



Caesar Guerini Woodlander Dove Special

GUERINI'S LATEST LIMITED PRODUCTION SHOTGUN IS PERFECTLY SUITED FOR DOVE HUNTING—AND JUST ABOUT EVERYTHING ELSE.

FIREARMS don't have to be ornate to be beautiful. Case in point: Caesar Guerini's new limited production Woodlander "Dove Special." At first glance, the Woodlander Dove Special seems rather austere. But when you look more closely, the fine details found on this gun make it stand out—and it might just be the best value in upland shotguns for this year.

As the name implies, the Dove Special is based upon the Woodlander over/under, Guerini's entry level field gun. Calling the Woodlander "entry level" doesn't really do this gun justice, though, for it comes with a boxlock action that is case colored with a protective Invisalloy finish and an oil-rubbed walnut stock with a wood butt plate and a Bulino style engraving of a grouse on the bottom of the receiver. The standard Woodlander is an understated but beautiful firearm, and so is the Dove Special.

The new Dove Special Woodlander shares much of the same design architecture as the standard Woodlander model, but there are

noticeable differences. For starters, the grouse on the bottom of the receiver has been replaced by a brace of mourning doves on the limited gun. The sides of the receiver are still clean, and they have the same case colored/Invisalloy



finish that looks classy and stands up to harsh elements. The Dove version also has a solid top and mid rib, which only adds to this gun's charm. Since it's only available in 20- and 28-gauge and as a 20/28 combo, the Dove Special will likely come with 6mm ribs (the 12-gauge Woodlander comes with a 7mm rib, but all the sub-gauge guns wear 6mm ribs). In addition to the limited gauge selection, the Dove Special also comes with longer barrels than the standard Woodlander. Buyers can select from 28-, 30-, or 32-inch chrome-lined barrels, which makes sense for a gun that is primarily built for making passing shots on fast-moving birds.

The Dove Special deviates from the standard Woodlander formula in other ways, too. The standard Woodlander comes with a wooden butt plate, Schnabel forend and a round Prince-of-Wales grip, whereas the Dove Special comes with an upgraded flat-bottom grip, rounded forend and a rubber recoil pad. Both guns do come with tang mounted safety/barrel selector,

auto ejectors, and Anson style release. The 20-gauge version of the Dove Special weighs around 6.75 pounds depending upon barrel length and wood density while the 28-gauge gun will weigh between 6.25 and 6.50 pounds.

AT THE RANGE

I had an opportunity to test the Woodlander Dove Special during a Caesar Guerini event at Greystone Castle in Texas in early 2020. The Dove Special at that event was a prototype, a gun Guerini USA Owner, Wes Lang, designed to be the ultimate dove hunting gun.

For starters, this gun balances beautifully. The added barrel length distributes more of the weight forward, which is particularly beneficial for taller shooters. The availability of 28-, 30-, and 32-inch models makes these guns even more versatile. They're light enough to carry in the field and yet those long barrels make the gun perfectly suited for pass shooting or even sporting clays.

Following the gun's introduction, I was able to test the Dove Special at the Greystone's sporting clays course. The single silver bead is in keeping with the gun's traditional styling, and the oil finish Turkish walnut stock is elegant and functional. The gun came naturally to the shoulder and seemed to have close to a 50/50 POI based on how it shot for me, ideal for a field gun. I'm also a fan of the pistol grip design on this gun in terms of both aesthetics (the wood is excellent and the diamond checkering is clean and even) and the comfortable grip angle. The trigger is the same model that comes in the Woodlander and is smooth and clean. The tang-mounted barrel selector/safety should be familiar to anyone who has shot Guerini guns before, and the five nickel-plated choke tubes fit flush and offer constrictions ranging from Cylinder to Full for any

SPECIFICATIONS

Note: some of these figures are based on an early production model and may vary slightly on the finished gun.

ACTION
Over/Under
GAUGE
20, 28
CHAMBER
3" (20-ga), 2 3/4" (28-ga)
BARREL LENGTH
28-, 30-, or 32-Inches
WEIGHT
6 lbs., 5 oz.—6 lbs., 9 oz. (28-ga); 6 lbs., 10 oz.—6 lbs., 14 oz. (20-ga)
STOCK
Oiled Turkish walnut, pistol grip
RECEIVER FINISH
Case colored, gold doves on bottom of the receiver
BARREL FINISH
Blue
CHOKES
5 (CYL, IC, M, IM, F), flush fit
SIGHTS
Silver Bead
MSRP
\$4,650 (20-ga or 28-ga), \$6,875 (20/28-ga combo)
WEBSITE
gueriniusa.com

it won't have all the extras you typically find on some of Guerini's sport-specific models like adjustable combs and ribs, but the Woodlander has the balance and build quality to make a superb light sporting gun. For that matter, the gun would also work well for skeet, and though a sub-gauge field gun shooting a 50/50 pattern might not be the ideal trap gun it would work fine there, too. After a few rounds of clays at Greystone Castle I can tell you that the gun's smooth handling and very good factory trigger make it a suitable competition gun, and the 20-gauge I shot at almost 7 pounds reduces recoil fatigue.

The Guerini did its part, and it solidified the notion that this sub-\$5,000 Italian beauty is one of the best guns in this price range. It's worth noting that the early prototype model I tested came with the wooden butt plate, but Guerini has, as previously mentioned, decided to outfit the Dove Special with a rubber recoil pad.

Despite its typical Guerini good looks, the Woodlander Dove Special is not a gun you'll need to baby. The Invisalloy protective coating on the receiver is quite durable without taking anything away from the striking case color metal finish, and the oil-finish walnut stock looks great but stood up well to the handling demands of a typical day in the field or at the range. This is an exclusive gun, but not one that was meant to be trapped in the dark inner recesses of a gun safe. It's not as ornate as some field guns in this class, but that's precisely the Woodlander Dove Special's charm: it's understated but elegant, and it is mechanically solid. What's more, it's backed by the best customer service in the industry: Guerini's service department has earned an excellent reputation and they are invested in satisfying their customers—an important consideration any time you buy a gun. **GD**

hunting or sporting needs.

Speaking of sporting guns, the Woodlander Dove Special with 30- or 32-inch barrels would make a superb, light-recoiling sporting clays gun. Granted,

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