

# Savage Model 12 Long Range Precision Varminter

When Savage designed its new top-of-the-line, Model 12 Long Range Precision Varminter (LRPV), it wisely selected several proven features from benchrest rifles. These include a super-heavy, free-floating, stainless-steel barrel; a solid-bottom, stainless steel, single-shot action; a right-hand bolt with a left-hand loading/ejection port; and a synthetic stock with an aluminum bedding block. Savage also included a new version of its AccuTrigger with a user-adjustable pull weight from 1½ to 6 lbs.

The Model 12 LRPV—available in .223 Rem., .204 Ruger and .22-250 Rem.—has a 26" barrel that was selected to obtain maximum performance from these high-velocity cartridges. The .22-250 barrel breaks tradition with six button-rifled grooves having a twist rate of one turn in 12", instead of one turn in 14". Free-floated in front of the chamber, the barrel of the Long Range Precision Varminter measures 1.10" in diameter with no taper for maximum stiffness and heat dis-

sipation. Other benchrest touches include a recessed target crown and a smooth, natural finish on the barrel surface.

Benchrest shooters believe a rigid action is a major factor in accuracy. To this end, they prefer short-length single-shot actions with solid bottoms and small loading/ejection ports. Savage incorporated these features in the Long Range Precision Varminter, using its short action with no magazine opening in the bottom, a loading/ejection port measuring just 2.60" long and 0.635" wide on the left side, and a 70-degree short-throw bolt with an oversize knob on the right side.

While this arrangement may appear counter intuitive, it works

smoothly in practice. After opening the bolt with his right hand, the shooter drops a loaded cartridge into the left-side loading port with his left hand. The fresh cartridge rests in the center of a shallow depression in the action floor that aligns it with the center of the bore axis. Closing the bolt feeds the cartridge smoothly into the chamber.

To eliminate the possibility of bedding shifts, Savage built the Long Range Precision Varminter on an H-S Precision, synthetic varmint stock with an aluminum backbone. The action is bedded to the aluminum backbone and the fiberglass-filled outer shell is selectively reinforced with Kevlar

The *American Rifleman* has used the phrase "Dope Bag" since at least 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.

Savage selected an H-S Precision synthetic stock with an aluminum backbone and selective Kevlar and carbon fiber reinforcement for the Long Range Precision Varminter (below, l.). Measuring 1.10" in diameter, the barrel has a

recessed muzzle crown (below, center). The AccuTrigger offers a crisp trigger pull that is user-adjustable from 1½ to 6 lbs., (below, r.). Depressing the lever inside the trigger bow de-activates a sear-blocking safety.



The single-shot Model 12 LRPV's receiver has no magazine opening. The loading port is on the left side, even though the bolt, with its oversize handle, is on the right.

and carbon fiber. A black rubber butt pad, stainless steel trigger guard, sling-swivel studs and a speckled black finish complete the stock package.

No precision rifle can deliver consistent accuracy without a good trigger. User-adjustable from 1½ to 6 lbs. of let-off weight, the AccuTrigger system offers a crisp, even trigger pull with little slack or over-travel. Out of the box, our test rifle had a consistent let-off weight of 1 lb., 11 ozs.

At first, the 12-lb. rifle with its balance point approximately 4" in front of the action, felt muzzle-heavy. However, when scope bases, rings and a large varmint-class scope were installed, the

balance point moved rearward to a point about 2" in front of the action. This substantially reduced muzzle heaviness while helping the rifle ride the sandbags, control muzzle rise and reduce recovery time.

The 14-lb. weight of our test rifle with scope and mounts reduced recoil to negligible levels. Also worthy of note is the stock's short 13½" length of pull that eliminates the need for the shooter to "crawl the stock" when shooting from a bench.

Our Long Range Precision Varminter test rifle consistently averaged sub-m.o.a. accuracy and near catalog muzzle velocity with factory ammunition. After a

minimum of practice, we found the right-hand bolt with left-hand loading/ejection port functional and reliable. The AccuTrigger received many appreciative comments. In short, the Savage Model 12 Long Range Precision Varminter combines solid performance with advanced features at a lower price than many rifles in its class. ★

## SHOOTING RESULTS (100 YDS.)

.22-250 REM. CARTRIDGE	VEL. @ 15' (F.P.S.)	ENERGY (FT.-LBS.)	GROUP SIZE IN INCHES		
			SMALLEST	LARGEST	AVERAGE
FEDERAL No. P22250V 40-GR. HP	4102 Avg. 21 Sd	1,494	0.48	1.52	0.82
HORNADY No. 8336 60-GR. V-MAX	3853 Avg. 26 Sd	1,648	0.65	0.98	0.81
NORMA 62-GR. HP	3704 Avg. 22 Sd	1,675	0.63	1.37	0.89

