



Victrix Gladius.

The .375 CheyTac (middle) based on a .505 Gibbs case, flanked by 6.5x47 cartridges.



# Victrix Rifles

by PHILLIP HAYES

*The most accurate factory-made rifles?*

**I** imagine buying a factory rifle from a retailer, taking it to the range, selecting a load that might work and hand-loading it on the spot, then, in a howling wind, shooting two bullets within three inches of each other at one kilometre.

Well, it now seems possible with Victrix's brand new Tormentum rifle in .375 CheyTac – since this is pretty much what I did on a 1 000m range near Meyerton.

Rifle manufacturer Victrix, having recently become part of the Beretta Group, introduced their high-end rifles at IWA in Germany last year. The range comprises a tactical series (Minerva), a competition series (Victoria) and hunting rifles (Lunae).

The first Victrix rifles recently landed in South Africa. I test-fired two from their tactical range: the flagship Tormentum in .375 CheyTac (also



Victrix's flagship Tormentum in .375 CheyTac.

available in .408 CheyTac) and the Gladius in 6.5x47 Lapua.

Victrix also offers off-the-shelf rifles for competing at the highest level of F-Class. The maker chose Benchmark as its exclusive barrel supplier. The rest is done in-house. The action is similar in design to a Remington 700, and the chassis can be used on most stocks made for the Remington 700. The bolt-head has three locking lugs with a 60° lift and 105°/105°/150° lug-geometry, which provides greater resistance

to flexing than the more traditional 120°/120°/120° 'cloverleaf' geometry. This layout also aids the picking-up and feeding of rounds from a magazine when used in a tactical configuration.

Victrix has developed its own trigger, a dedicated three-lever tactical design, adjustable over an 8–21 ounce range (250–600g) for the tactical rifles, and a four-lever target trigger with an adjustment range of 1–2.5 ounces (30–70g).

The action and bolt are machined from 17.4PH stainless steel and then hardened (body 48

Rockwell, bolt 45 Rockwell), and Physical Vapour Deposition (PVD) coated with chromium nitride and nobium – for wear-resistance and smooth operation. I was told that the PVD coating makes the need for oil or grease obsolete; we tested the rifles without any oil on them and the actions were extremely smooth.

Tenon thread is M27x1.5 and, of course, tolerances are 'benchrest' standard. Picatinny rails are screwed and pinned to the action.

The Tormentum's action is scaled and beefed up considerably to accommodate the more powerful cartridges and the bolt head has the normal 120/120/120 degree locking lugs.



Balistix Bullets, a South African Company, developed a 375gr bullet specifically for the CheyTac which was used in Peterson Cartridge (American match-grade brass manufacturer) cases. But first, something about these bullets: according to Balistix, it first considers the rifle twist, and then develops the bullet to suit the twist. The bullets, all monolithics, are made out of 99.5% copper in a target and hunting design that Balistix claims should shoot to the same point of impact. A Hexagonal Boron Nitrate (HBN) dry lubricant is used on its bullets, said to lessen friction and fouling, with a rebated boat-tail on each one. We'll get back to the bullets later.

The 375gr bullet has a BC of .91 – no, that's not a typo – and is launched from the Tormentum at 2 930fps. This is made possible by using the Peterson case (based on a .505 Gibbs), Federal 215 primer and

123gr Vihtavuori N570 powder.

The reloading was done on the range with ultra-precision Exact Shooting, Exact Sizing dies, also custom-made in South Africa. This was the first time I'd seen these dies: a single precision die that perfectly resizes your brass to conform to your chamber. The first stage conforms the case's body and shoulders perfectly to the chamber and the second stage just resizes the case neck, resulting in perfect concentricity. The beauty of the Exact Sizing Die is that it does not oversize your brass which increases accuracy and brass life, and the range results were spectacular. See more at [www.exact-shooting.com](http://www.exact-shooting.com).

THE AVERAGE VELOCITY on the Lab-Radar doppler radar chronograph was 2 930fps. This translates to muzzle energy of 7 065ft-lb. At 2 000 yards, the .375 CheyTac bullet is travelling at 1

416fps and still has 1 670ft-lbs energy, the same as an AK47's bullet at the muzzle – impressive to say the least!

