



SPORTING CLAYS, FIVE STAND AND PARCOURS DE CHASSE

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OFTEN IN ERROR,
NEVER IN DOUBT
BY BRUCE BUCK

FABARM AXIS RS12 QRR SPORTING

A REVIEW BY **BRUCE BUCK**

THE FABARM AXIS RS12 SPORTING QRR IS THE LATEST SPORTING CLAYS ITERATION OF THE FABARM AXIS OVER/UNDER. FABARM (FABBRICA BRESCIANA ARMI S.P.A) HAS BEEN PRODUCING GUNS IN BRESCIA, ITALY FOR THE PAST 115 YEARS. TODAY, FABARM'S 100,000 SQ/FT MODERN COMPUTERIZED PLANT PRODUCES LARGE QUANTITIES OF RIFLES AND SHOTGUNS EACH YEAR.

Over the years Fabarms have been imported into the USA by companies such as SIG, H&K, Tristar, Hanus and others. Today, Caesar Guerini holds a controlling interest in Fabarm. The combination of the two companies makes them the second largest producer of shotguns in Italy.

The Axis RS12 Sporting has been out for a couple of years. It costs \$3,150 plus \$340 for an adjustable comb stock if you wish it. Our review gun, the Axis RS12 Sporting QRR (Quick Removable Rib) is new this year. It is basically the same gun but includes the adjustable comb stock, a removable stock weight and two easily interchanged top ribs for \$4,195.

The Axis RS12 action is the popular Italian design of replaceable stub hinges and a low-mounted wide locking tongue like Browning. This certainly isn't fancy, but it definitely is proven. With the exception of Beretta, Benelli, Perazzi and a couple of others, most other Italian makers (along with the Turks and one American company) use this same basic O/U action. The low locking lug makes the action just a touch deeper than some others, but it's

not really noticeable. The action has the reputation for great durability – so important in a target gun.

Inside, the layout of coil spring driven hammers pivoting from the bottom trigger plate and sears hung from the top strap is again pretty standard. Ejector trip rods are fastened to the bottom of the hammers so that on the hammer drop they will protrude slightly from the receiver nose to engage the ejector trips in the forend. The ejectors built into the barrels' monobloc sides follow the Perazzi pattern and are easily removable for deep cleaning by compressing the ejector and popping out a little locating button. A heavy single hammer cocking rod runs down the center of the receiver bottom to meet the stud in the forend which pushes back the rod to cock the hammers when the gun is opened. This is a reliable setup.

The trigger is of the inertia type, using the recoil of the first shell to move an inertia block to select the second sear.

Trigger pulls on our test gun were quite light at 3# for



the under barrel and 2³/₄"# for the over. There was some creep, but little slop. They felt crisp when shooting. The trigger blade is adjustable along a track to fit various hand sizes. As befits a target gun, the safety is manual. The top of the safety has a Beretta-style lateral toggle to select which barrel fires first.

The receiver, inside and out, is nicely blued. The parts are cleanly machined. Everything is made of solid steel. In all, it definitely looks durable and well designed.

While the receiver design is standard stuff, the barrels are a bit different. The first thing you will notice is that the barrels have no side ribs, like the Krieghoff and Remington 3200. The barrels are joined at the monobloc and by a metal spacer near the middle and a polymer hanger at the muzzles. Barrels come in 30" or 32". Our test gun had 30" tubes.

The top rib is the QRR feature of the gun. It's aluminum and quickly detachable by pushing out a retaining pin and sliding the rib off. Two ribs come with the gun. One is set for a 50/50 point of impact when looking flat down the rib. The other, raised at the rear, is set for a higher 65/35 POI. The rib is attached fore and aft, but free floating in the middle. There is the

usual white target bead up front and a small steel center bead.

The barrel interior design is Fabarm's TriBore HP system. It starts with a 3" shell chamber, then a fashionably long 1¹/₂" forcing cone. For about the next 13" or so the bore measures a consistent .737" overbore. Then, for the next 7", it slowly tapers down to .723". After that it goes back to parallel for the next couple of inches until it reaches the rear of the choke skirt. The choke skirt widens to .739" and then begins to taper until it opens out at the muzzle. Thus, the barrel constricts, runs parallel, then constricts, then runs parallel, then opens at the choke skirt, then constricts in the choke and then flares at the choke end. Fabarm literature claims that all this wiggling about 'lowers recoil and reduces the need for excessively long forcing cones'.

