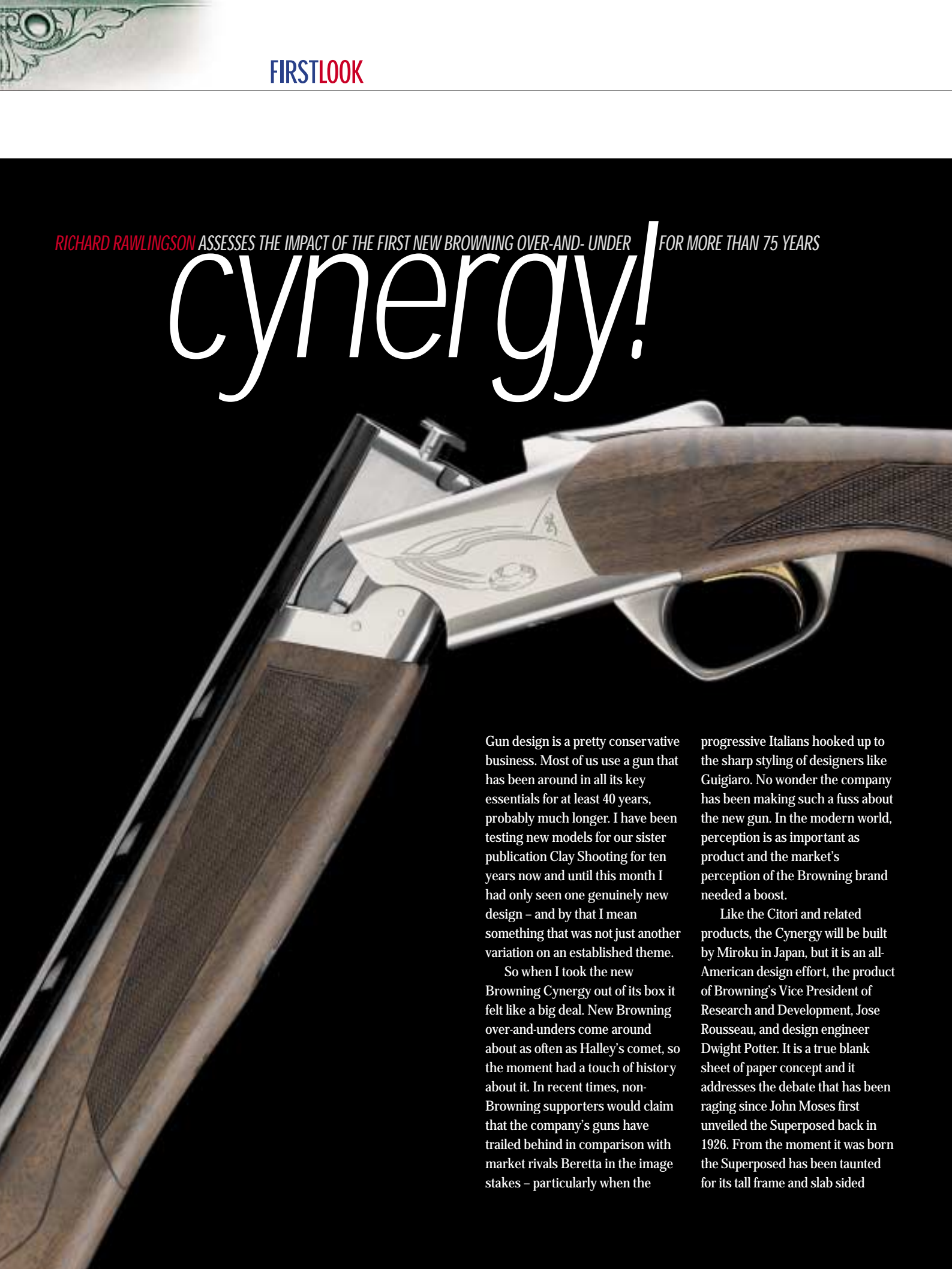


RICHARD RAWLINGS ON ASSESSES THE IMPACT OF THE FIRST NEW BROWNING OVER-AND- UNDER FOR MORE THAN 75 YEARS

# Cynergy!



Gun design is a pretty conservative business. Most of us use a gun that has been around in all its key essentials for at least 40 years, probably much longer. I have been testing new models for our sister publication *Clay Shooting* for ten years now and until this month I had only seen one genuinely new design – and by that I mean something that was not just another variation on an established theme.

So when I took the new Browning Cynergy out of its box it felt like a big deal. New Browning over-and-unders come around about as often as Halley's comet, so the moment had a touch of history about it. In recent times, non-Browning supporters would claim that the company's guns have trailed behind in comparison with market rivals Beretta in the image stakes – particularly when the

progressive Italians hooked up to the sharp styling of designers like Guigiario. No wonder the company has been making such a fuss about the new gun. In the modern world, perception is as important as product and the market's perception of the Browning brand needed a boost.

