

COVEY RISE®





FROM OLD AGE TO AVANT-GARDE

Johann Fanzoj gunmakers apply centuries of family heritage to produce firearms with a vision for the future.

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JOHANN AND DANIELA FANZOJ



A great dilemma faces those who create bespoke luxury items in the 21st Century: Stick to time-proven methods but face rising production costs and the risk of being left behind; or move with the times, embrace modern technology, and imperil the very values on which such items are built. It's no easy decision. And yet it seems the answer lies in the murky waters of compromise.

The very perception of “bespoke luxury” is subjective. Rolls-Royce motor cars and hand-tailored three-piece suits might spring to mind, but should one not look beyond what an item is and delve into how it came to be—the history, people, and processes behind its existence. All of a sudden, striking that balance between tradition and innovation becomes a tricky task. To endure as a business today, must the soul and emotion synonymous with handmade items be sacrificed?

According to Austrian gunmaker Johann Fanzoj, the answer is no. As a heritage-rich family firm established in 1790, they've faced that dilemma head-on and have chosen their route with confidence. Here's a business proud to be bringing a modern vision to an ancient craft.

Now one of a handful of surviving gunmakers in the small town of Ferlach at the foot of the Karawanken Mountains, the Fanzoj family made their name with the famous Ischler Stutzen hammer take-down rifle in the early 1900s. Proprietor Albert Fanzoj then secured the custom of Emperor Franz Joseph I and his private protective guard, the “Carlsbad Shooter's Corps.”

However, it was Johann Fanzoj, Sr.—an avid hunter and highly regarded member of various international hunting associations—who laid the foundations for the company as we know it today, foundations his children Daniela and Patrick Fanzoj have been building on as current company directors. The pair are the eighth generation of gunmakers in the family. And they're doing some exciting things.

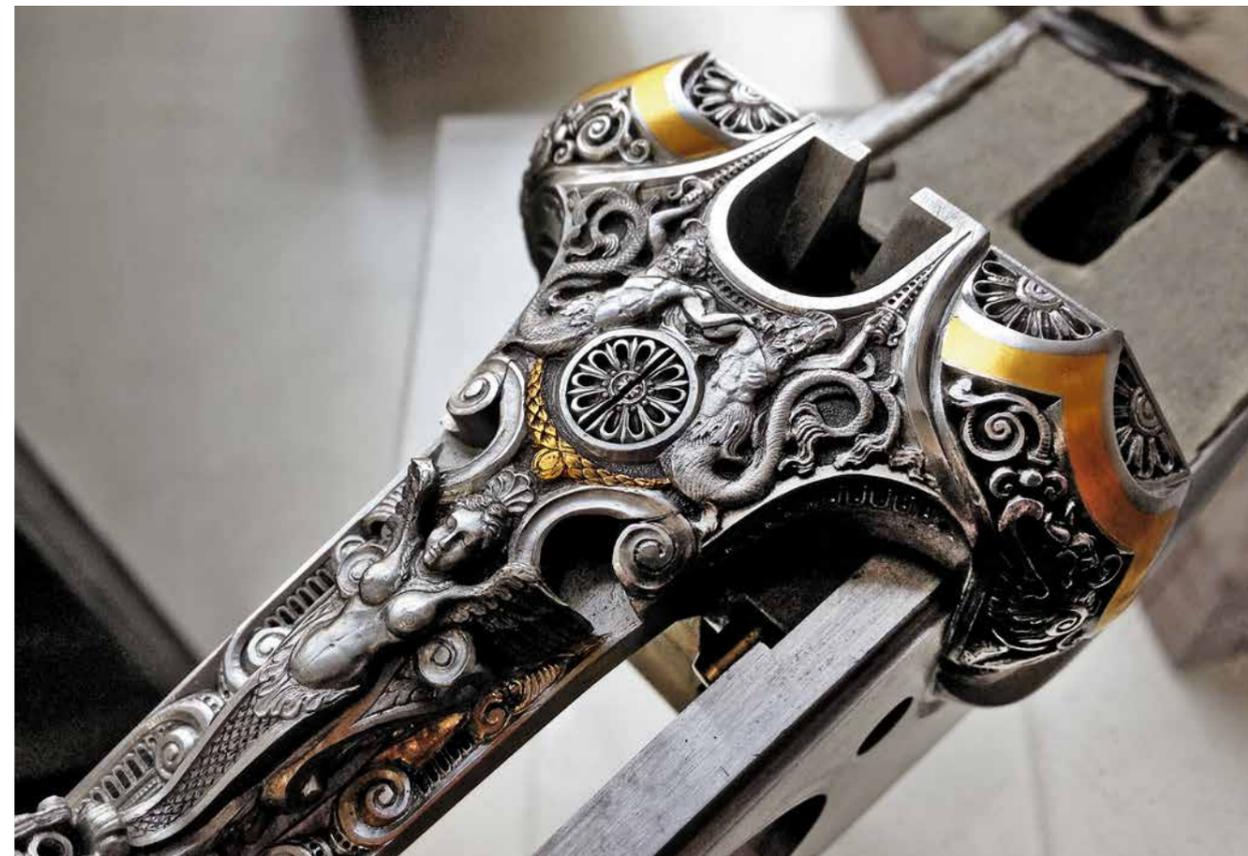
“We are digging deep to our roots to bring the knowledge

THE FANZOJ LEGACY

Daniela Fanzoj and her brother Patrick carry on the family legacy propelled by their father Johann Fanzoj, Sr., who laid the foundations for the company as we know it.



