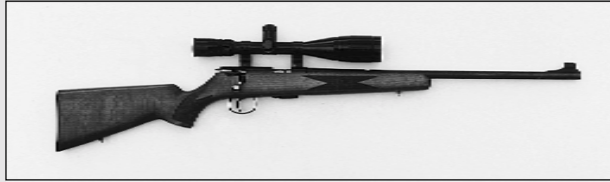


Gun-By-Gun Recap

We tested the NS 522 at the same time we evaluated three high-end products for the April 1996 issue. Here are brief summaries of the other guns we tested.



Anschutz 1416D Classic

This detachable box-magazine bolt-action sells for \$785. Its trigger is a single-stage model, but is adjustable for weight, sear engagement, and overtravel. The barrel is free-floated in the stock.

The gun shot just under 0.7-inch groups at 40 meters (chickens) and between 0.8 to 1.2 inches on the pigs (60 meters). At 77 meters, turkey groups hovered around 1.2 inches. Ram groups (at 100 meters) fell between 1.3 and 1.9 inches. All of these groups would keep bullets on the steel animal plates when the shooter aimed for the middle of the silhouettes.

As the gun came from the factory, it comfortable to shoot. It had enough drop in the stock to allow the shooter to hold an erect head position. The gun, while balanced properly for field shooting, was too light out front to slow the muzzle appreciably, we thought.

The trigger-pull weight out of the box was set at 2.5 pounds. It broke shots unevenly, we thought. We adjusted the trigger to clean up the creep, fine-tune the sear break, and lighten the trigger pull to 2 pounds.

Because metal edges on the magazine and the plastic magazine-release button protrude from the bottom of the gun, the gun was uncomfortable to shoot fist style, we thought.

The short, stainless-steel bolt handle, which featured a small bolt-handle ball, was stiff. It caused a sore spot in the shooter's palm after several dozen rounds.

Our Recommendation: The Anschutz 1416D Classic's Match 64 action shot almost all the ammo brands accurately. Its light weight (a little over 6 pounds with the scope and rings) gives the shooter plenty of room to modify the gun by adding weight in the stock exactly where he wants it. It was also fairly comfortable to shoot. In April, we recommended the 1416D, but based on its price difference vis-a-vis the KFS gun, we probably would take the Chinese product over it if budget were a factor.

Kimber Model 82C Classic

We bought this clip-fed bolt-action .22 LR for \$785. It weighed 6 1/2 pounds unloaded and without a scope and mounts. Rigged and ready for action, it weighed 7 1/2 pounds.

The trigger is a single-stage model, but is adjustable for weight, sear engagement, and overtravel. The barrel is free-floated in the stock. The action is pillar bedded.

Based on the data we collected, we can only say we were disappointed in the Kimber's accuracy. The gun shot Eley Tenex su-



perly (0.43 inch groups) at 40 meters, but we could get no better than 1.5-inch groups at 100 meters with the same ammo. The Kimber performed very poorly, in our view, with Federal Ultramatch and RWS R50. We must acknowledge that the gun simply didn't like the ammo lots we shot. Still, we assess accuracy performance on what we see, not what might be.

Besides not shooting particularly well, the gun's straight stock, which makes the visual lines of the gun classic and attractive, impeded shooter performance, we thought. To be suited for silo use, the Kimber needs more drop in the stock to allow the shooter to bring the gun up to an erect head position.

As it came from the factory, the trigger was nearly competition ready. It had a crisp break and a trigger-pull weight of 2.5 pounds. With the barreled action out of the stock, we turned one screw on the trigger to take the pull down to the 2-pound lower limit.

In the crucial area in front of the trigger guard, we thought the Kimber was more comfortable to shoot than the Anschutz. The magazine sits flush in the magazine well and the front edge of the magazine-release button sits nearly flush, making the gun fairly comfortable to shoot on top of the fist.

Cosmetically, the gun was beautifully finished. Unquestionably, the Kimber was the most visually attractive of the firearms in this test.

Our Recommendation: The Kimber 82C Classic we tested looked great, but performed erratically. We simply weren't happy with how it shot, and we don't recommend the Kimber 82C Classic for hunter-silo use.

Cooper Model 36 Featherweight

This bolt-action .22 LR retails for around \$1,595. The barrel, which is screwed into the receiver, is free-floated in the stock.

As the data reflects, we were pleased with the Cooper's accuracy across the board. The gun shot better at every distance than any of the other guns. Particularly good was its performance at ram distance. The 36 notched 1.03-inch average groups with that ammo at 100 meters.

The Cooper had a number of other edges, first among them being the stock. The 1 1/2 inches of drop at the heel allow the shooter to seat the rubber buttplate comfortably yet firmly in the shoulder while keeping the head erect. No other gun felt as natural in the hands as the Cooper, we thought. The grip was long enough and low enough for the hand, wrist, and arm to line up naturally, and the plastic stock surface afforded a better grip than the Anschutz, we thought. The thickly-tapered gun was muzzle



heavy, which most silo shooters prefer.

Out of the box, the trigger was competition ready. It had a crisp break and a trigger-pull weight of 2.2 pounds.

Our Recommendation: The Cooper Model 36 Featherweight is worth the money. For hunter-rifle silhouette shooting, we recommend the Cooper Model 36 Featherweight.