

TOM CERETTO PUTS THE **BROWNING CITORI**  
**XS SPECIAL** ...THROUGH ITS PACES



In the pantheon of great shotgun designers there are people those of us who shoot are greatly indebted to. Certainly that first anonymous Chinese experimenter that had the radical idea that you might be able to hurl a projectile from a tube using the primitive black powder of that era comes to mind. Names like Remington, Boss, Greener, Beretta, Churchill, Parker and Fox must also be mentioned. But one name, especially here in the United States, stands head and shoulders above all the rest – John Moses Browning.

Browning was the most prolific designer of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and perhaps of all time. That his shotgun, rifle and military firearm designs are still used today in the twenty-first century is a testament

to his genius. Many of Browning's designs were never manufactured because Winchester purchased the patents from him to make sure that no other firearms manufacturer would produce them. It would be interesting to know how many and what those firearms designs were, but unfortunately, I do not think we will ever know.

His last design, the Browning Superposed over and under, certainly is one of his greatest achievements in shotgun design. The Superposed is manufactured in Belgium at Fabrique Nationale and Miroku builds the Citori in Japan. Miroku also sells the Citori in Europe under the Miroku banner and it is quite popular there. Without question, the Browning Superposed is one of the most copied designs in the world.

## ROCK SOLID

The heart and soul of the Browning is its rock solid receiver – it locks up like a bank vault! I have owned two Brownings and despite having shot thousands of rounds through both of them they never shot loose. I put almost 40,000 registered skeet targets and more than that many in practice and fun shoots through my four barrel set and it was a much used shotgun before I purchased it. If you want a workhorse over and under shotgun you could do no better than a Browning.

The secret behind the strength of the receiver is the full width slot below the bottom barrel that the bolt locks into and the chopper lumps that nestle into the openings in the base of the receiver. Those features keep the twisting and recoil forces that destroy over and



under shotguns in check. The pin and hook barrel pivot makes the Browning and its clones the easiest over and under shotguns to assemble. I can and have done it in the dark of night in the wetlands of America and the plains of Saskatchewan.

## CRISP PULL

I have had issues with Browning triggers in the past, too much slack, but the triggers on my demo were the best on any Browning I have ever shot. They were crisp and went off at a four and a half pounds. The trigger is adjustable for length of pull and three trigger shoes and a wrench to install them come with the gun. The Browning XS Special comes with enough accoutrements to satisfy even the most finicky shooter.

The scroll engraving on the bottom and both sides of the receiver is very well done. There is

a bit of engraving on the top lever and on the top of the receiver just behind the rib. The gold wire border is attractive and not over done. When I see a target gun that has gold plastered all over it I tend to suspect it is hiding something behind that facade.

It seems a popular activity for some shotgun scribes today to criticize the Browning over and under because the receiver is not as shallow as some of the more current designs. This is, of course, hogwash. Without question, more world, national, regional, State and gun club championships have been won and are still being won today by shooters using Browning stackbarrels than any other over and under shotgun.

## LOW RIB

All of the rounds I have shot through Brownings have been shot through models with raised

ribs. I chose to evaluate the Citori XS Special Sporting Clays because of its low rib design and the fact that I had not shot a Browning over and under for a long time. The fact that it is also a very pretty gun had something to do with my wanting to test it too. I like pretty guns. It did take me a bit to get used to a Browning with low rib, but I was soon hitting targets with the XS Special like it was an old friend. The gun balances almost perfectly on the hinge pin and swings like a well oiled gate. You can't ask for better than that.

The flat vented rib on the XS measured 10mm wide and has a 4mm scored center groove running the length of the barrel fore and aft. The remaining 6mm, three on either side, of the center groove are scored at right angles to the center groove. It is very well done and offers a nice sighting plane.

