

REVIEW:

# Syren Elos SPORTING

Fit specifically for women, the Elos Sporting is elegant without being in-your-face feminine. And it shoots great, too.

BY HOLLY A. HEYSER

Compare a women's jacket to a men's jacket and the differences are obvious: The women's jacket is smaller, comes in at the waist and leaves room for curves.

Compare a women's shotgun to a men's shotgun and the differences are much more subtle, but arguably more essential. Shotgun fit isn't about looking good — it's about shooting well.

Fabarm's newest women's shotgun — the 12-gauge over-and-under Syren Elos Sporting — nails womanly fit in ways that are sometimes difficult to see, but very easy to feel. And the only outward indication it is a woman's gun is Syren's signature spray of roses etched into the receiver and carved into the grip — a much-needed reprieve from the proliferation of pink products.

To review this gun, I put a case of Fiocchi Little Rino shells through it, shooting clays twice (once with two girlfriends, to get their impressions of the gun), and skeet once. I also took it to gunmaker and gun fit expert Dale Tate, based at the Camanche Hills Hunting Preserve in Ione, California, to get his impressions. One important caveat about my impressions of the gun: Like many women, I am cross-dominant, so I shoot left-handed, but the model I tested was a right-handed gun.

First, the overview: At an MSRP of \$2,595 (add \$230 for a left-handed stock, which I'll elaborate on later), the Elos Sporting packs incredible quality into an affordable price in the realm of over-and-unders. The gun is well-designed, the wood-to-metal fit is immaculate. The Turkish walnut stock is gorgeous —



every time I took it out of its case in front of someone, they'd say, "Ooooh, that's pretty!"

Out in the field, the gun performed consistently well through an entire case of shells. The only problems I encountered involved the stiffness of a new O/U, which is to be expected. I especially appreciated that the chokes, once tightened after shipping, remained tight through the entire testing period.

It's also important to note that the gun comes standard with a non-automatic safety, but you can get it with an automatic safety if you prefer that for field use.

On to the details that make this gun special: fit and recoil.

The first time I shouldered this gun, I was surprised how perfectly it came up to my face, even though I was mounting a right-handed gun to my left shoulder. For me, the Churchill mount never



▲ A Monte Carlo stock makes a difference in fit, as women tend to have proportionately longer necks and higher cheekbones than men.

comes off as smoothly as I'd like, with my gangly giraffe neck. But the Elos features a Monte Carlo stock as its most obvious female-friendly trait, a nod to women's tendency to have longer necks and higher cheekbones than men. It makes a huge difference, and my girlfriends who tried out the gun — one lefty, one righty — noticed it as well.

It also features a smaller grip and a shorter length of pull: 13.75 inches, compared with 14.5 inches on Fabarm's traditional (read: men's) Elos B and Elos Deluxe models. The length of pull can be modified by moving the adjustable trigger, or by conventional gunfitting methods of shortening the stock or changing the recoil pad.

I don't think much about the grip of my primary men's shotgun, but after shooting the Syren Elos, I am acutely aware now that it is much too big for my hands. (Thanks, Syren — you had to go and spoil it for me.)

Though shooting a right-handed O/U was jarring to my left cheek, I was surprised at how otherwise

comfortably the Elos shot. During my first round of testing at the Quail Point Hunt Club in Zamora, California, I'd resolved to shoot 100 shells, but I was having so much fun with the gun that I shot another box and walked away with minimal recoil soreness. The last 12-gauge O/U I'd shot left me deeply sore for days after putting far fewer rounds through it.

One design element that should make this gun more comfortable than men's guns is the fact that the toe kicks out a quarter inch more than the heel — a feature designed to minimize the tendency of a stock to dig painfully into a woman's breast. But I was shooting a right-handed gun, which meant the toe was digging into me more, not less. So what else was making it more comfortable?

The most obvious facet was weight: The Syren Elos weighs a hefty, recoil-absorbing 7 pounds 14 ounces, far more than Fabarm's "men's" Elos models, which weigh 6 pounds 9 ounces (they are strictly for hunting). Some women might not like a gun

that weighs nearly 8 pounds, but I'll gladly do a few more curls to put up with less recoil.

Another less visible design feature gun-fit expert Tate noticed is the gun's extended forcing cone, which reduces

► The smaller palm swell is designed to fit smaller hands.



your hand welds to the grip. It feels good.

