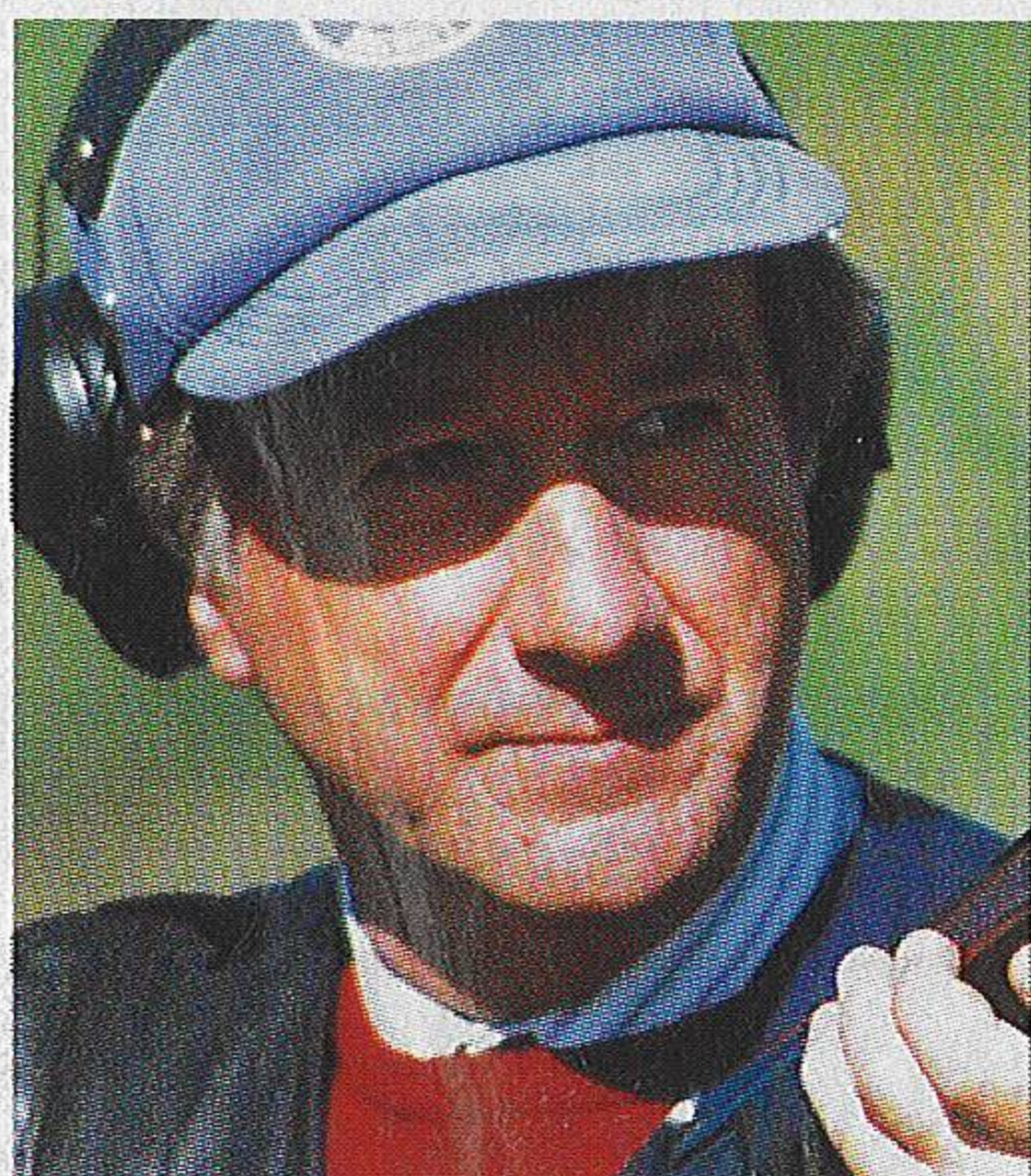




Miroku for the **MILLENNIUM?**



As BW (UK) Ltd take the wraps off their new specification Miroku MK-70 Sporter, **Andrew Harvison** puts a Grade 5 model through its paces.

