

ON TEST: JOCKER'S ECO-FRIENDLY NEW CUP WAD



Clay



GOING GREY

Becky McKenzie shoots the
Browning 525 laminate sporter

SHOOTING

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH
BASC
BRITISH ASSOCIATION
SHOOTING COACHES

2020 CHAMP

We talk to new British Open
Sporting champion
Dave Ferriman

GET A COACH

What the right
coach could do for
your shooting

MOVE RIGHT!

Movement and vitality
expert Matt Zanis
explains how



HANDLING NOISE
COMPLAINTS

BRITISH SHOOTING
GRAND FESTIVAL

HOLLAND
& HOLLAND

BEST SPORTERS
UNDER £4,000



The Seated Gun

Wheelchair
shooter makes
waves on Instagram



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Digital Edition

A SEATED PERSPECTIVE

Jean-Paul Gaudin introduces **Jasper Fellows** to *The Seated Gun* and explains how he plans to make shooting accessible to all

I imagine lying in a hospital bed and being told you've had a terrible accident and may never walk again. Where would your thoughts be? Certainly not on shooting. After a period of recovery the urge to break clays would surely return, but where would you begin? How would you know which grounds might be suitable, or even accessible? Who could you turn to for advice? Will you need a change of shooting style? Or even someone to help you to the stands?

After suffering a life changing motorcycle accident in the late 90's, Jean-Paul Gaudin faced all of these questions and more. Now, with two decades of experience as a seated shooter, he is on a mission to provide answers and to educate the shooting community on how to make our sport more accessible to all.

Jean-Paul began his shooting career in the most idyllic fashion. "I started shooting when I was about 15 years old, with my grandfather from his home in Southern France. In the UK we have wonderful driven days, whereas in France the majority of the shooting is walked up, or from a hide if aiming for boar."

"As a young man I enjoyed many days with the family, strolling through forests and vineyards shooting the odd bird that setters flushed out. Clay shooting grounds in France were vastly different from the grounds we see in the UK today. They were casual affairs, run by guns for guns, with simple manual traps throwing targets in an inaccurate manner and with a clubhouse consisting of little more than a cool box and an honesty jar. Oh, and they tend to be on a 'hill' that even the hardest mountain goat would struggle to climb! I would often find myself standing on uneven ground, in

a bush, trying to get a shot off in the vague direction of where I thought a clay might appear. Don't get me wrong, there are some wonderful grounds in the major cities, but the rural clay grounds tend to be much more rough and ready."

Having developed a love of game and clay shooting from a young age, Jean-Paul became a regular at shoots across the UK and France, his love of the outdoors falling hand-in-hand with his love of shooting. Then, in 1998, disaster struck. Jean-Paul was involved in a motorcycle accident that left him with devastating spinal injuries and dependent on a wheelchair.

"I spent three years enduring all manner of operations and intense physiotherapy after my accident," he continues. "but eventually I was able to return to that mountainous, bushy clay ground in France and, despite the difficulty of getting to the stands, I was soon hooked once again."



Jean-Paul Gaudin, *The Seated Gun*

Aiming high, Jean-Paul hopes to create a platform for all sports lovers



"I felt a great deal of trepidation about getting back into shooting, and there was very little information out there to guide me. How would I know which grounds or estates would provide chair access? Would the staff be accommodating? Would I even be able to get out of the car park? Or even be able to hit anything once I reached the stands?"

Despite his initial worries Jean-Paul threw himself back into the sport he loves, and soon found there were others struggling to return to the stands and looking for advice. "I was often fielding a lot of the same questions that I'd struggled with when I first came back to shooting," he explains, "both from able bodied shots and those with limited mobility. I was regularly approached by staff members at grounds and game estates too. They wanted to make sure that I was being well looked after and if I had any tips on how they could improve their facilities for other chair users."

"Hand on heart, all I wanted to do was enjoy my day away from the office. Then, in

"Would I even be able to get out of the car park?"

2019, I was propositioned by a gentleman called Jeremy Pascoe, a field sport photographer and web developer. He asked if he could take some photos of me for his portfolio and I agreed. It later transpired that a national magazine was keen to feature the images and write a piece on me. This was at the beginning of lockdown, so I found I had the time to dedicate to looking into how to promote limited mobility shooting. Following a number of discussions Jeremy offered to build a website to help highlight my shooting journey and to pass on the information I had gathered through my years as a seated shot."

