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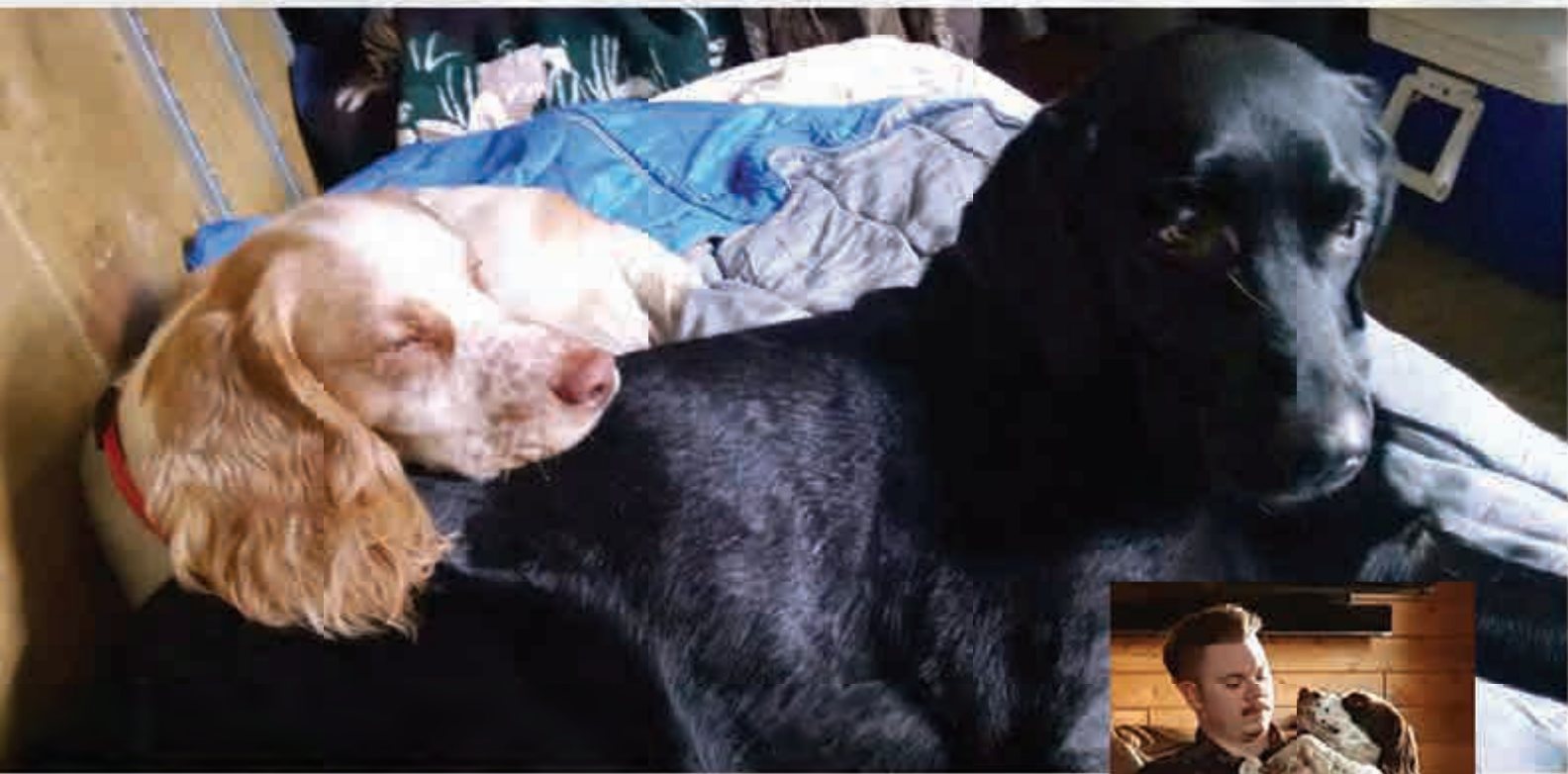
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## Never Spoil Your Bird Dog – Matthew Gay, Founder and Editor

**O**PINIONS RUN QUITE STRONG ON THIS TOPIC, with many claiming that spoiling your bird dog will lead to a less compliant hunting partner while some believe the opposite is true. We at *Wing & Clay Life Magazine* subscribe to the former.

What does it mean to spoil a bird dog? First, a bird dog is a tool, just like a screwdriver...but different. Bird dogs need rigid structure and dutiful discipline. We can never let them get the idea that they are a part of the family and deserving of the same privileges. Much like the house, furniture is for people, not dogs. By no means should one ever give one's bird finding companion the wrong impression.

We need to keep our K9 servants in check. They eat when we say they eat. At no time is it ever prudent to feed table scraps to one's hunting dog. Treats make for an uncouth critter, constantly begging for an unscheduled snack. The occasional pat on the head is acceptable but be careful not to get too handsy with them, they could come to expect it on a regular basis. Needy and affectionate dogs can never make good hunters.

While some speak to their dogs as if they are human and deserving of such advanced communication, this is a great mistake for the

true hunter. Such regular interactions could lead to your bird dog believing he or she is not the subservient life form they are. Baby talking to your pup is really a bad idea. Keep them humble and keep them hunting.

As you can see in the attached pictures of bird dogs from the kennels of *Wing & Clay Life Magazine*, we practice what we preach. No dogs inside, no dogs on the furniture and most of all...no baby talk to the pups.

If you haven't figured it out yet, the above is satirical bovine excrement of the male variety. We don't spoil our bird dogs; we treat them as a valued part of the family. I have always believed that a bird dog who is happy, will do anything for you. While I may allow my dogs more liberties than some, I know they are happy pups and would do anything to make me happy. In fact, there have been times when I liked my dogs more than my children...much more.

As you take to the woods this fall, enjoy the time with your K9 hunting partner. Remember, you are their entire life, albeit too short for our liking. Enjoy this edition and good luck in the fields and courses this fall. 🐾





# WING & CLAY

JOURNAL NO. 5







# Features

**Single-Page  
Bonus Feature!**  
The Southern Trapper  
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### The Magical Season

We've been to the range in order to hone our shotgun pointing skills and we are poised to make this season the greatest yet. Our gear is prepared, packed and ready to deploy. Our bird dogs are breaming with anticipation, while dreaming of endless coverts from which to roam. When we awake to the fragrance of coffee permeating the air inside the cabin and light creeping through the windowpanes, it all begins anew. The magical season we eagerly await all year...opening day.

## 30

### A Masterpiece of Dual Inspiration

Working seamlessly as a family-oriented father and son team, Orion Outdoors Company is a culmination of over 50 years of building an iconic reputation and brand in the shooting sports industry. Certainly, universally known and deeply involved in their local community and the greater southeastern Michigan community, the Lieske family is also synonymous with the sporting life throughout the state of Michigan and equally important, the nation.

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### Northern Michigan Fun Shoot

SASSS was created to promote and preserve the heritage of the American side by side shotgun in the hunting and sporting realm. A part of its mission is to promote events and shoots for those individuals who are fond of the old school horizontal barrels. With that in mind, SASSS has been quite successful at holding events around the state of Michigan and elsewhere. On August 10th, SASSS held their Northern Michigan Fun Shoot.

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### Alamo Sporting Arms

There are multiple high-quality manufacturers of sporting and field arms on the market offered by several different retailers. Some will make the sale and wish you well without offering any kind of fitting or customization services, while others sub the services out to manufacturers or firms with the expertise to service firearms effectively. Then you have the full service, recognized experts who will not only provide design, customization and maintenance/repair services, they consider their customers family.





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I cut my teeth behind dogs in the northern part of Michigan's lower peninsula, and pointing dogs became my immediate favorite for the task at hand. After one English Setter, I have gone to the Llewellyn Setter, with no looking back.

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We were a brood of six children that would have fit well within the land of misfit toys, with two parents who didn't follow the world's standards and taught us at a young age to grab life by the horns and live fully each day.



# WING CLAY

JOURNAL NO. 5

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**Wing & Clay Life's Picks!**



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## “Sus Ojos” (translation: Your Eyes)

By Cyle Foley

**I**N THE SHOOTING SPORTS WORLD, SEEING IS EVERYTHING. When we venture into competition shooting, we need to realize that a multitude of things affect our performance, but the most important factor is our vision. Here are a few things we need to discuss about eye color sensitivity, light sensitivity, target focus, and eye placement. I am not going to talk about prescription lenses as that is self-explanatory, but please get your eyes checked regularly by an ophthalmologist.

We can discuss some rules of thumb when we start talking about men's and women's eyes. Men are generally red deficient, so therefore, they see better with lenses with red tints to them, and women see better through purple. This is not an exact science, but it is an excellent place to start when we seek to address how we can see targets better. Take some time to look at targets through different lenses and manufacturers. My word of advice is to go outside and look at some targets to see how the lenses help or hinder your vision.

Are you ready for more generalities? Well, here they come. Blue, green, and other light-colored eyes are light sensitive. The

converse of this is true for darker eyes. Why does this matter? Eye fatigue is one reason. This writer has personally been through having lenses that were either too dark or too light. If the lens is too light, we tend to squint and strain our eyes to see the target, and if the lens is too dark, we have to focus hard to find the target in the dark haze. Focusing

too soon leads to us working our eyes so hard, and by the end of the round, they're just tired and don't want to focus any longer. Selecting a lens for your glasses that enhances the color you need and gives you the optimum shade is imperative. When look-

ing through a lens while on a course, the result one is looking for is that of a neutral feeling; your eyes should not be straining to see or squinting to block light. This is the sweet spot we should be looking for.

One might notice some people running around with two pairs of shooting glasses. One is on their face, and another is in their hat. This is done to help them choose between two options that they have already established will work in their given situation. Sometimes, this means that they need something a little darker for when there are





no trees or shade around, or something a little lighter when there's cloudiness or at the time of day. Also, they may be switching between something that helps them see the target better in a different background. Modern shooting glasses have vastly improved over time. Now, we can customize our shooting glasses to optimize our performance. Here is a piece of advice about this, too: make sure that you think about what time of day you are shooting and the conditions when you get ready to pack your range bag.

This is the best part. Now we have the cool gear that we have just bought, we are ready to go evaluate it. Here are a few things you should know. One is that there is a definite correlation between where we put our eyes and our ability to break the target easily. We will talk about hard and soft focus later, but right now, we are going to talk about eye placement. As we like to always have a consistent breakpoint, we also need to have a consistent target pickup point.

Generally, I pick out a spot where I can let my eyes softly focus and catch the target coming into view from my peripheral vision, lock onto it with my eyes, and move with it as it goes. There's a strange phenomenon that happens when you do this. It seems like the target has lost speed and somehow slowed down, if you will. You just feel like you could shoot that thing at any point in time you wanted to. This is because our eyes are moving at the same speed as the target thus making it feel like the target is moving in slow motion. Trying to look really

hard for the target or staring right down the barrel of the machine will give most people problems. I know a few who have mastered the art of being able to see a bird come right off the arm and quickly engage it. I am not so fortunate; I require some time to get in sync with that target. Learning how you can place your eyes along the flight path of the bird or target, and how far away your eyes need to be for you personally, is something that must be practiced in order to master. Using a soft focus on a fixed point allows repeatability and allows for you to be able to adjust if you picked the wrong point.

Your eyes will work the same way if you are too close to the trap then the bird comes off too fast for your eyes to pick up cleanly and clearly; you will then struggle as you push to find it again too far away. You will find that your eyes have been focused on the bird for way too long before it comes into shooting view and cannot maintain the focus needed to break the target. This is the "two-second" rule. The human eye can only hard focus on a specific point for two seconds before beginning to "bounce" off that point.

Now we are down to the meat and potatoes of this; all these other items are setting us up to be able to do the one thing we must be able to do to be successful. Being able to see the target clearly is paramount for one to break the target. Now that we've gotten the colors and shades right for us, we need to understand how our eyes work.

