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AUGUST 2018

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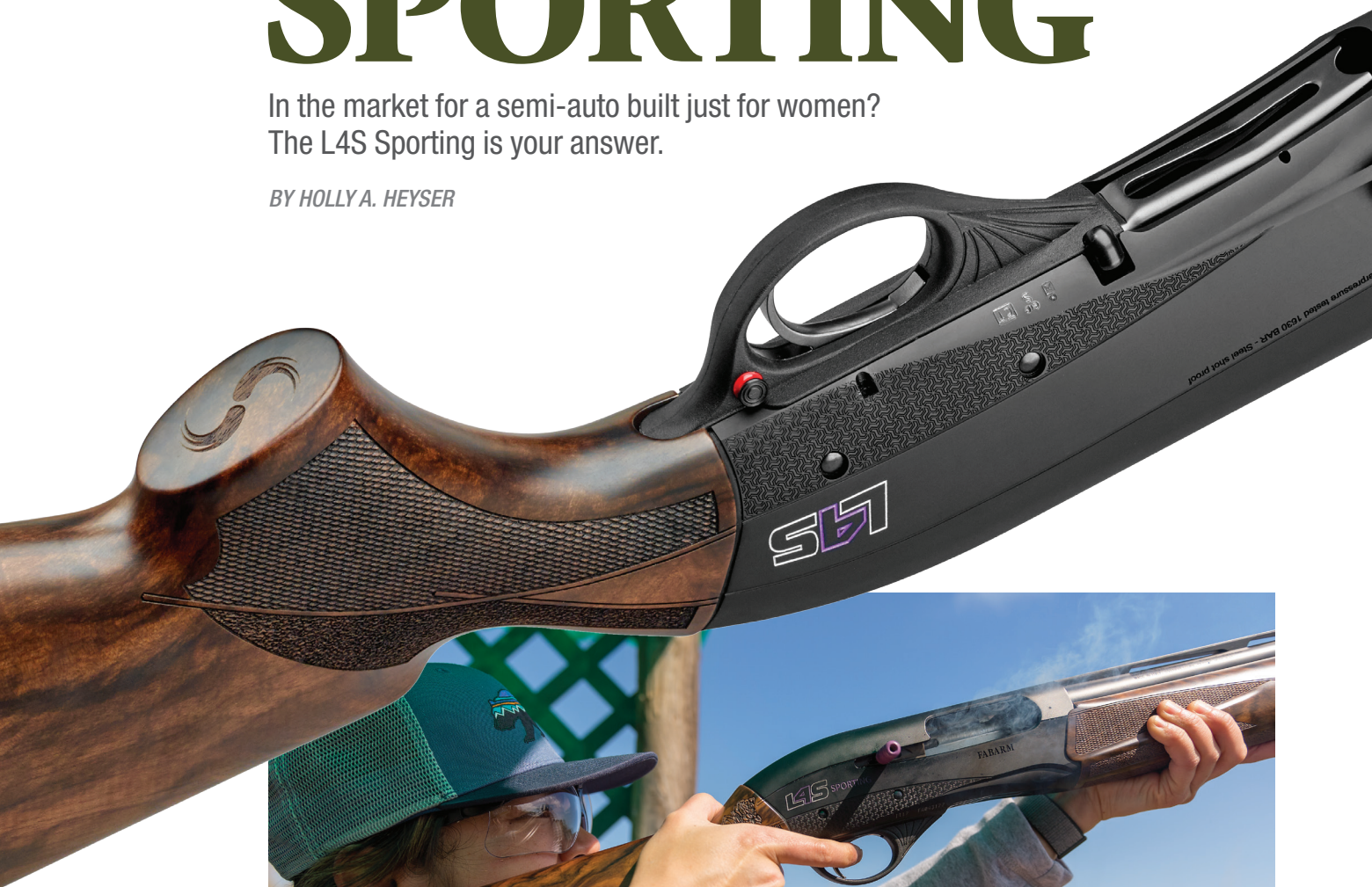
- ▶ KOLAR MID-AMERICA
- ▶ JESS BRILEY BLUE GOOSE
- ▶ PAN AMERICAN SKEET
- ▶ GREAT WESTERN OPEN

REVIEW:

Syren L4S SPORTING

In the market for a semi-auto built just for women?
The L4S Sporting is your answer.

BY HOLLY A. HEYSER





▼ The stock on the Syren L4S features a shorter length of pull than men's guns, a higher comb, and a steeper pitch.

I think I've gotten over the shock of having a gun manufacturer that builds a shotgun specifically for women. But I still have to pinch myself just a bit to accept that we actually get more than one choice.

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 introduced a new sporting gun to its Syren lineup this year: the semi-automatic L4S, which takes place alongside Fabarm's other women's semi-auto sporting-clays gun: the XLR5 Sporting.

