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May 2014 \$4.95 Canada \$5.95



NEW CAESAR GUERINI INVICTUS SPORTING

GUN TEST



THE BEAUTIFUL NEW INVICTUS SPORTING OVER/UNDER FROM
CAESAR GUERINI. YOU, YOUR CHILDREN AND THEIR CHILDREN
WILL BE SHOOTING THIS SHOTGUN IN COMPETITION.

INVICTUS SPORTING



A FULL SIDE VIEW OF THE NEW INVICTUS SPORTING OVER/UNDER. THIS “PURE” SPORTER APPEALS TO THE PURIST IN ME, AND I THINK IT WILL APPEAL TO A LOT OF OTHER TARGET SHOOTERS.

Caesar Guerini over/under shotguns have always been well-designed, beautifully embellished, innovative, comfortable to shoot and durable. Durable – when you think of what it means with regards to a shotgun, what comes to mind? The number of rounds it can withstand before it needs to be tightened may come to mind for many people. Well, hold onto your shell pouch, because Guerini’s beautiful new Invictus Sporting over/under has been designed to be – in the words of Wesley Lang, President of Caesar Guerini U.S.A. – “... a quantum leap forward in double-barrel shotgun durability.”

Unveiled at the 2014 SHOT Show in Las Vegas, the Invictus maintains all the graceful, stylish lines and handling characteristics these fine Italian guns are known for and much more. I spoke with Wes Lang about obtaining one of

the new Invictus models for review. When it arrived at my office, it was accompanied by a press release with the heading: Caesar Guerini designs a shotgun to exceed the one million-round durability mark.

Whoa! Did I read that right? One million rounds? I have known some clay-target competitors who mentioned they have shot more than 150,000 rounds with their guns, and I thought to myself “There’s a wall-hanger.” But according to Wes Lang, Guerini “...set out to make a shotgun that was not measured by how long you can shoot it but how long your children and grandchildren can use it.”

There are, of course, other shotguns who tout re-buildability on their models as well. But I know of no other brand that even comes close to claiming 1,000,000 rounds within the useable service lifetime of the shotgun.

This amazing feat of gunmaking engineering Guerini accomplished by deviating from the more typical design that incorporates trunnions or pins for the barrels to hinge on. Wes informed me the wear on these areas will eventually cause a condition known as “being off face,” a condition where the barrels no longer lock up tightly to the action of the gun. When this occurs, the shotgun has reached the end of its functional life. This is where the Invictus pulls away from the pack. By making use of replaceable components within the action that allow for the wear on the action to be compensated for, you not only end up with a shotgun that has been put back “on face” but a complete barrel/action relationship that is back to factory specifications. The result is an over/under that can withstand many hundreds of thousands of rounds and a gun that, like a cat, has many lives.

My test sample, Wes explained to me, was an early production model. It featured a blued receiver Wes told me is not going to be in the Invictus line-up. The photos you will see on these pages are of the regular production models, which feature a greyed receiver.

The Invictus came to me in a Sporting configuration, meaning 2 ¾" chambers, 32" flat, ventilated-rib barrels with the rib tapering from 10mm at the breech to 8mm at the muzzle. The rib sported a 4mm white Bradley-style bead at the muzzle, as well as a 2mm steel mid-bead at the mid-point of the length of the rib. Additionally, the Invictus rib featured a full-length center groove and glare-reducing cross hatch. A ventilated mid-rib is also incorporated. This rib design is one of my all-time favorites.

Weight of my test sample was 8.3 pounds with two Maxis Chokes installed in the muzzles. The balance point of my

Invictus was approximately 1.2" forward of the barrel hinging point. Bores measured with my bore reader indicated identical top and bottom interior diameters at .734 and .734 for the top and bottom. Forcing cones were seemingly of the longish persuasion, both visually and from the feel of the very acceptable recoil sensation under fire.

When asked if anything was new with regard to the bores and/or chokes, Wes replied they felt everything with the barrels and chokes was working just fine and there was no need to change a thing. Maxis Chokes, I have known from previous reviews, have always crushed targets. The chokes that came with my Invictus were no different. Six Maxis Chokes were in the tough ABS lined carrying case accompanying the shotgun: one Cylinder (+.002 over @.736), one Skeet (.004 @ .730), two Imp. Cyl. (.008 @ .726), one Light Mod-

ified (.013 @ .721) and one Modified (.025 @ .709). Like all Maxis Chokes, there were no notches to accept a typical choke wrench. Maxis Chokes can be installed and removed either by hand or with the aid of the supplied friction-fit choke wrench that doubles as a thread cleaner.

