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Contents

Richard’s Editorial
A Matter of Trust… 7

News & Letters
Fan Mail By Rob Wäre 8

From the Desk of Hunter Proud Foundation
Of Demons and Dragons By Zig Mackintosh 10

Gear & Gadgets
Gaston J. Glock 14
Westley Richards 14

Wildlife Game By Dr John Ledger
Politics and Hunting in Botswana 16

Wildlife Profile By Chris and Mathilde Stuart
Royal Antelope from “Game Animals of the World” 18

Hunting Stories:
A Matter of Stripes By Craig Boddington 20
South Africa 2018: “Did you hear the Oxpecker?” By Brian Gallup 32
Namibia 2012: Sharp Eyes: Springbok, Impala and a Bushman By Archie Landals 42
Tanzania 2017: Tanzania Chui By T.J Schwanky 48
Mozambique 2017: Buff for Deer By Vance Squires 56
Namibia 2013: Dangerous -Game Hunting – not just for “Real Men” By Bill Head 64
South Africa 2018: Small Sizes Count! By Michael Arnold 72

Bowhunting
South Africa 2017: Bow, Arrow and Common Reedbuck By Frank Berbuir 80
Archery and Bowhunting– Why I Like It… By Dr Adrian de Villiers 86
South Africa 2018: Always trust Your PH By Lucas Paugh 88

Wingshooting
Waterfowling Africa Style - Size Matters By Ken Bailey 92

Hunters Do Good
Bergzicht Game Lodge 98

PH Q&A
Cloete Hepburn – a true man of the bush 100

PH Story
Facing Down (a different) Fear… a South African Chippendale in Reno By Joe da Silva 104

Rifles in Africa
How the gunmaking tradition is keeping pace with technology at Rigby By Phil Johnson 108

Johan Van Wyk’s On Shooting
The Legendary Magnum Mauser Action 112
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Directory of Advertisers

AHG - African Oasis ........................................... 84
AHG – Life Member Special .......................... 14 & 82
AHG – Members ............................................. 8
AHG – Shipping ............................................. 6
AHG – subscriptions .................................... 114
AHG - Visited & Verified ............................. 115
African Safari Jewellery ................................ 28
Africa-Sun Safaris ........................................... 17
African Wingshooting Safaris ....................... 142
Afton Safari Lodge .......................................... IBC
Archers Edge ................................................... 52
Bergzicht Safaris ............................................. 96 & 97
Bobby Hansen Safaris .................................... 12
Bulls Eye Taxidermy ....................................... 106
Bushmen Safaris ............................................ 109
Cape Town Hunting Safaris ............................ 107
Clint Orms ..................................................... 87
Conroe Taxidermy ......................................... 51
Craig Boddington ......................................... 116
CZ USA .......................................................... 125
Dakota Arms ................................................... 119
Dallas Safari Club ........................................... 44
Discount African Hunts ................................... 105
Eland Safaris ................................................... 120
Euro Optics ..................................................... 41 & 61
Explorer Satellite Communications ............... 91
Field & Stream Taxidermy ............................. 132
Gaston J Glock ................................................. 129
Hornady .......................................................... 15
Huntershill Safaris ......................................... 113
Hunting Safari South Africa ........................... 25
Images of Africa Taxidermy ........................... 99
Impisi Safaris ............................................... 74
Jamy Traut Safaris .......................................... 28
Jewel Africa .................................................... 40
JJ Perodeau Gunmaker, Inc .......................... 71
JL Bar Ranch Resort ....................................... 47
Kimber .......................................................... 3
Krieghoff ......................................................... 66 & OBC
Kwalata Safaris ............................................. 121
Limpopo Safaris ............................................. 30
Makadi Safaris ................................................. 62 & 63
Mashambanzou Safaris ................................ 70
Michel Mantheakis Safaris ........................... 95
Molopo Kalahari Safaris ............................... 76 & 77
Nightforce Optics ......................................... 123
Ostrich Jewellery ............................................. 60
Pascoe Gallery ................................................. 130 & 131
Rigby .............................................................. 34
Safari Landia .................................................. 69
Spear Safaris .................................................... 79
Spirit of Africa Taxidermy ............................. 102
Stormberg Elangeni Safaris ......................... IFC & 1,39
Swarovski Optics ........................................... 13
Swartberg Safaris .......................................... 97
Swift Bullets ................................................... 9
Tom Beckbe ................................................... 37
Travel Express ................................................. 128
Trijicon .......................................................... 55
TWG ............................................................... 31
Wesley Richards ............................................. 5
Zambeze Delta Safaris ................................... 59

Terry Wieland On Ammo
African Cats ..................................................... 117

A Hunter Speaks Out
Big Tube. Big Glass. Big Mistake By Wayne van Zwoll .......................... 118
Choose the Right Knife By Jess Walter ............................................. 124
The Namibia Success Story: conservation, hunting, venison
By Jofie Lamprecht ........................................... 126

Artist Profile
Pascoe Gallery – Unique African ceramic art ........................ 130

African Outfitters – Visited & Verified
Giving you Peace of Mind.................................. 133

Terry Wieland’s One for the road
By the Book ..................................................... 144
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A Matter of Trust…

Trust - firm belief in the reliability, truth, or ability of someone or something

When you’re buying something – particularly the higher it is in value – this underlying element of trust is becoming all too important. The world is offering more of everything. Promises are spouted, choices abound. Everyone and anyone is being told everything and anything. Decisions become difficult. Once great bastions of truth - like BBC, CNN – distort the facts for the sake of agendas, viewers and stakeholders.

With international travel to Africa, when your precious time and personal cash is spent on a classic safari – the last thing you want is to be sold is some story. How do you tell who has got what concession, or the exclusive right to hunt where they say they can? Or have even got their license from that country’s association? Forums exist, but many use pseudonyms, and right of reply is seldom offered before there is trial by media. Associations exist, but don’t have enough clout. Ethics committees abound – but with well over ten thousand hunters to Africa each year – how many rotten apples are removed?

With offering peace of mind, we launched the Visited & Verified Program. There’s no grading system for now – it was merely a means to independently confirm, via our platforms, what the Outfitter said they offered. Our reputation was on the line.

While there's space for all types of hunting operations and areas, just like any restaurant, hotel, tourist attraction or motor vehicle for that matter, simply state what it is that you offer. Don’t say with a straight face you are a Mercedes, when you’re a Toyota and have stuck a star badge on the hood. We know it happens, and thankfully the V&V program has gone some way to alleviate the problem. Our goal is to move this forward.

While everyone is a publisher, or a journalist, and there is too much keyboard courage and cyber ranting, we want to offer a refuge for those serious about hunting in Africa. As we expand the program, we will do what we can to build on that age-old quality that is all too quickly eroding in today’s world. Billy Joel sang about it in his 1986 hit, *A Matter of Trust*. And for us – promoting safaris to this great continent is what we do, so we take this seriously, and it is a matter of trust.

The Story of Two Shoe Salesmen in Africa

- Once upon a time, a shoe company sent two salesmen to Africa to determine the market potential for their products. One salesman was sent to the east coast of Africa, while the other was sent to the west coast. Both the salesmen completed a basic survey of the target market and called back to the office. The salesman sent to the east coast of Africa reported, “No one here wears any shoes, there is no market for us here!” The other salesman sent a message, “No one here wears any shoes, there is a huge market for us, send inventory fast!” And so, the story went. Different perceptions of potential with the same scenario.

For those sitting in the northern hemisphere and reading this – there has never been a better time to visit Africa. I keep saying this, and each time there are more reasons: The currency exchange rate, the declining cost of game, (essentially an economic factor of constant demand and rising supply), the increasing number and frequency of airlines to Africa, and then the low barriers to entry for PHs and Outfitters to ‘get into’ this industry. Game farm owners are becoming hunting outfitters, wealthy businessmen are becoming game farmers - you name it, the reasons are many. Yet, the outfitters tend to bemoan the fact that competitors respond to the economic reality of rising supply and discount their hunts.

In May 1993, I flew to the USA from South Africa, via UK to start a summer internship at 3M, Minnesota. At an exchange rate of 3.18 SA Rand to the US$, it was $943. I have googled the cheapest flight right now, and it is SAR 11 073 to get to the USA, and at today’s exchange of 14.41 to the US$ – that would mean my flight would be $768. More than 20% cheaper than it was 26 years ago!

This continent offers so much, as each area opens up - be it wilderness areas in Zambia, Botswana lifting its ban, Mozambique’s Zambeze Delta team managing the greatest relocation of lions, ever - or South Africa’s Karoo, of all places, offering a wonderland of big open skies. The potential abounds. Wildlife is hardy and survives in extreme areas, Namibia’s desert game being the best example. And so, hunters, if you know of friends that have dreamt of hunting our great continent – there really is no better time. We challenge you - in fact politely beg you to tell your buddies, share this magazine, or electronically send it from our website to your contacts – just spread the word.

Outfitters and professional hunters. If the fish are not biting, or they appear smaller than before – it is time to explore new waters. There are hunters from across the globe that are nuts about Africa. We see them at Afton Guest House, from Slovakia to Sweden, Argentina to Australia. When you are presenting the diversity and wealth of our wildlife, our scenery, people and weather, the odds are stacked in your favour. Period.

Our mission and my job is to promote hunting in Africa, and 2019 will be a telling time. We will be unveiling a plan to promote this continent and outfitters, not only to our primary markets – but to establish larger secondary markets and, equally important, to new and potential markets. We started it in Canada 10 years back, so we know there is potential. We can’t do it alone and we will be working with the industry we are a part of and so committed to. So, as you read through the next hundred and something pages – please bear in mind that this is the turning point. We are on a mission. And like the shoe salesman who noted nobody wore shoes in Africa – “bring more inventory!”

Life member: If you love this magazine and believe in what we do – take a minute to see what the Life Membership offers on page 14 & 82.

Shipping: As 2019 gets into full swing and hopefully you are heading to the African shores – remember the grudge purchase of shipping your trophies. AHG Shipping is here to save more, so you can hunt more – please visit page 6.

Afton: Whether you need help with gun permits, accommodation, a shuttle while waiting for your PH – pop in to the Afton Safari Lodge to say hello. Have a coffee, shower, relax – just feel at home and let’s help take the hassles from your travels into and out of Joburg – please visit Inside Back Cover.
Richard,

Sorry this has taken so long for me to reply.

Thank you for your kind email welcoming us as Life Members of the AHG! We enjoy the magazine immensely. We also enjoy the African Oasis in Dillon. What has been created there under Kim’s creativity and supervision is amazing. It is our favorite stop when in Montana, except for our own house that is.

We are looking forward to our third safari coming up this April, and look forward to staying at Afton.

Thank you again,

Rob Ware
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Membership, Road Director
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Kenya is the preservationists’ posterchild in Africa where the non-governmental organizations (NGOs) have had a stranglehold on government environmental policies since the mid-1970s when safari hunting was banned. The International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW), Born Free and the African Wildlife Foundation lead the NGO pack. Under their watchful eye, it has been estimated that since 1963, Kenya has lost 90% of its wildlife and 80% of its forest land. Thirty to forty per cent of the rangelands have turned to desert. This damning evidence shows that these institutions are more concerned with the raising of funds than the wildlife they purport to protect. They realize all of the benefits of their unique position through the ability to raise awareness and money for their assorted campaigns with the added bonus of not being accountable for their actions. The day-to-day consequences resulting from their shenanigans are left to the people who live with the wildlife to deal with.

In stark contrast is South Africa’s wildlife success story, probably the greatest the world has seen. Pioneers of this program were Dr. Ian Player and his colleagues in the Natal Parks Board. Faced with an overpopulation of white rhino in the Hluhluwe-iMfolozi game park in the 1970s, a decision was made to sell excess animals to private ranchers. A key aspect was that the rhino owner could do whatever he liked with his rhino. Profit could be made from his investment through photographic and hunting safaris as well as through the selling of excess animals onto other game ranchers. This radical concept was the engine that drove the establishment of game ranching in South Africa. From a countrywide population of around 500 000 in 1964, South Africa’s wildlife numbers now stand at around 22 million head.

Botswana followed a similar progression, centered around consumptive sustainable use, until Ian Khama became president of Botswana in 2008. He was hell-bent on changing tack and emulating the Kenyan model. He reportedly once said that the only endangered animal in Botswana would be the professional hunter. With the support of animal rights activists such as Dereck Joubert (National Geographic’s “Explorer in Residence”), Colin Bell and many others, the country’s safari hunting industry was systematically dismantled.

The closure of safari hunting in Botswana (except for plains game species on private land) had devastating consequences for both...
people and wildlife. “The effects of the safari hunting tourism ban on rural livelihoods and wildlife conservation in Northern Botswana” was written by Prof. Joseph E. Mbaia from the Okavango Research Institute, University of Botswana.

He states that between 2006 and 2009, safari hunting generated US $3 120 000 for rural communities, while photographic tourism generated only US $415 000. 49.5% of revenue from the safari hunting industry was used in the local district, 25.7% at the national level, and only 24.8% was being paid overseas, mainly in the form of agents’ commissions and profits. Over 600 jobs were lost, and 4 800 livelihoods affected.

Photographic operations have not picked up the slack in marginal areas because these areas are not suited to photo-tourism. Community projects such as the construction of houses for the needy, funeral insurance, scholarships and household dividends have dried up.

The loss of protein in the form of meat from the hunted animals was substantial. In the last five years prior to the hunting ban, each community was allocated a total of 22 elephants or 154 tonnes of meat per annum. This was in addition to the meat from other animals hunted such as buffalo. The communities were permitted to sell any excess meat, and in one area alone, Sankoyo, $600,000 was realized from meat sales in 2010.

With these losses, human-wildlife conflict has increased appreciably and the nationwide reports rose from 4 361 in 2012 to 6 770 in 2014. Poaching is on the rise and is having a significant impact on wildlife populations. Fortunately for Botswana’s people and wildlife, the current president Mokgweetsi Masisi realizes the importance of sustainable use of natural resources, and, hopefully, safari hunting will once again be an integral part of the country’s community-based natural resource management (CBNRM) program.

In South Africa it seems that the preservationists are gaining some traction. When “Skye the lion” was supposedly shot on the border of Kruger in June 2018, the anti-hunters were hoping for another “Cecil the lion” story. But, unsurprisingly, the international outcry was muted. That fairy tale has lost its mojo. The lion in question may or may not have been “Skye”. It’s irrelevant. Kruger lion are not endangered, there is a healthy, growing population of around 1 800. A male lion was on quota as set by the appropriate authorities, and all of the various hunting protocols had been followed. There was an upshot to this saga however.

Dr Ian Player of Operation Rhino fame was instrumental in jump-starting South Africa’s wildlife success story.
An enquiry into the Kruger and Private Reserves Benefit Sharing Agreement by the parliamentary Environmental Committee for Environmental Affairs was initiated. At least five anti-hunting presenters were invited to the enquiry, and not one pro-hunting representative. Any subsequent committee findings could therefore hardly be described as unbiased. The chairperson of the committee, a certain Phillemon Mapulane, was livid when he found out that the cooperative agreement between the Kruger National Park and the Association of Private Nature Reserves was signed despite the directives of his committee not to. As Stephen Palos the CEO of the Confederation of Hunting Associations of South Africa (CHASA) pointed out to Mapulane, while committees hold an oversight role and a responsibility to report and make recommendations, they have absolutely no mandate to directly interfere at the operational level. It is untenable to expect any functionary to try serve or appease two different masters. SANParks is governed by a Board, duly appointed and empowered in terms of legislation, to oversee the operational activities of its executive and staff. To drag that same executive and staff to answer and act at the operational level to the Portfolio Committee is not just illegitimate in terms of law, but also highly immoral. It must prove very disheartening to the capable, dedicated and passionate people who try run our parks. They will surely prove the legitimacy and correctness of the processes they have followed towards the benefit sharing and expansion of area on Kruger’s western border.

Palos goes on to question whether the Portfolio Committee has not somehow been captured by the doctrine of animal-rightism, which has a coordinated and devious agenda to replace conservation with preservation, at huge potential cost to human needs.

And so like some warped “Game of Thrones” melodrama the battle continues with dragons to be slayed and villains to be vanquished and all the while we are left to ponder when common sense, if ever, will prevail.

---

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Westley Richards

After nearly 2 1/2 years in the making, Westley Richards is pleased to announce the first printed edition of The Explora journal. Since the release of Westley Richards blog, The Explora in July 2013 much discussion has centred around the exceptional photography and unique insight that the blog has given to the world of fine guns and the shooting community at large. This ultimately led to the question whether a printed edition of The Explora would ever see the light of day? Well, here it finally is! Sumptuous photo essays from the Westley Richards factory accompany detailed articles that delve into aspects of the gun, rifle and hunting world. Beautiful photography of guns and rifles naturally grace the pages as do the gunmakers that build such works of art. All of this capped off with in the field imagery and of course wonderful touches of ephemera and nostalgia.

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Politics and Hunting in Botswana

By Dr John Ledger

In 2014 the then President of Botswana, Ian Khama, unexpectedly announced the banning of all hunting in his country. This caused consternation in the hunting community and brought confusion and distress to local rural communities around hunting areas who had benefited materially and financially from the hunting industry. They were simply cut off from an important source of money, protein and other wildlife products and work opportunities. It has been said that former President Khama was strongly influenced by animal rights and anti-hunting activists. Whichever way you look at it, the lack of consultation and proper planning of the hunting ban was shameful.

But as they say, what goes around comes around. Just over four years down the line, Botswana has a new President, and one with a different style to his predecessor, in that he is apparently more willing to listen to the people. And the people tell him that they are suffering damage to their homes, crops, and even loss of life resulting from the impacts of wild animals which, since the hunting ban, are of no value to them. President Masisi appointed a committee (‘The Hunting Ban SubCommittee of Cabinet’) to consult the people through tribal meetings known as ‘kgotlas’, where everyone has an opportunity to be heard. In its formal report back (in the form of ‘Handover Notes’) to the President, the subcommittee made the following key points:

“From the submissions made by the communities and other stakeholders, the Committee as assigned by Your Excellency, found it necessary to propose the following recommendations, stated here in summary form.

• Hunting ban be lifted;
• Develop a legal framework that will create an enabling environment for growth of safari hunting industry;
• Manage Botswana elephant population within its historic range;
• Department of Wildlife and National Parks (DWNP) should undertake an effective community outreach program within the elephant range for Human Elephant Conflict mitigation;
• Strategically placed human wildlife conflict fences be constructed in key hotspot areas;
• Game ranches be demarcated to serve as buffers between communal and wildlife areas;
• Compensation for damage caused by wildlife, ex gratia amounts and the list of species that attract compensation be reviewed. In addition, other models that alleviate compensation burden on Government be considered;
• All wildlife migratory routes that are not beneficial to the country’s conservation efforts be closed;
• The Kgalagadi southwesterly antelope migratory route into South Africa should be closed by demarcating game ranches between the communal areas and Kgalagadi Wildlife Management Areas;
• Regular but limited elephant culling be introduced and establishment of elephant meat canning, including production of pet food and processing into other by-products.”

Some of these submissions made by rural communities are rather bizarre, and unlikely to be implemented by government, but it should be remembered that these are people who are so angry and frustrated by the impacts of wild animals, especially elephants, that their emotions have boiled over to the extent that they have come up with the idea of culling them and turning them into pet food! These thoughts have certainly caused a furore among the animal-rightists, but I doubt any of them have had family members killed by elephants. It also seems improbable that the government would sanction such activities, or unrealistic ideas for fences, but the realities of elephant management in the long run are that someone has to have the courage to take the ‘tough love’ road, as difficult as that may seem.

The important point is that the debate on the role of wildlife in Botswana has been re-opened and government has an opportunity to come up with some innovative policies regarding the relationship between people...
and wildlife outside the formally protected areas of the country. There is little doubt that the people of Botswana have been looking with interest at the wildlife policies of their neighbour, Namibia, where community conservation programmes have resulted in a high level of tolerance by people for wildlife, because they benefit from its presence. These benefits range from tourism and hospitality, from subsistence and trophy hunting that can be conducted in areas that are not suitable for photographic safaris, and from the breeding, sale and relocation of sought-after species.

There is no good reason why Botswana cannot implement a sound national wildlife management policy that will see rural communities benefiting from the wild animals living on their land. Benefits from the wildlife sharing space with humans results in tolerance. There are limits to tolerance, however, and predators will always require management and control when they exceed the bounds of tolerance. Namibia has learned how to do this, and reach a balance between the rights of stock farmers and the tourism benefits of seeing predators in adjacent areas. Custodianship must benefit the custodians, and wildlife must be able to make a financial contribution to the well-being of the human occupants of the land. Hunting has a major role to play in rural economies, and can be implemented with proper checks and balances and quotas based on sound management principles.

There is little doubt that the government of Botswana will be at the centre of a huge debate about how it should be managing its wildlife in future. Hunters should give their firm support to government for the re-opening of hunting in areas that are best suited for these activities, and where local people can benefit from regulated, well-managed and high value hunting operations.

The animal-rightists and anti-hunting lobby will of course do their best to dissuade Botswana from implementing wildlife management policies similar to those that are working in Namibia. Indeed, I have noticed a recent trend that looks like a deliberate campaign to ignore or sideline the Namibian success story, because it does not sit well with the animal-rights and anti-hunting lobby.


