

# La Bohémienne

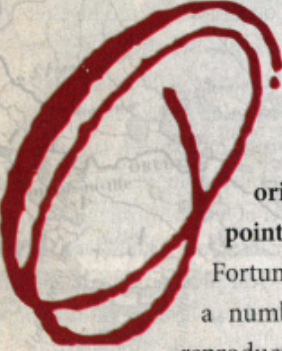
Pedersoli creates the ultimate Victorian gentleman's sporting shotgun

BY FRANK JARDIM



Pedersoli's new La Bohémienne double-barreled shotgun is reminiscent of the Colt Model 1878, a high-end double in its day with Belgian-made barrels.





**OVER THE YEARS, demand from the Cowboy Action Shooting (CAS) market drove the prices of shootable original 19th century shotguns up to the point where a good value is hard to find now.**

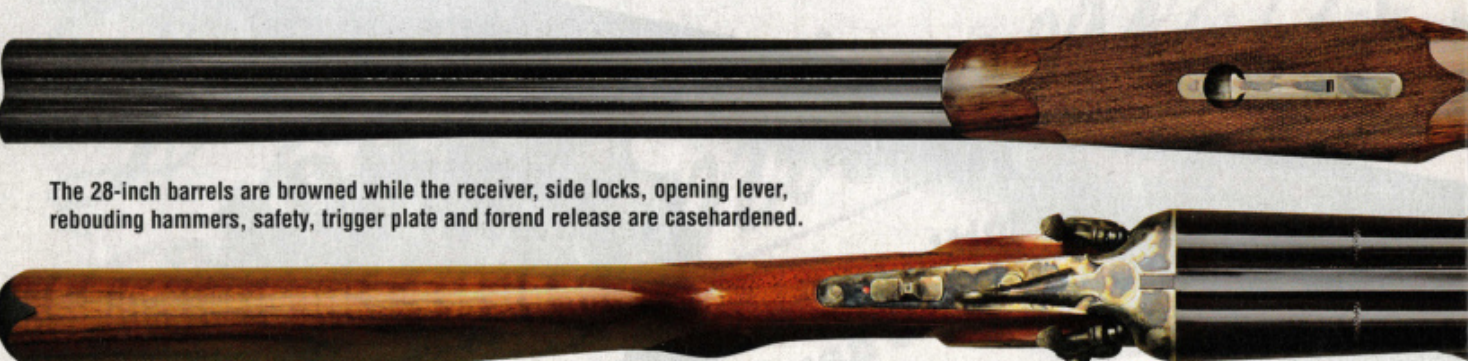
Fortunately, it also led to the development of a number of well-made, Old-West-inspired reproduction side-by-side coach guns, mostly from Europe. And, unlike the antiques, the stronger modern steels used in the new guns make them safe with modern smokeless ammunition. Now you can shoot a shotgun stage with an authentic-looking gun without the lingering worry every time you pull the trigger that some 100-year-old component might give up the ghost.

Times were pretty good, but not quite as good as they might be for the people who loved hunting with Old West guns. A 20-inch-barreled, cylinder-bore coach gun was a specialty weapon in the 1800s. The tactical shotgun of its day, it

was intended for close-range combat, not rabbit hunting. The vast majority of shotguns in the hands of ordinary folks were do-everything guns. Putting food on the table, from birds to deer, was their main use, but they kept foxes out of the henhouse, and ruffians at bay as needed. These typical shotguns had choked barrels in the 28- to 32-inch range for tighter patterns.

In a move that should bring joy to everyone who wants to hunt cottontails, possums, raccoons, gobblers and the like just like Great Great Granpappy did before the those Spaniards blew up the *Maine*, Davide Pedersoli has created the *La Bohémienne* shotgun. Mechanically, it's a 28-inch-barreled hunting version of the company's 12-gauge, side-by-side, dual-trigger, exposed-hammer Wyatt Earp coach gun. Neither gun is an exact copy of any specific vintage model, but both are inspired by the lines of shotguns of the era and Colt's Model 1878 in particu-





The 28-inch barrels are browned while the receiver, side locks, opening lever, rebounding hammers, safety, trigger plate and forend release are casehardened.

lar. When I finally got a Bohémienne in my hands, I realized it shared much more in common with the Model 1878 than the Wyatt Earp model.

### *Classy Double*

Where the Wyatt Earp is a plainly finished working gun, the Bohémienne is beautifully and tastefully adorned. The floral engraving on the side locks, receiver and trigger plate were laid out on the metal with precision by a computer-controlled laser, but then each line was hand-chased by a human engraver's hand-guided blade, giving it a rich, genuine look.

