

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

GUN TEST

ON TEST
THIS MONTH:
Krieghoff K80
Black Shadow

GUN TEST
WITH VIC HARKER

The confidence booster

With its intriguing appearance, crisp trigger pulls and adjustable comb and bottom barrel, this Krieghoff inspires confidence at every turn, says Vic Harker

If ever there was an example of original thinking and unconventional appearance being a success in terms of gun making, it's the Krieghoff K80.

Its ancestor, the Remington 32, was also popular, but with rising production costs after World War II the Americans didn't have the confidence to keep the gun in production. How wrong they were in allowing it to be taken to Krieghoff by some American enthusiasts. The M32 – or rather the K80 – lives on and is much improved in a number of areas. It is hugely

successful in the USA as it is in the UK.

I've been looking at the K80 in its latest incarnation, namely, the Black Shadow – a reference to its latest engraving design. This constitutes a beautifully finished plain black background with the insignia K80 with a matt finish emblazoned on both sides of the action and highlighted with what looks like a flash of lightening underneath.

Dramatic and mysterious, it somehow suits the gun's character and design, which fortunately remains unchanged.

THE ACTION

The sliding latch top fastening reassuringly remains the same as ever. The tempered steel shroud that locks the barrels to the action has no obvious ancestry, but there is no doubting its strength and efficiency.

The benefits of placing a shotgun's locking mechanism above the explosion of the cartridge was something English gunmakers understood from the beginnings of the over-and-under. Remington's Crawford C Loomis, the American creator of the Krieghoff's

'There's no doubting the strength of the steel shroud that locks the barrels'

SPECIFICATIONS

KRIEGHOFF K80 BLACK SHADOW TRAP

■ Bore size:	12
■ Barrels 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:	9lb
■ Price:	£12,655
■ Distributor:	Alan Rhone
■ Telephone:	01978 660001
■ Web:	www.alanrhone.com

ancestor, also grasped this fundamental principle and his take on it may well be the strongest solution of all.

The design for the Krieghoff's trigger mechanism is equally original. Rather than being located in a notch, the hammers sit on a step. When the trigger is pulled, the barrel selector moves upwards, disengaging the hammer and at the same time rotating to select the second barrel.

One of the most important mechanical features of any trap gun is the trigger pulls. Krieghoff's are of the very best and they stay that way, due to the high standards of materials employed and their careful fitting.

THE STOCK

While the better Italian makers might be particularly noted for their gun fitting and stock work, Krieghoff's new configuration for the K80 Black Shadow is exceptional. The grip area is complemented by an adjustable trigger blade which I liked immensely, and I think it will suit a lot of shooters.

The radius, which combines a palm swell, keeps the hand firmly in place and so your trigger pull remains consistent. This, combined with crisp pulls as I have already described, inspires confidence from the moment they are employed.

The adjustable comb is another feature which, unless you find a perfect fit off the rack, a Trap shooter can't do without. In order to achieve a high level of accuracy when shooting, it is absolutely essential to have the master eye at precisely the correct elevation above the rib. This is easily achieved with the Black Shadow stock, which can be altered in a



With its adjustable comb, the Black Shadow comes naturally to the face.

second for both height and, almost as importantly, cast.

Fitted with a concave Kick-eez pad suitably adjusted, this stock would be hard to improve on for many shooters. Equally impressive is the new slim fore-end: while it's not so critical as the stock it nevertheless provides a manually pointable hold that inspires confidence.

THE BARRELS

As with every aspect of this K80, the barrel specification provides the facility to ensure the

gun prints its patterns where the shooter wants them. As with all Krieghoffs, the Black Shadow's bottom barrel can be adjusted for POI (point of impact) by changing the barrel hanger.

Employing a number 4, I achieved a perfect 70% / 30% above and below the POI, but if that's too high for you other options are available. I particularly liked the Shadow's 12mm tapered rib; with a low rear ramp it tapers to 8mm at the muzzle ends, and the machined edges with longitudinal lines provide an excellent sighting plane. ■

SHOOTING IMPRESSIONS

Although the K80 Black Shadow is a new gun I had never shot before, there were some aspects of it that felt familiar. For example, the stock configuration in terms of the comb, which came naturally to the face, felt as if it was made for me.

This was almost certainly due to my handling guns from makers who have very different ideas to the British as to how a Trap gun should be brought to the shoulder, which is a matter of shoulder first and then dropping the head forwards onto a stock

with a broad comb. In the case of the Shadow's stock with its slim comb tapering to the front, this could be achieved in one movement, with the stock coming into the shoulder and only the slightest inclination of the head to achieve facial contact.

In terms of balance, handling and easily achieved gun fit, the K80 Black Shadow has few rivals and therefore for the dedicated Trap shooter and particularly those who compete in the domestic disciplines, this gun comes highly recommended.

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