

The LR Precision

from APRS

by Technical Advisor Brendan Atkinson



It is possible these days to purchase a fairly accurate longer range factory rifle over the counter. These are produced by several of the major manufacturers and generally speaking, they will deliver acceptable accuracy with a bit of careful handloading. However, for those shooters who want a really accurate longer range outfit, then the custom-built option is certainly worth pursuing. It is interesting that the premium price asked for some of the factory outfits makes the cost of a custom-built gun even more attractive.

Ace Precision Rifle Systems (APRS) is an Adelaide-based outfit, which produces only custom-built rifles made to a tried and

proven recipe. The gunsmith is Andrew Noble, who served in the Australian Regular Army as an armourer and has now honed his skills as a builder of precision rifles. APRS is a subsidiary of, and works from, the Lightforce premises and naturally, recommends that Nightforce scopes be fitted to their rifles. Everyone involved in this venture is also a shooter and owns at least one APRS rifle.

For this review, I was shown a rack of very desirable custom-built rifles and invited to pick one. I chose one of Andy's favourites and this is a heavy, longer range outfit chambered in .300 Winchester Magnum. The LR Precision is a big, heavy

gun with a long barrel and it certainly looked the goods 'even when standing still', as the car enthusiasts say. The rifle was built with a minimum-size chamber using reamers from Pacific Tool and Gauge, but would still allow factory ammunition to be used safely. Doing it this way means less expanding and resizing of brass and assists with the overall accuracy of the finished product.

If you are going to build your dream rifle, then it pays to carefully select the components. For the review rifle, the recipe went like this: A Stiller Predator repeater action with fluted bolt, Rifle Basix LV-1 adjustable trigger, Kreiger heavy match-grade fluted barrel, Defensive Edge muzzle brake, Manners MC-S T4A stock, PTG trigger-guard and bottom metal, and Nightforce scope and heavy-duty rings.

So let's have a closer look at this custom-built firearm. With an overall length, including the muzzle brake, of 51", you had better go hunting for a decent-sized gun bag for this rifle because most of them will be lacking in length and height.

The action is made by Jerry Stiller in the USA and is based upon the Remington footprint, but is held to tight tolerances. A special run of these has been made with the APRS logo engraved into the left-hand side of the action. The top of the action is drilled and tapped for scope mounts, with the usual Remington spacing for the holes.

The magazine is internal and in the case of the .300 Winchester Magnum calibre, holds three rounds comfortably. The two-lug bolt on this rifle has spiral fluting and a Sako-style extractor. A normal spring



The Stiller Predator actions are specially engraved for APRS.

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and plunger-type ejector is also used. At the left rear of the action is a bolt release, which may be thumb-operated.

The trigger used is from Rifle Basix and is fully adjustable. On the test rifle, it was set at 2lb, which is a sensible weight, but may be too heavy for experienced shooters. I left it the way it was, as it had zero creep and was very crisp at let-off.

The barrel is a heavyweight fluted Krieger 28" in length and has a rifling twist of one turn in 10". This will stabilise the heaviest of bullets normally selected for this calibre. Krieger barrels are now used by many of the world's top Benchrest shooters and have established an enviable record of successes of recent times.

At the front of the barrel is a muzzle brake made by Defensive Edge (DE) in the USA. With the DE brake, there are no ports on the top or bottom and the blast is directed from the sides to keep the rifle level and prevent dust and debris from



This APRS bolt features spiral fluting.

blasting back at the shooter. It looks effective and certainly proved to be so during testing later.

The stock comes from Manners in the US and is the MC-S T4A model. It has an adjustable cheekpiece and a near 90-degree pistol grip for comfortable prone position shooting. There is a thick recoil pad, and sling swivels are provided front and rear. There are two at the front to allow for a bipod to be fitted as well. The action beds to a bedding block and the take-down screws should be torqued to 65 inch-pounds for best results.



A serious rifle needs some solid mounts to hold this together. These mounts are from Nightforce.

The scope

A rifle like this is useless if a substandard or cheap scope is fitted - it would be like putting retreads on a Porsche! The scope used during testing is the NXS Nightforce in 8-32x and was fitted with their NP-R1 reticle. The scope is secured to the action using a very sturdy looking set of Nightforce bases and rings - there is no point doing things by half measures. The whole outfit is finished in matte black and certainly drew a crowd when put on the firing line at SSAA Para Range.

Range time

I went out to Para to see how the LR Precision rifle would perform at distances to 300m, which is the limit of the range. I had a selection of factory loads in both hunting- and match-grade styles, as I felt that some shooters might want to use this rifle for longer range shots at goats, deer and other larger game, where it is sometimes impossible to get closer.

