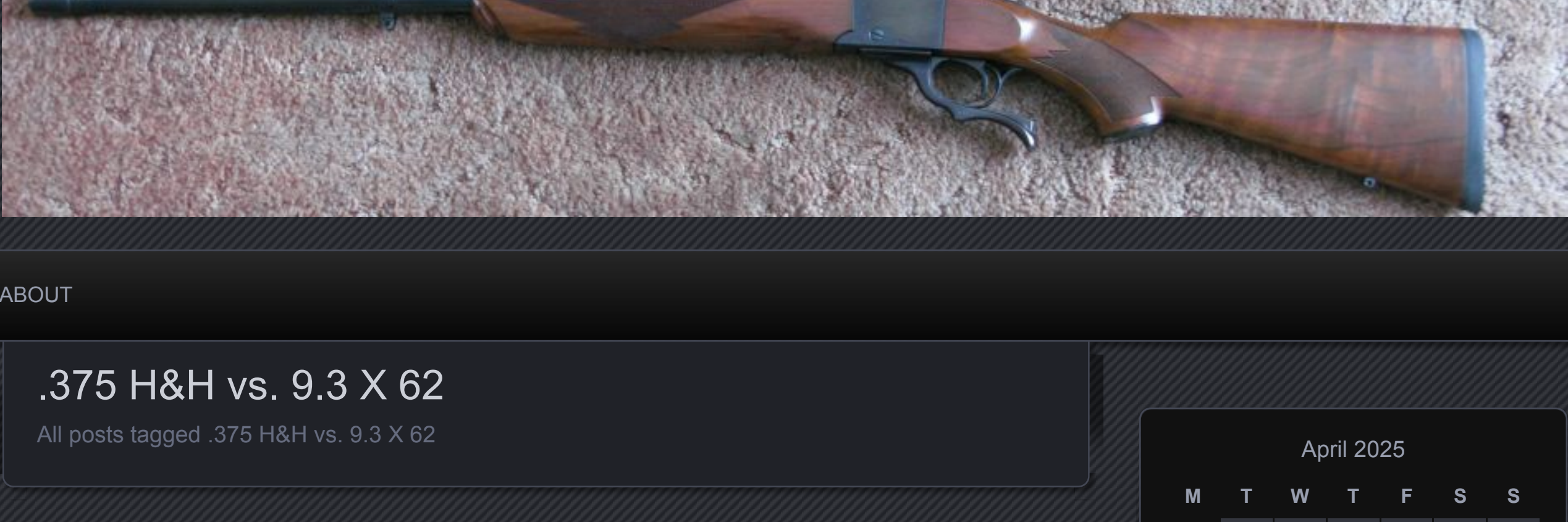


# Lovin' The Big Bang

A blog about big bore rifles



## ABOUT

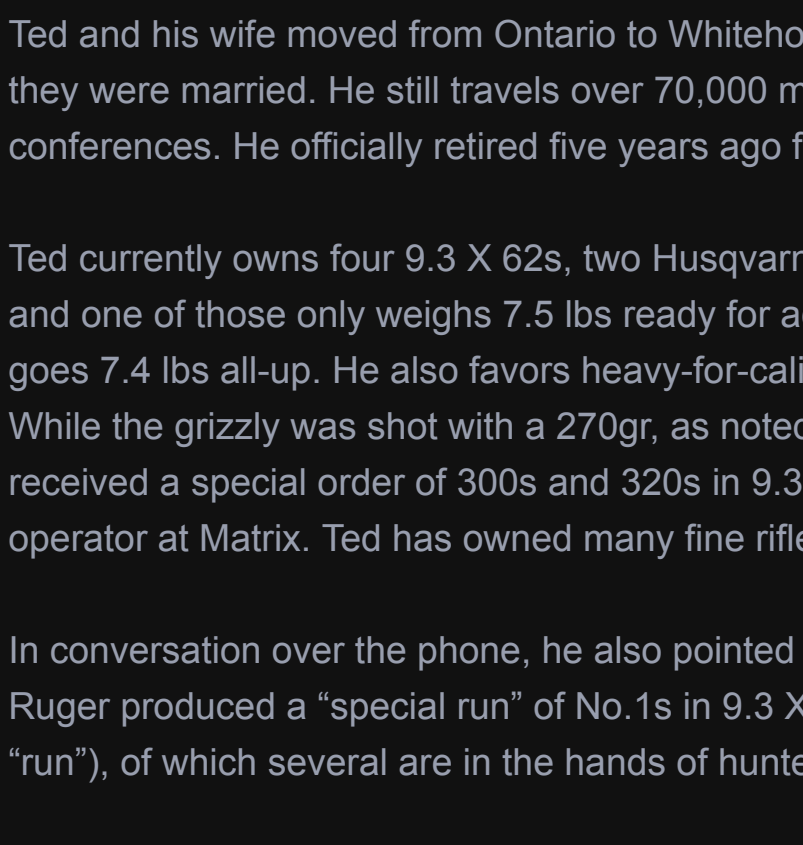
### .375 H&H vs. 9.3 X 62

All posts tagged .375 H&H vs. 9.3 X 62

Posted by [bigborefan](#) on February 12, 2015

## Three Rifles for World-Wide Hunting of Big Game — Part 1

Posted in: Uncategorized. Tagged: .375 H&H vs. 9.3 X 62. Leave a comment



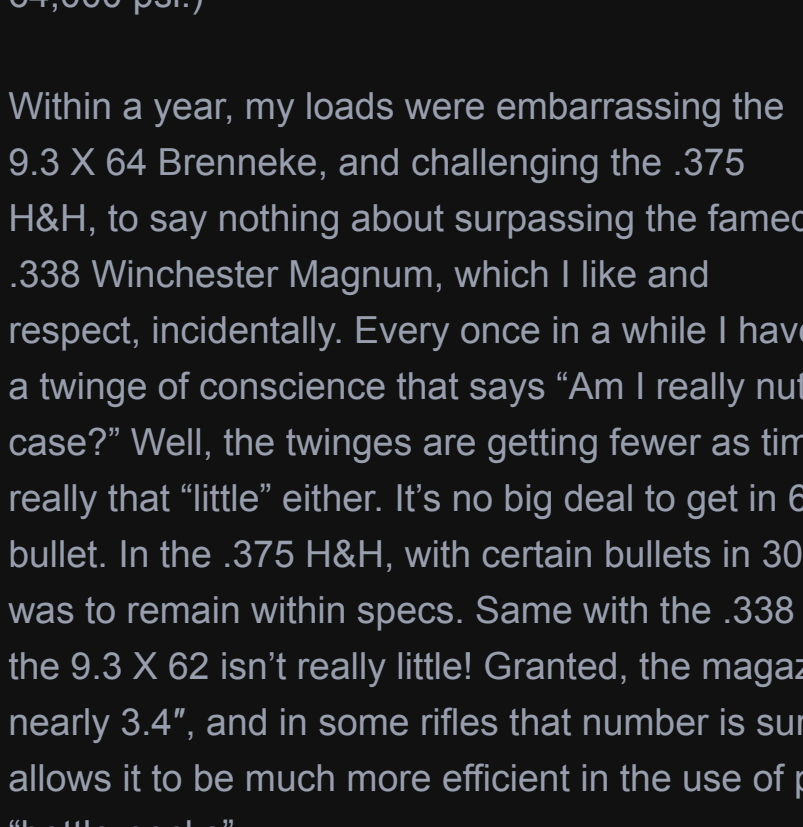
This is a very nice grizzly taken cleanly by one shot from one of Rev. Ted Wagner's 9.3 X 62's. He's a resident of Whitehorse in the Yukon with his wife, who also hunts with him. The bullet was a fused 270gr Matrix — <http://www.matrixballistics.com> — out of British Columbia. Though Ted has been using the 9.3 X 62 as his main big-game rifle for over thirty years, it has only recently been gaining much attention in the rest of North America. In fact, it is now a hot commodity. (Photo credit: Rev. Ted Wagner)

In comparison to the famed .375 H&H, Ted expresses his appreciation for the 9.3 X 62 this way: "After using both for almost forty years, and putting literally tons of game in the freezer, I am fond of saying that the 9.3 X 62 is a .375 H&H with five in the magazine." He has shot all of the big game in The Yukon several times over, including sheep at over 6000 ft.

