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Fabarm Elos D2

BRUCE BUCK

At first glance, the new Fabarm Elos D2 over/under may seem similar to previous Fabarm Elos models, but it has undergone a number of changes—one of which makes a world of difference.

In the September/October 2013 issue I reviewed Fabarm's Elos Deluxe AL. It was a very nice 20-gauge aluminum-action O/U. It is still in the Fabarm line along with its plainer sibling, the Elos B AL, but both are slowly being replaced by the Elos D2. The D2 comes in 12, 20 and 28 gauge and is priced at \$2,595. This is very close to the current \$2,520 price of the Elos B AL and substantially less than the \$3,055 of the Deluxe AL. Our review D2 was a 20-gauge.

The new Elos D2 comes only with an aluminum receiver, while the Deluxe and B were available with steel or aluminum. The D2's receiver has rounded underside edges, whereas the earlier guns had more fully rounded receivers. Inside, the action appears unchanged, but there are some important improvements. Our gun's action interior also appeared cleaner and more finely finished than that of the Deluxe I reviewed.

The action design is the Italian triggerplate design used by many makers. Sears hang down from the top strap; hammers hinge on the triggerplate. Active lockup is by a broad low tongue that engages the monoblock bottom. Passive locking is courtesy of four lugs on the underside of the monoblock that engage cutouts in the receiver floor. Hinging is by trunnion stubs. It is not original, but it works and is proven beyond a doubt.

The trigger is inertial and needs recoil from the first shot to set the second sear. It worked correctly during my tests and never malfunctioned. That's thanks to the D2's improved sear springs and redesigned hammers. Trigger pulls were both 5¼ pounds with a bit of free travel before engagement. This is acceptable in a field gun, where a very light trigger might be a safety issue. The tang safety is manual, and barrel selection is by the Beretta-style lateral toggle built into it.

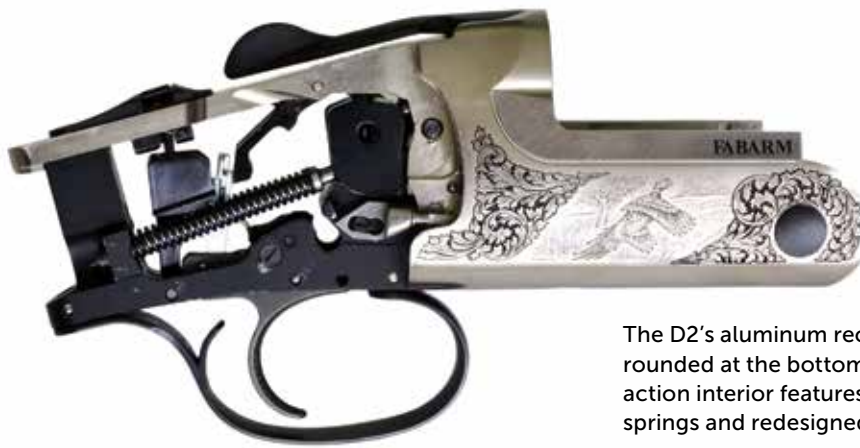
While the triggerplate is steel, the main part of the action is aluminum. Actually, it's Ergal 55, a high-strength aluminum alloy. The action does not have the common vertical steel reinforcement in the standing breech face, so that Ergal 55 must be able to do its job. The aluminum action is laser engraved and then nickel plated. The engraving shows a pheasant on one side and two quail on the other—all surrounded by acanthus leaves.

The D2's 20-gauge barrel is 28", the only length offered.

The deep-drilled bores are cut to Fabarm's unique Tribore HP dimensions.

They started with 3" chambers and moderate 1"-long forcing cones. For the next 13" they were an overbore of .638", a good bit larger than the nominal 20-gauge .615". Over the next 7¾" the bores tapered to .625" where the screw chokes began. Basically, the Tribore HP gives you a long overbore section and then another long taper before choking. According to Fabarm literature, the overbore section lowers friction and deforms less shot, while the tapered bore increases shot speed.

The five included screw chokes are flush mounted and ¾" long. The chokes are called Inner HP and are



The D2's aluminum receiver is rounded at the bottom, and the action interior features improved sear springs and redesigned hammers.

referred to as being “hyperbolic.” The interior tapers aren’t straight conical. They actually arch before reaching maximum constriction, and then curve out again to a short flare. Fabarm claims that the curving constriction causes less shot distortion than the sharper constriction of standard chokes. This is the reason that, unlike most makers, Fabarm OKs the use of steel shot in its tightest chokes.

The choke tubes are each marked as to distance and constriction: “Cylinder”, “Short $\sim\frac{2}{10}$ ””, “Medium $\sim\frac{5}{10}$ ””, “Long $\sim\frac{7}{10}$ ”” and “Xtreme $\sim\frac{9}{10}$ ””. The chokes are conveniently notched on the front rim for easy identification when in the gun. They come in a plastic box with a proper wrench.

