

TEST REPORT

MOSSBERG'S NO-FRILLS "PLINKSTER"

The Plinkster had a 3-9x40 Nikko Mountmaster attached. Scope has a focusing objective which allowed precise aiming at rimfire ranges.



AT A GLANCE

The original Mossberg Plinkster was a semi-automatic with 500mm barrel and a thumbhole stock molded from high-impact polystyrene. The new "Plinkster" is a bolt-action but a bit more conventional



Tubular receiver has thick walls. Note: left locking lug is engaged and there are two retaining pins for the barrel.

THE FIRST .22 RIFLE made by the firm of O.F. Mossberg was a hammerless pump which came out in 1922.

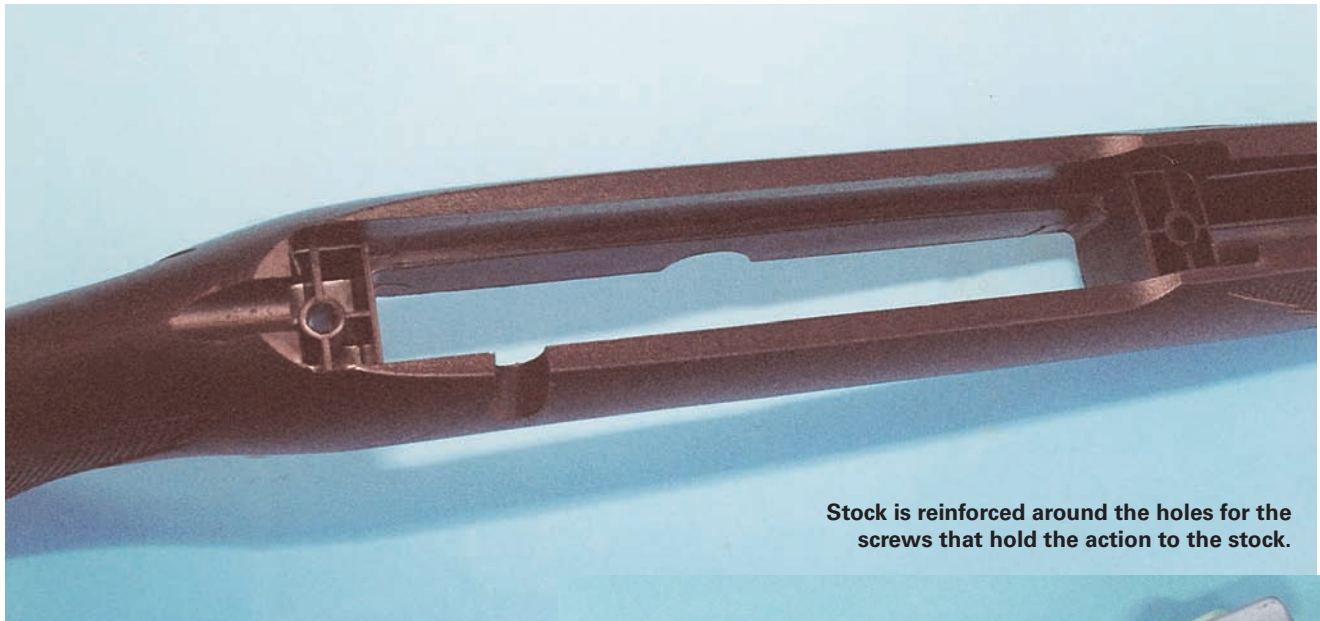
During World War II, the company produced the Model 44 training rifle used for preliminary marksmanship testing by both the U.S. Army and Navy. Mossberg became known for making rather beefy rifles with man-sized stocks and hand-filling forends, the excellent accuracy of their AC-KRO-GRUV rifling, and the trademark plastic grooves at the front of the pistol grip.

Times have changed and so have their rifles. Today the firm's name is Mossberg International Inc. and their line of rimfire rifles is a lot slimmer and trimmer. They are being made by CBC in Brazil.

The rifle sent for testing was the Model 802 Plinkster, a 10-shot clip-loader with brushed chrome finish on all the exterior metal surfaces – action, barrel, bolt and trigger guard-magazine floorplate. The effect when combined with a black synthetic stock, black bolt handle and shroud, iron sights magazine and trigger poses an attractive contrasting appearance.

Unlike the old Mossbergs I reviewed back in the 1960s, the new Plinkster is light, well-balanced and fast-handling. Tipping the scales at a featherlight 2.27 kgs – it feels more like a rapier than a cutlass.

The stock is classic-styled with a straight comb sans cheekpiece and slim schnabel forend tip. It has molded-in checkering in a point pattern and plastic grip cap and buttplate. The grip while slim is unusually long due to



Stock is reinforced around the holes for the screws that hold the action to the stock.



the pronounced amount of drop at heel – about 38mm from the centre of the bore. Having 19mm of drop at the nose of the comb, however, raises the face high enough and is a reasonable compromise for making the Plinkster comfortable to shoot with either the irons or a scope sight.

The tubular receiver is 185mm long, has a diameter of 27mm and average wall thickness of 6mm. The rear end is angled and ends in a short thick tang. A 9.525 (3/8") male dovetail runs the full length of the receiver. The ejection port measures 45mm and is long enough to handle .22 WMR and .17 HMR cartridges. The slot for the magazine in the bottom of the receiver is also long enough to take the longer magazines.

