GUN TESTS®

THE CONSUMER RESOURCE FOR THE SERIOUS SHOOTER

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AMERICAN AK RIFLES

We tested three U.S.-made AK-47s: The PSA AK-47 MOE Edition, a Century Arms RAS47 Magpul-Zhukov, and a PSA AK-47 Gen2 Classic Red. Find out the winner on... **— Page 6**



40 S&W PISTOLS

Tested: A new CZ-USA 75B, a new Ruger SP40, a factory-refurbished SIG P226R, and a used Beretta 96 Vertec Inox. Finding: Good old guns still got game. **— Page 12**



$400 38 SPECIALS

Tested: The Charter Arms Off Duty, Rossi Model R35102, and Rock Island Armory Model 206. Outcome: Three good recommendations, but for widely different tasks. **— Page 20**



PRACTICAL TARGET GUNS

In this showdown of 45 ACPs that have the sights to punch paper, we assess if they also have the skills for defense. Tested: Kimber Gold Match II and the Springfield PI9132LP Loaded Target 45 ACP. **— Page 27**

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DOWNRANGE

MAKE AMERICA'S GUNS GREAT AGAIN



Todd Woodard

I am rarely worried when I write these editorials, but this time I am. Here, we are all Brothers and Sisters of the Gun, a community of folks who like to read about, shoot, maintain, accessorize, and buy and sell handguns, rifles, shotguns, and parts. There are few, if any, anti-gun readers sitting in their parents' basements in their pajamas — really, what would be the point of subscribing? So, with that said, I'm simply doing my job here and filling this space with gun-rights-related material because, sadly, politics matter in our ability to enjoy firearms freely.

But any time Donald J. Trump's name gets mentioned, folks tend to get agitated for him, or about him, or against him. I'm merely making sure that my readers know what the putative Republican presidential nominee has to say about firearms because it might get overlooked otherwise. Straight from his website, here are the major points of Trump's recently released gun-policy ideas headlined "Defend The Rights of Law-Abiding Gun Owners."

GUN AND MAGAZINE BANS. Gun and magazine bans are a total failure. That's been proven every time it's been tried. Opponents of gun rights try to come up with scary sounding phrases like "assault weapons", "military-style weapons" and "high capacity magazines" to confuse people. What they're really talking about are popular semi-automatic rifles and standard magazines that are owned by tens of millions of Americans. Law-abiding people should be allowed to own the firearm of their choice. The government has no business dictating what types of firearms good, honest people are allowed to own.

BACKGROUND CHECKS. There has been a national background check system in place since 1998. Every time a person buys a gun from a federally licensed gun dealer – which is the overwhelming majority of all gun purchases – they go through a federal background check. Study after study has shown that very few criminals are stupid enough to try and pass a background check – they get their guns from friends/family members or by stealing them. So the overwhelming majority of people who go through background checks are law-abiding gun owners. When the system was created, gun owners were promised that it would be instant, accurate and fair. Unfortunately, that isn't the case today. Too many states are failing to put criminal and mental health records into the system – and it should go without saying that a system's only going to be as effective as the records that are put into it. What we need to do is fix the system we have and make it work as intended. What we don't need to do is expand a broken system.

NATIONAL RIGHT TO CARRY. The right of self-defense doesn't stop at the end of your driveway. That's why I [Trump] have a concealed carry

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Debugging a Cranky Llama

The handgun kind, not the shaggy kind. Showing the correct Benelli stock, what about the energy of .410 bore shotshells, and readers are disturbed about Docs asking about Glocks.

Re: "More 45 ACP Semi-Autos: Stay Away From Llama and Firestorm," September 2001

I recently read your article on the Llama. Truth is, I'm having issues with mine. I've replaced parts and carefully polished the barrel, cleaned and lubricated it, but it still jams while feeding the seventh round. It jams between the extractor and the magazine, the feed ramp and the chamber. I have to drop the magazine to release the jam. The first six feed, fire, and eject just fine. Any suggestions? I thought a factory magazine would solve this issue, but I have been unable to find one. Any help you can provide would be greatly appreciated. **— Alicia**

There are a lot of variables in 1911 function problems, as you've noted. Magazines can be a big one, so try as many different makes as you can lay your hands on, ideally by getting loaners from friends to test before you buy. But the issue is, can you find any ammunition that will function? Generally speaking, ball ammunition will feed more consistently than hollowpoints, so that's a pretty cheap way to test as well. You can load only two rounds at a time, since it's the last round that's giving you trouble. Some polymer-tip 45 ammo may help as well. If you exhaust those avenues, then you may have to seek professional help for the gun. — Todd Woodard



Re: "Semi-Auto 12 Gauges from Benelli, Beretta, and Mossberg," May 2016

I'm a long-time subscriber. Great publication you have. Unique and valuable! But, oops! It appears to me somebody got their photos mixed up. In the May 2016 issue, page 7, in the sidebar where the Beretta specifications are listed, there is a photo at the top with a complete view of the gun, but the third photo down shows a detail of the buttstock that looks like the Benelli instead. Everybody makes "mistrakes." **— John**

You're correct. The Benelli buttstock incorrectly appeared in the module for the Beretta Model 1301 Tactical 12 gauge Semi-Auto J131T18. Above is the correct image for the Benelli Model M4 Tactical



Acknowledging that personal preference would influence favorability, we found that while the full pistol grip on the Benelli's stock did help hold the shotgun on target when it was shouldered, handling and loading the shotgun was not as quick and easy as with either the Beretta or Mossberg.

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.

No. 11707 12 Gauge buttstock and the caption that should have gone with it. — tw

Re: "Downrange," May 2016

Maybe, just maybe, doctors should focus on the fact that more innocent people young and old die at the hands of doctors each year than by children getting into unsecured guns at home. It is simply not their responsibility to counsel our young on this subject as in many cases they don't have a clue about firearms in general. I applaud you Todd Woodard, please keep up the good work! **— PT**

As an avid shooter and a physician, I am really bothered by the idea that physicians need to ask about the presence of firearms and the safety measures in place in the home. Don't get me wrong, this is an important issue, but it shouldn't have to be handled during the annual physical. First, most docs will admit that they are totally naive about firearms and firearms safety. Second, patients have no obligation to be honest. Third, if a patient reveals firearm(s) in the home and that information winds up in the electronic health record, it's there for good. Who has access to this information and for what purposes will it be used? Last, remember the *Freakonomics* piece about the biggest threat to your children on a play date? Yes, the swimming pool is 100 times more dangerous than the handgun. The swimming pool is infinitely more dangerous than the properly secured firearm. Should I also ask patients about the absence or presence of a swimming pool and how it is secured? Where does this conversation stop?

— Posted by: FirearmDoc





Which is more dangerous? The sparkling pool, by a long shot.

Re: "Firing Line," May 2016

Just read the latest issue of Gun Tests and saw mention of problems with the Taurus Millennium Pro 45 ACP Compact pistol. I own one of these pistols and apparently did not hear about the problem. Please advise what to do with my gun in regard to returning for repair or whatever you can provide. Your magazine is top-rate and one of my favorites.

— Boots

Hey Boots: Thanks for writing. In the matter of Carter v. Forjas Taurus, S.A.,*_the court has continued the hearing on final approval of the settlement until July 18, 2016. The claims period will not begin until after that time has passed. Additional details will be posted to a website, TaurusCarterSettlement.com, including various settlement offers, which include receiving a payment of up to $200, repairing existing guns, or replacing them as necessary.*

In "Firing Line" last month, muzzle energy for .410 rounds was discussed for use in various Derringers. I don't own a Derringer or a chronograph, but standard Winchester Super X shotshells are not in the same class as .410 handgun ammo. I have tested both types since buying a Taurus Judge eight years ago. There are probably almost a dozen varieties with various combos of slugs, buck shot, BB's, etc. Just sticking to ones loaded with buckshot (Remington), they are plated, have more penetration, and shoot a tighter pattern. A Brenneke .410 handgun slug surprised me by penetrating 6 inches of wet phone book at 10 feet. I am sure they still would not match the muzzle energy of 357 Magnum or



38 Special, but .410 handgun ammo is more powerful than regular .410 shotshells. **— Dave**

Hey Dave: You don't need a Derringer or a chronograph to compare energy readings. A quick check of .410 Bore shotshell specifications listed on MidwayUSA.com shows this: Hornady Critical Defense Ammunition .410 Bore 86238 (2.5 inches long with a 41-caliber FTX Slug over two 35-caliber lead round balls ($15/20, Product #599762) produces muzzle energy of 294 foot-pounds (likely just for the slug). Contrariwise, Remington Express Extra Long Range Ammunition .410 Bore 20743 (2.5 inches long with .5 oz #4 Shot, $14.79/25 Product #235266) produces 760 foot-pounds of energy. That's more in line with a Brenneke 0.25-ounce rifled slug, which generates muzzle energy of 781

foot-pounds. So there's actually a lot of variability in .410 bore rounds based on length, powder charge, and shot or slug charge. Adjust according to your conditions. — tw



Re: A Rock River LAR-47 Review?

As a longtime subscriber, I value the knowledge and fairness displayed in Gun Tests Magazine. I am hoping for some testing of the LAR-47 in the near future, to see how it measures up to the competition on the market. I started with the low-cost SKS rifles many years ago, and as my eyes started to fade, I hung good optics on most of my rifles, but the upper cover on the SKS would not allow reliable optics mounted on top of the receiver. The same thing is maybe true for the AK-47 as well. ARs in 7.62x39mm did not provide enough reliability. So I went several years looking for a 7.62x39 rifle to go with my supply of ammo on hand. I think the solution for me was the Rock River LAR-47 with a 3x9 Redfield scope mounted on a 1-inch riser. With hollowpoint factory ammo, I have been impressed with its accuracy at 100 yards. My 18-year-old grandson harvested a doe, a bobcat, and a 225-pound hog with this rifle this past hunting season. He fell in love with the gun. Have I stretched the limits of this 16-inch barrel, letting the grandson shoot it as a deer rifle? Do you think it will shoot reliably past 100 yards? I also have plans to hang an EOTech on a second LAR-47 for shorter-range shooting. Thanks again for a great magazine.

— Don

Hey Don: I appreciate the praise and compliments on behalf of the writers. The staff works hard to find interesting guns to test, and because we don't accept advertising, we don't have commercial pressure to tout one gun over another. In 2012, Rock River introduced the LAR-47 lower receiver, which had been engineered to accept 7.62×39-type AK magazines with the ergonomic advantages of the AR platform. I don't currently have an article in development on the Rock River LAR-47, but that can change PDQ, so we will banter that around. As far as the 7.62x39mm round itself goes, it's basically as effective as the 30-30 Winchester, which is sometimes chambered in 16-inch lever-action barrels. Generally, the thutty-thutty is considered a 200-yard gun, but that's dependent on the sights and the shooter, of course. — tw

The Virginia CCP Reciprocity Situation

I recently sent you an e-mail concerning the Virginia CCP Reciprocity situation. My wife Laura and I are planning a trip to Fredericksburg beginning early next month, to visit our son and daughter-in-law and our two grandchildren.

However, we are of course very concerned about going into a state that has removed our right to self-protection provided to us via the Concealed Carry Permit (CCP) process, which was initiated in 1987 by Marion Hammer and the Unified Sportsmen of Florida organization here in Florida. I received one of the first fifty licenses issued back then. And Laura has had her CCP for about five years.

What's the status of reciprocity between Virginia and other states as of now? **— John**

Hey John: I sent you a link to a U.S. Law Shield story that covers reciprocity state by state. Or you can search for "U.S. Law Shield 18.2-308.014" to find it. — tw

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

American-Made AK-47 Rifles Compete: PSA vs. Century Arms

Can American engineering and manufacturing enhance the iconic Soviet rifle? In this test of two generations of rifles from PSA and a Century Arms RAS47 Magpul-Zhukov model, we find out.

At one time AKs were made from de-milled parts kits or shipped into the U.S., then rebuilt with a specific number of U.S. parts to make it 922r compliant, and they still are today. But depending on what company re-manufactured the rifle, the rifle might look like an AK-47 semi-automatic, but not work like one. In recent years the cost and availability of quality AKs have gone up and good ones can sometimes be difficult to acquire. Two U.S. manufacturers, however, have seen the need to fill shooters' demands for a well-made AK-47 that has all the durability of the iconic rifle and at a reasonable cost.



