



CARLOS POLIDURA
MAKES THE TRIP TO
MADISON AVENUE,
NEW YORK

When you think of New York City, images that come to mind are a majestic skyline, the Empire State Building, Radio City Music Hall and Wall Street. But do you ever think of finding a fine upscale hunting and sporting shop there?

The
B E R E T T A
Gallery

Well, hiding in plain sight among the Manhattan skyscrapers that surround it is one of the finest gun shops you'll ever walk into. Yes, you heard me, right in the heart of midtown on Madison Avenue lies the Beretta Gallery, home of some of the finest guns ever made.

From the outside, the store's facade stands out from its neighbors. That's because the stone used was imported from the same village in Italy where Beretta's headquarters stand. I had the pleasure of being given a tour of the store by Peter Horn, the Manager and Vice President of Sales. Peter has been with Beretta





for well over a decade and has been running this shop since it was first built in 1994. There are only six such Galleries in the world today, each one a showcase for Beretta's finest products. The New York store was the first – built to cater to those who pursue the sporting lifestyle. “What a lot of people don't realize is that Beretta is one of the oldest businesses in history. They have been in business for 500 years, spanning over 15 generations,” he said.

FULL SERVICE GUN SHOP

The gallery is not just a retail store but a full service gun shop as well. You can have your gun fitted and

have custom finishes and scroll work designed to fit your exact taste. On the first level when you walk in you enter the apparel section of the store. Here you will see the complete line of clothing that Beretta offers. On the second level you will find their line of accessories as well as a library of books and videos on all kinds of shooting and hunting subjects. But the third level is where the real draw is – that's the gun room. Here you will find a collection of fine guns ranging from \$15,000 to \$300,000.

Peter had his assistant bring out some of their finer guns and set them on the table before me. I found myself staring at some of the

most beautiful guns I had ever seen. There were SO6s, SO9s and SO10s, all ELs and EELs with beautiful scrollwork on their receivers. I quickly reached for my handkerchief lest my drooling would damage any of these gorgeous guns! People often go to gun clubs and use a stock Beretta and say *‘that's ok, I have one just like it at home so I can use this.’* “That's because of how we manufacture our guns. We call it the Beretta feel,” said Peter.

The shop is run in the old style of business common in the UK. Peter meets with his clients who are looking for a high end gun – and he knows his business. “Lots of the people who come in looking



THE DISTINCTIVE OUTSIDE FACADE OF THE BERETTA GALLERY.



THE BERETTA GALLERY IS ON THREE LEVELS – APPAREL ON THE FIRST FLOOR, ACCESSORIES ON THE SECOND FLOOR AND THE GUN ROOM ON THE THIRD FLOOR.

“ Lots of the people who come in looking for a high end gun are board room executives... I meet with them here and they pick out a gun and focus on the details of what they want. Then I later send the bill to their secretary!...”





for a high end gun are board room executives,” he says, “and I meet with them here and they pick out a gun and focus on the details of what they want. Then I later send the bill to their secretary!”

“People who buy high end guns are extremely loyal,” Peter said. “They often buy guns as gifts for their sons, family and close friends. Once you deal with them you almost become a member of the family.”

In talking with Peter you realize

that you are in the presence of a consummate sales person who has a wealth of knowledge about the industry and the sporting lifestyle. He was a professional hunter in Africa prior to joining Beretta and has been hunting since he was nine years old.

HUNTING OVERSEAS

And hunting is one of the things that the Beretta Gallery does best. “We offer hunts all over the world –

in Europe, Asia and Africa,” Peter said. “We have scouted out some great locations, particularly in Eastern Europe, for animals like Roebucks,” he said. “I’m currently writing a book called ‘Hunting across the Danube’ and it is about Roebuck hunting in Eastern Europe. It is how I discovered some of the locations we offer for hunting,” he said. Looking around the gun room I saw many pictures of former Presidents, celebrities and satisfied customers who were

standing over their prized animals.

“Come, let me show you something really special,” Peter told me with a twinkle in his eye. He took me to his private office where he meets with his clients. His inner sanctum was what you would expect from someone with his background. Photos of his adventures were everywhere – along with skulls and mounts from some of his hunts. He then produced a large binder from a locked cabinet and opened it to the



“ We offer hunts all over the world – in Europe, Asia and Africa... We have scouted out some great locations, particularly in Eastern Europe, for animals like Roebucks... **”**

THE BERETTA GALLERY GUN ROOM. INSET: PETER HORN, MANAGER AND VICE PRESIDENT OF SALES.

first page where there was a picture of a custom gun with what I consider to be a work of art on the receiver. “These are my bambinos! My babies as they say in Italian,” he said. “These are photos of some of the custom guns and engraving we’ve done for people. All done by our master engravers in Italy.”

YOUR CHOICE

“We can do most everything anyone can imagine. People have

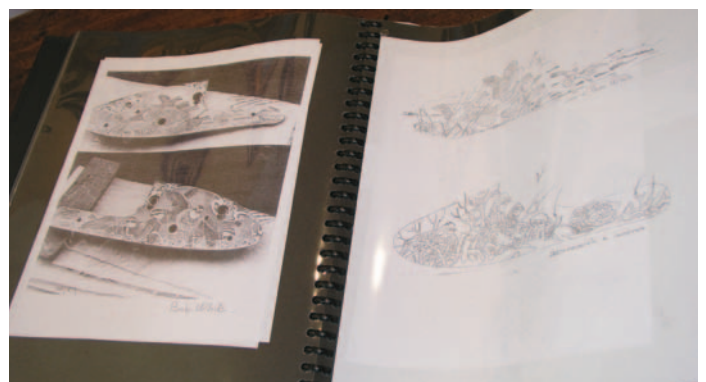
come to me to have their dogs engraved, ducks and hunting scenes – anything as long as it is tasteful,” he said. I looked at page after page of some of the most extraordinary engraving ever produced. “This is a gun I sold to someone that they called the ‘Millennium’ gun. It was produced in 2000 and is a replica of the Michelangelo Madonna. It was done by Aldo Rizzini. We worked on this for a long time. It took 800 hours of work to engrave – a

normal gun takes about 200 hours to produce. The cost was about \$150,000,” he said.

“I like to go to the engravers and ask them ‘*what do you like to do? What types of artwork do you enjoy doing?*’ and they tell me pheasants, mythological figures or dogs. I write down who does what so that I can match them with a customer when they make a request.” He went on to say, “these are not normal guns. These are unique one of a kind guns that

people commission to have made as gifts or to mark a special occasion.”

So the next time you’re in the market for a truly special one of a kind gun, you may want to think about taking a ride on the subway to Madison Avenue and visit the Beretta Gallery. Walk around and take in the experience of being transported into the world of sporting life. Then ask for Peter – and begin your journey to making your dream gun a reality. ■



TOP RIGHT: FULL SERVICE GUN SHOP. RIGHT: THE ‘MILLENNIUM’ GUN AND PICTURE BOOK OF CUSTOMER ENGRAVINGS.