

# The Sako 85 Finnlight II

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The Sako Finnlight has a rich history which goes back to the Model 75, released in 1997. From then through to the Model 85 the Finnlight has been regarded as one of the premier stalking rifles world-wide. I have an 85 Finnlight in .270 Winchester topped with a Zeiss Duralyt 2-8x42 scope as my 'go to' rifle for serious hunting.

When I heard Sako were releasing a new Finnlight on the 85 platform I wondered how they could improve on what's already a superb rifle, but from first glimpses in the international shooting press the 85 Finnlight II looked a worthy successor. So when *Australian Shooter* received the rifle in .308 Winchester from Beretta Australia it came with high expectations.

The Finnlight II is developed on the Sako 85 format and is available in four action

lengths (S, SM, M and L) and 10 classic hunting calibres - .243 Win, 6.5 Creedmoor, 6.5x55 Swedish, .270 Win, 7mm-08, 7mm Rem Mag, .308 Win, .30-06 Sprg, .300 Win Mag and .300 WSM.

Refreshingly, the rifle is available in both right and left-handed models and the review version came with a set of Sako Optilock rings/bases as well as a superb Steiner Ranger 2.5-10x50 scope. This combination would be perfect as a light-weight stalking set-up and weighs in at 3.74kg, the rifle in its bare form a mere 2.8kg and 1030mm in length.

## Receiver

The barrelled action is made from stainless steel enhanced with a weather-resistant tungsten grey Cerakote finish. The receiver is the Short action, measuring

215mm x 35mm with the ejection port (on the right-hand side) coming in at 70mm, large enough to allow for unhindered ejection of fired and unfired rounds.

The top of the receiver encompasses Sako's trademark dual tapered dovetails which can accommodate an array of scope mounting options but is tailor-made for Sako Optilock rings and bases. The left-hand side of the receiver has an angled flat which follows the perimeter of the ejection port and carries the maker's name, action size, serial number and proof mark. To the rear is the bolt release button which by pressing when the bolt is drawn back allows for removal for cleaning and safe storage.

## Bolt

The Sako 85 bolt on the Finnlight II is of the standard triple locking lug arrangement found on this grouping and for the Short action measures 70mm x 16mm. The bolt body is the only part of the visible surface not Cerakoted, going with a polished steel finish.

The bolt head encompasses the triple locking lugs, a claw extractor on the right and a slot milled into the base of the bolt head which allows the blade ejector to come into play when the bolt is drawn fully back. The bolt handle is a one-piece unit attached to the body and is also Cerakoted but in matte black.

Rearward is the steel shroud on the bolt body, also Cerakoted to match the receiver and barrel in tungsten grey. The bolt handle



Sako 85 Finnlight II in component form.

## The Sako 85 Finnlight II

is well profiled, comfortable in the hand and the 60-degree bolt lift ensures quick cycling of the action.

### Triggerguard and magazine

The triggerguard and magazine plate is made from a single piece of lightweight, hard anodised aluminium and is neatly inletted into the floor of the stock and Cerakoted to match the barrelled action. The detachable five-shot magazine with Sako's patented Total Control Latch (pending) sits securely in place, flush with the bottom surfaces. It will never fall out accidentally and can be top-loaded through the ejection port. The trigger on the Finnlight II is identical to all the Sako 85 stable, a single stage unit (with an optional set trigger available), fully adjustable between 1-2kg. It broke crisply at 1.5kg. The trigger blade is aluminium with a gentle curved profile and ribbed surface allowing positive finger control.

### Safety mechanism

This mechanism comprises a two-way safety that locks trigger and bolt handle simultaneously and a small bolt release button which, when depressed, allows the user to load or remove a cartridge from the chamber while the safety is engaged.

### Barrel

This measures 510mm, is of a standard sporter profile and in .308 Winchester calibre has a 1:11" rate of twist with four grooves. It is cold hammer forged, stainless steel and tungsten grey Cerakote finished to match the rest of the rifle and, more importantly, is fluted. This gives some savings in weight and provides a slightly larger barrel surface area, allowing faster cooling when the barrel has heated up. Internally the barrel is superbly finished with no machining or tooling marks.

### Stock

This has been completely redesigned with adjustable cheekpiece and improved



One of the main features is the lightweight fibreglass stock with fully-adjustable cheekpiece.

### Group accuracy testing in mm of Sako Finnlight II in .308 Winchester - 100m

Ammunition	Best	Worst	Average*
Sellier & Bellot Match 165gr HPBT	16	23	20
Sako Powerhead 165gr Barnes TSX	24	34	29
Sako Super Hammerhead 150gr Soft Point	20	32	26
Sako Hammerhead 180gr Soft Point	17	30	24

\* Average group size calculated from five 3-shot groups at 100m



Tungsten grey Cerakoted action showing tapered Sako 85 dovetails on top, steel bolt shroud and two-position safety.

bedding arrangement. The stock itself is fibreglass with aerospace-grade RTM (Resin Transfer Moulding) technology, a cutting-edge method of component manufacture from precise moulds using a vacuum.

