



CZ 75B SA

MANUFACTURER: Ceska Zbrojovka a.s., 68827 Uhersky Brod, Czech Republic

IMPORTER: CZ-USA (Dept. AR), 1401 Fairfax Trafficway, Building B, Unit 119, Kansas City, KS 66115; (913) 321-1811; www.cz-usa.com

CALIBER: 9 mm Luger (+P), 40 S&W (tested)

ACTION TYPE: short recoil-operated, semi-automatic pistol

CONSTRUCTION: carbon steel frame and slide

OVERALL LENGTH: 8 $\frac{3}{16}$ "

FINISH: matte black

BARREL: 4 $\frac{1}{2}$ "

RIFLING: six-groove, 1:14" RH twist

HEIGHT: 5 $\frac{1}{16}$ "

WIDTH: 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ "

WEIGHT EMPTY: 37 ozs.

MAGAZINE: 10-round, double-column

SIGHTS: combat-type, low-profile with three white dots; post front, notched blade rear drift-adjustable for windage

TRIGGER: single-action with overtravel adjustment; 3-lbs. pull

STOCKS: two-piece, checkered, black polymer

ACCESSORIES: padded, black polymer carry case, extra magazine, magazine loading tool, metal cleaning brush, slotted plastic cleaning rod and keyed cable lock

SUGGESTED RETAIL PRICE: \$467



CZ 75B SA Pistol



Building on the success of its popular CZ 75-series of semi-automatic, double-action pistols, CZ has introduced a new, *single-action* model called the CZ 75B SA. In the 1970s, the classic CZ 75 design earned the grudging respect of pistol guru Col. Jeff Cooper—not a fan of double-action, semi-automatic 9 mms—because of its ability to be carried cocked and locked in M1911 fashion. Now fans of the single-action semi-auto can have all the positive features of the CZ 75 design without the double-action operation that such handgunners deem superfluous.

Built on a compact steel frame with a 4 $\frac{1}{2}$ " barrel, the new model is 20 mm shorter and 10 mm lower than the standard CZ 75 pistol. Despite its compact dimensions, the CZ 75B SA weighs a hefty 37 ozs. with an empty magazine. With the pistol's single-action-only fire control system and steel frame, this new model will appeal to those shooters who

With its steel frame and single-action-only fire control system, the new CZ 75B SA pistol in .40 S&W is certain to appeal to shooters who prefer single-actions that may be carried cocked-and-locked.

prefer a classic, Browning-based, M1911-type pistol.

Available in 9 mm Luger or .40 S&W caliber, the short recoil-operated CZ 75B SA is rated for +P ammunition. The pistol is supplied with two politically correct, 10-shot, steel magazines and a polymer magazine loading tool. Additional standard accessories include a metal cleaning brush, slotted plastic cleaning rod, padded carry case and keyed cable lock. A computer-rendered facsimile of the factory acceptance target and an illustrated manual come with each pistol. CZ provides a three-year warranty on parts and a one-year warranty on surface treatments and stocks.

We test-fired an example of the CZ 75B SA in .40 S&W sent to us by U.S. importer CZ-USA in Kansas City, Kan. Using sev-

The low-profile, three-white-dot sights on the CZ 75B SA pistol are solid and dependable—just the ticket for a defensive pistol. The rear sight is drift-adjustable for windage.

