

# Caesar's Over/Under Empire

Wes Lang brings Italian craftsmanship to the American shooter.

**IN A FEW** short years, Caesar Guerini has come to represent superb quality and craftsmanship in over/under shotguns. The company's success is the direct result of the passion and dedication of its principals. We recently spoke with CG president Wesley Lang about how this vision evolved.

Two Italian gunmakers, brothers Giorgio and Antonio Guerini, worked for their uncle, Battista Guerini, but parted ways in 2000. Antonio is an innovative engineer and Giorgio handles sales. The brothers knew Wes from previous business relationships, and after stints at Beretta, Sig Arms, RSR, and publishing giant Emap, Lang was well versed in the complexities of the American gun market.

The three teamed up in 2002, and Caesar Guerini was born. Lang's path to this position is both inspiring and illustrative.

Born and raised in New Jersey, Wes comes from a family of dedicated shooters.

"My grandfather ran a successful advertising business and was an avid trap shooter," Wes said. "I was about 12 when he let me fire my first shotgun."

The model? "A Remington 870!" Wes said. The iconic pump had "a custom stock" and a barrel that had "a lot of work," he recalled. Lang's dad was also an avid shooter, and at a nearby club, some members had "invented" a new clay target game. They called it "sporting clays."

Wes's dad was really hooked on sporting, and soon Wes was shooting almost every weekend. After about a year, he began entering tournaments, becoming a top shooter.

His love of shotguns, industry experience and relationship with the Guerini brothers has led to the success of CG.

regular production guns is usually sold out in advance. With the recent acquisition of Fabarm, it is now the second-largest shotgun-manufacturing concern in Italy.

CG over/unders are essentially one gun, but made in several models.

With a flawless design, they can concentrate on more precise manufacturing. "This is a tremendous advantage," Wes said.

He noted they try not to be "the largest gunmaker in their niche, but the best," and embody "craftsmanship through technology. We always try to add value for the customer by making a better product without an increase in price."

Modern CNC machines turn out parts infinitely more precise than "hand-made" parts. "They're just a better file," he said. Tolerances down to one or two 10,000ths of an inch are routine, which means consistent quality. Guerini's parts can actually be moved from gun to gun.

Guerini makes guns in a range of gauges with a wide array of variations that tailor each version to its intended task. The major groups (and the number of models therein) are: Hunting (7), Ellipse (5), Sporting (9), Impact (3), and Trap (5). In turn, each model offers several gauges, barrel lengths, and levels of embellishments. It allows buyers to have a gun tailored to their shooting style.

All are solid box-locks, but numerous high-end versions have false sideplates, gracefully adorned with engraving and inlays. Barrel lengths vary from 26 to 30 inches. Two- and three-barrel multi-gauge sets are available.

Buttstocks and forends (even the least expensive models) are of Turkish walnut that shows fine grain, checkering, and finish. As prices increase, the wood quality gets better.

Every part is carefully crafted, in-

**COMING OF AGE** Today, Caesar Guerini is growing fast. Its yearly supply of

Wes Lang of Caesar Guerini.



stalled, and fitted so the whole is greater than the sum of its parts. For example, Guerini's heavy-duty ejectors are easily removed for cleaning, if necessary. They have oversized cams and a disk stop. The blind sideplates have no pins or screws, resulting in clean lines and an uninterrupted canvas for the engraver. Lightweight models have a forged aluminum frame and forend parts.

The trigger is adjustable for take-up and overtravel, and the rebounding hammers and sears are machined from solid steel billets, all of which adds up to a crisp and consistent trigger pull. Interceptor sears and independent inertia block round out the action features. The tang safety is non-automatic, but an auto version can be had, if desired.

The barrels pivot on trunnions, and along with the locking lugs are easily replaceable, if necessary. Barrel lengths vary from 26 to 32 inches, depending on the intended application of the gun. All barrels (except the 28-gauge) have 3-inch chambers and are chrome-lined with a set of five, nickel-plated choke tubes.

**GORGEOUS GUNS** Aesthetics of these elegant doubles are enhanced by Guerini's "Invisalloy," a clear protective finish on the receiver. The barrels undergo a special proprietary polishing process, resulting in a really lustrous and deep blued finish.

The Turkish walnut stocks have exquisite 26-lines-per-inch checkering, and a hand-rubbed high-luster oil finish that brings out the natural beauty of the grain. The buttplate is a precision-fitted wood. The forend is attached by an Anson push-button latch, and incorporates a replaceable hardened steel insert that allows the shotgun to be tightened if it becomes loose after years of heavy use.

All guns are pressure tested at the

Italian National proof House to 1,320 bars. This is a little over 19,000 psi, well above S.A.A.M.I.'s MAP for any shotgun bore.

Caesar Guerini has specifically targeted the American market. They strive to make guns U.S. shooters want to buy. While you'd think every company would embrace such a philosophy, many European firms make their guns the way *they* want them.

In addition, Wes said Caesar Guerini does not hesitate to make subtle (and sometimes expensive) design changes in a model to make it more appealing to the U.S. consumer, and he emphasized their commitment to "superior customer service." The guns come with a lifetime warranty, period. The personal appreciation for the customer is paramount, and they are always ready for feedback.

Plus, CG believes service does not end with the sale, backed by their "Pitstop Maintenance Program." The original owner can send their O/U to Guerini once a year (up to three times) for service and a "tune-up." This valuable add-on is free; the customer pays only the shipping. Turn around time is approximately 10 business days.

This quest for excellence permeates the entire company. Wes said each and every craftsman in the Italian factory is committed to producing a superior product. "That's good enough" is just not a part of their lexicon. And it shows in the final products.

It takes talent and commitment to grow a successful business, and perhaps even more so for a highly specialized enterprise like fine over/unders. But Wes Lang and Caesar Guerini seem to have it mastered.\*

Caesar Guerini's Ellipse EVOLution Sporting with open action.