

» SIG Sauer Blaser Tactical 2 rifle with its unique stock configuration comes into its own shooting prone. Straight pull bolt allows shooter to re-chamber a round with minimal sight disturbance for follow-up shots or engaging multiple targets.



COMBO PLA

SIG'S BLASER TACTICAL 2 TACKLES STORM MOUNTAIN'S LONG RANGE RIFLE COURSE

This article interweaves two complementary subjects.

The first is the SIG Sauer Blaser Tactical 2 rifle chambered in .308 Winchester. The second is Storm Mountain Training Center (SMTC) located near Elk Garden, West Virginia, where the Blaser Tactical 2 was put through its paces during a Long Range Rifle Course. It is not often that I get the opportunity to write about multiple items of discussion that interact so seamlessly.

The SIG Sauer Blaser Tactical 2 represents the cutting edge of rifle technology, combining many innovative features (nine patents are associated with its design) with time proven, accuracy producing enhancements. The Blaser Tactical

2's distinctive aesthetics immediately put one on notice that this is not an ordinary rifle. The Tactical 2's most obvious departure from the established norm is the Blaser straight-pull bolt-action.

The straight-pull bolt is simple to operate, even for the most committed turn-bolt gunner. I admit to initially trying to open it by lifting, but this urge quickly disappeared after shooting a five-round magazine. The Blaser straight-pull bolt allows a shooter to stay on the scope and work the action without interrupting sight picture. I suggest that right-handed shooters take advantage of the Tactical 2's ability to convert to right- or

» BY TODD BURGREN

left-handed use by moving the bolt handle to the left-hand side for even quicker manipulation when shooting prone. This prevents the shooter from having to remove the firing hand from the rifle.

The straight pull bolt houses a 360-degree radial collet that expands into a locking groove in the barrel as a cartridge is chambered. The collet both centers and headspaces the round in the chamber in the same position shot to shot. This is crucial in any tactical rifle, where repeatable, precise accuracy is demanded. This is one of the signature features of the Blaser straight-pull bolt-action.

The SIG Sauer Blaser Tactical 2 weighs



SIG Sauer's straight pull **>>** bolt pivots slightly rearward when operated to unlock bolt head from chamber. Action tracks smoothly and reliably on two integral rails found at bottom of action.



Blaser's radial collet bolt **>>** head and scope base mounted to barrel. A switch of calibers (.223 Rem., .308 Win., .300 Win. Mag. and .338 Lapua) involves changing barrels and collet head. Entire operation takes less than ten minutes.



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>> Blaser's unique stock offers numerous adjustments, allowing it to be customized to individual shooter's needs.



nearly 12 pounds and measures 44.5 inches long with the 24.7-inch, hammer forged, fluted heavy barrel. The barrel is obviously free-floated due to the Blaser Tactical 2's unique stock configuration. Rifling twist is 1:11. Trigger pull is adjustable between two to three pounds. The trigger position and trigger stop are adjustable. The fluting aids in heat dispersion and adds rigidity to minimize barrel vibration. The barrel is plasma-nitrided treated, ensuring maximum resistance to corrosion and abrasion. The Tactical 2's receiver is machined from a single block of aircraft-grade billet aluminum alloy. A recoil lug of hardened steel is used to interface the receiver with the injection-molded stock.

The stock is manufactured out of

fiber-reinforced polymers for absolute stability in all weather conditions. The Blaser Tactical 2's stock configuration is unique, to say the least. I will admit that the Tactical 2's stock was the hardest component for me to overcome my preconceived prejudices against. After firing over 450 rounds during the Storm Mountain Long Range Rifle course, I grew to appreciate its ergonomics, especially firing from the prone position. The buttstock's slightly radiused recoil pad is fully adjustable for length of pull, height, and can be pivoted 15 degrees. Further tweaking can be accomplished with the cheek piece, which can be raised or lowered per individual preference. The pistol grip has a base plate for maintaining hand position, and proved

conductive for placing a sandbag under it, enabling rock steady holds for precise shots at long range. The stock is also threaded for use with a buttstock monopod if desired.

The Tactical 2 uses a single stack, detachable magazine with a capacity of five rounds with .308 Win. and four rounds with .300 Win. Mag./ .338 Lapua.

I found my confidence bolstered by the knowledge that the SIG Sauer Blaser Tactical 2 was capable of ¼ MOA accuracy as witnessed in my preparation for the course and reconfirmed at Storm Mountain during the first morning's zero confirmation session. I knew if my spotter and I did our part reading the wind conditions after the unknown range targets were deciphered using Leupold's Tacti-

Portion of Storm Mountain's Unknown Distance range. Steel targets measured 23" x 48" and were arrayed between 220 yards and 800 yards from firing line.



cal Milling Reticle (TMR), the Blaser Tactical 2 had more than enough accuracy to effectively engage the eighteen 23" x 48" steel targets randomly placed anywhere from 220 yards out to over 800 yards.

The Blaser Tactical 2 and Leupold Mk4 3.5x10X40mm scope with TMR did not fail. In fact, the author engaged all ten targets effectively on the final day's exam, missing only a 790-yard bonus target. Not making excuses, but wind was gusting in the 15-25 mph range during the final exam. The mistake was clearly mine, based on the fact that the Blaser Tactical 2 had proven more than capable of hitting the same target during the first two days work-up to the exam.