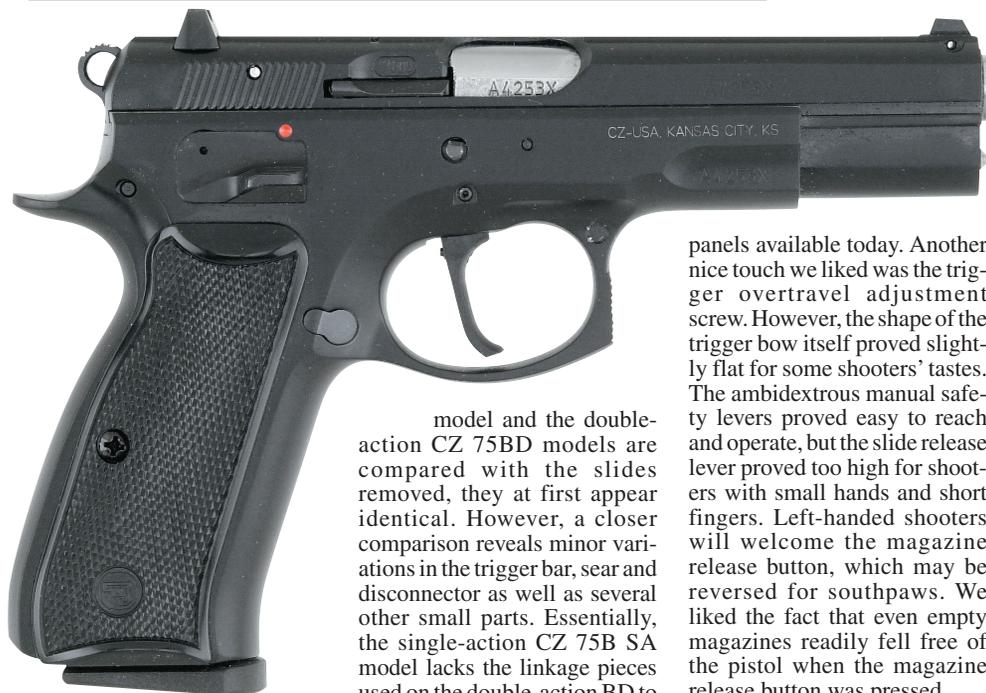


The *American Rifleman* has used the phrase "Dope Bag" at least since 1921, when Col. Townsend Whelen first titled his column with it. Even then, it had been in use for years, referring to a sack used by target shooters to hold ammunition and accessories on the firing line. "Sight dope" also was a traditional marksman's term for sight adjustment information, while judging wind speed and direction was called "doping the wind."

WARNING: Technical data and information contained herein are intended to provide information based on the limited experience of individuals under specific conditions and circumstances. They do not detail the comprehensive training procedures, techniques and safety precautions absolutely necessary to properly carry on similar activity. Read the notice and disclaimer on the contents page. Always consult comprehensive reference manuals and bulletins for details of proper training requirements, procedures, techniques and safety precautions before attempting any similar activity.

SHOOTING RESULTS

.40 S&W Cartridge	Vel. @ 15' (f.p.s.)	Energy (ft.-lbs.)	Recoil (ft.-lbs.)	Smallest (inches)	Largest (inches)	Average (inches)
Black Hills No. BH40JHP 180-gr. JHP	901 Avg. 15 Sd	324	4.6	1.12	3.16	1.90
Federal No. PD40HS4 135-gr. JHP	1124 Avg. 21 Sd	378	4.3	1.97	2.39	2.12
Hornady No. 9132 155-gr. JHP	1129 Avg. 21 Sd	439	5.5	1.56	3.52	2.50
Average Extreme Spread:						2.17
Measured average velocity for 10 rounds from a 4 1/2" barrel. Range temperature: 66° F. Humidity: 56%. Accuracy for five consecutive, five-shot groups at 25 yds. from a sand-bag. Abbreviations: Sd (standard deviation), JHP (jacketed hollow point).						



eral brands of JHP ammunition in various bullet weights, the CZ 75B SA lived up to the reputation already established by its predecessors—functioning was flawless. We also tested accuracy with results summarized in the accompanying table. With most standard loads, bullet impact coincided with point of aim. Perceived recoil proved modest partly because of the pistol's 37-oz. weight.

Like all CZ 75 pistols, the SA model has internal frame rails and a low bore axis. As we have mentioned before, we like these features. Internal frame rails help keep dust and dirt out of the mechanism while a low bore axis reduces perceived recoil and aids quick recovery for follow-up shots.

When the fire control mechanisms of both the single-action CZ 75B SA

We especially liked the CZ 75B SA's comfortable, checkered, black plastic grip panels.

model and the double-action CZ 75BD models are compared with the slides removed, they at first appear identical. However, a closer comparison reveals minor variations in the trigger bar, sear and disconnector as well as several other small parts. Essentially, the single-action CZ 75B SA model lacks the linkage pieces used on the double-action BD to cock and release the hammer. These consist of the disconnector and sear, which are absent or different according to requirement. Other differences include a longer trigger bar on the BD model and decocking levers on the double-action BD model replaced by safety levers on the single-action CZ 75B SA.

Everyone who fired this pistol gave very high marks to the comfortable grip panels. CZ really deserves credit for designing some of the most comfortable factory plastic grip

panels available today. Another nice touch we liked was the trigger overtravel adjustment screw. However, the shape of the trigger bow itself proved slightly flat for some shooters' tastes. The ambidextrous manual safety levers proved easy to reach and operate, but the slide release lever proved too high for shooters with small hands and short fingers. Left-handed shooters will welcome the magazine release button, which may be reversed for southpaws. We liked the fact that even empty magazines readily fell free of the pistol when the magazine release button was pressed.

Where it counts, workmanship and quality on the CZ 75B SA remains above reproach. However, fit and finish could stand improvement. Compared to the bad old days of communist control when fit and finish did not count on a firearm, CZ has made great improvements in this area; however, further improvements to fit and finish on internal surfaces would be welcome.

Balance and handling of the CZ 75B SA are excellent. Because of that, the pistol does not feel heavy despite the num-

In similar manner to earlier CZ 75 pistols, the CZ 75B SA breaks down easily into its major components for cleaning and routine maintenance.



bers on the scale. However, for concealed, all-day carry, the weight becomes much more noticeable. For that reason, the 27-oz. CZ 75D compact model with an aluminum alloy frame may be a better choice for some users, although the fire control system on that model is double-action/single-action with a decocking lever. The CZ 75B SA tested had a pleasantly light 3-lb. trigger pull spoiled by a long take-up.

