GUN TESTS®

THE CONSUMER RESOURCE FOR THE SERIOUS SHOOTER

$5.95 March 2016/Vol. XXVIII, No. 3



AFFORDABLE 9MM PISTOLS

We found a lot of quality in two side-arms priced below $300: The Century Arms TP9SA and the Diamondback Firearms DB FS Nine. But one was a far better gun... — Page 6

RECENT 9MM PISTOL RATINGS — Page 11



9MM REVOLVERS

Which wins: The traditional stainless Taurus 905 five-shooter or the more-modern polymer Ruger LCR in 9mm? — Page 12

TOP-RANKED REVOLVERS — Page 17



SELF-DEFENSE SHOTGUNS

How do Chinese-made Fury Catamounts do against a real, live Saiga 12 gauge? — Page 19

SHOTGUN RATINGS — Page 23



AK ACCURACY

Good enough for deer and hogs? We shoot 8 loads to find out... — Page 24



NEW HANDGUNS FOR 2016

We cover more than two dozen pistols, revolvers, loads, and accessories that shooters will see on shelves later this year... — Page 26

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

2016-03GT1 Cover.indd 1 2/4/16 1:33 PM

DOWNRANGE

GOOD NEWS ON VIRGINIA RECIPROCITY



Todd Woodard

We reported last month that effective Feb. 1, 2016, Virginia would sever concealed handgun permit (CHP) reciprocity ties with 25 of 30 states, likely affecting many GUN TESTS readers. Good news: The cancellation of reciprocity was moved back a month to March 1, about the time this issue arrives in your mailbox. Also, the Virginia Citizens Defense League, Inc., (VCDL), an all-volunteer, non-partisan grassroots organization defending the right to keep and bear arms in the state, said there was a package deal in the works between Governor Terry McAuliffe and the Republicans in the General Assembly dealing with 1) concealed handgun permit (CHP) reciprocity, 2) voluntary background checks at gun shows, and 3) those subject to a permanent domestic violence protection order.

A VCDL release said those three components would be represented by matching bills in the state's House and the Senate bodies. Under the reciprocity section, Virginia will now honor carry permits from all states. "This is considerably better than current law and something VCDL has been trying to get for at least seven years now," the group said in a release.

Because Virginia will honor all other states, Virginia CHPs will be recognized by all the states affected by the reciprocity cancellation, plus three new states will be given reciprocity status: New Hampshire, Georgia, and Colorado. Further, going forward, the State Police and the attorney general will have no say in how reciprocity is handled. If another state requires a formal agreement to honor Virginia CHPs, the new law requires the attorney general to enter into any such agreement.

The VCDL also told its members not to worry about the gun-show background checks. They said, "Background checks for a private sale [at a gun show] are completely voluntary." If a background check is run, the seller receives some special legal protections that are currently not available for private sales. If a background check is not run, the seller doesn't have any more, or any less, legal protections than under current law.

For those gun owners who would feel safer selling a gun to someone who has had a background check, this provides a new option, in addition to the current option of either asking if the person has a CHP or going through the more laborious and expensive route of letting an FFL do the transfer. It also has no effect on private sales conducted anywhere outside of gun shows, where this voluntary option is not provided.

On the third point, persons subject to a permanent domestic violence protection order cannot possess firearms until the order expires. The only permanent protection order this restriction applies to is one for domestic violence and nothing else. VCDL said, "The subject of the protection order must have had his day in court along with any legal counsel. Temporary protection orders do not affect possession of firearms."

We'll notify you if the deal hits major snags, but otherwise, this looks like a pretty good resolution to what could have been a calamity. **GT**

GUN TESTS®
THE CONSUMER RESOURCE FOR THE SERIOUS SHOOTER

Editor ..... W. Todd Woodard
Managing Editor ..... Tracey Taylor
Sr. Product Coordinator.... Kevin Winkle
Contributing Editors ....R.K. Campbell
Roger Eckstine
Robert Sadowski
David Tannahill
Rafael Urista
Ralph Winingham
Social Media Coordinator Cara Blake

TO CONTACT THE STAFF:
GunTestsEditor@icloud.com

GUN TESTS ACCEPTS NO COMMERCIAL ADVERTISING

GUN TESTS ® (ISSN No. 1042-6450) is published monthly by AG Media, Inc.; 111 Corporate Drive, Big Sandy, TX 75755-2446. Periodicals Postage Paid at Big Sandy, TX, and at additional mailing offices.

Copyright © 2016, AG Media. All rights reserved. Reproduction in whole or part is strictly prohibited.

Printed in U.S.A. Revenue Canada GST Account #128044658.

Subscriptions: $49 (U.S.) annually. Outside the U.S. and Canada $72 (U.S.) for one year, $144 (U.S.) for two years. Single copies $7.50 (U.S.). Bulk-rate subscriptions for organizations and educational institutions are available.

Postmaster: Please send address changes to: ***GUN TESTS***, P.O. Box 8535, Big Sandy, TX 75755-8535, or ***GUN TESTS***, P.O. Box 39, Norwich ON, N0J 1P0. **Canada Publishing Agreement** #40016479.

ONLINE SUBSCRIPTION SERVICE:
www.Gun-Tests.com
Click "Contact Us"
Or call toll free (800) 829-9084

BACK ISSUES:
Call (800) 571-1555

2016-03GT1 Cover.indd 2 2/4/16 1:33 PM

Advice for Reader Winslow

A reader who's been there suggests that an elderly relative stick with 38 Specials and not 357 Magnums if she's going to use a revolver for self defense. And how about an AR-15 for ridealong?



Re "Firing Line," February 2016

In last month's Firing Line, reader Winslow asks for advice on a 357 magnum lightweight snubnose revolver for a 75-year-old female cousin. My advice would be, buy the 357 mag if you must, but be sure you can shoot 38 Special in it as well. I own an S&W LadySmith originally bought for my wife. I have fired several dozen 38 Special rounds from it, but only five (one cylinder's worth) of the 357 mags. It was a painful experience, maybe because that attractive rosewood grip doesn't offer much cushion. (It is now wrapped in thick camo tape.) More likely because that is a lot of firepower for a smaller, lightweight firearm. I suspect that 38 Special (not even +P) will be the round of choice with for Winslow's cousin's revolver.

I have read recent Gun Tests articles on various AR rifles, so I recently built an AR with a folding stock. I was attracted to this option because I drive a sports car, and even with a collapsible stock and 16-inch barrel, an AR will not fit in the trunk. The folding stock adapter I chose was one made by Law Tactical (LawTactical.com). It was easy to install, works fine to fold the stock, and adds just a little bit of fiddling when I have to separate the upper and lower. But it is very expensive and adds no additional operating functionality to the firearm, since it should never be fired with the stock folded. Anyway, I have not seen many options for folding stocks on an AR platform, and thought that a review of adapters for them might be in order.

— Jim

I had the notion a couple of years ago that I was going to put some sliding, lockable cabinets in my Tahoe so I could take and get to an AR PDQ should the need arise. I agree with many other shooters that a sidearm allows me to fight my way to my rifle. Maybe a folding stock, like what you suggest, is a better answer than an SBR for portability — less expensive and no tax stamp. Thanks for the suggestion.

— Todd Woodard

Re "DPMS and POF 308 Semi-Autos: Heavy Hitters, or Just Heavy?" February 2016

I would appreciate a little help. I'm wondering why these two diametrically opposed 308s were chosen to oppose one another. By the way, I would pick the DPMS based on price alone. It just seems odd to me that the A- went to a gun you needed a Dremel to open up. The POF's price alone is enough to keep me away. Then we have a 16-inch barrel versus a 20-inch barrel. No wonder the DPMS was lighter. Then we have the stock difference. The DPMS wins with the most commonly available adjustable you can get. The POF has the stock that I commonly see in distance competition or benching. I

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.

2016-03GT2 Firing Line.indd 3 2/4/16 1:42 PM



don't care for it, but it is rock solid with no slop at all. I would have thought that putting your March 2014 Rock River LAR-8 A4 would have been a more similar comparison. Then again, maybe similar is not the intent. Thanks for the chance to express my thoughts. **— John**

Hey John: You're obviously correct; these were diametrically opposed 308s, rifle vs. carbine. We chose these two to see which gun was better suited for a variety of applications: hunting, accuracy, handling, and how the guns would be viewed by different shooters not familiar with the more powerful 308 Win. cartridge. As far as the modification with the Dremel tool, this could have been addressed through the manufacturer, but we chose to deal with it because the modification was simple and not beyond our 'smithing abilities. Like most shooters, we're always looking for value, so we gave the $1000 DPMS an ***A-*** *because it outperformed the high-end POF in all aspects we cared about. — Rafael Urista*

Re "Bad CHL News Come Feb 1," February 2016

While I am not in one of the affected states, I am from Vermont, and we do not require a permit for CC, and no state recognizes our not needing a permit! I can highly sympathize with anyone from a state that is affected. One way to express your dissatisfaction is with your wallet. Do not visit or spend money in Virginia. Let the state's General Assembly know your dissatisfaction and let them know that you will speak with your wallet. There are many places in Virginia that might be worth visiting and spending time and money there. List them. List the length you might have considered staying. The General Assembly is well aware of the money per day that visitors to the state spend on average. The more they hear from dissatisfied people, they might begin to crunch the numbers and reconsider.

I have some dear friends who live in Virginia. Unfortunately, due to some archaic laws in Virginia, we seem to curtail many visits for fear of being stopped or detained while passing through that state. **— Art**

As I mention on page 2 of this issue, the General Assembly is looking for a solution to the reciprocity problem caused by the state's attorney general. His name is Mark R. Herring, and his mailing address is 900 East Main Street, Richmond, Virginia 23219. Or you can call his office at (804) 786-2071. If the current deal between the assembly and Gov. Terry McAuliffe goes through, Herring will have his reciprocity review authority revoked. — tw

Re "Uberti's 1860 Henry Rifle Trumps Henry's 'Original' Lever-Action," February 2016

I am writing in regard to the article on the Uberti 1860 Henry rifle. On page 26 you note that "Remington ammo was balky on entering the chamber," which you attributed to a slight shoulder on the bullet. I had the same problem with a Uberti copy of the Colt Lightning pump action rifle in 45 Colt. I don't think it was the bullet so much as the abrupt shoulder caused by the uncrimped case mouth. It wouldn't matter in a revolver, as you are basically dropping the round into the chamber. However, in the mechanized and horizontal loading process in a lever or pump action, the round will feed better if it presents a smooth profile to the ramp and chamber entrance. I solved the problem by running all of my ammo through a profile crimp die. That pushes the case mouth inward and rounds it slightly, and would



also smooth out lead bullets. It's no different than the crimp I apply to my handloads. I routinely do that to all brands of factory ammo that I purchase for my Lightning or various lever actions. It's cheap (if you already have the reloading equipment) and doesn't take much time.

— John

Thank you for the tip. — tw

Can't Reach Thureon Defense

Enjoy your magazine and the work you do. I have decided to purchase a 45 ACP carbine, so I reviewed past articles and your value guides. However, I struggle to find what I am looking for in the online Gun Tests resource. Even using the advanced search feature, I find it easier to look through my stack of past issues, find what I am looking for, and then use keywords or the magazine issue date to see if I can get to what I am looking for online.

Anyway, based upon your ratings, I decided on a Thureon Defense Carbine. Easier said than done. Over the last couple of weeks, both myself and my local dealer have tried contacting them by phone and email and have gotten zero response. Are they still in business? If they are closed for vacation, are out of stock, or have another reason for not responding, I would think a note on their website, a voicemail message, or an automatic email reply would

2016-03GT2 Firing Line.indd 4 2/4/16 1:42 PM



go a long way toward improved customer service. **— Don**

Don, I will attempt to contact Thureon myself, and I will contact you if I'm successful. Two comments: The performance of the Thureon was faultless. It is simpler than an AR-15 and has the makings of a great carbine. However, a lack of response to dealer and consumer interrogatives is a concern.

— Bob Campbell

Re February 2016 Issue

As I sat here reading my latest copy of Gun Tests, I started to think, I find such great information on so many things in here, but looking at the pistols, why do they all have to look the same? Whatever happened to the personal pride everyone took in their ownership of not only a working tool, but also a masterpiece of design and artwork? In all my years in law enforcement, I took great pride in the firearm I carried, and so did my fellow officers. When anyone saw one of us wearing a sidearm with custom grips, in a spit-shined leather holster, they knew that we were someone who took pride in our firearm and knew just how to use it. Nowadays, when you see an officer with a flat-black piece of plastic sticking out of a plastic or nylon holster strapped to his leg commando-style, you have to wonder where the pride went. Yes, it may look very military-like, but it all looks the same. And I ask myself, can he really use that thing?

The same goes for personal carry. What pride can you take in having a handgun that looks like all the rest? Somehow a square, blocky, hammerless, flat-black piece of plastic, with rails so short that the slide rattles like a 1911 with ten thousand rounds through it, just can't scream pride. If you were to take an example from almost every firearm maker and throw them in a box, shake them up and stand back two feet, you would have a very hard time trying to figure out just what was what. They all look the same!

Whatever happened to steel, wood, a choice of finishes, and last but not least, a hammer and full-length rails? Oh, we all know that most are great-working tools, but you should still be able to take pride in what you carry. There are some very nice, well-thought-out carry handguns out there, but who wants to pay three thousand dollars for an everyday carry gun?

If you like and want plastic, there is always Glock, the ones who started this whole trend of today's handguns. But some of us still think about curves, flow, smoothness, and materials in the design and building of modern sidearms. Thank you.