Typically, your eyes can focus faster from far away to close-up, than they can from close-up to far away. Also, there is a finite amount of time that our eyes can focus on any given thing and what we call hard to focus (two-second rule). If a person were to start off focusing their eyes as hard as they can on the target from the time the target is launched, by the time their eyes and the target reach the breakpoint, they could not stay focused any longer. Doing this repeatedly throughout a round will cause eye fatigue because you are forcing your eye to try to stay focused longer than it can physically do it. It is better if a person can save their hard focus until just before the breakpoint (Where we see the target the best) and then focus as hard as they can on a small spot on the clay that we have established, which will produce a break. 🙌





Being able to see the target clearly is paramount for one to break the target. Now that we've gotten the colors and shades right for us, we need to understand how our eyes work.





# 2024 SCTP Nationals

By Maggie Kelch • Photos by Maggie Kelch and Tom Davis

**T**HE MIDWAY USA FOUNDATION IS A STRONG PARTNER WITH THE SCHOLASTIC SHOOTING SPORTS FOUNDATION (SSSF). THEY HELP TO FINANCIALLY SUPPORT THE TWO SHOOTING PROGRAMS THAT ARE MANAGED BY THE SSSF: The Scholastic Clay Target Program (SCTP) and the Scholastic Action Shooting Program (SASP). In addition, they provide support to teams that compete in these two outstanding youth shooting programs.

In the SCTP program, youth from elementary grades through college compete in shotgun sports. This includes the Olympic disciplines of bunker trap, trap doubles and international skeet as well as American-style trap, skeet, sporting clays, 5-stand and make-a-break. The SASP program provides youth in grade school through college with the opportunity to participate in team-based action shooting sports using rifles and pistols. They compete in timed events using .22 rifles, .22 handguns, pistol caliber carbines and/or centerfire handguns. Action shooting targets are steel circular or rectangular plates.

In July, youth shooters gathered in central Ohio from across the country to compete in the 2024 Scholastic Shooting Sports Foundation (SSSF) National Championships. Hosted by the Cardinal Shooting Center in Marengo, the annual youth shooting sports competition was held July 9-20. The Midway USA Foundation had a very visible presence at both the SCTP and SASP National Championships. In fact, they held special events for youth shooters to participate in during the week which allowed them to raise money for their endowment funds as well. They held a scavenger hunt and sweepstakes where entrants could win \$1,000 in endowment funds for their favorite youth shooting program and other prizes. They also held an Action Shooting contest with daily prizes awarded to the top youth male and female in both rifle and pistol.

The 2024 SCTP and SASP National Championships had more than 3,657 youth athletes registered, which is over 500 more than last year, according to Tom Davis, Marketing and Communications Manager for the SSSF. This made it the largest Nationals event to date. Davis added, "The SSSF National Championships are a great indicator of how popular participation in youth shooting sports has become. We break registration records year after year, and I only see plenty of room to spread awareness and grow. To meet this demand, we have expanded our development staff to meet the demand of current team support and further expansion of new teams forming."

According to Jake Spengler, Shooting Sports Operations Manager at the Cardinal Center, they threw more than two million clay targets during the national championships. More than 3,100 athletes competed in the shotgun events. This year, more than 1,700 youth shooters competed in the sporting clays championship.







The SCTP Nationals combine the competition of a major sporting clays event with the opportunity for young shooters to shop at dozens of shooting-related vendors, try out their "dream" shotgun and meet other young shooters from across the country.

### Team Spirit

Teams are affiliated with gun clubs, high schools, colleges and universities. Team members proudly fly flags with their team logos along with state and American flags on their ATVs, golf carts and pop-up tents on the grounds. Team members wear custom made shirts and shooting vests with their names imprinted or embroidered on them, along with their team's name or logo and the names or logos of their sponsors. These kids come to compete and to experience all that the event





## Youth Shooting

has to offer. They are serious and focused when they are on the line, but you can tell that they enjoy the competition as well as the camaraderie of the sport.

Since the SCTP Nationals are a team event, the opening ceremonies (held on Wednesday, July 18th) were an opportunity for the shooters, their coaches and families to celebrate team and state spirit. An Olympic-style "parade of states" was held where the shooters marched in front of the grandstands on the trap field, proudly wearing their team apparel and waving their team and state flags.

The vendor buildings at the Cardinal Center are open throughout the event and a number of other vendors set up tents and trailers where they show their products and offer services to shooters. Many of the major gun, ammunition, hearing, eyewear and apparel manufacturers see this as an opportunity to support the youth shooters and to promote their products to thousands of potential buyers. Several of the shotgun manufacturers bring their gunsmiths to the event to perform annuals and repairs.

This year, international and national sporting clays and FITASC champions Karen and Gebben Miles were on vendor's row. Karen was a member of an SCTP shoot-



ing team when she was younger. At that time, she shot trap and skeet but said that when she discovered sporting clays, she knew she had found her sport. They were talking to shooters and spectators about sporting clays and sharing their experiences as well as providing information about their Sporting Clays Academy and new instructional videos.

To enable the young shooters to learn more about collegiate shooting programs, including the availability of college scholarships for shooting sports, the SSSF held a College Day on Friday at the Nationals. Representatives from colleges across the country set up tables and provided information about their shooting programs to hundreds of shooters and their parents who attended. This year, there were 20 colleges/universities who participated in College Day.

In addition, representatives of the ACUI (Association of College Unions International) had a display at the College Day. ACUI started its clay targets program more than 50 years ago and hosts the largest collegiate national championship, as well as several regional events throughout the year. The ACUI and SCTP established a partnership in 2022 and now hold joint national collegiate clay shooting events together.

### Make-A-Break

Many of the youth shooters who compete in the SCTP National Championships participate in all the disciplines throughout the week. Both Make-A-Break and 5-Stand are offered as side events. Make-A-Break is a scheduled team competition and generates a lot of enthusiastic participation from the youth shooters. This year, 59 teams competed in the Make-A-Break competition and hundreds of youth participants shot the game for fun and individual honors.

Make-A-Break features a specially made trophy for the winning squad. The





trophy is named for Raymond Forman, the creator of Make-A-Break and 5-stand. Once again, this year, Forman attended the event and presented the trophy to the winning team after the finals were held on Thursday, July 18. The finals always draw an enthusiastic crowd of shooters, parents, coaches and other spectators.

The winning team in the Make-A-Break competition this year was from Pennsylvania. The Hunting Hills Hawkeyes shooters scored 252 to claim the Forman Trophy and bragging rights for the next year.

### Stand Side Event

Two 50-bird 5-Stands provided the youth shooters with plenty of challenging targets in this 100-bird competition. There were 242 competitors in the 5-Stand competition this year. Awards were presented to winning squads in two divisions: Intermediate (including both the Entry Level and Advanced Intermediate shooters) and Senior (including the JV, Varsity and Collegiate shooters). Competitive squads consist of five shooters, in the same age classification, from the same team.

In the Intermediate Division, the Pella Christian Eagles Intermediate/Advanced Team from Iowa took top honors with a team total of 343. Following behind them was a team from the Young Guns at Quail Creek from Florida with a total score of 332. In third place was



another team from the Pella Shooters Club with a total score of 308.

In the Senior Division, a squad from the Young Guns at Quail Creek were the champions with a combined score of 404. The runner-up squad with a 402 was the Manchester Young Guns, from Michigan. In third place was a squad from Central Georgia Elite Shooters who broke 384.

High Over All individual honors in the 5-Stand competition went to Owen Haas, a collegiate shooter



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Tanner Gibson | SASP TN

START SEARCHING FOR A YOUTH SHOOTING TEAM



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## Youth Shooting

from the Forest City Juniors in Georgia who broke 96/100. Runner-up was Grant Glossner, an Intermediate/Advanced shooter from the Central Penn Crushers who broke 91/100.

### Sporting Clays Championship

The SCTP National Sporting Clays championship was held from July 13th through the 18th. It was a 200-bird event held on two courses at the Cardinal Center. The Red course features both a woodlot and farm fields with rows of crops and buildings in the distance as the background. The Blue course is in the field and is flatter, marked by rows of crops and blue skies. Each course has its own personality and the staff at Cardinal Center took full advantage of those differences to set two equally challenging courses.



The Cardinal Center team mixed in some tower target; to increase the level of challenge on both courses but were utilized more on the Blue course.

While the Sporting Clays Championship is an NSCA registered event, class awards (Master, AA, A, etc.) are not presented at this event. Instead, SCTP shooters are classified in several age divisions: Rookie (5th grade and under); Intermediate/Entry Level (grades six to eight in their first year); Intermediate/Advanced (grades seven and eight); Junior Varsity (grades nine to 12 in their first year); Varsity (grades 10 to 12 and Collegiate). Both individual and squad awards are presented to the shooters in each Division.

Two new awards categories were added to the Sporting Clays competition this year: Team Awards and High School Team Awards. The Team Awards were presented in two categories: Intermediate Division (anyone shooting in Rookie/IE/IA categories) and Senior Division (anyone shooting in the JV or Varsity categories). The scores of a team's top three athletes in each division were combined to determine the winners in each category.

In the High School Team Category, the top three athletes from a team who attend the same high school were combined to determine the winners in this new category.

### Results

At the SCTP Nationals, squads are comprised of three shooters for a total of 600 targets. In the Rookie Division, a squad from McKenzie Shooting Sports of Tennessee won the Championship crown with a combined score of 433. Just six targets behind them was a squad from The Farm in Indiana with a score of 427.

Teams from Georgia dominated the Sporting Clays competition. They claimed honors in the Intermediate/Entry Level Division, the Intermediate/Advanced Division, the Junior Varsity Division and the Varsity Division. In the Intermediate/Entry Level Division, the Gator Creek Young Guns swept the top spots. One squad took the Championship with a 475 and a second squad from their team were the runners-up with 474.

In the Intermediate/Advanced Division, the Forest City Juniors again claimed the Championship crown by breaking 519. The runners-up were a squad from the Lake Oconee Shotgun Club who broke 509. The Forest City Juniors continued to claim championship

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honors in the Junior Varsity Division. Their squad broke 537 to claim the crown. Just 15 targets behind them, a squad from the Central Georgia Elite Shooters came in as runners-up.

The Varsity division was once again ruled by shooters from the Forest City Juniors team. They claimed the Championship trophy by breaking 567. Close on their heels was a squad from the Etowah Valley Mambas who were named runners-up with a score of 560.

You couldn't keep squads from the Forest City Juniors team off the Sporting Clays podium. They also claimed top Collegiate honors in the SCTP National Championships with a score of 564. The runner-up trophy was awarded to a collegiate squad from the University of Tennessee Knoxville Clay Target Club who broke 556.



### Team Awards

Awards were presented in two team divisions: Intermediate (Rookie/IE/A) and Senior (JV/Varsity). Scores for the top three athletes from each team were used to determine rankings in these new divisions. The team from the Henry County No Fly Zone of Tennessee took home the Championship trophy for the Intermediate Division with a score of 533. Right behind them was a team from the Central Penn Crushers with a 528. Winning teams in the Senior Division were both from Georgia with the championship team from Forest City Juniors with a combined score of 567 and the runner-up was a team from the Lake Oconee Shotgun Team with a score of 564. ➤



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**74.2%** of Wildlife Restoration Act funding comes from non-hunting sources



**60%** of youth shooters participate in hunting or conservation activities



**4.5 MILLION** youth target shooters in the US, aged 6-18



# R3 IMPACT





**\$1.8 BILLION** spent by youth target shooters per year on firearms, ammo & accessories

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### High School Teams

Another new award category this year was the High School Teams Awards. Once again, teams from Forest City Juniors dominated the awards podium. In first place were three shooters who all attend Benedictine Military School and broke a combined score of 559. Runner-up was a Forest City Juniors team of students who all attend Savannah Country Day School. They broke a combined score of 555.

### Individual Awards

In the Rookie Division, the men's champion was Parker Ortowski who shoots for the Fort Worth County Day School in Texas (179). The women's champion in the Rookie Division was Peyton Hilliard of the Tennessee-based McKenzie Shooting Sports (159).

The men's champion in the Intermediate/Entry Level Division was Dalton Bruhhorst of the Pella Shooters Club in Iowa (175). The ladies' champion in this division was Morgan Rae Walker of the Georgia-based Gator Creek Young Guns (170).

