A Tale of Two Churchill

Not Winston, but Turkish shotguns that are taking the bush by storm. Story and pics by Neil Grennan.

IT’S JUST LIKE riding a bike I was told when I mentioned to someone that I was making a return to the sport of clay target shooting. Shortly after this the opportunity arose to have a shot at the local gun club and I dragged my wife Melissa along in the hope she would give it a go too. Well, as things turned out we both walked away sharing the same opinion, “Let’s join up!” So then came the painful task of purchasing a gun we could both use at first, rather than go in neck-deep and spend a heap with little, if any research. You know, a bit like a politician would, only he’s spending other people’s money.
After much deliberation and throw it up and try sessions at different gunshops we purchased an Akkar Churchill Sporter from my good friend John Harrison of Hunting Haven at Urralla. Let me stress this article is in no way a review but as this brand of gun has been in the retail market for a couple of years and, with all due respect to gun reviews, I am simply transferring my experience with a product onto paper for your perusal. This particular over and under has really impressed me.

The guns are imported from Turkey by Nioa Trading and the Akkar range are expanding all the time. It has a 20-inch O/U model available as a combo. Also there’s
An extractor version with 30-inch barrels, an ejector with 30-inch barrels, both in sporter configuration and a trap gun, which comes standard with barrel porting to both top and bottom barrels, centre bead and I am told adjustable stocks will be available in some of the models very shortly.

As I mentioned the guns themselves have a standard design, nothing fancy just very practical, but they all seem to carry some very appealing features, one of the most important being how well they come to the shoulder. Also their value for money is excellent and I recently found out after digging around in the specs that the top and bottom firing pins and springs across the range of guns are the same finally someone decided to keep things simple.

They have inertia triggers that are very crisp.
Interchangeable chokes come as standard on the Akkar - you receive four chokes in total and from my quick tests, they throw a nice pattern with most shells I shot. The way the guns are designed to lock up on closing is done with the help of a replaceable locking plate, that is located in the bottom of the action. This design opens up the opportunity for a re-tightening style tune up if needed later down the track but I from our experience so far this would be a long way away.

We have been using our guns for 18 months, give or take, and my Akkar sporter has fired in excess of 15,000 rounds.
To give you an idea, if you were to shoot every weekend firing a box of shells it would take 12 years to shoot away what has gone through that gun to date and I am being conservative.

Like I said earlier, I do feel the need to sing praise for products if they are worthy of it, and if I ever wear this
one out I’ll be back for another one.

The guns have good level of finish, three-year warranty and are definitely worth considering. In the world of shotgunning these Turkish offerings are right up there. Their knowledge of gun design and engineering is something they take very seriously, in other words they appear to really know their stuff.

Don’t get me wrong; these guns are not in the same class as the high-end guns you will pay many thousands of dollars for (sometimes tens of thousands) but pointed in the right direction they’ll smoke a clay as well as any other gun and/or give you years of faithful service in the field.

“A shotgun should be like a good pair of joggers; they ... fit like a glove”

You may ask yourself what’s this man’s credentials? I’ve been around firearms long enough to know what works and grew up shooting shotguns in the field, over gundogs and have sniffed my fair share of freshly-fired Eley Blue Stars to know the difference between craftsmanship and crap.

More recently I have had the pleasure of seeing people somewhat surprised after trying our guns. Oh yes! I forgot to mention, we also purchased the Akkar
trap gun for my wife and as I was saying most people who try them at the club are very positive at the performance and handling of the Churchill guns.

I was away at a shoot not too long ago and it was remarked to me how many of these guns are finding their way into the club scene, but it goes to show you don’t need to part with a large wad of cash when buying a reliable smoothbore.

This range of guns they may not be everybody’s cup of tea, but we couldn’t fault them. A shotgun should be like a good pair of joggers; they simply become a mere extension of one’s body and fit like a glove. More importantly, they should be a pleasure to use. I have included a number of photos hopefully showing you some of the features of this wonderful range of guns.

I am a person to call things the way I see them, I don’t think it’s a bad thing but I’ll let you be the judge. Cheers!

“It was remarked to me how many of these guns are finding their way into the club scene.”

ABOVE: Simplicity and quality – a close up photo of the engine room of one of the Churchills.

RIGHT: Wade whistled this fox in with his Silva Fox whistle; bowled over by the author and his Churchill Sporter.