GUN TESTS®

THE CONSUMER RESOURCE FOR THE SERIOUS SHOOTER

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300 WM BOLT RIFLES

We shot this trio of precision rifles to see who would get hits way out yonder. Tested: The Savage 110 BA Stealth, Steyr's SSG 08, and the Barrett MRAD. One is a Best Buy; one is an Our Pick; and the third is awfully good, too. ● Page 6



BARGAIN HUNTER: DOUBLE-ACTION 357 MAGNUMS

These 4-inch-barrel revolvers, found used at pawn shops and gun shops, went head to head at the range. Contestants: Two Ruger GP100s, one blued and one stainless, and two Combat Magnums from Smith & Wesson, a stainless Model 66 and a blued Model 19. ● Page 17



SUPPRESSOR READY?

When we pitted three 45 ACPs, we were looking for an easy way to shoot quietly. Two made it easy; one did not. Tested: FN America's FNX-45 Tactical FDE, Glock's G21SFTB, and the famous Heckler & Koch Mark 23. ● Page 25

DOWNRANGE: 2 ● FIRING LINE: 3 ● COMING UP: 32

DOWNRANGE

MORE LEGAL PROBLEMS FOR SIG'S P320



Todd Woodard

We recently published a news item on Gun-Tests.com (the digital site for this magazine) that updates our readers on legal troubles the SIG Sauer P320 is encountering. Most recently, the Loudoun *Times-Mirror* website is reporting that a Loudoun County (Virginia) deputy has filed a lawsuit against SIG Sauer alleging that her fully-holstered P320 duty weapon discharged and sent a bullet into her leg. According to the newspaper's account, the incident occurred this year on Feb. 7, "… when 37-year-old Loudoun County Deputy Marcie Vadnais went to the Northern Virginia Criminal Justice Academy to attend a general instructor course." The *Times-Mirror* further reported, "In accordance with academy policy, Deputy Vadnais began removing her firearm from her belt when she arrived." According to the lawsuit, as she fed the belt through the holster's first tooth, her SIG Sauer P320 somehow "fired one nine millimeter bullet, which hit her in the upper right thigh."

"At no time during this incident did she touch the trigger, which at all times was inside and covered by a SIG-manufactured holster," the lawsuit reads. The round shattered the deputy's femur in several places and caused "massive blood loss and other internal injuries," according to the suit. Deputy Vadnais, a seven-year veteran of the force, still has shrapnel and bone fragments embedded in her leg. A steel rod now holds her femur in place.

At Gun Tests, our shooters have had no problems with the P320 in terms of reliability and had no malfunctions with it. We gave it a **Grade B** rating in our first report on it in 2015. Many of our readers have told us they won't buy '**B**'-rated guns, especially when there was another handgun in the test — a Heckler & Koch VP9 9mm Luger — which earned a **Grade A** rating and was Our Pick. In the November 2016 issue, we tested a different version, the SIG Sauer P320 Carry 320CA-9-BSS, which earned an **A** grade. If our team had experienced a safety problem with a test firearm like what's been reported, we would have given the P320 an **F** or failing grade — and we would have unequivocally told our readers not to buy it. But we bought two over-the-counter handguns and simply didn't have a problem with them.

Still, it's incumbent on us to follow up our reviews with some of the reported problems and legal actions affecting the P320.

In the most recent legal action, Deputy Vadnais is seeking $10 million in damages and to have SIG Sauer recall the pistol. In the suit, the deputy suggested that the company issue an "enhanced, unambiguous warning to all purchasers of the P320, stating that it can fire without a trigger pull in its existing condition." SIG has released a statement that "reaffirms the

— continued on page 31

GUN TESTS CREDO

REMEMBER: BE SAFE, BE SECURE, BE AWARE

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Reloading Advice from Veterans

Readers James and Bruce offer wisdom earned from using a variety of handloading tolls over the years. Reader Phil presents his solution to 22 TCM cases sticking in Rock Island handguns.



Re "Programmable Automatic Powder Dispensers Compete," June 2018

I want to thank you for publishing the article on automatic powder dispensers. Although I think you may catch some flack for those who think GUN TESTS should just test guns, and maybe ammo, I find that articles such as these are very helpful and informative for those of us who pursue reloading, gunsmithing or other peripheral "hobbies."

Had I not already purchased the Hornady Auto Lock-N-Load, I would probably follow your recommendation for the RCBS model on the basis of its accuracy and intuitive operation. I say this, because the other drawbacks and problems you note with the Hornady reflect my experience. But once you have used the Hornady, some of the problem settings are less confusing. The manual also includes several instructions on how to correct the performance in terms of dispensing and trickling speeds. Other than changing the speed, I have not had to make more complex adjustments. That being said, the RCBS Chargemaster Lite seems to address those factors, as well. You describe the problems with dispensing rod-versus ball-shaped powders very well. There is an internet fix for this involving cutting a plastic straw and fitting it within the dispensing tube. I have not tried this yet. Finally, as you note, using one of these machines really makes the process of measuring powder much more efficient, and it can perform this task while you charge the cartridge cases and seat the bullet. It's a great time saver, and if you're content with an accuracy of the dispenser to 0.1 grain, then I wouldn't wait to purchase one of these. **— James**



Re "Caliber-Conversion Pistols From Rock Island Armory, Glock, SIG," July 2018

Just reviewed your gun test of the Rock Island Armory handgun. I purchased my Rock Island pistol new about a year and half ago. In 9mm, the pistol is great! I have used it successfully in combat/practical pistol training with my local gun club. I had the same experience with the 22 TCM cartridge as your testers — two stuck cases while firing 40 rounds. I sent the pistol to the

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.

factory for warranty repair. They returned the pistol, verified my complaint, tuned the extractor, and test fired. They recommended using light oil on the extractor, not grease (I had not used grease). During the next 20 rounds, I had two stuck cases. I tested the extractor by closing the slide on the fired/stuck case and by using herculean gorilla strength, the extractor successfully removed the fired/stuck case. Doesn't appear to be the extractor. I obtained a 50-caliber copper brush and thoroughly cleaned the chamber, then I applied gun oil to the chamber surface. I fired approximately 25 rounds with no malfunctions before I ran out of ammunition. Traveling across Missouri, I found a shooting range in St. Louis County. I have three magazines for my Rock Island handgun, so I loaded all three with 17 rounds each of the 22 TCM cartridges. Fired 51 rounds with no malfunctions, no stuck cases. Before I fire it again, I'll use the wire brush/oiling procedure and see if I can prevent having any more stuck cases. Also, I should mention I travel all summer in my motorhome, and during my stops, I tried to find 22 TCM cartridges with no luck. That suggests an availability problem your readers should consider. **— Phil**

Re "380 ACP Shoot-Out: New Models Versus a Time-Tested Veteran," August 2018



I just received the August issue with the tests for the 380 ACPs. Since you have included an older steel Walther, I would like to suggest the carry 380 that I use. The SIG Sauer P232 in 380 ACP has very good function, and I checked the trigger-pull weights: Double action is 9.25 pounds and single action is 3.75 pounds. I personally prefer a SA/DA firearm over a 1911 style. Unless someone has practiced with or has used 1911s all the time, the owner may forget to set the firearm to Fire mode when in an emergency. The SIG is quite accurate because it has a fixed barrel and decent sights, if you really have time to use sights in an emergency. The size and weight are good. You might think about including this senior but excellent pistol. **— Bill**

Hey Bill: Thanks for the note on the P232. It has been a while since we last tested it in the June 2010 issue, where it earned a B grade. — Todd Woodard

Mail Subscription?

I came across a 2008 edition of your magazine and recalled how much I enjoyed reading it. Someone at work had a subscription and would leave it laying around. Having discovered it again, I was thinking about ordering a subscription of my own. However, it looks like you only have an online version. Is that the case, or can I get a hard copy delivered to my door? Thank you for your time, and thank you for such an informative magazine. **— Frank**

Thank you, Frank. We offer mail, mail plus online, and online only subscriptions at Gun-Tests.com. I look forward to hearing about some tests you want us to consider. — tw

Re "Buying Self-Defense Insurance: Important Factors to Consider," May 2018

I was reading the reply to the article on self-defense insurance and remembered what happened to a good friend of my brother's back in the 1950s. He'd had an operation on his sinuses and was told by his doctors, no strenuous exercises, to include lifting and anything above walking. His next-door neighbor asked him if he could take her to the store to buy some groceries. He informed her that he would be happy to, but he couldn't lift or carry anything because of his operation. She just wanted a few staples, and she would be happy to carry them herself. She just couldn't drive. When they got back, she noticed that the blind in her kitchen window moved, and she asked him to stay for a bit until she found out what was going on.

She had a protection order against her husband, who was a large man and a retired Marine. My brother's friend was living at home with his parents while he was going to a nearby university. When her husband came storming out of the house, accusing him of having an affair with his wife, my brother's friend was in a position where he couldn't run or fight, so he drew his 45 and told the man to stop. Not wanting to kill his neighbor, he still shot him several times trying to stop him! The man would have lived if the ambulance had not gotten lost and taken more than an hour and a half to arrive. First aid had been rendered, but the man died on the way to the hospital.

The prosecuting attorney charged him with murder, and the wife of the man who was killed testified for the defense, and he was eventually acquitted, but it cost him thousands of dollars for his attorney's fees. Now this sounds like an excellent reason to have self-defense insurance. But that is not why I am sending this to you. Years later my brother, his friend, and I were involved in an initiative to change the law in Washington state to stop politically correct district attorneys from prosecuting people who use deadly force in protecting themselves or someone else. And it is quite simple. If you are defending yourself or someone else and the aggressor is seriously injured or dies, and a prosecuting attorney decides to charge you with a crime and you are acquitted, the office of the prosecuting attorney picks up all of your expenses for your defense out of their operating budget.

When an initiative is passed by the voters, it becomes law and cannot be changed for two years in this state. If you are defending yourself or someone else in the state of Washington, get the equivalent of O.J. Simpson's defense team because if you are acquitted, the prosecuting attorney will have to pay all your expenses. It is said that the most sensitive nerve in the body is the one that is attached to the pocketbook. **— Gordon**

Self-defense shootings are life-changing events, regardless of the outcomes. I don't think any Gun Tests readers want to shoot someone who's threatening them, but they will if forced to. I personally have had self-defense insurance, but I currently don't, so I see both sides of the issue. If more states adopted the stance you've described in Washington state, it would make the decisions not to have insurance a lot easier. Thanks for letting us know. — tw

Re "Firing Line," July 2018

Mr. Woodard: I don't always agree with you, but I look forward to every issue of Gun Tests, and always enjoy it when it arrives. I am writing in regard to Scott's letter in the July 2018 issue. It just makes me want to cry! He says he has been "trying to reload for 10 years," but always runs into a problem he has to spend more money to fix. Despite his NRA reloading classes, I'm afraid poor Scott got the wrong idea somewhere. He seems to think that the point of reloading is to save time, and that spending more money solves all problems. So Scott, please consider this:

The point of reloading is to load safe ammo yourself, producing ammo that functions well and is acceptably accurate. Set aside your Lyman T Mag II turret press for the time being. Get a simple C-frame single-stage press, like the Lyman Ideal, or the Lee Precision Reloader. Try Lee die sets; for around $30 to $50 you actually get more than the Lyman and RCBS sets whose prices you complain about. Use some Lee dippers and a trickler to throw powder onto your scale. Don't worry about saving time; instead, focus on making one perfect, safe, functioning, accurate round at a time. When you get good at doing that, then maybe move back to your turret press. Your Lyman 55 powder measure should be adequate, if you develop the correct consistent technique, and choose the right powder. Flake, ball, and short-cut extruded powders work best in all powder measures, including the electronic ones. Scott, all tools require technique to use properly. This applies to a wrench, a stapler, or a reloading press. All of the front-line reloading companies belong to the National Reloading Manufacturer's Association, and all provide products that work. Tools that cost twice as much seldom work twice as well; they will usually work ten or twenty percent better. This is an improvement most noticeable to the expert user, not the novice. Good luck, Scott, and don't give up.

By the way, Todd, I just realized that you edited my favorite nightstand book, *Cartridges of the World.* Good job! **— Bruce**

Thank you, Bruce. I agree that it's better to focus on getting the right loads for your firearms first, then try to improve your speed. Reloading should be a satisfying experience for the shooter. And re Cartridges of the World, *I'm working on the 16th edition now. — tw*

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

300 Win. Mag. Bolt Rifle Test: Savage, Steyr, Barrett Shoot Out

We shot this trio of precision rifles to see who would get hits way out yonder. Outcome: The 110 BA Stealth is a Best Buy, while the SSG 08 is Our Pick. The MRAD is great, too.

Rifles set up for long-range precision shooting are specialized instruments with features that allow the user to consistency wring out accuracy at or beyond 1000 yards. We recently looked at three precision rifles in the big-boy cartridge of 300 Winchester Magnum to see what hit our wallets had to take to get in on the fun of precision rifle shooting. At the low end of the price range, we tested a Savage 110 BA Stealth ($1484) and two that were nearly four times the cost, a Steyr SSG 08 ($3353) and Barrett MRAD ($6000). After the dust had settled, we determined the cost of the rifle did not make much difference in its accuracy performance. All rifles grouped sub minute of angle, requiring us to measure to two decimal places, or hundredths of an inch, to determine the top gun in accuracy. Spoiler: We shot the smallest group with the Savage. What separated the low-cost 110 BA Stealth from the premium-priced Barrett and Steyr were features that made the premium rifles easier to shoot or were more adaptive to the user's needs.

We went to MidwayUSA.com to fit the rifles with two affordable variable-power scopes and mounts. The first



The Steyr SSG 08, top, without scope, is well appointed with numerous features that make shooting it easy, including a fully adjustable buttstock. The Savage 110 BA Stealth (center) is an excellent low-cost precision rifle with minimal features. The Barrett MRAD (bottom) is a non-traditional bolt action that allows a user to swap calibers. All rifles had sub-MOA accuracy. These rifles are quite capable of making hits on targets accurately out to 1,000 yards with the right optic, ammunition, and operator pulling the trigger.

