

EVERY YEAR OR TWO, EXCITEMENT AND ANTICIPATION RUNS HIGH AS ONE MANUFACTURER OR ANOTHER BRINGS OUT A NEW MODEL - TO EITHER ADD TO OR REPLACE ONE OF THEIR PRODUCT LINES. THIS TIME, WE NOT ONLY HAVE A BRAND NEW MODEL OF OVER AND UNDER, BUT IT COMES FROM A COMPANY FAIRLY NEW TO THE U.S. MARKET.



THE BLASER F3

A STATE-OF-THE-ART ENTRY FROM GERMANY...



A REPORT BY
STEVE FISCHER

Blaser, (pronounced blah-zer) of Germany has just introduced their state-of-the-art over and under shotgun, the Blaser F3, to the US market. Words like 'innovative' or 'revolutionary design' are tossed about daily in the advertising world, but occasionally (and in regards to the F3) these phrases truly mean something – as this sleek new over and under is all of that and more.

As a professional gunsmith, I usually see a gun through different eyes than most consumers in that I am interested in the design and function on the inside, just as much – if not more so – than the external appearance.

The Blaser F3 is being distributed in the US by SIGARMS and features a field, trap, skeet and sporting version – all of which have something in common. The F3,

THE RECEIVER BOTTOM SHOWING THE MASSIVE BARREL UNDER LUG, AND ALSO THE REPLACEABLE LOCK UP BLOCK LOCATED ON THE RIGHT FRONT AREA OF THE UNDER LUG.

regardless of model, is totally modular. This means that stocks, forends, barrels, and even receivers, can be interchanged at will without the need of a gunsmith or any special fitting! In other words, a sporting gun can be 'made' into a trap gun in a matter of



NOW HERE'S A FINE PIECE OF TURKISH WALNUT!

seconds by changing the buttstock to the higher parallel combed trap stock. The competition model's barrels are offered in 28, 30 and 32 inch versions, (with the field model's lengths 27, 28 and 29 inches) all with three inch chambers and Briley flush screw chokes (or Briley's Spectrum extended version as an option). And here's another innovative feature – the barrels, regardless of length, all weigh the same! This weight is regulated by careful attention paid to the thickness of the barrel walls, making each length weigh and feel exactly the same as the others. All barrels share a .735 bore diameter with lengthened forcing cones, side ribs, chrome lining and a plasma nitrite rust preventative coating on the outside. Want more? Perhaps your taste is for a more barrel heavy feel. This can be accomplished with what is called the 'Blaser Balancer' system. The stock through bolt, which connects the stock to the rear of the receiver, is replaced with one that comes threaded with a pair of weights. It can be used to adjust weight forward or aft by turning one or both, in or out, on the threaded stock bolt to change the balance in relation to density of wood, length of stock, or other accessories such as an adjustable comb or buttplate. Pretty slick? I thought so.

ALTHOUGH BLASER'S F3 COMES IN TWO BASIC CONFIGURATIONS, FIELD OR COMPETITION, ITS MODULAR DESIGN WILL ALLOW A MULTITUDE OF COMBINATIONS.

case with a 1500 gram (3.3 lb.) trigger pull for both barrels! Crisp as breaking glass, the trigger itself is adjustable within the trigger guard for movement forward or back, and can be adjusted for the proper angle for a righty or lefty. Much time and effort, not to mention a serious amount of money, went into the trigger and hammer system development to create an extremely fast lock time coupled with superb reliability.

Here's where it gets really interesting. The insides of the receiver are designed so that the hammers and firing pins move in a straight line with the bore. There are no angles up or down on the firing pins, making the best possible use of kinetic energy in a very low profile (60.6 mm) receiver. Enclosed coil springs power the in-line hammers, which also provide a

secondary function each time they are fired. The hammer fall also cocks the ejectors so that when the gun is opened and the fired cases are expelled, there is no resistance felt in closing the gun because the ejectors are not cocked on the closing cycle. This ingenious system also relieves any pressure on the ejector springs during storage by not being continually cocked. Topping off this system is the Blaser IBS (Inertial Blocking System) that reliably prevents the involuntary second pull of the trigger (fan firing) – often problematic on single trigger guns.

