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By: *Ward M. Clark (wclark1046@aol.com)*

Reader's comments

This is a follow up to an article I wrote for the March 1996 Mauser Newsletter.

Do to weather and other obligations, it was June of 1996 before I got to fire my Persian Mauser. I picked up some 196 grain fmj 8mm at a couple of gun shows and purchased both Winchester 170 grain soft point and some S&B 196 grain soft point ammo at local gun shops.

The range was one of my uncles' pastures and the rest was the top of my Nissan pickup. The 8mm fmj fired to point of aim. Five shot groups at approx. 100 yards ran about 4 ½ inches. These groups were strung vertically and I would say it was due to small sights and my aiming.

The S&B also shot to point of aim. The recoil was about the same for this load and the fmj. Groups were about 4 inches for 5 shots.

Last were the Winchester 170-grain soft points. There was about a 20% decrease in recoil. This load shot about 3 inches lower than the other two. The best group shot with this was about 3 1/4 inches for 5 rounds.

It should be noted that the first two loads were shot on a nice Kansas day with a LITE breeze.(wind speed was about 15 mph) I just had to shoot it. I couldn't wait any longer.

The Winchester load was shot on a warm day with almost no wind.

My wife shot a doe with the 8mm during deer season in Nov 96. It was a one shot stop. The shot was a little high and did penetrate completely through. This was with the S&B ammo. It was about a 70-yard shot.

In a moment of weakness, I parted with my Persian to a gentleman who had bought one of the collector grade Persians and wanted one to shoot. While it went to a good home, this is one I wish I would have kept.

William B Boyle (ronin@ksu.edu)

The last two Swedes I received from SAMCO were in excellent shape. I ordered 1 M96 and 1 M38. I don't know how fussy you are when it comes to quality but so far I have not had a BAD rifle from SAMCO. Both were select and after cleaning them up I'm real proud of them.

I got started late in this rifle business. Mostly was a revolver man while on the Police Dept. When I retired in 1990 a friend of mine introduced me to the rifle game. Started out with two VZ-24's from SOG. \$79.95 each in good condition. Cleaned them up, steamed out some dents in the stocks and re-barreled them. One

in .308 the other in 30.06. They garner a lot of attention at the range. At 100 yards they're right on. Further out it's my eyes that offer a challenge.

The last issue of the paper was probably one of the best that I have seen so far.

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Hey Fellow Mauser fans,

Lookie what a friend sent me:

<http://www.terrestrial.com/~wpoolejr/swedescore.html>

Bill Poole
Scottsdale, AZ
(wpoolejr@terrestrial.com)

Mr. Clark:

I have purchased a Husqvarna, c. 1950s. It appears to have an FN action, but may have their own production action. L. Olson's book is not clear when the switch was made. It matters because the peep sight for a Husky is listed as the 98 sight, while the FN is a different sight. I presume the curve radius of the bridge is different.

Do you know when/serial number? Husqvarna stopped using FN actions?

P. M. Hayden (pmhayden@sos.net)

What IS it? Pre-1899 Mausers! (Reprinted from Edition 1, Volume 1, February 1996)
by Jim Rawles (Jwrawles@aol.com)

Is My Mauser Pre-1899?

I often get e-mail and phone calls inquiring as to whether or not a particular gun is pre-1899. Why? Under U.S. law, any firearm actually made before Jan. 1, 1899, is not considered a modern "firearm", and is thus legally "antique". No FFL is required to buy or sell such guns across state lines. Thus they are in the same legal category as a muzzle-loader. Some State or local restrictions may apply, however.

Shootable pre-1899 production cartridge guns now bring a 10 to 20% premium over identical condition guns made AFTER Jan. 1, 1899. Based on market trends, I expect that premium to increase considerably in the next few years. Many of my customers are commenting that they previously had no interest in "antique" guns, but now want one or more because they fear additional gun laws. For the time being at least, pre-1899 are completely EXEMPT from all federal laws. Presumably, this would also mean that they would be exempt if we ever have to face nationwide gun registration....

Here is a partial list of guidelines for determining if any particular Mauser is pre-1899:

Mauser M1896 "Broomhandle" pistols with serial # below 15,000--(most have cone ring hammers) are pre-1899

Mauser Bolt Action Rifles:

M1889 Belgian, most rifles are pre-1899. However, most carbines with yatagan bayonet mounts are all legally modern.

