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Citizens Association for Responsible Gun Ownership = CARGO

www.cargogunclub.org

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Hello Fellow CARGO Members,

The next meeting will be held at Napoli's on **Thursday, October 20.**

We will meet at Napoli's in Wylie.

Napoli's
701 N Highway 78 # A
Wylie, TX 75098

For the dinner portion of the meeting, we will be in the meeting room between 5:45 and 7:00 for food and fellowship. The meeting will begin at 7:00 PM and run until about 9:00.

Under the new Texas Open Carry Law, you could be committing an offence if you remove your pistol from its holster while open carrying. While at Napoli's DO NOT remove your pistol from its holster unless it is an emergency.

Member Don Bridges has volunteered his shop for the meeting. There are a very limited number of chairs at the shop, so please bring a camp chair for the meeting. We will meet there from 7:00 (ish) until 9:00 (ish)

The address is:

2274 EAST Brown Street in Wylie

While heading east on Brown Street, it is 1/2 mile past stop sign that's at the intersection of Brown Street and Kreymer Lane on the right hand side.

The shop is behind a small white house with a picket fence around the front yard.





Meeting gun topics:

- What firearm have you shot the most rounds through? Do you have a .22 with 10,000 plus rounds through it, or a shotgun that you have shot case upon case of shells through? A 1911 that has seen 20,000 rounds? Bring the firearm and the stories to go with them.
- Fall is near and that could mean that you are going to changing your concealed carry pistol. Share what you are going to move to when the weather cools down.
- Firearms require maintenance and cleaning from time to time and a pair of pliers doesn't actually work on many of the special fittings associated with them. Do you have a great tool, cleaning kit, cleaning product that you swear by? Bring it to the meeting to share with the rest of the club.
- And as always, does anyone have something new, old or special in your collection? Bring it to the meeting.

Non Gun topics:

- The election is just under 3 weeks away and early voting starts soon. There are pro-2nd amendment choices in almost every race on the ballot. Have you taken the time to explore the 2nd amendment stance of people on the ballot that you will receive?

If you have any suggestions for future speakers or topics please send your feedback to CARGO@att.net.

When was the last time you visited our web site? Please take some time to go to the CARGO website at www.cargogunclub.org



ARMED AND INFORMED

from GUN OWNERS of CALIFORNIA

NEWS REPORT: POLITICS. GUNS. LIBERTY

September 27, 2016

Following a season of heartaches for California gun owners, Governor Jerry Brown has, in the closing days of the legislative cycle, decided in favor of the Second Amendment for the remaining gun bills on his desk. As of last night, he struck down two bad bills (AB 450 and SB 1332) and upheld one of the good ones (AB 2510).

VETOED - AB 450, according to its author, Assemblyman Kevin McCarty, would have “clarified” current law regarding concealed weapon permits and would have mandated that the issuing authority charge a fee “sufficient” to cover the cost of CCW issuance and administration. In reality, this bill would have lifted the limits placed on CCW fees, and, as a result, many prospective CCW holders would be “priced out of the market”—meaning that, potentially, only those of greater means would be able to afford a carry permit. It is important, also, to note that this bill was a blatant attempt to insert the state into decisions and affairs of the local government.

VETOED - SB 1332, authored by Senator Tony Mendoza, would have allowed spouses and domestic partners to jointly register a firearm under both of their names. However, this bill would also have severely crippled the process of the loaning of firearms—shortening the period during which the firearm can be loaned from 30 days down to 10. Furthermore, SB 1332 would have opened up the use of money from the Firearm Safety and Enforcement Fund for use in other DOJ projects.

SIGNED - SB 2510, authored by Assemblyman Eric Linder, allows local law enforcement agencies to do away with the current cumbersome and easily damaged paper CCW permits in favor of a new standardized CCW identification cards. These ID cards—already issued in certain California counties—would no longer need to be carried in conjunction with the large paper permits, are easily carried in a wallet/pocket/purse, are more durable, and would have the permit holder’s picture printed on it (making it easier for law enforcement to match the permit to the permit holder).

We at GOC would like to thank Governor Jerry Brown for his action on these pieces of legislation, and to thank every one of our members for standing with us in this year’s fight for the Second Amendment!

Stay armed and informed,

Sam Paredes, Executive Director

https://www.gunsamerica.com/blog/ruger-380-lcp-reborn-new-lcp-ii-full-review/?utm_source=email&utm_medium=20161010_BlogDigest_193&utm_campaign=/blog/ruger-380-lcp-reborn-new-lcp-ii-full-review/

The Ruger .380 LCP Reborn: The New LCP II—Full Review.

by Dennis Adler on October 6, 2016

Making improvements to an iconic firearm is always a tough decision. And yes, the [Ruger LCP](#) is iconic; it was one of the significant catalysts for the now prolific variety of .380 ACP pocket pistols on the market, and the resurgence of interest in the .380 caliber, which has benefited from this gun's popularity by becoming one of the most commonly seen (and surprisingly capable) small-caliber defensive rounds in use today.



The LCP II (left) brings a locking-open slide system on empty magazines and also a radically recontoured shape.

Despite the fact that the LCP wasn't introduced until five years after the Kel-Tec P-3AT (to read a full review of this pistol on GunsAmerica.com, click this [link](#)), the first modern .380 pocket pistol, the popularity of any new gun is, ironically, a little like comedy; it's all in the timing. In 2008, the timing was right; the Ruger name and the pistol's excellent design helped the little .380 knock it out of the park. The .380 ACP suddenly emerged from the shadows long cast by the most famous .380 pistol in the world, the Walther PPK (to read a review of this firearm on GunsAmerica.com, click this [link](#)).

Less Than Perfect

The LCP for all its technological advances in design and construction had its flaws, and there were minor changes made to the pistol over the first several years, but the real issues for gun owners were never quite addressed, such as poor sights, a heavy trigger pull, a slide that was hard to rack when chambering the first round or clearing the gun, and a slide that did not lock back after the last round was fired.



The original LCP had some features that Ruger strove to address with the (shown) Ruger LCP Custom.

In terms of familiarization, the original LCP version is a hammer-fired, locked breech, recoil operated semi-auto with an internal hammer. The hammer can be clearly seen resting flush against the back of the slide when the action has been cycled. If it isn't there the action is not ready to fire, making this a very quick check of the gun's condition. In addition, the trigger, though remaining in its forward position, has zero resistance if the slide has not been cycled. And last, there is a loaded chamber view port at the breech that exposes the rim of a chambered cartridge. While it is unusual for a pistol as small as the LCP to use a locked breech design, as opposed to blowback operation common with many .380s, Ruger opted for the locked breech design to avoid the large slides and heavy recoil springs found with blowback guns.

Many of the issues gun owners had with the LCP's sights, slide and trigger were partially addressed in 2015 with the [LCP Custom](#) (to read a full review of this pistol on GunsAmerica.com, click this [link](#)), which introduced a more durable stainless steel guide rod, a slide with slightly less resistance, but most significantly, a new trigger design and much-needed improved front and rear sights. With a very unapologetic bright red skeletonized aluminum trigger and polished blue slide fitted with a tall, square notched dovetailed (windage adjustable) rear sight and raised white dot photoluminescent front blade, it was such an improvement over the original LCP that there was scarcely a basis for comparison, except for still having a slide that would not lock back after the last round was fired. Fast forward one year.



The LCP II still has the characteristics that made the first LCP popular—namely compact size yet capable power—and kicks it up a notch.

SPECS

- **Chambering:** .380 ACP
- **Barrel:** 2.75 inches
- **OA Length:** 5.16 inches
- **Weight:** 10.6 ounces
- **Grips:** Integral
- **Sights:** Low profile
- **Action:** SAO
- **Finish:** Matte black
- **Capacity:** 6+1
- **MSRP:** \$349

Two Steps Forward

The 2016 LCP II has fully addressed the issue of a slide that locks back after the last round is fired. And the crowd goes wild! They've even gone one step further with a new, integrated blade safety trigger design evolved from the [LC9s](#), that, and I say this with a great deal of respect for the "Red Trigger Ruger" (which I carry every day), makes the LCP II worth stepping up for. The average trigger pull on an LCP is 6.5 pounds; the new LCP II trigger has a resistance of 5 pounds, 11 ounces on average. Ruger describes it as having a single-action-only (SAO) trigger. It has a long 0.75 inches of travel, firm stacking for the last 0.5 inches with a clean break, and short reset. Although it may seem strange to describe a trigger like this as a single-action, I think that Ruger's reasoning behind this is that a double-action-only (DAO) would fully cock the hammer when you pull the trigger, and the LCP needs to have the slide cycled to set the hammer for the gun to be able to be fired. As a result, it offers no second-strike capability but the new slide requires only half as much effort to rack, and a short stroke to re-cock the internal hammer in the event of a misfire. It is a much-improved trigger and slide design, and I really liked the "Red Trigger Ruger" LCP Custom. One other change to the pistol's internal hammer-fired design is that only the top third of the hammer, rather than the entire back of the hammer, appears in the rear slide opening when the action is cycled. This is a little harder to see, but adequate. But this is not the only new feature that is just adequate.



The new LCP II comes standard with a pocket holster, giving you a carry-ready gun right out of the box.

Two Steps Back



Only the top third of the LCP II's hammer (left), rather than the entire back of the hammer, appears in the rear slide opening when the action is cycled.

Having assuaged two of the LCP's greatest deficits, a slide that does not lock back and a slide with too much recoil spring resistance, Ruger also changed the contours of the slide, added new, crescent shaped slide

serrations, not only at the rear but at the front of the slide, which is very effective with the lighter recoil spring resistance, reshaped the glass-filled nylon frame for a modestly improved hand hold, and completely redesigned the triggerguard, giving it an elongated base and squared off front for more trigger finger clearance. So, how is all of this not good? It's all good except for the sights. For some inexplicable reason the LCP II has reverted back to a variation of the original molded-in design, which almost totally negates the advantages gained by the improved LCP Custom model. Once again you have a through-hardened steel slide with a matte black finish and small, hard-to-acquire black sights (though not as small as the original LCP and with a slightly greater sight radius). The sights on the LCP II are definitely better, but a step back from the LCP Custom. The second step back is really more of a sidestep; the new frame and triggerguard designs make it impossible to use any existing LCP Laserguards or current contoured leather or Kydex belt and shoulder holsters. This, of course, will correct itself as the aftermarket responds with LCP II accessories. Fortunately, it comes with its own pocket holster and still fits the majority of pocket rigs like the DeSantis Nemesis, and my everyday carry Elite Survival Systems BCH 10 ballistic nylon belt clip holster.



The overall dimensions of the new LCP II (left) are quite similar to that of the original LCP pistol.

In weight and handling, the LCP II checks in at 10.6 ounces with an empty magazine, that's about one ounce more than the current LCP; a negligible difference. Barrel length remains the same at 2.75 inches; the new slide contours increase the mass but not the overall length at 5.16 inches and height is 3.7 inches, a fraction taller than the standard LCP at 3.60 inches, and about the same as the LCP Custom. The LCP II also introduces a new grip contour with raised rear side panels stepping down to lower front panels that wrap around the frontstrap. They also have a rough stippled finish for a more tactile hold.

One of the more noteworthy changes to the LCP II grip contour is a reshape of the curvature of the integrated thumb rest from the horizontal indentation on the LCP to one where the front joint of the thumb naturally tips downward. This induces a slightly stronger grasp on the small .380 pistol.

As one might expect, the standard LCP six-round magazine will not work with the LCP II (they fit inside the grip well but will not allow a round to be chambered). Interestingly, LCP II magazines will fit into an older LCP and chamber a round, but they won't lock the slide back. So, if you end up with both guns, be sure to keep your house in order to avoid a magazine mix up.



The author found that the LCP II performed quite well at 7 yards with the three types of ammo he used.

Different by only fractions of an inch and 1.0 ounces, the new LCP stacks up against the original model (and even the LCP Custom Red Trigger model) as a better handling gun. But, how does it shoot? All things being equal, or nearly so, with a lighter trigger, revised recoil system, and new slide design, it should be easier to handle and thus a bit more accurate at a combat distance of 7 yards (21 feet).

To keep everything equal for testing I used the same test ammo from an LCP Custom T&E I did about a year ago. That was done with Sig Sauer Elite Performance V-Crown 90-grain JHP, Federal Premium 99-grain HST JHP, and Sig Sauer's 100-grain Elite Performance, slightly heavier than standard grain weight FMJ round. All ammo from the LCP Custom T&E clocked in well over 800 fps (feet per second) from the short 2.75 inch barrel, with Federal Premium HST JHP clearing the traps at an average of 886 fps, Sig Sauer JHP just a hair behind at 882 fps average, and the FMJ Sig Elite Performance traveling at an average of 825 fps. The same three fired from the LCP II were all a little slower, clocking 857 fps, 896 fps and 803 fps average, respectively.

