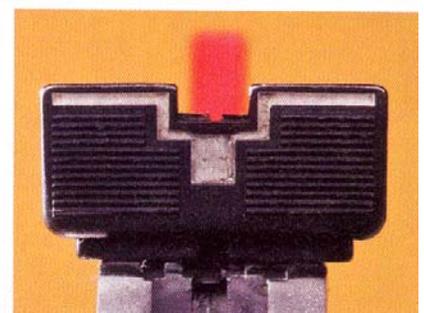
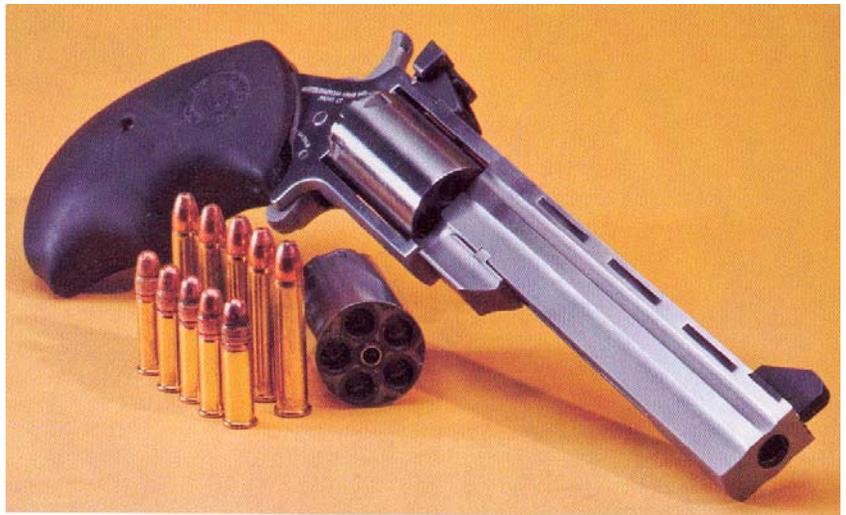


North American Arms Mini-Master

Compared to its 4-ounce, 3 5/8-inch Short Mini-Revolver cohort, North American Arms' Mini-Master is a giant. But at 7 7/8 inches long, 35/8 inches tall and weighing 10.7 ounces, it is still more compact and lightweight than most of the centerfire handguns on the market. It has a slim, 1 1/2-inch-wide frame and 1 3/8-inch-wide cylinder, and only the black, oversized rubber grips break the 1-inch thick mark. The ergonomically shaped grips have a thick palm swell and molded in finger grooves, and both display North American Arms' eagle insignia.

This five-shot, single-action revolver has a 4-inch barrel and an integral, quasi-ventilated rib. Atop the rib resides a ramp front sight highlighted in florescent orange and either a fixed, low-profile or adjustable Millet rear sight, depending on the customer's preference. The front and rear sights are both dovetailed into place. There is no trigger guard, and the rearward-sweeping, 1 1/2-inch trigger has two sets of horizontal ribs to enhance purchase. The test gun's trigger had minimal creep and broke at 31 1/2 pounds of pull.

The Mini-Master is available in either .22 WMR or .22 LR, with the latter capable of handling .22 Short, .22 Long and .22 LR ammunition interchangeably. An additional cylinder in the second chambering can be purchased separately, or it's provided with the conversion option. Each non-fluted cylinder has its cartridge designation stamped at the muzzle end: "M" for .22 WMR and "LR" for .22 LR. While .22 Short and .22 Long ammunition can be used in the .22 LR cylinder, .22 WMR cannot, and vice versa, as .22 WMR cases have an incrementally larger diameter. Between each chamber is a safety slot that allows the hammer to be lowered on a loaded cylinder for carry without the danger of an accidental discharge. Shotshells in the appropriate chambering are safe for use in the Mini-Master.



Two cylinders in different chamberings add versatility to the Mini-Master, but care must be taken to ensure the appropriate ammunition is used. To distinguish the cylinders, they are stamped with either "M" (.22 WMR) or "LR" (.22 LR) to denote the respective chambering.

The purchaser's intended use will ultimately determine whether an adjustable or fixed, low-profile Millet rear sight is the best option. The ability to make sight adjustments is a nice option, but in a personal-defense gun, higher profile sights can hang up during a draw.

Specifications		North American Arms Mini-Master			
Manufacturer: North American Arms 2150 South 950 East Provo, UT 84606; (800) 821-5783 www.naaminis.com		Rifling: 1:12 RH			
Type: Single action		Overall Length: 7 7/8 inches			
Finish: Stainless		Weight: 10.7 ounces			
Caliber: .22 LR, .22 WMR		Sights: Ramp front; adjustable Millet rear			
Capacity: Five		Grips: Black rubber			
Barrel Length: 4 inches		Trigger Pull: 3 1/2 pounds			
Accuracy Test		MSRP: \$330 (with conversion and adjustable sights)			
Five, five-shot groups fired from a sandbag rest at 25 yards, measured in inches					
Group 1	Group 2	Group 3	Group 4	Group 5	Average
1 1/8	2 1/4	1 1/4	2 1/8	2 1/2	2
Ammunition: Federal Premium .22 WMR 30-grain Sierra jacketed hollow point					

To load, the hammer is first placed in the half-cock position. Then you remove the cylinder pin assembly by pulling outward on the retaining latch while twisting either clockwise or counterclockwise and pushing the unit forward. In addition to retaining the cylinder during operation, the cylinder pin is also used for extraction of spent cases.

Sending hundreds of rounds downrange when evaluating a centerfire handgun can sometimes be an unpleasant undertaking, particularly with today's ultra-lightweight alloy and big-bore revolvers, so it was a welcome change to spend an evening with the light-recoiling Mini-Master. Since the sample I had on-hand was a conversion model. I had the ability to shoot both .22 WMR and .22 LR ammunition. Of the four types tested-two for each chambering Federal Premium .22 WMR 3D-grain Sierra jacketed hollow points grouped the tightest, averaging 2 inches for five, five-shot groups at 25 yards. There were no failures to fire, and only after the cylinder became excessively hot and fouled did extraction of spent cases become a sticky affair.

As a trapper, my initial thought of the Mini-Master was that of a trapline companion rather than a personal-protection piece. Although a bit longer than some revolvers I've used in the past, it more than made up for that extra length in weight savings. In fact, it weighs approximately one third of the semi-auto .22 LR that typically goes with me, and it tucked nicely inside my wader chest pocket. Similarly, the Mini-Master would make a wonderful trail gun anywhere large carnivores are not an ever-present danger, especially when stoked with both shotshells and traditional rimfire ammunition. In reality, the .22 WMR and .22 LR cartridges are not the best choices for self defense. Given correct shot placement, the Mini-Master would probably prove effective in life-or-death situation. There are better choices for personal protection though, and single actions such as the Mini-Master do not offer the quickest reloads, which could determine an attack's outcome. However, for the person who wants some means of protection but is intolerant to recoil, or the trekker who wants a versatile trail gun, the Mini-Master will handle both.

-Aaron Carter



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