

If anyone ever doubted the value of role models to gunmakers then the success of the Beretta DT10 should be proof enough. With the ultimate endorsement of Richard Faulds behind it, the DT10 has been sprouting up on Sporting grounds like mushrooms on a damp autumn morning. The more Faulds appears to walk on water, the faster it sells. This was once Beretta's weakest market sector, but no more.

Launched originally as a minimalist competition gun, with plain black actions on the trap models and two-tone silver on the sporters, the range has now been extended with the addition of the DT10L, a deluxe model featuring some very traditional scroll engraving. It looks a shrewd move; there will always be a proportion of customers, happy to pay a little more for style and a cosmetic upgrade, who still want all the serious competition tweaks the DT10 has to offer.

Part of the success of the gun in sporter form has been that it seems to work well with 32" barrels. At the top level 32's are everywhere, but only if they handle. The trend in recent times has definitely been to try to marry the pointability of the 32" with the weight and balance of a 30", something that many older Beretta models certainly could not pull off. As well as looking at the cosmetic upgrade therefore, I have been testing a 32" sporter, so this is in effect two tests in one.

# BERETTA DT10L

BERETTA'S HIT COMPETITION MODEL GETS A TOUCH OF LUXURY WITH THE LAUNCH OF THE NEW DT10L. RICHARD RAWLINGSON GETS AN EXCLUSIVE FIRST LOOK AND ALSO PUTS A STANDARD 32" SPORTER THROUGH ITS PACES.





*The cross bolt locking system has been used for generations of Beretta high grade guns...*



'L' gets extra attention in this area with a polished frame. A spares kit is supplied that includes replacement firing pins, a left handed trigger blade and two alternative front beads.

The 682E influence is most obvious in the barrel department, where many of the features first seen on the cheaper model are carried across. Firstly we see that the 'Optima Bore' configuration is adopted, with the continuous taper forcing cones and the barrels mildly overbored to .735" (18.6mm). As we have discussed before, this represents quite a change of heart on Beretta's part, the company having stuck in the past to the typically Italian slightly tight boring.

With Optima Bore comes the matching 'Optima Choke' system, with five of the new

## Technical Overview

### TECHNICAL OVERVIEW

The DT10, in concept, is a marriage of the old Beretta ASE with the latest 682E. It is a trigger plate action, the DT standing for 'detachable trigger', using the locking system common to both the original ASE and the more expensive SO sidelocks. The key feature is a substantial cross bolt that emerges from the left hand side of the action when the gun is opened. When closed it engages lugs either side of the top barrel for a very strong lock up. The trade off is a more clumsy appearance than on, say, the Beretta 680 series guns and potentially slower loading. For the competition shooter neither will be of great concern compared to the benefits.

Looking at the gun against earlier models, some important differences are apparent. The monobloc is squared off, allowing the barrels to sit a fraction lower in the receiver, while the walls are raised and thickened adding strength and weight between the hands. The barrel shoulders are replaceable

