

Sako 75 Finnlight



Rifleman Senior Executive Editor Brian C. Sheetz took this 5x5 elk (L) with a Sako 75 Finnlight in 7 mm Rem. Mag. while hunting with Big Canyon Outfitters in Utah. The Sako's integral scope-mounting dovetails and its injection-molded synthetic stock help keep its weight to 6½ lbs. overall. Shown below are the company's Optilock bases and rings holding a Weaver Grand Slam scope.

Sako rifles have always had a reputation for high quality of both workmanship and accuracy. Now that Sako has joined the Beretta family, new variations on some of its tried and true bolt-action hunting rifles are beginning to appear.

One of the newest and most interesting of these is the Sako Model 75 Finnlight. Designed as a mountain rifle, the Model 75 action (May 1997, p. 44) was an excellent choice on which to build a lightweight hunting rifle. The Model 75 comes in

four different action lengths to specifically accommodate the various families of cartridges from the Winchester Short Magnums up to the .375 H&H Mag.

With the length-specific actions no more steel, and therefore weight, is incorporated than necessary. As a final weight-saving consideration, the Finnlight's stainless steel action is fitted with a 20½" fluted stainless steel barrel.

The biggest weight savings, however, comes from the Finnlight's injection-molded synthetic stock,

which the manufacturer claims is nearly unbreakable. Like the Finnlight's stainless steel action, it has the distinct advantage of being impervious to all conceivable weather conditions that might be found in any type of hunting. In place of checkering, the synthetic stock sports soft rubber over-molding on the pistol grip and fore-end to provide a sure grip. The stock's profile is of the Monte Carlo style with its familiar contours and ends with a solid rubber recoil pad.

SAKO 75 FINNLIGHT

MANUFACTURER: Sako Ltd., Riihimaki, Finland
IMPORTER: Beretta U.S.A. Corp., 17601 Beretta Drive, Accokeek, MD 20607; (301) 283-2191; www.berettausa.com
CALIBER: .270 Win. (tested); 26 others from .22-250 Rem. through .375 H&H Mag.
ACTION TYPE: bolt-action center-fire rifle
RECEIVER: 400 series stainless steel
BARREL: 20½" fluted stainless steel
RIFLING: four-groove, 1:10" RH twist
MAGAZINE: five-round detachable box
SIGHTS: none, drilled and tapped for scope
TRIGGER: single-stage, adjustable 2- to 4-lb. pull
OVERALL LENGTH: 43½"
WEIGHT: 6½ lbs.
SUGGESTED RETAIL PRICE: \$1,311



Designed as a lightweight mountain rifle, the Finnlight's super-light synthetic stock features soft rubber over-molding at the pistol grip and fore-end. Further weight saving features include a fluted barrel and four different receiver sizes, scaled for specific cartridge families.

Weighing a scant 6½ lbs., the new Sako Finnlight has all of the right features one would look for in a rifle for severely rugged coun-

try. We found a 7 mm Rem. Mag. version an easygoing companion on a strenuously vertical Utah elk hunt that brought success in the

form of a fine 5x5 bull. But form follows function, and if a rifle isn't accurate, quick and dependable, light weight and ruggedness count for nothing.

In a practical sense, having an accurate rifle doesn't necessarily mean that it can be shot accurately in the field; for most shooters the trigger makes a big difference. Fortunately, the Finnlight comes with a trigger that is easily adjusted from 4 lbs. down to a very light 2 lbs. with an Allen wrench through the magazine well. Additionally, the Finnlight tested (in .270 Win.) showed no

trigger creep and broke crisply at each setting.

On the question of quickness the new Sako 75 Finnlight also received high marks. Both the bolt and the bearing surfaces inside the receiver are highly polished, allowing the bolt to slide effortlessly. The three-lug bolt head requires only a short 70 degree lift for disengagement, which, when combined with the slick action, make for impressively fast follow-up shots.