—Grant

Hey Grant: I don't think you're alone in your nostalgia for handsome, well-cared-for firearms. But the upsides of plastic guns are hard to overlook. They function well; they are easy to care for; they are practically corrosion proof; and, not to be dismissed, they are less expensive on a per-unit basis. The economics of the matter alone are persuasive. But I would wager a lot of other Gun Tests readers agree with you. Thanks for writing. — tw

Print Subscribers: How to Get Web Access to the Archives

Setting up free electronic access to our website allows you to search the **Gun Tests** archives for specific guns — and you get access to the current issue on the web before it hits your mailbox. Also, you can check the status of your subscription account, update your mailing or email address, pay your subscription invoice or renew your subscription, and communicate with the editorial staff. Current subscribers can begin activating free online access by typing this into your browser: **Gun-Tests.com/activate.**

To create your web-access login, you provide your first and last name, the ZIP/Postal Code, and your account number. That's the first 11 digits found on your magazine's mailing label just above your name. If you can't get the account activated, contact us at **Customer_Service@GunTests.info**, or call 1-800-829-9084.

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

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

2016-03GT2 Firing Line.indd 5 2/4/16 1:42 PM

Century Versus Diamondback: Affordable 9mms Butt Heads

Practically every quality handgun has the potential to be the ideal fit for any shooter, but small differences can add up and make one sidearm better than another. That's the case here.

The high-capacity 9mm handgun continues to be a popular personal-defense choice, for good reason. Many of the finest handguns in the world are chambered for the 9mm Luger cartridge and nothing else. In a handgun of 30 ounces or so, loaded recoil is light to manageable. Practical accuracy may be outstanding. A magazine capacity of 15 rounds or more is reassuring and gives a good reserve of ammunition. With these considerations in mind, we tested two modern economy-grade 9mm handguns whose performance was acceptable, especially considering the price, though our shooters found we liked one pistol better.. These two handguns are large for concealed carry, but they are light enough and may be concealed with enough effort and an intelligent holster choice. Certainly, they can be employed in the home, where overall size is less of an issue. Those firing and using compact handguns may not realize how easy bigger handguns are to use well compared to a pocket model.

One such larger handgun that is affordable to boot is the Century Arms TP9SA, which is listed in the company's catalog as SKU HG3277-N. A similar desert tan model is HG3277D-N. We found one selling for $346 at Budsgunshop.com and another one on sale at Cabela's for just under $300. This handgun is manufactured by Samsun Yurt Savunma, a Turkish gun maker, and imported by Century Arms of Delray Beach, Florida. The TP9SA and many of its accessories are marked "Canik," for the Canik 55 division of the manufacturer. So, to be plain about it, the Century Arms TP9SA is a Canik 55 9mm pistol, similar in outline to the Smith & Wesson SW99 and Walther P99. There are enough differences between the Canik and the Walther pistol to say the former is not a clone of the latter, but the Century import is obviously similar to a comparable Walther, being a service-size 9mm with a polymer frame and mid-length slide and a 4.25-inch barrel. Our second test gun was the Diamondback Firearms DB FS Nine DB9FS 9mm Luger, which lists for $483, but which we found at



The pistols are similar in size, with the Diamondback, left, slightly smaller. As you can see, the Diamondback 9mm's slide sits closer to the bore than the TP9SA's slide. The DB's lower bore axis produces less upward recoil.





Both 9mm Luger pistols proved to be pleasant to fire offhand without punishing recoil, and their price tags aren't punishing, either. At left is the Diamondback Firearms DB FS Nine, $265. At right is the Century Arms TP9SA HG3277-N, $346. Our shooters preferred the Century.



The Diamondback, left, has a smaller profile than the TP9SA, depending on where you look. It isn't as tall or as wide, and it is also lighter, 21.5 ounces unloaded versus the Century's unloaded weight of 28 ounces.

2016-03GT3 Full Size 9mm Pistols Century Diamondback.indd 6 2/4/16 2:21 PM

Budsgunshop.com selling for $265. Founded in 2009, Diamondback Firearms is based in Cocoa, Florida. The Diamondback DB9FS is a striker-fired polymer-frame pistol that in general outline resembles the Glock 17. Our shooters noted that the pistol feels different than a Glock, and the overall configuration is markedly different than the Glock. Here's more about these two affordable 9mm pistols:

Century Arms TP9SA HG3277-N 9mm Luger, $346

Upon first examination, we saw the slide was well machined, with no tool marks, and the bevels and machining looked good. Barrel-to-slide fit was acceptable. The barrel hood locked into the ejection port in the SIG/Glock fashion. The cocking serrations on the slide allowed adequate purchase for manipulation. There is a loaded-chamber indicator that rises when the chamber is loaded. To our shooters, the sights seemed small for this type of handgun, but they nonetheless offered an adequate sight picture. The sights displayed a three-dot configuration, along with a white bar on the rear sight in the seldom-seen bar-dot configuration. When cocked, the striker protruded in a witness hole in the rear of the slide. The end of the striker is a visible red color.

We liked the slide-lock design. It wasn't difficult to manipulate, but on the other hand it seemed unlikely to be actuated inadvertently. It was ergonomic, and even raters with short fingers had no difficulty operating the slide lock. There were finger reliefs on each side of the trigger guard to lessen the trigger span. The front strap and rear strap featured raised protrusions to aid grip. The sides of the handle were also roughened. While offering good adhesion, none of these surfaces were uncomfortable when firing, we learned.

It was possible to change the rear strap by removing a pin at the bottom of the grip strap. The grip was large, but fit the raters' hands well. The magazine featured 17 staggered witness holes and held 18 rounds of ammunition. The magazine was not difficult to load to full capacity, although greater effort was needed with the final cartridges. The magazine release was a Browning type with a flat button. We did not like the fact that it isn't protected from activation by a border of some type, but we experienced no problems with it during the firing test.

The pistol field-strips more easily than most, with two comfortable

RANGE DATA

Black Hills Ammunition EXP 115-gr. Jacketed Hollow Point	**Century Arms TP9SA**	**Diamondback DB9FS**
Average Velocity	1240 fps	1201 fps
Muzzle Energy	392 ft.-lbs.	368 ft.-lbs.
Smallest Group	2.1 in.	2.5 in.
Largest Group	2.5 in.	3.0 in.
Average Group Size @ 25 Yards	2.3 in	2.8 in.

Fiocchi Ammunition 124-gr. JHP SJHP 9APBHP	**Century Arms TP9SA**	**Diamondback DB9FS**
Average Velocity	1121 fps	1099 fps
Muzzle Energy	345 ft.-lbs.	332 ft.-lbs.
Smallest Group	2.2 in.	2.6 in.
Largest Group	2.6 in.	3.0 in.
Average Group Size @ 25 Yards	2.4 in.	2.8 in.

Winchester PDX1 Defender +P 124-gr. Bonded Jacketed HP	**Century Arms TP9SA**	**Diamondback DB9FS**
Average Velocity	1226 fps	1198 fps
Muzzle Energy	413 ft.-lbs.	395 ft.-lbs.
Smallest Group	2.0 in.	2.8 in.
Largest Group	2.4 in.	3.4 in.
Average Group Size @ 25 Yards	2.3 in.	3.2 in.

To collect accuracy data, we fired five-shot groups off a solid bench rest. We recorded velocity with a Shooting Chrony Master Chronograph, with the first skyscreen set 10 feet from the muzzle. Tested ammunition was from MidwayUSA.com: Black Hills Ammunition 115-grain EXP cost $14.57/20; Fiocchi 124-grain semi-jacketed hollowpoint rounds were $17/50; and Winchester 124-grain PDX1 +P cartridges were $22/20.



Regardless of the load, we got back on target fast with every shot using these full-size 9mm handguns. All of the loads proved reliable, except for one hiccup in the Diamondback. The Black Hills 115-grain EXPs and Fiocchi 124-grain Extremas shot 2.3- and 2.4-inch average groups in the Century Arms handgun, and 2.8-inch averages in the Diamondback. The Ranger LE ammo was used as another function-check round during live-fire drills.

2016-03GT3 Full Size 9mm Pistols Century Diamondback.indd 7 2/4/16 2:21 PM

spring-loaded levers under the ejection port. We liked this system better than the Glock type used with the Diamondback. The recoil-spring guide was plastic, and the recoil spring seemed strong enough. The frame featured a rail for mounting a combat light or other accessory.

Now to the action. The earlier TP9 is a double-action first-shot handgun. The TP9SA, as the name suggests, is a single-action handgun, like the Springfield XD. To operate, the slide is racked, cocking the striker. There is a firing-pin block and a lever set in the trigger to prevent lateral or dropped gun discharges. The TP9SA's trigger breaks at 5.5 pounds but with considerable take up. If you keep your finger on the trigger, you need not run through the take up again during firing strings because the trigger reset is short and rapid.

The conversion to single-action fire brings about an odd feature. The decocker of the double-action TP9 is retained, and it decocks the TP9's double-action-first-shot trigger. With the TP9SA, the action is decocked with a cartridge in the chamber. The chamber is loaded, but the slide must be racked to reset the striker. We filled the primer pocket of a dummy training cartridge and decocked the piece with the training round chambered and found the pistol did not fire. We feel that this feature has little merit, save to decock the piece for storage.

The TP9SA was supplied with a Serpa-type plastic belt holster. Both belt- and paddle-holster attachments were supplied. While not Blackhawk quality, we found the Canik-marked holster to be superior to many other plastic holsters. In particular, it served well as a range holster, with good retention because the draw required the holster's latch to be actuated on each draw.

The pistol was lubricated and prepared for the initial combat-firing stage. In initial firing, we used Winchester 147-grain Train & Defend FMJ loads ($13.47/50 from AmmunitionDepot.com) and Fiocchi 124-grain semi-jacketed hollowpoints.

CENTURY ARMS TP9SA HG3277-N 9MM LUGER, $346

GUN TESTS GRADE: A-

It was reliable, and the trigger action was the better of the two guns tested. We would have liked better accuracy.



Action	Semi-Auto, Locked Breech Single Action
Overall Length	7.55 in.
Overall Height	5.7 in.
Maximum Width	1.3 in.
Weight Unloaded	28 oz.
Weight Loaded	33.2 oz.
Barrel	4.5 in. Long; Hammer-Forged Steel
Magazine	(2) 18-Rd. Detachable Box
Slide	Steel; Front/Rear Cocking Serrations
Frame	Polymer; Rev. Mag. Catch; M1913 Rail
Frame Front Strap Height	2.75 in.
Frame Back Strap Height	~3.65 in.; (2) Interchangeable Straps
Grips	Textured Grip Frame
Grip Thickness (max)	1.25 in.
Grip Circumference (max)	5.6 in.
Sights	3-Dot Steel
Trigger-Pull Weight, Single Action	5.5 lbs.
Trigger Span Single Action	2.75 in.
Safety	Firing Pin Block, Trigger Lever
Decocker	Ambi Slide Mounted
Loaded Chamber Indicator	Yes
Cocking Indicator	Yes
Warranty	Limited Lifetime
Telephone	(800) 527-1252
Website	CenturyArms.com
Made In	Turkey
Imported By	Century Arms, Delray Beach, FL



The pistol field-strips easily enough, using two comfortable spring-loaded levers under the ejection port for breakdown. We liked this system better than the Glock type used with the Diamondback.



Bottom arrow: The slide lock lever is a particularly good design feature, we felt, but the decocker (top arrow) on the upper slide is of dubious value.



Right: The rear sight had two white dots and a bar. The striker is uncocked here, with no red tip showing.



Right: The TP9SA comes with a holster, spare magazine, and lockable box — a good accessories package.

2016-03GT3 Full Size 9mm Pistols Century Diamondback.indd 8 2/4/16 2:21 PM

DIAMONDBACK FIREARMS DB9FS 9MM LUGER, $265

GUN TESTS GRADE: B-

Attention to detail was lacking, in our view. The sights were not well regulated from the factory. We fixed that, but suffered a short cycle that we did not experience with the other pistol. Accuracy was poor. The magazines were difficult to load.



Action	Semi-Auto; Locked Breech Single Action
Overall Length	7.8 in.
Overall Height	5.6 in.
Maximum Width	1.25 in.
Weight Unloaded	21.5 oz.
Weight Loaded	26.5 oz.
Magazine	(2) 15-Rd. Detachable Box
Barrel	4.75 in. Long; Melonited Chromemoly Steel
Slide	Stainless Steel; Front and Rear Cocking Serrations
Frame	Polymer; Double Stack w/1913 Rail Dust Cover; Flared Magwell
Frame Front Strap Height	2.5 in.
Frame Back Strap Height	3.6 in.
Grips	N/A
Grip Thickness (max)	1.25 in.
Grip Circumference (max)	5.6 in.
Sights	Steel; Fixed 3-Dot
Trigger Pull Weight	6.5 lbs.
Trigger Span	2.75 in.
Safety	Firing Pin Block; Trigger Lever
Loaded Chamber Indicator	Yes
Cocking Indicator	Yes
Warranty	Limited Lifetime
Telephone	(877) 997-6774
Website	DiamondbackFirearms.com
Made In	USA

The Diamondback fields-strips easily. Fit was not tight. The takedown resembles that of a Glock, with two levers on the frame that are depressed to remove the slide. When we field-stripped it, the recoil rod and spring easily fell out of the slide.



Fired from a braced position, the Diamondback was comfortable to shoot. It just wasn't as accurate as the TP9SA. The slight cutout under the trigger guard helps the pistol sit lower in the hand.



The only malfunction during the test was a failure to eject with the Diamondback. The Diamondback 9mm proved to be the better performer during combat drills, our shooters said.



One of the raters also supplied a box of Winchester Rangers, marked LEO-only but often available at gun shows. At the range, the TP9SA's handle offered good purchase when drawing the pistol. Initial work was done engaging human-silhouette targets at 5, 7, and 10 yards. During firing, the pistol seemed slide heavy. This isn't uncommon with polymer-frame handguns. The TP9SA never failed to feed, chamber, fire, or eject with 50 rounds of Winchester 147-grain 9mm and 40 rounds of Fiocchi 124-grain Extrema. Once we learned how to drive the slide up for the proper sight picture, hits were nicely centered. However, the pistol did not like 147-grain loads. With bullets traveling at 950 fps, the slide seemed to hang at the end of its travel, and we expected — but did not see — a short cycle.

