



Steve Lamboy, General Manager of Zoli North America, knows how to trip my trigger – he need only mention small bores. He knows as a recovering skeet shooter that I like to shoot small bore target guns, especially the 28 gauge.

Says Tom Ceretto

Introduced in the late spring of last year, the Zoli sporting clays 20/28 gauge Combo is based on the popular Z Sport series target shotguns, but on a smaller scale dedicated 20 gauge frame. Like the 12 gauge, it is offered in three grades, Z Sport, Z Sport Extra and the top grade Z Ambassador EL.

The entry level Z Sport with 32 inch barrels is the subject of this gun test. Like it's larger 12 gauge sibling, the Combo is a modified Boss boxlock machined out of a solid steel forging. Where it differs from the original Boss design is the extensions that jut out from both sides of the monobloc that fit into slots machined into the face of the receiver.

A U-shaped bolt engages the

extensions and solidly locks down the barrels with authority. Like the original Boss design, the barrels pivot on replacable trunnions, (or stub pins if you prefer) in the barrel walls. The sturdy looking cocking rods are located on each side of the bottom of the receiver. The twenty gauge receiver is 2.20" deep and 1.53" wide, about 1/8 inch shallower and narrower than the 12 gauge Z Sport.

This demo gun is minimally but nicely engraved along the edges of the receiver and the scallop with a Zoli Z in the middle of an oval set in the center of the scallop. Both trunnion buttons are also tastefully engraved. The bottom of the receiver sports the Zoli bow and arrow logo with the same Zoli Z in

ZOLI 20/28 COMBO



MY DEMO GUN AT TOP IS MINIMALLY BUT NICELY ENGRAVED ALONG THE EDGES OF THE RECEIVER AND THE SCALLOP WITH A ZOLI Z IN THE MIDDLE OF AN OVAL SET IN THE CENTER OF THE SCALLOP. BOTH TRUNNION BUTTONS ARE ALSO TASTEFULLY ENGRAVED.

an oval that is on either side of the silvered receiver. The recoil ball is engraved and the opening lever is nicely checkered. It's tastefully done and attractive.

REMOVABLE TRIGGER

Like its sibling 12 gauge, the 20/28 gauge Combo has an easily removable trigger assembly. This makes short work of cleaning or repairing the assembly. The hammer, sears, cocking levers, inertia block, levers and springs are all titanium coated for wear and smooth functioning. The triggers on my demo were excellent with very little, if any, creep evident. The bottom barrel went off at 3.75 pounds and the top barrel at 4.0

pounds – nearly perfect. The hammers are powered by a pair of sturdy looking titanium-coated coil springs.

BARRELS AND CHOKES

I have always admired Zoli barrels – they are a work of art. They are machined out of high-grade steel alloy bars and bored out by the deep drilling method and then centerless ground to near perfection. Barrels are assembled, top rib included, and heated or oven brazed as a complete assembly. Using this method to eliminate stress and warping in the barrel/monobloc assembly, is why Zoli can boast that their barrels are regulated to

SPECIFICATIONS

MANUFACTURER:	ANTONIO ZOLI SRL VIA ZANARDELLI 25063 GARDONE, VAL TROMPIA ITALY
DISTRIBUTOR:	ANTONIO ZOLI NORTH AMERICA 3603 EAST RIDGE CANANDAIGUA, NY 14424 585-394-1271 www.zoli.it
ACTION:	ANSON MODIFIED BOSS BOXLOCK
TRIGGER:	REMOVABLE THREE POSITION ADJUSTABLE
TRIGGER PULL:	LOWER: 3.75 LBS. UPPER: 4.0 LBS.
RECEIVER DEPTH:	2.20"
RECEIVER WIDTH:	1.53"
WEIGHT:	7.3 LBS.
STOCK:	TURKISH WALNUT
STOCK FINISH:	HAND RUBBED OIL
LOP:	14 7/8"
DROP AT COMB:	1.5"
DROP AT HEEL:	2.375"
CAST OFF:	3/16"
TOE:	5/16"
FORE-END:	ROUND COMPETITION
CHECKERING:	24 LPI
CUSTOM DIMENSIONS:	AVAILABLE AT EXTRA COST
BARRELS:	30" TESTED
TOP RIB:	VENTED
MID RIB:	VENTED
FRONT BEAD:	IVORY
CENTER BEAD:	STEEL
CHAMBERS:	20 GA. 3" 28 GA. 2 3/4"
BORE:	20 GA. 0.627" 28 GA. 0.555"
CHOKES:	FLUSH
FORCING CONES:	LONG EXTENDED





