



Akkar Triple Crown

A pyramidal three-barrelled “mammoth” handles better than you might expect, says Lewis Potter

I have always been enthusiastic about unusual firearms, some of which, in their day, proved to be less than practical or were simply overtaken by rapid technical development. The firearms I find most fascinating are those with more than two barrels. I have been fortunate enough to use a four-barrelled Lancaster and, though the “flat three” or side-by-side-by-side has eluded me, I am familiar with the three-barrelled guns produced in the early 20th century by Edwinson Green of Cheltenham.

These were built in the pyramidal form, with the third barrel on top, and I think this design has a visual attraction that cannot be bettered with a triple. It was therefore with keen interest that I unpacked the Akkar Triple Crown or Mammut (mammoth) for this review.

First impressions

My first impression is that it is appropriately named: it appears big, bulky and a handful. It is the kind of shotgun that would stand out on the retailer’s rack, rather like finding a wild boar in the back garden. If an inanimate object can ever



The pyramidal form of the three shotgun barrels and non-ejector extractor system is very clear

be said to have presence, this Akkar has it aplenty, from its sturdy stock and beaver-tail fore-end through the chunky action body to the imposing muzzles. In fact, in the US there is a version for self- or home-defence with 18in barrels, which would probably have a similarly discouraging effect on a baddie to looking down the wrong end of a blunderbuss.

That apart, in the UK we have the sporting gun version, which, when loaded with 3in cartridges, just about nudges 8¾lb on my scales, so it is never going to be an especially fast-handling gun. As expected, it is biased with the weight forwards, balancing about 1½in in front of the cross-pin when loaded – better than what you might expect. Realistically, the handling characteristics are not a lot different from some long-barrelled over-and-unders – a little deliberate, perhaps, but very smooth to swing with that inbuilt characteristic to follow through.

If this 28in 12-bore is thought to be a little on the heavy side, the importers will be bringing in lighter 20- and 28-bore versions and possibly a camouflage wildfowling model on special order if and when available. For me, though, the oil finish and neat chequering on this gun’s stock and fore-end and the pleasing quality of the walnut would be sufficient.

Technicalities

Starting with the barrels – because those are what make the Akkar obviously different – they are laid with the two bottom ones a little further apart than on most side-by-sides. This means that the top barrel can be fixed lower than on an over-and-under, resulting in a slightly slimmer vertical profile. The other advantage is that it reduces the height of the standing breech, which, with a break-open gun, makes for greater strength. The two side ribs and the bottom rib are solid, while the

NEED TO KNOW	
Bore	12-, 20- and 28-bore options will be available.
Barrels	28in, superior proofed in Birmingham and fitted with interchangeable chokes.
Action	break-open, non-ejector, manual safety and right/left/top barrel selection.
Features	three barrels and fast lock work.
Importer	Edgar Brothers, tel 01625 613177 or visit www.edgarbrothers.com .

top rib is ventilated and suitably narrow for a game gun. There is no short keel rib between the fore-end loop and barrel flats, a not unusual arrangement on some Turkish-made guns.

At the breech, the non-ejecting one-piece extractors are lifted by a traditional cam fixed at the front of the action bar knuckle. As for the impressive muzzle end, the barrels are screwed for interchangeable chokes, the usual set of five being provided, ranging from cylinder to full.

While the barrels hinge on the familiar hook (though surprisingly wide in this

“It would stand out on a retailer’s rack, rather like finding a wild boar in the back garden”

case), which aids lateral support, they are locked by only a single bite at the rear lump. Even more unusual is the fact that the top-lever returns to the central position when the gun is open and it is the engagement of the rear lump that pivots it across to enable the gun to be shut.

Lock work

One might expect the lock work of a triple-barrelled gun to be rather complicated, the sort of arrangement to give a gunsmith bad dreams. On this Triple Crown it is nothing of the sort – it’s a model of simplicity – though the Turkish designers appear to have the ability to make the potentially complicated quite straightforward.

This lock work is a variant on the common modified trigger-plate arrangement with, in this case, three hammers in line rather than two. The sears hang from the top strap and the lifter/inertia block engages the hammers



to produce the sequence right barrel, left barrel, top barrel. The changeover is mechanical and therefore independent of recoil, while the safety is of the non-automatic type. A single cocking arm or rod cocks all three locks, and the trigger-pulls proved to be suitably short and crisp.

On test

A hand-filling gun this Akkar may be, but it is a comfortable handful. The curve of the pistol grip, with its slight palm swell, suited my fairly big hands, and the beaver-tail fore-end is nicely shaped. At a 14½in length of pull, the stock, with its two-piece butt-pad, could have been a little longer for me but, with plenty of room on the fore-end, I opted for the old trick of moving my left hand slightly further forward.