Dependability is marked by not only flawless functioning, but by design functions that enhance dependability. The flush-fit five-round detachable magazine makes for quick and dependable loading and unloading. Scope bases machined into the top of the receiver provide for sure and solid scope mounting. The two-position safety with dual cocking indicators at the rear of the bolt is a rock-solid system, and after firing over 200 test rounds of various makes of ammunition through the Finnlight, we experienced no malfunctions of any kind.

The Sako 75 Finnlight is a tough, accurate, go anywhere hunting rifle that is light enough to pack into the most rugged hunting country. However, there is a price to pay. Weighing in at only 6½ lbs, even in .270 Win., the Finnlight has a rather punishing kick when fired off the bench. On the other hand, very few Dall's sheep are ever shot at from a bench.

SHOOTING RESULTS (100 YDS.)					
.270 Win. Cartridge	Vel. @ 15' (f.p.s.)	Energy (ft.-lbs.)	Group Size In Inches		
			Smallest	Largest	Average
Hornady No. 8056 140-gr. BTSP	2820 Avg. 22 Sd	Avg. 2,473	1.33	2.19	1.71
Federal SKG No. P270C 150-gr. Sierra BTSP	2800 Avg. 18 Sd	Avg. 2,613	1.02	1.94	1.46
Winchester No. SBST270 130-gr. BST	2878 Avg. 19 Sd	Avg. 2,391	1.14	1.69	1.47

Measured average velocity for 10 rounds from a 20½" barrel. Range temperature: 81° F. Humidity: 50%. Accuracy for five consecutive, five-shot groups at 100 yds. from a sandbag rest. Abbreviations: BST (Ballistic Silvertip), BTSP (boattail spire point), SGK (Sierra Game King), SD (standard deviation).



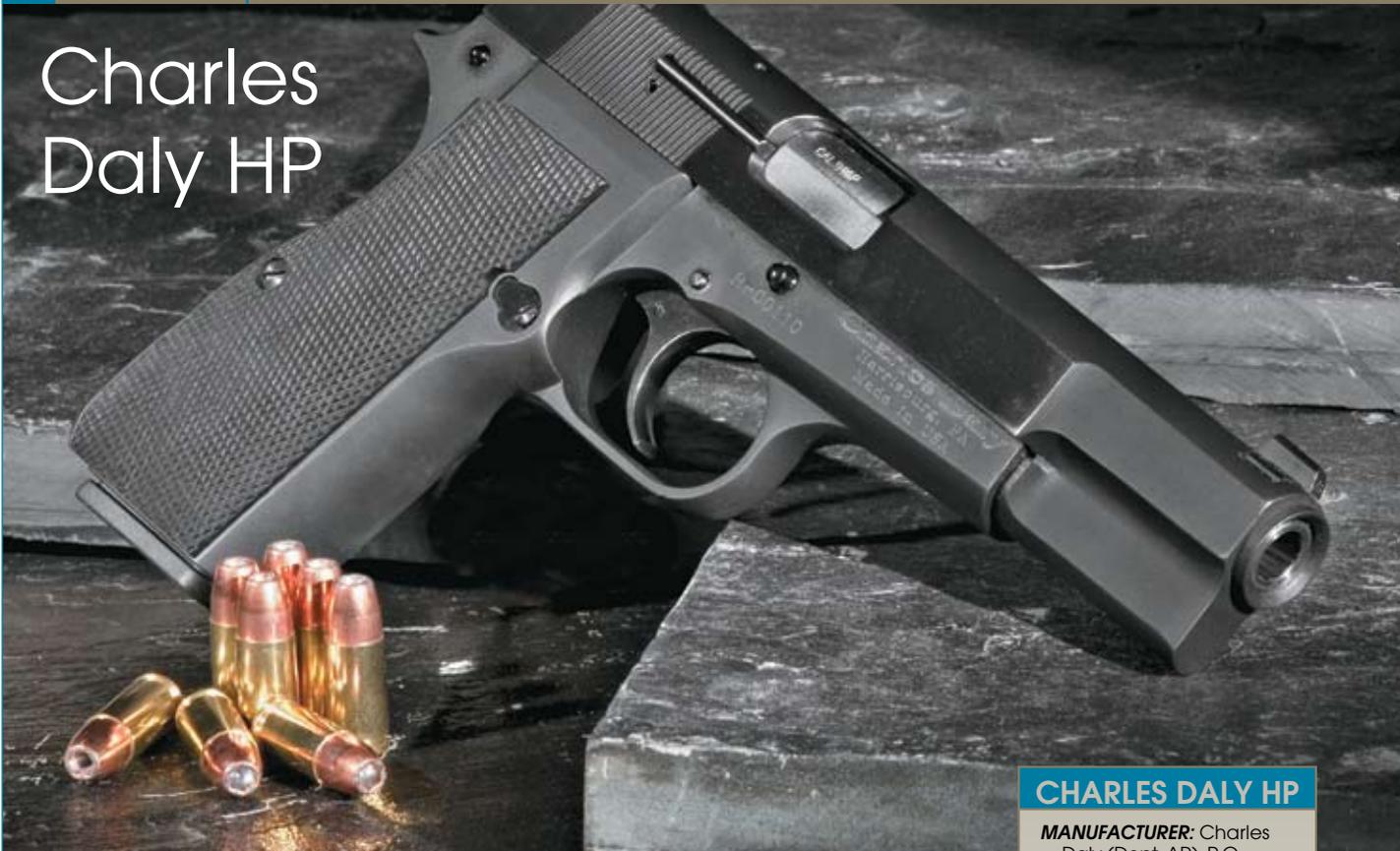
Three locking lugs (above r.) are used to lock the action on the Finnlight 75, which allows for a short 70 degree lift for disengagement. A hook extractor is mounted in the bolt, while the ejector is a blade style mounted in the receiver. The five-round, quick-detachable magazine (above) is a flush fit when fully inserted.

