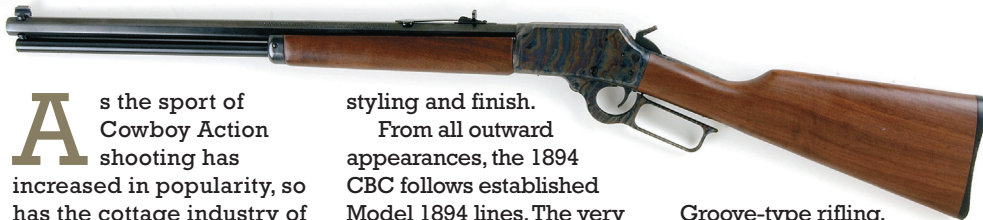


# Marlin 1894 Cowboy Competition Carbine

Photo by Rebin Towlesley



*Marlin's Model 1894 CBC, while completely modern in materials and method of manufacture, harks to the nostalgia of the Old West in appearance and finish.*



**A**s the sport of Cowboy Action shooting has increased in popularity, so has the cottage industry of "tuning" guns for cowboy competition. But as the number of specialized gunsmiths has grown, mass-producers of cowboy-style guns have responded with factory-tuned guns, ready for top-level competition right out of the box. The most recent addition to the factory-tuned gun list is Marlin's Model 1894 CBC Cowboy Competition Carbine lever-action chambered for .38 Spl. that, while completely modern in its materials and method of manufacture, harks to the nostalgia of the late 1800s in terms of

styling and finish.

From all outward appearances, the 1894 CBC follows established Model 1894 lines. The very first Model 1894 rifles had case hardened receivers, which was abandoned in 1969 in favor of a blued finish. Realizing that one of the biggest parts of Cowboy Action shooting is looking the part, Marlin wisely chose to give a color-casehardened finish to the receiver, square bolt, trigger guard plate and square finger lever of the new model. The 20", blued octagonal barrel is another nice 19th century touch, and its six-groove 1:16" Ballard-type rifling should work much better with the cast bullets used in Cowboy competition than Micro-

Groove-type rifling.

In keeping with the 19th Century look, the Model 1894 CBC has Marlin's tough Mar-Shield finish that looks like an oil finish on the American black walnut stock. It is notably tougher than oil and more resistant to damage. A blued steel fore-end cap and hard rubber buttpad complete either end of the CBC. The final period touch is the adjustable Marble's semi-buckhorn rear sight and Marble's Carbine front sight. The only feature that betrays the otherwise nostalgic appearance of the Model 1894 CBC is the unobtrusive hammer

## MARLIN 1894 CBC

**MANUFACTURER:** Marlin Firearms Co. (Dept. AR), 100 Kenna Drive, P.O. Box 248, North Haven, CT 06473-0905; (800) 544-8892; [www.marlinfirearms.com](http://www.marlinfirearms.com)

**CALIBER:** .38 Spl.

**ACTION TYPE:** lever-action repeating rifle

**RECEIVER:** color-casehardened steel

**BARREL:** blued, 20" octagonal

**RIFLING:** Ballard-type cut, six-grooves, 1:16" RH twist

**MAGAZINE:** 10-round tubular

**SIGHTS:** Marble's semi-buckhorn rear drift adjustable for windage, elevator adjustable for elevation; Marble's Carbine front

**TRIGGER:** single-stage, non-adjustable, 4 lbs., 7 ozs. pull

**STOCK:** American walnut; length of pull, 13 1/2"; drop at heel, 1 3/8"; drop at comb, 1"

**OVERALL LENGTH:** 37 1/2"

**WEIGHT:** 6 lbs.

**ACCESSORIES:** hammer extension, safety lock

**SUGGESTED RETAIL PRICE:** \$965

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.





block safety button on the receiver rear.

Of all the custom features on the new Model 1894, the most noticeable when first firing the gun is the slick-as-ice functioning of the finger lever. Marlin smoothed up and tuned not only the lever, but its ancillary parts as well. The finger lever plunger spring, hammer, breech bolt, breech bolt lock, carrier and hammer spring are all optimized for smooth, effortless functioning. When combined with the .38 Spl.-

only chambering and the mild recoil of Cowboy Action loads, it is possible to fire the Model 1894 CBC rapidly from the shoulder while losing the sight picture only minimally. We found in function firing that we could empty the 10-round tubular magazine into an 8½"x11" piece of paper at 50 yds. so fast that we thought we had a misfire or had short-stroked the gun before we realized we had fired all 10 rounds.

