



## Sako Finnlight in .25-06

Sako, founded in Finland in 1921, has established and main Stained a worldwide reputation for producing high quality rifles. Having used Sakos on everything from rabbits and magpies to deer and goats - a .222 Hunter and a .308 Battue reside on the gun racks at home - I have become familiar with Sako quality, design and performance.

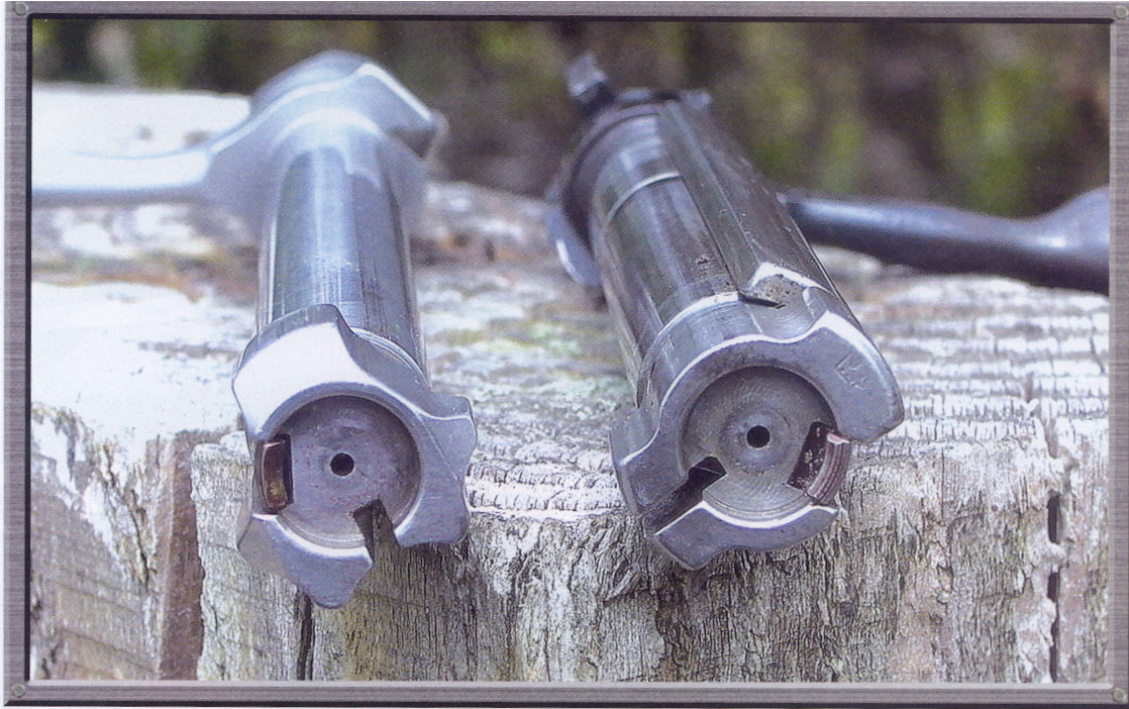
When I opened the courier parcel I was stoked to find a new Sako 75 Finnlight chambered in .25-06 on test from John Elliott of Brittain Wynyard in Parnell, Auckland. The Sako Finnlight is a stainless/ synthetic bolt action repeater also available in 6.5x55, .270,.280 Rem and .30-06.

### The .25-06 cartridge

The .25-06 is basically a .30-06 cartridge necked down to take .25 Cal. projectiles. It was originally introduced as a wildcat around 1920 by A.O. Niedner and in late 1969 was picked up and added to Remington's commercial line. The .25-06 is considered one of the finest .25 cal. cartridges ever produced. Projectile weights range from 75 grain varminters (although the 87 grain bullet is considered better for the purpose) through to 117-120 grain big game projectiles. Muzzle velocities using 120 grain pills average around 3200 fps with muzzle energies measuring approximately 2600 ft/lbs.

