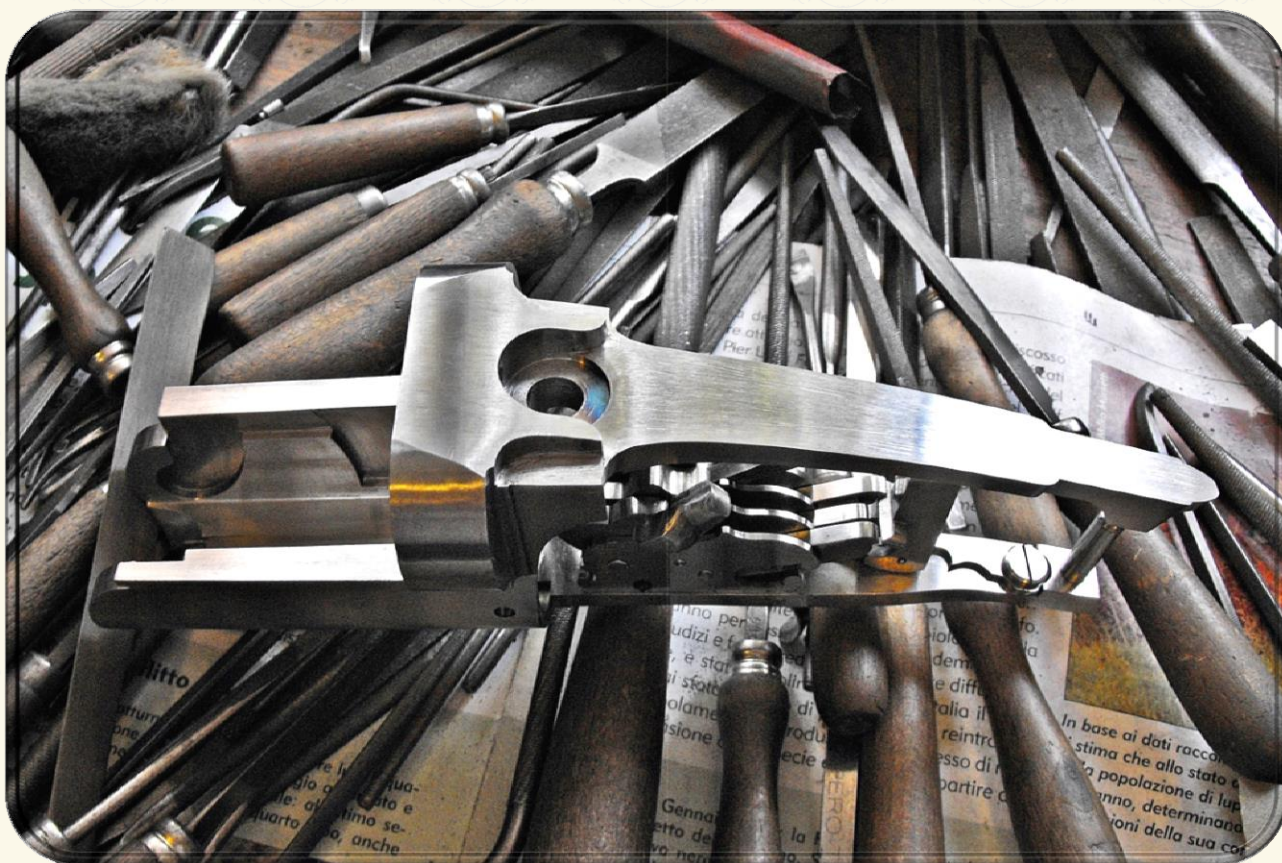


Talking with Nerio Cortesi



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Nerio Cortesi tells: "once upon a time uncle Salvatore, while hunting, got three woodpigeons in a range. He took two, the third one escaped; so he decided to build his own triple barreled gun". This was the very serious answer to our request about how and when the famous drilling by Cortesi was born.