300 WINCHESTER MAGNUM RANGE DATA

Federal Premium Gold Match 190-gr. Sierra MatchKing BTHP	**Barrett MRAD**	**Steyr SSG 08**	**Savage 110 BA Stealth**
Average Velocity	2996 fps	2933 fps	3009 fps
Muzzle Energy	3787 ft.-lbs.	3630 ft.-lbs.	3820 ft.-lbs.
Smallest Group	0.67 in.	0.64 in.	0.55 in.
Average Group	0.82 in.	0.66 in.	0.58 in.

Hornady Non-Typical Whitetail 170-gr. SP	**Barrett MRAD**	**Steyr SSG 08**	**Savage 110 BA Stealth**
Average Velocity	2995 fps	2946 fps	3026 fps
Muzzle Energy	3586 ft.-lbs.	3469 ft.-lbs.	3660 ft.-lbs.
Smallest Group	0.70 in.	0.83 in.	0.70 in.
Average Group	0.78 in.	0.86 in.	0.77 in.

Federal Edge TLR 200-gr. Edge TLR	**Barrett MRAD**	**Steyr SSG 08**	**Savage 110 BA Stealth**
Average Velocity	2949 fps	2914 fps	2949 fps
Muzzle Energy	3863 ft.-lbs.	3772 ft.-lbs.	3863 ft.-lbs.
Smallest Group	0.75 in.	0.63 in.	0.78 in.
Average Group	0.77 in.	0.74 in.	0.83 in.

Hornady Match 178-gr. ELD Match	**Barrett MRAD**	**Steyr SSG 08**	**Savage 110 BA Stealth**
Average Velocity	2956 fps	2930 fps	2996 fps
Muzzle Energy	3454 ft.-lbs.	3394 ft.-lbs.	3548 ft.-lbs.
Smallest Group	0.60 in.	0.90 in.	0.76 in.
Average Group	0.73 in.	1.08 in.	0.86 in.

To collect accuracy data, we fired five-shot groups from a bench using a bipod. Distance: 100 yards. We recorded velocities using a ProChrono digital chronograph set 15 feet from the muzzle. ***Ammo sources:*** *300 Winchester Magnum Federal Ammunition Non-Typical Whitetail 180-grain Soft Point 300WDT180 ($23.59/20 from CheaperThanDirt.com); 300 Winchester Magnum Hornady Match 178-grain ELD Polymer Tip Boat Tail bullet 82043 ($42/20 from CheaperThanDirt.com); 300 Winchester Magnum Federal Premium 200-grain Edge TLR Polymer Tipped Bonded Boat Tail P300WETLR200 ($40/20 from MidwayUSA.com); and 300 Winchester Magnum Federal Premium Sierra MatchKing 190-grain Boat Tail Hollow Point GM300WM ($40/20 from MidwayUSA.com).*

was a Bushnell Engage 4-16x44mm ($399) with Weaver Tactical Skeleton rings ($35). The second was a Leapers UTG Accushot 4-16x56mm scope ($245) with a Bobro 1-Piece QD mount ($235). The Engage scope uses what Bushnell calls a Deploy MOA reticle. We felt this scope offered clarity and sharpness. The locking turrets were easy to use and require no tools to adjust windage and elevation. We also liked the parallax adjustment, which we feel is a requirement for long-range shooting. The eyepiece was also easy to adjust and allowed different testers to dial in sharpness for their individual eyes. The magnification had just the right resistance so we could be on target and adjust magnification by feel, but not have to move out of position to make the optical changes we wanted. The Weaver rings are also a low-cost option that easily dealt with the recoil of the 300 Win. Mag. Since the Weaver set up used separate rings, we were able to ensure the Bushnell was well attached to the Picatinny rail of the Savage. The Leapers UTG Accushot 4-16x56mm performed similarly to the Bushnell but offered an illuminated reticle in either red or green, which some testers liked. A black reticle can be more difficult to aim on a black target. It featured a mil-dot reticle with a bubble leveler, letting the user know if the rifle is canted, which could affect the shot. Both scopes featured a second-focal-plane reticle, so the magnification needs to be set on a specific magnification for the reticle to be used in range estimation. The Bushnell needs to be dial to 16x, the highest magnification, and the Leapers needs to be dialed to 10x. In our opinion, the reticles and magnification ranges were suitable for long-range work, well over the yardage found at most public shooting ranges. We were pleased at the performance of both scopes. The Bobro Engineering Precision Optic Mount,

Close Gap Ring with single lever QD mount was used with the Leapers scope. This mount is designed to fit to any Picatinny rail. We liked this mount a lot and have used it previously on AR rifles, and because the Barrett has a straight stock comb, it provided the correct eye height. Also, because we did not have a lot of Picatinny rail on the Steyr, it worked well on that rifle. We used this scope-mount set up on the Steyr first then placed it on the Barrett and were able to get zeroed with three rounds. We found the Bobro could take the pounding and recoil of the 300 Win. Mag. with no issues.

To check our work shot to shot, we used a Bushnell Tactical LMSS 8-40x 60mm spotting scope ($1300 from OpticsPlanet.com). This is a one-piece spotter without a separate eyepiece. This spotter is straight and offered plenty of focus adjustment, clarity, and an eyepiece for the user with eye glasses. We liked this spotter, though we would have liked the magnification rings to turn a bit easier. We used it with and without a tripod and could count the mirage waves floating out at 200 yards on a 95-degree day in North Carolina. We could also see black bullet holes in black bullseyes easily.

With specialized long-range equipment, you need ammunition up to the task. The hunting ammunition types we chose included Federal Premium 200-grain Edge TLR Polymer Tipped Bonded Boat Tails and Federal Ammunition Non-Typical Whitetail 180-grain Soft Points. The match-style loads were Hornady Match 178-grain ELD Polymer Tip Boat Tail bullets and Federal Premium Sierra MatchKing 190-grain Boat Tail Hollow Points.

How We Tested

We test-fired the rifles using a bipod. The Steyr came with a bipod, and we had on hand a Sinclair Tactical Bipod ($199 from Brownells.com), which attaches to a sling swivel stud. We fired sitting at a bench and in the prone position at target sets at 100 and 200 yards. It was 95 degrees during testing, so it did not take many rounds down the tube to heat up the barrel. Our firing sequence consisted of five shots, swap rifles to allow the barrel to cool, and repeat the process until all rifles fired all four ammo types for accuracy and chrono results. We then loaded up the magazines and cranked through rounds as fast as we could to see how a hot barrel might impact accuracy. These are heavy rifles, and that is a good feature in a long-range rifle. The weight helps settle the rifle, especially when your heart beat can cause the reticle to move when aiming. This is especially true when you have three bullet holes clustered together so close it looks like one hole and you have two more shots to make. Self-imposed pressure for sure. The weight also helps stifle the recoil of the 300 Win. Mag. To help with recoil further, the rifles featured beefy muzzle brakes. We collected data at 100 yards and also fired at 200 yards, anticipating groups opening up, which they did. What these rifles do is help build confidence so 200 yards is a chip shot. If we did our part,



Bolts from the Steyr (left), Savage (center), and Barrett (right) show the locking lugs, which dictate the amount of bolt throw.



The Bushnell spotting scope was easy and comfortable to use with or without a tripod.



We shot the Savage and Barrett off a Sinclair Tactical bipod. It attaches to a sling-swivel stud.



The Leapers UTG is a low-cost scope suitable for long-range work. The buttons on top change reticle color to red or green and adjust the intensity.





Above: The Bushnell Engage scope is a low-cost unit suitable for long-range work. The turrets can be adjusted without tools. Right: The tactical knobs on the Bushnell scope were easy to operate and did not require tools.

SAVAGE 110 BA STEALTH 22639 300 WINCHESTER MAGNUM, $1122

GUN TESTS GRADE: A (BEST BUY)

The 110 BA Stealth does not have all the bells and whistles of the others, but it is nonetheless a precision rifle worth having. The lower cost — compared to the other rifles — can get you into long-range shooting fast.



Action Type	Bolt, push feed
Overall Length	49.0 in.
Height Unboxed	8.0 in.
Height As Tested	11.25 in.
Width	3.25 in.
Weight, Unboxed	11.1 lbs.
Weight, Loaded	12.8 lbs.
Weight, Range	13.25 lbs.
Barrel	24 in. long; fluted; 1:9.3 RH twist, matte-black carbon steel
Barrel Muzzle Device	3-port brake
Stock	Drake Hunter/Stalker aluminum chassis, Magpul PRS polymer buttstock; rubber buttpad, 0.8 in. thick; Hogue Overmolded rubber pistol grip
Stock, Length of Pull	Adj., 14.3 to 15.7 in.
Stock Comb	Straight, adj. for height
Stock Forend	Aluminum, slotted M-LOK handguard
Stock Sling Attachments	Two fixed
Trigger Pull	2.1 lbs. factory set; adjustable single stage
Trigger Guard	Aluminum, enlarged
Safety	2-position slider, tang mounted
Magazine	(1) 5-round. detachable single-stack box, steel
Magazine Release	Paddle, front of trigger guard
Bolt	Two lugs, 90-degree lift
Bolt Release	Bolt switch and trigger pull
Sights	None, Drake Picatinny rail
Accuracy Guarantee	None
Warranty	1-year limited
Telephone	(800) 370-0708
Website	SavageArms.com
Made In	U.S.A.



The Magpul PRS Gen 3 stock is excellent, being adjustable for LOP and comb height.



We liked the large paddle magazine release compared to the other rifles' magazine releases. The oversized bolt knob was easy to manipulate.



An aluminum chassis allows attachments of AR-style accessories such as buttstocks and pistol grips. The Magpul stock and Hogue pistol grip as provided are pretty good choices, however.

the rifles would do our bidding with surgical consistency. We would like to own any of the rifles tested, but some testers leaned more toward one rifle than the others. Here's what we learned after tabulating the data and picking up a few pounds of empty 300 Win. Mag. brass.

Savage 110 BA Stealth 22639 300 Winchester Magnum, $1122

This was a recent posted price from BudsGunShop.com. On the same day, CheaperThanDirt.com listed the same rifle at $1125 and SportsmansOutdoorSuperstore.com priced it at $1155. Consider the Stealth a stripped-down, bare-essential long-range rifle. Savage has taken the 110 barreled action and dropped it into a Drake aluminum chassis. The action and barrel are blueprinted by Savage, so the best accuracy from the components can be achieved. The long action is mated to a heavy-profile fluted barrel with a nice muzzle brake. The safety is a two-position slider operated by a shooter's thumb — simple and intuitive. Bolt removal requires pressing the trigger and depressing the bolt-release lever on the right side of the action.

The Stealth comes in a cardboard box with one steel-body single-stack magazine. The double-stack-magazine round capacity in the Steyr and Barrett are nearly double, which we preferred. The chassis wore a burnt bronze finish with a matte-black barrel, action, and magazine. The rifle looked sharp to those who like the bronze look. The rubber pistol grip was a Hogue Overmolded piece. Any AR-style pistol grip or buttstocks will work with the Drake aluminum chassis.

An excellent Magpul PRS was fitted to our sample. This stock is adjustable for length of pull and comb height via wheels that are rotated. A sling swivel stud is attached to the forend. The forend will also accept Picatinny rails at the 3, 6, and 9 o'clock positions. In our opinion, there was plenty of Picatinny rail at

the 12 o'clock position to securely mount any size scope.

At first look, the 110 BA Stealth seemed just like a 110 barreled action mated to a Drake aluminum chassis, and we assumed the set up would lag behind the more expensive rifles. Not so. We shot the smallest group in the test with the Stealth. Getting behind the Stealth, the stock comfort was similar to the Barrett. The Stealth was the lightweight of the three rifles. Recoil was a bit more noticeable. The action was not nearly as smooth as the others, but is was good enough for the price discount. It took more movement to crank the Savage's bolt. Another nit was the magazine rattled in the chassis. The others were silent and secure. While the Stealth features Savage's excellent AccuTrigger, all the rifles had in common a crisp and adjustable trigger and enlarged trigger guard. Operating the rifles with gloved hands posed no issues.

Because all the rifles are push-feed models, the rifles allowed single-loading a cartridge through the ejection port. The ports were similar in size. We liked the large paddle magazine release on the Savage the best. Depress the magazine release paddle, and the magazine would drop free, unlike the Steyr and Barrett magazines, which required the user to strip the magazine. This is not a big deal because speed reloading a long-range rifle is not a requirement.

Our Team Said: The Stealth is an intriguing, low-cost option if you have interest in shooting long range without having to go to the bank. Because the Drake chassis is compatible with AR components, you could swap out stocks and pistol grips if one or both did not suit you. We felt you could outfit the Savage with a more expensive scope, carry case, and ammo and still be under the cost of the Steyr and Barrett. Thus, we call it a Best Buy.

Barrett MRAD 14361
300 Winchester Magnum, $6000

The MRAD was designed for adaptability and configuration at the user level. It offers the ability to swap calibers between 6.5 Creedmoor, 308 Winchester, 300 Win. Mag., and

BARRETT MRAD 14361
300 WINCHESTER MAGNUM, $6000
GUN TESTS GRADE: A

Versatility and accuracy best describe the MRAD due to the data we collected and the ability to swap calibers. The design is simple and robust, but the cost is crazy high. The grade above is for the rifle's utility, without price factored in.



Action Type	Bolt, push feed
Overall Length	48.75 in.
Overall Length, Folded	40.75 in.
Height Unboxed	8.0 in.
Height As Tested	11.8 in.
Width, Stock Extended	3.25 in.
Width, Stock Folded	3.25 in.
Weight Unboxed	13.25 lbs.
Weight, Loaded	15.3 lbs.
Weight, Range	16.2 lbs.
Barrel	24 in. long; 1:10 RH twist; matte-black stainless steel, 2-port muzzle brake
Stock	Aluminum chassis w/adj. metal & polymer buttstock;
Stock	rubber buttpad
Stock Length of Pull	Adjustable., 5 position
Stock Comb	Straight, adj. for height
Stock Forend	Aluminum, slotted
Stock Sling Attachments	2 QD
Stock Pistol Grip	Magpul MOE polymer
Trigger	2.5 lbs. factory set; adjustable single stage
Trigger Guard	Aluminum, enlarged
Safety	2-position lever, AR style
Magazine	(2) 10-round. detachable double-stack box, polymer
Magazine Release	Ambi. paddle, front of trigger guard
Bolt	9-lug, 60-degree lift
Bolt Release	Receiver latch
Sights	None, Picatinny top rail
Accuracy Guarantee	None
Warranty	1 year
Telephone	(615) 896-2938
Website	Barrett.net
Made In	U.S.A.