The buttstock and forearm on my Caesar Guerini Invictus were of high-grained European walnut finished in a hand-rubbed oil. The buttstock sported a mild palm swell on the right side. Both stock and forearm were checkered in a point style, with the buttstock featuring a teardrop accent on the right and left side of the wrist. The forearm was of a rounded form instead of the more familiar Schnabel style. It felt good in my hand, providing better control.

Dimensions, as measured in my office with the aid of a gun vise (see page 48) and a Shotgun Combo Gauge



THE UNDERSIDE OF THE INVICTUS OVER/UNDER IS MY FAVORITE VIEW. THE EDGES OF THE RECEIVER ARE CARESSSED BY THE GRACEFUL LAYERED BOLSTERS, AND THE ARTFUL VINE-AND-SCROLL ENGRAVING IS PLEASING TO THE EYE.

from Robert Louis Company (see page 40), gave me the following: Length-of-pull (with the trigger blade adjusted to the rearmost point in the trigger guard), 14 1/2"; cast at heel, 1/16"; cast at toe, 1/8"; drop at comb (face), 1 1/4"; drop at heel, 2 1/4"; and approximately 3 degrees positive pitch. A medium-soft, 3/4", black, solid recoil pad came on the Invictus buttstock.

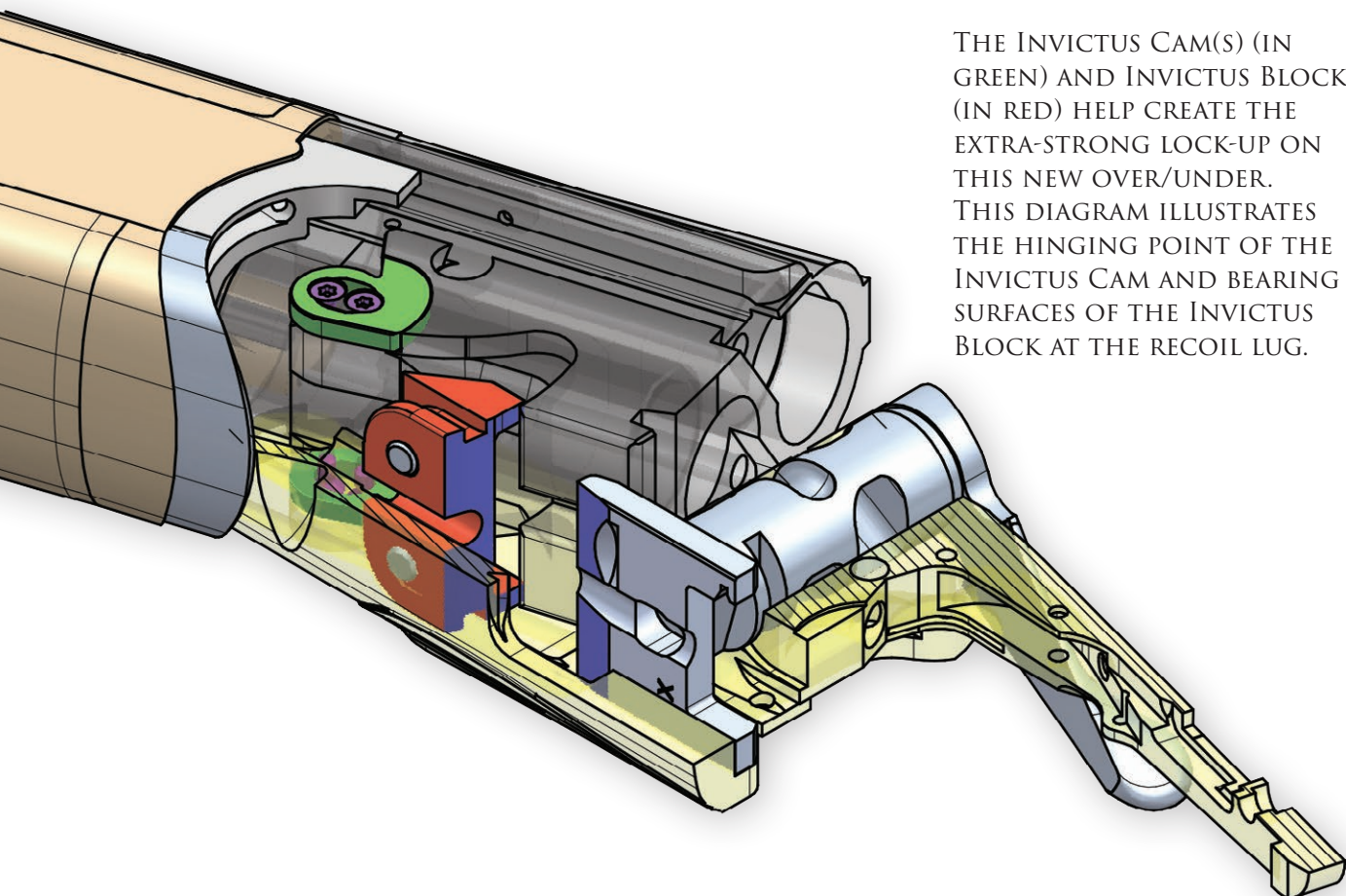
The trigger group features an adjustable trigger blade. It is 10mm wide, polished smooth and teardrop shaped. The total range of adjustment within the trigger guard is approximately 11mm or 7/16". There is a supplied T6 Torx wrench for making adjustments. Triggers are single-selective. The poundage of the triggers on my test gun were measured at 3 pounds, 7 ounces for the bottom barrel and 3 pounds, 10 ounces for the top barrel. A bit of very negligible take-up was noted. However, the little Torx wrench can also be used to adjust take-up as well as trigger-blade travel. The Guerini guns I have tested in the past all had very good triggers, as did the Invictus Sporter.

