



Over a decade ago, I mentioned to some shooters that I was going to buy some Chinese-made bore snakes, which at the time were about 20% of the price of the branded American examples, postage included. "They won't last five minutes" was the general consensus. Well, they are still going strong and the only real difference I can see between the two brands is that the cords on the Chinese versions are of variable length and on rare occasions would not be long enough for some barrels. So, don't be put off, as 'made in China' is not always a sign of poor workmanship.

All arms great & small

I suppose it is unusual that anything that is copied and produced on a budget will be as good as the original, but there are those out there who cannot afford to pay premium prices for quality goods. With the Norinco rifle that we have here, the money saving is made at the expense of fit and finish, but as the gun has been through a European proof house, safety will not have been compromised during manufacture.

Norinco (an abbreviation of China North Industries Group Corporation Limited) is a relatively new player in the firearms industry, being formed in 1980. Their arms products encompass everything from .22 rimfire pistols to battle tanks, with a good assortment in between. At one time or another, they have copied the M16 rifle, AK47, Winchester shotguns, the Colt 1911 and a Dragunov sniper rifle among others.

This is the only Norinco product imported into the UK at this time, but in the past, I have brought in examples of their .22LR lever-action, a loosely based copy of the Winchester 9422 takedown



model. Some examples had a very 'crunchy' action at best and the takedown was somewhat awkward. Their reproduction of the Winchester 1897 shotgun on the other hand was a very acceptable copy and great value for money. So, safety issues aside, it is a hit-or-miss affair as to whether you get a gun that you are completely happy with right out of the box. I have imported a number of these Norinco rifles over the years, owning a couple along the way, and have been pleasantly surprised at how they perform, with the downside being some minor disappointments in the finish of the woodwork and the wood-to-metal fit. The former can be fairly easily addressed with very little skill and I found

the latter was not a problem that spoiled my enjoyment of the guns.

Mini Mauser

It is not difficult to imagine how this model got its nickname of the 'Mini Mauser', as at first glance it is a dead ringer for the K98, but with the overall dimensions coming in at a shade over 85% of its big brother. The idea for producing this rifle probably stems from the popularity of the Mauser KKW single-shot training models, which were used by the German military, police and the Hitler Youth. One of the Norinco rifles that I imported from Germany, a pre-owned example, had the magazine spot welded in place and showed a fixed

A MIXED BAG

Derek Landers looks at an interesting rifle from China; the Norinco JW25A



Detail of the rear sight

floor plate, essentially turning it into a single-shot rifle.

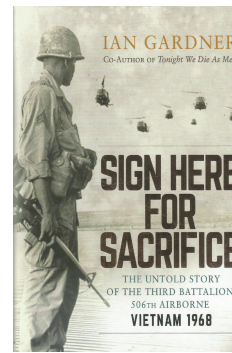
The 2-piece woodwork (there is a short top hand guard), in this case, beech with a dark stain and a silky finish, closely follows that of the K98 model. It is in this area that we see some cosmetic shortcomings, with the cut-outs for the rear sling attachment, the magazine well and the slot for the turn-down bolt handle being a little on the rough side. I did not remove the barrel and action but suspect the same would be found there. I must stress that this in no way affects the operation of the rifle, it's just a bit of nitpicking. This is, after all, a budget gun.

The wood-to-metal fit is very good throughout, with no unusual gaps or overlaps. With the exception of the bolt and the bolt disassembly

disc in the but, the finish on the metal is black with a satin finish and is very well executed. The rear barrel band has a bar on the left side for attaching the sling and there is a bayonet lug under the barrel for those whose gun club allows bayonet practice! A short cleaning rod that measures 13" in length is screwed into the stock, with one end having a slot for patches. The trigger guard is a generous size, so there is enough room for a gloved finger.

Sights are typical military style, with a bar at the rear which is raised by pressing a spring-loaded plunger on the cross piece and sliding it forward, with notches on the right of the bar ensuring it stays locked in position. There is no provision for

BOOKSHELF



TITLE: Sign Here for Sacrifice
AUTHOR: Ian Gardner
PUBLISHER: Osprey, Oxford
ISBN: 9781472849427
PRICE: £25.00
 The history of the 506th Parachute Infantry Regiment of the 101st Airborne Division during WWII was brought to general attention in the book 'Band of Brothers'. Focusing on the same regiment a generation later, this time during the Vietnam War, this book does for the 3rd Battalion what the earlier work did for the 2nd Battalion. The fighting was different, but, as this work explains, the whole esprit de corps of this elite unit is what kept them together. Covering the period when the fighting was at its fiercest in the late 1960s, such as the Tet Offensive, the author, using first-hand accounts of veterans, takes the reader from basic training to being committed to battle. This is a work that was waiting to be written and it was worth the wait. The veterans tell it how it was and for that reason, from a list of many, makes it a 'must read' book to understand Vietnam.



