

FINALLY!
A GUN FOR WOMEN

A PLAN TO SAVE
SEA DUCKS

SPECIAL FEATURE:
TOP CHOKES

BUILD YOUR OWN
MEGA-PIT

WILDFOWLMAG.COM

NOVEMBER 2015 | VOLUME 30 | NUMBER 7

WILDFOWL[®]



GREENHEAD GLORY!
The Call of Pothole Mallards

POTOMAC RIVER:
Hunting the
Presidents' Ducks

+ SPOTLIGHT: REALTREE
Building of an Empire

+ WINGMEAD'S
CONSERVATION
SUPER-LEGACY

SHOWTIME!

Peak-Season Tactics

CHASING
CANVASBACKS
ON ICE

KILL MORE
GEESE, PLEASE:
Exploit the Resident
Honker Epidemic

Feminine Firearm

Syren's XLR5: Built for the lady shooter in your blind. By John M. Taylor

THE FIRST TARGET looked like a wave-skimming scoter. After powdering the faux sea duck, she swung high to make the make-believe mallard dinner. How do you mix scoters with greenheads, you ask? Well, it was a hot, sultry August afternoon, and all we had were clay targets. *She* was shooting the Italian-made Syren XLR5 Waterfowler, a 12-gauge specifically made for female shooters.

Syren means seductive, and I believe there was an old tale of women singing their Syren Song to attract sailors to their shores only to have them shipwrecked on the rocky shoals. Sailors need not worry about this Syren,—ducks and geese should!

According to the National Shooting Sports

Foundation, the largest growing segment entering the shooting sports and hunting are women, so according to Syren president Wes Lang, “It’s high time someone built a shotgun for them.”

How true, because women need far more different stock dimensions than those that result from cutting

THE CLAY CRUSH

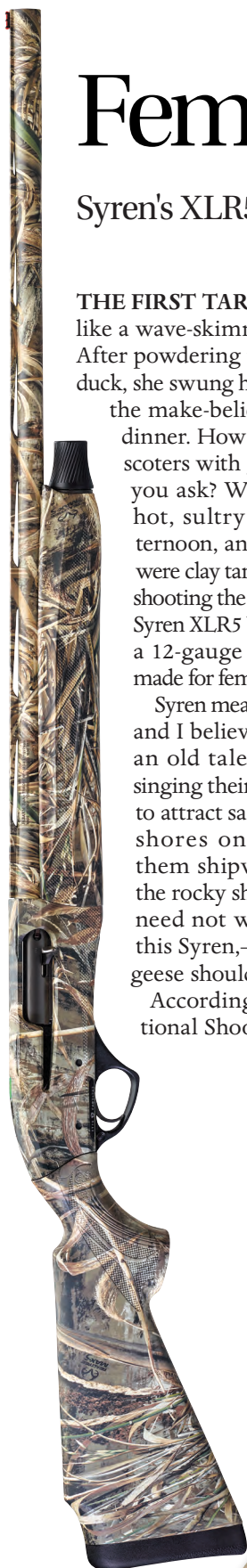
My wife, an experienced shot, was having severe back problems, so I asked Colonel Denise Loring, U.S. Army (Ret.) to give the XLR5 a good tryout on one of our local sporting clays courses. Denise is tall, slim and a top competitor with an AR-15. She’s not a shotgun shooter, but she danced

The largest growing segment of people entering the shooting sports and hunting **are women.**

down the stock of a gun made to fit a man or boy. Yes, a shorter stock is important, but most women require a much higher comb because their shoulders are lower relative to the area right under their cheek bone. They also require more pitch down and a tighter pistol grip to accommodate smaller hands. The XLR5 does all of these, with light recoil.

around the course hitting hard and easy targets with grace and authority.

“This is a nice shotgun,” she remarked. She also thought recoil was light and manageable. Granted, she was shooting $\frac{7}{8}$ -ounce Rios with a measured velocity of 1,361 fps. The XLR5 is a 3-inch gun that will digest everything from heavy 3-inch duck and goose magnums to light target





loads without a hitch. For safety reasons, Lang has all of his shotguns subjected to the highest proof levels at the Gardone Val Trompia Proof House; 1,630 BAR that translates to over 23,000 psi. Both action and barrels are proofed to this high pressure.

By the way guys, Fabarm (owner of Syren) makes an XLR5 for you, so don't feel left out.

The test gun weighed 7 pounds, 4 ounces, and because Loring is an experienced shooter, she had no problem shooting it well over the 100-target course, far more action than any duck hunting day in the U.S. The length of pull on the test gun was 13½ inches, and the comb of the Monte Carlo-style stock was

1¾ inches with the drop at heel 2¾ inches, providing that oh-so-necessary higher comb for proper shoulder and cheek relationship.

The XLR5 comes with five interchangeable choke tubes, although the test gun, which had been used as a demo, had only one in the hard plastic case, but it was just right at .015-inch of constriction, or light modified, perhaps the most popular choke constriction for sporting clays and waterfowl. It allows close shots, but stretches the barrel well for targets out to nearly 40 yards.

One of the reasons the XLR5 is so soft shooting is its Pulse-Piston gas operating system. Gas operation goes back to the pre-World War I Browning Automatic Rifle, the BAR, and the M1 Garand of World War II fame.

SOFT-KICKER

In the case of the XLR5, the gas port is 9½ inches from the mouth of the chamber. The bled gas impinges on a piston that fits in a cylinder beneath the barrel. Driven rearward, the piston pushes a set of action bars attached to a heavy inertia mass rearward against a sliding plate beneath the bolt. When this plate slips far enough to the rear, it enables the locking bolt that locks the bolt to the barrel extension to drop, freeing the bolt to join the action bars in its trip to the back of the receiver. If the magazine is empty, the bolt is locked in the open position.

If a fresh round is present, the carrier release lifts the new shell to the chamber and the shell is pushed forward as the bolt closes, ready for the next shot. This process takes but the blink of an eye, but in so doing spreads the



recoil so that the shooter experiences a shove not a whack. A high-tech soft recoil pad also dampens recoil.

The exterior of the XLR5 Waterfowler is clad in Realtree Max-5 with a Soft-Touch finish. The camo skin protects the exterior from rust and corrosion and the Soft-Touch finish affords a good solid grip regardless of the conditions. The trigger pulls are a bit heavy, averaging 8 pounds, 6 ounces (tested over five shots), but for a production semi-auto they are not objectionably hard. Loring is used to shooting a rifle with a tuned smooth 4½-pound trigger pull, but voiced no complaint with the Syren's trigger. In fact, the trigger on the test gun, had absolutely no preliminary take up; the trigger pull was smooth and broke clean, unusual in most auto-loaders.

Syren owners enjoy a five-year warranty on the XLR5 and Syren's headquarters is in Cambridge, Maryland, where I understand repairs have a very fast turn around. MSRP is \$1,995 for the right-handed XLR5, and \$2,170 for the left-handed version.

