

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, Ron Keysor, 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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BERSA THUNDER 9 PISTOL

ARGINENTINA probably doesn't come to mind when one calls the roll of pistol-making nations, but Bersa, S.A., has been making pocket pistols there for many years.

Now the firm has stepped up to the challenge of a full-sized 9 mm with the new Thunder 9. There's such a glut of 9 mm autoloaders these days that it takes something a bit out of the ordinary to make a splash, and the Thunder 9 provides it, with several interesting features.

When first examining the Thunder 9, we immediately were reminded of the Walther P88 (July 1991, p. 50), a superb pistol that suffered in the U.S. market because of a very high retail price. Like the P88, the Thunder 9 has very trim lines that follow the lead of the Browning Hi-Power, rather than the blocky shapes of many contemporary 9 mms.

Like its costly German inspiration, it caters for the left-hander with bilateral controls, in the Bersa's case, the thumb safety/decocker and slide stop. While the P88's magazine release is ambidextrous, the Thunder 9's is reversible for the forgotten minority.

BERSA THUNDER 9

MANUFACTURER: Bersa, S.A., Castillo

312, (1704) Ramos Mejia, Argentina

IMPORTER: Eagle Imports, Dept. AR, 70 Brielle Ave., Unit B1, Wanamassa, NJ 07712

MECHANISM TYPE: recoil-operated semi-automatic pistol

CALIBER: 9 mm Parabellum

OVERALL LENGTH: 7½"

BARREL LENGTH: 4¼"

WEIGHT: 31 ozs.

WIDTH: 1⅞"

HEIGHT: 5½"

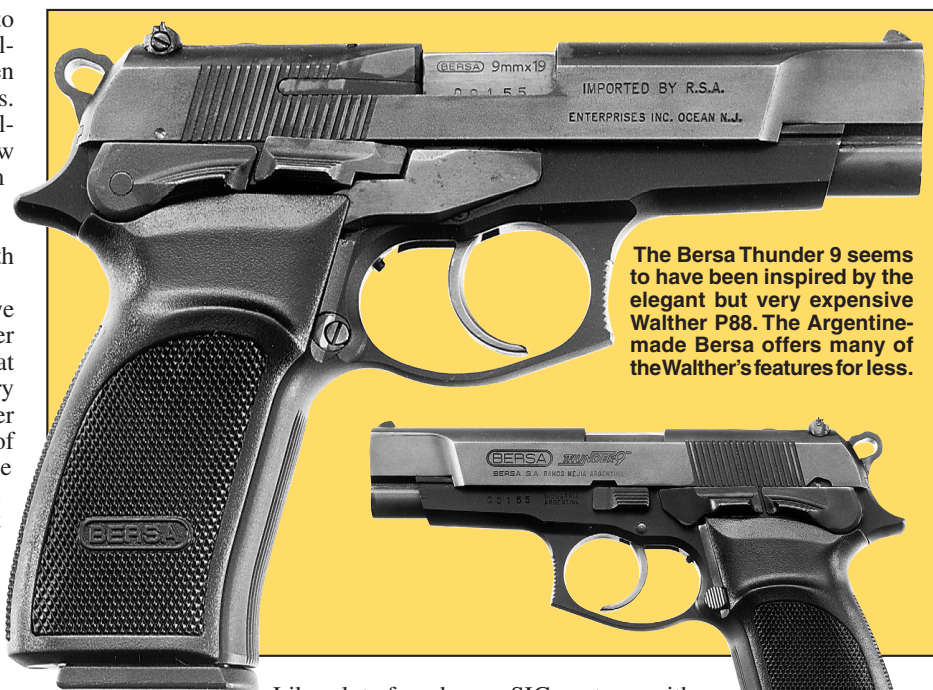
MAGAZINE CAPACITY: 15

RIFLING: six-groove, 1:10" RH twist

TRIGGER: single-action pull, 8 lbs., double-action, 10 lbs.

SIGHTS: three-dot with rear click-adjustable for windage and elevation

PRICE: \$414.95



The Bersa Thunder 9 seems to have been inspired by the elegant but very expensive Walther P88. The Argentine-made Bersa offers many of the Walther's features for less.

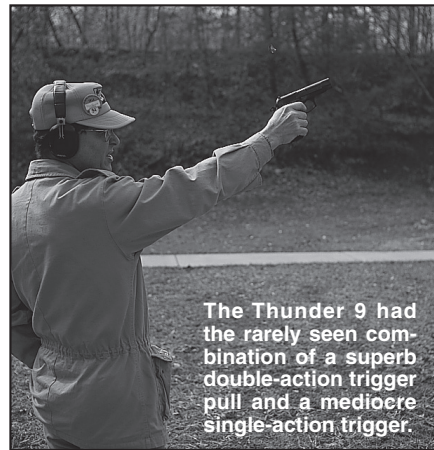
Like a lot of modern double-action autoloaders, the Thunder 9 has no provision for "cocked and locked" carrying. Pressing up on the decocking lever drops the rowel hammer, disengages the trigger bar from the sear and locks the slide forward for an "uncocked and locked" condition. The lever then can be pressed down (with a loud click) to allow immediate double-action firing.

