



Mitchell's Mausers Gold Series 1911 Pistol

If one trend in today's .45s is variety, another is specialization. Most of these M1911s come out of the box ready for carry or competition. Since the blocky contours and sharp edges of the Mitchell's Mausers Gold Series pistol would make it difficult to carry, it is clearly one of the latter. The gun has a full-size, stainless steel frame and a slide topped with a raised rib reminiscent of the Colt Gold Cup. Both the rear and front sight are dovetailed into the top of the slide. Additionally, the top of the slide is deeply recessed to give the tall blade of the rear sight a lower profile. Horizontal grooves on the face of the rear blade

reduce glare and help the shooting eye quickly acquire the deep U-notch. There is a single white dot insert on the front sight post, but there are no corresponding dots on the rear sight. The rear sight is screw-adjustable for both windage and elevation. The front post is, however, fixed. Twelve deep grasping grooves at the front as well as the rear aid slide racking when an optical sight is mounted on the gun. The Gold Series retains the internal extractor of the original M1911 design, but Mitchell's Mausers has lowered and flared the ejection port for reliability. Since many pistol shooting sports prohibit fitting the barrel directly to the slide, the 5"

barrel of Gold Series makes use of a bushing for this purpose. The sample gun was chambered in .45 ACP, but .40 S&W, .38 Super and 9 mm Luger models are available as well. The full-length, one-piece guide rod is a welcome piece of insurance for competitive shooters considering the number of rounds put through a competition gun and the time and points lost clearing a jam. The opening of the magazine well is gently beveled for smoother insertion of the gun's eight-round, single-column stainless steel box magazine. Index holes running down the both sides of the magazine body show the user how

many rounds remain. Also, a generously sized synthetic bumper pad protects the floorplate from damage when an empty magazine falls to the deck. The flat mainspring housing is checkered, but the points are recessed rather than raised, making them more decorative than functional. Also, the front-strap is smooth. In contrast, the walnut grip panels of the Gold Series sport crisp, nicely executed 22-line-per-inch checkering in the classic double-diamond pattern. Stained to a reddish hue, the panels are finished with circular silver escutcheons emblazoned with the Mitchell's Mausers logo. Controls enhanced for

competition include an extended thumb safety and slide-stop lever as well as a magazine release button that is suitably raised but not oversized. The thumb-safety lever of our sample pistol was right-handed only, but an ambidextrous thumb safety is available as well. The Gold Series pistols are fitted with the combination of a beaver-tail grip safety with raised palm pad and a skeletonized rowel hammer to aid establishing a properly high grip. Slide-to-frame fit was commendably tight with no discernable horizontal or vertical play. The finish is a two-tone, stainless satin on the gun's grasping and sighting surfaces, but polished to an attractive high gloss elsewhere. If the first advantage derived from shooting

a .45 is the power of the ammunition, the second is the control provided by its single-action design. Appropriately, Mitchell's Mausers makes the most of this by fitting the Gold Series with an extended trigger made of aluminum and skeletonized to reduce weight, but mated to a steel bow for durability. After a little creep in the take up, the trigger broke at 4¼ lbs. The gun was fired with a variety of hollow-point and full-metal-jacket loads from Hornady, Black Hills and Speer. A Ransom rest was used for accuracy testing, and results at 25 yds. shown in the accompanying table compare favorably with more expensive pistols tested in the past. A number of IDPA targets were set up to get a

SHOOTING RESULTS (25 YDS.)					
.45 ACP Cartridge	Vel. @ 15' (f.p.s.)	Energy (ft.-lbs.)	Group Size In Inches		
			Smallest	Largest	Average
Black Hills 230-gr. FMJ	677 Avg. 14 Sd	234	1.71	2.21	2.06
Hornady No. 9090 185-gr JHP (XTP)	874 Avg. 16 Sd	314	1.35	1.98	1.66
Speer No. 23966 200-gr. GDHP	793 Avg. 13 Sd	321	1.21	2.44	1.93
Average Extreme Spread			1.88		

Measured average velocity for 10 rounds from a 5" barrel. Range temperature: 81°. Humidity 50%. Accuracy for five consecutive, five-shot groups at 25 yds. fired from a Ransom rest. Abbreviations: JHP (jacketed hollow-point), XTP (Extreme Terminal Performance, GDHP (Gold Dot Hollow Point), Sd (Standard deviation).

sense of its general shootability. The trigger was very crisp and controllable, but the lack of checkering caused one shooter's grip to break down during long shooting strings. Additionally, the shortage of texturing required more concentration to establish a consistent repeatable grip from the holster.

