

Shotgun options numerous

By HAROLD HARTON
Special Correspondent

This is probably the first time, or nearly the first, I have written about the shotgun. I am a poor shotgun shooter and have never had the interest due to my poor performance.

I shoot with a lot of friends who are excellent shotgun shots, such as Galen Watson and Police Chief Tim Angermann, and I always enjoy the fellowship. Once in awhile I can break a few clay birds, but my percentage is rather low. I own several shotguns, and I admire them and love to go bird hunting, mainly to be with the guys.

The smoothbore goes back to a dated 1614 fowling piece. It was followed by several years of development of more usable muzzle-loading single-barrel, then double-barrel, shotguns. Following the muzzle-loading shotguns, after many years of unsuccessful trials, the breech-loading guns of today came on the

scene.

One of my shotguns belonged to my grandfather. I have a love letter he wrote to my grandmother shortly before they married in the late 1800s. In it he mentioned he had been on a trail drive of cattle to "Lampasas Springs." I would assume the old Remington 12-gauge double-barrel with exposed hammers was along with him on that ride, since there was still a bit of Indian trouble in the area.

I also have a single-barrel .410 that belonged to the same grandfather. It is a Winchester Model 41. In his later years that is what he carried on the ranch. With it, he killed dogs when he found them in his sheep, as well as snakes and other vermin.

Today's market is filled with everything from the single-barreled break-open hammer guns in a variety of calibers to the side-by-side double, over and under double, slide action, and self-loading (semi-automatic). And since some areas of our country require shotguns for deer hunting, we even have shotguns with rifled barrels and scope sights for them.



This Remington 12-gauge shotgun belonged to Harold Harton's grandfather, who may have used it for protection while on a cattle drive to "Lampasas Springs."

One of my favorite shotguns is the Remington Model 870 pump-action 12-gauge riot gun. I suppose my attachment to it came about through my time being a police firearms training officer. During that time, it became necessary for the police to be proficient with not only the handgun and rifle but the riot gun as well.

My next favorite is the over-and-under Weatherby .20 gauge. Although I will never be good with it, I still prefer it for bird hunting.

With the exchangeable choke tubes in most new production guns, your one favorite shotgun can be used for just about any hunting you need a shotgun for. Just change choke tubes for the hunt -- be it goose, ducks, doves, rabbits or quail.

Good hunting!

Dutch Oven Venison Stew by John Johnston

This is a quick and easy meal to make in deer camp. I usually make it in a Dutch oven, but you can make it in a foil pack over a grill. I prepare the ingredients at home and keep them in sealed plastic bags. This recipe will feed 4.

Ingredients:

- 1-1 1/4 lbs. of 1-inch cubed venison backstrap
- 1 white sweet onion, cut up in bite-sized chunks
- 2 carrots, sliced
- 10 mushrooms, cleaned and cut in half
- 6 small golden potatoes, cut in quarters
- 1 cup flour
- 1 small bottle Italian salad dressing (no olive oil)
- 1/4 cup cooking oil
- salt and black pepper to taste

Start a fire to provide some good coals. Wipe the inside of the Dutch oven with cooking oil on a paper towel. Put the rest of the oil in the oven. Coat the venison with flour seasoned to your taste. Heat the oven and lightly brown the venison. Drain off the remaining oil. Add the rest of the ingredients. Cook with a few coals under and on top of the oven. You do not want the oven too hot or it will overcook. Cooking time should be 1-2 hours, the slower the better.

I have been known to add some red wine or bourbon to this recipe.

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