



## TEST FIRE

By Tracy Short



# Schultz & Larsen Rifles

## M97-DL in 6.5-284, CLASSIC in .308

### Impeccable pedigree

The Danish firm Schultz & Larsen started producing target rifles in 1889 with an emphasis on high quality and accuracy and soon established a reputation for making the most accurate rifles money could buy.

Their first sporter was the 54J (made in 1954, J is for Jaeger or hunter) and came in calibres 7x61 S&H, .244 Rem, 6.5x55, .270 and 30-06. It had a straight stack magazine and was a very well made rifle. Next came the Model 60 which they tuned for the US market with a staggered magazine to rake the belly out of the stock, the safety was switched to the right and made into a 3 position one, striker travel was increased and the action was made a little longer. It was made from 1957-

“ I do believe that this is probably the most accurate factory rifle I have tested so far for Rod & Rifle ”

1960. Next came the Model 65 which cocked on opening (an important change) and was offered in 358 Norma Magnum and .308 Norma Magnum and other calibres. This was almost the same as the Model 60, but cosmetically even nicer, I have a Model 65DL (Deluxe) for sale in my shop in 6.5x55, it is a superbly made rifle. Then came the rifle that really established Schultz & Larsen's reputation for excellence, the Model 68DL

which was fully 'Americanized' with rosewood fore-end and grip cap with white spacers and available in over 20 calibres. The stock was the fore-runner of the Weatherby stocks and in fact the first Weatherby .378 Weatherby Magnum rifle had a Schultz and Larsen action (Super Magnum M56A) because it was the only action available that was strong enough.

After that S&L faded away, but now they are back with their old agents C R Pain Ltd so when James Pain offered me these two rifles at the Sika Show I jumped at the chance because I have had little to do with the latest generation of Schultz & Larsen's. I have always been a fan of

the Schultz and Larsen rifles and have come across many over the years and they all had one thing in common; they shot extremely well. The rifles in the early days were mostly rear locking which is considered by many as an inferior method of locking up an action mainly for strength reasons. Most rear locking actions object to high pressure loads although in the past I have put some very stoked up loads through the rear

“ Only really accurate rifles are interesting in my opinion-this one is very interesting ”

locking Schultz's and they seem to cope very well. In more recent times Schultz & Larsen have been producing front locking actions. This was my first experience in using a front locking Schultz and I am going to tell you why I was more than impressed.

#### The Model 97-DL Action

Highly polished and silky smooth were my first impressions with a big heavy bolt body, three locking lugs and an extractor that slides across one of the lugs as you would see in a push feed Winchester or many other actions. There is an ejector



Above; The 97-DL is very similar except that the barrel removes easily.

plunger in the bolt face and 3 large gas ports in the ejection port area of the bolt that resembles the Schultz & Larsen's from days gone by. The action body is nicely shaped with a clever integral scope base machined in that is compatible with common bases. The custom rings were very clever and could be moved forward or back to achieve correct eye relief on the integral base although I still prefer the Weaver type system myself which could be used if you wanted.

Although the action is well made and designed it lacks frills such as a jeweled bolt that you might find on some high grade rifles, but there are custom high grade options available as a special order which will give you what you want in that department.

The bolt release says Schultz & Larsen again and looks identical to the old Schultz models from years ago. It is a large push in lever on the left rear of the action; the best type in my opinion.

The front of the receiver is split with a clamp system to hold the barrel in the receiver and the bolt locks into the back of the barrel. This means that it is relatively easy to change barrels and a wide variety of calibers can be obtained for the one rifle (you will need a different bolt for some calibers). The magazine

is all metal and very well made. In fact I could not find any plastic parts or any parts in this action that were not superbly machined. The magazine release is a button just forward of the magazine proper.

The safety is a positive three position job on the right of the tang; best place and best kind of safety full stop. Full safe also locks the bolt while in the middle position you can operate the bolt while still safe and forward is the fire position. The safety was not that well marked as to the different positions however they would be relatively obvious to most people.

#### The Trigger

This is an adjustable two stage trigger that was a delight straight out of the box. I did not try and adjust it because there was no reason to. It looks pretty straight forward to do so however.

#### The Bedding

The bedding was very well done with a combination of cleverly machined steel pillars that were bedded into the stock and action with an epoxy type bedding compound to produce a perfect fit and an ultra reliable bedding system. This was another clue to the fact that this is not just another mass produced production rifle.

