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Guns & ammunition

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McMillan G30

Mention the name "McMillan" in any gun circle and it's sure to be associated with some of the finest synthetic rifle stocks made anywhere in the world today. It all started back in 1972 when the late Gale McMillan, an avid benchrest shooter, founded McMillan Fiberglass Stocks. Gale was one of the true pioneers in the field. I met Gale at a benchrest match very early on when fiberglass stocks, including his, were pretty crude and required a ton of work both inside and out. But technology advanced rapidly, and MFS was always among those companies at the cutting edge of it.

In 1992, Gale and his son, Rock, a highly skilled machinist and an avid hunter and shooter himself, designed a bolt action. To make a long story short, that action was used as the basis for the family building custom rifles under the McBROS name.

In 2007, Kelly McMillan, another of Gale's sons who had been running the



The Prodigy performed flawlessly at the bench over the course of firing some 80-plus rounds through it.

family's fiberglass stock business, founded McMillan Firearms Mfg. LLC, with the idea of offering a fixed-spec, i. e., a semi-production line of hunting rifles through a dealer network as well as consumer direct. The result is a new and comprehensive line consisting of seven distinct hunting rifles: *Legacy*, *Dynasty*, *Prodigy*, *Prestige*, *Heritage*, *Outdoorsman*, and *Tactical Hunter*. The action on which these rifles are based remains unchanged from the original, basic design, but is now known as the G30. The "G" stands for the father's name, Gale, and "30" for the year he was born.

The example sent us for test and evaluation was the *Prodigy* model chambered in .300 WSM.

The G30 action has some distinctive features, first and foremost is the fact that the bolt body is fatter than on your typical Mauser-type action, though not by a lot. Whereas the bolt diameter of a Mauser, Remington 700, Savage 110 or Ruger 77 averages

around .695", the G-30 bolt measures .715" or some .020" fatter. This extra girth comes in handy when the rifle is being chambered for Rigby-size cartridges that measure some .580" at the base. If when designing an action you want a recessed bolt face to encircle the case rim, having that extra .020" makes that wall surrounding the case rim a bit thicker and stronger. This rim encircling the bolt face is interrupted only to accommodate the Sako extractor and the ejector slot.

Which brings us to a feature found only on the G-30 – its redundant ejection system. Not only is there the familiar, plunger-type ejector button housed in the lower left quadrant of the bolt face, but there's a Model 70-type ejector blade in the floor of the receiver bridge that works in conjunction with a slot on the left side of the bolt head. In other words, if the spring-loaded plunger doesn't flip the spent case free of the loading port, the blade ejector will as the bolt nears its fully withdrawn position. Over all the years I've been in this business, I've witnessed only two incidents of plunger ejectors failing, and both were due to rust, but in the unlikely event that should happen, it wouldn't matter with a G-30 action. It almost goes without saying that the G30 action is made in short and long versions, the latter capable of digesting the most potent big bores offered.

The twin-opposed locking lugs up on the bolt head are quite large, with plenty of shear and contact surfaces ensuring that this is one very strong action. The right lug has a narrow groove which rides a projecting rail in its raceway; this provides added stability to the bolt. It must work because there's almost no lateral play in the bolt when it's fully withdrawn. And the



With its 24" barrel and Talley bases installed the test gun weighed two ounces shy of 7 lbs. With the Nikon Monarch 2.5-10x50 scope aboard the field-ready package weighed 8 lbs., 3 oz.



The G30 action is quite conventional in that it employs a tubular receiver and separate recoil lug. The magazine box is fabricated sheet metal that engages skirts in the receiver and bottom metal unit.



The slightly fatter than normal bolt provides extra wall thickness for the recessed bolt face. Note the plunger ejector and the slot in the bolt head for the static ejector, giving the G30 two separate ejection systems.

bolt travel is extremely smooth, with no tendency to bind when cycled from the shoulder — something that can't be said for a lot of actions.

The helical flutes on the bolt body not only lend a distinctive look to this action, they're practical as well in that they collect whatever dust or grime that may work its way into the action, keeping the raceway clean. At the rear of the bolt is a rather angular shroud which also contributes to a distinctive silhouette. There's a tail on the cocking piece that projects out from beneath the bolt shroud when the action is cocked, thus providing both a visual and tactile check as to its status. The trigger itself is a Timney, which says all that need be said. On the test gun the trigger broke like a glass sliver at an even three pounds. It is not only a superb trigger, it's externally adjustable so you don't have to dismantle the rifle to do it.

The G30 receiver is tubular, thus it employs a separate, washer-type recoil lug that's sandwiched between a shoulder on the barrel shank and the receiver ring. This one has plenty of surface area to distribute recoil over a large area of the stock to minimize the chance of stock splitting in the case of a walnut stock — something you don't have to worry about with a McMillan rifle because only fiberglass stocks are offered.

Only two of the seven MFM models feature straight-comb classic stocks, and the Prodigy is one of them. The others wear Monte Carlos, which ergonomically are more suited to the fact that one's eyes are some 11 inches higher than the meaty front portion of the shoulder that absorbs recoil, but are not as well suited to heavy recoiling rifles as is a straighter stock. Regardless of style, the lines and

detailing of a McMillan stock come close to equaling those of a finely-crafted walnut stock; it's just that the medium is different. The stock itself is a graphite composite which McMillan calls *EDGE*. It's very light yet very rigid. I own a couple of them and they are superb stocks.

The action of the test gun was expertly glassbedded, with the barrel fully free-floated all the way out to the fore-end tip. The bottom metal unit is beautifully machined from aluminum in the case of the test gun and a couple of other lightweight models in the MFM line; the others are identical, but machined from steel. The hinged floor-plate straddles the guard bow, which is the best arrangement, and the release is inside the bow.

To ready the test gun for a little range work, I mounted one of the new Nikon Monarch 2.5-10x50 scopes with bullet drop compensating long range reticle. This is the reticle that instead of using hash marks on the lower half or the vertical arm, uses circles to represent the various points of impact down-range. By the way, all MFM rifles come with Talley machined steel bases included, pre-installed, with Talley rings in 1-inch or 30mm, your choice. With the scope aboard the ready-to-go rig weighed 8 lbs., 3 oz.

Rummaging through my ammo supply I found that what I had on

hand was three Winchester and two Federal factory loads — the 150 grain Ballistic Silvertip and 180 Fail Safe in Winchester's Supreme line, and the 180 Power Point in the Super-X line. From Federal I had the 150 Nosler Ballistic Tip and 165 Nosler Partition.

I expected no surprises at the shooting bench, and there were none. The Prodigy performed flawlessly. The bolt literally glided back and forth, feeding was positive, and ejection of spent cases, spirited. Accuracy was also as I expected — far better than average. The two 150-grain loads turned in the best group averages, with the Federal Premium averaging 1 inch for five 3-shot groups, while the Supreme load (actually loaded with the same Nosler-made bullet), averaged 1-1/8 inches. The tightest individual group was .7 inches turned in by Federal's 165-grain Partition, but the average for that load was 1.3 inches.

Assuming the Prodigy sent us for T&E was representative, the McMillans are building a very fine line of rifles, and are priced accordingly. The least expensive model in the line is the Legacy, which carries an MSRP of \$4,095. The Prodigy goes for \$4,395, and the priciest model in the line, the Outdoorsman, goes for \$4,795. You can find a detailed description of each model, complete with specs, at www.mcmfamily.com. 🐾



The *EDGE* graphite stock weighs only 24 ounces but is extremely rigid. The G30 action is beautifully glass bedded; the barrel, however, is fully floated the entire length of the fore-end.