

**NO IT'S NOT A CIRCUS ACT  
BUT ONE OF  
ITALY'S QUIRKIEST  
GUN MAKERS.  
RICHARD RAWLINGSON  
LOOKS AT SOME MORE  
MODERN CLASSICS.**



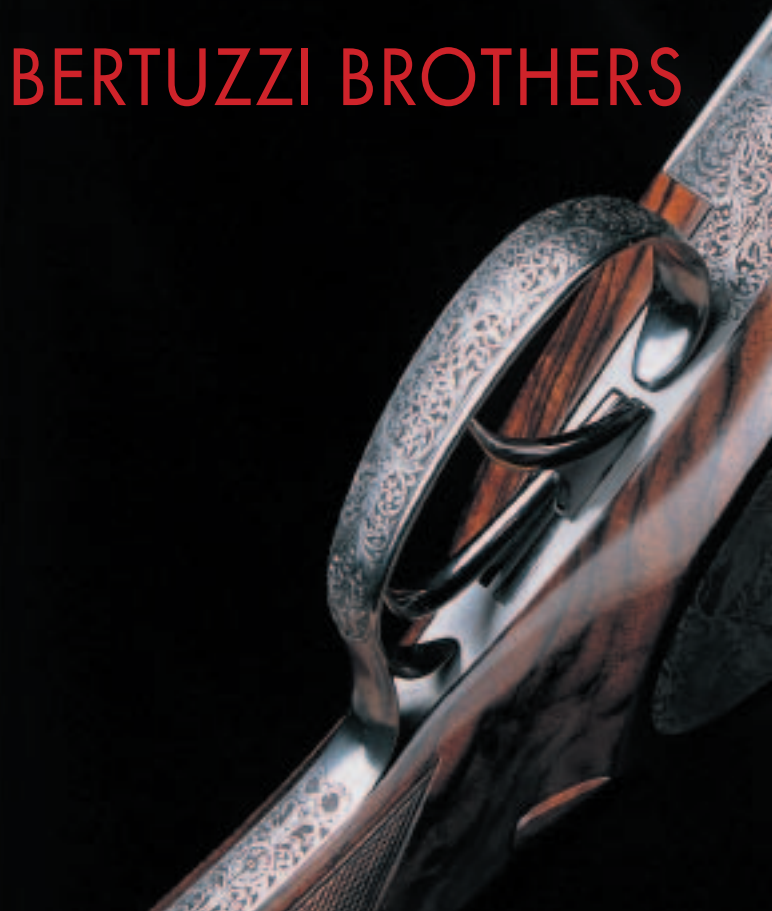
## THE AMAZING BERTUZZI BROTHERS

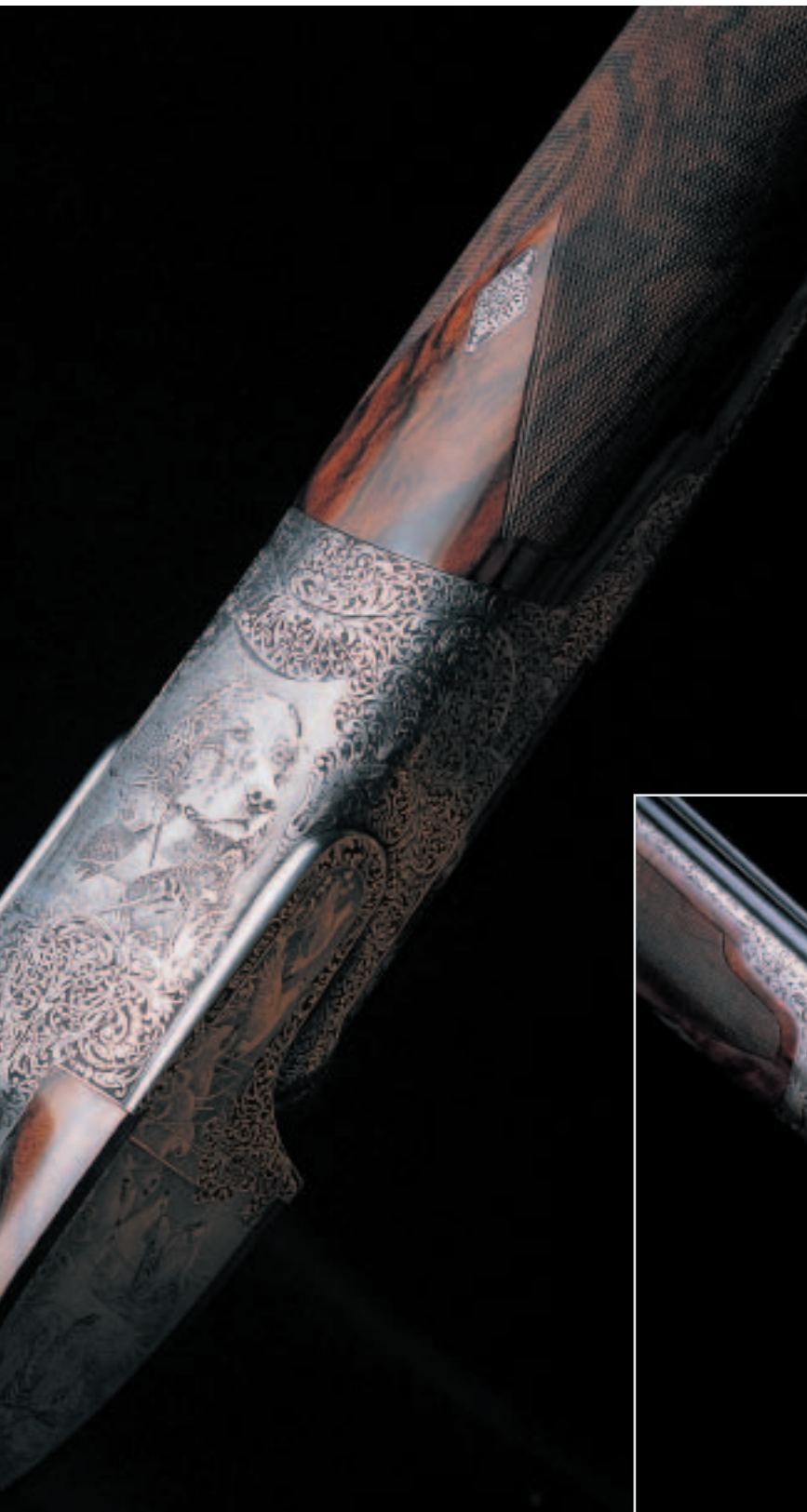
**THERE IS SOME DECIDEDLY  
ODDBALL STUFF BEING BUILT  
IN ITALY THESE DAYS AS THE  
VAL TROMPIA'S BOUTIQUE  
MAKERS VIE WITH EACH  
OTHER TO SHOW OFF THEIR  
TECHNICAL SKILLS. FROM  
SELF-COCKING HAMMER  
GUNS TO REMO SALVINELLI'S  
FOUR BARRELED .410 YOU  
CAN FIND PLENTY OF  
EXAMPLES FROM THE OUTER  
REACHES OF THE  
GUNMAKING UNIVERSE IN  
THAT WINDING VALLEY  
NORTH OF BRESCIA.**

For sheer style as well as ingenuity however, few can match brothers Elio and Remigio Bertuzzi who are the owners and entire workforce of the company that bears their name. Together they produce some of the most astonishing shotguns in the world, every one a collector's item from the moment it leaves the workshop.

And a tiny workshop it is too, especially considering the quality of work that takes place there. In a space scarcely bigger than the average garage the brothers produce just a handful of guns each year – guns of a quality that leaves everyone seeing a Bertuzzi for the first time speechless.

Like so many in the valley, the Bertuzzis are following in a family





tradition, the fourth generation of master craftsmen. They learned their skills alongside their father and grandfather, starting while still at school, and striking out on their own following the death of their grandfather in 1976.

In those early days their output was fairly conventional – sidelock and boxlock side-by-sides in the style of the top London makers. Elder brother Remigio is the specialist in metal, Elio a master stocker. A taste for the unusual began to emerge however, not least in the Ariette model, an over-and-under single trigger hammer gun, that demonstrated a desire to create gunmaking problems just to see if they could be solved. Still made to order today, this model can be built to scale in all bores from 12 to .410.

Like most of the bespoke Italian trade, Bertuzzi have responded to changing demand by increasing output of over-and-under guns and, again like most of their peers, they looked to London – and specifically Boss – for inspiration. The brothers are on record as saying that they regard the Boss over-and-under as the best gun in the world and unashamedly set out to emulate this classic design. That they succeeded is beyond doubt and many would now argue that they have gone beyond the levels set by Boss in the golden age.

