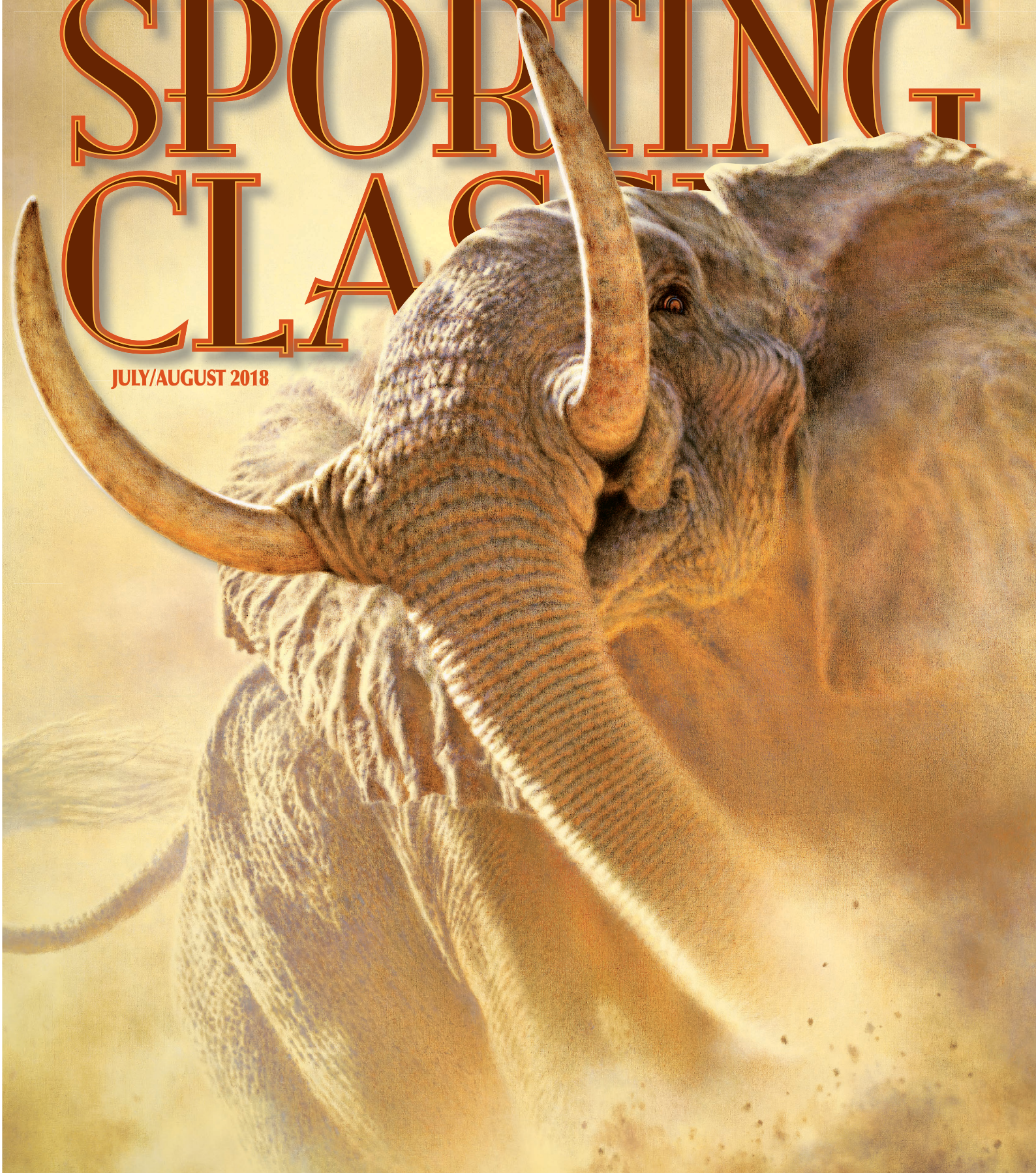


SPORTING CLASSES

JULY/AUGUST 2018





A few years back, I seem to disremember exactly when, I wrote one of those obligatory pieces that every outdoor writer is compelled to write once in a while about the theoretical question: What if you could only have one?

Of course, in my case, the question centered on shotguns. I dutifully listed all the requirements, ticked off all the boxes, and came to the inevitable conclusion that it had to be a 12-gauge repeater, preferably

a semi-auto, with interchangeable choke tubes. A 2¾-inch chamber would be adequate, but a 3-incher would be better. The gun would be fairly light, for small gamebirds, but somewhat heavier if the shooter's emphasis was going to lean more to the heavy end of the scale, such as waterfowl or turkeys. The same would be true for anyone who wanted to concentrate on any of the clay bird sports. Most importantly, it had to be well-balanced and comfortable in the hands.

