

DOPE BAG

Dope Bag is compiled by Staff and Contributing Editors: David Andrews, Hugh C. Birnbaum, Bruce N. Canfield, Russ Carpenter, O. Reid Coffield, William C. Davis, Jr., Pete Dickey, Charles Fagg, Robert W. Hunnicutt, Mark A. Keefe, IV, Angus Laidlaw, Scott E. Mayer, Charles E. Petty, Robert B. Pomeranz, O.D., Charles R. Suydam and A.W.F. Taylerson.

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SMITH & WESSON SW380 PISTOL

THE calibers offered in Smith & Wesson pistols and revolvers over the years have ranged in power from .22 Short to .44 Mag, but one round conspicuously absent from the tally is the .380 ACP. S&W made a brief foray into the pocket auto market in the early part of the century, but that gun is now remembered only as a curiosity for cartridge collectors interested in its unique .35 S&W ammunition.

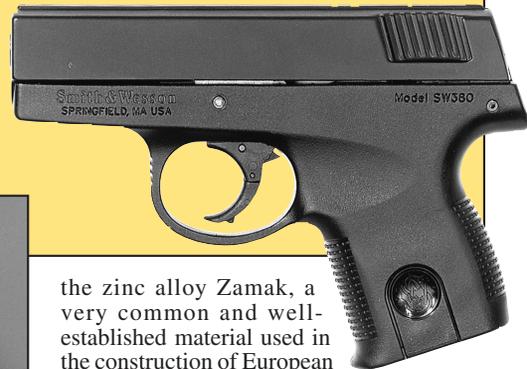
Perhaps the failure of that exercise deterred S&W from another foray into pocket pistols, as did the natural desire to emphasize its well-established Chiefs Special snub-nosed revolvers. More recently, the firm could point to its compact 9 mm autoloaders as a proper choice for concealed carry.

But as we have found (see story p. 42), there are some buyers who insist on the .380 caliber, whether for economic or other reasons, and so S&W has decided its best course is to give them what they want.

The new Sigma SW380 is something of a marketing departure for the Springfield, Massachusetts, manufacturer, too. At \$308, it is positioned between the products of firms like Davis and Lorcin at the economical end of the pistol spectrum and those of traditional S&W competitors like Beretta, Colt and



Smith & Wesson's SW380 is a big departure for the firm—a gun intended strictly for the pure defensive user rather than for the police or sporting pistol markets.



The slide top has a groove connecting the SW380's fixed front and rear sights.



the zinc alloy Zamak, a very common and well-established material used in the construction of European and economical U.S. pistols.

Zamak is easily die-cast and takes an attractive black finish, but is heavier than aluminum and has a shorter life than that metal or steel. S&W estimates the service life of the SW380 at about 2,500 rounds. This is more than a lifetime of shooting for most defensive .380 users.

An integral channel at the top of the slide incorporates the front and rear sights, which are small and non-adjustable, though it should be kept in mind that any defensive use of this pistol is likely to be at arm's length, and a smooth, non-snagging surface is more important in a self-protection gun than is precision sighting equipment.

Deeply recessed grasping grooves at the rear of the slide are a big help in retracting it. These worked well with any hand position we tried. The extractor is pivoted on a roll pin on the right side of the frame behind the generously-sized ejection port.

The slide also houses a passive firing pin safety to help prevent accidental discharges should the SW380 be dropped on its muzzle. A plunger in front of the extractor roll pin must be lifted by a projection on the trigger bar to allow the firing pin to move forward enough to touch off the chambered cartridge.

SIG. A quick perusal of the *Gun Digest* shows just two .380 autoloaders close to the SW380's price—the AMT DAO Back Up and the FEG B9R, guns whose names are probably unlikely to ring a bell with the first-time gun buyer.

Clearly, S&W is attempting to expand its customer base beyond the hard core of pistol fanciers to purely defensive users who know little about guns but who have heard the Smith & Wesson name.

Like the 9 mm and .40 S&W Sigmas, the SW380 has a polymer frame and a trigger-cocking lock with an articulated trigger blade. The similarities end there, however.

