

WEATHERBY SA 08

Product Review.

First Impressions

Although Entry level in terms of Price, don't let that fool you! This little gun has a lot to offer.

SA 08 Options

The SA-08 a semi-automatic shotgun marketed by Weatherby Inc. is available in both 12g, 28g or 20 gauge with a black composite finish also available in a youth model.

The Deluxe and Upland model have a wood finish & there is also camo versions available.



Manufactured in Turkey for Weatherby and priced at under \$600 this shotgun constitutes Weatherby's low-end shotgun line, along with the Weatherby PA-08 pump action.



Unboxing

As you would expect for a gun of this price point, it arrived in a standard cardboard packing box. On opening, we find the user manual, a box containing a basic trigger lock and the second Valve sleeve for heavy loads, the shims for adjusting the stock, and a universal choke key. The Action and barrel are detached and packed separately in plastic. A quick review of the user manual and we assemble the gun.

This semi-automatic uses a dual valve system which has a manual change out when moving from light to heavy loads and vice versa. A process easily completed by removing the forend and barrel.



History

The history of Weatherby® began in the mid-1940s when a young cartridge "wildcatter" named Roy Weatherby set out to change the world of firearm performance. Contrary to then-popular thinking (heavy bullets pushed at slow speeds), Roy believed that lightweight bullets traveling at super high speeds provided the best combination for one-shot kills. Based upon that philosophy, he spent the next decade developing the high-powered Weatherby.



Roy Weatherby and Roy Rogers after bear hunting with a Mark V.

Famous for its rifles Weatherby has now expanded its range into shotguns.

Above image and text courtesy of Weatherby® web site

The first thing noted was how light this gun is... and I mean very light. I believe that this composite version is the lightest semi on the market today, which is great for training new shooters as well as carrying around all day out in the field.



The Stock

The SA08 has a black Injection - moulded synthetic stock with a honeycomb style rubber recoil pad. The pistol grip is a good size and fits the hand well. The chequering offers an affective grip and is not too aggressive on the hand unlike some of the other semi's on the market. The stock, is fixed to the action with one long fixing bolt, which we applied some thread lock to, as there has been the odd report of the bolt loosening slightly. If it does happen, it does not represent an immediate safety issue as the stock and action have a stepped joint preventing any rotation, so at worst you would experience some minor movement between the two components. If you do experience this just remove the butt pad and tighten the bolt applying a dab of lock-tight to the thread if desired.



Before this is done though, it is a good idea to try the gun out and if required fit the stock shims. To improve the comfort factor as well as raise the comb height slightly we applied some self adhesive neoprene to the stock. This was purchased from a local craft store for a couple of dollars, then cut out to form an ambidextrous shape over the comb, this is useful for identifying similar looking guns of differing calibers. There is a swivel in the base of the stock allowing the attachment of a sling for hunting.



The Forend.

The forend, as you would expect on a semi auto is fairly long in order to cover the magazine tube, this extra length helps accommodate shooters of differing builds.

[see our post on gun fit] The chequering runs almost the full length and there are eight ventilation ports to help cool the barrel, four at the top and two on each side. The fore-end is retained by an aluminium black ferrule with a swivel mount in the end for a sling.

The Action

The all aluminum action is anodized giving it a very durable finish and the Weatherby logo adorns the breach side.

The action release button is well placed directly under the cocking lever when closed, which is similar to many other auto's on the market, and easy to operate.



The Trigger



A one piece removable trigger mechanism has a simple design but effective. It can be removed by pressing out one pin on the side of the action. Whilst depressing the bolt release button pull downward on the trigger guard. We found this task easier after detaching the fore-end, barrel and bolt. We remove and clean the trigger mechanism after every 1500 rounds.

Barrel

The 12g has a 28" chrome lined barrel also available in a 26" option, a set of three removable chokes IC, M, F. The finish is a matt black in keeping with the black composite stock and fore-end. The Rib is a fixed 8mm rib tapering down to the muzzle. In keeping with tradition the barrel on the Deluxe Model is a deep blued finish.

The SA O8 Stripped Down



Shooting and Overall impressions.

As previously mentioned this is a very light gun. This has the advantage for game hunters in that, it is easy to carry around all day and it is quick to handle when swinging onto various game. The negative side to this is that on rising shots such as American Trap and walked up game, there is a tendency to burst through the target with your swing due to its lightness, resulting in shooting over the top of the target. I should point out that as long as you are aware of this and maintain good gun control it won't be a problem.

The recoil pad is quite grippy, not a problem on a pre-mounted shot but if you have any loose clothing and execute a moving mount it may snag, this is not unique to this gun, it is common on many new production guns. It does however offer a good level of comfort from recoil.

We have shot these guns on Trap, Skeet and wobble in all cases we were achieving a good break rate. The functionality of each gun was very impressive. A selection of cartridges were tried using the light load valve, Kent, Federal, Fiocchi, & Winchester in 7.5 & 8, 1oz, 1 1/8oz & 7/8oz in all cases they cycled well. The 7.5 - 1oz and 8 - 1oz worked the best. As for the heavy loads we have yet to try them, and when using steel shot you should only use stainless steel choke tubes with modified or larger chokes.

We mainly use these guns for training, both the 20g and 12g perform well and are used every time we go out. So far we have put about 4000 rounds + through each gun and they are in the same great condition as when they first arrived.

Summary

The Weatherby SA08 offers excellent value for money and is a good all round gun if you are on a budget. They may not have the refinement of the mid to high end Semi-Auto's but then it doesn't cost 2 to 3k. My only gripe about the SA08 is that it does get fairly dirty around the gas valve, which requires more cleaning time. Not a problem if you only have the one to clean, but when you have to clean 10 its a different story. For the future I would love to see these guns offered in a range of anodized colours.

Specs.

Gauge	Chamber	Approx. Weight (1)	Overall Length	Stock Composition	Barrel Length	Chokes Included	Length of Pull	Drop at Comb	Drop at Heel
20	3"	6 lbs.	48"	Synthetic	28"	3C,M,F	14"	1 1/2"	2 1/4"
12	3"	6 1/2 lbs.	46"	Synthetic	26"	3C,M,F	14"	1 1/2"	2 1/4"
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