No magazine safety is fitted, but there is a passive firing pin safety to help prevent accidental discharges if the pistol is dropped. It is a plunger in the right rear of the slide that is lifted by a lever as the trigger is pulled, allowing the firing pin to move forward.

Overtravel is regulated by a hex socket screw that passes from the magazine well through the matte-finished aluminum frame to touch the back of the trigger blade when it is pulled.

The barrel and slide are locked on the

SIG system, with a block at the breech end of the barrel engaging the ejection port. Cam surfaces on



The Thunder 9 had the rarely seen combination of a superb double-action trigger pull and a mediocre single-action trigger.



the bottom of the barrel slide against a steel insert in the frame to raise or lower the barrel.

Sights are on the three-dot pattern, with the rear sight click-adjustable for windage and elevation. The rear sight is very nicely blended into the slide and rounded at the corners for a snag-free draw. The ejector pivots in a deep flare in the slide that copies the P88 pattern.

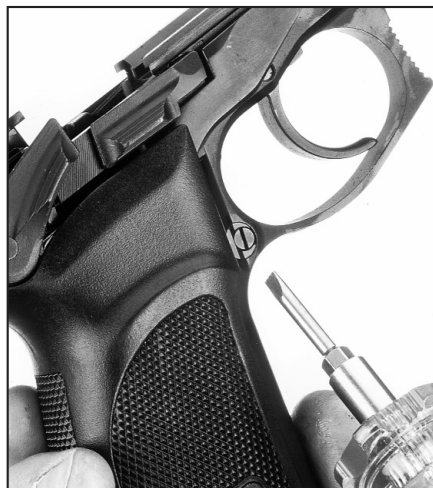
Takedown also follows the convenient method of the P88. Remove the magazine, ensure the chamber is empty and rotate downward the takedown lever above the trigger. Slip the slide/barrel assembly forward off the frame. Then remove the barrel, plastic guide rod and spring in the usual fashion. Reassembly is in reverse order.

To reverse the magazine catch, use a screwdriver to push in and turn the screw at the back of the butt. Then spread the grip cover slightly at the front and pull it off. Press in a bit on the magazine catch and turn its screw. It then can be pressed out and reversed.

The Thunder 9 was fired for accuracy, with results shown in the accompanying table, and function-fired with CCI, Hornady, PMC, Remington and Uzi ammunition. There were no failures of any kind.

We initially thought to call a failure the fact that the slide would move forward when

All major controls (above) are bilateral for the convenience of left-handers and IPSC shooters. Takedown begins by rotating the lever above the trigger (r.). The slide assembly then is free to move forward off the frame for removal of the barrel and the recoil spring.



The magazine catch can be reversed by sliding the grip cover partway off and turning the catch screw. The catch can be pressed out and reinstalled from the other direction.

a full magazine is firmly inserted, then recalled that the same feature is part of the P88, and has been around at least since the Mauser Model 1910.

The instructions don't mention it, and it should be noted that the slide won't fall if the magazine is inserted gently. The importer has announced a 10-round magazine version for 1995.

Our sample's single-action and double-action trigger pulls were almost the same, at 8 and 10 lbs., respectively. This gave the combination of a rather poor single-action pull and a very good double-action.

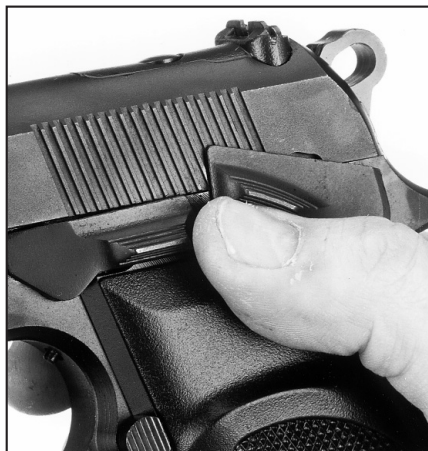
The double-action pull was quite the equal of many guns costing twice as much. The single-action pull, while heavy, was clean, though 8 lbs. is a bit much for best accuracy. The decocking lever was easy to use with the pistol unloaded, but a full magazine load caused it to bind enough that it was almost impossible to disengage with the thumb of the shooting hand. Pushing it down from the "uncocked and locked" position was no problem.

We were tremendously impressed with

the Walther P88, but predicted correctly that its cost would limit its success in the competitive U.S. pistol market. The Bersa Thunder 9 provides many of the same features and much of the feel of the P88 at a price about a quarter of the German original's. If you're one of those not glutted on big-capacity 9 mms, it's well worth a check.

