

CUSTOM FABARM **STF 12**

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ISSUE 20

GREAT COUNTRY FOR NEW GUNS

Our Custom Fabarm
STF 12 Won't Get
Mixed in With the
Others and Become
Just a Shotgun

BY STEVEN KUO

I taly is known for turning out some great shotguns. There's a good chance that Benelli and Beretta, perhaps Perazzi, just popped into your mind.

But what about Fabarm? Formed in Brescia by the Galesi family in 1900, Fabarm got started with side-by-side and over-under shotguns, expanding into semi-autos and pumps. More known for sporting and hunting guns, Fabarm doubled down on the tactical market by standing up Fabarm Professional a few years ago with the STF 12 pump shotgun as its centerpiece.



IS THERE SOMETHING WRONG WITH ANYTHING?

Pump-action firearms are manually cycled using a forend that slides fore and aft. When you rack it back and forth, it extracts and ejects a shell from the chamber, cocks the hammer, and loads the next round. It's a simple and reliable design, originating in the 1850s. Pump shotguns are versatile and have stood the test of time, serving in sporting, hunting, military, law enforcement, and home defense roles for over a century.

Offered only in 12-gauge, the STF 12 is Fabarm's take on the revered tactical pump gun, designed as a weapon system that can be configured in various different ways to suit the mission.

It's evolutionary, not revolutionary, with many refinements and nice design choices to make for a very slick and capable shotgun. At its core, it's a typical pump shotgun with a tubular magazine, dual action bars, and a familiar-looking trigger group. Zoom out from there, and you'll start to see Fabarm's refinements and modular design.

Fabarm designed the STF 12 to be modular and configurable to the end user's needs.

Buttstocks for the STF 12 include fixed, folding, and telescoping options, as well as a pistol-grip-only option for masochists, breachers, and Instagrammers. Hold that thought, though. Swapping buttstocks is straightforward but more of an armorer-level task. All furniture is high-quality, soft-touch, and very comfortable.

Fabarm makes 11- to 22-inch barrels that are easily changed; like any other shotgun, simply remove the magazine tube cap and slide the barrel out. Once again, though, hold that thought. The barrels are bored out of nickel chrome molybdenum, proof tested to 1630 BAR, and hide under a body-colored shroud. They're topped with Fabarm's own chokes,

Wright Armory in Arizona cut down a spare barrel and threaded it for chokes.



featuring hyperbolic profiles — rather than straight, conical walls, they're curved and match the profile of the barrel with no edge.

A removable top Picatinny rail bridges the barrel and aluminum receiver, providing a long, continuous rail for sights, optics, and accessories. A set of beefy iron sights with fiber-optic inserts, two green in the rear ghost ring and one red in front, bolt on to the rail. Interestingly, if you remove the top rail, you'll find another set of small ghost ring iron sights integrated into the front and rear mounting points — should we call them BUBUIS? Additional short rails can be installed at 3, 6, and 9 o'clock on the forend, with a hand stop at 6 o'clock.

Sling slots and loops are also configurable, with a slot at the front lug that rotates to 3, 6, or 9 o'clock. A sling plate sandwiches between the buttstock and receiver, with sling

slots that you can position on the left or right. Alternately, you can install a plate with a circular hole on top to repurpose your MP5 sling with a hook.

Additionally, Fabarm makes four- and five-round shell caddies that attach to the receiver via the trigger group pins. Note that the five-rounder interferes with the rear sling slot.

IF THE RULE YOU FOLLOWED BROUGHT YOU TO THIS, WHAT GOOD IS THE RULE?

So, why were we saying to hold on when it comes to the barrel and buttstocks? Unfortunately, due to import restrictions here, Fabarm USA can only offer the 18-inch, fixed-stock variant of the STF 12 right now. This realization was like a face full of cold water after browsing the sexy options available elsewhere. However, they have black and flat dark earth guns, and the latter look great in a mismatched FDE SCAR kind of way.

Inspired and undeterred, we decided to build our own badass version of the STF 12. So long as you can get the tax stamps, you can follow along and build your own too.

WHAT'S THE MOST YOU EVER SPENT ON A CUSTOM BUILD?

Fabarm's fixed buttstock is excellent; it's robust and fitted with a thick recoil pad. Their OCONUS folding stock looks like it would be perfect, with a similar design that folds to the right side of the gun. But alas it's not available here; however, Fabarm is releasing an adapter that accepts AR-15 receiver extensions so you can use any AR stock. We immediately grabbed one of their production samples and a BCM receiver extension and got to work.

