

Preparing for the Season

Gun

Make sure your gun is in perfect working order well in advanced of your first game day. There is nothing more frustrating than your gun failing to fire whilst on the peg. We would recommend having a strip & clean service to remove any dirt and grease that has built up over a summer of clay shooting. If you haven't shot your gun since returning it to the cabinet at the end of last season, it is well worth taking it to your local clay shooting ground and putting a box of cartridges through it.

Cartridges

Have you got appropriate cartridges for your gun and your quarry? If you have an older English gun, it may well have 65mm chambers as opposed to the more modern 70mm. Double check, or ask your local gun shop, whether the cartridges you are purchasing will fit. 65mm cartridges can be used in larger chambers, but 70mm must not be used in 65mm chambers as they could seriously damage your gun and put you at risk of injury.

Furthermore, it is your duty as a responsible shooter to make sure your cartridges are suitable for the game you are shooting. For early season partridges and pheasants, we would recommend 28gram or 30gram shot size 6. For stronger birds later in the season it may be appropriate to move up to 32gram shot size 5. When choosing the size of your cartridges it is always worth considering the typography of the land you are shooting over... will the birds be particularly high? If so, you may need to move down a shot size.

Another consideration is paper or plastic casing. Paper cased cartridges do tend to be more expensive, but also burn slower and create a smoother discharge. They are also kinder to older guns and put less wear and tear on the barrels. Our Rocketeer cartridges, produced by Lyalvale Express exclusively for Atkin Grant & Lang, come in paper and plastic.

Kit

As with any hobby, there can be an awful lot of kit involved with shooting. The term 'all the gear, no idea' has often come up in the world of shooting. From tweeds to cartridge bags, 'gun slips' to garters, the array of accessories can often be intimidating especially if you are new to the sport. Some of the gear is unnecessary, but certainly enjoyable to purchase, however some is vitally important; make sure you have safety equipment such as ear defenders, glasses and a hat. If you have electronic ear defenders check that the batteries still work.

It is always worth trying your tweeds on a few weeks before your first day. This will allow you to check they are clean, free of holes (from last seasons barbed wire) and dare I say it... still fit. Updating your shooting wardrobe can also be enjoyable, why not treat yourself to a new shirt and matching socks? Or a new sweater and tie. Getting dressed up for the day is part of the fun. A warm, waterproof coat and hole-free wellies are also a requirement... you will be grateful that you prepared them when stood in the middle of an open field with howling wind and horizontal rain.

Have you got a gift for your host? This may not be necessary but it is always a nice touch to take a bottle of something or a nice small gift that you think they would appreciate. We offer bespoke Atkin Grant & Lang gin in a range of flavours such as sloe, damson and plum, made and bottled by Foxdenton Estate.

Yourself

Have you shot since last season? If the answer is no, then just like your gun, it may be worth heading to the clay ground for a refresher. A specific game lesson or two always helps to prepare you and gives you a confidence boost on the peg. Making sure you are confident in your shooting skills is an important aspect of game shooting as, unlike clay pigeons, live quarry deserves a clean and precise shot.

If you have any questions or would like any extra advice and help preparing for the game season, please don't hesitate to get in touch. With two Shooting Grounds, two Gun Shops, a team of countryside enthusiasts and a wealth of knowledge and experience, we would be happy to help with any sporting query. Contact details can be found on the contents page.