We ran three U.S.-made AKs head to head to see how we liked them, or not: They were the PSA AK-47 MOE Edition ($749), a Century Arms RAS47 Magpul-Zhukov ($800), and a PSA AK-47 Gen2 Classic Red ($849) with Magpul and surplus magazines. The RAS47 Magpul-Zhukov (above) offered an excellent stock and furniture set-up, but the side-mount optic rail did not work with a Russian-built PK-01 VS red dot from Kalinka Optics (kalinkaoptics.com), so we ran them all with open sights. The optic worked with the PSA rifles. We found a lot to like with all three rifles and would not hesitate purchasing any of the models tested.

It seems an oxymoron to say "American-made AK," but Century Arms and Palmetto State Armory (PSA) are building AK-47s out of 100-percent U.S.-made parts. These are not former military or new import weapons made 922r compliant, but truly U.S.-made AK rifles built in Vermont by Century and in South Carolina by PSA. The two companies designed their rifles using an amalgamation of AK designs from a variety of countries including Russia, Bulgaria, Yugoslavia, Romania, China, and others, taking what was best and incorporating the good ideas into the domestic designs.

We wanted to look at this new breed of American AK, so we scrounged up a pair of Palmetto State Armory rifles and a Century rifle. The rifles ranged from two that were set up with modern Magpul polymer furniture and a third with a more traditional wood appointments.

The AK-47 was designed and prototyped in 1947 and adopted by the Soviet Union in 1949. The design actually borrows from the M1 Garand and German Sturmgewehr StG 44, both of which were issued in WWII. The M1 Garand saw extensive service with G.I.s, while the StG 44 saw limited service when it began to be issued in 1943. The AK design incorporates a long-stroke gas piston and rotary bolt. The idea behind the AK-47 was to design a weapon that was reliable, durable, simple to maintain, relatively accurate, and inexpensive to manufacture. The AK-47 meets all those criteria hands down. Like the StG 44 and M1 Carbine, the AK-47 was a turning point in military weaponry. Shorter, more compact weapons with close to mid-range accuracy was the way wars were being fought. Heavy, large-caliber rifles were not as effective. The AK-47 shoots the 7.62x39mm cartridge, which was also influenced by other countries, namely the cartridge used in the German StG 44, the 7.92x33mm Kurz, and the U.S. M1 carbine in 30 Carbine. In terms of power and trajectory the 7.62x39mm is similar to the venerable 30-30 Winchester.

Some AK characteristics that U.S. shooters need to get used to is the bolt does not lock back on the last shot fired; the safety is a large lever located on the right side of receiver; magazines need to be rotated and locked in place; and the magazine may need to be stripped away, as some magazines fall free when the magazine is released and some do not. The open sights on all AKs,

even these three, looked slightly bent. The sights were perfectly zeroed, but slightly bent sights are another characteristic U.S. shooters must acclimate to. The three rifles tested all used stamped receivers, which was what the original AK design called for. Milled receivers were used in the interim. Century offers a line of milled-receiver AKs in the C39v2 line. Milled receivers offer less flex than stamped receivers during recoil, which can aid in accuracy. Milled receivers are also heavier, so felt recoil is lessened. Milled receivers are also more expensive compared to stamped receiver models.

There can be strong opinions about AK-47s from U.S. shooters, but the fact is the AK is probably the most prolific combat rifle currently fielded. One of our team members who is a Gulf War veteran said if he could have only one gun it would be an AK-47 due to the rifle's reliability and the better terminal ballistics of 7.62x39mm compared to the 5.56x45mm NATO/223 Remington. Yes, there is more recoil with the Russian cartridge, and it is not as accurate as the 5.56/223, but it has more power, and typical accuracy is 4 minutes of angle (MOA), which is plenty accurate for defensive purposes and hunting at moderate distances. We also had diehard AR fans in our test group who gained a respect for the AK platform. In terms of performance, there was nothing lost in translation with these AKs as testers grew a little more tolerant.

We fired the three AKs using open sights, with some members using a Strike Hard (StrikeHardGear.com) AK chest rig. The rig uses an x-harness and holds four magazines with a shock cord retention system. The weight of fully loaded magazines is comfortable with the rig. Here are the details about how each rifle performed during our head-to-head testing:

Palmetto State Armory AK-47 MOE Edition 7.62x39mm, $749

Looking at the rifle out of the box, our team thought the PSA AK-47 MOE Edition would cost almost twice the

PALMETTO STATE ARMORY AK-47 MOE EDITION
7.62X39MM, $749
GUN TESTS GRADE: A

This AK with modern Magpul furniture updated the design; accuracy was acceptable, as well as the price.



Action Type	Semi-Automatic Long-Stroke Gas Piston
Overall Length (Min/Max)	35.25 in.
Overall Height	8.0 in.
Weight Unloaded	6.7 lbs.
Weight Loaded (w/30-rd mag)	8.2 lbs.
Barrel	16.2 in. Long; 4150 Steel, 1:9.5 Twist, Melonite Finish
Muzzle Device	Slant Brake, 14-1 LH Threads
Buttstock	Black Magpul MOE AK
Length of Pull	12.8 in.
Handguard	Black Magpul MOE AK
Grip	Black Magpul MOE AK
Receiver	Stamped Blued Steel
Magazine	(1) Magpul PMAG, 30 Rds.
Rear Sight	Tangent Leaf, Elevation Adj.
Front Sight	Winged Post, Windage Adj.
Sight Radius	15.0 in.
Trigger	5.5 lbs., Mil-Spec; Single Stage, Double Hook
Safety	2-Pos. Lever
Warranty	Limited Lifetime
Telephone	(803) 724-6950
Website	PalmettoStateArmory.com
Made In/By	USA/Palmetto State Armory



The PSA rifles used standard braided-wire trigger springs.



SOP on the MOE: Easy to take apart and clean.



The MOE's short handguard exposed the gas tube; a metal heat shield is built in.



The MOE grip provides better ergonomics over the standard AK pistol grip.



The MOE, along with the other rifles, has standard sights.

list price, and that was because of the finish and the Magpul MOE furniture. The blued finish was excellent. The AK-47 MOE rifle looked fine from muzzle to butt with blued metal and the modern polymer buttstock and furniture. The MOE furniture gave the old AK platform a refreshingly new look and feel. The handguard, we thought, allowed for a better grip since it was ribbed and had an integrated heat shield to protect the shooter from barrel heat from excessive firing. The fixed stock was a good length of pull at 12.8 inches, though the tall shooters would have liked a slightly longer LOP. The stock has a hidden compartment under the cheek rest to store small items. An optional cheek riser can also be added at additional cost (Magpul.com; $9.95). It also had a rubber buttpad. The pistol grip was a Magpul MOE, also with a storage compartment. We liked the furniture and thought it gave the AK better ergonomics than traditional wood. The Magpul MOE lightened the AK to 6.7 pounds; the Classic Red with wood stock/furniture weighed 9 pounds, and the Century 9.6 pounds.

Test members also noticed the smoothness of the action. It cycled slickly and was super smooth. The safety lever did not drag over the side receiver and it was precise. On some rebuilds we have found the safety selector drags along the side of the receiver and can be loose, not providing confidence. A cleaning rod and one Magpul mag were included.

The PSA AK-47 MOE employed a 1-millimeter-thick stamped heat-treated carbon-steel receiver with a side mount that allows a shooter to attach an optic. We used a Russian-built PK-01 VS red dot optic from Kalinka Optics and found the optic sat low and just above the dust cover. A good set up. When we found that the PK-01 did not lock in place on the Century rifle we decided to keep the playing field level and test with open sights. But this was a major plus, in our eyes.

A 16.2-inch 4150 steel barrel that was Melonite treated had six-groove rifling with a 1:9.5 twist. The classic

CENTURY ARMS RAS47 MAGPUL-ZHUKOV
7.62X39MM, $800
GUN TESTS GRADE: A-

The RAS47 with Magpul-Zhukov furniture really enhanced the AK design, especially with the adjustable stock.



Action Type	Semi-Automatic Long-Stroke Gas Piston
Overall Length Folded	25.5 in.
Overall Length (Min/Max)	34.75 to 37.25 in.
Overall Height	8.15 in.
Weight Unloaded	8.2 lbs.
Weight Loaded (w/30-rd mag)	9.6 lbs.
Barrel	16.2 in. Long; 4150 Steel, 1:10 Twist, Nitride finish
Muzzle Device	Slant Brake, 14-1 LH
Buttstock	Adj. Black Magpul Zhukov
Length of Pull	12 to 14.75 in.
Handguard	Black Magpul Zhukov
Grip	Black Textured Magpul MOE AK
Receiver	Stamped Blued Steel
Magazine	(1) Magpul PMAG, 30 Rds.
Rear Sight	Tangent Leaf, Elevation Adj.
Front Sight	Winged Post, Windage Adj.
Sight Radius	15.0 in.
Trigger	5.4 lbs., Single Stage; Double Hook RAK-1 Enhanced
Safety	2-Pos. Lever w/Bolt Hold-Open Notch
Warranty	1 Year
Telephone	(800) 527-1252
Website	CenturyArms.com
Made In/By	USA/Century International



Left: There's no doubt the Century Arms RAS47 is made in America.



The longer handguard hid the gas tube and allowed shooters to grasp the handguard closer to the front sight, and aid to accuracy.



Notice the cut out (arrow) that allows the bolt to be held open.



The RAK-1 enhanced single stage trigger is operated by a standard, non-braided wire spring (arrow).



Push the button (arrow) and the Zhukov stock folds. The length of pull adjusts and locks into five different positions.

slanted muzzle brake was attached onto the barrel's muzzle. Sights were traditional, with an 800-meter rear sight and adjustable front sight. The trigger was an ALG single-stage model with a smooth press and shorter pull than the standard AK trigger. Its required a 5.5-pound press to fire. It had initial take up but a relatively clean break. The MOE edition also used a standard magazine release. We used both polymer Magpul and aluminum Polish surplus magazines and had no issues inserting the magazines or running the AK on the magazines. We ran the AK hard and it performed.

Using a rest at 100 yards we were able to get three-shot groups under 4 inches with Hornady steel case ammo and steel case Wolf ammo, which we thought was good accuracy considering we were using open sights and the triggers was not designed for precision work.

Our Team Said: The PSA MOE edition clearly updated the handling and balance of the AK-47 platform. The action was smooth, the side optic mount made equipping the rifle with a red dot or low-power optic easy. Some liked the Magpul-Zhukov stock better.

RANGE DATA

Hornady 7.62x39mm 123-gr. SST	PSA AK-47 MOE Edition	Century RAS47 Magpul-Zhukov	PSA AK-47 Gen2 Classic Red
Average Velocity	2144 fps	2151 fps	2154 fps
Muzzle Energy	1256 ft.-lbs.	1264 ft.-lbs.	1267 ft.-lbs.
Smallest Group	3.5 in.	3.5 in.	3.8 in.
Average Group	3.7 in.	3.7 in.	4.0 in.

Tula Ammo 7.62x39mm 122-gr. FMJ	PSA AK-47 MOE Edition	Century RAS47 Magpul-Zhukov	PSA AK-47 Gen2 Classic Red
Average Velocity	2336 fps	2385 fps	1276 fps
Muzzle Energy	1478 ft.-lbs.	1541 ft.-lbs.	651 ft.-lbs.
Smallest Group	4.0 in.	3.6 in.	3.9 in.
Average Group	4.6 in.	3.7 in.	4.0 in.

Wolf 7.62x39mm 122-gr. HP	PSA AK-47 MOE Edition	Century RAS47 Magpul-Zhukov	PSA AK-47 Gen2 Classic Red
Average Velocity	2428 fps	2344 fps	2347 fps
Muzzle Energy	1597 ft.-lbs.	1489 ft.-lbs.	1492 ft.-lbs.
Smallest Group	3.5 in.	3.7 in.	3.9 in.
Average Group	3.8 in.	4.0 in.	4.1 in.

To collect accuracy data, we fired three-shot groups from a bench using a rest. Distance: 100 yards with open sights. We recorded velocities using a ProChrono digital chronograph set 15 feet from the muzzle.



It's fair to say that all three of these AKs were 4-inch guns at 100 yards, which is quite remarkable since we fired groups with iron sights and not optics. The best fodder was the Hornady 7.62x39mm 123-gr. SST round, top middle and displayed. Tula Ammo's 122-gr. FMJs, left, were best in the Century rifle. Wolf 7.62x39mm 122-gr. hollowpoints were slightly more accurate in the PSA MOE edition.

Century Arms RAS47 Magpul Zhukov 7.62x39mm, $800

The RAS47 was slightly different from the PSA rifles. Century Arms outfitted the RAS47 with polymer Magpul furniture, part of which was a longer handguard that hid the gas tube and allowed shooters to grasp the handguard closer to the front sight like some shooters do with ARs.

