



Ruger M77 Mk II Compact



Bolt-action rifles such as the Ruger Model 77 Mk II Compact may be the best option for those seeking a short, handy brush gun. The M77 Compact compared well, accuracy-wise, to its full-size counterparts previously tested here.

Ruger's new Model 77 Compact bolt-action rifle stands poised to set the tradition of still hunting in thick woods on its ear. Hunters who patiently stalk thick woods where shots are taken at a moment's notice and typically at very close range often choose lever-action carbines. That rifle design is a handy size that does not get smacked into cedar boughs or caught up in thick tangles of briars as a hunter moves through the woods. They're responsive and point naturally, come chambered for

moderately powerful cartridges and have quick follow-up shot capability for anchoring game as soon as possible. That's the practical rationale for using a lever-gun. But as we test established theories and learn things such as the world is not flat, we also begin to question whether the lever-gun really does have that functional edge when it comes to close quarters hunting.

In extensive, recent range tests of speed shooting conducted by an *American Rifleman* field editor using a host of

rifle action types and different shooters (See p. 64), the lever-action ranked last in accuracy, next to last in speed, and last again in speed and accuracy combined. The bolt-action surprised everyone by ranking third in accuracy, fourth for time, and tying for third overall with *single-shots*! So where does Ruger's new Model 77 Mark II Compact fit in?

At 35" overall length with a 12¾" length of pull, the M77 Compact challenges even the most compact of lever-action carbines for size. Even its 7"-

M77 COMPACT

MANUFACTURER: Sturm, Ruger & Co., Inc. (Dept. AR), 200 Ruger Road, Prescott, AZ 86301; (520) 541-8820;

www.ruger-firearms.com

CALIBER: .223 Rem., .243 Win. (tested), .260 Rem., .308 Win.

ACTION TYPE: bolt-action center-fire rifle

OVERALL LENGTH: 35"

BARREL: 16½" chrome-moly or 400-series stainless steel

RIFLING: conventional, six-groove, 1:9" RH-twist

WEIGHT: 5½ lbs.

MAGAZINE: internal box with hinged floor plate, capacity four rounds

SIGHTS: none, receiver milled for supplied Ruger scope rings

TRIGGER: single-stage, non-adjustable 4½ lbs. pull

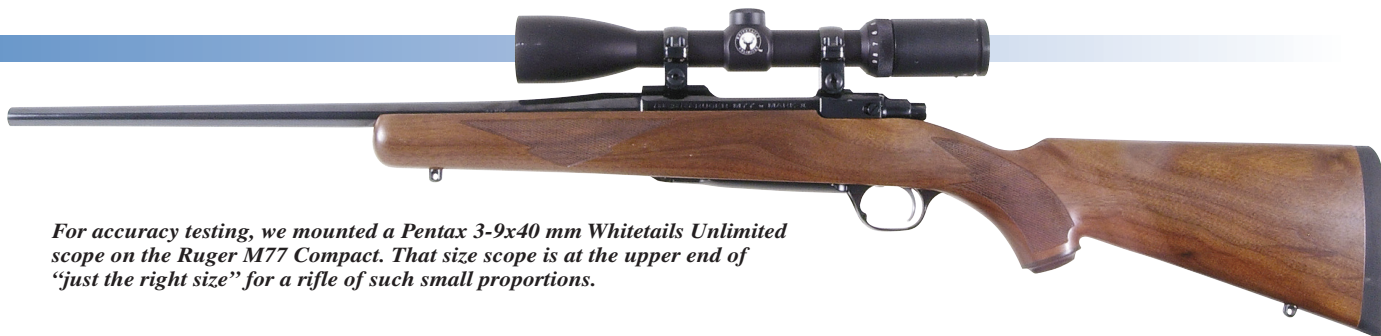
STOCK: American walnut (blued gun), black laminate (stainless gun); length of pull, 12¾"; drop at heel, 1"; drop at comb, ¾"

ACCESSORIES: Ruger scope rings, cable lock

SUGGESTED RETAIL PRICE: \$649 (blued), \$699 (stainless)

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

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



For accuracy testing, we mounted a Pentax 3-9x40 mm Whitetails Unlimited scope on the Ruger M77 Compact. That size scope is at the upper end of “just the right size” for a rifle of such small proportions.



