

TEST REPORT



RWS- ROSSLER TITAN 6

AT A GLANCE

The Titan 6 bolt-action rifle now being imported into Australia is a modern design with Old World overtones made at Kufstein in the Austrian Tirol by the father and son team of Erich and Walter Rossler.

MY FIRST SIGHTING of the *Titan 6* was gained when I paid a visit to the factory early in 2005. Erich and Walter Rossler are operating what is essentially a small family business with the help of one full time employee, although they have four casuals on call. This is practically a semi-custom operation since their output is only 2000 hunting rifles annually.

My good friend Hubertus Dowidat at the Dynamit-Nobel plant in Furth, Germany, told me that RWS was distributing the Titan 6 rifles and arranged for me to visit the Rossler factory. The journey took three hours by train from Furth and on arrival I was picked up from the station by the Rosslers, who gave me a warm welcome. After spending the night at the Gasthaus zur Schanz which has a sign out front 'Jagdhof' (hunters home), Walter Rossler picked me up and drove me to the factory.

The Rossler Waffen KEG is the smallest rifle making factory in Europe and maybe the world. The Titan 6 receives more handwork than most commercially produced rifles, because each unit is made individually and assembled by hand rather than mass-produced. That means that each unit gets a little extra attention.

Unlike a good many European switch-barrel rifles which are a trifle ungainly the Titan 6 has an appearance. The stock wood is Italian walnut in varying grades. Two stock designs are available: standard Classic with straight comb and cheekpiece, finely checkered pistol grip and forend, matt lacquered finish and rubber recoil pad; the Luxus with a Germanic hogsback comb with square-edged Bavarian-style cheekpiece and a dull, Old English oil finish. The Titan 6 took a while to get to Australia, but it is well worth the wait. My test gun, when I eventually got it, was the sleek, handsome Luxus version.

The buttstock on my test gun has plenty of figure and the pores of the grain have been properly filled and sealed before finishing to a smooth surface. The hogsback comb is understated and gracefully curves down toward the rear. The grip, which is sharply curved with a slight hook at the toe, allows maximum control over the rifle. A long, slim forend with schnabel tip of contrasting rosewood complements a nicely proportioned stock. Panels of sharp, even checkering in a point pattern on forend and grip are neatly executed with no runovers at the borders. Stock furniture consists of a solid black rubber recoil pad, and inlaid silver grip cap with the word 'Titan' engraved on it, together with a pair of fixed sling swivels. I've asked Walter Rossler to consider replacing them with quick-detach swivel bases.

Modern and Modular

The Titan is a modern modular design with interchangeable barrels. Rifles are chambered for most

The Austrian-made Titan 6 is a well-built, beautifully balanced hunting machine that combines high quality with fine accuracy.

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SPECS

DESIGNATION:

Titan 6

MANUFACTURER:

Rossler Waffen KEG, Kufstein, Austria

MECHANISM TYPE:

Turn-bolt action with six locking lugs and interchangeable barrels

CALIBRES:

.243 Win, .25/06, 6x62 Freres, 6.5x55mm, 6.5x57mm, 6.5x65mm, 7x64mm, .270 Win, .308 Win, .30/06, 8x57IS, 8x68S, 9.3x62mm, 7mm Rem Mag, .300 Win Mag, .338 Win Mag, .270 WSM and .300 WSM

OVERALL LENGTH:

Standard calibres – 108cm
Magnum calibres – 113cm

BARELL LENGTH:

Standard calibres – 56cm
Magnum calibres – 61cm

WEIGHT:

Standard calibres – 2.9kg
Magnum calibres – 3kg

MAGAZINE CAPACITY:

Standard calibres – 3 rounds
Magnum calibres – 2 rounds

SIGHTS:

None, drilled and tapped for scope mount

STOCK:

Italian walnut; matt lacquered; classic style, Luxus hogsback comb with Bavarian cheekpiece (standard models)

APPROX. RRP:

\$1600; spare barrel – \$550; extra magazine – \$140

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popular American standard and magnum cartridges as well as the most widely used European metric calibres.