The Zhukov stock folded and locked to the right side of the receiver, allowing users to operate the rifle with the stock in the folded position. The stock also had an adjustable length of pull, and like the MOE stock, was compatible with an optional cheek riser for an additional cost. It also had a rubber recoil pad. We liked this stock because it allowed the rifle to be more easily stowed in a bug-out bag yet still be ready for action. The opening and closing mechanism of the stock was easy on the fingers and operated smoothly and locked opened or closed with confidence.

The stock and furniture also made the RAS47 the heaviest of the three rifles tested at 8.2 pounds unloaded; 9.6 with a fully loaded magazine. We felt the added weight and the design of the recoil rod and bolt carrier helped reduce felt recoil. We did note that Century Arms offers an RAS47 set up with Magpul MOE furniture and PSA offers a model with Zhukov furniture, so the butt stocks and furniture are not exclusive to either manufacturer.

The action on the Century Arms was as smooth as the action in the PSA rifles. Field-stripping the RAS47 was familiar, but when we started to remove parts, we noticed the recoil rod was a two-piece set up with one nesting into the other during recoil. We also noticed the bolt carrier had two cuts in it to reduce weight. The piston was also chrome plated.

Other details that separated the Century Arms from the PSA rifles

was a bolt hold-open notch on the safety selector. This notch allows the bolt to be held open, making administrative tasks on the range safer. The magazine release was also T-shaped so it had more surface area to operate for both left- and right-hand shooters. The trigger is a RAK-1 enhanced single-stage trigger group that cleanly broke at 5.4 pounds after a bit of initial take up. It was operated by a standard, non-braided wire spring. We slightly favored the Century Arms's trigger. There was also no retaining plate like there was in the PSA rifles.

The receiver was made of 0.0625-inch-thick stamped 4140 steel. As mentioned, the optic side mount did not work with our Russian red dot. We docked the Century Arms points due to this, and we have since learned Century Arms will now equip rifles with a new side scope mount. The barrel was chrome moly 4150 steel with a 1:10-inch twist rate and the standard slant muzzle brake. It screwed off so other muzzle attachments could be used. The barrel was nitride treated. The blued finish was well executed.

At the range we noticed the recoil of the RAS47 was slightly less due to the weight of the rifle and lightened bolt carrier. There was less weight moving back and forth to operate the mechanism, and it was most noticeable in firing sequences where we shot for speed.

Our Team Said: We had absolutely no issues with the RAS47. It fed off the Magpul and surplus magazines with ease and liked the Tula Ammo and Hornady ammo best. We are able to shoot about 3.5-inch three-shot groups with this ammo and averaged just slightly under 4 inches at 100 yards. The RAS47 with the Magpul-Zhukov stock and furniture brought the handling and balance of the AK-47 platform squarely into the 21st century. The action was smooth. The non-functioning optic side mount caused us to lower the grade.

Palmetto State Armory AK-47 Gen2 Classic Red 7.62x39mm, $849

The PSAK-47 Gen2 Classic Red is

PALMETTO STATE ARMORY AK-47 GEN2 CLASSIC RED 7.62X39MM, $849

GUN TESTS GRADE: B+

The Classic Red with beautiful wood furniture was a more traditional AK design that performed well, but showed its age in dated ergonomics.



Action Type	Semi-Automatic Long-Stroke Gas Piston	Grip	Red Polished Maple, Smooth
Overall Length (Min/Max)	35.25 in.	Receiver	Blued, Stamped
Overall Height	8.0 in.	Magazine	(1) Magpul PMAG, 30 Rds.
Weight Unloaded	7.5 lbs.	Rear Sight	Tangent Leaf, Elevation Adj.
Weight Loaded (w/30-rd mag)	9.0 lbs.	Front Sight	Winged Post, Windage Adj.
Barrel	16.2 in. Long; 4150 Steel, 1:9.5 Twist, Melonite finish	Sight Radius	15.0 in.
Muzzle Device	Slant Brake, 14-1 LH Threads	Trigger	5.5 lbs., Single Stage, Double Hook
Buttstock	Red Polished Maple, Fixed	Safety	2-Pos. Lever
Length of Pull	13 in.	Warranty	Limited Lifetime
Handguard	Red Polished Maple, Smooth	Telephone	(803) 724-6950
		Website	PalmettoStateArmory.com
		Made In/By	USA/Palmetto State Armory



The magazine release is standard size; the RAS47's was much larger. Neither of the PSA rifles had a bolt-hold-open notch in the safety selector. The selector on the Classic Red began to scratch the receiver after extensive use.



The PK-01 VS red-dot optic from Kalinka Optics mounted effortlessly on both PSA rifles. There are plenty of aftermarket AK mounts that also put a Picatinny rail on top.



No surprises in the Gen2's disassembly. One of the favorite aspects of the AK gas design is its simplicity and robust nature. They are not at all finicky, and they're easy to maintain.



The fixed MOE stock, above, has a LOP of 12.8 inches, making it comfortable for most shooters, plus it had storage. Below is the Century with the Zhukov stock folded. Overall length in this orientation was only 25.5 inches.





Above: The bolt carrier for both PSA rifles was standard type; below, the Century employed cuts in the bolt carrier to reduce weight and lessen felt recoil.





The wood on the Classic Red was nicely executed and similar to standard AK style.



The recoil-rod retainer button locks the dust cover in place; it functioned the same on all three.

a PSA Gen2 model. The MOE tested was Gen1, and with the newer Gen2 models, PSA uses a different manufacturer to build the barrel trunnion.

The Classic Red is close to the original AK design with a traditional wood buttstock and handguards. The birch was nicely mated to the metal and wore a reddish stain like some former Soviet rifles. You can see the grain of the wood. All grip areas were smooth. Traditional lightening cuts are located on the sides of the butt stock and a hard, coarsely-textured buttpad was fitted onto the butt, along with a sling swivel. Traditional cooling slots were also built into the two-piece handguard. The pistol grip was similarly tapered as a traditional grip and was smooth. Test members thought Classic Red looked good. The Classic Red came with a cleaning rod and one Magpul magazine.

Other than the red wood stock and furniture, the Classic Red is similar to the MOE Edition from PSA. It is equipped with a 16.2-inch barrel made of 4150 steel that is Melonite treated and wears the classic slanted muzzle brake that can be screwed off and swapped with something else if the shooter wants that. Sights are classic 800-meter rear sight, adjustable for elevation and the front sight is adjustable for windage. The stamped receiver wears a side mount that allows a user to mount an optic. The Kalinka PK-01 VS red dot mounted with ease, but we tested with open sights. The trigger was an ALG single stage, double hook trigger, same as in the MOE Edition. It too had a clean 5.5-pound break. The bolt carrier group operated smoothly, and the safety selector worked positively. We did note the safety selector dragged along the side of the receiver. It locked positively and was not loose.

The reddish wood furniture felt good in hand, and the 13-inch LOP on the stock was slightly longer than on the MOE Edition. The Classic Red weighed a total of 7.5 pounds unloaded; 9 pounds in total with a fully loaded 30-round magazine. Disassembling the PSA rifles and the Century rifle followed the standard AK field stripping routine. Push in the recoil spring retainer button to lift off the dust cover. Remove the recoil retaining spring and pull the bolt carrier group and piston out. We needed pliers to rotate the gas-tube lever, which is normal for most AKs we've experienced. Both the PSA rifles used a one-piece recoil rod.

Our best accuracy with the Classic Red was about 3.9 inches with all the 7.62x39mm test cartridges from Hornady, Wolf, and Tula Ammo. The rifle ran consistently and without incident and did not care what type of magazine was feeding it cartridges. There was less felt recoil with the Classic Red due to the extra weight of the rifle; in fact, we thought it had less felt recoil than the MOE edition. Our petite female tester had no issues handling the rifle. In fact, she had never fired an AK previously and was able to run the Classic Red efficiently. At 25 yards she perforated the center of mass on the target.

Our Team Said: The PSA Classic Red is a good choice for someone who wants a traditionally styled AK. The wood was nice, but we felt the polymer models offered a better grip and better ergonomics.

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

Special thanks to Eastern Outfitters (easternoutfitter.com) of Hampstead, North Carolina, for their assistance. **GT**

40 S&W Shoot Out: Beretta, CZ-USA, Ruger, and SIG Sauer

Looking for value, we tested two new forties against a used model we praised previously and a factory-refurbished handgun. We liked all four, but one was a standout at the range.

Pistols chambered for the 40 S&W round often are the odd man out as the first choice of a citizen contemplating arming himself or herself. Most of us choose the 45 ACP for its terminal performance and the 9mm Luger for capacity. Here, though, this report is in part a continuation of 40-caliber ammunition tests we conducted some years ago. One of our raters has much field experience and favored the 45 ACP and did not give the 40 S&W much attention. After empirical testing, he came to the conclusion that the 40 is more like the 45 than the 9mm in terminal ballistics, and that's a good place to be. This rater also tested compact and subcompact 40-caliber pistols and came away believing that forties lighter and smaller than the Glock 23 are too much for most shooters to handle well. So, it was logical that he gravitated toward service-size 40 S&W handguns as the right fit of cartridge and pistol.

Full-size handguns are among the most common 40 S&W handguns chosen for home and personal defense. They are relatively mild to fire and reliable.

With these facts in mind, we wanted to test four 40-caliber handguns of different configurations to see which one suited our testers the best. Also, we went looking for value, shooting two brand-new guns against veterans which, perhaps, still had some game left in them. The two new guns were a selective-double-action CZ 75B and the double-action-only Ruger SP40, which we found listing around $580 and $569, respectively. The other choices were the double-action first-shot SIG P226R and the double-action first-shot Beretta 96 Vertec Inox, the latter a used model and the former was a factory rebuild offered by SIG Sauer.

The Beretta Model 96 Vertec has received praise from us before, being named a Gun of the Year in 2005 after being evaluated in the April 2005 issue. We said then, "Alloy 40 S&W pistols have a well-earned reputation for packing plenty of power in their lightweight frames, but they are also well-known for being vicious kickers for the training shooter. However, the Model 96 Vertec was an exception." In particular, we liked the vertical grip design that, combined with the thinner grip panels and short-reach trigger, made the pistol much friendlier to shooters with smaller hands. We liked it because its flat-sided feel and more rectangular shape were easier to index, that is, get in proper alignment faster. This time we tested the stainless version.









From top: The double-action-first-shot SIG P226R, the double-action-first-shot Beretta 96 Vertec, the selective-double-action CZ 75B, and the double-action-only Ruger SP40. The Ruger and CZ were new, while the Beretta was found on the used market and the SIG was a factory rebuild. We liked all four, but the consensus was that the SIG P226R is a great gun at a fair price. The Beretta Model 96 Vertec in blued finish was named a Gun of the Year in 2005. We liked the vertical grip design that, combined with the thinner grip panels and short-reach trigger, made the pistol friendlier to small hands. The flat-sided feel and more rectangular shape were easier to get in proper alignment faster.

Certified Pre-Owned SIG Sauer pistols like the P226R tested here are often traded in by law-enforcement agencies for new SIGs, and the company puts the pre-owned SIG pistols through a stringent Factory Certification process. Each pistol is stripped, refitted with original factory parts where needed, cleaned, lubricated, function tested and hand-inspected by a factory technician. Each Factory Certified pre-owned SIG comes with a one-year warranty and one standard-capacity magazine. The condition of these pistols will vary depending on the amount of wear, such as that caused by a holster and ring wear, and that condition will be reflected in the retail price. Dings and holster wear and ring scratches are not covered under the one-year factory warranty.

We have tested a similarly set up CZ 75B previously (May 2009), but chambered in 9mm. In that test we noted the accuracy of the CZ was about 2.5 inches for all shots fired at 15 yards. We also noted the heavy CZ dampened 9mm recoil, and there were no problems with the CZ whatsoever. It appeared to be very well made and built to last. We looked forward to testing the 40 S&W version.

Likewise, we have tested a Ruger SR40 previously, most recently in the October 2011 issue. In that review, we said, the SR40 was remarkably underrated, and it might be a plastic gun for people who don't like plastic guns. We said, "Its slender profile makes it more controllable than most high-capacity guns, and it's a good candidate for concealed carry, too. We liked having manual safeties even if they weren't perfect. Though not match grade, we thought the trigger was predictable with a reasonable sense of take-up and overtravel." That model was the BSR40, with an all-black color scheme and a 15+1 capacity, which is now listed by the company as Model 3471. This new SR40 is Model 3470, still with the same 15+1 capacity, but this time with a brushed-stainless-steel slide.

