

# Griffin & Howe

*Finest in Firearms Since 1923*



**CERTIFICATE OF INVENTORY & DISPOSITION  
VON LENGERKE & DETMOLD RECORDS  
ABERCROMBIE & FITCH RECORDS**

**Purdey Side by Side Shotgun  
Serial Number 23158**

Purdey shotgun, serial number 23158, was received at Von Lengerke & Detmold on October 16, 1926 and entered in inventory on page 26 of Inventory Book No. 3. Further specifications for this firearm include:

Gauge: 12 gauge  
Barrels: 27 inch barrels with ejectors and 2 5/8 inch chambers  
Chokes: Improved Cylinder & Modified  
Weight: 6 pounds, 9 ounces  
Dimensions: 2 3/4 in. Drop @ Heel x 1 3/4 in. Drop @ Comb x 13 6/8 in. LOP x  
1/4 inch Cast Off  
Stock: Half Pistol Grip

The date of sale is recorded as April 26, 1926. Like four other Purdey shotguns on page 26, the date of sale is earlier than the date received in inventory suggesting that the earlier date is actually the date that a custom order was placed for the shotgun by the customer. Several other examples appear on this page where the two dates are the same. These, too, are understood to represent special order guns.

Purdey 23158 was sold to "C.H. Wells" in the New York store. The catalog price for a Purdey hammerless ejector game gun in 1926 was £126, or approximately US \$612, not including freight, duty and delivery charges.

On December 7, 1956, Purdey 23158 was consigned at Abercrombie & Fitch by "C.H. Wells" and listed with "Left On Sale" Shotguns in the 1956 inventory. The specifications at this time were similar to those in 1926 except as follows:

33 Claremont Road  
Bernardsville, NJ 07924  
PH: 908.766.2287  
Fax: 908.766.1068

Shooting School & Events  
270 Stanhope Sparta Road  
Andover, NJ 07821  
PH: 973.398.2670  
Fax: 973.398.0685

340 West Putnam Avenue  
Greenwich, CT 06830  
PH: 203.618.0270  
Fax: 203.618.0419

e-mail: [info@griffinhowe.com](mailto:info@griffinhowe.com)

[WWW.GRIFFINHOWE.COM](http://WWW.GRIFFINHOWE.COM)

Choke: Cylinder & Improved Cylinder  
Weight: 6 pounds, 6 ounces  
Dimensions: 2 1/4 in. Drop @ Heel x 1 11/16 in. Drop @ Comb x 13 7/8 in. LOP  
Accessories: Trunk case & contents, canvas outer case

On December 8, 1956, the shotgun was sold to "Wm J. Strawbridge" in the New York store at a price of \$1275. The cost of the Purdey to A&F was \$900.

Griffin & Howe confirms that this information was extracted from the original Von Lengerke & Detmold Inventory Records, Book No. 3, page 26 and the Abercrombie & Fitch Inventory Records, Book No. 14, page 94 on April 8, 2015.



Robert C. Beach  
Archives Research  
Griffin & Howe, Inc.

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## NOTES ON

### Purdey Side by Side Shotgun Serial No. 23158

Purdey shotgun, number 23158, was received at Von Lengerke & Detmold on October 16, 1926 and entered on page 26 of VL&D Inventory Book No.3, the seventh entry from the bottom of the page. On that page the date of acquisition is in the leftmost column and is followed by the serial number, gauge, barrel length, weight, stock dimensions, chokes, ejector/non-ejector status, and type of grip (**F**ull pistol grip,  $\frac{1}{2}$  pistol grip, or **S**traight grip). The type of grip uses ditto marks referencing an earlier entry. The cast of the stock and the chamber length are noted following the type of grip.

The date of sale, April 26, 1926, appears in the column headed "Consigned" and is followed by the name of the buyer, "C.H. Wells". This customer may have been Charles Hopkins Wells, born in Scranton, Pennsylvania about 1876. Like his father, also Charles H. Wells, Mr. Wells was a prominent local attorney in Scranton. He resided at the family home at 615 Vine Street in Scranton with his wife, Mary, his children and several live-in servants.

Since the date of sale is about six months prior to date received, the recorded date of sale is likely the date that the shotgun was ordered from VL&D by the customer. In later records, both the date of the order and the date of sale, which usually coincided with the date received, were recorded in the "Date Sold" column.

On December 7, 1956, Purdey 23158 was received as at Abercrombie & Fitch as a "Left On Sale" shotgun and entered on page 94 of Record Book No.14, the tenth entry from the bottom of the page. The category heading showing the inventory date and category of shotguns was entered only on the first page of a particular category so the heading of page 93 has been superimposed above the photograph of page 94. A&F had merged with Von Lengerke & Detmold in January 1929 under the A&F name and many of the former VL&D customers now came to A&F to buy and sell their more expensive firearms. The shotgun was received from "C.H. Wells", likely the same customer who purchased the shotgun at VL&D in 1926.

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By 1956 there was more information recorded about each firearm in the record than in 1926. In addition to the specifications in the earlier record, the entries now include a list of accessories as well as the cost and the retail price of the used shotgun. Only the amount of cast off appears to have been omitted.

The cost and retail price of the shotgun are written in code on the right side of the page. This code is based upon the word H-Y-D-R-O-P-L-A-N-E, where H=1, Y=2, D=3, etc. The number '0' is indicated by the letter 'E', however, the letter 'X' is used to indicate an additional '0'. Using this code it can be seen that the price of 23158, as seen on page 94 was 'HYLO.--' which would be the equivalent of \$1,275.00. Similarly, the cost of the shotgun to A&F on page 94 was 'NEX' which translates to \$900.

The buyer of Purdey 23158 in 1956 is recorded as "Wm. J. Strawbridge". This customer is almost certainly William Justice Strawbridge, born in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania on October 7, 1911. In the 1920 and the 1930 census Mr. Strawbridge is shown in residence at the estate of his step-father, Samuel W. Morris, a banker and a descendant of several famous American patriots, including Robert Morris known as the "financier of the American Revolution". In 1935 Mr. Strawbridge married Mary Gwinn Vaux in Whitemarsh, Pennsylvania and by the 1940 census the couple was residing in Whitemarsh with their two sons, William J., Jr. and Richard V. Strawbridge. In 1961, the son of William J. Strawbridge and Mary Gwinn Vaux Strawbridge, William J. Strawbridge, Jr., was wed to the youngest daughter of New York Governor Nelson A. Rockefeller, Mary Clark Rockefeller. On none of the census forms does Mr. Strawbridge indicate that he is employed and his obituary limits his credits and accomplishments to those associated with yacht racing. William Justice Strawbridge passed away at Hobe Sound, Florida on January 15, 1995.

I hope that this information adds to the appreciation of your firearm. If we can be of any further assistance, please let us know.

  
Robert C. Beach  
Archives Research  
Griffin & Howe, Inc.