...AND LEAD US NOT INTO TEMPTATION

Reviewed by Peter Caroline

God only knows, I’ve tried to keep this addiction down to a dull roar. Sixteen years ago, I built a basement gunroom with more than enough space for a lifetime collection of pistols, rifles, shotguns, ammo and reloading equipment. It is now bursting at the seams, and Ruger is one of the prime offenders.

Every year, at the SHOT Show, Ruger manages to hit at least one out of the park. The LCP, LCR, LC9…and in 2011, the Gunsite Scout .308 carbine. I thought that my meager firearms budget was safe from this latest one – it was introduced, not surprisingly, as a right-handed bolt action. I’m left-handed, so I’ll pass, I thought.

Several months after the show, Mark Pixler, my editor, informed me that Ruger was cataloging a left-handed version of the Gunsite Scout. I requested a sample from Ruger, just for review, mind you, and certainly not because I needed another rifle.

The rifle arrived and, at about the same time, an appropriate FX-II 2.5 x 28mm Intermediate Eye Relief scope from Leupold, complete with some neat quick-detachable mounts. Although the rifle has very adequate iron sights, one of Colonel Jeff Cooper’s specifications for his Scout carbine concept was a scope mounted forward of the action. This was part of Cooper’s answer to the age-old question, “If you were to have only one rifle, what would it be?” The scope is compact and fixed-power, and its placement lets you get on target quickly, while still being able to see what’s going on around you.

Another interesting feature is the 10-round detachable magazine. Cooper felt that this general-purpose rifle should have adequate firepower for defensive situations, and be equipped for rapid reloading. I understand that Ruger will soon be able to supply a 5-round magazine, if such is needed to comply with state game regulations. I do wish that the action provided a slot for stripper clips, plus a magazine that could be loaded from the top, rather than pushing each cartridge in from the front. I suppose that one could lay in a supply of extra Accuracy International magazines, but at around 70 bucks apiece…ouch! [Editor’s Note: Ruger now has polymer magazines available in 3-, 5-, and 10-round capacity, priced at $39.95 each.]

The Gunsite Scout’s stock is made of a black and gray wood laminate, and its length of pull can be adjusted to your individual needs by adding or removing any of three hard polymer inserts. The soft butt pad takes up recoil quite nicely. The gun weighs only 7 lbs., and has a 16-1/2” barrel with a flash suppressor. It also is equipped with a sturdy rear peep sight, adjustable for windage and elevation, and a front blade sight with protective ears. Ahead of the action is a 6” Picatinny rail that easily accommodates an Intermediate Eye Relief scope or red dot sight. By removing the rear peep sight, you can also fit a rear scope mount, if you choose to mount a scope in the conventional position. Sling swivels are provided fore and aft, and the front swivel can also be used for mounting a bipod.

Right out of the box, the Scout’s action is reasonably smooth, and gets even smoother after a little lubrication and some working in. The trigger pull is approximately 4-1/2 lbs.

Shooting the Scout was a pleasure. Quite frankly, I was a bit surprised at the mild recoil, given the short barrel and relatively light weight. Thanks to the stock configuration and the adjustable length of pull, the gun fit me perfectly. Initially, I mounted the Leupold Scout Scope, and that extra eye relief did take a bit of getting used to…old dog/new tricks, and all that. For checking out group size at 100 yards, I mounted an old Weaver K4-1 scope, which is far less challenging for older eyes, and printed five-shot groups ranging from 1-1/4” to 1-3/4”. One group, definitely a fluke, was a hair under 3/4”. I was using Winchester Super X 150-grain Power-Point ammo. Just to see what the Scout would do with some truly bargain basement stuff, I ran a box of Russian Brown