#### The Barrel

This is removable and has the locking abutments in the rear section of the barrel. Schultz & Larsen are known for their fine



Left; The large bolt head with three locking lugs, slide extractor and ejector with plunger in the bolt face. Right: Integral base mounting system common to both models and also drilled and tapped for Weaver type bases.

barrels which are produced by the cut rifling method which has been around for 500 years and is still the best way of creating precise grooves and a superior finish but is too expensive and time consuming for most manufacturers. Many would say that cut rifled barrels are the best and I must say that I have never seen a bad cut rifle barrel.

I was surprised that in the instructions that came with the rifle they didn't recommend the use of bore solvents in their barrels and to clean only with good quality gun oil. I was slightly disbelieving of this however after much shooting I put an oily rag through the barrel and to my surprise there was little or no fouling in the bore, but then of course they are lapped in the factory for a near perfect finish. The finish was fantastic looking through the borescope. The barrel is 26 inches on this rifle



*Above; The Schultz&Larsen M97-DL Superbly accurate, both the S&L models would make an ideal New Zealand deer rifle-certainly they are the most accurate rifles I have tested for Rod&Rifle.*

*Left; The Classic stripped, the superb machining is quite evident as is the real steel.*

which in my opinion is the ideal minimum length in 6.5x284 to get the best velocity.

### **The Stock**

Yes it is nice and very functional with a rosewood fore-end tip and pistol grip cap. The wood was by no means plain and the checkering was well cut. I must say that for me it lacked a little of the style that I have seen in some of the European rifles I have tested lately; a bit square and blockish looking. Maybe if the fore-end was shaped different it would have rated better cosmetically with me.

The recoil pad looked good and was well fitted but was as hard as hell and even in a light calibre was sharp in recoil. The Americans have certainly got the recoil pad thing better sussed



*Adjustable trigger and bolt release on the Classic.*

than most of the Europeans; maybe they are tougher over in Europe?

than most of the Europeans; maybe they are tougher over in Europe?

### **Shooting the Schultz M97-DL**

I put a few loads together for a starter and straight out of the box with no running in she shot like a dream. The accuracy was unbelievable; cut rifle barrels rule-OK! The rifle was supplied with a 4x36 Klassik Schmidt & Bender hunting scope which was optically superb and

up contemplating a more powerful scope because I doubted I could do a lot better than I had already achieved. This rifle just sang sweet music every time I pulled the trigger and I do believe that it is probably the most accurate factory rifle I have tested so far for Rod & Rifle, it was a pleasure to shoot apart from the hard recoil pad.

The M97-DL weighed in at 3.90kg which is reasonably weighty however with the length and contour of the 6.5-284 barrel it wasn't too bad I thought.

### **The 6.5-284**

One of the world's great calibres, this cartridge started life as a wildcat when the 284 Winchester case was necked down to 6.5. Due to the high ballistic co-efficient of the 6.5 projectile in the 140 grain weight range and the good velocity produced by this cartridge out of longer barrels, it soon proved itself as a fantastic long range target round. It has held many world records at 1000 yards and beyond. These fantastic results were soon noticed by hunters and varmint shooters wanting high capability with relatively low recoil. Due to the long aerodynamic design of the 6.5 projectiles and the faster twist barrels they tend to kill game better than you would expect for their weight and energy. There is very little available in factory ammo. Norma produce great factory ammo for this cartridge however most people I know who use this cartridge either load their own or have someone load it for them. I shot 130 grain Norma Diamond Line and 140 Hornady A-Max and Nosler 130 grain Accubond projectiles through this rifle. I have used them all on game and they performed well with the Norma and Hornady having a very high ballistic co-efficient.

I have shot this cartridge a lot competitively and for hunting and believe I may have been the first in New Zealand to use it extensively. Today it still dominates in F-class shooting in New Zealand and the rest of the world.

**Conclusion**

The M97-DL is a fantastic rifle. It has a RRP of \$4200 and is in my opinion worth every cent. There are prettier rifles around for the money however functionally this would be a better rifle than most with a superior bedding system and the barrel is of a quality not normally found in a factory rifle. Only really accurate rifles are interesting in my opinion. This one is very interesting.

The problem I have now is a real desire to own one of these fine rifles. I am not one those who impulsively buy things and tend to sleep on the idea of large purchase however the desire to own a model 97 DL has not diminished after many sleeps.