Cartridges on test included Nobel Sport Prima, Eley VIP and Alphamax, Hull High Pheasant, Lyalvale Express Supreme Game and Super Game. With 30g loads such as the Nobel Sport Prima and Hull High Pheasant, the Triple Crown's weight absorbed the recoil, making it comfortable to shoot. Using the Eley Alphamax Magnum, with its 46g shot load in the top barrel with full-choke, I noticed the recoil but it was not unpleasant. When using it for real with the concentration on a bird, you would feel it even less.

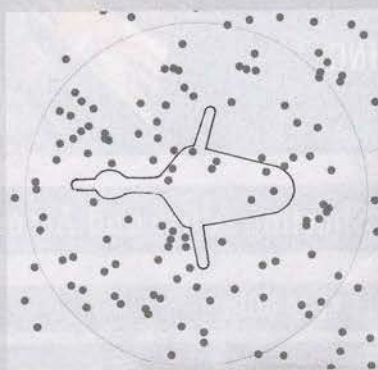
The visual bulk of the pyramidal barrel layout took a little bit of getting used to unless I concentrated properly on the "bird", but it could be fired as quickly as the finger could be made to squeeze the trigger. As for the weight, the days when I used to carry a 13lb big-bore all day with little discomfort for blowing out squirrel dreys are long gone, so my view now is that the 8lb-plus Triple Crown is a younger man's gun. However, I bet the 20- and 28-bore versions, when available, will be very handy guns whatever your age or fitness.

Above: For a three-barrelled gun, the lock work is delightfully simple

Below: The fine finish to the Akkar Triple Crown or Mammut

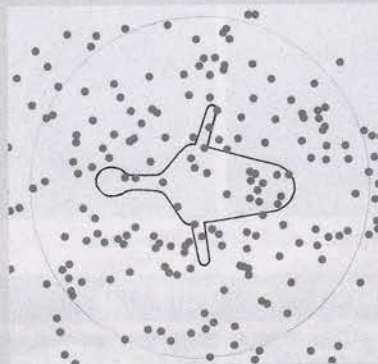


PATTERN SHEETS



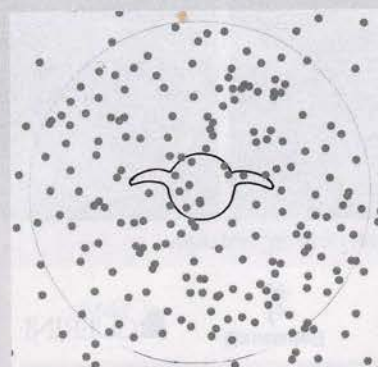
SHEET 1

Shot at 30 yards, nominally half-choke. Cartridge Nobel Sport Prima 28g No.7½ shot, fibre wad. This cartridge performed well in the Triple Crown, tending to throw patterns a little tighter in the middle. The driven partridge profile shows that, even if the shot were slightly misplaced, it would still produce an effective kill, especially in the middle 18in of the pattern.



SHEET 2

Shot at 30 yards, nominally three-quarter-choke. Cartridge was Lyalvale Express Supreme Game, 32g No.5 shot, fibre wad. A lot of hits on the pheasant profile, giving an indication of this cartridge/choke combination's usefulness at longer distances.



SHEET 3

Shot at 30 yards, nominally full-choke. Cartridge Eley Alphamax Magnum 46g No.3 shot, plastic wad. Some thinning of the pattern in places, but considering this cartridge would be normally used at a bigger quarry than the medium duck profile represents, it would produce effective, clean kills at greater distances than tested.

CONCLUSION

The Triple Crown is really fun and, to a great extent, that is what shooting is about. It is undeniably distinctive, but do I hear cries of "unsporting"? Well, if it is, so is double-gunning with a loader. As for its legal status, it is a part-2 firearm, the same as any side-by-side or over-and-under. I think the shooting world is a richer place when a maker is brave enough to put something like this "mammoth" Triple Crown on the market.

Construction	Well made yet simply designed and strongly constructed	19 / 20
Handling	Smooth, if a little deliberate with good swing characteristics	17 / 20
Finish	A good finish on both metalwork and wood	18 / 20
Fit	The two-piece butt-pad allows for a thicker spacer which, for taller shooters, would help balance the barrel weight	17 / 20
Value	There are sure to be some good deals with this being new to the market, and you do get 50 per cent more gun	17 / 20
SCORE		88 / 100