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SUMMER 2019

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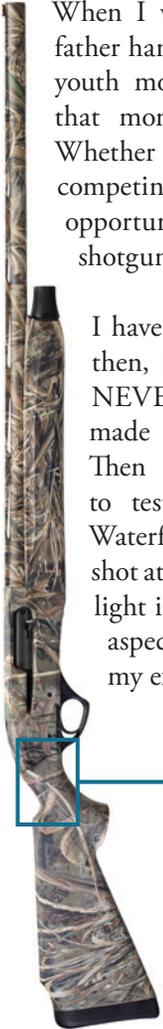
SHOTGUN REVIEW

SYREN XLR5 WATERFOWLER

by **TAYLOR BYARS**, CWA CAMP COORDINATOR

When I was just 7 years old, my father handed me a Remington 870 youth model 20 gauge, and since that moment, I've been hooked. Whether I'm hunting, practicing, competing or coaching, I love the opportunities and camaraderie that shotguns have brought me.

I have shot countless guns since then, but until this year I had NEVER laid eyes on a firearm made specifically for women. Then I got the opportunity to test Fabarm's Syren XLR5 Waterfowler, and after the first shot at a green-winged teal at first light in the Suisun Marsh, most aspects of the gun exceeded my expectations.



Roses in the grip of the gun add a feminine touch.
COURTESY OF FABARM.

When I took the gun out of the box, it was such a satisfying feeling. As I put the XLR5 together, I couldn't get over the actual touch of the gun. It has this "soft touch" grip that makes the gun feel so soft and smooth, almost like it was specifically made for soft lady hands. It's actually a signature Fabarm treatment, used even on tactical firearms, to improve the grip in all weather conditions.

When I mounted the gun, my first thought was, "Why do I feel like I'm looking on top of the barrel?" Well, that's because I was: The Syren has a raised comb, because women's shoulders tend to be lower than men's relative to their cheekbones, and I was used to adjusting my cheek placement to work on men's guns. Once I found the perfect spot – you know, the place where my cheek should actually be if I weren't compensating for poor gun fit—I couldn't wait to test it out that coming weekend.

The morning of the hunt arrived and once we were all set in the blind, I practiced getting it in that "perfect

spot" again. Two minutes after shoot time, a group of green-winged teal buzzed us, and when we all got up to shoot, I was the only one who missed.

I was not a happy hunter, but I quickly realized the problem: I don't usually shoot with a bead! So I practiced ignoring the bead, and by the time the next group of ducks came around, that bead and I were friends and there were ducks splashing belly up in the water.

Overall, the Syren XLR5 Waterfowler was a pleasure to test. It was definitely a learning curve in the beginning because I've spent most of my life adapting to men's guns, but it's nice to think a new female shooter wouldn't have to do any adapting if this was the first shotgun she owned.

THINGS I LOVED:

- There are roses carved into the grip of the XLR5, and to me it was very welcoming to see something feminine on a firearm.
- Weighing in at about 7 pounds, it didn't make the walk to the blind torturous in any way. I would happily sling this over my shoulder and walk miles if I had to.
- The button that closes the bolt is on the opposite side of the action. I tend to catch my fingers in the action while closing it sometimes, and it was much easier to press being on the other side.

- The reach was much more comfortable than it is with men's guns, and my hand seemed to fit snugly into it.

THINGS I DIDN'T LOVE:

- The Syren XLR5 Waterfowler only comes in 12 gauge. I don't need another 12 gauge, but if it was available in 20 gauge, I would purchase it immediately – I'd love to have one for 20 gauge-only clubs, dove hunting and days when I'm in the mood for a little more challenge.
- I wasn't impressed with the recoil reduction. It wasn't horrible, but I've shot guns with less recoil.

Overall, Fabarm's Syren XLR5 Waterfowler performed exceptionally well for me. I hunted with it in the rain and fog, and on a blue-bird day and it performed well in all conditions. As I was cleaning it (which is super easy—a thorough cleaning took just

15 minutes), I was sad to have to send it back. I would've really loved to have kept it and tested it out at a clays course or even turkey hunting!

If you or a woman you know are still unsure about women's guns, contact a dealer and see if they'll let you test one out. 🦅

KEY FEATURES

- 12 gauge
- 28-inch barrel
- Chambered for 2¾- and 3-inch shells
- Gas operating system

- Comes with five choke tubes
- Includes shim kit to adjust fit
- Realtree MAX-5
- \$1,885 for right-handed and \$2,075 for left-handed
- 5-year warranty

WHERE TO BUY

Syren has five dealers in California:

- Alquist Arms-Freitas Park in Turlock
- Birds Landing Hunting Preserve and Sporting Clays in Birds Landing
- P2K Sports in El Cajon
- Pacific Sporting Arms in Azusa
- Triple B Clays in South El Monte

Measure	Syren XLR5 for women	Fabarm XLR5	Why it matters
Length of pull (distance between the front of the trigger and the middle of the butt pad)	13.75"	14.5"	The average woman in the U.S. is 5-foot-4, compared with 5-foot-9 for men. Stocks made for average men tend to be too long for women, making holding the gun awkward.
Pitch (angle of the butt relative to the rib of the barrel)	7°	5°	Having the toe of the gun — the bottom of the butt — angled farther away from the shooter helps protect women's breasts from painful recoil.
Monte Carlo (raised) comb	Yes	No	Women's shoulders relative to their cheekbones tend to be lower than men's; a raised comb compensates for this difference.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

Taylor Byars is a certified shooting instructor who runs California Waterfowl's hunter training camps. PHOTO BY WAYNE TILCOCK