



Pheasants in the frost. Richard found the Miroku ideal for fast going-away shots.



MIROKU MK70

20 GAUGE SPORTER –

Richard Philburn reviews an under & over so good he ended up buying it...!

Our anticipation has set in, they've heard our calls and they're heading our way. The safeties are pushed forward and the black barrels raise to take aim. My twenty gauge roars as the birds are outlined against the foggy Waikato mist.

For the new age hunters double barrel guns are a thing of granddad's era, but make no mistake, they are slowly making their way back into the fields.

With smaller bag limits and less time to shoot, conservation and traditions are becoming more dominant among

the field-gunners today. The 12 gauge is still the most popular calibre, and in the hands of learners they

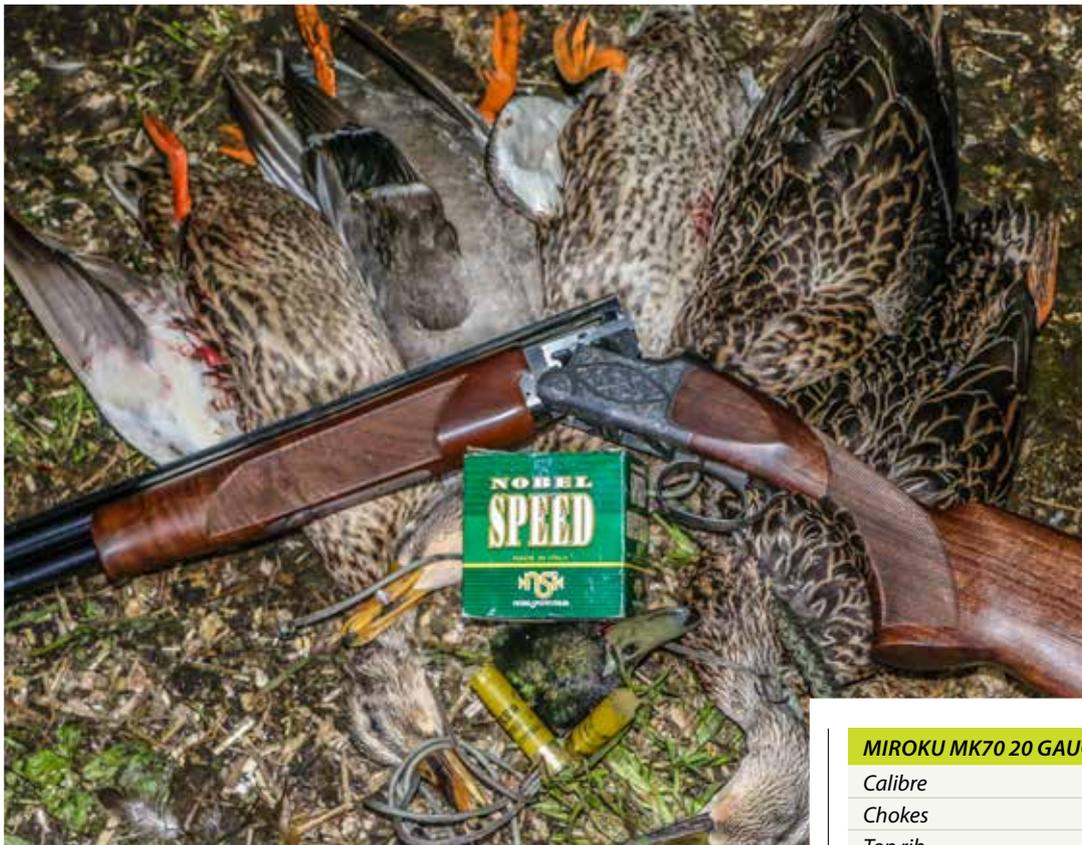
are a good way to start, but experienced shotgunners know that a 20 gauge is more than adequate for



“EXPERIENCED SHOTGUNNERS KNOW THAT A 20 GAUGE IS MORE THAN ADEQUATE FOR HARVESTING GAME.”

harvesting game. For years steel shot has been pushed on us in New Zealand, so the 20 gauge took over as it was still approved for lead shot. In 2017 though, Fish & Game announced that

◀ *A high standard of factory engraving and excellent wood to metal fit are part of the Miroku's appeal.*



“IT PERFORMED WELL EVERY TIME IT CAME UP AND WASN'T OUT OF BALANCE OR OFF/ON ITS CASTE – IT WAS RIGHT THERE, READY FOR ME TO PULL THE TRIGGER!”

sub-gauges like the 20 will be going to steel also, therefore a gun is needed that's able to handle both types of shot.

