

Miroku ML 11 Sport

As good as it gets

by Paul Miller



The well-figured Schnabel fore-end and medium height tapered rib.

We have previously reviewed the Miroku Mk 70 Grade 1 Field (*Australian Shooter*, March 2017) which is imported by Outdoor Sporting Agencies in Melbourne. This is an impressive gun that would double for field and sporting clay or casual Skeet shooting and came highly recommended. The Miroku ML 11 Sport under review here is based on the same action but has been cleverly designed by Rod Laidlaw at OSA to be a useful competition Sporter and equally suitable for serious Skeet shooting.

As we noted in the earlier review the BC Miroku Manufacturing Company of Nangoku in the Kochi Prefecture of Japan has been making firearms since 1893. Located on the small southern Japanese island of Shikoku, since the end of the Second World War BC Miroku has grown rapidly to be one of the most successful firearms manufacturers in the world.

From the moment I put this Miroku together and mounted it to my shoulder a couple of times, it was obvious the gun was something special due to its astute design and specifications.

The stock and fore-end

This ML 11 Sport has an attractively-figured walnut stock that is unusual nowadays in that it has little or no cant for right-handers. In fact I'd describe it as neutral and much like the older American Brownings where they employed slightly greater drop at comb and heel dimensions with zero cast-on or cast-off. This made them ambidextrous and encouraged a heads-up position.

The stock measurements are a fine example of the lower end of Sporting/Skeet dimensions. The stock has 38mm drop at comb and 58mm drop at heel with a 375mm length of pull. The modern trend is towards higher stock dimensions for Sporting and

Skeet competition guns (35mm drop at comb and approximately 50mm drop at heel) which centre the patterns a little higher (say 60 per cent of the pellets above and 40 per cent below sight point), meaning the shooter can keep the target in sight all the time. The gun shoots its patterns approximately 50/50 but the addition of an adjustable comb would further increase its versatility and allow additional tweaking for perfect gun-fit.

The stock has a thin Decelerator pad which is well shaped and seems to soak up recoil perfectly, and you could easily replace it with a thicker pad if you wanted to extend the stock's length of pull.

The generous pistol grip is moderately curved, promoting an ample hand-to-trigger relationship. It has a comfortable palmwell for right-handed shooters but still feels relaxed to a lefty like me. The fore-end is of the Schnabel or tulip style and is smoothly profiled, allowing choice of a wider mid grip

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or a slim forward grip. Both positions felt good to me. The fore-end is easily detached from the barrels with a single lever attachment like all Miroku shotguns and the chequering on stock and fore-end is fine and well executed, giving a secure grip.

The barrels and rib

The barrels are 30" long with 3" chambers and bored for screw-in Invector Plus chokes with four supplied in the classic quarter, half, three-quarters and full. It's possible to buy more aftermarket chokes and I'd certainly prefer two Skeet chokes if this were my versatile competition gun.

The really outstanding feature of this gun is the moderately high rib which rises quickly from the breech to a height of 10mm then gradually back down to 6mm high at the muzzle. It is supported by 12 posts of varying heights to allow for the rib dropping down to the action and tapers to 6mm at the muzzle and I think the configuration in combination with the stock dimensions is the secret to this gun's outstanding performance. The rib between the barrels is ventilated.

On top of the rib are two white beads, one at the centre and one at the narrower muzzle



The Miroku ML 11 Sport - a highly competent performer for serious competition clay shooting.

end of the rib, perfect for a competition gun. The barrels are over-bored at 18.6mm and the forcing cones extended. This certainly contributed to the enjoyable shooting experience and is a feature of much more expensive guns. The barrels and rib were superbly assembled and blued.

The action

This ML 11 Sport features a completely

unadorned black action with just the words 'ML 11 Sport' engraved in gold on the underside of the action and a small ML 11 on both sides of the action. As much as I love fine game scene engraving on my sporting shotguns, I have to admit to thinking this finish looked rather svelte and perfect on a gun purpose-designed to be an all-round clay shooting machine. Sometimes less is more and some of the



The medium height rib is supported by 12 posts and gives an enhanced view of targets in flight.



Flush Invector Plus chokes.

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finest competition guns in the world look just like this.

As with all Miroku shotguns a full width hinge pin provides a substantial surface area for effortless opening and closing. Lock-up is achieved with a full width flat bolt that fits perfectly into a bite beneath the bottom chamber. As we've noted before with other Miroku reviews, this method of locking up the action gives the gun a deeper profile than some of the more recent Italian designs, but it's immensely strong and still looks like classic quality. The gun opens efficiently and closes with the crisp resonance of a bank vault locking - a pleasing sound.

The opening lever worked smoothly as did the trigger selector incorporated in the safety. The trigger is adjustable for 'length of finger' and the gun comes with two other trigger shoes to suit how you like a trigger to feel. The trigger pulls were crisp at around 4lb, ejectors were perfectly timed and worked well with factory loads and the metal-to-wood fit of action to stock and fore-end iron was excellent.



Adjustable trigger with two spare trigger shoes to fine-tune the feeling of this impressive gun.

Shooting impressions

A couple of my friends and I gave the ML 11 Sport a serious workout on Skeet and Trap targets. It handled remarkably well both from the gun down and gun up positions, due to the arrangement of the

slightly lower than usual stock dimensions with neutral cast in combination with the cleverly-designed and tapered rib. I have rarely found a shotgun with which I could shoot so well straight out of the box. It allowed an upright head position for improved vision and excellent target acquisition and, most importantly, it shot exactly where I was looking.

Apart from changing chokes between Skeet and Trap it needed no adjustment in my shooting position to pulverise virtually all targets I shot at. This is not boasting, rather an indication of how well we all performed with this gun. My only regret is I didn't have a chance to try it at sporting clays but have no doubt it would be perfect for those varied targets.

My right-handed mates shot it every bit as capably as I did, one of my friends smashing a 25 straight-at Skeet he never



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looked like missing. I'd be willing to bet a few packets of shells that he'll be doing extra chores around the house to impress his better half, and trading in his current competition gun for an ML 11 Sport.

This gun could only be improved with an adjustable comb for more serious trap shooting and that could be installed for about \$250 aftermarket. Greg Coleman from OSA says there's likely to be a factory-installed variable comb in later production

for an increase in retail price of about \$200. There will also be different chokes available but you'll need to confirm the details if you decide to grab one of these Australian-designed Miroku Sporters.

Considering it's expected to retail for about \$2950 the Miroku tradition of exceptional quality for a fair price just keeps on keeping on. I believe it can be had with a basic plastic Negrini-style case for about another \$100 so check this with your gun

dealer. This was one of those occasions gun reviewers find themselves in where I genuinely didn't want to send the firearm back. It performed extremely well and deserves glowing praise. ●

Specifications

Manufacturer: BC Miroku, Japan
Model: ML 11 Sport
Gauge: 12-gauge, 3" chambers
Action: Box-lock inertia cocking
Trigger: Single selective, tang safety, two spare trigger shoes
Barrel length: 30" with 3" chambers
Rib: Medium height 10mm; maximum height tapering down to 6mm.
10mm wide tapering to 6mm at muzzle
Chokes: Four Invector Plus, quarter, half, three-quarter and full
Stock and fore-end: Attractive walnut with satin finish, medium pistol grip and Schnabel fore-end
Stock dimensions: 38mm at comb and 58mm at heel. Neutral cast with 375mm (14.76") length of pull
Weight: Approximately 8lb or 3.7kg subject to walnut density
Accessories: Choke wrench, instruction manual
RRP: Approximately \$2950
Distributor: Outdoor Sporting Agencies, Melbourne
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