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THE COVER

The jaunty California Valley quail challenges the wildfowler with its elusiveness, lures the wildlife photographer with its beauty, and tempts the gourmet with its savory flavor.

Just under a foot long, with black plume and throat, reddish-brown crown, white 'eyebrows' and bib line, California's State bird is semi-domesticated due to being often in orchards and gardens near man.

Hungry Forty-Niners during the Gold Rush and vineyard owners resentful of the quail's inate fondness for grapes formerly decimated the flocks. In recent years, however, the birds responded to well-planned conservation, and are now plentiful.

Barbecued, braised, broiled, or baked, the California Valley Quail ranks with the West's tastiest game birds.

This male specimen was photographed near Encino, Calif., by J. Ennis Humphrey of Reseda. Camera was Hasselblad equipped with 135 mm. Kodak Ektar Lens, using Ektachrome film exposed at 1/250 sec. with lens set halfway between f5.6 and f8.

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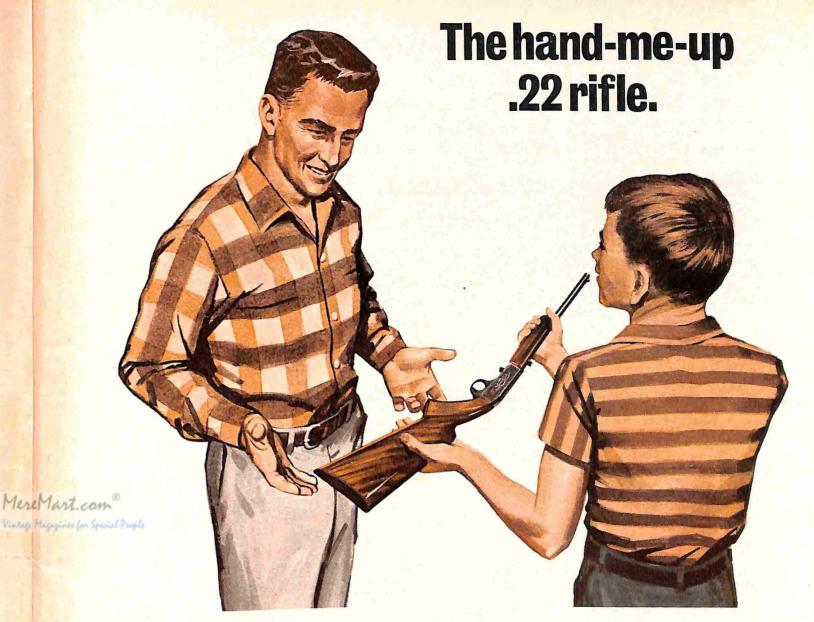
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