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Whose Rules Are
You Following?

TREATING
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BFR

BANG FOR THE REVENUE

By: Max Prasac

A GUN FOR
ALL SEASONS &
ALL REASONS

Photos by Vincent Ricardel & Max Prasac

Magnum Research entered the revolver building business in 1999, with the introduction of the BFR – the Biggest Finest Revolver, chambered in the ubiquitous .45/70 Government. You read that correctly, hence the Biggest in BFR as it takes a large cylinder and equally large frame to house the .45/70 in a revolver, giving the BFR comic book proportions. Fast-forward to 2011, and Magnum Research still produces extended framed single-action revolvers for the .45/70, .460 Smith & Wesson, and even the old warhorse .30/30, to name but a few. They also offer a much less cumbersome revolver chambered in standard handgun calibers that are comparable to a Ruger Super Blackhawk in stature.

Let's take a quick look at the BFR. Constructed entirely of 17-4PH stainless steel, the BFR looks like Ruger's single action Super Blackhawk albeit beefier in key areas such as the bottom portion of the frame as well as the top strap, making the BFR among the strongest revolvers ever made. The counter-bored, unfluted five-shot cylinder features a free-wheeling pawl, making loading and unloading a snap. The transfer bar safety system is borrowed directly from Ruger, allowing for safe loaded carry in the field. The barrel features a fast 1:15 twist rate and is sourced from Badger Barrels. The frame comes pre-drilled and tapped for a scope base and rings.

Magnum Research offers custom revolvers in a variety of less mainstream calibers from their Precision Center, their in-house custom shop. The customer can

specify barrel length, and the action gets some extra attention from the Precision Center. Precision Center guns also receive an 11 degree crown. We ordered ours in .500 JRH with a 6.5-inch barrel, and black Micarta grips. We also ordered a set of the optional rubber grips as we would be spending some time on the bench with this hand cannon. The big revolver balanced well with the 6.5-inch barrel, and the trigger exhibited no creep and broke at a crisp three pounds.

The .500 JRH was the brainchild of Jack Huntington (JRH Advanced Gunsmithing – 530/268-6877), a gunsmith out of Northern California. Jack wanted a full-power, no compromise .50 caliber cartridge that would fit in a standard-framed revolver like the Freedom Arms Model 83, with a maximum case length of 1.4-inches. He turned a dummy in his lathe in 1993 and the .500 JRH became a real live, commercially loaded reality in 2005 when Starline produced the brass and Buffalo Bore produced the first commercial loads for it, followed by the Grizzly Cartridge Company.

At the range it became apparent that our revolver possesses accuracy potential that we infrequently witness. We fitted our BFR with an Ultradot 30 red dot-type sight on the supplied rings (from Ultradot) and base to aid in our testing. Grizzly Cartridge Company (www.grizzlycartridge.com) provided us with a number of loads to try. Off of sandbags, the worst group we measured was 1 5/8-inch, and with one load we were able to shoot under

1-inch at 50 yards. We have rifles that don't shoot this well! Recoil is brisk but manageable with all of the loads tested save for the 425 grain Buffalo Bore loads (available exclusively from JRH Advanced Gunsmithing) which release a small earthquake every time a primer is struck. This is a load you would want when facing something large, furry, and angry bearing down on you.

The summer months are far from optimal for hunting boar in the southeast, but deadlines loom no matter what the season. We consulted our good friend and outfitter, Milton Turnage (Hog Heaven Outfitters of Johnston County, North Carolina, www.hogheavenoutfitters.com) for a recommendation, as his wild hogs had all but gone nocturnal due to the excessive summer heat. Milton steered us to North Carolina, a

family operated outfit which we were assured could fulfill our needs. Proprietor David Madures personally guided our hunt culminating in the killing of a large sow. The 350 grain hollow-point passed through both lungs and exited the off-side, leaving a blood trail even a bat could follow. She stumbled 15 yards before piling up.

My only criticism is rather subjective. The grip frame is standard Ruger plow-handle. I am a self-professed Bisley man. That said, the Bisley grip frame is not for everyone, and if you ask ten handgunners their preference they will likely come down on one of the two sides evenly. So, it's not a flaw, just a preference. The supplied rubber grips did a fine job at limiting discomfort with the top end loads, and give the BFR a rather utilitarian look.

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We took this sow one hot morning in August at Snow Hill, North Carolina. Owner David Madures personally guided our successful hunt.

BANG FOR THE REVENUE

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The Grizzly Cartridges 350 grain JHP performed admirably on the double lung shot at 25 yards offhand.

The .500 JRH version of the Biggest Finest Revolver is now a part of the regular lineup and not a Precision Center only offering. While not as pretty as some other factory revolvers, for pure functionality and field use, this is a hard combination to beat. The BFR in .500 JRH may not be the best choice for the neophyte, but it is a great choice for someone wanting

the most power in a portable package at a reasonable price. Bang For the Revenue indeed.

SOURCES:

Magnum Research BFR
www.magnumresearch.com
1(800) 772-6168

Grizzly Cartridge Company
www.grizzlycartridge.com
1(503) 556-3006

Ammunition & Bullet Type	Load Weight	Average Velocity	Group Size In Inches
Grizzly Ammo JFP	350-gr.	1,380 fps	1.625
Grizzly Ammo JHP	350-gr.	1,401 fps	0.906
Grizzly Ammo WFN	370-gr.	1,425 fps	1.375
Grizzly Ammo Punch	380-gr.	1,377 fps	1.250
Buffalo Bore TC	425-gr.	1,428 fps	1.250

* Outdoors/ Sandbags/ 50 yards/ 5-Shot Group/
Abbreviations: JFP (Jacketed Flat Point); JHP (Jacketed Hollow-Point); WFN (Wide Flat Nose hardcast); Punch (Punch Bullet by Belt Mountain); TC (Truncated Cone hardcast)