



SPARTAN

BY REMINGTON

TOM CERETTO CHECKS OUT THE SPR310S SPORTING

When Remington initially announced they were going to import an inexpensive line of over and under and side-by-side shotguns from Baikal, under the Spartan by Remington label, distribution was to be limited to big box sporting goods stores and mass merchandisers. Since that first announcement, Remington decided to market a second line of Spartan firearms for their normal wholesale distribution channels. I think it was a very wise decision. They not only expanded their distribution, but added economical shotguns and rifles that gun shops and retailers were excited to have on their shelves. One of the new items added to the Spartan line for wholesale distribution is a dedicated sporting clays shotgun, the SPR310S. Having shot the standard O/U while pheasant hunting, I knew I would have to have a sporting clays model to evaluate. It took awhile, but I finally received one of the first.

FIRST IMPRESSIONS

When I opened the shipping carton, I was a bit surprised at how attractive the SPR310S was. One does not expect much from a shotgun that retails for only \$615, but the gun looked good – especially

the finish on the more than pedestrian wood. A good start I thought. The nickel-plated receiver was minimally but nicely engraved with a border around the receiver and a better than average stylized clay pigeon engraved on both sides of the receiver. There is also a little engraving on the fences. The top lever and safety are checkered. All in all, a lot more attractive than I had expected it to be.

A CLOSER LOOK

The action, like many other over and under shotguns on the market today, is almost a clone of John Browning's original superposed





design – a hook and pin with a slot in a barrel lump extension beneath the lower barrel for the locking lug to engage. The lump extends from the monoblock through the receiver. This style of receiver, as Browning aficionados know, is one of the strongest lock-up systems ever designed for an



over and under. Frankly, the SPR310S receiver is built like a Russian T-54 tank, rugged and solid as a rock. I think it would take a long time to shoot the action loose. Like many economy European shotguns, the SPR310S is slightly tight and requires a bit of 'break in' before the action opens and closes smoothly.

There are a couple of hinged tabs on either side of the receiver that operate the ejectors when the action is opened. This kind of surprised me, as the only other shotgun I am familiar with that uses this type of set-up is the Krieghoff. Evidently the Russians are as adept as the Chinese at reverse engineering and adapting proven systems for their products.

When the receiver is opened for disassembly and storage, the top lever stays locked to the right and it is necessary to depress a small tab that peeks out from just below the locking lug to release the top lever. The only other shotgun I have ever seen that uses a similar system is my old Parker Trojan double. The Spartan is full of surprises!

The trigger system on the Spartan is simplicity itself, but who said trigger systems need to be complicated to work well. There is a small amount of slack and then the trigger gets firm and crisp. The triggers on my demo released at six pounds, a bit on the heavy side, but hey, this is not a Perazzi and triggers can be tuned up. The

SPR310S has a single selective trigger with a difference; when you want to shoot the top barrel first you push forward on the trigger until it clicks. It took a little getting used to, but worked very nicely when I finally figured it out. It does pay to read the manual thoroughly instead of flippantly skimming through it. Those of us that test a lot of different shotguns tend to expect the expected and occasionally get caught up by the unexpected. Embarrassment is usually the result.

The wood on the forearm and stock was certainly better than I expected on a low-buck economy shotgun. The finish was well executed, but the grain could have been filled a bit more. Both the stock and the forearm stood proud above the receiver and forearm iron. The checkering was quite sharp, but not exceedingly well done – there were run offs in a few spots. A Deeley and Edge fore-end latch secures the forearm solidly to the barrels.

The grip radius is open and not as severe as on some target guns. It felt quite comfortable and the

SPARTAN SPECIFICATIONS	
RETAIL PRICE:	\$615.00
GUN WEIGHT:	7LBS 14OZ. (ACTUAL)
LENGTH OF PULL:	14 ⁷ / ₁₆ "
OVERALL LENGTH (MEASURED):	46 ¹ / ₂ "
RECEIVER:	NICKEL PLATED
TRIGGER:	SINGLE SELECTIVE
DROP AT COMB:	1 ¹ / ₂ "
DROP AT HEEL:	2 ¹ / ₂ "
BORE (MEASURED)	.729
CHOKES:	FLUSH 1 ⁵ / ₁₆ INCHES LONG
CHOKE CONSTRUCTIONS:	
CYLINDER:	.730 -0.001
IMPROVED CYL.	.720 0.009
MODIFIED:	.715 0.014
FULL:	.695 0.034

