

BOXALL & EDMISTON 12-BORE

Mike Yardley is excited to find a new English side-by-side sideplated boxlock costing £16,000 and made by a veritable *Who's Who* of top-flight craftsmen

IT is always a great pleasure to use and write about a new English gun, all the more so when two respected figures of the gun trade are behind it. Boxall & Edmiston – a partnership of engineer Peter Boxall, late of Jaguar, W&C Scott and Holland & Holland, and James Edmiston, who once owned Sterling Armament – was formed last year and the firm has already brought its first guns to the market. This, in itself, is quite an achievement. The project is all the more interesting because the Boxall & Edmiston is made with the aid of the latest technology by a company which has begun with a philosophy of

preserving and encouraging traditional skills wherever possible.

This apparent contradiction is explained when you explore the new gun. It is a 12-bore, 28in, 6lb 13oz game-gun with sideplates and quite profuse engraving. It is based on an Anson and Deeley action (albeit one with some interesting new features) and has been made with machinery combined with the named work of some of the country's most respected artisans.

First impressions are good. I liked the basic form of the gun and the obvious integrity of its manufacture. It may be predominantly machine made, and the engraving may be applied by a

new laser process (which allows for custom embellishment), but there is a lot of handwork evident – far more than the norm. Stock and barrel shapes and balance also impressed.

All parts of the Boxall & Edmiston are made and the engraving executed in-house. However, the gun is actioned and stocked and the barrels put together outside. Finishing is also outsourced. This gun was actioned by John Craven who has worked for William & Son and Holland & Holland. The stocking is by Stephane Dupille who has done beautiful work for Atkin Grant & Lang among others. The gun's barrels – monobloc but with TIG-welded joints – are by Phil Turner of Bozard, an ex-Holland and Purdey man. Finishing is the work of Tony White and the engraving design is by Andy Miles.

This is a *Who's Who* of top-flight craftsmen. Yet the gun sells for a comparatively reasonable £16,000 plus VAT. The scalloped boxlock costs only £10,000 plus VAT. A sidelock is in the works at a charge of around £25,000 – highly competitive price points. Using so many premier league specialists is not an especially economical way to build a gun but it is an admirable one. ■

Clockwise from below: the safety catch; gun in the making; the top engraved lever and trigger guard; and the monobloc barrels



Mike Yardley is former British side-by-side champion, one of The Field's Top Shots, and author of the BASC Guide to Shooting Game



“ This gun showed how hi-tech and artisan work can be combined ”

**BOXALL &
EDMISTON
SIDE-BY-SIDE**

Price £16,000 plus VAT
Maker Boxall & Edmiston
 Shrewsbury, Shropshire
Web www.boxhallandedmiston.co.uk
Tel 01743 762352
Delivery four-eight months

TECHNICAL DATA

There is a lot of innovation in this gun. Let us start with the barrels. These are monobloc, fixed choke ($\frac{1}{4}$ and $\frac{1}{2}$ on the test gun), made from chrome vanadium EN19 steel. They have TIG-welded joints, so they do not appear sleeved and are brazed at the rim. The tubes are struck up especially well and internally straight. A lot of effort has gone into getting the weights right, too. Chokes are of traditional type with forcing cones leading to a parallel section.

The action, made from EN34 billet, is based on a classic Anson and Deeley but is a little deeper than the norm – for additional strength – and has a detachable draw in the action body. This system ensures that the recoil load is more equally divided.

This modified Anson and Deeley design is also intriguing because the extractor leg profile has been changed to a diamond shape (instead of the usual semi-circle) which eliminates the need for a guide, increases the surface area, and thus is easier to fit and stronger. The shape allows other mechanical changes, which use the ejector kickers more effectively, thus throwing out cartridges more positively and achieving, the makers claim, the same ejector performance as a sidelock but with reduced wear.

SHOOTING IMPRESSIONS

This gun handled well and was crisp to shoot. Trigger pulls were excellent, as was all mechanical functioning. Felt recoil was not excessive. The shapes of the stock and its shelf dimensions suited me well.

This gun showed, in an English way, how hi-tech and artisan work can be combined. The Italians have led the way with computerised gunmaking but I don't think any other nation has the eye for detail and flair of our best gunmakers. They have in their heads and hands shapes which machines can't yet fully reproduce (evident here in the barrels and stockwork). Clearly evident is an unwillingness to cut corners and a determination to do the job properly.