GUN TESTS®

THE CONSUMER RESOURCE FOR THE SERIOUS SHOOTER

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AFFORDABLE COMPACTS

Tested: The American Tactical GI 1911, Taylor's & Company Compact 1911, and the Taurus 1911 Officer, all in 45 ACP. Which offered the most value?

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6.5 BOLTGUNS

Tested: Two 6.5 Creedmoors from Savage, the Axis II XP Stainless with Scope and the 110 Apex Storm. Then in 6.5 PRC, Mauser's M18. And we stroll down memory lane with a 6.5x55mm Swedish. ● Page 16

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22 RIMFIRE AMMO TEST

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DOWNRANGE

YOU CANNOT MAKE THIS STUFF UP



Todd Woodard

OMG, the things that are going on in and around the gun world these days. Some of it is quite hilarious, and some of it is deadly serious. In both cases, the items below are so weird, I could not make this stuff up if I had to.

DANG IT. I ONLY HAVE $17,999.98! The Vault III is a limited and carefully curated collection of weaponry produced by Big Daddy Unlimited in conjunction with Taran Tactical Innovations (TTI) and is intended for the John Wick super-fan. The collection is four fully functional firearms patterned after the guns that were used in John Wick: Chapter 3 – Parabellum. They are an STI 2011 Combat Master, a TTI Glock 34 Combat Master, a TTI Ultimate MPX, and a TTI Ultimate Benelli 3Gun. The vault also includes a trio of 24-karat-gold-plated "Continental Coins" as well as a "used" Number 2 pencil. According to the listing at BigDaddyUnlimited.com, "The Vault III collection is presented in a handcrafted trunk made from solid red oak. It features brass hardware and includes custom foam inserts made by Carolina Custom foam." But here's the closer: "Each of these guns can be used right out of the case in steel challenges or 3-gun matches." Price: $17,999.99.

OF COURSE SHE DOES. If you want a look into the kook-left anti-gun world, check out a USAToday.com article by Peter Funt on April 26. The headline: "Kamala Harris owns a handgun. That's disqualifying for a 2020 Democrat in my book." The subhead: "Harris, a former DA, apparently thinks it's fine to own a handgun for personal safety. That's a position held by the NRA, not progressive Democrats." Hahahahaha.

THAT'S NOT WHAT I'D CALL HIM. A tweet from NBC-TV in New York City (@NBCNewYork): "Police say a New Jersey man fought off an *unwanted house visitor* by using the suspect's own gun, ultimately killing him." I guess the shot itself could be called *sudden lead poisoning.*

ARMS TREATY IS 'FIRED.' During his speech to the 2019 NRA-ILA Leadership Forum in Indianapolis last month, President Trump announced that he would "unsign" the United Nations Arms Trade Treaty. He then signed, in front of all in attendance, a formal letter to the Senate requesting that it halt the ratification process and return the treaty to the Oval Office, where President Trump would "dispose" of it. OMG, I can't wait to see what PDT "fires" next. **GT**

GUN TESTS CREDO
REMEMBER: BE SAFE, BE SECURE, BE AWARE

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Enthusiasm for Pistol Carbines

Various Readers chime in with additional recommendations and ideas for semi-auto rifles that are chambered for handgun rounds. Also, a lot of folks like the technical material in our Straight Shooter e-letter.

Re "9mm Rifles from Beretta, Just Right Carbines, and Ruger," April 2019

I have a Canadian Non-Restricted version of the 9mm Beretta CX4. Barrel Length ~19.5 inches. The Restricted version here is ~16.5 inches. I did not see any mention in the review about needing "No Tools" to field-strip the rifle. When field-stripped, the two main parts are about the same size as the Ruger when taken down. In Canada, the Restricted version comes with a plastic gun case and no front rails, and the Non-Restricted version comes with the front rails and no hard case. The Non-Restricted version is too long to fit into the plastic case. With my big hands, I don't have an issue with the mag release. I bought the CX4 because I already own a Beretta 92A1, and they use the same magazine.

— Czy_Horse

In this same class, the TNW Firearms Aero Survival Rifle seems to have been available since at least 2014, with mixed reviews. It has a competitive price, breaks down into barrel and receiver, and is available in several pistol calibers. I use mine for plinking, trying different add-ons, such as a suppressor, different scopes, fold-down sights at a 45-degree angle, etc. It is fun, but the gun could stand some improvements, and using your objective testing process to identify those improvement would be useful for consumers and for TNW.

— Alan

I was able to get a Ruger PC Carbine in a special run done for Davidson's. The barrel and receiver are done in Barrett Brown, and it really sets off this carbine. I've run it some on the Ruger magazine



without a hitch, and then switched over to the Glock mag well — simple to do, and because I have two Model 19 Glocks, this is a no-brainer. I'm convinced it is a winner.

— Varmint1

Ruger's takedown feature makes it a U.S.A.-made winner. We need protection and firepower for the home, hiking, and camping.

— Edward

I don't know if Gun Tests has an issue with Kel-Tec, but I'm very surprised that you didn't include the Sub-2000 in this comparison. It's a great carbine that can be folded down to 16 inches. I have one and love it. It's too bad GT didn't consider it for the comparison.

— Steven

Steven: We previously tested the Sub-2000 in the March 2014 issue (40 S&W chambering), the June 2012 issue (9mm chambering), and the February 2003 issues (also the 9mm chambering). Readers can consult those issues online or type "sub-2000" in the search window in the top-right corner of Gun-Tests.com *to pull up these articles. — Todd Woodard*

Re "Double-Action 357 Magnums: Ruger & S&W Tested," September 2018

I'll never buy a Ruger or S&W,

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.

or for that matter, any revolver, without running a competition-grade, well-lubricated range rod down the barrel to check for a choke point where the barrel meets the frame, or for bad timing. You would be surprised what you will find. I have read that Ruger will no longer repair the choke, as it is so common on their firearms. I would like to be wrong about that. **— PCmacd**

"Different Firing Pin Designs: What They're Called, How They Work"

Articles like this give us who subscribe to GUN TESTS the advantage over those "You Tube educated gunsmiths." With information like this, we can walk the walk and not just talk the talk. **— WyldBill**

More tech items, please. **— McCarty**

Love these tech articles. **— 4jsgun**

I have to agree with the others commenting about this article. I love these tech articles and save all of them to a folder for future reference. Knowledge is a wonderful thing. Thanks again for a wonderfully informational article. **— jt5828**

To other GUN TESTS *Readers: "jt5828" and the others are talking about an article published in the Straight Shooter e-letter, which* GUN TESTS *staff distributes two or three times a week. We cover a lot of topics outside head-to-head evaluations because space isn't an issue in an electronic publication, and we send technical material from* American Gunsmith *magazine in Straight Shooter as well. It's free, so I encourage readers to sign up for it. We ask for your name and email, and we never sell the list or rent it. To navigate to the sign up page, enter* GUN-TESTS.COM *in your browser window. At the very top*



of the browser, click on the "Free Newsletter" tab. Then fill out the registration window. Free free free. — tw

Whither the SIG P365?

Dear Todd, I love your magazine, but I've been curious why the highly touted SIG Sauer P365 has never been evaluated by your magazine. I know early production ones had issues. SIG claims they've corrected this. The P365 I bought, which was made 9/18, has gone back to SIG. After 500 rounds, I'm still having failures to go into battery. What gives? Bad engineering? **— Steve**

Hey Steve: You're right, we've overlooked it. I'll get one in the works. And thanks for the heads-up on the battery failures. We'll be looking for that. — tw

"Bore-ing?" Not At All

Would you folks ever consider doing a comparison test on various types and brands of bore-sighting tools? I think it would interesting to see how the different types of tools — the cartridge laser types that chamber like a loaded round, the arbor laser types that slide into the muzzle end of the barrel, and the arbor optical types, along with magnetic types.

Also, how they work on different firearms: semi-auto handguns, revolvers, rifles of all types, especially battle rifles with flash hiders, shotguns, etc. By the way, great publication. GUN TESTS is one of only two gun magazines I subscribe to. The other is an NRA publication I get as a member. Please keep up the good work. **— Kevin**

Hey Kevin: Absolutely, we would test these devices. Thanks for the idea. — tw

Re "Springfield Armory's Socom 16 CQB Keeps Pace at the Range," April 2019

I have one of the Scout Squad versions with a walnut stock. To scope it, I used the factory mount with an old Redfield Wide View scope and low rings, which set the scope right down where it belongs for a comfortable head posture with a traditional stock. It is rock steady and delivers sub-MOA groups. It does use the charger guide dovetail as an anchor. The only drawback is that the scope/mount must be removed to service the receiver and chamber. One tip: Use a torque wrench and the recommended settings when remounting it. It will pretty much stay in register. Love your magazine. **— Bruce**



Re "Perfect 10s? We Test a Trio Of Big-Bore Semi-Autos," March 2019

Thanks for the review of the 10mm semi-autos. The timing could not have been better. I am a 1911 bigot, but I am now in the market for a higher-capacity 45 ACP and a 10mm semi-auto. After handling/firing them at a local dealer, my personal preference was for the Springfield Armory XDM 5.2 Competition. But further investigation of the XDM 5.25 competition models showed the lack of OEM and/or third-party custom accessories. Nothing could be worse than purchasing a firearm and finding out months or years later that a replacement barrel was not available. What I would like to see in conjunction with your current reviews is a weighted value that would reflect

the readily available accessories for the platform being evaluated, and the score adjusted accordingly. Thanks for the great magazine.

— John

Re "Which Cowboy Revolver? We Test Three 357 Magnum Guns," March 2019

Dear Todd: Thanks for your articles on sub-gauge Shockwaves and the Cowboy 357 revolvers. I have been and am interested in the 357 single-action army, but with the transfer bar. I grew up using the transfer-bar system on all my revolvers, but I didn't like the 5-shots-from-6-holes loading routine the old-style SAAs required. I know the routine, and used them, I just didn't care for the reduction in capacity. I have four of the Pietta revolvers, two of the Traditions production, which are one of the few outfits selling transfer-bar revolvers, along with the big boy Ruger. I like the smaller frame of the Traditions revolvers over the Ruger. I have to agree that the Sheriff's model isn't as accurate as the longer-barrel six shooters I have.



I have experienced extraction problems on one chamber of one revolver's cylinder. It took 250 rounds to loosen it up, and another 250 to get that one chamber to extract and eject without banging on the ejector rod. The other two problems I had, which you evidently avoided, was the initial takedown and removal of the cylinder pin and cylinder. Try as I might, the main cylinder pin is a b*tch to get out. I have had to pry or tap the pin out with a screwdriver and hammer. I then went so far as to buff the pin down, which doesn't work well with a stainless-steel pin, and then used some emery cloth on the center hole of the cylinder, and also on the sticky chamber of the other SAA. New guns just do not come apart easily. The other thing you didn't mention was the loosening of the screws on the revolvers. I have shaken loose trigger guards and grips, as well as most other screws on the guns. If you get a new Pietta revolver, stop and tighten up the screws at 100 rounds, and every 100 or so after that, or you will be calling Italy to have them send more screws.



I plan on buying a 410 Shockwave to hang on a coat hook by the back door, something the wife and kids can shoot for snakes and other varmints. I may be interested in the 20-gauge version if the 410 works out. Keep up the good work.

