

THE GUN RACK

Fabarm Autumn

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They say good things come to those who wait. So when Italian firearms manufacturer Fabarm recently announced that, after 120 years in business, it had produced its first side-by-side shotgun for American hunters, wingshooters were understandably excited. And why wouldn't they be? Dubbed the Autumn, the new 20-gauge was designed for the uplands, with sleek lines and a rounded action perfect for carrying in the grouse woods or pheasant fields. We were lucky to get our hands on the first example brought into the US, and we took it to the Maine woods to see if it had been worth waiting for.

The gold selective single trigger is inertia operated (so the first shell must fire to enable a second shot), and there are intercepting sears, to provide additional safety. Trigger pulls were crisp and clean and averaged 3¾ pounds for the right barrel and 3½ for the left. The barrel selector is located on the top-tang safety, which is manual—not ideal for a game gun.

The Autumn comes with Deluxe Turkish walnut with a hand-oiled matte finish. Our gun had an English stock with a splinter forend (although a pistol grip paired with a semi-beavertail is available) and an Anson-style pushbutton latch. The forend incorporates a steel insert where it contacts the barrel lug, so the action can be tightened, if necessary. Stock measurements were: 14½" length of pull to a wooden buttplate, 1½" drop at comb and 2¼" drop at heel. Checkering on the forend, grip and buttplate was nicely done.

The 28" Tribore HP barrels (30" tubes are available) have 3" chambers and automatic ejectors and are proofed for steel. The swamped rib has a textured finish, to reduce glare, and there is a silver front bead. The gun comes with 5 INNER HP flush-mounted choke tubes: Cylinder, Improved Cylinder, Modified, Improved Modified and Full. The chokes are grooved on the ends for identification, and all are approved for steel.

Lockup is bank-vault secure, thanks to a four-lug locking system—which also should increase durability. The rounded action is steel and color case hardened with a scalloped back. Engraving is full-coverage ornamental-style scroll on the action, fences and toplever, with "FABARM" in gold on both sides, "Autumn 20" underneath and the gold Fabarm lion on the bottom of the trigger guard.

The Autumn arrived just in time for opening day, so we put it to good use in Maine's coverts. With a weight of 6 pounds 3 ounces (on our digital scale) and a balance point just in front of the hinge pin, the gun carried and pointed well. The measurements were ideal, and the gun performed like a virtual wand—sweeping birds from the sky. Several shots were the instinctive poke-and-hope type in thick cover, with the dog bringing back grouse and woodcock taken for lost. The only "issue" I had was with the manual safety, as I am accustomed to automatic safeties on field guns and a couple of times found myself unnecessarily trying to push off the catch as birds escaped. We also put a variety of loads through the gun at the range, and it smashed clays with equal authority—functioning without a hiccup and kicking out empties with vigor.

But just as the seasons pass, our time with the Autumn eventually came to end. As we boxed up the gun, we reflected on its performance in the uplands and at the range and emphatically concluded: It definitely had been worth the wait. Price (including an INTEGRALE case and five-year warranty): \$3,995. For more information, contact Fabarm USA, fabarmusa.com.



A pair of 20-gauge Autumn side-by-sides with Deluxe Turkish walnut—one with a pistol grip and beavertail forend, the other with an English stock and splinter forend—from Fabarm USA. See p. 39.