

SPECIFICATIONS

MODEL: X-TRAIL

GAUGE: .28-GAUGE TESTED (.12 AND .20 AVAILABLE)

BARRELS: 30" (32" AVAILABLE)

LOP: 14 1/2"

DAC: 1 1/2" (AS TESTED)

DAH: 2 1/4" (AS TESTED)

WEIGHT: 6LBS 9OZ

CHOKES: 5 FLUSH MOUNTED CHOKES (CYL, IC, M, IM, F)

SUGGESTED RETAIL: \$2349.00 USD

Bettinsoli X-Trail 28-Gauge

INITIAL IMPRESSION

The X-Trail comes furnished with an ABS breakdown case branded with the maker's name. Upon opening the case, a fully camouflaged over-under is neatly wrapped and fitted into the case with an accessories case, warranty card and manual. The accessories case contains the additional three choke tubes and a choke wrench. Even a traditionalist must admit that the Realtree Max-5 high performance finish is not only perfect for the duck blind and turkey woods, its thick and protective for those less comfortable days afield.

Bettinsoli is an Italian manufacturer located in the center of the world in terms of firearms makers. For more than five centuries, the valley town of Gardone Val Trompia, in Brescia has stood at the forefront of firearms manufacturing innovation and technology. Many Italian manufacturers call this picturesque mineral rich area at the foot of the Alps, home.

THE STOCK

The stock is walnut but completely coated with a durable finish in a Realtree Max-5 pattern. When putting the shotgun together, the forearm fit tight and securely to the barrel lug and wood to metal fit was excellent. All edges are rounded to prevent the potential for any snagging when mounting. There is a slight right-handed palm swell and standard pistol grip stock for excellent control. The factory butt pad is 3/4" thick with medium density and rounded at the top of the comb for quick mounting. Checkering is laser cut and offers more than adequate grip characteristics without being rough on the bare hand.





THE RECEIVER

The receiver on this model is fully covered with high-performance coating, apart from the gold trigger. The design on this model utilizes the time-tested and proven underlug locking mechanism made popular by John Moses Browning's superposed. Being a field gun this model comes with an automatic safety. While the barrel selector is installed in typical Italian fashion, atop the tang safety selector, Bettinsoli has integrated a simple yet brilliant feature to this selector switch.

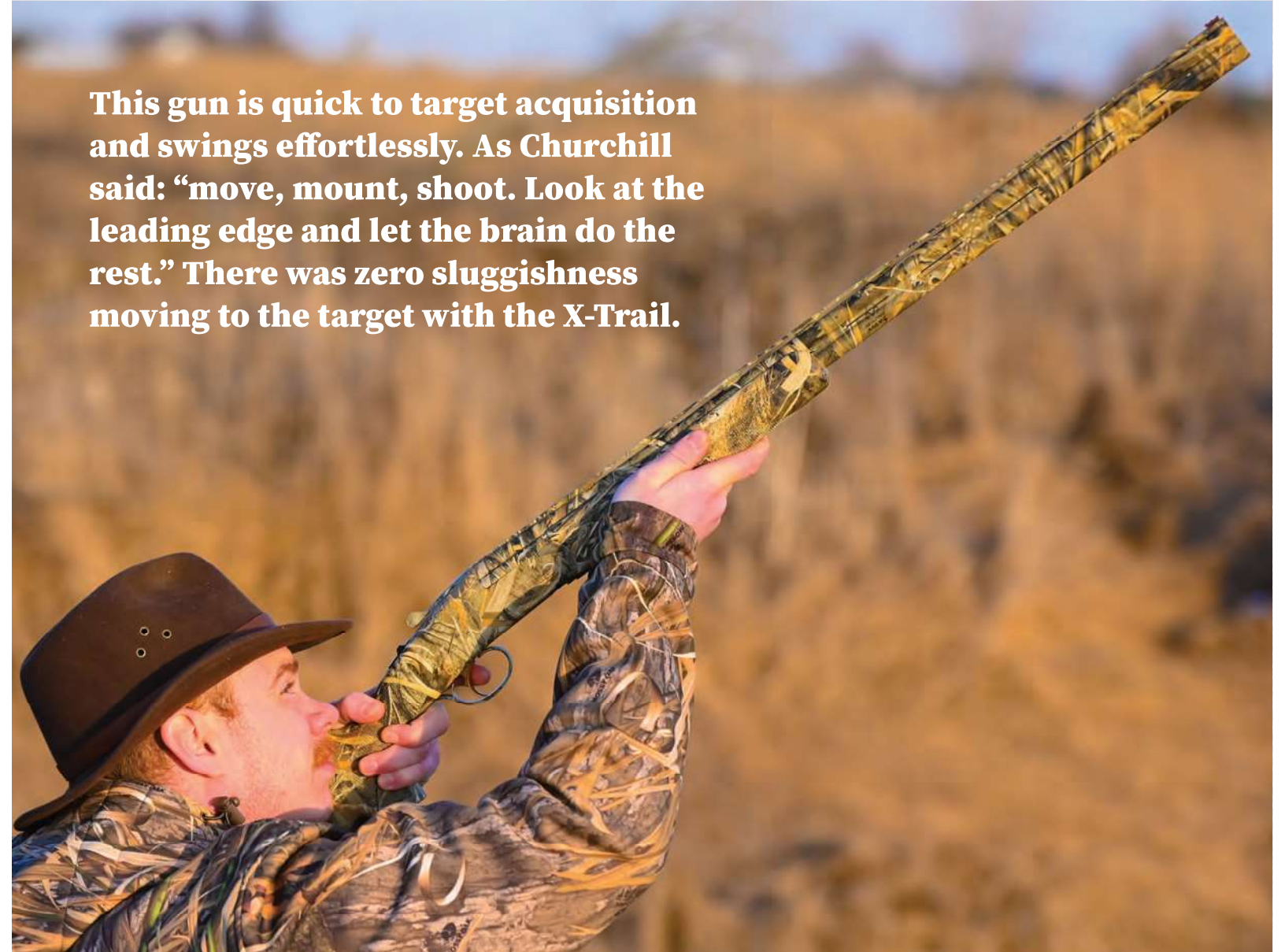
Occasionally, with the typical Italian design, the barrel selector can get bumped slightly out of battery, rendering the gun un-fireable until the switch position is corrected. Such a thing is impossible with the Bettinsoli X-Trail. The barrel selector can only be moved when the safety is on, meaning when it's set to fire, the selector is locked out.

