

The new Lincoln Premier Deluxe 20 - bore is elegant in both looks and handling

City Slicker

Mark Stone gets the chance to try Lincoln's newest model, the Premier Deluxe 20 bore.

A lot of shooters ask me why I like Lincoln shotguns and the answer is an easy one. When I became old enough to buy my own shotguns I purchased a used Lincoln 12 – bore game gun from Bond & Bywaters for less than £300 and that was well over thirty years ago. Besides the fact that my friendship with Peter and Paul at B&B has more than stood the test of time and so has my relationship with the Lincoln. Apart from two new firing pins and a top-lever spindle,

the exact same shotgun still lives in my cabinets and is still my first choice when the game season comes round each year.

So when the new UK importers John Rothery invited me to try the new Premier Deluxe 20 bore I was delighted and whilst times and designs have changed over the years, this little Lincoln still embodies everything I've come to expect. Now manufactured by Fabbrica Armi Isidoro Rizzini or FAIR for short over in Marcheno, the only connection any Lincoln shotgun has with the city of the same

name is that their then importer David Nickerson happened to be based there which is the Premier Deluxe's only English facet; this elegant little sideplate boxlock is 100% Italian and proud of it too - it even states the fact on the base of the action.

Class act

The Lincoln arrived in a fitted plastic travelling case along with a full set of five flush -fit choke tubes and space for some of your own accessories. The walnut furniture is well grained with a semi-oil finish along with neat

panels of chequering on both sides of the grip and either side of the slim Schnabel forend. Being a game gun the stock's butt features a narrow black plastic chequered buttplate that gives friction against the shoulder yet allows the stock to slide up the shooter's clothing and into position.

The barrels - as with all Lincolns - are finished in a rich gloss black. Chrome lined to facilitate the use of non-toxic loads, a small brass bead sits atop the muzzles and at the far end of the 4 – 5mm tapering elevated game rib whilst both tubes swage into 3" chambered monoblocs. These also incorporate the long stroke ejectors that do an excellent



The new Premier Deluxe 20 bore from Lincoln



Although non-adjustable the gold-plated trigger-blade is broad and comfortable.

job of throwing the empty cases high and wide well out of the way of the shooter. The action is of the boxlock type that has come to typify the Italian style, which has been proven for years on end.

Where the Premier Deluxe mechanical transfer action differs is that it's had sideplates added that have fine scroll work around the borders, game scenes and inlaid pheasant and partridge plus a woodcock on the base. Moving to the top tang, a broad automatic combined safety-catch and barrel selector sit just to the rear of the top-lever that incorporates a filigree pattern into the thumb pressure area. Anticipating that the shooter will be taking the Premier deluxe on some big bird bays, the fences and top – lever shroud have been finished with a matte stipple to reduce potential heat shimmer caused by intensive bouts of shooting.

Just as the safety and top-lever is finished in a contrasting gloss black, so is the trigger –guard, the surface of which echoes the action's woodcock albeit in a far more subdued manner. Nicely oversized to accommodate a gloved finger, although non – adjustable, the broad gold blade has sufficient curvature to ensure the finger comes into contact exactly where it should and enhances the break predictability and positive shooter reactions.

Clays and crows

After a moment or two with the Arrow Laser Shot to determine where the Premier Deluxe placed its shot it was time to head over to Huntroyde to shoot both clays and enjoy a late afternoon stroll around the numerous copses and the small woodlands that proliferate. Choking up 1/4 and 1/2 and initially loading up with 28gram Eley CT20 fibrewads

filled with 7 1/2's, a variety of sporting birds were quickly taken care of, the Premier Deluxe's characteristics of shooting just a tad higher than flat, meaning adjustment to crossing birds was all that was required. The almost infinitesimal high shooting manner is exactly what you'd expect from a shotgun that's primary intent is as a game gun, but unlike many it's almost negligible.

Dimensionally for such a lightweight shotgun the Premier Deluxe still fits well. Weight and overall length are 6lbs 1oz and 45 1/2" with a barrel length of 28". Drops at comb and heel are 1 1/2" and 2 3/16" with a good all round length of pull that measures 14 1/2" whilst the non-adjustable trigger breaks at an average of 5lbs 4oz. Balancing an inch in front of the hinges the outstanding physicality of the Premier Deluxe is the slender grip and slim forend that when combined with the stock's dimensions, angles and narrower comb means the gun mounts in a flash, comes up almost perfectly time after time whilst remaining fingertip malleable within the hands.

The noticeable benefit of the grip and forend's physical elements is that smaller hands will find them comfortable and easy to hold whilst larger hands will instantly appreciate how they add to the Lincoln's deftness of handling and movement. One of the other significant advantages is that even when the load



The slim forend allows for fingertip control of movement.



The sideplate action has gamebirds inlaid in gold.



A wide gape and long stroke ejectors facilitate well time ejection and ease of loading.



The Premier Deluxe includes a fitted travelling case.

► size was increased to 32gram VIP Game loads the already almost undetectable recoil didn't increase, the Lincoln emphasizing the fact that the engineers got each and every aspect of the Premier Deluxe absolutely right.

Tightening the chokes to 1/2 and 3/4 and upping the shot size to 5's, small inroads were made into Huntroyde's crow and pigeon population as they flighted into roost for the evening. Whether settling or on the wing, even with the light fading to a degree they became nothing more than passing silhouettes, the Premier Deluxe made short work of them, even when having to mount the gun quickly to take a bird overhead and to the left. No matter how you look at it, Lincoln's new Premier Deluxe

20 bore is a nice gun to shoot, handles as well as any all-round shotgun you're likely to pick up, whilst the sideplates and inlays certainly add a degree of style to the tried and tested Italian boxlock action. For £999 it's excellent value for money for the shooter looking to own a sub-gauge and a gun that every member of the family can use.

Family friend

Existing Lincoln owners myself included can revel in the Premier Deluxe's familiar Lincoln traits of design, quality of build, the fact that the gun will suit almost anyone and that it's more than capable of turning its muzzles towards any target asked of it. All Lincolns irrespective of model or age will literally last for years to

a degree that they can become something of a family heirloom, an attribute normally reserved for more illustrious makes.

The true attraction of the Premier Deluxe, like all Lincolns, is that whether it's a day's driven shooting, a walked-up day, a gathering of rough shooting friends, duck flighting or on a clay shoot, this little gun always looks perfectly at home. It not only looks right, it performs right as well - this smooth handling 20 bore is one of the most shooter friendly you'll hold. Years of building Lincolns has allowed Rizzini (or FAIR as they are now) to build shotguns like the Premier Deluxe that are instinctive, shot where the user looks and connect to their target whatever it is. From my

own perspective there's never been a bad Lincoln, and the Premier Deluxe is continuing testament to the fact. **GM**

The Deluxe package includes a full set of flush - fit choke tubes and a small key.



The game-style stock is well proportioned and angled.

TECHNICAL SPECIFICATION

Name	Lincoln Premier Deluxe
Type	Double – Barrel O/U
Calibre	20 bore / 3" Chamber
Action	Boxlock
Capacity	2 x 20 bore cartridges
Barrel	28 inch multi-choke
Price	£999 srp
Contact	John Rothery 0239 2245350 www.bisley-uk.com
Thanks to:	Eley; www.eleyhawklltd.com Huntroyde Estate; www.huntroyde-estate.co.uk CENS Digital; www.censdigital.com Sinn – Chronomaster; www.chronomaster.co.uk Arrow Laser Shot; www.arrowlasershot.com