While the big Sigmas are recoil-operated with conventional steel slides, the SW380 is a straight blowback arm. The slide is made of

S&W SW380

MANUFACTURER: Smith & Wesson, Dept. AR, 2100 Roosevelt Ave., Springfield, MA 01102

MECHANISM TYPE: blowback semi-automatic pistol

CALIBER: .380 ACP

OVERALL LENGTH: 5 $\frac{1}{8}$ "

BARREL LENGTH: 3"

WEIGHT: 14 ozs.

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

HEIGHT: 4 $\frac{1}{8}$ "

MAGAZINE CAPACITY: 6

TRIGGER: trigger-cocking, 10 lbs. pull

SIGHTS: post front, notch rear

ACCESSORIES: disassembly tool, empty chamber indicator, plastic carrying case

PRICE: \$308

The SW380 lockwork is interesting and unusual. The trigger is articulated, following the design of the larger Sigmas. Its lower portion serves the same purpose as the trigger safety lever of Glock pistols—it prevents trigger movement unless it is depressed, again serving to help avoid accidental discharges if the pistol is dropped.

Pulling the trigger pushes the trigger bar

zine floorplate has two vertical catches that engage cuts molded into the interior of the grip frame. Pinching them inward allows the magazine to be removed. Spring tabs in the magazine box limit their travel.

We saw no easy way to remove the floorplate for cleaning the inside of the magazine; we suspect a special tool is required to depress the plastic tabs that hold floorplate to box.



The magazine is retained by twin catches at either side that engage cuts inside the grip frame. The system is secure, but not quick.

rearward against a buffered return spring. A projection at its rear serves as a disconnecter; it is pressed down, disengaging the trigger bar from the sear assembly, by a bump inside the slide except when the slide is in battery.

The sear assembly and ejector are part of a subassembly roll-pinned into the rear of the frame. As the trigger bar moves fully rearward, a cam surface on top of the sear meets a corresponding surface in the body of the assembly, pushing the sear down out of engagement with the tail of the firing pin, allowing that part to fly forward and fire the chambered round.

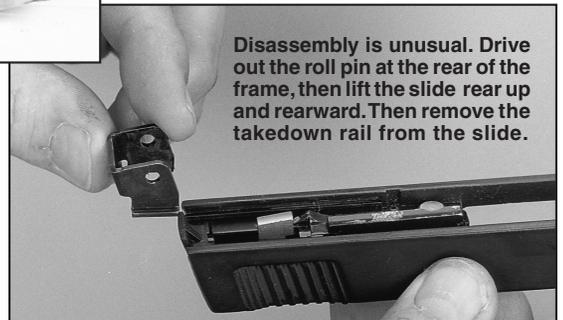
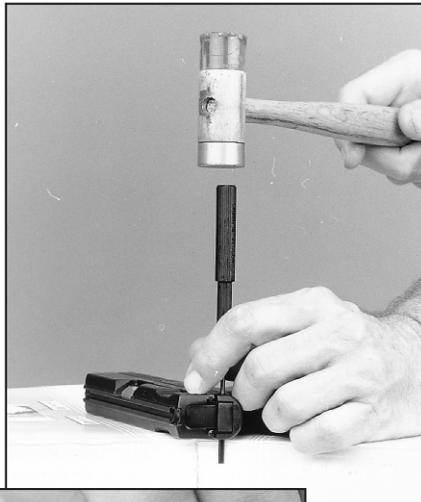
As the slide returns after ejecting the spent case, the disconnecter is activated, allowing the sear to pop up in the path of the firing pin tail in preparation for another shot. It is important to note that this system does not allow repeated trigger pulls on a misfired round; the slide must cycle before another attempt to fire can be made.

In contrast to the larger caliber Sigmas, in which the slide rides on Glock-style steel inserts, the slide is supported in the SW380 by a part called the takedown rail at the rear. There is a generous clearance between slide and frame, which provoked a lot of jokes when the Sigma was first introduced, but S&W defends it on grounds that it helps prevent jamming should foreign matter lodge there.

