

RUSSIAN SKS

Price.....\$400



SPECIFICATIONS

Warranty: None Written

FINISH	Blued	MAGAZINE TYPE	Fixed
WEIGHT	8.8 lbs.	STOCK MATERIAL	LAMINATED
OVERALL LENGTH	40.2 in.	ACTION TYPE	Semiauto
BARREL LENGTH	20.4 in.	TRIGGER PULL	5.5 lbs.
SIGHT RADIUS	18.8 in.	LENGTH OF PULL	12.5 in.
MAGAZINE CAPACITY	10		

Our recommendation: The Russian SKS is simple, easy to repair, and gave good accuracy. If you can find one for around \$400, buy it before we get to it.

bolt carrier handle was milled out of the block of steel that made up the carrier.

The trigger of the Legend was a milled, nicely curved, smooth-fronted and comfortable part protected by a stamped trigger guard, and located comfortably forward from the slanted pistol grip. The wood pistol grip had well-done flat-top checkering on both sides. It was held to the rifle by a through-bolt, and was as stout, as well, as a military rifle. The trigger pull had a little creep, then broke at 4.25 pounds. The AK had the best trigger of this test series, and we didn't think it needed any work.

The forend was a two-piece wood guard that kept fingers off the hot barrel and gas tube. It was comfortable and hand-filling without being bulky. The forend had two slots on each side for heat escape. All the wood was well filled and finished in an oil-type finish. The wood appeared to be a Chinese relative of birch or very plain walnut, a bit soft, light in color, and with no decorative grain.

The sight picture was clean and sharp, consisting of a flat-top post front and a U-notch rear. There was occasional difficulty in getting a fast

sight picture because of the sight-guard ears. In a hurry, or in bad light, it was possible to mistake one of the ears for the front sight. The front sight itself was a screw that turned in or out to fine-tune the elevation setting of the rear sight, and drifted sideways for windage. Both operations required a special tool that did not come with the rifle.

The rear sight had markings out to 800 yards ("8"), and a positive-locked elevator that was easily moved in 100-yard increments by pinching between thumb and index finger. Oddly, the rearmost mark on the rear sight was labeled "D", and gave about the same elevation as the 300-yard mark. The "1" mark, for 100 yards, was the lowest rear sight position. The SKS rifle had a similar setup. The sight radius was 15 inches, not exactly what you'd want for swiftly nailing a deer at 200 yards.

The magazine was retained by a spring-loaded lever at the rear of the magazine well. The latch pivot was an extension of the trigger guard. Removing the magazine required a natural-feeling forward press with the thumb while wrapping the hand around the magazine. Locked into place, the magazine was solid, with

no rattle. It fed—Surprise!—perfectly, whether it held one or thirty rounds.

Although many millions of AK-47 clones use stamped receivers, this one was milled. Our test Legend had absolutely no frills. The barrel, for example, showed its lathe-turning marks with pride, instead of a polished surface. That gave it a dead-flat appearance. There was a cleaning rod under the barrel.

The stamped sheet-metal folding stock could be deployed or folded with a 30-round magazine in place. The curved shape of the buttplate held it securely against the shoulder. The buttstock pivot had a checkered button on the left side to unlock the stock, and also held the rear sling-attach point. The front sling attachment encircled the barrel at the rear of the gas-bleed housing.

Takedown was extremely simple. Pressing the button located at the rear of the action allowed the guts to come out easily and intuitively. The captive mainspring ensured no small parts would be lost in the field. Reassembly was easy. The drill was to put the parts into place and start the cover into the front end, then press it down smartly over the takedown button.

On the range, the Legend had absolutely no malfunctions. Empty shells were thrown 25 feet off the starboard bow. The target, however, indicated the limitations of a short sight radius and a big barrel. We measured the groove diameter at about 0.315, and that guaranteed two things: 1) the rifle will shoot any ammo without developing high pressure, and 2) the rifle won't give great accuracy with common ammunition. In fact, some of the Winchester bullets hit tipped. The best group was with Czech-made Sellier & Bellot ammunition (biggest bullet). With it, the Legend put four out of five into two inches. The fifth made it over 4 inches. The worst individual five-shot group was just under a foot, with the Russian ammo.

Lack of accuracy with this rifle wasn't its whole story, however. The gun performed very well in the role for which it was designed, fast and