

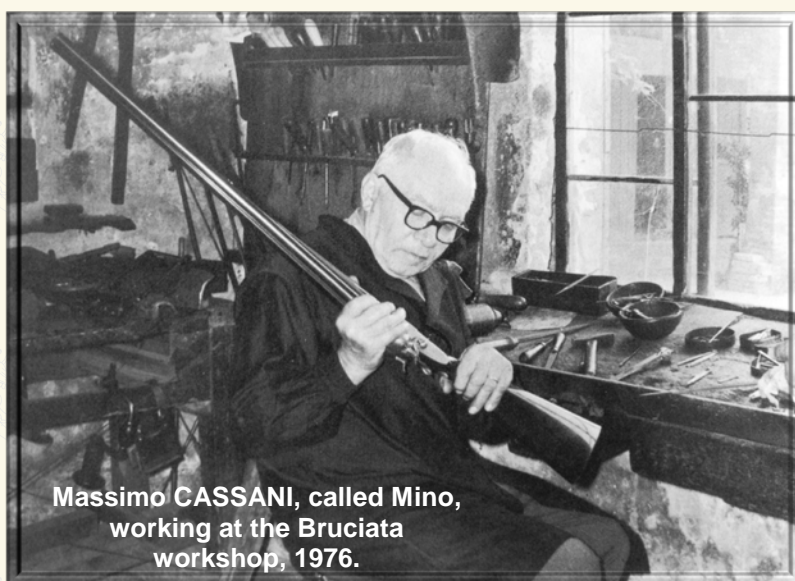
## *Renato Zanotti, 20 gauge sidelever.*



The Zanotti family from Santa Maria in Fabriago (a little town near Ravenna in Emilia Romagna - Italy) is one of the oldest among gunmakers. There are documents dating back to the half of the 17th century that refer to firearms built into "Bruciata" (literally burned – the town is also called like this because it was reconstructed in 1730 after being destroyed by a fire) of Santa Maria, in the Duchy of Fabriago.

In this place the Zanotti workshop still exists, abandoned for almost thirty years after being active for centuries.

Under this roof Giacinto, Tomaso with his son Fabio and his nephew Massimo Cassani, Leopoldo with his son Renato learnt their job by working for their family.



Very skilled gunsmiths, they refined their side by side until reaching a quality reputed equal among the best European gunsmiths. In 1936 Renato Zanotti moved to Bologna and opened his laboratory. He provided assistance to the clients' shotguns and he built new ones, always keeping up with the high quality level for which Zanotti was becoming reknown. Everything was handmade taking care of the every single part and of the whole product, regardless of the time necessary to reach the completion of the work.



Renato died in 1975, four years after the demise of his cousin Fabio who moved to Gardone Val Trompia (near Brescia, home of the biggest Italian gunmakers) in 1954. He signed his works as Fabio Zanolotti from Bologna.



Besides the guns, he left a heritage made of an admirable way of working, that students may carry on continuing his work. This is the legacy bequeathed to us by Renato. After his death some lovers of the Zanolotti's gun decided to give life to a fascinating gun-making adventure: their aim was to continue the manufacturing of Zanolotti's shotgun, protecting its

integrity and originality, manufacturing it like it was done back in the years between the two world wars.. The semi-finished parts, the equipment and the workers were still available.

A little more than thirty side by side have been produced so far by this new-old Renato Zanolotti. Most are 12 gauge top lever hammerless guns, four or five 12 gauge hammer guns, four or five 20 gauge hammerless guns.

**Among these 20 gauge guns only one is a sidelever, made as a challenge and therefore carefully finished in the substance and in the appearance.**



It's not often love at first sight, but this time it is. It is the powerful charm of the sidelever that allows the long top strap, born from the wood, to seamlessly become head of action. Once eliminated the top lever, the profile is that of an "ancient shotgun".

The well-shaped stock from Romagna, the action's proportions, the relationships between iron and wood, the decoration and the finishing, they all complete the look of this beautiful work.