The CZ 75B SA comes equipped with frame mounted, ambidextrous safety levers, an automatic firing pin safety and a safety notch on the hammer. The manual safety levers block the trigger when applied, leaving the hammer in the classic, single-action cocked-and-locked position.

We liked the low-profile, three-white-dot sights. No nonsense here, just the basics in solid and dependable form as is proper for a defensive pistol. That said, CZ may wish to consider an adjustable sight option in addition to the drift-adjustable for windage rear unit on our test gun.

As the CZ 75 pistol design grows older, it seems to get better rather than becoming long in the tooth. This is because CZ remains dedicated to constantly meeting consumer needs with new models, features and options. This new model is a perfect example as it extends the appeal of the CZ 75 to single-action aficionados.



Merkel's 28-ga. 280 EL is a nimble and lively shotgun. Weighing a scant 5½ lbs., this is a shotgun we could carry afield or on a clays course the entire day.



Merkel 280 EL Side-By-Side

The land of the Suhl gun-makers has seen more than four centuries of significant change: Reformation, Counter-Reformation; wars with Austria, France and Prussia; two World Wars; the rise of the Iron Curtain; the fall

of the Berlin Wall and the uncertainties of a free economy—all of which have had an impact on shaping that area of the world. What has endured throughout the region, however, is the Old World craftsmanship built into guns.



The wood—like with other guns in the Merkel's league—is only a little proud around all metal edges save for around the trigger guard and fore-end latch.

One such example is the 28-ga. side-by-side Merkel 280 EL we recently received for test and evaluation.

In 2000, this model was a special run of 100 guns, and it became a production gun for 2001. The action is a petite, self-cocking, Anson & Deeley boxlock tastefully appointed with hunting scenes deeply engraved on its sides. Well-executed scroll work embellishes the bottom of the action, fences, trigger guard and top latch.

Lock-up is by way of an H-shaped locking block that engages Purdy-type double underlumps and is further augmented by a Greener crossbolt top lock. Deviating from the large-frame Merkel side-by-side shotguns, the gauge-sized 280 EL dispenses with the ornamental side clips on the standing breech that is instead squared off.

Barrels are cold hammer-

MERKEL 280 EL

MANUFACTURER: Merkel
Freres, Strasse 7
October, 10, Suhl,
Germany

IMPORTER: GSI, Inc.
(Dept. AR), 7661
Commerce Lane, P.O.
Box 129, Trussville, AL
35173; (205) 655-8299;
www.gsi firearms.com

GAUGE: 28

ACTION TYPE: Self-cocking Anson & Deeley boxlock, side-by-side shotgun

RECEIVER: Silver-grayed carbon steel

OVERALL LENGTH: 44½"

BARRELS: cold hammer-forged, 28"

WEIGHT: 5½ lbs.

TRIGGER: double; 5 lbs. pull both triggers

STOCK: straight-grip, oil-finished walnut: length of pull, 14½" (front trigger), 13¾" (rear); drop at heel, 2¾"; drop at comb, 1½"

ACCESSORIES: fitted luggage case

SUGGESTED RETAIL

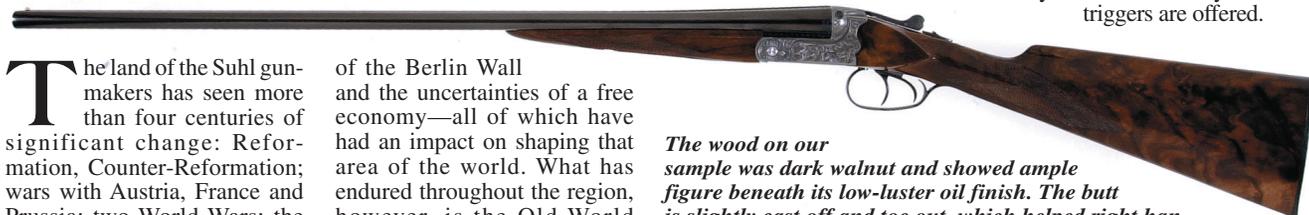
PRICE: \$4,995

forged steel joined by the demi-bloc system and topped by a solid rib with rope pattern grooves along its length. Bluing is deep and even and contrasts nicely with the silver-grayed receiver.

Typical of Merkel shotguns, the wood is a high grade of very dark walnut with ample figure and a low-luster oil finish. Hand-cut checkering is in a bordered point pattern of 22 lines per inch and, as this is universally a lost art, the few over-runs and flat points we observed were expected. That said, these cosmetic flaws were minor enough that most people will not even notice them. Wood-to-metal fit—another lost art—was as good as on any other shotgun in the Merkel's league that we've seen. The wood is only a little proud around all metal edges save for the trigger guard and Deeley-type latch in the splinter fore-end where it is flush.

