The Rossi Matched Pair combines the inherent safety and simplicity of a small-scale, single-shot, break-open gun with switch-barrel versatility to create a great first gun.

Rossi Matched Pair

There are three basic elements to successfully introducing youngsters to shooting responsibly: Safety, simplicity and satisfaction. Make shooting safe and instill safe gun handling practices and both the student and teacher will be more relaxed and receptive to the task at hand. Make shooting simple so safety remains the primary focus and so as not to overload a youngster with steps and procedures. Make shooting satisfying with bullseyes and broken targets or put the gun away and get out the basketball and teach your kid how to shoot hoops instead.

The Brazilian firm of Rossi, under the Taurus/BrazTech banner, hit all of those points right on the head with its new "Matched Pair" that combines the simplicity of a youth-size single-shot break-open gun with rimfire and .410 shotshell switch-barrel capability. In regard to safety, this gun is packed full of passive and manual safety features above and beyond the simple fact that the gun can't fire if it's broken open. First, the hammer must be manually and consciously cocked to fire. Next, a transfer bar keeps the hammer off the free-floating firing pin and resting safely on the frame instead. That practically eliminates the chance of the gun firing if the hammer is struck while in the down position. There is also a manually operated safety lever that physically blocks the cocked hammer from falling fully down if for some reason the trigger is inadvertently pulled. It also provides enhanced safety if engaged when decocking the gun. One additional safety feature of the design is that the gun can't be opened or closed if the hammer is cocked.

Single-shot break-open guns are inherently simple, and the Matched Pair is no exception. Depress the side lever to open the action, load a car-

Rossi Matched Pairs come with both .22 Long Rifle and .410-bore shotgun barrels. Switching barrels is simple and requires no tools.

ROSSI

MANUFACTURER: Amadeo Rossi S.A., 143, Sao Leopoldo, RS, Brazil
IMPORTER: BrazTech, L.C. (Dept. AR), 16175 N.W. 49th Ave., Miami, FL 33014; (305) 624-1115; www.rossiusa.com
CALIBER: .22 Long Rifle and .410 bore
ACTION TYPE: break-open, single-shot
FINISH: stainless steel
OVERALL LENGTH: 32¼" (rifle), 35¾" (shotgun)
BARREL: 18½" (rifle), 22" (shotgun)
RIFLING: six-groove, 1:12" RH twist
WEIGHT: 4 lbs.
SIGHTS: square-post front adjustable for elevation, square-notch blade rear adjustable for windage (rifle); brass front bead (shotgun)
TRIGGER: single-stage, non-adjustable 6¾ lbs. pull
STOCK: hardwood: length of pull, 12½"; drop at heel,1½"; drop at comb,1"
SUGGESTED RETAIL PRICE: $140 (blued), $170 (stainless)

The *American Rifleman* has used the phrase "Dope Bag" at least since 1921, when Col. Townsend Whelen first titled his column with it. Even then, it had been in use for years, referring to a sack used by target shooters to hold ammunition and accessories on the firing line. "Sight dope" also was a traditional marksman's term for sight adjustment information, while judging wind speed and direction was called "doping the wind."

SHOOTING RESULTS

.22 Long Rifle Cartridge	Vel. @ 15' (f.p.s.)	Energy (ft.-lbs.)	Recoil (ft.-lbs.)	Group Size In Inches Smallest	Largest	Average
CCI 00031 Mini Mag HP	1162 Avg. 25 Sd	105	0.2	1.32	1.52	1.43
Federal AE5022 American Eagle RN	1134 Avg. 34 Sd	114	0.2	1.47	2.60	2.00
PMC 22SM Scoremaster RN	1042 Avg. 14 Sd	97	0.2	1.09	1.38	1.27
Average Extreme Spread:						1.57

Measured average velocity for 10 rounds from an 18½" barrel. Range temperature: 82° F. Humidity: 77%. Accuracy for five consecutive, 10-shot groups at 50 yds. from a sandbag. Abbreviations: HP (hollow-point), RN (round-nose) Sd (standard deviation).

tridge, close the action and cock the hammer. If the safety is "off," the gun is ready to fire by pulling the trigger. There's an automatic ejector designed into the monobloc, so cases are ejected clear of the gun.

Switching from the .410 shotgun barrel to the .22 Long Rifle barrel is only a matter of turning out the front sling swivel stud, prying off the fore-end and tipping the barrel out of the receiver then reversing the procedure when installing the other barrel.

Sights on the rimfire barrel are an easy-to-use square-blade front and square-notch rear with a little white triangle pointing to where the shooter lines up the front sight. Windage adjustments are made on the rear sight by loosening a set screw and sliding the unit in the direction you want the bullets to go. Likewise, the front sight uses a small set screw to hold the blade at the proper elevation, though being the front sight, you move it in a direction opposite of where you want the bullets to go. "Chase your shots" is an easy way to remember how to adjust a front sight.

Overcoming the apparent center-fire/rimfire incompatibility dilemma was also a simple matter for Rossi. While other makers have used different firing pins or hammer noses, Rossi chose instead to fit the rimfire barrel eccentrically in the monobloc. You'll never notice the eccentricity with the barrel mounted in place, and it's a remarkably practical solution.

