GUN TESTS®

THE CONSUMER RESOURCE FOR THE SERIOUS SHOOTER

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THREADED-BARREL 1911 45 ACPS

We tested a quartet of 45 ACP–chambered pistols with and without suppressors to see what worked, and what didn't. Outcome: Problems with function plagued half of the competitors. ● Page 6



BUDGET PUMPGUNS

We pit the H&R Pardner, Remington Express, and Mossberg Maverick 20 gauges. Finding: Home defenders would be well armed with any of these. ● Page 17

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DOWNRANGE

WHY HIDE YOUR SOURCES?



Todd Woodard

One of the more important claims in the gun-control debate is that the United States has more mass public shootings than any other countries. I'm sure you've heard that reported on gun-ignorant major media outlets. But as John R. Lott, Jr., president of the Crime Prevention Research Center (CrimeResearch.org) points out in a new video, conventional TV wisdom on this topic is likely misinformed — but we can't find out for sure.

Lott says, "A paper on mass public shootings by Adam Lankford (2016) has received massive national and international media attention, getting coverage in the *New York Times*, the *Wall Street Journal*, plus hundreds of other news outlets spanning at least 35 different countries. Lankford's claim was that over the 47 years from 1966 to 2012, an enormous amount of the world's mass public shooters — 31% — occurred in the United States. Lankford attributed this to America's gun ownership."

Lott goes on to explain that Lankford claims to have "complete" data on such shooters in 171 countries. "However, because he has neither identified the cases nor their location nor even a complete description on how he put the cases together, it is impossible to replicate his findings," Lott said.

It is particularly important that Lankford share his data because of the extreme difficulty in finding mass-shooting cases in remote parts of the world going back to 1966. Lack of media coverage could easily lead to under-counting of foreign mass shootings, which would falsely lead to the conclusion that the U.S. has such a large share, Lott points out.

Adam Lankford is a criminology professor at The University of Alabama. This reminds me of the claims by Michael A. Bellesiles, then a history professor at Emory University in Atlanta, who claimed that there were few guns and gun owners in early America. He, too, initially refused to allow others to corroborate his findings, and his book *Arming America* was later proved to be fraudulent.

Given the massive U.S. and international media attention Lankford's work has received, and given the considerable impact his research has had on the debate, his unwillingness to provide even the most basic information to other researchers raises real concerns about Lankford's motives, in my estimation.

To view John Lott's video, search for "Media Hype Questionable Gun Control Study" or visit John Stossel's YouTube channel. **GT**

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REMEMBER: BE SAFE, BE SECURE, BE AWARE

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Praise for 'Penetrating' Test

Reader Matt is going to look at a recent 9mm cartridge recommendation for backwoods use. And Reader John points out a safety issue in holsters that we watch for carefully.



Re "Deep-Penetrating Heavy-Bullet 9mm Loads: Pretty Good Picks," November 2018

Hey guys, I just finished reading this issue, and I had to let you know I thought it was great. I really appreciate the heavy 9mm loads article. I don't have the time or resources to buy and test a bunch of loads, even though I am very interested in selecting a load for my 9mm that fits my needs. You guys did all the work for me! I trust your opinions and appreciate your straightforward approach to testing and review. I now have a few options that I can try to see if they work for me personally. Case in point, I recently went on a hiking trip with my 12-year-old son in cougar, bear, and, unfortunately, now wolf country. I had to choose between a high-capacity 9mm and a 5-round 357 Magnum. I went with the magnum for better penetration potential. But after reading your article, I am definitely going to pick up some Buffalo Bore Outdoorsman Hard Cast Lead Flat Nose cartridges and see if I can get the best of both worlds. Thanks for the great magazine and keep up the good work! **— Matt**

Re "Coming Up," December 2018

I see that you are planning to test plastic and kydex holsters. I have a request: Please include something in your tests to see if the holsters might switch off the safeties on 1911-style handguns. I have been buying a particular brand of IWB holster for many years, for many different guns. Until recently, they were made of formed kydex. I recently bought three replacement holsters for 5-inch and Commander-length 1911s, all with factory stock safeties. These seem to be an injection-molded plastic. On several occasions, I noticed a holstered 1911 with the safety off. The first time it happened, I assumed I had made the error, which seemed odd because I holster with my thumb under the safety pushing up. The next time I assumed a bad plunger spring or some other mechanical defect. I couldn't find an obvious problem, so I switched to a different gun. When I found the safety off on that gun also, I decided I'd better diagnose the cause.

What I eventually found was that even when the holster tension was properly adjusted and the gun clicked in, the gun could still move back and forth a bit when the butt was pushed forward, as when I was sitting down. I could actually see the plungers pushed in by the holsters pushing on the safeties. I also found rub marks on all three holsters where the tip of the safeties came in contact with the plastic.

I believe this is an unsafe condition for guns with a thumb

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.



safety, such as the 1911. (I also bought one of the new-design holsters for a Glock. That one works just fine.) I've been in contact with the holster manufacturer, and am waiting for them to run their own tests. May I suggest you include this potential problem in your tests? Thanks! **— John**

Hey John: You're right, that's a safety issue. Bob Campbell has a thorough shakedown routine for all holster tests, and if this condition existed, we'd mention it, show how it happens, and fail the holster. Please check page 24 for our most recent comparison of IWB types. — Todd Woodard

Re "9mm Slim Line Compact Pistol Shoot-out: Five Go Head To Head," November 2018

Hi Todd: Read your recent article and was prompted to send



you a note. I am a World War II veteran and have always been a firearms person, and GUN TESTS is my reading matter when I want to buy a new gun. In reading the November issue, I came across an article where you were testing 9mm pistols. Seems like a lot of old-timers like me are having problems, like I am, racking the gun, so I read the article and was quite surprised to find your choice out of the five guns was the Taurus G2S. It seemed like the selection was the answer to my problem, so I ordered one from Buds and some ammo, and I hung a laser on it. I attached a photo. I couldn't be happier! The gun is a single stack, and my small hand fits it like a glove.

Thank you, Todd, and keep up the good work. **— Dr. Guy**

Well, let's give proper mention to Contributing Editor Bob Campbell for that story. We added the slide-retraction effort measurement to pistol evaluations a while back, and I'm still adjusting to how important many people consider that line item to be. I shouldn't be surprised, of course — reasonable folks won't like (and won't buy) a gun they can't operate easily and safely. — tw

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

Todd, I just heard that Walther is bringing back the PPK and PPK/S for sale in the U.S. once again. I hope you can do an evaluation on the new models and see if they are any better than the one tested in August of this year. I know that in the last test you rated it a "C" and recommended not to buy the Walther, which I understand. But they are sooooo cool. — Carl

They are cool, but I wish the platform would evolve, like the 1911 has. I owned a stainless PPK/S years ago, and I don't regret selling it. A gunsmith mentioned later in this issue, Ross Carter, had toyed with the idea of updating



the PPK-PPK/S handguns with an extended beavertail, better trigger, lighter frame, and better sights, but it never came to fruition. That's a lot for Walther to fix to make the handgun more competitive. Maybe Glock can buy the tooling and create a Polymer PPK. — tw



Re "Which 308 Bolt-Action Rifles Would We Take to the Woods?" December 2018

Sirs: I just finished reading this article. You recommend the Savage Model 12FV. When I go to the Savage site, I cannot find such a model. What am I doing wrong? I have been receiving your publication ever since the first issue came out. Keep up the good work. **— Dr. Les**

This time of year, models come and go at a rapid pace, so in the intervening time between when we started the test and when it was published, Savage may have decommissioned the 12FV. I did a DuckDuckGo search for "Savage Model 12FV 18393" and found several retailers offering it. Cabelas.com was the top hit with a sale price for the 308 Win. of $380. — tw

Test Request

I love my 31-year-old Smith & Wesson 52-2, my old Feinwerkbau 65 MK1, as well as my brand-new Steyr LP10 air pistol at 10 meters, but I am thinking of buying a 1911 for target purposes and upgrading it myself. I think the Springfield Range Officer Elite Target 45 ACP

is a great target entry-level 1911 with a great price point. It has been manufactured for target use, so it should be more accurate than the predecessor Range Officer and have a better trigger and better finish. The RO Elite target was launched about a year and a half ago. I have it in my wish list with some nice upgrades, such as an extended beveled magazine well from Ed Brown, a trigger-pull kit for better and lower weight of 3.5 pounds from Cylinder & Slide, a flat recoil spring from Wilson Combat, and a new grip with checkered front strap for better grip. I think that investing no more than $311 plus the online retailer price of $809 for a total of $1120 would be a good investment in a great 1911.

Before I do that, though, I think that Colt's Gold Cup Trophy, Dan Wesson Pointman Seven, the SW1911 from the Performance Center, or a Kimber Team Match II would be great handguns to match up against RO Elite Target in 45 ACP. Maybe one of those would be a better starting point. Please include trigger-pull weight out of the box. I can't find one in a local shop to feel it, so I am counting



on your test before I would buy it online through my FFL. Have a nice day. **— F.**

Sorry, we haven't had a chance to shoot the Range Officer Elite Target PI9128E. It's been mentioned as a new product, but it hasn't formally been tested yet. But it's in the works. — tw

Re "Cowboy Up with Lever Guns From Cimarron, Uberti, Taylor's," November 2018

I'm a subscriber, and am looking at purchasing a rifle chambered



in 45/70. As you noted in the November 2018 article comparing 38 Special lever-action rifles, the T&C rifle was your top pick, though expensive. I'm wondering if this would hold true for the 45/70? I would consider it if so. **— Greg**

Hey Greg: I shy away from making generalizations from one gun to another in a company's lineup. Still, if a firm like Taylor's & Co. has a good product in a certain style of rifle, it's worth a look. Contributing Editor Robert Sadowski pointed out that Taylor's makes a repro Model 1886 in 45/70, and he will attempt to match up some 45/70 rifles and see how they do. — tw

Correction

I'm a long-time subscriber. Really like the changes you are making in your publication. I found a typo in your December 2018 S&W Model 637-2 38 Special specifications. It lists the maximum width as 4.1 inches! That would be a hefty firearm to conceal carry. **— Rick**

Yes, that dimension should 1.4 inches. Thank you for pointing it out. I'll correct it online — tw

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There are two ways to find guns we've reviewed. The Compare Guns feature (top left corner of the page under the logo) allows you to input several descriptors and narrow the search results. Or you can use the Search function. If you search for a common item, such as "22 LR," you'll get tons of references. Basically, the search function finds every instance of the searched-for topic and lists the accompanying articles the topic appeared in. The more specific and unique the reference, the better the search. We do our best to list the catalog numbers for guns we've tested, so that's usually a good place to start. There's also an "Advanced Search" area to help you narrow the results.

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 first name, but we may need to contact you about material in your letter.* **GT**

Threaded-Barrel 1911 Pistols: Some Choices Come Up Short

We tested a quartet of 45 ACP–chambered pistols with and without suppressors to see what worked and what didn't. Outcome: Problems with function plagued half of the guns.

Last year, we began testing suppressors on rifles and handguns because we saw that the sound-abatement equipment was becoming a lot more popular. This was a surprise because suppressors are expensive and hard to transact, so it takes a lot of patience and money to get started, and there is a fair amount of legal liability if you get it wrong. Despite these drawbacks, since we began this journey suppressor regulations have become much more relaxed across the country, with all but a handful of gun-restrictive states allowing the devices. Still, it will take a couple of generations for suppressors to become mainstream and for the misconceptions about them to evaporate. For some, these unobtrusive pieces of hollow metal will always be tied to clandestine assassin or spec-ops use rather than as portable hearing protection. Pity, because during our testing with them, we have found a lot of salutary benefits behind the gun, whether long gun or sidearm. Suppressed firearms not only have shown better accuracy in most cases, they are certainly better mannered with a can hanging off the front. Muzzle flip and blast are easier to control with a can in place, and that improves accuracy and enjoyment.

