



WINCHESTER SUPER X3

At the introduction of the Super X2 in 1999, a colleague said, "They won't be able to make 'em fast enough," and time has proven him right. One of the softest recoiling and most reliable gas-operated semi-automatic shotguns, the Super X2 has been an excellent performer.

Because Browning and Winchester firearms are owned by the same entity, the Walloon Regional government of Belgium, the two companies have been able to share technology, and that is no more apparent than in the Super X3. At the 1999 introduction Josef Rousseau, Browning/Winchester's chief gun designer, stated that the Super X2 was a simplified version of the already successful Browning Gold semi-automatic. They share the same gas system, and the chief difference is in the trigger group that has a one-piece carrier rather than the more complicated

two-piece carrier of the Gold, so the Super X guns do not have the speed loading feature long identified with Browning semi-auto shotguns.

The Super X line of shotguns began in 1974. Long without a semi-automatic shotgun, Winchester brought forth the Super X1 that was perhaps the finest gas-operated semi-automatic shotgun ever made. Crafted of all-steel milled parts, the Super X1 was a true semi-automatic descendent of Winchester's legendary Model 12 pump and, like the Model 12, became too expensive to manufacture at a profit. It died in 1981. The Super X2 had the same styling as the SX1, but with an aluminum receiver. Now, five years later, Winchester decided to improve an already excellent shotgun by adding new styling and features.

Starting from the muzzle are

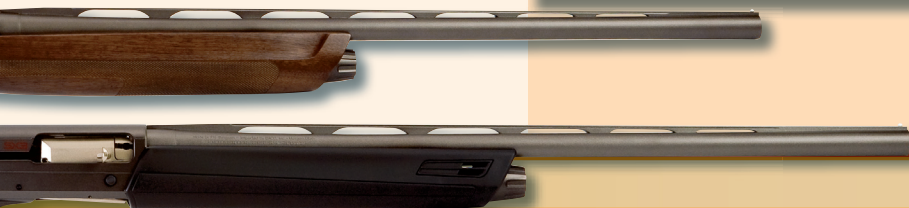
Browning/Winchester's Invector-Plus chokes. The Super X3 comes with three choke tubes, and there is a plethora of aftermarket choke tubes for this system. The chamber forcing cones are cut at five degrees and the barrel is backbored to 0.742", the favored dimension for good downrange patterns. Although the bores could be opened farther, 0.742" is about the maximum dimension that will provide good ballistics under all conditions. In very cold weather, the skirts of plastic wads do not obdurate as easily as in warmer temperatures, hence for proper gas sealing behind the shot charge 0.742" is a proven dimension.

The operating system uses what Winchester calls its Active Valve that serves two purposes. It both regulates the amount of gas needed to reliably operate the gun and it serves as the





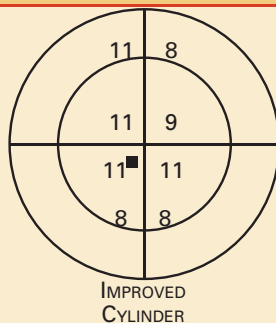
Shims enable the shooter to adjust the stock to fit his or her physique. The Super X3 uses new alloys to lighten the magazine tube, piston and gas-regulating Active Valve System. The Active Valve directs excess gas through the Quadra-Vent ports.



Super X3s are available in a Field model (top) and a synthetic-stocked Waterfowl model (above).

SHOOTING RESULTS

AVERAGE OF 10 PATTERNS @ 40 YDS.



■ = POINT OF HOLD

FEDERAL PREMIUM PHEASANTS FOREVER
No. 154-4 12 GA., 2¾", 1¼ oz.,
No. 4 COPPER-PLATED LEAD
AVERAGE PELLET COUNT: 157
MEASURED VELOCITY @ 3 FT.:
1355 F.P.S.

