-gauge semi-auto shotgun. It has an aluminum-alloy receiver and black/charcoal bi-tone finish. This 3½-inch gas-operated autoloader also features a stock and forearm in Mossy Oak Shadow Grass Blades camo. Available with either a 26- or 28-inch barrel. SRP: $1140.

CZ-USA

For 2018, CZ-USA is rolling out its fanciest over/under shotguns, the Supreme Field, which feature Grade III wood and copious amounts of hand-engraved scrollwork. Its polished-nickel receiver features auto ejectors and a mechanical single-selectable trigger. Five extended chokes are included. SRP: $1700.

CZ-USA's most affordable over/under shotgun gains two sub-gauge variants for 2018. Identical to the larger shotguns, but in 28-gauge and .410-bore, these diminutive shotguns are built on steel CNC actions, have a mid-rib, and are clad in Turkish walnut stocks. SRP: $679.

CZ's 3½-inch Swamp Magnum now has 26-inch barrels and extended choke options, the Reaper Magnum gives the turkey hunter the ability to choose a tight choke for long shots and an open choke for closer shots.

Mossberg

New options for the Shockwave include a 20-gauge version and a flat dark earth Cerakote finish, and a 12-gauge JIC (Just In Case, shown at right) model that comes with a water-resistant storage/carry tube. SRP: $455.



Standard features of the Mossberg 930 shotgun include a smooth-operating dual-gas-vent system, a drilled-and-tapped receiver, an ambidextrous safety, and a stock-drop spacer system. The 930 handles 2.75- and 3-inch shotshells with ease, and the new versatile 26-inch-barreled Bottomland model comes with an expanded choke-tube set for both turkey and waterfowl. SRP: $560. The 28-inch-barreled black synthetic stock version makes a great choice for upland and waterfowl hunting. SRP: $560.

The 835 Ulti-Mag's (pictured below) standard features include dual extractors, positive steel-to-steel lockup, twin action bars, an ambidextrous safety, and a clean-out



magazine tube cap. The 835 Ulti-Mag shotguns handle all shotshells, including powerful magnum loads, and the over-bored 26-inch barrels provide reduced recoil and uniform, dense patterns. New for 2018 are a standard matte blue with a black synthetic stock version and a Bottomland-finished model. SRP: $604.

All SA-20 and SA-28 International Bantam shotguns come with a 12.5-inch length of pull and are popular with young and small-statured shooters. For 2018, Mossberg has three new offerings. The Walnut Youth comes in 28- and 20-gauge and has a 28-inch barrel with a ventilated rib. It weighs only 6.25 pounds. SRP: $570. The Black Synthetic Youth is now available in 28-gauge and also has a 24-inch ventilated rib barrel. It weighs only 5.5 pounds. SRP: $674.

Mossberg has three new Mavericks from which to choose. First is the six-shot Cylinder-bore 18.5-inch-barreled standard model with a flat dark earth stock. Next is a similar eight-shot version, but with a 20-inch barrel. And finally, there's the six-shot, 18.5-inch model that comes with an ATI ShotForce folding stock, and weighs only 6 pounds. SRP: $296.

Rock Island Armory

Rock Island Armory is rolling out 20 new shotguns this year. They include one pump-action, four break-actions, and 15 semi-auto variants. The pump is an

18.6-inch-barreled smoothbore slug gun with a synthetic stock.

Break-actions include a 20-inch-barreled single-shot at 6.18 pounds, an over/under 28-inch-barreled 12-gauge at 7.18 pounds, a similar over/under Plus with a hand-engraved receiver, and an over/under Competition. All 12-gauge models accept 3-inch shells.

The semi-auto magazine-fed VR-60 is now offered in a range of colors, from tactical black and sand to rosy red and combinations.

This wicked-looking shotgun resembles the AR in profile and weighs about 8 pounds, depending on variation. It will handle 3-inch shells.And, Rock Island will produce the 5+1 magazine-fed Bull Rocket. This is a 12-gauge semi-auto bull-pup design with a 20-inch open-Cylinder barrel.

TriStar

Notable features on the new Viper 410 shotgun (shown below) include a beautiful Turkish walnut stock, a fiber-optic front sight, and a bronze finish. Out of the box, it weighs only 5.7 pounds.



Winchester

Winchester expanded the Super X4 semi-auto shotgun line to include the SX4 NWTF Cantilever Turkey model (shown below). It comes with a 24-inch barrel and a Weaver-style cantilever rail that makes it easy to attach an electronic sight or scope. This 3½-inch model features a synthetic stock and forearm with full coverage in the non-glare Mossy Oak Obsession. A Truglo fiber-optic front sight and adjustable rear sight are standard. SRP: $1,070.



The new SX4 Cantilever Buck 12-gauge 3-inch semi-auto has a synthetic stock and forearm in a non-glare matte black finish. The 22-inch rifled barrel also features a Weaver-style cantilever rail, and a Truglo fiber-optic front sight and adjustable rear are standard. SRP: $960.

Produced in association with SHOT Daily at the 2018 SHOT Show.

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