— Mike

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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**

Compact 1911s: Two Pretty Good 45 ACPs for the Money

The American Tactical GI 1911 and the Taylor's & Company Compact 1911 both offered a lot of shooting performance in small packages. The Taurus 1911 Officer had a sight problem that bumped it down.

There should be a saying: Once you shoot a 1911, you won't go back. That's how some of our testers feel about the 1911 platform, which in a properly executed handgun will have a nice trigger, comfortable grip angle, good sights, and plenty of power in 45 ACP. And 1911s that you might carry don't have to have a big footprint, so with that in mind, we looked at a Commander and two Officer-size 1911 pistols with a street cost of about $450. Inexpensive doesn't necessarily equate to value in a 1911, but with the two Officer models, one each from Taurus and Taylor's, and a Commander from American Tactical, Inc. (ATI), we found some value-packed compact 1911s. Not perfect by any means, but good performance for the cost. Of course there are compromises, but that is to be expected in a 1911 that costs about $450. In fact, if we could disassemble and reassemble these compact 1911s into one optimal compact 1911, we would take the trigger from the ATI, the sights from the Taylor's, and the receiver from the Taurus.

How We Tested

We ran these three compact 1911s on standard 230-grain ball rounds (FMJ) and 185- and 230-grain JHPs. Ammo ran the spectrum from inexpensive



The American Tactical GI 1911 (top) is a traditional GI-style Commander with a nice trigger, though the sights are a bit dated. The Taylor's & Company Compact 1911 (middle) has good sights and a good trigger, but we wanted some extra texture on the front grip strap. The Taurus 1911 Officer (bottom) has all the features you would expect is a compact 1911, but its point of impact was too low, we thought.

45 ACP RANGE DATA

Perfecta 230-gr. FMJ	**Taylor's & Company Compact 1911**	**Taurus 1911 Officer**	**ATI Firepower Xtreme GI 1911**
Average Velocity	721 fps	702 fps	729 fps
Muzzle Energy	266 ft.-lbs.	252 ft.-lbs.	271 ft.-lbs.
Smallest Group	0.32 in.	0.79 in.	0.40 in.
Average Group	0.56 in.	1.09 in.	0.59 in.
Winchester Train 230-gr. FMJ	**Taylor's & Company Compact 1911**	**Taurus 1911 Officer**	**ATI Firepower Xtreme GI 1911**
Average Velocity	731 fps	717 fps	774 fps
Muzzle Energy	273 ft.-lbs.	263 ft.-lbs.	306 ft.-lbs.
Smallest Group	0.82 in.	1.18 in.	0.79 in.
Average Group	1.06 in.	1.54 in.	1.20 in.
Atlanta Arms 230-gr. JHP	**Taylor's & Company Compact 1911**	**Taurus 1911 Officer**	**ATI Firepower Xtreme GI 1911**
Average Velocity	855 fps	833 fps	850 fps
Muzzle Energy	373 ft.-lbs.	354 ft.-lbs.	369 ft.-lbs.
Smallest Group	0.89 in.	0.79 in.	0.76 in.
Average Group	1.04 in.	1.09 in.	0.99 in.
HPR Ammunition 185-gr. JHP	**Taylor's & Company Compact 1911**	**Taurus 1911 Officer**	**ATI Firepower Xtreme GI 1911**
Average Velocity	918 fps	909 fps	957 fps
Muzzle Energy	346 ft.-lbs.	339 ft.-lbs.	376 ft.-lbs.
Smallest Group	0.40 in.	0.88 in.	0.72 in.
Average Group	0.59 in.	0.94 in.	1.01 in.

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

training rounds like the made-in-Italy Perfecta to expensive defensive ammo like HPR, which is made in the USA. We experienced one jam, and that was with the American Tactical in the first magazine with the HPR 185-grain JHPs. We had no failures afterward with the ATI. All the pistols ran well and met our expectations of what a compact 1911 pistol should be. At 15 yards from a rest, we were able to shoot some tight groups with all the pistols. We also fired for speed performing a Bill Drill — a full magazine fired as fast as we could into an 8-inch paper-plate target — and found the less-textured grip straps of the ATI and Taylor's slipped in the hand. Also in the combat phase, we found that all three basic 1911s had little chamfer in the magazine well, which caused a few testers to hit a speed bump when reloading. We were not as fast to reload when compared to a modern polymer-frame pistol with a built-in magwell. Plus, we found we needed to be more deliberate with single-stack magazines compared to double stack magazines. Double-stack magazine have a taper at the top of the magazine that make them easier and faster to insert into the magazine well.



Magazines from Taurus (left), Taylor's & Company (middle), and American Tactical (right) were all constructed of steel and made in Italy. They are rugged, and we preferred the two with the bumper pads for ease in reloading and disassembly.

We also carried these 1911s concealed, and as you would expect, they are heavy. What's the Clint Smith expression? "Concealed carry should be comforting, not comfortable." With a proper holster, these 1911s can provide both. Here are the details.

Taurus 1911 Officer 1-191101OFC 45 ACP, $459

This was a recent price from MidwayUSA.com. We tested the Taurus 1911 Commander in the October 2018 issue and gave it an A rating. We had high hopes for the 1911 Officer, and for the most part, the Officer delivered, but we did have issues, which we will get into. The Officer came in a hard case with foam cut outs for the pistol, magazine, and lock. It also came with a small takedown tool that we almost lost.

The Officer design has a belled barrel that mates up inside the slide. There is no barrel bushing like on GI-style 1911s and the ATI pistol. You will need some sort of tool to disassemble the Taurus and the Taylor's pistols due to this design. In our opinion, the traditional GI-style bushing set up, like on the ATI, is simpler and requires no tools to field strip.

The Officer features a matte-black finish that was executed well. The slide serrations are coarse and angled and provide a good grip. It took 20 pounds of effort to rack the slide, and that was the highest of all three guns tested. Taurus used the slab sides of the slide for plenty of marking, though they weren't too obtrusive.

TAURUS 1911 OFFICER 1-1911010FC 45 ACP, $459

GUN TESTS GRADE: B+

The 1911 Officer had all the right features, but it did not shoot to point of aim, and the only way to fix this without gunsmithing was by adding a new rear sight.



Action	Semi-auto single-action locked breech
Overall Length	7.2 in.
Overall Height	5.1 in.
Maximum Width	1.3 in.
Weight Unloaded	34.5 oz.
Weight Loaded	37.9 oz.
Barrel	3.5 in.
Capacity	6+1
Slide	Matte-black steel
Slide Retraction Effort	19.0 lbs.
Frame	Matte-black steel
Frame Front Strap Height	2.0 in.
Frame Back Strap Height	2.7 in.
Grips	Checkered polymer
Grip Thickness (max)	1.16 in.
Grip Circumference (max)	5.5 in.
Rear Sight	Steel, Novak white two dot, drift adj.
Front Sight	Steel, Novak white dot, drift adj.
Trigger Pull Weight	7.2 lbs.
Trigger Span	2.8 in.
Magazines	1; steel
Safety	Manual thumb, beavertail grip, firing pin block
Warranty	Unlimited lifetime
Telephone	(305) 624-1115
Website	TaurusUSA.com
Made In	Brazil



The Taurus used a standard GI-style magazine, and there was very little chamfer on the magazine well to aid reloading.



The three-hole trigger was bit heavy, in our opinion.

The sights are genuine Novaks, which provide a great sight picture that was easily acquired due to the design. What we found were the sights shot low at 15 yards. The elevation was off, and the only way to fix this was to aim above the point we wanted to hit. Windage was dead on. These sights should be dead on at the range tested, and we marked down the Officer half a grade due to the sights. Novak makes an adjustable rear replacement sight ($81.95; NovakSights.com) for the Officer. We're not sure why Taurus didn't go with the adjustable rear sight.

The receiver's front grip strap is finely checkered, as is the flat mainspring housing. This is a great set up, especially for a compact pistol chambered in 45 ACP. We found we could more easily hang onto the Officer compared to the Taylor's and ATI in fast shooting. The Taurus grips were checkered plastic, which we thought offered good texture without abrasion to the palm of your hand after extensive shooting. The sweeping beavertail also eliminates hammer bite. The hammer is a traditional rounded and serrated Commander-style piece, which we found easy to manipulate. The trigger is a long style compared to the short GI-style triggers. It broke at 7.2 pounds on average, and we thought that was a bit too heavy. The thumb safety was oversized and nicely serrated, so it was easy to manipulate.

Going hot at 15 yards showed our hits were about 6 inches low. Taking that into consideration, we found the Officer still had game. Our best five-shot group





Left: The belled barrel of the Taurus does not need a bushing. Note the stepped recoil guide rod. A tool fits on the rod to capture the guide spring. Right: This is the small tool that is required to disassemble the Taurus. We're not too fond of it.



Above: The Taurus grips were checkered plastic, which offered good texture without abrasion. The hammer is a traditional rounded and serrated Commander-style design.



The beavertail protects the shooter from hammer bite. The thumb safety was oversized, which made it easier to manipulate.



Right: The speed bump on the grip safety (arrow) was a nice size, and though the thumb safety was small, it was easy to flick on and off, we found.

Below: Those are genuine Novak sights on the Taurus, but the pistol shot low. The rear sight would need to be replaced.



The checkered front strap was one of the features that made the Taurus stand out as a carry gun.



TAYLOR'S & COMPANY COMPACT 1911 51469 45 ACP, $450

GUN TESTS GRADE: A-

The Compact 1911 had good sights and a good trigger. We would have liked a textured front grip strap.



Action	Semi-auto single-action locked breech
Overall Length	7.3 in.
Overall Height	5.2 in.
Maximum Width	1.3 in.
Weight Unloaded	38.9 oz.
Weight Loaded	42.8 oz.
Barrel	3.6 in.
Capacity	7+1
Slide	Parkerized steel
Slide Retraction Effort	20.0 lbs.
Frame	Parkerized steel
Frame Front Strap Height	2.0 in.
Frame Back Strap Height	2.7 in.
Grips	Checkered, double-diamond walnut
Grip Thickness (max)	1.3 in.
Grip Circumference (max)	5.5 in.
Rear Sight	Steel, white two dot, adj.
Front Sight	Steel, post
Trigger Pull Weight	6.1 lbs.
Trigger Span	2.7 in.
Magazines	1; steel
Safety	Manual thumb, beavertail grip
Warranty	Unlimited lifetime
Telephone	(305) 624-1115
Website	TaylorsFirearms.com
Made In	Philippines by Armscor



That hole in the recoil guide rod accepts the tip of a paperclip, which is required to field-strip the pistol.



The skeleton trigger had a heavy pull weight, but we mastered the trigger, according to the small size of our groups.



Slow reloads were a characteristic of these 1911s. Train with purpose when practicing reloads.

was fired with the Perfecta 230-grain FMJs and the Atlanta Arms 230-grain JHPs. Both measured 0.79 inches at the bench distance. The HPR 185-grain JHP had a best group that measured 0.88 inches.

There is a slight chamfer on the magazine well, but it took concentration to reload fast. The lack of a magazine bumper made reloading slower, too. If we were to carry this pistol concealed, we would use the stock magazine without the bumper for better concealability. Our backup magazine would have a bumper. The steel magazine was traditional GI style, meaning the magazine base plate is not removable. You need a punch to trap the spring and disassemble the magazine. Not a show stopper, but it is a minor inconvenience to those used to easily removed floorplates.