In front of the two-position safety is a bolt handle release button (arrow) that allows the bolt to be cycled while the safety lever remains in the safe position.

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."

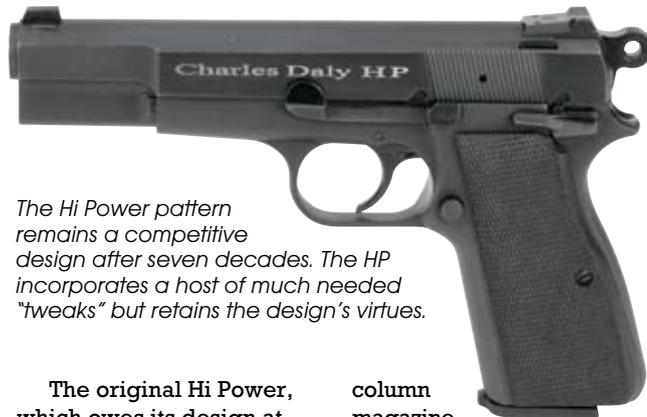
WARNING: Technical data and information contained herein are intended to provide information based on the limited experience of individuals under specific conditions and circumstances. They do not detail the comprehensive training procedures, techniques and safety precautions absolutely necessary to 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.

Charles Daly HP



With the introduction of its HP pistol, Charles Daly appears to have torn a page out of the Kimber playbook. The play starts with a vastly popular military pistol pattern designed (at least in part) by John Browning. The pistol, which has been adopted by both law enforcement and armed civilians, has a few sore points that are usually addressed by gunsmiths and aftermarket sources to make the pistol more suitable for non-military applications.

The goal is to standardize these modifications, introduce them into the production cycle and produce an American-made, factory-built pistol that is user-friendly and ready to go right out of the box. And that pistol must be affordable. In the case of Kimber, the pattern was the M1911. In Charles Daly's case, it is the Hi Power.



The Hi Power pattern remains a competitive design after seven decades. The HP incorporates a host of much needed "tweaks" but retains the design's virtues.