We initially chose handguns chambered in 45 ACP because they offered a lot of full-power bullet weights and shapes that run below the speed of sound, so it's easy to find good ammo that suppresses well. For the handguns, we started with three full-size non-1911 45s from Glock, HK, and FN, all of which come from the factory suppressor-ready. Reviewed in the September 2018 issue, we recommended the FN America FNX-45 Tactical FDE 66968 45 ACP, $1200. We had function trouble with a Glock G21SF PF2150203TB 45 ACP, $511, and didn't recommend it. The third polymer gun was the Heckler & Koch Mark 23 45 ACP M723001-A5, $2300. It was big and expensive and very nice to shoot. Some of our testers said that if they were to buy the HK Mark 23, they would remember the day as fondly as when they got their favorite dog, which is high praise indeed.



The Remington 1911 R1 Enhanced Threaded Barrel 45 ACP was fabulously accurate and dependable, other than during break-in. Our test team thought it was a great value for the money.



Three other threaded-barrel handguns included, from top, the Kimber America 1911 Warrior SOC 3000253 TFS with Crimson Trace Rail Master Laser Sight, the American Tactical Imports ATIFGX45K FX1911, and a tester's custom 1911 build from Carter Custom Weaponry, into which we dropped two aftermarket barrels, one that worked and one that didn't. Here, it has a Briley barrel in it.

45 ACP RANGE DATA

Prvi Partizan (PPU)	Kimber Warrior SOC		Remington 1911 R1 ETB	
185-gr. SJHP PP-R4.31	**Unsuppressed**	**Suppressed**	**Unsuppressed**	**Suppressed**
Average Velocity	942 fps	884 fps	876 fps	920 fps
Muzzle Energy	364 ft.-lbs.	321 ft.-lbs.	315 ft.-lbs.	348 ft.-lbs.
Average Group	1.8 in.	2.3 in.	2.2 in.	1.6 in.

Fiocchi Ammunition	Kimber Warrior SOC		Remington 1911 R1 ETB	
200-gr. JHP 45B500	**Unsuppressed**	**Suppressed**	**Unsuppressed**	**Suppressed**
Average Velocity	1004 fps	1041 fps	987 fps	1025 fps
Muzzle Energy	448 ft.-lbs.	481 ft.-lbs.	432 ft.-lbs.	466 ft.-lbs.
Average Group	2.3 in.	1.6 in.	1.6 in.	1.8 in.

Winchester USA	Kimber Warrior SOC		Remington 1911 R1 ETB	
230-gr. FMJ Q4170	**Unsuppressed**	**Suppressed**	**Unsuppressed**	**Suppressed**
Average Velocity	866 fps	895 fps	843 fps	879 fps
Muzzle Energy	383 ft.-lbs.	409 ft.-lbs.	363 ft.-lbs.	394 ft.-lbs.
Average Group	2.2 in.	2.5 in.	1.0 in.	1.5 in.

Prvi Partizan (PPU)	ATI FX1911		Carter Custom w/Briley Barrel	
185-gr. SJHP PP-R4.31	**Unsuppressed**	**Suppressed**	**Unsuppressed**	**Suppressed**
Average Velocity	924 fps	NA	867 fps	902 fps
Muzzle Energy	351 ft.-lbs.	NA	309 ft.-lbs.	334 ft.-lbs.
Average Group	2.6 in.	NA	2.2 in.	3.5 in.

Fiocchi Ammunition	ATI FX1911		Carter Custom w/Briley Barrel	
200-gr. JHP 45B500	**Unsuppressed**	**Suppressed**	**Unsuppressed**	**Suppressed**
Average Velocity	994 fps	NA	997 fps	1020 fps
Muzzle Energy	439 ft.-lbs.	NA	441 ft.-lbs.	462 ft.-lbs.
Average Group	3.2 in.	NA	1.6 in.	1.6 in.

Winchester USA	ATI FX1911		Carter Custom w/Briley Barrel	
230-gr. FMJ Q4170	**Unsuppressed**	**Suppressed**	**Unsuppressed**	**Suppressed**
Average Velocity	886 fps	NA	853 fps	878 fps
Muzzle Energy	401 ft.-lbs.	NA	371 ft.-lbs.	394 ft.-lbs.
Average Group	3.1 in.	NA	1.8 in.	1.8 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 50 degrees and 40% humidity, with 10 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, $756 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 MidwayUSA.com), and Winchester USA Ammunition 230-grain Full Metal Jacket Q4170 ($17/50 from PrimaryArms.com).*

Our 1911-style test guns this time included the ***Kimber America 1911 Warrior SOC 3000253 TFS with Crimson Trace Rail Master Laser Sight, $1309.*** We had loan of this immaculate early-model SOC with about 250 rounds through it, half of which were fired with an Osprey 45 suppressor like the one in this test. The Warrior SOC has an accessory rail built into the dust cover, which allows fitting a desert-tan Crimson Trace Rail Master laser as part of the package.

The second gun was a ***Remington 1911 R1 Enhanced Threaded Barrel 96339, $675,*** a recent

KIMBER AMERICA 1911 WARRIOR SOC 3000253 TFS WITH CRIMSON TRACE RAIL MASTER LASER SIGHT 45 ACP, $1309

GUN TESTS GRADE: B-

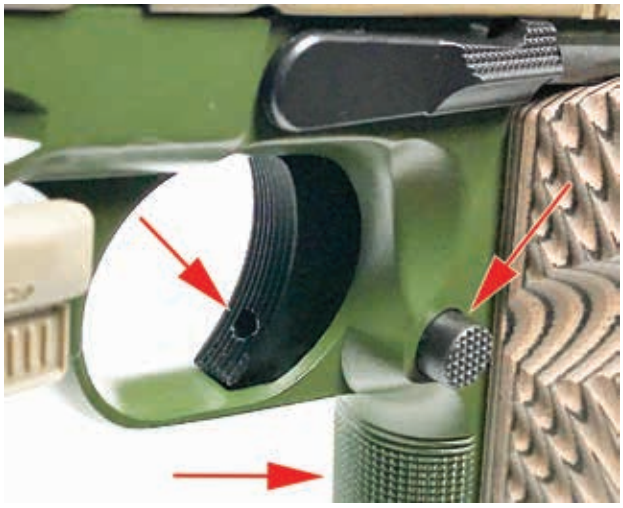
Ran haltingly and accuracy wasn't as good as the Remington R1-ETB overall.





Above: The Crimson Trace laser that comes standard with this particular model didn't show up very well in daylight shooting, but it wasn't occluded by the suppressor (below). The Kimber was fabulously finished, so if you go against our advice and want to buy a Kimber, then consider the Desert Warrior TFS, which is likewise threaded, but doesn't come with a laser. Then add a green laser/light combo separately.





This shows some of the performance details on the Kimber. There's an overtravel-adjustment screw in the trigger shoe, a high-profile checkered mag-release button, and a nice bit of low-profile checkering on the frontstrap.

Action	Semi-auto single action
Overall Length	9.3 in.
Overall Length w/Suppressor	16.9 in.
Overall Height	5.25 in.
Maximum Width	1.4 in.
Weight Unloaded	44.0 oz.
Weight Loaded	48.8 oz.
Weight Loaded w/Suppressor	59.2 oz.
Barrel	5.5 in., 1:16 LH twist; match-grade stainless steel w/match grade bushing; polished chamber and feed ramp; muzzle thread 0.578x28 w/thread protector
Capacity	7+1
Magazines	1; polished blued steel, single stack; flat basepad
Slide	Desert tan stainless-steel Service Melt treatment; front/rear cocking serrations; KimPro II finish; standard military-length guide rod
Slide-Retraction Effort Uncocked	10.5 lbs.
Slide-Retraction Effort Cocked	5.0 lbs.
Frame	KimPro II dark green steel; 4-slot MIL-STD-1913 rail; 24-lpi checkering; left-side slide-stop lever; lanyard loop
Frame Front Strap Height	2.53 in., 24-lpi checkering
Frame Back Strap Height	2.81 in., 24-lpi checkering
Grips	Kimber G-10 tactical
Grip Thickness (max)	1.33 in.
Grip Circumference (max)	5.5 in.
Sight, Front	Suppressor-height post, tritium green dot
Sight, Rear	Suppressor-height square notch, serrated rear face; two tritium green dots; cocking shoulder
Sight Radius	6.8 in.
Optic	Desert Tan Crimson Trace Rail Master red laser
Trigger-Pull Weight Single Action	5.6 lbs.
Trigger Span Single Action	2.78 in.
Trigger	Serrated aluminum, match grade
Safety	Ambi frame-mounted lever, beavertail
Warranty	1-year limited lifetime
Telephone	(888) 243-4522
Website	KimberAmerica.com
Made In	U.S.A.



Above: Unsuppressed, the Kimber fired the 185-grain PPU ammo into the smallest groups.



Above: We had a fair amount of stoppages with the Kimber when it was suppressed. This shows a failure to go into battery with the PPU ammo. You can see the barrel isn't fully elevated yet.



Above: Here's the blunt nose of a PPU bullet getting caught on the feed ramp of the Kimber. The two non-ball rounds (PPU and Fiocchi) had more trouble feeding than did the Winchester FMJ.

in-stock price from TombstoneTactical.com. This was a well-outfitted gun for the money, coming with the 5.5-inch barrel threaded .578-28 like the others, two 8-round magazines with bumper pads, and a lot of other features we detail below.

The third handgun was from ***American Tactical Imports,*** the ***ATIFGX45K FX1911,*** which has become discontinued during our test period. However, used, new, and like-new versions exist on gun boards across the web, usually for around $525, a recent price from BudsGunShop.com.

The fourth gun was a tester's ***custom 1911 build from Carter Custom Weaponry,*** into which we planned to drop aftermarket barrels. We did change the barrel twice, both times requiring gunsmith intervention. But there were issues with the plan that required us to spend more money than we wanted to, which we detail below.

The Suppressor

For this test, we attached a SilencerCo Osprey 45, recently $756 at SilencerShop.com. This is just for the shell; you must also buy a piston threaded for your specific handgun. To fit our pistols and replacement barrels, we needed just the 0.578x28-tpi piston , $71. The polygonal Osprey has a monocore stainless-steel baffle design inside a black-oxide aluminum shell. It weighs 11.1 ounces and is 8 inches long. According to Silencer Shop's data, the SilencerCo Osprey 45 provides a hearing-safe 131.3 dB output with subsonic 45 ACP ammo.

Of course, you must also buy an NFA tax stamp for the suppressor, which SilencerShop.com sells for $205. 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 they will be named automatically after the item's serial number. Moreover, no notary is required, only your fingerprint data and photo. 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 and get them all to the notary to complete the forms. 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. 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

REMINGTON 1911 R1 ENHANCED THREADED BARREL 96339 45 ACP, $675

GUN TESTS GRADE: A

This was a well-outfitted gun for the money. If we were in the market for a new 1911, we'd strongly consider the threaded-barrel model over the company's other offerings that lack the feature. You may not have a suppressor right now, but maybe some day you will.