Another tuned piece is the ejector. We found in

## SHOOTING RESULTS

.38 Spl. Cartridge	Vel. @ 15' (f.p.s.)	Energy (ft.-lbs.)	Group Size In Inches		
			Smallest	Largest	Average
Black Hills 158-gr. FPL	950 Avg. 9 Sd	317	0.68	2.44	1.90
Hornady No. 90342 140-gr. FPL	1074 Avg. 8 Sd	359	2.30	4.17	3.22
Winchester USA38CB 158-gr. FPL	889 Avg. 8 Sd	277	1.74	3.00	2.06
Average Extreme Spread:					2.39

Measured average velocity for 10 rounds from a 20" barrel. Range temperature: 76° F. Humidity: 58%. Accuracy for five consecutive, five-shot groups at 50 yds. from a Cabela's Elite Rifle Rest. Abbreviations: FPL (flat-point lead), Sd (standard deviation).

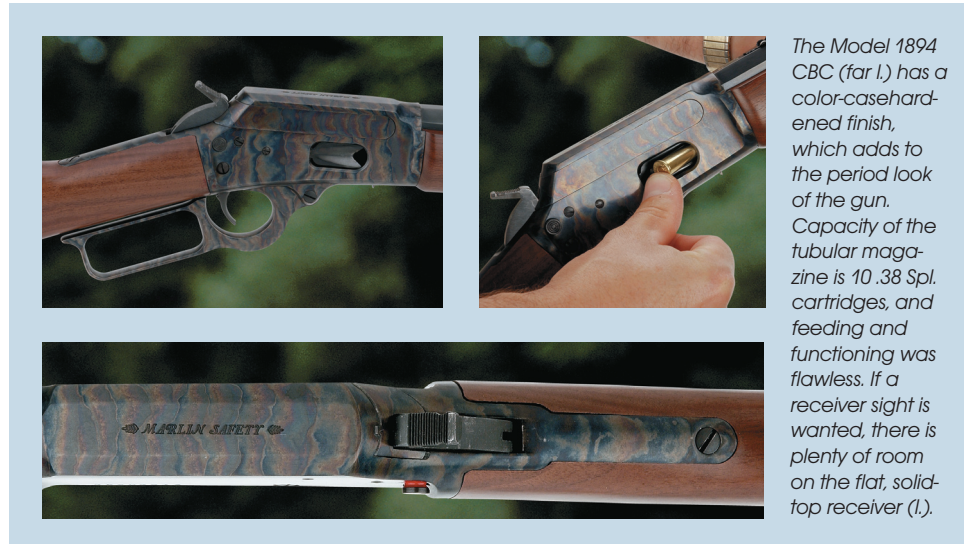
rapid firing and in deliberate accuracy testing that the CBC throws its empties forward and to the right about a foot. Ejection is not energetic, but just enough, and what it lacks in pizzazz it makes up for in reliability.

We fired the Marlin Model 1894 CBC for accu-

ing the serial number. For those wishing to fit a CBC with a receiver sight, there is plenty of room for one on the solid flat top, though the words "Marlin Safety" are engraved into the top of the receiver.

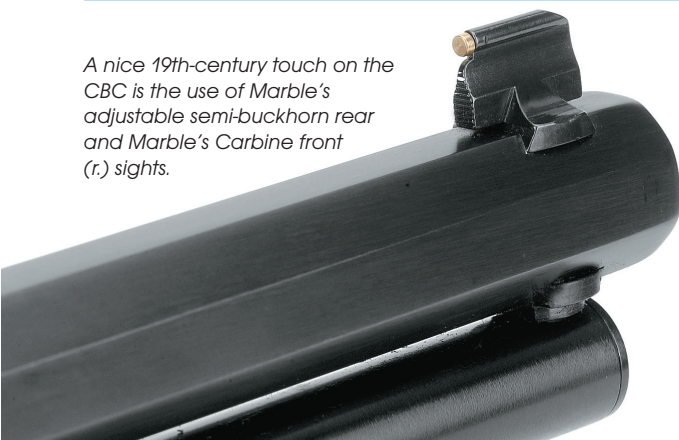
During firing, there was no noticeable leading of the bore, accuracy remained constant and the trigger pull was magnificent. We had some difficulty loading the small .38 Spl. cartridges into the magazine as the rims tended to hang up on the loading gate cutout. We also found that magazine capacity is very tight to 10 rounds. We used CCI Lawman 158-gr. round-nose ammunition as one of the function firing loads and found that the cartridge's longer overall length—attributed to the long ogive of the round-nose bullet—reduced the magazine capacity to nine of those rounds. There was no problem getting 10 flat-point cartridges to fit in the magazine.