SHOOTING RESULTS (7 YARDS)

LOAD	VELOCITY	ACCURACY
Federal Premium 99-gr. HST JHP	857 fps	1.26 inches
Sig Sauer Elite V-Crown 90-gr. JHP	896 fps	1.76 inches
Sig Sauer Elite 100-gr. FMJ	803 fps	1.50 inches

The LCP Custom was consistently good with average groups from all three brands of ammo under 2.5 inches. The LCP II proved faster to reload, and with the new trigger design and lighter trigger pull delivered a best five-shot group with Sig JHP measuring at 1.76 inches, Sig FMJ at 1.50 inches and Federal HST a best five-shot group at 1.26 inches with two overlapping.

Final Thoughts

The differences in accuracy at 21 feet were minimal, and the gun is faster to fire. It does, however, have snappier recoil than the older LCP and LCP Custom models. The difference here once again is minimal, and

overall the LCP II outperforms the LCP and LCP Custom. And when that slide locks back, you know it's time to reload.

With a suggested retail of \$349, which is \$90 more than the standard LCP and \$80 more than the LCP Custom, the LCP II comes off as a much-improved handgun overall; it's easier to operate, easier to load, and just as accurate. All it needs is better sights. The road to perfection is a long one, but this one is definitely heading in the right direction.

For more information, visit <http://www.ruger.com/>.

https://www.gunsamerica.com/blog/jeff-coopers-greatest-legacy-the-ultimate-scout-rifle-full-review/?utm_source=email&utm_medium=20161003_BlogDigest_192&utm_campaign=/blog/jeff-coopers-greatest-legacy-the-ultimate-scout-rifle-full-review/

Jeff Cooper's Greatest Legacy? The Ultimate Scout Rifle—Full Review

by Richard Mann on September 26, 2016



The Steyr Scout is the culmination of Jeff Cooper's concept of a light yet capable rifle. *Image courtesy of the manufacturer.*



With two magazines on board, the Steyr Scout Rifle is easily tac-loaded and the operator need not carry additional ammunition on their belt.

For more information, visit <https://steyrarms.com>.

To purchase on GunsAmerica.com, click this link:
<https://www.gunsamerica.com/Search.aspx?T=steyr%20scout>.

The idea of owning only one rifle does not appeal to many Americans. In some European countries, government restrictions make it more common and is why drillings and vierlings—rifle and shotgun combination guns with multiple barrels—are popular there. In the United States, we can own multiple rifles specialized for almost any specific task. While this is very appealing if not an ideal situation, so is the idea of owning a single rifle you can do almost anything with.

U.S. Marine and [Gunsite](#) Academy founder Jeff Cooper began experimenting with carbines – short rifles – as early as the mid-1960s. His work with these reduced rifles led to his conceptualized solution to the one rifle question. Cooper's Scout Rifle concept is now often looked at as mostly a set of ridged specifications regulating the physical makeup of the firearm. What is very often overlooked is the practical application and friendliness of the rifle Cooper was trying to create.

In the early 80s Jeff Cooper held a number of conferences with riflemen and others he respected. The goal was to put forth the criteria of the Scout Rifle concept Cooper had formulated around the idea of a rifle that would best suit a man working alone in the wild while operating as a military scout, hunter, or both. Though Cooper massaged the specifications over the years, his Scout Rifle could be broken down into these 10 elements.

- Compact bolt-action rifle chambered for .308 Winchester
- Barrel of 19 inches or less
- Overall length of 39 inches or less
- Forward-mounted, low-powered, long eye relief optical sight
- Reserve ghost ring sights
- Ching or C.W. shooting sling, with hammerhead recessed attachments
- Good trigger
- Integrated bipod
- Mechanism for storing extra magazine or ammunition in the buttstock
- Maximum weight of seven pounds unloaded, with all accessories attached

Cooper's definition went far beyond elemental makeup; he wanted a rifle that was “friendly” and stipulated its most outstanding characteristic was “handiness.” He wanted a rifle that was ideally adapted to the snap shot, while still providing two MOA or better precision out to any reasonable shooting distance. Cooper wanted a “general-purpose” rifle.



This is Cooper's second prototype Scout Rifle and he called it Sweetheart; it is the rifle Zedrosser from Steyr worked with when he came to Gunsite.

Cooper worked with a variety of gunsmiths trying to construct prototypes meeting these specifications, but what he really wanted was that a major firearms manufacturer to mass-produce his conceptualized carbine. Over the next several years Cooper came close to creating a Scout Rifle with his prototypes, but it was 1990 when a major firearms manufacturer finally showed interest. Cooper met with [Steyr](#) Mannlicher to explain his concept rifle, but Steyr was too busy with other projects to commit at that point. However, the idea was not scrapped and Cooper invited Steyr engineer Herr Ulrich Zedrosser to visit Gunsite and try his best prototype Scout Rifle to better understand the concept.

Zedrosser went to Gunsite and was very impressed with how well “Scout II” or “Sweetheart” – Cooper’s second prototype Scout Rifle – worked. Zedrosser immediately began sketching ideas and seven years later the Steyr [Scout Rifle](#) was unveiled at the Whittington Center in Raton, New Mexico, in October of 1997. A Steyr press release contained the following description, and it read as though Cooper had written it himself:

“The essential element of the Scout Rifle is handiness. It is a general-purpose arm intended to all things that a rifle might be called upon to do, with the exception of certain specialties, such as formal target shooting and hunting pachyderms. Conceptually, it renders all extant general-purpose rifles obsolete. The man who owns a Steyr Scout has no need for any other rifle.”



This mule deer is the first game animal Cooper took with the Steyr Scout Rifle. Circa – 1997, Gunsite Academy photo.

SPECS

- **Chambering:** .223 Rem., .243 Win., 7mm-08 Rem., .308 Win
- **Barrel:** 19 inches
- **OA Length:** 38.5 to 39.4 inches
- **Weight:** 6 pounds, 12 ounces
- **Stock:** Synthetic
- **Sights:** Pop up ghost ring rear, blade front
- **Action:** Bolt
- **Finish:** Matte black
- **Capacity:** 5, or 10 with the extended magazine kit
- **MSRP:** \$ 1,499.00

From Dream to Reality

Even by today's standards, the Steyr Scout Rifle's appearance is radical, but the radicalness of the Steyr Scout is not in just its looks. The rifle is built on Steyr's SBS action which has a four lug bolt with a 70° lift. The lugs lock into a bushing with a steel safety ring that leaves the bolt head, case head and extractor, surrounded.



Though the integral bipod on the Steyr Scout Rile is not as rigid or as versatile as say a Harris bipod, it can aid with shooting and is great for resting the rifle.



The integral bipod of the Steyr Scout folds down and forward.

This system also incorporates a three-position, tang-mounted rolling safety. In the forward "FIRE" position a red dot is visible. In the center position, the trigger is locked and both a white dot and a button are visible on the

rolling wheel. With the safety in this position, the bolt can be cycled without worry of negligent discharge. If the button is depressed and the wheel is rolled to the rear “LOCKED SAFE” position, you can press down on the bolt handle and lock it in place. This circumvents the bolt from being accidentally opened if it snags on something. To place the rifle in either the center safe or fire position, press the button and roll the wheel forward. When this is done the bolt shifts out of the locked position.

It's all a rather ingenious affair and at first blush might seem a bit over engineered. However, with a little practice and use it becomes second nature, blazingly fast to operate, and truly appreciated for its three-position, three-function utility.

Another departure from conventional rifle design is the aluminum alloy receiver, which extends about six inches forward of the front receiver ring. This extension serves as the foundation for the distinctive extended eye relief optical sight (or “scout scope”) that has become so emblematic of Cooper’s concept. The rifle’s thin and fluted 19-inch barrel is joined to the receiver by an interesting arrangement that uses an expanding bushing, tightened to a specific level of torque.



At the rear of the receiver on the Steyr Scout Rifle you will find a pop up ghost ring aperture sight.

Incorporated in the rear receiver ring is a flip-up ghost ring sight adjustable for windage. Recessed in the front barrel shroud is a pop-up front blade sight that can be adjusted for elevation. Together they form the reserve sights Cooper felt a Scout Rifle must possess.

The detachable magazine is made of polymer and holds five .308 Winchester cartridges (other chamberings from .223 Rem. to 7mm-08 are also available). It has the double detent feature that allows it to be locked in place only partially inserted in the magazine well. This allows the operator to load a single cartridge by dropping it through the ejection port. The cartridge will rest on top of the loaded magazine, perfectly aligned so that the bolt can be closed to chamber the cartridge. If access to the full capacity of the magazine is desired the box only needs to be fully seated. Additionally, if the magazine is fully consumed, the operator can continue to load single cartridges through the ejection port or alternately retrieve the spare full magazine that can be stored in the rifle’s buttstock.



One of the more unique features of the Steyr Scout Rile is the ability to store a spare magazine in the rifle's buttstock.

Steyr made every attempt to honor Cooper's concept and engineered a retractable bipod integrated into the rakish lines of the stock. The legs of the bipod are released by a push button in the bottom of the forearm and they fold down and forward. This is counter to most bipods that fold down and to the rear and it will not allow a shooter to load – put pressure against – the bipod when shooting.

Steyr also installed five hammerhead recessed sling swivel slots in the stock to permit the attachment of a traditional two-point sling or the Cooper-preferred three-point C.W. or Ching sling. Rifles are shipped with three hammerhead sling attachments allowing the operator to position the sling as desired.

Finally, and what might be the most overlooked and important aspects of the rifle deal with Cooper's "friendliness" requirement. The butt of the stock is fitted with spacers allowing the length of pull to be adjusted to fit the shooter and the heel of the butt is rounded to facilitate ease of shouldering. The center of the comb of the Steyr Scout Rifle is very high, only a fraction of an inch below the centerline of the bore, and about 1.75 inches below the center line of a scout scope when mounted as low as possible on the rifle. Additionally, the comb of the Steyr Scout Rifle does not drop—from its nose to its heel—it rises.

This might seem to go against conventional wisdom, but Melvin Forbes of New Ultra Light Arms pioneered this concept when he introduced his model 20 lightweight rifle in 1983. (Incidentally, Forbes stocked a prototype Scout Rifle for Cooper in 1987.) By having the comb configured this way it allows the shooter to establish a solid check weld, while being able to see through the optical sight. More critically, as the rifle recoils the shooter's cheek slides forward and down the comb. With a conventional rifle stock, with drop in the comb, the crest of the comb is driven back into the shooter's cheek and the drop prevents the cheek or face from experiencing a comfortable interface.



The author ran a selection of Hornady, Remington and Barnes ammo through his test sample rifle with good results.



Though many neglect the open sights on the Steyr Scout Rifle and only shoot it with a scout or traditional scope in place, they are an integral and important part of the general-purpose rifle concept.

Tips on Equipping a Scout

An integral part of being a rifleman is the ability to accurately engage targets from field positions. This is best done with the aid of a shooting sling and the Steyr Scout Rifle will easily accommodate any variety. For the purists, I'd suggest the Rhodesian or Ching Sling slings from [Andy's Leather](#). Both are simple, light, and made of leather.



The Ching Sling, available from Andy's Leather, attaches at three points on the rifle and works very well with the Steyr Scout Rifle.



Burris' 2-7X Scout Scope is a versatile scout scope that will work for the snap shot and at distance.

Another option is a sling I worked on with Galco Gunleather called the [RifleMann](#) sling. This two-point sling made of nylon and leather allows for comfortable carry of a rifle. It's also well suited for slinging-up with the support or shooting arm.



Though not intended as a long-range hunting rifle, the Steyr Scout Rifle took this Idaho black bear at just a shade over 400 yards.

Don't overlook the fact that you can mount a traditional riflescope on the Steyr Scout Rifle. This allows you to specifically tune the rifle to the application. And, with detachable mounts on your scout scope and traditional scope, you can switch between them, as need dictates. Alternatively, if you want to strictly stick with a "scout"

scope, consider the [Burris 2-7X Scout Scope](#) with its Ballistic Plex reticle as a good compromise for general-purpose usage.

Finally, I'd suggest ammunition selection be a priority. The shorter barrel of the Steyr Scout Rifle reduces muzzle velocities and this is counter-productive to terminal performance as distance extends. Hornady's new [Precision Hunter](#) ammo loaded with their ELD-X bullet will provide exceptional terminal performance at Steyr Scout Rifle velocities out to 500 yards.

Where It Counts

SHOOTING RESULTS

Load	Velocity	SD	Accuracy
Remington 150 gr. CoreLokt	2713	39	1.98
Hornady 168 gr. A-Max	2600	19	0.99
Barnes 175 Gr. Precision Match	2543	14	1.08

NOTES: Average muzzle velocities and standard velocity deviations (SD) were obtained by firing 10 shots over a PACT Professional XP Chronograph with the screens set 10 feet from the muzzle. Accuracy – group size – was established by firing three, three-shot groups, at a distance of 100 yards, from a sandbag rest, using a Burris 2-7X scout scope.

Is the Steyr Scout rifle the ideal general-purpose rifle? Is it the only rifle you really need? It just might be. Keep in mind, the Scout Rifle—as Cooper envisioned it—was never intended to be the ideal whitetail, elk, coyote or safari rifle. What Cooper was searching for was the one rifle that could do all these things exceptionally well, while still having serviceable utility for personal defense or in a limited military role. In other words, Cooper saw the Scout Rifle as the one rifle answer to everything. I had a chance to put a sample Steyr Scout rifle through its paces on the range and must say I was very impressed. Although not designed as a “precision” rifle, it is more than capable of effective accuracy and performed quite well. I would say that I agree with Cooper’s assessment of the design and its capabilities.



