

# A 21st-century masterpiece

Boss & Co gives an 'in-the-white' preview of its latest addition to the 1812 Edition family: the ambidextrous side-by-side, sidelever 20-bore



Above: Boss & Co's '1812 Edition' uses a bespoke world-first action, developed over four years

world has previously made a side-by-side shotgun with a lever for the left side of the action and one for the right.

This unique set-up, debuting on the 1812 Edition, allows the gun to be easily adapted for a right- or left-handed shooter. Crucially, both levers are filed and shaped by the same actioner and engraved by the same engraver at the same time, forgoing the need for a new owner – who may need to have the gun adapted for their dominant hand in the future when it has been passed on to another generation or sold on – to trace the original craftsmen many years after the gun was first created.

Since no gunmaker has ever created an ambidextrous side-by-side sidelever gun, the expert craftsmen at Boss &

and the first British over-and-under barrel configuration.

DeMoulas has always considered it vital to maintain and develop that reputation, which is why Boss & Co is set to unveil its second ground-breaking shotgun mechanism in the space of just two years. Described as a product of "the early stages of Boss & Co's second golden era of gunmaking", the new piece in the 1812 Edition range offers the remarkable and unprecedented combination of a 20-bore shotgun with a purpose-built sidelever action.

We have been allowed a sneak peak of the product here 'in the white' – unfinished, without engraving – to fully show this bespoke action, developed and created entirely by hand by Boss & Co.

Despite a rich 210-year history of crafting sidelever, side-by-side guns, neither Boss & Co nor any other gunmaker in the

66 The new piece offers a 20-bore shotgun with a side-lever action 99

Co were challenged with designing a bespoke action that maintains the company's signature slim, elegant shape while accommodating the complex ambidextrous sidelever mechanism.

While solving the problems of creating such an action could never be described as simple, they were eased somewhat by the fact that in late 2020, 111 years after Robertson's last major innovation, Boss & Co revealed its first all-new creation of the current era after four years of development.

The first in the 1812 Edition range, the 12-bore introduced a groundbreaking ambidextrous sidelever action to Boss & Co's iconic over-and-under shape, creating a multi-generational gun suitable for both right- and left-handed shooters. Such a shotgun had never before been manufactured and thus demanded new technical solutions, some of which were put to use in creating the ambidextrous, side-by-side 20-bore. It is an attitude of innovation that resonates precisely with Robertson's vision for the company, which was to continually reinvent the art of gunmaking – a feat he achieved three times.

The first was with the development and manufacture of the Boss single trigger, which Robertson began working on in 1890 and spent three years perfecting. Although many of his contemporaries dismissed the idea of a truly reliable single-trigger gun, Robertson was so confident in his creation that not only did he welcome the press to fire the fully functional prototype, he also created an ingenious showcase as further proof. This was a unique triple-barrel shotgun equipped with the single-trigger action, which was fired repeatedly to demonstrate its ability to discharge all three barrels faultlessly, load after load.



The side levers on the new 20-bore are both filed and shaped by the same actioner at the same time



Boss's exquisite new 20-bore is intended as a multi-generational masterpiece, a 21st-century heirloom

In 1897 and with the reliability of his guns proven, Robertson turned his attention to developing the sleekest, most innovative and most beautiful shotgun on the market by equipping it with an entirely new type of ejector.

More compact, refined and lighter than anything then available, the ejector slotted seamlessly into the top of the gun to create a flowing line that had never before been possible in gunmaking. Named the Boss Hammerless Ejector, it was of such exceptional quality and ingenuity that it is still used in every Boss & Co gun built today, providing a low-slung silhouette that has led to the firm's products being likened to the 'racehorses of Best guns'.

In 1909, little more than a decade later, Robertson's quest for visual perfection continued with the creation of the

Boss unmatched over-and-under gun. Although over-and-unders were readily available from other makers, Robertson's was not only the first from Britain but was also lightweight and slender at a time when all other examples of the style were heavy, bulky and awkward to handle. This meant the new Boss & Co design instantly set a benchmark that is still much limited.

## PERFECTION

That tradition of excellence, innovation and foresight has prevailed throughout the 210-year history of Boss & Co, during which the pursuit of perfection has restricted production to little more than 10,000 shotguns and rifles. Each new shotgun or rifle is meticulously hand-crafted at the maker's Kew, West London, workshops to the exact specifications of the buyer in a process that takes an average of 1,400 hours.

And it is a way of working that DeMoulas continues to embrace because it is such care and attention to detail that differentiates 'manufacture' from true craftsmanship – and which enables the evolution of design that has been proven to result in invention.

There will undoubtedly be a great deal more to come from Boss & Co in both the near and distant future. ■

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