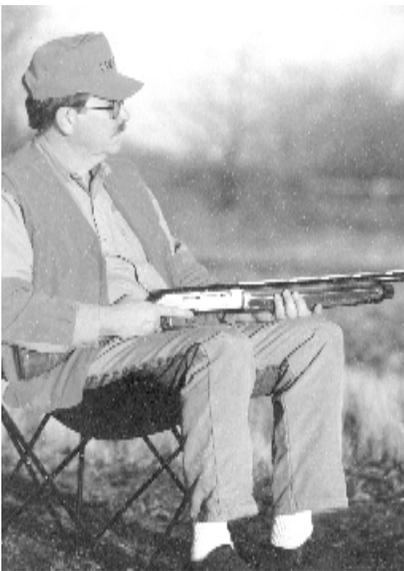


Beretta AL 390 Silver Mallard

Retail Price...\$860



Our recommendation: We liked the Silver Mallard better than the X2 3-inch gun: it kicked less and handled better, in our view.



SPECIFICATIONS (3 in.)

Warranty: 1 year

METAL FINISH	Blued	BARREL LENGTH	28 in.
WEIGHT (EMPTY)	7.5 lbs.	UNPLUGGED CAPACITY ...	4+1 rds.
OVERALL LENGTH	48.3 in.	STOCK MATERIAL	Walnut
PULL LENGTH	14.5 in.	ACTION TYPE	Gas/Semiauto
DROP @ HEEL	2.4 in.	TRIGGER PULL WT.	4.1 lbs.
DROP @ COMB	1.3 in.	Safety	Reversible Button

The 3-inch, Italian-made Beretta looked great and felt great, due in large part to a slight bit of cast-off in the stock, which, like the drop, can be altered. The Beretta's walnut stock had cut checkering, a glossy finish and a thin but effective rubber buttpad. Some hunters won't like the finish because it can alert gamebirds.

appears to have no finish on its interior. A good coat of linseed oil on the interior wood surfaces would do much to improve the life of the forend, we believe. The 28-inch barrel, like those on the other two new guns, is swamped. Unlike the other two new guns, the exterior of the Beretta's highly polished barrel is perfectly smooth, without any trace of waviness. The barrel is threaded for the Mobilchoke SP tubes, three of which came with the gun along with a cleverly designed wrench. The 1/2-inch wide vent rib is supported on smooth and attractive trusses, and it leads the eye evenly from the top of the matte-finished aluminum-alloy receiver to the 1/8-inch-diameter front bead. The sides of the re-

ceiver are brush-finished and have impressed "engraving" in a muted scroll pattern. The matte-black finish of the action sets off the gold-colored trigger well. The safety is a cross bolt located at the front of the guard, and it is reversible for lefties. It may be put on only when the gun is cocked. This gun has an auto-resetting magazine cutoff, which permits safe unloading without the need to cycle rounds through the action. The feature can also be used for single-loading, as when shooting trap. The bolt locks into an extension of the barrel, steel against steel. Optional extras for the AL390 Silver Mallard include modular stock and forend counterweights to vary balance. All in all, the Beretta is

a well-thought-out shotgun.

Higher marks for recoil reduction go to Beretta as well, because that gun kicked noticeably less than either the new Browning or Winchesters when loaded with 3-inch magnums, yet the Beretta weighed 0.6-pound less than the Winchester X2s and 0.2-pound less than the Browning. A lighter shotgun with less recoil? How can you beat that?

GUN TESTS® Recommends

✓ If you want modern technology with precise assembly, get yourself an \$860 Beretta AL390 Silver Mallard. Our sample was clearly head and shoulders above the Winchester Super X2 3-inch gun, \$725, for recoil reduction and also visibly had more care in its construction.

✓ Likewise, if we needed a 3 1/2-inch gun, we'd choose the \$735 Browning Gold Hunter or Gold Stalker over the \$855 3 1/2-inch Winchester Super-X2. Though the guns are very similar because of their shared components, we thought the Brownings handled better overall. ●

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