



## RICHARD RAWLINGSON WITH THE NEWS OF THE FIRST NEW

Here it is then — probably the worst kept secret of the year, certainly to anyone with internet access. Several months after it first appeared in the USA we can now talk about Browning's brand new gun, to be known as the Cynergy. And when I say new, for once it really is different, not just another variation on a well-worn theme. The Cynergy is top-to-toe, clean-sheet-of-paper, brand-spanking new; and this from the company that has basically relied on one design for the past 75 years.

BROWNING  
CYNERGY

So when I took the new Browning Cynergy out of its box it felt like a big deal. Given that the last Browning designed over-and-under first appeared in 1926, the moment had a touch of history about it. It is perhaps asking way too much of the Cynergy that it emulates the other Browning, but, nonetheless, this is an important development for the company. In recent times it has suffered in comparison with arch rivals Beretta in the image stakes, with the Gardone giant leading the way with sharp styling and interesting technical innovation. No wonder Browning has been making such a fuss about the new gun in the USA. In the modern world perception is as important

as product and the market's perception of the Browning brand needed a boost.

Like the B525 and its forebears, the Cynergy will be built by Miroku in Japan, but it is an all-American design effort, the product of Browning's Vice President of Research and Development, Jose Rousseau, and design engineer Dwight Potter. It addresses the debate that has been raging since John Moses first unveiled the B25 Superposed back in 1926. From the moment it was born the Superposed has been taunted for its tall frame and slab sided appearance. 'We don't care, it works' has been the reply of the maker and all the gun's millions of happy owners. And so it does — brilliantly.

Those insults have, you suspect, always rankled, for all the success that has come the way of the Superposed and its Japanese descendants. Rather like the girl



## BROWNING OVER-AND-UNDER FOR MORE THAN 75 YEARS



who gets top grades in school but secretly wants to be pretty and popular with the boys, Browning would like a gun with sleek racy lines too.

Any o/u is constrained to a minimum depth by the dimensions of the barrels stacked one on the other. How deep the gun ends up depends on what else you hang off them. In the case of the Superposed and descendants that is quite a lot, namely the hook that pivots on the full-width hinge pin and the locking bite that sits under the bottom barrel. Various other methods have been adopted to reduce height, notably the Boss

'bifurcated lumps' that we see today on guns from Perazzi, Gamba and Kemen to name but three, and Beretta's neat combination of interlocking shoulders and a U-bolt that locks either side of the upper barrel. Krieghoff's take on the Remington sliding breech is the other commercially significant system for target shooting guns.

The Cynergy would only work therefore if it could match these rivals in the height (or lack of) stakes and a measure of the success is that the gun is an all-important 1mm shallower than the Beretta 682 that will be its main rival. Checking it against my own B325 showed a reduction of 10mm or around 15%.

It has been achieved with a concept Browning have dubbed the MonoLock Hinge. Raised sections of large radius within the receiver walls match slots in the

**THE 'MONOLOCK HINGE' IS A  
TOTALLY NEW APPROACH TO  
OVER-AND-UNDER DESIGN**



## BROWNING CYNERGY



LOVE IT OR HATE IT — THE STYLING OF THE CYNERGY CANNOT BE IGNORED.

THE EJECTOR WORK IS ALSO NEW, WITH BROWNING DITCHING THE FAMILIAR KICKERS CONTAINED WITHIN THE FORE END FOR A SYSTEM CONTAINED ENTIRELY WITHIN THE MONOBLOC. COIL SPRINGS RUNNING PARALLEL WITH THE BORES SIT BETWEEN THE BARRELS AND PROVIDE POWERFUL EJECTION...



THE INTEGRATED RECOIL PAD WORKS WELL BUT MAY MAKE ADJUSTMENT TRICKY.

monobloc, doing away with the trunnions or stub pins on which most other gunmakers hinge their barrels. As well as compactness, this design promises great strength, the bearing load is spread over a much greater area. The barrels are locked in place by square section pins emerging from the breech face that take up the slack as the gun wears in, again promising a long life before any major overhaul is needed.

Not content with their revolutionary efforts, the design team also decided to

turn conventional thinking on triggers on its head. Without the abundance of space in a conventional Browning, there was a packaging issue and the solution has been borrowed from rifle technology. It has been dubbed a 'reverse striker' system, because the travel of the springs when the trigger is pulled is backwards towards the shooter's face. The springs act on a rocker which rotates and drives the firing pin forwards. The bare minimum of movement is involved, which bodes well for crispness of feel and fast lock times. It is a mechanical system, the inertia block part serving only to prevent a double discharge, and it seems to work well. It is possible to fire two rounds very quickly indeed and most of the characteristic free play of the Miroku line is gone, leaving a crisp and positive pull. My trigger gauge measured the first barrel pull at 4½lbs, the second around half a pound heavier, slightly more than I am used to on Miroku-made guns, but my sample was an early production gun. As on many B525s, the trigger blade is detachable and three different styles are provided with the gun.

