

I own and use a switch barrel rifle (Mauser M03 Extreme) and since I have had it, I've appreciated the advantages it offers. In essence you have one chassis (stock/action) that will accept different calibre barrels and bolts (or replacable bolt heads) to suit. This then allows you to swap around as you need, for example you could have a 243 Win set up for shooting roe then swap to a 30-06 if you wanted more range and power for bigger species.

Casting around shows a number of other European manufacturers offer their own switch barrels systems such as; Merkel (KR1), Sauer (202), Blaser (R93), Mauser (M03), Steyr Mannlicher (Luxus) and RWS (Titan). This last model is the subject of this test.

Currently in the UK the biggest problem with switch barrel rifles is cost, as the drastic changes in the Euro to pound rate have really put prices through the roof. My M03 has gone up by nearly £400 since 2007 with similar rises across the board. The Titan has increased too, but is still the cheapest of this genre; the bottom line is that it's quite affordable by comparison. So I tend to view the RWS offering as an excellent place to be shopping.

Made by, made for

The Titan is made for RWS by Roßler (Rössler Waffen / Austria). It also bears a passing resemblance to the popular and prolific Sauer 202 both inside and out, yet offers features of its own too. So let's take a look.

The rifle is available in two versions - Titan 3 and Titan 6 - and as I discovered, due to the build of the bolt they can only swap calibres within their individual receivers.

The Titan 3 (3-lug bolt) covers just four calibres; 222, 223, 22-250 Remington and the German 5.6x50 Mag. The theory being you don't need anything stronger for these 22 centrefires. The Titan 6 (6-lugs) covers 243 Win to 338 Win Mag with all the good stuff in between 25-06, 6.5 Swedish, 270 Win, 7mm-08, 308 Win, 30-06, 7mm and 300 Win Mag, 270 and 300 WSM, 8x57 etc. Pleasingly the bolt face shows a spring/plunger-type ejector.

I have to say this is an odd way of doing things, as surely one chassis that could go from 222 Rem to 338 Win Mag would be easier to produce and certainly more flexible for the customer? In the UK with the popularity of the

Switch barrel

Pete Moore considers the advantages of an exchangeable calibre rifle in what appears to be the most cost effective format for the UK hunter – the RWS Titan

223 Rem and 22-250 as fox/small deer rounds and the 243/308 Win for bigger species would mean having to buy two Titans, which would seem unlikely.

The All-Round

Finishes go to the traditional wood/blued and stainless/black synthetic (All-Round), the latter being what I have on test. The

layout goes for a closed-topped, aluminium alloy receiver, which is threaded for mounts, with the bolt locking directly into the chamber. Feed is by a 3-round, single column magazine that locks by twin latches either side/front of the well. The gun is offered in both left-hand biased and true left hand models too.

The safety catch is tang-mounted and slides forward to

FIRE (red dot exposed) and reverses for SAFE (S exposed). When set to safe the action cannot be opened. The bolt handle shows a 90° lift angle, which is set to easily clear the scope's eyepiece bell and offers a smooth and easy operating stroke. At the rear of the angled receiver is a cocked





The magazine is the same, just modified on the COL and follower to suit individual calibres

action indicator that protrudes to show the gun state. Big enough to be felt in the dark it also has a red dot on it for easy daytime identification.

The stock is your typical sporting-style with no cheek piece and a low, flat comb. Coarse, cast-in chequering panels are applied at the grip and forend with QD sling studs front and back. The forend, though solid, is quite slim and flexible, and under pressure from a bipod position pushes up all too easily. The barrel is fully floated, but shows little metal/plastic clearance, with just enough space to insert a sheet of paper. However the rear section is good and solid, offering a decent and stable hold for freehand shooting, likewise for supported shots, such as off a high seat rail or sticks.

Total take-down

Trigger pull was most agreeable at a crisp and clean 3 lb break from the well curved and mid-width alloy blade. This was a standard mechanism, but a single set option is also available. Length of pull went to 14" and offered an easy first pad trigger finger position, even with my long arms. Likewise the low, Leupold QD scope mounts with a Night Force 8-32x56 on board offered a good head position. On that point and given the Titan is a switch barrel; bases/rings of this nature are a good bet. You might just want to leave the scope fitted and adjust it as and when you change calibre. But then again you might, as I do with my M03; have different glass for different needs, so the ability to swap it as you please is well worth consideration.

Now on to the all-important area – changing the barrel. This is approached by the various manufactures in different ways. My Mauser uses the twin, vertical

stud system of the Blaser R93, whereas the Titan follows the split clamp receiver design of the Sauer 202 to a greater degree.

To swap the tubes on the Titan you have to remove the stock completely and take out the barrelled action. Once out you will see under the front of the receiver a block with two, Allan-headed screws (key supplied) on the right side. This is the split clamp design, which simply compresses the action around the barrel shank to retain it.

