

Miniature SLICE OF HISTORY

Bruce Potts tries out a very familiar-looking bolt action rifle from Norinco; the Mini Mauser 33/40

There has always been a fascination with military rifles, and shooting as well as reloading for them can evoke nostalgia. I never got the military bug, I went the sporting route, however, one rifle has always fascinated me, the Mauser K98 sniper rifle. The trouble is that these days originals are extremely rare and exorbitantly expensive and you are limited to where you can shoot them, not to mention the cost of the ammunition.

Wouldn't it be nice to own a K98 sniper look alike but at a fraction of the cost with the same low running costs, say a .22 version? Ah voila, enter the Norinco Mini Mauser 33/40 bolt action rifle from Henry Kranks. This Chinese made rifle is as near as damn it a direct copy of the famous Mauser K98 rifle but scaled down to .22 LR.

Nice copy

The basic rifle design is a copy of the CZ 452 action. The K98 military lookalike stock comes complete with original style open sights, bayonet fitment and bolt opener in the stock. This means you have a tried and tested rimfire bolt action rifle that uses cheap CZ rimfire magazines and has the benefit that a scope can be fitted. All you need to do is add a period scope, ammo, re-watch Enemy at the Gates and have a pleasant afternoon plinking!

Spec

That action as we said is a pure CZ copy, it's a bit more agricultural than the original but soon smooths out after a few boxes of ammo.

The Norinco takes the form of the tried and tested petite Mauser design action and bolt assembly. Its tubular all-steel receiver has integral dovetails for scope mounting, with plenty of length to accommodate most scopes on the market today.

The bolt is well proportioned, with a short angled rearward profile and an adequate ball bolt knob. Because of the short bolt throw and travel, it is more than good enough. At the front, it shows a twin extractor claw arrangement with a fixed blade ejector that is simple yet works very well, plus is suitably robust.

The safety catch is a horizontal wing-type lever that is located on top of the bolt, at



Next to a real K98 sniper, you can see the similarities, note the sling hole, bolt opener disc and over-sized pistol grip

I really enjoyed shooting the mini Mauser Norinco, it put a smile on my face and delivered the goods at a very good price

AMMO TABLE

Factory	Bullet weight (grains)	Muzzle Velocity (FPS)	Muzzle Energy (ft/lbs)	30 yard Accuracy (inches)
Eley Subs	38	1037	91	0.85
Norma Subs	40	999	89	0.75
SK Long Range	40	1081	104	0.65
CCI Suppressor	45	941	89	1.0
RWS Z-Lang	29	840	45	1.55
CCI Quiet	40	733	48	1.85
RWS HV	31	1213	101	0.95
CCI CB Longs	29	707	32	1.75
Federal HV	31	1347	125	1.25
Eley Match	40	1099	107	0.85
RWS R50	40	1101	108	0.70

the back. Rear is FIRE and forward is SAFE with bolt lock. When the action is cocked there is a small protrusion from the bolt shroud that indicate the status.

The sights on this Norinco are just like the original, with a thick tapered post for the foresight. This is protected with a removable blued steel cover. The rear sight is soldered to the barrel and is the same style sliding graduated model used on the original K98. However, it is marked from 25 to 200m in 25m graduations. Windage is achieved by the wedge type foresight movement.

The trigger has the same simple yet functional action and I think robust and rustic best describes the 4.95 lb trigger pull. As with all these Chinese made firearms, with use, a lot of the rough edges get smoothed out and everything starts to gel together. The 5-shot magazine is all steel and is released by a small lever.

The furniture

When placed next to a real K98 sniper, the stock is very true to the original. It is made from what looks to be beech and shows a thick dark lacquer to protect it. The length of pull (LOP) is a short 13.25" and there is also a blued steel recoil 'pad'. The butt stock has the original bolt

opening pressed in metal inserts and orifice and the pistol grip is enormous! It is very fat, even for my hands, so it's definitely not going to split.

Up front, there is the very characteristic K98 top hand shield with a forend sling loop to the left. The lower wood section is held in place by the steel bracket that also holds the bayonet fitment, blimey those rabbits must be tough in China! You even get a cleaning rod too.

The field test

I fitted a period Hensoldt 4x power scope with P/H GTM3 mounts, which are see-through so the opens sights can be still used.

Loading the mag was easy and fed with no issues, except the shorter CB longs hung up a tad. The bolt was a bit stiff to start, it's new, but soon ran itself in and fed and ejected all the rounds used without a single problem.

With no screwcut to the muzzle, the report on the subs was actually not bad. I liked the heft of the whole Norinco, as it really did feel like a trimmed down K98, even with that fat pistol grip. The Hensoldt sight was great and we had some excellent fun shooting groups and then steel silhouettes from Toms

targets out at range. The trigger pull was heavy but a good gunsmith will sort that out. As you can see the accuracy and velocities achieved are more than acceptable. (See Ammo Table)

For £429 you get a miniature slice of history but a full-sized amount of fun. **GM**

TECHNICAL SPECIFICATION

Name:	Norinco Mini Mauser 33/40 (K98 copy)
Type:	Bolt-action
Overall Length:	38"
Barrel Length:	20.25"
Calibre:	.22 LR
Finish:	Blued steel
Weight:	7.6 lbs
Magazine:	Detachable 5-shot
Stock :	Beech military K98 copy
Trigger:	Single-stage
Safety:	Wing type
Sights:	Adjustable open sights, 11mm dovetails for scope mount
Contact:	Henry Krank - www.henrykrank.com
Price:	£429.00

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