The barrel has been over-proofed to 1630 BAR. For reference, 1200 BAR is standard steel load CIP proof in Europe. 1370 BAR is their high performance proof. 1630 BAR is very strong indeed and Fabarm says that you can use steel shot even with the tightest choke.

The screw chokes, marked 'Hyperbolic Exis HP', were 3³/₄" long, including a 1/2" extension

beyond the muzzle. The choke interiors are cut in a hyperbolic curve, rather than the usual straight taper and then parallel. This is intended to improve patterns, though just how is not clear.

Five chokes are included with constrictions listed as Skeet (.720"), IC (.715"), Mod (.703"), Imp Mod (.698") and Full (.688"). These are about nominal for a .723" bore gun. You'd be set if you just added a Light Mod at around .708". A perfectly adequate choke wrench is included, not one of those wretched flat stamped things.

The Monte Carlo stock on the Axis RS12 QRR Sporting comes standard with a 'Micro-Metric 3D' adjustable comb. It is adjustable for height, cant and cast by means of the included Allen key. In its full down position and using the flat 50/50 rib, the comb measures 1¹/₂" x 1³/₄" drop. This may be a bit high for those with a

full face, but it goes no lower. Stock length is 14³/₄" to the back of a 22mm smooth non-sticky rubber pad. The right hand stock has a palm swell and a bit of right cast off. A lefty stock is optional. The grip is tight, thick and vertical. The stock is easily removed via a through bolt, which also provides the interior attachment for the included 6.5oz 'Kinetik' weight if you wish to use it. The weight feels as though it contains loose lead pellets which can shift slightly on recoil to alter the recoil pulse.

The lines of the forend are very attractive and classic, mainly because it eschews the wretched Schnabel-schnout inflicted on so many other sporters. If you shoot with your index finger well forward, it will not get dinged. The forend uses a proper Deeley pull-down latch and inside it has a nice little extra. By turning an eccentric screw inside the forend you can adjust the opening and closing tension of the gun to personal preference or to account for wear. Nice little touch.

The wood on the gun looks smashing, really first rate, but looks can be deceiving. The walnut has received the Fabarm 'Triwood' treatment. This process has been used for 13 years. It's not a film. It's a process which inks a grain pattern into the wood. The result is a very fancy looking walnut protected by a scratch-resistant semi-gloss waterproof acrylic

THE MONTE CARLO STOCK ON THE AXIS RS12 QRR SPORTING COMES STANDARD WITH A 'MICRO-METRIC 3D' ADJUSTABLE COMB.



