

# DOPE BAG

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."

**CAUTION:** Technical data and information contained herein are intended to provide information based on the limited experience of individuals under specific conditions and circumstances. They do not detail the comprehensive training procedures, techniques and safety precautions absolutely necessary to properly carry on similar activity. Read the notice and disclaimer on the contents page. Always consult comprehensive reference manuals and bulletins for details of proper training requirements, procedures, techniques and safety precautions before attempting any similar activity.

## BERETTA ELITE TEAM PISTOLS



Beretta has a new line based on the Model 92/96. A Border Marshall Model emulates guns issued to INS, the Compact Carry is for discreet carry and the INOX Tactical is all stainless steel. We tested an IDPA gun, the Elite.



Slide-mounted, ambidextrous levers function only as decockers. "Cocked-and-locked" carry is not an option, nor is the IDPA Enhanced Service Pistol classification.

receive a Beretta Model 92G Elite for test and evaluation and to classify for IDPA competition. As an IDPA gun, the Elite falls into the Stock Service Pistol classification. The slide-mounted, ambidextrous levers function only as decockers, not safety levers, so "cocked and locked" carry—and thus Enhanced Service Pistol classification—is not an option.

Since fast shot recovery decreases times for better scores, a heavy, contoured, "Brigadier"-style slide helps reduce felt recoil, and aids getting back on target quickly. The slide also has front grasping grooves in addition to grooves in the normal rear position.

Removable front and rear sights are of the three-dot-pattern and are dovetailed into the slide. The rear is easily adjusted for windage by drifting the unit left or right.

Other competition-specific enhancements include a radiused backstrap to fill

**W**HEN semi-automatic pistols customized for competition or discreet carry are mentioned, the Colt M1911 usually comes to mind. Recognizing the potential of these markets, Beretta USA has responded with the introduction of the "Elite Team" series of pistols based on its proven Model 92/96 handguns. Four new pistols make up the team, starting with the Model 92/96G "Elite" with a 4.7" stainless steel barrel that is an out-of-the-box Int'l Defensive Pistol Ass'n (IDPA) pistol. Next, the Model 92/96 "Border Marshall" emu-

lates the pistol specifically made for the Immigration and Naturalization Service. For discreet carry, Beretta's new 92/96 "Custom Carry" has a compact 4.3" barrel and shortened grip. Completing the team is the stainless steel Model 92FS "INOX Tactical." The INOX Tactical comes only in 9x19 mm, while the other Elite pistols are offered in 9x19 mm or .40 S&W.

Since members of the NRA Technical Staff often compete in monthly IDPA matches on the NRA Range, we elected to



A generous bevel on the Beretta's magazine well allows for easier insertion of the steel, 10-round, double-column magazines. Thick, rubber bottom pads prevent magazine damage during speed changes.

### SHOOTING RESULTS

9x19 mm Cartridge	Vel. @ 15' (f.p.s.)	Energy (ft.-lbs.)	Recoil (ft.-lbs.)	Smallest (ins.)	Largest (ins.)	Average (ins.)
Federal 9AP 124-gr. FMJ	1069 Avg. 15 Sd	315	3.4	1.67	3.08	2.33
Remington R9MM3 115-gr. FMJ	1144 Avg. 9 Sd	334	3.4	2.58	7.67	4.79
Winchester SC9NT 105-gr. JSP	1172 Avg. 11 Sd	320	3.1	2.77	4.49	3.77
Average Extreme Spread:						3.60
Measured average velocity for 10 rounds from a 4.7" barrel. Range temperature 68° F. Humidity: 42%. Accuracy for five consecutive, five-shot groups at 25 yds. from a Ransom Rest. Abbreviations: FMJ (full-metal jacket), JSP (jacketed soft-point), Sd (Standard deviation)						

