

Small-Gauge Caesar Guerini Summit Sporting



With travel and lodging costs escalating, it is apparent that once you sporting clays shooters arrive at a shoot, that's what you are extremely interested in doing—shooting. Consequently, the popularity of shooting the preliminary small-gauge events is on the rise. Other reasons for this popularity center around less recoil than 12-ga. loads, nary a necessity for using fast loads since the small-gauge event targets tend to be closer, and, finally, shooting the small guns is just one heck of a lot of fun.

Of course, we all want to do well, in small-gauge events or in the 12-ga. events. One way to help ensure we shoot our best is to shoot essentially the same gun in all three of the smaller bores—20, 28, and .410. Some shotgunners opt to do this with full-length sub-gauge tubes in their 12-ga. over-under sporter, or even shorter tube inserts, an excellent way to go. But some shooters have the sense that a tubed over-under weighs a little too much for them. If this is true for you, I have a suggestion. Shoot the Caesar Guerini Summit Sporting because this company offers this model in all three of the smaller bores. Of course, if you already compete with a 12-ga. Summit Sporting, all the more reason to consider a 20, 28, and .410 in the same model.

A bonus here is that all three of these smaller bores are built on one receiver. You could call it a 20-ga. receiver, but in my view, it's quite a small one, maybe more approaching the size of some 28-ga. receivers. Another important aspect of these three models is that they can all be had with 32" barrels. While shorter barrels are also available if you are so inclined, the longer 32" tubes are proving extremely popular these days.

It was two years ago when I bought a 28-ga. Summit Sport-

ing with the longer 32" barrels. I have used this gun a lot, having served me well on fun sporting clays excursions, clay target busting on skeet fields, pest pigeon seasons, plus two trips to South America to try and help the poor farmers down there do something about the dove plague. By the time you read this, the Summit Sporting 28 will have returned from its third trip down there. I make this point because I feel these guns are really built to take the high-volume shooting. Further, with Caesar Guerini, you can take advantage of its Pit Stop service; send in the gun any time you want for a thorough looking over, and all you pay for is the shipping.

I'm always interested in shooting the .410, so I ordered a consignment Summit Sporting in that baby bore, with the 32" barrels, of course. Just two days ago, a friend of mine called to ask me to shoot some quail over his cocker and springer spaniels. The .410 Summit was in the delivery wrapper when I got the invitation. There are too many folks who pooh-pooh the .410 as a hunting gun. Perhaps all who are in this category either don't own a .410, never did own one, or they've read where some writer has said that the .410 is a crippler and should never be used in the hunting field on live birds.

But here's my take on the .410. They are wicked killers, especially on small birds like quail, and especially at close range.



Here's a pair that three-of-a-kind won't beat: the Summit Sporting in 28 gauge (top) and .410.

SPECIFICATIONS

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

Gauge: 12, 20, 28, and .410

Weight: 7 lbs., 1 oz. in 28 gauge; 7 lbs., 5 ozs. in .410

Barrels: 28", 30", and 32"

Chokes: six extra-long screw chokes

Stock: dimensions: drop at comb—1.45", drop at heel—2.15", length of pull—14.8"

Suggested Retail Price: 20 and 28 gauges \$3,295; .410 \$3,450

Manufacturer/Importer: Caesar Guerini USA, 700 Lake St., Dept. SC, Cambridge, MD 21613; 410-901-1131; www.gueriniusa.com



Though these Summit Sporting models are obviously aimed at sporting clays use, they also make excellent hunting guns, even in the baby bore .410 at reasonable ranges.

If a bird is more than 30 yards away, who says you *have* to shoot? Further, I think most .410 hunting guns are choked too tight. You need a little pattern spread if most of your shots are going to be inside 20 yards or so, and in dog-training situations, such close shots are the rule. Plus, similar-distance shots are also common at a shooting preserve.

My test .410 came with a very nice piece of walnut. Caesar Guerini puts long stocks on its guns, typical length of pull 14³/₄". You can always trim a buttstock's length, but lengthening it other than with a slightly longer recoil pad usually results in something pretty ugly. A longer pad can also change the gun's balance point.

These Summit Sporting small-bore guns are not ultra lightweights. As a sporting enthusiast, I know you will be glad to hear that. My 28 gauge weighs 7 lbs., 1 oz., while this test .410 gun hefts 7 lbs., 5 ozs. I'm guessing some of the added weight comes from the dense, attractive walnut. Plus, of course, there's a bit more metal in the monobloc area, where the .410 monobloc matches up with the 20-ga. size receiver. I don't have a 20-ga. Summit Sporting to weigh, but I'm going to guess it will weigh just an ounce or three over 7 lbs.

Another thing you are going to love about these Summit



The Summit Sporting features a schnabel-shaped fore-end with extremely well-done checkering.

Sporting models is the extra-long screw chokes, much longer than anyone else's small-bore choke tubes. The longer length allows for longer taper and parallel sections, features I've always felt treat the shot pellets more gently, so more of them stay round and don't quickly fly out of the effective pattern.


The .410 fore-end weighs 11.4 ozs., the 32" barrels 3 lbs., 2 ozs. Interestingly, the 28-ga. fore-end weighs only 9.7 ozs., and those 32" barrels weigh 2 lbs., 14.5 ozs. Both guns balance just a hair forward of the hinge pins or trunnions.

The receivers, trigger guards, and opening levers are all treated with a super corrosion-fighting process called Tinaloy,

which ends up being sort of a double coating of nickel, resulting in a frosty-gray finish. Barrels are deeply blued, and the ribs have a metal mid bead and white bead at the muzzle. The triggers can be moved back and forth, too.

The locking system centers on an under-locking bolt, yet receiver depth on these models is quite shallow. The under-locking bolt is replaceable, as are the trunnions that the barrels pivot on, though I bet you put one heck of a lot of shot through these barrels before you will ever need either.

The checkering is extremely well done, probably by a CNC checkering machine and then cleaned up with hand finishing. The recoil pads are thin and set off from the buttstock by a black spacer. The recoil pad on my older 28 gauge is nice and slick, thus there's never a hang-up problem in mounting. The .410's pad was a little sticky, but I worked it over with a cotton ball soaked in rubbing alcohol and made it a lot slicker.

The schnabel-shaped fore-end is tight with no wobble, yet it's easy to remove. If you are looking for a small-bore gun or a set of small bores to compete with or just to enjoy on clays and birds, the Caesar Guerini Summit Sporting is probably going to be a good answer for a lot of you. If you want to save some money, consider buying a 28-ga. Summit and using it for both the 20- and 28-ga. events. Do that, and I bet it won't cost you one target in 200. Then, add the .410 Summit Sporting as finances permit. Another consideration is one receiver and three or even just two separate barrel sets. Either way, you'll love shooting these small-bore Summits. 

Email Nick Sisley at nicksisley@hotmail.com



Small-gauge sporting events are increasing in popularity, as is interest in shooting them just for fun.