

The Trifecta of Shotshell Loading:

By **Andrea Bogard**

Break Point
Hold Point
Look Point
Breathe...
Pull.

And a proper shot is made.... Hopefully.

Shooting flying targets is widely regarded as being both an art and a science. In fact, a well-executed wing or clay shot can be likened to a beautifully choreographed dance made possible by physics and firepower along with a healthy sprinkling of fairy dust, if we're being honest.

Those that reload for said discipline can argue that the same principles apply to the creation of the shell that makes it all possible. Toward that end, it is my distinct pleasure to bring you a recent foray into the wonderful world of shotshell loading, compliments of Dillon Precision.

Dillon Precision, while not a household name in the shotgunning world, is an international leader in ballistic-related engineering. They have pioneered progressive loaders in the centerfire pistol and rifle worlds in much the same way Henry Ford popularized and perfected the assembly line. They also make a shotshell loader that parallels the engineering excellence of their metal-centric offerings. That, my friends, is the SL900.

The SL900 is made in 12-, 20- and 28-gauge platforms with conversion kits available. In lieu of purchasing an entirely new loader to load something different, the SL900 can be converted from gauge to gauge with minimal impact to settings and function. I haven't explored that facet at this time, so I can't speak to it personally.

Let's talk about what has been discovered so far. First off, the directions for assembly are FABULOUS. They are clear, concise, visually

effective and beautifully sequenced. Once the thing is put together and bolted up, it looks like a fancy espresso machine or an azure-hued still (my nail girl actually waxed poetic about what a "pretty color" my new coffee maker was). Personally, I can't imagine consuming enough caffeine to justify a bean grinder as large as the optional casefeeder, but, you know, different strokes....

Getting the SL900 making shootable shells was a more difficult proposition than putting the thing together. The instructions, while fabulous, were geared toward the 12-gauge version and this was the 28-gauge platform, so all settings needed to be adjusted accordingly. Additionally, the instructions described Winchester AAs, but the test shell included was a Remington STS. These can differ in length, thus altering crimp and taper settings.

While the courtship was a little rocky with the SL900, the moral and technical support were beyond exemplary. Enter, Gary Kieft. Gary is the voice, face and loader whisperer extraordinaire for Dillon Precision.

Gary patiently responded to my barrage of emailed questions and phone calls with the professionalism and aplomb of a trained therapist.

Like a well-executed shot, a properly made shotshell takes a lot of pieces and processes working in perfect harmony to achieve

