

# Arrieta sidelock over-and-under

This beautifully crafted 12-bore is the latest best-quality offering from the revived Spanish maker, and Michael Yardley is pleased to report that the gun shoots as well as it looks

THIS month's test gun, made in Eibar, is a best-quality sidelock over-and-under from the relaunched firm of Arrieta. It is a 12-bore and weighs just under 7lb 3oz, a good weight for a 29in stack-barrelled game gun. First impressions are dominated by the acanthus and gold-accented engraving by Spanish master Iñaki Azkue. Beautifully done, and quite bold, it is actually inspired by old Belgian patterns. Miguel de Oriol, who has overseen the creation of the gun as well as the rebirth of Arrieta, emphasises that this is intended as an exhibition piece. Customers may order whatever decoration they want.

Spanish makers, meantime, have always been able to offer guns at different price points and build qualities. Arrieta, originally founded in 1919, developed a reputation for good-quality, mid-priced guns. When Ricardo de Serdio, an entrepreneur and shooting enthusiast, took over in 2016, he backed a proposal brought to him by de Oriol, who shared a passion for guns and game shooting and had a not-inconsiderable talent for design himself. The plan for the Arrieta revival was to offer best guns only; 15 have been

completed so far, including a Perazzi-inspired droplock over-and-under, a sidelock side-by-side pigeon gun as well as the sidelock over-and-under on test.

This test specimen ticks many boxes. The form of the action body is well proportioned with elegant fencing, buttresses to the top of the action walls and beaded

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edges to its belly. There is a narrow top-lever but it is functionally efficient. A non-automatic safety is positioned conventionally on the top strap, the single trigger is inertia-operated and the trigger-guard, which is beaded to its right edge, is extended all the way to the grip cap.

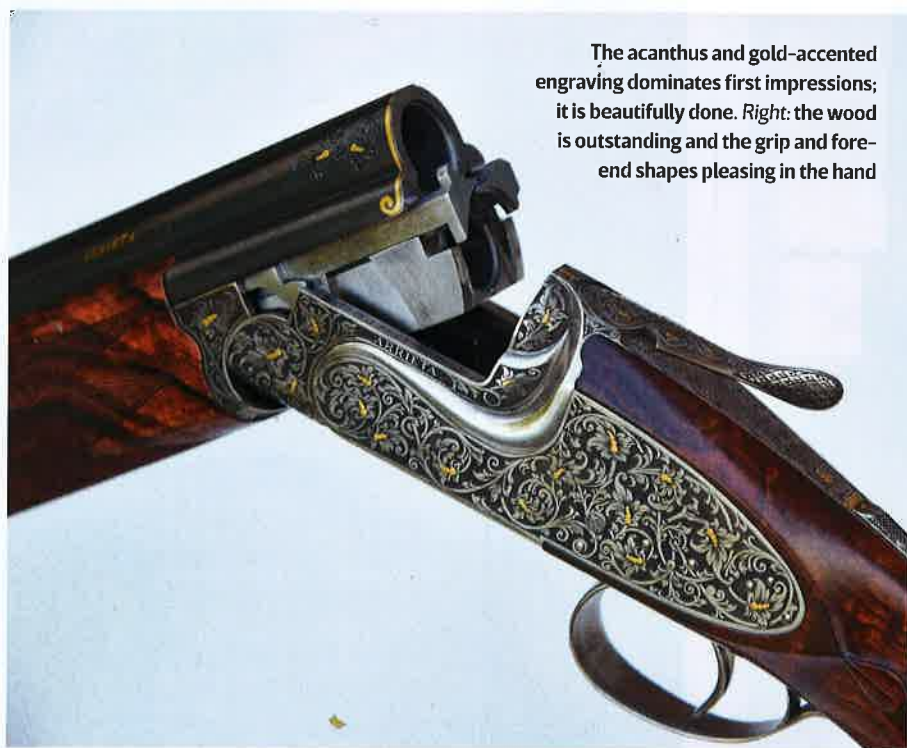
The 70mm-chambered, demi-lump barrels here are exceptionally presented

and enhanced by an excellent 8mm to 6mm solid rib. They are equipped with well-proven and versatile Briley interchangeable chokes and are fleur-de-lys proofed for steel. Frankly, barrel-making has been an issue with some Spanish manufacturers in the past. Arrieta, taking the concept of its new best gun seriously, decided to source its barrels in unfinished form from one of the world's most respected suppliers: Lamec, in Brescia. The finished results are hard to fault.

