

Italian Flair

- the Webley & Scott Series 1000

by John McDougall



Webley & Scott is a renowned English gunmaker that has obviously felt the increased costs of production in recent years, firstly moving some of its manufacturing to Turkey. Although competent gunmakers, the control of output and the quality assurance in Turkey may not have been up to English standards, so a further switch has been contracted to Italy. After all, Italian gunmakers have been producing shotguns of the highest standard for centuries.

So the Webley & Scott Series 1000 game gun has emerged as the latest offering, reportedly the work of Italy's second-largest

shotgun manufacturer Bettinsoli. Having previously reviewed Webley & Scott shotguns made in Turkey, it would be interesting to see how the Italian version shaped up.

The barrels

These were faultlessly blued in a dark rich colour approaching near black. Both barrel tubes were joined by ventilated side ribs with a similar tapered top rib, ranging from 10mm at the receiver to 7mm at the muzzle. This is a great design as the rib automatically subconsciously draws the shooter's eye to the target without having to look directly down it. A translucent red barrel sight at

the muzzle was also a pleasant addition for providing the shooter with a great reference between the barrel muzzle and the target.

Also at the muzzle end of the Webley & Scott were the choke tubes. These were 50mm in length and five were supplied with the gun which was a pleasant surprise. They were housed in a plastic container along with the propeller-style choke tube key. Each choke was marked on the side with its constriction while notches in the end of the tubes were quick references for identification once the chokes were installed. Five notches designate cylinder choke moving up to one notch for full choke, the tightest. The propeller spanner for the choke >

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tubes was easy to use and for that little bit extra in cost Wembley & Scott has opted for a user-friendly tool.

At the chamber end, the barrels were proofed for High Performance steel shot loads and chambered for 76mm semi-Magnum loads. This is a bonus for those wanting to hunt waterfowl with hyper-velocity steel shot loads offered by most cartridge manufacturers nowadays. Although some shotguns are chambered for the super Magnum 3½" cartridges, the 3" Magnums should be sufficient for all but the heaviest of goose loads.

Jewel polishing about the ejectors and monobloc sides was well appreciated for the retention of lubricating oils to ensure longevity and smoothness of the action while opening and closing the gun. The extractors on the Webley & Scott were strongly constructed and perfectly timed. They removed spent cartridges from the barrels smartly and raised unfired cartridges for easy extraction.

Being a bifurcated jointed gun, whereby the lugs on the sides of the receiver accept a pivot point mid-bottom barrel, the Webley & Scott had a lower profile than an underpinned shotgun. This gave a good feel of balance between the hands when swinging the gun and additionally, with a lower centre of gravity, balanced better than an underpinned gun.

The additional provision of four large lumps on the bottom of the monobloc capably assisted with the integrity of the closing mechanism. When the barrels were locked into the receiver floor, these would minimise any hammering of the barrels against the receiver face as you would expect with high performance steel shot loads running pressures around the 15,000psi mark. This is well above the pressures found with lead shot loads. The large bite to the bottom rear of the monobloc also secured the integrity of the action and should provide many years of service before needing attention.

The receiver

The silver nitrate finished receiver was engraved with game birds on both sides depicting pheasants and ducks in flight.



These were tastefully completed and complemented the firearm as a game gun well. However, proofed for HP steel shot loads suited to the hunting of waterfowl, I'd have preferred the receiver to be blued to eliminate any glare that could spook approaching ducks on high.

This can be overcome by applying a grey or camo tape to the receiver, but I feel the manufacturers should have given a little more consideration to glare. Otherwise, as a game gun for upland shooting, targeting hares, rabbits, foxes, partridges and pheasants, the piece is well suited for such hunting situations. And even a spot of sporting clays is viable for the avid or novice clay target shooter.

On the top of the receiver, the uppermost

lever functioned positively and smoothly to open the gun without too much effort. Engraving about the top lever and tang complemented the overall look about the gun's receiver and triggerguard with all metal surfaces subject to impressions of some kind, usually featuring scrolls and flourishes. The pheasant's head on the underside of the receiver was quite dramatic.

