

Miroku's revamped Mk38 Sporter and Trap

by John McDougall



John McDougall took great delight in shooting the new Mk38 Trap over the traps. The pulls were fast, but the Miroku's patterns were effective with both first- and second-barrel shots.

I can remember back more than 30 years when the first Miroku shotguns appeared in Australia during the late 1960s under the Stirling brand. They were well-made and serviceable shotguns from Japan and to date, they have only become better. The latest offering from Miroku is the new Model Mk38 Sporter and Trap guns. The Mk38 has also been around for as long as I can remember and it is the foundation of the Miroku fine range of shotguns but formerly only offered in a Trap gun configuration.

The present Mk38 range is also unlike the latest Mk11 Mirokus with their lower frame. The Mk38 maintains a similar frame to all previous models but what is new is quite exciting. A revamped engraving on the receiver of the gun is only the beginning, followed by the option of a Sporter configuration and then by improvements in stock dimensions, fixed chokes and ventilated side ribs. A change of fore-end style has also been added. Throw in a small mid-sight bead to assist with gun mount and all of a sudden, you have a firearm that is more than capable for the purpose for what it was designed.

I have owned several Mirokus during almost four decades of sports shooting and I can say without fear of contradiction they are well-built guns suited to the demands of the Australian shooter, whether it be for Sporting Clays or Trap shooting. Their prices over the years, like everything else, have increased, but you can still purchase one of these latest Mk38s for around \$2000 if you care to shop around.

I have been impressed with the new Sporter model on review, presented with fixed chokes of quarter in the bottom barrel and half in the top. This has been purposefully designed so that shooters who choose to use steel shot through their Sporter for duck hunting can do so without fear of damage to their guns. On the other hand, the fixed chokes with the Trap gun, being three-quarters and full, are marked not

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An overall view of the great-looking and fabulous-shooting Miroku Mk38 Trap with its special chequering and adjustable comb piece.

suited to steel for hunting. However, they would be teamed with steel shot Trap loads on shooting grounds where such credentials are mandatory.

The barrels

Finished in a deep lustrous blue, the barrels of the Mk38 Sporter were designed to perfection. Measuring 30" (760mm) in length, they were topped by a parallel ventilated rib finished with a non-reflective surface. A barrel-type white bead was fitted at the muzzle, while a smaller white bead was located midway down the rib to assist with correct gun mounting - to overcome canting of the gun. The ventilated side ribs ran almost the length of the barrels and were short, covered by the fore-end.

The latest Mk38 features fixed chokes of quarter and half, which is a new direction, as Miroku guns are generally fitted with interchangeable choke tubes, as seen with earlier Invector and C300 series. However, this new model has fixed chokes and simply destroys targets.

The chamber end of the gun features the typical two-piece ejectors that have lasted the test of time along with 2¾" (70mm) chambering. This will accommodate all Sporting Clays loads from 34 to 24g and a wide range of steel shot loads offered in the 70mm case length. I would be happy to fire loads up to No. 3 size shot in steel shot loads, but I would be reluctant to fire the larger No. 2 and BB sized shot, despite the gun being fitted with open fixed chokes. Testing that I saw on fixed-choke guns during early investigations by the British Association of Shooting and Field when steel shot was initially reviewed, showed slight bulging of the chokes, even when lighter than half-choke constriction was used. This is just my personal recommendation, for I believe Miroku will stand by its product, hence the maximum half-choke constriction on the top barrel.

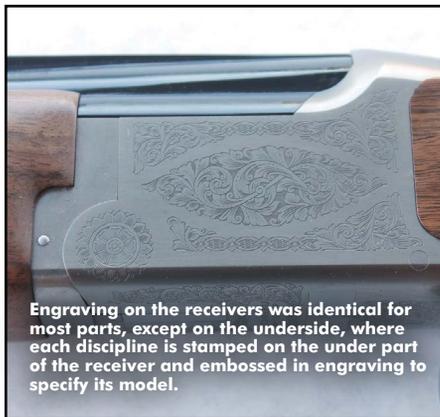
The receiver

The receiver has undergone a complete change of engraving from the previous

model and looks pleasant to the eye without being overdone. As an under-pinned gun, the Mk38 has not undergone the receiver height reduction found with the Miroku Mk11, preferring to maintain what has traditionally been offered. The underneath engraving has the letters 'B.C. Miroku' with 'Mk38 Sport' engraved one line on top of the other to identify the model number and manufacturer. This has been tastefully included in a surrounding scroll border.

The finish on the surfaces of the Mk38 receiver was perfection with a satin steel look rather than a highly reflective shine. This is a benefit for hunters while water-fowling and will cut down on reflected light shining from the receiver, though it is not really a worry for clay target shooters.