It is good to note up high that even with the mix of operating systems and handling characteristics, we encountered no failures to feed, chamber, fire, or eject with any loads in any of the handguns tested. Of course, there were things we didn't like or liked more on one gun than

CZ-USA CZ 75B 01120 40 S&W, $580

GUN TESTS GRADE: B-

The CZ 75 was accurate, reliable, and combat worthy. The shortcomings were due to lack of two practical features: No decocker and no accessory rail.

Action	Double Action Semi-Auto, Locked Breech
Overall Length	8.1 in.
Overall Height	5.4 in.
Maximum Width	1.4 in.
Weight Unloaded	35.2 oz.
Weight Loaded	43.5 oz.
Barrel Length	4.6 in.
Barrel	Blued Steel
Magazine	(1) 10-rd. Blued Steel
Slide	Black Polycoated Steel
Frame	Black Polycoated Steel
Frame Front Strap Height	2.75 in.
Frame Back Strap Height	3.75 in.
Grip	Plastic
Grip Thickness (max)	1.4 in.
Grip Circumference (max)	5.4 in.
Sights	Black Polycoated Steel
Trigger Pull Weight Double Action	14.0 lbs.
Trigger Pull Wight Single Action	4.5 lbs.
Trigger Span Single Action	2.6 in.
Safety	Manual Lever; Firing Pin Block
Warranty	5-Yr. Limited
Phone	(800) 955-4486
Website	CZ-USA.com





Here's the characteristic external extractor and ejection port of the CZ 75 B, a time-tested design.



The pistol may be placed on safe during tactical movement or for cocked-and-locked carry.



The Lobo Gunleather IWB holster demanded a considerable break-in period, characteristic of custom-grade leather.

The CZ's green three-dot treatment had a degree of self luminosity.



another, and for those insights, continue reading below:

CZ-USA CZ 75B 01120 40 S&W, $580

The 'B' designation indicates that the model is equipped with a firing-pin-block safety. The price is a recent cost at CheaperThanDirt.com. The manufacturer number of 01120 reflects a gun that ships with a 10-round magazine, but we tested with Mec-Gar 12-round magazines that are widely available, including at MidsouthShootersSupply.com for $26.

The CZ-USA 75B looked at first glance to be a replica of the thousands of CZ 75 pistols sold worldwide. The CZ 75B was finished in a black coating that is evenly applied and attractive. The pistol's dust cover is thicker than on the 9mm, so some holsters, such as the tightly fitted Lobo Gunleather IWB used in the test, will require a significant break-in period before the handgun will properly fit a holster blocked for the 9mm CZ 75 B. The sights were an improvement over the original CZ design, combat sights that offered rapid acquisition and a clear sight picture. They were enameled with a green three-dot treatment. The paint was self luminous and glowed green for some time after being exposed to light.

The cocking serrations were adequate; however, some effort was required to cock the slide. That's because the slide rides lower in the receiver than on the other handguns. The CZ uses a system in which the slide rails are inside the frame, the opposite of most handguns. The result is a good slide-to-frame interface and also a lower bore axis than most other double-action handguns.

The double-action trigger was long, but smooth, at 14 pounds. The single-action trigger press was clean at 4.5 pounds with the slight backlash characteristic of the type. The grip was comfortable, with a modest S curve that made for a good fit and feel.

The pistol was a double-action first-shot handgun. The manual safety was well placed for ergonomic manipu-

BERETTA MODEL 96 VERTEC INOX 40 S&W, ~$600 USED

GUN TESTS GRADE: A

Accuracy was good, if not outstanding. The pistol was reliable and we liked the safety features. The Beretta offers the lowest magazine capacity of the pistols tested. Beretta fans will likely prefer the Inox over the others, but we preferred the SIG P226.

Action	Double-Action Semi-Auto, Locked Breech
Overall Length	8.5 in.
Overall Height	5.4 in.
Maximum Width	1.5 in.
Weight Unloaded	32.0 oz.
Weight Loaded 11 rounds	39.7 oz.
Barrel Length	4.9 in.
Barrel	Stainless Steel
Magazine	Steel, 11 Rds.
Slide	Stainless Steel; Open Design
Frame	Aluminum; 1-Slot Accessory Rail
Frame Front Strap Height	2.4 in.
Frame Back Strap Height	3.5 in.
Grips	Plastic
Grip Thickness (max)	1.3 in.



Grip Circumference (max)	5.5 in.
Sights	Steel
Trigger Pull Weight Double Action	15 lbs.
Trigger Pull Weight Single Action	4.0 lbs.
Trigger Span Single Action	2.4 in.
Safety	Manual Safety/Decocker
Warranty	NA
Telephone	(800) Beretta [237-3882]
Website	BerettaUSA.com.



The Vertec grip fit most hands well, our shooters said.



The Vertec front sight, left, is a big improvement over the standard Beretta 92, right.



The Beretta's straight-line feed is an advantage in feed reliability. Note the open design of the slide.



Many feel the Beretta safety/decocker is an advantage in safe handling. All depends on your training, of course.

SIG SAUER P226R FACTORY-CERTIFIED PRE-OWNED 40 S&W, $725

GUN TESTS GRADE: A+

The pre-owned SIG P226R turned in as-new performance. Reliable and fast handling, the SIG got high marks during the firing tests. The pistol was ergonomic and fit most hands well. The double-action trigger was very smooth. The pistol's advantage over the other handguns was its accuracy.

Action	Double Action Semi-Auto, Locked Breech
Overall Length	7.7 in.
Overall Height	5.5 in.
Maximum Width	1.5 in.
Weight Unloaded	34.0 oz.
Weight Loaded 12 rounds	42.4 oz.
Barrel Length	4.4 in.
Barrel	Blued Steel
Magazine	12 Rds., Blued Steel
Slide	Steel
Frame	Aluminum
Frame Front Strap Height	2.5 in.
Frame Back Strap Height	3.4 in.
Grips	Plastic
Grip Thickness (max)	1.4 in.
Grip Circumference (max)	5.6 in.



Sights	Steel
Trigger Pull Weight Double Action	12.0 lbs.
Trigger Pull Weight Single Action	4.25 lbs.
Trigger Span Single Action	2.4 in.
Safety	No Manual Safety
Warranty	1 Year
Telephone	(603) 610-3000
Website	SIGSauer.com



Accuracy with all pistols was combat acceptable, but SIG's P226R was stellar. It is rated highly enough for hostage-rescue use where accuracy is at a premium. We thought this handgun was a great value.



The SIG decocker and slide lock are close to the hand and easily manipulated.



The SIG P226R was fired in the same range drills with the same ammunition as the other pistols and was drawn from a Nelson holster, shown, one of the best-designed and executed IWB types we have used in some time. The Neoprene backing on a leather holster may be an original step.

lation. The safety cannot be placed in the Fire position with the hammer down. (Clones may differ.) The CZ 75B is often termed a selective-double-action pistol. This is because the hammer may be cocked and the safety applied, allowing cocked-and-locked carry. While some find this carry well suited to their personal scenarios, the raters believed this was not the original intent. We believe that the pistol was designed to be carried hammer down. Then, after the first shot, you are better prepared to be in a gunfight. The conventional double-action first-shot pistol would have to be decocked for safe movement during tactical maneuvers. The CZ may be quickly placed on Safe after the first shot is fired, then the shooter can simply thumb the safety off and resume firing. This is a tactical advantage.

The practical advantage of the SIG and Beretta double-action pistols is that the hammer may be decocked without ever touching the trigger. To make the CZ ready, the slide is lowered on a loaded magazine and the thumb controls the hammer as the trigger is pressed to lower the hammer. A shooter adopting the CZ 75 must be aware of this system at all times.

The pistols were fired with SIG Sauer 180-grain FMJ loads ($20/50 @ Brownells.com) during the combat firing stage. Drawing from concealment and firing at man-sized targets at 7 yards, we expended two magazines and then moved to firing groups as rapidly as possible at 10 yards. We loaded magazines with 10 rounds for these drills, with the last drill firing 10 shots offhand at 15 yards. The CZ 75 was fired in the double-action first-shot mode. The pistol gave a good accounting of itself, with good control and combat accuracy. The raters felt that this pistol showed the best combat type shooting results.

Next, the pistol was fired for accuracy from a solid benchrest firing position at 25 yards. Ammunition included the Black Hills Ammunition 180-grain JHP, the Hornady 155-grain XTP, and the Winchester Win3Gun

RUGER SR40 3470 40 S&W, $569

GUN TESTS GRADE: B-

The pistol exhibited more felt recoil than the others; however, it was also lighter than the other handguns, so this wasn't unexpected. The grip fit most hands well. The big advantage of the Ruger is magazine capacity. The pistol holds 15 rounds of hard-hitting 40 S&W ammunition. The pistol's combat accuracy was acceptable, but in this test, it was the least accurate handgun. We're not fans of the takedown process.

Action	DAO Semi-Auto; Locked Breech
Overall Length	7.5 in.
Overall Height	5.5 in.
Maximum Width	1.3 in.
Weight Unloaded	26 oz.
Weight Loaded	36.5 oz.
Barrel Length	4.1 in.
Barrel	Steel
Magazine	15 Rds, Steel
Slide	Stainless Steel
Frame	Reinforced Nylon
Frame Front Strap Height	2.7 in.
Frame Back Strap Height	3.75 in.
Grips	NA
Grip Thickness (max)	1.25 in.
Grip Circumference (max)	5.5 in.



Sights	Steel
Trigger Pull Weight Double Action	6.5 lbs.
Trigger Span Double Action	2.5 in.
Safety	Lever
Warranty	None Written
Telephone	(336) 949-5200
Website	Ruger.com



Although the Ruger SR40 kicked the most of the pistols tested, it was controllable.



The Ruger's takedown, using a lever in the frame, wasn't the most popular with the raters.



An advantage of the Ruger SR40 is its light weight. That creates more noticeable recoil, of course, but physics will be physics. Balance was still centered in the hand.

180-grain FMJ loading. Accuracy was consistent, with most groups averaging less than 2.5 inches, a good showing. The best average came with the Hornady 155-grain XTP at 1.9 inches. The CZ was more accurate than the Ruger and edged the Beretta out by a small margin. The SIG was more accurate with every load, but only by a small margin.

Our Team Said: Raters were split on the CZ 75 B. All gave the pistol high marks for reliability. Accuracy was excellent. The pistol is comfortable to fire. The lack of a decocking lever was a serious drawback to some. This was the personal pistol of our most experienced rater, and he feels that the CZ 75B isn't the pistol for the casually interested shooter. We feel that for most users, the SIG system is superior. Another demerit came for the lack of a light rail.

Beretta 96 Vertec Inox 40 S&W, ~$600 (Used)

Introduced in 1990, the Beretta 96 is a 40 S&W chambering of the Beretta 92 9mm pistol. It was discontinued in 2007. The Vertec variation is similar to the new Beretta 96A1. The Vertec has several parts made of stainless steel, also known as inox steel, or inox, from the French "inoxydable": the slide (extractor, safety, and manual safety lever), the barrel, the trigger and trigger pin, the slide-stop lever, and the grip screws.

The anodized aluminum grip frame is intended to fit most hands well and alleviate concerns over the large grip of the high-capacity Beretta handgun. While more comfortable than the original Beretta grip, the Vertec treatment doesn't seem to lower the pistol's bore axis in the hand, we found. The stainless slide offers nice polish; even though this was a used gun (perhaps a police trade-in), our shooters thought it was more attractive than the new Ruger. There was no eccentric wear noted on the locking wedge, which appeared original, but there were signs the pistol had seen use. The decocker and magazine release were well worn.

The sights are good examples of combat sights. The front sight was dovetailed in place, an advantage

over the Beretta 92. The pistol featured night sights, and they still had some self-luminous glow — we'd guess about 60 percent of full, new tritium brightness.

The pistol is a double-action first-shot pistol. In common with the CZ and SIG tested, the first shot cocks and drops the hammer. After the first shot, the slide cocks the hammer for subsequent shots. The trigger action was smooth, if long, at about 15 pounds. The single-action trigger mechanism broke at 4 pounds — the lightest single-action trigger tested.

The decocker was slide mounted and also acts as a manual safety. If carried on Safe, the action to take the safety off isn't nearly as ergonomic as a frame-mounted safety. However, with a rapid straight-thumb motion, it may be operated with a degree of rapidity. We like the SIG's frame-mounted decocker better, but then there isn't a need for a speed decock. If you prefer your double-action pistol to have a safety, then the Beretta should be your choice. The Beretta magazine holds 11 rounds, one fewer than the other double-action pistols and four fewer than the Ruger.

