

by: G.W. Fleming

Constructing the New-Wave North American Hunting System

There's nothing like the look of a polished high grade walnut stock or the glimmer of a flawlessly blued barrel. I'm a sucker for both but as new technologies are developed and new products hit the market it's hard not to notice, or pass up on, some of the obvious advantages that new products offer. Especially if you're the kind of hunter that actually goes out in the woods, rain or shine, and uses the weapon you have for what it was intended for, hunting.

Although a polished walnut stock and a shiny blued barrel can look magnificent, there is just something about the sleek look of a stainless barrel over a black composite stock that I find intriguing. Maybe it's just that it's new technology thus different from my old school weapons or maybe, like most of my hunting stuff, it's just something new and cool looking to play around with. Over time, I've learned a good way to put out a fire is to throw water on it.

With me, quenching the fire usually cost money so in an effort to conserve some of that I did a lot of shopping for the components I used to put together a new-wave hunting system. I've listed the suppliers of, and cost for, each of the components I chose to construct that hunting system just incase you get the same type of uncontrollable urge I got and want to save some shopping around time.

Of course the shopping was part of the enjoyment and with the exception of the purchase of the rifle itself, I was able to do it all high tech via the internet. The following paragraphs list all of the components that I chose and my reasoning for selecting them.

I've had to wait, in one case over a year, for some of the components which has only made the final product more enjoyable. The only item that I can not give details about and have not been able to get is flip up lens covers for the scope I selected. They won't be out until 2007. Every thing else is in hand and put together now so here are my selections:

Caliber: 300 WSM

The 300 WSM has been out there for a couple of years now and I think will become increasingly popular. You can buy 150 grain Winchester silver ballistic tips at Wal-mart now if that's any indication of coming popularity. I prefer the 180 grain bullet so will have to purchase my ammo somewhere else for now. That said, I chose the 300 WSM for two reasons.

The first reason is that I can use it in almost every hunting situation on the North American Continent. That's important to me since I don't want a gun cabinet full

of rifles that I never use. Secondly and most importantly, I chose the 300 WSM for the SM part. The shorter length of the cartridge allows for a shorter and lighter action thus a lighter rifle while giving magnum ballistics. As far as I'm concerned lighter is better.

Plenty of old timers will say that for that heavy of a load you need more rifle weight to offset recoil. My argument is this: It's not like you're going into the deer/elk woods and firing 20 rounds back to back leaving your shoulder on the forest floor as a quivering pile of jelly. Most guys who hunt to the range, shoot about 20 rounds to site their rifle in, then put their gun in the gun cabinet until hunting season begins.

They fire a few shots during hunting season and back in the cabinet the gun goes. If it gets out of line before next season it's back to the range for another 20 rounds. So my point is most of us only fire our hunting rifles once or twice at our quarry on any given hunting day. If your shoulder can't handle that kind of shooting to the point where you flinch at every shot, then you may want to stay home and play jacks.

Product:	150 grain Silver Ballistic Tips	180 grain Nosier Accubond
Supplier:	Wall Mart	Cabelas (I use these)
Cost:	\$ 31.00 per box	\$27.00 per box

Leupold Dual Dovetail Rings and Two Piece Base System

Base: LEU50161

Rings: LEU49905

The main reason I chose the dual dovetail mounting system is stability. Assuming all goes well during installation, the dual dovetail system is probably the least likely mounting system to allow movement if the gun/scope is jarred.

Since the VXL scope has been engineered to allow a lower mount I was able to use low rings.

That means a better cheek to stock weld when aiming and firing. To me that's paramount!

I chose the two piece base system as opposed to the one piece bases that are available also for increased stability. Lots of folks ask why choose one over the other. As usual, I believe the simplest explanation seems to make the most sense. The two piece base is mounted with four screws and the one piece base is mounted with three. Which would you rather have holding your scope down - three bolts or four?

Product: Leupold dual dovetail rings LEU49905

Supplier: Cheaperthandirt.com
Cost: **\$22.68**

Product: Leupold dual dovetail two piece base LEU50161
Supplier: Cheaperthandirt.com
Cost: **\$17.21**

Scope: Leupold 3.5 x 10-50mmVXL

The VXL is the latest and greatest scope design for Leupold. Out in 2006, it allows a lower mount thus a better cheek to stock weld while still giving the shooter the advantage of having a large objective (50 - 56 mm) for increased light gathering during low light conditions. I chose the 3.5 x 10 - 50 mm for the low mount reason. I might have chosen the 56 mm since it gathers more light but it must be mounted on medium height rings which, in my opinion defeats the purpose of the new design with respect to cheek weld.

