

Looking for a straight-pull but don't fancy a Blaser then what about the Lynx 94 from Finland?



Pete Moore checks out the Finnish Lynx 94, which takes another approach to straight-pull operation

Precision ENGINEERING

Straight-pull rifles have never been that prolific, though in terms of speed of operation their push/pull action stroke is quicker than a standard turn-bolt. In the military three designs stand out; the Austro Hungarian Steyr Mannlicher M1895, the Canadian Ross and the Swiss Schmidt Ruben K31. However, the idea never really proved as popular or reliable as the iconic Lee Enfield and Mauser etc.

In sporting circles straight-pull actions are generally a more modern concept and equally thin on the ground. There have been a few such as the short-lived Mauser 96 and Browning Acera, along with what must be considered the benchmark and by far the most popular – the Blaser R93 and later R8. Also the Strasser RS 05, which was designed by Horst Blaser (R93 designer),

which is another story! Plus the one rimfire, the elegant and efficient Browning T-Bolt.

ENTER THE LYNX

Adding to this list is the Lynx 94 from Finland. Designed by master gunsmith Torsti Laaksonen and manufactured by Pirkan ASE Limited, this is not a new design as I have seen it at the IWA show for a few years and always wanted to test one. In the UK a company called Brown Trout brought them in pre-2010, but despite many requests and promises they never sent one. However, the good news is that Alan Rhone has been bringing them in for about a year now and I have the Light Hunter version for test.

First impressions are of an exceptionally well built if slightly heavy rifle

with a simple and efficient action. When compared to the majority of straight-pulls that tend to go for some form of rotating bolt, or in the case of the Blaser a radial system the 94's is like a big version of the Browning T-Bolt. Nothing complicated, just a simple cross bolt located at the rear of the receiver. This engages using a rectangular lug into a cut out on the right and a flat bar on the left.

Apart from that the bolt body is a massive steel bar, which is a precision fit in the steel receiver. To be honest I have never considered rear locking actions to be that accurate, but in the case of the 94 I stand corrected. Operation is by a T-shaped handle not unlike the old Schmidt Ruben K31, however, as a K31 user I had to adapt my style a little!



With the exception of the bolt system this is very much a conventional layout, note the laminate stock, walnut is also an option

LAYOUT

Lynx offers two versions of the 94 - the Hunter (Standard and Light) and Target, which I will detail, but the basic action goes like this. The steel receiver is tubular and shows a slot-style ejection port, which offers a closed-topped action with an integral 17mm dovetail. The trigger is adjustable from 0.5-1.2 Kg and the safety located rear left of the action. It pushes forward to FIRE and reverses for SAFE with the bolt locked in this mode. Feed is from a 3-round box magazine as standard, with a 5-shot also available. The Target offers a 10-round unit. In all cases the release catch is at the rear of the well.

Unusual is the bolt catch, which takes the form of a pull-down lug inside the trigger guard. The case-hardened bolt shows a plunger-type ejector in a fully supported head.

Barrels are both 24 1/2" and my example came threaded 17x1mm. No iron sights are fitted on either version, but they are available. Major changes between the two models are the heavier, thumbhole, target-type stock of the Target version. The hunter offers a more sporting-style with raised comb in the choice of laminate and walnut. Tipping the scale at 8lbs + these are not light rifles. Calibre choice is not huge but good enough - Hunter - 308 Win, 6,5x55 Swedish, 30-06 and 9,3x62, Target - 222 Rem, 7,62x39, 308 Win, 6,5x55 Swedish and .30-06. From the UK shooter's view 223 and 22-250 Rem and 243 Win would be useful additions.

TOP CLASS

From the box the 94 exudes quality, the laminate-stocked version is my favourite with a decent length of pull topped with a thick rubber recoil pad. The butt is a Monte Carlo style with a good cheekpiece and medium height comb. The grip is full and near upright with a thumb scallop at the rear and a slight R/H palm swell. There's plenty of meat around the action and the forend though tapered is hand-filling. Both this area and the grip are textured for added hold. A nice touch on a European rifle are a set of normal QD sling studs, so a bipod is not a problem!

The barrel is a standard sporter weight and is just floated in the forend. All the metalwork is well blued and general finish and wood to metal fit is excellent. This is an

PETER SAYS:

"I have never considered rear locking actions to be that accurate, but in the case of the 94 I stand corrected"

elegant rifle though visually the big, industrial looking T-shaped bolt handle is a bit at odds with the rest of the design. However, that's just aesthetics, as once understood it's a most practical control...