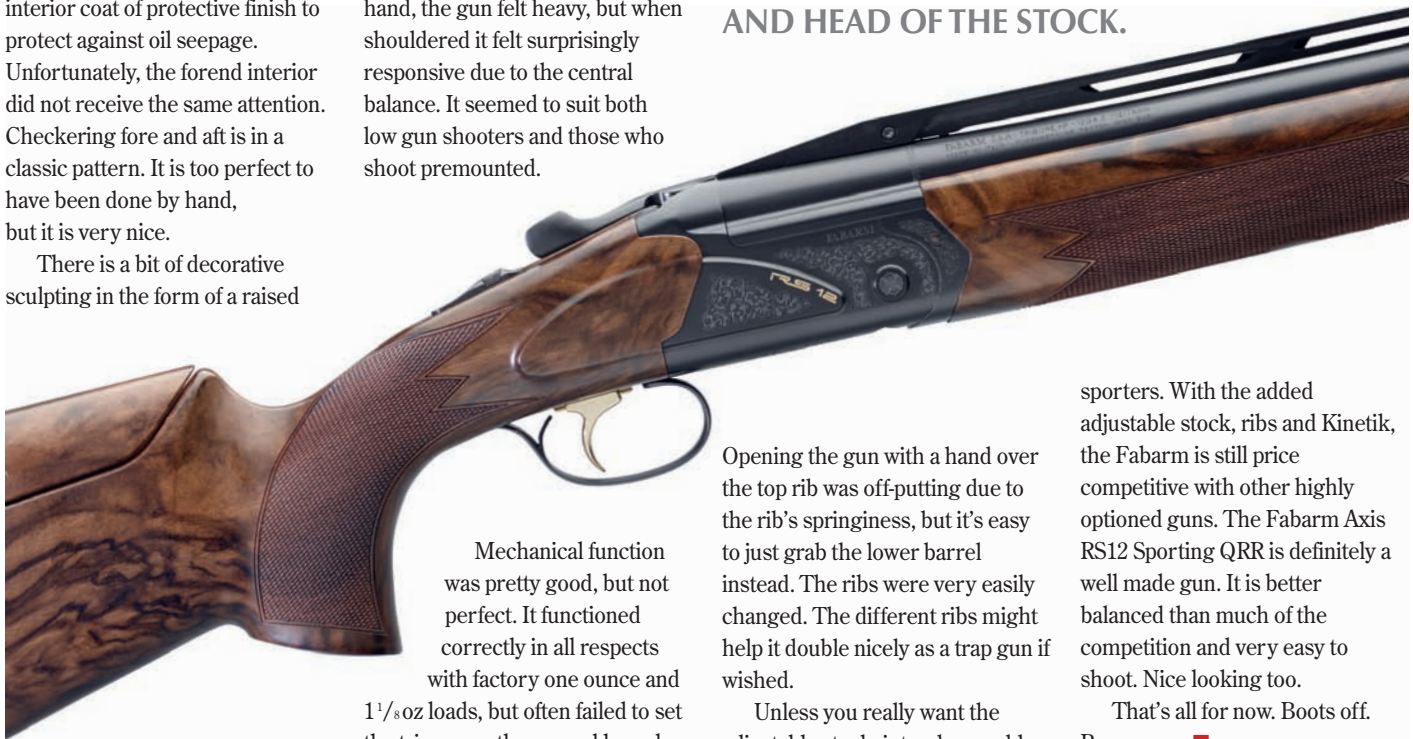


varnish. Compared to the other 'enhanced finish' guns I've seen, this is the best and least obvious. The head of the stock has an interior coat of protective finish to protect against oil seepage. Unfortunately, the forend interior did not receive the same attention. Checkering fore and aft is in a classic pattern. It is too perfect to have been done by hand, but it is very nice.

There is a bit of decorative sculpting in the form of a raised

5-Stand and Olympic bunker trap. At a bit over eight pounds, it stands right in the middle of the general weight for sporters. Held in one hand, the gun felt heavy, but when shouldered it felt surprisingly responsive due to the central balance. It seemed to suit both low gun shooters and those who shoot premounted.

THERE IS A BIT OF DECORATIVE SCULPTING IN THE FORM OF A RAISED ELLIPTICAL SECTION ON EACH SIDE OF THE RECEIVER AND HEAD OF THE STOCK.



Mechanical function was pretty good, but not perfect. It functioned correctly in all respects with factory one ounce and

1 1/8 oz loads, but often failed to set the trigger on the second barrel when using my grotty ultra-light 7/8 oz reloads. Perhaps that just shows that the Fabarm has good taste! It did handle hot 1250 fps 7/8s loads just fine.

In spite of all the hype, recoil seemed normal for a gun of that weight. Newton wins again.

Opening the gun with a hand over the top rib was off-putting due to the rib's springiness, but it's easy to just grab the lower barrel instead. The ribs were very easily changed. The different ribs might help it double nicely as a trap gun if wished.

Unless you really want the adjustable stock, interchangeable ribs and Kinetik weight, you can save \$1,000 by getting exactly the same gun in the Axis RS12 Sporting model without the QRR. Up to you. In that \$3,000 area, it comes up against Browning's base 725 Sporting, a bit over Beretta's 686 and well under their 692

sporters. With the added adjustable stock, ribs and Kinetik, the Fabarm is still price competitive with other highly optioned guns. The Fabarm Axis RS12 Sporting QRR is definitely a well made gun. It is better balanced than much of the competition and very easy to shoot. Nice looking too.

That's all for now. Boots off. Beer open. ■

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elliptical section on each side of the receiver and head of the stock. It would have been better omitted, but it's not awful. Our receiver was nicely blued with well done mechanical acanthus leaf engraving. I've seen photos of other Axis shotguns with silver receivers and this blued one looks a lot nicer. In all, it's actually a pretty good-looking gun.

The gun comes in a practical lockable Negrini plastic case suitable for hand-to-hand combat with the airlines baggage gorillas. The case contains the gun, the extra rib in an upper compartment, five chokes in a small plastic choke case, the choke wrench, four Allen keys for all the adjustments and a semi-helpful eight language manual. The Kinetik recoil reducer weight came installed in the stock. The US warranty is for five years.

The gun was shot at sporting,