Our Team Said: All in all, we thought this used gun was well worth the money. The pistol was reliable and performed well during the firing tests. The Vertec grip gave a good fit and allowed real speed on the draw. The pistol wasn't as ergonomic as the CZ; however, despite a higher bore axis in the hand, the Beretta was comfortable to fire and use. Accuracy on the combat course was rated below the CZ and the SIG. In benchrest accuracy, the single most accurate loading was the Black Hills 180-grain jacketed hollowpoints, with an average of 2.3 inches.

Factory Certified Pre-Owned SIG P226R 40 S&W, $725

This was our price from South Carolina Gun Company (SCgun.com). This was a police service pistol that has been refurbished. The pistol was delivered in a red cardboard box to distinguish it as a factory refurbished item. Still, the pistol appeared as new. The fit, finish, and quality control on the SIG left little more to be desired. Savings were $225 compared to the common $950 counter price of a new P226 with a rail and regular sights. Like two other test pistols, this one featured a rail, thus the "R" designation in the model number (which has been dropped from currently manufactured guns, most of which include a rail).

The SIG is a double-action first-shot pistol like the Beretta, but it featured no manual safety. The decocker was very ergonomic, located between the trigger guard and the grip frame. The trigger action was the smoothest double-action first-shot pistol tested, with a break at about 12 pounds. The single-action trigger broke at 4.25 pounds. Reset was much faster than other SIGS we have tested.

The sights were good examples of combat sights, with the typical SIG white outline treatment. The grip frame fit most hands well. The bore axis sat higher in the hand than the CZ or Ruger, and similar to the Beretta



This is representative of what we got during rapid-fire drills with the SR40. Not bad, but we thought the others were better.

96, and recoil moved straight back down the shooter's arm. Handfit was comparable to the Beretta, but not quite on the par with the CZ for most shooters.

The pistol was fast on target, and the smooth trigger action aided in landing a fast and accurate first shot. Control in rapid fire was comparable to the Beretta and better than the Ruger overall, but the heavier CZ was more controllable and did a better job in rapid fire. Still, in firing double taps and in rapidly engaging targets, the SIG did well. The vote was close.

In the benchrest firing session, it had a clear-cut edge over the other handguns. The refurbished SIG was most accurate with the three loads tested, averaging less than 2 inches for five shots in most of the testing. The Black Hills Ammunition 180-grain JHP exhibited a brilliant 1.4-inch group on one occasion, while the average was 1.9 inches.

Our Team Said: Based on accuracy, reliability, relatively light weight, firing comfort, and a fair price, the Factory Certified Pre-Owned SIG P226R earned an A+ rating.

Ruger SR40 Model 3470 40 S&W, $569

The Ruger featured a polymer frame and stainless-steel slide. This is the lightest pistol tested. Magazine capacity was the highest at 15 cartridges. It was a little stiff loading the last cartridge, but if you choose to load only 14, you still have more cartridges than in the other handguns. The fit and finish were good, and the fit to the frame was acceptable, but there was considerable lateral motion when the slide was grasped and rocked from side to side. The pistol incorporated a light rail, a feature in common with the SIG and the Beretta.

The sights presented a three-dot outline and were acceptable; the notch in the rear sight was smaller than the other pistols, but still usable. The rear sight is actually an insert in a larger sight body and offers good adjustment. We liked the sights of the CZ much better, and the SIG and Beretta sights a little better, than the Ruger.

The Ruger is a much fresher, newer design than the 1970's 9mm designs that have been converted to 40 S&W. The combination of checkering on the side panels and front strap and back strap provided good grip surfaces when firing.

The pistol features a manual safety that may be used or ignored. The Ruger handled well. Felt recoil was the

RANGE DATA

Black Hills 40 S&W 180-grain JHP	Beretta 96 Inox (Used)	CZ-USA 75B	Ruger SR40	SIG Sauer P226R (FCP0*)
Average Velocity	984 fps	998 fps	975 fps	966 fps
Muzzle Energy	386 ft.-lbs.	398 ft.-lbs.	379 ft.-lbs.	372 ft.-lbs.
Smallest Group	2.0 in.	1.8 in.	2.1 in.	1.4 in.
Largest Group	2.5 in.	2.4 in.	2.6 in.	2.4 in.
Average Group Size	2.3 in	2.1 in.	2.4 in.	1.9 in.

Hornady Custom 40 S&W 155-gr. XTP JHP #9132	Beretta 96 Inox (Used)	CZ-USA 75B	Ruger SR40	SIG Sauer P226R (FCP0*)
Average Velocity	1090 fps	1124 fps	1060 fps	1082 fps
Muzzle Energy	408 ft.-lbs.	434 ft.-lbs.	386 ft.-lbs.	402 ft.-lbs.
Smallest Group	2.4 in.	1.5 in.	2.2 in.	1.6 in.
Largest Group	2.8 in.	2.3 in.	3.0 in.	2.1 in.
Average Group Size	2.6 in.	2.0 in	2.6 in.	1.9 in.

Winchester Win3Gun 40 S&W 180-gr. FMJ	Beretta 96 Inox (Used)	CZ-USA 75B	Ruger SR40	SIG Sauer P226R (FCP0*)
Average Velocity	990 fps	970 fps	944 fps	969 fps
Muzzle Energy	391 ft.-lbs.	375 ft.-lbs.	356 ft.-lbs.	375 ft.-lbs.
Smallest Group	2.2 in.	2.0 in.	2.5 in.	1.8 in.
Largest Group	2.8 in.	2.5 in.	3.2 in.	2.3 in.
Average Group Size	2.4 in.	2.2 in.	2.8 in.	2.1 in.



**Factory Certified Pre-Owned. Notes: Average velocity readings were recorded by firing five-shot strings over a Competition Electronics Pro Chrono. The muzzle was 10 feet from the first skyscreen. Ambient temperature: 45 degrees. Elevation: 815 feet above sea level. The accuracy figures are the average of three five-shot groups. For accuracy, we fired the test gun from a benchrest at a 25-yard target. Ammunition sources: Black Hills 180-grain Jacketed Hollow Points 40 S&W, $15/20 @ VenturaMunitions.com. Hornady Custom 155-gr. XTP Jacketed Hollow Points #9132 40 S&W, $17/20 @ LuckyGunner.com. Winchester Win3Gun 180-grain Full Metal Jacket #X40TG 40 S&W, $19.70/50 @ CheaperThanDirt.com.*

The 40 S&W ammunition used during the test gave good accuracy and never failed to fire. From top are the Hornady Custom 155-gr. XTP Jacketed Hollow Points #9132, the Black Hills 180-grain Jacketed Hollow Points, Winchester's Win3Gun 180-grain Full Metal Jackets, and SIG Sauer's Elite Performance 180-grain FMJ loads used during the combat firing stage.

greatest of the handguns tested, a result of light weight and a thin grip cross-section. On the other hand, the grip fit most hands well.

The trigger action was similar to a Glock, with the striker prepped as the slide recoiled. The trigger featured a safety lever set into the trigger face. The trigger broke at 6.5 pounds, the same for every shot, an advantage, some feel, in personal defense. The trigger was good for making first-shot hits. However, the trigger was heavier than the single-action trigger press of any of the other pistols.

Takedown was too complicated, in our view. The slide was locked to the rear, the ejector pressed down, and then the takedown lever pressed out. A tool was needed to press the takedown lever out. As far as takedown, we liked the SIG and Beretta equally, the CZ next, and finally the Ruger.

Our Team Said: The pistol was useful for personal defense and the groups were not bad. However, the SR40 held no advantage over other pistols. Most of the raters felt the other handguns performed better in fast-shooting drills. In benchrest accuracy, the pistol gave credible results, but not up to the standard of the other handguns. The worst groups were almost 3 inches, while the best group, with the Hornady 155-grain XTPs, was just over 2 inches.

The raters did not find a bad gun among the four, and we would buy any of them under the right circumstances. However, we preferred the others over the Ruger SR40.

Written and photographed by R.K. Campbell, using evaluations from Gun Tests *team testers.* **GT**

VALUE GUIDE: 40 S&W HANDGUN RANKINGS

GUN NAME	ISSUE	GRADE	COMMENTS
Springfield XDM 3.8 Compact XDM9384CSHC 40 S&W, $769	Oct 2011	A	Testers said this one had versatility, accuracy, power, and style. “Sweet” trigger.
Springfield XD40 SC HC XD-9822HCSP06 40 S&W, $566	Jan 2007	A	An Our Pick, the 2006 subcompact XD carries superior ergonomics found on the full-size models.
H&K USP Compact 40 V 1 40 S&W, $799	Dec 2006	A	Rated “Our Pick,” at this price it should be the best. Finished first in accuracy and speed.
Kahr P40 40 S&W, $707	July 2005	A	Rated “Our Pick,” we liked the look, feel, and especially the rapid-fire potential of the P40.
Smith & Wesson 4046 (DAO) 40 S&W, $290	May 2003	A	This police trade-in was worn but needed only a recoil spring to be ready for carry again.
Springfield Armory XD40 40 S&W, $489	Oct 2002	A	A Best Buy, we can’t think of another handgun selling for under $500 that offers so much.
Smith & Wesson M&P40c 109203 40 S&W, $480	Jan 2015	A-	Credible handgun with good design, reliability, and combat-shooting performance.
Heckler & Koch P30S V3 40 S&W, $1005	Oct 2010	A-	Fastest shooter. Offers a modular grip, multiple safeties, and a refined single-action trigger.
Springfield XD Service Bi-Tone XD9302HCSP06 40 S&W, $605	Nov 2009	A-	A lot of value for the money. Shot well, decent trigger, and we liked its safety features.
Smith & Wesson M&P40 No. 209200 40 S&W, $495	Oct 2007	A-	It gets a lot of things right. The beavertail, sights, and slide cuts were excellent.
Kahr PM40 No. 4043 40 S&W, $786	Oct 2009	A-	Not a blindingly fast pistol, but precise and powerful. A best bet for ankle carry.
Walther PPS No. WAP10002 40 S&W, $713	Oct 2009	A-	For summertime carry or as a matching backup piece, the PPS may be hard to beat.
FNH-USA FNP-40 40 S&W No. 47832, $450	July 2013	B+	Clean ergonomics in the grip, smooth and easy use, simple takedown.
Glock G22 Gen4 40 S&W, $649	Oct 2010	B+	The Gen 4 grip system should make this gun more appealing to a wider variety of shooters.
SIG Sauer SP2022 E2022-40-B 40 S&W, $570	July 2013	B	The grips had the best texture, but we preferred the overall ergonomics of others.
Beretta PX4 Storm JXS4F20FC 40 S&W, $511	Jan 2015	B	The Storm isn’t the lightest 40-caliber subcompact, but it is among the easiest to fire.
Walther PPQ No. 2776481 40S&W, $680	July 2013	C+	Tricky takedown method and unusual magazine release made it stand out good and bad.

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

$400 Snubnose Revolvers: Rossi, RIA, and Charter Arms

There was a lot to like — and dislike — about these budget 38s. Tested: The Rossi Model R35102, $390, the Rock Island Armory Model 206, $320, and the Charter Arms Off Duty, $404.

There is that old expression: You get what you pay for. We did not pay a lot for the three snubnose revolvers tested below; in fact, we wanted to see what new revolvers were available for about $400 because we feel protection should fit in everyone's budget. We found the Charter Arms Off Duty, Rossi Model R35102, and Rock Island Armory (RIA) Model 206 as not inexpensive choices, but not horribly spendy either. Note that we did not use the word "cheap," since cheap implies lack of quality.

We felt all of these were well made, and we believe these revolvers will perform their designed task of self defense. They are also safe to carry fully loaded and concealed, since they are equipped with internal safety systems that require the trigger to be pulled fully to the rear to fire a round. If accidentally dropped, none of them will fire.

Snubnose revolvers like these three offer the user simplicity since there are no manual safeties, magazine-release buttons, slide stops or any other controls on the revolver other that the cycler latch. There is no magazine to lose since the revolver feeds off an attached cylinder. The double-action trigger pull on all three revolvers provided enough resistance — some were easier to press than others — so that in a high-stress situation, we felt they would be quite adequate and be less likely to be accidentally discharged.



From top: The Rock Island Armory M206, Rossi Model R35102, and Charter Arms Off Duty are three snubnose 38 Special revolvers that are all budget friendly but still well suited for conceal carry and home defense. We preferred the Charter Arms for concealed carry, the Rossi for extensive shooting, and the Rock Island Armory for its extra round.



All the barrels had crowned muzzles; the Rossi R35102 (left) and Charter Arms (middle) chamfered their underlugs to aid holstering.

