

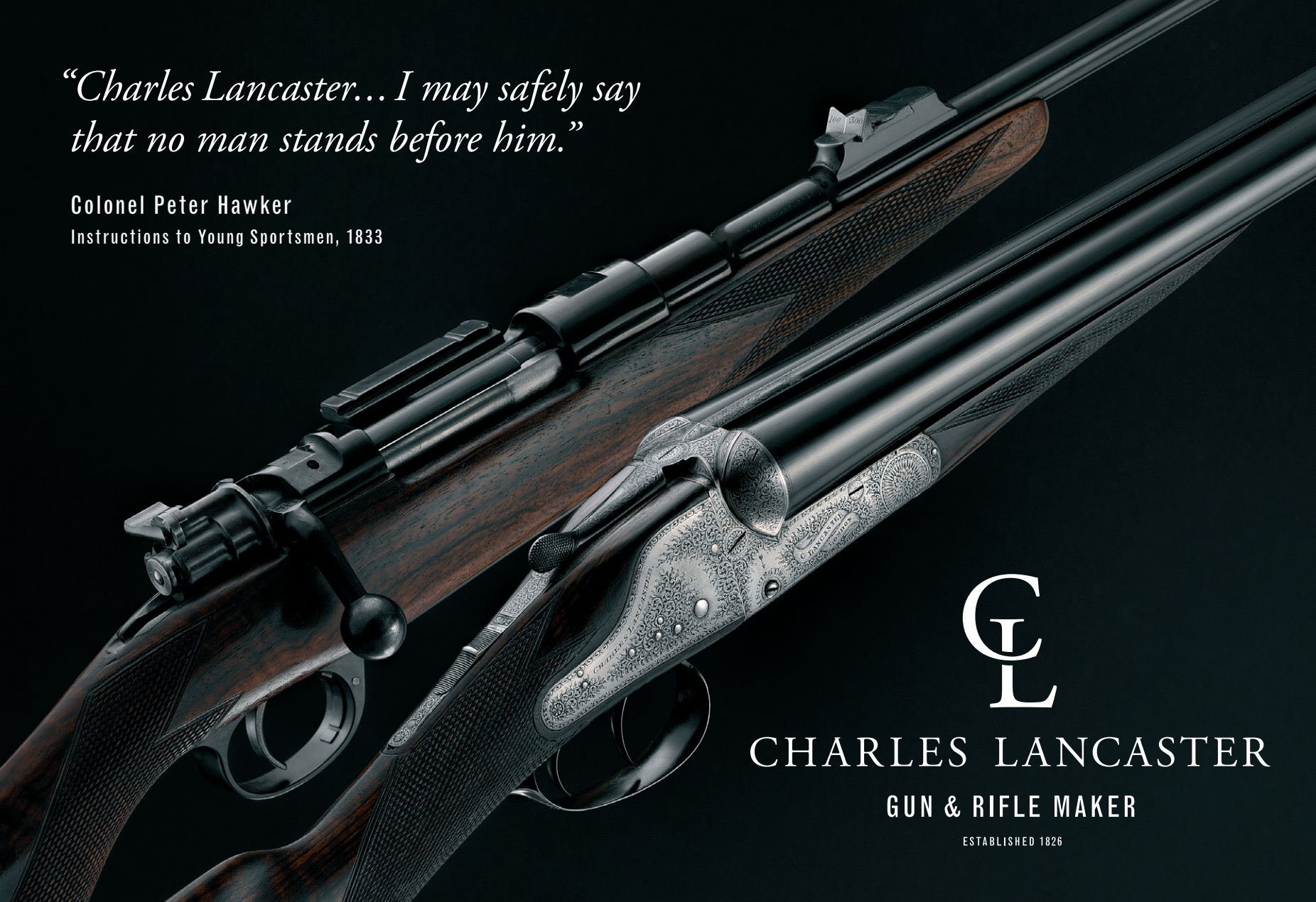
CHARLES LANCASTER

GUN & RIFLE MAKER

ESTABLISHED 1826

*“Charles Lancaster... I may safely say
that no man stands before him.”*

Colonel Peter Hawker
Instructions to Young Sportsmen, 1833



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CHARLES LANCASTER... A HISTORY

In the early 1800s the company's Founder, Charles Lancaster, was a barrel maker for the famous gunmaker Joseph Manton. In 1811, having decided to go into business for himself, Lancaster opened his own premises in Drury Lane, from where he was able to supply barrels to much of the London Gun Trade, including his former employer and other emerging and famous gunmakers such as James Purdey.

