

My FAVORITE SHOTGUN

for Pheasants

— LARRY'S SHORT STORIES #35 —

Guns have been an important part of my life, since I was old enough to shoot—guns to hunt with, guns to shoot, and also guns for collecting. Often I'm asked which gun is my favorite; but there's no simple answer to that question. You see, being a shooter, a hunter and a collector, and having quite a few years of experience, I have many favorite guns; it just depends on what I'm hunting or shooting.

Pheasant hunting has lots of different facets -- early season, late season, wild birds and released birds. While I've hunted all of these, most of my experience has been with released birds -- sometimes on game farms

here in Missouri, but other times on the vast prairies of the Dakotas. In my experience, released pheasants generally hold tighter for the dogs and fly a little slower than the wild ones. Wild birds typically require more lead, heavier loads and tighter chokes.

So my favorite shotgun, for most of the pheasant hunting that I get to do, is a 20

gauge over and under, choked improved cylinder and modified - that I've had for several years. Now remember I'm also a gun collector and always prefer a vintage gun to something more modern. This is a Belgian-made Browning Superposed. It's very special to me because it was made the year I was born and is documented as having been in the first shipment of 20 gauges shipped to the United States -- in 1949.

On a recent hunt up in the Dakotas, I took my favorite shotgun for pheasants and also a 12 gauge side by side



*There is nothing much better than a favorite gun
— except perhaps having more than one!*

— in case the shots were longer. I started with the 20 and never took the 12 gauge out of the case.

Every rooster that flushed near me was down cold with one shot from the lower barrel, except for one time when we flushed a report pair. The second bird came up over my head and rather than waiting

**“It's very special
to me...”**

for him to level out, I tried to show off and shoot him in the head as he went over the top. I missed! Anyway, for me at least, a favorite gun is dependent on the game I'm hunting, how well the gun hits what I'm shooting at and of course it's going to be a vintage gun that could tell lots of stories, if only it could talk.

**USA
Midway**

Larry Potterfield

Hecla, South Dakota
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*Yes, of course I'm smiling — one shot,
one pheasant.*



My favorite pheasant shotgun is also a joy to use on doves.