

The Los Angeles Silhouette Club

Shooting Buffalo Bore's New Heavy 348 Ammo

By: Jim Taylor

Buffalo Bore Ammunition - an innovator in the field of High Performance ammunition - has brought out a line of ammo in one of my favorite calibers, the .348 Winchester. Declared as Obsolete by the shooting world in the 1960's this old-timer has managed to stay alive only because it was Winchester's baby and the fact of a small but vocal group of users (of whom I am proud to say I belong!) kept using it.

Introduced in 1936 as a replacement for the grand old .33 Winchester (known as a bear killer by those who engaged in such things) it was made in only one gun, the great Model 71 Winchester, which was introduced along with the caliber. The Model 71 was produced only until 1956 when it was dropped from production. The ammunition was originally loaded in 3 bullet weights: 150 gr., 200 gr. and 250 gr. soft points. All but the 200 gr. soft point ceased to be produced and even those became scarce.

For a long time handloaders only had several choices of bullets, the 200 gr. JSP by Hornady or the 250 gr. JSP by Barnes. Both are excellent bullets by the way. Barnes introduced a 220 gr. and an X-bullet a few years back. I have not tried either of them so cannot tell you how they are. Those who have tell me they work just fine.

Winchester produced a short run of commemorative ammo using the 200 gr. Silvertip bullet when Browning brought out their remake of the Model 71. Hal Swiggett, knowing I was a 348 fan, sent me two boxes of the factory ammo. My notes show that in my old Model 71 Winchester they are sighted to hit 1/2" high at 100 yards. This puts them 1 1/2" low at 200 and 9" low at 300 yards. Using this ammo I took a nice large Mule Deer and a nice Coues Whitetail with the old gun. Both were taken at over 200 yards.

The Buffalo Bore Heavy .348 ammunition is loaded with the Alaska Bullet Works Bonded Core 250 gr. bullet. This is a 2-diameter bullet, the nose being .340" and the bullet body from the crimp on back being .348". This allows the bullets to be used in rifles with short throats Miles Fortis and I ran the ammo through 2 guns, my original .348 Winchester Model 71 which was made in 1937 and his new Browning Model 71 which he remodeled in 1999 from a carbine to rifle.

Tim Sundles of Buffalo Bore and Dave Scovill of Handloader & Rifle magazines both report the Browning giving higher velocities than the original Winchester. Our experience was just the opposite.

We shot some targets at 50 yards, the groups from the Winchester

were larger than the groups from the Browning, which are what Scovill and Sundles experienced. Truthfully, we did not shoot but several groups and it

**Winchester
Model 71**

Ave. velocity
2285 fps
SD - 9.8

**Browning
Model 71**

Ave. velocity
2275 fps
SD - 6.7

was not a good test to use to draw conclusions from. More shooting should be done. All shooting was done from a Taffin/Kelly Machine Rest. (For those of you who are not familiar with the Taffin/Kelly Machine Rest it is a rolled-up carpet on the hood of a pickup truck.)

We also shot into some seasoned oak logs for a penetration test. This was done up close which is very tough on bullets since you are hitting them at close to maximum velocity. The Alaska Bullet Works slug penetrated right at 8" of oak and lost just under 45 gr. of weight slamming through the dense wood. The recovered bullet weighed 206.8 gr. on my scales.

No, this does not tell you how it will perform in a bear, moose or elk. It tells you how it will do when you miss and hit the tree beside the bear, moose or elk. There is no relationship to shooting through living breathing tissue. It does show that this is one tough bullet. The jacket folded back on itself and hung together. The rear half of the bullet is intact and solid. That's all it tells. But it was fun!

The great news is that now those of us who like this old cartridge have some real viable big-game factory ammo available. Thanks to Buffalo Bore.

You can visit their website: <http://www.buffalobore.com> ... and while you are there, check out some of their other great offerings.

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