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May 2012 No. 262



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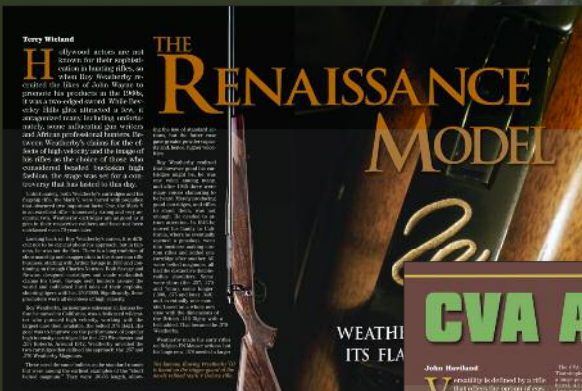
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This E. Arthur Brown Company Model 97D falling-block single shot represents a mix of classic lines and modern machining and is chambered for the .30-30 WCF. Photo by Stan Trzoniec.



Issue No. 262 May 2012

# RIFLE®

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# DOGS, CATS, COYOTES AND WINCHESTERS

## SPOTTING SCOPE

by Dave Scovill

**A** number of folks have written over the years regarding suitable loads for a variety of lever actions. The most popular by far is the .45-70, followed by the .45 Colt and .44 Magnum. Oddly enough, two of the most popular cartridges in western history, the .38 and .44 WCFs, appear to garner little interest, probably because folks are constantly bombarded with the notion that they can be troublesome to hand-load, i.e., they are easily damaged by ham-handed folks, aren't suitable for sizing in carbide dies and require some method of lubrication, which can get a bit messy and time consuming to deal with. This is not to ignore the classic "nail in the coffin" that they aren't accurate enough to serve for anything but casual plinking or cowboy action duty.

As a result, when some would-be writer decides to make a name for him/herself by nominating the 10 most useless cartridges to be selected for the discard pile, the .44 and .38 WCFs usually make the list, right

up at the top. Never mind that by opining such a theory, the author is admitting little or no knowledge of the very rifles and cartridges he is so quick to condemn. It also shows ignorance of the fact that such drivel serves no useful purpose, especially since there's an even chance that a good number of readers not only own one of these old "clunkers" that Granddad passed on to Dad, but cherish them as well. In short, it's probably not smart to attack family values and tradition.

The truth is, the Winchester Models 73 and 92 .38 and .44 WCFs and their copies from Europe are among the most practical rifles and carbines for knocking around, hunting varmints, fur bearers, pests and small game or pulling house duty. They may not be the first choice for deer, or some such, and don't measure up in comparison to some bolt-action "blow-hole express," but they are just about ideal for folks who, because of size, age or disposition, aren't up to dealing with vicious recoil dished out by Dad's big game rifle.

About 20 years ago, after moving into our home north of Prescott, it didn't take long to figure out the area was infested with coyotes. Our black cat would sit in the bay window of my son Jason's bedroom, and the coyotes would come around in the early morning and start yapping and howling at the cat. It was a rude way to wake up, with all that racket just 10 feet from the bedroom window. I shot a couple of them, and they quieted down a bit, but tracks around the house proved they hadn't moved on.

It was inevitable, I suppose, that one fine afternoon my daughter Alicia was playing with her tabby cat on the patio near the kitchen door when a coyote came out of the nearby brush and grabbed the cat. Alicia chased the coyote, yelling and screaming, and for whatever reason, the coyote put the cat down and ran off.

The kids were upset that a coyote tried to eat the cat, so we planned an ambush. The idea was to barbecue a chicken on the back porch, and Jason would wait in ambush in the dry wash below the house. The wash was used by javelina, bobcats, coyotes and an occasional mountain lion, to pass through the area, so it seemed reasonable to expect the coyote would use the same route in pursuit of barbecued chicken. An hour or so before I lit the charcoal, Jason took a '73 Winchester .44 WCF and hunkered down under the low hanging limbs of a big juniper. The smell of barbecued chicken drifted toward the wash on the prevailing breeze, and it wasn't long before the bellow of the Winchester rocked the quiet afternoon. Jason and

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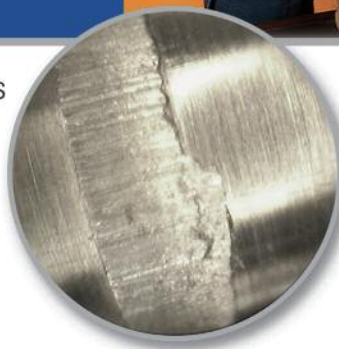
Toolmarks happen...particularly on Monday.  
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burrs and voids lurking in your barrel?

