

NEW KID ON THE CONTENDER BLOCK THE TC VENTURE

Quality low cost hunting rifles are being offered by several companies. The competition is fierce so anyone entering the market has to have a quality product or they won't last. Our US correspondent gives us an advanced look at the new economy bolt action from Thompson Centre.



Shooting TC Venture offhand – good stock design and comfortable recoil pad.

The low-cost bolt action rifles generally come in the popular hunting calibres, have composite stocks and shoot pretty well. In fact an inch at 100 yards is very achievable which is great for a bargain rifle. In fact many shoot as well as most high dollar rifles though they are not as fancy looking. They also function reliably which is a vital feature in a hunting rifle. The composite stocks are more durable than wood and in bad weather there isn't much of a chance that the point of impact will change due to weather as a wood stock might. They just don't look as pretty, which isn't important to a practical hunter. The TC Venture is such a gun.

Thompson Centre has made quality guns for years and has now come out with its own

economical rifle to complement its higher grade Icon bolt actions. The Venture has a composite stock and comes in a few of the more popular hunting calibres. They include the .270, .30-06, 7 mm Remington Mag and the .300 Win Mag. They are all useful and well known rounds with proven track records. At my request, TC sent me a .270 which is one of the long time favorites here in the USA.

One of the new rifle's features is an externally adjustable trigger though mine, out of the box, broke as clean as glass. According to my gauge it breaks at 2¾ pounds consistently. That's as good as it gets for a high power hunting rifle. If you want to adjust it you can remove the bolt and the screw is there to adjust. Instructions and wrench are also provided. When you can concentrate on the

target instead of the trigger your groups will shrink and you will have better results in the field. TC guarantee that the rifle is capable of a 1" 3 shot group at 100 yards.

One reason for TC's confidence in the Venture's accuracy, is its adoption of 5R rifling. The company has this to say about the 5R rifling system:

Thompson/Center constantly strives to improve the performance and accuracy of our firearms. One major factor that we studied is the different rifling options developed in the past and how they perform with our rifles. In this study, we found that 5R rifling had the characteristics, consistency and improved accuracy that we were searching for. 5R rifling is a rifling developed in Russia which uses 5 lands and 5 grooves instead of

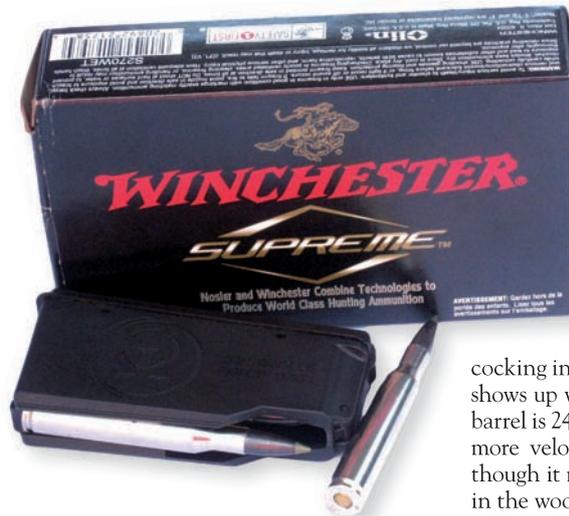
the traditional 6 lands and grooves. In addition, the sides of each land are cut at a 65 degree angle versus a harsh 90 degree angle on standard rifling. 5R rifling's unique design provides benefits to the shooter by causing less bullet deformation, because the edges of each land do not cut into and deform the bullet jacket. When the bullet jacket is less deformed, there will be less jacket fouling in the grooves. The results are better consistency of accuracy from shot to shot, greater bullet stability over multiple shots, and ultimately a rifle that's easier to clean thoroughly. When you see the 5R logo stamped on our T/C Venture you can rest assured that MoA is guaranteed.

Like all rifles I am sure the Venture will prefer one load over another. Another feature is the 3 lug bolt system as opposed to 2 on many rifles. That enables a 60 degree bolt lift instead of the 90 degrees on two-lug rifles. The shorter bolt throw is faster but requires a little more effort because of the reduced leverage. The bolt body is the same diameter as the locking lugs which enhances smooth operation and eliminates bolt binding. In the very unlikely event of a case rupture the gas management system will keep the shooter safe though shooting glasses are always a good idea.

