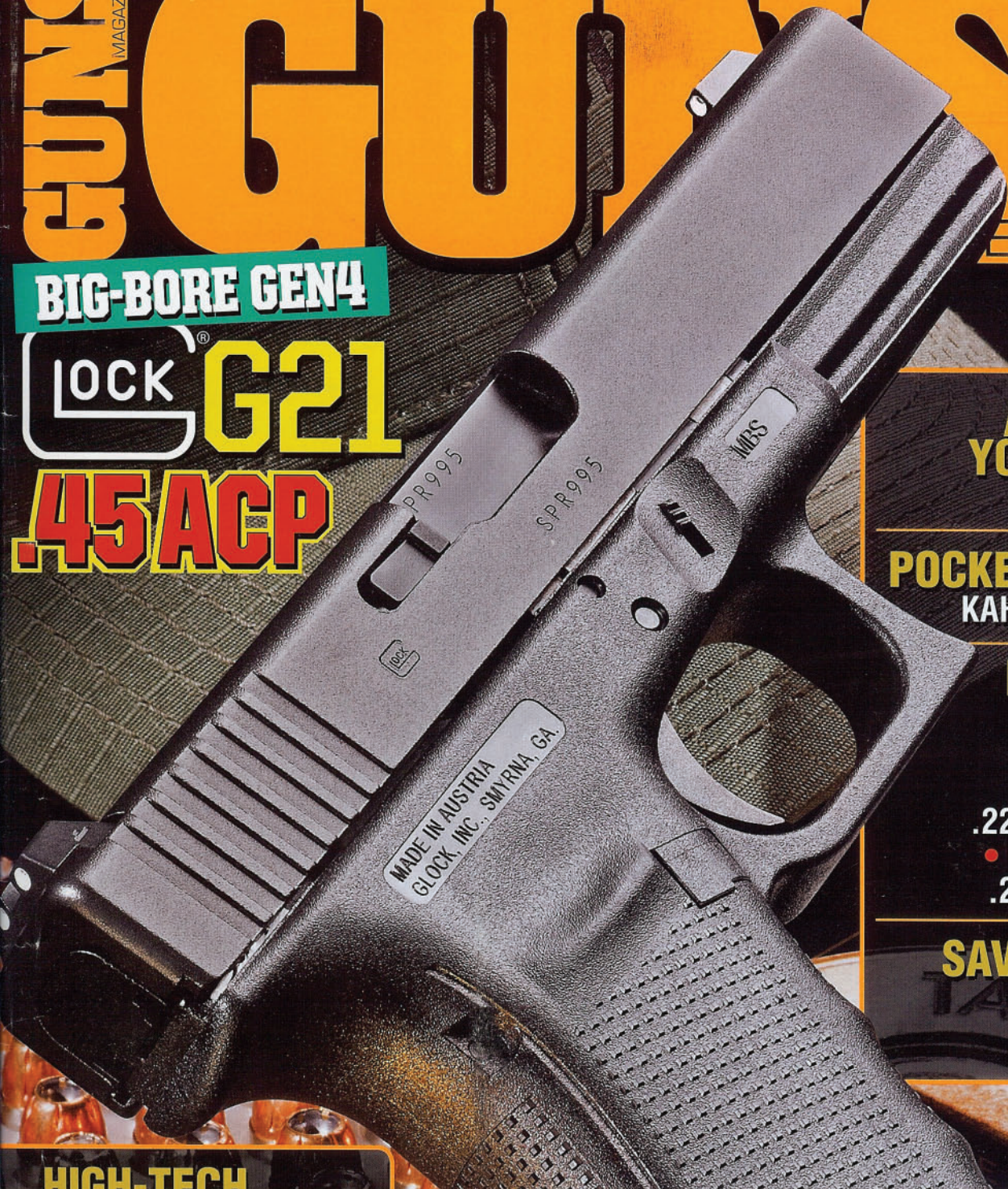


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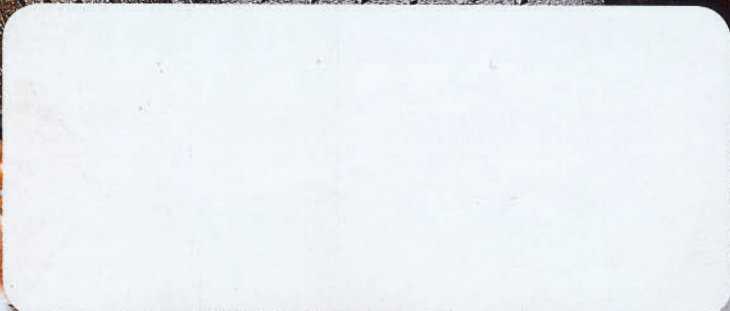
**HIGH-TECH
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Pg 24

- LEICA RANGEFINDERS
- KESTREL METERS

SPARE AMMO?

