

TWO TOUGH SHOTGUN CASES

Along with the four rifle cases we tested, we also examined two shotgun cases, which would be useful information for STC shooters who also need protection for their scatterguns. Here's what we thought of the Elk River Shotgun Case, \$180; and Browning's Traditional 11152 Full-Length Shotgun Case, \$200.

Browning 11152 Shotgun Case

Who would have guessed that this stylish and attractive case would be so tough? Not us, but it proved us wrong. The case is made from wood, covered on the outside with vinyl designed to imitate leather. Metal bumpers protect the corners. The interior is covered with a soft fabric, and foam cushions optimize shock protection. The firearm is held in place by hook-and-loop straps at the wrist and barrel. The case measured 53.4 inches in length, 8 inches in width, and 3 inches in depth.

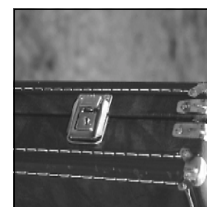
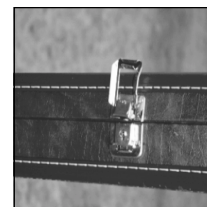
The case came through the durability tests nearly unscathed. It went head to head with Cabela's metal case, failing only under the wheels of a car, and not too badly there either. It weighs only 8 pounds, and is easy to use. The latches open and close smoothly, and the two locking latches functioned with no problems. We had to push harder on them at the end of the drop tests, yet they still worked properly. We did notice that the two case halves were slightly out of alignment, but they still fit together satisfactorily.

Still, every silver lining comes with a cloud, and the Browning's flaw is its relative lack of security, in our estimation. Only a half-dozen or so hammer blows were required to break open the lockable latches, placing it at the bottom



Left: Browning's \$200 Traditional 11152 Full-Length Shotgun Case has a wooden shell and frame and is covered with vinyl. The interior is covered with a soft, foam-backed fabric. It was 53.4 inches long, 8 inches wide, and 3 inches deep.

Right, top and bottom: The Browning case came through the durability tests nearly unscathed, bending slightly out of alignment under the wheels of a car. The case has one flaw, in our view: The latches are easy to bypass.



of the category along with the Elk River case.

4 Priced at \$200 suggested retail, Browning's Traditional 11152 Full-Length Shotgun Case will do an excellent job of protecting your firearms, in our view. We think it is an excellent value, providing outstanding protection from abuse—especially where security concerns are not overwhelming.

Elk River Shotgun Case

This product is heavy on styling and fashion, but our tests indicated that it generally came up short in other areas.

The 10-pound product has a padded cloth exterior, with leather trim, leather straps, and two lockable latches. Two small hinges, some brass nails, and feet complete the outside. Inside, it has adjustable blocks for differing barrel lengths, hook-and-loop retaining straps for the firearm, and some accessory storage compartments. It's also worth noting that it appears to be designed primarily for take-down shotguns. Pump and autoloader owners will have to struggle to use the case. The case was 32 inches long, 10 inches wide, and 4 inches deep.

Despite its "pretty boy" appearance, it performed admirably in the durability test-

ing, actually finishing just behind Cabela's metal case. Some damage was nevertheless sustained: The handle broke off, locked latches started popping open, and some of the brass nails began to work loose. Overall, however, it stayed largely intact, even after the car rollover.

Security was disappointing, in our view. Locked latches started malfunctioning during the stress tests, but they could be forced open without too much effort. Though we initially thought the leather straps were just for show, we realized the weak latch design may necessitate the extra strap-closing mechanism.

Ease of use likewise was a disappointment. All that fiddling with restraining straps, poor latches, and exterior straps added extra time to opening and closing the case. We recognize that part of this sort of case's charm is the extra hands-on attention that it (and your shotgun) requires, but the fact remains that it takes longer to operate.

I We can't deny that the Elk River Shotgun Case is a good-looking gun case, but for \$200, we would like to see it stand up to abuse better. This case would fit best in your new BMW Z3 roadster as you zip back and forth to the local trap or skeet range, but we wouldn't use it for serious traveling.



Left: The Elk River Shotgun Case, \$220, has a padded cloth exterior, with leather trim, leather straps, and two lockable latches. Despite its stylish appearance, it performed admirably in durability testing.