



470 Mbogo - From Start to Finish

470 Mbogo, custom built big bore rifle by Dave Estergaard

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Big Bore Compendium – .550 Magnum

The 550 Magnum is a new cartridge designed by Neal Shirley of Yuma, Arizona that is generating a lot of excitement. It is based on the 460 Weatherby cartridge necked up to .550" bore diameter. The 550 Magnum will push a 700 grain bullet close to 2400 f.p.s. if the shooter can stand behind the rifle.



By basing the 550 Magnum on 460 Weatherby basic brass, the historic problems related to rebated rims and/or brass of questionable quality in the 500 Jeffery, 505 Gibbs, 500 AHR and .585 Nyati are eliminated. The round will fit into a CZ550 action economically and with very little modification. The 550 Magnum pushes a 700 grain bullet at 2400 feet per second, creating a very deadly dangerous game round.

A short version of the 550 Magnum called the 550 Express will fit into Mauser 98 and Winchester model 70 actions. It has a 2.65 inch case and a 3.35 inch cartridge overall length so that it will fit into any action that accommodates a .338 Win. Mag. or .458 Win. Mag. It will be a true delight to be able to push 700 grain bullets at 2200 f.p.s. from surplus military Mauser 98 actions.

The 550 Magnum and 550 Express have a unique groove diameter of 0.550", shared only by a few obsolete cartridges. Consequently the bottleneck for 550 Magnum owners is a steady supply of top quality solids for dangerous game hunting. At the time of this writing, Mr. Shirley has gotten several premium bullet makers interesting in supplying this cartridge, Alaska Bullet Works, PA Bullets, www.CustomCastBullets.com, and Hawk bullets are already in production. Properly headstamped brass is available from Quality Cartridge, and Jamison International – Formerly BeLL Brass www.custombrassandbullets.com. Alternatively the reloader can just neck up and fireform 460 Weatherby brass, though it will be slightly too short, requiring the reloader to load to OAL rather than cannalure.

Barrels for the 550 Magnum are available from Dan Pederson of [Cutrifle Barrels](#) in Prescott, Arizona, Bausksa Barrels, Pac-nor, and Badger barrels in the US.

For the reloader who wants a practical big bore bolt gun of maximum possible bullet diameter, the 550 Magnum is the natural choice. If you were thinking of a 500 A-Square, 505 Gibbs or 500 Jeffery but wanted a little more bullet, the 550 Magnum provides it. Even Mauser and Model 70 fans can have a low cost big bore by rebarreling to the 550 Express. Custom loaded ammo is available from Superior Ammo.

Example loads:

Cartridge	Bullet	Velocity	Notes
550 Magnum	700 grain	2400 f.p.s.	Long version for CZ550 and Ruger RSM actions. 26" barrel.
550 Magnum	650 grain	2400 f.p.s.	–
550 Magnum	600 grain	2500 f.p.s.	Low sectional density – not preferred.
550 Express	600 grain	2400 f.p.s.	Short version to fit in .458 Win. Mag. sized actions.
550 Express	650 grain	2250 f.p.s.	–
550 Express	700 grain	2200 f.p.s.	Maximum load 23" barrel.

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