The Steyr Scout is the culmination of Cooper's musings on the ideal all-around rifle and Steyr's (successful) efforts to achieve it.

I'm of the opinion Cooper and Steyr got it right. It will excel in just about any situation where volume fire is not a requirement. It can provide reliable service in many roles, while weighing less than any other rifle with all of its features. To me is the epitome of a general-purpose rifle, which is exactly what Cooper wanted, and what the Steyr Scout Rifle is supposed to be.

For more information, visit <https://steyrarms.com>.

To purchase on GunsAmerica.com, click this link:

<https://www.gunsamerica.com/Search.aspx?T=steyr%20scout>.

http://www.firearmsnews.com/reviews/walther-pps-review/?utm_source=newsletter&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=editorial&utm_term=firearmsnews&utm_content=mainarticleurl

Walther PPS Review

by James Tarr | January 4th, 2016



The Walther PPS hit the market before either the S&W Shield or Glock 43, but Tarr thinks it doesn't get nearly the press it deserves as a reliable compact 9mm.

With all the hoopla and kerfluffle over the new [Glock 43](#), I thought it might be prudent not just to remind readers that it is not the first compact single-stack 9mm pistol to hit the market, but actually review a very similarly-sized pistol that has not garnered a lot of attention: the [Walther PPS](#).

There have been a lot of companies that have “been there, done that” with small single-stack 9mm autos long before the Glock 43 came along, and the Walther PPS is one of the early ones. Introduced in 2007, the Polizei-Pistole Schmal (Police Pistol Slim) was designed for plainclothes law enforcement and (of course) found a welcoming market in the U.S. among CCW holders.



FIREARMS NEWS
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The Walther PPS (r.) is bigger and heavier than the Glock 43 and S&W Shield, but they all are very similar in size. The Walther has more features than the others.

Most Americans tend to think James Bond and the venerable PPK when they hear the name Walther, but Walther makes a wide variety of modern handguns.

The Walther PPS is striker-fired with a polymer frame, chambered in 9mm and .40 S&W. For this article, I obtained a 9mm version. While there will always be die-hard big bore fans out there ("if the caliber doesn't start with a four, don't bother me") but the fact of the matter is that sales of .40 S&W guns are dead because modern 9mm rounds have been shown to be just as effective.

Now that the .40 and .45 fans have left the room screaming, "Heresy!" let's get on with the review.

Like most every other compact 9mm, the Walther PPS is a little big and heavy for the standard pocket, but it is eminently concealable. Weighing in at 19.4 ounces, it is 6.32 inches long and 4.4 inches tall. Walther states the pistol is just .9 inches wide. I read a review of the pistol stating it is 1.1 inches wide, which is a big difference. Per my calipers at the slide release (the widest point) my sample was 1.03 inches wide. The rest of the pistol was about .95 inches thick, which is rather flat.



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Tarr found the Walther PPS a very serviceable CCW piece with distinctive looks, but the Walther name and German engineering does carry a price premium.

These specs put it an ounce and a half heavier and a hair larger in every dimension than the Glock 43, but for those perceived disadvantages it does have a definite advantage. The Glock 43 is only sold with six-round magazines, while the Walther PPS is offered with flush, medium and long magazines with six-, seven- and eight-round capacities (respectively). A medium and long magazine (both of which have some extended grip surface) were provided with this pistol.

The PPS has some modern Walther style points, but seems a little squarer than its larger handguns. It looks and feels very flat, however. The pistol features a 3.2-inch barrel with a rectangular slot cut into the hood which functions as a loaded chamber indicator.

The barrel has traditional lands-and-grooves rifling. Unlike a lot of polymer-framed pistols, the Walther PPS actually has a steel feeding ramp set into the frame. The barrel has a very short ramp that mates to the steel ramp. Both of them are smooth and appear to be polished.



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The Walther PPS is very flat and is easy to conceal. The European-style paddle magazine release helps keep it slim, but many Americans may not like that feature.

The Walther PPS' slide features an external claw extractor and narrows slightly at the top. It is very comfortable to rack using the wide flat-bottomed serrations at the rear. Personally, I like forward cocking serrations as well, but there's not really room enough for them on a gun this size. The pistol has dual recoil springs in a captured assembly that absorb recoil forces but also make the slide harder to rack.

When cocked, the rear of the striker is visible at the back of the slide. It is marked with red paint. As you pull the trigger, it protrudes slightly from the frame. The frame has a one-slot tactical rail for mounting lights or lasers, something many pistols this size do not offer.

The Walther PPS is manufactured in Germany and imported by Walther Arms in Fort Smith, Ark. You'll notice a lot of markings on the barrel and slide right beneath it. The CIP over the N on the barrel and slide and frame is the mark of the proof house, as is the stag antler. The stag antler is the symbol of the Beschussamt Ulm C.I.P. accredited Proof House which pressure tests all the Walther and HK firearms in Germany.



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Three different sized magazines are made for the Walther PPS: the seven-round Medium (l.) and 8-round Large were included. The 6-round Small has a flush basepad.

The serial number on the internal steel frame can be viewed through a cutout in the polymer above the trigger guard. That serial number is also etched on the slide and the barrel. Oh, and if you want to know what year your [Walther PPS](#) was manufactured, that's there as well.

On the slide you'll see a DE, indicating the pistol was made in Deutschland (Germany). To the right of that is a BE. Using Walther's number system where A=0 (and B=1, C=2, etc) BE=14, meaning this pistol was manufactured in 2014. The Germans are nothing if not meticulous record keepers.

The steel sights on the Walther PPS are of the three-dot variety. The notch in the rear sight is wide and provides a visible amount of daylight around the front sight when aiming. The front sight is square and rather low to the slide. The front sight is held in place by a set screw in the bottom, similar to the Glock.



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The Walther PPS slide narrows slightly at the top to soften an otherwise blocky appearance. The frame's dust cover has a one-slot accessory rail for lights or lasers.

The front sight was marked unobtrusively with a 4, and the rear sight with a 2, which tells me that there are most likely various height sights and that the pistols are probably test fired at the factory, although a test target was not provided with my handgun.

When I brought this pistol out at the range one day, one of my acquaintances asked if it had the same trigger system as the [Walther PPQ](#). Unfortunately, no. The PPQ has one of the best trigger pulls of any striker-fired gun on the market, but the trigger system on the Walther PPS is styled from their larger P99.

Don't fret; instead of having a much better than average trigger pull for a striker-fired pocket-sized gun, it just has an average trigger. Trigger pull on my sample was a screamingly average 7.5 pounds.

Unlike many guns this size, the Walther PPS had an interchangeable backstrap. Two sizes were provided with the pistol, a medium installed at the factory and a larger one in a foam cutout in the case. Replacing them is simpler than you'll find with just about any other pistol, and requires no tools: remove the magazine, and press the spring loaded tab at the bottom of the backstrap. The backstrap then comes right out.



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Switch backstraps by removing the magazine and pressing the grooved tab just behind the magazine well with your thumb. The backstrap then comes right off.

The pistol disassembles in the same manner as a Glock: remove the magazine, ensure the pistol is unloaded, pull the trigger, retract the slide slightly, and then pull the takedown tabs downward. When you release the slide, it will come forward off the frame. A look inside the frame reveals a very familiar configuration to anyone who has ever looked inside a striker-fired handgun.

With the seven-round “medium” magazine in place, I can get all my fingers on the gun. With the short magazine, everyone is going to be two-fingering it. The eight-round magazine adds extra capacity, but does affect concealability. Personally I prefer the seven-rounder, as it provides the best combination of controllability and concealability.

At the range, I found that it was possible to shoot this pistol almost as well as a full-size model. I experienced the same thing while shooting the S&W Shield, a similarly-sized 9mm, but not the Glock 43.



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If you can see the red-tipped striker at the back of the slide, the striker is cocked and you may fire. The rear sight has a sizeable notch that Tarr liked.

As they are all about the same size, I think the difference is the weight: both the Walther PPS and S&W Shield are heavier than the G43. Bigger, heavier guns are easier to shoot, but a little harder to conceal. Life's full of compromises. Because the pistol is so flat, it tends to point very naturally.

The frame is textured in various patterns: horizontal grooves, tiny vertical squiggles, even raised dots on the side. In addition, there are finger grooves on the front of the fame and magazine basepads. While none of the texturing is very aggressive, the combination of them plus the proportions of the gun keep it secure in the hand during firing.

Perhaps the main reason the Walther PPS isn't as popular as it could be is its European-style mag release. Instead of the traditional American button-style mag release on the frame just to the rear of the trigger guard, it features an ambidextrous paddle that runs along the bottom of the trigger guard.



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As you pull the trigger, the striker protrudes slightly from the rear of the slide. It's not something you'll be watching in any real firing situation.

We all like and want what we're used to, but for all practical purposes, the type of magazine release a firearm has is much less important to its utility than being familiar with its controls.

There are those who will argue that the American-style mag release allows for a faster (or the fastest) magazine change. Some time ago, I learned a technique to work these European-style mag releases, and with just a little practice, the technique is as quick as using an American-style mag release.

Ironically, I learned it from someone who carried a Walther PPS: Mike Allen, an Iraq vet who works at my local gun store, Double Action Indoor Range and Gun Shop in Madison Heights, Mich.



pps-10-walther The Germans love marking up their guns. The serial number is etched into the frame, slide, and barrel. And the DE BE shows that the pistol was made in 2014.

When your pistol has an ambidextrous lever mag release, trying to drop a magazine with your thumb usually is a non-starter: you just can't reach unless you twist the gun completely sideways in your hand. And trying to hit the paddle on the other side with your index finger doesn't work either: the finger is in the wrong spot. Again, you have to completely move your hand off the grip.

Mike showed me that hitting the right side of the lever mag release with your middle finger is the way to go. I know, it sounds slow and tortured, but trust me. As you finish shooting and your index finger comes out of the trigger guard and goes up, move your middle finger up as you keep your ring and pinkie finger on the grip (and your other hand goes for the spare mag). The tip of your middle finger will then be right on the lever and it is easy to depress.



The lever mag release can be awkward. Tarr recommends using your middle finger to drop the magazine and says the technique is nearly as fast as a button release.

This mag-changing technique is a bit easier with a full-size gun than a compact like the PPS, but everything is easier with a full-size gun except concealing it. I first practiced this technique with the original Walther PPQ (with paddle mag release) and in less than five minutes' time, I was running at 95 percent of the speed I could with my Glock.

However, that PPQ didn't sell too well, and Walther soon introduced the PPQ M2 with American-style mag release. The PPS is not a full-size duty gun, however, but a CCW piece, and speed reloads are less of a concern than concealability.

I'm not saying you might not have to, but if you're planning on having to do a mag change on your CCW piece during a gun fight, perhaps you should rethink your approach to the subject. The lever mag release definitely helps keep this pistol slim.

European-made guns tend to be more expensive than similar models made in the U.S., and the PPS is no different. Suggested retail of the [Walther PPS](#) is \$735, which means I see it being sold for around \$550.

While that not as inexpensive as other guns on the market, the pistol is reliable, concealable and uncommon. And don't forget that it says Walther on the slide.

Review: Walther PPQ M2 in .45 ACP

by Tom Beckstrand / March 7th, 2016 [8 Comments](#)

Flexibility Instead of Uniformity” is the Walther company motto. It’s a welcome departure from some company’s mottos detailing “perfection.” Walther is one of those companies that actually believes a pistol should conform to the needs of the owner, not that the owner needs to adapt to the pistol. This motto was the same guidance Walther gave to Horst Wesp, the technical team leader assigned with developing the P99, and the company adhered to its motto in the creation of the new [PPQ M2 .45](#).

Wesp came to work for Walther in 1994, but had been in the firearms industry for several decades prior. He had a wealth of experience designing firearms and had steadily risen through the ranks to that of technical team leader at both Steyr and Glock before settling down in Ulm, home to Walther. Not long after Wesp started at Walther, the company tasked him with designing a completely new pistol. The P99 was ready just three years later.



In order to understand why a particular firearm exists, we need to look at its design requirements and, if possible, know who led the technical team that did the work. Company culture and market trends will dictate a lot of a new product’s features, but the individual leading the team will also have a profound influence on what that team develops. In the case of the new Walther PPQ 45, we must examine its predecessor, the P99, to fully appreciate what the new Walther PPQ 45 offers.

One of the new design features was a polymer frame, a new development for Walther at that time. While the use of polymer frames wasn’t uncommon in semi-auto pistols in the 1990s, Walther had to assume a lot of risk getting into this highly competitive market. Polymer frames do significantly reduce the cost of manufacturing, but also present hurdles when creating a feature-rich model that will remain competitively priced.

Where Hesp chose to challenge the existing polymer-framed pistol market was by offering the owner the ability to tailor the pistol to their specific needs. The P99 was one of the first polymer pistols to have an interchangeable backstrap. This allowed the shooter to fit the grip size to their hand. Where other manufacturers chose a minimalist “take it or leave it” approach, Walther wanted to offer as many options as possible and began with the grip size. History would prove that Walther correctly identified what the customer prefers because almost every manufacturer of polymer-framed pistols now offers interchangeable backstraps. Walther and Hesp were simply the first to recognize their value.