All were metal-frame revolvers chambered in 38 Special and sported 2-inch barrels. The Rossi and Charter Arms models have 5-round capacities, while the RIA can carry 6 rounds. Because we also wanted to carry these revolvers, we looked at spurless and concealed-hammer models, which were the RIA and Charter Arms, respectively. The Rossi was a traditional SA/DA revolver with an exposed hammer with spur.

After running these revolvers, we found we liked a

lot about all of them, but, as always, we noted some specific details about them we did not like. Our biggest gripes were the trigger pulls and grips, as we note below. Accuracy with some of these short-barrel protectors was a pleasant surprise.

All three were marked 38 Special, and we read the manuals to see if the guns were safe to use +P ammo. The Rossi manual stated it was compatible with +P ammo, but not to use +P frequently. We decided to test with 38 Special regular-pressure ammunition only, and acquired some Federal Champion 158-grain lead roundnose (LRN) cartridges, some Armscor 158-grain Full Metal Jacket (FMJ) rounds, and Hornady Custom fodder loaded with 158-grain XTP hollowpoints. Felt recoil with this ammunition varied widely.

A $400 revolver will exhibit some characteristics, such as fit and finish, that are not going to be nearly as nice as a revolver costing twice as much because finishing a firearm can be labor intensive and costly. What we concentrated on were the functional aspects: triggers, sights, grips, accuracy, concealability, and ease of use. Here is what we discovered:

Rock Island Armory Model 206 51289 38 Special, $320

The RIA, imported by Armscor, is a traditional steel-frame snubnose with a look that seemed frozen in time. The Model 206 is similar to a Colt DA revolver design with a cylinder latch that is pulled rearward to swing open the cylinder. The cylinder also rotates clockwise like a Colt. In fact, the action reminded us of a Colt Mark III J-series action with a coiled mainspring, such as that found on the Colt Official Police first produced in 1969. The RIA was equipped with a crowned 2-inch barrel with a full underlug that houses the knurled ejector rod. The front ramp sight was machined into the top of the barrel. The ramp was not serrated, so there was some glare when aiming in direct sunlight.

This Model 206 is the spurless model. The hammer sits flush with the rear

ROCK ISLAND ARMORY MODEL 206 51289 38 SPECIAL, $320

GUN TESTS GRADE: B-

The Model 206 gave good accuracy for a DAO revolver; the grip was dated.



Action Type	Revolver; Double Action Only
Overall Length	9.25 in.
Barrel Length	2.0 in.
Sight Radius	4.0 in.
Overall Height	5.45 in.
Maximum Width	1.4 in.
Weight Unloaded	24 oz.
Weight Loaded	29.0 oz.
Cylinder Gap	.007 in.

Capacity	6
Frame Finish	Matte Nickel
Barrel/Cylinder Finish	Matte Nickel
Frame Front Strap Height	2.9 in.
Frame Back Strap Height	2.7 in.
Grip	Checkered Wood
Grip Thickness (max)	1.3 in.
Grip Circumference (max)	5.12 in.
Front Sight	Ramped Blade
Rear Sight	Fixed Groove
Trigger Pull Weight (DA)	14 lbs.
Safety	Internal Transfer Bar
Warranty	Limited Lifetime
Telephone	(775) 537-1444
Website	Armscor.com
Made In	Philippines



Note the slight gaps between the frame and crane.



An example of what one tester could do; the RIA had unexpected accuracy with Hornady ammo.



The RIA was equipped with a full underlug that houses the knurled ejector rod. Empties ejected well with a little help from gravity.



Tooling marks were evident in some places on the Rock Island handgun, though the satin nickel finish was smooth.

of the frame, and it is DAO only. The fit of the side plate and crane to the frame showed slight gaps, something a more expensive revolver would likely not display. The 6-shot cylinder slightly wiggled when in battery, but not as much as the Rossi. The Charter Arms had the best lock up, in our opinion. Tooling marks were evident on the exterior, though the satin nickel finish was evenly applied.

The grip was the first characteristic noted by team members that looked dated and vaguely resembled a revolver grip design from a century ago. The grip was constructed of fairly nicely checkered wood, and the wood-to-metal fit was okay, with some overlap of the wood. At the butt, the grip bulged out; toward the top of the back grip strap, it was very narrow. That space just behind the trigger guard, which revolver manufacturers have been filling with grip for decades, was open. In hand, it was hard to get a solid and firm grip because of this space. Because the 206 resembled a Colt, we would check to see if a pair of Colt aftermarket grips would work with the RIA.

A transfer-bar safety system was employed with the RIA along with the firing pin located in the frame, like the Charter Arms. The Rossi had the firing pin located on the hammer. The trigger needs to be pulled all the way rearward for the revolver to fire.

On the plus side, the sights were large and easy to acquire. We found the trigger was the second smoothest of the three, with minimal stacking in the final press. It measured 14 pounds at the break, but felt less. The trigger was wide and smooth.

The RIA was the largest of the three guns tested but was not that much heavier that the 5-shot Rossi. We liked that it held six rounds and was only 0.1 inch fatter than the other two revolvers, which makes a difference in IWB carry.

At the range, we were pleasantly surprised to see the RIA was accurate. In fact, it was the most accurate of the three tested. Some team members were able to shoot six shots into one ragged hole. With the Federal and

ROSSI MODEL R35102 38 SPECIAL +P, $390

GUN TESTS GRADE: B

The R35102 had the best trigger and the most comfortable and largest grip; the spurred hammer could get hung up in a draw from concealment.



Action Type	Revolver, Double Action
Overall Length	6.5 in.
Barrel Length	2.0 in.
Sight Radius	3.7 in.
Overall Height	4.7 in.
Maximum Width	1.3 in.
Weight Unloaded	24.0 oz.
Weight Loaded	28.1 oz.
Cylinder Gap	.006 in.
Capacity	5

Frame Finish	Blued Steel
Barrel/Cylinder Finish	Blued Steel
Frame Front Strap Height	2.4 in.
Frame Back Strap Height	3.2 in.
Grip	Checkered Rubber, Finger Grooves
Grip Thickness (max)	1.1 in.
Grip Circumference (max)	5.12 in.
Front Sight	Ramped Blade
Rear Sight	Fixed Groove
Trigger Pull Weight (SA)	3.2 lbs.
Trigger Pull Weight (DA)	12.2 lbs.
Safety	Internal Hammer Block; Security Lock
Warranty	Limited
Telephone	(305) 474-0401
Website	RossiUSA.com
Made In	Brazil



The Rossi's big grip made it pleasant to shoot. Carry would be tough, though.



At the top of the crane, a detent locked the front of the cylinder to the frame.



The Rossi liked the Federal ammo, giving us a best 5-shot group of 0.4 inch.



The Rossi strongly resembled a Smith & Wesson J-frame revolver.

RANGE DATA

Federal Champion 38 Sp. 158-gr. LRN	Rossi Model R35102	Charter Arms Off Duty	Rock Island Armory M206
Average Velocity	649 fps	658 fps	613 fps
Muzzle Energy	148 ft.-lbs.	152 ft.-lbs.	132 ft.-lbs.
Smallest Group	0.4 in.	0.9 in.	0.5 in.
Average Group	0.6 in.	1.6 in.	1.6 in.

Armscor 38 Sp. 158-gr. FMJ	Rossi Model R35102	Charter Arms Off Duty	Rock Island Armory M206
Average Velocity	826 fps	826 fps	784 fps
Muzzle Energy	239 ft.-lbs.	239 ft.-lbs.	216 ft.-lbs.
Smallest Group	1.3 in.	1.2 in.	0.4 in.
Average Group	1.6 in.	2.2 in.	0.7 in.

Hornady Custom 38 Sp. 158-gr. XTP	Rossi Model R35102	Charter Arms Off Duty	Rock Island Armory M206
Average Velocity	682 fps	620 fps	722 fps
Muzzle Energy	163 ft.-lbs.	135 ft.-lbs.	183 ft.-lbs.
Smallest Group	0.7 in.	1.7 in.	0.6 in.
Average Group	1.7 in.	2.5 in.	1.2 in.

To collect accuracy data, we fired five-shot groups from a bench using a rest. We fired the Rossi single action and the Charter Arms and RIA double action. Distance: 15 yards. We recorded velocities using a ProChrono digital chronograph with the first screen 15 feet from the muzzle.



From top, our ammunition choices included Federal Champion 158-grain lead roundnoses, Armscor 158-grain full-metal jackets, and Hornady Custom 158-grain XTP hollowpoints.

Armscor ammo, five-shot groups using a rest at 15 yards were a half-inch or less. They grew to 0.6 inches with the Hornady ammo. During recoil, that narrow portion of the backstrap slapped the webbing of our hand as severely as the lightweight Charter Arms, even though the RIA was the largest and heaviest of the guns tested. As such, we had a hard time finding a holster to fit it. We improvised with a Galco holster and found the larger RIA was not as comfortable to carry as either the Rossi or Charter Arms, in our view.

Our Team Said: The Model 206 was not as nicely manufactured as the other two, and the grip needs to be updated, but it was accurate. Also, the trigger was the second best of the three tested, and it held six rounds for a 20 percent edge in capacity over the 5-shooters.

Rossi Model R35102 38 Special +P, $390

The Rossi is manufactured in Brazil by the same company that manufactures Taurus revolvers. The resemblance to a Taurus and a Smith & Wesson J-frame revolver was obvious. The Rossi had a nice blued finish and a full rubber grip that made the small revolver feel like a full-size unit. The metal-to-metal fit was better than the RIA, with no gaps. The barrel was 2 inches in length with a full shrouded ejector rod, and the front ramp sight was milled into the top of the barrel. The ramp was serrated so there was not glare when aiming in direct sunlight.

Unlike the RIA and Charter Arms handguns, the Rossi is a SA/DA with a hammer spur nicely checkered and offering a good grip. The hammer was a bit old school with the firing pin attached. The hammer is a rebounding type so the firing pin does not rest on a live cartridge primer, except when the trigger is pulled fully rearward. There was also a hammer-block system similar to those found on S&W revolvers, which is activated when the hammer is cocked in single action. Accordingly, the Rossi is safe to carry with all five cham-

bers loaded. It also included a security lock (like all Taurus revolvers) that requires a key to inactivate and activate the mechanism.

Our initial examination saw a slight bit of wiggle in the cylinder. We ran a range rod down the barrel just to check the chamber-to-barrel alignment and found it was good. All revolvers were within spec, in fact. At the top of the crane was a detent that locked the front of the cylinder to the frame.

The Rossi had a double-action trigger-pull weight of about 12 pounds, and our shooters felt it had the best trigger of all three revolvers — smooth and consistent. We also felt the grip played a part in the trigger pull, providing plenty of leverage for the hand to work against. The trigger itself was smooth and wide, so the pull actually felt less. In double-action operation, there was a perceptible amount of additional finger press needed to fire the revolver due to stacking.

The cylinder latch slid forward to open the cylinder. The grip and the latch allowed unfettered access to the cylinder with a speed loader. A ring appeared around the cylinder shortly after dry firing and testing the Rossi. A ring and marks on both the Charter Arms and RIA also appeared.

At the range the Rossi was very pleasant to shoot due the grip. Cartridges that stung our hands in the other revolvers did not have the same effect in the Rossi. We fired the Rossi for accuracy in single action and were surprised at the accuracy. It particularly liked the Federal ammo, giving us a best 5-shot group of 0.4 inch. Average accuracy was 1.5 inches for 5 shots across the board. The sights, we thought, were good, slightly smaller than the RIA and Charter Arms sights. We would have liked the rear-sight groove to be notched just above the top of the hammer to relieve glare and provide more contrast.

We used a few holsters designed for a S&W J-frame to tote the Rossi and found the size and weight comfortable to bear. The grip was the largest of the three tested, and if

CHARTER ARMS OFF DUTY 53811 38 SPECIAL, $404

GUN TESTS GRADE: A-

The Off Duty started off with a gritty trigger but soon slicked up; it was the lightest and most compact in this test.



Action Type	Double Action Only
Overall Length	6.25 in.
Barrel Length	2.0 in.
Sight Radius	3.8 in.
Overall Height	4.9 in.
Maximum Width	1.3 in.
Weight Unloaded	12 oz.
Weight Loaded	16.1 oz.
Cylinder Gap	.006 in.
Capacity	5

Frame Finish	Matte Aluminum
Barrel/Cylinder Finish	Matte Stainless
Frame Front Strap Height	1.6 in.
Frame Back Strap Height	3.0 in.
Grip	Ribbed Rubber; Finger Grooves
Grip Thickness (max)	1.2 in.
Grip Circumference (max)	5.0 in.
Front Sight	Ramped Blade
Rear Sight	Top Groove
Trigger Pull Weight (Double Action)	12.0 lbs.
Safety	Internal Transfer Bar
Warranty	Limited Lifetime
Telephone	(203) 922-1652
Website	CharterArms.com
Made In	U.S.A.