The 12-gauge L4S is designed to handle like a double, but with the obvious benefits of a semi-auto. The S stands for "slender," which applies to the forend and the gun's weight, 10 ounces lighter than the XLR5. It could also apply to the price: \$1,895 for right-handed and \$2,080 for lefties, \$205 less than the XLR5.

The stock dimensions are the same as the XLR5's, which is to say designed for the average woman: shorter length of pull than men's guns, a higher comb to meet cheekbones that tend to be higher on women than men, steeper pitch to



keep recoil from jabbing that toe into our breasts.

But there are key cosmetic differences. The rose pattern carved into the grip and etched into the receiver of the XLR5 have been replaced with the Syren logo “S wings” carved into the base of the grip and discreet purple accents: the forend cap, the cocking handle and the carrier latch button.

I liked the roses better. But in this case, Syren is mirroring the red accents on the men’s Fabarm L4S, and the purple is straight out of the Syren logo, so it makes sense. And really, those accents are all about warning men not to pick up your gun — more on that point later.

To test this gun, I put 100 rounds through it at the Camanche Hills Hunting Preserve & Sporting Clays in Ione, California, and 300 rounds at the Rancho Cordova, California-based Cordova Shoot- ing Center,

WHAT STOOD OUT

Overall: It was my final skeet shoot where I really got my groove with this gun. The 30-inch barrel appeared to keep swinging all by itself after every shot. It made me feel like a ballerina, when in fact I am awkward, gangly and utterly lacking in grace and natural hand-eye coordination. Even the rookie shooters who were with me that day noticed my spectacular follow-through. I felt like a princess. A gun-toting princess.

It was literally the best skeet I’ve ever shot, and I pre-mounted only for Doubles, which I do at every station. The gun came up easily, which is fascinating because I’m taller than the average-height woman this gun is made for. It made me really sad that I had to give the

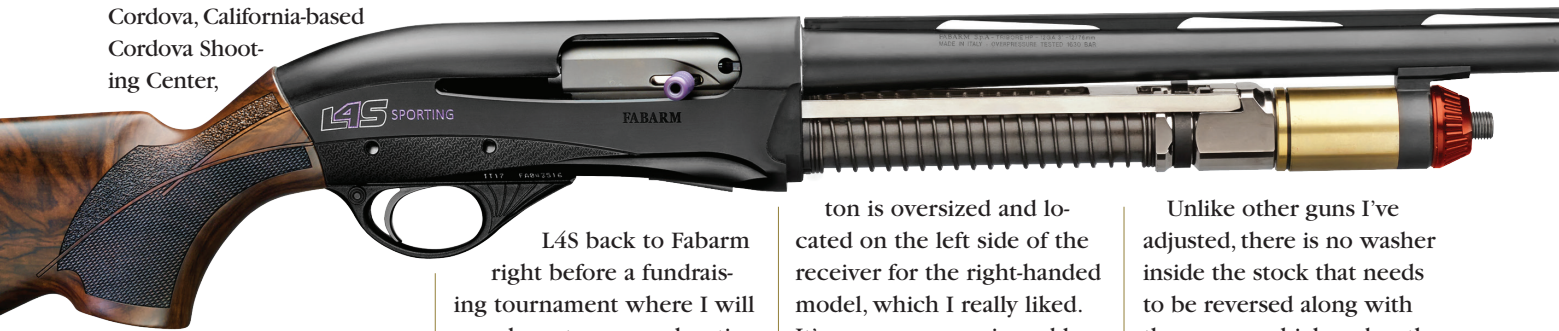
design — which looks nice.

Personally, I would not be averse to shooting an ugly shotgun — I am all about function. That said, I enjoy having a gun that’s nice to look at, and who doesn’t enjoy people oohing and ah-ing over her firearm?

Carrier latch button: The but-

I’m cross-dominant, so I’ve become pretty fearless about adjusting drop and cast myself. It is ridiculously easy on this gun: You remove the butt pad, unscrew the retaining nut, pull off the stock, reverse the spacer between the stock and receiver, then put it all back together.

▼ The author reports that the barrel “appeared to keep swinging all by itself after every shot.”



▲ Delicate purple accents mark the gun as feminine without screaming “GIRL GUN!”

which will have closed before this magazine rolls off the press.

I also patterned the L4S at 20 and 30 yards with the included improved cylinder and modified five EXIS HP™ Competition Choke Tubes, using Winchester Super Target and Rio’s new Vintage 1896 paper-hulled shells.

L4S back to Fabarm right before a fundraising tournament where I will now have to use my hunting shotgun.

Function: The gun loads easily, ejects shells perfectly and never malfunctioned during testing.

Appearance: Syren never fails to produce a beautiful shotgun. The Turkish walnut stock is gorgeous, the receiver has graceful lines and there are two types of etching in the forend and grip — traditional diamond/cross-hatch pattern and a granular

ton is oversized and located on the left side of the receiver for the right-handed model, which I really liked. It’s more ergonomic and less awkward than a right-side button because it places your hand in a natural cupping position without getting your thumb in the way of the cocking handle.

