

# LOOK WHO'S TALKING

by Connie Mako Miller

**W**e all recognize the name “Caesar Guerini” now, but it was only a short few years back, while introducing the Guerini guns to the U.S. marketplace, Wes Lang, President of Guerini U.S.A., was accustomed to people asking, “What’s that?” or sometimes even, “Who’s that?”

It’s pretty amazing how quickly the American market embraced the quality lines of Guerini. The U.S. shotgun community can be a very traditional group in their purchases, not easily impressed with new or foreign smoothbores. For



the most part, we tend to gravitate to the tried-and-true established brands, but since we are a savvy bunch, after the first shipment in 2002, we quickly learned to appreciate the features and excellence of Caesar Guerini guns. It is currently a highly recognized name and a force in the sporting world.

As with the introduction of any new creation, marketing and advertising are keys to its success. In coordination with the Guerini brothers, those are two of Wes’ primary jobs. Well, perhaps “primary” isn’t exactly the correct word because, as any businessman will tell you, an owner must assume all types of duties, and his primary duty is the one he’s working on at that moment in time. As President of Caesar Guerini U.S.A., if there is such a thing as a primary-primary job, Wes would probably consider it talking to customers and ensuring they are happy. Speaking with him back in December, it seemed to me it was that facet of his work he enjoys most. Wes genuinely appreciates his customers.

The work-a-day world of Wes Lang, as you probably gathered from the last paragraph, is not one that is routinely repetitive. Guerini guns are manufactured in Italy under the leadership and engineering of brothers Antonio and Giorgio Guerini and

## Wes Lang Caesar Guerini USA

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shipped to Wes in the U.S. With a background in marketing and advertising, Wes’ daily schedule involves a great deal of that type of work. Alongside his staff of a dozen, he also confers with the gunsmithing department and deals with everything from accounting issues to sales, distribution and all the details between.

Wes is largely responsible for product development, also, which often revolves around ideas or suggestions from shooters and customers. Caesar Guerini guns are designed mainly for the U.S. market, so Wes has to have a handle on what American consumers want in a shotgun and what features are essential to their needs. While Guerini also sells to clients in various countries all over the world, the majority of their product comes to

the U.S.; therefore, a considerable amount of the design concepts and features are generated from Wes and company. As you can imagine, time is the biggest challenge he has. There is barely enough of it to get all his work done, say nothing about spending time with his two young sons or having time to shoot his favorite Guerini at the sporting clays course. Wes is a NSCA Master Class competitor.

Beginning right out of school, Wes has spent his career close to the firearms industry. His first job was at RSR Wholesale, a huge gun wholesaler. After a few years, he moved on to Seminole Gunworks, working for Randy Mitchell. Wes said, as a single guy, it was a super job that took him to heaps of shoots. With an ardor for shooting first developed as he learned

trapshooting from his grandfather, Fred Lang, and then sporting clays with his dad, Barry Lang, setting up for Seminole at various competitions around the country gave him the opportunity to pursue his love of clay-target shooting. Wes recently won the 2008 Zone 2 NSCA Championships, which includes Maryland, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware and Virginia. He has also won Florida, Delaware and New Jersey (non-resident) and Maryland (resident) state titles and was a past Runner-up at the prestigious Seminole Cup in Florida.

Wes joined Beretta and, some years later, Sig Arms. It was in his capacity there he first met Giorgio Guerini. Leaving Sig Arms, he entered the outdoor publishing business, working for a company that put out over a dozen magazines, including *Guns & Ammo*. Believing it to be a more stable environment but still in the realm of the shooting world, Wes had decided to join the publishing group, but in time he realized he had moved away from his real passion, too far away from the products and shooters that had always been his real zeal.

Wes and Giorgio Guerini had remained friends since their working relationship at Sig Arms. As the needling thought process dawned on Wes the publishing business was taking him away from shotguns and the people who were so important to him,



***Wes is not only a fine shotgunner, he enjoys other sporting activities as well. He hooked this beauty of a striper out of the Chesapeake Bay.***

the Guerini brothers and Wes started talking about creating their own sporting-gun masterpieces. Dreams became reality in 2002.

If you talk to Wes about Caesar Guerini guns, you come to the realization he loves his work, has unending respect for Antonio and Giorgio and a great deal of admiration for what they have produced. Throughout our conversation, I never once felt he was trying to sell me on the gun, only that he was telling me about something of which he is infinitely proud and that is a big part of his life. Sometimes business owners just automatically go into their "sales speak," often not even knowing what they are doing. It's sort of an autopilot thing. I did not get that from Wes. It was just two shooters talking about shotguns and shooting... fun.

Fun is a word Wes often gives as advice. This NSCA Master Class competitor suggests new shooters always remember to have a good time and keep things in perspective. Wes said one of his greatest enjoyments is purposely squadding with people he doesn't know and learning about them. Socializing with different people is what brings out the best of sporting clays for him. That social aspect keeps the NSCA Nationals on the top of his list of favorite shoots. Squadding for four days of competition gives him the opportunity to get to know many wonderful people.

***Enjoying the sights in Maine with wife Dierdre and two young sons, Collin and Garrett.***





*Wes is a Master Class sporting clays competitor and genuine student of the game.*

Going back to the Nationals each year, he loves reacquainting with old friends and meeting new ones. It is how he keeps the game fun.