Action	Semi-auto single action
Overall Length	9.75 in.
Overall Length w/Suppressor	16.5 in.
Overall Height	6.0 in.
Maximum Width	1.25 in.
Weight Unloaded	41.0 oz.
Weight Loaded	46.6 oz.
Weight Loaded w/Suppressor	56.8 oz.
Barrel	5.5 in., stainless steel; thread pitch .578-28 w/knurled thread protector
Capacity	8+1
Magazines	(2) 8-round black-steel single stack; black polymer detachable baseplate
Slide	7.5 in. long, 1-piece machined carbon steel, front & rear cocking serrations
Slide Retraction Effort	15.5 lbs. uncocked; 9 lbs. cocked
Frame	Matte-black carbon steel; Ed Brown-style beavertail w/raised pad, 20-lpi checkering; extended slide-release lever (L); left-side mag-release button; flat mainspring housing, checkered
Frame Front Strap	3.2 in. long, vertical serrations
Frame Back Strap	3.3 in. long, 20-lpi checkering
Grips	Checkered black-and-brown laminate w/magazine relief cut
Grip Thickness (max)	1.4 in.
Grip Circumference (max)	6.0 in.
Sight, Front	0.256 in. post, white dot, dovetailed; serrated, slanted front face, carbon steel
Sight, Rear	1-dot, windage adj., slanted and serrated face, dovetailed w/set screw, suppressor height
Sight Radius	6.6 in.
Trigger	4.0 lbs. pull weight, 3-hole aluminum; adj. overtravel
Trigger Span	2.8 in.
Trigger Guard	Matte-black carbon steel
Safeties	Frame-mounted left side lever; beavertail
Warranty	Limited 2 year
Telephone	(800) 243-9700
Website	Remington.com
Made In	Huntsville, AL



Above: Here's the business end of the R1-ETB. No front-end shake to worry about, excellent metalwork on the thread protector, and a very visible front sight. Flat, angled-forward serrations helped with press checks, though there was a chamber-viewing slot as well.



Above: We had some minor issues with failures to go into battery during the first 50 rounds of firing. Eventually, whatever was rough got smoothed out, and the gun ran flawlessly after.



From top, lots of goodies here: a nice, clear rear sight, a skeletonized Commander-style hammer, a high-rise beavertail, and a wide safety lever.



Above: There are eight shots in this group, a full magazine, because the R1-ETB just kept pouring the rounds into the center of the target. With that kind of performance, why stop at five?



Above: Here's the left side of the R1-ETB. Things we liked included an excellent trigger with an aluminum shoe and overtravel adjustment and a cut in the grip panel to allow better access to the serrated, raised magazine release. The grip texture was aggressive, making the gun more comfortable to shoot with a glove.



Two details worth mentioning: The 20-lpi checkering continued from the mainspring housing to the safety bump. The bottom edge of the frame was pretty sharp and needed to be beveled.

the Osprey onto the provided muzzle threads. We had no trouble attaching the suppressor to any of the pistols. We must reiterate that to make installation safe, remove the magazine, clear the chamber, and lock the action open on the unloaded pistol. These are musts for your safety 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:

Kimber America 1911 Warrior SOC 3000253 TFS with Crimson Trace Rail Master Laser Sight 45 ACP, $1309

The $1309 price listed above is a recent cite from SportsmansOutdoorSuperstore.com. Two acronyms in the Kimber's name are especially meaningful: SOC stands for Special Operations Capable, and TFS means Threaded For Suppressor. Since we began testing this gun three months ago, the webpage for this particular model has been pulled off the Kimber website. If you're still interested in the Kimber after reading this summary, the Desert Warrior TFS 3000237 is much the same pistol in all-over Desert Tan, but it lacks the laser. We think that's fine because the supplied Crimson Trace red laser wasn't visible in daylight anyway. It was excellent for dusk and nighttime work, but it also precluded the use of a light on the gun. We always want to be sure of our target before firing, so not being able to put a light on the gun while using the laser created a problem. The red dot of the laser was certainly visible with all the handheld lights we tried, so it's possible (and for some, preferable) to hold the light with the off-hand. Also, we noted that the Osprey suppressor did not block the laser when the can was attached. Nonetheless, on its website Kimber offers Crimson Trace Lasergrips for $339 (4000932, a red variant), which would allow the shooter to put a light on the rail and have use of the suppressor. If you choose to do that, a better choice, in our opinion, is CT's LG-904G Green Master Series Lasergrips G10, $479, because the green dot is visible in daylight and the Lasergrip frees slots on the rail for a light on the gun. Crimson Trace also offers less-expensive green variants and other green lasers with different panel color schemes if you want to color-coordinate the Kimber's color scheme. Another option would be to use a combo light/laser unit like the SureFire X400 Ultra — Green Laser unit (X400U-A-GN) mounted on the rail.

Otherwise, the SOC is a 1911 pistol with a two-tone color pattern, dark green on the frame and flat dark earth on the slide. Both parts have the corrosion-resistant KimPro II finish applied. The controls, including the ambidextrous thumb safeties,

trigger, and grip safety, were black. The grip carries earth-tone G10 panels that our shooters liked when wearing gloves, but which abraded the inside of the firing-hand thumb a lot when shooting gloveless. We had a similar complaint about the Remington 1911R1. The grip panels on the ATI and Carter Custom gun were less irritating, we found.

The pistol has an ambidextrous thumb safety, which makes it suitable for lefties or righties, a skeletonized hammer, and an extended beavertail grip safety with a bump for better engagement. A serrated aluminum trigger was supposed to break between 4 and 5 pounds from the factory, but on our unit the trigger activated at 5.6 pounds on average. In our view, the triggers on the R1-ETB and the Carter guns were better than the Kimber's. Kimber's Warrior SOC comes with a match-grade 5.5-inch barrel and match-grade bushings. The extra half inch of barrel length beyond what's common on Kimber's other 1911s is to accommodate the 0.578×28-tpi threading, which will work with many 45 ACP suppressors. A knurled thread protector is also included. A military-length guide rod allows for quick field takedown without tools.

The SOC features a lanyard-hole-equipped mainspring housing, the backstrap of which has an aggressive checkering pattern on it as well. The frontstrap was also checkered, but the pattern was less abrasive on the shooting hand's fingers, and, in fact, offered a good grip. The front points of the magwell were extremely sharp, and we would have removed them with the pass of a file except it would have taken the green finish with it, we believe. The top of the Kimber's slide, which has been dehorned, did not mark soft tissue. Capacity is 7+1, and we got only a single magazine with our gun. Relatively speaking, the Kimber-marked magazine was harder to load than all the others.

The pistol had a tight slide-to-frame fit, and the slide operated smoothly. All the controls operated as expected. The magazine-release button allowed the magazine to fall cleanly from the gun, and the ambi safeties allowed seamless both-hands operation. The durable KimPro II finish, applied to withstand harsh use in rough environments, showed no wear even after extensive handling and shooting. The slide had both front and rear serrations.

Meprolight MH3 three-dot tritium night sights were spaced to 6.8 inches of sight radius, and the shooter-facing side of the rear sight was finely grooved to reduce glare. We liked the sights; they offered great visibility above the Osprey and were easy to read. The same was true for the R1-ETB and the ATI, but not on the Carter gun. Also, the muzzle-side face of the rear sight is squared off, so the shooter who needs to rack the gun with one hand can do so on any handy table, window ledge, or other firm surface. Both sights were dovetailed into the top of the slide, and the rear would be windage-adjustable by drifting in the dovetail. A small hex-head screw locks the rear sight into place.



In reality, a suppressor is nothing more than a shell with baffles in it. At top is the Osprey disassembled into its components: the housing and a spring that encircles the piston at right. The flat threaded piece screws the piston and spring into the housing. The unit is not really a "silencer," because the resulting report isn't anywhere near silent. But using our test loads, it was hearing safe with minimal ear protection. Bottom is the Carter Custom Colt 1911A1 with a Briley stainless threaded barrel accepting the Osprey. That combo shot the best groups of the test with the Fiocchi 200-grain rounds. We later added a green Crimson Trace Lasergrip because the existing sights just barely cleared the suppressor. It was possible to shoot over the top of the Osprey with the existing sights, but only in perfect light on a colored target. We think most people will be better served by buying an entire gun for suppressor use rather than modifying a good performer like the Carter Colt.

The laser was very easy to operate. Push-to-operate tabs on both sides of the laser turned the Crimson Trace unit on, and they could be manipulated with a single hand on the gun. On the down side, the laser sometimes switched itself on during recoil. Installation on the rail is simple using a flat-blade screwdriver, and the laser is adjustable for windage and elevation using a small Allen wrench. We liked shooting with the laser in low-light conditions because the bright-red dot downrange removed any issues for aging eyes, and the laser shows the shooter's hold quality depressingly well. Reading the dot's movement immediately shows the advantage of proper grip and trigger control, which can dramatically improve accuracy and reduce time between shots for any level of shooter.

At the range, we ran into problems using the suppressor. The owner of the handgun had fired fewer than 250 rounds through the Kimber, so we ignored

AMERICAN TACTICAL IMPORTS ATIFGX45 FX1911 45 ACP, $525

GUN TESTS GRADE: F

Since we began this test, this model has been discontinued. If other people's experience was like ours, we understand why. We had ongoing function problems with the suppressor.







A threaded-barrel pistol should be set up to shoot a suppressor, which our ATI didn't do so well. We had all sorts of malfunctions with the can on, including a classic stovepipe, a diver, and the most common, failures to go into battery.



Action	Semi-auto single action
Overall Length	8.5 in.
Overall Length w/Suppressor	15.25 in.
Overall Height	5.6 in.
Maximum Width	1.5 in.
Weight Unloaded	40.0 oz.
Weight Loaded	46.0 oz.
Weight Loaded w/Suppressor	57.0 oz.
Barrel	4.75 in., 4140 steel; thread pitch .578-28 w/ thread protector
Capacity	8+1
Magazines	(1) 8-round ACT-Mag blued-steel single stack; black polymer detachable baseplate
Slide	6.6 in. long, 1-piece 4140 matte-black carbon steel, rear cocking serrations
Slide Retraction Effort	24 lbs. uncocked; 15.5 lbs. cocked
Frame	Matte-black blued 4140 steel; accessory rail; beavertail w/raised pad, extended slide-release lever (L); left-side serrated mag-release button; flat mainspring housing, serrated
Frame Front Strap	2.8 in. long, plain
Frame Back Strap	2.8 in. long, serrated
Grips	Checkered black polymer
Grip Thickness (max)	1.34 in.
Grip Circumference (max)	5.6 in.
Sight, Front	0.236 in. post, white dot, dovetailed; carbon steel
Sight, Rear	U-shaped groove, windage adj., slanted and serrated face, dovetailed w/set screw, suppressor height
Sight Radius	5.6 in.
Trigger	6.6 lbs. pull weight, 3-hole steel
Trigger Span	2.8 in.
Trigger Guard	Matte-black carbon steel
Safeties	Frame-mounted ambi lever; extended beavertail
Warranty	Limited lifetime
Telephone	(800) 290-0065
Website	AmericanTactical.us
Made In	Philippines

problems in the first 50 rounds while we thoroughly broke the gun in. Once we began accuracy testing, however, we saw the PPU and Fiocchi blunt-nose rounds skid to a stop on the ramp and not feed. This led to some spectacular stoppages, with rounds still being captured by the magazine but with their noses wedged against the ramp. We'd have to hold the gun action open, press the magazine release, then push the top round back into the magazine enough for the mag to drop. We had eight such stoppages during the accuracy and chronograph testing, and we had another five failures to go into battery completely. The Winchester 230-grain ball ammunition didn't exhibit these problems.

Our Team Said: Using its supplied magazine, the Kimber was finicky about what it would shoot, and we don't like that. You might be willing to find a certain ammunition that feeds and functions perfectly in the gun, but we can't recommend that uncertain outcome. To its credit, the Kimber Warrior SOC is well built, nicely appointed, and it was certainly accurate enough for self defense in most circumstances. But in our view, it comes in third here.

Remington 1911 R1 Enhanced Threaded Barrel 96339 45 ACP, $675

We first tested the 1911 R1 Enhanced No. 96328 back in the May 2012 edition. That gun graded an A-, mainly for the sharpness of the front sight housing. We also tested the R1 No. 96323, a GI-style 45 ACP, in the October 2012 issue and graded it an A+. The standard model looks like a wartime 1911, meaning the R1 standard version doesn't have

the Enhanced's beavertail, great rear sight, or the lightened, Commander-style skeletonized hammer spur, among other features. We also tested the R1 Commander 96336 in the April 2015 issue, giving it a B grade because of some early malfunctions. All in all, we've been impressed with the company's work on this 1911. And that continues with the R1 Enhanced Threaded Barrel, which we'll abbreviate as the R1-ETB.

