

OUT OF THE BOX

THE RODEO HERITAGE

By Dick Williams

In addition to a number of custom 1873 single action handguns, United States Fire Arms Mfg. Co. makes a basic cowboy handgun called the Rodeo. They consider this their entry-level gun for cowboy action shooting. Fear not regarding the "entry level" phrase; the Rodeo fully lives up to USFA's reputation for quality products. Their single action revolvers are as tight as any cowboy guns I've handled.

The special edition Rodeo Heritage simply offers some different features than the basic Rodeo model. For example, it will only be available with a 4.75 or 5.5-inch barrel and only chambered for the .44 WCF, otherwise called the 44-40. The gun's most distinctive feature is the True Ivory grips that are hand fitted at the factory.

Elephant and walrus lovers relax. True Ivory is a manmade material that looks and feels like aged ivory and doesn't shrink. It

looks superb on a handgun and requires no animal participation.

The gun received for review has a 4.75-inch barrel and, as promised, was chambered in .44 WCF. The finish is matte black, but it is the smoothest, prettiest matte black I've ever seen. Like other cowboy guns, the rear sight is a notch in the top of the frame, and the front sight is a round blade with the rear side cut vertical. Unlike the traditional "V" notch rear and inverted "V" shaped front blade, the Rodeo sights are larger and more visible. Both the rear notch and front blade have vertical sides making them larger and creating a much better sight picture for the aging vision of senior cowboys and cowgirls.

Metal to metal fit was excellent everywhere. Cylinder lockup when you cocked the gun was incredibly tight requiring a bit of concentration to create and detect any

TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS

Model:	Rodeo Heritage
Caliber:	.44 WCF (.44-40)
Barrel:	4.75 inches
Capacity:	6 rounds
Weight:	34 ounces
Finish:	Black Matte
Grips:	True Ivory
MSRP:	\$695

rotational or end-to-end play. The Heritage has the half cock position for loading and unloading the gun. It also has the traditional safety notch that holds the hammer off the primer, but that doesn't mean you can carry a live round under the hammer. When you cock the hammer, you get the distinct four-click sound that seems to spell out "U-S-F-A" or whatever you choose to hear.

Trigger pull was a consistent three pounds with no creep. Written messages on the gun were minimal and clearly not the work of someone's legal staff. The bottom of the frame had the serial number while the left side of the frame had three patent dates from the 1870s. The caliber, .44 W.C.F. was on the left side of the barrel. The top of the barrel said "U.S.F.A. MFG. Co. Hartford, Ct. USA." Do you sense a little history here?

But it was the True Ivory grips that had me drooling! They had been lovingly hand fitted and looked spectacular! Fortunately I got past the "almost too beautiful to shoot" phase and had a wonderful time putting some Black Hills, Hornady, and PMC cowboy ammo through the revolver. All groups were fired indoors, off hand, at 50 feet, and the photos attest to the gun's accuracy.

It would be nice to move those groups a shade right and up, but these results will keep you on target in any cowboy action match. And I certainly wouldn't start rubbing any rough or abrasive tools on the Heritage.

I cannot think of this single action as an "entry level" gun. It's beautiful to look at and delightful to shoot! And if you, like Forest Gump, believe that "beauty is as beauty does," (bear with me for a little paraphrasing) look at the gun's performance. The Rodeo Heritage is, and does, beauty.



FOR MORE INFORMATION:

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