

CAESARS PALACE

DON BRUNT VISITS THE CAESAR GUERINI FACTORY IN ITALY TO FIND OUT WHAT IT IS THAT IS MAKING THE BRAND SUCH A WINNER IN THE US MARKET



L TO R: MASTER ENGRAVER, CESAR GIOVANELLI, WITH GEORGIO GUERINI OUTSIDE BOTTEGA INCISIONI GIOVANELLI. THIS FAMOUS ENGRAVER'S STUDIO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE CRISP, DELICATE ENGRAVING NOW CHARACTERISTIC OF THE SIDEPLATED GUERINI MAXUM, ESSEX AND FORUM MODELS.



Although a recent addition to the world of gunmaking, the Caesar Guerini name has made quite a reputation for itself in the last six years – not only has the marque received numerous industry awards but it is rapidly becoming favored by many of the top shots – including Chris McClelland, Mike Loungo and Pat Lieske.

In order to get a full understanding behind the ethos of this young company, it was time to pack a bag and hop on a 'plane to Italy to visit the factory and some of the suppliers that help make the marque stand out from the crowd.

Nearby Lake Garda may be renowned around the globe as a mecca for those seeking tranquil serenity in an area of outstanding beauty, but if you head north west along the A4 Highway, rather than north east, you will find yourself heading for Brescia and the ancient home of Italian

gunmaking. The Gardone Valley is where it all happens, with bustling towns following the river as it snakes through the narrow valley whose sides loom almost vertically into the Italian blue sky.

Think of any Italian gun maker and the chances are they are based here. Driving through the valley is like a 'who's who' of the gun trade – from the large sprawling industrial mass production factories through to the tiny boutique manufacturers who might only produce a handful of guns each year.

The town of Marcheno is where Guerini began production at the start of the decade. Their new purpose built factory, commissioned last fall, is only a few hundred yards from the original facility. Modern and spacious, it underlines the growth seen by the brand and the ambitions the company holds for the future.

DELIVERING A PROMISE

Founding brothers, Antonio and Giorgio Guerini, have accumulated a wealth of experience gained within the gun trade and started the business with a definite ambition as to where they saw themselves fitting into the current market. "We recognized that there was a need for a high quality range of shotguns to fill the gap between those that are mass produced and the limited production hand made guns. We believed that there was a clear opportunity to produce a high quality gun at an affordable price by utilizing modern technology."

Brave words indeed – but some six years on it seems that the Guerini boys are delivering on their promise – and with the new factory having only recently opened, it seems that there is plenty of scope for the brand to grow yet further.

The upper level of the new factory is the assembly room where the guns go through their

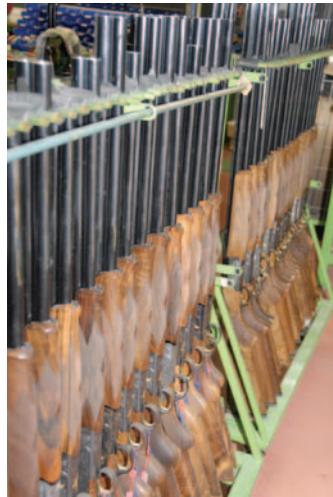
final checks following assembly prior to dispatch. A team of experienced artisans go about their work in a businesslike manner while still retaining the obvious Italian passion and pride that they have in what they are achieving.

Machining work is carried out on the floor below where hi-tech equipment allows for the manufacture of components in-house. The quality control office is close to the action, performing nearly 150 checks on each firearm before it reaches the customer. Using the latest in measuring equipment, the components are tested for both strength and accuracy of fit.

Go down still further into the bowels of the factory and you come to the indoor range. This really is an example of cutting edge technology. A 'speed trap' measures the performance of the shot pattern as it travels down range. At the business end, the pattern is checked not by using the traditional pattern plate, but by a high speed TV camera that examines the shot string in flight. It's most definitely a facility that is the envy of many of their rivals.