Ted and his wife moved from Ontario to Whitehorse in The Yukon forty-four years ago, one year after they were married. He still travels over 70,000 miles each year by air in North America speaking in conferences. He officially retired five years ago from being pastor in Whitehorse.

Ted currently owns four 9.3 X 62s, two Husqvarnas and two customs. The customs have 21" barrels and one of those only weighs 7.5 lbs ready for action, about the same as my Tikka T3 Lite which goes 7.4 lbs all-up. He also favors heavy-for-caliber bullets for the heavyweight game of The Yukon. While the grizzly was shot with a 270gr, as noted, he recommends the 290gr Matrix, and has received a special order of 300s and 320s in 9.3mm from Marshall, who is the owner and chief operator at Matrix. Ted has owned many fine rifles over the years in several other cartridges as well.

In conversation over the phone, he also pointed out something that I was completely unaware of: Ruger produced a "special run" of No.1s in 9.3 X 74R quite a few years ago (not the more recent "run"), of which several are in the hands of hunters in "The North".



(This is the Matrix bullet that terminated that big grizzly — Photo credit: Rev. Ted Wagner)

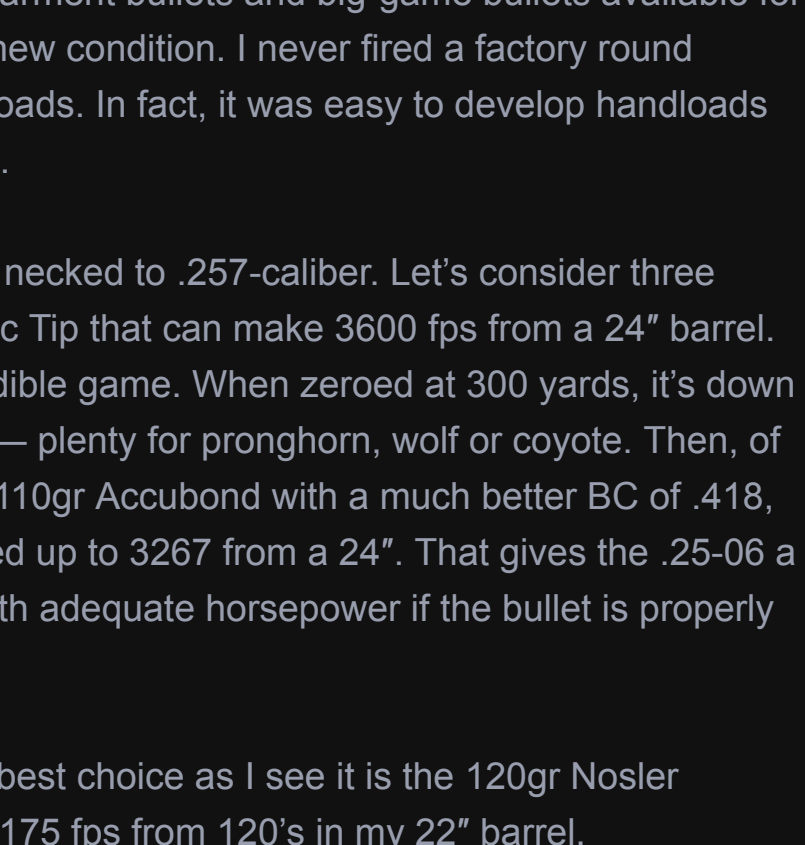
Consider these facts regarding the current popularity of the 9.3 X 62: The interest and demand for rifles and components for reloading are well in advance of production. Favorite sites for bullets in 9.3mm, such as Swift, Barnes, Hornady, Nosler and Tradex Canada, often list 9.3s as "sold out" or "back ordered". There's a reason for that, and it isn't because sales are slow and therefore dealers don't stock them, it's rather

due to this fact: They are sold out and dealers didn't count on that happening so quickly! My gunsmith friend, Edwin, said recently "I've seen more 9.3 X 62's in the last few months than I'd seen in the previous 40 years!"

