

ONE GUN IS NOT BEST

Dear Technoid,

I have been hunting and shotgunning in North Iowa most of my life, but have learned more in the past 2 years than I ever wanted to know about shotguns. I shoot a Citori upland special for hunting pheasant, quail and grouse {we have all three in Iowa}, and a Citori Special Sporting Clays for trap and skeet. Is it wise to use 2 such totally different types of guns for these purposes? I've tried to practice for hunting with the Upland, but the recoil just hammers me. After 25 rounds, I've had enough. Is shooting trap and skeet with a different gun than what you hunt with a bad idea for hunting success? Both guns fit quite well after a few stock adjustments.

Thanks, Curt

Dear Curt:

You are lucky to be able to hunt three such divergent upland species in your home state. Here in Connecticut our only native upland species are ruffed grouse and woodcock. We do get a lot of waterfowl, but everything else involves game farm or travel.

As to two different guns: you always hear the adage about "beware the man with one gun", but I don't really see it. When I hunt waterfowl in winter, I use a 28" Beretta 390 auto. When I hunt grouse and woodcock in the fall I use a 6.25# 12 bore Webley and Scott double trigger SxS. When I do field trial work or am second gun on walk up pheasants I use a 30" FN Browning O/U. When I am serious about trap, skeet or sporting clays I use a 30" Beretta 303 semi-auto trap gun (yes, for skeet too). When I am not so serious, I use a sub-gauge skeet tubed 30" FN O/U. I quail hunt with a Winchester model 42 .410 pump (I don't have to carry quite as many quail in my game pouch that way). I feel that each gun is just about ideal for its selected purpose and really do not have too much trouble going back and forth after a little tune up time.

True, I have been shooting long enough so that I have gotten the guns adjusted so that they all fit me properly, but that does not mean that they all fit the same. My waterfowl gun is a bit flatter shooting and shorter stocked than the others. The SxS has to be stocked a bit higher than the O/Us, etc. I prefer clay guns set to shoot a bit high also, but can take considerably more length on those than I can on a field gun.

I feel that each gun is, for me, about the optimum for its intended job. As I am not likely to go grouse hunting with the double trigger SxS one day and quail hunting with the pump the next, transition can be more leisurely. I have found it helpful to shoot all my clay games with the same gun, but to tell the truth, the 303's stock probably could be a touch higher for American trap-although it is ideal for wobble.

Your choice of the Citori Upland for upland and the Citori Special Sporting for clays sounds like a wise one. Although the ribs on your guns are different, both guns are most likely set up to shoot dead on and that is what counts. The Citoris are excellent guns and will give you years of faithful service.

Let's face it. Every gun is a compromise. You said that you did not like to shoot a ton of standard target loads in your light field gun. No one would. You certainly don't want to lug an 8# target gun around all day chasing after grouse. No one would want to do that either. You have made good choices and have certainly been far less profligate in your gun purchasing excesses than the Technoid has been. Your commendable restraint surely entitles you to treat yourself to another gun this Christmas.

Perhaps, when hunting season comes around, you might practice with your field gun on clays using light 7/8oz loads propelled at a modest velocity. If you reload, 700-X, Red Dot or Clays all list excellent 1200 fps 7/8 oz loads. With those light kickers you will be able to practice all day with your game gun. That said, for more serious clays shooting, stick with the Special Sporting and full sized shells. One gun may do it all, but it doesn't do it all well.

Best regards,
Bruce Buck
Shotgun Report's Technoid