



Westley Richards 12g Special Quality Pigeon Gun

Serial Number 09079

\$18000.00

DESCRIPTION

Westley Richards & Co. 12g “Special” Quality Pigeon Gun completed in 1924 for Major H.P. Savory.

The “Special” quality was a top-grade model offered by Westley’s during the 1920’s and came standard with the firm’s hallmark features such as the patented “droplocks” and reliable “One Trigger” as well as a distinct version of scroll engraving on the action and fancy checkering on the grip and forend and a host of other options that were available.

These models were available in most configurations, and I have seen them in lightweight 20g game guns with 26” barrels to robust pigeon guns like the one featured here.

Based on Westley’s incomparable double hammerless action with a scroll back, hand detachable locks, hinged cover plate, patent “One Trigger”, auto “beetle-back” rocker safety, and iconic Snap Lever and Doll’s Head top fastening.

The unique “Special” Quality engraving combined a traditional small scroll with a complementary bold scroll with near full coverage engraving of Maker’s name in flowing banners surrounded by a small scroll. The cover plate is fully covered in bolder version of scroll with a matching scroll on the furniture and engraved wedges at the barrel’s breeches.

The term “Special Quality” denotes the grade of the gun and sheds light on the type of engraving and other options it might have been made with, but the gun gets its “Pigeon” moniker from its barrel’s configuration including the barrel length, chamber length, choke and rib type. Prior to WWII, Westley Richards produced its own barrels in the Bournbrook factory made with Westley Richards & Co. “Special Steel” which bears the W.R.&Co. “Golden Triangle” trademark; a proof mark on the bottom of the barrels with “Westley Richards Steel” written on the three sides of a triangle.

This gun was made with 30” Westley Richards “Special Steel” barrels which were always made with a saddle lump. The gun’s long barrels have a wide concave rib that is engine-turned and still retains the original Ivory foresight bead. The barrels were originally made with 2 ¾” chambers (original proof for 1 ¼ oz). The barrels were reproofed in Birmingham in 1992 for 70mm chambers and 18.8mm (.740”) bore diameter. Both the right and left bores measure .743” and both have good wall thickness, no less than .025” in the right or left. The right barrel is choked at .012” and the left barrel at .036”.

Somewhat confusing, the barrels are marked with the 178 New Bond St. address which was closed in 1917. No doubt WWI plaid a role in the disparity between the barrel address and the completion date recorded in the factory ledgers. Either the gun’s completion was delayed, or the gun was made with barrels that were produced prior to the war.

The original stock has a half-pistol grip with fancy fleur de lis checkering on the hand and forend with fancy borders. Both the grip style and checkering were standard features of the “Special” Quality guns of this era as described in catalogs of the same period. The stock has a 14 1/16” LOP over a leather covered pad and the forend is fitted with a Deeley catch and horn forend tip.

The gun remains very nice as restored. The action body and forend iron are recolored, furniture and barrels re-blackened, and stock has a new pad and somewhat recent high gloss finish. I cannot say for sure that Westley’s did the restoration work, but the firm did a lot of it during the early 1990’s when these barrels were re-proofed. Owing to the high quality of the restoration work and the fact the barrels are properly re-proofed in Birmingham leads me to believe that Westley’s did in fact do the work.

Gun is in a vintage O&L case relined in a royal blue baize with a re-printed W.R.&Co. trade label.

Overall, a cool gun well suited for today’s side by side clays matches.

170 New Bond Street in Mayfair was the address Mr. William Bishop, known colloquially as the “Bishop of Bond Street”, occupied when he took on the Westley Richards & Co. London Agency in 1815. This was three years after Westley Richards the Elder established his gunmaking services further north in Birmingham. The address’ number was changed to 178 New Bond Street in 1878, but Westley’s London Agency remained at this same location for 102 years until 1917 when the Agency moved to its 23 Conduit Street premises.

SPECIFICATION

Location	US
Make	Westley Richards
Calibre/Gauge	12g
Action	Droplock
Triggers	1
Ejectors	Automatic
Barrel Length	30"
Rib	Engine Turned Concave
Chamber	2 3/4"
Choke Right	.012"
Choke Left	.036"
Stock	Semi Pistol Grip
LOP	14 1/16"
Weight	7lbs 5oz
Case	Leather