At the range, a gusty 12mph crosswind prevailed from left to right throughout most of the shooting session. To make things more difficult, the 1 000m target was on an incline where the wind was constantly shifting, creating intermittent updrafts in the shooting direction and with strong gusts to the right. We had no choice but to carry on.

After dry-firing the trigger three times, I fired the first shot at the 1 000m target, a red dot on a white steel plate. The idea was not to hit the red dot, but to see how small a grouping was possible. After three shots we drove the kilometre and found two shots 2.9 inches apart and the third 5 inches lower down. That's three shots in less than 8 inches at 1 000m, with a rifle I have never shot before, and in dismal weather conditions with a load that was a thumb-suck. I was also very uncomfortable when shooting these first three shots as the bench setup (as always) was not suited to my oversized body. In addition, I had to cant my head at an acute angle to get a proper sight picture.

To prove that this was not a fluke, another shooter used the same reloads in another rifle and put two shots 3 inches apart. I could not help wondering what this rifle, bullet and reloading die would be capable of under ideal circumstances, and with proper load development. Getting a 1MOA group at 1 000m means the shots should be in 11.44 inches, something the Tormentum could do all day without any problem – my first effort produced well under 1MOA, and things could only get better from there. Of course, the question now was, what could this rifle do at 2km?

The Tormentum weighs 12.7kg without a scope, and the three-chamber detachable muzzle-brake helps to tame the recoil. I found that the rifle gave more of a rearward push than the recoil associated with big calibres and large-capacity cases – more like shooting a .308 or .30-06 than a .375.



Above: View from the shooting pit to the 1 000m target. Right: Two shots 2.9 inches apart at 1km.

I THEN SHOT the Gladius, the baby in the tactical range (the middle ground is filled by the Scorpio in calibres like the .338 Lapua).

The 6.5x47 reloads consisted of Lapua cases, Balistix's 115gr 6.5mm target bullets, CCI 400 primers, and 40.5gr of Somchem's S355. No case preparation was done, and the bullet was seated .5mm from the lands, again using the Exact Sizing Die.

With the lighter bullet and the strong unpredictable wind, we decided against long-range testing. I started by firing a couple of shots at a 100m target, and finished with three shots cutting one another, and the fourth some 2mm away right on the cross of the target. Dialling the scope for 375m, I fired several shots at a 100m gong without a single miss. Two other shooters duplicated this with the same rifle and scope without changing any settings.

THE INCLEMENT WEATHER forced us to abandon the shoot and we reconvened the following week to test the Gladius 6.5x47L at a 100m indoor range. The lighting was not good enough for precise groups but, after getting a feel for the trigger, I managed a three-shot group whose single hole measured 7.3mm edge-to-edge (0.8mm centre-to-centre). I then used the target bullets to shoot a group whose single hole



measured 10.8mm (4.3mm C-to-C) and the hunting bullet to shoot three shots into a hole measuring 9.8mm (3.3mm C-to-C). The hunting and target bullets' groups were just over .5 inches from the point of aim, which would make no practical difference in the hunting field. One of the Balistix Team Shooter's then fired a 4.5mm three shot group, same rifle, scope and reloads.

It was crystal clear that this 'small' magazine-fed tactical rifle weighing 6.4kg with its 26-inch bull barrel, was extremely accurate. I was shooting in artificial light which strained my eyes, the target floating in and out of focus, and, again, the bench was made for normal sized people. With proper load development, this rifle should cut one hole in paper all day. And, of course, this is not a target rifle. I cannot wait to get my hands on a Victrix F-Class rifle made for absolute precision shooting.

There's really not much more I can say. The two rifles did the talking – just look at the photos of the targets. To say I was impressed with the Victrix rifles would be an understatement. All proved extremely accurate, indicating precise manufacturing procedures with almost no variance in tolerances.

So impressed was I, in fact, that I immediately bought the Gladius in 6.5x47.