Satisfaction for new shooters using the Rossi Matched Pair can be had in selecting the correct barrel. There's no better way to start someone in the shooting sports than by using the positive reinforcement of consistently busting clay targets—so start new shooters using the .410-bore barrel and stationary clay targets against a proper backstop. The modified choke helps ensure that even a not-so-close miss is seen as a hit and with fine shot there is almost no chance of a dangerous ricochet. Once confidence is instilled via plenty of broken birds, you can transition the shooter over to the rimfire barrel and direct attention to the more tedious aspects of shooting such as sight alignment and trigger control.

Bullseyes come with practice and the desire to shoot more, and the rimfire barrel of the Matched Pair is accurate enough to make the effort pay off. It is drilled and tapped for the same scope base as used on a Thompson/Center Contender, and on it we mounted a Tasco World Class scope and fired the rimfire barrel for accuracy with the results shown in the accompanying table. The .410 is an expert's gun for flying targets, so instead we shot that barrel several times at a sheet of patterning paper to see where the pattern hit in relation to where the front brass sight bead was pointed. Pattern centers averaged a foot high and well centered with sufficient shot in the mark at which we "aimed" for stationary clay birds to be broken consistently.

Many will immediately see the low price as the tangible incentive for choosing the Rossi Matched Pair over other guns as a youngster's first. Some will see the additional barrel as a "two-guns-for-the-price-of-one" value. Still others will see the Matched Pair as did we—a gun that combines the right features in the right size package to offer youngsters and parents the safety, simplicity and satisfaction of responsible shooting.

The fore-end is retained by the front sling swivel (below l.), which is threaded into a lug on the bottom of the barrel. After turning out the front sling swivel, pry off the fore-end and lift the barrel from the receiver (r.). Switching barrels is simply a matter of reversing those steps with the barrel of choice. A conventional side thumb lever opens the gun for loading or unloading (below r.).

SIG P210-6

Colt's Single-Action Army, Mauser's C96, Luger's P08 and Browning's M1911 are all considered handgun icons because of their influence on the design and use of small arms. SIG's P210 pistol is an icon for different reasons.

SIG's P210 pistol has long been considered an icon, not for its influence on design or use, but rather its rarity, cost, workmanship, accuracy and styling. Production rates of the P210 series have never been high, and limited production of this 50+ year old design continues today in Neuhausen, Switzerland. Over the years, the NRA Technical Staff has never tested and evaluated a P210. SIG Arms remedied that situation recently by submitting a new P210-6 model for exactly that purpose.

Called the Pistole 49 in Swiss military service and the P210 in commercial markets, this handgun has been offered in various configurations ranging from military to target models and in calibers 7.65 Parabellum and 9 mm Luger along with .22 Long Rifle conversion kits.

Based on a design by Charles L. Petter in 1935, the P210 incorporates 1930's technology unsuited to modern manufacturing techniques. No lightweight alloys, castings, stampings or synthetics here, just old-fashioned, forged, machined, carbon steel and hand fitting—the way good guns were supposed to be made in those days.

Design combined with superior workmanship produced superior accuracy—something for which the P210 pistols became famous. The P210 does away with the barrel bushing and swinging barrel link of the Browning M1911 pistol. Instead, the barrel mates directly to the slide and a ramped, solid lug under the barrel locks and unlocks the action.

The P210 design is undeniably stylish with excellent ergonomics and spare, clean, uncluttered lines. The slide appears minimal with a low profile, internal frame rails and bold, sturdy sights. Attention to ergonomics shows in the balance point just under the trigger, the comfortable grip angle and the control levers that come readily to hand. In the P210, everything looks *and* handles just right.

But, does today's P210 really deserve its revered status? Technically speaking, the P210 design is pedestrian Browning with conventional, single-action, short-recoil operation—albeit with improvements such as deletion of the barrel bushing and swinging link. There's nothing really unique here. Legendary P210 accuracy remains outstanding as our tests demonstrated (see the accompanying table), but no more so than many modern designs. And as we have seen, construction techniques and materials break no new ground. Ergonomics are excellent, but not remarkable today. In fact, many modern pistols have *better* ergonomics.

Out of the box, our test example P210 displayed excellent workmanship, fit and finish

SIG P210-6

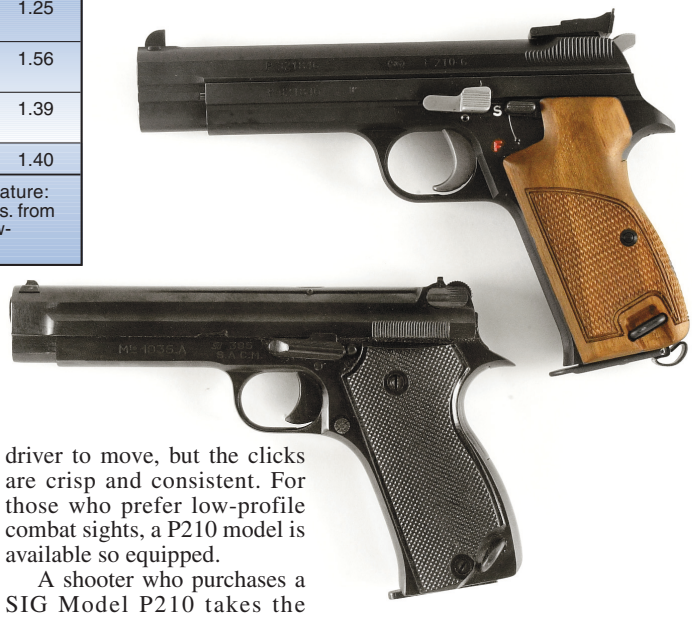
MANUFACTURER: SAN Swiss Arms AG, Industrieplatz, Neuhausen am Rhinefalls, CH-8812, Switzerland
IMPORTER: SIG Arms, Inc. (Dept. AR), 18 Industrial Drive, Exeter, NH 03833; (603) 772-2302; www.sigarms.com
CALIBER: 9 mm Luger
ACTION TYPE: single-action, short-recoil operated, semi-automatic center-fire pistol
CONSTRUCTION: forged carbon steel frame and slide
FINISH: matte blue frame and slide; high-polish barrel; natural hammer, trigger and slide release lever
OVERALL LENGTH: 8¼"
MAGAZINE: detachable, eight-round, single-column
BARREL: 4 1/16"
RIFLING: six-groove, 1:10" RH twist
WIDTH: 1¼"
HEIGHT: 5⅝"
SIGHTS: fixed blade front, notch in blade rear click-adjustable for windage and elevation
TRIGGER: single-stage, 3¼ lbs. pull
WEIGHT EMPTY: 36½ ozs.
ACCESSORIES: magazine loading tool, padded plastic carry case
SUGGESTED RETAIL PRICE: $2,089

