

100 Years of the .375 H&H!

RIFLE

Sporting Firearms Journal

**New Rifle Loads from
Buffalo Bore!**

**Stocky's
High-Tech
Laminated
Stocks**

**Field Test:
Savage
Long Range
Hunter
6.5-284 Norma**

**GERMAN WW II
SNIPER RIFLES**

March 2012

No. 261

\$5.99



7 25274-01240-4
Display until 4/14/2012 Printed in USA

\$5.99 U.S./Canada

Buffalo Bore

Ammunition

New Rifle Loads
Previewed



Buffalo Bore now offers centerfire rifle loads ranging from the .223 Remington to .50 Alaskan.

Brian Pearce

In 1997 Tim Sundles took a big risk and invested heavily in custom-built .475 and .500 Linebaugh brass in preparation for offering factory ammunition. Being that I have custom revolvers so chambered, I sought Sundles out and offered my experience, advice and load data. Through much experimentation and testing, the .475 Linebaugh case was modified to feature a smaller rim diameter and was engineered for use in the Freedom Arms

Model 83 revolver, eventually becoming the specification used by SAAMI for that cartridge. Even though there was interest in both cartridges, sales were not strong enough to support a business.

In a phone conversation with Sundles, I suggested he consider offering +P-type .45-70 ammunition designed specifically for modern Marlin Model 1895s, as well as many other rifles, including the Ruger No. 1, smokeless-era Winchester/Browning Model 1886s, 1885s, etc. I suggested bullets – cast and jacketed – and stated velocities as goals to reach. His new loads became grand-slam hits and helped establish the



Buffalo Bore Ammunition

company's reputation. From this humble beginning, Buffalo Bore Ammunition (BBA) has steadily expanded its product line, and today there are more than 200 SKUs (Stock Keeping Units) that include rifle and handgun loads.

The company frequently offers loads that either enhance the performance of a given cartridge or feature a bullet weight or type that is not offered commercially by big ammunition companies. A few examples include the .35 Remington with a 220-grain JFN bullet at 2,200 fps, .30-30 Winchester with a 190-grain bonded bullet at 2,100 fps, .348 Winchester with a 250-grain JFN at 2,250 fps (which has not been offered by major ammunition companies for decades) and many others. BBA also offers specialty and proprietary handgun and rifle cartridges, such as the .50 Alaskan, .500 Linebaugh, .460 Rowland, heavy .44 Special, .45 Colt in standard and +P persuasion and many others. Recent introductions include popular bottleneck rifle cartridges, such as .223 Remington, .308 Winchester, .30-06, etc., that contain Barnes Triple-Shock X-Bullets (TSX) for hunters and match loads for target shooters.

I recently had the opportunity to

BBA is currently the only manufacturer offering .348 Winchester with a 250-grain bonded bullet.



Buffalo Bore .30-06 Supercharged features Barnes TTSX bullets.

try some of the new rifle loads, checking them for accuracy, velocity and overall performance. There are simply too many to evaluate them all, so only select calibers and loads were tried.

.223 REMINGTON

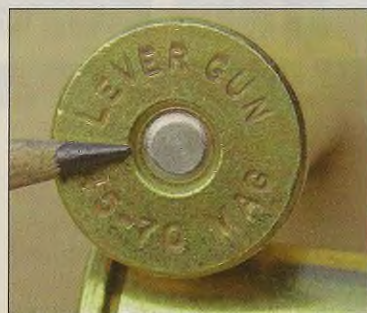
BBA offers .223 Remington loads with 55-, 69- and 77-grain bullets, with the 69-grainer being selected to check for velocity and accuracy. This particular bullet is best when fired from a barrel with a twist rate of one turn in 7 to one turn in 9 inches. Advertised velocity is 2,900 fps. The bullet, manufactured by Sierra, is technically a match bullet, but it expands reliably on game; and due to its high ballistic coefficient, it offers dis-

tinct advantages over lighter bullets in terms of retained down-range velocities and wind drift, which effectively helps extend the range of this cartridge.

Using a Colt AR-15 Match Target HBAR with 20-inch barrel featuring a 7-inch twist, four shots clustered under one inch (100 yards) using a sandbag rest and issued aperture sights. Function was flawless. Changing to a Savage Model 10 Predator topped with a Weaver 6-20x44 scope and fitted with a 22-inch barrel with a 9-inch twist, four-shot groups clustered into just over .5 inch. Muzzle velocity clocked 3,110 fps, and the extreme spread was 39 fps for five shots.