NRD

Pressing upward on the thumb safety decocks the hammer, disengages the trigger and locks the slide.



ACCURACY RESULTS

**Five Consecutive 5-Shot Groups at 25 Yds.
Fired From Sandbags**

9 mm Parabellum Cartridge	Vel. @15' (f.p.s.)	Smallest (ins.)	Largest (ins.)	Average (ins.)
Hornady No. 9020 90-gr. JHP	1385 Avg. 14 Sd	2.54	5.49	3.68
PMC No. 9B 115-gr. JHP	1200 Avg. 15 Sd	2.06	5.40	3.70
Remington No. GS9MMC 147-gr. BJHP	998 Avg. 15 Sd	2.08	4.46	2.83
Average Extreme Spread				3.40
Abbreviations: Sd (standard deviation), BJHP (brass-jacketed hollow-point), JHP (jacketed hollow-point)				

COLT POLICE POSITIVE MK V

IN 1908, Colt lengthened the frame and added a quarter-inch to the cylinder of its three-year-old Police Positive revolver (chambered for .38 New Police/.38 S&W cartridges) and came up with the .38 Spl.-chambered Police Positive Special (PPS).

The PPS remained in Colt's line until 1973 and, along the way, was chambered for several cartridges, including the .32-20, .38 Short and Long Colt, .38 New Police (S&W), .38-44 and .38 smoothbore, with the .38 Spl. remaining the most popular choice.

COLT MK V

MANUFACTURER: Colt's Mfg. Co., Inc., Dept. AR, Box 1868, Hartford, CT 06144
MECHANISM TYPE: double-action revolver
CALIBER: .38 Spl.
OVERALL LENGTH: 9 1/8"
BARREL LENGTH: 4"
WEIGHT: 30 ozs.
WIDTH: 1 3/8"
HEIGHT: 4 3/4"
CYLINDER CAPACITY: 6
TRIGGER: single-action pull, 4 lbs., double-action, 12 lbs.
SIGHTS: fixed with notch rear
PRICE: \$384

The 4" barrel was the most popular, but 1 1/4", 2", 2 1/2", 3", 4 1/2", 5" and 6"-barreled models have been reported.

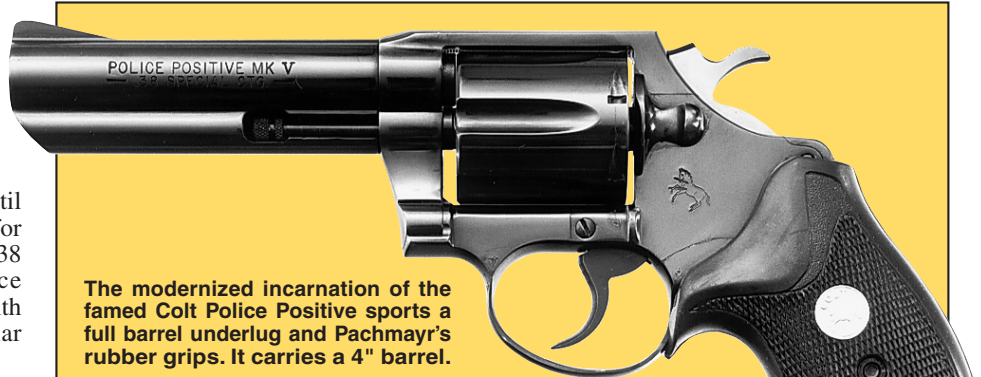
In the 1977-79 period, at \$175, it reappeared briefly as the Police Positive (PP), dropping the word "Special" except for the .38 cartridge description. A revolver identical except for an aluminum frame in place of steel was sold as the Viper.

Now the D-framed Colt is back, not only in its 2"-barreled Detective Special guise (August 1993, p. 66), but with a 4" barrel and the new name "Police Positive MK V."

It differs from the walnut-stocked 1978 version in its MK V name suffix, its Pachmayr rubber wraparound stock and its full-length ejector rod shroud accounting for an increase in weight of 3 1/2 ozs.

The Police Positive MK V was fired for accuracy, with results shown in the accompanying table, and function-fired with Federal, Remington and Samson ammunition. There were no failures of any kind.

We found the PP every bit as easy and pleasant to shoot as we had expected, with the single-action trigger pull reminding us why Colts were the favorite of convention-



The modernized incarnation of the famed Colt Police Positive sports a full barrel underlug and Pachmayr's rubber grips. It carries a 4" barrel.

al pistol shooters back in the days when "three gun" competitors really used three guns. The double-action pull was a bit stiff, though not unduly heavy at 12 lbs.

Those among us who are fans of the classic prewar Colts could take or leave the

heavy lugged barrel and Pachmayr rubber grips, but these made the new Police Positive a soft shooter, whatever their aesthetic qualities.