The Intermediate/Advanced men's champion was Grant Glossner from the Central Penn Crushers team out of Pennsylvania (192). The ladies' champion in the Intermediate/Advanced Division was Taylor Hilliard from McKenzie Shooting Sports of Tennessee (177).

The Junior Varsity Division men's champion Cason Holder of the Camel City Clays team from North Carolina (185). Ladies' champion in the Junior Varsity Division was Brylee Pippin of Florida who shoots on the Young Guns at Quail Creek team (189).

The Varsity Division Men's Champion was Joseph Prentovich of the Buckeye Chippewa Trapshooting Team in Ohio (193). The ladies' champion, for the second year in a row, was Ann Weathers Blankenship of the Featherhorn Young Guns from South Carolina (192).

The top collegiate shooters at the event were both from Tennessee: Dalton Berry, from Tennessee, who shoots for the HSSC Crush team (197) for the men, and Ashley Sellers from the William Eloquent Shooting Team (185) for the women. HOA among all the shooters was Dalton Berry of Tennessee who shoots for the HSSC Crush team. The Collegiate Division shooter broke 197/200.

In what was a tight competition, runner-up Bradlan McDonald of the Gator Creek Young Guns in Georgia broke a 196. He is also a Collegiate Division shooter. Third place went to Joseph Prentovich of the Buckeye Chippewa Trapshooting Team in Ohio who is a Senior/Varsity shooter. He broke a 193/200. In addition to third place HOA for Sporting Clays, Prentovich took individual and squad HOA honors in the Bunker Trap competition at the SCTP Nationals.

### Looking Forward to Next Year

The SCTP National Championships continue to grow each year and plans are already underway for the 2025 event, which will again be held at the Cardinal Center from July 8-19. Additionally, collegiate shooters will have an opportunity to compete in the 2025 Collegiate Clay Target Championships in March next year. The championships, held in conjunction with the ACUL will take place at the National Shooting Complex in Texas from March 16-22.





**YOUTH ESSAY** By Macie Krenak

## A Country Girl Finds Her Place in the Suburbs

Ever since I was a kid, I've always loved going to my Gramp's place. He lives on several acres so it's the perfect place to enjoy my favorite outdoor activities. From fishing to hunting dove and deer, to shooting rifles and pistols at targets to see who's the best shot. It's where my love for the outdoors took root and where my love for shooting started.

Being a country girl living in the suburbs, I never imagined I'd find a place to be able to pursue my passion for shooting. But then in 5th grade, I heard about the Allen Eagle Competitive Shooting Team, a school sponsored program. My parents and I started looking into it and found out

that you could join the team in sixth grade, and that's exactly what I did. When I went to my first team practice, and I hit my first trap targets, I knew shooting was a sport I wanted to pursue. I had an amazing first year making friendships and getting to know everything I could about this sport.

I then started to venture out from the monthly SCTP shoots and started competing in NSCA, NSSA and 4H. I am so glad I started shooting in multiple programs because it has helped me grow and mature as an athlete, by teaching me life lessons and self-discipline. By participating in these various programs, I have found different perspectives on shooting that make me want to work to improve every day.

I've encountered a lot of great people through this sport. I have also been blessed with an amazing coach who helps me with my mental game, my technical work and is always push-

ing me to be the best I can be.

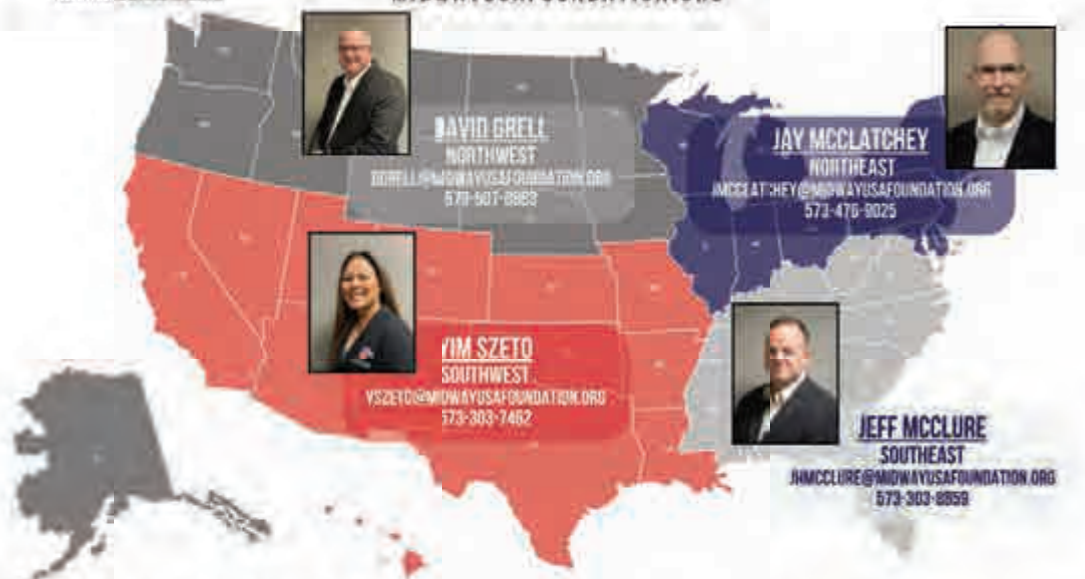
For me, shooting is more than just a sport I do for fun. While it is certainly fun, it's also something I want to continue doing for the rest of my life. I have many goals and aspirations I want to achieve in this sport, and I love that there are opportunities for all ages.

As I enter my freshman year of high school, I can't wait to see what the next four years have in store for me as I continue to shoot SCTP, NSCA, NSSA, 4H and other events. I look forward to growing as a shooter and hope to be lucky enough to shoot for a college team someday. Through it all though, I really want to be a positive role model for others coming into this sport. I want people to appreciate and love the sport as much as I do. I'm so blessed to have found a sport I love doing and can see myself doing for the rest of my life. 🙌





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# the magical

**i**t's September 14th, 2024, and the eve of another grouse and woodcock season opener is upon us. The earliest hint of color is just beginning to grace the forest with tints of orange and red. Some early mornings have that crisp smell of fall, exciting the senses and fueling the thoughts of what is to come. The sun has just peeked over the eastern horizon and the light first approaches like a welcomed slow avalanche of life. A flight of Blue-winged teal buzzes the shoreline audibly cutting the air with their wings, dipping and turning with the precision and aerodynamic capability an F-22 Raptor pilot could only dream of. Wood ducks whistle a sitting tune, then chuckle while frolicking and splashing about and feasting on this bountiful crop of acorns. As the day progresses, the Canada geese arise from their slumber and begin to move. Distant honks and cackles become louder until the shadow of a perfectly formed "V" moves across the ground, making one instinctually look to the sky. While some consider the fall a prelude to the season of hibernation, those who truly understand nature recognize it as a season of life. >







# season

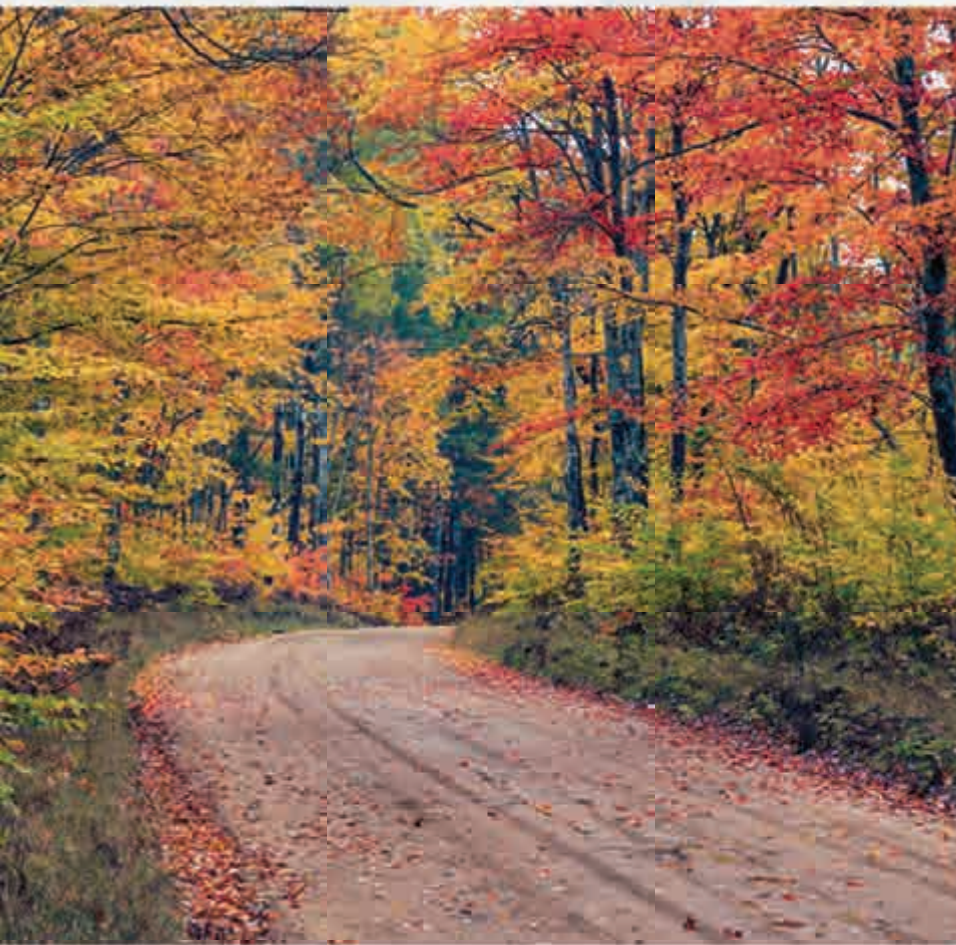
BY MATTHEW GAY



**Our four-legged hunting companion nestles his nose into position. This means without equivocation, “pet me now, for I will brave to wilds and find birds for you tomorrow.”**







t

his is the season which makes the new life of spring possible. The great migration not only preserves those who make this annual pilgrimage, it serves to supply hundreds of species with sustenance. This is the mating season for wild cervids which replenishes the herd and creates a surplus population which offers the perfect protein and nourishment to many species, including humans. This is the time when the forest and wetlands are alive with activity as resident species prepare for the winter season. For the hunter conservationist, this is the grandest time of the year to be alive. You can feel it in your soul.



**W**e have prepared, trained and conditioned both ourselves and our dogs for the traditional 78-degree weather which will greet us tomorrow. We've been to the range in order to hone our shotgun pointing skills and we are poised to make this season the greatest yet. Our gear is prepared, packed and ready to deploy. Our bird dogs are breasting with anticipation, while dreaming of endless coverts from which to roam. As we quietly sit at camp and ponder the happenings of tomorrow, our four-legged hunting companion nestles his nose into position, us springer owners call it the "springer nudge." This means without equivocation, "pet me now, for I will brave to wilds and find birds for you tomorrow." ►




**L**ong after our furry companion has drifted off to sleep, we find ourselves in a mild state of contemplative daydreaming, enveloped by our imagination and recourting opening days of past seasons. We revisit our preparation one piece at a time. Are we truly ready? Have we done everything possible to make this truly the best season yet? While unending analysis of one's preparations can be considered compulsive in some instances, for the grouse hunter... it's simply normal. Our ultimate performance will be a culmination of the total sum invested in our preparation.