Capacity of the magazine is four rounds. A hinged floor plate allows shooters to quickly and easily empty the magazine (above l.). A three-position safety locks the bolt when in the fully rearward position. In the middle position, the trigger is blocked, but the bolt can be operated to empty the chamber of a live cartridge (l.). A solid rubber buttplate (above) is slightly radiused at its top so the gun doesn’t hang up when mounting.

long fore-end (forward of the receiver ring) rivals that of many lever guns and its straight comb and slender wrist compare equally with those dimensions, too. The agile Ruger tips the scales at a scant 5¼ lbs. and snaps smartly to the shoulder without “flying away” or being whippy.

With the exception of the .223 Rem. option, the M77 Compact’s .243 Win., .260 Rem. and .308 Win. chamberings are all proven whitetail

medicine, and, with a capacity of four cartridges, offer the hunter plenty of quick follow-up shots. As with the earlier Model 77 Mark II variants, the new Compact has the dual locking lug bolt with claw extractor, conveniently located three-position safety lever and easy bolt removal. A solid rubber buttplate is radiused at the top so it doesn’t hang up when mounting the gun. Its sur-

face is finished neither slick like a plastic pad nor sticky like a rubber one, but smooth for easy mounting with enough grip so that it doesn’t slide around on your shoulder.

For accuracy testing, we equipped the Ruger M77 Mk II Compact rifle with a Pentax Whitetails Unlimited 3-9X 40 mm scope with Twilight Plex reticle. That size scope is just on the upper end of what’s right for a rifle of such diminutive pro-

portions: Anything larger would offset the balance of the gun and make it top heavy and awkward looking.

There were no malfunctions of any kind, and accuracy was about the same as the full-size .243 Win.-cal. Ruger M77 Mark I we tested previously (February 1969, p. 45), and essentially the same as the .243 Win.-cal. Ruger M77 Mark II we tested a little more than a decade ago (October 1990, p. 49). Interestingly, we still had several boxes of the same PMC 243C 80-gr. PSP ammunition remaining from the 1990 test and shot it as one of the ammunition types in the new Compact. That ammunition shot more accurately in the M77 Compact than in the circa 1990 full-size test gun and gave up only 225 f.p.s. velocity despite having a 5½” shorter barrel!

Eastern whitetail deer hunters take note, Ruger’s new M77 Compact has the speed, accuracy and power to rival the lever-action “Thutty-thutty” on which most of us cut our teeth and took our first bucks. The lever-gun still has its place in the annals of hunting nostalgia, but small-statured shooters or hunters who want the inherent virtues of a bolt-action in a handy package need not look further.



SHOOTING RESULTS

.243 Win. Cartridge	Vel. @ 15' (f.p.s.)	Energy (ft.-lbs.)	Recoil (ft.-lbs.)	Group Size In Inches		
				Smallest	Largest	Average
PMC 243C 80-gr. PSP	2905 Avg 22 Sd	1,499	9.4	1.62	2.51	2.10
Rem. Express R243W3 100-gr. CLPSP	2558 Avg 23 Sd	1,453	10.5	2.78	3.79	3.35
Rem. Premier PRB243WA 100-gr. BT	2633 Avg 25 Sd	1,539	10.8	1.82	2.18	1.98
Average Extreme Spread:				2.48		
Measured average velocity for 10 rounds from a 16½" barrel. Range temperature: 78° F. Humidity: 62%. Accuracy for five consecutive five-shot groups at 100 yds. from a Recoil Buster rifle rest. Abbreviations: BT (boattail) CLPSP (Core-Lokt point- ed soft-point), PSP (pointed soft-point), Sd (standard deviation).						

As with full-size Ruger M77 Mark II rifles, the Compact has dual locking lugs on the bolt head and an external claw extractor.



Stoeger Condor Supreme Deluxe



For the budget-minded hunter who wants an over-under that's affordable and attractive without looking cheap, the Stoeger Condor Supreme Deluxe is worth a look.



The Brazilian firm of E.R. Amantino & Cia is perhaps best known for its inexpensive single- and double-barrel top-break shotguns imported by Stoeger under the familiar names of Gaucha and IGA. There is also an over-under shotgun line using the Amantino name, positioned in a price spectrum to rival many pumps.