Granted, the original Marlin Model 1894 came along a little too late in history to have had much to do with "winning the West," but from what we've seen and experienced shooting Marlin's new Model 1894 CBC rifle, we suspect it will be remembered for its part in winning Cowboy Action shooting matches.



The Model 1894 CBC (far l.) has a color-casehardened finish, which adds to the period look of the gun. Capacity of the tubular magazine is 10 .38 Spl. cartridges, and feeding and functioning was flawless. If a receiver sight is wanted, there is plenty of room on the flat, solid-top receiver (l.).

A nice 19th-century touch on the CBC is the use of Marble's adjustable semi-buckhorn rear and Marble's Carbine front (r.) sights.



racy with the results shown in the accompanying table. We were impressed with the accuracy of the gun given that we fired it using the semi-buckhorn sight. For shooters wanting to equip the CBC with a tang sight, Marlin has conveniently moved the serial number from the top tang to the side of the receiver, thus permitting drilling without illegally obliterated



# U.S. Fire-Arms Rodeo Revolver



For many years, some participants in Cowboy Action shooting (CAS) have been less than satisfied with the current crop of reproduction Single Action Army revolvers. The unique spirit of CAS creates participants who treasure firearms for their authenticity as much or even more than for their shooting performance. But many reproduction guns that worked and shot well often fell short in terms of authenticity, while those that were dead ringers for originals sometimes had trouble holding up in CAS events.

U.S. Fire-Arms created a stir by promising a sound and durable gun whose appearance would please even those among CAS shooters who are most stubborn about authenticity. Its commitment to restore the old Colt dome in Hartford, Conn., and assemble the guns there from U.S.-made parts clearly showed it understood the passions of the CAS shooter.

CAS shooters pride themselves on friendly, low-pressure competition and hospitality to new

shooters. In that spirit, U.S. Fire-Arms offers the Rodeo as an entry-level single-action revolver for budding Cowboy Action shooters. Its aim was to create a functional and durable SAA at a price attractive to new shooters. An example with a 5½" barrel chambered in .45 Colt was sent to us for testing.

Although U.S. Fire-Arms offers models in a variety of calibers, finishes, barrel lengths and other features, fancy doo-dads are eliminated from the Rodeo in the interest of keeping its cost down. The gun is offered in two of the most popular chamberings for CAS: .38 Spl. and .45 Colt. The most commonly chosen and useful barrel lengths are available, namely 4¾" and 5½". Also standard are hard rubber stocks patterned after those seen on original SAAs. These units feature molded diamond checkering and "US" escutcheons.

Like the originals, the bases of the stocks are beveled away from the frame's square butt.

Like most of the late-production SAAs, the frame features a transverse crosspin for the cylinder base pin and three slotted screws are present above the trigger guard, one each for the hammer, trigger and bolt. The cylinder and frame are investment cast, and like all of the Rodeo's metal parts save the case-hardened hammer, display a satin blue finish that is attractive and evenly applied. Though not as strikingly handsome or authentic as original-style fire-bluing, it is far more durable when subjected to the corrosive effects of the blackpowder loads popular with some Cowboy Action shooters. Historical

## USFA RODEO

**MANUFACTURER:** United States Fire-Arms Manufacturing Company, Inc., 55 Van Dyke Ave., Hartford, CT, 06106; (877) 227-6901; www.usfirearms.com

**CALIBER:** .38 Spl., .45 Colt (tested)

**ACTION TYPE:** single-action center-fire revolver

**FRAME:** investment-cast steel with satin blue finish

**BARREL:** 5½" round\*

**RIFLING:** six groove, 1:16" LH twist

**MAGAZINE:** six-shot cylinder

**SIGHTS:** top strap groove and front post

**TRIGGER:** single-action; 4½ lbs. pull

**OVERALL LENGTH:** 11½"

**WIDTH:** 1½"

**HEIGHT:** 5½"

**WEIGHT:** 38 ozs.

**ACCESSORIES:** cleaning brush, trigger lock

**SUGGESTED RETAIL PRICE:** \$405

\*Other options available.

