



HUGLU 103FE

Turkish perfection delivers a knockout punch

By Christopher Blatherwick

If you are a shotgun fanatic who would like to enter the exciting world of trap, skeet, sporting clay or even wing shooting, this review speaks your language. The humble over-and-under shotgun has a long and illustrious history as a hunting, military, and sport platform.

Huglu Hunting Firearms Co-operative has long operated in the wings, producing world-class shotguns for CZ and other firearm powerhouses. However, the company has elected to push its top-notch shotgun lines to the foreground. Join us as we put the exquisite Huglu 103FE over-and-under through its paces.



The receiver can only be described as a masterpiece.

GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT HUGLU

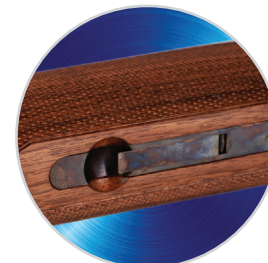
Huglu Hunting Firearms Co-operative was established in 1914. However, its origins are unlike any other firearm manufacturer we have featured before. The name is derived from the Turkish town of Huglu, where the company is located.



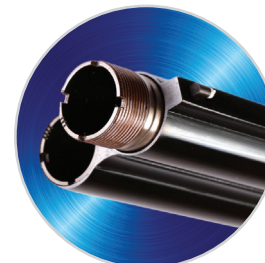
The machining on the 103FE is astounding with the Huglu showing no lateral play after a very hard day of testing.



The forearm of the 103FE is crafted from high quality Turkish walnut and features aggressive checkering that provides the shooter with an astounding amount of grip whilst shooting.



The chokes on the 103FE can be swapped out in a matter of seconds, the tread pattern allows the end user to utilize extended chokes in this Turkish beauty.



The town was isolated after World War 1 due to its geographic location, limited natural resources, and sustainable employment opportunities, and turned to the firearm trade as a revenue stream. The inhabitants started off by repairing old military surplus firearms. In 1962, 165 residents elected to design and produce shotguns for the civilian market.

The layout of the town only allowed for a decentralised production model, whereby each household produced different shotgun parts, assembled at a central location, before being shipped to their respective clients, and all of this achieved without electricity. In 1971, the town was connected to the Turkish electricity grid, allowing for modern production techniques that resulted in the company being recognised as one of the top ten shotgun manufacturers in the world.

Today, Huglu Hunting Firearms Co-operative's has a 17 000 m² purpose-built factory, where modern and Old World craftsmanship combine to produce world-class shotguns. Huglu produces a multitude of shotguns, including single-barrel, side-by-side, over-and-under and self-loading derivatives, exported to more than 50 countries.

The 103FE oozed class and sophistication.

DESIGN AND ERGONOMICS

The design of the side-by-side and over-and-under shotgun, or scattergun as it is fondly referred to, has remained relatively unchanged since 1875, with the most significant redesign being internal hammers from external. Huglu has refined this tried-and-tested design with the 103FE, and produced a world-class over-and-under shotgun that does not need to stand back an inch for any shotgun produced in Italy or elsewhere.

The 14.75 inch pull stock is made from Turkish walnut, giving not only a quality 'feel' to the 103FE, but being extremely durable at the same time. The handguard and stock feature aggressive chequering that aids the shooter in controlling this 'clay master' under any competition environment, with the stock fitting perfectly into the case-hardened receiver. The receiver can only be described as a masterpiece. It is adorned with Old World hand engraving. The craftsmanship is utterly astounding, with the case-hardened receiver accentuating every single aspect of the engraving.

For me personally, the epitome of the craftsmanship can be seen in small details such as the fact that all the heads of the slotted screws are affixed horizontally to the receiver, and finished off with additional engraving. The top lever of the 103FE is engraved with yet more exquisitely-finished engraving, with the two-headed eagle (the Huglu trademark) featured prominently in the engraving. The lock-up of the barrels to the action is

particularly strong, with big lumps under the barrel flats that fit well into the slots in the action bar.

