



Akkar's Churchill *a Turkish delight*

John McDougall

For shooters who'd invite the extra challenge in the clay target sports or those who enjoy hunting quail and other upland birds with a lighter gun, the 28-gauge is certainly an option. Although not quite capable of handling a 28-gram load in a 2¾" cartridge, generally packing around 15/16th of an ounce or ¾oz, the 28-gauge is a nice shotgun to use being light, fast and when pointed in the right direction, just as capable of breaking most targets you'll be presented with in sporting clays. This is more so on a skeet ground but absolutely delightful for quail hunting.

To this end Nioa have sourced a smart little 28-gauge from renowned and highly respected Turkish gunmaker Akkar. Their Churchill 828 Silver is the subject of this

review and I have to concede the more I used the down-sized 28-gauge the more I enjoyed it. I won't pretend the Churchill is any more than an entrance level shotgun in its class, but with a five-year warranty and attractive pricing, the Australian distributors are clearly backing it.

Barrels

I had to look closely at these to ascertain whether they were blued or hard black chromed, as is the case with some brands of shotguns from Turkey. My final assessment was they're blued but not on a highly polished barrel surface we've come to expect with many modern shotguns, especially compared to those made in Japan. I can't really be critical of such a design, which looks more like the barrels are

rubbed down with 1200 grade emery or finer as I encourage a matte finish on guns, especially those for hunting.

With barrels weighing 1.14kg and the gun 2.65kg overall, it's a great deal lighter than a 12-gauge shotgun weighing around 3.8kg and coupled with shorter 710mm barrels, the little 28-gauge is nimble and extremely 'fast' to move, not carrying the weight of a 12-gauge nor their 760mm barrels.

At the muzzle end the Churchill 828 Silver has a barrel fluoro front sight and is fitted with internal choke tubes, five supplied and all packed into a handy plastic case along with the propeller-type spanner. Slots in the ends of the choke tubes immediately identified the choke constriction but these should only be checked or installed



An overall view of the Churchill 828 Silver 28-gauge.



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when the gun is unloaded - both barrels.

The barrels are joined by solid side ribs running from the muzzle down into the fore-end covering but not quite the full length of the barrels. The top rib is ventilated, measures 7mm wide and runs parallel to the full length of the top barrel, a cross hatching finish giving a non-reflective surface. At the chamber end the 28-gauge is suited to 2¾", 70mm cartridges and shorter, presenting the opportunity to use 15/16oz which is just short of 28 grams, although the majority of loads used during the review were 24 grams (English Eley loadings) and ¾oz (American Federal).

The ejectors are quite solid and timed well to eject empty shells well clear of the chamber when the gun is opened, construction of the monobloc robust with jewel polishing about the lower half to retain lubricants, an excellent idea. Locking of the action is via a bottom wedge/slide which travels the whole width of the monobloc, a couple of lugs built into the receiver wall mated with recesses in the monobloc and combining to maintain the integrity of the Churchill when fired. The system seems novel but well designed.

Receiver

Finished in plain matte silver the receiver is devoid of engraving except for the Churchill name stamped into the side and Akkar into the bottom of the receiver. As a base model gun this is acceptable and when you consider it retails for around \$1295 there can't be a lot to be expected in terms of lavish scroll engraving and the like.

Warrantied for five years, distributor Nioa has backed the gun's reliability and service, the five-year guarantee something usually reserved for more expensive shotguns as



The Churchill with its gun socks, stylish case, instruction manual and choke tubes.

most costing three or four times the price of the Churchill offer just a one or three-year warranty at most. The triggerguard and triggerfoot need to be generous for the shooter's comfort and you'd still be comfortable wearing thin leather shooting gloves. Trigger pulls are reasonable and measure 2kg (about 4½lb) for each barrel. The mechanically operated trigger system will be appreciated, especially for hunting which is where I believe the this gun will come into its own, particularly on quail and upland game birds such as grouse and partridge.

Operating the top lever became something of a skill as the new gun was pretty



Choke tubes supplied are internal and stored in a plastic container along with the propeller-style wrench.



The receiver is plain with 'Churchill' inlaid into both sides and 'Akkar' on the underside.