Moving to accuracy testing, we used the Fiocchi load, the Winchester 124-grain +P load, and the Black Hills 115-grain EXP, a jacketed hollowpoint that's not rated +P. Accuracy was acceptable, but we wanted more light in the sight picture. The best group at 2.0 inches was fired with the Winchester 124 grain +P. Three inches at 25 yards is deemed adequate for service use, so the TP9SA is adequate.

Our Team Said: Eye appeal and hand fit will sway the potential customer at the counter, and at the range, our test pistol was reliable. Also, the trigger allowed good control. The slide-lock position is ideal for a combat gun, and we liked the takedown manual of arms. The decocker is questionable, but it hurts nothing. The sights are adequate. Our worry about the magazine release's exposure resolved itself when a rater wore the pistol extensively in a Falco IWB, and it stayed put. This pistol is yet another entry in the crowded polymer-frame 9mm field, and we think it offers a lot for the money.

Diamondback Firearms DB FS Nine 9mm Luger, $265

The price cited above is for just the gun at Budsgunshop.com. We actually acquired our test sample as a package with a Bulldog Safe for $400 at AcademySports.com. As we

2016-03GT3 Full Size 9mm Pistols Century Diamondback.indd 9 2/4/16 2:21 PM

noted earlier, the pistol resembles a Glock 17, but it feels different and the overall configuration is different than the Glock. The DB has a modern look that many find appealing.

It came with two 15-round magazines. The sights were high profile and easily picked up during rapid-paced combat drills. The pistol does not incorporate a changeable backstrap in the design. So, in our view, the pistol will not fit as many hands well. The grip texture received high ratings for good adhesion without excess abrasion. The grip top ends in a modest beavertail. The trigger guard is undercut, which results in a lower bore axis in the hand and should translate to less muzzle flip. The pistol featured forward cocking serrations. Some might say the serrations are aggressive, others might find them downright sharp.

The trigger breaks the mold for polymer-frame guns in that it is metal. The drop-safety lever set in the trigger will prevent discharge from trigger movement if it hits the ground, and the lever must be depressed to allow the trigger to move to the rear. The trigger action is more similar to the SIG P320 than a Glock, in our estimation. When the trigger is pressed, the firing pin is moved to the rear, but slightly. The action is similar to that found on the Springfield XD, including a firing pin that protrudes from the rear of the slide. Trigger compression was 6.5 pounds. The slide lock and magazine release were well designed and easy to manipulate. Takedown is the Glock type, with two levers on the frame that are depressed to remove the slide from the frame. The trigger must be released, uncocked, before the slide may be removed. When we field-stripped the piece, the recoil rod and spring fell out of the barrel without any effort on our part.



Above: The Diamondback's forward cocking serrations worked well, and it had more mounting slots for accessories than the Century Arms TP9SA, below. Even so, we had no issues putting a range of lights on both guns.







Top: The Diamondback pistol does not incorporate a changeable backstrap in its design, as does the Canik/Century Arms pistol's grip, bottom. However, the DB's grip texture received high ratings for offering good adhesion without too much abrasion. The Century comes with two backstrap panels, which are removed by pressing in a release in the hole and popping off the panel.

The sights were acceptable for combat use, larger than the TP9SA's but offering a similar sight picture. The light rail offered good functional fits with the combat lights tested.

We lubricated the pistol and loaded the magazines with the same type of ammunition used in the TP9SA. The first thing we noticed was that the Diamondback slide sat lower in the hand than the other pistol, so the FS Nine has a lower bore axis. The pistol also has a smaller profile than the TP9SA, depending on where you look. It isn't as tall or as wide, but it is longer. It is also lighter, 21.5 ounces unloaded versus the Century's unloaded weight of 28 ounces.

During the firing tests the Diamondback 9mm proved to be a better performer during combat drills, our shooters said. The low bore axis and better overall hand fit proved to be an advantage. During firing, we had one short cycle, a failure to fully eject a casing from a Winchester 147-grain round. There were no other failures to feed, chamber, fire, or eject when firing this out-of-the-box-new handgun. The DB's magazine capacity was three rounds fewer than the TP9SA, and our shooters found the magazines were more difficult to load. We used the magazine loader supplied with the TP9SA to help us. During combat firing, we noted that the pistol fired to the left by about 3 inches, which required drifting the rear to get shots lined up.

Accuracy lagged behind the TP9SA, around 3 inches at 25 yards. The heavier trigger action may have contributed to the results. Accuracy was good enough to be useful for personal defense, but we wouldn't call it good. The best group came with the Black Hills load with a group of 2.5 inches.

We didn't spend a lot of time with the Bulldog Gun Vault, but we can say it made for an interesting package at $400. One of the raters noted a few dealers offered the combination for $320, which is more reasonable.

Our Team Said: Based on the results of our head-to-head shooting, our raters preferred the TP9SA, which had more features, including a good range holster and a changeable backstrap, and better accuracy. Also, the TP9SA's magazines hold three more rounds of ammunition. To its credit, the Diamondback was more controllable during combat-firing drills due to its low bore axis, and the Diamondback has a smaller footprint and is lighter, if you wanted it for concealed carry.

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

2016-03GT3 Full Size 9mm Pistols Century Diamondback.indd 10 2/4/16 2:21 PM

VALUE GUIDE: RECENT 9MM LUGER PISTOL RATINGS

GUN NAME	ISSUE	GRADE & COMMENTS
Springfield XD Mod.2 3.0-Inch XDG9801HCSP 9mm Luger, $556	Feb 2016	**Grade A:** This 9mm model offered fast recovery time, 13-round capacity, and was only 6.25 inches long.
Springfield Loaded Target PI9134LP 9mm Luger, $873	Sept 2015	**Grade A:** Function of the Loaded Model was flawless. Stainless construction, nice trigger made the deal.
Springfield 1911 Range Officer PI9129LP 9mm Luger, $704	Sept 2015	**Grade A:** An easy-shooting 1911 with first-rate fit, finish, and barrel-to-slide fit. Excellent adjustable sights.
Glock 43 Subcompact PI4350201 9mm Luger, $499	Aug 2015	**Grade B+:** If you can carry a larger pistol, you should, but the Glock 43 is a good slim line pistol.
Walther Concealed Carry Pistol CCP 5080300 9mm Luger, $452	Aug 2015	**Grade C:** The CCP had features we liked, but not enough to overcome its complicated takedown and failures.
Bersa Thunder Ultra Compact Pro 9mm Luger, $405 (Used)	June 2015	**Grade A:** Trouble free, capable of delivering MOA accuracy and adaptable to any size shooter.
Smith & Wesson Model 908 103882 9mm Luger, $350 (Used)	June 2015	**Grade B:** The design of the slide resulted in a higher bore axis than the Bersa; lacked an ambidextrous safety.
Heckler & Koch VP9 9mm Luger, $630	March 2015	**Grade A:** Ergonomics are excellent. Hand fit can be customized, with more extra panels than the other handguns.
Walther PPQ M2 Navy SD 2796082 9mm Luger, $576	March 2015	**Grade B:** Mag release was too light for a defensive handgun. Sights were not well regulated for 115-grain ammo.
SIG Sauer P320 320F9BSS 9mm Luger, $579	March 2015	**Grade B:** Lack of an easily changeable grip strap and heavy trigger were demerits. Also the heaviest.
Springfield Armory XD-S 3.3 XDS9339B 9mm Luger, $494	Feb 2015	**Grade A:** Our Pick, the XD-S was a great shooter. The pistol was reliable. We liked the safety features.
Ruger LC9s Standard #3235 9mm Luger, $339	Feb 2015	**Grade A:** Best Buy. We found the Ruger to be reliable and accurate enough. The price is low for a reliable handgun.
Beretta BU9 Nano JMN9S15 9mm Luger, $369	Feb 2015	**Grade B-:** We rated the pistol down for its small sights, heavy trigger, and worst-of-group accuracy.
Beretta 92A1 Compact Inox with Rail J90C9F20 9mm Luger, $650	Nov 2014	**Grade A:** Stainless-steel construction, manual safety, light rail, and excellent accuracy added up to high marks.
Smith & Wesson M&P9c 209004 9mm Luger, $480	Oct 2014	**Grade A-:** This subcompact is as slick as possible, with no protruding controls and no manual safety.
Heckler & Koch P2000SK 709302-A5 9mm Luger, $866	Oct 2014	**Grade B+:** A thoroughly modern handgun with good features. Extended slide lock an advantage in combat drills.
Springfield Armory XDM 3.8 XD-M9389CBHC 9mm Luger, $1056	June 2014	**Grade A:** The Custom Shop trigger job was better than we thought possible from a striker-fired pistol.

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.

2016-03GT3 Full Size 9mm Pistols Century Diamondback.indd 11 2/4/16 2:21 PM

9mm Luger Snubnose Revolvers: Ruger LCR versus Taurus 905

Is a 9mm wheelgun an odd pairing of cartridge and firearm — or a viable option for self defense? We take a look at two solid choices in traditional stainless steel and more modern polymer.

The 9mm is the most popular handgun cartridge in the world, in use with most military forces and LE agencies; in fact the FBI announced in 2014 that it is switching back to the 9mm after having used the 40 S&W since 1997. When we think snubnose revolvers, we typically think 38 Special, but since the mid-20th century, revolver manufacturers have been building short-barreled wheelguns chambered for 9mm semi-automatic pistol ammunition. In the past we tested two such 9mm Luger chamberings, an S&W Model 940 (C+) and Charter Arms Pitbull (A-). We noted then that 9mm compact semi-automatic pistols have an edge over 38 Special revolvers due to the semi-automatic's higher round capacity, but in the revolver, the playing field between 38 Special and 9mm Luger is leveled, as far as round counts go.

Now, ballistic technology has made the once underperforming 9mm better. We have done a number of tests comparing 9mm and 38 Special ammunition from short-barrel handguns, and, generally speaking, the 38 Special runs bullets with weights from 110 to 158 grains at muzzle velocities of 900 fps to 1000 fps. The typical 9mm uses bullet weights from 115 to 147 grains at speeds of 910 fps to 1100 fps. So the 9mm has a slight performance advantage over the 38 Special. A bigger nod goes to the availability and affordability of 9mm ammo, which can be found nearly anywhere in the world, and which domestically costs about 17 cents a round compared to 25 cents a round for 38 Special.

There are other reasons to look at 9mms in wheelguns. We feel the ability to swap ammo between our semi-auto and our revolver makes sense, with only one type of cartridge to purchase. New shooters usually find revolvers to be less complicated to operate, so if your home-defense backup isn't familiar with semi-autos, you can still partner a high-cap 9mm semi-auto with a low-cap 9mm wheelgun pretty easily.

Though some testers groaned when they saw the 9mm revolvers in this test, saying they were as unnatural as three-wheel motorcycles, they put their prejudices aside and found these revolvers performed well at the range. The Ruger LCR Model 5456 9mm Luger debuted in 2014, and the Taurus 905 has been around since 2003. Unlike the Charter Arms Pitbull (which does not use moon clips, but instead employs a retention spring built into the ejector that fits under the 9mm cartridge's rim), the LCR 9mm and the 905, like the S&W Model 940, use five-shot moon clips. Moon clips have been the standard convention when chambering semi-automatic cartridges in revolvers since 1917, when 45 ACP was chambered in S&W and



The Ruger LCR at left ($619) and the Taurus 905 ($528) are two revolvers originally designed to fire the 38 Special cartridge and retrofitted to fire the semi-automatic 9mm cartridge. They are both suitable defense revolvers.

The LCR, below, is a better carry option due to weight, grip design, and double-action trigger pull. We have some mild concerns about the tackiness of the grips hanging on clothing, but your mileage may vary.



2016-03GT4 9mm Revolvers Ruger Taurus.indd 12 2/4/16 3:31 PM

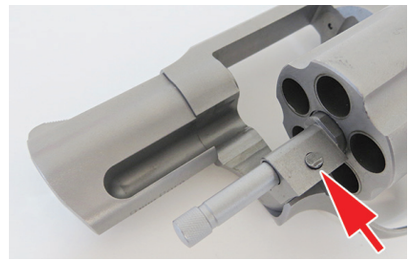
TAURUS 905 MODEL 905SS2 9MM LUGER, $528

GUN TESTS GRADE: B

The 905 was faster to reload than a traditional 38 Special and performed well. The trigger and sights were serviceable, and that is reflected in the lower cost.



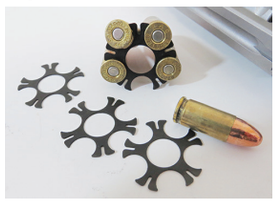
Action Type	Double-Action Revolver
Overall Length	6.5 in.
Barrel Length	2.0 in.
Sight Radius	4.0 in.
Overall Height	4.37 in.
Maximum Width	1.3 in.
Weight Unloaded	22.2 oz.
Weight Loaded	24.2 oz.
Cylinder Gap	0.007 in.
Capacity	5
Frame Finish	Matte Stainless
Barrel/Cylinder Finish	Matte Stainless
Frame Front Strap Height	2.1 in.
Frame Back Strap Height	3.0 in.
Grip	Checkered Rubber
Grip Thickness (max)	1.1 in.
Grip Circumference (max)	4.75 in.
Front Sight	Ramped Blade
Rear Sight	Fixed Groove
Trigger Pull Weight (SA)	4.8 lbs.
Trigger Pull Weight (DA)	14 lbs.
Safety	Transfer Bar, Security Lock
Warranty	Lifetime Limited
Telephone	(800) 327-3776
Website	TaurusUSA.com
Made In	Brazil

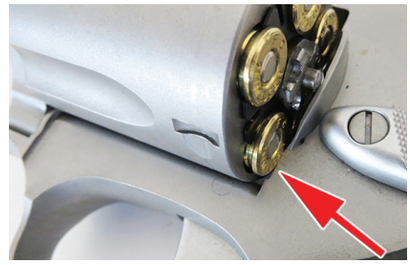


The 905 has a detent built into the crane (arrow) that sank into a notch in the frame to lock the cylinder in the front. Lock up was tight on the Taurus 905, with no gap between the crane and frame.