The takedown procedure with the Taurus involved a small tool. This tool is a small plastic tube with a cut along its length. This tool is snapped over the internal recoil spring guide to trap the spring. It worked well enough, but we wondered how we'd field-strip the pistol if we lost this tool.

We like Taylor's takedown method better. As we mentioned, we dropped the tool on the shop floor and had a devil of a time finding it.

Our Team Said: The Officer ran well and had all the features we expected in a compact 1911. The sight regulation was disappointing, but we compensated and found the Officer to definitely be an accurate shooter. If we owned this pistol, we'd ditch the fixed rear sight for an adjustable rear sight.



Nice sights in our opinion, and they shot to point of aim without any adjustment. There's also a good beavertail and small, but easily manipulated, thumb safety. We like these sights a lot because the rear is easily adjusted and the sight picture was large.



Above Left: The speed bump on the grip safety is not that large. We like the checkered mainspring housing, which aided our grip.

Above Right: Lack of front grip strap texture made the Taylor's Compact slip in our grip during rapid-fire testing.

Taylor's & Company Compact 1911 51469 45 ACP, $450

This was a recent price at Gunbroker.com. We found the Taylor's Compact 1911 delivered the goods, but we'd tweak it slightly. The Compact came in a hard case with one steel magazine with a bumper that allowed the magazine to be easily disassembled and allowed the magazine to be slammed home with the palm of your hand.

The Parkerized finish gives the Compact a GI look, but this is a thoroughly modern set up. The short 3.6-inch barrel is belled and mates up the slide, similar to the Taurus. The slide wore coarse angled serrations, and it took 19 pounds of effort to rack the slide. The slide was void of a lot of markings — just a simple Taylor's logo on the left side near the serrations. The sights were the best of all three pistols tested. The adjustable rear sight is dovetailed into the slide and has two white dots. The rear face of the sight was machined to reduce glare. The front ramp was plain and dovetailed into the slide.

The receiver's front grip strap does not have texture. We'd prefer to have some texture in this spot, especially on a compact 45 ACP. The flat mainspring housing was finely textured, which we thought was very functional. Grips were double-diamond-checkered walnut, which also contributed to the GI look of the Compact. The beavertail did its job; there was no hammer bite. The manual thumb safety was small but was serrated on both sides, so flipping it off or on with your thumb was easy and positive. The hammer was a modern design with plenty of serration to make manipulation sure and positive. The skeletonized trigger was long with a serrated face. It broke at a fairly clean 6.1 pounds on average. Like the Taurus, we would have liked the Taylor's trigger to be at 5 pounds.

The field-strip process with the Taylor's requires a paperclip to trap the recoil spring inside the recoil-guide rod. We have experience with this set up and find it easier to procure a paper clip if we happen to drop and lose one on the shop floor.

At the range, the Compact was easy to shoot and provided great accuracy. It also shot to point of aim. Our best 5-shot group was with inexpensive Perfecta 230-grain ball ammo at 0.32 inches. The HPR 185-grain JHP defense ammo shined with a group that measured 0.40 inches. On average all ammo shot averaged groups of about 1 inch. There were no glitches with the Taylor's. Going to fast shooting, we found the Taylor's could slip in our grip. That's what the textured grip strap would solve. Recoil was pleasant with no rasping of the palm.

As with all pistols tested, reloading was not as fast as we would have liked. The lack of a magwell costs time, and those few milliseconds it takes to insert the 1911 single stack could mean a world of difference in the wrong circumstances. Again, this problem is not a show stopper, but it is a characteristic of the design that requires more training.

Our Team Said: The Taylor's Compact is a fine-shooting pistol for the price. We liked nearly everything about it. If we were to own this pistol, we'd most like get the front strap textured or try a set of grip that incorporate texture on the front strap, such as Pachmayr Signature Grips ($28 at Brownells.com) or perhaps Crimson Trace LG-404 Lasergrips ($399; CrimsonTrace.com), which have a front activation strap that provides a more secure grip.

American Tactical Inc. Firepower Xtreme GI 1911 ATIGFX45GI 45 ACP, $398

This was a recent price at BudsGunShop.com. The ATI looks like your great-granddad's 1911 Commander, but is it most certainly not. The AT comes in a hard

case with foam and one steel magazine with a bumper.

This a Commander-size pistol, meaning it has a standard receiver size and a shorter barrel and slide. The Taurus and Taylor's Officer-size pistols have a shorter barrel/slide and a shorter receiver. This means the ATI has an 8+1 capacity, while the Taylor's and Taurus have a 7+1 and 6+1 capacity, respectively. In fact, the Taylor's and ATI magazines are manufactured by Act-Mag in Italy. Both have a removable floor plate and witness holes.

The ATI receiver has a matte-black finish that was nicely executed. The slide had fine, GI-style serrations that worked well. It only took 16 pounds of effort to manipulate the slide. The fixed rear sight was dated

AMERICAN TACTICAL FIREPOWER XTREME GI 1911 ATIGFX45GI 45 ACP, $398

GUN TESTS GRADE: A-

This a traditional GI-style Commander with a nice trigger and good sights. We could forgive the lack of front gripstrap serration because of the nice trigger pull.



Action	Semi-auto single-action locked breech
Overall Length	7.8 in.
Overall Height	5.3 in.
Maximum Width	1.2 in.
Weight Unloaded	33.5 oz.
Weight Loaded	37.8 oz.
Barrel	4.25 in.
Capacity	8+1
Slide	Matte-black steel
Slide Retraction Effort	16.0 lbs.
Frame	Matte-black steel
Frame Front Strap Height	2.5 in.
Frame Back Strap Height	3.1 in.
Grips	Checkered mahogany
Grip Thickness (max)	1.3 in.
Grip Circumference (max)	5.25 in.
Rear Sight	Steel notch, drift adj.
Front Sight	Steel post
Trigger Pull Weight	4.9 lbs.
Trigger Span	2.7 in.
Magazines	1; steel
Safety	Manual thumb, beavertail grip
Warranty	Limited 2 year
Telephone	(800) 290-0065
Website	AmericanTactical.US
Made In	Philippines, by Armscor



This was the only jam with the ATI. The failure to feed occurred with the first magazine of JHP ammo. We didn't experience any other issues.



The traditional bushing means there are no tools needed to field-strip the ATI.



The sights were dated on the ATI and were similar to GI-style sights, though the notch and the front ramp sight were wider.



The trigger broke at 4.9 pounds. It looked retro, and the magazine-release button was GI style, so it wasn't too tall.



Like the other pistols, the ATI had a minimal chamfer on the magwell, so you need to be deliberate when reloading.

and GI style, but it had a wide notch, which we liked. The rear sight is not low profile and could potentially snag on clothing, but on the other hand, you can use this rear sight to manipulate the sight with only one hand. Place it on the edge of a bench or other similar objects, and you can easily cock the piece if you only have one hand available. The front sight was a wide ramp. These sights are more modern compact GI-spec sights, and we found we were quite proficient with them even if they are stodgy.



The Taurus (left bottom) and Taylor's (top) use a belled barrel that mates up with the slide in lieu of a barrel bushing like the AT (right bottom). The Taurus and Taylor's require a tool for disassembly, the AT does not.



No texture on the front grip strap meant our hands slipped in fast shooting.



Top arrow: The ATI had a smallish thumb safety, but it worked well. Middle arrow: A modern design feature that we all expect in a defensive 1911 is the beavertail grip safety. Bottom arrow: The mainspring housing was finely serrated, which provided good texture when gripping.

The receiver lacks texture on the front grip strap, which we complained about previously on the Taylor's pistol. The flat mainspring housing is finely serrated, which we liked. Another modern update to the classic Commander design is the beavertail grip safety, which protected shooters' hands from hammer bite. The grip-safety bump was also large, so even with a sloppy grip, it could be released. The hammer style was classic rounded hammer with plenty of serrations to grip and manipulate safely. The trigger span was similar to the Taurus and Taylor's, though it looked retro GI to us. The face was curved and serrated. It broke at a wonderful 4.9 pounds, which in our opinion is a good weight for a defense pistol. Grips were checkered mahogany, which were nice and lended to the GI look. The manual thumb safety was small but serrated on the both sides so it could be confidently flicked on and off with your thumb. The magazine-release button was GI size, which is smallish and serrated. It worked positively.

At the range we started with ball ammo and then moved on to hollow points. Accuracy with the inexpensive Perfecta ammo was great. The smallest group measured 0.40 inches, and we had no issues. In the first magazine of the HPR, we experienced one failure-to-feed jam. We cleared the jam and the ATI ran without further issues. We suspected the jam was due to the ATI being a new gun and needing a break-in period. It ran strongly from there, even when we tried to limp-wrist shoot the ATI and cause a jam. With all the other ammo, our smallest groups averaged 0.8 inches. The AT is a nice shooting pistol. Moving to our fast-shooting portion of the test, we found the lack of front grip strap texture caused some slippage with our grip. The ATI also ran on an assortment of standard full-size 1911 magazines.

The Taurus and Taylor's also ran on full-size 1911 magazines, but the bottom of the magazine extended from the butt. That's a plus on the capacity side, but we found carrying the larger Commander-style pistol rather than the Officer style Taurus and Taylor's required a bit more effort.

The field-strip procedure is just like Uncle Sam wrote back in 1911. No tools required and simple.

Our Team Said: The AT is an inexpensive pistol that performed very well. For the price, we think this a good option for those seeking a classic Commander-style 1911.

Special thanks to Eastern Outfitters (EasternOutfitter.com) of Hampstead, NC, for their assistance.

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

VALUE GUIDE: 1911 PISTOL RATINGS

GUN NAME	ISSUE	GRADE	COMMENTS
Colt Gold Cup National Match O5870A1 45 ACP, $1190	May 2019	A	Our Pick. The National Match Colt is the most accurate of the five handguns tested.
Colt Series 70 01970A1CS 45 ACP, $865	May 2019	A	Best Buy. The least expensive tested, but it could be the best carry gun for the money.
Les Baer Concept VI 45 ACP, $2290	May 2019	A-	It wasn't faultless; we dinged it for a sharp edge on the safety.
Colt Bright Stainless Government O1070BSTS 45 ACP, $1549	May 2019	B-	Flawless fit, finish, and build quality. Slippery grip isn't easily addressed.
SIG Sauer Traditional Match Elite 1911T-45-TME 45 ACP, $1050	May 2019	D	If you're willing to do some light gunsmithing, move the grade up to B.
Remington 1911 R1 Enhanced TB 96339 45 ACP, $675	Feb. 2019	A	A well-outfitted gun for the money. Consider the threaded-barrel model over an R1E.
Kimber America 1911 Warrior SOC 3000253 TFS 45 ACP, $1309	Feb. 2019	B-	The Bobcut offers a crisp trigger pull and bobbed grip for better concealment.
American Tactical Imports ATIFGX45 FX1911 45 ACP, $525	Feb. 2019	F	We had ongoing function problems when the suppressor was fitted to the gun.
Metro Arms Co. MAC 1911 Bobcut M19BC45C 45 ACP, $746	Oct. 2018	A	The Bobcut offers a crisp trigger pull and bobbed grip for better concealment.
American Classic Commander ACC45C 45 ACP, $568	Oct. 2018	A-	Our only ding is the lack of a serrated front grip strap.
Taurus 1911 Commander 1-191101COM 45 ACP, $459	Oct. 2018	A-	The trigger was a bit too heavy, but the sights are good. Great fit and finish.
RIA Tactical 2011 w/TruDot Night sights 45 ACP, $590	Apr. 2017	A	Best Buy. Light rail, good barrel fitting, TruDot night sights, ambi slide-lock safety.
Springfield Armory TRP PC9108LP 45 ACP, $1347	Apr. 2017	A-	Good fit and finish. The Match Grade barrel lived up to its name. Reliability was faultless.
EAA Witness Elite 1911P Polymer 600347 45 ACP, $470	Apr. 2017	B-	Least accurate pistol off the bench. Magazine latch could cause dire consequences.
ATI Firepower Xtreme Hybrid FXH-45 45 ACP, $600	Apr. 2017	D	We could not convince the pistol to fire without a trip back to the factory.
Kimber Gold Match II 45 ACP, $1311	June 2016	A	Offered an excellent trigger action and was more accurate than the Springfield.
Springfield Armory TRP PC9108LP 45 ACP, $1347	June 2016	A	Best Buy. The Springfield offered excellent reliability and good accuracy.