### AVERAGE EXTREME SPREAD:

MEASURED AVERAGE VELOCITY FOR 10 ROUNDS FROM A 26" BARREL. RANGE TEMPERATURE: 82° F. HUMIDITY: 60%. ACCURACY FOR FIVE CONSECUTIVE, FIVE-SHOT GROUPS AT 100 YDS. FROM A SANDBAG REST. ABBREVIATIONS: HP (HOLLOW POINT), SD (STANDARD DEVIATION).

## MODEL 12 LRPV

**MANUFACTURER:** SAVAGE SPORTS CORP. (DEPT. AR), 100 SPRINGDALE ROAD, WESTFIELD, MA 01085; (413) 568-7001;

WWW.SAVAGEARMS.COM  
**CALIBER:** .204 RUGER, .223 REM., .22-250 REM. (TESTED)

**ACTION TYPE:** BOLT-ACTION, SINGLE-SHOT CENTER-FIRE RIFLE WITH RIGHT-HAND BOLT AND LEFT-HAND LOADING/EJECTION PORT

**RECEIVER:** BRUSHED STAINLESS STEEL  
**BARREL:** 26" HEAVY CONTOUR, FREE FLOATING  
**RIFLING:** SIX-GROOVE, 1:12" RH TWIST  
**MAGAZINE:** NONE

**SIGHTS:** NONE, RECEIVER DRILLED AND TAPPED FOR SCOPE BASES

**TRIGGER PULL:** ADJUSTABLE, 1½ TO 6 LBS.

**STOCK:** H-S PRECISION SYNTHETIC WITH ALUMINUM CHASSIS; LENGTH OF PULL 13½"; DROP AT HEEL 1/2"; DROP AT COMB, 1¼"

**OVERALL LENGTH:** 46¼"

**WEIGHT:** 12 LBS.

**ACCESSORIES:** INSTRUCTION MANUAL, TRIGGER ADJUSTMENT TOOL, CABLE LOCK, EAR PLUGS, PAPER TARGET

**SUGGESTED RETAIL PRICE:** \$967





## Dan Wesson Commander Classic Bobtail

### CLASSIC BOBTAIL

**MANUFACTURER:** DAN WESSON FIREARMS Co., 5169 ROUTE 12 S., NORWICH, NY 13815; (607) 336-1174; WWW.DANWESSONFIREARMS.COM

**DISTRIBUTOR:** CZ-USA (DEPT. AR), P.O. Box 171073, KANSAS CITY, KS 66117-0073; (800) 955-4486; WWW.CZ-USA.COM

**CALIBER:** 10 MM AUTO, .45 ACP (TESTED)  
**ACTION TYPE:** SHORT-RECOIL, SINGLE-ACTION, SEMI-AUTOMATIC PISTOL

**RECEIVER:** INVESTMENT-CAST STAINLESS STEEL  
**BARREL:** 4 1/4", STAINLESS STEEL

**RIFLING:** SIX-GROOVE, 1:16" LH TWIST

**MAGAZINE:** SINGLE-COLUMN, DETACHABLE BOX, SEVEN-ROUND CAPACITY

**SIGHTS:** RAMPED-POST FRONT; DRIFT-ADJUSTABLE, NO-SNAG FIXED- NOTCH REAR; TRITIUM INSERTS IN A THREE-DOT PATTERN

**TRIGGER PULL:** SINGLE-ACTION; ADJUSTABLE FOR OVERTRAVEL; 3 LBS., 12 OZS.

**WIDTH:** 1 3/8"

**HEIGHT:** 5 1/2"

**OVERALL LENGTH:** 7 5/8"

**WEIGHT:** 34 OZS.

**ACCESSORIES:** BLACK PLASTIC CASE, OWNER'S MANUAL, BUSHING WRENCH, EXTRA MAGAZINE, FIRED CASE

**SUGGESTED RETAIL PRICE:** \$1,169 (.45 ACP), \$1,179 (10 MM AUTO)

### SHOOTING RESULTS (25 YDS.)

.45 ACP CARTRIDGE	VEL. @ 15' (F.P.S.)	ENERGY (FT.-LBS.)	GROUP SIZE IN INCHES		
			SMALLEST	LARGEST	AVERAGE
<b>AMERICAN EAGLE No. AE45A 230-GR. FMJ</b>	779 Avg. 13 Sd	310	2.06	2.51	2.18
<b>COR-BON 200-GR. JHP +P</b>	1039 Avg. 14 Sd	479	2.75	3.65	3.20
<b>HORNADY No. 91128 200-GR. TAP-FPD HP</b>	1040 Avg. 14 Sd	480	2.29	2.66	2.47
<b>AVERAGE EXTREME SPREAD:</b>					2.62

