

Caesar Guerini Maxum Sporting



It has been many months since I wrote about a Caesar Guerini model in this column. I've tested two previous Guerinis, and I liked them so well, I bought them both. For a gun writer to do that speaks volumes about how much he thought of the gun. Probably 100 or more smoothbores pass through my hands for testing for every one I've purchased over the last several decades. Like some of you, I need to buy another shotgun like my wife needs a new pair of shoes, but with regard to both, whose counting—and we can't resist.

The Maxum Sporting is the very top of the Caesar Guerini line. This company offers shooters many models, some for hunting, some for trap, several for sporting and skeet. What sets the Maxum Sporting apart at the first opening of the package or picking up one at your favorite gun store is the spectacular wood and extensive engraving, and there's plenty of engraving room because of the model's side-plates.

This engraving was designed by the renowned Italian group of engravers Bottega Giovanelli. Guerini and Giovanelli call the type of engraving used on the Maxum "deep relief Gothic scroll." The darker areas of the engraving appear to be a series of tiny hammer "peens," but somehow the makers have found a way to create this effect by their own method. I think this style increases the shadow effect, enhancing the good looks of this exquisite, hand-finished engraving.

In addition to covering the side-plates, the same engraving goes on the receiver sides and bottom plus the back of the fore-end iron, the trigger guard, receiver top, opening lever, and top tang. There's what I call a "scalloped" look to the receiver sides, which I think further enhances the model's good looks. "Caesar Guerini" is engraved on both receiver sides, plus there's "Maxum" engraved on the receiver bottom.

The walnut is an upgrade on the Maxum, compared to other Guerini models. Wood-to-metal fit is near perfect. But don't expect absolute perfection because Maxum stocks are inter-

changeable—as are the stocks on all Caesar Guerini models. My test gun came with an adjustable stock, but the Maxum model also comes with a traditional stock. The adjustable adds on less than \$300 to the price. The checkering is done with precision and at 26 lines to the inch.

Interestingly, Wes Lang, who runs Caesar Guerini USA and is an avid sporting shooter as well, is a bit worried about the gun industry's walnut supply. It's tougher and tougher to find good walnut, but even lower walnut grades are drying up. For a number of years, Italy and other gun making countries have purchased their walnut in Turkey. But this is a very arid area, so trees grow very slowly. Of course, slow tree growth also produces the most beautiful gunstocks. Are we buying more wal-



The upgraded walnut on the Maxum is very special, and the recoil pad has rounded edges to help prevent gun hang-ups during mounting.

SPECIFICATIONS

Action: Over-under with under-locking lug; barrels pivot on trunnions

Gauge: 12 tested, also available in 20, 28, and combo sets

Weight: 8 lbs., 3 ozs. as tested

Barrels: 30" (tested), 32", and 34"

Chokes: Six screw-ins supplied

Stock: Traditional or adjustable (tested) stock with upgraded walnut; dimensions: length of pull—14³/₄", drop at comb—1.5", drop at face—1.65", drop at heel—2.15", pitch—5 degrees, breech to comb—7.75", and reach (from grip to trigger, which is adjustable back and forth)—4.18"

Suggested Retail Price: \$5,700

Manufacturer/Importer: Made in Italy by Caesar Guerini/imported by Caesar Guerini USA, 700 Lake St., Dept. SC, Cambridge, MD 21613; (410) 901-1131; www.gueriniusa.com



The Caesar Guerini Maxum Sporting's receiver, including the side-plates, features exquisite, deep relief Gothic scroll engraving.



The fore-end, which was firmly attached, with no wobble, is released by the push button at the front.

nut than Turkey can produce? Lang thinks there's some walnut across the Turkish border in Iraq. Any of you care to venture there on a walnut-buying spree? Me neither—at least for the immediate future.

Stock dimensions are interesting on Guerini over-unders. Length of pull is long at 14³/₄". The Maxum's recoil pad is a good one, not all that thick, but "cushiony" enough, a bit concave to better fit the shoulder pocket, and there's a thin black spacer to set the pad off from the buttstock. The pad is rounded all around, so you won't have gun-mounting problems due to sharp pad edges. Unlike most gun companies, Caesar Guerini provides additional stock measurements, not just length of pull and drop at comb and heel, as outlined in the accompanying specifications sidebar.

The barrels pivot on trunnions, and gun lock-up is the same in all Guerini models. There's an under-locking bolt that protrudes from the base of the receiver upon closing to nestle into a lug milled into the bottom of the monobloc. Further, the rear bottom of the monobloc has lugs that nestle into an area milled out to fit in the bottom of the receiver. The sides of the monobloc are jeweled.

The ejectors Guerini calls Boss-style feature over-size cams the company says ensure positive spent shell ejection. Disc retainers, a part of the ejection system, provide added strength. The fore-end is very positively removed by pressing on the release button at the fore-end's very front. Consequently, there's no wood inletting on the outside of the fore-end, save for the fore-end iron at the rear and the tiny metal teardrop at the bottom of the fore-end. The fore-end is held rigidly in place by both the lug on the bottom of the barrels and a fastener at the rear of the fore-end that attaches to its mate at the front bottom of the receiver. I hate wobbly fore-ends. They are distracting while shooting, and they tell me that in final fitting, the



The Maxum's trigger can be moved back and forth to attain your perfect grip-to-trigger distance.



There's a bit of recurve to the pistol grip.

wobble was not addressed—so what else was not addressed? Guerini fore-ends do not wobble.

The barrels are special, too. There's a 10mm non-tapered rib on top and vented side panels between the barrels to aid cooling. The top rib has a white bead near the muzzle and a metal bead about halfway down the rib. The special aspect is the DueCone system, where immediately ahead of the chamber area there's a short step down toward the inner barrel diameter. Just forward of this first step down is a much longer one, 4.5", which tapers to the over-bored inner barrel diameter, which I measure at .736" in both barrels. Caesar Guerini designs barrels in this manner so they not only improve patterns (some say reduce recoil as well, although I am not in that camp), with this system, if shotshells with fiber wads are used, Guerini claims that the DueCone system still provides a good gas seal. I have shot in Scotland and England where plastic wads were not allowed. As much as plastic wads are used in this country, environmentalists may some day look down upon them. If that ever happens and you have a Guerini shotgun, no problem, you can shoot fiber-wad shells with no risk of gas seal loss.

By varying barrel weights and perhaps stock weights as well, all Caesar Guerini Sporting models balance about 1 centimeter in front of the trunnions. All sporting 12-ga. models are offered with 30", 32", and 34" barrels, my test gun with the former. The Maxum model is also available in 20 and 28 gauges with 30" or 32" barrels, plus 20/28 and 20/28/.410 combo sets are offered, although stock dimensions are not exactly the same in the smaller bores as compared to the 12-ga. specifications.

Six screw-in chokes are supplied, one cylinder, one skeet, two improved cylinder, one light modified, and one modified. These are long chokes at 3¹/₈", allowing for longer taper and parallel sections. The chokes are knurled on the end for easy spin in and out, plus the choke designation is lasered on the exposed outside portion, making it easy to see which chokes you have installed.

The fore-end weighed 11.4 ozs., the 30" barrels 3 lbs., 14.5 ozs., for a total gun weight of 8 lbs., 3 ozs. on my digital postal scale. A hard plastic case is included, as is a stock removal tool, letting you remove the buttstock without first removing the recoil pad.



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