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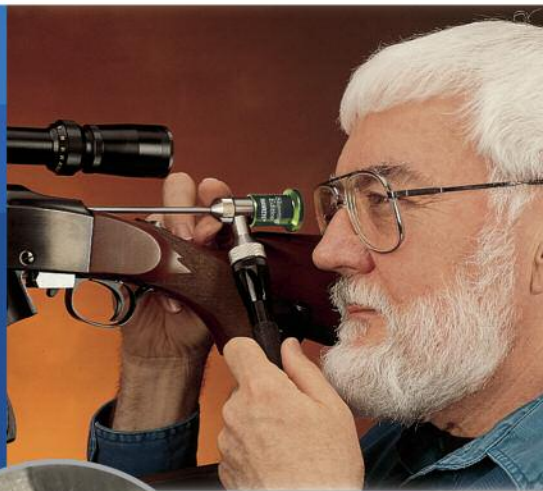


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Alicia got their revenge, and the cat recovered nicely.

Problems with coyotes quieted down for awhile, although I shot a couple on state land next to the house, just to let them know it wasn't safe . . . yet. Then, one quiet afternoon, I was standing on the deck and a coyote came out of the wash and walked up along the south side of the house, passing within 20 feet of me. I grabbed a Model '92 .44 WCF that was leaning against the wall near the bedroom door and took a second look – just in time to see the coyote walk into the house through the kitchen door!

Sneaking down the hallway toward the living room, I expected to see the coyote in the living or dining rooms and contemplated the bloody mess it would make if I shot it on the carpet. Nothing. I glanced around the corner into the kitchen and noticed a movement in the hallway that led to the garage. Sure enough, the tip of the

coyote's tail was moving in the entry way to the front door. The door was open so I went out to the patio to take a look down the front of the house just as the coyote trotted down the porch steps – and took a 200-grain cast bullet through the shoulders.

Save for the coyotes that came to bark and howl at the cat in the bay window, they left the cats and dog alone for awhile – a couple of windows were partially open to provide a safe haven for the cats to escape, although they could climb a tree to gain access to the roof easily enough. When the howling became obnoxious in the early morning, the barbecue gambit was tried again, with a couple of cooked chicken wings tossed into the thick brush below the deck at the back of the house for good measure. I sat on the deck in the afternoon shade and waited. Within minutes a coyote trotted by with the chicken wing in its mouth and took a cast .44-caliber slug through the lungs.

We adopted another dog that Roberta saved from a certain fate at the local shelter. Since she was deaf, the 5-month-old puppy, dumped on the highway near the shelter, was due to be put down the following Monday. When Roberta picked up the pup and paid the fees, the folks at the shelter made her sign a paper stating she wouldn't bring her back.

Beta Sue, don't ask where that name came from [our feminine version of Beethoven, who was also deaf – *Roberta*], was a mix of Aus-



*Beta Sue*

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tralian shepherd and Queensland heeler, and smart as a whip. She quickly learned doggie sign language and wouldn't go far without coming back to check on Roberta, or whoever was out and about in the yard at the time. For the most part, she was never out of sight for long and was always anticipating a signal – come here, no!, go left or right – or she would simply lie down and wait. The only problem was during short periods when she was facing away or distracted by whatever and wasn't watching or anticipating what we might want her to do.

One morning Beta Sue was lying nearby on the deck, and without a prior hint of discontent, went berserk. My first reaction was that she was about to tangle with a javelina – a fight most dogs will lose . . . badly. Within a millisecond she leaped off the side of the deck and headed for the dry wash, growling like a hound from hell. I grabbed the Model '92 .38 WCF that was leaning against the wall near the back door and saw Beta Sue running up the other side of the wash just as a large male coyote stepped out of the tall grass in her path.