Right: Moon clips make loading the 905 fast because the 9mm cartridges (below) are tapered and short. Taurus provides five moon clips with the 905 revolver.





Note where the cartridge case is hitting the frame; we experienced this condition after about 200 continuous rounds. We also encountered some binding due to fouling.

Colt's large-frame revolvers. Moon clips mean the revolver is fast to reload — nearly as fast as a magazine change in semi-auto. But, as we have found in the past, carrying a spare moon clip in one's pocket can lead to bent clips, making them inoperable. Not that this a show stopper, just an attribute of moon clips in general. So don't put a moon clip in your rear pants pocket and sit down. In fact we loaded both the Ruger and Taurus moon clips provided with the test guns and dropped them onto a concrete floor from waist height to see if the cartridges would fall out or the clips bend. A cartridge from each clip popped out after the drop, but there was no sign of bending. Another cost we looked at was how much moon clips go for. Brownells.com lists three moon clips for $12.99 (#780-001-371WB), less than one semi-auto magazine. The moon clips from Taurus and Ruger were not compatible with the other manufacturer's revolver. We should note that single cartridges can be loaded into the chambers of the Ruger and Taurus wheelguns and fired safely, since the 9mm case headspaces on a step in the chambers. In that case however, extraction without a moonclip requires each case be pushed out with a pencil, pen, or similar skinny object.

Because these are lightweight revolvers, we checked them to see if bullets would begin to pull out of the case due to the revolver's light weight and recoil. This is typically an issue with lead bullets, but it can happen with jacketed ammo. The OAL of our 115-grain bullet handload measured 1.07 inches. We loaded a test cartridge, along with four others of the same, in a moon clip and fired four rounds, then measured the fifth round to see if the bullet was working its way out of the case. We noted the OAL was now 1.11 inches, so the bullet had begun to work its way out of the case by 0.04 inches. This is worth noting but it isn't a major concern with these 9mm revolvers, because there is a lot of space in the chamber from the tip of a cartridge

2016-03GT4 9mm Revolvers Ruger Taurus.indd 13 2/4/16 3:31 PM

to the front of the cylinder — about a half-inch on both the Ruger and Taurus with 147-grain FMJ bullets. With lighter (shorter) bullets, the space is slightly more. Even if the crimp begins to fail, as we saw with the handloaded cartridges, and the bullet partially works its way out the case, the cylinder will still rotate without fear of binding on a dislodged bullet. This is another good reason to test-fire your actual defense ammo in your revolver. Here's what else we found about these 9mm revolvers:

Taurus 905 Model 905SS 9mm Luger, $528

This is the actual sales price at Gallery of Guns' Gun Genie. The 905 is a traditional snubnose constructed of stainless steel and wearing a non-glare matte finish. Metalwork was well executed, and we noted that Taurus has rearranged its roll marks. The caliber marking is found on the bottom side of the barrel lug and is marked "9mm Para." with no indication if the revolver is safe for +P or +P+ loads. A look through the manual indicated the Taurus revolver can handle +P loads, but not +P+. It also states using +P loads "…may affect the useful life of the firearm…." The Taurus logo was located on the right side of the revolver on the sideplate and was well executed. The hammer and trigger had a brighter finish. The trigger was smooth, and the hammer spur was well checkered for thumb cocking and single-action shooting. The cylinder locked up in the rear, and a detent at the top of the crane snapped into a notch in the frame. The ejector rod was housed in a full-length barrel shroud. The cylinder latch was low profile, so it was not in the way when loading the moon clips. The cylinder locked up tight with the crane and frame.

Sights consisted of a serrated-ramp front-sight blade machined into the barrel. A groove along the top strap served as the rear sight, with a U-shaped notch at rear that helped contrast the front sight from the rear. We thought the sights were serviceable but not super. The muzzle

RUGER LCR MODEL 5456 9MM LUGER, $532

GUN TESTS GRADE: A-

The LCR has a buttery-smooth trigger, and the grip design stands out from traditional snub-nose revolvers. Plus, it is lightweight.



Action	Double-Action-Only Revolver
Overall Length	6.5 in.
Barrel Length	1.875 in.
Sight Radius	3.5 in.
Overall Height	4.5 in.
Maximum Width	1.3 in.
Weight Unloaded	17.2 oz.
Weight Loaded	19.2 oz.

Cylinder Gap	0.007 in.
Capacity	5
Frame Finish	Matte Black
Barrel/Cylinder Finish	Matte Black
Frame Front Strap Height	1.7 in.
Frame Back Strap Height	3.0 in.
Grip	Hogue Tamer Monogrip
Grip Thickness (max)	1.2 in.
Grip Circumference (max)	5.2 in.
Front Sight	Ramped Blade
Rear Sight	Fixed Groove
Trigger Pull Weight	10.5 lbs.
Safety	Transfer Bar
Warranty	None Written
Telephone	(928) 541-8892
Website	Ruger.com
Made In	USA



The front of the LCR's cylinder is held by a detent that snaps in the front of the ejector rod (arrow). Lock up was tight, and there was little play side to side or front to rear. In fact, both revolvers locked up tightly.





The Ruger comes with three moon clips; both Ruger and Taurus moon clips failed a drop test.



Brass marks on the frame indicate cartridges did rub against the frame when closing the cylinder. The LCR is made of polymer, aluminum, and steel. The cylinder is stainless steel and is traditionally fluted. The fire-control housing is polymer, while the frame assembly is aluminum, with a stainless-steel barrel sleeve in the frame. The Ruger was five ounces lighter than the Taurus, which is significant for daily carry. Our shooters liked it.

2016-03GT4 9mm Revolvers Ruger Taurus.indd 14 2/4/16 3:31 PM

was crowned to protect the rifling from damage.

The 905 also sports Taurus' new rubber grip, which has finger grooves, left and right palm swells, and texture on the sides and backstrap. A ridge on each side of the grip for right- or left-handed shooters positions the second finger almost level with the bottom of the trigger guard. We thought the grips were well executed and did a good job of filling up the space behind the trigger guard. We did note that the design of the LCR allowed for a higher grip, which we preferred. A roll-pin punch and hammer is required to remove the grip from the Taurus. These grips were smaller than the Ruger's grips.

The 905 has a transfer-bar system, so the revolver is safe to carry with all five chambers loaded. A security system can be engaged via a key in the rear of the hammer that locks the works and disables the revolver when stored.

The Taurus has the ability to be fired both single action and double action, and the SA fire was an advantage during accuracy testing because the Taurus had a DA trigger-pull weight of about 14 pounds. We did experience stacking in DA, meaning there was a perceptible amount of additional finger press needed to fire the revolver near the end of the trigger cycle. The trigger on the Ruger was much smoother and lighter, in our opinion. In our speed drill, firing five shots as fast as possible at a target 7 yards away, testers could control the Ruger better due to the grip design. The Taurus was very controllable, but the Ruger had an edge.

The moon clips were easy to load and unload empty cases, and unlike 45 ACP moon clips, these clips do not need a case removal tool. Instead, the cases come off easily, using your fingers. Some were even loose, so if they are carried in a pocket, a cartridge may fall out during everyday carry. We'd make sure the spare moon clip has a good purchase on the cartridges and carry the clips in a spare ammo carrier like you would a speedloader. They do bend easily, so acquiring more clips is a good idea because they will not last the life of the revolver like a magazine may with a pistol. The 905 and LCR 9mm can be loaded with 9mm cartridges without the moon clip, but empty cases need to

RANGE DATA

American Eagle 9mm 115-gr. FMJ	**Taurus 905**	**Ruger LCR**
Average Velocity	992 fps	996 fps
Muzzle Energy	251 ft.-lbs.	254 ft.-lbs.
Smallest Group	1.7 in.	1.7 in.
Average Group Size @ 15 Yards	2.1 in.	2.1 in.

Winchester NATO 9mm 124-gr. FMJ	**Taurus 905**	**Ruger LCR**
Average Velocity	1079 fps	1077 fps
Muzzle Energy	321 ft.-lbs.	319 ft.-lbs.
Smallest Group	0.7 in.	0.9 in.
Average Group Size @ 15 Yards	1.2 in.	1.5 in.

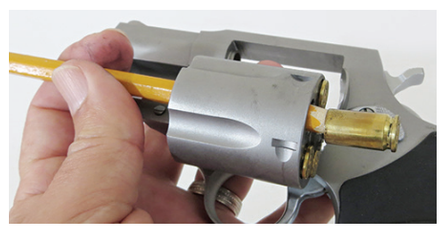
Atlanta Arms 9mm 147-gr. FMJ	**Taurus 905**	**Ruger LCR**
Average Velocity	808 fps	811 fps
Muzzle Energy	213 ft.-lbs.	215 ft.-lbs.
Smallest Group	1.1 in.	0.9 in.
Average Group Size @ 15 Yards	1.4 in.	1.1 in.

To collect accuracy data, we fired five-shot groups from a bench using a rest. The Ruger was fired double action, and the Taurus was fired single action. We recorded velocities using a ProChrono digital chronograph with the first screen set 15 feet from the muzzle.





Above: Empty cases do not fully eject from either handgun, so gravity assist is required. Below: Both revolvers will fire 9mm Luger rounds without a moon clip, but the ejectors will not shuck empties. A pencil or pen is required to eject empties from each chamber in the revolvers when the shooter is not using a moon clip. For what it's worth, empties fell out of the Taurus easier than the Ruger, in our estimation.





2016-03GT4 9mm Revolvers Ruger Taurus.indd 15 2/4/16 3:31 PM

be manually ejected with a rod. We liked this feature as a fail safe, but would hate to be in a situation where we needed to poke out those empties. All the more reason to carry extra moon clips.

At the range, the 905 was easy to control, even with the snappy Win. NATO 124-grain cartridges. The new-style grip helped to control and spread recoil better in the palm of our hands. The front sight in bright light was difficult to see for accuracy work, but at close range it was adequate. After extensive shooting, about 200 rounds, we noticed the 905 was more difficult to load due to fouling. We also noticed we had to be sure the cartridges were set fully in the chambers. If they were not, the case rim would catch on the side of the frame and prevent closing the cylinder. Because these revolvers are not designed for extended shooting sessions, we'd advise to give it a thorough cleaning after each use. We did not experience this issue with the LCR, but we did notice brass marks on the LCR's frame, indicating some cartridge rims rubbed against its frame as well.

Our Team Said: The Model 905 is a sturdy revolver, what we have come to expect in a traditional snubnose. We felt the new-style grips were comfortable without adding bulk. The trigger pull was heavy in double action, but it had the ability to be fired single action.

Ruger LCR Model 5456 9mm Luger, $532

This is the average price of the 5456 offered by five retailers through the Gallery of Guns app on the Ruger website. The LCR (Light Compact Revolver) is a different breed of snubnose using polymer, aluminum, and steel construction. A polymer fire-control housing is the grip and trigger guard portion of the revolver, while the frame assembly is aluminum, with a stainless-steel barrel sleeve in the frame. The cylinder is stainless steel and is traditionally fluted, unlike the radically fluted cylinder of the LCR 38 Special +P model. The Ruger was five ounces lighter than the Taurus, which is significant especially for a daily carry gun, but 3.7 ounces heavier than the LCR 38 Special model. It came with a soft case and cable lock. The LCR also uses a transfer bar safety system that enables the hammer to hit the firing pin only when the trigger is pulled all the way to the rear. So it is safe to carry fully loaded.

The matte finish was well executed, and we anticipate the polymer/steel portions to wear similar to a polymer/steel semi-auto. The trigger was smooth and felt much lighter than 10.5 pounds due to the friction-reducing cam-fire system. The trigger pull was also smooth, without stacking effect — noticeably better than the Taurus. The cylinder latch on the LCR is squeezed rather than pushed forward like on the Taurus or an S&W revolver. Manipulating latches of both revolvers was solid and precise. The end of the ejector rod on the Ruger LCR 9mm engages a pin in the shroud, locking up the front and via the ejector in the rear. Lock up was tight, and there was little play side to side or front to rear. Both revolvers locked up tight.



Both revolvers have a crowned muzzle; note the front edges of the Ruger are slightly smoother than on the Taurus (arrow), which eases reholstering.



Both revolvers were carried in DeSantis Cozy Partner IWB and Galco SOB (Small Of Back) holsters; the Ruger was less noticeable because it weighed less.







In the side by side above left, the Ruger's plain-faced grip was larger than the Taurus's lightly ribbed grip, making the LCR slightly bulkier when carrying concealed. Above center, notice how the user's grip on the Ruger is higher than on the stainless Taurus at right. Our shooters said this grip shape enabled the shooter to better control the Ruger revolver. The side view at right also shows the Ruger grip is slightly bulkier than the Taurus grip.



