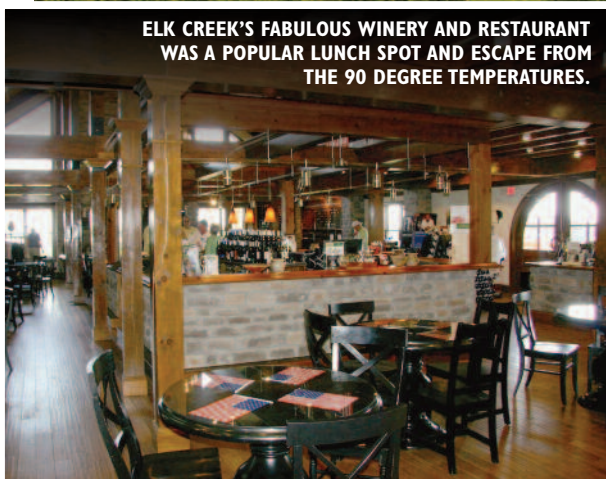


# KENTUCKY'S ELK CREEK HOSTS THE **2009 US OPEN**



ELK CREEK'S FABULOUS WINERY AND RESTAURANT WAS A POPULAR LUNCH SPOT AND ESCAPE FROM THE 90 DEGREE TEMPERATURES.



A SPORTING CLAYS 'RUN FOR THE ROSES' SAYS **STEVE FISCHER**



ELK CREEK'S MANAGER, **GARY KATHMAN.**

**WHAT DO MOST PEOPLE THINK OF WHEN THE SUBJECT OF CONVERSATION INVOLVES THE STATE OF KENTUCKY?**

For many, thoughts of Kentucky's long history of beautiful thoroughbred race horses from the Bluegrass country around Lexington comes to mind – as does Churchill Downs and the famous Kentucky Derby's 'Run for the Roses'. The beauty of Kentucky's Blue Ridge Mountains also stands out, followed then perhaps by the folklore and famous people in history that have such great ties to Kentucky – such as Daniel Boone, Abe Lincoln and Jefferson Davis.

Plenty of history and proud tradition to be sure. Now we can

add yet another great attraction to the list – Elk Creek Hunt Club and Winery. Set in beautiful central Kentucky, near the town of Owenton, Elk Creek played host to the 2009 Sporting Clays US Open and did a yeomans job of presenting almost a full week of shooting for some 1100 competitors.

No stranger to large and prestigious events, Elk Creek has been host to many Big Blasts and is currently the home for the Boomer Esiason Foundation All American Sporting Clays

Championship and World FITASC Challenge. This annual Elk Creek hosted event helps to raise money for the BEF to hopefully find a cure for Cystic Fibrosis. Rather than try to host two major tournaments within 30 days of each other, the decision was made to postpone the All American BEF for this year and bring it back in 2010. However, a section of the BEF All American Championship was included as a part of the US Open in the form of the Pre-lim which was re-named the Boomer Esiason All-American Preliminary and ran from Tuesday

through Saturday with over 800 competitors. Shooting awards and presentation of the annually awarded All-American trophy for this event were presented at the Saturday night Banquet along with a short but meaningful presentation about Cystic Fibrosis and the BEF – but more on that later.

### So Many Targets, So Little Time!

If there was something else Elk Creek could have offered in the form of another shooting event, I certainly can't imagine what it might be! Hard core shooters had all they could handle with a 100 target Pre-lim, 200 target Main Event, 100 target FITASC and 5-Stand, four 50 target sub gauge events (.410-28-20-and 12 ga.) and the Farewell 100 target event. In addition, there were several practice 5-Stands, the ever popular Make-A-Break, a Flurry and a Long Bird game. As always, the FITASC event filled early, and there was a considerable waiting list for an opening spot. Some shooters were disappointed – but registering early has its rewards when it comes to FITASC.

One of the many reasons Elk Creek is such an excellent venue is the terrain. This is true 'mountain goat' territory in every sense of the word, with deep ravines and steeply rising hill-sides that just beg for a target setter to let his imagination run free. What better place then for the FITASC event. Mick Howells and Mike McAlpine did the honors with Howells setting Parcours 1 and 2, and McAlpine 3 and 4. They also set the Main Sporting courses, Blue and Red respectively, with Chuck Frazier setting the White course. Hayward Cunningham did a masterful job of targets on the All American 100 Pre-lim and Ed Prechel set the 5-Stand.

