

XC file

To JWB
FEM
FHS
From RSM

Subject: Competitive Review - Bolt Handle, Bolt Plug,
Metal and Wood Finishes

A meeting was held on Monday, April 1, to complete our series of bolt action rifle competitive reviews. The final topics of discussion included the bolt handle, bolt plug, and metal and wood finishes. The length, size and shape of the various bolt handles was evaluated in terms of the effect on function. Bolt plugs were evaluated on their ability to deflect escaping gas, the existence of a cocking indicator and aesthetics. And metal and wood finishes were evaluated with regard to finish quality, polish (luster), color match, ^{roll mark size.} sanding (or machine) marks and checkering. A summary of the comments made is listed below.

S + W 1500 - oddly shaped bolt handle, long slender handle, knob may be too small

- bolt plug does not deflect gas from rails
- exposed firing pin head
- good metal finish
- barrel finish doesn't match receiver
- purple finish on bolt plug

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- poor wood finish - open grain
- skip line checkering, glass finish
- terrible cut checkering
- angular square fore-end
- no sanding marks
- good uniform inletting
- only caliber rollmark on barrel, remainder on receiver

Ruger 77 - bolt handle swept back close to hand

- large smooth bolt handle
- bolt plug blocks gas flow down rail
- exposed firing pin head
- very nice polishing, high luster
- bolt handle, plug, receiver, barrel color matches perfectly, floorplate and guard distinctly different
- satin finish, some open grain
- good uniform inletting
- hand checkered, better than S&W still uneven and not good
- very wide rails along barrel
- moderate rollmark on barrel
- safe works over wood

Browning BBR - large smooth spherical bolt handle

- massive well designed bolt plug, deflects gas from rails and encloses firing pin head
- cocking indicator painted red
- excellent metal finish
- square ugly fore-end, same as S+W
- glass finish with open grain, pin holes
- hand cut checkering not good, overruns
- double border on checkering a mistake, shows every flaw
- grip checkering patterns not symmetrical
- top inletting not uniform
- wide rails along barrel
- delicate rollmarking on barrel
- separate wooden grip cap

Colt Sauer - ugly styling

- smooth teardrop shaped bolt handle
- no bolt plug exposed, only end of bolt body
- enclosed bolt body
- cocking indicator has red paint worn off
- excellent polish and metal finish
- glass finish, open grain
- sanding marks
- narrow rails along barrel
- poor checkering, flat diamonds, overruns
- wooden grip cap insert
- yellow line spacers
- very little rollmarking on barrel

Winchester 70 - spherical knurled bolt handle, poorly done, looks cheap

- bolt plug does not deflect gas from rail

- two piece bolt plug enclosed firing pin head

- cocking indicator painted red

- poor metal finish, purple bolt plug

- satin finish, open grain

- excellent checkering

- simple cheek piece design

- poor inletting, poor stock fit at tang

- moderate rollmarking on barrel

Weatherby Vanguard - teardrop shaped knurled bolt handle

- same shape as S+W

- poor knurling, looks cheap

- bolt plug looks too long, does not deflect gas from rail

- enclosed firing pin head

- unpainted cocking indicator

- good metal finish

- low gloss stock

- flat bottomed fore-end

- poor, coarse checkering, double border

- yellow line spacer

- caliber only rollmark on barrel

Sako L61R - small bolt handle, poor knurling

- bolt plug does not deflect gas, from rail
- exposed firing pin head
- rough polished metalwork doesn't look bad
- bolt handle and plug finish doesn't match
- no crown on barrel
- stock top profile almost symmetrical
- square, low cheek piece
- terrible checkering, double border
- good inletting
- very little rollworking on barrel