<< The first prototype dates back to 1936, it was slowly developed until the beginning of World War II" Nerio keeps

talking while he is seeking and finds a book with a faded photo of a gun with three barrels. The caption says: superior Italian craftsmanship gun. Nerio affirms It is a Cortesi and it is proved by the shape and position of the three triggers. The upper barrels are shot by sidelock hammers, the third lower barrel, with its own trigger, is shot by a lock on the triggers' plate. A lump seems to protrude from the lower face of the action.



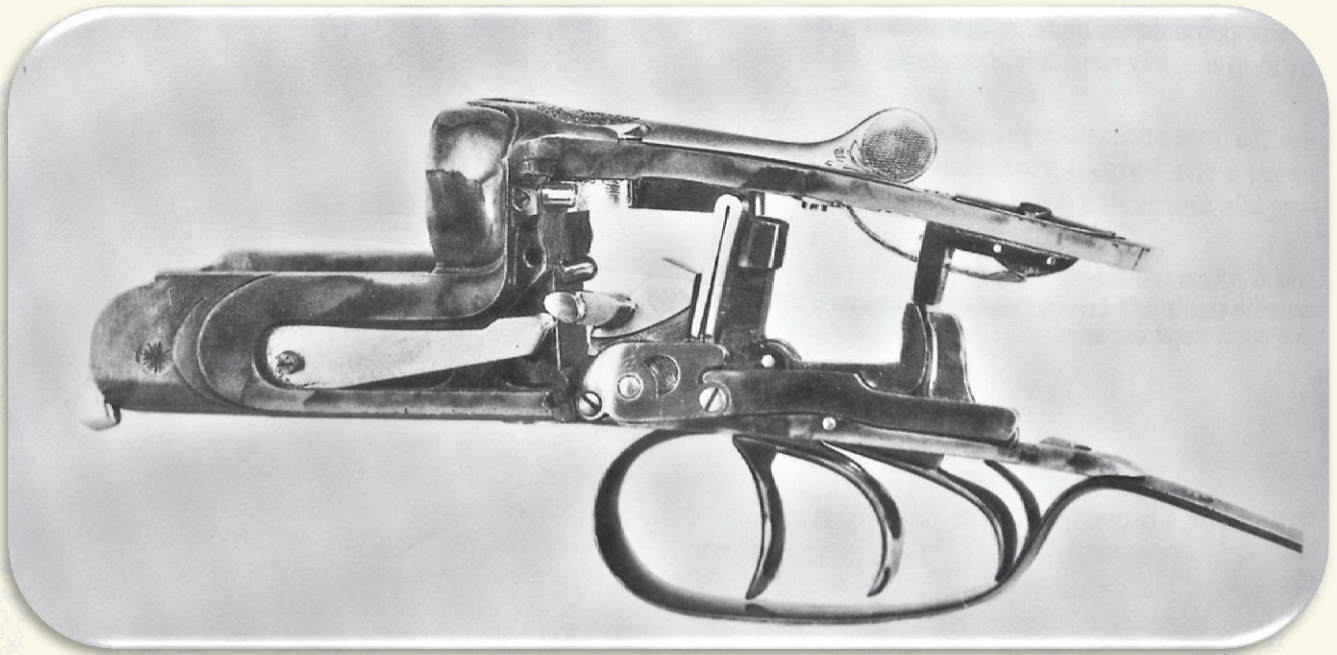
The three triggers of a 1992' drilling, late work by Salvatore. He used to make them this way also when he was young.

<< After the end of the War the project was resumed" Nerio continues while entering an adjacent room from which he reappears with a stock in his hand. "This belongs to one of the first three barreled guns made by my uncle, dated 1949".

This relic is just as eloquent: it is made to receive a lock with three tumblers.



Drilling n°5, 20 gauge. Salvatore Cortesi. 1955 approx.