SHOOTING RESULTS

9 mm Luger Cartridge	Vel. @ 15' (f.p.s.)	Energy (ft.-lbs.)	Recoil (ft.-lbs.)	Group Size In Inches Smallest	Largest	Average
Black Hills 124-gr. JHP	1107 Avg. 21 Sd	338	3.4	1.13	1.51	1.25
Federal 9AP 124-gr. FMJ	1045 Avg. 14 Sd	301	3.1	1.44	1.66	1.56
Winchester X9MMSHP 115-gr. STHP	1136 Avg. 12 Sd	330	3.2	1.22	1.67	1.39
Average Extreme Spread:						1.40

Measured average velocity for 10 rounds from a 4⅛" barrel. Range temperature: 75° F. Humidity: 91%. Accuracy for five consecutive, five-shot groups at 25 yds. from a Ransom Rest. Abbreviations: FMJ (full metal jacketed) JHP (jacketed hollow-point), Sd (standard deviation), STHP (Silvertip hollow-point).

The SIG P210 (top) and the French M1935A pistols (bottom) show off their common heritage—both are designs from the genius of Charles L. Petter who designed the M1935A for the French Army.



with crisp edges, clean cuts and no burrs. We noted abundant tool marks on the internal frame rail grooves, on the slide rails and on the bottom of the slide body and dust cover, but they did not affect functioning or operation in any way. We observed no tool marks on any exterior frame surfaces. Blueing was consistent and evenly applied, but of medium polish matte. The barrel was brightly polished and engraved with the gun's serial number and caliber over the chamber. Metal-to-metal fit and wood-to-metal fit on the sample were excellent. Checkering on the oil-finished walnut grip panels, however, was average or only slightly above. The trigger, hammer and slide-release lever seemed the single concession to modern production techniques in that they were sintered of steel alloy left in the white.

Our P210-6 has an integral lanyard loop on the left side of the grip frame with an access cutout in the grip panel—a feature that harkens back to the P210's military roots. Another feature many American shooters will find strange is the magazine release button on the bottom of the grip frame behind the magazine well. Modern shooters who have become used to frame-mounted, ambidextrous magazine release buttons may find the P210's release location awkward at first, but will appreciate it as familiarity with the P210 grows. Our only complaint on this score was the considerable effort required to press the release button, which caused the magazine to drag when inserting or removing it.

Shooting the P210 quickly emphasizes its superior balance and handling. We felt handling was superlative with excellent balance, smooth operation and very low perceived recoil. Reliability also proved excellent. We literally tried everything in the ammunition locker with flawless functioning. Hollow-points, soft-points, or full metal jacket designs made no difference—the P210 digested them all with aplomb.