Ornamentation of the Condor Supreme Deluxe is reserved, offering the no-frills shotgunner a sturdy gun with gold-tone, single-selective, mechanical trigger; American walnut stock; fiber-optic front- and mid-beads; automatic safety; interchangeable choke tubes; and automatic selective ejectors. All metal parts—save the ejector assemblies, trigger and locking bolts—have an even, medium polish blue finish. The monobloc is jeweled, with the pattern of the left side suggesting it offered the tool operator suffi-



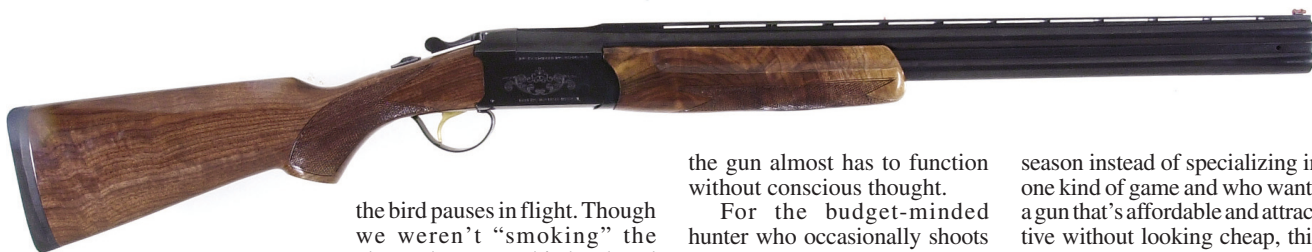
Lockup is by way of two pins protruding from the front of the standing breech. These engage corresponding holes in the monobloc on either side of the top chamber.

cient practice to do a fairly good job of jewelizing the right. Further decoration is limited to a tasteful amount of well-executed machine-cut scroll engraving on the action sides.

Standard model Condor shotguns sport Brazilian hardwood while the Deluxe has American walnut with functional, hand-cut checkering of approximately 16 lines per inch

STOGER

MANUFACTURER: E.R. Amantino & Cia., Ltd., Veranopolis, RS, Brazil
IMPORTER: Stoeger Industries (Dept. AR), 17603 Indian Head Highway, Accokeek, MD 20607-2501; (301) 283-6300; www.stoegerindustries.com
GAUGE: 12, 3" (tested), 20, 3"
ACTION TYPE: over-under shotgun
RECEIVER: carbon steel
OVERALL LENGTH: 42"
BARREL: 24" (20-ga. only), 26" (tested), 28"
WEIGHT: 7 lbs., 12 ozs.
CHOKES: interchangeable
TRIGGER: single selective, 6 lbs. pull, both barrels
STOCK: American walnut: length of pull, 14½"; drop at heel, 2½"; drop at comb, 1½"
ACCESSORIES: two choke tubes, wrench
SUGGESTED RETAIL PRICE: \$490



in a double bordered point pattern on the wrist and fore-end.

Lockup is by way of two pins protruding from the front of the standing breech engaging corresponding holes in the monobloc on either side of the upper chamber much like the system used in the Beretta 686 shotgun series. A recessed and grooved cam latches the fore-end to a single hanger on the bottom barrel.

Barrel side ribs are solid with openings at the front and rear to allow water or debris to exit, and the 9 mm-wide, ventilated top rib is stepped at the rear and cross-grooved its length to reduce glare. Barrels accept screw-in choke tubes and two tubes are provided with each gun: full and modified with 28"

barrels, and modified and improved cylinder with 24" (20-ga. only) or 26" barrels. All are suitable for use with steel shot.

Actual constrictions on our 26"-barreled gun were 0.013" and 0.026" or modified and improved modified, respectively. Both had slightly oversize bores of 0.732" and 0.731", and actual pattern testing showed pellet percentages representative of the claimed modified and improved cylinder chokes. Patterns were noticeably left of center, but even. Function firing was at sporting clays; and although the action was initially very tight and hard to open and close, there were no malfunctions of any kind. The action should become easier to operate as the gun is broken in.

There's a lot of weight in the fore-end making the handling of the sample Condor Supreme Deluxe somewhat sluggish. We struggled with fast incoming clay birds, but did well on targets such as "springing teal" where there is ample time to get the gun up and take the shot as

the bird pauses in flight. Though we weren't "smoking" the clays, they were hit hard and none were chipped, which suggested that the off-center patterns were working against us. Handling dynamics of the sample Condor Supreme Deluxe we tested make it more suitable for shots such as passing geese where leads are fairly predictable and sustained, and less useful on close flushing birds like woodcock or quail where

the gun almost has to function without conscious thought.