**a**s we drift off to sleep, we think of hunting dogs, past, friends who have gone to the great covert in the sky and those who can no longer join us for the trek through the alders. We silently acknowledge our humble appreciation for finding and embracing this upland life we live. Our thoughts move to prospective hunting grounds and the weather, as our dreams this night reverberate with the thunder of wings from the king of gamebirds, exploding from their hide. When we awake to the fragrance of coffee permeating the air inside the cabin and light creeping through the windowpanes, it all begins anew. The magical season we eagerly await all year...opening day. 🦌







**When we awake to the  
fragrance of coffee  
permeating the air inside the  
cabin and light creeping through the  
windowpanes, it all begins anew.**





# ORION OUTDOORS CO

*Guided by the legend of Orion, the hunter in the stars, Orion Outdoors Company is driven by a passion for elevating your outdoor experience. Just as Orion's constellation has led explorers for generations, we are here to guide you toward success in the field and on the range. Your time outdoors is precious, which is why we provide premium products to enrich every adventure. Whether it's the perfect feel of a finely-crafted shotgun or gear that keeps you focused on the moment, our goal is to ensure your time outdoors is filled with memories that will last a lifetime.*

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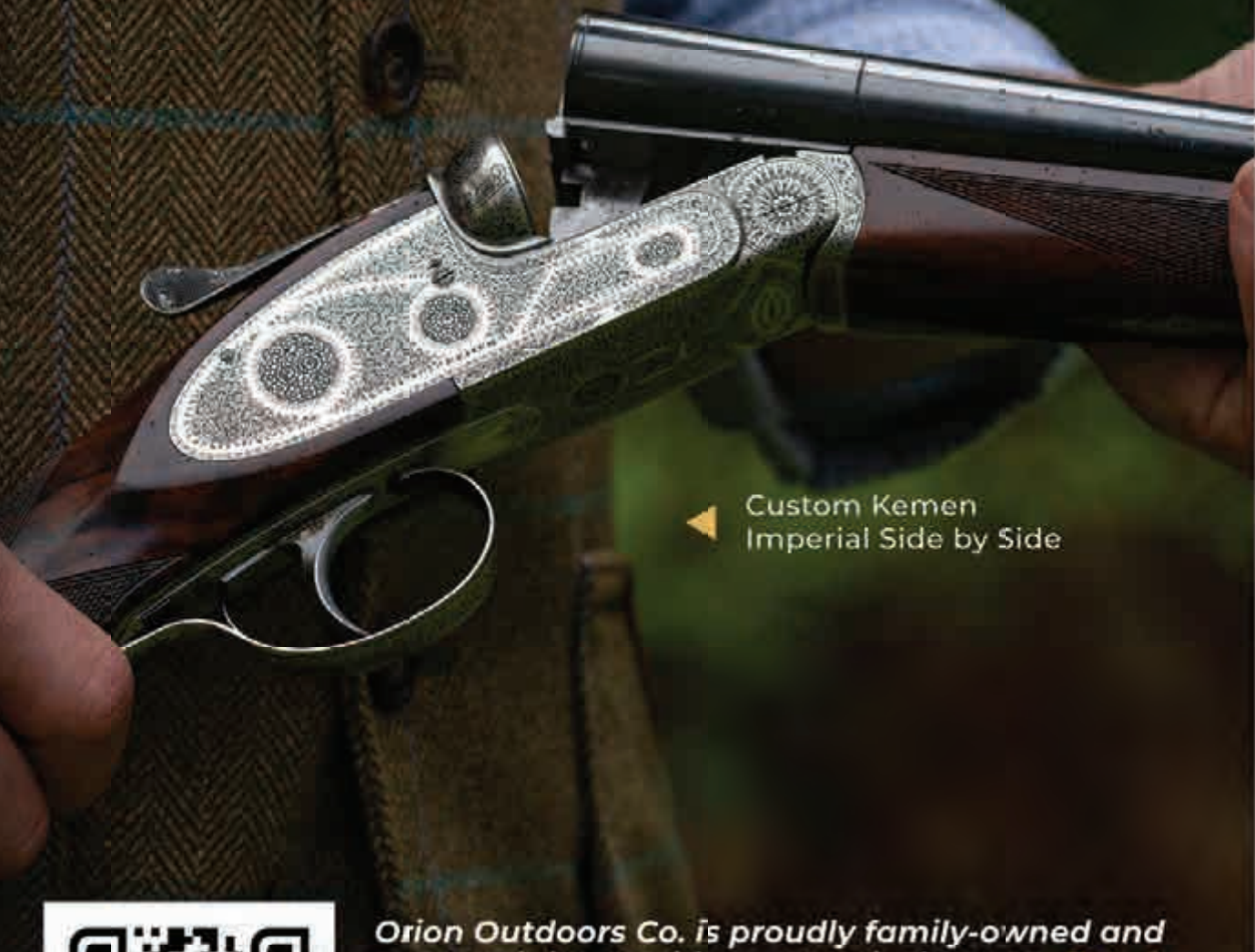


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*Orion Outdoors Co. is proudly family-owned and operated by world-renowned shooters **Pat & Drew Lieske**. With over 50 years of expertise, we bring our passion and experience to every sale!*



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Orion Outdoors Company -  
A Lieske Family

# Masterpiece of Dual Inspiration

By Mark Fitzpatrick

Among nature's many masterpieces, the concept of family may be the most important. Families are the bonds reminding us of yesterday, providing strength and support today, and giving us hope for tomorrow. Throughout history these bonds of strength originally known as tribes kept ancient Romans, indigenous Indians, the Germanic and Celtic tribes of Europe, and the Clans of Scotland unified, loyal and purposed. This unifying social division of family is still the foundation of America.

Modern records support Americans are largely the same DNA as our forefathers. According to the 2000 census, the most common heritage of modern Americans remains Irish and German by a significant margin to all other ancestries now occupying America. In other words, the Celtic and Germanic tribes of yesteryear still dominate our American DNA.

Sacrifices made for family are the seeds of a resilient and thriving future. We need look no further than the role of the family and specifically the American family which provided the tenacity and teamwork to break away from England, tame the new wilderness, transform it into the new world, exercise Manifest Destiny and unite America from coast-to-coast. ➤



## So much of what is best in America is historically bound up in our love of family.

It remains the measure of our stability because it measures our sense of loyalty. Winston Churchill famously said, "There is no doubt, it is around the family and the home that all the greatest virtues, the most dominating virtues of the human condition, are created, strengthened and maintained." Echoing Churchill, Pope John XXIII said it most succinctly, "The family is the first essential cell of human society." By putting family first, we create a foundation supporting the dreams and aspirations of generations to come. When we put family first, as the Lieske family does, we become the architects of a masterpiece transcending time. It is with great honor I introduce Pat and Drew Lieske: Michigan's First Sporting Family.

### A FAMILY AFFAIR

Working seamlessly as a family-oriented father and son team, Orion Outdoors Company is a culmination of over 50 years of building an iconic reputation and brand in the shooting sports industry. Certainly, universally known and deeply involved in their local community and the greater southeastern Michigan community, the Lieske family is also synonymous with the sporting life throughout the state of Michigan and equally important, the nation. Highly decorated, both Pat and Drew share the rare and coveted distinction of highly decorated status on a National and Collegiate level.

World and National podium finishes, and tireless industry service make the Lieske Family not only a family-owned business but also a world and nationally revered sporting family brand without equal. As the only father and son team to sit on both the National and State of Michigan Board of Directors for the Sporting Clays Association, this father and son dynamic duo have worked relentlessly to guide and improve the world of sporting clays for generations to come. Is it any surprise, the company brand known as Orion Outdoors Company bears such close resemblance to the mighty hunting god Orion, their small-town roots in Orion Township and the importance of family first.

### WHY ORION OUTDOORS COMPANY?

The Orion Outdoors Company reflects the Lieske family's connection to the outdoors, deep local roots, and faith in Christ's guidance. Headquartered in Orion, Michigan, a place where natural beauty and outdoor adventure thrive, Orion

Outdoors Company carries both the legacy of the company's hometown and the enduring traditions of outdoor sportsmanship and hunting. For the Lieske family, the name "Orion" represents more than just a geographical connection; it's a nod to the rich heritage passed down through our family and generations of hunters across America. Though rooted in mythology, where Orion is known as a legendary hunter, we see Orion symbolizing something deeper.



Just as the constellation has guided explorers and adventurers for centuries, the Lieske family believes their path is guided by Christian faith, purpose, and commitment to serving others. At Orion Outdoors Company, the Lieske family is driven by a passion for the outdoors and a dedication to craftsmanship, integrity, and excellence. Orion Outdoors Company is more than just a name, it's a symbol of the Lieske family's connection to tradition; a reflection of Lieske family values, and a promise to equip future generations of outdoorsmen with the finest gear.

The Lieske family believes in honoring legacy while charting the future, ensuring every offering supports hunters and outdoor enthusiasts during their own journeys. This is the Lieske family mission; to serve, to provide, and to uphold the spirit of adventure with purpose and respect for the world.

### THE HISTORY

Let's turn back the clock and explore the humble, small-town roots of the Lieske family living in the bucolic simplicity of rural Davison, Michigan which inspired the Lieske family to storied heights. Father Pat, always a sensible and practical









**Pat and Drew benefit from a God-given computer-like mind which views the world through a mathematical lens. Certainly, handy in business, but who knew Pat would design a world-class sporting clay methodology using his mathematical gifts which would crown him a National Champion.**







man applied his natural gifts for understanding and applying order to the world to pursue a Bachelor of Business and Finance degree from the prestigious business school at University of Michigan. Five years with a CPA firm convinced Pat he had bigger dreams than would be realized at his CPA desk.

Pat and Drew benefit from a God-given computer-like mind which views the world through a mathematical lens. Certainly, handy in business, but who knew Pat would design a world-class sporting clay methodology using his mathematical gifts which would crown him a National Champion. Son Drew would also apply his mathematical gifts to achieve Valedictorian status in high school, and a BS in Financial Management and Mathematics with Magna Cum Laude Honors and Kappa Mu Epsilon Mathematics Honors. All this while competing nationally as a Team Captain, garnering 8-time NSCA All-American status, 2-time NSCA U.S. Team status and the sole distinction of being crowned the Individual National Champion in 2017. Can you say Einstein with a shotgun?

Hard to imagine: Drew made time for The Kids & Clays® Foundation, an organization, directed by shooting sports enthusiasts, committed to supporting Ronald McDonald House. The foundation has helped net over \$18 million for Ronald McDonald House Charities. Perhaps over-achiever is equally appropriate.

Today, Drew continues to march relentlessly forward, cementing his bond to the love of his life, Allie. Now feeling more complete as a couple, Drew and Allie bring a young son into the world and dub him, Brady. The family now in place, Drew quickens his work pace by expanding their existing businesses, while simultaneously building new businesses with his father, Pat.

As we turn the clock back to this period in Pat's life, we see Pat married to his blushing bride Karen, their first-born Drew still crawling and soon to walk. Pat decides his passion is Karen, Drew and sporting clays...in that order. Ditching the CPA firm, Pat backfills his lost income by giving sporting clay lessons using his mathematically based shooting approach. It catches fire and soon Pat has a calendar of steady clients serviced mostly at the local hunting club but needs a proper clay ground to take his game and his client's game to the next level.

#### **MICHIGAN SHOOTING CENTERS IS BORN**

Enter the Michigan Department of Natural Resources RFP for a new concessionaire for the existing Island Lake Shooting Range in Brighton, Michigan. Pat knew this would be a perfect canvass to create an exemplary sporting clay experience for this up-and-coming sport of sporting clays. As a hands-on operator, Pat worked with friends willing to assist in designing and constructing a proper clay ground. The DNR watched closely as Pat evolved the Island Lake Shooting Range into something the DNR never experienced before. Impressed with Pat's command of business and sporting clays, the DNR awarded Pat a twenty-year concession for not only Island Lake Shooting Range in Brighton, Michigan but also a twenty-year concession for Bald Mountain Shooting Range in Lake Orion, Michigan.

Today, Southeast Michigan is blessed with some of the finest sporting clay venues in the United States due to the leadership and creativity of the Lieske family blazing an inspiring trail, blueprinting a business model for other sporting entrepreneurs to follow. Pat made his most inspiring moves at the birth of his first son, Drew and





Drew is making a similar push to establish a larger and more diverse foundation for the Lieske family to launch new generations of Lieske into the sporting life upon his marriage to Allie and the recent birth of his first son, Brady. You are now immersed in the tale of Michigan's First Family of Sporting.