The palm swell is a wonderful feature, and it's an important one to note, if for no other reason than this: If you prefer to buy right-handed guns and have them altered to your specifications, this is one feature that can't readily be altered. For that reason, I strongly recommend left-handed shooters pay extra for the left-handed stock, even if they know they'll need to have a gun fitter further alter drop and cast. If you shoot with the palm swell on the wrong side, it's actually harder for

and the left-handed stock in particular, which costs some economy of scale. That's unfortunate, because in my experience, cross dominance is so common among women that easily half the women I've shot with shoot left-handed.

The gun itself is priced closer to the Elos B (\$2,470) than the Elos Deluxe (\$2,995), though an apples-to-apples comparison is difficult because the Syren Elos isn't just a women's version of the other Elos models, which are strictly for hunting, not hunting and target.

All that said, if I were in



► The Elos's trigger can be adjusted to modify the gun's length of pull.

your fingers to wrap around the grip.

Now, a note about price and gender: All too often, women pay more than men for comparable products. Is that the case with the Elos?

In the case of the stock, it is. The Syren Elos left-handed stock costs 87 percent more than left-handed stocks for the "men's" Elos Deluxe and Elos B — \$230, compared with \$123. The folks at Fabarm attribute this primarily to manufacturing realities: They have to retool their equipment to produce the Syren, and there is a much more limited run on the Syren Elos in general,

## FIOCCHI LITTLE RINO REVIEW

The shotshell: 2¾-inch, 1 ounce of 7½ shot, 1,250 fps

If normal recoil is like someone in a doorway yelling at you, shooting Fiocchi's Little Rino is like shutting the door on that person. You can still hear the yelling, but it is noticeably dampened. And when you're shooting a 12-gauge O/U, that makes for a much more pleasant experience on the clays course.

Fiocchi came out with the 1-ounce target loads in this line back in 1993 when then-president E. Robert Oxsen realized that target shooters were subjecting themselves to more recoil than necessary shooting 1 1/8-ounce loads. Little Rino uses high antimony shot, which is perfectly round and results in better patterns. And the rest of what makes this ammunition so comfortable to shoot is proprietary, so that's all I can tell you.



When I started shooting the Syren Elos at the Quail Point Hunt Club in Zamora, California, I began with Little Rino. I brought along a box of a competitor's shells that met the same specifications, except for slightly faster velocity (1,290 fps), with the intention of popping a shell in from time to time to see if I would notice a difference.

It was so noticeable the first time that I put away the box of other shells, and went through five boxes of Little Rino before finally stopping for the day. I swapped ammo several times the next two outings just to make sure I wasn't imagining things, but each time, the competitor's ammo had noticeably more punch, with no change in performance.

If you love shooting clays with your over-and-under but hate recoil, give this a try and see if it doesn't muffle that yelling a bit so you can focus on shattering clays.

## SYREN ELOS SPORTING

**Price:** \$2,595 (plus \$230 for left-hand stock option)

**Gauge:** 12

**Barrel Length:** 30 inches

**Avg. Weight:** 7 pounds 14 ounces (can vary with wood density — mine was 7 pounds 8 ounces)

**Receiver finish:** Blued

**Stock:** Turkish Walnut with TRIWOOD™ finish

**Recoil Pad:** Soft black rubber

**Chamber:** 3 inches

**Top Rib:** 10mm ventilated

**Center Rib:** Ventilated

**Forcing Cones:** Standard

**Average Bore:** TRIBORE HPTM

**Chokes:** 5 EXIS HPTM Competition Choke Tubes

**Sight(s):** White Bradley style front, Brass center bead

**Forend:** Rounded

**Trigger:** Adjustable for length of pull

**Safety:** Manual (automatic as an option)

**Accessories:** Stock and trigger wrench, choke case, choke wrench

**Case:** White plastic hard case with cloth gun sleeves

**Proof test:** 1630 BAR

**Warranty:** 5 years

## STOCK DIMENSIONS

**Drop at comb:** 1.375 inches

**Drop at Monte Carlo:** 1.6 inches

**Drop at heel:** 2.25 inches

**Comb to grip:** 4.75 inches

**Length of pull:** 13.75 inches

**Cast at heel:** 0.125 inches

**Cast at toe:** 0.375 inches

**Pitch:** 7 degrees

**Breech to comb:** 6.75 inches

**Reach** (measured from center of trigger adjustment): 3.5 inches

the market for an O/U, I would very strongly consider this gun because it just felt so good. Yes, I can have a men's gun altered somewhat, but the idea of starting with a gun whose every dimension is made for me is deeply appealing. After putting the Syren Elos to the test, I actually feel a little spoiled, and I'm afraid I'm going to judge traditional "men's" guns a little more harshly now. **CTN**