## MODEL 92 ELITE

**MANUFACTURER:** Pietro Beretta S.p.A.,  
Via Beretta 18, 25063 Gardone V.T.,  
Brescia, Italy

**IMPORTER:** Beretta U.S.A. Corp. (Dept.  
AR), 17601 Beretta Drive, Accokeek,  
MD 20607; (301) 283-2191

**CALIBER:** 9x19 mm (tested), .40 S&W

**ACTION TYPE:** short recoil-operated, semi-  
automatic, double/single-action pistol

**CONSTRUCTION:** chrome-moly steel

**FINISH:** Bruniton frame

**OVERALL LENGTH:** 8 3/4"

**BARREL:** 4.7" stainless steel

**RIFLING:** six-groove, RH twist

**WIDTH:** 1 1/2"

**HEIGHT:** 6"

**MAGAZINE:** detachable, 10-round,  
double-column, steel with rubber pad

**SIGHTS:** three-white-dot: blade front,  
square-notch blade rear, drift-adjustable  
for windage

**TRIGGER:** single-stage, non-adjustable;  
double-action, 11-lb. pull; single-action  
5 1/2-lb. pull

**STOCKS:** checkered black plastic

**WEIGHT EMPTY:** 35 ozs.

**ACCESSORIES:** extra magazine;  
lockable, hard plastic box

**SUGGESTED RETAIL PRICE:** \$732

the palm of the gun hand, and serrations on the front and back strap for a more secure grip. A generous bevel at the bottom of the magazine well allows for easier insertion of the steel, 10-round, double-column magazines. Magazines have thick, rubber bottom pads to protect them when dropped during speed changes.

The Beretta 92G Elite was fired for accuracy with the results shown in the accompanying table. Function firing was with a variety of ammunition with round-nose, truncated and hollow-point bullets including subsonic loads. There were no malfunctions of any kind. We found the 92G Elite recovers quickly for fast




The slide has front grasping grooves. Though they aid in opening the action with a scope or red dot sight attached, such sights are not allowed in IDPA competition.



The Model 92 Elite has a heavy, contoured, "Brigadier"-style slide that is thicker than those of standard Beretta Model 92 pistols.

follow-up shots and points naturally. Double-action trigger pull is a little heavy and stacks somewhat, but the single-action pull is crisp. Some overtravel is evident and we'd like to see a stop screw incorporated into the trigger blade. Sights are easily visible against the buff-colored IDPA targets. The sharp front sight blade tended to snag in a fabric holster we tried, but not in a leather model. For this reason, we opted to use a leather holster from the Gould & Goodrich Gold line for the IDPA competition. Accuracy, especially with Federal 124-gr. bullets was quite good.

The Elite Team series fills niches where there are definitely growing markets. The design is battle- and match-proven, and the Elite Team should appeal to competitors looking for something beyond an M1911. 

## BLASER R93 SYNTHETIC



Terms such as "revolutionary" and "the rifle of the future" are used in SIG Arms literature to describe the Blaser rifle. While history will determine if this holds true, the Blaser certainly offers a package of innovative, unique concepts such as 360 degree, radial bolt locking; a trigger unit with no sear; thumb-cocking safety; fast takedown with interchangeable barrels in different calibers and a unique magazine with straight-line feed.

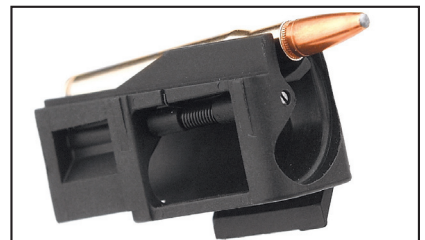
**A**FTER Gerhard Blenk retired from a successful career in international business, he had time to indulge his lifelong passion for big game hunting. As he considered hunting rifles from the viewpoint of a dedicated, modern sportsman, he began to question why existing designs, many of which were more than 100 years old, could not be improved using modern technology.

Although Blenk was not an iconoclast, he felt that the state-of-the-art in hunting rifle technology could be pushed forward dramatically. As existing gun manufacturers were not interested in such a project, Blenk resolved to accomplish it himself. He built several prototype rifles then took them hunting. Others were so impressed by

Blenk's rifle, many sought to buy one. Blenk later formed his own company to manufacture his creation—the Blaser rifle.

European hunters have a finely developed appreciation for engineering excellence and technical accomplishment. The advanced technology of the Blaser rifle appealed to these senses and struck a responsive chord throughout the European market. Blaser rapidly came from nowhere to gain a major market share among knowledgeable, European hunters. Competing rifle manufacturers such as Sauer immediately noted this, of course. In the late 1990s, the Swiss Industrial Company (SIG), owners of Sauer in Germany, gave in and purchased the Blaser rifle company. American

sportsmen stand to benefit from this as SIG now actively promotes sales of the Blaser rifle in North America.