*Like the original SAAs, the Rodeo has a fixed firing pin and no transfer bar safety.*





*The Rodeo has an even satin blue finish that helps reduce the cost, making the revolver more appealing for entry-level shooters.*

details include a checked hammer spur, two-line patent date above the trigger guard and serial numbers stamped on the cylinder and the bottom of the frame. Sights include a U-shaped top strap groove and front post. Like the original, both are fixed, meaning shooters may have to file down the front sight to match their favorite loads.


Like the original SAAs, the Rodeo has a fixed firing pin and no modern safety, such as a transfer bar. Accordingly, it demands extra responsibility and attention from the user. Those who enjoy shooting traditional firearms like the Rodeo need to pay heed to the age-old warning to “keep five beans in the wheel.” In the Old West, it was common knowledge that the only safe way to carry these guns was with the hammer down on an empty chamber. It seems likely those already in the CAS community are aware of that necessity, but with the growing number of newcomers in the sport it seems wise to repeat it.

On the shooting range, the Rodeo retains the balance and handling characteristics of the original SAA. The Rodeo points like an original SAA and, unlike many reproductions, the shooter will hear four distinct audible clicks when drawing the hammer to the rear—just like a real Peacemaker.

The Rodeo’s single-action trigger broke cleanly

at 4 lbs. pull after minimal take-up. Our example printed well-centered groups about 4" below point of aim at 25 yds. with the loads we tested. Accuracy and function testing was conducted using Black Hills, Hornady and Winchester ammunition. The results shown in the accompanying table were as good or better than those of other SAA reproductions we have tested in the past, and there were no malfunctions of any kind. Timing is the heart of reliability and durability in any revolver, and the Rodeo’s proved to be first-rate. Even at the end of long shooting sessions no binding or looseness was evident in the rotation of the Rodeo’s cylinder. Additionally, lockup was very tight and cylinder play was almost imperceptible.

Workmanship on the sample revolver was of a very high order as well. Only a few tooling marks could be found on the inside of the recoil shield and in the cylinder notches.

Although the Rodeo’s satin finish is far more durable than period-style fire-blueing, this concession to economy may be the one feature the hand-sewn authentic underwear crowd may find wanting in the Rodeo. Nonetheless, those with a yen for the pleasure of shooting a piece of history like the SAA or a sturdy reliable gun for CAS would be well advised to take a look at U.S. Fire-Arm’s Rodeo. 

## SHOOTING RESULTS

.45 Colt Cartridge	Vel. @ 15' Energy (f.p.s.) (ft.-lbs.)	Group Size In Inches		
		Smallest	Largest	Average
Hornady No. 9115 CAL 255-gr. LFN	747 Avg. 316 20 Sd	1.54	3.26	2.62
Winchester No. X45CP2 255-gr. LFN	730 Avg. 302 22 Sd	1.68	3.41	2.85
PMC No. 45LA 250-gr LFN	656 Avg. 239 17 Sd	2.12	3.88	3.06
Average Extreme Spread:		2.84		

Measured average velocity for 10 rounds from a 5½" barrel. Range temperature: 72° F. Humidity: 68%. Accuracy for five, consecutive five-shot groups at 25 yds. from a Ransom Rest. Abbreviations: CAL (Cowboy Action Loads), LFN (lead flat nose) Sd (standard deviation).

*The Rodeo’s lockwork with its three-notch hammer mimics that of the original SAA. When cocking the hammer, shooters will hear the familiar four clicks of the Peacemaker.*



*The sights include a sharply cut top strap groove and a tall fixed front post. Shooters may want to file it down to match their favorite loads. As with the SAA, the six-groove barrel is rifled with a left-hand twist.*



