

THE MAUSER MONTHLY
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The newsletter for fans of Mauser rifles - the REAL "Riflemen's Rifle!"
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More on Hunter's Lodge

Never before have I seen a dealer who was so unanimously described by many different customers (over a period of... well... two years) as disreputable, sleazy and untrustworthy as "Hunter's Lodge".
There must be some reason for this... :-)

--Alexander Eichener
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Sporterizing the 96 Swedish - part 4 of 4
by WClark1046@aol.com (Ward M. Clark)

Last month I told you about the final assembly of my daughter's 38 Swedish on a fiberglass stock. This month we go to the range!

I had fired the rifle in its original military trim with some old surplus military ammo. I was getting 2" to 3 inch groups over the open military sights - not bad for an off-the-rack surplus bullet-launcher. The bore was bright and clean once all the goop was removed, so at the time of original firing I had high hopes for the rifle after customizing.

I wasn't disappointed. I obtained 60 rounds of Sellior&Bellot factory ammo, loaded with a 131-grain soft point spitzer bullet. First group - bang bang bang - look through the spotting scope - about 1".
Great! Sellior&Bellot, I'm told, is not to be confused with a lot of the cheap European crap that is passed off as sporting ammo these days. The results proved that out. Groups stayed under 2" for the S&B ammo, which I had bought primarily for the brass!

Reloading that brass with a 42 grains of 4350 and a 120 grain Nosler Ballistic Tip gave similar results - groups averaged under 2" at 100 yards. This with the scope cranked up to 9X. Turning the scope down to 3X opened groups up to near 3", although some of this may have been fatigue on my part as this was at the end of a 2-hour bench session. The rifle is sighted in 2" high at

100 - the kid is hitting
pop cans at 100 yards from field positions - and we are ready to go antelope
hunting in October!

Century Int'l Arms Mexican "Custom Sporter"
by WClark1046@aol.com (Ward M. Clark)

A few months ago, I noticed that Century International Arms, those Mauser
importers extraordinaire,
were offering a "Custom Sporter." The "Custom Sporter" was built on an M1910
Mexican small ring
'98 action, with a tapered, 22" .308 barrel and a "walnut finish hardwood" stock.
The listed price was
a few cents under \$200, so I figured, why not?

In due course, the rifle arrived. Upon first examination, I figured I had got
about what I expected. The
stock was fitted OK, but the wood was a mediocre grade of birch, with an
unconvincing muddy brown
stain. There was a cheap looking plastic buttplate installed and no swivels. The
action and barrel had
been fairly well polished and blued; the stock bolt handle had been cut and
rewelded to accommodate
a scope. Weaver scope mount bases and a MkII low-swing safety completed the rig.
The bolt was
brightly polished, ran smoothly in the action, there was no play in the action and
headspacing was fine.
I planned to fit a new stock, break up the crappy birch one for kindling, and have
a nice little rifle.

A friend of mine likes to point out, Man plans and God laughs.

Luckily, I was not able to get to the range for a while, so I ended up looking
over and handling the little
.308 before I had a chance to shoot it. At one point I discovered that you could
cock the rifle, apply the
safety, pull the trigger, and upon releasing the safety, the striker would drop!
An unsafe and potentially
disastrous situation at best, and it did not speak well for Century's Quality
Assurance practices. I called
Century and informed them of the problem. They responded that they had no more of
the rifles in
question, but that I could return it for repair or refund.

Now I don't always do what I should. Perhaps I should have washed my hands of
that rifle and got my
money back. Of course, by now you've guessed that I didn't. I've always liked
small ring '98's for some
reason or another. I decided to rework the rifle myself. Another orphan had
found a home in the Clark
gun rack.

Now my first consideration was the safety. I have always used the MkII type
low-swing safeties on
Mausers, but this time I decided to try something different. I ordered a Bold
Optima trigger with a side-mounted safety, and a solid clean-top bolt shroud from
Brownells. These fit the rifle well - the bolt had
a nice slick appearance and the Bold trigger worked flawlessly. I looked the
rifle over again, still in the
crappy birch stock. Shooting it with Federal Classic 150-grain High-Shoks and an
old 4X Bushnell
Sportview scope gave me about 3" groups. Not great, but at least it's safe.

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My thinking at this point is that I need a rifle for close-quarter work that packs more wallop than my .30-30 Marlin, so next the Mexican will get the barrel bobbed to 18", fitted with a Mannlicher-style stock and a small, bright low-power scope. I still don't regret buying the Century Sporter, although it wasn't usable as sold. The way the project is shaping up, I doubt I'll regret rebuilding it myself, either.

