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By Miles Fedinec

Well it’s that time of year again. Time for turkey fanatics everywhere to start clucking and gobbling through the woods, trying to get revenge on last year’s Thanksgiving dinner. So we thought what better way to get you started on your spring turkey buzz than by putting a gobble buster on this month’s “Tools of the Trade” pedestal. This month we chose to put Benelli’s Nova pump through the test.

Let’s start with the nuts and bolts of the Nova. The Nova pump comes in both 20 and 12 gauge including a 20 gauge youth model. The 20 gauge will accept 3 inch magnums and the 12 accepts 3 ½ magnums. The Nova pump is available in three finishes- Realtree APG, Realtree Max-4, and synthetic black. It is also offered in two tactical models but for this test we focused on the field guns. On the Nova, Benelli has taken a polymer stock and incorporated it with a one piece receiver to make a weatherproof, tough as nails shotgun. On the stock and forend Benelli has used grooves instead of checkering which I found not only to add to the great styling of the gun, but to be very comfortable as well. Also on the forend is one of my favorite features of the gun.

Benelli has incorporated a push-button shell stop which lets you eject a shell out of the chamber without releasing and loading another from the magazine. With the polymer stock and one piece receiver the Nova is a relatively light 12 gauge weighing in at 7.8, 7.9 or 8.0 lbs depending on the barrel length. Even with the light weight I didn’t think the recoil showed it. If you are worried about the recoil Benelli offers an optional mercury recoil reducer to soak up the punch from that 3 ½ inch mag.

The Nova pump comes in 24, 26 or 28 inch barrels and comes standard with three different chokes- improved cylinder, modified and full. Benelli also offers a line of special purpose chokes if these don’t cover what you are looking for.

Having never shot the Nova before I wanted to get to know the gun so as soon as I received it, I headed straight to the local trap club. Having a good feel for your weapon is very important when it comes to accuracy and safety and the only way to get that feel is by shooting a lot.

It took a few rounds to get a feel for it but it but that was it, a “few” rounds. Almost immediately I was breaking birds at a regular pace. I shot a round then handed the Nova off to another gentleman at the club and he broke the first six he shot at before handing it back to me. When we started shooting doubles I was very impressed at how smoothly the Nova cycled and how quickly I was able to acquire my second target with the red bar front sight and metal bead mid sight. Once I ran out of target loads it was time to throw in a turkey load and pattern the Nova. I really only have two words for the result, dead bird.

After a day of working the Nova over I came to the conclusion that this is a hard to beat all around shot gun. From trap to turkeys and everything in between the Benelli Nova is a great value especially if you’re on a budget.