

Quadro a lápis de Vittore Pisano (Pisanello, Escola de Verones<sup>e</sup>; 1380-1446). É de todas as reproduções do cão de parar a mais antiga que se conhece. Segundo Arkwright o animal que serviu de modelo ao pintor italiano deve ter sido de ótimo tipo. Repare-se no soberbo contorno do crânio (Arkwright, «The Pointer»)

Bravo's re-drawing of Arkwright's re-drawing Museu de Louvre, Paris

"Pencil sketch by Vittore Pisano (Pisanello, Veronese school, 1380-1446). This is the oldest known image of a pointing dog. According to Arkwright the model must have been of an excellent type. Note superb contour of head."

(Note similarity to Huck's head: small, square muzzle, depth of which is not clear from this angle. Good stop, eyes, ears.)



*But early in the hunting season, young blues and ruffed grouse are often found feeding at the same elevation. The same is true of spruce and ruffed grouse, but blues and spruce grouse do not seem to share the same forest type.*

*Generally, ruffed grouse are birds of lower elevations and early forest succession; spruce grouse are birds of the northern short-needled conifers. Blue grouse are more closely associated with the Douglas-fir forest. Hunting all three species of grouse is challenging; doubles and mixed bags are possible—and misses not unusual.*





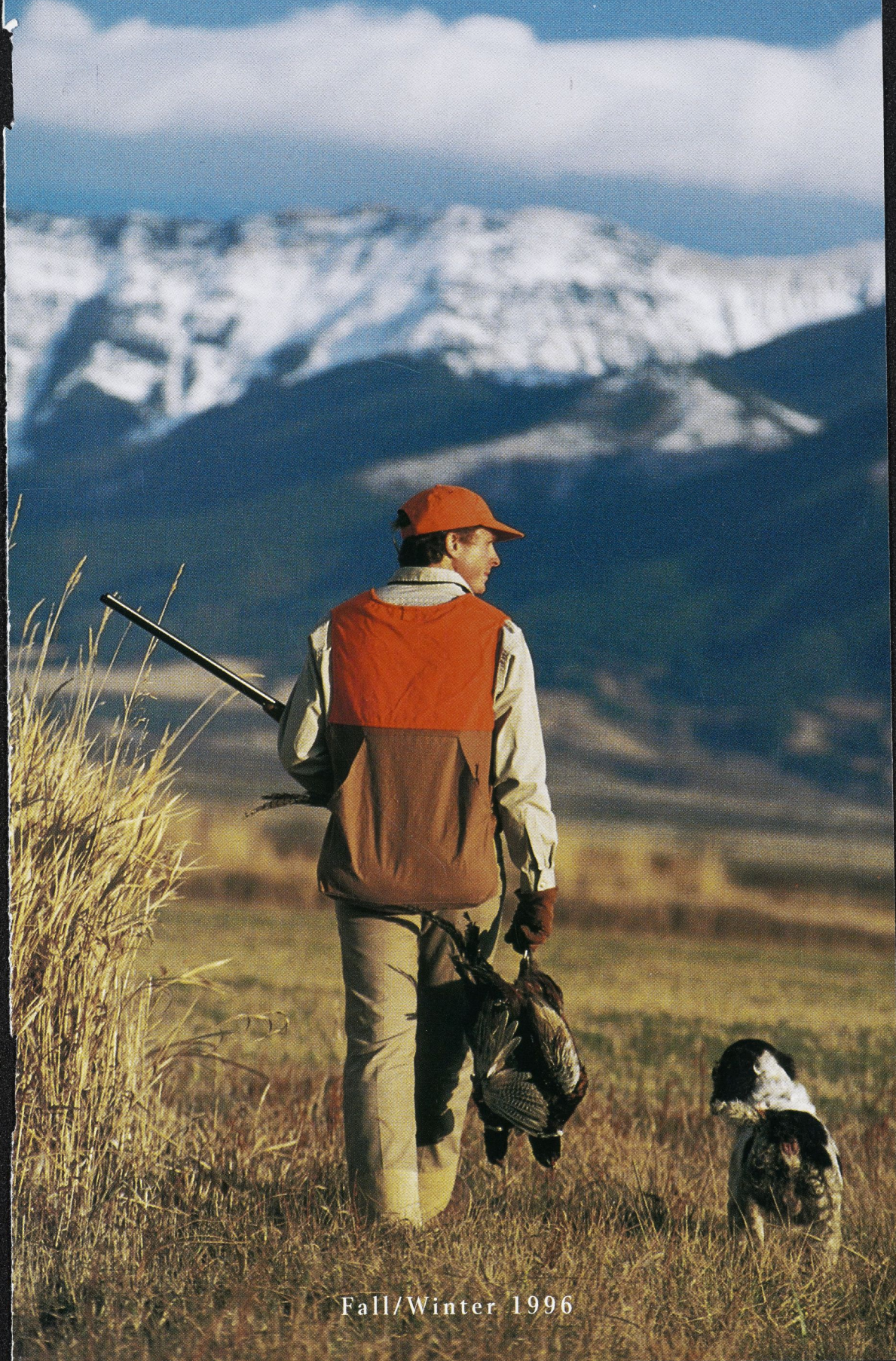
*A grand slam on high-country grouse is unusual, but not impossible. I've been there once, but luck was on my side. All three species were numerous—within an hour's drive of one another—though not all on the same mountain. In fact, I've never found all three together.*