Left: Press the receiver latch to field-strip the MRAD. It comes apart much like an AR. Right: The MRAD uses polymer magazines (arrow) that were easy to load. At first, the magazines encountered slight resistance when inserted into the mag well, but with use, they slid into and out of the mag well with ease.



The Barrett's stock folds to the right side of the rifle and locks the bolt in place. That's a feature required by the U.S. Special Operations Command during the search for a new Precision Sniper Rifle (PSR) in 2009. The Remington Modular Sniper Rifle was selected as the winner.

338 Lapua Magnum. Extra barrels, magazines, and bolt assemblies are required for the caliber transformation. Our sample came in a Pelican case with the foam pre-cut to the hold the scoped rifle with the stock folded, separate slots for the two magazines, and other cubbies for accessories and tools. Our rifle wore a matte-black finish that was well executed.

Unlike the Savage and the Steyr, which are traditional bolt-action rifles, the MRAD is designed to mate the upper and lower receivers like on an AR platform. A retaining latch under the stock separates the two receivers on a pivot pin so the bolt assembly can be removed for cleaning. The chassis of the Steyr and Savage allowed the user to jam the mag well up against a barrier, if needed for stability. With the MRAD, you would jam the front of the magazine against the barrier. Not a deal breaker by any means because these rifles are designed to be fired off bipods and tripods.

The MRAD was the heaviest of the rifles tested, and that we liked. The upper housed the barrel, which was heavy profile and fluted. Two hex screws secure the barrel to the upper, and when removed, allow the user to swap barrels for a different length or caliber. The muzzle brake, in our opinion, helped mitigate recoil the best. The bolt is encased in a polymer tube, which offered slick lubricity and acted to keep dirt and debris out of the action. A clever design, we thought. The bolt throw was 60 degrees, the smallest in the test, and that allowed us to crank the bolt faster than on the others. The monolithic upper also had plenty of Picatinny rail to mount a massive scope as well as night-vision gear, if needed. The lower housed the trigger group, which is easily removed for cleaning and adjustment. The lower also holds the folding stock and Magpul MOE pistol grip. The grip can be replaced with any aftermarket AR grip. Some testers would ditch the Magpul MOE grip and install an AR grip with a 15-degree grip angle, especially if prone shooting. The safety lever is like an AR platform, rotating between Safe and Fire; it is simple and easily adapted to by AR shooters. The stock is adjustable for LOP via a button that extends or collapses the butt at preset intervals. The comb adjusts for height via a rotating knob. The stock folds to the right and locks the bolt handle — a nice safety feature, we thought. We liked this stock and found it easy to shoot with. We used a sock filled with sand on both the Savage and Barrett to fine-tune the vertical position of the rifle when aiming in tandem with the bipods.

The MRAD bolt rifle uses polymer magazines that were easy to load. At first, the magazines encountered slight resistance when inserted into the mag well, but with use, they slid into and out of the mag well with



Our 300 Winchester Magnum choices included, from left, Federal Ammunition Non-Typical Whitetail 180-grain Soft Points 300WDT180, Hornady Match 178-grain ELD Polymer Tip Boat Tails 82043, Federal Premium Sierra MatchKing 190-grain Boat Tail Hollow Points GM300WM, and Federal Premium 200-grain Edge TLR Polymer Tipped Bonded Boat Tails P300WETLR200.



With Federal Non-Typical Whitetail hunting ammo, the Barrett MRAD typically gave us 0.75-inch groups.



This is a typical group fired from the Savage with Federal Match ammo.



This is a typical group from the Steyr shooting Federal Edge TLR hunting ammo.





The Bobro Engineering one-piece mount worked well and was not affected by recoil. Right: A lever makes it a quick-release design.

VALUE GUIDE: CENTERFIRE BOLT-ACTION RIFLES (MULTIPLE CHAMBERINGS)

GUN NAME	ISSUE	GRADE	COMMENTS
Uintah Precision UPR-10 Bolt AR-10 Upper 6.5 CM, $1295	June 2018	B+	Capable of very good accuracy, this was a dream upper in need of a little refinement.
Ruger American Rifle Ranch 06968 300 Blackout, $420	May 2018	A-	Shot well both suppressed and unsuppressed. Short length would make it handy.
Remington Model 700 SPS-T 84205 300 Blackout, $680	May 2018	A-	Shot well in 300 BLK supersonic and subsonic. Pair it with an AR-15 in 300 BLK for extra value.
Savage Arms 10PT-SR 22356 308 Winchester, $550	May 2018	B+	Good build. It did shoot sub-MOA with one round. We loved the bolt handle and the AccuTrigger.
CZ-USA CZ 527 Youth Carbine 03050 7.62x39mm, $650	March 2018	A-/B+	Grade A- for adults; Grade B+ for youths. A tool we would trust to work over a lifetime of hard use.
Browning A-Bolt Micro Hunter 035020216 7mm-08 Rem., $578	March 2018	A-/C+	Grade A- for adults; Grade C+ for youths. Probably too much rifle and recoil for the youngest shooters.
Savage Axis II Compact Muddy Girl 22230 243 Winchester, $490	March 2018	B/A	Grade B for adults; Grade A for youths. Clear winner as a youth rifle, especially for young ladies.
Desert Tech SRS-A1 6.5 Creedmoor, $4495	Nov. 2017	A	Test results proved the SRS-A1 is at the top of the rifle-quality pyramid.
Ruger Hawkeye Mark IV VT 17980 6.5 Creedmoor, $1139	Nov. 2017	B+	Rough bolt action, but in terms of accuracy, the Hawkeye deserved an A.
Legacy Sports Howa HCR 6.5 Creedmoor, $1450	Nov. 2017	C	The HCR should grade higher based on its ergonomics and simplicity.
Remington Model 700 SPS Tactical 85538 308 Win., $600	Oct. 2017	B+	This short rifle isn't the most accurate, but the overall handling is superb.
Remington Model 700 SPS Varmint 84218 308 Win., $606	Oct. 2017	B+	Hard to find a production rifle that is capable of greater practical accuracy than the SPS Varmint.
Savage Axis 19223 308 Winchester, $240	Oct. 2017	C	Accuracy wasn't the best. The rifle was dogged by a heavy trigger that we chose to fix.
Remington 783 85847 308 Winchester, $340	March 2017	A	Best Buy. This was the most accurate rifle tested, and there were no demerits to topple the 783.
Remington 700 SPS 85538 308 Winchester, $655	March 2017	A-	If you're looking for a maneuverable choice, there are few that are nearly as handy as this one.
Savage Axis XP 19231 308 Winchester, $390	March 2017	B	Accuracy wasn't the best, but accuracy was acceptable with the provided Weaver riflescope.
Mossberg 100 All-Terrain Rifle 27230 308 Win., $200 (Used)	March 2017	C	The rifle did not misfeed. We liked the cheek rest. The primary problem was accuracy.

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VALUE GUIDE: BOLT-ACTION RIFLES (MULTIPLE CHAMBERINGS)

GUN NAME	ISSUE	GRADE	COMMENTS
Thompson Center Compass 10071 22-250 Remington, $399	Feb. 2017	A	Simple, straightforward, and inexpensive. Delivered sub-minute-of-angle groups with all rounds tested.
Browning X-Bolt Micro Midas 035346209 22-250 Rem., $860	Feb. 2017	B+	This is a super-handy rifle for the whole family, and it can fit just about anywhere.
CZ USA 557 Sporter Short Action 04806 243 Winchester, $792	Feb. 2017	B+	The 557's refined looks belied its rugged durability, but its heavier weight did not seem to tame recoil.
Legacy Sports Howa Mini Action HMA90622MCC+ 6.5 Grendel, $855	Feb. 2017	C	This otherwise top-grade rifle was spoiled by weak magazine retention.
Ruger Precision Rifle 18008 6.5 Creedmoor, $1599	Nov. 2016	A	This is another solid effort by Ruger. They took an already good gun and made it a touch better.
Blaser R8 Professional 30-06 Springfield, $3787	Sept. 2016	A-	The R8 was pricey, but it offered interchangeable barrels, a safe firing system, and good accuracy.
Mauser M12 30-06 Springfield, $1799	Sept. 2016	A-	The M12 performed well and had a smoothly operating bolt, but the wood looked dated.
Mossberg MVP Long Range (LR) 27697 7.62 NATO/308 Win., $945	July 2016	A-	The MVP LR is well suited as an entry-level rifle for long-range shooting..
Howa Alpine Mountain Package HMR33143+VX 308 Win., $1577	July 2016	B+	Lightweight and accurate, but we thought the mag release may be an issue for some hunters.
Ruger Precision Rifle 18001 308 Win., $1399	April 2016	A	Out of the box, this is an easy-to-shoot rifle that is very accurate for the price point.
Tikka T3 CTR 308 Winchester, $950	April 2016	A-	If you want a rifle to both hunt and do long-range shooting, then the CTR would be a good choice.
Savage Arms Model 12 LRP 19137 6.5 Creedmoor, $1252	Jan. 2016	A	The Model 12 LRP shot the smallest groups of the test with every round we tried.
Ruger Precision Rifle 18005 6.5 Creedmoor, $1399	Jan. 2016	A-	Adjustability and AR-15 ergonomics make this rifle appealing and easy to shoot
Howa 24-Inch HB 6.5 Creedmoor, HKF92507KH+AB $1000	Jan. 2016	B+	Many of the benefits of a heavy-caliber hunting rifle with very little of the punishing abuse.
Krag 1898 Springfield 30-40 Krag, ~$1500	Sept. 2015	A	It worked well in its day, and good examples still do today, with a fine inner beauty.
Iver Henriksen Mauser 98 338 Winchester Magnum, ~$5000	July 2015	A	Classic lines in the Elmer Keith style, the Henriksen 338 is an impressive rifle.
Winchester Modified Model 70 338 Winchester Magnum, $1390	July 2015	A	Originally an A- in Dec. 2012; upgrades from a 375 H&H Model 70 raised its performance.

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

ease. The magazine release is an ambidextrous paddle that we thought could be slightly larger for better ease of use.

Getting behind the MRAD was a pleasant experience. The safety lever was familiar, the bolt throw was slick, and the muzzle brake allowed us to stay on target for a fast follow-up shot. The MRAD did not toss brass far, which we liked. We believe the overall weight, crisp trigger, and adjustable stock helped us achieve the accuracy listed in the accompanying table.

Our Team Said: We liked the MRAD for its simplicity and its ability to swap out barrels and calibers, which also makes it very expensive. The magazine latch needs to be fitted with a longer paddle for more leverage and better ease of use. If you have plans for long-range shooting in a variety of calibers, this would be a good choice. We did not ding the rifle for its cost.

Steyr SSG 08 6001138
300 Winchester Magnum, $3353

This was a recent price at BudsGunShop.com, but fewer than five were available at that price. The SSG 08 is a refined shooting instrument. It comes in a hard case with foam padding and includes a bipod, one magazine, and pistol grip inserts. The SSG 08 was the only rifle in our test that guaranteed accuracy and included the simulated test target that showed a sub-MOA 3-shot group. Fit and finish were superior, with a unique spiral pattern on the barrel.

The SSG 08 places a Steyr barreled action in a steel-and-polymer chassis. The forend is set up with Picatinny rails at 3, 6, and 9 o'clock. A pin at the front of the forend allows attachment of the included bipod. We liked the bipod as it had flat feet at the end of the legs, which could be independently adjusted to conform to uneven terrain. We would have liked rubber feet for better friction on surfaces, but that is a nit. The buttstock was adjustable for LOP and comb height. It also had indicator marks on the cheek riser so you could adjust the comb and go back to where it originally was positioned. The cant

STEYR SSG 08 6001138
300 WINCHESTER MAGNUM, $3353
GUN TESTS GRADE: A (OUR PICK)

The SSG 08 is a precision instrument with features that make it easy to shoot, like the fully adjustable stock. This is still a lot of money, but the Steyr is a lot of gun.



Action Type	Bolt, push feed
Overall Length	46.5 in.
Overall Length, Folded	37.8 in.
Height, Unboxed	7.5 in.
Height, Range	11.3 in.
Width, Stock Extended	3.0 in.
Width, Stock Folded	5.0 in.
Weight, Unboxed	14.4 lbs.
Weight, Loaded	16.5 lbs.
Weight, Range	17.2 lbs.
Barrel	23.6 in. long; 1:10 RH twist, matte-black (Mannox) finish, stainless steel
Barrel Muzzle Device	3-port brake
Stock	Aluminum chassis, metal/polymer buttstock, fully adj., rubber buttpad, 0.8 in. thick
Stock Length of Pull	14.25 to 14.91 in. adj.
Stock Comb	Straight, adj. for height and cant
Stock Toe	Adjustable monopod
Stock Forend	Aluminum, slotted, bipod attachment
Stock Sling Attachments	2 QD style
Pistol Grip	Polymer, modular inserts
Trigger Pull Weight	3.5 lbs. factory set; adjustable single stage
Trigger Guard	Aluminum, enlarged
Safety	3-position wheel, tang mounted
Magazine	(1) 8-round detachable polymer double-stack box
Magazine Release	Dual grooved tabs, side of magazine, two-stage
Bolt	2-lug bolt, 70-degree lift
Bolt Release	Safety wheel, tang mounted
Sights	None, 15.9 in. Picatinny top rail
Accuracy Guarantee	Sub-MOA
Warranty	1-year
Telephone	(205) 417-8644
Website	SteyrArms.com
Made In	Austria



The Steyr's stock was fully adjustable. The stock also folded to the left side of the rifle to reduce the carry dimensions. We liked the buttstock monopod (arrow), which helped steady the rifle. It could be dialed to fine-tune the rifle position. A rubber buttpad gave good adhesion and helped reduce felt recoil.



Compared to the other rifles, the SSG 08's Picatinny rail was short and offered less room to mount optics.