#### ORION OUTDOORS

I have known the Lieske family for decades and watched their operations grow and prosper. My sporting clay instruction, started by Pat decades ago, is now continued by his son Drew. The former assembly space at Bald Mountain is now transformed into a fully stocked gun room brimming with the world's finest firearms. Their almost limitless collection of offerings includes stunning pieces from Kamen, Caesar Guerini, Beretta, Browning, Rizzini, Nighthawk Custom, Cosmi and Cabot Custom pistols...just to name a few...over 700 guns at your fingertips and an adjacent gun range for pistol, rifle and sporting clays offering a full menu of introductory, intermediate and world-class targets. Lieske's other operation, Island Lake in Brighton, also offers vast acreage and a similar high-quality experience for pistol, rifle, and three sporting clay courses. Island Lake also offers multiple skeet and trap venues.

A full complement of annual events keeps both Bald Mountain and Island Lake bustling with sporting clay competitors, leagues, charity events, corporate outings and special sporting weekends. The Lieske family and Bald Mountain regularly host the Michigan Sporting Clay Championship, the Great Lakes Championship and in 2017 hosted the prestigious U.S. FITASC Grand Prix, setting a new standard for world-class targets, shooter throughput and user-friendly shooter interactions. Pat Lieske remains a member of the NSCA Super Squad and holds important and influential roles within the NSCA national committee.

#### FORWARD MOMENTUM

As you have likely surmised, the Lieske Family is constantly moving forward. In the last few years, Drew has resurrected the presence of Kamen shotguns in America with the formation of Kamen USA. Kamen is a premium sporting gun manufacturer based in Spain that produces some of the world's most coveted shotguns. I shot the Kamen sporting and hunting premium lineup of shotguns with Pat and Drew at the Bald Mountain 5-Stand venue during Orion Sporting Weekend in August and the guns felt as familiar and comfortable as my own. If the opportunity arises, I encourage you to road test Kamen. I think you will be pleasantly surprised.

I have purchased sporting clay and hunting shotguns from Orion Outdoors and received exceptional full service and enjoyed an inventory which makes other gun purveyors blush. Orion Outdoors Company has over 500 5-Star recommendations and provides gun fitting, custom stock building, gun smithing, and world-class shotgun instruction. The Orion Outdoors Company buying experience is user friendly and comfortable whether you are a first-time buyer or a buyer who just needs one more gun in your collection.

The Lieske family is pleased to announce, Orion Outdoors Company is expanding its retail operations to include a new 5,000 square foot satellite store on M-24 in Lake Orion, Michigan. Imagine 5,000 additional square feet of in-hand inventory to shoulder, balance and admire. The new facility is currently under construction, but we should enjoy a grand opening soon...think hunting season or early Christmas. Who doesn't need a new Grouse, Woodcock or Duck gun under the tree and some new hunting togs to keep you warm and dry.

The Lieske's have worked hard to build a family-owned business, keeping family-first at the core of everything. Despite their unparalleled successes in family, sport and business, the Lieske family is just a humble, hard-working family enjoying special gifts bestowed









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by God. If you study the Lieske family and the relationship between Pat and Drew you can plainly see a life dedicated to family; a beautiful tapestry woven with memories, laughter, and love. In a world full of distractions, putting family-first is the compass guiding the Lieske family toward true fulfillment. The sacrifices made for the Lieske family are the seeds of a resilient and thriving family future. In a family-owned business, putting family-first means nurturing the roots allowing the family to grow and flourish, both individually and collectively. To love your family deeply and fiercely is to invest in a legacy of kindness, resilience, and unity echoing through time.

**The sacrifices made for the Lieske family are the seeds of a resilient and thriving family future. In a family-owned business, putting family first means nurturing the roots allowing the family to grow and flourish, both individually and collectively.**



So, the next time you look into the night sky and Orion's Belt shines brighter than all else, think about the Lieske family as Michigan's First Sporting Family; like Orion seemingly able to walk on waves, yet raised in small town USA, enjoying a good hunt, building a business and still putting their pants on one leg at a time, just like the rest of us.

The famous educator and author, Stephen Covey who brought the world *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People* once said, "Begin with the End in Mind" So, let's finish this insightful tale where we began... "among nature's many masterpieces, the concept of Family is the most important... the family is the first essential cell of human society."

Orion Outdoors Company and the Lieske family... inspired by the heavens... grounded by nature. 🏹

For further details on Orion Outdoors Company and to explore their offerings, visit [www.outdoorscompany.com](http://www.outdoorscompany.com) or reach out directly at 248-564-3640 to speak with a member of the Orion team.™



**ORION  
OUTDOORS CO**



Society of American Side by Side Shotgun  
**Northern Michigan**

# Fun Shoot





SASSS was created to promote and preserve the heritage of the American side by side shotgun in the hunting and sporting realm. A part of this organization's mission is to promote events and shoots for those individuals who are fond of the old school horizontal barrels. With that in mind, SASSS has been quite successful at holding events around the state of Michigan and elsewhere. On August 10th, SASSS held their northern Michigan fun shoot.











While intermittent rain was on tap for the day, the hardy side-by-side aficionados would not be dissuaded.

**Targets were set to challenge the shooters while maintaining a level of fun for all gauges and levels of skill.**

**T**his event drew a crowd of shooters to one of the most beautiful sporting clays courses in the state. The Lewiston Sportsmen's League is built on a former skiing facility. The course winds around the side of this ski hill and offers breathtaking views for miles. Although a golf cart is recommended for events at this club, many walked the course with their side-by-side shotgun in hand in a celebration of our American shotgunning and firearms manufacturing heritage.

Organizations and vendors were set up in the pavilion with both merchandise and programs, pertinent to SASSS members. A special thanks goes out to the sponsors and donors who provide merchandise to SASSS at these events: Dickinson Arms, Will Brothers Restoration, All Marine and Storage and the Upland Habitat Conservancy.

While a little intermittent rain was on tap for the day, the hardy side-by-side aficionados would not be dissuaded. Targets were set to challenge the shooters while maintaining a level of fun for all gauges and levels of skill. After all the smoke had cleared, David Olshansky took the high overall honors with a great performance. Karen Chupa-Brueggeman and Heather Lewis ended their event tied for first place lady honors in the Annie Oakley division. The tiebreaking long run calculation favored Karen, earning her the Annie Oakley trophy. SASSS' very own small gauge devotee, Dean Hepp earned the Tiny Gun champion trophy with his .410. Congratulations to the "Son of 67 Gauge." ➤





After the shooting had concluded, participants gathered at the pavilion for the presentation of awards and fellowship amongst like-minded folks. Many door prizes were given out via random drawing and it appeared everyone went home with something. While there has always been a loyal following of side-by-side enthusiasts travelling around the country and participating in these types of events, there has been a significant amount of growth amongst the ranks of shooters, specifically seeking out these kinds of shoots. A portion of this growth can be attributed to the SASSS organization and their pure love of all things side-by-side.

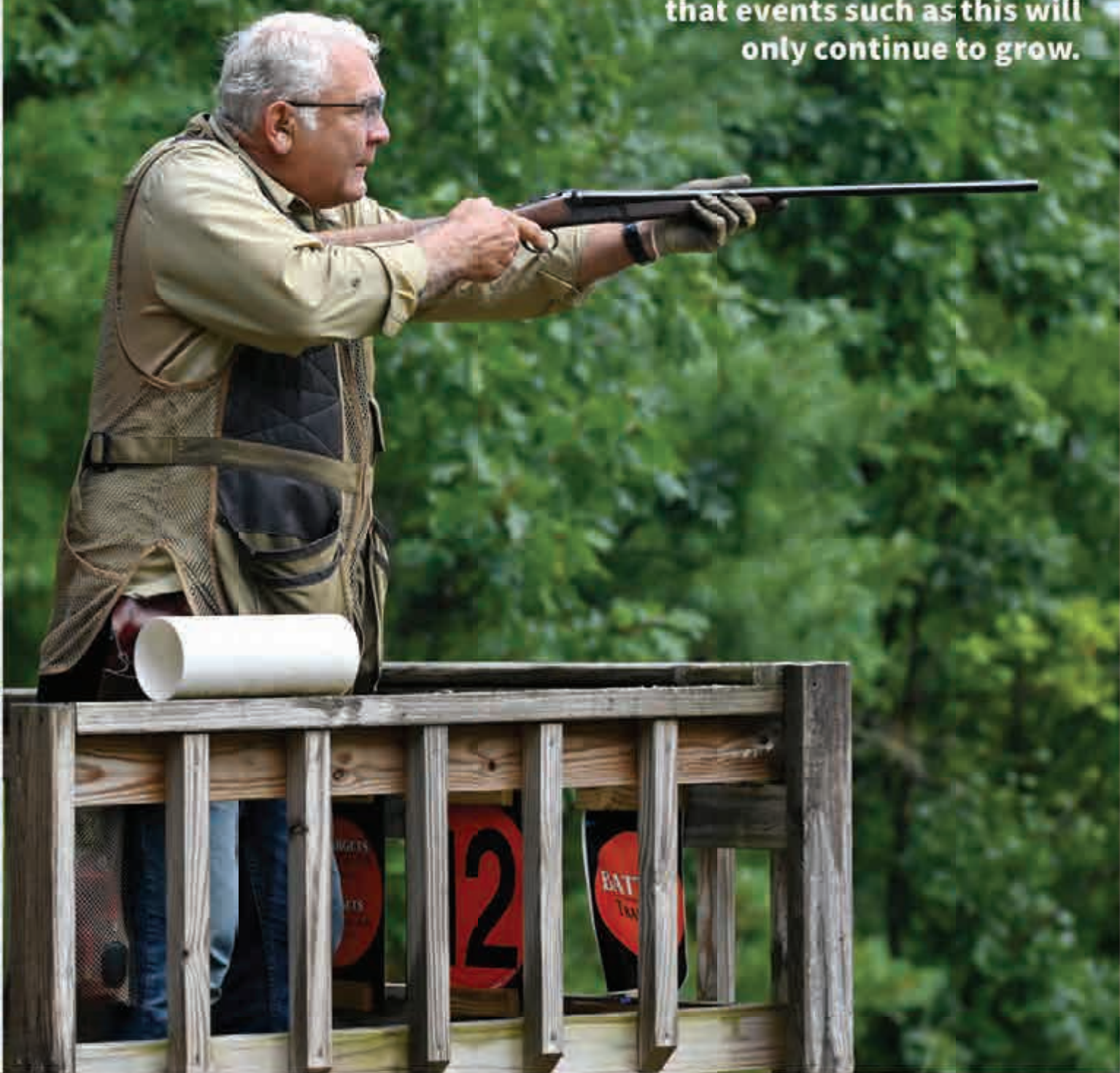
With a big following in Michigan, centered around the culture of grouse and woodcock hunting in the Northwoods, the anticipation is that events such as this will only continue to grow. The Society of the American Side-by-Side Shotgun has a very active Facebook page with great information, pictures, event announcements and opportunities to interact with other loyal side-by-side shooters. From hunting to gun restoration, if you have a question about the sport or equipment, chances are there is a SASSS member with the answer. Many annual events are announced on the page along with advice and discussion from folks with cumulatively hundreds of years of experience with classic scatterguns.

To get in on the action and wonderful information from SASSS members join their Facebook page and enjoy the great folks who keep this sport alive. Many events have been planned and will be announced for SASSS members along with wonderful pictures of SASSS members' adventures afield this season. Finally, a big thank you goes out to the Lewiston Sportsmen's League for making this event possible. We look forward to seeing you all next year. Good luck to all SASSS members as they venture to the prairies, wetlands and Northwoods this season. 🍷





**With a big following in Michigan**  
centered around the culture of grouse  
and woodcock hunting in the  
Northwoods, **the anticipation is**  
**that events such as this will**  
**only continue to grow.**









# Alamo Sporting Arms

**T**here are multiple high-quality manufacturers of sporting and field arms on the market offered by several different retailers. Its important to note that not all of these retailers are created equal. Some will make the sale and wish you well without offering any kind of fitting or customization services, while others sub the services out to manufacturers or firms with the expertise to service firearms effectively. Then you have the full service, recognized experts who will not only provide design, customization and maintenance/repair services, they consider their customers family.

