

50 YEARS IN THE MAKING

Richard Atkins tests the latest incarnation of what is probably the most successful clay target semi-auto of all time



Richard Atkins has been shooting clays since the early 1960s. He is a prolific author of articles on shotguns, cartridges and technique

Introduced in 1963, the Remington 1100 has just passed its 50th anniversary. I was delighted to get my hands on the latest model of a gun I grew up with. My first encounter with a Remington gun was a borrowed 1100 Trap at a club DTL competition. Despite only having it on loan when I won the cup, we remained close all these years.

World-class Sporting competitor Duncan Lawton, from Staffordshire, used an 1100 to win many major Sporting events. In 1980, he recorded the first ever 100-straight at a registered English Sporting competition, and on a testing course – second place hit 93, even with England squad members also competing. Duncan put the Remington 1100 on the international map when he took second place in the FITASC world championships in France. The following year, he became the youngest person to win the FITASC Sporting world championships, also with his Remington 1100. A great many 1100s were sold thanks to Duncan's tremendous achievements.

Recipe for success

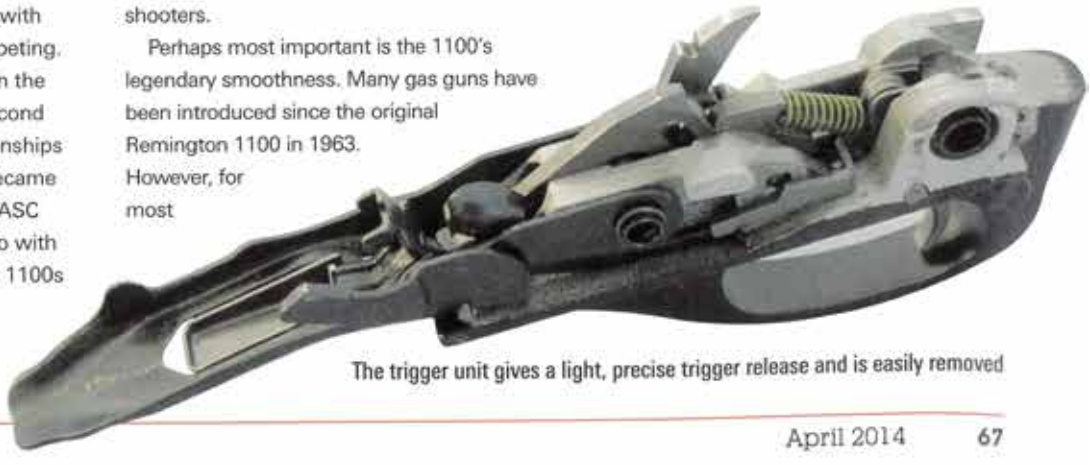
The 1100 took the American clay-shooting world by storm. Many top shooters used it to win major events, particularly in Trap and Skeet events (Sporting was in its infancy back then). Sales were good and the news spread. Soon, Remington 1100s were turning up everywhere. Over 4 million have now sold worldwide.

It proved to be a gun that naturally seemed to fit many shooters, even of differing build. It picks out targets effortlessly and handles in a readily controlled manner. Shooters liked the trigger pull more than any semi-auto before: light and controllable, it's not as fast as the more refined over-and-unders but many found this advantageous. Those few extra milliseconds of hammer travel allowed shooters to fine-tune final aim even as they pulled the trigger, and it suited many successful trophy shooters.