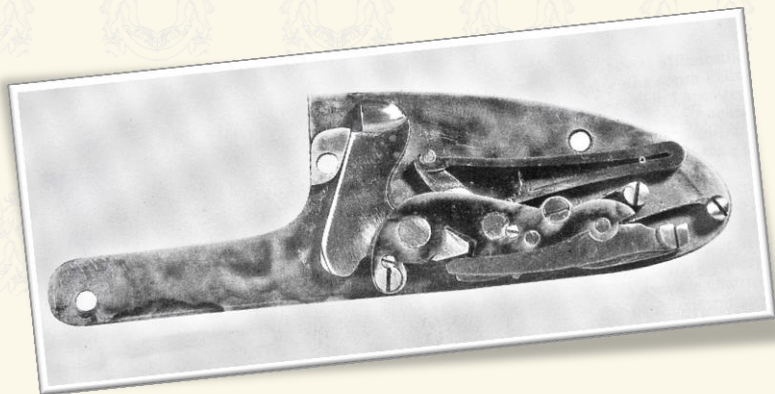


The fifth one out of ten drillings made by Salvatore. It is gauge 20. Being it hard to find, we have to be content with old photos.

Two back-spring sidelocks are slaved to the upper barrels, they are operated by the first and the second trigger. The third trigger starts the third barrel's lock, that is on the triggers' plate. Three tumblers to cock and only two levers to do this work, the left one, visible in the photo, cocks the left and the lower tumbler.



The complex casing, it has to hold three locks.



Right lock of the drilling n°5.

Back-action spring, no rebounding, three pillars bridge, safety sear.



The lump system can be distinguished from other drilling' manufacturers. The lumps are worked from the solid of the lower barrel and they are on the sides of this one. Thanks to this solution the action has a lower profile if

compared with the Germanic school drillings, there is also a lower mechanical stress on the closure upon firing.

Drilling n°37, 20 gauge. Salvatore Cortesi. 1992.

Drilling made by Salvatore near his 80th birthday. The serial belongs to the numeration of the guns made by "Cortesi di Veggiano". Bar action sidelocks and a third lock on the triggers' plate. Three triggers. A sled on the inner bottom of the action cocks the three tumblers. The closure is in a high position.

The gun is gauge 20. In order to respect the right proportions, Salvatore inserts the mainsprings of the sidelocks into the sides of the action.



Once upon a time there was a Princess ...

It seems the beginning of a fairy tale, but it is a true story. Past century, in the early 50s, Princess Giulia Ottoboni wanted to express her gratitude to an illustrious doctor donating him a gun. She did not choose an "usual" fine and blazoned side by side; her thankfulness was so big that she wanted something very particular and rare.

In that moment, in Italy, there were two guns different than usual: the semiauto by Cosmi, wonderful but a "machine", and the strange creature with three barrels that Salvatore Cortesi handcrafted in his workshop in Rimini, a specimen every now and then.

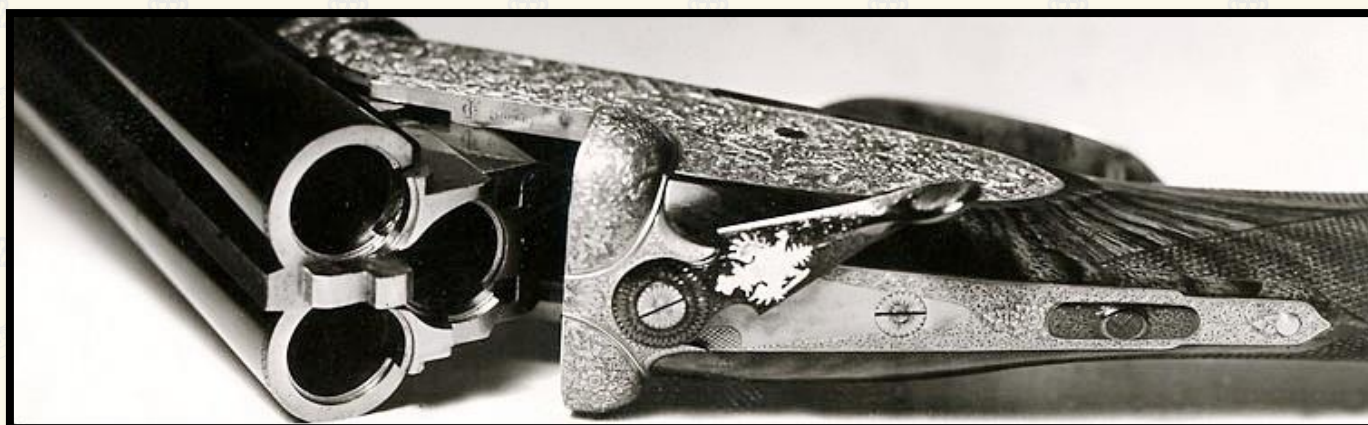
The noblewoman found among the Cortesi gunmakers the new Volcano capable to shape the work she wished. Salvatore didn't want to build a three-barreled different from his usual one, so his brothers Alfredo and Virgilio tried their hand on it, it was a bold decision. The need of ejectors and of two triggers forces a completely new project for lumps, action and locks that Salvatore devised during the construction of his gun, which had three triggers and no ejectors.

