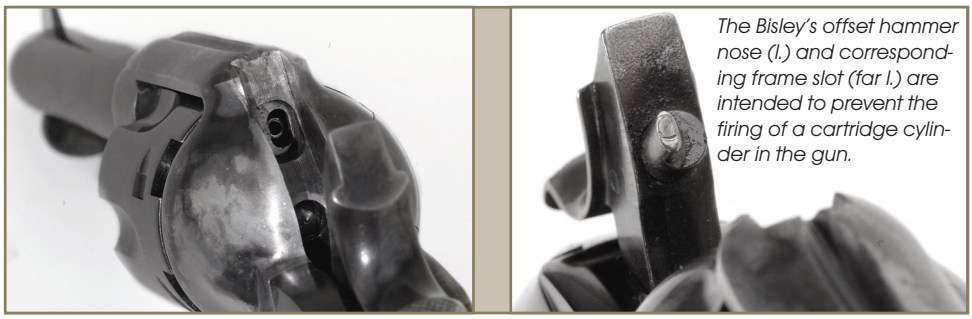
Cabela's Blackpowder Bisley

Cabela's, a firearm community staple for nearly 41 years, is well known to shooters and outdoorsmen for its exhaustive catalog of supplies and equipment. In addition to those products, Cabela's has for roughly the past 15 years been selling reproduction blackpowder revolvers, offering a balance of the more common styles and some less conventional models such as the double-action Starr revolver (Oct. 2000 p. 72). Unlike the Starr, which was a unique yet historically accurate reproduction, the new Blackpowder Bisley from Cabela's is a design unto itself. This revolver is, in simple terms, a reproduction made by Uberti of a Colt Single Action Army Bisley revolver that is redesigned to function as a blackpowder percussion revolver.

When asked why offer a Blackpowder Bisley, Cabela's Jerry Bramer stated, "We have been successful with the percussion version of the '73-Colt style revolvers and wanted to expand our offerings of these style



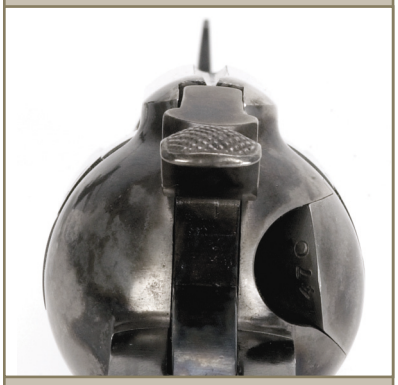
The Bisley's offset hammer nose (l.) and corresponding frame slot (far l.) are intended to prevent the firing of a cartridge cylinder in the gun.

CABELA'S BISLEY

MANUFACTURER: Aldo Uberti, Cassella Postale 43, I-25063,Gardone, V.T., Italy
IMPORTER: Cabela's (Dept. AR), One Cabela Drive, Sidney, NE 69160; (800) 237-4444; www.cabelas.com
CALIBER: .44
ACTION TYPE: single-action, blackpowder cap-and-ball revolver
FRAME: case-colored steel
BARREL: 4¾" (tested), 5½" available
RIFLING: six-groove, 1:22" LH twist
SIGHTS: notch in frame rear, blade front
TRIGGER: single-action, 3 lbs. pull
OVERALL LENGTH: 10"
WIDTH: 1⅝"
HEIGHT: 5"
WEIGHT: 41 ozs.
ACCESSORIES: padded handgun case
SUGGESTED RETAIL PRICE: $249

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."

Although in theory this is a target-style revolver, the Blackpowder Bisley sports fixed sights (below). A spring-actuated cylinder base pin latch allows the base pin to be removed from the front (bottom). Once the pin is removed, the cylinder can be removed by pulling it out from the side of the frame.



SHOOTING RESULTS

.44 Caliber	Vel.@ 15' (f.p.s.)	Energy (ft.-lbs.)	Group Size in Inches Smallest	Largest	Average
Speer .454" lead roundballs one Pyrodex .44-cal. Pistol Pellet CCI No. 10 percussion caps	782 Avg. 87 Sd	190	2.55	4.16	3.16
Hornady .457" lead roundballs one Pyrodex .44-cal. Pistol Pellet CCI No. 10 percussion caps	755 Avg. 87 Sd	177	1.66	3.29	2.50
Hornady .457" lead roundballs 22-grs. Pyrodex P CCI No. 10 percussion caps	712 Avg. 25 Sd	158	1.93	3.41	2.44
Average Extreme Spread					2.70

Measured average velocity for 10 rounds from a 4¾" barrel. Range temperature: 81° F. Humidity: 42%. Accuracy for five consecutive, five-shot groups at 25 yds. from a sandbag rest. Abbreviations: Sd (standard deviation).

percussion revolvers. We felt the Bisley would be a popular addition."

