



Pedersoli's ***Missouri River*** **HAWKEN**

The first recorded sale of a rifle that carried the Hawken name was made to General William Ashley in 1823. Ashley was the Lieutenant Governor of Missouri and a brigadier general in the Missouri State Militia. In 1831 the American Fur Company ordered 18 Hawken rifles from St. Louis gunsmiths Jacob and Samuel Hawken. From then until the late 1840's the Hawken brothers built hundreds of the rifles each year.

By Richard Mann

TRADITIONAL PRECISION

The Hawken rifle is the most famous percussion muzzleloaders ever associated with the American West. In the movie "Jeremiah Johnson," a film about the mountain man period, Robert Redford's character won't settle for anything less than a Hawken rifle. He managed to purchase a small-caliber Hawken before he hit the wilderness and later, in one of the best-remembered scenes in the movie, he found one in the frozen hands of a dead trapper named Hatchet Jack.

Almost every manufacturer of replica muzzleloading rifles has at one time or another built a Hawken-styled rifle and I would guess, with few exceptions, that every muzzleloader enthusiast is capable of recognizing a Hawken styled rifle

when he sees one. Hawken has become the premier name associated with traditionally styled muzzleloading rifles. And such rifles still find favor with hunters.

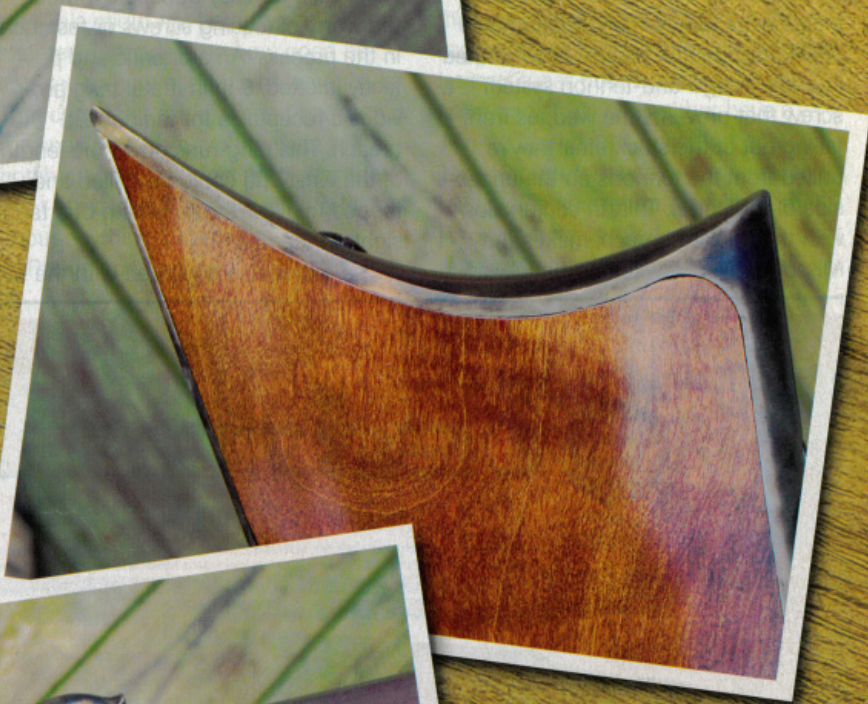
The Missouri River Hawken recently released by Pedersoli of Italy is a good example. This rifle is built true to the original Hawken's crafted by Jacob and Samuel during the early 1800s. It's available in .50 in either a walnut or maple stock, both with a 30-inch, rust-browned, octagonal barrel that measures one inch across the flats. All of the furniture (metal work) including the lock — with the exception of the two barrel mounted ferrules — is very tastefully color case-hardened.

I was especially impressed with the



Like most of the metal components on this gun, the trigger guard is color case-hardened.

The metal-to-wood fit on the Hawken is well crafted and comparable to custom-made guns.



The Missouri River Hawken comes standard with double set triggers. By setting the rear trigger, the front trigger becomes a hair trigger.



wood-to-metal fit on this rifle. The butt plate, toe cap and even the wedge plates were tightly inlaid in the maple stock. One unique feature incorporated into the wedge-and-tenon system is a screw that prevents the wedges from falling out of the stock after they're pulled from the tenons on the underside of the barrel. This, in conjunction with the hooked breech, makes the Missouri River Hawken essentially a

take-down rifle that can be packed in a short case for easy transport without the worry of losing screws or fasteners in the process. An authentic and perfectly inletted, 6-inch metal tang provides a receptacle for the hooked breech. This tang runs down the length of the wrist and could be drilled and tapped to allow the mounting of a tang sight on the rifle.

The rifle is also equipped with the

The rear sight provided is authentic in design and adds a touch of class to the rifle. The notch is sized perfectly for providing a good sight picture for hunting or target shooting.

