GUN TESTS®

THE CONSUMER RESOURCE FOR THE SERIOUS SHOOTER

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6.5 CREEDMOOR RIFLES

In this match-up of bolt actions, we find three ways of getting rounds downrange accurately. Tested: Howa's Hogue Kryptek Cerakote Package, the new Ruger Precision Rifle, and Savage Arms Model 12 Long Range Precision model. **— Page 6**



BISLEY SHOWDOWN

We match up two single-action revolvers with target shooting pedigrees, the Ruger Bisley Vaquero and Uberti's Cattleman Bisley. Did we prefer an original design or did we favor a more modern take? **— Page 14**



OC HOLSTERS, PART I

This month, we look at five models to consider for open carry. Tested: Galco's M4X and M6X, the Hogue ARS CF, Blackhawk's GripBreak, and the DeSantis Facilitator. **— Page 20**



SHOOTING COLLECTIBLE

We shoot — and enjoy — the unusual Schmidt-Rubin Model 1911, a straight-pull action with superior workmanship and a long and distinguished history. **— Page 24**

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DOWNRANGE

OBAMA SIGNS GOOD GUN LAWS



Todd Woodard

Toward the end of 2015, President Barack Obama signed into law the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA), which had some notable pro-gun provisions. Here are the high points that concern firearms.

● The NDAA now allows the U.S. Army to transfer its surplus vintage firearms to the Civilian Marksmanship Program (CMP) for public sale. Transferring these vintage pistols to the CMP will allow them to inspect, grade, and ultimately sell these pistols to the public through federally licensed firearms dealers.

● Also, the NDAA included a provision requiring the Secretary of Defense to establish a process for commanders at military bases, reserve centers, and recruiting centers to allow service members assigned to that base or facility to carry a firearm. This NDAA provision is a good step toward restoring the Second Amendment rights of military personnel.

● A third provision of note, the NDAA prohibits the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) from banning traditional ammunition under the Toxic Substances Control Act. This provision is necessary because extreme anti-hunting groups have filed multiple petitions with the EPA to ban the use of lead ammunition. Those petitions have been rejected, but those groups use the administrative rejections as an excuse to sue the agency in pursuit of the same restrictions.

We applaud President Obama for making these common-sense changes.

We were gratified to see Washington D.C. Police Chief Cathy Lanier lay out the options for citizens who are caught in an active shooter situation, such as in the recent Paris attacks and in San Bernardino, California.

In an episode of *60 Minutes* on Sunday, Nov. 22, Lanier told host Anderson Cooper, "Your options are run, hide, or fight. If you're in a position to try and take the gunman down, to take the gunman out, it's the best option for saving lives before police can get there."

We could not agree more with the chief. She spelled out a sober, realistic view of the tactical predicaments people can stumble into.

However, we will point out that in D.C., Lanier actively prosecutes gun ownership by citizens. So, in our nation's capital, as well as in Paris, citizens lack the ability to "fight" effectively in an active shooter situation or any other life-threatening scenario — because few to no guns are available to the public (legally). According to Emily Miller, the chief investigative reporter for Fox News Channel 5 in the city, D.C. has only granted 45 concealed handgun permits.

So, while we appreciate Chief Lanier's truthfulness in her televised comments, we would appreciate it more if she would take the next step and recognize that self-defense is an inalienable right of every person, and that firearms facilitate self defense. **GT**

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Where is the Bond Derringer?

We supply the results of a pocket-gun model we tested more than a decade ago, but which are still valid. Also, we get into the weeds about cartridge penetration and places to shoot.

Re: "Derringer Shoot-out: DoubleTap, Cobra, American Derringer Co.," December 2015

Just got my December issue today and went right to the derringer shoot-out article. I have a Bond Arms Texas Defender Derringer with barrel sets in 38 Sp./357 Magnum and 44-40 WCF, which I purchased after researching Bond Arms in your archives and reading the article Derringer Match-Up in the July 2002 issue.

No quarrel with your conclusion in both articles that derringers are not the best choice for self-defense. I use mine for plinking at close-range silhouette targets. I just like the old-time design and enjoy shooting it. I use revolvers for carry and home defense. My question is this:

Why did you not include a Bond Arms derringer in your shoot-out, or at least reference the earlier article? I think it's a better gun than either of the others (the DoubleTap and Cobra Enterprises guns were not in the 2002 article). It's very solidly made, stainless steel throughout, has easily interchanged barrel sets, and is comfortable to shoot with 38s and cowboy 44-40s. Optional grips are available that are longer and have rubber panels to further ease recoil. It's as safe as any very short gun, with a rebounding hammer and a simple crossbolt safety. In the 2002 article, you rated the Bond Texas Defender as "Our Pick" for Cowboy Action shooting, and the American Derringer 38 Special as a Conditional Buy for self-defense because it was a double-action design, unlike the model you tested here. Finally, I would guess that Bond Arms is the largest manufacturer of derringers in the country. **— John**

Hey John, you're right, we could have supplied some context with the inclusion of the earlier piece, since these models change very little over time. In the July 2002 issue, we said, "In today's world, however, derringers are indeed marginalized firearms for people seeking to protect themselves. Lightweight metals such as titanium and scandium have made revolvers not only pocket guns, but in some cases possibly even shirt-pocket guns (at least in terms of heft). Double-action wheelguns offer more capacity and easier handling than derringers, we found in a recent test. Ditto that with small-frame pistols." Because of limited samples in this segment, we tested an American Derringer DA 38 and the Bond Arms Cowboy Defender, $359, also in 38 Special/357 Mag. Also, we shot the American Derringer Model 1 and the Bond Arms Texas Defender in 45 LC/410 shotshell. In that match-up, we preferred the Bond Arms Texas Defender in 38 Special/357 Magnum, though we cautioned against their use for self-defense. We



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.

said, "There are simply better, more modern guns out there that make more sense than a derringer, in our view. If we wanted a Cowboy Action derringer, the Texas Defender, whose trigger guard can be removed, would be Our Pick." — Todd Woodard

Re "Handgun Bullets: How Do They Penetrate in Home Materials?" November 2015

Great article! There are a lot of us out here who appreciate your time and dedication to the CCW world and home defense. There is a ever-growing population of folks who are purchasing and owning guns, and these tests you perform are essential in understanding all the parameters that need to be taken into account. Also, I would like to see a test on the new Poly ARX ammo. **— David**

I just read the cartridge-penetration article. Forgive my ignorance, but I own a 40 SW pistol and saw it was not listed, as were so many other popular calibers? What was the basis for the choice of caliber used on your tests?

Also, I purchased a new LWRC M6 A2 223 Rem. over a year ago, and have not fired it! My state, California, is really screwing with the gun business (owners, retailers, and manufacturers) at every level, and in every way, including land management. It is tough (six hours or more drive time) to find legal, open country that allows rifle use. I have called the state, asked friends, and searched the yellow pages for information. Gun ranges that allow rifle use are hard to find and a long drive (2 hours to 6 hours) from me. Finally, my question: Do you have any information, maps, articles, etc., that list Southern California public shooting lands? **— Karl**



Bob Campbell replies: "The first question on the 40 S&W isn't ignorance — it's a good question. There's simply a limit to the number of cartridges that can be tested in a certain time period. We tested a range of styles because the physics don't vary. We don't have to test every single chambering/brand/bullet style to be able to get an idea about how a projectile of a certain weight, design, and speed will perform in penetration media. All in, 40 S&W comes in well behind 9mm and 45 ACP in total ammunition sales. That's the only reason it was left out. A heavy 9mm or a light 45 will give you an indication of how 40 S&W rounds will perform." As far as shooting facilities, the National Shooting Sports Foundation has a website called WhereToShoot.org where you can sort facilities by distance from your ZIP code and by what they offer. — tw

Re "Two Ways to Go Lighter with an AR: M&P vs. Daniel Defense," November 2015

I've enjoyed your magazine for more than 10 years, and I've never been disappointed in your recommendations. But I have one question. In the Gun Tests Value Guide for AR-15 rifles in multiple chamberings, you do not have the DPMS LR-308 rifle in your list. According to your August 2005 edition, it was your first choice and had a 4-star rating. **— David**

David: It was just the age of that review. The 2005-year review was two years earlier than the oldest listing in the table. In any case, the DPMS Panther Arms LR-308B was indeed "Our Pick," and would have earned a Grade: A score. We said, "This rifle would be our first choice for match shooting, and even our first choice of these three for field use because of the confidence it gave our shooters." — tw

Re "We Take a Close Look at Springfield M2 Bolt Gun," November 2015

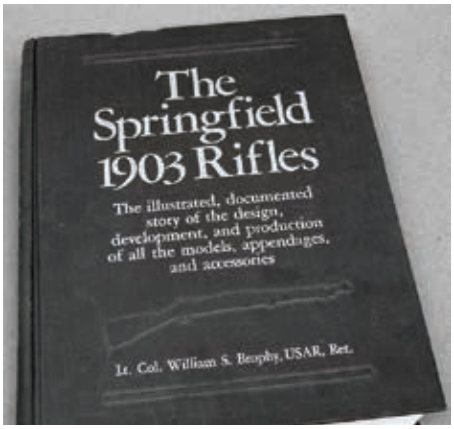
In the 1950s and 1960s, I recall that 1903 rifles and 1903 M2 rifles, as well as spare milled parts and stocks for them, were common and cheap. My friends and I rebuilt these rifles, creating "exotic" mixtures. In particular, we had several M2 Springfields with no stocks, or damaged stocks. We rebuilt them as bogus full-stocked versions. Your rifle was a Springfield Armory barreled action in a Remington A3-03 stock. Unless you have documentation, this is probably a bogus rifle. Usually, they are worth much less than a genuine M2. All the reference books that I have read state that the M2 was stocked in a NRA sporter stock, or in a modified type C stock (also sporter). The M2 stock usually did not have a butt trap, and the buttplate is usually without a trap door. The sight hood is not rare unless it is the Marines version, in which the hood is higher than the usual Army one. There are a number of target and hunting-sight discs that have adjustable irises or waterhouse diaphragms. I hope that you can confirm this rifle as a rare version, because it appears to have the wrong stock for a genuine M2 rifle.

— Edward

I'm sure by now you realize that your review of the Springfield Model 1922 rifle is seriously flawed in that the sample you purchased is a fake of a version that was never produced by the military. Rather than being a rare collectible, it is a legitimate action hacked into an 03A3 stock and handguard with a sleeved barrel. Rather than a value of $3,000 it is likely worth no more than $600 as a collection of parts. As a long-time subscriber, I applaud the expansion of your coverage in to collectible firearms. However, your efforts will benefit from consulting a few basic

reference books before publishing. In this case, a review of the Brophy book on the Springfield would have shown you that you had been misled in purchasing the rifle. **— Brad**

Brad is referring to The Springfield 1903 Rifles *book by Lieutenant Colonel William S. Brophy. Published by Stackpole Books in 1985, it has 624 pages. We found some for sale on ebay listed for between $85 and $250. — tw*



I found your article on the Springfield 1922 M2 to be very interesting. I have had an interest in the 1922 for several years and done some research. Two books that I have found useful are *Flayderman's Guide to Antique American Firearms* and Robert W.D. Ball's *Springfield Armory Shoulder Weapons 1795-1968*. However, neither mentions a full-stock M2. The only full-stock '03 .22 mentioned is Ball's description (and photos) of the Model 1903 .22 Gallery Practice Rifle made from 1907 to 1918. Writing about the M2 Ball does say "12,000 various models of the U.S. Rifle caliber .22 M2 were produced at the Armory with the serial number range from 1 to 22,000." I suppose it is possible that some of these "various models" might have had '03-type stocks.