Although the Colt SAA was an extremely popular design, many shooters thought that the grip design was less than ideal for precision shooting. The "plow handle" shape moderated recoil well, but that same quality caused the pistol to slide down in the hand during firing. This necessitated repositioning the revolver in the hand after every shot.

The Bisley design answered this by utilizing a long, curved grip frame that was slightly underslung, a wide hammer spur that was situated low, and a deeply curved, wide trigger. This redesign caused the gun to recoil straight back and allowed the shooter to cock the lower hammer spur without changing his grip.

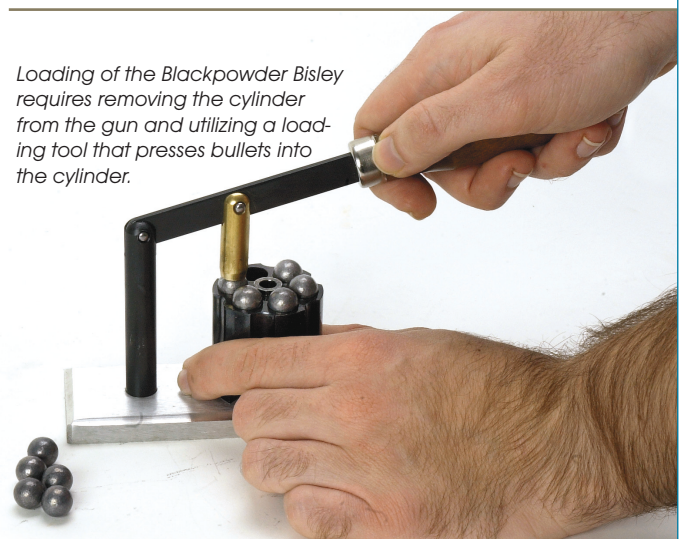
Cabela's Blackpowder Bisley looks like a standard centerfire revolver. It even has an ejector mounted under the barrel, although it serves no purpose on this cap-and-ball revolver. Dimensionally, it is very close to an original Bisley. The one evaluated sports a 4¾" barrel, although a 5½" version is also available. Uberti made the grip frame smaller and redesigned the mainspring so that it is longer and has a recurved shape to reduce the amount of effort needed to cock it.

Although in theory this is a target-style revolver, as with the original, the Blackpowder Bisley sports fixed sights—a blade front and a notch rear machined into the topstrap. The lowered hammer spur of the Bisley does not block the view of the sights as it does on the SAA.

Although a cursory external examination reveals a conventional looking Bisley, a closer look reveals its true nature. The cylinder has nipples for No. 10 percussion caps and the hammer nose has been redesigned for striking percussion caps rather than primers. To prevent the use of a cartridge cylinder in the revolver, the hammer nose and the hammer nose slot in the frame have been offset to the side. This ensures that if a cartridge cylinder is dropped in, the hammer nose will miss the primer in the cartridge. Lastly, the barrel features six lands and grooves that are approximately .010" deep and a twist rate of 1:22".

Loading, like the firearm itself, is unique. First, set the hammer to the loading or half-cock position, then open the loading gate on the right side of the frame. Ensure that there are no percussion caps on any of the six nipples, then close the loading gate. Next, take a wooden dowel and insert it into the open face of one of the chambers that is exposed to the side of the frame. Remove it and place it alongside the outside of the cylinder to ensure there is no charge in the chamber. Repeat on the remaining five chambers.

Next, depress the spring-actuated cylinder base pin latch from the left to the right (looking down from the top of the revolver). This will free the cylinder base pin that passes through the frame to be



Loading of the Blackpowder Bisley requires removing the cylinder from the gun and utilizing a loading tool that presses bullets into the cylinder.

removed from the front. Open the loading gate and remove the cylinder toward the right. The cylinder, once removed, is loaded by pouring the charges into the chambers and then pressing the bullets in firmly with a loading tool. Replace the cylinder in the frame and ensure that the hammer is in the half-cock position. With percussion caps placed on the nipples, the gun is ready to fire.