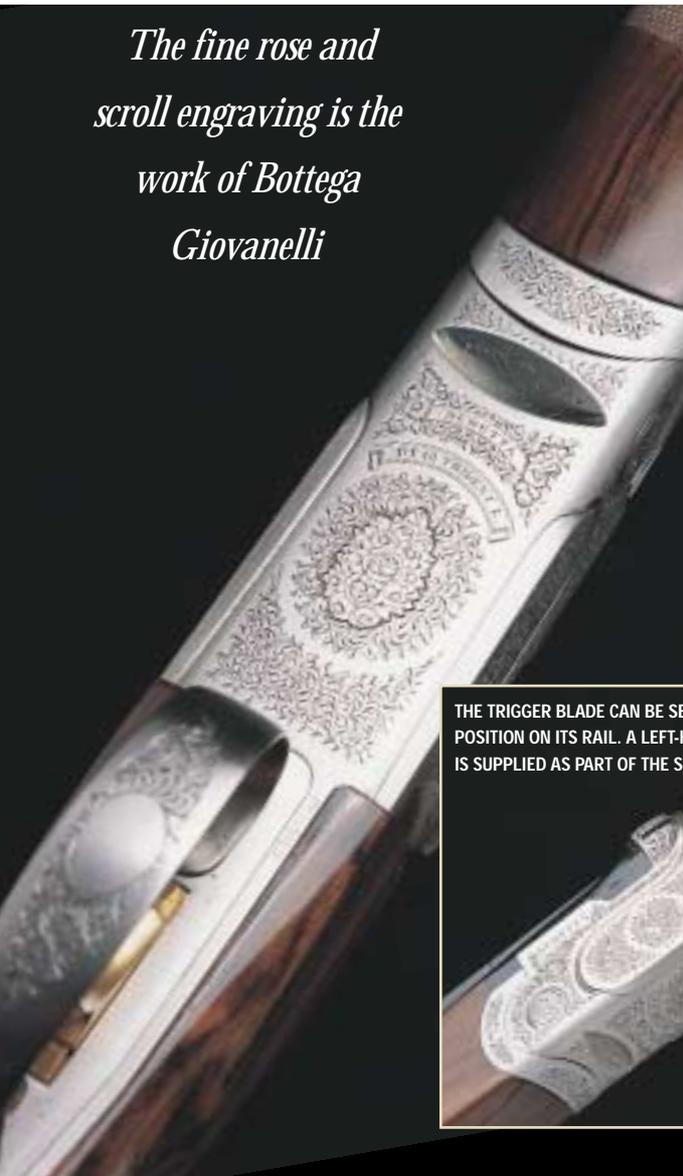
The trigger unit itself is powered by V-springs and the can be removed only with the gun open. On the standard model it lacks the final finish of the old ASE triggers, being blacked rather than engine turned and polished but the

long (70mm internal section plus 20mm extended portion) tubes supplied with each gun. These are top quality chokes, thin and light to match the characteristics of the barrels. They are also sensibly colour coded and clearly marked for easy identification. If extended chokes are not your thing then flush fitting tubes are available as an alternative. The barrels are all chambered to accept 76mm (3") cartridges.

Beretta have worked hard in recent times on reducing the weight of their sporting barrels — too hard for some tastes on the 682E. On the DT10 they seem spot on when viewed in the context of the overall weight of the gun (as they should be if the measure is to have any meaning — weight distribution is much more important than total weight). The 32" model I tested had barrels that tipped the scales at just under 1500g (3lbs 4 oz) in a gun with a total weight of nearly 3.85 kg (8 1/2 lbs) — close to the average figure quoted in the catalogue. I will return to the effect this has on performance later.

Part of the reduction comes from a ribless section hidden by the fore end. The tapered rib (10 to 8mm) also shaves a few grams. Like the standard DT10 the 'L' will also be available in trap form, in various rib/choke configurations.

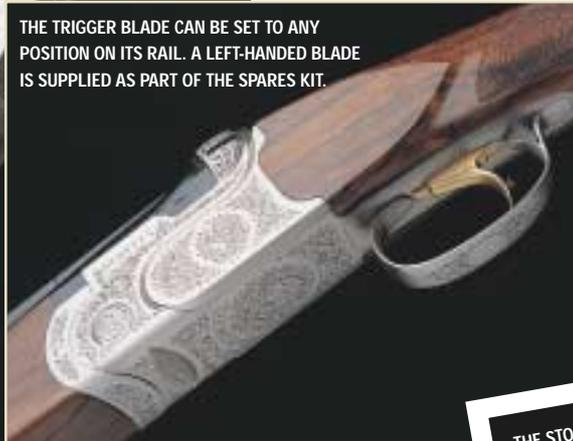
*The fine rose and scroll engraving is the work of Bottega Giovanelli*



### On Test

I had already completed my test work on a standard 32" sporter before the new model came along, so what follows refers to that gun. This is certainly a meaty gun, but the most striking thing is the excellent balance. I am assuming here that anyone looking at the DT10 will already have a fair idea of what type of gun suits them and it won't be the sort of lightweight 'wand' that feels great in the shop but is totally uncontrollable out on the ground. This is a gun built for precision and smoothness on testing targets. The weight gives it plenty of initial inertia and then resists efforts to pull off the line once moving. The 32" tubes suit the overall character of the gun extremely well.