TITLE: 12th SS Panzer Division Hitlerjugend
AUTHOR: Massimiliano Afiero
PUBLISHER: Casemate, Oxford
ISBN: 9781636241685
PRICE: £24.95

In an effort to stem the Allied advance after D-Day in June 1944, Hitler committed many units to the Normandy campaign. This included parachute troops, artillery and Panzers, but it was the actions of the infamous 12th SS Panzer, the subject of this first-rate book, which stands out, but for all the wrong reasons. The unit comprised of young men, some as young as 17 years, all of whom had been indoctrinated by the Nazi regime and with a fanatical allegiance to Hitler. Taking the history from its formation and training in 1943, the author continues by explaining the weapons and vehicles issued to the unit and its deployment to Normandy. Supported by excellent maps, artwork and photos, the author covers the atrocities committed at the Abbey des Ardennes and in the town of Authie. This book tells how the 12th SS fought around Caen and was involved in operations such as Charnwood, Goodwood and Bluecoat.

windage adjustment. The markings on the bar are in increments from 25 to 200 yards (or metres?).

At the front, a collar is pinned onto the barrel and shows a block with a serrated rear ramp. Into the block is dovetailed a tall, inverted 'V' blade, allowing lateral adjustment. The unit is protected by a removable hood. It is a decent setup but I would have preferred a slightly deeper v-notch at the rear. The top of the receiver has an 11mm dovetail should you wish to add some glass and doing so certainly improves the usability of the rifle.

Czech heart

At the heart of the rifle beats a clone of the CZ 452 action, so the pedigree is there, it's just that it has not been groomed as well as its parent. You can feel the roughness of the bolt as you move it back and forth or up and down, the surfaces not being polished quite as well as the European gun. Whether you would wish to polish this area yourself or just let it bed in with use, which I can assure you that it does, is a matter of personal preference. The bolt knob is slightly smaller than my CZ and the safety catch, which is pushed forward to engage, is very stiff, but again will likely ease after use. I found that my CZ bolt did not go all the way in before it encountered resistance and I did not try to force it home.



Detail of some rough wood in the rear sling cut-out

TECHNICAL SPECIFICATION

- Name:** Norinco JW25-A
- Calibre:** .22LR
- Barrel Length:** 20¼"
- Overall Length:** 38"
- Weight:** 7½ lbs
- Price:** £429.00
- Contact:** Henry Krank - www.henrykrank.com

The metal 5-round magazine is practically identical to the CZ one and they are interchangeable, so a spare is easily obtained. You also have the option of fitting a 10-round magazine, although this sort of upsets the military profile of the gun. It drops clear of its well easily, by depressing a spring at the front edge, and fed a mixture of ammunition without any problems.

Far eastern fun

This is another gun which garners a bit of attention when you take it out of the bag. On short indoor ranges you will get the "You can't use that in here!" look from other shooters, until they realise what it is.

Coming in at only 1" longer than a Ruger 10-22, this is a nice, compact rifle and it has a length of pull measuring 13". It weighs over 2½ lbs more than the Ruger but this doesn't really matter when you are using it from a bench and might only make itself felt with extended offhand shooting. It has a chunky grip at the wrist that measures 6" in circumference.

As befits this style of rifle, there is no adjustment on the trigger but it is not excessively heavy and breaks with only the minimum amount of creep. Ignition was positive every single time with all brands of ammunition used and the twin extractors did not fail to remove a case, with the empties being thrown well clear.

The best 5-shot group from the bench was with CCI Mini Mag at about 1.25", but I know from experience that even an inexpensive scope can cut this in half. Your scope choice could be limited by the rear sight block, which seems to be permanently

fixed to the barrel. From memory, I believe that anything with a front objective lens larger than about 40mm will cause a problem. I used a Hawke 3-9x40 on my last example and it worked a treat.

Verdict

For serious target work, you will need something a bit more sophisticated than this, and it's not set up for rabbits. However, for some general plinking and all-round fun, this gun should definitely be on your radar. **GM**



Front sight, note the hood is removable



Safety in the 'ON' position



Fitting a scope improves useability