

# Spray of Feathers

OUNCES ARE IMPORTANT WHEN YOU CARRY A GUN ALL DAY LONG.

By RICHARD VENOLA | Photography by ERIC R. POOLE







## CZ ULTRA LIGHT UPLAND



**“W**ear enough orange so that if you get shot, you’ll know it was intentional,” the outfitter warned. Even though the former vice-president wasn’t in the state, I took him at his word and orange’d up.

My editor had told me he wanted the gun tested in the field, and I’d Googled up the Gobblers Knob hunting reserve just out of town. Owner and master of hounds Don Deuel has been running pheasant, chukar and quail at the Knob for a dozen years. The next morning I met Don and his exuberantly enthusiastic, slobbering business associates, Worm and Pete. Worm is a German Wirehaired Pointer and Pete an English Pointer. The pheasants cooped in the back of the Chevy seemed significantly less thrilled by the day’s prospects.

Tens of thousands of shells have passed through my shotguns, but I’d never had the pleasure of taking pheasant over dogs. I had a couple of boxes of Federal shells with a pheasant silhouette on the cover, which told me they were probably the right tools for the job. As it turned out, an ounce and a quarter of No. 6s is heavier than the roosters required, and recoil in the light gun was considerable.

CZ shotguns are designed for hard work in the hands of working men. The new Huglu-built CZ import is designed with all-day hunting in mind, with its light weight of six pounds, five ounces. Author Terry

Wieland was visiting the office when the Upland arrived. He normally disdains anything that costs less than your house, but he had favorable comments about its weight and balance.

Don Deuel has run Gobblers Knob for the last 12 years, offering Illinois sportsmen a casual, quality upland-game experience. Pheasant, chukar and quail are raised on site, and superbly trained dogs complete the bill. When the satin-finished three-inch magnum arrived, we were able to book a hunt for the next day.

The gun’s mechanically set hammers are blessed with an American-style manual safety and operate with a single trigger. Trigger-pull weight on both barrels was a bit heavy at six pounds, but crisp and sharp. With retail price recommended at \$749, you can afford to run it down to the local gunsmith for a lightening.

The barrel selector’s detents were very positive, like the turn indicators on a Mercedes, and the safety engaged smoothly without any of the binding that used to be associated with Turkish guns.

While planting birds, Don commented that as a business owner he wished all shotguns had European-

**Formula for success: A very light, well-balanced shotgun and top-drawer ammo. Healthy birds, good dogs and a safe hunting environment completed the package.**

THE FOURTH BIRD WENT UP LIKE GOVERNMENT DEBT, EVADING BOTH SHOTS WITH NO INDICATION OF A HIT. SOMETIMES THEY GET AWAY.



The classic arrangement for upland game: Improved cylinder on the bottom, modified up top. The light-gathering fiber optic front sight grabs the eye, especially on gloomy days.



A single beefy double-sided extractor muscled out hulls with no difficulties. Tolerances in the action were superb.



The crew at Huglu did a fine job of putting together this gun. Its styling is tastefully understated.

style automatic safeties. All you need is one lawsuit to be out of business. Because of the style of American hunting, I much prefer a non-automatic safety, but the value of an automatic one comes into its own when guns are being passed from loader to shooting in a driven hunt.

Huglu's German-trained workforce builds all their guns on state-of-the-art CNC machines to extremely tight tolerances. One reassuring fact was that the brand-new gun went together very tightly, but even without lubricant there was no roughness or gritty binding. The action worked even better after a liberal application of Tetra Gun grease.

One concern regarding long-term field use is that the vented ribs holding the barrels together are just that—two ribs, with a trough-like space between them. A day in drizzling rain or some time in the bottom of the boat and you might have to use compressed air or large volumes of light oil to effectively get mud or water out of that space. As this is a serious hunting gun, this situation isn't out of the realm of the possible.

The normal at Gobblers Knob is to plant an even mix of hens and roosters, but we planted six roosters, as they're more photogenic than the hens. The common pheasant, *P. colchicus*, is one of the most sexually dimorphic species on earth, with the males being large and flamboyantly

#### SPECIFICATIONS

**TYPE:** Over/Under  
**GAUGE:** 12  
**CAPACITY:** 2  
**CHOKES:** IC, M, IM, F  
**OVERALL LENGTH:** 46 in.  
**BARREL LENGTH:** 26, 28 in.  
**WEIGHT:** 6 lb., 5 oz.  
**LENGTH OF PULL:** 14.5 in.  
**MSRP:** \$749



plumed, while the females are small and drably camouflaged. Don mostly raises blue-backed ring necks, and his birds were gorgeous and tasty. Pheasant sautéed in butter and onion is quite the treat.

Worm and Pete stood for four birds that had to be flushed. Even if you know the bird is there and that it's going to come out in a general direction, it's still quite startling when they explode from the Canary grass, rattling as they rapidly gain altitude. The big light-gathering chunk of fiber optic bead was quick on target, and the grooved rib presented an excellent plain to the eye.

The high-base Federal Game-Shok load lived up to its name on the first two birds. The improved cylinder choke in the lower barrel allowed for an excellent pattern that covered the bird, leaving large clouds of feathers drifting in the breeze. On the second bird, the shot broke both wings. The third bird evaded my first shot, but the



The reserve offers quality affordable hunts to local clientele.

modified choke was perfect for the follow-up, which knocked down the bird at about 30 yards. The fourth bird went up like government debt, evading both shots with no indication of a hit. Sometimes they get away. Don hunts a number of fields on about 250 acres, and the habitat is perfect for keeping the birds around—someone will get my loss as a scratch bird.

Several friends and Don recommended lighter loads with smaller shot, but years of chukar hunting out west have me leaning toward heavier shot, and the performance was there when I put the pattern where it was supposed to be. A heavy load and an extra-light shotgun are not rotator-cuff friendly, and I definitely noticed the recoil. My regular trap gun is a gas-

operated autoloader with a Dead Mule recoil reducer in the magazine, so I'm not used to being pummeled. Of course, you could always put the Dead Mule into the Upland's stock-bolt hole, but it would add seven ounces and sort of defeat the purpose. It's a hunting gun, not a trap gun, and it is perfect for its intended use.

For the serious hunter who wants the pointability and life-long durability of an over/under and all-day carry capability for an affordable price, this shotgun is your huckleberry. (C)



**Effect on target: Improved cylinder gets the job done at the ranges usually encountered with pointed pheasant.**