The receiver of the Guerini Invictus is, like all Caesar Guerini shotguns, beautifully engraved. Its looks are enhanced by the gracefully sculpted and dramatic fences. My

favorite view of the new Invictus is the underside, where your eye is treated to equally dramatic layered bolsters that caress the right and left sides of the receiver. Highly attractive vine-and-scroll engraving also greets your eye on all surfaces of the Invictus receiver (see photo above).

The Invictus receiver is where the magic of extreme durability and re-buildability takes place. The main components that facilitate this are the Invictus Cam(s) and Invictus Block. These parts not only ensure solid lock-up of the barrel to the receiver, they strengthen the union of those two major components. In the illustration on page 38, the green items are the Invictus Cams, the red piece is the Invictus Block. The Invictus Cams facilitate hinging of the barrel upon the receiver and, if ever necessary, help to re-face the breech to the receiver to factory, like-new specifications with new oversized cams.

But Guerini's engineers thought that wasn't enough. They knew they needed another player in this scenario. Enter the Invictus Block. When the Invictus is closed, the rear face of the block (the blue area) bears against the front face of the recoil lug, thereby completing the lock-up and ensuring the strength of the total relationship of barrel to receiver. Like the



THE INVICTUS CAM(S) (IN GREEN) AND INVICTUS BLOCK (IN RED) HELP CREATE THE EXTRA-STRONG LOCK-UP ON THIS NEW OVER/UNDER. THIS DIAGRAM ILLUSTRATES THE HINGING POINT OF THE INVICTUS CAM AND BEARING SURFACES OF THE INVICTUS BLOCK AT THE RECOIL LUG.

Invictus Cam, the Invictus Block can be changed to a larger size to reestablish a proper barrel-to-receiver relationship (back "on face"). A lock-up this solid not only keeps the wear and tear of normal use to a minimum, it makes for a softer recoil sensation due to less slap of components under the stressors created when a shell ignites in the chamber. In a nutshell, that's how the Caesar Guerini Invictus can make a claim to a one million-round lifespan.

Field testing took place on the sporting clays course at Coon Creek Trap & Skeet Range in Lincoln, California, a few miles from my office. Light Modified and Modified Maxis Chokes were my choices for the testing, and B&P's famous F2 Legend 1-ounce loads with 7 1/2s were called upon for the job. Although the stock's LOP was a touch long to allow a smooth mount for me from a low-gun position, I compensated by using a pre-mounted gun on most shots. Being a longtime skeet shooter, this change in routine did not bother me much. Two of my students were with me that day, Layne Curnutt and Greg Nau. Both were admiring the looks of the Invictus Sporting, so I asked them if they would like to take a few shots with it. You would have thought I was handing out bags of money the way they reached for the shotgun. Layne and

Greg hit most of the targets they attempted with the Invictus, attributing the misses to "new gun syndrome." Both liked the smooth handling of the 32" Invictus, as well as commenting on how soft the recoil felt to them.

I agreed with their opinions on the soft recoil and excellent handling the Invictus displayed. I also said the gun was a "pure" Sporter, devoid of high rib or adjustable comb. It appealed to me in such a configuration (Guerini DTS barrel weights and Stock Balancer can be fitted). Targets were hit with authority. The Maxis Chokes and hard 7 1/2s did a number on the long crossers, as well as those pesky Rabbit targets taken from the tower at Coon Creek's Station 2. I did not shoot my best-ever score, nor did I score my worst ever, but the Invictus was impressive, to be sure.

As I wrote this, the Invictus was in very short supply. Contact your local Caesar Guerini dealer to see when he or she may have one for you to fondle and fall in love with. Offered in 30" and 32" Sporting configurations for the time being, the Invictus will set you back approximately \$6,750 (MSRP). The new Caesar Guerini Invictus is "A quantum leap forward in double-barrel shotgun durability" and a lot more!

SS

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