

THOMPSON/CENTER VENTURE



The T/C Venture reviewed is a synthetic stocked, blued steel, basic standard weight hunting rifle in .270 Win.

The Thompson/Center name was a common one back in the early '70's if you were a follower of handgun hunting and the rash of new efficient cartridges that were designed and written about by the late Bob Milek and grip maker Steve Herrett. Cartridges like the .30 and .357 Herrett based on a shortened and improved .30-30 case and the TCU series of cartridges that were designed by Wes Ugalde specifically for the Thompson/Center Contender single shot pistol, hence the TCU moniker. This series was based on an improved version of the .223 Remington in 6mm, 6.5mm and 7mm. So, in the grand scheme of firearms Thompson/Center are relative new comers.

The rifle we have to review is a synthetic stocked Blued steel basic standard weight hunting rifle described in the T/C catalogue as an entry level rifle. I must admit to being a little hesitant when I read this in T/C's description of their product as some other entry level rifles we have seen in the past were less than satisfactory. To be fair the quote is "the new T/C Venture is the

most value packed bolt actioned rifle available on the market today, designed to deliver top end quality and accuracy at an entry level price." (The barrel twist is stated as 1:12 for the .270 Winchester which is a worry! Mr Weatherby tried this twist rate with some of the first .270 Weatherby magnum rifles and they were a failure except for the lighter bullets. Never fear, a major typo - as the rifle has a 1:10 twist). This rifle has some similarities to the T/C Icon reviewed in the last issue (G&G 66), but is radically different in the execution.

The stock is an all synthetic system except for the blued steel sling studs and aluminium pillars for the bedding screws to ensure the integrity of the synthetic material is not compromised if you get over committed to tightening the bedding screws. Both screws have a blued steel washer under their heads to ensure the head of the screw doesn't gall the aluminium pillar, as there is no traditional bottom metal with trigger guard and floorplate. The trigger guard is moulded as part of the stock. This stock is probably the strongest injection moulded stock I have seen. The forend on most moulded synthetic stocks of this type is usually barely strong enough. This stock's forend has webbing for its entire length which makes it very strong. There are raised traction panels where there is normally checkering on both the forend and pistol grip. The pistol grip is a full type and has a T/C emblem where the grip cap would be. The butt stock is a classic style with no cheek piece and is finished with a soft recoil absorbing pad with the T/C emblem in the centre of the pad. The comb is a good height for scope use.

The receiver is a cylinder, and similar to the Remington 700 when viewed from underneath. T/C has both the receiver ring and bridge as a common diameter, which is something I have always thought to be a good idea. There is a large diameter flute on the left hand side of the receiver going forward to the rear of the receiver ring and a similar flute on the right hand side of the bridge. There is a flat flute over the ejection port. These flutes break up the cylindrical top side of the action and reduce weight. The top of the receiver is drilled and tapped and Weaver style bases are supplied.

(Left) Note the distinctive bolt handle shape. The safety is two position located just behind the bolt handle and locks only the primary sear.



The bolt locking lug area is similar to the old Omark 44 target rifle. The locking lugs on the Venture are oriented differently and they don't lock into the back of the barrel but rather into the receiver. The bolt body is a common diameter of 0.850" for the majority of its length. The locking lugs are slightly reduced in diameter to 0.825" (approx), as it is difficult to measure just the corners of the lugs. The bolt head is part of the body and not floating like a Savage. When the bolt is in the open position the bottom lug is the lug which picks up the cartridge from the synthetic single column magazine. Because the bolt is a common diameter there is a chamfer directly behind this lug going forward to the relief behind the locking lug area to ensure the front side of the shoulder of the bolt body can not pick up another cartridge from the magazine and cause a jam.

The bolt face is an enclosed counter bored type. The extractor is spring and plunger powered and mounted in the front face of the right hand locking lug (as you shoot the rifle). Similar to Savage and a bump feed Winchester Model 70. The claw of the extractor is contoured to match the bottom of the extractor groove in the cartridge. The plunger ejector is positioned under the left hand locking lug. The bolt body is a common diameter for all of its length except for an elongated gas port just behind the locking lug relief which directs gas into the front of the



(Right) The all steel trigger and the pins which attach it to the action. Also note the over travel and sear engagement screws and locknuts which can also be seen.

(Below) The allen key in the weight of pull adjustment in the top of the trigger. The bolt stop can be seen inside the action directly above the bolt handle slot.



(Below) Break down of the Venture. Of particular note are the blued steel washers on both bedding screws. Scope is a Nikon Buckmaster 3-9x40.



magazine in the unlikely event of a case rupture or pierced primer.

The other interruption to the common diameter is the guide way for the bolt stop. The bolt stop is quite small considering the size and weight of the bolt and this becomes more of a concern as the bolt is arguably the slickest bolt straight out of the box I have used. The bolt stop also acts as

a bolt guide once the bolt handle clears the way in the receiver bridge. The bolt shroud and cocking piece are distinctively T/C with a flowing line leading up from the top of the pistol grip to the top of the action.

The steel trigger is pinned to the underside rear of the receiver and is adjustable for over travel and sear engagement. Both these adjustments are factory sealed with lacquer type paint, I didn't adjust either. If you did adjust either

(Left) The 3-lug bolt face, and things to note are the contoured extractor claw and the spring powered plunger ejector under the left hand (as you shoot the rifle) locking lug.

(Right) The relief around the locking lug area and the chamfer of the front shoulder of the bolt body behind the bottom locking lug to prevent it from picking up another cartridge from the magazine and causing a jam. Note the gas port just above the chamfer which directs any escaping gas down into the magazine.





