

THE MAUSER MONTHLY Edition 1, Volume 5 February 2000
The newsletter for fans of Mauser rifles - the REAL "Rifleman's Rifle!"
Editor/Publisher - Ward M. Clark, Aurora, Colorado, USA

Fourth Anniversary Issue!

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Reader's comments

Shooting NZ portal - the entrance to the Shooting NZ site.
A brand new New Zealand shooting site.
<http://shootingnz.com/>

David M. (davidmac@paradise.net.nz)

My name is Gary Koenig and I live in Breton, Alberta, Canada. I am very interested in Mauser rifles. I have recently picked up an early Oberndorf sporter with double triggers and the claw scope mounting system. Any ideas where I could get scope rings for this. It is 8x57 JS. How would I get on your newsletter ? Any information would be greatly appreciated.

THANKING YOU IN ADVANCE

Gary Koenig (gkoenig@telusplanet.net)

Steve's comments in the January 2000 issue of The Mauser Monthly, made me think of the conversions I have using the Mauser action.

Several years ago there were numerous companies selling the Israeli 7.62 barrels, large ring Mauser, in the white. One company in Illinois was selling them for 5 for \$100.00. These were NEW and of course I could not pass on this.

I have converted two VZ24's and 1 K98k to this caliber. Many rounds have gone through these actions with no problems. I also have one in 22-250.

It is my understanding that the Mauser actions, especially the VZ24 action are some of the strongest in the world. At the club I belong to, I have seen numerous conversions on the Mauser action.

Those who "QUAIL" at the conversion probably do so mainly because they are purists.

John Milewski (jmilewsk@execpc.com)

(Response to above)

Hi Clark and John,

I am not worried about the opinions of "purist" who do not want *any* milsurp firearm altered. At this point, we are swimming in some really fine large ring Mausers, many of which have already been altered by having their original crest and other markings ground off! These rifles have largely lost their collector value. The grindings, along with the fact that many have become reworked parts rifles with few if any matching numbers, supports my position that it is not a "sin" to revive these great pieces by re-barreling, re-stocking and putting them back into service as wonderfully unique hunting or target rifles. My latest project is putting one of Century's "New, in the white barrels in 7.62x39mm" onto an Argentine M-1909 carbine. With the Mannlicher style stock, this piece should not only be handsome, but a good choice for a woods stalking rifle for whitetail deer.

I will report on the progress as it comes down.

Kindest regards,

Steve Ashe (stevena@clark.net)

For those of you into Mausers, check out the cover of the Jan 2000 Precision Shooting magazine. There is a picture of a gorgeous magnum Mauser built by Hoffman Arms in 1924 chambered in .505 Gibbs. Unfortunately there is not an article about it, just a 1-page description of the +ACI-gun on the cover.

Dave Berryhill (www.berryhillguns.com)

A Possible New Magnum Mauser?

By: Robert Barstow (teenut@hotmail.com) and Eric (mauser416@interconnect.net)

I thought this might be of interest. Robert Bastow of The Express Rifle Company can be reached at teenut@hotmail.com. As the letter says, it's still in the works.

Today I picked up my birthday present. It's an 1891 Argentine in 7.65. I'm no expert but, I would rate it darn close to excellent. Paid \$175. The crest is removed, all serial numbers match, stock has all the cartouches and the blue looks almost 100%. The bore looks promising, only a thorough cleaning will tell. The owner also had a carbine for \$175 but the stock had been cut at the band and at least one sling mount was missing. Haven't fired mine yet. With ammo at \$40 a box, I'll have to wait a little while.

Here's the letter.

As some of you are aware I have been investigating the possibility of building an oversized Magnum Mauser type action.

This is now much closer to reality than I ever dreamed when I began the investigation process. Yesterday I plunked down several hundred thousand dollars and bought a complete, working, Machine/Tool and Die shop!! 7000 square feet, ten employees and a bank of CNC machining and turning centers plus Sinker EDM, wire cut EDM, plasma cutting, welding and heat treatment facilities.

