Benelli’s Incredible Vinci

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Benelli’s Incredible Vinci

It’s billed as the fastest-shooting, softest-kicking, most reliable 12-gauge shotgun in the world. We had to put it to the test.

By Nick Sisley

I swung from behind a trio of gray birds streaking from left to right, and hit the trigger. The rear dove folded and somersaulted on the way to the ground. Forward momentum kept the barrel moving. I slapped the trigger again and claimed a double, one of many that day.

It was March 2009, and in my hands was a new auto-loader named the Vinci. Benelli, its maker, calls it the fastest-shooting, softest-kicking and most reliable 12-gauge shotgun in the world. To prove the claims aren’t hype, the company invited half a dozen writers, myself included, to test the smoothbore in the Cordoba province of Argentina, one of the top dove hunting areas on the planet.

And, brother, did we put the Vinci to the test! To say the barrels heated up would be an understatement. Doves were barreling in from all angles, crossing, incoming and outgoing. It didn’t take long to discover the 6.9-pound gun was easy to swing, easy to hit with and easy on the shoulder.

Recoil is a demon in high-volume shooting anywhere, and also when firing heavy loads at ducks and geese. Mitigating recoil on the new gun is a futuristic stock called the ComforTech Plus. The original ComforTech, introduced several years ago on Benelli’s Super Black Eagle II shotgun, featured 11 recoil-absorbing chevrons running diagonally across in the buttstock. The ComforTech Plus sports 12 chevrons. The additional chevron closest to the buttpad is wider and longer than the others, providing a bit more recoil absorption.

But the stock is only part of the kick-taming system. The Vinci sports a modern recoil pad that reduces perceived recoil by spreading these forces over a larger area and over a longer period of time.

Because of the way inertia-driven shotguns operate, that recoil is pretty much straight back. However, the little recoil that does come up into the cheek is significantly softened by a gel comb pad. Made of a substance developed for the medical industry, the pad allows your cheek to slide along the comb during recoil. This eliminates frictional resistance and insulates the face from shock and vibration.

One of the most interesting aspects of the Vinci is its modular concept and how easy the different parts are to assemble. The gun is comprised of three modules. The Quadrafit buttstock attaches to the top of the barrel/receiver module. Simply place them together, align a white dot on the buttstock module with a sighting groove on the receiver, and then twist the two parts together.

The third module is the trigger group/forearm, which is aligned with a dot on the barrel/receiver and pushed down

Smoke beches out of the Vinci as author Nick Sisley swings on a crossing dove.

A close-up of the camo ComforTech Plus stock with the 12 recoil-reducing chevrons

Continued
The Vinci is the first shotgun with a modular design. Here, guns are assembled for the first morning’s shoot.

Argentina’s non-stop dove shooting provides a brutal test for shotguns and autoloaders in particular.
until there is no gap between it and the buttstock. Turn the magazine cap clockwise, and you are finished. Assembly takes just seconds.

The inertia-driven action is contained in the barrel/receiver module. Powered by a single spring, the system is incredibly efficient and rugged.

Fewer parts also mean the gun cycles faster. Utilizing straight recoil, a minimum of moving parts, and superb fast ejection and chambering, the inertia system has become very well recognized for its ability to function flawlessly time after time. This system is the same one used on all Benelli semiautos.

The result of all this technology is faster cycling and decreased muzzle climb so you get back on target faster while your hunting buddy is still recovering from his shot.

I remember making a couple of shots that were so quick, two doves almost fell as one. But I was not nonplussed at the next opportunity to send a far bird tumbling into a soon-to-be harvested soybean field ahead of us.

We were shooting adjacent to that field at the request of a farmer. Doves were destroying his soybean crop. Doves are largely considered nuisance birds in Argentina.

The Vinci cycles anything from 2¾-inch dove loads to 3-inch magnum turkey loads with consistent reliability.