The original Hi Power, which owes its design at least as much to Belgian Dieudonné Saive as to John Browning, was a brilliant handgun much ahead of its time as demonstrated by its continued production at a time when most of its original contemporaries are but historical relics, the M1911 notwithstanding. Most significantly, the pistol could hold 13 rounds of ammunition while maintaining ergonomics that weren't just tolerable, but excellent.

While the double-

column magazine allowed it to initially dominate competitors in terms of firepower and then to remain competitive with them as new high-capacity pistols emerged, the Hi Power had some niggling design elements of which non-military gunowners were not enamored. One was feed reliability. The Hi Power was intended as a military pistol to be used in compliance with the Hague accords. As such, there was originally no need to have it function with anything

CHARLES DALY HP

MANUFACTURER: Charles Daly (Dept. AR), P.O. Box 6625 Harrisburg, PA 17112; (866) 325-9486; www.charlesdaly.com
CALIBER: 9 mm Luger
ACTION TYPE: recoil-operated semi-automatic pistol
CONSTRUCTION: carbon steel
FINISH: blued
OVERALL LENGTH: 7 1/2"
WIDTH: 1 3/8"
HEIGHT: 5 1/2"
BARREL: 4 1/2"
RIFLING: six-groove, 1:16" RH twist
WEIGHT EMPTY: 35 ozs.
MAGAZINE: double-column, 10-round, detachable box
SIGHTS: fixed; single white dot front, shallow "V" with vertical white line rear
TRIGGER: single-action-only, 7-lb., 11-oz. pull
STOCKS: overmolded checkered rubber
ACCESSORIES: lockable plastic case, lock
SUGGESTED RETAIL PRICE: \$549

other than military ball ammunition. The average hollow-point round would cause the pistol to choke. The single-action trigger

has always suffered in comparison to that of the M1911; it's rough and, for a single-action, heavy. Also, the sights were either of a crude, fixed variety or the overly elaborate "Capitan" adjustable style calibrated to a ludicrous 500 meters. The thumb safety was too small and its operation too indistinct for surety. The highly polished blued models were very handsome, but the gleam was a tactical liability. Finally, the conventional hammer found on many Hi Powers had a tendency to bite the web of the shooting hand.

While most of these problems can be rectified by time, money and a good gunsmith, Charles Daly intends its HP to be a panacea for these ills and, to a large extent, it is.

The HP has a well-throated barrel and well-polished feed ramp that, in our testing, handled all bullet profiles. We tried flat-points as well as hollow-points of three different weights and designs, and even mixed all within the same magazine. We fired the pistol while holding it at the hip, sideways, upside down and with a limp wrist, and it never once misfired.

The sights are the current state-of-the-art in iron tactical models—the XS Sight Systems Express

Sights. These low-profile units feature a shallow "V" instead of a typical rear notch. That combines with a large front dot to make the fastest iron pistol sights we've tested.

The thumb safety has a comfortable and relatively generous paddle. It is easy to manipulate and adequately distinct in operation. It is, however, not ambidextrous and will give southpaws trouble.

The all-steel HP's finish is a low lustre matte blue, which is sufficiently handsome while still being tactically sound. The blueing and overall fit and finish are quite good—better than expected for a low-cost service pistol of this type. While some may not like it, wooden stocks have been eschewed in favor of rubber units. These grip panels are tapered along their edges for a slimmer, more comfortable fit than wood and provide a more positive grip.

The HP uses the rounded, rowel hammer. We liked this in that it reduces considerably the tendency for hammer bite, but still offers greater mass (and, theoretically, greater reliability) than a bobbed conventional hammer. It is also easy to cock.

The trigger remains the one problem area. Ours was just "okay" for duty use,



XS sights (above, l.) are a welcome addition, though we'd prefer the tritium version. The cost, though, would substantially raise the HP's price. The thumb safety (center) is well sized for



easy manipulation, while the rowel hammer reduces bite. The trigger (r.) is gritty and heavy, however, the improved extended slide release lever above it is a nice added feature.



