



ROTTWEIL 580 O/U

SPORT

RICHARD ATKINS TRIES OUT THIS NEW ENTRY-LEVEL CLAY GUN FROM RUAG AND FINDS IT ACCOMPLISHED AND COMPETITIVELY PRICED



Whether Rottweil is prescient or just quick to introduce products in tune with the times I'm not sure, but the timing of its latest 580 Sport over/under shotgun could hardly be better.

The 580 is offered in game and sporting clays formats: game models come in 12-, 20- and 28-bore with 28- or 30-inch barrels with 7mm game ribs and auto safety catch, while the Sport has 30-inch barrels, a manual safety catch with 11mm wide raised sighting rib and is slightly heavier than the game models. The common feature is that all are competitively priced and with a SRP of just over £1,000 it seems likely deals under four figures could be struck before VAT goes up in January.

Entry-level shotguns are nothing new and there has always been a place in the market for them. We are fortunate today

in that the experience gained in the production of shotguns in volume, using the latest design technology where CAD/CAM systems allow designers to experiment with fine detail refinements and then readily translate them into production volume, means these guns are so precisely machined as to reduce the amount of expensive hand gunsmithing skills to an absolute minimum. The result is guns of excellent build quality for the price. Twenty or more years ago there were plenty of cheaper guns around, but some had weaknesses, not so much as to be dangerous but not conducive to allowing the shooter to get the best from their shooting; heavy trigger pulls were almost obligatory and the balance and handling was poor due to excessively heavy barrels. The economy guns of today are significantly ahead of those and modern production techniques and materials have combined to make it so.

The critical thing we look for in today's value models is that they are not just well put together but feel good too and offer a tool that is actually well up to the job the purchaser intends to use it for. Looks are very much secondary; competent construction comes way ahead of cosmetics in my book. I'm pleased to report that it's immediately apparent, even upon opening the polystyrene-lined cardboard box the 580 comes in, that Rottweil has taken that route – no frills, minimal embellishment and sound but plain woodwork.

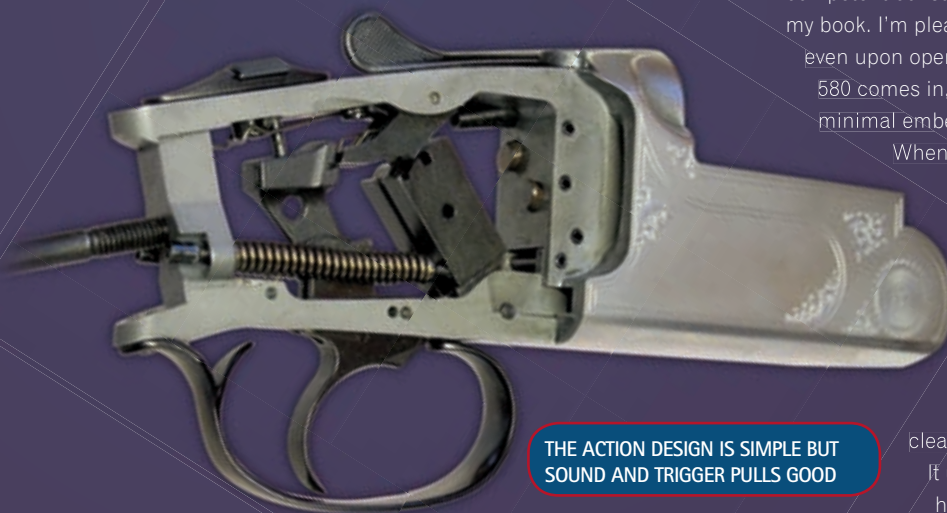
When you have gained some skills and confidence, saved up and are sure you love the sport, you can buy something more expensive: or you might just buy a nicer case for your 580!

So, what does the 580 offer and how does it perform?