On the outside the barrels are matte blued, not gloss. There is a $\frac{1}{4}$ ”-wide flat vent top rib with non-reflective engraving and a single brass bead up front. The side ribs are solid but go back only 18” from the muzzle, leaving the part under the forend without side ribs and thus a little lighter. The solder joints were flawless. I was told that the solder process used was relatively high heat and that the ribs are firmly attached with no history of coming loose. Many much fancier guns cannot make this claim.

The screw chokes do cause slight barrel bulges at the muzzles, but you don’t notice it when shooting. What is key is that the barrels are a bit thinner—and thus lighter—than on earlier models. They are still over-proofed at 1,630 BAR, where a typical Italian nitro-proof shotgun is rated for steel at 1,320 BAR. Lighter certainly doesn’t mean weaker.

But it’s the barrels’ weight and

balance that are the keys to the Elos D2. O/U’s with aluminum receivers are notorious for having comparatively heavy barrels that produce an excessive forward balance and impede handling. The Elos B and Deluxe are quite good, but this gun has taken the next step. The D2 is probably the best-balanced aluminum-frame 20-gauge O/U I have handled.

And by balance, I don’t mean the teeter-totter point. I am referring to the moment of inertia. I have mentioned this before, but perhaps I should touch on it again. Take a broomstick with a brick on each end. It balances in the middle but has a high moment of inertia and, if it were a shotgun, would be hard to swing quickly and hard to stop. Now take the same broomstick and put the same two bricks together in the middle. Weight doesn’t change. The balance point is still in the center. But the moment of inertia has gone way down, and the “gun” now handles too quickly and is whippy.

So balance point really doesn’t mean much. It’s the moment of inertia, or the effort to move the gun, that matters. Wes Lang, who runs Fabarm USA (as well as Caesar Guerini USA), is very much concerned with gun handling. He is an excellent shot and knows how to set up a gun. The Elos D2 has benefited from his expertise. The all-important handling of the D2 is truly exceptional, especially considering its aluminum receiver and light weight. Our gun weighed only 5 pounds 12.5 ounces, a great upland carry weight and the reason you buy a gun with an aluminum receiver.

The walnut on our gun would best be described as “mid-range” as far as

grain. Not bad, but not too fancy either. The pistol-grip stock had a length of pull of $14\frac{11}{16}$ ”, a drop at comb of $1\frac{1}{16}$ ” and a drop at heel of $2\frac{1}{4}$ ”. There were about 3° of standoff and a bit of right-hand cast. The LOP was fairly standard, but the stock height was a bit more than on many other guns, including the Elos Deluxe tested previously. At the back of the stock is a $\frac{1}{2}$ ”-thick black recoil pad, but other pads are available to alter length.

Unlike the Elos Deluxe, the D2 has a Schnabel forend. The forend is attached with an abbreviated Deeley latch. The forend metal where it mates with the front of the receiver is also aluminum, so the action-hinge surface is aluminum on aluminum, to even out wear. The forend also has a unique adjustment feature where it easily can be snugged up to the receiver if it becomes worn.

Checkering was cleanly laser-cut in a traditional and effective pattern. The wood finish is described as being matte and hand-oiled.

The D2 comes in a serviceable cloth-covered plastic case, which contains the box of five chokes, the choke wrench and two Allen wrenches for adjustments. The manual is one of those eight-language generic deals that covers many models. The warranty is for five years.

Shooting the gun was a real eye-opener. It was mechanically correct in all respects. Thanks to the gun’s perfect balance, the delightfully light carry weight did not cause whippiness or difficulty shooting.

Because it was summer and I like to stay on good terms with the game warden, I elected to shoot clays. Skeet



originally was designed as grouse practice and, when shot low gun, is a great test for an upland gun. The Elos D2 moved quickly and allowed me to take Station 8 birds quite close to the house. Crossers on Station 4 could be taken well before the center stake or well after it. In the latter case I would delay mounting the gun so that the mount/swing/shot would be at the same tempo, just later. The barrel balance had just enough inertia to help the follow-through but not enough to slow it down. The crisp trigger was also an aid.

To simulate quail flushes (after clearing it with the range officer), I shot trap with a low gun from just behind the trap house. Depending on my luck with the first shot, I took a second shot at the clay or a piece thereof to check the recoil and muzzle rise. Neither was significant, and the gun continued to shoot exceptionally well.

Those to whom I loaned the gun all felt that its light weight and pleasant handling were ideal for upland work. There were also comments about it being quite attractive and a good value.

The Elos D2 is a real shooter. It is beautifully balanced, a joy to carry and fairly priced. Well done, Fabarm. 🙌

For more information, contact Fabarm USA, fabarmusa.com.

If you have a question or comment, e-mail Bruce Buck at TheTechnoid@gmail.com.

SNAPSHOT

Make & Model: Fabarm Elos D2

Gauge: 20

Action: Over/under boxlock

Chambering: 3"

Finish: Nickel-plated receiver, laser engraved, matte-blue barrels

Barrel length: 28"

Weight: 5 pounds 12.5 ounces

Chokes: Five screw-in flush-mount chokes

Stock: Pistol grip, oil finish, 14¹¹/₁₆" LOP, 1⁵/₁₆" DAC, 2¹/₄" DAH

Accessories: Choke wrench, two Allen keys, five-year warranty

Price as tested: \$2,595