SHOOTING RESULTS

9 mm Luger Cartridge	Vel. @ 15' (f.p.s.)	Energy (ft.-lbs.)	Group Size In Inches		
			Smallest	Largest	Average
Federal No. P9HS1 124-gr. Hydra-Shok JHP	1095 Avg. 18 Sd	330	1.88	5.63	3.80
Hornady No. 9025 115-gr. XTP JHP	1146 Avg. 14 Sd	336	2.75	4.38	3.55
Winchester No. S9 147-gr. SXT JHP	868 Avg. 12 Sd	246	2.00	5.13	3.78
Average Extreme Spread			3.71		

Measured average velocity for 10 rounds from a 4 1/2" barrel. Range temperature: 81° F. Humidity 50%. Accuracy for five consecutive, five-shot groups at 25 yds. fired from a Ransom Rest. Abbreviations: JHP (jacketed hollow-point), SXT (Supreme Expansion Technology), XTP (Extreme Terminal Performance).

but could have been much better. It was gritty and heavy with a 7-lb., 11-oz. pull weight. While that weight is acceptable, it should be remembered that many current double-action-only pistols have a pull weight equal to or less than that. While their trigger strokes are much longer, they are also usually smoother. Hi Power triggers are problematic due to John Browning's attempt to by-pass his own brilliance. He was trying to avoid infringing on his own patent designs when he created the necessarily complex Hi Power mechanism.

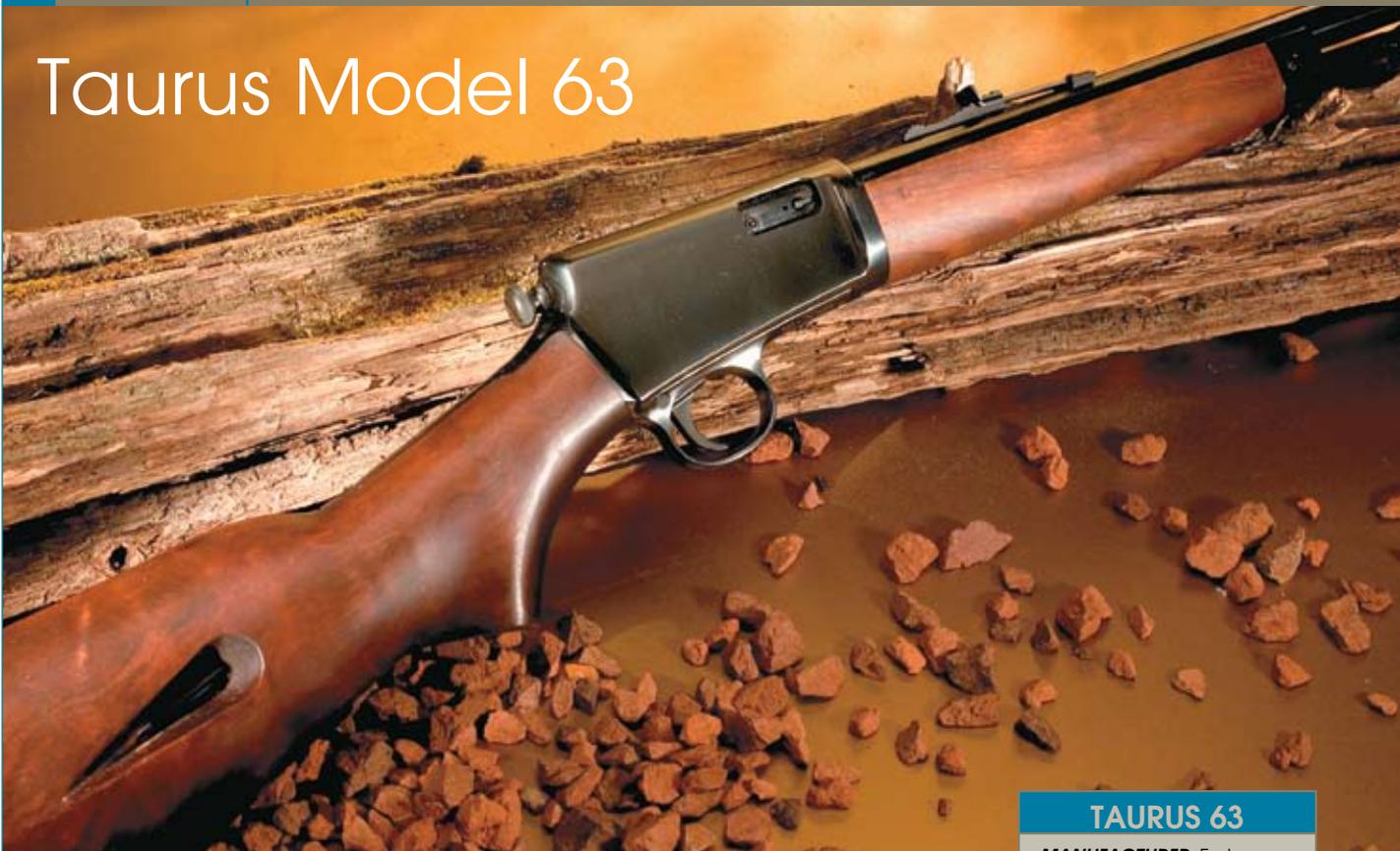
The Charles Daly's frame and slide are crafted in the U.S., while the other parts are imported. The pistol is then assembled in America.