M1890 Turkish, all are pre-1899

M1891 Argentine Contract, all are pre-1899

M1891/1892/1893 Spanish rifles, all are pre-1899

M1893/M1895 Spanish *carbines*, --see date on receiver ring

M1893 Turkish Contract rifles, all are pre-1899

M1894 Brazilian Contract, all are pre-1899

M1894 Swedish carbines --see date on receiver ring--about 40% are pre-1899

M1895 Chilean Contract by Ludwig Loewe are pre-1899 (Most DWMs are not!)

M1895 Contracts for China, Mexico, Persia, Spanish, and Uruguay--see date on receiver ring, (if undated, it is anyone's guess.)

M1896 Swedish rifles --see date on receiver ring--only about 1% are pre-1899

M1896 German, all are pre-1899

M1898 German--see date on receiver ring--less than 1% are pre-1899

Pre-1899 Mausers Are Cheap, Fun and Safe to Shoot!

In response to repeated requests by e-mail, the following is a brief review that describes the differences between the various older smokeless era Mauser bolt actions, and some answer to frequently asked questions.

For full details on Mausers, see the book Mauser Bolt Rifles by Ludwig Olson. But here is a description of smokeless powder era (but still pre-1899 antique) Mausers, in a nutshell:

Model 1891: Single column magazine (5 rd.) that protrudes below the stock (like on a Carcano), small ("tab") extractor, small ring diameter barrel, usually chambered in 7.65 mm Argentine Mauser (also sometimes called 7.65 Belgian Mauser. You may also see it labeled as 7.65x53 or 7.65x54. This is a relatively hard to find cartridge. None of the major North American manufacturers load for it. Ballistically, it is a good cartridge (about like a .300 Savage). Right now, the only maker of soft nose (boxer primed) 7.65 Argentine ammo is Norma. It sells for about \$25 a box. There is also quite a bit of Berdan primed (non-corrosive) original Argentine military full metal jacket ("ball") available. It is packed in boxes of 15 rounds, and sells for only about \$6 a box.

Model 1893/1894/M1895/M1896. This was the first modern-style Mauser action. Used by Brazil, Chile, Sweden, Spain, Turkey, and several other countries. Double column magazine (5 rd.) that does not protrude. It has a full-length extractor that is much larger than that of the M1891. (It is very similar to the Model 1898 extractor).

An aside: This is the same extractor that Winchester just put back on its Model 70 rifle. (They had this style extractor on their pre-1964 model 70s.) They are touting it a some radical new development called "Positive Feed". Actually, the guys at Winchester just re-adopted a 102 year old Mauser design. (Those dweebs!)

The Model 1893 through 1896 were essentially low-pressure actions. Like the M1891, they are small ring Mauser actions. Most are chambered in 7 x 57 Mauser or 6.5 x 55 (Swedish) Mauser, which are relatively low-pressure smokeless cartridges. However, many of these guns (mainly Turkish contract 1893s and a few Spanish and Chilean Model 1895s) were re-heat treated and arsenal upgraded to 8 x 57 mm Mauser, .308, and even .30-06. These particular ones are perfectly safe rebarrel and to shoot in moderate pressure chamberings like: .250 Savage, .300 Savage, 6.5 x 55 mm (Swedish) Mauser, .35 Remington, and 7x57 mm. Some folks still re-barrel re-heat treated examples Model 1893/94/95/96s to higher pressure chamberings like .243, 6mm Remington, .257 Roberts, and .308. I used to do this as well, but have discontinued making up these rifles due to concerns about liability lawsuits. (Even if it was a remote possibility, I wanted to err on the side of caution.)

Larry Ellis was nice enough to provide the following info on the Chilean contract Model 1895 Mausers produced by Ludwig Loewe of Berlin and DWM: Contrary to popular belief, the M1895 "Chilean" did *not* have a third safety lug like the Model 1898 Mausers. To quote Olson's "Mauser Bolt Rifles":

"... Another feature of the Chilean Model 95 action was a shoulder on the receiver a few thousandths of an inch behind the bolt handle. The bolt handle would engage this shoulder and serve as a safety lug if the locking lugs would let go." The third locking lug (or in the case of the Chilean M95, the receiver shoulder) comes into play only *after* there has been a catastrophic failure of the bolt. They are intended to protect the shooter from being hit in the face by the bolt after both locking lugs have been sheared off. This arrangement was not considered an adequate safety feature and was replaced by the third locking lug on the Model 1898 Mauser. (See description below.)