Two-position magazines allow the user to keep the magazine in the magazine well but not allow a round to be chambered.

of the cheek riser could also be adjusted. The LOP could be adjusted by adding or replacing inserts. A rubber buttpad gave good adhesion and helped reduce felt recoil. In the toe of the stock was a retractable monopod that could be locked into position, plus the foot of the monopod could be dialed to fine-tune the rifle position. We thought this stock made long-range shooting easier, and our shooters preferred this stock over the others. The stock also folded to the left side of the rifle to decrease the overall length for transportation. With the stock folded, the rifle could still be fired, which might be a consideration for some users. To fold the stock, a user pulls up on the stock and swings it forward. It locks in place when folded, and a good yank on the folded stock extends it and locks it in place. When folded, the Steyr had the thickest width. To remove the bolt, the stock needed to be folded. The pistol grip is modular and has three front and rear grip strap choices, ranging from flat and arched to finger grooves and no finger grooves. We liked the modularity of the grip.



All three rifles were equipped with muzzle brakes. We felt the Barrett, top, and the Savage, middle, devices were better at managing recoil than the Steyr unit, bottom.



The Barrett's buttstock is comfortable and adjustable. We used a sock filled with sand under the toe to steady the rifle butt.



The Steyr grip is modular with six different front straps and back straps to choose from.



The Steyr had a more complicated wheel-type three-position safety. It is shown here in the bolt-lock position.

The three-position safety uses a knurled wheel and is operated by the shooter's thumb. All the way back is the Fire position. The middle position is safe and allows only the bolt to be operated. All the way forward locks the bolt closed and a small button pops up, locking the safety. Push the button down and rotate it to Fire. The safety also acts as the bolt release. Lift the bolt handle, turn the safety until the button pops up, and the bolt can be removed.

The magazine could also be partially seated so the bolt could eject a round from the chamber and then pushed forward without loading the top round in the magazine. To remove the magazine, the user presses a pair of latches on either side of the magazine. When we seated the magazine, it pinched some tester's fingers. We did notice the Steyr's muzzle velocity was noticeably less than the Savage and Barrett.

Going hot with the SSG 08, we found users could get in a more comfortable position than with the Savage and Barrett. That was due to the adjustable stock. The action of the SSG 08 was the smoothest of all the rifles, with the Barrett coming in a close second. The Savage was smooth but not as buttery as the others. This was due to polymer sleeves in which the bolts of the Steyr and Barrett rotated. The polymer sleeve made the action slicker than the steel-to-steel bolt of the Savage. The bolt throw was 70 degrees, which was less than the Savage at 90 degrees and more than the Barrett at 60 degrees. The knob is polymer and oversized, and we could work it with speed. The muzzle brake helped control recoil, and we thought it did a good job, though in our opinion the Barrett's muzzle brake performed the best. The single-stage trigger was crisp and the best of the three.

Our Team Said: The Steyr had the most comfortable and adjustable stock, a slick action, good accuracy, and a crisp trigger. Some testers did not care for the magazine release and complicated safety.

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

SHORT SHOTS

S&W's Performance Center Introduces T/C Long Range Rifle in Multiple Calibers, Configurations. The Smith & Wesson Performance Center and Thompson/Center Arms announced the launch of a new bolt-action chassis-style rifle — the Performance Center T/C Long Range Rifle (LRR). Co-developed for extreme long-range shooting, the Performance Center T/C Long Range Rifle is built on an aluminum chassis stock and is available in 243 Winchester, 308 Winchester, and 6.5 Creedmoor.



Tony Miele, general manager of the Performance Center, said, "With the growing popularity of long-range precision shooting, we wanted to ensure our customers had an option available from the Performance Center. The new Performance Center T/C Long Range Rifle also includes a 20-MOA Picatinny-style rail and a 5R rifled, fluted barrel. The LRR features an adjustable cheekpiece and buttplate, built-in Magpul M-LOK slots, a threaded barrel with muzzle brake, and a Performance Center trigger that's adjustable from 2.5 to 3.5 pounds. Available in both a black and flat dark earth (FDE) finish, the Long Range Rifle includes a 1-year limited warranty and lifetime service plan and ships with one 10-round detachable magazine, a Caldwell Pic Rail XLA Fixed Bipod, and soft case. The Performance Center T/C Long Range Rifle is priced at an MSRP of $1,211 in all calibers and configurations.

Hornady Provides Rapid Rack to French Military. Hornady Manufacturing Company has struck a deal to sell more than 90,000 of its Rapid Rack empty chamber indicator/load-assist devices to the French Ministry of Defense through the company's French distributor, Sidam SAS. The device is an empty chamber indicator as well as a load-assist device, allowing law-enforcement officers or military personnel to keep their long guns ready with a fully charged magazine and a visibly empty chamber. The user inserts the cartridge-shaped portion into the chamber, leaving the lever protruding from the gun's ejection port, and then closes the bolt and inserts a loaded magazine. Grabbing the lever and pulling straight back allows the Rapid Rack to fall to the ground so the fully charged bolt springs forward to feed a round into the chamber. The French Ministry of Defense will purchase a customized Rapid Rack, sporting a black handle rather than the standard red, to accompany 93,340 new Heckler & Koch HK416 rifles. The French armed forces have chosen the HK416 to replace the long-running FAMAS, nicknamed the Bugle for its distinctive shape, as their standard assault rifle. "This purchase confirms that Hornady is recognized throughout the world as a supplier of not only top-of-the-line ammunition but also innovative accessories," said Steve Catlett, international sales manager. "We're just as proud to help the French armed forces defend their nation as we are to help U.S. law-enforcement agencies stay cruiser-ready with our Rapid Rack."





Thompson/Center Arms Launches New T/CR22 Rifle. Thompson/Center Arms today announced that it has introduced a new semi-automatic rimfire rifle: the Thompson/Center T/CR22 rifle. Danielle Sanville, brand manager of Thompson/Center Arms, said, "Thompson/Center has a long, storied history of innovation in firearms, from muzzleloaders to bolt-action rifles. When we decided it was time to develop our next rimfire rifle, we wanted to be sure to continue that trend." The new T/CR22 rifle includes a green fiber-optic front sight and adjustable rear peep sight, a built-in Picatinny-style rail for mounting an optic, a light, crisp trigger pull, button-rifled barrel, and a threaded muzzle. The T/CR22 rifle is compatible with most aftermarket 10/22 accessories and employs a Magpul co-branded OD-green composite stock. Additional T/CR22 features include a last-shot bolt-hold open when using factory magazines, a pushbutton safety, an oversized bolt handle, machined 6061 aluminum receiver, machined stainless-steel bolt, a 17-inch button-rifled barrel with 1:15-inch twist rate, molded-in sling swivel studs, and slots in the forend to accept M-LOK accessories. Chambered in 22 LR, the new T/CR22 rifle ships with one 10-round detachable rotary magazine, includes Thompson/Center's limited lifetime warranty, and is priced at an MSRP of $399.



Double-Action 357 Magnums: Ruger & S&W Revolvers Tested

These revolvers, found used at pawn shops and gun shops, went head to head at the range. Winners: Two Ruger GP100s — but a Smith & Wesson Model 66 took honors for concealed use.

Among the most popular revolvers is the double-action 357 Magnum, and shooters can confirm this because Smith & Wesson recently reintroduced the Combat Magnum and Ruger has introduced a seven-shot GP100 357 Magnum. Those companies wouldn't (purposefully) add a couple of dogs to their inventories. Shooters like the 4-inch 357 configuration because these revolvers make for excellent all-round hunting, personal defense, and target guns. Some revolver fans also favor them for concealed carry. Also, they will stand up to long-term storage and come up shooting. It is interesting that a number of special teams in Europe and the U.S. Military keep the 357 Magnum in inventory for this reason.

Readers have asked us to revisit the category with an eye toward picking a used wheelgun that could save them a couple hundred bucks — that is, they wanted us to go bargain hunting. So we purchased a quartet of used revolvers from major brands that included adjustable sights with 4-inch barrels capable of serving for some types of hunting and for home and auto defense. In other words, we wanted the best go-anywhere do-anything revolver, not a specialized concealed-carry type, such as the Ruger SP101. The 357 Magnum is a great defense cartridge and also a fine pest and varmint round in accurate handguns. With the proper loads, the cartridge is versatile and will take deer-sized game at modest distances. Also, a major advantage of the 357 Magnum is the ability of the revolver to chamber 38 Special +P or stouter cartridges, but as important, softer-shooting loads as well. A practice regimen of twenty 38 Specials for every Magnum is recommended by most trainers. We elected to test the revolvers with both 38 Special and 357 Magnum loads and also to include handloads that have proven themselves. Interestingly, the two Ruger GP100 revolvers, one in stainless steel and one in blued finish, showed practically the same firing line and absolute accuracy performance. However, the two Smith & Wesson revolvers, also one blued and one stainless, had considerably different characteristics.

The test firearms started with the ***Smith & Wesson Model 19 Combat Magnum, $800 used.*** This particular Combat Magnum came with a display case and a knife with matching serial number — pretty neat, but also pricey. The Combat Magnum name gave way to the Model 19 designation in 1957, the year when Smith &









A 4-inch-barrel 357 Magnum is simply one of the best tools for the jobs of self defense, hunting, and target shooting. That's why so many shooters trust the revolver. Here, we test a quartet of handguns with an eye toward expanding your collection with a solid shooting collectible, but not one that will break the bank. From top are a pair of Ruger GP100s in stainless and blued finishes, which are solid as a rock and affordable. Third from top is a blued Smith & Wesson Model 19 Combat Magnum that's more expensive than the others, but which doesn't bring any additional fun to the party. Bottom is the stainless Smith & Wesson Model 66 Combat Magnum, shown here wearing a smaller replacement grip that makes it an excellent compromise of lighter weight and power. The round-butt Combat Magnum, if you can find one, is a superior carry gun and is one we'd buy.

Wesson changed from names to model numbers. It has always sold well with a 4-inch barrel, in either bright blue or nickel finishes. Other barrel lengths have appeared as well, with 6-inch (1963) and 2.5-inch (1966) barrels showing up as mainline production guns. There is also a rare variation of the Model 19 with a 3-inch barrel. The Model 19 was dropped from the line in 1999 as police agencies migrated to semi-autos, but Smith & Wesson reintroduced the Model 19 Classic (4.25-inch barrel) at the 2018 NRA Annual Meetings & Exhibits (Model No. 12040, MSRP $826). There's also a Performance Center Model 19 Carry Comp No. 12039 (MSRP $1092) with a tritium front night sight, custom wood and synthetic boot grips, and a 3-inch PowerPort vented barrel for recoil management. The revolver features a trigger overtravel stop and Performance Center tuned action. We previously tested a less-expensive Model 19-4 nickel-finish variant in the March 2015 issue, giving it an A grade.

Next up was a silver-skinned copy of Model 19, the stainless-steel ***Smith & Wesson Model 66 Combat Magnum 38 Special +P/357 Magnum, $420.*** In July 1971 Smith & Wesson announced its first stainless-steel

Our test ammunitions included, from top, Federal Premium's 140-grain Barnes Expander solid-copper Hollow Point P357XB1, DoubleTap 158-grain Controlled Expansion Nosler JHPs 357M158N, and Factory New Black Hills 125-grain Jacketed Hollow Points D357N2. The Ruger GP100 stainless revolver shot test-leading groups with all three, notching average group sizes of 1.3, 1.5, and 1.7 inches, respectively.



RANGE DATA

Black Hills Factory New 125-gr. JHP	Ruger GP100 Stainless	Ruger GP100 Blued	S&W Model 19	S&W Model 66	Taurus Model 66
Average Velocity	1455 fps	1439 fps	1422 fps	1416 fps	1388 fps
Muzzle Energy	587 ft.-lbs.	574 ft.-lbs.	561 ft.-lbs.	556 ft.-lbs.	534 ft.-lbs.
Smallest Group	1.3 in.	1.5 in.	1.9 in.	2.1 in.	2.9 in.
Largest Group	1.9 in.	2.4 in.	2.5 in.	2.6 in.	3.6 in.
Average Group	1.7 in.	2.0 in.	2.2 in.	2.3 in.	3.2 in.

Federal Premium 140-gr. Barnes Exp. HP	Ruger GP100 Stainless	Ruger GP100 Blued	S&W Model 19	S&W Model 66	Taurus Model 66
Average Velocity	1346 fps	1360 fps	1299 fps	1324 fps	1290 fps
Muzzle Energy	563 ft.-lbs.	574 ft.-lbs.	524 ft.-lbs.	544 ft.-lbs.	517 ft.-lbs.
Smallest Group	1.0 in.	1.5 in.	1.8 in.	2.2 in.	2.2 in.
Largest Group	1.5 in.	2.2 in.	2.5 in.	2.8 in.	2.9 in.
Average Group	1.3 in.	1.8 in.	2.1 in.	2.5 in.	2.5 in.

DoubleTap 158-gr. Nosler JHP	Ruger GP100 Stainless	Ruger GP100 Blued	S&W Model 19	S&W Model 66	Taurus Model 66
Average Velocity	1222 fps	1190 fps	1176 fps	1188 fps	1169 fps
Muzzle Energy	523 ft.-lbs.	496 ft.-lbs.	485 ft.-lbs.	495 ft.-lbs.	479 ft.-lbs.
Smallest Group	1.3 in.	1.5 in.	1.2 in.	1.6 in.	2.5 in.
Largest Group	1.7 in.	2.6 in.	1.8 in.	2.0 in.	3.1 in.
Average Group	1.5 in.	2.0 in.	1.5 in.	1.8 in.	2.8 in.

We averaged the results from three five-shot groups for accuracy. We recorded velocity with a Competition Electronics Chronograph. Range for velocity testing is 10 feet. Temperature at the time of testing ranged from 94 to 103 degrees. All groups were fired with an O.H. Products Bullshooter Pistol Rest at 25 yards (#666-100-013WB, $58 from Brownells.com). Ammo sources: DoubleTap 158-gr. Controlled Expansion Nosler JHP 357M158N ($23.74/20 from DoubleTapAmmo.com); Federal Premium 140-gr. Barnes Expander Hollow Point P357XB1 ($30/20 from LuckyGunner.com); and Black Hills 125-grain Jacketed Hollow Point D357N2 ($24.72/20 from CheaperThanDirt.com).

