

CHAMPLIN FIREARMS

By Nels Rodefeld



This 28-gauge, London-built Purdey is truly unique, according to George Caswell, owner of Champlin Firearms, because it features a blue quail engraving. "I've never seen another gun, honestly, that has a blue quail engraving," Caswell said.

From the plains of Africa, hunting man-eating lions and rouge Cape Buffalo, to hunting exotic game in the most remote reaches of nearly every other continent, guns made in Enid, Oklahoma, have been the choice of princes, kings, Hollywood actors and business tycoons.

Not just any guns, mind you. These are one-of-a-kind, hand crafted, precision works of art. And when it comes to big bore double rifles, there is no place better known than Champlin Firearms.

Founded in 1966 by Doug Champlin, it was created to build custom sporting rifles, and remains the only made-to-order custom rifle shop that uses quality wood and steel incorporating its own turn bolt action.

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George Caswell acquired Champlin Firearms in 1978 and while Champlin still occasionally builds a handful of custom firearms, most of the company's focus is centered on repairing fine, North

American firearms and buying and selling a variety of high-end rifles and shotguns. Five people, including renowned gunsmith Jean Jacques Perodeau, work with Caswell to provide one-on-one service to prospective customers.

"We deal in time-proven, historically well known and accepted, mostly pre-owned firearms with a proven track record," said Caswell. "We've shipped all over the world. We have customers from the United Arab Emirates to South America and Indonesia, but most of our business is in North America."

Caswell counts a collection of country singers, industry leaders and Hollywood types as Champlin's primary clientele, but adds that they deal with anyone interested in high-quality firearms, with gun prices ranging from \$400 to \$40,000. In addition to Champlin's famous bull-action rifle, German Sauers, Merkels, Krieghoffs and Belgium SXSs can be seen on a virtual tour of Champlin's vault (www.champlinarms.com).

"About 1,000 firearms come through our doors a year, and we maintain a vault of 350 to 400 guns," Caswell said. "This is my life's work and through Champlin I've reached the plateau to be surrounded by the world's most interesting people who pursue adventure in every corner of the globe with rod, gun and camera. Best of all, my family has shared many of these destinations and give loving support of my lifelong passion."