

## *My Initial Thoughts on the*



## *Guardia Civil Spanish Mauser Cal. .308 Win*

**Article Contributed by:** [Darren Locke](#)

While thumbing through Shotgun News recently, my eye caught an ad from [SAMCO, Inc.](#), located in sunny Miami.

Among other offerings, they were hawking so-called Guardia Civil Spanish Mausers chambered in .308. I had never seen these for sale anywhere else and thought it was a neat looking rifle, so after some online review, I decided to buy one. I already own a nice Kar 98 Mauser and wanted another. The price was \$120 plus shipping & Maine sales tax. My FFL friend charged his usual transfer fee of one 12-pack of Shipyard India Pale Ale. He ordered one for himself as well, so I got to pick which one I wanted.

SAMCO shipped the rifles separately in rifle boxes via UPS. The rifles each came with a sling and a metal muzzle cover. They were not as pretty as the one in the ad. These rifles were literally gooped with cosmoline. Overall condition was very good with the expected storage dings in the stock and some rust on the stock metal. The bores on both were nice & shiny and the bolts were polished.

First step was to take it apart. If you have ever taken down a Mauser you can figure this one out. The only real difference is the way the barrel bands are removed. In fact, these were a hell of a lot easier to remove than on a K98, i.e., you don't need 3 hands and a C-clamp. Block of wood and a hammer works admirably.

The only problem I had was removing the buttplate. The buttplate on this rifle is a lot like that on a Mosin Nagant as far as looks and the way it screws into the stock. The top screw came out no problem, but I had noticed that on

both rifles the screw in the back appeared to have become one with the buttplate itself from wear. I had to re-establish the notch in the screw head with a dremel & cutoff wheel. I cut the notch so that my hollow point screwdriver fit well, but could not turn the sucker. I was afraid that I was going to wreck my screwdriver handle. I then put my driver tip into a socket and tried to gain leverage by turning the screw with a 3/8" drive handle. That did not work and was sort of like wrestling a greased pig. I wound up carefully clamping down the stock and used adapters to fit my "screwdriver socket" into a 1/2" drive breaker bar. That did the trick. When the screw finally broke free it sounded like a .22 going off.

After removing the buttplate I noticed there was a hole in the back of the stock with a piece of metal rod stuck in. I gripped this with a pair of visegrips and pulled it out. It turned out to be a 3" finish nail (*not exactly up to pre-war Model 70 standards, I guess*). I think it has something to do with holding the rear sling swivel (*it does not really swivel*) in place. The rear "swivel" on these guns consists of a flat chunk of steel with a sling loop. The flat part goes into a notch in the stock. After removing the nail, you grip the sling loop with your visegrips and coax it out. When it came out, I noticed that it had been shimmed with a piece of cardboard (or something) to provide a tight fit.

After that, I wrapped all the metal parts in newspaper & put em in a box. The stock took 3 coats of Easy Off and plenty of scrubbing at the sink to remove the commie grease. What I generally do with military stocks is to let the stock and the handguard dry for about an hour, then put the handguard in position and wrap it tightly to the stock with string. This way, I try to keep the handguard from warping. Seems to work, too.

The stock is very nice walnut and should sand down easily. The storage dings will come up with judicious use of steam. Maybe a touch of dark mahogany stain in the initial tung oil filler coats will be the order of the day to highlight the grain.

As for the metal, I am debating whether to reblue or parkerize. I know a guy who parkerizes **M44 carbines** & they sure look sharp. I know some folks cringe at the idea of not keeping things historically correct, but you've got to remember that historical correctness for this rifle includes a nail and piece of cardboard. Perhaps I will try some of that Brownell's spray on finish, so long as I can find an oven big enough to fit the barreled action in for baking the stuff on.

Of course, there is at least one individual out there who says that these rifles are unsafe. I have chatted about this on the Surplus Rifle forum page. The issue is whether it is safe to shoot .308 commercial ball ammo. These rifles were chambered for the proprietary .308 CETME round and, it is said, there are issues as to whether the small-ring action can withstand the pounding of a modern .308. SAMCO tested several of these rifles and had no problems. "[Guns & Ammo Magazine](#)" put one of these rifles to the test with a heavy diet of commercial .308 and surplus 7.62 round (*they shot hell out of it*) and everything was fine. I understand that the test rifles failed only when grossly overloaded. Even then, the Mauser action held its integrity, the gasses blew down through the magazine box.

My plan is to buy or beg some .308 commercial brass and reload some reduced .308 rounds and try them. I do not expect to go crazy shooting this rifle (*I save that for my handguns and evil black rifles*) and will likely fire less than 100 rounds per year.

Speaking of the action, I should point out that the bolt is somewhat different than the 8mm Mauser in that it cocks on closing, not on opening. This seems to mean that you have to use a little force to slam the bolt home and will not have the butter-smooth operation of the Kar 98. The firing pin, when at rest, is flush with the bolt face. If anyone has any comment on this, I would appreciate it.

In sum, the Guardia Civil appears to be a cheap, interesting variant. It is small and light (*and probably kicks like a barge mule*) and should make a fun shooter. It would not be the rifle I grab if the U.N. invades (*that's what AR's and Garands are for*), but I hope that I can help put the nay-sayers to rest if, in fact, this rifle turns out to be a safe, reliable little gun.

### **Author's Note:**

In a recent article about the 1916 Spanish Mauser, I erroneously mentioned that commercial .308 loads were likely less powerful than 7.62 NATO surplus ammo. This is incorrect. Commercial .308 is by and large MUCH more powerful than the NATO round and it would probably not be a good idea to use it in such a rifle, just to be safe.

Personally, I am putting a 7.62 x 39 chamber insert in my Guardia Civil Mauser. This round generates much less pressure than the NATO round and I am willing to take my chances with it. Also, the relatively light rifle will be more pleasant (and cheaper) to shoot.

[Darren Locke](#)

Copyright 2003© Jamie Mangrum