### Great FITASC

Without doubt, discussions will continue for the next few months over Parcour 2, peg 1. It featured several targets that would make

most shooters weak at the knee's and cause considerable perspiration – over and above that caused by the high temperatures. Of the four targets presented, three of them were in the serious category with a long left to right quartering as well as dropping incoming 'B' target that came up a long hill, quartering to the shooters right, and gently hit the ground at about 35 yards from the peg. A real knee knocker. The 'C' target was a true monster shot that featured a screaming battue quartering away right to left while going downhill and away from the shooter, low and fast. I never found the handle on that one! Another tough shot was presented as a single only. The E target, a 90mm, was sent from an 85 foot tower that was set up behind a tall Oak tree to the rear of the shooters right shoulder. After about a 3 second delay, it just suddenly appeared out over the top of the tree, approaching the speed of light and on its way to Cincinnati. It's the kind of shot that makes you feel good all over if you hit it. The



**A LONG FAST QUARTERING AWAY SHOT ON PARCOUR 1.**

least difficult shot was the 'A' target, a left to right chandelle, that nevertheless had a good bit of juice on it. Many a shooter left that peg with a wounded score card and out of the 171 competitors in Master class there were only two 23s, four 21s and nine 20s recorded on this layout.

Parcours 1 and 4 proved to be the most friendly with Parcour 3 somewhere in the

middle, yet they only produced three straights in Master class. Both target setters utilized the extreme terrain very well, and their layouts were well thought out and designed to be at a higher skill level as one would expect at a tournament of this stature.

One of the first scores recorded early in the week was that of Wendell Cherry. His 86 topped the field for quite some time, giving all shooters the message that this FITASC event was at a Championship level and demanded the very best of each competitor. It wasn't until the weekend that competitors broke the magic mark of 90, with Brandon Powell finally taking the HOA spot with a magnificent score of 25-23-22-23=93. Runner-up went to Jon Kruger, posting a 24-23-23-22=92. Master first went to Scott Robertson (90) with Bobby Fowler Jr. one back for second place with Diego Duarte (87) in third. Results are in the accompanying panel.

FITASC		
CH	BRANDON POWELL	93
RU	JON KRUGER	92
M1	SCOTT ROBERTSON	90
AA1	ERIC STEINKRAUS	77
A1	JOE CLARK	71
B1	FRANK MARCUM	67
C1	RICHARD COTE	66
D1	ROY GREGORY	63
E1	DREW LIESKE	55
SJ1	DAVID RADULOVICH	79
J1	GREG JACKSON	84
L1	DIANE SORANTINO	75
V1	JIM WILLIAMS	83
SV1	STEVE FISCHER	80
SSV1	RICHARD COTE	66

### All-American 100-Pre-lim

The Pre-lim event was combined with the BEF All American Sporting Clays Championship and for many it was considered to be their favorite event. Set by

The Pre-lim course wandered through both woods and open areas, providing the shooter with a good mixture of target presentations and featured a good variety of presentations.



THE PRE-LIM WAS WELL SET UP ON A RIDGE.

Hayward Cunningham, the presentations were well thought out with interesting and entertaining targets. The difficulty level was in the light moderate range but for some shooters unfamiliar with shooting targets beneath their feet, or over heavily sloping hill sides that is the norm at Elk Creek, figuring leads and lines provided an extra measure of challenge. Some of the true pair presentations were an either/or situation as to which target to take first even though the shots could be taken either way. "Which one you gonna shoot first?" was a frequently asked question amongst squad members. Nevertheless, just about 20 percent of Master class scored a 90 or higher in this event.

The course wandered through both woods and open areas, providing the shooter with a good mixture of target presentations and featured a variety of presentations from quick and tight windowed shots, to long shots with plenty of time to pick your best break point. This event ran daily through



A NICE TIGHT WINDOW GOING AWAY TARGET ON THE PRE-LIM.