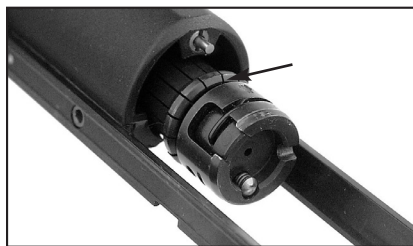
Blaser magazines are molded, single-column, semi-spiral designs powered by rotary springs acting on a synthetic follower.



# DOPE BAG

The Blaser offers a package of innovative, unique concepts such as 360 degree, radial bolt locking; a trigger unit with no sear; thumb-cocking safety; fast takedown with interchangeable barrels in different calibers and a unique magazine with straight-line feed. Other advanced features not unique to the Blaser include a straight-pull action, a free-floating barrel, a metal bedding block, a detachable bolt head, captive mounting screws and nuts, scope bases with integral rings, scope mounts with repeatable zero and a synthetic stock.

Blaser rifles do not have a receiver of conventional configuration in that there are no front or rear receiver rings or bridges. Rather, the receiver is a non-stressed, U-shaped piece of aluminum that simply



The bolt locks directly to the barrel by means of an expanding collet (arrow) that engages radially through 360 degrees into a V-shaped groove cut into the rear shank.

serves to bed the barrel and hold it, the bolt assembly and trigger assembly in relation to each other. The bolt locks directly to the barrel with a collet head and, as the bolt head does not rotate, the bolt travels on two rails riding in corresponding grooves cut into the upper, inner sides of the receiver. The bolt collet head locks radially through 360 degrees into a V-shaped groove cut into the rear shank of the barrel.

A coned surface on the rear of the bolt head serves to expand the collet's steel fingers for locking or allow them to contract for unlocking. In the locked position, the collet fingers travel up the cone surface, causing them to expand into the locking groove cut into the barrel. When unlocked, the collet fingers slide down the cone surface to their normal, retracted position. The separate, detachable bolt head is fitted with an internal extractor and internal ejector. A small, steel assist pin on the upper face of the bolt carrier and connected to the bolt handle provides a degree of initial extraction to first loosen the cartridge case as the bolt is opened. A lightweight, steel firing pin powered by an encompassing coil spring combined with short firing pin travel offers ultra-fast lock time. These features enable an unusually short, compact bolt assembly. A small, bolt-release button located on the upper right rear wing of the action enables the bolt to quickly be removed as needed.

## BLASER R93

**MANUFACTURER:** SIG Swiss Industrial Co., CH-8212 Neuhausen Rhine Falls, Switzerland

**IMPORTER:** SIG Arms, Inc. (Dept. AR), Corporate Park, Exeter, NH 03833; (603) 772-2302

**CALIBER:** .22-250 Rem. through .416 Rem. Mag., .30-'06 Sprg. (tested)

**ACTION TYPE:** straight-pull, repeating, center-fire rifle

**RECEIVER:** aluminum

**FINISH:** matte black

**OVERALL LENGTH:** 39 3/8"

**WEIGHT:** 6 lbs. 9 ozs.

**BARREL:** take-down design, free-floating, hammer-forged, carbon steel, 22" standard calibers, 26" magnum calibers

**RIFLING:** conventional, four-groove, RH twist

**MAGAZINE:** internal, detachable, three-round, semi-spiral with rotary springs

**SIGHTS:** none

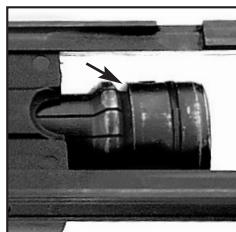
**TRIGGER:** searless, 2-lb. pull

**STOCK:** one-piece, molded, fiberglass-reinforced, matte black synthetic; length of pull, 14 1/2"; drop at heel, 1 1/8"; drop at comb, 1 1/8"

**ACCESSORIES:** optional at extra cost; scope bases with integral rings, barrels with magazines for different calibers, left-hand action, Safari package.