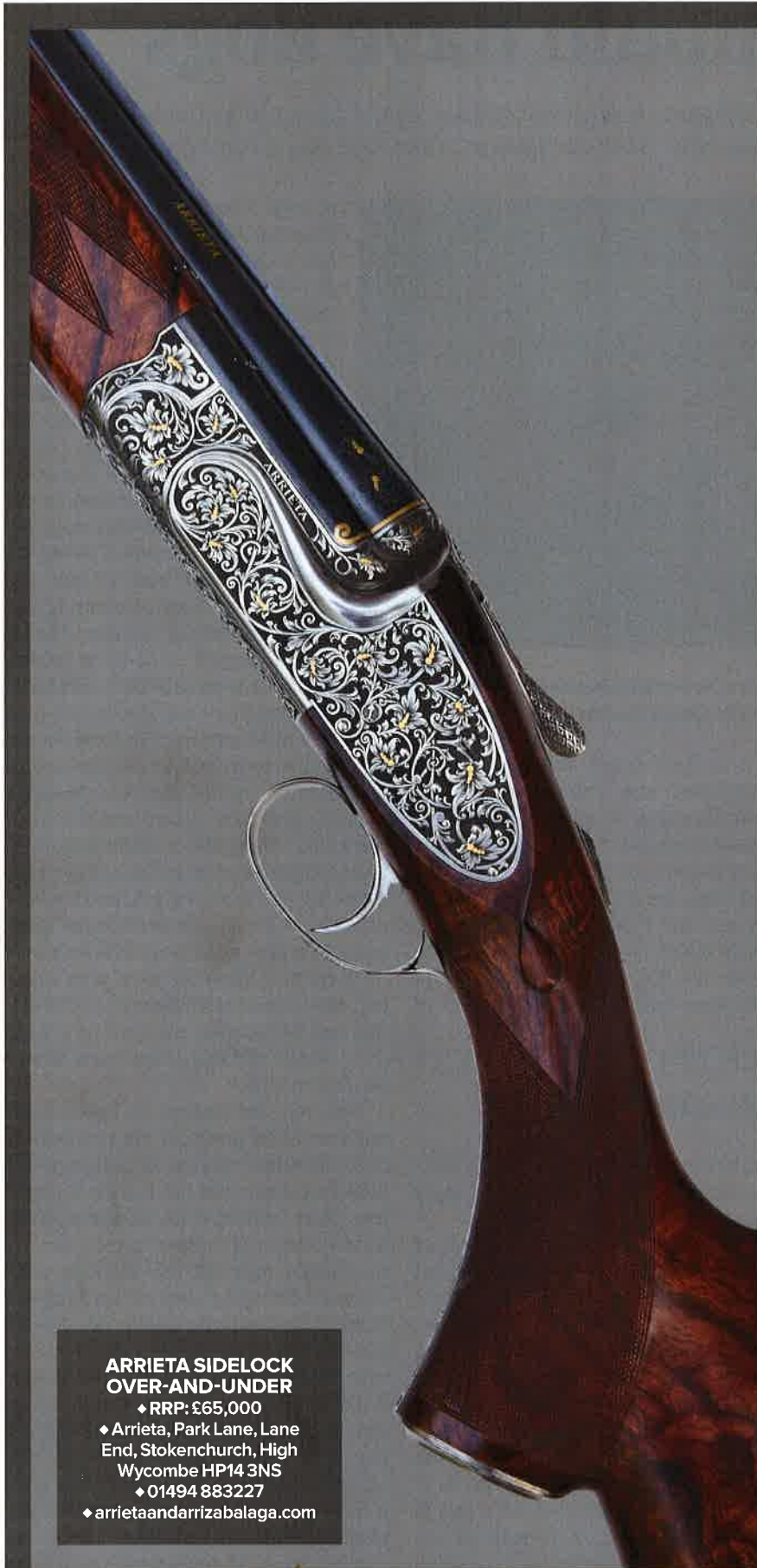
What of the woodwork? The stock as tested has standard 'shelf' dimensions: a length of pull of 14¾in with drop at 1½in and 2in. The exhibition-quality wood (Turkish walnut) is outstandingly figured, mainly straight through the grip with a pleasing swirling grain to the rear. The comb is classically shaped and not too full. There is a pistol grip of relatively open radius, and the quite fine hand-chequering and oil finish are impeccable.