Although some competitors will likely prefer more positive checkering, the Gold Series' full-size all steel construction and out-of-the-box mechanical accuracy certainly make it worth the consideration of anyone looking for a good starting point for an IDPA or limited IPSC action 1911-style pistol.



There was a little creep in the Gold Series' skeletonized aluminum trigger, but it broke at just 4¼ lbs. pull with minimal overtravel. The satin finish of the smooth frontstrap contrasts with the gloss of the gun's vertical sides. Front and rear sights are dovetailed into the top of the slide. They proved to be well-regulated and printed groups about 2" below point of aim at 25 yds.

The Gold Series flat mainspring housing is commendably made of steel, but its recessed checkering does little to aid the shooter's hold on the gun. A raised palm pad on the beaver tail grip safety ensures it is disengaged with a proper hold.

The front of the barrel is fitted to the slide with a bushing in the manner of the original government-issue 1911. The Gold series is appropriate for many types of competition because many pistol sports require this type of construction.

GOLD SERIES

MANUFACTURER: Mitchell's Mausers (Dept. AR), P.O. Box 9295, Fountain Valley, CA 92728; (714) 444-2220; www.mitchellsales.com
CALIBER: .45 ACP (tested), 9 mm Luger, .38 Super, .40 S&W
ACTION TYPE: short-recoil-operated, center-fire, semi-automatic
FRAME: stainless steel
BARREL: 5", match grade, stainless steel
RIFLING: six groove; 1:15" RH twist
MAGAZINE: eight rounds
SIGHTS: rear blade screw adjustable for windage and elevation, dovetailed front post with white-dot insert
TRIGGER PULL: single-action, adjustable for overtravel; 4¼ lbs.
GRIPS: walnut panels cut in a 22 line-per-inch, double-diamond pattern
OVERALL LENGTH: 8½"
HEIGHT: 6"
WIDTH: 1½"
WEIGHT: 2 lbs., 9 ozs.
SUGGESTED RETAIL PRICE: \$795

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.

Marlin 917VS .17 HMR



Though having a heavy barrel, the Marlin's 7-lb. weight is easy to carry in the field. A track at the magazine's rear (bottom arrow) engages a bracket in the magazine well to position it. Magazine release is by way of a button (upper arrow) at the rear of the opening.



The rimfire rifle, with its almost negligible kick and ammunition cost, has always been the first choice for all-around plinking fun. About the only negative aspect of the ubiquitous .22 Long Rifle is its limited range.

Enter the .17 HMR in 2003, which combines the low recoil and report of previous rimfire rounds with a ballistically efficient 17-gr. hollow-point bullet at a sizzling muzzle velocity of 2550 f.p.s. Marlin's heavy-barreled Model 917 bolt-action rifles are the North Haven gunmaker's answer to those seeking a reasonably priced rifle chambered in .17 HMR. The Model 917 comes in two varieties, the blued Model 917V and the stainless Model 917VS, which we received for evaluation.

The Model 917VS features a 22", stainless-steel barrel having a muzzle diameter of 0.80" and four-groove rifling in a 1:9" right-hand twist. The barrel attaches to a cylindrical 1"-diameter stainless-steel receiver, whose top has both grooves and 6-48 holes for scope base mounting. There are no provisions for iron sights.

The bolt features a single non-rotating, spring-steel claw extractor, a bolt handle located

in the middle of the bolt body, and an exposed cocking piece having a red dot that is visible when the bolt is cocked. Bolt lock-up is by way of a lug at the bolt handle root which engages a notch in the receiver upon bolt turn-down. Ejection is via a steel finger that rides in a groove in the underside of the bolt body.