The position of the safety catch cum barrel selector was in the traditional spot - on the top tang. This has become standard for Miroku shotguns. The top lever was substantial, nicely engraved and also imparted with a non-slip surface for positive operation when hunting in wet conditions.



Engraving on the receivers was identical for most parts, except on the underside, where each discipline is stamped on the under part of the receiver and embossed in engraving to specify its model.



The chokes on both gun models are fixed. Note the white bead barrel-type front-sight.

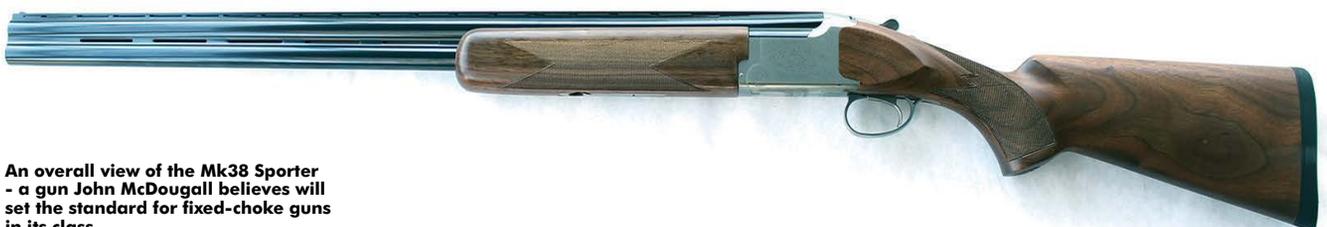


Fusil à canons superposés
Superposé geweer
Over and under shotgun
Bockdoppelfinte
Fucile a canne sovrapposte
Escopeta de cañones superpuestos
Espingarda com canos sobrepostos

MIROKU MK 10 - MK 38



Both new Mk38s have a mid-positioned sight to enable the shooter to avoid canting their gun, as the sights should line up one behind the other and in a figure-eight sight-picture.



An overall view of the Mk38 Sporter - a gun John McDougall believes will set the standard for fixed-choke guns in its class.

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It worked smoothly and positively when opening the gun with the least amount of effort.

Design of the triggerguard was generous enough for the shooter to use thin leather gloves, should the weather be cold. The triggerguard was well rounded and complemented the elegance and style of the gun's overall lines. The triggerfoot, although non-adjustable, was well designed and comfortable to use. It was more on the thinner than broader side in size, but worked well. The trigger releases on the inertia-operated selector mechanism were around 4lb for each trigger, which is quite within safety limits and nice to the release.

Metal-to-wood fitting about the receiver was without fault, which is quite an exception, as many entry-level guns have minor flaws. Miroku obviously has its manufacturing down to fine tolerances. The metal-to-metal fitting of the barrels to the receiver was perfection.

The stock and fore-end

The walnut stock and fore-end of the updated Mk38 is new in both design and dimensions. With the Sporter, the fore-end has moved away from the traditional

Schnabel-style found on previous models and now supports a Trap-style fore-end. This is well covered with chequering and firm to the grip, while the Trap model also has an identical fore-end but a different chequering pattern.

The stock dimensions have been changed significantly with the Sporter, in that there is less drop at comb and less drop at heel, making for higher stock on the Sporter. The new Trap gun version of the Mk38 has an adjustable comb piece for personal stock adjustment. Both models, the Trap and Sporter, feature a new-style recoil pad that has also been thrown in as the Australian Miroku distributor, Outdoor Sporting Agencies, has a greater input into what it has deemed to be the demands of Australian shooters.

The Mk38 Sporter in the field

A visit to the Frankston Gun Club for some Sporting Clays practice was indeed a delight with the new fixed-choke Mk38 Sporter. The improved cylinder choke with No. 8 Spartan loads demolished targets out to 40m and beyond, while the tighter half-choke finished off those further targets the lighter choke failed to destroy.



The character of wood in the stock and fore-end matched well with its color and grain. Note the different recoil pad used for the Sporter version and the excellent chequering about the pistol grip. Wood-to-metal fit was also perfect.



The Mk38 Trap comes with an adjustable comb on the stock so shooters can make adjustments for their own comfort and gun-fit.

I was impressed with the fixed chokes of the Sporter and there seemed not to be a target set on the ground that the Mk38 could not handle. In fact, I was so taken with the gun that I have entertained purchasing one for my own personal use. This would be a huge deviation for me, as I have always used interchangeable choke tubed guns. But the fixed chokes from the Mk38 were devastating.

