

Sierra 7mm 183 HPBT

Reviewed by
Gerry Veugelaers

TEST FIRE

The New Zealand Ammunition Company recently sent me a care package. How does a G1 BC of .707 sound? Wow!

Sierra, not to be outdone in the present option rich projectile market, introduced a new 7mm MatchKing recently in a real heavyweight class. The 7mm bore is a bit spoilt for choice but the new 183 HPBT offering from Sierra gives even more reason to own one. Of course, me not having one on hand personally at the time, apart from being a bit embarrassing, required me to steal my mate's new Browning X-Bolt in 7mm Remington Magnum as a test bed. 69 grains of AR2225 in a Federal case using their 215M primer saw these long, sexy projectiles slip out of the 26" buggy whip sized, fluted barrel at an average of 2857 fps with an SD of 15.6 and minor signs of pressure.

Unlike the usual hunting rifle when faced with long for caliber projectiles, the 183 fitted easily into the X-Bolt magazine even when seated .004 off the rifling. Groups were under MOA (.85) but could have been a lot better if I wasn't fighting the mirage off the suppressor on a hot Wairarapa afternoon. 7mm Rem mags generate a LOT of heat!

This load needs 26 MOA to reach 1000 yards but will deflect a mere 5.5 MOA in a 10-mph crosswind, while placing over a ton of energy on target once it gets there.



I have no idea how the projectile would behave on game but with ballistics such as these, hitting your target is just that much easier.

In the photo above you can see the 183 MatchKing next to a .308 168 A-MAX® for comparison.



Buffalo River Sporting ammo

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I was recently given a box of ADI's factory .308 ammo to test. It was loaded in ADI marked Winchester brass and utilised the Sierra 135-grain flat base hollow point

Factory specs state that this projectile is doing 3000 fps at the muzzle but through my Browning Ultralight's 16" tube averaged 2840 fps, which is still pretty good. So good in fact that it still delivers the recommended 1000 ftlbs of energy required for red deer way out at 350 yards.

First surprise was that it shot to the exact same point of impact as did my 168 grain HPBT National Match load (42.5 grains of AR2206H) I used to zero and test the Browning. Second was that it produced similar 3/5 MOA 3-shot clusters at 100 yards.

In fact, a composite 6-shot group on both projectile weights would have fit into a single patch! The 135-grain HP is fairly short, but in my rifle sat exactly .002 off the lands. Using the same projectiles, a handload of 44.5 grains of AR2206H using a Federal case and primer gave me an average of 2905 fps but shot approximately 1 MOA left of POA.

I'd be hesitant to use them on red deer, but on the likes of fallow and goats they appear to be near perfect. Sighted in as they are in my rifle to be POA at 100 yards, they drop 1.8 MOA at 200 and 6.5 MOA at 350.

In English this equates to the load dropping 3.6" at 200 yards and 22" at 350 yards, so not "flat shooting" by any definition. However, if you zeroed the rifle to be on POA at 200 this gives you a very useful trajectory of 1.8" at 100 yards, only 9" low at 300 yards, which would force you to hold on the top of the shoulder of a medium-sized animal but is easily doable.

I can see this load will become my light game option, given that it works with the same zero as my hunting ammo, which is a definite bonus in my book.