



# THE GUN NUT

RANTINGS AND RAVINGS FROM PHIL BOURJAILY AND DAN

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## Bouraily: Aya Shotguns and Dreams (Nearly) Fulfilled

When I first got interested in shotguns, Orvis offered custom Aya doubles from Spain. I only saw them in the catalog, never in real life, but I yearned for one in the worst way. I even sent away for the order form, where you could specify finish, stock dimensions, grip style, etc., and spent way too much time designing dream guns I couldn't afford. Although they were out of my price range, they weren't exorbitant, at least, not when compared to other custom doubles. It seemed feasible I might own one someday.



It turns out that putting one kid through college -- with another on deck -- while writing for a living means I still can't buy an Aya, and I'm okay with that. But, I finally got a chance to shoot a couple of them last week at a local preserve, and I was pleased to find they are every bit as wonderful in hand as they were in the pages of the Orvis catalog 25-plus years ago.

Aya (you say "A-Why-A" not "Eye-A" -- I asked importer Tom Hall) was founded in Eibar, in Spain's Basque region, in 1917. Spanish gunmakers are known as copyists rather than innovators, and they have well-deserved reputation for building beautiful versions of classic English doubles that cost much less. The guns I shot had excellent fit and finish. Wood to metal fit was seamless. There wasn't a hint of ripple in the barrels, and they handled beautifully.

The high-grade gun I tried, the Number 2, is a full sidelock with such niceties as hand-detachable locks and an articulated front trigger which prevents it from bruising your trigger finger as the gun recoils when you shoot the second barrel. The other, the 4/53, is a plain boxlock, less ornate but very well finished. The 4/53 starts at \$3199, the Number 2 at \$5199 and are made to order in as little as 4 to 6 months. Admittedly, they are not cheap (I know: you can kill more game with your 870. So can I. Sometimes that's not the point) however, both represent a lot of gun for the money. A tremendous amount of time and skill goes into making a double gun almost entirely by hand. And, Aya's are dirt cheap when you compare their cost to the price of an English gun. You can see more at [aya-fineguns.com](http://aya-fineguns.com)