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The new Walther PPQ 45 is a full-size pistol without being overly large. It works equally as a duty gun or as a concealed carry piece. G&A staff has fired thousands of rounds through five different samples since August 2015 without a single malfunction to report.

The P99 was designed as a hammerless pistol but with an interchangeable trigger system, keeping with the flexibility theme that Walther favors. The first P99s had the classic double/single-action trigger system so popular in the mid-1990s. While there was no hammer, the trigger pull was long and heavy for the first shot and then short and crisp for subsequent shots. Walther also placed the decocker on top of the slide behind the ejection port. Depressing the button safely released the spring tension on the firing pin, much like previous decockers that safely lowered a hammer.



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2016: Celebrating 130 Years of Walther

[In 1886, about the same time U.S. President Grover Cleveland dedicated the Statue of Liberty, a 28-year-old German army ...](#)

Depending on a customer's wishes, the P99 could be fitted with a double-action-only (DAO) trigger or a partially cocked single-action system. Having three trigger types available from which to choose was unheard of at the time. Much like interchangeable backstraps, this feature is more common now.

Military & Law Enforcement Influences

Most of the major manufacturers pay attention to the demands of the law enforcement and military communities for a couple of reasons. Military and police contracts give a manufacturer some stability because they often last for years and have a fixed procurement cycle. This makes life easier and more predictable for a manufacturer.

These two customers also establish trends, for better or worse, which frequently carry over to the civilian market. A lot of civilians value the opinions of armed professionals and the perceived expertise that comes with them. For these two reasons, law enforcement demands had a heavy influence on the changes that the P99 would undergo for almost the next fifteen years.

The dust cover and the front of the polymer frame would change from two grooves underneath and parallel to the frame rails, to the standard Picatinny system that is now everywhere. This was a good change that made it possible for the owner to choose what accessory, if any, he wanted to mount to his pistol. We no longer had to endure proprietary systems that mandated specific lights or lasers.



The Walther PPQ 45 ergonomics were almost 15 years in the making and have evolved steadily over that time. The three-dot sights are standard and make good general-purpose sights. The Pic rail on the dust cover gives plenty of accessory options. The trigger is lighter (and better) and has a shorter reset than previous models.

Several other tweaks occurred with the frame ergonomics and sights. The frame became less angular, with sharp edges giving way to rounded contours. Sights changed from white outline to two- and three-dot models.

One of the biggest changes came when Walther migrated from the P99 to the P99Q. This change occurred in 2008 with the addition of Walther's partially cocked single-action system (what many refer to as striker-fired). Striker-fired pistols had gained steadily in popularity and more law enforcement organizations (such as the Dutch police) wanted pistols with this trigger system. The problem is that law enforcement agencies employ persons with disparate proficiency levels, to the point that some folks are downright dangerous with a loaded firearm.

The typical law enforcement solution is to put a heavier trigger pull on a pistol, making it harder to have a negligent discharge. The P99Q was a pistol developed directly for German police contracts, a decision that proved profitable for the company. Two variants of the P99 were developed for this project, the "Q" and the "D". The "Q" model had the lighter trigger with a shorter reset and proved to be the more popular of the two versions.

One of the features of the P99Q was a relatively heavy trigger pull as mandated by the requirement it was designed around. While many might wonder why a pistol with a heavy trigger would be popular (other than agencies like NYPD that think a heavy trigger is the best way to prevent negligent discharges), the idea of purchasing a pistol designed and tested to rigorous German standards appealed to many. The P99Q was adopted by several German law enforcement agencies and by several foreign countries, Poland being one of the biggest procurers.



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The lower half of the Walther PPQ 45 looks like a standard striker-fired pistol. The internals offer easy access for cleaning and lubrication.

The PPQ is Born

The P99 had been around for about 14 years and had seen many updates and refinements over its lifespan. While the internals hadn't changed much, the polymer frame had steadily evolved over the life of the pistol. Walther decided to take many of the best features from the P99 and build a pistol better suited for the commercial market. The pistol that would come from this effort is the [Walther PPQ 45](#).

The Walther PPQ 45's polymer frame is almost identical to the last P99 model. This is a good thing because those ergonomics were almost 15 years in the making. No other manufacturer can claim they've got that much study and effort into getting the grip right. As a result, the ergonomics make the Walther PPQ 45 one of the most comfortable pistols any of us here at G&A have held. Demonstrating early in the polymer pistol craze that they were serious about ergonomics, Walther's interchangeable backstrap system is the most time-tested and simple to use. One pin holds the backstrap in place and, with multiple sizes from which to choose, the pistol can be made to fit almost every hand.

The Walther PPQ 45's grip texture strikes a good balance between being aggressive enough to hold under any condition and smooth enough to not damage our clothes if we carry the Walther PPQ 45 concealed. The beavertail on the back of the frame allows our hand to grab high up on the grip to help us control the pistol under recoil.



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The captured guide rod and recoil spring effectively manage the recoil from the Walther PPQ 45.

While the grip and frame on the Walther PPQ 45 appear almost identical to the P99Q, the trigger is where we see the biggest changes and the most improvement. Walther wanted to offer the best trigger on any polymer-framed pistol, so they focused on lightening the trigger pull weight and shortening the amount of trigger movement required to fire the Walther PPQ 45.

The P99Q's pull weight was lightened by over 25 percent and trigger travel was shortened by 66 percent for the Walther PPQ 45 trigger. The short, light trigger pull makes it easier to concentrate on shooting, with less focus on trigger management.

To make the Walther PPQ 45 safe for concealed carry, Walther's solution was to widen the trigger, cut a slot in it, and insert a narrow shoe that prevents the trigger from moving until it is depressed.

Placing the safety on the trigger face makes it very fast to disengage while ensuring that we have to deliberately pull the trigger to fire the pistol.

The Big Bore

The Walther PPQ in .45 ACP is the company's latest addition to its flagship line. All the research and design that went into previous P99 and PPQ models are present in the .45. Slide releases are located on both sides of the frame and the magazine release can be placed on either side of the grip.



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Walther CCP in 9mm Review

[It has similar rounded contours, the same angular slide that is also not angular at the same time \(a curious optical ill...](#)

The Walther PPQ 45's magazine holds 12 rounds and is made from steel. If you can choose between steel and polymer magazines for your pistol, always choose steel. One of my biggest complaints about polymer-framed pistols is the fact that many ship with polymer magazines. If you've ever reloaded a polymer pistol that has a polymer magazine; once the slide has locked to the rear, you may have noticed that the magazines are slow to fall out of the well.

Empty polymer magazines frequently don't have the weight to drop free on their own. Polymer just doesn't like to slide across polymer well. You'll often see pistol shooters flick the pistol to speed the polymer magazine's exit from the frame.

With rare exceptions, all those headaches seem to go away once we use steel magazines. Steel magazines leap out of the magazine well when compared to their polymer brethren. While this might seem like a small issue to some, if you need to change magazines quickly, it matters.

The Walther PPQ 45's slide has serrations up front and rounded edges for comfortable carry. The striker is visible at the rear of the slide when the pistol is cocked, making it easier to determine the pistol's status when glancing at it.



Taking the Walther PPQ

45 out for several range sessions rekindled our love for the gun and its excellent trigger. The short pull keeps pre-ignition shenanigans to a minimum and the light crisp let-off makes it easy to keep the sights on the target throughout the pull.

The excellent ergonomics allow for a high grip and the angle at which the trigger guard contacts the frontstrap is easy on the middle finger. The ergonomics of the frame took a long time to evolve and in our opinion, Walther got them right on the PPQ 45.

The three-dot sights are pretty standard fare and strike a balance between speed and precision. During testing, I managed a five-shot group at 25 yards that measured 1.68 inches from center to center using Barnes 185-grain Tac-XPD. That's excellent accuracy from a service pistol. I burned through many magazines just for fun and think that the reset on the Walther PPQ 45 trigger is exceptional. It is short and tactile, making it possible to work the trigger very quickly.

Accurate; yes. Reliable; absolutely. The [Walther PPQ 45](#) is on my "must have" list. It's there because of the M2 trigger, metal magazines and ergonomics.

Read more: <http://www.gunsandammo.com/handguns/semi-auto-handgun/review-walther-ppq-in-45-acp/#ixzz4NObp6iiR>

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To NFA or not NFA? Nighthawk Custom 870 SBS 12 Ga.—Full Review

by Rob Garrett on September 13, 2016



Based on the venerable Remington 870 12-gauge shotgun, Nighthawk Custom offers a full line of enhanced tactical shotguns. Shown is a custom-built, short-barreled-shotgun NFA variant direct from the manufacturer.

For more information, visit <http://www.nighthawkcustom.com/>.

To purchase a Nighthawk Custom 870 on GunsAmerica.com, click this link:
<https://www.gunsamerica.com/Search.aspx?T=Nighthawk%20870>.

To purchase a Remington 870 on GunsAmerica.com, click this link:
<https://www.gunsamerica.com/Search.aspx?T=Remington%20870>.

So which is right for you? An NFA short-barreled shotgun (SBS), or a traditional 18-inch or longer-barreled tactical shotgun? Well, I like both and have several examples of each. I started my career in law enforcement in 1978, and “riot guns” in those days tended to be a Winchester Model 12, an Ithaca Model 37 or the venerable [Remington 870](#). All three were 12-ga. pump guns and normally had 18-inch cylinder bore barrels. They had wood stocks and fore ends, bead sights, and were either blued or parkerized. While not pretty, they were what we had and they served us well for many years. Over the years, I became very attached to the 870 and added

several to my collection. They served as a camp gun, car gun, and in the role of home defense. It is safe to say that I have rarely been very far from one 870 or the other!



The heart of the 870 design is the robust ordnance-grade steel receiver.

Introduced in 1949, the 870 competed directly with the Winchester Model 12. The 870 proved to be reliable, rugged and earned the respect of sportsmen and law enforcement alike. Now, sixty-seven years later, the 870 is still in production and is the choice of hunters, law enforcement and security professionals worldwide.

The key to the 870's durability and long life is the nearly indestructible receiver that is machined from an 8-lb. block of ordnance grade steel. The steel lined forend operates the action through two, non-binding action bars that provide strength, reliability and a smooth, consistent action. The fire control system features a disconnector that requires a deliberate trigger pull for each shot. In other words, the 870 will not slam fire when the action is run with the trigger in the rearward position. The trigger assembly features a crossbolt safety and is easily removed for maintenance by simply punching two retaining pins.



The shotgun is equipped with a four-round “sidesaddle” for carrying spare ammo within quick reach.

Over the years, Remington has worked to update the 870, but the basic design and engineering has changed very little. Magazine extensions have increased the capacity from four rounds to six rounds in the tube the 18-

inch model and seven rounds in the tube of the 20-inch model. Wood stocks and fore ends have been replaced with more durable injection molded polymers and, on some models the simple bead sight was replaced by rifle type sights. The “Flex Tab” carrier was introduced to prevent a shell from becoming lodged between the shell lifter and the bolt when the action was short stroked. Other than that, it remains true to the original.

The Next Level

While the standard patrol officer and armed citizen are most often armed with an 18-inch model, some law enforcement and special users have a requirement for a more compact shotgun. Perhaps the most famous special purpose 870s were produced for the United States Marshal’s Office. Coined the “Witness Protection 870,” some of these guns featured a modified pistol grip and a 14-inch barrel. The United States Secret Service and the Federal Bureau of Investigation, along with most other federal agencies, have ordered large quantities of fully stocked 870s with 14-inch barrels and with bead or rifle sights. Along the way, and for the same reasons, the short barrel 870s became the darling of the commercial NFA market.



The sample shotgun was equipped with a Duracoat-finished Magpul SGA stock.

SPECS

- **Chambering:** 12 gauge, 3-inch chamber
- **Barrel:** 14 inches
- **OA Length:** 32.75 inches
- **Weight:** 7 pounds
- **Stock:** Magpul SGA
- **Sights:** LPA
- **Action:** Pump
- **Finish:** Matte black
- **Capacity:** 4+1
- **MSRP:** Base price, \$2,165

Nighthawk Custom is known as one of the premier manufacturers of custom 1911s. However, the company also offers an [“Overseer” line](#) of highly modified 870 shotguns. Being an NFA aficionado, I contacted Mark

Stone, CEO of Nighthawk Custom and requested a short-barrel 870 for evaluation. After the obligatory wait on ATF to clear the transfer, I took possession of a very cool, short-barrel 870 custom made from their line.

It is important to note that while Nighthawk Custom offers “off-the-shelf” 870s for sale, it also will do custom work as I requested based on customer-provided Remington 870 shotguns (provided the shotgun is a Remington 870P or Express Magnum in good working order). At the current time, unfortunately, Nighthawk Custom has temporarily suspended production of any NFA shotguns to catch up with current production demands. However, they plan to resume this as time allows. So, if you have a little patience, the NFA route might be right for you.