EXTENDED SPORTING CLAYS CHOKES AVAILABLE FROM COLONIAL AND TRULOCK

THE TRIGGER SYSTEM ON THE SPARTAN IS SIMPLICITY ITSELF, BUT WHO SAID TRIGGER SYSTEMS NEED TO BE COMPLICATED TO WORK WELL...

sharp checkering offered a secure grip. As many of you know I am not enthusiastic about Schnabel fore-ends and thankfully the SPR310S does not have one. Instead it has a straight fore-end that was quite comfortable for all that shot it. It is too bad that the checkering was not done to the same quality level as rest of the stock and forearm. A vented rubber recoil pad that was a bit on the firm side capped the stock. If you purchase a Spartan sporting you might want to consider purchasing a more forgiving after-market recoil pad.

Spartan literature gave the length of pull as 14½ inches, but my demo unit measured 14⁵/₁₆ inches. Overall weight was listed as 7.4 pounds, but my unit weighed in at 7 pounds 14 ounces. Frankly, I think this is a good weight for a sporting clays gun and I am not disappointed that it did not weigh less. It absorbed recoil very well.

The SPR310S barrels measure 29.5 inches and are topped by a 10mm wide vented and checkered rib. Both barrels are ported with a series of 28 round ports, 14 on each side of the barrel. Both barrels and chambers are nicely chrome plated. The bore measured .729. The gun comes with four 1⁵/₈ inch long screw-in chokes in cylinder, improved, modified and full. All of the choke constrictions measured up to industry standards except for the modified choke, which measure .715, closer to light modified than modified. But I must say, that the modified choke did smoke targets way out there!

Extended chokes for the Spartan are available from Colonial and Trulock in almost any style and constriction you could possibly need. Colonial alone has well over 100 chokes for the Spartan from spreader to super tight turkey. Extended chokes in your favorite constrictions would be a good investment for any Spartan

SPR310S owner or for that matter for any sporting clays shotgun.

ON TEST

I have been shooting autoloaders lately and it took a few stations for me to get accustomed to shooting an over and under again. Once I did, the Spartan felt comfortable and I shot it well. The balance point on the shotgun is about two inches in front of the hinge pin and it is just a bit nose heavy, not a bad trait for a target gun. In fact, I shot a round of skeet with it and did quite well, running the last 25. The IC choke creamed the second target at skeet doubles. The SPR310S not only performed well at sporting clays, but would be a very nice skeet gun too.

The SPR310S is equipped with 3 inch chambers and would be a pretty good waterfowl gun. At almost 8 pounds it might not be the best companion hunting upland game, but would be quite at home in a duck blind or turkey hide.

EVALUATION

How good a shotgun is the Spartan? It seems to be a good solid shotgun and at the price it certainly is a bargain. It shoots very well, in fact better than I expected and seems to be a sturdy piece of equipment. It balances quite well and being slightly nose heavy, swings very nicely. I had no problem with getting on the second target when a true pair was thrown. It felt good between my hands.

Baikal has been manufacturing this shotgun for many years and I have never heard anything bad about them. It is certainly a rugged looking shotgun that should perform well for many years. If you have limited wherewithal and have always wanted an over and under sporting clays shotgun, the Spartan SPR310S might be a good gun to start out with. It would also be a good, inexpensive first shotgun for a teenager to start shooting sporting clays. It is not a Perazzi, Kolar or Beretta, but it does not pretend to be. It is, however, a ruggedly built economy entry-level sporting clays shotgun that will not put a big dent in your wallet.

The only real issue I have with the SPR310S is the checkering. While it was sharp and made for an excellent grip it was not done very well because of the over runs. But I suppose at \$615 one should not complain too much!

There are those who have criticized Remington for importing a line of shotguns from overseas. I do not think that criticism is warranted. It is the responsibility of any company to offer a wide range of product to fill the needs of



THE GUN COMES WITH FOUR 1⁵/₈ INCH LONG SCREW-IN CHOKES IN CYLINDER, IMPROVED, MODIFIED AND FULL.

their customers. It would have been impossible for Remington to manufacture economy entry level over and under and side-by-side shotguns here in the United States, the cost of labor and material would be much too high. The decision to import the Spartan line did not cost a single American job, but created jobs. It is a world economy and you have to be competitive to survive, and all of us want to see the last great American arms and ammunition manufacturer survive and prosper. ■

