

and fastest-acquired sight pictures we've seen on any rifle. It had a fully adjustable rear sight with wide-angle V mated to a bead front.

CVA Frontier

Our Recommendation: Since this model is no longer a catalog item, they have to be found new or nearly new on the back shelves of retail stores or at gun shows. The effort may be worth it, however: Ours was only \$100, and it was a lot of gun for the money.

The CVA Frontier we tested had a 28-inch barrel that measured 15/16 inch across the flats, an oil-finished stock of decent maple, clean and simple brass furniture, and the same 1:48-inch twist of the Bobcat. This rifle had appropriate engraving on the lockplate and hammer, both of which were nicely case-colored. It had a convenient screw-adjustable rear sight with a flat top and square notch that was mated nicely with a brass front blade. The CVA Frontier weighed 7 pounds. The CVA Frontier had a set trigger that required adjustment before it worked to our satisfaction.

The CVA Frontier felt just right with the test load, and we shot it with a load of 100 grains of FFFg and thought the resulting recoil was still tolerable. The Frontier gave us 12-inch 100-yard groups with round balls. This wasn't good enough, in our opinion, so we tried cleaning the bore thoroughly. The resulting clean-barrel accuracy improved, but after half a dozen shots it went downhill again. Then we tried fire-lapping the bore and got easier loading and again improved accuracy over more shots, so it seems that more fire-lapping is in order. The CVA Frontier didn't like sabots much, giving us 18-inch patterns for our efforts.

This rifle looked like it was made a century ago, and it got a lot of respect for its understated elegance. We would hang this one on the wall and never polish the brass.

CVA Frontier .50 Cal

Retail Price...approx. \$100 used



SPECIFICATIONS

Warranty: None

METAL FINISH	Blued	FRONT SIGHT	Blade
WEIGHT	7 lbs.	REAR SIGHT	Square Notch
OVERALL LENGTH	40 in.	COUNTRY OF ORIGIN	USA
BARREL LENGTH	28 in.	TRIGGER TYPE	Set
RIFLING TWIST	1-in-48	STOCK MATERIAL	Maple
BARREL SHAPE	Octagonal	BEST GROUP 100 YDS.	6 in.

Our Recommendation: Worth a look, if you can dig one up.

The two CVA rifles were not very similar in appearance, but nearly identical in performance. The new Bobcat, top, has a very useful large trigger guard and no set trigger. This rifle is also all black, which helps the hunter keep a low profile in the woods. The classic-looking CVA Frontier, at the bottom, has a bit of brass, but maintains a traditional appearance with its maple stock. Note the adjustable rear sight.



Gun Tests Recommends

After we shot and thoroughly examined these .50-caliber muzzleloaders, we formed distinct opinions about their function, value, and pride of ownership. To wit:

CVA Bobcat, \$126. This gun is light, so you can pack it all day, is accurate with any good ball load, and has a carefree stock and simple trigger mechanism. It's not a showboat like the T/C Hawken, but it is a robust rifle that ought to give many years of service. Buy it.

T/C Hawken, \$448. The T/C Hawken costs too much for what it delivers in terms of real-world application, unless you must have its cosmetics or ability to handle heavy loads. Otherwise, we think it's overpriced.

CVA Frontier, \$100. You will have to hunt to find this gun in retail outlets, but we believe the effort

may be worth it. The Frontier shot well enough with our round-ball charge, and it looked plenty good enough to hang on the wall. Anyone wanting a good muzzleloader with a wood stock would do well to consider a discounted-new or even a good, used CVA Frontier. ●

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