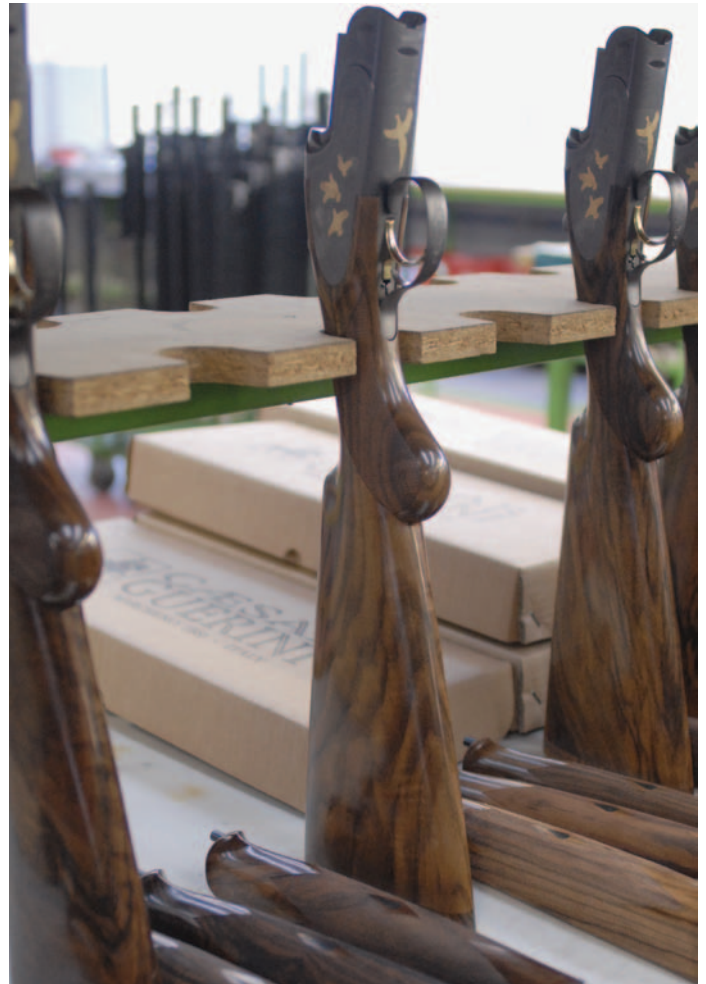
ELEGANT ENGRAVING

One of the attractions of the guns produced here are the aesthetics,



THE NEW FACTORY BOASTS THE MOST MODERN OF SHOTGUN PRODUCTION FACILITIES.

which are most definitely pleasing to the eye. However, in modern business it is not always practical or cost effective to carry out every part of the finishing process on site, therefore the fine engraving work seen on the seamless side plates of models such as the Maxum (see Tom Ceretto's excellent review in May/June 2006) and the Essex is carried out by one of the foremost names in engraving. The Bottega Incisioni Giovanelli is quite simply the place to go to see the engravers art practiced at its highest level. Over the past half century, Giovanelli's customers have included Astronaut Neil Armstrong,



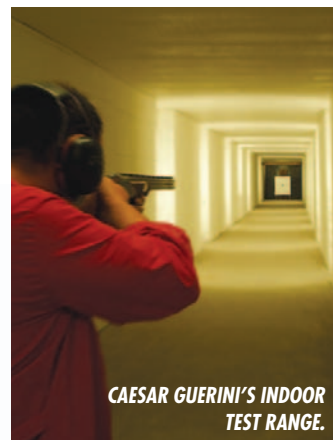
numerous Presidents (including Ronald Reagan and George Bush) as well as two of the most revered people in Italy – Jean Todt (racing director at Ferrari) and the great man himself, His Holiness the Pope!

Hand finishing of engraving is a painstaking process demanding hours of ceaseless concentration. However, done well, it adds significant value to the finished product. Look at one of the Guerini Forum models (below) and its 25 days of engraving work are obvious.