**SUGGESTED RETAIL PRICE:** \$1,495 (Synthetic), \$1,795 (LX), \$3,495 (Classic), \$4,675 (Grand Luxe), \$5,125 (Attache)

Blaser triggers are built into an integral housing on the bottom of the tang. There is no sear and the housing is not removable. Although the housing is enclosed, panels can be removed for cleaning or maintenance as necessary. When the trigger is pulled, it acts to raise a round metal pin out of the housing a very short distance so it contacts the pivot arm on the bolt assembly. The pivot arm holds the striker



A coned surface on the rear of the Blaser R93's detachable bolt head (l.) serves to expand the locking collet's steel fingers into the R93's barrel extension.

and, rotary spring-powered piece pushes against the bottom of the receiver to push the magazine upward into its proper position. The purpose of this is to present the topmost cartridge in such a manner as to allow a straight push into the chamber for reliable feeding. Blaser magazines are caliber-specific and can be removed easily when changing calibers. Extra barrels are sold with a correct caliber magazine.

Of takedown design, Blaser barrels are easily interchangeable between calibers. Changes requiring a different bolt face are made possible by interchangeable, detachable bolt heads. Blaser barrels are hammer-forged of carbon steel with four lands and grooves of conventional design.

Two equal-length mounting bolts permanently affixed to the bottom of the barrel pass through the bottom of the receiver to mate with two captive locking nuts in the stock. The 4 mm hex heads of these locking nuts are deeply recessed into the stock. Barrels bed directly to the metal receiver. Scope bases with integral rings mount in small eyebrow notches cut into the top of the barrel. Designed especially for repeat zero, the scope base/ring unit with the scope attached can be dismounted and remounted without losing its zero.

The Blaser Synthetic rifle comes equipped with a one-piece, fiberglass-reinforced, molded stock with steel QD sling swivel studs and a black rubber buttpad. The stock has no checkering, but its surface has a finely pebbled, black, non-slip, non-reflective finish. In the Synthetic model only, the receiver is imbedded permanently in the stock.



Turnbolt rifles require four distinct hand movements for operation—upward, backward, forward and downward. The Blaser's straight-pull bolt reduces these to just two.

in see-saw fashion; when the pin pushes upward, the striker is released by the arm. A disconnecter is built into the assembly.

Although Blaser magazines are readily removable, they are not external. Rather they are internal in somewhat similar fashion to the "en bloc" clips such as those used in the M1 Garand, but are not ejected when empty. They are molded, single-column, semi-spiral designs powered by rotary springs acting on a synthetic follower. A sec-

Turnbolt rifles require four distinct hand movements for operation—upward, backward, forward and downward. The Blaser's straight-pull bolt reduces these to just two movements—backward and forward. That substantially reduces the time required to operate the bolt for a quick second shot and keeps the rifle securely in the shooter's shoulder and focal plane. When the shooter pulls the bolt knob rearward, the bolt handle first pivots about 15 degrees. This pulls

## SHOOTING RESULTS

.30-'06 Sprg. Cartridge	Vel. @15' (f.p.s.)	Energy (ft.-lbs.)	Recoil (ft.-lbs.)	Smallest (ins.)	Largest (ins.)	Average (ins.)
Winchester No. 30065 165-gr. SP	2761 Avg. 10 Sd	2792	18.4	1.24	1.76	1.49
Federal No.3006A 150-gr. SP	2843 Avg. 13 Sd	2692	15.2	1.50	1.85	1.63
Speer No.24508 180-gr. GS	2719 Avg. 11 Sd	2954	21.4	1.14	1.93	1.61
Average: Extreme Spread:						1.58
Measured average velocity for 10 rounds from a 22" barrel. Range temperature: 68° F. Humidity: 42%. Accuracy for five consecutive, five-shot groups at 100 yds. from a sandbag rest. Abbreviations: Sd (standard deviation), SP (soft point), GS (Grand Slam)						

the bolt carrier slightly rearward allowing the locking collet fingers to slide down the rear cone of the bolt head, unlocking the bolt from the barrel. At the same time, the assist pin on the bolt carrier deploys forward to loosen the cartridge case by pushing the bolt carrier rearward. The bolt is then free to move fully rearward, extracting and ejecting the fired case. Pushing the bolt knob forward causes the bolt to push the topmost cartridge from the magazine into the chamber. As it does so, the bolt knob pivots forward, causing the locking collet fingers to travel up the rear cone of the bolt head and deploy into the locking recess ring in the barrel. The rifle is now locked securely.