Since the AR receiver extension on a STF 12 doesn't actually have any function beyond holding the buttstock, we affixed the smallest folding stock adapter we could find. SB

The shortened barrel and folding stock make for a very compact package. Note how tightly the SureFire Mini Scout Light Pro tucks up against the forend.

Tactical makes a simple but elegant adapter that locks open and closed. It worked great, locking solidly into place. When folded, simply brace your palm on top of the receiver and pull up with your fingers to unlock the stock and swing it open. We topped it off with Mission First Tactical's Extreme Duty buttstock, which is sturdy but also slim enough to fold neatly.

The muzzle end of the gun needed some right-sizing too. We sent a spare 18-inch barrel, along with a SilencerCo Salvo 12 adapter, to Wright Armory in Mesa, Arizona, for gunsmithing. They cut down the barrel, threading it for Remington chokes since SilencerCo doesn't have an adapter for Fabarm chokes. In an abundance of caution, we left some extra length on the barrel to avoid threading underneath the front lug, ending up with a 12.25-inch barrel. Wright Armory then chopped down a magazine tube extension to match and Cerakoted it black.





This reduced magazine capacity to four shells; we could've just slapped a simple cap on it, but this made the finished product look factory-fresh.

Any tactical long-gun needs a weapon-mounted light. After attaching an extra side Pic rail to the forend, we worked out a perfect setup with SureFire's 500-lumen Mini Scout Light Pro system. Introduced earlier this year, the Pro line comes with a pivoting and low-profile integrated mount, allowing us to attach the light to the bottom rail and tuck it tightly against the forend. We exchanged the tail cap for SureFire's pressure switch, attaching it to the side rail.

The factory fiber-optic iron sights are solid, but we wanted a red dot on this build. Holosun's 509T is small, light, and rugged, with an enclosed emitter and solar battery backup. You can configure the reticle with just a center dot or add a 32 MOA circle; the circle-dot is a nice match with a shotgun.

DO YOU SEE IT?

We first ran the STF 12 at the range in factory configuration. The 18-inch barrel comes with a standard cylinder choke as well as an angry-looking breaching muzzle brake that's also a cylinder choke. The factory mag extension holds five shells; we installed a Briley extended magazine tube. It's quite hefty, holds six shells, and was Cerakoted FDE by Fabarm.

The STF 12 has excellent ergonomics, and the action is very smooth. All control surfaces are comfortable and well-designed. Unlike other shotguns with a small, thin slide release lever tucked underneath the receiver that can make you feel like you're playing a game of find the man in the canoe, the Fabarm has a beefy, extended lever that's a cinch to actuate. We appreciated this when doing select-slug drills. The cross-bolt safety is oversized as well. And the shell caddy holds extra ammo securely and is easy to access for reloads or switching ammo types.

Like all 12-gauge pumps, recoil is stout, but the factory buttstock helps tame it. The muzzle brake helps further still. We're glad we chose the heavy-duty MFT stock, which also has a buttplate, even if it's not as plush as the factory stock. While the STF

12 can be fired with our stock setup folded, it pretty much sucks and there's a good chance you'll bang up your knuckles like a bar fight.

Since it's so much fun to shoot groups with a 12-gauge, we shot slugs with the 18- and 12.25-inch barrels. The trigger has some creep and breaks at a bit over 4.5 pounds. With the longer barrel, our best was a 6.8 MOA five-shot group with Winchester Super-X full-power slugs — boy was that unpleasant — and 6.4 MOA with Winchester Ranger low-recoil slugs. The Super-X zipped down range at an average of 1,518 feet per second; the Ranger did 1,102 fps. With the shorty, the Ranger slugs slowed down to 1,053 fps and printed an excellent 4.1 MOA group. Having had enough self-flagellation for the day, we skipped shooting more groups with the Super-X.

We also tested return-to-zero of the top rail, on which the Holosun was attached. We were impressed to find slugs landing on top of one another. When switching between the two barrels, the slug zero shifted by approximately 8 MOA.

Additionally, we patterned the short barrel with Federal FliteControl LE13200 9-pellet 00 buckshot and the SilencerCo cylinder-choke adapter installed. At 7 yards, six pellets clustered within 2 inches, while the remaining three spread out to 3.75 inches. At 25 yards, six pellets landed within 9 inches, and all nine fell within 13 inches.

