

SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 2018

SPECTATOR ARCHERY



A Ring-necked Pheasant is shown in flight against a clear, bright blue sky. The bird's wings are fully extended, revealing intricate patterns of brown, tan, and white feathers. Its body is dark with a prominent red face and a white collar around its neck. The bird is positioned in the upper right quadrant of the frame, flying towards the right.

JUST RIGHT FOR RINGNECKS

The author kicks off the pheasant season with Krieghoff's new K-20 Parcours. **BY DOUG PAINTER**

Like a dollop of whipped cream on a slice of pecan pie, a pleasant bonus that comes along with leading a sportsman's life is the odds-on chance that you'll run into an old friend at one of those special places around the world that, from one season to the next, pulls in hunters from near and far.

Some such locales are lodgings like the Tidewater Inn in Easton, Maryland. Back in the day, waterfowlers from up and down the East Coast gathered in the Decoy Bar, then went down to the dining room for the hunter's breakfast where you could get your scrambled eggs and fried scrapple beginning at 4:30 a.m. It was a rare trip that I didn't end up sharing a cocktail or hasty cup of pre-dawn coffee with a hunting buddy I hadn't seen in a while.

Other such places are where you "jump off" to your final hunting or fishing destination. The airport in King Salmon, Alaska, for example, is a popular bush plane gateway to the Alaskan Peninsula. Heading out on a bear hunt one spring, I ran into a friend and fellow hunter that I had not seen in 20 years. He was returning from a successful hunt.

Similarly, the airport in Sioux Falls, South Dakota, during the pheasant season is a central hub that brings in gunners from around the country. You have to love an airport that hangs a big banner at the entrance to baggage claim that reads, "Welcome Hunters."

It was here, in late November of 2016, that I ran



Dieter and Betty Krieghoff pause during one of the pheasant walk-ups at Cheyenne Ridge Signature Lodge.

From left: With the new K-20 Parcours atop his shoulder, the author shares his thoughts—all positive—on the gun's performance with Dieter Krieghoff and company COO Alex Diehl.

into my friend Alex Diehl, chief operating officer for Krieghoff International. We had both, of course, been pheasant hunting, but for Alex it had not been all play. He had spent the past week field-testing a prototype of a new Krieghoff game gun on fast-flying native birds. The shotgun would be in production the next year, so Alex suggested we get together on a pheasant hunt the following season when this new addition to the Krieghoff lineup would make its public debut.

For those not familiar with this iconic German company, Krieghoff is a family business, one that spans five generations and one where uncompromising quality has always been the firm's hallmark.

"Family traditions," emphasizes Dieter Krieghoff, one of the firm's three managing directors as well as president of Krieghoff International, "help define who we are and what we represent."

"Since 1886 the Krieghoff family has taken pride in their tradition of crafting exceptional firearms that have stood the test of time."

For almost 70 years after its founding, Krieghoff's specialty had been making drillings and combination guns for the European market. In 1954, a top American trap shooter, L.M. Donaldson and his German partner, Viktor Brandl, presented the idea of manufacturing Remington's discontinued Model 32 at Krieghoff's Ulm factory in southern Germany for distribution in the U.S. The Model 32 was an over-and-under target gun introduced by Remington in 1932 and sold until wartime production halted its run in 1942. After the war, Remington decided not to reintroduce the model.

Using the basic design of Remington's Model 32 as a starting point, Krieghoff developed its own K-32 Model, which debuted in 1957. It quickly found favor with American clay target shooters and, by the early



1970s, was the leading over-and-under among the competitive ranks of U.S. trap and skeet shooters.

Not resting on its laurels, the company began to redesign its flagship model in the late 1970s with an eye to improving the original design, notably upgrading the gun's adjustable trigger, optimizing stock designs for specific clay target disciplines, and introducing a wide range of new rib and barrel configurations. The result was the release in 1980 of Krieghoff's K-80, an evolutionary design that once again set the standard for a high-grade clay target over-and-under.

With a wide variety of models for trap, skeet and sporting clays and, with a range of configurations within each clay target discipline, today's K-80 has evolved into a highly flexible and feature-rich competition gun that has also gained a reputation for strength and reliability. According to Krieghoff, it's not unusual for a K-80 to shoot a million rounds and still be going strong.

Knowing Krieghoff's family legacy, I could not think of a more appropriate hunting location for our planned outing than Cheyenne Ridge Signature Lodge, owned by the Weinreis family. With roots in the Dakotas that go back to the early 1900s, the Weinreis' success story has also been built on a family heritage, one of farming and ranching that now spans four generations. Creating an atmosphere that brings family and friends together is the signature aspect of this great American hunting lodge.