### 5-Stand

532 shooters tested their skills on the 5-Stand making it the most popular side game of the Open. Set atop of a ridge beyond the four FITASC Parcours overlooking a deep ravine, this event produced some high scores in spite of its hilly location. Getting a solid footing for some was somewhat of a challenge. Each of the four layouts presented a single target with two true pairs at each position, and careful consideration as to which of the two targets presented as a simo pair were to be shot first was a must – a wrong decision would leave the shooter with a very challenging second barrel. The targets were varied and interesting with a good selection of just about every type of shot one would encounter on a sporting course. Teals, rabbits, battues, chandelles, crossers and quartering shots were well mixed throughout the entire 100 targets. The event was fun as well as being a good test of reaction and selection skills. Anthony Matarese Jr. took HOA with 98, tied with Wendell Cherry who took runner-up. Master first went to Scott Robertson (97) while second and third place awards went to Hub Johnson and Justin Fox, also tied, at 96.

Saturday noon and shooters competed throughout the week with awards being presented at the banquet and concert on Saturday evening. Cory Kruse (97) topped the long list of competitors taking HOA after a shoot-off with Anthony Matarese Jr. who took runner-up. Second runner-Up Gebben Miles also tied at 96 with the first three shooters in Master class – Brandon Powell, Brian Hughes and Hub Johnson.

PRE-LIM		
CH	CORY KRUSE	97
RU	ANTHONY MATARESE JR.	97
3RD	GEBBEN MILES	96
M1	BRANDON POWELL	96
AA1	MARCELINO GOMEZ	91
A1	WALKER BUTCH	90
B1	MIKE MINTON	88
C1	JASON BURTON	83
D1	GUY WOMACK	76
E1	WILLIAM WOLFE	73
SJ1	DAVID RADULOVICH	94
J1	THEO RIBBS	95
L1	ASHLEIGH HAFLEY	92
V1	GERALD HENDRICKSON	93
SV1	STEVE FISCHER	93
SSV1	J.W. PULLIAM	78

## 5-STAND

CH	ANTHONY MATARESE JR.	98
RU	WENDELL CHERRY	98
M1	SCOTT ROBERTSON	97
AA1	CHRISTOPHER SMITH	95
A1	RANDY HUNT	86
B1	JEFF SAIK	85
C1	GEORGE PAINE	78
D1	RAY FISCHER	82
E1	STEPHEN CARSWELL	74
SJ	KYLER FORD	95
J	JUSTIN FOX	96
L	JANET MCDUGALL	90
V	DAVID WALKER	93
SV	JACK CONCANNON	92
SSV	RICHARD RUIZ	75

Variety, as they say, is the 'spice of life'. Well, the Main Event was certainly well 'spiced' with a variety of targets that ran the gamut of possible presentations.



RICK CAMUGLIA CAREFULLY STUDIES THE PAIRS ON THE 5-STAND.

## Red White and Blue

Variety, as they say, is the 'spice of life'. Well, the Main Event was certainly well 'spiced' with a variety of targets that ran the gamut of possible presentations. Red course gave the shooter a large number of true pairs where

NOW HERE'S A SQUAD AND A HALF!



FLORIDA'S NELSON FAMILY SHOT TOGETHER. THEY ARE ALL MASTERS.

once again, picking the right target for the first shot was a critical decision – and selecting the wrong one could be costly. Some of the true pairs called for the shooter to be a bit more aggressive on the first shot in order to leave sufficient time to acquire the second. Statistically, the Red course fell about in the middle as regards difficulty level.

The White course was fraught with danger in the form of more technically difficult shots, often with short windows. It was, in my opinion, a toss-up with the Red course as far as difficulty was concerned, depending on each shooter's individual ability and preference for shooting faster, shorter windows. Several of the stations could be shot with open

## US OPEN

CH	DAVID RADULOVICH	192
RU	BRANDON POWELL	189
3RD	ANTHONY MATARESE JR.	187
M1	GEBEN MILES	187
M2	PAT LIESKE	187
M3	SCOTT ROBERTSON	187
AA1	ROD DROUSE	179
AA2	RICH HUGHES	174
AA3	LANNY GRIFFIN	172
A1	WALKER BLITCH	172
A2	STEVE MYERS	171
A3	LARRY KNOTS	164
B1	WILL HINTON	166
B2	JEFF SAIK	165
B3	SCOTT GRANGE	163
C1	JAMES STEWART	157
C2	GEORGE PAINE	157
C3	SCOTT MCLEOD	154
D1	MARK REED	167
D2	GUY WOMACK	158
D3	MARK KNOTTS	153
E1	PHIL PARKS	161
E2	GEORGE GAYLE	145
E3	DREW LIESKE	143
SSV1	J.W. PULLIAM	153
SSV2	PETER VARDA	141
SSV3	PHILLIP ODEM	140
SV1	JACK CONCANNON	180
SV2	BOB DAVIS	174
SV3	FLOYD HARTLAGE	172
V1	GARY GREENWAY	186
V2	STEVEN GOODBERLET	178
V3	MICHAEL ALLEN	178
SJ1	DAVID RADULOVICH	192
SJ2	WESLEY BORIE	173
SJ3	CORD KISTHARDT	172
J1	JUSTIN FOX	181
J2	GREG JACKSON	180
J3	JOEY BOLTON	178
L1	ASHLEIGH HAFLEY	177
L2	DIANE SORANTINO	176
L3	STEFANIE STEINKRAUS	166