357 Magnum, the Model 66. Like the blued Model 19, the Model 66 was a favorite of everyday cops who wanted a Model 19 that was rust resistant. The 4-inch-version, like the one we tested, was the most popular. It stayed in continuous production until 2005, when Smith & Wesson dropped the Model 66 at its 66-7 iteration. Then production on the handgun was restarted in 2014, with the 66-8 unit, which is still in the catalog as Model No. 162662, with a suggested retail of $849. In the June 2001 issue, we tested a 2.5-inch-barrel M66, saying of it: "Even with the small problems we encountered, this is a superior weapon, and few revolvers can match this incarnation of the snubnosed K-frame." In the April 2002 issue, we tested a 4-inch Smith & Wesson M66-2, $219. That Smith & Wesson Model 66 was gauged to be in 95 percent condition, which would bring a Blue Book price of $300 at the time. It earned a "Buy It" recommendation.

Then came ***Ruger's GP100 KGP-141 38 Special +P/357 Magnum, $500.*** In the August 2006 issue, we said a stainless Ruger GP100 No. KGP-141 was Our Pick, because "it functioned with the most consistency and would likely offer the most durability. The front sight can be easily replaced, and the adjustable rear sight was built to last. The ejector rod was shrouded, lockup was braced, and our GP100 shot all ammos well." In the December 2006 Guns of the Year issue, we named that gun a "Best in Class" choice.

The ***Ruger GP100 GP-141 38 Special +P/357 Magnum, $480,*** is the fourth 4-inch handgun in the test. The GP100 line was introduced in 1985 as a second generation of the Ruger double-action, exposed-hammer revolvers intended to replace Ruger's Security-Six, Service-Six, and Speed-Six lines. It was made stronger so it could fire an unlimited number of full-power 357 Magnum rounds. All GP100 revolvers use solid-steel sidewalls (no sideplates) and frame widths with extra steel in critical areas that support the barrel. This makes them rugged and dependable, but also makes them heavy. In the line, the missing "K" in the model-number designation means this unit is blued. The current manufacture issue is Model 1702 (MSRP $769), with a 4.2-inch barrel and Hogue Monogrips. We have not previously tested the blued model.

We also tested a ***Taurus Model M66 38 Special +P/357 Magnum, $325,*** at the same time as the others, but because of its longer barrel, we cover it in a separate sidebar on page 24. The Taurus 66 357 Magnum, we figured, might give us the best of both worlds. It is a K-frame revolver like the Combat Magnum, but a 6-inch barrel might give us good velocity and accuracy. That turned out not to be the case.

For orientation and combat-course work, we fired two handloads through the revolvers, the first being a range load of the Hornady 125-grain XTP and 7.5 grains of Titegroup for 1250 fps. This isn't a full Magnum load, but it is powerful and accurate. When we used this load over the combat course, in most cases we saw the front post simply hang on the target as we worked the double-action trigger. We also fired another handload in 38 Special, comprised of the Oregon Trail 158-grain semi-wadcutter over enough WW231 powder for 950 fps. For our range data table, we fired three 357 Magnum commercial loads: factory new Black Hills 125-grain Jacketed Hollow Point D357N2, Federal Premium 140-grain Barnes Expander Hollow Point P357XB1, and DoubleTap's 158-grain Controlled Expansion Nosler Jacketed Hollow Point 357M158N.

Smith & Wesson Model 19
Combat Magnum Texas Ranger Edition
38 Sp. +P/357 Mag., $800

We paid a lot for this revolver, but most Texas Ranger commemorative revolvers seem to be going for $1200 or more, so in that sense, we found a bargain. The revolver came with a presentation case and a nice custom-grade knife with a motif that matched the revolver. The rater who found it argued that it isn't much more than a new Model 66, but then it isn't stainless and doesn't have the new transfer-bar ignition the Combat Magnum does in its present edition. The revolver is very well finished in faultless blueing. The adjustable sights and red-insert front sight are good examples of all-round sights for the revolver. The Combat Magnum featured a wide combat trigger and target hammer as well as an internal trigger stop, in contrast to the thin trigger of the Model 66, giving us a chance to compare. The revolver was fitted with a nice set of Smith & Wesson smooth combat-type stocks. A useful addition, inspired by the famous shooter and writer Bill Jordan, was a cut-out trigger guard. At one time, revolvers were butchered by cutting away the trigger guard to gain fast access to the trigger. But such weakened guards could actually bend and prevent the trigger from moving. Jordan felt

Simultaneous with our tests of the 4-inch 357s, we also tried a 6-inch Taurus 66 357 Magnum (below), a K-frame revolver like the Combat Magnum. One of the raters predicted the Taurus might outdo the 4-inch guns in a couple of areas. The Taurus locks up in the same manner as the Smith & Wessons with an ejector rod under the barrel in a protected housing. The trigger face is smooth and similar to the Smith & Wesson M66. The grips are attractive hard wood with nice checkering. See page 24 for the full review.



that the partially cut away trigger guard was superior, and we agree. The Model 19 Combat Magnum Texas Ranger revolver is the only handgun we are aware of turned out from the factory with this addition.

Though pricey, the likes of this revolver cannot be purchased new for any price. This revolver is very smooth, although it has been fired but little. The double-action trigger press is the lightest of any tested. It is perhaps more smooth than light. The gold accents are well done, and considering the age of the revolver, they bonded well to the blued-steel revolver. There was only slight wear on the gold from handling. On the firing range, the Model 19 Combat Magnum gave good to excellent results. However, half the raters found the grip slipped in their hand when firing heavy loads. This wasn't noticeable with the 38 Special loads. In a lucky stroke, we tried the ill-fitting square-butt Pachmayr grips that had been on the Model 66 on the blue-steel Model 19 Combat Magnum and found control greatly improved. Of course they fit this square-butt revolver well. In combat firing, the two Combat Magnum revolvers, as expected, were neck and neck, with the round-butt-configured revolver pulling away from the blue-steel revolver for speed from leather. We used an Avenger type holster from Nelson Holsters and found the speed to be excellent with either. The wide trigger of the Combat Magnum allowed better control for those staging the shot for maximum accuracy. The stainless revolver with its thin trigger was faster. In absolute accuracy, the blue-steel Model 19 had a slight, but discernible, advantage over the Model 66 when slowing down a bit for a deliberate shot. The grips and the fit for single-action fire may have been responsible.

Our Team Said: We have no doubt that the Smith & Wesson Model 19 Combat Magnum Texas Ranger Edition revolver is a good handgun that would serve its owner well. However, it wasn't as accurate as the stainless Ruger GP100 with two loads, and the Model 66 is better suited to personal

SMITH & WESSON MODEL 19 COMBAT MAGNUM
38 SPECIAL +P/357 MAGNUM, $800
GUN TESTS GRADE: B

The used Combat Magnum came with a display case and a knife with matching serial number — pretty neat, but also pricey. It is light enough to be carried concealed with a proper high-riding holster and makes a good combination for field and range use. The Model 19 Classic 12040 is the current production gun.



Action	Double-action revolver; K frame
Overall Length	9.25 in.
Overall Height	5.6 in.
Minimum Width	1.52 in.
Weight Unloaded	35.0 oz.
Weight Loaded	37.0 oz.
Barrel	4.0 in. long, blued steel
Cylinder Capacity	6
Frame	Blued steel
Front Strap Height	2.5 in.
Back Strap Height	4.3 in.
Grips	S&W Smooth Combat Grips
Grip Thickness	1.5 in.
Grip Circumference	5.5 in.
Front Sight	Post
Rear Sight	Black blade adjustable
Sight Radius	5.5 in.
Trigger Pull Weight Single Action	4.2 lbs.
Trigger Pull Weight Double Action	13.0 lbs.
Trigger Span Single Action	2.3 in.
Trigger Span Double Action	2.7 in.
Warranty	None
Telephone	(800) 331-0852
Website	Smith-Wesson.com
Made In	U.S.A.



The red-insert front sight predates fiber optics but works about as well. The barrel and barrel rib with a red-insert front post sight are S&W hallmarks.



The round-butt and square-butt revolvers each have their fans. The original square-butt wood stocks on the M19, right, distribute recoil better, our shooters said. During the test, we added Pachmayr smooth combat-type rubber grips to make the M19 handle more like the stainless M66, left.



The Model 19 is a well-finished revolver that gave good results. The cut-out trigger guard is an interesting modification.

SMITH & WESSON MODEL 66 COMBAT MAGNUM 38 SPECIAL +P/357 MAGNUM, $420

GUN TESTS GRADE: B+

This Combat Magnum has the advantage of stainless-steel construction, a very smooth action, and a round-butt configuration very seldom seen on the 4-inch-barrel Combat Magnum. The round-butt revolver handles well, and the whole package is attractive.



Action	Double-action revolver, K frame
Overall Length	9.25 in.
Overall Height	5.6 in.
Minimum Width	1.52 in.
Weight Unloaded	34.5 oz.
Weight Loaded	36.5 oz.
Barrel	4.0 in. long, stainless steel
Cylinder Capacity	6
Frame	Stainless steel
Front Strap Height	2.5 in.
Back Strap Height	4.3 in.
Grips (Hogue)	1.5 in.
Grip Circumference	5.2 in.
Front Sight	Post
Rear Sight	Adjustable
Sight Radius	5.5 in.
Trigger Pull Weight Single Action	3.8 lbs.
Trigger Pull Weight Double Action	13.0 lbs.
Trigger Span Single Action	2.2 in.
Trigger Span Double Action	2.5 in.
Warranty	None, used gun
Telephone	(800) 331-0852
Website	Smith-Wesson.com
Made In	U.S.A.

A compact and accurate revolver, the Model 66 is a great all-round handgun for the money. Much of the satisfaction a shooter can gain from the M66 comes from the grips he or she decides to install. Here we fitted the Combat Magnum with HideOut grips from Brownells to make the pistol "smaller" and more concealable.



The difference between round- and square-butt performance on the range and in the hand was noticeable. The round butt had an advantage in fast handling.



Various grips were tried for fit and handling. In the end, the Hogue MonoGrip (shown installed) works best, our shooters said.



carry. The Texas Ranger Edition is also a lot more expensive than the others. That doesn't really leave a spot for us to recommend it.

Smith & Wesson Model 66 Combat Magnum 38 Special +P/357 Magnum, $420

We felt lucky to find one of these used at a pawn shop, and in good condition. The 4-inch-barrel Model 66 stainless steel 357 Magnum revolver was marked "California Department of Natural Resources" and wore the California state emblem as a commemorative, not an issue, revolver. At the pawn shop it wore a set of square-butt Pachmayr grips that did not fit its round-butt frame correctly. There was no box or original grips, so the collector value wasn't intact. We added a set of Hogue MonoGrips prior to starting the test, and we also tried a set of Precision Gun Specialties S&W Hideout Revolver Grips ($19 to $22 from Brownells.com), in our experiments at improving concealed carry. These are molded-nylon black grips in smooth and textured finishes for the J-frame as well as finger-groove smooth and textured styles for the J-frame. The same textures are are also available for the K- and L-frame Smith & Wesson revolvers. The best compromise in concealed carry and control, we feel, was the Hogue MonoGrip, while the hideout-type grips have much merit for maximum concealment. The Model 66 in round butt is comparatively rare. All new Smith & Wesson revolvers are round butt and conversion grips make the revolvers square butt, a good move for ease of manufacturing. The finish had a few scratches.

The revolver seemed smooth and reliable in operation. The Smith & Wesson features a red insert front sight we really like. There is also a fully adjustable rear sight and the ejector rod is shrouded. We liked the handling of the round-butt revolver. It seems to transfer more recoil to the shooter's hand than the square-butt revolver, but the grip seems firm and we were able to draw very quickly with the

round-butt revolver. The trigger reach from the grip to the trigger face was slightly shorter with the round-butt configuration, something worth considering because this made double-action shooting a bit better. For single-action fire, the Model 19 revolver, with its large grips and wide trigger, was superior, but for combat shooting, the round butt and thinner trigger were better. The double-action trigger was smooth and well broken in. The single-action trigger press was a crisp 3.8 rounds. Hit probability for the first-shot double action was high. On the firing range, this much lighter revolver was not as controllable as the Ruger GP100s with 357 Magnum loads, but it wasn't terrible either. After 50 full-power Magnums, you might feel the sting in your hands more so than with the Ruger GP100s. The pain with the GP100s might be in the lumbar after a long hike. The M66 was a better-handling revolver than either the Taurus or the Smith & Wesson M19 Combat Magnum, we thought. It was certainly accurate enough for personal defense and even hunting at moderate range, but it wasn't the most accurate with any load. Fired from the benchrest, this round-butt K-frame revolver was the hardest kicker.

Our Team Said: The stainless GP100 was more accurate than the Model 66 with all loads, and the Smith & Wesson Model 19 Combat Magnum beat it with one load as well. So the Model 66 might be third on the list for sport shooting and even home defense. But for concealed carry, the round-butt configuration is the best of the test. The round butt conceals better and feels good in the hand in double-action fire.

Ruger GP100 KGP-141
38 Sp. +P/357 Mag., $500

Ruger GP100 GP-141
38 Sp. +P/357 Mag., $480

We cover these two together because, at the range, we saw very little difference in performance. Some shooters prefer the look of blued steel and others, stainless. For us, however, stainless is a plus for hard use. The mechanical operation

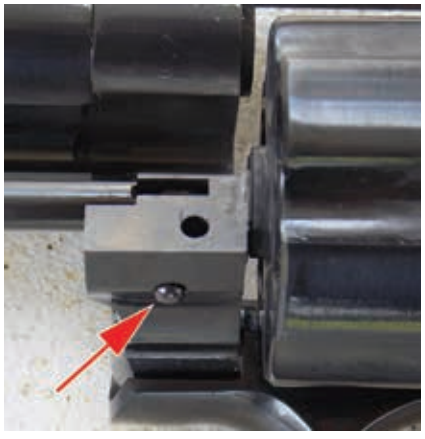
RUGER GP100 GP-141
38 SPECIAL +P/357 MAGNUM $480
GUN TESTS GRADE: B+

The blued GP100 doesn't quite perform on par with the stainless version, and the stainless finish is easier to maintain, so the other Ruger gets our pick as an all-round choice. And the stainless M66 is the better carry choice, so that doesn't leave much room for this fine blued wheelgun.



