

BLASER F3

GRACEFUL, ELEGANT AND GETS THE JOB DONE IN STYLE, SAYS TOM CERETTO.

SPECIFICATIONS

MANUFACTURER:	BLASER GmbH ISNY, GERMANY
IMPORTER:	BLASER USA SAN ANTONIO, TX
SUGGESTED RETAIL:	\$6709.00
ACTION:	STEEL ALLOY CNC MACHINED BOXLOCK
TRIGGER:	MECHANICAL IN LINE HAMMER AND FIRING PINS
TRIGGER PULL:	LOWER: 3.7 LBS. UPPER: 3.9 LBS.
RECEIVER DEPTH:	2.385"
RECEIVER WIDTH:	1.575"
WEIGHT:	8 LBS. 4 OZ. (WEIGHED)
OVERALL LENGTH:	50"
STOCK:	WALNUT
LOP:	ADJUSTABLE 14 5/8"
DROP AT COMB:	1 1/2"
DROP AT HEEL:	1 3/4"
CAST OFF:	6mm
FORE-END:	1.725" x 10 1/4"
BARRELS:	32" AS TESTED 28, 30 AND 34 AVAILABLE
FORCING CONES:	LONG EXTENDED
CHAMBERS:	3"
BORE:	UPPER: 0.730" LOWER: 0.730"
CHOKES:	BRILEY CONICAL
PARALLEL	
CHOKE LENGTH:	2 3/4"
SKEET:	0.002"
IMPROVED CYLINDER:	0.009"
MODIFIED:	0.019"
IMPROVED MODIFIED:	0.025"
FULL:	0.034"
TOP RIB:	VENTED 10mm x 8mm
MID RIB:	SOLID
FRONT BEAD:	WHITE
CENTER BEAD:	STEEL

Not long after reading Richard Rawlinsong's excellent article on the Blaser facility in Isny, Germany in the May/June 2006 issue of ClayShootingUSA, I had the chance to visit Gil and Vicki Ash and take a condensed version of their OSP course at the American Shooting Centers. I noticed a Blaser F3 in a gun rack – and chose it as my loaner for the day. I was impressed. At last year's Nationals I finally had the chance to get together with Norbert Haussmann, CEO and Rich Kaysa, VP of Sales & Marketing for Blaser USA, and arranged for a demo to be shipped to me for a gun test.

One of the things that immediately impressed me about the F3 was its slender and elegant look – it just looked like a quality target gun should look. I have been fooled in the past by pretty guns that disappointed me greatly, but not this time. The F3 is graceful, elegant and gets the job done in style.

I was also impressed by the fact that Blaser had set out immediately to improve upon the age old tradition of an almost totally hand

crafted product and take advantage of the most modern production methods available to them. They were already at the forefront of CNC, EDM (Electrical Discharge Machining) and CAD CAM design with their R93 rifle and have designed and manufactured this shotgun with even more precision machining in mind. Accuracies of up to $\pm 0.0005"$ were held in the

The manual safety hangs from the top strap and secures snugly into its detent. The barrel selector is located in front of the trigger – left fires the bottom barrel first and right the top barrel first. While free of any embellishment except a gold F3 on the bottom rear of the receiver sides, the receiver with its gray finish is attractive. Machine tool marks are totally absent. Needless to say, the machining is flawless. The receiver face is

manufacture of the R93 rifle and were carried over to the manufacture of this gun.

The boxlock receiver is fairly conventional in that it uses trunions on the receiver wall for the barrel to pivot on and a very short chopper lump that nestles into an opening in the receiver floor. A full width bolt engages a slot in the chopper lump to secure the gun in battery. The receiver measured 1.575 inches wide by 2.385 inches in depth.

Unique to the Blaser are the in-line hammer and firing pins first pioneered on the R93 rifle. I do not know if that alone is the reason for the excellent triggers, but I suspect so. The bottom trigger released at 3.6 pounds and the upper trigger at 3.7 pounds. There was absolutely no creep or binding and release was instant and crisp. It is one of the best boxlock triggers I have ever used – and I have pulled some very good ones over the years.

gunsmith removable and replaceable, a strong feature on a shotgun with so many interesting features. Parts are coated with titanium carbo-nitride using a physical vapor deposition process that helps reduce wear and corrosion. The receiver is CNC machined out of a solid block of steel alloy.

Modular

The F3 is a modular gun. Barrels, stocks and fore-ends are machined to such close tolerances that no hand fitting is required when adding barrels or exchanging stocks and fore-ends. My demo came with an extra set of 20 gauge barrels. All barrels are manufactured to the same weight regardless of gauge or length. The barrels are hammer forged out of high-grade steel and arrive at Isny from another Blaser group