(Left) The synthetic magazine with inscriptions. Note there is about 5mm of space in front of the Federal factory round.

(Below) The front of the synthetic magazine with the steel latch which clips into the stock.

you would need to reseal them to ensure they didn't come loose. They both have a lock nut to give positive locking. The weight of pull adjustment is found in the top of the trigger housing and the bolt has to be removed to access this adjustment. A suitable allen key is supplied.

The safety is two position located just behind the bolt handle and locks only the primary sear.

Bedding is achieved with a screw into the bottom of the receiver ring and the rear screw screws into the tang at the rear. A Remington style recoil lug is sandwiched between the barrel shoulder and the front of the receiver.

The barrel is a standard sporter weight starting at the knox form with a diameter of 30mm (1.184") with a straight taper to 16.6mm (0.653") at 610mm (24") at the muzzle. Thompson/Center are employing a new "5 R" rifling technology. The lands shape is the different part of this system as the lands have sloping shoulders to reduce bullet deformation which enhances ballistics. Five lands have been around for a while, BSA were making 5 land barrels from the late 1800's. All this aside, T/C guarantees their rifles will shoot 3 shots into 1" at 100 yards and your satisfaction is guaranteed. This is a pretty bold guarantee as this assumes you are capable and the ammunition you choose to use will be favoured by your particular rifle.

After mounting the Nikon 3-9x40 Buckmaster scope in a set of low Weaver rings which set the scope in an almost perfect height for quick target



acquisition, there was the usual run in period for the first few shots while zeroing. The first 3-shot group with 130gr Federal Power Shock Ammo went into 0.42". Begs the question why handload? The other ammo tried was Winchester Supreme 130 gr Ballistic Silvertip for a disappointing 1.68" and Highland SX Premium 130gr Sierra Game King with the 3 shots going into 1.45", and 2

handloads. The first with Speer 90gr TNT for 1.47", and 150gr Sierra Game King bullets for a more reasonable 0.69". What does this mean? Well, only that you will need to try different factory ammo if you want to get the best from your new T/C Venture. A note here, the Owner's Manual warns against using handloaded ammunition.

The factory trigger was a delight as there was no creep and it broke at 1.7kg (3lb12oz) making the Venture a pleasure to use.

Hunting with the Venture came in the form of a visit to a friend where there was a distinct possibility of a goat and they always welcomed the

(Below) The T/C emblem on the pistol grip.



SPECIFICATIONS

Thompson/Center Venture

Maker: Thompson/Center Arms

Action: Bolt, 3 locking lugs

Calibre: .270 Win (also available in .204, .223, .22-250, .243, .308, 7mm-08, .30-06, .300WM, 7mmRM)

Overall Length: 1120mm (44")

Barrel Length: 610mm (24")

Weight: 3.25kg (7lb 2oz), bare

Stock: Synthetic with alloy pillars

Metal Finish: Blue

Sights: None. Screwed and tapped for scope bases (Weaver base supplied)

Nikon 3-9x40 Buckmaster Scope from

Outdoor Sporting Agencies

www.osaaustralia.com.au

Magazine: 3-shot single column synthetic detachable

Safety: 2-position, locks on primary sear

Distributor: Frontier Arms Co Pty Ltd

www.frontierarms.com.au

Warranty: Lifetime

Price: \$1090

(Below left) The webbing in the forend that gives it its strength. Also note at the back of the barrel channel the slot for the recoil lug.

(Below right) Note the aluminium pillars and the moulded trigger guard.



(Right) The first group fired was with Federal Power Shock ammunition and I was very tempted not to fire any more shots as it is unlikely to better this result. In the interest of showing the capabilities of the Venture, a 3-shot group was fired with Winchester Supreme 130 gr Ballistic Silver Tips for 1.68" and then a 3-shot group with Highland SX Premium ammo loaded with Sierra 130gr SBT for a 1.45" group. The two handloads tried were 90gr TNT's which were disappointing at best, and last but not least 150gr Sierra Game Kings. It shows if you want to get the best from your new T/C Venture you will have to try different ammunition. (Below) The barrel inscription with calibre and 5 lands rifling.



(Below) The generous traction panel on the forend



legs for the dogs as they have quite a tribe. After checking out three normally good goat areas to no avail the fourth prospect proved to be more fruitful with a reasonable sized black billy the most likely target. The range was only about 90 metres and without a rest. At the shot the billy reared up like he had been stung on the bum by a bee, so a quick second shot looked eminently necessary. By the time the cross was back on the billy he had expired thanks to the absolute reliability of the old .270 Winchester. The great trigger and good fit helped make the shot count.

It wasn't until I went to remove the bolt to pack it in the bag for the trip home that I noticed that it had become very stiff. On close inspection there were no foreign bodies causing the problem. I removed the barrelled action from the stock - I had a thought it may be something to do with the bolt stop. I removed it to reveal a burr at the end of the bolt stop race way from that quick second shot. Because the bolt is a neat fit and a common diameter for all of its length the burr was causing the problem. The burr was easily removed with a small file and has caused no further trouble. The magazine fed like a good baby throughout the test.

In conclusion the Venture was a joy to use with the well proportioned strong synthetic stock and crisp trigger. The Nikon Buckmaster scope performed well throughout the test with a clear sight



picture. I could possibly be to blame for the small problem with the bolt stop as I cut my teeth on M17's and 98 Mausers and throughout my career I have not thought about easing off pulling the bolt back for that quick second shot. The accuracy of the Venture is certainly exceptional with favoured loads. The soft recoil pad is a definite plus for comfort and aiding in shooting well.