FEATURES

A closer look reveals the Rottweil 580 is clearly Italian in origin despite the German name. It uses the proven twin side trunnion barrel hinges combined with full-width, Browning-

THE ACTION DESIGN IS SIMPLE BUT SOUND AND TRIGGER PULLS GOOD

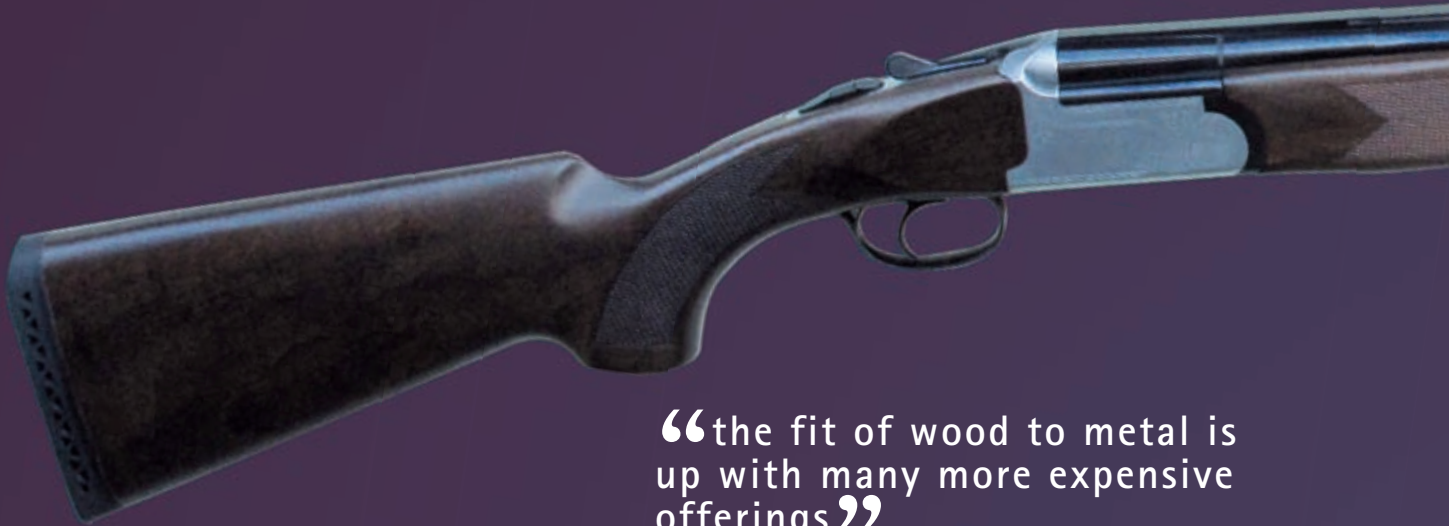




GUN TEST

by Richard Atkins

TYPICAL ITALIAN STYLING MAKES THIS 30-INCH BARREL SPORTER AN ATTRACTIVE FIRST BUY



“the fit of wood to metal is up with many more expensive offerings”

style under barrel locking lug format, with sprung loaded ejectors set into each side of the monobloc between the barrels. Rottweil has had this gun produced in one of the accomplished volume shotgun makers situated in the Brescia region: it makes better economic sense to gain the advantage of increasing the production of an existing maker prepared to make some adjustments to meet your specifications, than to set up a factory in competition when the skills and capacity exist already.

Barrels are 30" long and have been very well polished internally and externally, before having the bores chromed and external surface deeply chemical blacked to a high gloss finish of exceptional depth that gives an attractive appearance that belies the price. The barrels are of almost universal monobloc construction and joined by full-length side ribs, ventilated for both additional cooling and reduced weight. The top rib is a competition style 11mm wide ventilated rib with curved, cross-milled, anti-glare top surface for excellent sighting. A quality

