

# Small ore Head Ball Small Smal

Head-to-Head Ballistics of the Small Shooters

BUYES GUIGE

.17 Hornet

.224 Valkyrie

.223 Remington

.22 Hornet

.222 Remington

.22-250 Remington

**PLUS** 

## FOUR FORTHETWOTWO-THREE

Ammo to Make Your .223 Rem. a Do-All Rifle

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Sweeney's AR-15 Is the .257 Roberts
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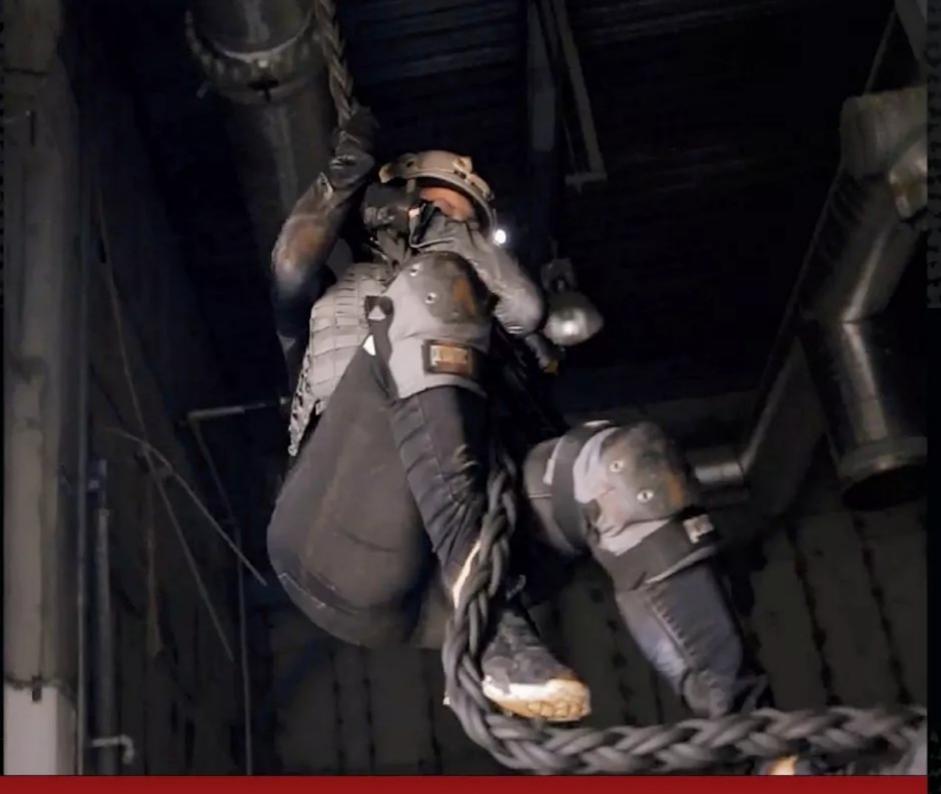
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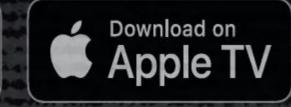




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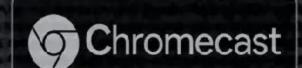












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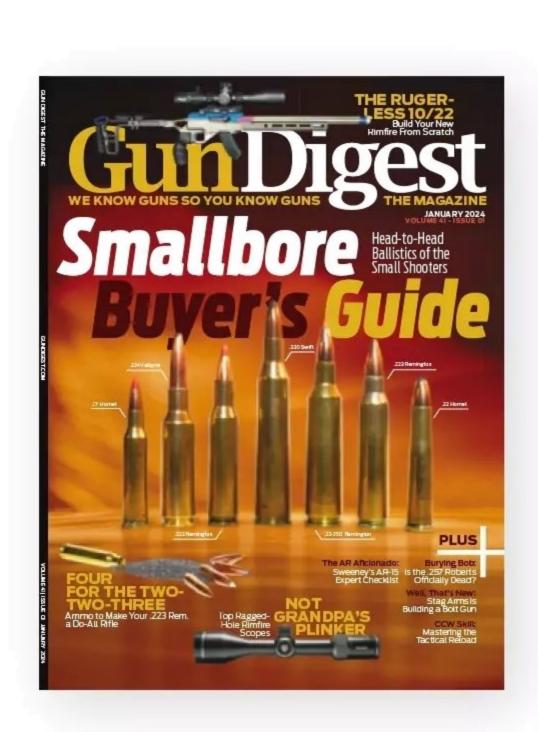
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very month, when I sit down in front of my computer and stare at the blank screen that is this column before it actually becomes this column, I'm pulled to write about my grandpa and the Model 61 Winchester pump-action .22 LR ... I got from my grandma. Every time, without fail.

If you follow my ramblings here, you've undoubtedly read a word or two about that gun, and I suppose it's because that gun, and those two people, played such a huge role in the first two decades of my life. A young man can learn a lot about life with a good .22 LR, a woods full of critters and a farmyard plagued with rabbits—and a grandpa pushing just the right buttons to cause just the right amount of trouble.

But that was a long time ago already. Just the other day, I was rummaging through the gun safe and saw that ol' Model 61 leaning up against a new Bergara B14R ... and I was taken aback for a moment. Both capable of chambering identical ammunition, neither looking like anything that resembled the other.

Imagine, if you will, a '57 Chevy pickup (with some road rash and mild hail damage) parked adjacent to a

hot-off-the-line Cybertruck. New is always cool. But new becomes old, old becomes retro ... and retro is always cool, too. Everything cycles in this life: It always has, and it always will.

And right now, the .22 LR market is looking much more like a Cybertruck than a Model 61 Winchester—which is a very, very good thing. It's possible to do more with a smallbore rifle today than many big-bore centerfires were capable of 75 years ago.

Did you know that "long range" .22 LR ammo is available at nearly 50 cents per round? Excessive? Maybe. But if you watch the wind, it's possible to put together a jaw-dropping group at 400 yards with the right setup ... with a .22 LR. Don't believe me? The Faxon build on the cover of this issue is one of those rifles.

So, while sending a silent apology to Grandma, I pushed past the Model 61 in my safe and grabbed the B14R. Sure, I felt bad for a little while, but that disappeared quickly upon inspecting the first 100-yard cloverleaf of the day.

**GDTM** 

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#### A blip on the radar.

#### HISTORICAL NOTES

One of a number of cartridges for the Stevens 44 or 44½ series of single-shot rifles, this cartridge was introduced by Stevens in 1896. Actual design is credited to Charles H. Herrick, of Winchester, Massachusetts. It did not enjoy a particularly long life, as most shooters preferred the .25-21 or some of the larger-caliber cartridges. Many shooters claimed the .22-15 Stevens gave better accuracy than the .22 WCF.

#### **GENERAL COMMENTS**

This is an improved centerfire .22 of better killing power than other .22s of

#### .22-15-60 STEVENS LOADING DATA AND FACTORY BALLISTICS

BULLET	POWDER	GRAINS	VELOCITY	ENERGY	SOURCE
60 Lead	Unique	3.4	1,070*	152	Lyman No. 22636
60 Lead	Blackpowder (FFg)	15.0	1,150	176	Factory load

\*Estimated

its day. With the heavy 60-grain bullet, it would shoot flat for 125 yards or so. As a target or match cartridge, most of the blackpowder .22s fouled the bore badly and required frequent cleaning. Most shooters preferred the larger calibers of .25 on up.

The .22-15-60 was displaced by the .22 WCF and smokeless powder developments in the rimfire group. Origi-

nal primer was the 1½ size, the same as the modern small rifle or pistol primer of .175-inch diameter. Charge was 15 grains of FFFFg or FFFg. Lyman No. 22636 or 22637 in 54- to 60-grain weight is the proper bullet. Therefore, if you should have one of these old rifles in shooting condition, you can still shoot it—if you can find cases.**GDTM** 



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# DON'T DROP THE BALL

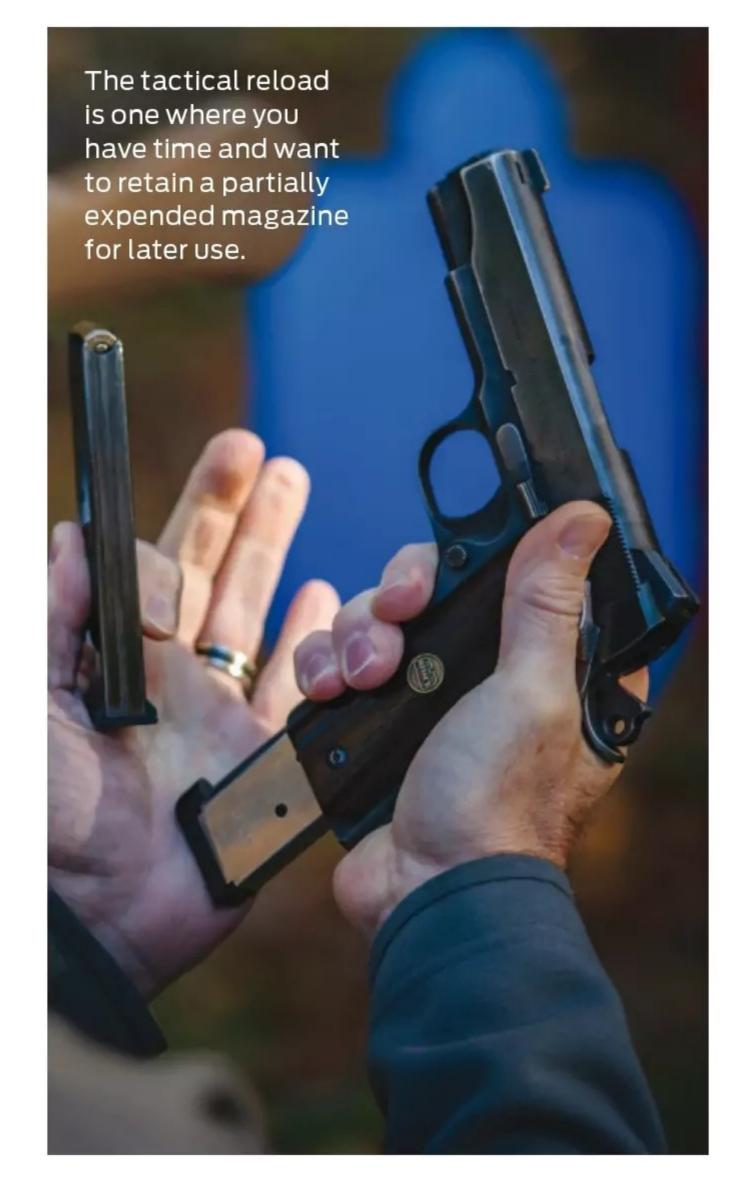
#### A practical variation of the tactical reload.

leloading a defensive handgun is a basic skill. It's something every defensive handgun training course should spend a good bit of time teaching and something everyone who carries a defensive handgun should spend time practicing. Most doctrine separates reloading into three techniques: the administrative reload, the tactical reload and the speed reload. Although all three serve the same purpose of keeping your pistol full of ammunition, they all have different applications.

I've detailed these techniques here before, but to refresh, the administrative reload is a range reload that's conducted at leisure, and the speed reload is done when your handgun is out of ammo and you need more ammo in it *immediately*. The tactical reload is something between an administrative and speed reload, and its conduct and proper application is one of the most misunderstood concepts of defensive handgun management.

#### **HURRY, JUST A LITTLE BIT**

A tactical reload should be conducted when you have time ... but when there are also tactical considerations remaining. It's suggested that you conduct a tactical reload during a lull in the gun fight or action. I'm not sure how to precisely define "a lull in the action," but I am sure that the more ammunition you have in your



gun the better off you are, and that you should never holster a handgun that's not fully loaded. Those two considerations are what drives the conduct and need of a tactical reload.

At the basic level, with a tactical reload you retain the magazine you're ejecting from the pistol because it's not empty and you might need it later, or because you're in a situation where you might need the ejected empty magazine later on so that you can load it with more ammunition.

Most trainers teach the conduct of a tactical reload as follows:

Bring your pistol into your work-

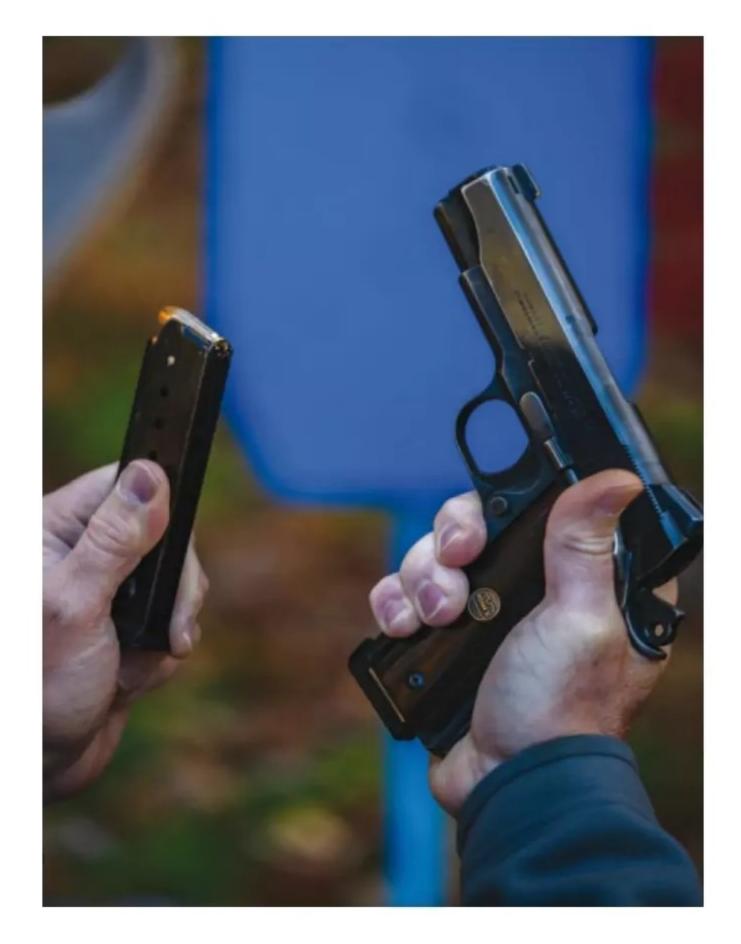
- space while retrieving a fully loaded magazine with your support hand, holding it in your palm and between your index and middle finger.
- As you eject the partially expended or empty magazine, grab it between the thumb and index finger of your support hand.
- While holding both magazines, insert the fresh magazine into the pistol.
- Store the ejected magazine in a pocket, or if it's the only extra magazine you have, put it your magazine pouch.

This is not a timed activity, but it's one you should be able to conduct smoothly and with minimal focus, while keeping at least some of your attention on your surroundings. Those talented at conducting a tactical reload can accomplish the task with graceful fluidity in about 5 seconds.

My main problem with the above method is that you must manage two magazines with one hand at the same time. Granted, you're not supposed to be doing this with blistering speed or while you're being shot at, but there's still a reasonable possibility that you'll drop one—or both—of the magazines. That's not a good thing, and I think it makes just as much sense to conduct a tactical reload as follows:

• Bring the pistol into your workspace.





#### TACTICAL RELOAD

(common method)

#### STEP 1

Pull the pistol into your workspace and retrieve a fully loaded magazine, holding it in your palm and between your index and middle finger.

#### STEP 2

As you eject the partially expended or empty magazine, grab it between the thumb and index finger of your support hand.

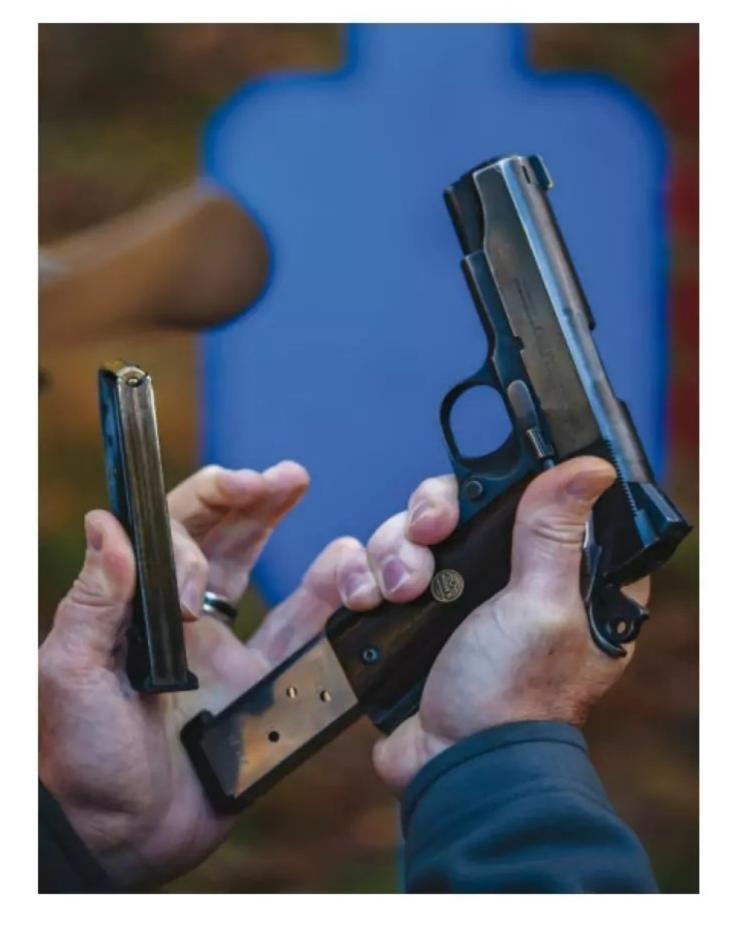
#### STEP 3

While holding both magazines, insert the fresh magazine into the pistol.

#### STEP 4

With the partially expended—ejected magazine in your support hand, store it in your pocket or magazine pouch.





- Eject the partially expended or empty magazine into your support hand and store it in your pocket.
- Retrieve a fully loaded magazine and insert it into your pistol.
- If you still have time and the partially expended magazine is your only other magazine, move it to your magazine pouch.

Though speed is not a principal concern, this second method can be conducted just as swiftly, and it limits the possibility of dropping the partially expended magazine, or more importantly, the fully loaded magazine. Admittedly, the second method leaves your pistol unloaded for a second or so longer. But remember, you should only be conducting a tactical reload when time is not a priority, such as when there's no immediate threat or when you've solved the problem and are holstering your handgun.

If time is of any concern, conduct a speed reload.

#### **DON'T DROP IT!**

Outside of tactical considerations, the tactical reload can and should be frequently used on the range during practice or training sessions, too.
Why? Well, the worst thing you can do with a pistol magazine is drop it on the ground where the feed lips

might become bent, or where it can be gobbed off with dirt, debris or mud. Yes, when practicing a speed reload, your ejected magazine goes to the ground, but the most common reason for stoppages in pistols is magazine related. There's no reason to risk damage unnecessarily.

I'm not suggesting you replace the practice of a speed reload with a tactical reload. What I am suggesting is that if you've finished a drill and have depleted your magazine to the point you cannot run the next drill, if you conduct a tactical reload—especially if you use the second method described above—you'll circumvent the possibility of a magazine being damaged or fouled because it was dropped either intentionally or accidentally.

Hopefully, you'll never be in a dangerous situation where you need to conduct a reload of any type. And, hopefully, if you do need to reload your pistol in conjunction with some sort of dangerous situation, you'll have the time and cover necessary to allow for you to do it tactically. Pick either tactical reload method described here, the one you like the best and feel is the most practical, and practice it. It might save you from fumbling when you can't afford to drop the ball. **GDTM** 

# LEAVEN COUNTY OF THE PROPERTY OF THE PROPERTY

#### Sights that are pushed, not pounded.

reviously, referring to someone as a "pusher" meant they weren't to be trusted. That's not the case with XS Sights. Today, it's used to adjust your sights, and the Inline Sight Pusher kit for Glock is a simple and straightforward tool.

Normally, sight pushers are designed to work with, well ... everything, making them complex. I mean, when you actually have to read the instructions, perhaps it's too much of a good thing. The XS Sight Pusher, however, is simple and straightforward (or sideways, if you get what I mean).

There's an adjustment bolt, a sliding brass pusher and an included nylon wedge. Wedge? Yep. You slide the wedge along the angled base of the pusher to adjust the position of the slide and produce a non-slip surface that won't mar your slide.

Then, you crank the bolt to push the sight. XS Sights also made the brass pushing part with a marked





scale, so you can see how much you've moved the sight and get a better estimate of how much is "enough." The best part of all this is that it's compact and lightweight enough that you can put it in your range bag and take it with you.

Shoot and adjust until your Glock is on-center. If you're doing the adjustments at home, then the XS Sight Pusher, with its scale on the brass plate and index marks on the pusher body, will tell you when you have your sight centered.

Now, even a Glock-specific tool has to have some complication. In this case, it's one provided by Glock themselves. If you're working on a Glock 42, the .380 micro-Glock, you'll have to read the G42-specific step to make sure you do it correctly. Oh,

and for those who are online mavens, use the QR code etched on the side of the pusher to download and read the instructions, should you need them at the range. (Brave new world indeed.)

It should go without saying that any and all Glock-clone slides will work just as well in the XS Sight pusher. The kit is the pusher, wedge, Allen key to turn the adjustment bolt, steel Glock front sight tool (so if you're installing a complete new set of sights, you can do the front one as well), oil and thread-locking goo.

This is the sort of thing that we gunsmiths back in the dark ages wished for or made ourselves to avoid marring sights with aluminum, brass

or steel drift punches. No more hammering rods to move sights and no more brass marks or dinged sights. The DIY Series runs \$150, which if you own a couple of Glocks is not a big deal. If you only own one Glock, it might seem like a bit, but wait until someone at the gun club has a sight-in issue and you have the tool to solve their problem right there in your range bag.

Being the hero of the day makes the cost go down easier, and getting your own Glock on-center is a whole lot easier. **GDTM** 



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## SMALL PROJECTILES, SMALL DETAILS

#### Finding big success when reloading the small stuff.

he processes involved in reloading a centerfire rifle cartridge don't vary drastically when comparing case and bore size, but there definitely seem to be some idiosyncrasies involved with the smaller cartridges. Perhaps it's the accuracy expectations of a small-bore cartridge, or the game species that are hunted with those smaller cartridges, which have us looking for one-hole groups ... or at least tiny little clover leaf groups.

In my experience, the moderate velocity big-bore cartridges can often be more forgiving than the speedier small-bores, or perhaps I should say I've often been able to reach the goal line faster with a big-bore cartridge. Along the line, I've had some trials and tribulations with the smaller cartridges, and depending on the application for your reloading needs, there are some ideas and techniques that might save you some time.

#### **LEARNING THE HARD WAY**

I started the small-bore journey by loading for the .223 Remington and .22-250 Remington, in a couple of rifles that gave me fits. My dad had purchased a Ruger Mini-14, which, no matter what we fed it, was a 2-inch rifle. We tried multiple factory loads and then began to handload for the clunker. I thought I didn't know what I was doing, until we tried the handloads in a buddy's bolt rifle and saw ½-MOA groups; the strict regimen was working, but the rifle didn't read the script.

My next experience was with a Ruger Model 77 MKII in .22-250, with

a sporter-weight barrel, that I purchased for hunting coyotes, fox and woodchucks. No matter what I tried, I couldn't get the gun below an inch, often with a flier. Some shooting buddies who had heavy-barreled Remington 700s with finely tuned triggers were routinely printing ¼-MOA groups, and they were kind enough to share their load data.

No dice in my rifle.

What it took was a change of projectile and a new trigger—those mid-1990s Rugers had a non-adjustable trigger that broke at about 6 pounds, and my rifle has a crown that much prefers the flat-base Sierra MatchKing bullet. A Timney trigger and a 53-grain MatchKing, plus an appropriate charge of Hodgdon's H380, saw the rifle finally print ½-MOA groups.

Both those rifles had issues, but they

taught me some lessons that came in handy later in life. Because I couldn't get them to print, I started to examine each and every detail of the equation, from the components and their consistencies to the fine-tuning of the cases and the methods of assembly. Small-bore cartridges—especially those which generate higher velocities—can magnify any errors or deviations, and the target board can reflect that. So, I learned some tricks and tips to obtain the best results with these little guys.

#### SMALL PROJECTILES, SMALL DETAILS

Velocity comes at the price of pressure, and consistent pressures can equate to consistent velocities, and correlative precision. If your cases are of differing volumes, the same powder charge will generate a slightly different pressure







(Far left) The Sierra 53-grain flat base MatchKing that saved the author's Ruger .22-250 Remington; it remains his go-to bullet for that rifle.

(Left) The diminutive .17 Hornet has very little case capacity; powder charges should be weighed in order to achieve safe, accurate handloads.

(Below)The .223 Remington can be a very forgiving cartridge to load, able to use a wide array of powders.

level, so trying to keep things as uniform as possible will best keep velocities even.

If you're after the finest precision, weighing your cases after trimming and resizing can indicate which cases have slightly thicker walls; the outside dimensions being the same, a case with thicker walls will be heavier and have a smaller combustion chamber. For best precision and consistency, sort your cases into lots, using the most uniform for the best match-grade accuracy.

Primer choice can make a big difference in small-bore loads, and I've long felt this class of cartridge is more susceptible to differences in primer heat. If you like the .220 Swift or .22-250 Remington, any large rifle primer will get things to go bang, but I like a matchgrade primer like the Federal Gold Medal Match GM210M. That primer has given such excellent performance across the board that I generally reach for that first to save me time and effort.

The same can be said for the small rifle primers, where the Federal GM205M Gold Medal Match offers the same consistency for the smaller cases, though I've had good results with the CCI 400 or the CCI BR-4 Bench Rest primers. In the end, whichever primer gives the lowest velocity spread is usually the one that gets the nod from me. The point: Simply switching a brand or type of primer has made all the difference in some rifles.

Powder choice is also highly important, as it has made an absolute world of difference in some cartridges. Where



I can feed my .375 H&H Magnum just about any powder, from IMR 3031 to H4350, some of these little cases are very particular about the powders they like. My .22-250 shows a marked preference for Hodgdon's H380, and the 17 Hornet likes Hodgdon's CFE BLK and Accurate LT-30.

On the other side of the spectrum, the .223 Remington is one of those cases that seems to be more forgiving. I've used H335 and BL-C(2) with great effect, and a couple of Shooters World powders—the AR Plus and Tactical Rifle—have been excellent performers, with the latter giving very tight and consistent groups.

Case preparation can also help tighten up groups; I like to full-length resize in most instances, and I also feel that a uniform flash hole can make a real difference. When it comes to the highly frangible varmint bullets, or those match bullets that stake their reputations on highly concentric jackets, a poor chamfer on a case mouth can scratch and sometimes deform a bullet to the point where the ballistic coefficient will change, and long-range accuracy will degrade.

A good VLD chamfer tool, like Redding's piloted P15 chamfer tool—which uses the cartridge's flash hole to keep the chamfer as concentric as possible—will allow for easier seating of your projectile and minimize any damage to the jackets.

Lastly, I feel small-bore cartridges warrant the weighing of every powder charge, especially when it comes to the smaller cases like the .17 Hornet and .22 Hornet. With minimal case capacity, an overcharge of 0.2 or 0.3 grain can push pressures into the red, so err on the side of caution and weigh each charge—it'll also give the best accuracy and consistency in your handloads.

**GDTM** 

# ISITTIMETO BURY OL' BOB?

Performance-wise, the .257 Roberts can keep up with the best of them, so why is this cartridge always overlooked?

Roberts is a total Fudd cartridge—an anachronism, destined for the brass pile of history. It's a shame, too, because it has nearly all the virtues modern rifle shooters look for in any cartridge bigger than .223 Rem. and lighter than .308 Win.

