

## ALL PURPOSE TRAP STOCK

Dear Technoid:

This may be a real simple question for most but here goes. I own a Browning Citori Lightning (Sporting) with invector plus chokes and 28" inch barrel. I've recently started shooting trap at least twice a week and would love to change the barrel to a 30" or 32" ported. Is this possible or would it be wiser to but a whole new gun.

Thanks for time.

Kevin

Dear Kevin:

This is not such a simple question at all and it is a good one to ask. Many shooters find themselves in this position.

Yes, it is possible to buy an extra Citori barrel and have it fitted by a gunsmith. No, it probably does not make sense in your case.

First of all, it will probably be difficult to find an extra set of matching barrels in the used market. Citori barrels usually come with the rest of the gun attached. Two barrel Citori sets exist, but are not all that common. If you cannot find a used barrel, you will have to buy it new from Browning. Probably at full list price if you have to deal directly with the company. Barrels generally cost 50% of what the whole gun costs, but you could buy the whole gun from your friendly dealer at less than full retail list. Thus, new barrels from Browning might cost you 75% of what a whole new gun would cost from your local discounting dealer. The economics of buying a second barrel don't work very well unless you already have your eye on a used one. Even if you can find a second barrel, the solution is not ideal for trap.

Your Lightning Sporting Clays model was built to have the look and feel of your field gun. It probably has a 1.5" drop at comb. Trap guns are almost always set up higher with less drop at comb to build in lead for the rising trap targets. Browning's standard trap stock measures a nominal 1.375" at comb. That does not sound like much difference, but it is.

Even if you put on longer barrels, you will still have the same lower stock. Proper stock fit is even more important than barrel length. I think that you would be happier buying a gun with longer barrels and a higher stock, rather than trying to piece one together.

A trap stocked gun can be far more versatile than you might think. Many of the best sporting clays and skeet shooters use trap stocks on their guns. Yuri Tsuranov, Russian World Record International Skeet champion in 1974 (world's first 200x200 at International Skeet) stunned the Olympic shooting world by doing it with a trap stocked skeet gun- at a time when everyone thought that lower field stocks were the only way to go. Twenty years ago, the Russians figured out that the higher "trap" stock made skeet shooting easier. Today, many American style skeet

shooters are using high stocked guns with 30" barrels. Ten years ago, these guns would have been on the trap field.

Sporting clays is another case in point. Almost all of the best sporting clays shooters shoot higher stocks than you would use on a field gun. Longer barrels too. 32" barrels are not all that uncommon at sporting, though 30" is the norm. Again, except for the more neutral balance, these guns would have been considered trap guns 10 years ago.

So what am I saying? Often in error, but never in doubt- the Technoid is saying that it is hard to shoot trap with a field style gun, but it is often best to shoot skeet and sporting with a trap style gun. Sounds crazy, but it isn't. Obviously, there are certain configurations of trap guns that would not be suitable for skeet or sporting, but many would.

You really can have your cake and eat it too. Since you ask about modifying your present gun, I am assuming that you want to keep your options open and be able to shoot some other games in addition to trap. If that is not the case, and you want to pursue trap solely, go buy a purpose built trap gun. If you do want to have more of an all around gun, I would suggest that a 30" high stocked sporter would meet your needs for all games. With a little stock bending, you can make almost any 30" gun suit. Citoris and Berettas are excellent choices.

Personally, when I shoot O/Us I do best at trap, skeet and sporting clays all with the same gun and stock- a 30" FN "Super Trap". Dan Carlisle, 1984 Olympic Bronze medalist in International Trap and also World Champion International Skeet shooter, used trap stocks on both his Perazzi trap gun (obviously), but also on his Remington 1100 skeet gun. Dan, who has also won some major sporting clays titles, prefers a 30" Beretta 303 for sporting and that has a trap stock too.

There is an old adage in clay target shooting-"The more you shoot, the longer and higher your stock gets." It is true.

Bottom line: If you are going to switch entirely to trap and not shoot anything else, get a trap gun without any other considerations. If you want something that is more dual purpose, take a look at a 30" O/U with a slightly higher than normal stock. You may be pleasantly surprised.

Best regards,  
Bruce Buck  
Shotgun Report's Technoid