The six-round magazine is retained by a catch system heretofore associated more with cordless drills than with pistols. The maga-

ACCURACY RESULTS

.380 ACP Cartridge	Vel. @15' (f.p.s.)	Smallest (ins.)	Largest (ins.)	Average (ins.)
Geco 94-gr. FMC	870 Avg. 14 Sd	2.79	4.06	3.23
Rem. No. GS380B 102-gr. BJSP	917 Avg. 18 Sd	3.31	4.22	3.65
Win. No. S380 95-gr. JHP	862 Avg. 14 Sd	1.83	3.63	2.64
Average Extreme Spread				3.17
Five consecutive 5-shot groups at 15 yds. fired from sandbags. Abbreviations: Sd (standard deviation), FMC (full metal case), BJHP (brass-jacketed hollow-point, JHP (jacketed hollow-point), Rem. (Remington), Win. (Winchester)				



The SW380 has no user-optional safeties, and, unlike some other S&Ws, no magazine safety. A warning to this effect is molded into the frame, rollmarked on the magazine box and repeatedly emphasized in the instruction manual. There also is no slide stop, so an empty-chamber indicator is provided with the pistol for use at the range.

The grip frame is serrated at front and rear, as is the front of the trigger guard. Finger

grooves on either side of the grip behind the trigger help short-fingered users reach the trigger blade. The gun's serial number, both in numerals and a scannable bar code, is inlaid in front of the trigger guard.

The disassembly method is unusual, and will probably be the most controversial aspect of the SW380 for experienced pistol owners. S&W clearly figures most home-defense pistol users are unlikely to do a whole lot of cleaning, and so has traded ease of takedown for lower cost.

To disassemble, remove the magazine and ensure the chamber is empty. Support the gun, except for the extreme rear of the frame (we found a couple of telephone books did nicely). Using the supplied tool as a punch, drive out the roll pin, being careful not to lose it.

Next, grasp the slide and pull it rearward and upward; the motion will be familiar to Walther users.

Then allow the slide to move forward and off the barrel. The takedown rail then is free to slide out the rear of the frame.

The sear assembly is free to move up and down a bit in the frame, but is retained by the trigger bar. Take care not to dislodge the ejector from its place in the plastic body of the sear assembly.

The instructions warn against driving out any other pins. Having driven them all out and laboriously replaced them, we can heartily second that advice. The barrel, trigger and trigger return spring all must be aligned for the front roll pin to be replaced, and that's a lot easier said than done.

To reassemble, use the disassembly tool as a guide to replace the recoil spring and slide over the barrel. We found this helped keep the recoil spring from kinking. Keeping control of the slide, replace the takedown rail and align its holes with the holes in the frame. Then, using a non-marring mallet or similar tool, drive the roll pin back into place.

The SW380 was fired for accuracy with results shown in the accompanying table, and function-fired with Geco, Remington and Winchester ammunition. There were no failures of any kind, even when we tried to induce one by "limp-wristing" the pistol. The rear roll pin did have a tendency to walk out of the frame after 25 or 30 shots, but is easily tapped back in.

The SW380 clearly requires a different

standard of judgement than previous S&W pistols we've examined. There are plenty of S&W revolvers from World War I and even before in everyday use, and a decades-old Smith can be restored to like-new condition by the factory or any of dozens of top-level gunsmiths using well-proven methods.

The SW380 is not a gun intended to be used regularly for the next 100 years. No one has yet figured a way to make Zamak as durable as steel. Our sample gun showed noticeable wear on the underside of the slide and some battering of the ejection port after 150 rounds or so.

That said, the gun functioned flawlessly through as much shooting as a lot of defensive purchasers will do in a lifetime. The SW380 was also accurate by pocket pistol standards, with groups limited as much by the rudimentary sights as anything else. Groups formed about 3" low at 15 yds.

Ergonomics are excellent. Despite the stunted grip, recoil was never a problem, and keeping a secure grasp on the pistol was easy. The magazine release system probably won't be taking the IPSC circuit by storm, but it was



The disassembly tool is used to guide the slide over the recoil spring during reassembly. While the slide can be replaced without the tool, the process is easier with it in place.

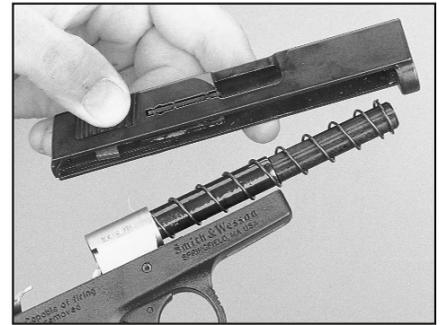
easy enough to use and allows a very smooth exterior. It would be a big drawback, however, for users who have some disability in the non-shooting hand.