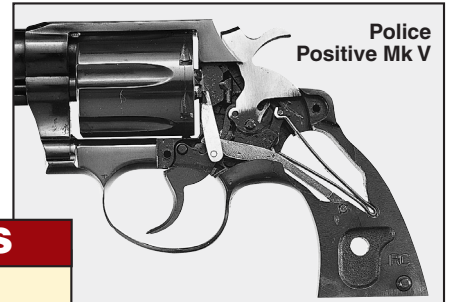
Many who saw the new Police Positive at last year's SHOT Show questioned the need for another .38 revolver when autoloaders are getting all the attention.

The answer, to us, seemed obvious. The self-protection market, especially among women, has become red-hot, and women have, until now, at least, shown a clear preference for revolvers. The new PP is smaller and lighter than S&W's K-frames or the



Colt Police Positive

The lockwork of the new D-framed Police Positive (at r.) is very similar to the mechanism that made earlier versions (above) such favorites. Chambering is in .38 Spl.



Police Positive Mk V

ACCURACY RESULTS

Five Consecutive 5-Shot Groups at 25 Yds.
Fired From Ransom Rest

.38 Spl. Cartridge	Vel. @15' (f.p.s.)	Smallest (ins.)	Largest (ins.)	Average (ins.)
Federal No. 38B 158-gr. LRN	726 Avg. 10 Sd	2.28	3.72	3.00
Remington GS38SB 125-gr. BJHP	1005 Avg. 21 Sd	1.47	3.52	2.57
Samson No. 38-35B 125-gr. JHP	905 Avg. 16 Sd	1.72	2.89	2.38

Average Extreme Spread 2.65
 Abbreviations: Sd (standard deviation), LRN (lead round-nose), BJHP (brass-jacketed hollow-point), JHP (jacketed hollow-point)

Ruger GP100, but doesn't carry the psychological baggage of "snub-nosed" pieces like the Detective Special.

During its long tenure (the longest of any double-action Colt), the PP/PPS was a favorite of police and a home defense staple. Minimal weight and bulk coupled with the effective .38 Spl. cartridge (it is +P-approved) accounted for its past popularity; its continued success is probable.

NRD

PARA-ORDNANCE P12-45 PISTOL

LARGE-capacity 9 mms and .40 cal. are all well and good, but many of us still prefer the good old .45, especially in a defensive pistol. There's something reassuring about that big, blunt bullet, regardless of how some interpret the ballistics tables.

Canadian manufacturer Para-Ordnance started the trend to big-load .45s when it introduced its accessory frame in the late 1980s and then added complete pistols a couple of years later. The first frames were aluminum, but the firm added blued and stainless steel later.

Para-Ordnance frames and pistols have become favorites among practical pistol shooters, who stuff 18 or more rounds of .38 Super into a magazine.

Now the maker has gone in the other direction with the P12-45, a compact version with a 12-round magazine in place of the full-sized version's 14-rounder.



The Para-Ordnance P12-45 offers large ammunition capacity in a small package for the diehard .45 ACP aficionado.

P12-45 PISTOL

Manufacturer: Para-Ordnance Mfg., Inc.,
3411 McNicoll Ave., Scarborough, Ont.
M1V 2V6

Importer: Para-Ordnance, Inc., 1919 N.E.
45th St., No. 215, Ft. Lauderdale, FL
33308

Mechanism Type: recoil-operated semi-automatic pistol

Caliber: .45 ACP

Overall Length: 7 1/4"

Barrel Length: 3 3/4"

Weight: 27 ozs.

Width: 1 1/2"

Height: 5 1/8"

Magazine Capacity: 12

Trigger: 5 lbs. pull

Sights: three-dot with rear drift-adjustable for windage

Accessories: plastic carrying case

Price: \$708.75

Magazines for pistols made after the Violent Crime Act became law will be 10 rounds.

The P12-45 is almost exactly the same size as the Colt Officer's ACP—it's 1/16" wider and 1/8" longer. And at 27 ozs., the aluminum-framed version weighs the same as the 3"-barreled Ruger SP101 revolver.

Like previous Para-Ordnance pistols, the P12-45 uses a "fully supported" barrel configuration. The feed ramp is part of the barrel and fits into a mortise in the frame. This supports the full circumference of the cartridge base, rather than leaving some

exposed, as in most M1911 designs. Barrels of this type are essential in IPSC competition in which very heavy .38 Super loads are *de rigueur*.

Para-Ordnance has performed considerable slimming of its frame and grip panels in response to competition from the likes of Caspian Arms and Strayer-Tripp. The results make a big difference in the pistol's feel in the hand.

Where holding an earlier Para was much like holding a baseball bat, the new ones restore an M1911-like feel that inspires familiarity and confidence. The P12-45 looks and carries small, but feels like a full-sized pistol in the shooter's grasp.

