

Schultz & Larsen Victory Synthetic Thumbhole £2,950

A thumbhole version of a favourite stalking rifle is everything Bruce Potts has been hoping for and gets a well-deserved five-star review



Overall rating: 97%

Schultz & Larsen Victory

Manufacturer: Schultz & Larsen

Price as reviewed: £2,950.00

Verdict on the Schultz & Larsen Victory synthetic thumbhole version

In this world of fast food and high-tech gadgetry, it is nice to see that some firearms manufacturers still move with the times — but not at the expense of real quality and engineering. Schultz & Larsen (S&L), whose rifles are distributed by Alan Rhone, continues to offer superbly made, well-priced firearms that are meticulously tested to produce excellent accuracy, handling and reliability straight out of the box.

The premium Schultz & Larsen Victory bolt-action model from this Danish manufacturer is known world-wide for its strength and smooth operation. The cut-rifled barrels (built in-house), unlike the button-rifled barrels of other makers, have an interchangeable calibre facility yet still achieve consistent and tiny groups downrange.

Now, with the release of the synthetic Classic version we reviewed a while ago, my prayers have been answered and a thumbhole synthetic version is now on test. This gives the shooter a purpose-built weatherproof stock with the handling and stability that only a thumbhole design provides. The addition of an adjustable cheekpiece further enhances the usefulness of the stock, making this S&L a true rifle for the discerning stalker, available in cartridges from .22-250 to .458 Winchester Magnum.

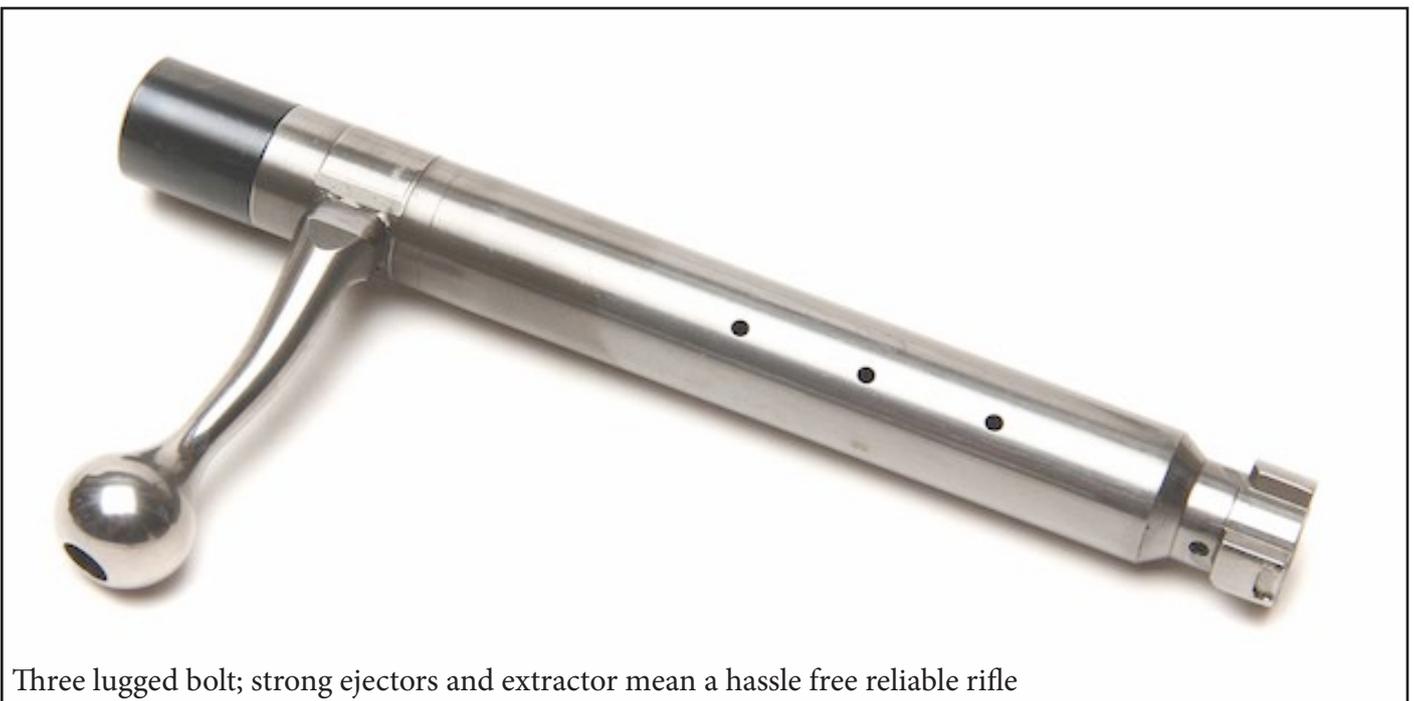
Small touches, such as the ridge at the base of the pistol grip to stop your little finger slipping, a dual-height cheekpiece for comfort and support, and the hand-lapping of the rifled barrels, all make a difference. This attention to detail could only come from a company that truly knows shooting.