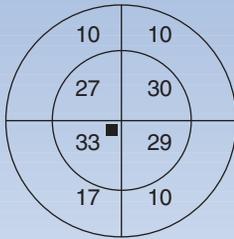
Holland & Holland-type ejectors are selective with no ready means of conversion to extractors, and the tang-mounted safety is automatic. Only double triggers are offered.

The wood on our sample was dark walnut and showed ample figure beneath its low-luster oil finish. The butt is slightly cast off and toe out, which helped right handers center the barrels when mounting the gun.

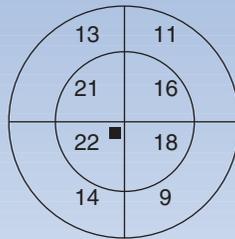


SHOOTING RESULTS

AVERAGE OF 10 PATTERNS AT 40 YDS.



Modified



Improved Cylinder

■=Point of Hold

Federal P283 7.5—28-ga.,
2¾"—¾ oz.—No. 7½ Lead
Average Pellet count—262
Measured Velocity @3-ft.—1168 f.p.s.
Remaining Energy Per Pellet @40 yds.: 1 ft.-lb.
Recoil: 14.3 ft.-lbs

Total Hits	166 (63%)	Total Hits	124 (47%)
21" Inner Circle	119 (45%)	21" Inner Circle	77 (29%)
30" Outer Ring	47 (18%)	30" Outer Ring	47 (18%)



The action is a petite, self-cocking, Anson & Deeley boxlock tastefully appointed with hunting scenes deeply engraved on its sides. The ornamental side clips have been dispensed with.

Chokes are marked "vz"—*verbesserte zylinder*—German for improved cylinder, and "1/2", the German designation for modified. Actual choke constrictions as measured with a Galzan barrel and choke gauge were .006" and .023", or improved cylinder and full, respectively. We patterned the Merkel with Federal Premium ¾-oz. No. 7½ shotshells with the results shown in the accompanying tables. Gauged against actual pattern percentages, the sample 280 EL shot patterns representative of improved cylinder and modified chokes as the barrels indicated, irrespective of the actual measured constrictions. There were several misfires attributed to light firing pin blows caused by not fully closing the top latch. Because the Merkel action is so tight, the top latch doesn't snap all the way closed and needs to be pushed into the fully closed position until the gun is broken in. The explanation given in Merkel literature and on GSI's website is that these shotguns are hand-fitted to extremely tight tolerances so the action can break-in under actual shooting conditions. Time precluded us from shooting the 280 EL until it was fully broken-in, but our experience in the past with Merkel shotguns is that the break in claims are true.

For function firing, we took the Merkel 280 EL on an afternoon ruffed grouse hunt in fairly thick eastern hardwoods. The chosen load was Winchester

Chokes are marked "vz"—*verbesserte zylinder*, German for improved cylinder, and "1/2", the German designation for modified. Actual choke constrictions as measured by a Galzan barrel and choke gauge indicated improved cylinder and full choke constrictions, but patterns were improved cylinder and modified percentages.

Super-X Long Range with 1 oz. of No. 8 shot. Typical of the area, the terrain was difficult to hunt because of the thick tangles of thorns and steep hill-sides. A heavier gun would have had us frustrated, tired and back in the truck much earlier. But thanks in part to the Merkel being a joy to carry afield, we managed to stay out the entire afternoon with the svelte small gauge. We also fired several rounds of sporting clays with it; the only hitch was the previously mentioned tight top latch.

Merkel's 28-ga. 280 EL is a nimble and lively shotgun. Weighing a scant 5½ lbs., this is a shotgun we could carry afield all day—and look good doing it, too. It comes quickly to the shoulder and solidly to the cheek, and the slight amounts of cast off and toe out center the barrels directly in front of the shooting eye of right-handed shooters.

Through eras of change global in scale, it's nice to know the German gunmakers continue to toil away making guns that serve their owners well, and even outlast governments. 



Lock-up on the Merkel Model 280 EL is by way of an H-shaped locking block (top) that engages Purdy-type double underlumps (above) and is further augmented by a Greener crossbolt top lock. Barrels are cold hammer-forged steel, 28" long with fixed improved cylinder and modified chokes. They are joined by the demibloc system and topped by a solid rib.