THE TRIGGER BLADE CAN BE SET TO ANY POSITION ON ITS RAIL. A LEFT-HANDED BLADE IS SUPPLIED AS PART OF THE SPARES KIT.



DT10 to one of the autos tested last month. It was like going from crackly old Medium Wave to digital radio.

I greatly approve too of Beretta's conversion to more open bores. These recoil sensitive old bones can feel a difference, although the standard rubber pad as fitted would be quickly replaced with something that was both easier to mount without snagging and also added further recoil reduction.

Dislikes? While the stock profile is a big improvement on the old ASE, it still has a bit too much meat through the comb area for my liking and I still would rather not have a palm swell. If we are being perfectionist I would also ease the radius of the grip out a touch, although I could live with it as it is. Give me that though, along with a plain fore end rather than the schnabel and I would be a very happy bunny indeed.

As you may have gathered, I rate the DT10 very highly. It is, in my personal opinion at least, the best sporting gun Beretta have built by some margin. It is particularly well judged for its target market — the serious competitor who is likely to shoot testing targets and is prepared to invest in top quality equipment. The standard gun, with a recommended retail price of £3740 (£3940 with adjustable stock) is very competitive against the main rivals. The extra style of the DT10L will set you back another £1000 or so and will not of course buy you a single extra target. It will though buy you a handsome gun that will be a joy to own and I would not for a moment try to talk you out of it. Chalk up another winner to the Gardone stable.

### Cosmetics

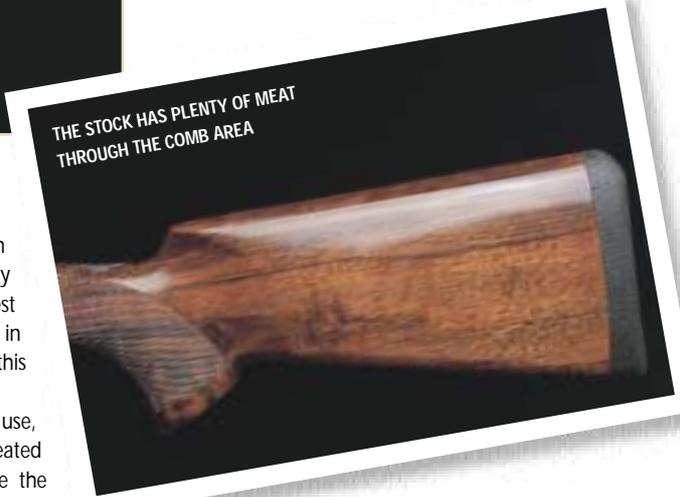
This section will deal with the DT10L as pictured, the standard gun having been around long enough to become familiar. As you will see the metal surfaces are extensively covered with fine rose and scroll engraving, the work of the renowned Giovanelli studio. It gives the gun a look of restrained elegance. You should expect also some fairly tasty walnut, although the gloss varnish may not be to the taste of those who prefer a more traditional finish.

Build quality, as you would expect of a gun classified by Beretta as one of their Premium Grade range, is exemplary, with not a duff note anywhere that I could see. Just studying the lines and the execution of the area around the fences and top lever should be enough to convince you of the quality built into the gun. The standard DT10 is very competitive in its price bracket, the L another notch up altogether.

The balance is biased towards the muzzle, but only just, so long barrels or not, it will still change direction neatly when necessary. I will stick my neck out and say that it is the best handling Beretta sporter I have shot in the nine years I have been doing this job.

Little details bring pleasure in use, such as the ergonomic top lever, treated with anti-friction material to reduce the effort needed to open the gun. The trigger blade runs along a rail and can be set at any position, not just a couple of pre-set notches and the whole gun operates with that heavy 'clunk' that oozes quality. So too does the trigger pull, beautifully crisp and, at just under 3 1/2 lbs, as light as anyone would sensibly want to go. I have been accused in the past of paying more attention to quality of trigger pulls than they actually merit, but I make no apologies. I believe good pulls are a key part of consistent shooting, something reinforced when I switched during the same test session from a

THE STOCK HAS PLENTY OF MEAT THROUGH THE COMB AREA



EXTENDED 'OPTIMA CHOKES' ARE SUPPLIED AS STANDARD