Yes, you may have noticed we mentioned SilencerCo — we then fitted the Fabarm with a Salvo 12, because suppressors make everything better. And the Salvo makes shotguns better. While Salvo silencers are long and heavy in their maxed-out configuration, attaching it to the short barrel resulted in a heavenly combination. It's nowhere near as quiet as Anton's movie gun in *No Country for Old Men*, but that's Hollywood. In reality, it's still comfortable, very civilized, and gobs of fun.

We even tried to go quail hunting with the STF 12, but the trip unfortunately had to be canceled due to wildfires. Why would we try to do such a thing? Because, why not?

The STF 12 ran like clockwork, except for one discovery. While trying 3-gun style dual- and quad-loading techniques, we found a way to induce double feeds while loading the gun. There's a small gap between the tip of the shell carrier and the tail end of shells sitting in the magazine tube. If you load a shell but don't push it in far enough to engage the shell latch that retains it in the tube, it can pop back out and end up sitting on the carrier. Then, when you next rack the action, another shell is released from the magazine and jams against the one on the carrier. The shells will be under spring tension and lock up the action. You'll have to reach in through the ejection port to free up the double feed.

You can avoid this issue if you always positively insert each shell

during loading; try bending your thumb into an L-shape so the tip of your thumb always pushes the shell all the way in. But we can envision it still might happen if the shooter's rushing to load quickly or under stress. Fabarm's engineers in Italy acknowledged this is possible but elected to leave a bit of gap plus cut a half-circle radius at the end of the carrier to ensure shells load reliably and are aligned consistently when cycling the gun. Every design decision is a trade-off; if you like, you could weld and lengthen the carrier like a 3-gun shotgun. Or just be aware of the possibility and focus on your loading technique.

Additionally, the forend overlaps with the receiver when retracted, denying you access to the loading port. This could've been useful, for example, when clearing a double feed. However, this also allows Fabarm to position the front lug further back, thus accommodating shorter barrels than Remington and Mossberg counterparts.

YOU STAND TO WIN EVERYTHING

The STF 12 is a very refined shotgun; you can feel Fabarm's Italian heritage of decades of building elegant sporting guns. You half expect it to flirt with your wife. Fabarm's modular design is versatile and well thought out with great attention to detail. It's a sweet shooter and easy to run quick and hard.

Anton would approve.

The STF 12 is an excellent tactical shotgun. And with all the custom work, this is one of our favorite builds we've done. The gun will acquit itself perfectly well out-of-the-box ... but just look at how this build turned out. Flip a coin — if it's heads, it's out of your hands; you simply must get the stamps and build one yourself. You can't stop what's coming. **HH**

FABARM USA STF 12

Fabarmpro.com

CALIBER:	WEIGHT UNLOADED:	WEIGHT AS SHOWN:	WEIGHT AS SHOWN:
12 GAUGE	8.7 POUNDS	10.4 POUNDS WITH SALVO	8.2 POUNDS WITHOUT SALVO
MAGAZINE CAPACITY:	MAGAZINE CAPACITY AS SHOWN:	BARREL LENGTH:	BARREL LENGTH AS SHOWN:
5+1	4+1	18 INCHES	12.25 INCHES
LENGTH:	LENGTH AS SHOWN:	30.5-33.8 INCHES OPEN	+12.7 INCHES WITH SALVO
36.5 INCHES	21.8 INCHES FOLDED		

BUILD SHEET:

SilencerCo Salvo-12 +\$999	Fabarm 4-round shell caddy +43
SilencerCo Echo adapter (Remington) +124	Fabarm stock adapter kit +95
SureFire Mini Scout Light Pro +299	BCM receiver extension and castle nut +52
SureFire DS-SRD7 weaponlight switch +195	Mission First Tactical Extreme Duty stock +70
Holosun 509T-RD sight +506	Wright Armory gunsmithing (cut and thread barrel) +250
Trijicon RM33 low Picatinny rail mount for RMR +104	Wright Armory gunsmithing (modify and Cerakote magazine extension) +180
Fabarm forend rail +65	

SOURCES

WRIGHT ARMORY
wrightarmory.com

MSRP: **\$1,345** AS SHOWN: **\$4,327**

The STF 12 cycles very smoothly, and its ergonomics and controls are well-designed.

