A Mule Ear Chunk Rifle

I ran across a Mule Ear Chunk and Bench Rifle at the Bevel Brother’s 21st Annual Original Over-The-Log World Championship. The match was held at Bevel Down’s farm “Wiseacres” near Weston, MO, October 13, 2018. I arrived on Friday afternoon and scored a primo parking place, just in front of Chuck Jones. He is a Bower and makes some pretty sweet kids and adults archery bows. His website is Bows.net.

After a couple of ounces of Jack (me) I started to discover his other talents. He also has made a few rifles. I have a soft spot for Mule Ears because they solve the problems created by a drum and nipple or a patent breach without resorting to an under-hammer action. Of course, a mule-ear creates its own set of problems. The design Chunk has built solves some of those. He chose his design based upon a lock built by an Illinois gunsmith featured on the American Long-rifles website. Most mule-ears have a full thickness lock-plate, twice as thick as a lock-plate on a regular side-lock. This is because the tumbler-hammer pivot is drilled parallel to the face of the plate. The design Chunk has built has the feature.

That’s where his design and a regular mule-ear departs. Chuck’s design places the sear and the mainspring on the outside of the lock-plate. The sear catches on the tail of the hammer, which is on the outside of the lock.
The advantage to this is the tail of the Sear is pressed upwards to release the hammer, which means the rifle builder and use an off-the-shelf set trigger. Note the small sear notch of the tail of the hammer. The tail is the other end of the hammer and is not found on most locks.

The main spring is massive and the hammer doesn’t engage the spring until the hammer is almost cocked.
The inside of the lock is very smooth with only the sear and the sear spring on the inside. Note the pivot for the sear is a blind hole near the tail of the lock. Only a small part of the sear pivot pin is visible. The sear spring looks like the sear spring from a Siler lock.

The rifle this lock is pared to is a 48 caliber, 54 inch, 1 ¼ inch across the flats barrel and it weights 23 pounds. He shoots 120 grains of 2Fg Swiss behind the 45 caliber round ball.

By the way the Bvl Bros OTL shoot was great. Lots of great prizes, a nice day with no rain and the best BBQ I have ever had. The apple dumplings finished of the day.