But nowhere is there any mention of Namibia’s success in community-based conservation, of its massive community conservation areas, of its government’s unwavering support for both trophy hunting and subsistence hunting, of the benefits that have flowed to rural communities through a balanced approach towards sustainable consumptive wildlife utilisation, alongside eco-tourism opportunities. How does Namibia manage conflicts between rural communities, elephants and lions, for example? Why does this book choose to ignore the success story of conservation in Namibia, and make no mention of one of the most significant books on the region, An Arid Eden, by Garth Owen-Smith?

Let us hope that Botswana will soon join Namibia by introducing a new wildlife policy that suits its country and its people, and not the prohibitionists who apparently cannot stand the thought of Africans benefiting from the wild animals on their land.

Dr John Ledger is an independent consultant and writer on energy and environmental issues, based in Johannesburg, South Africa. John.Ledger@wol.co.za
Royal Antelope

Based on Chris and Mathilde Stuart’s book, "Game Animals of the World," published by African Hunting Gazette, here’s everything hunters need to know about the Royal Antelope

**English:** Royal Antelope

**Latin:** Neotragus pygmaeus

**German:** Kleinstböckchen

**French:** Antilope royale, Antilope pygmée

**Spanish:** Antilope pigmeo

**MEASUREMENTS**

- **Total length:** 57 cm (1.9’)
- **Tail:** 7.5 cm (3”)
- **Shoulder height:** 25 cm (0.8’)
- **Weight:** 1.4 – 2.8 kg (3 – 6 lb)
- **Horns (male):** 12 – 25 mm (0.47” – 0.98”)

**DESCRIPTION**

The royal antelope is the smallest of the three dwarf antelope (Neotragus spp.) and smaller than any duiker species in the area. They have cinnamon to russet upper coats with white underparts, and these are separated usually by a more orange-coloured band that extends onto the legs. There is a white throat patch that extends under the chin and the underside of tail is white. Only the male carries the short horns that slope with the face.

**DISTRIBUTION**

Restricted to the Guinean forest zone of West Africa, and occurs in Guinea, Sierra Leone, Liberia, Ivory Coast and Ghana. It is considered hunt able and many are taken in the bush meat trade. The very similar Bates's pygmy antelope (N. batesi) occurs from Nigeria to eastern DR Congo, and is hunt able in Cameroon.

**CONSERVATION STANDING**

Relatively common, but loss of habitat probably having some impact. Bates’s pygmy antelope numbers in the hundreds of thousands.
HABITATS
Occupies areas of dense and some secondary forests, also utilizing clearings in these habitats.

BEHAVIOR
Royal antelope is little studied, but Bates’s pygmy antelope probably very similar. They live singly, or in pairs, and the male probably defends a territory. Said to be mainly night-active but some daytime activity has been reported, and it may have activity periods throughout the 24-hour period. Home range sizes probably less than 4 ha (10 acres), and perhaps considerably smaller.

BREEDING (VERY LITTLE KNOWN)
Mating season: Probably throughout the year
Gestation: About 180 days

Number of young: 1
Birth weight: Probably < 350 g (<12oz)
Sexual maturity: Female 8 – 18 months, Male 16 months
(Longevity: Unknown

FOOD
Predominantly a browser, taking a wide range of plant species and possibly includes some fallen fruits and fungi.

RIFLES AND AMMUNITION
Suggested Caliber: Shotgun
Bullet: Coarse bird short.
Sights: Open sights or red dot.
Hunting Conditions: Expect short range in dense vegetation.

An extract from the book:
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A matter of stripes

The zebra is Africa…but it’s not that simple!

By Craig Boddington
The zebra is Africa’s most recognizable animal, requiring no description. Although related to both horses and asses and of the same Equus genera, the zebra is indigenous only on the African continent, and evidence that it existed elsewhere in prehistory is unclear. In Africa the zebra is not found continent-wide, but occupies an extremely broad range across East and Southern Africa. There are actually three species of zebra: Plains, mountain, and the Grevy’s zebra. There are, or were, seven races or subspecies of plains zebra and two of mountain zebra; the distinct Grevy’s zebra stands alone.
A zebra was at the top of Caroline Boddington’s wish list on her first safari. She took this big Burchell’s zebra. A single shot to the shoulder chevron with her 7mm-08 worked perfectly.

This is a Selous zebra taken in coastal Mozambique. The Selous is a smaller zebra with beautiful black-and-white skin. Once seriously threatened, good management has brought this zebra back to huntable numbers.

Donna and Brittany Boddington with a big Hartmann’s zebra stallion, taken on the spine of Namibia’s Erongo Mountains. This zebra shows the classic “Christmas tree” rump marking, plus the brownish facial stripes, both hallmarks of Hartmann’s zebra.

All zebras are primarily grazers, social animals that form into herds. Typically, these are harems with a dominant male and his mares. With both mountain and plains zebras these are permanent bonds, but Grevy’s zebra groups are temporary, with the males wandering off on their own after a few months. With all zebras, surplus males form bachelor groups. Size of the herds depends on population density and available grass and water; mountain zebras, usually in harsh habitat, are found in smaller groups—twenty is a lot—while plains zebras can form into large herds.

All visitors to Africa want to see this signature animal, and indeed they’re marvels to observe... it doesn’t take long before the seemingly nonsensical stripes make perfect sense: In shadows the zebra’s camouflage is amazing. Even in sunlight the stripes merge and blend... and imagine what a predator, sans color vision, is observing in black-and-white.

I am not a casual visitor to Africa. I love to observe her wildlife, but I make no secret that I am a hunter, always looking with a hunter’s eye. So, with zebras, I am studying the striped patterns and trying to locate the stallion in the group. This is fascinating...and often difficult! I must also make no secret that I enjoy hunting zebras! Sorting the correct animal from the herd is an interesting and sometimes frustrating puzzle. The fully utilized meat is unusually marbled, and a zebra rug seems almost an essential safari memento!

Because of their resemblance to the horses we love, anti-hunters, many non-hunters, and even many hunters are shocked at the thought of hunting a zebra. The best answer I have to the question, “How could you possibly kill a zebra?” comes easily: “Only with great difficulty!”

But, back to this matter of stripes.

BLACK AND WHITE?
The three species and several races of zebras vary in striped patterns, but universally have vertical stripes on the body and horizontal stripes on rump and legs. The several plains zebras have stripes all the way to the belly, while the mountain and Grevy’s zebras have a white belly, their vertical stripes stopping short. It’s commonly believed the zebra is a white animal with black stripes, but recent research suggests the opposite: The zebra is a black animal, with white added during development. While some
varieties have distinct striping, all are pretty much black and white, except - the young mountain zebras have undertones of brown that remain on the face in maturity. And several races of plains zebra have noticeable “shadow stripes” between the black and white bands that can be brown, gray, or muted.

So, which zebra are we looking at? There are hybrid zones, and today there are differences between historic native ranges and current distribution. The three species remain pure, at least in the wild - plains zebras, mountain zebras, and Grevy’s zebra do not interbreed! But some of the subspecies, and exactly where they range today, is a bit messy. Relatively little precise DNA work has been done because, after all, a plains zebra is not a mountain zebra, and the endangered Grevy’s zebra is very distinctive. Here’s a rough guide:

PLAINS ZEBRA: The plains zebra is Equus quagga. The type specimen, the quagga, E. q. quagga, became extinct in 1878. Once numerous, the quagga lay squarely in the path of South Africa’s settlement; the last wild quaggas were in Orange Free State. A few skins and photographs of one zoo specimen survive, so we know the quagga had vertical stripes on neck and shoulder and a dark body, perhaps with muted stripes. There are six extant plains zebra races, though not all authorities are in complete agreement.

Most widespread and numerous is the Burchell’s or “common zebra,” E. q. burchelli. This is the zebra most prevalent in South Africa, the southern three-quarters of Namibia, and most of Zimbabwe and Botswana. This zebra has the most prominent shadow striping, although zebra stripes are like fingerprints - no two are exactly alike!

Farther north is the Grant’s zebra, E. q. boehmi, found from Zambia’s Kafue (west of Luangwa) north through western Tanzania and on up into Kenya. This is the zebra I hunted in western Zambia, central Tanzania and Masailand, and southern Kenya. Grant’s zebra is slightly bigger than Burchell’s zebra, with mature stallions weighing up to 700 pounds. The big difference: This zebra lacks shadow stripes and has an extremely beautiful black-and-white skin.

The Selous zebra, E. q. selousi was once widespread in central Mozambique, but we almost lost this one. When hunting resumed after the long civil war there may have been as few as 20 Selous zebras in the Marromeu complex. Today there are more than 500, increasing nicely, with a small hunting quota. This is a smaller zebra, but pure black-and-white. Interestingly, the Selous zebra always has a white spot near the backbone, which is said to be where the striping pattern starts!

The Sudan maneless zebra, E. q. borensis, is the northernmost race of plains zebra. Described as late as 1954 by Tony Henley, then a game ranger and later a famous professional hunter, the maneless zebra does, in fact, have a very short mane! This zebra occupies a limited range in northwestern Kenya, Uganda’s Karamoja District, and southeastern Sudan. The few photos I have seen suggest a thin, muted shadow stripe, but the maneless zebras I saw in Uganda were in too bright light to confirm or deny this!

Chapman’s zebra, E. q. chapmani, is the zebra of Caprivi, adjacent Botswana and Zimbabwe, and southern Angola. Chapman’s zebra is a large zebra, up to 800 pounds, with shadow stripes much like the Burchell’s zebra. A major difference is that younger animals are more brownish than black, and some Chapman’s zebras maintain the brownish tint into maturity.

In northeastern Zambia and on up through Malawi and into southeastern Tanzania the zebras are Crawshay’s zebra, E. q. crawshayi. This is the zebra of the Selous Reserve and adjacent areas. I have found that this is a big zebra, generally with narrower stripes than other plains zebras, but with slight shadow stripes on some individuals.

MOUNTAIN ZEBRA: There are two, the Cape mountain zebra, E. z. zebra; and Hartmann’s mountain zebra, E. z. hartmannae. The two are geographically separated, with the Cape mountain zebra occupying the smallest range of any zebra, in isolated mountain habitats in the Eastern and Western Cape. They are visually indistinguishable, except the Cape mountain zebra is the smallest of all zebras, with big stallions weighing less than 600 pounds. Both varieties have white bellies and vertical body stripes, with brownish tints that usually darken with maturity, except on the face. Mature males of both races have a prominent dewlap, which can be a valuable hint when trying to determine sex. Perhaps the most defining visual characteristic of the
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mountain zebra is a triangular “Christmas tree” marking above the tail, where short vertical stripes meet horizontal stripes on the rump.

The Cape mountain zebra is considered endangered, but thanks to game ranching has been brought back from the brink and numbers are increasing. It may not be imported into the United States. Hartmann’s mountain zebra is naturally found in isolated mountain ranges from central Namibia north to southwestern Angola. Again, thanks to the game ranching industry, Hartmann’s zebra is now widespread throughout much of Namibia, and has been introduced into some properties in South Africa. This could prove a problem: Hartmann’s zebra is much larger than the Cape mountain zebra, and the two subspecies will interbreed.

GREVY’S ZEBRA: To my thinking Grevy’s zebra, E. grevyi (a unique species with no subspecies) is the most beautiful of all zebras, sort of a pin-striped zebra, found in northern Kenya, Somalia, and up through Ethiopia to the Danakil Depression. Grevy’s zebra is the largest of all zebras, weighing up to 900 pounds, with big ears, more like a wild ass, while other zebras are more horse-like in appearance. Regrettably, the gorgeous Grevy’s zebra lives in bad neighborhoods and is seriously threatened, and as few as 3000 remain in the wild.

CURRENT OPPORTUNITIES

Well, it took me 40 years, but, except for the long-gone quagga, I’ve actually seen all the races of zebra! The only time I’ve seen Grevy’s zebra in the wild was in Ethiopia’s Danakil in 1993; even then they were completely protected. The tide seems to be turning, with the remnant population stable, but it is highly unlikely Grevy’s zebra will ever return to huntable numbers. In March 2017, in Uganda’s Karamoja District, hunting along the boundary of Kidepo National Park, we saw a couple of herds of Sudan maneless zebras. The manes are not quite absent, but clearly not the long, stiff manes of other zebras. This zebra, too, is protected and has not been hunted since 1983, when hunting in Sudan ground to a halt. The population is stable and probably not endangered, but this zebra’s range is limited, so it is definitely vulnerable.

All the other zebras are huntable today, depending primarily on where you are. Burchell’s zebra is, of course, widespread pan-African, and these days, you can hunt them in Mozambique, Botswana, and South Africa. Burchell’s zebra is the most numerous of all zebras and is found from South Africa to Kenya and Tanzania. Their populations are growing after years of conservation and sustainable hunting.

Selous zebras on the open floodplains in Mozambique’s Coutada 11. Since hunting resumed in 1992 the Selous zebra population has grown from as low as 20 to more than 500 today.
and numerous. Grant’s zebra is the zebra you will hunt in western Zambia, and central and northern Tanzania. You’ll love the black-and-white skin without shadow stripes! In Mozambique’s Marromeu complex the Selous zebra has been brought back from the brink and is hunted. The annual quota is just a handful; you need to speak up well in advance if you want this set of stripes.

Among the zebras, it is probably least clear exactly where Burchell’s zebra stops and Chapman’s zebra takes over. Without question Namibia’s Caprivi (now Zambezi Region) is the best place, and these are pure Chapman’s zebra, but, as with the Selous zebra, the quota is small, so you have to speak up.

In Zambia the Luangwa River is said to be the boundary between Grant’s and Crawshay’s zebra, so this one is fairly simple: You will be hunting Crawshay’s zebra in the Luangwa Valley, and in the Selous and adjacent areas, but Grant’s zebra lies to the west and north.

Thanks to game ranching, permits are available for the small and utterly gorgeous Cape mountain zebra, but they cannot be imported into the U.S. The larger Hartmann’s mountain zebra is readily available throughout much of Namibia, also thanks to game ranching. A huge boon to ranchers, mountain zebra and plains zebra don’t interbreed, so today many areas offer both Hartmann’s and plains zebra. I’ve never known anyone who wanted to make a collection of all the zebras. It would be impossible, and also silly: Several are visually indistinguishable. But wherever you are, the “local zebra” offers a good hunt… and a lovely set of stripes!

IT AIN’T THAT EASY

As I said, you will often obtain that zebra rug only with great difficulty! If you’re a “horse person” or you’ve ever done any horseback hunting, you know that equines have all senses tuned and are amazingly aware of their surroundings (if only we could instantly understand what they’re telling us!). Zebras have all this, and more… they are among the wariest of animals in the African bush or, as our PHs say, “the most switched on.”

Zebras are extremely difficult to approach and difficult to fool. Unlike some animals, their eyesight is sharp, and their ears and noses are keen. All of this is compounded and conflicted by a simple
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physiological fact: Zebras are uniquely difficult to sex! It isn’t just that they are without characteristics like horns or antlers! The stallion’s junk is very tight between the hind legs. In open ground you might get a glimpse, but in long grass or thornbush habitat, never.

The absolute mandate to shoot only males depends largely on the local population and herd dynamics. There is no shame in taking an older female. Stallions fight viciously, and mares usually have skins that are much less scarred. However, all things equal, in most areas we try to take only stallions. But not always. There is evidence, especially with mountain zebras, that, depending on local population, it can take a long time for a stallion to come into the herd. So, it’s not cut-and-dried, but typically a major hurdle in any zebra hunt is to identify the stallion.

There are many clues. The zebra stallion is generally larger and has a thicker neck; mountain zebra stallions have defined dewlaps. More important is behavior: The stallion can be the leader and will frequently bring up the rear, tending his mares, but he is rarely in the middle.

You have to keep looking, waiting for that glimpse, and take in all the clues. My first Hartmann’s zebra, in then-South West Africa 40 years ago, was in a little valley straight below us - no way to see anything from that angle. We watched for three eternities, and finally took the shot based entirely on behavior. Correctly, we took the stallion. Last year, in the Eastern Cape, we had a small herd of Burchell’s zebra feeding and milling below us, it wasn’t straight down, but the brush was up to their bellies, nothing to be seen. We watched and waited; there had to be a stallion, and we thought we knew which one. After a tense hour the most likely candidate turned away, and for just an instant I saw testicles under the tail. TOUGH STUFF

Legend has it that “all” African game is extremely tough. This is not true, but zebras are very tough! Hit a zebra poorly and you will be in for a long day with unknown chances for recovery! The books say, depending on the subspecies, mature zebra stallions range from 550 to 900 pounds. Having shot quite a few but properly weighed none, I have no idea, but I figure 700 to 800 pounds is about right. Whatever, it’s a big animal and very strong!

The target area is large, and there is often an upside-down “V” of stripes on the shoulder, offering an inviting aiming point. With or without that guide, the middle of the shoulder is the right place, one-third up from the brisket. Center the shoulder with a good bullet that gets in and does its work, and there will be no problems. Flub the shot, and chances for recovery depend only upon the exact location of the hit and good tracking.

Over 40-odd years I’ve only seen a couple of zebras lost, but I’ve been on some very long tracking jobs! Zebras are often taken for lion or leopard bait, which means you need a zebra down now. The best-case scenario is to whack a zebra on the shoulder with a .375 - game over. However, I have seen zebras taken very cleanly with mild 6.5mms, 7mms, and .270s, and the great old .30-06 is awesome. But what really matters on zebra is shot placement. You gotta do it right. If you don’t, a lot of extra foot-pounds may not matter. These animals are tough.

Both of my daughters, despite teenage girls’ affinity for horses, put a zebra at the top of their wish lists on their first safaris. (Knock me over with a feather!) When questioned, one said, “Well, my Mom tells me zebras are really tough and hard to hunt, so it sounds interesting.” Unsolicited, both copped to the real reason: “Well, I’d really like a zebra rug for my room.” Fair enough, who doesn’t?

Only partly joking, wife Donna has often said, “No girl has too many zebras.” This has created a monster. She has nine nieces… and each one now wants a zebra
especially in the hunting world. The number of different biomes you can experience on the 45 000 hectare privately owned Nature Reserve in the far northern corner of the Limpopo Province, bordering Zimbabwe. The range of birds you can watch, the trees you can rest under, the expanse of wilderness for hunting and photo safaris, with families welcome all year round. The quality of trophies on offer, 4 of the Big 5, along with the investment in your comfort in our luxury camps all add up to making the experience, quite literally, unique. (References going back 15 years available).

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Various Countries
skin, whether as a wedding or graduation present. We’ve covered some of them, but not all. At least I have an excuse to keep hunting!

THE BEST HUNT
Difficulty always depends on terrain, vegetation, numbers of animals, the wind… and blind luck! Once in a while a zebra rug comes easy with a quick shot, but not very often. Usually a few blown stalks and serious scrambling are needed. Honest, it’s all good, but the most enjoyable zebra hunting I’ve done has been Hartmann’s zebra in native habitat in Namibia’s rocky ridges, truly a magical hunt.

As I said, the first time was 40 years ago, in a time when game ranching was in its infancy and mountain zebras at their zenith. Ben Nolte and I climbed to the top of the Erongo Mountains, following intermittent tracks and hearing whistles. We got right on top of them among knife-edge ridges, a magic experience.

Since then I’ve done it many more times, certainly not all with me as shooter (after all, how many rugs do I need?). The mountain zebra in native terrain offers a real hunt, and a real mountain hunt! I may never fire another shot, but I’m sure I’ll make the climb a few more times!

A rare melanistic zebra photographed in Etosha National Park. From few surviving photos, this animal is similar to what the extinct quagga looked like, although the quagga’s body color wasn’t so dark. (Photo by Dirk de Bod)
“Did you hear the Oxpecker?”

By Brian Gallup

We were in the bush with good men tracking the most dangerous animal in the world to hunt - the Cape buffalo. Though Sandy and I were soaked with sweat, we loved every minute of it.
Our plan was to hunt an old Cape buffalo cow in the Lowveld. We would sneak up close enough to get a good shoulder shot, I would do the shooting, my wife Sandy would do the videoing, and Pieter Kriel of Mkulu Safaris would do all the work. It was a good plan!

North of the Olifants River near Phalaborwa there is a lot of mopani bushveld, plus some nice big, rolling open areas, with kopjes surrounded by glacier-strewn boulders. The buffalo were in the mopani bush and you have to go in and find them.

The trees were widely spaced and we could see in any direction for about 100 yards - but so could the buffalo. The dry ground was covered with noisy leaves that were blown into serpentine piles. It was mostly flat land, with some ancient dry river channels. Mopane bushveld is exciting to hunt in. The tricky part is that the moody spring winds move through the trees from every direction.

We couldn't have asked for a better safari crew. The two trackers, Samuel and Peter were good-spirited and on the ball. The outfitter and PH, Pieter Kriel and the back-up PH, Johan were real professionals, focused, able, and considerate. What's more they loved the bush. And our cook, Michael, was awesome.

We would ride in the back of the hunting vehicle checking for spoor and watching for a herd. Johan was good with spoor, and he kept his eyes on the sandy ground as we drove slowly along, while Samuel checked deep into the bush for a glimpse of a herd. When one of them spotted something promising, we'd leave the truck. We wanted a herd with many cows.

If the spoor was good with lots of cow sign, we would start tracking. We repeated this several times a day for three days and never got close to a herd for a good shot at an old cow. It was hard work and the buffalo were easily spooked in the shifting wind.

Late morning of the fourth day we stopped for a break.

"We have been following two herds," Pieter said. "One was mostly bulls and they moved east through here early this morning. Another herd with a good cow population grazed through recently. Maybe an hour ago. They are moving towards water."