Also on the top of the receiver was the safety catch-cum-barrel selector. I'd liked to have seen a letter to represent the under-and-over barrels stamped into the top tang but as it stood there was only an 'S' for safety. With the 'S' exposed, the gun was in the safe position and conversely when covered, it was ready to be fired. For the novice, with the catch moved to the left-hand



side of the tang, the top barrel fired first and with the catch moved to the right the bottom barrel fired first. Stamping a simple 'U' for under and 'O' for over to accompany the 'S' for safe would have made things far more obvious.

Design and size of the triggerguard was generous and would enable a shooter to wear thin leather gloves should the weather be cold. Although not adjustable, the triggerfoot was quite comfortable and the rake of the pistol grip provided good access for those with even the shortest of fingers. The trigger was mechanical in operation, as compared to an inertia-operated trigger mechanism. This meant a shooting opportunity in the field should never be lost in the event of a misfire, with the second barrel always ready for firing. The trigger pulls were heavy at around 2.2kg each with a little travel in the trigger as well. However, this would be less noticeable in the field than on the sporting clays ground where you seem to be more conscious of this.

Stock and fore-end

These were both constructed from walnut of a basic grade two plus and sealed with an oiled finish. For a gun at around \$1890 I'd have expected a slightly higher grade of wood with just a little more character.



With the action opened, the jewel polishing about the monobloc is evident.

The fore-end was of a Schnabel-style with a typical tulip head to the front. This was generously covered with chequering at around 20 lines per inch. It was obviously completed by laser-guided machinery for there was a single border with no overruns. Inletting of the fore-end catch was admirable with no gaps and the catch was adjusted

perfectly to hold the wood firmly to the barrel set.

The stock was standard for a field gun, being a little lower than a 'sporter' and was thankfully fitted with a comfortable recoil pad to absorb the hammering you can often experience from semi-Magnum loads of steel shot travelling in excess of 1500fps.



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Again, chequering on the pistol grip, which was nicely raked, was excellent and similarly completed to complement the fore-end.



Webley & Scott has fitted a comfortable recoil pad.

The oil coating on all woodwork was nicely finished and could be touched up should you be so inclined. Overall the finish and fit of the woodwork was superb.

In the field

Taking the Webley & Scott into the field was a delight. I enjoyed a few sessions shooting clay targets and another outing aiming for vermin in an olive grove. The gun performed well with targets consistently broken but if I was to buy this firearm I'd have an adjustable comb fitted. The Webley & Scott tested, now made in Italy, was a large improvement from what I'd previously assessed from Turkey. The price represented better value than the Turkish models although the colour case hardening on the Turkish brands was an added attraction.

The triggers were dreadful on the Turkish types and certainly needed attention. The Italian version has seen an improvement in this area. For anyone in the marketplace for a reasonable quality gun, backed by a three-year warranty, the Webley and Scott 1000 is definitely one for consideration.

Specifications

Manufacturer: Contracted by Webley & Scott, Brescia, Italy
Overall length: 1210mm (47½")
Overall weight: 3.53kg (7lb 12oz)
Barrel length: 760mm (30")
Barrel weight: 1.52kg (3lb 6oz)
Bore diameter: 12-gauge with both barrels 0.723" (also available in 20-gauge)
Chamber: 76mm, (3") steel shot proofed for High Performance steel shot (all sizes)
Chokes: 50mm long, fully internal, Cylinder 0.726", Improved cylinder 0.716", Modified; 0.700", Improved modified 0.696" and full choke 0.690" (Imp Mod and full not suited to steel shot)
Stock dimensions: Length of pull; 380mm 15", Drop at comb; 40mm/1 9/16", Drop at heel; 52mm/2 1/8".
 Chequering at 20 lines per inch;
 Comfortable recoil pad fitted as standard
Warranty: Three years
Accessories: Sold with fitted case, set of five chokes and instruction booklet
Price and Australian distributor: Recommended price: \$1890. Distributed by OSA Melbourne

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