

Sunday-go-to-meeting Shotgun

— LARRY'S SHORT STORIES #84 —

With some degree of regularity, I receive invitations to participate in sporting clays events – mostly they're fundraisers, and often for the Boy Scouts or local charities. Sporting clays originated in England and came to the U.S. in the late 1980s; the first event I attended was the Charlton Heston Celebrity Shoot, put on by the NRA. Mr. Heston was there of course, as were lots of other celebrities – musicians, movie stars and politicians.

Such an event naturally requires a man's finest shotgun – his Sunday-go-to-meeting shotgun; unfortunately, I didn't have one. But the wheels began to turn, and the gun came together in my head. It had to be a respected brand, a trouble-free design, stocked and choked so I could shoot it well, and the overall appearance had to turn heads – at least that was, and still is, my definition of a Sunday-go-to-meeting shotgun.

The basic gun came to me in a trade at the Tulsa Gun Show the following year. It was a Browning Superposed 12 gauge, grade V (Diana), made in 1955; but it was choked and stocked for trapshooting.



Browning used a French gray finish, which allows the engraving to really stand out.

This was a great start; a man who owns a Browning Superposed will never have to apologize to anyone because he bought 'second best.'

The factory engraving on the Diana grade is relief carved game scenes -- ducks on the right side, pheasants on the left and a pair of partridge on the bottom. Rather than bluing the receiver, Browning used a French gray finish; it naturally draws the eye to the receiver and the beautiful engraving.

The stock and forend needed replacing, first because they weren't pretty enough and second because the stock didn't fit me. English walnut is unchallenged as the finest wood for stockmaking; and exhibition grade pieces can be



Catalog cover picture of our daughter Sara, taken in 1995; pretty girl, pretty dog and pretty shotgun.

truly amazing. A blonde background with serious mineral streaks and feather, lightly stained, with a durable high-gloss finish was my choice; and factory-style 28 line per inch checkering panels completed the restocking job.

The last piece of the puzzle was the chokes; they were modified and full.

"...requires a man's finest shotgun..."

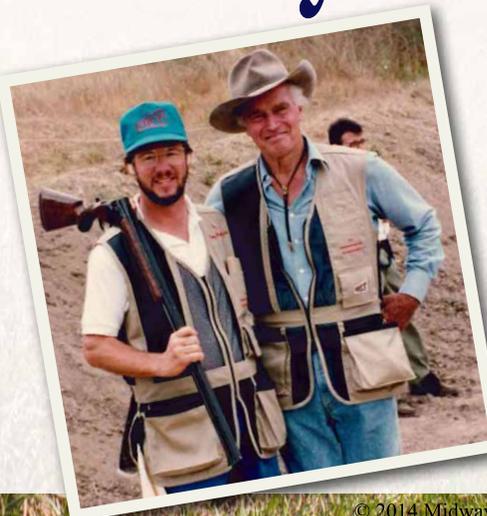
Thin-wall choke tubes

by Briley was the answer; they machined the muzzles to accommodate the tubes and furnished two skeet-choked tubes and one each in improved cylinder, modified and full. With the right chokes, I have shot everything from American skeet to live pigeon; and at those 'special events', this Sunday-go-to-meeting shotgun has turned a lot of heads.



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The 1993 Charlton Heston Celebrity Shoot was a classic opportunity to show off a Sunday-go-to-meeting shotgun, but I didn't have one. That's Mr. Heston to my left.