As he outgrew his shop, Lancaster made the move to New Bond Street where, in 1826, he began making complete guns under his own name. Following his death in 1847, the business passed to his son, Charles William Lancaster, who was joined in 1855 by his brother, Charles the Founder's second son, Alfred. Alfred left the business just 4 years later to start his own company, A. Lancaster Gun & Rifle Manufacturer. Alfred carried out his business in South Audley Street, near to where Purdey would eventually set up shop. Such a prestigious address clearly showed he was a successful gunmaker, as much so as his elder brother. Indeed both brothers worked together to take out jointly held patents, mostly relating to barrel making and rifling, though Charles William's own 1850 patent for the 'Oval Bore' rifling system was arguably the most well-known of the Lancaster designs.

Many hunting rifles were produced on the oval bore system. Furthermore, the company received funding from the government that ultimately resulted in oval bore cannon being used during the Crimean Campaign and the Lancaster Carbine being adopted as the principle firearm for the Royal Engineers.

Charles William would also famously go on to create, or certainly vastly improve and complete, the design of the modern centre fire cartridge and the design of the modern extractor and ejector mechanisms. Additionally, many of his gun and rifle barrel designs would be given over to rival gunmakers, where he allowed them to put their own name to his work, just like his father the Founder had done before him.

After the death of Charles William in 1878, his own apprentice, gunsmith Henry A.A. Thorn, acquired the business. Alfred Lancaster died in 1890 and, following a few years where A. Lancaster guns were manufactured by W. J. Jeffery, Thorn acquired this business as well, and reunited the two brothers' brands under the name Charles Lancaster & Co.

The era beginning with the Founder, his sons and then under Henry Thorn saw the production of numerous models of guns and rifles that became synonymous with the Lancaster name. The company became famous for its Baker patent "Twelve-Twenty" shotgun, its Beesley patent back-action "Wrist-breaker", its 4-barrelled shotgun and its

2-barrelled and 4-barrelled Howdah pistols, the latter of which was used extensively by British military officers due to its reliability, despite the fact that it was not standard Army issue. Along with these famous models, this era saw numerous other inventions, many of which were well ahead of their time.

Throughout the 1800s and early 1900s, Lancaster made guns and rifles for several notable clients. One of the most famous clients was Annie Oakley, America's famous trick shooter known as 'Little Miss Sure Shot'. Oakley formed a strong bond with the company in 1887 after Charles William watched her shooting a tournament and spotted that her lack of gun fit was affecting her performance. Charles William was able to immediately put this right by building her a gun with a very specific set of measurements that she would go on to put on all of her guns, including a number of new ones produced by Lancaster. Oakley later returned to Britain to be a guest instructor at Lancaster's shooting grounds, where she famously instructed British women in the art of shooting.

Celebrated author and war hero Colonel Peter Hawker, King Edward VII, Prince Albert and Denys Finch Hatton, noted for his role in Karen Blixen's autobiography "Out of Africa", were among other clients that chose Lancaster as their preferred gunmaker. Charles William travelled extensively in Russia, and the Czar even had a large gold medal struck in his honour. This was just one of the awards and warrants received by the company from numerous international Princes, Emperors and Sultans.

In 1932 came the first significant change in the structure of the company. Charles Lancaster was purchased by Grant & Lang, subsequently Atkin Grant & Lang. The production of new Lancaster guns and rifles dwindled throughout the 1900s and by the late 20th Century, the company was privately sold.

Lancaster had a series of owners throughout the early 2000s until it was purchased in 2007 by former Rigby rifle maker, Ronald Wharton, who began to relaunch the brand as Charles Lancaster Gunmakers Ltd, with the help of his wife, Margarita Booker. Following Wharton's untimely death, the business remained with Margarita and her business partner, Francis Beardsworth.

In 2021, former Purdey employees George Juer and Thomas Cosby, the latter of whom also worked for Atkin Grant & Lang, formed a new company to reinvigorate the brand. With Margarita and Francis remaining as directors, the new owners are beginning an exciting journey that will see Charles Lancaster Gunmakers returned to its heyday heights and its rightful place amongst the best of British Gunmakers.



AWARDED GRAND PRIZE (HONOUR HONOR) FRANCO-BRITISH EXHIBITION 1862
LONDON 1862
VIENNA 1859
LONDON 1851

ESTABLISHED 1802
AT 41, NEW BOND ST. LONDON, W.
AWARDED SIX FIRST CLASS PRIZES, MEDALS & DIPLOMAS

SPECIAL WARRANT
TO HIS LATE MAJESTY KING EDWARD VII
& TO HIS MAJESTY KING GEORGE V

CHARLES LANCASTER
GUN & RIFLE MANUFACTURERS

10, BUNTON STREET, MARKET LANE, LONDON, E.C. 4
OPPOSITE THE CONDUIT STREET

NEW SHOOTING SCHOOL AND GUN AND RIFLE MANUFACTURING WORKS, 20, MOUNT FLEMING STREET, N.W. 11

THE WAY OF SHOOTING, ILLUSTRATED BY CHARLES LANCASTER
SEVENTH EDITION, PUBLISHED 1875, PRICE 3S. POSTAGE 6D. EXTRA.

