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Okay, so Blaser stole the show, but what else was there to see?

Browning

Well, Browning had a feast for the eyes too, raising the profile of their Custom Shop – which makes hand-built guns in the best Belgian tradition – by launching the John M Browning brand, complete with a classy new logo and contemporary brown and orange livery. On display were some stunning examples of the classic B25 that has long been synonymous with the Custom Shop, but alongside them was a new gun, the B15. Based on a side-plated version of Browning's excellent B725 action, it's a machine-made gun, but lovingly hand-finished, lavishly engraved with a choice of game scene or foliate designs, and furnished with gorgeous walnut in a range of four grades. Price-wise, it fits in neatly between the bespoke B25s and the deluxe but production-line Heritage, with guns costing from around £9.5K to around £15.5K.

Benelli

Also making its UK show debut – though it arrived in the shops last year – was Benelli's extraordinary entry into the O/U market, the 828U. If you haven't seen this gun, you absolutely must take a look at one. Everything about it is radical, from the semi-auto-style, shim adjustable stock with its gel comb insert and innovative recoil-damping system, to the top-lever-cocking, wide-gaping, alloy-bodied, low-profile action, with its robust steel Jaeger-type



And the winner is... Bated breath as Blaser's Robert Sajitz announces the result of the Blaser F16 prize draw

fastener-cum-standing-breech, to the barrels which have ejector triggers built into their chambers, no side ribs and a sighting rib made from carbon-fibre. Even the chequering pattern on the pistol grip is continued as a decorative motif on the action body, which is available in either a satin silver or black finish. However, you feel about the 828Us looks you can't help but be impressed by the sheer creative energy that Benelli have applied to re-imagining what an O/U shotgun should be!

Akkar

Of course another way to make a shotgun distinctly different is to stick a third barrel on it! That's the neat attention-grabbing trick accomplished by Akkar's Mammut (a.k.a. Chiappa Triple Crown). Perfect if you can't decide whether to buy a side-by-side or an over-and-under, or if you simply want to see the shoot captain turn purple. Joking apart, the gun is nicely made, surprisingly handy, and simple to



Is Churchill's name any more out of place on a Turkish gun than Webley's? Regardless, the Akkar Churchill 820 is a handy little 20g

use. It's a non-ejector, and the single-trigger is non-selective, but it has a reliable mechanical (non-inertial) action that fires right-left-top. The Triple Crown uses Rem-choke-style interchangeable choke tubes, so you can set up your patterns to suit your situation, or purchase duplicate tubes and shoot the same pattern from each barrel. For a closer look, check out Hickock45's YouTube channel, call your local gun shop, or look out for a review of the nimble 28g version here. Expect to pay around £1500.

Akkar also do a tidy little 20g O/U in their Churchill range, called the 820. It's an ejector, with 28- or 30-inch barrels, 3-inch chambers, modern styling and a plain brushed-silver action... and attractively priced at around £700.

Zoli

Or if you're interested in a 20g O/U game gun but want to go a good few steps further up-market, what about Zoli's new Pernice round action? Available with Grand Lux or Ambassador-grade

walnut, and adorned with elegant and impressively-executed, acanthus-scroll fond-creux engraving, the Pernice's rounded action is perfectly complemented by a London-style forend with a neat Anson push-button release. The base of the pistol grip may be of the square rather than the rounded Prince-of-Wales type, but the overall effect is still very pleasing, and the quality of workmanship and materials go a long way to justifying the asking price of £4995 for the Grand Lux and £5989 for the Ambassador.

Caesar Guerini

Staying in Italy, Caesar Guerini have a fine track record in both the technical and aesthetic aspects of shotgun design. I was particularly impressed a couple of years ago by the Invictus, and before that by the Evo Ellipse. Now, however, they have something especially for the Ladies.