Reticle: Boone & Crockett

I like the idea of being able to have my rifle sighted in at more than one distance with cross hairs to match each. The Boone and Crockett reticle design allows you to choose one of several sets of cross hairs based on the distance of your quarry. To me this seems very handy and worth the extra money to have.

Product: Leupold VXL 3.5x10 - 50mm, Black Matte
Supplier: Bass Pro Shop
Cost Regular Duplex Reticle: \$699.00
Cost Boone & Crockett Reticle: **\$779.99**

Flip up Lens Covers (TBA) 2007

Neoprene Sling

For me comfort is everything and for max comfort I don't think you can beat a neoprene padded sling. There are numerous brands out there and one from Wal-Mart is just as good as one from one of the major hunting supply houses. I bought an Allen brand black sling with cartridge loops on it to carry a couple of extra rounds. Frankly, I would never carry extra ammo on the sling since it reflects light and might scratch the gun but the ammo holders do make the sling look cool.

Product: Wal-Mart
Supplier: **Allen, Black Neoprene with Cartridge Loops**
Cost: **\$17.00**

Remington 700 - Extreme Conditions Rifle (XCR) in 300 Caliber WSM

I could have selected anyone of several different weather resistant rifles and probably done just as well when it comes to shooting accuracy. Most of today's guns, with a little fine tuning, are good to go right out of the box. The Browning A-bolt, Winchester Model 70, Ruger M77 etc., etc., etc. are all available in some version of weather resistant construction and would have all been good selections with respect to accuracy and economics. However, the Remington 700 XCR has some cool features that make it the best all around choice for me. Rather than go into a lot of depth regarding each amenity, I'll save some time and list them in descending order of priority as I see it:

1. Light weight short action
2. Remington proprietary Trynite corrosion control system
3. Flat finished surfaces
4. Rubber over-molded grip by Hogue
5. Pre tapped for scope with no rifle sites installed
6. R3 Recoil Pad from Limbsaver

(This rifle will be just plain tuff in wet weather)

Product: Remington 700 XCR
Supplier: Wal-mart (Special Order)
Cost: **\$700.00**

Miscellaneous Items:

1" wood dowel - for setting scope rings - \$5.00
Blue Loctite - for mounting base screws to rifle - \$6.00
Lapping tool and compound – Lock Stock & Barrel – \$16.00

These items are not necessary if you have a gunsmith mount your scope. In my area the cost for mounting the scope above including lapping the rings is approximately \$100.00. If you're confident you can do it yourself you can save yourself a few bucks by buying the items above.

Though most folks don't bother, but lapping scope rings is easy to do and will help prevent scratches and denting of your scope caused by poor fitting rings and will provide an all round tighter mounting job. Also, it aids in preventing bending of the scope tube during installation which may save you the cost of repairing a damaged scope. You can go further and purchase a bore sighting tool for your

chosen caliber but if you do a good job mounting your scope you'll likely get the first shot on the paper without it. You also may need to add new brushes to your gun cleaning kit if you don't have the appropriate size for the caliber you choose.

Miscellaneous Total Cost: **\$27.00**

Total Cost: \$1,563.88

Note: The total cost for constructing the new-wave does not include ammunition; flip up lens covers, shipping or sales tax if applicable

I'm sure some hunters have weapons that cost three times this much and would consider putting together what I've described above a relatively low cost endeavor. But I'll bet more hunters, including me, think that this is a lot of money to put out for a new rifle. I believe though, that when you consider, scratched bluing, dinged wood, poor shots due to pore cheek weld, game lost due to stock and barrel reflection and sore shoulders and arms from carrying heavy weight magnum weapons about some minds may be changed.

I think the equipment I've listed is attractive in its own high tech way and well worth it regardless of your particular means.

If you think the costs above are really reasonable I'd just whip out that wallet and pick the stuff up today. If you think it's too much you should consider that almost all of the suppliers above have promotional easy payment plans or in, at least one case, a lay away program so you don't have to buy it all at once. I've been pretty fortunate with respect to not putting out a large lump sum while putting the new-wave system together. That's primarily due to the fact that most of the stuff was/is new on the market and was not available to purchase all at once.

The whole process took a year and a half. Most of that time was spent waiting for Remington to stamp out the XCR in 300 WSM. On my part, that slow purchase stuff required a lot of nail biting patience but it was worth the wait. I just know I've come up with the ultimate new-wave hunting system for North America. No ones ever done that before - have they? Ok - well may be a few folks have but mines the best. What would you choose?

Note: Most photographs of each of these items can be viewed at the web shopping pages of the suppliers mentioned. Additionally, Remington and Leupold also have web pages that include comprehensive specifications for most of their products.