If it is true the saying that vintage Zanolotti's guns are made better inside than how much the aspect, at times bare, might lead to believe, let alone this one.







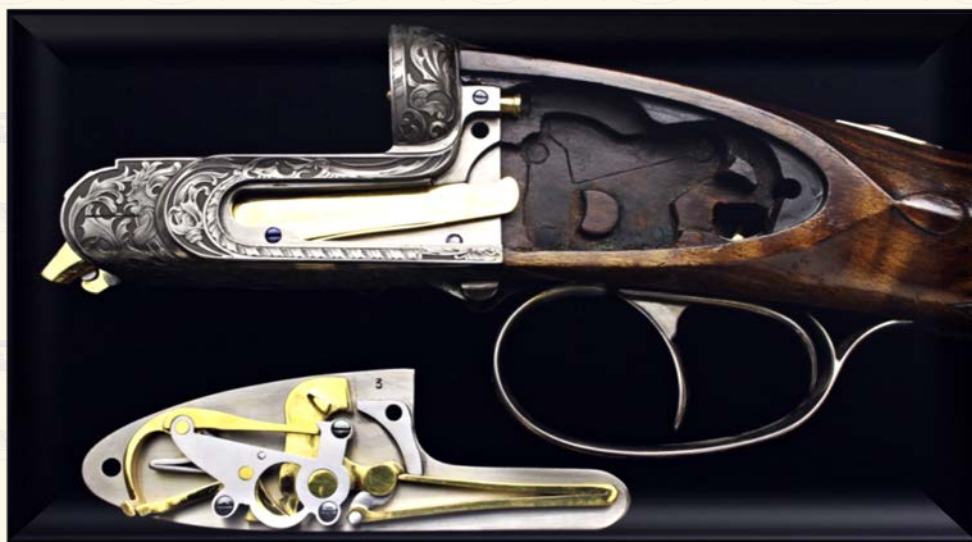
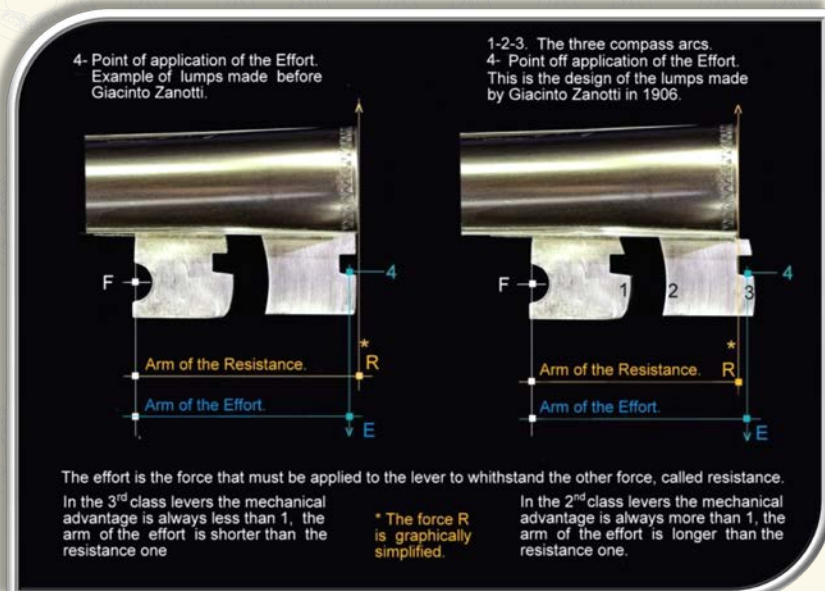
In fact it opens the barrels with that slight friction that only the most tidy adjustment can give, tumblers are gracefully cocked and it closes as a safe. The action is proportionate to the gauge and its plans are 2,05" long.

The barrels should be Lebeau & Courally. We use the conditional just because the registers are

discordant on this point. They are 27,56" long, drilled 0.622", chupper lump, modified and light full choked and the ribs are tin-welded. Once beaten they play as they were crystal-made.

