

THE VIRGINIA SPORTSMAN

Virginia and Beyond

A State of Mind ♦ A Way of Life

Feb/Mar 2013

\$4.95

Bath County Virginia

The Range Rover
Evoque



Carriage

Carriage Driving at Walnut Hill • The Governor's Cup Yacht Race

Fishing in Ireland • Young Guns on the Hill

Dumbarton Oaks • John James Audubon • The Restoration of Montpelier

Young Guns on the Hill

The Clay Target Team at
Hampden-Sydney College

Story and Photos
by
John Shtogren

It was on a late September afternoon when I first stopped by to watch the young guns. There was a hint of fall in the air which sharpened the smell of burnt gunpowder. They, the newly formed Hampden-Sydney College Clay Target Team, practice twice a week at a makeshift five-stand course six miles from campus in rural Southside Virginia. Much of their time that afternoon was spent helping each other improve their shooting: one teammate standing behind each gunner and looking over his shoulder to help him mark his shot—high, low, wide or on target.

Toward the end of practice, five of the most seasoned team members took side-by-side positions for some friendly competition. On “Pull!” a clay target would fly in any one of a number of directions and would be broken by the shooter who was quickest to take aim and fire, a contest of keen vision and quick reflexes. The first target was in the air for only an instant when a shot broke it in pieces—and then two more shots rang out. At first I didn’t understand. Why the extra shots at a clearly “dead bird”? When it happened again, I got it: They were shooting any leftover fragments larger than



Club president Braxton Elliot (right foreground) spots for Jay Easley with Daniel Adams (center) and Zach Dodson (right) on deck.

a quarter! After the last shot was fired, there was only dust in the air. And they did it again and again. The shooting was, in a word, awesome.

The Clay Target Club has two sides, a recreational side for students who simply want to learn safe gun handling and how to shoot clay targets, and a competition side for serious shooters who want to go up against the best guns from other campuses. Club president Braxton Elliot ’13 supports both sides. “Having the recreation side is great, because we have a lot of guys who come down to grill some burgers and hot dogs, then shoot and have a good time. A lot of times I’ll just go down to watch, and if I see a guy who’s just blowing them away I’ll invite him to shoot with the team.”

And there are a number of shooters on the team who really can blow away clay targets, including Elliot himself. He started shooting clays when he was 13. Two years later he was shooting in the Scholastic Clay Target Program. “Our little team from Appomattox, Virginia, won the

national title that year.” Tucker Bulleit ’15 from Kentucky shot with the University of Kentucky team while in high school before coming to Hampden-Sydney. Cody Bailey ’15 from Keysville, Virginia, made the Junior All-American team while in high school and competes in National Sporting Clays Association events. He also appears on the Outdoor Channel’s *Hunting the World, Southern Style*.

Last year the Clay Target Team attended its first competitive event, the Hokie Invitational at Virginia Tech. Over two days the team shot sporting clays, five-stand and trap and did remarkably well for its first time out. Bailey and Bulleit were in the top ten individual shooters. Bailey was first in clays and five-stand, second in trap and top gun overall. The team placed fourth overall and was only a few targets behind second-place Virginia Tech. It’s worth noting that the Virginia Tech team has been racking up national titles for more than a decade and has a team four times the size of Hampden-Sydney’s.

A Premier Outdoor Recreation and Event Facility in Quintessential North Carolina

"The Ordinary"



FIRST CLASS SPORTING DESTINATION OFFERING:
SPORTING CLAYS • QUAIL & DUCK HUNTING
"THE FORK LODGE" BED & BREAKFAST • EQUESTRIAN
"THE ORDINARY" SHOOTING LODGE
PRO SHOP FEATURING MERCHANDISE
BY BERETTA*, REMINGTON*, BARBOUR*



THE FORK

www.theforkfarm.com

3200 Fork Road, Norwood, NC 28128
704.474.4052 ext. 227

Robert Milner's • Duckhill Kennels

*Excellence in British Labrador Gundogs since 1972 • They are Classics
Home of Legacy Labradors - Labs of the original strain*



duckhillkennels.com • 901-428-6694

High in Hunt - High in Trainability - Calm in Disposition
Puppies and Started Gundogs



Richard Foley takes the shot while Braxton Elliot (left) and Tucker Bulleit (right) wait their turns.

Berkeley Leonard '07 (senior assistant dean of admissions), Evan Pinekenstein 15, 'Cody Bailey '15, Daniel Adams '14, Casey Grimes '14, Richard Foley '15, Tucker Bulleit '15, President Christopher Howard, Ben Gillis '15, Holton Walker '15, and Braxton Elliott '13.



