



## DPMS PANTHER 5.56 SPORTICAL CARBINE

**A**lthough a dizzying array of AR-style rifles is available today, many of them range from simply pricey to extremely expensive. At odds with this trend is DPMS Inc.'s Panther 5.56 Sportical, an AR-style carbine that retails for just under \$700. In fact, the 5.56x45 mm rifle's unique moniker presages its intended purpose—namely bridging the gap between the sporting and tactical markets.

The Sportical is something of a hybridization of two of DPMS' previous carbine designs, namely the Panther Lo-Pro Classic and the Panther Lite 16. The former is a bull-barreled rifle with a slab-sided, flat-top upper that is generally intended for precision shooting, plinking and competition. The Lite 16 is a more traditionally configured AR-style rifle, featuring a fixed carry handle and a light contour barrel.

The heart of the 5.56 Sportical is the flat-top upper receiver it shares with the Lo-Pro Classic. Rather than a more conventional 7075-T6 alloy upper receiver, the Sportical's hard-coat anodized upper is made from more

cost-effective, extruded 6066-T6 aluminum alloy. In addition to the differences in material and construction from a more conventional upper, the Lo-Pro-style upper also features a Spartan slab-sided exterior with no forward assist, shell deflector or dustcover on its right side. Also, it features a larger exterior diameter of just over 1½" as compared to a slimmer 7075-T6 upper.

As cost effectiveness is a key concept of the Sportical, the rifle does not come with sights. DPMS recognized that most users plan on equipping the rifle with some sort of optic and would not want to pay for parts they would just remove later anyway. The Sportical also shares another feature with the Lo-Pro Classic—a flat-topped gas block with a strip of Picatinny rail.

Rather than employing a heavy bull barrel like the Lo-Pro, the Sportical instead features a phosphated 4140 chrome-moly steel light contour 16" barrel similar to that of the Lite 16, contributing to the Sportical's feathery-light weight of 6 lbs., 5 ozs. The barrel has an

exterior diameter of 0.642" along its length and is topped off with an A2-style flash hider. The barrel's button-rifled bore has six grooves with a 1:9" right-hand twist.

The lower is a standard forged 7075-T6 aluminum alloy hard-coat anodized receiver with an A2-style pistol grip and non-ambidextrous safety lever. Anyone familiar with the operation of any other DPMS A-15 rifle, or any other AR-style rifle for that matter, will find no surprises here.

Although the price would lead one to think that this is a no-frills offering, the rifle actually has several upgrades over a more traditional AR-pattern carbine. In particular, the rifle features a set of DPMS' Glacier Guards, a fiber-reinforced polymer handguard that dispenses with the standard internal aluminum heat shield and instead employs 15 internal fins or ribs to help dissipate heat. In addition, the ribs add structural strength. DPMS claims that the heat-resistant polymer of the handguards allows them to resist temperatures of up to 500° F. The handguards also feature 15 external ribs that mirror the internal cooling ribs and add

## SHOOTING RESULTS (100 YDS.)

.223 REM. CARTRIDGE	VEL. @ 15' (F.P.S.)	ENERGY (FT.-LBS.)	GROUP SIZE IN INCHES		
			SMALLEST	LARGEST	AVERAGE
<b>BLACK HILLS 60-GR. V-MAX</b>	2871 AVG. 35 SD	1,098	0.98	1.17	1.08
<b>REMINGTON-UMC 55-GR. No. L223R3</b>	3017 AVG. 15 SD	1,112	1.08	2.57	1.95
<b>WINCHESTER No. X223R2 64-GR. POWER POINT</b>	2740 AVG. 39 SD	1,067	1.33	1.68	1.43
<b>AVERAGE EXTREME SPREAD</b>					1.49
MEASURED AVERAGE VELOCITY FOR 10 ROUNDS FROM A 16" BARREL. RANGE TEMPERATURE: 80° F. HUMIDITY: 60%. ACCURACY FOR FIVE CONSECUTIVE, FIVE-SHOT GROUPS AT 100 YDS. FROM A SANDBAG. ABBREVIATIONS: SD (STANDARD DEVIATION).					