Accuracy averaged about 2 inches due to the grip size and trigger pull.



The serrated cylinder latch was large and speedloader friendly.



The Charter's ejector rod is nested and in two pieces that snap into the frame. The lock-up was the tightest of the three, our testers said, leading to confidence in its reliability.



Empty cases ejected nicely out of the Charter Arms, as they did from the Rossi and RIA. Function with all three was uneventful, which is what we want.

we were to daily carry this revolver, we would opt for smaller grips. No doubt our comfort shooting would diminish as the grips shrunk.

Our Team Said: The Model R35102 was the most comfortable revolver to shoot and it had the best trigger out of the box. The cylinder had play in it, and the grip was a bit too large for deep carry.

Charter Arms Off Duty 5381
38 Special, $404

The Off Duty was the smallest and lightest as well as the most expensive revolver tested. It had a hammerless design, meaning the hammer was enclosed within the frame, making the Off Duty smooth and snag free. The frame is made of aluminum and left in a matte finish. The barrel, crane, and cylinder are made of stainless steel with a complementary matte finish. As a result, the gun had a subtle two-tone look that some testers liked.

The black rubber grip was minimalist, with finger grooves that positioned our hand in a high, comfortable spot. The sides of the grips also had a slight palm swell and were ribbed for a better grasp. In addition, the grips filled that space behind the trigger guard that the RIA left vacant. In fact, our grip hold was the highest on the Charter Arms, which helped control muzzle flip and perform a fast second shot. We did note that the rubber grip fit to the backstrap overlapped. Not the best fit by any means. We would remove the extra rubber that overlaps the rear back strap. When shooting the Off Duty, we needed to curl the small finger under the grip.

The Charter's cylinder lock up was the tightest of all three with no wiggle, which gave us more confidence in the design. The Off Duty, like the Rossi, locks the cylinder in the front and rear. The Charter Arms uses the ejector rod, which is nested and in two pieces that telescope to snap back into the frame. The cylinder latch was well serrated and large. It is pushed forward to swing out the five-shot cylinder. Both the grips and latch are speedloader friendly. The front edge of the cylinder had a slight chamfer, which aided reholstering.

The Off Duty revolver employs a one-piece frame, while the Rossi and RIA use a side plate on the frame. The one-piece frame makes the small revolver strong while allowing it to be slightly smaller than the two-piece design of the Rossi and RIA.



The backstraps of the RIA (middle) and Charter Arms (right) are exposed and narrow at the top, which transferred recoil to our hands.



The Charter grip (middle) was the smallest and best suited for carry; the Rossi (right) was the largest and most comfortable; the grip of the RIA (left) was dated.

The 2-inch barrel used a full lug that enclosed the ejector rod. The lug was tapered like the Rossi so reholstering was easier. The ramp front sight was milled into the top of the barrel and serrated to minimize glare. The rear sight was a groove along the top. It was also notched so the aluminum rear sight contrasted nicely with the stainless front sight. These were the best sights, in our opinion. Out of the box, the trigger was gritty, but it soon smoothed out with dry-fire practice and range testing. The trigger was serrated in the middle, allowing users to keep the position of their trigger finger the same, even during recoil.

Due to the compact size and light weight of the Off Duty, recoil was most noticeable, whacking the web of our hand at the top position of the grip. The rear of the rubber grips were squared off, and we also felt those edges slap our palms. If the rear edges of the grips were rounded, we believe felt recoil would be less. Though the Off Duty scored lowest in accuracy among the three, we felt 2.0 inches for five shots was acceptable for a close-in defense weapon. We were able to coax it to under an inch with the Federal ammo, and our smallest groups with the Armscor and Hornady ammos hovered around 1.5 inches. The smallish grip and stacking on the last bit of trigger press no doubt hindered accuracy. Empty cases ejected smartly out of the Charter Arms, as they did with the other two.

In concealed carry, the Off Duty shined. It could be carried in a holster designed for a S&W J-frame or dropped in a pants or cargo-pants pocket.

Our Team Said: The Off Duty was the lightest and most compact revolver tested. The trigger was initially gritty, but it smoothed out after use. We would not hesitate to carry this revolver.

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

VALUE GUIDE: TOP-RANKED SNUBNOSE REVOLVERS

GUN NAME	ISSUE	GRADE	COMMENTS
Smith & Wesson PC M627 170133 357 Magnum, $1079	April 2015	A	Well-made, nice-shooting revolver. Ball-detent lock up, chamfered chambers, excellent sights.
Smith & Wesson M686 357 Magnum, $600-$850 (Used)	April 2015	A	Well-designed six-shot revolver. Liked the slender 686 even though it had less capacity.
Smith & Wesson PC M629-8 44 Magnum, $900-$1000	Nov 2014	A	Ported 3-inch barrel, compact grip made this a concealable N-frame our testers really liked.
Smith & Wesson M60 #178013 3-in. Barrel 357 Magnum, $799	Sept 2014	A	Light and thin but packs plenty of power. Adjustable night sights are helpful for carry.
Ruger SP101 Model 5718 357 Magnum, $659	Sept 2014	A	Traditional snubnose. Felt solid in hand, wore a glare-free finish, was snag-free and accurate.
Ruger Lightweight Compact Revolver LCR-BGXS 38 Sp., $575	March 2011	A	The boot grip and the XS sight helped us point-shoot it. A good match to the GP100.
S&W Model 442 Centennial Airweight 38 Special, $400 used	Sept 2010	A	Overall, this revolver had the best DA trigger for precision slow shooting.
Taurus 851 SSUL Ultra Lite Protector 38 Special, $461	June 2005	A	Snagproof adjustable rear sight gives windage adjustment and great sight picture.
Taurus 817 2-817029ULC 38 Special, $440	Sept 2002	A	Porting—love it or hate it. The tradeoffs were very good controllability, but fierce noise.
Ruger SP101 #5759 (3-in. barrel) 327 Federal Magnum, $600-$800	Sept 2014	A-	Added capacity and adjustable rear sight. Limited ammo availability must be a concern.
Ruger LCR No. 5401 38 Special +P, $529	Nov 2013	A-	Polymer skin is a leap from a traditional DAO. Trigger was smooth and easy to use. Recoil was nil.
Smith & Wesson M638 Airweight 163070 38 Special, $459	March 2013	A-	Smaller, narrower grip, but a good choice as a backup due to light weight and small size.
Charter Arms Pitbull 9mm 79920 9mm Luger, $465	March 2013	A-	Largest of the revolvers in the test and most accurate. Operates without moon clips.
Charter Arms Bulldog No. 14420 2.5-in. 44 Special, $414	July 2012	A-	Tight lockup, slim grip. Flat-black finish. We'd like even smaller grips for concealment.
Smith & Wesson Governor, 45 ACP, 45 LC, 410/2.5 In., $679	Aug 2011	A-	Probably the biggest "snub-nose" ever with a 2.5-inch barrel. Innards were just as good as always.
Smith & Wesson Bodyguard 38 103038 38 Special, $509	March 2011	A-	Even without the laser, this is one accurate pocket gun. A lot of innovation for the dollar.
Taurus 905 Model 905SS2 9mm Luger, $528	March 2016	B	The 905 was faster to reload than a traditional 38 Special and performed well.

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.

Practical Target Guns: Kimber And Springfield Go Head to Head

Finicky adjustable sights are often the weakness of target guns that seek to cross over to more dangerous work, but in the Gold Target and Loaded Target tested here, those were not an issue.

In this installment, we pit two practical target guns against each other. By practical target guns we mean accurate and useful 1911 handguns suitable for personal defense, hunting, and some forms of competition. They are not so specialized that they are not holster guns or unreliable for general use. Some target guns simply are not as robust as these handguns. Fragile sights that overhang the slide too far, as an example, are counterintuitive in an all-round packing gun. If an adjustable sight loses its zero in competition, you will lose the match. Losing zero in a personal-defense situation carries a stiffer penalty for failure. Getting down to the nitty-gritty, fiber-optic front sights are not always desirable in a hard-use handgun because they tend to be fragile, even if they deliver superior targeting performance.

On the other hand, a service pistol or a hunting pistol with adjustable sights is desirable given the wide range of bullet weights and velocity available with the 45 ACP cartridge. Gun Tests readers already know that the 1911 Government Model platform is a versatile, go-anywhere do-anything handgun; but the question is, can target performance translate to defensive reliability and handling?



Either handgun would be a great all-round choice, but the Springfield on the left is the better buy by several hundred dollars, we believe.

Target Gun Background

When the National Matches got into full force after World War One, improvements were undertaken on the 1911 handgun. Barrels were welded up and carefully fitted, and high-profile sights were fabricated. These improvements led to the Colt National Match pistol's introduction in 1933. The National Match featured a hand-honed action and two-way adjustable sights. Law officers and outdoorsmen also adopted this relatively expensive handgun. Changes and modification led to the Colt Gold Cup. The sights were fragile in many renditions — not the





Left: Each handgun was comfortable to fire offhand because of modest recoil. Note a spent case in the air as the Kimber cycles. Such control is possible with a steel-frame 1911 handgun. Right: Recoil was greater with +P loads, but the pistols (Springfield shown) remained controllable. Fired at extremely long handgun range, 100 yards, both the Kimber and the Springfield proved accurate and offered plenty of sight adjustment.



The Springfield beavertail grip safety design, left, was preferred to the Kimber, right, due to the generous memory bump (arrow).

case in the newest models — so the shooter wishing to own a service-grade handgun with target sights had to take the custom route. Expedients, such as fitting Smith & Wesson revolver sights to the 1911 slide, were not always successful, but the Bo-Mar sight was an excellent addition to any 1911.

High-visibility adjustable sights are a good thing to have, provided they are reliable in keeping zero, are not fragile, and aren't likely to be damaged. Today, we have the best adjustable-sight 1911 pistols yet from the factory, and our two tests guns put them to excellent use. Here's how they performed.

Kimber Gold Match II 45 ACP, $1311

This price is also from BudsGunShop.com. Though we test each handgun on its own merits, at this point we were coming off the Springfield's run with excellent performance and looking at a handgun that cost $474 more dollars. There had to be superior performance to justify this price increase. The Kimber and the Springfield had been fired in tandem, with each rater taking a turn, during the combat firing phase. The Kimber suffered the same magazine related problems. The Kimber also exhibited the ability to sight the pistol in for any handload on hand. The Kimber is a handsome handgun. The stainless finish is brighter than the Springfield, with better polish. The design of the trigger and hammer differs, but the raters had no clear preference. The mainspring housing of the Kimber is checkered in a different pattern. The cocking serrations are also cut differently, each type has utility.

Each handgun features a full-length guide rod. The Springfield's may be unscrewed for easier disassembly. The sights of the Springfield have a slight overhang over the rear of the slight, noticeable but not anything to affect carrying the pistol. The slide-lock safety of the Kimber worked fine, with a positive indent. We simply like the Armand Swenson-type slide-lock safety of the Springfield better because it is supported by the right-hand grip panel.

Each pistol features a set of grips that are both attractive and serviceable. The Kimber features a firing-pin block that is disengaged by the grip safety. The grip safety of the Kimber works fine, but again we like the Springfield's memory bump design. The Kimber is supplied with two magazines and no accessories.

At this point, after confirming reliability, the match up was shaping up to be a close call. We liked the Springfield's slide lock safety and beavertail safety better. The finish of the Kimber is more attractive. The Kimber had one advantage not easily over looked. The Kimber Gold Match features a trigger compression of 4.25 pounds that we noticed was very smooth. The lighter trigger action, coupled with a truly smooth compression, resulted in better performance when firing in combat-style shooting and also in

RANGE DATA

Handload 200-gr. Hornady XTP	Springfield Loaded Target	Kimber Gold Match II
Average Velocity	980 fps	1011 fps
Muzzle Energy	386 ft.-lbs.	402 ft.-lbs.
Smallest Group	1.4 in.	1.3 in.
Largest Group	2.0 in.	1.6 in.
Average Group Size	1.7 in.	1.5 in.

HPR 185 gr. JHP	Springfield Loaded Target	Kimber Gold Match II
Average Velocity	970 fps	990 fps
Muzzle Energy	480 ft.-lbs.	500 ft.-lbs.
Smallest Group	2.0 in.	1.8 in.
Largest Group	2.4 in.	2.1 in.
Average Group Size	2.2 in.	1.9 in.