Obviously, my main priority will be to sustain and increase the current workload on the shop...My Family and Employees do like to eat regular meals.

However, this is a golden opportunity to put my dreams to work. When machinery like that is standing idle between jobs... anything you can put on them gets machined, virtually for FREE!!

So I intend to tool up and produce my Super Magnum Actions; in fact a whole range of custom actions!!

First will come a Double Square Bridge, solid side wall, Mauser "Clone" with a bolt diameter of .750" and a magazine length of 4". This will take care of the Gibbs 505 and wildcats based on that basic case. I plan to contract with a brass maker, to produce a Gibbs Basic cylindrical case, 3 1/4" ling. 1/8" longer than the standard Gibbs. It will have a "Generic" headstamp.

Next will come a larger version, slightly bigger all round, with a 800" diameter bolt and a box length of 4.25"!! This should satisfy the masochists among us!!! This will be suitable for the standard RIMMED 3 1/4" .577 Nitro Express. A suitable magazine box for the rimmed round will be available.

The traditional Mauser "Inner Ring" breaching will be standard, as, of course, will the Mauser third safety lug, guide rib and long "Controlled Feed" claw extractor. One variation will be the ejector, which will be of the Pre 64 Model 70 style, angled BENEATH the left hand locking lug..instead of passing through it. Bolt stop will be traditional Mauser, but the underside of the action will be reinforced for rigidity...a la Model 70. Triggers will also be Model 70 style "over-ride" type.

For the experimenters among us, I will be marketing, at reasonable cost, a basic rimless case, based on a 50BMG case redrawn to a .700" rim diameter (from .800" (I have the punch presses, the toolmakers and the expertise to be able to do this. I hope to offer these cases at \$1.50 each!!!

I will also be developing, along with a well known quality bullet maker and a maker of high grade CUT rifled barrels, a NEW CALIBER: the 550" 3 1/4" Rimless Nitro Express. Arrangements are already in hand for the first barrels and full patch, steel-jacketed bullets in a grain weight of 650.

Finally I intend to produce Custom Quality STANDARD sizes of Mauser clones: Double square bridge, solid side wall etc. Single square bridge and thumbcuts, with clip slots will be an option. These will come initially in Magnum and Kurtz lengths. Solid bottom, single shot "Bench Rest" actions will be available too.

Additionally I plan to manufacture and sell a range of Mauser type bottom metal with hinged, straddle, floor plates. These will be suitable, for instance for those who want to build a .500 Jeffery on a standard 98 action, without needing to have the ugly and persnickety single column magazine. I have already made several of these for myself and the staggered box works perfectly!!

Other products will include TAKEDOWN versions of the above actions. Plus, custom grade, folding leaf express sights, barrel swivel bands, and front sight ramped bands, side swing safety shrouds for Mausers etc.

Eventually I will supply complete barreled and headspaced actions, they will come with the option of being "In the White, unpolished", ready for you or your gunsmith to do the finishing work. This will keep the prices down enormously!!

Prices????

Not finalized yet, but I see no reason why they should not be held to a seasonable level. The custom action makers have been gouging us too long!!!

I would welcome any constructive comments and ideas. Nothing is set in stone yet...EXCEPT the fact that this IS going to happen!!!

No I am NOT taking orders yet... I will let you all know when.

Swedish Mausers as the All-Around Rifle
By: Alex Hawley (alhawley@kans.com)

Well, it's been 2 solid years I've spent with a Swedish Mauser in my hands. In that time, I've worked up loads, tested loads, torn 'em down to the basic parts, customized 'em, shot 'em in original form, read everything I could find on 'em including scores of e-mails, and bagged a couple of deer. I've also built a couple 98 Mausers and 1903 Springfield in the last year. Time to take a pause and reflect a bit. Most of you know, I'm not a collector. Gunsmithing, stockmaking, and hunting is what trips my trigger, so that's what my viewpoint is from as are the following observations.