MEASURED AVERAGE VELOCITY FOR 10 ROUNDS FROM A 4 1/4" BARREL. RANGE TEMPERATURE: 88° F. HUMIDITY: 73%. ACCURACY FOR FIVE CONSECUTIVE, FIVE-SHOT GROUPS AT 25 YDS. FROM SANDBAGS. ABBREVIATIONS: FMJ (FULL METAL JACKET), FPD (FOR PERSONAL DEFENSE), HP (HOLLOW POINT), JHP (JACKETED HOLLOW POINT), Sd (STANDARD DEVIATION), TAP (TACTICAL APPLICATION FOR POLICE).



Additional custom features include an extended thumb safety and Cocobolo stocks.

Best known for its novel switch-barrel revolvers, Dan Wesson started making M1911s in 2001. In 2005, Dan Wesson was purchased by CZ-USA, and the Dan Wesson name is currently found on three M1911-style semi-automatic pistols, including the subject of this review, the Commander Classic Bobtail. The "Bobtail" designation refers to the gun's most distinctive feature, a "round-butt" modification to the frame's backstrap pioneered by noted pistolsmith Ed Brown. Its purpose is to eliminate the sharp point at the end of the standard backstrap that can noticeably protrude under certain concealment clothing.

The pistol features a forged slide, forged barrel and investment-cast frame, all of 416 stainless steel. Both slide and frame have polished flats and sandblasted upper and lower surfaces. The slide has rear serrations and a lowered, flared and beveled ejection port. The frame features a beveled magazine well

The internals of the Commander Classic Bobtail offer no surprises to those familiar with traditional M1911 design.

and 16-line-per-inch, machine-cut checkering on the frontstrap. Extensive use is made of quality aftermarket components such as an Ed Brown Bobtail mainspring housing, slide stop and beavertail; an STI extended thumb safety; a

Greider aluminum trigger; and Wolff springs. Rounding out the list of custom touches are its slotted Commander-style rowel hammer and custom Cocobolo stocks.

The Bobtail follows conventional M1911 design with an unramped



Sighting is by way of a ramped front post and no-slag fixed rear notch, drift-adjustable in its dovetail (r.). Both sights have tritium inserts. The 16-l.p.i. checkering on the frontstrap (center) is slightly dull, to prevent irritation of the fingers. Also note the palm pad on the beavertail grip safety (far r.).

barrel whose lockup is controlled by the familiar swinging-link system, a left-side-only thumb safety and a standard-length recoil spring guide instead of the full-length rod found on many custom guns. All Dan Wesson M1911s are of Series 70 design, lacking the Series 80 passive firing-pin safety. Sighting is by way of a 0.12"-wide front post mounted in a transverse dovetail and a no-slag fixed rear sight unit—similar in profile to a Novak Lo-Mount sight—with a 0.115"-wide notch.

Fit and finish were both excellent, with an absolutely play-free slide-to-frame fit, and the trigger released at a light, crisp 3 3/4 lbs. Welcome functional and cosmetic details included complete dehorn-ing of every sharp edge and the

blending of the front-sight base into the slide contours.

We fired the Commander Classic Bobtail at 25 yds. off sandbags using a 230-gr. FMJ American Eagle load, a 200-gr. JHP +P load from Cor-Bon and a Hornady +P load featuring a 200-gr. TAP FPD hollow-point bullet. Although the Cor-Bon and Hornady loads were fairly stiff, recoil was moderate.

With the Hornady TAP load, there were a few failures to feed, with the slide stopping about 1/8" short of going into battery and the cartridge wedged tightly into the chamber. Careful measurement showed that the case mouths of the Hornady cartridges were slightly larger in diameter than the mouths of the American Eagle and Cor-Bon rounds, both of which fed

flawlessly. Also, on those Hornady cartridges that did not feed, the protruding full-diameter shoulder of the TAP FPD bullet showed signs of contact with the rifling, which could inhibit chambering. Whatever the cause of the observed feeding malfunctions, they point to the necessity of testing any defensive handgun with a variety of ammunition types.