Your article has some excellent detail photos of the M2 and a lot of rarely found information on takedown, etc. Is it possible that the M2 in your article was a "one-off" made by fitting an M2 to an '03 stock? The dimensions of the guns are very similar, making such a restocking change very doable. Do you have any information on the provenance of the gun? **— David**

Sr. Product Coordinator Kevin Winkle responds: "I purchased the Springfield training rifle that appeared in the November 2015 issue from a reputable private seller, who described it as a Springfield M2 training rifle. After the article was published, I checked back with him and he said that it is an M2, but not a 1922 M2. There were improvements that were made to the 1922 rifle. He told me the bolts are slightly different between the two versions of the rifle, but that the rifle was made in WWII, it does not have a sleeved barrel, and it is not a fake. After talking with several other gun collectors, only a few could say that they might have seen



any variant of the rifle in question with a full-length stock, and none of them could produce a photo. I believe that all of the parts, with the possible exception of the wood, are U.S. government–arsenal authentic, not copies. I also believe the stock is U.S. military, and that it may have been adapted for this rifle. I think everything is correct for an M2 rifle, except the stock. I would guess that someone had an M2 rifle and the stock cracked, and they replaced it with a 1903 stock that they made fit. After doing further research, I would estimate the value at $1000 to $1500, rather than $3000."

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6.5 Creedmoor Bolt Actions From Howa, Ruger, and Savage

In this match-up of pretty darned accurate rifles, we find three approaches to getting rounds downrange. Howa's package gun leads the way on value, but the LRP and RPR are quite good.

Reading Gun Tests means having a front-row seat to watch the evolution of firearms. But it's rare that so much change is represented within a single roster. In this test we'll compare three bolt-action rifles with what we call traditional, modern, and progressive designs. Even with its Kryptek camouflage coating and heavy barrel, the $1000 Howa 1500 from Legacy Sports International filled the traditional role with a standard-profile stock, bolt, trigger, and safety. The newest version of the $1252 Savage Model 12 LRP series was aptly named because it mirrors the modern long range precision rifle. The $1399 Ruger Precision Rifle progresses the idea of a precision military or competition rifle built around the ergonomics of the AR-15 rifle in mass production for a mass-production price.

What ties these rifles together is the 6.5 Creedmoor chambering, which was named — if not designed for — the famed Creedmoor Cup rifle competition. The Creedmoor Cup is a three-day event consisting of 16 different matches with a total of 240 shots fired standing, seated, and prone at distances of 200 yards, 300 yards, and 600 yards. The essence of the 6.5 Creedmoor round is a 6.5mm (0.264-inch diameter) bullet launched with approximately the same velocity and relatively flat trajectory of the 300 Winchester Magnum, but with considerably less recoil. This is important because, unlike hunters, competitive shooters need to be able to withstand the recoil of hundreds of rounds during matches and practice.



The $1399 Ruger Precision Rifle was accurate, delivering 0.6-inch groups consistently when firing Hornady's 140-grain A-Max bullets. It also offered the shooter a lot of features: 10-round removable mag, big bolt head, adjustable folding stock, long Picatinny top rail, key mod handguard, threaded barrel, and a great trigger. Sold separately is the $1400 Bushnell 4.5-18x44mm LRHS Tactical Hunter scope.



We think the Howa 1500 rifle imported from Japan by Legacy Sports in Reno, Nevada is highly underrated. Actions sold separately by Legacy are a steal, in our view. But we wouldn't want to miss out on the Kryptek Highlander/Austrian Brown Cerakote package shown here, accented by a matching beanie bag ($20) from TABGear.com plus Caldwell's $65 9- to 13-inch camo bipod. The Hogue stock was made in the U.S.A., and the result was a very desirable package. The sight is a Nikko Stirling 4-16X44mm Game King scope.

Not every maker is currently producing 6.5 Creedmoor, but based solely on available choices, Hornady Manufacturing is the most prolific. Our test rounds were Hornady's 129-grain SST Superformance hunting load, plus Hornady's 140-gain A-Max, and 120-grain A-Max Match rounds. We also tried handloading equivalent ammunition consisting of once-fired Hornady brass and 140-grain Hornady A-Max bullets to learn more about the cartridge. However we were limited in overall cartridge length to suit the detachable magazines of the Ruger Precision Rifle.

The Howa arrived with its own scope in place and with camouflage finish to match, but to put each gun on equal footing at the range, we shot our test rounds with Bushnell's new 2.5-18x44 Long Range Hunting Scope featuring 30mm tube construction, 0.25-MOA click value, and the innovative 62M reticle. Bushnell's

Tactical Hunter series scopes feature first-focal-plane magnification, which means you can keep the reticle lines small to block only a minimum amount of target. Accuracy data was collected by shooting 5-shot groups from the 100-yard bench at Houston's American Shooting Centers (amshootcenters.com). We are aware that the 3-shot group is being used as the standard elsewhere, including within the rules of Ruger's Precision Rifle challenge, but we like the 5-shot standard better because it says more about heat management and how the shooter is helped or hindered throughout the rigors of multiple shots. Here's how the rifles performed for our shooters:

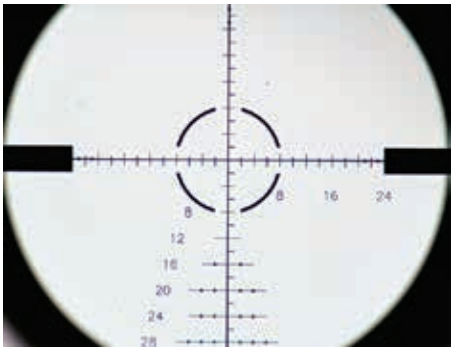
Howa Hogue Kryptek Cerakote Package HKF92507KH+AB 6.5 Creedmoor, $1000

This is the list price. We found the package retailing for $795 at RichiesPNG.com, but it was also out of stock. You can find a retailer on the Legacy Sports website under Contact > USA Dealers.

Based on the company's 1500 action, the Howa rifle was the most straightforward in terms of profile, offering a Sporter-style Hogue Overmolded stock with an aluminum bedding block. It was treated to a Kryptek Highlander camouflage coating, as was the Nikko Stirling 4-16x44mm GameKing scope included in this package. The barreled action was sheathed in Austrian Brown Cerakote and free-floated, connecting to the stock with two pillars fore and aft of the trigger guard and the hinged floorplate of the magazine. The Howa rifle felt quite rigid, and the surface of the stock was friendly to the hands and cheek. A beefy rubber buttpad was mounted, and there were sling swivels front and rear. The forend of the stock was broad enough to make good contact with a sandbag or any other surface. The No. 6-profile heavy barrel was 24 inches long. The result was a heavyweight hunting rifle (9.5 pounds loaded) with a commanding presence.



Our $1252 Savage Model 12 LRP (Long Range Precision) #19137 was a new item from the manufacturer. What's new is the chambering in 6.5 Creedmoor (also available chambered for 260 Rem. and 243 Win.) and the HS Precision stock. Similar in profile to a $3700 custom rifle from HS Precision, we think Savage cut costs by leaving in only what you'll need to go from gun store to shooting match. The Savage shot every test ammunition, including one that seemed to stump our other rifles, into groups that averaged about 0.4 to 0.6 inches wide with relatively little effort. Working from the 600-yard benches at Houston's American Shooting Centers, we used a $47 bench mat from Creedmoorsports.com to prevent the bipod feet from transmitting rebound and interfering with our shots. The $1400 Bushnell 4.5-18x44mm LRHS scope with 62M reticle was a big help. So were the $50 TAB ammo SAC and $20 small bag from Tabgear.com.





We really liked Bushnell's 4.5-18x44mm LRHS G2M (MOA) first-focal-plane reticle because it offered a lot of visual reference for ranging and holding off center to compensate for crosswinds or increased distance. Shown at 18X (top) and at 9X (bottom), we thinned the crosshairs to cover the least amount of target.

We couldn't help but notice that Ruger's Marksman adjustable trigger looks and acts very much like Savage's AccuTrigger, each with a hinged lever integrated with the trigger face. Howa's two-stage HACT (Howa Actuator Controlled Trigger) looked common in comparison, but is renowned in its own right. The Howa HACT trigger offered a short take up to a soft, but predictable, break. Measured using a Lyman digital scale, weight of resistance averaged just under 2.6 pounds, with a maximum deviation of no more than 6 ounces. At no time did anyone on our team find the fluctuation so obvious that it affected accuracy or the shooting experience in general. One member of our team thought the trigger was further to the rear than they liked.

The bolt action featured very positive ejection early in the rearward stroke. Clamping down the bolt handle required a little extra strength, signifying a tight lockup. Both the three-position safety and bolt-release levers were sheet metal to hold down costs. While not aesthetically pleasing, they were more likely to bend than break, and both levers worked without flaw.

At the range, we began shooting with the 4-16x44mm Nikko Stirling scope that came mounted and bore sighted

on a spacious Picatinny rail as part of the package. On the 18th round downrange, something came loose in the scope and appeared in the sight picture. We were able to continue without ill effect, and whatever it was eventually disappeared from view. But for the remainder of our tests, we switched to the Bushnell 4.5-18x44 LRHS scope and continued to use the Bushnell for the Ruger and Savage rifles as well, thus ensuring a level playing field for each rifle.

Results showed that a rifle does not have to be tactical or sniper-fancy to deliver accuracy. While the best average we could compile firing the Superformance rounds measured about 1.1 inches across, efforts shooting the 120-grain A-Max Match ammunition resulted in 5-shot groups ranging from about 0.6 inches to 0.9 inches. Switching to the Bushnell scope, we were able to place the 140-grain A-Max rounds into groups about 0.5 to 0.9 inches wide.

Our Team Said: The camouflage and Cerakote package was a very appealing upgrade and helps this rifle compete with the pizazz of the latest "tacticool" stocks and chassis. The importer (Legacy Sports International) will soon offer an upgrade to a 10-round detachable box magazine for even more flair. This could limit cartridge length for handloaders daring to increase their rounds' overall length in search of greater accuracy. But shooting a half-minute of angle out of the box is difficult to argue with.

Savage Arms Model 12 Long Range Precision (LRP) 19137 6.5 Creedmoor, $1252

The next movie about a military sniper may feature a rifle similar in construction to the Ruger Precision Rifle, but based on the accuracy and simplicity of the Long Range Precision Rifle Model 12, the specially bedded fiberglass stock is still the heavyweight champion, even if this platform is under attack from the chassis designs. The HS Precision Pro Series Tactical (PST) stock on the Savage grabs your attention, as do the LRP's 1-inch-diameter 26-inch-long fluted carbon-steel barrel, oversized bolt handle, and scrolled

HOWA 24-INCH HB HKF92507KH+AB 6.5 CREEDMOOR, $1000

GUN TESTS GRADE: B+

This package offers many of the benefits of a heavy-caliber hunting rifle with very little of the punishing abuse. The "AB" in the name designates the finish as "Austrian Brown." The buttpad and stock design combined to produce little recoil.