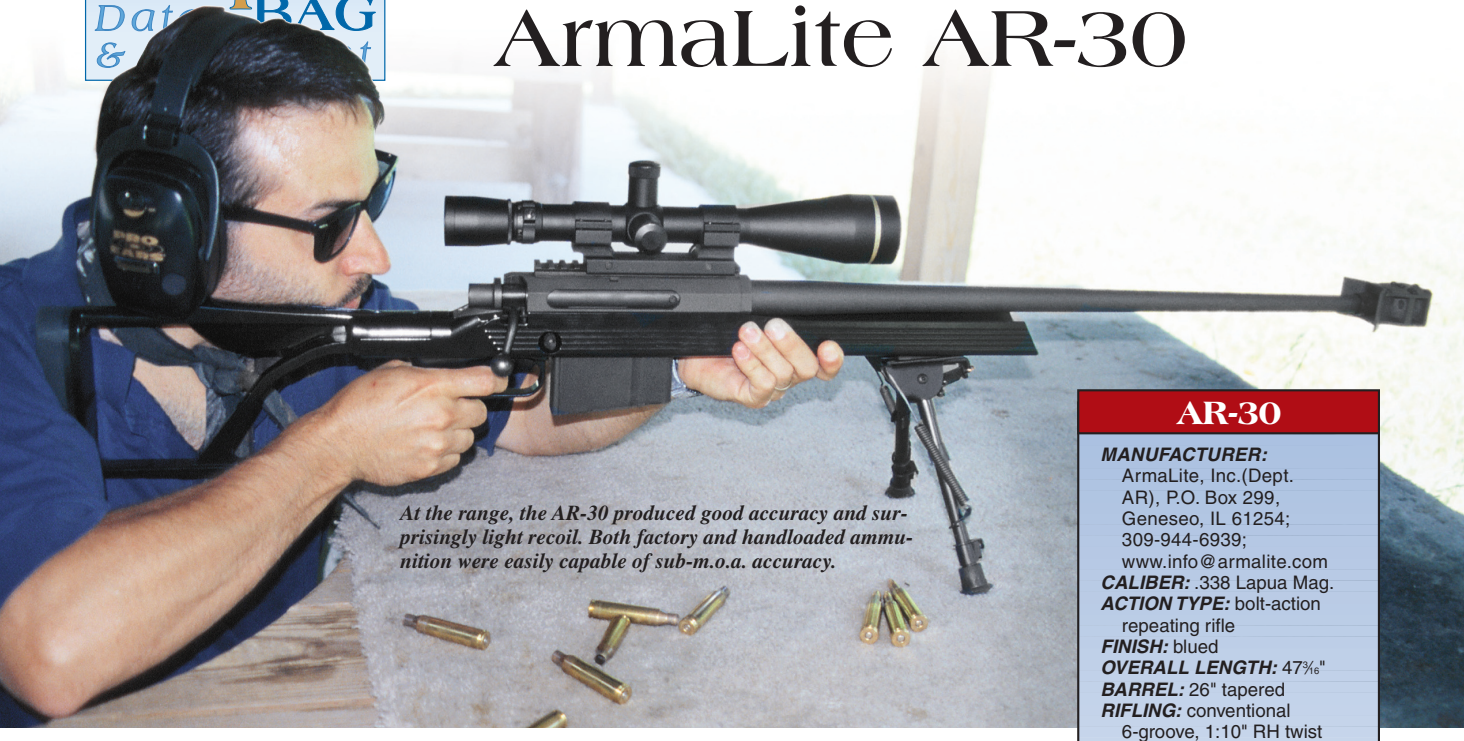
We found the factory trigger very much to our liking with 1/4" of slack and 1/4" of take-up followed by a notably crisp let off of slightly more than 3 lbs. We also liked the sights. The front blade and rear notch are wide enough to see clearly, and the rear blade provides an excellent non-reflective background for contrast. Both windage and elevation adjustments require a small screwdriver to move, but the clicks are crisp and consistent. For those who prefer low-profile combat sights, a P210 model is available so equipped.

A shooter who purchases a SIG Model P210 takes the excellent ergonomics, superior accuracy, Swiss workmanship and superb reliability for granted. What today's P210 customer wants is a conventional design pistol made with forged steel, oiled walnut and traditional workmanship—in other words a pistol that is made the old-fashioned way as its designers would have wished. Yes, the price of the SIG P210 may be high, but this gun is a lifetime purchase with a commitment to traditional quality that is nearly unknown today.

SIG includes one item with every P210 that should be considered an essential tool for any pistol—a well-designed magazine loading tool (l.). Charles L. Petter's stylish design is vintage Browning with several improvements such as elimination of the barrel bushing, a solid lug incorporating the camming surface to lock/unlock the barrel from the slide and a captive recoil spring (above).

Dope Data BAG & Gear

ArmaLite AR-30



At the range, the AR-30 produced good accuracy and surprisingly light recoil. Both factory and handloaded ammunition were easily capable of sub-m.o.a. accuracy.

AR-30

MANUFACTURER: ArmaLite, Inc.(Dept. AR), P.O. Box 299, Geneseo, IL 61254; 309-944-6939; www.info@armalite.com
CALIBER: .338 Lapua Mag.
ACTION TYPE: bolt-action repeating rifle
FINISH: blued
OVERALL LENGTH: 47⅞"
BARREL: 26" tapered
RIFLING: conventional 6-groove, 1:10" RH twist
WEIGHT: 11 lbs., 13 ozs.
MAGAZINE: detachable steel box, five-round capacity
SIGHTS: none supplied; Picatinny rail provided for scope mounting
TRIGGER: Shilen single-stage, adjustable, 3½ lbs. pull
STOCK: 6061 aluminum; length of pull, 13⅞" drop at heel, 1⅜"; drop at comb, 1⅜"
ACCESSORIES: hard case,
SUGGESTED RETAIL PRICE: $1,180

ArmaLite, Inc., perhaps best known for its AR-15/M16 variants, ventured into the bolt-action rifle field in 2000 with its .50 BMG AR-50. That rifle boasted several distinctive features including an all-aluminum stock, a wedge bedding system and a highly effective muzzle brake (June 2000, p. 53). The company has now modified the basic AR-50 design to create its latest offering, the AR-30 rifle, chambered in .338 Lapua Magnum.

The AR-30 is essentially a scaled-down AR-50 featuring a two-lug bolt, a skeletonized aluminum stock, a five-round box magazine and a two-chamber muzzle brake. All steel parts have a matte black finish, while the aluminum stock has a black powder coat finish.

The .338 Lapua Magnum is relatively unfamiliar to American shooters despite having been developed by Lapua, Ltd. of Finland at the behest of the American military. The .338 Lapua Mag. can accelerate a 250-gr. bullet to nearly 3,000 f.p.s., yielding close to 5,000 ft.-lbs. of muzzle energy as well as a projectile trajectory flatter than that of a 200-gr. .30-cal. match bullet fired from a .300 Win. Mag. Such a combination of power and flat trajectory is matched by few commercial or wildcat cartridges.

