

## 28 GAUGE PUMP FOR SPORT AND SPORTING

Dear Technoid,

I have never owned a 28 gauge, but have an itch for one. I have read much you have written concerning 28 tube alternatives but don't feel I wish to or can afford to spend the dollars to set up a true zero weight gain type set. From what I can gather, the 28 gauge is very efficient for its charge weight.

You have commented on some shooting the model 42 pump in .410 so I was wondering whether the Remington 870 in 28 gauge might be a possibility for a fairly inexpensive alternative. How does the Remington action (smoothness in pumping) compare to the model 42 and how would the standard choking on the 870 28 ga. which is a mod. meet the needs. I thought it would be a nice gun to carry in the field as well for quail or dove size birds. Would recoil be pretty comfortable with the 870 fixed action in this gauge?

Your comments would be appreciated.

Randy

Dear Randy,

Been there, done that and enjoyed myself along the way. Your instincts are absolutely correct. The 28 is a great gauge and is perfectly adequate on most dove shots. To me, it is the ideal quail gauge. The problem that you will run into with a fixed Modified (about .015" in the 28) is that you will need that much for dove, but that will turn a quail bird into mulch at 15 yards. You will have to let them get out a bit.

You can forget about recoil, even in a 6 pound 28 gauge gun. One of the reasons that everyone likes the 28 so much is that it kicks so little.

As to chokes: In my Parker Repro 28, I opened the short barrels up to .003" and .012" for quail and used .015" and .020" in the long barrels for dove. That seemed about right. Remember, those little 28s really do seem to pattern tighter and hit harder than you would expect (out to about 35 yards where reliability sets in as it has to with any 3/4 oz shot load out of a tiny bore.)

I had a Browning Model 12 28 gauge (same as the current ones made for Winchester in Japan) and that came through with .015" (Mod). It was a nice all around choke until you got too close. Then it was quailburger. I had Briley screw choke it with .003", .009" and .019" and I used it pretty successfully at sporting clays. The Browning/Winchester Model 12 28 was not ever a totally satisfactory gun for me due to the misguided addition of a trigger interrupter in the modern version. It is there to "protect" you from fan firing. When I got shucking quickly, the darn thing would always hitch just a bit. Drove me crazy. I tried removing it (gun would not work) and having all sorts of action work done, but the thing always had a hitch. It was never as smooth as the original Model 12s or my ancient and beloved 42.

The Remington 870 is a great low cost way to try the joys of 28 gauge pumping. Remington quality has declined quite a bit in the past few years, but there really isn't much that you can do to mess up an 870. I am not too big a fan of the 870 28 gauge's 25" barrel, but that is I all that they offer right now. The current version is the 870 Express with a modified fixed choke and 25" barrels. It is pretty plain looking, but handsome is as handsome does. Once it gets broken in and the burrs are worn off, it should be as smooth as any other 870. That said, there are few 870s that are as slick as an old original Model 12, but they can come close with much use. Matt Dryke used to do his trick shooting with an 870. You would have to see the speed to believe it- 870 trigger interrupter and all.

You might also consider the Browning BPS 28 gauge. It comes with factory screw chokes in either 26" or 28" (my choice) barrel lengths. These guns are copies of the old bottom ejection Ithaca Model 37s. In turn, those were copies of an original John Browning design. What goes around, comes around. It is a great gun.

The BPS 28 has a number of plusses: It is very smooth right out of the box, it has bottom ejection (my personal preference), screw chokes and a tang safety (MUCH nicer than trigger guard safeties). I would take a long hard look at this gun. I just love pumps and have been considering getting a 28 gauge BPS myself. For 2009 the receiver is plain blued and the barrel has a ventilated rib.

O/Us and autos also work well in the 28, but they just plain are not as much fun as a good old pump gun- and fun is what the 28 is all about.

Regards,  
Bruce Buck  
Shotgun Report's Technoid