

As a kid growing up in Michigan, I learned early on to eagerly await October 20th – it marked the annual opening day of the pheasant season! I mention this because in much the same manner, I feel the same familiar kind of rush of anticipation as the Rose Hill Challenge approaches at the end of each September.

For the past few years the elegant and beautiful grounds of Rose Hill Farms has opened its gates for three days of the very best Parcours de Chasse. Steeped in history, this working farm is also a favorite convention site in North Carolina and hosts a very upscale wedding facility besides providing sporting clays, trap and skeet on its

ample acreage. A beautiful mid 1800's southern plantation home is the center piece on these historic grounds dating back to the Civil War era – complete with the familiar round pillars on the front porch standing in elegance with a coat of pristine white paint just beyond the circular driveway leading to the antebellum style mansion. Like a sentry, an antique and working wrought iron fountain stands watch within a small flower garden at the center of the drive at the main entrance, making for a truly beautiful and breathtaking sight.

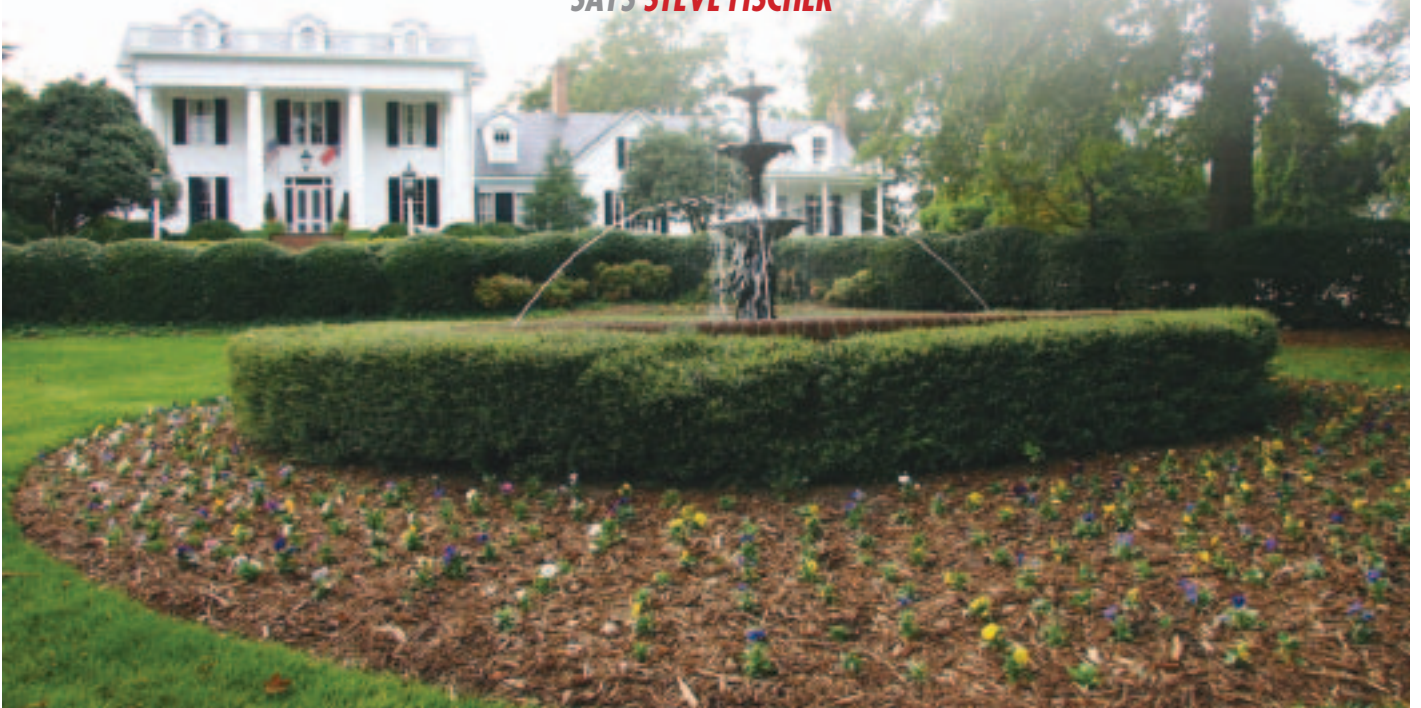
SIX LAYOUTS

Larry and Steve Corbett operate the shooting facility portion of Rose Hill Farms and each year bring in three target setters to put up six layouts of truly magnificent target presentations over the vast and varied terrain of the Farm. Soft rolling hills dotted with trees, ponds and pastures provide limitless possibilities for the target setters – and each tries to out-do the other for bragging rights as to who got the most praise for their presentations.

This year, Dave Fiedler, Chuck Frazier and the 'English Curmudgeon', Cyril Jeffery, set two Parcours each, and truly did a magnificent job with entertaining yet challenging targets each day. Set 'new style', each layout featured three distinctly different pegs, and each peg brought a new set of targets to be figured out by the competitors. I can honestly say that during the entire event I did not hear one derogatory remark regarding the targets on any of the six Parcours. But, before I mis-lead you into thinking this was an elegant but easy romp in the woods, I assure you that these targets were what Parcours de Chasse targets should be – tough, challenging, but hittable. The scores were there to be reached if you did it right.

THE ROSE HILL CHALLENGE

ONE OF THE YEAR'S
LAST, AND ONE OF THE BEST
SAYS **STEVE FISCHER**



