

Eastmans' HARDCORE TESTED PRODUCT FIELD TEST

THE BLASER R93 | BY RYAN HATFIELD

Growing up in the West in a family of modest means (at best), one quickly learns to get familiar with whatever can be picked up cheap and out of the box at the local sporting goods store. For years I've managed to get by with those same types of rifles, but not without the accompanying angst. I cringe at the thought of opportunities lost on trophy game either because of equipment malfunction or a simple lack of confidence in my gear.

Last fall, I had the opportunity to hunt with something significantly better designed and manufactured than anything I'd personally ever used before – the Blaser R93 Professional in .300 Win.-Mag. In a nutshell, holding that German-made Blaser rifle was similar to picking up some of today's top of the line binoculars after using a pair of Tascos from the 1960s.

The first thing I noticed was the bolt. There is no bolt throw whatsoever; the bolt is straight-pull action, designed to pull directly back in one motion. Not only does this give the user a lower needed clearance for a scope, but it is also a flat-out advantage in speed and ease of use in critical situations.

The next feature I noticed right away was the cocking mechanism. Rather than having a normal safety, which can fail, the Blaser has an actual cocking mechanism. This is a superior design over traditional safeties in that the gun can not fire unless the user has engaged the cocking mechanism.

Another great feature of the R93 is its versatility. The entire rifle can be taken apart for travel with simple twists of the



The author takes aim with the Blaser R93. Intelligent engineering and common sense practicality make the Blaser a top choice for critical hunting situations.

supplied assembly key. Once you reach your hunting destination, you just reassemble it, tighten the bolts, and it's still dead-on accurate. This could be a tremendous advantage on a horseback hunt or with airline travel. You can also change the caliber on the same stock and receiver. Take this .300 Win.-Mag. for example; you can turn it into a .243 by simply changing the barrel, bolt head, and magazine. This simple caliber change saves you from needing to buy an all-new rifle. All of this can be done with the supplied assembly keys; no gunsmith required.

At the range, I was impressed once again. First, the trigger was incredible. It was easily the lightest, most natural factory trigger I had ever squeezed. On a different rifle I used earlier in the fall, the trigger was heavy and forced the user into an unnatural position of pulling



With no bolt throw, a simple straight pull back motion is both faster and easier than traditional bolt actions.

PRODUCT	SCORE	COMMENTS
Overall design:	Excellent	The straight-pull action, cocking mechanism, and ability to break down the rifle are all incredible features that make the rifle versatile and practical. The design instills greater confidence in safety, and also allows for the cartridges to be ejected with no fear of accidental firing. Detachable scope mounts are invaluable.
Ease of use:	Excellent	The bolt is smooth; the trigger even smoother. Best trigger I've ever felt.
Durability:	N/A	I would assume this to be excellent, but haven't had the product long enough to answer this properly.
Appearance:	Excellent	Smooth and well designed. Nice-looking setup.

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A few simple turns with the supplied key results in the complete disassembly of the rifle, making for much easier travel, whether on horseback or via airplane. Reassembly takes only seconds, and the rifle is still spot on.

hard and unnaturally up. By the time it fired, I had little confidence in a precise shot. Not so with the Blaser. Each time I squeezed the trigger, it went off slightly before I expected it to (which a good rifle should). It was very comfortable and was an easy, natural squeeze, helping to avoid pulling your rifle off target.

Second, the accuracy matched every other impressive facet of this rifle. With no sort of laser bore-sighting device on hand, we had to rely on the old eyeball method of looking down the bore as a start to zeroing the scope. Even so, we had the Blaser completely sighted in out of the box in five shots. I've never shot a rifle before that could match the incredible precision which this rifle possessed. I was hooked.

In the field, I had the chance to put the Blaser to work under true field conditions: Chasing big mule deer during the rut. Rather than constantly second-guessing my own personal rifle that I should have divorced years ago, I knew I had quality gear on my shoulder. That might not seem like a big deal, but I've come to realize something important. When it's "go time", having gear that you know will do its job if you do yours gives you an amazing underlying confidence to make good shots under pressure. Knowing the gear I was packing on this hunt instilled a subconscious confidence in me that allowed me to truly focus on the task at hand, rather than having that little inner demon bothering me about where the

bullet would land as I pulled the trigger. Squeezing the trigger on that Blaser at one of the bigger bucks I have ever taken truly "set me free." The result was a great buck on the ground, with a superior rifle due a great amount of credit.

The old adage "you get what you pay for" is nowhere more appropriate than in the investment we make in our hunting gear. Yes, the Blaser is more expensive than the typical rifle you can grab off the shelf at Wal-Mart, but it is comparable in price to most

custom-made rifles. However, if superior design, accuracy, and craftsmanship matters to you, then you'd be well advised to consider investing in something that you have total faith in getting the job done when you have your dream buck in front of you. For the first time in years, I had that subconscious confidence in my rifle when I squeezed the trigger, and I felt free to focus on what I needed to focus on. The result speaks for itself. For more details, visit www.blaser-usa.com.



The author took this mature 30-inch buck on a DIY hunt while using the Blaser R93 Professional in .300 Win.-Mag. The buck fell to a 188-yard, well-placed shot as he was following a hot doe.