

# A BEAUTIFUL BEAST

FABARM PROFESSIONAL CHARTS A NEW COURSE  
WITH ITS STF/12 SHOTGUN.

WORDS BY BRAD FITZPATRICK | PHOTOS BY MARK FINGAR

FABARM HAS BEEN IN BUSINESS since 1900, but the brand is relatively new to the tactical shotgun market. Despite Fabarm's reputation as a producer of sporting and upland shotguns, the Italian-made STF/12 is actually cutting edge and capable of serving both armed professionals and defense-minded civilians alike.

The STF/12's modularity indicates that the engineers of the new brand, Fabarm Professional, did their homework before creating a tactical pump that intends to rival domestics such as the Mossberg 590 series and Remington 870 models aimed at the same market.

Introduced in 2018, the STF/12 is a completely modular platform with a long list of features that make it even more user friendly than comparable shotguns. For example, there

are five interchangeable barrel lengths available, each optional. They measure 11, 14, 18, 20 and 22 inches, respectively, and are equipped with a door-breaching, recoil-reducing muzzlebrake.

Inside this muzzle device is Fabarm's Inner HP Accuracy cylinder choke tube. You can't miss the fact that the barrels wear a color-matching heat shield.

The sample I evaluated was finished in a flat-dark-earth (FDE) color on the receiver, heat shield, pistol grip and composite stock. As with many FDE-colored guns featuring different metals, composites and coating types, the FDE colors are mismatched. The pistol grip and forearm were similar in color, while the stock, receiver and heat shield were the same. Though not unusual for FDE, if the mismatched colors bother you, the STF/12 is also available in all-black.





**Fabarm STF/12 Compact**

Type:	Pump action
Gauge:	12
Capacity:	5+1 shells
Barrel:	18 in. (tested)
Overall Length:	40 in.
Weight:	8 lbs., 11 oz.
Finish:	Cerakote or hardcoat anodized, flat dark earth or black
Sights:	Fiber optic (front); ghost ring, adj. (rear)
Trigger:	5 lbs., 2 oz. (tested)
MSRP:	\$1,195 (black); \$1,285 (FDE)
Manufacturer:	Fabarm USA, 410-901-1260, fabarmpro.com

**Beyond Colors** What's really important to learn about any new gun is the quality of features, materials, how it performs and how it compares to what's already on the market. Consider the question, "Do we need another tactical pump-action shotgun?" Well, Fabarm thinks so.

The STF/12 receiver is machined from a single block of 7075 aluminum that is hard anodized. Its 8-pound, 11-ounce weight seems light for a shotgun with such a stout barrel, handguard and heat-shield assembly. But it's actually heavier than the average weight of a Mossberg 590 Tactical and Remington 870 Express Tactical models that weigh in at 7 pounds, 8 ounces, as well as the Benelli M4 that weighs 7 pounds, 13 ounces. With that said, the extra pound the STF/12 carries is forward of center and gives the shotgun arguably better recoil management characteristics than its competitors.

If you're a fan of detachable and adjustable iron sights on a tactical shotgun, the STF/12 will appeal to you. On top of the anodized receiver is a rugged ghost ring sight assembly with a fiber optic front that's similar to the quality found on the Benelli M4, and better protected than the sights on 590 and 870 tactical models. The sights on the STF/12 are



relatively low profile, unless you need to mount an optic low and want to keep your cheek firmly planted on the stock.

Due to the monolithic 15½-inch Picatinny rail — standard on the STF/12 — the sights don't interfere with mounting red dots, magnifiers or variable-powered optics as we've struggled with other shotguns having abbreviated rails. This is a notable difference and benefit when comparing.

If you didn't want to add a small section of rail to the forearm at 3 or 9 o'clock for a light, you could always attach a light with an angled offset mount to the front of the top rail. Even with attachments, the forearm offers plenty of real estate along its 8¾-inch length to comfortably place your hand. If you don't need the top rail, it is removable, which will save a bit of weight.

The rail features a quick-release pivot system under the front sight that lets you unlock and rotate it 90 degrees for removal. There is still the option of keeping the STF/12's open sights on, however. To reattach the rail, simply position it at a 90-degree angle, insert the front dovetail into the matching slot on the front sight and rotate it so that it's parallel to the bore and the rear locks into place at the rear sight base. A large nut on the side is used to secure the rail into place.



The continuous optic rail on top of the STF/12 can be removed leaving the use of open sights.



The rail at 6 o'clock is well suited for attaching a small light or laser. A handstop is integrated behind the bottom rail.



The multi-purpose muzzlebrake redirects gas in three directions, works as a stand-off device for breaching and is a choke.

**The Barrel** Most manufacturers cold hammer forge their shotgun barrels, stretch and then tweak them for alignment. Fabarm does barrel making differently by deep drilling barrels from solid nickel chrome molybdenum bars.

This is aimed at reducing tension inconsistencies and helps to improve accuracy. Standard CIP pressure tests require shotguns to handle 1,320 bars during overpressure tests. Fabarm exceeds that limit with a 1,630-bar overpressure test at a proofhouse to ensure that its guns are as safe and reliable as possible. As with



The stock and forend are comfortable due to a smooth, soft-touch treatment. The finish improves grip in all weather.

other European-made shotguns, proofmarks are stamped into the barrels and receivers to certify that each test has been passed.

The STF/12 barrels feature a unique, 15-slot muzzlebrake that redirects gases in three directions to help manage felt recoil and compensate for muzzle rise. At the front of the brake are teeth, which work with the brake's slots if the shotgun were to be used for breaching. The teeth allow the brake to bite into wood doors, for example, while the pressure of having the muzzle obstructed is relieved by the additional ports in the length of the brake.