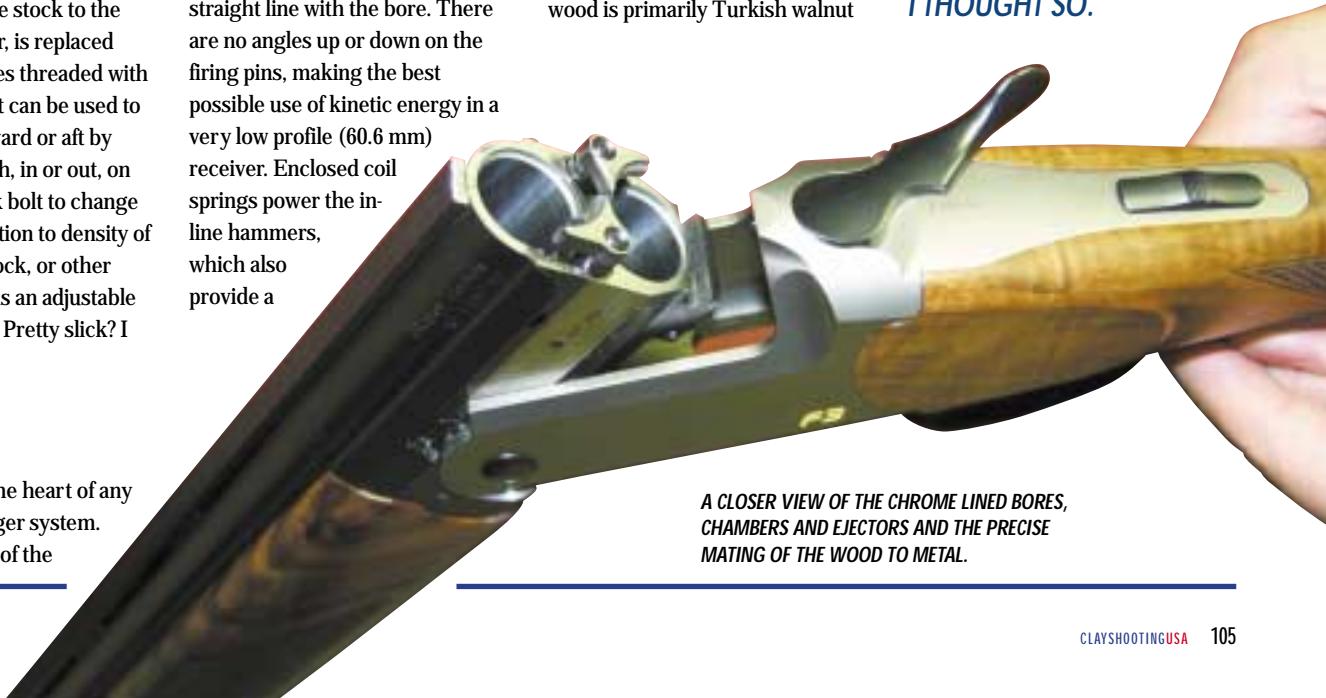
STOCK WOOD AND ACCESSORIES

Although Blaser's F3 comes in two basic configurations, field or competition, its modular design will allow a multitude of combinations. As stated earlier, all the components interchange. The wood is primarily Turkish walnut

THE STOCK THROUGH BOLT WHICH CONNECTS THE STOCK TO THE REAR OF THE RECEIVER IS REPLACED WITH ONE THAT COMES THREADED WITH A PAIR OF WEIGHTS WHICH CAN BE USED TO ADJUST WEIGHT FORWARD OR AFT BY TURNING ONE OR BOTH IN OR OUT ON THE THREADED STOCK BOLT TO CHANGE THE BALANCE FOR TASTE, DENSITY OF WOOD, LENGTH OF STOCK, OR OTHER ACCESSORIES SUCH AS AN ADJUSTABLE COMB OR BUTTPLATE WHICH WOULD CHANGE THE BALANCE OF THE GUN. PRETTY SLICK! I THOUGHT SO.

ON THE INSIDE

Now we come to the heart of any shotgun – the trigger system. The F3 comes out of the



A CLOSER VIEW OF THE CHROME LINED BORES, CHAMBERS AND EJECTORS AND THE PRECISE MATING OF THE WOOD TO METAL.

NEW TO MARKET

with figuring from mild to wild! Sleek forends in the Schnabel style are standard on the sporting model, but can be interchanged with the trap style if desired. An ergonomic palm swell is standard on the competition stocks and left handed stocks are available. Each stock is fitted with a soft recoil pad featuring a hard insert in the heel to help the stock to slip to the shoulder easily. A low stock profile was selected at almost a parallel level of comb (1.5 in. by 2.0 in.) but there are several other combinations available to accommodate just about every need – up to and including custom-built stocks to the customer's specification. Trap versions feature a true parallel comb.

Because of the precise machining and modular concept of the F3, wood to metal fit is near perfect. For those who prefer unique and high figure in stocks and forends, there are some truly spectacular higher grade stocks

and forends available as an upgrade. An adjustable comb is also available as well as an adjustable butt plate system which will adjust for up, down, right, left, cast and pitch. The base gun has some rather unusual 'laser-cut' checkering of a series of perfectly aligned circles or dots that give a solid grip for the shooter without being overly sharp. The upgraded woods feature hand cut conventional checkering.

HANDLING AND RECOIL

Though left-handed, I test fired a right-handed version. The felt recoil was very comfortable and surprisingly, was closely comparable to my SX-1 auto loader. The excellent balance between the hands felt just right and I found the gun moved with smoothness and ease. I didn't have to 'push' the 32 inch barrels and was able to acquire even the fastest targets very quickly. Being used to a 4-plus



FIG 1: BLASER'S IN LINE HAMMERS COCKED AND READY.