For safety, the Blaser rifle normally remains *uncocked* when the bolt is closed on the first round. To cock the rifle, the shooter must push forward and upward on a large, ribbed, metal button on the rear of the bolt that is connected to the striker. This exposes a large red dot in the tang, indicating the rifle is ready to fire. Once pressed home to cock the striker, the button will stay in that position after the shot has been fired and the bolt manipulated for follow-up shots. If desired, the rifle can be put on safe by pressing the button inward and upward, which releases it to slide down into the safe position. This decocks the striker and locks the bolt closed. If desired, a light upward push on the safety button unlocks the bolt without cocking the firing pin. The safety can also be applied when the bolt is open. There is no conventional safety button. We found that while the Blaser's operational procedure takes a bit of getting used to, it works quite well once you get the hang of it. One piece of advice, however—read the operation manual carefully and completely, then practice the operation procedure on an unloaded rifle *before* attempting to fire it.

Following the utilitarian concept of the Blaser Synthetic, finish on all metal parts is a matte blue/black. Even the trigger guard and trigger bow are made of molded, matte black synthetic. Fit and finish of all metal parts proved average for a rifle in this price range.

Styling elicited a mixed bag of reactions. Traditionalists choked on the synthetic stock and matte finish. For them, a rifle is not a rifle unless made of blued, polished steel and checkered walnut. However, they did allow as how the Blaser stock lines were nice—for a synthetic. For traditionalists, the higher grades of Blaser rifles with checkered walnut stocks and blued steel parts had stronger appeal. But, potential buyers should consider that the price of such models is substantially higher. If they remember that the Blaser Synthetic is aimed at customers who view a hunting rifle as a basic tool with little aesthetic content, then the appearance makes perfect sense.

Our tests indicated that takedown and reassembly of the Blaser rifle were fast and easy—however a hex wrench was required. Bedding did not prove to be a problem as the Blaser barrel beds directly to the metal receiver and the entire scope base/ring assembly attaches to the barrel.



**The R93's free-floating, hammer-forged barrel beds directly to the aluminum receiver and features four milled cuts for attaching an optional scope base with integral rings.**

In this connection, we tested the repeatable zero by first zeroing in the rifle, removing the scope base, waiting overnight then reinstalling the scope base the next day. Zero did not change.

Blaser bolt operation was smooth and very fast—something straight-pull rifles are renowned for. Fast second shots were easy, even by novice shooters. This raised an interesting point. Turn-bolt hunting rifles require practice to achieve smooth bolt operation allowing fast follow-up shots. The Blaser required noticeably less training in

this respect with novices quickly mastering the backward-forward operation.

The cocking safety, however, was another matter. While it does operate reliably and has considerable thought behind its design, it is not intuitive. Rather, it requires a careful reading of the manual—and practice—before use. Uninstructed but experienced shooters, for example, could not get the rifle to fire at first.

Feeding, extraction and ejection were flawless. One point is worth mentioning here. Straight-pull rifles do not have the inherent mechanical advantage during extraction that good turnbolt designs have. While this remains unimportant in most cases, it takes on serious meaning when a



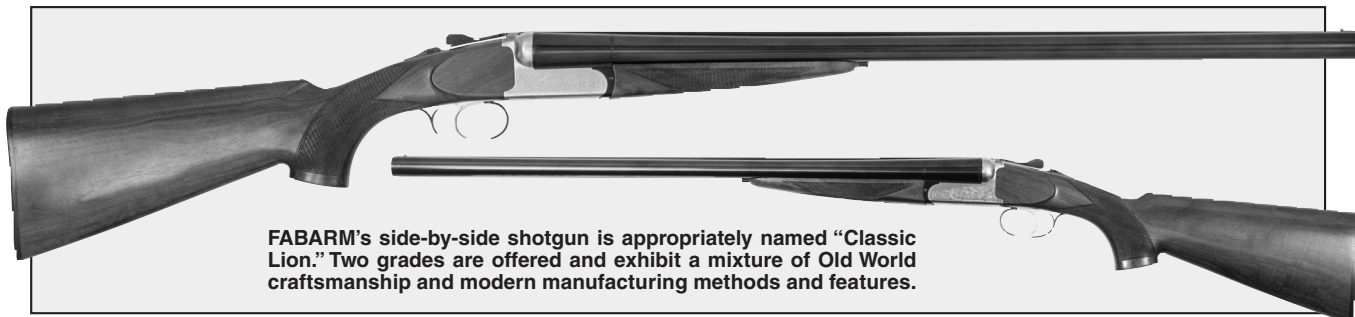
**The Blaser rifle remains *uncocked* when the bolt is closed on the first round. To cock, push forward and up on the large, ribbed, metal button (arrow) on the rear of the bolt.**

case sticks in the chamber for whatever reason. Fortunately, such instances are rare, so the average owner need not be overly concerned about this.