"Cow droppings pile up like this," Johan pointed with his rifle barrel. "Bull droppings splatter out.

"Did you hear that?"
"What?"

"Did you hear the oxpecker? There it is again. Look, you can see it now." He pointed to something flickering in the treetops to the north of us more than 100 meters away.

"It's a Red-Billed Oxpecker," he said. "Where there is an oxpecker there is usually a buffalo. They eat the ticks and bugs off the buffalo. If I were following a wounded buffalo right now, I would mark this place with some stones, take a deep breath, and follow that oxpecker, because that's probably where my wounded buffalo would be - circling around to get me!"

Johan and Samuel were still up ahead. When Samuel looked back, Pieter pointed to the oxpecker. The two grinned and nodded in agreement. The decision was to follow the bird.

We were back in the game. Sandy winked at me. No tracks, no droppings. Just an oxpecker in a tree. We began to see more of them fluttering along as we went, while Johan
who was in the front would sometimes crouch down and use his binoculars to look under the branches for those buffalo legs.

The bush seemed to be getting denser, then at a waterhole in an open place about 65 yards ahead, even I could clearly hear the oxpeckers. We nudged forward through the branches until I could see our herd of bulls and cows drinking. And red-billed oxpeckers!

We had some good cover and a light breeze in our faces. I could smell the buffalo. The gentle noise from the drinking herd helped cover any noise we made. We reached some good cover within 40 yards of the water. I waited with my rifle on the sticks for Pieter to pick out a perfect old cow.

You know how it feels. Three days of stalking, sometimes frantically trying to get a shot off in time, but mostly just walking, creeping, crouching, and crawling. Now I was resting purposefully on the shooting sticks waiting for Pieter to say, “Are you happy? Take the shot!”

My single shot, break-open rifle, was a .577 NE loaded with the 700-grain Peregrine, Bush Master bullet over 116 grains of N550 powder. I was watching a big old cow through my 1-5 Weaver scope, when Pieter whispered, “Yes, that’s the one! If you’re happy, take the shot.”

The cow was standing at 32 yards with her
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FROM AFRICA TO THE WORLD
left side to me and her head up. A bull stood beside her, and when he lowered his head to drink I had just enough room to slip the big slug over the bull’s neck and into the center of the cow’s shoulder. It was five inches above her heart, but it was still a good shoulder shot.

When a buffalo is hit in the shoulder it usually lurches, turns and runs for about 30 yards. But this old cow hardly moved. I saw the bullet hit, I saw the oxpeckers fly off her neck and I saw the bull jump away. For an instant the cow just stood there. As I opened my rifle and reached for another cartridge, she tried to lift her left front leg to take a step and she fell flat on the ground.

The Peregrine Bush Master bullet shattered her shoulder and plowed through her chest. The bullet showed a perfect balance of controlled expansion and penetration.

When we walked up to inspect her, Johan kept his rifle ready and watched the herd that was still close by. “A perfect cow to take out of the herd.” Pieter said, “An old cow, thin and worn out. Just as we planned.”

And above our heads, in the mopani trees we heard the oxpeckers.

Retired in BC, Canada, Brian recalls that his first formal hunting trip was with his father in 1958, for pronghorn antelope in southern Alberta, Canada. He and his wife Sandy have lived and hunted in some pretty remote places, including the Mackenzie River Valley in Northern Canada. They now spend more time in South Africa. “We keep going back to hunt and explore with our family and grandchildren. I mostly hunt Cape buffalo now.”
Sharp Eyes:
Springbok, Impala – and a Bushman!

By Archie Landals

I am sitting at my computer on a cold Canadian winter’s day trying to recall every minute of our first African hunt. I am inspired by the pictures of our African adventures that adorn the walls, and refer to details from the journal and photo book from our first hunting adventure. That was six years ago...
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Much time was spent following Joseph as we hunted kudu in the thick bush. I glassed the open areas with my Bushnell Custom Compact binoculars, and mostly saw springbok and impala. Often their eyes were upon us as we looked at them! But the slightest movement from us had them on the move. Both species, particularly the older rams stayed well away from cover, and wind direction was a problem - on our first attempts we either ran out of cover or were betrayed by a shifting breeze.

Then our luck improved. A small group of springbok with one good ram grazed some distance from the main herd. They looked close enough to the edge of the field to attempt a shot if we were successful with a stalk. We drove about four miles, parked a mile downwind, and began a stalk through the bush. Keeping to the thick cover we got within about 500 yards. From there it was a cautious sneak from one clump of brush to the next every time the herd faced away. At 280 yards, cover was running out, so Louw got me on the shooting sticks.

“What do you think?” he asked.

“It’s a very small target at that distance,” I said.

Gambling on one final sneak we managed to get behind the last shrub, but were still 240 yards away. It was either try a shot or forget it. Back on the sticks I peered through the scope of the .300 Winchester Magnum, following the ram, watching for an open shot. He was always surrounded by ewes and smaller animals. At one point he lay down behind a tree with only his rump showing. I was on the sticks for about twenty minutes, but it seemed like an eternity.

The author with his springbok ram, Aandster 2012.

While the ram was behind the tree I started shaking so badly that I could not keep the crosshairs on him. I raised my head and took a few deep breaths. Whether I had buck fever or simply could not hold the rifle steady for that long, I do not know. (Almost 60 years ago when I shot my first Canada Goose I definitely had buck fever, but not until after the shooting was over! I still remember hunkering back in the blind with my goose by my side. I was happy but shaking so badly that if another flock had come within range I would have had trouble holding my shotgun. Some memories of magical moments last forever.)

Finally, the ram stood up. With my PH, tracker and my brother for an audience, the pressure was on.

“Make sure the ram is clear of the ewes before you shoot,” Louw kept saying.

“Allow an inch for the distance and an inch to the right for wind,” he advised. “The kill zone of a springbok is the size of a saucer.”

At 240 yards I was not convinced I could hit that, let alone adjusting an inch. You cannot believe the relief I felt when I squeezed the trigger and heard the bullet hit. The ram tried to run with the others, but dropped after eighty yards. With the grassland savanna and a clear Namibian sky as a backdrop I happily posed with my trophy.

A few days later as we casually watched giraffe and a herd of eland from a tree stand, springbok appeared in a burned area a long way off. On the chance that there might be a good ram, my brother and Louw started a long stalk, and I followed far behind. Duane dropped a nice ram with one shot. The springbok has a patch of long white hairs concealed in the brown hair along the back, and when they are alarmed, the white hairs stand erect. Sometimes these hairs lift for a few minutes after an animal dies, and we captured that on photos.

Hunting two on one with Louw, it was my brother’s turn to carry the rifle when we...
Often their eyes were upon us as we looked at them!

Although Aandster is surrounded by a high fence, and some readers might comment that it is only 6,000 ha, I can assure anyone who has not hunted a high-fenced area that is every bit as challenging as hunting in the Canadian arctic where there is not a fence or road for a thousand miles. In 10 days of hunting we never saw an animal near the fence. It would have been impossible to drive an animal toward the fence with two hunters, a PH and tracker. Perhaps if 20 or more beaters were sent through the bush, a hunter could stand along the fence and wait for a shot, but unlikely as that would be, it would be as unethical as shooting from the vehicle, a practice totally taboo at Aandster.

Spotted a herd of impala with a good ram. Once more, a long drive got us downwind, and our stalk through open woodland had fair visibility but still plenty of cover. Out of nowhere, impala were suddenly bounding though the bush. We dropped to the ground hoping to be less conspicuous, but I thought the impala had scented us and that was the end of this stalk. But soon the herd was bounding back the other way, only to turn around and repeat the performance. It was just the youngsters playing - what a thrilling sight. Then Louw pointed out a good ram walking toward us, and Duane made a great kneeling shot as it angled away.

It was day six before I got a chance at an impala. Tracking kudu through thick Kalahari Apple-leaf trees we came to the edge of an open field. As the afternoon shadows lengthened we spotted impala grazing with a herd of blue wildebeest far across the field, and Joseph’s sharp eyes picked out a good ram that I could not see!

A long circular stalk of more than a mile got us downwind on the other side of the field. Carefully peeking through the last cover, Louw pointed out the fine ram in the middle of the wildebeest. It was walking slowly, grazing, and with its head down only the top of its back was visible over the low shrub.

I was on the sticks following the impala through the scope and hoping for a shot where I would avoid hitting a wildebeest. After a few minutes, there were no animals behind, but the two in front prevented a shot. Finally, one of the wildebeest moved enough so I could see the spine of the impala just behind the front shoulder. I squeezed the trigger and he dropped on the spot. Louw radioed for the truck and we set up my trophy impala for a few quick photos as the light faded.

Aandster is a great place for those wishing to experience rural life in a remote part of Namibia. Grootfontein, the nearest town is about a two-hour drive. The farm and lodge are totally off grid. Hot water is provided by wood-fired boilers. Lights and freezers run on solar power. Seven native families live and work on the game farm and tend livestock on the adjoining Aandster properties. The native staff from the skinning shed also worked in the machine shop helping to maintain and repair heavy equipment - self-sufficiency is essential when you live that far from services, and everyone learns to be a jack of all trades. Home schooling is the norm for younger children. Those in the upper grades spend the week in Grootfontein and come home for the weekend.

Carole and I had our own private cabin with all the amenities, and evening routine was sipping a glass of Amarula and ice while Louw cooked steaks on the open fire. It was a treat to eat what we shot, blue wildebeest being our favorite.

And now, Africa beckons once more. Carole and I are planning our fifth trip.

Retired after 40 years in parks and conservation, the author has hunted for as long as he can remember. He has hunted across his native Alberta, Canada as well as New Zealand, Namibia, South Africa, the western United States and the Canadian Arctic. In 2013 he was awarded the Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Medal for his work in conservation. Along with his wife Carole he spends a lot of time in their rustic cabin enjoying the solitude of the Boreal Forest.

Although Aandster is surrounded by a high fence, and some readers might comment that it is only 6,000 ha, I can assure anyone who has not hunted a high-fenced area that is every bit as challenging as hunting in the Canadian arctic where there is not a fence or road for a thousand miles. In 10 days of hunting we never saw an animal near the fence. It would have been impossible to drive an animal toward the fence with two hunters, a PH and tracker. Perhaps if 20 or more beaters were sent through the bush, a hunter could stand along the fence and wait for a shot, but unlikely as that would be, it would be as unethical as shooting from the vehicle, a practice totally taboo at Aandster.
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The plan was perfect; we’d slipped into the blind during the pre-dawn darkness with minimal fuss and now all we had to do was wait for the sun to rise. The big male leopard had been showing up on the trail camera just before dawn and feeding well into the morning. It all seemed pretty easy. Perhaps too easy. Chui has a way of changing plans.

It was still an hour before legal light when we heard a thump on the ground in front of the blind. I looked over to Vanessa, and even in the near pitch-black, I could see her eyes get wide. It sounded like the leopard had just jumped out of the tree. Night hunting for leopards is illegal in Tanzania, so it really changes the game. We were filming the hunt for our television series, Outdoor Quest TV, and I was in the role of hunter and Vanessa was running camera. Capturing a leopard kill in broad daylight seemed a tall order, but our PHs Stephan Stamm and Paddy Curtis were confident we could get it done. They average around 90% success on leopards, and getting a daylight kill on film was going to be no problem according to them.

It was eerily quiet in the blind. The doves had yet to begin their morning serenade, and even with my gunshot ears, I could hear the soft sounds of an animal padding over the ground as it walked past us. We were right on a hippo trail, but this definitely wasn’t a hippo. I looked back at Paddy but his ears were worse than mine, and he sat blissfully unaware. Vanessa, however, was at full alert. The animal walked down the hippo trail toward the Rufiji River, and soon the sound was gone. Both Vanessa and I took a first breath in what seemed like several minutes. Had the leopard sensed our presence and vacated the tree? Was it just going down to the river for a drink? There were so many possibilities, and only when the sun peeked over the eastern horizon would we get our answers; or so we thought.

It was about 30 minutes later when we heard the raspy breathing. Vanessa was in the side of the blind closest to the trail, and through the thatched wall, I could see the broken outline
about 80 yards, but ran out of cover, so I had a decision to make. I set the .375 H&H up on the sticks and managed to lean my body against an adjacent tree. The crosshairs on the scope were rock-steady. I found the sweet spot just behind the big bull’s eye and, as the rifle recoiled I quickly regained my sight picture, but there was nothing there. Stephan urged me to shoot him again, and after seeing the bull had fallen right in his track, I put a second round into his spine for insurance. There was no need for it, but insurance on dangerous game is never a bad idea.

It was pretty amazing taking a hippo so far inland, and it was truly amazing seeing the impact they had on the habitat. I had no idea that hippos were such voracious grazers on land and how much they competed with other grazers like buffalo and plains game. Along most of the river, the grass was grazed right down to the dirt for several miles inland, entirely by the hippos. The Rufiji is home to thousands of hippos, and from what we saw, their management is critical to the long-term survival of all the grazers in the area. We saw dozens of hippo skeletons up on the plains during our hunt. Most had starved to death during a drought two years previously. We now had some camp meat and leopard bait as well. We’d been in short supply of both.

Vanessa was next up, and she had buffalo in her sights. While buffalo were plentiful, as were good-quality bulls, opportunity was not. We spent the bulk of our time in some dried-up river channels where the buffalo would come to lie in the cool sand in the afternoons, but they would spend the remainder of the day in the thick adjacent cover. We tracked numerous bulls and got to within 20 yards several times, but a shot opportunity just never presented itself. In the 100-degree heat and high humidity, it was hard to keep hydrated, but we kept up the pace, covering 15-20 miles a day.

It was on our fifth day that preparation and opportunity finally came together. We’d of an animal. It was quite literally inches away from Vanessa, with only the branches and leaves of the crudely constructed blind separating them. I had no doubt it was chui. The next move was his. Each movement of the second hand on my watch seemed to take minutes. We were all frozen still, and no one even took a breath. I’m not sure who we thought we were fooling. The leopard knew exactly what we were, but all we could do was remain still and silent and pray.

We never heard the leopard move off, but a minute or so later he let out a number of guttural grunts a few yards in front of the blind. He continued to grunt as he moved up the dry wash, away from the tree. The leopard had let us know he was in control, and as the sun began to rise and the doves welcomed the morning, none of us were surprised that the tree was empty.

We were on a two-week safari with Heritage Safaris Tanzania in the famed Selous Game Reserve, and had hippo, buff, leopard and some plains game on our list. Buffalo was definitely at the top, but after walking about 20 miles the first couple of days and being outsmarted several times by big bulls, we ran into a good hippo bull in a postage-stamp-sized puddle, miles from the river. While hippo was on my list, I had reservations about how I’d feel taking one in the deep water, so when this one presented itself, basically on dry land, I wasn’t about to look a gift hippo in the mouth. We were able to stalk to within

I’m not sure who we thought we were fooling.

Checking the trail camera pictures for chui.
done yet another morning march through the thick cover and tall elephant grass, and got so close once that we could hear several bulls chewing - but again no opportunity for a shot was presented. It was as we were walking back to the Cruiser that we ran into three bulls in the riverbed. Our tracker, Karlos, quickly evaluated the bulls and got Vanessa on the sticks. She wasted no time sending a 250-grain bullet on its way, and the big bull reeled at the impact but spun hard and ran before Vanessa could get another shot into him. Karlos tapped his side and gave Vanessa a thumbs up. The shot had been good.

Blood was sparse but the trail was easy enough to follow, and of course it led into the thick stuff almost immediately. We could hear the bulls and see movement, but there was no way to tell which bull Vanessa’s was. Paddy suggested we wait a bit and let things settle down before following the blood trail any further. It was sage advice from a veteran PH who had followed up many bulls in the long grass.

Sweat stung our eyes as we inched through the heavy thorn brush. Paddy, Stephan and Vanessa all had their rifles at the ready. We had no doubt the big bull would not go far, but we also knew he would position himself to take on anything following his trail. About 20 minutes into the trail the blood stopped. Paddy took one of the trackers and headed right, and Vanessa and Stephan went left. The buff was running out of cover and we knew he was close. Whatever was going to happen, was going to happen soon. Then a shot rang out about 20 yards to our right. And a second. Then all was quiet. A million scenarios rushed through our minds until Paddy called out. They’d found the bull down in his bed and put a couple of insurance shots in him. Vanessa had her very hard-earned bull, and he was magnificent.

We worked through the heavy cover along a side channel of the river, but as we’d learned by now, the wind was anything but consistent, and as I felt a breeze caress the back of my neck, I knew the gig was up. We never heard them run off, but as we looked south, there was a huge dust cloud on the horizon. The buffalo had wasted no time getting out of Dodge. We returned to finish our coffee.

Before we could pack up after coffee, one of the trackers came running and indicated the buffalo were back, so we grabbed our rifles and headed off in their direction. The wind was swirling madly as it did every afternoon, but we had nothing to lose and soon we had managed to sneak right into the middle of the herd. We were surrounded by buffalo, but had only seen two good bulls in the group, and finding them in the heavy cover was going to be nearly impossible. My heart raced as buffalo moved all around us, many less than 15 yards away. It was exhilarating, but it was dangerous, too. If any of the buff took a dislike to us so close, someone was going to get hurt. Dangerous-game hunting is the ultimate adrenaline rush, and it makes otherwise rational people do irrational things. And, being right in the middle of 200 agitated buffalo was about as irrational as it gets.

Suddenly, the wind swirled hard and the buffalo bolted for the open. We followed. It was a mass of black bodies all moving as one, and I struggled to locate one of the bulls but then, as if on cue, the mass separated and a big bull emerged to challenge us. He stood facing us, his head held high in defiance. I asked Vanessa if she had him in the video camera. She did. I slipped the safety forward on the .375 and found the bull’s chest in the crosshairs. It literally felt like time stood still and that I was the only one in motion. I’m sure it was only a second or two, but it seemed to take minutes for the crosshairs to settle. If time did indeed stand still, the report of the .375 put it back in motion. The big bull humped up at the impact of the bullet and ran off with the herd. With so many
The author, with Patty (L) and Stephan (R) and his close encounter leopard

buffalo running over its track, it was going to be difficult to follow up.

Much to my relief, we found blood in the first 20 yards, a sure sign the bull was badly injured and unable to keep up with the rest. The blood trail was heavy, and within 90 yards we found him down in the trees. A little insurance, and I too had my buffalo.

Time was growing short, and while we had plenty of leopards on bait, there were no big males coming during daylight hours. Stephan suggested we hunt some plains game for more bait for some new areas. I’d had my eye on a Nyassa wildebeest since we’d arrived, and after several botched attempts, I managed to take a nice bull. We wasted no time setting up four new baits, and by the next day three of them had been hit, including one by a nice male leopard, well after sunrise. With only two days remaining in the hunt, we decided to sit the next morning.

This time, however, we made plenty of noise as we approached the blind in the darkness. If the leopard was in the tree, we planned to scare it off, with the hopes it would return later after the Cruiser had left. Sneaking in definitely hadn’t worked earlier in the hunt. We still had about two hours before legal shooting time, but we wanted to be well settled and ready in case the leopard returned in the dark.

The doves had already begun their morning serenade when we heard a bushbuck bark in the riverbed below. It left little doubt in our minds the leopard was near, but as the sun continued to rise in the east, there was no sign of Mr. Spots. It looked as though it was going to be a no-show. Then, like an apparition, he jumped up on the trunk of the tree. I nudged Vanessa to push the record button on the camera. The leopard just stood there still, looking directly at the blind. None of us dared move. I had the rifle barrel supported by a rope but still needed to bring the stock to my shoulder. The leopard leapt up into the tree closer to the bait, but still showed no interest in it. He remained focused on our blind. It was as though he was looking directly into my eyes. Then he turned his head, and I slowly began to raise the rifle to my shoulder. But the leopard looked back, and I stopped. Sweat dripped into my eyes, but I dared not wipe them.

It was nearly five minutes before the leopard turned his head again. I was matching his patience, but my arm was now shaking from being frozen in one position so long. I lifted the rifle up, and found the familiar spot on my shoulder. I’d heard so many tales of missed and wounded leopards that I began to question my ability, despite the crosshairs being locked solidly on the leopard. There was no way I could screw this up, I thought to myself. But then I remembered that chui has a way of making his own rules. My finger tightened on the trigger. The crosshairs never wavered. At the shot, the leopard leaped high in the air and then hit the ground hard on his back. There was no way he was running off after taking that hit with the .375… but he did.

Paddy put his hand on my shoulder but we all knew this wasn’t over until it was over. Stephan radioed the trackers and they quickly showed up, shotguns in hand. There was no celebrating, no congratulations offered. They were all business. They’d all been on wounded leopard tracks and knew the gravity of the situation. I slipped another round in the .375 and we took up the track. The blood trail was massive, and within 20 yards we found the leopard… very dead!

Seasoned African hunters look at you differently when you tell them you’ve hunted Tanzania. Many say that you’ve got to experience real Africa. The truth is, all of Africa is real, it’s just in different states of development or political chaos. Tanzania, however, is raw Africa. While much has changed, much hasn’t. This is a place where things can and often do go wrong. It’s a place where insurance shots are a way of life… preserving life that is. I consider myself blessed to have experienced the Selous. With talk of hydro dams on the Rufiji River and settlements to go with them, it likely won’t be this raw forever. Hunting anywhere in Africa changes you, but hunting Tanzania lets you experience Africa in its most raw and untamed form. I suppose it’s a bit like experiencing old Africa – or at least as old as it can be in the 21st century.