Two other factors that should be considered regarding the HP are the magazine safety and magazine availability. The pistol will not fire without

the magazine inserted. This is a controversial feature that some shooters like and others do not, claiming such a device is tactically unsound and also adversely affects trigger pull. However, every Hi Power shooter enjoys the availability of low-cost, high-capacity 13-round magazines. Those old magazines will fit and function in the HP.

While it is not quite perfect, the HP is a significant and welcome addition to the numerous Hi Power-pattern pistols offered over the years. It's sharp-looking, capacious, comfortable and reliable, all at a very attractive price. Those seeking an affordable, full-size, medium-bore personal protection pistol should take a look at the Hi Power-pattern HP. The design has withstood the sternest test of all—the test of time.

Taurus Model 63



Taurus of Brazil makes a number of rimfire rifles, and the latest in its line is the semi-automatic Taurus Model 63 in .22 Long Rifle. The new gun is a replica of the original Winchester 63 that was once a common sight in boardwalk and carnival shooting galleries. The handy little semi-auto possessed sleek lines and boasted excellent workmanship, but its high cost kept sales sluggish until production finally ceased in 1958.

The Winchester 63 was itself a refinement of its first semi-automatic rimfire rifle, the Model 1903. Because the 1903 was developed after John Browning parted ways with Winchester, the gun had to be designed without making use of Browning's patents. As a result, Winchester designer Thomas C. Johnson incorporated some unique features to the original gun

that have been faithfully replicated on the Taurus Model 63, including the charging plunger on the fore-end.

Depressing the plunger and giving it a quarter turn locks the action open for safety inspection or rudimentary cleaning. Also, the rifle's fixed magazine is housed in the stock and cartridges may be loaded through a port in the right side. Alternately, the tubular follower can be completely withdrawn to allow rounds to be inserted through a hole in the butt. Loaded to capacity, the magazine will accommodate a maximum of 10 rounds.

Because the magazine cannot be removed and inspected, unloading requires extra caution. The user first should lock the bolt open and then remove the follower from the stock. Cartridges remaining in the magazine should slide out if the rifle is held in a

vertical position with the butt pointed toward the ground, but since rounds can remain in the receiver, the action should also be cycled a few times to ensure the gun is clear.

Operation of the Taurus 63 remains direct blowback. There is a single extractor on the right side of the bolt and a fixed ejector on the receiver wall.