The forend and rounded pommel grip are elaborately covered with fine, deep, bordered, diagonal checkering that I was surprised to learn was cut by laser. The oil-rubbed Grade A+ walnut stock has an attractive grain and is topped with a protective satin finish. The receiver, side locks, opening lever, hammers, safety, trigger plate and forend release latch have soft color casehardening, mainly of browns and blues. Only the buttplate and triggerguard are blued. The dual triggers wear a contrasting nickel plating. The monobloc barrels have a shiny brown finish intended to replicate traditional browning. The browning is actually a painted and baked-on finish, not as durable as

Though the Bohémienne looks 19th century, Pedersoli included **QUITE A FEW MODERN UPGRADES** to the classic hunting double.

DuraCoat, and should be handled with care to avoid chipping or scratches.

Overall, you might think, "Wow, this looks like an expensive shotgun." In fact, its MSRP is \$2,055, and I found it online for \$1,900. While that's certainly not cheap, it's a lot of gun for the money. These shotguns are made in small batches, one at a time, start to finish, by

a single gunsmith who does all the handwork and fitting. As advanced as Pedersoli is today, the company still sees value in keeping skilled human hands on its guns. The benefits of keeping one foot in the artisanal past of gun-making show in this handsome shotgun.

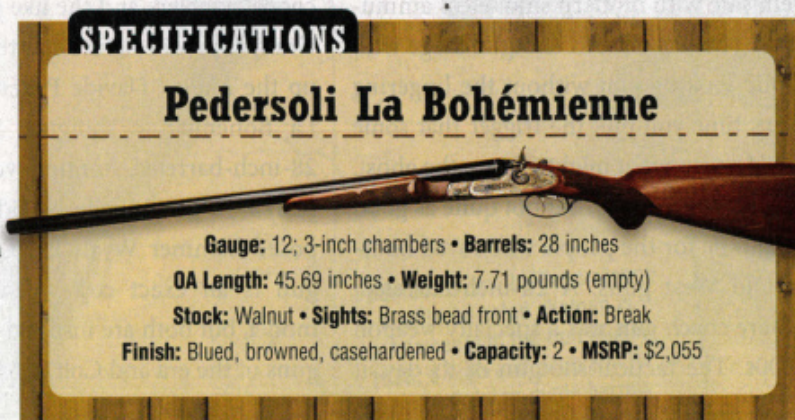
It is in respect to the higher-quality finishing and decoration that the Bohémienne shares an obvious connection to the Colt Model 1878. The Colt was actually a high-end shotgun in its day, with Belgian-made barrels mated to parts and wooden stocks crafted in Colt's Hartford, Connecticut, factory. The engraving was also done in America, at whatever level of embellishment suited the customer's tastes. Only 23,000 were made during its 11-year production run, which ended in 1889. In an 1884 retail catalog, I found the lowest-grade Model 1878 started at \$55. In today's money, that's over \$1,400. That being said, the Colt wasn't the shotgun of stagecoach guards, and for

most of us, it probably wasn't our Great Great Grandpappy's shotgun—unless he happened to own a railroad.

Though the Bohémienne looks 19th century, Pedersoli included quite a few modern upgrades to the classic hunting double. The most important new features are in the barrels. They

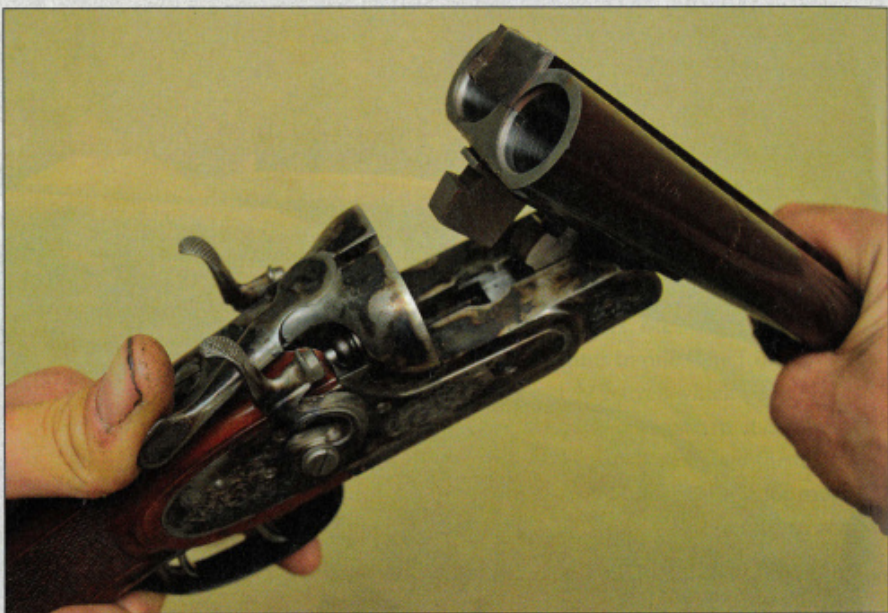
## SPECIFICATIONS

### Pedersoli La Bohémienne



Gauge: 12; 3-inch chambers • Barrels: 28 inches  
 OA Length: 45.69 inches • Weight: 7.71 pounds (empty)  
 Stock: Walnut • Sights: Brass bead front • Action: Break  
 Finish: Blued, browned, casehardened • Capacity: 2 • MSRP: \$2,055





Disassembling the Bohémienne is a simple matter of unloading the gun, removing the forend, breaking open the action and lifting off the monobloc barrel assembly.