Black Hills 230 grain JHP	Springfield Loaded Target	Kimber Gold Match II
Average Velocity	860 fps	871 fps
Muzzle Energy	377 ft.-lbs.	387 ft.-lbs.
Smallest Group	1.8 in.	1.5 in.
Largest Group	2.0 in.	1.8 in.
Average Group Size	1.9 in.	1.6 in.

Notes: Average velocity readings were recorded by firing five-shot strings over a Competition Electronics Pro Chrono. The muzzle was 10 feet from the first sky-screen. Ambient temperature:45 degrees. Elevation: 815 feet above sea level. The accuracy figures are the average of three five-shot groups. For accuracy, we fired the test gun from a benchrest at a 25-yard target. Ammunition sources: HPR 185-gr. JHP ($35.50/50 @ MidwayUSA.com); Black Hills 230-gr. JHP ($18.40/20 @ MidwayUSA.com).



All the accuracy choices gave good results. The Kimber was the more accurate handgun with all the ammo, but the Loaded was fine.

firing at targets at the 100-yard range. The Springfield gave good results with proper trigger control, but the Kimber had an advantage. The single best group of the day off the bench came with the Hornady 200-grain XTP handload, a 1.25-inch group at 25 yards. Trigger compression played a positive role in this performance, we are certain.

Our Team Said: Each handgun gave good performance. There were features that were different, such as the forward cocking serrations, that did the business just as well on one pistol as the other. The significant advantage of the Kimber was its trigger compression. However, for a lot less than $474 dollars, a reputable gunsmith could add a trigger kit to the Springfield and you would still have the superior features and money left over. A Nowlin trigger kit, $145 from Brownells.com (654-012-110WB), is one option.

Springfield PI9132LP Loaded Target 45 ACP, $837

This was a recent price listed at BudsGunShop.com. To be clear, Gun Tests does not have a commercial affiliation with Bud's, but the gun seller often has among the lowest prices we find online, and several Gun Tests readers have spoken favorably about their dealings with Bud's.

The Springfield Loaded Target (we call it the Loaded Model Target, Springfield aspires to more brevity) is a Loaded Model with adjustable sights. Comparison to other Loaded Model handguns on hand doesn't seem to indicate superior fit or a better trigger action, only the addition of adjustable sights. The Loaded Model features included a beavertail grip safety, ambidextrous safety, a full-length guide rod, and forward cocking serrations, as well as a target trigger.

Beyond those elements, the Springfield Loaded Target featured highly developed monolithic adjustable sights. They are similar to the legendary and out-of-production Bo-Mars. These are the same sights we have previously tested with the Springfield 9mm Loaded Target

KIMBER GOLD MATCH II 45 ACP, $1311

GUN TESTS GRADE: A

The Gold Match II offered an excellent trigger action, truly crisp and controllable, excellent accuracy, and sights that offered good adjustment. It was more accurate than the Springfield. The Kimber was reliable, and its final fit and polish were flawless. Still, we felt that the Springfield offered a couple of superior features for much less money.



Action	Semi-Auto, Locked Breech Single-Action
Overall Length	8.5 in.
Overall Height	5.4 in.
Maximum Width	1.5 in.
Weight Unloaded	39 oz.
Weight Loaded	43.5 oz.
Barrel Length	5.0 in.
Barrel	Steel, 1:16 Twist
Magazine	8 Rd. Detachable Box
Slide	Satin Silver Kimpro Stainless Steel
Frame	Satin Silver Kimpro Stainless Steel
Frame Front Strap Height	2.6 in.
Frame Back Strap Height	3.2 in.
Grips	Double-Diamond-Checkered Rosewood
Grip Thickness (max)	1.3 in.
Grip Circumference (max)	5.4 in.
Sights	Adjustable
Trigger Pull Weight Single Action	4.25 lbs.
Trigger Span Single Action	2.5 in.
Safety	Ambi Slide Lock Safety; Grip Safety
Warranty	1 Year
Contact	(888) 243-4522
Website	KimberAmerica.com



Kimber's ambidextrous safety was well fitted, but we liked the reinforced Springfield better.



Kimber's full-length guide rod was well made and fitted well. The gun's function with all loads was excellent. The Kimber Gold Match was well made and well finished, with high marks on every point.



The Kimber's forward cocking serrations were crisply cut and inset into a topnotch final polish.



The Kimber rear sight provided a wide range of adjustment.

and the Range Officer. While each handgun was tested on individual merits, these sights have earned a good reputation among GUN TESTS raters. The range of elevation and windage adjustment is quite large, allowing regulation of point of aim and point of impact with projectiles from 165 to 260 grains at 25 yards. One of our raters is an enthusiastic handloader and enjoyed the task of confirming the utility of these sights while testing a number of his handloads. Compared to the Kimber, the Springfield sights extended very slightly more toward the rear of the frame. The front post of the Kimber is slightly longer.

The barrel ramp exhibited the proper 1/32-inch gap between the two halves of the feed ramp to ensure proper feeding. The pistol fed wide-mouth hollowpoints, lead semi-wadcutter loads, and even the button- type 185-grain SWC target loads, so in our view, feed reliability is not an issue.

The pistol exhibited excellent fit and finish. The stainless-steel Loaded Target presented a matte-stainless exterior versus the high-polished-stainless cosmetics of the Kimber, but it showed a serviceable appearance. The grips were excellent. The laser engraving was attractive, and the cocobolo grips matched the stainless frame well. Trigger compression was good, with a clean break at 5.75 pounds. The grip safety properly releases its hold on the trigger about halfway into its travel. We liked the Memory Groove beavertail safety of the Springfield more than the simpler design of the Kimber. The pistol was supplied with two magazines, a plastic range holster, and a plastic dual-magazine carrier. The pistol was inspected for tool marks and fit and finish, and then lubricated. The Springfield magazines were supplemented by Brownells 7- and 8-round magazines and Chip McCormick PowerMags.

For draw-and-fire exercises, we loaded the magazines with Black Hills Ammunition 230-grain full-metal-jacket rounds. The initial combat sets

SPRINGFIELD PI9132LP LOADED TARGET
45 ACP, $837
GUN TESTS GRADE: A

The Springfield offered excellent reliability, good accuracy, and sights that offer good adjustment. It is accurate, if not quite as accurate as the Kimber. The grips supplied with the handgun are particularly attractive. All told, the Springfield not only earned a solid A rating, it is a Best Buy.



Action	Semi-Auto; Locked Breech Single-Action
Overall Length	8.5 in.
Overall Height	5.4 in.
Maximum Width	1.5 in.
Weight Unloaded	39 oz.
Weight Loaded	43.5 oz.
Barrel Length	5.0 in.
Barrel	Steel, 1:16 Twist
Magazine	8 Rd. Detachable Box
Slide	Stainless Steel
Frame	Stainless Steel
Frame Front Strap Height	2.6 in.
Frame Back Strap Height	3.2 in.
Grips	Laser-Cut Cocobolo
Grip Thickness (max)	1.3 in.
Grip Circumference (max)	5.4 in.
Sights	Adjustable
Trigger Pull Weight Single Action	5.75 lbs.
Trigger Span Single Action	2.5 in.
Safety	Slide Lock Safety, Grip Safety
Warranty	Lifetime
Made In/By	USA/Springfield Armory
Telephone	(800) 680-6866
Website	Springfield-Armory.com



The Springfield Loaded Target showed good barrel-to-slide fit and good accuracy.



The slide-lock safety of the Springfield is hard chromed. We also liked the beavertail safety better than the Kimber.



The slide-lock safety of the Springfield isn't a gas-pedal type, but it is plenty large for rapid manipulation.



Springfield's forward cocking serrations worked well and are good additions to an all-round go-anywhere do-anything handgun, our testers said.



The Springfield, left, has an overhang on the rear sight. The Kimber, right, features a longer front sight. We could detect no practical difference in firing for accuracy.



We prefer the Springfield-type full-length guide rod, left, as it may be disassembled with a wrench. It is a two-piece rod that simplifies disassembly, in our opinion.

included drawing from a Ted Blocker X 16 holster. The targets were placed at 5, 7, and 10 yards. The Springfield was run at speed, firing double taps, controlled pairs, and hammers. The pistol was fast to get on target and cleared leather as quickly as any other 5-inch 1911s we've tested. During firing of 50 rounds of 230-grain FMJ loads, there were three short cycles. However, we experienced the same problem with the Kimber and traced this problem to a Chip McCormick PowerMag. So, each pistol suffered a spate of failures to lock that may have been a break-in malfunction, but more likely were the result of a factory-new magazine with a weak spring. It pays to check your equipment, and this was no exception. There is no starting over to check for break-in malfunctions, but the Springfield did not fail to function during the sighting-in phase otherwise.

The loads tested in both pistols included Cor-Bon 165-grain PowerBall factory loads (1250 fps); a handload of a 185-grain Hornady XTP over Titegroup powder (980 fps); a 200-grain XTP over WW 231 powder (1050 fps [+P]); a 230-grain Oregon Trail roundnose lead bullet over WW 231 powder (790 fps); a 230-grain XTP propelled by Unique powder (872 fps); and a 260-grain NWCP Woodshed bullet running at 780 fps.

We fired 10 to 12 rounds of each handload and the Cor-Bon factory load in both pistols and determined that each could be sighted-in properly for the full range of bullet weights on hand. We were at just over 100 rounds when we had malfunctions that also occurred with the suspect magazine in the Kimber. The pistol was cleaned and lubricated and then fired another 50 rounds on silhouette targets from 15 to 100 yards, and also firing at pine combs and such at the far end of the range on the berm.

The ammunition used in the practical accuracy testing was among the most accurate combinations ever fielded, an old-standard handload using the Hornady 230-grain XTP bullet over Unique powder for 872 fps. Results were good to excellent. This is a fine shooter and a good outdoors handgun. There were no malfunctions of any type.

The barrel was cleaned before the benchrest shooting exercise. A load one of our raters has used to take deer, using the Hornady 200-grain XTP, was included, along with two factory loads, the Black Hills 230-grain JHP along with the HPR 185-grain JHP load. Accuracy was consistent, with the single best group of 1.6 inches with the 200 grain XTP load. The factory loads also provided good performance.

Our Team Said: The Springfield Loaded Target is a reliable handgun with good accuracy. The pistol is a good buy. We liked both the reinforced ambidextrous slide lock safety and the beavertail safety of the Springfield better than the Kimber, though we liked the Kimber sights and trigger action better. However, as we added up features we liked better, the Springfield Loaded Target rose to the top.

Written and photographed by R.K. Campbell, using evaluations from Gun Tests *team testers.* **GT**

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permit and why tens of millions of Americans do too. That permit should be valid in all 50 states. A driver's license works in every state, so it's common sense that a concealed carry permit should work in every state. If we can do that for driving – which is a privilege, not a right – then surely we can do that for concealed carry, which is a right, not a privilege.

MILITARY BASES AND RECRUITING CENTERS. Banning our military from carrying firearms on bases and at recruiting centers is ridiculous. We train our military how to safely and responsibly use firearms, but our current policies leave them defenseless. To make America great again, we need a strong military. To have a strong military, we need to allow them to defend themselves.

All in, I'm heartened by Trump's positions. I'm eager to hear your thoughts on these ideas, and please suggest any others you might want to see him adopt if he wins the general election in November. **GT**

COMING UP IN GUN TESTS

● Three AR Pistols: Kel-Tec PLR-16, Spike's Tactical The Jack, and CMMG Mk4 K. We test three AR-style pistols that run the spectrum from a full-out custom build to a dirt cheap — relatively speaking — polymer model.

● Glock Night Sights: We test six — XS Express Sight Systems 24/7 Big Dot Sight Set for Glock, Truglo night sights, GlockParts.com Glock Night Sights, Battlehook Sights from Henningshop.com, Ameriglo Three Dot sights, and AdvantageTactical.com Sights.

● Optics-Ready Pistols: Smith & Wesson M&P9 Ported, FN-USA FNX-45 Tactical, and Glock's G17 Gen4 MOS. All three are game changers and we liked them — but we preferred one over the others.

● Gauging the 20 for Home Defense: We tested several loads to see which one we'd bet the house on — Federal 2072B 3-inch Magnum #2s, Federal 2582B 3-inch Magnum #2s Vital Shock, Winchester XB203 3-inch Magnum #3, Remington 2.75-inch 20B3 #3s, Remington Slugger 8-REM-SPHV20RS half-ounce slug, and the Federal F203Rs 0.75-ounce slug.

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