The Hampden-Sydney campus in rural south-central Virginia



The clay target team will wind up this year's competition in the spring at the Association of College Unions International (ACUI) Collegiate Clay Target Championship in San Antonio. That's the big one for college-level shooters. Last year 537 students from 57 schools competed. From what I saw on a September afternoon, the team will put Hampden-Sydney in the top ranks.

Sporting Tradition and Personal Honor

If you were not familiar with Hampden-Sydney and its traditions and culture, the idea of guns on the Hill, as the center of campus is called, might make you a bit uneasy. Too many bad things have been happening to good people on college campuses these days. Even if you knew the basics about the college—founded in 1775, 1,110 male students, one of three all-male colleges in the country, ranked by *Forbes* as 6th Best College in the South and 54th Best College or University in the Country—and even if you knew all firearms are kept in a gun locker by the campus police, you might still feel shotguns and higher education simply don't mix very well.

However, it is a good mix at Hampden-Sydney when you consider its traditions and culture. The sporting life has been central to the college since its founding two and a half centuries ago. Today, the college's Outdoor Experience includes activities such as hunting, fishing, hiking, biking, canoeing and a variety of academic courses embracing the outdoors such as marine science and nature writing. Few campuses can boast of regular Ducks Unlimited-sponsored hunting trips or fly-tying and casting clinics offered by world renowned fly-fishing instructor Harry Robertson. It is little wonder that *Outdoor Life* magazine named Hampden-Sydney one of "The Country's Top Ten Colleges for Students who Live to Hunt and Fish."

The chairman of the college's Board of Trustees, Tom Allen '60, sees the



ON POINT
FOCUSED ON YOUR INVESTMENT GOALS

The
TRUST
COMPANY
of Virginia

Active Asset Management

Preserving capital, managing its growth, and efficiently transferring that capital from one generation to another.

804.272.9044 | www.tcva.com

Richmond | Colonial Heights | Williamsburg | Roanoke | McLean | Lynchburg



Arizona's Premier Double Gun Shooting Event

The 4th Annual Southwest Double Gun Expo
 March 2, 2013
 Phoenix, Arizona

The Southwest Double Gun Expo (SWDGE) is a unique sporting clays shooting tournament that benefits the Phoenix Art Museum. Organized by the Men's Arts Council, SWDGE features a full day of challenging stations and the camaraderie of fellow double gun enthusiast.

The cost to take part is \$160 per individual shooter or \$600 for a foursome. Participants receives a practice round of 25 targets and one competition round with 50 targets as well as an invitation to the Kick-Off Reception, breakfast, lunch and a post-shoot happy hour.

SWDGE features double barrel, break action shotguns of which may be either over/under or side-by-side, with or without hammers. Trophies will be awarded in the categories of side-by-side and over/under in large (12 and 16) and small (20 and under) guage classes.

With 7 challenging stations -- including a Driven Clays Flurry and a High Pheasant, the course will challenge even the most seasoned shooter. In addition a chance shot at the Long Shot Station. Shooter buy chances to hit this long shot with net proceeds being split between the winning shooter and Phoenix Art Museum.

Phoenix Art Museum is the Southwest's premier destination for world-class visual arts, featuring artists such as Rembrandt, Norman Rockwell, Annie Leibowitz and Monet, along side with the Museum's outstanding collection of more than 18,000 works of American, Asian, European, Latin American, Western American, modern and contemporary art, and fashion design.

For more information and tickets, visit
www.swdgc.com

clay target team as part and parcel of the traditional sporting life at the school:

"Hampden-Sydney has always been a place where after classes young men were comfortable putting on some hunting togs, pulling out their favorite shotgun and driving not so very far for turkey, ducks or any other legal critter that would look good on a grill. The clays team is just an extension of that long-held mentality."

Hampton-Sydney President Christopher Howard also supports the clays team and all that goes with it because of another tradition that is bedrock to the college's culture: its Code of Conduct. It is based on two key principles, one of which is common to other institutions with honor codes: students "will not lie, cheat or tolerate others who do." The other is this: "The Hampden-Sydney student will behave as a gentleman at all times and in all places." Being a gentleman simply means taking personal responsibility to do the right thing wherever you are—in the class-

room, behind the wheel or on the clay target firing line. When personal honor is practiced by everyone, it brings civility and safety to campus life. Howard says that taking personal responsibility as a gentleman is summed up in the school's motto, "Man Up!" It's a fine motto and ethical compass for all of us who aspire to be Virginia gentlemen and sportsmen.

John Shtogren is the senior editor for *Virginia Sportsman*. He is an outdoorsman, farmer and international management consultant whose travels often take him to the far edges and borderlands. He welcomes comments at jashstogren@yahoo.com.