The sample shotgun was fitted with an option Vang Comp “Big Speed Safety” for enhanced operation.

The talented smiths at Nighthawk start with the basic 870 and then strip the gun down to basic components and perform an inspection. During this process, the action is hand honed for a smooth, consistent action. On my test gun, the trigger pull measured 4.5 lbs., but exhibited a rough spot in the take-up. A Vang Big Speed Safety was also installed to allow the safety to be disengaged using the side of the trigger finger.

To provide a highly flexible sighting system, Nighthawk installs high visibility LPA sights. The LPA rear sight features a ghost ring aperture that is adjustable for both elevation and windage. The adjustment screws were positive and we had no issues with the sight retaining a zero. The front sight on my test gun is a large white dot post that mounted on a wide base and protected by wings. Nighthawk also offers a fiber optic or tritium front sight blade. At my request, Nighthawk also installed a section of Picatinny rail on the receiver, in front of the rear sight. This allows the option of running a red dot optic.



The buttpad is designed to help reduce perceived recoil, and provided spacers can adjust the length of pull.

At the heart of any shotgun is the barrel. The Nighthawk 870 came with a 14-inch Remington factory barrel that had received the full Vang VCS treatment. For over 25-years, Hans Vang has been at the forefront of shotgun barrel performance. In the early nineties, he patented the Van Comp System or VCS. The VCS is an internal modification of the factory barrel and consists of lengthening the forcing cone and back-boring the barrel. By lengthening the forcing cone, the pellets have a smoother transition from the chamber to the bore. Back-boring the barrel is a process where the barrel is bored from the chamber to the muzzle, creating an internal choke. This results in less shot deformation and tighter, more consistent groups. The final modification consists of a series of ports at the muzzle. The ports reduce muzzle rise and allow for faster follow-up shots. A side benefit is that this modification reduces felt recoil.

The short barrel of the shotgun extends approximately 1 $\frac{3}{4}$ inches past the magazine cap. The factory polymer magazine follower has been replaced with a polished stainless steel unit that should last a lifetime. The four shell side saddle is machined from a single aluminum billet that is hard anodized to military specifications. Unlike other designs, the Nighthawk unit does not obscure the serial number on the side of the receiver.



A matching Magpul MOE forend was installed on the shotgun. Note the stubby, ported 14-inch barrel of the test gun.

The final addition to the shotgun was a Nighthawk-branded Magpul [SGA](#) stock and matching [MOE](#) forend. The SGA stock is the most comfortable shotgun stock I have used and is user-configurable. The buttpad is designed to significantly reduce recoil, and spacers are provided to adjust the length of pull. The high cheek comb assists in indexing both the iron sights and an optic if so equipped. Optional cheek risers allow this height to be adjusted to fit the individual user. The deeply arched pistol grip is set at a natural and comfortable angle and the stock features recesses for the shooter's palm.

The MOE forend is longer than the standard factory unit and features traction ribs for position manipulation. A lip on each end is designed to prevent the hand from slipping off the forend during operations. This is especially critical when running a short-barreled model like this one. Both the stock and forend were given a Duracoat snake skin camo finish by [Hillbilly223](#). The 870 also wears the distinctive Nighthawk logo on both the forend and the stock. The finish really set the little gun off and proved to be an eye-catcher during range trips.

Shortest Straw

On the range, the little 14-inch 870 proved very surprising. Testing shotgun performance is an inexact science given the inconsistency of pellet dispersions and loads. Unlike Hollywood's portrayal, the shotgun doesn't blow down doors or blow up cars. With traditional 18-inch, cylinder bore, barrels, a general rule is that 00 buck shoots a group that is approximately 1 inch in diameter for every yard of distance.

Nighthawk Custom Remington 870 14-Inch Vang Comp and Ported Barrel						
Manufacturer	Pellet Size	# Pellets	Other	Velocity	15 Yard Pattern	25 Yard Pattern
Remington	00 Buck	8 Pellet	Reduced Recoil	973 fps	2.5" X 3"	9" X 7"
Federal	00 Buck	9 Pellet	Flite Control	1095 fps	3" X 4"	7 1/4" X 5 3/4"
Winchester	#4 Buck	27 Pellet		1062 fps	23" X 20"	

Velocity 10 yards - Two shot patterning groups fired from 15 yards

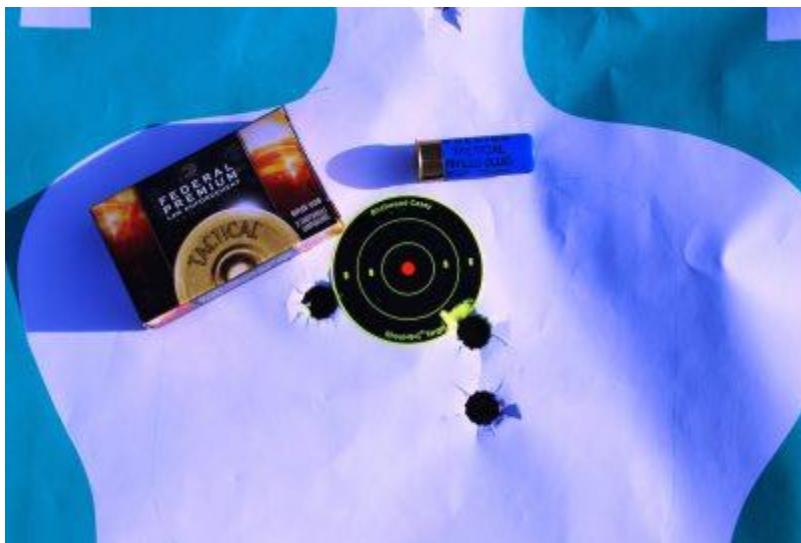
					Aimpoint H-1 Optic	50 Yards
Remington	1 oz	Slug	Reduced Recoil	1117 fps		4"
Federal	1 oz	Slug	Flite Control	1176 fps		3.5"

Velocity 10 yards - Three-shot group fired from bag rest at 50 yards

The old school, standard police load was usually 00 buck shot that consisted of nine .33 caliber pellets. However, over the years, manufacturers have improved the performance their loads through improved shot cups and other technology. In addition, they have developed specific “reduced recoil” loads for law enforcement. We tested the Nighthawk 870 with Remington’s Remington 8 Pellet Reduced Recoil load and Federal’s 8-Pellet Federal Flite Control load. The Remington load averaged 873 fps and the Federal Flite Control load averaged 1,095 fps. We patterned both loads at 15 yards and measured the height and width of the group. The Remington load measured 2.5×3 inches while the Federal load 3×4 inches. Surprisingly, at 15-yards, the Remington grouped consistently better than the Federal Flite Control. We also tested a 27-pellet Winchester #4 Buckshot load from Winchester. This load is devastating at close ranges, but at 15-yards produced a spread that measured 20×24 inches. The advantage of the #4 load is that it reduces the risk of over penetration.



The author patterned the shotgun with a selection of buckshot, including this Remington 00 buckshot.



The author also shot the Nighthawk for groups with slugs at 50 yards, with this group being a Federal Flite Control load.

Engaging a target from 25-yards with any buckshot load is pushing the operating envelope of most shotguns. From the 25-yard line, the Remington load produced a group that measured 9 inches in height and 7 inches in width. The Federal Flite Control seemed to make a difference at this distance. The Federal produced a group that measured $7\frac{1}{4}$ inches in height and $5\frac{3}{4}$ inches in width. With both loads, all pellets stayed well within the silhouette and would have delivered effective terminal performance. For home defense, I would choose the #4 Buckshot, while either the Federal or Remington loads are more than acceptable for general use.



The sights on the sample shotgun are LPA with an adjustable rear unit and white dot front sight with protective wings. Tritium or fiber optic front sights are also available.

I was also interested in seeing how the barrel performed with slugs. I moved to 50 yards and shot several three-shot groups off of a range bag. My best group was shot with Federal's Tactical 1 oz Rifled Slug. The Federal load chronographed at 1,176 fps and produced a group that measured 3.5 inches. Remington's 1-oz Reduced Recoil Slug chronographed at 1,117 fps and produced a group that measured 4 inches. I also used the LPA adjustable sights to shoot a group that measured 4 inches. This is outstanding accuracy from a 14-inch tube and really extends the effectiveness of the compact shotgun.

Decision Time

Like the short barrel rifle, the short barrel shotgun is a special purpose weapon and not suited for every application. Due to the increased popularity on NFA weapons and suppressors, the wait times are longer than ever. For the least painful experience, I highly recommend using a dealer that is experienced in NFA transfers and the recent rule changes. Nothing is more frustrating than to wait seven or eight months, only to have a Form 4 returned for a mistake.



The factory polymer magazine follower has been replaced with a polished stainless steel unit that should last a lifetime.

For those 870 lovers that do not want to go the route of a short barrel shotgun, Nighthawk Custom also offers the above-mentioned complete line of non-NFA shotguns. Or, you can have them work on your own 870. A variety of features are available to include various stock, sight and barrel options. The shotguns are ideal for personal and home defense, certain hunting applications, and having an all-round good time at the range. For me, the little 14-inch gun has definitely found a place in my daily operating environment and, when appropriate, is a close companion. If you have the means and want the full NFA deal, then take a look at this option. If you want to keep it simple, then select one of Nighthawk's non-NFA guns. I am sure that either way you will not be disappointed.

Images courtesy of [Camera1](#), Columbus, GA.

For more information, visit <http://www.nighthawkcustom.com/>.

To purchase a Nighthawk Custom 870 on GunsAmerica.com, click this link:
<https://www.gunsamerica.com/Search.aspx?T=Nighthawk%20870>.

To purchase a Remington 870 on GunsAmerica.com, click this link:
<https://www.gunsamerica.com/Search.aspx?T=Remington%20870>.



The shorty Nighthawk proved to be very handy and capable on the range. Note the muzzle blast during this night range shoot.

https://www.gunsamerica.com/blog/cowboy-time-machine-uberti-1873-carbine-better-original-full-review/?utm_source=email&utm_medium=20161010_BlogDigest_193&utm_campaign=/blog/cowboy-time-machine-uberti-1873-carbine-better-original-full-review/

Cowboy Time Machine: Uberti 1873 Carbine—Better Than The Original? Full Review.

by Dave Campbell on October 4, 2016



The 1873 is a classic design, pioneered by Winchester at its birth and offered as a high-quality reproduction today by Uberti. It gives modern-day cowboy enthusiasts a chance to have a shootable version of this revered design.

For more information, visit <http://www.uberti.com/1873-rifle-and-carbine>.

To purchase on GunsAmerica.com, click this link:

<https://www.gunsamerica.com/Search.aspx?T=uberti%201873%20rifle>

It has been called, “The gun that won the West.” It has also been the title star of a motion picture. Cussed and discussed, this rifle has been the subject matter over countless campfires, hunting camps and saloons. At once praised as being one of the slickest lever actions, it is equally disdained as a weak rifle incapable of handling cartridges with enough power to knock off a mouse. Nonetheless, the Model 1873 Winchester remains an iconic rifle of the American West some 143 years after its debut.



The heart of the 1873 design is its toggle-link action located inside the receiver. Note the top-ejection port and sliding dustcover.

The '73 was the culmination of a 25-year evolution of the lever-action repeating rifle. Beginning with Walter Hunt's Volition Repeating Rifle with a tubular magazine and a complex and relatively fragile linkage system, the rifle's patent was purchased by Lewis Jennings a year later. Jennings improved the linkage somewhat, producing a few rifles through the firm of Robbins & Lawrence of Windsor, Vermont, until 1852. Horace Smith and Daniel Wesson bought the patent from Jennings and acquired Jennings' shop foreman, one Benjamin Tyler Henry, to oversee further improvement and manufacturing, calling their new company the Volcanic Repeating Arms Company.



The author has found his own Uberti 1873 to be a great shooter and a treasured possession.

SPECS

- **CHAMBERING:** .44-40 WCF
- **BARREL:** 20 inches
- **OA LENGTH:** 39 inches
- **WEIGHT:** 7 pounds, 4 ounces
- **STOCK:** Walnut
- **SIGHTS:** Semi-buckhorn rear, blade front
- **ACTION:** Lever-action
- **FINISH:** Case color and blued
- **CAPACITY:** 10 rounds
- **MSRP:** \$1,219 (starting price)

One of the first improvements was Smith's incorporation of a copper case with a priming compound held within the folded rim of the cartridge to replace the "Rocket Ball" ammunition that was a Hunt invention. Rocket Ball ammunition held the powder charge within the hollow base of the bullet, and like all forms of so-called "caseless" ammo it has never proven to be reliable or accurate. The cartridge Smith developed became the .22 Short. The rifle and cartridge had limited success, limited by the lack of power and reliability of its ammo. Eventually, the Volcanic Repeating Arms Company produced a lever-action pistol to go with its rifle.



The sights of the 1873 are simple and straightforward, with a semi-buckhorn rear matching up to a blade front.

