

# TARGETING PERFECTION



One of the four drawings by Simon Gudgeon

**Building the very finest sporting guns, A.A.Brown's attention to detail and true perfectionism is unrivalled**

The best quality English sidelock sporting gun is surely one of the world's great artefacts. In such guns, form truly follows function as grace, beauty and superb handling dynamics come together to give the sportsman unequalled pleasure and joy in ownership and use.

These qualities are synonymous with the guns of A.A.Brown and Sons. Albert Arthur Brown established the business in 1938 and made his name building guns of fabulous quality, which were ultimately signed with the names of many famous makers. He, together with his sons Albert H and Sidney continued to work this way for many years, his company establishing

Owen Williams woodcock artwork



Commissioned by VIC VENTERS. FOR GAME SCENE ENGRAVING BY KEITH THOMAS. FOR A.A.BROWN GUN 78731. 2011

itself as a 'gunmakers' gunmaker' – a firm that the trade turned to when only the very best would do. However, in the early 1970s, 10 years after Sidney's son, Robin, started his apprenticeship, it was decided that if A.A.Brown was going to build the very best, it would do so under its own name.





The A.A.Brown & Sons gun room

Today, under Robin's leadership, A.A.Brown build the very finest sporting guns in their workshops, a short distance from historic Birmingham, in the mediaeval village of Alvechurch. They have enjoyed more than 70 years of continual production with an order book that has always bulged. If you were to visit you would be struck not only by the evidence of fine gunmaking, epitomised by the stunning shape of Brown's rounded-action sidelock, which has an aesthetic appeal all of its own and is quite unlike any other gun, but also by the huge amount of servicing, restoring and customising that gives the workshop a constant buzz of activity. Brown's reputation precedes it and seems to ensure that the company is never short of work.

Brown's best gun is the side by side Supreme de Luxe, which uses an optional barrel mounted self-opening system. The mechanics of the Supreme de Luxe are similar to a Holland & Holland Royal, however, the aesthetic is entirely A.A.Brown. The rounded action of the Supreme de Luxe, developed out of a customer's request for a gun that seemed smooth and sleek, has slightly domed lock plates and a double bar to the action,

which adds to the effect of a rounded gun. It is this roundness that gives A.A.Brown guns their organic feel and distinctive appearance.

You'll find this rounded body on the opening picture of this article, showing the firm's most recent best pair dubbed the 'Gudgeon Guns'. These are so called as they feature game scenes interpreted and engraved by Keith Thomas from a set of original pencil drawings by the sculptor and artist Simon Gudgeon. These stunning scenes were then bordered by his fine rose and scroll, for which he is legendary. The natural beauty of the high level of artistry that went in to creating these wonderful guns, set somewhat of a trend



in A.A.Brown & Sons and the next gun to be completed had an original drawing of a woodcock by the amazing wildlife artist Owen Williams. This gun has a story all of its own, being the last ever boxlock to be produced by the firm from the final forging left over from the height of boxlock production in the 1950s and 60s. After the huge success of mating artist to engraver in the creation of the Gudgeon Guns, it was decided by the client, upon commissioning the gun, that being the last boxlock ever, it should feature something special and he also employed the mating of artist to engraver principal. He contacted his friend Owen and asked him to draw a unique woodcock sketch in pencil, something for which he is renowned. This was again stunningly recreated by the talented Keith Thomas to sit alongside his still legendary fine rose and scroll. The result was a truly fitting send off to the A.A.Brown boxlocks of the past and by far the best to have ever been produced. By using all the techniques currently used to make the firm's very best sporting sidelocks it really is a 'one of kind' even without the unique artwork adorning its action cover plate.

This trend looks certain to continue and with the current development of a new style of gun, the first pair to be commissioned are to have custom artwork featured on the underside of the actions. It is these touches as well as the opportunity for a customer to have the gun tailored to his exact wishes that makes people come back and order best guns time and time again. A.A.Brown & Sons are no different to any other best gunmaker in this regard, but an attention to detail that can only come from true perfectionism sets them apart with an aesthetic and tactile quality that cannot be described and yet sticks in the mind.



Matthew Brown checkering a gun-stock

Robin's son Matthew, who is responsible for the photographs in this article, is now working with his father in forging a path for the company to follow for the next generation of sporting shooters and the story has barely changed. The best quality English sidelock sporting gun is, without doubt, one of the world's great artefacts. Form truly follows function as grace, beauty and superb handling dynamics come together to give the sportsman unrivalled pleasure in ownership and use. These qualities are synonymous with the guns of A.A.Brown and Sons.

For more information, superb gun photography and an in depth history of A.A.Brown & Sons, please visit the website: [www.aabrownandsons.com](http://www.aabrownandsons.com)

For sales enquires contact Robin or Matthew on 0121 445 5395 or email: [enquiries@aabrownandsons.com](mailto:enquiries@aabrownandsons.com)

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# matthew brown

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