Unfortunately, the .257 Roberts has long suffered from a botched release (more on that soon) and never got quite the same development as other more popular cartridges.

#### **HISTORY OF .257 ROBERTS**

The .257 Roberts started life as a wild-cat, devised by gunwriter and tinkerer Ned Roberts in the 1920s who tried his hand at necking down a case to shoot a smaller bullet. The idea, as always, was to decrease recoil and gain ballistic advantage through sheer velocity.

The parent case is 7x57mm Mauser. Roberts necked it down to .25 caliber (6.35mm) while changing the neck angle to 15 degrees for a long neck and keeping the original powder charge.

Initially dubbed .25 Roberts, it was eventually stumbled upon by Remington and the company decided to make a few changes and introduce it commercially. Remington increased the projectile size to 6.5mm and named it



Ned Roberts (far right).

.257 Roberts, after its creator.

As a result, the projectile could potentially gain anywhere from 200 to 400 fps (depending on the bullet, powder charge, barrel length, etc.) over the .250-3000 Savage, the other popular cartridge of that caliber from this era.

Remington's idea was to put out a new caliber that was equally adept at blasting woodchucks, prairie dogs and other varmints but would also make a fantastic medium-game hunting round—a combination of attributes prized at the time.

#### **THE.257 ROBERTS IN ACTION**

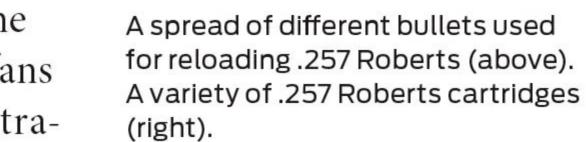
When Remington released the .257 Roberts in 1934, it was initially praised as a dual-purpose cartridge. It was celebrated for its light recoil and excellent

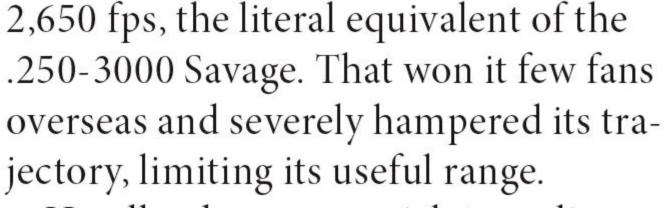
accuracy, but it was hampered by the rotten factory ammunition of the era in two key respects.

First, .257 Roberts was loaded lighter than necessary. The ammunition makers of the day did not want to take chances with chamber pressure, so it was generally only loaded to about 51,000 psi—much lighter than most rifle calibers today. There's a good reason for that: If someone re-barreled a surplus rifle (Spanish Mausers and Type 38 Arisaka rifles were commonly rebarreled to .257 Roberts), there's a good chance it wouldn't withstand the pressure.

Second, Remington elected to use a 117-grain round-nose soft-point as the hunting load. Factory velocity for the 117-grain bullet was a lackluster







Handloaders were quick to realize that a bit more powder and a more aerodynamic projectile would propel a 117-grain spitzer to 2,800 fps or more. However, just like today, most people then relied on available factory ammo rather than handloads.

P.O. Ackley also created an improved version—the aptly named .257 Ackley Improved—which is quietly considered an absolute Goldilocks rifle cartridge. However, given ammunition is (and always has been) very hard to come by, the improved round never really caught on.

Making matters worse, Remington decided to squeeze the cartridge into short-action rifles (7x57mm Mauser is halfway between .308 and .30-06), which hampered accuracy as there was less leade for the longer, heavy-for-caliber bullets. Worse still, when Winchester released the .243 Winchester in 1955, just about everyone quickly discovered it did everything .257 Roberts did, arguably did them better, and did so for less money.

#### .257 ROBERTS VS. .243 WINCHESTER

To give you an idea of what the classic .257 Roberts load is capable of, less use Remington's 117-grain soft-point load with a G1 BC of .240, with a 100-yard zero, a 1.5-inch height-over-bore, a 90-degree 10-mph crosswind and no corrections for atmosphere.

The bullet drops quickly, goes transonic just after 550 yards and, in general, is not much to write home about.

Now let's compare that to the trajectory for Hornady's American Whitetail load in .243 Winchester using a 100-grain soft-point bullet and a G1 BC of .405.

The .243 Winchester drops dramatically less, is still supersonic at 1,000 yards and still has more energy at 650 yards than the average .357 Magnum has at the muzzle. Given that this load of .243 has about the same recoil energy, there's no reason to even think about ol' Bob ... unless you picked up a more contemporary load for it, as modern .257 Roberts +P is a different animal.

Let's consider a Nosler 110-grain AccuBond +P Trophy Grade load with a G1 BC of .418.

With additional velocity and a modern high-BC bullet, .257 Roberts remains supersonic past 1,000 yards and has more energy at 800 yards than a .357 Magnum has at the muzzle. Not too shabby, huh?

Modern .257 Roberts +P satisfies the 1,000 foot-pound minimum for big game out to 500 yards, and when zeroed for maximum point-blank range it can hit within 3.5 inches of point-of-aim to 300 yards.

If, that is, you could ever find any ammo to buy.



#### WHAT IS .257 ROBERTS GOOD FOR?

The .257 Roberts, in its classic factory loading, is underpowered and drops more than .243 Winchester, all while costing more than it should for the dearth of benefits.

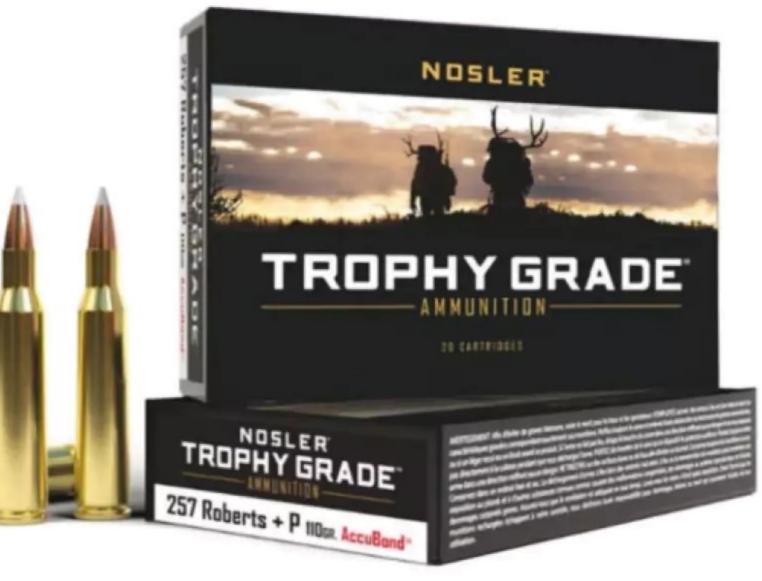
Sure, you could use it to shoot varmints or hunt, but there's no good reason to when .243 Winchester exists.

In modern +P loadings, however, .257 Roberts is capable of everything .243 Winchester is. It could be effectively used on medium game and varmints at some fairly impressive ranges, and it would make a sheep, mountain goat and pronghorn cartridge *par excellence*. With the right rifle and right load, it would even make a capable precision rifle cartridge as well given its recoil energy of less than 11 ft-lb.

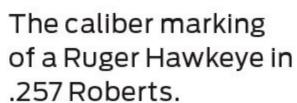
Is .257 Roberts Ammo Still Made?

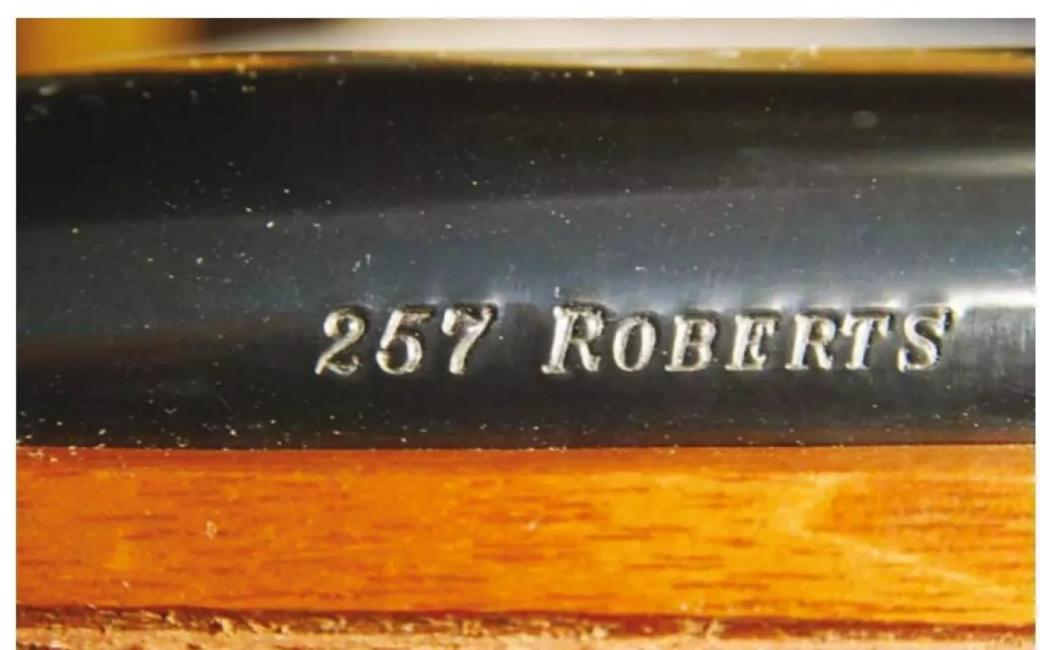
Ves. manufacturers do still make. 2

Yes, manufacturers do still make .257 Roberts ammunition, but not in any significant volume. Most ammo shops











you visit likely won't even have any in stock.

Browsing online retailers tells a similar story: At the time of writing, sites like MidwayUSA and GrabAGun only have a handful of loads listed, none of which are currently available.

Further, AmmoSeek didn't return a single in-stock result. Finding factory .257 ammo for sale is difficult, to say the least.

Rifles chambered for .257 Roberts are also hard to come by these days. The online retailers we perused had

The .257 Roberts has been dying a slow death ever since. Modern loads exist for it, but few people buy them.

zero new-production rifles for sale, and only secondhand outlets like Gun-Broker had a few used options.

The point is that, despite modern bullets making this venerable old cartridge vastly more capable, you can't get the ammo, you can barely get a rifle and the truth is other cartridges perform pretty much the same while having ammo and guns available for them.

#### .257 ROBERTS IS DEAD OR DYING, THERE ARE OTHER OPTIONS

The only reason to fool with .257
Roberts anymore is because you inherited a rifle from a relative, and even then you're going to have a hard time feeding it. Frankly, re-barreling the gun would pay for itself if you shot it enough. The fact of the matter is this cartridge is dead or dying, and there's almost no reason to resuscitate it.

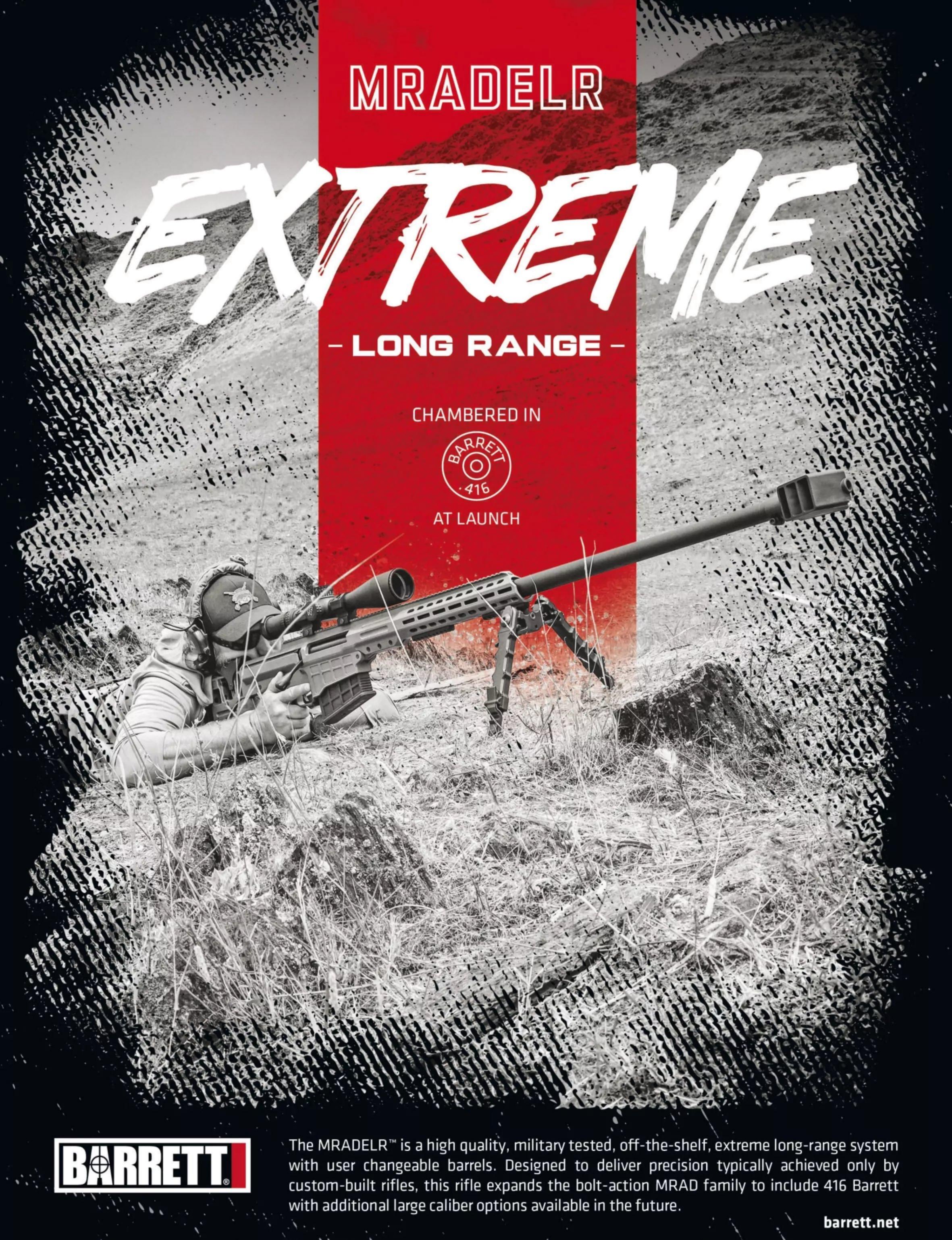
Light-recoiling, multi-purpose rifle cartridges exist outside of .257 Roberts.

For example, .243 Winchester is ridiculously available, affordable and can be found in bolt-action and modern semi-auto rifle platforms.

The same is true of 6mm Creed-moor, 6.5mm Creedmoor and .260 Remington, all of which are highly capable light-to-medium game-getters even at long range, are excellent for varmints and have been used to win a bevy of precision rifle matches. The same is also true for 7mm-08 Remington.

Every single one of the mentioned calibers is light enough for youth hunters and is a fantastic varmint, predator and light game (even some heavier game; 6.5mm Creedmoor and 7mm-08 are more than viable for elk, moose and black bear) cartridge, not to mention, are available in a variety of different platforms.

While more than capable on paper, the availability of guns and ammo is simply the final nail in the coffin for .257 Roberts. **GDTM** 



#### O1 Rock Island Armory TM22 Feather

Plinking, pest control, teaching youth there are a lot of different roles a rimfire rifle can fill. Whether you already own one or several, given its very affordable price, the Rock Island Armory TM22 Feather is worth a look. With aesthetics inspired by old-school AR carbines, the TM22 is a lightweight semi-auto chambered for .22 LR. Despite the removable carry handle rear sight, it still has plenty of modern features. Among these are a top optics rail and fully adjustable stock. Plus, the pistol grip and buffer tube adapter can both be replaced by AR-pattern aftermarket parts. The rifle ships with two, 10-round magazines, but 15- and 25-round mags are available as well.

MSRP: \$249

#### 02 Chiappa Little Badger Take Down Xtreme Rifle

Whether you're a bush pilot or a backpacker, having a firearm of any type can mean the difference between life and death if things go south. When space and weight considerations take priority over firepower, Chiappa's Little Badger Take Down is a top option. A break-action single-shot .22LR, the Little Badger is capable of breaking down into two pieces, each about 16 inches in length. With a total weight of only 2.9 pounds, this is ideal for anyone who needs a compact survival gun. The rifle features built-in iron sights as well as Picatinny rail segments on the barrel and grip area for attaching accessories like a red-dot or a proper pistol grip. It might not be a standout at the range, but it could save your skin.

MSRP: \$310.37

#### 03 Smith & Wesson M&P22 Magnum

Fans of .22 Magnum should be excited to see Smith & Wesson's latest foray into the caliber. Called the M&P22 Magnum, the pistol uses the same TEMPO barrel system as Smith's new M&P 5.7 pistol chambered for 5.7x28mm. This unique system will theoretically improve the full-size polymer handgun's performance and reliability, but perhaps the most notable feature of the M&P22 Magnum is its 30-round capacity. That's a lot of firepower for what's a relatively small package, and it would be just as useful for varmint control around one's property as it would be fun at the range. Modern features like an optics-ready slide, accessory rail and flat trigger only make it more appealing.

MSRP: \$649

#### 04 Heritage Manufacturing Co. Tactical Rancher

Tactical is a word that's not too often used to describe revolvers, but Heritage's Tactical Rancher is one of them. Just how tactical is it? Honestly, not that much, but it has a Picatinny rail for mounting optics, a threaded muzzle and provisions for attaching a sling, and that's more than most revolver carbines can claim. The rifle comes with a six-round .22LR cylinder, but it can accept a .22 Magnum cylinder as well. Whatever cowboy operator fantasies you might have, the Tactical Rancher would be a solid way to live them out.

MSRP: \$355.99



#### **05 CCI Clean-22 Hyper** Velocity

Anyone who shoots a lot of rimfire knows just how dirty these little guns can get. If you're a high-volume .22LR shooter, CCI's Clean-22 Hyper Velocity is a great option. This ammo is loaded with 31-grain round-nose projectiles that have been coated in purple polymer, resulting in less fouling. This is especially true if you have any cans on your rimfire guns, as CCI says that Clean-22 will reduce lead buildup in suppressors by up to 80 percent. With an advertised muzzle velocity of 1,550 fps, CCI ensures that the ammo is both accurate and reliable in semi-auto firearms.

MSRP: \$10.99 / box of 50

#### 06 Lapua .22 LR Super Long Range

The .22 LR cartridge is good at a lot of things, but shooting at long ranges isn't one of them. Thankfully, companies like Lapua are working hard to mitigate that. Lapua .22LR Super Long Range was designed specifically for use at distances beyond 100 yards, making it a great choice for any shooter who needs accuracy at extended ranges. The load features a 40-grain roundnose projectile with an impressive G1 BC of 0.172 and an advertised muzzle velocity of 1,106 fps. Whether you're a hunter, competition shooter or anything else, this ammo should help you hit your mark. It's not cheap, but it could revolutionize your .22LR rig.

MSRP: about \$0.45 per round

#### **07** Winchester Ammunition XPERT.22 LR

Winchester Repeating Arms released the Xpert .22LR bolt-action rifle not that long ago, and now Winchester Ammunition has designed the perfect ammo to go along with it. Bearing the same Xpert name, the ammunition features a 42-grain copper-plated hollow-point projectile and has an advertised muzzle velocity of 1,320 fps. Winchester says that the ammo is loaded very consistently and describes it as very flat shooting, making it easier to score good hits at longer ranges. Plus, the impressive velocity helps ensure reliable expansion. Whether you shoot paper for sport or game for sustenance, Xpert .22 LR will help get the job done right.

MSRP: about \$0.10 per round



# E E LAS

The pleasures and pitfalls of the smallest centerfires.

to make the move to a small-bore rifle—whether for hunting, target shooting or for defensive measures—their choice of cartridge usually ends being highly debated. I've seen guys who were friends for decades get extremely hot under the collar when arguing the .22-250 Remington versus the .220 Swift, to the point where I thought it might come to blows.

Bring up the .204 Ruger and you might find a shooter who feels that all other bore diameters are an absolute waste of time, and the shooting world was just waiting for a .20-caliber cartridge. And then there's the huge crowd of folks who feel that small-bore cartridges begin and end with the 5.56mm/.223 Remington, and that's that.

For the hunter/shooter looking for a small-bore cartridge to best fit his or her needs, there are some considerations to keep in mind with any of the small-

bore choices, and the more you know, the easier the choice will be. Let's look at some of the more common choices between .17 and .22 caliber, and what each has to offer.

#### THE TEENAGERS

This .17 caliber is the smallest bore diameter of the commercially loaded cartridges and offers some serious heat. This bore diameter can be traced back to the Flobert rifles—using no powder, only a primer as propellant—and was championed by P.O. Ackley. Remington was the first to legitimize the 0.172-inch-caliber cartridges, with the 1971 release of the .17 Remington.

Based on a slightly modified .223 Remington case, the .17 Remington will propel 20- and 25-grain bullets to a muzzle velocity of 4,250 fps and 4,040 fps, respectively. This velocity level will test the mettle of any bullet, let alone frangible varmint bullets of 20 to 25 grains, and the .17 Remington can be nearly explosive upon



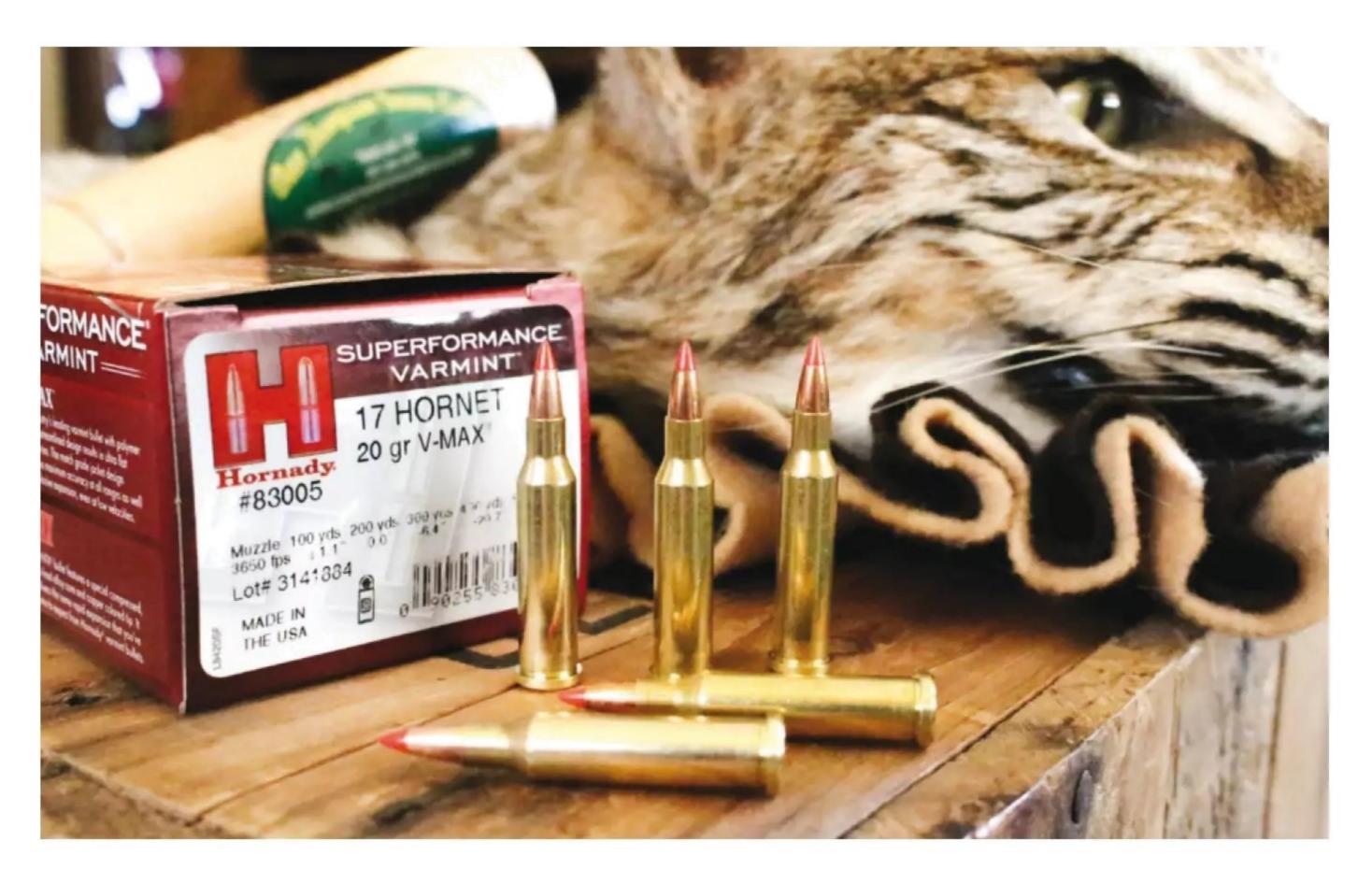


impact. The hydraulic shock generated will certainly create "red mist" when used on woodchucks and prairie dogs, and if placed correctly, it will hold even the bigger Eastern coyotes.

The .17 Remington can be hell on barrels, especially if you overheat them, and fouling can be a real issue if you don't stay on top of it. Accuracy will degrade, and cleaning any of the .17 bores can be a challenge, as it requires a cleaning rod of special diameter, as well as tiny little patches.

Remington also had the distinction of producing the second commercial .17-caliber cartridge, when interest in the .17 Mach IV wildcat warranted the development of the .17 Remington Fireball in 2007. Necking down the .221 Fireball resulted in a cartridge that offers a muzzle velocity rather close to the .17 Remington—driving a 20-grain bullet to just over 4,000 fps and a 25-grain bullet at more than 3,700 fps—in a smaller case. I find the .17 Remington Fireball to be a bit more barrel friendly than the larger .17 Remington, but despite a bit of fanfare upon release, factory ammunition is becoming increasing rare ... if you can find it at all.