# COUNTRYSPORT

PUBLISHERS OF FINE SPORTING BOOKS & ART



Scrap for  
pictures

Fall/Winter 1996

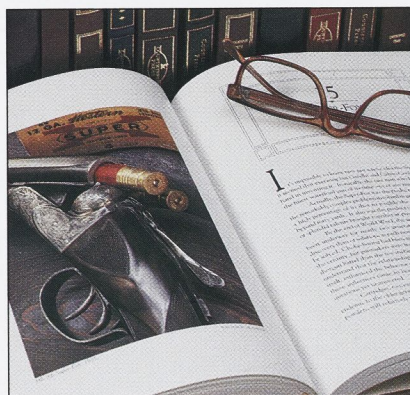


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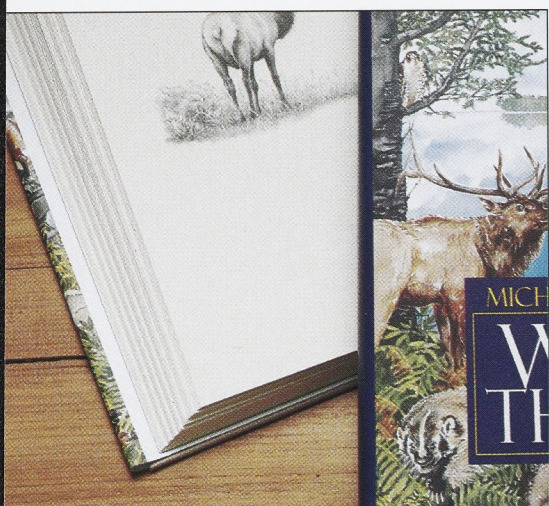
—Brook Elliot, *Sporting Clays magazine*

Derrydale Press established a tradition of excellence in the world of sporting literature in the 1920s and '30s—a tradition that we at Countrysport are dedicated to keeping alive. We begin by publishing only the best authors of our time, unique voices that are tied into the rich traditions of the past but not bound by them. Gene Hill, Michael McIntosh, Charley Waterman—these writers already have become living legends in the fields of wingshooting, fine guns, fly fishing, and the sporting life.

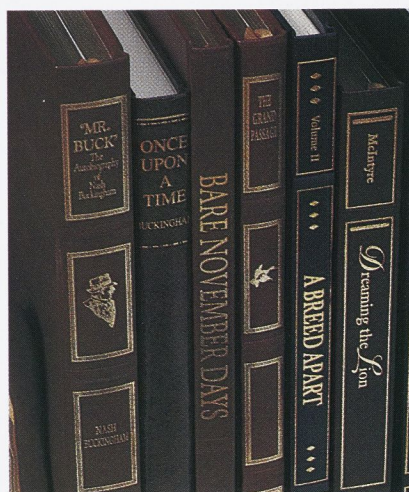


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*Cover photograph by Denver A. Bryan*



Wide-angle lens. Mountains are higher



DENVER A. BRYAN

And that's as it should be. Montana's more than 60 WMAs, encompassing approximately 260,000 acres, offer a diversity of wildlife habitats as varied as any in the Rocky Mountains and as valuable to Montanans and all Americans as any in the nation.