Firing the Blackpowder Bisley revealed it is an accurate cap-and-ball revolver, with results shown on the accompanying table—although it did hit about 18" below point of aim at 25 yds. It is important to note that this revolver works best with .454" or .457" bullets rather than the .451" bullets utilized by many other cap-and-ball revolvers. The manual states that .454" bullets are best, but Cabela's informed us that the .457" bullets had proven the best in their tests—a fact supported by our results. While the .451" bullets were too small, the .454" and .457" bullets had a ring of lead shaved off when seated—a necessity for accuracy in cap-and-ball revolvers. Also, it is necessary to ensure that the bullets are pressed firmly down into the chambers to the same depth for the best accuracy.

Offering a lot of "bang for the buck," Cabela's Blackpowder Bisley gives shooters an accurate, well-made and attractive cap-and-ball revolver for not a lot of money. The uniqueness of this Blackpowder Bisley—that is externally a Colt SAA Bisley and internally a cap-and-ball revolver—adds to the charm.

Kimber Model 84M Varmint

Illustration by Harry Lloyd Jaecks

KIMBER 84M

MANUFACTURER: Kimber Mfg., Inc. (Dept. AR), 1 Lawton St., Yonkers, NY 10705; (800) 880-2418; www.kimberamerica.com
CALIBER: .22-250 Rem.
ACTION TYPE: repeating bolt-action rifle
BARREL: 26" (24" early production tested)
RIFLING: six-groove, 1:14" RH twist
MAGAZINE: internal steel box with hinged floorplate, five-round capacity
SIGHTS: none supplied; receiver drilled and tapped for scope mounts
TRIGGER: single-stage, 2¾ lbs. pull
OVERALL LENGTH: 43¼"
WEIGHT: 7 lbs., 8 ozs.
STOCK: Claro Grade A walnut: length of pull, 13⅜"; drop at heel, 1/2"; drop at comb, 1/2"
SUGGESTED RETAIL PRICE: $865

Given the success of its M1911-style handguns, it is easy to forget that Kimber originally started in 1980 with a bolt-action rimfire rifle—the Model 82. Two years later, the company—then known as Kimber of Oregon—introduced the Model 84, a center-fire rifle built on a reduced-size Mauser-type action and chambered for the .223 Rem. In the ensuing years, the Model 84 was chambered for several additional cartridges sharing the same 0.373"-diameter case head.

The Model 84 was discontinued when Kimber of Oregon filed for bankruptcy and was sold around 1990. It wasn't until 1997—after another change of corporate ownership—that the gun was reintroduced as the 84C single-shot varmint rifle in .223 Rem. While that gun and its variants were all made on a .223 Rem.-length action, a new rifle with a longer action suitable for .308 Win.-size rounds, the 84M, was brought out at the 2001 SHOT Show. The "M" in "84M" stands for "medium," and reflects the company's future plans to market actions for even longer cartridges.

Current 84M rifle variants include the 5½-lb., 22"-barreled Classic rifle in .243 Win., .260 Rem., 7 mm-08 Rem. or .308 Win. chamberings; the LongMaster Classic .308 Win. with a 24" stainless fluted barrel; the LongMaster VT in .22-250 Rem. with an ultra-heavy 26" stainless fluted barrel and gray-black laminated stock; and the Varmint, reviewed here, which sports a 26" stainless fluted barrel chambered in .22-250 Rem. only.

The 84M has all the design characteristics of its short-action Model 84 siblings, such as a round receiver with an integral recoil lug; a two-lug bolt with a Mauser-type claw extractor and a shroud-mounted, two-position, striker-blocking safety. In addition, there is a push-button bolt release in the left rear receiver wall; a spring-loaded receiver-mounted ejector that rises through a slot in the bolt head to contact the case head; and a hinged floorplate released by a button at the front of the trigger guard.

Noted firearm designer Nehemiah Sirkis designed the 84M's action to be strong and accurate while having a trim profile. For example, the 4340 heat-treated steel receiver measures only 1.140" in diameter, compared to 1.355" for a Remington Model 700. Similarly, the Kimber's bolt, also of 4340 steel, is only 0.587" in diameter, compared to 0.693"-0.697" for the bolts from several other maker's rifles.