TJ Schwanky is host of Canada’s longest-running television hunting series, Outdoor Quest TV and an award-winning author. He’s hunted on six continents and has been to Africa for 11 safaris, and will be returning again in 2019.

Hunt Facts
Time of Hunt: September/October 2017
Country: Selous Game Reserve, Tanzania
Rifle/Cartridge: Custom rifle .375H&H Ammunition/Bullet: Hornady 250-grain GMX
Rifle Scope: Zeiss 3-9x50 Victory HT
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Deer for Buff

By Vance Squires
In October 2017, I got an offer for an all-inclusive hunt for free-range Cape buffalo in Mozambique. The old-fashioned one-on-one, track, stalk and hunt in the bush.

I had already booked a plains and buffalo hunt and photo safari in South Africa with Roche Safaris, for a September 2018 hunt, when he offered an end-of-the-year all-inclusive hunt with all permits. I had just enough time for him to apply, and make a 10-day deer hunt before the season closed at 30 November. I was already on vacation for the deer season and everything just fell into place. We had all kinds of plans and relatives coming in for Thanksgiving, but my wife said that I couldn’t pass up this opportunity, and to go.

Am I lucky or what! She knew that Cape buffalo was on my bucket list, but I never expected a free-range hunt was in my future. All I had to do was get from Pittsburgh to JFK airport in NY. I had originally met Roche and his wife Ansu at the outdoor show in Harrisburg, last February, and saw them again at the Allegheny outdoor show in Monroeville, near Pittsburgh the following week.

As you can see from the pics, it was successful. We started hunting at daybreak on the Monday, but didn’t see any bull tracks that we could follow. Then Tuesday and Wednesday we jumped buffalo in the thick thorny bush two mornings in a row, and walked up on a herd just before dark on Tuesday evening, but could not get on a good bull before dark. Talk about excitement. We paralleled those buffalo in the bush at 50 yards for 30 minutes and set up for a shot several times. It was almost dark, before a huge cow decided to spook the herd. That old adage that a buffalo looks at you like you owe it money is the truth.

I got my buffalo on the third evening (day before Thanksgiving) using a Ruger guide gun in .375 Ruger, shooting hand loads using 300-grain Swift A Frame bullets and Hornady factory solids. The first shot at 36 yards put him down, and we ran up and I put two more in him to make sure he stayed down. My PH said that the bull would probably be close to 1.2 ton in weight. What a monster! His horns taped 44½ inches across and he had 14½ inch-wide bosses. The next day Roche told me that with him, I had killed the biggest buffalo in 10 years, and his wife said I had highlighted his career. In the three days that I hunted we tracked and hiked a total of 24 miles in 90+F degree heat. (32+C)

All the meat was donated to a couple of villages, the camp staff, and the guards and village at the Mozambique border. No meat is allowed to be exported, and my Cape buffalo hide and horns will have to be exported to me after a few months of quarantine, a process

This bull taken by the author had had a mock fight with a yellow fever tree as you can see by the colored bark on his horns!

The wild Mozambique zebra that thought it was a donkey, which came within 20 meters of our truck together with the village donkeys.
Still Africa’s finest purveyor of buffalo

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they call dip and ship, to be sure all possible diseases are gone.
We stayed in Mozambique and explored the countryside for another three days, saw and visited several villages, and saw a zebra that thought he was a donkey!
After our Mozambique visit we returned to Roche's lodge in South Africa where he has a great staff that wait on you hand and foot and are always eager to please. Roche took me to Kruger National park on a photo safari. It's got to be the world's best natural zoo, and we saw almost everything, from rhino to warthogs right next to the vehicle, but no big cats.
Other than some squirrel hunting, I gave up my deer season that year, but it was worth it.

I grew up in the farm country of western Pennsylvania about 35 miles northwest of Pittsburgh. I was taught how to hunt, trap and fish by my father and started hunting when I was 12 years and shot my first whitetail buck when I was 16. My wife of 42 years and I now live in Chester, West Virginia. I have hunted and fished in Quebec and Ontario Canada, and have hunted in Newfoundland Canada for caribou and moose. I have also hunted in some of our western states for deer, elk, and pronghorn antelope. I am a life member and Vice-President of our local sportsmen club. I am also the lead hunter education instructor for our county.
Diethelm and Katja Metzger have been running Makadi Safaris since 1996. Diethelm grew up on the farm Otjisauona, in central Namibia and has been hunting all his life. He studied agricultural economics for a master's degree from Texas A & M University. Katja studied nature conservation at the Technikon of Pretoria, where they met. She manages the household and attends to the culinary desires of the guests. Katja and Diethelm have three children, and the youngest, Nikolai, has just recently joined the family farming business.

Makadi Safaris has two different privately owned hunting areas available, namely, Kamab which is situated to the north-east of Windhoek and Ilala Private Game Reserve situated west of Windhoek close to the Namib Desert. The two hunting areas cover 225 000 acres, of which 95 000 acres is personally owned. Exclusive hunting rights exist on the rest of the huntable area.

Makadi Safaris main camp, Kamab Lodge – an old, beautifully renovated homestead with an inviting pool, bar, and elegant dining room, has been in the family for three generations. Here one finds a magnificent diversity of Namibian landscapes. Open plains, fertile basins, dams, riverbeds and rugged mountain ranges are all there. Being situated on the high plateau of the central region of Namibia, the area enjoys the advantage of a moderately cool climate. The terrain is ideal for walk and stalk hunts, either with a rifle or a bow, as well as extended hikes armed with a camera.

Your PH will take you in a 4x4 vehicle fitted with two-way radios to the best hunting grounds. Our safaris take only from sustainable wildlife populations, are strictly ethical and based on fair chase. Hunting is walk and stalk. Due to our effective wildlife management programme, which has been in place for the last 50 years, the area is never over-hunted, allowing for extraordinary adventure and exceptional trophies. Bring your family, as non-hunters may enjoy self-guided walks, extended game drives, as well as day tours to surrounding tourist attractions, or historical discovery tours and shopping trips to the City of Windhoek.

Tucked away in the rugged, scorched mountains at the edge of the desert, is another kind of paradise - the exquisite Ilala Private Game Reserve. Only a few miles off the main road, one travels through dry riverbeds and rocky hills to finally reach the old colonial-style ranch house built by the legendary Johann Vivier, a man who made...
his fortune with diamonds in the days when Africa abounded with adventure and wildlife. While enjoying a thirst-quenching sundowner on the whitewashed veranda, you can watch a magnificent African sunset painting the slopes of the Gamsberg Mountain in hues of pink and mauve.

In 2009 Ilala Private Game Reserve became part of our available hunting areas. The family owned reserve is situated along the border of the desert between Windhoek and Walvis Bay on the Gamsberg route. This vast, rugged, mountainous and untouched wilderness area is where you can delve deeply into the myths and legends of old Africa. It enables you an exclusive hunt in a breath-taking environment. Apart from the beauty of this wild, romantic landscape, you might come across special game like leopard or Hartmann’s zebra in their natural environment.

The mountain slopes are home to the scarce and agile klipspringer, the Hartmann’s (Mountain) zebra and leopard, while gemsbok (Oryx), kudu and springbok graze the grassy plains. Hunting at Ilala is an exclusive and exceptional experience, because we only allow one hunter or hunting group at a time in this sensitive, semi-arid landscape. For non-hunting companions – and for your time off from hunting – Ilala offers various entertainment and recreational activities to choose from. Bushman paintings can be admired at two separate locations on Ilala. One can explore the area with guided walks, game drives on 4x4 vehicles, or simply admire the view from the veranda. And there’s an inviting pool as well. Whether you are reading in the old family library or just allowing your eyes to linger on Africa’s sublime beauty, either way, the Ilala Private Game Reserve will be a cherished experience.

Through conservation efforts and controlled trophy hunting, the number and diversity of animals in Namibia has almost doubled since the eighties, with 70 - 80% of all wild animals in Namibia found on privately owned ranch land. Therefore it is possible to take exceptional trophies that could be world record. Some of the huntable species include kudu, oryx (gemsbok), hartebeest, springbok, warthog, duiker, steenbok, waterbuck, klipspringer, mountain and Burchell’s zebra, leopard, cheetah, black and blue wildebeest, eland, giraffe, baboon, jackal, as well as waterfowl and game birds.

We actively partake in research projects, and our latest participation includes collecting DNA samples from trophies taken for analysis and establishing a DNA data bank for research and reference purposes. An ongoing cheetah research project done by the Institute of Zoology and Wildlife Research and the University of Berlin has been actively supported by Makadi Safaris over the past 10 years. Most recently a leopard study has been added with the capture and collaring of three leopards.

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Uninitiated Americans often see African adventure through images of fictionalized rough and dirty “Real Men” like John Wayne (Hatari) or Robert Redford (Out of Africa). I did. But frankly, guys do not go to Africa and find lonely heiresses or rope rhinos.
VICTORY RESTS IN HER HANDS

Aptly named after the Goddess of Victory, the K-20 Victoria promises women triumph in the field or on the range. Offering a beautifully designed and tailored stock for the female shooter, K-20 Victoria’s graceful balance and lightweight barrels give any woman an unbeatable field companion.
Merely an ordinary deer hunter, I made my first safari to the Karoo, hunting for kudu and oryx from a comfortable, cliff-based 5-Star chalet with a chef. I ignored warnings that once you go, Africa gets into your head. But beware – it does!

Upon arrival in Windhoek, I was told that “my” buffalo permit might not be available, but Jamy Traut thought he could convince a local chief to find an extra. I need not have worried.

My primary quest was to hunt Cape buffalo with a .416 Taylor. That wildcat was developed by Bob Chatfield-Taylor to get .416 Rigby performance out of standard-length brass. The escapades of the caliber were made famous by John Wootters, an adventurous outdoor writer best known for his Whitetail books. I met John and his wife Jeannie when introduced by former NRA Director Bob Bear. I saw the most magnificent buffalo trophy mounted above John’s stone fireplace. I followed John to his workshop where there were two more trophies, both even bigger. Almost drooling with admiration at their size, I said, “No matter what gun you used, the hole in the end of the barrel just would not be big enough.” John handed me a cartridge. “Yes, it is. It’s a .416 Taylor.” My .375 H&H now appeared smallish compared with the fat .400-grain cartridge I held.

Immediately I promised John I would take a .416 Taylor to Africa. MG Arms converted my 7 Mag, LH, Win CRF M70. John offered his original reamer and whatever else was needed. Kerry O’Day barreled the action, truing it, adding sights and barrel band, bedding the stock with extra epoxy here and there. I installed a mercury recoil reducer and a Weaver 30mm, 1-5 illuminated scope. When sighting from an unweighted Lead Sled, the Taylor produced better than half-inch groups with 350 Barnes TSX loads that Kerry recommended. In 2013 at the January 2013 Dallas Safari Club convention, I formally booked an October 2013 Caprivi hunt with Jamy Traut. Unfortunately, John died just three weeks later - he would share my adventure from a loftier location.

I first saw the Caprivi when trekking by Land Cruiser to a remote camp. We saw hundreds of elephants in Botswana, across the Chobe River. While there, chasing elephant, buffalo, croc, hippo and red lechwe, I became obsessed with getting a large croc, and spent many fruitless days hunting them. Then a week after I left, a 14-year-old girl with a 7-08 took a 14.5 foot croc from “my” blind!

While chasing rogue elephant we spotted a large buffalo herd on an island in the Chobe west of Kasane, claimed that day by active Botswana military in small gunboats. There were a couple of wide-horned hard-bossed Daggas there. Alas, the river was a boundary for nations, a national park, and ethical sportsmen. I hoped the herd would swim north as others had done to escape the overgrazed Chobe Park, but the island held enough forage to last longer than my hunt. I had a buff permit in hand, which was why I booked with Jamy in the first place, though a friend who went south for Namibian leopard left me his croc permit. So I was now in a dilemma – croc, or buff, or both.

Jamy suggested we scout buffalo in between the long time spent in two different blinds waiting for the “right” croc. At 115 degrees it was too hot anyway to read my new book about some “Horn” written by a gin-drinking New Yorker. Five days later we were onto a herd of about 150 free-range buffaloes. We walked after them for miles. The sandy, grassless soil on that island was blinding bright with reflective heat hot enough to cook a shoe with you still in it. Around mid-day, the herd lay down under some small bushes that still had a few brown leaves. We flanked the main body but came onto a fringe group resting in and among some other low brush we had not seen while making our approach. We were on a slight rise of an eroded sand dune. No wind. The fringe group, BB gun close, did not move or care. We could see on the very opposite edge of the herd, with sizable cows and young bulls, a rather nice, big, Dagg Boy. He knew we were there. Like a ghost, day in and out he knew, appearing then disappearing only to reappear always at the back of the main group.

That black, mudless, birdless, ghost of a herd bull kept at least one or two cows and a few calves between us. At the distance from
me on the low dune to him, maybe only 80 to 100 yards. I set up a few times to take a shot, but nothing. He moved only when the cows moved. The cows moved only when the calves moved too far. Frustratingly, no clear shot could be made. This game went on for hot day after hot day as the herd kept moving, crossing water-filled channels seemingly in a grand circle. Terrain and cover varied on each island, or channel bank. Finally, one night a fisherman came to our tented camp to report that a large herd had moved to a nearby island. He was nervous about their proximity to his hut and those of his village.

Early arrival found us within sight of the back of a westward-moving column. It appeared to be the group we had spent the last several days following. My ghost bull would surely be there, but with 298 extra eyes. These buffalo were way out in the open with plenty of grass to eat, safe from the approach of lions. Worse, the fisherman's island was pretty bare. Practically no trees, brush or cover existed away from the small village, except for that terrible short sword grass. About as flat as the Makgadikgadi Salt Pans, of Botswana, there was one low relief river meander that crossed about two-thirds of the distance to the buffalo. The minute I saw the setup I knew we would soon be crawling. Crawling is a skill that you need to hunt Africa if you leave your Land Cruiser. Being a masochist helps too. "PH Crawling" is a duck-walk then a butt-n-scoot, then a belly slither. None of it is fun or easy. In the heat I was running out of my most important advantage - attitude.

In Dallas I had told Jamy that I would carry my 10.5 lb Taylor the first 100 miles. On Day 11, at about mile 88, I gave in and handed the rifle to a 20-year-old skinner companion. Four hundred yards later he handed it back for my crawl with Jamy.

Off we went single file at a walk, then a bent-over sneak, then the duck, the butt, and finally the belly. Even though the morning sun was behind us, the blistering heat from the previous day was in that darn grass and in my face and hands. We crawled on and on. In the warm grass it was like standing over the slow heat of a Texas branding fire while waiting for the first spring calf. Jamy, sensing I was not having a great time, whispered jokes and stopped to calibrate the herd's movement. We were on an intersect vector. Then a mild breeze and the little evaporating dew refreshed the grass – the sweet smell a devil's lure to go on. We waited to measure wind from where to where. I lay there. “One whiff, and that ghost will know it’s me, and spook,” I thought.

Now, with a steady breeze in our faces, we crawled again. I swore a bit too much at myself. We got within 50 yards of the port stern of a westbound mass of indistinguishable black bodies with a sea of moving legs. Lying there, we whispered about seeing three or four shooters. Jamy commented that the big

Though past middle age with pointed horns not yet worn down, at 20 yards with me prone in the grass, #2 convinced me he was a shooter with a boss hard enough to hurt a bit.

Meat reward for the fisherman who came to camp to tell us about a local herd of Cape buffalo.

Jamy Traut and me, mainly me, rejoicing this part of the hunt was over.

So I was now in a dilemma – croc, or buff, or both.
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Boy was again at the back. At this point, if I had two permits I would have been tempted to cheat and send a solid through a cow to get him. Of course, Jamy would never hunt with me again if I did. For just a second we would see a glimpse of the big boy’s shoulder or a hump. Cows would be grazing in front and behind. No real moving. Just ever so slow feeding with a lot of heads up and down, always looking. No alarm.

One of the shooters paraded over to check us out. A desirable #2, he was possibly demonstrating that he did not trust whatever was lying on the ground. Although the bull was pawing and snorting, Jamy ignored him, as did the ghost and most of the herd.


Waiting seemed endless. Sword grass started to smell like dry, hot, dusty hay, and the herd began to walk a bit, tightening up, wary. The middle-aged, hard-bossed #2 was getting closer and closer. At about 25 yards, he picked up his tempo and lowered his head, bellowing.

Aware that the herd was about to move off and that my persistence was waning, (and not really wanting his client to get stomped), Jamy said that if the snort-and-head-bouncer got any closer, it was OK to shoot #2 before he got real determined. Oh, really?

Number two snorted convincingly. “OK. Now!” I heard Jamy’s whisper. Still prone, I placed a 350 Barnes TSX into the high heart, near the right inside shoulder, quartering upward back somewhere. I did not feel recoil. The buffalo ran in two tight circles then fell over. I elbowed up to send another, but Jamy stopped me. “Well done.” The ghost and his herd stampeded off, but only by about 300 yards, then went back to grazing. Our game scout ran over. “Sniper!” he congratulated me.

We cautiously approached the buffalo to give an insurance shot, but Jamy said it was not needed. I was just grateful I would not have to crawl any more. We stopped for the usual pictures while a small crew from the village came with a cart to collect some meat.

I had accomplished what I had promised John Wootters I would do - hunt Cape buffalo in Africa with a .416 Taylor, though I was sorry not to be able to tell him my version of the hunt. I am not disappointed in the horn size or boss, just that an incredible adventure was over. However, I would have liked to get a clear shot at the ghost. I will go back, at a cooler time, with better mental stamina and, of course, with another rifle project.
“You have just taken one of the Tiny Ten,” said Arnold.
“What is that?” I asked, somewhat disinterested. My PH Arnold Glaasson and I were traveling back from our vaalie hunt in the mountains near the town of Graaf-Reinet in the South African Karoo. I had just achieved a many-decades’ goal of taking my dream animal, the vaalie (Vaal rhebok). Arnold explained that this category included members of Southern African pygmy antelope, and that not only had I collected the first of these, but the main Blaauwkrantz Safaris property we were speeding towards was an excellent place to get at least three more Tiny Tenners.
However, I was obsessed with the thought of my second-most desired trophy, a zebra, and a tiny ten candidate did not have much appeal.

Fast forward three days and hunting on the marvelous 100,000-plus acres near Port Elizabeth had already netted a Burchell’s zebra, a huge Eastern Cape kudu, a large mountain reedbuck, and a very nice red hartebeest. Sometime during the collection of these wonderful trophies, I had decided to change my aim at creatures that could run me over, rip me apart, stomp me into a puddle, or even give me a nasty scratch, and rather focus on the Tiny Ten.

Encouraged by the incessant remarks from the three PHs to take more Pygmy antelopes, I think that the final incentive was the thrill I experienced as I watched my first klipspringers, or (“klippies”), seemingly dance across the slopes in the mountainous environs. I was mesmerized.

One of the highlights of my safari was driving about and walking around the mountains. More than once we were almost blown out of them by gale-force winds, and the weather, like in all mountainous areas around the world, could change in a heartbeat from pleasant to ugly and back again. But, I loved the harsh look of the mountains, so different from the thick, nasty chaparral-esque vegetation found lower down. So, as we headed back up the seriously rough road in Arnold’s 4x4 pick-up, I could feel my spirits lifting.

We had almost reached the highest ridge when we spotted the little antelope that had held me entranced earlier in the hunt - a group of klippies. One of the little animals was a beautiful male whose horns even I could see.

We stopped, jumped down, and Arnold quickly got me on the rest.

"Remember, BEHIND the shoulder or you’ll damage the skin!” he said quietly. I was shooting my 7mm Remington Magnum with 175-grain Nosler Partitions. I was expecting that by careful shot placement there would be little damage to the tiny animal. (Note to all who will hunt Pygmy antelope: Use solids only!). At my shot, the little form was lifted off the rock on which he was perched and tumbled down the rocky slope. We found him at once and examined his skin. Arnold turned to me, and said quietly, “Did I not say ‘behind the shoulder?’”

It seems the male had been quartering ever-so-slightly away and my ‘behind-the-shoulder’ only worked for the on-shoulder. The off-side, on the other hand, resembled the Texas Chainsaw Massacre. As I was starting to freak out at the mess I’d made, Arnold added, “Your whole mount of the klippie won’t be on a rotating stand, so just put the off-shoulder toward the wall.”

We took photos and enjoyed the...
Eastern Cape high country while our tracker Neville field-dressed the little animal. As we jostled back down to the rough track, I realized I was hooked.

The following morning we headed out, but this time keeping to the lowlands to look for duiker and grysbok. I pondered on what might keep these two at low elevations, while klippies and vaalies remained higher. Regardless, hunting them would be very different. Because of the impenetrable lowland vegetation, instead of spot-and-stalking, we would either “lamp” (spotlight) them at night, or call them in daylight. (Night hunting with a light source is wildly illegal in my home country, but lamping is accepted in many African countries, especially for collecting largely nocturnal species.)

We started off looking for grey duiker during daylight hours, with Arnold using an inexpensive varmint call to lure the animals into the open – a brilliant way to be able to check the gender, as well as the horn dimensions on the males. Though the morning and afternoon hunts saw Arnold successfully call in a number of duikers, none of the males reached his self-imposed minimum length of 4½ inches. A number of times I readied myself on the bipod rest, but, “We can do better,” Arnold would whisper. I didn’t mind not collecting the beautiful little brown animal on that day, captivated as I was by my first hunting

During the author’s search for a grysbok, Neville and another tracker caught an adult female... by hand!
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experience involving calling. Watching the duikers dashing across the landscape from one patch of vegetation to another, or crossing large open areas just to reach the source of the call was another highlight. Some of these pygmy antelope ventured several hundred yards to investigate the sound. Several came within bayonet range, while others stopped 30-ish yards away from our stands.