In a recent series of articles I wrote on "One Rifle and One Bullet for All Big Game Hunting", I stated that if I were limited to one rifle for all big game, in a medium it would be a 9.3 X 62. And that is after having owned and used numbers like .338 Winchester Magnums and .375 H&H's! In my experience so far, there are good enough reasons for that.

When I started experimenting with a new 9.3 X 62 in a Tikka T3 Lite in 2011, there was little reliable handloading information out there. And what was available was of the stiff-upper-lip conservative type that conveyed the definite notion that to pass 2400 fps from 286's was a prediction of something very bad about to happen! However, never being one to follow the masses, I tried their conservative approach until patience yelled "Enough already!". Then, my experimenting nature took charge. Eventually, within the first year I came across a couple of hints that RL-17 might wake up the sleeping cartridge, and breath new life into it. As expected, the protesters came out of the woods (woodwork) flinging their anathemas, declaring it was insulting to the cartridge to try and get more from it than was either necessary or historical! Ha! and Ha! Ha! Well, never being too obedient, I listened to the hints.

(This result is from the combination of the 286 Nosler Partition over RL-17. Corrected MV = 2622 fps/4365 ft-lbs. Quick Load says it's just under 64,000 psi.)

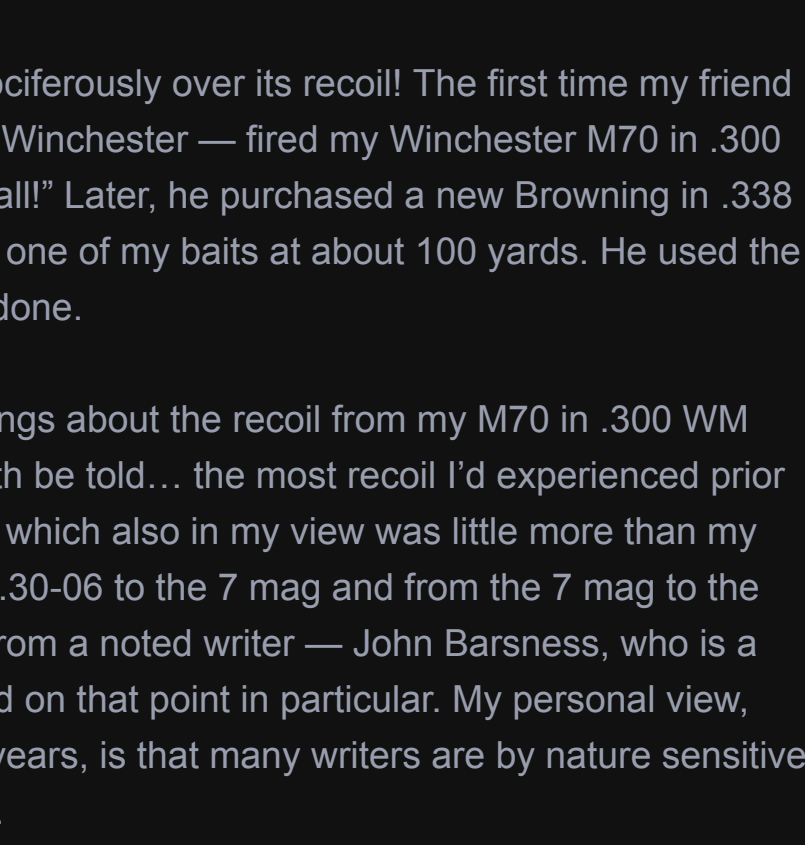


Within a year, my loads were embarrassing the 9.3 X 64 Brenneke, and challenging the .375 H&H, to say nothing about surpassing the famed .338 Winchester Magnum, which I like and respect, incidentally. Every once in a while I have a twinge of conscience that says "Am I really nuts in getting those kind of ballistics from that little case?" Well, the twinges are getting fewer as time and experience passes. Then, the case is not really that "little" either. It's no big deal to get in 68 grains of the right powder before stuffing in a bullet. In the .375 H&H, with certain bullets in 300grs, I had to work at getting in 73 grains if the COL was to remain within specs. Same with the .338 and the .458 Winchesters. So, the case capacity of the 9.3 X 62 isn't really littel! Granted, the magazine clip and freebore allow a stretching of the COL to nearly 3.4", and in some rifles that number is surpassed. Also, being a near straight-wall cartridge allows it to be much more efficient in the use of powder than, say, the magnum cartridges with tight "bottle-necks".