Action	Double-action revolver
Overall Length	9.5 in.
Overall Height	6.1 in.
Minimum Width	1.5 in.
Weight Unloaded	38.1 oz.
Weight Loaded	40.1 oz.
Barrel	4.0 in. blued steel
Cylinder	Capacity 6 rounds
Frame	Blued steel
Front Strap Height	2.5 in.
Back Strap Height	4.5 in.
Grips	Hogue black rubber
Grip Thickness	1.2 in.
Grip Circumference	4.8 in.
Front Sight	Post
Rear Sight	Adjustable
Sight Radius	5.5 in.
Trigger Pull Weight Single Action	4.1 lbs.
Trigger Pull Weight Double Action	14.0 lbs.
Trigger Span Single Action	2.5 in.
Trigger Span Double Action	2.8 in.
Warranty	None
Telephone	(336) 949-5200
Website	Ruger.com
Made In	U.S.A.
State Approved	CA, MA

The GP100 is a robust revolver that instills confidence. Final fit and finish of the Rugers were good to excellent. The lockup on the cranes featured a ball (arrow) and detent that worked well in keeping the pistols tight. The blued-steel revolver fell a step behind the stainless GP100 in accuracy and ease of maintenance.





The GP100, top, is a .41-frame revolver, as they are often referred to, similar to the Colt Trooper, bottom. The GP100s may be more rugged than the .38-frame M19 and M66 Smith & Wessons, but the Rugers are also much heavier.

RUGER GP100 KGP-141
38 SPECIAL +P/357 MAGNUM, $500
GUN TESTS GRADE: A

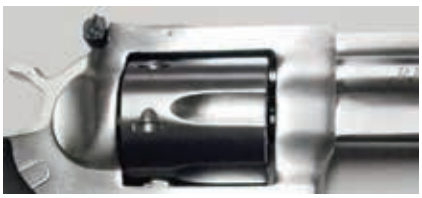
The stainless-steel GP100 is an excellent performer in all categories: accuracy, smoothness, control, and velocity. It is a big gun, which is comfortable to fire, so the size is a tradeoff.



Action	Double-action revolver
Overall Length	9.5 in.
Overall Height	6.1 in.
Minimum Width	1.56 in.
Weight Unloaded	38.0 oz.
Weight Loaded	40.0 oz.
Barrel	4.0 in. long, stainless steel
Cylinder Capacity	6
Frame	Stainless steel
Front Strap Height	2.5 in.
Back Strap Height	4.5 in.
Grips	Hogue black rubber
Grip Thickness	1.2 in.
Grip Circumference	4.8 in.
Front Sight	Post
Rear Sight	Adjustable
Sight Radius	5.5 in.
Trigger Pull Weight Single Action	4.1 lbs.
Trigger Pull Weight Double Action	14.0 lbs.
Trigger Span Single Action	2.5 in.
Trigger Span Double Action	2.8 in.
Warranty	None
Telephone	(336) 949-5200
Website	Ruger.com
Made In	U.S.A.
State Approved	CA, MA



The cylinder release differs from the Taurus and the Smith & Wesson designs. The shooter pushes the Ruger button inward with a positive release.



Rock-solid lock up was an advantage of both of the GP100s. The double-action press was smooth in both cases, and the single-action presses were crisp as well.



The stainless GP100 outshot everything except the Smith & Wesson M19, which matched it with the DoubleTaps.



Ruger adjustable sights are easy to use and durable.

of each gun was tight, identical in fact. Each double-action trigger was smooth, and the single-action triggers broke at 4.5 pounds. The GP100s feature adjustable rear sights and post front sights. The revolvers have a shrouded ejector rod. The lockup on the cranes featured a ball and detent that worked well in keeping the pistols tight. The grips fit most hands well. We liked the pebble-grained Hogue grips a lot. The double-action press was smooth in both cases, and the single-action presses were crisp. It is interesting to explore the differences in revolvers and in this case, both were similar.

The GP100s were even more controllable with the 38 Special, and the pieces were very accurate firing at small targets at known and unknown ranges. These were controllable and comfortable handguns. Next came the firing for accuracy stage, firing from the bench using every possible advantage short of a machine rest. We never use as machine rest as this eliminates the very important factor of how the interface between man and firearms works together. Results were excellent. The Federal 140-grain load provided one 1-inch 25-yard group in the stainless GP100, and the stainless Ruger outshot everything except the Smith & Wesson M19, which matched it with the DoubleTaps. The blued GP100 was 0.3 inch behind the stainless Ruger with the Black Hills and a half inch less accurate than the stainless gun with the Federal Premiums and DoubleTaps.

Our Team Said: We found the blued and stainless GP100s from Ruger to be controllable, accurate, and rugged. The GP100 stainless is the Best Buy of the test and the best performer, even though it cost more than two of the other three revolvers tested. Also, we feel that when you can have stainless in a hard-use handgun, you should. Still, either of the GP100 revolvers would be a good buy, with the blued one coming in second behind its stablemate.

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

When we began testing the 4-inch 357s, we wondered if a longer barrel, such as the 6-inch Taurus 66 357 Magnum, might give us the best of both worlds. It is a K-frame revolver like the Combat Magnum, but a 6-inch barrel might give us good velocity and accuracy. We were disappointed in its performance. Still, we would have got our money's worth for a modestly priced recreational and home-defense revolver.

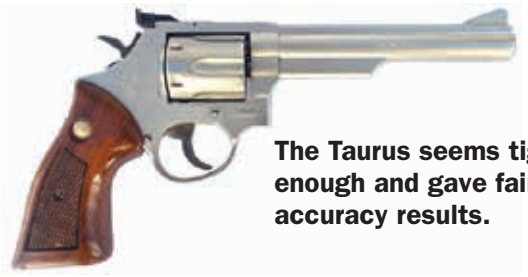
This is an older Taurus with a finish sometimes called Starvel. It is attractive and seemed none the worse for wear, even though the revolver is at least 10 years old, perhaps 20. We evaluate it separately here because the barrel is 6 inches long. One of the raters likes long-barrel revolvers, and he predicted the Taurus, with adjustable sights, would be a good performer and might outdo the 4-inch guns in a couple of areas. That turned out not to be true, which is the point of testing.

While all of the revolver sights were adjustable and provided different sight pictures, we really had no clear preference in rear sights. We liked the integral front sight on the Taurus the least because the light finish sometimes caused the front sight to fade from our eyesight, despite there being a striation on top of the rib between the front sight and rear sight. The Taurus locks up in the same manner as the Smith & Wesson with an ejector rod under the barrel in a protected housing. The trigger face is smooth and similar to the Smith & Wesson M66. The grips are attractive hard wood with nice checkering in the middle of the grips and good finish. The grips did not quite meet in the front, but it was a slight mismatch. They had a few dings, and they should have after their years of service. The double-action trigger was the heaviest of the revolvers tested. We estimated 16 pounds because the weight exceeded the range of our scale. The single-action trigger was also heavy at 6.5 pounds. The revolver locked up tight and did not show signs of wear or abuse. The Taurus performed okay on the firing range, but it was behind the Ruger and Smith & Wesson revolvers in combat shooting. The long barrel pointed well with good balance. However, the double-action trigger was not the smoothest and seemed to have a rough spot. This did not allow us to achieve good results. The revolver was comfortable to fire due to the large grips and the long barrel limiting muzzle blast, which can be punishing with the 357 Magnum cartridge. Using 38 Special ammunition, the revolver was accurate, and hitting small targets wasn't difficult in single-action fire. We expected better accuracy during the bench rest test because we were able to do well in offhand shooting on the 25-yard berm, but the Taurus was not an accurate revolver by our standards. Some of the groups were twice as large as the GP100's best groups, and none equaled either of the Smith & Wesson revolvers. Velocity was also the lowest of the test with all loads, a surprise because long-barrel revolvers usually exhibit greater velocity than 4-inch-barrel revolvers. Spent cartridge cases ejected without any problem. There were no excess pressure signs.

Our Team Said: Compared to the other revolvers, the Taurus was definitely not in the same class of performance. It was the least expensive by a considerable margin, however, and was reliable. We did not like the heavier trigger action or the relatively poor accuracy.

TAURUS MODEL 66
38 SP. +P/357 MAGNUM, $325
GUN TESTS GRADE: B-

The Taurus featured a finish that many find attractive. It is a subdued satin-nickel type that must wear well because the handgun showed signs of use, but the finish is still in good shape. The barrel length of 6 inches did not generate greater velocity. The catalog number for the current-production version is 2-660069.



The Taurus seems tight enough and gave fair accuracy results.

Action	Double-action revolver; medium frame
Dimensions	11.5 in. long; 6.0 in. tall; 1.6 in. maximum width
Weight Unloaded/Loaded	38.5 oz.; 40.5 oz.
Barrel	6.0-in.-long stainless steel; 1:16.5 RH twist, 6 grooves
Frame & Cylinder Material/Capacity	Stainless steel, 6
Front Strap Height/ Back Strap Height	2.5 in.; 4.5 in.
Grips	Checkered hardwood, 1.2 in. thick; 4.7 in. circumference
Sights	Fixed front post; adjustable rear; 7.5 in. sight radius
Trigger Pull Weight Single Action/Double Action	6.5 lbs.; 15.0 lbs.
Trigger Span Single Action/Double Action	2.4 in.; 2.7 in.
Safety	Transfer bar
Warranty	None
Contacts:	Telephone (800) 328-8776; Website, TaurusUSA.com
Made In	Brazil

The fit of the sideplate isn't the best, but it was a match for the budget profile of the handgun.





The cylinder and ejector rod operated smoothly enough. We like the balance of the M66 overall but wished it had been smoother.

Still, for those on a tight budget, it would serve for recreational use and home defense.

Threaded-Barrel 45 ACP Pistols: Glock, FN, and H&K Match Up

We tested a trio of polymer-bodied pistols with and without suppressors to see what worked, and what didn't. Outcome: The FNX-45 Tactical offers a lot of value for suppressor-ready buyers.

Several years ago, we noticed an uptick in suppressor sales and began researching how to buy suppressors and make them work on various firearms. As we've mentioned previously, because the suppressors are so expensive and so hard to transact, we wanted to start with a suppressor model with a big hole in front, such as a 45-caliber unit, which would allow it to be used with smaller-diameter cartridges, such as 40 S&Ws, 9mms, even 22 LRs. But the original idea was always to use a pistol suppressor on full-size pistols because, in a self-defense situation in the home, an "un-canned" pistol could easily deafen and blind the home defender after the first shot, and we thought a suppressor might be worth the investment to solve that problem. And in the home where a full-size handgun doesn't have to be carried far, the overall length of a suppressor-equipped handgun is still shorter than even the shortest short-barreled rifle. Also of note, most 45 ACP rounds run below the speed of sound, so it's easy to find good ammo that suppresses well. Toward that end, we began buying factory-threaded handguns to survey the range of opportunities Gun Tests readers might consider. To start, we picked three full-size 45s from Glock, HK, and FN that come from the factory suppressor-ready, at least in theory.

Our first handgun was the ***FN America FNX-45 Tactical FDE 66968 45 ACP, $1200,*** and in stock at that price from PrimaryArms.com. BudsGunShop.com and TombstoneTactical.com have both been selling this recently for $1200 as well. The FNX-45 Tactical is a variant of FN's FNX-45 45 ACP pistol, the latter of which we tested in 2009 and graded an A-. We tested the FNX-45 Tactical in the July 2016 issue as an optics-ready model, so this time around we concentrate on its abilities as a suppressor-ready 45 ACP unit. It offers a 5.3-inch threaded barrel, with a knurled sleeve that protects the threads, and an optics-ready slide. The pistol comes in a nylon carry case with pouches, three magazines, four backstrap inserts, and two adapter plates, screws, and wrenches.

Next up was the ***Glock G21SF PF2150203TB 45 ACP, $511,*** from HinterlandOutfitters.com. We also found the G21SFTB in stock at a couple of other places, including AbleAmmo.com ($585) and BudsGunShop.com ($610). We have tested the G21 variants extensively, beginning in the June 1999 issue, and then later in the August 2005, July 2007, January 2008, and December 2013 issues. The Glock 21SF Generation 3 has some exterior design changes compared to the Glock 21. To recap those changes briefly, the trigger housing was changed and an ambidextrous magazine release was installed. Original G21 magazines won't fit the SF, but SF magazines will fit older Model 21 pistols. The redesigned magazines will function in both designs, but the old magazines don't have the necessary cut out in the front



Top is the FN America FNX-45 Tactical FDE 66968 45 ACP, $1200, which is an optics-ready model as well as a suppressor-ready unit. It offers a 5.3-inch threaded barrel with a knurled sleeve that protects the threads. Middle is the Glock G21SF PF2150203TB 45 ACP, $511. The Glock 21SF Gen3 "TB" models ship with a threaded barrel and suppressor-height sights. Bottom is the Heckler & Koch Mark 23, which is famous for its military-procurement bloodline as well as its accuracy. It's also pricey and in limited supply, and it's a pretty big gun. Still, those negatives don't deter shooters who have put the Mark 23 on their bucket lists.

of the magazines to function in the redesigned weapon. The backstrap was shortened by about 0.10 inch. The short grip frame is noticeably thinner from the backstrap to the trigger, and out front, the G21SF incorporates a rail. Of course, the designated "TB" models ship with a threaded barrel. The G21SFTB looks like a standard Glock except for the longer barrel and elevated sights. The sights easily cleared an attached suppressor. Glock also includes a polymer thread protector that slips on and off the muzzle.

