

TWO NEW TACTICAL SCOPES FROM IOR VALDADA

Top optical quality for close-quarter combat
or long-range work

IOR scopes have achieved a well-deserved reputation among military, law enforcement, and civilian shooters worldwide. IOR Valdada, which supplies these scopes in the USA, has worked closely with the Industry Optic Romania factory in Bucharest to develop tactical scopes that fit the needs of American shooters. IOR was established in 1936, and throughout the Cold War produced the best optics in the Eastern Bloc. In fact, I first became familiar with

IOR scopes through their version of the PSO-1 Dragunov scope, which I found of higher quality than the Russian original. Throughout the Cold War, too, Romania maintained close contacts with other European optics manufacturers, including Carl Zeiss and Leica. As a result, IOR kept current with new technology and was poised for competitive operation once Romania became democratic.

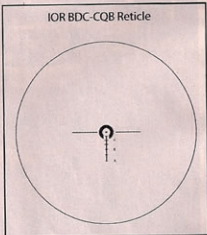
My familiarity is with IOR Valdada tactical scopes, but I understand

from those who have used their hunting scopes that they are excellent as well. Among the features that make Valdada scopes of such high quality is the use of glass from the German Schott Glasswerk. As a result, IOR Valdada scopes remain clear and the reticle sharp in very adverse conditions. The etched reticles are very sharp and of excellent design for quick tactical usage. The

By Leroy Thompson



IOR BDC-CQB Reticle



The Pit Bull utilizes IOR's
BDC CQC reticle.

Thompson fires his Colt LE6940 fitted with the IOR Valdada Pit Bull offhand. The Pit Bull is an extremely compact 1-4X scope, yet it gives big scope performance—highly suitable for close-quarter combat as well as engaging more distant adversaries.



Another advantage of the IOR Valdada Pit Bull is that the BUIS (Back Up Iron Sights) Thompson's Colt LE6940 may be used through it.



Top view of the Pit Bull shows the elevation dial atop the scope, windage dial on the right, and illumination dial at the bottom. Note the white dot and clearly marked OFF position for the illumination dial. This is very helpful in making sure the illuminated reticle is turned off to avoid running the battery down.

Use of steel ball bearings in IOR scopes is a big plus, as this ensures consistent and exact tracking when adjusting windage or elevation. I test a lot of scopes and find that many scopes that theoretically have precise adjustments are not so precise. Those from IOR Valdada are generally very precise. IOR Valdada scopes feature the MC-7 Wide Band full anodizing process using seven to



This side view of the mounted Pit Bull shows how carefully the rings must be positioned not to bind the magnification adjustment ring.

11 layers of coating per lens surface. All of this translates to exceptional clarity and resolution (including on the edges of the field of view) as well as excellent light gathering and superb long-range performance.

IOR Valdada scopes have a well-earned reputation for holding up to hard usage, too. They are designed to operate in temperatures from -40 to 140 F. The scopes are of airtight construction with nitrogen-filled tubes and are resistant to rain and fog.

There are a couple of other

aspects of IOR Valdada products that make me especially enamored of them for law enforcement. First, IOR Valdada Heavy Duty rings really are heavy-duty. Once the scope is mounted properly, it stays securely in place. I also especially like IOR Valdada's illuminated reticles. I have used them on very dark nights when a target at 200 yards was illuminated only by moonlight or a small light placed nearby and shot groups virtually as good as in daylight. In fact, in some cases I find the illuminated reticle against the dark surface at night allows more precise aiming. The adjustment dial for the illuminated reticles also offers enough brightness settings to allow for use in total darkness or twilight.

The new Pit Bull QR-TS 1-4x32 is a very compact optic, which gives big performance. Only 7.3 inches

overall and 23 ounces in weight, the Pit Bull does not take up much real estate on an M4's top rail yet offers 1X with a very wide field of view for CQC (Close Quarters Combat) or 4X by quickly operating the magnification ring. On 1X setting at 100 yards, the field of view is 144 feet, which is excellent for scanning for targets. Even on 4X at 100 yards, the field of view is 38 feet.

The Pit Bull uses IOR Valdada's CQB-BDC reticle, which is a good combo for CQC out to 300 yards



Thompson fires the Colt LE6940 with the IOR Valdada Pit Bull from the kneeling position. The Pit Bull allows the Colt carbine to remain handy enough that Thompson can quickly assume this position and acquire the target.

plus. This reticle incorporates a horseshoe with a center dot that may be used for very quick target acquisition at closer range. The center dot is 3 MOA on 4X setting. Out to 25 yards, the horseshoe may be placed quickly around the target for fast engagement. With practice, I have gotten to the point that I can engage to 50 yards in this way. At 100 to 200 yards (if zeroed at 200 yards), the center dot may be used for more precise aiming. A post with stadia lines to 800 yards allows aiming at those distances without adjusting elevation. When the reticle is illuminated, the horseshoe and center dot glow red and allow precise shooting. Horizontal lines to the sides of the horseshoe lead the eye to the center dot. I would actually like to see hash marks on these horizontal lines as an aid to leading a target at closer ranges. The reticle is designed for 62-grain SS109 (M855) rounds, but it will be very close at 300 yards with 55-grain M193 ammo.