I have been testing the new specification Miroku MK-70 and it has given me a problem. It's not that I don't like it or that if I write an honest report it will get me into trouble with their importers BW (UK) Ltd. Quite the contrary. My difficulty is that I wonder just how good these guns can get - and what more can I say about Miroku that has not already been said?

Yes, as you may have gathered, I was impressed. The great thing about Miroku is that they have developed a range of models which in many respects offers the shooter the perfect sporting combo. In fact they now have a staggering 79 guns in their range with nine different standard grades of engraving.

But for the purposes of this article I am concentrating my interest on the MK-70. There is no doubt that this gun is a result of a period of evolution as well as

development, going right back to 50 years ago when the Kochi factory in Japan first started making guns with a more than uncanny likeness to Browning. Such was the quality of workmanship and success of their sales that Val Browning (the son of John Moses) approached Miroku in the Sixties with a view to them coming to some kind of joint arrangement. The marriage has proved a success, with Miroku continuing to grow, expand and improve their range, while at the same time producing guns for Browning.

That the guns are well made is not disputed and has been proven again and again by users down the years. In my opinion the MK-70 has the lot. It is not only well made, but superbly finished and aesthetically extremely attractive. But what really sets it apart are its handling characteristics. Being able to produce a gun where the

barrels do the work is very difficult and this is a quality which is generally found only in hand made firearms.

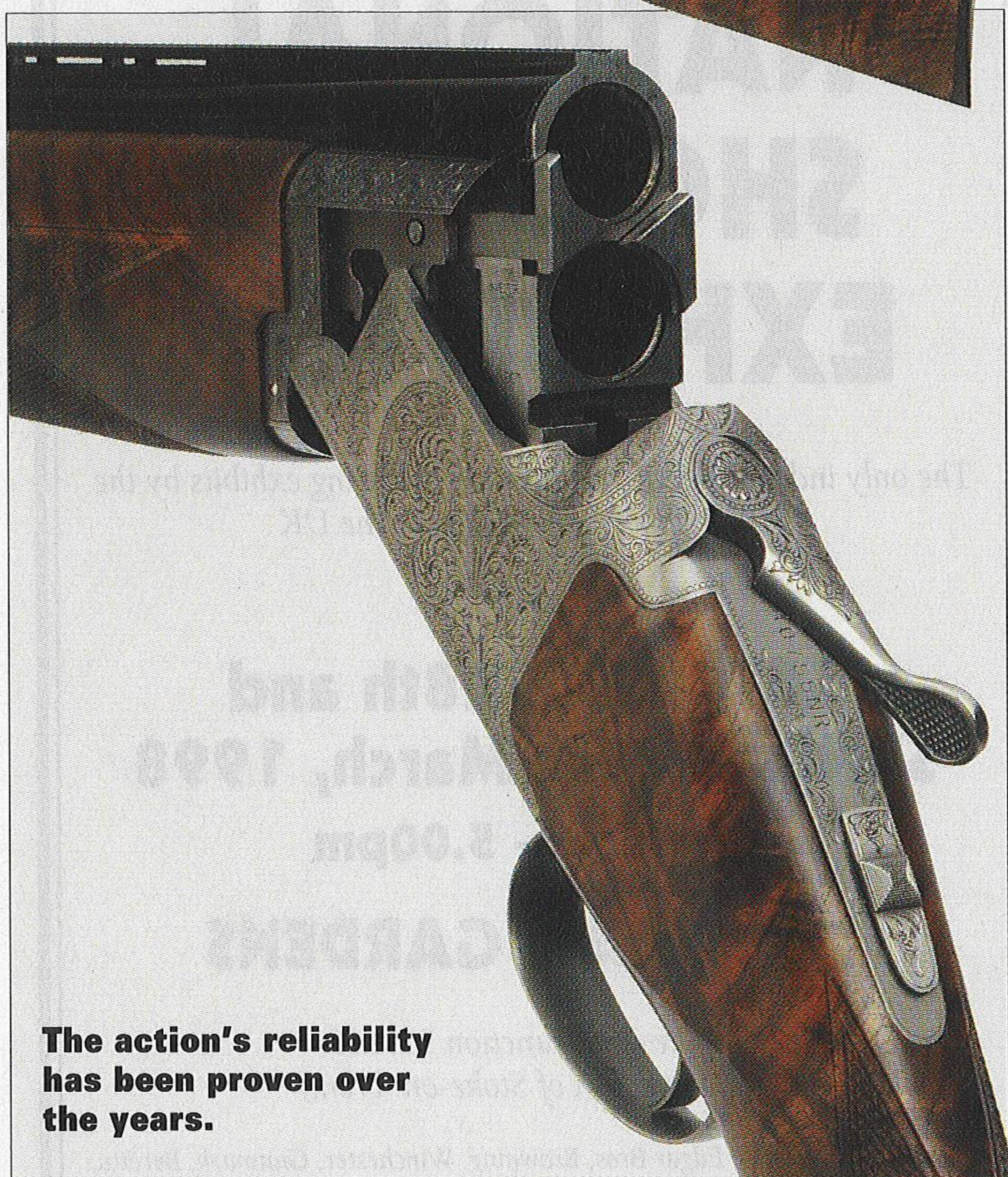
Balance is everything. Is it coincidental that barrels are stretching to 32"? I think not. People are finding that in using a gun of 32" to give them the pointability and stability needed for going away and quartering targets, they are also discovering the benefits of the balance achieved by long barrels on a heavier gun.