By the the time I could get the sights on the coyote, Beta Sue was already in the line of fire, coming



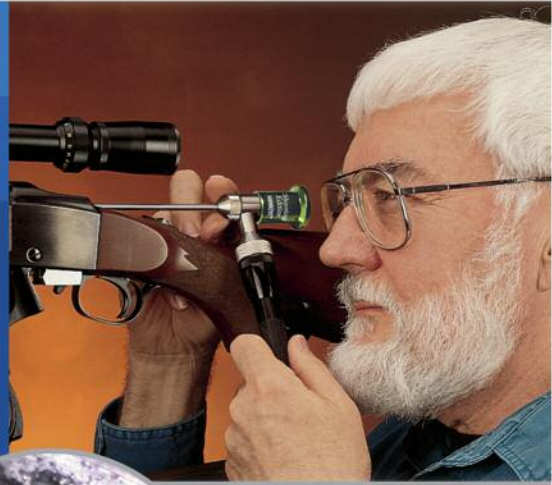
*This Arizona coyote fell victim to a 180-grain cast bullet from a Model 1892 .38 WCF rifle at less than 40 yards.*

# Pit Happens.

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to a skidding halt, rocks and dust flying, and nearly colliding with the big male. For who knows what reason, she stopped with her ears laid back and backed up a step or two, leaving just enough room for a 180-grain bullet to pass by, striking the coyote in the shoulder. Without further fuss, she sniffed the dead coyote and trotted back to the house.

Since Beta Sue was deaf and never heard the sound of a gun – she could feel shock waves from muzzle blast at close distances – I’ve often wondered what she must have been thinking when that big coyote simply fell over dead in front of her. She must have felt like pretty tough stuff, and it occurred to me from time to time that she was a little lighter on her feet after that.

Nowadays, the old Morgan Ranch has been largely sold off in parcels to heretofore city folks, our dogs and cats are now gone (Beta Sue lived to be 14 years old.), the kids


have their own children to raise and the little Winchesters have been put away, but not far out of reach. Then too, it may not be over, not just yet anyway. While I was standing in front of the garage enjoying the gray light of dawn re-

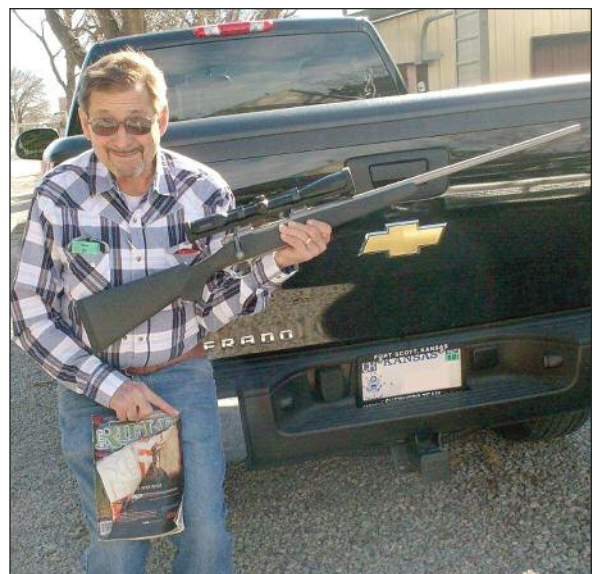
cently, five coyotes trotted across an open area 150 yards or so from the driveway within easy range of an iron-sighted Winchester and hesitated for moment before moving on, as if to serve as a reminder of earlier days in Arizona.

## 6.5-284 NORMA RIFLE GIVEAWAY WINNER

Our congratulations go to Leo Prettyman of Arma, Kansas, the winner of our most recent rifle giveaway – a Classic Barrel & Gun Works 6.5-284 Norma. Mr. Prettyman sent the following note:

“Mr. Polacek and staff,

“Received the rifle, thoroughly impressed and pleased. My sincere thanks to all. Half the county has seen it, and the other half wants to.” 



## Stan Trzoniec

**W**hen it comes to deer cartridges, the .30-30 Winchester remains a popular choice. It's been around for eons, it is dependable, and ammunition is available worldwide. When I got a chance to review a totally different concept in a "deer" rifle, I accepted delivery of a Model 97D single shot made by E. Arthur Brown Company, Inc. (EABCO) out of Garfield, Minnesota.

Aside from being available in the .30-30 Winchester, Brown lists over 50 chamberings, including such novelties as the .17 Bumble Bee, .219 Donaldson Wasp, .25-35 Winchester, .300-221 Remington, .357 Herrett and .375 Winchester, to mention only a few. Various rifling twists are specified, and loaded ammunition, brass and dies are available for Brown's EABCO 6.5 BRM cartridge. As a variation, the basic Model 97D action is also available as a shortened pistol version in different configurations for both the hunter and target shooter.

