

GET IT RIGHT: TOP TIPS FOR HIDE BUILDING

# SPORTING Gun

**TESTED**



**RIZZINI'S  
RBEM 20-BORE**

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## Choked up

Find the right  
choke for  
the job

## Which rifle?

Choosing a  
tool for fox  
control

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- ➔ Partridges and pheasants on a farm syndicate
- ➔ How to respond to a shooting invitation
- ➔ We get ready for the first day on our shoot

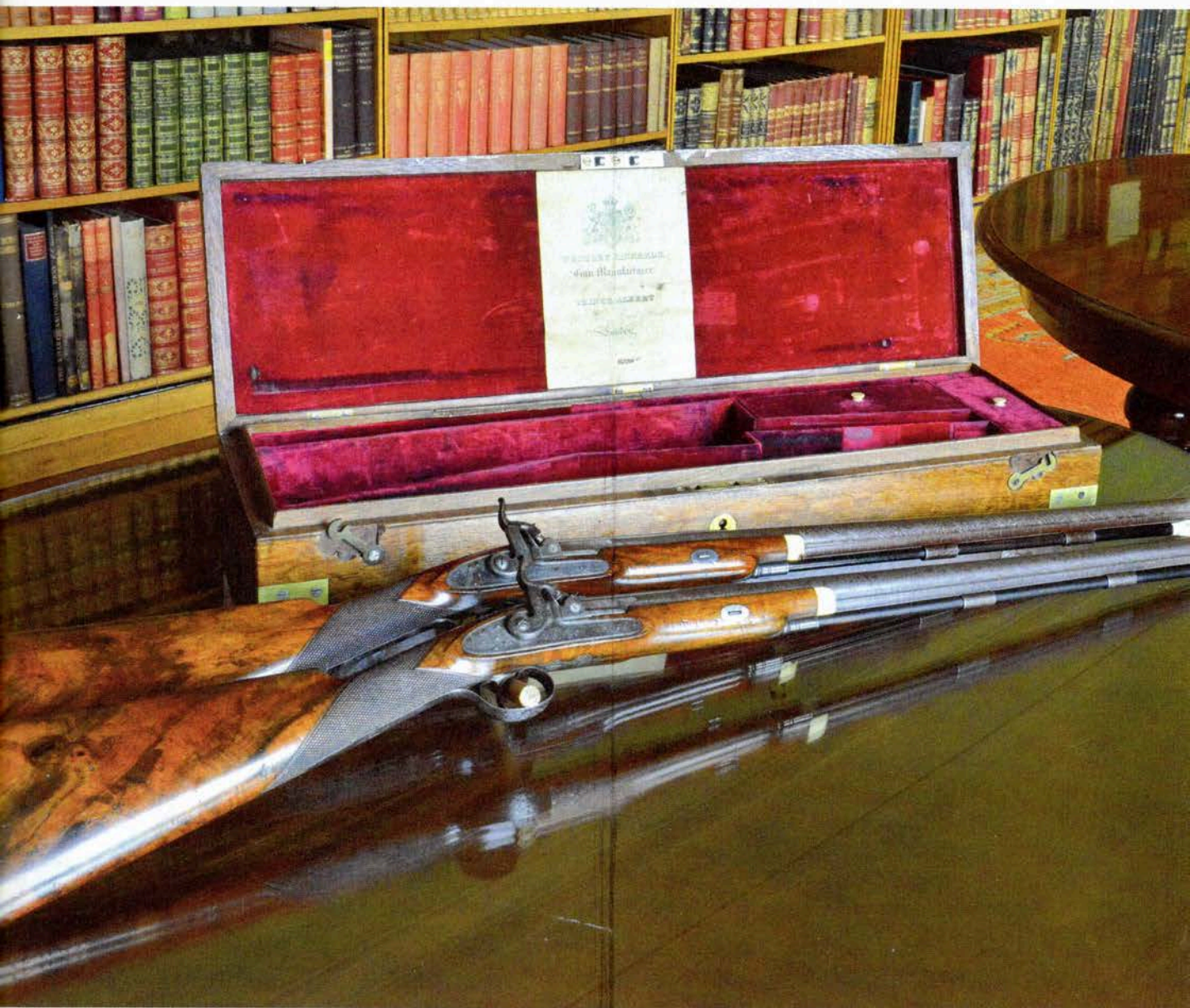
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# Royal collection

**Robert Morgan** reviews the star lot at Holts' December auction, a shotgun fit for a king – or a prince, in this case

Imagine being a lad of around 10 years old, whose dad was influential enough to have appointed his own company of top gunmakers. This was the happy situation a young Prince Alfred, second son and fourth child of Her Majesty Queen Victoria and HRH Prince Albert, found himself in around 1850.

Prince Albert was an avid hunter and sportsman and was very keen that his sons should follow in his footsteps. Enlisting

the help of Messrs Westley Richards of London, his personally appointed Royal gunmakers, he commissioned two percussion muzzle-loaders for his first two sons, the aforementioned Prince Alfred (later The Duke of Edinburgh) and his older brother and heir to the throne, Prince Albert Edward (later King Edward VII). The two guns were, to all intents and purposes, identical, even though they were both made around each boy's 10th birthday

and featured round damascus 20in barrels with bead fore-sights and carved quarter sighting ribs at the breech, both signed: 'WESTLEY RICHARDS 170 NEW BOND ST. LONDON'.

## Lavish engraving

The breech-plugs had twin platinum lines and an engraved band, the nipples sat on carved snails with vented platinum plugs, the top-tangs were lavishly engraved »

with borderlines and scrolls, as were the matching locks, which also featured scroll-engraved, dolphin-headed hammers.

Both guns were fitted with figured walnut half-stocks expertly chequered at the wrist, and iron furniture pieces with matching engraving. Prince Alfred's particular gun

labelled by the maker proudly proclaiming 'Makers to HRH Prince Albert' inside the lid. The tray of the case itself was lined in a lush red velvet with matching lidded compartments and the top of the lid on Alfred's case bears a matching escutcheon to the stock. All in all, a shotgun fit for a king –

## “The tray of the case itself was lined in a lush red velvet”

had a clipped corner rectangular silver escutcheon behind the top-tang engraved with an English coronet.

Silver oval escutcheons were also fitted to the barrel key slot and the fore-ends were equipped with ivory tips. Ivory-tipped, ebony ramrods completed these delightful little muzzle-loaders and they came complete with a brass-bound, oak storage-case

or, in this case, a Prince.

### Little used

Neither of the guns can have seen much use, for the two Princes must have soon outgrown them. The example made for Prince Albert Edward still resides in the Royal Gun Collection at Sandringham House, Norfolk, although unfortunately it

has become separated from its maker's case, which is now lost.

The gun made for Prince Alfred was handed down by descent from Alfred to his third daughter, HRH The Princess Alexandra (1878-1942), the wife of Ernst II, Prince zu Hohenlohe-Langenburg, whose family seat was Schloss Langenburg in Germany. The gun remained in the castle armoury until auctioned to raise funds to repair the castle in 2014.

### Star lot

Prince Alfred's gun is now on the market again, and is to be offered as the star lot in the antique section of Holts' December auction. If anyone fancies the ultimate Christmas present for an aspiring young shot, or even a piece of British history just for themselves, it could just prove to be the best investment they ever made. ■

King Edward VII shooting grouse in Scotland; his muzzle-loader is still in the Royal Collection



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