## DPMS SPORTICAL

**MANUFACTURER:** DPMS FIREARMS, LLC (DEPT. AR), 3312 12TH ST. S.E., ST. CLOUD, MN 56304; (800) 578-3767; WWW.DPMSINC.COM  
**CALIBER:** 5.56x45 MM (.223 REM.)  
**ACTION TYPE:** DIRECT GAS IMPINGEMENT, SEMI-AUTOMATIC, CENTER-FIRE RIFLE  
**RECEIVER:** UPPER, 6066-T6 EXTRUDED ALUMINUM; LOWER, 7075-T6 FORGED ALUMINUM  
**BARREL:** 16", PHOSPHATED  
**RIFLING:** SIX-GROOVE, 1:9" RH TWIST  
**MAGAZINE:** DETACHABLE BOX  
**SIGHTS:** NONE SUPPLIED; PICATINNY RAIL UPPER RECEIVER AND GAS BLOCK  
**TRIGGER PULL:** TWO-STAGE, 7 LBS., 4 OZS.  
**STOCK:** PARDUS SIX-POSITION: LENGTH OF PULL, 14¾" (FULLY EXTENDED); DROP AT HEEL, 1½"; DROP AT COMB, 1½"  
**OVERALL LENGTH:** 36½" (FULLY EXTENDED)  
**WEIGHT:** 6 LBS., 5 OZS.  
**ACCESSORIES:** TWO 30-ROUND MAGAZINES, NYLON WEB SLING, CLEANING KIT  
**SUGGESTED RETAIL PRICE:** \$699



additional gripping surface area.

Matching the upgraded handguards is DPMS' Pardus six-position collapsing stock. As opposed to a more traditional AR collapsing stock assembly, the fiber-reinforced Zytel Pardus unit has four integrated sling attachment slots, a curved "saw-tooth" buttplate and a redesigned length-of-pull adjustment latch with finger grooves. There are six length-of-pull adjustments ranging between 10¾" and 14¾".

The Sportical's fit and finish are quite impressive, with a level of quality that belies its affordable price. There was little to no play between the upper and lower receivers, and the anodized finish of the major parts matched evenly.

Handling the 5.56 Sportical reveals a sprite and handy little carbine that neatly splits the difference between the Lo-Pro Classic and the Lite 16. Unlike the nearly 8-lb. weight of the bull-barreled Lo-Pro, the Sportical's light weight brings it more in line with


*The DPMS Panther 5.56 Sportical's reasonable cost leaves users with more money for accessories, such as this Leupold Mark 4 CQ/T and a set of Brownells tactical flip-up sights. The Sportical features a gas block equipped with a strip of Picatinny rail and DPMS' "Glacier Guards," which employ 15 internal fins that help dissipate heat. The rifle's Spartan slab-sided 6066-T6 extruded aluminum receiver lacks a forward assist, a shell deflector and a dustcover.*

the Lite 16, while the Lo-Pro-style upper receiver lends it a great deal more flexibility regarding optics than the fixed carry handle of the Lite 16.

As the Sportical comes without sights, we chose to mount a Leupold Mark 4 CQ/T, as the carbine's reasonable cost allows users a little more latitude in purchasing a high-quality optic such as this one. For the more budget conscious, a set of iron sights such as Brownells' tactical flip-up iron sights make for a good choice.

For testing, we chose three loadings raging in bullet weights from 55 grs. to 64 grs. Due to its light weight and handy size, the 5.56 Sportical was a pleasure to

handle and shoot. Over the course of a several hundred rounds, there was not a single malfunction. Also of note is the fact that a southpaw evaluator had no problem whatsoever with ejecting cases despite the fact that there is no shell deflector on the upper receiver. Accuracy was outstanding, with all three loadings shooting extremely well, although it did exhibit a preference for the Black Hills load.