Action Type	Bolt, 2 Lugs	Stock	Hogue Overmolded; Kryptek Camo Finish
Overall Length	44.25 in.		
Barrel	24.0 in. Long, 1:8 Twist	Stock Length of Pull	14.1 in.
Overall Height (w/o scope)	7.2 in.	Bedding	Aluminum Pillar
Weight Unloaded	9.25 lbs.	Trigger Pull Weight	2.6 lbs.
Weight Loaded	9.5 lbs.	Safety	3 Position, Side Lever
Sight Radius	NA	Warranty	5 Years
Action Finish	Austrian Brown Cerakote	Telephone	(775) 828-0555
Barrel Finish	Austrian Brown Cerakote	Website	Legacysports.com
Magazine Capacity	5 rounds	Made In	Japan
Magazine Type	Internal box	Imported By	Legacy Sports Int'l, Nevada



Howa currently sells the barreled action found in our test gun (sans the Austrian Brown Cerakote finish) for about $525. The roomy Picatinny rail would be extra. Howa's U.S. importer, Legacy Sports of Reno, Nevada, also sells $100 upgrades to a removable box magazine (right) made to fit just about every popular action.



Hogue's signature pebble finish on the Overmolded stock was evident on our Howa. The Kryptek Highlander camo finish was a good match for the Austrian Brown Cerakote, but did show minor chipping along the scope mount.



The Howa 1500's bolt action was smooth and featured short, quick ejection. The two-lug design was simple but offered firm, consistent lockup. The Cerakote treatment on the bolt body was a nice touch, bringing together the exterior camo pattern and action colors.

and polished chrome bolt.

Our test rifle model, No. 19137, was so new at the time of this writing that the manufacturer had not yet assigned a photograph to its web link. But it does resemble the $3695 HS Precision PLR custom rifle, though our test rifle offered a more vertical grip and the barrel of our LRP showed decidedly less taper. The heft of the barrel walls made the 6.5mm bore look relatively tiny, with the result being a rifle that was heavy but with a balance point very near the center of its 46-inch-plus overall length.

The Model 12 fed from a detachable magazine. We liked that it fit flush to the receiver, but magazine capacity was limited to only three rounds. Formed from sheet metal, the magazine's construction was robust. While feeding and working the action, we found it to be smooth and reliable, but also a bit heavy, in our view. The words, "Warning: Precision Target Trigger" were emblazoned on the left side of the action, and, yes, this was indeed a special iteration of Savage's Accu-Trigger.

RANGE DATA

Hornady 6.5 Creedmoor 140-gr. A-Max	**Ruger Precision Rifle**	**Savage Model 12LRP**	**Howa 1500 HB**
Average Velocity	2672 fps	2763 fps	2680 fps
Muzzle Energy	2219 ft.-lbs.	2373 ft.-lbs.	2232 ft.-lbs.
Average Group Size	0.6 in.	0.6 in.	0.6 in.
Hornady 6.5 Creedmoor 129-gr. SST Superformance	**Ruger Precision Rifle**	**Savage Model 12LRP**	**Howa 1500 HB**
Average Velocity	2921 fps	2977 fps	2982 fps
Muzzle Energy	2444 ft.-lbs.	2538 ft.-lbs.	2545 ft.-lbs.
Average Group Size	0.9 in.	0.6 in.	1.1 in.
Hornady 6.5 Creedmoor 120-gr. A-Max	**Ruger Precision Rifle**	**Savage Model 12LRP**	**Howa 1500 HB**
Average Velocity	2806 fps	2902 fps	2876 fps
Muzzle Energy	2099 ft.-lbs.	2244 ft.-lbs.	2204 ft.-lbs.
Average Group Size	0.7 in.	0.5 in.	0.8 in.

To collect accuracy data, we fired 5-shot groups from a sandbag rest. Distance: 100 yards. We recorded velocities using a CED chronograph, with the first sky screen set 12 feet from the muzzle.



Hornady currently makes the most varieties of 6.5 Creedmoor ammunition. Left to right are a 243 Winchester case, Hornady 120-grain A-Max, Hornady 129-grain SST, and Hornady 140-grain A-Max Match bullets, then a 308 Winchester on the right. Note the broad shoulders and steep angles of the 6.5 Creedmoor cases. Each rifle shot the 140-grain rounds accurately, but the Savage excelled with all three.

The center activation lever was also colored red to remind the shooter to pay extra attention. Our Savage LRP had the lightest-weight trigger in our test, coming in at about 2.25 pounds with little variation. The trigger sensation was very easy to learn, and it did not ask the shooter to overcome a sharp break or wait through a lengthy compression.

The tang-mounted safety offered a third central position so the bolt could be worked with the trigger locked down. We found ourselves more willing to use the safety on this rifle (rather than just leave the bolt open) because the stock was so comfortable in the hand. Both sides of the vertical pistol grip offered the same natural palm swell, leaving the thumb for either left-handed or right-handed shooters resting atop the safety. So far, index to the trigger was about perfect for everyone who has shot the LRP.

Some of our smaller shooters thought the buttstock felt a little long, but length of pull measured only about 13.5 inches. We think its length was somewhat of an illusion caused by the supplied two-piece scope base. With only one cross slot fore and aft of the ejection port, adjustment for eye relief was limited to sliding the scope back and forth within the rings.

In testing the Howa and Ruger rifles, we saw a distinct preference for the A-Max Match loads and much less willingness for those rifles to deliver the 129-grain SST Superformance hunting loads into a tight group. Before shooting the Savage, we credited this to the Superformance ammunition being designed more for terminal ballistics than match-grade accuracy. But the

SAVAGE ARMS MODEL 12 LONG RANGE PRECISION (LRP) 19137 6.5 CREEDMOOR, $1252

GUN TESTS GRADE: A

The Model 12 LRP shot the smallest groups of the test with every round we tried.



Action Type	Bolt, 2 lugs	Magazine	3 Rounds; Removable Flush Fit Box
Overall Length	46.25 in.	Stock	HS Precision Fiberglass; w/Aluminum Bedding Block
Barrel	26.0 in. Long, 1:8 Twist Matte Blued Finish	Stock Length of Pull	13.5 in.
		Trigger Pull Weight	2.1 lbs.
Overall Height w/o Scope	6.5 in.	Safety	3 Position, Tang
Weight Unloaded	11.1 lbs.	Warranty	1 Year
Weight Loaded (140 grain)	11.4 lbs.	Telephone	(800) 370-0708
Sight Radius	NA	Website	SavageArms.com
Action Finish	Matte Blued	Made In	U.S.A.



Heavy and well made, the jeweled bolt of our Savage Model 12 LRP fit into a precise barreled action mounted in a vise-like stock. Solid.



Addressed from either side, the shape of the pistol grip and palm swell made our hands feel right at home. This helps the shooter by removing all unnecessary tension from the grip. The Model 12 LRP version of Savage's Accu-trigger was a treat.



The three-round detachable magazine supplied for the 6.5 Creedmoor was heavy and robust sheet metal. We only wished for more rounds.



The stock was not adjustable, but it did offer what a shooter really needs at the grip. The thumb-operated three-position tang safety added to the 12's ambidextrous capability.

Savage was ready to pile at least one shot on top of another in every group, including those shot with the Superformance. In addition, both A-Max rounds produced some sub-half-inch groups. The Howa and Ruger rifles each favored the Hornady 140-grain A-Max ammunition with an average-sized group of about 0.6 inches. The Savage tied this performance and delivered 5-shot groups averaging 0.6 inches and 0.5 inches across for the 129-grain and 120-grain ammunition, respectively.

Our Team Said: Our wish list for the newest Savage Arms model 12 LRP was very short: A one-piece scope base, a second sling stud beneath the forend, and maybe an adjustable cheekpiece. In the meantime, buyers of this rifle are going to be bored shooting at less than 300 or 400 yards. If longer-range competitive shooting interests you, this rifle is probably the simplest and least expensive way to get started.

Ruger Precision Rifle 18005 6.5 Creedmoor, $1399

ChampionFirearms.com listed this rifle for $950, but the retailer wasn't accepting pre-orders for the gun. SlickGuns.com had it on sale for $1200, but it was out of stock. Kentucky Gun Co. (KYGunCo.com) was likewise out of stock, with a retail price of $1080 and a cash price of $1049. Sportsmans Supply auctioned one on GunBroker.com, with the bid up to $1501 when we checked it last.

First reactions to the Ruger Precision Rifle ranged from "It's a bolt-action AR" to the expectation that the RPR was a "chassis" rifle. Actually, nether is correct, but the RPR draws from both of these platforms. A chassis rifle consists of a frame, including a buttstock, folding or rigid, and support structure for the barreled action, trigger mechanism, and magazine well connected to a forend that may or may not be skeletonized, but provides bore-centric rails for mounting optics, laser aiming devices, or illumination. A true chassis rifle, such as those made by Accuracy International, JPRifles or Ashbury Precision Ordnance,

RUGER PRECISION RIFLE 18005
6.5 CREEDMOOR, $1399
GUN TESTS GRADE: A-

Adjustability and AR-15 ergonomics make this rifle appealing and easy to shoot. It displayed noticeably more consistent accuracy with heavier bullets.



Action	Bolt, 3 Lugs		Anodized Aluminum
	Parkerized Finish	Bedding	Modular free float
Overall Length (min/max)	42.25 in./47.25 in	Buttplate	Rubber, adj. Cant
Barrel	24.0 in. Long, 1:8 Twist,	Length of Pull (standard/set)	12.0 in./15.0 in.
	Parkerized Finish; Fluted, 5/8"-24 Threads	Handguard	Keymod, Picatinny
Overall Height (w/o Scope)	7.3 in.	Receiver Scope-Base Pattern	Picatinny
Weight Unloaded	10.75 lbs.	Trigger Pull Weight	2.6 lbs.
Weight Loaded	11.25 lbs.	Safety	Rotating Thumb
Sight Radius	NA	Warranty	None Written
Magazine Capacity	10 Rounds	Telephone	(336) 949-5200
Magazine Type	Detachable Box	Website	Ruger.com
Buttstock	Adjustable, Folding;	Made In	U.S.A.



More sophisticated than the other two rifles, the bolt action of the Ruger Precision Rifle showed three heavy lugs. Not similar to Ruger's Hawkeye or Mark II actions, the bolt is proprietary and mates with Ruger's "American" rifle-series design.



The folding stock helps with transport, as well as providing step one in removing the bolt. The hinge was sturdy, but it had no provision to lock open. Different shooters were accommodated for length of pull and for comb height, which was locked into position using cam levers. The Picatinny rail along the bottom can be used for attaching a monopod or as a platform for rear bag support.



Samson's 15-inch-long Evolution-series free-float handguard carries a manufacturer's suggested retail price of $219. This points up the modularity of the Ruger Precision Rifle as well as its value. The plug-like fitting was for a QD or "quick detach" sling loop. Mounting is via the Key Mod system that serves as a pegboard-like grid.

provides a complete structure into which a barreled action is bolted in place. If the RPR were a true chassis rifle, then maybe the barreled action from one of Ruger's three Hawkeye bolt-action rifles chambered for 6.5 Creedmoor would fall right into place. But the Ruger Precision Rifle is more of a hybrid design built around Ruger's patented American-style action and the company's SR AR-15/type rifles.

Nonetheless, the RPR takes advantage of the many AR-like features that the American public has fallen in love with. The 15-inch-long Samson key-mod free-float handguard is ready to accept Picatinny rails in just about any position the operator desires. The top rail was affixed at 12 o'clock and extended the 7.8-inch-long Picatinny rail directly above the receiver. Bore-to-rail height was very close, and recoil was designed to move straight to the rear at the top of the 0.9-inch-thick rubber buttpad. The buttpad was designed to be adjustable for cant, but we found the primary locking screw to be frozen and were unable to move it from its vertical set. Adjustment for length of pull was much easier via a cam and clamping lever. With the release lever pulled away from the rifle, the buttpad could be moved closer to or further from the receiver by rotating the large threaded shaft. Despite variations in size, each staff member was able to adjust for eye relief and comfortable extension of the arms and wrists.

