



## Syren Julia

BY ROBERT MATTHEWS

**I** was just a youngster when I first noticed that men and women were different. Long before I encountered puberty, I noticed that women thought differently than men. And acted differently, too. My daddy was a stern disciplinarian, but somehow, he seemed to “get me” much better than Mom. When puberty became a “thing” rather than just a word that I didn’t understand, I began to notice that females were built differently, too.

**SUBJECTIVELY**, I’d have to say that it appears that a few firearms execs must be reaching puberty too, ’cause they’ve clearly been noticing the same thing. The really smart ones are acting on what they see. It has been evident for some while that there are a growing number of women involved in the shooting sports. Not only that, but recent studies show that they comprise the fastest growing segment of the shooting sports.

The folks from Caesar Guerini have been on top of this development for a long time. Years before the Syren brand grew out of Guerini, they were

talking about the phenomenon and what to do about it. The whole Syren brand grew out of those talks, and it has, over time, grown to include several field and competition over/under models as well as a couple of repeaters designed exclusively for women.

The bitter truth is that women are at a distinct disadvantage when it comes to shooting, because almost all factory shotguns are built to fit the mythical “average man.” Proper stock fit is absolutely critical to good shooting, yet most women have to struggle along with guns that don’t fit them at all! It’s true that we

would all shoot better if we had a custom-built gun that was made to fit, but since that’s not economically feasible, most of them are built to fit the “average” male.

The problem is that a gun that fits the average man usually doesn’t fit many women. I’d never claim to have met an “average” woman, but generally speaking, women are smaller than men and not as strong. They tend to have shorter arms, smaller hands, longer necks and higher cheekbones. Most of them, I’ve noticed, are built “differently” in the area of their chests, as well. All of these things affect the way a gun fits and handles.

The newest model from the Syren brand is called the “Julia” and it’s probably the best of the bunch. It is to my eye, at least, the most fetching of all. The Julia is a side-plated boxlock that exhibits the deep, lustrous color case-hardening for which the Guerini family of guns is justly famous, and has a unique gold-tone engraving pattern on the sideplates. It’s loosely based on Guerini’s well



respected line of boxlock over/unders and inherits its legendary reputation for reliability. Like all of the Guerini/Syren family of guns, the execution of the design is simply immaculate. Fit and finish of the elements is consistently excellent. The checkering is flawless. The female-friendly stock is of nicely figured Turkish walnut.

**THE JULIA SAMPLE GUN** is a field model with a fixed, nicely sculpted Monte Carlo style comb and a slim Schnabel forend. The competition version comes with an

adjustable comb. It's a 20 gauge with a single selective trigger and 28-inch barrels with a full complement of choke tubes. This particular gun weighed about 6 3/4 pounds, give or take a smidgen. In short, it's a quality gun, lovely and well-made from the get-go. That much was easy for me.

The point where the Julia and the other Syren guns are truly remarkable is in the attention to details that are uniquely feminine. Truthfully, I don't really have a pronounced "feminine side," and that puts me at a distinct

disadvantage when trying to evaluate a gun designed for females. Well, I studied the problem for a while and decided to head to the local gun range one Saturday see what kind of reaction the gun got from some bona-fide, real females.

Fortunately, there were a bunch of them there. They were all eager to handle the Julia. And I learned a lot. Every single woman who shot the gun absolutely *loved* it as a whole, and the stock in particular! The slightly raised Monte Carlo comb fit their higher cheekbones much better, and the sub-14-inch length-of-pull made

it much easier to come to grips with the gun. The slender, Prince-of-Wales grip and adjustable trigger made it easy for them to grip the gun and get comfortable with the trigger. Not all of them noticed the cast-off and toe-out, but nonetheless remarked how comfortable the gun was to shoot. And every single one of them said that they could shoot the gun better than their own gun! Let me repeat that. Not one. Not some. *All* of them liked the Julia better than their own gun!

**BEFORE I LEFT**, more than one woman tried to buy the gun from me, and one experienced old gal left and came back with her husband to try and negotiate a price. Another of the subjects was a petite, 20-ish-year-old blond woman who was shooting her very first round of sporting clays and struggling to hit her first bird with her



boyfriend's gun. When I handed her the Julia, she immediately grinned and exclaimed, "I like this!" Then she went on to break more than half the clays that she shot at. Remember, this was the very first time she had ever tried to shoot a moving target with a shotgun. I thought that I was gonna hafta "rassle" her to get it back!

The most amazing thing about my little experiment was the unanimous, collective response to the gun. Every single woman who shot the gun gave it back to me with reluctance and sighed wistfully, "I want one!"

From a grizzled old guy's point of view, it was easy to see that the Julia is a beautiful, well made, slender slip of a gun that exhibits considerable grace and undeniable functionality. The women, however, pronounced the final verdict far better than I ever could! ■



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