

A brand new English made shotgun will shortly be completed, fulfilling a dream for one of the UK's most experienced clay shots.

Fifty-six-year-old Andrew Harvison has been a keen shot for much of his life. A winner of the British Open Sporting Championship, he has also won a number of Skeet and Trap titles and has represented England in all three disciplines.

Andrew, who lives near Leicester, started the road to building bespoke shotguns nearly 12 years ago, after a long career in textiles. He owned a textile manufacturing company enjoying major contracts with top High Street names such as Marks & Spencer. But shooting was his passion. For some years he also simultaneously ran Kibworth SG in partnership with current owner Baz Burnham, and after leaving textiles he also enjoyed a stint with GMK and Laporte.

"All the time my dream had been to build a shotgun - a classic English over-under," he explained. So the long haul began. Working with Wiseman brothers, the gun repair company based in Cannock and owners of the Holloway & Naughton name, together they built a prototype between 1992 and 1995. "We learnt a lot along the way and I soon found that it was not going to be straightforward. But nevertheless that first gun looked OK and got us going. We then set about refinements and gradually were able to deliver a gun that really looked the business."

He travelled far and wide with his gun, and made several trips to the big shows in the States.

"I knew that from a shooting point of view we had an edge in that I was the only maker in the UK who had shot competition to

a high level and coached extensively for both clay and game. So though I had never built a gun, I knew the workings and knew what was required in terms of weight, dynamics and style. This wasn't simply going to be a gun that looked good - handling would be of major importance."

Wisemans are hugely in demand however for repair work and accommodating the build of new guns into the programme was not always easy. But together they made and sold 11 top class sidelocks, before two years ago coming to an agreement that Andrew would continue in the production of best quality sidelock over-unders in his own right, retaining the Holloway & Naughton name.

Andrew had by now pieced together a new team. During the last decade he has got to know the trade pretty much inside out and made very good friends of some talented and reliable gunsmiths. However, it could be argued the his most significant step has been the setting up of his own operation in Leicester to make all of the parts, thus ensuring complete



Above: Andrew Harvison.

Left: The new prototype Holloway & Naughton Sporter due for completion this month.

Below left: The game gun.

quality control very close at hand. From that point he has a select team of London trained specialists. For barrel making he has turned to one of the finest in Bill Blacker - others involved in the assembly and woodwork are of similar ability.

The latest off the production line is a real gem. Built for a private American client at a price of £55,000, it is a classic looking, Boss style action game gun.

But intriguingly Andrew is also breaking new ground by building what is surely the first dedicated British sidelock Sporter.

"I have always dreamt of making a gun like this," he enthuses. "It follows the Perazzi/Fabri style, aesthetically similar but mechanically different to the Boss and is a proper Sporter, not just a tweaked game gun. It has 30" barrels and weighs 7½lb and I am so proud of it. It really does handle beautifully. It will be fully engraved by the end of June and will then be winging its way later this year to its owner in the USA. I am sure he will be thrilled with it. It is entirely English made, no imported parts and all best quality - the barrels are superb."

Andrew will continue making two models - the Boss style game gun and the new Sporter, which sells for £37,000 (inc VAT).

"It really has been a long haul, but I have learned so much, and never at any time did my spirits fade as I knew deep down that I could do it."

In many ways Andrew is a throwback to the great gunmaking pioneers of the turn of the century, who were also passionate shots and of the belief that they could prove the worth of their product by investing their shooting experience in it.

www.hollowaynaughton.co.uk

Made in England

Mike Barnes meets top shot Andrew Harvison, a man who is breaking new ground in gunmaking.