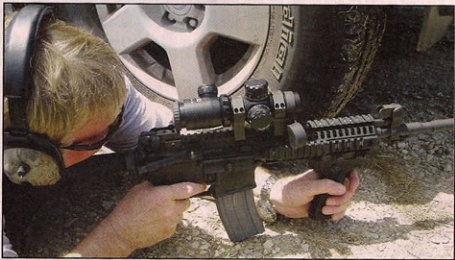
I have found that I can get excellent accuracy with the CQB-BDC reticle. At 100 yards, I can stay

around an inch and at 200 yards around 2 inches so basically I'm achieving about an MOA at those ranges for three-shot groups shooting prone or from a rest. I also have done some quick shooting offhand and been happy with the results. I tried some five-shot groups at 50 yards on 1X and was getting groups of around 2 inches fairly typically.

The Pit Bull is a very versatile

optical sight for a 5.56 NATO-caliber carbine. It functions in low light on 1X setting as a CQC carbine with illuminated dot, yet it allows counter-sniper usage to well past 300 yards if so desired. I have it mounted on my Colt LE6940 carbine, which I previously reviewed in this magazine. That combo is very light and portable yet gives me a broad engagement capability. The Pit Bull can serve as the optical sight for a tactical police or military unit, but it would also make an excellent optic for a police patrol rifle. U.S. Special Operations Command has had a bid spec out for some time for optical sights that allow a fast transition from CQC to counter sniper to meet conditions encountered in Iraq and elsewhere in the War on Terrorism. The Pit Bull would meet these bid specs quite well.

I have now fired around 300 rounds through my LE6940 with the Pit Bull mounted and become more impressed with it each time I shoot with it. A shooting buddy who is hypercritical of optical sights tried it the last time I had it out and pronounced himself impressed. I have also let a half dozen law enforcement tactical officers have a look at it; they are impressed as well. I have specifically tried quickly transitioning between hanging plates between



Thompson practices engagement drills from around cover with the Colt LE6940 and IOR Valdada Pit Bull. A Colt/LaserMax GGL vertical foregrip with laser and navigation light is affixed to the Colt.

25 and 50 yards and find it very fast handling. Plus, that wide field of view aids in fast target acquisition.

I do find when going quickly from 1X to 4X, the adjustment ring is a bit stiff. IOR Valdada does this on purpose to keep fit close and precise. The ring will get smoother with use. I also noted when I mounted the Pit Bull that since there is not a lot of space on the tube care must be taken not to mount the rings too close to the adjustment ring or it will not turn. I did manage to mount the Pit Bull, however, so I could use my BUIS (Back Up Iron Sights) through the scope, an important consideration with a battle rifle.

My orientation is towards military or law enforcement tactical optics, and the Pit Bull fits those missions quite well. It would also work well for the shooter who owns an AR-type carbine and wants a versatile scope that may be used for home defense or hunting or other types of shooting. Valdada scopes are not cheap; one pays for quality. However, when compared to other top-of-the-line optical sights with the same features and quality, Valdada scopes are reasonable.

The other new IOR Valdada optical sight is designed especially for the array of .308 tactical self-loading rifles. The self-loading .308 tactical rifle has become quite popular for use by designated marksmen as well as police snipers. Many military special ops units have found the .308 self-loading rifle useful for engaging targets quickly and precisely at longer ranges. Although .308 scopes that are designed for bolt-action sniping rifles have worked quite well on some self-loading tactical rifles, there are some special considerations that make a scope designed for the self-loading rifle appealing. For example, the ability to deliver fast follow-up shots makes a scope with a wider field of view particularly useful with the self-loader.

For security teams or some military units, the .308 rifle offers the ability to engage vehicles more

effectively or to punch through light cover. Many special ops personnel or security team members who use a .308 self-loader desire an optical sight that will allow them to use the rifle effectively and quickly at close ranges yet reach out to 600 to 800 yards if necessary. Because the .308 self-loading rifle will already be heavier than a 5.56 carbine, weight for the scope is important, as well, to keep the rifle handy.

In an attempt to tailor a scope to



Here are the results of five shots fired offhand at 50 yards with Pit Bull-sighted Colt carbine.

minated reticle. Length overall is only 12 inches and weight is 24 ounces, both excellent for a scope with these features and magnification. I chose my Rock River LAR-15 carbine as a platform, and the two work very well together.

The reticle is the MP-8 Dot which



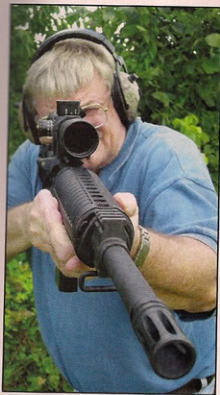
Thompson fired this three-shot group at 200 yards using the Colt LE6940 with the IOR Valdada Pit Bull and Black Hills 60-grain soft-point ammo.