Like the Citori and related products, the Cynergy will be built by Miroku in Japan, but it is an all-American design effort, the product of Browning's Vice President of Research and Development, Jose Rousseau, and design engineer Dwight Potter. It is a true blank sheet of paper concept and it addresses the debate that has been raging since John Moses first unveiled the Superposed back in 1926. From the moment it was born the Superposed has been taunted for its tall frame and slab sided



appearance. 'We don't care, it works' has been the reply of the maker and all the gun's millions of happy owners. And so it does – brilliantly.

Those insults have, you suspect, always rankled, for all the success that has come the way of the Superposed and its Japanese descendants. Rather like the girl who gets top grades in class but secretly wants to be pretty and popular with the boys, Browning would like a gun with sleek racy lines too.

Any o/u is constrained to a minimum depth by the dimensions of the barrels stacked one on the other. How deep the gun ends up depends on what else you hang off them. In the case of the Citori/Superposed that is quite a lot, namely the hook that pivots on the full-width hinge pin and the locking bite that sits under the

bottom barrel. Various other methods have been adopted to reduce height, notably the Boss 'bifurcated lumps' that we see today on guns from Perazzi, Gamba and Kemen to name but three, and Beretta's neat combination of interlocking shoulders and a U-bolt that locks either side of the upper barrel. Krieghoff's take on the Remington sliding breech is the other commercially significant system for target shooting guns.

The Cynergy would only work therefore if it could match these rivals in the height (or lack of) stakes and a measure of the success is that the gun is an all-important 1mm shorter than the Beretta 682 that will be its main rival. Checking it against my own B325 showed a reduction of 10mm or around 15%. It has been achieved with a concept Browning have called the MonoLock Hinge. Raised sections of large radius within the receiver walls match slots in the monobloc, doing away with the trunnions or stub pins on which most other gunmakers hinge their barrels. As well as compactness, this design promises

great strength, as the bearing load is spread over a much greater area. The barrels are locked in place by square section pins emerging from the breech face that take up the slack as the gun wears in, again promising a long life before any major overhaul is needed.

Not content with their revolutionary efforts, the design team also decided to turn conventional thinking on triggers on its head. Without the abundance of space in a conventional Browning, there was a packaging issue and the solution has been borrowed from rifle technology. It has been dubbed a 'reverse striker' system, because the travel of the springs when the trigger is pulled is backwards towards the shooter's face. The springs act on a rocker which rotates and drives the firing pin forward. The bare minimum of movement is involved, which bodes well for crispness of feel and fast lock times.

It is a mechanical system, the inertia block part serving only to prevent a double discharge, and it seems to work well. It is possible to fire two rounds very quickly indeed and most of the characteristic free

*LIKE THE CITORI AND RELATED PRODUCTS, THE CYNERGY WILL BE BUILT BY MIROKU IN JAPAN, BUT IT IS AN ALL-AMERICAN DESIGN EFFORT, THE PRODUCT OF BROWNING'S VICE PRESIDENT OF RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT, JOSE ROUSSEAU, AND DESIGN ENGINEER DWIGHT POTTER.*

*THE RADIUSSED SECTIONS IN THE RECEIVER PROVIDE A LARGE BEARING SURFACE.*





THE CYNERGY WILL BE AVAILABLE FROM THE START IN CONVENTIONAL WALNUT AND SYNTHETIC FINISHES.

play of the Citori line is gone, leaving a crisp and positive pull. My trigger gauge measured the first barrel pull at 4¾ lbs, the second around half a pound heavier, slightly more than I am used to on Miroku-made guns, but my sample was an early production gun. As on the Citori, the trigger blade is detachable and three different styles are provided with the gun.

The ejector work is also new, with Browning ditching the familiar kickers contained within the forearm for a system contained entirely within the monobloc. Coil springs running parallel with the bores sit between the barrels and provide powerful ejection. Attached to the barrels is a composite framework to which the forearm mates, for reasons that are not entirely clear – protection against damage to the vulnerable areas perhaps?

All this would be innovation enough to have scribes like me scouring the thesaurus for alternatives to ‘new’ and ‘different’, but the Browning boys were clearly on a roll by this time and they decided to go the whole hog in the stock department too. In fact the changes there will be what most people first notice because there is no danger that you will mistake this gun for any other when it is in the rack.

Firstly we have an integrated



THE ‘MONOLOCK HINGE’ SYSTEM IS A GENUINE INNOVATION.

recoil pad that is both functional and a style statement. Rather than just sticking a lump of squashy material on the end, the designers have created the pad as part of the stock as a whole, using the space created to give it much longer travel. The company are claiming a 25 percent decrease in felt recoil as a result, presumably against a conventional pad. Length of pull changes can be made using one of three different thicknesses of pad, together with a ¼ inch spacer. Less simple are alterations to pitch and pad angle and solving these problems for those that need changes could give gunsmiths a few headaches.