TOTAL HITS	77 (49%)
21" INNER CIRCLE	42 (27%)
30" OUTER RING	35 (22%)

WINCHESTER SUPER X3

IMPORTER: WINCHESTER (DEPT. AR),
275 WINCHESTER AVE.,
MORGAN, UT 84050, (800) 333-3288;
WWW.WINCHESTERGUNS.COM

ACTION TYPE: GAS-OPERATED
SEMI-AUTOMATIC

GAUGE: 12 2¾", 3" and 3½"

MAGAZINE: TUBULAR, FIVE-SHOT REDUCED
TO TWO WITH INCLUDED PLUG

BARREL: BACKBORED TO 0.742" WITH
INVECTOR-PLUS SCREW-IN CHOKES

SIGHTS: MACHINED VENTILATED RIB WITH
BRASS CENTER AND FRONT BEADS,
TRUGLO SIGHTING SYSTEM ON DEER
AND TURKEY MODELS

STOCK: SYNTHETIC ON WATERFOWL, TURKEY,
COMPOSITE AND DEER MODELS, WOOD
ON FIELD GUN. PACHMAYR NEXT-GENERATION
DECCELERATOR RECOIL PAD. LENGTH
OF PULL: 14¼", DROP AT COMB: 1¼",
DROP AT HEEL: 2".

OVERALL LENGTH: 49" WITH
28" BARREL

WEIGHT: 7¼ LBS. WITH 28" BARREL

FINISH: MOSSY OAK ON WATERFOWL AND
TURKEY MODELS, PERMA-COTE UT
(ULTRA TOUGH) ON DEER AND
COMPOSITE MODELS

ACCESSORIES: THREE CHOKE TUBES, IM-
PROVED CYLINDER, MODIFIED AND FULL;
SPACERS TO ADJUST LENGTH OF PULL AND
A SHIM KIT TO ADJUST DROP AND CAST

SUGGESTED RETAIL PRICE: CAMO
WATERFOWL \$1,216; CANTILEVER DEER
\$995; COMPOSITE \$1,048; FIELD \$979

piston that puts the operating system in motion. When shooting light loads, most of the bled gases are used. When magnum loads are fired, more gas is released from the valve through the slots cut next to the barrel in the top of the fore-end. When 3½" magnum loads are fired, excess gas is bled off forward through the Quadra-Vent ports on the leading edge of the fore-end.

The action has not been changed, there was little need, although the bolt is now plated with electroless nickel for additional corrosion resistance. Winchester exhibition shooter Patrick Flanagan has, to date, fired in excess of 30,000 rounds through the same Super X3 without any critical parts failures. To assist in better, faster handling, the magazine tube of the Super X3 has been lightened by use of a tough but light aluminum alloy.

Perhaps the best has been saved for last. All synthetically stocked Super X3s are now finished with Dura-Touch Armor Coating that ensures a good grip regardless of the weather conditions.

Even more exciting is the Super X3's use of stock-adjusting shims. Many shooters don't take advantage of this feature that enables the user to better fit the stock to his physique.


The shims allow the user to adjust both the drop and cast of the stock over a quarter-inch range. That amount of adjustment will move the point of impact 4" up or down and side to side over 16 yds.

Of course these shims cannot accommodate shooters who require extreme stock dimensions, but for the average hunter and shooter, they are quite sufficient for fine tuning.

Two spacers are included that allow the user to adjust the stock's

length of pull from 14¼" to 14¾". To further soften recoil, all Super X3s come with a Pachmayr next-generation Decelerator recoil pad with a proprietary horse-shoe-shaped insert at the heel to facilitate smooth mounting.

The Super X3 comes synthetically stocked for waterfowl and turkey, and the Field version has a wooden stock and fore-end. This fall, the Waterfowl version will be in Mossy Oak's newest Duck Blind camouflage. The Cantilever Deer, with its optics rail, and Composite models have Dura-Touch-clad stocks and gun-metal gray Perma-Cote UT (Ultra-Tough) finish on the barrel and action for extreme corrosion resistance.

One of the softest shooting and most reliable semi-automatics on the market, the Winchester Super X3 is laden with features for the avid hunter and shooter. 



CENTURY ARMS GOLANI .223 REM. RIFLE

The Golani Brigade, one of the most highly decorated infantry units in the Israeli Defense Force, serves as the namesake for Century Int'l Arms' new .223-cal. Golani rifle—a semi-automatic version of the renowned Galil rifle. Century combined original Israeli parts with a domestically produced milled receiver and other U.S.-made parts necessary for legal compliance.

The Galil rifle was developed as a replacement for the Israeli military's FAL rifles. The reliability of the AKM/AK-47 design was a primary goal, but the ergonomic

qualities and refinements of the M16 were also desired. The resulting rifle did not break any new ground, but rather combined the best features of previously established designs.

