

# A Pair of HOLLAND 410s

— LARRY'S SHORT STORIES #279 —

One of the many great joys of my life is to have learned to shoot the 410-bore shotgun. Of course, it started on the skeet range—for me, it was Rapid City, SD, back in my Air Force days. The gun was a Winchester 101 O/U, 3-barrel set, 20, 28 and 410. Later, I had a Remington 870 pump, then a Franchi over/under, a Browning Superposed, and a Winchester Model 42 pump—not all at the same time. Most recently, I've enjoyed shooting side-by-sides made by Purdey and Holland and Holland. Clay targets and doves have always been my primary game with the 410—with an occasional pheasant or bobwhite quail.

My exposure to shooting driven birds in Europe, my long-time interest in 410 bore shotguns, and a visit to the Holland and Holland plant, in London, all impacted my decision to order a matched

pair of 410 bore guns—primarily to shoot driven partridge in Spain. Now, one doesn't normally just go to the factory and buy a pair of guns, you place an

order—and wait. In my case, during the COVID pandemic, the stated delivery was 16-18 months, but the wait was nearly three years.

"Specifications" are the things you must commit to paper when ordering any type of custom firearm. For me, the most important specification was weight, followed by barrel length; I asked for 28" barrels and a weight five and one quarter pounds; anything lighter and shorter is difficult to swing well.



*Sporting Clays at Midway Farms is usually the first place I get to shoot a new shotgun. This was the last night of our Thursday night league. (Photo by Jared Griffin)*

Making a pair of "Royal" ejector side by side guns from scratch is a straightforward process, but not fast or easy. Holland has been doing this work for well over 100 years. The barrels are always the starting point, followed by the action and finally the stocks. There's a lot of back and forth between the departments until the final polishing and finishing of the wood and metal is complete.

**"...the most important specification was weight..."**

The greatest value, in any gun, is how it feels and performs; beautiful wood and engraving are just bonuses. In the case of this pair of 410s, they have the right weight, balance, fit and feel—with the right trigger pulls and chokes; all "Specifications" that were called out at the time of order and painstakingly created by the craftsmen at Holland and Holland. The execution was flawless, the guns shoot great and are also works of art!



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*For the Customer, choosing the blanks is one of the most important and exciting steps. However, the beauty of the wood and metal engraving are second to the handling qualities and functionality of the gun.*



*In my opinion, a pair of nice guns should be displayed in a fine Oak and Leather display case, with the maker's label. These guns have 28" barrels and weigh 5#, 3oz. each.*