The 84M Varmint's 26" barrel is of 416R stainless steel, is button rifled in a six-groove, 1:14" RH-twist pattern, has six flutes and a target-type, 11 degree crown.

The 84M's entire ignition mechanism is optimized for top performance. The trigger comes from the factory set at a crisp 3 to 3½ lbs. A low-mass firing pin and a striker travel of only 0.19" give fast lock time, while a minimum-diameter firing pin allows the use of a lower-rate spring, which in turn permits a lighter trigger pull weight. Additionally, the bolt body features vent holes to prevent air compression ahead of the firing pin, which would slow lock time.

Much of the rifle's classic appearance results from its A Claro walnut stock, designed by award-winning stockmaker Darwin Hensley. Well-executed 20-line-per-inch checkering adorns the gripping areas of the fore-end and wrist. Bedding is accomplished via two aluminum pillars around the front and rear stock screws and a synthetic pad in the barrel channel that contacts the first 2.1" of the barrel. No bedding compound is used in the 84M Varmint; such compound is used, however, in the stocks of 84M variants in .260 Rem., 7 mm-08 Rem. or .308 Win. The rifle's floorplate assembly and pistol-grip cap are of steel, and the barrel channel is inletted so as to allow the barrel to be free-floating except for the 2.1" at the rear. Sling swivel studs adorn the stock in the customary locations near the stock toe and fore-end tip.

We were impressed with the elegantly modern look of our test 84M Varmint, produced by the combination of a matte, bead-blasted stainless barrel, a classic wood stock, a trim matte-finish action and specially contoured Redfield-pattern rotary dovetail scope mounts. Our sample rifle was from the first 100 units of production, which all had 24" barrels, polyurethane-coated stocks and orange rubber buttpads. Current production 84Ms all feature 26" barrels and stocks with a hand-rubbed oil finish and a black buttpad.

We mounted a Burris

SHOOTING RESULTS

.22-250 Rem. Cartridge	Vel. @ 15' (f.p.s.)	Energy (ft.-lbs.)	Group Size In Inches Smallest	Largest	Average
Black Hills 52-gr. BTHP	3671 Avg. 16 Sd	1556	0.55	0.95	0.78
Norma Diamond 55-gr. HP	3643 Avg. 18 Sd	1621	0.69	1.02	0.89
Winchester 40-gr. BST	3966 Avg. 11 Sd	1397	0.71	1.18	0.96
Average Extreme Spread:					0.88

Measured average velocity for 10 rounds from a 24" barrel. Range temperature: 55°F. Humidity: 43%. Accuracy for five consecutive, five-shot groups at 100 yds. from a sandbag. Abbreviations: BST (Ballistic Silvertip), BTHP (boattail hollow-point), HP (hollow-point), Sd (standard deviation).

The Kimber's bolt features two front locking lugs and a Mauser-type claw extractor (far l.). The push-button bolt release is in the left rear receiver wall, and the two-position striker-blocking safety mounts to the bolt shroud (l.). Bedding is by two aluminum pillars and a synthetic pad that contacts the first 2.1" of the barrel (below).

The Kimber's floorplate release—a lever in the front of the trigger guard—is reminiscent of vintage Mauser sporter rifles. Pressing forward frees the hinged floorplate.

8-32X variable Posi-Lock scope on the Model 84M and test-fired it at 100 yds. off sandbags. Accuracy was excellent, with good grouping facilitated by the rifle's trigger, which broke at a clean 2¾ lbs.—slightly less than the factory standard. No malfunctions were encountered during more than 100 test-fire rounds.

The stock got big marks, its nearly straight comb being the right height for use of a low-mounted scope and its gracefully proportioned wrist giving the trigger hand a proper grip. The rifle rode the sandbags well, though the fore-end could have been both wider and flatter for even greater stability. Although the gun is several *pounds* lighter than just about any other center-fire varmint rifle we have tested, it exhibited little jump upon firing, making the effects of a shot easy to see.

The manual ejector is a plus on a varmint rifle, as it eliminated the need to pick up a lot of brass at the end of the day—something very much appreciated by varminters who reload.