Chokes: The improved cylinder and modified chokes patterned cleanly and consistently with both types of shells that I used. They never came loose during shooting.

Adjusting drop and cast: I shoot left-handed because

Unlike other guns I’ve adjusted, there is no washer inside the stock that needs to be reversed along with the spacer, which makes the process very simple. There’s also not a lot of space for the nut to get lost in, so you can pretty much drop it into the stock and not fumble and curse for five minutes trying to line it up with the bolt.

One note: If you shoot lefty, you might be tempted to buy the right-handed gun, save \$185, then adjust the cast for left-handed shooting. If you do that, you will lose the benefit of having the

palm swell where you need it in the grip, rather than on the opposite side of the gun. **Cost:** This is not a cheap gun, but it's Syren's most affordable sporting gun at \$1,895 for right-handed, \$2,080 for lefty. I looked up the price on the men's Fabarm L4S,

SPECIFICATIONS

Price: \$1,895 for right-handed, \$2,080 for left-handed

Gauge: 12

Operation: Stainless steel piston, gas-operated

Barrel: TRIBORE HP™

Barrel length options: 28 inches, 30 inches

Chamber: 2 3/4 inches

Chokes: Five EXIS HP™ Competition Choke Tubes

Action finish: black anodized

Stock: Turkish walnut

Wood finish: Triwood™

Length of pull: 13.75 inches (1 inch shorter than the men's Fabarm L4S)

Weight: 6 pounds 12 ounces (for gun with 28-inch barrel)

Proof test: 1630 BAR

Case: Hard case with fit interior

Warranty: Five years

Drop at comb: 1.5 inches

Drop at heel: 2.25 inches

Cast at heel: 0.125 inches

Cast at toe: 0.125 inches

Pitch: 7 degrees

Breech to comb: 10.5 inches

Reach: 4 inches measured from the center of trigger adjustment

and I was pleasantly surprised to see it's the same. Women are used to paying more for things made for us — even deodorant! — so I appreciated the gender parity on this pricing.

It would be nice if left- and right-handed models cost the same, though. Given the prevalence of cross-dominance in women, there are an awful lot of women who shoot left-handed — close to half in my experience working with new shooters who are taught to shoot their dominant eye, not forced to adapt to a right-handed world.

Cleaning: It's a gas gun, so it's dirty — fact of life. The only thing I found difficult was removing the cocking handle, which is a constant problem in semi-autos for me. In the L4S, you're supposed to be able to pry the handle out with the ring of an empty shot shell, which didn't work for me. Part of it might be that I have arthritis in my hands. Part of it might be that the gun manufacturers haven't figured out a handle that removes easily for everyone. This is important: When a part is hard to remove, you're going to clean it less often.

The manual: I believe in reading instructions, so I really appreciate a good manual. In general, I found the L4S manual lucid, and at five pages, brief — perfect for an attention-deficient society that can barely bring itself to glance at word-free quick-start guides.

There was one exception: When I went to adjust drop and cast, I discovered

the manual did not indicate what size nut is used on the stock bolt.

On other Italian guns I've adjusted, it's been 13mm. On the Syren, my 13mm socket did not work. So, I hit the local big-box hardware store for a set that would cover my bases.

None of them worked, because — inexplicably — the set did not include a 16mm socket, which turned out to be the size I needed. Obviously, it was not my day.

Fortunately, this is my only quibble with the instructions.



"Now you know how it feels, pal," I mumbled. He needed the pink. We sure don't.

The first day I shot the L4S, I invited my friend Vy to come along and give it a try. She asked if her husband Jakob could come along, and I said of course. He surprised

me when he asked if he could shoot the L4S a few times, and his response was so deeply gratifying that I wrote it down: "Shooting this gun

▲ The Syren L4S Sporting comes with five Exis HP competition choke tubes.

FINALLY, ABOUT KEEPING MEN AWAY FROM YOUR GUN

I only recently discovered the main value of pink or any other "feminine" color in shooting and hunting gear. It happened when I watched a man try on a women's camo lifestyle jacket that lacked pink to warn him away. I wasn't close enough to let him know, but I was close enough to see the perplexed expression on his face because nothing felt right.

I snickered ungenerously.

makes me realize how awful it must be to shoot a gun that's not matched to your size," he said. "It's awkward. It's humbling. It's freakish."

Most women adapt to shooting guns that weren't made for them, and when they pick up a Syren, they experience that "where have you been all my life?" feeling — the exact opposite of what Jakob had felt.

So huge kudos to Syren on its 12th shotgun made for women. The fact that Fabarm builds shotguns for us is a wonderful thing. The fact that the L4S is a really nice gun makes it even better. **CTN**