Mike and Pam Young have spent more than a combined five decades in the shooting sports world. Mike started his career training with the finest gunmakers from across the globe. When Mike met Pam, he was working for Krieghoff International as a master gunsmith and having earned universal recognition as a true expert with the very finest of bespoke firearms. Pam entered this world as a result of her love for spending time with Mike and embraced the sporting lifestyle in every aspect.

Shortly after they married, Mike and Pam had the opportunity to relocate to Florida and work for another dealer in fine firearms. During this time, Mike used his great skill to design, craft and repair sporting arms from around the country. Simultaneously, Pam honed her industry and customer relations skills, ascending to the post of sales manager. This 14-year stretch in Florida further cemented Mike's standing in the industry while concurrently building Pam's reputation as an expert in customer experience and sales.



2008 was a pivotal year for this industrious couple. The opportunity to purchase Alamo Sporting Arms presented itself and Mike and Pam took the leap, allowing them to pilot their own ship and build on their already prominent reputation in the industry. With fresh ideas, hard work and unending determination, they built Alamo into one of the largest Krieghoff and Blaser dealers in the nation.

Under the guidance of Mike and Pam, Alamo Sporting Arms has achieved a exceptional level of prominence within the industry. They have achieved this status by committing themselves to the highest standards of honesty and dependability.

Pam's creative vision combined with Mike's profound command of all things technical, as it relates to the development and service of fine sporting arms, has led to Alamo being recognized by both Krieghoff and Blaser as a factory authorized service center. This makes Alamo Sporting Arms one of only two independent shops in the world with this prestigious dual distinction. ➤





The owners of Alamo Sporting Arms have clearly proven that their driving company ethos is anchored in the delivery of exquisite luxury sporting firearms and accessories to discerning customers. They take a hands-on approach with each client to ensure their experience is personal and uniquely tailored.

Recognizing a need to offer bespoke field shotguns for their customers, Mike and Pam recently added the Luciano Bosis line to the Alamo family of brands. This addition gives Alamo's customers the opportunity to design, build and bring their dream sporting shotgun to fruition. Luciano Bosis prides itself on innovation, beauty and reliability, making each and every gun by hand. Such attention to detail and exceptional customer experience makes Bosis a perfect fit for Alamo Sporting Arms.

Pam clearly articulated the Alamo philosophy on client service. She shared that their clients are more family than customers. She is quoted as saying, "when you buy from Alamo Sporting Arms you are buying from us, Mike and Pam Young, nobody else. This isn't just our livelihood, it's our lifestyle." Pam shared that she enjoys the custom engraved projects the most. She takes great pride and pleasure out of seeing a project progress through to completion. It all starts with an idea or concept and at times just hand sketches on paper. Mike and Pam then provide their expertise to ensure the customer receives precisely what they had envisioned. Mike's imagination for one-of-a-kind engraving is second to none.



His resume of concepts which have been turned into functional works of art is vast. In recent memory, the "Element of Time" Krieghoff as well as the 2015 Gun of the Year "The Alamo," both came from the mind of Mike Young. In 2018 Mike conceived another genius gun of the year for Krieghoff, the "Da Vinci." With such a pedigree and history for brilliant designs, it's no wonder clients flock to Alamo for their most special projects. Mike and Pam hold a great passion and special place in their heart for these modern firearms which are as much at home in the Smithsonian as they are in the field.

The owners of Alamo Sporting Arms have clearly proven that their driving company ethos is anchored in the delivery of exquisite luxury sporting firearms and accessories to discerning customers. They take a hands-on approach with each client to ensure their design and acquisition experience is personal and uniquely tailored. Alamo has a store front located in Boerne, Texas where the hours are by appointment only. This allows the Alamo team to focus 100 percent of their skill on the individual client. Mike's realm is at the custom shop, located on 24 acres where everything from gunsmithing to conceptual art occurs. When travelling to various sporting clay, skeet







and trap tournaments around the country, they bring a custom trailer specifically built for mobile gunsmithing. This allows them to fully support their existing clients and meet new ones.

Efficiency is paramount for both Mike and Pam. The concept of prompt and precise service is how they have built the reputation they hold. Mike has been quoted as saying that when a gun comes in for service, he strives to ensure that "UPS has the firearm in their custody longer than Alamo does." Such a level of service is unique and uncommon in the modern day. Mike and Pam take great pride in Alamo with the personal touch that keeps clients coming back time and time again. 🐾

For those fortunate enough to be attending the 2024 National Sporting Clays Association National Championship, you can find Alamo Sporting Arms in their store on vendor row. To browse their current inventory of fine firearms and optics, or to schedule an appointment to start designing the bespoke firearm of your dreams, visit their website at: [www.alamosportingarms.com](http://www.alamosportingarms.com)








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A photograph of a quail, likely a Gambel's quail, standing in a field of tall, dry grass. The quail has a distinctive black and white striped head, a large eye, and a body covered in mottled brown and white feathers. It is facing left, and its long, thin legs are visible. The background is a dense field of similar grass, creating a natural, outdoor setting.

**THE SPORTING LIFE**

**LADY SHOOTER**  
*Life Styles*




# THE SOUTHERN TRAPPER

The Southern Trapper is a Charleston, South Carolina purveyor of fine leather and alligator skin holsters, belts, wallets and purses. Their products and dedication to craftsmanship distinguishes them from other leather crafters.



**H**aving grown up on 480 acres enjoying the outdoors hunting and fishing, owner Dane Schemel understood conservation and did not believe that commercially sourced leather and alligator hides were the way he wanted to go. All Southern Trapper's alligator hides are sustainably sourced and humanely harvested through national wildlife programs. All hides are limited to only wild harvested animals, which means that each one has a specific look and feel like no others. Each item is handmade by skilled craftsmen, not stamped on a production line, adding to the individuality and making their products items of generational quality.

The Southern Trapper impressed me with their variety of items, some out of the ordinary like a limited-edition alligator wrapped rifle or shotgun. The Southern Trapper also has a wide variety of women's purses as well as custom pistol grips. All their orders are shipped in their own Southern Trapper delivery box and felt storage bag. — *By John Caffey* 

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## Rizzini BR240 Cole Special

### SPECIFICATIONS

- MODEL: RIZZINI BR240 COLE SPECIAL
- GAUGE: 12 GAUGE (30 GAUGE AND TURKEY SET AVAILABLE)
- BARRELS: 32" (TESTED) (30" AND 34" AVAILABLE)
- LENGTH: 14.75" (TRIGGER HOLE TO MOUTH) FOR GRIP LENGTH
- DAC: 1 1/2" (AS TESTED) (AVAILABLE)
- OAL: 22.5" (AS TESTED)
- WEIGHT: 8 LBS. 11 OZ.
- CHOKES: 5 - COLE PRECISION KILN DRIED EXTENDED (CYL, IC, M, BL, T)
- SUGGESTED RETAIL: STARTING AT \$5100.00
- RIZZINI LIMITED LIFETIME WARRANTY
- COLE'S GUNSMITHING IS A RIZZINI WARRANTY SERVICE CENTER

The BR 240 Cole Special comes stashed in a high-quality break-down ABS case marked with the Rizzini logo and fitted for perfect protection during transport. The receiver and barrel set are further protected by their own Rizzini socks and secured in place. This shotgun is the culmination of much research and development in association with Rich Cole of Cole's Gunsmithing. The stock measurements are per Rich's design parameters and specifically tailored to the modern American shotgunner. When pulling the receiver from its sock, the engraving in gold is starkly contrasted by the high gloss blackened base of the receiver. The Turkish walnut stock was beautifully figured and very well executed with wonderful checkering and very clean lines. The accessories compartment held the five extended choke tubes, a choke tube wrench, and a manual with warranty card.

### The Stock

As mentioned above, the stock on the BR240 is specifically designed with modern

measurements. It features a longer length of pull, slightly increased pitch, a very comfortable right-handed palm swell (left-handed stocks available) and a solid adjustable comb (as an option). The checkering is cut at 20 lines per inch and generously proportioned, providing a secure and comfortable grip. The buttstock comes supplied with a sporting style recoil pad.

The Turkish walnut on this sample is very well figured with nice marbling and sporting an elegant glossy oil finished sheen. The sporting style forearm is rightly checkered and well-covered, promoting excellent control and security. It locks solidly in place employing the Rizzini Anson style push button mechanism which latches securely to the barrel lug.

### The Receiver

The receiver on this model is designed for both beauty and durability. Built on the boxlock action originally conceived by the brilliant mind of John Moses Browning, this underlug design is capable of round counts well into the six





digits. The embellishments on the receiver can be most accurately described as simply elegant. The semi-gloss black Ceracote™ receiver is sharply contrasted by profiled borders inlaid with gold. The side of the receiver bears this model's designation in brilliant script while the bottom of the receiver is decorated with the Rizzini crest and "Cole Special." The receiver coating provides maximum resistance to corrosion while maintaining a handsome finish.

The barrels pivot on trunnions installed in the ears of the receiver and lock solidly into battery engaging the monoblock at multiple points within the receiver. The BR240 receiver has some additional width to it, adding strength and durability to all stress points. The single selective inertia trigger had nearly zero creep and broke at just over three pounds on both the upper and lower barrel. Reset of the well radiused trigger blade was quick with very little return necessary to engage the second sear. The trigger blade on this model is adjustable to perfect grip length, a measurement which is often overlooked by some.







**The BR240 comes in at the mid-range level and offers a refined look and exceptional functionality at its price point.**

The safety and barrel selector is done in the traditional Italian style, located on top of the manual safety switch. Once the safety is moved to the fire position, the barrel selector locked securely into place,

### The Barrels

When it comes to any sporting gun, barrel construction and design is absolutely critical to a model's performance and reputation. Regulation is the test performed to determine that both barrels effectively and evenly distribute the shot in the correct place. Think of it as the geometry that ensures both barrels are not only symmetrically built to deliver the payload to the same place down range, but also the element of putting the patterns consistently where the shooter is looking. The BR240 had excellent barrel regulation and when in a vice demonstrated a 50/50 point of impact (POI). For shooters who prefer a higher POI, the adjustable comb option will give the shooter full versatility to customize POI to their specific requirements.

The chrome lined barrels on this sample measured 32 inches and were well constructed with a gloss blue finish. Various rib options are available depending on the model chosen. The standard models are provided with a 10mm-8mm tapered vent rib. The "X" models come with a 4mm ramped vent rib. This rib is well executed and outfitted with a white Bradley style front bead and a small silver mid-bead.



The BR240 barrels are designed with the proprietary XI Bore. The bore diameter measures .732 with 5.25 inch long forcing cones. The geometry of this bore profile produces more consistent patterns and reduced felt recoil. Working synergistically with the XI Bore are the five Cole Precision choke tubes supplied in the kit and a speed wrench. These choke tubes delivered great pattern density and uniform distribution.

### Shooting the BR240

A shotgun that does not shoot where you look is problematic, so the first thing necessary with any new gun is to conduct a test fitting on the pattern plate. The adjustable comb was simple to move and locked tight into place when adjusted. This test sample was set up with a 60-40 point of impact, which is this writer's desired configuration. This step is vital to building confidence when shooting a new gun.

The test range for this excursion was the Michigan Trapshooting Association home grounds where they now have not only multiple skeet fields, but also a 5-stand and 16-station sporting clays course. The BR240 performed well with one ounce, 1250 feet per second loads. Recoil was quite manageable with the Cole Special's stock measurements. The operation was flawless, and the gun balanced about an inch in front of the trunnions. This model is supplied with ejectors which are well timed, and the controls all function perfectly.