For most of us however, my belief is that good balance is more important than barrel length and to that end 30" is a good all-round barrel measurement. The example of the MK-70 which I have been using was quite outstanding in its handling characteristics - guns do vary, but the balance and responsiveness of this gun was all that you could want from a sporter. At 7lb 12oz it is an ideal



A beautifully finished gun, and exceptional value for money.

Pleasing to look at and ideal balance on the review model.



The action's reliability has been proven over the years.

weight, and the Invector chokes just give it the slightest barrel heavy feel, which makes the difference in controlling such a responsive gun.

I have shot it on a wide range of targets and thought its ability to cope was quite outstanding.

I have to add however that I am unsure of the wisdom of some of the new specifications for the model, in particular a 15 $\frac{1}{4}$ " (375mm) stock. I feel that such a length is not appropriate for a sporter, and good mounting on certain targets involves a lot of unnecessary work which is definitely not conducive to good shooting. The slender Miroku stock is nice, but ideally it should be no more than 14 $\frac{1}{2}$ ".

Some would say that you can always take something off a stock, but you can't add it on. My answer would be, why not supply spacers and an easily removable heel plate?

I am also not a great fan of the checkered trigger, and would prefer a variable one, rather than fixed position. While the other minus point in my eyes is the persistence of Miroku sporters to

have a low drop at comb (1 $\frac{9}{16}$ " - 2" on the gun tested) giving a very, very flat shooting gun. I would suggest that the success of the 3800 trap gun as a sporter is partly down to its comb height. BW may argue that the MK-38 Sporter now offers a higher shooting gun, while the MK-70 is a model with a stock configuration which enjoys a committed following.

This is obviously a sales consideration, but in terms of my assessment of the gun, it obviously colours my view and conclusions.

In the final analysis however, with prices on the Grade 1 starting at around £1100 the importers are practically giving it away. If I were to buy one (I am already shooting a Miroku, so I won't be investing!) I would alter the stock length and comb height in the knowledge that I would then be the owner of just about as good a sporter as I could wish for. Outstanding. ■

● For details of the Miroku range contact either a Browning/Miroku stockist or write to: BW (UK) Ltd, 37D Milton Park Estate, Abingdon, Oxon OX14 4RT. Tel. 0-235 444100.