The gun that has done this is called the Zeus and at first glance it appears a near replica of the Boss – a sidelock of elegant proportions and fine detailing. Push forward the



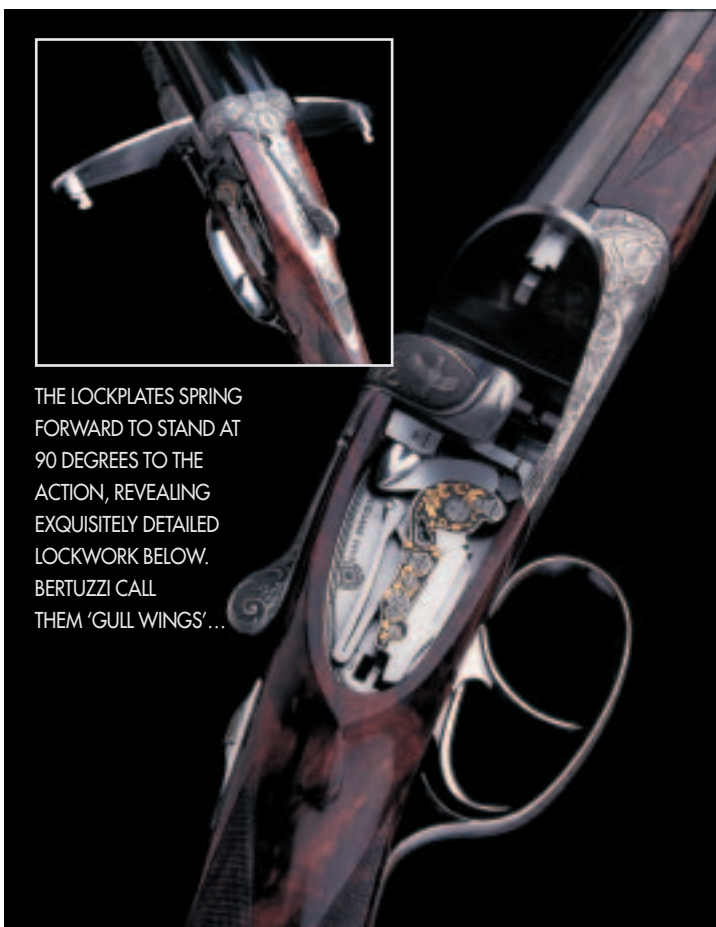
IN A SPACE SCARCELY BIGGER THAN THE AVERAGE GARAGE THE BROTHERS PRODUCE JUST A HANDFUL OF GUNS EACH YEAR; GUNS OF A QUALITY THAT LEAVES EVERYONE SEEING A BERTUZZI FOR THE FIRST TIME SPEECHLESS.

safety catch beyond the normal 'off' position and prepare to be surprised and delighted. The lockplates spring forward to stand at 90 degrees to the action, revealing exquisitely detailed lockwork below. Bertuzzi call them 'gull wings', although the term 'flying locks' is also sometimes used. The lockwork itself is attached to an inner plate rather than the sideplate as on a normal sidelock. Highly polished tumblers, engraved pin heads and gold detailing indicate that the Zeus is very much for show.

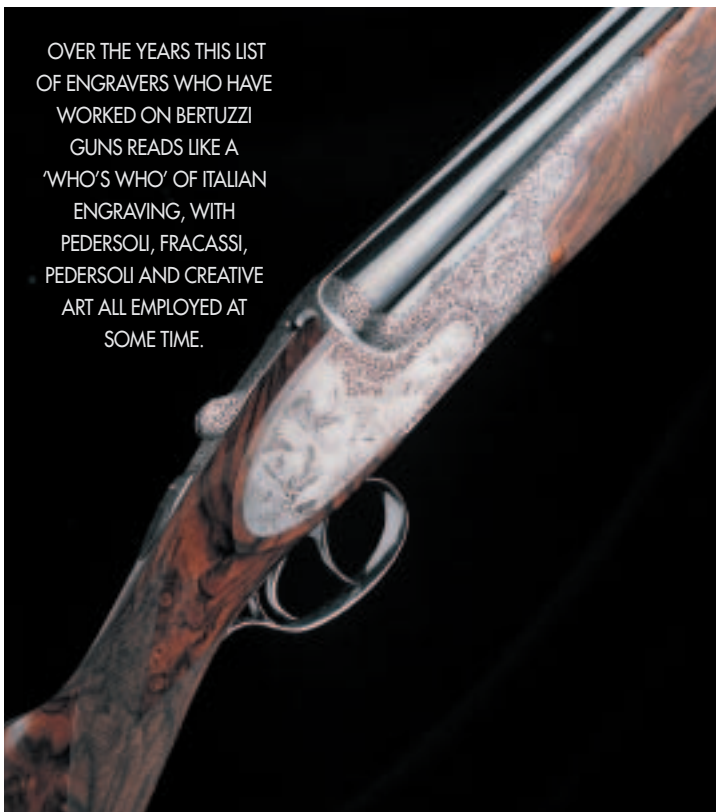
Close the plates again and you simply can't see the join. So precise is the fitting, aided by skillful engraving, that it is almost impossible to tell the Zeus from a conventional gun. If the side-by-side configuration is your preference then the same feature can be seen on the Venere, with its Holland & Holland style lockwork. More recently the brothers have produced that rarest beast of all, a 'best' quality boxlock called the Orione. This is however a long way from the basic Birmingham original, its round action reminiscent of the great Scottish guns and its elaborately sculpted action anything but box-like.