At its core, the Galil is a highly refined Kalashnikov. It employs the gas-piston-driven system of the AK, but has more “user-friendly” features, such as better sights and upgraded controls and ergonomics. The basis for the rifle was the Finnish Valmet M62, itself a highly refined AK variant.

The sighting system is radically different from that of the Kalashnikov. The front sight is located atop the gas block and the rear sight is on the receiver cover. The sights themselves are also much refined, with the rear being a flip-up peep with 300- and 500-meter apertures and the front a hooded post. Front-sight windage adjust-

ments are achieved by loosening and tightening opposing screws on the front-sight base, and the post can be adjusted up and down for elevation.

Even more unique is the rifle's set of night sights. Forward of the rear sight assembly is a U-shaped flip-up night sight, and the front-sight post has a flip-up night-sight post. Use of these sights, which are designed for 100 meters, requires that the L-shaped aperture be placed in the middle position. The luminous material on the Golani's rear sight was gone, but that on the front sight remained.

The next most obvious deviation from the standard AK design is the safety. Although the Golani employs the bulky dustcover safety lever of the AK on the right side of the receiver, it is connected to a thumb-operated safety lever



Pushing forward on the lever in front of the trigger guard releases the Golani's 35-round .223 Rem. Galil-style magazine. The lever has a knurled tab that extends to the right of the guard.

SHOOTING RESULTS (100 YDS.)

.223 REM. CARTRIDGE	VEL. @ 15' (F.P.S.)	ENERGY (FT.-LBS.)	GROUP SIZE IN INCHES		
			SMALLEST	LARGEST	AVERAGE
FEDERAL GMM 69-GR. SM BTHP No. GM223M	2683 Avg. 19 Sd	1,103	1.47	4.47	2.52
REMINGTON UMC 45-GR. JHP No. L223R7	3260 Avg. 37 Sd	1,062	3.77	4.53	4.09
WINCHESTER 55-GR. FMJ No. USA223R1	2297 Avg. 21 Sd	1,097	2.22	5.27	3.74
AVERAGE EXTREME SPREAD:					3.36

MEASURED AVERAGE VELOCITY FOR 10 ROUNDS FROM AN 18" BARREL. RANGE TEMPERATURE: 83° F. HUMIDITY: 42%. ACCURACY FOR FIVE CONSECUTIVE, FIVE-SHOT GROUPS AT 100 YDS. FROM A SANDBAG. ABBREVIATIONS: BTHP (BOAT-TAIL HOLLOW POINT), FMJ (FULL-METAL JACKET), GMM (GOLD MEDAL MATCH), JHP (JACKETED HOLLOW POINT), Sd (STANDARD DEVIATION), SM (SIERRA MATCH).



CENTURY GOLANI

MANUFACTURER: CENTURY INT'L ARMS (DEPT. AR), 430 S. CONGRESS AVE., SUITE 1, DELRAY BEACH, FL 33445; (800) 527-1252; WWW.CENTURYARMS.COM

CALIBER: .223 REM.

ACTION TYPE: GAS-OPERATED, SEMI-AUTOMATIC RIFLE

RECEIVER: 4140 MILLED STEEL, MATTE BLUE

BARREL: 18", MATTE BLUE

RIFLING: SIX-GROOVE, 1:9" RH TWIST

MAGAZINE: DETACHABLE BOX, 35-ROUND CAPACITY

SIGHTS: PEEP APERTURE REAR, HOODED POST FRONT

TRIGGER PULL: TWO-STAGE, 7 1/4 LBS.

STOCK: FOLDING TUBULAR STEEL: LENGTH OF PULL, 13 1/2"; DROP AT HEEL, 2 1/2"; DROP AT COMB, 1 1/4"

OVERALL LENGTH: 38 1/4", (29" WITH STOCK FOLDED)

WEIGHT: 8 LBS., 3 OZS.

ACCESSORIES: SPARE 35-ROUND MAGAZINE

SUGGESTED RETAIL PRICE: \$996

The rear sight has apertures for 300 and 500 meters. The winged unit is a night sight (far, l.). A two-position thumb safety is located in a recess at the top of the pistol grip (l.).



The Century Arms Golani offers shooters a chance to own a semi-automatic version of the renowned, AK-based Israeli Galil rifle.

located above the pistol's grip's left side for easier operation.