**BARREL WORK**

Both 30 inch barrels are nicely ported with fourteen ports on each side of the bottom barrel and nine ports on each side of the top barrel. The barrels, as you would expect to find on a Browning, are smooth as glass and without a ripple from breach to muzzle. The bluing is top notch and the barrels are polished to a high luster. The barrel is over-bored and measures 0.742 – about a 0.013 overbore from the American standard of



0.729. I did not have an opportunity to pattern the XS Special, but it hit targets with alacrity. The barrel has an ivory mid-bead and a fiber optic front sight with several different colors included and a tool to facilitate changing them.

**SCREW CHOKES**

The XS Special is equipped with Browning's high grade Midas screw in chokes in cylinder, skeet, improved cylinder, light modified, modified and improved modified included with the gun. Additional Midas chokes are available in 0.005 increments from spreader to extra full. The chokes are easily removed and replaced by hand and a choke wrench is included. Also included is a very nice pair of snap caps. It would be nice if more shotgun manufacturers did that – a very good idea that saves a lot of firing pins.

**ADJUSTABLE STOCK**

The stock and forearm were of better than average wood and showed some nice grain, but not a lot of figure. The matte finish on the stock and forearm is very well done. I was impressed with the checkering – it was sharp without any run-offs and covered all the essential areas completely. The checkering offered excellent grip with and without gloves.

Browning's adjustable stock is one of the best I have ever used.

Adjustment was easily accomplished and done with one socket head screw supplied with the gun. I see no reason why you could not shoot any shooting sport with a Browning equipped with their easy to manipulate adjustable stock and wide variety of available Midas chokes.

The only issue I have with the XS Special is the shape of the forearm. It is done in a semi beaver tail configuration that I do not believe is optimum for sporting clays. It is more of a trap gun forearm than a sporting clays forearm. I much prefer the style of



forearm that Browning uses on their Lightning models. I think the Lightning style forearm is not only very aesthetically pleasing, but ideal for sporting clays or for that matter any shotgun sport. I am, however, thankful that Browning did not equip it with the dreaded and unattractive Schnabel fore-end.

What you get when you buy a Browning is a bulletproof gun that you will never wear out in your lifetime and can leave to your offspring. They in turn can probably leave to their offspring. I have shot and very much like the new Browning Cynergy, but don't look past the original John Moses Browning design or you might be

**WHAT YOU GET WHEN YOU BUY A BROWNING IS A BULLETPROOF GUN THAT YOU WILL NEVER WEAR OUT IN YOUR LIFETIME AND CAN LEAVE TO YOUR OFFSPRING...**

missing something. Shotguns can improve with age and the original John Moses Browning design is proof of that. ■

**BROWNING XS SPECIAL SPECIFICATIONS:**

**MANUFACTURER:** B.C. Miroku Firearms Co., Cochi, Japan  
**U.S. Distributor:** Browning Firearms Co., Morgan, Utah

**SUGGESTED RETAIL PRICE:** \$2,727.00

**GUN WEIGHT:** 8 lbs. 10 oz. w/30 inch barrels

**LENGTH OF PULL:** 14<sup>3</sup>/<sub>8</sub>"

**OVERALL LENGTH:** 30 inch barrel 47 inches, 32 inch barrel 49 inches  
**BARRELS:** 30 or 32 inches vent rib, ported

**RECEIVER:** Steel CNC machined

**TRIGGER:** Single selective

**TRIGGER PULL:** 4.8 lbs.

**DROP AT COMB:** 1<sup>7</sup>/<sub>8</sub>"

adjustable stock: Standard

**DROP AT HEEL:** 1<sup>7</sup>/<sub>8</sub>"

**BORE:** nominal 0.742

**CHAMBERS:** 2<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub>"

**CHOKES:** Midas 3<sup>1</sup>/<sub>8</sub>" extended <sup>5</sup>/<sub>8</sub>"

**CHOKE CONSTRICTIONS:**

Spreader: -0.000

Cylinder: 0.000

Skeet: 0.005

Improved cylinder: 0.010

Light Modified: 0.015

Modified: 0.020

Improved modified: 0.025

Full: 0.035

Extra-Full trap: 0.040