**Stock Options** The STF/12 is available with four separate stock configurations. There's a short model, which essentially turns the STF/12 into a shotgun with a pistol grip sporting a single-point swivel attachment; a Compact version with a skeletonized, folding composite stock that is hinged on the right side; a telescopic version with a six-position, collapsible stock that allows the lengths of pull (LOP) to be adjusted from 9.84 to 14.17 inches. The adjustable stock also features a five-position cheekpiece, which helps when shooting the STF/12 with an optic in a tall mount.

G&A received the Compact model for testing, which features a lightweight, nonfolding skeletonized stock with a dense HRA recoil pad. It has a fixed LOP of 12.6 inches. The oversized forearm and pistol grip both have a soft-touch treatment that feels very comfortable and offers a nontacky grip that doesn't feel slippery, even in wet weather. The Compact model I tested came with 9-o'clock sling attachment points fore and aft, as well as two rails that included a fixed rail at the 6-o'clock position.

That said, Fabarm offers a host of accessories including rails, sling attachment points, shell holders and extra barrels at [fabarmpro.com](http://fabarmpro.com).

## PERFORMANCE

LOAD	VELOCITY (FPS)	ES	SD	BEST GROUP (IN.)	AVG. GROUP (IN.)
Winchester Super-X Rifled Slug 2¾, 1 oz.	1,534	50	16	1.89	2.45
Hornady American Gunner Reduced Recoil 2¾, 1 oz.	1,200	22	8	1.93	2.32
Remington Slugger 2¾, 1 oz.	1,499	41	16	2.25	2.86
Federal Truball Rifled Slug HP 2¾, 1 oz.	1,521	39	12	2.39	2.62
Fiocchi Exacta Aero-Slug 2¾, 1 oz.	1,077	22	7	2.75	3.11

Notes: Accuracy results are the average of three, five-shot groups at 50 yards from a fixed rest. Velocity is the average of 10 shots recorded by a Shooting Chrony digital chronograph placed 10 feet from the muzzle.



**On The Inside** There's been a movement toward cheapening pump guns to sell sporting models at rock-bottom prices, but Fabarm is bucking that trend with the STF/12. Twin action bars ride both sides of the magazine tube and prevent binding. Two hardcoat-anodized aluminum inserts — one inside the forearm and the other at the front of the forearm — ensure a smooth slide when operating the pump action. The forearm glides like a well-worn field gun, yet feels just as robust and durable as you'd expect a class-leading tactical pump to feel.

The bolt is also machined, which features a single, large extractor for positive control of shells on their way out of the action. The shotgun was also designed so that it could not be fired unless the locking lug is engaged, a critical safety feature.



**At The Range** G&A's slug gun accuracy tests are not typically a pleasant experience, but I must admit that shooting the STF/12 isn't as painful of an experience as normal for these type of shotguns. The muzzlebrake vents gases in a manner that reduces felt recoil, and the addition of the heat shield, magazine tube and handguard at front of center contributes to taming muzzle rise.

The recoil that makes it to the shoulder is seemingly captured by the dense, HRA recoil pad. These features add enough weight to the gun to minimize kick in a way that you can feel it. If you add a sight and light, it gets even better.

I ran a Meprolight sight and a Surefire Scout Light on the shotgun for a total weight of 9 pounds, 11 ounces. With a belly tube full of 1-ounce, 12-gauge slugs, the weight crossed 10 pounds, which made rapidly pumped and aimed follow-up shots incredibly fast — really fast.

Before the test started, I fired several rounds at torso targets from a standing



The bolt rides on twin action bars and a locking block that will look familiar to owners of other pump-action shotguns.

position at 10 yards. It's rare to have a pump shotgun run 100 rounds without some sort of minor bauble, whether due to a short stroke, sticky extraction — something. But the STF/12 never stumbled.

I read in Fabarm's catalog that the STF/12 can produce three-shot groups "under 2 inches at 50 meters," or 55 yards, from the bench using premium slugs. Of the five loads I tested, two managed to group under 2 inches at 50 yards, and all five loads averaged between 2 to slightly over 3 inches at the conclusion of this test. If all you shoot is an AR-15, that doesn't sound impressive, but that's very good real-world accuracy for a smoothbore shotgun firing lead slugs. In my opinion, the STF/12 can live up to Fabarm's accuracy claims, and it certainly shoots better groups than many of its competitors.

The STF/12 should grab the attention of someone needing a home defense shotgun capable of accepting a light and optic. Your decision may come down to price, and, sure, a seven-shot Mossberg 590 retails for \$455 and a Remington 870 Express Tactical starts at \$601. But if you step up to a Benelli M4 Tactical, be prepared to pay \$2,000. The Fabarm STF/12 falls in the middle with a suggested retail price of \$1,195, or \$1,285 if you prefer FDE coloring. No matter which you select, the STF/12 should be at the top when you consider features, handling and performance.

Fabarm's new STF/12 would be a good home-defense option, though this gun was designed with law-enforcement customers in mind; it would excel in that role. The controls are easy to use even with gloved hands. The bolt release is large and located just in front of the triggerguard so there is no fumbling to locate it. There's a crossbolt safety that's been widened on the right side for easy operation, and the trigger lets the hammer forward at 5 pounds, 2 ounces, with none of the grit you'll encounter on a lower-priced, tactical pump.

Everything about the STF/12 is durable and user-friendly. From making sight adjustments to zero a particular slug to positioning the optional rail for attaching a light, this modular shotgun is very adaptable. Fabarm Professional checks all the boxes for a functional and reliable duty shotgun. **GA**