Arnold turned his attention to organizing a pre-dinner lamping expedition: the goal was to collect a trophy grysbok. I was excited at the thought of collecting a new species with a new hunting method. Arnold wanted at least 2½ inch horns with good bases, and I was reassured that we had still many nights to hunt and, most importantly, Arnold and our trackers, Jambo and Neville, were excellent.

Once night had fallen, we headed along the rough trail to an area of mixed lowland shrub bordered by open plains. Jambo held the spotlight, with Arnold and me on either side of him. The spotlight beam had to be kept even with the rifle’s action, otherwise the shooter would see only a bright glare from the light shining into the ocular end of their scope. As we went down the track with Jambo continually shifting the beam from left to right, a little form jogged into the beam and stayed just in front of us. It was a Cape grysbok female. We kept up the South African version of the "slow-chase" for about 100 yards, till the little animal finally trotted off into the vegetation.

Our light also caught a Cape fox and a grey duiker, but both were safe - the former needing a permit we did not possess, and the latter to be focused on in daylight. Because I was having such a wonderful time seeing the creatures and countryside in the lamp's beam, I was almost sorry that it ended so quickly. But within 30 minutes Jambo quietly signaled for us to stop. He was holding the beam on a diminutive shape at the edge of a stand of trees and bushes.

Arnold raised his binoculars as they got me situated on the rest. The animal was turned sideways, necessary to be able to judge the horns. Grysbok's ears are dark along the inner edge, which can give the impression of horns on females if they are facing you.

As I found the pygmy antelope in my field of view, my reticles were sharp in the lamplight. “That’s your animal,” whispered Arnold. I made certain that my crosshairs were behind the “on” shoulder. I lost him in the recoil and chambered another round as I realigned my sight picture. He was not there, and I turned to Jambo and Arnold.

“He’s down,” Arnold said. I breathed a
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At Arnold's insistence on shooting only fully-mature animals, we took four SCI gold (Vaal rhebok, duiker, kudu and impala), two silver (klipspringer and mountain reedbuck) and two bronze awards (Grysbok and Red Hartebeest) trophies. The only animal not making 'the book' was our zebra.

 três of the four Tiny Tens were in the salt, and the next morning broke with a particularly bright halo. We headed back out to try and call in a mature trophy duiker. I had no idea what the SCI awards were before my hunt. I just wanted to experience Africa. I did not have 'award-level' goals but fortunately, Arnold knew what mature animals were, and that was what we hunted.

As we walked from the truck through the chaparral-like habitat and scrambled across the slope, Arnold pointed down at a rusted horseshoe.

"That's from the 'English War'”. When queried, he clarified that that was what is generally known as 'The Boer War'. I love historical artifacts, so with his permission I took it. We finally arrived at the target of our hike, an open hillside where we had a commanding view of a valley and the hillside opposite. Before the calling began, we spotted a nice nyala bull and a kudu bull and cow across the valley, browsing on the opposite slope.

Arnold blew only twice through his call, when we heard a crashing noise in the brush in the valley. Fortunately, I had already placed my rifle on the bipod before a duiker bolted from the underbrush.

"That's your ram," Arnold whispered. "How far?" I asked as I aimed. "He's seen us, shoot!” At the shot, the little form collapsed.

"Let's go collect him," said my never-flustered PH. As the photos were posed, I sat cradling the little ram's chin, and realized that Arnold, Jambo and Neville had accomplished a transformation: In the span of one safari they had changed a novice African hunter into a glassy-eyed fanatic, one intent on returning as many times as possible to succeed in collecting the remaining marvelous species making up the Tiny Ten.

Michael Arnold is a Distinguished Research Professor in the Department of Genetics, University of Georgia, USA. He is also a hunter, albeit with the occasional mishap! He is passionate about the shooting sports (especially hunting) and writing about said sports.
Previously, we were lucky and happy to finally take a nice mountain reedbuck after four days of intense hunting. Now the next challenge awaited us - a common reedbuck.
It was the end of August and I had made it back to South Africa to hunt with bow and arrow again with my PH Izak Vos from Vos Safaris.

We were on a property close to Bela Bela in the beautiful Limpopo province. Deriving its name from the geothermic hot springs around which the town was built, it was called “Warmbaths” until 2002.

After arriving and settling in, we wanted to do a game drive to get familiar with the area, the terrain and the game, especially where to find the common reedbuck. Even on game drives I always take along my bow and arrows because you never know what can happen.

In the early afternoon we slowly made our way through the bushveld. The first animals we saw were some nice nyala and warthogs. Suddenly, as we rounded a bush, four Cape buffalo bulls were standing in the path just about 10 meters in front and they were not really amused to see us. We stopped and kept dead quiet - you could hear a pin drop. The gang of four were moving and shaking their heads and sniffing to catch our smell. Fortunately the wind was in our favour, and after some bluster and showing off, the bruisers turned around and moved slowly back into the bush. That was an exciting encounter!

We continued our drive. Suddenly, “Stop!” I whispered to Izak. “I can see a pair of horns sticking out above the grass.” We checked with our binoculars. Bedded down in the grass was a good specimen of a common reedbuck. Carefully we sneaked out of the car to try stalking closer because the ram was lying about 80 meters from us. As quietly as possible we tiptoed from bush to bush. We managed it to shorten the distance down to 50 meters when suddenly the buck stood up.

Unfortunately at that moment we were in the open between two bushes, but luckily the antelope did not look in our direction. Quickly I pulled an arrow out of my quiver and put it on the rest. I was at full draw and ready to release the arrow when the reedbuck turned his head and stared at me. Not good. In the moment I released the trigger to send the arrow, the ram ducked down - string jumped - and the result was clear: I overshot him. What a pity, but that’s life.

“Don’t worry, the buck was just surprised to see us,” Izak said. “Probably he...
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will not go far and we might have another chance when we follow him slowly as long as he is in sight." No sooner said than done, we found the arrow, and watched to see where the reedbuck was going. We checked available bush cover, keeping an eye on him. Fortunately he did not run, and we could follow him slowly through a bushy area. About an hour later we arrived at an open plain and saw him standing calm and relaxed 65 meters from us across the plain at the edge of more bushes.

Only problem was, just grassland between him and us and no cover to hide and sneak in closer. It was a long shot for bow and arrow, but I had practiced long shots. I’d give it a try. I put an arrow on the rest and pulled the bow, aimed a bit lower in case he might string jump again - and undershot him! The arrow flew directly behind his front legs, under his chest, into the bush. He jumped and vanished into the bush.

Izak looked a bit disappointed while I was more than upset and was swearing at myself.

We decided to leave it for the day and trudged back to the car to return to camp. I also wanted to check if it were probably just buck fever or something wrong with the bow, sight or arrows. Back in camp I did a bunch of shots on the practice block and decided to take the sturdy German Kinetics Silverflame broadhead instead of the mechanicals I had used. Their flight and shooting result was more precise.

Izak handed me a beer and told me to relax at the campfire.

“We will find him again tomorrow. Don’t worry. Relax. He is an old buck and they are territorial,” he stated. Sitting around a nicely burning campfire under the African sky with a tasty South African beer – yes, indeed that is relaxing, and on top of that dinner was different. Usually we liked to braai around the campfire but this was a different specialty – Spaghetti Bolognese, but instead of the usual ground beef, it was made with wildebeest – unbelievably delicious. It was so good that I overate!

Next day – new chances! It was an early morning when we started, and not that we were superstitious but both of us skipped shaving this morning in the hope of better luck. We drove the bakkie close to the place where we had seen the reedbuck the day before. At crawling speed we moved forward checking the area with the binoculars. Then we spotted him bedded down in the grass in front of a bush about 200 meters away. He did not notice us. We stopped, got quietly out, and started our stalk. It was quite challenging moving forward between the bushes and grassland so as not to spook the ram. But silent and slow, step by step we shortened the distance down to an incredible 32 meters.
First described in 1785 by Pieter Boddaert, a Dutch physician and naturalist, common reedbucks - or southern reedbucks (Redunca arundinum), are very similar to their mountain reedbuck family members, with a few slight differences between them. The southern reedbuck is larger than both the mountain reedbuck (Redunca fulvorufula) and the bohor reedbuck (Redunca redunca). The horns of common reedbucks are angled outwards, which have a distinctive forward curving arc from the ridged bases to the smooth tips. Forming a “V” when viewed from the front, the horns typically grow 25 to 45 cm long. Only males have horns and they grow to be slightly larger than mountain reedbucks’ and lack the distinctive hooked tips of the bohor reedbuck. The common reedbuck body is overall bigger and more muscular, with a larger neck and shoulders. Their neck and face is a lighter shade of brown, something the two species share. The coat of the southern reedbuck is fawn or buff in color, with some grizzling gray and brown. The undersides are white, including the bushy lower surface of the tail. All four legs have a dark stripe on their lower fronts. At the base of the pointed ears lies a gland that, when active, appears as a black circle of bare skin. Aside from this, there are no distinctive facial markings, although the lips, bottom of the jaw, and area around the eyes are often pale or white. This antelope has an average mass of 58 kg and a body length of about 134 to 167 cm. They prefer to lie in grass or reedbeds in the heat of the day and feed during sunrise and sunset, or sometimes even at night. Old reedbucks are permanently territorial.

Delicious Black Wildebeest Spaghetti Bolognese.

**Equipment:**
- **Bow:** Mathews Z7x @ 70 lbs
- **Arrow:** Carbon Express Maxima Hunter 350
- **Broadhead:** Silverflame XL 2-Blade @ 125 grain
- **Optics:** Zeiss Victory Binocular & Nikon Rangefinder
- **Release:** Scott
- **Camo:** Sniper Africa

German hunter Frank Berbuer is passionate about the outdoors and hunting – especially bowhunting, which he has practised for more than 19 years. Although he’s bowhunted in several countries, he’s become addicted to hunting in Africa since his first safari in 2004. Frank is a mechanical engineer and risk manager in the automotive industry.

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He was lying calm and relaxed, unaware of us, maybe because it was early morning and still a bit crisp. Meanwhile I was totally different as I could feel my heartbeat rising rapidly when I drew the bow in slow motion and aimed at his chest cavity. Suddenly he stood up but I could align my aiming spot and released the arrow, hitting him hard. The reedbuck jumped and bounded off at full speed. We watched him out of sight and gave it a break for 20 minutes. It also allowed me to calm down and get back to normal blood pressure.

On the spot we found a good blood trail and followed it for about 50 meters before it abruptly stopped. That was strange. We called Jacob, the tracker of the farm to help us in following the tracks. It took us three hours before finally Jacob found him slipped under a dense thick brush. These trackers and their abilities to read the signs are amazing.

We all were relieved to find the reedbuck and I was more than happy to have taken a common as well as my mountain reedbuck. Again, it was an awesome and challenging experience with bow and arrow. Again I had a tremendously good hunt with unforgettable impressions and memories with my friend and PH Izak Vos from Vos Safaris in South Africa.

Shoot straight, take care, always good hunting, “Waidmannsheil” and “Alles van die beste”. Frank

German hunter Frank Berbuer is passionate about the outdoors and hunting – especially bowhunting, which he has practised for more than 19 years. Although he’s bowhunted in several countries, he’s become addicted to hunting in Africa since his first safari in 2004. Frank is a mechanical engineer and risk manager in the automotive industry.

Common reed buck ram.

Delicious Black Wildebeest Spaghetti Bolognese.

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Archery and Bowhunting – Why I Like It…

The reason archery and hunting with a bow is so special is because you are only as good as your last shot.

With archery there is no such thing as sighting in your bow and packing it away till next hunting season, taking it out of moth balls and going hunting with it. It takes regular practise, and it takes gym and exercise to stay in shape. Today’s bows are state-of-the-art machines with computer-designed and C&C cut aircraft quality aluminium parts – they are way better than the cast magnesium riser bows we used in the 1980s. The bows can be fine-tuned, and good archers can easily shoot a golf ball at 100m with them.

There are a number of reasons why bowhunting is so interesting. A rifle hunter can shoot an animal as soon as he sees it in a good position. But it’s just the beginning for a bowhunter. We have to know animal behavior in far greater detail, and especially herd animals.

I do not consider shooting animals at a feeder or at a waterhole as “Bowhunting” although when I started I did do quite a lot. However, all the animals I have entered into the SCI bow hunter’s record book I hunted on foot, and not over bait or from a hide, including the Big Five and a hippo. But I would urge new bowhunters to shoot at least ten animals from a hide until they get over their buck fever and to see which type of shot will have the best results.

It is thought by most hunters that the only shot is the broadside shot behind the shoulder, but that is not the case. When we are bowhunting on foot in the bush, a broadside perfect shot is not always possible or desirable, especially when you are 10 or 15 yards away. All herbivores have their eyes on the sides of their heads, and plains game, unlike us, do not have much of a “blind spot” so to hunt them you need to be more crafty than they are. So try not to be recognised as a human. Look like a bush. Move slowly. Wear Ghillie suits or leafy suits. If you can hear your own footsteps you are walking too fast.

You can’t wait till they are close by standing broadside to you and then draw the bow - they will see that immediately. You need to quickly and silently draw as their eyes pass behind a tree or bush, and you must be standing dead still in a leafy suit or Ghillie suit so they don’t recognise you as a human. It’s hard to judge the speed of their movement while they are walking, so it’s a good idea to try get them to stop and then shoot. I use a soft, small animal sound like, “Ma”, similar to a baby wildebeest.

You don’t have to kill something to be “actively hunting”. You can walk and stalk and draw on animals that you are NOT going to kill just for the practice and excitement! It’s a great way to improve your skills. Hunting and not shooting animals you would normally kill will allow you to get all your ducks in a row-to get into a good position and choose the right moment to draw and aim without the adrenalin pumping stress of shooting a record-book animal.

The archery component of the bowhunt is also tremendously entertaining, and archery is a sport that you might never master beyond a certain range or distance. It’s not a sport where you can shoot a perfect shot every time, even under perfect circumstances. I have seen world-class archers, who have won many world titles, shoot badly under hunting conditions. I’ve had some amazingly good days where I could do nothing wrong, and weekends where I just could not do anything right. That’s what I love about it - it’s never over till the animal is in the cooler room.

Nowadays with the drama involved in getting a firearm license, more people are turning to archery. You can buy the bow and accessories in the morning and be practising in the garden by the afternoon. I have taught a lot of novice bowhunters to shoot a bow, and within an hour they are sitting in a hide and hunting animals that same day.

Hunters that used to shoot with rifles
become obsessed with bowhunting quite easily. The thought that you are supplying the energy to the arrow that kills the animal puts you much closer to your quarry, and the absence of that devastating explosion of energy and noise is refreshing. I have often shot animals in a herd without any other animal even noticing it.

Many bowhunting farms, including mine, have exemption to hunt all year around, so it's possible to keep busy all year and thus to keep your equipment in pristine condition all the time.

3 D archery on animal-sized rubber targets is also great exercise and fun. You can choose different shooting lanes to shoot at the same target. When you get proficient at shooting through tiny gaps and being able to visualise the arc that the arrow will take on its way to the target, you can teach yourself to shoot some insane shots, whereas another bowhunter will not even see an opportunity. Whenever I come back from a hunt I have a ritual. I take all my arrows, wash them, and spin them on a jig to make sure they are 100% straight. If you own carbon arrows you should bend them quite harshly and listen to them - if you hear a creak or crack, discard them. They could explode on the next shot.

Fixed-blade heads and all used heads are either re-sharpened carefully or the blades replaced with new ones. A broadhead should only be shot once and then be re-sharpened. A broadhead shot into an ethafoam butt is not sharp enough to hunt with. Once the arrows, fletches and points are checked, the arrows should be shot once more at a target to check that they are shooting true. The same applies to every new arrow you buy: test it by shooting it before you hunt with it. Every arrow should be weighed when you bring them home to make sure they are within a few grains of each other in weight. Although a 20 gr difference in weight has very little effect over 30 yards, over 100 yards it could be as much as a meter higher or lower.

A light and heavy arrow of the same make will look identical. One may have a brass insert, one a plastic or aluminium insert. Because a light arrow may leave the bow before it has taken all of the bow's energy, a heavier arrow may take more energy, and so the two could shoot a similar height up to 30 yards, but at 60 yards the heavy arrow will drop way more, so testing them from close may not work. Weighing them will tell.

I strongly urge anyone who is reasonably fit and dextrous to try bow hunting instead of hunting with firearms. You will be amazed how much more enjoyment you will get being fully camouflaged and getting into bow range of an animal and hunting it without the animals 50 yards away even knowing that a shot went off. A huge bonus is the fact that you can practice at home in your garden or in your garage. You don't need huge distances to practice your shooting from and build up your muscle memory. Arrows are deadly projectiles, so ensuring a solid backstop is essential.

I have been retired many years now and my bow and archery equipment keep me busy most days for a few hours. Pulling an 85 # bow is good exercise, too. If you are just thinking about archery and need advice on what to buy and where to get it and how to get started, please email me.

Dr Adrian de Villiers Professional hunter & bowhunter, IBEF
Master Bowhunting Instructor. srac@icon.co.za

Archery and bowhunting have pretty much been my life outside Radiology and Game farming for the last 35 years or so. I started my hunting career hunting with a Colt Python handgun in 1976. By 1982 I had shot most plains game in SA including Cape buffalo and a world record white rhino. By then I had a huge handgun collection from a .357 to a 45 70. I hunted the rhino with a .375 JDJ Thompson contender single shot pistol. By 1982 we were regularly shooting varmints out to 300m and game at similar distances. My ears were damaged, and Barry Gordon (Sharp Edge Sharp Shooter) convinced me to try bowhunting, and the rest, as they say, is history. I never hunted again with any firearm, and I never will.
“Nothing captures your heart like Africa,” was the mantra of my friend and mentor Craig Boddington. And as a young hunter I had always dreamed of hunting Africa to experience what most others only talked about, and very few Americans ever experienced.

Seeing the Big Five taxidermy exhibits at various trade shows sparked a fire in me to someday make this dream a reality. My longtime friend and hunting partner Jason Quick had previously introduced me to Alex and Johnny Thomson of Eland Safaris, a private hunting concession in the Northern Limpopo Province of South Africa, and we finally inked the date for early July 2018.

We were met in Johannesburg by PH Petrie Boshoff, and on arrival at the farm we were welcomed by Johnny and his family. We spent the afternoon shooting our bows to ensure accuracy, and recovering from jet lag after 26 hours in the air. Needless to say, we were ready to go experience Africa after over a year of waiting, and after an early breakfast next morning we split into our groups with our PHs. I was fortunate to have Petrie as my PH (or he was the unfortunate one to draw the short straw and have me as his client!).

One thing about bow hunting in Africa is that you will sit in blinds over water. At first, I was having a hard time with this concept, but I learned to respect and understand their hunting culture, and it wasn’t more than 30 minutes when my first encounter with an African species came straight to drink. A large mature impala ram had me at full draw, and when the arrow released that animal sprung up from the water and hightailed it out. It was a good shot, but the “vital triangle” sits a bit forward and lower in South Africa than...
in our traditional North American species. This took some getting used to as my impala proved by escaping my first arrow and disappearing in the bush!

I had a sleepless night worrying about it, but the good news was that thanks to my tracker Abraham, the impala was recovered within a few hundred yards of where I had hit him.

Day Two began at the same waterhole. The temperatures were rising in the afternoon, so plenty of game came down to feed and drink. I sat and studied Kevin Robertson’s The Perfect Shot about shot placement for trophy hunting Africa game, and made mental notes of where the arrow needed to penetrate for a clean kill.

Near the top of my desired list was a kudu bull. Of the spiral horned antelope, for me there is nothing more majestic than the Grey Ghost as they walk and browse through the trees. This day a massive kudu bull was thirsty, and my PH Petrie told me to grab my bow and get ready for a shot. We waited over 45 minutes until all the other animals left the watering area and the kudu gave me a 25-yard broadside shot. My arrow took flight, the bull spun and charged out into the thicket. In spite of the fact that the autopsy showed my arrow had cut through the bottom of the heart, he evaded us for hours till we finally were able to stop him in his tracks. I gained a newfound respect for these African animals.

I think another very special spiral-horned species is the nyala, and I decided to test my luck and see if I could get a chance on one. At the waterhole many nyala came in waves, and they all looked like a trophy bull to me. Prior to the trip my good friend and neighbor in our local town, Craig Boddington, told me straight: “Lucas, always trust your PH”. I recalled those words as I relied on Petrie to field judge and help me find a nyala bull that stood out above the rest. As luck would have it, a big bull with ivory-tipped horns appeared out of the thick brush and walked into water. Immediately my PH gave me that look of, “there’s the one”. I took my bow, nocked an arrow, and waited for the right moment. After what felt like hours, I lined up my single pin on the first stripe running down the front shoulder, and
released a deadly arrow that made a full pass through and hit the dirt before the bull even knew what hit him. I managed to double down that morning as a nice-sized blesbok also came to water and took one of my arrows. One morning and two animals in the salt!

As the days passed, I also managed to hunt the holy grail of a gemsbok, a 40" horned beauty that turned out to be just an incredible representative of the species. Although all that was stimulating and fun, it wasn’t till the last day that was for me the most exciting and entertaining.

