



A scout-scope-equipped lever gun like the Chiappa Kodiak is a fast-handling carbine that can be used to hunt in varied conditions for a variety of big game.

CHIAPPA 1886 KODIAK

There may be no rifle more appealing to an American shooter than a big-bore lever-action—there's just something about working the lever and sending big, heavy bullets down-range, one after another. Of course there's always the cowboy connection, and nothing symbolizes America's spirit like the cowboy. Chiappa's new 1886 Kodiak ties the modern lever gun's performance together with its historic appeal in a robust package.

Chiappa starts with a variation of the John Browning-designed Winchester 1886 action, which, unlike previous lever-guns, incorporated twin vertical locking bolts that simultaneously engaged channels in the receiver and breechbolt, making it compatible with more powerful, large-bore cartridges of the era, such as the

.45-70 Gov't, .45-90 and even the .50-110. During the 49 years Winchester manufactured the original 1886, nearly 160,000 were sold. It was available in carbine, rifle and musket variations.

Made in Italy, Chiappa's Kodiak is a modern variant that some would classify as a "guide gun"—a category generally credited to Alaska-based Wild West Guns, which has offered big-bore, short-barreled lever-action rifles with rugged aperture sights or scout scopes since 1992. In 1998 Marlin introduced its rendition—officially coined as the "Guide Gun"—built on its 1895 action. Chiappa has applied this concept to the Winchester Model 1886 design, and the end result is a beast of a rifle with a lot of hunting potential.

The Kodiak's action is machined from 4140 steel. It is fitted with a heavy 18½" 4140 steel barrel with an octagonal section that extends 10⅝" out from the receiver with the remainder hav-

ing a round, non-tapered profile. The octagonal portion of barrel measures a hefty 0.92" wide across the flats, and the round part of the barrel has a diameter of 0.845". Beneath the barrel is a short four-round magazine tube that extends 2¾" past the nose cap on the fore-end, making it 4½" short of the muzzle.

The stock is hardwood but has been coated with black soft-touch paint, which makes for a solid, yet comfortable feel in hand. Just as importantly, it contrasts very nicely with the brushed-nickel finish that has been applied to the action, barrel and lever. A soft, rubber buttpad and hard-chrome sling swivel studs—one on the buttstock and one on the nose cap—round out the Kodiak.

Although the soft-touch paint and brushed-nickel finish are modern touches, perhaps the most modern enhancement has to do with the sights. Dovetailed onto the end of the barrel is a 0.40"



The Chiappa's butt is topped by a generous soft rubber recoil pad (l.). John Browning designed the strong, twin vertical locking bolts that pass through the receiver and the bolt (far r.) for the Winchester Model 1886, on which the Kodiak is based.

SHOOTING RESULTS (100 YDS.)

.45-70 Gov't. CARTRIDGE	VEL. @ 15' (F.P.S.)	ENERGY (FT.-LBS.)	GROUP SIZE IN INCHES		
			SMALLEST	LARGEST	AVERAGE
DOUBLE TAP 300-GR. BARNES TSX	1908 Avg. 10 SD	2,425	2.34	3.40	2.84
REMINGTON RIFLE 405-GR. SP No. 29473	1047 Avg. 46 SD	986	2.20	4.51	3.03
WINCHESTER 300-GR. BALLISTIC SILVERTIP	1831 Avg. 13 SD	2,233	1.30	2.00	1.63
AVERAGE EXTREME SPREAD					2.50

MEASURED AVERAGE VELOCITY FOR 10 ROUNDS FROM AN 18½" BARREL OVER A SHOOTING CHRONY CHRONOGRAPH. RANGE TEMPERATURE: 64° F. HUMIDITY: 44%. ACCURACY FOR FIVE CONSECUTIVE, FIVE-SHOT GROUPS AT 100 YDS. FROM A SANDBAG REST. ABBREVIATIONS: SD (STANDARD DEVIATION), SP (SOFT POINT), TSX (TRIPLE-SHOCK X-BULLET).

CHIAPPA KODIAK

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MODEL: KODIAK (920-301)

CALIBER: .45-70 Gov't

ACTION TYPE: LEVER-ACTION

CENTER-FIRE RIFLE

RECEIVER: 4140 STEEL; BRUSHED NICKEL FINISH

BARREL: 18½", 4140 STEEL, BRUSHED NICKEL FINISH

RIFLING: SIX-GROOVE, 1:18" RH TWIST

MAGAZINE: FOUR-ROUND TUBULAR

SIGHTS: FIBER-OPTIC FRONT,

SKINNER APERTURE REAR

TRIGGER: SINGLE-STAGE, 2-LB., 12-OZ. PULL

STOCK: PAINTED HARDWOOD; LENGTH OF PULL, 13½"; DROP AT HEEL, 1 11/16"; DROP AT HEEL, 2 3/8"

OVERALL LENGTH: 37"

WEIGHT: 8 LBS., 8 OZS.

SUGGESTED RETAIL PRICE: \$1,595

With its external metal parts treated with a brushed nickel finish and its soft-touch painted hardwood stock, the Kodiak is a weather-resistant big bore. The .45-70 Gov't rifle is made even more versatile by a rail forward of the action port that allows a scout-style riflescope.



high, red fiber-optic front sight. For a rear sight Chiappa chose the intriguing Skinner aperture, which is mounted just forward of the action. When combined with the fiber-optic front, it offers an easy-to-see and fast-to-acquire sight picture. Tapped holes in the top flat of the octagonal portion of the barrel accommodate a Weaver-style scout scope rail; however, the rear sight must be removed in order to mount it.

The rail vastly expands the versatility of the rifle; in fact, all test firing with the Chiappa Kodiak was conducted using a Burris 2-7X handgun scope. Granted, at seven power such a setup somewhat defeats the both-eyes-open concept, but it was nonetheless helpful in shooting from the bench to determine the rifle's accuracy potential.

As for the shots fired, the Kodiak's 8-lb. weight sufficiently tamed the recoil of the .45-70 Gov't cartridge—even the hard-recoiling load from DoubleTap that pushed a 300-gr. bullet out of the 18.5" barrel at more than 1900 f.p.s. Five-

shot groups from the bench ranged from a small of 1.30" to a large of 4.51". The Kodiak shot best with the Winchester 300-gr. Ballistic Silvertip load, which usually resulted in three out of the five shots touching on a target. In steadier hands, it might be a minute-of-angle load out of the rifle.

The anemic 405-gr. Remington factory load was a bit inconsistent but was a pleasure to shoot with minimal recoil. Additionally, the point of impact of the Remington load, when compared to the harder-hitting Winchester and DoubleTap loads, was 18" lower.

In all, 120 rounds were cycled and fired through the Chiappa Kodiak. Most were fired from the bench but enough were shot from off-hand positions to establish that this rifle points fast and balances very well. The action functioned flawlessly with all the loads tested. The trigger was nothing short of exceptional—regardless of rifle type. In fact, one shooter commented that he'd never pulled a trigger on a lever-action rifle out of the box that could compare

to that of the Kodiak. It had zero take-up and broke at a crisp and consistent 2 lbs., 12 ozs.

The wide variety of factory .45-70 Gov't loads means that the Chiappa Kodiak can be loaded for game ranging from whitetail deer to water buffalo. That, combined with all the rifle's other positive features makes the Kodiak a fast-handling carbine with punch suitable for hunting Alaska to Africa—and just about everywhere in between. ★