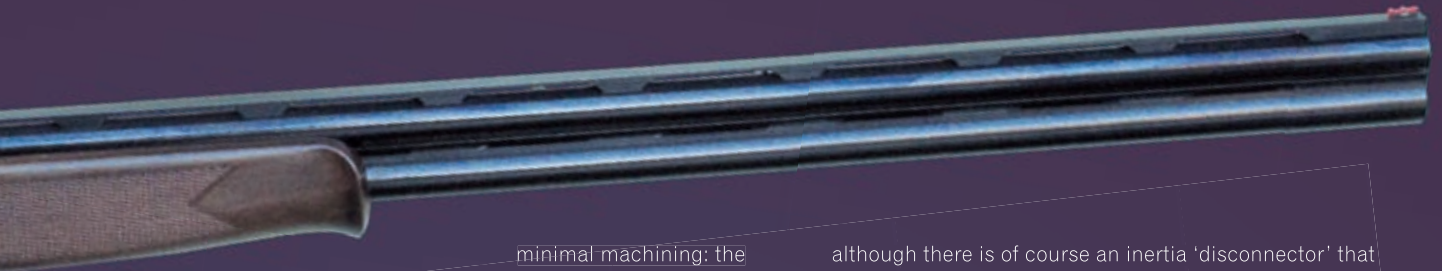
LPA front optic fibre front bead is fitted; there is no central bead.

Barrel bores are to the more traditional tighter boring of 18.3 / 18.4mm, once common with Italian makers before over-boring became fashionable and the forcing cones have been slightly elongated for smoother shot transition from the 3" chambers to the bore and should suit fibre wad loads particularly well. The muzzle ends of each tube are gradually flared to accommodate the internal choke tubes without an obvious 'bulge' to accept them. The choke tubes are flush fitting and styled on the Berretta 'Mobil' type, though they are of slightly smaller outside diameter so are not interchangeable with the Beretta tubes. A quality choke key with pilot plug guide and four precision driving pegs is provided to suit the five choke tubes supplied. The barrels are proofed for use with steel shot ammunition and the lower three choke tubes are also suitable for steel shot.

Action internals are solidly produced, some by the investment casting method that gives precise dimensions with



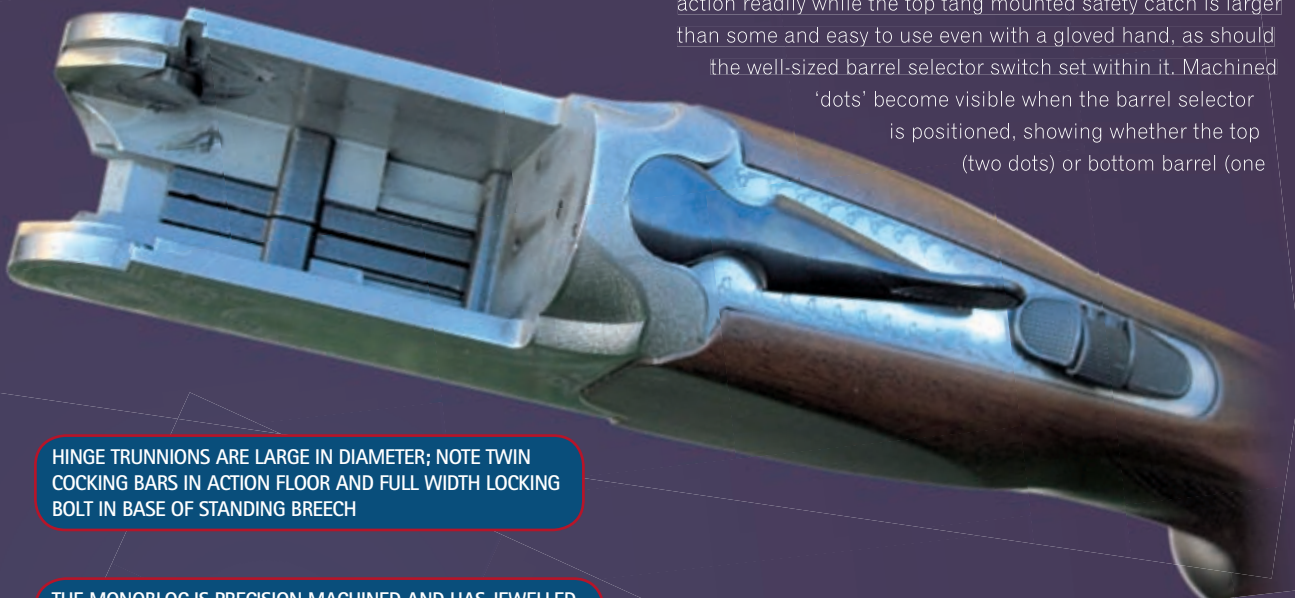
STOCK DIMENSIONS WILL PROVE WIDELY SUITABLE AND THE ROUNDED TOP OF RUBBER RECOIL PAD HELPS MOUNTING



