

Vic Harker looks at the guns that give clay shooters the edge

GUN TEST

ON TEST
THIS MONTH:
Krieghoff K80
Sporter



Heavy hitter

Krieghoff's latest variation of the K80 Sporter incorporates a revised stock design

In spite of the great number of shotguns produced in Europe and the USA, only a small handful of makers are able to attract attention from that small band of elite shooters at the very top of competitive clay shooting. Krieghoff is one of these makers. Based at Ulm in West Germany, though originating in

the old gun-making city of Suhl in the East, it has a reputation for high standards of manufacture few other companies can rival. Rather like the German automotive industry, their guns attract a respect for their original design and the Teutonic thoroughness and attention-to-detail with which they are built.

I've been looking at the latest variation of the K80 Sporter – the Super Sport – which, while retaining all the mechanical features for which Krieghoff is famous, incorporates some new ideas when it comes to ergonomics.

The action

There is no doubt that part of the Krieghoff's appeal is that it's different from other guns, if not unique. This is especially the case when it comes to a reassuring level of build quality and robust, simple mechanisms which make the gun a delight to use. The sliding latch top fastening for example, possesses an aura of uncompromising strength. On closing the gun it moves forward, providing a hardened steel shroud over the standing breech, locking the barrels down into the action body. This design is shrouded in

mystery (pardon the pun). Certainly it was incorporated in this German gun's American ancestor but its origins are open to debate. The trigger mechanism is an original Krieghoff design and is a truly excellent one – no gun will pass muster with serious top clay target shooters unless it has a good trigger and the K80's is up there with the very best. Clay shooting in all its forms creates a special, very specific kind of pressure and tension, and shooters are therefore inherently particular about triggers and trigger pulls. That the Krieghoff meets their unqualified approval, both in the USA and increasingly here in the UK, says it all. A contributory factor in this is the high quality of materials employed and standards of manufacture. Sears and hammers are both made from a tempered steel that requires a diamond file to cut it. The component parts are then polished to a glass-like finish with a ceramic stone. The secret of a good trigger mechanism is in the geometry of the sear hammer engagement. In the case of the K80 the sears sit on a step instead of in a notch. When the trigger is pulled, the barrel selector, hard on the rear of the sear, is pushed upwards to disengage it and at the same time rotates to select the second barrel. It's hard to imagine any other system that is more direct, and therefore faster, in operation.

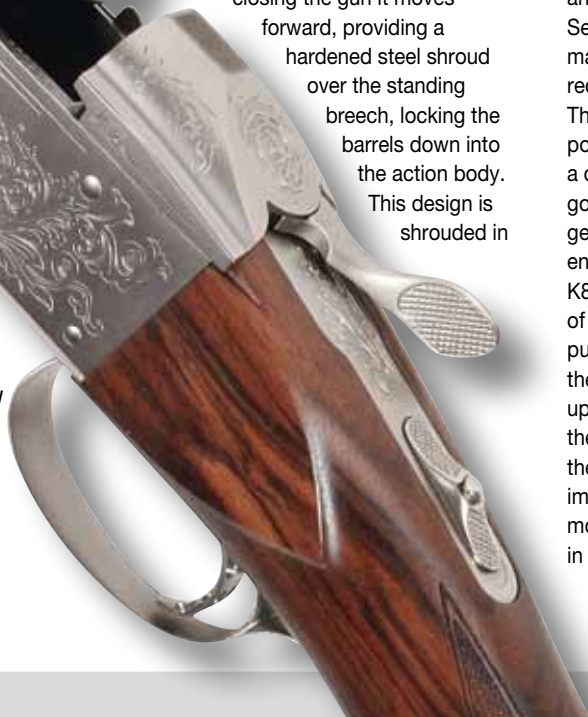


SPECIFICATION

Krieghoff K80 Sporter

- Maker: Krieghoff
- Model: K80 Super Sport
- Bore size: 12
- Barrels length: 30"
- Action: Coil spring
- Chamber: 76mm 3"
- Chokes: 5 extended detachable
- Rib: Adjustable for POI tapered 10mm-7mm
- Stock: Parcours style with adjustable comb
- Weight: 8lbs 14oz
- Price: £10,500 including VAT
- Distributor: Alan Rhone Ltd. Telephone: 01978 660001

The Krieghoff-designed trigger on the K80 Sporter is perfectly suited to clay target shooting



SHOOTING IMPRESSIONS

No matter how many different kinds of gun I shoot, I always come away with some kind of new insight or I remember an old one that's applicable to the gun I'm evaluating. In the case of the K80 Krieghoff I am reminded that a gun of full weight is all the better for a well fitted stock. To that I would add, though you may prefer the fast-handling qualities of a lighter gun, in certain circumstances something heavier can be more beneficial, certainly so far as competitive shooting is concerned. On targets at distance (which are nearly always of the kind you can win or lose the shoot on) the heavier gun comes into its own for two reasons: the extra momentum the gun generates can get you through a target at long range more positively and, at moments of tension when the leading hand starts to tighten on the forearm, it can be more forgiving of this and can essentially save you from yourself. Driving home from the North Oxfordshire Shooting School I pondered on this. For while I may have been in raptures last year over the superb handling qualities of the somewhat lighter K80 Parcours, when the chips are down in such a situation as I've just described, I wonder whether or not I would go for the heavier K80 Super Sport. I eventually decided that it would be a nice decision to have to make!



Barrels

The K80's free-floating barrel assembly is an iconic feature of all Krieghoffs. Its great benefit is that no matter how hot the barrels get they continue to maintain the same point of impact. Conventionally bored to 18.6mm and with a set of five detachable extended chokes, with Improved/Cylinder in the bottom barrel and 1/2 choke in the top, the Krieghoff delivered evenly distributed patterns to a POI of 60% / 40%. I particularly like the K80's low-ramped rib which seems to fall naturally under the eye. Its suitably matted 10 x 7 tapered top surface is very pointable without representing a distraction (would that all shotgun ribs were as good).

Stock

Last year Krieghoff introduced the K80 Parcours Sporter, a lighter-barrelled gun

with a stock configuration and dimensions that for me, and I know for many others, represented a benchmark for balance and fast handling characteristics. This is a gun I would happily use on any kind of Sporting targets and shoot pheasants with it as well. The Parcours stock has now been introduced on the purpose built and heavier K80 Sporter. Tipping the scales at 8lbs 14oz this

Krieghoff is no lightweight, but a heavy gun is more manageable when it fits you properly. With 50mm drop at heel combined with an adjustable comb for height and cast I achieved close to a perfect fit. The grip's open radius was comfortable and together with the adjustable trigger blade, it created a good hold essential for a gun of this weight. ■



The sears and hammers are made from tempered steel so hard it requires a diamond file to cut it

ON TEST NEXT MONTH:
Perazzi MX 12/3 Sporter