Located less than a half-hour from the Pierre, South Dakota airport and over-looking Lake Oahe, Cheyenne Ridge Signature Lodge is by no means your typical bunkhouse operation. The lodge includes 28 private, single-occupancy guest rooms plus five suites, each featuring handcrafted Amish furnishings and a long list of in-room luxury amenities.

High Adventure Company manages the lodge and General Manager and Executive Chef Sean Finley is on site to oversee an exceptional staff and memorable cuisine. How about a thick slice of pan-fried prime sirloin to go along with your breakfast omelet? And forget the soggy tuna sandwich and bag of chips for lunch. Instead, return from your morning hunt and savor buffalo sausages served over real mashed potatoes and fresh peas drizzled with a blueberry reduction sauce.



Krieghoff's handsome new K-20 Parcours.

Barry Rich of Double Guns of Nashville was instrumental in helping to supply the hunters with Krieghoff guns.



Following your afternoon hunt, come back to cocktails and house favorite hors d'oeuvres such as smoked pheasant pate and wild duck empanadas. Try not, however, to over-indulge since dinner will be one of chef Finley's signature entrees—his prime rib and bone-in rib eye presentations, for instance, rivaling the top steak houses in the country.

Guests I've spoken too also appreciate the lodge's inclusive pricing with no extra charges for everything from shells, vintage wines and premium liquors to the fine cigars you can enjoy in the lodge's famed Ice Bar along with your favorite after-dinner drinks.

I was very pleased that it was not only Alex Diehl who would be joining me on this hunt but also Dieter Krieghoff and his wife, Betty, along with a dozen of their friends, all Krieghoff aficionados and avid sportsmen and sportswomen.

Susan Bernard of Bernard and Associates, *Sporting Classics'* national advertising firm, and her husband, Deane, were also on board. Altogether, a great group of

friends and fellow shooters to help kick off our K-20 hunt.

Ken Pfau, general manager at Rio Ammunition, provided all of us with their aptly named Royal Pheasant Loads. These shells feature true copper plated—not just washed—shot together with a new wad design and powders designed for higher payloads. If you did your part, these shells wouldn't let you down.

I may be wrong on this, but it's my sense that the game of sporting clays has somewhat altered, at least among those many hunters who shoot the game, about some of the notions that go into making a great game gun. First, it's highly likely that your sporter is the shotgun you shoot the most, by far, each year. As a result, it has become, in a sense, the de facto standard, the gun with which you are the most comfortable and most confident.

Along the way, you've learned that a somewhat heavier but well-balanced shotgun with longer barrels does wonders for initiating a smooth swing and promoting a good follow-through. If you're an old-timer like me, you remember when shotguns with 26-inch barrels were de rigueur at the skeet range and in the field. Not anymore.

The legendary strength and reliability of the K-80 action is at the heart of Krieghoff's new K-20 Parcour. Slimmer and lighter, it nonetheless has all the technical features of its "big brother" and is specifically built for the 20 gauge, not just a small-gauge barrel set in a normal-sized receiver.

The result? A new standard for game guns: an over-and-under weighing just under seven pounds and sporting either 30- or 32-inch barrels and available with either a trim, Prince of Wales hunting-style stock or with a sporting stock with adjustable comb.

The K-20 action serves to center the weight of the gun between your hands, exactly where it should be to support a smooth swing and to create the perception that the gun is lighter than it is. The tough-as-nails K-20 action and the gun's heft also make this smoothbore ideally suited for high-volume hunting, whether driven pheasant or red legged partridge or a classic dove shoot in Argentina. This is not a shotgun that will wilt after a few hundred rounds.



Betty Krieghoff (left) and Susan Bernard of Bernard and Associates compare notes after pushing a field filled with big, colorful roosters.

The first hunt of every new season brings with it not only a sense of anticipation but also a sense of renewed optimism, that the days ahead will be the best yet. Our hunt at Cheyenne Ridge was all I could ask for, whether first or last hunt of the year. The birds flew fast, and we shot confidently and, for the most part, on the mark. At the end of the day, we dined superbly and savored a glass or two of exceptional wine. Above all, we enjoyed that unique camaraderie that exists between men and women who share time afield together.

At Cheyenne Ridge Signature Lodge, they like to say that they've set a new standard for an old tradition. Appropriately, the same could be said for Krieghoff's new K-20 Parcour. ■

The K-20 pheasant hunt at Cheyenne Ridge brought together many friends of the Krieghoff family and aficionados of the firm's guns.

IF YOU WANT TO GO

To book your own hunt, contact Sean Finley at John Burrell's High Adventure Company: (317) 441-0483 or visit highadventurecompany.com.

For more information on Krieghoff shotguns visit krieghoff.com or call (610) 847-5173.