Our first impression of the R1-ETB was that it had a great finish, was tightly assembled, and had a great trigger, breaking at 4.0 pounds. The R1 Enhanced has the same Series 80–style internal firing-pin safety as the original R1, which many shooters don't like because it can affect trigger-pull quality. That wasn't the case here.

We liked the dull-black finish and the coarsely-checkered wood-laminate grip panels. The left-side panel features a thumb groove for a right-handed shooter. However, after only a few rounds, we wanted to cover the bare trigger hand with a glove because the panel texture under the right-hand thumb was pretty sharp. This was also a problem with the Kimber and ATI guns.

Midway down the left side of the slide a demure "Remington" was cut into the metal. In small letters below the ejection port, the word "ENHANCED" was stamped, and "1911 R1" appeared near the front serrations. The front strap had vertical serrations that helped keep the gun from twisting in the hand during recoil. The rear strap was straight, with a 20-lpi checkered-carbon-steel mainspring housing. The checkering extended to the bump on the grip safety, a nice touch, we thought. The left panel was cut away slightly to permit access to the extended magazine release, which was vertically serrated.

The R1-ETB's front (four) and rear (seven) flat-bottomed slide cuts were easily used to lock back the slide or, with the forward serrations, press-check to see if a round was in the chamber. There's also a slot at the back of the barrel that lets you see brass in the chamber. There were two well-made 8-round magazines in the fitted and cut pistol box. The magazines both had polymer drop pads that blended into the frontstrap and witness holes to show how many rounds are in them. The instruction book was very thorough and descriptive. We should note that on page 15, there was a warning not to "use ammunition marked with Plus P, '+P' or any other high-velocity or [high-] pressure ammunition."

The aluminum trigger had an adjustable stop and three holes for weight reduction. The left-side safety lever was 0.335-inch wide, which made it easy to use, and the shooter could ride the top of the safety with a thumb on it while shooting. The thumb safety had positive clicks up and down and no malfunctions.

The barrel was stainless steel, and the muzzle cuts for the suppressor were crisp. The carbon-steel thread



Here's where the Carter Colt gun started: With a Wilson Combat match barrel, bushing, and guide rod. Shot great. Why did we try to mess it up with a new barrel?



Here's our first replacement barrel, a Nighthawk Custom unit from Brownells. Two gunsmiths couldn't get it fitted into the Carter Colt.



This is the Briley barrel in the Carter gun. It would close and fire — an outcome we chased for quite a while. But other problems cropped up unrelated to the barrel installation that gave us pause.

cover was very finely machined, which looked good and worked fine. Remington says the tube is a match-grade model, and the results at the range suggest that's









We knew from the start that the sights on the Carter gun probably wouldn't clear the suppressor, and here's what that looked like. With a 6 o'clock hold on a colored target, we could fire the handgun with the can in place, but it was a thin sight picture. That would require new sights, and we weren't willing to mess up the Carter Colt any more because the existing sights produced decent results unsuppressed with the Briley barrel. At right is how the Carter Custom shot with the Briley barrel unsuppressed.

true. Slide-to-frame fit and barrel fit were very good. The R1-ETB has a stainless-steel barrel bushing and a standard GI recoil spring/plug system.

The tall rear sight was a combat style with rounded edges and was drift-adjustable only for windage, with a small Allen-head screw locking it in place. The two dots, stacked on top of each other to form an "8" shape, were easy to see and align in the rear notch. The sights easily cleared the suppressor and came perfectly regulated for a mid-target hold at 25 yards. Both shooter-facing planes on the sights were angled and grooved to eliminate glare. The beveled forward surfaces of the rear sight permit easy and cut-free clearing of stovepipe jams, and the edges of the ejection port also didn't cut us, which our hands surely appreciated.

Takedown was traditional and easy. Inside the slide was a trigger-release pin on the firing pin, which means the firing pin cannot move unless the trigger is pressed. Workmanship inside was excellent.

We had a handful of failures to go into battery at the start, requiring the shooter to push the back of the slide forward to allow the gun to fire. That worked out after about 50 rounds. By the time we got to the suppressed firing, the gun ran like a champ. Also, it was very accurate with the can or without, shooting the best of the test overall, although the Briley barrel edged it with the Fiocchi 200s.

There were a few spots on the R1-ETB that were sharp. Two worth singling out were the bottom of the grip frame and the front of magazine well. We would have liked more beveling inside the magazine well. The slide-to-frame fit was tight, but it didn't stick. The trigger pull was behind only the custom Colt's in break weight and crispness.

Our Team Said: The Remington R1 Enhanced Threaded Barrel was an excellent 1911. It had very good accuracy, worked perfectly with and without the suppressor after a minor break-in period, looked great, had an excellent trigger, and showed tight fitting and superb workmanship.

American Tactical Imports ATIFGX45K FX1911 45 ACP, $525

The 0.578x28 RH-threaded barrel will be compatible with most 45 ACP suppressors. The gun has a steel frame with blued finish and weighs 39.9 ounces. The FX45-K also features an ambidextrous manual safety, grip safety and locked breech. It has drift-adjustable target sights, external hammer, and target trigger.

As we noted, since we began the research and shooting for this article, this unit has been discontinued. And if our experience is any guide, we can see why. Set up with the Osprey, our gun was plagued with failures to feed and failures to go into battery, so much so that we couldn't get it to run long enough to gather range data. It wasn't unsafe, but it was so unreliable that we wouldn't want our readers to consider it. A call to ATI's customer-support line said that if the firearm was malfunctioning as we described, then we should return it for warranty work. That's what we'll try next.

Our Team Said: Don't buy it.

Carter Custom Weaponry Colt 1991A1 w/Replacement Barrels

This is not a test of the handgun itself, which was built several years ago by pistolsmith Ross Carter. Rather, we wanted to see if adding a threaded barrel to an existing firearm was a judicious option if you

wanted to save some money getting into suppressors, which are expensive enough. There were problems from the start.

We started with an online trip to Brownells.com to find what barrels there might be for the tight and accurate Carter handgun, which was originally fitted with a Wilson Combat barrel, bushing, and link. We saw that Nighthawk Custom (NighthawkCustom.com) made a series of match-grade threaded-barrel choices (Brownells 100-011-457, $250). It was very clear on the Brownells webpage that the barrel required gunsmith fitting, and a barrel bushing, pin, and link were not provided.

So we took the gun and Nighthawk parts to a local gunsmith for fitting, $100. When we got it back, it was so tight we could barely open the slide, and the gun wouldn't go back into battery without a lot of force. We tried shooting it in, but we couldn't get more than a few rounds through it. By this time, the gunsmith had moved on, and we didn't have any recourse to get it resolved with him.

So we took the Carter Colt to Briley Mfg. in Houston (Briley.com) and asked them to fit the barrel, $125. After a couple of weeks, a salesman contacted us and said they couldn't fit the Nighthawk barrel into the Colt without a lot of machining hours and parts that would quickly add up, but they could fit a new Briley threaded barrel for $275. We elected to do the latter.

We had some failures to go into battery with the Briley barrel initially, but function firing it about 100 rounds eliminated the problems. We proceeded to accuracy and chronograph testing and were happy to see the great groups we were shooting unsuppressed.



Here's the Crimson Trace Master Series LG904G Green Lasergrip, $419, installed on the Carter Colt 45 with the Briley barrel. Installation of the laser, including unboxing the device and reading the directions, took about 10 minutes. There's an on/off main switch midgrip on the other side, and the activation button is on the frontstrap, bottom arrow. The laser itself sits just under the slide.

And here's where the next problem cropped up.

We had known from the start that the existing sights would be, perhaps, tall enough to shoot over the top of the installed Osprey suppressor, but they were not suppressor-height by any means, and that turned out to be correct. We could barely see the front sight in the rear notch with the suppressor on, but it was a very thin sight picture. To truly get the gun functional, it needed new, taller sights. Depending on what we chose, that would run another couple of hundred bucks.

Our intention all along had been to use the Carter Colt as a proven testbed for the barrels and then restore the pistol to its original setup after the test, so this meant changing the sights on an already great-shooting gun. Unsuppressed in its original form, it was a 2-inch gun at 25 yards and perfectly reliable. It was time to cut bait. We added a Crimson Trace Master Series LG904G Green Lasergrip, $419 at CrimsonTrace.com, which gave us daytime visibility, unlike the red laser on the Kimber. Also, it improved our ability to shoot the Carter Colt suppressed or unsuppressed and allowed us to keep the existing Bo-Mar sights. We were able to co-witness the laser and the sights at 25 yards, so the gun shoots to point of aim either way. But if the laser fails or is blocked, we don't have much accuracy with the suppressor on. Also, the laser barely cleared the bottom right corner of the Osprey, which it might not on your gun. A smaller-bodied suppressor would be advisable, or if your gun has a rail, add a green laser/light there.

Our Team Said: We don't recommend you take this journey. Allow our mistakes to guide you. If you decide to add suppressor functionality to an existing firearm, we learned it's a mistake to use a super-tight gun to start. We noted during the test of polymer handguns that Glock offered replacement threaded barrels that were drop-ins. That seems like the way to go. If you have an unthreaded barrel, wait until your gunmaker offers replacement threaded barrels for your gun model. Or, if you have a tight gun like the Carter Colt, send the gun back to the pistolsmith to get a threaded barrel added, along with new sights if you prefer. Also, there are springing issues to take note of that we didn't encounter, but which are worth mentioning. Putting a weight on the end of a 1911 barrel can change the relationships of some pretty important parts inside the gun as it operates, and that can cause tough-to-diagnose malfunctions. So you're asking for trouble going that route, we believe.

All that said, we were happy with the work Briley did on the gun, and $275 seems like a reasonable price for the parts and the fitting. But we think you'll be better served buying a gun like the R1-ETB rather than trying to add parts. Effectively, we spent enough on the barrel and laser to make the Carter gun work as well as the Remington did out of the box. Buy the R1-ETB instead.

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

Budget 20-Gauge Pumpguns: H&R, Mossberg, Remington

We pit the Harrington & Richardson Pardner, Remington Express, and Mossberg Maverick Youth Models. Home defenders would be well armed with any of these pumps.



We tested three 20-gauge shotguns. All have merit, but if we are flush with funds, we will take the Remington, top, over the H&R, middle, and the Mossberg, bottom. Shotguns are an important part of the home-defense battery. The shotgun handles naturally and points well for a range of shooter types, but there's always an issue with recoil. Many shooters like and want the full-power ooomph of the 12 gauge, but the 20 gauge is almost always enough to do the job.

Every day there is a headline of some deadly incident that could have been stopped with a shotgun. Home invasions and animal attacks are common in this dangerous world. The shotgun is formidable protection for prepared individuals who might be short statured, aging, or have a physical impediment. The 20 gauge offers a strong choice for most shooters. A string of twenty #3 buckshot pellets makes for a formidable way to stop a home-defense attack. Our calculations and best formulas show that the 20-gauge shotgun generates about three quarters the recoil of the 12 gauge versus the often quoted half the recoil but the 20 gauge delivers about three-quarters the payload at the same time.

We collected and tested three 20-gauge pump-action shotguns that happened to be marketed to younger shooters, but which the home defender can use as fast-handling hallway and interior-room guns right out of the box because of their shorter barrels and overall lengths and lighter weights. These included:

- ***the Remington 870 Youth Model 25561 20 Gauge, $340;***
- ***the Harrington & Richardson Pardner Youth Model NP1-2S1 20 Gauge, $165;*** and
- ***the Mossberg Maverick 88 Youth Model 32202 20 Gauge, $198.***

For this use, we would purchase any of the three and feel well armed. Also, we ended up with a Best Buy, and we were not being easy on either of the less expensive shotguns. They simply had different characteristics folks should consider for themselves.