The youngest of the bunch—Hornady's

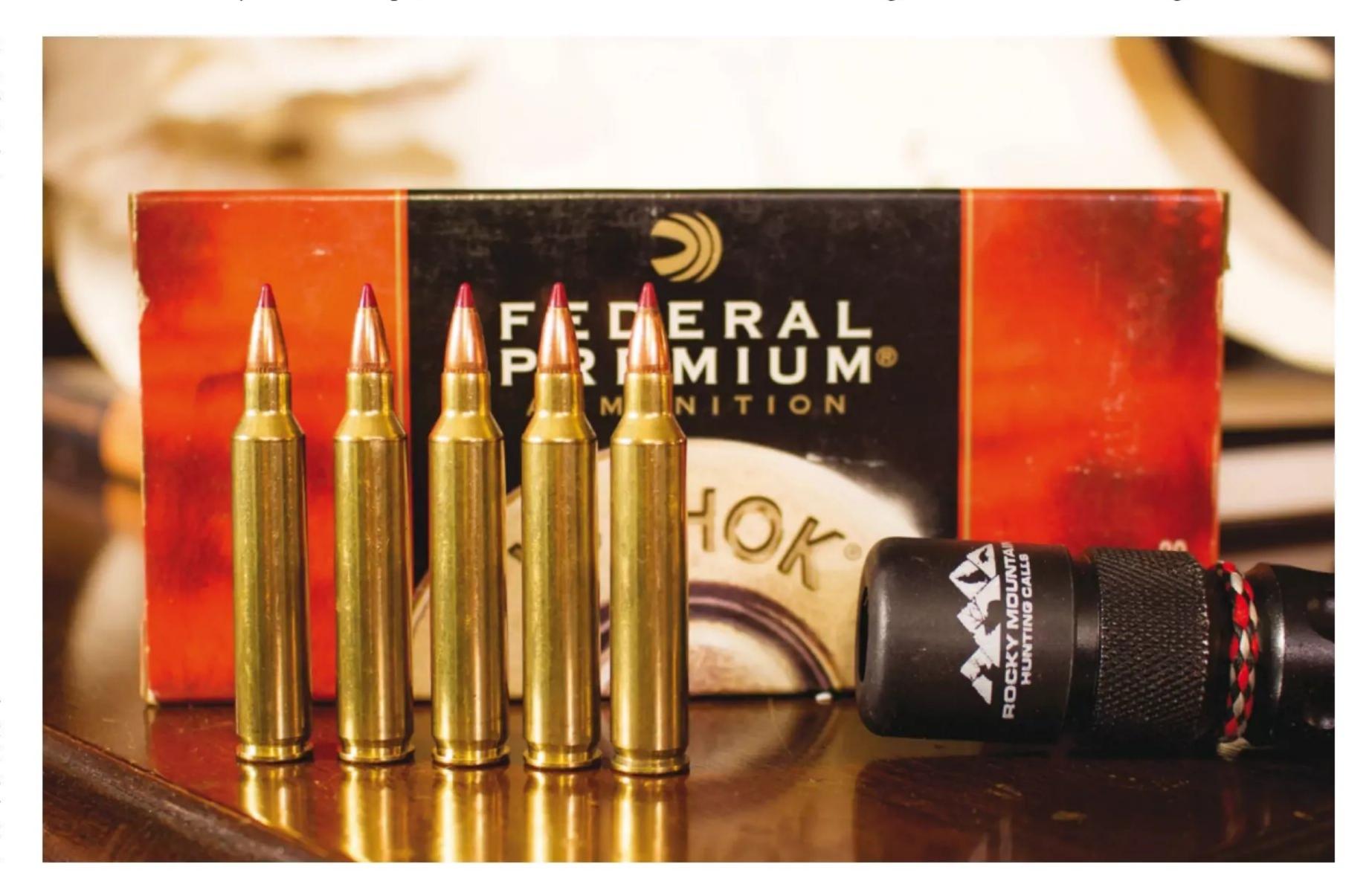


.17 Hornet—is based on a P.O. Ackley wildcat, which necked down the highly popular .22 Hornet to hold .172-caliber bullets. While the Ackley variant used a 30-degree shoulder to help increase case capacity, the Hornady version uses a 25-degree shoulder, albeit with less body taper.

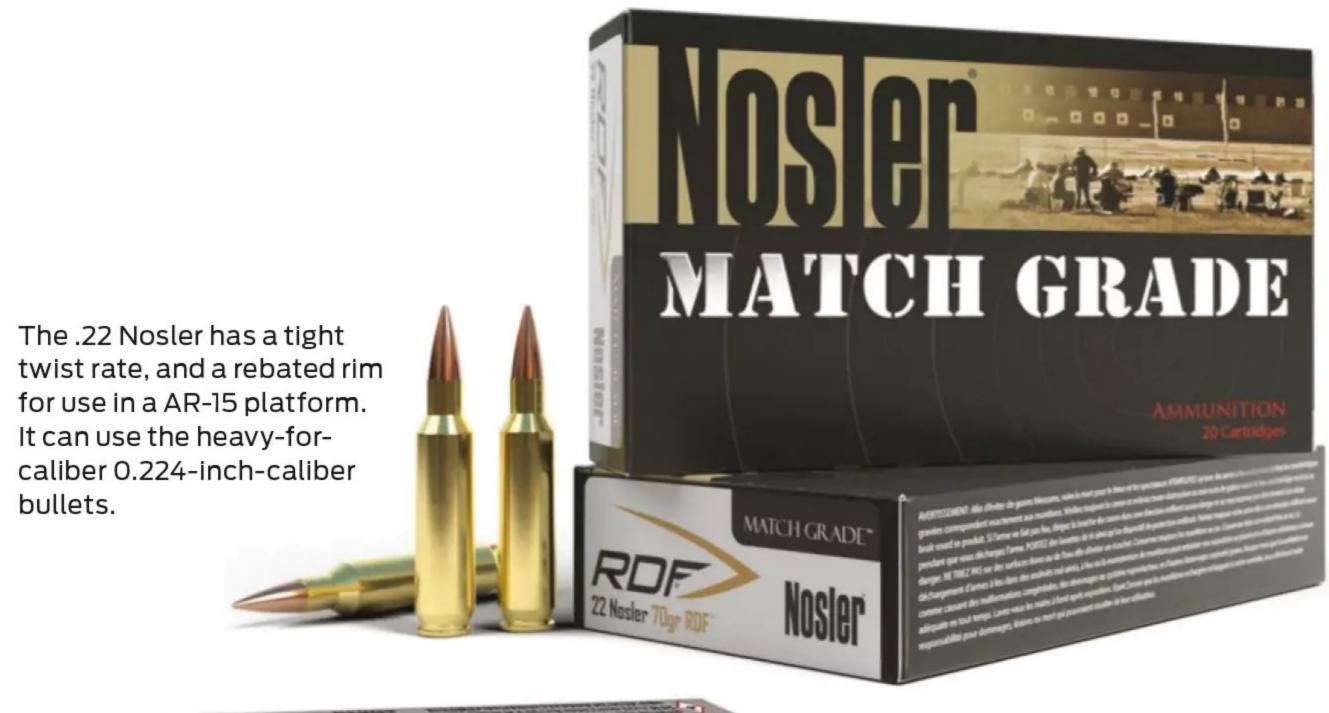
Despite the rimmed case, the .17 Hornet feeds well in bolt-action rifles, including the Ruger rotary magazine. With a 20-grain bullet leaving the muzzle at 3,650 fps, the .17 Hornet is the best balanced of the .17-caliber cartridges. Despite the fact that it gives up 600 fps to the .17 Remington, the lack of ear-splitting report, while still delivering a respectable trajectory, makes a huge difference.

Looking at downrange trajectory, you'll see an arc very similar to that of the .30-06 Springfield. That 20-grain V-Max—when zeroed at 200 yards—will strike 6½ inches low at 300 yards and 20½ inches low at 400 yards, though the wind deflection of the diminutive cartridge is twice that of the ought-six. But

(Above) The .22 Hornet is a classic, but the author finds the .17 Hornet to be a better and more useful cartridge.



(Right) The .204 Ruger is a collaborative effort between Ruger and Hornady, and makes a great cartridge for small game and target shooting alike.





once you become accustomed to the .17 Hornet in the wind, you've got a rather potent little package. A 20-grain bullet will work on bigger coyotes up close, but outside of 150 yards or so it might struggle to hold them. Nonetheless, I like having a .17 Hornet in my lineup.

#### **ANYONE FOR A 20?**

In 2004, Hornady worked with Ruger to create what would become the secondfastest small-bore: the .204 Ruger. Based on the .222 Remington Magnum and using a bullet of nominal diameter, the factory loads would use a 32-grain bullet to break the 4,200-fps barrier. A 30-degree shoulder handles the headspacing duty.

Although the 32-grain bullet generates some impressive velocity figures, there are bullets available weighing up to 55 grains, including Hornady's 40-grain V-Max at 3,900 fps, making a good load for longer range hunting and shooting. The heavier bullet weights require a 1:10 twist rate for proper stabilization, rather than the standard 1:12 supplied in most factory barrels. I like the .204 Ruger as a happy medium between the .17s, which use considerably lighter bullets, and the .22-caliber centerfires, which have the bullet weight but can sometimes be too

much of a good thing when it comes to small-bores.

Remington's .17 Fireball is

down to hold 0.172-inch-

Hornady is a prime source of ammunition, but there have been factory loads from Federal, Winchester, Remington, Nosler, Sierra and more. Many of the loads seem to be produced as seasonal runs. There are plenty of good component projectiles out there, and the .204 Ruger isn't a particularly finicky cartridge to load for. If you enjoy cartridges a bit

out of the norm, the .204 Ruger is a neat choice, which will be effective in the field or at the target range.

#### CATCH 22

When I think of centerfire small-bore cartridges, my mind goes immediately to .22 caliber; perhaps it's because that was as small as things went when I was a young. From the classic .22 Hornet of the 1930s, to the undeniable popularity of the .223 and Triple Deuce, and the faster .22-250 Remington and .220 Swift, it seemed that these cartridges were resigned to killing woodchucks and foxes. There were, however, some adventurous deer hunters who would employ a .222 Remington or .22-250 Remington to fill the freezer, with mixed results.

There are plenty to choose from, with some fading into obscurity and some older ones still hanging on. Yes, I think the .219 Zipper, .224 Weatherby, .225 Winchester and .22 Savage HiPower are cool, but they aren't popular at all any longer. So, I'll compare and contrast the more popular—and attainable—.22caliber centerfires.

The .22 Hornet has its roots back in the late 19th century, but the cartridge we all know and love came onto the scene in 1930, having been molded by the likes of Grosvenor Wotkyns and Townsend Whelen at the Springfield



The .223 Remington has the advantage of being highly popular and has been loaded with a wide array of projectiles. These 62-grain Federal Fusion bonded core bullets will handle deer-sized game, if properly placed.



Armory, bearing a serious resemblance to the blackpowder .22 WCF. Though it's rimmed, the Hornet has been adapted to a wide number of rifle actions, from boltaction to falling-block single-shots, to double rifles and drillings. With a slight shoulder measuring just over 5½ degrees, the Hornet feeds nicely from a box magazine and will push a 45-grain bullet to nearly 2,700 fps.

While this might not be setting any velocity records, it's good enough for varmints and furbearing predators up to and including coyotes. It has very little recoil, and the report won't flatten eardrums. Ammunition is still available from a number of manufacturers—though it seems to be produced in limited runs—and offers projectiles weighing between 30 and 46 grains. If you want a low-recoiling choice for taking varmints and furbearers inside of 200 to 250 yards, the .22 Hornet surely deserves consideration.

The .222 Remington was a gamechanger when it burst onto the scene in 1950 in the Remington Model 722 bolt rifle. Developed by Mike Walker, the Triple Deuce was the first commercially loaded rimless .22-caliber centerfire cartridge, and it smashed all sorts of accuracy records. Compared to the larger, speedier cases, it has very tolerable recoil, and a 50-grain bullet traveling at right around 3,200 to 3,350 fps doesn't exactly disappoint at moderate ranges. The 23-degree

shoulder handles the headspacing duties, and the neck measures 0.313 inch, giving plenty of neck tension.

The .222 Remington had its heyday here in the United States, but it long ago lost the popularity contest to the .223 Remington and .22-250 Remington. However, it remains popular in those European countries where military ammunition is prohibited for hunting. Inside of 400 yards, hits were rather consistent, but past that distance it became increasingly difficult, especially in comparison to the .223 Remington. But for the eastern woodchuck hunter who wants a target cartridge for shorter ranges, the Triple Deuce might be a great solution. Should you find a rifle so chambered, don't count it out.

#### THE STANDARD

There really isn't too much I can add to the .223 Remington that hasn't been said a million times, but it does possess some qualities that set it apart from other .22-caliber cartridges. It's slightly longer than the .222 Remington, with the same 23-degree shoulder and 0.378-inch case diameter, yet has a shorter neck. This yields a greater case capacity and a correlatively faster velocity.

And, to change the game even further, many modern rifles chambered in .223 Remington offer a tight twist rate—sometimes as tight as 1:7—which allows the use of heavy-for-caliber bullets that best retain energy and resist wind deflection. A 77-grain bullet at 2,700 fps will perform much better at longer ranges



Wanna turn a woodchuck inside out? The .220 Swift is a perfect candidate, as it has the case capacity to generate serious velocities. than any lighter bullet when the targets are out past 500 or 600 yards, and the winds begin to wreak havoc with your bullet. If you want a flexible package, which is affordable to shoot, with a multitude of ammunition choices, look no further than the .223 Remington; it can be handloaded easily, it's easy on the shoulder, and though it may lack the sparkle of newer cartridges, it just plain works.

#### **THE NEWBIES**

The .22 Nosler reared its head in early 2017, and was designed to mate up perfectly with the AR platform, giving superior ballistics to the .223 Remington/5.56 NATO, and approaching those of the .22-250 Remington. With a 1:8 twist rate, the .22 Nosler offers heavier bullets in the loaded ammunition, including 70-, 85- and 90-grain choices. It has a rebated rim and a 30-degree shoulder for head-spacing, but it makes the most sense in an AR rifle.

The main issue with the cartridge is that Nosler is the only source of ammunition, and the cartridge seems to be fading fast. Nonetheless, the formula makes sense and if speed is your thing, the .22 Nosler has no flies on it.

Federal's .224 Valkyrie is a long-range

cartridge, for sure, with a twist rate of 1:7 to handle the heaviest .22-caliber bullets. Based on the 6.8 SPC, the .224 Valkyrie was released at 2018's SHOT Show. The rimless case uses a 30-degree shoulder like the .22 Nosler but is more adaptable to a bolt-action rifle. Factory ammunition will offer bullet weights between 60 and 90 grains and is available not only from Federal, but from Hornady and Sierra, in both hunting and match-grade target loads.

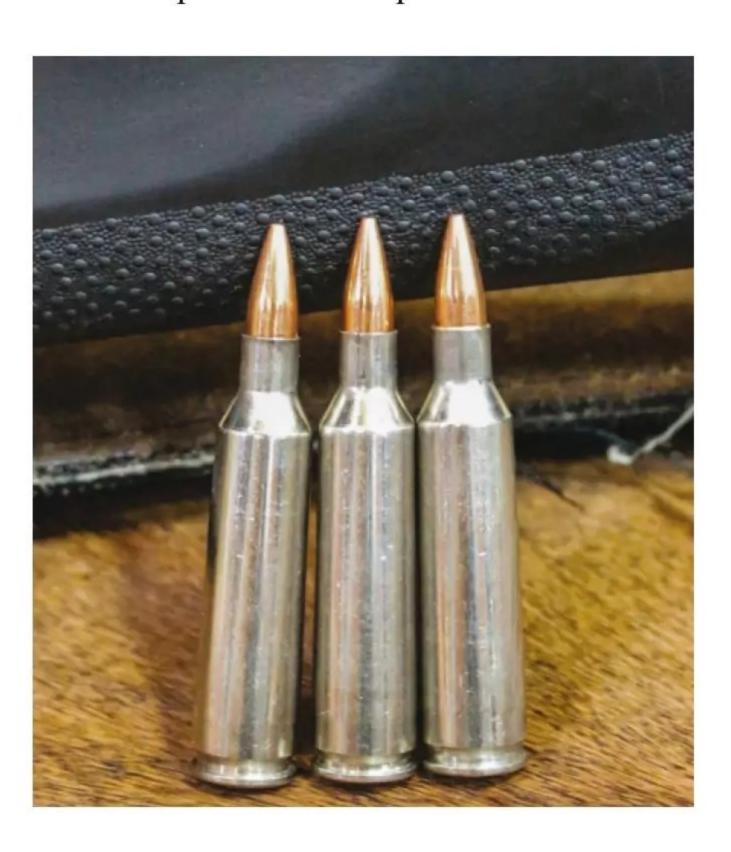
It's probably the best choice for those who want a .22-caliber centerfire that can readily handle deer and similar-sized game, as well as the varmints and furbearers, yet readily handle a 1,000-yard target range. Of the new releases, I like the .224 Valkyrie a whole lot.

#### THE SPEEDSTER

Remington's .22-250 spent more than a quarter-century as a wildcat cartridge, being nothing more and nothing less than the .250-3000 Savage necked down to hold .224-diameter bullets. One of the most popular variants was developed by Grosvenor Wotkyns, J.E. Gebby and J.B. Smith, rivaling the .220 Swift's velocity levels. Ironically, the .22-250 was one of the only cartridges to have a commercial rifle chambered for it before any

commercial ammunition was available. Browning made a rifle chambered in 1963, while the Remington ammunition wouldn't be offered until 1965. Our own John T. Amber commented on the situation in the 1964 Gun Digest Annual, reporting, "As far as I know, this is the first time a first-line arms-maker has offered a rifle chambered for a cartridge that it—or some other production ammunition maker—cannot supply."

The .22-250 is still a highly popular cartridge among the small-bore crowd, as it offers impressive velocities and can deliver hair-splitting accuracy. But, the cartridge has both pleasures and pitfalls: The case





(Above) The .22-250
Remington—being
a necked down .250
Savage—was a wildcat
for many years before
Remington legitimized
it. It remains one of
the author's favorite
small-bore cartridges.

(Left) Federal's .224
Valkyrie is equally at
home in an autoloader
as it is in a bolt gun,
and as it can handle
the heaviest bullet in
.22-caliber, it's well
suited for deer, antelope and similar game
species.



Housed in a light rifle, the .22 Hornet can be a wonderful training tool for a youngster, yet it will handle bobcats, foxes and coyotes at "woods" ranges.

capacity is almost wasted because the twist rate prevents bullets heavier than 55 grains, or maybe 60 grains if the conformation is correct. A 55-grain slug can be driven to 3,800 fps, and while that's impressive, I contemplate re-barreling my rifle from the standard 1:12 twist down to a 1:8 or 1:7 twist to accommodate the 85-and 90-grain bullets, which would take full advantage of the case capacity.

Factory loads are available from nearly any company that loads ammunition, and the handloaders have long embraced the case. In fact, Hodgdon's H380 spherical powder is named for the 38.0-grain load of surplus military powder that Bruce Hodgdon used under a 55-grain bullet in the (then wildcat) .22-250 case.

With a 0.473-inch rim, and a neck measuring 0.248-inch long, the case has all sorts of capacity, but unlike the modern cartridges, is handicapped by the twist rate common to yesteryear. Or is it?

If you want your small-bore rifle to simply handle the smaller species and some target duties at moderate ranges, the .22-250 Remington has no drawbacks whatsoever. But if you want to stretch the capabilities, extending the .22-250 into the regions of a deer rifle, the standard design with the slower twist rate will not stabilize the heavier

projectiles, and even the .223 Remington can be a better choice.

#### **THE SWIFT**

The .220 Swift has been a topic of debate since its release in 1935. Again, Grosvenor Wotkyns had a hand in the development (seeing a trend here?) of the world's fastest cartridge, and in the midst of the Great Depression it broke all sorts of barriers. It's fast—well over 4,000 fps—and that came at a price, namely eroded throats and worn barrels.

Much like the .22-250 Remington, using the .220 Swift in a high-volume shooting situation isn't the best for the throat or rifling, as things heat up pretty quickly. And again, like the .22-250, the majority of rifles chambered for the .220 Swift use a barrel with a relatively slow twist rate—either 1:14 or sometimes 1:12. This twist rate was common for .22-caliber barrels of the era and will preclude the use of bullets much heavier than 55 grains, as they won't be properly stabilized, and you'll see those nasty keyhole marks on your targets.

#### **AND THE WINNER IS?**

So, which cartridge do you choose?

Like so many things in life, the answer is highly subjective and truly depends

on your hunting/target needs. If you're looking at things from a purely practical viewpoint, the .223 Remington offers the greatest amount of flexibility and literal bang for the buck. It'll check all the boxes and do so affordably.

But practicality isn't always applicable, and some folks enjoy shooting a cartridge that's either a nostalgic classic—in the case of the .22-250 Remington or .220 Swift—or one of the technological wonders designed to be cutting edge, like the .224 Valkyrie or the .204 Ruger.

I've settled on two: the .17 Hornet and the .22-250 Remington. The former chose me, after spending a week killing prairie dogs with a plethora of different cartridges, and the latter I chose as a much younger man, who believed he needed the velocity. I've had many opportunities to revise both choices—yet I have not—as I know both the rifles and cartridges very well, and they cover all the bases I need a small-bore cartridge to cover.

Be honest with yourself regarding hunting distances and game pursued, or if you're looking for a target cartridge, assess your goals and needs and pick a cartridge that's both available and accessible. You'll probably make a friend for life. **GDTM** 





The Zion-15 18" Special Purpose Rifle (SPR) pays tribute to the MK12 with a modern-day update which includes a 17" Free Float Handguard with integrated ARCA Rail, steel barrel nut, a B5 Systems Stock, and Grip, IWI 2-Stage Precision Match Trigger, and includes one (1) 30 round Magpul PMAG. Proudly manufactured and assembled at the IWI US facility in Middletown, Pennsylvania.







# THE 'NOT A RUGER' 10/22

## Building your own tack-driving 10/22 is easier than it's ever been.

n the era we currently live in, there are platforms that dominate, and one of the more interesting examples has occurred in the rimfire world, where one general family of products has become the flagship for the entire genre.

Ruger's 10/22 is a worldwide classic and one of those ubiquitous firearms that almost everyone and their brother (and sister, dad, uncle, etc.) owns. Unlike literally hundreds of other rimfire rifle designs that have come and gone with each passing season, the 10/22 platform has hung on, in my opinion largely because of its extremely reliable magazines.

The design was not originally some-

thing that was "modular," but in our day it has become the go-to platform for all things rimfire. You can build your own not-technically-a-Ruger "10/22" out of parts from many companies now; in a way, it has become to rimfire what the AR-15 did for centerfire.

But, before we get into the meat of what notable maker Faxon Firearms has done with it, we need to take a bit of a look at what got us to the place we are now at in rimfire modularity.

#### A FLEXIBLE DESIGN

If you've read my words long enough on the pages of *Gun Digest*, you'll know I like to keep things simple, and I don't really go for the industry jargon unless I am made to, often begrudgingly. The thing with the 10/22 is that, while all these parts are compatible with one another, only Ruger guns can be called "10/22" in earnest.

Unlike the AR platform, where it's all pretty much open source and you can call it what you like, that 10/22 designation belongs to Ruger. As a result, all other parts, while compatible, are "for 10/22," "10/22 compatible" or otherwise designated. I do need to make note of that here because we are dealing with independent designs that are outside that Ruger copyright. What I am going to discuss here is what made the original Ruger 10/22 design suitable for becoming a platform—

and not just the product of the company that originally made it.

The main basis for an expanded aftermarket, in any firearms category, is popularity: think AR, Remington 700, and every other design that lends a particular dimension in physical size to expanded options. The AR is obvious and needs little explanation. The Remington 700

The Faxon build is decked out with a Sig 3-15x FFP scope, a great option for mid- to long-range plinking.





The Grey Birch Solutions chassis is configurable when you order it. There are several variations to choose from.

"footprint" is a widereaching standard across the industry and the base standard for virtually all custom actions in terms of receiver length and shape, as well as screw spacing and magazine inlet.

Some platforms are designed literally as a launch point, such as the Sig P320 and P365. The company in this case wanted to foster an aftermarket and openly welcomed these independent innovators to the point of including their products on their website as custom options.

#### MODULAR BY DEFAULT

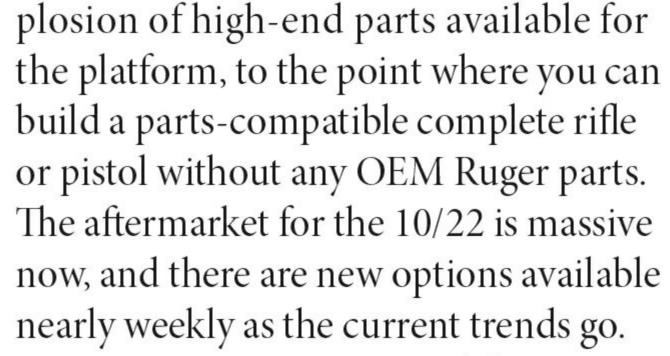
The Ruger 10/22 was, as far as all research I've done on the topic, not intended to be a modular product. The ease of modularity comes from the construction of the gun, which is held together with just a few screws. The barrel isn't even screwed into the receiver; instead, it's held in with a V-block setup featuring two screws and a clamp that tensions to the barrel to the receiver. It takes all of a minute to install a barrel using this system.

The trigger assembly is a self-contained unit that includes the hammer, in a way similar to that of the M1 Garand or M14 rifles. The entire unit is held to the receiver by two pins. With the barrel and trigger group attached, the barreled action is simply lowered into the stock and secured by a single screw.

Some variants have a barrel band that encompasses the barrel and stock, though this is common to factory guns and is lacking from virtually all "custom" build options. A large reason here is that few aftermarket barrels follow the exact contour of Ruger factory barrels and, as a result, are incompatible.

The overall ease of changing parts on the factory 10/22 and its overwhelming popularity inevitably led to an aftermarket. This was initially slow and somewhat rigid as far as options. I remember when there were many types of cheap plastic kits you could use to "go tactical" with your 10/22, but there weren't many options as far as actual new parts or triggers.

All that changed in the past decade, and there has been an ex-



Enter Faxon Firearms and their gamechanging rimfire products.

#### **FAXON GOES RIMFIRE**

I'll be up front about the fact that I've worked with Faxon on many of their AR parts for years. I have yet to find a bad one, to the point that I heartily recommend them at every chance I get. I put thousands of rounds through a single .224 Valkyrie Faxon barrel and featured it in many articles on these pages. It shot



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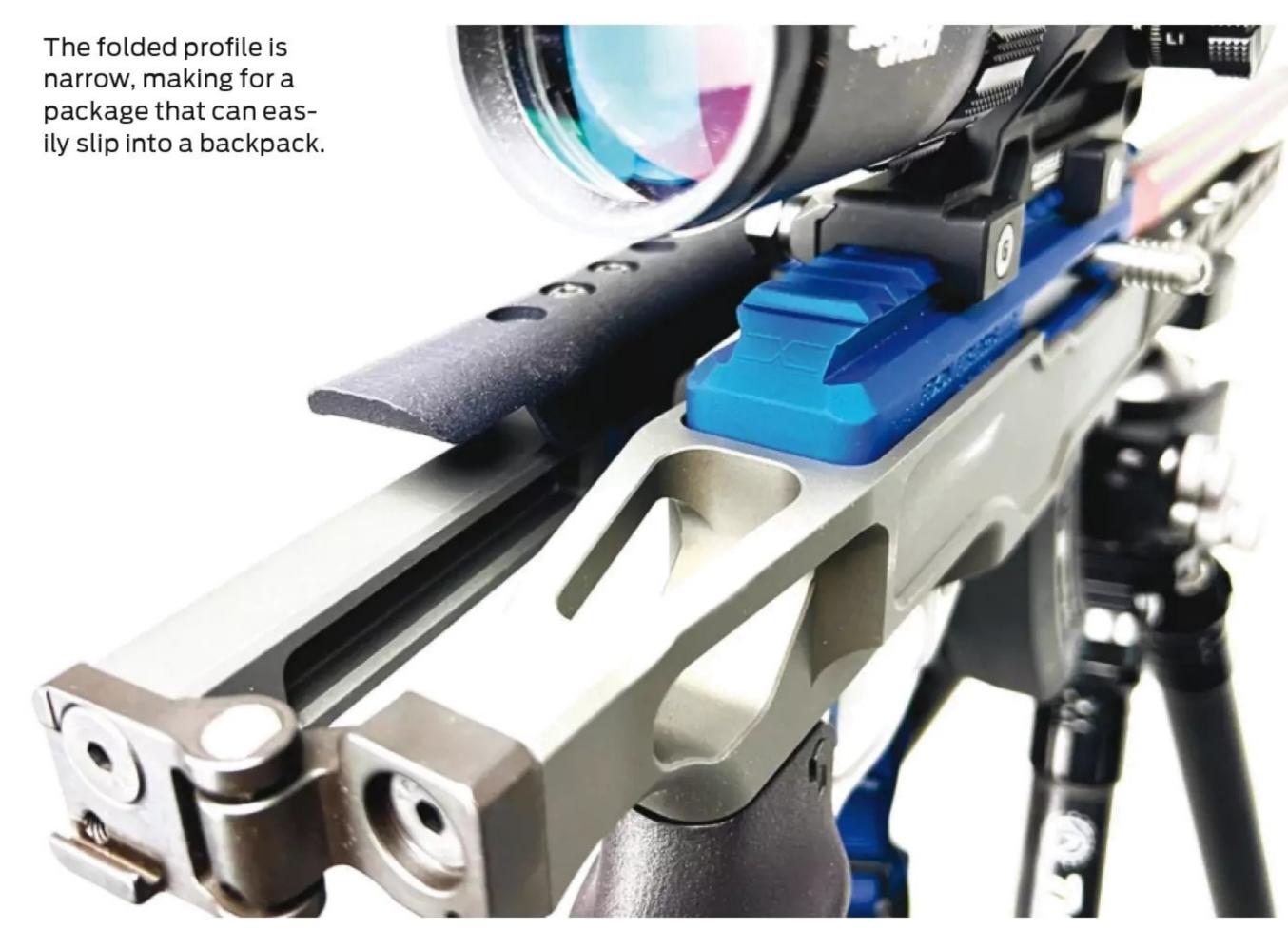
article, and I'll just spoil the end here by saying that these are some of the best barrels you can hope to find for your build. The rainbow heavy contour barrel featured on these pages is so accurate you'd think you were shooting a centerfire ... at 400 yards.

