Sights for Sore Eyes

Pete Moore adds some extras to Pedersoli’s 1886/71 lever-action rifle that should improve accuracy

You may recall in the last issue I looked at Pedersoli’s reproduction of the Winchester 1886/71 lever-action rifle. Chambered now in 45-70 Government and 444 Marlin it has been reintroduced more as a sporter for driven boar or large game than a classic for competitions like the Trafalgar Meeting at Bisley. A fact attested to by the Boar Buster models, which are the same as the full length rifle but with a 19” barrel, fibre optic insert front sight and rear optical base with fixed iron sight included. The only difference being that one is in walnut and the other shows a blaze, orange camo stock, which fits in with the European rules on this sort of hunting.

The full-length (24” barrel) 1886/71 shows classic sights, with a semi-Buckhorn elevator wedge mounted on the barrel and a ramped, brass-tipped blade with removable protector up front. Depending on your needs these are adequate, but if more precision is required then Pedersoli’s USA 418 Creedmoor aperture sight can be substituted, which is the first of two sighting upgrades that I was sent.

COMPROMISE

Aperture sights for classic BPCRs (black powder cartridge rifles) such as Pedersoli’s Sharps 1874 usually take the form of a flip-up ladder located on the tang of the butt. This offers a micrometer, windage/elevation-adjustable disc with aperture, which tends to centre the eye better in terms of precision aiming. This can further compromise aperture sights for classic BPCRs (black powder cartridge rifles) such as Pedersoli’s Sharps 1874 usually take the form of a flip-up ladder located on the tang of the butt. This offers a micrometer, windage/elevation-adjustable disc with aperture, which tends to centre the eye better in terms of precision aiming. This can further compromise aperture sights for classic BPCRs (black powder cartridge rifles) such as Pedersoli’s Sharps 1874 usually take the form of a flip-up ladder located on the tang of the butt. This offers a micrometer, windage/elevation-adjustable disc with aperture, which tends to centre the eye better in terms of precision aiming.

However, given the more hunting-oriented nature of the 1886/71 that little lot might be a bit too big and fragile, so Pedersoli have come up with a compromise with their ‘Bolt’ USA 418 Creedmoor sight. Another factor with tang sights is that lever-action rifles often cannot mount them due to the fact the breechblock (bolt) opens rearwards (over the tang). Certainly the case with the longer (45-70 cartridge overall length) of the 1886.

The bolt of the 1886 is pre-cut (slotted) for the USA 418, which consists of a long base with a small, windage-adjustable aperture at the rear that drops into the slots. Also includes are an elevation thumbwheel stud, keeper screw, tension spring and pivot/hinge pin, which passes through the side of the bolt. The design is such that all of this sits above the firing pin channel so does not interfere with function and offers limited windage and elevation correction. In use it’s better to remove the rear Buckhorn unit as it can get in the way. In terms of what you see you get the circular aperture with the pawn-shaped blade sitting neatly in the middle. The only problem is that in low light things get harder to see.

Fitting is a little involved and it was easier to remove the bolt and firing pin, as it makes access easier. This route will not be for everyone, so given a medium/high skill level is required it’s worth paying the extra and getting a competent gunsmith to do the job.

SOLUTION

Eminently more practical if not historically correct is the optical sight
The scope base replaces the rear sight and offers an integral, adjustable hi-vis, U-notch and is purely aimed at the hunter.

FOR
Two practical solutions for improving the 1886/71s sighting possibilities.

AGAINST
Pedersoli’s solution to improved accuracy and shootability.

**TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS**

- **Pedersoli USA 418 (bolt) Creedmoor**
- **1886/71 barrel-mounted scope base**
- **Price:** POA
- **Contact:** Henry Krank & Co Ltd, 0113 256 9163
- **www.davide-pedersoli.com**