



Westley Richards 12g Ovundo Super Magnum Explora

Serial Number 18041

\$45000.00

DESCRIPTION

The *Explora* smooth bore for shot and ball was developed in 1905 by famed W.R.&Co. managing director Leslie Taylor. Taking Col. Fosberry's paradox design to the next level, the smooth bore gun was made with rifled chokes and capable of shooting both shot and the Taylor designed 'L.T.' Conical shaped bullet.

The smooth bore guns by W.R.&Co. were originally offered as the "Explora" in a 12g with 2 1/2" chambers and as the "Fauneta" in a 20g or 28g. A 12g version with longer 2 3/4" chambers was introduced before 1910 and it was referred to as the "Super Magnum Explora" to distinguish it from the "Explora" with the shorter chambers. The SME fired a 730gr bullet capable of achieving a muzzle velocity of 1,500 fps to generate over 3,500 ft-lbs of muzzle energy.

Originally available in a side-by-side configuration in both a fixed lock and hand detachable lock version, the Explora remained a popular model for Westley's well into the 1920's..

In 1914 Leslie Taylor also patented a design for a gun with superposed barrels that incorporated Westley's famous hand detachable locks or "droplocks" as they're known colloquially. Taylor named his over/under gun the "Ovundo".

Any example of the Explora or Ovundo models are extremely rare, not saying anything about how rare specimens are that remain anywhere close to their original condition might be. The rarity of a single gun that is both an Ovundo and a Super Magnum Explora cannot be overstated and surely ranks as one of the rarest guns ever produced by the firm.

The gun offered for sale here is one of these exceedingly rare Westley Richards 12g Ovundo Super Magnum Explora ball and shot gun completed in 1925 is the best example of any Ovundo or Super Magnum Explora to come to market and the only one that is both an Ovundo and a SME in recent memory.

The Ovundo was a very robust design and was well suited to the heavy loaded Super Magnum Explora rounds. This particular gun is also fitted with many of the options and patents available during this era but not often encountered.

The Ovundo and Explora were available in all levels of embellishment, from the very plain or "best quality, plain finish" lovingly known as a "gold name" to the top of the line, "Highest Quality" as it was listed in period catalogs and often referred to as a "deluxe".

This latter grade of gun included hand detachable locks and sideplates with viewing ports, and a lovely deluxe bold scroll pattern engraving. The "Highest Quality Ovundo" also incorporated Westley's distinctive Snap Lever and most were fitted with patented single-selective "One Trigger" like the gun featured here. While the shotguns were normally fitted with an automatic safety, because the Ovundo Super Magnum Explora could conceivably be used for dangerous game, this one was fitted with a bolted safety like a double rifle.

The sideplates, action body, and furniture have a full coverage deluxe bold scroll engraving and the Maker's name is engraved on the leg of each lock plate. "Westley Richards Patent Ovundo" is engraved on the cover plate and surrounded by matching scroll engraving.

The 28" barrels measure .734" in the bottom bore and .735" in the top, with perfect smooth bores and rifling in each muzzle. Each barrel has 2 3/4" chambers that remain in their original Birmingham nitro proof (ca. 1925 - 1954) for 730gr max bullet weight, rifled chokes, and 2 3/4" chambers. Barrels also feature the extremely rare factory installed ventilated rib. A feature rare on any Westley Richards gun but especially so on those made prior to WWII. As was most often ordered on "Explora" guns, the rear sight is made up of 5 folding leaves all lined in platinum and engraved 100, 150, 200, 250, 300 yds respectively. Each sight leaf is in proper scale to the width of the vent-rib and much smaller than those found on a conventional bolt action or double rifle. The front sight is a thin, low blade with a brass bead. This sight arrangement worked for both shooting flying objects with shot and more precise aiming for ball. The top-rib is engraved "Super Magnum Explora" in the dramatic style of the "Explora" trademark. Somewhere in the gun's life claw scope mounts were fitted to the gun's barrels but the corresponding rings or any scope for the gun have been lost.

The original stock has a straight hand grip and a LOP right at 14 3/4" over a modern rubber pad. The original forend and barrels are fitted with Taylor's patented ejectors for the Ovundo's vertical barrel arrangement. The forend has Westley's trademark horn forend tip and Deeley forend latch.

The gun weighs 8 ½ lbs. and handles similar to a well balanced pigeon gun.

Overall, the gun remains in superb condition. The action body retains much of its original color hardening and the engraving remains as sharp today as it was nearly 100 years ago when it was made. The barrels remain in their original proof with excellent wall thickness as well as perfect bores, chokes, and chambers.

The barrels have been refinished, presumably when the scope mounts were installed, but all engraving such as the Maker's name, barrel, and rib inscriptions remain sharp and clearly visible. The stock is original to the gun but has also been refinished, also assuming that was done when the modern pad was installed.

The original factory ledgers read:

12g Ovundo Super Magnum Explora. 28" Vent Rib, Detachable Lock, Hinged Cover Plate, SOP Trigger, In Rear Position?
Straight Hand Stock, Anti Recoil Pad. Sold To Colonel R.H. Morse On July 29th, 1925.

A rare opportunity to own a very rare, unique, and collectable gun from one of England's most storied makers.

SPECIFICATION

Location	US
Make	Westley Richards
Calibre/Gauge	12g
Action	Droplock O/U
Triggers	1
Ejectors	Yes
Barrel Length	28"
Rib	Ventilated
Chamber	2 3/4"
Choke Right	Rifled
Choke Left	Rifled
Stock	Straight
LOP	14 13/16"
Weight	8lbs 8.8oz
Case	N/A



