

UBERTI SCHOFIELD REVOLVER

Among the many desirable Frontier-era firearms replicated by the Italian arms industry is the 1875 S&W Schofield revolver made by Uberti. The example reviewed here has a short 3½" barrel. This length was never made by Smith & Wesson, but it makes for a handy big-bore cowboy sixgun.

The original gun was built to the specifications of Maj. Schofield, a U.S. cavalry officer with strong connections to Army Ordnance. Because the Schofield cartridge

was shorter than the .45 Colt, the standard .45 Colt round would not work in a shorter .45 Schofield cylinder—so there were ammunition interchangeability issues. The Schofield was dropped from Army service, but remained in use with police agencies and, particularly, with Wells Fargo. It would have been relatively easy to make the gun with a longer cylinder, which might have kept it alive. That didn't happen until the 1990s, when Uberti built the first replica S&W Schofields for the longer .45 Colt cartridge (May 1995, p. 42).

Function is nearly identical to the original. Although the hammer has a firing pin like the original, there is an unobtrusive internal hammer-block safety on the hammer and the frame. When the hammer is down, a tab on its front bears against a protrusion on the back of the hammer block to help prevent inadvertent discharges

were the gun to be dropped. The block, attached to the base of the hammer, moves out of the way only when the hammer is cocked and the trigger pulled, allowing the pin to reach the primer of the chambered cartridge.

The .44-40 Win. example is a very nice modern rendering of the original design. Made of well-polished steel and finished in a deep black color, the Uberti Schofield is a handsome revolver. Note that the barrel latch, trigger guard and hammer are case-colored, as were the original revolvers. Uberti replicated the barrel latch system that was Maj. Schofield's salient idea. It is mounted on the receiver, rather than on the barrel extension, as was the case with other S&W top breaks. The sweeping curves of butt are there, as is the elegant fluted top rib on the barrel.

Authenticity extends to the inspector's cartouche marking



The rear sight is a V-shaped notch cut into the barrel latch. Note the groove that runs along the top of the barrel. Both the rear sight and the front sight are fixed, so any adjustments will have to be made with a file.

UBERTI SCHOFIELD

MANUFACTURER: ALDO UBERTI & C. SRL,
VIA G. CARDUCCI, 41, PONTE ZANANO,
SAREZZO, BRESCIA, ITALY 25060

IMPORTER: STOEGER, 17603 INDIAN HEAD
HIGHWAY, ACCOKEEK, MD 20607;
(301) 283-6981; WWW.STOEGER.COM

CALIBER: .44-40 WIN. (TESTED), .45 COLT
ACTION TYPE: HINGED FRAME, TOP-BREAK,
SINGLE-ACTION REVOLVER

FRAME: BLUED STEEL

BARREL: 3½"

RIFLING: SIX-GROOVE, 1:16", RH TWIST

CYLINDER CAPACITY: SIX ROUNDS

SIGHTS: HALF-ROUND, BLADE FRONT;
"V" NOTCH REAR

TRIGGER PULL: SINGLE-ACTION, 5 LBS.

OVERALL LENGTH: 9¼"

WIDTH: 1¾"

HEIGHT: 5"

WEIGHT: 38 OZS.

SUGGESTED RETAIL PRICE: \$825

SHOOTING RESULTS (25 YDS.)

.44-40 WIN. CARTRIDGE	VEL. @ 12' (F.P.S.)	ENERGY (FT.-LBS.)	GROUP SIZE IN INCHES		
			SMALLEST	LARGEST	AVERAGE
BLACK HILLS 200-GR. LRN	624 AVG. 11 Sd	173	3.94	5.60	4.87
REMINGTON 200-GR. JSP	578 AVG. 16 Sd	148	3.05	4.47	3.76
AVERAGE EXTREME SPREAD					4.32

NOTES: ACCURACY RESULTS BASED ON THE AVERAGE OF FIVE CONSECUTIVE, FIVE-SHOT GROUPS FIRED AT 25 YDS. FROM A SANDBAG REST. VELOCITIES MEASURED WITH AN OEHLEH MODEL 35P CHRONOGRAPH WITH SCREENS PLACED APPROXIMATELY 12' FROM THE MUZZLE. TEMPERATURE: 61° F. HUMIDITY: 9%. ALTITUDE: 4,950 FT. ABBREVIATIONS: LRN (LEAD ROUNDOUSE), JSP (JACKETED SOFTPOINT), Sd (STANDARD DEVIATION).



Depressing the rear of the ejector pawl on the underside of the frame disengages the extractor cam, allowing the gun to be opened without ejecting the cases in the cylinder.



stamped into the plain, oil-finished walnut stock panels. Even the serial number is rendered in the style of lettering used on the originals and so is the "US" on the rear corner of the butt.

