

Although the history of Beretta semi-automatic shotguns goes back to the 1960s with the Silver Lark, Gold Lark and Ruby Lark, most of us that shoot sporting clays were first familiar with Beretta automatics starting with the AL-1, AL-2 and AL-3 series that were manufactured from 1971 to 1976.

In 1977 Beretta started to manufacture the 300 series gas operated shotguns, which were a continuation of the AL series. In a very short period, the 301 series progressed from the 300 to the 303 series, which was manufactured until 1996. In 1995 the first of the now famous AL390 series shotguns started to roll off the assembly lines of Beretta's Brescia factory, starting with the AL390 Sporting.

To say that sporting clays shooters took to the AL390 like a duck takes to water would be an understatement. In 2000 the 391 series debuted along with the Urika and Xtrema series. Each new iteration of the 300 series shotguns was a significant improvement over the previous

**TOM CERETTO PUTS THIS
'UNIVERSAL' SHOTGUN THROUGH
ITS PACES**

AL391 TEKNYS GOLD TARGET



model. The culmination of the 300 series target shotguns is now – at least until next year or the year after – the top of the line AL391 Teknys Gold Target.

I had shot several of the 300 series shotguns owned by friends, but had never shot the AL391 Gold Target until recently. That happened at Media Day at the Orange County Sheriff's Training Center the day before the SHOT Show opened this year in Orlando, Florida.

Media Day gives all of us scribes a chance to shoot shotguns, rifles, pistols, air rifles and pistols (and even fully automatic SWAT and military firearms) from several different manufacturers. The



manufacturers introduce new models at the event and we get to shoot many of them for the first time. Give a bunch of outdoor writers all the guns and all the ammo they can shoot and you have quite a shooting festival. Federal and Remington furnished us with all the target ammunition we could possibly want. One of the highlights of the event, for me, was shooting the AL391 Teknys Gold Target for the first time.

There is an old saying in shooting circles that you should *"Beware of the man that shoots but one gun, for he probably shoots it well."* You could say, without contradiction, that the 391 Teknys

ATTENTION GETTER

The bright alloy receiver is distinctively embellished with a stylized Beretta logo on the left side and a neo modern stylistic 'swoosh' on the right side that culminates in a blue enameled insert on the side of the receiver that starts on the butt stock and runs into the receiver. The blue enameled insert is evident on both sides of the receiver and the blue color designates the gun is a Teknys Gold Target – field guns have a green insert. Beretta has a knack for doing that sort of modern embellishment very tastefully and not offending traditionalists like

fix it'. Beretta claims that this system will cycle twice as fast as any other gas system available. I don't know for sure about that, but I shot true pairs as fast as I could and it never failed to do its job, I did occasionally, but not the gun. Beretta Automatic shotguns have a history of being able to cycle for a long time between cleanings, and that is also true for the AL391 Teknys Gold Target. I would like to see Beretta use the same self-cleaning piston they recently introduced on the AL391 Urika 2 in the Gold Target. It would seem to be a no-brainer, but perhaps more research and development is needed before that can be done.

Gold Target is that gun! It has so many features that it is difficult for this scribe to know where to start. Distinctive to this gun are the adjustable comb, the four fore-end caps of different weights called the Beretta Balance System (BBS) and the 70/30 optional rib – more on those items later.

me. I like the design elements very

much, it's an attention getter.