Alex and I had previously discussed which species were on the target list, and he convinced me to acquire a baboon permit. “You never know when that opportunity could arise,” he said. All through the plains-game hunting I had this baboon permit sitting out there, and I thought, “Why not go and see what this baboon hunting is all about?”

So Petrie and I set out to an offset concession where the landowners were having issues with the baboons damaging their crops. After sitting in the blind for 20 minutes, a shrill shriek sounded out in the distance and my PH smiled. Within minutes a female baboon had entered the area and started feeding on the rotten tomatoes strategically placed. She was smarter than most, as she would grab a few veggies and run off. Then I noticed a silhouette in the bush walk out into view.

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“Take a shot if you can.”

I was committed to using my bow, which limited my opportunity as these primates are extremely clever and cunning. But this male slipped up by walking into my lethal distance. The shooting window was narrow and based on an angle did not give me much of a shot. As I went to full draw, I hoped that little sliver of an opening would be the vital zone I was looking for. One more step was needed for the baboon to give me a broadside shot...

The step was taken and arrow released. The animal immediately ran off for 50 yards till it expired with an arrow perfectly placed high in the shoulder. Petrie was delighted, as it was the first time he had been with successful bowhunter on baboon. We laughed and celebrated all the way back to camp.

That evening, we decided on a night hunt for steenbok. This was another hunt where they had never taken an archer at night to hunt one of these common small antelope species. We met the landowner and started out flashing spotlights across the fields looking for eyes. We had looked over many small game and then found a lone male ram feeding in the distance.

As we approached, my good friend Jason Quick helped me range the animal as I focused on making the shot in the dark. I recall hearing 48 yards, I set my pin, and the visible lumenok vapor trail traveled over the back of that ram. It ran off and went out quite a bit farther out of my effective range. We slowly moved forward and Jason whispered out another range of 38 yards. We followed, and after setting my pin I let an arrow fly and watched the ram buckle up hard and run about 20 yards before folding up. I was ecstatic at what I had just accomplished. Never had I thought this was achievable, but again proved these animals could be taken with archery equipment. We spent that evening under a sprinkle of rain taking photos and enjoying the beautiful winter’s night under the stars.

I gained a newfound respect for these African animals.
South Africa: 2018

Gear List:
Mathews Halon 32
Option Archery 8 Sight
Ripcord Max Micro Adjust
Tightspot 7 Arrow Quiver
Crossover Stabilizer
Ramcat Broadhead 100 gr
Easton FMJ 400
First Lite Cipher Camo
Kenetrek Mountain Extremes
Leica Geovid 10x42 HD-BSLXL

Location: South Africa – Limpopo
Outfitter: Eland Safaris
Year: July 2018
PH: Petrie Boshoff

I’d like to thank Eland Safaris for making our experience incredible and providing world-class accommodations, and special thanks to our camp of hunters and friends: Dave Kelner, Bob Anderson, Jason and Wyatt Quick, Brandon Williams, Derek and Meredith Franklin.

Africa certainly captures your heart unlike any other place in the world. For a hunter or someone just looking to experience the culture or sheer beauty of the country, it offers everything one could ever imagine - and some. The density and diversity of wildlife is unlike anywhere else I have ever seen. On that last evening watching the sunset, the enjoyment of our final dinner was bittersweet as we broke bread with some amazing people from all walks of life and backgrounds. But all good things must come to an end, and I had memories that will last a lifetime.

And we are already planning another trip.

PS And you can hear more about this story and our adventure on our Podcast webpage www.rnaoutdoors.com/podcast.

Lucas was born and raised in North Central Montana where there were year-round hunting and fishing opportunities, growing up on the Milk River Valley which provided some of the best whitetail hunting in the West.

Over the last 15 years, his hunting and fishing experiences have taken him to Utah, Wyoming, Idaho, California, Nevada, New Mexico, Alaska and Montana, as well as Argentina, Brazil, Australia, Africa, and New Zealand internationally. 100% of his hunts are DIY self-guided.

He enjoys hunting all big game, but there’s no passion greater than chasing big bull elk in September. His lifelong goal is to kill the North American 29 and 50 bull elk by the age of 50.
Waterfowling Africa Style - Size Matters

By Ken Bailey
In the big-game hunting world there’s a loose conglomeration of species collectively referred to as “charismatic megafauna.” These are the animals with special appeal, typically because of their physical size, their glamorous appearance or, in some instances, because of their unpredictable disposition and a willingness to demonstrate their displeasure. This list includes all of the Big Five, of course, as well as crocodiles, giraffes and the hippopotamus. It also includes those game animals revered for their regal beauty, including the kudu and sable. For the sportsman, hunting any of the charismatic megafauna has a unique way of inducing a racing heart, shortness of breath and sweating palms; in short, an excitement that underscores the very reason we choose to hunt them. We thrive on that adrenaline rush.

Wingshooters, by and large, don’t have a list of similarly compelling species to pursue. But if there’s one bird that can stir the emotions, at least for me, it’s the spur-winged goose, the largest goose on the planet. As a self-professed hardcore waterfowler, the prospect of dropping one of these oversized geese, with the namesake unusual protuberance on each wing, is something I’d lusted for since I saw my first spurwing some 30 years ago. So when the invitation came to help out a farmer whose crops were being decimated by geese, including spurwings, my pulse immediately kicked up a notch or two.

We’d be hunting near Baynesfield in South Africa’s KwaZulu-Natal province. My partners were Mark Haldane, a larger-than-life PH renowned for his Mozambique safaris, particularly for Cape buffalo, and Dylan Holmes, a PH who guides for Mark. Both enjoy bird hunting when the opportunity presents itself, and have been hosting wingshooting safaris for many years. While Dylan is quiet and measured, Mark is all personality and an eager and captivating story-teller.

We arrived at the farm after a seven-hour drive from the Eastern Cape where we’d enjoyed two days of hunting grey-winged spurfowl. Though the drive was tiresome, the anticipation of hunting spurwings had me alert and focused as we pulled in. After meeting the landowner, we surveyed the situation. His oat crop was just sprouting and being ravaged at its most sensitive stage by marauding geese staging on a large wetland less than a mile away. The waterfowl season wouldn’t officially open here for a couple weeks, but he’d received a damage control permit as a way of protecting his crop. If he waited until the opener to do something about the depredation, these geese would have his entire oat crop grazed to the nubs.

The geese’s route was a quick, direct path from the lake. We could watch them as they lifted off the water, circle a couple of times, then fly arrow-straight to the field. Given the relatively short flight they weren’t gaining much altitude, so pass shooting them as they approached the field was the most obvious strategy.

Mark, Dylan, the landowner and I spread out along the fenceline bordering the oat field, 100 yards or so apart, each of us hiding behind a large straw bale. It was late afternoon and the geese were already flying as we scrambled into position. They were a mix of spurwings and smaller Egyptian geese that were easily identified by their brown and grey bodies and distinctive dark eye patches. As I watched flight after flight of geese rise from the wetland, it was obvious that Egyptian geese were the more numerous of the two species here.

The first birds that flew towards the field after we were in position were a pair of noisy Egyptian geese that glided 100 yards to my left, near where our farmer host was hiding. The author with a yellow-billed duck. It’s perfect when they arrive in twos and threes.
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Lesser Kudu  Southern Gerenuk  Fringe Eared Oryx  Coke’s Hartebeest  Chandler’s Mountain Reedbuck  Patterson’s Eland

Robert’s Gazelle  Grant’s Gazelle  Thomson’s Gazelle  East African Impala  Masai Bushbuck  Kirk’s Dik-Dik

Steinbuck  Klipspringer  Eastern White bearded Wildebeest  Western White bearded Wildebeest  Striped Hyena


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2019 Outfitter of the Year
As the birds crossed the fenceline he rose and, with two practiced shots, folded both cleanly. Very impressive shooting, I recall thinking, though it put pressure on the rest of us to shoot as well. I didn’t have long to wait before it was my turn, as an incoming bird’s flight path would put it right in line with where I crouched behind the bale. From its dark colouration and massive proportions I knew immediately it was a spur-winged goose. It crossed the fenceline to my left, about 40 yards up, hell bent on the waiting oat seedlings. Mounting and swinging my gun in one smooth motion, I pushed my barrel in front of the crossing bird and hit the switch. The goose never so much as rustled a feather. A rapid follow-up shot had the same effect, or lack thereof – I’d missed cleanly! I shrugged it off, putting it down to getting the kinks out, and prepared for my next opportunity.

A few minutes later another spurwing flew over on a near-identical trajectory. Unfortunately, my results were identical, too. From down the way I heard the farmer yell, “Get out in front of them further,” or words to that effect in a not especially friendly manner. That was understandable as he was trying to save his crops while I was hunting recreationally; he clearly had more at stake than I did. As I was to learn later, missing is not an uncommon experience when hunting spur-winged geese for the first time. Their enormous body size and deliberate wingbeats make them appear to be much closer and flying much more slowly than they really are. As a consequence, shooting behind them is a frequent mistake for newcomers to the game. I swallowed my pride after the reprimand and vowed I wouldn’t make the same mistake again.

A short while later a flock of six Egyptians winged towards my position and, remembering the admonition, I forced myself to significantly increase my lead before pulling the trigger. Two shots and two geese crumpled to the earth! I smiled with newfound confidence and watched contentedly as Mark’s lab raced into the field to retrieve them. I had the sight picture now. Shortly after, a lone spurwing flew towards my position. I was fully prepared this time, and dumped it cleanly with one shot. It landed about 20 yards from where I stood, and I swear I could feel the earth tremble when it thudded to the ground. I ambled out to retrieve it, eager to hold the massive bird. It was even bigger in the hand than I had imagined, probably nearing 20 pounds, substantially heavier than even the largest Canada geese I hunt at home. I stood marvelling at its heft, its jet-black plumage, and the strange and dangerous-looking protrusion on its wings, before being jolted back to reality by Mark, who hollered down the line that another flight of birds was on final approach.

Over the next hour or so we enjoyed steady action. When we finished up we had two dozen geese on the ground, about a third of them spur-winged. After my initial misses I held my own in the shooting department, and the farmer appeared to sincerely appreciate what the three of us had done to help with his goose problem. As we packed up our gear, I took a moment to reflect on the hunt: you are too caught up in the moment to always fully appreciate it when the event is unfolding. I’d fulfilled a long-standing dream to shoot the world’s largest goose, and had done so with a great group of people in a glorious setting. All in all, it had been a helluva day.

My African waterfowling wasn’t confined to that one afternoon of goose hunting, however. Before we’d left the Eastern Cape the previous evening, I’d hunted ducks with local rancher and PH Robbie Stretton and a couple friends from Alberta, T.J. Schwanky and Vanessa Harrop. After a morning hunting grey-winged spurfowl, Robbie put the three of us in a series of one-person reed blinds spaced out evenly along a dammed section of a 10-mile long watercourse. A dozen and a half floating decoys rested in the shallow water along the shoreline. As we were getting our gear squared away and settled into our respective blinds, a pair of shelducks, a handful of red-billed teal and a dozen or so yellow-billed ducks sprang from the pond. They would be harbingers of what was to come, as over the course of the next couple hours we were treated to some wonderful duck hunting.

The teal and the shelducks never did return, but yellow-billed ducks spiralled into our decoys on a regular basis. Most often they came in twos, threes or fours, which is perfect. If they arrived in large groups there’s a risk of flock shooting rather than picking out a single bird; more often than not that results in a clean miss. T.J. and Vanessa took turns shooting and operating a video camera as they filmed a sequence for their popular Outdoor Quest television show, while I was free to shoot away. So I did. When we
A flight of yellow-billed ducks on final approach.

decided to call it a halt, we’d managed to drop about 18 birds.
Yellow-billed ducks are very similar in size and build to a mallard, the most popular duck in North America. In fact, they greatly resemble a hen mallard with a brilliant yellow bill.

In the days following our goose hunt we travelled north to Dundee, where we focused on hunting pigeons and doves. I did, however, spend one evening there in a duck blind. The season was not yet open in Kwazulu-Natal, so I carried a camera rather than a shotgun, and had a close-up look at several southern African duck species.

These included white-faced ducks, southern pochards and Cape shelduckers, along with the more common red-billed teal, shelducks and yellow-billed ducks. I would have loved to have been shooting that evening, but I know full well that a man should never have everything he craves, no matter how hard he wishes for it. It’s that unsatisfied itch, however, that ensures I’ll be back, and soon, to further explore southern South Africa’s underutilized waterfowl hunting opportunities.

PH Dylan Holmes and the author with a spur-winged goose. The wingspan is enormous.

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est. 1998
Here are a few facts to keep in mind when trophy hunters visit Bergzicht Game Lodge. We also like to invite outsiders to enlighten them and learn about our day-to-day management. This article specifically focuses on the meat consumption of the trophies taken.

Right from the start it was part of our mission to make productive use of our resources, and it is vitally important to us to contribute to the social wellbeing of our local community. Therefore, almost every safari is part of a meat donation program to the local school.

As the pulling of the trigger is only a very small part of hunting itself, there are various other components accompanying a hunting safari which we regard as “part of the creating of a memory” experience. Not only do we have the opportunity to allow clients to interact with nature on a daily basis, we help them to understand our environment, our fauna and flora.

The hunters can do what they love to do, while they assist us in uplifting our community. The meat harvested will be donated on a regular basis to the local primary school in Dordabis. Dordabis is a rural village about 20 minutes’ drive from our lodge. This specific village is very dependent on donations and financial support from the surrounding ranchers.

The school has 255 full-time students. For many of these children this meat donation from farmers in the community is the only source of protein they get. We offer the opportunity to our clients to be part of this donation, handing over of meat should they wish to do so during their time with us.
The hunters can do what they love to do, while they assist us in uplifting our community.

To those who are against hunting - trophy hunting to be exact - perhaps it is time for you to realize that the meat from a large animal provides more protein and nutrients to each and every pupil which they may not have had otherwise.

Also, when our hunters bring along their own children we encourage the clients to take their children to the school. This allows the clients’ children to see how poor some communities are, and to teach them to be thankful for their own fortunate circumstances. In this way these children can, from a young age, see what a big role trophy hunting plays and the positive contribution it can make to someone else’s life. The smiles and happiness of those village kids will leave an unforgettable impression.

When privileged children experience this first hand, it also creates the opportunity for them to return home with a better understanding of hunting, and perhaps be able to explain and defend ethical trophy hunting to their school friends who do not understand the situation. We are very keen to get youngsters involved in such programs, to get the message out there about trophy meat being utilized. Nothing goes to waste. This way a young hunter / huntress can feel as though they are part of the story.

At Bergzicht we normally use the prime cuts for the lodge. In this way the clients can enjoy the meat they harvested, and we have 20 full-time employees who also benefit from the meat hunted.

In Windhoek, the capital of Namibia our focus is more on the old-age homes. Here we again donate meat to the elderly. In this way they are sure to get top-quality organic meat without any hormones.

Be sure to get your next couple of African Hunting Gazette editions to get a better understanding of yet another important phase in the Bergzicht Game Lodge operation.
When and where were you born?
Cloete Hepburn: I was born Johannes Marthunes Cloete 1971 in Heidelberg, RSA in the Transvaal Province (now Gauteng).

AHG: And tell us about your family.
CH: I am married to Stienie. We have two children, a daughter Felicia of 26 years old and a son Henry who is 21.

AHG: How did you become a PH? Tell us the interesting bits.
CH: We had a farm in the Transvaal in the Limpopo Province where my two brothers and I grew up in the bush. There were many hunting stories around the fire when the family came to visit from Namibia, and those stories inspired me to follow in the old legends’ footsteps in hunting and guiding. One of my father’s friends was an astonishing hunter and tracker, and I spent lots of my time with him here. He taught me the ways of tracking game, and the knowledge of nature - trees, grass and wildlife.

My father taught us from a young age how to handle a rifle, and by giving us one .22 bullet each to go and hunt with, we learnt that if you did not make a kill shot and the bullet was wasted, then the hunt was over for you that day. This sounded so harsh, but it had us shooting straight in no time, and I was driven to pursue my passion for hunting.

I became a PH in 2001, but only after working at the Department of Correctional Service could I pursue my dreams to become a professional hunter.

AHG: Which countries have you hunted, and where are you hunting these days?
CH: I started in the Limpopo Province as a freelance PH, and I have hunted in Zambia and Mozambique. All of these places brought me great pleasure and experience, and I would yet like to hunt in the Selous National Park in Tanzania. I am currently based in the Kalahari, and I represent Afri-Sun Safaris. We offer three of the Big Five, and a variety of plains game including roan, sable and springbok (common and copper).

AHG: If you could return to any time or place in Africa, where would it be?
CH: I would return to Zambia any day, to
Professional Hunter - Q&A

hunt the banks of the Luangwa River which was one of my greatest achievements ever. The wildlife and hunting is something else - almost magical

AHG: Which guns and ammo are you using to back-up on dangerous or wounded game?
CH: My back-up rifle is a .458 Lott bolt action with a .500 /.550-grain bullet. For a back-up situation you need a proper solid to get penetration on game running away from you.

There are plenty of good bullets these days, with a good Swift A-Frame soft and Hornady DGX soft for all big-game animals on the first shot. Not one scenario is the same. I always say stand your ground, aim small, and shoot straight.

AHG: What guns and ammo for dangerous game and for plains game would you recommend for your clients?
CH: I would recommend the rifle that you are comfortable with, from a .375 upwards. There is plenty of good ammo: Barns X, Swift A-Frame, Hornady DGX and DGS. The .375 H&H can be used on all plains game. It is a good all-rounder. A .375 solid can be used on the Tiny Ten and your taxidermist will be so happy.

AHG: What is your favorite animal to hunt and why?
CH: Buffalo is my favorite. There is nothing that excites me more than the sight of an old, broken-horn bull with torn ears and a body covered in mud, and that stares at you with a look on his face that says you must not come any closer. There's their sense of smell, exceptional eyesight and hearing. There is the tracking after the shot, and then Black Death needing to be followed up in thick bush, with the expectation of a charge that can come from anywhere. Just the thought that this animal will kill you when he is on top of you - and will not stop until you are dead - will stay with you for days. The rage that is in him after he has been wounded - or even not wounded - just shows you that this is not a domestic cow, and they do not like to be tampered with.

AHG: Looking back, which was your greatest achievement ever? Tell us a bit about the hunt.
CH: I would say that it was a buffalo bull in Luangwa Valley, Zambia back in 2007. The client's shot went too far to the front of the body and the buffalo decided to pick up speed and head straight back into the Park. After a long follow-up and with the permission of the Parks board we were given special access to enter and were then accompanied by one of the Parks officers to go with after the wounded bull. The follow-up began on the banks of the river where the animal had come out of the water and into the nearest jesse bush. It was so dark inside the bush that you could not make out the spoor and blood in the thick cover. I went in step by step, slowly watching every corner, anticipating where he would charge us from. After a few steps more the thicket got to a point where I had no choice but to pursue this bull on my knees.

There I was moving merely an inch at a time. I could see him lying down, a massive black body, and very angry, waiting patiently to ambush us. When I had seen the bull, make no mistake he had already seen us. The buffalo stood up two meters in front of me, and with so much rage he was thrashing the brush between us to make way to get to me. It was on, I said to myself. I was still on my knees and had fired my rifle from the hip in the hope off hitting the vital area in his chest. After the shot went off, I had just enough time to dive out of harm's way. The buffalo came flying past me and went into the next nearest thicket. After getting to my feet I got everyone back together and we could pursue this bull again.

There was now a better blood spoor to follow, and on the edge of the thicket we stopped. I got all the shooters in line next to each other, and within seconds the buffalo made his second charge. I shouted to wait until the buffalo was in sight and open for us to make the shot. I could hear only two shots that went off at that time. The first shot came from the officer and the other shot from me, then another. At the time we did not realize two more rounds came simultaneously, with the buffalo at four meters. The buffalo came to rest as he slid past our feet. At that very moment, without warning we were attacked by a swarm of honey bees. We did not realize that we had disturbed their nest and we had to run for cover to get away from them. It took a while before we could recover the buffalo. Nonetheless that was an exciting and dangerous day, both with Africa's Black Death and with the smallest of critters.

AHG: What was your closest brush with death? Looking back: Anything you should have done differently?
CH: I stepped over a crocodile while I was dragging a hippo out of the water, and the crocodile hit me with his head on my right leg and knocked me so hard that my feet went straight up in the air and I went head first into the mud. That is the only time that I felt that this was it. I had no control and that scared me. I would not say that I would have done anything differently, but I was really lucky that the croc rather wanted to get away from me than make a meal out of me.

AHG: How has the hunting industry changed over the years? And the hunting clients themselves?
CH: Communication has had a great influence in the hunting industries: Wi-Fi, Internet, WhatsApp, Videos, Magazines. The clients can communicate faster, and information can be found on any hunting company in the world.
Every thing is negotiable execpt quality
It makes a difference if you as hunter can read, see and hear all about an area where you want to hunt and about your outfitter for that special hunt that you were saving for for so long. Therefore a client has all the information without a hidden agenda and gets what he pays for. Communication is the bond between hunter and outfitter.

**AHG:** Which qualities go into making a successful PH and or a successful hunting company?

**CH:** We as PHs and outfitters must always have the policy that the client is the most important person for us. Without clients we cannot go on. Provide the best service you can, with good ethics and communication skills, prior planning and performance. And always stay honest and humble.