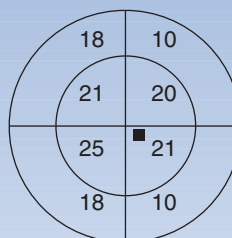
For the budget-minded hunter who occasionally shoots clays, hunts whatever may be in

season instead of specializing in one kind of game and who wants a gun that's affordable and attractive without looking cheap, this gun is worth a look.

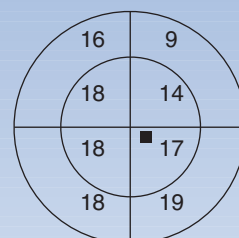


SHOOTING RESULTS

AVERAGE OF 10 PATTERNS AT 25 YDS.



Modified Tube



Improved Cylinder Tube

■=Point of Hold

Federal P128—12-ga., 2%, 1½ oz. No. 6 Lead

Average Pellet count: 253

Measured Velocity @3-ft.: 1352 f.p.s.

Remaining Energy Per Pellet @40 yds.: 3 ft.-lb.

Recoil: 31.4 ft.-lbs

Total Hits	143 (57%)	Total Hits	119 (47%)
21" Inner Circle	87 (34%)	21" Inner Circle	67 (26%)
30" Outer Ring	56 (23%)	30" Outer Ring	52 (21%)



Ornamentation of the Condor Supreme Deluxe is reserved, and it offers the no-frills shotgunner a sturdy gun with some cosmetic upgrades over the standard Condor. The top rib is stepped and cross-grooved to reduce glare. Sighting beads are red fiber-optic units (l.). Condor Supreme Deluxe shotguns come with two interchangeable choke tubes (above l.). The test gun with 26" barrels came with modified and improved cylinder tubes.





Gamo Hunter 1250 Hurricane Air Rifle

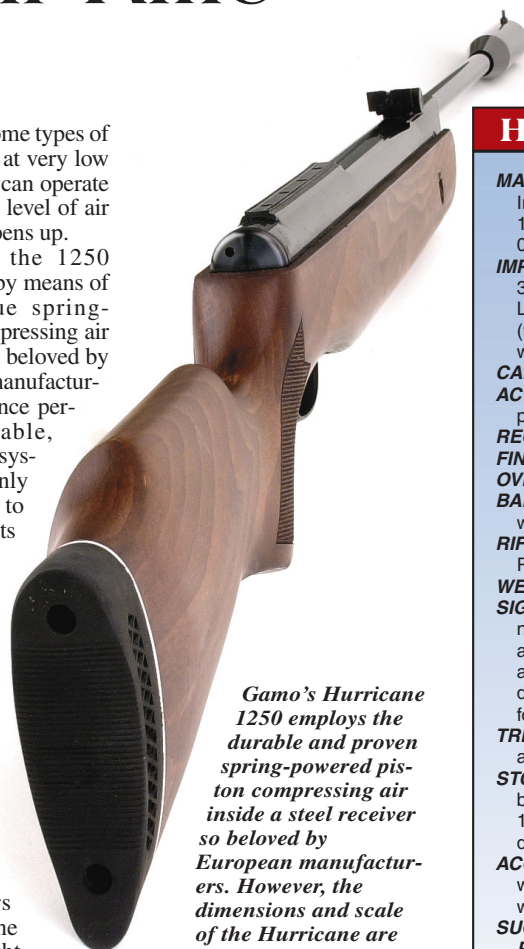
Most .177-cal. air rifles fire a pellet at distinctly subsonic muzzle velocities (less than 1150 f.p.s.). Only rarely do muzzle velocities of .177-cal. air rifles venture above 1100 f.p.s.—until now. Enter the new Gamo Hunter 1250 Hurricane supersonic air rifle from a company whose innovative new products have lately put the fun back into air rifle shooting. Muzzle velocity of Gamo's new Hunter 1250 Hurricane air rifle is listed in company literature as being a sizzling, supersonic 1250 f.p.s. The NRA Technical Staff recently received one of these air rifles for test and evaluation.

