

Taurus 445TBC .44 Special

Retail Price...\$599



SPECIFICATIONS

Warranty: 1 Year

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|--------------------------------|---------------------------|---------|
| METAL FINISH ... Blue Anodized | SIGHT RADIUS | 4 in. |
| WEIGHT (EMPTY) | CAPACITY | 5 rds. |
| OVERALL LENGTH | GRIP MATERIAL | Rubber |
| OVERALL HEIGHT | ACTION TYPE | SA/DA |
| MAX. WIDTH | TRIGGER PULL Wt. SA | 5 lbs. |
| BARREL LENGTH | TRIGGER PULL Wt. DA ... | 8+ lbs. |

Our recommendation: Conditional buy. The porting helped us control this light gun. But its action problems need fixing.

grain Winchester Silvertip Hollow Point produced the best accuracy, but the heavier bullets, such as the Winchester 246-grain LRN, produced the best point of aim. Perhaps a heavier jacketed bullet is the answer to both problems.

Unfortunately, our titanium 445 also locked up when heated. But again, the cylinder-to-forcing-cone gap was inordinately small, 0.002 inch in fact. Smith & Wesson's 296 showed a gap of 0.005 inches.

There is a marked difference in the actions of the alloy UL and the titanium ULTi. This 445TBC all-titanium revolver shares the trigger feel of older-style Taurus guns; that is, it has a short action with a stacking feel, then a sudden acceleration and release. This is fine for rapid fire, but not as precise as the trigger that appears on more recent models. The only difference we see between this gun and its predecessors is the titanium construction. To begin with, the Taurus action is based on a coiled mainspring in a configuration based on Smith &

Wesson's J-frame series. Lately, such models as the UL series reflect a change in the modulation of the mainspring pressure to make trigger pull more even. That being said the Taurus 445TBC succeeds in its design purpose as an extremely lightweight package for close encounters of the unkind kind.

Smith & Wesson 296 Centennial

Our recommendation: No one ever thought the Centennial series would come to this: a hammerless humpbacked L-frame complete with accommodation for a lanyard. But it works!

The Smith & Wesson 296, despite weighing in slightly over the nothing mark, produced power factors with the test ammunition ranging from 139 to 149. Another time around with the adhesive tape please. Power factor is a good indication of brute force, a term we like better than delivery of, or transference of energy. It is calculated by multiplying the weight of the bullet

by its velocity divided by 1000. The all steel Taurus 445 developed a power factor of 150 with the Winchester 246-grain LRN. The 296 rang in with its highest power factor (149) by driving the PMC 180-grain JHPs 830 fps. Thank you PACT for the glove. We would have loved to fire the 246-grainers in the Smith gun, but it says right on the barrel, MAX BULLET 200 GRAINS. What S&W is afraid of is that the 296 will become an expensive bullet-puller on recoil. The 296 is so light, when the recoil moves the gun rearward, the only thing left behind would be the big, heavy, soft, lead bullet standing still, giving up its crimp and finding itself sticking out the front of its chamber, impeding further rotation of the cylinder. Taurus claims to have overcome this problem by recoil reduction via compensation.

When it comes to concealment, nothing is smoother than the Centennial series. It is virtually snag free. The 296 is not quite light enough to hang around your neck, unless you're Mr. T. The Uncle Mike's boot grip with open back strap sits ergonomically correct in the hand, but the cylinder and bore line is way above it, adding to recoil. But, then again, even though the bore line is nearly 3 inches above the heart of the trigger, top heavy doesn't really count when the gun isn't that heavy to begin with.

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