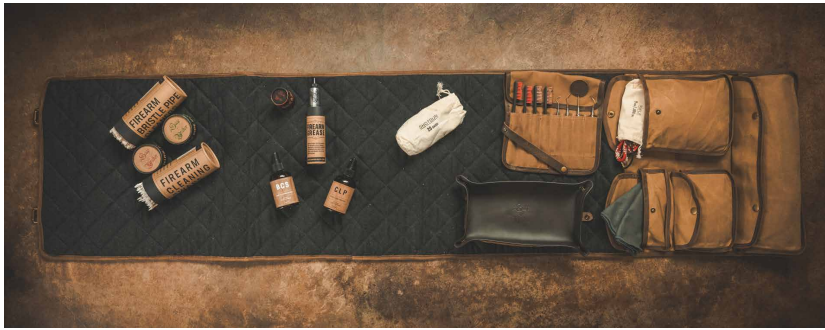


SHOTGUN AND RIFLE CLEANING MAT

FROM SAGE & BRAKER | Review by Edgar Castillo

There's something to be said for using an old, worn-out and stained towel that's permeated with Hoppes No. 9 cleaning solvent as a crude cleaning mat. The noticeable odor mixed



mat serves dual purpose at the local gun range or when plinking long range targets since it can be used as a place for marksmen to lay prone when shooting. How's that for versatility? Bet

ya you can't do that with one of those flimsy store-bought gun mats. These "mats" are sometimes old garments, pieces of cloth, or maybe even part of an old wool saddle blanket – heck, possibly even an animal pelt. Let's be honest: there haven't really been many advancements or refinements in the evolution of the gun cleaning mat. Yes, one can purchase one of those "green" mats with a rubbery bottom, but it's not going to get any fancier than that. Those mass-produced cleaning pads lack substance; they offer no personal value. Some mats offer more in terms of features but still lack that deep connection. Until now.

In 2015, Fred Bohm had a vision when he started Sage & Braker (named after his bird dogs), a mercantile company that offers high-end, heirloom quality gun cleaning products. A year later Fred released his flagship creation: the ultimate gun cleaning mat. He'd grown tired of glorified mouse pads and wanted to build a mat that would be multi-functional, yet timeless and classic. But not just any gun mat – a gun cleaning mat worthy of being passed down to family members and dear close friends.

The mat needed to have enough storage space to hold and organize gun cleaning gear, provide ample surface for cleaning, be portable, and look damn good. The materials chosen are texturally appealing to the senses: 12oz waxed canvas in tan, heavy gray wool, and thick brown leather trimmings with a circular chocolate leather patch emblazoned with the Sage & Braker logo. Even the stitching that binds the gun mat together is first class. For Fred's blueprint to come together, he brought on his mother, a quilter, to help create his design. What materialized was nothing short of top-quality craftsmanship.

At the root of the S&B gun cleaning mat is its portability. Akin to a cowboy's bed roll, this gun mat can be rolled up, cinched down with its leather straps and brass buckles, and easily transported. Once the quilted-patterned wool (a beefy ½in thick) is unveiled, an impressive set of measurements – 69in long by 16in wide – provide plenty of space for cleaning variously sized shotguns, rifles, and handguns. The

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Organization was second on Fred's list of details for this gun mat. The mat needed to have enough storage space for a multitude of S&B gun cleaning supplies: bore snake, CLP, brushes, swabs, patches, picks, and cleaning rags. The gun mat delivers on storage with four pockets of various sizes to accommodate items. Any articles too big for a pocket can be merely rolled up securely within the gun mat.

When I received and first unrolled my S&B gun mat, I was astonished by the sheer size of the cleaning surface. The cushioned wool mat was large enough for two shotguns! Plenty of room to clean and keep track of gun parts. It made for an excellent impromptu cleaning station on my truck's tailgate after a long day of hunting pheasants and bobwhite quail.

The gun cleaning mat is aesthetically pleasing; the look-and-feel is rugged, and its craftsmanship deserves to be displayed, not hidden in a gun cabinet. The quality materials that comprise the mat allow it to age well the more it is used. Every crease and wrinkle revealed in the leather and canvas with regular usage add new lines to the owner's story. The Sage & Braker gun cleaning mat is the finest you will ever own. Its blend of warm and natural yet brawny colors of leather, wool, and waxed canvas lay the foundation for how it's been built to be passed down as an heirloom and bestowed on the next generation. It is the Louis Vuitton of cleaning mats, but it's still built like a lumberjack.

The old adage "you get what you pay for" is evident in the quality of the Sage & Braker mat. The gun mat typically sells for US\$255.00, but Fred offers specials throughout the year. Purchasing the gun mat is an investment into one's own heritage, as it will last several lifetimes. Every time the S&B Shotgun and Rifle Cleaning Mat is unrolled, it will become a part of its owner. Passing those memories and experiences down is what Sage & Braker is all about.

MSRP: US\$255 | **Website:** www.sageandbraker.com