Many who saw the pistol at the NRA Annual Meetings were disturbed by its take-down system, and it unquestionably comes off second-best to guns like the M1911 that have a military heritage. On the other hand,

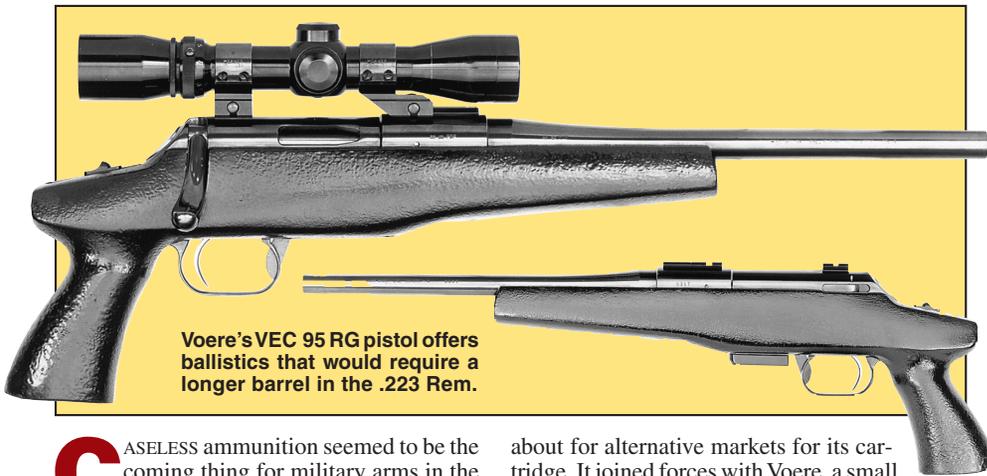
it's certainly easier to get to the working parts of the SW380 than to the insides of a revolver, and the SW380 buyer is more likely choosing between it and an inexpensive revolver than the new S&W and a .45.

We suspect a lot of the longtime readers of this magazine will see the SW380 as yet another sign that civilization as we know it is doomed. Fortunately, S&W has a traditional product line intended for them.

The SW380 is for the utilitarian, even the reluctant, gun buyer who will dutifully fire the occasional practice string but otherwise keeps a pistol for peace of mind. That purchaser will get his money's worth from the SW380. **NRA**



VOERE VEC 95 RG PISTOL



Voere's VEC 95 RG pistol offers ballistics that would require a longer barrel in the .223 Rem.

CASELESS ammunition seemed to be the coming thing for military arms in the middle 1980s, with both the former West Germany and the U.S. military actively pursuing caseless designs.

Doing away with the heavy cartridge case is a tremendous benefit for military users, who may need to airlift troops thousands of miles, as well as for defense planners who can find better uses for brass.

The end of the Cold War, however, chilled development of caseless designs. The Austrian firm USEL, which first began working on caseless ammunition in cooperation with Smith & Wesson in 1965 and had provided the ammunition for the Steyr Advanced Combat Rifle prototype, immediately cast

about for alternative markets for its cartridge. It joined forces with Voere, a small Austrian maker of sporting arms, to offer the VEC 91 rifle (May 1993, p. 38). Now the rifle has been joined by a pistol, the VEC 95 RG, that uses the same basic action.

The VEC 95 is conventional in general outline, but totally unconventional in its mode of operation. In place of a conventional primer is one designed to ignite only when a specific elec-

tric current at a specific voltage is applied. This is important to prevent the ammunition from igniting if exposed to static electricity, radar emissions, etc.

In place of a conventional firing pin, the bolt has an electrode that contacts the primer portion of the caseless cartridge when the bolt is closed on a loaded round. Pressing the tang safety button forward allows the two 15-volt camera batteries in the pistol grip to charge a capacitor (and illuminate a red pilot light in the tang).

Pulling the trigger closes the circuit, allowing the charge to proceed down the bolt, into the primer and out the copper-covered ejector, firing the cartridge in just 1 millisecond. Returning the safety button discharges the capacitor to help prevent accidental firing.