When recently asked his opinion on the 9.3 X 62 for Alaska's big bears, a renowned Alaskan outfitter and guide, Phil Shoemaker said "...you would have to shoot a lot of them to see any difference between the .375 H&H and the 9.3 X 62".

The standard COL for the 9.3 X 62 is 3.291", so the way I load mine is in effect adding about 1/10" to the cartridge. Does that matter? Well, yes if you want to use a slower powder than RL-15 or IMR4895 which only partially fill the case before you run into pressure problems. I've never understood manuals or people who load modern brass in a new rifle from 54 to 58 grains of a medium fast powder when they could use 12 grains more of a medium slow one that will keep the pressure curve flatter to the muzzle. Anyway, upcoming will be a new series on EFFICIENT CARTRIDGES when this current theme is done.

How does the above fit into the current theme of "Three Rifles..."? In this way: Personally, I would always want one of the three to be a "Medium". And as maintained in the series on "One Rifle..." for all big game, while there are obviously many good to excellent choices, mine would be a 9.3 X 62. I'll restate my reasons later on in this series.



Having said that, there are many possible "Threes" where it might not be included. One example of an excellent battery of three, excluding a high velocity .22-caliber, might be: a 7-08 Remington, a .300 Winchester and a .375 H&H. There is nothing you couldn't hunt in any part of the world with one or more of those. I once owned a trio like that.

So let's indulge our imagination.

At one time I thought the perfect threesome might be a .25-06 Remington, a .300 Win Mag and a .375 H&H, and I also owned such a trio. Let's see what one could do with those.

#### FIRST: a .25-06 Remington

It's considered a dual-purpose cartridge. There are varment bullets and big-game bullets available for the handloader. Mine was a Winchester M70 in like-new condition. I never fired a factory round through it, and also found it to be amenable to handloads. In fact, it was easy to develop handloads for and superbly accurate with relatively gentle recoil.

The .25-06 Remington is, of course, the .30-06 case necked to .257-caliber. Let's consider three examples from Nosler: They produce an 85gr Ballistic Tip that can make 3600 fps from a 24" barrel. That's a varment bomb intended for varments, not edible game. When zeroed at 300 yards, it's down at -8" at 400, still making about 2423 fps/1108 ft-lbs — plenty for pronghorn, wolf or coyote. Then, of course, tougher-light bullets are made, like Nosler's 110gr Accubond with a much better BC of .418, and according to Nosler's Manual #6, it can be started up to 3267 from a 24". That gives the .25-06 a flat enough trajectory for mule deer to around 400 with adequate horsepower if the bullet is properly placed.

Then for larger game, such as elk or black bear, the best choice as I see it is the 120gr Nosler Partition at about 3200 fps (from a 24"). I could get 3175 fps from 120's in my 22" barrel.

While I never used my .25-06 on black bear, there are those who have, with success, I might add. But then there are "bear" and other "BEAR"! The same goes for elk. In my view, the .25-06 is at it's best for game between about 40 lbs to 400 lbs, always at responsible ranges.

Since I consider black bear as dangerous game (DG — some say "potentially dangerous", but that also might aptly apply to whitetail bucks that can go 400 lbs here in The North!), the formula I use for my personal bear hunts under all conditions would be a TE of 32 for a bear of 400 lbs. A 120gr Nosler would need be travelling at 2984 fps at impact to produce a TE of 32. That means I might use it over bait at not more than 100 yards, but for free ranging bear of trophy size where a 200 yard shot, or more, might be called for, I'd NEVER be toting a .25-06 for a trophy quality bear of any kind!

While I've owned and used only one rifle in .25-06, I enjoyed it for developing loads and shooting it at the range. But I never shot any game with it, nor varments that I can recall. It was for experimentation and sport shooting, though I'd still recommend it as part of a threesome, especially in the West where it seems to find a natural home.

