

GC Precision Developments Game for anything!

by Daniel O'Dea



The GC Precision Developments MSP-M700-LA-TAC-1 in .375 H&H.

I guess the whole concept of the modern modular rifle system with features such as hi-tech alloy chassis construction, titanium receivers and carbon fibre-wrapped barrels don't exactly evoke thoughts of Hemingway's *Green Hills of Africa*. In fact, I'm not entirely sure what old Ernest would make of such a modern rifle. In reality, modern functional technology inevitably overcomes tradition so it's not surprising to see such a rifle being introduced in a traditional big game calibre for big game hunting use.

In the past couple of years, GC Precision Developments at Hume in the ACT have offered *Australian Shooter* several variants of their highly technical Modular Rifle Systems for review, this time it was their spin on the big game hunting rifle in the MSP-M700-LA-TAC-1 in .375 H&H.

The .375 H&H as a calibre, although first

introduced by British gunmaker Holland and Holland in 1912, is still considered by many to be arguably the most versatile 'big game' cartridge around. With a good range of bullet weights it can both stretch out over most practical ranges to strike like lightning on plains game, yet punch with up to 4200 foot-pounds of energy up close on the heaviest of targets.

A longtime favourite in Africa, it has literally taken everything from duiker to elephant. In my experience it's also one of those magical calibres that never seems to be as hard on the shoulder as you might expect, more a big heavy push than hard-bucking recoil. Most seem to be able to handle it quite well, especially from a standing position, which tends to mean people shoot better with it and better place their bullets.

Like many old timers, the .375 H&H

has also benefited in recent years from the advent of advancements both in modern projectile and powder availability, making a good thing even superior. Needless to say it's a good choice of calibre for such a firearm.

Back to the rifle, and with other GC Precision Development MSP rifles we've covered, we start with a precision CNC machined 6061-T651 aircraft grade modular alloy chassis, this time with an under barrel style fore-end with composite textured grip panels. This fore-end replaces the more commonly seen tube-style fore-end on this make of rifle and provides, dare I say, a more classical look, though in an ultra-modern way.

Finish on the rifle is hard anodised to certified MIL-A-8625 and/or dependent on material other components on the rifle are nitride coated.

The action is a Lone Peak Arms Razor Ti

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long action featuring a full 6AL-4V titanium receiver, integral recoil lug and a pinned 20 MOA Picatinny rail for scope mounting. It has a spiral fluted bolt body in a black plasma nitride finish which not only looks great but is incredibly slick and positively glides in the receiver race.

The dual opposing locking lugged bolt has an extended handle and generous bolt knob for good control and also features an M16-style extractor for a positive grip on fired cases. Some might argue the benefits of controlled round feed on a big game rifle but honestly, this one is so smooth to run I doubt you could short stroke it if you tried, even in this long action configuration.

Rounds are fed from a four-round 'Accurate Mag' detachable magazine, the magazine release having a dual operation functionality. First there's a paddle style lever that can be operated by the thumb of the offhand allowing single-handed removal of the magazine, secondly an extension at the rear of the paddle lever protrudes through the front edge of the triggerguard that can be depressed using your trigger finger to drop the magazine. Both release activation methods work well and make the release system ambidextrous.

The barrel is a Proof Research match grade, cut rifled carbon fibre-wrapped barrel with 1:11.2" twist rate. The barrel as tested was 640mm (25") in length and fitted with GCPD's proprietary horizontally ported, four-port muzzle brake. The carbon wrap barrel provides a good weight saving over a traditional all-steel barrel and allows good barrel length without shifting the point of balance too far forward. The rifle as set up had a balance point about level with the front of the magazine housing, which for me seems the natural point of grip for the offhand.



Daniel O'Dea lines up the GCPD MSP in .375H&H.



An under barrel style fore-end with composite textured grip panels replaces the more commonly seen tube style fore-end.

The standard trigger for the rifle is a choice of a Triggertec or Timney with either top or bottom safety. However, the rifle as tested was fitted with an optional Jewell HVR trigger which was superb in every way, but breaking at just under nine ounces may be considered a little light for the intended purpose and possibly more suited to a precision target rifle. No criticism, just my opinion, as far as triggers go arguably there's no better than Jewell.

The MSP .375 H&H was fitted with GC Precision Developments' stock fully adjustable for both length of pull and comb

height. Being modular in design, the stock can be swapped out for a Magpul CTR buttstock providing a further weight reduction, but only in states where telescoping stocks are compliant (Vic, Qld, Tas, NT).