And then we have the stock shape itself. Yes, you are right, it is curved; and, if you are a student of gunmaking history you have seen it before. The great English gunmaker W.W. Greener came up

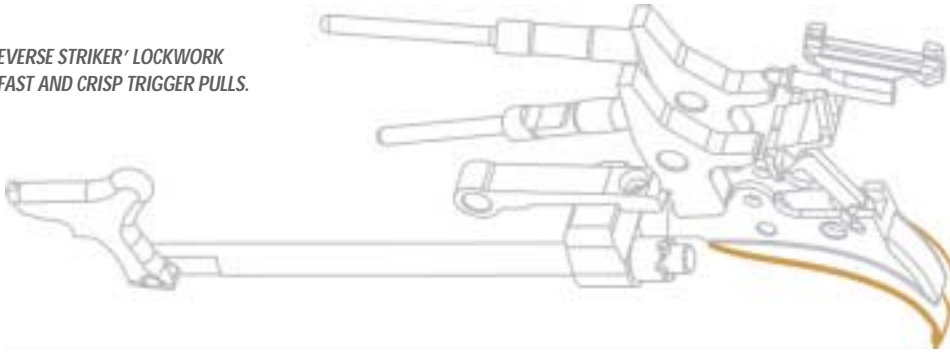
with what he dubbed the ‘Rational’ stock in the 1870s and you can see it illustrated in Chapter XVI of his classic book *The Gun and its Development*. It was designed to do the same job as the later Monte Carlo stock, that is put the whole of the butt plate in contact with the shoulder while allowing the shooter to keep his head upright and level. It never caught on, largely I suspect because it looked odd and created work for stock makers. It still looks quite unusual today, but it works.

One of the features of the Cynergy is that it was launched simultaneously with both conventional walnut and composite stocks for both target and field models. The problem of stock adjustment on the composite stocks has been addressed with an adjustable comb mechanism. The styling lines this creates are mirrored on the wood stocks by



ANGULAR LINES CHARACTERIZE THE CYNERGY'S STYLING.

THE 'REVERSE STRIKER' LOCKWORK GIVES FAST AND CRISP TRIGGER PULLS.



COMPOSITE STOCKS COME WITH AN ADJUSTABLE COMB MECHANISM.



grooves, part of an obviously conscious effort to give the gun a dynamic and aggressive look. It will be interesting to see what the take up is on composite Sporting models, because we target shooters remain mysteriously wedded to the old technology. Could this be the gun that breaks the mold and makes new materials acceptable on Sporting guns?

Browning have retained the 'Invector Plus' boring and choke system of the Citori, but seem to be playing right into the hands of the aftermarket choke suppliers by providing just three tubes – Improved Cylinder, Modified and Full – with each gun. The Sporting models get porting as standard and I would certainly have liked the option of non-porting. The literature also makes much of the barrels being lightweight, but the 30" tubes on my test sample went a full 3¾

lbs (1.69kg) which is far from light by modern standards.

Lighter barrels, says the brochure, means a faster swing and there is no doubt that 'fast' is the buzz word you are supposed to pick up from the Cynergy promotional material. I confess, I was worried when I took the gun out to test, worried that it would be a flying machine, as easy to stop as it was to start. Luckily 'light' and 'fast' are relative terms. The Sporters weigh in total around 7¾ to 8 lbs, depending on barrel length and they are certainly faster handling than many recent Browning Sporters. Weight in any case is not the issue with gun handling, but where you put it and Browning guns of late have tended to be nose heavy. The Cynergy's weight is much better distributed and I would call the handling responsive and precise – crucial if it is to grow

THE UNIQUE RECOIL PAD IS AVAILABLE IN THREE DIFFERENT LENGTHS.

Browning's share, rather than just cannibalize existing sales.

Other things I liked? The angular forearm shape does not look as elegant as the more conventional schnabel, but is much more effective. I also totally approve of the open radius of the grip – as good as any out there at the moment – and the tapered (11-8mm) rib with center channel is my personal favorite configuration.

And then we have the styling. Judging by the comments already posted on the discussion boards, this is going to split opinion right down the middle. I have yet to meet

anyone who is indifferent to the Cynergy's looks. It seems you are firmly in love with it or hate it, with very little middle ground. Browning's response, I suspect, will be that the B525 is there for the traditionalist, so the more radical look is justified. I can be as conservative as the next man about shotgun styling when the mood takes me, but I am happy to live with the Cynergy as it is, given that it performs very well. After all, there are plenty of people who think a Krieghoff is ugly but few who doubt it can crunch clays – and that is what this game is all about. Just tell me how many, not 'how do I look?'

As soon as I saw the first details



of the Cynergy my reaction was that the pricing would be crucial. It must have been tempting to gild the lily and make it a rival to the Beretta DT10 and Perazzi. I could have made a persuasive case for that market positioning. Choosing instead a price point around \$2650 shows that Browning are serious with this gun. It meets Beretta head on in their strongest area as well as laying down the gauntlet to the new wave of Italian guns. It is going to be fun watching what happens. ■