



John Satterwhite gets ready to powder a target.

# Buffalo Bill and Clay Pigeons

by Billy Gianquinto

Photos by the author

S cattergunners all over the country are raving about sporting clays, five-stand, and other shotgunning games spawned from clays. Originating in Europe, sporting clays and its fellow games have caught on. I've tried them all, and I'm telling you they're exciting.

Sporting clays, or "golf with a shotgun" as it has been called, has captured the

imagination of the competitive shooter. Smoothbore enthusiasts are copying the golf nut, traveling the country to compete on different courses and experience clay pigeons zipping through the air from every possible angle, within beautiful landscapes. Every conceivable shot is thrown, and you never see the same shot twice. Hilly, flat, and open desert courses, over-

water shots—they're all out there.

As co-host of "Pull, America's Great Gun Clubs," which can be seen on the Outdoor Life Network, I had the opportunity to visit, shoot, and film some of the finest sporting clays courses in America, including the Homestead in Virginia with top pro David Judah, the Greenbriar in West Virginia, Sandanona in Upstate New

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Organizers of the Buffalo Bill Shootout (l to r): Jane Saunders, Karen Gibbons, and Sandi Lang.

York, and many more. Each course was as different as night and day. I thought I was a deadeye with a shotgun. Boy, did those courses humble me in a hurry. But what a challenge.

Sporting clays demands the right equipment. Guns, chokes (a must), shot size, even the right clothing will increase your success. Most of all, this sport requires tremendous concentration and practice. So if you want a shotgun challenge, this sport was made for you.

I was invited last summer to one of sporting clays' biggest events, the Buffalo Bill Celebrity Shootout in Cody, Wyoming. This annual competition draws shooters from all over the country and tests their skills at sporting clays, five-stand, wobble skeet, wobble trap, trap and skeet. The three-day competition, with big-time prizes, benefits one of the most beautiful museums in America, the Buffalo Bill Historical Center. Celebrities at the event have included General Norman Schwarzkopf, former Wyoming Senator Alan Simpson, Frank Stallone, and Roy Rogers' son, Dusty. A shooting sports "who's who" adds a special flavor to this event.

The sporting clays course is a high desert, rolling hill setup that will challenge any shooter. The five-stand course is one of the most challenging I've seen. This was the first time I'd shot wobble trap and wobble skeet. What is the wobble? It's just like trap and skeet—same stations, same angles—but at varying heights. Shooters never know how high or low the clay will be thrown. Sometimes it varies as much as 10 feet. It's more challenging than regular trap and skeet.

The city of Cody rolls out the red car-

pet for this annual event. Daily rodeos, barbecues—they even rope off streets for "Old West" gunfights and shows. On that weekend, John Satterwhite, one of the world's greatest trick shooters, put on a dazzling display of shotgunning skills. The shots were incredible.

The Buffalo Bill Historical Center is actually five museums in one. The Whitney Gallery of Art, the Buffalo Bill Historical Center, the Plains Indian Museum, the Cody Firearms Museum, and the newest addition, the Natural History Museum. The first time I visited the center a few years

ago, I spent six hours inside and didn't see everything. It seemed as if every gun ever made in America was on display. Browning, Remington, Winchester, Sharpes, you name them, they're all there. The artwork was breathtaking. Native American exhibits abound. And, of course, Buffalo Bill's influence is everywhere in the facility. Magnificent is the only word to describe this wonderful treasure. When passing by the exhibits you'll feel like you're going back in time to a wonderful place in history.

The shootout. The center. Cody Wyoming. Yellowstone Park. It's a "must see." And get this: Cab rides are free on Sundays. Now that ought to get you there. 🦋


*The author has been a professional caller for 28 years. He has authored a series of videos and cassettes on calling and waterfowling.*

*The Eastern Shoreman*



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