

# BLASER UP CLOSE

**STEVE FISCHER** REVIEWS WHAT'S NEW FROM GERMANY!

Sometime ago, when the world of advertising was into slogans to help consumers remember brands, the phrase "You've come a long way, Baby!" hit the marketplace and was, as I remember, quite successful. The phrase describes quite accurately just what has been going on with Blaser since its arrival in the USA. In the July/August 2005 issue of this magazine I had the pleasure of reviewing the F-3 Blaser for the first time. Now it's time to bring you up to date with new and exciting developments from this successful German firearms company.

Blaser graciously invited me and several others to a writers "camp" held at Pintail Point, a super nice shooting preserve and sporting clays range just outside Baltimore, in Queensland, on Maryland's gateway highway to the Eastern Shore. We would be attending seminars on the entire Blaser line, and in between, would be able to handle and fire both the shotguns and rifles as well as seeing their new clothing and accessories line.

I found the seminars to be an excellent way of presenting their latest developments – especially when the information was coming straight from those who helped design and build the product. On hand were Michael Lüke (owner of Blaser), Jack Huety (President and CEO USA), Bernhard Knobël (President and CEO of Blaser of Germany, who helped design the F-3), Alex Diehl (Vice-President and Chief Operations Officer for the U.S. who gave a presentation on the R-93 and K-95 rifles), Kevin Wistner (Director of sales in the U.S.) and Joe Hernandez (Marketing Director for South and Central America introduced us to the extensive clothing and accessories line).

Probably best known on this side of the Atlantic for their innovatively designed over/under Blaser F-3, this successful company also markets an equally innovative straight pull bolt rifle – the R-93. It is capable of firing multiple calibers from the same receiver by changing the barrel and bolt face, as well as a single shot rifle with the same capabilities, the K-95, and several models of double rifles, drillings and other combination guns.

## A LITTLE HISTORY

But, for those as yet unfamiliar with Blaser, a little background is in order. The company began its rise to fame in 1957 when Horst Blaser developed a unique over and under rifle/shotgun. During

the years that followed, additional models and calibers were added to their line of over/under and single shot rifles. Around 1993, a beautiful and truly innovatively designed straight pull bolt rifle, the R-93, was added to the line and Blaser quickly became one of the top selling firearms manufactures in Europe. The company expanded and continued to grow – and in 2000 Michael Lüke took over the reins and ownership. The following year Bernhard Knobël, a master gunsmith and business economist, came on board as President and CEO.

2003 was a banner year for the company. A new clothing line, "Blaser Active Wear" made its debut, while the company celebrated the production of the 100,000th R-93 rifle and introduced a new double rifle – the S-2 Safari with calibers running up to the 500 Nitro Express. The first over and under shotgun, the F-3 was introduced in 2004, and within the





MAIN PICTURE: THE F3 ATTACHE NOW AVAILABLE IN USA.  
ABOVE: ELEGANT CUSTOM ENGRAVING.

past year, Blaser USA was welcomed to Stevensville, Maryland, where they have set up shop for the US market.

Although this magazine is primarily devoted to shotgunning, it would certainly be remiss of me if I didn't take a moment to touch on the Blaser rifles. The keystone piece would have to be the R-93 straight pull bolt rifle. It comes in a grand array of calibers from .222 Rem. up to and including .416 Rem. Mag. Caliber changes can be made by simply having another barrel and the appropriate interchangeable bolt face. The bolt does not rotate to unlock as in conventional bolt action rifles, but is literally pulled straight to the rear of the action, making it lightning fast for follow up shots. Like all Blaser guns, the R-93 is modular and comes in both right and left handed models. Very soon you will be seeing an addition to this line of a rimfire kit in calibers .17 HMR and .22 LR and .22 Magnum cartridges.

The K-95 is a single shot rifle, also in a multitude of calibers from the .22 Hornet all the way to .300 Weatherby Magnum – and many favorite European calibers. We in the U.S. will soon be seeing Blaser's double rifle line, the S-2, as well as their multi-caliber drillings and combination shotgun/rifle barreled models. As of today, Blaser has produced over 130,000 rifles in 15 different

## 20 GAUGE

Based on the success of the F3 in 12 gauge, Blaser have now complemented their program with an elegant 20 bore. Due to the F3's low-profile and slim receiver, the gun pleases the eye of the aficionado with its elegant lines. The F3 in 20ga is – like the F3 in 12 bore – available in two versions: Game and Competition.

The F3 20ga Competition follows exactly the characteristics of its 12ga sister. For the

demanding competitor who competes in both the 12 ga and 20 ga events, it is a real bonus to have one gun with two sets of barrels offering exactly the same characteristics. The 20ga barrel has exactly the same overall weight, balance and weight distribution as the 12ga and is also equipped with the same rib. The 20ga Competition is available in 30" and 32" barrel length and comes with Briley Spectrum screw-in chokes.



**THE WIDE RANGE OF CUSTOM ENGRAVING CHOICES IS SPECTACULAR!**

variations, 22 scope mount choices, 11 grades of wood, 16 different pistol grip caps, 7 different stock magazines, 4 bolt knob choices, 2 receiver materials and 13 (count 'em) side plate designs. Whew!

