

PARKER REPRODUCTIONS

Dear Technoid,

I'm currently thinking of mortgaging the farm and selling the diamond mine for one of the last Parker Repros. I shoot a friend's 12-bore very well, but the arthritis seems to predict a light side-by-side in the near future.

Fool that I am, I didn't get a 28" straight-grip with double triggers when the things were available. Now the few remaining come in pistol-grip mode with splinter forearms (shot a friend's and that combination seemed distinctly awkward).

One of somebody's recent pontifications (keep 'em coming--love them all!) made a quick and undeveloped comment on the 28-gauge Parker. Not a complimentary one, either. One of you folks is a known and habitual user of a Parker repro, I understand.

To be short, how about considering a Report report on the gun, and on the wisdom of trying to score with what's left of the Repros? By the way, the 20-bores remaining have 26" barrels(!) and single triggers, in addition to the mismatch of grip and forearm. The bores on these guns seem to go WAY open from what they are marked, though the choking seems very well done indeed.

The gun is for short-range woodcock. My grouse gun may remain a 12, as grouse in public lands is very often like pheasant in the woods, at a bit of range.

Your humble and fawning public,

IC

Dear IC,

Ah, nothing nicer than a fawning public. The only problem with a fawning public is that it gets then down to the level where they might notice some feet of clay. Well, the Wizard of OZ got away with it until that stupid little dog pulled the curtain away, I might have a bit more time left before being discovered.

As to the Parker Repro, consider selling the farm, but keep the diamond mine. The gun most definitely gets mixed reviews. Here goes:

When Tom Skeuse at Reagent Chemical, Brunswick, NJ first introduced the little Parker Repros, I thought that they were neat guns, but a bit pricey for a boutique item. When Jaqua's, GU and Cape bought out his remaining 5,000 guns and lowered the price so much, I jumped in and bought a 28 gauge two barrel set with English grip, splinter forend and single trigger. I got mine from Cape and it had some of the best wood that I have seen on a shotgun. Really, really nice wood.

The gun was simply extraordinarily beautiful- a little bon-bon of the first order. It came with chrome snap caps fitted into the leather case. I added a rosewood and brass cleaning rod in the little slots provided in the case and also a chrome square oil bottle in the space provided for that. I used to put that open case on my desk and just stare at the gun. Fit and finish was excellent. Detailing was perfect. I mean, here was this absolutely gorgeous gun and I owned it! Wow! I was rooting a furrow right through hog heaven.

Then I started to shoot the gun. The single trigger started to double. Since Reagent Chemical was handling the repairs and was only a modest drive away, I took it there and they courteously sent it off for repairs. This cured the doubling for an entire year.

Then one of the ejectors went south. Back again. Courteous treatment and gun was returned repaired.

Then one of my internet readers mentioned that his Parker Repro had misaligned barrels. I tested for this and found that the left barrel of the 28" barrel set threw its pattern very far off center. It also had .040" of choke! I know that it was supposed to be Full choke, but in a 28 gauge that would equal about .025". This choke had never been cut. Parker Repros chrome the barrels before cutting the chokes, so that you can easily modify the choke area. The full choke was still chromed, thus never cut. I sent it back again and they opened the choke and regulated it for me. (By the way, all my 28 gauge chokes were on the tight side, not open as you have heard of the 20s.)

This seemed to solve things for a while. Many of my quail shooting buddies bought the 28s and a few also laid in some 20s. There were a lot of trigger problems with the single trigger.

I am a pretty good sized guy and was having real problems getting used to the absurdly short and low stock. This may have fitted the average American guy at the turn of the century, but if you are over six feet tall, you are going to find the gun to be a very, very poor fit. Good looking, yes. Good shooting for bigger guys, no. This was doubly surprising as I met the three sons of the originator of the Repro and they were all well over 6'2", so I imagine the Skeuse senior was also a large man.

The problem is that the stock comes with the gorgeous skeleton butt plate and heavy rounding at the top. In order to make the stock even remotely fit me, I figured that I would have to cut off the rounded part and add over 2" of spacers. Since this would be like painting a mustache on the Mona Lisa, I started looking around for a new owner for the gun. I ended up selling it to a friend (of short stature) who already owned four of the Repros and was familiar with what I went through on my gun. My gun is now back at the shop with a bunch of other Repros getting the trigger worked on.

Everyone who bought the gun said that they loved it, but no one shoots them. They were made to amazing tolerances though. When we went quail hunting, four of us used the Repro 28s and one evening I was able to put each and every barrel on my receiver. They all fit absolutely perfectly. CNC machinery is an amazing thing.

Now, most of the people I know who have them are setting them aside waiting for the prices to go up. They are still just as good looking as ever and I sort of wish that I had mine back just to look at. I do not wish that I had it back to shoot. As a working gun, it just did not work for me.

As to the remaining guns, I really cannot tell you whether or not to get a pistol grip stock and beavertail forend on the little gun. That is your personal choice. The beavertail is a very modest one and not at all intrusive, while the pistol grip stock is also modest and really does help control the gun. What you give up in sleekness, you gain in practicality. As to 26" vs 28" barrels, that I also personal choice. The Repro 20s are a good bit heavier than the 28s. I found the short 26" barrels on the 28 to be very, very quick- too much so for my taste. They might work better on the 20.

As to the double trigger vs single trigger- I would not buy the gun with the single trigger. Unfortunately, only 10% of the guns that they made had the double trigger so you may have to live with that telltale "blamblam". Maybe someone can get them to work right. If you check Gun List and the other ads, I am sure that you can turn something up from a private person. The big gun shops have always tried to get "pre-remainder" prices for the guns.

So there you go. One man's journey into the world of the boutique Parker Repro. I am sure that other's have had different experiences, but this is what I have seen.

Best regards,

Bruce Buck

A sadder, but wiser Technoid.