The cheekpiece that covered what looked very much like an AR-15 buffer tube was also held by a cam and clamp, but the cheekpiece simply slid up or down on a spring-loaded race. Hand-setting the position was a little tricky, requiring the operator to pinch the lower forks of the cheekpiece to release it from its spring-loaded detent.

Sporter-rifle stocks offer a pistol grip, but when compared to the AR-15 that would be in name only. The true pistol grip found on the RPR was interchangeable with just about any available AR-15 grip. The AR-15/



The Ruger's buttplate was supposedly adjustable for cant (inset) to about 11 o'clock or 1 o'clock, but the setscrew was frozen, so we had to leave it as shipped.

Below: Inside the receiver is where the Ruger American Rifle action is mated to an exterior construction similar to the AR-15/AR-10 platform. The safety was thumb operated, but with the deletion of a third position for the select-fire option, it was a short throw between Fire and Safe. The magazine-release lever (bottom arrow) is in front of the trigger guard. The hinged panel along the receiver (top arrow) serves as the bolt release.



style thumb safety was limited to movement between 9 o'clock on-Safe and about 11 o'clock to Fire, because unlike the AR-15, its family tree does not include full-auto operation. The safety lever can be moved to the right-hand side, if so desired.

The RPR was very long, thanks to its 24-inch barrel and a long bolt assembly. The barrel was threaded and those threads were capped, but the thread cap was difficult to remove. We chose not to force it off, especially in the absence of a barrel vise. Adding a suppressor to the threaded barrel would make it a real fishing pole. The folding stock helped shorten the rifle for transport, but unless you've got a properly padded case, we think most people will carry the RPR extended, partially because the stock does not lock down when folded.

Removing the bolt required folding the stock, pulling up the bolt handle, and pressing the release lever located on the left-hand side of the receiver. The rear of the bolt was sealed with a polymer cap bearing the Ruger logo, so it is protected and does offer a finished look. The cap screws off and reveals a compartment holding a 5/64th-inch hex wrench to disassemble the bolt or adjust the trigger. Trigger pull upon arrival measured 2.55 pounds, with a maximum variation observed as being only about 1.4 ounces. This was light enough and consistent enough, in our view.

The magazine release consisted of a vertical lever at the rear of the magazine well. Patented by Ruger, we found it to be very easy to grasp the magazine and activate the release lever with either hand. Two ten-round polymer magazines (PMags by Magpul) were supplied, but those made by AICS will also work. Provisions for a QD (quick detachable) sling mount consisted of the female portions of the system only. The QD mounts were found on the left side of the buttstock, but they could be moved to the opposite side. The forward QD attachment was held via the key mod system, so it could be moved to anywhere along the handguard. A 3.75-inch-long Picatinny rail with sling stud was supplied. A shooter could use the stud to mount a bipod. A Picatinny rail measuring about 2.25 inches long was machined into the lower structure of the buttstock. This rail could be used to connect a monopod or to provide a flat surface for rear bag support.

When firing the Ruger off sandbags, we found that the profile of the forend wasn't as stable on bags as it was with a Harris bipod we tried after gathering accuracy data. We tried a lot of positions on the sandbags, including pushing the rifle forward into the bags so that it was braced against the magazine and magazine well. Also, bolt travel was not as smooth as we would have liked, but the trigger was very consistent, and it was smooth enough to let the shooter concentrate on other things, such as breathing and taking aim. The only feature our shooters really didn't like was the cheekpiece. Its top radius followed the arc of the tube below, but was then squared off at about 9 o'clock. As shooting progressed, every member of our team sooner or later felt the edge rubbing uncomfortably into the face.

In terms of accuracy, the Ruger Precision Rifle was very consistent. One group fired with the 129-grain Superformance ammunition measured 1 MOA exactly, with a final average of 0.9 inches. The 120-grain A-Max rounds provided an average group of 0.7 inches, while the 140-grain A-Max rounds printed 0.6-inch-wide 5-round groups one after another.

Our Team Said: If America votes with their dollars, then the AR-15 is the most popular rifle in the land. This bodes well for a bolt action designed in its image, with many of the same ergonomics and popular features. What we liked most about the Ruger Precision Rifle's performance was that except for a lack of comfort at the cheekpiece, it really lets shooter perform at a high level. No matter what the size or body type of our shooters, the results were very much the same. In the case of the 140-grain ammunition (handloaded or factory), we found it remarkably easy to print 5-shot groups into 0.6-inch groups one after another.

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

VALUE GUIDE: TOP-RANKED BOLT-ACTION RIFLES (MULTIPLE CHAMBERINGS)

GUN NAME	ISSUE	GRADE & COMMENTS
CZ-USA 527 Varmint 03066 17 Hornet, $725	Feb 2014	**Grade A:** Highly accurate hot or cold, with standard and set triggers that didn't vary in pull weight.
Weatherby Vanguard 2 Deluxe 257 Weatherby Magnum, $1149	April 2013	**Grade A:** The Vanguard has the same stock design as the Mark V and it works just as well.
Howa Hogue Youth 2N1COMBO No. HWR66204+ 243 Win., $641	April 2013	**Grade A:** Trouble free, capable of delivering MOA accuracy and adaptable to any size shooter.
Ruger American No. 6904 243 Winchester, $449	Feb 2013	**Grade A:** The Ruger American delivered performance that was worthy of a much more expensive rifle.
Winchester M70 F'wt Compact SA 535126220 308 Win., $880	Jan 2013	**Grade A:** We liked this slim, trim Model 70. Excellent wood, great metal and wood finish, excellent trigger.
Savage 11/111 Lightweight Hunter 19209 308 Win., $899	Jan 2013	**Grade A:** The Savage was the epitome of a light hunting rifle. We've seen very few 308 rifles this light.
CZ-USA 550 American Safari 416 Rigby, $1907	Feb 2012	**Grade A:** The CZ 550 had great sights and recoil pad, nice wood, and an excellent trigger.
Anschütz 64 MP R No. 009977 22 LR, $1399	July 2011	**Grade A:** Enough accuracy, charisma, and versatility to keep the shooter interested for a lifetime.
Steyr Jeff Cooper Scout 308 Winchester, $2975	May 2011	**Grade A:** It is distinguished by its gray color and the Cooper logo on the butt.
Kimber 84M Longmaster VT 22-250 Rem., $1391	Feb 2011	**Grade A:** Effortless accommodation to the shooter. On par with more costly custom rifles.
Kimber 8400 Caprivi 375 H&H Magnum, $3196	March 2010	**Grade A:** The lovely wood of the Kimber Caprivi stole our hearts. Well-fitted ebony forend tip.
Ruger K77/17-VHZ #7212 17 Hornet, $969	Feb 2014	**Grade A-:** This is a smooth, rapid-cycling full-size rifle with a crisp single-action trigger.
Browning T-Bolt Target/Varmint No. 025176270 17 HMR, $799	Sept 2013	**Grade A-:** The T-bolt is almost as fast as a semi-auto. It is a classy rifle that is fun to shoot.
Ruger K77/17VMBBZ No. 7027 17 HMR, $969	Sept 2013	**Grade A-:** Shot every load tested to 1 minute of angle or better. Full-length barrel maximized velocity and power.
Thompson Center Dimension No. 8402 243 Win., $679	April 2013	**Grade A-:** This gets a high grade based on accuracy and a remarkably simple procedure for caliber changes.
Weatherby Mark V Deluxe 257 Weatherby Magnum, $2400	April 2013	**Grade A-:** Many would think it's overrated because of its too-glossy finish, but it does perform.

Log on to **Gun-Tests.com** to read complete reviews of these products in the designated months. Or you can order and download two bolt-action e-books that cover more than a dozen rifle recommendations, riflescope picks, accessories choices, and ammunition suggestions.

Ruger Bisley Vaquero Takes On Uberti's Cattleman Bisley

We match up two single-action revolvers with target shooting pedigrees. Would we prefer an original design, as found in the Uberti, or would we favor the Ruger's more modern take?

In 1894 Colt debuted a target variation of its Single Action Army pistol (SAA) called the Bisley. This new revolver was named after the famous British shooting range in Surry, England. Colt manufactured more than 44,000 Bilsey revolvers in 18 different chamberings, with barrel lengths of 4.75, 5.5, and 7.5 inches, until 1915, when the company discontinued the line. A very small number had adjustable sights, but most had fixed sights like the SAA. The Bisley used the same frame, barrel, ejector-rod system, and cylinder, as well as the basic mechanism of the SAA, but the new gun also offered some distinct differences — namely the hammer, trigger, and grip, which were designed for the late-19th-century target shooter. Some internal parts like the mainspring, hand, racket, and others were also different.



Top, the Uberti Cattleman Bisley (Model No. 346040, $609) is as close to an original Colt Bisley as you can get, while the Ruger Bisley Vaquero (Model No. 5130, $835, bottom) is a modern take on the Bisley design.



Left: The shape of the Uberti Bisley grip is swept under and is more vertical than the traditional SAA (top), while the Ruger Bisley Vaquero grip (right) is fuller.



At the turn of the 20th century, a target-pistol shooter's firing stance was much different than today. At the line, the pistol shooter would fire one handed, with his shooting arm bent at the elbow and wrist bent forward. The original Bisley made this stance comfortable.

The shape of the Bisley grip is swept under and appears more vertical than the traditional SAA, and that's for a reason: To accommodate a bent-arm single-hand hold, which for today's shooter looks and feels archaic. Obviously, one can shoot

a Bisley like any modern pistol by keeping the wrist locked with a one-hand or two-hand grip, like with modern semi-automatic pistols such as the 1911, Glock, and the ilk. But the Bisley's grip doesn't lend itself to this modern hold.

Also, the Bisley's trigger is wider than the traditional SAA, the trigger guard is shaped differently, and the hammer spur was lowered to make it easier to cock without a shooter needing to loosen his grip.

Ruger refreshed the Bisley in 1984, introducing the Ruger Blackhawk Bisley with a similar unique grip, but not as tucked as the original Colt, and with target sights and an engraved unfluted cylinder. The Ruger Bisley grip design allows for less movement of the grip in hand when firing hot loads. Unlike a SAA grip style, which curls up in your hand when firing hot loads, the Bisley transfers the recoil into the palm of the hand, a more comfortable experience when shooting hot loads. A Bisley of one type or another has been in Ruger's catalog ever since.

We wanted to take a look at an old-school Bisley and a modern Bisley to compare them side by side, so we acquired an Uberti Cattleman Bisley, which is a spitting image of an original Colt, and the more modern variant in a Ruger Bisley Vaquero, built on the New Vaquero frame. Our first task was to use a revolver range rod and rod-head combo from Brownells in 38 Special/357 Magnum (080-617-038WB, $40) to check each chamber for alignment with the bore, and we found everything to be in spec. Some older replica revolvers might have had the throat of a chamber opened up to accept a range rod during factory inspection, which means that particular chamber will shave and spit lead and be less accurate than other chambers. The range rod won't pick up this issue.

Newer CNC machines hold better tolerances, and we did not experience any spitting or shaved lead with the Uberti replica nor the Ruger, nor did we expect it. We mention it only because we thought

UBERTI CATTLEMAN BISLEY 346040
38 SPECIAL/357 MAGNUM, $609
GUN TESTS GRADE: B+

If you want a traditional Bisley, buy the Uberti. It was well made, had a beautiful finish, and furnished good accuracy, even with the 19th-century-style grip.





The ejector head pivots away from the barrel like a traditional Single Action Army.



The Uberti needs to be on half cock for the shooter to rotate and load the chambers.



the Uberti's firing pin is located in the hammer (arrow). The Ruger's firing pin is in the frame.