### F-3 SHOTGUN

Now for the latest news on the F-3 Blaser over/under shotgun. First of all, there is a new barrel available this year in 20 gauge. As with all the Blaser line, it is modular in design and will go right on your 12 gauge receiver. A 34 inch 12 gauge barrel may also be available in the US this year, along with some higher grade models added to the F-3 line. Also new are several models of F-3 American Trap and American Skeet guns, including a 34 inch "un-single" barrel model for trap shooters and several stock choices with adjustable combs in the semi-Monte Carlo style. For skeeters, the F-3 skeet combo is unique in that the set includes the AS weighted barrel in 12 gauge with Briley Spectrum Chokes, as well as the LST carrier barrel and a set of Briley sub-gauge tubes in 20, 28, and .410 gauge. The LST carrier barrel is fully functional and proof tested so it can be shot as well as used for a carrier barrel for the sub-gauge tube set. Several stock options are available – including adjustable combs, right / left hand cast, or custom built on special order to your specifications.

For field, as well as clay target work, the F-3 has a new model in the line, the F-3 Attache. It features a velvet black finish on both the barrel and receiver, exquisite Turkish walnut in grade 7

### FRONT BEAD

All F3 Competition models come with an interchangeable original HIVIZ® front bead. The bead was designed specifically for Blaser and is, being laser-welded from the bottom, a true integral part of the rib. In the standard version the red bead is installed. As an option, Blaser offers the HIVIZ® container with five different beads in three different colors and different bead diameters as well as a tool to exchange the beads. Depending on visibility and target color, the appropriate front sight can be selected and exchanged in seconds.



and barrel choices from 28 to 34 inches. The model name “F-3” along with the “S and F” on the safety is inlaid in solid gold and the trigger is gold plated. It comes in a lockable hard case along with 5 titanium nitrided choke tubes (gold color), a choke wrench and choke box.

There are about a dozen engraving options NOT including the custom engraving options, precious metal inlays, and wood of the highest quality.

Also new this year is an articulated F-3 try-stock device that is truly the cat’s meow. Typical German precision engineering is all over this unit and allows the operator to collect measurements for every necessary detail of stock dimension by direct read-out. One variation features a laser unit in the barrel which is activated by the trigger – so the fitting process can be accomplished when actual shooting is not an option. It accurately measures cast at comb, heel and toe, drop, length of pull and even pitch. Measuring scales are located all over the device and can be easily read and recorded producing a precise set of figures for the stock maker to work from.

## OUTDOOR WEAR

Blaser’s Active Wear accessory line is certainly worth a closer look – it is loaded with a myriad of accessories and clothing for the hunter and sporting shooter. The line features a complete selection of outdoor clothing – including jackets and trousers, shirts, shooting vests, windbreaker fleece jackets and underwear. The accessories include gun cases (both soft and hard), hearing protection, as well as caps, tee’s and polo shirts and some beautiful flannel long sleeve shirts. Last but not least, they offer a traditional style dark green felt hunting hat

with leather band, capping off a rather extensive and high quality line of clothing and gear.

## THE PROOF IS IN THE PUDDING....

...or so goes the old saying, bringing me to the actual shooting of the new Blaser “toys”. Pintail Point is quite a complex, featuring along with its preserve bird hunting an excellent sporting course, skeet fields, wobble trap, and a novel 5-Stand layout. Our first stop was to the wobble trap to wring out the new trap models. The 34 inch un-single was a definite winner and we were all pasting the varied wobble trap targets quite well. I particularly liked the over/under high ribbed trap model as its elevated rib came to my eye level quite naturally without having to see rib from the top lever to the front sight bead. It absolutely smoked targets.

Next stop was to the skeet field for a workout with the sub-gauge tube sets in the skeet model F-3. The barrel sets were superbly balanced and as I went from gauge to gauge, the gun felt the same whether there was a 20, 28, or .410 tube set in the barrel. We then moved on to the sporting course and got a chance to try out the new F-3 Attache – as well as different stock variations. The Blaser trigger mechanism is about as crisp as it

could possibly be, set at 3.3 pounds from the factory. It has an incredibly fast lock time. The internal design of this trigger is such that it can never “fan-fire” – which if you have ever had that experience, is something you never want to see repeated.

Later that afternoon we were taken over to the Navel Academy rifle range for some hands on experience with the Blaser rifles. There were several R-93 straight pull bolt rifles in .243, .270, and .308 calibers, as well as some K-95 single shot rifles with bullseye targets set up at 100 yards. We all took turns testing our skills with the scoped rifles – from the bench as well as off hand from prone, sitting, kneeling and even the standing position. They provided us with a high powered spotting scope so we could see the results of our efforts on the black faced bulls that left a bright yellow and easily spotted hole when hit by the bullet. Again, the quality of these rifles was more than evidenced not only by the excellent stock wood or engraving, but also by how smoothly the straight pull bolt action glided and how crisp the trigger pull was on all the rifles we test fired.

We ended the day back at Pintail Point with an excellent dinner and were looking

forward to the next morning for some Partridge and Quail hunting for some – and another trip around the sporting course or 5-Stand for others. By mid afternoon we were on our way back home after a fascinating and informative weekend of hands on experience and face to face conversation with those at Blaser. You too can get up close and personal by checking out their web site at [www.blaser-usa.com](http://www.blaser-usa.com) or contacting them direct at 410-604-1495 for a catalog of their products. ■



**TOP: BERNHARD KNOBĚL THE MASTER GUNSMITH FOR BLASER HELPED TO DESIGN THE F3 SHOTGUN.**

**LEFT: MICHAEL LÜKE THE OWNER OF BLASER IS AN AVID HUNTER AND SPORTSMAN.**

**ABOVE: TESTING BLASER RIFLES.**