Roßler fit an integral alignment pin so the barrel shank can only go in one way. Further inspection shows the clamping block also acts as the recoil lug as it sits down into a pocket in the front of the action void of the stock. Included in this is the thread for the front action screw. A neat touch is that both main screw heads have plastic blanking plugs to protect them.

5-minute wonder

I suppose it takes about 5-minutes to swap a tube, which is by far the slowest of any of the switch barrel designs. However, as it's unlikely you will be doing this in the field but on a bench, it makes little difference. The Titan keeps it simple on the bolt too, as there are no removable heads or sleeves. Instead you have to get a new, calibre-specific unit complete.

The Titan has a long action only receiver so it can accommodate all the calibres in one length. However, the magazines are adjusted as to cartridge overall length (COL) by the fitting of a filler block at the rear of the body and a dedicated follower shape.

As I found on my M03 it's wise when you pick your calibres to try and go for something that will handle more than one type



Bolts – top the 3-lug Titan 3, below the 6-lug Titan 6. Note the barrel is removed and you can see the clamping arrangement



The RWS Titan 3 or 6; if you don't want to spend as fortune on a switch barrel rifle it's well worth consideration

in the mag and on the bolt face. For example 25-06, 270 Win, 7mm-08, 243, 308 and 30-06 can all use the same bolt. With 25-06, 270 and 30-06 using the same mag too, as 22-250, 243, 7mm-08 and 308 also can. This will save you money. Wisely RUAG offer the Titan pre-threaded 1/2 x 20" UNF and with a near invisible protector; overall this is a good looking and well put together rifle.

Down, test & adjust

The test rifle was chambered in 243 Winchester and importers RUAG Ammotec UK also supplied the ammo – RWS 100-grain (soft tip) and Norma 58-grain (V-MAX) Shooting would be done off a rest with a butt bag, as opposed to a bipod to give it the best chance to impress.

In terms of controls and features the Titan was easy to run. The safety was well placed for operation with the firing hand thumb without breaking your shooting grip. Likewise the mag fell away clean and its release latches were easy to get on to. Filling a single column type means the ammo has to go in from the front base first. On that point higher capacity units are also available to a payload of five (standard calibres) and three (magnums). This drops to three and two accordingly in the standard clip.

I only had one initial drama as I found the rifle would not shoot a decent group. This was solved as after three shots bolt operation got very stiff. Inspection showed that the barrel was moving forward in the action, due to the fact the retaining bolts were not fully tightened. On this friction-only, clamping system you must be aware of this fact and check accordingly. Whipping the action out of the stock and tightening up got it sorted and it never happened again.

That aside the big, steel bolt ran slick and smooth with no



The Titan bears more than a passing resemblance to the Sauer 202

A real bonus is the Titan uses standard scope mounts so no need to spend £300 on dedicated bases as you do with some other makes



The butt of the All-Round is plain with no raised comb or cheek piece



Detail of the practical, tang-mounted safety and the cocked action indicator

hesitations on feed or extraction. Accuracy was good though the rifle showed a slight preference to the lighter, 58-grain V-MAX load, which it shot at around the 1/2" mark. The heavier, 100-grain RWS was printing just over the inch, but this is still respectable and more than enough for deer at normal ranges.

Switch or swap?

The obvious concern with any switch barrel system is will it return to zero after it has been changed? On this example I found that when the barrel was removed and re-fitted the point of impact shifted by about an inch left with the 58-grain and one inch left and two down with the 100-grain loads.

The question then arises is this a switch or a swap barrel rifle? By this I mean did the designers intend for the Titan to easily change calibre, but with a mandatory check zero session prior to hunting? In the big scheme of things this is an important consideration. The Titan is based on the Sauer 202 - which is a system I have never tested as to its ability to maintain its zero and point of impact when stripped down and re-assembled. So I am not in a position to slate the Titan for wandering off, if it was never envisaged to be a return to zero build, but simply a multi-calibre system; but it is something to be aware of.

If you factor in the barrel change and its potential to wander, and are then prepared to accept you will have to check zero prior to hunting, then add in the far more affordable price, the Titan is still a design to be given serious consideration.

That aside I found it a generally decent rifle with a good bolt and magazine and a well positioned and practical safety system. Plus accuracy was more than acceptable! Another financial advantage is the lack of need to buy a dedicated scope mount as you have to with Blaser, Mauser and Merkel. These days that sort of equipment is going to set you back the thick end of £300.



To change the barrel the Titan needs to be completely disassembled

Technical Specification

Name:	RWS Titan 6 All-Round
Calibres	243 Win (on test)
Capacity	3 and 5 (DM)
Barrel	22.5"
Threaded	1/2x20" UNF
Finish	stainless
Stock	synthetic
Price (complete rifle)	£937
Bolt assembly complete	£528
Without cocking sleeve	£254
Spare Barrel	£276
Spare Magazine	£53
Contact	RUAG Ammotec UK Ltd, 01579 362319 www.jagd-shop.at