Again, in line with the modular design of the system, the rifle is fitted with a Magpul MOE pistol grip which could be swapped out with a myriad of other similar US MSR (Modern Sporting Rifle) grips available.

The whole set up with the relationship between the stock and barrelled action provides stocking very closely in line with that of the bore. Theoretically it's ideal to have a situation where recoil comes straight back in line with the bore, leaving no point of pivot and improving recoil management and shot recovery.

When it came to shooting I shot all groups over a Caldwell Lead Sled, which pretty much negates the majority of felt recoil in any case, but I also sent some lead downrange from standing and other assumed field positions. Between the muzzle brake and near inline stock design I found the recoil most manageable.

When testing magnum calibres designed for big game hunting I generally see little point in firing dozens of rounds at paper; after all MOA (Minute of Angle) is not so critical when you're hunting Minute of Buffalo-sized targets. However regardless the size of quarry, consistent accuracy



The MSP .375 H&H was fitted with GC Precision Developments' stock fully adjustable for both length of pull and comb height.

always helps breed confidence in your rifle, and the GC Precision Developments MSP chambered .375H&H would have no problems doing that.

Although I had components on hand I stuck to testing with three brands of quality factory ammunition in Federal Premium 270gr Soft points, Sako Powerhead with 270gr Barnes TSX and Barnes VOR-TX with 300gr TSX-FB projectiles. All produced three-shot groups (measured best from five) of 0.75 MOA or better, five-shot groups averaged about 1.25 MOA across all groups fired.

All ammo grouped consistently through the rifle and, even considering the two different bullet weights, no round landed further than six centimetres away from point of aim on the 100-yard target. This is good to know if you have to source ammo at your safari designation which may differ from your pet loading. Overall accuracy was excellent for a big game rifle and I have little doubt it would only improve with further load tuning.

The rifle as tested had an overall length of 1235mm including the muzzle brake on minimum LOP or longer with further length of pull adjustment, so wasn't compact by any means. It weighed in at about 4.5kg including the scope, which is quite light in this class of rifle. It may be long but it is sleek and slender for a big game rifle. To look at it with its long profile barrel you might think it would be heavy and perhaps unbalanced, but the weight saving in the carbon-wrapped barrel and titanium receiver makes for an overall well-balanced package that swings well and points like a laser.

It's worth a mention the rifle came



The GCPD MSP delivered consistent accuracy in a big game rifle package.

fitted for testing with a compact 2.5-10x24 Nightforce optic which would be an excellent choice for such a rifle-calibre combination. It had a circle with centre dot-style reticle and 10-stage red illumination from zero to very bright. Set on 2.5x power would be great for close-up work, while dialing up 10 would be all you could use within the practical trajectory of the .375 H&H chambering for shots across the plain.

I'd been sitting on this rifle for a while as there had been a chance of a trip to the NT which unfortunately didn't happen. I'd love the chance to put it to work in the field against a few boars and perhaps a bull or buff on the Barkley Tableland property I've frequented in recent years, but with time constraints it wasn't to be. That aside, my

experience in testing left me in no doubt it would be up to the task.

For more on GC Precision Developments, visit gcpdarms.com or contact info@gcpdarms.com

Specifications

Rifle: GC Precision Developments MSP-M700-LA-TAC-I

Action: Bolt action (Lone Peak Arms razor titanium long action)

Trigger: Jewell HVR trigger (optional as tested)

Calibre: .375 H&H

Capacity: Four round 'accurate mag' detachable magazine

Barrel: 25" (640mm) fitted with GCPD four port muzzle brake

Twist rate: 1:11.2"

Barrel spec: Proof Research match grade, cut rifled carbon fibre-wrapped barrel

Sights: Pinned 20 MOA Picatinny rail for optics mounting

Length of pull: Adjustable

Chassis finish: Hard anodised to MIL-A-8625

Parts finish: PVD titanium/aluminium nitride

Weight: 4.5kg as tested including Nightforce 2.5-10x24 optic

Stock: Adjustable LOP and comb height

Length OA: 1235mm as tested, minimum set LOP

Price: From \$6250 (\$7450 as tested + optic)



Precision machined chassis, Titanium receiver, pinned 20MOA rail, spiral fluted bolt, dual control Ambi-Mag release, Jewell HVR Trigger, the MSP has all mod cons.