The sights were similar to those on the Taurus, except the ramped front-sight blade was pinned in place and replaceable or can be modified for a certain load. It also has a white strip on it so it is easier to acquire. The

2016-03GT4 9mm Revolvers Ruger Taurus.indd 16 2/4/16 3:31 PM

VALUE GUIDE: TOP-RANKED SNUBNOSE REVOLVERS

GUN NAME	ISSUE	GRADE & COMMENTS
Smith & Wesson PC M627 170133 357 Magnum, $1079	April 2015	**Grade A:** Well-made, nice-shooting revolver. Ball-detent lock up, chamfered chambers, excellent sights.
Smith & Wesson M686 357 Magnum, $600-$850 (Used)	April 2015	**Grade A:** Well-designed six-shot revolver. Team members liked the slender 686 even though it had less capacity.
Smith & Wesson PC M629-8 44 Magnum, $900-$1000	Nov 2014	**Grade 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	**Grade 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	**Grade 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	**Grade 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	**Grade A:** Overall, this revolver had the best DA trigger for precision slow shooting.
Taurus 851 SSUL Ultra Lite Protector 38 Special, $461	June 2005	**Grade A:** Snagproof adjustable rear sight gives windage adjustment and great sight picture.
Taurus 817 2-817029ULC 38 Special, $440	Sept 2002	**Grade 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	**Grade A-:** Added capacity and adjustable rear sight. Limited ammo availability must be a concern.
Ruger LCR No. 5401 38 Special +P, $529	Nov 2013	**Grade 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	**Grade 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	**Grade 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	**Grade 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	**Grade 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	**Grade A-:** Even without the laser, this is one accurate pocket gun. A lot of innovation for the dollar.
S&W Model 438 Bodyguard 38 Special, $625	Sept 2010	**Grade A-:** We liked the gun, despite construction methods and materials that are alien to lovers of classic S&Ws.

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.

2016-03GT4 9mm Revolvers Ruger Taurus.indd 17 2/4/16 3:31 PM

GUN TESTS
THE CONSUMER RESOURCE FOR THE SERIOUS SHOOTER

1. To Change Your Address

If you are moving, please attach your present mailing label to this form, and enter your new address here:

Name

Company

Street

City

State Zip

2. To Order/Renew

To order, or extend your current subscription, enter your name and address above, and check the subscription term you prefer:

__ One year: $49
__ Two years: $98
__ New subscriber
__ Renewal

These rates are good in U.S. and Canada only. For all other countries: 1 year $72 (air), 2 years $144 (air).

3. To Give a Gift Subscription

Enter your name and address above and your giftee's name and address below. The subscription rates stated above apply to gifts.

__ Send a One-Year Gift
__ Send a Two-Year Gift

Name

Street

City

State Zip

Return this coupon (or a photocopy) to:

GUN TESTS
P.O. Box 8535
Big Sandy, TX 75755-8535

rear sight is a groove along the top strap that seamlessly blends into the arched portion of the frame covering the hammer. In our view, the LCR had more user-friendly sights and were a plus.



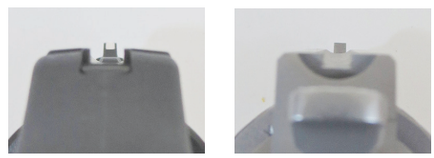
Both revolvers had a cylinder gap of 0.007 inch.



Above: A punch and hammer are required to remove the 905's one-piece rubber grip. The coiled spring exhibited stacking in single-action operation.



Below: The LCR uses a coiled mainspring, but because of the cam mechanism, it exhibited no stacking. A blue-rubber sleeve inside the grip is very squishy, so the LCR transfers less felt recoil to the web of your hand.



The white stripe on the Ruger's front-sight blade, left, offered better contrast than the all-stainless sights on the Taurus.

The Hogue Tamer grip had a pebbled texture on the sides, palm swells for both left- and right-hand shooters, and finger grooves. Where the web of the shooter's hand contacts the grip is embellished with the Ruger logo. We also found a section of squishy blue rubber on the inside of the grip for absorbing more recoil. The grip felt good in hand, but was slightly larger than the 905 grip, something our testers thought would make the LCR print or hinder a draw from a pants pocket holster, depending on the size of your pocket. The rubber-to-metal fit of the grips of both guns was excellent. Overall, the Ruger had a smoother outside surface than the Taurus. The hammer was the obvious culprit in a pocket-draw snag with the Taurus.

The ejector rod pushed empties to the very edge of the chamber; a gravity assist is needed to completely eject the cases. The LCR will fire 9mm cartridges without the moon clips, but it will not eject the empty case. A pencil or some other long skinny object is need to eject empties.

At the range, we found the LCR to be noticeably lighter than the 905. It also allowed a higher grip on the revolver, which means placing the center line of the bore closer to the shooter's hand, reducing felt recoil. Indeed, we thought the LCR shot softer and produced less muzzle flip, particularly in rapid fire. Both revolvers had similar accuracy and pointability. In extended fire, we had no issues reloading or closing the cylinder, like we did with the 905.

Our Team Said: The more time we spent with the LCR 9mm, the more we came to appreciate the smooth trigger and grip design, which makes this non-traditional revolver easy to shoot and manipulate. We'd buy this revolver for concealed carry use or home defense.

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

2016-03GT4 9mm Revolvers Ruger Taurus.indd 18 2/4/16 3:31 PM

Stoppages Make Us 'Fury-ous' At Two Catamount 12 Gauges

We liked a Russian-made Saiga-12 we tested a few years ago, but they've escalated in price to the point that we went looking for alternatives. We'd pass on two Chinese-made variations.

For those who are not in restricted states, magazine-fed shotguns can quickly switch from sporting uses to home defense and competition with some minor adjustments. In the November 2012 issue, we test-fired four high-capacity products with an eye mainly toward effective home defense, which is often done with shotguns that hold 5, 6, 7, and 8 rounds, usually in tubular magazines under the barrel. But there are bigger-capacity shotguns out there, so we examined the Akdal Arms MKA 1919 3-Inch 12 Gauge, a Red Jacket Saiga RTS-SBS-12 Short-Barrel 12 Gauge, the Kel-Tec KSG 3-Inch 12 Gauge, and the Saiga IZ-107 12 Gauge.

Outcomes: The Akdal MKA 1919 was a gas-operated semi-automatic shotgun that was created by a Turkish company called Akdal Arms. The 1919 was designed to look and feel like the AR-15 rifle. It suffered quite a few malfuctions during our test, and we weren't sure what fixes would be needed to make it cycle reliably. The Red Jacket Saiga RTS-SBS-12 Short-Barrel 12 gauge was pricey and didn't function worth a hoot during our testing of these shotguns.

The KSG (Kel-Tec Shot Gun) was a bullpup pump shotgun whose short overall length tallowed for greater maneuverability, making it suitable for close-quarters combat. The KSG weighed a shade over 7 pounds and measured only 26.1 inches in length. The internal dual tube magazines held an impressive 14 rounds of 12 gauge 2 ¾-inch shells (seven per tube) or 12 3-inch rounds (six per tube). Because different types of loads can be placed on either side, the shooter can switch between tubes depending on his needs. There are many good fighting shotguns on the market, but no others are quite as handy and possess as much firepower as the Kel-Tec KSG, we found.



This is the Russian-made Saiga tested in the November 2012 issue. It performed flawlessly, and even though it has gone up in price, we'd choose it ahead of the Chinese-made shotguns.



Here's what we got tired of dealing with. The Fury (above, with a failure to feed) and Fury II (below, with a failure to eject) shotguns were constantly malfunctioning, though the Fury wasn't as bad as the II. We used both high-brass shells and low-brass shells and changed the gas settings, all to no avail.



Another recommended shotgun from that test, and our favorite, was an older Saiga 12, graded as in Very Good used shape. It was manufactured at the Izhmash Factory in Russia and imported through EAA Corp. What we believe is an identical gun, the IZ-107 12 Gauge, is available from K-Var Corp. of Las Vegas (K-Var.com,

2016-03GT5 Century Arms Fury 12-Ga Semi Auto Shotguns.indd 19 2/4/16 4:01 PM

[702] 364-8880). Designed as an all-purpose shotgun, the Saiga comes with a chrome-lined barrel, which allows the use of many different types of ammunition, including steel. This shotgun was manufactured utilizing the Kalashnikov gas system, which reduced felt recoil dramatically over the KSG pumpgun. The Saiga shotgun was capable of cycling both 2 ¾- and 3-inch magnum shells. As with all Saiga 12s, this shotgun is not designed to use low-pressure shells. Saiga 12 gauges now come standard with a bolt hold-open feature, which allows for quicker magazine changes.

Since our last test, market availability for the Saiga 12 has tightened, making these shotguns difficult to come by and rather expensive — Gunbroker.com prices average around $1300 for an Izhmash-branded Saiga. We wanted to see how a Saiga-style shotgun, but made in China at less than half the price, would hold up to the real thing, so we acquired Catamount Fury and Fury II shotguns and put them through similar tests as the Izhmash Saiga. Here's what we found:

Features

The Saiga 12 is a Kalashnikov-pattern 12 gauge imported as a sporting shotgun. Like the Kalashnikov rifle variants, it is a rotating bolt, gas-operated gun that feeds from a box magazine. Saiga 12s are recognizable as Kalashnikov-pattern guns by the large lever-safety on the right side of the receiver, the optic mounting rail on the left side of the receiver, and the large top-mounted dust cover held in place by the rear of the recoil spring assembly. Our 2012 test shotgun was manufactured at the Izmash Legion Factory in Russia.

The Fury and Fury II are Chinese-manufactured Saiga-style 12-gauge shotguns imported by Century Arms, the Fury II being the more tactical-style upgraded model. So, in essence, what we had was one gun with two option packages.

The obvious differences between the two Chinese models are almost the only differences. The buttstock and the magazine well are the only major differences, but those variations affect weight, length of pull and overall length, and the ergonomics for fit and feel. The size advantage

CENTURY ARMS CATAMOUNT FURY SG1874-N
3-INCH 12 GAUGE, ~$400
GUN TESTS GRADE: D
CENTURY ARMS CATAMOUNT FURY II SG1875-N
3-INCH 12 GAUGE, AVERAGE ~$575
GUN TESTS GRADE: D-

The Fury SG1874-N appeared more like the standard Izhmash Saiga we tested a few years ago. We hoped it would perform like the Izhmash, but it didn't. It was plagued by malfunctions. The Fury II SG1875-N tactically styled version was worse.



Action	Semi-Auto; Gas-Operated Piston; Adjustable Pressure Settings	Buttstock (Fury II)	Polymer Skeleton, Pistol Grip
Overall Length (Fury)	42.75 in.	Length of Pull (Fury)	14.25 in.
Overall Length (Fury II)	41.25 in.	Length of Pull (Fury II)	12.5 in.
Overall Height	7 in.	Sights	Fixed Rifle Style
Maximum Width	2.5 in.	Sight Radius	8 in.
Weight Unloaded (Fury)	8.8 lbs.	Trigger Pull Weight (Fury)	7.0 lbs.
Weight Loaded (Fury, w/5-rd mag)	9.8 lbs.	Trigger Pull Weight (Fury II)	6.8 lbs.
Weight Unloaded (Fury II)	8.6 lbs.	Safety	Lever
Weight Loaded (Fury II, w/5-rd mag)	9.6 lbs.	Chokes	F, M, C
Barrel	20.125 in. Long;, Internal Thread	Accessories	Cleaning Kit
Magazine	Detachable Box, 5- or 10-rd	Warranty	1-Year Limited
Dust Cover	Stamped Steel, w/ Picatinny Top Rail	Telephone	(800) 527-1252
Receiver	Stamped Steel; Black Anodized	Website	CenturyArms.com
Buttstock	Polymer, Rifle Style Grip	Manufactured In	Zwiang Machinery Co., China
		Imported By	Century Arms, Delray Beach, FL



The Fury magazines use a traditional AK-style rolling lock, distinguished by the ledge on the magazine (arrows), and the Fury II uses an AR-style straight lock. Neither takes the same magazines as the Saiga.

2016-03GT5 Century Arms Fury 12-Ga Semi Auto Shotguns.indd 20 2/4/16 4:01 PM

goes to the tactically outfitted Fury II; it's 1.5 inches shorter and weighs in 0.2 pounds lighter than the rifle-stocked Fury.

The addition of the magazine well also means that they use different magazines, the Fury being a more traditional AK-style rolling lock and the Fury II being an AR-style straight lock. Neither takes the same magazines as the Saiga, which means our 50-round drum wasn't part of the function tests.

A Closer Look

As we noted about the Saiga in 2012, there were some substantial nits to pick on the gun. The metalwork was rough and sometimes sharp, especially on the mount on the left side of the receiver. The lack of a rubber buttpad made the stock slip around in the shoulder socket and did nothing to soften recoil. The trigger pull wasn't overly heavy at 6.6 pounds, but it has about a half-inch of takeup before creeping toward release. The rear sight was crudely fashioned and was only drift-adjustable in a machined-in slot in the barrel. If we were buying new, we'd probably pick an adjustable sight version for just a few dollars more.

The general look and feel of the machining on the two Chinese shotguns was worse, in our view. Aside from the etching on the receiver, the machining on the Fury II's bolt carrier showed clearly filed down areas in a few places, while the Fury in the same spots was clean and sharp. This minor difference may have increased the number of failures in the Fury II.

Ergonomics of the shotguns were a point of contention between our testers, because some liked the tactical pistol-grip-style stock of the Fury II, and some did not. The backstrap on the pistol grip measured a short 2.2 inches, and some of our testers had a hard time finding a comfortable grip around this cross between a thumbhole and pistol-grip-style stock. The test team also commented that the shorter length of pull on the Fury II made it slightly

SAIGA IZ-107 12 GAUGE, $640

GUN TESTS GRADE: B+

The Kalashnikov-based semi-auto is a tank that fires shotshells.



Action Type	Gas-Operated Semi-Auto	Chamber Size	2.75, 3 in.
Overall Length	44.5 in.	Choke	External Threads
Barrel Length	24 in.	Sights	Fixed Rear V, Front Post
Overall Height	8.75 in.	Sight Radius	8.5 in.
Drop @ Comb	0 in.	Action	Matte Manganese Phosphated Steel
Drop @ Heel	0 in.	Barrel	Matte Manganese Phosphated Steel
Drop @ Toe	5.0 in.	Buttstock	Polymer, No Buttpad
Cast	None	Forearm	8.5 in. long, Checkered Polymer
Pitch	3.5 in.	Trigger Pull Weight	6.6 lbs.
Length Of Pull	13.5 in.	Warranty	None
Weight (Unloaded)	8.2 lbs.	Telephone	(702) 364-8880
Weight (Loaded 2.75-Inch)	9.1 lbs.	Website	K-Var.com
Capacity (2.75/3)	10+1	Made In	Russia



The Saiga 12 is a Kalashnikov-pattern 12-gauge combat shotgun. It is a rotating bolt, gas-operated gun that feeds from a box magazine. Saiga 12s are recognizable as Kalashnikov-pattern guns by the large lever-safety on the receiver.