A thumbhole version of a favourite stalking rifle

Need to know

- **Name Schultz & Larsen Victory synthetic thumbhole**
- **Manufacturer Schultz & Larsen**
- **Type Bolt action**
- **Barrel length 21in**
- **Overall length 42in**
- **Calibre 6.5mm Creedmoor**
- **Stock Green synthetic thumbhole with adjustable cheekpiece**
- **Weight 4kg**
- **Trigger Adjustable, single stage**
- **Magazine Detachable, three shot**
- **Price £2,950 Slide & Lock scope mounts £165 Ultradome moderator £210**
- **Schultz & Larsen Professional bipod £286**
- **Contact Alan Rhone, 01978 660001**



Three lugged bolt; strong ejectors and extractor mean a hassle free reliable rifle

In Depth

The stock has instant visual appeal, with its graceful lines, green colour and black rubber inserts that improve overall grip. High fibre-glass content produces a strong and rigid stock with precise bedding, so even the worst weather will not alter this rifle's accuracy or zero.

The slender fore-end has a sling swivel stud fixed to the very tip and, on this gun, an additional S&L Professional bipod mount. An unrestrained hold to the upright pistol grip and palm swell, along with the large thumbhole section and nice thumb rest, is perfection.

The adjustable cheekpiece allows a varied height for better scope use. A small thumbwheel releases the sprung-loaded black synthetic cheekpiece to a height that's comfortable and then retightens to lock, aiding stability. Little cast, a solid black rubber recoil pad and rear swivel stud complete a great-handling stock.



The three-shot all-steel magazine feeds the 6.5mm Creedmoor rounds beautifully

Changing calibre

S&L's blued steel action with integral scope mounting rails acquits itself equally well. Its interchangeable barrel system dictates a single-sized action length from which the barrel is retained by a secure clamp held by two screws and a barrel alignment key. Release these, remove the bolt and stock and you can change calibre instantly between the same bolt size — for example, .22-250 to .30-06 — but magnum calibres will require an additional bolt.

This model is in the ever popular 6.5mm Creedmoor and the 21in barrel is ballistically good for this round. It has a Sporter profile of 0.640in outside diameter at the muzzle, with a 14mm/1 thread for moderator fitment.

Best of all are the chromoly steel barrels, on which S&L prides itself. These are cut rifled for ultra precision; this process takes longer and costs more, but it is well worth it.

The bright polished bolt operation is like a knife through butter, with the three locking lug arrangement ensuring a low 60-degree bolt lift and thus fast action cycling.

Cartridge extraction is via a single claw sited in the lower right locking lug and complemented by a strong plunger-type ejector in the bolt head. Just as good is the cartridge delivery from the three-shot, single-stack, all-steel magazine, which has a small button in the floorplate to release it.

On the silent three-position safety, forward is fire, the central position locks the trigger but the bolt opens and the rearmost locks bolt and trigger. The trigger has a direct sear engagement with weight adjustment, here set at 2.15lb, and is also adjustable for length. It is one of the best I have tested.



When factory Hornady 129-gr SST loads group as well as this, why reload?

Conclusion

It should come as no surprise that I love the Schultz & Larsen Victory rifle; it has all the quality you expect from a premium brand, with excellent attention to detail and execution. The thumbhole stock is excellent, as is the accuracy, and you feel it's a companion rather than just another rifle.

Testing the Schultz & Larsen Victory

The 6.5mm Creedmoor is a versatile cartridge suitable for fox, small species deer and red deer in Scotland. So the lighter Federal 95-gr with a chronographed velocity of 3,150fps, 1,994ft/lb energy and 0.85in groups would be a great all-rounder in England and Wales.

The mid-weight 129-gr Hornady Whitetail and SST loads had a big velocity/energy difference at 2,598fps and 1,934ft/lb and 2,815fps and 2,271ft/lb respectively. The SST would be my choice as it consistently achieved three shots nearly touching at 100 yards.

The heavier 140-gr Remington AccuTip yielded good accuracy at 1in with a velocity of 2,591fps and 2,087ft/lb energy.

My best reloads were both Hornady based, with the 95-gr V-Max bullets over 44.5 grains of RL15 powder for 3,207fps and 2,170ft/lb, or the heavier 129-gr SST bullet and 44.0 grains of RL17 powder for 2,823fps and 2,283ft/lb. Both loads shot ½ MOA at 100 yards. Very impressive.



The combination of the SL Victory rifle and Hornady SSTs made short work of this roebuck

The thumbhole design not only gives a firm grip, but it plants the rifle in the shoulder for a great degree of control and steady aim. The smooth bolt just peels off the top cartridge from the magazine and closes silently too, as does the safety, which is most important on a stalking rifle.

We were stalking the Surrey Hills after roebuck. After crawling across the nettle-strewn edge of a field, I nestled against a tree guard and waited. Eventually, a buck came into view.

With the rifle loaded with the Hornady 129-gr SSTs, I kept the scope's cross-hairs and dot on the deer's vitals as he fed slowly through the new tree growth. It seemed like an eternity until no branches obscured my aim, but when I finally had a clear shot, the sublime trigger broke and a cracking buck was harvested.

- Accuracy The S&L Victory has cut-rifled barrels — what do you expect? 20/20
- Handling The rifle just feels so steady and comfortable in the hand 20/20
- Trigger The best factory trigger I have tested — it breaks beautifully 19/20
- Stock Adjustable, weatherproof, sturdy and, best of all, a thumbhole 19/20
- Value This impressive firearm offers superb quality at a great price 19/20
- Overall score An exceptional rifle is made even better for fans of the thumbhole stock **97/100**