## TORMENTUM

Calibre (twist rate)	.375 Cheytac (1:10)
Barrel length	30"
Barrel	Single-cut in Aisi 416R lapped FLUTED
Action	Marte CT 3-lug action in Aisi 630 with detach. magaz. PVD-coated
Magazine	5 rounds
Magazine optional	Polymer 7 rounds
Trigger	Double-stage - adjustable
Muzzle Brake	3 chambers detachable
Action Rail	45 MOA
Buttstock horiz. adj.	50mm
Buttstock vert. adj.	60mm
Monopod rail	Stand equip. w/ QD sling attach
Folding	Evo
Forend	Octagonal Elliptic
Top rail	45 MOA
Side rails	Standard equipment full length
Bipod rail	Standard equipment w/ QD sling attach.
Carry handle	Standard equipment
Stock colour	Hard black anodised
Colours Optional	Tan (action, barrel, muzzle brake, cheek piece, magazine, screws and rails) and black
Hard case	Standard equipment
Weight	12.7kg
Dimension min/max mm	1230/1450

The bolt of the Tormentum (top) and Gladius. Insert: Note the three locking lugs.



## GLADIUS

Calibre (twist rate)	6.5x47 (1:8)
Barrel length	22" - 26"
Barrel	Single cut in Aisi 416R lapped
Action	Minerva short 3-lug action in Aisi 630 with detachable magazine and PVD-coated
Magazine	5 rounds (compatible AI AICS system)
Magazine optional	Polymer 8 rounds - Metal 5 rounds - Metal 10 Rounds
Trigger	Double-stage - adjustable
Muzzle Brake	3 chambers detachable
Action Rail	20 MOA
Buttstock horiz adj.	50mm
Buttstock vert adj.	60mm
Monopod rail	Standard equipment w/ QD sling attach
Top Rail	20 MOA
Side rails	Standard equipment only on Oct. Ellipt fore-end
Bipod rail	Standard equipment w/ QD sling attach
Hard case	Standard equipment
Weight	6.4kg (22") - 6.7kg (26")
Dimension min/max mm	900/1 125 (22") - 1 000/1 225 (26")



Exact Shooting's locally produced precision die. Even the packaging is top notch.

This rifle felt right from the moment I first picked it up, and the finish is simply the best I have ever seen on a factory-made rifle, putting almost every custom rifle I have seen to shame. I could, perhaps, exchange the aluminium tactical stock for an after-market stock made for the Remington 700 to create a 'traditional' looking rifle. However, its out-of-the-box accuracy is superior to most custom target rifles I have seen in action.

Victrix's target rifles for both Open and FTR Classes feature stocks of wood, wood-laminate, aluminium and carbon-fibre. The design is minimalist, specifically for shooting a rested rifle, and the proof that the rifles work lies in the gold medal victory of their CEO, Giuseppe Valtorta, with his FTR rifle at the 2015 European F Class Championships.

To be competitive at club, national or international level, one needs proper equipment. With Victrix it is possible to buy the equipment at a retailer and head straight to the competition.

I shall thoroughly test the Victoria competition rifles at a later stage. The same goes for the Balistix bullets, and the Exact dies. Both are locally-produced, quality products and will feature in a future edition of *Magnum*. It is hard to believe that a bullet manufacturer can come up with a bullet that, without load development, shoots one hole groups in calibres as diverse as the 6.5 and .375. From what I have seen and experienced so far, I can highly recommend both.

Quality like this comes at a price, but it is money well spent. The estimated retail prices including VAT are: Tormentum .375 CheyTac with detachable magazine: R180 000; 6.5x47 Gladius with detachable magazine: R108 000; 338 Lapua Scorpio with detachable magazine: R120 000; Victoria Carbon Performance single shot in .308 Match: R110 000; Victoria F-Class Target Rifle single shot .308 Match in grey, blue or red laminates: R100 000; Victoria Sport Series single shot .308 match: R90 000, and the Lunae Hunting at R85 000.

For more information contact Rapala VMC on 011-794-6950. 