**The Pedersoli comes with five screw-in choke tubes and a T-wrench to install them. The author tested the shotgun with the modified and full chokes in place.**

are chrome lined, rated for steel shot and have 3-inch chambers as well as removable chokes. By the way, don't try steel shot with anything tighter than a modified choke. It doesn't compress as much as lead shot, and you can ruin your muzzle. The shotgun comes with a set of five screw-in choke tubes (cylinder, improved cylinder, modified, improved modified, full) and a T-wrench to install and remove them. Two will always be in use. Never fire the gun without the chokes installed.

### *Two Guns In One*

Dual-trigger double-barreled shotguns had a lot of advantages over repeaters on the hunt and one big drawback. Because their actions were shorter, break-action side-by-sides were up to 4 inches shorter than repeaters with the same-length barrels. This made the side-by-sides fast handling and easy to get on target with. They also couldn't be beat for quick, accurate follow-up shots. Unlike a slide action,

there's no pumping to disturb the shooter's aim or distract from the target. In addition, and most importantly,

with two triggers, the side-by-side was really two guns in one. The front trigger fired the right barrel, which had an open choke for a broader pattern at close-range targets. The rear trigger fired the left barrel, which had a tighter choke for more distant targets. That tighter pattern could come in very handy for catching up with a fleeing animal if you missed with the first barrel. But, as good as they are, you may be wondering why side-by-side shotguns are hardly made today. This is where their major drawback comes into play: They are complicated guns, meaning they're expensive to make.

Operationally, the Bohémienne action opens by turning the lever at the top of the receiver to the right with the thumb of the shooting hand. I noticed that the lever on the gun I tested was pointing to the right when fully closed, suggesting that the action might not be fully locked. It turns out it's actually designed that way by Pedersoli to keep the gun latching up tightly for a long time. The cam moved by the lever to lock and unlock the action at the back of the rectangular lug when it is closed into its corresponding slot on the





top of the receiver is slightly oversized to compensate for wear over time.

For safety, Pedersoli uses rebounding hammers, a feature found on the Colt Model 1886 and other quality shotguns of the era. When a trigger is pulled, its hammer flies forward and slaps the exposed firing pin to drive it into the primer of



the loaded round, then bounces back to a rest position that separates its face from the head of the firing pin by 0.04 to 0.05 inches. In addition to the rebounding hammers, Pedersoli added a sliding tang safety button. This modern safety is out of place on a 19th-century-style hammered shotgun, but it's not without merit. With

The oil-rubbed Grade A+ walnut stock and forend both have fancy checkering done by a laser. Also note the pivoting release latch on the bottom of the forend.

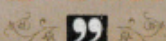
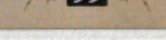
the tang safety on, a hunter can keep the hammers cocked while moving in the field so as to have only the delay of slipping it forward and off to make his or her shot at suddenly appearing game.

### *Doubling Down*

Pedersoli made this gun with the romantic hunter in mind, so I tested it out with Federal's #7½ Wing-Shok Upland rounds. This shot size is good for quite a few game birds and throws 1.13-ounce shot out at darn near the listed velocity, a screaming 1,500 fps. This high-velocity round reminds you what a 12 gauge can kick like. I set the barrels up as modified and full choke and, to my surprise, found no


**RE**


**The BENEFITS**  
 of keeping one foot in  
 the artisanal past of  
 gun-making show in  
 this **HANDSOME**  
**SHOTGUN.**


**PD**






A laser handles the floral engraving on the side locks, receiver and trigger plate before a skilled artisan chases it by hand.

appreciable difference in the patterns at 40 yards other than the left barrel centered its shot patterns about an inch lower and 2.5 inches farther to the right than the right barrel. This Federal Wing-Shok load carries 486 pellets on average, and 44 to 45 percent of them made their way into a 30-inch circle at 40 yards. It may not hit the animal with as many pellets as some loads, but the ones that connect have a lot of energy to transfer.

The Bohémienne is not something you are likely to find in your neighborhood gun shop. Fortunately, your local dealer can easily get one for you from the Italian Firearms Group (IFG) in Texas. This company represents Davide Pedersoli, Sabatti and FAIR in the American wholesale market. If it doesn't have the Pedersoli gun you want in stock, the company will know when it's expected and can take your dealer's order for the factory to ensure you get it as soon as it's available. IFG is also a wealth of technical information on the guns. For more information, visit [italianfirearmsgroup.com](http://italianfirearmsgroup.com) or call 800-450-1852. ★

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