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CLARION REVIEW ★★★★☆ SPORTS & RECREATION

Stock Fitter's Bible: Removing the Mystery

Rollin Oswald
CreateSpace
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Stock Fitter's Bible is a valuable reference for anyone attempting to shoot trap, skeet, or sporting clays, or for anyone who is considering breaking into the sport. Author Rollin Oswald explains that success is based on knowledge of every aspect of the gun and the ways that the stock dimensions and other factors relate to the shooter's height, weight, clothing, facial structure, and even gender.

Oswald's comprehensive volume, which focuses in particular on trap shooting, includes the history of personal weapons and stocks (Monte Carlo, English, and field), early sport shooting, and problems caused by poorly fitting stock dimensions and shooting form.

When it comes to guns, one size does not fit all. Oswald details how the "pitch" dimension must be correct if "cheek slap" is to be avoided, for example. He provides tips on dealing with recoil and urges readers to "remain open-minded about changing your shooting form." Oswald also provides tips on modifying every aspect of the gun to fit the shooter, but cautions readers about wasting money. Will the "tweaking" be worth it? Will too much tailoring of the gun make it more difficult to sell or trade?

Consistency is a key element of the sport—from what the shooter wears to how the gun is held. Oswald warns that "when mounts are inconsistent, shooting success will also be inconsistent." Shooters must also be consistent in their swings.

Stock fitting, especially the first time, is "not always a simple undertaking," Oswald explains. His technical discussion of every aspect of stock dimensions underscores this point while making it clear that a poorly fitted stock can affect shooting form and success. The five critical stock dimensions are pitch, cast, drop at the heel, length of pull, and drop at comb.

Readers are advised not to skip around in the book, but to read it in order and reread to master the material. An index, however, should be added so readers can easily return to key sections. The book's glossary is useful, but more terms need defining, such as "low house," "streak," and "pre-mount."

The author's notes on the book's syntax are off-putting. For instance, Oswald writes, "To understand what I had in mind when writing this book, please pay careful attention to what you are reading. For example, 'may be' has a different meaning than 'will be' or 'is.'" Readers who are able to understand this highly technical book will likely know the meaning of these common words.

The target audience for the book is not clear. At times it appears to be directed at novices, yet even with occasional graphics, the parts of the gun and the "low house" are not described early enough to be useful for beginners. The technical level appears to be most appropriate for those already familiar with the sport. The inclusion of the author's background is recommended to help establish his credibility.

Despite the book's flaws, however, readers who are serious about finding greater success in shooting will learn much from this thorough guide.

LINDA SALISBURY (January 10, 2011)

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