

Shotgun Sights

Shotguns generally have at least a simple white bead at the end of the barrel rib. Target shotguns generally have a smaller steel mid-bead at the halfway point of the rib. The front and mid-bead should only be checked when pre-mounting the gun to ensure a proper gun mount. You should never look at the beads while you're shooting at a target. More about that in later chapters.

There is a wide variety of aftermarket shotgun beads. Most are larger than the factory beads, many are different colors, some even glow in the dark. Our advice is to stick with the smallest bead you can that has the

TOM'S TAKE

I've shot a lot of different shotguns, and some are better than others. You get what you pay for. You can buy an over-and-under these days for less than \$500. Or you can rob a bank with the \$500 model and spend upward of \$250,000 on a Holland & Holland. Either one will do the job, but one will last a whole lot longer than the other.

I started out hunting partridge with a 20-gauge Remington autoloader. It was a pretty good little gun with a short barrel, and I killed a lot of birds with it, but autoloaders can jam and need to be disassembled and cleaned frequently. I envied hunters with over-and-unders and, even more, the classic side-by-sides.

When I began to shoot clays, I bought a 12-gauge Remington 1100 autoloader, a very affordable gun, and learned to completely dismantle it so I could really clean it properly. I shot that gun a lot, and it is a formidable and dependable shotgun. Many championships have been won on the skeet field with a Remington autoloader. I installed a competition trigger and bought some aftermarket chokes, and I shot that gun for a long time.

Then one day I fell in love with a nifty little gun, a North American Versatile Hunting Dog Association (NAVHDA) gun. The gun is a 20-gauge Beretta Onyx with the forcing cones lengthened and the barrel cut down to 20 inches. No choke, just a cylinder bore. It's very easy to tote all day in the woods and kills birds out to 30 yards reliably. Because of the open barrel, it does not pepper the birds too hard.

The gun drew many curious onlookers. It looked like something you might use to rob a liquor store. But if ever there was a fun gun, this was it. I still use it in the woods during bird season. It is my all-time favorite field gun, but it is not really a clays gun.

most unobtrusive color—white. In other words, stay away from the after-market add-ons. They will only draw your eye away from the target, leading to a miss.

Barrel Length

Over the years, barrel lengths have become longer and longer. In general, longer is better if your build allows it.

The longer a barrel, the smoother it swings. But the additional length usually means more weight, especially on your forward hand. Additional weight out front can make the gun front heavy and difficult to swing

I purchased a Rizzini 12-gauge over-and-under, my first real clays gun, which came with all the chokes necessary to shoot my new favorite game. But the gun was heavy and awkward and the triggers were very heavy and creep-ridden.

I graduated to a Browning 625, and that was a very big step forward. Mark advised me that if I was going to dedicate myself to my new passion I should buy a quality gun that would last a lifetime. I decided to buy a Krieghoff K-80. A Krieghoff is a German shotgun built like a battleship. It is made to shoot hundreds of thousands of rounds and is the pinnacle of German engineering.

So I sold all my other guns and bought a \$10,000 Krieghoff. (People who balk at the price should consider that many outdoorsmen buy motorcycles, skimo-bikes, camps, boats, and other expensive toys in that price range.)

And what a gun! It shoots like a dream, has triggers that break like glass, and balances like a scale.

Most other guns, with the possible exception of a Perazzi, are simply not built for the punishment of high-volume shooting. With a yearly service, a Krieghoff will last a lifetime.

Mark and I recommend buying your K-80 from Chris Maest of Clay Target Sports in Princeton, New Jersey. He will fit the gun to your personal specifications, and this makes all the difference in the world. Chris was a service manager for Krieghoff, so he knows his stuff.

Every expert recommends that you look around and try different guns. Choose the one that feels best to you, and make your own judgment. Most shooters are friendly folks and will let you try their gun if you ask nicely, which is a great way to experience new guns shooting at real targets.