The Princess wanted to meet the Cortesi family and it was a great event in Vergiano. Suit and tie for the men, beautiful the women, polished, and strictly guarded, the children. The six-doors limousine made a big impression, the large quantity of candies made the youngest happy.

Alfredo and Virgilio decided to build two specimen of this gun and it took four years. Maybe, in our opinion, one was made to study and solve the problems, a sort of prototype to set up the mechanisms. Whatever the reason, they have not been made to be a pair. They've been tested in July 1956, serial 1 and 2 among the numeration of the three-barreled guns. The first "smooth-drilling" made by Cortesi from Vergiano.



*Virgilio Cortesi in
Zurigo to deliver the
gun (serial n. 1) to dr.
Haemmerli.*



Serial n. 1. On the top lever the coat-of-arms of the Princess Giulia Ottoboni.



Serial n. 2. The coat-of-arms is the one of the Cortesi gunmakers.

*On this website, in the sections "Smooth barrel" and "Under the skin", this
gun is described in detail.*

Drilling n°15, 20 gauge. Alberto Cortesi. 1980.



An easier version of the drilling with measures aimed at cost reduction. Monobloc barrels, triggers' plate and locks designed with the purpose of a rational construction simplicity.



Of course the "substance" is Cortesi. It has to be noted the hardening and the finishing of the inner parts (they are concealed from view). It is completely different from the work of others, externally cared and sloppy inside.

Drilling n°19, 12 gauge. Virgilio Cortesí. 1981.

The creative research does not stop. Every work is different from the previous one and the next one will be different again. It is a feature of the artist.

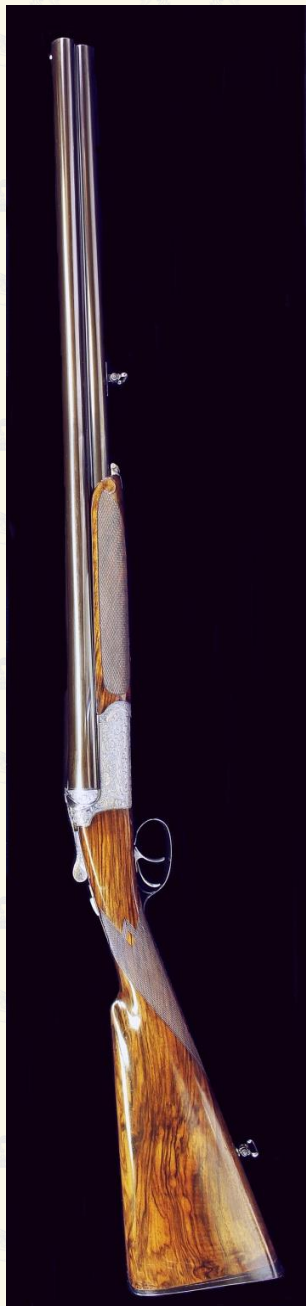


This one evokes some among old English guns, maybe it is the shape of the action, the hardening colors or just a wave of memory connecting two distant excellences.

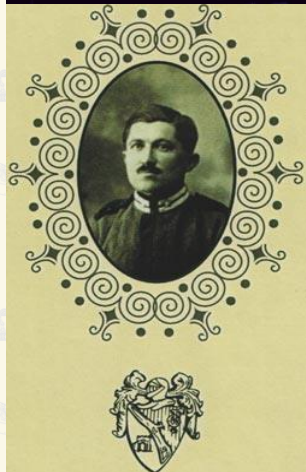


Drilling n°49, 12 gauge. Virgilio e Nerio Cortesi. 2003.