The AR-30 action is made of 4140 steel and designed by the father and son team of George and Paul Reynolds. For maximum rigidity, it has minimum-size cuts for cartridge feeding and brass ejection. The octagonal receiver is both massive and trim: while it has 0.18" thick walls for strength and rigidity, its 1.415" width is only 0.060" greater than that of a Remington 700 receiver.

The AR-30 is not supplied with sights. A steel Picatinny rail is attached to the top of the receiver to allow scope mounting.

The rifle's bolt is of conventional design, with two massive opposed locking lugs, a spring-loaded plunger ejector, a sliding-plate extractor and a 0.130"-deep counterbore in the bolt face for the cartridge rim. The hardened 4140 steel bolt head is a separate piece from the bolt body and is attached by means of a 0.215"-diameter crosspin. The design, similar to that of Savage rifles, allows the bolt head to pivot slightly in relation to the bolt body, ensuring that both lugs contact their seats even if the seats are not perfectly machined. Two 0.125" holes in the bolt head allow the venting of any propellant gases that may enter the bolt from a pierced primer or ruptured case. Also, a separate hardened steel collar at the rear of the bolt contains the cocking cam for the striker.

The bolt is removed from the receiver by depressing a pivoting bolt release in the left receiver wall. An override bevel on the bolt release allows one-handed bolt reinsertion.

Striker release is effected by a slightly modified Shilen standard model adjustable trigger, which is attached to the receiver by two crosspins in the Remington pattern. The trigger features a two-position safety lever at the right rear of the receiver that permits firing in the forward position and blocks the sear in the rearward, "safe" position. The bolt can be worked with the safety on.

The AR-30 is fed from a five-round, single-column, steel detachable box magazine with a synthetic follower. The magazine is retained in the aluminum stock by a spring-loaded AR-15-style magazine catch, which engages a notch in the magazine body.

The AR-30's 26" barrel is of 4140 steel, button rifled with six-groove, 1:10" right-hand twist and a deceptively slender

The ArmaLite AR-30 combines power, accuracy, and ruggedness with a military-style all-aluminum stock.

SHOOTING RESULTS

.338 Lapua Cartridge	Vel. @ 15' (f.p.s.)	Energy (ft.-lbs.)	Recoil (ft.-lbs.)	Group Size In Inches Smallest	Largest	Average
Lapua B408 250 gr. FMJBT	2835 Avg. 14 Sd	4,463	30.0	0.71	0.95	0.84
Lapua B408 250 gr. FMJBT	2850 Avg. 18 Sd	4,509	30.0	0.76	1.18	0.97
Handload No.1 Lapua 250 gr. FMJBT	2795 Avg. 31 Sd	4,337	28.6	0.68	0.89	0.81
Handload No. 2 Hornady 200 gr. SP	3238 Avg. 9 Sd	4,658	27.8	0.93	1.45	1.21
Average Extreme Spread:						0.96

Measured average velocity for 10 rounds from a 26" barrel. Range temperature: 83° F. Humidity: 55%. Accuracy for five consecutive, five-shot groups at 100 yards from a bipod. Abbreviations: FMJBT (full metal jacket boattail), Sd (standard deviation), SP (spire point).

profile—measuring 1.15" at the receiver ring and 0.700" just rearward of the muzzle brake. A 0.375"-thick recoil lug is sandwiched between the barrel shoulder and receiver face.

Threaded to the barrel is the AR-30's muzzle brake, scaled down from the one used on the AR-50. Two sets of rearward-angled baffles redirect propellant gases to reduce the gun's perceived recoil. The brake is composed of a main body and a top cover that attaches with eight machine screws.

Three separate 6061 aluminum components make up the AR-30's stock: an extruded forestock, a forged M16-style pistol grip section and a cast buttstock attached by machine screws to the rear of the forestock. The buttstock incorporates a 1" thick soft rubber recoil pad and an integral cheekpiece grooved for clearance of the cocking piece during bolt removal.

A V-block-shaped recess cradles the action in the forestock that is designed to spread slightly when the two action screws are tightened, providing better contact. The U-shaped fore-end leaves the barrel completely free floating and can be rested on sandbags or support a bipod using the mounted QD sling swivel stud.

An interesting feature of the gun is its wedge bedding system. Just forward of the recoil lug recess in the forestock is a steel block attached by a machine screw. Both the block's forward face and its seat in the stock are slightly angled such that when the block's machine screw is tightened it is cammed rearward against the recoil lug, pushing the lug firmly against the stock. This positions the action consistently and eliminates the need to "shoot in" the gun to seat the recoil lug.

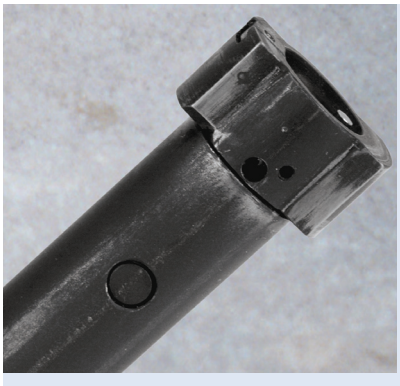
We shot the AR-30 for accuracy and reliability at 100 yds. using a Harris bipod and a Leupold Vari-X III 6.5-20X 50 mm scope. Two lots of Lapua factory 250-gr. loads were used, along with two handloads. The results are listed in the accompanying table. There were no malfunctions of any kind.

