

JOHN M. TAYLOR

THE REVENANT

Caesar Guerini has introduced a beautiful, functional over/under that rivals a handmade, bespoke gun at a fraction of the price.



Engraving by Giovanelli on Caesar Guerini's new Revenant.

I recently attended a two-day hunting, shooting, and learning event at Pursell Farms/The Orvis Experience in Alabama with the folks from Caesar Guerini. Our hosts were Guerini USA President Wes Lang and Georgio Guerini, president of Caesar Guerini Italy, who, along with Georgio's brother, Antonio, are the brains of the outfit. One of their company mottos is "Fine Italian shotguns designed for the American shooter." For many decades, Italian gun companies made guns that were attractive to European shooters and hunters but were lacking in the details that made them popular on this side of the pond. Guerini set out to correct that, and along with offering a lifetime warranty and complimentary tune-ups, they have become a driving force in a crowded field of traditional gunmakers.

The folks at Guerini didn't invite a gaggle of writers to a posh hunting destination just for fun. In addition to showcasing their current line of

Guerini over/unders, the Syren line of ladies' semi-autos and O/Us, and their subsidiary Fabarm's array of guns, they unveiled the new Revenant (the name means one who has returned from a long absence).

Georgio Guerini said, "I attribute much of our success to our passion for combining technology and art." Let me explain: Many who read this column know that I have always put great stock in the handmade, bespoke shotgun. The legendary British makers of Holland & Holland, James Purdey, and others have always taken pride in producing shotguns of the highest order, all made by hand. In recent years this has become less a matter of taking a solid block of steel and filing and shaping it by hand, and more a matter of using CNC and other modern machining techniques that have been adopted even by the most staid British gunmakers. My late friend Michael McIntosh said it best: "What difference is there if Michaelangelo used a jackhammer to remove the excess around David?" So it is with Caesar Guerini; their engineers have developed machining equipment and design techniques to take away whatever isn't a gun and leave what is.

Some time ago I wrote about the all-robot facility at Benelli where parts are made to such strict tolerances that human hands only touch them at final assembly. Guerini has adopted this approach to crafting the Revenant. In short, parts are machined so closely that they never need a file or emery paper to adjust them to fit. Does that make a traditionalist cringe? Perhaps, but look about and see what engineering and sophisticated manufacturing techniques can produce. The driving force is to make

a beautiful, functional shotgun at a fraction of the price of a bespoke gun of the same style and quality.

What sets the Revenant apart, and makes folks want to spend the MSRP of \$12,995, is its styling. The fore-end is styled like the classic Boss, winged iron that flows from the true round-body action. The side plates—it is a boxlock in function—are also rounded to enable a true round action. The grip of the stock is a flowing Prince of Wales style with a flat bottom that Guerini prefers to call “English style.” The barrels are topped with a solid game rib and carry interchangeable choke tubes. Custom stocks are available for a modest up charge.

To add to the Revenant’s sleek lines is Caesar Guerini’s choice to release this shotgun in 20 gauge. It makes for a slimmer action, and with the 3-inch (76 mm) chambers it will



Georgio Guerini squares off on a high-flying rooster with one of the company’s other over/unders.


handle about anything you choose to hunt with it. The choice of barrel length is 28 or 30 inches. The “show” gun had 30-inch barrels and felt very good between my hands. The stock and fore-end are top-drawer European walnut with a lustrous oil finish. Left-handed stocks are available and a straight-hand or English-style stock is available also on special order. Dimensions are as follows: length of pull, 14¾; drop at comb, 1½; and drop at heel, 2¼ inches. The single-selective trigger follows the traditional Italian style embedded in the sliding top-tang safety. The advertised weight is about 6 pounds, 8 ounces.

I did differ with them regarding the butt plate, which, like many of their other over/unders, is made of wood. They could provide a checkered butt like on my old AyA 53 and No. 2, but there is a reason they don’t. As Lang pointed out, many who purchase a shotgun need to either lengthen or shorten the stock. If it’s cut off for a pad or other manipulation, there goes the \$250 checkered butt. Hence there is good method to their madness.

Last, but far from least, is the elaborate engraving by none other than the house of Bottega C. Giovanelli, led by their Director and Master Engraver Dario Cortini. Giovanelli is considered the top engraving house in Italy. Their work is a combination of laser, a proprietary (secret) process, and hand finishing. All agreed that the engraving on the Revenant—designed by Dario Cortini—was striking and beautifully executed. Engraving should enhance the appearance of a gun, not be a gaudy distraction.

Because the gun we examined at Pursell Farms was the first one produced, we did not have the opportunity to shoot it as it needed to be photographed in a virgin state. I’m hoping to shoot some game-farm birds with the new Revenant soon, and report back.

It’s pretty certain, though, that for the price, this is a very fine gun.

By the time you read this, the Revenant will be available on a limited basis at your Caesar Guerini dealer. 

Farewell to a Friend

On February 6, one of the giants of shotgunning and outdoor writing left us. Nick Sisley was my best friend in the outdoor writing craft. We had been friends for over forty years and shared many hunting trips here and abroad. Nick was a true gentleman, whose hearty laugh and pointed questions were commonplace. I remember one drizzly, cloudy afternoon in Argentina where we shared a corner in a field. We had a 28-gauge and a .410, and switched guns and sides every 10 or 20 birds, laughing at good shots and bad and just having fun. Nick was fun regardless of where or when, and I and all of hunting and shooting will miss him. Farewell, my friend. —J.M.T.



Taylor’s late friend, Nick Sisley, shooting clays.



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