The cylindrical receiver is milled out of a solid block of aircraft-grade aluminium alloy on CNC machinery. Its rounded top is drilled and tapped for scope mounts which are the same as those for the Sauer 200. The Titan 6's flush multiple lug bolt is laced with gas ports along its side and capped with a heavy shroud-type bolt sleeve. Six locking lugs lock directly into the rear end of the barrel.

The bolt is machined out of a single piece of steel, and the bolt face, counterbored to a depth of 3mm, fully encloses the cartridge head. The one-diameter bolt body has been grooved and channeled to form two rows of three non-protruding locking lugs spaced equidistantly around the bolt head in a symmetrical 120 degree pattern. This results in a low bolt lift of 60 degrees. This six-lug arrangement ensures a large contact surface with matching shoulders in the rear end of the barrel.

The locking lug area is equal to that of the Mauser 98 which has a lug shear area of .316 square-inch and a lug bearing area of .054 square-inch. Non-protruding lugs eliminate the necessity for broaching long and deep raceways in the receiver sidewalls, adding to the rigidity of the action. As well, in the event of a pierced or blown primer, the shoulder formed on the bolt helps confine escaping gas inside the breech. There are two holes in the bolt body to vent any gas that gets inside the bolt through the firing pin hole, out to the side, away from the shooter's face. Any residual gas flow is blocked at the rear by the bolt sleeve.

The receiver has the cocking piece shroud shaped to blend in with the exterior lines of the receiver, and a sliding three-position safety catch is mounted atop the rear tang where it is handy to the thumb. When moved fully rearward, it blocks the trigger movement and locks the bolt down by interposing a tab through the receiver wall and into a notch in the bolt body just ahead of the handle. In the mid-position it releases the bolt allowing it to be cycled to safely remove a loaded round from the chamber and, of course, fully forward readies the rifle for firing. In firing mode, the rear of the cocking piece protrudes from the rear of the bolt shroud, and a red dot is visible at the back of the safety button on the tang.

A bolt lift of 60 degrees allows enough extra rotation to overlap the cam bevels and thus centre the contacting surfaces to furnish optimum bearing efficiency. The root of the bolt handle turns down into a notch at the rear of the bolt during lock-up and serves as an auxiliary safety lug.

The one-diameter six-lug bolt effectively limits sideplay without resorting to guide lugs or rails. The head of the Titan 6 bolt is relieved on the underside, to reduce dragging against the top cartridge in the magazine.

The top of the sear engages a close-fitting, full-length groove along the underside of the bolt body serving as a bolt guide. Because it pivots in an oblong slot, the sear can yield slightly against its spring in stopping the bolt, thus minimising stress on its pivot pin. Hauling back hard on the trigger tips the sear

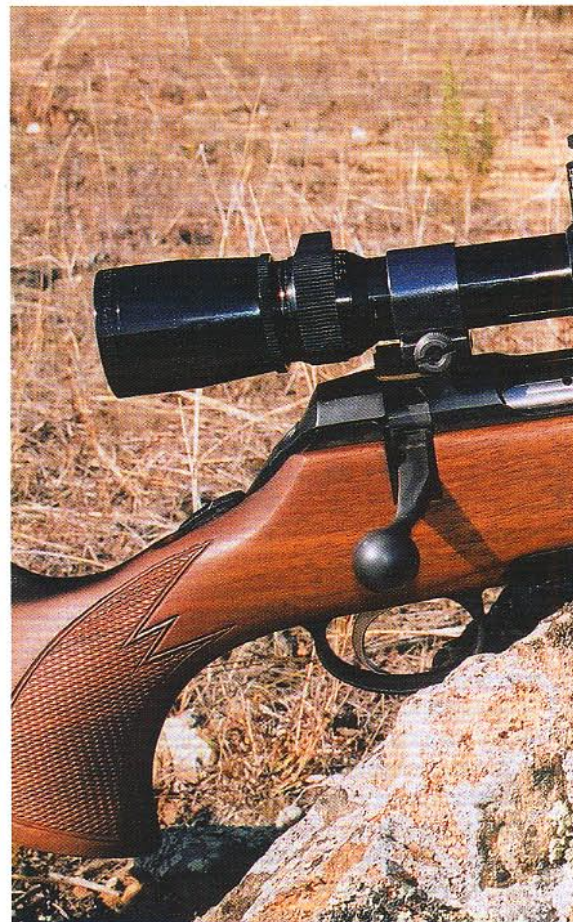
clockwise, lowering its nose for bolt removal.

