



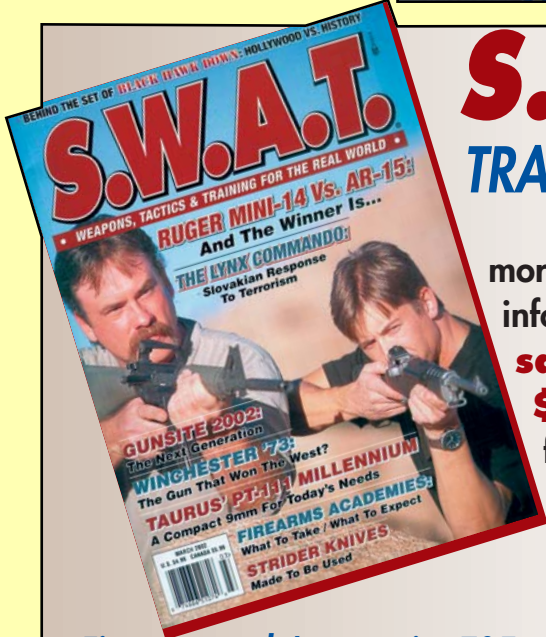
Turkish Invasion Part 2 – The Traditions ALS 2100

BY PATRICK KELLEY, A-14401

Hopefully our last issue piqued your curiosity, and you are ready for the next installment of the Turkish shotgun tests. In case you missed our last issue, Turkish arms manufacturers have recently begun invading the U.S. market through American-owned importers, affixing western-sounding names to surprisingly strong Turkish designs. Hence Huglu, Sarsilmaz,

Hatsan, and Matsan guns have arrived bearing the names Legacy Sports International, Traditions, Verona, and Stoeger, among others. For the budget-oriented 3-gun consumer, these Turkish designs offer value at a discount price – some much more so than others.

Today our focus falls on the Traditions ALS 2100, a lightweight, gas-operated self-loader that has real potential as a budget 3-gun blaster. Again, my local gun shop www.davesguns.com provided the tool for the test—thanks Dave! Manufactured by ATA and imported by Traditions, the ALS series includes an entire family of variations on the same basic platform. Available in both 12 and 20 gauge with



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Easy loadin'. The ALS 2100's shell carrier stays half-depressed between shots, forming a kind of "shell well." It's one of the easiest designs to speed-reload this side of a Mossberg pump.

barrel lengths from 24" to 28", all are equipped with screw-in chokes and your choice of synthetic or handsome wood stocks. They even offer a plain-barrel 20" fixed cylinder bore home defense model that wears a synthetic stock and could be readily adapted to our sport.

To make it easier for resale at this time of year, Dave ordered in a 26" field model with a Turkish walnut stock. My initial impression was "Wow, this is a beautiful shotgun. It costs how much!?" With a suggested retail price of \$479 and a street price of considerably less, if this shotgun works half a good as it looks we might have a winner here. I am happy to report to you that the ALS 2100 does work very well indeed.

Let's look at the inside of this self-loader before we take it out for a drive. Weighing in at close to 6 pounds, this offering from Traditions is built on a well-polished and deeply blued aluminum alloy receiver. The 26" vent rib barrel is chrome lined and comes with

what seems to be the industry standard in chokes; improved cylinder, modified and full. The buttstock and forearm are of nicely figured Turkish walnut with a high gloss finish. This gun would fit right in on your local sporting clays course. Since we are going to use and abuse the finish we won't dwell on this, but it is a rich-looking gun for little money.

On to the gas system

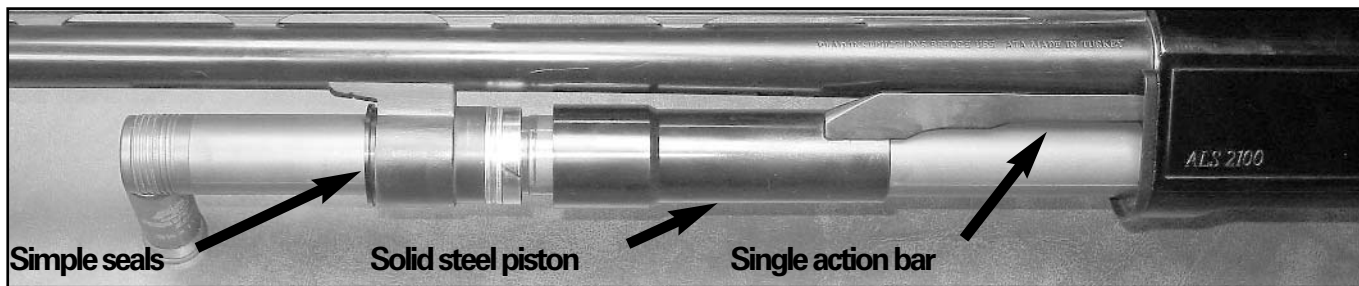
Quickly put, it's too simple. How can this gun work without the pressure compensating multi-valve, spring relief, and O-ring replacement gas parts? Again, very well indeed. This gun's gas system looks like it has taken a step back in time. Do any of you remember the touted virtues of "twin action bars?" "No twisting or binding," etc? Well the 1897 Winchester and the Ithaca 37 got along fine for many years without "twins," and so it goes for the ALS 2100. The gas flows as follows: Gas diverted through two holes in the barrel ring impinges on the one-piece piston/action bar assembly, driving it rearward to run the action. The gasses are prevented from leaking around the barrel ring at the front by a seal and an O-ring held in place by a plug. At the rear of the barrel ring are the two stationary piston rings that seal the interface between them and the moving piston/action bar (the manual labels this part "cartridge sliding bar tube"). The last two seals are within the "cartridge sliding bar tube." These seals prevent the gas from blowing through the area between the tube and the magazine. In

