

PRECISION

RIFLE SHOOTER

UINTAH PRECISION 6.5 CM

BOLT-GUN WITH
AR LINEAGE

Sightmark
Presidio
3-18x50

8.6 BLK

The case for a new cartridge

OPTICS GALORE

- Sightmark Presidio
- Burris Veracity
- Vortex Strike Eagle
- Leupold Mark 5HD
- Trijicon Tenmile
- Burris Signature HD

13 STEPS

TO DIAL IN YOUR
HUNTING RIFLE

P.112

BUCKET
LIST

RIFLES: STRASSER
RS 14

ADDING THIS EUROPEAN
SWITCH-BARREL TO THE LIST
MADE IT SHORTER.

BY ILYA KOSHKIN

EVOLUTION



The phrase “bucket list” has been around for a while, but it became popular after the movie of the same name was released in 2007. For gun people, their bucket list is of guns to get before they die or “kick the bucket.”

I have acquired a few that were on my list from the beginning (Mosin M28/76, for example). Unfortunately, I have also been adding to the list faster than crossing things off. After spending time with the review sample of the Strasser RS 14 Evolution rifle, I added a new rifle to my bucket list. Yet the beauty of this design is that it replaced three firearms that were on my list.

Strasser is not a household name among firearms enthusiasts, but if the build quality and superior engineering of the RS 14 are any indication, it should be. It is not a cheap gun, but as the saying goes, “Good things are not cheap, and cheap things are not good.” Once I spent time with this rifle, I ended up wondering why it isn’t more expensive.

Strasser hails from Austria. If you look at the images, it does not look unusual for a modern European rifle. However, once you start exploring the rifle, all sorts of interesting details come out.

The furniture is a two-piece design with both the buttstock and the forearm connected to the aluminum receiver. The test rifle has nice wooden furniture, but along with higher grade wood, Strasser offers composite, laminate, and carbon-fiber stocks. It weighs around 8 pounds with the wooden stock and about 7 pounds with the carbon-fiber one. The barrel is free floating and perfectly centered in the forearm channel. The receiver can be made of aluminum because it is not a stressed part; the bolt locks into the barrel extension.

When I first got my hands onto the RS 14 Evolution, I grabbed the rather conventional looking bolt handle and

tried to pull up on it. That did not yield any useful results. This is a straight-pull rifle.

I’ve used a few straight-pull rifles in the past, and most did not cycle as smoothly as this one. I’ve seen some that felt very smooth, but I think Strasser is the fastest cycling bolt-action rifle I have seen to date. I can run lever-guns quickly, and the RS 14, in terms of the speed of follow-up shots, is up there as well and probably almost as fast. Its Picatinny base is machined into the receiver, which makes mounting an optic straightforward. Barrels can be equipped with iron sights if you are so inclined, but I went with a scope.

Along with wooden furniture, Strasser offers the RS 14 in composite, laminate, and carbon-fiber stocks.

I make it a point to examine the technical details of how the locking lugs work. With a turnbolt design, the bolt handle essentially works as an extra locking lug for safety. I have had a rifle blow up in my hands in the past. Since then, I have been following a “trust but verify” approach by carefully examining every new rifle I test. With straight-pull designs in particular, I make it a point to ensure I am not going to end up with a

rifle bolt sticking out of my forehead. I am happy to report that the bolt head on the Strasser is an exceedingly clever and robust design.

There are four beefy, radially-symmetric locking lugs that engage recesses in the barrel extension. Once the bolt is locked, it is not going anywhere. It is a secure lockup. The bolt head is removable via a substantial locking lever in the bolt body, which brings us to one of the more interesting features of this

rifle. It is a switch-barrel design that supports a wide range of calibers by having three different bolt heads. Even more impressively, all the tools you need for disassembly are contained within the gun itself.

Pull out the bolt and drop the trigger group with a single button push. Remove an L-wrench from the trigger-guard for removing the forearm. Rotate the barrel-tensioning lever using a tool contained in the forearm, and pull out

the barrel. Assembly goes in exactly reverse order, so it would take a lot of dedication and ingenuity to reassemble it the wrong way.

The three case heads are mini (.223 Rem.), standard (.308 Win.), and magnum (6.5 PRC). The way Strasser holds tolerances, all bolt heads work with all barrels of compatible calibers. Their machining is so precise that they can easily stay within a fraction of the headspace tolerance.

I am sure someone is miffed that their favorite cartridge is not in that table, but it looks comprehensive to. In principle, almost anything .30-06 length or a touch longer can be made to work in the RS 14. All of the barrels are threaded in mostly M14x1 or M15x1, depending on the barrel profile. The .300 Blackout barrel is the only one threaded 5/8-24.



