



Fabarm Infinite RS

When Fabarm's president couldn't find just the right side-by-side, he decided to make one. The result is the Infinite RS — but how does it shoot?



BY PHIL BOURJAILY

Sometimes need creates the gun. Sometimes a gun creates the need. Fabarm's latest target model, the Infinite RS, creates immediate need, or at least, immediate want. I know I wanted it the moment I took it out the box, and I wanted it more after I shot it. In truth, only a serious competitor set on winning a side-by-side event needs a fully-featured, 8½-pound, high-rib target gun. The rest of us can still want one, though.

Target side-by-sides aren't new for Fabarm, which has built lots of side-by-sides in its 100-year history. From the 1950s through the 1970s, the owner was a live-pigeon shooter who spearheaded the design of the four-lug action to make a gun strong enough for heavy pigeon loads. Most side-by-sides have two lugs fitting into the floor of the action. Fabarm has four, arranged two by two on either side of the ejector mechanisms, making for a very solid lockup. Actions made for pigeon loads can take sporting ammo

in stride. Wes Lang, Fabarm USA president, was well aware of the heritage and possibilities of the Fabarm side-by-side design. He came up with the Infinite RS in part because he was frustrated with the side-by-side choices available to target shooters.

"Before I was in the gun business, I was a shooter," he told me. "I wanted a side-by-side target gun, but couldn't find anything I liked in either a new or an older gun, and I didn't want to spend the money on a bespoke gun. So, we made the Infinite RS." Lang admits the gun is based on a real gun he had seen before: "Black Magic" was a Winchester Model 21 target gun belonging to the director John Milius, who took it everywhere and shot everything with it.

The Infinite RS does have "Black Magic" appearance all its own, with a matte-black receiver and non-glare barrel bluing. The similarities end there. Although both guns have vent ribs, Model 21s have flat ribs while the Infinite RS rib soars above the bar-



rels. It also has a host of target-gun features: An adjustable Monte Carlo stock, a trigger that adjusts for length, extended chokes and a pistol grip with a palm swell, along with 32-inch barrels.

Lang says he started with what he wanted and back-engineered it onto the Fabarm four-lug action. From there, Fabarm S.P.A. president Giorgio Guerini used his CAD-CAM expertise to redraw the designs so production could be switched over from outdated machinery where side-by-sides had been built to the state-of-the-art CNC machining. Some of those machines work to .0001-of-an-inch

tolerances. The result is a much more precisely made, consistent product. Certainly, while my eye can't detect .0001-inch differences, I know what wood-to-metal and metal-to-metal fit should look like, and this gun has it.

The semi-deluxe Turkish walnut contrasts with the dull black metal and semi-gloss barrels in a pleasing fashion. The otherwise plain black receiver does have a small, engraved "Infinity" symbol blending into the letters R and S rendered in light blue and white enamel. Purists might not like the decoration, but they won't like a high-rib target side-by-side with extended chokes to begin with, anyway. I liked it. I may be biased because my Fabarm Elos N2 RS has very similar decoration.



The high rib catches your eye, both when you shoot this gun and when you look at the gun. The gun uses Fabarm's interchangeable Quick Release Rib system, devised by Giorgio Guerini's brother, Antonio Guerini, the firm's engineering wiz. Rather than use a swamped rib as is traditional, the high rib makes this gun's sight



picture similar to that of an over-and-under or semiauto. The QRR allowed the use of an alloy rib in place of a much heavier soldered-on steel piece that would have added too much weight to the barrels. There are no accessory ribs available, although that could change. This way, if the rib were to be damaged, it can be replaced without tools.

That lighter rib, and the slightly shorter action of a side-by-side, concentrates the weight between the hands. The Infinite RS with 32-inch barrels has some weight forward but is still a responsive gun thanks to the light rib and an action that's even more compact than an over-and-under action.

I knew none of the ins and outs of the Infinite RS when I picked the gun up at my FFL holder and took it straight to the club. Out of the box, I shot it well — except for that one station with the rabbits that we won't talk about — and I can't say I'd have broken any more targets with my own over-and-under. The high rib provides a familiar picture to over-and-under shooters, so the transition from over-and-under to the Infinite RS is easy and intuitive. I liked the way the barrels of a side-by-side sit down in my hands, too. The forend is a fairly slim beavertail just thick enough to keep your fingers off the metal while still allowing the gun to ride low in your cupped palm.

Mechanically, everything worked well, too. The gun was a pleasure to shoot, and I was able to shoot it both mounted and unmounted, although that's not always the case with me and Monte Carlo stocks.

Later I verified on the skeet field and at 5-stand that my first experience with the gun wasn't a fluke. I did shoot the gun for POI/POA and found it hit a hair low for me, maybe 45/55 or even 40/60. Side-by-sides do shoot lower, often, because there's more downflip in the unsupported barrels, but that's what adjustable combs are for. I shot the gun fine out of the box, but if I needed to dial it in better, the Fabarm Micro Metric 3D comb hardware works well. The gun's 8½-pound weight and MicroCell recoil pad soaked up the punch of 1 1/8-ounce, 1,200 fps target loads just fine.

The bores are Fabarm's same tough, 1630 BAR proof (higher than required in Italy) with the Tribore dimensions and Exis HP chokes that do print hard-hitting patterns.

The trigger broke at 4.5 pounds, which I thought was fine, and Lang assured me that the main difference between the demo gun I shot and the production models will be an improved trigger, so I assume production triggers will be better than "fine."

The Infinite RS is an easy, fun gun to shoot. It's fun to look at and to pass around to your friends on the range. I suppose you might draw some dirty looks if you showed up with this gun at a tweedy side-by-side shoot where everyone else packs a double

that's 100-plus years old, but on the plus side, you'd probably beat the brakes off of them with it, so there's that. Add it to your battery the way people add smallbores. It's not a gun to replace your over-and-under or



FABARM INFINITE RS

- GAUGE:** 3-inch 12-gauge
- BARRELS:** 30- and 32-inch
- ACTION:** Break-action, Inertia reset
- TRIGGER:** Single selective
- STOCK AND FOREARM:** Deluxe Turkish walnut, pistol grip with RH palm-swell and adjustable Monte Carlo comb, beavertail forend
- LOP:** 14.85 inches over Microcell pad
- WEIGHT:** 8 pounds, 8 ounces (tested) with 32-inch barrels
- PRICE:** \$6,175

semiauto unless you are dead set on becoming state side-by-champion. It's a gun you might buy on impulse because it's different, there's nothing else like it, and it's hard to resist, even at \$6,175. It's also a great shooter, and I doubt you'll ever experience buyer's remorse if you do spring for an Infinite RS. *CTW*