IT'S NECESSARY Pg 12



RIMFIRES

STORY: Holt Bodinson

RIMFIRE MAGNUM TACK DRIVER Magnum Research's Barracuda .22 WMR.

Magnum Research stunned everyone with the introduction of their remarkably innovative, gas-operated Desert Eagle handgun and went on to stun the rimfire world with a carbon-wrapped barrel and the meanest looking stock in the business. I like mean machines like the SR-71 Blackbird and the Lamborghini Aventador. Magnum Research's "Barracuda" rimfire magnum, part of their Magnum Lite rifle series, fits into the same visual class as those classics. It is high style, high tech and high performance from muzzle-to-butt.

Carrying the Model designation "MLR 1722M," the Barracuda was available in both .22 WMR and .17 HMR. In fact, Magnum Research was responsible for carrying out some groundbreaking studies to see how the hot .17 HMR could be managed in a blowback, semi-automatic action.

While the .17 HMR functions well within SAAMI pressure standards, the cartridge generates its peak pressure almost as soon as the bullet leaves the case plus the timing of those peaks is not consistent from one shot to the next. This peak pressure inconsistency proved a challenge in solving the

mechanical timing and inertia issues inherent in the design of a blowback, semi-automatic action.

Magnum Research solved the problem by drilling a small orifice in the barrel just in front of the chamber to bleed off a bit of the expanding gas. The effect was to equalize the peak pressure from shot-to-shot which solved the timing and inertia design problems. Over the orifice, Magnum Research installed a multi-holed gas block to diffuse the vented gas under the forearm.

Unfortunately, Magnum Research, which is now part of Kahr Arms, no



A stainless end cap (above) protects the muzzle and locks in the carbon fiber cover. The forged and machined receiver (below) sports an integral and racy-looking optic's rib.



longer lists a .17 HMR chambering in their catalog, but this same gas metering system is used in the current .22 WMR to enable the rifle to function with all bullet weights.

The Barracuda is a rakish looking rimfire. Its effect is achieved by blending together some rather unique components.



Magnum Research's Barracuda is one of the great original rimfire designs. The highly sculptured, thumbhole buttstock both saves weight and looks smashing.

BARRACUDA

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12602 33RD AVE. S.W.
PILLAGER, MN 56473
(508) 635-4273

WWW.GUNSMAGAZINE.COM/MAGNUMRESEARCH

ACTION TYPE: Blowback, semi-automatic,
CALIBER: .22 WMR, **CAPACITY:** 9, **BARREL TYPE:**
Carbon/steel composite, **BARREL LENGTH:** 19",
OVERALL LENGTH: 35.5", **WEIGHT:** 4.6 pounds,
FINISH: Anodized black, stainless, carbon gray,
SIGHTS: Picatinny-type Weaver rib, **STOCK:** Colored
laminate, **PRICE:** \$935

fiber exterior is durable, Magnum Research observes if you wanted to remove that inevitable scratch, all you have to do is to give it a lick or two with 320- or 400-grit sandpaper.

The Barracuda is also offered with a conventional stainless steel barrel, but the weight of the rifle increases from 4.6 pounds to 7.45 pounds while the price saving is only \$30 or so. My feeling is the carbon/steel composite barrel is worth every penny.