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

VALUE GUIDE: 1911 PISTOL RATINGS

GUN NAME	ISSUE	GRADE	COMMENTS
Colt Rail Gun 01070RG 45 ACP, $1199	Apr. 2016	A	An all-stainless 1911 with Novak sights, ambi safety, and a rail. Excellent.
Springfield Armory TRP PC9108LP 45 ACP, $1347	Apr. 2016	A	Our Pick. This is a first-class 1911. Excellent reliability, accuracy, and night sights.
Springfield Loaded PX9109LP 45 ACP, $790	Apr. 2016	B	Best Buy. A good choice for home defense, carry, IDPA, and as an all-round handgun.
Colt Combat Elite 08011XSE 45 ACP, $1015	Apr. 2016	B	We rated it down based on the lack of an ambidextrous safety.
Colt's Mfg. Co Series 70 O1970A1CS 45 ACP, $953	Aug. 2015	A	Excellent trigger action, good accuracy, relatively light weight for a steel-frame 1911.
Colt's Mfg. Co 1991A1 No. O1991 45 ACP, $745	Aug. 2015	B+	Accurate and reliable. Some of the 1991A1 pistols have a nicer trigger than ours.
Colt's Mfg. Co. Gold Cup Trophy O5070X 45 ACP, $1249	July 2015	A-	Excellent trigger action, good accuracy, and sights that offer good adjustment.
Metro Arms Co. Bullseye M19BE45C 45 ACP, $1294	July 2015	B	Ramped barrel, ambi safety, good sights, and one of the best factory triggers.
S&W 1911 E-Series SW1911TA 108409 45 ACP, $1399	May 2015	A	The SW1911TA was Our Pick over the very good SIG TACOPS.
SIG Sauer 1911 TACOPS 1911R-45TACOPS 45 ACP, $1213	May 2015	A	Accuracy and handling cannot be faulted. Reliable, accurate enough for any task.
Ruger SR1911 CMD-A Model 6711 45 ACP, $899	May 2015	A	Good looks, decent accuracy, a good trigger, and nothing that doesn't belong.
Colt Mfg. Co. Commander XSE O4012XSE 45 ACP, $940	April 2015	A	Consistently the more accurate handgun. Ambi safety, forward serrations, frame cut.
Remington R1 Commander 96336 45 ACP, $573	April 2015	B	This is a traditional 1911 Commander with no extraneous features.
Shooters Arms Mf'g Commodore CIA HG1009-N 45 ACP, $429	Nov. 2014	D	Not reliable with hollowpoints and showed annoying quirks with the original slide lock.
Kimber Tactical Pro II 45 ACP, $1317	Oct. 2014	A	Kimber's quality control and attention to detail really shine in this pistol.
SIG Sauer Carry Scorpion 45 ACP, $1213	Oct. 2014	B+	Quite accurate. Cerakote coating, frame rail, and G10 scaled grips were good features.
Ithaca Gun Co. M1911-N #1911-C45G10 45 ACP, $1799	Aug. 2014	A	Excellent fit and finish, flawless operation. Holds its own against similarly priced 45s.

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

6.5mm Bolt-Action Rifles: Savage and Mauser Compete

Which is better, the 6.5 Creedmoor or the 6.5 PRC? We test the Savage Axis, Savage 110 Apex Storm, and Mauser's M18 head to head at the range to find out. Also, how does the 'Swede' stack up?

Recently, at one of his favorite shops, a GUN TESTS rater saw that one of his friends, a 70-year-old shooter still going strong, was looking for a "long-range" rifle. Long-range rifle shooting seems to be quite popular. We don't necessarily mean Camp Perry–type shooting, but ordinary shooters wishing to fire their rifles at distant targets and hit the target more often than not. With a wide range of 6.5 Creedmoor ammunition and the introduction of nine new rifles from a single maker in this caliber, we feel that the 6.5 Creedmoor is likely to remain popular for many years. The cartridge is touted as highly accurate, with low recoil, and enough velocity to consistently kill deer-sized game cleanly with a well-placed shot. The 6.5 Creedmoor also offers long-range efficiency with less component expense for handloads, not to mention lower recoil than the 308 Winchester or 7mm Remington Magnum.

Because of the friend's interest, we elected to test two new rifles in 6.5 Creedmoor and a third in another midrange offering, the 6.5 Precision Rifle Cartridge, introduced by Hornady. The two "Creeds" were both Savages. The first was the Axis II XP Stainless Bolt-Action Rifle with Scope 57289 in 6.5 Creedmoor. The Savage Axis II is the newest development of the Savage Axis line, a package gun. Package guns are simply affordable rifles supplied with scope rings and bases and a rifle scope. The buyer saves considerable amounts of money by purchasing the package versus purchasing each component separately. The rifle will have been mechanically bore-sighted by the manufacturer. In general, these rifles offer good value and save both time and money compared to obtaining and putting together your own package.

The second was a Savage 110 Apex Storm XP 57344 in 6.5 Creedmoor, substantially more expensive than the Axis. The Savage 110 differs considerably from the Savage Axis rifle. The receiver of the Axis is closed and easier to machine, while the Savage 110 is more traditional. A locking lug in the stock attaches to the Axis receiver, while the Savage 110 locking lug is sandwiched between the barrel and the action. The 110 action has more leverage and primary extraction seems better, although the



Shooting the 6.5 Creedmoor, the 22-inch Savage Axis was practically as powerful as the 24-inch-barrel Savage Apex.



In this test, the Mauser M18 chambered in 6.5 PRC was the most accurate and the most powerful rifle, as measured by muzzle energy.



Also chambered in 6.5 Creedmoor, the Savage Apex shot near a minute of angle and cost less than the Mauser.

practical difference may be difficult to prove.

Though the 6.5 Creedmoor is increasingly popular, the 6.5 PRC may become a viable cartridge for many users. The 6.5 PRC seems unlikely to be chambered in anything but bolt-action rifles, and we felt this a good opportunity to test a rifle we have not yet put through the grueling GUN TESTS procedure, the Mauser M18. This rifle came chambered in 6.5 PRC, allowing us to gauge the difference in accuracy, power, and recoil between this cartridge and the 6.5 Creedmoor. The rifle was fired with the Hornady 6.5 PRC Match load, one of only two available, both manufactured by Hornady. Each box of 20 6.5 PRC rounds cost $31 from SportmansWarehouse.com.

There are also those who flatly state the 6.5 Creedmoor will do nothing the ancient 6.5x55mm round will not do, so we added a rifle chambered in the latter cartridge to give us some historical perspective. There are a few current rifles chambered for this cartridge, but we found an original Mauser rifle, manufactured in 1895, chambered for the 6.5x55mm Swedish, also known as the 6.5x55mm Swedish Mauser, and sometimes called the 6.5x55mm Mauser. The round first appeared in 1891, according to *Cartridges of The World's 16th Edition.* We are not collectors per se, but we like testing viable hunting rifles to see if the new stuff gives any better performance than the oldies. A collector may turn up his nose at the humble sporterized Mauser, but we found it to be a great light rifle for woods hunting.

How We Tested

All four rifles were fired from a solid brenchrest position, putting three-shot groups on targets at 100 yards with each load. We all fired each rifle in offhand fire at 50 yards, firing 20 rounds from each rifle, as a test of offhand handling and snap shots. We used three types of ammunition in the 6.5 Creedmoor rifles. These included the Black Hills Gold 147-grain ELD, Federal 140-grain Non Typical soft points, and Hornady's 143-grain ELDs. During the initial firing of the Creedmoors, we began with the Federal 140-grain load. Our sole 6.5 PRC round was the Hornady Match 143-grain ELD-X. There is also a 147-grain load. We used two loads in testing the 6.5x55mm Mauser, a Fiocchi 140-grain SST and the Hornady Superformance 140-grain SST.

If you match the game to the cartridge and remember that the primary component of taking game is shot placement, the 6.5 Creedmoor will serve well. The cartridge has been used in long-range competition for over a decade. The raters enjoyed firing the 6.5 Creedmoor and found it both pleasant and accurate. The cartridge features a flat trajectory. The rifles tested may not take full advantage of this gem of a cartridge at long range, but up to at least 300 yards, they are minute-of-deer accurate. The trajectory is equal to that of a number of cartridges that kick much harder. As for velocity, the 6.5 Creedmoor has plenty, from 2700 to 2900 fps with standard loads. The lowest velocity recorded was 2650 fps with the 143-grain bullet. We should note that the PR guys have been working overtime to promote the cartridge. The fact is, much of what they are saying is true, and while there are other calibers that will do the same job and perhaps a few that are even better, modern rifles and loads make the case for the 6.5 Creedmoor as everyone's midrange cartridge.



We shot the sporterized Swedish Mauser, top, thoroughly, and it clearly is the least powerful and the least accurate rifle, especially compared to the Mauser M18, the most powerful and the most accurate, bottom. But each has its place. Even though it was more than 100 years old, the 6.5x55mm was a fun gun to fire with low recoil. The Swede is a nicely made rifle with a certain amount of eye appeal. The controlled-feed action is reliable and durable. Although the stock has seen some wear, it remains useful. The iron sights were well designed and accurate. An internal magazine will never be lost. If we had an optic on this 6.5x55mm rifle, we're not so sure we'd trade it for a 6.5 Creedmoor, and we're certain we wouldn't trade it for the M18 in 6.5 PRC until the round establishes a firmer foothold in the market.

But there are many loyal fans of the 6.5x55mm Swede, a 6.5mm cartridge that is respected for both accuracy and killing power. The 6.5x55mm was designed to produce a disabling wound at long range. It offered full penetration and light recoil and became a popular game cartridge. The best explanation of the difference between the two — the Creedmoor and the Swede — is that the 6.5x55mm is a low-pressure cartridge for long-action rifles, while the 6.5 Creedmoor is a high-pressure cartridge for short-action rifles. We realize users of the Ruger 77 in 6.5x55 may load it to higher pressures, but our assessment is valid based on military Mauser rifles, which considerably outnumber commercial rifles. One of our raters likened the argument to a comparison between the 30-06 Springfield and the 308 Winchester. You may burn more powder for more velocity in the long action, but what is the real gain?