Faxon got into rimfire because there was an obvious demand for it. Many AR builders find the classic semi-auto rimfire as an excellent build project situation for the kids or a long weekend in the workshop. I know that the build bug has a strong bite, and once you begin seeing your options, you really can't stop at just ARs.

Faxon began making rimfire barrels in 2020, and soon other parts followed. The barrels started as the tapered standard option, and they sold extremely well. The idea was to make it an accessible rimfire line, and the emphasis was on maximum accuracy with the greatest appeal to the average builder—not just the match-grade elite.

The barrels have a sporter chamber, so they can accept virtually any and all .22 LR ammo (there is more than one .22 LR chamber profile, think .223 Rem., 5.56, Wylde, etc.). Faxon wanted people to be able to run Eley Match and Remington Bucket o' Bullets ... creating a chamber for all occasions, from long range to plinking, without sacrificing precision.

Receivers started rolling out shortly after barrels, and they offer drop-in compatibility with triggers and barrels. Other



receivers are currently in development. I reached out to the company for some "cool" colors, because I do love my bold builds. These aren't tactical guns, won't be used for any mall ninja events and are really what I like to see when I think of having fun at any range. That's not to say that rimfire rifles can't be lethal, but the world is a rough place and sometimes just having fun is enough.

#### **BARREL ROLL**

Faxon currently offers 17 options in rimfire barrels. Sizes vary from pistol length to full size. Presently, the company plans to stick with .22 LR for the foreseeable future, though other calibers might come in the future. I'm

interested to see what these might be, though I'm pretty sure there's a limited selection available in that category unless the company plans to release their own cartridge design.

I went to two extremes in accomplishing the article builds: one a fast and light barrel in gold meant for speed, and the other a heavy, thick stationary build for precision at longer ranges. I paired the heavy barrel in the rainbow color to the blue receiver and built out a stellar rifle that has wowed me with its accuracy. The light contour gold barrel went to the red receiver. This was intentional, as I wanted to make it have all the matched fire-themed colors in red, gold, orange and black. It turned out nice.

The accuracy of Faxon barrels is hard to argue against. At 50 meters, both of



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# **FAXON FIREARMS** SUPPORTS COLLEGE **PROGRAMS**

Faxon currently sponsors three college teams: Michigan State, Oklahoma State and Florida State practical shooting teams. Some teams want the complete FX22 rifles, some request just barrels. I really love seeing this. I do wish more schools would get back into shooting sports, but I think we all know the universities today are less about thinking critically and more being critical about thinking.

these barrels shot to under an inch, with the lighter contour losing a bit of accuracy as it heated up. At 100 meters, the heavy contour barrel still printed an inch, which truly impressed me. I was achieving 2 MOA at 100 meters with the light barrel.

At 200 meters, the separation was obvious, with the heavy barrel producing centerfire accuracy of 2.5 inches using standard Remington Bucket o' Bullets ammo. It held 2 MOA with Eley Match loads. I eventually took the heavy blue gun to 400 meters and could keep every shot on an IDPA silhouette at that range ... if the wind cooperated.

# **STOCK OPTIONS**

When it comes to stocks and triggers, you'll have to look to companies other than Faxon. My favorite trigger company for all things rimfire is Timney, and each of their triggers. In fact, all of my rimfire

the trigger you want without having to go through a custom shop, and the best part is that they drop in easily. There's no additional effort other than inserting two pins.

Stocks are plentiful for this platform. I decided to use two different brands, KRG and Grey Birch Solutions, for these builds. KRG is a known player in the industry: I've worked with their incredible centerfire products for the better part of a decade and have never had a bad experience. I currently run their stocks on several builds and love them.

The KRG stock is simple, affordable and offers a good degree of customization. I found out a little too late that they offered a red-colored stock I could've used, but the black with red accents was no consolation. What's nice is that these stocks are compatible with many of KRG's accessories, making for a truly competitive edge. You can add weights, extra rails, extend the length-of-pull and more—just as you can with a centerfire stock.

Grey Birch Solutions makes some absolutely topnotch stocks. Not only are they modular on their own, but they also offer the builder a match-grade solution to their rimfire problems. The stocks they make are constructed in much of the same manner as the best centerfire chassis currently available: solid metal with all the right features at a weight savings.

The forend I went with has an integral

ARCA rail, making it instantly accessible to my Two Vets tripod. The stock itself is a folder, akin to the mechanism used in many other high-end modern rifles. It's minimalist, solid and helps deliver maximum accuracy. Ergonomics are a bit skeletal, but this is by design; nobody wants to be carrying a 19-pound rimfire rifle, and weight adds up drastically when working in any medium associated with metal. It's not like riding in a Cadillac for comfort, but rather a sport bike.

#### YOUR GAME IS ON

Using Faxon receivers, barrels and bolts, you can craft some truly excellent rimfire builds based on the Ruger 10/22. I find this is such a fun thing to do that I have several, and I plan to build several more. I enjoy that Faxon makes these parts so affordable and at the same time accurate—your accessibility to all things rimfire is maximized in match shooting, field use and recreation.

We're at the cusp of an explosion in the rimfire market as the AR situation reaches peak saturation, the dollars and ideas simply must flow in a different direction lest we lose our way entirely. I think that the middle half of the '20s will be a golden age for rimfire rifles, especially the Ruger 10/22 and its growing aftermarket offerings. **GDTM** 





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# FOUR FOR THE TWO-THO-THREE

# Four .223 Remington loads, four applications, one primer and one powder.

he .223 Remington is one of my most used rifle cartridges, and I wanted to develop four loads for it that could be relied upon to do everything I need to do with that chambering. I wanted a load for varmints and small game, another for big game, one for tactical applications and one for precision on paper and steel. But—and here's the kicker—I wanted to keep it as simple as possible by only using one powder and one primer, and I wanted to do it all with moderate to high velocity and sub-MOA precision.

I began the project by looking over my .223 Remington load notes that go back more than three decades. I also talked with other handloaders, and then I compared reloading data from various manuals. Here's a look at what I ended up with, and I believe that these four, one-primer/one-powder loads, might very well work for you and your rifles, too.

### BRASS

I had a lot of .223 Remington brass on hand, but not more than a hundred or so empty cases from the same manufacturer, and I wanted to build these loads with duplicate components. Over the years, I've had great success creating consistent loads with Nosler brass, so that's where I started.

I ordered 500 new cases, and when they arrived, I weighed 100 of them and found the standard deviation to be less than a half-grain. The only case preparation I performed was to slightly chamfer the inside and outside of the case necks. Remember: The goal was to keep it as simple as possible.

# **PRIMERS**

Primers can drastically impact pressure

and velocity consistency, and precision. Years ago, working at a ballistic lab with pressure testing equipment, I witnessed the same primer deliver pressure variations of as much as 6,000 psi, while only altering velocity by about 30 fps. More importantly, this resulted in a point-of-impact variation at 100 yards of more than 2 inches.

Primers matter a lot more than many shooters think. My notes indicated some of the best loads I have assembled for cartridges that use small rifle primers were put together with Federal small rifle primers. Fortunately, I had 1,000 of those.

#### **POWDER**

I like powders that meter consistently, especially when loading from a powder dispenser. This generally means ball/spherical powders. If you want to build loads with wide variance in



For a load you'll want to use on steel or paper, especially at distance, the Nosler 77-grain Custom Competition bullet is ideal. It does, however, require a 1:8 twist or faster.



Nosler's 50-grain Ballistic Tip bullet is ideal for predators or small game.

bullet weight, it also means you need

load manuals, but it's easier to just visit

Hodgdon's website to plug in the car-

tridge and the bullet weights you want

to use and see what pops up. I did this

for the .223 Remington, specifying 50-,

60-, 70- and 77-grain bullets, and eight

Over the years, I had used all but

Remington. That one untested pow-

der was CFE 223. I had heard lots of

good things about CFE 223 in the .223

Remington, and though its burn rate is

minutely slower than the other seven

powders, I took a gamble. CFE stands

for "copper fouling eraser" to highlight

that the powder has been tweaked to

I cannot comment with any

one of these powders in the .223

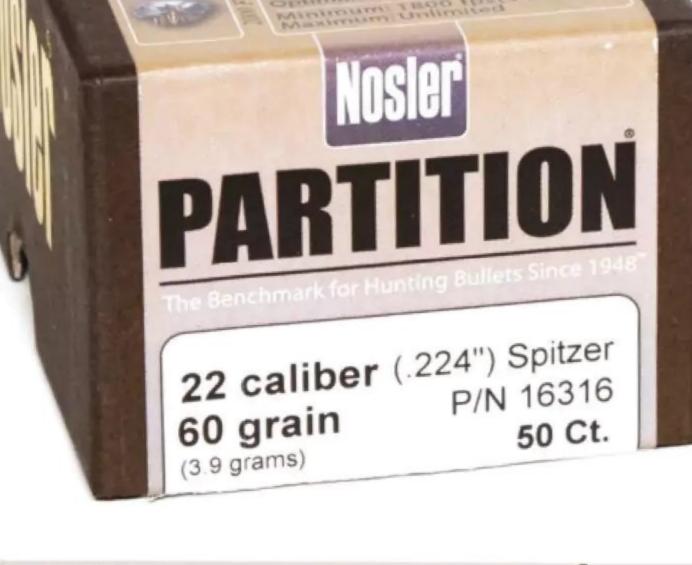
powders were offered.

deter copper fouling.

throughout the process.

a versatile powder. You can consult

antiquated, Nosler's 60-gain Partition bullet is excellent at defeating intermediate barriers, penetrates well and creates massive wounding.





GARDER HORS DE L OF REACH OF CHILDREN EDERAL® AMMUNITION SMALL RIFLE 100 QTY. PRIMERS AMORCES

Primers matter because they can deliver fluctuating results when paired with certain powders in certain cartridges. Federal's small rifle primers provide very consistent ignition.





supporting definitive proof on how well this works, but my impression is that it does limit copper fouling. During the development of these four loads, which consumed more than 100 rounds, I never once cleaned my rifle's barrel, and precision only improved



### **BULLETS**

This is where diversity with a cartridge happens, and it's especially true with the .223 Remington, which can be used successfully in so many different applications.

I chose the 50-grain Nosler Ballistic Tip, which is very volatile on small critters.

I've probably killed more big game with Nosler AccuBonds than any other bullet, so the 70-grain 0.224-caliber version seemed perfect for deer, black bears and hogs.

For tactical applications, many overlook the Nosler Partition, but these bullets do a great job against intermediate barriers.

And finally, for paper and steel, I chose the Nosler 77-grain Custom Competition.

## THE DATA

With each load, I started 5 percent below maximum and worked up while watching for high pressure signs and keeping an eye on velocity. Because the chamber and magazine length of my New Ultra Light Arms rifle allows for it, I used a longer than normal overall cartridge length. I stopped when sub-MOA groups and practical velocities were consistent. Though velocity consistency was better with the lighter bullets—in some cases with single-digit standard velocity deviations—the combination of the Federal primer, Nosler Brass and CFE 223 powder was capable of producing excellent on-target precision with all four bullets.

A few things are worth noting. Out of my 22-inch barrel, the 50-grain load did not deliver near advertised veloci-

ties for a maximum charge. Also, many claim Nosler Partitions are incapable of extreme precision. However, if you kick up the throttle just a bit, they shoot better. This is especially true—and possible—in a modern bolt-action rifle, because .223 Remington load data is kept right at or below 55,000 psi. The Partition and the other three loads all delivered sub-MOA precision.

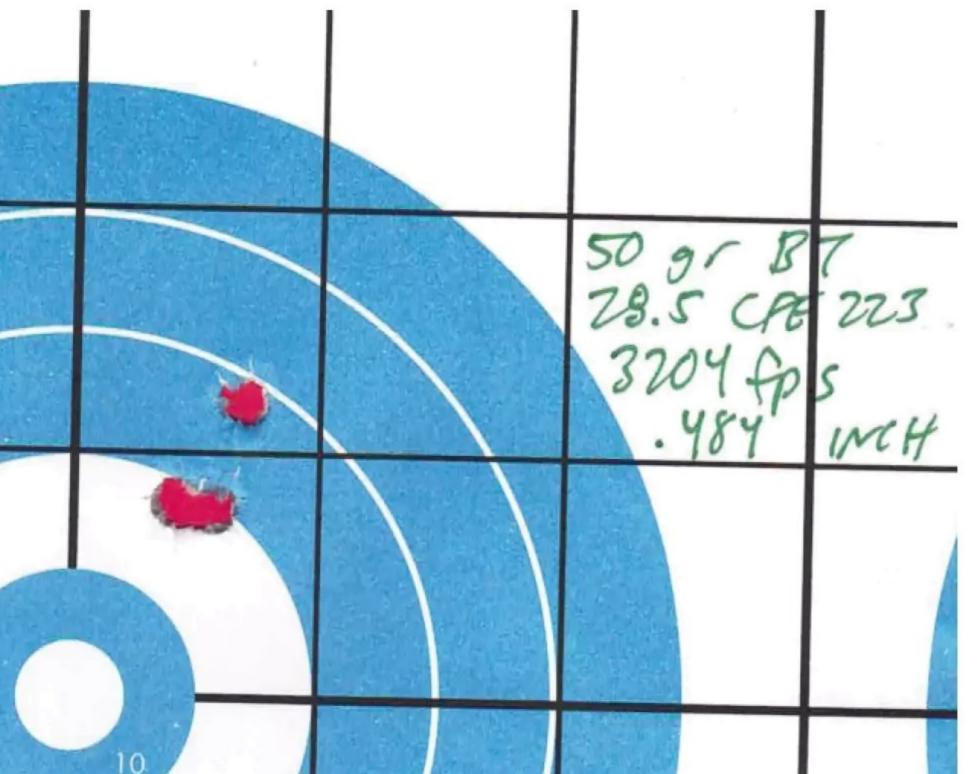
The remaining question was this: Would these four loads also work well in my 5.56 NATO chambered AR-15? I dropped all the loads to slightly below the maximum listed powder charge and reduced their overall length to 2.248 across the board to work with AR-15 magazines. CFE 223 powder does not crowd the case, so seating bullets deeper was a non-issue. Out of that rifle's 16-inch barrel, which also

has a 1:8 twist, velocity consistently was similar, and based on all the AR-15s I have tested over the years, precision on target was better than average ... with flawless reliability.

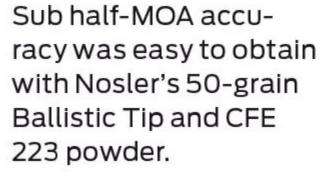
#### **GOALS ACHIEVED**

Initial terminal performance confirmation was conducted by shooting into blocks of Clear Ballistics. (See Table 2.) Last spring, I used the Ballistic Tip load to take a turkey gobbler at 239 yards (rifles are legal for turkeys in West Virginia). I also put a doe in the freezer with the Partition load, and a 200-pound whitetail buck on the meat pole with the AccuBond load. Both the Partition and AccuBond bullets will penetrate more than 16 inches and upset to about 1.7 times their original diameter. They are much deadlier on





Though from a velocity consistency standpoint it might seem that CFE 223 is not a good match for heavy bullets in the .223 Rem., this target would beg to differ.





Some folks will tell you Nosler Partition bullets are not accurate. They're wrong. With the right combination of powder, primer and twist rate, they'll shoot with extreme precision.



The overall length and

performed very well.





# THE MOST VERSATILE COMPACT DROP-IN KITS FOR THE AR-15



# CLAM **PACKS**

For years, the standard ammo storage container was hard plastic boxes with a folding lid. These are nice but will set you back somewhere between \$5 and \$15 per. A few years ago, I stumbled on a neat ammo storage device called the AmmoBuddy. It's a simple clamshelllike clear plastic ammo holder that's compact, easy to access and keeps each round separate. And for the .223 Remington, these retail for about \$2.50 each. I've become addicted to these carriers because I like how I can slip one in my pocket, how they hold each round or empty case captive, and how easy they are to stack and label for different loads. Granted, if you are going to load in bulk, they might not make sense for all your ammo, but they are still extremely hand-

In fact, I now commonly transfer ammunition from factory packaging to an AmmoBuddy for convenience, especially for hunting. The company—Calmtainer even offers these unique containers for a lot of other gear, such as batteries and toilet paper. And they even have one that encases a mouse trap.

ing for trips to the field.

big game than conventional wisdom and most hunters realize.

I do think there is some tweaking to do with the AR-15 loads; I might have left a little velocity in the powder can. But, as they are, and for both of my most-used .223 rifles, this collection of handloads is capable of handling any task I need to tackle with a .223 Remington, and all I need is one powder, one primer and four bullets to do it.

Handloading is an enjoyable pastime that will allow you to create loads not commercially available, while possibly saving a little money. And it's all much easier to do if you can use a single powder and primer. If you're looking for a stable of .223 Remington loads that will allow you to extract the most of what the cartridge can offer, these four bullets are a good start, and I suggest you give CFE 223 a shot. **GDTM** 



#### .223 REMINGTON LOAD DATA WITH CFE 223

BULLET	CHARGE	OAL	VELOCITY	SD	PRECISION
Bolt-action rifle with 22-inch, 1:8 twist barrel					
50-grain Ballistic Tip	28.5*	2.294	3,245	04	0.504
60-grain Partition	27.0*	2.331	3,174	15	0.633
70-grain AccuBond	25.0*	2.400	2,807	30	0.561
77-grain Custom Competition	24.3*	2.400	2,680	33	0.598

AVERAGE: 0.574

AR15 semi-automatic rifle with a 16-inch, 1:8 twist barrel					
50-grain Ballistic Tip	27.7	2.248	2,912	04	1.119
60-grain Partition	26.0	2.248	2,700	09	1.288
70-grain AccuBond	24.0	2.248	2,460	18	1.187
77-grain Custom Competition	22.9	2.248	2,240	29	0.971

AVERAGE: 1.141

NOTES: Reported velocity and standard velocity deviation (SD) is the average for 10 shots fired over a Caldwell G2 chronograph with the screens set 10 feet from the muzzle. Reported precision is the average of three, three-shot groups fired from a sandbag rest at 100 yards.

#### **TERMINAL PERFORMANCE TESTING**

BULLET	VELOCITY	PENETRATION	RECOVERED	
50-grain Nosler Ballistic Tip	3245	9.50	Fragmented	
60-grain Nosler Partition	3174	19.50	0.394/45.6	
70-grain Nosler AccuBond	2807	17.25	0.389/47.4	
77-grain Nosler Custom Competition		- not tested –		

NOTES: Reported velocity is the average for 10 shots fired over a Caldwell G2 chronograph with the screens set 10 feet from the muzzle. Reported penetration and recovered bullet frontal diameter and weight are the average of three shots fired into blocks of Clear Ballistics at a distance of 50 yards.



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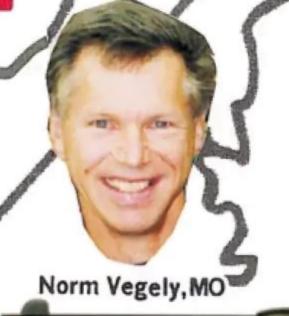
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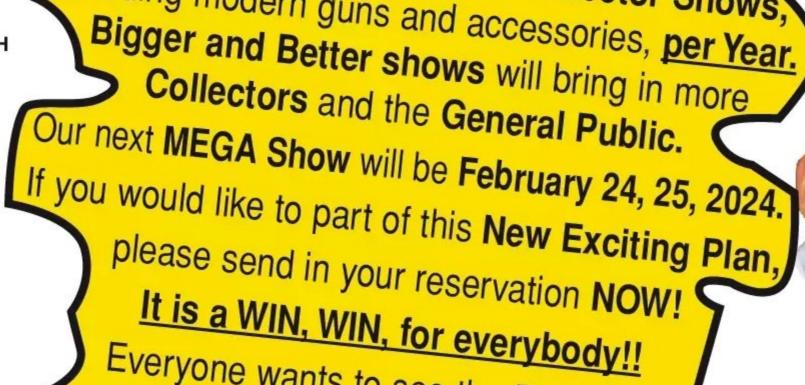


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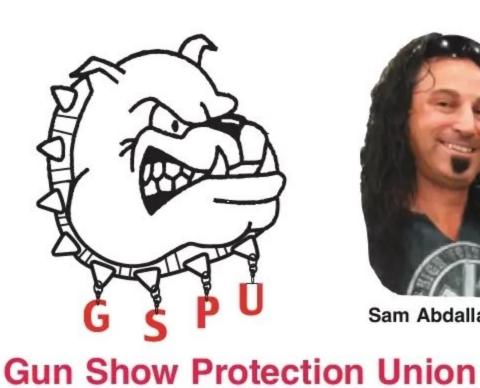


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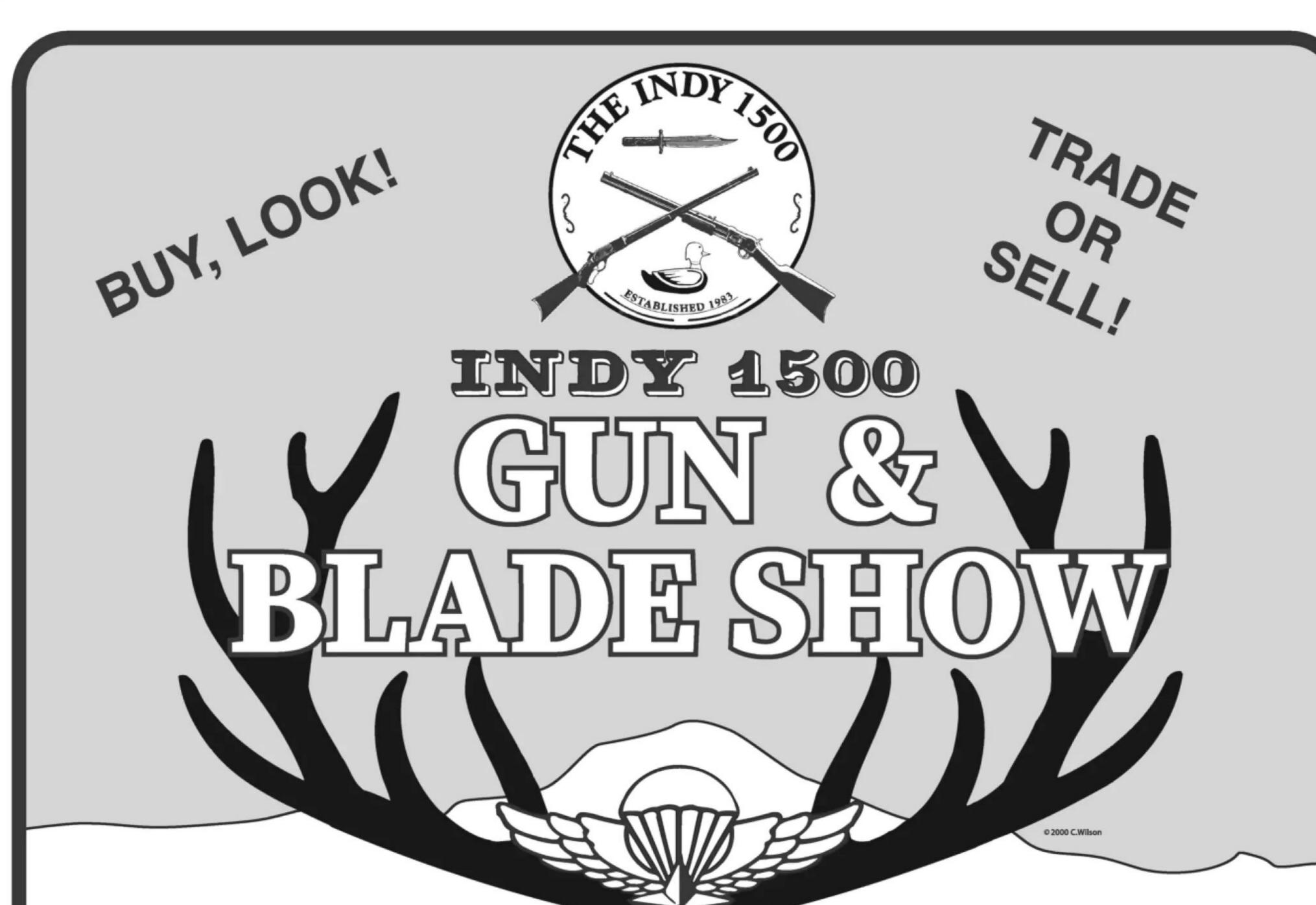




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#### **DECEMBER**

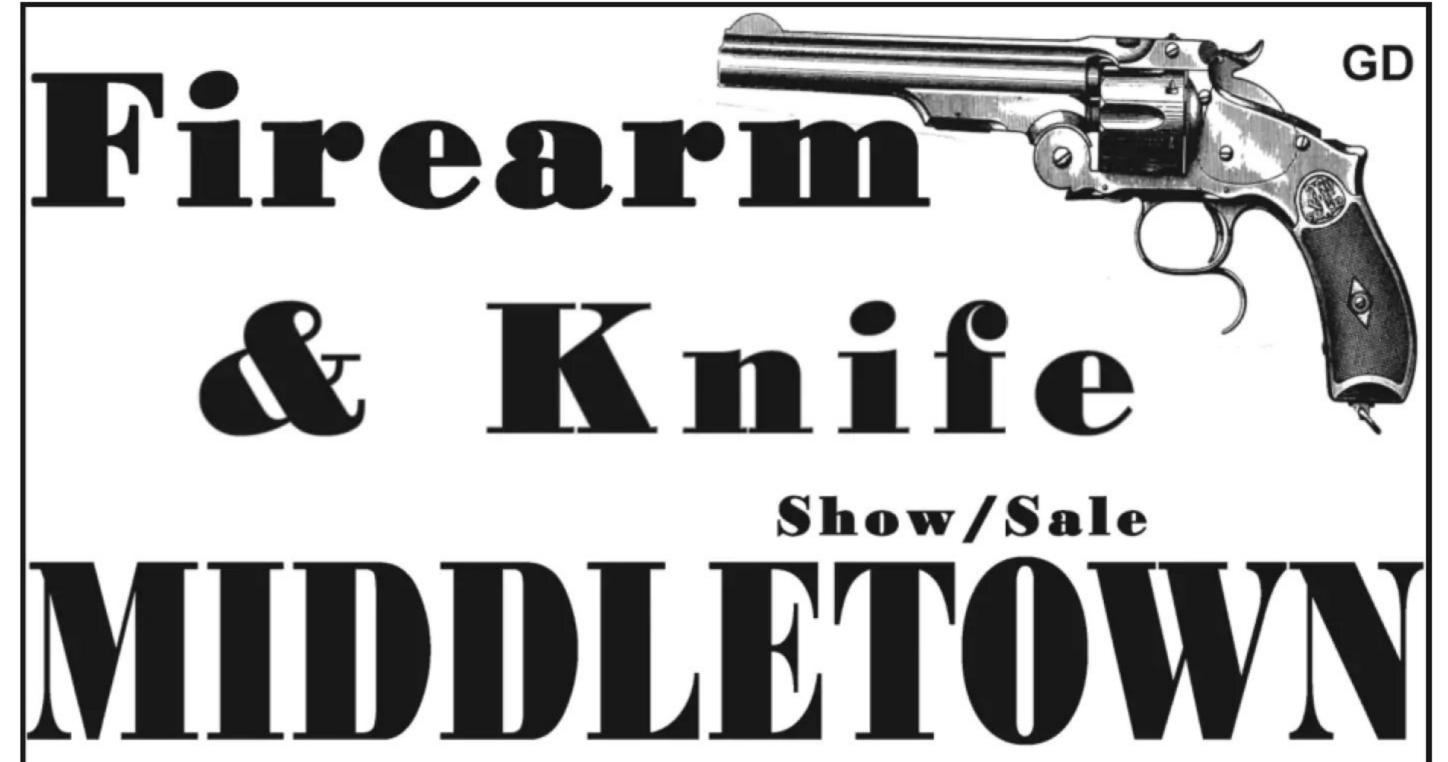
Dec 2-3 SD, RAPID CITY. Rapid City Firearms Association Gun Show. The Monument Civic Center, 444 W. Blvd. N. SH: Sat. 9am-5pm, Sun. 9am-2pm. A: \$5.00 daily. Children under 12 free. T: 200. F: \$40.00 pre-paid 30 days before the show. \$45.00 thereafter. Rapid City Rifle Club. PO Box 1945, Rapid City, SD 57709. PH: 605-209-1166. ww.rapidcityrifleclub.com.