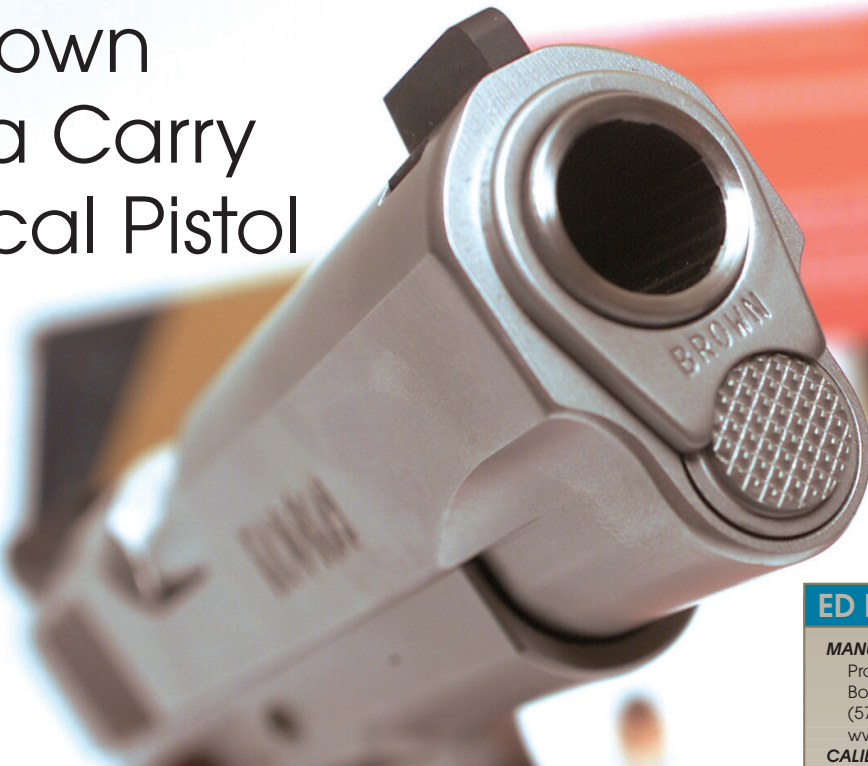
*The fit between the cylinder and the Rodeo’s frame was very tight and any play between the two was almost imperceptible. Timing is the heart of reliability and durability in a revolver, and the Rodeo’s proved to be first-rate.*





# Ed Brown Kobra Carry Tactical Pistol

Ed Brown's new Kobra Carry offers many custom features at a less than custom price. It is offered in both standard size as the Kobra and in a Commander size as the Kobra Carry.



As John Browning's masterpiece M1911 pistol approaches its centennial, this classic handgun shows no sign of aging. Many handguns have come and gone since the M1911 was introduced, but when a rugged and reliable defensive handgun is needed, an M1911 variant invariably remains the popular choice.

One of the most notable and highly respected manufacturers of custom M1911-type handguns is Ed Brown, whose pistols have achieved an enviable

reputation for quality, innovation and reliability. Brown recently announced two new M1911 models—the full-size Kobra and Commander-size Kobra Carry. Both have many custom features at a less than custom cost, but with no sacrifice in quality. We selected a Kobra Carry for test and evaluation.

Each Brown Kobra pistol features a match-grade barrel, beavertail grip safety with "memory groove" to ensure a consistent grip, extended safety lever, Novak/Trijicon low-profile tritium night sights and Hogue exotic wood grip panels. Kobra pistols are available in satin blue, satin stainless or two-tone stainless and blue finish. Each pistol comes in a padded range bag with Ed Brown logo and internal pockets for spare magazines.

A notable feature of

Kobra pistols is the "snake-skin" surface treatment on the slide, mainspring housing, and back and front straps. This treatment is machined into the metal surface and consists of small circular cuts that are slightly tilted against the direction of finger travel. While Brown's snakeskin is similar to others, it is not identical as Brown uses smaller cuts intended to provide a better, non-slip grasping surface. At the same time, the snakeskin treatment does not catch and hold lint and dirt particles like the fine checkering used on many other custom pistols.

A unique feature is Brown's patented bobtail treatment of the mainspring housing. This innovative feature seems so natural for a carry pistol that one wonders why it had not been tried before. Essentially, the mainspring housing and bottom inch or so of the frame is bobbed and angled at approximately 45 degrees. This makes the

*The bobtail mainspring housing had no detrimental effect on the gun's overall handling, which was excellent.*