A further refinement of the design is the L-shaped operating rod handle that extends above the top of the receiver cover. This allows a right-handed operator to rack the action with his left hand.

When folded, the tubular steel stock lies along the right side of the receiver. It requires a smart amount of downward pressure to unlock it from its open position. When folded, a simple outward tug swings it to its extended position. The dustcover safety lever is blocked when the stock is folded, making the thumb-operated safety lever a necessity.


Internally, the Golani features a gas piston attached to the heavy bolt carrier and a rotating bolt with dual-opposed locking lugs. The Golani's bolt locks into recesses in its 4140 milled steel receiver whereas the AKM bolt locks into a barrel extension.

An even matte-black finish was applied to the steel surfaces. The machining on the receiver was good, and magazines fit smoothly into the magazine well, locking solidly in place.

The rifle proved to be controllable and light recoiling—no doubt a result of its weight and the .223 Rem. chambering. At 7 1/4 lbs., the trigger was a bit on the heavy side, but it broke cleanly. During firing,

most of the cases were forcefully ejected roughly 20' forward and right, while a minority landed 3' to 6' to the right.

In the course of firing, we experienced a single malfunction with each of the types of ammunition. Empty cases remained in the action and were pressed between the front face of the bolt carrier and the receiver above the chamber mouth. The Golani delivered good accuracy for an iron-sighted rifle, showing a clear preference for heavier bullets. Accuracy results are shown in the accompanying table.

The Golani offers a unique opportunity to own a rifle that has not been available in this country for more than a quarter century, as well as an opportunity to try out an interesting variant of the ubiquitous Kalashnikov design. 



The Sightron SII 12X 42 mm is one of the company's new Big Sky series of scopes, and features an adjustable objective, ZACT-7 multicoating and the ExacTrack windage and adjustment system. Distinct markings on the target-type turrets permit fast, repeatable windage and elevation adjustments. An adjustable objective focusing ring provides parallax-free operation from 10 yds. to infinity.

SIGHTRON SII BIG SKY 12X 42 MM RIFLESCOPE

When then-Tasco executive Scott Helmer decided in 1993 to strike out on his own and found Sightron, he had a simple company philosophy: to produce a premium optical product without a premium price. Based on his wide knowledge and experience, Helmer believed that there was room to compete with the best American manufacturers of sport optics. Originally based in Miami, the new company first produced

red-dot scopes. Fixed- and variable-power hunting riflescopes were added in 1995, and a year later, coinciding with the company's relocation to North Carolina, a line of target scopes was introduced. Today, the Sightron logo can be found on a wide variety of products, including binoculars, spotting scopes, red-dot scopes, and, of course, riflescopes for hunting, competition and plinking.

Sightron riflescopes are divided among three product lines. The SI series optics are aimed at economy-minded shooters, and feature multi-coated objective and ocular lenses. At the next level of quality and price, the SII scopes offer more rugged construction, adjustable focus objectives and better lenses that are fully multi-coated with Sightron's proprietary ZACT-7 seven-layer coating. This is

the most extensive of the Sightron product lines. It includes variables from 1.5-6X to 6-24X and fixed-power models from 4X to 36X in hunting, compact and target configurations. The SIII rifle scopes are similar to the SII models, but have 30 mm main tubes and side-focus turrets on the saddle.

Regardless of product line or price, all Sightron rifle scopes are made in Japan and feature one-piece aircraft aluminum main tubes, a construction method that, according to the company, offers greater strength than that afforded by most jointed, multi-piece scopes. Additionally, Sightron optics are backed by the company's lifetime replacement warranty. Should any Sightron scope ever prove defective, the warranty provides the customer with a completely new scope, not a refurbished or remanufactured unit.



An adjustable ocular allows focusing for different eyes.

A distinctive Sightron innovation is ExacTrack, a patented windage and elevation adjustment system claimed to provide more consistent contact of the adjustment screws and the pivoting erector tube inside the scope. This, in turn, is said to create more precise and repeatable click values and prevents reticle point-of-aim shift.

New for 2007 are the SII Big Sky scopes, three years in the making, which offer the highest optical performance in the Sightron line, with extremely high contrast and resolution, greater eye relief, and more light transmission. Though new, the Big Sky line is extensive, with mil-dot, target, compact, and both variable and fixed-power hunting models. Among the fixed-power scopes is the 12X 42 mm, reviewed here.