The cocking piece is unusual because it does not protrude below the bottom of the shroud housing but lies flush with it, and the sear comes up through the bottom of the receiver to engage it. The forward end of the sear also acts as the bolt stop.

The aluminium alloy receiver is round on top with receiver ring and bridge the same height. An ejection port is milled into the side of the receiver and since the bolt locks into the rear of the barrel the receiver is not under any stress during firing. The inside surfaces of the receiver are nicely polished. The blued bolt handle is angled slightly rearward and has a round, unchecked knob. When the bolt is locked the bolt shroud is encased on all but the right side where the channel is cut to allow bolt passage.

The extractor is a small steel hook 3.5mm wide pinned inside the front right locking lug is tensioned by a tiny entrapped coil spring. A plunger-type ejector recessed into the opposite (left) side of the bolt face at 2 o'clock works in conjunction with the extractor to eject cases at as low an angle to the right as the edge of the loading port allows.

Due to limited bolt rotation, the extraction and chambering cams in the Titan 6 rifle are rather small. Most low-lift bolts on modern actions are notoriously difficult to raise due to the steep angle of the cocking cams. Rossler seems to have licked this problem by



balancing the cocking cam forces about the firing pin axis, which enables the powerful mainspring to be cocked without an excessive bolt-lift effort.

The alloy trigger guard assembly is retained by a pair of hex screws that are provided with plastic plugs. Turning them out allows removal of the barreled action from the stock for access to the trigger. The single-stage trigger is adjustable for weight of pull from 0.8-2kg and leaves the factory set at 1.6kg. The sear is made from specially hardened high-tensile Bohler steel 1200 Newton MM2 which simply doesn't wear. The sear engages the cocking piece squarely and is actuated upward by a small coil spring.

The Titan 6 has the very fast locktime of 1.7 milliseconds – one of the fastest in the industry. For comparison, the Remington Model 700 short-action has a locktime of 2.6 milliseconds. The firing pin is 28.36mm long and is cocked using a double-tension guide.

The Titan has a conventional detachable box magazine retained by a pair of lugs, one on each side of the trigger guard/magazine frame. When the two knurled catches are pressed inward they allow the magazine to drop out into your hand. Being a single-column design, cartridges fairly leap off the follower and into the chamber, seemingly of their own volition.

The magazine box in the Titan 6 is made of stainless steel, the follower of anodised aluminium and has a fibreglass floorplate. It holds three cartridges in

standard calibres and fits flush with the belly of the stock. The magazine frame is synthetic with integral trigger guard, glass fibre reinforced to be stable in shape and impact resistant.

In keeping with the modern European trend, the Titan 6 features interchangeable barrels. The changeover is effected by first removing the stock. The large recoil lug under the receiver ring is split and clamped around the smooth barrel shank with two large hex-head screws which are loosened with a special wrench that comes with the rifle. Once the clamp has relaxed its grip the barrel can be withdrawn from the receiver ring. Another barrel in a different calibre is slid fully home and indexed by means of a tiny notch in the outer rim of the shank, engaging a matching stud in the receiver ring and the screws are retensioned.

