



I think the DPMS is probably the all-around first choice in a float tube. Even though its diameter is the same 1.375 inches as most others, the “window” for the gas tube allows both for easy standard-configuration gas tube installation as well as extra room to tweak the tube to clear a bigger barrel. No gas tube is supplied since it doesn’t need anything different to fit on most barrels. That’s a good thing. The DPMS tube is also easy to install since it, like any good one, is a two-piece system. Install the barrel nut and then install the tube. The barrel nut is threaded on the outside to attach the tube and then rotate it to get it aligned as wanted. Compared to popular others, the DPMS tube has a little more thread on the nut, and they’re very fine threads, and that makes it a little more solid and sturdy in this area. By construction, it’s also a strong tube and very rigid. The sling swivel attachment point is über-stout. I have broken another tube at this spot.



fully) using a heat gun. Speaking of this, there are differences in handguards, and the ones to get are the “Thermold” types. They are made of a more rigid substance. It’s a type of resin, not a brand name. There are others made of a more flexible material and they flex and squeak big-time. I really don’t like it when I can feel the handguards flex. I also put a cut-to-fit piece of mirage band under the holes in my top handguard

(inside the guard so it’s technically hidden). I’m convinced this helps keep some heat waves from waving. It’s easy to glue in using any snot-like adhesive. I used 3M “77” spray on the last one I did. I haven’t looked too hard to find a replacement, but all mirage



My belief is that Accuracy Speaks does make, and always has, one of the very best free-float tubes. It’s stainless steel, workmanship is what you’d expect from Derrick Martin, and strength and rigidity are as good as they can be. It’s not as popular as some since it’s not perfectly easy to install and you have to do your own gas tube bending and handguard modifications, and you also have to supply those parts. The gas tube bending may not be necessary; depends on the barrel diameter. It also costs a little more than the big-outfit tubes. It’s also a little smaller diameter than some (1.25 inches). On the other hand, compared to the others, the Accuracy Speaks tube is a work of art and full-strength. It’s got that “shop done” appearance and that’s because it was done in a shop.

band is a piece of elastic fabric that’s white on the bottom and black on top. Bands are cheap and available from any good target shooting supply outlet.

The mainest thing that goes from the front sight housing to the free-float tube is the front sling swivel. In its standard location, any pressure from a sling pulling on its swivel can change where the barrel looks. The float tube isolates the barrel from pressure and the sling pulls on the tube. No pressure then goes to the barrel.

There are a good number of choices in these handguard “under tubes,” and not all are equal. Criteria include strength, ease of installation, strength, capacity to enclose the gas tube and barrel, and strength. Strength matters. The tube can’t flex or bend or have the sling swivel attachment come apart. The gas tube and barrel part is that some float tubes have a little

larger diameter that can accommodate a little larger diameter barrel, and there are also differences in how restrictive gas tube routing is. It’s good to some if there is more room to either be able to bend the gas tube more to accommodate a larger barrel or enough room that the tube doesn’t have to be bent at all. That depends on whether we’re looking for easy straight up installation or want to make something difficult a little easier. A few free-float under tubes come with their own gas tubes already bent to fit. This is often a necessary modification otherwise.

What about so-and-so’s tube? Be happy with one of these three. You may not be so happy with any number of others.

The next thing that’s going to be on a gun built for track use will be a barrel. Well. That’s about all I can say for the choices I’ve seen made by way too many.