**AHG:** Which qualities go into making a good safari client?

**CH:** Trust the judgment of your PH/Outfitter - some of us have had many years of experience and knowledge, particularly when we make a decision that can improve the outcome of the hunt, and judgement regarding safety. Practice with the rifle you are going to use on the hunt and bring the right ammunition for whatever game might be taken on the safari. Find out what kind of terrain you are going to hunt in for you to be prepared. And enjoy every moment, even if it just to see the beauty of the place or the animals.

**AHG:** If you should suggest one thing to your hunting clients to improve their experience of their safari, what would it be?

**CH:** They must make a safari out of their time here in Africa, and not a killing spree. Walk and stalk the game with your PH and learn about the smaller things in the African bush. Learn about the animal you are going to hunt and practice the shot placement from offhand and shooting sticks. Do not bring a rifle with a scope that has too big a magnification.

**AHG:** Based on your recent experience in the field, do you think that any species should be upgraded to Appendix I or downgraded to Appendix II or closed all together?

**CH:** I believe that elephant being Appendix I is not entirely necessary, as we all know that in some areas their population needs to be controlled for the sake of the habitat and the animals co-existing in those areas. We are always at the mercy of Mother Nature, and the increased poaching and illegal hunting activities throughout Africa jeopardize our main goals. Through strict conservation practices governed by CITES, among other wildlife entities, as well as the support from our local governments, we can achieve our goals and continue to let Africa thrive. I can say one thing, and that is you as hunter and us as PH/Outfitters must try and focus more on the older, past-their-prime animals, and leave the massive-sized younger ones still in their prime to grow and produce good genes. Don’t chase the measuring tape.

**AHG:** What can the hunting industry do to contribute to the long-term conservation of Africa’s wildlife?

**CH:** The hunting industry can focus more on the ethical and sustainable hunting of CBL lions to give those still in the wild and controlled areas of Africa a chance to get a sustainable growth in population. In doing so, it will ensure swift funding to our operational anti-poaching units. We cannot do it without the support of the governments and spokespersons of our countries. Hunters’ fees pay for conservation, and so we ensure the survival of various species soon to be non-existent. It is an ongoing battle to convince the anti-hunter of the necessity for controlled hunting. Without ethical hunting there would be no wildlife left for them to make a fuss over. Hunters are the stronghold of conservation and we must work together to uphold our wildlife’s wellbeing.

**AHG:** Any Last Words of Wisdom?

**CH:** To all hunters, safari operators, outfitters in the world - keep up the good work. Without us, our world would be hell on earth without wildlife. Work hard to ensure that we can still enjoy what we love to do, stay humble, and look out for each other.

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*A huge lion taken at Afri-Sun Safaris situated in the Kalahari.*
Facing Down (a different) Fear… a South African Chippendale in Reno

I have been in the hunting industry for over 30 years and I have been in many different dangerous situations in my life, and just got on with it. But in all those times, and those of many other PHs who have also experienced similar situations of fear, normally you have been taught and trained how to handle them. And always you have something in your hand, like a firearm, to protect you. But when you have nothing to hold onto and no one to turn to, then this is “FEAR”, and you know you are in the biggest trouble of your life.

After a long flight from Cape Town into Reno in January 2019 for the SCI show, I arrived at my hotel at 7.30 p.m. This was my first time staying at the Harrah’s hotel in Reno. Normally I stay at Legacy, Circus or Atlantis but I had change of mind in staying somewhere different this time.

After booking in, I dropped into the little convenience store across the way to buy my supplies for my room - orange juice, bananas, and my bottle of Crown Royal. I do it every year, and I also go in search for the nearest Starbucks for my morning start before the show begins. After settling into my room, going through my emails, I poured myself a glass of Royal with ice, spent an hour working on emails, showered and got into bed. I didn’t switch on the TV as I don’t enjoy watching it in the US - 98% adverts and 2% movie. I prefer to read. The last thing I saw just before falling asleep at 9.15 was the bright red electronic clock.

About 12.30 a.m. I woke up to do my usual early morning whiz in the toilet. Getting up, I felt like I had almost in lost my mind (not from alcohol, just lack of sleep). As I opened the door, it did not register that I never open the toilet door as it is always open in my room – my brain was in slo-mo – and what I was opening was the front door of my room. I walked down a little way away from the door and heard it close behind me. That’s when my brain started to light up. I immediately went for the door handle and heard “click”, and I was locked outside my room. My mind was in wake mode now and the realization hit me like a lightning bolt. This person was totally naked as I don’t sleep with any clothing.

I will always remember many years ago a friend of mine Ron Crous shot a charging lion in Botswana with Johan Caltiz. One of Johan’s clients had wounded the lion and Ron shot it from a kneeling position, shooting it in mid-air between the eyes with his .458 Win. Mag, open sight rifle. He gave me the video, and when I saw him at Reno some years later, he said, “You will know you got balls as a PH when you face a charging lion… Ron, I am afraid you are wrong. I’d rather be facing the lion charge than standing naked at 12.55 a.m. on the 11th floor of my hotel.

What went through my mind at that moment as millions of neurons were sparking all over my brain? While standing naked in front of the door of my room I soon realize that I need to figure out help, hoping nobody would come or leave rooms near where I was standing. I spotted a fire escape sign about five doors down to the left side of my room and immediately ran towards it and opened the door into the fire escape. Just remember I still needed to go to the toilet for a whiz - the urge to go and still to concentrate was not easy at all.

I walked down from the 11th floor to find something that I could possibly use to open my room door. On the 9th floor I saw a bunch of hard carbon cards on a wire ring which the Fire Inspection Officer adds on when he finalizes his checking that the fire hoses are in order. It was a bunch of cards from years back, and I struggled to remove the wire loose so that I could take a card off the wire. Eventually I did get it loose and took two cards to my door. (Many years ago I was fascinated by a person called MacGyver and I used to watch his weekly programs which were great for mindless thoughts and quite entertaining at the time, and I guess the Swiss army knife factory could not keep up with the demand - good marketing.) Unfortunately I did not find any Swiss army knife like MacGyver had, but I took his idea to use the card like a credit card to try to slide open the latch of my door, like MacGyver did in his movies. What I did not realize, I was outdating myself by 35 years - MacGyver could do it in those days, but now all doors on hotel rooms have a metal safety device to stop anybody from entering by using a credit card, so plan “A” did not work.

I ran back down the fire escape to put the cards back so that the next inspection of the fire chief would not be lost and he would not be worried about his cards missing. My urge...
of wanting to relieve myself increased, so a thought came into my mind – should I just whiz down the fire escape stairways? But I could not let myself to do such a terrible thing. As I slowly walked further down the staircase to the 8th floor I saw two empty Corona bottles on the stairway. I immediately grabbed one bottle and starting urinating into it, but one did not do the trick and I filled the other one...What a relief. One less thing less to worry about now. I left the two bottles in a corner well-hidden, hoping no one would see them and think he got himself two full Corona beers.

Walking my way down slowly I came to the 5th floor and I heard someone talking. It sounded very foreign but I could not clearly understand what language it was as it echoed up the stairway. As I went further down I saw a very young man sitting on the steel staircase and talking into his cell phone and enjoying a beer. He did not notice me at all.

I finally decided I needed to approach him. As I got nearer to him he glanced up and saw me one floor above him. He looked at me strangely and put his hand up, telling to me to stop. I froze, but he just continued talking on his phone and drinking his beer as if I did not exist. Maybe he was talking to his girlfriend, far more important than some crazy old man walking naked to him. I guess I was not part of the Chippendale group. I stood there waiting for his attention but he just ignored me and continued to speak on the phone.

I realized he was Spanish as I could hear a few words. I decided I needed to get some reaction from him and I walked down closer and he finally stood up, telling me to stop in Spanish. I asked if he could speak English and he said no. Then I had to work quickly on my Spanish as I do speak Portuguese. I tried to explain that I needed help from security - this took some doing as you can well imagine. With much persuasion I finally got him to go look for a security person of the hotel. After about 15 minutes I was standing there still waiting for him to come back to me, which felt like a lifetime. I was hoping he was going to return.

Finally he arrived back and said he had spoken to the security. How he got the message to security as he could not speak a word of English was another thought that went into my brain, and whether this security guy understood him and if he would come. After almost 20 minutes waiting I started to converse with him. He said he was from Salvador so I named him Mr Salvador, hoping he was going to be my savior. He said he had just finished working as a dishwasher at the kitchen of a restaurant in the hotel.

After some time I asked him to go and look for the security guy again. He hesitated, but I

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said I would pay him for his help. I don't know what went through this guy's mind when he and I were talking - he probably thought I was crazy. He asked if I was on drugs or drinking, and lastly enquired whether a woman had kicked me out of my room. I suppose these things happen in Reno hotels.

Finally a 6.5-foot tall security person came and I explained and said there was not anything sinister, that he could check at reception on my room number and my name to confirm. He was very understanding and said he'd help. “Just follow me,” he said. What a relief. I asked if “Mr Salvador” could come with us, as I’d like to give him a donation for helping me. "No problem," said security, so Mr Salvador took an old black T-shirt out of his bag and gave it to me to wrap around my body. Unfortunately it was so small it just covered my private parts. From the 3rd floor we followed my security guard up the fire stairway. As we got to the 5th floor, he said we could now use the service lift to take us to the 11th floor, and pressed for it to arrive. It would not open. He then contacted his other friend via his two-way radio. “What’s wrong with the service lift not opening on the 5th floor?” “It’s damaged,” was the reply. Wonderful. “We have a challenge now,” said security. “What challenge?” I asked.

“For us to get into the 6th to catch another service,” he explained, "you have to get out the fire stairway and get into the passage of the hotel rooms and run to the other fire escape stairway and then catch the another service lift to the 11th floor.”

"Are you joking? Is there no other way?" He wasn’t.

“OK, I have no option.”

“But you have to cross the whole passage to get into the other side," he added. Holy Moses. I can't believe this is happening to me.

“Ok,” I said to him, “but you must walk to the end of the passage to see if anybody is going to come out of their rooms, and me and Mr Salvador will run together and meet you at the end of passage.” So we popped our heads out of the fire escape door and he gave us a signal to run to him.

Well, Usain Bolt would have never caught up to me. We managed to get into the service lift up to the 11th floor. Once we arrived there was another obstacle to conquer, another passage to run through to get to my room. I did another Usain Bolt run to my door - what a relief it was. The security guy took his master key to open the room…

Guess what? It did not work and there I was standing, still naked, in front of my door, back to square one…

Security had to radio his other friend to come and open the door as he had the wrong key. While waiting there he went out to the other side of the passage and managed to collect a used towel from the service room. Not naked anymore. Finally his friend came and opened the door. Before we entered the room he asked me to describe anything in the room to prove it was mine. I told him on my bedside table you will find a notepad written with word “Suitcase”, and my mobile phone is 7s IPhone with a black cover. He checked and said good to go. They got a nice tip from me to thank them for all their wonderful help.

The red light clock said 3.45 a.m. as I got into bed again. As I was lying down I wondered if it all really happened or was this just a dream. I phoned my wife as I could not sleep at all as the whole saga was running through my mind all over again and I needed just to talk to someone. She was quite surprised that I was phoning her at that time.

"Shouldn't you be sleeping?"

“Yes,” I said, “but I just wanted to let you know there is a new member of Chippendale in Reno, and he is here in Harrah’s Hotel in room 1146.”

And every night for the duration of the show, I assure you that I put a chair in front of the front door to make sure I did not go through that door to the bathroom.

Joe was born and based in Cape Town, and is the owner of Cape Town Hunting Safaris and Tours. He has had over 36 years in the hunting industry, and has been an International Firearms instructor for over 25 years, as well as owning his own gunshop for 30 years. Joe is a qualified and registered tour guide and auctioneer, and conducts hunts into Zambia, Zimbabwe, Mozambique, Namibia and South Africa. He is also a qualified knife maker in his spare time.
How gunmaking tradition is keeping pace with technology at Rigby

By Phil Johnson

Every morning, Mark Renmant starts his day at the John Rigby & Co. workshop by meticulously applying oil to four deluxe wooden rifle stocks. He can only do up to four at once because of the time it takes to dry. The oil has to be at a very specific tackiness – something he measures himself – when removed at the end of the process.

“If you’ve got six oiled up, by the time you get to the fourth one, the fifth has gone too hard,” he explains. “So, you have to do four in the morning and the same in the afternoon. I’ve been doing that every single morning for many years. The oil I used to mix up in the 80s was a bit more forgiving, with more of a satin finish. The oil we use now is unbelievably shiny, which means preparation is vital. It is more labor-intensive than it used to be.”

A London gunsmith and gunmaker for fast-approaching 40 years, Mark is well placed to assess how much has changed over the decades. Can tradition really keep pace with technology?

It’s often suggested that technology leaves tradition behind when modern machinery can produce things with more speed and precision than man, but that doesn’t make conventional handcraft obsolete. Far from it. It could, in fact, be argued that there is now even greater appreciation for fine goods that have been lovingly crafted, fine-tuned and tested by dexterity.

Mark believes John Rigby & Co. to be a case in point. There is nothing more satisfying for the 53-year old from Surrey than hearing how much customers value and acknowledge the quality of his work. Now that he is back at the firm where he learned his trade, Mark enjoys that fulfilling feeling of satisfaction every day. Even so, with technology advancing so quickly he never takes things for granted.

“I’ve been doing this for so long now that I’m just really happy to still do what I do for a living,” he says. “One thing I’ll never leave home without is my fear of failure, and that...
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To be a gunmaker, Mark believes you need to be good with your hands and understand mechanics.

has helped me get a long way. I keep my head down and work hard.”

It’s an attitude that has served him well since he started out in 1981 as a 16-year old apprentice at J. Roberts & Son. A country boy, Mark was exposed to guns from a young age when brought up on a farm south of Guildford in Surrey. “There was no avoiding it,” he recalls. “I was brought up with shooting and fishing. I wasn’t academically gifted at school, so I was lucky that someone was prepared to give me a chance as a young teenager. It did help, of course, that I knew the guy I was going to work for. He used to hunt with my dad.”

That guy was renowned gunmaker Paul Roberts, managing director of J. Roberts & Son. “It was tough at first because I was just a run-around for a couple of years, making tea and delivering parcels,” Mark remembers. “I was usually found lurking in the workshops, observing, listening and gradually being given small things to do – like raising dents in stocks and preparing old stocks for refinishing. I was keen to show I wasn’t scared to get my hands dirty.” Back then, there was no course to sit, or qualification to pass. Mark advanced the old-fashioned way, learning on the job. Three years later, Roberts bought John Rigby & Co. and Mark kept working on Rigby guns until his boss sold the brand to a Californian investment group in the mid-90s. By this time J. Roberts & Son had moved to Southwark, near Waterloo Station. The opportunity in January 2014 to re-join Rigby a few months after it had returned to London and opened a new workshop and showroom, meant cutting ties with Roberts after 33 years. It was a huge wrench, of course, but Mark has no regrets.

“I’m so glad I joined Rigby five years ago,” he reflects. “It’s given me a new lease of life, but I was scared to leave J. Roberts & Son. It was such a big decision after all that time, and I doubted myself. Although the opportunity to work with the Rigby brand again was a no-brainer, it was hard to walk away from someone who had looked after me for all that time. I still feel bad about it, but look at what we’ve achieved.”

A lot. Mark is a member of an esteemed team of skilled in-house gunsmiths and gunmakers at Rigby’s Pensbury Place headquarters. Located south of the River Thames in central London, it is one of the last bastions of traditional gun shops in the capital, a place where they are ‘made out back and sold out front’.

“It’s a more traditional way of doing things,” explains Mark. “When I first started gunsmithing, Roberts had the same set-up,
with two workshops in the same building and a showroom. That was in Covent Garden. Paul still has it all under one roof like we have at Rigby, but it is increasingly rare. It’s such a nice thing for the customer, many of whom come such a long way to be here. They can have a look round, and we encourage them to get behind the scenes and have a look. That personal touch means so much to them. It’s one of the things I learned when I first started fitting guns for people back in the 80s. There was a time in gunmaking when measurements would be passed to the stocker to make it fit. At Rigby, we always actively encouraged customers to come in, put a few guns to their shoulder and see how they felt. That personal service is just as important today.”

The workshop is a hive of activity, a place where the smell of oil on wood and the sound of metalwork piques the senses. There are 12 full-time craftsmen, 10 gunsmiths and gunmakers in the workshop downstairs, and two engravers above. They are always busy, but always more than happy to explain what they are doing and why.

Mark explains that the amount of work required to manufacture each rifle varies massively. A typical Highland Stalker or Big Game rifle arrives fitted with an action from Mauser’s factory in Germany. All Rigby guns are proofed at the London proof house and then zeroed before upgrades are undertaken.

“The turnaround for a Highland Stalker or Big Game can be anything from six weeks to six months, depending on what needs doing. For a Rising Bite double rifle, we’ll probably put in 800 to 1,000 hours of handwork on each gun. This will include chiselling, filing and shaping the action and shaping, polishing and hardening all of metal parts. Stocking, engraving and finishing is also done in-house. For bespoke guns, there is a lot of handwork to do at the workshop.

At the premium end of Rigby’s rifle offering is the custom-built London Best, fabricated by hand. As we speak, there are six double guns and 10 London Best bolt rifles all nearing completion, as well as everything going on. “On average, we probably produce about 20 absolutely bespoke London Best rifles a year of the very highest quality,” says Mark, who emphasises the importance of teamwork and having the right skill mix in the workshop.

“We have some very talented people here, and I can do a lot of things, but not everything. I do work on wood and metal. I finish a lot of new stuff. I have stocked before, but my stocking is not quite up to standard to put on a brand-new £30,000 rifle or double gun. But there is plenty of other work to do as

we take on repair work and stock alterations.”

So what skills are essential to do the job effectively? “I think it is important to be good with your hands. You need to be open-minded and patient. On the metalwork side of things, a mechanical brain helps. There’s lots of movement in an action. It’s like a chain reaction, so you need to understand how that works. So, having a good idea of mechanics helps a lot in this job.”

A milling machine, a couple of lathes and some of the tools and technology adorning the workshop suggest that Rigby is keeping up with the times. But the history and tradition of handcraft remains synonymous with this most premium of brands.

Mark acknowledges: “We can’t get away from the fact that machinery is becoming necessary in gunmaking, especially on our big Rising Bite double rifles. We’re a business, so it has to be profitable to make and sell guns. But the art of handcrafting remains absolutely essential. It is at the very heart of the process. “As my career has progressed, I’ve really begun to appreciate what gunmakers produced before 1900, right back to the early days in the 1600s and 1700s. The conditions they were working in back then would have been so different. What they were able to produce was quite extraordinary. I think the greatest time of innovation really was probably between 1850 and 1900. Before they settled on the ejector system that we have now, there were so many variations. But since then there hasn’t really been a new system. That technology is still employed today.

“I don’t think any children nowadays have a grasp of what’s required to be, for instance, a cabinet maker or carpenter. It’s not valued as a skill as much as it was 20 or 30 years ago. You have to start at the bottom and you learn by experience. It takes time. You’ve got to get your head down, be patient and get on with it.”

Getting on with it is exactly what has served Mark well throughout his career, and he seems to be getting better with age.

“Since I came back to Rigby, I’ve been producing my best-ever work, and I’ve improved so much that I’ve surprised myself,” he concludes. “To be working with the people I am now is a real privilege. Hopefully, this insight into my working life can inspire, not just some younger members of staff, but others as well, wherever they may be.”

The legendary magnum mauser action

As far as bolt-actions intended for dangerous game are concerned, the famed M98 Magnum Mauser is without doubt the most famous. It is most often associated with classy British rifles with the names and addresses of famous gunmakers engraved on the barrel. As such, they are often greatly coveted (whenever one becomes available, it has to be said) by serious collectors and riflemen alike.

The legendary magnum mauser action

The M98 Mauser action was originally designed for the German military cartridge of the day, the 8x57 JS, and the Gewehr 98 ticked all the right boxes. It was strong, easy to disassemble and maintain, could be reloaded under pressure by means of stripper clips, and, most importantly, it was reliable. These same qualities, of course, made the M98 eminently suitable for sporting use as well, and it wasn't long before M98-actioned rifles were in use in the hunting fields of Africa and Asia.

In addition to actions dedicated for military use, the Mauserwerke also made excellent M98 actions for commercial use, and they even sold these in sparing quantities to other makers for their own use. Although military-surplus Mauser actions were available for relatively modest prices almost right from the start, several best-quality British rifles were made on commercial M98 actions, and the ones I have seen have generally been superb. These rifles were largely responsible for the death-knell of the superb Gibbs-Farquharson and other single-shot falling-block actions which had hitherto been the more affordable alternative to an expensive double rifle.

With the advent of the cordite era in the late 1890s, the gunmakers of the day were challenged to develop large-bore cartridges suitable for use on dangerous game, and that could be made to function reliably in the new repeating actions. Westley Richards developed their .425 which was a slightly odd-looking cartridge with a bottleneck case and a rebated rim, while Jeffery developed the .404, a fine cartridge with
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a gently sloping shoulder that was clearly developed with smooth feeding from a bolt action. Holland & Holland came up with their superb .375 H&H Magnum, to this day one of the most popular big-bore cartridges. All these cartridges could be made to work from a standard-length M98 action, but this course of action was potentially fraught with peril as well. The list of modifications to accomplish such a conversion effectively and safely was extensive: Open the bolt face and magazine rails, remove steel from behind the locking-lug recess to lengthen magazine space (potentially the biggest cause of trouble as it weakens the action in a very crucial area), and lengthen the bolt throw. Sometimes, a clearance notch had to be milled into the receiver ring to allow loaded cartridges to be ejected, and often a completely new trigger guard/magazine box assembly had to be fitted as well.

