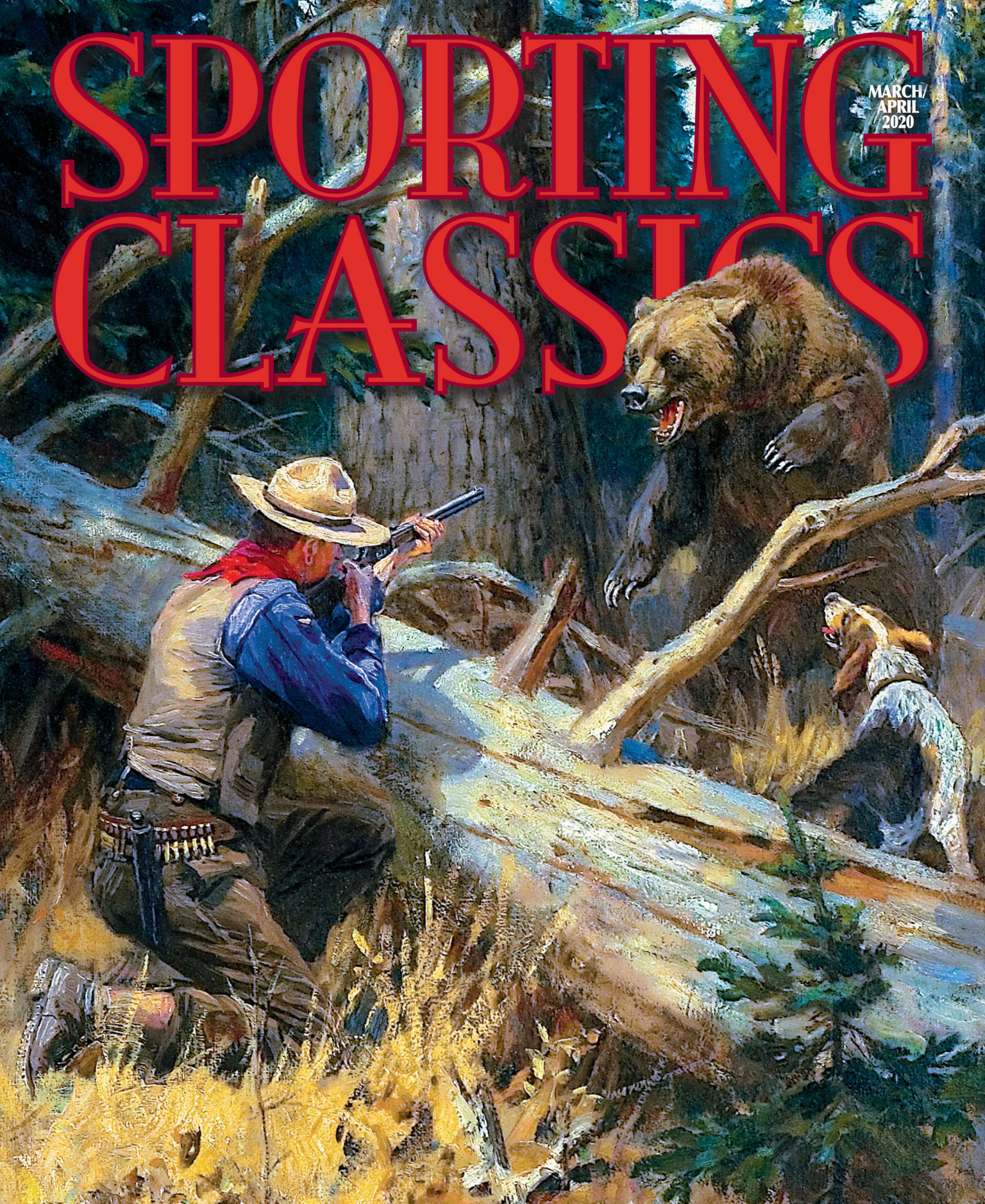


SPORTING CLASSICS

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The new Revenant: A modern classic.

BY ROBERT MATTHEWS



Caesar Guerini's Revenant truly shined on Pine Hill Plantation's quail.

It will come as no surprise that a long time ago I developed a profound affection for rare and fine shotguns. The rarer and finer, the better.

There was little that I could do to salve my affliction at the time, but the obsession persisted and when I became an adult, I set out on a course that led me to procure as many of them as I possibly could.

At the time, I was absolutely fixated on side-by-side doubles, and no others qualified. No repeaters even came close. Not even the very finest of the new-fangled over-and-unders made the grade. Except for one.

