

Turkey Guns: 7 Keys to Tighter Patterns

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* **The raised texture on the stock and the non-glare finish** on the rifle are ideal attributes on a working hunting rifle, which is what the Legacy is meant to be.

* **The long bolt handle** gives the user additional leverage and adds to the feeling of smoothness in the action. The flat surface on the handle helps it clear the ocular bell on larger scopes.

* **Spiral fluting on the bolt** not only is attractive, but adds slickness to the action and helps to keep ice, mud and other debris from getting caught in the mechanism.

GUN TEST

McMillan G30 Legacy

One of the finest synthetic-stocked hunting rifles you can buy **BY JOHN B. SNOW**

The idea of a hunting rifle bearing the McMillan name might come as a surprise to some, but it really shouldn't. Granted, when Gale McMillan, a former Air Force mechanic and avid competitive shooter, founded his company in 1973, it was called McMillan Fiberglass Stocks, and these stocks are what most people think of when McMillan comes to mind.

And for good reason. What started as a garage operation (literally), with McMillan fashioning stocks for a handful of shooting buddies, grew into a booming business as word of his high-quality products—made from a decidedly non-traditional material, fiberglass—spread.

The company took a big leap forward in 1975, when McMillan persuaded the Marine Corps to use one of his stocks—the first he built that wasn't meant for competition—on the M40A1 sniper rifle. This stock (marketed to the public as the GPH, for “general purpose hunting”) was McMillan's first successful consumer product as well. With its plain Jane lines and widened

forend to accommodate heavier barrels, it wasn't pretty, but it was tough.

What McMillan understood back then was that fiberglass provides an ideal platform on which to build an accurate and durable rifle, thanks to its rigidity, strength and resistance to environmental change. Making this statement to a gun enthusiast now is akin to telling him the sky is blue, the advantages of synthetic stocks being well accepted in all corners of the shooting world. However, this wasn't always the case, particularly among sportsmen who cherished carefully inletted rifles with finely figured walnut stocks.

But times change, and as Gale McMillan's business flourished, the diehards' attitudes toward “plastic” stocks softened to the point where now a hand-built hunting rifle costing thousands of dollars is as likely as not to have a synthetic stock.

BEYOND STOCKS

Stocks weren't the only gun products McMillan made. From the mid-'60s to the mid-'80s, he built rifles too. Some of these were handmade, one-off benchrest

rigs; others were hunting rifles built on factory actions. Another military contract, this one with the Navy in 1986, prompted McMillan to design an action of his own, which led the McMillan family one step further down the path toward creating a line of hunting rifles. Called the Signature Action, it used the Remington 700 as its starting point, sharing many of that action's key dimensions.

The Signature got a makeover in 1992, and a new name—MCRT, short for McMillan Remington Type. The most notable design changes were the spiral fluting cut into the body of the bolt and the addition of a Winchester-style blade ejector, giving the MCRT two ejectors, the other being a plunger-style ejector. To the best of my knowledge, this is the only production action so equipped.

You could order rifles built on the MCRT from McMillan Brothers (the company had a series of name changes, and its new business undertakings would require a separate column to sort out), but these were strictly custom jobs, with every detail specified by the customer. That changed in 2007, when McMillan Brothers became McMillan

* **Pillar glass bedding and a free-floating barrel** are two accuracy-enhancing features on the Legacy. Gale McMillan was one of the pioneers of pillar bedding.

* **Classic calibers:** The Legacy is chambered in .308 Win., .30/06, .300 Win. Mag. and .338 Win. Mag. All are ideal for North American game.

Overall Rating:



Report Card
PERFORMANCE: A
DESIGN: A+
PRICE/VALUE: B

Verdict:
 At \$4,295, the Legacy is pricey, yes, but it represents the pinnacle of synthetic-stocked hunting rifles.



Precise Fit:
 The craftsmanship evidenced by the exacting fit between the stock and action is as good as you'll see on any synthetic-stocked rifle.



Dual Ejectors:
 The bolt face shows the Sako-style extractor and the dual ejectors—a plunger and blade—a feature unique to the G30 action.

Firearms (see what I mean), and the family entered the production gun business. At the same time, the MCRT was renamed the G30, in memory of Gale—who died in 2000—and the year he was born, 1930.

CUSTOM COLLECTION

The Legacy I tested is one of six rifles in the Custom Collection, all of which use the G30 action as their foundation. As befits a rifle labeled “custom,” the Legacy is built to best-in-class standards. The fit between the graphite stock and metalwork is one such example. Where the two materials meet along the action, there is no gap at all, and the channel in the forend wraps around the free-floating barrel to within a whisker’s thickness.

According to the company, about 25 to 30 hours of hand labor go into each rifle, and on close inspection, you’ll see evidence of this expertise from the fit of the recoil pad to the flawless crowning at the muzzle.

The fluting on the bolt and the offset ledge on the magazine follower, which prevents it from coming in contact with the bolt, give the action a smooth, silky feel. Cartridges feed from the magazine without a hitch, and the Jewel trigger on our sample let go at a crisp and consistent 3 pounds 7 ounces.

The match-grade barrel is hand-lapped. Testing for accuracy at the range confirmed the .30/06’s capability,

with five-shot groups coming in as small as 0.784 inches from Federal’s Match ammunition, while the average of 6 five-shot groups, using ammo from 150 to 180 grains, was 1.183 inches.

The Legacy sits right in the middle of the six rifles in the Custom Collection, which runs the gamut from lightweight mountain rifles to Safari guns for dangerous game. Consider it the best all-around big-game rifle of the lot, a designation reinforced by the four calibers it comes chambered in: .308 Win., .30/06, .300 Win. Mag. and .338 Win. Mag.

About the only hitch with the rifle was the tendency for some soft-pointed bullets to hang up in the action when single-feeding rounds were placed on top of the magazine follower, a minor hiccup to be sure, but one that the company says it will look at.

If that’s the worst thing you can say about a rifle, you know you are looking at a fine firearm indeed. Its elegant looks, go-anywhere toughness and superb design and performance make it a rifle the most discriminating sportsman could use for a lifetime without complaint, which in turn makes its \$4,295 price tag, if not a bargain, then certainly a justifiable investment.

In fact, it isn’t going out on much of a limb to say that the Legacy is one of the finest synthetic-stocked rifles available at any price, and a fitting tribute to Gale McMillan’s legacy. ▲▲▲

Specs

MCMILLAN G30 LEGACY	
Caliber	.30/06
Magazine Capacity	4+1
Weight	7 lb. 14 oz.
Finish	Black
Stock	Graphite
Barrel Length	24 in.
Rate of Twist	1 in 12 in.
Overall Length	44 ½ in.
Trigger Pull	3 lb. 7 oz.
Suggested Retail	\$4,295

ACCURACY	
Range	100 yd.
Scope	Leupold VX-III 6.5-20x50
Smallest Group	0.784 in.
Average Group Size	1.183 in.* *6 five-shot groups

AMMO TESTED*	
Black Hills 168-gr. Match	1.388 in.
Federal 168-gr. Match	0.850 in.
Federal 150-gr. Sierra GameKing	1.605 in.
Winchester 180-gr. Accubond	1.019 in.

*Average of five-shot groups