There are gazillions of other details to consider for your ideal shotgun, of course, but there it is, my one paragraph, all-in-a-nutshell answer. This is what you need if you could own only one shotgun.

The prescription also works for a travel gun if you aren't going outside the U.S. If you're going on a trip that includes multiple hunting opportunities, for example, but only have space for one, this combination would do.

Just in passing, if you have a favorite

FABARM DESIGNED ITS NEW L4S GREY HUNTER PURELY WITH FUNCTION IN MIND.



shotgun or two for specific game, but want a single spare gun to cover all possibilities, it will also work as sort of a “universal back-up.” I’ve used one like this many times over the last 70-odd years. As usual, I digress, but it’s a bit of information worth thinking about.

A few days ago, I got in a new Fabarm L4S Grey Hunter to test. As I’m writing this, I’m in the throes of preparation for my annual, “get-away-from-the-

doldrums-and-heat” trip to somewhere—anywhere in the Southern Hemisphere where it’s autumn now. This time, I’m taking in Argentina (Patagonia to be specific), where cool breezes will swirl across the foothills of the Andes while I chase California quail, trout and red stag.

From there, I’m flying directly to the North Island of New Zealand to stalk red stag once again, and then slide down to the South Island where we’ll take to the snow-capped peaks of the Southern Alps

for tahr. It’s a tough job, but somebody’s got to do it!

Usually, I wouldn’t rush a test report but, in this case, I wanted to get the word out before I disappear on my annual migration. I’ve only had this gun a few days, but managed to put it through its paces pretty well to insure that it’s well made and reliable. At this point, I can unequivocally state that it is.

As with all new guns, I can’t tell you conclusively how it will handle decades of use but, from my vantage point, the L4S Grey looks really good. I’d be willing to wager a fair sum that it will last quite well. Obviously, I like it or you wouldn’t be reading about it here.

The gun is gas operated, which tends to ease recoil somewhat, but also has an integral recoil system that helps even more. Chambers are three inches; magazine capacity is the usually mandated three rounds. The barrels, which come in your choice of 26 or 28 inches, are fitted with choke tubes that are supplied with the gun. The stock is adjustable, as in many of the best new semis, but comes with



just a tad of cast-off at both toe and heel for the right-handed shooter. My sample weighs 6¾ pounds with its 28-inch barrel, and balances just ahead of where the hinge pin would be if the gun were a double.

There are lots of details on this gun that I like, but the real “tell” on any new gun are those things that jump out to catch your attention—that you don’t like. With this gun, there just aren’t any. And that’s saying a lot, because everyone in the industry knows that I’m a notorious nitpicker.

In fact, I’m semi-famous—to the extent that anybody in this business can be famous—for griping about details, stuff that isn’t right in some tiny way. An awkward line, a slip in the checkering, butt-heavy balance, a balky action, a gritty trigger, a shiny finish . . . just to name a few details that bug me. Even my all-time, most favored guns have some feature or detail that I can gripe about. That’s why I have this job.

Here are some things that I really like about the L4S. First, all the exterior finishes are attractive, low luster or matte. There are no high-gloss, game-spooking surfaces. There are no “swoopy,” stylized angles that detract from the gun’s functionality or just make it butt-ugly in the process. This also contributes to the natural, comfortable feel of the gun in the hand.

Additionally, the L4S is very nicely balanced. Not too far forward, not too far back. Goldilocks would call the balance “just right,” as is the weight that is neither too heavy for small game nor to light for extended sessions on bigger birds or clays. As near as I can tell, the gun was designed purely with function in mind and that’s just the way I like ‘em. A side benefit is that approach makes them lovely to look at as well.

As a reasonably priced, do-all shotgun, the L4S checks all the boxes. And, I can find absolutely nothing to complain about, which is truly remarkable.

It’s so remarkable that I’d spend my own money to buy one. That’s why, if you need a gun of this type, one that will handle everything from longbeards to jacksnipe (and almost everybody does), this gun deserves to be one of your top choices. ■

Fabarm’s L4S is available in three attractive grades. From left: Deluxe Hunter, silver action with detailed game scene, gold inlays and upgraded wood; Grey Hunter, silver action with game scene; Initial Hunter, black action.