Ignition is by way of a two-lever, single-stage trigger unit, which features a serrated finger-piece.

MARLIN 917VS

MANUFACTURER: The Marlin Firearms Co. (Dept. AR), P.O. Box 248, North Haven, CT 06473, (203) 239-5621, www.marlinfirearms.com

CALIBER: .17 Hornady Magnum Rimfire

ACTION TYPE: repeating bolt-action rimfire rifle

RECEIVER: stainless steel

BARREL: 22", stainless steel

RIFLING: four-groove; 1:9" RH twist

MAGAZINE: seven-round steel detachable box

SIGHTS: none supplied; receiver tapped and grooved for scope mounting

TRIGGER PULL: single-stage, 4-lbs.

SAFETY: trigger-blocking two-position safety; spring-loaded inertia firing pin

STOCK: laminated wood with Monte Carlo comb; length of pull, 14"; drop at heel, 1 1/4"; drop at comb, 1 3/8"; drop at end of Monte Carlo, 1 3/8"

OVERALL LENGTH: 41 1/4"

WEIGHT: 7 lbs.

ACCESSORIES: owner's manual

SUGGESTED RETAIL PRICE: \$410 (917VS), \$274 (917V)



The Marlin 917VS is a .17 HMR rifle offering a stainless steel receiver, a heavy 22" stainless barrel and an adult-size laminated wood stock.



A two-position safety locks the trigger but allows bolt manipulation, while a red dot (arrow) on the cocking piece is visible when the bolt is cocked. Note grooves and tapped holes in receiver top for scope mounting. The bolt head features a non-rotating spring steel extractor and a spring-loaded inertial firing pin (above).



The heavy barrel measures 0.80" at the muzzle, and features a recessed target crown.



The heart of the Marlin 917VS is its cylindrical stainless steel receiver. Note safety piece attached to trigger housing (left arrow), and magazine mounting bracket and release button (right arrow).

.17 HMR Cartridge	Vel. @ 15' (f.p.s.)	Energy (ft.-lbs.)	Group Size In Inches		
			Smallest	Largest	Average
CCI 0053 17-gr. Speer TNT HP	2729 Avg. 11 Sd	281	0.72	0.90	0.82
Federal V-Shok P770 17-gr. Speer TNT HP	2715 Avg. 13 Sd	278	0.53	0.73	0.61
Hornady 83170 17-gr. Hornady V-Max	2668 Avg. 14 Sd	269	0.57	1.24	0.94
Hornady 83172 20-gr. Hornady XTP	2501 Avg. 14 Sd	278	1.05	1.36	1.16
Remington PR17HM1 17-gr. Hornady V-Max	2680 Avg. 12 Sd	271	0.53	0.82	0.58
Average Extreme Spread:			0.76		

Measured average velocity for 10 rounds from a 22" barrel. Range temperature: 82° F. Humidity: 56%. Accuracy for five consecutive, five-shot groups at 100 yds. from a sandbag rest. Abbreviations: HP (hollow-point), Sd (Standard deviation), V-Max (Varmint Express).

The sear serves both to release the firing pin and to retain the bolt in the receiver; thus, the trigger of the unloaded gun must be pulled to remove the bolt. A two-position safety allows firing in the forward position and, when pulled rearward, blocks the trigger but allows the bolt to be worked.

The Marlin 917VS feeds from a seven-round-capacity, stainless-steel box magazine whose sides have deep stamped grooves that contact the case shoulder to prevent the bullet tips from hitting the front of the magazine. The magazine follower is synthetic, and the unit can be disassembled for cleaning.