Next, the middle of The Three:

#### A .300 Winchester Magnum

With this one I have considerable experience from six bolt-action rifles. I've recently written of them some detail, so will not do so again. However, there must be a reason somewhere in my psyche and experience that tells me it's one of the best all-around cartridges for just about anything in North America under most conditions.

As some extreme examples of that, I shot a big jack rabbit in an open field in March, with still lots of snow around, at a measured 286 yards with one shot. I was leaning against a sturdy hardwood that was the last one between me and the rabbit! On the other end of things, also with snow on the ground in November during a deer hunt, I wacked a fat nine-point whitetail as it was coming up a ridge toward me through a relatively new fir bush. The range was 35 yards! The buck folded in its tracks with no external signs of a hit! The 180gr Hornady SP landed where intended between neck and shoulder (It was quartering toward me.). The bullet never made exit and I only found the entrance when the hide was pulled off in my garage. It was pencil size through the thick winter coat with a 3" hole punched through the ribs. No meat loss or bloody mess as many would describe the results of using a 300 Win Mag on a whitetail, and post that as their excuse for not using one.

Then, there is a bunch of crybabies who complain vociferously over its recoil! The first time my friend and hunting buddy, Mike — who used a BLR in .308 Winchester — fired my Winchester M70 in .300 Win Mag, he said "That doesn't have much recoil at all!" Later, he purchased a new Browning in .338 Win Mag and shot a very nice black bear with it over one of my baits at about 100 yards. He used the 210gr Nosler Partition at around 3000 fps. One and done.

As a matter of fact, Mike not only expressed his feelings about the recoil from my M70 in .300 WM firing a 180gr at over 3000 fps, but mine as well. Truth be told... the most recoil I'd experienced prior to my first .300 WM was a 7mm Rem Mag in a BAR, which also in my view was little more than my .30-06! There was an incremental increase from the .30-06 to the 7 mag and from the 7 mag to the .300, but certainly nothing like what I've read about from a noted writer — John Barsness, who is a very good writer, but I disagree with him at times, and on that point in particular. My personal view, after reading most of the popular writers over many years, is that many writers are by nature sensitive people and, therefore, sensitive to the IDEA of recoil.

Many intellectuals shudder at such a thought! I once knew a Doctor of anesthesiology who was a competitive target shooter on the international scene. He often shot beside me, prone, at our range. I was shooting some heavy loads in one of my .45-70's, and he was shooting a heavy-barreled, single-shot .223 Remington. He complained when he had to shoot his heavy-barreled .308 Winchester, and could never understand how I could tolerate shooting a 400gr at 2000+ fps from an 8 1/2 lb rifle! The problem was not that I was a muscular "he-man" while he was a "shrinking violet", but rather the difference was in perception and ATTITUDE! Of the various .45-70s, including my No.1 Ruger (Improved), I had the attitude that "Sure, it's gonna punch me, but so what? There are things in life that hurt far, far worse!" And: "I'm not going to let this thing beat me... I'll master it, and it'll kill me in the process!" Today, after thousands upon thousands of rounds down range from mega loads in .300's, it's not much more to me in recoil than a .223 Remington! Really? Well, I'll concede it's a little bit more, but to me I'd as soon shoot a .300 WM as a .223 Remington. Honestly. But then, I wouldn't be shooting it a hundred times in a day at gophers, either! That would be way too expensive!

It's perhaps obvious, a .300 Winchester Magnum is one of my all-time favorites. Then, on the other hand, I could just as easily live with a .300 Weatherby if it were as economical and practical.