So began The Seated Gun, a website and multi-media enterprise focusing on providing the answers to the questions Jean-Paul had faced so many times before. "Jeremy did an excellent job with the technical aspects of the site, while I provided all the content and my thoughts on how everything should look," says Jean-Paul.

"To boost our online presence it was suggested that we set up an Instagram page, which I admit I was a little unsure of, but we have found it to be a fantastic way to get the latest news and stories out there as



A keen game shot, Jean-Paul has experienced the good and the bad at estates across the UK and beyond



Seated or standing, Jean-Paul hopes to make shooting more friendly to all

© Jeremy Pascoe, Woking Gun.com

they happen. We currently have around 700 followers and I can proudly say that they are all real guns, or industry professionals, who have taken an interest in The Seated Gun and limited mobility shooting."

Jean-Paul's latest focus has been on The Seated Gun's Youtube channel, where he posts videos on a wide range of topics, from finding the most comfortable position as a seated shooter, to reviewing guns to suit those with upper body issues. Perhaps the most important videos being posted however are the ground and estate reviews.

"Every clay ground or game estate visit I make is professionally filmed and recorded for the Youtube channel," says Jean-Paul. "The idea is to show other shooters exactly what they need to be prepared for at each venue from the point of view of a chair user, from the width and angle of any ramps, to how easy it is to navigate down pathways, to whether or not an estate is able to provide a vehicle to help navigate tricky terrain."

"By the end of the season we are going to use all of the information we have gathered to publish a shoot directory on the website," Jean-Paul explains. "The directory will be completely un-biased and independently funded, and will list our top shoots and clay grounds for accessibility, friendliness, usability for mobility impaired guns and more. We won't be knocking any shoots or grounds, but we will be explaining the benefits and pitfalls of each location."

During one of Jean-Paul's visits, to EJ Churchill's West Wycombe Estate, he drew the attention of Managing Director Rob Fenwick, whom he knew and had met on several occasions before. "Rob

and I discussed what I was doing and how I believed it would help both non and mobility impaired guns," explains Jean-Paul. "EJ Churchill is an extremely forthright organisation, it is very much a market leader and innovator, as such Rob was telling me about their new cleaning bothy – a neat little hut with tables, gun clamps, oils and everything else you might need to give a gun a thorough clean after a day on the stands, something that is quite unique on a UK clay ground. Rob asked me what I thought of it, I told him it sounded great, but was the door wide enough to fit a chair through with a gun on their lap? And were the tables high enough to get underneath? Both of which are a must for a gun who uses a wheelchair. As Rob pointed out they had done their research and believed it was, however on trying the bothy it was clear that the tables were not high enough and that the entrance needed a small ramp to make it user friendly."

"Rob's immediate reaction to this was, 'this is the problem, no matter how much research and advice we get online, it's not the same as having someone who is in the position we are trying to accommodate check it first-hand.' EJ Churchill has always stood out as being one of the most accessible grounds, but even they struggle to notice these little things that can make things difficult for a chair user. Rob is very understanding of this and in his drive to ensure EJ Churchill is a ground for everyone, he kindly asked me if I would join his team as a Brand Ambassador and provide my perspective and to help make their grounds even better than they already are. I gladly accepted and am now helping them plan a

range of accessibility improvements for both their clay and game shooting operations."

As if building a directory, reviewing grounds and estates and working with EJ Churchill wasn't enough, Jean-Paul and The Seated Gun are also working on a wide range of videos on to cover every aspect of the shooting industry. "We're currently working on a full behind the scenes look at game shooting, a video series on the process of tailoring a fine set of tweeds with Samuels the Tailors of Wellingborough, and we will be looking at some of the best shooting vehicles from the likes of Ford, Bentley and even Lamborghini. We are hoping to have a well-rounded channel that anyone with connections to country sports can enjoy."

Clearly there is quite a lot to look forward to from The Seated Gun, but their original goal remains the same. "The Seated Gun is there for all shooters. Of course, we want to have fun and entertain, but I hope we are able to help guns get back out there," says Jean-Paul. "If there is anyone with limited mobility, or even anyone who is getting a bit older and finding they are struggling to make it round a full course, they can simply email us or give us a call and we can eliminate any fears before they even leave the house. Through our directory and web presence we want to provide the answer to the questions that I, and many others, have struggled with and show that shooting can be accessible to all." 📺

Keep up with all the latest from The Seated Gun on Instagram @theseatedgun, Youtube The Seated Gun or on the website www.seated-gun.com