I set the rifle up on a normal bench rest arrangement of a front rest and rear sandbag, but I took along a Harris bipod as well to see how well it would shoot under those conditions.

Now, to be honest, I did not know what to expect when I first fired the rifle. My last experience with a .300 Winchester Magnum was not pleasant - it was an 8lb rifle and had no muzzle brake. With the test rifle, I chambered a factory 180-grain load and settled the cross-hairs on a target at 100 yards. Squeezing the trigger slowly, I then experienced about the same recoil as a .223 Remington, but the muzzle blast was something else. The best place to be was right

The cheekpiece on the Manners stock is adjustable for height.



The DE muzzle brake, although seemingly small, goes a long way to taming the recoil of the .300 Winchester Magnum.



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The LR Precision set up in a bipod.

behind the rifle, as it cleared the benches either side of some loose targets and other bits and pieces.

I fired several more, just zeroing the rifle and I would have to say that it was very pleasant to shoot. I guess that 15lb of weight and DE brake soak up a lot of recoil. But I wanted to be sure whether it was the brake, so I removed it and fired just one shot. Recoil was up, but still quite tolerable. I did all further testing with it back on.

With the rifle zeroed, I proceeded to fire a few groups at 100 and 200 yards using all of the loads. Not surprisingly, the match loads shot tighter groups, but I was impressed at how well some of the hunting stuff went. In particular, the Federal Power Shok loaded with 180-grain Speer Hot-Cor SPs would consistently put at least three of the five

shots into 0.650 MOA, which is very good accuracy for hunting loads.

The match factory loads were Federal Gold Match 190-grain HPBTs. I shot these at 300 yards and after some scope adjustment, could shoot around half MOA for five shots. In better conditions I might have even got them down tighter, but one 10-shot group showed seven of the 10 shots around the 1" mark.

I cleaned the bore after each 20 shots and as usual, the Krieger barrel cleaned up with a minimum of fuss using patches, a bronze brush and some Pro Shot bore solvent. It should do, as it is a stainless match-grade barrel!

A week later, I returned to the range with some handloads to see if I could get a bit more accuracy out this beast. I



The trigger is by Rifle Basix and is fully adjustable.

had some Dyer 155-grain match-grade bullets, some 168-grain HPBT Sierras and some 190-grain Bergers all loaded over AR2213SC powder and lit by Federal 210M primers.



The big rifle was equally at home shot over a bipod. Recoil did not bother this shooter at all.

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The Dyers may be considered a bit light for this calibre, but I nevertheless tried them. I shot them at 100 and 200 yards just to see what they would do and the result was some nice, tight groups. The 168-grain Sierras were used at 200 and 300 yards and returned similar performance. Switching to the Bergers, I must have lobbed right onto the accuracy node, as I managed to shoot two consecutive groups at 300 yards that were just on the 1" mark. So, the potential for extreme accuracy is there.

A rifle like this needs careful handloading to achieve maximum performance, but as I noted, some of the factory loads were



very acceptable. Just remember that a .300 Winchester Magnum loaded hot will burn up a barrel in around 1000 rounds, so don't spend too much time developing loads.

I did try the rifle with the bipod fitted and found no major difference in the way that it shot. If you do need a bipod, buy a good-quality one and avoid the cheap knockoffs, as they might not be up to the weight of such a rifle.

Conclusions

I have established that this rifle will send bullets a long way with very good accuracy, but what would the average shooter do with it? Where could you use it? It is a bit too heavy as a carry-around rifle and is better suited to setting up somewhere and taking shots of opportunity. Rabbits at extreme distances would certainly test the shooter. Certainly, there are areas in Australia where it is near impossible to get close to game due to the terrain. It may be very hilly or perhaps barren plains and a longer shot will be required. Placing a bullet for a swift and humane kill should be the object of the exercise and this rifle is capable of doing just that.

These three 200-yard groups were shot with handloaded Dyer 155-grain bullets over AR22135C, lit by Federal 210M primers.

For range shooters, you might want to try F Class shooting; it's a bit like Benchrest lying down!

The LR Precision is a fine rifle and a good example of the work done at APRS. Such quality is not cheap, but may pleasantly surprise people when the cost is compared to some of the factory longer range jobs. What you finish up with is governed by your imagination and the size of your wallet, so check out what they do at www.lightforce.net.au/aprs ●

Specifications

Manufacturer: Ace Precision Rifle Systems (APRS) from imported parts

Model: LR Precision

Distributor: Lightforce

Calibre: .300 Winchester Magnum

Action: Stiller Predator turn-bolt repeater

Trigger: Rifle Basix

Barrel: Krieger stainless match grade

Stock: Manners MC-S T4A

Overall Length: 51"

Weight: 15.25lb

RRP: Price upon application