strike within three inches of each other at thirty yards. Both the 20 and 28 gauge barrels are slightly overbored at 0.627" for the 20 gauge and 0.555" for the 28 gauge.

Five flush chokes were included with my demo. Briley is making extended competition chokes for both 20 and 28 gauge Zoli barrels. One thing I did notice was that Zoli chokes their tubes according to gauge, something that most manufacturers do not do. If you choke a small bore according to 12 gauge standards they are over-choked at each step. Small-bore chokes do not require as much constriction as the 12 gauge to achieve the proper pattern for that choke designation. Chalk up another plus for Zoli – it shows they pay attention to detail.

The top rib is tapered from 11mm at the breech to a narrow 5mm at the muzzle. It is elliptical-radius cross-hatched to eliminate glare. The center rib is vented and extends from the muzzle all the way back to the monobloc.

TURKISH WALNUT

Stocks are made of select Turkish walnut and have a nicely filled hand rubbed finish. Nice grain was evident on both the stock and fore-end. The 24 lines per inch checkering was well executed and afforded a firm grip with or without gloves. The grip radius is what I would call a loose competition grip. Not as tight as some trap guns – but more like a skeet target gun and perfectly adequate for sporting clays.

The rounded fore-end was of appropriate size and fits the hand very well. It is firmly attached to the barrels with Deeley and Edge improved fore-end iron with no movement fore and aft or side to side. Wood to metal fit on both

stock and fore-ends was good. Wood upgrades are available at extra cost.

ON TEST

I decided to take the Zoli for an outing at Wild Wings Sportsmans

Club near Campbellsport, Wisconsin. They throw shooter friendly targets there that are appropriate for shooters of an advanced age like your humble scribe. I was shooting with Karl Fabry. If there is anyone that likes to shoot the small bores for

sporting clays more than I do, it's Karl. I asked if he would like first crack – and even though he is left-handed and generally shoots with a shorter stock, he shot the Zoli well with the 28 gauge barrels – his favorite.

I also shot the Zoli at my home club, Waukesha Gun Club, using the twenty gauge barrels for sporting clays and the 28 gauge for skeet. I was impressed with how nicely the gun transitioned from target to target on report pairs, true pairs and at my favorite skeet game, skeet doubles. I am sure the excellent almost neutral balance of the gun aided transition from target to target. It balanced just at the trunnions and was very slightly forward biased.

Even though the Zoli is lighter weight than larger competition shotguns at 7 pounds 3 ounces, recoil with hefty 20 gauge Winchester sporting clays loads was mild. Shooting my reloaded 28 gauge sporting clays loads (1,250 fps) offered barely any recoil at all. The best compliment I can pay to the Zoli Combo is that it shot like a 12 gauge competition shotgun, displaying no whippy characteristics that some small bore shotguns are prone to. It felt like a competition target gun should feel.

I don't know if Zoli intends on making .410 bore barrels for the 20/28 gauge Combo in the future, but for now, a set of .410 bore sub-gauge tube inserts in the 20 gauge barrels would be a nice addition. Briley will make a set for you on request. At a suggested retail of \$5,995 for the entry-level model it is very well priced for a high quality two-barrel set. Sales of the Zoli 20/28 Combo have been better than expected – I can understand why. It's a pleasure to shoot. ■

ZOLI HAS ANNOUNCED THAT THE 20/28 SUBGAUGE SETS ARE NOW AVAILABLE IN THE NEW KRONOS SPORT MODEL WITH DROP OUT TRIGGER AT A RETAIL PRICE OF \$5995.

