



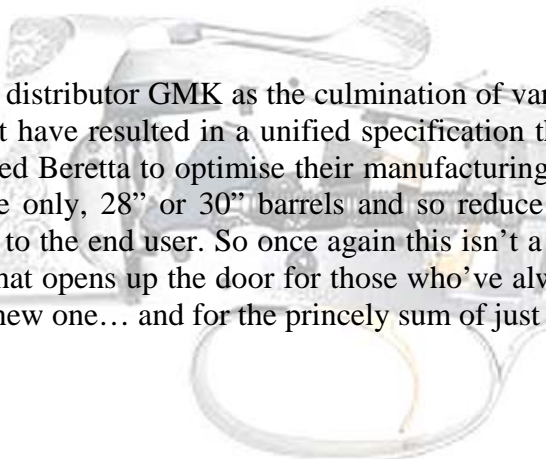
## Silver Pigeon 1 from Beretta

By: Mark Stone

**It's a name that seems to have been around for years, Mark Stone takes a look at the new Silver Pigeon 1 from Beretta**

Beretta's latest incarnation of their successful Silver Pigeon has already been christened their budget 12 bore, but once you've tried one you will realise that this title is remarkably unfair.

This gun is described by UK distributor GMK as the culmination of various European importers' requirements that have resulted in a unified specification that will appeal to all. This in turn has allowed Beretta to optimise their manufacturing process, scale down the options to 12 bore only, 28" or 30" barrels and so reduce costs, savings they've been able to pass on to the end user. So once again this isn't a cheap shotgun it's a cost effective Beretta that opens up the door for those who've always wanted to actually go and buy a brand new one... and for the princely sum of just £1,385.



### Cut out

Although the purchase price has been kept to a minimum don't for one minute think you'll be getting a raw deal. The Silver Pigeon 1 still arrives in one of Beretta's familiar blue plastic travelling case that also contains the usual set of long, flush-fit Optima multi-chokes, tubes that have more than proven their worth. Where those familiar with Berettas will feel fully at home is that they are immediately presented with what to a degree has become something of a Beretta trademark. The silver box lock action that displays the usual raised, scalloped panels and profuse panels of scroll engraving still employs the recognizable cut-outs along the top of each side of the steel 680 style receiver.



These in turn mate up to the extensions that project from either side of the 3" chambers of the monobloc 28" barrels whilst the two pegs that extend from the face of the action locate to both sides of the top chamber so ensuring a tight, reliable and secure lock up when the gun is closed. Since this Silver

Pigeon 1 is a field gun, as might be expected the side ribs are solid although the vented top-rib exhibits a degree of cross-over, the 8-10mm taper and large white bead as suited to clays as it is to pheasants. Further back more ornamentation is to be found on the fences whilst a short throw top-lever that has been designed and positioned to offer excellent leverage with Beretta's familiar over-sized manual safety catch just behind that incorporates the usual sliding barrel order selector.

## Ingrained

As if to emphasize the fact that the Silver Pigeon 1 isn't the budget Beretta everyone seems to think it is, you only need look at the walnut. Semi-oiled, the woodwork is well grained with a slightly more open panels of chequering on to both sides of the



gently radiused grip, the sporter style stock completed with a thick, soft rubber and noticeably effective recoil pad. Moving forwards tighter, extended chequering features on the Schnabel forend with some additional engraving on the irons, the combined effect producing a 12 bore that looks both attractive and more than fit for purpose. Like all Berettas the fit and finish of the furniture is more than up

to standard, the overall effect of the stock, forend and detailing of the action adding up to a shotgun that looks to have cost considerably in excess of the Silver Pigeon 1's suggested retail price.

## Lighten the load

## Related articles

Dimensionally the new Silver Pigeon 1 if anything highlights that whether you're British or European we would all seemingly enjoy none too dissimilar upper body characteristics. Drops at comb and heel measure 1 3/8" and 2 5/8" combined with a length and weight of pull set at 14 3/4" and 6lbs 3oz respectively. Similarly it would seem that we all prefer an average weight of 8lbs 3oz and balance point an inch rearward of the hinges on the 28" barrel version although this will alter slightly if you opt for the longer tubes.

Heading over to Bond & Bywaters' first summer evening's thirty-birder complete with a selection of Express ammo divided equally between clay and game loads, the Silver Pigeon was more or less on target from the off. Fitted with 1/2 and 1/4



chokes the patterning was everything we've come to expect from Beretta's Optima system whilst the performance and balance of the gun was typically Beretta. It mounts and swings with ease, is one of the flattest shooting modern game shotguns I've used for many a while and delivers clean kills irrespective of target type. There are however two small downsides if only from my own perspective.