The 20-gauge shell, right, carries about three-quarters the payload of the 12 gauge in the black hull. For defense, the 20 gauge is a formidable option, being much more powerful than most handguns and many rifles.

To evaluate the shotguns, we used three loads, including the Hornady 3-inch #6 nickel Magnum load ($12.72 per 10 shells at Brownells.com). Then, we shot Federal's 3-inch #3 buckshot rounds ($6.45 for five shells from SportsmansGuide.com) and Winchester's AA 2.75-inch ⅞-ounce # 7½ shot ($9.49 per 25 shells from BassPro.com). This gave a good mix of light loads, buckshot, and a heavy field load. We also used Winchester's 20-gauge slug ($3.48 per five slugs from BudsGunShop.com). All of these shells fed, chambered, fired, and ejected normally. We loaded each shotgun with Winchester birdshot first then progressed to the heavy Hornady field loads, firing 25 Winchester birdshot shells followed by ten Hornady heavy field loads and five Federal buckshot loads. Recoil was simply not a factor, although we

HARRINGTON & RICHARDSON PARDNER YOUTH MODEL NP1-2S1 20 GAUGE, $165

GUN TESTS GRADE: B (BEST BUY)

This was the least expensive shotgun tested. Yet we would hesitate to call this shotgun cheap. The bottom line is that the Pardner never failed to feed, chamber, fire, or eject. The aiming rib was as good as the other shotguns, and the Pardner was easy enough to fire. It was the heaviest shotgun tested. This results in light recoil. The shotgun handled well enough, and after a bit of cleaning and removing packing grease, the shotgun's action smoothed out. The Pardner is the only shotgun tested drilled and tapped for a red dot or scope optic.



Action Type	Pump, dual extractors, twin action bars
Chamber Size	3.0 in.
Overall Length	40.0 in
Capacity	5+1
Weight Unloaded	7.4 lbs.
Barrel Length	21.0 in.
Barrel	Blued steel
Receiver	Blue Steel
Choke	Modified
Buttstock	Checkered synthetic-recoil pad
Buttstock Length of Pull	13.0 in.
Forearm	Synthetic
Sights	Single bead
Trigger-Pull Weight	7.5 lbs.
Warranty	1 year
Telephone	(866) 776-9292
Website	HR1871.com
Made In	China





The Harrington & Richardson Pardner never failed to feed, chamber, fire or eject. It was the heaviest shotgun tested, so recoil at the shoulder felt like it was the lightest kicking. At right, the stock is okay. The recoil pad was rated at the top of the test for the cushioning it gave the shoulder.





Left: The bolt release (left arrow) and pushbutton crossbolt safety are straight up Remington types. Thus, the Pardner controls are well placed and familiar to many shotgunners. Below: The barrel and receiver rib did not quite mesh. We wouldn't let that deter us from buying the H&R.

did notice the Hornady was the most powerful load tested. This is a highly developed 20-gauge choice, in our opinion. Here's how the rounds performed in each firearm:

Harrington & Richardson Pardner Youth Model NP1-2S1 20 Gauge, $165

We ordered this shotgun from a local gun store and paid $165 plus sales tax, but you can buy it online at BudsGunShop.com (#72282) for $187 plus tax, shipping, and FFL receiving fees.

The H&R Pardner is the least expensive shotgun tested by a considerable margin. This shotgun isn't perfect, but it delivers a solid value if that is what you are looking for. The Pardner is finished in a dull-black bluing. There are brush marks on the receiver,

and the barrel finish is a slightly different tone than the receiver, but it is acceptable. The line of the receiver and the barrel rib do not mesh seamlessly, but it is okay. The receiver is drilled and tapped for scope mounts. We kept looking at the price tag and nodding our heads. What would be unacceptable on a $500 shotgun gave us no worries because function was what we had to have. The forend is credible, with useful checkering. The grip section is also nicely checkered. The plastic buttstock has the appearance of a cheap AR-15 accessory, but it works fine. The stock isn't hollow and doesn't rattle. The rubber recoil pad has enough give in it to absorb recoil efficiently. Takedown is the same as most pump-action shotguns: Take the barrel-retention nut off and move the bolt slightly to the rear, and then remove the barrel. The shotgun was supplied with a plug that reduced the magazine capacity to two shells. We removed the plug and used the shotgun as a 5+1 shooter. If we use the shotgun for hunting migratory game birds, we will replace the plug.

As we examined the shotgun, it was obvious the action is based on the Remington 870. While there is a humpback receiver, the internals are straight-across-the-board Remington of the type used since 1948 when the 870 was introduced. The crossbolt button moves right to left to place the gun on Safe. The safety locks the trigger.

The trigger action is heavy at 7.0 pounds. It is fairly smooth as it is pressed, without a catch or roughness. The shotgun is listed at most outlets as weighing 6.5 pounds. H&R's website lists the Pardner at 7.5 pounds. As soon as we unboxed the H&R Pardner Youth Model, we knew it was heavier than 6.5 pounds and had more heft than the other shotguns we tested. The true weight is 7.4 pounds. This extra poundage played out in testing with two characteristics related to the weight. The first was that the H&R Pardner recoiled less than the other two shotguns, as expected. The second was that it tracked more slowly and handled more slowly than the other two shotguns. Let's face it — while many adults find the short youth model and barrel ideal, the shotgun's dimensions, but not the weight, are suited for youths when it comes to the Pardner. The Pardner would be heavy to handle for a teenager beginning his or her shotgun shooting, we believe. The Pardner uses Remington choke tubes and was supplied with a single Modified choke tube and a tool to change the tubes.

The shotgun never stuttered during shooting; however, all was not smooth with the action. The action binded during firing. It did not tie up, but in the end of its travel, it was tight on the backstroke and also going forward. It smoothed in just slightly with dry fire and firing. Unlike a Remington 870 Tactical tested recently, the action was not occasionally tight. Instead, it was tight with every load and every stroke. Whether extended use will smooth the action up is the question. It was not unusable, but it was difficult to work. When firing, the action was not as smooth as the Remington and binded to an extent, yet the force needed to cycle the action was not that great. The stroke isn't longer than the Remington 870's. In fact, it was nearly identical. The Mossberg was only slightly smoother.



We used a mix of light and heavy loads, including, from bottom, Winchester's birdshot field load, Hornady's #6 shot load, and Federal #3 buckshot.

Below: A 20-gauge pump, top, is lighter and faster to handle than a 12-gauge pump, bottom.



The weight of the H&R Pardner and the effort needed to cycle the piece made it the slowest shotgun tested in rapid fire. As for shot patterns, there was no discernible difference between the shotguns. All gave good patterns consistent with Modified chokes with all loads. The single front bead of the Pardner gave acceptable aiming results.

One of the raters noted that the Harrington & Richardson 20-gauge youth model was shipped all the way from China and might be full of packing grease. Fair enough, the senior rater said, let's clean it. After removing the bolt and trigger group (which was easy for someone familiar with the Remington 870) and cleaning off the packing grease, the H&R Pardner was remarkably smoother. It wasn't as smooth as the Remington, but it was smoother in operation than before the cleaning.

REMINGTON 870 YOUTH MODEL 25561 20 GAUGE, $330

GUN TESTS GRADE: A- (OUR PICK)

The Remington had advantages out of the box. These included ideal weight and a smooth action and trigger. When we compared the Remington 870 20-gauge Youth Model to the other shotguns, however, the Remington did not dominate. As an example, the other shotguns each have a magazine capacity of four shells. When you already have a limited magazine capacity and you are keeping the piece at home ready with the magazine loaded but not the chamber, this may be important. Despite its higher price, the Remington shotgun is not drilled and tapped for a red dot or shotgun scope. This was somewhat overshadowed by the Remington's performance on the firing range. This was the smoothest shotgun tested and one that ran combat drills very smoothly indeed. We would purchase the Remington for home defense.



Action Type	Pump, dual extractors, twin action bars
Chamber Size	3.0 in.
Overall Length	40.5 in.
Capacity	4 +1
Weight Unloaded	6.2 lbs.
Barrel Length	21.0 in.
Barrel	Blued steel
Receiver	Blued steel
Choke	Modified
Buttstock	Wood laminate with recoil pad
Buttstock Length of Pull	13.0 in.
Forearm	Wood, Laminate
Sights	Single bead
Trigger-Pull Weight	6.6 lbs
Warranty	Limited Lifetime
Telephone	(605) 347-4686
Website	Remington.com
Made In	USA





Left: The Remington 870 was very smooth out of the box. After firing the Remington, our testers said it was the hands-down smoothest shotgun tested. The Remington sized up well. It was in the middle of the weight range of the shotguns tested. The sighting rib and single bead provided good results. Right: The laminate stock was attractive. The recoil pad could have been better.

The Remington bolt release and crossbolt safety worked well during the test. Notice the similarities to the H&R Pardner. The Remington 870 is a clean design. The Remington 870 showed wear on the high spots (arrows).



Our Team Said: After test firing the Pardner, we find it to be a reliable shotgun worth its price. However, there were demerits and trade-offs. The weight of the shotgun is the same or greater than most 12-gauge shotguns. We were selecting winners based on light weight and fast handling, an advantage of most 20-gauge shotguns. The trade-off was that recoil is the lightest of the test, as might be expected. Overall recoil is light even for a 20-gauge shotgun. Also, the Pardner isn't the smoothest shotgun of the test, but the catch in the action was noticeable. However, it did not compromise reliability, and the shotgun could be fired relatively quickly. But it was not in the Remington's class as far as speed. We rated the Pardner down a grade based on the catch in the action that made firing quick follow-up shots more difficult. Function was not stopped, just

slowed. We did not rate it down on weight because half of the raters found the weight was an advantage in shooting heavy field loads, while the other half found the weight to be a drag. The Pardner is a viable shotgun and offers good protection for a pittance.

Remington 870 Youth Model 25561 20 Gauge, $340

This is a recent price from Cabelas.com. There is a synthetic-stock version of this shotgun. However, with the wooden stocks listed for the same price, we preferred the shotgun here. One of our contributing raters found the shotgun at a local shop for $340 retail, so we did not bother to order a shotgun on line and pay shipping.

Our first impression of the Remington 870 as we unboxed it was its light weight. This shotgun weighs 6.2 pounds, 0.2 pound over its listed 6.0 pounds. That is just a difference in wood density. The shotgun features a 21-inch barrel with a rib and front bead, same as the H&R Pardner. The fit and finish of the Remington is superior without the brush marks on the H&R shotgun. However, the rib isn't serrated as far back as the H&R's was. Surprisingly, the receiver is not drilled and tapped for a red-dot or scope. The barrel and the receiver mesh better than the H&R, and the overall level of fit is superior to either the Harrington & Richardson Pardner or the Mossberg Maverick.

The green-hued stock is well done, and its fit to the shotgun is good. The forend is checkered for a better grip, and the semi pistol grip stock is also checkered. The rubber recoil pad is solid and rated down from the cushioned recoil pad of the H&R. The Remington is supplied with a single Modified choke tube. The Remington 870 features a crossbolt safety. The shortened stock is a good option for youths and short-statured adults. Just the same, our mix of adult raters did not have difficulty with the Remington 870 shotgun.

In dry fire manipulation, we found the Remington to be very smooth in operation. This continued to be the shotgun's greatest advantage throughout the test program. Prior to firing, we field-stripped the 870 and removed the magazine plug. We are concerned with home defense in this test, and making the change made our rapid-fire testing more realistic. While we have a good idea of the merits of each of the shotguns in field use, the primary focus was on personal defense. When firing the Remington, it showed different characteristics than the H&R Pardner. None of the shotguns exhibited a difference in patterning. Shotguns are sometimes individuals as far as patterning goes, but in this case, from 10 to 20 yards, there was nothing to choose between.