The Gamo Hunter 1250 Hurricane is definitely an adult air rifle. Indeed, its dimensions, operation and performance are adult scale. For example, with a weight of 9 lbs., 10 ozs., a cocking effort of 58 lbs., a pull length of 14 1/2" and supersonic ballistic performance, the Hunter 1250 Hurricane may be too much for smaller youths and many female shooters to operate. But that may be just the appeal—here is a large, supersonic air rifle designed for high performance

plinking and even some types of small game hunting at very low cost. For those who can operate the big brute, a new level of air rifle performance opens up.

Mechanically, the 1250 Hurricane operates by means of the tried and true spring-powered piston compressing air in a steel receiver so beloved by European air rifle manufacturers. Not rocket science perhaps, but a durable, proven, economical system that requires only one cocking stroke to operate. To keep costs down, the Hurricane dispenses with a counter-recoiling piston so there is mild recoil. While total recoil (really a "jump") is nothing noteworthy, the fore-and-aft recoil of such guns does require a special scope to handle the forces in both directions.

As most owners will use the Hurricane with an optical sight, the rifle comes equipped



Gamo's Hurricane 1250 employs the durable and proven spring-powered piston compressing air inside a steel receiver so beloved by European manufacturers. However, the dimensions and scale of the Hurricane are suited to adults.

HUNTER 1250

MANUFACTURER: Gamo Industrias S.A., P.O. Box 16, Barcelona, Spain E-08830

IMPORTER: Gamo USA, 3911 S.W. 47th Ave., Fort Lauderdale, FL 33314; (954) 581-5822; www.gamo.com

CALIBER: .177

ACTION TYPE: spring air-piston, air rifle

RECEIVER: steel

FINISH: medium polish blue

OVERALL LENGTH: 48 1/2"

BARREL: 20 1/2" (with barrel weight)

RIFLING: 12 groove, 1:9" RH twist

WEIGHT: 9 lbs., 10 ozs.

SIGHTS: fixed post front, notch in blade rear click adjustable for windage and elevation, integral dovetail base on receiver for scope mount

TRIGGER: two-stage, adjustable, 2 lbs. pull

STOCK: walnut stained beech: length of pull, 14 1/2"; drop at heel, 3 1/8"; drop at comb, 2 1/8"

ACCESSORIES: muzzle weight, scope stop, wrenches

SUGGESTED RETAIL PRICE: \$400

SHOOTING RESULTS

Caliber: .177	Vel. @ 15' (f.p.s.)	Energy (ft.-lbs.)	Group Size In Inches		
			Smallest	Largest	Average
H&N Match 7.3-gr. FN	1067 Avg. 37 Sd	18	0.57	1.16	0.78
Gamo Magnum 7.7-gr. PTD	1064 Avg. 16 Sd	19	0.78	1.45	1.26
Beeman Silverjet 8.3-gr. PTD	1067 Avg. 8 Sd	21	0.49	0.97	0.74
Average Extreme Spread:					0.93
Measured average velocity for 10 rounds from a 20 $\frac{1}{2}$ " barrel. Range temperature: 75° F. Humidity: 21%. Accuracy for five consecutive, five-shot groups at 33 ft. from a sandbag. Abbreviations: FN (flat-nose), PTD (pointed), Sd (standard deviation).					

With a muzzle velocity of more than 1060 f.p.s. over our chronograph screens, Beeman's 9-gr. Crow Magnum hollow-point pellets drilled through four bars of soap before coming to rest in the last bar.



with an integral, dovetail scope base with a scope-arresting block to prevent the scope from slipping on the dovetail base. The front of the arresting block has a small rubber face that contacts the rear scope ring to cushion the recoil impulse. Iron sights are also standard with a fixed post front and a notch in blade rear click-adjustable for windage and elevation via large finger-wheels with knurled edges. As there is plenty of room for mounting the scope on the receiver, the iron sights do not have to be removed to do so.

Cocking requires a break-open procedure in which the barrel pivots around its breech. Dual lever arms attached to the barrel then utilize the mechanical advantage to compress the main-spring and recock the piston. An anti-bear trap safety feature prevents the barrel from slamming closed should the shooter lose his grip on the barrel while cocking. An oversized muzzle weight provides a large, but smooth grip surface for cocking.

Gamo equips the Hurricane with a two-stage, adjustable trigger. We found the trigger light, with about 1/4" of take up, followed by light loading and a rather mushy, but predictable, let-off. There is also a mechanical safety lever inside the trigger guard.