# **JANUARY**

Jan 12-13 MI, Iron Mountain. USI Gun and Knife Show. United Sportsmen's Club, W7689 Sportsmans Club Road. SH: Fri. 3pm-7pm, Sat. 9am-3pm. A: \$5 - 12 and under free with adult. T: 75. F: \$25. United Sportsmen's Club. W7689 Sportsmans Club Road, Iron Mountain, MI 49801. PH: 906-774-3700. https://www.unitedsportsmeninc.com.

Jan 13-14 SD, RAPID CITY. 33nd Annual Tom Wenn Memorial Winter Gun Show. Fine Arts Bldg., 800 San Francisco St, South LaCrosse Street. SH: Sat. 9am-5pm, Sun. 9am-2pm. A: \$5 Daily. children under 12 free. T: 110. F: \$40.00 prepaid. Rapid City Rifle Club. PO Box 1945, Rapid City, SD 57709. PH: 605-209-1166. www. rapidcityrifleclub.com.

Jan 20 PA, Greencastle. Franklin Co.
Pa Izaak Walton League Gun &
Sportsman's Show-Greencastle,
PA. Winter Cabin Fever Gun Show,
3260 Sportsman's Road. SH: Sat.
8am-3pm. A: \$6.00 adults. T: 70.
F: \$25.00. Franklin Co. PA Chapter
Izaak Walton League of America.
106 Greenleaf Rd, Chambersburg,
PA 17202-3134. PH: 717-977-9240.
106 Greenleaf Rd..



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Jan 20 TN, Knoxville. Knoxville TN:
Smoky Mountain Gun Collectors Association Gun Show. Kerbela Shrine
Temple, 315 Mimosa Ave. SH: Sat.
9am-5pm. A: \$10.00 each day. T:
120. F: \$50.00. Smoky Mountain Gun
Collectors Association, Inc. . P.O.Box
9251, Knoxville, TN 37940. PH: 865333-4970. www.smokymountainguncollectors association.org.

Jan 21 TN, Knoxville. Knoxville TN:
Smoky Mountain Gun Collectors Association Gun Show. Kerbela Shrine
Temple, 315 Mimosa Ave. SH: Sun.
9am-5pm. A: \$10.00 each day. T:
120. F: \$50.00. Smoky Mountain Gun
Collectors Association, Inc. . P.O.Box
9251, Knoxville, TN 37940. PH: 865333-4970. www.smokymountainguncollectors association.org.

## **FEBRUARY**

Feb 9-10 WI, Richland Center. Pine River Sports Gun Show. Richland Center Community Center, 1050 N. Orange St. SH: Fri. 3pm-8pm, Sat. 8am-3pm. A: \$5 admission, 12& Under Free With Adult. T: 70. F: 30. Pine River Sports Association. 29798 County Hwy TB, Lone Rock, WI 53556. PH: 608-604-9595. www.myprsa.org.

Feb 17-18 IN, Valparaiso . Gun & Knife Show . Porter County Exp-Center, 215 East Division Road. SH: Sat. 8am-5pm, Sun. 9am-3pm. A: \$6.00 children 12 & under free with Adult. T: 350. F: \$60.00 8ft.@ run of show . Dunes Rifle & Pistol Club L.L.C.. P.O. Box 345, 812 West Old Ridge Road, Hobart, IN 46342. PH: 219-942-4514. Https://valpogunshow.com.

# **MARCH**

Mar 8-9 UT, Vernal. Vernal Gun and Knife Show. Uintah Conference Center, 313 East 200 South. SH: Fri. 12pm-7pm, Sat. 9am-6pm. A: \$5.00 daily. T: 175. F: \$50.00. Friend of Buckskin Hills Shooting Complex. P.O.Box 790028, Vernal, UT 84079. PH: 438-247-2254. vknifeshow@gmail.com.

## **APRIL**

Apr 6-7 TN, Crossville. Cumberland County Gun and Knife Show.
Cumberland County Community Complex, 1398 Livingston Road. SH: Sat. 9am-5pm, Sun. 9am-3pm. A: Saturday Admission is just \$5.00, youth under 16 Free. Sunday Admission is Free to all attendees.. T: 200. F: \$40 for 6' table with multi table discounts. Cumberland County. 1398 Livingdston Road, Crossville, TN 38571. PH: 931-484-5028. www. gkshow.org.

Apr 12-14 NV, Sparks. Big Reno Show .
Nugget Resort Casino, 1100 Nugget
Ave. SH: Fri. 9am-5pm, Sat. 9am5pm, Sun. 9am-3pm. A: \$15 one
day. \$24 all three days. \$90 early in
with exhibitor set up . T: 700. F: \$165
booths \$435. 1344 Disc Dr suite 800,
Sparks, NV 89436. PH: 775-8282350. Bigrenoshow.com.

### **AUGUST**

Aug 3-4 TN, Crossville. Cumberland County Gun and Knife Show.
Cumberland County Community Complex, 1398 Livingston Road. SH: Sat. 9am-5pm, Sun. 9am-3pm. A: Saturday Admission is just \$5.00, youth under 16 Free. Sunday Admission is Free to all attendees.. T: 200. F: \$40 for 6' table with multi table discounts. Cumberland County. 1398 Livingdston Road, Crossville, TN 38571. PH: 931-484-5028. www. gkshow.org.

#### **SEPTEMBER**

Sep 6-7 ND, West Fargo. Red River Range Gun Show. Red River Regional Marksmanship Center, 640 16th St NE. SH: Fri. 4pm-8pm, Sat. 8am-4pm. A: \$5.00 per day; 12 years and older. 11 and under free with adult. T: 98. F: \$38. Red River Regional Marksmanship Center. 640 16th St NE, West Fargo, ND 58078. PH: 701-356-0677. rrrmc.com.

#### **OCTOBER**

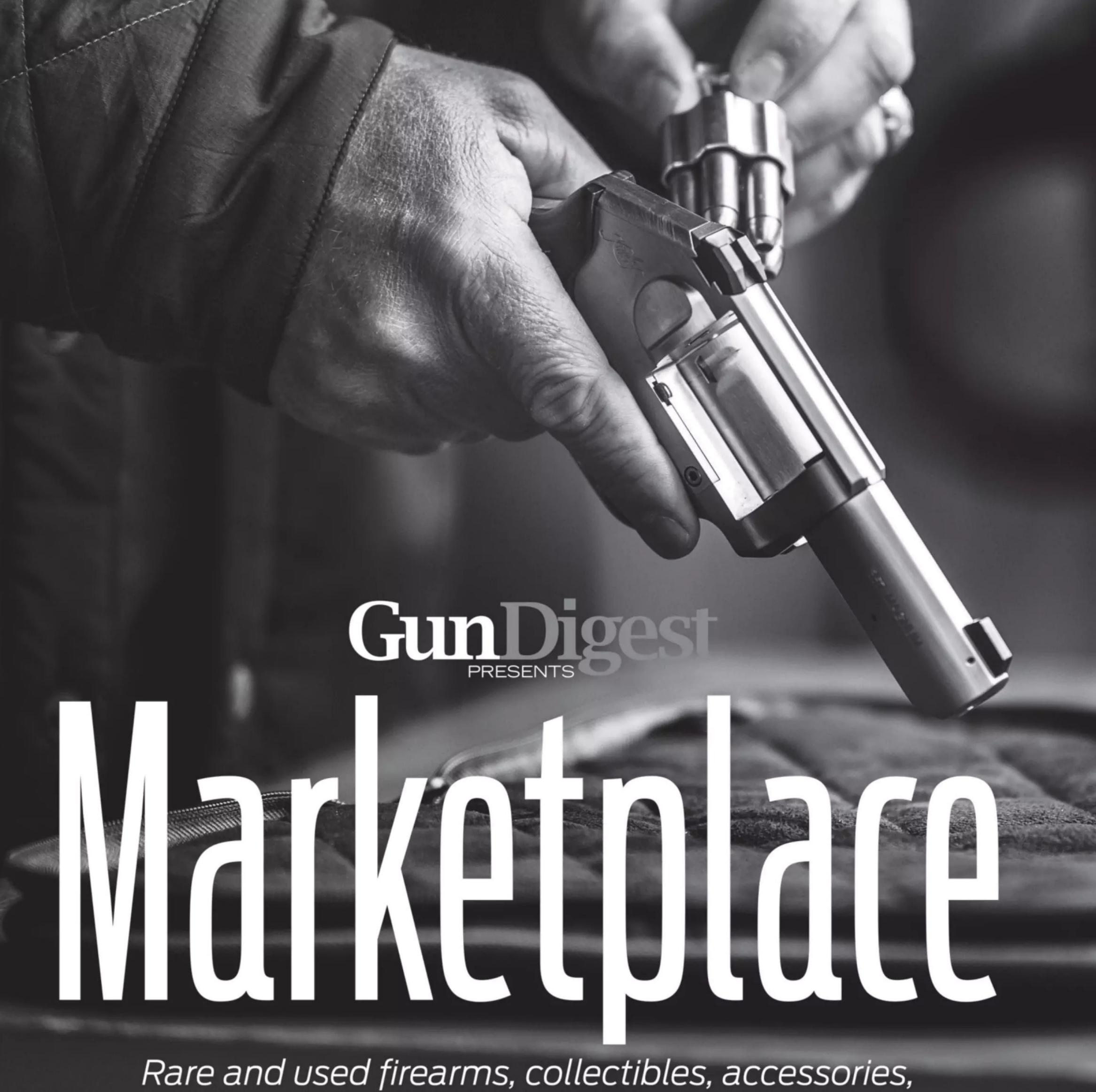
Oct 5-6 IN, Valparaiso . Gun & Knife Show . Porter County Exp-Center, 215 East Division Road. SH: Sat. 8am-5pm, Sun. 9am-3pm. A: \$6.00 children 12 & under free with Adult. T: 350. F: \$60.00 8ft.@ run of show . Dunes Rifle & Pistol Club L.L.C.. P.O. Box 345, 812 West Old Ridge Road, Hobart, IN 46342. PH: 219-942-4514. Https://valpogunshow.com.

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Smith & Wessons:
22LR Prewar Outdoorsman First Model #642,976 6"Bbl 5 Screw mfg 1932
22LR Prewar Outdoorsman First Model, "Humpback Hammer" #669,795 6"Bbl 1937
22 LR Pre-Model 17 #30,945 6"Bbl 1948 Red-Bead King Sight
22LR Mdl 17-2 #K652,889 6"BbL mfg 1965
22LR Model 43 Airweight Kit-Gun 3.5"inch #M38,805
32 Long Model 31-1 ".32 S&W Long #H-109,996
First-Year. This is The "Earliest" Pre 19 I've Ever Owned! I Estimate This S&W was Shipped in the "Early
First Quarter" of 1955! Page 185 of my S&W Book; Says The 4 screw K Target Frame Began in 1955 at Serial
#K260,001. This S&W also has The (6 Six-Groove Backstrap & Forestap) & The Factory Target Walnut
Stocks. The Model 19 was Built "Slightly Larger" than a Standard "K" Frame. Pg.185 THIS "IS" one of the FIRST
Block of Serial Numbers
357 Combat Magnum"PRE-Model"-19-Model, 4-Screw, 4"inch Bbl #K264,619 *NOTE* S&W Letter Shipped 10-11- 1956 to Jonas Arms & Aircraft NY,NY. Walnut Target Stocks, *Note*First-Year. The Factory Sold 5,000 Revolvers
& used up (the First Block of Serial numbers) = (K260,000 to K265,000) set aside for it's manufacturing with
Orders for this model, which were RESERVED in the First 6 Months of 1956. THIS "IS" one of the FIRST Block of
<u>Serial Numbers</u> 99.9% \$5995
38 Special U.S. Victory" VIP-England-Conversion by Cosswell & Harrison LTD
38 Special + P" Model 442, 2"inch "Airlite-Titanium"
38 S&W Special Ctg. = 38/44 Heavy Duty"Pre-War" Blue 5 Screw 5"inch 62,207 With Police S&W Letter; Belt, +
Holster + more Leather. It has Mint Factory Checkered Walnut Stocks, with seial # 62,207+ Lanyard ring on Butt of the pistol with # BCP239 etcThe Heavy Duty Production was only 11,111 made This 38 Special was
Shipped Oct. 25,1940 to Marshall Wells Co., Vancouver, BC. This Revolver was Ordered. for the British Columbia Police
Dept. and marked with their Property marking and a number. The S&W Letter also says that The .38/44 Heavy Duty
was designed to fire the .38 Special Super Police Loads
44 SPECIAL PRE-Model 24, Nickle 5 Screw, 6.5"inch S-146,5xx 3T's S&W Letter
44 Special Model 624 3"inch #ALV 15xx First Year Strols-Steel'Target' Made1985-1988
44 Special Model 624 3"inch #ALW48xx First Year Stnls-Steel'Target' Made1985-1988
Very "Early "First-Year" Production" Serial # S-156,4xx
45 ACP Revolver Pre-Model-22 Blue 5.5"Bbl Factory Letter#S-88,357 Shipped 5-2,1952 Rare Mint Condition LNIB \$4995
S&W 44 Magnum's "Consecutive Pair" Model 29-6 Blue, Gold, Factory Engraved . Both (Serial #8 & Serial #9)
are New in their Wood & Glass Display Case's With the Cardboard Sleeve box cover. Both have their own Factory
Letters. Only "137 " Made. This "Consecutive", "Single"-"Digit" Pair of Collectable Firearms is a "True- Rarity". Both shipped to Baron Technology Inc. Turnbull, Ct. 4"inch Light-Tapered Barrel, Blue finish & Goncalo
Alves Grips. With "Gold" Embellishments Both Are New in their Boxes\$15,000.
Miscellaneous - Pistols:
Astra Model 600/43 SN #44,5xx 9mm Parabelum Only 800 Made 1 of 800 M.R.P Portuguese Navy
COLT 45 ACP = Colt U.S.A.F. Air Force Model 1911 A-1 Mfg = Auto Ordinance Commemorative; Nickle & Gold95%\$1395
EmbellishmentsetcNIB with Display Case etc This USAF Commemorative has the Works = Gold Engraved
Left side = M 1911 A 1 & To FLY AND FIGHT with United States Airforce in Blue & Gold Emblem on Both Ivory  Grips, Gold clip release button, Scrows, Trigger Safety Lover, & 18 SERT, 1047
Grips. Gold clip release button, Screws, Trigger Safety Lever, & 18 SEPT. 1947.  NIB \$4,995
High-Std G-380 "First Year" Production The 603rd Made!
Reising Target 22 LR SN#1,3xx First Year with Rod & Holster Only 3000 made
<u>Ruger 44 Mag / 44-40 = 2 Cylinders #87-00078</u>
Ruger .45 Long.Colt. SN# 48-44,464 Ruger Blackhawk 5.5"inch
Sig Sauer Pistol 10"Barrel Cal .223/.556 Nato; Model 556
Rifles:
Mannlicher Schoenauer Caliber .338 Winchester SN 34,0xx. Double-Set-Trigger, Original Stock LOP = 13 3/8", Stock has Never been Cut; with an added Pad the LOP = 14 3/8". Also, Factory Tapped Receiver for a Scope. This is the
Last .338 Win Caliber I have. I saved the Very Best for the Last & for myself
Winchester Model 61 "Deluxe" .22 S, L, LR TakeDown Matching Serial # 215,6xx , Factory Checkered Forearm,
Buttstock & Grooved ReceiverSteel checkered Buttplate. etc 95% barrel blue
Marlin Model 39 22S,L,LR. 24" Octagon-Barrel, Tube Mag. Open sights, Take-Down mfg 1920-ish "Early Multi-
Colored Case-Hardened Receiver, "S"Shaped Pistol Grip; Beautiful Bluing on the Barrel, Forend-Tip, Magazine-
Tube, Bolt-Hammer & Screws. Hard Rubber Butt-Plate. *Note* Earlier-Rifles with the "S" Prefix, are Noted for their Superior Workmanship, and Fine Finish. This is one of them & it is; Gorgeous = Serial # \$16,377 99.9% \$5,995
Their Superior Working Ising, and I me I mism. This is one of them & it is, ourgeous - serial # 510,377 99,970 \$3,993



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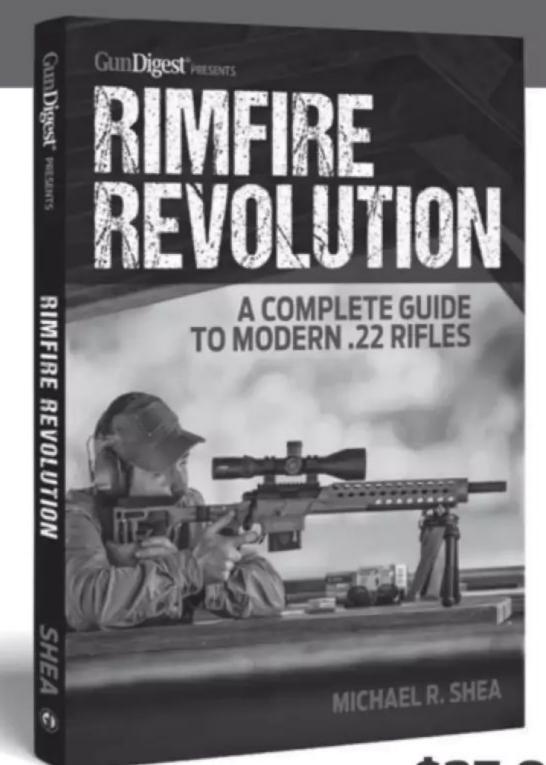
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- 11-A CZ .32 ACP "Model 50" Single / Double Action Auto Pistol 3 3/4" barrel with excellent bright bore, fixed sights, 95% original blue with some holster scuffing, hammer drop safety, loaded chamber indicator, excellent serrated black plastic grips, finger rest magazine, excellent function, import marked on frame (C&R) ..........\$355

- 16-A High Standard .22 LR 1<sup>st</sup> Model "Sports King" Auto Pistol 4 ½" barrel with mint bore, 95%+ original blue with some thinning to gray at muzzle, front and back strap, fixed sights, checkered reddish brown plastic original grips, comes with one 10 round original magazine with aluminum follower, manufactured 1950 (C&R) ............\$350

- 23-A Smith & Wesson .38 S&W Special "Model 14-3" "K-38 Masterpiece" 3 Screw Double Action Revolver 8 3/8" solid rib pinned barrel with bright excellent bore, 98% original blue with light wear along cylinder, frame and barrel shows light scratches, 90% case colors shows on semi target hammer and serrated trigger, front blade adjustable rear sight, checkered Walnut target grips with speed loader cutout and silver S&W medallions, excellent function, manufactured 1970-1971 (C&R) .............\$850

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- 27-A Smith & Wesson .45 ACP "Model 1917/1937 Brazilian Contract" Revolver 5 ½" pinned barrel with excellent bright bore, 90% scratchy original blue taking on a brown tinge on barrel, fixed sights, all matching numbers in the 200,000 correct serial range, importer stamped over barrel serial number but still readable as matching, 90% dark case colors, very good+ checkered Walnut commercial style matching grips with silver S&W medallions, excellent smooth function, one of the better 1937 Brazilian contract revolvers, lanyard at butt, inventory number on backstrap (C&R) .......\$900

- 30-A Smith & Wesson 9mm "Model 59" Auto Pistol 4" barrel with mint bore, 99% original blue and black anodized finish on slide and alloy frame, mint black nylon checkered grips with S&W logo, serrated front and rear grip straps, front serrated ramp and rear adjustable sights and a slide mounted safety/de-cocker, comes with one factory magazine stamped 9mm/S&W/A on its floorplate, manufactured 1977-1978 ........ \$600

# **CENTERFIRE RIFLES:**

- 37-A Finnish / Tikka 7.62x54R "Model 27" Mosin Nagant Bolt Rifle 28" barrel with good pitted bore, factory sights, 95%+ arsenal blue finish, barrel base marked with Tikka Arsenal mark over serial number over "1934", small import mark on muzzle, birch straight grip stock with round "finger" joints, handguard also birch, comes with cleaning rod and gray canvas sling, non matching numbers, manufactured 1934 (C&R) ... \$710

- **40-A Harrington & Richardson 45/70 "Commemorative Officers" Model 1873" Trapdoor Rifle** 26" round barrel with mint bore, 98%+ original blue and case colors, front blade sight with tang peep sight, Springfield Buckhorn rear sight, checkered Walnut straight grip stock showing some light scratches, bottom of stock shows circle "P" cartouche lock, lever and side plate all nicely scrolled engraved, crescent buttplate shows 98%+ case colors, comes with light colored cleaning rod, like new, excellent function ............\$1100
- 41-A Ishapore .303 British "No.1 MK 3" Bolt Rifle 25" barrel with bright excellent bore, 85%+ arsenal blue finish thinning to gray, import mark on right side of receiver, all matching numbers, collar marked "R.F./1987.Bo1 MK3", smooth Walnut stock, forend and handguard, comes with one magazine, excellent function (C&R) ......\$575

- 44-A Polish Radom .22 LR "Model WZ4822" Training Bolt Rifle 25" barrel with bright excellent bore, 90% arsenal blue finish showing thinning on receiver and at muzzle, front barrel band is gray as well as high edges along protected front post, tangent rear sight graduated to 100 meters, bolt serialized to rifle and shows trace of blue, straight grip Walnut stock and handguard show dings and dents, steel buttplate showing high edge wear and not serialized to rifle, excellent function, barrel marked at base with Radom "11" in an oval over "1955", manufactured 1955 (C&R) ..................\$285

- 47-A Russian / Tula 7.62x54R "Model 91/30" Mosin Nagant Bolt Rifle 30" barrel with bright excellent bore, 98% original arsenal blue finish, laminated hardwood stock, protected front post, tangent rear sight, import mark on receiver, bolt serialized to rifle, magazine plate not serialized to rifle, receiver ring shows Tula arsenal mark over "1944", has cleaning rod, excellent function, manufactured 1944 (C&R) ...........\$525
- **49-A U.S. Government National Postal Meter .30 Cal. Model M-1 Arsenal Rebuild Auto Rifle** 18" Marlin barrel with a bright excellent bore, protected front post, milled rear adjustable sight, type 3 "Al" bayonet lug, parkerized original finish, Walnut low wood pistol grip stock with ordnance cartouche on right side and "A.A.L." on left side, flat op bolt, steel buttplate, comes with one "SW" marked magazine, green nylon sling, magazine pouch marked "Victory 1943" and oiler, excellent function (C&R) .....\$2100
- **50-A Yugoslavian 7.92x57 Zastava "Model M48A" Bolt Rifle** 23 ½" barrel with bright excellent bore, 98%+ original blue, protected front hooded sight, tangent rear sight graduated to 2000 meters, Yugoslavian crest on receiver ring, Elm wood stock and handguard, stainless steel cupped buttplate, original sling, cleaning rod intact, excellent function, manufactured 1950-1964, mint military surplus rifle (C&R) ...\$750
- **51-A Yugoslavian 7.92x57mm "Model 48" Mauser Bolt Rifle** 24" barrel with mint bore, 98%+ original blue, bolt in the white, original protected front inverted "V" post sight and tangent rear sight graduated to 2000 meters, receiver ring shows crisp Yugoslavian crest and "M48", cleaning rod, original sling, laminated hardwood semi pistol grip stock, stainless steel buttplate, all matching numbers (C&R) ............\$750

#### **RIMFIRE RIFLES:**

52-A Belgium Browning .22 LR "Grade I Model 22" Takedown Butt Tube Feed Auto Rifle
19 ¼" barrel with mint bore, front blade once barrel mounted scope base with attached
Weaver V22-A 3-6x scope, scope has duplex reticle, clean clear optics, 98% original blue,
light pin prick pitting on right side of receiver, checkered Walnut pistol grip stock and
forend, black serrated buttplate, excellent function, manufactured 1971 (C&R) .....\$1200