Contrasting nicely with the stainless-steel barreled action is the 917VS' gray/black laminated hardwood stock, which features a raised cheekpiece with a straight comb, a 1.6"-wide fore-end, a slight palm swell, double sling swivel studs, a 1/2"-thick rubber buttpad and a barrel channel that free-floats the forward 20" of the barrel. The 14" length of pull of the stock suggests that the rifle is best suited for an adult or a nearly adult-size adolescent. The stock is essentially a compromise allowing the rifle multiple uses. The fore-end, for example, is fairly wide and flat-sided for stability on a sandbag, but somewhat rounded

for comfortable shooting from the offhand, prone, kneeling or sitting positions. A solid hardwood version of the same stock is used on the blued Model 917 V. We mounted a BSA Sweet 17 3-12x40 mm AO scope on the Marlin, using Warne steel rings that mounted via the grooves in the receiver top, and fired groups at 100 yds. off sandbags using 17-gr., .17 HMR loads from CCI, Federal, Hornady and Remington, as well as the Hornady 20-gr. XTP load. No malfunctions of any kind were experienced.

A few minor irritations surfaced during our test-firing. We would have liked a little longer bolt

handle for easier bolt manipulation; and the 4-lb. trigger pull, though crisp and quite shootable, was a trifle heavy for our taste. However, these issues faded to insignificance when we began measuring the Marlin's 100-yd. groups, which are listed in the accompanying table. With all loads, one-m.o.a. accuracy was approached or exceeded, and using Federal and Remington ammunition, the Marlin produced the kind of groups we'd expect to see from a good varmint or target rifle. Accuracy persisted at extended range: Several 200-yd. groups fired with the Federal V-Shok load averaged 1.50", and the gun's 300-yd. groups with that load opened up to about 2.70" only because of a slight crosswind. This level of accuracy makes 250-yd. rimfire varminting a reality.

Whether it's hitting bottle caps at 100 yds., crows at 200 yds. or clay pigeons at 300, the Marlin 917VS is a good choice for any adult .17 HMR enthusiast.



PANTHER CMP .22 LR

The NRA and the CMP (Civilian Marksmanship Program) work hand in hand to ensure highpower competitive rifle shooting is alive and well every year at Camp Perry. Even a casual observer of these highpower service rifle matches would recognize one thing quickly—the dominance of the AR-style rifle on the firing line. Unfortunately, the amount of practice required to prepare for these events can be prohibitively expensive. Enter DPMS/Panther Arms.

Randy Luth, owner of DPMS (which stands for Defense Procurement Manufacturing Services), related the background of the company's new Panther CMP .22 LR rifle. "Right before last year's High Power Rifle Competition at Camp Perry, I and some of the engineers decided that a

rifle that mimicked the appearance and handling of a standard CMP A2 service match rifle in .223 Rem. would be a useful practice tool for the competitors." What resulted was a batch of just over 100 uppers in .22 LR. DPMS put them up for sale during the NRA and CMP Highpower Rifle Matches at Perry, and they were sold out in short order strictly by word-of-mouth—with many requests for more.

Based on the obvious interest, DPMS/Panther Arms now offers a complete Panther CMP .22 LR rifle for sale. Visually, it is hard to distinguish from a standard, .223 Rem. CMP service rifle. The only indicator that it is different, at first blush, is the 10-round .22 LR magazine, which is clearly not a standard magazine. A closer look at the rifle reveals the only other

indicator—the bolt. This straight-blowback bolt does not have the rotating head or locking lugs of a .223 Rem. bolt as they are not needed.

Looking at the big picture, this rifle is a very close copy of a standard .223 rifle. Its fixed-carry-handle upper receiver is made from forged 7075-T6 aluminum that is hard-coat anodized and Teflon-coated black. Its lower receiver is cast 356-T6 aluminum and is also hard-coat anodized and Teflon-coated black.

Controls and features that would be standard on a service rifle, such as the shell deflector, magazine release button and safety selector, are in place on the Panther CMP .22 LR—but the forward assist and dust cover are non-functional.