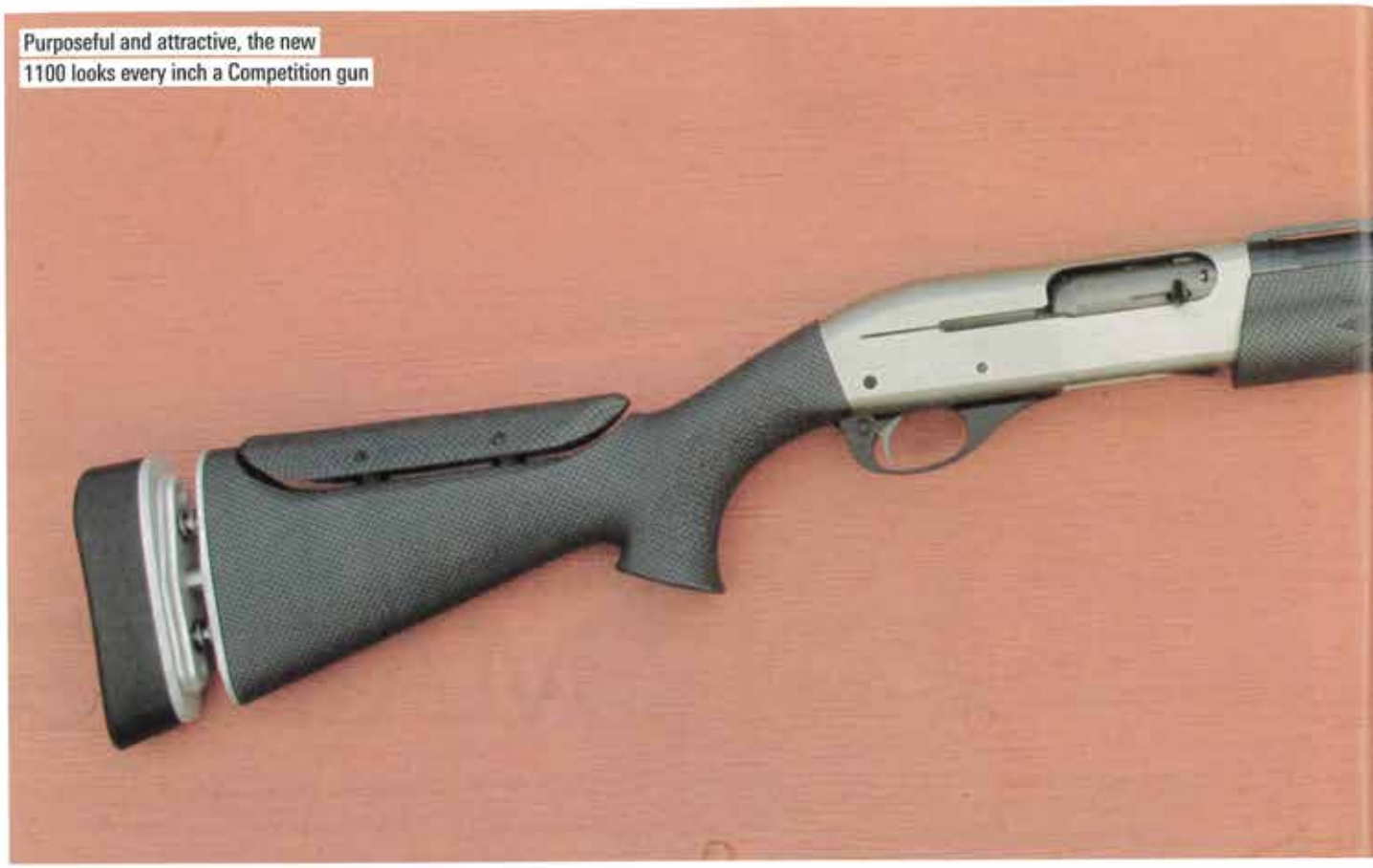
Perhaps most important is the 1100's legendary smoothness. Many gas guns have been introduced since the original Remington 1100 in 1963. However, for most experienced semi-auto users, the Remington 1100 remains the benchmark for other gas-operated semi-autos.

What's new?

The latest Competition model has a totally new look. Instead of the high-gloss lacquered American walnut stock and forend, it has a synthetic stock with striking carbon graphite finish that stands out and attracts positive comments at the clay range. Better still, it is not just stronger and impervious to the elements, it has an adjustable cheekpiece for perfect fit and adapts easily from a Sporting to a Trap set-up. It boasts a recoil-absorbing Ken Rucker butt pad too. The comfortable beavertail forend remains long with finely impressed chequering for a secure grip and offers plenty of hold position choices for different arm lengths.