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\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\* 53-A Browning / Miroku .22 LR "22 Auto" Takedown Butt Tube Feed Auto Rifle 19 1/4" barrel with mint bore, front bead sight, folding rear leaf sight, barrel mounted scope base with 1 \(^34\)-5x Redfield scope, scope has TV view style optics and duplex reticle, clean clear optics, checkered Walnut pistol grip stock and forend, grade I style engraved receiver, comes with its original black cardboard box, with trigger lock and paperwork, manufactured 2016 ......\$925 54-A J. Stevens .22 LR "No. 14 1/2 Little Scout" Single Shot Rifle 20" barrel with good bore, fixed sights, 90%+ blue on barrel with trace case color showing on receiver, smooth straight grip Walnut stock and splinter forend, excellent function (C&R) \$265 55-A J. Stevens .22 LR "No. 14 1/2 Little Scout" Single Shot Rifle 20" barrel with good bore, fixed sights, 90%+ blue with trace 70% case colors on receiver, receiver shows "SVG" in circle on left side of receiver, smooth Walnut straight grip stock and splinter forend, excellent function (C&R) ......\$265 56-A Kingston .22 LR "Model M-1 Garand" Clip Feed Auto Rifle 24" barrel with mint bore, M-1 Garand national match style sights, 99% original parkerized finish, smooth Walnut stock and handguard wood, excellent copy of an M-1 Garand but in 22 LR, looks to be built on a Ruger receiver using a Ruger rotary magazine, comes with its original box and pamphlet, collector quality, only made for 2 years, super looker and easily mistaken for an original M-1 Garand 2016-2017 ......\$1295 57-A Marlin .22 S, L, & LR "Model 39-A Golden" Takedown Lever Rifle 24" barrel with bright excellent bore, raised front blade, missing hood brass bead sight, rear sight with elevator, receiver mounted scope block with mounted Weaver 4x scope, scope has plane crosshairs, partly foggy optics, 97%+ original blue showing light pin prick pitting on barrel and magazine tube, receiver shows light scratches and light pin prick pitting, oil finished pistol grip stock and forend, black plastic pistol grip cap and buttplate, gold color trigger, sling swivels, excellent function, manufactured 1960 (C&R) ........... \$875 58-A Mossberg .22 LR "Model 380" Butt Tube Feed Auto Rifle 20" barrel with mint bore, 97% original blue, thinning a bit mid barrel, pin prick pitting at muzzle, front brass dovetail bead and open rear with elevator sights, grooved receiver, smooth dark Walnut pistol grip stock, stock has dents on right side, below charging knob, black plastic buttplate, excellent function, manufactured 1980-85 ......\$215 59-A Remington .22 LR "Model 24" Butt Tube Feed Takedown Auto Rifle 21" barrel with mint bore, 98% original blue with light loss at muzzle, factory open sights, grooved receiver, splinter style Walnut forend and semi pistol grip stock with "UMC" logo factory buttplate, barrel is marked "RB", excellent function (C&R) ......\$575 60-A Remington .22 Short "Model 241-SA / Speedmaster" Takedown Butt Tube Feed Auto Rifle 24" barrel with mint bore, 98% original blue with light scratches on receiver and some light pin prick pitting on barrel, factory open sights, smooth Walnut forend and pistol grip stock with factory steel buttplate, barrel marked "CRR" (factory code date for April 1946), excellent function, manufactured 1946 (C&R) ......\$495 61-A Remington .22 S, L, & LR "Model 521-T / The Junior Special" Clip Feed Target **Bolt Rifle** 25" barrel with mint bore, 70% blue to brown with pin prick pitting on receiver, front dovetail post sight, rear Lyman 57RS adjustable peep sight, smooth pistol grip Walnut target stock with adjustable sling swivel forend, sling swivel in rear toe line, black polymer serrated buttplate, magazine floorplate is brown in color, comes with one factory magazine, bolt shows 80% case color, manufactured 1948 (C&R) ......\$305 62-A Remington .22 S, L, & LR "Model 552 Fieldmaster" Tube Feed Pump Rifle 23" barrel with excellent bore, open sights, grooved receiver, 95% original blue with spots of thinning along barrel, aluminum receiver is 90%+ black showing areas of thinning and high edge wear along with light scratches smooth Walnut pistol grip stock and grooved forend show handling wear, dings and dents, grip end on stock has a chip missing, Remington black checkered plastic buttplate appears to be a replacement, excellent function, manufactured 1955 (C&R) ......\$400 63-A Ruger .22 LR "Model 10/22" Takedown Lite, Clip Feed Auto Rifle 16.1" barrel with mint bore, threaded muzzle, aluminum alloy "red" barrel sleeve, no sights but has Picatinny rail mounted to Ruger red receiver, black synthetic stock featuring the Ruger modular stock system, polymer trigger, cross bolt manual safety, comes with (1) 10 round detachable magazine, extra stock and black nylon carry case with papers, like new, excellent function, manufactured 2016 ......\$450 64-A Ruger .22 LR "Model 10/22" Clip Feed Auto Rifle 18" barrel with bright excellent bore, front blade with gold color bead, flip down adjustable leaf sight, 98%+ original blue with very light peppery pin prick pitting around rear sight, checkered Walnut pistol grip stock, serrated black plastic buttplate, comes with one original rotary detachable magazine, left side of receiver shows rubbing marks, manufactured 1974 ......\$325 65-A Stevens .22 LR "No. 26 Crack Shot" Single Shot Falling Block Rifle 18" barrel with poor bore, gray to brown patina with receiver showing gray, scattered pin prick pitting throughout the metal surfaces, smooth Walnut straight grip stock and splinter forend, extractor sticks at times otherwise all else functions properly (C&R) ......\$165 66-A Winchester .22 LR Model 63 Butt Tube Feed Auto Rifle 23" barrel with bright excellent bore, open sights, 98% original blue, smooth Walnut pistol grip stock and forend, forend has small light scratches on left side, left side of stock also shows light scratches, original blued steel buttplate, excellent function, manufactured 1950 (C&R) ......\$1000 67-A Winchester .22 S, L, & LR Model 290 Tube Feed Auto Rifle 20" barrel with mint bore, open sights, grooved receiver, 98% original blue, press checkered Walnut pistol grip stock and forend, black plastic serrated Winchester buttplate with white line

spacer, excellent function, manufactured 1967-1973 (C&R) ......\$225

- 68-A Winchester .22 S, L, & LR "Model 06" Takedown Pump Rifle 20" barrel with excellent bore, non professional re-blue finish on metal surfaces, marble front blade and adjustable rear sight, two holes on barrel at barrel address, holes do not go through barrel, Walnut straight grip stock and grooved forend, stock has a light crack starting at bottom tang, toe also shows repair mark, original buttplate, excellent function, end of production, manufactured 19301-1931 (C&R) ......\$500
- 69-A Winchester .22 S, L, & LR "Model 06" Takedown Pump Rifle 20" barrel with good, lightly pitted bore, front no. 2 marble sight, marble rear sight with elevator, non professional re-blue on all metal surfaces, smooth Walnut straight grip stock and small grooved forend are also non professionally refinished, manufactured 1910 (C&R) ......\$500
- 70-A Winchester .22 S, L, & LR "Model 61" Takedown Grooved Receiver Tube Feed Pump Rifle 24" barrel with mint bore, original fixed sights, grooved receiver, 98%+ original blue, smooth Walnut pistol grip stock with large grooved forend, wood shows light scratches, checkered steel buttplate, excellent function, collector quality, manufactured 1956 (C&R) ......\$1200
- 71-A Winchester .22 W.R.F. 1890 "Third Model" Takedown Tube Feed Pump Rifle 24" octagon barrel with fair/pitted bore, 80% original blue showing high edge wear and scattered peppery pin prick pitting, action is gray with scattered pin prick pitting, open sights, Lyman peep sight attached to tang, smooth Walnut straight grip stock and small grooved forend, crescent steel buttplate with a blue to brown color, wood shows wear, dings and dents, functions properly, manufactured 1923 (C&R) ......\$725
- 72-A Winchester .22 S, L, & LR "Model 55" Single Shot Auto Ejecting Rifle 22" barrel with mint bore, 98% original blue, factory open sights, smooth Walnut pistol grip stock with light dings and dents, original Winchester logo buttplate, top feed bottom eject functions properly, stock has small chip on right side just behind charging handle, manufactured 1958-1961 (C&R) ......\$300

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- 73-A Harrington & Richardson .410 Eley "Model 1905" Top Break Open Hammer Single Shot Shotgun 26" barrel 2" chamber, fixed cylinder with bright excellent bore, missing front bead sight, 97% original blue on barrel showing peppery pin prick pitting, once case colored receiver is now brown, left side of receiver has a take down latch, smooth round knob semi pistol grip stock and splinter style forend, H&R logo original buttplate, stock has a chip missing from left side behind triggerguard, manufactured 1905-1915 and probably intended for Canadian or European market, these are sometimes known as taxidermist guns (C&R) ......\$235
- 74-A J.C. Higgins 12 Gauge "Model 20" Pump Shotgun 28" barrel with excellent bore, 2 34' chamber, fixed full choke, 95% original blue thinning to gray, showing light scratches and silvering along receiver's high edge, single brass bead front sight, smooth Walnut pistol grip stock and grooved forend, black rubber recoil pad, excellent function, manufactured 1946-1962 (C&R) ......\$180
- 75-A Mossberg 12 Gauge "Model 500A" Pump Shotgun 28" raised vent rib barrel with bright excellent bore, 2 3/4" chamber, screw in improved modified choke tube, 98%+ original blue, white front sight, gold colored mid bead sight, press checkered hardwood pistol grip stock and forend, brown rubber recoil pad, excellent function, manufactured 1992-1993 ......\$275
- 76-A Mossberg 20 Gauge "Model 185-D" Clip Feed Bolt Shotgun 24" barrel with bright excellent bore, 2 3/4" chamber, threaded muzzle with Mossberg screw on full choke tube, single brass bead front sight, smooth Walnut pistol grip stock with a Schnabel forend, stock shows finish wear, finger groove triggerguard sits flush to grip, only red jewel remains, green one missing from safety lever, black plastic buttplate, NO magazine (C&R) ......\$225
- 77-A Savage / Springfield 12 Gauge "Model 67C" Pump Shotgun 28" barrel with bright excellent bore, 2 34" chamber, fixed modified choke, 97% original blue with thinning along barrel and light scratches along alloy receiver, hardwood pistol grip stock shows varnish chipping, scratches, red rubber recoil pad is a replacement and is not fitted correctly to shotgun (C&R) ......\$150
- 78-A Savage / Stevens 20 Gauge "Model 258B" Clip Feed Bolt Shotgun 26" barrel with good bore, 80% original blue, thinning to gray along receiver, pin prick pitting on receiver and thinning to gray, single bead front sight, smooth Walnut pistol grip stock with ebony forend, black plastic buttplate unable to hold a magazine due to broken magazine well, no magazine, parts shotgun ......\$120
- 79-A Sears / Ted Williams 12 Gauge "Model 21" Pump Shotgun 25" vent rib barrel with polychoke and bright excellent bore, twin bead sights, 87%+ original blue with thinning along barrel and receiver, receiver showing pin prick pitting on to edges, checkered Walnut pistol grip stock and forend, pistol grip cap and brown rubber recoil pad, excellent function (C&R) ......\$125

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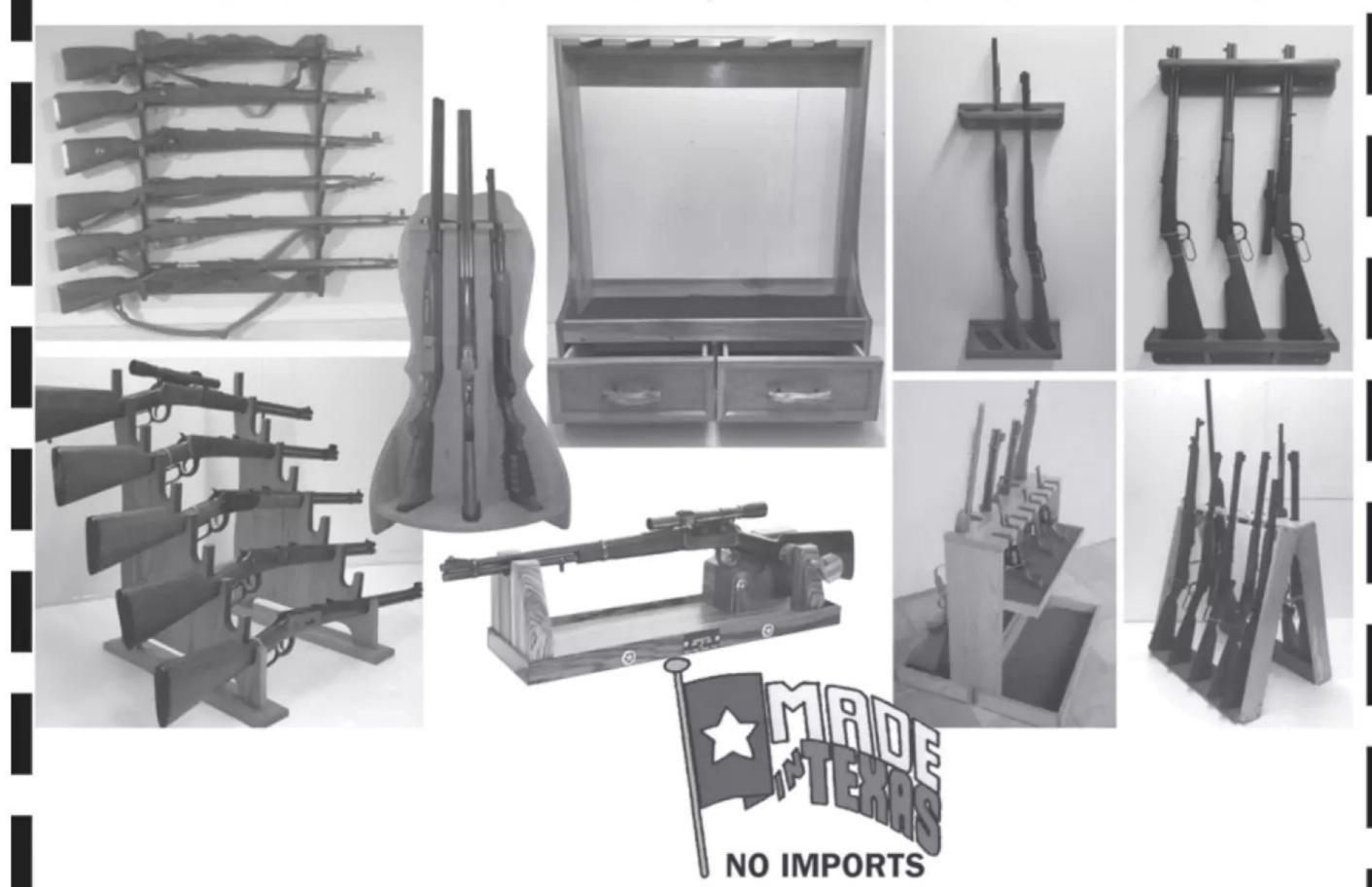
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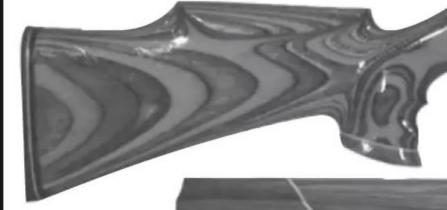
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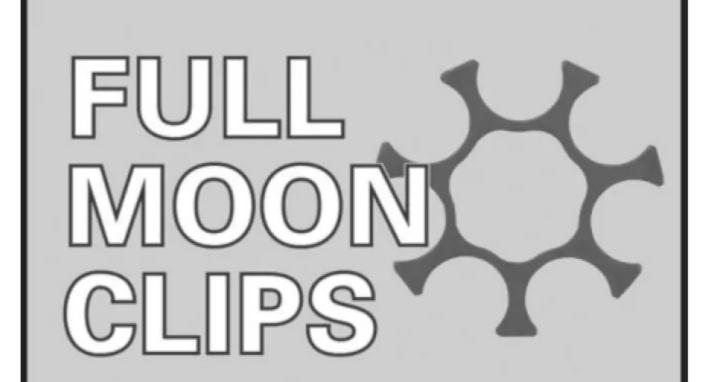
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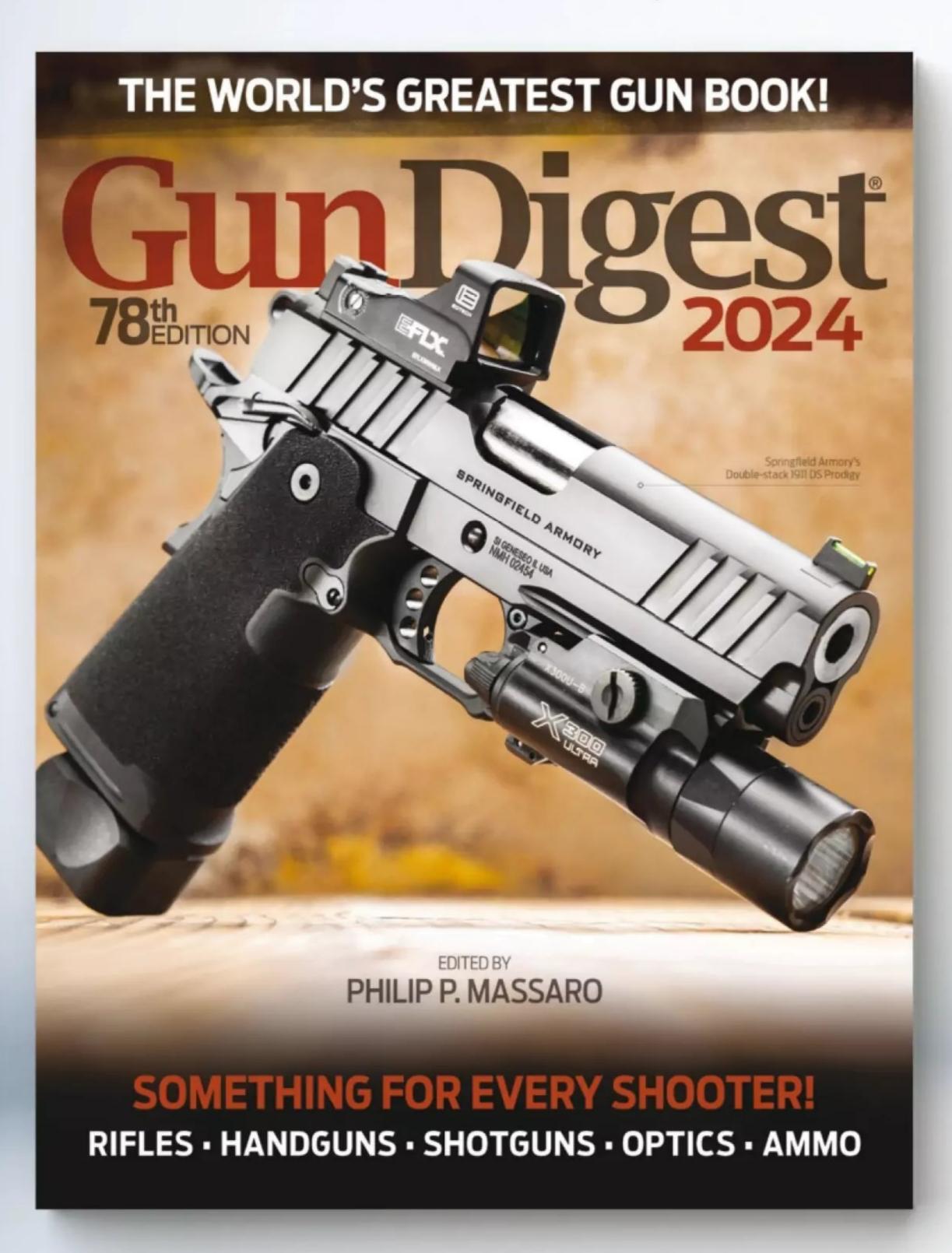
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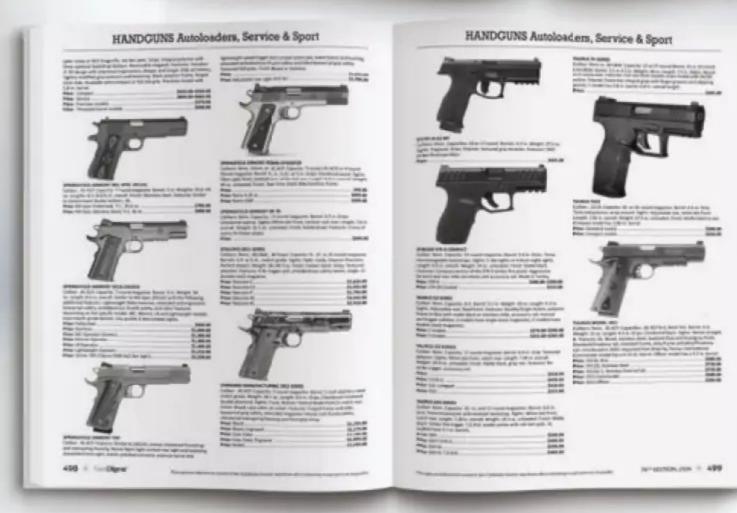
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# THE ESSENTIAL ASSENTIAL CHECKLIST

AR-15 Wizard
Patrick Sweeney
reveals the critical
things he checks
on every new—
or used—AR he
brings home.

ew gun scribes have spilled more ink on the AR-15 subject than Patrick Sweeney. In addition to being a respected law enforcement armorer, he's authored thousands of articles, columns and dozens of books, including the popular title Gunsmithing the AR-15: The Bench Manual—specializing in AR-15 maintenance, troubleshooting, upgrading,

gunsmithing and shooting.

GD: So, you're this world-renowned AR-15 expert, you're an AR-15 armorer. SWEENEY: [laughs] You're gonna give me a swelled head if you keep this up.

**GD:** OK, but you find a good deal on a \$700 AR-15, and you get it home.



A properly positioned buffer tube and a securely held buffer retainer. You want yours to look like this.

(Below) This barrel is marked "5.56 NATO chromed." That means it was chromed, but it wasn't a 5.56 NATO throat. Markings can't be trusted, with a few exceptions.

**SWEENEY:** It used to be that if you spent \$600 for an AR-15—and I'm dating myself here—that you were spending your money at the top of what you would be spending for an AR-15. Nowadays, you say to somebody that you got an AR for \$600, and they go, "What's wrong with it? What kind of cheap Chinese whatever is it that you just bought?" And people don't blink at a \$2,000 AR. Well, for \$2,000 or \$2,400, yeah, it better have all of these details taken care of.

**GD:** Where do you start? You get it home and what does Patrick do? **SWEENEY:** Start at the muzzle and make sure that whatever flash hider or muzzle brake that's on there is on straight and that your crown hasn't been mangled or screwed with. You'd be surprised how badly a rifle reacts after somebody has dropped it in the dirt, and now it doesn't shoot well anymore, so they sell it without telling you. So, look at that and make sure it's fine.

From there, it's back to the chamber, and the first thing to check is whether it's a .223 or a 5.56 leade. Many people

poo-poo the idea and think that .223 and 5.56 it's all the same. I've seen enough guns in classes go down from shooting 5.56-rated ammo in a .223 leade that I check it. And except for a few brands like Daniel Defense, Geissele, Colt, a few others, when it says 5.56, you can bet all the money in your pocket that it is 5.56.

**GD:** So, you wouldn't assume even if it says 5.56?

**SWEENEY:** I wouldn't assume so,

no. In one class I remember, we had half a dozen rifles with departments that issued them to officers, and the barrels said 5.56. And we gauged them, and four of the six that were marked 5.56 from companies we didn't know weren't; they were .223. But 5.56 sells rifles, so that's what you mark it as. OK, fine, you put a racing stripe on a car; it doesn't make it a street racer. And in the course of that class, all four of those rifles that had .223 chambers but were 5.56-marked went down with the







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## THE CASE FOR AND AGAINST AFTERMARKET PARTS

Sweeney admits that he exists in this strange space where, coming from a competition background, he can be "a real trigger snob" and "can sneer at just about anybody's trigger." And while there are few aftermarket AR-15 triggers he feels are truly good enough to use as is, like most things with Sweeney, the explanation runs deeper than that.

"There are very few [triggers] that you can take right out of the box, put in the gun and run, and can't say bad things about, but one is Geissele. If Bill Geissele has ever made a bad trigger, I've never heard of it.

"But at the same time, I've used rackgrade M4 triggers to drop 300m targets out at the National Guard range without a problem. And so I love a nice trigger, but I know how to manage a trigger, so I could get by with whatever you hand me. But if people think that is a skill that comes easily, they're wrong."

Is there a case for having a hard-to-run AR when you're learning? Sweeney says no, but "the comparison many people make is to musical instruments. If your parents want you to learn the violin, they should start you out on the best violin they can possibly afford because it will be easier for you to get a good sound out of it.

"But let's say you're a brand-new AR shooter, and somebody talks you into shooting a 2-pound trigger. You're just as likely to build bad habits as you are good habits. If you're a new shooter and want to get a trigger to learn to shoot with, you want something in about the  $4\frac{1}{2}$ - to 5-pound weight limit. You don't want  $7\frac{1}{2}$  to 8 pounds that the military will accept, but you don't want the 2 pounds that your local gun club grandmaster and 3-Gun shooter use, because you will build bad habits with a light trigger.

"And it's the same with optics: A magnifying scope doesn't help you shoot better; it helps you see better. I want to say people should learn to shoot with iron sights, but nobody's going to do it. It's like saying you should learn to shoot shotguns with a pump-action, but they're not going to do it; or you should learn to drive an automobile with a stick shift, and they're not going to do that, either.

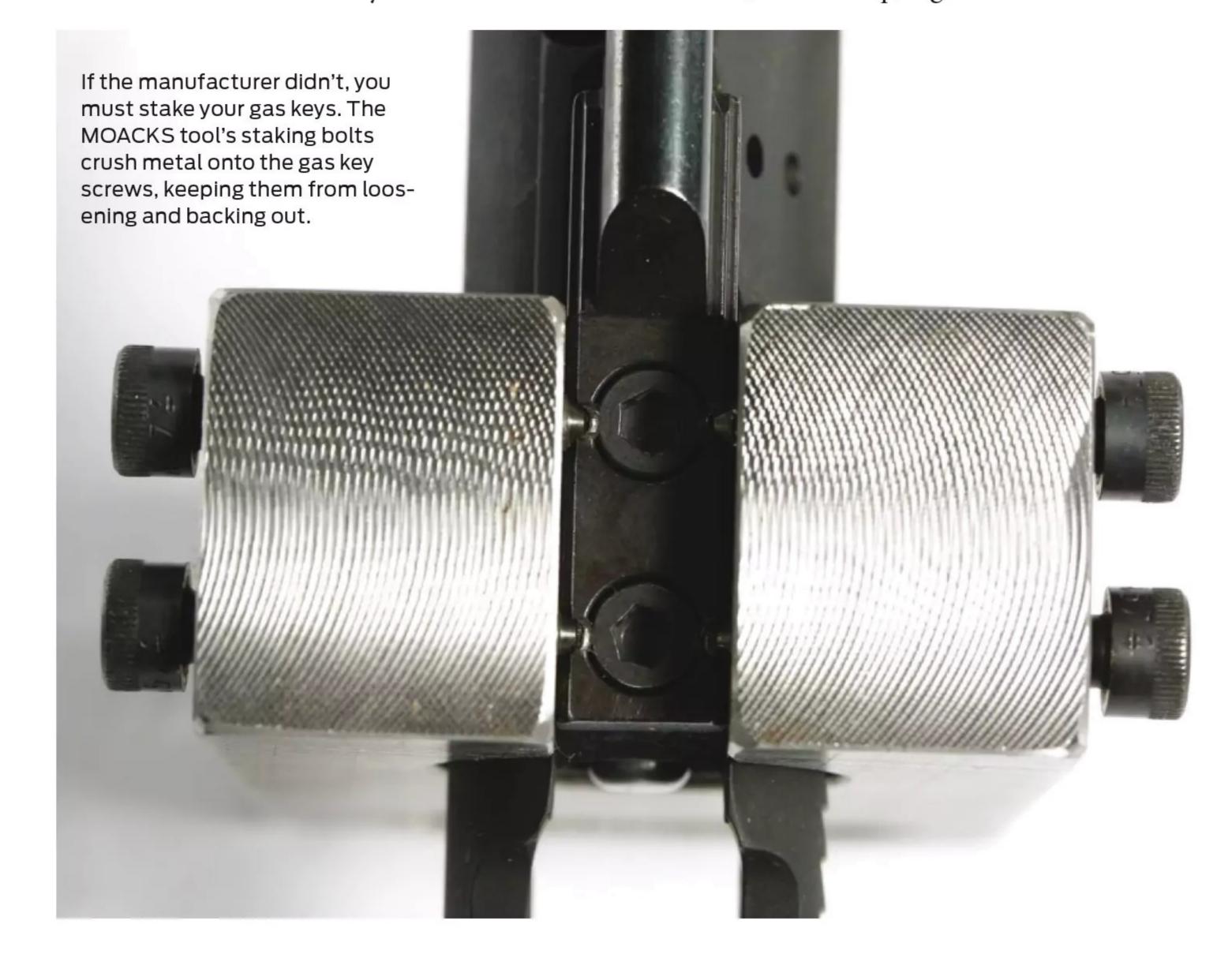
"So get a red-dot sight, learn to shoot with it and get a 4- or 5-pound trigger, and you can build good habits."



malfunctions we associate with that particular problem.

