



Three-quarters of a century of Spanish flair

As it marks 75 years in business, top Spanish gunmaker Arrieta is now focusing on bringing the brand to UK retailers.



Bespoke shotgun and rifle maker Arrieta is well known as the manufacturer behind the ever-popular E J Churchill and William Powell side-by-sides.

The Arrieta team of Juan Carlos Arrieta, Lucas Urquijo and Iker Merino celebrated the company's 75th anniversary in the company of both organisations at EJ Churchill's Shooting Ground, accompanied by key players in the trade and press from across the UK.

It gave *T&G* the opportunity to ask the team about the company, its guns and its future plans in the UK.

***T&G:* We know that Avelino Arrieta started the business 75 years ago. What was his inspiration?**

Arrieta: Avelino actually worked for the famous Sarrasqueta brand. His talent was extraordinary but Mr Sarrasqueta was, by all accounts, jealous and limited his work as a result. So Avelino, who also worked for handgun maker Astra, decided to go off on his own and set up his own venture.

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***T&G:* The Eibar region, where you are based, is synonymous with gunmaking in many forms. What makes it so special?**

A: Since the 16th and 17th century the Spanish military weapons industry has been based in the Basque country.

In the 18th and 19th century, during the Carlistas war, the Basque country supported the king but liberals come into power and all military weapon industry moved to Asturias.

The tradition and know-how continued in the Basque country and they started making hunting weapons instead.

***T&G:* What sets Arrieta apart from its competitors?**

A: Put simply, Arrieta has very qualified craftsmen and the most qualified engravers, as well as a good working atmosphere.

***T&G:* We know the engraving of any Arrieta is a real work of art. Can you describe what it takes to be a master engraver.**

A: We would say much of it is about

enthusiasm and dedication but, of course, there is also an artistic side – the gift of drawing. The master engraver is capable of visualising what you have in your mind and translating it to the action, or doing the same from a simple photograph. The master engraver must also be consistent and persistent in his work and operate with what you might term ‘good taste’.

***T&G:* Can you explain why your guns are fully bespoke and handmade?**

A: Bespoke, handmade guns are our essence and our heritage – that is why.

Our guns are known for





security, reliability and resistance. We are always there, 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. We are in the process of launching Arrieta Servicing, which will provide even more support for our customers.

T&G: In the past 75 years your company has seen many changes. Is there anything that really stands out for you?

A: The key thing for us is seeing how the company has evolved from a small, local Basque company from the Eibar region to a business that is now selling guns worldwide. We have also put in place several protocols that include quality control and what we call a 'new-order protocol'.

T&G: I understand you have commemorated Arrieta's 75th anniversary with a series of limited-edition guns. Can you talk us through them?

A: They are a special edition and will not be remade after the last gun has come out of production. There will be five made of every calibre from .410 up to 12, complete with unique engraving.

T&G: Why would you recommend Arrieta for UK dealers?

A: We are confident in our level of quality and reliability. The relationship between quality and price is unbeatable, we believe.

T&G: A prospective customer



Juan Carlos Arrieta is congratulated on the firm's 75th anniversary by E J Churchill boss Rob Fenwick.



(From left) Lucas Urquijo, Iker Merino and Juan Carlos Arrieta staged a birthday celebration in the UK.

comes to you asking about Arrieta. Can you explain the typical process for buying your guns?

A: We have established a new-order protocol. We first give a quick overview of the Basque weapon industry, the whole process is shown and explained, we listen to the customer and

ask him what he is going to use his weapon for, we offer him all different alternatives, going through fitting while explaining every step.

During the production process, we keep in close contact with the customer. For example, he chooses his stock from several options we give him. When the

product is finished, we always try them out with the customer at a shooting ground.

T&G: What are your strongest international markets?

A: Currently the UK, USA, northern Europe, Russia and Arab countries, but we are growing all the time.

T&G: Where would you like to see Arrieta in 10 years?

A: We would like to see it as a company that keeps listening to its clients and customers and is open to innovation, but will never lose its essence of fine, bespoke game guns and express rifles.

T&G: Although you have a strong reputation for the manufacture of side-by-side shotguns, we hear you're developing an over and under. Can you tell us about it?

A: We admit we are currently are starting the process so, yes, we are working on it. We listen to the market. However, you can be sure we will never lose our essence. **T&G**



Arrieta

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