The barrels are made from processed 4140 steel, with a chrome-lined chamber. The barrels are threaded to accept the five different chokes that make the 103FE the perfect platform for any clay event or wing shooting. The chokes are interchangeable with any Beretta extended choke set, giving the shooter even more options to customise the shotgun for their specific needs.

TIME WAITS FOR NO MAN, OR SHOTGUN

I am a sport-shooting shotgun competitor in both manual and self-loading divisions, and have dabbled a bit in trap shooting. However, I knew that if I wanted to push the limits of the Huglu, I would have to call upon the assistance of a 'clay guru.' Enter Drew Harrington, or 'Coach' as he is referred to fondly by his fellow shooters at Valley Gun Club. Drew is a legend in the clay-shooting fraternity, with a multitude of provincial, national, and international titles behind his name. Thus if there was anyone who could push the 103FE to its limits, it was Drew.

We arrived at Valley Gun Club with a combination of excitement and trepidation as to how our Turkish 'giant killer' would be received. Needless to say, the Huglu attracted a lot of attention as soon as I opened the high-quality hard case to exposed two velvet sleeves containing the receiver, barrel assembly, and handguard.

DESIGN OVERVIEW AND SPECIFICATIONS

Make:	Huglu
Model:	103FE
Calibre:	12 gauge
Configuration:	Over-and-under
Capacity:	Two rounds
Receiver:	Monoblock, forged receiver
Receiver finish:	Black case hardened
Ejector:	Extractor (automatic)
Weight unloaded:	3.4 kg
Overall length:	1 200 mm
Barrel length:	760 mm
Barrel type:	Processed 4140 steel chrome-lined chamber and barrel
Vent top rib:	Yes
Engraving:	By hand
Action:	Collapse, then shoot
Trigger type:	Single (adjustable)
Front sight:	Bead
Action:	Semi-automatic, recoil operated
Stock:	Turkish walnut
Choke:	Full, modified and improved cylinder
Applications:	Sport shooting (trap, skeet, and sporting clay) and wing shooting



We removed the Huglu from its hard case, and the receiver and barrel assembly from its velvet sleeves. The 103FE oozed class and sophistication, and the crowd of onlookers grew larger as this Turkish beauty was exposed to the shooting fraternity for the first time.

We applied some light bearing grease to the hinge pin before we assembled the 103FE. The initial plan was to, firstly, establish the spread pattern of the different chokes. However, all the testers were champing at the bit to get behind the Huglu, so we forego the formalities and decided to bust some clays.

TEST 1: SKEET

Skeet requires the shooter to engage clays from a high and low house at either end of a semi-circle with a precise radius of 19 m. The shooter starts at firing point/station 1 next to the high house, and engage the clay targets as they are spat out by the clay machines in predetermined patterns. The shooter moves through seven positions around the semi-circle, engaging targets in an established combination of shots at each tower. Firing point/station 8, also known as the duck station, places the shooter between the high and low house, and requires the shooter to engage a target from both houses. The end result is a round of 25 targets presented, with scores based on the number of clay targets broken.

The Huglu is offered with a wide selection of chokes ensuring that this stunning over and under can be setup for either Trap or Skeet events.

We agreed to start the ball rolling on the skeet range, and ease the Huglu into the range evaluation, as the shotgun was brand new. Drew measured the five chokes that came with the Huglu, and advised that we fit the cylinder and improved cylinder chokes to obtain the correct spread pattern for a skeet event. Drew had the honour of placing the first rounds through the 103FE.

True to form, Coach took up shooting position 1 and obliterated the clays as they sped by. This impressive feat was repeated at all seven stations, leaving the dreaded duck stage for last. Drew pulled his black shooting glove tight on his right hand, and fed the Huglu two rounds of 28 gr 7.5. He adopted his normal gun-down stance, and calmly called 'pull'. Before I had even managed to spot the 'bird', it was over. Drew calmly removed two spent shells from the 103FE, and that was a wrap.

