

November 1, 2009

DeVault Industries LLC

Custom Engineered Shooting Solutions

It has been a long year full of new adventures. I wanted to take a moment and let all of you know that DeVault Industries is still in business and doing just fine. There was a thread on TS.com that circulated around for awhile about the Infinity Shotgun. It is true that we unintentionally violated a registered trademark by using the Infinity name. The gun and the design is still mine and I can continue to produce a gun; I just cannot call it the Infinity. We are in the process of searching for a new name and when the time is right I will announce another gun. Do not worry I still have plenty of parts available and we will continue to service the guns in the future. We have not produced the MachOne shotgun for over 5 years but we still service those guns as we always have. The shop is moving into a new chapter and we will be expanding our fitting and stock making for all the guns out there. Look for the new gun to be out next year. We plan to put out a mobile unit to travel to specific areas and perform our fitting services so more shooters can benefit from our unique talents. Thank you, Happy Thanksgiving and have a great November.

Time to say good bye to all the fall colors what a beautiful view !!





No words are necessary
the pictures speak for
themselves. Have a great
day.



The World According to Me ~ “Dennis DeVault”

I want to continue our discussion on stock fitting and this month talk more about the grip. The grip, as I have stated, is one of the most overlooked areas of a gunstock. It is the steering wheel and effects how you mount the gun into your shoulder, controls the effect of canting the barrel and the rib, the thumb and overall comfort with a reduction in fatigue.

How did the grip used today originate? When the first S x S shotgun was made it had two triggers. When this gun was shot the finger was placed in the front trigger and the wrist had to be bent at a downward angle and the hand formed a tube. Thus the English Style stock is round like a tube. This hand position was necessary to allow the finger access to the rear trigger. The first trigger was pulled and then the hand slid back on the stock to allow the finger the ability to set off the second trigger. When the single selective trigger was introduced someone said “Let’s put a knob on the grip area”. This was to prevent the hand from moving or sliding backwards. See **Fig.1** that shows a Browning Superposed with a round knob grip. If you are lucky enough to be among the few who can shoot this type of grip you are a rare breed.

In 1995 I began to study the grips being made for the modern guns today and found that very little has changed over the last 100 years. The grips still have that swept back look. If you cover the pistol grip of today you will find the English grip still alive and doing well. Shooters experience an unnecessary amount of pain when shooting a grip of this style. More importantly I noticed the trigger on shotguns were not pulled they are lifted. Lifting is not bad except when you look at **Figure 2** you will notice that the index finger is right against the trigger guard. Recoil will soon cause you to let go or throw your hand off of the grip. Next I went to a lab and studied the effects of recoil. What we found was the recoil moved back then turned downward and the wrist took most of the effects of the recoil. With a conventional grip I could only shoot about 100 rounds before my wrist was in severe pain. If I went to a tournament where it was required to shoot 200 or more targets a day for a week I had to ice down my wrist between 100’s to relieve the pain and then continue to the next event. The first stock that DeVault made had a grip that turned down dramatically like a pistol. That grip was the most comfortable that I have ever shot. A lot of folks would pick up my gun and comment on how comfortable the grip felt. Then they would take the gun out and shoot it. When they returned most would comment on how comfortable it felt but ask, “Where and what were they supposed to do with their thumb?” I would always ask them “What did the thumb do for them anyway?” “It helps me hold onto the gun” I asked again, “Did you drop the gun?” “Did you miss any targets because your thumb was not a part of the grip?” They all answered “No,” but said it felt weird. Change is always tough and very difficult for some people to handle. All I can say is that since shooting a shotgun with my hand lower and in-line with the trigger it has been a pleasure. I have shot as many as 900 targets in a day and have never had to ice down my wrist. The recoil now passes over the hand and goes in a straight line back to my shoulder. I recently set up a pattern stock for a sporting clays shooter that brought in a New Browning Cynergy. During the course of the fitting I attempted to get his hand down and in-line with the trigger. One of my stock technicians came in and told me we would not be able to get the clients hand where we wanted due to the fact that the gun has a lift trigger. Upon inspection when the trigger was pulled it lifted up into the receiver and caused a gap at the bottom of the trigger guard. This gap created a pinch point that hurt when the skin rolled under the trigger and caused a blister on the finger. It only took one shot to realize that we had to compromise and split the difference on how low the hand could be.

Fig.2 shows another problem with what I call high riding the grip. With the hand in this position it is difficult to get the butt of the gun up into the pocket of your shoulder. The gun will only lift as high as the elbow and your forearm will allow you to go. Also notice the position of the trigger finger. It is at an angle so that the finger is lifting the trigger and not pulling it. The wrist is bent and in a very uncomfortable position

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Also notice the index finger is right against the trigger guard

We have been asked if the finger grooves in the DeVault Custom Stocks are just a fad. Definitely not; it is done for function. During a stock fitting session if a customer can't keep their hand in a consistent spot we “finger grip” that person so their hand is in the same place shot after shot. We had a customer early last year from Nebraska (Ed Grubbs). The reason we created finger grips is for shooters like Ed. He refused to keep his hand down and kept high riding the grip. When we went to the club to shoot Ed smashed targets as long as I reminded him to keep his hand down. When Ed's hand moved back up the grip he would not get the gun up in his shoulder pocket properly and began to miss targets. He would start to arm shoot instead of moving from the waist. On the trip back to the shop Ed kept asking what I could do to help him remember to keep his hand down and in the right spot. The finger grip was born. By Ed's own admission it has helped his shooting tremendously. Ed began shooting his new stock this year and he has gotten 4-1/2 yards in Handicap, increased his Singles average and moved up 2 classes in Doubles. The only thing Ed tells me now is that he hates me because he cannot shoot his other guns with the regular stocks. Sometimes there is a method to the madness. **Fig.3** shows Ed's stock with the finger grips.

