GUN TESTS®

THE CONSUMER RESOURCE FOR THE SERIOUS SHOOTER

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WHEELGUN SHOWDOWN

New revolvers tested in various chamberings: The Ruger LCRx, Colt Cobra, Charter Arms Boomer, and Kimber's K6s CDP. Which one fits like a comfortable pair of jeans? Find out on... ● Page 6

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HOME DEFENSE

Some situations require a fast-handling, lightweight, powerful firearm that both men and women can wield well. Two that fit the bill are the M1 Carbine and the AR-15. But which one is better? ● Page 16

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AFFORDABLE AMMO

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DOWNRANGE

'SAY SOMETHING' LEADS TO 'DO NOTHING'



Todd Woodard

After the Sandy Hook school shooting in 2012, Gun Tests magazine tried to steer the conversation toward a concept everyone can agree on. People who love guns and who love to shoot must be the first line of defense when it comes to denying firearms access to the wrong kinds of people. That means a scrupulous dedication to the disciplines we hold dear — safes, action and trigger locks, segregated ammo, and quick-opening lock boxes. We the people who own and enjoy firearms need to pay serious attention to security, and our focus must never waver. We can't forget that the Sandy Hook shooter shot his own mother with her own rifle. It's too easy and flip to say "ban this" and "ban that" without getting to this crucial element of firearms security.

We also posited that it's up to us to be sufficiently aware of our environment and the people around us — to be on the alert for people who might commit these horrible acts of violence against innocents. Following the Parkland massacre, there have been many discussions about how, and even if, we can spot those sufficiently deranged who might be capable of committing mass murder. But we have to try — like the grandmother in Everett, Washington, who led police to her violence-prone Aces High School grandson and probably stopped another mass killing.

In the Parkland incident, the "see something, say something" concept went horribly wrong. Law enforcement at the local and federal levels had numerous chances to stop the shooter and failed to do so.

Gun Tests readers are just as horrified as anyone else by what happened in Florida. Our condolences go out to the families and to the larger Parkland community who have to bear the consequences of this horrible act. Further, Gun Tests readers, like other responsible gun owners, want something done to stop school shootings.

As knowledgeable gun owners, Gun Tests readers know that paying lip service to restrictions and limitations isn't the answer. Guns aren't going to magically disappear. But gun owners, in particular, do have a responsibility to report erratic and potentially dangerous behavior in their communities.

Because we have access to guns, it's up to gun owners to be the front line of responsible gun ownership and report when we see behavior like what Nikolas Cruz exhibited. We can't stand on the sidelines and say, "It's not my business" and move on. The trouble is, will we get law enforcement to follow up effectively? That clearly did not happen in the Parkland event.

What is demoralizing to gun owners is that if we "see something" and then "say something," as was done at least twice in this case, will the

— continued on page 5

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How About More 44 Specials?

Reader Mick makes a case for an extensive wheelgun feature using one of his favorite rounds. On it. Reader Tom extols the virtues of smaller rifles for bigger people. Great advice.



Re "Firing Line," February 2018

Reader Andrew complained about the "apples to oranges" comparison of the GP-100 44 Special to two 44 Magnums. I have to agree. As a long-time fan of the 44 special (I prefer large holes), I would prefer to see a comparison of carry-worthy, relatively short-barreled 44 specials from Ruger, Taurus, Charter Arms, S&W or any other manufacturers still providing us with revolvers in this great caliber. While you have done comparisons in the past, I would like to see an updated and comprehensive comparison of 44 specials with cylinders dedicated to the caliber, and not including short-barreled 44 mags.

I realize that any 44 mag will shoot 44 special, and indeed my NM Super Blackhawk is the most accurate handgun I own; its groups always draw a crowd at the range. But at my 5'8" height, this single action is not my idea of the perfect carry gun. Yes, I still like to carry a revolver... imagine that! While because of my size I usually end up carrying a semi-auto IWB, especially during the summer, during coat weather I enjoy carrying my S&W 624 in a Kramer horsehide holster. I bobbed the hammer and had it round butted and fitted with Spegel Bootgrips. Nearly as accurate as the Super Blackhawk with the right handloads, this gun gives me comfort and a feeling of safety when it is on my person, and it is the weapon at my bedside.

But, sadly, my 624 is big and I am relatively small. So, to repeat, I would be pleased to see a review of short-barreled, K-frame-sized 44 specials from any manufacturer, whether currently offered or discontinued, but still available. Thank you for your consideration, and thank you for what I believe to be the most honest and informative firearm publication extant. **— Mick**

Re "Bolt-Action Hunting Rifles for Compact and Youth Shooters," March 2018

Not just for shorter people! I'm 5'10" and about 180 pounds, and my arms are a little longer than average. That makes me just about the average male in North America. Most of my hunting is wild boar in California, and you face a range of conditions, from up-close to 200-yard-plus shots. Over the years I've used several rifles. Lots of walking, in and out of trucks, up and down hills so steep you need to sling the rifle and use both hands, very hot days and very cold mornings. I really like the youth-sized guns! With a properly set scope, they are fast and easy to maneuver. They are also potentially just as accurate as their longer cousins. I don't find hunting with a shorter stock any handicap at all! My nephew started shooting with a Remington Youth

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.

Model in 7mm-08. I down-loaded his cartridges for the first few years to lower the recoil. Now, he shoots the full-power stuff. With a Leupold 2-8x scope and a good sling, it is the perfect wild boar rifle! **—Tom**

In the September 2003 issue, we ran a story about a Remington 700 Titanium in 7mm-08, which weighed 6.5 pounds with a scope. It listed for $1239, and our sample didn't shoot that well. But for a lot less money, as you learned, several youth models by various manufacturers weigh in very close to that and cost half of that, or less. For a lot of shooters, this entire class of youth firearms is a bargain. The trick in these light firearms is to get them chambered in something mild, so they won't rattle your fillings. — tw

Re "Guns of the Year," December 2017

I was excited to read the review on the 590 Shockwave. I have shot the 590 and was eager to compare our views. I was unexpectedly disappointed when the final sentence of the review stated, "but we wondered how easy it would be to shoot." This gun was given an A grade. One of the criteria is shootability. Would like to know why it was given an **A**. When I shot it, this gun literally blasted me with a giant blow back and up, and it removed skin on my right hand from the jagged safety and upward movement that, without the strap, would have caused me to lose control of the gun. I have ordered the OPsol insert and Aguila minishells, which it makes it so much nicer to shoot. Wondering about the stopping power of those shells? Maybe I should get the new 20-gauge model. Please advise of your findings. Love the GT magazine! — Jeff

Perhaps my edit of the original review for the December Guns of the Year feature didn't give our full experience with the Shockwave. Here's what the Our Team Said section said about the Shockwave in the October 2017 issue: "Loaded with Aguila minishells and equipped with the OPSol Texas Mini-Clip attached, the Shockwave offered a lot of firepower. We really like shooting the minishells through the Shockwave. The 2.75-inch shells were less fun to shoot due to recoil. We found the Shockwave accurate and effective. For a short-range defense weapon in cramped conditions like a vehicle, the Shockwave is a good choice." Just above that, Robert Sadowski wrote, "The 2.75-inch shells had substantially more recoil. The 3-inch shotshell delivered brutal recoil and an 18-inch pattern with birdshot. We would avoid shooting 3-inch shells in the Shockwave." — tw



Re "Value Guide, Recent Semi-Auto Handgun Rankings," March 2018

About the Remington R51 review, I bought the R51 for my every-day carry because I love the feel of the gun, and it conceals inside the waist well and comfortably. I had serious doubts immediately; the rounds did not chamber well. After looking very hard at the problem, I found two issues. First, the magazine is too tight to fit seven rounds, making the first round hard to chamber after firing. Second, the lips of the magazine were very sharp and dug into the rim of the case. You could feel a burr on all the cases. I filed the mag lip to alleviate the issue and began to only load six rounds and have run thousands of rounds through this pistol with no misfeeds at all since. I also sent Remington an e-mail with this same info, but got no response. I don't think they want to admit there is a problem at all. I will say this is a very good shooting pistol, and I am very happy with it. **— Bruce P.**



That's great problem-solving. Looking back over the last couple of years when the R51 was born, aborted, then reborn, perhaps there was a lot more going on behind the scenes that contributed to Remington's recent bankruptcy. I'm glad you got your R51 to work, and perhaps others who bought one can look at these problem areas that you've described. Thank you. — tw

Re "Bullseye Target Cam" Video on Gun Tests YouTube

I have the Target Cam and have used it several times out to 200 yards. Be sure and look at all the videos from Bullseye on how to set it up and use it. This works great and makes the spotting scope obsolete. Due to the ability to mark your hits with different colors, you can shoot multiple groups on the same target and know which



bullets go in which group. It saves a long walk out to 300 yards to check, change, or paste your target. I'm going to try the camera out when I pattern my shotgun for turkey hunting. Since it shows the last shot, I'm hoping to be able to fire several shells at the patterning target and see the pattern for each shot. The only problem I have encountered, other than not having looked at all of the videos before using the camera, is not having a clean line of sight from the camera to the shooting stand. My range has berms at 25, 50, 100, and 200 yards, so a camera placed on the ground at 200 yards may be obscured by the berm at 100 yards. Be sure your tablet or phone can "see" the camera. Oh, and don't forget to take your phone downrange with you to set up the camera to view the target. Ask me how I know. **— James**

Man, not having to fiddle with a spotting scope has a lot of appeal. But I assume that if I used it on a public range, somebody would "accidentally" shoot it and think that was pretty danged funny. — tw

— 'Downrange' continued from page 2

government respond appropriately? The FBI has already released a statement admitting "protocols were not followed" in responding to detailed tips about Nikolas Cruz. Twice, people saw something, said something, and the FBI failed to act.

The second event occurred last fall when a Mississippi bail bondsman and YouTube video-blogger noticed a threatening comment left on one of his videos. "I'm going to be a professional school shooter," said a user named Nikolas Cruz. The threat was left on Ben Bennight's YouTube channel. Bennight alerted the FBI's Mississippi field office and "said something" in two follow-up interviews with FBI agents.

Legitimate gun owners want law enforcement to have the tools to stop such people before the deranged commit mass murder. The FBI could have pursued an investigation after January 5, when the tips were received. This could have included alerting all state and local law enforcement, all gun stores, and area school districts of Cruz's identity and the situation.

But that's before the fact. It seems some Broward County Sheriff's Department officers, one a school resource officer at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High when the shootings began, waited outside the school while gunshots were still ringing out. The SRO has already resigned, and three other deputies may have likewise waited behind their cars until more officers from another jurisdiction arrived. If that's the department's policy, then Broward County Sheriff Scott Israel has some explaining to do to the county's voters, who may not realize the county's SOP is for armed officers to wait behind cover while kids get shot.

We believe gun owners are willing to police our own ranks and report dangerous gun use and threats to people or places. But we have to have some confidence that if we "say something," then law enforcement will "do something" to stop the violence before it occurs, or while the violence is occurring. **GT**

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New Revolvers from Kimber, Charter Arms, Ruger, and Colt

The Boomer 44 Special, a 38 Special +P Cobra, the Ruger LCRx in 357 Magnum, and Kimber's K6s CDP square off. After hundreds of rounds, we find one we'd carry over the others.



The Ruger LCRx (top left) offers light weight, a high grip to mitigate recoil, a single-action/double-action trigger, and five rounds of potent 357 Magnum. The Colt Cobra (top right) had good accuracy, a larger grip which made it bulky, and six rounds of 38 Special +P. The Charter Arms Boomer (bottom left) had no sights, a larger grip, a DAO trigger and five rounds of 44 Special power. The Kimber K6s CDP (bottom right) had an excellent DAO trigger, night sights and six rounds of 357 Magnum. We'd opt for the Ruger.

Why are there so many snubnose revolvers being manufactured? There is no sign that big-bore snubnose revolvers are going away any time soon, especially with manufacturers introducing new snubnoses. Snubnose wheelguns have been and are still excellent choices for self-defense sidearms. Easy to use, no magazine to lose, and chambered in powerful calibers, revolvers are here to stay. So we took a look at four new snubnose revolvers: the Charter Arms Boomer, Ruger's LCRx, the Kimber K6s CDP, and the Colt Cobra. These snubnose revolvers all proved to be reliable, safe, consistent, and accurate for self defense. What we experienced with these revolvers was a variety of grip sizes, some of which our testers said were too small for comfortable shooting or they were too big for ideal concealed carry.

The sights on three guns were very serviceable, while one didn't have sights at all. The triggers separated the pack, as did the chamberings. Two used a double-action-to-single-action trigger and two featured a double-action-only (DAO) trigger. A revolver chambered in 357 Magnum offers convenience because it can shoot 38 Special ammo, too. After tallying the scores, in our opinion the Ruger LCRx is a good choice for concealed carry, though we would tweak it. The Charter Arms Boomer, Kimber K6s, and Colt Cobra are all pretty good choices, but as you will see, the devil is in the details on those three.

We tested at 10 yards because these snubnose revolvers are made for concealed carry and short-range encounters. But we learned 10 yards was too far if you don't have sights, so we accuracy tested the Charter Arms Boomer at 7 yards. Not having sights is a liability as the distance between you and a bad actor increases. Though we typically test at 25 yards, FBI data shows that most gunfights between an officer and an attacker occur from a distance of 0 to 5 feet apart. We concealed-carry citizens can expect the same. The reality is these revolvers are made for up-close work. Short sight radii, smallish grips, and DA triggers do not make for tack-driving accuracy.