Like the original gun, the Taurus 63 is a take-down model. Turning out the large knurled and slotted knob at the rear of the receiver allows the gun to be separated into two compact subassemblies for cleaning, ease of transport or storage.

The barrel measures 23" in length, and its sporting contour gently tapers toward the muzzle. The stock and fore-end are made from hardwood stained in a walnut hue. The wood-to-metal fit was good, and Taurus retained

TAURUS 63

MANUFACTURER: Forjas Taurus S.S.; Av. So Forte, 511-Cx, Postal 44, CEP 91, 360-000, Porto Alegre, RS, Brasil
IMPORTER: Taurus Int'l Firearms, 16175 N.W. 49th Ave., Miami, FL 33014; (800) 327-3776; www.taurususa.com

CALIBER: .22 LR
ACTION TYPE: blowback-operated semi-automatic
RECEIVER: blued carbon steel
BARREL: 23" round contour blued carbon steel
RIFLING: 12-groove, 1:16" RH twist
MAGAZINE: fixed tube in stock, 10-round capacity
SIGHTS: fixed front post; rear blade step-adjustable for elevation, drift-adjustable for windage
TRIGGER: single-stage, 4-lb., 11-oz. pull
STOCK: walnut-finished hardwood, length of pull, 13 3/4"; drop at heel, 2 1/4"; drop at comb, 1"
OVERALL LENGTH: 39"
WEIGHT: 6 lbs., 13 ozs.
ACCESSORIES: Taurus security system key
SUGGESTED RETAIL PRICE: \$295



The Taurus 63's fixed tubular magazine is housed in the stock. The follower can be removed through a hole in the buttplate and rounds may be loaded through a port in the side of the stock.



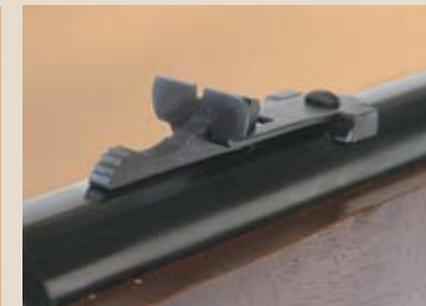
Like the original Winchester, Taurus' replica is a take-down model. Turning out the knurled knob at the rear of the receiver allows the rifle to separate for transport or cleaning.



Safety features include a cross-bolt safety button at the rear of the trigger guard and the Taurus Security System lock on the bolt. Turning out the lock with the supplied key locks the bolt closed and prevents movement of the firing pin.



The internal mechanism of the Taurus 63 operates in the same manner as the original.



Although the front sight post is fixed, the rear blade is step-adjustable for elevation and drift-adjustable for windage.



the steel buttplate in keeping with the spirit of the original gun.

Safety features include a cross-bolt safety button at the rear of the trigger guard as well as the Taurus Security System. Turning out the lock in the side of the bolt with the supplied key locks it closed and prevents movement of the firing pin.

The receiver has no provision for scope mounts, but—in addition to the iron sights—the tang provides a ready mounting

point for a more precise rear aperture.

The trigger blade is curved with a smooth face. The trigger of our test gun broke at 4 lbs., 11 ozs. with minimal take-up and overtravel. For accuracy and velocity testing we selected a mix of target and hunting loads. Results are shown in the accompanying table.

Rimfire semi-automatics usually work best with high-velocity loads and often have trouble cycling more accurate

target loads because of their lower velocity, but the Taurus Model 63 chambered, fired and ejected these lower-velocity target rounds without any trouble.

The bluing of our sample gun was rich and evenly applied, but somewhat darker than the originals we have examined. Although the buttplate stands a bit proud above the heel of the stock, wood to metal fit is otherwise quite good. Weighing in at 6 lbs., 13 ozs., the Model

63 is a bit heavier than most modern rimfire semi-automatics, but guns made of wood and steel will always weigh more than those of aluminum and polymer, and that extra weight provides stability when shooting offhand.

Guns like the Model 63 offer a unique mix of pride in ownership and shooting fun. Those looking for a traditional .22 caliber rimfire rifle for hunting or plinking would do well to take a look at this one.