minimal machining: the parts are well fitted as shown by the good trigger pulls. Both tumblers released at a shade over four pounds with minimal drag for a trigger release well suited to this type of gun: not heavy and so will not cause snatching with consequent barrels pulled offline, and not so light as to release before the potentially excited beginner is ready – ideal. Barrel selection is reset mechanically after each shot so the second barrel will still fire even if the first failed to go off,

although there is of course an inertia 'disconnecter' that ensures the second barrel sear lifter is not made active until the trigger has been released.

The hinge trunnions are of large diameter for extended life and the bifurcated lower lumps mate with a recess in the action body floor for added strength. The outside of the action body is left as polished metal with just some light and tasteful scroll engraving that suits both clay and game style equally well; the fence shoulders and action top are stippled to reduce potential glare. The top lever is of moderate size and opens the action readily while the top tang mounted safety catch is larger than some and easy to use even with a gloved hand, as should the well-sized barrel selector switch set within it. Machined 'dots' become visible when the barrel selector is positioned, showing whether the top (two dots) or bottom barrel (one



HINGE TRUNNIONS ARE LARGE IN DIAMETER; NOTE TWIN COCKING BARS IN ACTION FLOOR AND FULL WIDTH LOCKING BOLT IN BASE OF STANDING BREECH

THE MONOBLOC IS PRECISION MACHINED AND HAS JEWELLED SIDES; NOTE LARGE HINGE RADIUS AND STURDY EJECTORS

dot) is selected, useful when switching the order in which the barrels are fired, which may obviate the need to swap choke tubes.

The 580's woodwork is rather plain but nonetheless well presented. The wood used has been given a darker stain, as becomes obvious when the fore-end is removed but its grain is tight and straight so the gun should prove strong and the fit of wood to metal is up with many more expensive offerings, further evidence of the precision modern machining methods provide. Chequering is laser cut but is acceptably neat and well shaped. The wood's surface has been rubbed smooth before a matt lacquer type protective finish applied: although not one to show off, it is competent, practical and in keeping with the Rottweil 580's remit.

