

# GALLERY RIFLE: THE BASICS!



A few people have asked for some basic pointers regarding getting started in Gallery Rifle shooting so here is a quick summary for those who would like to get involved! Starting from the beginning in '97 when we lost our pistols, we needed to find something that was both legal to own and suitable to carry on shooting the "Action" matches such as the Bianchi, 1500, Man v Man and Practical type of competitions. At the time, Smith & Wesson were just not interested in making revolvers that would comply with our new laws leaving some sort of rifle to fill the gap as our only choice really. The Ruger 10/22 type would be ideal as there were plenty of aftermarket bits available for them from America at the time and they were relatively inexpensive, if you bought a standard one! The lever action type rifle was also taken on board as some people wanted to shoot centre fire (pistol caliber) instead and it all took off from there really, and has grown steadily into what we have today. Although there are now rifles with "other" types or actions that are used in Gallery Rifle competitions, these are the two types that were originally intended to be used.



**Whether you own a standard rifle or a "custom" one you will still have plenty of fun shooting in a Gallery Rifle match!**

You can get started competing in the rimfire GR events with a bog standard Ruger 10/22 type rifle that can be bought for as little as around £250. Add to this around £150 for a scope along with a little help from an experienced friend to help tune up your standard trigger and you are good to go out and enjoy yourself. You can of course spend in excess of £1200 just for a custom rifle on its own but make sure that you get plenty of

feedback and advice from fellow shooters who have been shooting for a while before spending your hard earned cash, as many of them will have an idea of what works, and more importantly, what doesn't! I would tend to stay clear of many of the "military" .22 type rifles for use in GR competitions as they generally tend to be of little use for what we do, especially on the accuracy side of things. For instance, you won't be able to shoot from the left shoulder safely with a bullpup design, lasers and

bipods are not allowed, and we don't shoot in the dark either so you won't need a flashlight mounted on a picatinny rail, if you get my drift!

On the underlever side of things, the Marlins are pretty much the rifles to use as by design they can be operated both quicker and more reliably than the other manufacturers' rifles and it is also very easy to mount optics on top of them too, which can be a major headache on some of the others out there. If you are just going to shoot the slow fire precision matches then a Rossi or Winchester will work just fine but for most of the faster "action" type matches you will have to work a lot harder just to get the same end result! As for the caliber, I go with the .44's as I find the rounds easier to handle when loading and



the larger hole size on the target has been the difference between scoring up or dropping a point on many occasions in the past. The ammunition is slightly more expensive to reload and there is a small difference in felt recoil but it is minimal really for the advantage that may be gained when it's time for scoring.

**Marlins are available in various calibres and barrel lengths with the Cowboy models being quite a bit longer and heavier, so try a few first to see which type fits and balances best for you.**

Both LBR's (long barreled revolvers) and LBP's (long barreled pistols) are starting to become a lot more popular now but again the choice is pretty limited really in what you can

buy at the moment. The most common LBR in use is the Taurus in either the 6 or 7 shot variety although there are a few S&W's around that have been imported from Germany. Ralf Merkle probably makes the best custom revolvers in Europe but they come with a hefty price tag too but if you can afford one, they are definitely the best that money can buy. There are some "smiths" waiting to be imported in the very near future but as yet the price and quality are yet to be seen, but these may well end up being the best option for a base gun as the triggers can be tuned to be far smoother and lighter than it is possible to do to a Taurus, due to their internal design.

The overwhelming choice so far for LBP's is the Browning Buckmark which normally retails at just over £600. There are a couple of tuners out there who will slick them up for you but the aftermarket parts available for them are pretty limited so far, but hopefully that will change soon. Low Mill Ranges have just imported their first .22 pistol



**Here's a Taurus set up with a red dot on top although many other people use a telescopic scope for a bit more accuracy in the 1500 and "Short" events!**

based on a 1911 frame which fits superbly well and of course will have numerous amounts of “go faster” parts available for them from both the U.S and Europe. I hope to have one on test very soon and although they will have a price tag of around £1200, if the accuracy is good and the reliability is 100% then I may well be ordering one of these to compete with! One quick point worth mentioning about



LBR's and LBP's (and section 1 shotguns also) is that you cannot loan or use one unless you have the relevant permission or your certificate, period! Unfortunately there seems to be many people out there who think otherwise, who are completely wrong, and are leaving themselves wide open should they choose to do otherwise.