For gunmaking of this quality, only engraving by the very best will do. Over the years this list of engravers who have worked on Bertuzzi guns reads like a 'Who's Who' of Italian engraving with Pedersoli, Fracassi, Pedersoli and Creative Art all employed at some time. In recent years Manrico Torcoli's signature has appeared more than most, his distinctive 'fantasy' style a match for the technical tour de force of the gun.

Needless to say work of this

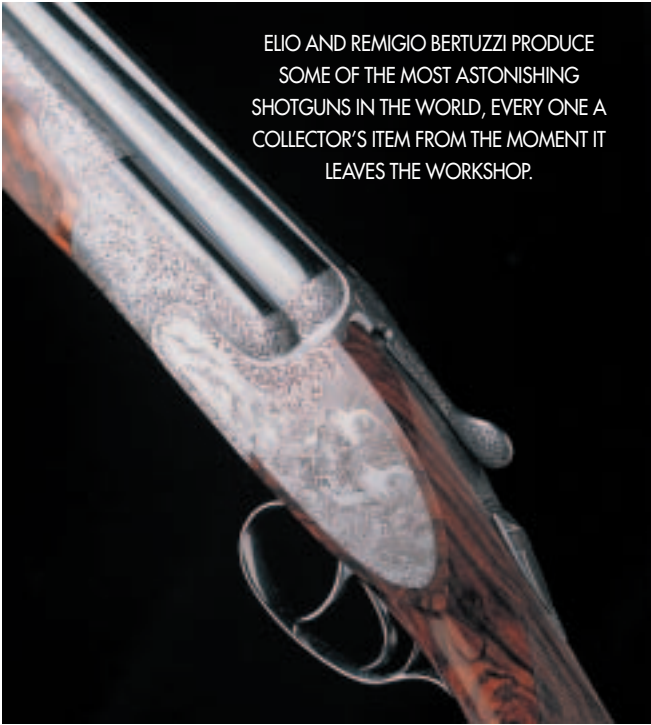


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YOUR BEST CHANCE OF SEEING ONE OF THESE GUNS IS BY VISITING THE KENNEDY GUNMAKERS SHOWROOM AT BISLEY IN ENGLAND, JUST A SHORT DRIVE FROM LONDON'S HEATHROW AIRPORT. TONY KENNEDY HAS A LONG ASSOCIATION WITH THE BROTHERS AND MANAGES TO SECURE ONE OR TWO GUNS EACH YEAR.



ELIO AND REMIGIO BERTUZZI PRODUCE SOME OF THE MOST ASTONISHING SHOTGUNS IN THE WORLD, EVERY ONE A COLLECTOR'S ITEM FROM THE MOMENT IT LEAVES THE WORKSHOP.

quality (and rarity) does not come cheap. Each new Bertuzzi is usually spoken for long before completion. Your best chance of seeing one is by visiting the Kennedy Gunmakers showroom at Bisley in England, just a short drive from London's Heathrow airport. Tony Kennedy has a long association with the brothers and manages to secure one or two guns each year. Actual prices are rarely disclosed, although the phrase 'six figures' was muttered last time I was there (and that was pounds not dollars!). Suffice to say that if you need to ask you probably can't afford it! ■

FOR SHEER STYLE AS WELL AS INGENUITY HOWEVER, FEW CAN MATCH BROTHERS ELIO AND REMIGIO BERTUZZI WHO ARE THE OWNERS AND ENTIRE WORKFORCE OF THE COMPANY THAT BEARS THEIR NAME. TOGETHER THEY PRODUCE SOME OF THE MOST ASTONISHING SHOTGUNS IN THE WORLD, EVERY ONE A COLLECTOR'S ITEM FROM THE MOMENT IT LEAVES THE WORKSHOP.