While the 6.5 Creedmoor is similar in performance to some older cartridges, the older rounds may have short necks or other drawbacks. The 6.5 Creedmoor uses modern rifling twist and powder development to make for good performance. The 6.5 PRC is an

6.5 CREEDMOOR RANGE DATA

Black Hills Gold 147-grain ELD	Savage Axis II XP	Savage 110 Storm
Average Velocity	2650 fps	2679 fps
Muzzle Energy	2291 ft.-lbs.	2342 ft.-lbs.
Small Group	2.0 in.	0.9 in.
Average Group	2.3 in.	1.2 in.
Federal Non Typical 140-grain 65CDT140 Soft Point	**Savage Axis II XP**	**Savage 110 Storm**
Average Velocity	2702 fps	2733 fps
Muzzle Energy	2269 ft.-lbs.	2321 ft.-lbs.
Small Group	1.8 in.	1.0 in.
Average Group	2.3 in.	1.5 in.
Hornady ELD 143-grain 81499	**Savage Axis II XP**	**Savage 110 Storm**
Average Velocity	2690 fps	2740 fps
Muzzle Energy	2297 ft.-lbs.	2383 ft.-lbs.
Small Group	2.0 in.	1.1 in.
Average Group	2.4 in.	1.6 in.

For accuracy, we fired three-shot groups from a benchrest firing position at a distance of 100 yards. We recorded velocities with an RCBS Ammomaster Chronograph. Ammo sources — 6.5 Creedmoor: Black Hills Gold ELD-M 147-grain pointed polymer at TargetSportsUSA.com $41/20 at; Federal Non Typical 140-grain soft point; $21/20 at MidwayUSA.com; Hornady ELD-X 143-grain pointed polymer tip 81499, $28/20 VenturaMunitions.com. 6.5x55mm Swedish: Fiocchi 140-grain SST, $21/20, VenturaMunitions.com. Hornady Superformance SST 140-grain SST 85507, $37/20 at MidwayUSA.com. 6.5 PRC: Hornady ELD-X 143-grain 81621, $32/20 at Sportsmans OutdoorSuperstore.com.

6.5X55MM SWEDISH RANGE DATA

Fiocchi Extreme 140-grain SST Polymer Tip	Mauser Sporterized
Average Velocity	2423 fps
Muzzle Energy	1824 ft.-lbs.
Small Group	3.5 in.
Average Group	4.5 in.
Hornady Superformance 140-grain SST Polymer Tip 85507	**Mauser Sporterized**
Average Velocity	2590 fps
Muzzle Energy	2085 ft.-lbs.
Small Group	3.0 in.
Average Group	4.0 in.

6.5 PRC RANGE DATA

Hornady Match 143-grain ELD-X 81621	Mauser M18
Average Velocity	2960 fps
Muzzle Energy	2782 ft.-lbs.
Small Group	0.6 in.
Average Group	0.8 in.

improvement over older cartridges — and the 6.5 Creedmoor. The 6.5 PRC bests the 6.5 Creedmoor by perhaps 250 fps in velocity. On our chronograph, the 143-grain 6.5 PRC loads in the M18 ran 2960 fps compared to 2690 fps and 2740 fps in the two Savages, or 270 fps and 220 fps, respectively, or about 250 fps.

When a cartridge is introduced, we want to know the "why" of its development and what it is good for. We think relatively few shooters will be able to utilize the advantages of the 6.5 PRC. It is powerful, but the 6.5 Creedmoor is powerful enough for most North American game and offers modest recoil for match shooters and youths in the hunting field. There is an advantage with the 6.5 PRC over the other 6.5s at 400 yards, if this matters. The 6.5 Creedmoor, we believe, with the balance and accuracy demonstrated,



Left to right are the 6.5 Creedmoor, 6.5x55mm Swedish, and 6.5 PRC cartridges. Each was mild mannered, but in these rifles, the 6.5 PRC was a runaway accuracy and power winner. The downside to the 6.5 PRC for us is the decided lack of ammunition choices. The Mauser rifle shot great, but we're concerned about recommending it to readers.

is the better ballistic choice for most hunters. But in these rifles, which round would shine brightest?

Custom Mauser 6.5x55mm Swedish, $255

We don't grade this rifle here, but we think it's useful to cover it as a reference for the other bolt actions.

This rifle is a rare find. While many ex-military rifles were cut up and sporterized during the past hundred years, in many cases not only the rifles' collector value, but also their shooting value, was ruined. Bedding and rigidity were destroyed, and the resulting rifles were inaccurate, although they accounted for many deer at short range. On the other end of the spectrum, military-style rifles were sometimes expertly modified into truly useful hunting rifles. This rifle is one of those.

It features a nicely turned out stock with a true cheek rest and a semi-Schnabel forend. Perhaps it was a big-name maker of the day that supplied this stock, but we do not know for certain, as there were no maker marks. While it has the look of a Fajen, they were widely copied.

The rifle was manufactured in 1895. While not as strong as the later Mauser 98, this Mauser 95 was plenty strong for the 6.5x55mm cartridge. The action is smooth and movement with the controlled-feed action excellent. The straight rifle bolt has been turned down, once a common operation. It is easier to use well than it seems it would be, comparable to factory bolt handles. The Swede was the fastest and smoothest rifle in off hand fire during extraction, but the cock on closing action slowed us somewhat. In the end, the Savage Axis and Savage 110 were not as fast to operate, although it was close. The Mauser M18 was much slower.

The Swede's barrel has been shortened to 18.5 inches, or perhaps this was an original carbine? A set of American-style sights has replaced the original military sights. These sights proved properly regulated for 50 yards. However, we had to learn to line up the front post in the rear notch and disregard the long walls of the rear sight, otherwise we fired high.

This ancient Mauser chambered in 6.5x55mm, which we bought for $255, is a neat, light and handy rifle. While outclassed by the modern rifles and calibers, the 6.5x55mm rifle is a good choice for woods game and recreational shooting. Recoil is light and the rifle is reliable.



Firing 20 rounds off hand was smooth going. Once we acclimated to the rifle's cock-on-closing bolt, we found the rifle to be fast in action, delivering its shots in the center of the 50-yard target with open sights. Fired off a bench rest at 100 yards, the fixed sights did not live up to the rifle's legendary prowess, but the results were not terrible. Taking time to aim carefully and using shooting glasses, not to mention a solid rest, we were able to produce credible groups. The Hornady loading put three bullets into 3.0 inches for the best effort, with most groups around 4.0 inches.

As for ballistic performance, the shortest rifle barrel tested did not give a competitive performance in relation to the 6.5 Creedmoor. Recoil, however, was the lightest of the test.

Our Team Said: The 6.5x55mm is an accurate, friendly, and light-kicking cartridge. While a neat rifle in most ways, this rifle isn't competitive with the modern scoped rifles. It would be viable for thin-skinned game out to 100 yards for those with good-enough eyesight to use the iron sights. This rifle would also be an excellent youth rifle, we feel.

Savage Axis II XP Stainless Bolt-Action Rifle with Scope 57289 6.5 Creedmoor, $400

This was a recent retail price at BudsGunShop.com without shipping and FFL transaction fees. While many use these budget guns as their main hunting rifles, other shooters keep these as backup rifles to more expensive or highly developed hunting rifles. This rifle and the Savage 110 were included as examples of package guns to gauge their performance in the new 6.5 Creedmoor caliber. We suspected that the gilt-edged accuracy found in more expensive rifles in which the 6.5 Creedmoor built its reputation might not exist in the package guns, but just the same, we expected relatively good performance compared to a 308 Winchester Axis rifle.

The rifle arrived in a cardboard box with a gun lock and the bolt and magazine packed separately. After assembling the rifle, we found a modern bolt action with interesting features. The stock is considerably changed from the bland-by-comparison Axis I. The forend features long longitudinal grooves that offer a good gripping surface. The rear of the stock is stylishly designed and incorporates a thick rubber recoil pad. The grip section is nicely pebbled with a well-defined stop at the butt cap to stabilize the firing hand. The rifle features a tang-mounted safety that is pressed forward to move to the Fire position. The stock wrist is a bit thin but useful for most hand sizes. The bolt is smooth in operation, and the uplift isnt difficult. The magazine is easily removed for loading. Loading and inserting a magazine is easier for most of us than reaching over a scope to load an internal magazine. The stainless-steel receiver, bolt, and barrel are nicely finished with no discernible flaws.

The supplied scope is a Weaver 3-9x40mm. The 3-9x40mm scope is the most common package-gun

scope, and the most common in use on economy hunting rifles. This scope features a magnification ring that isn't difficult to adjust but which maintains its setting. The elevation and windage turrets are easily adjusted. The rifle is factory boresighted. We did not test these rifles as target guns but rather as hunting rifles, which means we were looking for a balance of weight, accuracy, and handling. Oddly, the four-round magazine, the same used in the Savage 110, would only accept three cartridges when first loaded. That is what we use for accuracy testing, but we wished to load five rounds, or 4+1, for the 20-round offhand firing segment. After three loads, it began holding four rounds. Odd, but not a deal-killer.

Happily, the bore-sighted rifle was perfectly sighted in for this load. The first three shots fired

SAVAGE AXIS II XP RIFLE WITH SCOPE 57289 6.5 CREEDMOOR, $400

GUN TESTS GRADE: B+

The Savage is an excellent buy, a credible and accurate rifle for hunting. While it isn't as accurate as the other two scoped rifles, it is accurate enough for hunting to 200 yards or more. The stock treatment is superior, we felt, to the more expensive Mauser. We like the rifle's handling and find it to be a credible choice. We would save a few more weeks to buy the Apex.



Action Type	Bolt, push feed, 2 lugs, 90-degree lift
Overall Length	43.9 in.
Height	4.5 in.
Height as tested	6.9 in.
Weight (unloaded)	7.5 lbs.
Weight as tested loaded	7.7 lbs.
Barrel Length	22.0 in.
Barrel Finish	Stainless Steel
Stock	Synthetic
Stock Buttpad	Rubber
Stock Length of Pull	13.2 in.
Stock Sling attachments	2
Trigger Pull Weight	3 lbs., adj.
Trigger Style	Single stage
Trigger Guard Material	Synthetic
Safety	Two position
Magazine	4-round detachable, steel
Magazine Release	Ambidextrous, front of magazine
Bolt Release	Receiver latch
Sights	Weaver 3-9x40
Warranty	1 year
Telephone	(800) 370-0708
Website	SavageArms.com
Made In	U.S.A.



Subtle differences in optics and stock configuration make the Savage Apex Storm, bottom, an upgrade from the Savage Axis, top.



After a good work out, we found the Savage Axis rifle to be a capable and useful rifle well worth its modest price. The Axis is proven in long use and comes across well in 6.5 Creedmoor.

landed exactly where the crosshairs were put. The rifle exhibited a good standard of accuracy for an affordable package gun, producing 2-inch groups on demand with the Black Hills load, slightly shading the others with a 1.5-inch 100-yard group. The 147-grain load struck 3 inches above the 140-grain loads at 100 yards.

Our Team Said: We like the Savage Axis II. It is a friendly rifle with no obvious faults. The action wasn't as smooth as the other rifles, but it is useful. Feeding is flawless. The trigger is easily adjusted and offers a crisp break. The tang-mounted safety is positive in operation. This isn't the rifle to deliver a 0.75-inch group at 100 yards, but it is clearly accurate enough for hunting medium game to at least 200 yards. The 6.5 Creedmoor isn't a hard kicker but this rifle kicks more than the Savage 110, a slightly heavier rifle. For the money, this is a good choice.



