

Vic Harker looks at the guns that give clay shooters the edge

GUN TEST

ON TEST
THIS MONTH:
KRIEGHOFF
£10,750

Heavy hitter

Is the Krieghoff K80 Pro Sporter really the ultimate shotgun for clay targets? Vic Harker finds out

The Krieghoff is a gun that divides opinion between devoted enthusiasts of the marque and those who simply do not understand its appeal. The gun is unconventional in design and stark and angular in appearance. Some devotees of traditional forms of gun-making of the sort that owe their origins to the great English makers (Boss, Woodward etc, or even John Browning and the Beretta family), are mystified. Be that as it may, the Krieghoff has a following, and significant numbers of shooters view it as the ultimate shotgun for clay-target shooting.

I have previously likened the Krieghoff's appeal to another German object of desire, the Porsche 911, which is regarded by some as the greatest sports car ever, but by others as ugly and miscoined. In spite of their detractors, both gun and car perform extremely well for their intended purposes – according

to enthusiastic owners, better than anything else. In the British market, Krieghoff has gained an enviable reputation as a Trap gun, especially in domestic forms of the sport. Its full weight and balance makes it highly suitable for games which require a steady platform rather than something faster handling. In Sporting, Krieghoff has also enjoyed some success, with Ben Husttwalle using it to win the FITASC World Championship in 2006 as well as many other events.

The Pro Sporter, however, is a very different gun from Ben's and incorporates a radical specification that provides a whole new way of looking at Sporting targets.

Action

The origins of the Krieghoff sliding latch top fastening remain obscure. The K80 is a direct descendant of the Remington Model 32 over-and-under, but almost certainly the concept came from elsewhere. Most importantly,



The strength and longevity of the mechanism is legendary

it's hugely strong. Placed above the explosion of the cartridge, working with the forces that flex the barrels and the receiver together, its longevity is legendary. Not only is it strong, it is also simple: no jointing or other bearing surfaces are required. This is something I'd usually be quick to question but as the principles are both demonstrably sound and time proven, you will hear no quibble from me on that regard.

For a target gun to be placed among the best, a crisp trigger is of paramount importance. The Krieghoff K80 meets this criterion and then some. I would place its coil spring mechanism

up there with the flat spring detachable trigger plate actions from the best Italian makers. There is no free play, the barrel selector powered by a coil spring pushes hard on the rear of the sears and so will disengage the hammers on the first pressure. The sears sit on a step rather than in a notch, while the components are manufactured from the hardest steel which needs a diamond file to cut and are polished to a glass like finish.

Stock

A change to the Pro Sporter's stock configuration

SPECIFICATION

Krieghoff K80 Pro Sporter

- **BORE:** 12 bore
- **ACTION:** Coil spring, single selective trigger
- **BARRELS:** Free floating, 30in with interchangeable chokes
- **RIB:** High ramped 17mm, tapered 10-6mm
- **STOCK:** Adjustable comb, pistol grip
- **WEIGHT:** 9lbs
- **PRICE WITH CASE:** £10,750
- **CONTACT:** Alan Rhone Ltd, Telephone: 01978 660001

The high-ramped, bridged rib is the feature that sets this gun apart

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WITH VIC HARKER

SHOOTING IMPRESSIONS

On crossing targets at distance the Krieghoff comes into its own – get those heavy barrels moving and it makes light work of them. On closer faster targets, it was another matter. A 910 Sporter takes some getting used to if you are accustomed to something lighter. As for the high rib, although I could get the comb up to my preferred height, the 2½in drop at heel made things difficult on driven targets in particular, as the butt did not sit up in my shoulder as it should. My overall impression of this Sporter is it's designed for a gun-up game. While under English Sporting rules you now have the option to address the trap with a pre-mounted gun, I understand that in the US, it is increasingly becoming the norm. Will the British, who invent Sporting clays, follow the Americans? That remains to be seen; meanwhile I still hanker after a fast handling Krieghoff Sporter with much lighter barrels and a conventional Sporter stock with less drop. Is that too much to ask?

The high ramped bridged rib is the feature that most sets this gun apart from other Krieghoff Sporters. Its purpose is to provide a more head up view of the target; it then drops away down to the muzzle end to the same height as a conventional rib. ■

My impression is that the K80 Sporter is designed for a gun-up game



The diamond glaze finish is both attractive and practical in terms of resistance to water and humidity



has been made recently in circumstances which might have seemed tortuous, were it not for my own experience of the Germans and their ideas about gun stocks. When originally introduced, the Pro Sporter's high rib was, (as Krieghoff explained), to provide the shooter with a more head-up position and therefore quicker target acquisition.

This concept has some merit, but then the German's married it to a Monte Carlo stock with a lot of drop at the heel. This recipe may work well for some Trap shooters who, due to the very nature of their game tend to drop their heads forward and crane their necks along the stock. However, for a Sporting shooter, where it is usual practice to keep the head fairly erect and bring the gun to the face, this seemed to me at best unnecessary and at worst inappropriate for Sporting

clays which are presented at every height and angle.

This Teutonic preoccupation with excessive amounts of drop at heel and its influence on the American firearms industry is evident from the early flintlock rifles the German immigrant gunmakers made, and their influence persisted in almost every type of rifle and shotgun made in the USA up until the end of the 19th Century and beyond.

The new Pro Sporter stock has an adjustable comb which measures 40mm at the front, and 50mm at the face. The comb can, of course, be adjusted upwards but the drop at heel at a fraction under 2½in cannot. So it is still a low comb line compared to most other European manufacturers' specifications.

For the first time, some cast at heel has been introduced, clearly a gesture to the European market from a manufacturer whose main market is in America where it would be considered unnecessary.

Barrels

With the detachable titanium chokes in situ, the barrel assembly weighs 1.654kgs, or 3lbs 10oz. That's heavy for a barrel length of 30in, but it's clearly by design. I am quite certain Krieghoff could make much lighter tubes but they choose not to.

The free floating bottom barrel is joined at the muzzle ends by a barrel hanger, which is interchangeable for point of impact (POI). The test gun had the number four hanger which puts 50% of the shot charge above the POI.

DOUBLE TEST NEXT MONTH:

BROWNING VS MIROKU TRAP