Action Type	Revolver, Single Action
Overall Length	12.7 in.
Barrel Length	7.5 in.
Sight Radius	8.5 in.
Overall Height	5.1 in.
Maximum Width	1.6 in.
Weight Unloaded	47.7 oz.
Weight Loaded	50.1 oz.
Cylinder Gap	.008 in.
Capacity	6
Action Finish	Case Hardened
Barrel/Cylinder Finish	Blued
Frame Front Strap Height	2.3 in.
Frame Back Strap Height	4.0 in.
Grip	Smooth Walnut
Grip Thickness (max)	1.4 in.
Grip Circumference (max)	5.6 in.
Front Sight	Rounded Blade
Rear Sight	Groove
Trigger Pull Weight	3.6 lbs.
Safety	None
Warranty	5-Year Limited
Telephone	(800) 264-4962
Website	Uberti.com
Made In	Italy



Above: The Uberti uses a cylinder bushing like traditional SAA revolvers. Below: When we field-stripped the revolvers to get a better sense of their ease of disassembly and manufacturing, we found fit and finish for both were well executed.



it prudent to let readers know that some older manufactured replica revolvers on the used market may exhibit this problem. We also used a feeler gauge to check the barrel/cylinder clearance, and we found that the Ruger was tighter at .004 inches compared to the Uberti's .008 inches. The tighter Ruger, even with a 5.5-inch barrel, gave slightly higher muzzle velocities than the Uberti with the larger gap and 7.5-inch barrel. The recommended gap for lubed lead bullets is .008 inches and .006 inches for jacketed bullets. Not that we think it is an issue, but extensive lead shooting without cleaning may cause the cylinder to bind, so Cowboy Action shooters take note, especially if you load black-powder cartridges. Clymer Go (184-100-380WB) and No-Go (184-100-381WB) gauges, both $30 from Brownells, were used in the cylinder chambers to check headspace. We do this with the Go gauge to ensure factory ammo will chamber and allow the cylinder to rotate freely. If a No-Go gauge can be rotated in the cylinder, the headspace is too long and out of spec, and it becomes a potentially dangerous revolver to shoot. We assumed the Uberti and Ruger would pass without incident, and they did.

We also field-stripped the revolvers to get a better sense of their ease of disassembly and manufacturing. We found the fit and finish for both were well executed, and the timing on both Bisley revolvers was near perfect.

To test for function, feel, and accuracy, we tried a variety of standard 38 Special and 38 Special +P loads as well as a 357 Magnum set. What we found was that these old-style revolvers shot well. Across all ammo brands and types, we averaged about 1.5-inch 5-shot groups at 25 yards using a rest. Those older-style sights may not be as easy to use as more modern sights, but with some practice by the shooter, they sure can get the job done.

Depending on what you prefer, you will either like the more traditionally styled revolver or the modern update, but for most of our shooters, the

RUGER BISLEY VAQUERO, MODEL NO. 5130
38 SPECIAL/357 MAGNUM, $835
GUN TESTS GRADE: A–

The more modern Bisley-esque grip made the Ruger more popular with testers, plus the heft and stainless construction made it easier to shoot and maintain.





The modernized Ruger just needs the loading gate opened to load and unload cartridges.

Action Type	Revolver, Single Action
Overall Length	11.1 in.
Barrel Length	5.5 in.
Sight Radius	6.5 in.
Overall Height	5.5 in.
Maximum Width	1.6 in.
Weight Unloaded	45.5 oz.
Weight Loaded	47.9 oz.
Cylinder Gap	.004 in.
Capacity	6
Action Finish	Bright Stainless
Frame Finish	Bright Stainless
Barrel/Cylinder Finish	Bright Stainless
Frame Front Strap Height	2.3 in.
Frame Back Strap Height	3.7 in.
Grip	Polymer, Simulated Ivory
Grip Thickness (max)	1.3 in.
Grip Circumference (max)	5.6 in.
Front Sight	Rounded Blade
Rear Sight	Fixed Groove
Trigger Pull Weight	3.8 lbs.
Safety	Transfer Bar
Warranty	None Written
Telephone	(928) 541-8892
Website	Ruger.com
Made In	USA

The transfer bar safety mechanism means the Ruger can be safely carried fully loaded.





The ejector rod head does not pivot away from the barrel, which could mean a singed fingertip for the inattentive shooter. It's worth noticing.



Above: We used a feeler gauge to check the barrel/cylinder clearance and found that the Ruger was tighter at .004 inches compared to the Uberti's .008 inches. This likely explains why the Ruger, even with a 5.5-inch barrel, gave slightly higher muzzle velocities than the Uberti with the larger gap and 7.5-inch barrel.

Ruger Bisley came out on top, and you will see why shortly. Here's more on the Bisley match up.

Uberti Cattleman Bisley 346040 38 Special/357 Magnum, $609

If holding to tradition is important to you, then the Uberti Cattleman Bisley has a place in your gun safe. This is a well-made, beautiful revolver that offers good performance at $200 less than the Ruger. The barrel, cylinder, and grip frame are all deeply blued with a rich case-hardened frame color. The smooth walnut grips had nice figuring and were well fitted to the metal.

The blue-blood Colt collectors winced at the Uberti because it was not truly a clone of a Colt, but it was a darned good replica. Small touches, such as the checkered hammer spur, help redeem it in their eyes, though the firing pin was obviously not the cone-shaped firing pin of an original. The Uberti made the same music when cocking as does a traditional SAA. It uses the same type of mechanism, with a half cock notch for loading and unloading. As a result, the Uberti needs to have the hammer rest on an empty chamber when carried.

What was modernized on the Uberti was the elongated cylinder base pin, which has two notches in lieu of one. The shooter can press the base pin screw and push in the cylinder base pin to the first notch to block the hammer from fully moving forward and firing a round. This is not a solution for carrying the Uberti fully loaded, we believe. Instead, we recommend using the "load one, skip one" method like a shooter does with a traditional SAA.

The ejector-rod head is crescent shaped and rotates away from the barrel so finger tips do not get singed. This is a feature on traditional SAA revolvers testers have come to appreciate. The Uberti has a rounded front-blade sight and the traditional grooved rear milled into the top strap. When cocked, the rear of the groove is flat and dark. We found we liked these sights as is, especially because the Uberti shot to point of aim. In fact, with a rest, some testers were able to cluster shots with holes touching, especially with the 38 Special ammo.

In hand, the Uberti felt lighter and more compact than the Ruger. The grip was a bit odd; thinner directly behind

RANGE DATA

Hornady Custom XTP 38 Special 158-gr.	**Ruger Bisley Vaquero**	**Uberti Cattleman Bisley**
Average Velocity	852 fps	735 fps
Muzzle Energy	255 ft.-lbs.	189 ft.-lbs.
Average Group	1.8 in.	1.4 in.
Winchester White Box 38 Special +P 125-gr. JHP	**Ruger Bisley Vaquero**	**Uberti Cattleman Bisley**
Average Velocity	1032 fps	1026 fps
Muzzle Energy	296 ft.-lbs.	292 ft.-lbs.
Average Group	1.7 in.	1.5 in.
Federal Tactical Hydra-Shok 357 Mag 158-gr. JHP	**Ruger Bisley Vaquero**	**Uberti Cattleman Bisley**
Average Velocity	1385 fps	1375 fps
Muzzle Energy	673 ft.-lbs.	663 ft.-lbs.
Average Group	1.9 in.	1.5 in.

To collect accuracy data, we fired five-shot groups from a bench using a rest. Distance: 25 yards with open sights. We recorded velocities using a ProChrono digital chronograph with the first screen set 15 feet from the muzzle.





Left: This is the shooter's view of the Ruger. We blacked that semi-circular cut and the front blade on the Ruger. The front sight blade of the Ruger was slightly larger than the Uberti's, shown at right. Testers said the Cattleman's sight picture was traditional and still serviceable.





The Uberti, left, uses a traditional flat mainspring compared to the Ruger's coiled mainspring, another sign of modernization in the Vaquero.

the trigger guard than the Vaquero. Many testers liked the fuller Ruger Bisley grip, which filled this thinner area. Again, this is due to the Uberti keeping with the original design of the Bisley grip. We did fire a number of rounds like late-19th-century target shooters, and found in 38 Special, the stance was fine, though awkward. Using 357 Magnums, however, required a more modern stance. The felt recoil with the Hydra-Shok loads was quite manageable. We also felt the Uberti was easier to cock. It had a similar trigger-pull weight as the Ruger, and both had no creep and a crisp let off.

Our Team Said: The Uberti was as close to an original Bisley as you can get, and we thought it was a steal compared to the price of the Ruger. The grip, however, felt a bit off for modern shooters, and that was what knocked the Uberti behind the Ruger.

Ruger Bisley Vaquero 5130
38 Special/357 Magnum, $835

The Ruger Bisley New Model Vaquero offers the unique Bisley look plus many modern refinements that make shooting these revolvers safer and more user friendly. Our Ruger Bisley featured a 5.5-inch barrel, simulated ivory grip, and a polished stainless-steel finish that resembled nickel plating, but with none of the wear and maintenance requirements that finish requires. If the glossy, bright finish has a drawback, it is sun glare when shooting under a clear sky. On the other hand, the stainless finish made it easy to clean the revolver after extended shooting sessions. Testers agreed they would darken the shooter-facing position of the front blade and the semi-circular cutout just to the rear of the groove on the top strap.

The grip is reminiscent of the original Bisley, but it felt more friendly to the modern shooter, in our view. It is not as swept under as it is on an original Colt, so in hand, the Ruger Bisley felt much like a modern semi-automatic pistol. Shot one- or two-handed, the Ruger felt comfortable. We found it delightfully addictive to shoot with mild 38 Special loads, and quite comfortable and easy to manage with hot 357 Magnum loads.

The grip panels were an off-white polymer that looked like ivory. The Ruger medallion was inset in each grip panel. The panels were not flush with the frame like on the Uberti, but the edges were smooth, so no chafing occurred during live-fire testing. In hand, the Ruger had a bit of heft to it — 45 ounces — compared to the 7.5-inch barrel Uberti that weighed 47.7 ounces. The Ruger was a natural pointer that we found comfortable to hold, grip, and cock, due to the Bisley's lowered hammer. Testers did not have to break their grips to cock the piece like with a traditional SAA.

Features found in the Vaquero series are incorporated into the Bisley, such the transfer safety-bar system, which allows the Bisley to be safely carried with all chambers loaded, unlike the Uberti, which must be carried with the hammer on an empty chamber. The Ruger also uses a reverse indexing pawl to make loading and unloading



Note the wider trigger on both Bisley models for better trigger control and helpful for better accuracy.

the Ruger Bisley easier. If you pass the chamber, then just rotate it backwards a bit to align the chamber and loading gate. With the Uberti and other traditional SAA revolvers, if you rotate the cylinder past the chamber, the cylinder needs to be completely spun around to get back to the missed chamber and re-aligned with the loading gate.

The other features that make the Ruger a Bisley is the rounded trigger guard, curved trigger, and lowered hammer spur. The ejector rod head is crescent-shaped and does not pivot away from the barrel in use. Watch out for singed finger tips after extensive shooting heats up the barrel. The front of the cylinder is beveled to aid holstering. Loading the Ruger Bisley is also modernized. The hammer and trigger must be fully forward, and with the loading gate opened, the cylinder rotates freely. There is no half cock on the hammer as in a traditional SAA and in the Uberti Bisley. The Ruger's hammer took slightly more effort to cock than the Uberti, and we attribute that to the Ruger's coiled mainspring. The Uberti has a traditional flat mainspring.

