



OUT OF THE SHADOWS

Vic Harker gets his hands on Krieghoff's new and exciting Trap gun, the K80 Trap Black Shadow

For its intended purpose, the Krieghoff K80 Trap gun is difficult to improve on if we are to judge it by the sheer numbers of its devoted following. Though its slab-sided action body owes nothing to traditional gunmaking decoration in the form of raised side panels or chiselled fences, it has its own unique appeal. This takes the form of a sliding latch fastening, which on closure of the gun moves forward over the barrel's breech ends, locking them securely down into the action body. Though the origin of

this design is unclear, it can only add to the Krieghoff's mystique.

However, we do know that the Black Shadow owes some of its fundamentals to the Remington 32 over-and-under designed by Crawford C Loomis – but where this gunmaker from Wyoming gained his inspiration for such originality still remains a mystery. What is certain is that he understood the benefits of placing a firearm's security above the explosion of the cartridge – a principle that he shared with Beretta's Tullio Marengoni.

A unique feature is its lockwork – the hammers sit on a step when cocked rather than locating with sears by way of a notch. When the trigger is pulled, the barrel's selector moves upwards, disengages the hammer and rotates to select the second barrel. A combination of high-quality materials and meticulous finishing ensure the Krieghoff's trigger pulls rival the best.

The stock

The Black Shadow's stock configuration is a significant improvement over other Krieghoff



K80s. The radius of the grip is closer and this, together with a hand filling palm swell, provides a comfortable and secure hold. This is a particularly important quality with a relatively heavy gun like the Krieghoff. The stock also incorporates a particularly well-designed adjustable comb that is suitably robust.

Supported by two substantial steel pillars, both the correct height and cast can be determined to within a millimetre. The recoil pad is the concave Kick-EEZ and so the stock combines an easily attainable gun fit with comfort.

The new forend shape also deserves attention – it is a slimmer beavertail than usually seen on the K80. Still wide enough to provide a comfortable hold, its slim profile brings the leading hand closer to the centre of the gun and provides just that right amount of manual pointability.

The barrels

The K80 barrels incorporate 76mm chambers and have hand-detachable chokes that consist of one modified, one light-modified, two improved-modified and one full choke – more than enough to provide every possible combination wanted for Trap shooting.

At a time when ribs are becoming ever more complex, the Black Shadow's visual aids are thankfully less so. A low, 5mm-high ramp tapers from 8 to 5mm at the muzzle end and does all that's required of a rib, providing an unobtrusive point of reference that is only seen in the subconscious.





TECH SPECS

MAKER	Krieghoff
MODEL	K80 Black Shadow Trap
BORE SIZE	12
BARREL LENGTH	81cm
ACTION	Coil spring
CHAMBER	76mm / 3"
CHOKES	Titanium hand detachable
RIB	Flat tapered 12mm – 8mm
STOCK	Pistol grip – adjustable for height and cast
WEIGHT	9lbs
PRICE	£12,655
DISTRIBUTOR	Alan Rhone Ltd Telephone: 01978 660001 www.alanrhone.com

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The Black Shadow's barrels, as with all Krieghoffs, are ribless and so free floating, joined at the muzzle ends with a barrel hanger. This device determines point of impact in relation to the top barrel.

Each hanger is numbered and I chose number four, with this the pattern shared a similar point of impact to the top barrel, printing a 60/40 per cent pattern above and below the POI. The barrel selector is a small button in front of the trigger blade and so the top barrel can be fired first. However, being more than satisfied with the arrangement I had, I left that for experimentation on another day.

Shooting impressions

Tipping the scales at 9lb, the K80 Black Shadow is not lightweight, but at no point did it ever feel cumbersome. The reason for this is the Krieghoff's perfect balance, which places the firearm's weight comfortably between the hands, providing a combination of sufficient speed of movement with the right amount of control.

Gun fit also comes into the equation and though usually no off-the-peg stock can be a perfect fit, the combination of excellent stock configuration that the Black Shadow incorporates helps a great deal. This, together with an adjustable comb that determines the elevation of the aiming eye above the rib to the millimetre, is another crucial aspect of achieving the pinpoint accuracy Trap shooters seek.

The adjustable trigger blade, something that can be taken for granted, is also a factor in achieving perfect timing for each shot. For all of this, however, it is the Black Shadow's tactile qualities that make this firearm outstanding. It feels right and this was not just a matter of achieving a good fit, which I did easily.

Although the Black Shadow's stock bears little resemblance to the one I usually use, I nevertheless achieved a good fit. If this sounds contradictory, it's not. The adjustable comb provided me with the right amount of drop at face – 31mm. Fortunately, drop at heel, which of course I couldn't alter, was 50mm and that was fine too because I effectively had a Monte Carlo configuration that I could use comfortably.

I first shot the Krieghoff over some Ball Trap targets, simply because they were available at the time. With 32-inch barrels weighing 1.693kg, this Krieghoff could never be described as fast-handling – but if I let things take their natural course, it got to the target on time and with satisfying results. As always, this was very much to do with accurate gun fit, which had been equally easy to achieve.

The next day on some DTL targets, the Krieghoff was doing what it was made to do. There is something intrinsically satisfying about the Krieghoff. Sound in every aspect of its design, if you are a dedicated Trap shooter you could hardly chose better than the K80 Black Shadow. ●