NEW GUNS

The name Charles Lancaster is synonymous with shooting and for almost two hundred years any gun bearing this name is known for its quality, such that it may be relied on implicitly. Today, Charles Lancaster Gunmakers continues to make London style 'best' quality guns and rifles.

BOLT ACTION RIFLES

Lancaster bolt action rifles have been known for over 150 years for their accuracy, reliability, beauty and handling qualities. Built exclusively on original Mauser '98 actions, or modern Mauser '98 copies if required, our rifles are hand-made by our skilled craftsmen on a selection of action sizes and in a large range of calibres, with all specifications made to customer requirements.

DOUBLE RIFLES

Our double rifles are made in a range of calibres suitable for use on all game. Both sidelock and boxlock actions are available, each being entirely bespoke made to customer specifications.



'BEST' OVER AND UNDER SHOTGUNS

As with all our 'best' guns, Lancaster over and unders are entirely built by hand. Built on the famous Woodward-style system, your bespoke gun will not only last your lifetime, but will be used for generations to come.

'BEST' SIDE-BY-SIDE SHOTGUNS

Lancaster side-by-side shotguns are built just as 'best' guns should be, by hand and by the finest craftsmen in the world. Using the reliable Holland and Holland style assisted opening system, our guns are completely bespoke, just as our Founder intended.

THE 'VERTICAL BARREL GUN'

Also known as the 'VBG', our modern Vertical Barrel Gun is simply a sporting over and under shotgun, based on one of Lancaster's 1900s designs combined with a contemporary trigger plate action. Charles Lancaster prided himself on being one of the first gunmakers to use modern machinery: today the VBG uses the perfect blend of machinery and craftsmanship to provide a reliable over and under at an affordable price.

The VBG is currently in its design phase and is due to launch soon. Full details are available upon request.



THE GUN ROOM SELECTION

We are delighted to offer a range of firearms, both new and pre-owned, from manufacturers around the world, including a large selection of English guns and rifles.

The Charles Lancaster Gun Room contains a wide variety of Berettas, Brownings, Sakos, Mausers and other famous makes, all of which cater to the needs and budget of any sporting shooter.

Our Gun Room team are on hand to provide expert advice and ensure you leave with the right gun to suit your requirements.



THE LANCASTER SELECTION

Our Gun Room team are experts in all British made guns and rifles, but we specialise in firearms made under our own brand.

For almost 200 years, Charles Lancaster has been building best quality guns and rifles, numbering in their thousands. Many of these guns are still in use today, and as such our team is perfectly positioned to advise you on the purchase, sale, restoration or repair of your Charles Lancaster gun or rifle.

Our Gun Room has a selection of Lancaster guns for sale, details are available on our website or by request.

For information on your gun's provenance, or for information pertaining to valuation or servicing, please contact us and we will be delighted to offer our expert assistance.





LANCASTER OUTFITTERS

In 2019, company director Tom Cosby established Oldsport Outfitters. With the relaunch of Charles Lancaster Gunmakers, Oldsport Outfitters has been rebranded as Lancaster Outfitters, an agency offering hunting and shooting experiences both in Britain and internationally.

SIMULATED GAME DAYS

Using an advanced trailer-based system of multiple clay traps, we offer an unrivalled experience of simulated driven game days on a number of estates within one hour of London. Simulated days offer summertime fun for 10-18 shooters and the mobile trailer even allows travel to private estates.

BRITISH SHOOTING AND STALKING

Lancaster Outfitters offers stalking throughout the UK and specialises in the hunting of Chinese Water Deer in the Bucks/Beds area. Working with dozens of estates around Britain, we also offer driven pheasant, partridge and grouse shooting at some of the finest and most famous shoots in the country.

EUROPEAN BOAR HUNTING AND SPANISH MONTERÍA

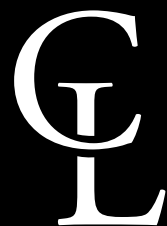
Our expert team can cater for any European shooting or hunting experience, but our specialty lies in driven boar shooting in Poland and Spanish Montería. Our team can arrange for any size group to travel to some of the finest hunting estates in Europe.

AFRICA AND BEYOND

Lancaster Outfitters sets itself apart from other agencies due to our directors' personal experiences in America, Africa and countries from as far afield as Kazakhstan to the Caribbean. Whether it is fur, feather or fin that you prefer, our team has contacts around the world and works with some of the finest operations on the international scene.



We look forward to you joining us on the trip of your dreams.



Charles Lancaster Gunmakers

Acorn Farm, Cublington Road, Wing, Buckinghamshire LU7 0LB

Tel: +44 (0)1525 659609 • info@CLguns.com

www.CLguns.com