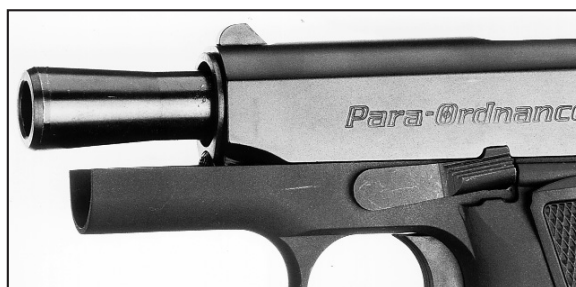
The mainspring housing is the original flat M1911 style, while the trigger is the short M1911A1 type for easy reaching by even small-handed users. The grip safety has a modest beavertail that coordinates with the Commander-style rowel hammer.

The thumb safety and slide stop are conventional in configuration; extended types wouldn't do for a carrying pistol.

Para-Ordnance has added the Colt Series 80 type passive firing pin safety to its line. This helps prevent accidental discharges in case the pistol is dropped on its muzzle. A cylindrical plunger in the left rear of the

slide locks the firing pin rearward unless the plunger is pressed up by a lever that moves with the trigger.

The slide is of a very dark-finished steel that contrasts with the charcoal color of the frame. An M1911-type barrel bushing is



The flared muzzle requires a special bushing that is larger than that of standard M1911 derivatives. Getting the bushing off was tough, since standard wrenches didn't fit.

used, but it is larger than most to accommodate the flared muzzle. It was very tightly fitted on our sample P12-45, and was difficult to remove, since standard bushing wrenches wouldn't fit. We resorted to driving it with a wood block.

There is no recoil spring guide rod, but the spring plug differs from the conventional M1911 style. It is retained by a stud

in its rear that engages a slot in the slide apron rather than by the barrel bushing. This, combined with the very tight fit of the bushing, made removing it a chore. We finally resorted to pulling out the slide stop and removing the slide as a single assembly.

The fixed sights are the three-dot type, with the rear drift-adjustable for windage.

The P12-45 was fired for accuracy, with results shown in the accompanying table, and function-fired with Black Hills, Federal, Remington, Samson, USA and Uzi ammunition.

It quickly became apparent that the P12-45 simply would not fire wadcutters. This probably could be corrected with some polishing of the ramp and adjustment of the magazine, but the pistol clearly is intended for FMJ and JHP ammunition, which it fed without complaint, except for Remington's new Golden Saber ammunition.

This also gave rather sluggish operation, as has been our experi-

ence with other autoloaders. Those who intend to use it as defensive ammunition should test-fire thoroughly.

With the kinds of defensive ammunition one would expect to use in a compact pistol of this sort, the P12-45 worked quite well. One might expect that a 27-oz. .45 might recoil unpleasantly (the standard

M1911 weighs 39 ozs.), but this proved not to be the case.

The small beavertail grip safety, while not as comfortable as the wide ones found on competition pistols, effectively prevented pinching of the web, and the grip frame is still broad enough to spread the recoil across the palm.

Given the preference of many women for smaller pistols, we thought the P12-45 might appeal, so we asked one of our staffers who has a bit of experience with standard .45s to give it a try. She found it quite easy to handle and shoot, and wasn't disturbed a bit by recoil.

This reinforces the opinion of some authorities that a .45 is a better defensive arm for those with small hands than powerful revolvers like the .357 Mag. Regardless of gender, anyone requiring a compact pistol with plenty of firepower will want to examine the P12-45.