### The stock

The 75 Finnlight, at first glance, looks good, and after a decent scout around the rifle it looks great. I have never been much of a fan of stainless/ synthetic rifles, preferring the look of bluing and the feel of wood, although this particular rifle certainly has more appeal than your average stainless/ synthetic type. The Monte Carlo stock utilises semi-soft rubber inletting around the palm swell and fore stock as a tasteful and practical alternative to chequering. The rubber surface is comfortable to handle and offers good grip, wet or dry. A classy feature also, is the cast alloy pistol grip cap bearing the company brand. The receiver bedding is entirely synthetic, even around the recoil lug, which testifies to the strength of the material used for the stock. Length of pull is 14" from the trigger to the surprisingly soft factory butt pad (the buttpads our older model Sakos have about as much give as the wooden stocks they sit on!). Sling swivel mounts are fitted which accept Harris bi-pods. Synthetic stock to metal fit is good, no surprises there.



Left, the low-lift three slug Sako 75 bolt. Right, the older two slug Sako design

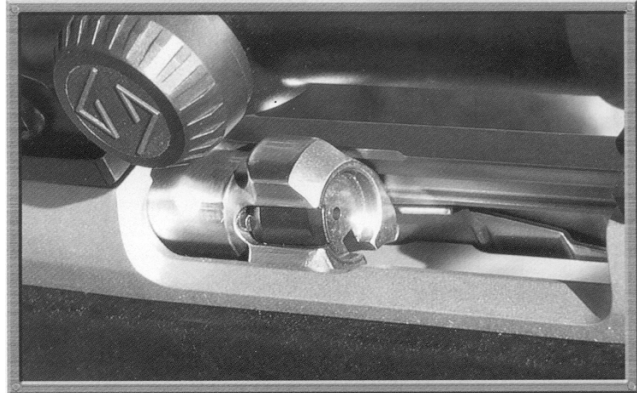
Stainless Steel detachable magazine holds five rounds



### The action

At the time Sako introduced its 75 model rifle the company also unveiled their new 70' throw, low-lift bolt which comprises three locking lugs rather than the two of the earlier models, thus improving accuracy and reliability. The bolt slides on five guide rails - hence loading and unloading are faster and smoother than they on our pair of older models. On older Sakos, as with many rifles, the tips of rounds being fed into the chamber had a tendency to hit the top lip of the chamber (particularly shorter cartridges) resulting in slight jamming effect and/or deforming of the bullets' lead tips.

With the new gun the spent cartridges literally fly out of the receiver as the action is cycled, thanks to the excellent mechanical ejector system. Another new feature Sako has cleverly integrated into the bolt action is the 'Key Concept'. At the rear of the bolt there is a steel button which incorporates a small key. Using the plastic key holder (see pic) all that is required is a 180° anti-clockwise turn and removal of the key - with that the bolt is locked in a closed position and the rifle is disabled. Reverse the process and the rifle is operable again, simple, safe and effective. Nice work Sako.



### Facts & figures

The Finnlight's trigger pull is crisp with no creep and factory set at 3.5lbs, fine for big game hunting, although as this particular rifle is chambered in .25-06 the shooter may also want to use it for a little bit of varminting - no problem, the trigger is adjustable. The cold hammer forged, fluted barrel measures 20' in length while the overall length of the rifle is approximately 41.5". The magazine body is stainless steel with an alloy floor plate and cartridge follower. The weight of rifle including its Zeiss 3-9x scope is approximately 81b 5oz. Scope mounts are fitted on Sako's well proven tapered dovetail system. The taper ensures that no matter how much recoil, the mounts will stay put.



### On the range

NZ G&H has tested several Model 75 Sakos before, most recently a timber stocked .223 rifle (issue #48, Sept / Oct '98) and all have been very accurate. The Finnlight proved to be no exception. Range testing was conducted using Federal 117 grain Sierra Gamekings, an excellent choice for deer stalkin& and particularly good for long range shots at chamois or tahr. These factory loads shot well, producing sub-minute of angle groups at 50 and 100 yards respectively.

