



Ryan Breeding Big Bore Rifles

by Jameson
Parker

*Because life in the shortgrass
can be short-lived.*

RYAN BREEDING OF RB BIG BORE RIFLES was passing through my neck of the woods recently and we got together at my gun club to play with some of his masterpieces. Breeding builds the ultimate stopping guns for dangerous game of the bull-elephant-and-up category. Remember those ads for Foster's beer that described a nine-pound sledgehammer as "Oostraaalian fer flyswatter?" That kind of gun. If you get killed by a dangerous game animal while carrying one of Ryan Breeding's rifles, it's because your name is Francis Macomber.

These are the Aston Martins of hunting rifles.

Breeding does all his work himself, by hand. He starts with an action from Granite Mountain Arms. He reworks the magazine spring to ensure proper feeding; smoothes the rails, magazine wells and feed ramp; he laps the lugs for full contact; he fits the barrel himself and does his own chambering to ensure proper headspace; he does his own bluing. Everything is fitted, smoothed and polished by hand.

Fine, but a lot of custom rifle makers do that. The refinements peculiar to his dangerous game guns are what make Breeding RB Big Bores so outstanding.

Breeding makes his own trigger and trigger guard, recessing the trigger itself back into the guard. This serves two functions. First, it allows you plenty of space to get your finger in on the trigger quickly, an advantage when hunting animals with a predilection for hunting you. Second, because your finger is farther back with-in the guard, your hand is forced farther back on the grip, both of which help protect your knuckles. If you've ever barked your knuckles firing even a moderate big bore, such as a .375 H&H or a .458 Winchester, you will appreciate that recessed trigger when you step up into the .585 Van Horn or .620 Van Horn class. To give you an idea of what we're talking about, I've smoked Cuban

cigars smaller than those cartridges.

Breeding uses Pac-Nor barrels and glass-beds them into stocks he designs and makes himself by hand. When people hear the term 'glass-bedding' they frequently think of it as something that is done because the stock maker is either too lazy or not skilled enough to do a proper job of inletting. That may be the case with some makers, but not with a perfectionist like Breeding. He glass-beds his barrels to seal against moisture under the barrel and to provide additional strength to the stock. He makes his own extra sturdy recoil lug, fits it below the barrel shank, and then adds two cross bolts to keep the sides of the stock rigid and clamped to the receiver.

"The cross bolts aren't really necessary, because the stock is so strong," he says. "But people like the look."

His stocks are extraordinary. They are much beefier and heavier, especially through the wrist, than the average English-made stopping gun, partly to stand up under recoil, and partly to tame that recoil for the shooter, but you aren't aware of that bulk until you handle one. Proportion dictates our perception of size. Muhammad Ali looked smaller than many of the men he fought (Sonny Liston, George Foreman, Ken Norton) but it was an illusion created by Ali's graceful proportions. Breeding's stocks are so graceful that their actual weight comes as a surprise.

The magic of his stock design is that the comb runs back almost perfectly straight from the action. There are three reasons for this. First, a straight line, coupled with the heavier wrist, ensures a stock that won't crack (the greater the angle of drop, the weaker the stock). Second, while a drop at the comb allows the shooter to keep his face on the stock and use low metal sights, he then has to raise his head if he wishes to shoot with a scope. And finally, that straight stock sends the energy back to the shoulder rather than up into the shooter's face.

In addition to his stock design, the things Breeding's rifles are most noted for—and that he is justifiably proud of—are the ruggedness of his iron sights, his unique and proprietary folding front sight and the flawless feeding of his guns. Reliability is paramount in a dangerous game gun. When I shot his .300 Ultra Mag., I deliberately pulled the bolt back slowly and gently to see if the spent case would hang up and block the feeding of the next round. It never happened. There is also an uncanny smoothness to the action of his rifles that has to be felt to be appreciated. Dan Neil, the Pulitzer prize-winning automotive journalist, has proposed his own Coefficient of Frictional Quality: "In any object with moving parts, the ease of that moving is directly proportional to the quality thereto." Using that as a standard, the coefficient of Breeding's rifles is unparalleled.

Now let's look at some smaller, but equally important touches you might not notice.

Big bores produce exceptionally heavy recoil that can do unpleasant things to a rifle that is not properly made. For example, a standard floor-plate release button can and almost certainly will pop open, dumping your cartridges on the ground and leaving you trying to persuade the angry Cape buffalo not to take that flesh wound so seriously. Breeding has developed a plunger operated lock on the release button that keeps it from opening until the lock is pressed on.

The follower is made of Delrin (DuPont's trade name for an engineered thermoplastic called polyoxymethylene) to help reduce unwanted weight and, more importantly, to prevent inertia damage to the magazine box.

Breeding's iron sights, including his proprietary folding front sight, are renowned for their ruggedness, and that front sight comes with an extra bead and a miniature Allen wrench to change it, both neatly contained in a Delrin cylinder in the trap grip cap.

There is almost unnoticeable relief (approximately 10 to 15-thousands of an inch, depending on caliber) between the

wood and the rear tang of the receiver to accommodate recoil.

But the detail that impressed me the most was the swivel studs he makes himself. They are fitted with stainless steel bushings that protrude slightly on either side to protect the bluing. That's attention to detail.

In addition to absolute reliability, ruggedness and the extraordinary smoothness of action, there is one other outstanding functional aspect to Breeding's rifles. They are superbly accurate. I shot his .300 Ultra Mag. under abysmal circumstances (20 to 30-mph sustained winds with 40 to 50-mph gusts) and yet all three bullet holes were touching.

Be forewarned, though. Buy one of Breeding's rifles and you may end up quitting your job and selling your house and moving to Africa to get your P.H. license. I'll come with you. ☎

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