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tight to activate but once the top lever was pushed well across to the 'open' position the barrels were able to be dropped down, albeit a bit stiff. Closing the barrels was similar. They were firm but after several hundred rounds had been fired during testing they opened and closed with minimum effort. Design of the top lever is novel, with the centre removed and only a frame to push upon though it served its purpose well. Position of the safety catch-cum-barrel selector is excellent and despite sitting proud it wasn't easily knocked to be deactivated, its operation solid.

Stock and fore-end

Made from Turkish walnut, the stock and fore-end match well, grain character quite basic and chequering completed at around 12 lines per inch. Coverage is reasonable, remembering the gun is light and has minimal recoil and it's clear the chequering has been completed by machine with a double line border and no overruns. A thin rubber composite recoil pad is fitted to the butt of the stock to help maintain gun mount as recoil is never an issue.

The fore-end catch is at the front of the fore-end wood and released it from the barrels with little effort. Reinstalling the fore-end to the barrels required a little more effort than I thought necessary but once fitted the wood was snug and secure.

In the field

Testing the Churchill 28-gauge was a pleasure and also a challenge, being almost a kilogram lighter than a 12-gauge and having 710mm barrels meaning the gun moved

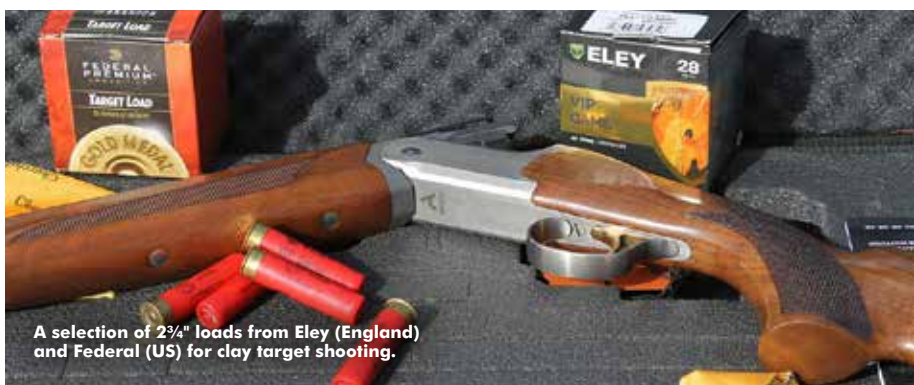


John puts the Churchill through its paces.



With action open the strong ejectors are evident along with the trapezoid bottom bite passing right across the monobloc.

The safety catch-cum-barrel selector is in a traditional position.



A selection of 2 3/4" loads from Eley (England) and Federal (US) for clay target shooting.

briskly. I occasionally over-lead close targets due to its speed but at one station I smashed a battue clay target at 45m just before it hit the ground, much to the amazement of all. With a little more practice and good load selection the 28-gauge will do most things a 12 is capable of using 28 or 24-gram loads.

An important note is the Churchill 28-gauge, for reasons unknown, must be cleaned immediately after use. I noticed a few marks around the monobloc face when I left the gun a couple of days as I intended to use it again and didn't bother, so cleaning immediately after use is a necessity.

In conclusion I found the Akkar Churchill in 28-gauge great fun to use. It would be ideally suited to quail and rabbit hunting when coupled with correct shot size loadings - quick fighting quail perfect, fast-bolting rabbits in swamp tussocks excellent. The lightness of the gun also means if hunting all day, carrying it won't be a burden. Priced at \$1295 and fitted into a smart suede case with all accessories and carrying a five-year warranty, the Akkar Churchill 28-gauge represents excellent value. ●

SPECIFICATIONS

Manufacturer: Akkar, Turkey
Distributor: Nioa, Queensland
Model: Churchill, Silver 828 28-gauge over-and-under shotgun
Overall length: 1145mm/45"
Overall weight: 2.65kg/5lb 13oz
Barrel length: 710mm/28"
Barrel weight: 1.13kg/2lb 8oz
Bore and chamber: 28-gauge/0.550", 70mm/2 3/4" chamber. Steel shot compatible, chokes no larger than Modified with steel shot loads
Chokes: Cylinder, Improved Cylinder, Modified, Improved Modified and Full chokes and spanner
Trigger pulls: Under barrel 2kg, over barrel 2kg
Length of pull: 360mm/14"
Drop at comb: 35mm/1 1/4"
Drop at heel: 50mm/2"
Warranty: Five years
Price: \$1295