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PRIDE FOWLER INDUSTRIES RAPID RETICLE SCOPES

Last year I was hunting prairie dogs with a party that included Mickey Fowler. An outdoor (read "gun") writer, Mickey is also a world-class marksman with several national championships under his belt. When he collared me to talk about a new scope system he had just developed in partnership with John Pride (another much-titled competitive shooter), I gave him my full attention. I thought he had an interesting concept, and he promised to send me a sample when one became available.

A few months ago, three scopes arrived in the mail. Two were 3-9x 42mm variables, while the third was a 6x 40mm fixed-power model. All sported innovative range-compensating (not range-finding) "Rapid Reticles" specifically designed for rimfire use. Each reticle featured dual-thickness crosshairs with a series of "hold-over" lines descending from the center. These horizontal aiming guides were calibrated in multiple increments ranging from 0 to 200 yards (300 yards for the .22 magnum model).

"The .22 rimfire scopes give accurate readings for high-speed .22 Long Rifle ammo starting out at 1,200 to 1,300 feet per second, which includes Federal Lightning, CCI Blazer, Winchester Power-Point and Remington Gold Bullet hollowpoints, to name a few," Mickey said. "The scope also works with other .22 LR loads, but some calculation will be involved. The .22 magnum scope is designed for 1,800 fps velocities generated by Winchester 40-grain .22 WMR hollowpoints and similar ammo."

He noted the reticles were initially calibrated for zero-altitude

shooting at 59 degrees Fahrenheit with a barometric pressure of 29.52. Scope height was 1.5 inches above the bore. A series of horizontal ticks along each ranging crosshair was each designed to compensate for a 10-mph crosswind coming from 3:00 or 9:00.

Unlike other range-compensating scopes I've used, Rapid Reticle crosshairs are clearly marked to indicate each different yardage. The reticles were designed and calibrated during actual range testing, with the results verified by Sierra's Infinity Ballistics Computer Program.

The variable-power Pride Fowler

scope reticles are mounted in the first optical plane. This means the readings hold true throughout the full range of magnification. It costs less to build scopes with reticles positioned in the second plane, but settings would remain accurate only at a certain magnification.

While these reticles appear cluttered at first, it doesn't take long to get used to all those numbers and the fine, horizontal crosshairs. The graduations are small enough to be unobtrusive but large enough to make distant shots with surprising precision. Effective use of these scopes requires ranging the target first

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with a laser rangefinder. Alternatively, you can watch for the dust of a bullet strike, then adjust your aim to compensate – this works for both windage and elevation changes.

