

SPORTING Gun

WIN
£2,500

WORTH OF



**STONEY
CREEK**

KIT

SEE PAGE 30

OPEN SEASON

- A time like no other
- We look back on some perfect days
- How to shoot responsibly

DO IT LIKE DIGWEED

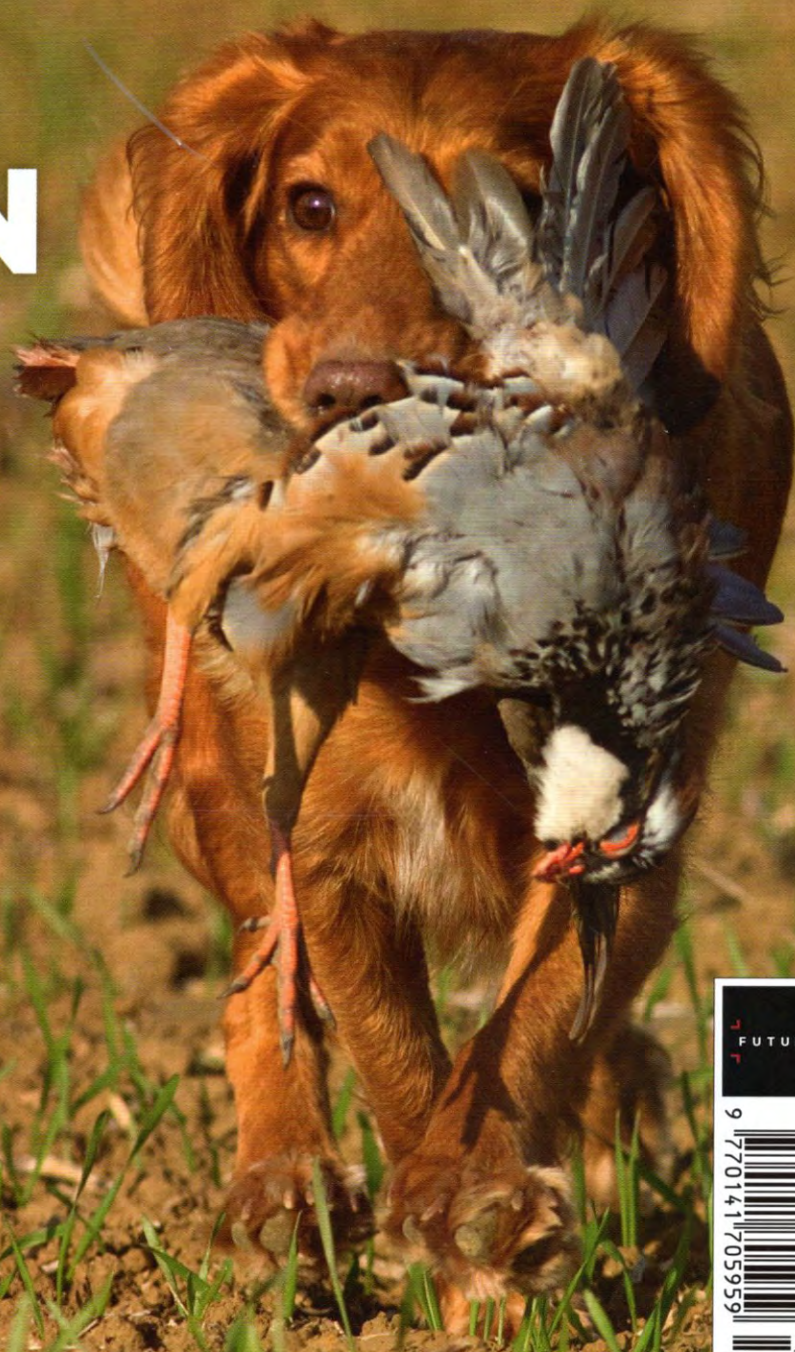
George's secret for success

CHURCHILL'S NEW CROWN

The gun that we couldn't miss with

LADY GUN

Rizzini Venus Sporter rated



78 PAGES OF SPORTING FUN
INCLUDING: FOXING ■ RABBITS ■ DEER AND GAME



No other maker in the world produced a heavy-calibre officer's pistol combined with a miniature version

A good Egg

Robert Morgan says that you will have to shell out if you want one

Few iconic objects exist in the world of antique firearms from before the time of mass production. Every gun produced was a handmade item and, as a consequence, unique. While pairs of guns existed, no two pairs were identical and even duelling pistols by different manufacturers differed considerably.

However, if there is an iconic antique firearm it is probably the ones pictured here: a set of Eggs. These were made by the master gunsmith Joseph Egg. Born in 1775 in Huningue, Alsace, Joseph came from an important line of Huguenot gunmakers and was actually the son of Johann Jakob Egg,

who in turn was the brother of the equally famous Durs Egg. Initially trading as a gunmaker in Great Windmill Street, London, by the age of 25 he had started filing patents, the first of which was Engineering Patent 2440 of 1800, which concerned bending steel with heat.

Partnership

He then joined with another engineer called Walker to form Egg & Walker, gunmaker and patent spring truss maker. By the end of 1801, he had the workshops at 59 Frith Street, Soho, London, and had gone into partnership with another renowned gunmaker, Henry Tatham, forming Tatham & Egg. From these shared premises, Tatham and Egg both produced firearms with either their own or shared names. In 1814, Joseph Egg acquired the property at No 1 Piccadilly (the corner of Piccadilly and Haymarket), which he kept until 1834 and where he produced the pistols pictured here.

So what made these guns special? First, these sets are unique in the world of antique firearms as no other maker produced a



The gun company's elaborate label

heavy-calibre officer's pistol combined with a miniature 'pocket' version of exactly the same gun. These fully functional miniatures are known in gun-collecting circles as 'Baby Eggs'. While they were supplied on their own or in pairs, it is these cased sets of large and small combined that are the most desirable.

Well-heeled

Second, they were phenomenally expensive in their day and were only ever purchased by royalty, titled persons and extremely well-heeled officers. When these were made in 1815, they would have cost in the region of £50. While only around £5,000 in



Ornate craftsmanship: mounted in silver and embellished in gold



These hugely expensive guns were only bought by royalty, titled persons and extremely well-heeled officers

today's terms, it does not take into account the average working man's wages of less than £1 per week.

Last but not least, they are an absolute tour-de-force of the gunmaker's art. The observant among you will notice for instance that the exposed mainspring not only powers

the cock, but also tensions the frizzen, an unnecessary and complicated way of going about things, but Joseph Egg did it because he could.

Both the pistols illustrated here are mounted in silver and embellished with gold, the baby with a gold pommel cap engraved

with the original purchaser's coat of arms. All the accessories are the best money could buy at the time, from the large and small red leather three-way flasks to the figured walnut detachable stock for the larger pistol.

If you had been fortunate enough to have had an ancestor who had the foresight to purchase a set of Eggs such as these, they actually would have proved to be good investments. Today, if you wish to own a similar set, they will cost you in excess of £40,000. ■

“They are an absolute tour-de-force of the gunmaker's art”



In association with
HOLTS
AUCTIONEERS OF FINE MODERN & ANTIQUE GUNS
holtsauctioneers.com

All the accessories are the best money could buy at the time