Anschutz 1730 Bolt-Action Rifle

ANSCHUTZ 1730

MANUFACTURER: J.G. Anschutz GmbH, Jagd- und Sportwaffenfabrik, Daimlerstrasse 12, 89097 Ulm, Germany
IMPORTER: AcuSport (Dept. AR), One Hunter Place, Bellefontaine, OH 43311; (800) 543-3150; www.acusport.com
CALIBER: .22 Hornet
ACTION TYPE: bolt-action rifle
RECEIVER: milled steel
FINISH: high-polish blue
OVERALL LENGTH: 43¼"
BARREL: 23½" stainless steel, 0.85" diameter
RIFLING: six-groove, 1:14" RH twist
WEIGHT: 7 lbs., 6 ozs.
MAGAZINE: five-round, single-column detachable steel magazine
SIGHTS: none
TRIGGER: adjustable, single-stage, 2½-lbs. pull
STOCK: walnut; length of pull 14"; drop at heel 1"; drop at comb 1"
ACCESSORIES: cable lock and manual
SUGGESTED RETAIL PRICE: \$1,295

Varminting east of the Mississippi often takes on a different flavor than one sees out West where a hunter scouts a ranch of more than a thousand acres from a truck in search of a dog town that may contain hundreds or thousands of prairie dogs. Consequently, the wise Western varmint hunter uses a heavy rifle suitable for firing from a bench and chambered for a cartridge with energy and accuracy suitable for hitting small targets at ranges of 200 to 500 yds. Obvious examples include the .22-250 Rem., .243 Win or .220 Swift. Back East, varminters often work a smaller farm on foot with a light rifle stocked for shooting from the prone or from improvised supports in search of a relatively smaller number of pests such as woodchucks. Because the ranges are generally less than 200 yds. and noise may be a factor if built-up areas are nearby, calibers such as .22 LR, .22 WMR and .22 Hornet rule the day.

Sporters in these small calibers accurate enough for

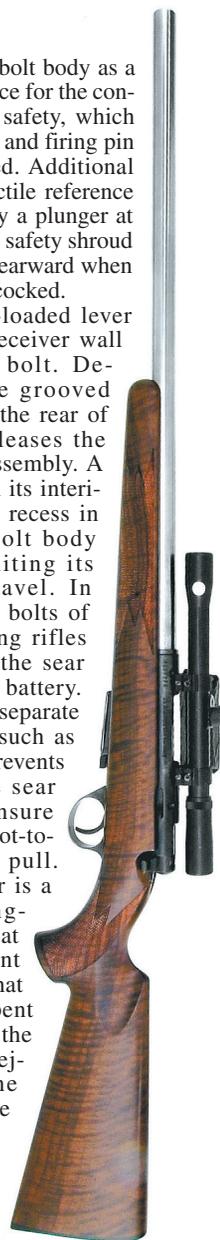
varminting are few and far between, but one maker American shooters may have overlooked in their search is Anschutz—the world-renowned German manufacturer of small-bore competition rifles.

Although best known for its target rifles, Anschutz has cataloged a variety of sturdy sporters for some time as well. Its 1700 series of sporting rifles are built around the proven Match 54 target action familiar to a generation of smallbore rifle shooters and is available in .22 LR, .22 Hornet and .222 Rem. chamberings. Three models are currently offered, including the European-styled Custom with rollover cheek piece, rosewood pistol grip cap and schnabel fore-end. As its name implies, the Mannlicher is stocked to the muzzle in traditional German hunting fashion. Also offered is the Classic, which features a stock profile popular among American sportsmen. We received a 1730 with the Classic stock in .22 Hornet for evaluation.

The non-rotating Match 54 bolt has a locking lug in its bolt handle ring that engages a recess in the left-rear of the handle also serves as a locking lug. The safety lever extends from the left rear of the bolt and is rotated upward to fire. A red "F" and a white "S" stamped into the safety shroud index against a red

arrow on the bolt body as a visual reference for the condition of the safety, which locks the bolt and firing pin when engaged. Additional visual and tactile reference is provided by a plunger at the rear of the safety shroud that extends rearward when the striker is cocked.

A spring-loaded lever on the left receiver wall retains the bolt. Depressing the grooved extension at the rear of the lever releases the bolt for disassembly. A projection on its interior engages a recess in the round bolt body thereby limiting its rearward travel. In contrast, the bolts of many sporting rifles are held by the sear when out of battery. The use of a separate bolt release such as the 1730's prevents wear on the sear and helps ensure consistent shot-to-shot trigger pull. The extractor is a small spring-loaded hook at the right front of the bolt that draws the spent case against the fixed blade ejector in the bottom of the



The Model 1730 is a varmint rifle that employs the same action as on Anschutz's Model 54 match rifles. The safety (l.) is on the rear of the rifle's receiver.

SHOOTING RESULTS

.22 Hornet Cartridge	Vel. @ 15' (f.p.s.)	Energy (ft.-lbs.)	Recoil (ft.-lbs.)	Smallest (inches)	Largest (inches)	Average (inches)
Remington 45-gr. JHP Express R22H2	2727 Avg. 21 Sd	800	1.1	0.42	0.72	0.58
Hornady 35-gr. JHP VX Varmint Express No. 8301	3198 Avg. 29 Sd	795	1.1	0.58	0.75	0.65
Winchester 34-gr. JHP Supreme No. S22H1	3183 Avg. 26 Sd	765	1.0	0.60	0.79	0.70
Average Extreme Spread:						0.64
Measured average velocity for 10 rounds from a 23.5" barrel. Range temperature: 66° F. Humidity: 56%. Accuracy for five consecutive, five-shot groups at 100 yds. from a sandbag. Abbreviations: Sd (standard deviation), JHP (jacketed hollow point).						