The weight of this model at 8 lbs. 11 oz is right in the sweet spot. It's just enough to mitigate the recoil of heavy sporting loads without making the gun move sluggishly. The trigger pull was crisp and just over three pounds when measured on both barrels. This is a nice shooter and looks at home on any gun rack. The BR240 comes in at the mid-range level and offers a refined look and exceptional functionality at its price point. For anyone looking for a purpose-built sporter with American design characteristics, legendary Rizzini reliability and blessed with Rich Cole's expertise, visit Cole Fine Guns and Gunsmithing at: [www.colegun.com](http://www.colegun.com)







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## Woodcock Opening Project Phase I

**T**HE UPLAND HABITAT CONSERVANCY COMPLETED THE WOODCOCK OPENING PROJECT ON THE GROUNDS OF THE MICHIGAN TRAPSHOOTING ASSOCIATION IN MASON, MICHIGAN ON AUGUST 18TH. The property sits on more than 300 acres of prime upland ground with a mix of hardwoods, agricultural fields and lowland swampy areas. This topography is perfectly suited for both a stopover for migrating birds as well as prime brooding ground for resident populations. The soft and edgy areas with their rich soil and abundance of earthworms, mixed with open native grasses provides the complete package for the timberdoodle.

This property has been studied previously and found to hold good numbers of birds but had additional capacity for prime woodcock habitat. The folks at the Michigan Trapshooting Association are com-

mitted to the very best stewardship of their property and have partnered with the Upland Habitat Conservancy to make this project happen. While the northwest end of the property has a confirmed singing grounds that needed no attention, the northeast section was prime for clearing some new openings. With the help of MTA Manager Jeff Russell, Matt and Dean Pukey, Travis Powers and Matthew Gay, this project came together and resulted in three new openings for the birds.

This is the first phase of a two-phase project on this property. Additional plots have been identified for clearing on the extreme north end of the property. This second phase is scheduled for the winter of 2024 where the Michigan Trapshooting Association again will partner with the Upland Habitat Conservancy to bring in a mulcher and open up these additional sites.

The Upland Habitat Conservancy is committed to pursuing any and all projects that will result in improved and restored habitat for upland birds, which ultimately benefits all game and non-game wildlife species. We are recognized by the Internal Revenue Service as a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization and our mission is: To raise funds, conduct projects and facilitate the creation, restoration and maintenance of upland habitat on both public and private land. To facilitate education and awareness for the importance of upland habitat stewardship and its value for all wildlife species. ➤

**The Upland Habitat Conservancy is committed to pursuing any and all projects that will result in improved and restored habitat for upland birds, which ultimately benefits all game and non-game wildlife species.**





### UPLAND HABITAT CONSERVANCY

## Upland Habitat Conservancy Fun Shoot

While habitat work was the priority for our visit to the Michigan Trapshooting Association on August 18th, after the chainsaws went quiet and the improvements were completed, we had a fun shoot. The menu was a round of 25 sixteen-yard trap singles and 25 five-stand targets on the new eight-machine layout at MTA. While we had to take a couple of breaks to get out of the intermittent rain, the event went off without a hitch.

Some fun and challenging pairs on the five-stand led to smiles and chuckles as shooters enjoyed everything from battues to flying rabbits and everything in-between. Some new friends and supporters came out to contribute to the Conservancy along with long time friends and shooting partners. While the objective was to have a good time and enjoy fellowship with like-minded conservationists the end result was dollars raised to

help create habitat.

The Upland Habitat Conservancy would like to thank the leadership at the Michigan Trapshooting Association for their generous donation of use of the range and the targets for this event. With their support, 100 percent of the revenue raised will go back into the ground in the way of new or restored habitat.

Congratulations go out to Jeff Russell and Matt Hayes for tying with the high score across both disciplines. After a coin toss to break the tie, Jeff won a custom bird and trout knife, inlaid with a .410 brass. Each participant was entered into a drawing for many thank you gifts donated by Wing & Clay Life, Travis Powers, Eppinger Lures and Matthew Gay. Each participant went home with something to show for their participation and the gratitude of the Upland Habitat Conservancy for their support of our mission. 🙌







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# Pan Seared Ruffed Grouse with Cherry Reduction



The season is here. The hunters are almost as restless as the dogs, the fall colors are starting to show, and that fragrance of autumn is in the air. The Ruffed Grouse is affectionately heralded as "The King of Gamebirds," and for good reason. Ole Ruff in the north woods is arguably the most difficult bird to put in one's bag. Traversing their habitat can be brutal, visibility is almost always a challenge, and they have earned the nickname "thunder chicken" for the way they explode into flight when flushed.

While bagging a ruffed grouse is a reward in its own right, as table fare, they are phenomenal. It's important to carefully monitor the grouse when cooking it, exceeding 160 degrees Fahrenheit can make for a dry piece of meat, and that is no way to treat "The King." This recipe is simple and classy. The cherry reduction adds a wonderful element and accentuates the flavor of the dish. Good luck in the coverts and enjoy this excellent recipe.

## Cherry Reduction Ingredients:

- 1 - Cup of fresh pitted cherries
- 2 - Tablespoons of sugar
- 2 - Tablespoons of water
- 1 - Tablespoon of softened butter
- 1 - Teaspoon of cornstarch

## DIRECTIONS

First mix the cornstarch and water very well. Next mix the cornstarch/water slurry with the rest of the ingredients in a saucepan and place over medium heat. Bring the sauce to a boil then reduce the heat to simmer. Simmer for ten minutes, then remove to allow the sauce to cool.



## Main Ingredients:

- 4 - Ruffed Grouse Breast Halves
- 2 - Tablespoons of olive oil
- 2 - Tablespoons of butter
- 2 - Cups of dried cherries
- 2 - Heads of artisan Romaine lettuce
- 8 ounces - Goat cheese crumbles

## DIRECTIONS

Pre-heat a quality searing pan to a medium temperature. While the pan is heating up, gently salt and pepper both sides of the grouse breasts (not too much, ruffed grouse has a gentle flavor that can be overpowered). Next, add the olive oil then the butter. (The olive oil will keep the butter from burning at higher heat). Once the butter has melted, place your grouse breasts in the hot pan for

roughly three minutes on the first side, then flip and repeat. (There is no shame in using a meat thermometer) You'll want to cook the breasts to an internal temperature of 150 to 160 degrees, but no more. When the breasts have been seared perfectly on both sides and have reached 150 degrees, remove them to a cutting board to rest while preparing the rest of the dish.

Take your washed heads of Romaine lettuce and chop perpendicular to the leaf so that you end up with roughly ¾ inch wide strips. Lay a bed of lettuce on each of the four plates. Next add 2 ounces of goat cheese to the top of the lettuce along with a small pile of dried cherries.

Finally, slice the grouse breasts and plate on top of the lettuce, adjacent to the cherries and goat cheese. Drizzle the cherry reduction over the grouse breast and enjoy. 🍴











## Weatherby Orion 20 Gauge

**W**EATHERBY IS A NAME WHICH HAS BEEN SYNONYMOUS with quality and innovation since appearing on the scene in 1945. Initially, Roy Weatherby focused his efforts on extremely high-grade rifles in custom calibers of his own design. Some of the Weatherby magnum cartridges exist in the land of legend in terms of velocity and effectiveness for dangerous game on the plains of Africa. It has been chronicled that the .257 Weatherby Magnum was Roy's favorite creation. Rifles are not the only place where Weatherby made an impact on the outdoor industry. They have produced a line of shotguns for many years and the Orion model of the earlier era are highly desired among wing shooters.

Although, in this writer's head, 1982 is not terribly long ago, that's more than four decades past. At this point in time, Weatherby began producing the Orion over-under shotgun, manufactured by SKB in Japan. This shotgun strays slightly from the standard SKB branded line (which

is excellent in its own right) in that it sports beautifully figured wood (at least grade III) and is a little more refinement in its fit and finish. My Orion 20-gauge over-under is an example of the exacting standards Weatherby required of any firearm bearing their name.

This specimen comes with 28-inch barrels, a single selective trigger and that traditional Creener style cross-bol locking system SKB used to create a very robust action. This shotgun bears the famous "diamond" pistol grip cap which has always marked quality amongst the Weatherby line-up of products. Simply speaking, this is a gorgeous shotgun with fine fit and finish. Capable of handling three-inch magnum loads but far more suited for upland or clays duty. The trigger is crisp, and all controls are located for instinctual control. As opposed to many models of shotgun the Orion locates the barrel selector on the top of the trigger blade. This makes for a rapid barrel change if a shooter desires to use a different choke while simultaneously relegating the slide on the tang to a safety on y. There's no fear of dislodging the barrel selector while attempting to quickly take the safety off and move the gun to the bird.

This shotgun has a wonderful deep blue finish on the receiver and barrels. A flat top rib features a single front brass bead, and the barrels are connected by a solid mid-rib. When opening this shotgun, you'll find a small detail which was undoubtedly born from Roy Weatherby's demand for excellent craftsmanship in every aspect. The jewelery on the side of the monoblock is beautifully done, adding an element of class and artisanship to the shotgun. The engraving on the receiver is simple yet elegant and fits the motif of this model perfectly. ➤





While this shotgun in my collection may not have a pedigree dating back to the late 1800s, it certainly represents an exciting time in American firearms manufacturing. Although built on the other side of the Pacific, the Weatherby standard of quality was maintained, and the design conceived with the American wing shooter in mind.

This shotgun has taken teal and geese in the early season with appropriately chosen ammunition but really hits its stride in the upland arena. The 28-inch barrel is threaded using the Win-Choke™ pattern, making it perfect for both pheasant and grouse duty. This shotgun was originally owned and wielded by a World War II veteran family member with a love for hunting in the "good ole days." His keen eye for quality drove him to this purchase, a decision we are thankful for as this multi-generational firearm's quality allows for continued use in the field, now into a third generation of hunters.



While some in society gravitate to the next new thing, I tend to go the other direction. Old shotguns harness our imagination and give us the opportunity to keep the sporting traditions alive with the very same scatterguns carried by our grandfathers and grandmothers. It's profound to think that some of the shotguns in my safe were carried on some of the same prairies I roam today, well before my mother was born. There is a "cool" factor and sense of connection with our personal heritage when taking a fine rooster or "pat" with a heirloom shotgun. I can probably speak for the vast majority of wing shooters out there when I say: the prospect of a hunter, three generations past me, carrying one of my shotguns across the Dakota prairies in search of a wily ringneck represents the crowning achievement of my wing shooting legacy. 🦃

**This shotgun was originally owned and wielded by a World War II veteran family member with a love for hunting in the "good ole days."**

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## The Llewellyn Setter and an Ode to Thor

By Roger Marks



I HAVE SPENT PLENTY OF TIME WITH LLEWELLIN SETTERS AS A GENTLEMEN BIRD HUNTER, having hunted behind four of my own over the years, with a pup in training to make five soon enough. Keeping open-minded, on the subjects of gun dogs and bird dogs, I realized somewhere along many steps through fields and woods that they each have their own strengths and weaknesses. I cut my teeth behind dogs in the northern part of Michigan's lower peninsula, and pointing dogs became my immediate favorite for the task at hand. After one English Setter, I have gone to the Llewellyn, with no looking back.

### THE BREED

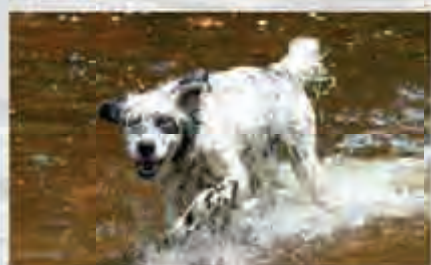
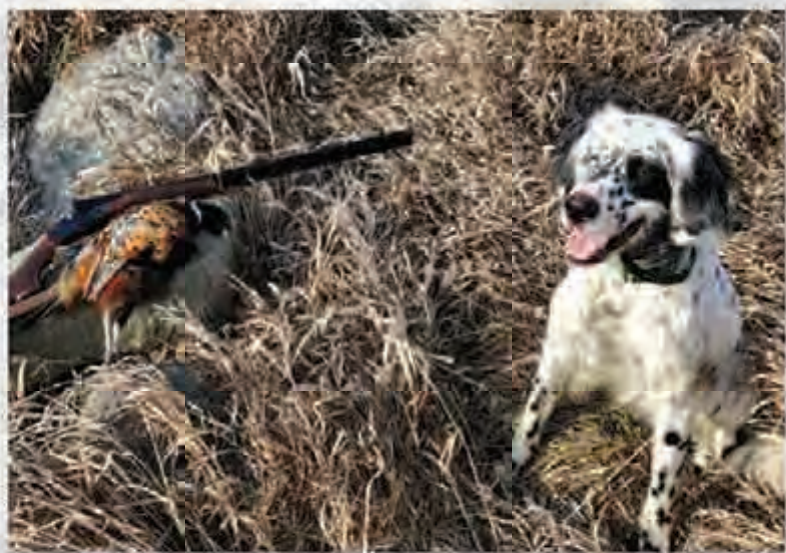
So, let us put some quick specifics on the breed and its origin as a starting point. On the first of January 2024 the United Kennel Club of Kalamazoo, Michigan completed their combining the 2021 purchase of Field Dog Stud Book to one book. Their statement about this merger read, "Any dog granted FDSB registration is automatically considered Dual Privileged in UKC and has the full privileges appropriate for its breed."