We also carried these revolvers in inside-the-waistband (IWB) and appendix-carry-style holsters. We took the time to practice our draw and dry-fire these revolvers at an imagined bad actor a few steps away. On the range, we tested for accuracy using a rest. The DA/SA trigger mode on the LCRx and Colt provided an edge over the DAO models. We also tested a variety of ammunition, and the K6s and LCRx proved to be more practical and

RANGE DATA

Winchester PDX1 Defender 125-gr. JHP 357 Magnum	Ruger LCRx	Kimber K6s
Average Velocity	1110 fps	1115 fps
Muzzle Energy	342 ft.-lbs.	345 ft.-lbs.
Smallest Group	2.60 in.	2.83 in.
Average Group	4.01 in.	3.98 in.

Aguila 357 Magnum 158-gr. SJHP	Ruger LCRx	Kimber K6s
Average Velocity	1055 fps	1060 fps
Muzzle Energy	391 ft.-lbs.	394 ft.-lbs.
Smallest Group	2.70 in.	2.64 in.
Average Group	3.95 in.	3.90 in.

SIG Sauer 38 Special +P 125-gr. JHP	Ruger LCRx	Kimber K6s
Average Velocity	1103 fps	1105 fps
Muzzle Energy	338 ft.-lbs.	339 ft.-lbs.
Smallest Group	2.50 in.	2.57 in.
Average Group	3.75 in.	3.86 in.

To collect accuracy data, we fired five-shot groups from a bench using a rest. Distance: 10 yards with open sights; Charter Arms Boomer tested at 7 yards. We recorded velocities using a ProChrono digital chronograph set 10 feet from the muzzle.

RANGE DATA

SIG Sauer 38 Special +P 125-gr. JHP	Colt Cobra
Average Velocity	873 fps
Muzzle Energy	212 ft.-lbs.
Smallest Group	1.37 in.
Average Group	2.55 in.

158-gr. 38 Special Lead Roundnose	Colt Cobra
Average Velocity	678 fps
Muzzle Energy	161 ft.-lbs.
Smallest Group	1.77 in.
Average Group	2.30 in.

Armscor 38 Special 158-gr. FMJ	Colt Cobra
Average Velocity	810 fps
Muzzle Energy	230 ft.-lbs.
Smallest Group	1.32 in.
Average Group	2.02 in.

Federal Classic 200-gr. SWHP 44 Special	Charter Arms Boomer
Average Velocity	801 fps
Muzzle Energy	285 ft.-lbs.
Smallest Group	1.90 in.
Average Group	3.07 in.

Winchester Super-X 200-gr. Silvertip HP 44 Special	Charter Arms Boomer
Average Velocity	867 fps
Muzzle Energy	334 ft.-lbs.
Smallest Group	1.05 in.
Average Group	2.42 in.

Hornady Critical Defense 165-gr. FTX 44 Special	Charter Arms Boomer
Average Velocity	878 fps
Muzzle Energy	282 ft.-lbs.
Smallest Group	2.50 in.
Average Group	3.25 in.

versatile because they can fire both 38 Special and 357 Magnum cartridges. Here's what we thought about each handgun in more detail.

Charter Arms Boomer Model 74429 44 Special, $443

The Boomer is basically the classic Charter Arms Bulldog revolver stripped down to the bare essentials to make the revolver even more concealed-carry friendly. Like other Charter Arms 44 Special models, the Boomer is a five-shot revolver, but unlike the traditional Bulldog series, the Boomer has an abbreviated barrel, no front sight to snag on clothing, a bobbed hammer to thwart snagging, and a DAO trigger. The barrel of the Boomer is only 2 inches in length and has oblong porting slots cut at the 1 and 11 o'clock positions. The intent with the ports is to control muzzle flip when firing the Boomer. Because of porting blast, we would advise not shooting the Boomer close to your body — make sure you extend it before firing. The Boomer features a one-piece stainless-steel frame and wears a matte finish so there is no flash or shine. The outside of the Boomer is smooth and snag free. The DAO trigger has a consistent and smooth-ish pull with very little perceived stacking. The press requires about 12 pounds of pressure to make the Boomer go bang. The grooved trigger ensures your finger is secured on the trigger. In our opinion, the trigger press feels lighter due to the smoothness of the trigger mechanism. It uses a transfer-bar safety system.

There are no sights on the Boomer except for a groove along the top strap. This revolver is made to point and shoot, and it is not intended as a target gun. The cylinder latch is coarsely serrated to ensure the user's thumb does not slip when swinging out the cylinder. In addition, because the ejector rod is exposed, the user can pull on the knurled end of the ejector rod to swing out the cylinder. The rod features a sleeve that snaps into the

front of the frame to lock up the front of the cylinder. A pin in the center of the ejector fits into the rear of frame, locking up the rear of the cylinder.

The Boomer is light and weighs only 18 ounces sans cartridges. The grip is a typical Charter Arms checkered-rubber unit that covers the backstrap. The grip was large compared to the K6s and LCRx grips. The bobbed hammer sits flush with the rear of the frame, making the Boomer smooth to extract. If you have big pockets, you could easily carry the Boomer in your pants pocket or jacket pocket and draw it without fear of a snag because there is no hammer spur to impede draw. The Boomer was carried in a leather DeSantis Cozy Partner IWB holster. This holster is made for S&W J-frame revolvers and fits the Charter Arms Boomer perfectly.

Going hot with the Boomer, we found the recoil tolerable because the 44 Special bullet does not have a fast muzzle velocity like a 357 Magnum and 44 Magnum. The recoil impulse was not so much slamming your palm like a magnum cartridge, but more like pushing into your hand. Because the bore axis is high from the users grip in most revolvers, there is always a bit of muzzle flip to contend with when shooting. Those ports in the Boomer are designed to divert burning gases up to counteract that muzzle flip.

Test ammunition included Federal Classic 200-grain semi-wadcutter hollowpoints, Hornady Critical Defense 165-grain FTX bullets, and Winchester Super-X 200-grain Silvertip hollowpoints. Since the Boomer has no sights, except the groove in the top strap, there was less aiming and more pointing of this pistol. This snubby is designed for very close work. On targets placed at 7 yards, most five-shot groups averaged 4 inches. When we concentrated and pointed the Boomer consistently, we shot groups that where two- and three-shot clusters, with some holes touching. The Boomer was fast to draw and point-shoot while the ported barrel allowed users to

CHARTER ARMS BOOMER 74429 44 SPECIAL, $443

GUN TESTS GRADE: B-

The Boomer was difficult to shoot at distance due to the lack of sights. At extremely close range, it was easy to control. A laser grip would enhance this revolver.



Action Type	Double action only
Overall Length	6.75 in.
Barrel	2.0 in. long; tapered and ported
Sight Radius	NA
Overall Height	4.9 in.
Maximum Width	1.5 in.
Weight Unloaded	18 oz.
Weight Loaded	20.7 oz.

Cylinder Gap	0.01 in.
Capacity	5
Frame	Large, matte stainless
Barrel/Cylinder Finish	Matte stainless
Frame Front Strap Height	2.1 in.
Frame Back Strap Height	3.2 in.
Grip	Checkered rubber w/finger grooves
Grip Thickness (max)	1.2 in.
Grip Circumference (max)	5.0 in.
Front Sight	None
Rear Sight	Fixed groove
Trigger Pull Weight (DAO)	12.0 lbs.
Trigger Span (DAO)	3.3 in.
Safety	Internal transfer bar
Warranty	Limited lifetime warranty
Telephone	(203) 922-1652
Website	CharterArms.com
Made In	U.S.A.



The ejector rod (bottom arrow) is not shrouded, so the user has the option of pulling it out or using the latch to swing out the cylinder. Two oblong ports on the top of the barrel (top arrow) help reduce muzzle flip by diverting burning gases.



There are only five holes in the cylinder, but they accommodate the 44 Special, a round many carry experts enjoy in their wheelguns.



The double-action trigger on the Boomer was smooth enough, but it was clearly not as good when compared to the others. The grooves help add purchase to the trigger finger while it's working the wheelgun.

COLT COBRA COBRA-SM2FO 38 SPECIAL, $699

GUN TESTS GRADE: B

The Cobra had a good trigger pull in double action and good sights, which made it easy and accurate to shoot. Though heavier and slightly larger than the other models, it offers six shots and is well suited for conceal carry.



Action Type	Double action/single action
Overall Length	7.2 in.
Barrel	2.0 in. long, matte stainless
Sight Radius	3.5 in.
Overall Height	4.9 in.
Maximum Width	1.4 in.
Weight Unloaded	25.0 oz.
Weight Loaded	25.9 oz.
Cylinder Gap	0.003 in.
Capacity	6

Frame	Matte stainless
Cylinder	Matte stainless
Frame Front Strap Height	2.0 in.
Frame Back Strap Height	3.1 in.
Grip	Hogue Overmolded, textured finger grooves rubber
Grip Thickness (max)	1.2 in.
Grip Circumference (max)	5.1 in.
Front Sight	Red fiber optic, removable
Rear Sight	Fixed notch
Trigger Pull Weight (DA)	9.2 lbs.
Trigger Pull Weight (SA)	3.9 lbs.
Trigger Span (DA)	3.2 in.
Trigger Span (SA)	2.7 in.
Safety	Transfer bar
Warranty	None written
Telephone	(800) 962-2658
Website	Colt.com
Made In	U.S.A.



The red fiber-optic front sight on the Cobra makes aiming easier. Note the front sight can be replaced.



The Colt Cobra uses a transfer-bar safety system, which basically means the transfer bar (arrow) is between the hammer and firing pin.



The Cobra carries six rounds, which gives it an edge over the Ruger and Charter Arms handguns. Pull back the cylinder latch (arrow) to swing out the cylinder. Like other double-action Colt revolvers, the cylinder rotates clockwise.

get back on target faster with less muzzle flip when shooting rapid fire. Recoil was quite comfortable. If we were to change anything, we would add Crimson Trace LaserGrips (MidwayUSA.com Model LG3225, $299). We would still point-shoot the Boomer at close distances and then use the laser for slightly longer distances.

Our Team Said: The Boomer is made for close work. The DAO trigger was smooth, but the other revolvers' triggers were smoother. At longer distances, the Boomer is less effective because it lacks sights. We'd add a Crimson Trace LaserGrip to increase this snub's all-round effectiveness; however, that will drive up the price considerably. The street price for the Boomer is about $350, plus $299 for the laser grips increases the cost to about $650. Another consideration is, we like the 44 Special round, but those cartridges are more expensive and less common than 38 Special and 357 Magnums.

Colt Cobra COBRA-SM2FO 38 Special +P, $699

The Cobra snubnose revolver was introduced in 1950 when wheelguns were popular with LE and civilians. Back then, the Cobra was a high-tech, lightweight, powerful concealed-carry pistol. This new Cobra has a retro look to it, but with modern enhancements. Like the original Cobra, the new Cobra has a skinny barrel and protruding front sight, and like the second-issue Cobra, it incorporates an ejector shroud. The Cobra is also made from stainless steel and weighs 25 ounces unloaded, which made it the heaviest of the four snubs tested. We thought the matte-stainless finish was well executed, better than the Boomer's matte-stainless cosmetics.

The Cobra has a 6-round capacity, which equals the Kimber and has an extra round compared to the Ruger and Charter Arms handguns. The cylinder latch is pulled back to swing out the cylinder, and like other DA Colt revolvers, the cylinder rotates clockwise.

The Cobra uses a transfer-bar safety system, which basically means the transfer bar is between the hammer

and firing pin. The system requires the trigger to be pulled into the full rear position to fire the revolver. This safety system also means the revolver will not accidentally fire if dropped on the hammer.

The DA/SA trigger uses a mainspring called LL2 — LL stands for Linear Leaf — which helps provide a smooth, consistent trigger. We did not experience stacking with the Cobra. When a DA trigger stacks, the user can feel extra resistance as the trigger is pulled through a full DA stroke. Stacking is caused by the coil-spring mainspring. The DA pull here is smooth, and the SA pull is crisp. They measure 9.3 pounds and 3.6 pounds, respectively. The DA pull felt less than that, and we really liked the DA trigger mode.

The Hogue grip design — along with the weight of the revolver — helped lessen felt recoil. With original Cobra revolvers, the bore axis was high above your hand. This new Cobra drops that height so the grip feels like you are more behind the gun rather than under it. The grip is hand filling without being excessively large, but it was the largest grip of the four revolvers. The Hogue grip with finger grooves and crisp single-action trigger allowed us to shoot the Cobra more accurately, and it helped dissipate recoil into the palm of the hand.

The pinned front sight is a red fiber optic that makes the Cobra easy to aim. We have come to appreciate red and green fiber-optic front sights. They glow when light is available, and when it is dark, the red fiber-optic tube shows up on dark targets. The rear sight is a groove milled into the top strap. The sights are bright and large as well as smooth and snag free, which are appropriate in a concealed-carry weapon.

We tested with both regular 38 Special loads and +P loads, because the pistol is rated for +P. The Armscor 158-grain FMJs, Hornady Custom 158-grain XTP jacketed hollowpoints, and Federal Champion 158-grain lead roundnose bullets were regular loads, while the SIG V-Crown with

KIMBER K6S MODEL CDP 357 MAGNUM, $1155

GUN TESTS GRADE: B+

The K6s has a smooth consistent trigger pull, small grip for more easy conceal carry, and offers six shots in 357 Mag. The price caused us to recoil as much as a K6s with hot magnum loads.