If you want to build a sporter on the M1893/94/95/96 type action, I recommend the Model 1893 receivers that were originally made in Oberndorf, Germany under contract for the Turkish government. These are currently available at very reasonable prices from Century International. Production for this contract ended in 1897, so ALL of these receivers are legally antique. (I'd be happy to send anyone who requests it a hard copy of a BATF letter that confirms this, and also states that sporterizing or re-barreling or re-chambering them does not change their exempt status.) The M1893 Turkish actions are currently the best choice because they are as I already stated, very inexpensive, and because they were all made before 1898, and because they were re-heat treated in the 1930s, when they were arsenal rebarreled from 7.65 mm Belgian Mauser to 8 x 57 Mauser. This makes them a bit stronger than other pre-1899 Mausers.

Because 1893/94/95/96-series rifle production spanned the legal "antique" threshold (Dec. 31, 1898--under the U.S. Gun Control Act of 1968), not all of them are legally antique. Some of them, like the Swedes, are clearly marked on the receiver bridge with the year of manufacture. So are many of the Mausers made in Spain. I wish that they all were, because it would make identifying "antiques" vs. "moderns" a lot easier.

The Model 1898 Mauser was a slight improvement over the M1893-to-1896. It uses a "large ring" barrel (about .20 inches larger diameter in the thread diameter), and virtually all M1898s are high pressure actions. Most are also about .30 inches longer in bolt throw than the M1893/95 series, making them capable of accepting very long cartridges (like .270 and .30-06). Combined, this has made the model 1898 a natural for building sporters for the North American market for many years. This was the most successful Mauser, with total production of over 100 million rifles. It also had the largest number of variations.

At one time or another almost all the world powers have produced a copy of the M98. Countries that have produced significant numbers of M98 Mausers include Germany, the Czechs, The Yugoslavs, Hungary, Belgium, Austria, Spain, Argentina, Mexico, China, and the United States. Most of the visible differences between the M1895 series rifles and the M1898 are in the bolt. The M98 cocks on opening (unlike the M88 and M93 which cocked on closing); the gas ports in the bolt were enlarged, the front portion of the bolt shroud was extended to form a larger gas shield, a locking device was added to the bolt shroud to prevent the shroud from unscrewing during firing, a third locking lug (the "safety lug") was added to the bolt, and the shape of both the firing pin and the interior of the bolt body were changed to prevent the tip of the firing pin from protruding through the bolt face unless the bolt was fully closed.

Unfortunately, 99 percent of Model 1898s you will find were made AFTER January 1, 1899. Thus, they don't have the legal (FFL exempt) status advantages of most of the earlier production Mausers. (Bummer!)

Ballistically, both 7 x 57 and 8 x 57 are good cartridges. The 7mm has higher velocity, and is a bit flatter shooting. The 8 x 57 slightly lower velocity, but can accept bullet weights of up to 240 grains! (This makes it great for mule deer, elk, or moose). Expect 1.5"-to-2" groups at 100 yards from either cartridge in a well-bedded rifle. Some of my 8mms have dark grooves, so they may group a little wider.

Winchester and Remington both make factory soft nose for both 7 x 57 and 8 x 57. Dealer cost is around \$11.80 a box. Full retail is close to \$19.00 a box. It is all boxer primed and reloadable. I've got some available (mail order) if you can't find any locally.

Military surplus ball for both 7mm and 8 mm Mauser is cheap and plentiful for both cartridges--just make sure you specify stuff that is non-corrosively primed. (That is what I sell, and I refuse to sell anything that is corrosive.) Nearly all of the military surplus Mauser ammo is Berdan primed and not reloadable without special tools.

There has been a LOT of discussion on the net about Mausers chambered in 6.5 x 55 mm (Swedish). Suffice it to say that it is an excellent deer class cartridge. It is very flat shooting and extremely accurate. Remington and Federal now load for it, so the cost of ammo has fallen to about \$12.00/box wholesale. (Full retail is \$18.75 a box.) There is also still a fairly large quantity of Berdan-primed Swedish military surplus ball ammo on the market at relatively low prices. I've got both soft nose commercial ammo and Swedish military surplus ball available (mail order) if you can't find any locally.

About the only drawback of the 6.5 x 55 is that it uses a different rim diameter from the other Mauser cartridges. This makes reloadable brass hard to find--at least for now. With the increasing popularity of this cartridge in North America, there should be good supplies of once-fired boxer primed brass available within a couple of years. The stripper clips for this cartridge are also currently hard to find. They often sell for \$1.50 each or more at gun shows. (I buy them in quantity, so I can sell them for \$1.00) Again, it is the odd rim diameter that causes the scarcity.

You probably can't buy a M1896 Swedish Mauser without an FFL. Unfortunately, full-scale production of the Swedish M1896 rifles didn't begin until 1899. That makes virtually all of them legally MODERN, and they have to be sold FFL-to-FFL (4473 "yellow form" paperwork and all that nonsense...)