If you are a hunter, or if you simply enjoy the beauty many species of wildlife bring to our landscape, you can appreciate the importance of good, productive wildlife habitat. In Montana, as elsewhere, it is the availability of such land that dictates the presence and health of wildlife populations.

As Montana's human population continues to grow and traditional land uses inevitably change, the welfare of wildlife—from elk and deer and bears to upland gamebirds and waterfowl—will take on even greater importance.

"There's a growing concern about the increased rate at which valuable wildlife habitats are being lost to changing land uses," says Jeff Herbert, a wildlife biologist who serves

as statewide waterfowl coordinator for Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks. "In the past two decades, especially, we've seen an influx of people moving into what have been important areas of big game winter range and creek bottom habitats. At the same time, we've seen conversion of native grasslands to intensively farmed croplands and other developments that have removed these lands from the habitat base. For the future welfare of our many species of wildlife, we will need to look toward conserving habitat whenever we can."

It was with this understanding that sportsmen's groups, conservation organizations, and others urged the 1987 Montana Legislature to pass House Bill 526, a landmark conservation law setting aside a portion of hunting license revenues for acquisition of important and threatened wildlife habitats. HB 526 extends habitat protection to all forms of wildlife, not just game animals, and encourages use of conservation easements and leases as preferred alternatives to fee title acquisition.

In the seven years since the bill's passage, FWP has spent \$9.5 million to conserve 112,000 acres of habitat. Approximately 60% of the acres acquired have been through leases and conservation easements.

Most Montanans recognize the important accomplishments that have been realized through purchase and enhancement of wildlife management areas. Many people are also aware that some of these lands continue to provide for traditional uses, such as domestic livestock grazing and farming under share-crop agreements, and that WMA managers work with

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*Montana's wildlife—from owls to antelope and elk to pheasants—need a variety of productive habitats. A program called "Habitat Montana" will guide FWP's land acquisition policies into the next century. Opposite page photos (clockwise from top): antelope—Dave Bennett; elk hunter—Donald M. Jones; bighorn lambs—Bill McRae; mule deer—Denver A. Bryan; great gray owls—Scott McKinley; Canada geese—Denver A. Bryan; beaver—Erwin & Peggy Bauer; Hungarian partridge—Keith A. Szafranski.*





MONTANA

# *the Best of the Rest*

**H**UDDLED AGAINST A COLD NOVEMBER DAWN on one of the dikes that transect Freezout Lake Wildlife Management Area (WMA) near Fairfield, one can hear an uneasiness growing among the ducks and geese rafted near the heart of the main lake. What begins as idle chatter intensifies as the eastern horizon glows and the hills beyond Freezout begin to take form. Then, as if in a massive marathon start signaled by a silent shot, the lake jumps skyward on white and mottled wings and the air fills with the exclamations of rising waterfowl. In contrast to the nearby Sun River WMA on the Rocky Mountain Front—a winter home for thousands of elk where all you may hear on a November day is the rattle of cottonwood leaves in the breeze or the hush of a high country snowfall—Freezout is not a quiet place in the fall.

by WILLIAM PHIPPEN

DAVE BOOKS



(wide angle shot)

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with to post himself nearby, then called Poke over and sent him in downwind of the bird's trail. The little spaniel caught scent immediately, paused, and sprang into the grass. Even dogs miscalculate, however, and his first pounce produced nothing. He paused and jumped again, then again. Finally, the bird clattered into the air not more than five feet from me. I dropped it to the cheers of my friend.

**W**HEN YOU HUNT can be just as important as where. Obviously, opening day is prime time to be afield, a fact that is no secret to the thousands of other people who will be out there with you. Still, it's probably worth going out; it may be the only time that the birds seem at a loss for tactics. After opening day, tactic-free birds are a fantasy.

