

16 or 28 O/U SHOTGUN FOR QUAIL

Tech - I'm looking for a shotgun for quail hunting and need some advice. I can't decide between a 28 or a 16. I do want an O/U. What's your opinion?

Thanks, David

Dear David,

Recommending guns is like recommending cars or wives. It's fraught with dangerous opinion intertwined with ignorance.

Personally, I like a 28 gauge on quail. BUT... my quail hunting is mostly on birds that get up fairly close in front of a pointing dog. I've not hunted far flushing and running species of quail out west. I'll be trying out some blues this fall in Kansas. I would not be at all surprised if you would want more gun for those. But perhaps not.

For pointed bob whites, I think that the 28 is ideal. It's small enough so that you have a little bit of bragging rights over the guys with the 20s. Yet it's extremely effective with #8 shot and open chokes. I'd choke a quail gun skeet in the first barrel and a bit more in the second. After all, your first barrel will probably be at or inside 20 yards and your second at or inside 30.

I prefer a SxS to an O/U for this type of hunting, but that's up to you. There are a lot more good O/Us out there than SxS. But, if you want to try an inexpensive SxS that shoots and balances far better than the price would indicate, look at the CZ Bobwhite http://www.cz-usa.com/product_detail.php?id=60
It's made in Turkey by Huglu. It's not fancy, but the 28 gauge balances well. At under \$900, it's a bargain, though I'd try to get 28" bbls for the 28 for myself.

There are tons of O/Us that will meet your requirements. You can spend pretty much whatever you want. CZ makes a decent one, but I like their SxS better. Of course, Beretta is a safe choice, especially in field guns. They are reliable and you can get any amount of glitz that you are willing to pay for. Same insides on all the O/Us other than the DT, ASE and SO models. At SHOT I felt that the Silver Pigeon V with the English stock and small non-Schnabel forend was absolutely gawjus in a 28" 28 gauge gun. The Silver Pigeon S is the least expensive version, but is also quite nice.

LL Bean sold a B. Rizzini called the New Englander for \$1,995 last year. That was also a great gun in a 28. The gun was imported by SIG for Beans. If Bean's doesn't carry the gun now, I'm sure that RizziniUSA has something very similar.

Caesar Guerini also makes very, very nice 28 gauge field guns. Guerini has superlative service too.

A quick comment on the 16. I'm not a big 16 fan simply due to ammo availability. Get off the plane in Frozen Nose, Montana and ask for copper plated 16 gauge #5s at the local gas station and they will stare at you like the space alien you are. If you drive to all your shooting, then 16s work fine. Just be aware that some quail plantations think that "Mr. Bob" ought to be hunted with 20 gauge or under. I'm not saying I agree with them, but that's the tradition in many places. Of course, if it's Western quail, then the bets are off and the 16 is a good choice.

My favorite 16 O/U is the Merkel 2016. It's expensive, but what a joy. Beautifully balanced. I think that Browning is now producing some 16 gauge Citoris for specific dealers. The Japanese Brownings are reliable guns and very sturdy. I'm sure that there are some others, but those two just come to mind. Obviously, you have much more choice in 28 gauge than 16.

Remember too, a 28 gauge was good enough for Dick Cheney when he went quail hunting. Can't get a better recommendation than that.

Best regards,

Bruce Buck
Shotgun Report's Technoid