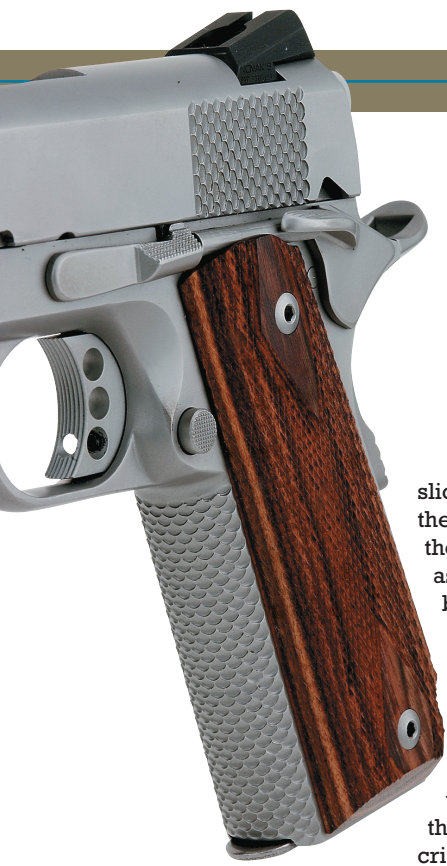
## ED BROWN KOBRA

**MANUFACTURER:** Ed Brown Products (Dept. AR), P.O. Box 492, Perry, MO 63462; (573) 565-3261; www.edbrown.com  
**CALIBER:** .45 ACP  
**ACTION TYPE:** short recoil, single-action semi-automatic pistol  
**FRAME:** satin-finished stainless or blued steel  
**BARREL:** 4 $\frac{3}{4}$ "  
**RIFLING:** six-groove, 1:16" right-hand twist  
**MAGAZINE:** eight-round-capacity, detachable steel box  
**SIGHTS:** low-profile Novak/Trijicon tritium rear drift-adjustable for windage  
**TRIGGER:** single-action, 3 $\frac{1}{4}$  lbs. pull  
**OVERALL LENGTH:** 7 $\frac{1}{2}$ "  
**WIDTH:** 7/8"  
**HEIGHT:** 5 $\frac{1}{4}$ "  
**WEIGHT:** 36 ozs.  
**ACCESSORIES:** padded carry bag  
**SUGGESTED RETAIL PRICE:** \$1,995

pistol less apt to "print" when carried under clothing, but has no adverse effect whatsoever on the pointing and handling characteristics.

The Kobra Carry pistol we received for evaluation was finished in satin stainless. The fit and finish were flawless and went far beyond what was necessary to achieve a functional and accurate pistol. The finish of this handgun was as good internally as it was





The snakeskin surface treatment on the grip areas of the slide, front strap and back strap provides a non-slip gripping surface. Unlike 30 l.p.i. checkering found on many other custom handguns, the snakeskin surface does not attract and hold lint or dirt.

slide and frame; indeed, the back and forth glide of the slide on the frame felt as if those parts were on ball bearings.

While not readily apparent at first glance, every sharp edge of the Kobra Carry has been smoothed or rounded to preclude snags and the snakeskin cuts were crisp and clean. The area where the trigger guard meets the frontstrap is slightly undercut to provide a better gripping surface. To assure smooth feeding and functioning, the ejection port is lowered and flared and the barrel

externally, and we were able to find no machining marks anywhere as every surface was smooth and finished to a very high order. There was no discernable play between the

## SHOOTING RESULTS

.45 ACP Cartridge	Vel.@15' (f.p.s.)	Energy (ft.-lbs.)	Group Size In Inches		
			Smallest	Largest	Average
Taurus SCHP 185-gr.	935 Avg. 11 Sd	359	3.50	4.00	3.75
Remington R45AP7 230-gr. JHP	769 Avg. 17 Sd	302	3.50	4.13	3.80
Black Hills 230-gr. JHP	828 Avg. 6 Sd	350	3.00	3.75	3.25
Average Extreme Spread:			3.60		
Measured average velocity for 10 rounds from a 4.25" barrel. Range temperature 81° F. Humidity 85%. Accuracy for five consecutive, five-shot groups at 25 yds. from an Outers Pistol Perch. Abbreviations: Sd (standard deviation), JHP (jacketed hollow point), SCHP (solid copper hollow point).					

throated and feed ramp polished. Additional custom features include a skeletonized hammer and a beveled magazine well.