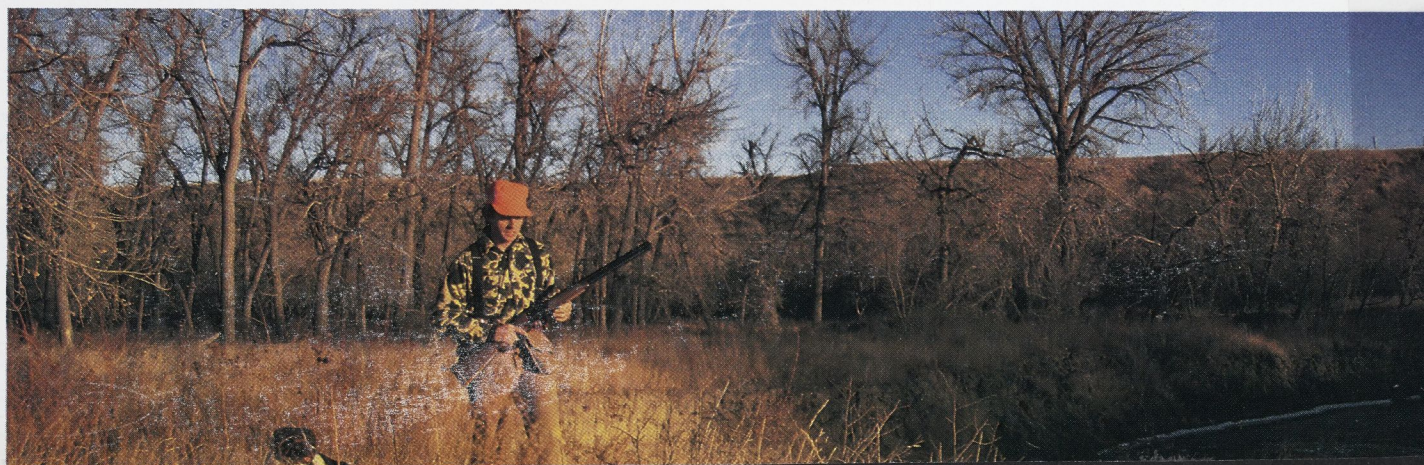
When possible, I hunt during the

week, avoiding the weekend crush. Even on public hunting areas, the hunting can be surprisingly good when the birds settle down a bit. Eric and I once spent several days hunting Freezout Lake Wildlife Management Area (WMA), which is technically not river-bottom habitat. But since most of uplands surrounding that beautiful place also border water, the cover is similar, although Freezout lacks the cottonwoods most of the rivers in the state support. In any event, Freezout gets hit and hit hard. Yet the two of us found roosters nearly every day, and one memorable afternoon flushed six or eight at once from a draw on the WMA's south side. The wind was howling that afternoon (I thought it would blow our tent away that night), and every bird we flushed shot downwind as if fired from a cannon. We killed just one of them, but the memory

of that cluster of roosters hightailing it away from us is etched in my brain.

The relatively narrow swaths of cover along Montana's river and stream bottoms can be used to the hunter's advantage. Pheasants *usually* won't run across open prairie or wheat stubble (although I wouldn't bet against their doing that), making a modified drive an effective technique. Since I've never been comfortable hunting with more than two or three other people, I rarely take part in the big drives popular in some parts of the country. And, at least in western Montana where I hunt, they're really not necessary. A couple of standers and a lone driver will work fine on most stream bottoms, assuming the driver has a good dog—a loaded topic if ever there was one.

"Good" is an adjective fraught with emotion among dog owners. What makes a dog good? What breed is best?



# Mont River

by DAVE CARTY





Datus C. Proper  
1085 Hamilton Road  
Belgrade, MT 59714









# THE SHARP-TAILED GROUSE

## *Shipped, Slaughtered, and Studied*

by Linda Bamber



*Early in the season, sharptails hold well for pointing dogs. But when cooler temperatures set in, they can make neurotics of classic pointers.*

As they crossed the Western prairie in their quest for the distant coast of the North American continent, Lewis and Clark encountered many species of wildlife previously undescribed. One of them was the sharp-tailed grouse, a bird that helped to feed vast numbers of prairie schooner families in years to come, a bird that hung on despite incredible odds to become one of today's premier Western game birds, instrumental in the training of some of America's best known bird dogs.

The Indians told Lewis and Clark of the sharptails' habits. Evidently, the great explorers were impressed enough to capture one at the beginning of the mating season. They shipped the grouse, along with a "burrowing squirrel" (prairie dog), and four magpies by barge down the Missouri River along with a multitude of other geological samples and animal skins.

Thomas Jefferson, who methodically reviewed shipments, eagerly awaited its arrival, mentioning several times in correspondence that the bird was "similar to a prairie chicken." Records show the bird arrived in St. Louis on June 15, but did not survive the next leg of the trip to New Orleans.

