By Jerry Ahern, Photos by Sharon Ahern

I have recently tested two terrific firearms, each a true bargain considering value offered. One is a rifle, the other a pistol. Both are excellent pieces of equipment in calibers compatible with U.S. military and police hardware, meaning, of course, there would be enhanced potential for finding ammo for these firearms in a disaster scenario, since this ammunition would tend to be more abundant.

The first of these is from one of my favorite gun companies, Century International Arms (centuryarms.com). It is a variation on one of my favorite styles of rifle. Called the “C93 Semi-Auto Rifle,” it is a 5.56 x 45 (.223 Remington) caliber sporter using the delayed roller locking system pioneered by the Spanish CETME rifles and subsequently incorporated into some of the world’s most well respected assault rifles. Prior to the idiotic Clinton-era assault weapons ban, mercifully allowed to sunset on President George W. Bush’s watch, high quality German produced rifles incorporating the system CETME pioneered were readily available in this country, in both 7.62 x 51 (.308 Winchester) and 5.56 x 45 (.223 Remington). These original weapons and associated accessories command a significant bounty these days, despite wider availability of military-style sporters.

Not long ago, I mentioned in this column the CETME Rifles from Century International Arms, these in .308. Excellent rifles! I was elated to subsequently learn that Century is also offering a .223 that incorporates the same outstanding features. And, the rifle is sensational! As a gunwriter – contrary to the opinions of some – you discover that most firearms are pretty well made and perform just as they should. There’s the occasional lemon, of course. If you’re a mature, responsible person, as a writer you do exactly what a retail purchaser would do. You notify the manufacturer of the problem and get it rectified. To keep honesty on your side, you mention the experience in whatever you write concerning the firearm. Sometimes, too, you’ll encounter a firearm to which you take an instant liking. This new .223 sporter from Century is one of the latter.

Unlike the case of the CETME in .308, to my knowledge there is no source for inexpensive spare magazines. The CETME takes H-K 91 and G3 magazines, as well as CETME magazines. The C93 would take H-K 33, 53 or 93 magazines, if you can find them. That said, the C93 does come with two 40-round magazines, but I’m one of those guys who likes having several spare magazines. So, I’ll explore the possibilities and, eventually, spend more than I want for some additional magazines. At the moment, prowling the Internet yielded no source for magazines at any reasonable price. This would suggest that the C93 is proving to be a popular gun!

As the rifle comes from Century, the C93 features the same delayed roller locking system found in the CETME, a fluted chamber. The barrel is 16-1/4” long and features a flash suppressor. The barrel is American made, as is the receiver. There is a carrying handle that folds out of the way when you wish. The rear sight is adjustable for various yardages. Disassembly of the weapon is really quite simple.

The C93 is very “shootable.” Its pistol grip is comfortable and operation of the left-side mounted safety with the right thumb is easy and reliable. Some will quarrel with the cocking handle being mounted on the left side of the weapon, but I’ve always found this arrangement quite convenient.

Unlike the CETME, the C93 is set up from the factory to handle a sling, although no sling comes with the rifle. The stock is impact-resistant plastic, a deep black in color. All metal surfaces are Parkerized. Magazine interchange is easier than on some other rifles – like the AK types and Rugers, for example – and the magazine release catch, which is found on the right hand side, is positive.

The accompanying magazines are not new production and show – at least with my sample – some signs of honest wear. Loading a C93 magazine is easily accomplished without the use of tools and without destroying your thumbs in the process.

Ahern with the Century C93 rifle, a weapon with which he was extremely impressed. Note carrying handle in raised position.