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# GUNDOG<sup>®</sup>

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THE BOISTEROUS & BIRDY

## American Water Spaniel

**TRAPPED**  
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Spotlight  
**KINETIC'S  
JOHN HOWARD**

Shotgun Report  
**SYREN WATERFOWLER**

NOTES FROM THE FIELD  
**WHITETAIL  
WOES**

### SPECIAL WATERFOWL SECTION

- A Lab's Last Season
- Tribute to a Friend
- Blinds to Baffle the Birds





# A Woman's World

Syren is making real shotguns for the fairer sex.

**WOMEN HAVE LONG** been stuck shooting a man's gun. But cut stocks and pink camo don't cut it at Syren.

A new division of Caesar Guerini and Fabarm, Syren auto-loaders and over/unders are designed for women with input from female shooters.

"Everyone at Syren, from our female management team to the ladies on our pro-staff, is committed to the best products possible so there will be no more compromises when it comes to our lady shooters and their needs," said Syren president Anne Mauro.

Designers at Syren utilize their knowledge of the female body to create well-fitting stocks. And there are now several guns in the lineup from field to sporting. The XLR5 Waterfowler, clad in Max-5, is built for the lady duck hunter.

Its action is a soft-shooting gas-operated semi-auto called the "Plus Piston." The Waterfowler comes with a 28-inch barrel, and it seems to have just the right heft and balance, and does not have a muzzle-heavy feel.

The mechanics and operation of the gas action will be familiar to most shotgunners, but the XLR5 has some subtle differences that make it stand out. Controls are in the familiar places, save for the bolt release, which is on the left side of the receiver, and the XLR5's action works a little differently than many other semi-autos.

As you would expect, powder gas is bled off through two ports in the bottom of the barrel. New is the operation of the gas piston itself. It is actually two parts, one of stainless steel, and the other made of a high-tech non-ferrous material. Upon firing, as the pressure increases and shot races down the barrel, the piston under the forend moves back, transferring energy onto the rest of the gas system parts.

The polymer part of the gas piston is shortened. This expands it slightly and forces it outward, which increases its internal diameter. As the part expands, it acts as a break on the gas piston and gas collar. The heavier the load, the more the expansion of the polymer part, and the recoil mechanism is slowed down, all in the blink of an eye. This allows the XLR5 to essentially adjust itself to the load without the user having to do anything—except shoot ducks and watch her dog retrieve them.

This action tends to draw the recoil out, making it subjectively lighter, which is significant in today's world of high-velocity steel and other non-toxic shot ammo that can pound any shooter, male or female, and ultimately affect their performance.

Similar attention to detail has been afforded the barrel. The XLR5 has what Syren calls the "Tribore HP" system. Basically, this makes the entire barrel one long forcing cone. First, the over-bored portion ahead of the chamber starts getting smaller, and the forcing cone itself is lengthened. Then a conical section about 8 inches long slowly reduces the 12-gauge bore diameter from about .736 at the rear to about .724 inch going forward toward the muzzle.

This is, of course, an application of the Venturi principle, i.e., reducing the diameter of a tube increases the velocity of a fluid (the shot) flowing through it. Fabarm says that this design produces better ballistics than a traditionally overbored barrel.

"There will be no more compromises when it comes to our lady shooters and their needs."



A set of five "INNER HP" choke tubes provides a constriction for just about any shooting scenario, and you can use steel shot with any of them. The XLR5 trigger is great for hunting, at 6 pounds, 2.5 ounces, and was reasonably crisp.

The XLR5's stock is pure "quacker gun." It's all decked out in Realtree's Max-5 pattern, and the dimensions are spot on for lady shooters. The buttstock has a raised but straight comb that extends almost to the toe of the stock. This too is by design, and allows a better fit for the lady shooter. It positions the cheek in line with the vent rib, and directs recoil straight back, rather than coming up

and smacking the shooter in the cheek.