Although Lewis and Clark were credited with the first description of the sharp-tailed grouse, Lewis acknowledged the Mandan Indians' help in an account sent to Jefferson on April 7, 1805: "Our information is altogether



BEN O. WILLIAMS PHOTOS

*The sharp-tailed grouse – one of today's premier Western game birds, and a bird instrumental in training some of America's best known bird dogs.*

from Indians, collected at different times and entitled to some credit."

The Indian's fascination with the grouse is easy to understand. In early spring shortly after the first thaw, the male grouse convene for day-long dancing frenzies on their

breeding grounds called "leks." Sometimes as many as 50 will swarm their turf located at the top of small knolls where the openness gives them relative safety. They will dance several hours before sunrise, rest, feed during the day, and then stage a repeat performance before sunset for almost two months until all the females are bred.

Males will gather in small bunches of 10 to 12 or even larger groups to perform their foot-stomping jigs and cooing sonatas. Suddenly, one male will drop his dark brown wings; the tips touch the ground as he erects his



the dog can gradually get used to the beep. The next few times out, reduce the amount of tissue you put in the horn. If you follow these simple procedures, your dog will readily accept the beeper collar and will ignore it completely.

### ***Tattling on the "secret creeper"***

A beeper collar helps you keep your bird dog honest because it allows you to know when the out-of-sight dog is creeping. Once the collar tells you that the dog is on point, it will continue the rapid beep until it detects the dog moving, then it will stop. When you find this happening, you'll know it's time to refresh your dog's memory by reviewing its lessons on remaining staunch.

### ***Which mode to use?***

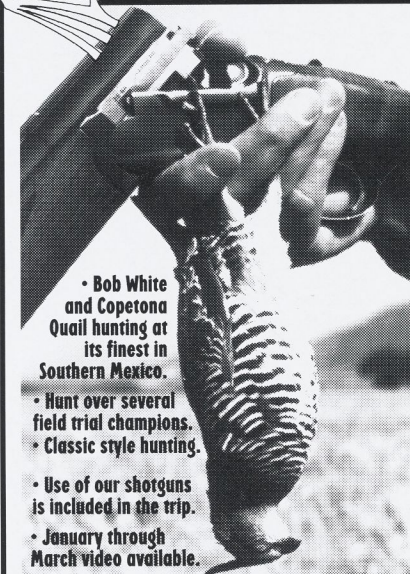
In the point-only mode, the collar does not beep until the dog goes on point. In the range/point mode, the collar beeps slowly while the dog hunts, then rapidly once the dog goes on point.

Some hunters prefer the point-only mode because it maintains the "serenity of the hunt" while allowing them to know immediately when the dog goes on point. Others prefer the range/point mode, so that they know where the dog is as it hunts and can guide its course or maintain a desired range.


Some grouse hunters find that the range/point mode causes a bird to hold better. One explanation is that the bird first hears the beep when the dog is far away. Since the dog can cover a lot of ground between beeps, the bird suddenly hears the beep close by. The bird is surprised and feels trapped, so it freezes and holds tight.

We don't know what truly causes birds to hold so well in the presence of the beeper. But one thing is for sure – the quicker you can get to your dog when it goes on point, the more birds you'll have in your bag, and a beeper collar will certainly help you do that, especially in difficult terrain and cover. ■

