

# HOLLOWAY & NAUGHTON

RICHARD RAWLINGSON LOOKS AT THE REBIRTH OF A CLASSIC ENGLISH GUNMAKER

It is remarkable how rarely the demarcation line between those who build guns and those who use them is crossed. Go back in history and you will find very few great gunmakers who were also top class shots. In my experience, most gunmakers are totally absorbed in their craft and the process of making a gun and have little interest in it once it has left the factory. I was a guest on one occasion on a rather grand driven pheasant day and alongside me was one of Italy's most famous gunmakers. Thanks to the airport baggage handlers he was using a borrowed gun

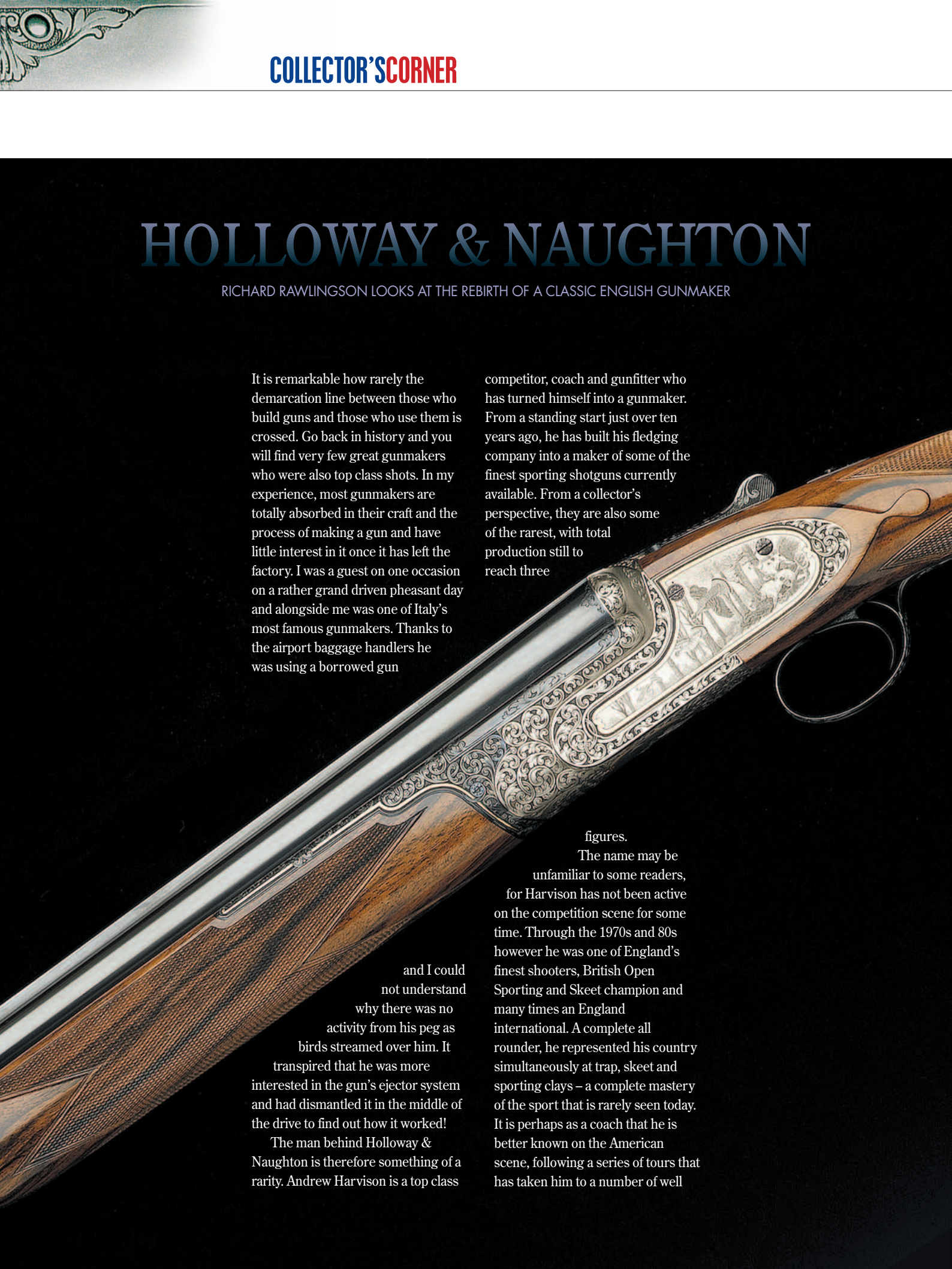
competitor, coach and gunfitter who has turned himself into a gunmaker. From a standing start just over ten years ago, he has built his fledging company into a maker of some of the finest sporting shotguns currently available. From a collector's perspective, they are also some of the rarest, with total production still to reach three