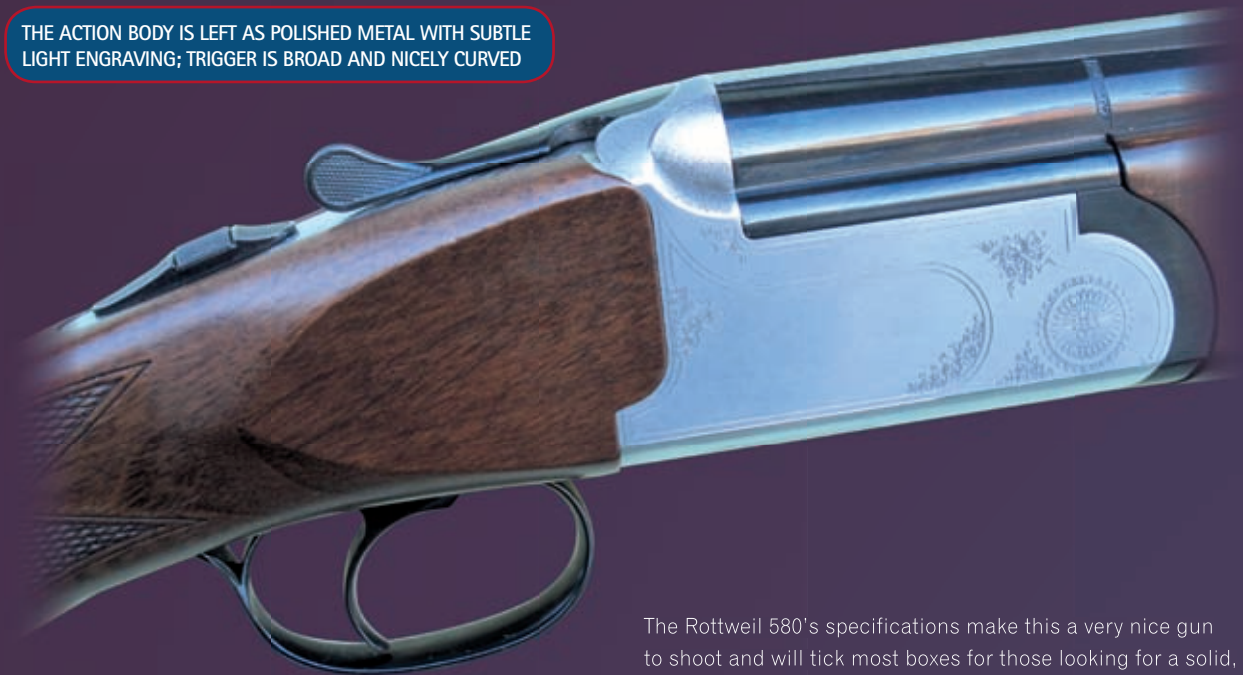




GUN TEST

by Richard Atkins

THE ACTION BODY IS LEFT AS POLISHED METAL WITH SUBTLE LIGHT ENGRAVING; TRIGGER IS BROAD AND NICELY CURVED



Shape and style are more important: stock length is good so will suit many average size frames and a neat rubber recoil pad with rounded top edge is fitted to reduce snagging when mounting.

The pistol grip radius is a comfortable compromise between a tight competition one and more open game style; again widely suitable. It's fairly deep from the top of the grip to the underside so my short digits barely met when wrapped around it. However, my index finger was positioned comfortably on the smooth, well curved and fairly broad trigger blade.

The fore-end is comfortable too; meaty enough to give an easy hold for the guiding hand with a slight 'roach belly' curve providing choice as to depth depending where held, with the established Schnabel style or 'tulip' tip. The fore-end is firmly secured to the barrels by a catch set deep into its underside.

On the 580's first outing I was recovering from an abscess on my right side jaw, so took 21-gram loads along in case it got too uncomfortable. I was surprised how smoothly the 580 shot and at getting a 10-straight on the first stand! On a stand of tricky and fairly long opposing crossers I risked some 28-gram Hull Sovereign loads and came off with 7ex-10 that topped the squad and felt none the worse for it. When the cards were in, the 580 had helped me top score the day, so did all and more that I could have asked of it. Stock dimensions meant it shot just above the point of aim for me, which worked well. It has rather more right-hand cast than often found today and came up very readily indeed (but won't suit left-handers, as some almost straight stocked guns can).

Balance is an inch or so forward of the hinge point, which steadies the gun well: I'd probably add an ounce or two of lead in the stock bolt hole were it mine, to bring the balance back and increase weight slightly; that said, it performed well anyway.

The Rottweil 580's specifications make this a very nice gun to shoot and will tick most boxes for those looking for a solid, well made gun at a competitive price that feels good in the hands. Its looks may not impress but its performance won't disappoint; and that's the point of this gun.

The way it handled for me, I'm confident it will fulfil what many club level clay shooters require to enjoy their sport and develop their skills. It's an easy handling and forgiving gun to use and controls recoil well for its modest weight. It would serve just as well for the odd day in the field, or at pheasant should the opportunity arise, where most would perform much better with the gun they were familiar with over a different gun they seldom shoot with: the Rottweil 580 Sporter is assuredly a very competent all-rounder. ●

TECH SPEC

Make:	Rottweil
Model:	580 Sport
Type:	Over/Under shotgun
Gauge:	12/76 chambers /1370 bar proof
Overall length:	47½"
Barrel length:	30" (76cm)
Weight:	7lbs 7oz
Trigger:	Single selective (mechanical reset)
Safety:	Manual
Trigger pulls:	4 lbs 2oz (bottom) and 4lbs 4oz (top)
Top rib:	11mm wide parallel RVR
Chokes:	Flush interchangeable tubes (five supplied)
Pull length:	14 5/8" (373mm)
Drop at comb:	1½" (38mm)
Drop at heel:	2" (60mm)
Cast:	6mm with no palm swell
SRP:	£1,050
UK distributor:	RUAG Ammotech: www.ruag.co.uk