

The Guerini  
Challenger by  
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# Up to the Challenge

**S**o far as shotguns in general are concerned Great Britain is, as foreign manufacturers have often reminded me, one of the most discerning markets. As to guns for clay target shooting, the Brits have no home based manufacturers to whom they might owe some loyalty and yet it is one of the toughest markets for newcomers to break into. I am inclined to believe this is because of a residual instinct the British have for quality gained, at least so far as my generation is concerned, by being in their youth influenced by what remained of the English gun trade and its production. This amounted to quite a lot of guns but even the least impressive of them were of sound design, put together properly and well finished.

The recent success of Guerini shotguns in the market can, I believe, be attributed to possessing by modern standards these same qualities. Their new Challenger Sporter priced at £2500 goes for the belly of the market to coin an old marketing phrase, or at least to the upper part of it dominated as it seems forever by Beretta and Browning/Miroku. The Challenger is the perfect name for the task in front of it, so how big a punch does this contender pack?

## Action

The action body machined from a single forging weighs 985gm, ideal for a competition gun. If you bought guns only with your eyes the Guerini beats all the others in its price bracket hands down. Truly beautifully hand filed shell fences and panels you would normally only expect to find on guns costing thousands of pounds more, provide the Challenger with real presence. With such a lavish exterior, you would expect on opening the gun to find the familiar drawers and wedges with the bifurcated locking bolt most top Italian makers adopt from the English Woodward and Boss guns. Instead there is a single if substantial tapered under bolt engaging at an angle under the bottom barrel. The barrel lumps also abut a surface integral to the action's floor plate. Is it enough? Well, it is to hold the barrels and action safely together; but how does this simple design stand up to hard wear and remain tight and smooth in operation? I quizzed a number of Guerini dealers, one in particular who had been selling the gun for over three years. What he had to say amounted to a glowing report of virtually no mechanical problems and as regards

## Specifications

Maker	Guerini
Model	Challenger Sporter
Bore	12
Action	Coil spring, single selective trigger
Barrel Length	30" with hand detachable interchangeable chokes
Rib	Tapered 10 – 7mm
Stock	Pistol grip
Weight	8lb
Price	£2495.00



the jointing of the barrels his customers have made no reports of their guns shooting loose. The reasons for this no doubt are due to the high standards of workmanship in the gun's assembly and the hardness of the materials used, particularly in key areas such as the hinge pins on which the barrels pivot. The layout of the trigger mechanism is a conventional one; with overhead sears it works well with trigger pulls considerably crisper than usually found with this type of coil spring action.

### Stock

The Challenger's stock is the best I have seen on a new Sporter for a very long time. The comb tapers nicely from the back to the front and offers good support at the face. The nose of the comb is in the right position in relation to the grip and a long very slight radius provides a palm swell that's in the right place. Drop at comb measures 36mm to 50mm at heel, and cast is 5mm and 10mm at toe. The solid recoil pad is of excellent quality and shape. This stock is so good I suspect British know-how has been applied both to its configuration and the dimensions, and with all due respect to the Italians, I don't think they produced it on their own.

### Barrels

Proofed at 18.6mm, the bores are finished to a high standard and the barrels are equally well struck off on the outside. The design of the rib is an excellent one, 10mm wide it runs parallel to the muzzle ends; the top surface is finely chequered with a narrow longitudinal line machined down the centre. The barrel assembly with long extended hand detachable chokes in situ weighs 1.524kg, just about ideal for a Sporter with 30" barrels. In this area again I sense a British influence, the

barrels like the stock are close to an optimum specification and while I'm sure the action is all down to Guerini the rest of the gun's specification hasn't just come together by happy accident.

### Shooting impressions

The best thing about the Challenger is shooting it. In my view, it possesses all the qualities a modern Sporter should have. The action is of full weight as it should be for a competition gun; it's not a game gun in disguise or a trap gun with a Sporter stock. The barrels are light but not too light. As for the stock it combines in its configuration and dimensions, everything the British know about shooting sporting clays in the classic gun-down manner. At Chatcombe Shooting Ground in Gloucestershire using Express Super Comp 28gm loads, the Guerini's combination of feel and balance made it a complete all rounder, steady enough for the long targets and quick enough for the short fast ones as the best kind of Sporter should be. The new Guerini represents more than just a challenge to the existing market leaders for a significant share in the high quality volume production gun market; it really is a genuine contender. Guerini UK, telephone: 0121 772 1119.