It was a real treat to see a true master like Drew at work. Now it was time for some of our test team to see if they could emulate the master. If anyone asks me about my score or that of the other testers, my official reply will be: "The clays we shot were dipped in a Red Bull mixture, so when they flew out the high and low house, they had extra speed as they whizzed past us." The test team clocked up scores of 18, 18, 17, and a 19 for the skeet evaluation session.



Trap, skeet, and sporting clay fall under the Clay Target Shooting Association of South Africa (CTSASA).

TEST 2: TRAP

Trap shooting differs from skeet in that it requires the shooter to engage a single clay from a single 'trap machine' per exposure, which oscillates continuously. The 'trap machine' is covered by a structure known as the 'trap house', thus making it impossible for the shooter to predict the direction that the clay will be launched from. The shooter starts at firing point/station 1, engaging a single clay at a time, with five clays in total at each of the five firing points/stations. The match is scored out of the 25 targets presented, with the shooter's score based on the number of clay targets broken.

After our skeet evaluation session, we moved over to one of the trap stations to test the versatility of the Huglu. We replaced the improved cylinder and cylinder chokes with the modified and improved modified chokes, ensuring our Huglu was set-up perfectly for trap. Coach took the lead again in the performance department, eviscerating the clays in less than a second after the 'pull' command was given, showing yet again why his name is so prominent on Valley Gun Club's honour roll.

The baton – that is, the Huglu – was passed on to the rest of the test team, who took turns in dispensing the clays with ease. Our photographer and general manager were roped in to test the Huglu as well, and also made short work of the clays. The Huglu attracted attention yet again, with curious shooters enquiring as to what make of shotgun we were shooting. One of the spectators, a Beretta 692 shooter, had a multitude of questions, so we elected to give him the opportunity to get to grips with this Turkish

beauty firsthand. Needless to say, he was immensely impressed with the performance of the 103FE in dispensing with the clays with such ease.

SUMMARY

South African firearm owners are quite loyal to specific brands, and moreso the trap and skeet community than the 'run-and-gun' clan. However, when you delve deeper into the reasoning behind their devotion, it is quite an eye-opener.

Trap, skeet, and sporting clay fall under the Clay Target Shooting Association of South Africa (CTSASA). The organisation has pulled out all the stops to grow this highly interactive and exciting international sport-shooting discipline, with over 43 affiliated clubs around South Africa. However, participants in this highly-addictive sport only had a handful of shotguns to choose from, as our firearm industry is more geared to the 'run-and-gun' community than the discerning clay or wing shooter.

Forward-thinking firearm dealers such as The Powder Keg took the lead in providing much-needed choice for the clay and wing shooting community, offering value-added options such as the Huglu shotgun range, including 12 and 20 gauge variants in a multitude of over-and-under and side-by-side configurations.

When the Huglu 103FE was put through its paces by Drew Harrington and the rest of the test team, more than one skeet shooter approached to enquire what newly-imported Italian thoroughbred we were testing. One shooter was adamant we were shooting a new Perazzi, until we showed him the Huglu seal on the top lever. This veteran shooter was totally amazed at the quality, fit and finish, and lockup of our test model.

As per my usual two questions to end off with: "Would I procure a Huglu 103FE with my own money?" Most definitely. The Huglu provides exceptional value for money, with the fit and finish on par with more expensive Italian shotguns. The weight and fit suits me to a tee, as the Huglu feels like a natural extension of my arm when shooting.

"What would I change on the 103FE?" Nothing, as the Huglu is perfectly set-up out of the box. I posed the same question to one of our testers, who commented he would also be hard-pressed to effect any changes to the 103FE, as it was set up perfectly for trap, skeet, and trench shooting. 🌟

The receiver of the Huglu is case hardened, and oozes class and sophistication and is adorned with Old World engraving thus placing the 103FE in a different league.



Drew Harrington also affectionately known as Coach putting the Huglu through its paces at station number two on the Skeet range at Valley Gun Club.

The 103FE, and other Huglu derivatives, are available from The Powder Keg of Roodepoort, Gauteng. It retails for R17 393.*

* Price correct at time of going to press.