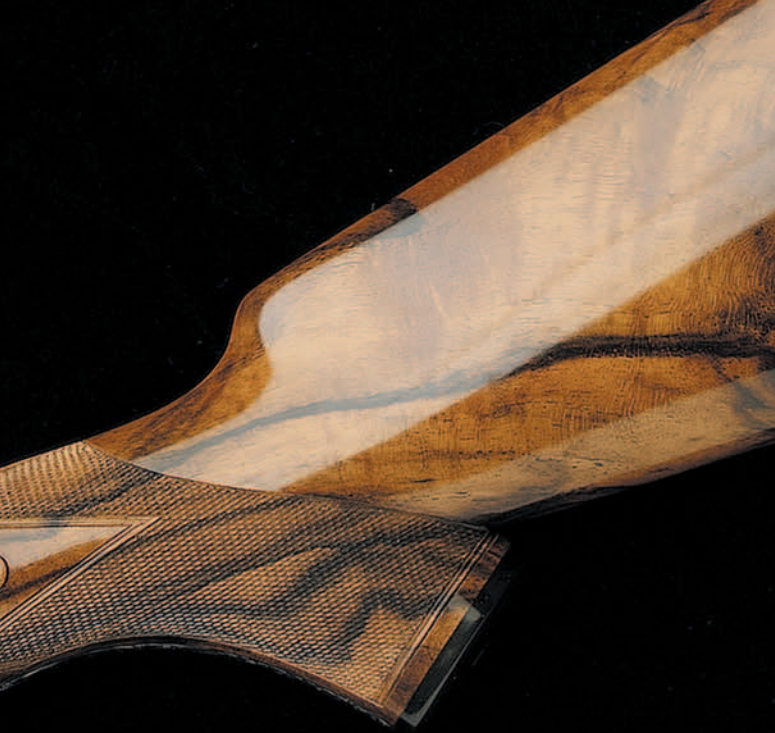
and I could not understand why there was no activity from his peg as birds streamed over him. It transpired that he was more interested in the gun's ejector system and had dismantled it in the middle of the drive to find out how it worked!

The man behind Holloway & Naughton is therefore something of a rarity. Andrew Harvison is a top class

figures.

The name may be unfamiliar to some readers, for Harvison has not been active on the competition scene for some time. Through the 1970s and 80s however he was one of England's finest shooters, British Open Sporting and Skeet champion and many times an England international. A complete all rounder, he represented his country simultaneously at trap, skeet and sporting clays – a complete mastery of the sport that is rarely seen today. It is perhaps as a coach that he is better known on the American scene, following a series of tours that has taken him to a number of well





*...this is both a superb example of gunmaking art and also a gun that feels immediately capable of championship winning scores... a gun designed and built by a man who understands what is needed to win at the highest level.*

THE BOSS ACTION IS THE CLASSIC ENGLISH OVER-AND-UNDER.



known ranges around the country. How good is he? I can only recount my personal experience. We worked together on a series of instructional articles around ten years ago. Following one photographic session we were shooting some targets together and he made some changes to the trigger position on my gun and my grip. Three days later I shot 96/100 in a registered competition – still my personal best!

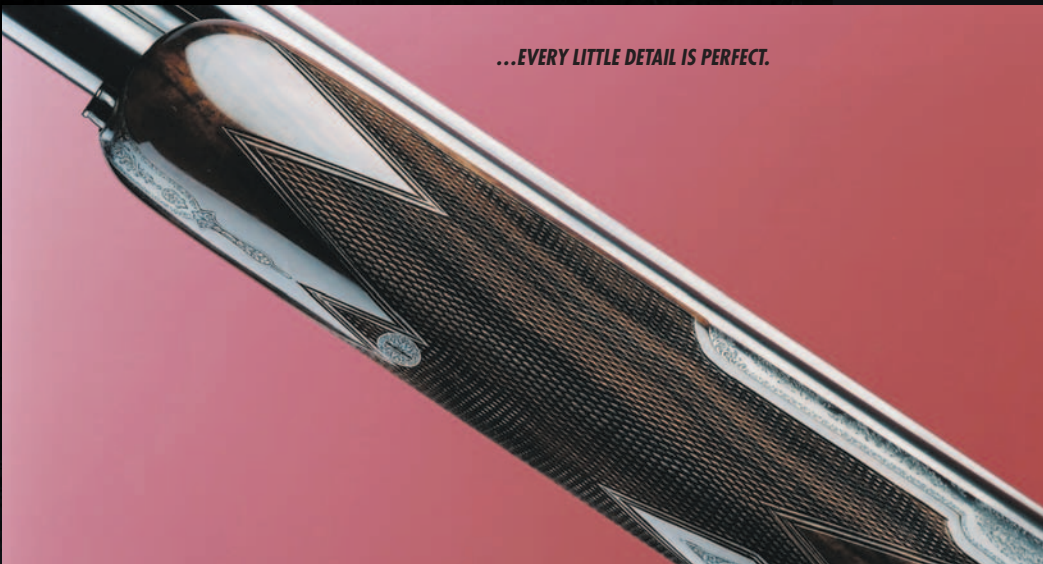
In the early 1990s the opportunity arose to turn his dream of building a best quality gun into reality. Many of the British

gunmakers of the golden era had disappeared in the years following the Second World War, either amalgamated into other companies or driven out of business altogether by fierce competition from Spain, Italy and Japan. One such was Holloway & Naughton, a respected Birmingham firm formed in 1909 when Thomas Naughton acquired the business of his employer Holloway & Co.