When it arrived, I was certainly taken aback by the rifle's unique appearance. The lines are trim; in fact, if you forgo a scope, putting one's hand around the receiver as to carry it in the field makes for one handy rifle. In fact, even with the Model 97D scoped, I could still hold the rifle comfortably with one hand while getting close to game or stalking.

Overall the rifle's lines are classic right down to the

stock. The forearm is tapered toward the muzzle that starts with a European Schnabel for appearance. The forearm has no checkering, is not free floating and is inletted with great care. It is attached with twin Allen screws, comes off cleanly for maintenance and has a sling swivel stud attached. Halfway up the sides, the wood is tapered inward to afford a good purchase of the nonshooting hand. (For the varmint hunter, EABCO offers an optional and much wider flat-bottom forend, and it fits an .810-inch barrel.)



# A .30-30 Like No

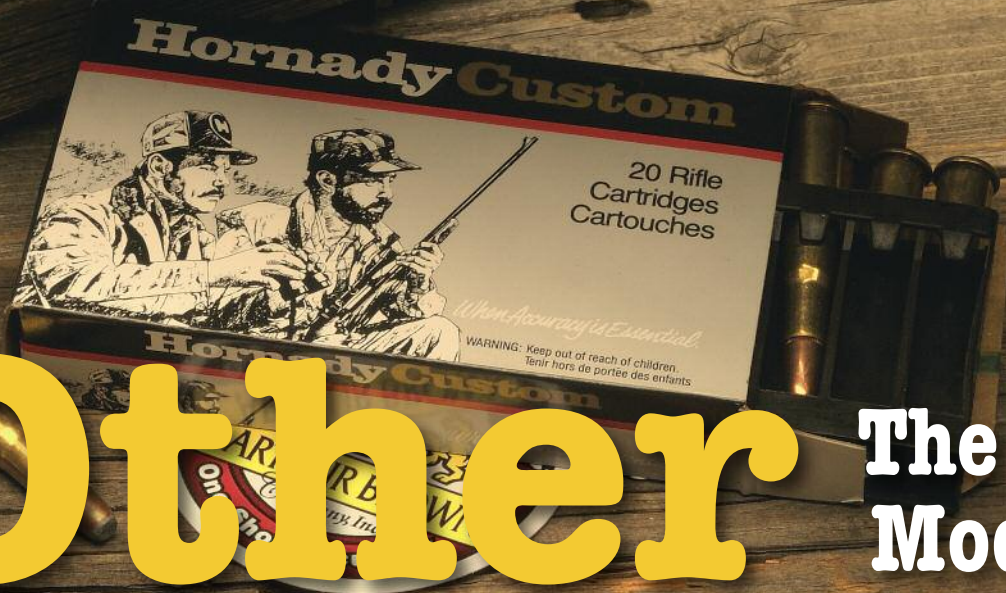


The buttstock is profiled in a classic pattern in an average grade of wood that looks like it was quarter-sawn. Right behind the receiver is a larger than usual recess that may look strange in the beginning, but holding the rifle places the hand directly on center with the receiver and hammer. The lack of a high comb in no way hinders the centering of the reticle in your eye. On the left side, a modest cheekpiece is part of the woodwork with a slight cast-off for right-handed shooters. A nicely figured pistol-grip cap with

Brown's logo laser engraved and separated from the stock with a thin black spacer finishes the stock.

Length of pull is 15 inches; with this type of rifle and action, it fits my 5-foot, 10-inch frame comfortably. This space is usually reserved to accommodate a bolt action, but with the single-shot receiver, the length of pull has been adjusted. For weather resistance, the stock is coated with a satin finish and capped with a thin recoil pad with both black and white spacers mated flush with the stock. An am-

*The Model 97D is a unique falling-block single shot with classic lines. The scope is a 4-12x 40mm with EABCO Keystone rings and a Picatinny-like mounting system.*



# Other

## The EABCO Model 97D

# EABCO Model 97D

bidextrous stock option will accommodate left-handed shooters.