Handloading Horror Stories
by Leyteno@aol.com

After tactfully extracting information from my handloading acquaintances I have deduced that they are not knowledgeable enough about handloading to be pulling a joke on me. I saw the remains of a Swede in the gun shop and the ruptured case-much of which was firmly brazed to the inside of the chamber. The powder used was an amalgam of stuff that Delbert Doofus inherited from his father along with a RCBS loading machine and lots of .357 magnum brass. Apparently he married up all the partial cans into two full ones since the powder grains all looked pretty much the same size and shape to him. Time and or roaches had pretty much eaten away the labels but he did remember the number 31 on one of the cans was still legible. I'm guessing 3031. These guys are just a little too big for me to even hint as to how stupid they are. They bought some very well made bullets about 150 to 160 grain SP at a local gun show loose in a plastic baggy. No brand name but they look to be high quality. The case was filled with this powder "purt near where it angles off" (the shoulder) and the bullet seated about 1/4 of its length in the case. These measurements are of necessity pretty general but close. Frankly I felt uncomfortable holding the thing in my hand.

Further inquires disclosed that it was the second round fired that lunched the carbine, not the first as previously thought. I figure this is about a 2700 fps load which is not all that exceptional in some of the 6.5 magnums for the projectile. Unfortunately, I'm referring to the bolt's velocity. One of the locking lugs is distorted as if it had been worked on with a hammer. Sort of hard to describe. The local gunsmith refuses to consider attempting any repairs. There must be someone in heaven who looks out for people like this. The odd thing is that all but one of the group are avid blackpowder hunters. Perhaps they think that smokeless can be diddled with like black powder or Pyrodex. Just thought I'd clear up a few details. I have a wicked sense of humor but don't like to see someone get hurt but if they don't want to listen-oh well!

The one I'll call Aimo has a 7.7 Jap "takedown" which is almost certainly a paratroop model Arisaka. I found 40 rounds of ammo for it at a local gun show and bought it for him at 20 cents/round and gave it to him. Got a lot of beer, pickled eggs, and indigestion in return but figured that I'd done my good deed for the day. Told him to take it in and have the headspace checked before he fired it. The rifle was in practically NRA excellent condition and seemed tight. Pretty strong looking action but I know nothing of the metallurgy involved. Hope he doesn't turn it into a .303 Kami kaze

Magnum. He's heard something about using 30-06 brass for loads. Doesn't sound right to me.

Mounting a Scout Scope on the M96 Swedish Mauser
by jphelps@handel.jlc.net (J Phelps)

Part I

The whole story started when a hunting buddy got his FFL. This was quickly followed by a catalog from Century. Followed shortly by me decision that I needed a M96. The M96 turned out to be very nice and shot so well I decided to try again. This time it was an Argentine built M1909 carbine. This rifle is real pretty from 30ft. Up close the stock looks rather poor, sort of like a heavily used SKS. The metal work is, for the most part, OK. Accuracy is mediocre with 3" groups at 100yds and the fired cases are engraved with what looks for all the world like wood borer tracks. While I can't see any chamber damage, it must be there.

At any rate, The M96 was a shooter and talk quickly turned to the subject of mounting a scope. a receiver scope was ruled out for two reasons. First, it would have required bolt handle work and drilling the receiver. Second, based on my in-depth research (I had strapped an old Bushnell phantom 1.3X pistol scope to the barrel with rubber bands and looked through it) I had decided that the scout scope concept was worth a try. Checking the usual sources I quickly determined that B-Square made a rear sight mounted scope base and that it cost at least \$60. This seemed rather excessive for an \$88 rifle. I also didn't like the idea that it mounted on the sight leaf. Removing the rear leaf and spring, I took a few crude measurements and decided that I could make my own mounting plate. The mounting plate would replace the sight leaf and be secured in the front by the sight's pivot pin. The rear of the plate would be held by a cap screw. The cap screw would use a small threaded hole already present in the sight base. This small screw was used by the arsenal to hold the sight base in place while it was being soldered to the barrel.

For material I found a piece of 1/4 inch band iron. I used a hack saw to cut this to the overall dimensions of 2.91" long and .663 wide. These are very close to the dimensions of the sight leaf and, as long as the plate fits into the base, not especially critical. At the front of the plate is a tongue .34" long and .438" wide. The tongue echos the shape of the tongue on the sight leaf except that the one on the leaf is only .25" long and .432" wide. The additional length and width of the tongue are important and the dimensions on someone else's rifle may be slightly different. The width in particular is important as it is an interference fit into the ears of the sight base. A tight fit is important for rigidity.

The additional length of the tongue is also important since it prevents the plate

from pivoting. On my rifle, the combination of the press fit, pivot pin and the forward protrusion of the tongue secure the plate so well that the screw at the rear is probably not necessary. So far the machining work required to make this plate is easy. I rough cut the length, width and tongue with a hack saw. The finish dimensions were cut with a mill file and abrasive paper.

