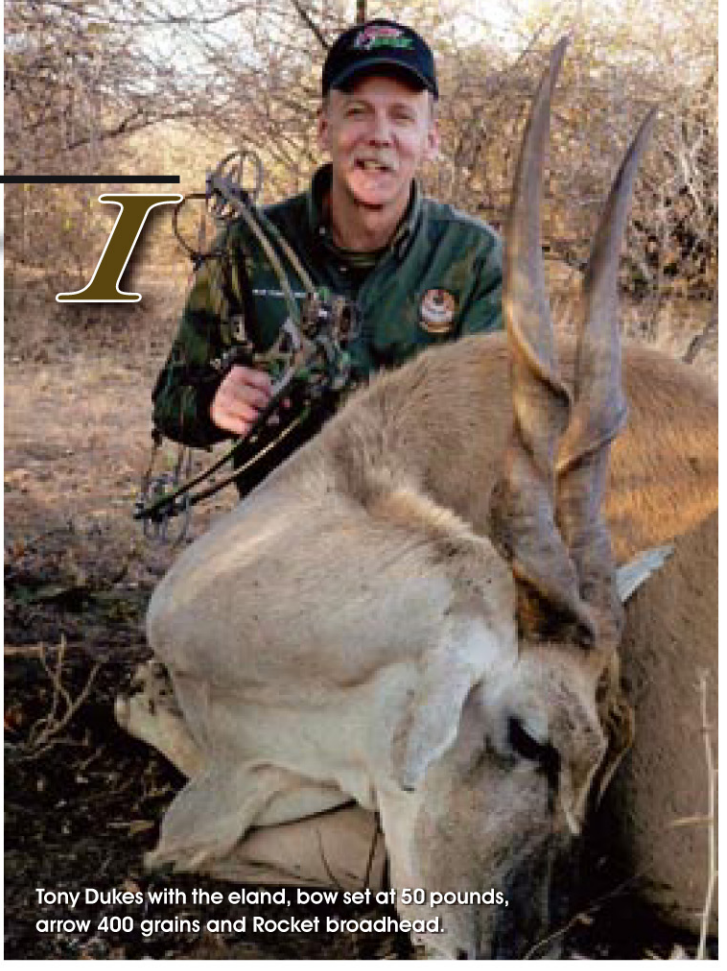
Testing the Liberty I

Specifications
Axle to axle: 20.5 inches
Brace height: 7 inches
Weight: 2.3 pounds
Draw lengths: 26.35 to 32 inches
Draw weights: 40 to 50, 55 to 65, 65 to 75 and 75 to 85 pounds
Cam and let-off: 85% dual high-speed split-cable design
Grip: Ergonometric angled grip
Sight: Vital three-pin
Sims string leeches and Bow Jacks cable silencers
Test speed: 293 fps using a 380-grain arrow, bow set at 70 pounds


Tony Dukes with the eland, bow set at 50 pounds, arrow 400 grains and Rocket broadhead.

By Adriaan Rall

A bow that fits in a briefcase? You must be kidding! The Liberty I is the shortest, lightest, most compact, radical bow ever. This brilliant design will change the trend in compound bows forever. The die-hards will complain like anything, but who cares! I have always favoured shorter and smaller. In Africa, bowhunters want to stalk and leopard-crawl through the bush – what better way to do so than with the Liberty. This is the first bow that can be shot from a prone position. What reason could there be for using a long compound bow ever again?

Tony Dukes, writer and professional bowhunting outdoor producer, had just arrived for a hunt in Africa, only to realise that all his luggage had been lost in transit, leaving him with only the clothes on his body. The Liberty I was due for a field test and no time was wasted in presenting Mr Dukes with the Liberty to help him out of his dilemma.

Needless to say, the bow was rigged up right away and set at 50 pounds. An old back injury prevented Mr Dukes from pulling any higher. I was nervous about him using such a small bow and low poundage, as he was not accustomed to the setup. He took one practise shot and with his next, shot an impala through the heart – the first animal shot in Africa using the Liberty. Next to fall was a large eland bull, the biggest antelope in Africa, with a pass-through shot. This might sound far-fetched, but was captured on film for Mr Dukes' show. There is no better testimony to this bow's efficiency than a pass-through on an eland with a bow set at 50 pounds and a 400-grain arrow!