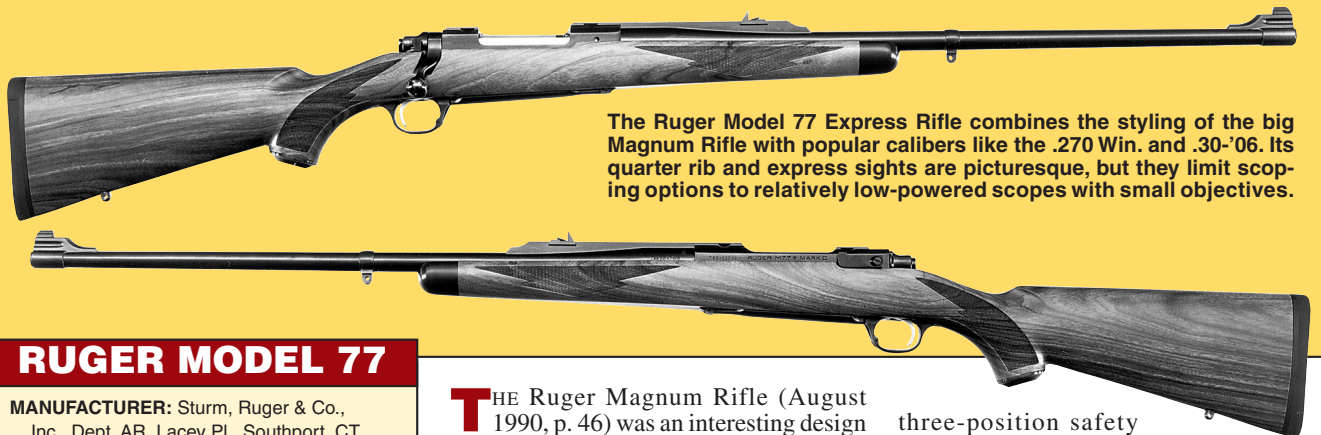
NRD

ACCURACY RESULTS

Five Consecutive 5-Shot Groups at 25 Yds.
Fired From Sandbags

.45 ACP Cartridge	Vel. @ 15' (f.p.s.)	Smallest (ins.)	Largest (ins.)	Average (ins.)
Black Hills 185-gr. JHP	841 Avg 17 Sd	1.88	4.37	3.06
Remington No. GS45APB 230-gr. BJHP	687 Avg. 19 Sd	1.74	2.86	2.28
Uzi No. 45-46A 230-gr. FMJ	715 Avg. 14 Sd	1.92	4.39	3.38
Average Extreme Spread				2.90
Abbreviations: Sd (standard deviation), JHP (jacketed hollow-point), BJHP (brass-jacketed hollow-point), FMJ (full metal-jacketed)				

RUGER MODEL 77 EXPRESS RIFLE



The Ruger Model 77 Express Rifle combines the styling of the big Magnum Rifle with popular calibers like the .270 Win. and .30-'06. Its quarter rib and express sights are picturesque, but they limit scoping options to relatively low-powered scopes with small objectives.

RUGER MODEL 77

MANUFACTURER: Sturm, Ruger & Co., Inc., Dept. AR, Lacey Pl., Southport, CT 06490

MECHANISM TYPE: bolt-action rifle

CALIBER: 7 mm Rem. Mag. (tested), .270 Win., .30-'06, .300 Win. Mag.

OVERALL LENGTH: 42½"

BARREL LENGTH: 22"

WEIGHT: 7½ lbs.

MAGAZINE CAPACITY: 3 (4 in standard calibers)

TRIGGER: single-stage, 5½ lbs. pull

SIGHTS: bead front, express rear

STOCK: French walnut: length of pull, 13½"; drop at heel, 2½"; drop at comb, 1½"

ACCESSORIES: scope rings

PRICE: \$1,550

THE Ruger Magnum Rifle (August 1990, p. 46) was an interesting design exercise that incorporated some unusual features, but clearly was not, given its .416 Rigby chambering, a gun for every hunter. The addition of .375 H&H and .404 Jeffery caliber choices widens its appeal only a bit.

For those who liked the Magnum Rifle's styling but don't need the foot-pounds of energy those cartridges deliver, Ruger now offers the Express Rifle in popular calibers like the .270 Win. and .30-'06.

The Express is built on a standard Model 77 Mark II action. Those who recall the original Model 77 with its tang safety will immediately notice the Mark II's

three-position safety that functions much like the Winchester Model 70's. When the safety lever is rotated to the rear, it presses in a plunger that locks the bolt, preventing its moving if snagged on a branch or other object. The safety button also engages a slot in the cocking piece, preventing it from moving forward.

Rotating the lever forward allows the bolt to be cycled, but the trigger remains locked. This allows emptying the magazine by cycling rounds through the action. Moving the safety fully forward allows firing.

The Magnum Rifle's magazine catch is retained. It is on the front of the trigger guard

and is pressed in to release the rifle's steel floorplate.

The barrel and quarter-rib are machined from a single bar of steel, and the rib is carefully blended with the forward scope mount atop the receiver ring. The rear sight unit is dovetailed into the rib and secured by a slotted screw. This allows easy windage adjustment. The sights are a fixed V-notch and a flip-up U-notch for more elevation.

The front sight rises from a beefy ramp affixed by a barrel band. The 1/16" bead's base is dovetailed into the ramp and secured there by a detent. Pressing in the detent with a punch allows the sight to be driven out for replacement.

The front sling swivel also is mounted on a barrel band and is both drilled trans-

versely and drilled and tapped from the bottom to allow multiple swivel options.

The sample rifle's stock was of French walnut whose impressive figure we admired but whose overall greenish cast left us cold. Checkering was in a point pattern at 18 lines per inch, a practical measure but perhaps a



Windage is easily regulated by turning the screw and sliding the rear sight. The front sight can be removed by pressing in on a detent.

bit coarse for a rifle in this price range. A blued steel grip cap, plain black rubber recoil pad and contrasting fore-end tip complete the ensemble.


The Model 77 Express was fired for accuracy, with results shown in the accom-

panying table, and function-fired with handloads, PMC and Remington ammunition. There were no failures of any kind.

