

P1

## PROJECT RIFLE

## FACTORY MATCH MAKEOVER

This rifle has a story. It wasn't conceived to be a product for DPMS to market, but rather, a vehicle to display products DPMS had to offer. After numerous requests from lookers-on to sell the rifle as they saw it at various trade shows, Randy Luth, President of DPMS, decided to give it an item number.

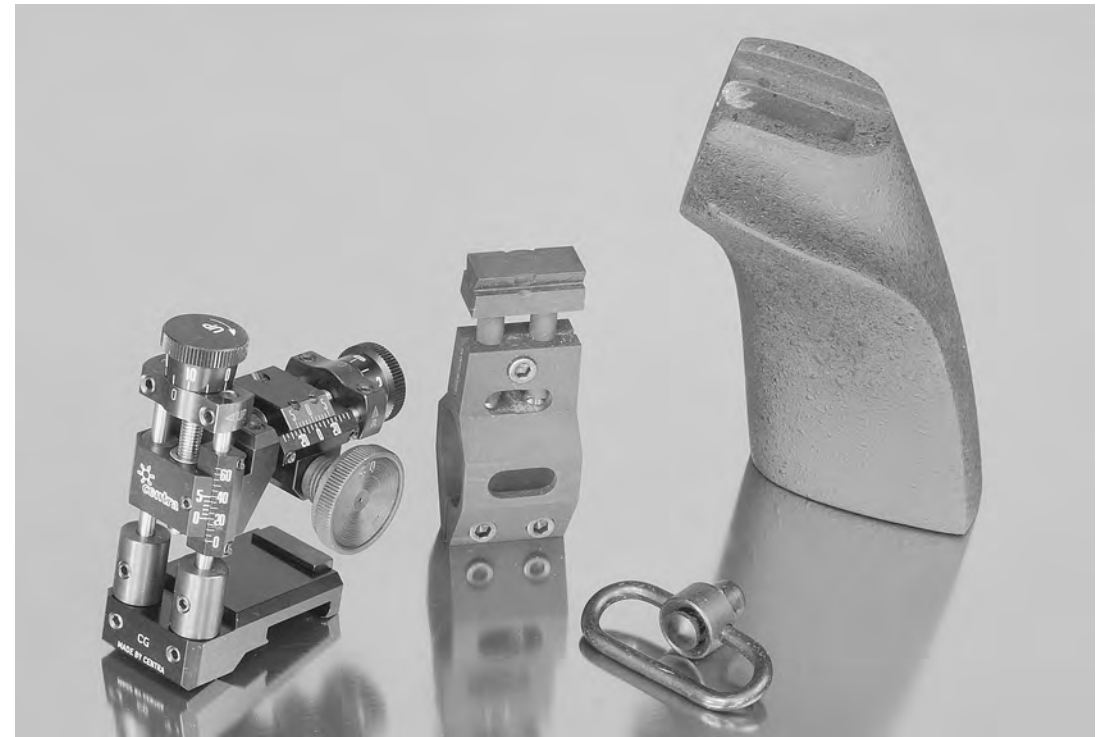
The Race Gun is the nearest equivalent I've seen to an NRA Match Rifle that's available from a major maker. Others have their take on the High Power rifle, but those are sold as and represented to be "custom" level, insinuating that they are on a par with a truly custom-made gun. They're not. Their prices are also high. This DPMS has an astounding price and a set of custom features equally as long as any of its competition, and spares us the over-blown claims.

I admit to first considering this rifle for my factory example because of its appearance. The fluted barrel, contrasting receivers, and handguard are off the cool chart, looks-wise.

I picked it after looking closer. Works-wise, the barrel is a Wilson and was available in 1-8 twist, a necessary thing. Barrel weight is excessive, as is rifle weight. Muzzle diameter is 0.922 inches. The whole thing, with the sights provided, is a half-ounce under 16 pounds. I'd say that's a good three pounds too much. I didn't break the assembly down to see how much the barrel weighed, but I do know that the flutes kept it from being ridiculous-

ly heavy. Actually, 16 pounds may not be too much for some. It's not really for me, but it's more than I prefer. Weight adjustment means are discussed in the "rifle fitting" segment.

The float tube is museum-quality — art museum. They call it the "Hot Rod" handguard and that's a fair image. It's made up of stainless steel rods between



front and rear caps. The guard is fully functional as a free-float tube and feels really good in the hand since a little flex in the rods. It's a heavy one. The handstop is easy to move and comfortable on the hand. I like a smaller stop but most don't. There's the typical huge DPMS gas manifold. That's not a criticism, I just don't know why it's so big. As started on, the barrel is a Wilson stainless with a 1-8 twist finished at 24 inches with an 11-degree crown and recessed muzzle. It could be a little longer, and a lot lighter, but it shot plenty well. The chamber is at least an equivalent of a SAAMI minimum (it produced a cartridge overall length of 2.410 inches with a Sierra 80-grain MatchKing seated to touch the lands) and that's a shorter throat than most custom-chambered guns will have.

The rear sight is a joke but no one is laughing. There are detailed instructions that talk about how fragile the rear sight is. It is. It also doesn't track well or provide well-usable eyepiece or aperture options. Replace it straight away with another. The front sight is an elevation-adjustable clamp-mount base with a Lyman-sized globe. It's flimsy and has no fine-tuned future. DPMS supplied these sights so the rifle could have some sights, but unless you're only going to

shoot fixed distances and are willing to risk a few zero issues despite keeping things simple, they need to come off.

Trigger and sights. That's really all this gun needed to be a "real" Match Rifle. I want to stop right here and make sure you all know that I am in no way downgrading DPMS for offering this rifle with a few sub-(high)standard parts. Overall, it's amazing what they have on this gun for the price. Take this rifle, add the trigger and sights, and it's capable. Obviously, there are better barrels. The one I had, as said, shot pretty well. Replace yours with a known-good brand (at a much smaller diameter) after it's shot out and then it's pretty much like any truly custom-made gun. You might have wasted money on the Lipski front sight base when you do that because you probably won't want another 0.922 size muzzle. If that's the premonition, then go with an extension tube to start. By the way the tube system works, the barrel mount portion could be replaced with one of another diameter and the rest of the investment (tube and front sight) will remain safe and in-hand.

I recommend some sort of buffer-tamer for this one. The gas tube is in the usual place (12.125 inches