

Classic Aesthetics

A MAUSER ACTION IN A MANNLICHER STOCK:
THE BEST OF FUNCTION AND STYLE.

By STAN TRZONIEC





CZ 550 FS

The easily recognized Mannlicher stock is either loved or hated by shooters; there seems to be no middle ground. Popularized by the M1903/05 Mannlicher-Schoenauer rifle, it featured the design of Ferdinand Ritter Von Mannlicher. Nothing more than a gradually tapered full-length wood stock, it is nonetheless distinct. Today, manufacturers that offer this type of rifle/stock combination are few and far between.

If you want one, CZ-USA is one of the few that can fill that request. In the company's literature it's listed as the Model 550 FS—for full stock—and is available chambered for both short- and long-action cartridges, as well as either a detachable or floorplate (fixed box) magazine.

The gun is fitted with excellent Turkish walnut, and it's superbly finished with a rich, oil-like finish that's smooth to the touch and devoid of air bubbles or dust bumps.

Overall, the design is about as

Teutonic as you can get. The stock has a classic German comb. On the other side is the German trademark cheekpiece found on many European hunting rifles. This part of the rifle really caught my eye. It is perfectly hand-finished; edges are sharp, true and without a ripple of any kind.

The pistol grip is cut at a rakish angle, which I found very comfortable. The grip and fore-end are checkered in a handsome point pattern complete with a single-line border.



A bolt release and bolt disassembly catch on the left side of the gun make maintenance easy.

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SPECIFICATIONS

CZ-USA MODEL 550 FS

ACTION TYPE: Bolt action

CALIBER: .243 Win. (tested), 6.5x55, .270 Win., .308 Win., .30-'06, 9.3x62

CAPACITY: 4 (short action), 5 (long action)

BARREL LENGTH: 20.5 in.

OVERALL LENGTH: 41.5 in.

WEIGHT: 7 lb., 6 oz.

STOCK: Full-length Turkish walnut

FINISH: Polished blue

TRIGGER: Single set/standard

SIGHTS: Adjustable rear, hooded front

MSRP: \$894 to \$1,004

The 550 FL's integral mounts feature a retaining slot machined into the receiver under the rear base to help keep rings from moving under heavy recoil.



The rifle has a European-style cheekpiece and thick, comfortable recoil pad.

Other fine points on the stock include a classic solid-rubber recoil pad. Non-detachable European sling swivels grace the stock.

Up front at the muzzle there is the ageless protective metal fore-end tip. It is so well fashioned that one would be hard pressed to find better craftsmanship on even a full-blown custom rifle.

The action is the tried-and-true Mauser design and has the characteristic Mauser claw extractor for positive feeding and extraction. The bolt has a rearward sweep for ready accessibility. The receiver and barrel feature a highly polished blue.

Topside on the receiver, CZ has machined twin square bridges with a 19mm dovetail directly into the receiver for secure scope mounting. CZ manufactures its own rings.

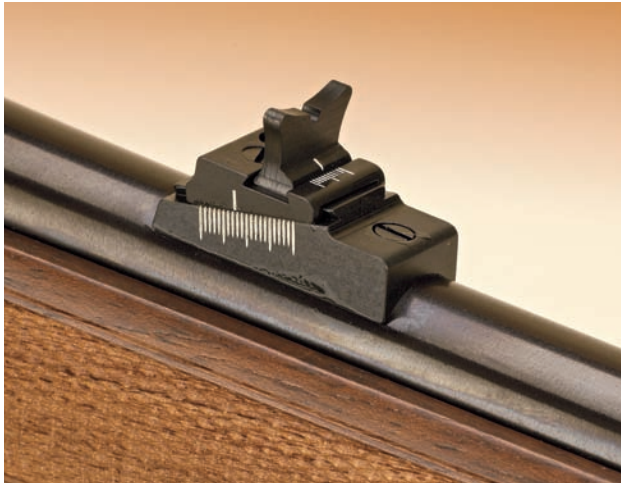
For those who like open sights, CZ supplies a Williams-type rear assembly that is adjustable for both windage and elevation. A white bead front with a protective cover graces the muzzle.

A familiar three-position safety sits just aft of the bolt. Pushing it all the

ACCURACY RESULTS

.243 Winchester	Muzzle Weight (gr.)	Avg. Velocity (fps)	Group (in.)
Remington Power-Lokt HP	80	3,075	.75
Cor-Bon DPX	85	3,178	2.00
Winchester SP	100	2,786	1.75

Notes: Average of three three-shot groups fired at 100 yards from a rest. Abbreviations: HP, hollowpoint; SP, softpoint



For iron-sight die-hards, a Williams-type rear sight and hooded bead front grace the barrel.

way forward allows the gun to fire. Mid-position allows you to work the bolt to add or remove ammunition with the sear blocked. All the way back locks both the bolt and sear.

A catch on the left side of the receiver allows withdrawal of the bolt for travel or cleaning, and on the left side of the bolt shroud is a disassembly catch that allows easy disassembly for maintenance.

The trigger is a combination single-set and conventional trigger. In its regular function, pull weight registered four pounds on my trigger gauge, with just a hint of slack. But when I pushed the trigger forward to the Set position and measured again, it broke at just over one pound. Now, that's cool.

My gun sample was chambered for the .243 Winchester and featured

the fully detachable magazine, which dropped directly into my hand with a nudge of the release hidden within the triggerguard.

At the range, the gun proved its mettle, shooting under an inch with Remington's 80-grain Power-Lokt hollowpoint. As far as I'm concerned, the rifle is worthy of any hunting chore the New England countryside I call home can throw at it. 🍷



Trzoniec found the gun easy to shoot and liked its short-barreled balance and good ergonomics.