



By Tracy Short

Mossberg Model 464 Lever Action 30-30

I am sure there will be a lot of people out there that will be excited to see the introduction of this new lever action rifle from Mossberg. With the demise of the Winchester Model 94 due to the closing of Winchester's US manufacturing plant there is definitely a gap in the market for a well made US lever action.



Of course the Marlin Model 336 is a mighty fine lever action in many respects and is far more suitable for scope use than the Winchester 94 however it is a heavier rifle than the 94 and wouldn't suit some people's needs. Mossberg have therefore timed it perfectly for the introduction of the Model 464. The rifle is not only lighter than the Winchester 94 it has additional safety features and is suitable for mounting a scope due to angle eject and being drilled and tapped for Weaver bases.

At first glance the rifle resembles the Winchester 94 and without close inspection one could easily be fooled into believing it is a 94. This in itself I am sure will be a major advantage in the marketing of this rifle. The Winchester 94 has so much history and there is no doubt in my mind that every

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shooting enthusiast at some time will have a hankering to have a play with a lever action rifle. I am not sure if it is the result of watching too many westerns as a kid but there is something cool about a lever action rifle. Early on in my hunting career I gave into the temptation to own a lever gun and had a Winchester Trapper 30-30 for a period. At the end of the day it didn't really suit my style of hunting but it was an experience I needed to have.

The Action

The first obvious difference to the Model 94 is that the bolt is round like a bolt action and slides home freely where it is locked by the falling block at the back. The next thing is the addition of a shot gun style push safety on the tang of the rifle-it is under your thumb on safe and out of the way on fire. The top of the receiver is open like the Winchester however the



Above: Without the scope the Mossberg 464 is a ready to go pig gun. Top: The Mossberg 464 in 30-30 with the 30mm tube Shirstone scope in 4x36-plenty of magnification for a lever action rifle.



Above: The tang safety, hammer extension and Weaver mounting system on the Mossberg 464.

ejection system is angled out the side with an ejector plunger on the left of the bolt and an extractor similar to the Marlin on the right of the bolt. Mossberg have put a steel band at the back of the action for extra strength which also helps with the scope mounting.

When the lever is not pulled hard up to the bottom of the receiver and depressing the small button the rifle will not fire. This is a feature common to most lever action rifles. The hammer also has a hammer extension allowing it to be easily cocked when a scope is installed on the rifle.

The loading port is on the right hand side of the action same as a 94 and the 336. The rounds feed into a typical tube magazine which holds 7 30-30 rounds in the magazine. The action fed and ejected everything I put through it reliably.

The Trigger

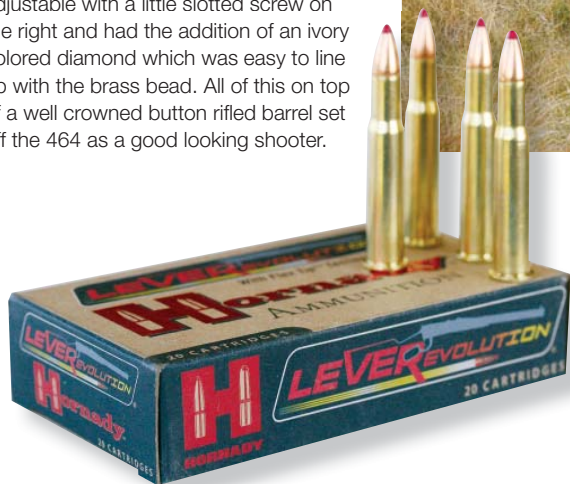
The hammer is single action and the trigger is a typical lever action trigger, two stage with the first stage being very

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light. The second stage was crisp and not excessively heavy for a lever action, it certainly didn't resemble the Jewell trigger in my hunting rifle however it was more than satisfactory for this rifle.

The Sights

The blade front sight with a brass bead and the folding rear sight Winchester for the installation of a scope were well done. The rear sight was nicely adjustable with a little slotted screw on the right and had the addition of an ivory colored diamond which was easy to line up with the brass bead. All of this on top of a well crowned button rifled barrel set off the 464 as a good looking shooter.



The Stock

To me it looks just like a Winchester 94 stock in fairly plain two piece walnut. The one long screw bolting up through the stock into the action is great for strength and easy disassembly and strengthens what was always a weak spot on lever actions. I liked the classy rubber recoil pad also.

Rifle Scope

The rifle came fitted with a Shirstone 4x36 scope with a 30mm tube. The scope is made in Japan and was a lot nicer than the last Shirstone scope I tested which had a 1" tube. The optics were a lot nicer in this scope which was supporting a European 4A type reticule; a duplex type reticule with 3 heavy posts. I like this reticule for hunting, especially in poor light and you don't need any more magnification on a lever action than 4X. Thanks also to whoever fitted it because no sighting in was required. Bore sighting a lever action is not an easy operation when compared with a bolt action rifle.

Shooting the 464

I only used Hornady Lever Evolution ammo in my testing. I guess it would have been fair to try other ammo however the rifle shot about how I would expect a good lever action rifle to shoot. The fact that the magazine tube is clamped to the barrel and stock means that as the barrel heats up on a lever action it is common for points of impact to change. The largest group I shot at 100 yards was 90 mm. The best I shot was 78 mm. I am sure that with a little fine tuning and with handloaded ammo better accuracy could be achieved although I believe my results would be adequate and pretty standard accuracy from a lever action. The rifle functioned well which is one of the joys of shooting these rifles; there is no better feel than shucking shells through a lever-it leaves a bolt action for dead.



Above; The 30-30 is still a valid calibre for bush hunting and if you can get close enough, like this red hind in the Ruahines, it will do the job effectively. Photo Tracy Short. Left: The 170 grain Hornady Lever Evolution ammunition used in the 464.



Above: A nicely designed adjustable rear sight that folds forward for scope mounting.

Conclusion

The new Mossberg 464 certainly fills the gap left due to the demise of the Winchester 94. It also offers the advantage of being scope compatible and with a tang safety. For a hunter wishing to have the ability to have a scope on his lever action or have a calibre that would not only be adequate as a pig gun for a walk behind the dogs or a reasonably capable deer rifle, the 464 would definitely be a good consideration. And with the beefed up action, will Mossberg be offering other calibres? The Mossberg tipped the scales at 3.10 kg's which is a little lighter than its look alike the Winchester 94. As a matter of interest I put a Marlin 336 on the scales and it weighed in at 3.30 which I guess is not a lot heavier. They both have a 500mm barrel and magazine length. Lever actions are fun and functional rifles which had the full approval of John Wayne.

Specifications

Action:	Bolt Action
Sights:	Open and drilled and tapped for Weaver bases
Weight:	6kg-6.71Bs
Barrel:	Button rifled-20 Inches-508mm
Finish:	Wood blued
RRP:	\$1099.00