We found the two-position safety positive in operation, but we prefer the three-position Savage 110 safety.



The Axis magazine is the same as that used in the Savage Apex Storm rifle.



The supplied scope is a Weaver 3-9x40mm, a common package-gun power. This scope features a magnification ring that is easy to adjust and which maintains its setting. The elevation and windage turrets are easily adjusted. The rifle comes from the factory boresighted, which is a nice convenience.



The stock is considerably changed from the Axis I series rifles. The forend features long grooves that offer a good gripping surface. The stainless steel has no discernible flaws.

Savage 110 Apex Storm XP 57344 6.5 Creedmoor, $605

This was a recent price at BudsGunShop.com. The rifle weighs 0.6 ounces more than the Axis, which isn't much and stock design probably accounts for the difference in recoil more so than the added weight. Recoil was lighter, however, with this rifle. Length of pull may be adjusted by a stock insert on the buttpad. We really like the three-position safety. While it is tang mounted like the Axis, the Axis safety does not lock the bolt when on safe. The Savage 110 does lock the bolt. The middle position locks the trigger but not the bolt and the final position is fire. The Savage 110 features a Vortex Crossfire II scope, a step up from the Axis rifle's Weaver scope. The hash marks on the Vortex reticle are appreciated for easier holdover. The scope features quarter-MOA adjustment. This rifle was not perfectly sighted in out of the box, but it was quite close, only 2 inches low and an inch to the right in the initial range session with Federal ammunition. The rifle proved accurate enough for hunting well past 200 yards. The smallest group was an exceptional 0.85-inch cluster; the average was 1.2 inches with most loads. The Apex Storm features a 24-inch barrel in contrast to the Axis rifle's 22-inch tube. Velocity gain was only modest. The 6.5 Creedmoor, it seems, is an efficient cartridge in shorter-barrel firearms, too.

Fired off hand, the rifle felt well balanced and came to the shoulder quickly. Compared to the Savage Axis, the 110 rifle was smoother in operation and seemed more positive in feeding. There were no failures to feed, chamber, fire, or eject of any type.

Our Team Said: We found the Axis handled well, but we like the Savage 110 Storm and rate it a better handling rifle, due mainly to the thicker wrist in the stock. After firing both Savage rifles, we think the Savage 110 Storm is worth the extra money. The Black Hills Gold got within 0.4 inches of the Mauser M18's average group size, and after firing the Mauser rifle and coming back to the Savage, then back to the Mauser to confirm, we like the Savage rifle better, despite its lesser accuracy. The 6.5 Creedmoor is well balanced, accurate, light recoiling, and will prove to be economical with handloads. Factory ammunition is affordable, with a bit of research.

Mauser M18 M18065P 6.5 Precision Rifle Cartridge (PRC), $628

This was a recent price as ImpactGuns.com. We paired the rifle with a Minox ZL3 4-12x40 scope,

SAVAGE 110 APEX STORM XP 57344 6.5 CREEDMOOR, $605

GUN TESTS GRADE: A- (BEST BUY)

The Savage Axis proved accurate, reliable, and fast handling. We like the three-position safety and adjustable length of pull. The Vortex scope is a credible optic.



Action	Bolt, push feed, 2 lugs, 90-degree lift; matte-stainless steel
Overall Length	41 to 44.5 in.
Height (unscoped)	4.5 in.
Height (scoped)	7.0 in.
Weight (unloaded)	7.5 lbs.
Weight (loaded)	7.66 lbs.
Barrel	24 in. long; 1:8 twist
Barrel	Matte-finish stainless steel
Stock	Black synthetic sporter, aluminum bedding
Stock Buttpad	Rubber
Stock Length of Pull	12.75 to 13.75
Stock Sling attachments	2
Trigger Pull Weight	3 lbs., adj. AccuTrigger
Trigger Style	Single Stage
Trigger Guard Material	Synthetic
Safety	Three position, tang mounted
Magazine	4-round detachable, steel
Magazine Release	Ambidextrous in front of magazine
Bolt Release	Receiver latch
Sights	Vortex Crossfire 3-9x40; EGW 0 MOA rail
Warranty	1 year
Telephone	(800) 370-0708
Website	SavageArms.com
Made In	U.S.A.



The Savage Apex Storm proved accurate and well mannered when firing off the bench rest.



The ribbed stock treatment provided a non-slip gripping surface.



These buttplate inserts are used to customize the length of pull. The other rifles didn't have this interesting and helpful feature.



The Vortex scope provided good results. With the Black Hills Gold ammunition, the 110 Apex shot within 0.4 inch of the more costly Mauser M18. Other loads might bring groups down further.



The Savage 110 Apex is a formidable rifle in every regard. Bolt throw was 90 degrees with the Savage 110.



A detachable steel magazine is reliable. We experienced no failures to feed, chamber, fire, or eject the thick-body 6.5 Creedmoor rounds.



The grip treatment of the Savage rifle was well done. This was better texturing than on the Mauser M18, in our view.



Initial range work confirmed the rifle's bore-sight zero. Sight-in went fast afterward.

$240 at OpticsPlanet.com, making the total package $868. The Mauser M18 is the newest rifle tested, introduced at the 2018 SHOT show and chambered in 6.5 PRC in 2019. This is the most expensive rifle-and-scope combination tested by several hundred dollars. Looked at another way, you could purchase both Savage rifles for just over $100 extra.

Mauser calls this the People's Rifle. The rifle is fairly inexpensive due to the use of modern manufacturing operations, turned on a lathe rather than milled, according to Mauser. The action is relatively short, with a 60-degree lift and three integral locking lugs. The bedding and tang screws are tightly fixed into the receiver, making for a rigid action. Countersunk nuts holds these bolts. We like the three-position safety. It is mounted on the right side of the receiver, unlike the Savage, which uses a tang-mounted safety. The rear positions are Safe and bolt locked and Safe and bolt unlocked. The third position is Fire. We like the system used in the Savage 110 better. The Mauser safety is positive in operation, but it is not as handy as the Savage tang-mounted safety, in our opinion. As on the Savage 110, we like being able to load the rifle with the safety engaged, which is also possible with the Axis, but with the Savage 110 and Mauser 18 rifles, you also have the option of locking the bolt. The bolt had a kind of swooshing sound when worked during dry fire. All the raters noticed the sound, yet the safety was silent in operation. You will not spook a deer when operating any of the safeties tested.

The stock is a nicely molded unit that felt good in the hand and offered good balance. While pebbling is slight, the stock always felt secure due to the design. The stock features a compartment in the rear that is accessed by pressing in tabs on the buttplate. We were neutral on this feature and see little real value.

Since the Minox optic is offered under the Mauser/SIG Sauer umbrella, we felt it was a good match for the Mauser rifle. The optics are clear, and while this isn't an expensive scope, it offers a good sight picture. Adjusting the scope's zero was easy enough. We especially like the power-adjustment knob's operation and the ability to firmly control the power adjustment ring. We liked the higher range of 4-12 power better than the 3-9 power scopes of the other two scope-mounted rifles. However, there is probably no need for extra power in most cases. We preferred the Minox slightly over the Vortex scope mounted on the Savage 110 Storm and more strongly over the Weaver scope mounted on the Savage Axis rifle. The Minox plex rifle scope averaged about $80 more than the Vortex scope, so you pay for the extra magnification. The Vortex is perfectly acceptable in an economy rifle.

The Mauser's trigger action was excellent straight out of the box. Trigger compression was 2.3 pounds on the Lyman Electronic trigger gauge. There was no creep or backlash. When firing the first few cartridges, we encountered an odd difficulty. Attempting to

MAUSER M18 M18065P 6.5 PRECISION RIFLE CARTRIDGE (PRC), $628

GUN TESTS GRADE: A-

The Mauser is accurate and reliable. The action is smooth enough, but no smoother than the Savage Axis. The rifle is very accurate, but expensive compared to the others.



Action Type	Bolt, push feed, three locking lugs, 60-degree lift
Overall Length	43.5 in.
Barrel Length	24.0 in.
Height	5.75 in.
Weight (unscoped, empty)	7.0 lbs.
Weight (scoped, empty)	8.0 lbs.
Weight (scoped, loaded)	8.26 lbs.
Capacity	5+1
Action	Black plasma-nitrided steel
Barrel	Black plasma-nitrided steel
Stock	Black polymer, inlays, rubber buttpad
Stock Length of Pull	13.75 in.
Stock Sling Attachments	2
Trigger Pull Weight	2.2 lbs., adj.
Trigger Style	Single Stage
Safety	Three position
Magazine	4-round detachable, polymer
Magazine Release	Ambidextrous, front of magazine
Bolt Release	Receiver latch
Sights	None
Warranty	10 year
Telephone	(210) 377-2527
Website	Mauser.com
Made In	Germany

The Mauser rifle isn't slippery in the hand, but it also doesn't feature much in the way of stock texture.





Above: The Mauser M18 features a three-lug bolt with a 60-degree throw. Pretty smooth.



Fired from the bench, the Mauser displayed excellent accuracy. There's not a lot of ammo selections, however.



The Mauser M18's three-position safety works fine, with two Safe positions to the rear and the Fire position (red dot) far forward.



The M18's four-round magazine is easy to handle and positive in operation.



The Mauser's trigger action was excellent straight out of the box. Trigger compression was an excellent 2.2 pounds.



A compartment in the butt stock of the Mauser M18 may be used for a cleaning kit.



We felt the Minox 4-12x40mm 1-inch-diameter scope was the best of the three rifle scopes tested, but it was also the most expensive. The reticle was uncluttered, but had enough holdover lines to be useful.

chamber the Hornady 6.5 PRC cartridge proved impossible. The cartridge chambered to an extent, but the bolt would not turn down. We felt that this was linked to the dual ejectors in the bolt face. Spring pressure is strong. The bolt was retracted and the chambered cartridge shaken out of the chamber. The next cartridge was similarly tight, but the bolt was closed with some effort and fired normally. The bolt throw on ejection was not difficult. The next round was difficult to chamber, but by the fifth cartridge the rifle was operating normally. The bolt was tight, but presented no problem in operation after the break-in period. However, the bolt worked best when worked briskly rather than slowly.

The Mauser proved very accurate. Firing for accuracy at 100 yards, the rifle placed three bullets into 0.6-, 0.8-, and 0.75-inch groups, easily besting the other rifles. While the 6.5 Precision Rifle Cartridge offers a solid 250 fps more velocity than the 6.5 Creedmoor, we did not feel that recoil was noticeably greater. The Mauser rifle's overwhelming strong point is accuracy.

After firing the rifle from the bench, we fired four magazines, 20 rounds, off hand. The rifle isn't as fast in handling as the Savage rifles, nor the Swede, but it did not present a great difficulty. In the end, we felt that the Mauser is a good rifle, one that demonstrates excellent accuracy, and which features one of the finest out-of-the-box rifle triggers we have ever tested. But it isn't the best choice for most riflemen, we believe. The 6.5 PRC cartridge's accuracy has been ably demonstrated in the Mauser rifle and its power as well. With the right load and bullet, this cartridge has an edge over the 6.5 Creedmoor. A shooter with this rifle and the 6.5 PRC will be able to add considerable range compared to the Savage rifles.