The Model 1730's bolt face is recessed to provide support for the rimmed .22 Hornet case. There is a locking lug on the left side of the bolt handle ring, and the bolt handle also serves as a lug.

receiver. The bolt face is recessed to provide support to the rimmed .22 Hornet case.

A gas-relief hole in the receiver ring above the extractor provides a margin of safety in the unlikely event of a case head failure or pierced primer. A recoil lug at the front of the blued steel cylindrical receiver engages a recess in the stock. Two large slotted machine screws pass through the trigger guard and stock and thread into the bottom of the Match 54 action.

The 1730's action is drilled and tapped for the attachment of center-fire scope bases and is also grooved to accept tip-off .22 scope mounts. Although the European custom and Mannlicher variants come with adjustable iron sights, the Classic is not provided with metallic sights.

The 1730's trigger is adjustable for pull weights from 2.2 to 4.4 lbs., and the sample rifle let off at a crisp 2½ lbs. Pull weight is adjusted by removing the action from the stock and turning a slotted screw in front

of the trigger blade. The blade itself is heavily recurved and grooved to improve the firer's control of the precision match trigger mechanism.

The 1730's action is fed from a stamped-steel, single-column magazine with a capacity of five rounds. To allow for easier grasping by the shooter, the floor plate is slightly wider than the magazine body and seats just short of flush with the stock. A stamped-steel magazine release catch at the front of the trigger guard engages a lump at the rear of the magazine and is easily manipulated by the trigger finger.

Anschutz's sporter barrels are lapped for smoothness, and the muzzles are carefully crowned and chamfered to the same tolerances as their match rifles. The 1730's 24", round-contour barrel measures to a medium-weight 0.825" diameter and features a recessed crown to protect the rifling origin.

The stainless steel barrel is free-floated in an American walnut stock of considerable figure. The stock's contour has



The trigger unit on the Model 1730 is adjustable for pull weight from 2.2. to 4.4. lbs. Our sample rifle's trigger let-off at a crisp 2½ lbs. out of the box.

a mix of target and sporting features common to varmint rifles meant to be shot from the prone or from a bench, including a high fluted comb with very little drop, a target fore-end and a generous pistol grip. Additionally, a synthetic butt-plate with horizontal grooves to keep the rifle from slipping off of the firer's shoulder. Checkering in a 18 l.p.i. double-bordered diamond pattern decorates the fore-end and pistol grip. Our example shows no flattened diamonds, but there are a few over-runs.

The Model 1730 was fired for accuracy, with results shown in the accompanying table, and function-fired with Winchester, Remington and Hornady ammunition. There were no failures of any kind. We tested the rifle with a 6X Leupold M8 compact scope in Millet tip-off mounts, and this combination certainly would seem a good one for Eastern ground hog hunting. Although the barrel is free-floated, we found that, as with many wood-stocked rifles, the 1730 would group best when supported near the receiver ring. If the bag was placed near the barrel resulting in erratic groups during the course of out testing.

Operation of the bolt was smooth and easy in general, but the safety lever was inconvenient for any sort of snaphooting because it is applied when moved down. This makes it easy to apply with the hand in

the shooting position, but almost impossible to flip off with the hand in the same place. Some might argue that this is a good safety feature, and it is certainly no handicap when shooting at the range or taking varmints from a supported position, but it doesn't help in making the kind of fast shots that can become available when stalking small game.

Fit and finish are what one would expect from a rifle in this price range. The bluing is rich, deep and evenly applied, and all exterior metal surfaces are polished so that no machining marks remain from the manufacturing process.

The 1730 is light and compact enough for carrying afield and balanced properly at the receiver ring making it ideal for shooting from improvised rests. Needless to say, few varmint rifles could make these claims. Additionally, there is no stacking or creep in the trigger; its precision brings a unique pleasure to the shooting experience and greatly simplifies accurate shooting. In sum, the Anschutz 1730 Classic should find favor among those looking for a light weight, short-range varmint gun with Anschutz match rifle features.



The stainless steel barrel (l.) has a round 0.825" contour and a recessed muzzle crown. No sights are provided on the 1730, but the receiver (below) is drilled and tapped for center-fire scope mounts and has grooves cut for tip-off mounts as well.



Armscorp USA M14 Rifle



ARMSCORP M14

MANUFACTURER:

Armscorp USA, Inc.
(Dept. AR), 4424 John
Ave., Baltimore, MD
21227; (410) 247-6200;
www.3wmguns.com/parts
/armscorp

CALIBER: 7.62x51 mm
NATO (.308 Win.)

