

3rd June 2023

The Best in the Country ?

When I was lucky enough to be invited to join Jake Spiers, one of the Gleneagles Shooting School managers, to shoot simulated game on the Drummond Estate, he said it was the best in the country. “I’ll be the judge of that”, I thought. After all, I’ve shot simulated game on numerous estates around Scotland, and I know what I like.

Well, it turns out that Jake was right. We had an excellent, full day with our host, Terry Massey, who was cool, calm and collected. He was the epitome of the graceful swan, outwardly pure serenity, but evidently paddling furiously beneath the surface to keep the show seamlessly on the road.

We arrived at the lovely Straid Hall before 9am to meet the other seven guns (we were one gun down, so all double gunning apart from one) and for coffee



Jake Spiers, Gleneagles Shooting School, and Terry Massey, Drummond Estate Simulated Game Shoot



Straid Hall - our rendezvous to meet for the shoot and the venue for our excellent lunch

and bacon rolls. It was then into our fleet of 4x4s for a long (~20 minutes) and spectacularly scenic drive up the single track Glen Artney road and then an off road track up the Findhu Glen.

Our first and second drives were in the breathtaking landscape up the Findhu Glen, which only benefited from the stunning weather of the early June high pressure system. The first drive was a nice warm up of medium driven birds and the second was of a seemingly endless stream (we ran out of cartridges!) of towering driven birds.



The breathtaking landscape of Findhu Glen for the first two drives



The elevenses bothy

Excellent home baked elevenses were then served at the bothy en route back down the glen towards

the hall for our third drive of the day. This was the fast and furious driven grouse on the Little Hill grouse moor towering above the village of Comrie, overlooking the upper reaches of Strathearn with Glen Lednock to the north.



In the butts for the grouse drive

It being a glorious Scottish summer's day, we returned to a barbecue served outside the hall on gingham tablecloth covered tables, prepared by the wonderfully efficient Anne and Trudy, our host's wife and sister respectively.



The first drive after lunch

The first drive after lunch, a short drive away, was a great open lowland drive with birds being driven off a steep face in front of the guns, the Rocks drive alternative being inappropriate because of its orientation and the bright sunshine we were blessed with.

A short drive further took us to the last drive which was a fabulous woodland drive, in the south west corner of Torlum Wood behind (to the west of) Drummond Castle. We were on peg one, but as with previous drives, being at the end of the line was not a problem, with plenty of birds soaring over the treetops to provide a wonderful finale for us.

Overall impressions

Terry is an outstanding host and the Drummond Estate is a magnificent playground. We were blessed with fabulous weather, but the scenery and vistas would be outstanding, whatever the weather.

Terry's propensity to present us with a mixture of midi and full sized clays, combined with the deep azure blue of the sky background, certainly made for really challenging targets that were frequently difficult to see before they were almost upon you. The spotting function of your loader was invaluable in this regard.

Driving into the drives afforded a privileged experience of the beauty of the estate and the walks in to each drive further reinforced the feeling of a live game shoot, with pegs and butts all clearly laid out.

Terry and his assistant, John, were charming hosts of the gun line who barely ever saw the team of trappers with their fleet of ATV-drawn trap trailers, and Anne and Trudy did us proud on the catering front. The whole day, which lasted from before 9am to after 5pm, was professionally run, and clearly safe at all times. Terry provided a safety briefing at the beginning of the day and offered PPE, and the entire event was alcohol free.

The birds were challenging but presented at a steady rate, allowing for a huge amount of shooting during each lengthy drive. Jake and I both shot more than 500 cartridges each.

In summary, much as it irks me to acknowledge that Jake was right, this has surely got to be the best simulated game shoot in the country.



The guns on the Little Hill with Glen Lednock in the distance