The Remington generated more recoil impulse than the H&R Pardner as a function of the 870's lighter weight. It was about equal with the Mossberg with birdshot loads. With buckshot and slugs, the



All of the pump-action 20-gauge shotguns tested broke down in the same manner. The bolt is moved slightly to the rear. A knurled nut on the end of the magazine tube is unscrewed, and the barrel is pushed forward. Disassembly is simple. Press the barrel back in place and screw the nut tight.

Remington kicked less than the Mossberg. The hard recoil pad, we felt, wasn't ideal for controlling recoil. We began with the shotguns at low ready and quickly pressed the shotgun into the shoulder and addressed one, two, or three silhouette targets. The Remington got on target and delivered a center hit faster than the other shotguns. The action is smooth and allowed fast follow-up hits. The impression was that the Remington was delivering five 20-gauge shells in the time the H&R Pardner took to deliver four. Results against the Mossberg were much the same. The speed to an accurate first shot and the accuracy of delivery at real speed were excellent. Price aside, we found the Remington to be the best performer in the test. The shotgun isn't perfect, however. Recoil was not uncomfortable, but it was more noticeable than the H&R Pardner and similar to the lighter Mossberg Maverick shotgun. We would have liked the option of mounting a red-dot scope.

Our Team Said: In the end, we rated the Remington 870 down a half grade based on a receiver that was not drilled and tapped for a scope or red dot mount and for the harder recoil pad and lower magazine capacity. The Remington 870 magazine holds four 20-gauge shells. The other shotguns held five rounds in the magazines. This shotgun would be Our Pick if price were not a consideration, and the Remington 870 20-gauge youth model isn't expensive.

Mossberg Maverick 88 Youth Model 32202 20 Gauge, $198

This was a recent price at SportsmansGuide.com. The Mossberg Maverick arrived with a 22-inch barrel capped with a Modified choke tube screwed in and a full-length rib. Despite the 1-inch-longer barrel, the Mossberg's overall length was the shortest of the test. Unlike the other two shotguns, the Mossberg featured dual sighting beads. When using a shotgun for game shooting, dual beads allow the shooter to use a figure-8-type aiming point in certain situations. The dual bead is more of a field feature than a home-defense advantage, but it is nice to have for the price. The rib and receiver meshed well, and the shotgun's finish was fine, just a tad better than the H&R, but

MOSSBERG MAVERICK 88 YOUTH MODEL 32202 20 GAUGE, $198

GUN TESTS GRADE: B+

The Mossberg is a true youth model with a short stock and a 12-inch length of pull. The distance between the buttstock recoil pad and trigger face is ideal for most youths and some adults. The shotgun was smooth enough as far as the action. The forend had wobble in it, and we did not like the action-bars' attachment to the forend. The Mossberg Youth Model has several advantages, including light weight. It tips the scale at only 5.25 pounds. The rib features dual sighting posts, which the other shotguns lack. A trade-off is that recoil is the greatest of the shotguns tested. With most field loads, this recoil isn't noticeable. For home defense, the Mossberg is a fast-handling piece for the whole family.



Action Type	Pump, dual extractors, twin action bars
Chamber Size	3.0 in.
Overall Length	37.5 in.
Capacity	5+1
Weight Unloaded	5.25 lbs.
Barrel Length	22.0 in.
Barrel	Blued steel
Receiver	Blued steel
Choke	Modified
Buttstock	Checkered synthetic recoil pad
Buttstock Length of Pull	12.0 in.
Forearm	Synthetic
Sights	Dual bead
Trigger-Pull Weight	6.0 lbs.
Warranty	1 year
Telephone	(800) 363-3555
Website	Mossberg.com
Made In	U.S.A.



The Mossberg 500 Youth Model 20 gauge is the lightest shotgun tested. The barrel is 22 inches long, an inch longer than the rest of the shotguns tested, but the shotgun features the shortest overall length. We felt the fit and finish of the Mossberg 20 gauge were good for the price.



We did not like the action-rail attachment. The fit was too loose. Still, the Mossberg was fast into action, and while it kicked the most of the shotguns tested, it was not uncomfortable to fire.



Above: The barrel rib and receiver rib fit well. Also, the Mossberg barrel rib features dual beads. We appreciated having the upgraded sights for general use.



Left: We tried speed loads with the Mossberg, Harrington & Richardson and Remington shotguns. There was no difference in this category, save the Remington held only four shells.

nothing to get excited about. The Mossberg Maverick features synthetic hardware. The molded checkering is well done and received high marks. The Mossberg Maverick youth model features dual operating rods





We tested all three shotguns with the Winchester 20-gauge ¾-ounce slug. Once again, there was little difference in performance. At 20 yards, each shotgun printed two of three slugs in a group on paper within an inch of the other. The Mossberg fired about 3 inches high, as shown on the target below, where we were holding on the neck. The Remington was on laterally but a bit high, and the H&R Pardner was well regulated. This isn't bad at all for a bead-sighted shotgun. Slug accuracy was good enough for animal defense in the wild or home defense if you prefer slugs. Just be certain to get in plenty of practice with slugs if you deploy them.

for the pump action. The forend had a lot of play and wobble. It is an inexpensive gun, but the cheaper H&R Pardner did not have this wobble. We tried tightening the screws that hold the operating rods to the forend, but had no success.

During dry fire, the action was not as smooth as we would have liked. It was compared against the H&R several times, and these guns were fired more than the Remington as a result. We knew the Remington was smoother than either of these. The goal was to discover which of the less expensive guns had the smoother action. We did not have a clear winner. The Mossberg may have had a smoother action over the Pardner, but the wobble in the forend abrogated any advantage.

There was some discussion of the safety location of the Mossberg Maverick Youth Model. One of the raters made no secret that his personal home-defense shotgun is a Mossberg 590, and others keep the Remington 870 at home ready. He asked why in the world did Mossberg move the safety from the ambidextrous location on the rear of the receiver? After all, this has been a highly touted advantage of the Mossberg 500 over other shotguns. As another rater pointed out, we do not consider what may be in the engineering board's mind, and the Mossberg Maverick features a safety in front of the trigger guard, while the Remington 870 and the Harrington & Richardson featured a safety behind the trigger guard. The trigger finger moves forward to take the safety off and then moves back to the trigger. As we fired the shotgun, we found the Mossberg Maverick Youth Model 20 gauge may have an advantage in safety design over the other shotguns. The problem was the safety was stiff to operate, even after a couple of dozen manipulations. We do not see a youth or a man or woman with weak hands operating this safety without difficulty.

The Mossberg Maverick Youth Model in many ways was the only true youth model, as the stock was designed for youths and the length of pull was the shortest of the three shotguns tested. This is the lightest shotgun tested at 5.25 pounds, and as a result, it is a light and fast-handling item, and the efficient recoil pad kept felt recoil manageable. The Mossberg Maverick did kick harder than the other shotguns. This was most noticeable with buckshot and slug loads.

In the end, the Mossberg was worth the money, but it had a couple of drawbacks. The safety is too stiff and the forend is loose and wobbly, which affected the action. While billed as youth models, the Remington and the Harrington & Richardson Pardner are more like scaled-down 12-gauge shotguns. The shorter stock of the Mossberg truly makes it suitable for young teens beginning their shotgunning interests. Also, the light Mossberg makes carrying and handling the shotgun a joy. As for recoil, it isn't a factor until you load buckshot and slugs. Then, the Mossberg delivers more felt recoil than the other shotguns.

As for the safety's stiffness, we filled the safety with lithium grease and worked it 200 times. It smoothed up, and this eliminated a demerit for the Mossberg, albeit with a bit of elbow grease expended. We found no easy fix for the Mossberg's loose stock.

Our Team Said: If you are purchasing a shotgun for use as a true youth shotgun by a teen or person of small stature, the Mossberg Youth Model is the best choice in this test.

The H&R Pardner is a Best Buy by a narrow margin. If you are an adult wishing to use an affordable 20-gauge shotgun for home defense and you have limited funds, the H&R Pardner is acceptable. The Pardner recoils the least because of its heftier weight. Also, it never failed, costs little, and was drilled and tapped for a scope or red dot sight.

If you are willing to spend a little more, we'd go ahead and buy the Remington over the other two. It was very smooth and well mannered, and would be Our Pick among these three shotguns.

Written and photographed by GUN TESTS *staff, using evaluations from* GUN TESTS *team testers.* **GT**

HOLSTER COMPARISON

We Test Inside-The-Waistband Holsters for $50 and More

Pitted: Blackhawk, DeSantis, Galco Gunleather, Lobo Gun Leather, Jeffrey Custom Leather, Urban Carry Revo, Sideguard, Jason Winnie, and Wright Leather Works.

Shooters know that quality leather gear is increasingly expensive. Like a good shoemaker, workmen capable of making quality holsters are few and far between. For many of us, this means buying off-the-shelf holsters. In this installment, we test more than a dozen holsters from makers large and small. While we tried to keep the price around $100 or less, in several cases we went over. This was a result of the raters adding options such as special reinforcements and sweat guards.

We tested traditional designs that have stood the test of time, such as the Galco Summer Comfort and the bold new designs from Urban Carry. We also tested the DeSantis Hidden Truth, a kydex design, as a counterpoint to leather. We threw in a couple of holsters that, while primarily are inside-the-waistband designs, do other things. These included the Wright Leatherworks Cobra, a combination IWB/OWB design, and the Jeffrey Custom Leather EZ Carry, a holster that may be worn between the belt and the trousers as well as IWB.

The IWB rides close to the body, and this makes the holster a very personal choice. The just-right holster for you is somewhere, you simply must find it. A true custom maker, such as Nightingale, offers options including cant and finish that may be important to the end user. For value and craftsmanship, the Galco Summer Comfort and Galco N3, available off the rack in some shops, are a good buy and represent the work of many craftsmen under a single roof. As our senior rater noted, holsters are a renewable resource. They do not last as long as handguns, but, of course, they are not intended to and simply cannot. When they become too worn, they should be discarded for safety reasons. Choose well, and if you get five years out of the holster in constant carry, you have done well.

Test Criteria

Workmanship. We graded the holsters based on stitching, quality of edging, and the general quality of the holster. Finish was not as important in the long run as a perfect fit to the handgun and good design.

Fit. The holster must fit the handgun it is designed to carry. No slop is allowed. We did not test holsters designed to accommodate more than one handgun. On the other hand, we did not like a holster that is excessively tight and demands a long break-in period.

Belt attachment. We feel that it is useless to choose a quality holster without a good gunbelt. We used both Big Foot and Jeffrey Custom Leather belts during the test. The holsters were rated on how securely the holster attached to the belt, whether with a C hook, J hook, belt loops, or a strong metal clip. The holster should not be able to be drawn with the handgun — the holster must remain stable.

Draw angle. The holster must tilt the handle into the draw, allowing a natural draw from concealed carry.

Concealment. The holster had to be capable of good concealment inside the pants. During the test, we drew from concealed carry and carried the holstered handgun with the test holster. We feel that in the end, we had a good grasp of the utility of each holster.

Blackhawk! Leather IWB, $47





This was our price at OpticsPlanet.com. This holster was ordered for the Smith & Wesson J frame 2-inch barrel revolver. The holster features a wraparound holstering welt that also contains the spring-steel belt clip. The holster is nicely stitched. The inside of the holster is a natural finish and offers little friction as the piece is drawn and may be less offensive in finish wear. The holster's dye is pleasant, with a fading of dark and light shades uncommon in a holster in this price range. Fit is good, the holster is comfortable, and the draw is sharp for those who practice. We rated the holster down a half grade because the holstering welt isn't as solid as some. For the money, this is a good bet. Note: MSRP is $99, so be certain to shop around, as we did.