#### The .375 H&H

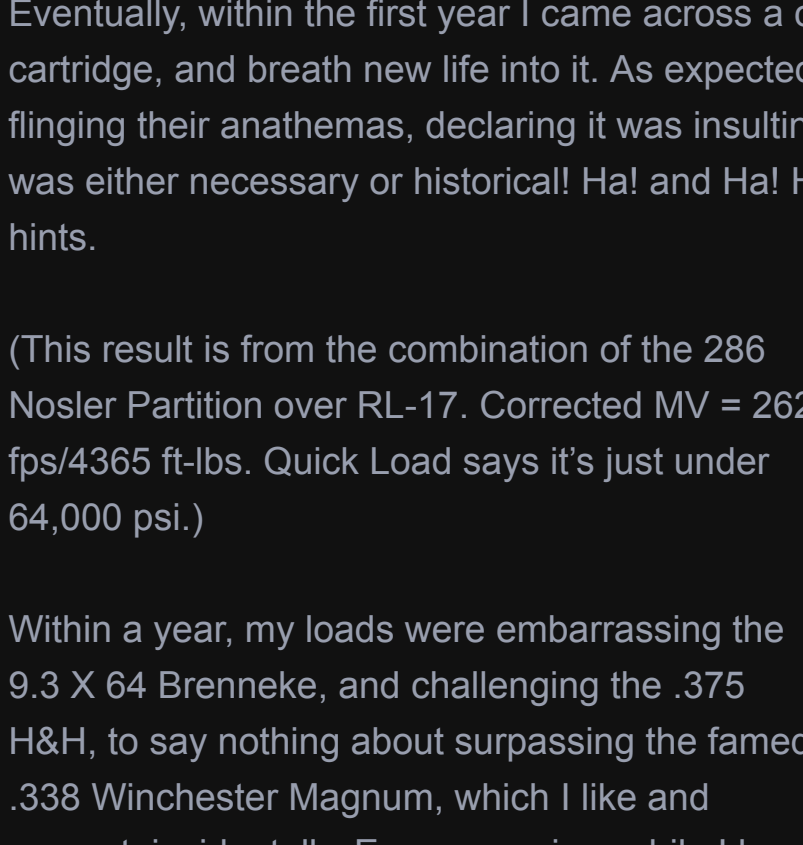
I'll not give a history lesson on this one, as that's been done a few million times including a couple of times in my articles. But I'm not unfamiliar with it, having owned a couple. One was an M70 Winchester with a 24" barrel and the other a Browning with a 26". That story has been told a few times as well, so I'll not retell it here other than to give a few specifics.

The .375 H&H is a favorite of mine. The M70 (push feed) had beautiful wood, was well made and accurate. It went both bear and moose hunting without any sense of being "too much gun" even though the trigger wasn't squeezed on either animal. I was on a guided hunt for bear and it was a bit ironic that my outfitter, Norm, moved me to a private property for a one-day stand. I'm not sure why, but with the week-end coming up he thought there might be too much ATV traffic in the area that would disturb the hunt, so he moved me again to another location. The next week a new hunter on the private property site shot a 500 lb trophy male!

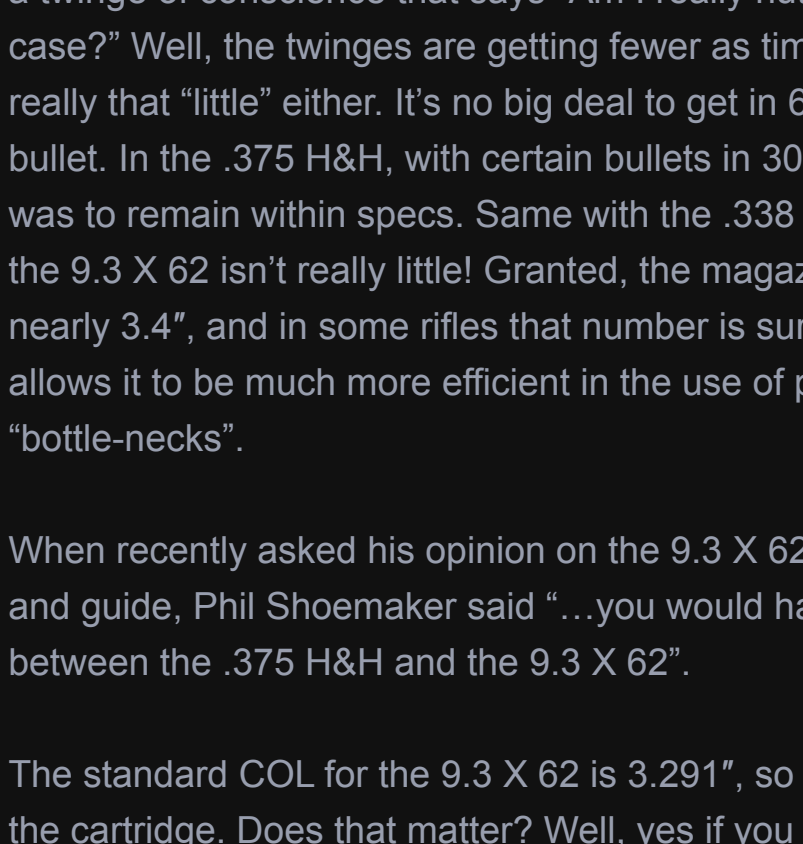
For some reason, I thought a left-hand bolt action might be a better deal for me since I shoot from that side, so the M70 got traded for a 26" Browning SS (LH) in .375 H&H with a 26" barre!, and a magazine clip attached to the floor plate. It also had a 60" bolt lift from a three-lug bolt. While that rifle was lighter than the M70 by about a pound, it was also longer by a couple inches. And it was fast! A 300gr would leave the muzzle at 2700 fps! But... the accuracy was very poor no matter what I did with it or to it! In desperation, I had my gunsmith cut 4" off the barrel in hopes of curing whatever ailed it. Besides losing 160 fps, that didn't work either. In that process it was revealed that the bore was 8 thousandths off-center! That was it's allement for which there was no cure! It went back to the dealer and for another \$100 I picked up a new, otherwise identical .338 Win Mag for which I'd planned to have it reamed to a .340 Weatherby. That worked out very well, but that's a different story.