looking at it you would only see two pieces, the stationary piston rings on the barrel ring, and the reciprocating piston/action bar assembly. Pretty simple eh?

The trigger group is straightforward as well. The housing itself is made of plastic while most of the fire control parts are of stamped steel. One cross pin at the front and a tongue-and-groove joint at the rear fastens the assembly to the receiver. An interesting feature found on the ALS 2100 is a cartridge drop lever. Benelli owners are familiar with this item, as are Beretta FP1201 users. In use, the manual cycling of the bolt will not draw a shell from the magazine tube unless the drop lever is used. Located on the left side of the trigger guard and forward of the trigger, this device allows the user to change loads without disturbing the remaining rounds in the tube. A secondary trait of this feature is that of a cocking indicator.

Ergonomically this gun is the best of the three Turkish self-loaders I have handled to date. Unlike many other self-loading shotguns, the ALS 2100 is blessed with a free shell carrier. No buttons to push or parts to add to gain access to the magazine tube. Additionally, the carrier release button is on the right side of the receiver (where it should be). The carrier itself is unusual in that it rides lower in the receiver (as viewed with the gun turned upside down for loading). If you were to set a loose round on the carrier, you could let go and the shell would rest in a kind of "shell well" formed the by the sides of the receiver. This can only help in our quest for quick reload since the carrier is staged to direct the shell into the magazine tube.

Simple Simon. The ALS 2100's gas system looks too simple to survive. Why doesn't it break?



Let's shoot!

Gathering up an assortment of shells with 7/8 ounce to 1-1/4 ounce payloads and dram equivalents from 3 to 3 3/4, I headed for my local shooting area. I had not removed the capacity-limiting plug so all my shooting was in three round bursts. Well, not really bursts because the gun would not cycle anything but the 1 1/4 — 3 3/4 loads!

"Great, a six pound shotgun that only shoots heavy pheasant loads," I thought, massaging my shoulder.

Back to the house I went, steaming with angry thoughts of a shotgun that did not work. Every gun deserves a second chance (some people don't, but guns do) so I decided to let the gun sit for a week with the bolt locked back, hoping for a quick and cheap break-in (I'm shooting my ammo, after all). I guess the second chance was a good idea, because on the second time out the gun ran all the ammo I had on hand for the test plus what another gun would not run — in all about 220 rounds.

This time out I really started to like this thing. What's not to like? It's fast (.12 splits), it seems reliable, it's light (is that a good thing?). The gas system is very simple. The controls are correctly laid out, with a free carrier and a cool "shell well" to boot. It will accept a Remington 1100 magazine tube extension and the gun itself is inexpensive. OK, so where am I going with this? I'm concerned about long-term durability. I don't have the time or money to see how this gun will hold up over the long haul but there are some things that may give us some insight. Most of the current crop of gas guns have some sort of buffer system to keep the reciprocating parts from battering the stationary parts. It may be a soft or hard material at the rear of the receiver or bolt, or between the action works and the receiver. This gun has neither. Maybe it can take the abusive contact of steel on aluminum but I don't know.

I placed a call to the folks at Traditions. After talking with customer service rep Jeff Brenneman and marketing director Jim Bruno, I was assured that

this gun has had a good reputation for durability during its two years of importation. Not only that, but all parts and service are available in house via the Old Saybrook, Conn. facility. No apparent worries about service after the sale with this Turkish shotgun.

What does it need for speed?

If I were to set up this gun for 3-gunning, the addition of an 1100 magazine tube extension, a www.3gun gear.com sidesaddle, and a Pachmayr decelerator clays recoil pad would be about all that is needed. Given a choice of any of the ALS shotguns, I would pick up the home defense model and add the same parts plus a set of rifle sights. It's cheap, easy and good to go!

If I had to go to a match with one of the three guns I have tested so far, this one would get the nod, but I still have one more to test and two more to report on. So until then, hit your local dealer and check out the offerings from Traditions. Tell them you heard about it in Front Sight!



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