The third polymer gun was the ***Heckler & Koch Mark 23.*** Heckler & Koch GmbH, or HK, developed the MK23 Model 0 in 1991, and it would be eventually be adopted by U.S. Special Operations Command, or USSOCOM. One of the most thoroughly tested handguns in history, HK's MK23/Mark 23 project originated in 1991 when HK began development for the U.S. Special Operations Command. According to the introduction in the manual, "On May 1, 1996, the first HK MK23 pistols were delivered to the U.S. Special Operations Command for operational deployment, making the MK23 the first caliber-45 ACP pistol to enter American military service since the venerable Government Model 1911A1. During testing, MK23 pistols met the most stringent operational and accuracy requirements ever demanded of a combat handgun. Endurance testing demonstrated a service life of more than 30,000 rounds of +P ammunition. To meet the reliability requirement, the pistol had to demonstrate a minimum of 2,000 mean rounds between stoppages (MRBS) with both M1911 ball and +P ammunition. All pistols exceeded the 2000 MRBS with an average of 6000 MRBS. In more than 450 accuracy test firings from a precision firing fixture at 25 meters, MK23 pistols far exceeded the government requirement, averaging 1.44 inches, with 65 groups of less than one inch." The HK Mark 23 we test here is a commercial model of the U.S. Government issue MK23 MOD 0 pistol and is available in limited numbers. Designated the "Mark 23," it is almost identical to the MK23 MOD 0 pistol, right down to its threaded barrel. The main differences are slide markings (Mark 23 as opposed to MK23) and a barrel manufactured to SAAMI headspace specifications.

The Suppressor

For this test, we attached a SilencerCo Osprey 45, $734 at SilencerShop.com. This is just for the shell; you must also buy pistons threaded for your specific handgun. Of course, you must also buy an NFA tax stamp for the suppressor, which SilencerShop.com sells for $205.

The Osprey is a distinctive pistol suppressor that sports a monocore baffle design. Because of its shape, this polygonal suppressor holds 30% more internal volume than a traditional round-tube silencer of the

FN AMERICA FNX-45 TACTICAL
FDE 66968 45 ACP, $1200
GUN TESTS GRADE: A

The best shooter with most of our ammo selections, either suppressed or unsuppressed. Quite a value if you're looking for an easy way to shoot the 45 ACP more quietly.



Action	Semi-Auto DA/SA, Locked Breech
Overall Length	8.64 in.
Overall Length w/Suppressor	16.25 in.
Overall Height	6.5 in.
Overall Height, w/Optic	6.8 in.
Maximum Width	1.6 in.
Weight Unloaded	33.3 oz.
Weight Loaded	39.5 oz.
Weight Loaded w/Suppressor	56.6 oz.
Barrel	5.3 in., 1:16 RH twist; cold hammer-forged stainless steel; polished chamber and feed ramp; muzzle thread 0.578x28 w/thread protector
Capacity	15+1
Slide	FDE stainless steel; top optics cut; front/rear cocking serrations; external extractor w/loaded chamber indicator
Magazines	3; polished blued steel, double stack; FDE polymer basepad; ambi release button
Frame	FDE polymer; 4-slot MIL-STD-1913 rail; replaceable steel frame/slide rails; ambidextrous slide-stop lever
Frame Front Strap Height	2.7 in.
Frame Back Strap Height	3.2 in.
Grips	Checkered polymer sides and back strap; grooved front strap, 4 interchangeable backstraps w/lanyard eyelets
Grip Thickness (max)	1.3 in.
Grip Circumference (max)	5.7 to 5.8 in.
Sight, Front	High-profile blade, tritium green dot
Sight, Rear	High-profile serrated; two tritium yellow dots
Sight Radius	6.4 in.
Optic	Burris FastFire 3
Optics Mounts	Trijicon RMR, Docter
Trigger Pull Weight (Double Action)	13.0 lbs.
Trigger Pull Weight (Single Action)	5.5 lbs.
Trigger Span (Double Action)	3.0 in.
Trigger Span (Single Action)	2.7 in.
Trigger Guard	Serrated FDE polymer
Safety	Ambi decocking safety lever
Warranty	None written
Telephone	(703) 288-3500
Website	FNAmerica.com
Made In	U.S.A.



The FNX-45 liked the Osprey suppressor, shooting two out of the three ammo choices better with the can rather than without. Velocities were likewise improved across the board.

GLOCK G21SF PF2150203TB SHORT FRAME TB DAO 45 ACP, $511

GUN TESTS GRADE: D

Disappointing accuracy and some nettlesome stoppages made us pass on this suppressor-ready choice.



Action	Semi-Auto DAO
Overall Length	8.1 in.
Overall Length w/Suppressor	16.0 in.
Overall Height	5.6 in.
Overall Height, w/Optic	NA
Maximum Width	1.4 in.
Weight Unloaded	30.2 oz.
Weight Loaded	41.4 oz.
Weight Loaded w/Suppressor	52.4 oz.
Barrel	5.2 in., 1:9.84 RH twist, matte-black Tenifer-finished steel; polygonal rifling; polished chamber and feed ramp; muzzle thread M16X1LH w/thread protector
Capacity	13+1
Magazines	2; black polymer, double stack; black polymer detachable baseplate
Slide	7.5 in. long, matte-black steel; rear cocking serrations; external extractor
Frame	Matte-black polymer; 1-slot front rail; integral steel frame rails, left-side slide-stop lever; left-side mag-release button
Frame Front Strap Height	2.8 in.
Frame Back Strap Height	3.25 in.
Grips	Textured black-polymer sides; checkered backstrap; finger-groove front strap with checkering
Grip Thickness (max)	1.26 in.
Grip Circumference (max)	6.0 in.
Sight, Front	Ameriglo high-profile blade, yellow dot
Sight, Rear	Ameriglo high-profile smooth; drift adjustable
Sight Radius	6.75 in.
Optic	None
Optics Mounts	None
Trigger Pull Weight (Double Action)	6.0 lbs.
Trigger Span (Double Action)	3.1 in.
Trigger Guard	Serrated black polymer
Safety	Safe Action trigger tab
Warranty	1 year limited
Telephone	(770) 432-1202
Website	US.Glock.com
Made In	Austria

With the suppressor on, the Glock had three light primer strikes, and separately, it failed to go into battery five times. All the failures were with the PPU ammunition. Accuracy was lacking with all the rounds we fired in it as well.



same length. According to Silencer Shop's data, the SilencerCo Osprey 45 provides shooters a hearing-safe 131.3 dB output with subsonic 45 ACP ammo. It has a black-oxide aluminum shell, stainless-steel internals, weighs 11.1 ounces, and is 8 inches long. To fit our pistols, we needed three different pistons for the Osprey. The FN's muzzle is threaded 0.578x28 tpi; the HK Mark 23's is 16mm RH, and the Glock is 16mm LH. We purchased three pistons from SilencerShop.com, $71 each.

We would also advise buying Silencer Shop's NFA Single Shot Trust service, $25. The Single Shot Trust simplifies the registration process by using one trust per silencer (or other NFA item). Your Form 4 and trust will be generated simultaneously, and will be named automatically after the item's serial number. Moreover, no notary is required, only your fingerprint data and photo are needed. Trustees may be added once ATF approval is received, and electronically signing your Form 4 via DocuSign completes this streamlined process. You don't have to track down a bunch of trustees, get them all to the notary, and scan everything and return it to Silencer Shop. If you plan on purchasing more silencers in the future, be sure to check out the Single Shot Unlimited version of the trust paperwork.

The Osprey comes with a tool to remove the piston and a user manual. To install the piston in the end attaching to the muzzle, the user slides the piston (a stainless cylinder with spokes on one end) into a spring inside a threaded adapter, which then screws into the suppressor body. Installation was simple: With the magazine out of the pistol and the action locked open, we screwed off the thread protector, then held the pistol muzzle at 12 o'clock and started the Osprey onto the provided muzzle threads. We had no trouble attaching the suppressor to any of the pistols. We advise removing the magazine and locking the action open as a must-do safety step because the working hand gets in front of the muzzle when removing the thread protector and installing the can. We then screwed the Osprey down as far as it would go onto the muzzle threads, aligned it with the top of the barrel, and tightened the locking collar. So equipped, we were ready to shoot the test guns with a lot less muzzle blast and sound. Here's how they performed:

FN America FNX-45 Tactical FDE 66968 45 ACP, $1200

The FN FNX-45 Tactical in Flat Dark Earth (FDE) is a hammer-fired semiautomatic, short-recoil-operated pistol modeled after the FNP-45, which was FN's service pistol that was submitted to the U.S. Joint Combat Pistol Program in 2007. What

45 ACP RANGE DATA

Prvi Partizan (PPU)	FN America FNX-45 Tactical		Glock 21TB		Heckler & Koch Mark 23	
185-gr. SJHP PP-R4.31	**Unsuppressed**	**Suppressed**	**Unsuppressed**	**Suppressed**	**Unsuppressed**	**Suppressed**
Average Velocity	878 fps	921 fps	882 fps	907 fps	918 fps	927 fps
Muzzle Energy	317 ft.-lbs.	348 ft.-lbs.	319 ft.-lbs.	338 ft.-lbs.	346 ft.-lbs.	353 ft.-lbs.
Average Group	3.0 in.	1.75 in.	6.1 in.	6.0 in.	5.1 in.	1.25 in.

Fiocchi Ammunition	FN America FNX-45 Tactical		Glock 21TB		Heckler & Koch Mark 23	
200-gr. JHP 45B500	**Unsuppressed**	**Suppressed**	**Unsuppressed**	**Suppressed**	**Unsuppressed**	**Suppressed**
Average Velocity	982 fps	1004 fps	983 fps	1024 fps	1027 fps	1045 fps
Muzzle Energy	428 ft.-lbs.	448 ft.-lbs.	429 ft.-lbs.	466 ft.-lbs.	468 ft.-lbs.	485 ft.-lbs.
Average Group	2.0 in.	1.6 in.	7.5 in.	5.6 in.	2.5 in.	2.1 in.

Winchester USA	FN America FNX-45 Tactical		Glock 21TB		Heckler & Koch Mark 23	
230-gr. FMJ Q4170	**Unsuppressed**	**Suppressed**	**Unsuppressed**	**Suppressed**	**Unsuppressed**	**Suppressed**
Average Velocity	843 fps	877 fps	858 fps	889 fps	881 fps	900 fps
Muzzle Energy	363 ft.-lbs.	393 ft.-lbs.	376 ft.-lbs.	403 ft.-lbs.	396 ft.-lbs.	414 ft.-lbs.
Average Group	2.0 in.	2.6 in.	5.0 in.	5.0 in.	4.0 in.	2.6 in.

To collect chronograph and accuracy data, we set up at American Shooting Centers in Houston (AMShootCenters.com). We recorded velocities using an Oehler Model 35 Proof Chronograph ($595 from Oehler-Research.com) with the first screen set 5 feet from the muzzle. Velocities were recorded with an air temperature of 90 degrees and 80% humidity, with 12 o'clock 20-mph winds. For bench-accuracy shooting at 25 yards, we fired the handguns off Caldwell DeadShot shooting bags. Accuracy is the average group size for five five-shot groups, measured center-to-center of the widest-apart bullet holes in each group, then rounded to the nearest tenth of an inch. The suppressed data were collected with a SilencerCo Osprey 45, $734 at SilencerShop.com in Austin, Texas. ***45 ACP ammo sources:*** *Prvi Partizan Ammunition (PPU) 185-grain Semi-Jacketed Hollow Point PP-R4.31, ($18/50 from SportsmansGuide.com); Fiocchi Ammunition 200-grain Jacketed Hollow Point 45B500 ($24/50 from CheaperThanDirt.com), and Winchester USA Ammunition 230-grain Full Metal Jacket Q4170 ($20/50 from CheaperThanDirt.com).*

sets the FNX-45 Tactical apart from the base model FNX-45 is the threaded muzzle, which can readily accept suppressors, compensators, and other accessories. Also included are suppressor-height tritium night sights (rear yellow/front green). The Tactical version also comes with three 15-round extended magazines. The stainless-steel slide has been modified to accept multiple types of optics. Ambidextrous controls include the magazine release, safety/decocking lever, and a slide-stop release lever. Interchangeable backstraps with lanyard eyelets are included, fitting both left- and right-handed shooters.

Two screws hold a top plate in place, and it is removed and replaced with an adapter plate and reflex sight. Two adapter plates for a Trijicon RMR and for a Docter USA red dot were provided. The other pistols lacked this feature. We mounted a Burris FastFire 3 using one of the plates and screws provided. Installation was simple. First, place the plate on the slide, then use two screws to mount the optic. The iron sights of the FN were tall and co-witnessed with the red dot. They were also 3-dot night sights, and the shooter-facing side was serrated to reduce glare. We liked these sights the best in this test, with the Mark 23's sights coming in a close second. The cocking serrations were placed in good locations forward and rearward, so racking the slide was easy. Neither the G21 nor the M23 had forward cocking serrations on the slide. The FN used a flat coil spring and solid guide rod in its front end.

The grip angle of the FNX-45 Tactical is similar to a 1911, which makes it a natural pointer. Unlike the other pistols, the FN's polymer frame offered four different backstraps: arched or flat and either checkered or ribbed. We needed a small hex wrench or a paper clip to remove and replace the inserts. The inserts made the pistol feel like it had less girth, which we thought was impressive because the FN holds 15 cartridges in a double-stack magazine. The grip sides were checkered and offered good texture without abrasion. The trigger guard was undercut so users can grasp the pistol high.

The slide rides on steel rails within the frame, like with all the other pistols, but they were replaceable on the FN. What also set the FN apart from the Glock was the trigger system. The FNX-45 Tactical uses a traditional DA/SA trigger with a double-action press that was smooth and consistent, measuring on average about 13 pounds, though testers felt it was less. In single-action mode, the press averaged slightly over 5 pounds, which we thought improved accuracy, and which to some extent also helped the M23. The FN trigger was wide, so pulling force was spread across a larger surface area of the

HECKLER & KOCH MARK 23 45 ACP
M723001-A5 45 ACP, $2300
GUN TESTS GRADE: A-

A superb, easy-to-shoot handgun. It's much more expensive than the FNX package and not as thoroughly accessorized.