The result is a high degree of manufacturing tolerances giving a superior bedding platform for the barrelled action and inherent accuracy, while resulting in a very lightweight stock as required by a premium stalking rifle.

Externally the stock is of a classic American profile with clean lines, the exception being a lightly scalloped section on the underside of the buttstock directly beneath the adjustable cheekpiece. Users can tailor the position of their master eye in relation to the ocular of the riflescope. A single square-shaped button on the right of



The pistol grip has a rubber elastomer insert.

the buttstock is pressed to allow the sliding comb to be positioned securely to any height required. I found the comb height spot-on with it fully in the 'down' position when looking through the fitted Steiner Ranger scope.

Moving to the pistol grip and fore-end grip areas, inlaid clear rubber panels offer an excellent grip and are super comfortable. At the rear of the buttstock a black gel-matrix recoil pad helps reduce flinch and is softer than traditional sorbothane pads.

The stock also has stainless sling swivel studs complemented by a set of Sako one-inch sling swivels supplied with the rifle. Removing the barrelled action from the stock the bedding arrangement is clear, the bedding platform by way of a carbon fibre

## The Sako 85 Finnlight II

unit providing a surface which will give superior stability for the barrelled action while saving weight.

A shallow square recoil lug on the underside of the front receiver ring mates up with a steel insert which in turn sits securely in a mortise in the carbon fibre bedding platform. This arrangement permits the barrel to fully float along its length while the rear of the receiver sits directly on the carbon fibre bedding block. The stock is finished in dark grey.

### At the range, in the field

The barrel was cleaned before range testing and five 3-shot groups taken using each ammunition brand with a barrel clean in between. The fluted, lightweight barrel did heat up markedly after each 3-shot string but allowing it to cool was a prerequisite. One target load in the Sellier & Bellot Match was assessed but the majority of ammunition tested were premium hunting loads from Sako - the 165gr Powerhead, 150gr Super Hammerhead and 180gr Hammerhead.

The three premium hunting loads by Sako shot well, all groups consistently averaging around the 1 MOA mark (28mm) at 100m. For a stalking rifle where most quarry would be hunted out to 300m, any of these three hunting loads will be up to the task. It's pleasing that Sako hunting ammunition is more available Australia-wide than it was a few years ago as it's excellent for the hunter who wants reliable and high-quality ammo without having to handload.



The flush-fitting detachable magazine and trigger guard.

### Overview

Can I compare my trusty 85 Finnlight in .270 Winchester with the new Finnlight II in .308 Winchester? Calibres aside, the Finnlight II has a definite edge over its predecessor. The much-improved stock is a winner and the tungsten grey Cerakote over the stainless barrelled action will help protect the metalwork against the elements as well as giving extra stealth.

I'm old-school but Cerakoting is here to stay, looks the part and protects metalwork unlike any metal finish. The review rifle felt superb in the hands and would make an astute investment for the stalking hunter. Quality doesn't come cheap with an RRP of \$4239 but I subscribe to the 'buy once, buy best' theory. More at [berettaaustralia.com.au](http://berettaaustralia.com.au). ●



The stainless steel barrel has a series of flutes for reduced weight and faster cooling.



The Sako 85 'S' action without stock.

## Specifications

**Manufacturer:** Sako, Finland

**Model:** 85 Finnlight II

**Distributor:** Beretta Australia

**Calibres:** Short action: .243 Win, 6.5 CM, 7mm-08 Rem, .308 Winchester (tested)

**Short Magnum action:** .300 WSM

**Medium action:** 6.5x55 SE, .270 Winchester, .30-06 Springfield

**Long action:** 7mm Rem Mag, .300 Win Mag.

**Sights:** Clean barrel. Tapered dovetails on receiver for scope-mounting hardware

**Action:** Sako 85 manually operated bolt-action, three locking lugs, control round feed with mechanical ejection. Stainless steel with tungsten grey Cerakote finish

**Barrel:** Stainless steel cold hammer forged, 510mm, fluted. Tungsten grey Cerakote finish

**Stock:** Fibreglass with RTM (Resin Transfer Moulding) technology, carbon fibre bedding block, adjustable cheekpiece

**Magazine:** Short and Medium action, five rounds in magazine, one in chamber. Short Magnum and Long action, four rounds in magazine, one in chamber. Detachable steel box magazine with Sako Total Control Latch (TCL) system

**Total length:** 1030mm

**Weight:** 2.8kg (Short action), 2.9kg (Medium), 3.1kg (Short Magnum & Long)

**RRP:** \$4239 (right-handed), \$4509 (left-handed)