The lumps' profiles are drawn with three different compass arcs; the rear one is withdrawn as much as possible from the cross pin and sticks out from the breech end of the barrels.

In this way a 2nd class lever is realized, with which the mechanical advantage is always greater than 1. In the distant 1906, first among everybody, Giacinto Zanotti realized this lumps, then adopted by other gunmakers.



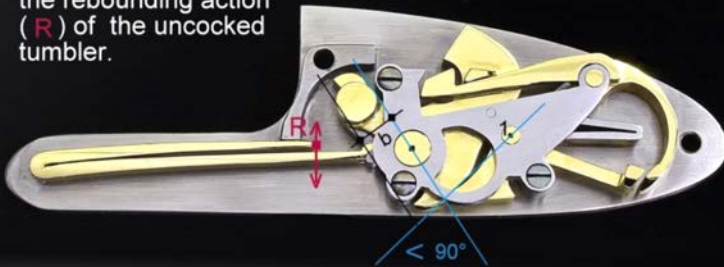
In the years preceding the World War I Stefano, son of Giacinto, projected and developed the lock used on the hammerless guns. Stefano Zanotti had in-depth knowledge of the Belgian and English gunmaking world, and he realized that a manufacturer of fine shotguns must have a proper firing mechanism.

In so doing he would stand against others, making different and better his side by side.



The unexceptionable geometric layout of the Zanotti's lock. Four pillars bridle, safety sear, rebounding action. The lower arm of the mainspring, when compressed, directs toward the tumbler axle. The arm (b) has the lowest possible value. The safety sear stops the tumbler, if it escapes, after a very short run. The sear pin (1) is higher than the tumbler one. The mainspring is weaker than the original one: to restore the balance the angle between the shooting notch and the sear is less than the canonical 90 degrees.

The shorter arm of the mainspring acts the rebounding action (R) of the uncocked tumbler.



Some of the most important English gunmakers commissioned their locks to highly specialized locksmiths; Brazier and Stanton punched very fine locks of very fine shotguns. The Holland & Holland one worked well and, once the patent had expired, it was produced in England and in Belgium by different manufacturer to satisfy a growing request. Zanotti instead made their own lock, including springs, couple after couple,

taking care of it until perfection. Jigs and templates are the same since that time, passed to Renato himself and still used by today's Renato Zanotti company. Tumbler, bridle and sears, machined from solid, are adjusted and finished up with "elbow grease". The actual main spring is not like that one which Leopoldo Zanotti and Mino Cassani forged on the anvil at the Bruciata workshop; today we must accept that Volcano is no longer among us.

The ejectors of the guns made by Zanotti have this peculiarity: they are activated by the command of two hinged catches that are separated from the tumblers cocking levers. Every catch, that moves along an arc of



circle, projects from the action when its tumbler is uncocked and retracts whit cocking. Such mechanism avoids every harmful friction among the parts when, wanting to uncock the tumblers, the barrels are closed keeping the triggers pulled.

Wealthy clients received their Zanotti's decorated by the best engravers. At the end of the 19th century Alphonse Delvenne and his students, Hyppolite Corombelle up to the World War II, his daughter Lyson up to the 60's, Natale Fabbrioli until recently.





*Our sidelever has a more modern taste that comes from the hands of the engraver Aldo Rizzini from Gardone Val Trompia. We don't want to give a judgment on the merit of the recent artistic exhibits. Too much close in time and constantly evolving, they give rise to conversations in which each one*

*maintains its own opinion.*

*It is all about the sensibility, the different tastes and the inevitable will to renew, at least in the decoration, an object that can only be equal to itself. Photos are eloquent; everyone, looking them, can appreciate.*



***This side by side, being born from the same humus, perpetuates the splendors that the School of Bologna had reached among the two World Wars. It is the song of a diva that narrates the deeds of the few creators remained who want and owe to hold alive their past.***