The barrels articulate on replaceable trunnions, as opposed to a hinge pin, integrating two of the most durable design features ever conceived for building and over/under shotgun. This

model has a single selective mechanical trigger which has little creep and broke right at 5.5 pounds for the bottom and 5.75 pounds on the top. Lock-up is very solid and absolute, informing on the quality of the manufacturing process employed.

THE BARRELS – THE HEART OF A SHOTGUN

This model's 30" barrels (32" available) are finished with the same high-performance coating in a Realtree Max-5 camo pattern, eliminating glare and protecting the metal from all the potential damage that could be thrown at it in the nastiest of conditions. To keep up with the new innovations in ammunition, these barrels are chambered for three-inch shells, an offering that is gaining traction among serious 28-gauge aficionados. The vented mid-rib serves to dissipate heat while the flat 6mm vented top rib is fitted with a fiber-optic front pin and no mid-bead. The barrels are threaded utilizing a Mobile style choke. This shotgun comes with five flush mounted stainless-steel chokes in: cylinder,

A man wearing a brown hat and camouflage clothing is shown in profile, aiming a camouflaged shotgun upwards. The background is a blurred, natural outdoor setting.

This gun is quick to target acquisition and swings effortlessly. As Churchill said: “move, mount, shoot. Look at the leading edge and let the brain do the rest.” There was zero sluggishness moving to the target with the X-Trail.



improved cylinder, modified, improved modified and full constrictions.

Barrel regulation was excellent throwing uniform patterns. Barrel construction was of high quality with seamless solder joints and uniform contour albeit under camouflage coating. The 30-inch barrels, with the choke tubes installed, balanced about an inch in front of the trunnions.

SHOOTING THE X-TRAIL 28 GAUGE

New ammunition technology and loads have made this gun writer a believer in the capabilities of a sub-gauge field gun. For decades the general consensus seemed to be “bigger was better,” but the advent of new types of hyper-dense shot has disproven that old-school thought process. A few years ago, I hand loaded some TSS-18 into 2 ¾ inch 28-gauge shells for a testing session on the North Dakota prairie. This test was a pleasant eye-opener as to the true capability of a .28.

Even with the heaviest of field loads, the X-Trail performed flawlessly, and the six-and-a-half-pound gun had very little to no recoil. The weight of this model made it a joy to carry around the pheasant fields. The 30-inch barrels are an excellent choice for all-around field work offering that little extra sight plane. The option of 32-inch barrels would be great for any use, unless one was chasing grouse through the tag alders, then I'd opt for the 30-inch tubes. All controls on this model performed perfectly and the ejectors were well timed, removing spent shells with just the right amount of force.

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Although I advocate for removing a front bead once a gun is properly fitted, with a field gun that can serve a dual purpose, it is quite useful: functional and not obnoxiously distracting to the eye. When I say, “dual purpose,” I am referring to the fact that the X-Trail is perfectly suited for turkey duty, particularly in the 28-gauge with the right ammunition. Very low recoil and muzzle flip with even the stoutest of loads makes for a great “Tom-tamer,” quick follow-up shots and a gun that can be used by very young turkey hunters without fear of excessive recoil.

The Bettinsoli X-Trail camo is a solid performer with a legendary pedigree. I can't overstate the potential this model has as a proverbial multi-tool in the field, from mile-high geese to long beards at great distances, with the right ammo of course. 🙌

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