Action Type	Double action only
Overall Length	6.6 in.
Barrel	2.0 in. long, matte stainless
Sight Radius	3.5 in.
Overall Height	4.4 in.
Maximum Width	1.3 in.
Weight Unloaded	23.0 oz.
Weight Loaded	23.9 oz.
Cylinder Gap	0.005 in.

Capacity	6
Frame	Matte black stainless
Cylinder	Matte stainless
Frame Front Strap Height	1.6 in.
Frame Back Strap Height	3.0 in.
Grip	Checkered rosewood, finger grooves
Grip Thickness (max)	1.1 in.
Grip Circumference (max)	4.7 in.
Front Sight	Night sight, removable
Rear Sight	Two-dot night sight, dovetailed
Trigger Pull Weight (DAO)	9.7 lbs.
Trigger Span (DAO)	2.9 in.
Safety	Internal hammer block
Warranty	1 Year Limited
Telephone	(888) 243-4522
Website	KimberAmerica.com
Made In	U.S.A.



The crane on the K6s mates up seamlessly with the frame. Notice the smooth edges.



From a shooter's point of view, the three-dot sights are user friendly.



The K6s trigger was wide and smooth to help make the trigger pull nice.

RUGER LCRX MODEL 5460 357 MAGNUM, $669

GUN TESTS GRADE: A-

The LCRx had decent accuracy and made concealed carry uncomplicated. It transmitted a lot of recoil to the shooter's hand. We'd like a more user-friendly front sight.



Action Type	Double action/single action
Overall Length	6.5 in.
Barrel	1.87 in. long, matte-black steel
Sight Radius	4.0 in.
Overall Height	4.5 in.
Maximum Width	1.27 in.
Weight Unloaded	17.1 oz.
Weight Loaded	17.9 oz.
Cylinder Gap	0.007
Capacity	5
Frame	Matte black polymer
Cylinder	Matte black steel
Frame Front Strap Height	1.75 in.
Frame Back Strap Height	2.7 in.
Grip	Hogue Tamer, textured rubber w/finger grooves
Grip Thickness (max)	1.23 in.
Grip Circumference (max)	5.1 in.
Front Sight	Pinned ramp, white insert blade
Rear Sight	Fixed frame notch
Trigger Pull Weight (DA)	9.5 lbs.
Trigger Pull Weight (SA)	5.9 lbs.
Trigger Span (DA)	2.7 in.
Trigger Span (SA)	2.2 in.
Safety	Transfer bar
Warranty	None written
Telephone	(928) 541-8892
Website	Ruger.com
Made In	U.S.A.



The crane on the Ruger fits inside of the front frame, similar to the Charter Arms Boomer.



There is ample room inside the LCRx trigger guard for gloved hands.



There is plenty of hammer spur to cock the revolver safely, yet most of it is enclosed. Note the transfer bar (arrow).

a 125-grain JHP was a +P load. We found the Cobra could consistently provide 5-shot groups into 2 inches at 10 yards using a rest. In DA mode and using a two-hand grip, we found the revolver was easy to control. We could stay on top of it and not let the recoil get the best of us, even with +P loads.

Our Team Said: The Cobra is a well-made and good-performing revolver. We liked the 6-shot capacity, fiber-optic sights, and smooth trigger, but our shooters felt the lighter and smaller revolvers were better suited for concealed carry. We wondered why Colt just didn't chamber the Cobra in 357 Magnum and give it the ability to fire both 38 Special and 357 Magnum cartridges. We thought the price was reasonable.

Kimber K6s Model CDP 357 Magnum, $1155

The K6s CDP offers 6-shot 357 Magnum capacity, smooth DAO trigger, night sights, and a relatively lightweight and compact package, but it comes at nearly double the cost of the other revolvers tested. The finish and fit of the K6s was superb, and that workmanship was built into the revolver's high cost.

The K6s looks dense and heavy next to the other revolvers, though it is smaller and weighs less than the Cobra. The CDP model features a matte-black frame and brushed-stainless-steel barrel and cylinder. The rosewood grips are crisply checkered and include a tasteful Kimber logo as well as finger grooves. The back strap is exposed and serrated for grip. Picking up the K6s, we knew the small grip and exposed backstrap would translate into felt recoil. Without much length on the grip, we curled our small finger under the butt to fire the handgun.

The cylinder is unique in that there are no flutes, but flats, forward of the bolt notches. The chambers are recessed, which gives the cylinder more mass and strength. We also noted that the 6-shot cylinder was nearly the same diameter as the 5-shot LCRx cylinder. Kudos to Kimber for squeezing in six chambers in the space of most 5-shot cylinders.

VALUE GUIDE: REVOLVER RANKINGS

GUN NAME	ISSUE	GRADE	COMMENTS
Ruger GP100 1761 44 Special, $649	Jan. 2018	B	Many of the raters liked shooting the Ruger GP100 the most.
S&W M69 Combat Magnum 10064 44 Sp./44 Mag., $732	Jan. 2018	B-	Has much merit for personal defense when loaded with 44 Specials or 44 Magnums.
Smith & Wesson M649 357 Magnum, $500-$530	June 2017	A	The 649 was lightweight, thin, and concealable. Even with 357 Magnum loads, recoil was tolerable.
Ruger Security Six 357 Magnum, $430-$450	June 2017	B+	The Security Six had good accuracy with user-friendly sights; recoil was mild due to its bulk.
Smith & Wesson Military and Police 38 Special, $300	Feb. 2017	A	Best Buy. Large enough to soak up the recoil of +P loads, but light enough for fast handling.
Ruger SP101 5718 KSP321X 357 Magnum, $450	Feb. 2017	B	Good as a combination of carry and home defense. For those with small hands, a very good choice.
Smith & Wesson Model 19 357 Magnum, ~$500	Feb. 2017	C	A specialist's handgun, and one most of us will find too expensive for the performance delivered.
Taurus Public Defender Polymer M4510PLYFS 410/45 LC, $514	Oct. 2016	A-	The Public Defender offers versatility along with good accuracy.
Charter Arms Bulldog Classic Model 34431 44 Special, $436	Oct. 2016	B-	The Bulldog had good accuracy for such a small revolver. The wood grip fit was loose.
Charter Arms Pitbull Model 64520 45 ACP, $509	Oct. 2016	D	The Pitbull had a good finish and functioned as expected, but the barrel was not fully seated.
Charter Arms Off Duty 3811 38 Special, $404	June 2016	A-	The Off Duty started off with a gritty trigger but soon slicked up.
Rossi Model R35102 38 Special +P, $390	June 2016	B	Best trigger and the most comfortable and largest grip. Spurred hammer could get hung up.
Rock Island Armory Model 206 51289 38 Special, $320	June 2016	B-	The Model 206 gave good accuracy for a DAO revolver; the grip was dated.
Ruger LCR Model 5456 9mm Luger, $532	March 2016	A-	Buttery-smooth trigger. Grip design stands out from traditional snub-nose revolvers. Light weight.
Taurus 905 Model 905SS2 9mm Luger, $528	March 2016	B	The 905 was faster to reload than a traditional 38 Special and performed well.
Smith & Wesson Model 325PD 45 ACP, $700-$925	July 2015	B-	The 325PD makes sense if you need a hideout revolver chambered in 45 ACP.
Smith & Wesson PC M625-10 45 ACP, $1200-$1400	July 2015	F	A cracked frame forced us to eliminate it from consideration for safety reasons.

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: REVOLVER RANKINGS

GUN NAME	ISSUE	GRADE	COMMENTS
Smith & Wesson PC M627 170133 357 Magnum, $1079	April 2015	A	Well-made, nice-shooting revolver. Ball-detent lock up, chamfered chambers, excellent sights.
S&W Model 686 357 Magnum, $600-$850 (Used)	April 2015	A	Well-designed six-shot revolver. Testers liked the slender 686 even though it had less capacity.
S&W Performance Center M327 170245 357 Mag, $1309	April 2015	B	Needed a different grip to be concealed carried. Short ejector rod hindered fast reloads.
FN Barracuda 357 Magnum 3-inch, $450-$750 (Used)	March 2015	B+	On the edge of "snubbie." Would have moved up a grade if the 9mm cylinder had been included.
Smith & Wesson PC M629-8 44 Magnum, $900-$1000	Nov. 2014	A	Ported 3-inch barrel, compact grip made this a concealable N-frame our testers really liked.
S&W M329PD Alaska Backpacker IV150545 44 Mag, $750-$900	Nov. 2014	B	Most pleasant of the 44 Magnums to shoot; nice compromise of weight and firepower.
Smith & Wesson PC M657-5 41 Magnum, $750-$850	Nov. 2014	B	A snappy shooter in 41 Magnum, its 2.6-inch barrel showed less recoil than the 44 Magnums.
Smith & Wesson M60 #178013 3-in. Barrel 357 Magnum, $799	Sept. 2014	A	Light and thin but packs plenty of power. Adjustable night sights are helpful for carry.
Ruger SP101 Model #5718 357 Magnum, $659	Sept. 2014	A	Traditional snubnose. Felt solid in hand, wore a glare-free finish, was snag-free and accurate.
Ruger SP101 #5759 (3-in. barrel) 327 Federal Magnum, $600-$800	Sept. 2014	A-	Added capacity and adjustable rear sight. Limited ammo availability must be a concern.
Ruger LCR No. 5401 38 Special +P, $529	Nov. 2013	A-	Polymer skin is a leap from a traditional DAO. Trigger was smooth and easy to use. Recoil was nil.
Smith & Wesson M42 150502 38 Special +P, $700	Nov. 2013	B-	Difficult for many shooters to shoot well. Easy to hide, though.
Smith & Wesson Model 638 Airweight 163070 38 Sp., $459	March 2013	A-	Smaller, narrower grip, but a good choice as a backup due to light weight and small size.
Charter Arms Pitbull 9mm No. 79920 9mm Luger, $465	March 2013	A-	Largest of the revolvers in the test and most accurate. Operates without moon clips.
Smith & Wesson 940 9mm Luger, $595 to $671	March 2013	C+	Doesn't offer single-action firing. Required moon clips to eject the rimless 9mm Luger rounds.
Charter Arms Police Undercover No. 73840 38 Special, $402	March 2013	D	Almost a copy of the Pitbull, so the Undercover felt good. Had no grooves in the barrel, however.
Chiappa Rhino No. 200DS 357 Magnum, $800	Dec. 2012	C+	Suffered three failures to fire. Lacks a true rear sight, so we struggled getting shots on target.

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Highly-ranked products from older reviews are often available used at substantial discounts.







These revolvers used a variety of grip sizes and styles. From left are the Kimber K6s, the Ruger LCRx, the Charter Arms Boomer, and the Colt Cobra. The rosewood grips on the Kimber exposed the serrated back strap. We found the small grip and exposed backstrap translated into felt recoil. The Ruger wears a Hogue Tamer Monogrip, which is small in size but offers pronounced finger grooves and palm swells. The Ruger's Hogue grip does a good job, offering good concealability and recoil protection. The Charter Arms grip was a checkered rubber model that covered the backstrap. The Boomer grip was large compared to the K6s and LCRx. The Hogue grip design on the Cobra was hand filling without being excessively large, and it was the largest grip of the four revolvers.





Here's how these revolvers work. Clockwise from top left are the coiled mainsprings of the Charter Arms Boomer 44 Special, the Kimber K6s, and the Ruger LCRx. The Colt Cobra, bottom left, uses a spring called the Linear Leaf 2, or LL2. When a DA trigger stacks, the user can feel extra resistance as the trigger is pulled through a full DA stroke. Stacking is caused by the coil-spring mainspring. We did not experience stacking with the Cobra. The Cobra's DA pull was smooth, and the SA pull was crisp. The Cobra's pull weights were 9.3 pounds for double action and 3.6 pounds for single action. The DA pull felt less than that.

To swing out the cylinder, the checkered latch is pressed into the frame. The ejector rod is knurled at the end to provide a sure grip when shucking empties, and the tip of the ejector rod also locks up via a pin inside the shroud.

The three-dot night sights are large, yet snag free. In fact, the K6s has all the edges and corners rounded, so it looks slippery and is snag free. The front sight is pinned in place, and the rear sight is dovetailed. We liked the sights on the K6s. The grip design also placed our hand higher on the grip, closer to the bore axis, compared to the Cobra and Boomer.

The smooth DAO trigger required just under 10 pounds to fire the revolver. In our opinion, it was the smoothest DA trigger pull of all four revolvers tested. The pull was consistent throughout trigger travel. Some testers were able to stage the trigger by pressing it, knowing just where it would break. The trigger face is smooth.

We found a leather Galco rig we used to carry the K6s. On our hip, it did not feel like a typical 6-shot revolver. At 23.9 ounces loaded, it was comfortable and comforting to carry.

When we went hot, we were correct on the felt recoil. The felt recoil of 357 magnum ammo through the K6s was quite noticeable. This is not a revolver we would want to shoot exclusively with magnum ammo. Shooting 38 Special ammo tamed this beast and made the shooting experience more tolerable and pleasant for testers. Most felt their procedure would be to train with mild 38 Special ammo and carry hot 357 Magnum loads in concealment. The ejector rod stroke on the K6s, as well as all the other revolvers, is not long enough to fully eject empties. Our shooters had to use gravity and point the muzzle skyward when discharging empty brass. The sights are large and easy to see.

Our Team Said: The K6s is a well-built, solid revolver we would own in a heartbeat, albeit the high price. We like the sights, the super smooth snag-free exterior, and trigger best. Some would prefer a more comfortable rubber grip when shooting hot loads.