Accuracy of the pistol was very good, and we did not consider the Bobtail frame modification to adversely affect either accuracy or handling of the firearm. This is an attractive, well-made and accurate Commander-size M1911 pistol that is well suited for concealed carry, home defense or casual practical pistol competition when used with the proper ammunition.





## Aimpoint CompML3 and 3XMAG

In these times of seemingly exponential advances in technology, especially in the realm of consumer electronics, we all have come to expect devices that do more and are smaller, faster, lighter, brighter, etc. The new CompML3 from Aimpoint is the perfect example of the wonders of technological evolution.

In 1975, about a decade after the invention of the original yet short-lived incandescent dot scope by the Oxford Company in Buffalo, N.Y., a new Swedish company called Aimpoint introduced the revolutionary Aimpoint Electronic. The 1X, electro-optical sight used a light-emitting diode (LED) to project a variable-intensity dot on a specially coated lens inside a long, thin tube. The parallax-free unit had unlimited eye relief, and all a shooter had to do was put its 3-m.o.a. dot on the target and squeeze the trigger.

The Aimpoint Electronic became a success within the shooting-sports community, and the company continued to innovate and improve the technology. The company touted the sight as a perfect companion for a bolt-action rifle, but primary interest in the United States came

from Bullseye pistol shooters who wanted to see the target and the reticle on the same focal plane.

The Aimpoint Electronic's large sidcar-style battery tube housed two fat mercury batteries that lasted anywhere from 500 to 1,000 hours in normal daylight use. As the product line improved through the following two decades, with smaller and more-powerful batteries being used, the diameter of the scope grew, while the battery tube and overall length shrunk.

Where the Electronic used a large, mostly encapsulated LED that projected the dot through a tiny hole, thereby wasting much of its energy, newer evolutions like 1997's XD sight lineup—which also ushered in the first Comp sight (May 1998, p. 52)—featured a change in the LED shape. The design produced a brighter, 500-percent longer-lasting dot, and while more efficient than previous versions, it still produced a lot of excess light that remained trapped inside the LED chamber.

The U.S. military came to realize the value of the red-dot sight and bought 500,000 of the CompM2—designated the M68/CCO (Close Combat Optic), which has four

extra brightness settings for use with night-vision devices (NVD)—after its introduction in 2000. The only criticisms we've heard about the exceptionally durable system are battery availability and a then-industry-leading 10,000-hour battery life.

Of all the shooters who use illuminated reticles, it's safe to say that at least a few have arrived at the range to find dead batteries as a result of leaving the sight on since its last use. Several of our staffers have done it at least once, but rarely have we had a spare battery in the range bag. With the relative obscurity of some of these tiny, powerful batteries, a dead battery often means returning home, having never fired a shot.

Aimpoint has responded by producing a brand-new sight that replicates the external appearance



A pair of caps tethered to the battery compartment by a rubber "Y" strap protect the CompML3's windage and elevation turrets.

### COMPML3 & 3XMAG

**IMPORTER:** AIMPOINT INC. (DEPT. AR), 14103 MARIAH COURT CHANTILLY, VA 20151-2113; (703) 263-9795; WWW.AIMPOINT.COM

**MODEL:** COMPML3  
**MAGNIFICATION AND OBJECTIVE:** 1X42 MM  
**TUBE DIAMETER:** 30 MM  
**FINISH:** MATTE DARK-GRAY HARD ANODIZING  
**EYE RELIEF:** UNLIMITED  
**CLICK VALUE:** 1/2" @ 100 YARDS  
**RETICLE:** 2-M.O.A. PASSIVE RED-DOT COLLIMATOR REFLEX  
**DIMENSIONS:** 5 1/8" x 2 3/16" x 2 3/16"  
**WEIGHT:** 9.5 OZS. INCLUDING LENS COVERS AND OUTER COVER  
**BATTERY:** ONE 3V LITHIUM 2L76 OR DL1/3  
**FEATURES:** ACET TECHNOLOGY, 50,000-HOUR BATTERY LIFE AT NO. 7 SETTING, SUBMERSIBLE TO 135 FT.  
**ACCESSORIES:** OWNER'S MANUAL, LENS COVERS, BLACK RUBBER OUTER COVER  
**OPTIONS:** 4-M.O.A. DOT, QUICK-RELEASE RING MOUNT, SPACER, KILLFLASH FILTER, DARK EARTH BROWN COVER  
**SUGGESTED LIST PRICE:** \$480