The quarter-rib is clearly the most visible feature of the Express, but potential buyers should be aware that it severely limits scoping options. We eventually resorted to an old Weaver fixed 2.5X after several more powerful scopes couldn't be mounted, thanks to interference with the rib or rear sight.

Given that limitation and its price, the Express is clearly intended for a specialist



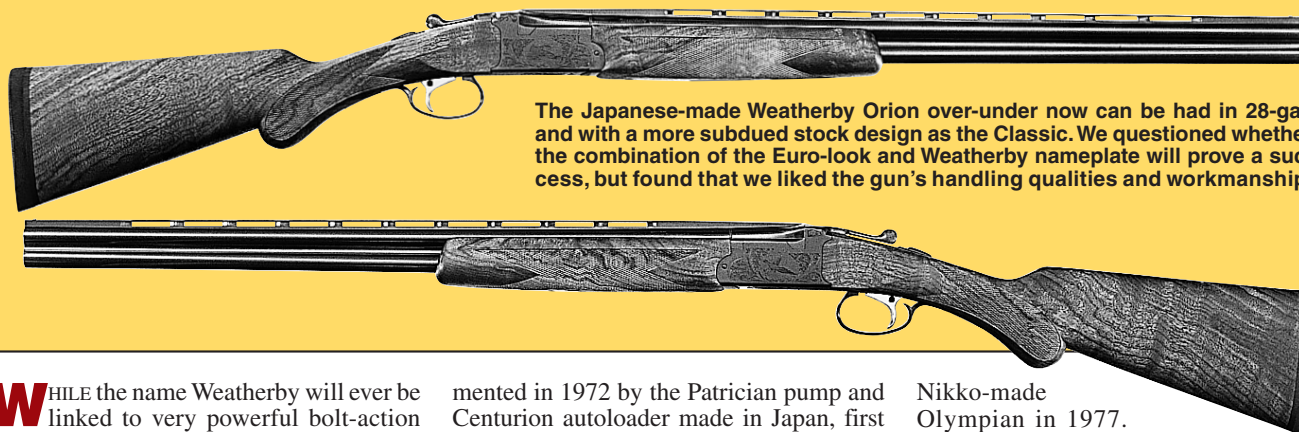
market. We suspect it may prove quite popular in France, where hunters like the odd, to us at least, combination of ribbed, iron-sighted rifles and calibers like the 7 mm Rem. Mag. or .300 Win. Mag. for hunting native species like wild boars. The ribbed sights, they think, aid fast target acquisition, and French hunters are forbidden military calibers like the .30-'06 or .308 Win. 

ACCURACY RESULTS

Five Consecutive 5-Shot Groups at 100 Yds.
Fired From Sandbags

7 mm Rem. Mag. Cartridge	Vel. @15' (f.p.s.)	Smallest (ins.)	Largest (ins.)	Average (ins.)
PMC No. 7MB 175-gr. PSP	2653 Avg. 21 Sd	0.85	1.51	1.16
Remington No. R7MM4 140-gr. PSP	2829 Avg. 23 Sd	1.15	2.52	1.79
Remington No. ER7MMA 165-gr. ER	2752 Avg. 22 Sd	1.76	2.65	2.05
Average Extreme Spread				1.67
Abbreviations: Sd (standard deviation), PSP (pointed soft-point), ER (Extended Range)				

WEATHERBY ORION CLASSIC



The Japanese-made Weatherby Orion over-under now can be had in 28-ga., and with a more subdued stock design as the Classic. We questioned whether the combination of the Euro-look and Weatherby nameplate will prove a success, but found that we liked the gun's handling qualities and workmanship.

WHILE the name Weatherby will ever be linked to very powerful bolt-action rifles, the firm has a quarter-century of experience in the shotgun field, too.

The original Weatherby shotgun was the Regency over-under, made in Italy by Angelo Zoli, 1967-82. This was suppl-

mented in 1972 by the Patrician pump and Centurion autoloader made in Japan, first by KTG and later by Nikko. These were superseded in 1982 by the Models 92 and 82, respectively.

Even while production of the Regency continued, Weatherby introduced the

Nikko-made Olympian in 1977.

The Olympian lasted until 1981.

The following year, Weatherby introduced a pair of over-unders made by another Japanese firm now familiar to U.S. shooters, SKB. The top of the line was the Athena

(February 1986, p. 52), with high-grade wood, false sideplates and plenty of scroll ornamentation.

The more economical model was the Orion, with a relatively plain blued receiver and somewhat more ordinary wood. It originally was offered only in 12- and 20-ga., but 28-ga. skeet and field guns were added to the shotgun line in 1988. Now the 28-ga. Orion can be had with choke tubes and with a new round-knob stock that Weatherby hopes will appeal to traditional-

breech. A cube-shaped projection from the bottom of the monobloc mates with a square recess in the bottom of the action body for greater rigidity.

The action body is decorated with a modest amount of scroll and a pheasant on the left side and a duck on the right.

