

THE GENTLE

MOST of the top shooters now agree that the modern one-ounce competition load is every bit as good as the 1 1/8 cartridge that preceded it. A slight loss in density of shot has been amply compensated for by other factors.

One of the original ideas behind the ounce was to lower the recoil levels to which shooters were subjected. To a large degree that objective was achieved, but, with a lighter load of lead up front, manufacturers found that they could boost velocities, hold good patterns, and still keep that kickback and muzzle flip within reasonable bounds.

However, ultimate velocity is not the total answer to competition success, and what are "reasonable bounds" to some shooters represent an uncomfortable tap on the shoulder to others. And if recoil is kept very low the advantages of comfort and ultra-rapid second-target acquisition can outweigh a slight loss in speed — providing that loss is but slight.

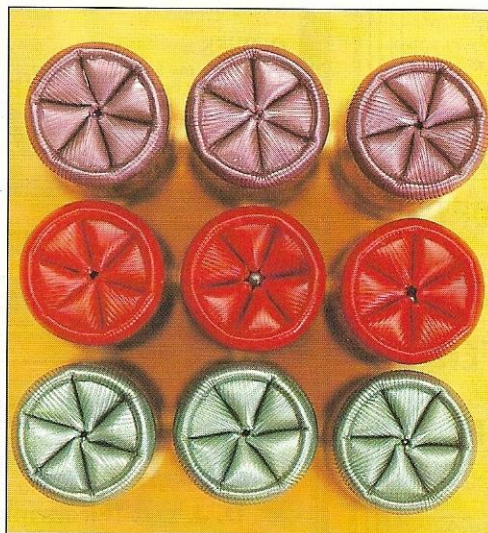
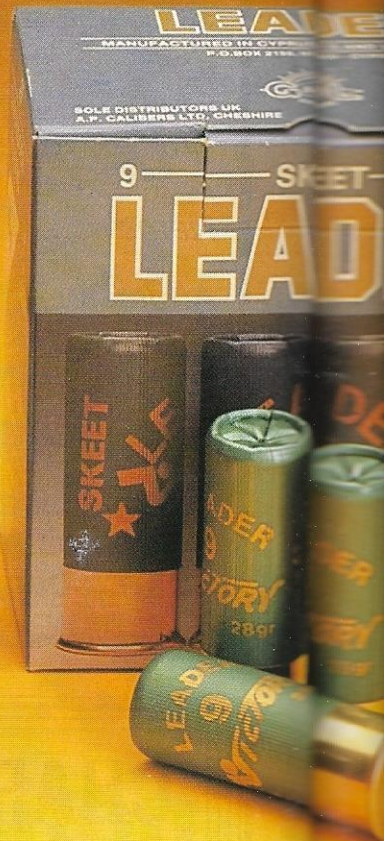
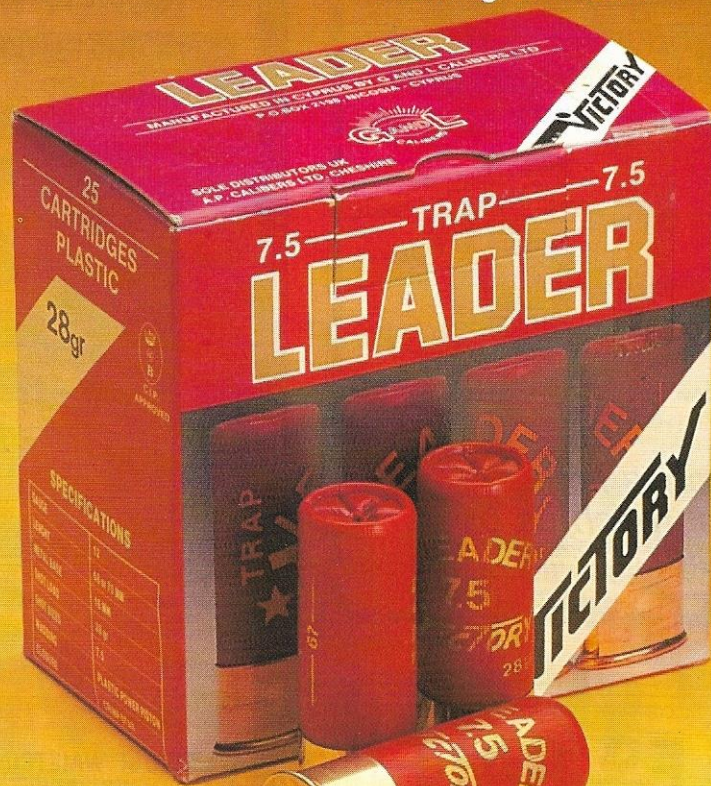
Such is the case with the new Victory Leader series, which has been introduced alongside the established Challenger to offer shooters something a little more gentle but with some hidden "extras".