Beautiful among the beautiful.

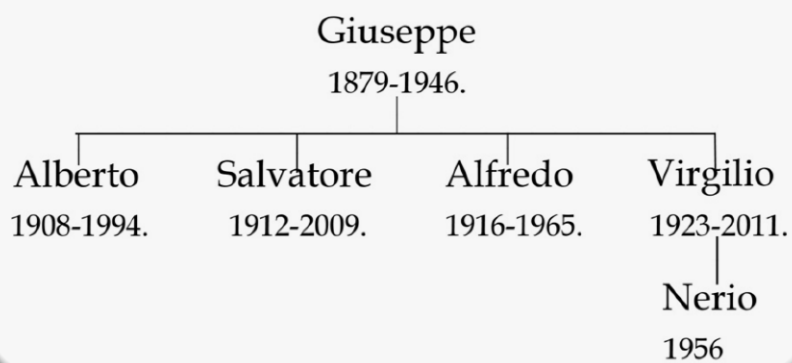


An exceptional gun with a perfect balance of every proportion. The steel parts, engraved by G. M. Sabatti, are made even more sumptuous by the tones of the transparent Cortesi hardening.





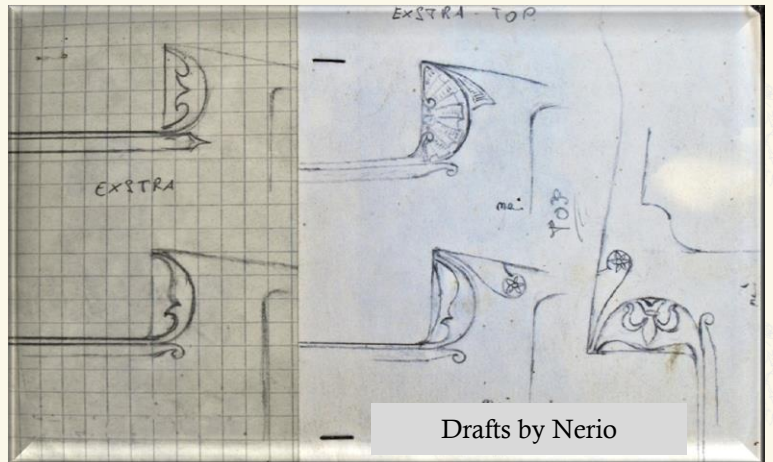
Family tree of the Cortesi gunmakers



Nerio Cortesi is an extremely skilled gunmaker, grown up in the best school. His guns arouse admiration and, moreover, wonder because they doesn't seem to belong to this present time. Expensive double guns made by others, even if well constructed and even better decorated, are often dull, his guns, instead, evoke far glories. They are not similar to nothing else, Nerio is not a mannerist; his



works are always and only Cortesi. A gunmakers' family of particular capacity. . Proud (with reason) of the beauty and



of the indisputable quality of the guns created by their knowledge.

The guns of these last years are steeped in whispered references to the ancient, in fascinating details patiently shaped, in transparent hardenings, in sophisticated citations that are able to make a miracle: when handling the gun we completely feel in the present, when looking the gun it's like being projected in a golden and mythical past.



Drilling under construction. (n°63?). 12 gauge. Nerio Cortesi.



Nerio tells he is intent on the realization of a drilling "in the manner of Giacinto Zanotti", single trigger and with the barrel selector beside the trigger.

He shows us the action, it is full-bodied, "if not, how could it be a Zanotti?". The strap of action reminds to the Tiberius bridge in Rimini, indifferent even to the mine of the retreating Germans.

He explains us about the difficulties to build a selector which has to work with three barrels, then he takes a mainspring and tells us to compress it with the fingers. It simply doesn't move, even if pressed with strength on the bench. Then he mounts the mainspring, the thumb cocks the tumbler with extreme and unexpected ease.

In the meanwhile the mind goes to the "manner" of Giacinto and of the more cultured Stefano Zanotti, they left us one of the most important side by side of the 20th century. Which among their distinguishing marks will be evocated from the wisdom of Nerio Cortesi?