The alloy receiver is a continuation of the 3 inch Urika receiver with the same self-compensating gas operating system that is capable of functioning with a wide variety of target and light field loads. I guess Beretta's motto is: *If it works don't*

CHOKES AND RIBS

The 391 Teknys Gold Target comes with your choice of 28 or 30 inch barrel with a .733 inch overbore and long forcing cones. The gun is shipped with five 2 3/4 inch long Optima Bore Sporting – OBS – chokes (cylinder, skeet, improved cylinder, modified and improved modified). Additional Optima Bore chokes are available in light

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SPECIFICATIONS

MANUFACTURER:

FABBRICA D'ARMI PIETRO BERETTA SPA
VIA PIETRO BERETTA
GARDONE VAL TROMPIA, ITALY

U.S.A. IMPORTER

BERETTA U.S.A.
17601 BERETTA DRIVE
ACCOCKEET, MD 20607

MODEL: AL391 TEKNYS GOLD TARGET

RETAIL PRICE: \$2,100

TYPE: GAS OPERATED SEMI-AUTOMATIC

RECEIVER: ALLOY BRIGHT METAL

WEIGHT: ADJUSTABLE

GAUGE: 12 GA. (TESTED) & 20 GA.

CHAMBER: 3 INCH

BARREL: 30" (TESTED) & 28"

CHOKES: OPTIMA BORE SPORTING:
CYLINDER, SKEET, IMPROVED CYLINDER,
MODIFIED AND IMPROVED MODIFIED –
OTHERS AVAILABLE

RIB: 10MM 50/50 FLAT – 70/30 RAISED RIB
INCLUDED

OPTIONAL RIBS AVAILABLE 60/40 & 80/20

SIGHT: TRUGLO TRU-BEAD

BARREL WEIGHTS: 2.5 TO 8.5 OZ. INCLUDED

STOCK: WALNUT – CHECKERED W/OIL FINISH

FORE-END: ROUND

DROP AT COMB: ADJUSTABLE

DROP AT HEEL: 2.36"

LOP: 14.5"

RECOIL PAD: GEL-TEK

SAFETY: CROSS BOLT REVERSIBLE

TRIGGER PULL: 4.5 OUNCES

CASE: FITTED POLYPROPYLENE
W/ACCESSORIES

modified and light full at extra cost. I shot the gun with a modified choke and it devastated targets, the combination of an Optima Bore barrel and Optima Bore chokes really is deadly on clay targets.

Unique to this model is the two-rib system that is shipped with the gun – a flush 50/50 rib and a stepped 70/30 accessory rib at no extra cost. Also available, but at extra cost, are ribs in 60/40 and 80/20. A shooter couldn't ask for anything more than a choice of ribs from 50/50 to 80/20, each

three fore-end weights and a base weight that the three optional weights can be screwed onto. This gives a shooter a choice of six fore-end weights from 2.5 ounces to a maximum of 8.5 ounces. Enough choices for just about any shotgun sport the owner may want to compete in. The fore-end is narrow by gas gun standards, but by the nature of the beast, it must be large enough to cover the gas operating system and retain enough strength to hold up under extreme competitive use. The checkering is

is very definitely there. If I were looking for a low recoil sweet shooting gas gun, this would definitely be at the top of my list.

