

BERETTA 686 SILVER PIGEON GRADE 1



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popular lower price points during the global recession, where worldwide, both hunters and competitive shooters were looking for the best bang for their hard earned dollar. What really stood out to us while getting a personal tour through the factory was how few differences there were in the manufacture of a gun that retails for \$3299 compared to a gun that retails for \$5499. For starters, you'll find exactly the same trigger in the 686 SP1 as you'll find in a \$12,000 EELL!!

The barrels are made from the same steel as a 687 and feature the same Optima Bore choke system in its sporters as the far more expensive models. So why/how can you get the famous Beretta quality at this \$3299 break through pricing? Simple. Bling, or rather lack of it! The walnut is Turkish as opposed to the Eastern European wood used on the higher grade models. So the SPG1 is a little plainer, but hey, the duck, pheasant, quail or clay target isn't going to look at the wood now is it? The engraving on the steel silver finished receiver is laser cut, quite an ingenious method that produces a nice finish without the hours of hand finishing, once again keeping the cost to where more people can get a crack at it.

The fun comes in a wide variety of configurations and gauges on two frame sizes. In 12 gauge Beretta produce a Sporter and a Field gun in 28 and 30 inch barrels. 20 bore is available in both barrel lengths also on the smaller frame as well as the increasingly popular 28 gauge and a .410. A trap gun version is also available on request. A bonus for sub gauge enthusiasts is that all gauges are the same low price which is also a first as often the sub gauges, which require special tooling, are more expensive.

For mine this is a great gun whatever way you want to go. If you enjoy walked up 'rough' pheasant hunting with a good dog, the 28" field is light and a very fast pointing option. Or if you're looking for more of an all rounder, a bird gun with which you can also shoot simulated field clays, the 30" Sporter is hard to beat. When it comes to the smaller gauges, in my opinion the .410 is really a gun for experienced shooters as its hard for a lot of kids to get clean kills with not much more than a teaspoon full of shot - although I'm sure I'll stand corrected on that by heaps of kids this year! However, in my experience 28G is a great gun for all ages including younger or female shooters. 28G has plenty of payload to kill most of the birds on our NZ game schedule and it only has slightly more recoil than the .410. The 28G is also a mint pigeon or quail gun for Dad!!

Hunting & Fishing New Zealand store owners have really got behind the concept of quality at an affordable price. Every store has at least one example of the Beretta 686 Silver Pigeon 1 on the gun rack in the lead up to the coming bird season. These will not last, and having seen the quality and craftsmanship at Beretta first hand I would urge anyone who is looking for a high quality Under & Over at the most affordable price they have ever been, then at least pick up a 686 SP 1 and see what you think. It will be very hard to put down!! Please note too, this will be one of the demo guns at the Beretta/Hunting & Fishing New Zealand duck shooters sporting clay circuit this season. See page 30, mark your calendar, and come shoot one!

Happy hunting, Charlie.

Having been a Beretta enthusiast for a number of years it was almost like a life pilgrimage to Mecca for Charlie Meyer and wife Kelly when they travelled to Brescia in Italy last October to visit the Beretta factories. Kelly and Charlie own the Wairarapa and Otaki Hunting & Fishing New Zealand stores.

Beretta has two factories in the Brescia Valley. Beretta 1 is where all the pistols, carbines and shotguns up to Diamond Pigeon Grade are produced and Beretta 2 where custom shotguns and the DT11 competition guns are manufactured. So it was during our tour of Beretta 1 that I got to follow the manufacture of the Beretta 686 Silver Pigeon Grade 1 from start to finish.

The Pigeon G1 was introduced three years ago to take on other brands at