A longer story made much shorter... in hindsight I should have kept the M70.

Today, there are .375 H&H's to be had for a handsome price from the SAKO in their model 85. Go to <http://www.sako.fi> to see the SAKO 85's and there are some beauties there, a few with even a 21 1/4 inch barrel weighing 8 lbs! There are 4 in the "Bear" series. A practical KODIAK with a grey laminate stock, SS action and fluted 21.25"barrel, clip magazine that holds 4+1 has been offered at our local gun emporium for \$1600 and change.



On the left, from top to bottom in the SAKO 85 BEAR SERIES: 1)The Black Bear in 9.3 X 62; 2)The Brown Bear in .375 H&H ; 3)The Grizzly in 9.3 X 62; and 4)The Kodiak in .375 H&H. Those four are in a few other suitable cartridges as well.



Any of those four could serve as "A One Rifle for Everything" candidate for sure! All up the Kodiak might go about 9.2 lbs. That's about a pound lighter than the M70 Winchester. There's nothing you couldn't hunt with that, since there are now sensible lighter rifles for smaller big game, like whitetails, that have decent BC's. A challenge for all .375s has been to find bullets with good ballistic coefficients. Nosler has again come to the rescue with their AccuBonds, and even their solids with good aerodynamics.

If I already had a .375 H&H like the Sako 85 KODIAK, I'd have no need for a 9.3 X 62 since they would be too close in format and ballistics. Yet of the two, I'd probably choose the 85 BLACK BEAR in 9.3 X 62 at 7 lbs naked, as I also have the ballistics of a .458 Win Mag in my Ruger No.1 in .45-70. Imp. But my TIKKA is half the price and fits better with a true Big Bore than a .375 H&H does, in my view. In other words, if I had a .375 H&H that was amenable to all hunting, I'd never bother with a Big Bore as it does have a slight edge on the 9.3 X 62 with today's better ballistic profile bullets, and it is close enough to the true Big Bores. But that depends entirely on how one loads a .375 H&H. Unless loaded with the 300gr AccuBond at 2600 fps+, the 9.3 X 62, as I load it, beats the .375 H&H in ballistics past about 250 yards. Using solids of 300grs for the really big DG, a 300gr at 2500 fps is exactly the same whether in a .375 H&H or a 9.3 X 62.

That's a Threesome that, in my view, could cover any hunting anywhere from mountains to plains, and from brush to bogs. Also, nothing more would be needed for any wild thing from a 40 lb warthog to a 7000 lb Hippo!

Next time: Another Trio. (Incidentally, this is my longest blog ever, at just over 3000 words! So, little wonder if you are suffering from eyestrain!)

Shalom

BOB MITCHELL

April 2025						
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