The Big Sky 12X 42 mm comes in only a matte black finish, and is supplied with a Sightron cloth scope bag, a 3" threaded sunshade, and a one-piece rubber scope cover. A single reticle is provided with the 12X 42 mm: a fine crosshair with a 0.5-m.o.a. central dot.

An adjustable objective provides parallax adjustment/focusing from 10 yds. to infinity. The eyepiece can also be turned in or out to allow focusing for different eyes, and is secured in position by a serrated locking ring.

Elevation and windage are adjusted via target-type turrets, which are protected by water-tight threaded-on turret covers. Each click is worth 1/4" at 100 yds., and the top of each turret is clearly marked with the click value and the direction of bullet impact. Hash marks for each click are engraved on the circumference of the turrets, and numbered witness marks below each turret can be used to gauge the number of revolutions through which it has been turned. Each full rotation of the turrets moves bullet impact 20" at 100 yds., and

a total of 80" of both elevation and windage adjustment is provided. Zeroing the turrets may be accomplished by loosening three small hex screws in the circumference of the turret top.

We put our sample Big Sky on a custom 6.5-284 Win. F-Class rifle based on an H-S Precision single-shot action and Douglas Premium bull barrel. Mounting was achieved using a steel Nightforce Picatinny rail base and TRS 1" steel rings. During an extended shooting session the scope performed extremely well, giving a sharp, bright view of the target with no discernible distortion. The nominal 1/4" click values were shown to be accurate, as was the yardage scale on the adjustable objective at ranges of 25, 50, 100, 200 and 300 yds. Once the scope was zeroed, we fired a group, ran the scope windage and elevation turrets to both ends of the adjustment range, returned to zero, and fired a second group. The centers of both groups coincided virtually identically. We appreciated the extended eye relief of the scope—just slightly less than 4"—as well as its optical sharpness, easily-seen markings, and generous windage and elevation adjustment range. The click values were fine, but distinct.

The recoil of even stiff 6.5-.284 Win. target loads in a 17-lb. rifle was not nearly enough to challenge the scope. Sightron states that all of the Big Sky models are capable of withstanding the recoil of any magnum cartridge, and can even tolerate the reversed recoil pattern of airguns, which often

SIGHTRON SII 12X42 SCOPE

IMPORTER: SIGHTRON, INC. (DEPT. AR, 100 JEFFREY WAY, SUITE A, YOUNGSVILLE, NC 27596, (919) 562-3000, WWW.SIGHTRON.COM)

MODEL: SIIB1242D

MAGNIFICATION AND OBJECTIVE: 12X 42 MM

FINISH: MATTE BLACK ANODIZING

FIELD OF VIEW (FT. @ 100 YDS.): 8.7

EYE RELIEF: 3.9"

CLICK VALUE: 1/4" @ 100 YDS.

WINDAGE AND ELEVATION ADJUSTMENT

RANGE: 80" @ 100 YDS. (WINDAGE),

80" @ 100 YDS. (ELEVATION)

RETICLE: FINE CROSSHAIR WITH CENTRAL 0.5-M.O.A. DOT

LENGTH: 12 3/4"

WEIGHT: 14.5 OZS.

FEATURES: OBJECTIVE ADJUSTABLE FOR PARALLAX FROM 10 YDS. TO INFINITY; FOCUSABLE EYEPIECE, ZEROABLE WINDAGE AND ELEVATION TURRETS

ACCESSORIES: RUBBER SCOPE COVER, CLOTH SCOPE BAG, 3" SUNSHADE

SUGGESTED LIST PRICE: \$587

disables lesser scopes.

To evaluate the 12X 42 mm's water- and fog-proofing, we immersed the scope in boiling water for 20 minutes (with the turret covers attached). We observed no fogging or leakage. We also kept the scope in a freezer for three full days, and upon withdrawal, saw no evidence of condensation, indicating that the nitrogen filling was intact.

With a list price of \$587 the Sightron SII Big Sky is priced comparably to a number of optics offering fewer features. Although its 12X magnification will limit its utility for some purposes, it is nonetheless an excellent choice for the varmint shooter with a .222 or .223 Rem., or the plains or mountain hunter who prefers a fixed-power scope. ★

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."

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