The bolt release is on the side of the receiver and is somewhat difficult to use. It takes a lot of effort to push it in far enough to release the bolt. The rifle supplied in the US comes with mounts installed plus rings. The mounts and rings are very sturdy and well made.

There are no iron sights supplied though I doubt that many hunters would use a .270 without a scope. For starters I mounted a Bushnell Banner 3-8X in keeping with the economical theme. It is also a compact scope which helps keep the weight down. For information on the extensive line of Bushnell products go to <http://www.bushnell.com/> for a listing. The Venture has a box magazine made from polymer which is

LOAD	BULLET	VELOCITY FPS	COMMENT
59 grains 760	90 grain Sierra HP	3595	HOT!
58 grains 760	100 grain Hornady	3371	good load
15 grains Trail Boss	110 grain Sierra HP	1680	nice
12 grains Trail Boss	130 grain cast	1434	consistent
7 grains Trail Boss	140 grain cast GC	1078	good load
60 grains IMR-7828	130 grain Remington	2892	accurate
60 grains H-4831	130 grain Sierra BT	3090	consistent
Factory Remington	130 grain Core Loct	2902	ok
Factory Winchester	150 grain Power Point	2879	decent
58 grains H-4831	150 grain Sierra BT	2941	very consistent
57 grains H-4831	160 grain Nosler Part	2881	bear load



LEFT: Polymer magazine of TC Venture holds 3 rounds of ammo and is a smooth operator.

click when released which may alarm an animal in the woods. If you move it slowly that will mitigate most of the noise. The Venture bolt has a prominent cocking indicator on the back of the bolt that shows up well when the rifle is cocked. The barrel is 24" long which will give the .270 a bit more velocity than the more common 22", though it might be a little more cumbersome in the woods.

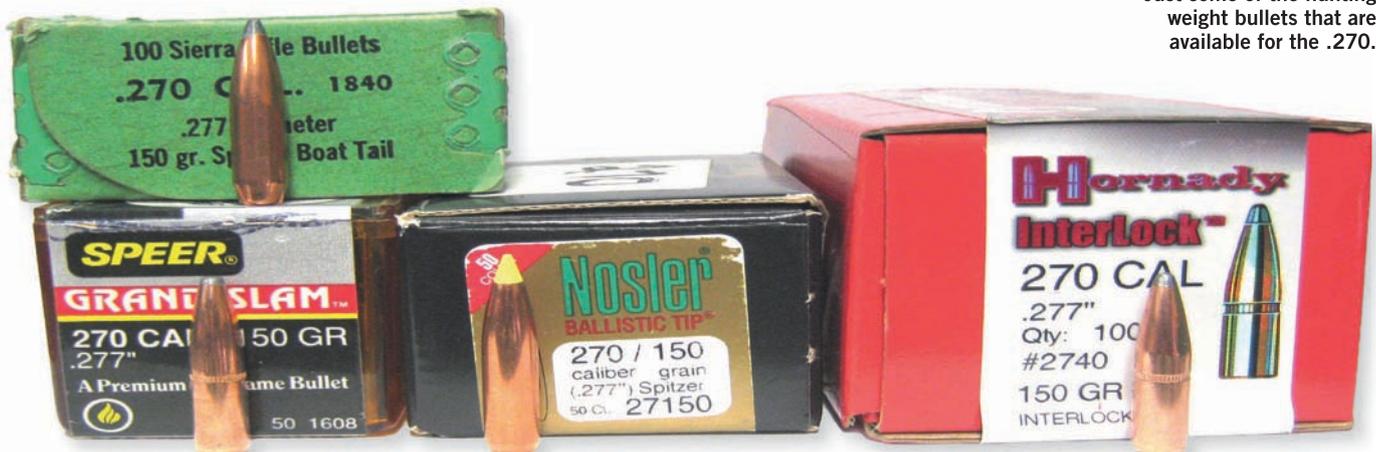
easily removable via a front latch. The magazine is a single column type that holds three shots, giving hunters four rounds total if there is a cartridge in the chamber. The trigger guard is also polymer. It is a feature of these non-metallic magazines that they tend to operate more smoothly and quietly than their metal counterparts.