In **Fig.4** the photo shows the position that we like to put a shooters hand in if they will allow this type of change to be incorporated into their everyday shooting. Remember it takes 21 days to break an old habit and form a new one. The human mind does not accept change very well and it takes time to get used to a new type of grip especially when it is something you have never had or seen before. Notice the wrist is straight and the finger in is in-line with the trigger. In this position the shooter pulls the trigger instead of lifting the trigger. The bottom three fingers control the gun and when the gun is mounted it will go into the shoulder pocket with no effort. This is created by the hand being on the side of the stock as opposed to being on top of the grip.



Fig. 1
Swept back
grip on Brown-
ing Superposed



Fig. 2
High riding the grip



Fig. 3

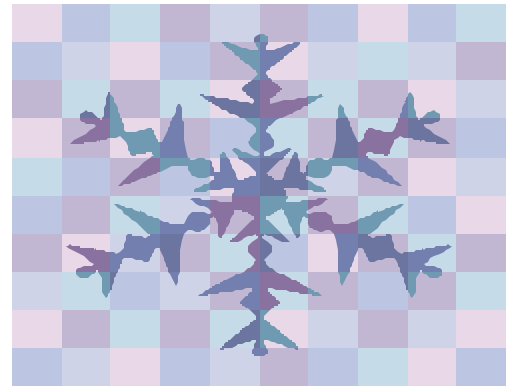
K-80 Stock with finger grips. This stock was built for Ed Grubbs

Fig. 4

Notice that the wrist is straight and the finger is in-line with the trigger. The index finger is nowhere near the back of the trigger guard. Also the eyes are level and the head is in a good position to see the target clearly. This was a stock for another shooter but it displays what we wanted to show



November



News Letter

Well it is cold and raining where most of us are. Our guns are cleaned and put away; or are they? Truth is, now we should use this time to our advantage. Have any work you need done to your equipment and annual service. Do your gun lifts, eye exercise's all winter; do not wait until warm weather. If you choose to shoot with layers of clothing on make sure to put a shorter pad on your gun instead of wondering what has changed or gone wrong. If you are not set up correctly to shoot in cold weather, do not do it. The only thing you are going to accomplish is start building a bunch of bad muscle memory habit's that will take all Spring to correct. This is why when I sell someone a gun, I ask, "Do you shoot in the winter?" If they answer yes, the gun should come with two pads, one for warm weather, and another for cold weather. This is in no way the solution to shooting in cold weather, but it helps. Please do not think you will change pads and shoot as if it were 85 degrees. Personally, I prefer not to shoot in cold weather, and be selective on days to practice. In my opinion, this is the time to reflect back on the past years performance, and see what needs to be changed, or tweaked to improve your game.

For example; My game is not at all at the level where I know it can or should be, Singles, Handicap, or Doubles. There is going to have to be some dedication to physical exercise for, my back to, once again, hold up for 300 targets a day. We change from day to day enough as it is. Here are a few things you need to watch, especially with the holidays just around the corner. Weight gain, or loss, blood sugar, {high or low} and blood pressure. All of these things affect the way we feel and so it has to effect gun fit and performance. When people get out of their normal routine they change their eating and sleeping habits. This changes the way they feel, act, and in essence react. Trap Shooters are playing a game of action and reaction. The way you react to the stimulus, the target, will naturally effect the score. Let's look at it from a more common perspective. When you ask someone how was their vacation? Usually the response is, well most of the time we just laid around the pool and relaxed, took a nap, went for a walk. We went to this Motel with all kinds of different things on the breakfast buffet. The next day, we went to another place, it was great also. Does this sound a bit familiar? Sounds like going to a Trap shoot, does it not? I have seen this happen so many times over the years. Here is an example, a friend is doing very well at home, practicing, shooting bird races and doing very well, until, they are taken out of their element. They travel many miles to a tournament, stay in a Motel, strange bed, different routine and diet. Then their game goes into the tank. Now think about what has happened and learn from it.

We are creatures of habit. These are things to put into your journal for each shoot; you are keeping a journal; right? Look forward to the coming year ahead, plan to win. Winning is no accident! It takes effort and a lot of hard work. To some, it is like a vacation, going to a weeklong tournament, however if you wish to play the game well or above average, do the same thing at a shoot you do every day at home, stay as close as you

possibly can to your daily routine. So do your gun lifts, and reflect back on past newsletters, or articles that caught your attention for some reason. Many times the second or third time you read something you will find new meaning in the same words. Stay warm and keep working on your game. Remember there is a Champion in each one of you.

Until next month,

Dean DeBow



We are beginning to set our schedule for the spring of 2010. If anyone wants to schedule a clinic at their favorite club let Dean or Dennis know so we can set you in the schedule. Watch the web site later this year for the dates as we post the schedule. www.ddshooting.com Contact Dean @ 270-886-2095 or Dennis @ 330-456-6070. We look forward to seeing everyone in the spring.

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Blind faith, sometimes it's all we have. The keys to success come in many different ways. Trust in another person is not always easy, but there are times when it is all that separates you from hanging by a thread or taking a deep plunge into a very large hole. Enjoy today for tomorrow is never a promise.