The other option is perhaps looking for a Model 1894 Swedish Mauser carbine. Nearly half of these were made before 1899, and are thus legally antique. They are handy little dudes, with a 17.7 inch barrel, and kick just a bit more than the rifles (M1896s) or short rifles (M1938s). The Swede carbine in my personal collection was made in 1898 at Carl Gustafs Gevarsfaktori. I previously owned one (in rougher condition) that was made in 1895 at Oberndorf, Germany.

I really like the Swedish carbines. They are very compact and handy. Unfortunately, they are scarce enough that they sell for between \$275 and \$550, depending on condition, and whether or not they are pre-1899.

S.O. Wendell provided the following answers to FAQ's about the brass stock disks and the aluminum trajectory compensation plates found on many Swedish Mausers:

The Model 1896 was originally made for the round nose m/1894 6.5x55 mm bullet. It was replaced by a pointed bullet in 1941. Since the sights were for the round nose the rectangular aluminum plate was added to show how the point of aim, and the distance markings on the sights, had to be changed.

"Sikte for trubbkula" means "Sights for round-nose bullets"

"Skjutning med spetskula" means "Shooting with pointed bullets"

"Avstand" means "Distance"

"Sikte/Rp" (Rp is short for Rikt punkt) means "Sights/Point of Aim"

The figures, i.e. "100-250 300/-3" mean that at an actual distance of 100 to 250 meters you should use the 300 meter scale on the sights, and aim low (I'd say 3 decimeters, or 1 foot low), since the higher velocity of the pointed bullet means a flatter trajectory. At an actual distance of 400 meters you should use the scale for 500 meters and aim dead-on, and so on.

It seems like the M1896's, with sights for round-nose bullets, were fitted with the aluminum plate during the war, while the Model 1938 carbines (those made after 1941 at least) had sights made for the pointed bullets, and had yellow decals (or aluminum plates) on the stock indicating point of aim for shooting with round-nose bullets.

A round brass disk in the stock tells the exact measurement of the bore. It has a scale that goes from 6.46 mm up to 6.59 mm. The exact bore diameter is marked on the disc with a small triangular mark. The state of the barrel, in three steps, 1, 2 and 3 could also be indicated.

In closing, antique Mausers are fun to shoot, historically interesting, and incredibly well built. They exhibit true Old World craftsmanship! They are also a relative bargain--especially compared to Colts or Winchesters made in the same era. A rifle with comparable fit and finish if built today would cost well over \$1,000. Unlike many other pre-1899 rifles, most M1891 and later Mausers are perfectly safe to shoot, and chambered in modern, smokeless powder, high velocity cartridges.

Jim Rawles, Proprietor	The obligatory quote...
Clearwater Trading Co.	"Our liberty is protected
c/o P.O. Box 2289	by four boxes...
Orofino, Idaho [83544]	The ballot box, the jury box
voice: (208) 476-4440	the soap box, and the cartridge box"
e-mail: Jwrawles@aol.com	- Anonymous

Let me know if you'd like my UPDATED and expanded catalog of shootable antique guns (primarily pre-1899 production "No FFL" Mausers and Winchesters), gun accessories (mainly clips and magazines), ammunition, backpacks, sleeping bags, waterproof gun/gear cases, and coins. (Due to AOL e-mail length restrictions, you'll get the catalog in two parts.) You can also now read my new shareware novel, *The Gray Nineties*. It is piece of speculative survival fiction about a socio-economic collapse and its aftermath. Hard copies are *NOT* available, but you can download a soft copy of the entire text free of charge from the web site at: <http://www.eskimo.com/~hmcom/4/db/gn/cover.html>

Publisher's Comments

By: *Ward M. Clark* (wclark1046@aol.com)

Amazing that it's been two years of this newsletter already, but here we are with the first edition of Volume 3!

Since this month marks the beginning of our third year, I have taken the liberty of reproducing one of my favorite articles from our very first issue, namely Jim Rawles' description of pre-1899 Mausers and the various action types.

As e-mail technology grows, hopefully I'll start including scanned photos, and so on, with the Monthly. The last few months saw the change to RTF format, which IMHO has improved the look of the Monthly quite a bit, for those who can read the RTF file.

February will have me in Arizona again, pursuing javelina; however, not with a Mauser this time, as we drew for the handgun season. I'll be pursuing stink-pigs with a Smith&Wesson 586 .357 Magnum. Maybe I'll draw for rifles next time around – I think the M94 Swede would make a great pig rifle.

Any readers who can make it to the March Montrose, CO gun show or the April Tanner show in Denver, I'll see you there!

Until next month - Good Shooting!

Ward