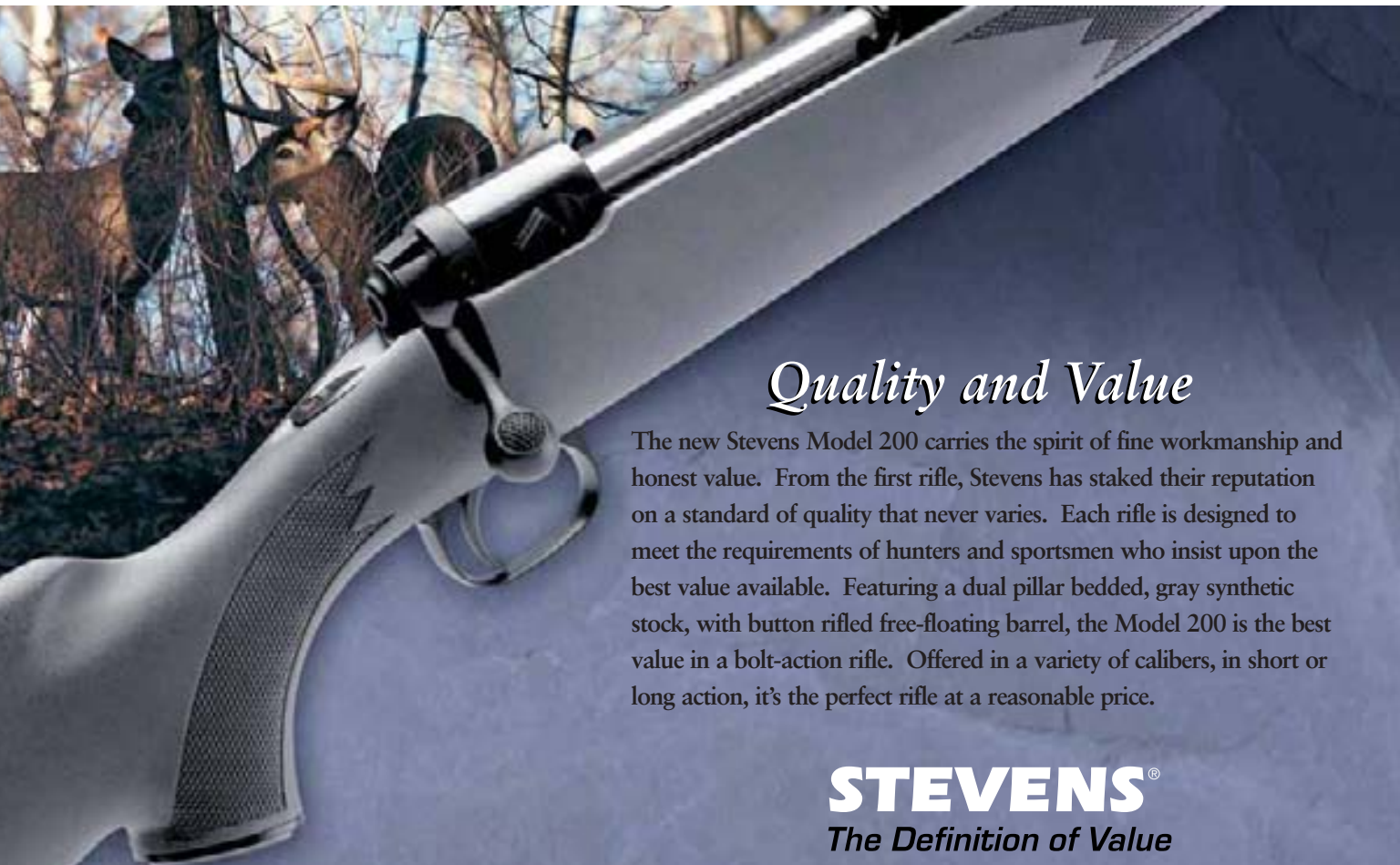
Each scope wears a one-inch 6061 T6 aluminum one-piece tube with a matte-black finish. Lenses are multicoated and deliver a clear, sharp sighting picture. I like the fast-focus rear eyepiece that makes adjusting the scope to your eye quick and easy. Windage and elevation adjustments are made with ¼ minute-of-angle (MOA) clicks.

Both standard and magnum 3-9x variables are 11 inches long and weigh 13 ounces. Each is priced at \$289. The fixed-power 6x 40mm scope weighs the same but measures 12½ inches in length. MSRP is \$189. All three are waterproof (I dunked them in the tub an hour to test this) and



advertised as shockproof (I've never learned how to gauge a riflescope's "shockproof" capabilities without testing it to destruction).

I've done a fair amount of plinking with both 3-9x variables, and they passed with flying colors. I could accurately place shots at any distance to the reticle's outer



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limit, provided I ranged the targets first. The beauty of these reticles is that, once you've sighted in the scope, you can leave the windage and elevation knobs alone. I'm looking forward to hunting with these scopes when prairie dog season rolls around again.

For more information, contact Pride Fowler Industries, Inc., Dept. R, PO Box 4301, San Dimas CA 91773; or you can visit online at: www.rapidreticle.com.

Montana Sling from IST Designs



I don't know how many different rifle slings I've used, but it's been a bunch. They've run the gamut from full-bellied leather cobra-style slings with loops for extra cartridges to plain, unadorned black nylon straps. Let's not forget the military-style leather slings with brass adjusting claws that were the universal standard when I began shooting many years ago. The target rifles I competed with during college ROTC matches were so equipped, and I still harbor a certain fondness for these useful, but obsolescent straps.

I don't much care for the wide,