**MODEL:** 3XMAG  
**MAGNIFICATION AND OBJECTIVE:** 3X20 MM  
**TUBE DIAMETER:** 30 MM  
**FINISH:** MATTE DARK-GRAY HARD ANODIZING, RUBBERIZED COATING  
**EYE RELIEF:** 1 1/2"-3 1/2"  
**DIMENSIONS:** 4 5/16" x 1 3/4" x 1 1/16"  
**WEIGHT:** 7.1 OZS.  
**FEATURES:** SUBMERSIBLE TO 67 FT., CAN BE USED AS A HANDHELD MONOCULAR  
**ACCESSORIES:** OWNER'S MANUAL, ALLEN WRENCH  
**OPTIONS:** TWISTMOUNT, SPACER  
**SUGGESTED LIST PRICE:** \$514

of the CompM2 but is revamped internally to achieve a single-battery run time of more than 50,000 hours at the seventh of 10 click settings. Dubbed the CompML3—with its night-vision compatible counterpart, the CompM3—the latest generation of the Comp sight attains a battery life of more than 5 1/2 years through its revolutionary Advanced Circuit Efficiency Technology (ACET).

At the heart of ACET is a new nano-size LED that is so small, more than 10 of them could fit on the head of a pin. This focused LED is surface-mounted inside the scope, so that nearly 100 percent of the light emitted is reflected back to the user's eye in the form of either a 2- or 4-m.o.a. dot, depending upon which version of the CompML3 is selected.

We were skeptical of these claims when our test sample

DPMS' Mangonel iron rear sight (r.) collapses neatly to fit under the three-power multiplier as a back up that, quite honestly, may go unused considering the battery life of the CompML3. Depressing the lever (arrow) in the base of the TwistMount (below r.) allows the 3XMAG to be rapidly removed.



arrived, so we unscrewed the cap from the sealed battery compartment, loaded a single 2L76 battery into the unit and replaced the cap. Since we didn't have in excess of five years to fully test this unit, we turned the rotary switch to the eighth position, one click brighter than the seventh position of the company's 50,000-hour claim. The latter position provided ample intensity for all but the brightest outdoor conditions.

We attached the CompML3 along with another new innovation from Aimpoint, the 3XMAG three-power magnifying module, to a DPMS Panther Arms AR-15-style carbine. We used Aimpoint's Quick Release Ring and TwistMount to attach the CompML3 and 3XMAG, respectively, to the carbine's flat-top rail. In order to co-index the red dot to the standard AR-style front sight, we needed to use an Aimpoint Spacer for each unit. Then, we headed to the range.

To zero the CompML3, we removed the 3XMAG by simply depressing the lever on the side of the TwistMount and rotating the unit counter-clockwise. Zeroing the CompML3 was by way of a pair of slotted windage and elevation turrets that lie beneath two protective caps at the top right side of the unit. Each click of the turrets had a corresponding value of 1/2" at 100 yds.

After establishing a 100-yd. zero, we reinstalled the 3XMAG by placing it at a 90-degree angle to the rifle, lining up the 0.315" hole of the TwistMount's upper half with the corresponding hardened steel pin of the lower half and giving the unit a quick clockwise turn to lock it securely in place. We centered the CompML3's red dot in the 3XMAG by turning the two Allen screws on the top and left side of the unit with the provided wrench. Once the dot



was centered, the unit had a very natural look and feel.

We then loaded up a magazine with 10 rounds and began making contact with a half-size ram-silhouette gong at 250 yds. Target reacquisition was fast and instinctive with both eyes open, providing for a perfect 10-hit string in as many seconds. We repeated this exercise several times with similar results, then we boxed the rifle up for transport and storage—this time remembering to leave the unit on.

Nearly six months after the unit was dropped off and after several similar speed-shooting sessions at the range, the red dot is just as bright as when we received it. Both units displayed exceptional light transmission and optical resolution, especially considering the CompML3's special coatings to reflect the sharp red-dot image. Overall, this coating created a slight bluish tint.

With rubber outer covers—removable on the CompML3—protecting high-strength extruded-aluminum shells, excellent water resistance, versatility, accuracy, vivid resolution, a bright dot and unheard of battery life, the CompML3 and 3XMAG combination represents the current standard in high-quality red-dot sight systems. It's also the reason you won't have to search for batteries again after leaving your sight on. 