



AGL in the field: Dove Shooting

Just like our customers, many of the Atkin Grant & Lang team not only enjoy shooting clays but are also avid game shooters and hunters. I was keen to dedicate a page of this newsletter to focus on the sporting adventures that occupy our free time when we are not sat at a desk or behind the counter at the shooting ground. Whether it be driven boar in Poland, salmon fishing in Scotland or standing on a peg in the Cotswold countryside, these are the pursuits and passions that drove us all to seek a career in the shooting industry.

Charlie Stewart-Wood, Director of Atkin Grant & Lang, who some of you may know from around the ground, is a seriously talented shot, experienced hunter and fisherman. He has had his fair share of epic sporting adventures, which I am sure contributes to his passion and vision for his job, developing and expanding AGL to its full potential as a Gun Makers, Shooting Ground and Sporting Agency. Although he spends most of his time on a clay ground, one of Charlie's true passions is shooting doves in Argentina. I spoke to him to find out exactly why this type of wing shooting is so addictive.

What made you decide to go dove shooting?

I first went dove shooting about eight years ago. The original attraction was that it is renowned for being the ultimate wing shooting challenge. Argentina has an amazing reputation for high volumes and a huge variety of birds. When an opportunity came up to give it a go, I just couldn't resist. I suppose the main draw was the reputation and the challenge, I wanted to see for myself how good it was.

What is the difference between dove shooting and shooting in the UK?

I think that the perception of dove shooting is often a gun standing in swarms of birds, having so many in the sky that they simply can't miss. It is not like that at all! The high volume comes from the constant stream of birds on a particular flight line. The main difference from shooting in England is the quantity and variety of birds in one area. You can replicate every type of driven shooting in the UK in one area, from grouse to the highest pheasant.

What is the countryside like in Argentina?

The Cordoba province is incredibly beautiful and extremely fertile. A lot of the ground can't be farmed due to the terrain, but creates the perfect breeding conditions for doves with ample food, roosting areas and the ideal climate.



How did you feel the first time you went dove shooting?

Tired! There is a lot of shooting involved. And overwhelmed, my mind was blown by the sheer volume and constant stream of birds. At first, I couldn't get my head around it, but after the first day or so I soon settled into a more relaxed swing.

What are some of your favourite things about dove shooting?

The beautiful scenery, incredible hospitality and the social aspects of the trip are very important.

With regards to the shooting, it is probably the best form of practice you can get. You can shoot as many or as few birds as you want, being really selective of your targets. If you want to practice high driven birds or crossers, you can just shoot those. If you miss, similar birds will come along within minutes. It gives you the opportunity to practice a huge variety of targets, methods and techniques.

Can you talk me through the layout of a day dove shooting?

We wake up and have breakfast – the birds don't tend to start flying until about 8.30am depending on the time of year. We will then head to a hunting area and meet with our 'Bird Boy' (field assistant which would be similar to a loader in the UK). After shooting all morning we will stop for lunch, often an Asado (BBQ) and may have time for a siesta. The birds also tend to stop flying, or numbers certainly drop, around lunch time. After lunch it will be time to head back out and shoot all afternoon before returning to the lodge for dinner and drinks.

What kit do you need?

You don't need a huge amount of kit. You can shoot doves all year round so make sure to check the weather before you leave, and remember even in spring and summer you can have some pretty heavy rain so a light weight rain coat is a good idea. The essentials for me are glasses and a hat for the sun, gloves for hot barrels and a shoulder pad for the volume of shooting.

Is it suitable for all shooters?

I would suggest that a basic level of shooting ability and experience is needed to enable you to get the best out of the trip. You can pick the birds that are suitable and that you feel comfortable with, so yes, the trip is suitable for most shooters.

What is the most challenging thing about dove shooting?

I think the main challenge is down to you, how you test yourself and your ability. That's the beauty of it – if you are hitting those birds 30 yards away, push yourself to 35 and then 40. There is something for everyone.





Would you recommend dove shooting and why?

I would absolutely recommend dove shooting in Argentina for the beautiful countryside and the variety of challenging shooting. It is an incredible experience. I have hosted trips to all three of the David Denies dove lodges with clients and friends and have only ever had 100% positive feedback. The reasons for this in my eyes are down to three main things, their attention to detail before and during the trip, the hospitality in the field and at the lodge, and the sheer volume of hunting area that they have access to, which enables them to get clients under the doves whatever the weather.

You have had your fair share of exciting sporting experiences, how does dove shooting rate against the other adventures you've had?

I wouldn't be without dove shooting; I just love it! It is an amazing trip to do on its own, or if you have time makes a perfect add on to one of Argentina's other sporting destinations. Argentina has so many sporting opportunities to offer from Black Buck and Axis deer in Buenos Aires province to the huge red stags in Patagonia. The fishing is just as diverse, you can head south to Tierra Del Fuego for the prehistoric looking Sea Trout or up to the north and fish for Golden Dorado on the Ibera Marshlands.

If you would like more information regarding dove shooting and the different lodges available, please visit the David Denies website:
www.daviddenties.com

If you would be interested in joining the Atkin Grant & Lang team for a dove shooting trip in 2020, please contact Charlie:
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