**Due to the much smaller size of the rimfire targets, LBP's are shot on the full size pistol calibre targets.**

Over the years the GR committees have over the last few years tried hard to accommodate various types of

new firearms, calibers and accessories to be used in GR competitions but it seems that there is always something out of the norm that someone wants to use alongside everyone else. It's always good to try and accommodate other groups of shooters into our sport but I feel this trying to please everyone approach may not be the best policy for us in the end, as more and more people want to compete in their own “special” class, instead of with everyone else. As you will read elsewhere in this issue there will be a review over the winter months concerning the direction that GR will take in the future so we will have to wait and see what, if anything will change for next year.

For anyone wanting to take up Gallery Rifle type shooting probably the most productive thing for you to do is either join up with shooters who have already been shooting it for a number of years, or get some to visit your own club and give you some coaching and advice there. Trying to start up on your own with a few enthusiastic friends can make the process much harder and take far longer than it needs to. It certainly took the rest of us a few years of figuring out the best shooting techniques and equipment that was needed before we started getting the desired results, so why not take a bit of a short cut! Some ranges have pretty limiting restrictions, space or finances so it is important to be able to utilize what you have available to provide you with the best setup for quality practicing. Most GR matches are shot at distances between



**Mattersey probably have the best club range complex in the country with 11 separate ranges with most of them being 50m long. Here's one of their dedicated Bianchi ranges that the “Los Alamitos” match is shot on.**

10 and 50m with many of them being shot at a maximum of 25m so most clubs should be able to shoot a wide variety of them at their own range. Having a set of turning targets is certainly very useful but they also cost quite a bit of money, so maybe investing in a shot timer or two will provide you with some good training practices, at a fraction of the cost. You could of course make your own bank of turning targets if you have a few people with the right skills in your club, and taking ideas and measurements from a commercial one at another club could well be beneficial for you.



Probably the most important thing for newcomers to the GR scene to take note of is that you are more than welcome to attend ANY of the matches that are on our competition calendar and that the Phoenix, and especially the British Championships at Bisley in August are not just for the “top” shooters, they are for everyone! As long as you are safe, you will be made very welcome and the R.O’s and competitors alike will give you all the help and advice that you need to get through your match! To make things fair and ensure that everyone has a chance of winning something on the day, most GR events are classified to ensure that you only compete against people of a similar ability. The qualifying scores for each class in every discipline can be found on the Galleryrifle.com website along with a host of other useful information like coaching tips, competition calendar, contact and results details etc. This system also helps to provide you with an incentive to achieve a certain score that moves you up into the next class. Winning and being an X class shooter isn’t what motivates everyone though, but ENJOYING yourself with like minded people and making many new friends over a cold beer after the shooting has finished is certainly not something to miss out on! For those who aspire to take their shooting to the next level, that is also catered for with National teams from England, Scotland and Wales competing in the Home Countries “Shorts” competitions, and the UK 1500 team that enjoys

some good rivalry with the Republic of Ireland, Germany and next year a team from South Africa!



Help will always be available to you whether you just want advice on the different firearms and equipment that we use, to day or weekend coaching sessions that can include everything from basic trigger control to shooting positions, or even how to shoot a complete Bianchi

**You will have fun whatever standard you shoot at in Gallery Rifle** or 1500 match! All you have to do is ask via the “contact” link on the Target Shooter home page. Help is also available to individuals or clubs who want to gain GR Range Officer experience so that you can run competitions either at your own range, or come down to one of the meetings held at Bisley and work alongside all of the guys and girls there. Either way, the more we put into our sport, the more it will develop and grow for the future!