

Fit and finish were exceptionally well done throughout this shotgun. The forend, like that of the 870, had a bit of sideplay in the fully locked position. We liked the provisions for sling swivels, one molded into the buttstock, the other underneath the barrel-attaching ring. With a 14.25-inch length of pull and a rounded heel to the buttstock, this gun mounted easily and was long enough to keep your fist off your face when lighting off those steel-filled 3.5-inch roman candles. The gun's weight kept recoil manageable, and we'll tell you more about recoil later in this report. The pump-gun enthusiast will find this gun's controls all very simple and intuitive, except for a button underneath the forend that bears special mention. If you want to unload the gun, you first press that button and HOLD IT DOWN as you work the slide to eject the round in the chamber. The act of pressing and holding the button prevents the next round from being released into the action. We found this to be a bit tricky. It required practice. With the chamber clear, you insert your finger into the loading port and manually release the rounds from the magazine one at a time. The safety was a cross-bolt located right where it belonged, at the front of the trigger guard, where it fell naturally under the extended trigger finger of right-handers. Just in front of that, on the right side, was the bolt release. The release showed a red dot when the bolt was locked fully forward. It also served as a cocking indicator. Loading and unloading the gun were very easy, the magazine accepting three 3.5-inch shells or four 3-inch or 2.75-inch shells. The trigger release was both creepy and heavy. It broke at just over 7 pounds, which is too much, in our view. It needed serious work.

On the good side, the entire trigger group is easily detachable by pulling two pins. The barrel-attaching nut is the tool for this job. It has a button on its nose for starting the

## Benelli Nova 12 Gauge 3.5-inch

Price.....\$425

### SPECIFICATIONS

Warranty: 1 Year

|                         |               |                         |           |
|-------------------------|---------------|-------------------------|-----------|
| FINISH.....             | RealTree Camo | MAGAZINE CAPACITY ..... | 3 of 4    |
| WEIGHT (w/REDUCER) .... | 8.3 lbs.      | STOCK MATERIAL .....    | SYNTHETIC |
| WEIGHT (w/o REDUCER) .  | 7.8 lbs.      | STOCK LOP .....         | 14.25 in. |
| OVERALL LENGTH .....    | 47.6 in.      | STOCK DROP @ COMB.....  | 1.3 in.   |
| BARREL LENGTH .....     | 26 in.        | STOCK DROP @ HEEL ..... | 2.1 in.   |
| ACTION TYPE.....        | Pump          | TRIGGER PULL WT. ....   | 7.4 lbs.  |

**Our recommendation: This shotgun performed very well and was cleverly designed, we thought. It's well worth its price. The black version of the gun sells for \$357.**

*The Nova (shown here in the black synthetic finish) breaks into just four major components, which makes maintenance and cleaning a snap.*



*Two easily removed pins permit removing the trigger group for cleaning. The forend nut is the tool to remove the pins. The "checkering" worked very well.*

*The recoil reducer didn't seem to help much with hot loads, but it helped cut the kick of lighter loads.*

pins, and the inside of the nut grips the heads of the pins to pull them out. With the trigger group removed the bolt comes easily away from the twin forend arms. This is a remarkably straightforward design. Reassembly is also very easy. The thick rubber buttstock is removable. This is not for ammo storage, but to accept a recoil-reducing hydraulic device that was already installed when we got the gun. Loaded with magnum 3.5-inch shells, we tested the gun with the device in place and then removed it and fired max loads

again, to assess the difference. One of our shooters thought recoil to be far more pleasant with the device removed. Another test shooter could tell no difference with the device in or out, and that was a blind test where he didn't know if the device was installed. With light loads, however, we could feel a distinct reduction in felt recoil with the device installed. Removing the device brought the empty weight of this gun down to 7.8 pounds. If we owned the gun, we'd organize a lead-filled tube to insert into the