We found the searless trigger pull crisp and clean with little loading and very little take-up. Blaser is on to something good here in its simple, searless, enclosed design. Accuracy results are summarized in the accompanying table. Results may be characterized as above average for a hunting rifle. Perhaps more important here is the consistency to be had from the metal bedding, free-floated barrel and synthetic stock.

The Blaser rifle incorporates numerous unique features combined with many other advanced features found on modern hunting rifles. No doubt about it, the Blaser does advance the state-of-the-art; witness the straight-pull clones from competitors. The Blaser embodies the personal preferences of Gerhard Blenk, a knowledgeable, modern sportsman. But not every sportsman is interested in advancing the state-of-the-art, particularly in North America. The combination of pioneering, technical features and high price limit the appeal of the Blaser rifle to knowledgeable, well-heeled hunters who appreciate technical excellence. Therefore, this is not a rifle for the average hunter. Predictably, we will see many of the concepts embodied in the Blaser rifles adopted by competitors. Such is the work of the pioneer.

## FABARM CLASSIC LION



FABARM's side-by-side shotgun is appropriately named "Classic Lion." Two grades are offered and exhibit a mixture of Old World craftsmanship and modern manufacturing methods and features.

**W**HILE many sportsmen have moved to over-unders and semi-automatic shotguns, a small but traditional market still exists for elegant side-by-sides. FABARM's line of double-barrel shotguns, appropriately named "Classic Lion," exhibit a mixture of Old

World craftsmanship with modern manufacturing methods and features. Two grades are offered, differing only in that Grade I is an engraved boxlock, while the Grade II is a boxlock with removable, engraved, false sideplates and a lockable, fitted luggage case. We received a Grade I Classic Lion for test and evaluation.

The most remarkable feature about the FABARM Classic Lion is its locking system. Each barrel chamber of the monobloc has its own set of Purdy double under lumps. H&K, the importer of FABARM shotguns, calls this arrangement the "four locking points." This "quad-lock" makes assembling the gun almost effortless as it is essentially self-aligning, and offers unsurpassed strength and durability.

The boxlock action is CNC machined from a nickel-chromium-molybdenum steel forging that is finished in the white. A tasteful amount of scroll engraving adorns the sides and bottom of the receiver as well as its fences. Hammers pivot on pins in the bot-

tom of the action and are powered by coil springs. Sears are pinned in the top tang and tripped by an extension protruding up from the single selective trigger. The trigger is gold-plated and checkered for better finger purchase. Barrel selection is by means of a selector button built into the top tang-mounted automatic safety button. Moving the selector to the left exposes one red dot indicating that the right barrel will fire first. Upon pulling the trigger, the trigger extension lifts the selected barrel's sear, releasing the hammer to strike the rebounding firing pin



The hammers pivot on pins in the bottom of the action and are powered by coil springs. The trigger unit is single selective.

### CLASSIC LION

**MANUFACTURER:** Fabbrica

Bresciana Armi, Via G. Zola 33,  
25060, Brescia, Italy

**IMPORTER:** Heckler & Koch (Dept. AR),  
21480 Pacific Blvd., Sterling, VA  
20166; (703) 450-1900

**GAUGE:** 12, 3"

**ACTION TYPE:** Boxlock side-by-side

**RECEIVER:** nickel-chromium-molybdenum

**OVERALL LENGTH:** 43"

**FINISH:** nickel receiver with scroll

engraving, high-polish blue barrels

**BARRELS:** 26" with solid top rib

**WEIGHT:** 7 lbs.

**CHOKE SYSTEM:** full, improved modified, modified, improved cylinder, cylinder FABARM screw-in chokes compatible with steel shot through modified

