



## High Grade : Trophy Taker

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Dan Evans brought his first fall-away arrow rest to the AMO Archery Trade Show in Indianapolis, Indiana, in January 2000. Fall-away rests weren't exactly new to archery, but they were far from mainstream. In fact, every company that had once made fall-away rests had either gone out of business or discontinued fall-away lines.

Archery hunters had never really embraced these rests in any significant number. And some previous models had not always worked properly, burning many retailers and leaving a bad taste. On top of that, Trophy Taker was a very small one-man company with no name and no track record.

The final hurdle came in the form of Trophy Taker's low-man-on-the-totem-pole booth location. They were stationed in the most remote corner of the most isolated room at the show. The show organizers felt so guilty about the slow traffic that they refunded most of Trophy Taker's booth entry cost.

Dan Evans was the man behind the vision to popularize fall-away rests with archers, and this was Dan's "welcome-to-the-industry" moment.

"It was like pulling teeth," Dan said. "People were very reluctant to believe this style of rest. But, as time went on they became more comfortable with the reliability of the rests. They became very popular and today there are dozens of companies making fall-away rests".

### Trophy Taker Rests

Dan's first rest was the Original Trophy Taker and it is still in the line. The rest features a micro-adjustable carriage that holds a spring-loaded rest arm. The only difference between this style of rest and the TM Hunter is the direction the spring pulls the launcher. With the Trophy Taker, and the drop-away rests it inspired, the spring snaps the launcher down, onto the riser's rest shelf, rather than up as it does with conventional rests.

A cord attached to the bow's harness pulls the rest up when you draw and lets it drop when you release.

The Original Trophy Taker has a comparatively narrow lizard-tongue launcher arm to hold your arrow as you draw. It works great for those shooters who never bobble when drawing. However, it is a bit precarious for those who often shake and shimmy when trying to get the string back. That's why Dan Evan invented what has become his most popular rest, the Shakey Hunter.

The Shakey Hunter features a wide mouthed launcher that scoops up the arrow no matter where it is lying on your rest shelf and keeps it securely in place as you draw the string. If you shake the bow while drawing, you can't conceivably lurch enough to jar it out of the launcher's grasp.

The latest addition to the Trophy Taker fall-away line is the new Shakey Hunter SL. This rest uses the same wide-mouthed launcher as the Shakey Hunter but has a simplified body that does not include the micro-adjustable features in the first generation. I like simplicity no matter how you package it, but I like it even more when it is also less expensive. It is easier to make the Shakey Hunter SL, so it sells for less. This is the first Trophy Taker rest to retail for less than \$50.

You adjust the Shakey Hunter SL's center shot and elevation at the same time by loosening a single screw. While this may not be the most convenient method when setting up a bow, it does lock very solidly and is a rugged arrangement.

### **Top Pin Hunting Sights**

Trophy Taker entered the sight market in 2004 with the Top Pin 4 Pin and the Pin version has a round pin guard and is ideally suited to most whitetail hunting situations. Some deer hunters use five pins so I asked Dan if it is possible to add another pin. A fifth pin will fit in the 4 Pin, but the bow must shoot at least 280 fps in order to keep the pin gap small enough to fit all five pins.

Trophy Taker also makes two other sights, the Top Pin 7 Pin and the Top Pin 10 Pin. The 7 Pin is designed for western hunters who sometimes take long shots or for those archers who like to practice at long distances. The 7 Pin and 10 Pin sights have oblong pin guards. All pin guards have glow-in-the-dark facing so you can easily see them in low light if you prefer to center the pin guard in your peep.

The top pin of all three of these sights has a wrapped fiber optic filament (50 inches of fiber) so it is the most visible under low light. The top and bottom pins are vertical. This slightly improves visibility of the target. Pin orientation is a matter of personal preference to a certain degree, but the Top Pin sights do have a god look.

In addition to their pin orientation, Trophy Taker sights have two other notable features. All sights have a large, highly visible, bubble level built into the bottom of the pin guard, an important aiming aid every hunter should use.

These sights also feature what Dan Evans calls "second axis" leveling. Some call this same feature "third axis" leveling. Regardless of what you call it, this adjustment assures the sight body (and more importantly, the bubble level) are at a 90-degree angle to your line of sight, a must for top accuracy, especially at longer distances.

Dan Evans is one of the most serious hunters I have ever met. He designed his Trophy Taker rests, and later his sights, specifically for his own use. He started out by making himself a rest that would permit better fletching clearance so he could shoot more accurately and bring home more big elk. In the process of achieving that goal, Dan inspired a revolution.