According to the Continental Kennel Club Inc: "Today's English Setter is often viewed as being divided into show lines and working lines, and their appearances can be dramatically different. The distinctive styles of each can be attributed to two English gentlemen of the mid-1800s: Edward Laverack and Purcell Llewellyn. Laverack was interested in producing a handsome dog with long, elegant lines and a flowing coat. These Laverack dogs became the foundation of many of the most famous show lines today, and this type is









commonly referred to as the "Show" (or "Bench") type. Llewellyn, on the other hand, was more concerned with performance, so he produced a less-exaggerated dog that reigned supreme in the field. This type became known as the "performance" (or "field") type, with direct descendants of Llewellyn's dogs being called Llewellyn Setters."

### THE GOD OF THUNDER

Now, let's explore some real-life experience. This is a little about Thor, our third Llewellyn. In his first days with us, we had a tremendous storm come through, and this little pup desperately wanted to go outside and play in it. His exuberance and fearless disregard for the raging storm is how he earned his name. True to the breed's general reputation, Thor was a friend and member of the family. His ability to worm his way into the heart of anyone he met was a method like no other dog we have experienced. He was simultaneously crazy and loveable. Able to be a pain and magnet for sincere love and attention all at the same time.

In the field, Thor's prey drive was off the charts, so much so that he temporarily lost his pointing tendencies in favor of getting the retrieve. Oh boy, did he love to retrieve! If anyone attempts to make the assertion that setters do not tend to retrieve well, I urge you to see for yourself first. With some professional assistance and a lot of prac-

tice and patience, we fixed the unusual problem. He not only regained his pointing prowess but became the best pointing dog I have experienced to date. He was both quick and careful in the search, naturally bent on utilizing the grid search method, decreasing half-circles, or whatever was necessary to achieve the find. This methodical approach was well in play every time feathers could be a part of the day.

He was not the most travelled hunter you might meet, but he did spend time in both Dakotas, Kansas, and all over Michigan, achieving a fair sampling of many of the wild upland scenarios that the continental US has to offer. Pheasants, quail, Hungarian partridge, ruffed grouse, sharp-tailed grouse, and woodcock rounded out his resume. He found, pointed, and retrieved them all.

The reputed tendency of the Llewellyn is to work reasonably close, compared to some of the chase-them-on-horseback-style pointers, though the handler needs to be prepared to reign in the super tenacious dog. Thor became extremely easy to work with in his maturity. I needed to keep my legs moving in the big fields, but a nice walking pace was perfect with him. He did NO walking, constantly moving, sniffing, searching, ready for the immediate halt, all the while checking in and staying adequately close in order to produce the magic moment of melding point, feathers, shot, and retrieve.

For my experience, the Llewellyn is a joy as a partner and a friend. 🐾



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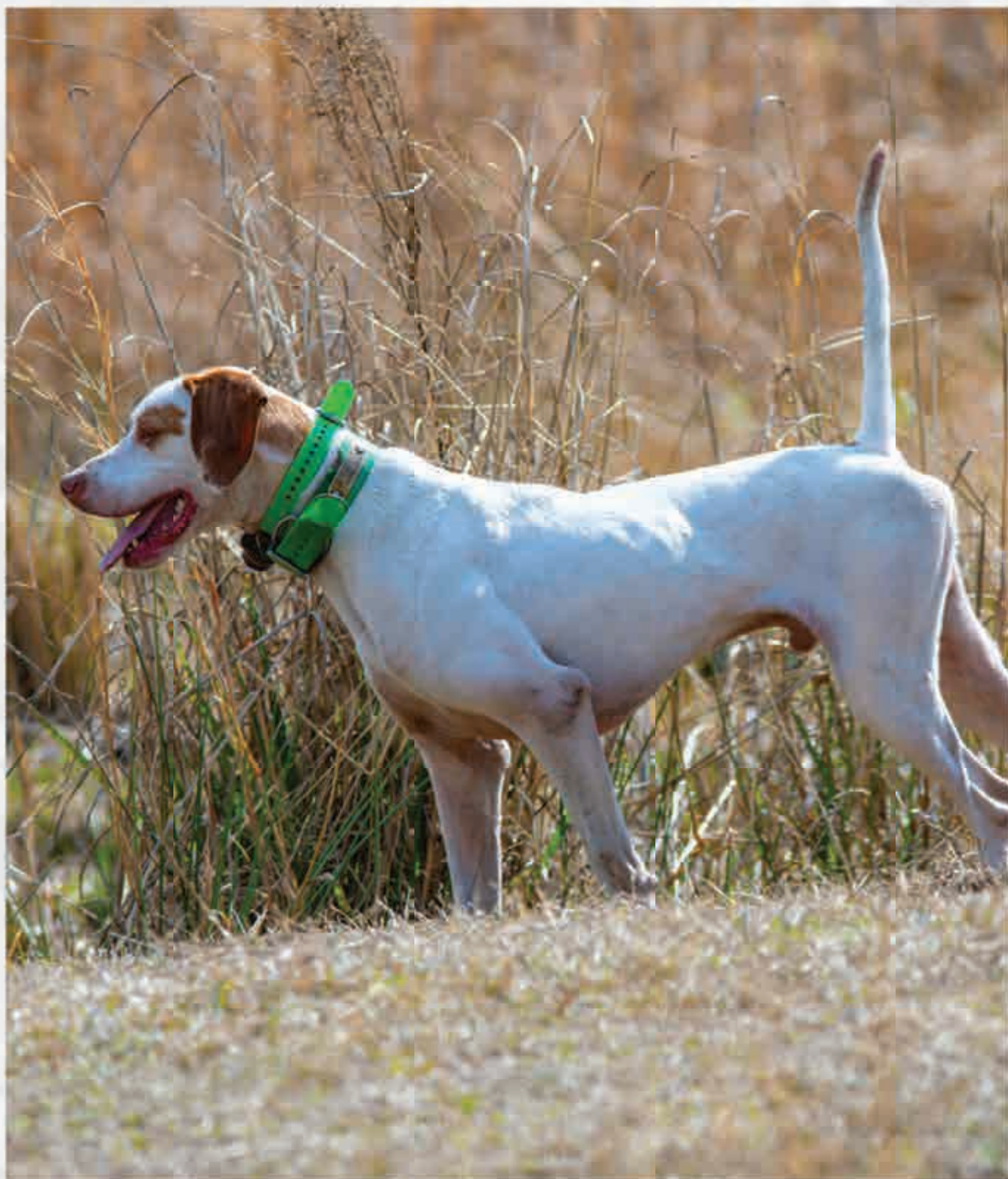
















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## Poor Percy

**I**N MICHIGAN, SAGINAW BAY IS ONE OF THE MOST FREQUENTED DUCK HUNTING BODIES OF WATER ON THE GREAT LAKES. This shallow bay is perfect shelter for both local and migrating birds, holding vast amounts of food and billed friends for the web-footed critters. At the convergence of the Atlantic and Mississippi Flyways, fed by birds of the James Bay flock, this vast part of Lake Huron supports a wide variety of waterfowl species...along with a few real sketchy duck hunters.

Well into the heat of a season years back, three of us were tucked into a perfect spot on the south side of a tiny island about a mile out from the boat launch. The morning was perfect. Arriving very early to ensure our spot was available, we traversed the shallow water under the backdrop of some vibrant Northern lights. We set decoys, brushed into our blind and awaited shooting time with great anticipation. "This could be one for the record books boys."

About 30 minutes prior to shooting light, we observed a light from a boat bouncing our way. We shined the craft to let them know where we were and they veered off to the west, settling about 300 yards away from our blind. We watched them hurry to throw out decoys, in no particular pattern...evidently, they were not aware of the magical "T" pattern, which when done right brings the birds right in. They were still screwing around when shooting time had arrived, shutting off their headlamps about five minutes into shooting hours.

My buddies and I just shook our heads and hoped these weekend warriors wouldn't end up derailing our plan for a monumental hunt.

The birds were moving ten minutes in. A large flock of mallards saw our spread and seemed to be wooed by our tantalizing feed chuckles mixed with a few lonesome hen calls. They circled wice to the east, then north, banking back east then south, turning to a nice approach angle and inbound. The three of us were focused on concealment while we watched this group of greenheads intensely. They were committed, wings cupped and losing altitude, the deal seemed imminent.

Then it happened. "Boom, Boom, Boom....Boom." To our west, these jokers touched off five rounds causing the flock to flare and get the heck out of Dodge. What a frustrating end to a perfectly executed plan. Out of sheer frustration, I looked to the west to see if maybe there were other birds working the disheveled sorry excuse of a decoy spread these late comers had put out, thinking perhaps a respectable bird would see the superior organization of our spread and come see us. To my surprise, the only birds anywhere near these miscreants were a pair of geese at an altitude of 20-ish yards above them. They were so far out of range the geese paid no attention to the five loads of shot that were thrown their way. They just kept heading into the corn fields.

"Oh great...sky-busters on our flank" says Big Irish. "Yep,



just our luck," I responded. The day went on and much of the same occurred over the first hour of the hunt. These ballistically challenged knuckleheads shot at anything they could see, just messing up every flock we tried to work. Adding to the ignorance was the incessant screaming at their unruly dog whose name we clearly now knew was "Percy." Percy didn't like to sit still. About every five minutes he would launch out into their mess of a decoy spread and the screaming at the dog would commence. We had to find humor in this situation because the hunting was being ruined by these fools, so we chuckled to ourselves every time they hollered at the dog. You must understand, this is shortly after the movie *The Green Mile* had been released. Ironically, the idiot villain in that movie was named Percy, causing us to laugh every time they bellowed his name.

Eventually, frustration turned to anger and a plan for retribution was developed. We were going to sky-bust too, knowing we were just wasting shells but needed to occupy ourselves with some additional humor. The funny thing was, they weren't laughing when we did it. In fact, in-between screaming at Percy, they hurled a few insults our way. It wasn't until they purposely dropped shot on us (they shot in our direction when there wasn't a bird within a two-mile radius) that we had enough. One of my two companions is quite

vocal when he is angered and without standing up sent a booming string of expletives their way for dropping the shot on us. In true moronic fashion, they responded with threats and additional expletives...until the three of us stood up and walked out of our blinds.

At six-foot and 240 pounds, I was by far the smallest of our group. Big Irish earned that name from being the only Irishman I have ever seen that stands at six-foot seven inches and about 280 pounds. The Gae Man is about six-foot three and weighs in about 260. We were a group of twenty something former football playing gyni rats who liked hunting ducks. At the moment we walked out into the decoys, I observed a flash consistent with someone in their group putting up a pair of binoculars. It was that moment that the hunters to our west went completely silent and retreated to their hides.

For the balance of the day, they didn't call, shoot, walk out in the decoys or mutter a cross word in our direction. The only way we knew they were still there is that every five to 10 minutes we heard, "damn it Percy, get back here." Evidently one of their crew had gotten a close-up view of the three duck hunting gorillas they were making trouble with and convinced the rest of their hunting party that discretion is truly the better part of valor. I left the bay that morning feeling sorry for poor Percy. I am sure he was just a good boy stuck with a crappy human. 🐾



**The three of us were focused on concealment while we watched this group of greenheads intensely. They were committed, wings cupped and losing altitude, the deal seemed imminent.**






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