## Mexico WILD QUAIL



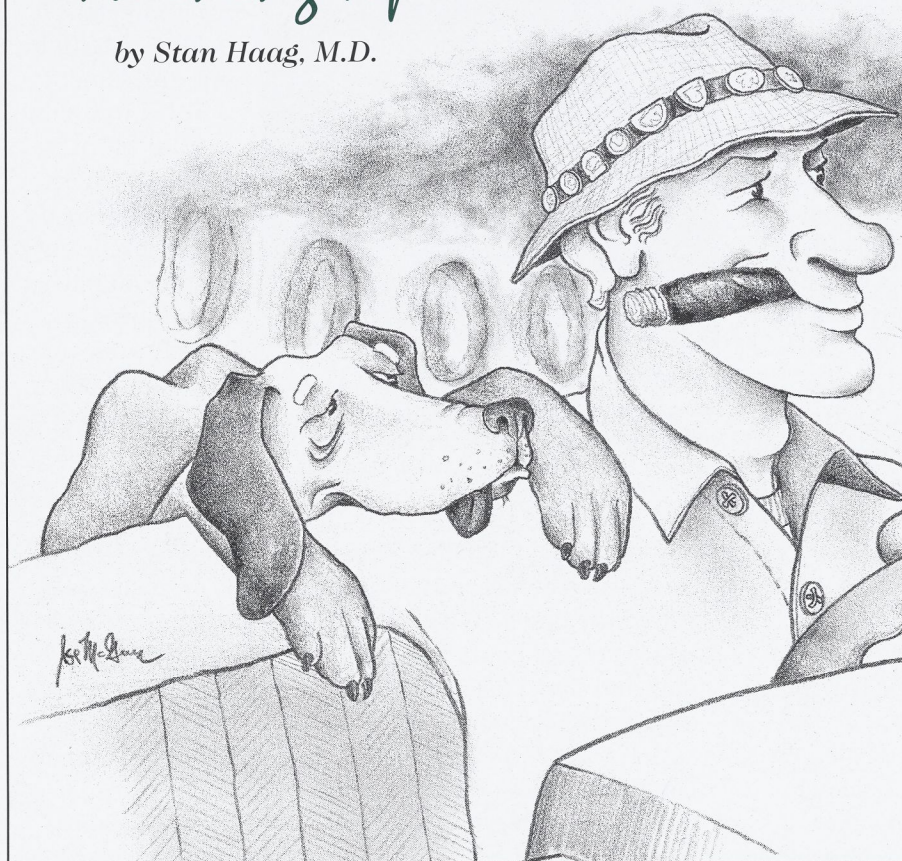
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## Training Tip

by Stan Haag, M.D.



## Second-hand SMOKE

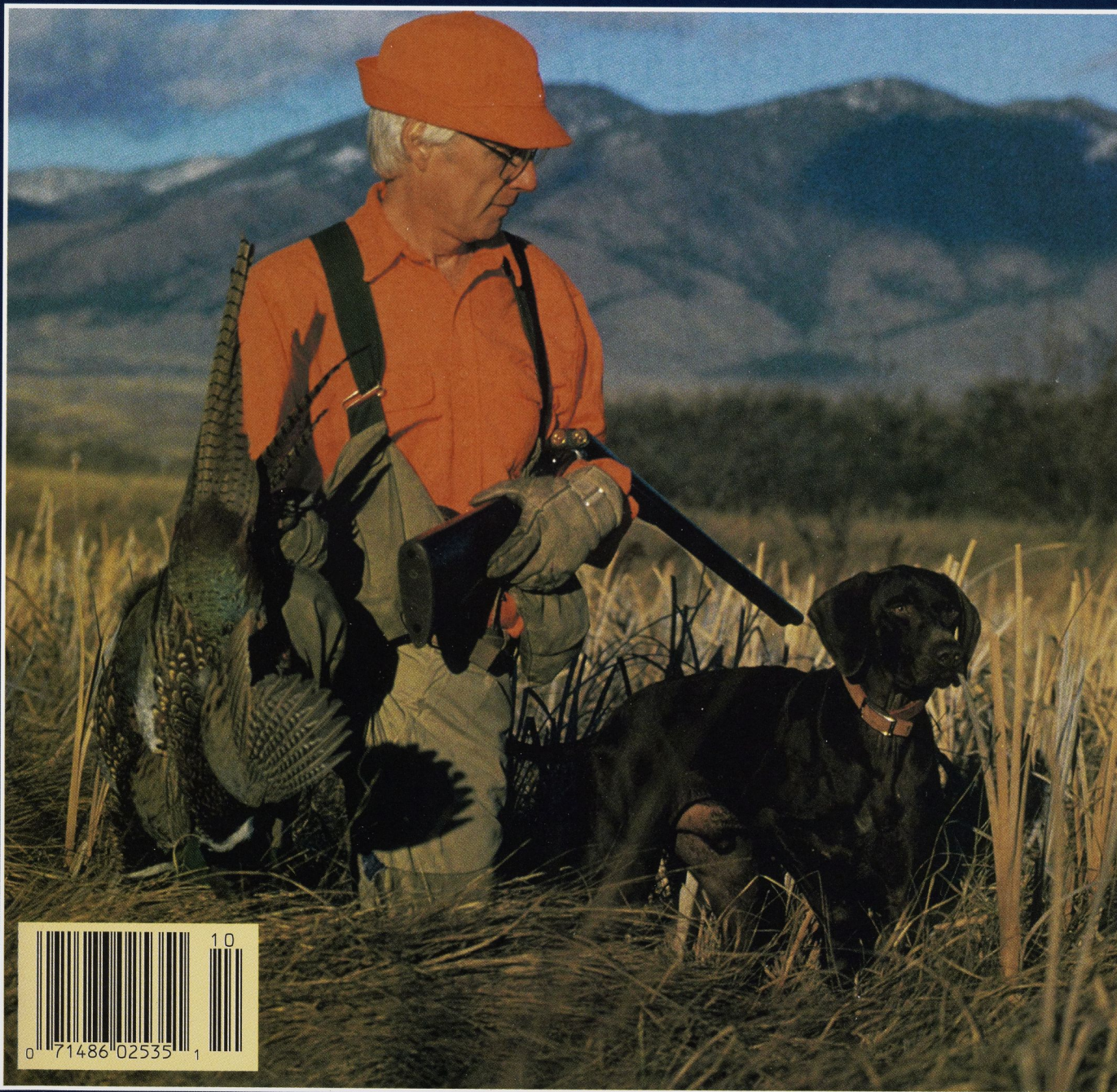
It's a proven and accepted fact that smoking diminishes the olfactory capacity of human beings. We have every reason to believe that is true of dogs as well, and because of that, I much prefer that people do not smoke around my dogs.

