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- A Radical Rimfire



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MRI MLR22AT .22LR

You've probably already read Layne Simpson's exclusive report on Kimber's new flyweight Mountain Ascent rifle elsewhere in this issue. Well, we have another brand-new featherweight rifle to report on. It's Magnum Research, Inc.'s (MRI) new MLR22AT semiautomatic rimfire rifle. And like the Kimber centerfire rifle, the MRI flyweight is outstanding in the accuracy department. More on that in a minute.

Also like the Kimber rifle, the MRI gun weighs less than 5 pounds. Actually, the MLR22AT is rated at 4.25 pounds, unloaded and without an optic. With the Burris

SpeedDot electronic sight I installed on it, the nifty, little rifle weighs in at 4 pounds, 14 ounces on my postage scale.

That just seems incredible to me. When I was a younger man, I didn't mind hefting a heavy rifle around. I used to tote my Springfield Armory M1 Garand (9+ pounds) around the family farm and along the creek banks for what must have been days at a time back then and it didn't bother me a bit. Nowadays, I much prefer to walk the fields and fencerows with my 6-pound 28-gauge Ruger Red Label. I guess age has its "advantages." Anyway, this new MRI rimfire weighs even less than my Red Label!

FEATURES

MRI has accomplished the weight reduction with this gun through the use of an aluminum alloy receiver, a graphite barrel, and a synthetic thumbhole-style stock. The rifle is patterned after the Ruger 10/22 semiautomatic, and in fact, it uses Ruger's famous 10-round rotary magazine and Ruger's 10/22 trigger group.

Starting at the forward end, the MLR22AT features MRI's proprietary Magnum Lite barrel that is constructed of a steel liner with "uni-directional" graphite fibers running parallel to the bore's axis. The result is a lightweight yet stiff barrel.

The company says the combination is six times stiffer than the equivalent weight of steel and that it dissipates heat 43 percent faster than steel. Typically, MRI's Magnum Lite barrels weigh less than a pound, yet they resemble bull barrels in profile. My sample gun's barrel measured 0.93 inch in diameter at the muzzle and 17 inches in length. It's a straight barrel with no taper, and it has a recessed muzzle crown. The barrel's Benz target chamber is designed specifically for semiautomatics. The Benz chamber has been described as being "tight" in the throat area to enhance accuracy, but "loose" enough in the mouth

SPECIFICATIONS

MLR22AT

Manufacturer:	Magnum Research, Inc. www.magnumresearch.com
Type:	Blowback-operated autoloader
Caliber:	.22 LR
Magazine Capacity:	10 rounds, detachable Ruger rotary magazine
Barrel:	17 in.; Magnum Lite graphite bull barrel
Overall Length:	35.5 in.
Weight, empty:	4 lbs., 4 oz.
Stock:	Synthetic ambidextrous thumbhole with palm swells, molded-in rubber buttplate, and raised comb
Length of Pull:	13.75 in.
Finish:	Black anodized receiver, matte black barrel with silver muzzle crown, black stock
Sights:	None; integral Weaver-style scope mount
Trigger:	3.75-lb. pull (as tested)
Safety:	Two position
Price:	\$562

area to facilitate reliable feeding and extracting in blowback-operated autoloaders.

The receiver is CNC-machined from a 6061-T6 aluminum forging, and it features an integral Weaver-style optics rail. As I alluded to above, I installed a Burris SpeedDot red-dot optic on my sample MLR22AT, and it was easy. All it took was a few minutes to line up the rings with the slots and tighten the screws.

The MLR22AT's lightweight, composite, thumb-hole-style stock has a raised comb that's nearly perfect for use with a scope. The stock also has slight palm swells on both sides of the pistol grip, and as such MRI is calling it an ambidextrous stock. Obviously, it's a right-handed gun because the bolt and ejection port are on the right-hand

side. Speaking of the bolt, the MLR22AT comes with an oversize bolt handle, which makes charging the carbine quick and easy.

Two more things about the stock: It has a molded-to-fit rubber buttplate, and it is built so as to allow the barrel to fully free-float.

PERFORMANCE

I put eight .22 Long Rifle loads through the MLR22AT, and as I said earlier, it was tremendously accurate. Its best single five-shot group measured a mere 0.25 inch. That's at 50 yards. Four out of the eight loads averaged 0.75 or less, and overall average for all eight loads was 0.88. The consistent 3.75-pound trigger pull and the finely crafted, free-floated graphite barrel contributed to my gun's top-notch

SHOOTING MRI'S MAGNUM LITE MLR22AT

Ammunition	Velocity (fps)	Extreme Spread (fps)	Standard Deviation (fps)	50-Yard Accuracy (Inches)
.22 LR				
Federal Hyper Velocity 31-gr. Plated HP	1340	66	23	1.00
CCI Stinger 32-gr. HP	1533	17	5	1.00
CCI Mini Mag 36-gr. HP	1175	65	20	0.50
Remington Game Load 36-gr. HP	1229	58	23	0.63
Winchester Varmint HE 37-gr. FHP	1352	88	29	1.00
American Eagle High Velocity 40-gr. Solid	1225	45	15	0.75
Federal Gold Medal 40-gr. Solid	1070	81	18	0.75
Winchester Power-Point 40-gr. LHP	1211	89	25	1.38

NOTES: Accuracy is the average of five, five-shot groups fired from a sandbag benchrest. Velocity is the average of 10 rounds measured 15 feet from the gun's muzzle.



The author demonstrated the MLR22AT's incredible accuracy at 50 yards. The sample gun's favorite loading was CCI's Mini Mag 36-grain HP, which averaged 0.5 inch for five, five-shot groups.

accuracy. The enclosed chart summarizes my results.

After putting the MLR22AT through my accuracy shooting session from the bench, I just had to walk the woods in search of trophy treetop whitetails (a.k.a. fox squirrels). Unfortunately, the woodland wildlife was on high alert and though I saw or heard crows, redheaded woodpeckers, yellow-shafted flickers, and three species of sparrows, I didn't see a single

squirrel. No matter, any day traipsing through the timber—even without getting the game you're after—is a good day. Rest assured this won't be the last time I hunt with MRI's little gem.

The new MRI MLR22AT is wonderfully accurate, 100-percent reliable (I didn't have a single misfeed or failure to eject in the firing of almost 400 rounds), and incredibly lightweight—just right for wandering the woods with. **57**