The typical varmint rifle of today is characterized by a heavy-profile barrel and a weight of 10 to 12 lbs. The Kimber 84M Varmint is an interesting departure from that stereotype in that it is more like a sporter in size and weight, yet its accuracy is comparable to that of heavier rifles. For the varmint hunter who spends a fair amount of time walking in search of game, or for any shooter who simply appreciates a trim, lightweight, but accurate rifle, the 84M is worth considering. NRA

Wilson Combat/Scattergun Technologies Standard Model

A few years ago, Wilson Combat, in order to more completely serve the tactical gun market, acquired Scattergun Technologies. The latter company had gained a reputation for converting stock Remington shotguns into high-performance, task-specific law enforcement and home defense tools. Scattergun is now a division within Wilson Combat and most of the old company's product line and services have been retained. Combined with its M1911 pistols and relatively new AR-15-type rifles, Wilson Combat now offers an extensive and varied line of tactical firearms for the law enforcement professional or discriminating private citizen.

Starting with Remington Model 870 or 11-87 shotguns, the Scattergun Technologies division installs a series of upgrades that make the guns better suited to the role of entry and/or patrol long arms for law enforcement or home defense. Scattergun can either convert a customer-supplied Model 870 to one of its tactical configurations or provide both the base gun as well as the modifications.

A major advantage of Scattergun Technologies has always been the fact that one could have any serviceable Model 870 in any original configuration reborn as a state-of-the-art tactical shotgun that, while new-looking, retains its previous manual of arms. That makes upgrading duty shotguns cost-efficient and minimizes retraining for those law enforcement agencies that avail themselves of the service. Currently, Scattergun does not perform conversions of customer-supplied Remington Model 11-87 semi-automatics.

We recently received one of Scattergun's Standard Model shotguns for test and evaluation. That converted Model 870 pump gun with an 18" cylinder bore barrel and 3" chamber had a laundry list of new features, including: adjustable TRAK-LOCK ghost ring rear sight, ramp-type front sight with tritium self-luminous insert, extended magazine tube with a seven-round capacity, side-saddle shell carrier, synthetic buttstock and fore-end with an integral 11,000-candlepower SureFire white light, non-binding high-visibility follower, heavy duty magazine tube spring, jumbo head safety, multi-purpose tactical sling, buttstock swivel and rigid magazine tube sling mount, and a mil-spec black manganese phosphate finish. This versatile model has been the backbone of Scattergun's product line for some time.

The gun's appealing appearance results from its obvious functionality. It is a no-nonsense arm with a clearly apparent tactical purpose. Moreover, it's full-featured, but not "gadgety."

Lightweight synthetic furniture keeps the gun's weight within reason—for a tactical gun. The reality is that it won't be gripped for hours in a duck blind nor lugged through the woods for miles, so its 9 lbs. is not a problem. The extended magazine and SureFire light combine to give the Standard Model some muzzle heaviness and a smooth swing, despite the short barrel. The short barrel improves handling speed and maneuverability, especially in confined spaces, while its length keeps it within National Firearms Act (NFA) regulations. (Wilson Combat does offer shorter barreled shotguns, but the customer must comply with all applicable NFA rules and regulations.)

The sights on this gun are excellent. The patented TRAK-LOCK ghost ring rear sight instantly, unobtrusively and automatically aligns the shooter's eye with the front post. Even in the dark (where most armed conflicts occur), a routine cheek weld places the eye behind the ghost ring and in line with the post and its glowing tritium dot.

As there is no such thing as too much ammunition in a crisis situation, the extended magazine tube and six-round side-saddle shell carrier provide comforting firepower. With a fully charged magazine, loaded shell holder and a round in the chamber, a person armed with the Standard Model has 13 shotshells readily available.

The SureFire light mounted in the fore-end is a good idea that is well-executed. High-intensity light is now recognized as a "force option" in law enforcement, and anything that may allow one to satisfactorily resolve a conflict without discharging the gun is a good thing.

Furthermore, target identification is an essential component of any responsible use of a firearm and the light helps the officer or armed citizen perform such. The pressure switch in the fore-end allows the user to quickly activate the light while he or she remains at the ready. The switch can be held down or released quickly should one want to resume using darkness as cover. Moreover, the shotgun can be operated easily