And I told the officers, "You should get that corrected, but we're going to have a test here." And sure enough, it was a five-day class, and I think it was the afternoon of Tuesday that these **GD:** OK, what's your next step? **SWEENEY:** Next, we go to the bolt and carrier and make sure that the gas key is properly staked. And if it's not, take it off, clean it up, tighten it back

reamer you're going to put in there.



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down with Loctite and stake it. Because if your gas key comes loose, you'll lose gas pressure, and you've got malfunctions—the always "oh my God moment" of short-stroking AR-15s.

Back in the early days, everyone assumed short-stroking meant that the people who made the barrel hadn't drilled the gas port out large enough. People would go in there, hogging out gas ports ... they would drill out the gas port to feed more



WHAT AR OPTICS DO THE PROS USE?

**GD:** You write a lot about different accessories, different optics and things like that, but where are you today? Are you putting a certain red-dot on every AR you get, or are you experimenting with all sorts of stuff because of your work?

know, if the bad guys were kicking down the front door and I was going to run out the back door and snatch one rifle, that rifle is going to have an EOTech. It'll also have a few other things, but it's going to have an EOTech on it because, big field of view, great big 68 MOA circle, so that if it's at 7 yards, and it's inside the circle, even if you're slapping the trigger, you're gonna get a hit.

(Right) An excellent tool to tell if you have a .223 or 5.56 leade is the 223/556 Gauge from M-guns.

(Below right) A .223 leade means a "popped" primer. In this case, the primer ended up in the locking lug recess and kept the rifle from firing. Don't blame S&W: This is not their upper on that lower.

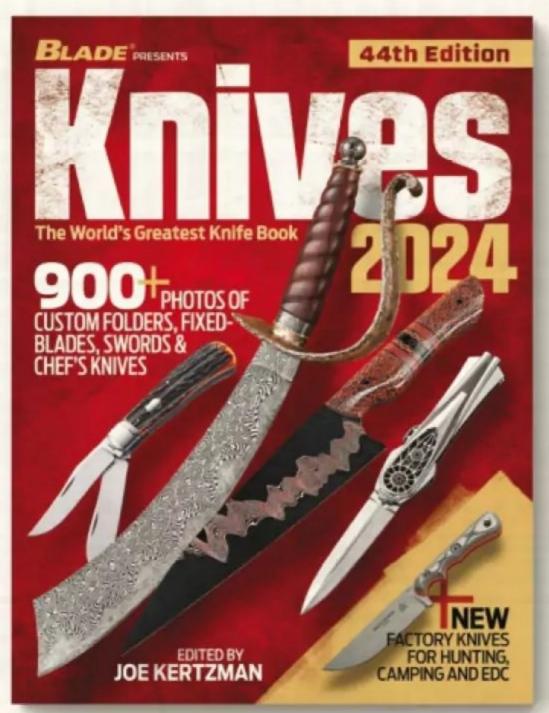
(Below) This is the result of using the reamer from Ned Christiansen. A clean, 5.56-length leade that will control pressure spikes in your rifle.







### Your Guide to the Knife Life!

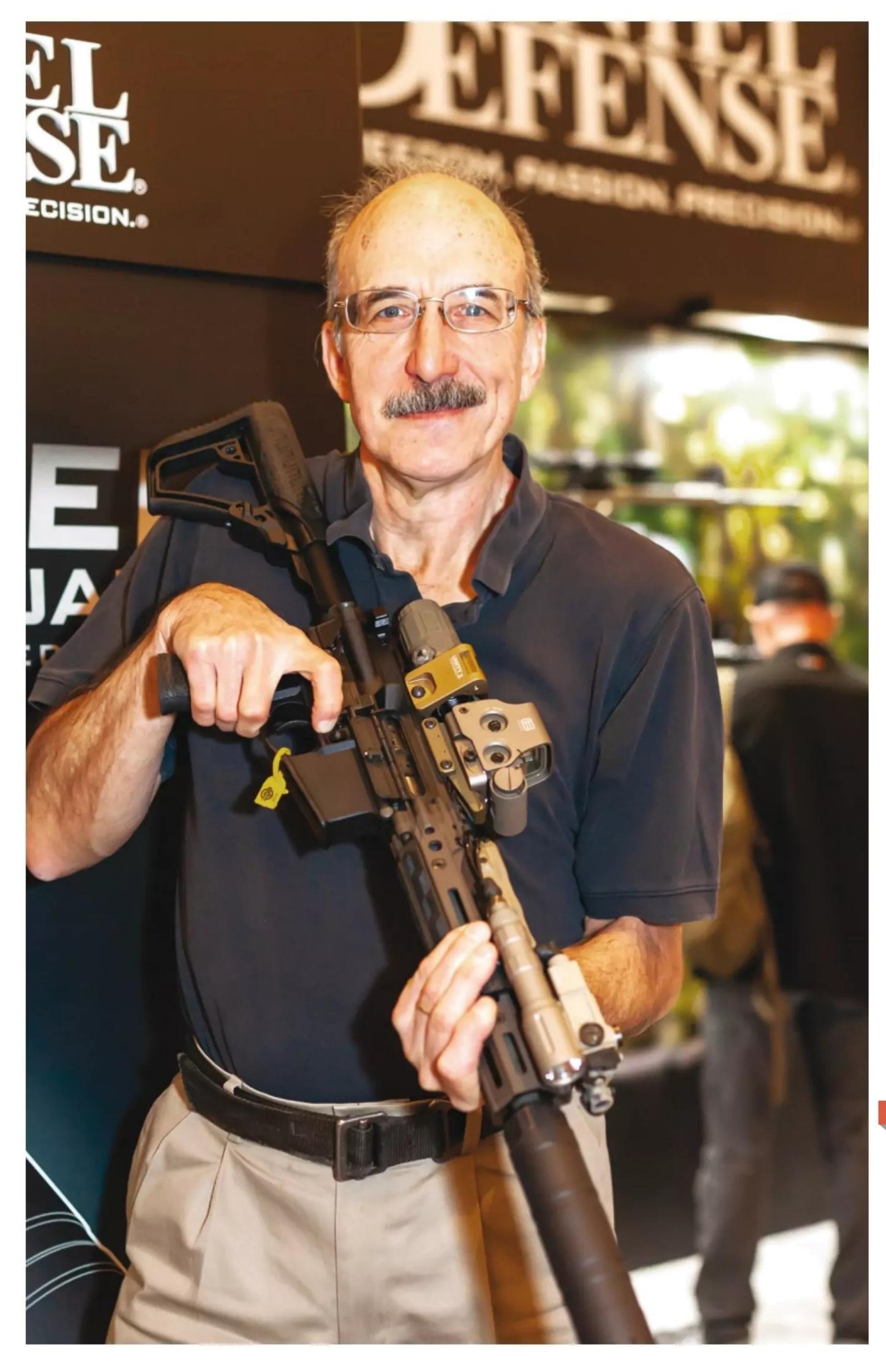


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Sweeney shared his bare-bones essential checklist with *Gun Digest* at SHOT Show 2023. He advises never to assume your new AR-15 is dialed in. Follow this checklist and be sure it's right.

too far, I'll probably leave it alone. But I'm just as likely to throw a standard buffer into the bin with all the other standard buffers and put in an H or an H1.

The next thing is the castle nut on the buffer tube. It has to be staked. Now, I don't care if your friend says you can torque it up tight enough or if you've got the super-great Loctite that will hold it tight. It's gotta be staked.

Last thing, the barrel nut must be tight. The specs say anywhere from 30 to 80 pounds of torque. If it lines up with a gas key with 30 ft-lb, I'm not sure I would go with that. I'll yank it apart and put in a shim to get it to time up somewhere above 30 ft-lb.

But if you take a no-name AR and do all those things to it, it will run. You may not have the MOA rifle that everybody promises you is your birthright as an American to have, but it'll run.

**GDTM** 

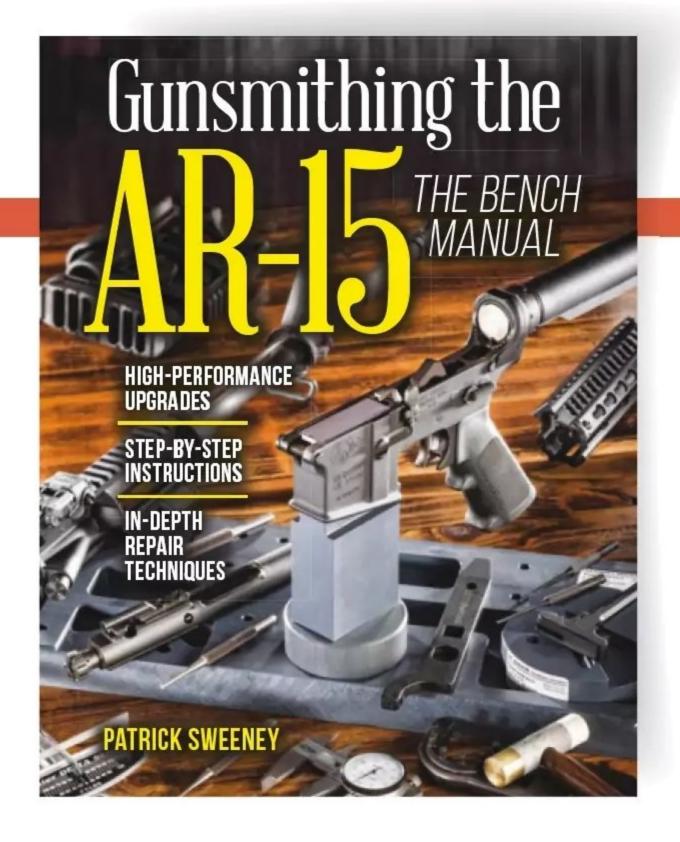
gas to the leaky gas key so that the gun would cycle properly. And if you fit the gas key properly, so it wasn't leaking anymore, all of a sudden, your brass is going off into the next county because, oh, they drilled out the gas key. No! Leave the gas ports alone.

Then, it's onto extractors. If you don't have an O-ring, or better yet, a defender on your extractor, your extractor's under tension. The Army says carbines

need the gold spring and the O-ring, but rifles don't. The Army's wrong. Every AR-15/M16, regardless of barrel length, needs all the extraction you can get on it.

From there, it's back to the buffer.

Personally, I like to run the heaviest buffer that the gun will properly cycle with. And some people like to tune it to this or that ... but if it's a standard buffer and the brass isn't getting thrown



#### Want More?

For more in-depth tips and step-by-step instructions on essential AR-15 tasks, pick up a copy of Patrick Sweeney's Gunsmithing the AR-15: The Bench Manual at GunDigestStore.com.

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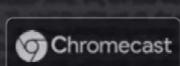














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# RIMFIRE RIFLESCOPES

#### A complete guide to finding a scope for your rimfire.

he biggest hurdle for new shooters interested in precision rimfire always seems to involve optics. There are turrets, and parallax, and complicated reticles and debates over minutes-of-angle (MOA) versus milliradians (MILs). Coming from a hunting background or another discipline like silhouette where you held the crosshairs on the target, a

more complicated aiming system can feel overwhelming.

It does not help that "rimfire" plus "scope" just meant crappy for the longest time. The glass was inferior. The adjustments were spotty. Drop one or get it wet, and the scope was toast. Here's the thing: You don't need a "rimfire" scope for a "rimfire" rifle. Whether you need an optic for competition or

hunting, most quality centerfire scopes will do the job, yet some are better suited for small-bore work than others.

Shooters define riflescopes by tube diameter. One inch is the classic and most common diameter and is still great for small-game rigs. 30mm is the new standard for tactical and match shooting. 34mm is the super-sized big brother and best-suited for extreme





long-range work. There are now even 36mm beasts like the Zero Compromise optics and 40mm digital range-finding scopes like the Swarovski dS Gen II. The fatter the scope, the more room for elevation adjustment, thus the more you can spin that turret for a dead-on hold way downrange.

Consider this example. The 30mm Vortex Diamondback Tactical 6-24x50 FFP—a popular base-class NRL22 optic—has 19 MRAD or MILs max elevation adjustment. That means if you zero the scope at the bottommost point, you can compensate for 19 MILs of bullet drop. With match-speed .22 LR and the scope zeroed at 50 yards, that's enough reach to connect to about 350 yards. The Vortex Strike Eagle 5-25x56 FFP with a 34mm tube brings 31 MILs of max elevation adjustment. That equates roughly to 470 yards of possibility. Keep in mind, this is theoretical as it's difficult to zero scopes at their lowest elevation setting, and the equation changes with tapered rails and scope rings, as we'll soon see. This example demonstrates the leap in max range one gets with a 34mm tube over 30mm. Compared to a classic 1-inch scope, the difference is planetary.

#### **MOA VS. MILS**

You make riflescope elevation and windage adjustments in MOA or MILs. To make things confusing, MILs are often also abbreviated as MRAD. They are the same thing for practical purposes. MOA and MILs or MRAD are angular measurements over a given distance rather than a linear distance. With a linear measurement, an inch is an inch. With angular, the value changes based on distance. I visualize this like a laser

beam shooting directly from my barrel's bore through targets from 100 to 1,000 yards. If I change the degree of that beam to mark a spot 1 foot over the target at 100 yards, it'll put the beam dozens of feet over the target at 1,000 yards. MOA and MILs are units that measure how much I'm moving that laser beam at the rifle to determine where it will hit at various targets downrange.

One MOA equals 1.047 inches at 100 yards and 10.47 inches at 1,000 yards—not 1 inch and 10 inches, as many wrongly believe. (This difference of 0.047 inch matters at distance, especially with rimfire where the elevation drops quickly.) One MIL equals 3.6 inches at 100 yards, which equates to 36 inches or 1 yard at 1,000 yards. Scope adjustments in MOA are usually 1/4 MOA per "click." MILs are often .1 or .2 MILs per click or less. Some wrongly conclude that MOA has more subtle adjustment than MILs, but it's a toss-up. A typical one-click adjustment in MOA is 0.25 inch at 100 yards, whereas MILs can go as low as 0.18 inch at 100.

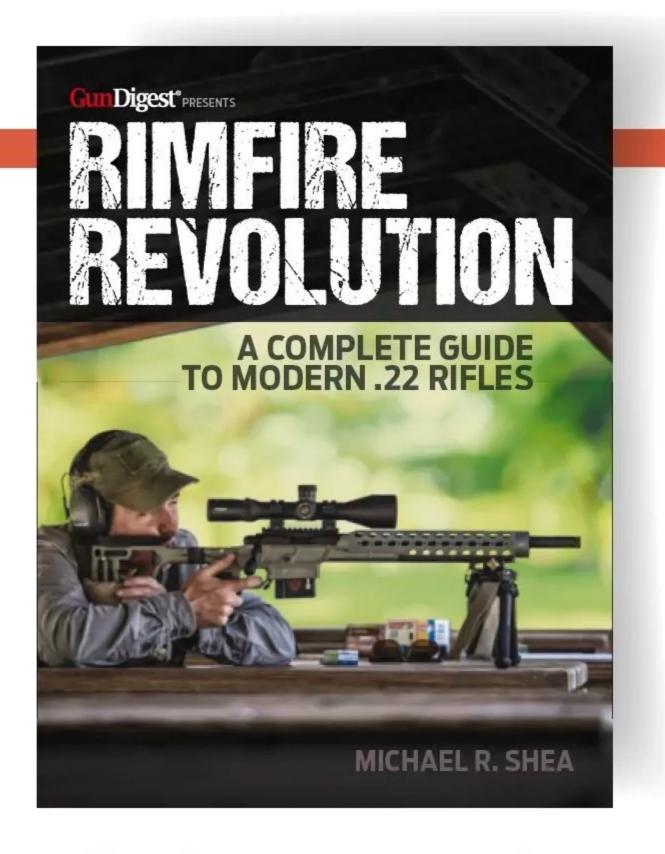
You can convert an MOA value to MILs by dividing it by 3.43, a MIL to MOA by multiplying it by 3.43. So, which is better?

Neither system is inherently better or worse. A shooter with experience who understands one approach over the other should stick with what they know. But new shooters, or shooters who want to dive down the long-range rabbit hole, should lean toward MILs. MILs are the standard measure for the U.S. Military and are used worldwide, unlike MOA that's only used in a handful of civilian markets—and is rapidly going out of style. Reasons for that are multiple, but at its root, if you learn

both systems, you'll see that computing MILs quickly in your head is generally faster than MOA. MILs "click," at least for me, in a way that MOA struggles, mainly because in MIL calculations, it's possible a lot of times to move the decimal place.

To learn the precision shooting language of MILs, I strongly recommend Ryan Cleckner's Long Range Shooting Handbook: The Complete Beginner's Guide to Precision Rifle Shooting.

MILs is the language of most precision shooters. You're more likely to talk shop and get help in MILs at a match than MOA. Also, when using ballistics programs to solve long-range shooting problems, MOA can create issues. Some optics manufacturers have incorrectly set MOA on their scopes for 1 inch at 100 yards instead of 1.047 inches.



#### All Things Rimfire

This article is a small sampling of what's between the covers in Rimfire Revolution: A Complete Guide to Modern .22 Rifles.
To get your hands on a copy, go to GunDigestStore.com and search "Rimfire."



Tricked out and ready to party. A precision rifle on the line at an NRL22X match in January 2020. Photo credit: Conx Media

If your ballistics program is calculating based on 1 MOA equaling 1.047 inches, but your optic is adjusting 1 MOA equals 1 inch, you could miss the target. That's especially true in longdistance rimfire shooting, where you need to make significant scope adjustments at not-so-big distances. A 0.047inch error can compound very quickly in .22 LR. It's also a challenge to figure out if an MOA riflescope uses 1.047- or 1-inch adjustments. Nikon always used 1.047 for MOA, but Vortex uses 1 inch. If you go MOA over MILs in precision optics, you may have to call customer service to get the numbers straight. If, as I did, you shoot both Nikon and Vortex MOA optics, you need to make sure you change the MOA value in your ballistics program to get accurate results for each rifle system.

MILs, being universal, avoid all this rigmarole.

With scope size determined and the MOA versus MILs argument decided, there are five factors to consider when settling on a precision optic for rimfire: parallax, focal plane, reticle design, turrets and magnification power. Let's look

at them:

#### **ADJUSTABLE PARALLAX**

If you've ever seen the reticle (cross-hairs) of your scope float or come in and out of focus while on target, you've probably noticed the phenomenon of parallax. The reticle and the target are no longer on the same focal plane within the scope's main tube. The difference between focal planes becomes exaggerated at extremely close and far target distances—decreasing accuracy and

obscuring the reticle. Some scopes allow you to manually adjust for this and bring everything into focus at specified target distances, while others have fixed parallax at a specific range.

Most centerfire scopes with fixed parallax are factory-focused, around 150 to 175 yards—too far for typical rimfire applications. Manufacturers set fixed parallax rimfire scopes at 50 or 60 yards, which can work fine for small game hunting but make 20- or 25-yard shots—standard in many small-bore



sports—a blurry mess. For any precision small-bore match scope and most hunting scenarios, I recommend an adjustable parallax down to at least 25 yards.

Most tactical-inspired and longrange centerfire scopes have a side knob for parallax adjustment, sometimes called "side focus." Bench shooting target scopes often have the parallax control built into the objective bell, called "Adjustable Objective" or AO. Side controls are easier to run when jumping between near and far targets within the same shot string in a match. AO controls work fine when you have plenty of time. For match shooting, I highly recommend adjustable parallax via a side focus knob.

#### **FOCAL PLANE**

There are two locations within the tube where makers install the reticle. If the reticle goes in toward the objective lens (the front of the tube), that's called first focal plane (FFP). If it goes in near the ocular lens or the back of the tube, that's called second focal plane (SFP). When dialing up the magnification on a FFP scope, the reticle will grow larger. In SFP scopes, the reticle will appear the same size no matter the magnification. There are pros and cons to each.

Many long-range shooters and hunters have migrated to FFP scopes because reticle holdover values don't change with the scope power. In other words, if every hash mark along the vertical stadia (the main crosshair line) represents 1 MOA at the lowest power, they still equal 1 MOA at the highest magnification. The second hash under the central crosshair equals 1 MOA drop at 4x power and 16x power. FFP scopes are a significant advantage in some precision matches where singlestage targets may be from 20 to 100 yards or beyond, and the shooter must change scope magnification and holdover within the shot string. An FFP optic's drawback is that the reticle can be small and hard to see at the power range's low end. In my NRL22 matches, many older shooters struggle to see the

Are MILs or MOA turrets and reticles right for you? Use what you already know, but if you're starting new, the author recommends MILs.



FFP reticles when turned down to 4x and 6x or even 8x. FFP systems are not for older eyes. Hard-to-see reticles also don't work well while hunting, where you might have to tease out a squirrel head in a tangle of branches and leaves. Fat, clear, stadia work much better.

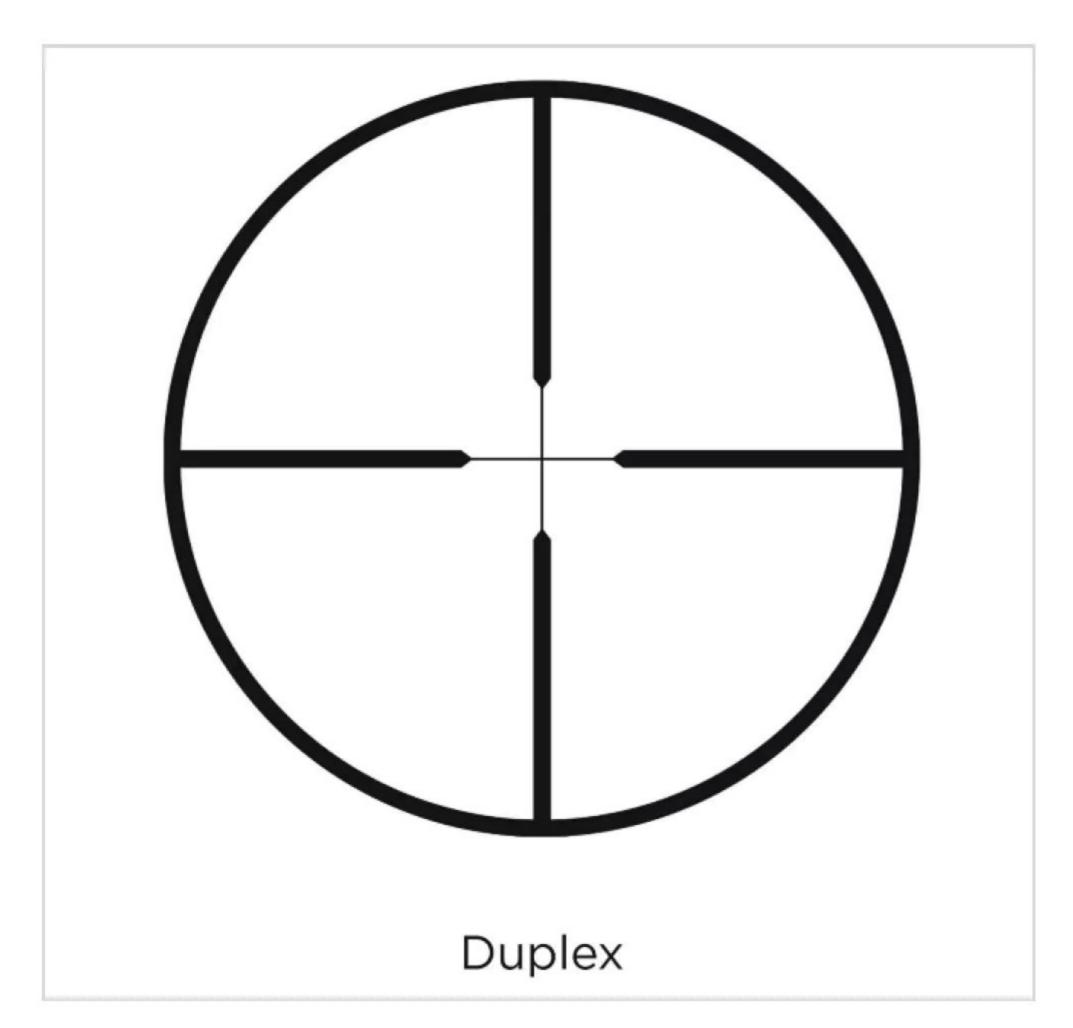
Second focal plane scopes work well in these situations, and old or bad eyes can usually find the mark quickly. The classic duplex reticle draws the eye to the center and makes for high-speed target acquisition. SFP scopes also tend to be less expensive than FFPs, but the former can cause trouble when you use the reticles for drop compensation.

Several years ago, I was on a pronghorn hunt in Wyoming. I had a .25-06 with me and tagged out on the first morning. A friend had long wanted a .25-06, and as we talked about it, I suggested he borrow my rifle to get his goat. Taped to the stock's side was the bullet drop for that SFP reticle when at the full 16x power. My friend came back after that first day discouraged. He had missed a shot at 400 yards—sailing the bullet over the old buck's back. The animal was grazing broadside. He had a steady rest and decades of Western hunting experience that made this shot—he thought—a layup. He had used my DOPE chart on the side of the stock, and when he shot,

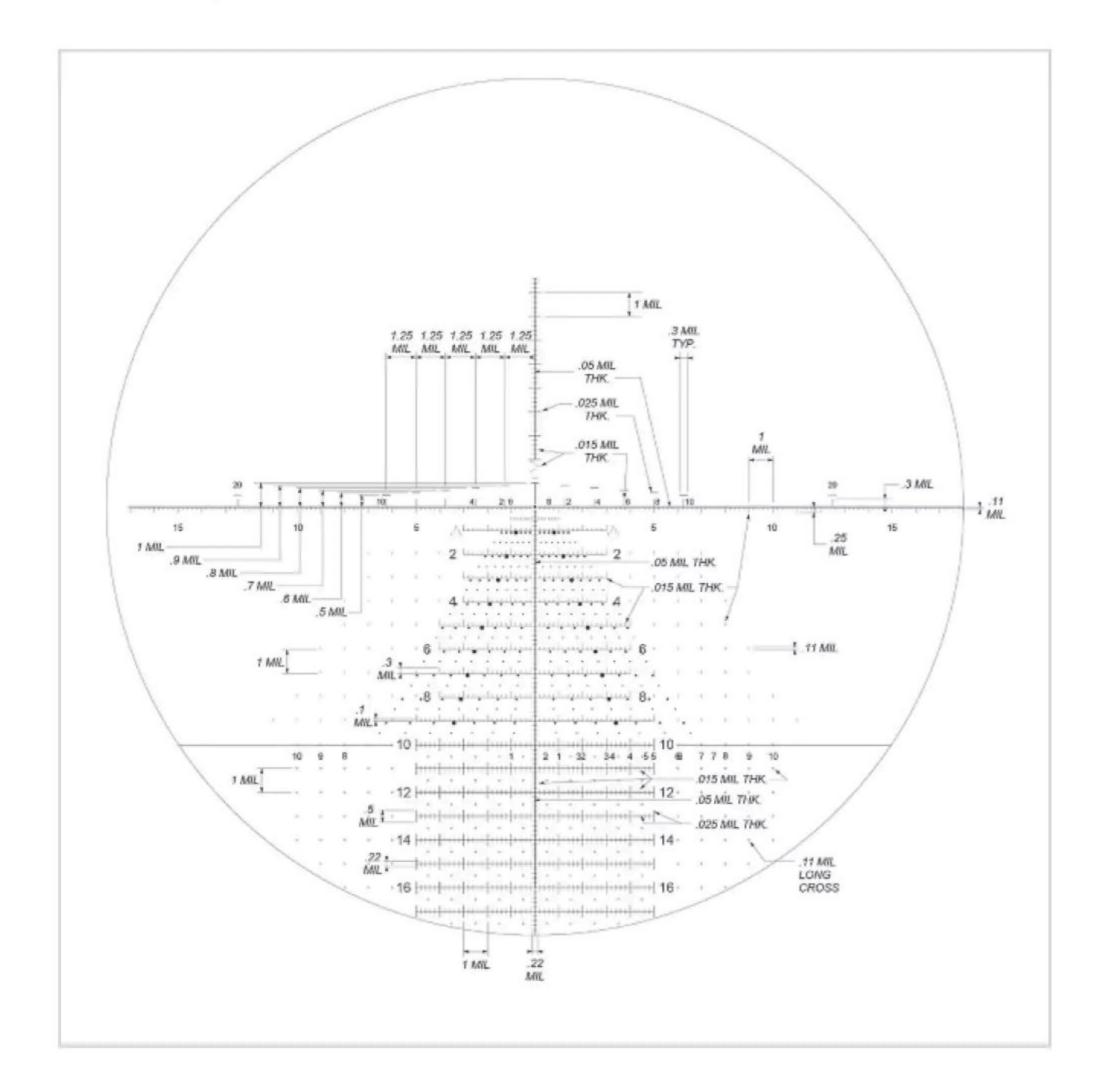
The Athlon Argos BTR is a first focal plane (FFP) optic. the scope was at 14x. At that magnification power, my chart was worthless. That's a rare situation, but it goes to show how "off" a reticle can be within an SFP scope if you don't pay careful attention to magnification. In the more likely event of moving fast through a competition stage, running different targets at different scope powers could be a real liability.