As more women take up shooting, forward-looking gunmakers like Caesar Guerini are taking note of the undeniable facts that 1) gun-fit always matters, and 2) women simply aren't the same shape or size as men. So Guerini have measured up hundreds of female shooters, and have analysed their physique (lower shoulder pocket), face shape (higher cheekbones), and shooting styles (more upright), and have come up with a set of stock dimensions that offer a reduced length-of-pull and trigger distance, a greater degree of drop, a higher



It's an O/U, Jim, but not as we know it! Benelli's ultra-radical 828U was my Gun of the Year in 2015



Finely-executed fond-creux engraving on the action of Antonio Zoli's new Pernice 20g game gun



Made by Akkar in Turkey as the Mammut and marketed as the Triple Crown by Chiappa of Italy, this triple-barrel 12g is available in the UK via Edgar Brothers

(Monte Carlo) comb, a toe-out cast, increased pitch and even a rounded toe for extra comfort.

On show were sporters based on the firm's Tempio and side-plated Magnus models, but game versions are also available. Guns come in 12g, 20g and 28g, with barrel lengths of 28-, 30- and 32-inches, and in a single grade of finish. The sporter clay gun shows a London- straight fore-end and a more tightly-radiused grip, whilst the game gun has a rounded Prince-of-Wales grip, a tulip forend and more drop at the comb, heel and toe.

As ever with Guerini, aesthetics have been considered too, and the guns show silver actions embellished with a briar-like scroll motif framing a cluster of roses (gold ones in the case of the Tempio) where one might otherwise expect to see game birds- being a well-judged choice. Guerini have also added a laser-

engraved rose motif at the top of the pistol grip, though I think this will appeal most to those who like tattoos (apparently everyone these days – so perhaps it's a smart move!). In any case, Guerini are to be congratulated for producing a line of ladies' guns with not even a hint of pink in sight.

The Tempio Syren Sport costs £2365 and the Magnus Syren Sporter is £2975.

Perazzi

Last but not least – and I really must apologise to all the clay shooters out there for my emphasis on game guns (a case of 'cobbler stick to your last'), there's Perazzi's High Tech. Launched at IWA 2015, the High Tech combines an edgy modern look with some new refinements to help get you on target and reduce recoil fatigue. Based on the MX8 action, the High Tech's body is slightly wider,

with a consequent increase in thickness at the head of the stock. This adds a little extra weight and inertia but keeps it between the hands, so handling isn't impaired, while recoil is slowed.

Further changes in bore profile also claim both to reduce felt recoil and to enhance shot velocity. Interesting too is a new top rib design, with a reverse taper (from 7mm at the breech to 10mm at the muzzle). The laws of perspective mean that the shooter sees this as a parallel rib, whilst the narrower breech end leaves a wider field of view either side, aiding target acquisition.

As for the gun's looks, all the metalwork, from the barrels to the tangs, is finished in a semi-matte black, whilst the raised profile on the sides of the action and the top lever have been given a brushed silver finish that looks smart, makes the action appear smaller, and sets off the business-like

lettering on the former and the Perazzi monogram on the latter.

The stock is handsome too, with swooping contours behind the action and along the sides of the butt, a matching rake to the front of the forend and the rib supports, and the Perazzi name and High Tech designation etched into the wood ahead of the recoil pad and under the forend.

There are versions for all shooting disciplines – though the Sporting version is based on the fixed selective-trigger MX12 action – and Perazzi say that in future all the options currently provided for the MX8 will be available for the High Tech also.

The Perazzi High Tech Sporting with SC2 wood and a selective detachable trigger costs £9651. **GM**

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- Zoli, Antonio.** www.zoli.it; (UK) Edgar Brothers Ltd. shootingsports.edgarbrothers.com 01625 613 177



Caesar Guerini's Syren Tempio is specially proportioned to suit female body shapes and dimensions



Perazzi's latest attempt to improve on perfection: the High Tech. A wider mid-section, new bore profile and updated styling may make this the smoothest Perazzi yet