

IN THE EVOLUTION OF SEMI-AUTO SHOGUNS IN THE UNITED STATES, ONE NAME HAS ALWAYS BEEN HERALDED AS ONE OF THE FINEST, THE WINCHESTER SUPER X.

WINCHESTER

CONTINUING AN EXCEPTIONAL LEGACY SAYS **MICHAEL MARR**

SUPER X3

As a youngster I used to dream of owning one of these beauties, and later in life I finally did. When I was contacted to write a review on the most recent model, I was curious to see what the latest generation had to offer.

When I got the call letting me know the gun was in, I wasted no time in scurrying up to the shop to pick it up. I just had to put it together at the shop – and all of us there (including a few regulars) waited to see what it looked like and how it felt. The gun got passed around to eager hands – and then the gun mounts started. When it finally got back to me, the debate started. “Does it feel like the original?”

“What’s that rib remind you of?”

This classic name still evoked the passion of those who remember, making me even more excited to study the gun in more detail and put it thru’ its

paces at the range.

I started with the complete disassembly and cleaning of the gun, including the trigger group. The gun came in the industry standard ABS case with compartments for the chokes and accessories. It was simple and intuitive to break down with only five main parts – the piston sleeve, piston sleeve spring, gas piston, bolt (2-piece) and trigger group. There were no parts that had complex geometry that would require brushes or other cleaning tools – just gun solvent, oil and a rag and you’re in business.

The SX3 has a very attractive receiver made of advanced aluminum alloy which offers incredible strength without adding unwanted and misplaced weight that could throw off the balance of the gun. The receiver was finished in satin gray nickel plate and executed very carefully to avoid the possibility of glare. The 30" ported barrel and trigger

group were finished in Perma-Cote UT, making them extremely resistant to the elements. They were of gun metal gray in color. The bore and chamber were chrome plated and the barrel’s ventilated rib was slightly ramped – with a white mid-bead and fiber optic front sight. There were extra fiber optic inserts of varying colors and diameters to suit individual preferences – and changing them was easy.

The five extended chokes were beautifully executed, and each wore an anodized aluminum red band with the constrictions laser etched on each (LF, IM, M, IC, SK). They had approx. 1/2" of knurling below the band, making for easy insertion and removal.

The wood on this test gun was, to say the least, a surprise. Normally one would not expect to see much in the way of figure or color in a semi-auto, but this piece of walnut had both – and was



topped-off with a satin oil finish and a Pachmayr Decelerator pad. The stock included an adjustable comb with hardware constructed of aluminum and steel, and was etched with hash marks to make adjustments simple. So, cleaned and ready to shoot – it was off to the range.

On Test

I would at this point, normally pattern the gun, but it came with a patterning target which showed excellent results – so I went straight to the sporting course. From the very first mount I noticed the balance of the gun, very neutral with only a slight bias towards the muzzle. The stock was slender to the touch, but with good comb diameter. My mount seemed very natural. The forend felt fine, with the top 1" recessed for finger placement. All of the checkering was well executed. The slightly ramped rib was more narrow than

really impressed with the handling of the SX3. Nowhere during my round did I find myself struggling with gun mount, insertion, lead or acquisition. When I missed, I knew immediately why – and that's something you cannot do if you're struggling with mechanics.

In order for the gun to be a real player, it has to point well, and the SX3 definitely does that – moreover, it does so very instinctively. The sensation of recoil was very low and the speed claims became obvious on true pairs – this gun cycles very fast.

I'm a true 'trigger puncher', so I'm not often sensitive to trigger pull. The trigger on the SX3 broke at a stout 6lbs on my RCBS digital gauge, but I have to tell you I didn't think about it while on the course. It was only after another shooter tried the gun and commented about the trigger did I put it on the scale, and although slightly heavy for a semi-auto, it broke very clean. The other shooters who shot the



most, and was filed to reduce glare. It drew my eye directly to the target, and throughout the day, I never noticed it once.

At the first station I encountered a steep on-edge teal with a shallow incomer below my feet on report. This pair would give me a good idea of the gun's handling characteristics – and it didn't disappoint. The MOD choke punched the teal hard and the gun indexed beautifully to the incomer, leaving only the familiar white smoke of a bio in the air.

I went on to shoot 14 stations of about every conceivable target presentation and found myself

SX3 were also impressed – and the resounding conclusion was, “this gun points like a semi-auto, but with the feel and balance of an O/U.”

The SX3 performed as advertised – and then some. With no malfunctions during testing and great fit and feel, Winchester's latest generation Super X is a real contender in the semi-auto category. Although different in manufacturing and materials to the original Super X introduced in 1973, the current SX3 does an admirable job of continuing its exceptional legacy. Put it on your list for consideration if you're looking for a new semi-auto sporter. ■