Riser
Made from A357-T7 aluminium – the same as used for Jet impellor blades – the Liberty I weighs only half a pound and is 3½ inches wide and 4½ inches long. When viewed from the front, the riser is almost non-existent. The four limbs, which come together in two limb pockets, end to end, are attached to the ghost skeleton riser, which supports the limbs at the back by way of a three-point architecture for the top and bottom set, and integrating on the front right, the sight bracket, and at the lower bottom, the grip bracket. On the right, a quiver-mounting bracket is also supplied.

The Liberty I uses a shoot-through-split-limb design (the arrow is loaded from the front and shoots through the limbs and cables). Owing to this design there is no riser torque, limb twist and cam lean and theoretically, level nock travel is possible. A three-pin Vital sight comes as standard.

Limbs
These are made from Gordon composite core, laminated with Ultra S on the outside and Bow Tuff on the inside. The four limbs are supported by the riser, 3½ inches apart, resulting in a very rigid column-type structure and on the other end supported by the cables, which virtually eliminates limb twist away from the centre line. This limb configuration prevents cam lean. Limbs twisting on the centre axis during draw add rotational stored energy.

Grip
The grip is an ergonometric angled synthetic rubber-cushioned grip. Angled at 29º, it puts you squarer behind the bow, enforcing a slight adjustment in shooting stance.

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Tony Dukes with the impala, bow set at 50 pounds, arrow 400 grains and Rocket broadhead.

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Rest
Liberty I prescribes total containment rests, such as Whisker Biscuit, owing to the extreme string angle, but I did fine with a NAP Quick Tune.

Peep sight
Owing to the shortness of the bow, a special peep comes with it.

Cams
The bow has dual-skeleton high-speed 85%-let-off split-cable cams. The Liberty does not have cam modules for adjustable draw lengths. Instead, to optimise each draw length, a specific cam set has been built for each draw length, which means a completely redesigned bow for every half-inch change in draw length. Having shot two different draw length bows, I can verify that each individual bow performs differently. I suggest trying the different draw length bows to see which one suits you best.

Energy
The bow's excellent speed is owing to the fact that it stores more energy at a given poundage than any other we have tested, as can be seen from the force draw curve.

Speed and accuracy
With such a long brace height and high let-off, the bow is very fast. The test bow had a 30-inch draw length set at 70 pounds and managed a speed of 293 fps with a 380-grain hunting arrow. Pointing this bow is like pointing your finger – it glues to the target. The bow is hyper accurate – thus my prediction is that it will win many competitions, not to say numerous hearts.

This is what Mr Dukes has to say: *Being a man who tends to enjoy a practical joke as much or more than the next fellow, I laughed long and hard with Adriaan Rall, as he brandished the toy-like Liberty I compound bow from his truck. I was certain this must be one elaborate, novelty toy. The Liberty I, however, was no joke or toy, I was soon to learn. The tiny bow is perhaps best described, in the native tongue of one of Thwane's trackers, as a "match box". A "match box" that is most likely going to set the bowhunting world afire. The Liberty I, growing out of the flames of innovation, giving birth to a certain genesis to the sport of the ages. Set at 50 pounds, the Liberty I tasted freedom on the 4th of July, the very day that symbolises Liberty in my home, America. Four animals, four arrows and one a 1300-pound eland bull – all harvested on the 4th of July. Coincidence? Most likely destiny! Bowhunting is waking up to a new Liberty.*

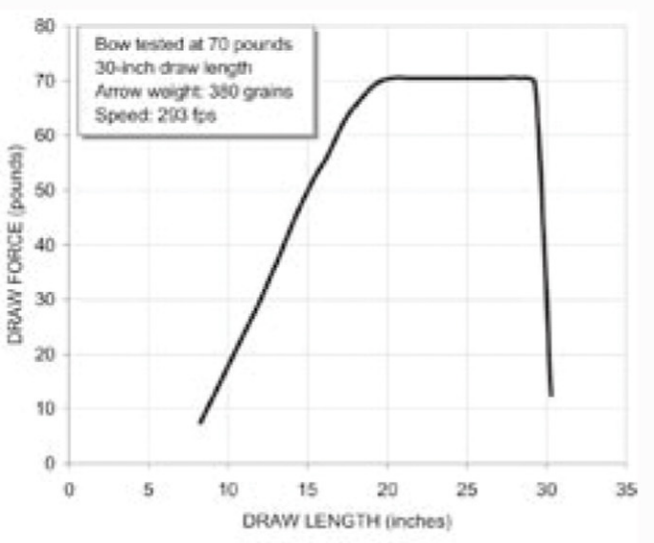

Fig. 1 Force-Draw Curve