**SPECIFICATIONS**

|                          |                                    |
|--------------------------|------------------------------------|
| <b>Stock</b>             | Walnut                             |
| <b>Magazine Capacity</b> | 3 and 5 rounds                     |
| <b>Weight</b>            | 3.9kg bare                         |
| <b>Action</b>            | Drilled and tapped with base       |
| <b>Barrel Length</b>     | 26 inches                          |
| <b>Calibres</b>          | 22-250, .243, 6.5x55, 7mm-08, .308 |
| <b>Price</b>             | \$4200.00                          |
| <b>Agents</b>            | C R Pain Ltd                       |

**Schultz & Larsen Model Classic 308**

The Schultz & Larsen Classic is in many respects very similar to the Model 97-DL that I have just spoken so highly of. There are a few cosmetic differences and a couple of minor cost saving features however the main difference is that the Classic does not currently offer the removable barrel design that the 97-DL offers. The Classic is still however in every respect a very well made and designed rifle with exceptional accuracy capabilities. If you don't require the interchangeable barrel system and you don't mind a few cosmetic features less then you need to check this rifle out.



*The nicely dovetailed bolt handle on the 97 DL.*

**The Action**

In most respects this action is the same as the M97-DL. It differs in the fact that the barrel is a press fit and is not clamped into the action. Otherwise there is little difference. The bolt looks identical apart from the fact that the bolt handle is dovetailed into the bolt which would be a less expensive method and maybe has not quite the strength of the 97 however it is still very robust. The bolt release is in the same position but different and less sophisticated although still effective. In all other respects this action is the same as the M97-DL.



*Fore and aft bedding in the 97 DL stock showing epoxy bedded steel pillars.*

**Trigger**

The trigger is a single stage adjustable trigger. It was not as well set out of the box as the M97-DL two stage trigger was, but it adjusted reasonably well.

**The Bedding**

The bedding was very similar to the M97-DL with steel pillars bedded in for a perfect fit with an epoxy bedding compound; unbelievable to see such a sophisticated bedding system used in a rifle of this price.

**The Barrel**

Shorter and lighter than the 97-DL and optionally threaded for a moderator or muzzle break. Schultz & Larsen do their own moderator system that I had a peek at when I was in Auckland. The barrel was extremely well finished inside and also shot very well. One of my reloads grouped into one ragged little hole. There was no barrel fouling after firing many shots and no running in. These people obviously know how to make barrels.

**The Stock**

Similar to the model 97DL in many respects however in Classic design; lacking the cheek piece of the Monte Carlo and



*Quality checkering is common to both models.*

missing the rosewood fore-end, but still with a rosewood pistol grip cap. The recoil pad was the same well fitted but hard kicking pad as on the 97. Checkering and palm swell was the same as the 97 and the stock fitted well and was very comfortable.

**Shooting the Classic**

I fired several groups with factory ammo and one with reloaded ammo and quickly found myself back behind an accurate rifle. The Norma match ammo was the best of the factory ammo

however it didn't quite match the accuracy of the 165 Sierra GameKing hollow point load which was really impressive. There was nothing I didn't like about this rifle. I was using the same 4X Schmidt & Bender scope as I shot on the 97DL which

surprised me as to how I managed to put such a tight group together with the heavy cross-hair and low magnification. As far as the scope goes I rate them as one of the finest scopes available. I have owned several over the years. Schmidt & Bender in my opinion adjust more accurately and reliably than any other European scope. The optics are right up there with the best also. The Classic weighed in bare at 3.27kg, a relatively light rifle that would suit a hunter who was going to carry his rifle around a lot.

**Conclusion**

The most accurate factory rifle I know of for the money. End of story. 

**SPECIFICATIONS**

|                          |                                    |
|--------------------------|------------------------------------|
| <b>Stock</b>             | Walnut                             |
| <b>Barrel Length</b>     | 21.5 inches                        |
| <b>Magazine Capacity</b> | 3 and 5 rounds                     |
| <b>Weight</b>            | 3.27kg bare                        |
| <b>Action</b>            | Drilled and tapped with base       |
| <b>Calibres</b>          | 22-250, .243, 6.5x55, 7mm-08, .308 |
| <b>Price</b>             | \$2495.00                          |
| <b>Agents:</b>           | C R Pain Ltd                       |

**Results-Factory Ammo**



Left: .308 S&L Classic, Fiocchi, 49mm, 7 shots.  
 Centre .308 S&L Classic, Sellier&Bellot, 42mm, 5 shots.  
 Right: .308 S&L Classic, Norma Match, 32mm, 5 shots.

**Results – Reloaded Ammo**



Left:.308 S&L Classic, 165gn Sierra HP GameKing 9.8mm, 5 shots.  
 Centre: 6.5-284 S&L 97 DL, Norma Diamond Line 130 gn, 55 grains RE 22, 18mm with flyer, 5 shots.  
 Right: 6.5-284 S&L 97 DL, 140 gn Hornady A-Max, 54gn RE 22, 9mm, 5 shots