If like me you tend to hold a shotgun, especially a game or field model in what might be referred to as a slightly loose manner, the fact that if the Silver Pigeon 1 isn't clamped tight into the shoulder it tends to become rather lively within the hands especially if loaded with the potent 28g or larger loads such as 36g game, although the soft rubber recoil pad efficiently dials out significant amounts of perceived recoil. No problem on the first shot but it can make recovery for the second shot a more protracted affair.



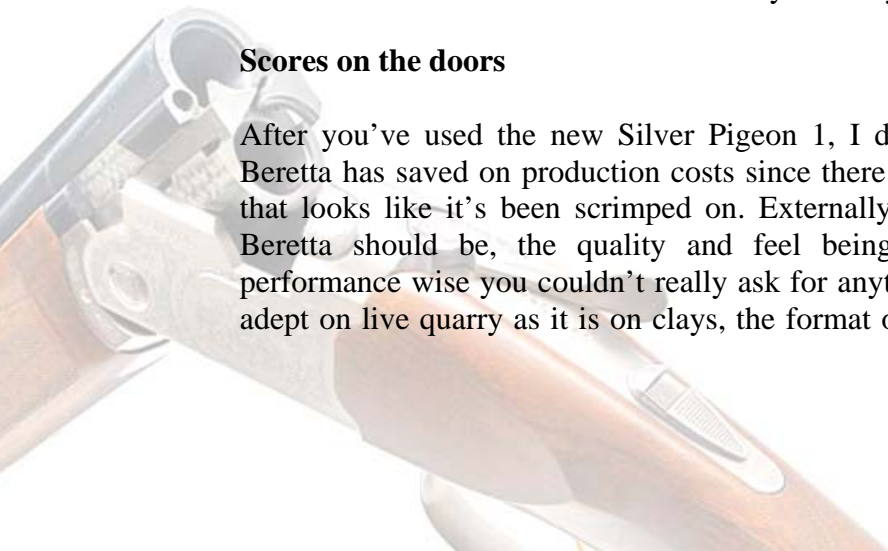
The answer of course is relatively simple. By tailoring the loads to the job in hand the Silver Pigeon 1 quickly becomes extremely docile, more specific of Express' 24g clay loads and 30g game equivalents significantly reducing the mechanical effects and physical reactions of discharge. In other words soften the load to soften the overall effect and you'll find yourself shooting an extremely capable and effective 12 – bore.

My other personal reservation is the tulip end of the forend. Seemingly fractionally shorter than usual, if you shoot with the index finger of your leading hand extended, the curled woodwork tends to bump into your finger tip. Apart from the fact that in my opinion Beretta has missed out on the opportunity to fit the Silver Pigeon 1 with a more rounded and immeasurable more attractive London style forend that would have accentuated part of this model's perceived uniqueness, you may find you need to hold

the gun slightly further back than usual. Once again no great problem but long armed shooters like me will have to alter their style if only by a fraction.

### **Scores on the doors**

After you've used the new Silver Pigeon 1, I defy anyone to comment on where Beretta has saved on production costs since there isn't any particular part of the gun that looks like it's been scrimped on. Externally and internally it's exactly as any Beretta should be, the quality and feel being everything you'd expect whilst performance wise you couldn't really ask for anything more from a 12 bore that's as adept on live quarry as it is on clays, the format of this new Beretta encouraging the



both. It's also a salutary lesson in that if Beretta can build one of their shotguns down to a price yet maintain the core values, why are other manufacturers increasing their prices for shotguns that in many respects don't even come close to the Silver Pigeon.

The end result is that for any shooter who has always wanted a new Beretta but been put off by the price, then now's your chance. And don't for a second think you'll feel an inferior being; on looks alone the Silver Pigeon 1 can hold its head high in any company or shooting circumstance.



### **Technical Specifications**

<b>Name</b>	Beretta Silver Pigeon 1 Field
<b>Calibre</b>	12 bore
<b>Barrels</b>	28" as tested
<b>Action</b>	Boxlock over – under
<b>Stock</b>	Walnut sporter
<b>Weight</b>	8lb 3oz
<b>Chokes</b>	Flush fit Optima multi – choke
<b>Price</b>	£1,385 srp