

# A New Sporter From Arrieta & Arrizabalaga Marks a Sea Change in Traditional Spanish Gunmaking

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Spanish gunmakers established their reputation for duplicating the British Best at a fraction of the cost while nearly rivaling the performance of the original. But Dan Moore, owner of fine-gun purveyor William Larkin Moore in Scottsdale, Arizona thinks that the new Spanish Sporter from Arrieta & Arrizabalaga could mark a turning point where design inspiration for Spain's remaining Eibar-region gunmakers instead comes from the Italian masters.

“Arrieta started again in 2019, and the new owners are looking to establish a modern Italian way to make the guns using more CNC-made parts and fewer parts made by hand,” Dan observed. “The Sporter is a take-off of a modern Italian sporter with a Boss-style lock-up. The Arrieta machine shop now has the best in casting, CNC and action forging with file finishing. They’re continuing to try to elevate their products, with the Sporter as their first product. The gun shows pretty well.”



Priced at \$49,000 with the premium hand engraving (the base price is \$40,000), the Arrieta & Arrizabalaga 12-gauge Sporter takes aim at the comparably priced second-generation Purdey Sporter. Regardless, Dan commented that Arrieta & Arrizabalaga saw itself specifically targeting top Italian sporters from the likes of Perazzi, Famars, Perugini & Visini, Beretta and Rizzini.

The Arrieta & Arrizabalaga Sporter over/under is a first-generation shotgun to appear from Arrieta & Arrizabalaga under their recent corporate restructuring. Although Arrieta had purchased Arrizabalaga in 2012, the cash-strapped operation was never able to realize the full synergy of the combined companies, and declared bankruptcy in 2016. Ricardo de Serdio, Chairman and CEO at Fremman Capital with offices throughout Europe, obviously saw enough potential in the Spanish gunmaker to fill the coffers for future product development and market expansion.



The Arrieta & Arrizabalaga Sporter I shot was supplied by William Larkin Moore. A monobloc, it possessed the hallmarks of a luxury European boxlock clays gun. The coin-finished sideplates were adorned with fine scroll and rosette engraving showing a perfect, flush fit. Iodine-hued walnut had a striking, high-contrast, non-linear figuring. The bottom of the pistol grip's inside radius was finished with a slight point to the curvature that embellished the shotgun's profile, with a sensuous line that extended upward to the perch-belly forend. In fact, a close examination of the Sporter revealed an array of subtle accents that have historically elevated Italian design in general to international prominence.

Personally, I'd order the shotgun with a proper recoil pad, as befitting most clays guns, instead of the checkered butt on my demonstration model. But for the gentleman clays enthusiast who shoots one-hundred rounds per week, the checkered butt with its beautifully engraved screw was a classy touch.



The Spanish Sporter in my possession had 30-inch vented barrels choked improved modified/full. There was a drop-out single, selective inertia trigger with leaf main springs that had a responsive pull of 3.1 pounds. Weighing 8.1 pounds, the Sporter was comparable on the scale to some others in its class. A manual safety was on the top strap.

Bear in mind that the Arrieta & Arrizabalaga Sporter is bespoke, with a production queue ranging from 12 to 14 months. That means an individually made Sporter can also be ordered as a 20 gauge to highly personalized specifications that could send the price higher.

I shot sporting clays with the Arrieta & Arrizabalaga Sporter at Southwind Clays & Quail in Quitman, Georgia. It took a few stations to realize that the gun shot high for me from the ready position and so I adjusted my point of impact accordingly by adding more float. Shooting the gun pre-mounted, though, produced a flatter shot of around 50/50 with tremendous target-smashing power. Shooting the shotgun pre-mounted left an indelible impression that the Arrieta & Arrizabalaga Sporter would make an excellent live pigeon gun (although Dan said the company is coming out with a new pigeon model).



On the sporting-clays course, the shotgun's handling fell more in line with the Purdey Sporter – meaning more deliberate and less nimble – than Arrieta & Arrizabalaga's Italian competition, Perazzi in particular.

Despite a not-perfect fit and lack of a rubber recoil pad, there was very little felt recoil shooting 1½-ounce loads rated at 1200 feet per second. The trigger was crisp and responsive.

Early in the course I encountered a long crosser that highlighted the Sporter's smooth balance and swing dynamics – further heightened by a true pair of crossers flying in opposition directions where the shotgun transitioned with authority.

After figuring out the shotgun's higher point of impact, it was easy to snap-shoot a pair of high incomers from the ready position as well as an overhead outgoer.

I'd have to assume that a custom-fitted stock coupled with the shotgun's mechanicals get you a highly competent Spanish clays gun.



At \$40,000, though, it always comes down to the buyer's value proposition. If you're in the market for an exclusive, prestige shotgun from Europe, the Arrieta & Arrizabalaga Sporter should be at the top of your list – especially if you're considering a Purdey Sporter where the historic calculus against an English Best can still feel like a Spanish bargain depending on your option choices. Purdey certainly has the upper hand in prestige, but if brand uniqueness is highly prized the Arrieta & Arrizabalaga Sporter earns a higher ranking than the English or Italians. As a practical matter, given the rigors of tournament shooting, most competitors would probably opt for podium

regulars such as Perazzi, Krieghoff, Blaser, Beretta or Kolar, which can also run up a \$40,000 price tag.

William Larkin Moore has been representing Arrieta & Arrizabalaga in the U.S. since 2000, and Dan considered himself “Arrieta’s man on the ground here. The U.S. market is the world market, so it’s important to them that they have someone in the U.S. that understands their guns and manufacturing technique.”

Dan said that following the new Sporter, we can expect to see more next-generation shotguns from Arrieta & Arrizabalaga here including the aforementioned pigeon gun, a self-opening side by side starting at around \$38,000 and a sidelock over/under. In the meantime, William Larkin Moore is importing some of the older inventory from Spain to help make room for the modernized, Italian-inspired company.

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Useful resources:

[The William Larkin Moore web site](#)

[The Arrieta & Arrizabalaga web site](#)



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