



Is Your AR Ready to Hunt?

AR type rifles have spawned an accessory industry like no other firearm in history. The items to bolt on, screw on and hang on are endless. The ones that seem to get the most discussion are the ones that fall under the “tactical” headline. Let us ignore those for the moment and take a look at some items that improve the “hunting” applications of these rifles because AR’s in .223 Rem and .308 Win are capable of taking any game animal in Texas.

A quick note to those that poo-poo the .223 as a deer cartridge. With a good jacketed soft-point or hollow-point bullet the .223 has vast terminal effect on whitetails.

The three most important areas to address are trigger, stock, and sights. Everything else is gravy. Using my personal Smith&Wesson M&P 15 as an example, the first thing changed is the trigger.

There are great triggers available from Jewel, Jard, Geissele and others. I chose the Timney AR-15 Skeletonized trigger. This

replaces the creepy two-stage triggers from most AR makers with a one-stage trigger that breaks crisp with no creep and has a 3-pound pull set at the factory. The Timney trigger module is a precision example of space age technology and construction and is a true drop-in item. Installation is quick and easy using the rifle’s original hammer/trigger pins.

Many AR’s come with collapsible stocks that are great for adjusting length of pull, but that is just part of the equation. Short necked folks like me need to rest their jaw on most factory stocks to line up



Timney trigger, Millett scope, ERGO grip and Mako Magwell

the stock sights. When optics are attached we need to rest our chins on the stock. Not a very solid purchase.

The VLTOR EMOD is a five-position stock that offers a great cheek weld, plus it is slightly wider and longer at the toe than

the regular M4 stock with a noticeable negative pitch, making mounting much more natural. The buttplate is covered with a removable rubber buttpad that is molded over a metal strike plate. The shape of the buttplate and the rubber buttpad give a solid stock purchase in all situations.

Storage in the removable, waterproof side compartments holds up to four CR123 or three AA batteries. These compartments provide additional cheek support. There is also an additional weather proof compartment in the clubfoot area of the stock, this compartment can be accessed quickly and holds two AA batteries or other small parts. There is a hole in the stock that accepts a push button quick detachable sling swivel that is perfect for a single attachment bungee type sling.

The majority of Texas deer hunting is done at ranges less than 200 yards with 100 yards being the norm. Though the favorite scope of Texans is a 3 to 9 variable, most of the time they are set at 4-power.

The Designated Marksman Scope, by Millett, combines riflescope-type optics with a red dot in a compact and rugged package. Its specialized reticle allows switching from precision shot placement

to rapid target acquisition immediately. The magnification adjusts from 1 to 4. The 30mm tube and fully coated lenses make for good light gathering. There is an illumination intensity adjustment knob for the reticle to aid in low light conditions.

The reticle is a unique donut-dot affair set between the crosshairs. The 18 minute-of-angle donut gives rapid acquisition at ranges as close as ten feet. Inside that is a 1 MOA dot for extended range precision. This versatility has us ready when we jump something on the way to our stand and we can dial in our preference after taking a seat.

Now here comes the gravy. Most AR’s have a molded plastic grip with pronounced checkering. Many are very uncomfortable when shooting barehanded and they get slick when wet. Also, they do not accommodate all hand sizes. The ERGO grip is as comfortable as they come and is exchanged by removing one screw.

The SUREGRIP texture is created by applying an overmolded rubberized covering to the polymer body with ergonomically correct finger grooves that greatly improve control of the rifle, plus an upper extension supports the web of the hand. The surface shrugs off moisture and there

is a hidey hole for stuff covered by a plug at the bottom of the grip.

The Picatinny rails on AR’s are great for attaching stuff, but sometimes their sharp edges cause discomfort to our palms. ERGO has a variety of snap in rail covers that eliminate that problem.

The original Magwell Grip from Mako converts the magazine well into a comfortable vertical grip for better control of the rifle. Also, this prevents pressure on non-free-floating handguards that can affect accuracy and it keeps hands off the magazine. The MWG also functions as a flared and extended magazine well to ease magazine insertion.

It is silly enough that many hunters feel the need to dress up like Rambo. We do not need to hunt with a 30-round mag-



VLTOR stock and a 5-round magazine

azine hanging from our rifle. There are several brands of five-round magazines that make the rifle handle more easily and quickly in and out of a stand, plus allows for laying the firearm on a rest.

The easiest way to acquire all of the above and more is to surf www.brownells.com. To ease the search they have a specific AR-15 Catalog we can scroll through and an additional dedicated site, www.AR15builder.com. Now, get that AR ready to hunt. **T★J**