

Tikka Continental Varmint Rifle

Price.....\$694

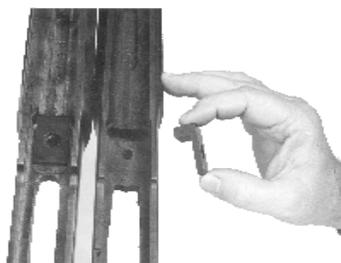


Our recommendation: Shoots good, but not quite as good as the others. Impressive features, including great cosmetics, set it apart.

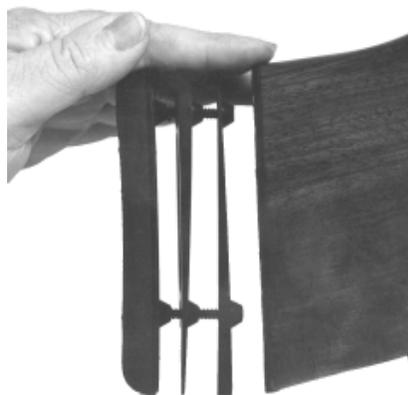
SPECIFICATIONS

Warranty: 1 Year

FINISH	Blued	ACTION TYPE	Bolt
WEIGHT (EMPTY)	9 lbs. 6 oz.	TRIGGER PULL WT.	2.75 lbs.
OVERALL LENGTH	46 in.	MAGAZINE CAPACITY	3
BARREL LENGTH	26 in.	STOCK MATERIAL	Walnut
RIFLING TWIST	1-in-12	STOCK LOP	14.25 in.
FREE-FLOATED BARREL	Yes	STOCK DROP @ COMB ...	1.25 in.
RINGS INCLUDED	No	STOCK DROP @ HEEL	2 in.



Instead of a bedding block, the Tikka's stock was inletted to accept an L-shaped insert. We prefer a built-in bedding block like those found on the Remington and Winchester guns.



The Tikka featured adjustable buttplate inserts, which can be used to change the buttplate angle.



The Tikka featured integral mounting rails on the receiver and was also drilled and tapped.

shooting sub-1-inch groups at 100 yards. These stellar accuracy readings derive from the gun's heavy barrel, the muzzle OD of which measured 0.770 inch at the crown, with a slight taper on the 26-inch free-floated barrel. An inspection of the gun's bore with a Hawkeye 17-inch borescope showed no anomalies that would hinder accuracy.

The gun's trigger pull was crisp at 2.5 to 2.75 pounds, and it showed a little creep. The trigger could be adjusted for pressure only.

The stock on this gun included a palm swell and hand-finished, diamond-point machine-cut checkering. However, the Tikka's wood was closed grain, and had a matte-lacquer finish with a soft sheen.

Wood-to-metal fit was excellent. The barrel had a low-gloss finish, while the receiver had a satin nonglare finish. The trigger guard and detachable three-round magazine were plastic. Using plastic for these parts, in our opinion, takes away from the appearance of the gun. Standard swivel studs were included.

The Tikka also had a two-position, tang-mounted safety on the right side. The receiver was drilled and tapped to accept

Weaver bases and is also milled for Sako-style integral base and rings. Bolt operation was smooth as silk and showed flawless operation.

The stock's length of pull was 14.25 inches with a 0.25-inch black-rubber buttpad. The buttpad allowed the shooter to change the length of pull and pitch angle by changing out butt spacers, which allows the shooter to adapt the gun to his own conformation—an advantage lacking on the other models.

Ruger KM77VT MKII Target Rifle

Our recommendation: The \$718 Ruger KM77VT MKII Target Rifle shot accurately and had a great trigger. We'd buy it.

Three of the test ammunitions shot in the Ruger produced half-inch-or-smaller average groups at 100 yards, with the best group average of 0.42 inch coming from PMC's 55-grain bullets. Only the Federal 69-grain boattail hollow-point round didn't shoot well. We also liked the gun's trigger pull, which drew a crisp 4 to 4.25 pounds out of the box. However, this trigger was adjustable, so we dropped the trigger-pull weight easily and quickly to 2 pounds. In our view, this feature gave the Ruger a leg up on the other guns. Of course, if you're not familiar with trigger operation, you shouldn't modify the release weight or sear engagement.

The Ruger KM77VT Target had a full-bull barrel that gently tapered