The Ruger's trigger consistently broke at 3.8 pounds, which we thought was fine for this revolver. The Bisley also shot to point of aim, an important attribute for any SAA-style revolver with fixed sights. At 25 yards, we found shooting a 2-inch group to be easy, even if the sights were hard to see in some light conditions. At 7 and 15 yards, the Ruger showed its stuff with good accuracy at fast speeds. Loaded for bear with the Federal Tactical 158-grain Hydra-Shok JHPs, recoil was quite manageable since the grip is wide and spread felt recoil to more area of the palm. For most shooters, the middle finger did not get whacked, which can happen on traditional SAA revolvers when firing magnum loads.

Our Team Said: The Ruger shot to point of aim, had a very serviceable grip, and its heft made shooting hot loads tolerable. Testers felt more confident with the Ruger due to the modern Bisley-esque grip shape. The sights needed to be blackened to perform better. The transfer bar system gave it a leg up on the Uberti in terms of safety — so with all that considered, we'd buy it ahead of the Uberti Cattleman.

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

GUN TESTS VALUE GUIDE: SINGLE-ACTION REVOLVERS

GUN NAME	ISSUE	GRADE & COMMENTS
Ruger New Model Blackhawk No. 5242 45 Colt/45 ACP, $650	June 2015	**Grade A:** This flattop had a smaller grip frame, an indexing pawl, a transfer-bar safety, and a reasonable cost.
Colt 2nd-Generation Second Dragoon, 44 Cal., $800	Aug 2013	**Grade A:** On the range the big gun did excellent work for our testers. Accurate and powerful.
Colt 2nd-Generation 1860 Army, 44 Cal, $650	Aug 2013	**Grade A:** We would be happy to own two of these and would even use them for home protection, if needed.
Colt 2nd-Generation 1851 Navy 36 Cal., $650	Aug 2013	**Grade A:** We were mighty pleased with the feel of this gun, with its balance like that of the 1873 Colt.
Cimarron Evil Roy ER4104 357 Mag, $770	Aug 2012	**Grade A:** The Evil Roy was our favorite because of the smooth function of the action and accuracy.
Cimarron CA081 .44-Cal. Second Model Dragoon, $349	July 2006	**Grade A:** On the range, the Cimarron distinguished itself. With FFg GOEX we made many tiny groups.
Heritage Rough Rider 22 LR/22 WMR, $149	Jan 2001	**Grade A:** This gun performed well at a bargain price. The extra safety mechanism is a plus.
Cabela's 1860 Army .44 Cap & Ball , $135	Oct 2001	**Grade A:** This black-powder pistol is an excellent value for the money, and would serve its owner long and well.
Colt New Frontier Model P4840 45 Colt/45 ACP, $1818	June 2015	**Grade A-:** The New Frontier was traditionally operated SAA revolver with a very crisp trigger — and a high price.
Ruger New Model Single-Six #0624 22 LR/22 WMR, $569	Sept 2014	**Grade A-:** The Ruger had excellent sights. Loading and unloading were tedious.
Traditions Frontier Series 1873 SAT73-126 38 Sp/357 Mag, $609	May 2014	**Grade A-:** The Frontier was favored by testers who preferred traditional SAAs. Low price is appealing.
Ruger New Vaquero No. 5108 38 Sp/357 Magnum, $739	May 2014	**Grade A-:** The Ruger would get the nod if high-volume CAS-style shooting was on the agenda.
Cabela's 1851 Confederate Navy .44 Cap & Ball, $90	Oct 2001	**Grade A-:** If you just want to test the waters of the world of black-powder revolvers, this is the way to go.
Colt Second Generation 1860 Army .44 Cap & Ball, about $600	Oct 2001	**Grade B:** If you can find this black-powder pistol for a reasonable price, we believe you won't lose money on it.
Heritage Mfg. Rough Rider RR22MB9, 22 LR/22 WMR, $230	Sept 2014	**Grade C:** We did see some of the bluing start to wear on the butt, and the front blade sight loosened.
Ruger New Vaquero NV-34 No. 5107 357 Magnum, $719	Aug 2012	**Grade C:** A modernized single-action revolver. Cosmetics were cheapened by the grips, we thought.
Heritage Mfg. Big Bore Rough Rider No. 357 Mag, $500	Aug 2012	**Grade C-:** Cylinder was loose when the hammer is in the load/unload position.

Log on to **Gun-Tests.com** to read complete reviews of these products.

Field Test: Higher-Retention Holsters for Open Carry, Part I

This month, we look at the first five of twelve units to consider for wearing 'outside': Galco's M4X and M6X, the Hogue ARS CF, Blackhawk's GripBreak, and the DeSantis Facilitator.

Handgun retention is serious business for uniformed police officers who, as a matter of course, practice open carry. Special holsters with retention beyond a tight fit are mandated in most precincts, yet the list of police officers killed with their own guns sadly continues to grow. So what does this mean for civilians who openly carry their firearms? On January 1, 2016 the state of Texas will join the list of states no longer requiring concealed-handgun license holders to carry their weapons concealed. How many Texas CHL holders will immediately change their habits from stealth carry to out-in-the-open carry remains to be seen. GUN TESTS doesn't get into how people carry and use their legally owned firearms, but we recognize that some legal gun owners will want to open carry, which creates two issues the shooter has to deal with in advance. Mainly, the gun owner must maintain control of a carry firearm while still having fast access to it.

Joe Woolley, president of Firearms Operations and Responsible Training of Texas (FortTexas.us), thinks the new law might prompt licensees to carry larger firearms that are ordinarily more difficult to conceal. But more important, he said, "The security level of any open-carry holster I use will need to be higher than for the concealed firearm." To see how manufacturers provide this extra security, we assembled a collection of 12 currently available holsters that supply more retention than most concealed models — that is, they require the manipulation of a locking device to draw the weapon. We'll cover this dozen in two parts in back-to-back issues.



In this first of two back-to-back reviews of higher-retention holsters, we examine the Galco M4X, Hogue ARS Stage One Carry CF 52872, Galco M6X (top row, left to right) and the Blackhawk GripBreak and DeSantis Facilitator (bottom row, left to right). The security of a thumb-release holster depends largely on keeping the release lever tucked in between the holster/weapon unit and the body. The $79 leather Blackhawk GripBreak (bottom left) let the user choose between high and low front belt loops to increase stealth. We think the $50 Hogue ARS C with carbon-fiber finish (top center) could do with a much smaller thumb-release lever. So could the $52 Desantis Facilitator (bottom right). The $45 Galco M4X (top left) and M6X (top right) holsters differed only in mounting hardware. We found the paddles on the Hogue and the Galco M4X to be inadequate, but the belt-loop options for these holsters kept them securely on the belt during our tests.

Our test holsters were Hogue Incorporated's $50 ARS Stage One Carry, Galco's M4X and M6X each priced at $45, Blackhawk's $79 GripBreak, and the $32 Evader from Bianchi. In addition we tested three holsters from DeSantis, the $52 Facilitator, the $40 Quick Safe, and the $68 Prowler. We also tried a









Above, right. and lower right: The Blackhawk GripBreak 421903BK-R, $79, had an automatic locking system inside an inner shell covered by Italian leather that was exquisite. The GripBreak accommodates only full-size Smith & Wesson M&P series and some Glock pistols. Once in place, our Glock 17 showed little play, and the gun could be drawn quickly. The GripBreak's open muzzle allows it to be used with different-length barrels over the same frame. An extra belt slot allowed the wearer to change the angle of the holster, which our shooters liked a lot.

trio of holsters from Safariland, the $50 578 ProFit in Long and Standard sizes and Safariland's $50 6378 ALS. Last, we also tried Blade Tech's $124 WRS Level 3, which was much closer to being a police duty holster than what a civilian would typically wear. In this installment, we'll tackle the Blackhawk GripBreak, DeSantis Facilitator, Galco M4X and M6X, and the Hogue ARS C.

Most people think a tight fit in a typical holster constitutes Level I retention and the addition of a thumb-break strap makes it a Level II holster. That's not actually the case, any more than adding a mechanical locking device would change its rating to Level III. Retention ratings and their corresponding tests were originally developed by Bill Rogers, a former FBI agent and pioneer in modern police training. In purchasing the Rogers Holster Company in 1985, Safariland adopted his security rating system with tests intended to simulate a gun grab. Rogers' Retention Level I test (trademarked) "is described as applying all the force to the grip or handle of the weapon by an individual while the weapon is totally secured in the holster and mounted on a suitable belt being worn by another individual. The direction of force is unlimited, but the duration of the force is limited to 5 seconds. At the end of the 5 seconds, the weapon must still be secure in the holster and the holster must still be attached to the operator." By mounting each holster on a Blackhawk Instructor Gun Belt ($37 from OpticsPlanet.com) we made sure any failure would be traced back to the holster and not to the belt.

Our tests likely exceeded Bill Rogers' protocol by wrestling to the ground for weapon control. We challenged retention using two types of grips, "educated" and "freestyle." The educated grip describes how an instructor might handle the gun, with the trigger finger held straight alongside the frame with three fingers wrapped below the trigger guard, thumb hugging the opposite side of the pistol. The freestyle grip started with all four fingers beneath the trigger guard and thumb wrapped around the other side. We also tried grabbing the gun with the left hand from a right-hand-side-mounted holster. In the interest of security, we're not going to tell you everything we learned about drawing from these high-retention holsters — just whether or not they might help protect you from a gun grab.

Blackhawk GripBreak 421903BK-R, $79

Our Blackhawk GripBreak holster featured an automatic locking system inside an inner shell covered by drum-dyed Italian leather. A less expensive GripBreak holster ($44) utilizes a 1000-denier Cordura nylon outer covering, but the leather model borders on the exquisite. Given most higher-retention holsters look robotic rather than classic, we think the GripBreak's appearance may serve well to camouflage its true capabilities. To date, the GripBreak is produced to accommodate only the full-size Smith & Wesson M&P series and Glock pistols no larger than the GL17 or GL22. Once in place, our Glock 17 showed little play, and the gun could be drawn quickly. The GripBreak's open muzzle allows it to be used with different-length barrels over the same frame. Versatility was enhanced with its three belt-slot design. The option of carrying the gun straight, upright beneath the arm, raised the gun nearly above the belt line for easier concealment and in some cases makes the gun easier to defend. Looping the belt through the upper loop cants the muzzle rearward (or butt forward if you prefer) and makes the gun more difficult to access from the rear. When not being used, the lower front loop provided extra support and comfort when carrying a heavier gun. Belt retention using either combination of loops was without failure.

Our Team Said: What we liked best about the GripBreak was that it was most like the normal experience of wearing a holster when compared to other retention designs. The extra belt slot allowed the wearer to change the angle of the holster to where it was less

accessible to anyone but the wearer, whether standing or seated in an automobile. We found this to be of the utmost importance since an educated grip produced an easy draw. Other grip attempts, however, had to get lucky to complete a release.

Gun Tests Grade: B+

DeSantis Facilitator 042KAB2Z0, $52

The Facilitator was connected to a leatherette backing, allowing it to bend with the shape of the body, but the holster body itself completely surrounded the pistol. Not intended for any mode other than on-the-belt carry, the Facilitator's belt slots were 1.5 inches wide, but so shallow that only our thinner Instructor belt fit through them. The Facilitator was not adjustable for cant or height, but we thought the supplied angle was ideal. With the release lever buried between the left side of the pistol and the body, the slight muzzle-back cant made the lever invisible and operational by only the practiced grip of the wearer. The front of the holster was cut away to expose much of the slide, covering all but the forward portion of the ejection port. The Facilitator will fit full- and compact-sized Glock or Smith & Wesson M&P pistols.

