



NAA Mini Black Jack .22 Mag

This customized and ported pocket revolver offers stylish self defense on the go!

Featuring barrel porting, a birdshead grip frame, laminated rosewood grips and a distinctive black carbon coating, the NAA Black Jack .22 Mag. ups the ante on deep-cover defense.



By B. Gil Horman

Photos by Sean Utley

In the last few years, it would seem that several gun manufacturers have been striving to produce as many compact pocket pistols as they can. But try as they might, they've had a hard time coming up with anything as deeply concealable as the North American Arms (NAA) Mini revolver. Working in conjunction with Talo Distributors, NAA has released a new Mini that's both a collectable and a practical pocket defense option—the limited edition Black Jack.

NAA Minis are traditional single-action revolvers based on a design developed by Dick Casull in the late 1960s. Casull, better known for his

high-powered hunting handguns and the .454 cartridge that bears his name, also knew how to think small. The Mini is an exercise in compressing features until a single-action revolver is as small as possible while remaining a functional and reliable defensive handgun. In the 1970s, NAA picked up where the short-lived Rocky Mountain Arms left off and has been successfully producing mini revolvers ever since. The line has grown to include a variety of configurations, barrel lengths and limited editions.

One company that NAA has teamed up with before to provide limited-run guns is Talo Distributors, Inc. Since 1985, the Talo wholesale buying cooperative has been supplying independent sporting goods dealers with unique firearms. Their goal is to provide customers with

special and limited editions at a reasonable price. The ideas and designs driving the limited runs often come from Talo members and customers. This includes the NAA playing card series, which boasts the River Boat, Snake Eyes, Queen of Hearts, and King of Hearts limited editions. Now this popular series has grown by one more with the addition of the Black Jack.

Gun Details

The Black Jack single-action revolver is a five-shot .22 Magnum featuring a 1.125-inch barrel, a birdshead grip frame, and laminated rosewood grip panels engraved with playing card spades. With a length of 4.625 inches and a weight of 8.6 ounces, this revolver can be concealed in almost any purse or pocket.

NAA MINI BLACK JACK .22 MAG

The Black Jack offers features that set it apart not only from the regular catalog of Minis, but also from the previous playing card offerings. The other card-themed guns, while remaining fully functional, are fitted with features that lean towards collecting rather than shooting, such as engraving, gold embellishments, and fancy display cases. The Black Jack, on the other hand, is a collectable that's designed as a working gun.

The revolver arrives in a standard case, with standard packaging, which makes it more affordable. With this particular weapon, 1,500 units will be produced

instead of the traditional 500. The series will feature unique serial numbers starting with a "BJ" prefix. The barrel has been ported to reduce felt-recoil. To accommodate the porting, the standard blade sight has been replaced with a small post. But what makes the Black Jack stand out the most from the North American Arms crowd is its black finish.

Minis feature all-stainless steel construction to provide the strength and durability needed for the dank and dirty condition inherent in pocket carry. Almost all Minis leave the factory with a natural stainless finish. To give the Black Jack its signature color, the Richter Precision's Titankote C12 DLC was applied to the entire gun. This amorphous diamond-like carbon coating process provides a high level of hardness and metallic surface cohesion, while giving the gun parts greater resistance to the corrosion caused by salt, dirt and water. The result is an even, flaw-



Following the theme of the gun line, the Mini Black Jack's Rosewood birdshead-style grips are engraved with playing card spades.

PERFORMANCE:

NAA MINI BLACK JACK .22 MAG

LOAD	VELOCITY	ACCURACY
CCI Maxi-Mag 40 JHP	929	2.15
Hornady Critical Defense 45 FXT	940	2.20
Speer Short Barrel 40 GDHP	936	2.00
Winchester Super X 40 JHP	980	1.95

Bullet weight measured in grains, velocity in feet per second (fps) by Cutting Edge Dynamics M2 chronograph, and accuracy in inches for best five-shot groups at 7 yards.

less finish that shows the shine or satin of the steel surface it's applied to.

Range Time

Shooting a Mini revolver like the Black Jack provides a unique at-the-range experience for a variety of reasons. You would think you need a big gun to catch other shooters' attention, but this revolver's extreme smallness will catch people's eye. I have yet to take a Mini to the range without having at least one shooter stop by my station to ask about it.

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NAA MINI BLACK JACK .22 MAG



The Black Jack's hammer is easy to cock with either the shooting or support hand, offering a distinctive three-click revolver sound.



As small as they are, the barrel ports of the Black Jack do reduce felt recoil, helping with controllability and follow-up shots.



The minute size and overall simplicity of the .22 Mag. Black Jack design is obvious, making it a unique option for concealed carry.

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Loading a NAA Mini follows a different set of operations than other single-action revolvers, which are typically unloaded and reloaded via a gate in the frame. The Mini is loaded by placing the hammer in a half-cock position, removing the cylinder pin, then removing the cylinder completely from the frame to place rounds in each chamber. Once the fully loaded cylinder is locked back into the frame with the cylinder pin, while the hammer is still in the half-cock position, the revolver is ready to be made safe or to be fired.