The balance of the gun was good and the height of the new stock dimensions perfect for great gun mount and an ideal sighting plane down the barrels. The stock wood was fine and for a gun around the \$2000 mark, it represented excellent value.

The Mk38 Trap over the traps

A further visit to the club during the same week found me shooting the Mk38 Trap gun on one of their many grounds of Down the Line (DTL) Trap. The phono pulls made for an excellent opportunity, with fast releases and targets smashed by the three-quarter choke first barrel and chips broken with the second full-choked barrel.

Unfortunately, it has been some time since I last shot DTL and several second-barrel shots had to be fired to hit elusive targets. Still, the Mk38 Trap was certainly up to the challenge. The evenness of the first-barrel pattern from the three-quarter fixed-choke barrel was spectacular as targets were crunched. My demise of straightaway targets occasioned second-barrel offerings and using Spartan No. 7½ loads, those targets that tried to elude my first efforts were certainly minced by the second barrel.

I was impressed with the performance of

Specifications		
Manufacturer	Miroku Gun Company, Japan	
Model	Mk38 Sporter	Mk38 Trap
Action	Boxlock, underpinned gun jointing system with single trigger and selective ejectors	
Calibre	12-gauge, 76mm chambered and steel shot compatible, bore diameter 0.738"	12-gauge, 76mm chambered and compatible only with lead shot and steel shot Trap loads, bore diameter 0.737"
Barrel Length	760mm (30")	760mm (30")
Barrel Weight	1.48kg (3lb 4oz)	1.42kg (3lb 2oz)
Overall Length	1200mm (47.24")	1205mm (47.44")
Overall Weight	3.5kg (7lb 10oz)	3.65kg (8lb 2oz)
Chokes	Fixed-choke system with quarter and half chokes, bottom barrel 0.729", top barrel 0.723", HP steel shot compatible	Fixed-choke system with three-quarter and full chokes, bottom barrel 0.705", top barrel 0.696"
Stock	Walnut stock and fore-end, treated with semi-matte oiled finish that highlighted character and sealed woodwork well. Chequering completed by computerised laser at around 18 lines per inch. Test gun fitted with non-adjustable stock. Drop at comb 1 3/8", drop at heel 1 3/4", length of pull (measured from trigger foot, parallel to barrels) 14 1/2"	Walnut stock and fore-end, treated with semi-matte oiled finish that highlighted character and sealed woodwork very well. Chequering completed by computerised laser at around 18 lines per inch. Test gun fitted with adjustable comb. Length of pull (measured from trigger foot, parallel to the barrels) 14 3/4"
Distributor	Outdoor Sporting Agencies	
RRP	\$2000 with instruction booklet in ABS case, five-year warranty on mechanicals, six-month warranty on woodwork	\$2150 with Allen key to adjust comb piece, a long Allen key to remove stock and instruction booklet in ABS case, five-year warranty on mechanicals, six-month warranty on woodwork

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A view of the top tang where the safety catch cum barrel selector is located. All functioned perfectly and the top lever with its smooth action was a pleasure to operate. Note the top lever positioned slightly to the right to accommodate wear.

the Mk38 Trap. The stock dimensions were good and the gun fitted well without having to alter the adjustable comb piece, though this can be simply undertaken using the Allen key provided with the gun. Although not suited to field use with high-performance (HP) steel shot loads or any others, a representative from Outdoor Sporting Agencies agreed that Trap loads in steel shot should be fine.

This model was a little more expensive, with a recommended retail price around the \$2150 mark due to the adjustable comb piece. However, it is still excellent value for a well-made gun and will prove a sound choice for a rigorous shooting discipline.

Summary

These new-model Miroku shotguns are set to appeal to shooters who are entering either Sporting Clays or Trap shooting for the first time. The Mk38 is an extremely reliable model from Miroku and will enable the shooter to advance to the next level of competition gun.

Service-wise, the Mk38 should last until that standard is reached when an Mk11 or Mk70 can be purchased to advance from what



The Trap gun, being a fixed-choke model, has a removable sticker on the barrel to indicate that it is not suited to steel shot loads. The OSA sales manager indicated that this also applies to steel shot field loads, but that the gun would be quite suited to steel shot Trap loads.

has been built on the Mk38's grounding skills. Mind you, the Mk38, once accustomed, could just as well serve the shooter for the entirety of their shooting journey. They are great guns, made to last and will provide top-notch service and reliability.

Both models in the Mk38 line come with an ABS fitted gun case and have a warranty for a period of five years with their mechanism. The stock wood is guaranteed for six months.

For more information, ask at your local gunshop or visit www.osaaustralia.com.au ●



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