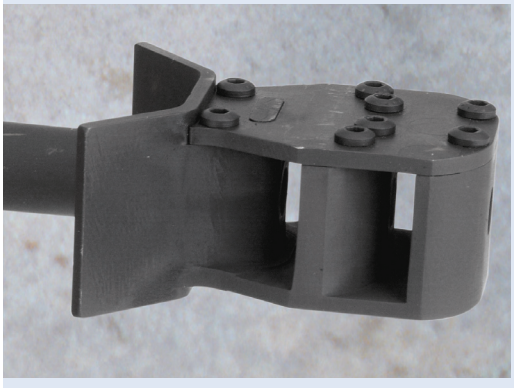
We obtained better accuracy than we expected from a relatively lightweight gun firing a cartridge of this power. Handloads with the Lapua 250-gr. bullet using Hodgdon 870 powder in once-fired Lapua cases and Federal 215M primers grouped slightly better than the factory loads. The handload with the 200-gr. Hornady soft-point bullet using Alliant RL22 in once-fired Lapua cases and Federal 215M primers yielded a 1.21" average and a sizzling 3,238 f.p.s. Accuracy was aided by the gun's light trigger, which broke at a crisp 3½ lbs. pull.

We were very surprised at the AR-30's light perceived recoil that seemed about equal to a .243 Win., resulting in part from the gun's nearly 12-lb. weight, but mostly from its highly effective muzzle brake. Note that the brake directs a considerable amount of both escaping gases and sound to the sides.

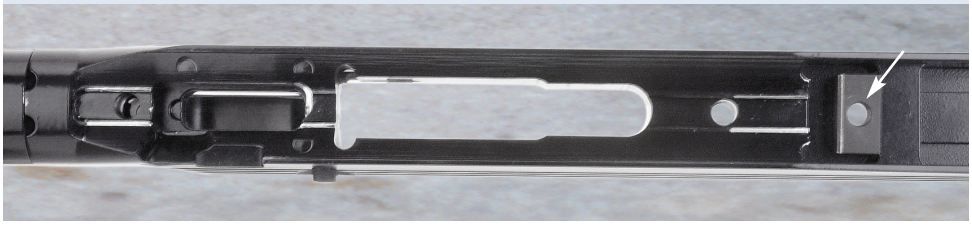
The AR-30 has many obvious applications in both the military and law enforcement arenas. In addition, it has various other uses, including 1,000-yd. benchrest competition and long-range hunting of large game animals such as elk.

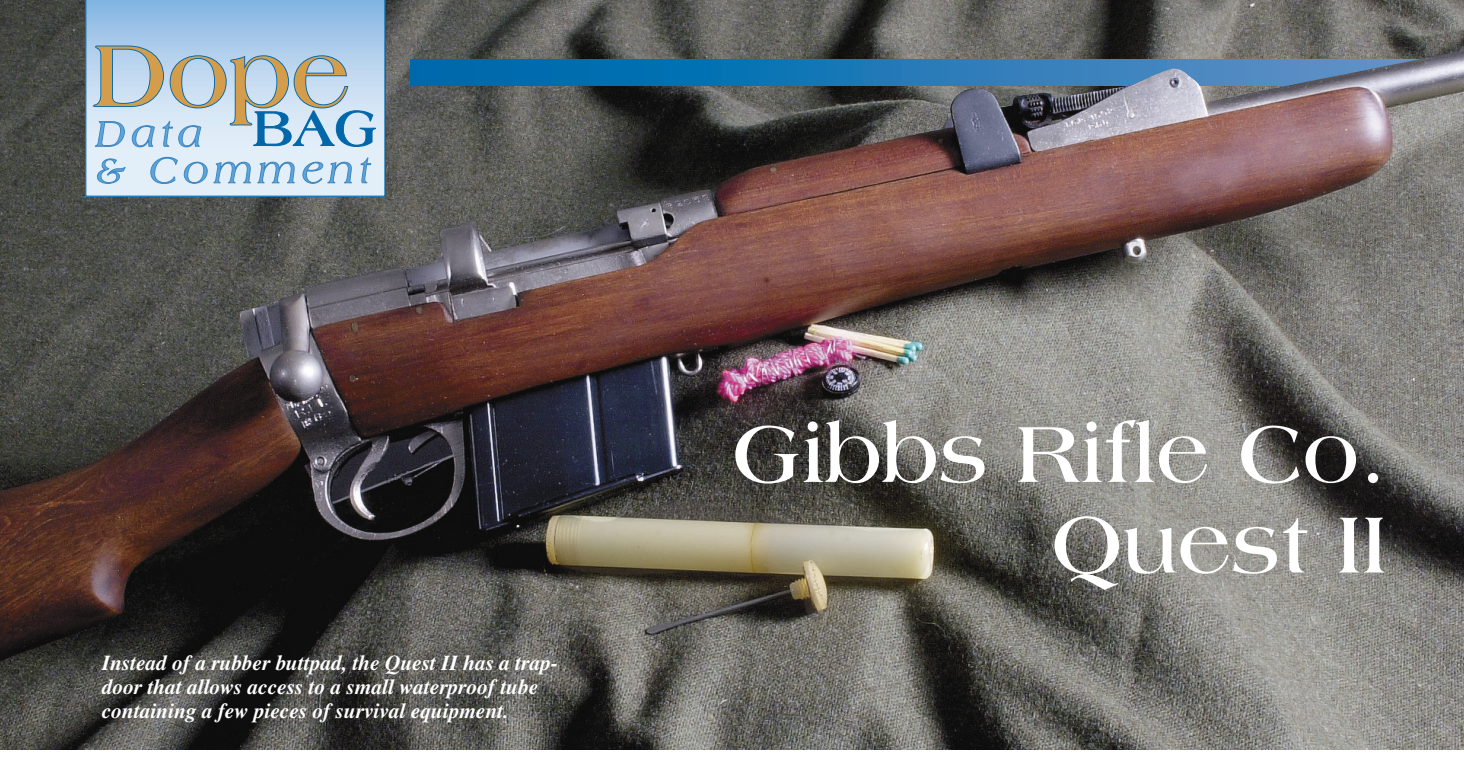
With the hefty power of a .458 Win. Mag., the flat trajectory of the .300 Win. Mag., the light recoil of a .243 Win. and accuracy rivaling that of many factory varmint rifles, the AR-30 offers a combination of attributes rarely found in a single gun/cartridge combination. At a suggested list price of $1,180, the new ArmaLite bolt gun represents an unusual value in a rugged, accurate and powerful multi-purpose rifle.