An early convert is regular Victory shooter John Woolley a top-line instructor and competitor as well as a Sporting Gun columnist. In future John plans to keep his Challengers solely for ultra-long targets, and to use the Leaders for all the rest of his shooting.

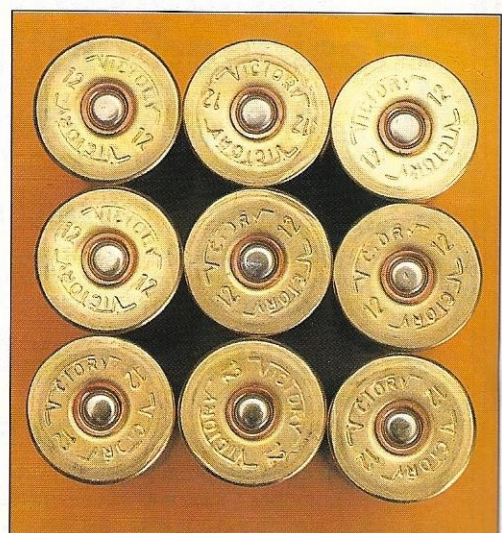
He has been using Challengers successfully for two years, and admits that some people he meets find them a bit too punchy for total comfort. "The first batch of Leaders I tried, I honestly didn't know they had gone off, they were so light in recoil. But I still got quality kills, even against some quite difficult and distant edge-on targets.

"I didn't really notice the fact they were a little slower than the Challengers until I tried them against some teal targets. I've had a bit of a problem shooting in front lately, and with the

Victory's new shell may not be the fastest in the business, but it has some fine qualities which aid both accuracy and shooting comfort.



The cases are closed with neat, six-star crimps, which enclose exactly 28gr of shot.

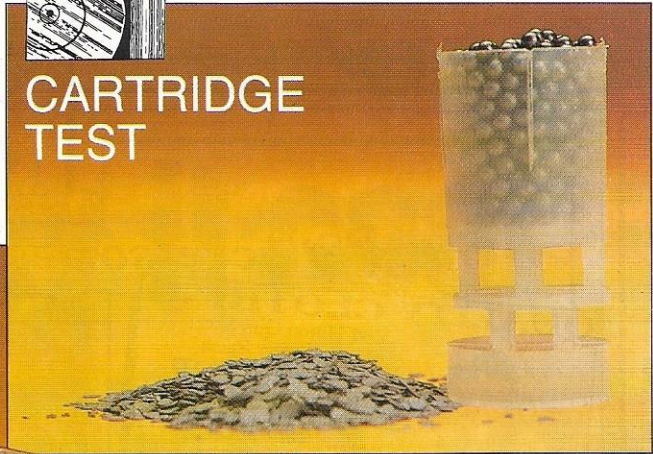


Cases are headstamped "Victory", and the heads carry well-seated Cheddite primers for reliable ignition.

GIANTS



CARTRIDGE TEST



Powder, shot and wads used in the Leaders are all quality components, the wads being made by Victory.

Left: The new Victory Leaders come in handily colour-coded boxes with cartridge cases to match.



Manufacturers G and L Calibres of Cyprus have put together some super shells using top-quality components. They make their own wads and cases (these particular cases having deep, 16mm brass heads), and light an L28 powder with a Cheddite primer. They make some of the shot themselves, and buy in some from sources in Greece and Italy.

The 7½ and 8 shot was dimensionally accurate to English sizes and recorded a crush value of 34 per cent. The skeet shot was a bit small — nearer English size 10 — and, as expected, quite a bit softer.

The hardness might have been a bit disappointing purely on test figures (best trap shot has a crush value of 30 or less), but there's no suggestion that it doesn't do its job. And the roundness, surface finish, and dimensional consistency of the pellets was excellent.

For Sporting shooters the shells come with an added bonus. Both the packs and the shell cases are colour-coded (red for 7½, purple for 8, and green for 9), and this spells a total end to firing point fumbling when you wish to load different shells for different targets.

Overall impression was of a series of very well thought-out and constructed cartridges which stand well alongside the already-proven Challenger series and offer both the committed shooter and the newcomer a really useful, low-recoil alternative.