I had a talk with Nik about a little 20 gauge gem I'd heard of, the Miroku MK70 Sporter under & over. Nik and I agreed that not enough is written about these little 20s, in fact they're often over-looked by

those who believe the 20 gauge shooter is under-gunned.

ABOUT MIROKU

Mirokus are manufactured in Japan, and the company is known for building some of Browning's models. They produce beautiful shotguns of all types, originally using the more traditional methods of building

↑ *Tight patterns make Nobel Speed 2-3/4" 20 gauge loads Richard's cartridge of choice.*

double guns, eg; hard-soldering the single forged barrels together. Today that's changed, instead of soldering Miroku now sleeves the barrels while maintaining the same strong construction they've

MIROKU MK70 20 GAUGE SPORTER

Calibre	20ga
Chokes	3 Invector +, 1/4, 1/2, 3/4
Top rib	10mm (6mm on Field model)
Barrel finish	Blued
Action frame	Steel
Wood grade	American Grade 2
Wood	Satin varnish
Stock style	Pistol grip
Length of pull	375mm
Drop at comb	39mm
Drop at heel	63mm
Forearm	Tulip
Weight	3.4kg – 3.5kg
Notes	Gun lock, choke key

always had. Forging and sleeving barrels together, as many major brands do today, makes manufacturing more precise and more economical – it's referred to as the mono bloc system. Depending on the grade, Miroku's walnut is among the finest. Likewise, the actions are built to last and offer excellent safety features.

◀ *Several shooters got the opportunity to test the Miroku in the field. Here Richard's partner Nicacia harvests a mallard from a Waikato creek.*

FIRST IMPRESSIONS

Sleek black barrels, nicely stained wood, an engraved action covered in sweet gun oil! A well-pointing, versatile light gun, interchangeable chokes, a comfortable, easy to hold pistol grip. The rib presents a good picture to the eye and the bead is easy to see. The barrel selector switch and safety catch function well. The Miroku shoulders like a wood and iron glove – I knew it was what I wanted for the game bird season.

The 10mm rib is easy to sight, the barrels are





“EASY TO FUNCTION AND RELIABLE, ITS RECOIL IS WELL DISTRIBUTED, AND ALTHOUGH LIGHT IT WASN'T UNPLEASANT TO SHOOT.”

↑ Richard calls them in...

➔ Limit bags early in the morning are just one of the reasons Richard decided to buy the gun!

polished deep black, and come with 76mm chambers for either the magnum loads I like for heavy field work, or the lighter clay loads. Interchangeable chokes with a Browning compatible thread means you can use aftermarket chokes for steel, or like me, just use the standard short chokes that come supplied in a box of five.

The trigger is inertia operated, and the safety/barrel selector is easy to operate with your thumb. Miroku's reliability is second to none, with a mechanism designed logically on a strongly-built action, with excellent engraving.

The timber quality is first-class, and of course the higher the model/grade you go the better it gets. The test gun's stock was standard length, just over 14 inches, with a pleasing shape to the comb and



pistol grip. I found the deep checkering very nice to handle when I first shouldered the gun on fast-flushing pheasants. The fore-grip likewise is of classic shape and easy to grip.

IN THE FIELD

With the pigeons in the maize crops at the time the Miroku arrived, I thought it would be worthwhile to trial it out before I hit the other game birds. I remembered fast that

this gun held only two rounds so I had to place them well. I teamed the gun with Nobel Speed, a 28 gram #5 shot 2-3/4" load, a cartridge that patterns well out of every gun I've tried it in. This meant not having to experiment too much, just sticking to something simple. I've always rated this cartridge in a 20 gauge.

I soon had pigeons coming at me from all angles, as well as a good few Waikato

mallards on the deck. I knew that a true test however, was over the dog on a frosty Waikato morning looking for pheasants. Always keen for any kind of hunt, I took the dog to a likely gully. A fast handling gun is most welcome as pheasants make quick, uncertain targets. For me, the Miroku was smooth to operate and easy to get on target. It performed well every time it came up and wasn't out of balance or

off/on its caste – it was right there, ready for me to pull the trigger!

I dragged it through mud and across the ugliest of gullies. It was all I needed to get my full share of birds. Easy to function and reliable, its recoil is well distributed, and although light it wasn't unpleasant to shoot.

We liked it so much the team told me to purchase it. Numerous people had a play and it became a neat gun to take out in the season. For its price range we gave the Miroku a nine out of ten for handling and functioning. For an under & over in its class, it's good value for money. It's a lot more than a boat oar, this gun!

Richard

NOTE: At the time of writing prices started at \$1999 depending on grade. Gun City and Dead Eye Dicks (among others) have a good range of Miroku shotguns, call them for current pricing and availability.