It's a shame that our tactical weapons wizards are locked in on the .308 Win as are a lot of folks. One can understand it because it has been a military round for many years. However, if they would run their ballistic calculators and compare a 140 grain Match load for the 6.5x55 against the 168 grain Match load for the .308 out at "sniper range" (800-1000 yds), guess who wins? The Swede! There's absolutely nothing the 308 can do that the 6.5x55 can't do better, whether its competition shooting, hunting, or sniping. It simply works because the bullet is optimum in sectional density and ballistic coefficient.

Get out the ballistic calculator again run the following loads: 25-06, 120 grain bullet at 2950 fps; 6.5x55, 120 grain bullet at 2950 fps; 270 Win, 130 grain bullet at 2950 fps. No, I didn't make a typo. All three of these caliber/bullet combos typically run at 2950 fps despite what the manufacturer's ballistic table wants you to believe. One finds that the Swede does just as well and better in ballistics than the vaunted 270 load or the heaviest bullet for the 25. The Swede is maxed out pressure wise at this velocity. With handloading, the 25-06 and 270 can go a bit faster but the end result is totally negligible. In short, the 6.5x55 doesn't give up anything to the other two for a typical deer/elk loading. I've found the Swede works best with the long 140 and 160-grain bullets it was designed for but the 120-grain loads are not to be discounted in any way. Try this comparison on the next person who swears there ain't nuthin' can beat a 270.

A friend recently told me he prefers his 7mm Mag to ensure he has plenty of knock-down power on those 400 yard white tail shots. I asked him how many 400-yard shots he had to take. The answer was none. By far, most of his deer were taken within 100 yards, just like the national average. Out came the ballistic calculator and a quick comparison between the 7mm shoulder-killer and the mild-mannered Swede out to 300 yards. His jaw dropped and he walked away muttering about having to re-think things. Granted, the 7mm Mag will reach out and get something a long ways away. The Army held with the same argument for years for the 30-06. Then one day the brass realized that GI's just flat didn't shoot at anything much beyond 100 yards and 300 yards was about as far as far gets under field conditions. So it goes on the hunting field. I just don't need anything with a 400-yard maximum point blank range. It's too heavy, too expensive and too uncomfortable for frequent use.

Accuracy? Look what G. David Tubb uses to win the high power rifle matches. A 6.5-308. He prefers a short action rifle, which the 6.5x55 is too long for. But, the point is, a 6.5mm bullet and suitable load can be as accurate as rifle accuracy can be defined. I haven't seen any of Mr. Tubb's loadings that are beyond the pressure/velocity constraints of the Swede.

In the great middle ground between pure varmint calibers and big bore polar bear stoppers, the Swede will do quite nicely without shoulder smashing recoil, heaps of powder, and very noticeable barrel erosion. I still like the 30-06 for its topped power but for something truly dangerous, better think of a 375 H&H-class rig. I like my 25-06 for its long range varmint ability, especially here in windy Kansas. The Swede's barrel twist is a tad fast for the short 85 grain varmint bullets but I can make it work almost as good as the 25-06. Actually, one also has to go to slower twist on the 25-06 for really outstanding light bullet performance.

If one HAD to use a Swedish Mauser for a varmint rig, I would recommend converting it to a 250-3000 or 257 Roberts. This is the ONLY circumstance I could understand making sense for departing from the 6.5x55 chambering. On the other end, the action does not make sense for the polar bear stoppers, ala 338 Winchester to 458 Winchester. If you need such a rifle, you know it. Go directly to Model 70, Model 98 or Model 700. Most of us aren't in the business of facing the very dangerous critters so we don't need to go there.

In my baby boomer youth, the 1903 Springfield was the crown jewel of milsurp rifles. The quality was superb, it could handle any 30-06 length cartridge, the basic gun was inexpensive, and surplus barrels were plentiful and versatile. I see the Swede filling a similar niche these days. It doesn't have the caliber versatility of the '03 but so what. Back again to the argument that the 6.5x55 is all you need on non dangerous game, target shooting, et al. One doesn't see very many '03's on the shelves these days and the ones still in original form bring steep prices.