The barrel is a button-

PANTHER CMP .22 LR

MANUFACTURER: Defense Procurement Manufacturing Services, Inc. (Dept. AR), 3312 12th St. SE, St. Cloud, MN 56304; (800) 578-3767; www.dpmsinc.com
CALIBER: .22 LR
ACTION TYPE: blowback-operated semi-automatic rifle
RECEIVER: forged-aluminum upper and cast-aluminum lower anodized receivers
BARREL: 20", stainless steel
RIFLING: six-groove, 1:16" RH twist
MAGAZINE: detachable, 10-round box
SIGHTS: rear, 0.30"-0.40" National Match; front, 0.050" A2 sight
TRIGGER PULL: two-stage, 7½ lbs.
STOCK: A2 stock: length of pull, 13½"; drop at heel, ½"; drop at comb, ½"
OVERALL LENGTH: 38½"
WEIGHT: 8.7 lbs.
ACCESSORIES: two 10 round magazines, cleaning kit, sling and hard case
SUGGESTED RETAIL PRICE: \$749



SHOOTING RESULTS (50 YDS.)

.22 LR Cartridge	Vel. @ 15' (f.p.s.)	Energy (ft.-lbs.)	Group Size In Inches		
			Smallest	Largest	Average
Winchester T22 Super-X 40-gr. LRN	1079 Avg. 9 Sd	103	1.25	1.89	1.64
Federal GMT Gold Medal 40-gr. LRN	1101 Avg. 9 Sd	108	1.06	1.97	1.47
Eley Tenex 40-gr. LRN	1030 Avg. 14 Sd	94	0.49	1.51	0.98
Average Extreme Spread:			1.36		

Measured average velocity for 10 rounds from a 20" barrel. Range temperature: 72° F. Humidity: 62%. Abbreviations: GMT (Gold Medal Target), HP (hollow-point), LRN (lead round nose), Sd (Standard deviation), V-Max (Varmint Express).



The Panther CMP .22 LR's bolt assembly features a unique chamber bushing (top) that houses the feed ramp. This bushing encircles the chamber of the rifle, which extends back into the upper receiver (above, l.). The magazine of the A-22 CMP rifle is polymer and holds 10 cartridges of .22 LR. A unique feature of this magazine is the extractor located on the top, right "lip" (above, r.) of the magazine rather than inside the receiver.

rifled, six-groove 20" stainless steel heavy barrel with a 1 in 16" right-hand twist and a target crown. What is important to note about this is the fact this barrel is designed from the ground up as a .22 LR. Unlike using a .22 LR conversion kit in a standard .223 rifle, the CMP's bore size and rate of twist is intended for the rimfire cartridge.

The rear sight of the rifle is a 0.30"-0.40" National Match assembly with 1/4-minute windage adjustments and 1/2-minute elevation adjustments. The front

sight is a .050" A2 sight. The handguards, at first appearance are of the normal A2 configuration. Closer inspection, however, reveals that they are DPMS' excellent CMP free-float handguards. The buttstock and pistol grip are both standard A2 fare.

The bolt is made from 4140 chrome-moly phosphated steel and is particularly interesting. The entire blowback mechanism is located in the area a normal bolt would fill. A sort of "chamber bushing" is located at the front of the bolt, and

houses the feed ramp as well as having the two bolt guide rods threaded into it. The bushing fully encircles the chamber section of the barrel (that extends into the receiver), and was designed as a separate piece for ease of maintenance and cleaning. At the top of the bolt is the carrier guide, which serves two functions: It allows purchase for the charging handle as well as helping keep the bolt aligned correctly. At the rear face of the bolt assembly is a carrier stop that keeps the .22 LR bolt

from extending back into the buffer spring system in the stock.

As a rimfire rifle, the Panther CMP .22 LR does not require the gas-impingement operating system of the standard .223 rifle and is operated by straight blowback. Consequently, there is no gas tube under the upper handguard.

Of special note is the ejector, which is located on the magazine rather than inside the receiver. The user must remember to not use the support hand to hold the rifle by the base of the magazine as this can throw off the alignment of the ejector in relation to the bolt as it cycles and cause functioning problems.

The rifle performed well, but was a bit "balky" with the Federal ammunition. Functioning with the Winchester and Eley ammunition was flawless. The rifle was fired for accuracy with open iron sights. Accuracy results are shown in the accompanying box.