Our Team Said: This was a comfortable holster to wear. Downside: The release was obvious, and any hand that gets between the body and the holster unit can easily release the weapon from this holster.

Gun Tests Grade: C









Above, right, and lower right: The DeSantis Facilitator 042KAB2Z0, $52, will fit full- and compact-sized Glock or Smith & Wesson M&P pistols. It was comfortable to wear because it bent with the shape of the body. The Facilitator was not adjustable for cant or height, but our shooters liked the supplied position, a slight muzzle-back cant that made the release lever invisible. Good thing because the release was obvious and could be manipulated by an adversary.

Galco M4X 224, $45
Galco M6X 224, $45

Both of the M4X and M6X holsters were formed via injection molded thermoplastic to fit the Glock 17 pistol. The only difference was the molding on the back of each holster. The M4X included a stanchion on which a paddle was riveted, and the M6X was fit with belt loops capable of threading belts up to 2 inches wide. A regulator was in place to reduce the width of the belt loops as necessary. The fit of our Glock 17 was tight inside both holsters, even if the M6X seemed to drag a little bit the first few times we drew. The thumb-release lever was well hidden from view. It was decidedly more easily operated by the person wearing the holster than from other angles. Our pair of Galcos achieved retention with pressure upon the edges of the ejection port rather than from inside the trigger guard. While not necessarily an advantage in itself, we did notice that if the gun were pulled with enough force before completely depressing the thumb release lever, the weapon would not release. That's one plus, and here's another. The owner can tell when the gun is properly locked into place by hearing the lock click and by seeing it settle into place. The thumb release was a simple (but heavily sprung) lever that lifted a form fit panel above the ejection port. With the lock fully engaged, we could see the panel seated flush with the holster body. More than making sure the weapon was secure, this introduced an alternate method of keeping the gun inside the holster in the event of a gun grab. In defense of a gun grab, the natural reaction is to either get to the grip first or push down on the trespasser's hand to keep the gun inside the holster. With the Galco design, we found another way to keep the gun holstered. By gripping the holster body with the weak hand, pressing down on the panel that locks into the ejection port, the gun cannot be released. Whereas we found that the key to defending





Galco's M4X 224 holster, left, and the Galco M6X 224, right, are made of injection-molded thermoplastic and fit the Glock 17. The M4X has a paddle that fits next to the body, and the M6X employs belt loops to hold it.





The M4X paddle holster seated tightly against the body, but in our tests the paddle slipped under the belt to incur a failure.





We noticed on the M6X, left, and the M4X, that if the gun were pulled with enough force before completely depressing the thumb release lever, the weapon would not release. The thumb release was a simple, heavily sprung lever that lifted a form fit panel above the ejection port. The owner can tell when the gun is properly locked into place by hearing the lock click and by seeing it settle into place.

any thumb release lever holster is to limit access to the space between the body and the weapon/holster unit, for the Galcos, belt fit was critical. The M4X paddle holster seated tightly against the body, but in our tests the paddle slipped under the belt to incur a failure. The belt-looped M6X holster stayed properly connected to the belt, and by making sure the belt loops were sized properly, the unit remained firmly against the body.

Our Team Said: The M4X and M6X holsters both offered a simple retention system that worked and offered the wearer a second chance for retention by manually holding the lock closed. In addition, activation of the thumb-release lever, whether on purpose or by coincidence, required a specific stroke to fully disengage. Bargain priced, the paddle on the M4X holster proved too weak for our tastes, but the belt-loop-fitted M6X is a very good pick.

Gun Tests Grade: A (M6X 224)
Gun Tests Grade: F (M4X 224)

Hogue Inc. ARS Stage One Carry CF 52872, $50

The CF signifies the optional carbon-fiber finish to this synthetic-construction thumb-release lever holster. Fit was very tight, with virtually no slop in the retention, yet the gun was not difficult to draw. Insertion was smooth, ending with a positive click. The ARS (automatic retention system) holster arrived with paddle in place, but the package included a belt-loop plate as well. The loops were extremely generous, measuring more than 2.1 inches top to bottom. Inserts to regulate ride height or reduce the belt slots to snug up against 1.5-, 1.25-, or 1.75-inch-wide belts were supplied. Both the paddle and the belt loop were adjustable for cant, and we found this to be a great advantage. Not only did this make cross draw possible, but adding muzzle-back cant to strong-side carry helped make this somewhat bulky holster easier to conceal. Canting the gun also made the release lever less accessible by tucking the unit closer to the body. The resulting grip angle also made it more difficult for an outsider to get hold of. The paddle failed to keep the unit attached to the wearer, flexing enough to allow it to be pulled from beneath the belt. The belt loops, however, proved secure and comfortable to wear in variety of angles.

Our Team Said: The major weakness of this design is the size of the thumb-release-lever platform. In our view, it offered about twice the amount of surface area necessary for operation, leaving its rearmost section much too vulnerable to a grabber. The driveline strut lever was metal with a polymer platform lined for grip, all attached by a Phillips head screw. We think reducing the platform by about half would make this holster more secure from a gun grab and still leave plenty of surface area for the rightful user to activate the release.

Gun Tests Grade: B

Check in next month when we'll test the Bianchi Evader, DeSantis Quick Safe and Prowler, Safariland's 578 ProFit Long and Standard, Safariland's 6378 ALS, and Blade Tech's $124 WRS Level 3 holster.

Written and photographed by Roger Eckstine, using evaluations from Gun Tests *team testers.*







Gun insertion into the Hogue ARS Stage One Carry CF 52872 holster was smooth. Gun fit was tight, yet the gun wasn't hard to draw. The tape applied to the thumb release lever shown far right represents how much material could be removed to make the contact area less vulnerable to a bad-guy grab.

Schmidt-Rubin Model 1911: A Superb Straight-Pull Rifle

While not the most attractive rifle for sporterizing, the mechanism in this unusual action functioned perfectly and was very fast for follow-up shots. We became fond of this rifle.

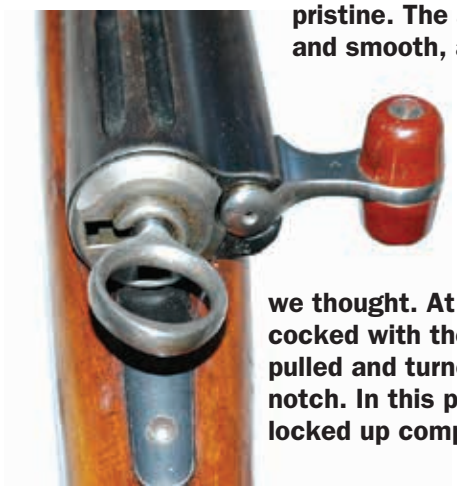
Eduard Rubin ought to be a household name to gunnies the world over. Why? He invented the full-metal-jacketed bullet back in 1882. Oddly, the bullet was paper patched, much like the old lead bullets were patched for many years prior to that date, but his was apparently the first metal-jacketed bullet to be paper patched. This technique is still occasionally useful today to bump up a bullet's diameter to make it fit an odd bore size.

Along his way Mr. Rubin came up with several cartridge designs, his most famous being the 7.5x55 Swiss, which essentially has defended Switzerland since 1889. The cartridge in nearly identical form is still used today in the Swiss M51 machine gun, and by home reserve units. Today's version of the cartridge, known as the GP11, brought out in 1911 like our test rifle, uses a boat-tailed bullet of 174 grains. That ammunition played a big part in U.S. military cartridge development.

During the first World War, the then-current version of the 30-06, with 150-grain flat-base bullet, was found to give poor performance at long range. This was discovered after U.S.-made machine guns finally replaced the foreign-made ones the U.S. had been using. At the time, long-range cover or blanketing fire from machine guns was key to military operations, though that is not the case today. The original 30-06 ammo was supposed to have a maximum range of close to three miles. It was found to have a true range of less than two miles. After the war the U.S. was determined to fix that, and began serious testing. In the process the Swiss GP11 ammunition, with the same-diameter bullets, was evaluated and found to be vastly superior to the 30-06. In light of the great performance of the Swiss ammo at long range, the U.S. testing team loaded Swiss bullets into our 30-06 brass and found it to be far better than even the U.S.'s specially loaded 180-grain match ammo. It was thus determined the 30-06 needed a boat-tail bullet. But what angle should the boat-tail be? Empirical testing, under the direction of Col. Townsend Whelen, of a variety of bullets having boat-tail angles from 2 to 12 degrees determined that 9 degrees was the best. The cartridge redesign was finalized in 1925 (under Julian Hatcher) and became known as 30-06 M1 Ball ammunition. It shot a 174-grain, 9-degree boattail bullet at 2700 fps, and had a maximum range of about 3.3 miles, a big jump forward from the 30-06's performance over the trenches in WWI. So it's in large part thanks to the Swiss and to Mr. Rubin for the highest mil-spec development of the 30-06, the M1, which lived from 1925 to about 1940. Incidentally, much of the early testing of U.S. mil-spec ammo was done at the annual matches at Camp Perry, Ohio, and on Daytona Beach in Florida.



Above: The Schmidt-Rubin is an unusual, but interesting, collectible. The knobs on the straight-pull bolt handle were pristine. The action was slick and smooth, and everything worked well. The trigger pull was a dream, and the sights gave a good picture. Accuracy was dandy, we thought. At left is the rifle cocked with the cocking piece pulled and turned into the locking notch. In this position, the rifle is locked up completely.





Right: The shorter cartridge is the 7.5x55 Swiss. On the right is a 30-06, which to some extent owes its earlier life to the Swiss round.

Our test rifle here is a Schmidt-Rubin Model 1911. These rifles were made in a variety of models and lengths, including carbines, over the years as various small improvements came

along to correct some of the initial shortcomings of the rifle. Commonly available on the U.S. surplus market for many years, the S-R never sold in vast quantities despite attractive prices, most likely because the ammo was somewhat hard to get and the action didn't permit transformation into a suitable sporterized form. Although the Schmidt-Rubin was not designed to be a sporter, we suspect a clever stock maker could make up a shorter-barrel version of this (carbines have 24-inch barrels) into an attractive custom rifle, much as Al Linden did long ago for the Krag. We tested our rifle with three types of ammo. This was Swiss Army issue GP11 with 174-grain FMJ bullets, Wolf soft-nose 174-grain bullets, and Hornady's 165-grain soft-nose load. Here's what we found.

Schmidt-Rubin Model 1911, 7.5x55mm Swiss, about $350

Once again we have a really snappy example of the species for our test. The bore, all 30.7 inches of it, looked like it was new. The muzzle was fitted with a clever snap-over cap, made of brass and spring steel, to keep crud out. The light-colored stock, most likely some form of birch, was decent looking with what seemed to be its original finish, though it had plenty of small dings and nicks. The metalwork and bluing were also in very good condition, retaining about 90 percent finish. The detachable magazine held six rounds and was extremely easy to load. We thought the metal finish was pretty good, not a shiny finish nor entirely dull, most certainly not crude, generally well done, and essentially equal to the finish on many modern rifles.

Rudolf Schmidt designed this action, and the great Swiss craftsmen brought it into a viable form that lasted a long time. To operate the rifle, the soldier did not have to learn how to twist a conventional bolt. All he had to do was grab the twin knobs on the right side of the action, heave them straight back, and shove them straight forward. This was undoubtedly faster for the

SCHMIDT-RUBIN M1911 7.5X55MM SWISS, $350

GUN TESTS GRADE: A

Though a mighty long rifle, the Schmidt-Rubin was not the least bit clumsy. The extra length gave it good weight, and that meant little recoil. These have been around a long time. They're good rifles, and good prices make them bargains.