The mechanical trigger allows barrel selection by a button in the top of the trigger blade. The bottom barrel is selected when the button is pressed left to right. The safety is manual, a configuration many

familiar from generations of Browning A-5s, and is nicely complemented by a rounded fore-end. When a prototype of this design was shown to a group of gun writers in 1992, the unanimous reaction was that the piece "didn't look like a Weatherby."

The unanimity was short-lived, however, breaking down over the question of whether not "looking like a Weatherby" is a good thing.

The Orion was pattern-tested, with results shown in the accompanying table, and function-fired with Remington and Winchester ammunition at American trap and skeet and at hand-thrown targets. There were no failures of any kind.

Though a 28-ga. field gun, the scores turned in with the Orion reflected well on the gun's quick mounting and handling quali-



The Orion uses the proven SKB action with its large leaf springs and Kersten top lock.

WEATHERBY ORION

MANUFACTURER: SKB Arms Co., Box 1401, Tokyo, Japan

IMPORTER: Weatherby, Inc., Dept. AR, 3100 El Camino Real, Atacadero, CA 93422

MECHANISM TYPE: over-under shotgun

CALIBER OR GAUGE: 28 (tested), 12, 20

OVERALL LENGTH: 43"

BARREL LENGTH: 26"

WEIGHT: 7 lbs.

TRIGGER: single-stage, 5 lbs. pull

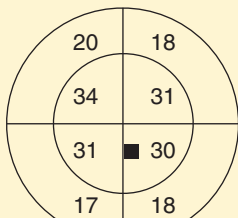
STOCK: Claro walnut: length of pull, 14¼"; drop at heel, 2½"; drop at comb, 1½"

ACCESSORIES: choke tubes, spanner

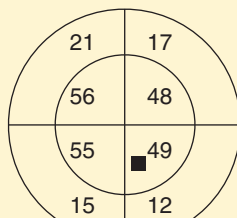
PRICE: \$1,235

WEATHERBY ORION CLASSIC

AVERAGE OF 10 PATTERNS AT 25 YDS.



IC Tube



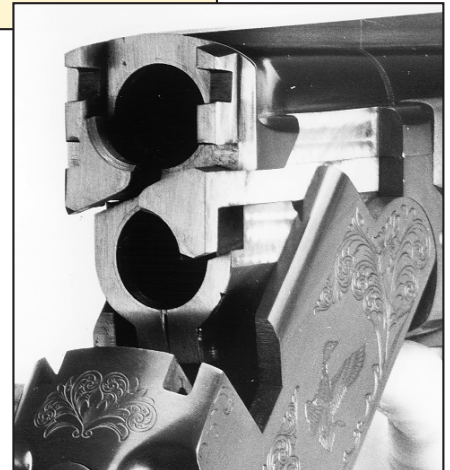
Modified Tube

■ = Point of Hold
Winchester Super-X Max.-1-7/8"
Pellet count—320

Total Hits	199 (62%)	Total Hits	285 (89%)
21.2" Inner Circle	126 (39%)	21.2" Inner Circle	208 (65%)
30" Outer Ring	73 (23%)	30" Outer Ring	77 (24%)

experienced hunters prefer, but which is less desirable for the new shooter.

The selective ejectors are tripped by rods that pass along the bottom sides of the action body. The Orion can easily be converted to extractor operation by pressing the ejector 3/16" into the monobloc and tilting its bottom edge out. Be careful to maintain control of the ejector spring and plunger. The barrels have solid side ribs and a medium-height straight-sided



The Orion uses a Kersten-style top bolting system that allows a lower profile than a Browning-style bolt below the monobloc.

ists who might abhor the "California" styling of existing models.

Leaf hammers springs are the heart of any SKB-made over-under. While coils springs are less prone to break, leaf springs are thought by many shotgunners to provide a shorter lock time and more reliable ignition, since they provide maximum power at the end of their stroke, rather than at the beginning, as do coil springs.

The barrels are bolted to the action body by a Kersten-style top lock that passes through two extensions from the barrel

ventilated top rib with brass bead.

The big news, of course, is the stock, which is certainly a long step away from Weatherby tradition. Our sample gun's was of a well-figured Claro walnut with lots of bold black figure against a lighter brown background, with an overall subdued satin finish. The stock's checkering was in a bordered point pattern at 16 lines per inch, certainly a serviceable measure for a hunting gun, but a bit coarse, we thought, for a shotgun of this one's pretensions.

The round-knob semi-pistol grip is

ties. There was no tendency to whip past the target as with some other light field guns, and the hits came consistently. Felt recoil was virtually nil because of the small gauge and shotgun's thick rubber recoil pad.

The new Orion Grade II, then, offers the shotgunner who's has been put off by the exuberant California styling of previous Weatherby shotguns something a bit more traditional. Those who like a bit more spice may prefer the appearance of Weatherby guns that "look like a Weatherby."

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