

Lanber 2097 Sporting Lux



The Lanber may be the best buy for a shotgunner on a tight budget, and these days most of us are. That's because this over-under has all the features a budding sporting clays enthusiast needs and wants; this gun has good feel, it simply keeps working and working, and you will find this one very inexpensive. That is if you can find one. The average gun shop does not carry the Lanber, and those shops that tend to cater to target gun buyers don't, either. You can find a dealer on the company website or contact the importer at Camfour in Massachusetts (see accompanying sidebar).

I've been shooting a Lanber 2097 Sporting Lux a lot, and, honestly, I can't find a thing wrong with it—despite the near giveaway price. Several years ago I wrote about a Lanber Sporting gun in these pages, and it received outstanding marks from me then. Tragically, when I called that importer, one based in Georgia, to ask if he would like to see a copy of that *Sporting Clays* column, I found out that he and his salesman had been killed in a car accident the day before.

It was many months before another company got the contract to import these shotguns from Spain. Just as the center for gun making in Italy is the area around the town of Brescia, the center of Spanish gun making is around the town of Eibar, which is situated just west of the Pyrenees Mountains that separate Spain from France. Lanber guns are produced in a nearby town, Bixkaia.

In the mid-1950s, *Outdoor Life's* Jack O'Connor and Colonel Charles Askins discovered the guns of Spain, side-by-sides from companies like Victor Sarasqueta, AyA, Ugartechea, Grulla, and others. Many of these double guns were patterned after the British side-by-sides, although the doubles from Spain sold for a fraction of the price of their British counterparts. The Spanish gun trade grew with their discovery by American outdoor writers, and more companies eventually started making outstanding double guns, including Arietta, Arrizabalaga, Garbi, and others. Today, these fine side-by-sides are still great bargains, but not like they were five or six decades ago. That's because these guns are now much in demand.

Very few Spanish makers build an over-under, Lanber being one exception. Interestingly, it appears the world has not discovered these stack-barrel double guns because Lanbers still wear low price tags. As already stated, you get a lot for your dollar with a Lanber.

The model I'm currently testing is the 2097 Sporting Lux. However, this company makes four other competition over-under models, plus its hunting line of six additional over-un-



The Lanber 2097 Sporting Lux features a receiver with Perazzi-like scalloping.

ders, including a lightweight with an aluminum alloy receiver and a slug gun double. All the competition shotguns are 12 gauges, as are most of its hunting double guns, though a 20 is available in two hunting models.

All these shotguns use the same action/receiver, which is simplicity personified: the barrels pivoting on trunnions, the lock-up via a receiver-wide bolt in the bottom of the receiver that moves forward upon gun closing to engage two lugs, one built on each side of the bottom of the monobloc. This is the type of lock-up that we see on many other over-unders these days. No doubt the under bolt keeps moving forward slightly

SPECIFICATIONS

Action: Over-under with under-locking lug plus two lugs built into bottom of receiver; barrels pivot on trunnions

Gauge: 12 with 3" chambers

Weight: 7 lbs., 13 ozs. as tested with 30" barrels

Barrels: 28" and 30"

Chokes: Five extended screw chokes included

Stock: Dimensions: length of pull—14^{5/8}", drop at comb—1^{1/8}", drop at heel—2^{1/8}"

Suggested Retail Price: \$1,050; \$960 for the 2097 Sporting version (as opposed to the Lux tested)

Manufacturer/Importer: Lanber in Spain/Camfour, 65 Westfield Industrial Park, Dept. SC, Westfield, MA 01085; (800) 545-6952; www.lanberusa.com



The fore-end is tipped with a schnabel flare.



The recoil pad is rubber and rounded off, especially at the top, for ease of mounting.

with wear. I'm betting it's replaceable—as would be the trunnions. But I'm also betting you would have to put one heck of a pile of shotshells through these Lanber over-unders before you would ever have to replace one or the other. Further, two lugs milled into the base of the monobloc nestle into two milled-out areas in the rear base of the receiver, adding more lock-up strength.

The barrels are not only deeply blued, it's obvious they were well polished before the bluing took place because to my eye, the bluing is flawless. The vent rib is not tapered and is nice and wide, at .470". That rib is matted, and there's a straight groove going down the center. There's a red optic-type sight at the muzzle and no mid bead. My test gun has 30" barrels, but 28" tubes are available, both lengths with 3" chambers. There are vented side panels between the barrels. The 30" barrels weigh 3 lbs., 7.5 ozs. on my digital postal scale.

The barrels are .728" in inner diameter, so by European standards, they are slightly over-bored. Five extended screw chokes are included in the 2097 Sporting Lux package. The one marked cylinder measures .730", so it's .002" larger than the bore. The choke marked xxx measures .722", the xxx .712", the xx .701", and the x .691". The choke markings are visible when inserted in the barrels, so you don't have to remove the chokes to see what's inserted.

The fore-end snaps on and off easily. So many shotguns I test have fore-ends that are extremely hard to remove. However, there's no wobble or looseness to the Lanber fore-end once it's in place. The fore-end weighs 10.5 ozs., and it has that schnabel flare at the end. Those who point their fore-end forefinger toward the target don't tend to like this feature, but I'm not one who points that forefinger.

The checkering on the fore-end and pistol grip seems to be done with a computerized laser machine because the whole checkering appearance is just about perfect. It's a tight checkering pattern, too, with many diamonds to the inch. The walnut stock is certainly handsome enough, considering the gun's



The checkering, likely created via a sophisticated laser machine, is well done.



The Lanber 2097 Sporting Lux comes with five extended screw chokes.

low price. There's a rubber recoil pad that's well rounded on the top for easy mounting, and the side edges are adequately rounded, too. The pad is separated from the stock via a black spacer. I'm betting the stocks are machine inletted, but if they are, I can find no fault since wood-to-metal fit could not be better. There is no pistol grip swell.

The polished receiver is handsomely engraved on both sides forward of the Perazzi-like scalloping. There's also one heck of a lot of engraving coverage on the receiver bottom. I'm certain this is not hand engraving, but the looks are still good. The trigger guard and opening lever are in blue and are engraved, as well as the polished top tang. Most of the receiver innards wear a good polish, but there are some tool marks. The sides of the monobloc are not jeweled, but the polish is good. Some say the primary purpose of jewellery is to act as tiny oil reservoirs, so if you buy a Lanber, make certain all the parts that rub always wear a coating of grease.

The inertia-style trigger is gold plated. The pulls do have creep, and they are heavy. I always thought my Lyman Digital Trigger Pull Gauge weighed let-offs a little heavy. My Lanber 2097 Sporting Lux triggers go off at 6 lbs. with the first barrel, 7 lbs. with the second barrel.

Lanber says its shotguns get pulse-plasma-nitriding technology, a process that gives the metal superlative strength as well as protection. The ejectors never failed in all my shooting. The receiver is made of high-strength alloy steel, while the barrels are made of chrome molybdenum steel.

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