The VEC 95 RG's caseless ammunition requires an electronic ignition system powered by two 15V batteries.



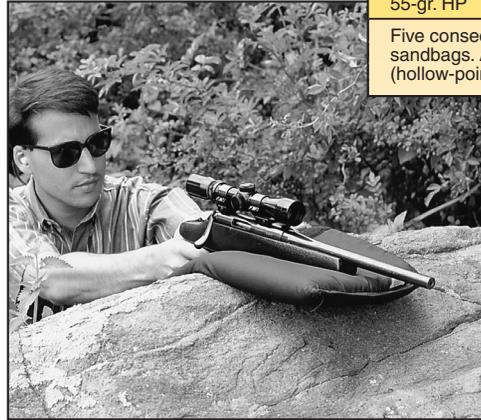
The batteries, available at most camera stores for about \$7 each, are retained by a coin-slotted cap in the base of the pistol grip, and are good for 5,000 shots, according to the importer.

The bolt itself is conventional enough at first glance, with two opposed locking lugs. These are angled at the front to mate with a cone-shaped collar at the front of the receiver that rotates to seal the rear of the cartridge. The bolt face has a small hook extractor for times when a loaded round must be ejected through the small contoured port in the pistol's receiver.

The trigger is adjustable for pull weight in a range of 7 ozs. to 7 lbs., according to the manufacturer. Our sample had a 2½-lb. pull as it arrived from the factory.

In contrast to the VEC 91 rifle, which had a front recoil lug trapped between barrel and receiver as in the Remington Model 700, the VEC 95 pistol's front lug is welded to the receiver ring, and the floorplate is doglegged

Though the VEC 95 RG would be an excellent choice for varmint hunting, few would care to work over a prairie dog town for several hours with ammunition that costs a breathtaking \$2 a round.



.223 UCC drove its 55-gr. bullet at velocities very close to those achieved with 40-gr. bullets in the XP-100. Pressures for the UCC cartridge are in the 55,000 p.s.i. range.

The faster lock time claimed for the electronic ignition system was imperceptible to us; perhaps it could be detected in a side-by-side comparison of two similar guns.

Bolt operation we found a bit stiff, a problem compounded by the limited clearance between the "butterknife" bolt handle and the 2-7X Burris scope fitted to the pistol. It took a vigorous shove to chamber the loaded round, though feeding from the magazine was smooth and reliable.

We also found that the bolt tended to contact the safety button in its travel, returning it to the safe position when opened, which is not so bad, but also pressing it forward to the fire position when it was closed, a much less desirable thing. This problem proved to be self-correcting, as the button wore down

ACCURACY RESULTS

.223 UCC Cartridge	Vel. @15' (f.p.s.)	Smallest (Ins.)	Largest (Ins.)	Average (Ins.)
JagerSport Lightning-Fire 55-gr. HP	3132 Avg. 19 Sd	0.08	0.58	0.34

Five consecutive 5-shot groups at 50 yds. fired from sandbags. Abbreviations: Sd (standard deviation), HP (hollow-point)

as we continued operating the gun's bolt.

The Remington XP-100 had an assembly called the trigger balance to help prevent accidental discharges should the pistol be dropped muzzle-up. The VEC 95 has no such mechanism, counting instead on a two-stage trigger. We pulled the bullet from a UCC cartridge, loaded it into the gun and dropped the piece grip-first about a dozen times, enough to chip the paint, without the round going off. This was at the factory pull setting of 2½ lbs., however, and those addicted to very light pull weights might want to conduct a similar test before taking a VEC 95 hunting at the minimum pull setting.

We found the VEC 95 RG a very accurate and pleasant gun to fire, and it certainly is a switch to open the bolt and have nothing at all pop out.

That said, the issue of ammunition cost and availability hangs over all the Voere caseless arms. The importer hopes to establish U.S. production of the ammunition in an



The VEC 95 RG was capable of one-hole groups at 50 yds., our standard distance for testing pistols chambered for rifle calibers. Shots on game at 100 yds. should be easy.

upward a bit to meet it. The sides of the magazine well are drilled through for weight reduction.

The seven-round steel magazine is retained by a catch that passes into the front of the trigger guard.

