

actions are glass bedded (though it is not actually fiberglass they're using). Extreme pains are now taken to be sure that chambers are absolutely concentric with the bore, that the throating and leade are uniform from rifle to rifle, that the bolt face is dead square with the bore, and that both locking lugs are making full contact. The feed rails have been redesigned to provide a more controlled, positive feeding, plus a lot of other little improvements.

"We are absolutely committed to restoring the Model 70," says Bob Morrison, the production planning manager, "as well as every gun bearing the Winchester name, to the exalted positions they once held." In a very forthright manner Bob conceded that you can't fool the gun-buying public. "The only way we can achieve that goal is to make guns that deserve that esteem."

Like I said, there's a new attitude at Winchester. And there are gun people running it again. Surely that bodes well for all of us Winchester fans.

TWO-POSITION SAFETIES

For years I've been advocating that rifles with two-position safeties should not lock the action when engaged. It's always been my contention that the time when you need a safety most is when you're cycling a live round into the chamber or taking a round out.

The only rationale I've ever heard used to defend the bolt-lock safety is that without it the handle could get caught on brush and thus partially or fully open the action. If a hunter were unaware of the condition and were suddenly confronted by game, a partially raised bolt handle may or may not allow the gun to fire. And, if the action has been fully opened, you'd have to reload.

Now I maintain that such incidents are extremely rare; after all, who goes through thick brush with their musket slung? That's like Stan Laurel trying to get a six-foot ladder through a three-foot-wide door, sideways. When I'm going through thick stuff, I'm holding my rifle in hand at my side and pointing it straight ahead. And so does everyone else I've hunted with.

In the highly unlikely event of a partially lifted bolt, all that's at stake is *perhaps* a missed opportunity at game. When compared to the alternative safety considerations, the missed-game argument barely merits mention.

Anyway, I was happy to learn recently that Remington has finally come over to my way of thinking. As of June of last year, the two-position, bolt-locking safety that has been traditional on the Remington 700 for the past 20 years has been modified to allow the action to be operated with the safety engaged. I must add, however, that I feel this unpublicized change of specs is an interim move on the part of the Remington, and that in the near future we'll see a complete redesigning of the fire-control assembly in the form of a three-position safety *a la* the Model 70 Winchester, or a two-position one with a separate bolt-locking feature like on the Colt Sauer.

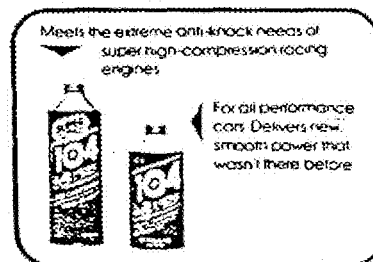
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