Ruger LCRx Model 5460 357 Magnum, $669

The LCRx is the evolution of the LCR series that incorporates an external hammer for single-action firing. We have tested the LCR chambered in 38 Special and 9mm in past issues and have graded it **A-**. We had high expectations for the LCRx.

Our sample had a matte-black finish with a matte-stainless-finish hammer and trigger. We like the addition of the hammer to fire the LCRx in SA mode. There is plenty of hammer spur exposed to cock the revolver



The barrel of the Boomer has porting slots that push hot gasses upward. Don't fire the gun close to your body.



Right: We carried the LCRx in a Galco Triton Kydex appendix holster, $52 from Midway USA. We found the rig to be light and comfortable.



Right: Unique to the Kimber in this test are the flats on the cylinder, which make it visually striking.





Left: The Boomer gets some of its close-in carry appeal from its stripped-down nature, such as having only a top frame cut for a rear sight and no front sight at all. Right: Crimson Trace Lasergrips would add downrange accuracy to the Boomer. And they would add hundreds in cost, too.

safely, yet the hammer itself is enclosed.

To swing out the cylinder, the shooter presses the latch. The K6s and LCRx have similar latches. The 5-shot cylinder is fluted to whittle away weight. The crane fits inside the front of the frame similar to the Charter Arms. The crane for Colt and Kimber mate up with the frame. The Ruger also wears a Hogue grip, like the Colt, but the LCRx uses a Tamer Monogrip, which is small in size but offers pronounced finger grooves and palm swells. We like this grip because it is compact, yet feels substantial in hand. The grip design of the LCRx, like the LCR series, places the user's grip higher up to better manage recoil — and there is plenty with hot magnum loads — as well as provide better leverage on the trigger. There is no grip frame on the LCRx, just a grip peg. The Hogue grip does a good job offering concealability and recoil protection.

The aluminum alloy frame is lightweight, and, in our opinion, this gave it an edge over the other revolvers tested. The barrel is a stainless-steel insert. The LCRx loaded weighs 17.9 ounces, which is 8 ounces less than the Cobra, 6 ounces less than the K6s, and 2.8 ounces less than the Boomer. Of course, light weight and hot loads translate into rearward momentum, aka recoil.

Going hot, we found the LCRx slightly more tolerable in recoil with 357 magnum ammunition than the K6s. That bit of rubber grip helps, but you must realize that a 17.9-ounce revolver will react when a 158-grain bullet is launched from it at more than 1000 fps. The grip is wider, so recoil is spread out more in the palm of the user's hand. The trigger face is smooth, and so is the pull, which uses a friction-reducing cam that has no stacking. We rated the LCRx DA trigger tied with the Colt DA trigger for second place.

Where the LCRx falls down is the front sight. The pinned front ramp can, and in our opinion should, be replaced with a fiber optic or tritium dot like the XS Sight (RP-0008N-4, $64 at MidwayUSA.com). The ramp wears white strip that we felt was not easy to aim. We carried the LCRx in a Galco Triton kydex appendix holster (MidwayUSA.com, $52) and found the rig to be light and comfortable.

Our Team Said: The LCRx offers the convenience of using both 38 Special and 357 Magnum cartridges, has a compact yet comfortable grip, is light weight, and has the ability to fire the revolver in SA mode. We'd buy this one ahead of the others, even though we know we would replace the front sight the first chance we got.

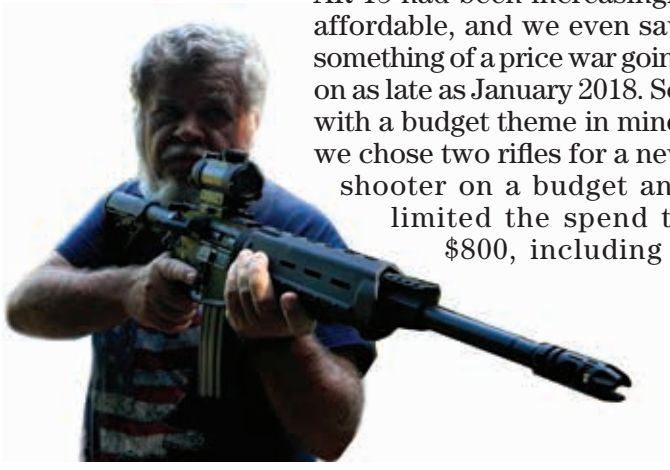
Written and photographed by Robert Sadowski, using evaluations from Gun Tests *team testers.* **GT**

Affordable Home-Defense Rifles: AR-15 or M1 in 30 Carbine?

We wanted to see how the Carbine matched up with a more-modern home-built AR-15 for home and short-range defense. Both will do the job for men and women, but one has an edge.

When we evaluate firearms, there are guidelines we follow. Some of the projects are a result of market forces, where we are guided by what is new in the market place. Then there are reader requests. The following evaluation combines those arenas. Readers have shown interest in the M1 30 Carbine because it is a lightweight, handy rifle with historical overtones that shooters of a certain age respect. Accordingly, we have done comparisons of the rifles head to head and also ammunition testing.

Likewise, we have extensively tested AR-15 rifles and ammunition. So, coupled with experience in handling both rifles and the preference of some of the raters, we cooked up an AR-15 versus M1 Carbine shoot-out, with a slant toward inexpensive rifles for home defense. The M1 Carbine is fairly inexpensive in most examples, including good-quality modern reproductions such as the Auto Ordnance. Until very recently when regulatory bans began pointing anew at the semi-auto rifle, the AR-15 had been increasingly affordable, and we even saw something of a price war going on as late as January 2018. So, with a budget theme in mind, we chose two rifles for a new shooter on a budget and limited the spend to $800, including a reasonable number of magazines and a credible ammunition supply. Counted in this evaluation were the opinions of inexperienced and female shooters, the latter of which we listened to carefully to find a combination of recoil, muzzle blast, and firearm weight the distaff gun owner might prefer.





Some prefer a long gun for home defense for its power and accuracy, and the fact that handguns require time and inclination to master, a rifle can be an easier-to-learn tool, especially if area defense is also a consideration — that is, your yard is pretty large or if roaming predators, such as coyotes and feral dogs, are a consideration. A hard-hitting but light-kicking rifle can give results much beyond what a handgun can do for most shooters, if the rifle is reliable and accurate enough.

The ammunition testing we have previously done in each caliber is an important part of the summary of facts in this feature. In terms of power, the 30 Carbine round in its most-common size, 110 grains, runs slightly

This test pitted two rifles suitable for home defense, and they make a case for replacing handguns in many homes, if a mix of more power and handiness is what you want. At left and directly below is a home-built AR-15 which cost $600 to assemble. Bottom left and bottom right is an Israeli Arms International M1 Carbine chambered in 30 Carbine, which run about $500 used. The M1 Carbine is widely thought of as the original personal-defense weapon, offering soldiers in WWII more oomph and accuracy than a handgun. The PDW still can do what it was designed to do.



behind the standard 223 Remington in a 55-grain bullet. But power isn't the only consideration for someone using a rifle inside a home. Too much penetration is a problem. Choosing the right round is crucial to balance what's needed to stop the fight and what's too much. In previous tests, we found the Hornady 110-grain Critical Defense 30 Carbine round produced 1980 fps and the resulting energy of 957 foot-pounds. Shot into water, that round terminated with an expanded width of 0.47 inch and weight retention of 100%. It penetrated 20 inches of water. A Hornady V-Max 223 Remington load with a 55-grain bullet sped along at 2890 fps and produced muzzle energy of 1019 foot-pounds. That might worry the home defender, but this particular round finished with an expanded width of 0.44 inches of the largest fragment. It retained 50% of its weight and only penetrated 10 inches in water. The AR, again, has the edge because it's possible to tailor the load to the home, and that's not as feasible with the 30 Carbine rounds.

How do these rifle rounds stack up to some common handgun loads? They're much more powerful. As noted above, the 30 Carbine Hornady FXT generates muzzle energy of 957 foot-pounds and the 223 Hornady V-Max 1019 foot-pounds. In comparison, a Double Tap 10mm 135-grain round generates 1555 fps and 725 foot-pounds of energy. A Black Hills 357 Magnum 125-grain round running 1430 fps makes 567 foot-pounds of muzzle energy, and a Black Hills 45 ACP 230-grain JHP clicking along at 850 fps makes a paltry 369 foot-pounds of muzzle energy.

So with those facts in mind, we compared an Israeli Arms International M1 30 Carbine and a home-built AR-15. Average price at GunBroker.com and other outlets

Counter-clockwise below are our test rounds: Hornady Critical Defense 30 Carbine 110-grain FTXes and Federal Power-Shok 30 Carbine 110-grain Soft-Point Round Noses fired in the IAI M1; and the Hornady Zombie Max 223 Rem. 55-grain V-Max cartridges and Federal American Eagle 223 Rem. 55-grain FMJs fired in the Self-Build AR-15.







RANGE DATA

Federal Power-Shok 30 Carbine 110-gr. Soft-Point Round Nose 30CA	**IAI M1 30 Carbine**
Average Velocity	1978 fps
Muzzle Energy	955 ft.-lbs.
Smallest Group	2.0 in.
Largest Group	2.8 in.
Average Group	2.5 in.

Hornady Critical Defense 30 Carbine 110-gr. FTX 81030	**IAI M1 30 Carbine**
Average Velocity	1980 fps
Muzzle Energy	957 ft.-lbs.
Smallest Group	2.4 in.
Largest Group	3.2 in.
Average Group	2.8 in.

Hornady Zombie Max 223 Rem. 55-gr. V-Max 83271	**AR-15 Self-Build**
Average Velocity	2890 fps
Muzzle Energy	1019 ft.-lbs.
Smallest Group	0.75 in.
Largest Group	1.5 in.
Average Group	1.2 in.

Federal American Eagle 223 Rem. 55-gr. FMJ AE223J	**AR-15 Self-Build**
Average Velocity	2960 fps
Muzzle Energy	1069 ft.-lbs.
Smallest Group	0.9 in.
Largest Group	1.8 in.
Average Group	1.3 in.

To collect accuracy data at 50 yards, we fired five-shot groups from a bench rest. We recorded velocities with a Shooting Chrony Master Chronograph.

Ammo sources: 30 Carbine 110-gr. Federal Power-Shok Soft-Point Round Nose 30CA ($29.44/50 from SportsmansGuide.com); 30 Carbine Hornady Critical Defense 110-grain FTX 81030 ($21.27/25 rounds from SportsmansGuide.com); 223 Remington Hornady Zombie 55-grain Max V-Max 83271 ($25.18/25 from SportsmansGuide.com); Federal American Eagle 55-gr. AE223J ($37/100 from SportsmansGuide.com).

was $480 for the 30 Carbine. Also, we found a Universal Carbine in a local shop for $425, and average price for a new Auto Ordnance 30 carbine was $775. We found a new Del-Ton AR-15 at SCGunCo.com for $399 new in the shop. There are many good AR-15 rifles going begging at the beginning of the year for $600 and less. This is a turnaround from a year ago. So, a clear winner on the price scale goes to a budget AR, at least until a new buying boom changes that. For more stable pricing, we chose to test a gun we built ourselves, mainly using parts from Brownells.com. The test AR-15 rifle consists of an Aero upper and receiver, Brownells barrel, and Brownells bolt. The parts priced out to $600, and we got what we consider to be an average rifle with good components. We realize you can go as high as you want on the AR-15 and spend several thousand dollars, but that isn't what we are doing in this report.

When it comes to ammunition supply, the 5.56mm/223 Remington is the hands-down winner as far as quantity. There are many choices. At the SportsmansGuide.com, Federal American Eagle 30 Carbine JSP ammunition used in the test was $29.44 for fifty rounds. Hornady's Critical Defense 30 Carbine FTX is $21.27 from the same source for 25 rounds. When we shot this test, Federal Power-Shok 223 Remington FMJs were $50.39 for 100 rounds, or $25.18 or so for 50. That price has dropped to around $35 for the 100-round quantity for many full-jacket bullets. Hornady Zombie Match was $17.63 for 20 rounds, from the same source. It's clear that 5.56/223 ammunition is not only less expensive, it is much more widely distributed. Chances are every little shack and large outlet will have the 223, which is not so for 30 Carbine in our canvas of local and some online shops. And those who stock 30 Carbine often have FMJs only and no jacketed soft-point loads. For home defense, the 30 Carbine is more than adequate based on terminal ballistics, but the choices are limited.

Additional kit is another consideration. We found 15-round magazines for the M1 Carbine at Brownells.com for $30 each. The 30-round AR Magpul PMag cost us $17.05 from Brownells.com. A good

ISRAELI ARMS INTERNATIONAL
M1 30 CARBINE, ~$480
GUN TESTS GRADE: A

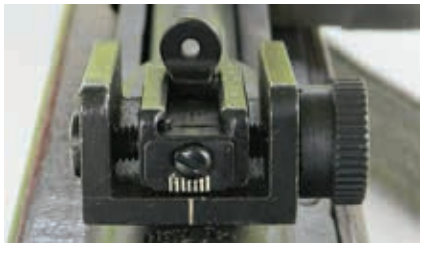
The M1 Carbine was the original Personal Defense Weapon. Light, reliable, accurate enough for combat use to 200 yards, and hitting harder than a handgun, the 30 Carbine performed beyond expectation. The rifle in this test proved reliable and should give any homeowner real confidence for home defense.