NORBERT HAUSMANN

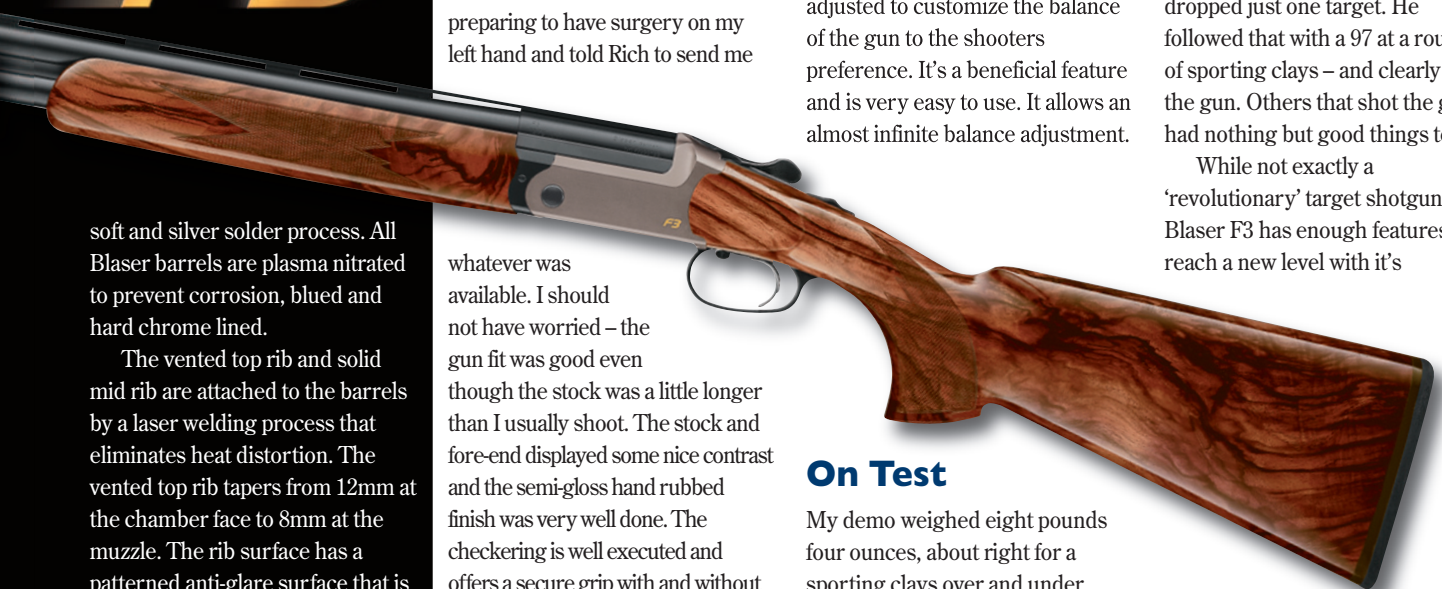


RICHARD KAYSA



company ready for finish machining. Striking of the barrels and preparation for bluing are one of the few processes that are done by hand. Barrels are secured to the monobloc with a proprietary

FB



soft and silver solder process. All Blaser barrels are plasma nitrated to prevent corrosion, blued and hand chrome lined.

The vented top rib and solid mid rib are attached to the barrels by a laser welding process that eliminates heat distortion. The vented top rib tapers from 12mm at the chamber face to 8mm at the muzzle. The rib surface has a patterned anti-glare surface that is highly effective.

The barrels on my demo were slightly over-bored and measured .730 inches. My demo came with extended Briley chokes. Included were skeet, improved cylinder, modified, improved modified and full. They measured 0.002, 0.009, 0.019, 0.025 and 0.034 respectively. A Briley choke wrench was included.

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The conical parallel chokes are 2 3/4 inches in length and are prominently marked and color-code.

Wood Work

I had requested a gun with an adjustable stock – but none were available at that time. I was preparing to have surgery on my left hand and told Rich to send me

whatever was available. I should not have worried – the gun fit was good even though the stock was a little longer than I usually shoot. The stock and fore-end displayed some nice contrast and the semi-gloss hand rubbed finish was very well done. The checkering is well executed and offers a secure grip with and without gloves. If you insist on equipping a shotgun with a Schnabel fore-end, do it like the Blaser has. It is about as attractive as a Schnabel can be designed. The fore-end is 11 1/8 long and measured 1.730 inches wide at mid-point. It is large enough to fill the hand nicely without feeling bulky. The fore-end is secured to the barrels with a push button Anson style fore-end

iron and snaps securely into place with no movement fore and aft or side-to-side.

One of the interesting features on the F3 is the Blaser Balancer. It is a threaded rod with two weight cylinders and replaces the stock nut. The weight cylinders can be adjusted to customize the balance of the gun to the shooters preference. It's a beneficial feature and is very easy to use. It allows an almost infinite balance adjustment.

On Test

My demo weighed eight pounds four ounces, about right for a sporting clays over and under target gun. Recoil was minimal with my 1,325 fps 24 gram Federal International target loads and my slightly faster 7/8 ounce hand loads. Everyone that shot the gun said recoil was very tolerable.

I had shot a Blaser F3 sporting clays before and so was eager to get some reaction and opinion from others. Jeff Hautamaki is a former



Wisconsin State Champion, Master class shooter and a perennial member of the Wisconsin All State team. He first shot a round of 5-Stand with average results for him. He then shot a round of skeet and dropped just one target. He followed that with a 97 at a round of sporting clays – and clearly liked the gun. Others that shot the gun had nothing but good things to say.

While not exactly a 'revolutionary' target shotgun, the Blaser F3 has enough features to reach a new level with it's

precision manufacturing process, inline hammers and firing pins, modular system and precise machining process to call it a big step forward in the manufacture of modern target shotguns. No glitz and glamour – just a solid, attractive, well built product at a very reasonable price. ■