**TRIGGER:** single, selective, inertial, gold-plated; 4-lb. pull left and right barrels

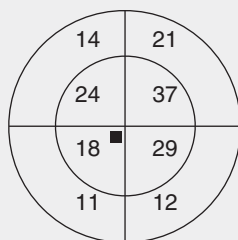
**STOCK:** satin oil-finished walnut; length of pull, 14 1/4"; drop at heel, 2"; drop at comb, 1 3/8"

**ACCESSORIES:** full, improved modified, modified, cylinder, improved cylinder choke tubes; choke tube wrench

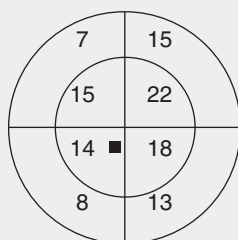
**SUGGESTED RETAIL PRICE:** \$1,488

### FABARM CLASSIC LION

AVERAGE OF 10 PATTERNS AT 40 YDS.



Improved Modified



Improved Cylinder

■=Point of Hold

Federal P128-6 Premium Magnum 12-ga.

2 3/4"—1 1/4 oz.—No. 6 lead

Average Pellet count—253

Measured Velocity @3-ft.—1385 f.p.s.

Remaining Energy Per Pellet @40 yds.: 2 ft.-lbs

Recoil: 31.5 ft.-lbs

Total Hits	162 (64%)	Total Hits	112 (44%)
21" Inner Circle	108 (43%)	21" Inner Circle	69 (28%)
30" Outer Ring	54 (21%)	30" Outer Ring	43 (16%)

and fire the shot. Recoil causes the inertia block to rock back and positions the trigger extension under the other barrel's sear.

Cocking is by a single rod passing through the bottom of the action that pushes the hammers back when the action is opened. The rather complicated automatic ejector system is interlocked with the action of cocking the hammers. When a hammer is cocked, it presses back a steel stamping in the side of the action connected to the ejector trip rods. The rod trips the ejector sear contained in the fore-end iron, which activates the ejector. If a barrel isn't fired, cocking does not occur, and the ejector is not activated.

Our sample's stock is straight-grained walnut with hand-cut checkering of 22 lines per inch on the pistol grip and splinter fore-end. An Anson push rod latch retains the fore-end under the blued steel barrels. The pistol grip has a very slight right-hand palm swell, and the buttstock is cast-on to center the barrels in front of



a right-handed shooter. A satin oil finish gives the wood a warm glow.

Barrels are 26" and joined by solid top and bottom ribs. A single gold sighting bead is on the front end of the top rib, while grooves perpendicular to the rib reduce glare. Chambers and barrels are chrome-lined and the muzzles are threaded to accept screw-in choke tubes. Full, improved-modified, modified, improved cylinder and cylinder tubes come with the gun. Tubes are rated for steel shot up to modified constriction.

We installed improved cylinder and improved-modified choke tubes and patterned the FABARM Classic Lion with Federal Premium Magnum lead shot ammunition. Function firing was at hand-thrown

battue clay targets with PMC target loads and Remington field loads. When hand-thrown, battue targets typically move fast, face, and zip off in almost any direction. They proved challenging, but the Classic Lion was up to the task. This shotgun points naturally, balances well and is extremely lively. Calmly tracking these targets was impossible, but we hammered most of them by using a combination of point and pass-through shooting techniques.

The handling characteristics of the Classic Lion will probably not come into play on game such as pheasant. Given faster and more unpredictable targets such as woodcock, grouse or quail, the responsiveness of the Classic Lion will really shine. For the upland hunter who appreciates