The largest stockholder in this fledgling firm was a shirt-maker from New Haven, Connecticut, one Oliver Fischer Winchester. Wesson left Volcanic in 1856, and Smith followed him eight months later to form the Smith & Wesson Revolver Company. Volcanic was in receivership, and Winchester—who was reputed to have a keen eye for a bargain—bought controlling interest in the company in 1857, renaming it the New Haven Arms Company. Henry remained with Winchester and continued to develop Smith's cartridge concept on a larger, .44-caliber scale. He also led in redesigning the rifle to handle the powerful new .44 Rimfire ammunition, culminating with the 1860 Henry rifle. The rifle saw a fair amount of service with the Union army during the War Between the States.

A STAR IS BORN

When the war was over Winchester renamed the firm the Winchester Repeating Arms Company and set about improving the Henry rifle. The 1866 model featured a bronze alloy frame, an improved magazine and a walnut fore-end to protect the shooter's off-hand from heat during firing. It retained the .44 Rimfire chambering of the Henry.



Note the attractive grain of the walnut buttstock and the curved steel buttplate.

The year of 1873 saw further improvement of the design with a new steel frame with sideplates that made it easier to access the rifle's innards for cleaning, along with a new chambering. This new cartridge had a separate "central-fire" primer with a heavier, stronger case and more powder to increase the velocity of the 200-grain bullet. Its name was the .44-40 Winchester Center Fire or as it is more commonly known, .44-40 WCF.

As the western prairies became highways for fortune-seeking settlers, the new 1873 Winchester became wildly popular. The rugged, no-nonsense rifle found itself in the hands of market hunters, in the scabbards of cowboys and under the driver's seat of stagecoaches through the remainder of the 19th century and into the 20th. It was no target rifle. Most 1873s could barely keep five shots on a dinner plate at 100 yards, but inside that it was accurate enough to kill a deer or put down a bad guy. It made up for its lack of accuracy and long-range power by offering a higher volume of shots. During its 46-year run some 720,000 Model 1873s were produced. If that number seems small by modern standards, recall that the country's population was only 76 million by the turn of the 20th century—about a quarter of what it is today.

Twelve years after its introduction Winchester began making the "One of One Thousand" grade of the 1873. Rifles of this grade were test-fired at the factory, and those that met a certain accuracy level were fitted with set triggers and fitted with fancy walnut stocks with checkering and engraving on the metal work. A One of One Thousand Model 1873 would have set you back \$100 at the time. Regular 1873s sold for about \$18 at the time. Today a rusty relic 1873 will fetch as much as \$3,000, and a One of One Thousand? The sky is the limit; count on at least six figures. One of One Hundred 1873s were also made with fewer embellishments and at about 40 bucks a copy then. Like the rest, its current value will give most of us a nose bleed. Interestingly, only 136 One of One Thousand grade 1873s were made, and just eight One of One Hundred rifles left New Haven.



Although somewhat delicate by today's standards, the toggle link of the 1873 was effective and smooth cycling.



Toggle-link action open, with sideplate of the rifle removed.

The last 1873 model left the New Haven factory in 1919. But during the late 1980s and '90s a tremendous resurgence in interest in the old rifle occurred with the blossoming of cowboy action shooting. Thousands of people clamored for shootable copies of the century-plus-old rifles. Winchester—which has undergone several changes and reorganizations over the years—has been at once blessed with products that were superior to its competition in many ways, as well as being cursed with business sense and practices that have undermined it at times. The company largely ignored the new shooting sport for some time. There were reasons—probably good ones at the time—for this position. After all, what company wants to take a step back with its products? Most look toward the future and see improvements in both design and manufacturing. But this is the gun industry, and its customer base is different than with most products. Gunners tend to be very traditional and hold strong emotional ties to their firearms. And, while Winchester does offer a line of [1873 rifles](#) today, it certainly had gotten behind the curve in these preceding decades.

RECREATING A CLASSIC



The author exclusively runs handloaded black power loads through his Uberti 1873. Not because he has to, but because he likes to.

Several gunmakers from Europe stepped in during this time and have been making replicas of the Model 1873, as well as many other 19th century firearms. These replicas tend to be pretty authentic and of excellent quality. As such, they have become wildly popular in the cowboy action circuit. I have a couple of them and shoot them regularly. In fact, my pride and joy is my [Uberti 1873](#) Short Rifle.

Chambered in the original .44-40 WCF, this copy of the famous Winchester is without a doubt the slickest lever-action rifle I own—and that includes a couple of century-plus-old Winchesters. The best part? It came that way from the factory.

Aside from Uberti's superb execution, the reason that a '73 is so slick is inherent in its design. The toggle-link lock-up is by its nature a soft and easy-to-operate design. Note how slick most P08 Lugers are (which feature their own toggle-link locking system). And while the 1873's over-center toggle is often derided for its weakness, it is certainly strong enough for the cartridges for which this rifle was designed. If you want a more powerful rifle, buy a larger one or one of later design that was meant for a powerhouse cartridge.

SHOOTING RESULTS (50 Yds.)

.44-40 WCF	Vel. @ 15'	Energy	Group Size in Inches		
Cartridge	(f.p.s.)	(ft.-lbs.)	Smallest	Largest	Average
Handload	946 avg.	421	1.75	3.50	2.81

Measured average velocity for 10 rounds from a 20-inch barrel. Range temperature: 86°F. Humidity: 52%. Accuracy for five consecutive, 3-shot groups at 50 yds. from sandbags. Abbreviations: FP (Flat Point), Sd (standard deviation).

My '73 was intended primarily as a cowboy action rifle and as a companion piece to my matched pair of Colt Single Action Army revolvers also chambered in .44-40 WCF. As such, and because I enjoy shooting traditional cartridges and loads, I shoot nothing but real black powder in them. Neither rifle or revolvers have seen a smokeless powder load or a jacketed bullet.

Because the Starline cases I use are a modern, solid-head type, it is physically impossible to get 40 grains of FF black powder in them. Thirty-three grains is about max, and I usually drop it to an even 30 grains since all I am doing with these guns is ringing steel at no more than 25 yards. I do keep a supply of full-power loads on hand in case I choose to hunt with these guns. With a 212-grain Lyman 427666, flat-point bullet, the Uberti kicks them out at just shy of 1,000 feet per second. It busts bunnies nicely and is accurate enough for consistent 20-yard head shots.



The 1873 is no tackdriver, but within the context of the design and its cartridge, it can be a quite effective performer.

And lest you think that cleaning black powder is too much of a hassle, I can tell you that I can get the rifle, the pair of Colts and the double-barreled shotgun cleaned, oiled and in the safe in the time it takes to clean one modern center-fire rifle or handgun loaded to the max with jacketed bullets.

The 1873, whether the original Winchester or the present-day Uberti, were never intended to be a target rifle. Groups at 50 yards are often just shy of 3 inches, and at 100 yards 10 inches are typical. But target-grade accuracy was not a criterion in 1873. Its intent was to provide better accuracy and hitting power than could be had from a six-gun for frontiersmen, cowboys and settlers. No, it's not a buffalo, elk or even much of a deer gun. If that is your desire, you need a bigger gun. However, if your need was a fast-firing, reliable rifle capable of knocking down a man or turning a raiding party, the ol' 1873 was a fine and much-desired piece of equipment when you were "way out west" and on your own.

For more information, visit <http://www.uberti.com/1873-rifle-and-carbine>.

https://www.gunsamerica.com/blog/buy-gold-silver-cheap-walmart/?utm_source=email&utm_medium=20161003_BlogDigest_192&utm_campaign=/blog/buy-gold-silver-cheap-walmart/

Prepping 101: How To Buy Gold and Silver Cheap (At Walmart)

by Paul Helinski on October 2, 2016

I bet you didn't know that Walmart sold silver. Well if you watch this video (at the enclosed link), you'll discover that they do, but until recently, there was a limit on how much you could buy at one time. This is an official heads up on a new feature I found on the Walmart online shopping cart where you can bump your purchase to 100, where 6 months ago, the last time I looked, the limit was 8. So now you can invest your fiat currency in items of real value that will help you survive the collapse, for real. Ignore the gold and silver that Glenn Beck has been trying to sell you. This is the only gold and silver in which you should invest if you wish to survive what is coming, most likely soon.

https://www.gunsamerica.com/blog/optics-buying-guide-get-pay-scopes/?utm_source=email&utm_medium=20161010_BlogDigest_193&utm_campaign=/blog/optics-buying-guide-get-pay-scopes/

Optics Buying Guide: Do You Get What You Pay For With Scopes?

by Tom McHale on October 7, 2016



There are a plethora of scopes on the market. How do you find the right balance of quality, features, and price?

Industry Leading Optics
Performance and Quality

VIEW HUNTING PRODUCTS

Burris
FIND WHAT MATTERS

A collage featuring two hunters in a snowy mountain setting, the Burris logo, and a call-to-action button.

THE SERIES

- Part 1: [Optics Buying Guide: Iron Sights, Red Dots, and Scopes](#)
- Part 2: [Optics Buying Guide: Top Must-Know Terms for Picking the Right Scope](#)
- Part 3: [Optics Buying Guide: Scope Mounts](#)
- Part 4: [Optics Buying Guide: How To Properly Zero Your Scope](#)
- Part 5: [Optics Buying Guide: Finding Your Range with a Scope Reticle](#)
- Part 6: [Optics Buying Guide: Hold Off vs. Adjustable Scope Turrets](#)
- Part 7: [Optics Buying Guide: Scope Reticles](#)
- Part 8: [Optics Buying Guide: Using a Laser Rangefinding Scope](#)
- Part 9: [Optics Buying Guide: Holographic and Red Dot Optics](#)
- Part 10: [Optics Buying Guide: AR-15 Optics and Scopes](#)
- Part 11: [Optics Buying Guide: Big Scopes](#)
- Part 12: [Optics Buying Guide: Do You Get What You Pay For?](#)

There are few products where the adage “you get what you pay for” applies more than with optics.

With many products, like cars, it’s pretty easy to see and feel exactly what you’re paying for. The cornering performance and zero to sixty specs for a 1970 AMC Gremlin are pretty easy to distinguish when you compare them to a Bugatti Veyron. Those two cars are very different in price, but you can make a list a mile long of exactly how the performance differs. I suppose the Gremlin might edge out the Veyron when it comes to gas mileage, the price of an oil change, and ability to blend in at the local landfill. (By the way, it’ll run you about \$21,000 for an oil change for the latter, whether you choose synthetic or the cheap stuff.) Other than that, the Veyron is going to claim the checkered flag in every visible category. As a result, whether you believe the Bugatti is worth a cool \$2.5 million or not, you can easily understand why it’s a lot more expensive.

When it comes to scopes and even red dot optics, it can be much harder to “see” the differences between models even though their whole raison d’être is “seeing.” Maybe that’s one of the reasons that we shooters tend to spend big bucks on a gun with little hesitation, but go into full Scrooge McDuck mode when it comes time to drop some coin on the scope. I’m just as guilty as the next guy when it comes to gagging when I see the price tag on a quality optic. Sure, I’ll happily spend \$1,000 or more on a good rifle, but \$1,000 for a scope? Are you kidding me? At risk of sending you into convulsions, it’s not all that unusual to see high-end optics in the \$2,000 to \$4,000 range. That doesn’t mean you have to rocket into four-digit territory just to hit what you’re aiming at. I’m just making the point to set you up for the big ask.

Here it is. I want you to seriously consider budgeting as much for your scope as you do for your rifle. There are some common rules of thumb about matching rifle and scope quality, but the 1:1 ratio is close enough. Hey, it’s even OK to drop down to 50% of the rifle price if you need to. The point is this: don’t buy a nice rifle and stick a cheap gun show scope on it. Shooting a quality optic, whether scope or red dot, is kind of like shooting with a high-end trigger. Once you try it, you’ll be ruined for life – anything less will not satisfy you. With a quality optic, you’ll see everything in a whole new light – literally. You’ll never again fight those wandering zero issues. When you adjust it, it’ll stay right where you expect, forever. It won’t fog. You’ll see clearly at high magnification. You’ll be able to see through it and make shots earlier in the morning and later at dusk than the next guy. And so on. More than anything else, you’ll be able to trust your scope. When you pick up your rifle, whether it’s been sitting for a day or a year, it’s going to hit exactly where you expect as long as you do your part.



This [Burris Veracity 4-20x50mm](#) scope is well matched to the Masterpiece Arms BA PCR. The rifle lists for \$1,999 and the scope about \$850. The combination is just under the legal price limit for PRS Production Class competition.

So how do you tell if a scope is up to snuff? Let's take a look at some pre-buy and post-buy things you can check to see if your scope is up to snuff.

Try Before You Buy

Unfortunately, you can't do a full evaluation in the store, but you can get a pretty good idea of a scope's performance while there.

Before you ask to see one behind the counter, skip any that are priced lower than three digits. Making a quality scope is a technically complex process and there are no shortcuts. If the price is too good to be true, then shortcuts have likely been taken.

Next, compare the clarity of the lenses. Pick out several scopes in your budget range and look through them side by side so you can see a direct comparison of performance. Start while you're in the store and pay particular attention to the outer areas of the circle of view. Those edges are the first thing to degrade with lower-end scopes. While most retail stores are brightly lit, interior lighting is nothing compared to sunny conditions outdoors, so use this indoors opportunity to get a feel for how clear the image is in lower light. Find different areas of the store that are a little darker and evaluate the brightness of the image.