The sample pistol's stock was a black fiberglass unit that we thought rather unattractive for a gun in this price range. We also were surprised it wasn't provided with sling swivels, given the VEC 95's 5-lb. heft.

The VEC 95 RG was fired for accuracy with results shown in the accompanying table, and function-fired with UCC ammunition. There was one misfire, apparently a faulty round.

The first thing we noticed about the VEC 95 was its very soft recoil and report. Recoil struck us as about on the .38 Spl. level, while report reminded us of the .222 Rem., this despite velocities well in excess of those we got from the Remington XP-100 Varmint Special, a .223 with a 14½" barrel. In fact, the



The magazine held seven rounds of the .223 UCC ammunition, which originally was developed for military use, where eliminating the brass case would have great value.

effort to get the price down from the current \$2 a round.

The chicken-and-egg effect comes into play here—the price per round for the unusual caseless ammunition will come down only as volume increases, and volume can't increase so long as the price is high.

In the meantime, the VEC 95 RG is a very interesting and unusual arm that will appeal to the seasoned firearms fancier who's looking for something very different.

VOERE VEC 95 RG

MANUFACTURER: Voere GmbH, Untere Sparchen 56, 6333 Kufstein, Austria

IMPORTER: Jagersport, Ltd., Dept. AR, One Commercial Way, Cranston, RI 02920

MECHANISM TYPE: bolt-action pistol
CALIBER: .223 (5.7 mm) UCC (tested), 6 mm UCC

OVERALL LENGTH: 21¹¹/₁₆"

BARREL LENGTH: 12"

WEIGHT: 5 lbs.

WIDTH: 2¹³/₁₆"

HEIGHT: 6⁵/₈"

MAGAZINE CAPACITY: 7

TRIGGER: two-stage adjustable:

7 oz.-7 lb. pull

PRICE: \$1,495

SAKO FINNFIRE P94S



Sako has joined the quality .22 rifle market with the Finnfire, a bolt-action that follows some of the lines of the firm's TRG-S series of center-fire rifles.

THE Finnish firm of Sako, Ltd., is best known for its line of highly accurate and equally high-priced center-fire rifles. Less well-known are the firm's rimfire rifles, the only one reviewed here being the P72 (June 1979, p. 60). Styled after the then-current line of Sako center-fire rifles, the P72 was accurate, but our sample was plagued by magazine-feeding problems.

Sako's latest .22 sporter, the Finnfire P94S, is not an updated P72, but rather a rifle styled after the current TRG-S center-fire rifle (May 1993, p. 50).

The sample we received was stocked in satin brown finished walnut, checkered at 18 lines per inch in a bordered point pattern on fore-end and grip. A black plastic buttplate and sling swivels are included.

The detachable box magazine holds five rounds and is made of lightweight plastic. An optional 10-round magazine is also available.

No metallic sights are provided, but the receiver is dovetailed for a scope. The clamped-in free floating barrel is retained by two



Despite its full-sized proportions, the Finnfire is lightweight, at less than 6 lbs., making it easy to carry.

hex screws passing below the barrel to draw the slotted receiver tight.

Rather than having a recoil lug as part of the receiver, the Finnfire uses a loose steel plate set in a recess in the stock that engages a shelf at the rear of the action.

Like the TRG-S, the separate bolt handle with stem is screwed into a lug on the rear of the bolt body. Unlike the TRG-S though, this lug is also the locking lug, entering a notch cut below the bolt handle after first passing over a detent ball. Bolt lift is very short. As the handle is lowered, the rifle cocks and the cocking indicator emerges from the rear of the bolt shroud.

Extraction is by a long single claw on the right side of the bolt. The ejector is fixed.



The barrel is slip-fit into the gun's receiver and secured by two screws.