The trigger unit gives a light, precise trigger release and is easily removed


Purposeful and attractive, the new 1100 looks every inch a Competition gun

The breech bolt is redesigned: no longer chrome-plated or engraved, it has a nickel-Teflon low-friction armour coating. The twin transfer bars, piston and gas system have all been upgraded. The 1100 is built to take a vast number of rounds and will soak up everything a shooter can give it. A destruction test in 1978 took 24,000 rounds to see a small part fail – it's even stronger today.

The Competition model sports Remington extended interchangeable Target chokes tubes made by Briley, so there is no need to carry extra barrels with different choke as in the early days.

The Ken Rucker Auto-Buster recoil reducer, complete with Supercell butt pad, makes the Remington 1100 even smoother to shoot. With the whole gun moving backwards into the shoulder, the springs compress, masking any semi-auto shuffle. The adjustable cheekpiece allows ample weight. Felt recoil is the least of any gun I have fired. It's a pussycat to shoot, a point readily discovered by all who've tried it.

I tried the Remington on DTL, ABT and Sporting clay layouts and enjoyed every moment. I used two cheekpiece spacers (supplied) higher for Trap than Sporting. It was easy to go from a 60/40 Sporting pattern placement to a shade higher for Trap. This competition model is specifically tuned to cycle target ammunition in the 24 and 28-gram range, with a variety of brands being consumed without any hitch in fibre and plastic wads. It also cycled some 21-gram loads. More residue was left in the cone area of the over-bored barrel (18.7mm/.736in diameter) with some fibre wad loads, but not with plastic.

Handling

The 1100 Competition comes up sweetly with the cheekpiece adjusted to suit the height and cast desired. It's easy to get


The 24-gram International's shot is hard and well graded


A more beefy gas system is as smooth and more reliable than the original



The extended choketubes are readily interchanged using the supplied wrench

a figure-of-eight alignment of the small central metal bead sight on the 9mm-wide and non-reflecting top rib. These beads are not intended for aiming but are ideal for regularly checking gun mount, particularly for the gun-up Trap disciplines.

At over 9lb, it's a full-weight gun but feels less in the hand. Balance is on the interface between the forend and receiver, giving a forward feel for steadiness. The 30in, gloss-blued, single-barrel and top rib ensures it points even better than the original. It's ideal for picking out Sporting clays, whether close or distant, and works well for Trap.

Some people cite the need to clean semi-autos regularly as a negative aspect, but it's not such a chore. Unscrewing the magazine tube cap that retains the forend allows the barrel to slip off the receiver and magazine tube with minimal effort. A wipe over the gas system and occasional blast from a cleaner, then light oiling (Rem Oil sprayed on and wiped off is ideal) with a similar brush out of the action can be quickly done.

Worth noting is the ease with which the magazine is loaded. Drop one cartridge into the chamber with the gun on its side, then rotate the gun to show its novel gate latch in the cartridge lifter.

Press this with the cartridge tip and a continued push inserts it into the magazine, simultaneously closing the breech without having to press any buttons. It's slick, easy and fast, making a great boon for flush-type Sporting events because you can load as you shoot.

I'm sure that those who try the Remington 1100 Competition will like it. Recoil does not detract from your performance at the end of a long competition and may keep some of us able to compete for a few years longer than we otherwise might. ■





The spring-loaded Ken Rutter recoil system and Supercell butt pad soaks up even more recoil

Tech Spec

Maker:	Remington
Model:	1100 Competition
Action:	Gas operated semi-auto
Barrels length:	30in
Gauge / chamber	12g /70mm
Overall length:	51.5in
Pull length:	14.5in
Trigger pull:	3lb 5oz
Special Features:	Adjustable cheekpiece. Synthetic stock with carbon fibre finish Ken Rucker Auto-Buster recoil pad butt
Website:	www.sportsmk.co.uk