“We are digging deep to our roots to bring the knowledge and skills from previous generations to the modern day, and then combining them with new materials and technology.”



and skills from previous generations to the modern day, and then combining them with new materials and technology,” Daniela explained. “Innovation is very important to the vitality of a brand, and I believe it will enable us to prosper for generations to come.”

The company doesn’t take its responsibility to safeguard the skills and knowledge of yesteryear lightly, though. “We don’t just make guns. We preserve something that is important to human civilization—the ability to think in three dimensions, to work with hands, mind, and eyes in concert to produce something meaningful, personal, and unique,” Daniela stated. Indeed, in 2010, Ferlach’s 500-year-old association with gunmaking was added to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization’s List of Intangible Cultural Heritage. It’s a big deal.

Both Patrick and Daniela are adamant that guns are symbolic, expressive objects of culture. They place great value on the highly emotional aspect of gunmaking, yet they remain confident that such qualities can still be delivered with the adoption of new methods and materials.

They have every reason to be confident, too. Fanzoj guns are created one at a time. Every year, only a handful of shotguns, bolt-action rifles, and double rifles—altogether some 25

pieces—leave the Fanzoj workshop, and the company insists that 80 percent of the total work involved is manual craftsmanship, with thousands of hours often involved in a single project. They’re special items, creations that customers are encouraged to be involved with and immersed in. “When somebody puts so much of themselves into an item—that’s my personal understanding of true, bespoke luxury,” offered Daniela.

Of course, it’s not just the customers who invest themselves in the guns that eventually leave the firm’s new, state-of-the-art production facility. The commitment of the team behind the exquisite guns and rifles seems central to their success. “Our team is made up of young, highly motivated individuals who come to work on the weekends if requested, because they want to,” Daniela said. “It is more than a ‘job’ to these people. It is a passion. They love what we are doing, and they are having fun.”

Capable hands and creative minds can rarely sustain what

FROM THE PAST TO THE FUTURE

Fanzoj preserves the history of our sporting traditions by using technology and innovative techniques to create firearms that are truly bespoke luxury.



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Daniela referred to as a “feverish drive to keep pushing the boundaries” if there isn’t something exciting to keep them champing at the bit, which is where the experimental mindset of the company as a whole comes into play—an approach that has seen, through necessity, every process brought in-house under one roof. According to Daniela, there is no other way to do it.

“When you want quality, you need total control of every step of production. It’s the most expensive way, and the most difficult, but it allows us to be the most creative we can be, to scrutinize every last element of what we are producing—from the barrels to the action screws—and nurture that spirit of ownership amongst our staff, who take great pride in being part of something that is so complete.”

At few other makers of best guns and rifles would there be the chance to work with such materials as titanium and carbon fiber, or to take inspiration from industries renowned for groundbreaking developments.

“We have been using titanium successfully in our rifles since 2010,” Daniela explained. “People said it was impossible to work with, and there’s no doubt it poses real challenges. It is 10 times the price of steel, ruins tools because it is so tricky,

PIONEERS OF AESTHETICS

Patrick Fanzoj (right) showcases the creative spark—the excellent mechanics and detailed aesthetics—that makes the company an innovator in the firearms industry.



PATRICK FANZOJ



has to be cooled constantly, and surface coatings are required to prevent friction between moving parts. But it can be done, and now everything but the springs and barrels in our titanium models is made with the material.”

The use of titanium results in ultralight, ultra-strong, and practically indestructible works of art. “We found the friction-saving coating solution in Formula One. The moving parts in a Fanzoj titanium shotgun are coated with the same compound as that found in the motor of an F1 racing car.” added Daniela.

It appears that Fanzoj customers are drawn to the creative spark that has culminated in the world’s first custom carbon-stock, single-shot, and bolt-action hunting rifles made of titanium, a unique three-barreled shotgun, along with other

beautifully classy shotguns, to name but a few. “Each model is based on excellent mechanics and then paired with high aesthetic standards,” added Daniela. This dynamic modus operandi is clearly adding to, rather than detracting from, the allure of a process that typically starts with countless computer-aided sketches and 3D design drafts, but still majors on craftsmanship and handiwork.

With every announcement or launch of an avant-garde project, new material, or way of doing things at Johann Fanzoj comes intrigue and curiosity. What will they do next? Which “rules” will they bend or completely disregard?

“A hundred years from now, we want people to open the cases of our guns and be taken aback by what they see,” said Daniela. “Traditional, age-old crafts will only survive if you embrace the present. We want to stay true to our roots, to use our heritage and knowledge that has been garnered through eight generations, while combining it with the advantages of the 21st Century. This is where the masterpieces of the future will come from.” With Fanzoj leading the way, it looks set to be an exciting century. 🍷

CONCEPT TO COMPLETION

From the initial conceptualization to the computer-aided sketches and 3D design, the meticulous planning processes that lead to the creation of a finished Fanzoj firearm are examples of paramount artistry and due diligence.