GUN TESTS GRADE: A-

DeSantis GunHide Flex-Tuk, $66

This is a current price at DeSantisHolster.com. The Flex-Tuk is supplied with both J- and C-clip belt





attachments. We used the J-clip we preferred. The holster is partly leather and partly synthetic. Due to the design, the holster may be worn as an appendix holster or in the crossdraw position. Our example is molded for the J-frame Smith & Wesson, specifically the 3-inch-barrel Model 649 357 Magnum. We found the holster offered a good fit. When worn in the traditional by-the-kidney-over-the-right-rear-pocket position, the holster was comfortable and offered a good draw. However, when moving the Flex-Tuk to the appendix position, we were able to execute a brilliantly fast draw. The design complements the short-barrel revolver very well. Speed, comfort, and the draw angle are excellent.

GUN TESTS GRADE: A

DeSantis Hidden Truth, $70





This holster solicited a greater range of opinion than any of the other holsters tested. The DeSantis Hidden Truth was delivered molded for the Glock 19. The holster is configured with a magazine carrier in the body. This adds perhaps 2 inches to the footprint. The holster features C-clips that come up under the belt and take a good bite of the belt, offering excellent security. The holster is thick enough for ruggedness and thin enough for comfort. A sweat guard extends above the holster. There is considerable adjustment in the belt loops for angle, cant, and even drop. The gun butt may be angled in different directions, and the height of the holster above or below the belt line may be adjusted. A T-shirt may demand a higher ride, while others prefer a deep drop when wearing a sport coat. The holster is also well suited to appendix carry. About half the raters did not like this holster or any other with a magazine carrier. They felt that the draw may be compromised and that this is unnecessary bulk. More practical raters noted that few concealed-carry permit holders carry a spare magazine, even though they should. This holster limits excuses for not carrying a spare magazine. The senior rater had to correlate the competing opinions. The Hidden Truth is a good design, perhaps best suited for appendix carry. There were no complaints concerning the execution. We had to take half the raters into consideration and mark the holster down a half grade on the larger footprint. We also note that at no time did the magazine carrier interfere with a sharp draw.

GUN TESTS GRADE: A-

Galco Gunleather Summer Comfort, $66





This was a recent price at MidwayUSA.com. This holster is similar to the original Summer Special designed by Bruce Nelson. The holster features a strong spine for rigidity and a reinforced holstering welt that prevents the holster mouth from collapsing when the handgun is drawn. This welt also allows the handgun to be holstered without removing the holster from the belt. The holster isn't adjustable; however, it is properly canted for a rear rake. This holster was molded for the Commander 45 ACP pistol. Retention is good. There is no wait for this holster, an advantage when some custom makers are posting a 28-week wait for custom holsters. As an aside, one of our raters, who wrote a book on holsters some time ago and has been carrying a 1911 in a Summer Special holster for many years, noted that most holsters of this type last about 5 to 7 years before becoming well worn and loose.

GUN TESTS GRADE: A

Galco N3, $87





This was a recent price at GalcoHolsters.com. While holsters such as the Summer Comfort are good for concealed carry, the belt loops on the face of the holster

add to the footprint. With a thin handgun such as the Colt 1911 or Browning Hi-Power, the problem isn't severe. With heavier or thicker handguns, alternate designs may be profitable. The N3 features a reinforced holster mouth and a raised sweat guard, requisites of a quality IWB holster. The primary advantage of the N3 is the rear-mounted belt loop. Secured by two screws, this rear loop cinches the holster in tight and results in a flat profile. While the dual-loop holster is a good design, the rear-loop N3 is a superior design for concealed carry. The Summer Comfort is an easier holster to dismount quickly as well. During the draw and re-holster phase, we found a very sharp draw was possible with the N3. This holster fills a real need.

GUN TESTS GRADE: A

Galco Royal Guard, $135



This is just $3.31 shy of being the most costly holster in the test. Only the Wright Leather Works Cobra, a combination of IWB/OWB utility, cost more among these products. What we found is a holster with excellent fit and stitching and attention to detail. The holstering welt is well designed. The dual belt loops tie in on the belt between belt loops, while more widely spaced loops will require threading through the loops to accommodate the correct cinched-in carry. The holster is well finished and features a built-in sight track. The draw angle isn't adjustable, but the supplied FBI-type tilt is excellent for IWB carry. We think the Summer Comfort is nearly as useful, but the tilt and design of the Royal Guard will appeal to some users.

GUN TESTS GRADE: A

Jeffrey Custom Leather EZ Carry, $99

This was a recent price at JeffreyCustomLeather.com. This is an interesting design. The EZ Carry features a strong steel clip that takes a good bite on the belt. With a dual loop holster, the belt is threaded through the loops and through intervening belt loops, the belt clip, or single loop attached to one point on the belt. The EZ Carry is also useful for carry between the belt and the trousers, offering a less complicated draw when a covering garment is worn. The holster features two retention screws for adjustment. As a rater noted earlier, the life of a quality holster in daily use may be five years, and these screws may be used to tighten up the holster if it becomes worn.





This holster has a solid and robust feel that makes our estimate a bit higher. As delivered, the EZ Carry was very tight. However, after loosening the retention screws and working the pistol in the holster a few times, we found the fit was quite good. The holster offers a good, sharp draw. This holster is a special type of holster in many ways, offering secure carry with a very strong spring steel clip, yet the easy-on-and-off function is there. We like this holster.

GUN TESTS GRADE: A

Lobo Gun Leather Base IWB, $75; +$8 Sweat Guard







This holster is available from LoboGunLeather.com, where we were able to get two examples of the Lobo Gun Leather dual-loop IWB holster. We ordered one for the Smith & Wesson L-frame revolver (a challenge to conceal), and the other for the Government Model 1911. We recommend that you order the optional sweat guard/hammer guard/slide guard at $8, making a total of $83. This addition protects the user's body and the finish of the handgun. The Lobo holsters are heavily waxed and may be slightly thicker than other leather holsters tested. This reduces need for a holstering welt, which itself makes a holster thicker. The stitching is excellent.

A note on the design — there is no holstering welt. The holster remains rigid due to the molding, heavy construction, and waxing. The revolver holster keeps the cylinder right on the belt line, allowing a fast draw. The Lobo design features a tilt that makes for a good draw angle. This design actually features two separate spines. This makes for excellent rigidity. The belt loops are crimped past the area where they actually meet the belt, which makes for good adhesion to the belt. These holsters have good features, and during our range work, they provided excellent results in fast draw and reholstering efforts.

GUN TESTS GRADE: A

Lobo Leather Offset Belt Clip IWB, $68



The problem of offsetting the belt loops has been addressed by a number of makers. Moving the belt loops out on wings is one example, but an even more compact design is the offset belt clip IWB from Lobo Gun Leather. We ordered this one for the Smith & Wesson Model 60 357 Magnum revolver. The design, we think, works well for lighter handguns, especially those that are worn in the appendix position. The offset works fine as a standard IWB, but it comes into its own as an appendix-carry holster. The holster does not feature a holstering welt; however, the hard-waxed body work well enough for re-holstering. We like this holster for day-to-day carry, and it is affordable.

GUN TESTS GRADE: A (BEST BUY)

Nightingale Krestel, $125





Order this from NightingaleLeather.com. This holster is more expensive than some, but it is a complex design that features a sweat guard and steel reinforcement in the standard offering. The holster features a wrapped-over section with sewing and snaps that mate the twin belt loops to the holster body. The belt loops allow easy-on-and-off positioning. The holster features a proper cant for the IWB draw; however, it may be ordered with a neutral cant for appendix draw. This holster is molded for the 1911 Government Model. The long, slim Government Model easily concealed with this holster. Note: A modest break-in was required. This holster is a good take on the classic IWB holster.

GUN TESTS GRADE: A

Sideguard Dual Clip, $95 as tested





Available from SideguardHolsters.com. We spent ten bucks extra for the reinforced holster, up a bit from the base price of $85 dollars. The molding of the holster is excellent. Boxing of the trigger guard in this example, specified for the Glock 17, is very good. The holster is a pancake IWB type and demands a lot of stitching. This stitching is well done. Dual belt attachments with strong clips keep the holster secure. The belt attachments are very well sewn. An advantage of this holster is that the holster features a strong holstering welt, yet the holster body itself is also rigid, making for excellent retention. The body shield is curved a bit and is hard waxed. This is an interesting holster that all of the raters liked. It was tight as delivered but quickly broke in. We find this to be a good example of the maker's art and a viable inside-the-waistband holster.

GUN TESTS GRADE: A

Urban Carry Revo Holsters Shell, $30 Back Plate, IWB, and Appendix, $30 each

These combinations, at $60 each for the shell plus any one of the options, are well designed and executed. The leather is of first quality, and the backing is well made. The backing features either two belt attachment points for the IWB or a single attachment



The Urban Carry's Revo holster has a shell that allows various components to Velcro to.



Note Velcro component of the Revo holster. The shell and backing of the Revo holster offer excellent adjustment.

for the appendix holster. They fit to the belt well and offer real comfort by use of a mesh backing on the leather component. The backing features two snaps that hold the holster securely. In addition, the Velcro component of the backing mates with Velcro on the holster to make for a further attachment. This allows excellent adjustable angles. The user may purchase any number of shells for the individual backing. The idea is good, the holsters are very well stitched, and the fit of the holsters is good.

There is a real problem with the Revo holsters, however. They are larger and bulkier than any other holster tested. We tried every conceivable means of wearing and concealing the IWB and the Appendix backing, including using trousers a size or two larger for the raters. One rater asked if we were mistaken and if the holsters were intended as OWB types, with the backing inside the trousers and the holster out. This isn't the case. The holsters did compress to an extent when worn under the trousers. The Revo holsters are innovative, well made, and not as well suited to concealed carry as other types. We rated them down on bulk and weight. To learn more about these unusual holsters, check out UrbanCarryHolsters.com.

GUN TESTS GRADE: B-



Twin loops allow easy adjustment of the Urban Carry Revo holster.



This is the Revo holster with the Smith and Wesson 442 38 revolver.



The Urban Carry Revo holster had the largest footprint of any holster tested.

Jason Winnie J121, $90



Available from JasonWinnie.com, the J121 is a pancake-type IWB with opposing wings and belt loops sewn in. The J121 features a sharp cut on each wing that allows the pistol to ride relatively low in the waistband while the wings are in the ideal position for attachment to the belt. In other words, a low drop is accomplished while the loops are higher in relation to the holster body itself. This design doesn't compromise the draw angle and makes for excellent concealment. We were impressed by the stitching of the holstering welt. The body of the holster is double stitched, an attention to detail that we appreciate. While the holster features a welt that makes for easy reholstering, the holster body itself is hard waxed. This holster was molded for the J-frame 38 Special in one example and the SIG P225 9mm in another example. Both gave excellent results.

GUN TESTS GRADE: A

Wright Leather Works Banshee, $108

This is available from WrightLeatherWorks.com. The Banshee is what Wright calls a pancake-style IWB. Pancake holsters are designed to hug the body and offer excellent concealment. Adding reinforced spines and IWB belt loops to the pancake results in a viable IWB holster. The Banshee features a high sweat guard or body shield and a reinforced holstering welt. The holster features good stitching and easy-on-and-off loops, but it may be ordered with tuckable deep-concealment straps. The Banshee isn't as tightly molded as some holsters, so the holster has a flat profile. Retention is good, yet the holster offers a fast draw, with a minimal break-in period. There are three holes in each holster wing that allow a wide range



In this illustration, a Wright Leather Works IWB is down with different loop positions and one without the loops showing the holes for excellent all around adjustment.

of adjustment for angle and cant. A neutral to severe angle is possible with these adjustable belt loops. We tested the holster in several renditions including examples for the Government Model 1911, Commander 1911, Browning Hi-Power, and Smith & Wesson J-frame 2-inch-barrel revolver. The design worked well for each handgun.

