



# Beretta SV10 Perennia

Gary Girvan Reviews Beretta's Innovative New Over and Under

**When a firearms manufacturer with Beretta's reputation** launches a completely new model over and under shotgun, it is big news and surprising news. After all, they already offer a complete range of highly successful superposed shotguns. For 30 years or so, their S68 range, which includes the 686/687/ Silver Pigeon models, has proved to be very popular and thoroughly reliable and offers an extensive range of models designed for field and for competition.

**T**he DT10 models cater specifically for competition shooting. Their SO series offers a range of models for shooters who favour expensive sidelock over and unders. You would think that the Beretta catalogue of O/Us was full, but their engineers have taken a taken a hard look at the 686/7 design and have come up with a new family, the SV10, which incorporates a considerable advance in design features.

This new range of SV10 models is not intended to replace any of the existing models which, for the time being at least, will remain in production. Rather it offers a completely new family to choose from and is set in a different price range which fits between the S68 models and the DT10 series.

The first versions of the SV10 series to be released, the Perennia models, are designated as field guns, but a Sporting Clays version, the Prevail, has already been announced and you can be sure that more models will follow.

Our Testfire gun came equipped with 28 inch barrels and was fitted with the optional extra of Beretta's Kick-Off recoil reduction system. Now, it is unusual for a review to begin by focusing on an optional extra feature, but as Kick-Off was the only aspect of the SV10 that caused any dissension amongst those who fired the gun, we'll look at it first.

## Kick-Off

Hunters who use Beretta's Xtrema2 autoloader will be familiar with the recoil-taming ability of the Kick-Off system which employs two hydraulic dampeners integrated with a gel-tek recoil pad. In my experience, the system provides the softest shooting available in any autoloader and offers the greatest control of muzzle flip when using magnum loads. Most

shotgunners find excessive recoil to be one of the greatest obstacles to enjoyable shooting. Why wouldn't you want a very effective recoil tamer on an over and under?

The few shooters who did not like the system fell into two camps. Despite the fact that Beretta have replaced the utilitarian rubber sleeve as found on the Xtrema2 with a rather more elegant nylon sleeve, a few traditionalists felt the installation at the end of the butt-stock jarred with the refined lines of the rest of the gun. The other camp found the slight backwards movement of the stock caused by the compression of the dampeners to be disconcerting. However, extensive testing on the range and in the field convinced me that if I were to buy a Perennia, I would have no hesitation in paying the extra for Kick-Off. You quickly get used to the movement of the



*Top: Dramatic new styling and engraving for the Perennia. Above: The top-lever, safety and barrel selector have been designed for ease of use. Left: Ejectors or extractors? A turn of the screw lets you choose.*

**I HAVE ALWAYS BEEN A FAN OF BERETTA'S S68 SERIES SHOTGUNS, BUT I AM EVEN MORE IMPRESSED BY THE HANDLING AND THE PERFORMANCE OF THE PERENNIA.**



*Left: A great gun for a hot corner. Mark Grace of Rathmoy uses a Perennia for his driven pheasant shooting. Photo courtesy of Rathmoy. Above: Built to take the weather. A wet day in the field doesn't faze the SV10. Photo courtesy of Rathmoy.*

system which occurs only after the shot is actually fired and thus has no effect on pointing and swinging. The increased shooting comfort the system provides is a significant advance in my opinion and is well worth the extra cost.

#### **New Styling**

While the new SV10 is unmistakably a Beretta, it bears only a passing family resemblance to the S686/7 series. Its styling is quite different. The steel alloy receiver has been given a very distinctive appearance with arrow-shaped raised side plates featuring game bird scenes and a polished finish which contrasts with the matt finish and the floral decoration of the receiver walls. A nickel based protective finish increases the durability and corrosion resistance of the metal work. The new-

style fences or top mouldings are much less rounded than on the 680 series and blend nicely with the new-profile barrels.

The gun is stocked in a good quality walnut with a dark, matt oil finish. This finish is very durable but on the Testfire gun it did tend to conceal the attractive figuring of the walnut. Thankfully, Beretta have turned away from the Schnabel-styled fore-end that has featured on their field guns for many years now. The Perennia is blessed with an elegant and practical semi-beavertail fore-end while the butt-stock has a shallow-angled pistol grip that is particularly appropriate for a field gun.

#### **What Else is New?**

Only a few of the features of the S68 system such as the bifurcated locking bolts, the sears, the strikers, the trigger's

inertia block remain unchanged. Almost every other feature has been redesigned to ensure even greater strength and reliability over the time-proven original design. For instance, the distinctive barrel lugs which engage cut-outs in the action walls have been substantially enlarged as have the hinge pins inside the action frame. For this reason, barrels from the S68 series will not fit on this new gun.

The top lever and the safety catch/barrel selector have been redesigned to provide greater ease of use. The trigger guard has been given an elegant new shape, and the trigger itself is now made from lightweight but high-strength titanium. Even the fore-end iron has been modified so that it now has an internal self-adjusting mechanism which ensures a consistent fit of the fore-end to the barrels.



