

The Ultimate Practice Shooting Center

by Steve Smith



We all know that in order to be the sort of spectacular wingshot we know in our hearts were are destined to be, our guns must fit us. And many people each year seek the services of a pro who specializes in doing that for us. But do you want to take a guess about who is the hardest for a professional stock-fitter to work with, to fit a shotgun stock so that the gun will shoot where the shooter is looking? Experienced wingshooters who have used a lot of different shotguns over the years. The reason is, they – we – being aware of the out-of-focus barrel(s) slightly below the line of sight, almost instantly fit ourselves to the gun, not the other way around.

And do you know how the savvy fitters get around this? Instead of immediately going outside and shooting patterns by mounting and shooting quickly at a stationary board, they start off with a fitting in the dark. That's right. Total darkness except for a laser gadget stuck in the shotgun's muzzle and a lighted spot on a wall the fitter mounts and "fires" at.

And do you know the best way to keep sharp between hunting seasons? Well, by shooting a lot, of course, but basically, by handling and swinging your gun.

Now, the Robert Louis Company has tied both of these together in a nifty setup they call *The Ultimate Practice Shooting System*. It consists of a laser light for the muzzle, and a moving dot that you project on a wall and then "shoot" at by firing the laser via a button that attaches to your trigger finger when that finger touches the trigger.

According to the company's pro shooter, Bob Foegel, a certified NSSA Instructor, "In a typical 15 minute practice session, the shooter will swing and mount his gun 200 times. The shooter picks a speed that he is comfortable with and direction – say crossers from the left or right or a quartering rise at an angle so typical of a pheasant or quail rising from a pointing dog. When the shooter touches his trigger, the red laser displays the shot on the wall and hopefully

shows the shot leading the target with a smooth follow-through. Also fast target acquisition is one of the practice drills we work on.

"Errors are seen instantly – like stopping the gun or not leading the target. But back to basics is the key to success in any sport, and the swing and mount and concentration on the target for the shooter is the key to more hits. And also, as a result of the practice, [the shooter gains] complete familiarity with his gun and his ability to control it – especially in the field where the shots vary wildly with each opportunity."

You can get the laser to fit the muzzles of 12-, 20-, and 28-gauges as well as .410. I used the system with my favorite 12-gauge pheasant gun in anticipation of a five-state pheasant hunt I plan to take this fall, which is the only time I'll be shooting that gun. I found that besides helping me with my mechanics, I found that it's a lot of fun.

Rather than trying to hit the moving spot with the laser dot, I made sure I was swinging through and leading the spot. As Bob has said, you can set it for right-to-left crossers, left-to-right, risers, doubles – anything, really. The gadget can be voice-activated, and the speeds can be changed from barely crawling to, "No way I can catch up with that."

In the literature that comes with the unit, there is a target you can use to ascertain gun fit. With it, comes a small chart showing that if your shots at the target with the laser hit *here*, or *here*, or *there*, it means the stock is too high or too low or there's not enough cast or...any of the other possibilities or combinations that can be fixed to make the stock fit you. I mean, a stock can be too high and also not have enough cast.

There's a lot of information about this setup at the company's website: www.shotgungaugecombo.com, or you can call 800-979-9156. ●