Looser clearances offered in an AK design result in high reliability, which we saw in our testing. We had no function failures with the Saiga, even though we used several different magazines, including an Alliance Armament AA12G30 30-round aluminum drum.



The Saigas are also distinguished by the optic mounting rail on the left side of the receiver and the large top-mounted dust cover held in place by the rear of the recoil spring assembly.







The metalwork was rough and sharp in spots.

2016-03GT5 Century Arms Fury 12-Ga Semi Auto Shotguns.indd 21 2/4/16 4:01 PM



Some testers preferred the skeletonized buttstock of the Fury II, bottom, and some did not. Those who didn't had a hard time finding a comfortable grip around this cross between a thumbhole and pistol-grip-style stock. Inset right is the Saiga stock's checkered grip.





This is the new 922r compliant Catamount Fury II Shotgun SG3015-N with a 10-round magazine. The similar SG3014-N is the rifle-stocked version below.





With these magazine-fed shotguns, capacity is what you're after. If your self-defense problem requires more than ten 12-gauge shells, then you're in a heap of trouble.

better for home defense, but that element made it considerably worse for most sporting uses, where we found both shot about a foot low.

The Fury won the ergonomics battle with its sibling purely because none of the testers didn't like it. It was neutral enough to take the victory over the disputed Fury II's layout.

At the Range

The looser clearances offered in an AK design result in high reliability, which we saw in our testing of the Saiga 12. We had no function failures of any type with the Saiga, even though we used several different magazines with different capacities, including the drum magazine.

After 150 rounds through each, we think we figured out why the Chinese versions are called Fury: That's the emotion we felt while clearing the failures we encountered with these firearms and remembering that we had to open the bolt to load a magazine, because they didn't lock open on an empty magazine.

Our test loads for the Chinese guns were Remington 00 Buckshot and Remington SureShot Heavy Dove Loads, fired with the appropriate gas settings. Once we began shooting the shotguns, the basic Fury scored higher for a few functional reasons and ergonomics. Functionally, we had fewer issues with the Fury, although there were still plenty of failures to feed that bent up the front of the shells. But we had no failures to eject and no issues loading the magazines with the Fury. Also, on the Fury, the bolt lock/release worked.

The Fury II had roughly the same number of failures to feed as did the Fury, but it also had plenty of failures to eject as well. The bolt lock on the Fury II worked fine, but the bolt release on ours did not function. The lever, which moves up and down when the bolt is locked back or released manually, would not release the bolt on its own. If the bolt lock-open became an issue, it would call for an additional full-letter downgrade because, unlike the Izhmash, the bolt had to be open for the shooter to load a magazine.



The magazine well on the Fury II, bottom, also differentiates the two Chinese shotguns.



Looked at closely, all these shotguns feature rough finishes. This is the Fury II Chinese action, which showed finish scraping by the safety lever, uneven colors, wear points, and scratches.

We also had a few issues with the Fury II magazines themselves. Being all plastic, the metal bottom on the shotshell would occasionally catch on the ramp and the shells would become jammed in place in the magazine and not feed to the top.

Our Team Said

The Izhmash remains the clear favorite as a high-capacity shotgun, and these two replica attempts weren't close to it. Since we received our Fury models, Century now has a 922r-compliant 10-round magazine and two more chokes for the barrel that ship with the current Fury II models, so perhaps some of the function issues have been resolved in the newer versions. If it were our money, we would still hold out for a Izhmash that takes the standard Saiga magazines and runs like what we have come to expect from this reliable design.

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

2016-03GT5 Century Arms Fury 12-Ga Semi Auto Shotguns.indd 22 2/4/16 4:01 PM

VALUE GUIDE: SELF-DEFENSE SHOTGUN RATINGS

GUN NAME	ISSUE	GRADE & COMMENTS
Remington 870 Express Tactical Pump 81200 12 Gauge, $442	Feb 2015	**Grade A:** The 870's 18.5-inch-long barrel handled quickly in close quarters.
Stevens M320 No. 19495 Pump 12 Gauge, $270	Oct 2013	**Grade A:** Inexpensive; we could find no fault in it as an effective self-defense tool.
Taurus Judge 4510TKR-3BUL 45 LC/410 Revolver, $620	Aug 2009	**Grade A:** Ported 3-inch barrel, compact grip made this a concealable N-frame our testers really liked.
Ithaca Model 37 Defense Gun Eight Shot 3-in. 12 Ga., $469	May 2009	**Grade A:** The best-handling, easiest-to-deploy shotgun had accessible controls, good trigger, and a low price.
Remington 11-87 Police 3-in. 12 Ga. No. 9861, $850	Feb 2008	**Grade A:** This gun had nearly everything our entry team wanted: soft recoil; good grip, surgical slug accuracy.
FN Police Tactical No. 17674 3-in. 12 Ga. Pump, $270	March 2006	**Grade A:** A Best Buy. Great gun for the price. Had some trouble feeding 3-in. shells, but 2.75-in. is plenty.
Winchester Defender 1300 512907308 12 Ga., $354	Sept 2005	**Grade A:** Our Pick. Also came with a pistol grip stock. Had speed, capacity, and was hard to jam.
Winchester Ranger 1300 20 Ga. 512036631, $354	Jan 2005	**Grade A:** Our Pick. Best looking, most accurate. Produced deadly pattern of buckshot and one-hole slug groups.
Remington Model 870 Pump 81180 20 Gauge, $530	Sept 2015	**Grade A-:** Good trigger, good handling and good patterning combined for its good ranking. Less recoil than a 12.
Tristar Tec-12 25120 Pump/Auto 12 Gauge, $689	July 2015	**Grade A-:** Performed well in both pump-action and semi-automatic modes. Felt recoil was softer than most.
Tristar Raptor A-TAC Semi-Auto 20120 3-Inch 12 Gauge, $450	Jan 2014	**Grade A-:** Flawless operation with full-power loads of all types. Fast onto target.
Benelli Super Nova Tactical 29155 Pump 12 Gauge, $559	Oct 2013	**Grade A-:** One of the most popular self-defense firearms on the market because it gets the job done.
Mossberg 410 Cruiser 3-Inch No. 50455 .410 Bore, $434	Aug 2012	**Grade A-:** A packable, powerful self-defense gun that nearly everyone in the family can handle.
CZ-USA Model 612 HC-P No. 06510 12 Gauge, $366	June 2015	**Grade B+:** This tactical firearm would be a fine self-defense tool for budget-minded shooters.
Kel-Tec KSG Bullpup 12 Gauge Pump Action, $1075	Nov 2012	**Grade B+:** Offers a great mixture of load selection, functionality, and handiness.
Saiga IZ-107 12 Gauge Semi-Auto, $640	Nov 2012	**Grade B+:** Not the easiest-to-handle defense shotgun, but capacity and function were excellent.
Mossberg SP M500 Mariner 50273 3-Inch 12 Gauge, $571	Oct 2011	**Grade B+:** The action of the pump was a little rough. Our corrosion test was uneventful — exactly what we wanted.

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.

2016-03GT5 Century Arms Fury 12-Ga Semi Auto Shotguns.indd 23 2/4/16 4:01 PM

AMMUNITION COMPARISON

How Accurate Is the AK?

A Gun Tests reader asked how well an over-the-counter AK-47 can shoot, so we bought one and an SKS and went to the range.

Recently, a Gun Tests reader requested that we gauge the accuracy of 7.62x39mm loads in the AK-47 rifle, with an eye toward evaluating the AK for ad hoc hunting, if the opportunity arose. Many of these rifles are in use in America, so determining the ability of the rifle to humanely harvest a deer or hog seemed like a good idea to check out. The 7.62x39mm cartridge is often compared to the 30-30 Winchester in power, and if the AK-47 and its loads were accurate enough, then the pair could be counted upon to take thin-skinned game at moderate distance. The question is, how accurate is commonly available ammunition in an average AK-47 at 100 yards? To find out, we obtained an AK-47 from the used rack at a pawn shop. The rifle featured an NDS receiver and seemed well put together. While we were there, we also grabbed an SKS chambered for the same round, in this case a Chinese rifle in excellent condition with matching serial numbers on its parts.

Accuracy Testing

Benchresting the AK and its long magazine produced some difficulties. We found it is not an easy rifle from which to coax accuracy. The SKS was easier to use well off the bench, especially when using the onboard iron sights. After initial sighting work at 50 yards to get on the paper, we fired a succession of three-shot groups at 100 yards, sighting both at the base of an 8-inch bull. At the end, we found the SKS to be slightly more accurate with the ammo we selected.

In broad terms, then, we think most shooters can get commonly available AK-47s to shoot around 4-inch groups at 100 yards, good enough to take game at that distance. We had slightly better results with the SKS, and would think of it as a 3.5-inch gun at that range. Also, we found a few rounds these guns preferred, so if you're attempting to knock a hog in the head, you might consider starting with our winners in your own AK or SKS. Following are our ratings for eight ammunition choices suitable for the AK-47 or SKS variants, and you can also scan the results in the accompanying table.

Note: Prices have changed since we began this test, so the cited costs aren't necessarily current.

Hornady 123-gr. SST H8078

Purchased from CheaperthanDirt.com for $36.43/50, a quick calculation shows that 20 shots would round out to be just less than $15, to put the numbers on par. The Hornady SST is put up in steel cases, which is fine, and the ammunition is priced fairly. The Hornady 123-gr. SST was among the better AK loads and also gave the best results of any of the jacketed-soft-point loads when fired in the SKS rifle. But we gave the most weight to the AK results because that is what the reader asked for. The Hornady 123-gr. SST is arguably the best buy JSP by no small margin.

Gun Tests Grade: A (Best Buy)

Fiocchi Shooting Dynamics 123-gr. FMJ #1836515864

Purchased from MidwayUSA.com for $8.86/20, the Fiocchi loading cost almost twice what the Tula load costs, but if you want superior accuracy, the Fiocchi delivers. Complete reliability is there as well, and you have no worries concerning extractor wear as with steel case ammunition. The Fiocchi load was among the most accurate tested. We wondered what it might do in a more accurate rifle than our AK and SKS choices.

Gun Tests Grade: A



The AK-47 test rifle was an ordinary one that proved accurate enough for most tasks. It was also reliable. The SKS rifle is below.





Hornady's SST bullets are likely a great choice for deer hunting. In a 50-round box, the Hornady SST load is a Best Buy as a hunting-ammunition pick.



The Fiocchi load has a well-finished appearance. It gave excellent accuracy.

Winchester 123-gr. FMJ Q3174

Purchased from MidwayUSA for $17.95/20, this is a good solid choice, widely available, reliable. It was accurate enough for meaningful practice. However, it is expensive and cost nearly as much as the JSP loads. But it burns cleanly and offers a brass cartridge case for reloading.

Gun Tests Grade: A

2016-03GT6 AK Rifles.indd 24 2/4/16 4:26 PM

RANGE DATA

Tula 122-gr. FMJ	AK-47	SKS
Average Velocity	2224 fps	2269 fps
Muzzle Energy	1339 ft.-lbs.	1394 ft.-lbs.
Average Group	4.5 in.	3.6 in.

Wolf 123-gr. FMJ	AK-47	SKS
Average Velocity	2280 fps	2301 fps
Muzzle Energy	1419 ft.-lbs.	1446 ft.-lbs.
Average Group	4.2 in.	3.8 in.

Winchester 123-gr. FMJ	AK-47	SKS
Average Velocity	2266 fps	2321 fps
Muzzle Energy	1402 ft.-lbs.	1471 ft.-lbs.
Average Group	4.1 in.	3.8 in.

Fiocchi 123-gr. FMJ	AK-47	SKS
Average Velocity	2281 fps	2312 fps
Muzzle Energy	1421 ft.-lbs.	1459 ft.-lbs.
Average Group	3.5 in.	3.4 in.

Winchester 123-gr. JSP	AK-47	SKS
Average Velocity	2290 fps	2331 fps
Muzzle Energy	1432 ft.-lbs.	1484 ft.-lbs.
Average Group	3.6 in.	3.8 in.

Remington 125-gr. JSP	AK-47	SKS
Average Velocity	2325 fps	2380 fps
Muzzle Energy	1500 ft.-lbs.	1572 ft.-lbs.
Average Group	3.9 in.	3.6 in.

Hornady 123-gr. SST	AK-47	SKS
Average Velocity	2341 fps	2355 fps
Muzzle Energy	1496 ft.-lbs.	1514 ft.-lbs.
Average Group	3.7 in.	2.9 in.

Cor-Bon 150-gr. JSP	AK-47	SKS
Average Velocity	2325 fps	2354 fps
Muzzle Energy	1800 ft.-lbs.	1845 ft.-lbs.
Average Group	3.8 in.	3.6 in.

Notes: Average velocity readings were recorded by firing three-shot strings over a Competition Electronics Pro Chrono. The muzzle was 12 feet from the first skyscreen. Ambient temperature: 29 degrees. Elevation: 815 feet above sea level. The accuracy figures are the average of three three-shot groups. For accuracy, we fired the test gun from a benchrest bag at a 100-yard target (see the AK rifle setup at left).



Remington Express 125-gr. JSP R762391

Purchased from CheaperthanDirt.com for $24.21/20, this soft-point hunting load is reliable, accurate enough for hunting, and uses a JSP bullet. The price is favorable. However, the Winchester and Hornady loads were incrementally more accurate. The Remington did best the Winchester load in the SKS.