Action Type	Semi-automatic	Trigger Pull Weight	6.5 lbs.
Overall Length	35.75 in.	Front Sight	Post
Barrel	18.0 in. long Parkerized steel	Rear Sight	Elevation- and windage-adjustable aperture
Overall Height	6.9 in.		
Stock Length of Pull	13.2 in.	Safety	Lever
Weight Unloaded	5.2 lbs.	Warranty	None
Weight Loaded	5.8 lbs.	Telephone	None
Magazine Capacity	15/30, detachable box	Website	None
Action	Parkerized steel	Made In	U.S.A.
Stock	Wood		

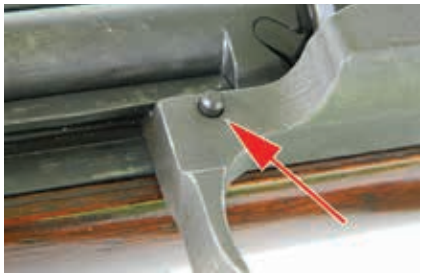


A bold front post sight offers rapid sight acquisition. Light and reliable, the M1 Carbine is a classic military firearm that also happens to be a good home defender. Our sample, made by Israeli Arms International, was made from U.S.-manufactured parts, despite the manufacturer's name.



Above, adjustable for both windage and elevation, the carbine's rear aperture sight is ideal for engagement out to 100 yards.

Below, the plunger on the cocking handle of the operating rod serves to lock the bolt to the rear.



AR-15 SELF BUILD 5.56 NATO/223 REM., $600

GUN TESTS GRADE: A (OUR PICK)

This rifle, assembled by an experienced builder, proved reliable, accurate, and capable in home defense. The good quality of the parts and the capable handling of the AR-15 rifle made it a first choice for all-round defense. The system is superior to the M1 30 Carbine, in our estimation.



Action Type	Gas-operated semi-automatic	Barrel	Black Parkerized steel
Overall Length	32 to 35.75 in.	Trigger Pull Weight	3.25 lbs.
Barrel Length	16.0 in.	Safety	2-pos. switch
Overall Height	11.5 in. with TruGlo 30mm Red Dot and 30-round mag	Front Sight	Elevation-adjustable post
		Rear Sight	Elevation- & windage-adjustable apertures
Stock Length of Pull	10 to 14.25 in., adjustable		
Weight Unloaded	6.8 lbs.	Warranty	Only individual parts
Weight Loaded	7.55 lbs.	Telephone	(641) 623-5401
Magazine	20/30 rounds, detachable box	Website	Brownells.com
Action	Black anodized aluminum alloy	Made In	U.S.A.

The rifle is fast handling and reliable, all we can ask. Additionally, magazines to feed the beast are common and affordable, as well as higher capacity than the M1 Carbine's.



During the evaluation, we fitted a TruGlo 30mm red dot to complement the iron sights. Adding an optic was an easy task on the self-build rifle. Not so much on the M1 Carbine.



performer in our previous AR-15 magazine testing, the PMag works well. Magazines are not accessories, and the more the better, so pricing is a consideration there as well. Four is a minimum. So, we paid $120 plus shipping for four 30 Carbine magazines versus $68.20 for four AR-15 magazines. The AR wins again. We tried a half-dozen shops locally, and there were no magazines in stock for the 30 Carbine. When asked for AR-15 magazines, all the shopkeepers said, "Please come in, we have plenty." And on top, our home-brew AR was optics ready, so mounting a red-dot sight was a matter of turning a couple of screws. On the M1, we would need to buy something like an Ultimak forward-handguard mount for the 30 Carbine, which Brownells.com had for $100. Also, mounting a combat light isn't practical with the carbine. So, looking at just the set-up ease and costs, the M1 Carbine comes up short before we even begin shooting. We did not figure in the versatility of custom stocks and handguards for the AR-15 because we are on a budget. The rifle was fine as it was.

Israeli Arms International 30 Carbine, $480

The Israeli Arms carbine is out of production, but there are quite a few available in the used market, like our sample. The price listed is the average of several we found for sale online. In construction, it is similar or identical to modern 30 Carbine M1 replicas and late World War II production. The rifle is well made with good fit. The controls are crisp. The trigger breaks at 6.5 pounds with a sharp reset.

Manipulation is easy. The magazine is angled into the magazine well and locked in place. The bolt is racked to load the chamber. Alternately, there is a plunger on the cocking handle that may be used to lock the bolt to the rear. The bolt may then be released to run forward and load the carbine. The bolt locks open on the last shot. The lever-type safety works well and isn't difficult to move to Fire. It is considered an improvement over the early push-button AR-15 safety. The military felt that the push-button safety was sometimes confused with the magazine release and made the change.

The rifle has a good natural point, and the balance and handling are good. The semi pistol grip allows good hand fit, and the forward hand position is comfortable on the wood stock. It is quite easy to rack the bolt without changing the firing position. The aperture sight is placed much lower on the bore line of the rifle than the AR-15. The rear aperture

M1 CARBINE TESTS

Over the years, we've tested several M1 Carbines, and because of their timeless designs and ongoing interest by gun owners, the handy semi-auto is likely to keep going strong for generations. Here are a few summaries of past evaluations of the M1.

INLAND MANUFACTURING M1 1945 CARBINE
30 CARBINE, $1079
GUN TESTS GRADE: A-



Action Type	Semi-automatic gas-operated short-stroke piston	Action Finish	Parkerized
		Barrel Finish	Parkerized
Overall Length	35.75 in.	Magazine Type	Detachable steel box
Barrel Length	18 in.	Stock	Smooth walnut
Sights	Adj. aperture rear, fixed front	Trigger Pull Weight	6.1 lbs., single stage
Overall Height	6.9 in.	Safety	Pushbutton
Stock Length of Pull	13.2 in.	Warranty	1 year
Weight Unloaded	5.2 lbs.	Telephone	(877) 425-4867
Weight Loaded	5.8 lbs.	Website	Inland-Mfg.com
Capacity	15+1	Made In	U.S.A.

The M1 1945 was pleasant to shoot, and we would use it for tasks as diverse as competition as well as keeping the ranch safe. It was historically accurate, and collectors of original M1 Carbines would do themselves a service by shooting a new repro rather than wearing out an original and reducing the value. It is an expensive home-defense option, but we wouldn't mind using it in that role, if push came to shove. The Inland M1 costs more, but it offered a good interpretation of the last production M1 Carbine manufactured in 1945.

AUTO-ORDNANCE M1 CARBINE PARATROOPER
MODEL AOM150 30 CARBINE, $941
GUN TESTS GRADE: A-



Action Type	Semi-automatic, gas-operated short-stroke piston	Barrel Finish	Parkerized
		Magazine Type	Detachable steel box
Overall Length	35.75 in.	Stock	Smooth walnut handguard, folding wire stock
Barrel Length	18.0 in.		
Sights	Flip aperture rear, fixed front	Trigger Pull Weight	Single stage, 7.1 lbs.
Overall Height	6.9 in.	Safety	Pushbutton
Stock Length of Pull	13.2 in.	Warranty	1 year
Weight Unloaded	5.3 lbs.	Telephone	(508) 795-3919
Weight Loaded	5.9 lbs.	Website	Auto-Ordnance.com
Capacity	15+1	Made In	U.S.A.
Action Finish	Parkerized		





Left: With the stock folded, the Carbine is more compact, but it can still be ready to fire. Right: Two indents in the side of the stock allow the wire stock to fold closer to the side of the rifle.

The A-O is a reproduction of the Model M1A1, which is a model variant specifically designed for paratroopers who required a shorter weapon. The original Inland manufactured the M1A1 back in the day. These are rare and quite collectible, and we imagine a collector would be loath to fire a valuable specimen. In our opinion, the A-O makes a great stand-in for the original. Like early original M1A1s, the A-O had no bayonet lug, and the stock was close to original's, even down to the brass rivets that attached the leather cheek rest to the wire stock. The A-O Paratrooper is easier to transport due to the folding stock, and it offered reliability and a lot of shooting fun. We think it is a good rendition of the WWII model.

AUTO-ORDNANCE AOM130 M1 CARBINE
30 US CARBINE, $899
GUN TESTS GRADE: B-



Overall Length	35.7 in.	Action Type	Semiautomatic
Barrel Length	18 in.	Barrel Finish	Parkerized
Sight Radius	21.5 in.	Magazine Type	Detachable
Overall Height	6.9 in.	Stock	Walnut
Stock Length of Pull	13.2 in.	Trigger Pull Weight	7.0 lbs
Weight Unloaded	5.0 lbs.	Warranty	1 Year Limited
Capacity	15+1	Telephone	(508) 795-3919
Action Finish	Parkerized	Website	Auto-Ordnance.Com

After A-O repaired the extractor, there were no more bobbles nor failures to eject. The A-O carbine delivered the finest accuracy we've encountered from an M1 carbine or clone, with five-shot groups as small as 1 inch at 50 yards. However, the trigger pull was not what we wanted. We gave the Auto-Ordnance AOM130 a B- grade for its slightly misfitting and unsmooth bolt that wore the finish so quickly, the very poor magazine, the lack of a sling, and its relatively high cost.

FULTON ARMORY SERVICE GRADE M1 CARBINE
30 US CARBINE, $1300
GUN TESTS GRADE: A



Overall Length	35.7 in.	Action Type	Semiautomatic
Barrel Length	18 in.	Barrel Finish	Parkerized
Sight Radius	21.5 in.	Magazine Type	Detachable
Overall Height	6.9 in.	Stock	Walnut
Stock Length of Pull	13.2 in.	Trigger Pull Weight	6.0 lbs
Weight Unloaded	5.7 lbs.	Warranty	30-Day Money Back
Capacity	30+1	Telephone	(301) 490-9485
Action Finish	Parkerized	Website	Fulton-Armory.Com

Our test crew liked the Fulton Armory carbine the best, and some of us would have put up the extra money to get one that didn't need anything else other than lots of shooting enjoyment. Others of our staff were taken aback by its cost and would take their chances with the CMP surplus guns. The Fulton carbine was the slickest, with all original G.I. parts, well matched, well fitted, and newly finished. It had no compromises other than its high cost.

CMP-2 INLAND CARBINE 30 US CARBINE, $495
GUN TESTS GRADE: A+

This was our first choice, in part because of its low price. During testing, we noted the Inland-barreled version sold out.



		Action Type	Semiautomatic
Overall Length	35.7 in.	Barrel Finish	Parkerized
Barrel Length	18 in.	Magazine Type	Detachable
Sight Radius	21.5 in.	Stock	Walnut
Overall Height	6.9 in.	Trigger Pull Weight CMP-1	6.7 lbs
Stock Length of Pull	13.2 in.	Trigger Pull Weight CMP-2	5.5 lbs
Weight Unloaded	5.7 lbs.	Warranty	NA
Magazine	None Supplied	Telephone	(256) 835-8455
Action Finish	Parkerized	Website	TheCMP.Com

In 2009, we tested the Fulton Armory M1, above, a CMP-1 Underwood Carbine, $565, which was also earned an A grade, and the CMP-2 at left. There were no problems with the Underwood-barreled carbine, not pictured. All told, the Inland shown at left was our first choice of all the carbines. You could hardly go wrong if you get a carbine like this Inland, though we note the Inland-barreled versions are among the most popular M1 Carbines, and as a result, are scarce.

is an excellent all-round combat sight. The front post is easy to pick up quickly. This sighting arrangement is one of the advantages of the 30 Carbine over the AR-15. At home-defense ranges, the M1 may be regulated to fire to the point of aim. During close-range firing, the 30 Carbine was dead on the money with sight regulation using a 6 o'clock hold. At longer ranges, a dead-on hold could be used. Firing at 5, 7, and 10 yards, it was possible to quickly double tap or even stitch targets quickly. Fast follow-up shots are easy. An entire magazine could be emptied into the X-ring. Even relatively inexperienced shooters came up to speed quickly on this rifle. Fired offhand standing at 25 yards, the results were not much different than at 15 yards. Predators could be dusted off with this rifle in good order. There were no malfunctions with 50 rounds of American Eagle JSP loads or later with the Hornady Critical Defense loading.

The 30-caliber carbine was fired primarily with the American Eagle 30-caliber load and also the Hornady FTX load for accuracy. At 25 yards, we shot groups of 0.75 to 1.25 inches from a benchrest firing position. At 50 yards, the rifle produced several 2-inch groups.

Our Team Said: This is an accurate and reliable rifle. It would work well for home defense based on its fast handling, light weight, and excellent terminal performance. Energy and terminal ballistics outstrip the 357 Magnum in a handgun, a proven performer, so there are no worries there. In firing more than 100 cartridges, and checking our records about another 200 or more fired in previous ammunition testing with the same rifle, there were no malfunctions of any type with personal-defense loads. We did experience short cycles with one brand of ammunition that was loaded to less than full-power standard during a ballistic evaluation.

