



DPMS PANTHER LR-338L RIFLE

The DPMS LR-308 rifle is a scaled-up version of the AR-15 rifle designed to accommodate the .308 Win. and similar cartridges. With the increasing popularity of this rifle platform, as well as the growing popularity of hunting with AR-type rifles, DPMS expanded the LR-308 line beyond the .308 Win. to include other cartridges, such as .243 Win., .260 Rem. and .338 Federal. The LR-338L in .338 Federal is the most powerful rifle in the DPMS AR line and the best suited to a wide range of big-game hunting scenarios. The "LR" in the name stands for "Long Range" and the suffix "L" denotes "Lightweight." It is designed for hunters, although it has some tactical applications as well.

The LR-338L features a 416 stainless steel, light-contour 18" barrel, which has short and shallow 2"-long flutes between the lightweight gas block and muzzle brake. A custom muzzle brake reduces felt recoil, which is mild compared to other .338 Federal rifles.

The LR-338L uses the rotating bolt and direct-impingement gas operating system common in AR designs. The bolt carrier is 8620

heat-treated steel, and the bolt itself is heat-treated. The rifle features a round, 12½"-long carbon-fiber handguard that reduces weight and does not transfer cold or heat like a metal handguard.

The upper receiver is extruded from 6066-T6 aircraft aluminum, features right-hand ejection, a dust cover, a shell deflector and a forward assist. The top rail allows for easy mounting of optical sights.

The lower receiver, with its integral trigger guard, is milled from 6061-T6 aluminum. Both the upper and lower are anodized and coated with black Teflon. Controls include a magazine release on the right side and a bolt release on the left. The safety selector lever is on the left side. Our sample rifle was shipped with the JP adjust-

able trigger, which is optional for an additional \$124.95. Any serious shooter should consider adding this trigger when ordering the rifle. The trigger on our sample had a bit of creep and a few hitches. Past experience with the JP trigger, however, has shown that much of that can be removed with careful adjustment and set-up of the trigger. Our sample broke at 3 lbs., 12 ozs. The gun comes with a Command Arms Tactical grip made of hard plastic with non-slip finger grooves. The grip is angled back a bit more than a standard AR grip and places the hand in good position for trigger control.

The black Zytel buttstock is skeletonized to reduce weight. It features a hard plastic, checkered buttplate with a superfluous trap



The LR-338L has a milled lower receiver with an integral trigger guard (r., top); our sample included the JP adjustable trigger (r.). The rifle's phosphated 8620 steel bolt carrier is proportionally larger than that of a comparable .223-Rem. AR carrier (far r.).



SHOOTING RESULTS (100 YDS.)

.338 FEDERAL CARTRIDGE	VEL. @ 15' (F.P.S.)	ENERGY (FT.-LBS.)	GROUP SIZE IN INCHES		
			SMALLEST	LARGEST	AVERAGE
FEDERAL No. P338FB 210-GR. NOSLER PARTITION	2366 Avg. 14 SD	2,611	1.41	2.90	2.03
FUSION No. F338FFS2 200-GR. SPT	2539 Avg. 22 SD	2,864	1.25	2.30	1.71
FEDERAL No. P338FC 185-GR. BARNES TSX	2692 Avg. 20 SD	2,782	1.30	2.30	2.44

AVERAGE EXTREME SPREAD

2.06

MEASURED AVERAGE VELOCITY FOR 10 ROUNDS FROM AN 18" BARREL. FIRST SCREEN OF OEHLER 35P CHRONOGRAPH 15 FT. FROM MUZZLE. RANGE TEMPERATURE: 40° F. ACCURACY FOR FIVE CONSECUTIVE, FIVE-SHOT GROUPS AT 100 YDS. USING FRONT REST AND REAR SANDBAG. ABBREVIATIONS: SBT (SPITZER BOATTAIL), TSX (TRIPLE-SHOCK X-BULLET), SD (STANDARD DEVIATION).



door. The gun would be better served with a rubber recoil pad as this hard plastic with sharp diamonds and edges can be painful when shooting in warm weather and light clothing.

