

# BUILDING A BETTER BORE GAUGE

As the old saying goes, build a better mousetrap and . . . well, probably not in the esoteric arena of shotgun bore gauges. But we might see the small world of double-barrel shotgun aficionados beat a path to Bob Foege's door.

I received a new shotgun choke, bore and wall-thickness gauge to test that might appeal to serious gunners, collectors and gun-show shoppers. The Boremaster has some great advantages over traditional gauges. Made by Foege's Robert Louis Co.—which also makes the Shotgun Combo Gauge (reviewed in Nov/Dec '04)—it's small and can measure any bore, choke or chamber configuration from .410 to 4 gauge. It also can measure barrel-wall thickness six inches in from the muzzle or breech. This feature alone could save 30 pounds of luggage on a gun-show trip.

In operation, the device (basically an electronic inside caliper with two six-inch arms) differs from traditional gauges and takes a little practice for good results. The key to success with this tool is to follow the directions. To this end, the company supplies thorough written instructions and an excellent instructional DVD. All of that and additional pertinent information are available on the company's Website.

The gauge operates "backward," from the smallest to the largest diameter, making its use somewhat counter-intuitive. After inserting it at the muzzle, you hold the gauge in your hand, jiggle it slightly to let the spring-loaded arms settle into the largest diameter, and push the gauge into the choke to measure it. If you try pulling it from the nominal bore through the choke, it will not work.

To obtain wall-thickness readings with the Boremaster, a supplied plastic block is attached to one end of the lower arm

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and a rubber "O" ring is slipped over both arms. Now calibrate the instrument to the supplied .025" reference plate and make a reading from muzzle or breech end using the instrument as an outside caliper. Because the arms are 6 inches long, that's the farthest into the barrels the device can read. Most honed-out barrels will reveal themselves well within that distance. As a chamber gauge, the Boremaster provides a great deal of information. It can read nominal chamber diameter and then give a continuous readout of the chamber profile up and through the forcing cone. By looking at the numeric scale on the side of the arm, the depth can be read at any diameter.

At \$269.95, I don't know if the Boremaster will be for everybody, but for the serious collector or dealer trying to inspect a used gun for chamber, wall-thickness or choke issues, it could save more than its purchase price with one use. And for portability, this gauge is unsurpassed.

For more information, contact the Robert Louis Co., 800-979-9156; [www.shotguncombogauge.com](http://www.shotguncombogauge.com). —Clair Kofoed