Victory cartridges are distributed to the trade by AP Calibres of Cheshire, Tel: 0565-54117.

Challengers I was noticeably snipping the noses off the clays. The Leaders, however, were smacking the clay right in the middle of what seemed to be an excellent pattern. The difference, therefore, isn't much, but the recoil level is definitely better."

We tested three shot sizes, 7½, 8 and 9, and found that the results from the proof gun bore out John's thoughts exactly.

Observed velocities for the three shells were 1,081, 1,054, and 1,044 ft/sec respectively, and the average pressure for all three shot sizes was under three tons. Highest pressure came from the eights and that was only 2.9. And velocity spread in the batches was amazingly close, maximum difference being a mere 45 ft/sec.



The shells are a neat package, the cases having deep, 16mm brass heads.



Victory play it cool

THERE is a corner of a foreign factory office which is forever England. A fridge. It sits four square in a cool room on the outskirts of Nicosia, Cyprus waiting for sample loads of Victory cartridges to 'acclimatise' before they're slipped into a test gun and chronograph for proof readings to be taken.

If the sample loads don't come up to scratch after a pre-determined period in the cooler then the entire batch is taken back to the factory, emptied and re-loaded again.

It doesn't happen often. Hardly ever in fact.

This is because the family-run company of G and L Calibres have been loading shells for the British market for several years now — certainly long enough to know what subtle changes are needed between the cartridges made for their home market and the climatic conditions experienced here.

The fact that cartridge sales to Britain have grown and grown in recent years says much about the care Victory takes over its product. Britain, in fact, is by far and away the company's biggest customer. Exports are numbered in millions and the figure is rising.

In fact the success now being enjoyed here has helped generate new markets. Mainland Europe beckons, as does the huge continent of Australia.

To meet demand Victory has had to vacate its original factory built 12 years ago and move to purpose-made premises on a modern industrial estate a mile or two down the road. Not only has company head Lakis Phisomolophis doubled production at a stroke by moving to new premises, he has also planned it for future expansion.

New high-capacity Italian loading machines have been installed and extra staff taken on to keep them running up to 24 hours a day.

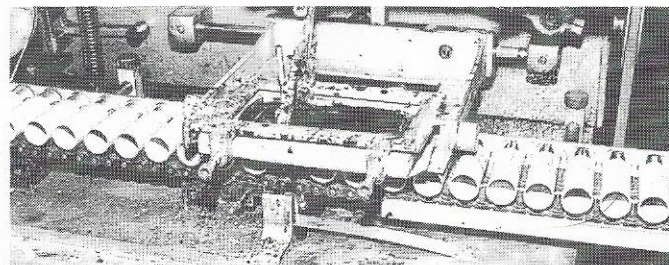
Out of the fridge and into the gun — that's the recipe for G & L's British — market cartridges



Victory's owner, Lakis Phisomolophis watches as more challenger shells come off the production line.



Each batch of cartridges is tested for consistency before being allowed out of the factory.



Cartridge cases going through the printer.

A reminder to the workforce!

ΠΟΙΟΤΗΣ
ΕΙΝΑΙ ΕΥΘΥΝΗ ΟΛΩΝ

QUALITY

IS EVERYBODY'S BUSINESS

Lakis looks back with considerable pride on how his company has grown in the 12 years it has been in operation. He started with one small machine, bought in all the components and started loading. While he stills buys-in lead shot and primers from Italy along with powder from Spain the company now makes all its own cartridge cases and brass heads.

In the early days he confined himself to one or two different loads but, as the order book grew, so too did his range. The choice available to game and competition shooters is now quite staggering — and lately the company has branched out into 20 bore and .410 shells too.

Sales to game shooters have always been important but the biggest growth has been generated by competition shooters. Lakis' experience as a top class skeet shooter (he's represented Cyprus at the Olympic Games) has helped no end but he listens carefully to the comments of other shooters — particularly the British.

"There's no point loading cartridges which your shooters don't like so we talk to people and find out what they want from their ammunition" he said.

Judging by the numerous major successes at national and international level in recent years it's a policy which has paid off handsomely. Yet Victory aren't prepared to rest on their laurels. They are continually looking to improve...as witness the new Leader which has been designed to run alongside the much loved Challenger 1oz trap and skeet range.

Others are in the pipeline. As Lakis explained: "The cartridge market is fiercely competitive and anybody who doesn't look to the future is lost. We have every intention of being here for many years to come."

They're probably going to have to buy a bigger fridge...