Overall Length	51.5 in.	Capacity	6 +1
Barrel Length	30.7 in.	Action Finish	Blued
Sight Radius	25 in.	Action Type	Straight-Pull
Overall Height	6.8 in.	Barrel Finish	Blued
LOP	13.2 in.	Magazine Type	Detachable
Weight Unloaded	9.8 lbs.	Stock	Hard Wood
Weight Loaded	10.2 lbs.	Trigger Pull Weight	2.8 lbs.
		Made In	Switzerland



The big spring-loaded lever below the right side of the action acts as a spring guide to keep the bolt open and closed to a large extent, though it's not the locking lug.



The bolt is complex and long. The five-round magazine loaded easily. It was well made, worked perfectly, and went into and came out of the rifle about like the movement of a Swiss watch.



Superlative inletting was everywhere on the Swiss rifle.



The pistol grip is an insert, well done like the rest of the rifle.



The edges of the ejection port were all rounded. No cut fingers here. Inside this nicely machined action, spiral grooves milled into the rather large outer surface of the bolt create rotary motion as the bolt is slammed back and forth by the operator.

average man to operate than all but the most skilled conventional-bolt operators. We kept trying to twist the lever downward after a new round went home, but we quickly adapted. Despite the great length of the rifle we did not find it to be clumsy, though it took some getting used to its 51.5 inches of length. We thought the sights were on the small size for fastest use, but serviceable. The rear was graduated out to 2000 yards and had a small U-notch, and the front was a flat-top post in a dovetail. The stock went almost all the way to the muzzle, and covered the barrel all the way but for the last 2.5 inches. That long, slim stock was just over 48 inches long. It was of hard wood, and had a pistol-grip insert added. The upper hand guard was just over 21 inches long. There was a bayonet lug on the forward barrel band and a stacking hook under the muzzle affixed to that same band. The forward barrel band was inletted into the wood. It was fitted with a stout screw to retain it, and opposite the screw was a hinge to permit removal of the band. All the visible numbers were matching including on the magazine. Even the curved and coned steel butt plate held the last three digits of the serial number.

A pleasant surprise for us was that the stock inletting was extraordinarily well done for a military rifle. It was better than that found on many modern sporting rifles. Even the rear sling swivel was carefully inletted into the stock. The action had two parallel, round-bottom grooves on top of the rear bridge in line with the bore. There was another rounded groove on the left side of the action adjacent to the action opening. We found some sticky old oil here and there that would have to be detail cleaned by the new owner. Although we cleaned it, the gummy oil did not seem to harm the rifle's function. One of the things that modern rifle makers should note is the S-R's action opening had nicely rounded edges, giving no chance of cutting your fingers anywhere. Another nice touch on our test rifle was that the two red knobs on the bolt handle were pristine, and that's apparently not common.





The front and rear sights gave an excellent picture, though we thought they were on the small size. Based on the graduated scale built into the rear sight, this rifle could be used for long-range fire. The Swiss cartridge certainly would support that use.

In order to get the rotary motion to the bolt as it's slammed back and forth, the bolt has spiral grooves milled into its rather large outer surface. With those deep, curved grooves, the odd cocking-and-safety hoop at the back, and the action's peculiar operating mode, the Schmidt-Rubin resembles not so much a rifle as a machine into which you put ice and Scotch, slam the bolt closed, and pour a perfect highball out the muzzle. Intoxicating! In our test example of the Schmidt-

RANGE DATA

Swiss Mil-Spec GP11 174-gr. BT	**Schmidt-Rubin M1911 7.5x55**
Average Velocity at 10 ft.	2560 fps
Muzzle Energy	2530 ft.-lbs.
Average Group Size	1.1 in.

Wolf 174-gr. SN	**Schmidt-Rubin M1911 7.5x55**
Average Velocity at 10 ft.	2395 fps
Muzzle Energy	2214 ft.-lbs.
Average Group Size	1.9 in.

Hornady 165-gr. SN	**Schmidt-Rubin M1911 7.5x55**
Average Velocity at 10 ft.	2705 fps
Muzzle Energy	2678 ft.-lbs.
Average Group Size	1.8 in.

Velocity was recorded using an Oehler 35P chronograph with proof channel. Three-shot groups were fired at 50 yards from a machine rest.



Later versions of the S-R rifle, such as our Model 1911, could utilize the full potential of the 7.5x55, a round equivalent to the 308 Winchester and suited to the same size of game. The most common bullet weights are 174-grain rounds.



Top: Here's the brass and steel muzzle cover on the rifle. It's spring loaded, and snaps over the front sight blade. Bottom: The front brass portion is riveted to the spring-steel arm. This was a handy accessory in marginal weather.

Rubin, the locking lugs are about midway along the length of the bolt, up toward the front of the big sleeve and right behind the shaft that one sees when the bolt is closed. A further development some years later did away with the forward shaft of the bolt and moved the sleeved portion forward so the locking lugs ended up in a conventional location, right behind the head of the cartridge. In the original design the lugs were at the extreme rear of the big sleeve, about nine inches behind the chamber.

That odd hook or loop at the back of the bolt permits recocking the rifle in the event of a misfired primer. It is also the safety. Pull it out, rotate it 90 degrees clockwise and let it slip into a second notch, and the rifle cannot be fired nor the action opened. The front of the bolt holds the extractor, which snaps over the cartridge as the bolt closes. To get the bolt out of the rifle, pull it all the way back and then push it slightly forward. Then depress that big lever under the right side of the action, and the bolt can be withdrawn. That lever that you just pushed down also acts as the spring to hold the bolt open or closed. It is in operation every time the bolt is moved through its full travel.

Feeding was, like the bolt movement, as slick as sliding steel on oiled glass. All three types of ammo, even the rather short Hornady rounds, fed with ease. We were also happy with the two-stage trigger pull, which broke at 2.8 pounds cleanly. On the range we found the sights to be on the money. They were perfectly centered and elevation with the rear slider all the way down was about two inches at 100 yards. Because of bad weather we shot the rifle at 50 yards. Shooting the rifle was most pleasant. The weight cut recoil to a nudge, and the perfect function and easy-loading magazine made our testing chores light and pleasant. All the ammo fed, fired, and ejected smoothly and easily. Once we became familiar with the action we found it easy and fast to get the next round ready to go. Accuracy was all that anyone would desire, the best groups going under 1.5 inches at 50 yards, with some clusters around an inch, and one doozy at 0.4 inch, three shots touching, which we could not duplicate. That one was with the mil-spec ammo and a cold barrel. All told, the accuracy translates to a little over two inches at 100 yards. For a mil-spec rifle, we thought that was excellent.

Our Team Said: We could not fault the rifle. It was fun to shoot, accurate, and enough different to keep one's interest up. Students of rifle mechanisms will have lots to examine in this one. There are lots of variations if one wants to collect Schmidt-Rubin rifles, and many of them are quite affordable. Ammo seems to be easy to get today. Bullets for reloading are easy, being the most common 30-caliber size. When you first operate a Schmidt-Rubin and run the fired case out and a new one in, you'll probably ask yourself, "Is that all I have to do?" Yep, it's that easy. Please note that the early versions of this rifle can't safely handle the pressure of the latest GP11 ammo. If in doubt, ask a qualified gunsmith.

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

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*S&W Customer Service	February
*Sharpshooter 22 Reloader kit	October
*SilencerCo EasyTrust Service	April
*Streamlight TLR-2 HL G tactical light	April
*UTG Pro Mount MTU026SSKA Keymod rail system	June
*Viridian ECR Instant-In hybrid holster	January
*Viridian Reactor 5 Green Lasr for Kahr 9mm and 40 S&W	January

AMMUNITION

9mm Luger Dynamic Research Tech. 85 gr. JHP	November
9mm Luger Fiocchi 115 gr. FMJ	November
9mm Luger Buffalo Bore 115 gr. JHP +P	November
9mm Luger Buffalo Bore 115 gr. JHP +P+	November
9mm Luger Fiocchi 124 gr. Extrema JHP	November
9mm Luger Federal 147 gr. Hydra Shock	November
22 LR CCI Stinger 32 gr. HP	November
22 LR Winchester 37 gr. HP	November
22 LR Winchester 40 gr. M-22 LRN	November
22 LR Wolf 22 LR 40 gr. LRN	November
22 Magnum CCI 40-gr. FMJ	November
22 Magnum Hornady 45 gr. FTX	November
32 ACP Fiocchi 60 gr. JHP	November
32 ACP Fiocchi 71 FMJ	November
38 Special Glaser Safety Slug Blue 80 gr.	November
38 Special Glaser Safety Slug Blue 80 gr.	November
38 Special Remington 110 gr. JHP	November
38 Special Winchester 158 gr. RNL	November
38 Special Winchester 158 gr. LSWCHP +P	November
45 ACP Glaser Safety Slug Blue 145 gr. +P	November
45 ACP Glaser Safety Slug Silver 145 gr. +P	November
45 ACP Buffalo Bore 160 gr. TAC Low Recoil	November
45 ACP Winchester 230 gr. FMJ	November
45 ACP Hornady 230 gr. XTP +P	November
357 Magnum Cor-Bon 100 gr. Pow'RBall	November
357 Magnum Winchester 110 gr. JHP	November
357 Magnum Remington 125 gr. Golden Saber	November
357 Magnum Speer 158 gr. Gold Dot JHP	November
380 ACP Hornady 90 gr. FTX	November
380 ACP Fiocchi 95 gr. FMJ	November
*Federal American Eagle Suppressor ammunition	November

**** Indicates abbreviated mention in Downrange, Short Shots, sidebar or Value Guide.***

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SHORT SHOTS

Magnum Research Introduces Final Two Animal Print Desert Eagles

Magnum Research has introduced another set of Desert Eagle Mark XIX animal prints. The new patterns are Kryptek Typhon and the Zebra, and both are available in either .50 AE or .44 Magnum chamberings. MSRP for both Desert Eagles is $1793.

"The Cheetah, Kryptek Highlander, and Snakeskin Desert Eagles sold very rapidly," said Frank Harris, VP of sales and marketing for Magnum Research. "When you take the largest, most powerful handgun in the world and marry it to a unique animal print, shooters really take notice."



Like the other designs, the Kryptek Typhon and the Zebra patterns are put on with a water-transfer method. Harris said the patterns have been extensively tested for durability and have proven to be very tough. He said cleaning solvents and acetone will not soften or damage the finishes.

The Desert Eagle .50 AE is a gas-operated, semi-automatic pistol with a 7-round capacity in .50 AE and 8-round capacity in .44 Magnum. Both guns are 10.75 inches long and have 6-inch barrels. Slide widths are 1.25 inches, heights are 6.25 inches, and weights with an empty magazine are just under 4.4 pounds in .50 AE and just over 4.4 pounds in .44 Mag.

Both handguns include Weaver-style accessory rails for easy mounting of aftermarket optics and scope rings.

COMING UP IN GUN TESTS

- Head to Head: Hammerless Lightweight 38 Specials: Charter Arms Off Duty goes against a Taurus Ultra Light.
- XD Mod.2 Sub Compacts Go Head to Head: 9mm vs. 45 ACP.
- 22 LR Copies of Famous Tactical Rifles: HK M416D, STG-44, HKMP5SD, M1 Carbine, Colt M4 carbine, S&W M&P 15-22.
- Canik Vs. Diamondback 9mms: Newcomer handguns butt heads.

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