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Subject: Model 710 Article

This is a preview of Steve Cooke's article for Safari Times on the Model 710.

Safari Times

Remington's New Model 710

A Safari Times exclusive by Steve Cooke, Editor of Safari Times Canada

Remington started out with the idea of designing an inexpensive, reliably built, workhorse rifle - and hit the jackpot in the process.

The Remington 870 Express has filled that bill for the shotgunner for years, and has become America's sweetheart everywhere ducks and geese are found. The "plain Jane" pump just "plain works". I've seen them keep on shooting while shotguns that cost many times more were packing it in as a result of mud, ice, dust, and anything else mother nature could throw at them. I've watched guides take a garden hose to their 870 after a day in the salt marshes, or rice fields to wash salt and mud out, hang them up to dry, squirt a bit of oil in and use them the next day with never a hang up. They are a working tool, and they just keep on working.

I don't think anyone could ever imagine repeating this "shotgun success" story in today's market, but I predict rifle shooters could be getting in on the ground floor of a repeat performance.

The Remington Model 710 is this company's first new rifle design in over 30 years. It will initially be offered in .30-06 Springfield and .270 Win., features a black matte finish with a grey composite synthetic stock and comes complete with a factory mounted and bore-sighted Bushnell Sharpshooter scope. It is designed to be virtually weather proof, easy to maintain when in the field for extended periods, and like the 870, just keep on working. And, it will retail for a little less than \$360.

Sound impossible?

That was my first reaction when I first heard about it. It started a flurry of phone calls to Remington to get more information, and as I started to understand the whole concept, the more I became convinced that it would be the perfect rifle for most of the world's serious hunters. The more information I received on it, the more questions I had, and I was soon reduced to the point where I was begging the Remington folk for the opportunity to take a quick peek at it, handle it, and if possible, shoot it a few times.

Persistence paid off, and eventually I was permitted an early preview with two other outdoor writers who were in the same predicament as I was. Ralph

Lermayer, a noted gun writer from New Mexico made the observation before we were introduced to the 710 that seeing a new rifle for the first time is like a blind date. "When that door opens, you never really know what to expect". I was quite prepared to be disappointed when I actually got to see it, but I left the one day session even more excited than before. The blind date was a real success in all respects.

I don't really know what I expected, but at that price I was conjuring up images that were more two by four, half inch water pipe and an odd looking receiver than anything else. I sure didn't expect to see a rifle that looked like a conventional rifle, balanced and handled like one, or shot exceptionally well. I was surprised on all three counts.

The 710 incorporates the use of modern materials, innovative design concepts, and up to date manufacturing techniques that save money, and those savings are passed on to the consumer. It also uses a "component" design that facilitates both manufacturing and repairs should they ever become necessary and it is presented in an attractive yet functional package. Sure, it will pale in the gun rack beside those polished blued steel and fancy figured walnut stocked firearms, but in the wet cold muddy field where it really counts, it will shine.

The heart and soul of this new rifle is the bolt sleeve insert. The receiver on conventional bolt action rifles undergoes extensive internal machining. Guide slots for the bolt lugs, the bolt lock up area, and a host of other machining operations are an essential part of the production process. The inside of the 710 receiver is a straight bore through process, and a silicon and teflon impregnated fiberglass reinforced polymer sleeve handles all of the bolt operating functions. The bolt itself actually locks up in the rear end of the barrel, turning the whole receiver into nothing more than a bolt carrier system.

This insert holds and guides the bolt while it is cycled through the reloading process. There is no slop in the bolt, and tolerances are close, so the pull and return is firm, smooth and even throughout its entire travel. The presence of the teflon and silicone means that lubrication is not required (some oil can be applied to the bolt for protection only) which is ideal for very cold climates. Test results with a prototype rifle which was fired and cycled 10,000 times showed that the polymer sleeve/bolt exhibited less wear than traditional steel to steel contact. The insert is held in place with a single screw, and can be removed for a thorough cleaning if it ever gets dunked, or exposed to a salt water environment.

The sleeve also incorporates one side plate of the trigger assembly. Model 700 parts are used for the trigger system, and it is preset at the factory at 3.5-5 pounds. The trigger is adjustable, but for liability reasons, it is sealed at the factory. Any adjustment except by a Remington authorized gunsmith renders them free from liability claims which may arise and cancels any guarantees associated with malfunction.

The safety does not lock the bolt, so it is operable in both positions, an added safety feature for unloading the chamber. The bolt release is an external lever on the upper left side of the stock which must be flicked up to remove the bolt from the action.

The receiver insert/trigger group become one component in this system.

The barrel and receiver housing are a second system component. The 22 inch barrel sports a hunting contour and, like the receiver housing is glass beaded for a matte finish. It is six grooved button rifled and has a right hand one in ten inch twist and comes only bare (without sights) at this point. The recessed crown, often thought of as a target grade crown, is the perfect choice for a hard hunting rifle since it offers the most

protection. In fact, Ralph Lermayer refers to it as a Texas floor board crown, since rifles there spend a lot of time in pick-ups, and sooner or later make contact with the floorboards of the truck.

The receiver housing is profiled much the same as the Model 700 and is drilled and tapped for scope mounting, but all similarities end there. The barrel is compression fitted into the housing to exact tolerances. Since the bolt lugs lock up in the barrel, there are no head spacing concerns, and that helps to turn this rifle into a true component system. Bolts are interchangeable from rifle to rifle. Another major departure from the 700 system is that the bolt for the 710 sports three lugs instead of two.

