

CLASSIC DRIVER



By Royal Appointment - James Purdey & Sons

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Founded in 1814, the year before Waterloo, James Purdey & Sons have become the gun and rifle maker of choice for the world's elite sportsmen. By Appointment to the Royal Family, the firm's products have become synonymous with everything that is best about British bespoke design - and they also produce a range of clothing accessories with that 'English Look'.



Every part of a Purdey is machined, and then hand-worked and finished, in their factory in West London. The transformation from raw materials (the highest quality steel forgings and walnut carefully sourced from Turkey for the stock) is brought about by using the skills of highly-trained craftsmen, skills that are handed down over the generations from master to apprentice via a five year traditional apprenticeship. In the way that Aston Martin engine builders sign their name on the finished motor, Purdey's trained gunsmiths are allowed to stamp their initials on the part of the gun he creates.

The bespoke, hand-made and hand-finished, feel of each Purdey today is a result of nearly two centuries of skill together with the latest in CAD/CAM and CNC technology, with parts manufactured

to less than 1/1000 inch tolerance. No two Purdeys are alike – unless a ‘matched pair’ – as each gun is made especially for its owner. Pieces that are handed down over the generations (as so many are) can be adjusted to suit the new ‘custodians’. Personalisation can be effected not only in the weight, dimensions and fit, but also in the degree of finish, the painstaking engraving and polishing, and by adding the owner’s initials (or family crest) in gold on the stock.



The price of such legendary craftsmanship is high. A typical side-by-side hammer ejector 12-bore game gun would be £48,500, and a double barrelled rifle could set you back £94,000. Game guns, for shooting pheasant and grouse do, of course, usually come as a pair, so £100,000 for a matched pair of Purdeys (to which you then have to add a case and bespoke engraving) is not uncommon. The company also carries an inventory of ‘pre-owned’ guns for immediate delivery.

Guns apart, Purdey’s South Audley Street showroom also carries a good selection of shooting clothing and accessories for men and women such as hip flasks, gloves, belts, bags and tweed outfits that would probably look as good off the moor as on it. For further details see www.purdey.com.

Text: Classic Driver

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