One thing you can check in the store is the “feel” of turret adjustments.

I also like to crank up the magnification to see how the image looks when magnified. With lower quality glass and high magnification, the picture will start to get lousy pretty quickly as you zoom in. If you’re looking for a higher magnification scope, be sure to read the [Optics Buying Guide: Big Scopes](#) article in this series to understand the concept of exit pupil. That will really help you compare features like objective lens size, magnification and glass quality. While the power is cranked up, see how sensitive the scope is to shadowing. If a big dark and hazy ring obstructs your view with the slightest eye movement, try another model – that will drive you nuts in the field.

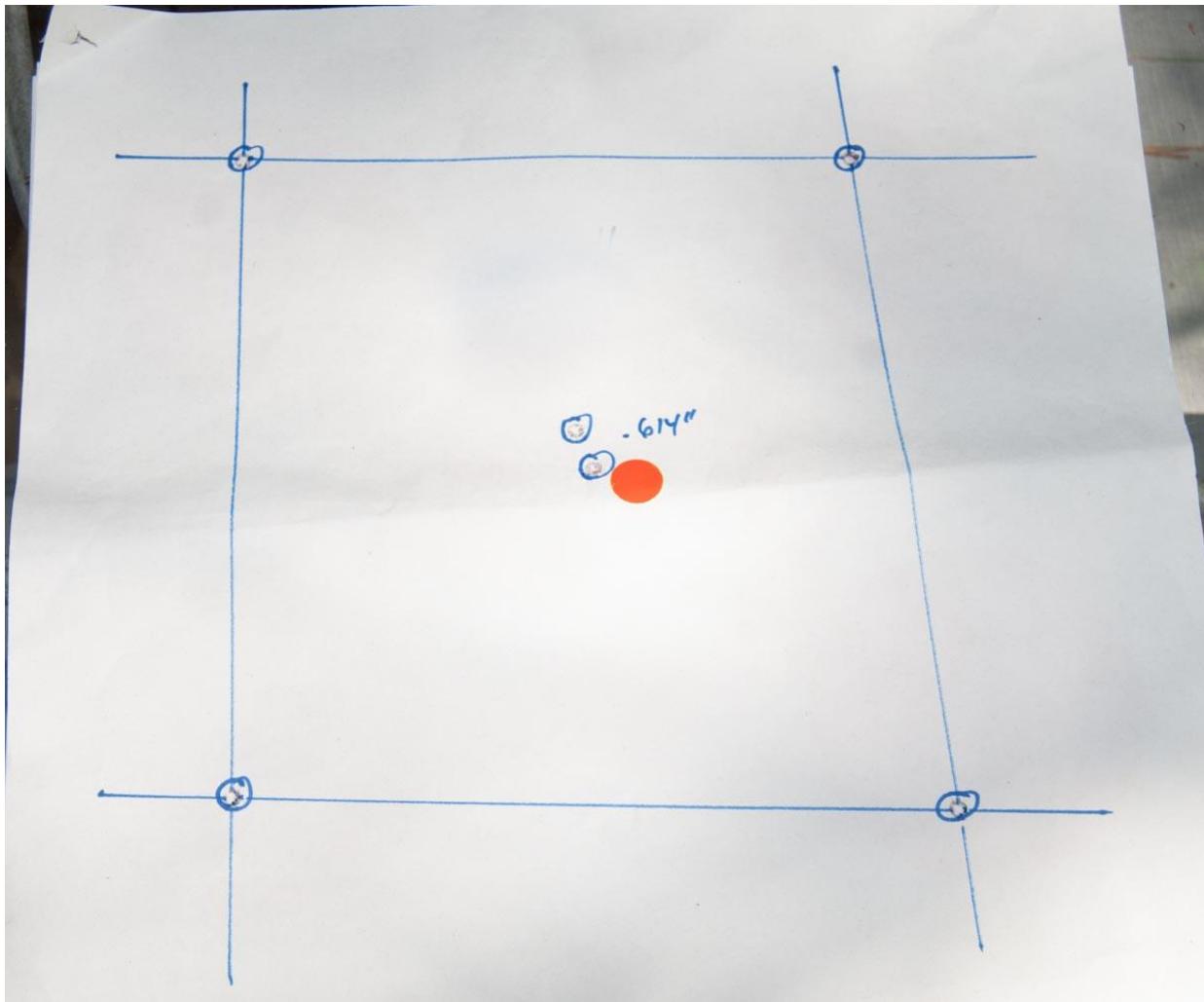
You might also want to beg the sales clerk to let you take a couple outside of the store so you can see how they look in natural outdoor light. Leave your license at the counter or do what you have to do to try it outdoors before you buy.

I also like to test the mechanics. Operate the zoom, reticle focus and parallax adjustment to see how easy or hard they are to move and whether they’re likely to stay in place when shooting. I bought one rimfire scope mail order, and the magnification wheel is so hard to turn that the scope now sits in a drawer. I also like to check the feel of the windage and elevation adjustment turrets. Does each click feel positive and consistent or mushy? You won’t know how accurate those adjustments are until you shoot, but you can pass right on by a scope with ambiguous clicks. I want to be able to make adjustments without looking – by feel and sound only.

Try After You Buy

This may sound a little weird, but there are some things you really can’t evaluate until you mount a scope and shoot it. As long as you buy from a retailer with a fair return policy, and take extra care during mounting, you should be able to return the scope if it doesn’t check out with some basic shooting tests.

The first thing I like to test is the precision and repeatability of windage and elevation adjustments. Once a scope is zeroed, you should be able to make large (if necessary) adjustments to windage and elevation. When you return the dials to the zero point, the bullet should impact exactly where it did before. That's repeatability of settings. You'll also want to know that if you adjust windage for a long shot that the predicted adjustment matches the actual adjustment. A fun way to test this is by "shooting the box."



Here's a fancy version of "shooting the box." In this case, I started in the middle, then used scope adjustments to define the four corners. The last shot was back to zero settings. As you can see, this scope came back to its original zero pretty well.

Here's how "shooting the box" works. Place a large square target at least 100 yards down range. For this example, we'll assume we're shooting at 100 yards. Assuming your scope is zeroed, choose an aiming point in the lower left of the target. You're going to use this same aim point for all shots in this scenario.

Now, using a stable rest, shoot at least one shot. I like to shoot three shot groups at each position, but you can do what you want.

Next, make a windage adjustment that will make your bullet hit 10 inches to the right of your first shot. You'll move the windage dial 10 minutes of angle (MOA) to the right. With most scopes, each click is $\frac{1}{4}$ MOA so that's 40 clicks. Now aim at the original aim point in the lower left and shoot. Your shots should hit 10 inches right of where you aimed.

Now we're going to change elevation to make the next shot(s) hit 10 inches above the last one(s). Adjust the elevation dial 10 MOA up and shoot, again using the original lower left aim point. Now you should have a hole in the lower left, another 10 inches to the right, and another 10 inches above that.

Now move windage 10 MOA to the left and shoot again using the original lower left aim point.

Last, dial elevation down 10 MOA and shoot.

You should have put bullet holes at each corner of a 10-inch square. Measure it, but don't worry if it's a little more or less than 10 inches. There's going to be a little error in the math since a minute of angle is 1.04 inches, and no scope is absolutely perfect with adjustments. If you have a square, and not some random geometric shape, then your scope makes proper anticipated adjustments. You should also see that the last shot(s) impacted at the same point as the first ones. That shows that the settings are repeatable – the scope returned to the original zero after all that adjusting.

Obviously, you need to be very careful with your shooting. Use sandbags and really focus on executing perfect shots. You're evaluating fine adjustments on the scope; you want to eliminate all other variables.

The other thing I like to verify is that the point of impact stays the same regardless of magnification level. Put a target 100 yards down range and carefully shoot at the lowest magnification. Now repeat this shot at different magnification levels. You might take three or more shots at different levels from lowest to highest. What you're looking for is for all shots to hit in the same place. You don't want to see a shot at 9x hitting at a different spot than one taken at 3x. It happens with lower-quality optics.

The bottom line is this: Don't skimp. I've seen all kinds of wonkiness from lesser scopes. One day, I couldn't zero a rifle to save my life. It turns out the internals had shaken loose under repeated recoil. If the crosshairs move with every shot, you're never going to hit where you expect, right? You don't necessarily have to spend four figures on a scope, but I would recommend looking through some in that price range so you can see the difference. That'll help you find a great one in the hundreds range that'll do the job for you.

A 6-pound, sub-MOA, \$999 5.56mm AR?—Full Review.

by Tom McHale on October 3, 2016



The Armalite M-15 Light Tactical Carbine, shown equipped with a Burris XTR II that the author used for accuracy testing.

For more information, visit <https://armalite.com/>.

To purchase an Armalite M-15 LTC or other M-15 variant on GunsAmerica.com, click this link: <https://www.gunsamerica.com/Search.aspx?T=Armalite%20M15>.

Based on sales figures and some good, old-fashioned SWAG math, there are somewhere in the neighborhood of 10 million AR-15 rifles floating around the country, give or take a couple of million. And guess where all that AR popularity started? Armalite. That's right, the "AR" in AR-15 AR doesn't stand for Assault Rifle, Apocalyptic Rampage, or even Alpaca Rabies. Instead, the letters "AR" represent an abbreviation the original company's name. Let's take a quick look at how we got to the subject of today's rifle review, [the Armalite M-15 Light Tactical Carbine](#).

History

It all started back in 1952, or 1954 if you count from the production date of the AR-1 7.62x51mm Parasniper rifle. Even back then, light and handy was the design goal of the day – that rifle had an anodized aluminum barrel with a steel sleeve. One of the founders, Eugene Stoner, had a big bee in his bonnet about the possibilities of using space-age materials like polymer and aluminum to make rifles lighter without sacrificing durability and performance.



The M-15 has everything you'd expect on an AR-15-pattern service rifle, forward-assist included.

The AR-1 was followed by the AR-5 .22 Hornet Survival Rifle, adopted by the Air Force as the MA-1 Survival Rifle. In the late 1950s, Armalite worked on the AR-10 in 7.62x51mm. Army officials asked for a smaller version of that rifle as a potential replacement for the M1 Garand, and the AR-15 was born.

In 1959, the rights to the AR-15 designs were sold to Colt's Manufacturing, who assumed responsibility for the manufacture and sale of the AR-15 design to the U.S. Military and others. Over the next 30-some years, things got a little confusing as the Armalite brand passed through Elisco Tool Manufacturing Company and later Eagle Arms. The final resolution came about in 2013 when [Strategic Armory Corps](#) (SAC) purchased Armalite, and that's the company you know today. Just to keep the big picture straight, SAC also owns OWC (suppressors), Surgeon Rifles, Nexus Ammunition, and McMillan Firearms. The bottom line is that Armalite is back and in the business of producing AR-type rifles, bolt-action guns, specialty weapons like integrally suppressed rifles and pistols, and a slew of other stuff.



The rifles comes with a standard birdcage flash hider/compensator timed with a compression washer. If you want to change muzzle devices, the thread pattern is standard 1/2×28.

Specs

- **CHAMBERING:** 5.56×45 mm/.223 Rem.
- **BARREL:** 16-inch chrome lined/chrome moly, threaded 1/2-28
- **OA LENGTH:** 32-35.3 inches
- **WEIGHT:** 6.0 pounds
- **STOCK:** Six-position
- **SIGHTS:** None
- **ACTION:** Direct gas impingement
- **FINISH:** Anodized/manganese phosphated
- **CAPACITY:** 30+1
- **MSRP:** \$999.00

The Tour

The first thing you notice about the M-15 Light Tactical Carbine is the handling. It's light, weighing in at just six pounds flat. Part of the "feel" is related to the weight, but the slim handguard also contributes to the perception of "handy." The anodized aluminum handguard is a very narrow, free-floated, 10-inch Keymod compatible model. Without the built-in rails, it's not only svelte, but smooth on the hands. I really like the feel.



One of my favorite things about the M-15 LTC is the Armalite handguard. It's narrow, light, and uncluttered thanks to the Keymod configuration.

Starting at the muzzle, you'll see a standard birdcage flash hider mounted on a $\frac{1}{2}$ -28 TPI threaded barrel. The barrel is manganese phosphate treated on the outside and chrome lined on the inside and has an M4 Carbine-style cut stepdown on its outer diameter. The 1:7-inch rifling starts right after a 5.56mm chamber, so it's ready to go with either commercial .223 Remington or 5.56mm NATO ammunition.



The gas key on the bolt carrier was staked into position as expected.

The gas system is carbine-length and uses a very low-profile gas block, allowing for the rifle-length slim handguard to fit over the top of it. The rifle is an optics-ready model, so there is no front sight gas block

assembly. If you want iron sights, you need to mount them on the top rail. Speaking of the handguard, it's octagonal in shape with a full-length Picatinny rail all the way across the top. The other seven sides all have Keymod attachment points, so you can mount stuff at the 1:30, 3, 4:30, 6, 7:30, 9, and 10:30 positions. The handguard is secured to the receiver with two hex bolts across the bottom. One more thing; the handguard is an Armalite custom design.



