

Norinco JW-105 .223Rem – Getting what you pay for?



First Impressions

These rifles have been available for a few years and can generally be picked up in the \$450-500 range. That makes them the cheapest centre-fire bolt action by a healthy margin. Figuring I'm not going to get Anschutz quality for \$400ish, I still thought I'd have a go.

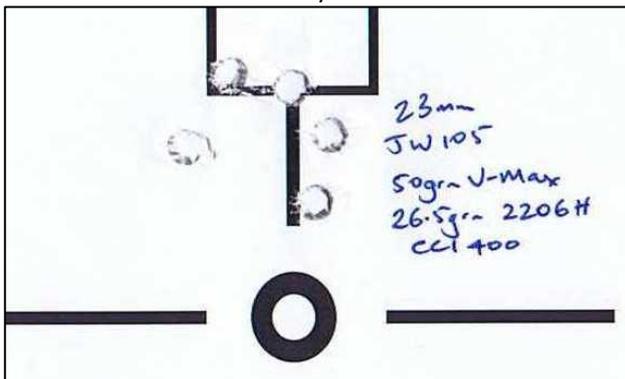
They come "in grease" from the factory, which is an effort to get rid of, but you can be sure it will not be rusty. The trigger has excessive creep, pull weight and over-travel from the factory, but is fully adjustable and when adjusted is as good as most factory triggers – get a gunsmith to do it if you don't know what you're up to. It also came with Weaver-style mounts, so scope mounting is no drama.

Accuracy

With the barrel and action separated from the stock, I could see the inletting left a fair bit to be desired. Without shooting it factory-standard, I decided to free float the barrel and bed the action in my home-brew mix of epoxy resin and "micro-balloon" filler. This was pretty simple with the tubular receiver.

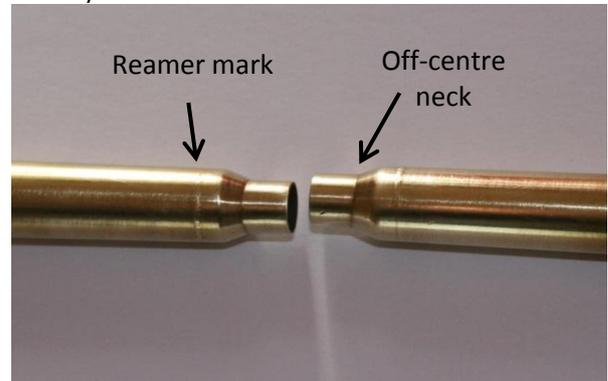


A handload of 26.5grns ADI 2206H/Hodgdon H4895 behind a Hornady 50grn V-max shot pretty well at under the mandatory inch at the 100m NZHA range. As an aside, I've shot this load in several .223s and haven't found one it doesn't work in yet.



Chamber Problem

I've had one of these Norincos before, and got rid of it as the chamber reaming was bad. This one is worse! The chamber is rough and off centre by at least 0.012" (measuring the fired cases). Bullet/chamber concentricity is a big part of accuracy, so I suspect this brass is ruined for reloading and this rifle will never do much better than 25mm at 100m. Maybe I'm just unlucky?



Where from:

Readily available on TradeMe or from GunCity for about \$500 (bare) or \$400 + freight (includes scope and rings) on special from Reloaders Supplies in Auckland.

Pros:

- Made of wood and steel (sorry all you Tikka fans).
- Classic lines and good exterior finish.
- Good, fully adjustable trigger.
- Removable 5-shot magazine.
- Reasonably accurate.

Cons:

- Poor design of receiver and bolt (no gas escape, rear locking lugs and not smooth!).
- Lousy chamber reaming – wrecks brass.
- Requires work from new – cleaning, bedding/floating and trigger adjusting.
- Not exactly a lightweight at 7.5lbs/3.4kg without scope and rings.
- No cred when you say "I've got a Norinco".

Overall:

Not bad as a handy gun for \$400, but I'd save up and get a Stevens 200 for a couple of hundred more.

If you want more info, drop me a line on matthew@mccallum-clark.com