

Schultz & Larsen Classic Synthetic

The Schultz & Larsen Classic is superbly engineered and astonishingly accurate, says Bruce Potts

Overall rating: 95%

Schultz & Larsen Classic Synthetic

Manufacturer: Schultz & Larsen

Price as reviewed: £1,695.00



Personally speaking I think it's a lovely looking, handling and superbly accurate rifle and a real bargain.

Hands up — I am a big Schultz & Larsen fan. After the S&L Legacy rifle test I was so impressed I bought one of its rifles — and I couldn't wait to try this new model Shultz & Larsen Classic Synthetic Sporter with its highly practical synthetic stock.

I tested the Classic model and as the name suggests it is a superb, traditionally made sporting rifle. Yet it possesses all the technological advantages of modern materials and manufacturing.

I'll look at the barrelled action before the new stock, as this is the part of any rifle that can ultimately make a great difference to how it operates and shoots. Outwardly it is a traditional-looking, bolt-action rifle, with a nice satin blued action to complement the barrel, and a polished bolt. The addition of a magazine, easily detachable scope mounts and barrel threaded for a sound moderator are all pretty standard these days.

Impressions

- Pick up the great Dane and you can instantly feel this is a rifle of good breeding.
- Like a well-balanced shotgun, the Classic handles and operates that bit better than the opposition. S&L makes everything and controls all the procedures itself and that makes a difference; every part synchronises with the other.
- The action is quite long to accommodate the available calibres, ranging from .22-250 to .358 Norma Magnum.
- The Classic offers scope-mount fitting via either the drilled-and-tapped attachment method, or using S&L's excellent dovetail and return-to-zero system. Again, scope mounts made in-house fit precisely.
- The bolt action is silky smooth and has a low opening height due to the three locking-lug arrangement that ensures a positive string lock-up and quick opening.
- The insert-claw extractor and sprung-plunger ejector are utterly reliable and the lock time, too, is very fast, no doubt contributing to the excellent accuracy on test.
- The S&L actions have a quick-change barrel system that allows calibres to be changed in the field if desired, turning a stalking rifle to plains game, boar or fox gun instantly.
- All you need to do is slacken the two large Allen screws that secure a clamping collar at the front of the action. The barrel locates precisely on a lug located at six o'clock to align perfectly so you can change calibres quickly. Using magnum cartridges will mean changing to the S&L magnum bolt, however.

- In the tests, repeated barrel changes only moved the grouping one or two bullet holes away. As S&L makes its own barrels you would expect something good, and they are. These are stress-relieved chrome molybdenum steel barrels that ensure perfect concentricity and precisely cut rifling.
- These rifled barrels take longer to produce but are incredibly accurate, thanks to the care S&L takes to hone and lap the inner surfaces to maximise accuracy and minimise fouling.
- The Classic on test wore a 23in barrel with a 14mm/1 pitch thread for the sound moderator that was S&L's own muzzle can, which is included in the price. It is also fully free floated from the stock to maintain accuracy and has a brighter blued finish.
- The triggers on all these rifles are very good and the Classic is no exception. A single-stage unit, adjustable if you desire, there's but no need as it broke very cleanly at 2.65lb with no creep or backlash.
- The safety has three positions: safe at the back position; midpoint, a little undefined, is safe with bolt opening; and forward is the fire position. The detachable magazine sits in an all-steel floorplate, with a push-button release that ejects the three-shot capacity mag for this calibre.



Silky smooth bolt operation and switch barrel system doubles the appeal as a rifle for all game.

Stock

Now the important part. People have been asking Schultz & Larsen when it was going to complement the range with a synthetic model and its answer was always: “When we are happy with the best we can design and make.” Well, here it is.

Outwardly, it is a Sporter-type profile with an attractive hunter green moulding and a semi-matt textured finish. It is manufactured using a half-moulded system with a high degree of glass-fibre content in the stock. This increases density without adding weight, so it feels solid and does not flex at all, giving absolute accuracy in any adverse weather.

The long fore-end is quite slim, with a finger groove on the top section for grip and further chequering below for additional support. The pistol grip is large but slim, with the same chequered panels, and the butt section has a small amount of cast and a well-proportioned cheekpiece both in height, for scope alignment, and cheek weld for correct handling.

