

How Many SHOTGUNS DOES ONE Man Need?

— LARRY'S SHORT STORIES #138 —

Once in a while this comes up as a serious question; and of course a serious question deserves a serious answer. To put things in perspective, remember that I'm a hunter, a shooter and a gun collector; I like guns and like to pull the trigger — on game birds or clay pigeons. Trap, skeet, sporting clays, ducks, geese, pigeons, crows, doves, quail, rabbits, turkeys, pheasant and partridge are all interesting.

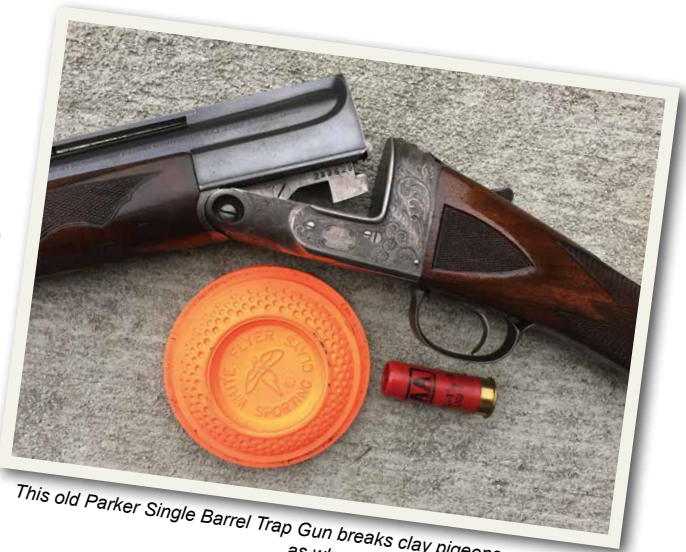
Now, a man could do all his shooting and hunting with a modern, 12 gauge semi-automatic shotgun, with interchangeable choke tubes; but for me that would be pretty boring — only one shotgun. To be fair, most of my shotguns do serve multiple purposes. Sometimes I shoot skeet and sporting clays with

the same over/under; or the same side-by-side is chosen for a variety of different game birds.

When there's an opportunity to shoot sporting clays or skeet,

I always give thought as to which shotgun to take. It will always be an over/under or a side-by-side; and often it's a 12 gauge. On other occasions it might be a 20, a 28 or a 410 — depending on the weather, the competition and how I feel at the time. For trap, I like a pump gun or a dedicated single barrel trap shotgun.

Bird shooting sometimes causes me to compromise; typically I like to be able to select the choke/load each time there's a flush or a flight of birds. This requires two triggers, which for me means a side-by-side; but sometimes I



This old Parker Single Barrel Trap Gun breaks clay pigeons as well today as when it was made in the late 1920's.

compromise and use a single trigger over/under on doves, pheasant and crows — just to enjoy shooting that particular gun. My turkey gun is a pump, and I've also shot a little trap with it and some ducks, geese and crows.

In addition to the design, make and model of a shotgun, a man needs to think about gauge. I've shot quail and pheasants with both twelve and twenty gauge, but also a few with the

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28 gauge and 410. Mostly I prefer the 28 gauge for clay targets, while the 410 is great for rabbits and sometimes doves. If a man gets a chance to shoot driven partridge or grouse, then a matched pair of Purdeys are in order. In going through my vault, there are just a few that I really need; but none of the rest are for sale!



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Certainly I need to keep this 10 gauge Parker, made in the 1870's. The brass shells I've loaded with black powder and the plastic shells are light loads of smokeless powder — to be safe in the twist steel barrels.



Normally I use an over/under more for clay pigeons than for hunting, but this little Browning Superposed 20 gauge is my favorite shotgun for pheasants.