WATCH YOUR FINGERS

I get a lot of rifles to test and some come without anything, so hats off to Alan Rhone as the Lynx 94 came fully fettled. On top was a Zeiss 3-12x56 Varipoint T* with ballistic turret mounted in a set of Ziegler ZP QD claw mounts. Up front an Ase Ultra Compact, muzzle-mounted moderator. Best of all it was chambered in 30-06 Springfield, which in my opinion makes it very much an all-round performer!

Ammunition went to Lapuas 170-grain Naturalis (non-lead) and their 200-grain

Mega (JSP) load. Magazines are double column but feed from the middle so rounds need to go in the front, base-first). In terms of handling and controls the Lynx shows a few anomalies - the safety is set on the rear/left of the action, which as a right hander means you are going to have to break your firing grip!

The T-shaped bolt handle offers a lot to get hold of and the natural thing to do is wrap your middle and index fingers around either side of the handle, as you would with a K31. However, the initial unlocking movement moves the lever inwards about 20°, consequently reducing the distance between the handle and the stock. Which will trap your fingers as the bolt moves rearwards. So a slight modification of your grip is required just using the pads of those two digits as opposed to the second joint. There is no extra effort required and you are still in total control. On the way back you simply palm it closed to offer a smooth and positive operating stroke.

SMOOTH AND ACCURATE

With that out of the way it was time to see how it shoots. Even without the moddy fitted recoil was typical 30-06; big but smooth and easily tolerable, one of the facts that makes it such a great all-round cartridge. Of the two loads the Lynx showed a slight preference for the 200-grain Megs coming in at a solid



Here we see the bolt handle unlocked prior to cycling, a finger tip grip on the handle is advised, note the 17mm dovetail and the rear Ziegler ZP claw mount



Ammo from Lapua with their 170-grain Naturalis (non-lead) and 200-grain Mega, the 94 preferred the heavier load



Zeiss in the Ziegler ZP claw mount, they offer a 100% return to zero, note the safety, bolt release lug, mag catch and the left side of the locking bolt

Even in 30-06 the bolt throw is short enough so you don't have to move your head back when cycling the action



WE RECKON

- ✦ A tough, accurate and well made straight-pull rifle
- ✦ Smooth and easy action, but watch those fingers...
- ✦ A lot of gun but also a lot of money!

► .75", with the Naturalis printing an inch at worst. I feel that this rifle is capable of better and sticking my neck out it could probably do ½" with the right ammo. Add in the superior trigger with its crisp, light and predictable release and you have a very capable hunting gun that should easily push out to 400-yards.

Though you don't need them - as the Lynx has an integral 17mm dovetail - the Ziegler mounts were impressive as they gave a guaranteed return to zero and are by far the fastest QD system I have ever used. You just locate the rear claws and push the scope down until it locks. To remove pull

back on the forward catches and lift up and off. Superb, but they do add the thick end of £500 to the bottom line!

MONEY

As you might imagine the Lynx 94 is not a cheap rifle! Currently Pirkan ASE make only 150-units per year, which is now being increased to 300 as they are moving to bigger premises. The Light Hunter (on test) will set you back £4200, the standard Hunter and Target are less at £3950, making them about a grand more expensive than a comparable Blaser R8 Professional. Alan Rhone are offering a package deal. As Zeiss Centre Partners you can get the Lynx with the Zeiss 3-12x56 Varipoint T* in the Ziegler ZP claw mounts for £6,400 giving a saving of £355.



Action unlocked here we can see the rectangular lug has been lifted from its cut-out prior to bolt retraction

Bolt removed showing the simplistic and solid build, in use primary extraction was not an issue and it ran smooth and sweet

TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS	
■ Name	Lynx 94 Light Hunter
■ Calibre	30-06 (on test)
■ Capacity	3 and 5 (DM)
■ Barrel	24 ½"
■ Action	straight pull
■ Length	44"
■ Weight	8 lbs
■ Price	£4200
■ Contact	Alan Rhone, 01978 66 00 01
www.lynxrifles.com	
Lapua ammunition - Viking Arms Ltd, 01423 780810	
Ase Ultra moderators - Jackson Rifles, 01644 470223	
Carl Zeiss Sports Optics, 01707 871350	

LYNX RIFLES

Come and See the Lynx 94
at the



The **BRITISH SHOOTING**
& Countryman Show
25th & 26th FEBRUARY 2012
West Midlands, Warwick, Warwickshire
www.theshootingshow.co.uk



ZIEGLER ZP MOUNTS **ZEISS**

LYNX RIFLES

The Ultimate Rifle Package
Lynx 94 Target or Lynx 94 Light Hunter Rifle
Zeiss Victory Varipoint 3-12x56 T* ASV
Ziegler ZP Mounts

alanrhone
tel: 01978 66 00 01
email: alan@alanrhone.com
web: www.alanrhone.com