

Mikhail Dragunovs fulde tekst om Baikal

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Izhevsky Mekhanichesky Zavod (Mechanical Plant, Izhevsk), “Izhmekh”, which is known as well under its trademark “Baikal” was founded on July, 20th, 1942 during WWII.

The main production of the factory were military small arms – Tokarev pistols M1933 (TT), Nagant M1895 revolvers, Simonov and Degtyarev antitank rifles.

After WWII the factory started the production of hunting and sporting weapons. The first model of the shotguns was the single-barrel shotgun ZK (**Z**latoust, **K**azantsev – Place of production/Designer’s name). The cheap and reliable gun was very popular in Russia, especially among country inhabitants. The production of ZK started in 1949. A year later the factory commenced the production of a side-by-side shotgun, model IZH-49. The IZH-49 based on the Sauer Mod. VIII system.

The IZH-49 marked the beginning of the Izhevsk side-by-side shotguns family. It included the IZH-54, the IZH-58 (various modifications), the IZH-26, the IZH-43 (various modifications). The most popular of them was the IZH-54 which a lot of people considered as “An Izhevsk Classic”.

An over-under shotgun appeared in the family Izhmekh guns in 1959. The first O/U shotgun of Izhmekh had IZH-59 designation. After two years it was replaced with the IZH-12 model. Since 1973 the serial production of the IZH-27 started. Till this time the IZH-27 is the most popular model of Izhevsk shotguns.

The end of 1950th was the time of growing popularity skeet & trap shooting in the USSR. The IZH-59 intended primarily for skeet & trap but it was used for hunting as well. The followers of the IZH-59 – IZH-12 and IZH-27 had their sporting counterparts: IZH-25 (based on the IZH-12 system) and IZH-39 (based on the IZH-27 system). Primarily the IZH-25 and the IZH-39 intended for entry-level and

amateur shooters, but some leaders Soviet national team used them. Larissa Gurvich, repeated Europe and World champion in female skeet shooting used the IZH-25.

Since early 1960th the Soviet Union started export of hunting and sporting guns. All hunting guns produced at that time bore trade mark "Baikal". About 60% of the weapons with "Baikal" brand were of Izhmekh production; about 39% were produced by TOZ (Tulsky Oruzheyny Zavod). The most popular model of TOZ was the side-by-side hammer shotgun TOZ-BM and its follower TOZ-63.

A new chapter in the history of Izhevsk hunting guns was opened in the early 1990th. It was adopted a new gun regulation which made easier for Russian citizens to own and use rifled guns. At that time every basic model was developed to a family of weapons. (One must mention that since 1996 the designation of Baikal guns was changed from IZH to MP – "Mechanical Plant")

It was developed the single-shot rifle MP-18MH based on the system of single-barrel shotgun IZH-18 (the follower of the ZK shotgun). The MP-18MH was chambered for a big scale of calibres from .222 Remington till .30-06 Springfield and 7,62 x 53R.

The IZH-27/MP-27 became the base for the family of combination guns and double rifles: "Sever" (North) – the combination gun with top rifled barrel (calibres .22 l. r. or 5,6 mm x 39) and bottom smooth barrel 20 ga./76; "Taiga" (MP-94) – top barrel 12 ga./76 and bottom rifled barrel from .223 Remington till .30-06 Springfield); MP-94MP – top .22 l. r., bottom .410/76 ("remake" of IZH-56 "Belka" (Squirrel) which was very popular among Russian hunters at the end of 1950th – early 1960th); MP-94 "Express" (MP-251) – O/U double rifle.

The IZH-43/MP-43 family was enlarged to three interesting versions: the MP-43KH – version with external hammers; the MP-43KH/MP-43K "John Wayne" – short-barrel version (barrel length 20 in./510 mm) intended for "Cowboy shooting" competitions (43K has external cocking levers which look like hammers); the MP-221 "Artemida" (Artemis) – side-by-side double rifle in two chamberings: .

30-06 Springfield and .45-70 Government (the MP-221 was developed on the order of European American Armoury, a dealer of Russian guns).

In the 1990th Baikal entered new niches of gun market: pump-action shotguns, semi-auto shotguns and small-bore semi-auto rifles. The MP-153 semi-auto shotgun, gas-operated, auto gas valve could use wide palette of 12 ga. ammunition from 12/70 till 12/89. The MP-153 was awarded with the title “Gun of the Year” by “Guns & Ammo” American magazine in 2001.

Since 2013 Izhmekh is managed by Kalashnikov Concern. “Baikal” is now the trade mark which belongs to Concern and is used for all hunting guns produced by the Concern.

Today “Baikal” brand includes the following families of guns:

Classic shotguns – MP-27 O/U series (MP-27M, MP-27EM – with ejector, MP-27EM-1C – with ejector and single selective trigger). MP-43 S/S series (MP-43, MP-43E – with ejector, MP-43E-1C – with ejector and single selective trigger, MP-43-KH – with external hammers). MP-18 single shot gun.

Semi-auto and pump-action shotguns – MP-155 (gas-operated, with auto gas valve), MP-156 (recoil-operated, with Benelli-type inertia system), MP-135 (pump-action, based on the MP-155 system)

Combination guns – MP-94 (smooth barrel – 12/76; rifled barrel – calibres from .223 Rem. till .30-06 Spring. and 7,62mm x 54R); MP-94 “Sever” (rifled barrel – calibres .22 l. r., 5,6mm x 39; smooth barrel 20/76).

Single-shot rifles – MP-18MH – calibres from .223 Rem. till 7,62mm x 54R; Baikal 121 “Lis” (Fox) - .308 Win.

Repeating rifle - Baikal 145 “Los” (Moose) – calibres .308 Win., .223 Rem.

Small-bore rifles – repeating straight-pull rifle Baikal 141 “Sobol” (Sable; has the same system as the Biathlon rifles series – BI-7-2, BI-7-3, BI-7-4); semi-auto rifles MP-161K; Baikal 161 “Manul” (blow-back operated)

Mikhail Dragunov CV

Mikhail E. Dragunov (b. 1947). Graduated from Technical High School (at this time Technical University “Mikhail Kalashnikov”), Izhevsk in 1972. Studied small arms designing and production. As a design engineer worked at Izhmash and Izhevsky Mekhanichesky Zavod (Baikal); both enterprises are at this time parts of Kalashnikov Group of Companies. Taught at the Technical University “Mikhail Kalashnikov”. PhD (mechanical engineering), associate professor. Since 2020, August is in retired position.

Professional achievements:

1. Submachine gun KEDR (stay for Konstruktsiya Evgeniya Dragunova - Design of Evgeny Dragunov), chambered for the 9 mm Makarov cartridge - improved the prototype of Evgeny Dragunov to serial production niveau.
2. MP-142K repeating hunting rifle in modular concept; calibres .223 Rem., .308 Win., .30-06 Sprg., 9.3x64 mm Brenneke - development & tests. Produced in small series.

Co-author of the books:

1. Спортивное оружие. Ижевское оружие, т. 2 (Sporting Guns. Izhevsk Small Arms, vol. 2)
2. Проектирование пистолетов-пулеметов (Designing of Submachine Guns)
3. Ижевское стрелковое оружие - Российской армии (Izhevsk Small Arms for Russian Army)
4. Оружие ижевских заводов (Weapons of Izhevsk Factories)