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SHOTGUNS BY ROBERT MATTHEWS





Fabarm Elos 2 Elite

BY ROBERT MATTHEWS

You can't count on much in this world. I guess you could say that it's just an "iffy" kind of world. For the most part, that makes it even more pleasant when you're confronted with something that's constant. The sun rises in the east and, sure as sin, it's gonna set in the west. Water runs downhill and leaves turn in autumn.

FABARM IS THAT WAY. I've evaluated a bunch of its stuff over the years. And that includes guns from its sister companies, Caesar Guerini and Syren. In fact, I always give a sigh of relief when I find out that one of them is sending me something to evaluate, because I know it won't be junk and I won't have to explain to some rep why I can't say nice things about a product that he or she is peddling.

Right now I have the Fabarm Elos 2 Elite in hand. It appears to be an upgrade of the Elos D2 over/under, and that's a good thing because the Elos D2 is a really good gun in its own right. Both are intended to be upland guns, and both fill the niche extremely well.

The sample gun is a single-trigger 20-gauge with 28-inch barrels and automatic ejectors. It's also available in a 12-gauge version for the pheasant hunters out there. The 20-gauge weighs spot-on 6 1/2 pounds, which is just about perfect for a general-purpose upland gun, and the 12 is about a half-pound heavier for folks who feel the need for a little more heft in a gun. It features a complete complement of the makers proprietary screw-in choke tubes and 3-inch chambers, which makes it extremely versatile. It should work equally well for snipe and pheasants and everything in between. The barrels are topped with a matte-finish vent rib that should help disperse heat mirage on those hot-and-heavy early season dove shoots. The rib is also easy for the eye to follow in the shooter's peripheral vision.

The gun functions perfectly and the barrels are well regulated, which



isn't always "given" in today's world. For folks like me who like their tubes a little longer on a two-barreled gun, both the 12- and the 20-gauge are also available with 30 inchers.

The sample gun balances just a tad in front of the hinge pin and that gives it a nice follow-through on passing birds. The light weight makes it quick and responsive. The low-profile barrels and forend make for a gun that points very naturally. If I hunted mostly passing birds such as doves or birds that tend to be taken at longer ranges such as pheasant, I might well spring for the longer tubes for a little more momentum in the swing.

The gun features a pistol-grip buttstock that has a fairly tight radius and a small palm-swell that's designed to afford a consistent grip. The Schnabel forend is slim and comfortable in the hand. Both are fashioned from a nice grade

of straight-grained Turkish walnut and feature checkering that is nothing short of immaculate. All of the wood-to-metal and metal-to-metal fit is just as good. All the wood and metal finishes, with the exception of the receiver, are matte or low-luster. It may just be a matter of personal preference, but I find the "subdued but elegant" look to be attractive as well as practical.

The receiver has an attractive color-case hardened finish that's not commonly found on guns in this price range. The receiver has attractive, multi-technique engraving with a game and landscape theme. The focal point of the embellishment is the gold inlaid birds on either side—quail on the right and pheasants on the left. Again, the embellishment is uncommonly good and very attractive for a gun in this price range.

AS YOU MIGHT GUESS, I think this gun is a good buy in its price range, but here's what I really like! The receiver is quite "round" in shape and feels good when the gun is carried over the arm or gripped by the receiver with the dominant hand. Additionally, the barrels are hinged near their bottom edge. It's not a true under-lug hinge, nor a true mid-point hinge. It's somewhere in between, but it's low enough to allow the barrels to snug down in the hand when firing. The combination of all this is a gun that carries very comfortably and shoots really well.

The Elos 2 Elite is a remarkably solid design and well-built gun that sells for a fair price. It carries and swings easily and has no apparent weaknesses. It's more attractive than others in its price range and a bit nicer than an entry level gun would be—even a very good one. If that sounds like the description of a real "winner" to you, it does to me, too. ■