The bolt is a two-piece affair, with the forward section being brush chromed and the rear section blued. A chisel-nosed firing pin lies in a groove atop the bolt head and is retained by a semi-circular spring clip which has the extractors made integral with it. The rear part of the bolt body contains the internal spring-driven hammer assembly.

A straight bolt handle has a round, hollowed-out knob. Two large studs which protrude from the bolt body turn into recesses inside the receiver as the bolt is rotated are dual-opposed locking lugs. When the bolt is

cycled, the top lug slides in a groove in the top of the receiver, and the bottom lug runs in a slot cut for it underneath. They engage in their respective locking recess, when the bolt is in the firing mode

The bolt handle turns down into a notch in the right side of the receiver, but doesn't bear against the rear edge. It doesn't form a third locking lug, but conceivably may act as an auxiliary lug in the unlikely event of simultaneous failure of the two forward lugs.

A similar-sized stud on the bottom of the bolt shroud is the cocking piece. When the bolt is cocked a red dot becomes visible on front of the shroud. A smaller stud on the front of the shroud rides up an angled surface machined in the rear of the bolt body to initiate extraction.

The 433mm barrel with a twist of 1:16 is pressed and pinned into the receiver and locked in place with two cross-screws. The barrel has a diameter of 17.50mm at the breech end and is straight-tapered to 15mm at the recessed and crowned muzzle. A set of rudimentary open sights screwed to the barrel are easily removable. Up front is a ramped bead and a rear U-notch with a ladder for

Trigger mechanism is enclosed in an alloy module which also houses the throughbolt safety and magazine release catch.

The studs on either side of the two-piece bolt are dual-opposed locking lugs. Small stud in front of shroud and angled cam surface initiates extraction.



ABOVE: Robust construction and strength of Plinkster's receiver is obvious. Full length dovetail allows plenty of latitude for eye relief with scope.



LEFT: The Model 802 Plinkster averaged 25mm five-shot groups at 50 metres with Highland RX .22 solids and hollow-points.

SPECS

Mossberg Model 802 Plinkster

MANUFACTURER:

CBC, Brazil, South America

TYPE:

Bolt-action with dual-opposed locking lugs

CALIBRE:

.22 Long Rifle

BARREL:

433mm, brushed chrome; twist 1:16

SIGHTS:

Ramped bead front, U-notch rear adjustable for windage and elevation.

OVERALL LENGTH:

100cm

WEIGHT:

2.27kg without scope

MAGAZINE CAPACITY:

10 rounds

STOCK:

Black synthetic, length of pull, 362mm, drop at heel 38mm; drop at comb 19mm. No sling swivels.

LIKELY RETAIL PRICE:

Plinkster \$425 inc GST; Optional Nikko Mountmaster 3-9x40 scope \$125.

TRADE ENQUIRIES:

For more information visit your local gunshop or contact highland Sports.

WEBSITE:

www.highlandsports.com.au

elevation which allows some windage adjustment. But the rifle comes as package deal with a Nikko Mountmaster 3-9x scope, which makes the sights superfluous.

Unlike most budgetary .22 rifles the Plinkster is attached to the stock with two screws – one at the front and one at the rear. This is a very secure assembly more akin to a centrefire rifle than a rimfire and ensures that the barreled action sits squarely in the stock. The forend is hollow and has four struts bracing it and the sections where the two action screws go up through the stock are reinforced.

The heavy aluminium alloy modular housing for the trigger is attached to the underside of the receiver with a screw on either side. The trigger mechanism is steel and features a sturdy sear tensioned by a coil spring. Not much chance of anything breaking with this Mossberg design. The module contains the magazine release and a throughbolt safety in the front of the trigger guard. The magazine is a pressed metal clip with a green nylon follower and 10-shot capacity. The right lip of the clip acts as the ejector.

For testing, the rifle was equipped with a Nikko Mountmaster 3-9x40 which has a focusing objective. This allows the shooter to eliminate parallax over the

short ranges which the .22 Long Rifle is suited for. The Mountmaster comes with a pair of rings and is available as an optional extra with the Mossberg Plinkster.

The Mossberg Model 802 Plinkster was fired over a benchrest at 50 metres with Highland RX ammo. The trigger is non-adjustable, but felt crisp and broke at 2kgs with a barely discernable amount of creep, but no overtravel. Results showed that one can expect 5-shot groups to average about 25mm with standard high-velocity solids and hollow-points. Quite a few rimfire rifles will not match the performance of the Mossberg Plinkster.

The Mossberg Plinkster is produced in many different combinations of metal and stocks – wood and synthetic – so one is not restricted to a single version of this rugged rifle. Therange includes the Bantam Plinkster with black stock or Pink Marble finish; Varmint Plinkster with Thumbhole/TipDown wood stock and bull barrel; Varmint Plinkster with pink chrome. All-in-all there's 16 different configurations to meet the individual's shooting needs. For many small game hunters, one of the versions of the Plinkster could well be all the rifle needed.

This is a durable, no-frills rifle, one that should give the buyer many years of satisfactory service. It is a worthy acquisition for the shooter with a limited budget. ■