Precision machined and anodized in a variety of colors, the entire assembly is quality built and assembled. To open the action, the trigger has to be fully forward. This takes some getting used to, as it is not a rebounding trigger; hence, after firing the rifle, pull the hammer back slightly to set the reloading procedure in place and relieve spring tension. Because of its design, the action actually swivels in a slight arc rather than a straight pull downward. Brown suggests you wrap your index finger around the trigger guard while bracing your thumb around the actual lever. Pushing down and forward opens the action. This is a fast-operating rifle, as the action only moves down

## Specifications: Model 97D .30-30 Winchester

**Action:** single shot, falling block  
**Stock:** American walnut  
**Barrel length:** 24 inches  
**Overall length:** 39½ inches  
**Sights:** none furnished, gun drilled and tapped for any commercial Thompson/Center mounting system  
**Weight:** 6½ pounds without scope, mounts or ammunition  
**Finish:** blue or stainless, wood satin finished  
**Price:** most calibers, \$999  
**Manufacturer:**  
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and out of the receiver less than an inch!

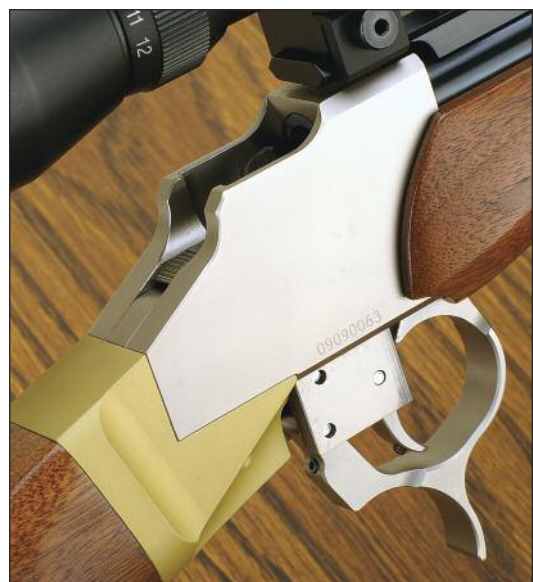
Brown notes that the “extractor is not a heavy leverage affair so it serves to warn you when your handloads are too hot.” To facilitate the loading and subsequent unloading and ejection, the hammer moves downward and rests flush with the falling block so the spent cartridge moves smoothly out of the chamber without hanging up on the top surface of the hammer. The top of the hammer is relieved as to allow the cartridge to follow to the rear and out of the action without hesitation.

To load the rifle, place a round in the chamber. Some cartridges like the .30-30 Winchester will not seat deeply enough in the chamber to allow the block to be raised. Insert the round, then nudge it flush with the breech allowing the ejector to follow, and then close the action. Once the loaded round is in place, reverse the procedure bringing the lever up, snapping it shut and securing the action for firing.

For those who may purchase the rifle for varmint hunting, you will appreciate this trigger. Out of the box, the sample broke at less than 2 pounds without any trace of take-up or slack. An overtravel adjustment has been installed on the



*As pictured, the action is locked and ready to fire.*




*The falling block, in its lowest position, exposes the breech for loading or unloading.*



*To close the action, finger pressure is used to lift the falling block into place.*

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*This close-up shows the extractor/ejector to the left side of the action. The hammer drops down fully and is relieved on its top surface to allow the spent case to eject.*



*All machining is top rate, as witnessed by the detail shown here where the barrel meets the receiver.*



*The forend has a Schnabel flair. The barrel has a heavy contour.*

rear of the trigger but as set by the factory was just as good as I could possibly do. As soon as the hammer fell, the trigger reached the end of its travel.

There are no outward safety levers or buttons. Instead, the rifle is equipped with a transfer bar safety mechanism. When the hammer is uncocked and in a forward position, the firing pin is protected and cannot accidentally set off a round by dropping the rifle or striking the hammer. Like others of its ilk, the best way to get around this is to cock the rifle only when game is in sight and you are ready to shoot.

Standard barrel fare is 24 inches long with a heavy contour (.810 inch) and your choice of blue or stainless in a variety of finishes. According to Brown, all barrels are precision turned and threaded between centers, installed and sealed as opposed to being torqued to the frame. A neat 11-degree target crown is applied after the rifle is completed, and the price of the rifle also includes the installation of Keylock Magnum Scope Mounts.

For those wishing a "custom" rifle, you can specify your choice of caliber and twist, barrel length from 17 to 26 inches, and with the frame factory blue, matte blue or stainless. The buttstock transition piece can be black, gold or silver anodized finish. Accessories can include engraving, scope mounts, a gold-plated trigger, a right-hand or ambidextrous stock, scope, bipod and muzzle brake. EABCO also offers gunsmithing services.

