



Westley Richards 12g Lightweight Highest Quality Droplock

Serial Number 18608

\$20000.00

DESCRIPTION

A Westley Richards & Co. 12g Light Weight *Highest Quality* Hammerless Ejector Gun with Hand Detachable Locks and completed in 1938. Based on Westley Richards seminal hammerless action with its distinctive scroll back action body, Snap Lever work and Doll's Head extension, automatic "beetle back" safety button, two triggers, and a hinged cover plate that reveals the hand detachable locks first patented in 1897.

W.R.&Co. offered its hammerless action guns in various qualities, or grades, all with different amounts, if any, of embellishment. The higher the quality of the gun, the more embellishment it would have. As early as 1900 W.R.&Co. won awards recognizing the artistic beauty of its high-grade shotgun, the *Modele De Luxe*, which featured game scene engraving on three sides of the action surrounded by scroll. By the 1930's this grade of gun was called the *Highest Quality* in company literature, a term originally used by the firm in the 1800's to describe its top of the line gun. Today we refer to this engraving motif as the *Model De Luxe* and it is one of the most popular engraving styles commissioned on new gun and rifle orders. While I consider it a very classic style of engraving, distinct to W.R.&Co., the *Modele De Luxe /Highest Quality* shotguns made prior to the second world war, are quite rare.

The general theme of the *Highest Quality* guns featured game scenes on both sides and the bottom of the action, no two are just alike. This gun depicts two rooster ringneck pheasant standing in a field on the left side of the action. The right side of the action shows gray partridge, which are distinguished by the engraving detail on the birds back, also in a field. Judging by the anatomy of the bird and, upon close inspection, the depiction of a marsh type background, the bird depicted in the scene on the cover plate is probably a King Rail which is depicted as being shot in flight, illustrated by a burst of feathers and the bird upside down in relation to the backdrop. On the guard bow is no doubt an English pointer and what a King Rail engraved on the ball of each action wading in a marsh. The balance of the action and furniture are engraved in a bold, deluxe scroll. There are also engraved "wedges" of scroll on the barrels over the chambers. The Maker's name is inlaid in gold on both sides of the action, above the game scenes. The word "SAFE" is also inlaid in gold.

Noted in the factory ledgers as a "lightweight", this gun weighs only 6 lbs. 2 oz., which is closer to the weight of a 20g. The 28" W.R.&Co. "Special Steel" barrels remain excellent retaining their original 2 1/2" chambers, original bore diameter, excellent wall thickness (min. >.031" in both barrels) and are choked .008" in the right barrel and .022" in the left barrel. The barrels are unaltered but were re-proofed in B'ham in 1983 for 2 1/2" chambers, .729" bores, at 3-Tons/Sq., to confirm their good condition.

The original walnut stock is nicely figured, a special consideration on guns of this grade, and has a half-pistol hand (a round knob pistol grip), a 14 7/8" LOP over a traditional rubber recoil pad, which was a later addition. Splinter forend with Deeley ejectors and a Deeley forend latch and Westley's trademark horn forend tip. The stock shield along the toe line of the stock is engraved with the initials: J.B.

The metal on the gun remains all original with strong amounts of case colors and black remaining. Stock and forend are also original but refinished, most likely when the contemporary recoil pad was added.

An excellent gun on a lot of levels.

SPECIFICATION

Location	US
Make	Westley Richards
Calibre/Gauge	12g
Action	Droplock
Triggers	2
Ejectors	Automatic
Barrel Length	28"
Rib	Smooth

Chamber	2 1/2"
Choke Right	.008"
Choke Left	.022"
Stock	Semi Pistol Grip
LOP	14 7/8"
Weight	6lbs 2oz
Case	N/A