The handguard is also free-floated—likely a key feature that contributes to the excellent accuracy of this rifle.

The receiver is made from 7075-T6 aluminum and has all the standard controls where you would expect: Safety on the left, magazine release on the right, and bolt catch and release on the left. You'll also find a forward assist.

The trigger is what you would expect from a mil-spec'ish rifle. I'd describe the pull as having some rough take up, followed by a short distance of stacking, and a little bit of a mushy break. I measured pull weight a bunch of times with my Timney Triggers scale and got figures ranging between 7.25 and 7.75 pounds. Like with most AR rifles, this is the first thing I would upgrade.



The charging handle is standard and perfectly serviceable.



The buttstock is standard six-position adjustable and mounted on a mil-spec receiver extension tube.

The bolt and carrier are what you would expect, including a well-staked gas key. That's not going anywhere anytime soon. The bolt carrier is made from 8620 steel, while the bolt itself is 158 carpenter steel. The charging handle is also standard with a latch on the left side.

The receiver extension tube is mil-spec size, and I measure the exterior diameter at 1.145 inches exactly. It holds a standard six-position adjustable buttstock. The buttstock has both a steel fixed sling loop and a cut just below the buffer tube for alternate sling attachment.

All in all, think of this rifle as a standard, optics-ready platform. It's ready for whatever you want to do with it.



As an optics-ready design, the receiver rail is “extended” full length with a Picatinny rail along the full length of the handguard.

Variants

Armalite makes about 75 different rifles at this point, including [M-15](#) models, [AR-10](#)s, and a wide array of [bolt-action](#) rifles. Just in the M-15 Light Carbine family, you can find four different models. The standard rifle discussed here is complemented by an 11.5-inch barrel model (requires an ATF tax stamp), a 6.8 SPC caliber model, and even one chambered in 7.62x39mm.

Nexus Ammunition

In the “learn something new every day” category, it turns out that the parent company of Armalite, Strategic Armory Corps, also owns [Nexus Ammunition](#). The Armalite folks who loaned the rifle sent along some of Nexus’s 77-grain match grade .223 Remington ammo to test with the rifle. This load uses a Sierra Matchking projectile, which is perhaps the gold standard for accurate bullets. It’s loaded to factory rated velocity of 2,767 feet per second, yielding 1,309 foot-pounds of muzzle energy. The box is stamped with 2,720 feet per second, so I tested it myself – we’ll get to that in a bit.



I sampled randomly selected cartridges from the Nexus match ammo and tested bullet runout using this Hornady Concentricity Gauge. No rounds showed more than 2/1,000ths off center. That's excellent.

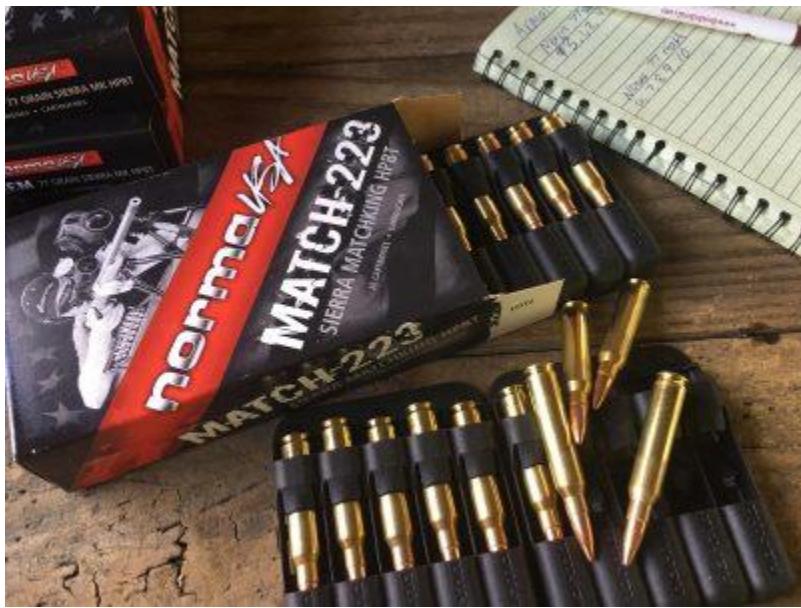
Our friends at [Midsouth Shooters Supply](#) recently loaned a [Hornady Lock-N-Load Bullet Concentricity Gauge](#). This nifty little tool checks the degree of bullet runout – a potential spoiler of accuracy. In plain English, it tests how straight the bullet is aligned in the case. If the bullet is straight, it's like launching a bowling ball right down the middle of the lane. Common sense would dictate that the straighter a bullet is starting out, the more accurate it'll be. I randomly selected a bunch of cartridges from the Nexus 77-grain match ammo supply and measured concentricity variance with the gauge. The lowest reading came in at 1/1,000th of an inch and the highest at 2/1,000ths of an inch. Most rounds were somewhere in between. Those are excellent results based on other ammunition brands I've run through the gauge – many move well into the 3 to 5 one-thousandths of an inch runout. Later on, I'll discuss the specific accuracy results of the Nexus ammo from the Armalite M-15 Light Tactical Carbine.

Shooting the M-15 Light Tactical Carbine

As this rifle features a 1:7-inch twist rate barrel, I had no qualms about feeding it heavier and longer 77-grain bullets in addition to the standard 55-grain varieties.



Armalite's parent company, Strategic Armory Corps, also owns Nexus Ammunition. The 77-grain match load performed shockingly well.



I also tested quite a bit of Norma's Match-223 77-grain ammo loaded with Sierra Matchking bullets.

In addition to the Nexus Match ammo, I also shot groups and velocity with [Norma's Match 223 ammo](#), also tipped with 77-grain Sierra Matchking bullets. To check performance with standard-weight bullets, I fired some groups with Hornady 55-grain V-Max ammo, also known for great accuracy performance.

I first measured the velocity of the various types of test ammo. I set up a Shooting Chrony Beta Master Chronograph 15-feet down range and fired ten-shot strings through that to get some decently reliable average velocities, extreme spread, and standard deviation figures.

Ammunition	Average Velocity	Extreme Spread	Standard Deviation
Nexus Match Grade	2,622.8 fps	54.0 fps	15.45

77-grain Sierra			
Matchking			
Norma Match 223			
77-grain Sierra	2,533.8 fps	90.0 fps	30.03
Matchking			
Hornady 55-grain V- Max	2,832.7 fps	NA	NA

To test precision, I mounted a [Burris XTR II 2-10x42mm](#) optic. This particular 34mm tube optic has the SCR MOA reticle which offers very fine crosshairs to facilitate precise aiming. That and the 10x magnification gave me reasonable confidence that I could remove most of the “human eyesight” error from accuracy testing. I used a Blackhawk! Titan III rest with a rear bag and anchored it to the shooting bench with a 25-pound bag of lead shot.



For accuracy testing, I mounted this Burris XTR II 2-10×42 scope.

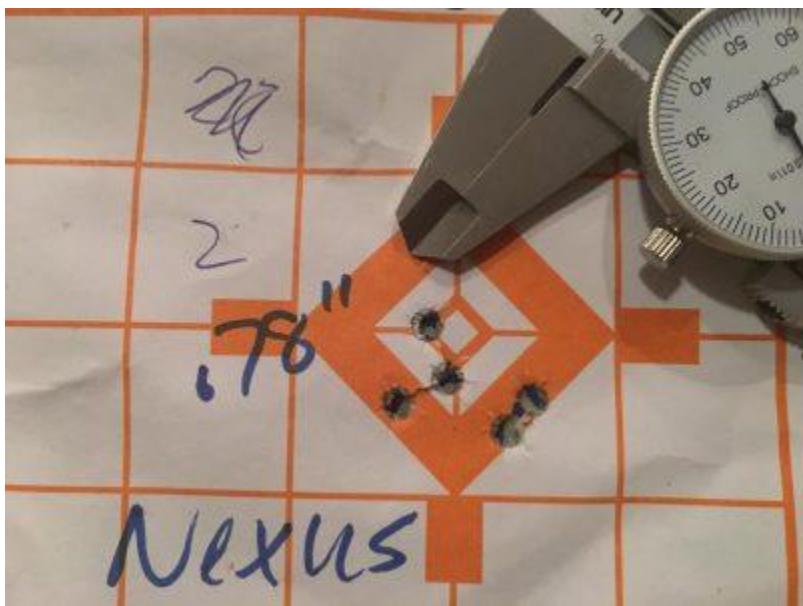
To get a decent indication of the precision of the various combinations of rifle and ammunition, I shot multiple five-shot groups with each ammo type and averaged the group sizes, center to center. Here’s what I found:

Ammunition	Average Five- shot Group Size (inches)
Nexus Match Grade 77-grain Sierra	0.86"
Matchking	
Norma Match 223 77-grain Sierra	1.09"
Matchking	

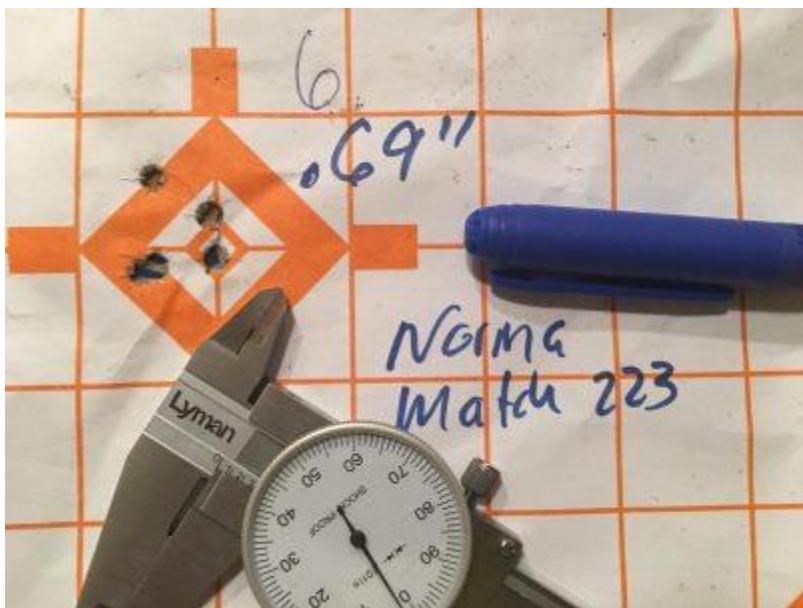
Hornady 55-grain V-Max

1.07"

As you can see, for a standard, mil-spec-ish AR-type rifle, the M-15 LTC is surprisingly accurate – among the best off-the-shelf models I've seen, and even more so considering the price point. While I didn't have the opportunity to test this hypothesis, I'd bet a wooden nickel or two that I could have shrunk those groups even more with an improved trigger. I had to work pretty hard to overcome the pressure and roughness of the trigger without blowing an otherwise perfect shot. Of course, an upgraded trigger won't do anything to improve mechanical accuracy, but it would help the shooter break a better and more predictable shot.



The Nexus 77-grain match ammo shot exceptionally well from the M-15 as evidenced by this 100-yard, five-shot group.



The best five-shot group using the Norma Match-223 77-grain ammo measured just .69 inches from 100 yards.

Functionally, the rifle ran like a champ. I shot plenty of standard 55-grain ammo and a few hundred rounds of 77-grain match ammo of various types, although both brands of that used the Sierra Matchking projectile.

I liked the feel of the rifle. The handguard is slim, and relatively short, which makes handling easy. The weight is only six pounds, but it handles even lighter due to the shape and proportions if that makes sense.

I also didn't mind, and even welcomed, the absence of built-in iron sights. The accuracy potential of this carbine lends itself to a quality optic, magnified or not, so I might only install lightweight backup sights if any at all.

Summing It Up

I didn't know what to expect with this rifle. With all the changes in the Armalite brand and underlying companies over the last 50-some years, it would be hard to make any assumptions one way or the other about the underlying quality of construction and components. Based on what I saw and shot with the M-15 Light Tactical Carbine, this is a winner. Yes, I'd upgrade the trigger pretty quickly, but there aren't a whole lot of sub \$1,000 rifles where I wouldn't do that particular operation right off the bat. Everything else is good to go as is so I would save my money for a big supply of 77-grain match ammo.

The bottom line? I think this rifle is an excellent deal. Its inherent accuracy capability is something you don't normally see in this price range and I think that's an indicator of the quality of components and care during the manufacture and assembly process.

For more information, visit <https://armalite.com/>.

To purchase an Armalite M-15 LTC or other M-15 variant on GunsAmerica.com, click this link: <https://www.gunsamerica.com/Search.aspx?T=Armalite%20M15>.



The Keymod-ready handguard allows you to mount gear on seven different angles around the guard.



Attention to detail was evident – everything was fit together seamlessly.



For accuracy, velocity, and function testing, I used a variety of factory ammo and plenty of my own handloaded 55-grain plinking ammo.







Thomas Jefferson wrote that "A bill of rights is what the people are entitled to against every government on earth, general or particular, and what no just government should refuse."

Thank you,
Paul Curtis
President - CARGO
www.cargogunclub.org

"If you can read this, thank a teacher. For the fact that it is in English, thank a Veteran."

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