What about rebarrelling? The 96 and 98 Mausers are the easiest of any center fire rifle (had to disqualify the Ruger 10/22) to rebarrel. I fully agree with Frank de-Haas (the Great American Gunsmith's Gunsmith) that unless the barrel has been ruined (or you just HAVE to make it a varmint rifle), there's no reason to put a new one on a Swedish Mauser. If you don't like the military barrel contour, take it to your local gunsmith. The standard barrel can be turned down to a lightweight profile with no sweat. Oh yeah, if you are thinking about varmintizing one, think of this; you can get a M98 action and a new varmint weight barrel for what you'd pay for a Swede off the shelf without rebarrelling. If that don't dissuade someone from varmintizing (extra cash outa da' pocket) a Swede, nothing will.

How does the M96 action compare to the M98? Well, the 98 is technically superior. It is stronger, which also means heavier. It can be adapted to any cartridge from the 22-250 to the 460 Weatherby. It has a better gas venting system for ruptured cartridges. The cock-on-open bolt feels a little better than the cock-on-close. So what! The cock-on-close bolt is not inferior as some folks like to tout. I can live with it just fine. The M96 gas venting works fine (no personal experience here yet). Several army ordinance bureaus in the world have destructively tested both actions; the M96 is more than safe for what it was intended for. They were proofed to 65,000 psi which percentage wise, is a bit more overload than the original '03 proof load of 70,000 psi for the 30-06. Triggers and safety mechanisms are the same for both. There are just as many after market trigger/safety options for the M96 as there are for the M98.

As an aside, if you really want to see how strong these military bolt actions are and what happens when things go afoul, read "Hatcher's Notebook". General Hatcher was the guy who put all those wonderful small arms in GI hands during WWII. He also got to do a LOT of radical experimentation between the two world wars with US Army small arms.

I've carried many a nine pound rifle. These days, I much prefer carrying my seven pound Swede carbine. It's hard to get a scoped M98 to stay at seven pounds without a lot of expensive (and fruitless) modifying. Plus, the Swede just balances better. If you want to hot-rod the 6.5x55 cartridge, then go to a M98. But, it ain't gonna get you much more than what you get with the M96.

The only currently produced action I see as making a better lightweight rifle is the Remington Model 7. You just can't trim a Mauser down to match it. If I were to get one, it would have be chambered for the 260 Rem, which is a 6.5-308 and ballistically identical to the 6.5x55.

Finally, for collectors, the Swedish Mauser is as collectable as any other historic arm. There are enough variations to provide diversity in the collection, yet not so many as to be impossible for one of limited budget to obtain a complete set. Try getting a complete collection of Lugers!

That's a long-winded summary of my two-year romance. I see no reason to end it. I'll still dabble with "other" rifles. Sporterizing M98s can be somewhat profitable. I've had and maintain a long relationship with a Ruger #1. Still, the Swedes in my cabinet are earning their keep as "primary" rifles. As long as I don't have to worry about Grizzly and Buffalo charges, they are all I need.

Publisher's Comments

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

Another year gone by, and the Monthly enters its fifth year of publication! This is the fourth anniversary of

the Monthly, and we've had some great stories, some great gunsmithing and project tips, and we've all learned a lot.

Thanks go out this month to Alex Hawley, Robert Barstow and Eric for the great articles – the prospect of being able to get a decent square-bridge magnum Mauser again ought to set gunsmith's heart rates up a notch. Thanks as well to everyone who sent in notes and tips this month, and to everyone who contributed the last year. We've got a big year ahead of us, so keep the stories and tips coming!

For those of us here in the States, this is an election year; there's a few bills sneaking around Congress intended to put stricter controls on "antique" firearms, including most of the pre-98 Mausers. Keep in contact with your representatives, folks, as the gun issue is being played to the hilt in this year's campaigns.

Meanwhile, best wishes to everyone, and enjoy another year of the Monthly!

Until next month, then;

Good shooting!

Ward