PEDERSOLI MISSOURI RIVER HAWKEN

Specifications

Caliber: .50

Stock: Walnut or Maple

Barrel Length/Twist: 30" / 1 in 24"

Weight: 9 lbs. 8 oz. (nominal)

Cost: \$1,080

common double set triggers typically found on original and many reproduction Hawken rifles. By setting the rear trigger, the front trigger becomes a "hair" trigger. Without setting the rear trigger, the front trigger on the sample rifle broke at 5.25 pounds, as measured on a Timney Triggers' pull gauge. With the rear trigger set, the front trigger released the hammer consistently at only nine ounces!

Traditional rifles, of course, demand the use of iron sights and the sights on

modern sabot-encased or belted muzzleloader bullets.

After running a few dry patches down the barrel to make sure it was clean, the first bullets I tried with the Pedersoli were 245-grain PowerBelt hollow-points. I poured 85 grains of FFg Kik blackpowder down the barrel and shoved a Power Belt on top of it. (Kik blackpowder is available from Western Powders in Miles City, Mont., www.ramshot.com) The second PowerBelt was loaded without cleaning

the barrel. It impacted the 50-yard target about an inch and a half higher than the first shot. I then fired four more PowerBelts, cleaning the rifle between every shot, and cut a large hole around the hole of the first bullet I fired.

I tried several other bullets from various manufacturers to include the new, 250-grain, CVA SlickLoad Sabot bullets with loads of between 80 and 95 grains of Kik powder. With every bullet tested, I had no problem shooting five-shot



The Pedersoli's 1-in-24-inch twist lets it shoot modern sabots well.

groups that measured between one and two inches at 50 yards, even though I was struggling with the open sights. In all, from the bench and off-hand, I fired 50 shots through the Pedersoli Hawken without experiencing a single delayed ignition or misfire.

I have shot a lot of blackpowder in sidelock and in-line rifles and have found that in most every case the best accuracy is found when the barrel is at least swabbed with a moist patch, then a dry patch between shots. The Missouri River Hawken was no different; cleaning between shots produced groups often half the size of groups shot without cleaning between shots. The trick here is that when you do clean between shots, clean the same way every time.

I like this rifle for a number of reasons: I like the authenticity of the

CONTACT INFORMATION

CVA

www.cva.com

Davide Pedersoli

www.davide-pedersoli.com

PowerBelt Bullets

www.powerbeltbullets.com

**Western Powders Kik
blackpowder and
Montana Extreme products**
www.ramshot.com

The silver front sight is easy to see in bright or low light. Its width of .06 inches works well for target shooting or hunting.

**WITH THE REAR
TRIGGER SET, THE
FRONT TRIGGER
RELEASED THE
HAMMER
CONSISTENTLY AT
ONLY 9 OUNCES!**

the Missouri River Hawken are very authentic. However, the only complaint I had with the rifle regarded the sights. My eyes seem to be aging faster than the rest of my body and I found it hard to obtain a good sight picture because



of how close the rear sight was to my eye. This might not bother another shooter, depending on how good he can see or how good his optometrist is. That complaint aside, when I backed up my head an inch or so the wide rear notch created a perfect cradle for the front blade and I found it easy to hit just about anything I wanted.

The unique feature of this authenti-

cally styled Hawken from Pedersoli is the rate of twist incorporated in the broach-rifled barrel, which has a slight, internal taper from breech to muzzle. Most traditional rifles either have a 1-in-60, round-ball-only twist or a 1-in-48 twist for shooting conical lead bullets. The barrel on the Missouri River Hawken is rifled at a 1-in-24 twist rate, permitting the accurate fire of



CLEANING BLACKPOWDER

One of the best procedures I have found for cleaning between shots is to run a moist patch and then a dry patch down the barrel. The patch can be moist with saliva, your favorite cleaning solution or, better yet, plain alcohol. Alcohol works well because it will evaporate faster than any water-based solution. I carry a small bottle of alcohol or the alcohol-based blackpowder solvent from Montana Extreme when I'm hunting with blackpowder.

As for cleaning at the end of the day, removing the barrel from your muzzleloader and washing it out in the bathtub with a combination of hot soapy water is a method often employed. It works, but it's about as much fun as cleaning out a septic tank. CVA's Barrel Blaster Foaming Bore Cleaner is the better answer.

Just run a few CVA Barrel Blaster, pre-coated Quick Clean Patches down the barrel and then squirt the barrel full of Barrel Blaster Foaming Bore Cleaner and let the barrel soak for a while. CVA recommends 30 minutes.

After the foaming cleaner has done its work, swab the barrel until dry with regular patches then run several Barrel Blaster Rust Prevent Patches down the barrel.

design and how that authenticity has been married with some modern concepts such as the hooked breech and contained wedge pins. I also like that this rifle will accurately shoot modern muzzleloading bullets. The rifle also looks very nice, and that's never a bad thing. The Missouri River Hawken should appeal to all shooters wanting to feel a nostalgic connection to the past while blackpowder hunting, but

desiring to enjoy all of the benefits of the modern projectiles available for muzzleloaders.

If you're interested in one of Pedersoli's replica firearms, you'll have to hook up with one of its American distributors. A list of U.S. dealers can be found on Pedersoli's Web site at: www.davide-pedersoli.com. ●



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