#### **RETICLE DESIGN**

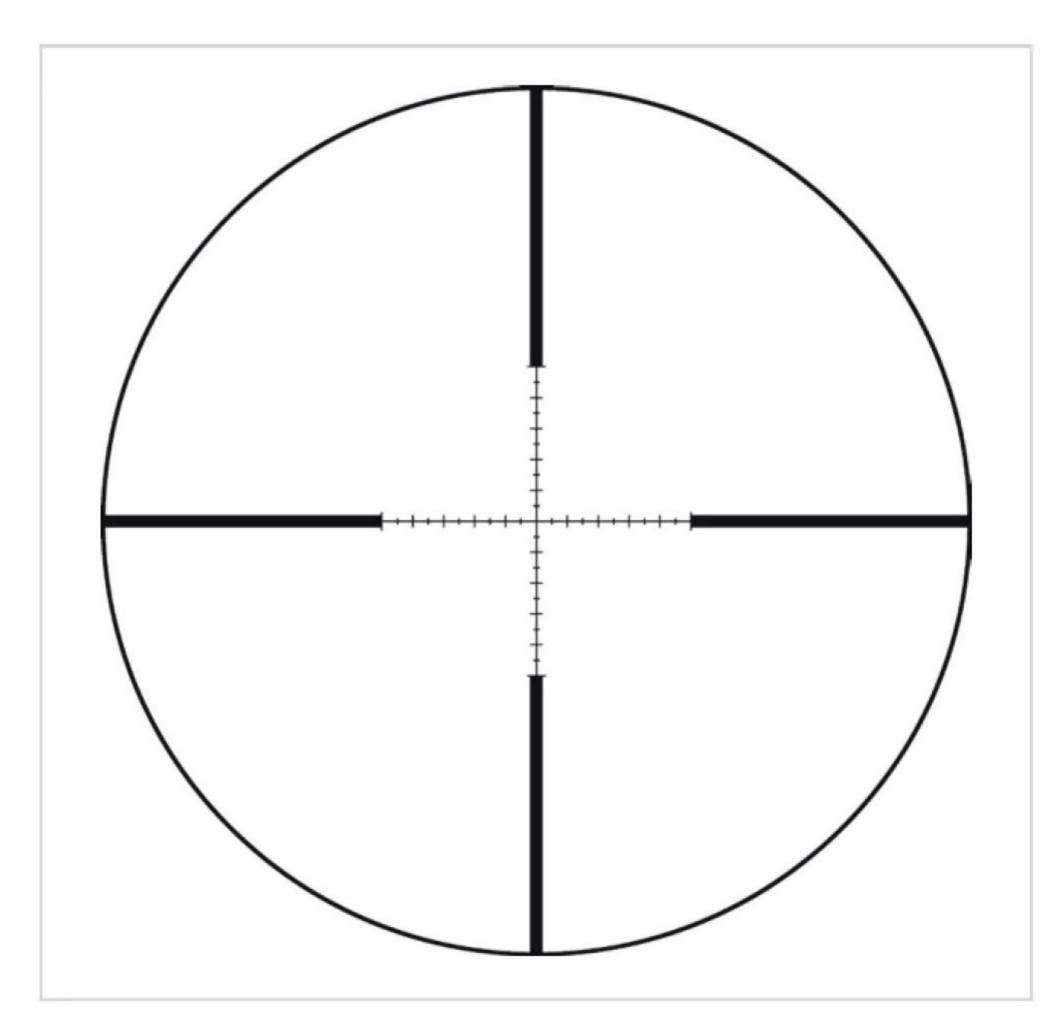
In the last few years, no part of the riflescope has been designed and redesigned more than the reticle or aiming point. For hunting with laser-flat .17 caliber, it's hard to beat a simple duplex crosshair. Developed in the 1960s by Leupold, the duplex uses four heavy crosshair lines that taper down to fine lines where they meet in the center. This design makes placing the crosshairs on a target fast, and it always provides a clean sight picture. When shooting slow rimfire loads like .22 LR, bullet drop is more of an issue. For hunting work, .22 LR Ballistic Drop Compensating



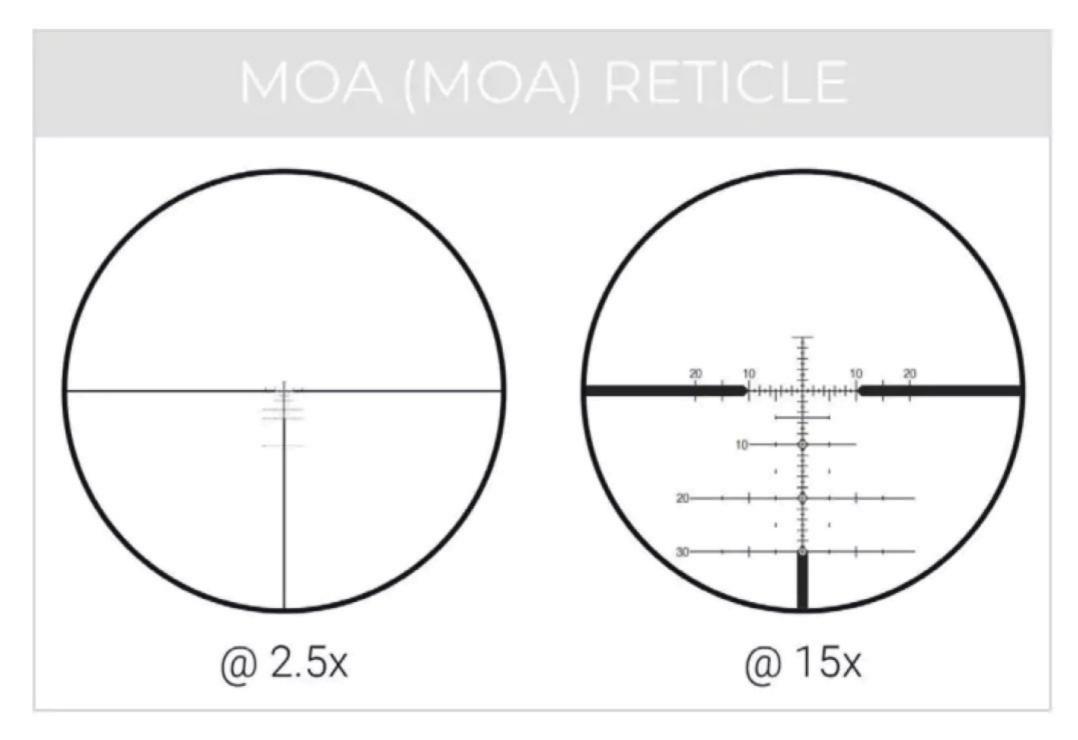
A classic duplex reticle.



(BDC) reticles, like those in the now-discontinued Nikon Prostaff Rimfire series, can work very well. Tract Optics and Hawke Optics have picked up the slack, producing dedicated rimfire BDC scopes that are not junk like many "rimfire" scopes. BDC optics have reticles with hash marks tuned to either standard-velocity .22 LR, high-velocity .22 LR, or .17 HMR, indicating where the bullet will impact at longer ranges. It takes some trial and error to figure exactly where the hash marks and



A clean duplex-style reticle with MOA hash marks.



(Above) A Maven MOA reticle in an FFP scope, as seen at 2.5x and 15x. Note the size difference.

(Left) The tech specs on a Nightforce Tremor3 reticle.

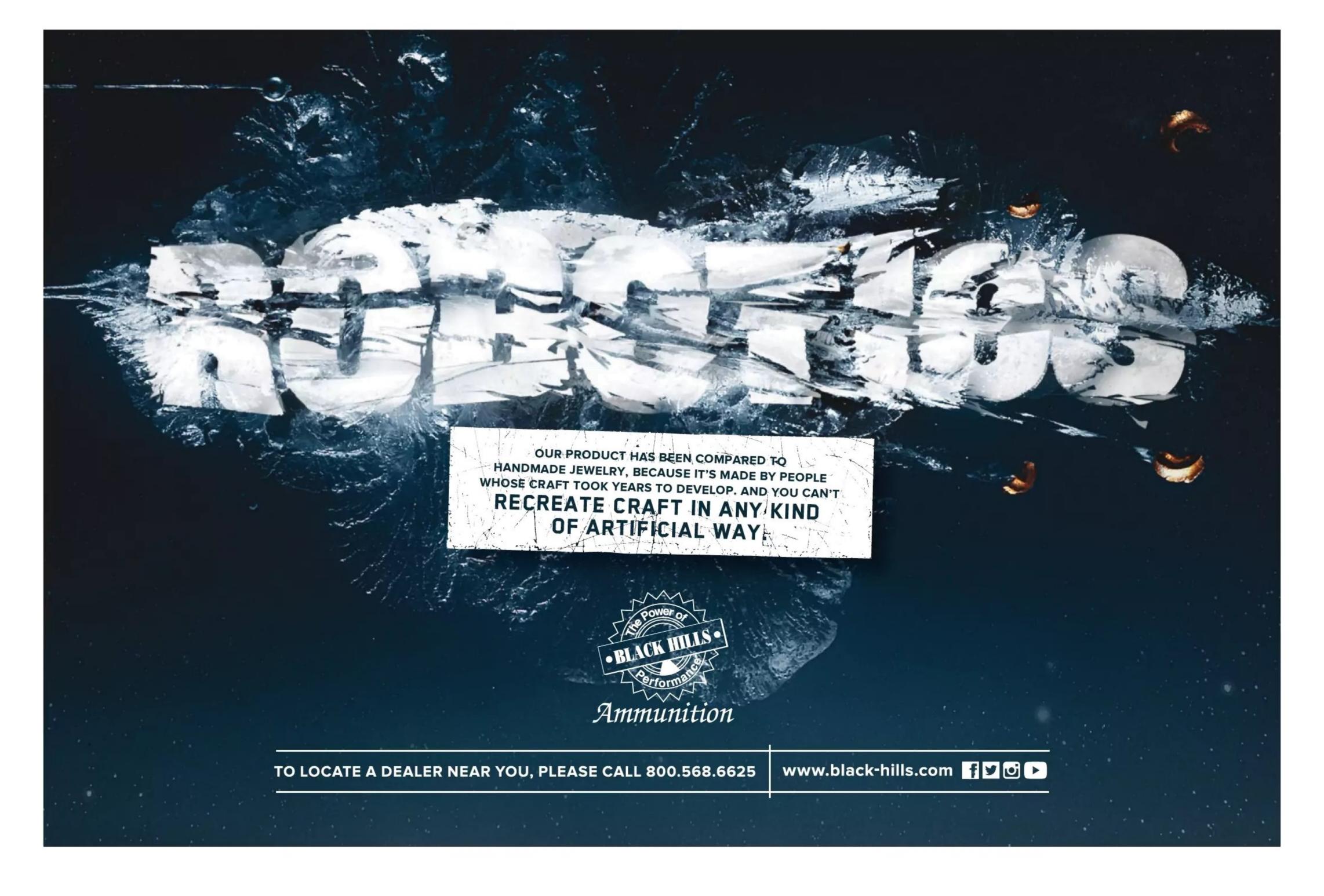
downrange impacts line up, but once you figure it out, it's a fast and elegant solution for a hunting or plinking rifle.

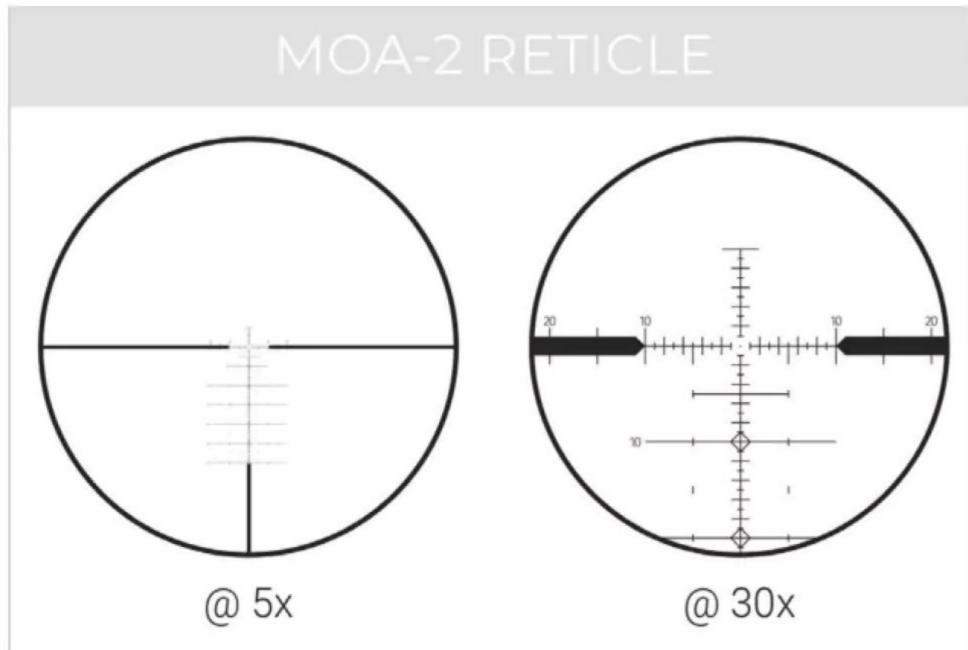
Competition reticles can quickly become complicated. Rather than hash marks indicating likely holdovers by caliber, each line may represent a certain number of MOA or MILs. The sub-tensions or white space between the hashes all have a set value, too. The finer these marks are, the more precise the measurement, theoretically. But too many marks can quickly clutter the

sight picture, particularly for a shooter who has spent their life using a duplex. That is especially the case with FFP scopes on low magnification, where a complicated reticle can look like smudged ink. But, when lying prone 100 yards or more from your target with match .22 LR ammo that drops like a brick, all those hash marks become very handy.

Different optics companies run various reticles, but there are a few standards. The Horus H59 started a revolution of "Christmas tree-style" reticles and quickly became the standard for many elite marksmen. Below the centerline is a grid laid out in 0.2-MIL increments that make for exact drop calculations and fast follow-up shots. It's







A Maven FFP at 5x and 30x.



(Left) The stock turrets on the Maven scope. limits rack at 50 yards as seen through a Nightforce.

(Above right) A know-your-

Photo: Greg Hamilton

clear to see where the first shot landed, then hold that spot in the reticle for the second shot. At first blush, a system like the H59 and the many similar reticles it spawned can look like a complex geometry problem but spend some time with them on the range, and it comes together quickly. Like understanding MILs, these reticles make good sense with a little time spent behind the trigger.

#### **TURRETS**

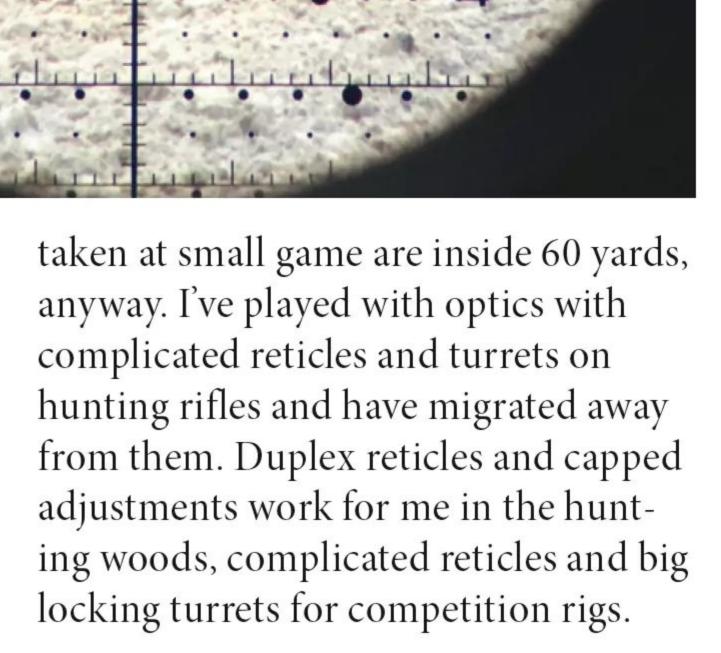
For the most part, there are two kinds of turrets available on riflescopes. You can get either exposed turrets, which allow for manual adjustments in the field, or capped turrets usually adjusted once when zeroing a rifle, then left alone. Most precision shooters use adjustable turrets, which allow you to dial-in precision shots for a given range.

For a .22 LR with a 50-yard zero, the crosshair center is still an accurate hold from 20 to 60 yards or more, depending on ammo velocity. Push out beyond 60

or 70 yards, and the shooter has a decision to make: Use the hash marks on the reticle to hold over the target, or spin up the turret and hold the center. In a PRSstyle rimfire match, if the stage involves shooting a close target, at say 30 yards, then jumping to a 100-yard plate, most shooters use the reticle. If target distances are fixed at 65 yards or more, dialing the turrets is a more elegant solution. However, for extended-distance rimfire shooting, like the developing sport of Extreme Long Range rimfire—or when clipping varmints across the plains—adjustable turrets are necessary.

I'm partial to turrets that lock. To spin them, you pull up on the turret, which lets it click free. Push the turret down, and it won't move on you. Many less expensive tactical scopes don't have locking turrets, which strikes me as a risk while afield.

When you're in the woods chasing squirrels or rabbits, all turrets tend to just get in the way. Most of the shots



#### **MAGNIFICATION POWER**

Magnification is useful, and it's the first thing many people consider when buying optics, but it's probably the least important feature when hunting or competing in a rimfire match. Sure, when shooting from a rock-solid rest at a tiny target 1,000 yards away, 35x magnification is handy, but in most cases, that's not the situation.

Match shooting like in NRL or PRS is often done from compromised and unsteady shooting positions at reasonable-for-caliber distances. The targets are rarely less than 1 MOA in size. Significant magnification can amplify wobbles and shakes and hurt the shot from unsteady rests. Unless you're going long on a varmint or ground squirrel hunt, magnification is even less critical when hunting small game. It's hard to beat 3-9x or 4-16x for a hunting setup. One of the killing-est bushy tail hunters I know spent most of his



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Dialing elevation with turrets is easy and more accurate for most shooters than using a reticle. Photo credit: Mike Semanoff

career behind a fixed 4x scope. Many run larger scopes with power ranges from 4x to 5x on the low end to 25x or 35x on the high end for match shooting. But all those shooters will tell you most of the time they live in the middle band of that power range. A superior-quality scope with less power than you think you need is often a better call than a lower-quality scope with a massive high-end zoom.

#### **RECOMMENDED OPTICS**

What is the best optic for your rifle? That's a hard question to answer and highly dependent on your end-use. As mentioned, I prefer MILs over MOA. I like 1-inch optics without turrets for hunting rimfires because they're lighter and look better on a sporter rifle. For varmint hunting and traditional 100-yard NRL22 competition, I lean toward

30mm optics with locking turrets for the added adjustment and security in rough and tumble stages. For ELR, I like 34mm. Considering these features, I then look at the price. As a general rule, I want the MSRP of the riflescope to match or exceed the MSRP of the rifle. In many shooting situations, especially NRL22, the optic is more important than the gun. Repeat: The optic is more important than the gun. That's because even low-end factory rifles have enough raw accuracy to be competitive at NRL22—or snipe a squirrel at 100 yards—but you cannot say the same about low-end optics.

Some optic manufacturers are ahead of others when it comes to precision.

Look at the gear survey from the 2020 NRL22 National Match, and you'll get an idea of who is leading the charge. Of the 68 shooters surveyed, 30 chose Vortex, 11 Athlon and 9 ran Nightforce. If you consider high-end optics (read: expensive), you could add Kahles, US Optics, Zero Compromise, and Trijicon, to that Nightforce in a "money is no object" class of the best riflescopes.

What follows is a roundup of some of the better general interest match and hunting optics, whatever the budget. I've personally shot all these on rimfire rifles and will vouch for them. Optics makers introduce new scopes every year that push the performance level, so this list is by no means exclusive. There are some great scopes not included here. A savvy buyer looking for a competition optic will track what the pros are using in their shooting discipline of choice, such as through the posted National Rifle League gear surveys. You can also follow the very excellent Precision Rifle Blog or track the various benchrest or other shooting organizations in which they compete—most publish extensive winning gear lists. GDTM



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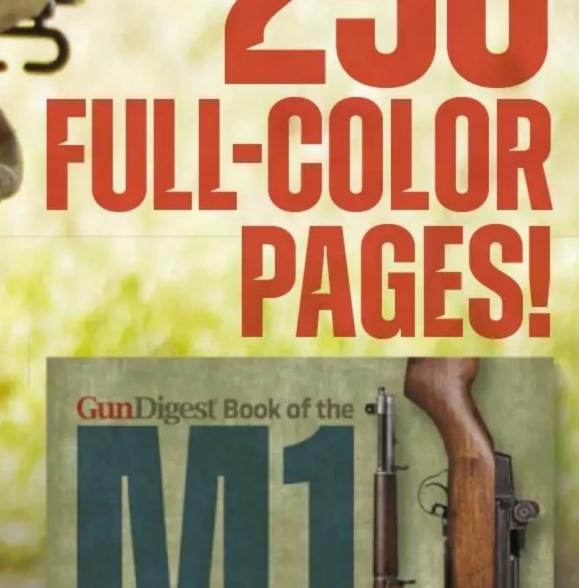
# PIGE IT'S THE MILE OF THE MILE

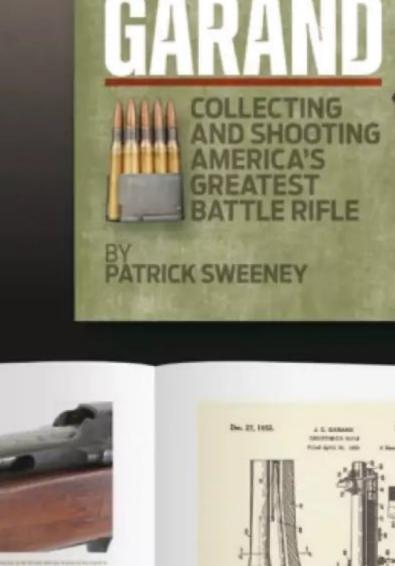
Photo: CMP Archives

If you've ever unleashed the awesome firepower of a well-worn wood and steel MI Garand followed by hearing that distinctive "ping" when the empty clip flies free, you'll understand why the WWII-era rifle remains as popular as ever with today's shooters. Whether striving for better accuracy, building a collection, or growing your knowledge about "the greatest battle implement ever devised," leading *Gun Digest* author Patrick Sweeney has put together a book you MUST have.

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# The Pursuit Series is the AR manufacturer's stunning new bolt-action line.

tag Arms is a company known for its precision ARs, but the Cheyenne, Wyoming-based gunmaker is now expanding into bolt-action rifles—with the release of the Pursuit series. Initially available in nine configurations, Stag Arms promises to offer a completely different shooting experience regardless of your pursuit, whether that be hunting, competing ... or anything in between.

Based on the Remington 700 Short-Action platform, Stag Arms Pursuit rifles are being offered in .308 Winchester with an 18-inch barrel, 6.5

Creedmoor with a 20-inch barrel and 6.5 PRC with a 22-inch barrel.

Regardless of your preferred chambering, all models feature sporter fluted 416 stainless-steel barrels and are sub-MOA guaranteed when using match ammunition. To further aid in accuracy, all models also ship with an adjustable single-stage TriggerTech Primary trigger.

As for the Stag Arms Pursuit rifles' furniture, all guns currently wear a three-piece chassis system that's available in three colors, including black, tan and OD green. The stock's length-

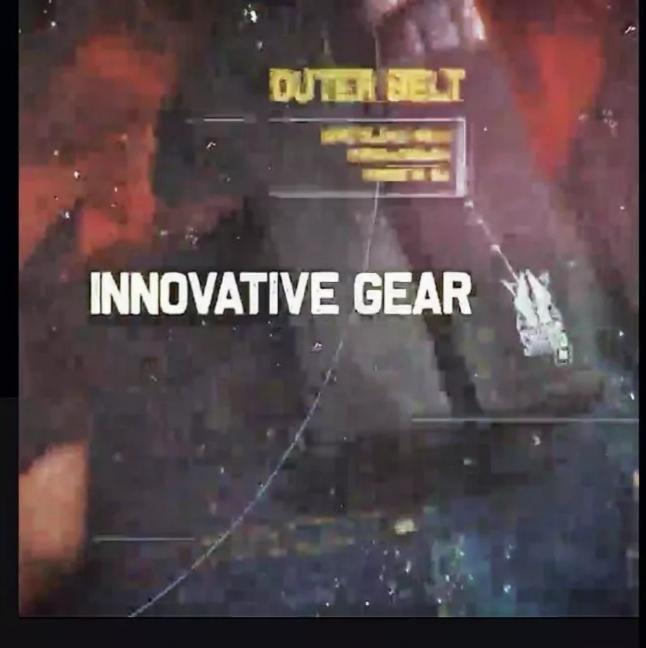
of-pull and cheek riser height are adjustable, and it can be quickly removed without tools for transport or storage.

Throughout the rifle, you will also find a 20-MOA biased rail on the action for mounting an optic, integrated QD cups, a Picatinny spigot, an attachable bag rider and a threaded muzzle. The guns are also AICS/AWS compatible, and each will ship with a Magpul magazine as well as a ½ Arca Swiss plate.

All nine variants of the Stag Arms Pursuit rifle are available now and have an MSRP of \$1,899.99. **GDTM** 













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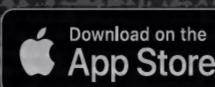


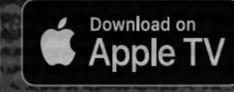


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