WILSON COMBAT

MANUFACTURER: Wilson Combat/Scattergun Technologies (Dept. AR), 2234 CR 719, Berryville, AR 72616; (800) 955-4856; www.wilsoncombat.com
GAUGE: 12, 3" (tested), 20
ACTION TYPE: pump-action shotgun
RECEIVER: Aluminum alloy
BARREL: 18"
CHOKE: cylinder bore
MAGAZINE: six-round tubular
TRIGGER: single-stage; 5 lbs. pull
STOCK: fiberglass-filled black polypropylene; nylon fore-end with integral 11,000 candlepower light with pressure switch; length of pull, 13⅞"; drop at heel, 2⅛"; drop at comb, 1¼"
OVERALL LENGTH: 38¼"
WEIGHT: 9 lbs.
ACCESSORIES: six-round side-saddle shell carrier, multi-purpose tactical sling, light
SUGGESTED RETAIL PRICE: $959; rebuild of customer-supplied Remington Model 870: $685

An extended magazine tube increases capacity (l.). Beneath it is the 11,000 candlepower SureFire light. The shell carrier keeps spare ammunition close at hand (below).

SHOOTING RESULTS

AVERAGE OF 10 PATTERNS AT 25 YDS.

Cylinder Bore

■=Point of Hold
Federal Premium 2¾" 00 Buck Magnum
12-ga.
Average Pellet count: 12

Total Hits	12 (100%)
21.2" Inner Circle	11 (92%)
30" Outer Ring	1 (8%)

with or without the use of the light. The integral design means that there are no exposed wires to snag or damage, either in a crisis or during routine daily use.

We patterned the Standard Model with buckshot at 25 yds., the approximate tactical range limit for 00 Buckshot. The gun performed well, functioning reliably and producing satisfactory pellet density. Felt recoil was typical for a 12-ga. tactical shotgun; by no means light, but not punishing, either. Besides, this gun isn't going to be used for 25-shot rounds of trap. The trigger pull deserves special mention as this crucial quality was far above average and contributed highly to the gun's performance. It was light enough for practical precision and rapid follow-up shots, yet heavy enough to decrease the chances of inadvertent discharges—always a concern, but even more so in a tactical gun.

Many of the components incorporated into Wilson Combat's Scattergun Standard Model are available a la carte from Wilson Combat, allowing the consumer to tweak his gun a little or a lot. However, a complete rebuild of the customer's Model 870 can be had for as little as $199.95 or as much as $444.95, depending on features. Some models, including the Standard Model are offered in 20-ga. as well as 12-ga. An advantage of being under the Wilson Combat umbrella is that now the Scattergun shotguns are available with Armor-Tuff anti-corrosion, anti-friction finish as an option.

The Standard Model, as either supplied or converted by Wilson Combat, combines many useful enhancements that should be of interest to both civilians and law enforcement agencies alike. It takes a proven and well-known performer, the Remington Model 870, and better tailors it to a specific role, updating and upgrading it. The result is a rare combination of cutting edge technology and comfortable familiarity.

Walther CO_2 PPK/s

"How can you get a Walther pistol for $89?" was the response from more than one person who, having stopped to look at the .177-cal. CO_2 PPK/s air pistol, found it an accurate likeness of a center-fire PPK/s. This air pistol, possessing the same dimensions as the center-fire model, also has a similar heft. In fact, the CO_2 version weighs only 3¼ ozs. less than the center-fire model.

That similarity is exactly what was intended, so the Walther CO_2 can be viewed as either a practice tool for the owner of a center-fire PPK/s or simply as a plinker.

Even in disassembly, the CO_2 pistol is strikingly similar to its center-fire counterpart. It features a hinged trigger guard and barrel fixed to the frame as with the original. Disassembly is accomplished by pulling down the trigger guard and retracting the slide about three-quarters back. The slide is then lifted up at the rear and pulled forward off the barrel and the frame as with the center-fire model.

SHOOTING RESULTS

.177 Caliber Steel BBs	Vel.@ 15' (f.p.s.)	Group Size in Inches Smallest	Largest	Average
Daisy Max Speed	258 Avg. 5 Sd	2.33	3.37	2.91
Crossman Premier BB	266 Avg. 13 Sd	1.86	3.15	2.61
Crossman Copperhead	253 Avg. 5 Sd	0.99	1.76	1.46
Average Extreme Spread:				2.33

Measured average velocity for 10 rounds from a 3" barrel. Range temperature: 75° F. Humidity: 21%. Accuracy for five consecutive, five-shot groups at 10 meters. from a sandbag rest. Abbreviations: Sd (standard deviation).