The gun weighs 7 lbs., 14 ozs. empty. With a Nikon Monarch 4-16X 42 mm Side Focus scope in Warne aluminum rings, which we used for accuracy testing, and with an empty four-round-capacity magazine, the gun checked in at 9 lbs, 12 ozs., with an overall length of 39 $\frac{1}{8}$ ".

One might expect the short 18" barrel to give up some veloc-

ity, so we gauged its performance against a previous test we ran a few years ago, in which we used the available .338 Federal factory loaded ammunition in a Sako rifle with a 22 $\frac{7}{16}$ " barrel. The 185-gr. Barnes load was actually faster in the DPMS rifle by 48 f.p.s., but the 180-gr. AccuBond lost 116 f.p.s. and the 200-gr. Fusion lost 113 f.p.s. in the shorter barrel.

As part of the function test we shot an R&R Racing Self Setting 8" rifle target at 250 yds. We found that by using the first circle in a Nikon BDC scope, hitting this

DPMS PANTHER LR-338L

MANUFACTURER: DPMS-PANTHER ARMS (DEPT. AR), 3312 12TH ST., S.E., ST. CLOUD, MN 5630; (800) 578-3767; WWW.DPMSINC.COM

CALIBER: .338 FEDERAL

ACTION TYPE: DIRECT-IMPINGEMENT, GAS-OPERATED SEMI-AUTOMATIC RIFLE

RECEIVER: 6066-T6 UPPER, 6061-T6 LOWER ALUMINUM ALLOY; HARD ANODIZED AND BLACK TEFLON COATED

BARREL LENGTH: 18"

RIFLING: SIX-GROOVE; 1:9" RH TWIST

MAGAZINE: DETACHABLE BOX, FOUR-ROUND OR 19-ROUND CAPACITY

SIGHTS: NONE; FULL LENGTH PICATINNY RAIL ON RECEIVER FOR SCOPE MOUNTING

TRIGGER PULL: SINGLE-STAGE; 3 LBS., 12 OZS.

STOCK: BLACK ZYTEL; LENGTH OF PULL, 14 $\frac{1}{4}$ "; DROP AT HEEL, 1/2"; DROP AT COMB, 1/2"

OVERALL LENGTH: 39 $\frac{1}{8}$ "


WEIGHT: 7 LBS., 14 OZS.

ACCESSORIES: ONE FOUR-ROUND MAGAZINE, ONE 19-ROUND MAGAZINE, NYLON WEB SLING AND CLEANING KIT

SUGGESTED RETAIL PRICE: \$1,499

The LR-338L breaks down like a standard AR (I.). Its carbon-fiber handguard does not transfer heat like a metal handguard, and the Zytel buttstock and tactical grip reduce weight and aid control.

target from hunting-type shooting positions was easy. The recoil was so manageable that the reticle was already back on target before the swinging target reset. Using the higher-capacity magazine we shot several boxes of Fusion 200-gr. ammunition (the best performing load in this rifle) without a single function problem. Although the barrel grew very hot during this shooting session, the carbon-fiber handguard did not, and the rifle could be easily held with a bare hand at anytime during the shooting. Also, we noted this swinging target handled bullet strikes from .308 Win. without a problem, but the .338 Federal hit hard enough that nearly every fifth shot knocked the target out of the frame.

The DPMS Panther LR-338L rifle is a well-made, strong and durable firearm for any hunter wishing to use a semi-automatic rifle. For the shooter looking for the tactical application of a heavy bullet with more power, or for somebody who simply wants something different to bring to the range, the DPMS Panther LR-338L is a good choice. 

The *American Rifleman* has used the phrase "Dope Bag" since at least 1921, when Col. Townsend Whelen first titled his column with it. Even then, it had been in use for years, referring to a sack used by target shooters to hold ammunition and accessories on the firing line. "Sight dope" also was a traditional marksman's term for sight-adjustment information, while judging wind speed and direction was called "doping the wind."

WARNING: Technical data and information contained herein are intended to provide information based on the limited experience of individuals under specific conditions and circumstances. They do not detail the comprehensive training procedures, techniques and safety precautions absolutely necessary to properly carry on similar activity. Read the notice and disclaimer on the contents page. Always consult comprehensive reference manuals and bulletins for details of proper training requirements, procedures, techniques and safety precautions before attempting any similar activity.