ACTION TYPE: gas-operated, semi-automatic rifle

RECEIVER: CNC-machined investment cast steel

FINISH: matte, phosphate

OVERALL LENGTH: 44 3/8"

BARREL: 22", (25 3/8" with compensator)

RIFLING: conventional, four-groove, 1:12" RH twist

SIGHTS: blade front, peep rear adjustable for windage and elevation

MAGAZINE: detachable, steel, double column, 5-, 10- and 20-round

TRIGGER: two-stage, 5 1/2 lbs.-pull

STOCK: walnut or synthetic; length of pull, 13 3/4"; drop at heel, 3 1/4"; drop at comb, 2 3/4"

WEIGHT: 9 lbs., 11 ozs.

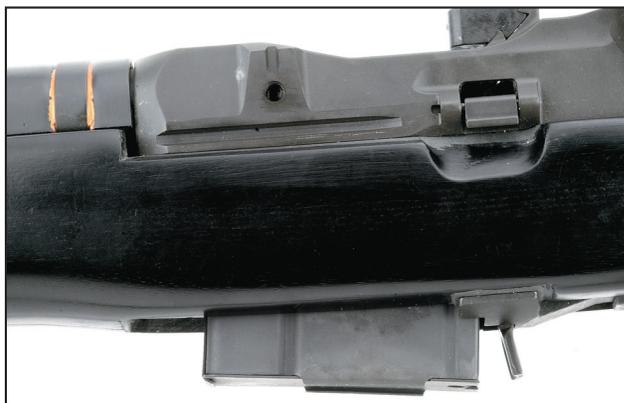
ACCESSORIES: one 10- or one 20-round magazine, sling, manual (scope mount base available at extra cost)

SUGGESTED RETAIL

PRICE: \$1,775 (Standard); \$2,695 (National Match); \$3,195 (M21)

Adopted by the U.S. Army in 1957 as the successor service rifle to the U.S. M1 Garand, the M14 was basically an M1 with a detachable magazine and an improved gas system. The M14 was the first U.S. service rifle chambered for the then new 7.62x51 mm NATO cartridge. Four manufacturers made 1,380,358 M14s before production ended only eight years later in 1964. Although its tenure as the standard U.S. Army service rifle was brief, the M14 soldiers on in U.S. military service as the standard service rifle for the U.S. Navy and, in M21 modified form, as a sniper rifle for the U.S. Army. The armed forces of Israel, Taiwan and South Korea have also used the rifle.

Despite its short military career, semi-automatic-only M14 variants, in particular the Springfield M1A, remain favorites of civilian marksman due to their familiar operation, rugged construction, ready availability of parts and moderate recoil. Another factor is that many traditionally inclined shooters prefer a .30-cal. rifle to the more recent .223 Rem.-cal. guns. Indeed, interest in and sales of civilian M14-type models have been increasing of late.



We found the workmanship, fit and function of the Armscorp USA M14 rifle to be good in every respect. The firm combines a new investment cast receiver with quality G.I. parts in its guns. Armscorp supplies one 20-round magazine and one five-round magazine with each rifle. Both magazines functioned flawlessly. The short magazine (above) looks surprisingly good.

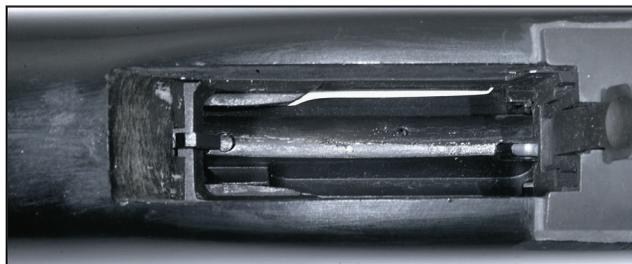
SHOOTING RESULTS

7.62x51 mm Cartridge	Vel. @ 15' (f.p.s.)	Energy (ft.-lbs.)	Recoil (ft.-lbs.)	Smallest (inches)	Largest (inches)	Average (inches)
Federal No. GM308M 168-gr. HPBT	2590 Avg. 19 Sd	2503	11.9	0.89	1.49	1.24
Hornady No. 80973 168-gr. HPBT	2597 Avg. 18 Sd	2516	12.0	1.04	1.26	1.12
Black Hills No. 2546-175-gr. BH308 175 HPBT	2520 Avg. 17 Sd	2467	11.5	1.21	1.45	1.32
Average Extreme Spread:						1.22
Measured average velocity for 10 rounds from a 22" barrel. Range temperature: 63° F. Humidity: 44%. Accuracy for five consecutive, five-shot groups at 100 yds. from a sandbag. Abbreviations: Sd (standard deviation), HPBT (hollow point boattail).						

