

SPORTING SHOTGUNNER

BY DON ZUTZ

TRACER AMMO LETS SHOTGUNNERS SEE WHAT THEY'VE BEEN MISSING

Combat or defensive shotgunning is an instinctive sort of move. The gun isn't always shouldered for an accurate point. Much of the time it's merely locked between the upper arm and rib cage while natural eye/hand coordination takes care of the rest. And sometimes it works.

But then again, it doesn't. Not everyone is a superbly coordinated athlete, and what should be instinctively accurate can easily turn out to be pure hope-and hope blasting. In deed, this sort of hip shooting with the scattergun needs to be refined just the way it does with a handgun.

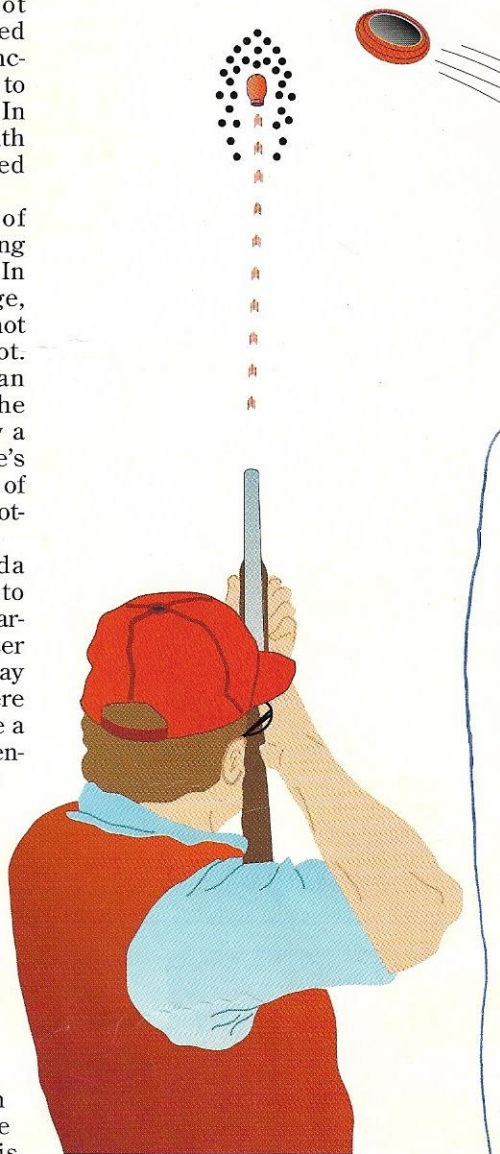
What expedites learning, of course, is knowing what you're doing wrong so that you can correct it. In fast-action, hip-style shotgun usage, this focuses on the course of the shot charge, be it buckshot or birdshot. And although we sometimes can make a correction by watching the gravel fly alongside, over, or below a target, the sight of the actual charge's flight line would be far better. That, of course, means tracers, which for shotguns have been mighty scarce.

But no longer! The Nevada Cartridge Company is beginning to supply 12-gauge shotshells of the target and buckshot variety with tracer elements! This will not only give clay target shooters a chance to see where they're missing, but it'll also provide a flashy line to show combat and defensive shooters where their patterns of buck have gone.

The buckshot rounds from Nevada Cartridge are 70mm long, meaning $2\frac{3}{4}$ inches, and they can be had in either #0 or #00 buck. The loads will have a rolled crimp, as a lot of interior space is needed to accommodate the tracer vehicle plus the buck pellets. A folded crimp simply took too much space. The company claims a 100 percent placement of the tracer vehicle in the main pattern at 40 yards, and the percentage of the tracer's visibility is 100 percent at 40 yards.

Great of a tracer acting as an aiming device has always thwarted popularity and widespread use

of tracers in shotguns. However, the Nevada Cartridge Co. believes it has licked that problem by controlling the length of the trace. Although it extends for 100 yards with buckshot loadings, the company is making



Tests showed the Tru-Tracer ammunition's tracer element stayed in the center of the pattern the majority of the time, giving an accurate picture of the shot trail.

skeet and trap fodder that burns for only 0.16 of a second, which is about 70 yards of flight.

In normal wingshooting, the tracer vehicle is still in the air at that point, and by the time it arches down to earth the air has cooled it to eliminate the chances of brush fires. It is only the buckshot round which has an extended trace life to a hundred strides.

Also available are 1 and $1\frac{1}{8}$ -ounce skeet and trap loads to help clay target shooters detect their misses. The one-ouncers come with No. 9s or $7\frac{1}{2}$ s; the $1\frac{1}{8}$ -ouncers with $7\frac{1}{2}$ s. The company claims that 80 percent of the one-ounce loads will find the tracer within eight inches of the center of the pattern. In the $1\frac{1}{8}$ -ounce loads, the tracer is said to be within nine inches of the core of the pattern 80 percent of the time, both distances being set at 40-yard patterning ranges.

My own patterning with the $1\frac{1}{8}$ -ounce charges indicates that Nevada Cartridge Co.'s claims are believable. Thus, we can basically rely upon the tracer to be inside the main 30-inch diameter a vast majority of the time, minimizing the old fears that tracer vehicles flipped out of the shot string and were misleading.

The name of these tracers is "Tru-Tracers," undoubtedly chosen to signify the relatively straightline flight of these elements. The company's address is 5401 Longley Lane, Suite 44, Reno, NV 89511. (702) 333-6680.

Victory shotshells are another new entry on the stateside scene. These were found in abundance in the 1992 International Sporting Clays championship (FITASC) last fall in Vermont. Enjoying a tremendous following and run of important wins in the U.K. and Europe, Victory ammunition is made by a relative newcomer to the shotshell industry, a company called G&L Calibers Ltd., of— get this— Nicosia, Cyprus!

When the British sporting press wrote up Victory loads, it called them "gentle giants" for their high performance with light recoil. The loads and the company were developed by one Lakis Psimolophitis, who is himself a well-traveled competitive shotgunner. The island of Cyprus does, in fact, have its own sporting clays facilities and active shooting crowd.

Victory loads are made in both target and hunting versions, but currently they are coming to the United States in only the target mode. These include the 28 and 32-gram shot charges, meaning about 1 and $1\frac{1}{8}$ ounces, respectively. Much European and British shotgunning has gone to the 28 gram charge lately, which is a 432 grain weight as opposed to the 437.5