Top; The action exposed. If needed, the trigger group can also be removed simply, using the stock bolt Torx key. Above: The Kick-Off system makes for soft shooting. Left: Q-stock enables the stock to be removed quickly through the pistol grip cap.

**EXTENSIVE TESTING ON THE RANGE AND IN THE FIELD CONVINCED ME THAT IF I WERE TO BUY A PERENNIA, I WOULD HAVE NO HESITATION IN PAYING THE EXTRA FOR KICK-OFF.**

Amongst all these new design features, two seem particularly significant to me: Q-stock and the new extractor system.

**Q-stock.** One of the Perennia's novel features is its quick-detachable butt stock. Instead of a conventional long stock bolt running inside the length of the stock, the butt stock is held in place by a short bolt which can be accessed through a spring loaded trapdoor in the pistol grip cap. Using the key provided, you can easily and quickly loosen the captive screw to remove the butt stock without having to take off the butt plate – a very convenient feature, especially if your Perennia has the Kick-Off system installed.

Should you need to remove the trigger group, this is easily done using the same tool that releases the butt stock. This new system is a great step forward in providing quick and simple access to the action for inspection and maintenance.

**Ejector/extractor.** The SV10's extractors have been newly-designed. They

are longer and are guided along the entire length of the monobloc to ensure reliable functioning. More importantly, though, they now give you the option of selecting by a simple turn of screws mounted on the monobloc whether your fired shells are ejected or simply extracted.

**Barrels**

As usual with Beretta, the barrels are cold hammer forged but they have been given a lighter profile to improve pointability without sacrificing strength. The gun is magnum proofed for steel shot. To improve patterning, the barrels feature a moderate degree of over-boring. Beretta's Optima-Bore HP has a bore diameter of 18.6mm (0.732in) and is combined with lengthened forcing cones and newly-designed internal choke tubes with a more gradual taper. Our pattern-testing showed

that this combination does produce well-distributed patterns with steel shot and with lead pellets.

Appropriately for a field gun, the barrels are topped with a narrow 6mm ventilated top rib and with solid side ribs as far as the fore-end. To reduce weight and to promote cooling, the side ribs are ventilated once they reach the woodwork.

**Performance in the Field**

Although the Perennia is designed primarily as a game gun, our handling tests initially involved shooting at clay targets: skeet and five-stand. The gun's pointability and fast handling made it a competent performer at these disciplines and, of course, with the Kick-Off feature, felt recoil was negligible.

These fast-handling and soft-shooting qualities came to the fore when we took the Perennia driven pheasant shooting at Rathmoy, Hunterville. With its Kick-Off mechanism, this SV10 is ideally suited for the kind of high-volume,



Optima-bore HP produces effective patterns with lead or steel shot.

high-intensity shooting that driven pheasants provide.

The day's shooting was conducted in a persistent drizzle. While this did not affect the quality of the birds' presentation, it did give the Beretta a thorough soaking. At the end of the shoot, the Q-stock feature proved to be eminently practical. Inevitably, in that weather a lot of moisture had penetrated into the internal mechanism. A twist of the screw to remove the butt-stock and the whole mechanism was exposed for some much-needed maintenance. Ingenious and practical—these qualities typify the innovative design features on this new family of shotguns.

I have always been a fan of Beretta's S68 series shotguns, but I am even more impressed by the handling and the performance of the Perennia. Although the SV10 models will inevitably be more expensive than the S68 series, I'm sure that the fine handling and the clever design of this new family will gain it many enthusiastic admirers.



Specifications for the Testfire Gun	
<b>Make &amp; model</b>	Beretta SV10 Perennia
<b>Type</b>	Over & under shotgun
<b>Gauge</b>	12 gauge only
<b>Barrels</b>	Length: 71cm (28 in); also available in 76cm (30 in) Chamber: 76mm (3in) Bore diameter: Optima HP bore 18.6mm (0.732in). Chromed bore Chokes: 5 interchangeable Optimachoke HP choke tubes, 70mm long.
<b>Ribs &amp; sights</b>	6mm ventilated top rib with single silver sighting bead; solid side ribs
<b>Receiver</b>	Steel with nickel finish. Game scene and floral decoration
<b>Trigger</b>	Titanium. Single selective, recoil-operated for second shot. Removable trigger group.
<b>Safety</b>	Non-automatic, incorporates barrel selector.
<b>Extraction</b>	On selection, either selective ejectors or extractors.
<b>Stock</b>	Select walnut with matt oil finish. Q-stock system enables quick butt-stock removal. Pistol grip butt-stock; semi-beavertail fore-end with finger grooves Dimensions: Length of pull: 367mm (14.5in) Drop at comb: 35mm (1.38in) Drop at heel: 55mm (2.17in) Cast for right hander Recoil pad: Kick-off hydraulic dampener with Gel-Tek pad
<b>Weight</b>	3.4kg (7.5lb)
<b>Accessories</b>	Fitted ABS case. 5 choke tubes plus spanner. Torx key for butt-stock and trigger group removal. Sling swivels. Beretta Teflon gun oil.
<b>RRP</b>	\$6699.00
<b>Distributor</b>	Beretta New Zealand Ltd