If your dog is constantly exposed to second-hand smoke, don't be surprised if you get decreased performance in the field.



# SHOOTING SPORTSMAN

*The Magazine of Wingshooting & Fine Guns*



SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 1994

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SHOOTING SPORTSMAN

VOLUME VI, ISSUE V

SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 1994





# RUGER

## A GREAT DAY FOR CLAYS

Ruger introduces a new Sporting Clays Red Label 20-gauge shotgun designed for the sophisticated shooter. The 20-gauge joins the 12-gauge gun, and both are available in either straight stock or pistol-grip models. Lightened 30" barrels that are back-bored with 2<sup>7</sup>/<sub>8</sub>" stainless-steel screw-in chokes produce a soft shooting, quick handling shotgun, while a two-bead sighting system assures correct target alignment. Whether it's midis from the high tower or springing teal, make your shot and your day with the Ruger Sporting Clays Red Label. Suggested retail: \$1,285.00.

Sturm, Ruger and Company, Inc.  
145 Lacey Place  
Southport, Connecticut 06490

Arms Makers for Responsible Sportsmen.

Free instruction manuals for all Ruger firearms are available upon request.



and blocking works because pheasants can almost always hear you coming, and if they know they're surrounded, they'll hold that much tighter.

One hunter I know goes to the trouble of approaching a field noisily from one side, then sneaking around to the other and driving birds with his Brittany toward himself, or at least, toward the spot where he'd been standing. The pheasants, he believes, think they're caught between two hunters and hold better.

Two hunts last fall convinced me of the value of blocking the exits. One day I hunted a small patch of long grasses – perhaps 150 yards long by 30 yards wide – in a mowed field. When Sam and I went in one end, the birds ran out the far end and flushed wild. The next week I enlisted the help of a friend and his Drathaar, and we trapped the birds in that grassy strip between us by executing a pincers movement, starting at opposite ends of the strip behind our dogs. This time, the pheasants held beautifully. My friend shot a rooster over a point right away. I had my chance, too, a minute later, and missed, causing me (once again) to vehemently reaffirm Resolution I.

**3. I Will Find New Places To Hunt.** The biggest secret to successful pheasant hunting is having good places to go. Now, if you don't have a place lined up for Opening Day already, you may not find one. However, it's often possible to find new places to hunt right through to the end of the season, after the crowds have thinned for the year and the farm field work is finished. In fact, some people who might not let you on early will let you on late. And, it never hurts to ask. Toward the end of last season, I finally stopped at a farm planted to perfect bird cover that I'd driven past many times, deducing from the "Posted" signs and lack of hunters that the landowner didn't let anyone on.

He came to the door and said without preamble the finest words in the English language (finest from a pheasant-hunting standpoint, anyway): "Go anytime you want. Don't even stop and ask." Needless to say, I did, and had a couple of great late-season hunts there.