With excellent fit and finish and extremely good accuracy, the DPMS Panther 5.56 Sportical should appeal to more than just sporting and tactical shooters. In fact, it should appeal to anyone who simply appreciates a high-quality product for a reasonable price. 





# CIMARRON BUNTLINE .45 COLT REVOLVER

**T**he lure of the frontier West still calls American shooters. Many compete in the popular Cowboy Action matches, and many more just like to own and use the familiar arms of that period. Virtually all of the major Colt, Remington, Smith & Wesson, Winchester, Sharps, Marlin and other guns that were in active use circa 1865-1900 are available once again. It is even possible to buy guns that would have been special orders in days past. The Cimarron Firearms Wyatt Earp Buntline revolver is a perfect example of a limited-production firearm from the past available off-the-shelf today.

Most shooters are aware of the Western legend regarding the Buntline. A Western dime novelist named E.C. Judson (who used the *nom de plume* Ned Buntline) purportedly ordered five Buntlines from Colt and presented them to five leading Kansas lawmen. According to the story, the main characteristic of these guns was a longer than standard barrel and, possibly, provision for attaching a skeletonized metal shoulder stock. Although it cannot be verified, the story has been repeated often enough that it is now part of the lore of the West. In those years, Colt would build almost anything that the customer wanted and a few

long-barreled (12" and 16") Peacemakers have surfaced, so it remains possible. Colt actually built several thousand Buntlines in the post-World War II era. When Hollywood armors wanted to equip their actors for the major film "Tombstone," they turned to Cimarron for a Buntline. That pattern replica revolver is now available.

Made by Uberti in Italy and imported by Cimarron of Fredericksburg, Texas, the Buntline is an excellent replica of an actual Peacemaker. All lines and curves of the original gun are there, and the fit of major assemblies is near perfect. The mating of the trigger guard to the bottom flat of the main frame is an example, as is the fit of the one-piece walnut grips to the backstrap. Authentic replicating carries over to the use of a so-called "bullseye" head on the ejector rod and the fine checkering on the hammer spur. Even the sights are close to what you could expect on a period gun—a V-notch rear sight cut in the top of the frame and a thin, tapered post front sight. Only in the case coloring do we find something less than most Colts, in that the colors are not quite so vivid. Considering the relatively modest price of the Wyatt Earp Buntline, it is a great buy.

The gun's special features add to its appeal. First, there is a long, tapered barrel that is 10" in overall length. This is actually shorter than the traditional Buntline lengths, but it is an excellent compromise, giving the gun a muzzle-heavy feel and long sighting radius. In keeping with the gun's use in a fictional film, the maker fitted it with a shield-shaped presentation plate in the right side of the grip. Cast of sterling silver, the plate reads "Wyatt Earp—Peacemaker—From The Grateful Citizens of Dodge City—April 1878 8th." The grips are cut from handsome reddish-brown walnut with nice figure and have a high-gloss varnish finish. Further, the action is of the traditional Peacemaker style that delivers the well-known four clicks as the hammer moves from all the way down to all the way back. It should be carried with the hammer down on an empty chamber.

The Wyatt Earp Cimarron loads through a loading gate on the right side of the frame. About 3 lbs. of pressure on the trigger drops the hammer and fires the gun. Note that this is not a short-action revolver and the lock time is considerable. This long hammer fall—along with a longer barrel time—means that the shooter must follow through, holding sight alignment just a bit longer.




For proper cleaning of the gun, Cimarron uses a quick and easy means of removing the cylinder from the frame. This revolver has the so-called "blackpowder" frame with the cylinder screw entering the frame at an angle from the front. Usually, this screw is a slot-head type, which requires a proper driver. On Cimarrons, the screw is a knurled thumbscrew type, which is easy to undo with the fingers. A proper slotted screw is included in the shipping carton for history buffs.