Action	Semi-auto short recoil SA/DA, modified Browning-type linkless
Overall Length	9.65 in.
Overall Length w/Suppressor	17.9 in.
Overall Height	5.9 in.
Overall Height, w/Optic	NA
Maximum Width	1.53 in.
Weight Unloaded	39.4 oz.
Weight Loaded	51.0 oz.
Weight Loaded w/Suppressor	62.0 oz.
Barrel	5.87 in., 1:14.88 RH twist, blued steel; O-ring style with polygonal bore profile; muzzle thread M16X1RH w/thread protector
Capacity	12+1
Magazines	4; black-steel double stack; black polymer detachable baseplate
Slide	8.9 in. long, 1-piece machined blued steel rear cocking serrations; external extractor
Frame	Fiber-reinforced polymer w/HK front groove; ext. slide-release lever (L); ambi mag-release paddles decocking lever (L), ambi safety levers
Frame Front Strap Height	2.6 in.
Frame Back Strap Height	3.25 in.
Grips	Textured black-polymer sides; checkered back strap & front strap
Grip Thickness (max)	1.3 in.
Grip Circumference (max)	6.1 in.
Sight, Front	Fixed Partridge style, white dot
Sight, Rear	Standard 2-dot, adj. for windage & elevation
Sight Radius	7.76 in.
Optic	None
Optics Mounts	None
Trigger Pull Weight (Single Action)	6.0 lbs.
Trigger Pull Weight (Double Action)	11.0 lbs.
Trigger Span (Single Action)	2.6 in.
Trigger Span (Double Action)	3.0 in.
Trigger Guard	Serrated black polymer
Safety	DA mode with hammer intercept notch, firing-pin block, disconnector
Warranty	Limited lifetime to original owner
Telephone	(706) 568-1906
Website	HK-USA.com
Made In	Germany

Here's a representative group shot with the Mark 23 using Fiocchi 200-grain jacketed hollow points. The manners of the HK and the Osprey suppressor working together were impressive. Very smooth and repeatable.



finger. The trigger reset was short. We liked this trigger a lot.

The hammer was round and serrated and allowed easy cocking. Elsewhere, the magazine-release button, decocking lever, and slide stop were ambidextrous, another valuable feature missing from the Glock and more ambi than the HK. The magazine release worked precisely. The thumb of the shooting hand naturally falls on top of the decocker, which decocks the hammer from SA mode and places the pistol on Safe when in DA mode. It functions like a 1911 thumb safety; up position is Safe; the down position is Fire. In the Fire position, a red warning dot was exposed. The slide-stop lever was inset into the polymer frame to avoid moving it inadvertently.

Steel double-stack magazines fed the FN, and they were fairly easy on the shooter's thumbs when reloading, even when loading the fifteenth round. The floor plate on the FNX's magazines was large and rounded, so slapping home a fresh magazine into the magazine well was easily accomplished with or without gloves.

Our Team Said: The FNX-45 Tactical was more accurate overall with and without a suppressor attached, though the M23 won a couple of accuracy head to heads. The FNX-45 Tactical ran without incident, shot accurately with a suppressor, and had a fantastic accessories package, as well as having a slide cut for optics attachment.

Glock G21SF PF2150203TB Short Frame TB DAO 45 ACP, $511

The Glock aficionado can get a threaded barrel one of two ways: Replace the existing barrel in your G21 with an aftermarket threaded barrel, or buy a new gun with a threaded barrel. Costs for the PF2150203TB unit tested here ran $511 at HinterlandOutfitters.com, $585 from AbleAmmo.com, and $610 from BudsGunShop.com. The minor differences between it and a stock Glock 21 are a slightly longer overall length (8.25 inches instead of 8.1 inches), an unloaded weight with empty magazine of 30.2 ounces instead of 29.1 ounces, and a longer barrel, 5.2 inches compared to the standard 4.61 inches for the factory specification. Also, the G21TB has taller Ameriglo suppressor-height sights.

Glock also makes what are said to be drop-in threaded barrels (TB) for several pistols. The TB units are chambered for 9mm Luger, 40 S&W, and 45 ACP for Gen3 G17, G19, G23, and G21 SF models. The rifling is the same polygonal type (no lead bullets) as a standard tube, and because the barrels are made in Austria, they use European left-hand thread patterns: 13.5×1 for the G17, G19, and G23 barrels and M16X1LH for the G21 SF. We haven't tested the Glock threaded barrel for the G21SF, but Brownells sells one for $192 (100-700-173WB at Brownells.com) if you're so inclined.



The SilencerCo Osprey 45 ($734 at SilencerShop.com) is just an aluminum shell with baffles inside, left. The shooter inserts a piston (three shown at right) into the spring and then into the threaded adapter, center. The mount, spring, and piston assembly is then screwed into the shell. Each handgun must be fitted with a piston that matches the various threads on these pistols. Each piston costs $71 apiece from SilencerShop.com. From left, the pistons are the 0.578x28 tpi for the FNX-45 Tactical; the 16mm RH piston for the HK Mark 23, and the 16mm LH for the Glock 21FS TB. The threads-per-inch dimensions are inscribed at the bottom of each piston.

The G21TB here looks like a standard Glock except for the longer barrel (tipped with a polymer thread protector that fell off when we fired it, so you might as well take it off in advance) and elevated sights. These sights easily cleared the attached Osprey suppressor. The rear sight is black and smooth, and the front blade has a highly visible yellow dot that works well. Elsewhere, the G21TB is a nondescript member of the family with have squared-off slide, blocky profile, matte-black finish, the tabbed trigger with built-in safety, and a minimum of other controls. The Model 21 is a pretty big package, but it's smaller than the FNX and the Mark 23. With 13+1 rounds of 45 ACP on tap, the grip is big enough that we'd guess those with average or small hands would reject it. In the case of this G21, it does not have alternate grip inserts as does the FNX.

Our test unit was solidly made, lighter than the FNX and Mark 23, and like most Glocks, set up primarily for right-handers. The FNX was much more ambi with its bevy of two-side controls. Lefties would have to use the index finger to get to the slide-drop button and the magazine release on the Glock. The finger grooves fit our hands well enough, though some might like to see Glocks without those grooves.

The sight picture with the Glock's tall steel sights isn't as good as the FNX or the M23. One bright-yellow dot is what the shooter sees, depending on ambient light. The sights on the FNX and Mark 23 are just as good or better than these, and, of course, the FNX has an optics slot which allowed us to attach and remove the Burris FastFire 3. The others lack this feature.

Takedown is pure Glock simplicity. Clear the gun, pull back slightly on the slide while pulling downward on the two finger-grip releases just above the trigger. Release the slide, press the trigger, and off comes the slide with its barrel and spring. The spring is captive. In fact, the insides of the slides reveal many more similarities than do the outsides of the two guns. Inside, everything looked robust and well thought out.

On the range, the Glock disappointed. We couldn't get the gun to group as well as the others with any of our test ammos, plus we had a handful of failures to go into battery and three light primer strikes with the PPU ammo and the Osprey attached. In particular, when shooting off the rest, we felt like the grip forced the shooting hand into the wrong position. Also, the DAO trigger wasn't nearly as good as the FNX or HK switches. Recoil was there, but it wasn't too much for a seasoned 45 shooter. In terms of handling, adding the suppressor likewise suppressed the Glock's recoil impulse, allowing us to better ride recoil shot to shot and stay more on target. Still, it wasn't enough to help accuracy.

Our Team Said: The G21SFTB came in a clear third place compared to the others. Yes, it's hundreds less, but if we already had a Glock 21 we liked, we might try a replacement threaded barrel. And if we didn't already have a Glock 21, we'd choose one of the other handguns, depending on our budget.

Heckler & Koch Mark 23 45 ACP M723001-A5 45 ACP, $2300

Price is an important consideration here, so let's talk money first. HK only builds a few hundred of these new every year, and they come in two configurations, one with two 12-round magazines (as tested here) or with two 10-round magazines. Both list for $2299, but let's call it $2300. We recently saw a Gunbroker.com auction for a new Mark 23 with a starting bid of $1950 or a "buy it now price" of $2150 and another auction for a factory-new Mark 23 with a starting bid of $1990 and a buy-it-now price of $2029, so that gives you some idea of what new-in-the-box Mark 23s will run you. We also saw a used Mark 23 auction with no reserve presenting a starting bid of $2050 on GunBroker, and in the completed auctions, we saw a new-in-box handgun sold in June 2018 for $1700. In July 2018, Lake Havasu Pawn sold a used HK M23 in a Gunbroker auction for $1500. Obviously, used guns are available, and depending on condition, we wouldn't be afraid of buying one.

What you're buying, of course, is a truck that looks like a handgun. The Mark 23 is 9.65 inches in overall length, 5.9 inches tall, 1.53 inches thick at its widest point, has a 5.87-inch-long barrel, and weighs 39.4 ounces unloaded with an empty magazine and 51 ounces topped off with ammo. Add a suppressor, and you've got a loaded weight of 62 ounces and a nearly 18-inch-long package to work around corners.

Our HK Mark 23 arrived in a black-plastic clamshell case with four 12-round magazines, instruction manual, pad lock, and extra O-rings. We spent quite a bit of time reading the manual, which may be the best we've ever seen in terms of explaining the Heckler & Koch Mark 23 pistol's operating system. It uses a modified linkless Browning-style short-recoil system to lock and unlock

— continued on page 32

DOWNRANGE, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2

safety of the P320 pistol."

In response to social media rumors questioning the safety of the P320 pistol, a variant of which was selected by the U.S. government as the U.S. Army's Modular Handgun System (MHS), SIG SAUER, Inc. has full confidence in the reliability, durability and safety of its striker-fired handgun platform. There have been zero (0) reported drop-related P320 incidents in the U.S. commercial market, with hundreds of thousands of guns delivered to date.

The P320 meets and exceeds all U.S. standards for safety, including the American National Standards Institute (ANSI) and Sporting Arms and Ammunition Manufacturers' Institute, Inc. (SAAMI), as well as rigorous testing protocols for global military and law enforcement agencies.

All SIG SAUER pistols incorporate effective mechanical safeties to ensure they only fire when the trigger is pressed. However, like any mechanical device, exposure to acute conditions (e.g. shock, vibration, heavy or repeated drops) may have a negative effect on these safety mechanisms and cause them to not work as designed. This language is common to owner's manuals of major handgun manufacturers.

As a result, individual attempts to perform drop tests outside of professionally controlled environments should not be attempted.

"SIG SAUER is committed to producing only the finest products," said Ron Cohen, President and CEO of SIG SAUER. "Safety and reliability have been and always will be paramount to the SIG SAUER brand."

Gun Tests readers weighed in on the P320 post as well.

"TP8433" posted: Discharges from firearms can occur when debris, clothing, or items follow the trigger guard into the holster. Holsters vary in the ability to minimize those events. I know of one verified case of a striker-fired gun going "bang" in the holster with no involvement from the shooter. This was not with a SIG P320, and the firearm was defective. It was an older duty gun in a duty holster. It was a lefty.

The left frame rail of this 40-caliber pistol was cracked, and the firing-pin safety was worn. When the individual leaned on a table, the slide separated, raising the firing-pin lug from the cruciform. With a defective firing-pin safety plunger, the pin went forward enough to ignite the primer. In other cases during holstering, it is generally an article of clothing that snags the trigger. Had she dropped the gun, I might give the story credence.

Had she had a handgun that was old with ten thousand rounds of 40 caliber cycled through it, I might think something broke (although the frame rails on the SIG P320 are solid, unlike the one that I described earlier. In this case, there is a likelihood that something snagged the trigger. From the article, it said she was using a SIG holster. I would like to know which holster it was since the SIG ships with a paddle-style holster and she was "threading it through her belt," which indicates it may have been a different SIG holster.

"GreyFox 73" posted: As ex-law enforcement, I hate to doubt another officer; however, if a P320 can be fired so easily, supposedly without touching the trigger, I think we would have had many more such incidents.

"Montanagun" posted: She would not have shot herself if she had followed one of the most important rules of gun safety: Never point the muzzle at anything you're not willing to destroy. When I put on an IWB holster, I put my gun in the holster first and then clip it over my belt.

"Carl Casino" posted: I have owned and shot my P320 and can honestly and truthfully say I have not had any problems with misfiring or any problem at all. I am not saying that this officer did not have a problem, but I am mighty curious as to how it happened, and it needs to be checked into further before SIG has to spend a lot of money to find out the accident was on her and not the gun.

"Fred T" posted: If her story is true, it should be easily repeated. Just safely test the gun with blanks in the same fashion that she alleges it fired. Guns don't go off while holstering unless the trigger is pulled in some way. It's also important to note that the SIG voluntary upgrade was for a potential discharge after the gun had been dropped at certain angles. This is completely unrelated to the deputy's claim that the gun went off while placing it in her holster.

"Colonel K" posted: I have had and carried and drawn my P320 Compact pistol thousands of time with no issues.

"Roadstar" posted: Had her P320 been upgraded by SIG? And why was a law-enforcement officer using a SIG holster and not a Level II or III retention holster? I have had my P320 for over a year now and shoot and carry it often, and have never had a problem of any kind.

To read the full post with additional links and information plus technical images, or to add your comments, key in the string below into your browser:
https://www.gun-tests.com/news/news/More-Legal-Problems-for-SIG-P320_26899-1.html

GT

— *continued from page 30*

the breech. Out front, according to HK, the captured recoil/buffer spring assembly reduces felt recoil by up to 40%. We don't know about the percentage decrease, but the HK did show less muzzle rise than the others. Some of that is due to weight, of course, but we noted it was very easy to recover from each shot faster and get back on target. The gun is really smooth to operate but tight nonetheless, and apparently HK does that by machining parts to tight tolerances and then hand-fitting them. Also unique to the HK is an O-ring in a milled groove at the front of the barrel. This O-ring tightens the barrel's fit inside the frame once the action locks up.

In the hand, the Mark 23 feels big, and for some of our testers, the grip is simply too much to hold well. The FNX's grip size and shape were better choices for about half our shooters. Our female shooters liked the operational feedback from the handgun, but it tired them pretty quickly at the same time.

After an extensive break in and cleaning session, we saw glimmers of what the Mark 23 can do. It shot the best overall group average of the test, a suppressed 1.25 inches at 25 yards with the Prvi Partizan 185-grain semi-jacketed hollowpoints. It likewise shot the others well suppressed, 2.1 inches for the Fiocchi 200-grain JHPs and 2.6 inches for the Winchester 230-grain ball. The extra weight of the suppressor really tamed recoil and made cycling back onto targets smooth and easy. The 0.375-inch-wide grooved trigger shoe was stageable, with a long take up and a hard stop just before breaking the single-action shot. The DA pull was a hefty 11 pounds, but we shot all of our accuracy groups single action. The HK can be safely carried cocked and locked, but it lacks the 1911's beavertail safety.

Our Team Said: The HK Mark 23 is a fantastic handgun. If you can afford one, we're sure you will not regret buying it.

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

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