Adult males who picked up the Hurricane commented approvingly on the sheer size and weight of it, which closely approximates a center-fire rifle. Most males had minimal diffi-

culty cocking and shooting the Hurricane as long as the firing cadence remained leisurely. On the other hand, a brisk plinking/shooting pace left many complaining of fatigue after 10 to 12 shots. Adult females, on the other hand, were generally put off by the size and weight. We found

For most customers, a major reason for purchasing a Hurricane will be the high muzzle velocity and the improved exterior and terminal ballistic performance that may offer. With that in mind, we tested the Hurricane with air rifle pellets designed primarily for field use

The Hurricane 1250 is equipped with an integral dovetail rail on top of the receiver. There is a scope stop to prevent slipping.



some unable to cock the Gamo. Those who could did not necessarily enjoy the experience.

Workmanship of the Hurricane proved up to the high standard we have come to expect from Gamo products. For example, although the stock is of stained beechwood with a five-layer varnish finish, the stain and finish are well done and evenly applied producing an attractive effect. All metal parts have a deep, even blue finish seldom found on air rifles today. Wood to metal fit was pedestrian, but acceptable. The only two blemishes were the front sight post that seemed strangely out of place and the trigger and trigger guard that seemed less finished than the other metal parts.

as well as with match-grade pellets. The flat-nosed, H&N match-grade pellets were used to establish the baseline accuracy while we used pointed Gamo and Beeman pellets to test penetration and Beeman hollow-point pellets to test expansion. Accuracy proved acceptable for a field gun of this type, however, users should remember this is not a match rifle. We found muzzle velocity with all pellets tested to be subsonic at 33 feet but still substantially higher than most other .177-cal. air rifles.

To test expansion, we fired Beeman 9-gr. Crow Magnum lead hollow point pellets into four bath-sized bars of soap at 25 yds. Typically, these pellets penetrated the first bar of soap

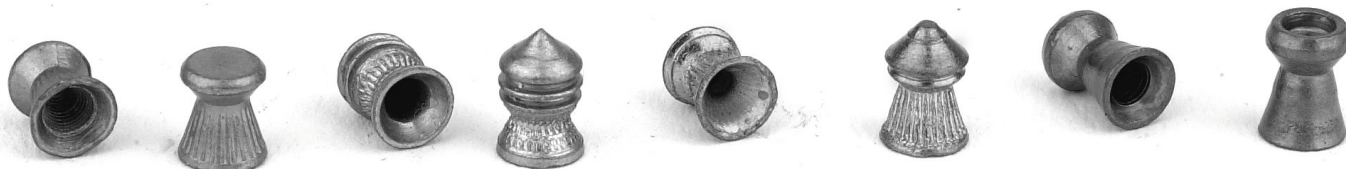
leaving a cavity of about 0.375" diameter, then expanded in the second bar as indicated by a 0.565" diameter cavity. The last two bars of soap were simply drilled through by the pellet. This minimal expansion test indicates the Hurricane 1250 can generate sufficient terminal ballistic performance for hunting pests and many types of small game. Not bad for a 9-gr. air rifle pellet! Non-hollow-point pellets simply drilled holes through four bars of soap and kept going.

To test penetration, we fired Beeman Silverjet pointed pellets into 1" soft pine boards and against 0.035" mild steel sheet at 25 yds. The Silverjet pellets fully penetrated the pine boards splitting the back side open but not exiting. Silverjet pellets impacting the mild steel sheet at zero degrees obliquely deeply dented the steel but did not penetrate.

Another major point here is that shooters must treat the Hurricane 1250 air rifle with the same respect due to a firearm as the Hurricane offers substantially higher ballistic performance than typical air rifles most shooters own and use. Gamo emphasizes in the manual that shooters must remember that high-powered air rifles such as the Hurricane can cause serious injury if improperly used.

With the new Hunter 1250 Hurricane, then, Gamo has opened a new market for adult, high-performance air rifles suitable for hunting and informal target shooting.

NRB



We fired the following pellets in the Gamo Hunter Hurricane 1250 air rifle for our tests (l. to r.): 7.3-gr. H&N Match flat-nose, 8.3-gr. Beeman Silverjet pointed, 7.7-gr. Gamo Magnum pointed and 9-gr. Beeman Crow Magnum hollow point.