The CO_2 Walther PPK/s possesses some unique attributes—one that adds to the sense of realism, and two others that detract slightly. Beginning with the latter, the CO_2 PPK/s differs from the center-fire version in the nature of the trigger system and the safety. Unlike the center-fire PPK/s that functions as a conventional double-action pistol, the CO_2 PPK/s is strictly a single-action. That was done to allow the air pistol to be sold for as affordable a price as possible while still maintaining as much similarity to the center-fire PPK/s as it could. The safety also differs. Rather than the slide-mounted safety design as on the original, the CO_2 PPK/s features a safety on the right side of the frame. It sweeps downward to place the air pistol on safe, or upward to expose a red dot indicating it is ready to fire. The CO_2 PPK/s does have a false slide-mounted safety for the sake of accuracy in appearance.

The CO_2 PPK/s does have an "ace in the hole" in regards to realism—a reciprocating slide. This clever feature causes the CO_2 PPK/s to "recoil" in the hand (much like a center-fire pistol) when fired. It functions by using CO_2 to not only force the BB down the 3" smoothbore barrel, but also to bleed some gas off against the action face of the slide to push it back during each shot. This makes the CO_2 PPK/s realistic to shoot.

The CO_2 PPK/s, with its metal parts made of zinc alloy, features a matte-black finish and has molded plastic grip panels with fine checkering. The fixed sights are simple and do not feature dots or markings—just as with the original. Fit and finish of the air pistol is very good and compares favorably with the center-fire PPK/s.

To fire the CO_2 PPK/s, first ensure that the pistol is on safe. Depress the magazine release button, located exactly as on original, and remove the magazine. Retract the slide. To insert a CO_2 cylinder, remove the left stock panel by pulling it away from the frame. Turn the cylinder retention screw on the butt of the pistol counter-clockwise until it is completely extended. Insert the fresh gas cylinder, bottom first, inside the frame of the pistol. Tighten the cylinder retention screw until resistance is felt, ensuring that it is not over-tightened. Replace the grips.

Next, up to 15 .177-cal. steel BBs can be placed in the magazine that fits up into the grip. The manual indicates that only steel BBs should be used. Seat the loaded magazine and either retract the slide to cock the hammer or cock the hammer directly. The slide movement does not "strip a round off the magazine" as in a conventional pistol, but instead serves to cock the hammer for the next shot. Once the safety is released, the air pistol is ready to fire.

When firing the CO_2 PPK/s, it is important to note that the hammer is cocked and ready to fire after every shot. Once the last shot has been fired, the slide locks open as a visible indicator that the air pistol is empty.

The CO_2 PPK/s was fired for function and accuracy with results recorded in the accompanying table. Bearing in mind it is intended as a plinker, its performance was adequate, with a tendency to have a first shot "flyer" as well as a preference for Crossman Copperhead BBs. The trigger has a long, nearly 1/4" take up, but breaks at a relatively crisp 2 lbs. There were no failures to fire.

It was during the testing that the realistic nature of this air pistol came through, much of it due to the moving slide. That realism, mixed with an affordable price, makes the CO_2 PPK/s quite a deal. Yes, you can get a Walther for $89, and most will probably think it is worth every penny.

WALTHER CO_2 PPK/s

MANUFACTURER: UMAREX, Sportwaffen GmbH & Co. KG, Postfach 2720, D-59717 Arnsberg, Germany
IMPORTER: Crosman Corp. (Dept. AR), Routes 5 & 20, East Bloomfield, NY 14443; (800) 7-AIRGUN; www.crosman.com
CALIBER: .177
ACTION TYPE: single-action; blow-back slide system; CO_2-powered
FRAME: blue-finish, cast alloy
BARREL: 3"
RIFLING: none
MAGAZINE: 15-BB-capacity detachable box
SIGHTS: fixed, blade front and notch rear
TRIGGER: two-stage, non-adjustable, 2 lbs. pull
OVERALL LENGTH: 7.1"
WIDTH: 1¼"
HEIGHT: 5" including cylinder retention screw
WEIGHT: 19¾ oz.
SUGGESTED RETAIL PRICE: $89; $99 with silver slide

CO_2 cartridges are loaded by removing the left grip panel and inserting the cartridge (r.). To disassemble the CO_2 PPK/s, pull down on the trigger guard, retract the slide and lift it off the frame (below r.). Adding to the realism of the CO_2 PPK's is the thumb-actuated magazine release and removable magazine (below).