I was well into middle-age before I

actually saw the thing in the flesh. I had seen photos. Heard stories. Hung on the tales of rumor mongers. Unfortunately, they were more rare than unicorn-leprechaun crosses, and for the most part, unobtainable by mere mortals.

The first time that I actually held a 20-bore Boss over-and-under, it took my breath away. And so did the price that my friend had paid for it. It was more than I paid for my first house. All was well, though, because it wasn't for sale, and I was spared the ignominy of having to admit that I couldn't afford it anyway. And probably never would.

To this day, it remains one of the sweetest, best-balanced, classiest shotguns that ever existed. I didn't even care that its barrels were misplaced, one above the other. To this day, it is the only one-of-its-kind that I have ever held.

I HADN'T THOUGHT ABOUT THE GUN in many years. Guess I'd forgotten all about it, until I got a call from Wes Lang, the head of Caesar Guerini USA. My old pal wanted me to take a look at a new gun they were bringing out.

"What's a Revenant," I innocently asked.

"Something reborn," he replied. "Brought back from the dead. Didn't you see the movie?"

"No. What is it, a copy of something?"

"No, but the spirit, the essence has been resurrected. Just wait until you hold it in your hand. You'll see for yourself!"

And I did. I saw for myself. And understood.

The spirit of the Boss small-bore oozes from the very pores of the Revenant. Thomas Boss would be proud.

Like Wes said, it's not a copy, but a

spiritual rebirth. You can see it in the classic scalloped forend. You can feel it in the meticulous attention to weight and balance. You can see it in every nuance of fit and finish, which is uniformly excellent. The gun simply flies to the shoulder and tracks a target in the way that only a fine, perfectly balanced gun can. All of these things are great accomplishments. They're ignored by most modern-day makers because they are so difficult to achieve.

Perhaps they are great accomplishments for that very reason—that *they are largely ignored by most contemporary gunmakers.*

My test gun weighs 6 pounds, 11 ounces, and has 28-inch barrels, though they are available in 26-inch length as well. It carries a matte, flat-topped rib that is easy to track in your peripheral vision. It sports a full compliment of choke tubes to suit any need. It features a pistol grip, but is also available with a straight English-style hand, on special order.



Inside or outside, the Revenant is a head-turner.

The wood is fabulous and its checkering is impeccable. Length of pull measures 14.75 inches from its rear-position single trigger and the stock exhibits a slight cast-off for the right-handed shooter. Special dimensions can be ordered.

The single trigger is non-selective and the safety is non-automatic, though an automatic safety is available if it suits your taste. The butt is completed by a slim, checkered wood buttplate that shoulders easily, but doesn't slide around when the gun is fired.

THE REVENANT HAS A ROUND BODY that mimics the comfortable feel of some of the famous Scottish round actions when it's carried in one hand. It also has pinless sideplates that are invisibly fit to the action. I didn't disassemble it for our brief test, but Wes advised that it uses the same lockwork as the company's Ellipse. Needless to say, the Ellipse's workings are tried and true—and damn near

unbreakable. The same can be said of the Revenant's selective ejectors.

The receiver is decorated with full-coverage engraving that's unlike anything I've seen before. I use the term "engraving," simply because that's the way we usually describe gun embellishment, and I can't think of another word that does it justice. In reality, the effect is achieved by the use of multiple techniques that were designed and engineered by the engraving house of Giovannelli. I can tell that it probably begins with laser engraving, and ends with a goodly amount of hand-engraving, but what occurs in between is beyond my ken and probably proprietary, anyway.

The engraving design is simply unique. It's a collage of foliage and gamebirds, highlighted in gold. The designers transcended their Italian roots because it doesn't appear to be a style that I would really call Italian. Or English, or European or American. It belongs to the Revenant and it's stunning.

"PRETTY IS AS PRETTY DOES," Mama used to say, so naturally I had to have a go at seeing how the gun would perform in the field. To that end, I traipsed off to Pine Hill Plantation in Donaldsonville, Georgia for a couple of days of quail hunting with plantation owner Doug Coe and Jay Stine, executive director of Quail Coalition from Dallas, Texas.

It turned out to be a good thing that Jay and Doug were hunting with me, because I was struggling through the morass of an awful slump and couldn't hit an outhouse from the inside. With any gun! Not even my own.

The good news is that the Revenant really shined for the two of them. And in time, it even helped me to break my slump. As it turned out, this "pretty" did pretty damned well.

According to Wes, they plan to bring out a 28 gauge in the not-to-distant future, and I can't wait to see it. And I have no hesitation in predicting that the Revenant is destined to become a modern classic. ■