SHOOTING RESULTS (50 YDS.)

.22 LR Cartridge	Vel. @ 15' (f.p.s.)	Energy (ft.-lbs.)	Group Size In Inches		
			Smallest	Largest	Average
Federal No. 711 40-gr. Solid	1105 44 Sd	108	1.57	3.32	2.45
CCI No. 00031 40-gr. HP	1285 16 Sd	147	2.18	3.83	3.04
Winchester No. WW22LR Wildcat 22 40-gr. Solid	1189 16 Sd	126	1.81	3.12	2.66
Average Extreme Spread:					2.71

Measured average velocity for 10 rounds from a 23" barrel. Range temperature: 81° F. Humidity: 50%. Accuracy for five consecutive, 10-shot groups at 50 yds. from a sandbag. Abbreviations: HP (hollow point) Sd (standard deviation).

Springfield M1A Rader Trigger

Springfield, Inc., Match Rifle Supervisor Dale Rader brought a half-dozen years' experience as a U.S. Navy armorer to the design of the patent-pending, adjustable M1A trigger assembly that bears his name. Rader, who oversees the building of all M1As from the National Match level on up, says he designed the trigger unit "for tactical purposes." It is, therefore, standard equipment on Springfield's top-of-the-line M25 White Feather rifle. It also is available separately as an upgrade for owners of other M1A models and could find applications in highpower competition as a dual-duty match rifle/service rifle trigger when adjusted at or above 4½ lbs. pull for the latter.

According to Springfield, the Rader Trigger adjusts from 1½ lbs. to 4¾ lbs. pull. In comparison, the company specifies 5 to 6 lbs. for Standard M1A trigger pulls, 4½ lbs. for Loaded Standard rifle triggers and a "crisp" 4½ lbs. for National Match triggers.

The assembly begins with an investment-cast, standard G.I.-type trigger group housing that is modified by the welding on of a rectangular cross-section stanchion at its rear. The stanchion houses a spring-loaded plunger that presses downward on the tail of the trigger bow to provide differing pull weights by means of a set screw and hexagonal locking nut accessible only with the trigger group out of the stock.

In addition, two tiny springs protrude from blind holes in a lug behind where the trigger pivots on a design-specific pivot pin



Adjustments to the Rader Trigger (above) require only a 5/64" Allen wrench for the set screw and an 11/32" end wrench for the lock nut. One of two tiny springs that power the sear (arrow) is barely visible.



and bushing to exert constant tension on the sear.

The three additional springs are key to the Rader Trigger's adjustability. They isolate the various parts' functions, allowing the sear to safely function regardless of the selected trigger pull setting.

The entire unit is finished in black Armory Coat, Springfield's proprietary moly-based, non-reflective metal treatment.

Springfield recommends that customers retrofitting the trigger unit to glass-bedded rifles return the guns to the factory for proper installation.

We measured the Rader Trigger's pull weights with the unit mounted in a Loaded Standard M1A using a Lyman Electronic Trigger Pull Gauge and averaging several sets of 10 pulls each. Our sample was found to be in accordance with the

factory's stated 1½- to 4¾-lb. range. We did note, however, that as the pull weight was adjusted downward, the trigger did not return to its at-rest position as positively as we might have liked. That was to be expected as the plunger and spring that act directly on the trigger's tail to control its release weight also provide the tension to return it. We also noted that care must be taken to securely tighten the locknut.

The trigger retains the two-stage "feel" of its military counterpart, but with a much crisper let-off from the second stage aided by its lighter release weight. We found the Rader unit did allow far more precise control of the trigger.

The Rader Trigger represents an easily installed accuracy upgrade for users of M1As who can appreciate the advantages bestowed by a light trigger pull.

Available from: Springfield, Inc. (Dept. AR), 420 W. Main St., Geneseo, IL 61254; (309) 944-5631; www.springfieldarmory.com. Suggested retail price: \$319.

