

Some Do, Some Don't

Classic shooter John Northmore ponders Uberti's long barrelled revolver based on their single-action Cattleman

Of all the guns that came after the handgun ban, the one that epitomises the adaptability and tolerance of your average, ex British pistol shooter must be the long barrelled revolver or LBR as its better known. If you ever shot a normal handgun then the LBR is a definite love or hate it thing. Personally they are not for me, for the simple fact they are far too long and unwieldy and handle like a boat anchor! With a nominal 19-20" barrel being mandatory to make up for the fact that to qualify as a Section 1 (large firearm) the tube must be 12" + with an overall muzzle to butt measurement of 24". However, in every other way they are a standard, single-action revolver and identical to the Colt 1873 Model P. But for many handgunners this odd looking gun was - in their view - similar enough to what they loved and missed to be

acceptable. I find this bizarre, as even when I could I had no interest in owning a Buntline Special and few others did either, though I have no problems with what you want to do and shoot. However, this view was not across the board and when they first appeared many a club committee decided to ban their use. The police likewise saw them as a way around the ban, so you had the usual split decision with in effect the fox hunting with the hounds. Sounds awfully familiar as it was in 1988 with the SLR ban and the then NRA's words on the subject; do we never learn?

Street legal

However, as the government set the rules for what constituted a Large Firearm,

how could they be illegal or even sailing close to the line? The LBR is what it is and as I said has quite a following, so much so that Uberti importers (Henry Krank & Co) due to customer pressure asked Uberti to start making them again. Which has to tell you something...

As an ex-western shooter and owner of a brace of Uberti's 44-40 WCF, 7 1/2" Cavalry Cattleman revolvers the high quality build and finish of these Uberti's has not changed. The major and sensible difference apart from the mandatory

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Acceptable or not; the Uberti 1873 Buntline Target LBR is the nearest thing you are going to get to a revolver these days

Chambered in 357 Magnum the Uberti can also use the more economic and shorter 38 Spl, ammunition from Prvi Partizan (PPU) is a 158-grain, full jacketed truncated cone





One of the most successful and copied handguns of all time - Uberti's exceptional reproduction of the Colt 1873 Model P; it's a cracker

longer barrel is the target-type sights, with a ramped front blade and the fully adjustable U-notch at the rear.

The build goes for a blued barrel, cylinder, trigger guard and grip frame, leaving the hammer and close-topped frame an attractive, colour, case-hardened finish. The grip is walnut and shows a medium colour and is varnished and smooth to the touch. The single-action mechanism and loading/unloading drills are simple when compared to the double-action and swing-out cylinder of a modern revolver.

Cock 'n' shoot

Everything is controlled by the hammer, which offers two positions – full and half cock. To load pull it back to its half cock position (one click), here the cylinder now freewheels. To the right of the frame is a swing-out

plate (loading gate) this is opened to access the individual chambers, here a live round is slid in then the cylinder is rotated to the next one - to a capacity of six. Once full, shut the gate and draw the hammer back to full cock (second click) and the gun is ready to fire. However, with no safety catch only do this when you are ready.

From there on in you fire then thumb cock the hammer for each subsequent shot. When the gun is empty set the hammer to half cock, open the loading gate and pump the ejector rod on the right of the barrel to push the fired case from the chamber (rotate/repeat). This is normally facilitated by raising the muzzle slightly to let gravity do its work.

Poke your eye out

In general the trigger offers a reasonably light and crisp break and the long barrel and subsequent good sight radius gives acceptable accuracy. However, the massive overhang offered by the 19" tube does require a bit of technique to hold

the gun steady. Calibre-wise this LBR is chambered in 357 Magnum so will also accept the shorter and less powerful 38 Special (Spl) round too. In truth 38 Spl is more than enough and is potentially more accurate as well as being cheaper over-the-counter and to reload. It is also available in 45 Colt.

To a degree the size/weight of the Uberti LBR rather dictates its use. Probably too big for more practical use, certainly to draw from the leather. If nothing else the slower loading drills rather predicates against speed reloads and high round count courses of fire. So a more precision and slow fire approach is probably better. Here it's back to the old target view and the doubtful pleasures of pure paper-punching... Standing using a two-handed grip with 158-grain, Prvi Partizan 38 Spl the gun was easily capable of two inches at 25-yards. You could of course elect to fit some form of optical sight, which should further increase its effective distance.

As much as I liked getting back to a single-action, cartridge revolver; personally I find the Uberti LBR just too long and cumbersome. But that's just me as I know plenty of ex-handgunners who will be queuing up to get one, as and despite its length it will give them back to a greater degree a working, centrefire pistol. Truth is a lot more needs to be done with these guns at both club and competition level to make them acceptable.

We Reckon...

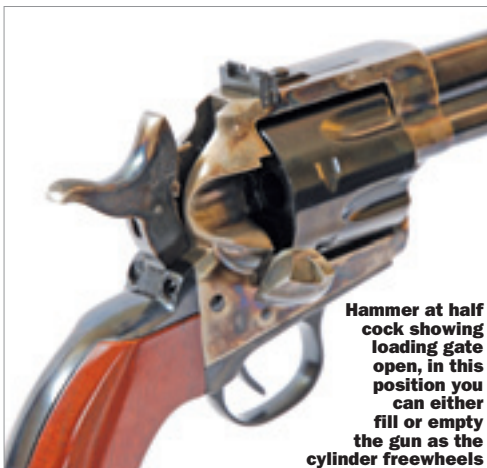
- If it floats your boat
- Long and relatively imbalanced
- Nearest thing you are going to get to a 357 revolver

(below) Detail of the manual ejector rod and housing – slow but certain

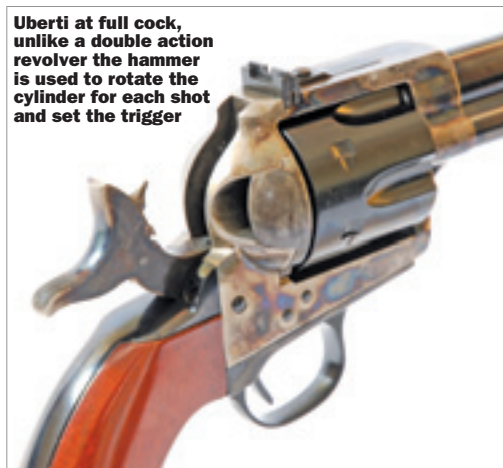
(bottom) The more solid, flat top strap allows the fitting of a decent, adjustable rear sight, up front is a fixed ramped blade

Uberti 1873 Buntline Target LBR

- Capacity 6
- Single action
- Barrel 19"
- Length 25"
- Weight 4 lbs
- Price £485
- Contact Henry Krank & Co Ltd, 0113 256 9163



Hammer at half cock showing loading gate open, in this position you can either fill or empty the gun as the cylinder freewheels



Uberti at full cock, unlike a double action revolver the hammer is used to rotate the cylinder for each shot and set the trigger