The Cimarron Buntline loads through a loading gate on the right side of its case-colored frame (above). It comes with two cylinder screws, the knurled style (above, l.) and the more traditional slotted style.

In shooting at the range, three different loads were used. One was a .45 Schofield (a.k.a., .45 S&W or .45 Short Colt) and the other two were .45 Colts. All of the ammunition was mild stuff, loaded to SASS specifications for close-range competition. While velocities were not particularly fast, accuracy was excellent. Hand-held on a bench, the Wyatt Earp shot five-shot groups as small as 1.76" and averaged just under 3"

for all loads. It would seem that the Uberti craftsmen paid attention to more than the looks of this gun.

While the gun may have been primarily designed as a presentation piece to commemorate the life and legend of a famous frontier lawman, it is still a finely fitted and finished revolver with no small appeal as a shooter. If Wyatt Earp had one of these revolvers, he would have shot it, too. 

## CIMARRON BUNTLINE

**MANUFACTURER:** A.UBERTI SpA,  
VIA ARTIGIANI, 1 25063 GARDONE V.T  
(BS) ITALY

**IMPORTER:** CIMARRON FIREARMS CO.  
(DEPT. AR), 105 WINDING OAK ROAD,  
FREDERICKSBURG, TX 78624;  
(830) 997-9090;  
WWW.CIMARRON-FIREARMS.COM

**CALIBER:** .45 COLT

**ACTION TYPE:** SINGLE-ACTION  
CENTER-FIRE REVOLVER

**FRAME:** CASE-COLORED STEEL

**BARREL:** 10"

**RIFLING:** SIX-GROOVE, 1:16" RH TWIST

**CYLINDER CAPACITY:** SIX

**SIGHTS:** FIXED, V-NOTCH REAR,  
BLADE FRONT

**TRIGGER PULL:** 3 LBS., 6 OZS.

**OVERALL LENGTH:** 15½"

**WIDTH:** 1⅞"

**HEIGHT:** 5"

**WEIGHT:** 42¼ OZS.

**ACCESSORIES:** MANUAL; EXHIBITION CASE  
AVAILABLE AT EXTRA COST (\$253)

**SUGGESTED RETAIL PRICE:** \$700

## SHOOTING RESULTS (25 YDS.)

.45 SCHOFIELD CARTRIDGE	VEL. @ 12' (F.P.S.)	ENERGY (FT.-LBS.)	GROUP SIZE IN INCHES		
			SMALLEST	LARGEST	AVERAGE
BLACK HILLS. 180-GR. FPL	777 Avg. 33 SD	241	2.80	3.69	3.25
.45 COLT CARTRIDGE	VEL. @ 12' (F.P.S.)	ENERGY (FT.-LBS.)	GROUP SIZE IN INCHES		
			SMALLEST	LARGEST	AVERAGE
GREAT BASIN 160-GR. LRN	852 Avg. 41 SD	258	2.67	3.31	3.03
PMC 250-GR. 250-GR. LFP	788 Avg. 19 SD	345	1.76	2.84	2.21
AVERAGE EXTREME SPREAD					2.83
MEASURED AVERAGE VELOCITY FOR 10 ROUNDS FROM A 10" BARREL MEASURED WITH AN OEHLER MODEL 35 CHRONOGRAPH. RANGE TEMPERATURE: 69° F. HUMIDITY: 21%. ACCURACY FOR FIVE, CONSECUTIVE, FIVE-SHOT GROUPS AT 25 YDS. FROM A SANDBAG REST. ABBREVIATIONS: FPL (FLAT-POINT LEAD), LRN (LEAD ROUND NOSE), LFP (LEAD FLAT-POINT), SD (STANDARD DEVIATION).					

The *American Rifleman* has used the phrase "Dope Bag" since at least 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.