This system also has the potential to be a real tack driver. Production rifles will likely deliver groups of about one inch or slightly larger at 100 yards from the box. Ralph Lermayer took one of our test rifles home for a photo session, and with a minimal amount of tweaking and the addition of a target grade scope was getting consistent three quarter inch groups. I predict that with a little home gun smithing, and a couple of ounces of epoxy bedding, the vast majority of these rifles will match, or even better those results.

The reasons for this are simple. By locking the bolt in the back end of the barrel, virtually all the bedding problems associated with the action are eliminated. The chamber section of the barrel is where it clamps into the stock with two screws, and the recoil lug is located between these two screws. If the rifle is solidly bedded in this area, with the barrel and the action (the rear tang screw is not necessary for bedding and only serves to hold the action in the stock) essentially free floated, you have just achieved the same thing in a hunting rifle that bench rest shooters have been doing for years. The only flaw in the plan would be if you wound up with one of those odd barrels that just doesn't want to shoot no matter what, and that can happen. Just ask a custom barrel maker.

The bolt features three locking lugs, and this allows for a short 60 degree throw. What this means in layman's language is that when it is in position to be cycled, the bolt handle basically sticks out at a ninety degree angle from the line of the bore. This design leaves plenty of room for the bolt handle to clear the scope while it is being operated. Again, this is an important feature when using the rifle in cold climates where numb, or gloved hands are the norm. The all steel bolt handle is swept rearward and downward and is knurled for a better grip.

The bolt also features Remington's new Integrated Security System (ISS) which will be standard on all of their bolt action rifles as well as a sister system for autoloading and pump action firearms.

Easily disassembled for cleaning, the bolt can be maintained in the field. Even the bolt head is removable for thorough cleaning or degreasing as required. The fact that the locking lugs do not have to be head spaced to a screwed in barrel means that bolts are interchangeable between rifles, or can be replaced with out gun smithing if for some reason one becomes lost.

The removable box magazine is constructed from steel with the exception of a synthetic box cover that carries the Remington logo. It sits flush with the bottom of the stock, and is held in place with a convenient front latch system. Once again, it can be quickly disassembled for easy cleaning and maintenance.

The dual stack, center feed system holds the cartridges at the rear of the case and provides for straight line positive feeding. It also eliminates the problems that can cause feed malfunctions due to bent or damaged magazine lips. The downside is that it cannot be charged through the open action, and must be removed to be reloaded, but a spare magazine rectifies

that problem. The capacity is four rounds in the magazine and one in the chamber for a total of five.

The stock, the final component, is an attractive medium dark grey fully textured Remington synthetic. A cheek piece is molded in for right hand shooters, and features a black rubber recoil pad and grip cap with the Remington Arms shield. It comes with mounted sling swivel studs, and is contoured to fit the shooters hands providing a comfortable secure grip. The trigger guard is incorporated into the stock as well, and while that may seem to be a bit unattractive, I found that it was so unobtrusive that I really didn't even notice it during our try out.

The 710 measures 42 1/2 inches overall, and weighs in at 7 1/8 pounds. It looks great, balances nicely in the hands, and looks like it knows why it was created. It's a truck rifle, a beginner's choice, a professional's dream, and the perfect first choice or back up rifle for that hunt of a lifetime. What more could anyone ask for, and at the right price as well.

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Sidebar: Integrated Security System

The brand new Integrated Security System (ISS), which will eventually become standard equipment in the Remington line-up is a very neat package that works very well. The current push by legislators to try to make firearms safer is responsible for this development, but good firearm handling is the first line of defense against accidents. The ISS provides a second line of defense, especially when a firearm is stored.

If you look very closely at the bolt shroud, you will see a small metal disk in the side with a "J" shaped slot cut into it. Insert the special Remington key, turn it, and the bolt is locked in the open and safe condition so it will not fire. This puts the rifle in a "non-operational" mode. It is a very slick system that does not compromise the clean looks of the rifle in any way. The ISS does not interfere with, or replace the normal safety operation.

If, for some reason, you prefer not to use this system at all, just make sure the bolt is in the unlocked condition, throw the key away, and use whatever other means for security that you might prefer. I would recommend that it be used as it was intended, and just be sure you never leave home (especially on a hunting trip) without the key. As a Canadian subjected to rigorous storage legislation, I can attest that you will soon become very comfortable with the simplicity of the ISS.

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Sidebar: Bushnell Sharpshooter Scope

The 710 comes from the factory with a Bushnell Sharpshooter scope mounted and bore sighted in heavy duty weaver style rings and bases.

The Sharpshooter is certainly not Bushnell's top of the line scope, but it is a serviceable, general purpose optic that will serve the beginning hunter well. This scope is a 3-9X variable with a 40 mm objective lens. The fully coated lenses coupled with the objective size provides a bright viewing area, and the Multi-X Reticle is perfect for fast target acquisition. A three inch eye relief and a neoprene eye guard help to prevent those nasty "scope cuts".

The Sharpshooter is waterproof and fogproof, has quarter inch adjustments at 100 yds, and a sure grip ring for power changes. It is finished in a

flat matte black, and features a lifetime limited warranty.

The Sharpshooter has a field of view of 12 ft./4 m at nine power, and 37 ft./12.2 m at three power, measures 13 in./330mm in length, and weighs 15 oz/425 g.

While serious hunters may want to consider upgrading this scope to the Elite 3200 or 4200 Series with Rainguard for maximum all weather performance, I'm confident that many people will find the Sharpshooter will give them years of reliable service.

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