Ample practice and warm up targets were also available in the form of a full 25 target 5-stand, a warm-up stand and a full practice Parcour. For the hearty shooters who just can't get enough, a 100 target sporting event was featured on both Friday and Saturday. No 'skeet in the woods' targets here – they were truly at championship level.

SPORTING

The difficulty level on Friday's sporting course was in my opinion, set to be won at about 90. The course featured long rabbits, incomers that dropped 30 yards from the shooter and some excellent chandelles, teal and several tough crossers. With much

of the course set in the woods, the mixture of sunlight and shade made for some tricky vision problems – much depending on the time of day the course was shot.

Thomas Cutler (95) took HOA, followed by L. McMurrin III (M1-90), Wendell Cherry (M2-89), and Phillip Williams (M3-88). The largest class of shooters for this and all subsequent events came from the Veteran's concurrent. Mark Kiddie (87) topped this concurrent, followed by Joe Cantey III (80) and yours truly in third spot at 79. Super-Veteran's was won by Richard Jordan (73), tied with Fred Abbott in second and Ed Moritt (71) took third. One Sub-Junior, Taylor Tew, took top honors with a fine 64 and one Junior, Peter Stodolski, won with 68. In the Ladies, Debbie Wall (74) was tops, with Cathy Shovan one away for second.

DAY ONE ON THE PARCOURS

Saturday morning began with the first of three layouts to be shot that day. You could not have mail ordered in a better day for being outside. The early morning air was a pleasant 60 degrees, warming up to the mid 70s later on, with just a pleasant breeze blowing all day long. After over six months of 90-plus degree heat at home, it was truly a pleasant and well needed break for me and the several other shooters from Florida.

We were soon to discover that Saturday's menu of targets would be pretty formidable and frankly, some of the best seen for quite some time. Parcour 3 was undoubtedly the hardest of the weekend in terms of target distances – peg 1, especially, was a real eye-opener! All in all, an excellent layout.

Parcour 1 was out in the 'back forty' and shooters were shuttled out to the location. This layout had one peg in the woods with a tricky and very fast quartering away

rabbit, probably the toughest shot on the layout. Peg 2 raised the level a bar or two with some very long and high shots, and a fast hooking trap style teal that faded right at the peak.

The end of day one found Wendell Cherry in the lead at 63. I was having a really good day, catching second place at 61. Mark Kiddie was next in line at 56.

SATURDAY'S SPORTING

For those who selected to shoot both events on Saturday, the sporting course would start the day if your FITASC rotation was in the afternoon and vice-versa if you shot the FITASC in the morning.

