

# BERETTA'S TOP GUN IN DALLAS

IAN HARRISON

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Few companies can boast the historical significance of Beretta. For 500 years precision mechanics have been at the heart of the company's global reputation for quality and craftsmanship in firearms, passed down through 15 generations of the same Italian family. Today Beretta remains the world's longest-established industrial manufacturer. The first US Beretta Gallery opened in New York in 1995 followed later by another in Dallas.

Tall and handsome, longtime firearms authority Ian Harrison is the manager of the Highland Park Gallery in Dallas. Harrison, a native of Nottinghamshire, England, is a crack shot whose love of upland bird hunting blossomed after immigrating to the US. He and his staff of knowledgeable personnel are available to demonstrate, answer questions and explain the entire range of Beretta products. "We sit in a pretty tony part of town," said Harrison. "A lot of people fly in specifically to see our guns." Polished leather gun cases, cartridge belts, luggage and accessories, as well as top of the line fashions in men and women's hunting apparel for any season, fill the store. "I think it's pretty cool that people can shop in one of the premier destinations in the country, buy a pistol or a shotgun, then can walk across the street to Hermes and buy a \$5000 golf bag," smiled Harrison, "or walk down the street and buy some Jimmy Choos."

The Dallas Beretta Gallery is a quintessential experience for the hunting connoisseur. "We have a large stable of professionals that shoot our guns; the bird hunter...the big game hunter and...the clay target shooter" said Harrison. "Some people know our brand for our handguns; they may think of James Bond or the military, however they have no concept of the fact that we are also a sporting company," said Harrison. "Then we have the sportsmen that shoot over-and-under Beretta Silver Pigeons (shotguns) and have no concept of the other. They are two separate worlds." Production includes expertly crafted over-and-under and side-by-side shotguns and rifles for hunting and competition in a variety of calibers and finished grades. While an estimated 90 percent of the company's lines consist of sporting firearms, more than 75 percent of Beretta's inventory is exported to nearly 100 countries around the

world for sale in the military and sporting sectors. "We have supplied pretty much every army, security force and police force in the world with either side arms or small arms," said Harrison. The Beretta 92 semi automatic pistol is the principle side arm of the US Army, Marine Corps and Air Force. "It wasn't until the Eighties that we had a presence in the US," Harrison explained. "Beretta was the first foreign company to win a tender with the US military. Part of that deal was that we would build a manufacturing plant in the US, and Americans would manufacture the guns. So all of the weapons that the armed forces and police forces use in this country are made here."

Twenty years ago Beretta added a comprehensive line of fashionable hunting apparel, accessories including clay and target shooting equipment and other outdoor sports items. As with the timeless firearms that company craftsmen have meticulously designed and produced for generations, these items have also earned an outstanding reputation for high-tech content and understated elegance. "A lot of people will say, British shotguns are the best," said Harrison. "But in fact, Beretta was making shotguns while the British were still running around in mud-huts...they are still puppies compared to the length of time we've been around, and that holds weight. The heritage that we have in the firearm business is unique. If you are buying a \$2000 gun from us, we put as much effort and energy into creating that gun and making it flawless as we do our \$200,000 guns," he said. "You're buying into that heritage," smiled Harrison. "That's why I work here."

## BERETTA GALLERY DALLAS

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