Twin-sling swivel studs and a soft black rubber recoil pad finish off an excellent stock, with immaculate bedding for consistent accuracy.

Field Test

In 6.5x 55mm Swedish you have an excellent all-round calibre for any deer species and fox, too. First were the factory choices.

- Hornady SST 140-gr ammunition is always a good place to start and sure enough the Classic was averaging 2,661fps from the 23in barrel — the previous 20in barrels yielded 2,565fps, so a nice increase in velocity. Accuracy was the best with three shots under 0.5in.
- Norma 120-gr Ballistic Tips shot 2,845fps at 2,157ft/lb energy and 0.95in three-shot, 100-yard groups, while the Federal 140-gr Power-Shok achieved 1.0in groups and 2,603fps at 2,107ft/lbs.
- Best reloads came from either the SST or Nosler Partition 140-gr bullets with a load of 45.5 grains of RL22 powder that achieved 2,688fps and 2,681fps respectively and almost identical 0.45in groups: superb.
- Lighter 100-gr Ballistic Tips shot 0.75in groups with a load of 49.5 grains of Vit N160 for 3,054fps and 2,031ft/lb. A Barnes 130-gr TSX lead-free bullet shot amazing 0.40in groups with 44.25 grains of RL22 powder for 2,711fps at 2,122ft/lbs.

As expected the S&L shot superbly accurately and consistently — my son Jake said it was the nicest rifle he had used. That sound moderator, too, is amazingly efficient and comes with the rifle, so it's a win-win.



The Schultz & Larsen Classic wants for nothing and now a synthetic stock makes it even better

In the field with the Schultz & Larsen Classic Synthetic

The roe rut was just starting in Surrey, so on an early morning venture we were sitting at the edge of a broadleaf woodland at dawn with a selection of roe calls to hand. The field looks out one way to a grass field and the other over crops. Roe like to rut in a more open area if possible so, with the wind to our faces, the scene was set.

I set up the sticks low in front of me, with the Classic resting on them for quick deployment — anything can happen when calling and the bucks can pop out in the most unexpected places. Sure enough, a few gentle squeezes on the Buttolo Blatter call for longer-range use had a smaller buck sauntering down a tractor-line in

the field until something disturbed him and he bounded off, thankfully silently.

I then started using the Richard Prior reed call with soft, muted tones and noticed a kerfuffle in the adjacent wood, resulting in a doe darting across the crop in front of me followed in hot pursuit by a nice roebuck.

It was difficult to see the buck among the wheat until he mounted the doe at 120 yards, when I glassed him and saw he was suitable to shoot. I had to wait and refrain from calling again in case he rumbled my position, and anyway he was more interested in the real thing.

My chance came after I had repositioned along an open section of field and he and the doe stopped dead as I barked. The S&L Classic Synthetic was already poised to send that SST bullet on its way to conclude a hot but memorable start to the roe rut.

Conclusion

S & L proves that traditional ways combined with modern thinking work — you can have a classic-looking stalking rifle but with all the advances in accuracy, stock and trigger design built in, without overcomplicating things. It has everything you need and with a synthetic stock is one of those rifles that will be as at home for stags on the wet hills of Scotland as it is in the Home Counties after roe.

The stock is superb and you can quickly change barrels if you want. One rifle for everything and it's superb value for money — really, what else do you need?

- Accuracy 19/20 Rain or shine this S&L will not let you down.
- Handling 19/20 Just feels right and inspires confidence with the shot.
- Trigger 18/20 Ultra reliable and safe
- Stock 19/20 Perfect synthetic stock, thumb-hole model, please.
- Value 20/20 For what you get, superb value

Total 95/100

Need to know

- **Name: Classic Synthetic**
- **Manufacturer: Schultz & Larsen**
- **Type: Bolt-action Sporter**
- **Barrel length: 23 in (interchangeable – varies)**
- **Overall length: 44in (varies)**
- **Calibre: .22-250in to .358 Norma Magnum (various)**
- **Weight: 3.5kg**
- **Magazine: Detachable, 3-shot**
- **Stock: Synthetic sporter green**
- **Trigger: Adjustable single-stage**
- **Price: £1,695 including sound moderator**
- **Contact: Alan Rhone Tel 01978 660001**