Bolt removal is accomplished by pulling it back and simultaneously pressing the bolt release button on the right side of the receiver. Bolt disassembly is generally unnecessary, but may be done by removing the bolt and uncocking it by turning the handle 1/8 turn clockwise. The shroud, cocking piece, firing pin spring and handle are then removed by driving out the rear pin. The firing pin and

SAKO FINNFIRE

MANUFACTURER: Sako Ltd., Sakokatu 2, 11100 Riihimaki, Finland
IMPORTER: Stoeger Industries, Dept. AR, 5 Mansard Ct., Wayne, NJ 07470
MECHANISM TYPE: bolt-action rifle
CALIBER: .22 Long Rifle
OVERALL LENGTH: 39½"
BARREL LENGTH: 22"
WEIGHT: 5 lbs., 10 ozs.
MAGAZINE CAPACITY: 5
RIFLING: 6-groove, RH twist
TRIGGER: single-stage, ¾ lbs. pull
STOCK: walnut; length of pull, 13¾"; drop at heel, 2"; drop at comb, 1⅞"
PRICE: \$685

return spring can be removed by driving out the forward pin. Reassembly of the rifle is in reverse order.

Two triggers are offered: a standard trigger, as on our test rifle, or a single-set trigger. Both are adjustable. The manual safety lever is located behind the bolt handle and locks the bolt when in the safe position.

The Finnfire was fired for accuracy, with results shown in the accompanying table, and function-fired with a variety of standard-, high- and hyper-velocity ammunition. There were no malfunctions of any kind. Trigger pull was crisp and light.

Standard velocity ammunition was clearly preferred by the Finnfire, with accuracy deteriorating with higher velocity ammunition.

Lowering the bolt handle took quite some effort. At first we suspected the difficulty was overcoming the detent ball, but it was determined that it was the beefy firing pin spring being compressed as the bolt was lowered and the gun cocked.

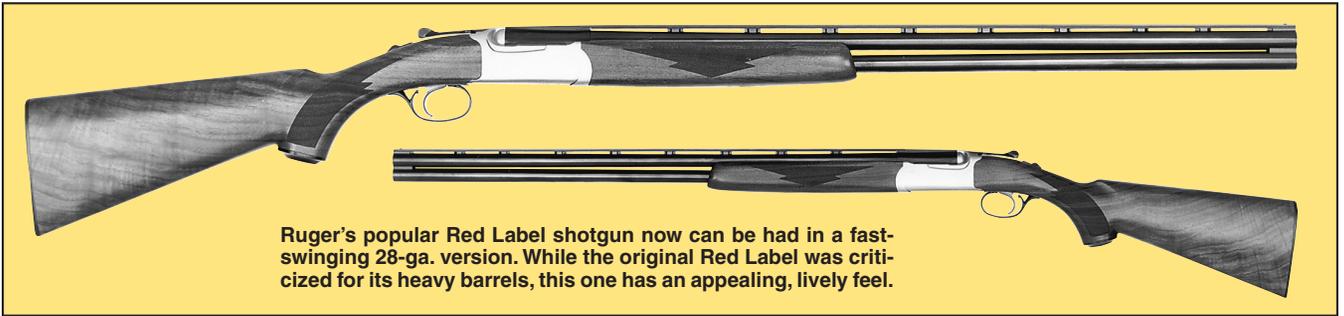
The price tag carried by this rifle will likely not appeal to those wanting to plink away with sale-priced hyper-velocity ammunition, but instead should find acceptance with those willing to pay for the accuracy characteristic of the Sako name.



ACCURACY RESULTS

.22 Long Rifle Cartridge	Vel. @15' (f.p.s.)	Smallest (ins.)	Largest (ins.)	Average (ins.)
CCI Green Tag	1098 Avg. 10 Sd	0.76	1.06	0.90
Remington THP	1429 Avg. 22 Sd	1.59	2.28	1.83
Eley HV Moving Target	1232 Avg. 33 Sd	0.81	1.66	1.18
Average Extreme Spread				1.31
Five consecutive 10-shot groups at 50 yds. fired from sandbags. Abbreviations: Sd (standard deviation), THP (truncated hollow-point), HV (high velocity)				

RUGER RED LABEL 28-GA



Ruger's popular Red Label shotgun now can be had in a fast-swinging 28-ga. version. While the original Red Label was criticized for its heavy barrels, this one has an appealing, lively feel.

THE popularity of small-gauge sporting competitions and of preserve hunting where small gauges are especially useful has led Ruger to offer a Red Label in 28-ga. The new Ruger shotgun can be had with 26" or 28" barrels, and with a straight-gripped or pistol-gripped stock.