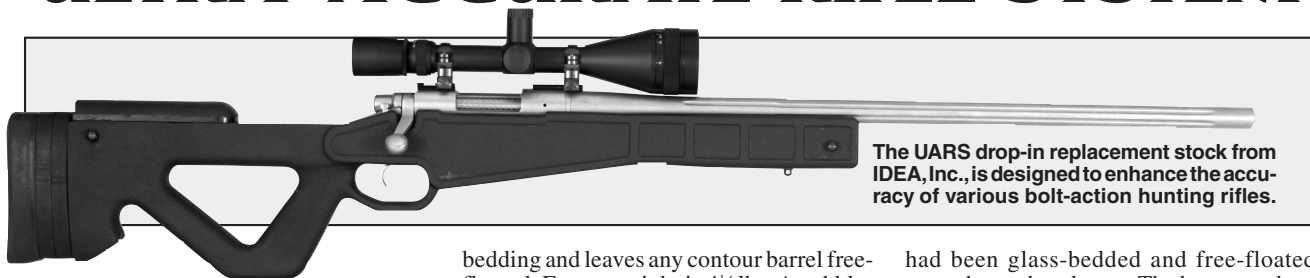


Each barrel of the Classic Lion has its own set of Purdy-type double under lumps. This "quad-lock" arrangement makes assembly effortless as it is essentially self-aligning.

excellent workmanship in a classic package at a fairly reasonable price, the FABARM Classic Lion will appeal.



## ULTRA-ACCURATE RIFLE SYSTEM



The UARS drop-in replacement stock from IDEA, Inc., is designed to enhance the accuracy of various bolt-action hunting rifles.

**T**HE Ultra-Accurate Rifle System (UARS) is a drop-in replacement stock that is claimed to increase rifle accuracy by 50 percent when used to replace wood stocks on bolt-action hunting rifles. Accuracy increases of lesser but unspecified degree are also claimed for precision rifles, regardless of grade or quality.

The stock incorporates a one-piece, aircraft quality, aluminum rail system with V-blocks that totally eliminates the need for

bedding and leaves any contour barrel free-floated. Empty weight is 4½ lbs. A pebbled-textured outer shell of paintable, thermoset, dense urethane foam, molded in a rather unusual thumbhole grip form, is permanently bonded to the aluminum rail. Two 1½" stock spacers are supplied to adjust buttstock length of pull, and a supplied ¼" cheek pad spacer may be used to adjust comb drop. Quick-detachable, steel, sling swivel studs on both sides of the stock are also provided, as well as a front sling swivel stud on the bottom of the fore-end. This bottom stud for attaching a Harris bipod can be located in any of six different positions along the fore-end.

Our test sample came with a Remington Model 700 action with a heavy, fluted, stainless steel, .22-250 Rem. barrel. While this was appreciated, we wanted to test the effect of the stock on a conventional sporter. We did this by replacing the supplied barreled action with one from an older Remington Model 700 chambered in .22-250 Rem. from the NRA Technical Staff test collection.

After carefully cleaning the bore, our test rifle was first fired for accuracy using its original wooden stock that

had been glass-bedded and free-floated more than a decade ago. The bore was thoroughly cleaned once again and the same test repeated using the UARS stock with the same lots of ammunition.

In this test, only Federal ammunition increased in accuracy, but the increase was a credible 22 percent. Both PMC and Hornady ammunition shot slightly worse with the UARS stock. A call to the manufacturer advised us to make sure the trigger pin was fully seated so the action sits properly in the V-blocks. Indeed, the trigger pin was slightly protruding. It was tapped back in place, and the UARS test repeated.

Overall accuracy improved an average of 7 percent. Actual results are summarized in the accompanying table.

The failure attributed to the trigger pin combined with the success observed in later testing suggests that there may be something to the UARS stock concept. While the price of the UARS stock seems steep, it's not much more than you'd pay for a high-end synthetic stock plus the cost of a bedding job. Like the Ford Model T, the UARS stock is available in any color as long as it is black. Currently, the stock is only offered for the Remington Model 700 short actions, though stocks for Model 700 long actions as well as Winchester and Savage rifles should be available soon.

*Suggested Retail Price: \$379.95 from IDEA, Inc. (Dept. AR), 2900 West Gunsite Road, Paulden, AZ 86334.*



### ACCURACY RESULTS

#### .22-250 Remington Cartridge

	WOOD STOCK	UARS STOCK	
Load	Average Group Size (ins.)	Average Group Size (ins.)	Average Improvement
Federal No. 22250C 40-gr. HPBT	0.508	0.498	2%
Hornady No. 83363 50-gr. Moly-coated VX	0.656	0.567	14%
PMC No. 22-250VB 55-gr. HPBT	0.916	0.864	6%
Average	0.693	0.643	7%

Accuracy for five consecutive, five-shot groups at 50 yds. from a sandbag. Abbreviations: HPBT (hollow-point boat-tail), VX (Varmint Express)