



Legacy SHOTGUNS

Grouse guns handed down from generation to generation.

BY BRITNEY BOOTH

“Beware of the man with one gun,” the old saying goes. That man, if he’s anything like my dad, will know how to use it, and use it well. His “one gun” is a 12-gauge Winchester 101

with improved/modified barrels, purchased in 1972 for \$125 from a private owner who originally purchased the gun for his wife when it was built in 1964. The gun sat, mostly unused, from the time it was built to the time

my dad bought it. He loved it so much he snapped up another 12-gauge 101 with skeet/skeet barrels when it became available from a client he guided at a hunt club. Since then, both have seen more than their fair share

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of burnt powder, but the first 101 he purchased has been his go-to shotgun for ruffed grouse, as well as any other upland bird he's hunted.

I've always idolized my dad and wanted to be just like him. My journey into hunting when I was a kid was mostly because I just wanted to spend time with him, and this morphed into my own love for conservation and wildlife as I got older. My dad and I have owned a business together, we've butted heads because our personalities are similar, and we've traveled the world hunting together. We both share an affinity for ruffed grouse hunting, German shorthaired pointers, and of course, the Winchester 101.

We're also a competitive family, and my dad and I have had a healthy wager going for the majority of my life—to see who can outshoot the other. It seldom happens that I'm on the winning end of the shotgun. He's got the 101 mojo working for him. My dad has always said I would get his first 101 passed down to me, but that's not happening anytime soon, thankfully. So, about 10 years ago, I did what any good daughter would do. I asked to borrow his skeet/skeet 101, and I never gave it back. I figured I would get a little mojo rubbed off on me and level the playing field. Since then, it's been my go-to shotgun for early season grouse hunting.

Recently, my husband's uncle passed away, and I was gifted his 20-gauge 101 with improved/modified barrels. A little research uncovered the gun was made after 1973 and before 1987, but no records exist for the exact date, which may be be-



cause of a fire at the Winchester plant in Connecticut. We don't know the back story as to where the gun came from, or how my husband's uncle came to have it, but I'm honored that I was chosen to continue the legacy, and it's definitely given me great 101 mojo on my ruffed grouse hunts.

Do I have other, new shotguns? Sure, but I prefer to use the shotguns passed down to me because they're special. Along with the emotional connection of legacy and tradition, older guns tend to be better quality because they are machined and not stamped. There are a few downsides to shooting a legacy shotgun: a lot of the American classics have a significant drop at comb and heel and may need some stock work if you want to turn them into a good shooting gun. Chokes on older guns are generally tighter, and depending on barrel thickness, they would need to be bored out—the shooter would need to use different shotgun shell loads to achieve his or her desired pattern.

Tom Keer from Massachusetts has a third-generation Parker VH16 with 26-inch barrels that was originally choked improved cylinder/modified. His grandfather swapped a half side of beef for for the gun in the late 1930s. The gun was lightly used by Tom's dad for skeet shooting and occasional hunts until it was passed down to Tom. The first season he used it, he was frustrated because it was bored too tight for ruffed grouse hunting. "I wanted to wrap it around a tree, put it in a closet, or sell it," he said. He decided to bore it out to cylinder/skeet, and shoot different loads of shells, depending on what





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kind of game he was shooting. Once he made those changes, the gun became his go-to gun for upland hunting. "Shooting a gun that was given to you carries more weight and sentimental value than one that you bought new," he said.

Giuseppe Papandrea of New York is a first-generation American with a deep family history of upland hunting. His parents were from Southern Italy and lived in a very impoverished area. In the early 1960s, Giuseppe's dad Francesco moved to Canada for work, where he purchased 12-gauge Spanish Gorosabel with 30-inch barrels for \$64 from a Sears store. The Gorosabel was Francesco's one-and-only gun, and he used it to shoot ruffed grouse, rabbit, and deer. The gun shop where he purchased his 12-gauge also had a 16-gauge, 20-gauge, and .410 caliber matching gun set for \$200. At

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the time, he didn't have the money to purchase them.

Before he passed away, Francesco passed the Gorosabel down to his grandson and namesake, Giuseppe's son Francesco, and asked that Giuseppe find the other gauges and complete the set for Francesco. Giuseppe has been searching for the guns since 1999, but hasn't had any luck finding them. "I love the gun because it was my dad's, not because it was the best gun, or the most ex-

pensive. The gun has stood the test of time and still looks and works like it's brand new. My dad loved it, I love it, and I'm sure my son will love it when he's old enough to grouse hunt too."

Lanny Barnes lives in Colorado and has spent significant time hunting ruffed grouse in Utah when she was there with her twin sister Tracy training for the Olympic biathlon. Lanny's shotgun of choice is a Remington Wingmaster 870, gifted to her by her Godfather before he passed away from cancer. Being Olympic biathletes and outdoor enthusiasts, the sisters have their choice of guns to use, but they always come back around to the 870. Lanny has shot her first (and many more thereafter) turkey, pheasant, quail, and grouse with the gun.

"I've put so much time into that shotgun, and I feel like it is good luck. I feel like my Godfather is look-

ing down on me while I'm using it, and it gives me a sense of pride to be able to take something he loved so much and use it in the field," she said. Lanny plans to keep the 870 in her family. If she and her husband have kids, she will pass it down to them, or to one Tracy's kids.

Cameron Ingle currently resides in New York and hunts the Catskills for ruffed grouse with his grandfather's 1978 Remington 1100 Field & Stream edition. When Cameron was 17 years old, his future wife's dad and two of his friends took him out to hunt as a "get to know you" event to see if he was good enough to date his daughter. Cameron took his grandfather's 1100 and shot his first upland bird with it, and from then on, he was hooked on hunting and the 1100. After his grandfather gift-

ed him the 1100, Cameron's parents told him that he had to buy a safe to store the gun if he was going to have it in the house. When Cameron turned 18 years old, he started to fill up the safe with other shotguns, but he always chooses to shoot 1100 because it's his favorite.

"The 1100 is just comfortable. I've had it in my hands for so long I feel like it is part of my family, and it's just easy to shoot. The guns were built so well and differently back then. When you shoulder it, it just feels great," Cameron said.

Legacy shotguns might not be the most-flashy or expensive guns on the market, and hunters definitely have the opportunity to purchase something new over getting a classic shotgun worked on, but they're worth the monetary invest-

ment due to their sentimental value. In 2014, after 42 years of toting his Winchester 101 through the grouse woods, my dad decided to have the buttstock refinished and Briley chokes put in. Two years after that, the buttstock warped, so he searched for an original 101 buttstock to replace the old one. The total cost was around \$1,000, but, to him, it was well worth it. He could have bought a new gun for a little more than what he paid to have old gun his redone, but it just wouldn't be the same.

My dad's legacy gun is special, and holds lot of memories for both him and me. He says he loves it because he's shot it for so long that it's just an extension of his body, but I think it's also an extension of his heart, and the love we both share for grouse hunting. 🍂