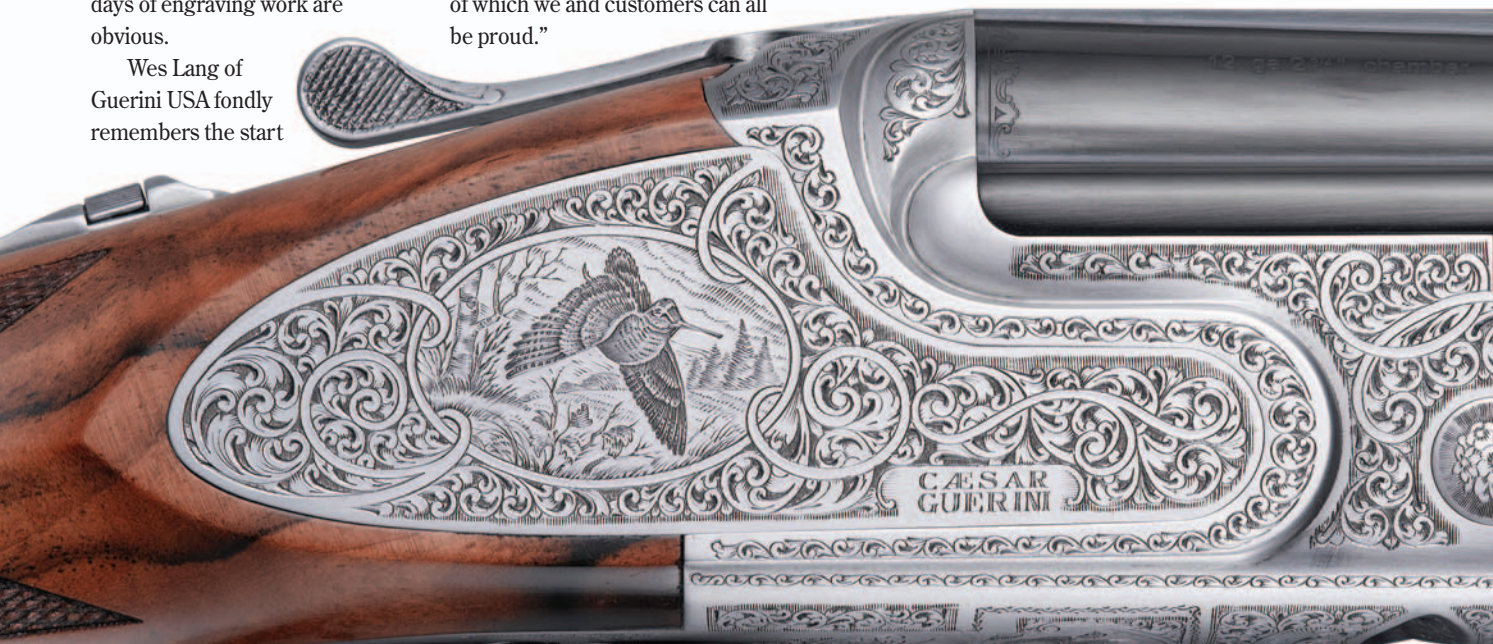
Wes Lang of Guerini USA fondly remembers the start

they always have been, and always will be. In Georgio and Antonio I knew that they shared that passion. You might ask what it is that motivates us. Well, it's the thought that we can go on improving our product – whether it's a new model or a new top lever design, it means a lot to us. As to the key to our success, it's very simple really. We aim to provide better products for the money utilizing the highest levels of technology and finished to a level of which we and customers can all be proud."

costs) in for a complete and thorough service, once a year, at no cost – with a turnaround time of 5-7 days. This is another strong point for the brand. "We aim to offer market leading customer service," says Lang. "We never forget that guns like these represent a significant investment. That's why we promise to get the gun repaired and back to the customer as soon as possible – and that doesn't mean months. Our usual turn around time for repairs



CAESAR GUERINI'S INDOOR TEST RANGE.



of the collaboration with the Guerini brothers. "It was Antonio and Georgio who proposed that we start the company. We all had a great deal of experience within the business, but never having worked for myself it was a big step. After a great deal of soul searching I took the plunge. One of the reasons I committed to the brand was my passion – shotguns are my life –

LIFETIME WARRANTY

Customer service is an area where many manufacturers falter. In addition to a lifetime warranty that covers manufacturers defects, there is also a 'Pit Stop' tune-up program. A customer can send their gun (paying the shipping

is less than two weeks – and that's something we are very proud of." Listening to Georgio talk about the brand it is easy to see the passion that Lang refers to. The features of the product speak for themselves – hand filed action fences, the best of engraving, Turkish Circassian walnut stocks with 26 lines per inch checkering, screwless sideplates and, to ensure that they shoot as well as they look, DueCon dual forcing cones to maintain pattern density and reduce recoil.

FOLLOWING A VISION

With a rapidly growing brand and delivering good product to a

competitive market, you might think that the sky is the limit for Guerini. Well, you would be wrong, as Lang explains. "We don't want to be one of the high volume industrial manufacturers. We started with a vision of where we wanted to go and we are sticking to it – we love what we do and although the business will grow it will always follow that vision." A big volume producer they might not want to become, but that isn't stopping them from bringing their ethos to other sectors of the sport. An American Trap gun was unveiled at the recent Shot Show. It's further evidence of Guerini's vision and passion for the sport. ■