It is also an entertaining revolver to shoot, particularly if you are into the Cowboy Action scene. To load the Uberti Schofield, bring the hammer back to the first notch, which permits the cylinder to turn freely. Then pull the barrel latch to the rear, which frees the barrel and cylinder to tilt downward. When the barrel pivots downward, the central extractor in the cylinder lifts upward, bringing any cartridges, fired or otherwise, with it. As the extractor reaches the limit of its travel, it pops back down, which permits the shooter to shake the spent cases away, load six new cartridges and close the barrel.

The revolver is single-action, so the hammer must be thumbed to full cock before firing. Depressing the rear of the ejector pawl on the underside of the frame just forward of the trigger guard, disengages the extractor cam allowing the gun to be opened without ejecting the cases in the cylinder.


One of the virtues of the Schofield revolver is its shape, which allows it to be aimed and fired quickly and accurately. The butt is a continuous curve, somewhat like the Colt Bisley. With no frame knuckle or prawl, this shape permits the gun to roll muzzle-up in the hand when fired. Not only does this action help absorb recoil, it also puts the shooter's thumb in a good position to quickly re-cock the hammer.

The sights are easily acquired and aligned. This revolver will undoubtedly be popular at re-

enactments and Cowboy Action matches. Ammunition in chamberings such as .44-40 Win. is usually quite mild, which makes an afternoon of shooting very pleasant.

Two loads were used in our shooting evaluation, and there were no malfunctions of any kind. Neither drove the typical 200-gr. bullets any faster than 700 f.p.s. As noted in the table, accuracy was just fair.

At 25 yds., the Schofield shot very low. That is because the front sight is rather high. In Frontier times, it was common to make guns this way, leaving the regulating of point of impact to the individual shooter and his file.

For shooters who want to add a little variety to their battery of Cowboy guns, the Uberti Schofield 3½" is a good choice. The company also offers this model in the original 7" style, as well as the 5" "Wells Fargo" variation. You can also get an authentic Russian Model—one of the most widely produced guns of the Old West era—from the innovative gunmakers at Uberti. 



INTERSTATE ARMS MODEL

In 1887, Winchester introduced one of the first, commercially successful repeating shotguns. Designed by John Browning, the Model 1887 lever-action, with its rolling block locking system, was one of the most unusual actions ever made by that company. Sales to sportsmen proved modest, but the 1887 found favor with express guards and law enforcement officers. An improved model failed to compete with Winchester's then-new Model 1897 pump-action, and production ceased in 1920.

Original Model 1887s are collector's items, and most are more than a century old. Enter Interstate Arms with a reproduction Model 1887 shotgun aimed at Cowboy Action competitors and other aficionados of the Old West. Made in China to Interstate's specifications, minor modifications were made to the original design. For example, the height of the exposed hammer spur was increased to provide better purchase, and modern, high-strength steels are used throughout. The Interstate gun also has the dual

extractors found on later Winchester lever guns.

The 1887 is rather unique in the world of shotguns, and nothing in the modern shotgunning experience prepares the user for this gun's operation. Pulling the operating lever down and forward unlocks the rolling breech, allowing it to pivot back and down. As it does so, there are four distinct stages. The first involves the two-piece operating lever pivoting slightly downward to disengage from its locking spur while opening the breech about 1". As the operating lever continues its travel, two clicks are heard; the first places the hammer on half cock and the second on full cock. After the operating lever completes about three-quarters of its travel, the dual extractors pull the fired shell from the chamber while a cam pushes the lifter upward, ejecting the spent shell and aligning a fresh shell with the chamber. Fully closing the lever feeds the fresh shell into the chamber, then cams the lifter down. Lever travel is approximately 75 degrees.

To fill the magazine, open the action, press the lifter fully down-



ward, drop the shells onto the lifter then push them forward into the magazine tube. Capacity is five rounds in the magazine plus one on the lifter. When the action is closed, the chamber will be empty. Cycling the operating lever a second time feeds the first shell into the chamber.

There is also a "fast feed" option. Open the action, push the lifter partially down until level with the center of the magazine tube, then drop two shells on the lifter. When the action is closed, the gun will feed the shells in turn.

Safety is served in several ways. First, loading the magazine and closing the action on the first stroke will not feed a shell into the chamber. This allows the gun to be carried with an empty chamber. A quick second stroke of the operating lever will feed a shell when needed. Second, the hammer has a half-cock notch allowing the gun to be carried safely



The hammer is shown fully cocked with the bolt closed (upper l.). Pulling downward on the 1887's operating lever pulls the bolt down and to the rear, (upper r.) to reveal the lifter (above).