Brown keeps the price of the Kobra Carry lower than many of its competitors with no sacrifice in quality by building every pistol to identical standards and limiting options. For example, the safety is not ambidextrous, as is usually found on custom pistols and the full-length guide rod found on many other custom pistols is conspicuous by its absence. Brown explains these deletions very simply—they are not needed to make a highly

accurate and reliable custom pistol, and they actually may detract from overall handling characteristics and reliability. A feature we particularly liked was the fact that it can be disassembled without tools, notably a barrel bushing wrench. And, as the reader will note from our accuracy results, this pistol is as accurate as many full-sized custom combat pistols.

Functioning proved flawless with all types of ammunition tested. We fired ammunition with full-metal-jacket round nose, jacketed-hollow-point and semi-wadcutter bullets without any effect whatsoever on functioning. Handling was classic M1911. We noted that the bobtail mainspring housing had no effect whatsoever on the Kobra Carry's overall handling. In fact, the feel of the Kobra Carry was virtually indistinguishable from an M1911 with a standard grip. The sample gun's trigger had no discernable creep or backlash and broke like the proverbial glass rod at an average of just over 3 lbs.

Ed Brown's new Kobra Carry M1911 pistol represents good value for the money. It combines an aesthetically pleasing finish with excellent reliability and numerous custom features. It is not an inexpensive handgun, but compared to custom M1911 handguns with similar features, the Kobra Carry pistol is a bargain—and a delight to shoot.



The bobbed mainspring housing of the Kobra Carry enhances the ease of discreet carry without compromising pointing or handling characteristics. Every sharp edge on the sample gun had been smoothed or rounded. Unlike some custom M1911s, the Kobra Carry does not require special tools for disassembly.





# EAA Saiga .308 Win. Carbine

*The .308 Win. Saiga offers the shooter a handy and compact semi-automatic rifle in a major caliber at an affordable price—a tough thing to find in today's market.*



**T**he Saiga series of semi-automatic rifles from European American Armory, made by Russia's Izhmash Weapons Factory, represents a modification of the AK series of military rifles designed for the civilian market. Izhmash recognized that the AK-47, considered to be the most widely distributed and best known military small arm of the post-World War II era, is well-suited to the sporting market. The name "Saiga," a Russian word for a type of antelope that lives on the steppes of southern Russia and in Kazakhstan, conveys the sporting nature of the Saiga rifle.

Saiga rifles are available chambered in .223 Rem., 7.62x39 mm and .308 Win., in barrel lengths of 16" or 22", and with either wood or synthetic stocks. The model received for testing is a .308 Win. model with a 16" barrel and synthetic stocks.

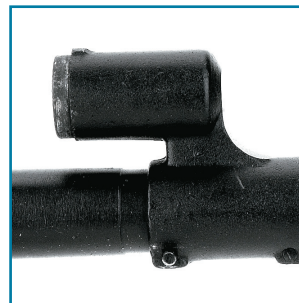
The Saiga shares many basic operating principles with the AK-47. The receiver is made of stamped steel and utilizes a heavy steel barrel extension into which the horizontally

opposed locking lugs of the bolt lock. A distinctive feature of the .308 Win. Saiga's receiver is the reinforced area on the forward, right side that reinforces the barrel extension. A large, simple safety is on the right side of the receiver and also acts as a dustcover. Those familiar with the straightforward design of AK-series rifles will be right at home with the Saiga.

Apart from the basic operating system of the Saiga, there are some significant details that set it apart from the military AK rifle. Obviously, it is strictly a semi-automatic firearm. Also, the placement of the trigger and the style of grip are altered from the original design. In place of the original pistol grip design, Saiga designers utilized a conventional style curved grip, which required the trigger to be moved rearward roughly 2". The rifle's internal trigger mechanism is mostly unchanged, with simply an

extended leg added to the trigger itself to move it to the rear. Although the detachable magazine of the Saiga functions similarly to that of an AK-47, the rifle is designed to accept only proprietary magazines. And, specific to the .308 Win. version, the locking lugs on the bolt are 2 mm wider, requiring two notches in the top of the receiver for clearance during disassembly and reassembly.