Gun Tests Grade: A



These major makers have not neglected the 7.62x39 cartridge.

Winchester 123-gr. JSP X76239

Purchased from CheaperthanDirt.com for $26.62/20, this was the most accurate of the JSP loads in the AK rifle. Clean burning, accurate and reliable, the Winchester 123-gr. JSP seems to be available from numerous outlets. It is more expensive than either the Remington or the Hornady JSP. It was the only load that performed less accurately in the SKS than the AK-47.

Gun Tests Grade: A

Cor-Bon Hunter 150-gr. JSP HT762X39150

Purchased from Midway for $33.99/20, any way you slice it, the Cor-Bon Hunter load has the most energy of all of the loads tested. It is accurate enough, and while we did not test penetration and expansion, this is a load that is more comparable to the 30-30 WCF than the other loadings. It's definitely pricey, but with good performance. At the present, it is difficult to obtain.

Gun Tests Grade: A

Wolf 123-gr. FMJ

We bought this from MidwayUSA.com for $6.19/20, making it the second least expensive loading tested. It was also the second least accurate, so we got our money's worth. There were no malfunctions of any type. We rated the WPA Military Classic down one grade on accuracy, but it is still a good resource and a good buy for practice and plinking.

Gun Tests Grade: B

Tula 122-gr. FMJ ULO76201

We bought this at CheaperthanDirt.com for $4.79/40, making it the least expensive ammunition tested — and also the least accurate. Just the same, this ammunition is accurate enough for practice, and it is cheap. The only malfunction of the test came when a steel-cased Tula cartridge was caught in the magazine lips of the AK-47. We rated the load down one grade for poor accuracy and another for the malfunction. We'd use it for informal practice and plinking.

Gun Tests Grade: C

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

2016-03GT6 AK Rifles.indd 25 2/4/16 4:26 PM

New Handguns at SHOT 2016

Our team of writers canvassed the massive Las Vegas show to find the hottest pistols and revolvers, optics, and new ammunition coming to your local gun shop later this year.

At the 2016 SHOT Show in Las Vegas, GUN TESTS staffers ran across many dozens of new products that we're working to include in future tests. Following are some of the handguns, handgun ammunition, and handgun accessories we were interested in. Next month we'll look at new long guns and new options for them

— *Todd Woodard*

Advanced Technologies, Inc.

Given the growth of the AR-15 pistol market, aftermarket supplier ATI sees an opportunity to help users of the popular Ruger Charger get more enjoyment out of its use. The AR-22 Pistol Stock System features a polymer receiver chassis and a T2 pistol grip as well as a six-sided aluminum free-floating forend that sports an FS8 nose cone. The T2-style pistol grip lowers a shooter's hand to align the finger with the trigger, and the sure-grip texture helps reduce recoil. In addition, the stock also features a 16-inch aluminum Picatinny rail that runs the length of the receiver and forend for trouble-free optic and accessory mounting. SRP: $120.

Browning

The biggest ammunition surprise might be the news that Browning is now offering, via licensing, a full line of ammunition manufactured by Olin-Winchester.

The BXP Personal Defense X-Point defensive handgun loads are loaded in black nickel-plated cases, with bullets utilizing the X-Point technology. There is also a line of Target Performance BPT loads for defensive handguns. The usual chamberings are represented in both lines, with one load each in 380 ACP, 9mm Luger, 40 S&W, and 45 Auto. Browning is also offering rimfire loads in 22 LR. They have a distinct black-oxide coating on the bullet and will be offered in 100- and 400-round packages.

CCI

CCI will offer four new centerfire handgun shotshell loads. The new CCI Big 4 loads extend the range and capabilities of these shotshells, thanks to a payload of No. 4 lead shot. The 10-round packs will be available for the 9mm Luger, 38 Spl./357 Magnum, 44 Spl./44 Magnum, and the 45 Colt. CCI's new California-legal bullet is called CCI Copper-22. The projectile is constructed from a unique mix of copper particles and polymer compressed into a 21-grain hollowpoint.

Cimarron

Cimarron has three new pistols in the Eliminator series. Cimarron's new Eliminator Octagon features a 4.75-inch octagonal barrel, checkered Army-style grips, and a pre-war frame. It has a case-hardened/blued-frame/cylinder assembly and is available in 357 Magnum/.38 Special and 45 Long Colt. SRP: $779.

Cimarron's new Eliminator Competition features a 4.75-inch round barrel, checkered single-action grips, and a pre-war frame. Like the Eliminator Octagon, it has a 25-percent-shorter hammer stroke and a Cowboy Comp U.S. action job. The Eliminator Competition is available in a color case-hardened/blued-frame/cylinder assembly or stainless steel. It's also available with a standard or low, wide hammer. Available in 357 Magnum/38 Special and 45 Long Colt. SRP: $714.

Cimarron's new Eliminator Thunderstorm is available with a 3.5- or 4.75-inch barrel and checkered



Browning BPT Performance Target Ammunition



CCI Big 4 10-Round Packs



From top: Cimarron's Eliminator Line: Competition, Octagon, and Thunderstorm.

2016-03GT7 Short Shots.indd 26 2/4/16 4:53 PM



Coonan 1911 in 45 ACP



CrossBreed Holsters Freedom Carry



CZ-USA Omega Suppressor Ready



CZ-USA Tactical Sport Orange

grips. Its specially designed Thunderstorm hammer is low and wide for comfortable no-slip cocking. The Eliminator Thunderstorm is available in standard blue or polished stainless steel in 45 Long Colt. SRP: $747, blue; $973, stainless.

Cimarron is also offering four laser-engraved revolvers from Pietta, Italy. They are available in two finishes: nickel and old silver frame (OSF). OSF is a two-tone finish, where the barrel, cylinder, and grip assembly are blued and the frame is left in white for a polished steel finish. SRPs start at $650.

Coonan

Known for its unique 1911 handgun chambered in 357 Magnum, the company is introducing a new class of 1911s chambered in 45 ACP. This new 45 ACP Pistol utilizes all of the proven technologies from Coonan's 1911 357 Magnum Auto. These "Coonan Difference" features include a linkless barrel, pivoting trigger, and an external extractor. It has a Novak rear sight and a blade front sight. Night sights or an adjustable rear sight are optional. The Coonan 45 ACP package includes a 7-round single-stack magazine, a carrying case, and a lock. SRP: $1,375.

Crimson Trace

The Carry 9 Program (SRP: $249, red; $319, green) packages a Blade-Tech Klipt Ambi IWB concealed-carry holster with a Crimson Trace laser sight for either a Smith & Wesson M&P Shield or Glock G43 pistol. Using Shock Stop (SRP: $319, red; $399, green) technology for red and green laser grips on S&W J-Frame Round-Butt revolvers helps reduce felt recoil. New Master Series 1911 laser grips include aggressive textured aluminum and faux ivory models.

C-More Systems

The Lazer Point MTL-OS is a tiny laser sight for Glock pistols that magnetically attaches over the rear sight. It can be removed or installed in seconds with no tools.

CrossBreed Carry Holsters

For 2016, CrossBreed Holsters is introducing the latest in its line of handcrafted holsters, the Freedom Carry. The line was created in response to consumer demand for more versatile carrying tools. What sets this new holster apart from its predecessors is that it can be worn in several positions without sacrificing comfort. The holster also allows the user to carry larger firearms in the appendix position. The Freedom Carry is available for more than 300 different firearms, including those with lights, lasers, and micro red-dot sights (depending on model). CrossBreed Holsters offers a two-week, try-it-free guarantee as well as a lifetime warranty on selected items.

CZ-USA

In the last few years, there has been a huge spike in requests for suppressor-ready firearms, and for 2016, CZ has more than doubled its threaded-pistol lineup. Clad in urban-gray, CZ's limited-edition Urban Gray Suppressor Ready Series of pistols come with a set of high suppressor sights equipped with tritium lamps front and rear. Extended-capacity magazines boost the capacity on all but the SP-01 by two rounds. Some models, like the P-01 Omega and the 75 Omega, are completely new. Variants include a P-09 with a 12+1 capacity, a P-07 with 17+1 capacity, a 75 SP-01 and a 75 B that hold 18 cartridges, and a 75 P-01 with a capacity of 16+1. SRP: $537 to $723.

Turning the Tactical Sport up a notch, the CZ 75 Tactical Sport Orange borrows a number of design features from the Czechmate and incorporates a few of its own. With the slimmer trigger guard, revised grip geometry, and finer checkering from the Czechmate frame, it adds a thumb stop and fully adjustable target sights. With the same long slide and full-length dust cover as the standard TS, it also shares the single-action-only trigger, giving it an incredibly light pull and short reset. SRP: $1,784.

CZ's FDE Scorpion hosts all the same features that have made the Scorpion Pistol such a hit. New for 2016 is a barrel that is threaded 18x1 to accept the factory flash hider, but also threaded ½x28 underneath the flash hider to allow for the easy addition of a suppressor or aftermarket muzzle device. The folding stock goes on quickly and easily, and is sold in a 922(r) compliance kit so you have all the required parts to stay on the up-and-up. CZ also sells an arm-brace adapter kit that allows the fitting of aftermarket arm braces or cheek weld devices. An 11-inch Picatinny rail rides on top, and aluminum

2016-03GT7 Short Shots.indd 27 2/4/16 4:53 PM

adjustable sights are fitted from the factory. Chambered only in 9mm Luger.

CZ's Bren 805 S1 Pistol has an 11-inch barrel and has proven a popular SBR candidate for customers wanting to convert it into an NFA firearm. Those who don't wish to register with the ATF can always equip it with CZ's adapter kit, which allows easy installation of aftermarket arm braces or other devices meant to help stabilize large-format pistols. Chambered in 223/5.56 and using the STANAG magazine from the AR15/M16, it easily accepts optics and lights on its top and bottom Picatinny rails.

CZ has added a new Kadet Kit to the line. Designed to swap onto current P-07s and older P-07 Duty pistols, the P-07 Kadet Kit enables shooters to train using cheaper 22 LR ammo. With a 10-round magazine and fully reciprocating-slide function, shooting the P-07 Kadet Kit will be identical to shooting the host pistol in factory form. The CZ P-07 Kadet Kit ships with two 10-round magazines. SRP: $237.

Dan Wesson

Dan Wesson has seen a steady increase in requests for a non-bobbed Valor Commander, and for 2016, it has delivered. What sets the Valor apart from the rest of Dan Wesson's 1911 lineup is the sheer amount of time spent hand-polishing, hand-fitting, and finishing. Not only do they get the best quality parts, they get the most individual attention of any model Dan Wesson builds. It is arguably the company's best-size 45 ACP or 9mm Luger 1911 for concealed carry. SRP: $1,688 to $2,012.

Dan Wesson has not forgotten wheel gunners. The Dan Wesson 715 Pistol Pack is as it was before—designed and built to be the most accurate, rugged, and versatile revolver on the market. This year sees the revival of the Pistol Pack, famous for its swappable barrels. The Pistol Pack is shipped with 4-, 6-, and 8-inch barrel/shroud assemblies, in the modern heavy vent shroud profile. A custom Dan Wesson hard case, with compartments for the additional barrel assemblies and a factory-supplied barrel wrench kit, is included. SRP: $1,688.

With more folks than ever choosing to hunt with a handgun and the continuing resurgence of the 10mm cartridge, Dan Wesson decided it was time to bring the heat. Dan Wesson's first long-slide 1911, the Bruin, was born to hunt. The long slide means a long sight radius, and the 6-inch barrel allows full-power 10mm loads as much time as possible to use their powder charge. Fully adjustable tritium sights ensure that when shooting hours arrive, you'll be able to see the sights. Additionally, there's a tritium/fiber-optic combo front sight to make sure the front glows day or night. SRP: $2,064, 45 ACP; $2,194, 10mm.

With suppressors becoming more and more mainstream, another interesting pistol from Dan Wesson is the Discretion. With its match-grade stainless barrel, which is extended and threaded, it is suppressor-ready out of the box. Its aggressively ported slide, serrated trigger, and competition-inspired hammer give it a radical look. High tritium sights allow for sighting over the top of most pistol suppressors. Available in 9mm Luger and 45 ACP. SRP: $2,142.

The Pointman series from Dan Wesson has been offered in limited quantities in the past, and demand has always outpaced production. Featuring a serrated rib on top of the forged slide, it has an adjustable target sight in the rear, a fiber-optic sight in the front, and front and rear cocking serrations. The frame is forged stainless with an undercut trigger guard and 25-LPI front strap checkering. The flats are polished to a soft, brushed finish, and the rounds are sandblasted for a nice contrast. Double diamond cocobolo grips finish off the Pointman, which is available only in 38 Super. SRP: $1,597.

Sharing the features that make the Dan Wesson Valkyrie one of its most popular concealed-carry 1911s, the Valkyrie Commander simply adds an aluminum Commander-size frame, making it ideal for those who need a bit more purchase than an Officer-size frame allows. The Valkyrie Commander is available in 9mm Luger and 45 ACP with a black duty/anodized finish. SRP: $2,012.



Dan Wesson Valor Commander and Pistol Pack Wheel Gun







Above: Federal's American Eagle Syntech Bullet Line and Micro HST 9mm Luger.

Federal Premium

For defensive handguns, a new 9mm Luger load has been added to the Micro HST line. This load utilizes a 150-grain HST bullet optimized for terminal performance and low recoil from micro-sized handguns. SRP: $31.95 for a 20-round box.

Federal's American Eagle Syntech loads in 9mm Luger, 40 S&W, and

2016-03GT7 Short Shots.indd 28 2/4/16 4:53 PM

45 Auto eliminate metal-on-metal contact between the bullet and bore, using all-new polymer-encapsulated Syntech bullet. Combined with specialized clean-burning powders and exclusive Catalyst primers, it should keep guns cleaner longer. SRP: $19.99, 9mm; $33.95, 45 Auto. Both are available in 50-round boxes.