FIG 2: RIGHT HAMMER AFTER FIRING.

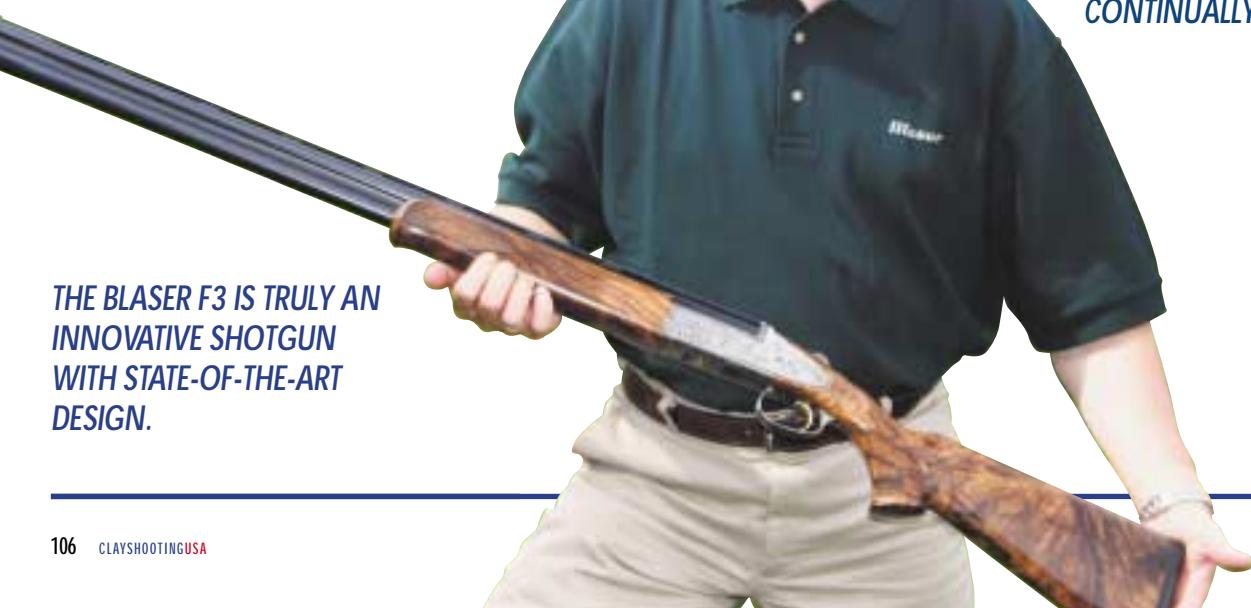


FIG 3: BOTH HAMMERS IN FIRED POSITION.

BERNHART KNOBEL, CEO OF BLASER PROUDLY SHOWS OFF ONE OF THE BEAUTIFUL HIGH GRADE F3s.

THIS INGENIOUS SYSTEM ALSO RELIEVES ANY PRESSURE ON THE EJECTOR SPRINGS DURING STORAGE BY NOT BEING CONTINUALLY COCKED.

THE BLASER F3 IS TRULY AN INNOVATIVE SHOTGUN WITH STATE-OF-THE-ART DESIGN.



pound trigger pull on my gun, it took a few shots to get used to the lightening fast and light 3 lb trigger pull, but once I got used to it, I found it to be a real plus with no creep or sponginess.

HIGHER GRADES AND ENGRAVING

I found the sleek flat surfaces of the receiver to be rather elegant in looks, even in the base gun, which comes without any engraving short of the 'F3' gold colored roll stamp on each side of the receiver and 'Blaser' on the bottom. The flat clean profile just begs to be engraved though, and those higher grade guns with side plates give more room to the engravers to create their works of art. For

those with deep pockets and a taste for the finer things, especially in firearms engraving, Blaser gives you a connoisseur's assortment of choices as to style, coverage and the use of precious metals. Rose and scroll, bulino animal scenes and deep relief styles for all tastes are available and custom jobs are most welcome as special orders.

MODELS, PRICES AND AVAILABILITY

Blaser has wisely slipped into a nice pricing slot between the different grades of over and unders available today. Base price of the F3 Standard starts at \$4895.00 with five more higher grades – the F3 Luxus at \$6395.00, the Super Luxus at

\$9895.00, the Exclusive at \$12,895.00, the Super-Exclusive at \$16,895.00 and the Royal that starts at \$25,895.00 and up, when custom built to individual desires. Extra barrel sets are \$2495.00. Upgrading the stock woods is priced by selection.

The Blaser F3 is truly an innovative shotgun with state-of-the-art design. Although priced a bit above the entry level over and unders, it is still in a relatively affordable price slot, and it is well worth saving up a little longer in order to get one into your gun rack. ■

BLASER is a partner with SIGARMS, and is distributed through them and their dealers in the US. For more information, brochures and availability, contact SIGARMS at 603-772-2321 or on line at www.sigarms.com

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