

that the bolt handle has to be lifted before it can be pulled to the rear. The only way to get a short throw on the bolt is to sacrifice camming geometry, which means that one loses both extracting force and chambering force, both of which could be vital. To achieve positive chambering and extraction of a cartridge I personally like a mauser or claw style extractor. This style of extractor meets our criteria for positive feed because it engages the rim of the cartridge as soon as it rises from the magazine, holding the round firmly against the bolt face and aligning it with the chamber. In other words, the cartridge has to chamber, it cannot fall out of the rifle because of the grip of the claw. With a push feed snap over extractor system such as the Remington 700 has, the bolt pushes the cartridge up out of the magazine, and in front of the thumbnail type extractor and then forward into the chamber. The cartridge is not held securely from being jarred out of, or depending on the angle of the gun, falling out of the action until the bolt is at least partially closed. At no time is the cartridge held by anything with this system until the bolt handle is lowered and the thumbnail extractor finally snaps over the rim of the cartridge.

Another serious consideration is the trigger and safety. A dangerous game rifle should have a trigger with a pull weight of three to four pounds. It should have no creep and be 100% reliable even under adverse conditions; for example, when a rifle is dropped. Delicately set and match style triggers have no place being installed in this type of rifle. The safety should be positive, meaning clearly on or off, conveniently located, easy to manipulate, and of the type that blocks the firing pin, actually camming the firing pin away from the sear (such as the Buehler or Mark II safeties). Safeties which block the trigger are never as reliable as the style described above because a sharp blow to the cocking piece of the bolt could chip or break the trigger sear allowing the rifle to fire.

One other factor I really like about the Buehler or Mark II style safety is that with little or no modification, in most cases, it is possible to open the bolt and eject a cartridge with the safety engaged. This is a nice feature to have when unloading a rifle for there is virtually no chance of having an accidental discharge. There are, also, a lot of strong points to be made for the military style trigger and safety if you do not mind the two-stage effect. On the other hand, if you do, with a little work the first stage can be eliminated. The military trigger is time and war proven. Little can or ever will go wrong with it. If the trigger on your rifle is not to your liking, there are other options available, such as Timney, Shilen and Dayton Traister, all of which are excellent.

There are some commercial actions which meet the above requirements, but let me give you a few other options. For the really big guys, such as the 505 Gibbs, etc., there is the much under-rated P14 and P17 Enfield. These actions, though very ugly in their military dress, can clean up quite nicely. When the sight ears are removed, the action opened up and the excess metal removed, from the

ugly duckling comes the swan. It has all the features we have discussed and the lines of a 720 Remington, which was indeed based on the P17 and was its ultimate refinement. Dayton makes a good trigger for these actions and it includes both a cock on opening conversion and a fast lock time main spring. The magazine assembly is, however, on the cosmetically shabby side and can be replaced. On the other side of the coin, it will hold four rounds of .416 Rigby ammo if worked right, which gives one a five-round rifle.

The good old 1898 Mauser action is also a great option. There is a little need for caution here for there are so many variations of this action: one is forced to select very carefully. Some of the late World War II actions are either too soft or hard to the point of being brittle. If you stick to the classics, such as the German manufacture 1909 Argentine, the D.W.M. actions pre-1942, F.N. from Belgium, the VZ 24 and such, you should be safe. With any action, have the gunsmith you want to do the work check it out.

Since I have brought it up, the matter of gunsmiths that is, let's consider the subject for the moment. Creating your custom rifle should be an enjoyable experience and one in which you are an active participant. Before embarking on this journey, visit the shops of several gunsmiths. Ask for referrals and to see some examples of their work. Guaranteed, if you can find flaws in their work more than likely there are other imperfections that you may not readily notice. Each gunsmith has their own unique style...make sure it is what you like. Find out if they do all their own work or if some is farmed out to others. Ideally, your custom gun will be done once and done right. Ask questions and make sure you understand and are happy with the answers. If a gunsmith will not take the time to respond to your concerns, get to know you and what you want, then it is doubtful he will be able to create the gun of your unique specifications. In my shop it is debatable who asks more questions, my customers or me. It is important to remember that this is your rifle, so make sure the gunmaker you select is happily willing to create what you want. If you are not completely comfortable, keep searching. You have invested hours of thought and weeks of planning for this rifle; be patient and make sure you get what you want. After all, a custom dangerous game rifle, or any custom rifle, should be everything you expect and more.

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