AR-15 Aero Precision Receiver/Brownells Parts Build 5.56mm/223 Remington, $600

This rifle came off the build-bench shooting without any type of malfunction and had been fired extensively by the owner prior to this shoot-out. The 30 Carbine had also been fired extensively, so both had plenty of break-in time. The AR-15 build proved easy to maneuver quickly. As for rapidly cocking the piece when held in the firing position, we found that all the shooter needed to do was turn the head to one side to accommodate the movement. The pistol grip allowed excellent control in tight quarters. The MOE handguard felt good in the hand, and with the proper technique, the rifle is fast to get on target. While we fired the M1 Carbine first and were impressed, a side-by-side shoot-out like this reinforces the good qualities of the AR-15. As an example, one rater fired the M1 carbine with one hand, bringing the sights to the eye and simulating an injury in the support hand or firing in very tight quarters. The 30 Carbine was easy to heft and fire. Surprisingly, the AR-15 was almost as easy — only a muscle tremor intruded toward the end of firing a magazine. As for accuracy with either 223 load listed in the Range Data table, the rifle was controllable and accurate. Fast groups on target were excellent to 25 yards. The 30 Carbine fared better for most due to sight regulation out to 10 yards, but outside this range, the AR-15 proved superior. As for accuracy, the AR-15 rifle turned in several 0.7- to 1.0-inch groups at 25 yards, with groups of 0.75 to 1.5 inches at 50 yards with the TruGlo red dot mounted. The sole drawback of the rifle for home defense is the sight offset. This resulted in the bullet going 4.5 inches low at 7 yards. The 30 Carbine was easily sighted in for 7 yards using a 6 o'clock hold with the provided iron sights. During the AR portion, we used Leapers fixed sights. However, because we had room under our budget, we fitted a TruGlo 30mm Red Dot ($58 from CheaperThanDirt.com). After a thorough evaluation, we find the TruGlo to be a good buy for the money, and it helped us get hits at close range.

As we noted, we fired the two rifles at combat distances of 5, 10, and 15 yards, much the same as handgun evaluations. However, we also added a drill in which we engaged two threats quickly at 15 yards to test viability against gangs. We tried to simulate a crowded hallway. At close range, inside of 15 yards, the M1 carbine handled more quickly, our shooters said.

Our Team Said: Fans of the M1 30 Carbine among the raters were discouraged, or perhaps enlightened, by the practical comparison of ratings for ammo, magazines, and accessorizing. That is what we do, and the older platform's limits are reality. But in practical handling, the M1 Carbine came into its own. The rifle is lighter than the AR-15 and somewhat easier to store. It takes up less space and is less likely to catch on furniture or be a problem in deployment from concealment. The safeties are each easily operated, with the lever-type safety of the M1 being fine for combat use. The AR-15 safety is a model of ergonomics and wins on that point. However, we like to keep defense rifles (and shotguns) at "home ready," which in this case is ammo and magazine loaded in the rifle, but with the chamber empty and the safety set to Fire. Thus, to get the firearm into play, the home defender simply uses a gross motor skill and racks the action, and it's ready. In making the rifles ready fast, the M1 is a clear winner. The AR-15 is easily racked, true, but the M1 Carbine is much easier and may be racked and made ready even from the firing position. The bolt is very smooth with a short throw. If you have to reload, magazine changes are much faster with the AR-15, but the M1 carbine isn't slow by any means. In home defense you have to decide how many times you will miss, since you're not limited to what you can carry, usually. Also, the AR-15 has an advantage in reliable capacity with 20- and 30-round magazines. The M1 Carbine magazines we tested had half the capacity of a standard AR 30-rounder. Press checks are easier with the M1 30 Carbine, but each rifle simply requires a different technique.

Home defense is about careful maneuvering and delivering a shot accurately. The 30 Carbine is light, fast handling, and moves like a good-quality 22-caliber rifle. But its shortcomings compared to the AR are simply to great to ignore. Would we consider someone with an M1 30 Carbine to be well armed to defend the home? Absolutely. Would we rather have an AR of some configuration? Absolutely.

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

Affordable Handgun Ammo: Is It Up to Par for Your Firearms Use?

A few months ago we received an insightful comment from a reader. He asked us to do an ammunition comparison on inexpensive loads from diverse makers. Here it is.

A few months ago we received an insightful comment from a reader. He asked us to do an ammunition comparison on inexpensive loads from diverse makers. How do they perform, he asked, compared to the big three (Federal, Remington, and Winchester) and the well-known Black Hills, Hornady, and Speer, and a few more. We are lucky to have so many choices, and because most, if not all, manufacturers subscribe to SAAMI standards, the ammunition should be safe and reliable.

There are two aspects to reliability: feeding and chambering properly and then going bang. We have run across poor ammunition that fail on either or both counts, but most of it is surplus ammunition from third-world nations. We won't discuss it here. If a brand makes it to the national market, the product has some merit.

There are economy loads that offer jacketed hollowpoint (JHP) bullets, and most of these do not have the development behind them that the Big Three loads do. However, we did test some JHP loadings in this report because they were as inexpensive as any other loads, and, in some cases, were all that was available. The goal of this report was to fire as many types of ammunition as possible in both popular and less popular calibers and determine if we were getting our money's worth in practice ammunition.

Safety came first, then reliable function. We also paid attention to powder burn. We have had experience with foreign-produced ammunition that simply did not have the powder technology of our domestic loads and the result was a lot of powder ash. If a load was particularly dirty — lots of smoke and debris — we took that into account.

Thankfully, the recent ammunition shortage that now seems to have abated had us searching out and trying anything we could find. Brand loyalty took a hit. So it is good to know if these inexpensive loads will function and if they are accurate enough for practice. Some of us like to fire for accuracy at longer ranges, but nothing tested wasn't accurate enough for practice at 15 to 25 yards. Some of the loads tested are among the very few available in certain calibers. There isn't a broad choice in 32 Smith & Wesson Long and 38 Smith & Wesson, as two examples.

It is worth noting that one of the raters has different criteria for loads, and they are reliability, dirtiness, and speed. His old Colt will not feed hollowpoints, so he concentrates on finding reliable rounds, getting a clean burn, and generating velocity, goals that are worthwhile to pursue.

As we told the reader who asked for this test, in our gun evaluations we strive to be fair and present a level playing field. That is why we use proven ammunition when testing a new gun. We generally include a generic ball load and one or two defense loads from the major makers when testing a new gun. This is only fair. Testing an unknown load with a new gun may not prove anything — does the ammunition or the gun bear the responsibility for failures? As one of our raters noted in his work at our sister publication, the well-respected *American Gunsmith*, and as a private gun fixer, he keeps a supply of generic ball from Federal, Fiocchi, Black Hills, Speer, and







Top: The little Walther P22 gave good results when testing 22 LR ammo for plinking and fun. Middle: We tested a wide spread of 22 LR ammunition, with Remington's Thunderbolt coming out on top. Bottom: Whenever possible, we used the Bullshooters rest to confirm accuracy.

Winchester on hand. The gun is sick if it doesn't feed these loads. By the same token, when testing the ammunition in this report, we did not pick up new guns, but instead relied on proven firearms from our team's collections that have proven reliable and reasonably accurate.

We were able to collect loads in thirteen calibers for use in this feature. During the test, our shooters used a Bullshooters pistol rest ($55 from Brownells.com) to confirm accuracy. Some of the results were excellent, others poor, and most fair. Accuracy is relative, and the 38-caliber Iver Johnson break-top would not be in same accuracy range as a tuned 45 ACP or 9mm pistol, but we expected some type of pattern.

One note about these burner loads: Brand performance isn't always consistent among the makers of inexpensive ammunition. One maker may have a poor load in one caliber and a standout in another. Let the buyer beware, but we found good loads for practice in most cases. We fired at least 50 rounds of each load tested, including 35 rounds off hand and three five-shot accuracy groups. Accuracy testing was conducted at a distance appropriate for the handgun.

In each case, we describe the performance of the test rounds, but we highlight one round in particular that we recommend.

22 Long Rifle

We used a rater's favorite 22-caliber handgun, a Walther P22, during the test. We were able to pit domestic burner loads against foreign loads. We should note that with Fiocchi's modern plant in Ozark, Missouri, that brand can't be said to be foreign produced. We tested the Winchester Wildcat 40-grain ($2.93/50 rounds at CheaperThanDirt.com), Winchester 37-grain HP Super ($7.65/100 at CheaperThanDirt.com), Fiocchi 40-grain 22FHVCRN ($4.29/50 at CheaperThanDirt.com), CCI Blazer 40-grain ($2.99/50 at AcademySports.com), Federal 38-grain copper-plated hollowpoints ($2.99/40 at Cabelas.com), Remington 40-grain Thunderbolt ($21.76/500 at Walmart.com), and the Aguila 40-grain HV ($2.29/50 at SCgunco.com). The Aguila is a standard-velocity load intended to give maximum performance, 884 fps from the test gun, and it worked fine. It may not work as well in all self-loaders. Since 22 LR is traditionally dirty, we were more lenient concerning powder ash but still noted it, and we also cleaned the Walther every 200 rounds. The good news — there wasn't a single failure to feed, chamber, fire, or eject, which isn't common when testing this much 22 LR ammunition. The Wildcat and the Thunderbolt performed similarly, so each is good to stock up on when the price is competitive. The CCI Blazer ran as high as $4.03/50 at some outlets, but its performance was also in with the other promotional brands. We really liked the Winchester Super-X hollowpoint. Velocity was good for all-round use, and it was as accurate as the very accurate Fiocchi loading. The Fiocchi loading was just excellent, with a clean powder burn and good accuracy, but expensive for bulk use. The Federal 38-grain plated hollowpoint is boxed in a 40-round box. For a high-speed hollowpoint, it is affordable and gave good results. The Aguila load was pleasant to fire and accurate as well.

In the end, it came down to the Winchester Wildcat, Remington Thunderbolt, and CCI Blazer. Buy the one that is least expensive; there is little difference between them. One may be more accurate in certain handguns. In this case, the Remington Thunderbolt was found at the best price, so it gets the nod.

GUN TESTS BEST BUY:
Remington Thunderbolt

22 Long Rifle Pistol Match

We tested the Wolf target load, Wolf Pistol Match ($54/500 at AmmunitionStore.com) and the PMC Pistol Match ($6.50/50 at a local shop). We used a Ruger Standard Model MK III with 6-inch barrel. The Wolf was more docile at 775 fps versus 809 fps for the PMC. The Wolf was the more accurate round, and the



We used a Ruger Standard Model MK III target gun with 6-inch barrel to test the Match 22 LR loads. The Wolf came out on top.

PMC seems to be out of production or is very difficult to find.

GUN TESTS BEST BUY:
Wolf Pistol Match

32 ACP

We had one test handgun, a Colt 1903 32 ACP. We tested the Fiocchi 73-grain FMJ ($20.99/50 at MidwayUSA.com), Aguila 71-grain FMJ ($21.75/50 SportsmansGuide.com), Winchester 71-grain FMJ ($28.99/50 at SportsmansGuide.com), and the MagTech 32 ACP 71-grain JHP ($24.99/50 at SportsmansGuide.com). Results were good across the board with the FMJ loads. The Aguila load was slowest at 846 fps.





Top: 32 ACP loads were tested in the Colt 1903. Bottom: We suffered a failure to feed with MagTech ammo.

The powder was dirty and the load smoky. The Winchester load featured a flat point and this may make more damage; however, at 860 fps it was slower than the 71-grain 1000-fps standard for 32 ACP. Speediest was the MagTech JHP at 915 fps. We had a misfeed with the MagTech not related to the hollow point; it dipped into the top of the chamber. The pistol in which this malfunction occurred will not feed the Hornady 60-grain XTP either. This occurred three times in 50 rounds. The Fiocchi load, at 905 fps, is fast and is also the best buy.

GUN TESTS BEST BUY:
Fiocchi 73-grain FMJ

32 Smith & Wesson Long

We tested three loads. Two were from Fiocchi, a 97-grain FMJ loading ($20.99/50) and a 97-grain LRN ($17.99/50), and the MagTech 98-grain JHP ($24.99/50, all from MidwayUSA.com). The handgun was a Heritage single-action revolver with a 3-inch barrel, chambered in the 32 H&R Magnum. Velocity was 690 fps for the Fiocchi FMJ loading, 730 fps for the Fiocchi LRN loading, and 680 fps for the MagTech JHP. We can only guess the Fiocchi FMJ load may meet some European requirement for jacketed ammunition. Velocity is too slow for expansion of a JHP, so this leaves us with the least expensive load, the Fiocchi 97-grain LRN, as our pick because it had the best accuracy.



Top: The out-of-production Heritage 32 H&R Magnum was used to test 32 S&W Long revolver loads. Bottom: The Fiocchi lead roundnose proved to be accurate.







Above: We used proven handguns that have fired thousands of rounds of ammunition, including the Colt 1903 32 ACP (top) and a Tokarev TT33 (bottom). Top right: The Wolf and PPU (standing) JHP loads gave credible performance at high velocity. Bottom: The 86-grain full-metal-jacket Red Army rounds gave good results in these handguns as well.

7.62mm Tokarev

We used a Romanian TT33 one of the raters uses as a carry gun. It's very reliable and accurate enough for defense use. We thought we tested four loads, but it turned out to be only three, with one packaged in different wraps from two companies. First up was the Century International Arms Red Army load with an 86-grain FMJ ($56.04/150 at SportsmansGuide.com), the Wolf 85-grain JHP, obtained locally for $18/50, the PPU 85-grain JHP ($18.04/50 at SportsmansGuide.com), and Sellier & Bellot 86-grain FMJ ($19.18/50 at SportsmansGuide.com). The Red Army loads functioned and burned clean enough, with good accuracy. The Wolf and the PPU JHP loads were identical, and are the same load in different packaging. Velocity was 1246 fps on average. One of our raters says his tests show good expansion. The Sellier & Bellot load at 1400 fps was fastest. Considering the clean powder burn and good accuracy, the most expensive load — and it is barely more expensive than the others — is a good buy. However, the Wolf load is a JHP that feeds perfectly and is accurate and also has a personal-defense component.