.30-30 WINCHESTER

BBA's latest .30-30 Winchester load features a 150-grain TSX at an advertised 2,350 fps, a load engineered for big game with increased velocity without sacrificing terminal performance. In a Marlin Model 336A fitted with a 24-inch barrel, velocity was 2,379 fps. Ammunition was limited and the best group using factory issued iron sights (semi-buckhorn rear and gold bead front) at 75 yards went into 1.35 inches. My suspicion is that the group size could have been improved with a good aperture sight arrangement. Nonetheless, deer could easily be taken at 200 yards and beyond in skilled hands.



Left, five .45-70 Magnum loads are intended for modern firearms, such as the Marlin Model 1895 or the current Model 1886 Winchester. Above, these loads feature a small rifle primer pocket.

.308 WINCHESTER

BBA currently offers four .308 Winchester loads, with two being used herein. The first is the "Sniper," with a 175-grain Sierra HPBT MatchKing bullet at an advertised 2,800 fps. Using a Savage Model 12 with a 24-inch heavy stainless barrel, five shots averaged 2,822 fps. From the bench four-shot, 100-yard groups hovered around .75 inch, and one three-shot group clustered just inside .5 inch.

The second load tried is from the Premium Supercharged line and contains a 150-grain spitzer at 2,900 fps. (Additional loads in this line include a 168-grain TSX at 2,750 fps and a 180-grain spitzer at

2,650 fps.) Muzzle velocity is 2,935 fps with an extreme spread of 28 fps. The best four-shot group clustered just under one inch.

.30-06

The BBA Supercharged .30-06 load contains a Barnes 168-grain TTSX. Advertised velocity is 2,900 fps, and from a Marlin X7S with a 22-inch barrel, it clocked 2,933 fps with an extreme spread of 45 fps. From a sandbag rest, the best four-shot, 100-yard group measured 1.2 inches.

.348 WINCHESTER

The .348 Winchester is much more than a deer cartridge, but it is important to choose correct bullets when used on heavier game, such

as moose, brown bear, etc. BBA offers a Hawk 250-grain JFN bonded at an advertised 2,250 fps, the only factory load with a bullet of this weight, although 250-grain jacketed softpoint bullets are generally preferred for accuracy and terminal performance.

Using a Browning Model 71 rifle with 24-inch barrel, the above load registered 2,269 fps. For accuracy testing, a Winchester Model 71 Deluxe rifle was selected (due to its better aperture sight) with a 75-yard group clustering into 2 inches – in gusty winds.

.35 REMINGTON

The .35 Remington is very popular where black bear and white-tailed deer are hunted in the brush and timber. However, factory loads have changed little ballistically since 1906. BBA has improved the ballistics by offering a 220-grain

Below left, high performance loads for the .38-55 and .35 Remington should only be used in modern actions that can handle the increased pressures. Right, new .444 Marlin loads enhance performance on big game and include 270-, 300- and 335-grain bullets.



Buffalo Bore Ammunition

JFN at an advertised 2,200 fps. There is a warning that this load should *only* be used in Marlin lever actions, T/C Encores and bolt-action rifles, as it generates around 40,000 CUP. SAAMI specifications list maximum average pressures at 35,000 CUP in deference to some early rifles (primarily pump actions and the Stevens 425 lever action).

In a Marlin Model 336T with a 20-inch Micro-Groove barrel, the 220-grain bullet averaged 2,181 fps for a five-shot string and had an extreme spread of 36 fps. From a sandbag rest, and with the aid of a Williams aperture rear sight, the best 75-yard group clustered four shots into 1.1 inches.

.358 WINCHESTER

The .358 Winchester was considered effectively dead, although am-



The .30-30 Winchester Lead Free loads feature 150-grain Barnes TSX bullets.

munition has always been available, during the 1980s and 90s. With new rifles chambered in the last decade, there has been renewed interest. BBA offers two loads: a 225-grain spitzer BT and 225-grain TSX, each at 2,500 fps. These are notable improvements (terminally and ballistically) over traditional

loads containing 200-grain round-nose bullets at 2,490 fps.

From a 1970's era Ruger Model 77R with a 22-inch barrel, the 225-grain spitzer reached 2,513 fps. This rifle has never produced extreme accuracy, but it clustered four shots around 2 inches, which is better than any factory load previously tried.

.35 WHELEN

The .35 Whelen is a great game cartridge with loyal followers. BBA offers a 225-grain spitzer BT at 2,800 fps and a 225-grain TSX at the same speed. They do warn that this "supercharged" ammunition is for SAAMI specification rifles only. From a custom Ruger Model 77RS MKII, the 225-grain TSX clocked 2,788 fps, and in spite of 10- to 15-mph crosswinds, groups hovered inside 1.5 inches.

