



Long gun

Mike Yardley gets his hands on the 34" barrellled Perazzi HPX

Gun tests for this magazine fall into two categories, there are what might be described as routine tests of conventional products – and we pride ourselves in providing you with good information and honest no-gloss opinions of the guns you might be thinking about buying – and, more rarely, tests of prototype guns in which we are especially interested. This test definitely falls into that category and concerns a Perazzi HPX high bird gun as developed by John Jefferies. It is especially intriguing because it is equipped with ribless 34" barrels.

Diamonds are forever?

Now, a few readers may remember John as the man who developed the concept of the 32" sporter a generation back. Such guns are common today, but some of us can remember the days when you went to a clay shoot with a skeet and trap gun (and, occasionally, a game gun as well). People started 'sporterising' their trap guns – typically lowering the comb and opening the chokes – to make them suitable for everything. John was

one of the first to market a dedicated sporter – the DG (Diamond Guns) Perazzi specials, many others followed. I once had a DG-2 which came with 30 and 32" barrels notable for their tapered and slightly raised rib. The gun was first class, I sold the 30" barrels, and campaigned with the 32" successfully for some years.

Let's fast forward; John, a keen shot, has an interest in game shooting as well as clays these days. He is especially intrigued by high

birds. "The extreme pheasant is here to taunt us," he told me a while back. He became convinced that he could make a better high bird gun. He believes good shots have proven that one can shoot consistently beyond 40 yards and he wanted to make a gun intended for this sort of really challenging shooting. I have to say at this point that though I have an interest in long range shooting, I must also advise caution. Most of us should not shoot at live quarry



The Perazzi action has a drop lock feature and excellent trigger pulls

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The 34" barrelled Perazzi HPX High Bird Special



The 34" barrels have fixed chokes 3/4 and 3/4 but Briley chokes are an option

leaf springs. These are always my preference. I think good trigger pulls are almost as important as good gunfit. The MX8 has always been notable for its excellent trigger pulls. The HPX, which is regulated in England, is no exception.

All the engineering was first class in fact. It's a great design and good enough for Purdey and others to copy. Purdey use a generic Perazzi style action in their new Sporter made partly by Perugini and Visini in Italy and partly in the UK at the Purdey factory (where, surprisingly, the action body, trigger body, monobloc and ejectors are all machined). Indeed, you might argue that the MX-8 and its various clones and derivatives is the best over and under yet conceived. Let's finish by noting that it's low in profile and very strong.

Moving on to those 34" barrels; they're monobloc and weigh in at 1600 grams which is about average for a 32" gun. They were conventionally bored – no significant over-bore – and they felt livelier than their imposing length might suggest. This is due to the ribless design. As one expects from Perazzi they very well presented, the tubes are perfectly straight (easier in a ribless design than any other because the barrels are subject to less heating in manufacture). Internal and external finish was impeccable.

Shooting impressions

I was sceptical when John and I started this shooting test. Would 34" be too long? I have tried 34 and 36" guns previously and, frankly, did not like them. The HPX was different. It shot well, much better than anticipated. It was, as might be expected, very pointable. It was easier than usual to find the line of driven birds, and I was also struck by the fact that perceived lead on all targets was reduced (a quirk of barrel length – short barrelled guns seem to need more forward allowance, long barrelled guns, less). The barrels did vibrate slightly on firing. John, however, had some rubberised magnets with him to use as barrel weights. I suggested that we try them as dampeners and a moment later had two attached

at the mid-point on either side. This had the desired effect. The HPX became really sweet to shoot even by my picky standards.

Does this gun offer an advantage on the high stuff? Perhaps. It certainly makes some driven birds easier to shoot. I found my consistency on the high tower went up significantly. I was putting in straights where, often, a bird or two had been dropped previously. John, once again, is to be congratulated for being ahead of the pack. The HPX concept is sound and will find its market niche. Will others follow John's lead?

The HPX is a custom gun. There is no surcharge for individual measurements. If you want one expect to wait 3-6 months. John will be offering 31 and 32" versions as well (the HPX-G and HPX-S respectively).

Top:
The stock has been the subject of significant development

Middle:
The forend is a Schnabel type, also note the high sighting rib

Bottom:
Grip is well shaped with distinctive chequering panels



much beyond 40 yards; with that on the record, let me continue.

On the high bird shoots of the West Country and Wales one often sees clay guns pressed into service. Perazzis, Kemens and Mirokus in 32" form are commonly encountered when birds are testing. I might also note that my normal game gun – the gun I use routinely – is a 32" Guerini 20 bore. Mr Jefferies wanted to push the boundaries. His idea was for a 34" gun with relatively light barrels (the weight reduction being achieved by dispensing with joining ribs). The test gun is configured thus, and it has a tightly radius grip, and John's favourite slightly raised, tapered rib with shallow centre channel.

The prototype looked much like any other MX8 Perazzi save for its unusual barrels. On looking closely though, it was evident that both sighting rib and stock had been the subject of significant development. The action had the usual stud pins as developed originally by Woodward, Boss style bolting, and drop lock feature (push the safety forward beyond its normal position to take out the trigger unit). The lock was powered by

Technical Specification

Make:	Perazzi
Model:	HPX High Bird Special
Bore:	12
Barrels:	34" (31 and 32" options)
Chamber:	2 3/4" (70mm)
Chokes:	fixed (three quarters and three quarters – Briley option)
Weight:	8lbs approx.
RRP:	from £7,500 as tested (deluxe models available)
Contact:	John Jeffries 07846 831888 (for HPX) RUAG 01579 362319 (for all other Perazzis)