The RS 14 is a switch-barrel design that facilitates a number of different cartridges.

TRIJICON TENMILE 3-18x44MM



Coping a lightweight .22-250 rifle like the Strasser RS 14 Evolution is not always a straightforward exercise. The rifle can serve as a walking varmintier, long-range predator gun, or a deer rifle. This requires an optic that is reasonably lightweight with the magnification range for anything from 30 yards to 600 yards. Trijicon’s Tenmile 3-18x44 turned out to be a perfect fit.

The scope is long but not heavy. The reticle is in the first focal plane, so the holds are accurate on all magnifications. Side focus allows you to focus down to 15 yards. An illumination turret offers both red and green for better contrast in any environment. The windage turret is covered to make sure it does not shift during transportation. The elevation turret has zero stop and nicely tactile clicks. Its 8 MRAD per turn is plenty for the .22-250 (4 MRAD takes it to the end of the supersonic range). With 3X on the low end for shooting unsupported and 18X for longer distances, it’s an ideal magnification range. Image quality is nicely optimized. The eyepiece is easy to get behind and, at 24 ounces, the Tenmile is easily one of the lightest and most capable scopes of this type available today.

Trijicon
trijicon.com

BUCKET LIST RIFLES: STRASSER RS 14 EVOLUTION

Three interchangeable bolt heads support the switch barrel system, and all the tools needed are housed within the gun.



Barrels	Calibre Code	Calibre Group	Twist Rate (in.)	Grooves
222 Rem.	R	MINI	12.6	6
223 Rem.	S	MINI	12	6
223 Rem.	S	MINI	8	6
300 BLK	Y	MINI	8	4
22-250 Rem.	O	STA	14	6
22-250 Rem.	O	STA	8	6
243 Win.	I	STA	10	6
6XC	V	STA	8	4
6.5 CM	W	STA	8	6
6.5x55	P	STA	8.7	4
6.5x65 RWS	M	STA	7.9	4
6.5-284 Norma	X	STA	9	6
7mm-08 Rem.	U	STA	9.5	6
7x64	B	STA	8.7	4
270 Win.	E	STA	10	4
308 Win.	G	STA	12	4
308 Win.	G	STA	8	4
30-06 Spring	C	STA	10	4
8x57 IS	K	STA	9.5	4
8.5x63	N	STA	10	6
9.3x57	GG	STA	14.2	4
9.3x62	F	STA	14.2	4
6.5 PRC	II	MAG	8	6
7mm RM	D	MAG	9.5	6
300 Win. Mag.	A	MAG	10	6
338 Win. Mag.	FF	MAG	10	6
375 Ruger	T	MAG	12	6
416 Ruger	KK	MAG	14	6
10.3x68 Mag.	HH	MAG	17.7	6
458 Win. Mag.	EE	MAG	14	6

There are two versions of the receiver: left-handed and right-handed. Both receivers work with all calibers. To switch between calibers, all you need is a barrel, bolt head, and magazine. Within each cartridge class, the magazines are mostly compatible across the board. The two exceptions to that are .22-250 and .458 Win. Mag., which require their own mags.

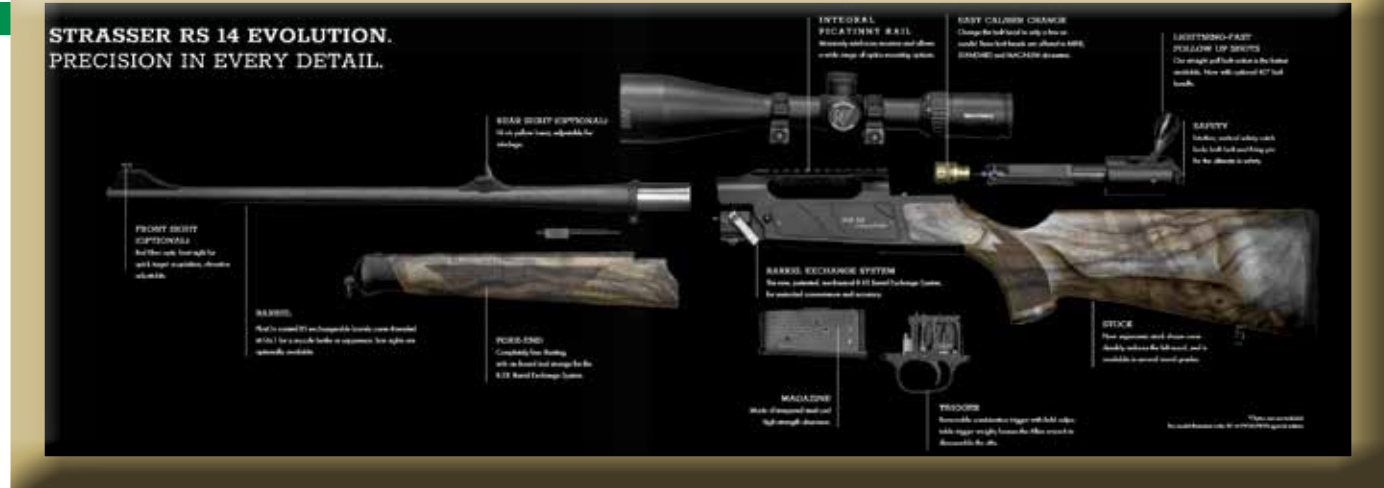
All the magazines are released the same way, by pressing two buttons on the opposite sides of the receiver. It is a clever feature that means if you only press one release button accidentally, the magazine will stay put. Both release buttons must be depressed simultaneously for the magazine to come out. The release buttons are nicely tactile and are intuitively positioned.