**4. I Will Use Enough Gun.** We all know pheasants are big, rugged birds. Nevertheless, many hunters kill them

cleanly with small-bore guns over pointing dogs. I used to favor a 20-gauge skeet gun loaded with an ounce of 6s myself, and that combination proved more than adequate for most birds most of the time.

Every once in a while, though, you'll run into a rooster that is flat-out bulletproof. Last fall, for some reason, I encountered many more than the usual number of extra-tough birds. Pheasants I hit hard kept on flying, and it seemed to me an entirely plausible explanation that someone had dumped the shot out of my shells and refilled them with Grape-Nuts. At one point, after hammering a rooster with high-velocity 4s only to watch him keep flying for some 300 yards before expiring, I seriously considered buying some 3" magnum 2s. Bigger, harder-hitting shot, however, is not the whole answer. What you need is sufficient energy plus enough pellets to give you a high probability of hitting vitals and breaking wings.

From my own observations this past fall, the 12-gauge, 1 $\frac{1}{4}$ ounce, 3 $\frac{3}{4}$  dram equivalent high-brass 5 offers the best compromise between sufficient pellet count – 212 per shell – and high energy. For hunting over pointing dogs, I like the 5s in a modified choke repeater (on windy days), or an ICM double most of the time.

**5. I Will Believe My Dog's Nose At All Times.** We take our dogs into the field not for companionship or comic relief, but because their noses are proven to be one million



Believe the dog. He knows better than you do.

*Nov. Dec. 1994*  
Pheasants are active critters, but they can be found with persistence.



*Huckleberry*

DALE SPARTAS PHOTO

GLENDIA HAAG PHOTO



# A Pheasant Hunter's New Year's Resolutions

by Philip Bourjaily

Pheasant hunters know the *real* new year begins on Opening Day, long after January 1 has come and gone, some time in late October or early November. On Opening Saturdays, the young season stretches before us like a carpet of fresh-fallen snow, as yet unsullied by our footprints, frustrations, and empty hulls.

And now it's finally come, New Year's Eve on the pheasant hunter's calendar, time to draw up a list of last-minute resolutions that will guide you through a successful season. Here's my own for 1994, based on what went right and wrong last year:

**1. I Will Not Miss Easy Shots Over Points.** No matter how many clay targets I break during the summer, I still begin every season by missing billboard-sized roosters at fly-swatting distances. Actually, clay target practice pays very little dividend, because hitting pheasants over points has virtually nothing to do with shooting skill, *per se*. Three feet of cackling pheasant blasting out of the grass beneath your feet provokes a startled, fight-or-flight response in most of us. Early in the year, my synapses choose "flight," and the gun is emptied as if the trigger were pulling itself before the bird has completed five wingbeats.

Some people are totally immune to this problem; recently I took an air-traffic controller on his first bird hunt ever, and the stress of having a pheasant flush underfoot seemed to him quite mild compared to the tension of landing airliners. He drew an easy, unflustered bead on his first pheasant, a bird that flushed raucously underfoot. Me, I hunt pheasants for excitement, but Roger thought he might take it up as a way to relax.

For those of us without ice water in our veins, there is no easy cure for the disorientation of a pheasant underfoot other than experience. I've tried mental exercises to help me maintain composure as a bird flushes, like count-

ing to three or telling myself, "Let him get out far enough." These tricks work, sometimes, when I remember to try them.

Having failed to come up with an ironclad cure for rooster fever, I guess my real resolution is to accept it as part of the fun and be thankful pheasants go away from us instead of charging.

**2. I Will Block The Exits.** If you own a pointing dog, you will spend less time planning complex tactical maneuvers



Resolution Number 1: "I Will Not Miss Easy Shots Over Points."

and more time simply following the dog around. After all, you reason, that's why you own a dog in the first place isn't it, to let him find the birds? It's beginning to dawn on me, though, that some tactical planning will produce more of the solid points that keep us buying pointing dogs instead of springers.

Posting a blocker at the end of the cover, or coordinating a pincers movement from two sides, pins birds down and prevents them from running away. Driving

"Winter Wonder - Pheasants" by David Maass, courtesy of Wild Wings, Inc., Lake City, MN 55041 1-800-445-4833.