

expensive high-quality rifles chambered in .308 Win. These include versions of the Ruger Hawkeye, Browning X-Bolt, Winchester Model 70, Bergara Canyon, Benelli Lupo, and others. Many custom gun makers will happily build you a rifle in .308, if you wish.

You can also find single-shot rifles such as the Henry Single Shot, and lever-action rifles like the Browning BLR, in .308 Win. I shot my first big trophy wild boar with a .308 Browning BLR decades ago. Sadly, that gun is no longer in my inventory. I don't remember when or why I parted company with it, but I seriously regret doing so.

It's AR Friendly

Eugene Stoner's original battle rifle design, which would become the M16, was initially chambered for the 7.62X51 NATO cartridge, the military version of the .308 Win. That AR10 design has been around for more than six decades, and while it nearly went extinct for a time, it has risen from the dead to become a star. That's partly because it offers lots of room to work with in the receiver, which led to the AR-10 being chambered for a host of cartridges in guns tailored for specific purposes, but the .308 Win. remains the bread-and-butter chambering for the AR-10. The main drawback of the

AR-10 for hunters was the fact that it was heavy, with many guns weighing 8-10 pounds empty with no optic attached. Cutting weight meant cutting barrel lengths and sacrificing velocity. That's no longer the case. Today, you can find a number of AR-10 rifles weighing well under 8 pounds. A good example is Ruger's new SFAR (Small-Frame Autoloading Rifle), which packs 308 Winchester punch into a gun nearly identical in size to an AR-15. It weighs just 7.3 pounds with a 20-inch barrel. That puts it on par with many popular bolt-action rifles.

Recoil is Tolerable

In guns of reasonable weight, recoil of the .308 Winchester won't rattle your teeth. Recoil increases with lighter rifles and heavier bullets, of course, so some comparisons help put the cartridge's relatively mild recoil in perspective. A 7.5-pound rifle launching a 150-grain .308 Win. bullet at 2,800 fps produces about 15.8 foot-pounds of recoil energy. That's just a couple of foot-pounds more than you'll get from a mild-recoiling 143-grain 6.5 Creedmoor bullet, and it puts the .308 Win. comfortably within the recoil tolerance of a majority of shooters.

In contrast, a heavier 8-pound rifle chambered in .270 Win., firing a 150-grain bullet, delivers

17 foot-pounds of recoil energy, while the same gun shooting a 150-grain .30-06 bullet hits the shoulder with 17.6 foot-pounds of energy. Numbers are likewise higher for the same-weight bullets in cartridges like the 7mm Rem. Mag., 280 Ackley

Improved, 300 WSM and 300 Win. Mag. None of these cartridges will make an animal any more dead than a properly placed, well-constructed .308 Win. bullet, and the .308 will produce less recoil in lighter guns than any of these

cartridges.

If you want a 30 caliber bullet to impact with accuracy and good energy on target while generating tolerable recoil on your shoulder, the good old .308 Winchester may just be your best choice.

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