GUN TEST GRADE: A (OUR PICK)

Wright Leather Works Cobra IWB/OWB, $134



For those living in a four-season climate, the pancake-style Cobra may be worn under a covering garment. This holster is the same holster as the Banshee, but with belt loops in the wing for use as a standard belt holster. You could remove the belt loops for standard OWB carry, which isn't difficult. So, for $26 more, you have a holster that does the work of $200 worth of custom holsters, more or less. The concept is tried often but seldom works as well as this design. If you need a combination of OWB and IWB for carry in your four-season climate, this is a good example of economy. If you need only an IWB, the Banshee is more compact.

GUN TESTS GRADE: A-

Wright Leather Works Cruiser IWB Clip Holster, $98

This holster is fairly light and compact and features a heavily-sewn-in belt clip. The holster features a solid holstering welt, so there are no worries on reholstering the handgun. The example we tested came molded for a rater's Colt 1903. It seems ideal for the PPK and small 1911-style 380-type



handguns. It is an easy-on-and-easy-off style, and the belt clip is secure. The holster offers a good fit; it was tight as delivered. We executed several dozen draws and found it to be a very fast holster, but one with a good balance of speed and retention. The holster is a neat trick, and while belt loops have their place, the spring-steel loop seems well suited to this application.

GUN TESTS GRADE: A

Our Team Said

The holsters tested were well made. There were no dogs. We give both Lobo and Nightingale high marks for true custom-grade holsters. Jason Winnie's double-stitched holster earns him the same accolade. In off-the-rack custom holsters, Galco offers excellent gear. We really liked the DeSantis Flex-Tuk. The Flex-Tuk and the Lobo rear clip were standouts, and difficult to choose between for holsters carrying light revolvers. The Jeffrey Custom Leather holster impressed us for its utility and workmanship. The Revo holster offers innovation in design, but none of the raters would use this holster system over the others tested. The most versatile type, we believe, was the Wright Leather Works holster with its wide range of adjustment. The pancake-style holster seems comfortable according to all raters and accommodates a wide range of tilts and cants and even drop. That is versatility.

Also, be certain you have the holster properly cinched to the belt. With the dual-loop holster this isn't as easily accomplished as with a single loop or belt clip. However, when properly worn, the dual belt loop spreads the weight of the holster over a larger area. We also like the Galco N3 and find that it and the Lobo rear clip are sturdy designs with excellent weight distribution without dual loops.

Written and photographed by GUN TESTS *staff.* **GT**

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Henry Debuts American Rodeo Tribute Edition Rifle. The American Rodeo Tribute Edition Rifle from Henry Repeating Arms is built on the company's Golden Boy platform and features images of popular rodeo events. Henry Repeating Arms debuted the American Rodeo Tribute Edition lever-action rifle in Las Vegas in December at the 2018 Wrangler National Finals Rodeo, Cowboy Christmas, and the RMEF Hunter & Outdoor Christmas Expo. The imagery on the receiver cover and the stocks celebrate three staple rodeo events where contestants compete against the clock. The 22-caliber rifle is built on Henry's award-winning Golden Boy platform and has a blued-steel octagonal barrel, American walnut stocks, and adjustable sights. The receiver cover is nickel plated, engraved, and embellished with 24K gold plating for added contrast. The right side of the receiver cover features an engraved image of a cowboy in the midst of roping a calf from horseback. The left side displays the words, "RODEO TRIBUTE," and a cowboy wrestling a steer to the ground. Both sides are bordered with 24K gold plated leafy-vine scroll patterns. The walnut buttstock is capped with a nickel-plated buttplate and engraved with the image of a cowboy riding a bucking bull. The stock engraving is hand painted. The fore stock of the rifle features a near full-coverage engraving with the phrase, "COWBOY UP." Anthony Imperato, Henry Repeating Arms President and owner, said, "This is our first year being in Las Vegas for the rodeo and the fans, the contestants, the atmosphere, and the sense of camaraderie is incredible. We've been sitting on this design for the American Rodeo Tribute Edition for a few months, but we wanted to hold off on announcing it until we could show it in person to the biggest rodeo fans in the world."



Marlin Model 336 is Now Available with a Curly Maple Stock. One model of the Marlin 336 lever-action rifle is now available with a curly maple stock. The Marlin 336C 70527 chambered in 30-30 Winchester features the uncommon wood grain pattern in the pistol-grip stock. Elsewhere, this model features a 20-inch barrel with Micro-Groove rifling, adjustable semi-buckhorn rear sights, and a polished blue finish. It has a 20-inch barrel and has a capacity of 6+1. MSRP is $899.



Federal Ammunition Announces New Loads in 450 Bushmaster. Federal is delivering new hunting loads chambered in the 450 Bushmaster straight-wall cartridge. Legal in more "slug-only" areas and offering enhanced range, accuracy and power over other straight-walled rifle cartridges and sabots, the 450 Bushmaster is becoming a new favorite of deer, hog, and bear hunters. The hot cartridge is available in the Federal Fusion (bonded), Power-Shok, and Non-Typical lines. The F450BMFS1 300-grain Fusion soft point comes in a 20-count box and has a suggested retail price (SRP) of $38. The 450BMDT1 is a 300-grain Non-Typical soft-point load. SRP for 20 $34. The 450BMB fires a 300-grain Power-Shok soft point and comes in 20-count boxes for $34 SRP. For more, visit FederalPremium.com.



Buy Ammunition Directly from Speer-Ammo.com. Lewiston, Idaho–based Speer Ammunition has created ecommerce capability on its website. For the first time ever, customers can buy Gold Dot ammunition, component bullets, and other products directly from Speer. The new service started in November. "This is a place where our customers can buy specialized Speer products, such as 44 Special, 327 Federal Magnum, and 32 Auto, that many retailers tend not to carry consistently," said Speer Senior Marketing Director Jason Nash. "For fans of Speer and Gold Dot technology, there is now another way to find their favorite product." Example: Site visitors will be among the first to see Speer's hot new 10mm Auto 200-grain Gold Dot. This powerful load's 1100-fps muzzle velocity delivers the full capability of the cartridge. Speer's online shopping cart features free shipping on orders of $50 or more shipped to a single U.S. address (before promotions, discounts, and taxes are applied). All orders are shipped UPS Ground. Delivery times vary, but most orders will be shipped within 10 working days. Customers can also read and write product reviews. Speer hats and the Handloading Manual No. 15 are also available for purchase in the merchandise section. Sections geared to reloading, protection and training, and law enforcement further speed the search for load data, performance specifications, and more. The site lets visitors search by product number or filter by usage, caliber and bullet style.





Remington Introduces the RM380 Executive. Remington's new Model RM380 Executive, chambered in 380 Auto, is an all-metal, micro pistol designed for concealed carry. The pistol, part number 96246, is a double-action-only recoil-operated tilt-barrel semi automatic. An all-metal construction encloses the longest barrel in its class to maximize muzzle velocity and bullet expansion. Weighing 12.2 ounces unloaded and measuring 5.27 inches in length and 3.86 inches in height, the RM380 is designed to be carried unobtrusively. An extended beavertail grip facilitates a smooth draw. Remington claims the RM380 has a light and smooth double-action-only trigger, which we'll decide for ourselves soon enough. Other features include a low-profile slide stop, light slide-racking force, and an ambidextrous magazine release. The replaceable grip panels allow for customizing. The slide stop holds open on last round. The frame is made of black-anodized 7075 aluminum, while the barrel is 410 stainless steel. There's also a checkered front strap and trigger guard undercut in the frame. The grip panels are laminate Macassar, and the slide has wide cocking serrations. It comes with two 6-round magazines, one with an extended floor plate and one flush-fitting. The snag-free sights are fixed. The barrel is 2.75 inches long and is a stainless match tube with 1:16 twist. The slide is also stainless steel. SRP is $405.

6.5 Creedmoor Conquers Steyr, Strives for World Dominance. When Steyr decides to chamber its Scout Rifle in a new cartridge, you know the world is changing. The Steyr Scout, which seeks to convince shooters that "A man needs only one rifle," now fires the ever-more-popular 6.5 Creedmoor. Elsewhere, the Scout remains the same with a short overall length of 38.6 inches, a light weight of 6.6 pounds, a fold-away integrated bipod, integrated spare magazine and other unique features. SRP for the 6.5 Creedmoor version is $1735.



Viridian Weapon-Mounted Accessories Now Available for the SIG Sauer P365. Viridian Weapon Technologies has announced the availability of two new weapon-mounted accessories for the SIG Sauer P365. The Reactor R5 Gen 2 Green Laser Sight and the E-Series Red Laser Sight are each designed to fit the P365 and are currently available for sale in stores and online. "Our E-Series and Reactor Gen 2 lasers are designed from the ground up for concealed carry," said Viridian President and CEO Brian Hedeen. "When combined with the SIG Sauer P365, you've got a compact pairing that offers the reliability and fast target acquisition needed for personal protection." The Reactor R5 Gen 2 comes standard with an inside-the-waistband (IWB) holster fitted for the SIG Sauer P365. Each Reactor product and accompanying IWB holster is equipped with Viridian's Instant-On technology, ensuring that the laser/light activates automatically when the gun is drawn. Viridian's R5 Gen 2 Green Laser Sight features triple battery life, with more than three hours of laser use in constant mode and up to six hours in pulse mode. The effective range of the laser is up to 100 yards during daylight and out to two miles at night. It has both windage and elevation adjustments for sighting in and is backed by a seven-year warranty. The SRP for the Reactor R5 Gen 2 Green Laser for the P365 is $239. The E-Series red laser sight for the P365 (shown left) weighs 0.78 ounces and is made of a high-strength molded polymer. SRP for the E-Series Red Laser for the P365 is $132.



Rock River Arms Expands LAR-15 Pistol Lineup. Colona, Illinois-based Rock River Arms has added two new 5.56 NATO–chambered pistols to its LAR-15 line. The Rock River Arms A4 pistols come in two configurations — one with a 7-inch barrel and 6-inch extended length aluminum free-float RRA lightweight handguard, and one with a 10.5-inch barrel and 9.25-inch mid-length lightweight aluminum free-float RRA handguard. Both RRA handguards are M-LOK compatible for accommodating desired accessories. Chambered in 5.56 NATO for use with 5.56mm or .223 ammo, the A4 pistols with

Short Shots continued on page 32

Short Shots continued from page 31



the SBX-K arm brace utilize chrome-lined barrels for durability and long life, RRA's forged LAR-15 lower receiver, an A4 upper with Picatinny rails that witness to the handguard rails, a single-stage trigger, and a rubber molded Hogue grip. The new A4 5.56 NATO-chambered pistols feature the SBX-K Pistol Stabilizing Brace designed by SB Tactical. The SBX-K is a shortened version of the original SBX brace, with a lower profile for improved operational handling. The advantage of the SBX-K brace is that it offers an additional contact point for shooters beyond the grip and pistol fore end. When used in compliance with applicable jurisdiction laws, the SBX-K brace provides the shooter the option of a cheek weld or securing the brace to the forearm (via an adjustable hook-and-loop strap) for improved stability, muzzle control, and accuracy. As a BATF-compliant part for legal use on a pistol platform, the addition of the SBX-K brace on the new LAR-15 models makes these pistols suitable for at-home personal defense firearms. Overall lengths are 24.75 inches for the 7-inch barrel and 29.25 inches for the 10.5-inch barrel. SRPs, respectively, are $940 and $980. **GT**

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- Perfect 10s? A trio of 10mm Autos from Springfield Armory and Glock offer great accuracy, good triggers, and manageable recoil. Tested: Springfield Armory XDm, Glock G40 Gen4 MOS, Springfield Armory 1911 Range Officer Elite Operator.

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