Armscorp USA is a small manufacturer of civilian, semi-automatic-only M14-type rifles located near Baltimore, Md. The company offers several different models including a Standard Rifle, National Match Rifle and M21 Rifle. All have investment cast steel receivers CNC-machined in-house by Armscorp. Four different types of receivers are offered: standard, match, rear-lugged or double-lugged. They differ in the configuration and location of their recoil lugs. G.I. parts are used for much of the remainder of the standard rifle including the trigger assembly, barrel, sights, magazine and gas system. The M21 rifle is hand-built using National Match parts, a McMillan fiberglass stock and a heavy stainless steel, match-grade Douglas barrel. We received an example of the Standard Rifle with a match-grade receiver for test and evaluation.

Two things are readily apparent upon examining the Armscorp M14 rifle for the first time. The first is the heft of the empty rifle, which weighs 9-lb., 11-ozs. The second is the workmanship, fit and finish of the machined steel receiver and real walnut stock. This is truly a rifle made the old fashioned way with machined steel and walnut—no exotic alloys or polymer parts here.

Those intimately acquainted with the Garand and the military M14 will feel right at home with the Armscorp M14. The selective fire switch and mount have been deleted from the right rear of the receiver as has the cutout on the stock. Due to misguided legislation, the bayonet lug on the bottom of the front sight assembly has been deleted as well. Other than those changes, the rifle remains essentially as issued. Out-of-the-box, it comes with one pre-ban, 20-round G.I. magazine and one post-ban, five-round magazine.



Additional 20-round magazines can be purchased separately from Armscorp as well as from a wide variety of other sources.

Operation, assembly and disassembly procedures for the Armscorp M14 rifle are identical to military models except for those absent parts associated with the selective-fire operation. The rifle can be quickly and easily disassembled for routine cleaning and maintenance. In the unlikely event of a broken part, commonly available surplus G.I. parts should serve nicely.

The Armscorp M14 has a 0.190" threaded hole with a small notch above it on the receiver's left side flat intended for use with most M1A/M14 scope mounts. This hole/notch system serves to quickly and easily mount an ingenious billet steel scope mount base of Armscorp's design on the rifle. To install the mount, the clip charger guide is first removed by loosening its set screw and drifting it off the dovetail on the receiver. The scope mount has a matching groove that slides into the dovetail and a captive bolt that threads into the hole on the receiver to secure the assembly firmly in place. With the mounting screws treated with Loctite, the mount holds the scope solidly over the iron sights, which remain fully useable. Armscorp offers the scope mount base as an extra-cost option. We received one with the test rifle.

To test the solidity of the Armscorp system, we installed the base on our test rifle and then

mounted a 3-9x40 mm Weaver Grand Slam scope. The base itself weights about 14 ozs. That, together with the added weight of the scope rings and scope pushed the all-up weight of the rifle to well over 12 lbs. We then "fired the square" to test the ability of the mount to hold a solid group. As our fifth group was right on top of our first, we were able to verify the solidity of the mount. As the mount holds the scope over the existing iron sights, an additional pad on the stock's comb was necessary to properly position the shooter's head. For this purpose, we used a well-made, velcro-on unit from Blackhawk.

We function tested the Armscorp M14 with two different brands of military 7.62x51 mm M80 Ball and two different brands of commercial ball ammunition in .308 Win. caliber. We experienced no malfunctions of any type. After breaking in the rifle with ball ammunition, we subjected it to a well-deserved cleaning then switched to match-grade .308 Win. ammunition with 168-gr. HPBT bullets to test accuracy. We elected not to use the scope and mount for the accuracy tests. The Armscorp M14 delivered very good accuracy for a standard rifle. The results of these tests are summarized in the accompanying table.

In shooting the Armscorp M14 rifle, it quickly becomes apparent why it is so popular among target shooters. Despite being chambered for a relatively powerful cartridge, perceived

recoil is moderate, being more of a sudden push rather than a bucking jolt. This is due to a combination of weight, stock design and gas operation. Combined, these attributes make shooting the M14 well an easy proposition. The shooter can concentrate on sight alignment and hold rather than bracing for heavy recoil. At 600 yds., the M14 competitor yields nothing while the average AR-15 shooter is scrambling.

We found that the trigger on our test sample broke crisply at 5¼ lbs. with very little take-up after approximately 1/4" of slack, which is appropriate to a rifle of this type.

For competition, M14 shooters will prefer the 20-round magazine as its base can be used as a palm rest when shooting offhand. Highpower match rules also call for one magazine change in 20-shot rapid-fire events, thus requiring two 20-round magazines. We found the short five-round magazine supplied with the rifle handy and easy to insert and remove despite its uncommon length. It also looks surprisingly at home when inserted in the rifle.

All this CNC-machined steel, walnut and hand fitting are not only old technology, they are expensive by modern standards. This is why an Armscorp M14 standard rifle carries a suggested retail price of \$1,775. But modern military-style rifles made from exotic alloys and synthetics cost as much or more, and, besides, the Armscorp M14 is a classic the likes of which we do not see very often these days.

Some reasons M14-style rifles remain popular are the familiar operation, moderate recoil and the availability of spare parts.