EABCO is a full-line, full-service company, so a nice addition to the test gun was a Brown 97D 4-12x 40mm riflescope. A year in the making, this scope is patterned after the Bushnell Elite 3200 and is compact enough to be brought up to a 12x magnification without looking awkward on a smaller rifle like the 97D. As an outdoor photographer, I am always interested in optics and the quality thereof, and this one is bright right out to the edges with only a trace

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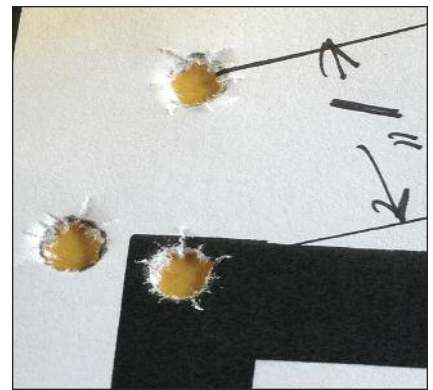
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# EABCO Model 97D

## EABCO Model 97 .30-30 Winchester

bullet (grains)	load	velocity (fps)	group (inches)
150	Remington Core-Lokt	2,358	1.00
150	Winchester Power-Point Plus	2,433	1.50
170	Hornady Custom Flat Point	2,216	0.75

**Notes:** All three-shot groups were fired from a rest at 100 yards. Velocities clocked over an Oehler Model 35P chronograph. Temperatures were in the mid-30s.



*The second best group was with Remington 150-grain Core-Lokts at 2,358 fps.*



*An 11-degree target crown is added before the 97D is shipped.*

of distortion on the periphery. The zoom control is smooth, as is the fast-adjusting eyepiece and finger-adjustable windage and elevation

knobs. When mounted in the Key-lock rings, the finish on the rings and the scope match seamlessly.

The .30-30 Winchester has to be one of the most popular deer hunting cartridges around. Part of this mystique is the fact that it was introduced in 1895, along with the .25-35 WCF, and at that time they were the first smokeless sporting cartridges made in America.

The cartridge is available in 125-, 150- and 170-grain offerings with

the 150 grain seemingly the most popular among my associates. I still have a few of those .30-30 Accelerators made by Remington several years ago if the opportunity arises for small game. With a single shot, handloaders can benefit from all the new bullets available without regard to using either a spitzer or flatnose, as would be the case of a magazine-fed rifle like the Model 94 or Marlin 336.

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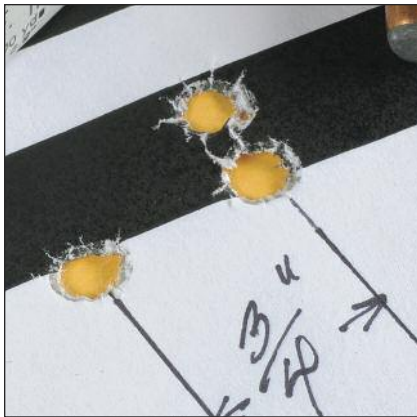
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*Hornady's 170-grain flatpoint bullets provided the best accuracy.*

At the range, the Model 97D performed as a custom rifle should. The weather was cold, so the session only lasted the better part of the morning, but the results were indeed satisfying. Like any rifle, it was sensitive to one brand of ammunition over the rest, and with the Hornady Custom Flat Point, groups on average circled an inch with the best group (out of three) hitting the .75-inch mark. Handloading may give more consistent results, but for deer, I don't know whether handloading would be worth the effort, especially when my deer hunting duties are relegated to the close-in shooting New England offers.

As rested on the bench, shooting the rifle was enjoyable, especially with the addition of that incredible trigger. I think the longer, 24-inch tube made the difference with the .30-30 cartridge, as most of the Model 94 fans shoot from a much shorter barrel. While the levergun offers follow-up or repeat shots, the Model 97D adds a new dimension in the everyday deer hunt by making it a single-shot challenge. The ejector tosses the empties back far enough to clear the buttstock; for handloaders that should be good enough for salvaging brass.

The Brown Model 97D .30-30 Winchester is more than accurate for woods-type hunting. Contact E. Arthur Brown Company, Inc. for its well-illustrated, 72-page catalog chock-full of "stuff" for its products, along with the Thompson/Center, Ruger and Savage line of rifles. ■

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