THE FAMOUS ELK CREEK TOWER.



RED COURSE STATION 10.

chokes as the targets were fairly close, but often that closeness was made up for by the short window it was presented in.

The Blue course gave the competitor longer windows of opportunity but was often combined with greater distances on the presentations. Target setter Howell's dipped into his English heritage on one of the stations that featured the closest thing the US shooters ever get to see in the form of a driven target. It was not quite directly overhead, but off to the shooters left shoulder. Not a particularly a hard shot, but fun nevertheless. He also set a rather testy downhill rabbit at about 35 yards and a very fast quartering shot 30 yards below the shooting stand going left to right. I would bet that target to be the most missed shot on all three courses. Overall, the Blue course was very entertaining.



ANTHONY MATARESE JR., DAVID RADULOVICH AND BRANDON POWELL – TOP THREE IN THE MAIN EVENT.



ADDING TO HER RECENT WORLD LADIES TITLE, ASHLEIGH HAFLEY IS NOW ALSO THE US OPEN LADIES CHAMPION.

### Down to the Wire!

A combination of Red, White, and Blue course scores decided who would be the 2009 US Open Champion – and this year the winner came from the Sub-Juniors. David Radulovich (64-63-65=192) became one of the youngest shooters to ever win this event. Brandon Powell took the runner-up spot (61-65-63=189) and Anthony Matarese Jr. was second runner-up (63-63-61=187).

In the Masters, 187 tied Gebben Miles, Pat Lieski, Scott Robertson, Andy Duffy and Tony Kell all the way to Master 5th.

### Looking Back

After all was said and done, Elk Creek Hunt Club and Winery and their very competent staff, headed by Gary Kathman, provided the competitors with a top notch event. They were well prepared to handle this huge event and did so with style.

The Winery was also another big plus, featuring not only the excellent wine produced there, but a delicious lunch and dinner menu that rates right up there with top



GOOD ATTENDANCE FROM VENDORS.

restaurants. Next to the National's in San Antonio, I think this event had more on site vendors than just about any other major event I have ever attended.

iClays did the scoring and computations for all the events,

RIGHT: iCLAYS FOUR SIDED KIOSK KEPT THE SCORES FOR ALL TO SEE IN REAL TIME.



COMPETITOR ATTENDANCE BY STATE WAS DISPLAYED.



#### SMALL GAUGE HOA

20G	BODE PORTER	49
28G	TIMOTHY GOLDSMITH	49
.410	STEVE EDMONDSON	46
12G	ANTHONY MATARESE JR.	50
ALL G	ZAC KIENBAUM	189

and their ground breaking television screens that showed a constantly updated compilation of all the event scores was a great asset. Shooters could keep track of other competitors and their own placement in each event all day long, every day. It was far more convenient than hand posted results, and hopefully will get adopted by other major events – starting with the Nationals!

An unexpected and very intense heat wave was the biggest challenge to both the grounds and the competitors, with the temperatures reaching into the 90s over most of the week's events. The club made sure there was more than ample water on all the stations and Parcours, and although a few trappers succumbed to the intense heat and humidity, all were quickly treated and there were no problems.

This 2009 US Open was one of the best in recent years – and most shooters I talked to had a great time. With Elk Creek located less than an hour from three major international airports and with plenty of hotels and restaurants within 20 minutes to a half hour from the grounds, Elk Creek would, in my opinion, make a most desirable location for either a World Sporting Championship or a World FITASC. ■



GIACOMO SPORTING INC'S NEW PRESIDENT, DAN LOKKER, SHOWED UP AND SERVICED SOME PERAZZIS.