I could not have picked a better place than Storm Mountain to effectively test



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and evaluate a rifle with the inherent capabilities of the SIG Blaser Tactical 2. Storm Mountain opened in 1996 and has continuously expanded its facilities, courses, and roster of instructors over the years. Storm Mountain features 11 ranges, two shoot houses, rappel tower, field training area, buses, helicopter hull and automobiles for use during training. Storm Mountain's staff, led by VP Operations Rod Ryan, pride themselves on providing world-class long gun instruction. Rod was one of four instructors—assisted by Charles Gentry, Vince May and Dan Basso—teaching the 20 students enrolled in Long Range Rifle I. Storm Mountain also offers a full range of courses including handgun, carbine, and rifle.

Storm Mountain's location in the Appalachian Mountains (2,600+ft elevation) guarantees challenging wind and weather conditions. Senior Instructor Charlie Gentry let the students know that if we could connect with targets in the swirling wind and driving rain experienced during our three-day course, we could be effective anywhere. Laser rangefinders were not permitted during the course. It was pointed out that students should learn effective mil-dot range estimation before relying on lasers.

An introduction to mil-dot ranging and ballistics was given the first morning of the course. Students were taken straight to 100-yard range zero confirmation and then to the Unknown Distance range. The Leupold TMR reticle in the Leupold Mk4 3.5X10 LR/T scope proved very effective in allowing me to determine ranges accurately.

I used Federal .308 Winchester 168-gr. Match ammunition during the Storm Mountain Long Range Rifle course. I could not have asked for better performance out of ammunition, rifle and scope. The Blaser Tactical 2 kept all cold



Blaser Tactical 2 immediately impressed and instilled confidence by producing 1/4" groups at 100 yards during author's initial work-up for visit to Storm Mountain.

Storm Mountain's Long Range Rifle I began in newly installed classroom building and then stayed on range for duration of course. This allowed plenty of trigger time and familiarization with rifle/scope combinations.



bore shots within 1/2 MOA of original zero.

Storm Mountain's instruction curriculum included introduction to the proper use of a rifle log book to track cold bore shot data, performance under specific weather and altitude conditions and shot count. A student quickly learns that attention to detail is just as critical for

the individual as for the manufacturer of the rifle, ammunition or scope. I credit the Storm Mountain staff for not overly complicating long range shooting, which is easy to do. Long range shooting was presented in a concise fashion, reflecting the experience of the instructor staff and instilling confidence in the students. Proof of the teaching method's effective-

SOURCES:

SIG SAUER Inc.
Dept. S.W.A.T.
18 Industrial Dr.
Exeter, NH 03833
(603) 772-2302
www.sigsauer.com

Storm Mountain, Inc.
Dept. S.W.A.T.
Rt. 1 Box 60
Elk Garden, WV 26717
(304) 446-5526
www.stormmountain.com

Federal Cartridge Company
Dept. S.W.A.T.
900 Ehlen Drive
Anoka, MN 55303-7503
(800) 322-2342
www.federalcartridge.com

Leupold & Stevens, Inc.
Dept. S.W.A.T.
P.O. Box 688
Beaverton, OR 97075-0688
(503) 526-1400
www.leupold.com

ness was evident as students quickly got on target and repeatedly hit targets at long range despite terrible wind conditions.

The Blaser Tactical 2's smooth pull-push bolt manipulation became evident on the range when having to quickly correct hold point based on my spotter's feedback and re-engage any missed target within a five-second time limit. The single stack magazine's design eliminates the need for a feed ramp, further enhancing the "slick" feel of the action. The Blaser Tactical 2's ease of manipulation, combined with the action's short throw, aids a shooter chambering a fresh round with minimal head disturbance. This enables a fast, accurate follow-up shot on a target not anchored with the first shot or another separate aiming point if a shooter is in a target-rich environment. This is where all of the Blaser Tactical 2's technological innovation pays off for the law enforcement or military sniper deployed in the field.

Extremely accurate range rifles do not always translate into effective tactical rifles due to durability, reliability or

ergonomic issues that arise when taken afield. The SIG Sauer Blaser Tactical 2 was subjected to harsh range conditions during the Storm Mountain course and it performed superbly. My choice to take the Blaser Tactical 2 to the Storm Mountain course proved wise in that it enabled me to perform to a high level and gave me the opportunity to evaluate the rifle in a more complete fashion compared to a series of sterile range visits during perfect weather conditions. The range where I do most of my testing is limited to 300 yards. Access to Storm Mountain's 800-yard targets allowed me to fully appreciate the Blaser Tactical 2's true ability.

I recommend both the SIG Sauer Blaser Tactical 2 and Storm Mountain Training Center to any individual operator, department or agency contemplating a new tactical rifle and/or training in use of a tactical rifle. Law enforcement agencies, even though typical engagement distances are less than 100 yards, would benefit from the confidence of hitting targets at long range under adverse wind conditions. Military personnel exposed

to the difficult wind and terrain at Storm Mountain will find their skills at calling wind and engaging targets at unknown distances bolstered.

A shooter will quickly overcome any preconceived notions about the SIG Sauer Blaser Tactical 2 based upon appearance or functioning once it is utilized in the field or training operations. The Blaser Tactical 2's advantages in accuracy and ergonomics will quickly become apparent. Any department or individual contemplating a new tactical rifle would do well to consider the SIG Sauer Blaser Tactical 2—not only for what it offers in performance, but also the advantage of having SIG Sauer as a company backing it in terms of service, parts and accessories.

Too many rifles on the market are labeled "tactical" when a heavy barrel and after-market stock are put together. The SIG Blaser Tactical 2 is a true professional's rifle, with all facets of long range accuracy considered. SIG Sauer's advanced engineering and uncompromising quality are evident throughout the rifle. ●



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