The DPMS Panther CMP .22 LR, then, rifle offers a great deal to both the seasoned highpower rifle shooter or the weekend "plinker."

BSA Sweet 17 3-12x40 mm AO



The BSA Sweet 17 3-12x40 AO offers a range compensation system designed for the trajectory of the 17-gr. .17 HMR load.

In 2003, BSA Optics, known for its varied and affordable line of sports optics, entered the range-compensating scope arena with its Sweet 17 scope series. These scopes all offer easy trajectory compensation for the 17-gr .17 HMR load as well as one-piece, nitrogen-filled 1" aluminum tubes, multi-coated objective and ocular lenses, a proprietary Shadow Black rubberized bake-on finish and adjustable objectives.

The heart of the scope's range compensation mechanism is a zeroable elevation turret having graduations from 100 to 300 yds., with numerical markings every 25 yds. Slightly more than three-quarters of a turn of the turret is required to go from the "100" to "300" markings. After the scope is zeroed to put the gun dead on at 100 yds., three hex screws in the top of the turret are loosened to disengage it from the reticle adjustment system, the "100" mark on the turret is aligned with an index mark on the turret base, and the three hex screws are retightened. Once the elevation turret

TRAJECTORY TABLE BSA SWEET 17 3-12x40 mm AO			
Federal Premium V-Shok .17 HMR 17-gr. Speer TNT HP			
Bullet Impact Below Aiming Point (inches)			
100 yds.	200 yds.	300 yds.	
0.0	-7.5	-12.3	

The Sweet 17's windage adjustment is of conventional design, with 1/8-minute clicks. To fire at ranges other than 100 yds., rotate the turret until the desired distance aligns with the index mark. Note the 25-yd. range increments.



is so set, rotating it to any indicated range should, in theory, produce the proper reticle movement to score a hit at that distance.

Windage adjustments are made utilizing a zeroable windage turret having calibrations for plus or minus 4 m.o.a., rather than a scale with constantly ascending values.

We mounted the scope



on a Marlin 917 VS stainless-steel, bolt-action heavy-barrel rifle in .17 HMR with Warne vertically split steel rings that engaged the grooves in the receiver top. Using

Federal Premium .17 HMR V-Shok ammunition loaded with a 17-gr. Speer TNT hollow-point bullet, we zeroed the scope at 100 yds. as per the instructions, and then fired groups at 200 and 300 yds. employing the markings on the elevation turret.

The Sweet 17 did not produce perfect trajectory compensation at all distanc-

BSA SWEET 17

IMPORTER: BSA Optics (Dept. AR), 3911 Southwest 47th Ave., Suite 914, Ft. Lauderdale, FL 33314, (954) 581-2144, www.bsaoptics.com
MODEL: 17-312X40
MAGNIFICATION AND OBJECTIVE: 3-12x40 mm
FINISH: proprietary "Shadow Black"
FIELD OF VIEW (FT. @ 100 YDS.): 28 ft. (3X), 7 ft. (12X)
EYE RELIEF: 3.0"
M.O.A. CLICK VALUE: 1/8
WINDAGE AND ELEVATION ADJUSTMENT RANGE: 70" (W), 70" (E)
RETICLE: duplex crosshair
LENGTH: 13.5"
WEIGHT: 19.4 ozs.
FEATURES: objective adjustable for parallax from 100 to 300 yds.; range compensation system
PRICE: \$149.95

es. This was to be expected, as the scope's range compensation system is based on the trajectory described by a bullet of a specific ballistic coefficient at a nominal muzzle velocity. The range markings on the Sweet 17's elevation turret should be seen as a guide, to be modified (with supplemental marks) on the basis of actual shooting results.

We found the BSA Sweet 17 to be bright and sharp, and parallax-free when the objective was properly adjusted. Its 1/8-minute click adjustments were positive (future versions will feature 1/4-minute clicks), and its duplex reticle effective.

With a list price of \$149.95, the BSA Sweet 17 3-12x40 mm AO is a good value in a rimfire scope for the .17 HMR, and its range compensation feature can be useful when modified by actual shooting tests. 