SPECIFICATIONS:

NAA MINI BLACK JACK

CALIBER:	.22 Magnum
BARREL:	1.125 inches
OA LENGTH:	4.625 inches
WEIGHT:	8.6 ounces (empty)
GRIPS:	Engraved laminated rosewood
SIGHTS:	Post front
ACTION:	SA
FINISH:	Black Titankote
CAPACITY:	5
MSRP:	\$359

The safety system of the Black Jack consists of a set of notches cut between each of the cylinder chambers. The revolver should never be carried with the hammer half-cocked or with the hammer resting on a loaded chamber. Instead, the hammer should be pulled back just enough to rotate the cylinder until one of the safety notches is under the hammer. The hammer is then slowly released fully forward into a cylinder notch. With the blade of the hammer in this safe position, any shock or pressure applied to the hammer will travel harmlessly into the steel of the cylinder instead of the primer of a loaded cartridge. This safety process takes a little getting used to, and should be practiced with an unloaded revolver until you get the hang of it.

When the chambered ammunition has been fired, then the cylinder is again removed from the frame for unloading. Each spent cartridge case has to be manually poked out of the cylinder to make room for fresh rounds. The cylinder pin just happens to be the right length for this job, but if you encounter a case that is stuck for some reason, a punch or cleaning rod should be used instead. Although defensive handguns should always be carried with at least one reload, it should be clear by now that the Black Jack is not a candidate for winning high-speed reloading competitions. Quite frankly, if you find yourself in a de-

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defensive situation where you have the time and the cover required to feed five fresh rounds into the Black Jack, you should probably be running away from the threat, calling the police, or moving to retrieve a larger gun instead.

The ergonomics of this revolver require some adjustments in shooting technique to operate successfully. Shifting from one handgun to another usually requires some amount of rethinking for changes in the grip, sight plane, trigger, and recoil management. In fact, these minor changes of body positioning are almost instinctual if you are familiar with the guns being fired. However, the Mini is unlike any other handgun on the market, so the differences are more pronounced.

Most handgun grip frames provide a three-finger grip, or at least room for two. The Black Jack has a one-finger grip. Technically, you can sneak two fingers up the grip frame if you have smaller hands like mine, but the middle finger ends up behind the trigger stud and the barrel tends to tip upwards, lobbing shots over the top of the target. Better results come with curling the ring and little finger into the palm, like you were making a fist, grasping the grip firmly with the middle finger, and then locking the thumb against the grip exposed above the middle finger.

With a good grip in place, the Black Jack proved to be a smooth operator. The hammer is easily cocked with the thumb of either the shooting or support hand, crisply locking back with that distinctive three-click sound of old school cowboy revolvers. The single-action trigger stud travels just 1/8 of an inch to release the hammer and does so with only 4.375 pounds of pressure.

The first impression of the barrel porting is that it's purely decorative in nature. Although a Mini can get a little peppy with hopped-up .22 Magnum loads, it's far from being a wrist bender. However, when shot side-by-side with an unported Mini of the



The long, removable cylinder is the heart of the Black Jack revolver, and it features fluting and five chambers for the .22 Mag. ammunition.



The Black Jack revolver features a removable cylinder pin located under the barrel that allows the cylinder to be taken out for loading.



The rear sight of the revolver is a simple and low-profile notch that is machined directly into the top strap of the Mini Black Jack .22 Mag.

same size, the Black Jack's ports demonstrated a reduction in felt recoil of about 30-35%. The reduced recoil did come at the cost of a little more noise and a little more flash, but not much.

The Black Jack is not designed with long range target shooting in mind, but it provides better defensive accuracy than might be expected from such a short barrel. Since this is defensive firearm, I chose to work with the heavier 40- to 45-grain .22 Magnum loads. Two of the four loads tested are specifically designed for self-defense: Hornady's Critical Defense 45-grain FTX and Speer's Short Barrel Personal Protection 40-grain Gold Dot JHP. The test set was rounded out with the CCI Maxi-Mag 40-grain JHP and the Winchester Super-X 40-grain JHP.

Formal testing consisted of five, five-shot groups fired from the bench into targets set at 7 yards. The Black Jack proved to be fond of all the loads tested, with no shot group in the entire set exceeding 2.25 inches. All of the test ammunition fired and functioned without any problems.

Final Thoughts

The new Talo Limited Edition Black Jack is yet another successful addition to the NAA line of Mini Revolvers. Only 1,500 of these custom serialized, ported, DLC-coated revolvers will be made available. In the course of discussing NAA Mini revolvers, someone will inevitably point out that a .22 Magnum with a 1.125-inch barrel doesn't have the stopping power of larger handguns. In response to this, I will agree—and so will North American Arms. The Mini is not as powerful as other defensive options. But the point of the Mini is not power, but presence. It's intended to be a defensive handgun that's with you when larger, heavier handguns may get left at home or cannot, for one reason or another, be carried at all. For more information, call 800-821-5783 or visit naaminis.com.

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