

SHOOTING SPORTSMAN

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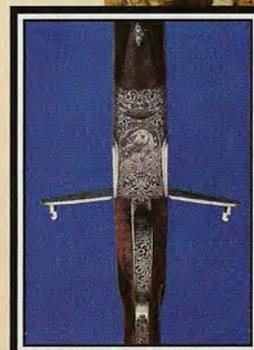
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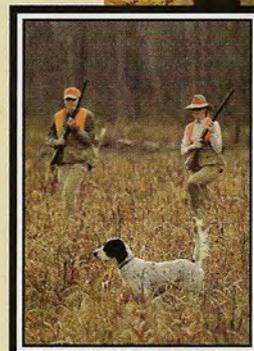
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Glowing Primland

Every now and then you get lucky and find someplace spécial. For shooters, hunters and those who love the outdoors, that place is between Meadows of Dan, Virginia, and Claudville, about 2,750 feet above sea level. It is the state's only Orvis-endorsed shooting facility: Primland. For two decades this 12,000-acre resort has provided excellent hunting and clay shooting in a stunningly beautiful setting.

Scheduled to open in August is Primland's new 74,000-square-foot lodge. Built next to the resort's award-winning golf course and three luxury golf cottages, the lodge features a spa, a 72-seat dining room, a 17-seat theater, an indoor pool, a ballroom and boardroom, an observatory and much more. Hospitality Manager Brooks Bradury said, "The lodge will act as a focal point for the entire resort. Its 26 one-bedroom suites will represent a comfortable way of life in a remote setting. But for those who just can't leave the outside world, we have wireless capability throughout this gated property."

The plush accommodations may encourage stays throughout the year, but the main reason for traveling to Primland is still the shooting. On any shoot safety should be of utmost importance; at Primland this is no exception. Every shooter is required to review a gunning safety video that speaks to using common sense when handling a gun. You are then introduced to your guide, and on the day I was shooting I was fortunate to be paired with Junior Stanley. Stanley is a longtime employee of Primland as well as a longtime dog handler and bird hunter.

We started our day in a sorghum field with my Lab, Luke. Now, hunting with your own dog, which Primland allows, is fun when things go well but frustrating when they do not. The birds we were after weren't waiting around to be flushed, and when they decided to fly they got up fast and strong. Let's say my dog and I



Primland offers excellent clay shooting and upland hunting amid Virginia's Blue Ridge Mountains.

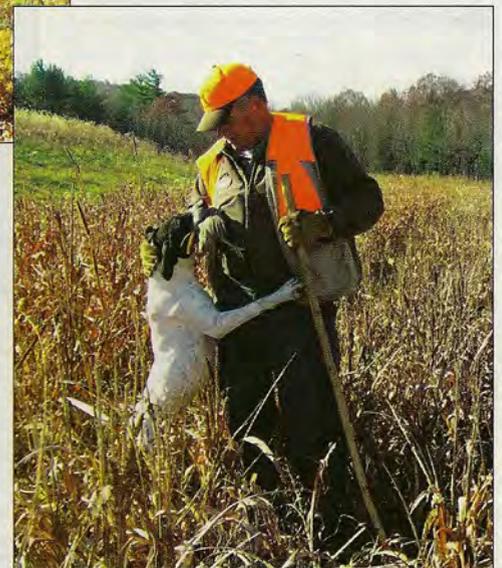
were trying so hard to please one another that we didn't immediately click. Luke's ability to find birds and get them airborne exceeded my ability to get within range before they flushed. But eventually we both settled down and began working together. After Luke made a number of retrieves, I was ready for Stanley's pointers, Ace and Suzy, to show their stuff.

Upland hunters look for challenging shooting over well-trained dogs. Stanley's dogs offer just that. For a bird hunter, nothing is more pleasing than watching experienced dogs familiar with the game and the territory hunt efficiently. Although it seemed that both Ace and Suzy were in a race to see who would point first, each honored the other graciously. My shooting improved, as I now was able to collect myself before flushing each bird.

It is widely recognized that in order to

hold quail and pheasants, habitat must be well managed. At Primland, management for upland birds consists of mowing and prescribed burns to control non-desirable plants and promote the growth of cereal crops for food and escape cover. A lot of work is done to make predators work for their meals.

As for the gamebirds themselves, after researching various varieties of pheasants, Wildlife Manager Carl McDaniel decided on a smaller, more compact bird for releasing at Primland. "A larger breed of pheasant is fine for an ornamental bird," Mc-



Daniel said, "but these small pheasants perform more consistently and 'go wild' quickly, once released."

In addition to upland hunting, Primland offers Continental-style pheasant shoots, turkey and deer hunts, and shooting on its 5 Stand and sporting clays courses. It also offers other outdoor activities, such as fly-fishing, horseback riding, ATV riding, tennis and more. For the sportsman interested in getting away from it all by himself or with his family, Primland is the place to be.

Primland, 866-960-7746; www.primland.com.