The Vinci’s barrels are frozen to minus 300-degree temperatures. Such cryogenic treatment changes steel at the molecular level, giving it a more even grain structure. The result is less fouling and more consistent flexing.

Crio choke tubes are the second part of the system. Longer than conventional chokes, they constrict shot charges more gradually, resulting in storage and transportation. The barrel/receiver module locks securely in place in the upper section. The bottom section compartments contain the three modules, Crio Choke Tubes, choke wrench, shim case and oil bottle.

The weather in Argentina in March is like September in the Deep South. One particularly hot afternoon, I was fewer deformed pellets.

The Crio system improves patterns by as much as 13.2 percent, according to Benelli.

The plastic case the Vinci comes in is very unusually shaped and is unlike any shotgun case I’ve seen. The case gives the impression that some kind of instrument is inside. Custom-shaped compartments within the case house and protect modular components for comfortably ensconced under a low shade tree. That meant no overhead shooting, and most of the shooting opportunities were out front—full right-to-left or left-to-right crossers. The wind was blowing hard, so the birds flying in the direction of the breeze had a tailwind while doves coming from the opposite direction had to battle the breeze. That meant totally different sight pictures, leads and swings at trigger-pulling time.

I dropped both types of crossers with equal success, but maybe it had something to do with how I had the Vinci rigged for that afternoon’s shooting.

The Vinci’s three modules come together easily and quickly.

The gun comes with spacers that allow you to change the amount of drop in the stock as well as the gun’s cast. By switching the spacers that fit between the front of the butt stock and the rear of the receiver I was able to improve how the gun fit me.

If memory serves, Benelli was the first to come up with this system. It’s a dandy, and every shooter who owns

Pica Zuro Lodge

We hunted out of Pica Zuro Lodge in Cordoba, Argentina, pretty much recognized as the high-volume dove shooting capital of the world. I have hunted Pica Zuro four times, and every trip has been outstanding. One booking agent who can handle Pica Zuro bookings is Jeri Booth at Detail Company Adventures, phone (800) 292-2213.

Joe Coogan keeps a sharp eye out for doves. He never has to wait long in Argentina.
a gun with changeable spacers should experiment to find out which ones work best for him.

Along those same lines, the recoil pad can also be swapped. Thinner and thicker pads are available from Benelli as aftermarket items to better fit a gunner's individual length of pull.

Changing the pad requires a little tugging, but no screwdriver is needed. Put on the pad that best fits you, and you are ready to go.

**Specifications**

- **Barrel Length:** 26” or 28”
- **Overall Length:** 47.75” or 49.75”
- **Stock:** Synthetic
- **Length of Pull:** 14.3/8”
- **Drop at Heel:** 2”
- **Drop at Comb:** 1 3/8”
- **Weight:** 6.8 pounds
- **Magazine Capacity:** Three plus one
- **Sights:** Red blade front, integral bead mid
- **Ammo:** 12-gauge 2 3/4” target loads to 3” magnum shells
- **Chokes:** C, IC, M, IM, F
- **Camo Patterns:** Advantage Max-4 HD, Realtree APG
- **MSRP:** $1,379-$1,479

Another Benelli innovation is the V-Grip, a corrugated, non-slip surface molded into the synthetic material of the forearm and pistol grip, offering a more secure hold than traditional checkering.

The Vinci is offered in a black composite and two camo models: Max-4 HD and Realtree APG. The receiver is drilled and tapped to accommodate a Weaver scope base. A lightweight vent rib with a mid bead and red front sight is also standard.

A non-slip material called V-Grip covers all forearm and pistol grip surfaces.

In Argentina, our group of six Benelli folks and six gun writers shot a cataloged 87,950 shells, just two boxes shy of 88,000. Essentially, we had no malfunctions, no feeding or ejection problems. The new Benelli kept working and working and working.

Bottom line: The Vinci is one of the most innovative shotguns to come along in years. And it cuts the figurative mustard — in spades.

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