But that's not the end of the story.

At Gun Tests, we look at every practical consideration. When we ordered the Mauser M18, it arrived promptly. Ammunition was another matter. The primary rater lives in a county with more than a half million people. Within 20 miles of his home are several gun shops and pawn shops that stock ammunition. He estimated that there were more than 100 boxes of 6.5 Creedmoor on the shelves of the shops he frequents, but not a single round of 6.5 PRC in the county. Neither did any of the distributors these shops use have a box in stock in February 2019.

Our Team Said: The Mauser M18 was clearly the class of the field. A sub-minute-of-angle rifle with a sub-2.5-pound trigger out of the box is hard to argue with. We could ding it for the stiff bolt, which worked itself out, and we prefer the safety location of the Savage. But, really, this is a Grade A rifle based strictly on performance. Time will tell if the 6.5 PRC sticks as well as the 6.5 Creedmoor. Also, this rifle, as a package, was much more costly than the others.

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

VALUE GUIDE: BOLT-ACTION RIFLES (MULTIPLE CHAMBERINGS)

GUN NAME	ISSUE	GRADE	COMMENTS
Ruger 77/44 Model 7401 44 Remington Magnum, $754	May 2019	A-	The 77/44 offers accuracy and power in a lightweight rifle. We disliked the magazine.
Howa M1500 HS Precision HHS63701 7mm Rem. Mag., $1119	Jan. 2019	A	We like the HS Precision stock, the large bolt handle, and smooth action.
Savage Arms 110 Storm 14361 7mm Remington Magnum, $849	Jan. 2019	A	Best Buy. The AccuStock with AccuFit and AccuTrigger make this rifle easy to shoot well.
Mossberg Patriot 27894 7mm Remington Magnum, $542	Jan. 2019	A-	Offers low cost with a traditional look. Not as accurate as the Howa or Savage.
Ruger American Rifle Standard 6903 308 Winchester, $382	Dec. 2018	A	Light enough, accurate enough, and inexpensive enough for us to want to keep it.
Savage Axis II XP 57095 308 Winchester, $411	Dec. 2018	A-	Best Buy. It works well, is accurate enough for hunting, and it is affordable.
Savage Model 12FV 18393 308 Winchester, $420	Dec. 2018	A-	Most accurate rifle tested. Modest recoil. The rifle never failed to impress us.
Mossberg Trophy Hunter 308 Winchester, $240	Dec. 2018	C	Overall, the rifle was worth the modest price, but there are better choices.
Steyr SSG 08 6001138 300 Win. Magnum, $3353	Sept. 2018	A	Our Pick. A precision instrument with features that make it easy to shoot.
Savage 110 BA Stealth 22639 300 Win. Magnum, $1122	Sept. 2018	A	Best Buy. Does not have all the bells and whistles, but it is a rifle worth having.
Barrett MRAD 14361 300 Win. Magnum, $6000	Sept. 2018	A	Versatile and accurate. Has the ability to swap calibers. The design is simple, robust.
Uintah Precision UPR-10 Bolt AR-10 Upper 6.5 CM, $1295	June 2018	B+	Capable of very good accuracy, this was a dream upper in need of a little refinement.
Ruger American Rifle Ranch 06968 300 Blackout, $420	May 2018	A-	Shot well both suppressed and unsuppressed. Short length would make it handy.
Remington Model 700 SPS-T 84205 300 Blackout, $680	May 2018	A-	Shot well in 300 BLK supersonic and subsonic.
Savage Arms 10PT-SR 22356 308 Winchester, $550	May 2018	B+	Good build. It did shoot sub-MOA with one round. We loved the handle and AccuTrigger.
CZ-USA CZ 527 Youth Carbine 03050 7.62x39mm, $650	March 2018	A-, B+	Grade A- for adults; Grade B+ for youths. We would trust it to work for a lifetime.
Browning A-Bolt Micro Hunter 035020216 7mm-08 Rem., $578	March 2018	A-, C+	Grade A- for adults; Grade C+ for youths. Too much rifle and recoil for younger shooters.

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

VALUE GUIDE: BOLT-ACTION RIFLES (MULTIPLE CHAMBERINGS)

GUN NAME	ISSUE	GRADE	COMMENTS
Savage Axis II Compact Muddy Girl 22230 243 Winchester, $490	March 2018	B, A	Grade B for adults; Grade A for youths. Clear winner as a youth rifle.
Desert Tech SRS-A1 6.5 Creedmoor, $4495	Nov. 2017	A	Test results proved the SRS-A1 is at the top of the rifle-quality pyramid.
Ruger Hawkeye Mark IV VT 17980 6.5 Creedmoor, $1139	Nov. 2017	B+	Rough bolt action, but in terms of accuracy, the Hawkeye deserved an A.
Legacy Sports Howa HCR 6.5 Creedmoor, $1450	Nov. 2017	C	The HCR should grade higher based on its ergonomics and simplicity.
Remington Model 700 SPS Tactical 85538 308 Win., $600	Oct. 2017	B+	This short rifle isn't the most accurate, but the overall handling is superb.
Remington Model 700 SPS Varmint 84218 308 Win., $606	Oct. 2017	B+	Hard to find a production rifle that is capable of greater practical accuracy.
Savage Axis 19223 308 Winchester, $240	Oct. 2017	C	Accuracy wasn't the best. The rifle was dogged by a heavy trigger that we fixed.
Remington 783 85847 308 Winchester, $340	March 2017	A	Best Buy. This was the most accurate rifle tested, and there were no demerits.
Remington 700 SPS 85538 308 Winchester, $655	March 2017	A-	There are few rifles that are as handy as this one.
Savage Axis XP 19231 308 Winchester, $390	March 2017	B	Accuracy wasn't the best, but accuracy was acceptable with the provided riflescope.
Mossberg 100 All-Terrain Rifle 27230 308 Win., $200 (Used)	March 2017	C	The rifle did not misfeed. We liked the cheek rest. The primary problem was accuracy.
Thompson Center Compass 10071 22-250 Remington, $399	Feb. 2017	A	Simple, straightforward, and inexpensive. Delivered sub-MOA groups with all rounds.
Browning X-Bolt Micro Midas 035346209 22-250 Rem., $860	Feb. 2017	B+	This is a super-handy rifle for the whole family, and it can fit just about anywhere.
CZ USA 557 Sporter Short Action 04806 243 Winchester, $792	Feb. 2017	B+	The 557's refined looks belied its rugged durability. Heavier weight did not tame recoil.
Legacy Sports Howa Mini Action HMA90622MCC+ 6.5 Grendel, $855	Feb. 2017	C	This otherwise top-grade rifle was spoiled by weak magazine retention.
Ruger Precision Rifle 18008 6.5 Creedmoor, $1599	Nov. 2016	A	Ruger took an already good gun and made it a touch better.
Blaser R8 Professional 30-06 Springfield, $3787	Sept. 2016	A-	The R8 was pricey, but it offered interchangeable barrels and good accuracy.

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Twenty 22 Rimfire Loads Go Head to Head at the Range

We test the 22 Long Rifle, with a couple of shorter loads thrown in. We find versatile and effective loads, inexpensive loads, and a few we could not do without for small-game hunting and varminting.

The most popular and most produced cartridge in America is the 22 Long Rifle. This is an old design, using not only rimfire construction but also a heel-based bullet. For this reason, many of us do not recommend the 22 LR ever be considered for personal defense. It isn't all about limited wound potential. The 22 rimfire firing system isn't as reliable as a centerfire system. Also, the heel-based bullet sometimes is damaged when feeding in a semi-auto firearm. It isn't unusual for a brick of 500 cartridges to contain several cartridges that misfire and do not ignite, even with a hard primer hit. Others will have the bullet bent in the cartridge case, which complicates feeding. On the other hand, during a test of self-loading pistols a few months ago, we fired 1600 22 Long Rifle cartridges from several makers without a single malfunction or failure to fire.

For this test we were looking at some of the better choices for hunting with the 22 round. The 22 rimfire is a great small-game round that offers excellent accuracy in the right handgun. While there have been plenty of tests of accuracy and velocity with this round, we set out to test penetration and expansion. We used our standard 6-inch-wide water jugs. We tested first for accuracy and then for penetration, along with standard metrics of accuracy, expanded diameter, and retained weight.

The primary firearm used was the Smith & Wesson Model 17, also known as the K-22, with a 6-inch barrel. This revolver is proven to be accurate. Since self-loaders demand high-velocity loads, the revolver eliminated any concern with function and allowed us to test 22 Short, CB Cap, and Quiet type loads without concern.

We also tested a number of select 22 loads with the Ruger Standard Model .22. The range results were interesting. In the end we isolated a number of very versatile loads for specific chores and other loads that do a number of things well. We rated the cartridges based on what they were designed to do. There is a great deal of difference in performance between the CCI Quiet load, as an example, and the CCI Stinger, but each rates an A because they perform as designed in a niche role.

The best hunting load, we believe, is the Federal Small Game Match load. A viable choice for all-round hunting use is the CCI Mini Mag. While we place a premium on accuracy, all of the loads tested were accurate enough for small-game hunting. We tested the loads at 15 yards because we were using iron-sighted handguns.



Here's our collection of 22 rimfire test loads, ready to get into action.

Overall, the 22 rimfire loads gave good results. We could get by with a single inexpensive practice load and a hunting load, but it is good to have the versatility of fast-opening loads intended for short-range pest control and heavier loads intended for deeper penetration. Here's how each load performed individually.

CCI Long CB 29-Grain LRN

We bought this lead roundnose round for $7.99 per 100 rounds at TargetSportsUSA.com. The 22 Long CB is basically a 22 Long case with a 22 Short bullet. Rated at 710 fps from a rifle, the load clocked 516 fps from the handgun. Accuracy was fair at 15 yards. Penetration in water was 8 inches. This is a useful load, but for hunting we find the 22 Quiet a better choice.