Naughton's story, as recounted in Douglas Tate's book *Birmingham Gunmakers* was a classic Dickensian tale of poor boy makes good by hard work. He started in the gun trade aged just ten, and progressed to become a master craftsman. Holloway & Naughton was always actively involved in target shooting and, with neat symmetry given the later history, employed English clay pigeon champion W. Ellicot as a traveling salesman.

Following Naughton's death, the business was continued by a son and eventually acquired by rival Birmingham firm F. J. Wiseman in the early 1950s, the name lying dormant until being reactivated by Harvison and John Wiseman, the latest generation of the Wiseman family.

...EVERY LITTLE DETAIL IS PERFECT.



Together they designed the first new Holloway & Naughton gun for over half a century, a modern 'Boss style' over-and-under that was first shown to the public in 1995. A total of seven guns was built to this design but the feedback from prospective buyers was that, as an English gunmaker, they should aim to build something more classically English. The resulting 'phase two' models are true Boss-action guns, the barrels pivoting in rotating trunnions, rather than on the fixed stub pins of the first model.

Harvison and Wiseman went their separate ways shortly afterwards, Andrew taking on the rights to build Holloway & Naughton over-and-under guns by his company Premier English Shoguns Ltd. With a determination to compete at the highest level, he has put together a team of hand-picked craftsmen to build his guns, all of them with extensive experience of building to 'Best' standards for some of the finest makers, including Peter Nelson,

Boss and Holland & Holland. Batches of parts are made at a dedicated facility in England and put into production to order, the final step being engraving from some of Europe's finest, including Marcus Hunt.

The Boss-action gun is essentially a lightweight game model, designed to weigh in the range 6.5-7.5 lbs according to specification. It can be built to scale in any gauge from 12-bore to .410. The gun is virtually 100 percent hand built, with prices to match (typically around \$85,000 plus taxes) but competing with the very best on quality. Many are already in the hands of discerning collectors, with a healthy order book of 'work in progress' besides.

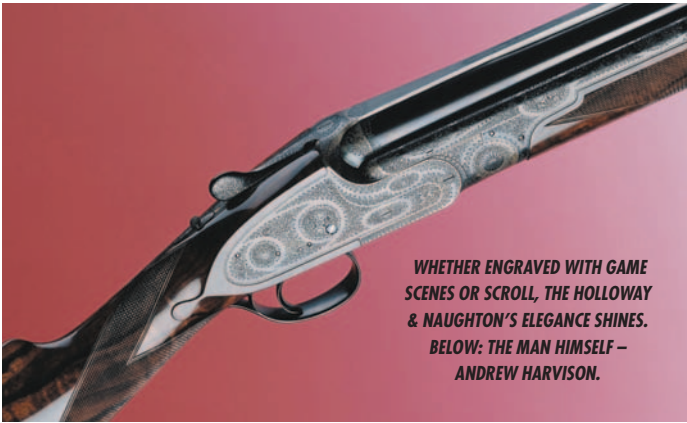
All of which would have been enough for most people, but Harvison is not one to choose the easy route. With his background it was perhaps inevitable that the concept of a true competition gun, but built to best standards, would continue to chip away at him. In a sense it would mean revisiting the

early design, but applying the lessons learned in the intervening years and the build quality of current production. The result is the Holloway & Naughton Sporting, the first example of which, exclusively pictured here, has just been completed for an American customer. It is a 12-bore with three barrel sets – 28, 30 and 32".

With more than a hint of Fabbri about it, this is both a superb example of gunmaking art and also a gun that feels immediately capable of championship winning scores. This is Harvison's unique selling proposition – a gun designed and built by a man who understands what is needed to win at the highest level. This first gun is a true sidelock, but a trigger plate version is planned and the base price is likely to be set around \$50,000. The weight will reflect the purpose, up to 8.25 lbs if required and, as a true bespoke gun, every detail can be specified, from grip

**THIS SIDELOCK MODEL HAS BEEN BUILT WITH THREE SETS OF BARRELS.**





WHETHER ENGRAVED WITH GAME SCENES OR SCROLL, THE HOLLOWAY & NAUGHTON'S ELEGANCE SHINES. BELOW: THE MAN HIMSELF – ANDREW HARVISON.



shape to rib style. More importantly, every gun carries Harvison's personal guarantee on fit; the buyer will be personally measured and fitted by a man recognized as one of the best gunfitter-coaches of his generation.

Andrew Harvison may be an unusual gunmaker then, but he shares the vision and drive that has inspired the greats from Harris Holland to Ivo Fabbri. Time will tell whether Holloway & Naughton will join the ranks of the elite but already this fledgling business can claim to have built one of the all-time great competition guns. ■

FOR MORE INFORMATION VISIT  
[www.hollowaynaughton.co.uk](http://www.hollowaynaughton.co.uk)  
 OR CALL +44 116 259 6592