The AR-30 muzzle brake (l.) features two sets of rearward-facing baffles to trap and redirect propellant gases. The aluminum stock (below) acts as a V-block to cradle the barreled action. Two action screws pull the action down into the stock. The bedding wedge (below arrow) is cammed rearward as its screw is tightened, pushing the recoil lug tightly against its seat. The rifle has a pushbutton bolt release (above arrow), Shilen trigger and, sandwiched between the barrel and receiver, a .375"-thick recoil lug. The AR-30 bolt head (above l.) features two oversize lugs, a sliding-plate extractor and spring-loaded plunger ejector. The head is attached to the bolt body by a crosspin that allows the head to pivot slightly and seat both lugs in the receiver ring.





Gibbs Rifle Co. Quest II

Instead of a rubber buttpad, the Quest II has a trapdoor that allows access to a small waterproof tube containing a few pieces of survival equipment.

Gibbs' Quest II, the second in the Extreme Carbine line, is based on a Lee-Enfield 2A1 barreled action. Enfield aficionados will recognize this as an action made at the arms factory in Ishapore, India. While earlier Lee-Enfield models were chambered for the .303 British military round, the 2A1—introduced in 1953—was intended to handle the more modern 7.62x51 mm NATO round. Rather than extensively redesign the Lee-Enfield to handle the newer, higher-pressure cartridge, the Indians simply strengthened the existing action by using stronger chrome-vanadium steel and improved methods of heat treatment. The Quest II action is thus amply strong to safely handle modern sporting .308 Win. loads.

The Quest II is modeled on the No. 7 Jungle Carbine, with a 40" overall length and a 20" barrel with a flash hider and a two-port muzzle brake. Each Quest II is fitted with a new hardwood stock that features quick-detatch sling swivel studs. All external steel parts are electroless nickel-plated with the exception of the bolt assembly, which is chrome-plated, and the front and rear sights, magazine and safety lever, which are blued.

The bolt has two rear locking lugs with angled engagement faces and, at the front, a rotating head that contains a claw extractor and a block that retains the bolt in the receiver until it is flipped vertically to align with a cut in the receiver bridge. The most novel feature of the mechanism, from the point of view of most American shooters, is that the rifle cocks on closing rather than on opening.

The Lee-Enfield's original two-stage military trigger is retained in the Quest II. Forward of the trigger in the trigger guard is the magazine release, which is pushed upward to drop the gun's 10-round steel box magazine.

On the left side of the receiver is the two-position safety. In the rearward position, the safety retracts the cocking piece from the sear and locks the bolt, preventing movement; pushed

The Quest II is provided with military-type iron sights. The rear, mounted forward of the receiver, is the standard 2A1 800-meter backsight with index lines graduated in 200-meter increments (l.). Since the Quest II lacks a rubber buttpad, we anticipated its kick would be unpleasant at best. We were surprised with the low level of perceived recoil thanks in part to the two-port muzzle brake (below l.) The original Lee-Enfield two-stage military trigger is retained, though it sports a new nickel-plated finish (below).

GIBBS QUEST II

MANUFACTURER: Gibbs Rifle Company (Dept. AR), 211 Lawn St., Martinsburg, WV 25401, (304) 262-1651, www.gibbsrifle.com
CALIBER: .308 Win.
ACTION TYPE: center-fire, bolt-action rifle
FINISH: electroless nickel
OVERALL LENGTH: 40"
BARREL: 20"
RIFLING: six-groove, 1:12" right-hand twist
WEIGHT: 8 lbs.
SIGHTS: 2A1 800-meter backsight, post front
TRIGGER: two-stage, 5 lbs. pull
STOCK: hardwood: length of pull, 13⅛"; drop at comb, 2½"; drop at heel, 2¾"
ACCESSORIES: five- and 10-round magazines, survival kit.
SUGGESTED RETAIL PRICE: $279

SHOOTING RESULTS

.308 Win. Cartridge	Vel. @ 15' (f.p.s.)	Energy (ft.-lbs.)	Recoil (ft.-lbs.)	Group Size In Inches Smallest	Largest	Average
Federal P306F 150-gr. BT	2524 Avg. 18 Sd	2,123	12.0	1.08	2.33	1.67
Hornady Light Mag. #8598 165-gr. BTSPIL	2517 Avg. 9 Sd	2,321	13.7	2.17	3.01	2.40
Win. S308W180 180-gr. ST	2324 Avg. 14 Sd	2,159	13.2	1.24	2.52	1.83
Composite Average:						1.97

Measured average velocity for 10 rounds from a 20" barrel. Range temperature: 72°F Humidity: 38% Accuracy for five consecutive, five-shot groups at 50 yds. from a bipod. Abbreviations: BT (boattail), BTSPIL (boattail spire-point Interlock), Sd (standard deviation), ST (Silvertip).

all the way forward, the bolt is unlocked and the cocking piece is eased back into contact with the sear, allowing the gun to fire.

