

action and, as we expected, the bolt locked up nicely. We checked headspace, found it to be acceptable, and proceeded to fire our "Brownchester" with no problems. Feed and function were fully as good as either gun with all its own "family" parts installed.

The new Winchester Super X2 3 1/2-inch gun had a black synthetic stock that was, at first handling, very slippery, much like the Stalker's synthetic stock. The checkering worked well, but the forend was not checkered on the bottom. We'd like to see the checkering cover a greater area. However, we handled this gun with rough-out leather gloves, like we'd wear on a cold-weather hunt, and the gloves totally eliminated any slippery feeling. The rough leather surface felt almost like Velcro fasteners against the black plastic stock. There is no gloss or glitz whatever to the Winchester. Every visible part of this gun was finished dead-flat black. The Winchester and Super-X2 logos on left and right sides of the receiver are boldly impressed, but are in no way highlighted. Even the cartridge carrier on the bottom is flat black, and like that of the new Browning it swung easily out of the way to load the magazine. The trigger and bolt were the same flat black as the ventilated rubber recoil pad, and all that lack of reflective surfaces gave the Winchester a very business-like appearance. The 3 1/2-inch X2s, offered in 24-, 26, and 28-inch varieties, are only available in black-matte synthetic finishes, like Browning's 3 1/2-inch Stalker. On the 3-inch gun, the Winchester Field wood-stocked model had nicely finished wood and deep bluing on its receiver and barrel, and we thought it looked on par with the Beretta 3-inch Silver Mallard.

The Super-X2s' 28-inch barrels had a 3/8-inch wide and quite high

Winchester Super X2 3 1/2-in.
Winchester Super X2 3 in.

Retail Price...\$855

Retail Price...\$725

SPECIFICATIONS (3 1/2 in.)

Warranty: 1 year

METAL FINISH	Matte Black	BARREL LENGTH	28 in.
WEIGHT (EMPTY)	8.1 lbs.	UNPLUGGED CAPACITY ...	4+1 rds.
OVERALL LENGTH	48.9 in.	STOCK MATERIAL	Synthetic
PULL LENGTH	14.1 in.	ACTION TYPE	Gas/Semiauto
DROP @ HEEL	1.5 in.	TRIGGER PULL WT.	6 lbs.
DROP @ COMB	1.3 in.	Safety	Reversible Button

SPECIFICATIONS (3 in.)

Warranty: 1 year

METAL FINISH	Blued	BARREL LENGTH	28 in.
WEIGHT (EMPTY)	8.0 lbs.	UNPLUGGED CAPACITY ...	4+1 rds.
OVERALL LENGTH	49 in.	STOCK MATERIAL	Walnut
PULL LENGTH	14.3 in.	ACTION TYPE	Gas/Semiauto
DROP @ HEEL	2 in.	TRIGGER PULL WT.	6.2 lbs.
DROP @ COMB	1.7 in.	Safety	Reversible Button

Our recommendation: Though the X2s are solid guns, we think the other shotguns are better buys.

ventilated ribs affixed to them. Like the Browning, the X2s accepted Invector choke tubes. The exterior of the synthetic gun's barrel was matte-finished, and that disguised the same wavy surface that was brought out on the Browning Gold Hunter by its glossy finish. The X2s' barrels were marked as having been made in Belgium, and like the Browning's, were swamped. The front of the ribs had 1/8-inch-diameter pearl-finished beads. The ribs were higher than the action top, which in certain light caused the eye to see two levels for the "rear" sight plane, and we found that to be less desirable than the even top plane of the Browning's setup.

We found no function problems with any of these guns. There was no discernible difference in triggers between any of the guns when actually firing the guns at a moving target. The new guns fed, fired and ejected short and long cartridges

perfectly. Although the Winchester manuals declared that the Super X2s weren't supposed to function with 7/8- or 1-ounce target loads, we encountered no problems with 1 1/8-ounce trap loads. The Browning Gold Hunter/Stalker gave less felt recoil than the old Super-X, but a bit more than the X2s, which had the least felt recoil of all the guns. The difference in felt recoil between the new Browning and the new Winchesters is entirely due to their weight difference, because the guns use identical gas systems.

**Browning Gold Hunter
Browning Gold Stalker**

Our recommendation: We thought these 3 1/2-inch guns handled better than their stablemates. We'd pick them over the X2.

Our test Browning Gold Hunter was a handsome gun. It had a glossy wine-red finish to its walnut stock that set off the dull black of