GUN TESTS BEST BUY:
Wolf 85-grain JHP

38 Smith & Wesson

We used two revolvers for this test, an Iver Johnson break-top revolver that passed a safety check (how many revolvers will do so after 100 years?) and a 5-inch-barrel Enfield MK2, which was Britain's service revolver for many years. The Enfield, a rater notes, is among the best combat revolvers ever designed, albeit an underpowered example. He keeps the Enfield loaded with the Buffalo Bore 125-grain semi-wadcutter (SWC)/1000-fps load, which would wreck or blow the Iver Johnson, and keeps it stashed in his house. We were able to collect three loads: The PPU 146-grain RNL bullet



The PPU 38 Smith & Wesson bullets were loose in the case.



The Silver Bear 380 ACP is a zinc-cased load. It burned cleanly.



We really like the Fiocchi load's clean burn and good accuracy.

($15.99/50 at SportsmansGuide.com), the Fiocchi 146-grain RNL ($28/50 at LuckyGunner.com), and the MagTech 146-grain RNL ($23.99/50 at MidwayUSA.com). All fired normally. However, the PPU bullets were so loose in the cartridge case they could be moved by hand. The PPU velocity in the Iver Johnson was 557 fps. Fastest results were with the Fiocchi load at 715 fps from the Enfield. For practice, the least expensive load is okay, especially in the break-top guns, as you will not see much difference in accuracy. The Enfield, however, did perform best with the Fiocchi load. In the unlikely event you are going to use the 38 Smith & Wesson for personal defense and your handgun isn't strong enough for the Buffalo Bore load — and that means a solid-frame swing-out cylinder revolver if you use the Buffalo Bore 125-grain SWC/1000 fps load — the Fiocchi is tops. We found the MagTech, with its middle-of-the-road performance, the best practice load.

GUN TESTS BEST BUY:
MagTech 146-grain RNL

380 ACP

We used an RIA Baby Rock to test three practice loads in the popular 380 ACP chambering. There are a number of loads that are offered in 50-round boxes, but we sought out the least expensive and narrowed the field to these three. They are the Tula 91-grain FMJ ($13.07/50 at CheaperThanDirt.com), Silver Bear 94-grain FMJ ($13.59/50 at CheaperThanDirt.com), and Fiocchi 95-grain FMJ ($15.64/50 at CheaperThanDirt.com). The loads were within a narrower spectrum in velocity than the 32 ACP, at 940 to 980 fps. The Tula loads functioned but were dirty, with so much powder residue we cleaned the gun before proceeding to the next load to test. The Silver Bear is a zinc-cased load. It burned quite clean and gave good results. The Fiocchi load also gave good results, with a clean powder burn and good accuracy. The best buy for all-round economy is the Silver Bear load. We would buy the Fiocchi as well.

GUN TESTS BEST BUY:
Silver Bear 94-grain FMJ

9mm Luger

To keep the test manageable, we limited the most popular handgun caliber in the world to seven loads, including one that surprised us. We are testing inexpensive ammunition and that did not mean the big three could not apply! We tested the Tula Steel cased 124-grain FMJ (TA919150 $9.49/50 at CheaperThanDirt.com), Fiocchi 115-grain FMJ ($11.89/50 at CheaperThanDirt.com), MagTech 115-grain FMJ ($10.59/50 at CheaperThanDirt.com), Aguila 115-grain FMJ ($12.35/50 at CheaperThanDirt.com), CCI Blazer 115-grain FMJ ($13.39/50 at CheaperThanDirt.com), and Winchester 115-grain FMJ ($24.79/100 at CheaperThanDirt.com). We also ordered a Federal American Eagle Practice and Defend pack (PAE9124HST, $33.95). This unit contains 100 rounds of American Eagle 95-grain FMJ and 20 rounds of 124-grain HST hollowpoints. The cost is 28 cents per round, so it is more expensive than the MagTech, as an example, at 21 cents a round, but the FMJ load is reliable and useful, and the box also contains 20 potent defense rounds. We used an Arex Rex Zero for most of the testing, backed up by the SIG P225A. The Tula steel-cased ammunition was the least accurate and also did not burn cleanly. Fiocchi gave good results and was the most accurate load. The MagTech load presented a peculiar problem — it fired okay, but another test involved unloading the cartridge from the chamber. The MagTech was very difficult to remove, requiring we fix the slide against a range table to exert enough force to unload the chamber — most of the time we simply fired the chambered cartridge. The cartridge case, we determined, was too long by a tiny amount. The Aguila ammunition presented the same problem, and a couple of cartridges from this 50-round box would not fully chamber in the Rex Zero. The CCI Blazer brass-cased ammunition was less expensive than the Winchester, but it was also less accurate. It was no more accurate than the cheaper loads and was less accurate than the Fiocchi. The Winchester load burned cleanly, perhaps the cleanest of any tested, and gave acceptable accuracy. We eliminated the too-long MagTech and Aguila loads. The Tula is inexpensive, but you will spend more time cleaning the gun, and it isn't very accurate. We really like the Fiocchi load's clean burn and good accuracy. The Blazer is okay, but it's too expensive for the performance, in our view. The Winchester FMJ in the 100-round box is the better buy. The Federal Value Pack presents a good value, but only if you need the HST defense load.

GUN TESTS BEST BUY:
Fiocchi 115-grain FMJ



The Prvi load is reliable and fast, just not as accurate as others.

38 Super

This is a popular caliber we have tested before, and this time we used a Springfield Mil-Spec to produce data from three loads. The Prvi 130-grain FMJ load clocked 1189 fps ($20.75/50 BulkAmmo.com). The Fiocchi 129-grain load ($22.50/50 LuckyGunner.com) was the most accurate, and the SIG Sauer Elite 125-grain FMJ was also accurate ($23.50/50 AbleAmmo.com). The Prvi load is reliable and fast, just not as accurate as the others. But in the long haul, for most combat practice, it will not matter. We would buy any of these three loads.

GUN TESTS BEST BUY:
Prvi 130-grain FMJ

38 Special

We used a Ruger GP100 357 Magnum revolver with a 2.5-inch barrel to test these loads. We were surprised when we began to look for 38 Special loads. There are very few under $20 dollars per 50-round box. We were able to test three loads, including the CCI Blazer 158-grain RNL ($16.59/50 at CheaperThanDirt.com), Fiocchi 125-grain CMJFB ($16.69/50 at CheaperThanDirt.com), and the Tula 130-grain FMJ ($10.19/50 at CheaperThanDirt.com), that fell into the affordable range. The Blazer gave acceptable accuracy. The Fiocchi load uses a special bullet that is coated and offers a lead free projectile. Accuracy was good. The Tula load mimics military 130-grain ball and gave acceptable results with a good powder burn.

GUN TESTS BEST BUY:
Tula 38 Special

357 Magnum

We used a 4-inch-barrel Smith & Wesson Combat Magnum Model 19 for testing. We found three loads that met our criteria. We found a Monarch brand at the local Academy Sports on clearance for $14.99. So, don't confine shopping to online sources. We use online sources for reference and try to find the best deal, but don't ignore local close-outs. We found Fiocchi 158-grain Extrema for sale at some online outlets for $24.99 for 25 rounds, but ordered a 50-round box at CheaperThanDirt.com for $20.59. It really pays to shop. This load uses the proven Hornady XTP bullet. More in keeping with the economy theme, we found the Fiocchi 142-grain Truncated Cone for $18.49/50 at CheaperThanDirt.com. All gave good accuracy, and while the Monarch was the least accurate, it is a full-power load — but not as powerful as the 1607 fps claimed on the box.



The Tula was acceptable and so inexpensive it made the top slot.

GUN TESTS BEST BUY:
Monarch 357 Magnum

357 SIG

The 357 SIG can be a pricey commodity. As such, it isn't easy to find a load that offers both good



The Monarch brand 357 Magnum load offers high velocity.

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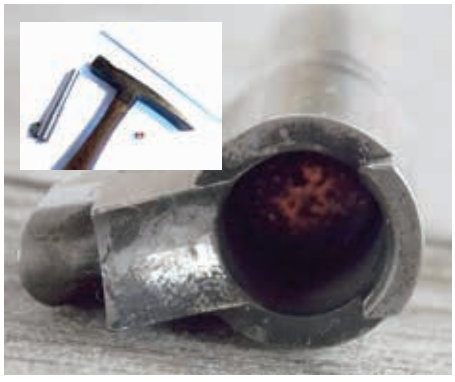


The 357 SIG isn't inexpensive anywhere we looked.



The HSM 44 Special load is plenty accurate and affordable.





Top: The Moylan loads were accurate and clean burning. Inset: We had to bring out a few tools to deal with a stuck bullet. Bottom: The stuck 230-grain FMJ bullet is seen just ahead of the chamber.

economy and good performance. We were able to search out two. We tested the Fiocchi 124-grain TCFMJ ($24.56/50 at CheaperThanDirt.com), and the Speer Lawman 125-grain FMJ ($37.99/50 at MidwayUSA.com). When doing our research at some sites, the Speer load was more expensive, but overall, with careful sorting, we found the Speer load was less expensive. Performance of each in the Springfield XD 357 SIG pistol was excellent. Velocity was 1220 fps with the Fiocchi and 1260 fps with the Speer load, sensibly downloaded from full-power service ammunition that may clock 1350 fps with the same weight bullet. Each gave excellent performance.

GUN TESTS BEST BUY:
Speer 125-grain Lawman

44 Special

We used the Ruger GP100 with 3-inch barrel to fire these rounds. This isn't an inexpensive caliber to fire and use. We tested two loads, the HSM 240-grain lead ($29.60/50 VenturaMunitions.com) and the CCI Blazer 200-grain Gold Dot ($47.42/50 at CheaperThanDirt.com). While the Blazer load is also a good defense load, for informal practice the HSM load is plenty accurate and more affordable than RNL loads from the major makers.

GUN TESTS BEST BUY:
HSM 240-grain Lead

45 ACP

It was pretty quick and easy to search for and order ammo online for this chambering, and we took care in ordering the least expensive loads. In 45 ACP, most 50-round boxes of 45 ACP are priced at $26 to $35. We had to spend less than this. Since we are not shooting a match or carrying these loads for personal defense, resistance to the elements and topnotch accuracy are not as important. Still, we wish to be able to hit a steel gong at 25 yards. We used two firearms, a Dan Wesson Guardian Commander and an EAA Witness Match. The Guardian was fired in combat-shooting drills and the EAA Witness Match was used in the only 25-yard test of this program. We used the Wolf 230-grain FMJ ($14.69/50 at CheaperThanDirt.com), the Fiocchi 230-grain CMJ ($18.49 at CheaperThanDirt.com), Fiocchi 230-grain FMJ ($18.69/50 at CheaperThanDirt.com), PPU Brass ($20.86/50 at CheaperThanDirt.com), and the Moylan 230-grain FMJ ($21.99/50 at MoylanLLC.com). The first loads are billed as inexpensive practice loads. The most expensive load tested, the Moylan, is advertised as accurate enough for pistol matches. We began with the least expensive ammunition first. The Wolf ammunition fed, chambered, fired, and ejected just fine, with a clean burn and little muzzle flash and acceptable, if not stellar, accuracy. The Fiocchi CMJ plated-type bullet isn't much less expensive than the FMJ Fiocchi. Accuracy with either was good. The PPU Brass 230-grain load also gave good results. The 230-grain standard 45 ACP load is renowned for a full powder burn, and in this case, the makers have gotten it right. Last up in the EAA Match 45 was the Moylan ammunition. Accuracy was its long suit. The cartridge performed well and delivered best-of-the-test accuracy. However, it was also the most expensive ammunition. The Moylan might be a choice for match shooting if you do not handload. The Fiocchi load is also accurate, and none of the loads tested were dogs.

It is worth noting that one rater had fired the Moylan to the tune of 200 cartridges before suggesting it be used in the test. During the test, firing the expensive Dan Wesson Guardian, a rater experienced a *puff* instead of a *bang* when he pulled the trigger. The case evidently did not have any powder in it. The bullet was stuck just ahead of the chamber, driven only by a primer. This malfunction was the only one we had in the 45s.

GUN TESTS BEST BUY:
Wolf 230-grain FMJ

Written and photographed by GUN TESTS *Staff.* GT

New Rifle Introductions for 2018

Browning goes big, and small; CVA makes long-range black-powder performance more affordable; CZ-USA goes lefty with the 557 bolt gun; and Savage makes the 110 fit nearly everyone.

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. For what seems like a long time now, new rifle introductions have been dominated by variations on the AR-15/AR-10 platform. But for 2018, we're also seeing the emergence of more dedicated long-range precision sport and hunting rifles. Here's a rundown on quite a few just-introduced rifle choices for 2018, some of which we'll be looking at later this year. — *Todd Woodard*

Bergara

The HMR Pro builds on the legacy of the 2017 HMR. It provides a multitude of upgrades to include a Cerakote stainless-steel action and barrel with a threaded muzzle and a TriggerTech primary trigger. The HMR Pro is also shipped with an accuracy-qualified sub-MOA target. Weights range from 9.2 to 10.1 pounds, and it is available in 223 Remington with a 1:8 twist, 22/250 Remington with a 1:9 twist, 6mm and 6.5mm Creedmoor with a 1:8 twist, and 308 Winchester with a 1:10 twist. SRP: $1695.



The Bergara HMR Pro utilizes an innovative injection-molded stock with a full-length integrated mini-chassis system. Options include a Cerakote stainless-steel action and a barrel with a threaded muzzle that can accommodate a suppressor.