Which Guerini does Wes shoot? He has a Maxum. At first, he tried the 32" barrels then switched to the longer 34" ones. As Wes said, the 34s are not for everyone, but with his lengthened stock to accommodate his 6'5" frame, the barrels are perfectly balanced to his liking. The custom stock was not made for the usual reasons of fine-tuning the fit of cast and drop. A standard Guerini fits Wes quite well in those regards. Length was the issue. His stock is fairly close to the same dimensions as a Guerini standard stock, just longer, with the pistol grip moved back a little and made a bit longer to fit his large hand.

The gun also has plenty of superior features, like chrome-lined bores, a dual-conical long forcing-cone system designed by Guerini, large bore diameter, fine-tuned Guerini extended choke tubes and a great trigger set adjustable for overtravel, take-up and length-of-pull. (Check them out at [www.gueriniusa.com](http://www.gueriniusa.com).) While we are on the subject, let me also point out the Schnabel forearm and engraving. Wes loves the bold scroll engraving

on the receiver with a pleasing contrast between the foreground and background.

Customer service is more than just a byline of Caesar Guerini U.S.A. Talk to Wes' customers and read about Guerini U.S.A.'s "Pitstop Program" and warranty, if you need examples. The Pitstop Program provides Guerini gun owners with a yearly service and gun tune-up, free of charge. The customer need only pay the shipping cost for Wes and his experts to service the gun each year for the life of their ownership. Turnaround time is just seven business days, or less. Wow, that is customer service at its very best!

Wes has had a challenging yet exciting year so far, furthering Guerini's commitment to keeping gun owners satisfied and happy. At the 2009 S.H.O.T. Show, Wes announced a full custom shop was opening in a new building at their facility in Cambridge, Maryland. There, a customer can choose any engraving pattern, different recoil pads, checkering, high-grade wood or a custom stock, which will be turned around in 45 days to complement their purchase. Wes told me this is a much cheaper option for the customer than going to an engraver or

## Wes Lang

### Caesar Guerini's Main Man

**Place of birth:** New Jersey

**Age:** 43

**Occupation:** President of Guerini U.S.A., Inc.

**Favorite:**

**Hobbies:** Mountain biking, snow skiing, surfing, fishing and hunting

**Gun:** Caesar Guerini

**Shotgun game:** Sporting clays or F.I.T.A.S.C.

**Shotgun shells:** B&P 1½-ounce No. 8s for the most part and 7/8s for long targets and rabbits.

**Pet:** A two-year-old black Lab named Briar who comes to the office with me every day.

**Who you most admire:** Obviously, Antonio and Giorgio Guerini, the people I work with and some of my dealers, particularly those who have been in the business a long time — dealers are much more beneficial to the sport than most people realize. Also, the Beretta family, who have been patrons of the sport and done a lot of good things. The shooters I admire are the best role models, the ambassadors of the sport.

**What have you learned in your shooting career you wish you'd learned earlier:**

Not to take it too seriously and be too competitive about it.

**The toughest challenge you've had to overcome:** Time and distractions.

**The dumbest mistake you made while shooting:** I make lots of them almost every time I shoot!

**Your biggest challenge this year:**

The dramatic change in the economy.

**Advice to someone looking to move up to the upper echelons of shooting:** If you really want to excel, keeping in mind it should be fun, you have to take a little more systematic approach. Take lessons from a qualified person and focus on making sure your fundamentals are very good. Focus on your concentration and get strong on the mental aspects of the game. I think those things will serve you well. The rest of it is just practice.

**Your mother/father always wanted you to grow up to be:** I think my father really wanted me to get into the advertising business with him eventually, but he wasn't the kind of guy who wanted to push me in that direction.

**Your favorite expression:** Sorry, but you can't print any of those; you'd have to edit it all out.

**You would never go shooting without:**

A positive attitude.

**If you're not shooting, you're probably:** Spending time with my family doing all sorts of things.

gunstock maker after the purchase is made. All the custom work can be done at the time of purchase, rather than after, at a dramatically lower cost, plus it can be turned around much quicker. Wes and company integrate with the factory to do these things,



Wes takes a short break during a chilly hunt in North Dakota for pheasants, sharp-tail and Hungarian partridge.

with some work done in Italy and some completed at the new custom shop in Maryland. Instead of just one person like a stockmaker doing the work, a team of the factory and Guerini people in the U.S. work together to get the product to the client.

Wes is one of the rare people who have found their bliss in life. Being a people person with a passion for shotgunning, guns and shooting products has led him to a job he loves everyday. When you see him at the NSCA Nationals or other shooting events around the country, you will see his enthusiasm. Stop and say hello and, while you are at it, say hello to the Caesar Guerini shotguns Wes loves. The “new kids on the block” have much to offer, and I think you will be impressed with both Wes and his guns. **SS**

Connie Mako Miller's shooting career began in 1969 with trapshooting lessons at the Winchester Club in Cleveland, Ohio. In 1988, she attained ATA Lady High Handicap Average in Ohio, 8th in the U.S. She was chosen for the NSCA All-American Team two times, four times Michigan State Lady Champ, five times Ohio State Lady Champ and Runner-Up in the NSCA National Champion of Champions in 1993. She began writing for *Shotgun Sports* in March, 1997.

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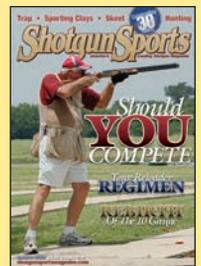
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