Speaking of .22-250, Strasser offers it with two different twist rates: 1:14 and 1:8. Fast twist .22-250s are not commonly

offered, but it is an excellent caliber for thinner-skinned game with quality bullets. The test rifle I played with was indeed a .22-250, albeit with the slower twist rate.

Thanks to modern manufacturing methods, finding a rifle that shoots accurately is not difficult. What is difficult is finding a rifle that is easy to shoot accurately.

The RS 14 uses a smooth cycling, straight-pull action that is quick to reload.



Since the rifle I was testing is set up with a lightweight hunting barrel, I did not bench it much beyond sighting in. Once the Trijicon Tenmile 3-18x44mm I had on hand was sighted in, I shot the rifle extensively off a tripod and a variety of other supports from field positions. For accuracy testing, I simply shot prone with nothing supporting the

buttstock but my shoulder. There was no load development since I shot standard 55-grain Hornady factory ammo.

The target was 200-yards away, and I shot seven shots (one in the chamber and two, three-round magazines) in rapid succession without letting the barrel cool. The wind was between 10 and 15 mph according to my Kestrel. I compensated for the changes the best I could but clearly not well enough given the slight horizontal spread. The first group I shot for accuracy came in at .85 MOA.

That is about as well as I can do without a rear bag on a good day, so the rifle is not adding much to the dispersion. The Lothar Walter barrels Strasser uses are clearly capable. Equally importantly, the rest of the rifle is not holding the barrel back. The trigger is user adjustable and can also function as a set trigger. Honestly, I did not do any of that. The pull was in the 3-pound range with a short first stage and very crisp break. It is perfect for a precision hunting rifle. If I wanted to shoot the gun in competition, I would consider some experimentation. For any other use, I saw no reason.

I shot a few more groups to see if there would be POI (point of impact) changes after removing and reinstalling the barrel. It was all within the shooter error. There must be some shift,

BUCKET LIST RIFLES: STRASSER RS 14 EVOLUTION

but to see it, I would need a vice and a 300-yard tunnel to get rid of wind. I do have a 100-yard tunnel available to me, and I could not see it there.

For those who do not need the switch barrel feature, Strasser offers the RS Solo model that looks the same except the barrel is not quickly interchangeable. Personally, I am a huge fan of takedown and switch barrel rifles. If I ever get a chance to hunt Africa, I will get a Strasser RS 14 Evolution for that. Pretty much anything and everything you encounter on any continent can be disposed of with three calibers. This would be a good lineup:

Despite the wind, the author's initial 200-yard testing resulted in a .85-MOA group.

- A .416 Ruger for big bears and other large critters (or anything you really dislike).
- A 6.5 PRC for mountain sheep and other animals you can't get close to.

- A fast twist .22-250 for smaller herbivores and predator hunting in North America.

Perhaps, a 6.5 Creedmoor barrel would be better if you also wanted to use it for NRL Hunter competition. It is certainly accurate enough for that. A .300 Blackout is a good option for subsonic use. The point is that the RS 14 system gives you the flexibility to configure it into anything you want.

I am not a one-rifle guy when I am home. It is different when travelling. I took some measurements, and I think the rifle with three barrels will fit in a Pelican Air 1605 case or the slightly larger 1615 if you want it to have rollers. That's an easy way to travel and a lot of firepower in a small box. **PRS**

RS 14 EVOLUTION

Type	Straight-pull repeater
Cartridge	.22-250 (tested), many other chamberings available
Capacity	3+1 rds.
Barrel	22 in., 1:14-in. twist (tested)
Overall Length	42 in. (tested)
Weight	8 lbs.
Stock	Grade 1 walnut
Trigger	Adjustable, 3 lbs. (tested)
MSRP	\$4,699
Manufacturer	Strasser hms-strasser.com