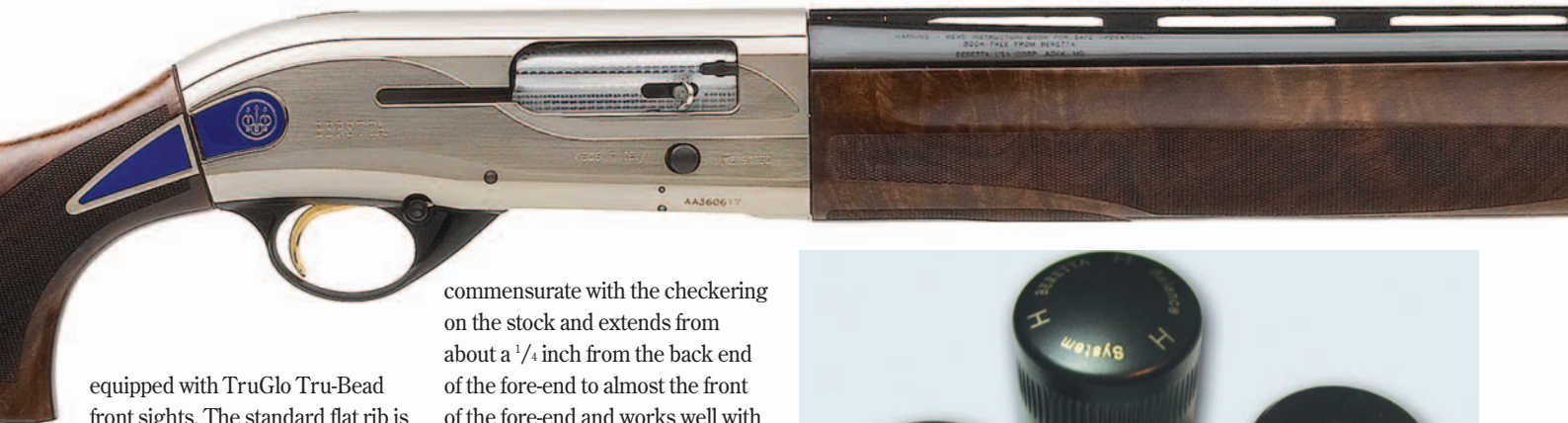
ON TEST

So how does it shoot? Damn well! I started out shooting fairly easy high and low straightaway targets and then switched to traps that had going away targets angling out from left to right and right to left. With the modified choke that was installed, it crushed targets. I then

range for a Super Veteran.

I often have problems with trap style targets rising at a high angle skyward, so I drifted over to a trap set up to throw that type of target. I was shooting with Will Fennell and we were having a blast, blowing away target after target that I usually have a lot of trouble with. It's nice getting tips from a former NSCA All American and Team USA member and not having to pay for the lesson!

I now have a dilemma. Should I shoot my Benelli Super Sport II



equipped with TruGlo Tru-Bead front sights. The standard flat rib is 10mm wide and cross-filed as are the optional ribs. The barrel is not ported and I don't think it needs to be.

ADJUSTABLE COMB

The butt-stock is equipped with an adjustable comb and an excellent Beretta Gel-Tek recoil pad. Drop at comb is 1.34 inches with the comb at its lowest level and drop at heel is 2.36 inches. I shot the gun with the comb slightly raised and very little cast off and that seemed to work very well for me. Inserted into the butt-stock is the Beretta Recoil Reduction System, which is removable at the shooters discretion – an excellent no cost standard item. The stock is select walnut with well done checkering, which I suspect is laser engraved.

The fore-end also has a little surprise. It comes with a choice of

commensurate with the checkering on the stock and extends from about a 1/4 inch from the back end of the fore-end to almost the front of the fore-end and works well with or without gloves on. Like the butt-stock, the fore-end is walnut with some figure in it, finished off with a nice hand rubbed oil finish that is well done.

The AL391 Teknys Gold Target is that rare "Universal Shotgun" that can be adjusted by the shooter for any shotgun sport – sporting clays, skeet, FITASC, hunting, Olympic shotgun sports and American trap. When you have a comb that is adjustable for drop, cast off or cast on and equipped with a state of the art Gel-Tek pad you are ready for any shotgun sport. Add to that the available ribs from 50/50 to 80/20, fore end weights from 2.5 ounces to 8.5 ounces and a removable recoil reduction system in the butt-stock and you have it all. It may be pricy for a gas gun, but it gives you all of the features, standard and optional, that are available – the dollar value



moved over to a Champion wobble trap that was set up to throw report pairs at a seemingly infinite number of angles and heights. I ran the first twenty targets in a row before I had to relinquish the trap to another writer. The transition from target to target was effortless and smooth, probably due more to the inherent handling qualities of the gun rather than the skill of the shooter – but I was having a pretty good day at the

(also a Beretta Corporate gun) at the World Sporting in April or the AL391 Tecknys Gold Target? I guess I will have to shoot the dickens out of both an awful lot more before I make up my mind.

Excuse me, but I have to get to my loading bench and start loading about a ton of 7/8 ounce 1,250 fps practice loads and start my test to see which gun I will chose – what an enjoyable dilemma to have. ■