The Venture has a two position safety that, when engaged, allows the bolt to be manipulated. Like most safeties, it has an audible

The .270 cartridge has been around since 1925 and is pretty popular among hunters. For most game, it will suffice, excelling in the long range thin skinned game area. Today's bullets have improved its killing power over the older slugs. Before premium bullets were designed, the .270 gave spotty performance on larger game such as elk which gave it a bad reputation in some hunter's minds.

Anyone who makes rifles or ammo offers the .270 Winchester round. Bullet weights are available from 90 to 180 grains

Just some of the hunting weight bullets that are available for the .270.



The Thompson Center Venture .270.



from every maker, giving the handloader a great selection.

Like all the rifles I test, I like to see how flexible they are. Everyone knows that a .270 is a fine long range deer and other medium game load but how about some reduced loads for small game and plinking. I have found that Trail Boss, due to its low density makes, an excellent reduced load powder in large rifle cases. Like other 270's that I have tried, H-4831 seems to be a good powder in the Venture, with bullets of 130 grains and heavier. In fact it is my favorite .270 powder although 7828 works pretty well also though it's a bit slower burning. WW 760 produces good results with the lighter slugs. The Hornady 100 grain bullets proved to be accurate at 100 yards and we plan on trying them out on some coyotes. These loads worked well in my rifle but I suggest you start a couple of grains below and work up carefully. I used Winchester large rifle standard primers in all of these loads.

We took the Venture to the local public range in order to wring it out. The ammo was a handload which is 60 gn of IMR 7828 and a 130 grain Remington soft point. After getting it on the paper, the Venture displayed excellent accuracy. The largest group was barely over an inch and that was due to a left to right breeze at 10 mph or so. The rest of the groups averaged less than an inch with a couple much less. That would indicate that this rifle will indeed shoot an inch group as per TC's advertisement. We tried some 100 and 150 grain Sierras for groups and they both stayed around an inch or less though they had different points of impact. The 150 grain Sierras were possible the most accurate bullet tested though not by much. For info on Sierra products go to <http://www.sierrabullets.com> for a list of its products. I shot a few 130 grain Barnes TTSX bullets and they also shot well and would be a top choice for western mule deer here in the US.



The 100 grain Hornady proved to be an accurate varmint load.



LEFT: The Venture action – Scope bases are standard.

BELOW: Venture bolt has 3 locking lugs similar to the TC Icon.



BELOW LEFT: TC Venture bolt has a pronounced cocking indicator.



“5R rifling’s unique design provides benefits to the shooter by causing less bullet deformation, because the edges of each land do not cut into and deform the bullet jacket.”

If I were to use a .270 for larger game like elk, I would choose the Barnes 150 grain TSX to insure penetration though any of the other premium slugs would also suffice. For more info on Barnes bullets go to <http://www.barnesbullets.com> for a complete list of its bullets. The Woodleigh bullet company in Australia has bullets from 130 to a new 180 grain offering for the .270. It makes premium hunt-

ing bullets in many calibers many are for guns that are unusual and offers weights that no one else does. For more info on those bullets you can go to <http://www.woodleighbullets.com.au/> to view its extensive line.

Careful shooting and a better scope would have reduced the groups a bit more without any doubt. The magazine functioned, perfectly as the rifle fired around 350 rounds for this review and my shooting buddy really liked it. In fact he bought the test rifle. I would not hesitate to take this rifle hunting as all functions came in at 100% all the time and having confidence in your rifle is important. As with all my gun reviews I have several people try the Venture and all of them liked the rifle and its performance.

If you are looking for a reasonably priced rifle for hunting I would advise taking a serious look at this one.

Thompson Centre firearms are distributed throughout Australia by Frontier Arms. For more information on pricing and availability, go to: www.frontierarms.com.au.



Top group with 130 grain Sierras and Remington 130 grain factory load.