Browning

The new X-Bolt Pro and X-Bolt Pro Long Range models feature an exclusive Generation 2 carbon-fiber stock with a palm swell. Barrels and receivers are stainless-steel-coated in Cerakote burnt bronze, and the bolt body and handle have spiral fluting. Rifles are hand-chambered and come standard with a target crown and threaded muzzle. The rifles can be had with either a 22- or 26-inch barrel (the outlier is the 300 WSM, which comes with a 23-inch barrel) in 6mm Creedmoor, 6.5 Creedmoor, 308 Winchester, 300 WSM, 26 Nosler, 270 Winchester, 30/06 Springfield, 7mm Remington Magnum, 28 Nosler, and 300 Winchester Magnum. SRP: $2069-$2129, X-Bolt Pro; $2099-$2179, X-Bolt Pro Long Range.



New rifles from Browning for 2018 include, from top, the X-Bolt Micro Composite in 243 Winchester, 6mm Creedmoor, 6.5 Creedmoor, 7mm-08 Remington, and 308 Winchester; and the X-Bolt Pro Long Range model with 22-, 23-, or 26-inch barrels.

The X-Bolt Hell's Canyon Speed Long Range McMillan rifle features a McMillan Game Scout stock with aluminum pillars, a vertical pistol grip, and a medium-width forend. It has a Cerakote burnt bronze finish and a 26-inch, fluted, free-floating, hand-chambered barrel with a muzzle brake. The stock sports an A-TACS AU Camo, Dura-Touch Armor Coat finish. A 20-MOA Picatinny rail is standard. Available in 6mm Creedmoor, 6.5 Creedmoor, 300 WSM, 26 Nosler, 7mm Remington Magnum, 28 Nosler, and 300 Winchester Magnum. SRP: $2129-$2199.

The X-Bolt Micro Composite will give smaller-stature shooters the option of a rifle with a shorter length of pull. It features a receiver and barrel in matte blue and is available in 243 Winchester, 6mm Creedmoor, 6.5 Creedmoor, 7mm-08 Remington, and 308 Winchester. SRP: $939.

CVA

With the new Optima V2 LR, CVA brings long-range performance to a more affordable price point. The gun employs the same long-range-oriented concepts



With the Optima V2 LR, CVA brings long-range performance to a more affordable price point. It features a 28-inch barrel, the Quick Release Breech Plug, and an ambidextrous thumbhole stock.

as the top-selling Accura V2LR, combining a velocity-enhancing longer barrel with the superior stability of a thumbhole stock. It features a 28-inch barrel, and like all CVA muzzleloaders, it has the exclusive Quick Release Breech Plug. The thumbhole stock is also 100 percent ambidextrous. The V2 LR is 43 inches long and weighs 7.65 pounds.

CZ-USA

For 2018, CZ is introducing a left-hand 557. It will be available in 30/06 Springfield (standard action) and 308 Winchester (short action). The 30/06 version has a hinged floorplate, and the 308 feeds from a detachable box magazine. Both have 24-inch, cold-hammer-forged and lapped barrels. SRP: $865.



CZ-USA's left-hand 557 will be available in 30-06 (standard action) and 308 (short action).

DPMS

DPMS now has the GII Hunter in 243 Winchester and 260 Remington. Both feature 20-inch Teflon-coated barrels, threaded muzzles, carbon-fiber free-floating handguards, two-stage triggers, Magpul MOE stocks, Hogue grips, and an enhanced shell deflector.

The GII Compact Hunter is chambered for the 243 Winchester. This minimalized semi-auto rifle features a 16-inch Teflon-coated barrel, a threaded muzzle, a carbon-fiber, free-floating handguard, a two-stage trigger, a B5 Sopmod Stock, a Hogue grip, and an enhanced shell deflector.

Another addition to the GII line is the AP4 OR (Optics Ready). This GII has an improved upper receiver optimized for left-hand shooters, and a standard, plain-steel single-rail gas block. SRP: $1249.



The GII Hunter from DPMS is now available in 243 Winchester and 260 Remington. Both feature 20-inch Teflon-coated barrels and Magpul MOE stocks.

E.R. Shaw

America's largest independent manufacturer of gun barrels is now offering the new Mark X bolt-action rifle. Consumers can order online and choose between barrel lengths from 16.25 to 26 inches. They can also select one of 90 chamberings in calibers from 17 through 458. The highly acclaimed AccuTrigger is standard, but a Timney is an option. This is a custom, made-to-order rifle. SRP: $1399.

Mossberg

The Patriot line continues to expand. For 2018, you'll see it in 6.5 Creedmoor in the top-of-the-line model—the Revere. This rifle features a 2.0 Grade European walnut stock and a rosewood forend tip and grip cap. SRP: $823.

The Patriot Cerakote is also new. Cerakote is a polymer-ceramic coating that protects metal surfaces, and this Cerakoted Patriot will be offered with a synthetic black stock in six popular chamberings, including 243 Winchester, 6.5 Creedmoor, 270 Winchester, 7mm-08 Remington, 308 Winchester, and 30/06 Springfield.

To keep things on the cool side, Mossberg is offering three new rifles specifically intended to visually please; all are finished in Muddy Girl Serenity camo. This new camo has a dynamic combination of colors and natural elements for a sharp look that will likely appeal to anyone wanting some additional, eye-catching flair from their rifle. The list includes a Patriot Super Bantam in 243 Winchester, a Blaze autoloading rifle in 22 LR, and an International 715T semi-auto rifle in 22 LR.



Mossberg's MVP Precision tactical rifle sports an all-new chassis and a Luth-AR MBA-3 adjustable stock.

Proof Research

The new Switch is easily user-modified to accommodate many cartridges. It comes standard with a free-floating, cut-rifled Proof Research carbon-fiber barrel in either 223 Remington, 6mm and 6.5mm Creedmoor, 260 Remington, or 308 Winchester. It incorporates a Savage-style barrel to allow for user-conversion to virtually any short-action caliber. SRP: $3,995.



The Switch from Proof Research is easily user-modified to accommodate many different cartridges.

Remington

The new 700 MTD Tactical Chassis rifle is available with a 24- or 26-inch barrel and is chambered for the 308 Winchester, 300 Winchester Magnum, or 338 Lapua

Magnum. It has a stainless-steel-barreled action, a Magpul PRS II adjustable stock, an oversize bolt handle, and an AAC muzzle brake, and ships in a hard case. SRP: $3,500.

The SS 5R Black Cerakote is built on an HS Precision stock. It has a stainless-steel barrel and action, and the 5R rifled barrel has the distinctive LTR-style fluting with a black Cerakote finish. A threaded muzzle and X Mark Pro adjustable trigger are standard. Available in 308 Winchester with a 20- or 24-inch barrel, 300 Winchester Magnum with a 24-inch barrel, and 6.5 Creedmoor with a 24-inch barrel. SRP: $1250. There is also a non-Cerakote version in 223 Remington. SRP: $1150.

Savage

Since its introduction in 1958, the Savage Model 110 has served hunters and shooters well as an economical, hard-hitting, accurate rifle. Now it's even better with the new Model 110 Big Game and Specialty series. These revamped rifles have received a fresh look and a full complement of new and improved features. Customized performance is the hallmark of the redesign, and these new rifles solve the three main issues shooters usually pay a gunsmith to address: fit, trigger pull, and bedding.

The all-new user-adjustable AccuFit system/stock is the key. It allows shooters to customize length of pull and comb height. Inserts included with the rifle can be installed in seconds with a Phillips screwdriver.

The new AccuStock also has a rigid chassis embedded in the stock. Combine these custom-like features with the standard adjustable AccuTrigger, and the 110s become affordable custom rifles, right out of the box. To help bring all this wonderfulness to the consumer, Savage has a full line of revamped 110s to choose from, covering everything from general-purpose to niche offerings.

The Savage 110 Storm features a detachable-box magazine, a stainless-steel barrel, and a gray synthetic stock. It is available in a plethora of cartridges, from 223 Remington to 338 Winchester Magnum. SRP: $849.

The 110 Engage Hunter comes out of the box with a mounted and bore-sighted Bushnell Engage riflescope. SRP: $629. The 110 Predator is a Realtree Max 1 camo version chambered for six coyote-killing cartridges. All feature 24-inch barrels and a four-round detachable magazine. SRP: $799.

For long-range 110 Savage use, there's the Long Range Hunter. It comes with a 26-inch barrel and is chambered for the 6.5 Creedmoor, 260 Remington, 308 Winchester, 300 WSM, 338 Federal, 6.5x284 Norma, 7mm Remington Magnum, 300 Winchester Magnum, and the 338 Lapua Magnum. SRP: $1099; $1298, Lapua.

If you want the ideal general-purpose 110, there's the 110 Scout. Configured to emulate Jeff Cooper's concept, this 110 has a 16.5-inch barrel, a 10-shot detachable magazine, open sights, and an extended eye-relief scope rail. Chambered for the 223 Remington, 308 Winchester, 338 Federal, or 450 Bushmaster. SRP: $815. Other specific-purpose new 110s include the 23-inch- barreled 110



The completely revamped Savage Model 110 benefits from the all-new user-adjustable AccuFit system, which allows shooters to customize the stock fit.

Bear Hunter ($999), the 26-inch-barreled 110 Varmint ($638), the 20-inch-barreled 110 Hog Hunter ($594), and the wicked 110 Wolverine in 450 Bushmaster ($899).

The 10/110 Stealth Evolution chassis rifle is chambered for six distance-delivering cartridges, including the 6mm Creedmoor. The rifle blends pinpoint precision with torture-tested toughness, and pairs a heavy fluted barrel, blueprinted 10/110 action, 5R rifling, and an AccuTrigger, with a monolithic aluminum chassis finished in rugged bronze Cerakote. SRP: $1799-$2149.

Steyr

The Zephyr II is Steyr's new smallbore rifle. It features a classic European walnut stock with a Bavarian cheekpiece and fish-scale-pattern checkering, and the Steyr Mannlicher bolt handle and tang safety. Available in 17 HMR, 22 LR, and 22 WMR, the Zephyr II has a cold-hammer-forged 19.7-inch barrel, with an overall length of 35.2 inches. The rifle weighs 5.8 pounds. SRP: $995.

The Pro THB (Tactical Heavy Barrel) offers extreme accuracy at an extremely affordable price, and it's a complement to Steyr's traditional platforms. It has a durable synthetic stock with removable spacers in the buttstock to adjust length of pull. It also has a cold-hammer-forged, 16-, 20-, or 26-inch threaded heavy barrel, finished with Steyr's durable Mannox coating. Chambered for the 308 Winchester, the magazine is the standard two-position five-round detachable box, with a 10-round conversion kit available. SRP: $1265.

Weatherby

The Mark V line includes five new rifles. The Camilla Deluxe has been designed for female hunters with input from the Women of Weatherby team. It weighs 6.5 pounds and has an AA-grade Claro walnut stock. A slim forearm, a narrow-radius pistol grip, and a high comb contribute to the fit a woman wants. Five chamberings are available: 240 Weatherby Magnum, 270 Winchester, 6.5 Creedmoor, 308 Winchester, and 30/06 Springfield.

The Mark V KCR features a 26-inch, No. 3 contour custom barrel from Krieger. It is available in 257, 6.5-300, 300, and 30-378 Weatherby Magnum cartridges, and includes an Accubrake to reduce felt recoil by up to 50 percent. A LXX trigger, oversize bolt knob, composite Monte Carlo stock, and flat dark earth and graphite black Cerakote finish round out the features on this rifle.

The Altitude weighs 5.75 pounds with the six-lug action,

6.75 pounds with the nine-lug magnum version. It features a lightweight Monte Carlo stock with an aluminum bedded block, a fluted stainless-steel barrel, Kryptek Altitude camo, and a Tungsten Cerakote finish. The Altitude is available in 240, 257, 270, 7mm, and 300 Weatherby Magnums, as well as 6.5 Creedmoor, 270 Winchester, 308 Winchester, and 30/06 Springfield.

Winchester

The new XPC is a chassis rifle with a quick-cycling 60-degree bolt with plenty of clearance for large scopes. The XPC comes with an optic rail, a button-rifled free-floating chrome-moly barrel, a target crown, a threaded muzzle, and a nickel-Teflon and Perma-Cote black finish. It has a MagPul buttstock and grip, and is available in 243 Win. and 6.5 Creedmoor with a 24-inch barrel, and in 308 Winchester with a 20-inch barrel. SRP: $1599.

The new XPR Sporter features a Grade I walnut stock and an Inflex Technology recoil pad. Other features include the MOA trigger, Perma-Cote matte black metal surfaces, a detachable-box magazine, a steel recoil lug, and a two-position thumb safety. It's available in a variety of cartridges, from 243 Winchester to 338 Winchester Magnum, with barrel lengths from 22 to 26 inches. SRP: $599.

A new 1873 Carbine model will feature a classic carbine-style forearm with a blued barrel band, a blued carbine strap buttplate, and a blued saddle ring. The stock and forearm are satin-finished walnut, and this lever gun comes standard with a ladder-style rear sight. It's available in 357 Magnum/.38 Special, 44/40 Winchester, and 45 Colt, with a 20-inch barrel. SRP: $1299.

The Model 1892 Carbine has the same features as the old 1873 Carbine, but with a semi-buckhorn rear sight and Marble Arms gold-bead front sight. Available in 357 Magnum, 44 Rem. Magnum, 44/40 Win., and 45 Colt, with a 20-inch barrel. SRP: $1069.

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

COMING UP IN GUN TESTS

● Bargain Hunter: We test a quintet of 357 Magnum double-action wheelguns to find which one is worth hunting for: Smith & Wesson Combat Magnum Texas Range Edition, $800; Smith & Wesson Model 66, $420; a Taurus Model M66 Nickel, $325; and two 4-inch Ruger GP100 revolvers in stainless and blued finishes, $500 and $480, respectively.

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