IAC 1887

MANUFACTURER: SHANDONG NO. 1 MACHINERY FACTORY, RIZHAO, PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA

IMPORTER: INTERSTATE ARMS CORP. (DEPT. AR), 6 DUNHAM ROAD, BILLERICA, MA 01821; (978) 667-7060; WWW.INTERSTATEARMS.COM

GAUGE: 12, 2³/₄"

ACTION TYPE: LEVER-ACTION, REPEATING SHOTGUN WITH PIVOTING LOCK

RECEIVER: BLUED STEEL

BARREL: 20" BLUE

CHOKE: CYLINDER, FIXED

SIGHTS: 0.156"-DIAMETER BRASS BEAD FRONT

TRIGGER PULL: 5 LBS., 10 OZS.

STOCKS: AMERICAN WALNUT WITH HAND-RUBBED OIL FINISH; LENGTH OF PULL, 13¹/₂"; DROP AT HEEL, 2¹/₈"; DROP AT COMB, 1¹/₈"

OVERALL LENGTH: 37¹/₂"

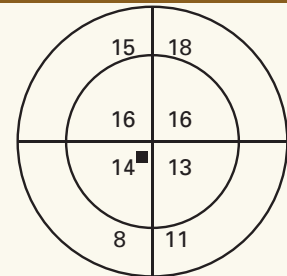
WEIGHT: 7 LBS.

ACCESSORIES: OWNER'S MANUAL, LEATHER WRAP FOR OPERATING LEVER

SUGGESTED RETAIL PRICE: \$530

SHOOTING RESULTS (40 YDS.)

AVERAGE OF 10 PATTERNS



CYLINDER
CHOKE

■ = POINT OF HOLD

FEDERAL GOLD MEDAL NO. T115

12 GA., 2³/₄", 1¹/₈ OZ., NO. 7¹/₂ LEAD

AVERAGE PELLET COUNT: 394

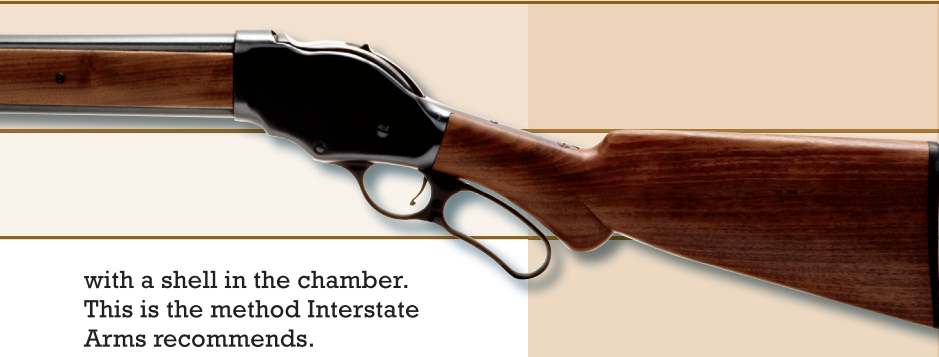
MEASURED VELOCITY @ 3FT.:

1084 F.P.S.

REMAINING ENERGY PER PELLET: 1 FT.-LB.

TOTAL HITS	111 (28%)
21" INNER CIRCLE	59 (15%)
30" OUTER RING	52 (13%)

1887 LEVER-ACTION SHOTGUN



with a shell in the chamber. This is the method Interstate Arms recommends.


Although the Interstate 1887 is proofed for all modern, 12-ga., 2³/₄" smokeless-powder shotshells, it recommends using target, game or light field loads due to the gun's light weight. In our testing, we found plastic shells fed flawlessly while paper shells caught on the right edge of the chamber and refused to feed.

While the shape of the trigger bow may be authentic, we found it uncomfortable and aggravated by a heavy, gritty pull. Unless the operating lever is pivoted forward forcefully, ejection is weak. However, forcefully ejected shells followed a flat trajectory into the shooter's face.

Do not judge the 1887 by its

ungainly, humpback appearance. We found its balance, handling characteristics, and the quality of the bluing, fit and finish to be remarkable for a gun in this price class. The short barrel and fixed, cylinder choke are specialized for Cowboy Action competition.

The Interstate 1887 offers nos-

algic design at a modest price. It is an excellent choice for Cowboy Action shooting and for those who want something just a little different in their shotgunning. 

The *American Rifleman* has used the phrase "Dope Bag" since at least 1921, when Col. Townsend Whelen first titled his column with it. Even then, it had been in use for years, referring to a sack used by target shooters to hold ammunition and accessories on the firing line. "Sight dope" also was a traditional marksman's term for sight-adjustment information, while judging wind speed and direction was called "doping the wind."

WARNING: Technical data and information contained herein are intended to provide information based on the limited experience of individuals under specific conditions and circumstances. They do not detail the comprehensive training procedures, techniques and safety precautions absolutely necessary to properly carry on similar activity. Read the notice and disclaimer on the contents page. Always consult comprehensive reference manuals and bulletins for details of proper training requirements, procedures, techniques and safety precautions before attempting any similar activity.