Thompson fires the Rock River LAR-8 with the IOR Valdada 2-12x36 BDC Spartan mounted from the kneeling position at 100 yards. The 24-ounce Spartan keeps the carbine lively in the hands for offhand shooting.

the self-loading .308 rifle, IOR Valdada has introduced the Spartan 2-12x36 BDC. The Spartan is a true battle rifle scope that allows close-range engagement on 2X setting and reaches out to maximize the .308 round on 12X. Field of view is good: 74 feet on 2X at 100 yards. The Spartan incorporates all of the IOR features I discussed at the beginning of this article, including an illu-

incorporates a center .25 MOA dot with crosshairs using fine hash marks instead of mil-dots. For anyone used to using mil-dots for ranging, the hash marks are easy to use and actually are a bit finer and do not obscure the target at longer range. At 12, 3 and 9 o'clock are heavier lines/bars of .5 mil thickness that lead the eye toward the center dot, especially for close range



Thompson looks ready for serious business in this head-on view of the LAR-8 with IOR Valdada Spartan mounted.

shooting. When I tested the Spartan on 2X at 25 yards, use of these three heavier lines allowed me to get on the target very quickly.

Perhaps the feature I like best with the 2-12x36 BDC Spartan tactical scope is the elevation BDC (Bullet Drop Compensator) adjustment system. The shooter can choose to sight in the scope at 100 or 200 yards. Once the group is centered on the aiming point and the dials are returned to the zero point, then adjustment for elevation will be quite simple. When the dial is set to "2," the scope will be on at 200 yards with .308 168-grain ammunition. To engage at 400 yards, all the shooter has to do is move the dial to "4." This is a great system that precludes the need to tape bullet-drop info to the stock or carry a chart.

I found the Spartan helped maximize the potential of the LAR-8 when shooting it. Rock River guarantees this carbine to shoot 1.5 MOA at 100 yards, and I was achieving consistent groups at 100 yards between 1 and 2

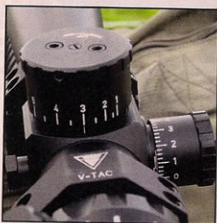


Thompson fires the LAR-8 with the IOR Spartan from the prone position at 200 yards. The 3.5-inch eye relief works well when shooting prone. A significant advantage of a telescoping stock on the LAR-8 is that the shooter can easily adjust for eye relief.

inches and at 200 yards around 3 inches. Normally, with red dot scopes, if the red dot is zeroed at 25 yards, it will be close to on at 200 yards. I wanted to get an idea of where the scope would shoot at 50 yards if I had it set for 300 yards, so I set up a hostage/hostage taker target and with the elevation dial on "3" fired two "head shots" at the hostage taker. Using the eye/nose triangle aiming point, my impact was about 2 to 3 inches high, still almost certainly a brain shot. Normally, the scenario used in training is that an operator is preparing to do a clearing drill on building or otherwise engaging a target at relatively close range, but then must quickly engage a far target in the counter-sniper role. I thought it

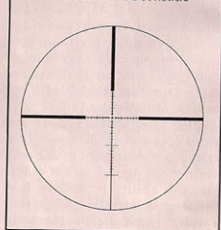
would be interesting to see what would happen if a quick shot were necessary at closer range when the operator was prepared for long-range shooting. I tried the head shot a second time using the SAS-Aiming Point (i.e. the mouth) and that put the two shots between the eyes. When, I set the elevation dial on "2," point of impact was much closer at 50 yards as well.

I was impressed with the 2-12x36BDC Spartan just as I was with the 1-4x32 QR-TS Pit Bull. IOR Valdada has got a pair of winners here for the 5.56 NATO and for the .308 battle rifle. Both are handy, both are



The Spartan 2-12x36 BDC has its elevation dial set on "3" for 300 yards. This is a very fast, effective system.

IOR Valdada MP-8 Dot Reticle



The Spartan 2-12x36 BDC uses the M-8 Dot reticle, which is similar in principle to the more familiar mil-dot system but uses hash marks instead.

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These two shots were fired offhand at 50 yards with the dial on the 300-yard setting. Though high, they would still have been brain shots.



This three-shot group was fired at 100 yards Using the 2-12x36 BDC Spartan atop the LAR-8, Thompson fired this three-shot group at 100 yards.

versatile, both are tough for hard use, and both track well for accurate adjustment. Either of these scopes could serve as the scope for one's battle rifle. Actually, my only problem with these two scopes is that they are so good that I don't want to take them off the two rifles that I have been using to test scopes. For sure, I am keeping the Pit Bull on my LE6940, and most likely the Spartan will stay on my LAR-8. Now that I have the Spartan zeroed to the LAR-8, it's so fast to just turn the elevation dial for distance and engage I don't plan to change. **GW**

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