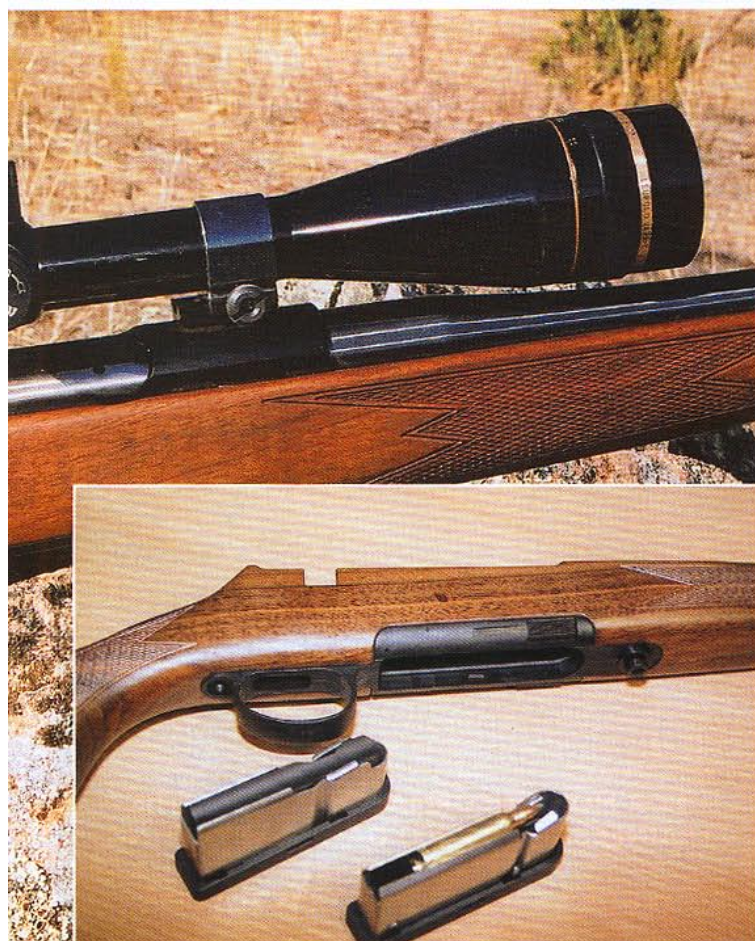
Titan bolt heads cannot be changed. A magnum barrel will interchange with a standard barrel without the necessity of changing the bolt. To swap over from a rimless to a belted cartridge requires no change of bolts. But after changing barrels you have to sight-in the rifle again because the scope is mounted on the receiver.

Rossler uses barrels from Wilson, USA and Heym in Germany. Rifles for Europe are equipped with iron sights, but export models all have slick barrels.

The recoil lug fits into a fibreglass insert which is glued into the stock mortise, while the rear tang rests atop a special alloy bedding block. The forend channel is relieved

BELOW LEFT: For testing, the rifle had a Leupold 6.5-24x attached in Weaver mounts. Accuracy was excellent in .243 and .30/06.

INSET: The single column detachable clip magazine is stainless steel with a plastic bottom floorplate section.



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so that the barrel is fully-floating right back to the receiver ring. There's nothing wrong with this bedding system as most of my rifles are set up the same way.

At the Range

For testing, the Titan 6 was fitted with a Leupold Vari-X III 6.5-20x scope in Weaver mounts. Having two barrels to test for accuracy, I figured the high magnification would be useful. The .243 Winchester barrel was tested first using Winchester Super-X loads with the 80gn PSP which delivered four 5-shot groups averaging 1.12 MoA and the Winchester Supreme load with the 95gn Ballistic Silvertip which averaged .90 MoA.

The classic stock has a high, straight comb, generous cheekpiece and slim, rounded forend. Wrench is for changing barrels.



The .243 barrel was exchanged for the .30/06 barrel and sighted-in using RWS Ultimate Performance cartridges loaded with the premium 184gn Evolution Power-Bonded bullet. The Rapid Tip bullet has a gold tip and is cannellured about midway. It is claimed to give reliable controlled expansion together with deep penetration and to retain almost 100 per cent of its original weight.

When I fired the first three shots sighting-in I was pleased by the light recoil for a .30/06; a comfortable all-up weight of 3.75kg made this one of the most pleasant shooting .30 calibre rifles I've shot for a long time.

To my surprise and delight, the first three shots fired for accuracy clustered into .65 MoA, but an additional two shots opened the group up to 1.35 MoA, which is normal. Successive five-shot groups with the new RWS ammunition, went into 1.60, 1.85 and 1.75 MoA for an average of 1.63 MoA. Function-fired with a variety of .30/06 ammunition there were no malfunctions of any kind.

The RWS Titan 6 is worthy of being called a premium hunting rifle. It's well made, incorporates a number of good, innovative design features, and the workmanship is excellent.

This is a rifle which should achieve its fair share of popularity on its merits alone, and judging by its quality of workmanship, there's every reason to believe that it will. ■

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