The distance from the trigger to the grip is shortened somewhat, too. Because most women have smaller hands and longer necks than men, this change makes it easier to get the correct hand position for the trigger. Finally, the area where the shoulder and chest meet, called the "pocket," and the angle of the comb and stock have been subtly tweaked to better fit women shooters.

The dimensions of the XLR5's synthetic butt stock are specifically tailored for women shooters. The length of pull is exactly as listed, 13¾ inches. The Monte Carlo comb extends back 10½ inches from the breech so the stock tends to move straight back rather than coming up and smacking the shooter in the cheek.

The Waterfowler was so—dare I say it?—beguiling that I couldn't wait to shoot it. Although there were no waterfowl seasons open at the time, I did shoot a variety of ammo through

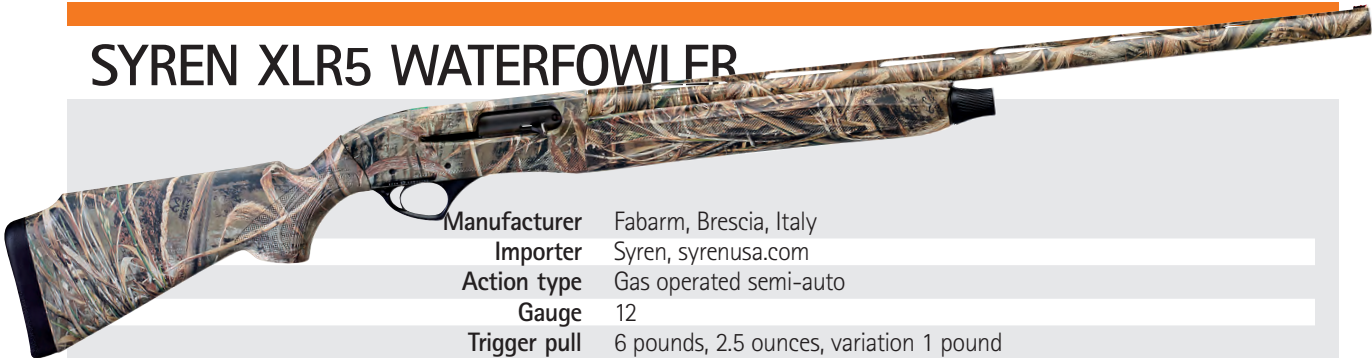


it, including some of the new killer turkey loads, and some heavy-duty goose loads, as well as some plain old 1-1/8 ounce trap loads. Every load I tried went "kaboom" with aplomb, and there were no malfunctions of any kind.

The recoil seemed (again, subjectively) more of a modest shove, rather than a sharp jab. I enlisted my wife, Rosielea, to give the XLR5 a whirl, and she took to it like a duck to, well, you know. Her only complaint involved the latches on the hard case. Be advised, ladies, that the outer latches are different from the inner two. To open the case, pull up on the bottom of the outer latches, but push in on the middle of the inner two; otherwise, you risk breaking a carefully manicured fingernail and saying lots of bad words.

All in all, the XLR5 got high marks for styling, functioning, and for innovative design. Finally, a company is making guns for women shooters that are actually designed by and built for women shooters. \*

## SYREN XLR5 WATERFOWLER



Manufacturer	Fabarm, Brescia, Italy
Importer	Syren, syrenusa.com
Action type	Gas operated semi-auto
Gauge	12
Trigger pull	6 pounds, 2.5 ounces, variation 1 pound
Barrel length	28 inches, ventilated rib
Sights	Red fiber-optic front, green fiber-optic insert at rear of receiver
Chamber	3 inches
Chokes	Cylinder, IC, Mod, Imp Mod, and Full
Overall length	47½ inches
Weight	7 pounds, 4 ounces
Safety	Manual, push-button behind trigger
Stock and forend	Synthetic, Realtree Max-5 Camouflage with Soft Touch finish
Length of pull	13¾ inches
Drop at comb	1½ inches
Drop at heel	2½ inches
MSRP	\$1,995