I asked de Oriol, an architect by training, about the challenges faced when creating the new sidelock. “Our first goal was to make an absolutely reliable, solid gun that was not only beautiful but fit for purpose,” he told me. “We had the tradition of sidelock side-by-sides and high-volume game shooting but we wanted to build the equivalent of our top-of-the-range side-by-side sidelock in a low-profile over-and-under. This had not been done in Spain before, although droplock and Merkel-style guns had been made previously. A basic specification evolved and we developed prototypes with Antton Osoro, an engineer who works in the automotive and aviation fields as well as firearms.

“We had looked at all the modern guns: Purdey, Famars, Holland & Holland and Fabbri. The best features we synthesised while developing our own new ejector system. It was a team effort. We have mainly young gunmakers but a foreman who is 75. Everyone gave their own ideas as the project advanced. We have 47 guns in production now and two orders for trios of sidelocks. On a new order for a single gun with house engraving, delivery time will be about eight months.” ■



The acanthus and gold-accented engraving dominates first impressions; it is beautifully done. Right: the wood is outstanding and the grip and fore-end shapes pleasing in the hand



**ARRIETA SIDELOCK  
OVER-AND-UNDER**

- ◆ RRP: £65,000
- ◆ Arrieta, Park Lane, Lane  
End, Stokenchurch, High  
Wycombe HP14 3NS
- ◆ 01494 883227
- ◆ [arrietaandarrizabalaga.com](http://arrietaandarrizabalaga.com)

### TECHNICAL

The action of the test gun is a back-action, six pin, square-bar sidelock with cocking indicators. CNC-machined and hand-filed, the body is made from 18CrNiMo7-6 – a tough steel intended for case hardening. Lock-up is Boss-inspired, with draws and wedges in the middle and Perazzi-style lock-up to the rear with projections to either side of the bottom chamber meeting slots in the action face. Barrels arrive in Spain from Lamec unprofiled with an inner diameter of 17mm but not internally finished. Arrieta drills them out, laps them and strikes up the external profile. Forcing cones are 30mm with a final internal bore of 18.5. As they are demi-bloc rather than monobloc, they are made from just two pieces of steel (excluding the ribbing) silver soldered together. The ejector work is Perazzi-inspired but simplified. The Arrieta dispenses with the small discs in the Perazzi system ejectors that must be pushed in to remove the extractors.



### SHOOTING IMPRESSIONS

It is always a pleasure to shoot a new gun, especially when so much dedication and effort has gone into its design and production. Happily, the gun shot as well as it looked. At just over 7lb, the weight is close to ideal and the balance on the hinge-pin suited the 29in barrels.

The sidelocks allowed for crisp, precise, trigger-pulls and felt recoil was comfortable. Grip, fore-end and comb shapes all felt good too. The narrow rib presented an excellent picture and aided pointability. It is quite an achievement to get so much right, and a great deal of the credit must go to Miguel de Oriol and his eye for detail. The gun is undoubtedly of best quality and although it is not inexpensive at £65,000, it still represents good value when compared with other side-lock over-and-unders of comparable build.

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