GUN TEST GRADE: B

22 RIMFIRE LOAD PERFORMANCE DATA

Gun: Smith & Wesson M17 (K-22) w/6-inch barrel	Average Velocity (fps)	Muzzle Energy (ft.-lbs.)	IPSC Power Factor	Average Accuracy (in.)	Expanded Width (in.)	Retained Weight (gr./Percent)	Penetration In Water (in.)
29 CCI CB Long	516	17	15	2.00	0.22	29/100%	8
29 Remington Short	691	31	20	1.25	022	29/100%	10
32 CCI Stinger	1032	76	33	1.45	0.32	30/94%	10
36 CCI Mini Mag HP	1090	95	39	1.50	0.33	36/100%	14
37 Winchester Super-X HP	996	81	37	1.60	0.22	36/97%	14
38 Federal HP	937	74	36	1.60	0.25	38/100%	14
38 Fiocchi PHP	1022	88	39	1.25	0.29	40/105%	12
40 Aguila Super Extra Plated RN	965	83	39	1.85	0.22	40/100%	13
40 Blazer RN	949	80	38	1.80	0.22	40/100%	14
40 CCI Quiet HP Segmented	695	43	28	1.50	FRAG	36/90%	5
40 CCI Mini Mag Segmented	990	87	40	1.30	FRAG	32/80%	9
40 CCI Velociter	1097	107	44	1.30	0.25	40/100%	14
40 CCI Standard Velocity	890	70	36	1.20	0.22	40/100%	12
40 Federal Small Game Match HP	1030	94	41	1.25	0.30	40/100%	15
40 Fiocchi RN	993	88	40	1.20	0.22	40/100%	14
40 Remington 22 LR HP	1011	91	40	1.25	0.32	40/100%	13
40 Remington Thunderbolt LR	980	85	39	1.75	0.22	40/100%	14
40 Winchester M22	1025	93	41	1.45	0.22	40/100%	16
40 Wolf Match	852	64	34	1.10	0.22	40/100%	13
45 CCI Suppressor HP	858	74	39	1.40	0.30	44/98%	10

Notes: *Average Velocity and standard deviation readings were obtained by firing four five-shot strings over a Competition Electronics Pro Chrono. Ambient temperature: 86 degrees. Elevation: 815 feet above sea level. ● The accuracy figures are the average of two five-shot groups. For accuracy, we fired the test gun from a benchrest at a 15-yard target. ● To calculate IPSC power factor, multiply bullet weight in grains by the velocity in fps, then divide by 1000. ● The retained-weight column shows the recovered bullet weight as a percentage of the actual bullet weight.*

Remington 22 Short 29-Grain Golden Bullet Plated Round Nose

We bought this item from OutdoorLimited.com for $39.90/500. It is the only 22 Short tested. This load is zippier than the CB Cap at 691 fps. Due to this greater speed, the 22 Short load was more accurate than the CB Cap. This is a top squirrel load for many shooters, although the 22 Short is sometimes more difficult to come by. For a limited-signature load, we prefer the quiet load and for hunting, the 40-grain High Velocity loads are superior. Penetration is 10 inches.

GUN TEST GRADE: B

Remington Thunderbolt 22 LR 40-grain LRN

We bought this for $29.99/500 at BassProShops.com. This is a bulk load that is offered at a fair price. Velocity was lower than some high-velocity 40-grain bullets. Accuracy was middle of the road. The Thunderbolt is a viable load, especially when found at sale prices, reliable and certainly strong enough for use as a small-game round. At 980 fps, it performed well. Penetration was 14 inches.

GUN TEST GRADE: A

CCI Blazer 40-Grain LRN

We purchased this 22 LR round for $2.08/50 from SportsmansGuide.com. This 40-grain solid averaged 949 fps. The rater supplying this load had four boxes that had water contact and had ridden behind the seat of his truck for months. Each and every one cracked off and fired. Accuracy is middle of the road, and velocity is good, but not exceptional. We think this load and the Remington Thunderbolt are practically identical. Penetration is 14 inches. Look for it on sale.

GUN TEST GRADE: A

Aguila Super Extra 40-Grain Plated RN

This cost $25.49/500 at SportsmansGuide.com. This load averaged 943 to 965 fps. So, we found nothing super about it; the Aguila is actually slower than the other roundnose promotional loads. It is accurate enough in the middle of the road. Its lower velocity resulted in an inch less of penetration, which should not matter for most uses.

GUN TEST GRADE: A-

Fiocchi 40-Grain CPRN 22FHVCRN

This copper-plated roundnose bullet ran $4.90/50

at LuckyGunner.com. The Fiocchi jolts a 40-grain bullet at 993 fps, faster than some and slower than others. The overwhelming advantage of this copper-plated bullet is accuracy. This was among the most accurate 22 loads tested and among the most accurate we have ever tested. Just the same, the minute-of-squirrel accuracy needed for hunting doesn't justify the expense of the Fiocchi load. Some other loads were nearly as accurate for less money. Just the same, it is a brilliantly accurate choice if you have to have it.

GUN TEST GRADE: A

Fiocchi 38-Grain CPHP 22HVCHP

This hollowpoint cost $3.99/50 at MidwayUSA.com. We didn't quite understand why this HP load is less expensive than the CPRN load. Doesn't matter, order this load. The Fiocchi 38-grain HP exhibited among the finest accuracy potential of any loading tested. Velocity is high as well, at 1015 to 1020 fps, with a standard deviation around 5 fps. This is a load well worth its price for small-game hunting. Practice with cheap stuff and sight the gun in for these loads. The Fiocchi load penetrates 12 to 14 inches on average. Expansion was usually .29 to .30 inch, but one of the bullets of the five tested failed to expand at all, something we saw with other 22 loads as well.

GUN TEST GRADE: A

CCI Quiet-22 Segmented Hollow Point 970

This ran $5.50/100 at SportsmansGuide.com. CCI advertises that no hearing protection is needed when using this load. At 695 fps, that is correct. This load offers excellent accuracy. The 40-grain hollow point penetrates 4 to 6 inches of water and separates into small shards. The predicted effect on small game would be good. This is a specialty load well worth its price. However, be certain to limit its use to pests. It would not do for larger animals, such as coyotes.

GUN TEST GRADE: A

CCI Mini-Mag 40-Grain Segmented Hollow Point

We bought this hollow point for $7.99/100 from TargetSportsUSA.com. This bullet is designed to break into three pieces and create three separate wound channels. It did so in our testing. At 990 fps, the Mini-Mag Segmented penetrates 8 to 10 inches, giving it an edge in penetration and energy over the Quiet load. It will get the 22 Long Rifle into the fox and coyote class with good shot placement at ranges inside of 50 yards. Accuracy is fine.

GUN TEST GRADE: A

CCI Mini-Mag 36-Grain Copper Plated HP

We bought this hollow point for $5.99/100 from TargetSportsUSA.com. We had a direct comparison in price with the 22 LR Mini-Mag Segmented. The slightly lighter Mini-Mag is faster and less expensive. This loading exhibited a low standard deviation at 1084 to 1095 fps. The Mini-Mag penetrated 14 inches of water. Four of the five bullets tested for expansion averaged 0.33 to 0.34 inch with one at a lower 0.27-inch diameter. The combination of expansion and penetration make this a good choice for larger game.

GUN TEST GRADE: A

Federal Hunter Match 40-Grain HP 720

At $39.99/500 from TargetSportsUSA.com, this load achieves 1030 fps from the Smith & Wesson revolver's 6-inch barrel. The combination of energy, expansion (see image below), and penetration makes this a good choice. We liked the performance of this load. The nickel-plated cases should make for reliable function and non-stick extraction in any firearm, particularly self-loading handguns. Penetration was deep for the 22 at 15 inches, and the bullet reliably expanded to .27 to .29 caliber. Federal's advertising claims this rimfire load was developed for use in long-range hunting with the rimfire. We think that the design and performance are excellent.



GUN TEST GRADE: A

CCI Suppressor 45-Grain Subsonic HP 957

Running $4.55/50 from SportmansGuide.com, this load is intended for use in suppressed handguns and rifles. It is heavier than most at 45 grains and averages 842 to 876 fps. While the standard deviation was not as low as some other CCI loads, accuracy was good. The Suppressor averaged 10 inches in penetration and expanded from .29 to .32 inches. For small game, this is a viable number.



GUN TEST GRADE: A

CCI Velociter 40-Grain Copper-Plated HP

Priced at $6.99/50 at TargetSportsUSA.com, the 40-grain Velociter averaged 1087 fps. Energy is the highest of any load tested. This load is fast enough to deliver 14 inches of penetration, a respectable number. Expansion was modest but consistent at .25 inch. This isn't the ideal small-game load, and it would be at its best from a rifle. For those who insist on using a 22 LR for personal defense, this would qualify, based on penetration.

GUN TEST GRADE: B

Wolf Match 40-Grain LRN

Running $47.99/500 from AmmunitionStore.com,



Our test gun was a revolver, this Smith & Wesson Model 17 with 6-inch barrel. Semi-autos usually need high-velocity rounds to function properly.

this Match ammunition is expensive. But performance is good. The load averaged 798 to 805 fps. Standard deviation in velocity was very low. Accuracy was excellent, as good as we are able to hold. This ammunition isn't any more accurate than the CCI Standard Velocity in practical terms, but clearly this is an accurate round. So, if you are making head shots on small game at longish handgun range, this load may give you an edge. As a hunting load, it was rated down a grade based on the price for a basic roundnose bullet.

GUN TEST GRADE: B

CCI Standard Velocity 40-grain LRN

Priced at $24.99/500 from TargetsportsUSA.com, this load is affordable and very accurate. Along with the Wolf Match ammunition, this is among the most accurate loads tested, with the Federal Match Hunting load and the two Fiocchi loads vying for top accuracy as well. At 890 fps, the Standard Velocity load is mild in report, although it certainly isn't in the class with the quiet load. There is no comparison in wound ballistics with the more expensive Federal Match load. If accuracy is the sole criterion, the CCI Standard Velocity makes head shots on small game a sure bet for those who practice.

GUN TEST GRADE: A

Winchester M22 40-grain Black Copper Plated Round Nose

Very reasonably priced at $53.19/1000 rounds from SportsmansGuide.com, this is an affordable high-velocity number. At 1025 fps, the smack on the steel reaction targets we used testing the Ruger Standard Model was evident. This load is intended to provide the proper powder burn and feed in modern 22-caliber AR-15 type rifles. The powder burn is clean and the unplated lead bullet proved accurate.

GUN TEST GRADE: A

Winchester Super X 37-Grain HP

Running $7.12/100 from SportmansGuide.com, the Winchester 37-grain load averaged 988 to 1000 fps. This is a loading that has been around some time, and it has developed a good reputation for function and accuracy, which this test bore out. The Winchester 37-grain HP exhibited good accuracy. Penetration is deep at 14 inches, which is pretty much standard for high-velocity non-expanding bullets. And the Winchester 37-grain bullet did not expand. There was some nose deformation, but none of the bullets got any wider. Like many other 22 LR loads, this one would be at its best in a rifle.



GUN TEST GRADE: B

Federal American Eagle 38-Grain Copper-Plated HP AE22

This loading, $20.89/525 from SportsmansGuide.com, earns Best Buy recognition. It is affordable, actually less money than the CCI Blazer, and it offers the advantage of a hollow-point bullet. There is really no reason

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to purchase a roundnose style when the HP is less expensive. This is a reliable plinking round with good, if not outstanding, accuracy. Velocity is lower than most loads of the type at an average of 937 fps. The consensus among raters is to stock up on this load for all-round practice and use a harder-hitting load when necessary. The Federal 38-grain HP penetrated 14 to 16 inches, depending on whether the nose expanded, which it did less than half the time.

GUN TEST GRADE: B (BEST BUY)

CCI Stinger 32-Grain CPHP

This round cost $4.95/50 at TargetSportsUSA.com. The Stinger averaged 1125 to 1138 fps. Penetration was a consistent 9 to 10 inches. The Stinger is accurate enough for most uses, but not as accurate as most of the 36- to 40-grain bullets. At 32 grains, energy is considerably less than the heavy bullets. Every Stinger bullet expanded, averaging .34 inch. This is a good small-game and pest-popper load. The Stinger would not make the cut for personal defense, if any 22 load could, but the limited penetration rules it out. The Stinger is a good choice for close-range work.

GUN TEST GRADE: A

Remington Golden Bullet 40-Grain HP

This affordable item was $69.99/1400 rounds at TargetSportsUSA.com and it offered an average of 1011 fps in velocity and 13 inches of penetration. The Remington Golden Bullet was once the gold standard for reliability in self-loading pistols. The Golden Bullet performed well, with expansion of .31 to .33 inch.

GUN TEST GRADE: A

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

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