Also on the left side of the receiver is the ejector, which consists simply of a screw whose tip protrudes from the inside of the left receiver wall to block the cartridge rim and send the case spinning out of the ejection port.

The Quest II is provided with military-type iron sights. In the front is a blued post mounted via a cross dovetail in the muzzle brake/flash hider unit. Steel ears protect the blade from damage. The rear is the standard 2A1 800-meter backsight. The sight body is inscribed with index lines graduated in 200-meter increments; finer elevation adjustments can be achieved by turning a small knurled wheel on the slide. Twin ears protect the rear sight blade.

In addition to the iron sights, a Weaver-type scope base is provided with the Quest II. It is designed to mount on the gun with no alterations to the action.

Forward of the trigger inside the trigger guard is the magazine release, which is pressed upward to drop the 10-round magazine.

The bolt has two rear locking lugs with angled engagement faces and a rotating head with a claw extractor.

Unlike most contemporary commercial rifles, the Quest II lacks a rubber buttpad. Instead, there is a steel buttplate having a trapdoor that allows access to a small waterproof tube containing a Brunton compass, waterproof matches plus striker, firestarter, fishhooks and twine, and a snare wire.

As a result of difficulties with the rifle's scope mount, we chose to fire the Quest II with iron sights at 50 yds. For those who will use the gun to hunt deer in the dense Eastern woods, this is not an unrealistic test. Best grouping was achieved with the Federal load, with the Winchester load close behind, but with all loads there was more vertical than horizontal dispersion. That was the result of the rather small front post and rear notch, which we found somewhat difficult to align properly in relation to the bottom of the target. With all the loads tested, most 50-yd. groups had only about 1" to 1½" of horizontal dispersion, hinting at greater potential accuracy than we were able to achieve.

Our test-fire session revealed many of the Quest II's strengths. During rapid-fire strings, the rifle exhibited the rapid bolt cycling for which Enfields are known. Since the rifle cocks on closing, bolt lift effort was negligible. Moreover, the nickel plating on the receiver and the chrome plating on the bolt made bolt movement even slicker.

Since the Quest II rifle lacked a rubber buttpad, we anticipated that its kick would be uncomfortable at best. We were pleasantly surprised, however, at the low level of perceived recoil. Undoubtedly the rifle's two-port muzzle brake and 8-lb. weight helped make recoil tolerable.

During the approximately 100-round test-fire session, there were no failures to feed, fire or extract from the chamber with any of the loads. All ammunition was fed from the magazine, so this is a testament to the effectiveness of the Quest's magazine system. However, empty brass failed to exit the ejection port completely about 10 percent of the time. According to a Gibbs Rifle Company spokesman, on occasion the electroless nickel plating on the receiver and the screw ejector can add sufficient material to prevent the ejector from being turned in far enough to give proper protrusion. The company stated that it was implementing a change in the assembly procedure to rectify the problem.

The Quest II felt lighter than its actual 8 lbs., thanks in large part to its balance, which caused the gun's weight to fall nicely between the hands, giving it a quick and lively feel. We also liked its short 40"length, which makes it both more convenient to carry in heavily wooded country as well as easier to stow in a cramped space. Its 13⅛" length of pull did not feel excessively short, and would actually be quite comfortable when the gun is used with a heavy coat or parka.

The Quest's 5-lb. trigger was better than many military triggers, though there was a slight amount of creep, the pull was still light and crisp enough to permit accurate shooting. We suspect that the nickel plating applied to the trigger components may have contributed to the smoothness of the pull.

There were a few areas in which we felt the Quest II could stand some improvement. Our initial intention was to test-fire at 100 yds. using a telescopic sight; however, when we mounted a scope using the supplied no-gunsmithing Weaver-style mount, we experienced difficulty in holding zero. Closer examination revealed that the front of the mount rose about 1/32" to 1/16" when the rifle was fired.

The mount is secured at the rear by a lip that fits under the receiver bridge, and at the front by a horizontal set screw that, when tightened, presses against the rear face of the receiver ring at the ejection port. A second, vertical set screw at the rear of the mount is tightened against the top of the receiver, presumably to prevent the front of the mount from lifting.

We also experienced a problem with the gun's iron sights. Initially our rounds impacted far to the right. As the rear iron sight allows no windage adjustment, we had to drift the front sight to the right to center our rounds on the target. Furthermore, when we commenced firing for accuracy, we had extreme vertical stringing on several targets. It was quickly determined that the pivoting backsight blade was rising up from 1/16" to 1/8" with each shot. When we reset the rear sight to its proper position before each shot, our groups shrank appreciably. Gibbs Rifle Company stated that the 2A1 backsight normally has a spring that keeps the rear sight from rising; this spring was likely left out of the gun when it was reassembled after plating.

Shooters who purchased surplus guns understand that such a gun, while eminently serviceable and an excellent bargain, may nonetheless have a few rough edges. So it is with the Quest. In spite of our difficulties, it is still a rugged, dependable rifle whose chambering makes it suitable for most big game. Further, its electroless nickel plating makes it suitable for those who spend a lot of time in the outdoors, and who need a handy rifle that can be left exposed to the elements and yet function reliably when needed.