The next step was the ugly part. On my M96 rear sight base, there are rails that taper upward towards the rear of the base, causing the mounting plate to slope steeply to the front. This may not be the case with M38s or M94s as I have seen at least one M38 without them. If the floor of your sight base is flat, then you are home free and can skip the next step. Unfortunately, on my rifle, the bottom of the plate had to be relieved to allow the plate to sit parallel to the bore. The relief is a taper starting approx. 1" back from the front of the plate. It finishes with the rear of the plate being .114" thick. I cut the relief by sawing, filing, grinding and sanding. As the plate began to fit, I checked the taper by test fitting. Since the barrel does not have an appreciable taper at this point, I could take my measurements by measuring from the bottom of the barrel to the top of the plate. I fitted the piece until the front and the back were the same height. This is important since any significant misalignment would cause your scope run out of vertical adjustment before it could be zeroed. And yes, doing this with hand tools was laborious. Maybe an aluminum plate would be easier to make. a milling machine would make it a snap.

Once the plate is fitted and level, the next step is to drill holes for the screw and the pivot pin. To drill the hole for the pin, I installed the plate and made sure that it was firmly seated against the bottom of the sight base. Then I clamped the barrel in a vise and drilled from halfway from each side with a hand drill. This seems like an imprecise way to do things but, in retrospect, this may not be a bad thing. In my case, the slightly misalignment of the holes helped insure that the plate was pressed firmly against the sight base and that the pin was firmly held. You should use caution to ensure that the drill does not ream the sight base holes to a larger size. This would be easy to do and have an adverse effect on accuracy. To locate the screw hole, I backed the factory set screw part way out of the base and, after installing the plate over it, tapped the plate with a hammer. The top of the screw made a mark that I center punched and drilled. a cap screw of the correct length and approximately the same diameter and thread were force fitted into the factory hole. The hardened cap screw self tapped itself into the hole. Someone more concerned with preserving the rifle might be able to match the thread and diameter of the original hole and avoid re-threading it.

So far, what you have is a flat, rigid plate where your leaf sight used to be. The next step is to attach

a sight base. In my experimentation I used three different bases, two intended for T/C rail mount scopes and one intended for using Weaver rings on a Marlin lever action rifle. The main criteria is that the base have a hole pattern that fits, or can be made to fit, on the mounting plate and that it has a low profile. The low profile is important because the stock of an M96 was intended for iron sights and a scope mounted too high will not line up well when you shoulder the rifle. Using low rings is also a good idea. I have found Weaver's low rings to be about the lowest available. Once you have decided on a base, carefully measure and scribe a center line on the mounting plate. Center punch the mounting holes using the base as a template. The final step is to drill and tap the holes. With regards to the tapping the holes, I could not find a 6-48 tap locally so I substituted a 6-32. This worked fine and also allowed me to find longer screws for mounting the base. Longer screws may be necessary if the base was intended for mounting on a curved surface. More patient workers could get screws and taps from Brownells. I finished the mounting plate by polishing it with wet and dry sandpaper and then cold bluing.

Overall, the mounting plate method for attaching a long eye relief scope is reasonable compromise. It is mechanically reliable and requires no permanent modifications to the rifle. It also provides a lower scope mount than the B-Square base. I initially used an old 1.3X Bushnell Phantom pistol scope and found that it provided fast target acquisition and encouraged shooting with both eyes open. Unfortunately 1.3X really provides no magnification and the cross hairs were too fine for hunting. I later tried 2X Leupold, 2.5X T/C and 4X Burris pistol scopes and found that the 2X Leupold was the best compromise between field of view and magnification. I attempted to use a 2-7 variable but found that eye relief and field of view became problems. These were also problems with the 4X scope. The only drawback to using the mounting plate was that I could never find a base and ring combination that was as low as the rail mount for the Phantom. Nor could I find a satisfactory add-on pad to raise the comb. This resulted in my next modification - mounting a scope base directly on the barrel.

Since I told Ward I would send him an article on this more than a month ago, I think that I will stop here and make my additional modifications the subject for another issue.

 Publisher's comments

a few varied comments this month.

First, thanks to all Leyteno@aol.com and jphelps@handel.jlc.net (J Phelps) for contributing material this month. All of your contributions are what will keep this newsletter going, and I think we're off to a great start.

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Second - I spent some time looking at some of the posts in the rec.animals.politics newsgroup last week. It is enlightening to look at the rhetoric put forth by the ARW's (Animal Rights Wackos.) If you ever have a bit of spare time, take a look at the maturity level of the posts made in the rec.hunting or the rec.guns newsgroups. Then hop over to the rec.animals.politics group and look at the adolescent ranting of the ARW's. I will admit I got a few good laughs out of it.

Mind you, there are some intelligent people making reasoned arguments on both sides of various issues in that newsgroup. Look for the posts where the subject is in all capital letters. Those are the ranters, and they are (thankfully) in the minority.

Third - I have read several posts in rec.guns - as some of you no doubt have also - concerning 6.5X55 brass manufactured by PMC. The posts cited case head separations after two loadings, constant trimming required with mild loads, and so on. If any of you have had similar experiences with PMC brass, write me a note and I'll post it in the June issue. I'm using Sellier&Bellot and Federal brass and both are of uniformly fine quality.

That's all for now - I've got a beauty of a Steyr-built 98 large ring, wearing a .30-06 barrel, that's waiting on my workbench for a new stock.

-- Ward