

My FAVORITE SHOTGUN for Dove Hunting

— LARRY'S SHORT STORIES #105 —

When it comes to dove hunting, I don't have a single favorite shotgun in my gun collection; but please don't feel sorry for me – I have many favorites. Here in Missouri, dove season begins on September 1; I'm almost always home and anxious to start the fall hunting season.

At Midway Farms, it's tradition to dedicate opening day to the 410. One year I might take my Winchester Model 42 pump; another year it might be the Browning Superposed over/under; but I've also opened the season with old Winchester single shots. The 410 is an interesting and frustrating gauge/bore to learn to shoot — and shoot well.

If the weather is nice and my schedule not terribly busy, I enjoy several morning or afternoon hunts during September and October; and each time with a different gun. Some I shoot better than others. For me personally it isn't about the number of

empty shells divided by the number of doves, but rather the whole experience of the gun, the fall weather and the time with shooting companions.



A limit of 15 doves with 26 shots from my Browning Superposed 20 gauge, made the year I was born.

My best percentage is with a side-by-side with double triggers. Typically I use cylinder and improved cylinder chokes early in the season, when the doves are many and close; then switch to improved cylinder and modified a bit later on, as the picking gets slimmer and the birds are farther out.

Old guns have always been a fascination, not only to collect but to shoot as well. One afternoon I shot #1 of a



Browning Superposed, Diana Grade 410, with a few doves.

matched pair of 14 gauge muzzle loading guns, made by Westley Richards, of London, England in 1851. Ryan Fischer, fellow Employee at MidwayUSA, and I sat under a shade tree – blasting away at doves with these fine guns. Shooting was difficult, because the stocks have high combs for driven birds. To hit the crossing birds, we had to consciously hold low or we would shoot over them.

Loading is a critical six step process. The powder goes in first, from the flask, then the

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over powder and the cushion wads are rammed home one at a time. The shot flask dispenses the shot, after which an overshot wad is seated tightly on top; last, the primer or cap. You have to pay serious attention when loading or something will get out of order; but what great fun to shoot doves with shotguns made in the middle of the nineteenth century.

Midway USA

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The Westley Richards Pair, from 1851, with a few doves.