.444 MARLIN

The .444 Marlin has historically been plagued with incorrect bullets, especially if heavier game is on the menu. BBA offers three loads that include a 270-grain JFN Speer Deepcurl at 2,250 fps (which I have used on several deer), a good general-purpose 300-grain JFN Speer plated softpoint at 2,150 fps and a 335-grain LFN cast at 2,025 fps.

The 300-grain JFN, which is very capable of taking deer, elk, moose,

**Dennis Erhardt
CUSTOM GUNS**



4508 North Montana Ave.
Helena, Montana 59602

Specializing in
Modern Classic
& European Style
Custom Rifles & Shotguns.

(406) 442-4533



GAMALIEL

SHOOTING SUPPLY

Your ATK Dealer

SUPPORTING SHOOTING FOR OVER 40 YEARS!

FREE SHIPPING ON QUALIFYING ORDERS OVER \$30!

GO ONLINE & REQUEST A FREE CATALOG!

ALLIANT POWDER
Technically Superior by Design



RCBS

FEDERAL PREMIUM
AMMUNITION

Gamaliel Shooting Supply

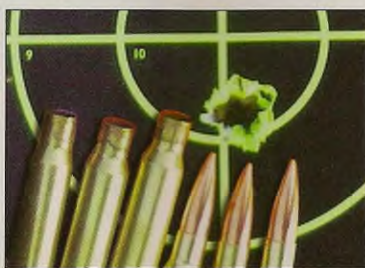
Gamaliel, KY - 1-800-356-6230

www.gamaliel.com

bear, etc., was shot from an early 1964-vintage Marlin Model 444 with a 24-inch barrel. Velocity was 2,214 fps. At 100 yards it consistently grouped around 1.25 to 1.5 inches, disproving claims that the slow one-in-38-inch Marlin twist will not stabilize bullets heavier than 265 grains.

.45-70 (MAGNUM)

BBA's line of .45-70 ammunition includes bullet offerings – cast and jacketed – ranging in weight from 300 to 500 grains, resulting in suitable loads for almost any practical field application. Personal favorites include the 405-grain JFN at 2,000 fps and the 430-grain LFN/GC at 1,925 fps. These loads are unique, as cases feature a small primer pocket, which effectively eliminates bullet nose-to-primer contact in magazine tubes. They also feature 100 percent plus powder capacity, which supports the base of the bullet and prevents it from being “deep seated” (potentially dangerous) when subjected



New .308 Winchester Sniper loads containing 175-grain Sierras were tried in a Savage Model 12. Three shots clustered into a single ragged hole.


to heavy recoil while in a magazine tube.

In trying the 405-grain JFN load in a Marlin Model 1895 with a 22-inch barrel, muzzle velocity was 2,041 fps, while the 430-grain LFN/GC load reached 1,956 fps. Using an X-S aperture rear sight and white post-style front, the well-tuned Marlin produced 100-yard groups hovering around one inch with the JFN load and 1.5 inches with the LFN/GC load.

.50 ALASKAN

BBA is the only commercial ammunition company offering loads for this proprietary cartridge. It is based on the .50 Winchester case cut to 2.1 inches (the same as the .45-70) and utilizes .512-inch bullets. BBA offers four loads: a 450-grain JFN bonded at 2,050 fps, a 450-grain LFN/GC at 2,100 fps, a 500-grain JFN and a 525-grain LFN/GC, each at 1,850 fps.

From a custom DRC (Dave Clay) stainless steel Marlin Model 1895 with a 23-inch Shilen octagonal barrel, the 500-grain JFN bullet reached 1,902 fps. With X-S aperture sights, it proved capable of sub-one-inch groups at 100 yards, at least when I could do my part without flinching! (This outfit is plenty lively and not especially fun from the bench!)

BBA is a developing ammunition company, with new loads appearing regularly. For more information visit www.buffalobore.com. 

There are some Special Forces in every Nightforce.



Virtually every scope we make had its origins at the request of the U.S. military. They wanted riflescopes of unparalleled quality, performance, reliability and precision. Come to think of it, the same things you should look for in your optics. We take our scopes seriously. As do our customers, whether they're professional shooters or just want to shoot like professionals. When our Special Forces rely on a scope, you can be assured that it's a very special scope indeed.

NXS 1-4x24 Compact
 NXS 2.5-10x24 Compact
 NXS 2.5-10x32 Compact
 NXS 3.5-15x50, 3.5-15x56
 NXS 5.5-22x50, 5.5-22x56
 NXS 8-32x56
 NXS 12-42x56



Nightforce Optics • 1040 Hazen Lane
 Orofino, ID 83544 • 208.476.9814
nightforceoptics.com