Hartman Ltd

Hartman is a new player in red-dot optics and is debuting the MH1 Red Dot Reflex Sight (SRP: $650), which has the largest (compared to other similar devices) field of view through the sight. It is waterproof up to 20 feet and night-vision-compatible. It also features ambidextrous activation buttons and a sleep mode.

Hornady

Hornady's Critical Duty line of personal protection/law enforcement ammunition gets a new addition with a 175-grain FlexLock 10mm Auto load. And, though not a true ammunition product, Hornady's Ballistic Band rubber bracelet (fits wrist or stock) is a simple and handy way for shooters to record and reference their ballistics information. It should be a great companion for any long-range hunter.

Kahr

Kahr has two new handguns for 2016. Part of the Value Series Plus line, the 380 ACP CW380TU has a black-polymer frame and stainless slide with a Cerakote tungsten finish (dark graphite gray) on the slide stop lever and trigger. SRP: $419.

Also part of the Value Series Plus product line, the 380 ACP CT3833TU features a 3-inch conventional rifled barrel, a trigger-cocking DAO action, and a passive striker block. New for 2016 is the Cerakote tungsten finish (dark graphite gray) on the slide, slide-stop lever, and trigger on a black polymer frame with stainless slide. SRP: $419.

LaserMax

The Spartan Laser series (SRP: $99, red; $149, green) features a mounting system designed specifically for handgun accessory rails, with ambidextrous activation and automatic shutoff after 10 minutes.

Lehigh Defense

Lehigh Defense continues to offer alternatives to traditional ammunition. The new 380 ACP Xtreme Defense (XD) load will penetrate more than 14 inches in 10-percent ordnance gelatin while retaining 100 percent of its weight. This barrier-blind projectile is an intense tissue-damaging, deep-penetrating alternative to traditional shallow-penetrating, expanding 380 ACP self defense loads.

Magnum Research

U.S.–based Magnum Research is introducing a new version of the iconic Desert Eagle, with the addition of its new Cerakote tungsten finish to the 44 Magnum and 50 AE Desert Eagle products. The new Cerakote Tungsten Desert Eagle is offered in either the 50 AE or 44 Magnum. SRP: $1,696.

NcSTAR

The VISM Reflex Sight with Green Laser (SRP: $119.99) is a compact sight system that combines a red reflex sight and a green laser. Both the dot sight and laser are controlled by a push-button control panel and powered by a single CR123A battery. The sight provides a one-third co-witness with BUIS.

Nighthawk

The custom 1911 giant Nighthawk has several new finely crafted pistols for 2016. The Silent Hawk is a Recon-style commander with a Tri-Cut slide, custom cocking serrations to match an Osprey silencer, a threaded barrel, tritium tall suppressor sights, and mid-length grip-screw bushings. It has a total blackout finish and custom NH/Silencer Co. brand logo. SRP: $4,295, 45 ACP; $4,495, 9mm Luger.

The Summit Hawk is a Recon-style commander with a Tri-Cut slide, custom cocking serrations to match an Osprey silencer, a threaded barrel, tritium tall suppressor sights, and mid-length grip-screw bushings. It has an NP3 finish and a custom NH/Silencer Co. brand logo. SRP: $4,995, 45 ACP; $5,195, 9mm Luger.



Hartman MH1 Red Dot Reflex Sight





Kahr 380 ACP CT3833TU, above, and 380 ACP CW380TU, below.



LaserMax Spartan Laser for handgun accessory rails



Magnum Research Desert Eagle Cerakote Tungsten Finish

2016-03GT7 Short Shots.indd 29 2/4/16 4:53 PM

The Heinie Kestrel is all black with stainless controls. This model includes a thinned scalloped frame and mainspring housing that is great for concealed carry and people with smaller hands. The build also includes custom features such as rear slide serrations, top slide serrations, a crowned barrel, a beveled and recessed slide stop, and thin Aluma Grips with the Nighthawk Logo. It is available in 9mm Luger or 45 ACP. SRP: $3,495.

Republic Forge

Republic Forge manufactures world-class Model 1911 pistols, and it has announced the addition of blued and color-cased finishes to its all-American 1911 lineup. Unprecedented in the custom 1911 market, firearms enthusiasts can navigate to Republic Forge's website and build their very own Republic Forge pistol. Now customers have a case-hardened finish as an option.

Remington

For those who like to shoot a lot and spend a little, Remington has two new Range Bucket offerings. One big plastic bucket—The Range Bucket—is filled with 350 rounds of 9mm Luger (SRP: $98).

For defensive handguns, Remington has two important ammo contributions. It will finally be offering the excellent Golden Saber Black Belt loads for civilian sale. This will include a 124-grain +P and a 147-grain 9mm Luger load, 164- and 185-grain 40 S&W loads, a 185-grain 45 Auto +P, and a 125-grain 357 Magnum load.

Remington has also added a full-size handgun category to the Ultimate Defense line of handgun ammunition. Last year it launched the compact handgun category with loads purpose-built for little pistols.

Ruger

Sturm, Ruger & Company, Inc., has entered the ammunition business by partnering with PolyCase. This new ammo, called the Ruger ARX, is designed and produced by PolyCase under license from Ruger. These loads use PolyCase's revolutionary ARX bullet technology. By design, the non-expanding Ruger ARX exploits the bullet's velocity to redirect energy laterally via flutes in the bullet ogive. The bullet's design allows it to feed like a round-nose, yet still transfer energy to targets effectively over a wide range of velocities.

The ARX bullet penetrates many different barriers without deformation, and it penetrates through clothing without clogging and degrading terminal performance . The four loads are a 56-grain 380 ACP, a 74-grain 9mm Luger, a 107-grain 40 S&W, and a 118-grain 45 Auto.

SIG Sauer

SIG Sauer has returned the venerable P225 pistol to its catalog. The P225A retains the exceptional look and feel of the original P225, but it features an enhanced trigger and the precision manufacturing and quality from the state-of-the-art SIG Sauer facility. The P225A is a single-stack 9mm pistol with the time-tested double-action/single-action trigger system. A fully machined stainless-steel slide comes in the durable Nitron finish. A hard-coat-anodized frame sports two-piece grips with the SIG mark medallion.

Last year, SIG introduced a full line of ammo products. For 2016, SIG has added to that line with several new loads. First up is a 38 Super +P Elite 125-grain V-Crown jacketed hollowpoint load at 1,230 fps. A 125-grain FMJ load at the same velocity is also available for the 38 Super. SIG has also added four new revolver loads for the 38 Special and 357 Magnum. The 38 Special loads are available with either a 125-grain FMJ or V-Crown bullet at a muzzle velocity of 900 fps. The 357 Magnum loads deliver 1,450 fps with either the FMJ or JHP bullet.

Smith & Wesson

Smith & Wesson Corp. is now offering its M&P Shield pistol in both 9mm and 40 S&W, with a factory-ported barrel and slide. These new Shield ported pistols, available exclusively from the Performance



NcSTAR VISM Reflex Sight with Green Laser



Nighthawk Silent Hawk, above, and Summit Hawk, below.





Republic Forge Model 1911 Pistol Color-Case-Hardened Finish



Remington Range Bucket 9mm



PolyCase Ruger ARX 118-grain 45 Auto

2016-03GT7 Short Shots.indd 30 2/4/16 4:53 PM



SIG Sauer P225A 9mm Luger Nitron finish



Top: SIG Sauer Elite Performance 38 Special FMJ; bottom, Elite Performance 38 Special V-Crown jacketed hollowpoint.



Top: Smith & Wesson SW1911 45 ACP Machine Engraved; bottom, Performance Center M&P Shield 3.1-inch ported barrel.

Center, provide a host of premium features desired by the most astute shooters. Engineered on a high-strength polymer frame measuring .95 inch in width, the Performance Center M&P Shield is standard with a 3.1-inch factory-ported barrel. The new barrel, along with the pistol's three precision-cut ports across the top of the stainless-steel slide, aid in reducing muzzle flip and improve the ability to remain on target after firing. The new M&P Shield pistols have been further updated with fiber-optic sights and an enhanced trigger. SRP: $490.

Smith & Wesson has also added greater versatility to its premiere line of M&P pistols by offering two new versions of the M&P with an additional threaded barrel included in the box. The new 9mm variants—which include the Performance Center M&P Ported and the Performance Center M&P C.O.R.E. (Competition Optics Ready Equipment)—allow owners to easily attach a sound suppressor without the use of additional tools. The additional threaded barrel included with both pistols brings an added retail value of $175 and feature a thread pattern of ½-28.

A custom-designed, machine-engraved SW1911 pistol is also joining the line this year. The new SW1911 features a scrollwork design created by Smith & Wesson's Master Engraver and made possible by a highly precise diamond-tipped tool. The engraving embellishes the all-steel canvas and elevates the venerable 1911 platform to a new level of sophistication and beauty. Chambered in 45 ACP, the pistol showcases decorative machine engraving on the left and right side of the stainless-steel slide and frame. This intricate linework extends across the pistol's 5-inch barrel, and when combined with its glass bead finish and rosewood colored grips, transforms this modern-day workhorse into a living piece of art.

Traditions Performance Firearms

For 2016, Traditions has introduced four new models into its popular blackpowder revolver lineup. All four feature laser engraving. While beautiful to look at and display, these engraved revolvers are also 100 percent functional. Models include two 1851 Navy revolvers. One is in blue with walnut grips, while the other is in nickel with simulated ivory grips. There is a blued 1858 Army with walnut grips and a blued 1860 Army configured similarly.

Traditions has also added two new models to the popular Frontier series of 1873 Single Action Revolvers. Like all Traditions single-action revolvers, these, too, come equipped with a transfer bar to give a high level of safety. One of the new introductions is an 1873 Single Action Sheriff's model, with a 3.5-inch barrel and color-case-hardened frame. The other is an 1873 Single Action with an oversize grip frame and a 5.5-inch barrel. Both have color-case-hardened frames and are chambered for 357 Magnum.

Trijicon

Small enough to fit on suitably-equipped handguns, the Miniature Rifle Optic, or MRO (SRP: $579 without mount, $629 with mount), red-dot sight features a large objective lens and shortened optical length to eliminate the tube effect common with so many tube red-dot sights. Comes equipped with a 2 MOA dot aiming point.

TRUGLO

The compact ultralight TRU TEC 20mm (SRP: $221) tactical red-dot sight offers a 2 MOA reticle and unlimited eye relief. The larger TRU



Trijicon MRO



TRUGLO TRU-BRITE 30 Red-Dot Sight

— continued on page 32

2016-03GT7 Short Shots.indd 31 2/4/16 4:53 PM

— Special Reports con't from page 31

TEC 30mm red-dot (SRP: $368) offers a larger tube.

Walther

The new PPS M2 from Walther is a compact handgun with a slim profile, push-button magazine release, and smooth trigger pull housed in a frame that fits just about anyone. The new PPS M2 comes chambered in 9mm and 40 S&W. The new version of the PPS has a 3.2-inch barrel in both chamberings, has a 6.1-pound trigger pull, and stands 4.4 inches tall in 9mm and 5.3 inches tall in 40 S&W. It's 1 inch thick.

It comes with three magazine options: Flat for concealment, mid-sized for comfort, and large for extra-capacity. In effect, the shooter could keep the gun in a nightstand at home with the high-cap magazine, transfer to mid-sized in the car, then use the flat mag for carry. It has front and rear slide serrations, a rear sight that's screw-adjustable for windage, and tactile and visible cocking indicators, along with a loaded-chamber viewport. The Walther PPS M2 9mm Luger LE Edition pistol comes equipped with phosphoric sights and three magazines.



Walther PPS M2

Compiled by Gun Tests *staff. Some of the descriptions above are from* SHOT Daily, *a trade magazine published at the show for the dealers and distributors who attend. Used with permission.*

COMING UP IN GUN TESTS

- Gauging the 20 for Home Defense: Tested: Federal Vital Shock 2582B 3-inch Magnum #2; Federal Vital Shock 2072B 3-inch Magnum #2, Winchester XB203 3-inch Magnum #3, Remington 20B3 2.75-inch #3, Remington Slugger 8-REM-SPHV20RS ½-ounce slug, and the Federal F203 Rs ¾-ounce slug.
- Premature Innovation: New Benelli Stackbarrel Can't Beat Browning Citori. Tested: Browning Citori Model 725 Field 12 Ga., $2,469, and Benelli Model 828U 12 Ga., $2,499.
- Along with Value Guides, Firing Line, Downrange, Short Shots, and other features on 45 ACP ammunition and threaded-barrel handguns.

GUN TESTS
THE CONSUMER RESOURCE FOR THE SERIOUS SHOOTER

Customer Service Contacts

If you have a problem with your magazine subscription, damaged or missing issues, need to change your mailing or email address, or renew your subscription, visit Online Customer Service at:
Gun-Tests.com
Click "Contact Us"

CALL TOLL FREE: 800-829-9084

SUBSCRIPTION DEPARTMENT
Gun Tests (US)
P.O. Box 8535
Big Sandy, TX 75755-8535

Gun Tests (Canada)
Box 7820 STN Main
London ON
Canada N5Y 5W1

QUANTITY REPRINTS
Reprints of **Gun Tests** articles are available.
Minimum Order: 1,000.
Contact:
GunTestsEditor@icloud.com

EDITORIAL OFFICES
Gun Tests *welcomes letters or email concerning our articles. Please include your name, telephone number, and hometown.*

We will respect your request not to publish personal information. Email comments to
GunTestsEditor@icloud.com.
Or "Like" the **Gun Tests Magazine** Facebook page.
Twitter: @GunTestsMag
YouTube: Gun Tests Magazine

Because of daytime testing requirements, the writers and editorial staff can't answer phone inquiries. But the staff responds to email. If you have a question or comment about Gun Tests evaluations, please email individual writers at: GunTestsEditor@icloud.com. Thanks for your understanding.