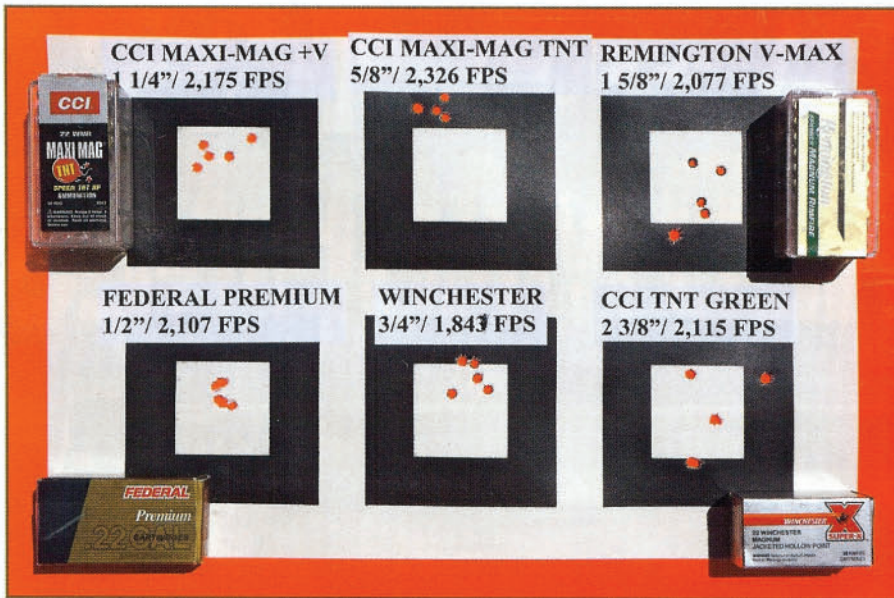
The most striking aspect of the Barracuda is Magnum Research's original, thumbhole, stock design, which has now been copied by other makers. Available in Forest Camo (seen here), Nutmeg (brown) and Pepper (black/gray) laminate colors, it's racy and spacey, and it's also one of the most comfortable, offhand and benchrest stocks I have ever handled. Because of the high degree of sculpturing in the stock design, the Barracuda is also the lightest, laminate-stocked rimfire rifle I have ever held, and it is mounted with a comfortable and skid resistant rubber recoil pad. Unfortunately, it's only available as a right-handed model; however, this year, Magnum Research did debut a new ambidextrous thumbhole stock in their .22 LR semi-automatic line, so there's hope.

The only accessory missing in the current Barracuda stock is a set of sling swivel bases. A set of recessed bases, similar to the existing Pachmayr design, would certainly complement the lines of the stock and add to the utility of the rifle.

How does it shoot? Like all rimfires, it has its likes and dislikes when it comes to ammunition. Mounted with a Kahles 2-7x36 rimfire scope, the Barracuda at 50 yards really performed with Federal Premium. The three best loads are detailed in the chart.

The Barracuda certainly lives up to its namesake as a deadly, accurate varmint rifle, and it's available in .22 LR as well as .22 WMR. Priced competitively, it's one of the great, original rimfire designs.

GUNS



The Barracuda is an inherently accurate design and a great varmint rig.

The Barracuda action is similar to what we are accustomed to in the Ruger 10/22. In fact, Magnum Research uses the same fire control system with a 5- to 6-pound trigger and a 9-shot magnum rimfire magazine as the Ruger, but there the similarity ends.

The Barracuda action body is machined from a 6061-T6 aircraft aluminum forging. Integral to the action is a racy, visually appealing, ventilated Picatinny-type rib that actually extends forward over the barrel shank for about an inch. This extension gives the shooter a greater option for moving a mounted scope more forward or for adjusting the spacing of the scope rings. The integral rib accepts any Weaver-style mount and, because of its height, will accommodate scopes with an objective lens diameter up to 50mm in low-style rings.

One of the valuable points in the Barracuda instructional manual, which is germane to mounting scopes on any semi-automatic with a prominent bolt handle, is—if needed—position scope ring knobs on the left hand side of the action to avoid interference between ejected cases and the reciprocating bolt handle.

The Barracuda bolt is machined by Magnum Research from 4140 steel, heat treated and fit to minimum headspace dimensions. Empties

are plucked from the chamber by a single extractor and kicked out by a mechanical ejector riding through the left side of the bolt face. As in the Ruger 10/22, there is a hand-activated-bolt, hold-open latch in front of the triggerguard and a cross-button safety positioned in the forward, upper edge of the guard.

Don't Dry Fire

When you unpack a Barracuda, the first thing that catches your eye is a large warning label reading "Do Not Dry Fire" stuck to the top of the Picatinny rail. That's good advice for any rimfire firearm, but try as I might, with a 9-round magazine and no automatic bolt hold open feature, I could not avoid dry firing the tenth shot on an empty chamber. It just happens, as it does with a Ruger 10/22, and I don't think it's going to ruin a Barracuda.

Magnum Research is famous for its patented, carbon/graphite barrel, featuring a steel barrel liner wound with graphite fiber with its grain parallel to the bore axis. Based on Magnum Research's tests, their composite barrel is lighter, six times stiffer and dissipates heat 43 percent faster than a conventional all-steel barrel. Essentially, what you have is a very accurate "bull barrel" without the weight plus the composite barrel really looks cool. While the carbon

.22 WINCHESTER MAGNUM RIMFIRE FACTORY AMMO PERFORMANCE

LOAD (BRAND, BULLET WEIGHT, TYPE)	VELOCITY (FPS)	GROUP SIZE (INCHES)
FEDERAL PREMIUM 40 JHP	2,107	1/2
CCI MAXI-MAG 30 TNT	2,326	5/8
WINCHESTER 40 SUPER-X	1,843	3/4