The influence of the Sporting Clays model is immediately apparent in the absence of side ribs. While other Red Labels allow for easy removal of the ribs, the Sporting Clays comes

in the lithe 28-ga. version of the stackbarrel.

The safety remains automatic, with conversion to manual operation a factory option. Locking is by a bifurcated bolt that engages two lugs on either side of the breech face. Another cube-shaped block under the bottom barrel passes into a square mortise in the action body to help locate the barrel assembly.

The selective ejectors are powered by coil springs inside the monobloc and controlled by ejector sears in the stainless steel fore-end that are activated by cocking rods.

The hammer-forged barrels are silver-soldered into the monobloc and are topped by a medium-height .33" floating ventilated rib with bead front sight. The 1.5"-long choke tubes protrude slightly from the muzzle. The gun is supplied with full, modified, improved cylinder and two skeet tubes and their spanner.

The sample Red Label was stocked in an attractive grade of medium-brown walnut with plenty of reddish and black figure. Checkering was in a point pattern at 18 lines per inch. The 28-ga. Red Label was pat-

tern-tested with results shown in the accompanying table and function-fired with Federal and Remington ammunition. There were no failures of any kind.

Shotgun purists who prefer side-by-side doubles are prone to sniff that over-unders stand too tall in the hand and are popular only because Americans are weaned on rifles (we won't ask why Italians like them).

Traditionalists argue that the hands should be, as nearly as possible, in line. Also, they



The action has been slightly modified to allow easy cocking with the light barrels. Extended hammer struts (arrow) apply leverage to the gun's hammers at a higher point.

with none, and the 28-ga. follows that lead, for a more lively feel.

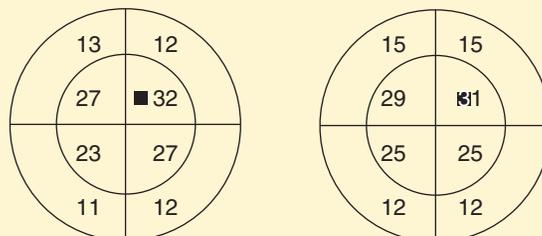
There have been some subtle, but useful, changes to the action. The investment-cast stainless action body is retained, as is the mechanical trigger and barrel selection by a pivoting safety button.

The change is a new system that replaces the low-mounted cocking cams with reshaped hammer struts whose forward tips contact the cocking rods that pass down either side of the action body bottom. As the barrels are lowered, the rods press on the strut tips. This applies force against the hammers at a higher spot for better leverage, reducing the cocking force required. This wasn't much of a consideration with the early heavy-barreled Red Labels, but is especially welcome

RUGER RED LABEL

MANUFACTURER: Sturm, Ruger & Co., Inc., Dept. AR, Lacey Pl., Southport, CT 06490
MECHANISM TYPE: over-under shotgun
GAUGE: 28
OVERALL LENGTH: 45½"
BARREL LENGTH: 28"
WEIGHT: 6¼ lbs.
TRIGGER: single selective, 4 lbs. pull both barrels
STOCK: American walnut: length of pull, 14½"; drop at heel, 2½"; drop at comb, 1½"
ACCESSORIES: choke tubes, spanner
PRICE: \$1,215

RUGER RED LABEL 28-GA.



■=Point of Hold
 Winchester Super-X Max.-1-6
 Pellet count—215
 AVERAGE OF 10 PATTERNS AT 25 YDS.

Total Hits	157 (73%)	Total Hits	164 (76%)
21.2" Inner Circle	109 (51%)	21.2" Inner Circle	110 (51%)
30" Outer Ring	48 (22%)	30" Outer Ring	54 (25%)

assert that the forward hand should be as close as possible to the bore line, something thought possible only with side-by-sides.

That objection goes by the board in the Red Label 28-ga. The barrels sit low enough in the hand that training the gun is as easy as looking down the index finger.

Some Red Labels we've tried in the past have had divergent trigger pulls, with one barrel requiring a noticeably heavier tug than the other. The 28-ga. was quite the opposite, with both of the triggers releasing quite crisply at 4 lbs. on the button.

While we've always respected the Ruger Red Label, we've found some niggling drawback in most previous versions we've tried. The 28-ga. is a Red Label we liked without reservation.