The ejector work is also new, with Browning ditching the familiar kickers contained within the fore end for a system contained entirely within the monobloc. Coil springs running parallel with the bores sit between the barrels and provide powerful ejection. Attached to the barrels is a composite framework to which the fore end mates, for reasons that are not entirely clear — protection against damage to the vulnerable areas perhaps?

All this would be innovation enough to have scribes like me scouring the thesaurus for alternatives to 'new' and 'different', but the Browning boys were clearly on a roll by this time and they decided to go the whole hog in the stock department too. In fact the changes there will be what most



THE COIL SPRINGS OPERATE A 'REVERSE STRIKER' SYSTEM, TRAVELLING BACKWARDS TO ACT ON ROCKERS WHICH DRIVE THE FIRING PINS FORWARD.



people first notice because there is no danger that you will mistake this gun for any other when it is in the rack.

Firstly we have an integrated recoil pad that is both functional and a style statement. Rather than just sticking a lump of squashy material on the end, the designers have created the pad as part of the stock as a whole, using the space created to give it much longer travel. The company are claiming a 25% decrease in felt recoil as a result, presumably against a conventional pad. Length of pull changes can be made using one of three different thicknesses of pad, together with a  $\frac{1}{4}$  inch spacer. Less simple are alterations to pitch

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and pad angle and solving these problems for those that need changes could give gunsmiths a few headaches.

And then we have the stock shape itself. Yes, you are right, it is curved; and, if you are a student of gunmaking history, you have seen it before. The great English gunmaker W.W. Greener came up with what he dubbed the 'Rational' stock in the 1870s and you can see it illustrated in chapter XVI of his classic book *The Gun and its Development*. It was designed to do the same job as the later Monte Carlo stock, that is put the whole of the butt plate in contact with the shoulder while allowing the shooter to keep his head upright and level. It never caught on,



## GUN TEST

largely I suspect because it looked odd and created work for stock makers. It still looks odd today, but it works.

One of the features of the Cynergy is that it is being launched simultaneously with both conventional walnut and composite stocks for target and field models. The problem of stock adjustment on the composite stocks has been

to be nose heavy and ponderous. The Cynergy's weight is much better distributed and I would call the handling responsive and precise. Most interesting from a sales point of view, the Cynergy is much more like the Beretta 682E in its dynamics, crucial if it is to grow Browning's share, rather than just cannibalise B525/XS sales.

looks. It seems you are firmly in the love it or hate it camp with very little middle ground. Browning's response, I suspect, will be that the B525 is there for the traditionalist so the more radical look is justified. I can be as conservative as the next man about shotgun styling when the mood takes me, but I am happy to live with the Cynergy as it is, given that it

performs very well. After all there are plenty of people who think a Krieghoff is ugly but few who doubt it can crunch clays — and that is what this game is all about.



Browning have retained the 'Invector Plus' boring and choke system of the 'X' series competition guns. The literature also makes much of the barrels being lightweight, but the 30" tubes on my test sample went a full 3¾ lbs (1.69kg) which is far from light by modern standards.

Lighter barrels, says the brochure, means a faster swing and there is no doubt that 'fast' is the buzz word you are supposed to pick up from the Cynergy promotional material. I lost count of how many times I heard it in the nearly six minute demonstration video. I confess I was worried when I took the gun out to test, worried that it would be a flying machine, as easy to stop as it was to start.

Luckily 'light' and 'fast' are relative terms. The sporters weigh in total around 7¾ to 8 lbs, depending on barrel length and they are certainly faster handling than many recent Browning sporters, but then most things are. Weight is not the issue with gun handling, but where you put it is and Browning Sporters of late have tended

Other things I liked? The angular fore end shape does not look as elegant as the more conventional schnabel, but is much more effective. I also totally approve of the open radius of the grip — as good as any out there at the moment. The tapered (11.8mm) rib with centre channel is my personal favourite configuration but I would ditch the high visibility green sight, again a personal preference.

And then we have the styling. Judging by the comments from those that have seen the gun, this is going to split opinion right down the middle. I have yet to meet anyone who is indifferent to the Cynergy's

Just tell me how many, not 'how do I look?'

As soon as I saw the first details of the Cynergy my reaction was that the pricing would be crucial. It must have been tempting to gild the lily and make it a rival to the Beretta DT10 and Perazzi. I could have made a persuasive case for that market positioning. Choosing instead a price point around £1600 shows that Browning are serious with this gun. It meets Beretta head on in their strongest area as well as laying down the gauntlet to the new wave of Italian guns. It is going to be fun watching what happens.

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