

PAOLO ZOLI, PRESIDENT OF ANTONIO ZOLI GUNMAKERS OF GARDONE V.T. ITALY, HAS CONFIRMED THE FORMATION OF A U.S. SUBSIDIARY, ZOLI AMERICA LLC, TO MARKET AND DISTRIBUTE A NEW SHOTGUN DESIGN FOR SPORTING CLAYS AND GAME.



PAOLO ZOLI.

“We developed the new Z series design specifically for the U.S. market after studying American shooters’ needs for many years and consulting with experts such as Rich Cole of Cole, Inc” said Zoli.

The all new over and under design features a removable titanium-treated drop trigger-lock mechanism, gas-sealing bushed firing pins, all new digitally multi-contoured barrels made to match-grade rifle specifications and stock dimensions made specifically for American shooters.

“Our goal was to create a clays gun with stocks that fit Americans and have

outstanding handling dynamics and durability. Z guns will be available beginning in March in 12ga and 20ga and barrel lengths to 32”. Suggested retail price is 4,500 US dollars for the Z Sporter.

BASED IN ITALY

As a new entrant to the market it’s interesting to note that it was Zoli’s grandfather that started the

business some 60 years ago in the ruins of post war Italy – and his grandson is determined to see the business grow stronger while in his stewardship. It has resulted in a complete new family of guns – developed and produced by the most modern of computer-aided design and production techniques – that are sleek, low profile and include innovative features, not least a detachable trigger



ZOLI COMES TO AMERICA

A REPORT BY **DON BRUNT**



mechanism normally found on more expensive models.

Inside the Gardone factory a mixture of the latest high-tech machinery and craftsmanship passed down through the generations is combined to ensure that the quality is as good as that found anywhere in the world.

The quality of shotguns tends to stand or fall by the quality of the barrels. At Zoli, barrels start life as steel bars, cut into 3 ft lengths and precision drilled, then polished by a reamer that is pulled through the barrel. Each tube is then put on a lathe to cut the outside profile of the barrel. A center-less grinding machine is used to ensure that every tube is identical; tolerances are to within +/- 4 tenths of a thou. Finally they are honed inside and out to achieve the final bore size and finish. For fixed chokes, cold swaging is used to achieve the required choke. The tubes are then inserted into the monobloc and carefully aligned – an area where precision is imperative.

The tubes are then soldered together, a process that takes two hours, with the metal being heated, cooled and heated again. This is done slowly to ensure that rapid changes in temperature, that could reduce the metallurgical strength of the barrel, are avoided. Recesses for the ejectors are then machined, once again ensuring a perfect fit, and then the barrel is rimmed for the cartridge case and the threads are cut for either the steel or titanium multichokes (if required). The steel chokes are made from cold hammered steel, in much the



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same way that some manufacturers make their barrels.

The barrel is then ready for chrome plating. Lastly it is polished, building up the levels of finish. The ejectors, machined from a solid block of carbon steel, are then fitted.

The action block is machined using a technique called Electric Discharge Machining (EDM). This is a slow and expensive process, but it ensures excellent quality. The company uses this technique on the breech of the frame and the joint of the barrel and the action.

This removes strain from the hinge pin, the breech face and the bolt, as it is the precision fit that locks the gun.

In order to ensure that the finished product remains at an acceptable price, actions are not engraved in house, but are instead sent to the world famous Giovanelli studios where they are finished to the highest standard. Similarly,

stocks are bought in, with stock and forend already matched, though Zoli retains the facility to produce custom stocks if required, using their own artisans.

It is on the upper floor of the factory that all of the elements of production are finally brought together. The final finishing is carried out by a small team, proud of their work as only the Italians can be, with the smell of gun oil, freshly finished stocks and cigar smoke mingling together amidst a hive of controlled activity.

One last process is required before any gun is declared fit for sale. Each gun is test fired in a range located within the factory. Each shotgun is also tested on the pattern plate.



**THE HUMAN EYE CAN STILL
OUTPERFORM MACHINES FOR
SOME TASKS.**

Zoli may not be the biggest Italian gunmaker and it may not be the most glamorous, but the guns they produce are of excellent quality and represent fantastic value for money. The Z Series is undoubtedly a serious competition gun, reliable and well made. If it all sounds too good to be true, perhaps you should try one and find out for yourself! ■

*For more information
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**HAND FINISHING IS STILL AN IMPORTANT
PART OF THE PROCESS.**