Current Saiga rifles represent the most refined version of contemporary AK-series rifles, benefitting from the many modifications and improvements that have occurred over the many decades the military version has existed. A good example of such refinement is the Saiga's 90 degree gas block. It was discov-



*The Saiga benefits from modern improvements to the AK series, such as the use of a 90 degree gas block. This replaced the earlier 45 degree block, which could cause bullet shearing.*



**MANUFACTURER:** Izhmash, Proyezd, Deryabin, 3 Izhevsk, Russia 426006

**IMPORTER:** European American Armory Corp. (Dept. AR), P.O. Box 1299, Sharpes, FL 32959; (321) 639-4842; www.eaacorp.com

**CALIBER:** .223 Rem., .308 Win. (tested), 7.62x39 mm

**ACTION TYPE:** gas-operated, semi-automatic center-fire rifle  
**RECEIVER:** stamped steel  
**BARREL:** black enameled, 16", chrome-lined  
**RIFLING:** four-groove, 1:12" RH twist

**MAGAZINE:** detachable, double-column, plastic eight-round capacity

**SIGHTS:** post front adjustable for windage and elevation, elevation adjustable notch rear

**TRIGGER:** 6½ lbs. pull

**STOCK:** black synthetic; length of pull, 13½"; drop at heel, 1¾"; drop at comb, 1½"

**OVERALL LENGTH:** 37½"

**WEIGHT:** 8 lbs.

**ACCESSORIES:** one magazine

**SUGGESTED RETAIL PRICE:** \$429

*Although still a Kalashnikov-based firearm, a look at the profile of the Saiga rifle reveals one of its most unique attributes—a conventionally styled, curved pistol grip. This feature gives the Saiga different handling characteristics than a military-style AK rifle.*



Close inspection of the .308 Win. Saiga reveals a firearm that is "all business." The fit and finish is adequate, and better on many levels than that of many military-style AK rifles. There is an evenly applied and attractive baked-on enamel finish that matches well with the synthetic stocks. The fore-end is solidly built, but the buttstock exhibits some odd molded-in checkering and seems a bit too trim.

The Saiga is slightly front-heavy, which helps reduce muzzle rise. When compared to a conventional pistol-gripped AK, the Saiga's front-heaviness is pronounced. The two-stage trigger of our sample took some getting used to. In testing, we found the trig-

## SHOOTING RESULTS

.308 Win. Cartridge	Vel. @ 15' (f.p.s.)	Energy (ft.-lbs.)	Group Size In Inches			
			Smallest	Largest	Average	
Federal No. AE308D 150-gr. FMJ BT	2553 Avg. 10 Sd	2,172	1.72	4.30	3.26	
PMC No. 308D 168-gr. FMJ BT	2323 Avg. 12 Sd	2,014	1.38	3.44	2.17	
Win. Super-X No. X3082 150-gr. ST	2484 Avg. 12 Sd	2,055	1.62	4.44	2.19	
Average Extreme Spread:					2.54	
Measured average velocity for 10 rounds from a 16" barrel. Range temperature: 73° F. Humidity: 31%. Accuracy for five consecutive, five-shot groups at 100 yds. from a sandbag. Abbreviations: FMJ (full-metal jacket), BT (boattail), ST (Silvertip), Sd (standard deviation), Win. (Winchester).						

ger break somewhat unusual. There was a great deal of take-up in the first stage, followed by little to no discernable feel to the second stage and then the release.

Not surprisingly, the .308 Saiga worked flawlessly, although it had a tendency to dent ejected cases. The all-plastic magazine was easily inserted and withdrawn from the firearm and fed ammunition consistently. Accuracy results are shown in the accompanying table. There was a strange tendency to have erratic one-shot flyers in every group, and barrel heat adversely

affected accuracy. Acknowledging the flyers and allowing the barrel to cool between shots resulted in reasonable accuracy results for a Kalashnikov-type firearm.

Recognizing that the rifle will not be used for purposes such as varmint hunting where extreme accuracy is required, the Saiga's accuracy, flawless functioning, compact dimensions and affordable price should make it popular for those looking for something a little different. It offers the shooter a new semi-automatic .308 Win. rifle for just over \$400—a rarity in today's market. NRA

ered that the 45 degree angle of earlier gas blocks could potentially cause bullet shearing. Consequently, the block was redesigned to be at a 90 degree angle to alleviate that problem. Another example is the inclusion of a universal mounting rail on the left side of the receiver. The rail allows for the use of quick-detach optics mounts.



To accommodate the conventional-style pistol grip, the trigger and trigger guard were moved back roughly 2" (l). The extra length required an extended leg on the trigger itself (arrow, far l). The .308's receiver has a reinforced area near the barrel extension (below center). Saigas feature a handy optics mounting rail (below l). For our accuracy testing, we used K-Var Corp.'s KV-04 Optimized AK Scope Mount (below).