Larry Corbett re-set the course from Friday and provided us with another set of testy and entertaining targets. I found it interesting as I reviewed the scores from both days that some shooters who did well on Friday,



PEG TWO ON PARCOUR ONE. IT DOESN'T GET MUCH PRETTIER, (OR MUCH TOUGHER!) THAN THIS!



ANGEL RAMOS CONNECTS WITH THIS DROPPER JUST BEFORE IT MAKES IT TO GROUND!

slipped a bit on Saturday, and several who were down the list on Friday fared much better on Saturday. Overall scores indicated that the targets were very similar in the degree of difficulty. Several stands featured the same presentations without any movement of the machines, changed dramatically by moving the shooting positions 20 or 30 yards right or left and back a bit, and others were changed completely.

Wendell Cherry started the day by winning the Saturday Sporting event with a superb 95, followed by Friday's winner Thomas Cutler (91) and Tim Burke (88) third. There was a close race in the Ladies, with Vandy Hall on top at 71 with Debbie Wall one back at 70. In the Super-Veterans, Gerald Wilcox topped the field at 82 with Fred Abbott right behind at 81. Otto Loving (82) won the Veterans concurrent followed by Ron Necessary (81).

PARTY TIME!

Rose Hill's Saturday night dinner was served buffet-style, with a delicious and tangy barbeque, complete with all the trimmings including peach cobbler for dessert. Those that have been to previous tournaments at Rose Hill

know that this is not a dinner to skip, as the food and service is always first rate. Awards for the Friday and Saturday sporting events were made, and it was announced that the rumor that this would be the last Rose Hill Challenge was just that – it would be held again next year with a date yet to be set.

FITASC DAY TWO

Sunday's FITASC was overlaid on Saturday's layouts, with a complete change of targets. The presentations, reflected by the scores, were just a bit less challenging. There were a few less of the long high shots, but a few more crossers were set for the balance. All the shooting positions were moved, changing each layout considerably – keeping all the presentations well visible with plenty of time in flight.

Layout 2 had two notable targets. A midi teal that no one on my squad ever touched, and a long midi crosser from left to right high and away that was deceptive in that it needed much less lead than one



WENDELL CHERRY WON SATURDAY'S SPORTING AND THE MAIN FITASC EVENT.

would think judging by its distance from the peg – probably due to its slowing down at the long end of its trajectory.

When it was all said and done, Wendell Cherry put up an amazing scoring streak on Sunday, hitting 68 ex 75, missing only seven targets for a 131 total, once more extending his long winning streak of the past year and scoring a full twelve targets ahead of the field. How does he do that?

By the grace of a 25 straight shot on Friday, I managed to keep my second place position at Master 1 with a 119. Will Fennell put on a superb charge on Sunday by bettering his Saturday score by a full twelve targets for a 118 and second Master, followed by Bob Haynes, besting his first day score by 15 targets, for third place at 115.

In the concurrents, Junior shooter, Casey Holder (109), took top honors followed by Ben Slome and Peter Stodolski, tied at 101 for

second and third place. Stephanie Steinkraus was the top Lady in with a 110, followed by Debbie Wall (102) in second. After an exciting shoot-off, Darby Jenkins bested Paula Moore for the third place. Super-Veteran Fred Abbott (103) took top honors, with James Collins (98) second and Richard Jordan (95) third, tied with Ed Moritt. I held on for the Veteran honors, with Mark Kiddie (114) second and Norman Reuter (112) third.

Rose Hill Farms once again did a masterful job of providing their competitors a full weekend of superb targets and all the Southern hospitality one could ever want. The relaxed and friendly yet elegant atmosphere of these grounds make the shooters feel comfortable and at ease, while they experience true Parcour de Chasse style targets the way the game was meant to be presented. To make my point, out of the entire event, there were only two 25 straights, one 24, and six 23s (of which Wendell was responsible for three of them!), once again attesting to the fact that this event features the proper level of challenge in their presentations for a true championship. ■