In their capacity as the Mauser agents in England, John Rigby & Co took a somewhat different approach. Way back in 1899, Mauser developed a special M98 action to accommodate Rigby’s .400/350 Nitro-Express cartridge. The .400/350 NE was a long, rimmed cartridge that fired a 310-grain bullet at moderate muzzle velocity, but it was a proven success on large game. So what Mauser did was to adapt their Siamese Mauser action by lengthening it by approximately a quarter of an inch and fit it with a specially developed sloping magazine box that allowed smooth feeding of the rimmed .400/350 cartridge. When Rigby started looking around for a suitable action for the newly developed .416 Rigby some years later, the Magnum Mauser action was born, and suddenly a host of new possibilities opened up.

The Magnum Mauser action was the inspiration behind such proprietary cartridges as the .416 Rigby and .505 Gibbs, and the long M98 action could be tuned to handle these cartridges without a hiccups. Magnum Mausers were usually fitted with straddle-type floorplates with push-button release levers, and the floorplates were also of different thicknesses accordingly to suit the proposed cartridge to be used in the action. Even bolt handles were proportioned according to the depth of the magazine boxes used. Although

When production of the Magnum was forcibly halted as a result of the outcome of World War II, it left a very big gap that took years to be filled. The French-made Brevex action was a good substitute, but was only made in limited numbers. When the Brno 602 came along in the 1960s, many were pressed into service to handle the big bolt-action cartridges of yesteryear, but people still fondly remembered the old Magnum Mauser.

It took more than half a century, but finally the Magnum Mauser was revived, and by none other than the reconstituted Mauser company itself. It is again in production, and again in use by the (new) Rigby in London, part of the same group of companies. Not to be outdone, Magnum Mauser actions are available from a small number of boutique makers as well. One thing is sure about the legendary Magnum Mauser, though: it was just too good to be left to die.
I’VE BEEN FORTUNATE TO HAVE SPENT THE PAST 40 YEARS TRAVELING THE WORLD AS A HUNTING JOURNALIST, where I’ve experienced the good, the bad, and the ugly of outfitters.

And while some have nice websites or may describe luxury accommodations, there is no way to really know who’s the best choice for your hunt if you haven’t been there, and hunted that.

For years now, I’ve been asked by readers and friends for recommendations on my favorite outfitters across the globe—and now I’m pleased to identify those proven operations through the Craig Boddington Endorsed Outfitter program.

Now you can know in 40 seconds what it took me 40 years to acquire—take the guesswork out of your next destination by starting with my list of preferred outfitters at: www.craigboddington.com

Craig Boddington Endorsed Outfitters is not a booking agency. We are a collection of premium outfitters Craig trusts. There are no commissions.
How many of these will still be around in five years — that is, chambered in a factory rifle with factory ammunition available — is anyone’s guess. I suspect not many. Most will have gone to their reward like the so-called “short magnums” that proliferated 15 or 20 years ago. A couple are still around, but not exactly robust; the others have wandered off into oblivion.

This would not matter, were it not for the fact that a few people bought the rifles and are now unable to obtain ammunition. For one or two, even brass for reloading sells at a stiff premium, if you can find it at all.

For the past 50 years, at least, everyone from gun writers to professional hunters have been warning prospective safari clients that it is very risky to go to Africa with a rifle chambered for a wildcat cartridge. Now, the same can be said for many of these new factory wunderkind.

There are several dangers. With a wildcat, where a cartridge is formed from another case with a different headstamp, your ammunition will not match your rifle.

Some African countries have very specific regulations about the amount of ammunition you can take in, and a few stipulate that it must match your own firearm. This came about, I think, because clients used to bring in hard-to-get ammunition, like .416 Rigby or .4709 NE, for their PH, even if they did not have such a rifle themselves.

Whatever the reason, I have had customs officials examine every single round of ammunition, trying to match the headstamp to the caliber mark on the rifle barrel.

Another, and greater, danger is that your ammunition will get lost in transit, and you will have to try to obtain some locally, or else use a borrowed rifle on your very expensive African trip. There are very, very few cartridges that are readily available in Winchester Magnum, and .270 Winchester.

Depending on the country, you might find some European calibers like the 8x57 or 7x57, but I wouldn’t count on it.

Finally, there is always the danger of running into some restriction regarding the importation of “military” calibers. This particular problem has been around for more than a century, beginning in (I believe) some British colonies, such as Sudan, where after 1905 you could not import anything in .450 or, later, in .303 British. Today, in countries where poaching is rampant and the rifles used are generally AK-47s or FN-FALs, there might be a prohibition on 7.62x39 or .308 Winchester — the latter because it is the same cartridge as the 7.62x51 NATO.

Obviously, the place to start in deciding what to bring on safari is to talk with your professional hunter right at the beginning, and stay in touch with him until your day of departure. Regulations change, often, seemingly, at the whim of some official who thinks he knows more than he does.

There is a final consideration which has nothing to do with legality and everything to do with taste and values. Twenty years ago, during the heyday of custom-rifle making, clients spending ten or twelve grand for a custom rifle almost always stipulated that it be a .30-06, .270 Winchester, or something similar. Today, when these rifles come up for sale at auction, anything in an unusual caliber, whether it is a wildcat, a short-lived wunderkind, or an oddball like the 7mm STW, brings considerably less money.

Classic rifles, which these are, demand classic cartridges. Fortunately, it is the classic cartridges (.30-06 et al) which are recognizable to customs officials, and which can be found in most parts of Africa.

Now, you may ask: Where does the 6.5 Creedmoor fit in? It is, right now, the hottest cartridge extant, billed as the finest round since the .30-06 for everything from long-range target shooting to hunting in thick brush. You might be able to find some, in some parts of Africa, but I wouldn’t depend on it. And anyway, practically speaking, what will it do that the .270 Winchester or .30-06 will not? The short answer is, little or nothing. It is still best to stick with the classics.
Sophisticated turrets with illumination, focus/parallax dials add weight, are best installed on big tubes.

“A screwdriver too thick for a slot is useless. Ditto a windscreen too wide for your bakkie. As rifle-scopes grow in diameter and weight, some test practical limits.

“Size follows magnification.” A pithy observation, coming from an engineer. As regards modern hunting scopes, he’s right.

A century ago, the idea of aiming through glass was odd. Hunters had little use for sight pictures that differed from what they saw over iron sights. For this reason, and because magnification in that day was limited by lens quality, the first scopes suitable for field use were all of modest power. Before Zeiss designed an erector system for optical sights in 1902, and followed with a short “prism” scope, shooters had only barrel-length optics that were cumbersome and fragile. These dated to the 1840s Stateside, and were used by snipers in the U.S. Civil War. But they were ill-suited to hunting in rough places and for any but deliberate shots over a rest. Receiver-mounted glass with internal adjustments changed the picture.

High magnification calls for big front glass, to maintain a big exit pupil (bright images in dim light).

Better scopes can improve your aim. But diameter is no measure of utility!

“The sole object of mounting a scope sight on a rifle is to give greater precision in aiming,” wrote John Taylor in his 1948 tome, “African Rifles and Cartridges” – and not just for small or distant animals. “I have killed many elephant at ranges between 30 and 60 yards (with a scope) that I’m quite sure I would not have succeeded in killing with any other type of sight.” He noted the inadequacy of iron sights when threading a bullet through a lattice of branches, or “skidding my bullet across the back of (an intervening animal) to get it into the big fellow.” Taylor named as his favorite scopes the Lyman Alaskan, Hensoldt Dialytan, Zeiss Zievier and “another small Zeiss that weighed only 7 or 8 ounces.”

Other professionals were hunting with glass sights early on. Robert Ruark’s “Use Enough Gun” (1952) shows a young Harry Selby with a scoped rifle and a Grant’s gazelle. Like Taylor’s favorites, it was of low power with a tube-diameter objective lens.

In North America during the 1930s and 1940s, a Hensoldt Zeilklein 2¾x on a Griffin & Howe .30-06 Springfield helped Grancel
Proven on every continent.
In every climate. On every type of game.
The timeless Dakota 76™. Now in its 25th year, the Dakota 76 exemplifies the exquisite craftsmanship, supreme dependability and graceful lines we've built our name on – and you can trust your life to. With flawless controlled round feed and a massive claw extractor, it's the pinnacle of bolt-action design. Custom tailored to you by the finest gunmakers in the world. Only Dakota.

The finest dangerous-game, bolt-action rifle in the world.
A Hunter speaks out

Fitz take fine specimens of every big-game animal on the continent. Like Taylor’s Zeiss, this scope was small, with a 7/8-inch (22mm) steel tube and a 19mm front lens. It weighed 8 ounces. On his marathon quest Fitz logged more than 40 trips, from the arctic to the tropics. A few years later a 7/8-inch alloy tube held the weight of Leupold’s 2½x Plainsman to a mere 6½ ounces!

In my youth 2½x was magnification enough for most hunters, 4x considered the best all-around choice if you expected some long shots. After all, if with iron sights you’d fire at game 75 steps away, 4x glass should suffice at 300 meters! The target would appear the same size, and the scope’s reticle would obstruct less of it! But power in optics, as in politics, can be addictive. Soon after Leupold’s Vari-X scope appeared in 1961, hunters were snapping up variables. The 3-9x40 became a top-seller. A twist of the ring yielded a broad field for up-close shots, or magnification for precise hits at distance. Oddly, many hunters left their scopes at high settings. Those big images were intoxicating – no matter that for long shots there was usually ample time to dial up, while game jumped in thickets afforded no time to dial down!

While guiding hunters in the 1990s, I had to remind them to keep their scopes at 3x or 4x. Those who chose higher power settings risked losing a chance that came close and fast! Even if they found the target quickly, the reticle’s magnified gyrations delayed the shot. In my own 45 years of hunting, mainly in the U.S. and southern Africa, I have shot just two animals that required more than 4x magnification.

Still, the march to higher power continues, fueled now by a trend to long-range shooting – at steel targets, but also, alas, at game. Variable scopes with six-times power ranges (top magnification six times the bottom) boast illuminated reticles, focus/parallax correction and arc-matched elevation dials. Some of these features can be packaged in small scopes, but they’re easier to install in big tubes. While high power itself doesn’t require big lenses, the ability of powerful glass to pass light is visibly linked to lens size, in a measure called exit pupil.

EP is the diameter of the shaft of light reaching your eye. The equation: \[ EP = \frac{\text{lens diameter in mm}}{\text{magnification}} \]

An EP bigger than your eye’s pupil is useless as regards brightness! Your eye’s pupil regulates the amount of light it accepts.
“We are passionate about what we do and guarantee every hunter will leave with the experience of a lifetime”.

www.kwalatasafaris.co.za
A Hunter speaks out

by dilating and constricting. A healthy young eye dilates to about 7mm at night; in noon-time sun it constricts to the diameter of a roofing nail. Figure a top dilation of 6mm in dim shooting light.

Even at 7x, the 42mm lens of, say, popular 2.5-10x scopes delivers as much light as you can use at dawn or dusk. (EP = 42/7 = 6mm). At lower power settings, EP increases - as it does if you boost the size of the objective lens. An EP bigger than your eye’s pupil is useless as regards brightness. At 4x, for example, that 2.5-10x42 produces no brighter images than at 7x, despite its EP of over 10mm. Your eye sets that 6mm limit.

EPs bigger than your eye’s pupil offer one advantage having nothing to do with brightness - they make eye position behind the scope less critical. If your eye is a bit off-axis, you can still catch aim. Hunting scopes have traditionally yielded a 5- or 6mm EP near mid-point on the power ring. The trend to higher magnification mandates bigger front glass, to keep images bright in poor light. The 50mm objective lenses now popular even on 3-9x scopes do offer an optical edge on 4-10x and 6.5-20x scopes.

Tube size has also grown, from 7/8-inch on post-Depression scopes to 1 inch to 30mm (and now, 34 to 40mm!). Bigger lenses boost resolution, all else being equal; however, many 30mm scopes feature erector lenses no bigger than in 1-inch scopes. Reason: erector assemblies have more room to move inside 30mm tubes, so you get more elevation adjustment for long shots.

To increase magnification, resolution and adjustment range, scope-makers seem locked in a battle to produce the biggest, heaviest sights. The Zeiss V8 Victory, a 4.8-35x60 scope, scales 34 ounces with a 36mm tube. Swarovski’s new 55 5-25x52 weighs 38 with a 40mm body. Nightforce markets a 40-ounce 5-25x56, Vortex a 48-ounce Razor HD 4.5-27x56, both with 34mm pipe.

The prospect of lugging such weight and bulk through the bush gives rational people pause. Big scopes can also impair your shooting. High rings that keep gaping front bells off the barrel tug your cheek off the comb. Heavy scopes perched high make rifles top-heavy and unwieldy.

Fast, easy aim matters more than your ability to see gnats crawling up a wildebeest’s eyelash, or crank 100 minutes of elevation into your sight. Eye relief (ER) and field of view affect what you see and how quickly you see it. With magnification, they comprise an optical triangle. The modest magnification that delivers a big exit pupil also blesses you with a broader field. Verily, through a 20x scope you see about half what’s visible through a soda straw! Try it! Generous, non-critical ER lets you position your scope well forward, to protect your brow from the bite of stiff recoil. It also helps you shoot faster.

Mark Thomas founded Kruger Optical in Sisters, Oregon, and has designed more than 300 rifle-scopes. He prefers modest power ranges. “A three-times range should be enough,” he says. “It is for me! Wider ranges require more lenses, some to correct for aberrations that pop up as each lens works harder. So you need a longer erector assembly, a longer tube. Greater diameters follow hikes in power.”

Lance Scrivens, who has designed scopes for Leupold, says, “vignetting at low magnification can become a problem as power ranges grow. Limiting parallax and maintaining focus become more difficult. Additional lenses and aspherical glass are costly fixes.” He adds that internally, wide-range scopes must be held to very tight tolerances: “Lenses in the erectors of six-times scopes move about twice as far as in three-times systems, so variation in components has twice the effect on images. Before CNC machines, tooling couldn’t hold the necessary half-a-thousandth precision.”

As wide-range variables gain almost all their breadth at high magnification, front glass the size of jam-jar lids comes as no surprise. Marketing people at Zeiss and Swarovski tell me 56mm objectives are popular in Europe, where hunters ambush wild boar at night, and in the southeastern U.S., to extend dusk, when big deer venture forth. But most places, certainly much of Africa, the most useful scopes may well be of the type popular between the 1940s and 1960s!

Fully multi-coated lenses, with sharp, centered reticles and repeatable click adjustments make any modern scope superior to its forebears. But the weight and shape of early sights are worth revisiting. Slim 1-inch tubes, with objective lenses of 21 to 36mm, permit low scope mounting and hold weight in check, so your rifle stays lively, its center of balance low between your hands. My arbitrary dictum: Keep scope weight to 15% of rifle weight (roughly, a 1-pound scope for a 7-pound rifle). Leupold’s VX-3i 2.5-8x36 and the 3-9x36 Swarovski Z3 rank among my favorite variables. Both scale around 12 ounces. But many 1-inch variables with a top end of 9x or 10x and objectives of 40 or 42mm tip the scales at under a pound. In low rings even 42mm objectives clear most barrels.

The last gemsbok I killed in southern Africa fell at 45 yards, the last springbok at 55, the last blue wildebeest at 70. These keen-eyed open-country animals may be easier to take at distance with big-eyed scopes on flat-shooting rifles. But real hunting happens closer to the game! A slender, low-power scope snug to a trim shoulder, it becomes more appendage than tool. And you’ll probably find, if you haven’t already, that a 2½x or 4x scope has all the magnification needed for 300-meter shots – plus the field for urgent pokes at dangerous game a stone’s toss away, and coming!
Many optics companies brag that their products are backed by a “full replacement warranty.” But when you’re dealing with the hazards that can destroy lesser riflescopes during the hunt, the most generous warranty on earth won’t help you. We prefer to build Nightforce riflescopes to be virtually indestructible in the first place. And give you a warranty you’ll most likely never use.
Waiting for you, with plenty of outdoor adventures and thrilling hunting experiences, 70% of land in South Africa is used for wildlife conservation, with the other 30% being government-owned national and provincial game reserves. As a hunter, you can always improve your arsenal. From boots and the right clothes for the weather, to a scope and even different types of safety gear, there’s one tool that can allow you to really take your experience to the next level - the right knife can make the difference between a good hunt and a great hunt.

A dependable knife is essential to any hunting trip. However, there are a few things every hunting knife should have, regardless of where you are or what you’re hunting. As is the case with the rest of your hunting gear, it’s a good idea to invest in quality craftsmanship that will stand the test of time, and be really useful even when you are not hunting. Aside from general quality, look for a fixed blade if you want a reliable knife that is easy to clean. And, unless you will be hunting really large game, you probably won’t need to look for a knife longer than four inches.

For smaller game, a smaller knife is a good, as it will be easier to carry, sharpen, and handle to work around the smaller game. You can check out an Opinel or Mora, but anybody who is going to take hunting seriously should own a C.T. Fischer Full-Tang Bushcraft knife at least once in their life. If you are going to be cutting the meat to consume, it’s also worth checking out a boning blade.

Some knives are designed for a specific task, while others serve as an all-purpose tool while hunting. A drop-point blade is great for hunting big game as it is slightly sloped down to the point, allowing you to cut deep, while still being strong enough for the larger game animals. High-carbon steel is generally sturdier, and therefore a great choice for these types of knives. You might want to look for a wider blade, but one of the most important aspects of a big-game hunting knife will be the grip and a hand guard to ensure you can use it effectively.

A proper knife is only one component of a safe hunting experience. Ensure that you know how to handle all of your gear and equipment and that you follow all instructions. Take safety measures to ensure you are covered while you hunt, and enjoy the experience in one of the world’s top hunting spots.

Choose the Right Knife

By Jess Walter
Without a doubt the finest rimfire rifle we've ever fielded, the CZ 457 combines a bevy of new features with the modularity and customizability that has made our rimfires so popular. The same swappable barrel system as our outgoing 455 allows quick changes from 22 LR to 17 HMR to 22 WMR, and all stocks are drop-in replaceable. Every rifle in the new platform features a push-to-fire safety, fully adjustable trigger (for weight, travel, and creep), reduced bolt rotation and a corrosion-resistant nitride finish – with accuracy coming courtesy our legendary factory-lapped cold hammer forged barrel.
Namibia: The second least-densely populated country on earth. Land of wide-open spaces. Land of the brave. Land of contrasts, from the oldest desert in the world to sub-tropical climates and wide rivers, where the sustainable use of our abundant wildlife is enshrined in the country’s constitution.

Namibia has had a constant average of over 5000 conservation hunters per year for the last nine years. This seems like a high number of hunters, right? Well, with our wildlife numbers increasing year-on-year and the value of these animals increasing due to hunters’ dollars and the increase of wildlife ranges – the answer is categorically, NO!

Partly due to our colonial history, German hunters are still the most prevalent, with the USA market share increasing every year. These two countries represent 50% of Namibia’s total international hunting market share. Other hunters to Namibia come from far and wide.

These conservation hunters take on average 23,000 animals each year which they then export to their home countries. This would seem high - an average of 4.6 animals per conservation hunter! But Namibia has a firm grasp on wildlife numbers, and thanks to the tireless effort of the Namibian Ministry of Environment and Tourism - conservative quotas are set each year on government land and communal conservancies – as well as well-regulated on privately owned land.

Namibia’s conservation hunting contributes N$ 450,000,000 (almost half a billion N$, or US$ 32 million) in the primary sector to the Namibian economy, a total of 0.24% of the country’s GDP. This is an estimated N$ 1.35 billion (US$ 96 million) total including the secondary and tertiary sectors or 0.75% of the country’s GDP. This includes, but is not limited to, airfares, tourism activities, taxidermy, shipping and much more.

This sector is definitely a significant contributor to Namibia’s “third-world” economy as well as an important source of employment and protein in the form of venison. Using the term “third-world” is really not the case for Namibia as a visitor – it is truly a very poor example of a “third-world” country, and is often referred to as the “Switzerland” of Africa.

The economic value of conservation hunting in Namibia increases constantly year-on-year, and Namibia has become...
A Hunter speaks out

Africa's most popular conservation hunting destination. If one looks at the diversity of species that are hunted annually, Namibia offers 44 different huntable species.

For some of the animals hunted, the venison is not consumed, which accounts for very few. The vast majority of animals, including big game like elephant, rhino, hippo and buffalo are a very important source of protein for local communities.

Venison as a product = an important source of protein for local communities. So how much venison is estimated to be a product of conservation hunting each year?

- From dangerous / big game animals, of which 98% occur in either state or communal lands, 320 tons of meat is harvested each year. The majority of this meat – about 80% goes straight to local communities.
- On private land this figure is even higher. If at an average of 50 kg (120 pounds) per plains-game animal, this equates to 1.15 million tons of meat annually.

Hunting.
- Hunting creates 15,000 jobs in Namibia (2.1% of all jobs) per year in the primary sector.
- This is significant. This means three jobs are created for every one conservation hunter coming to Namibia, a much higher employment rate than tourism. Tourism is obviously the winner by sheer volume, but what about revenue and ecological impact of these numbers as well?

In brief:
- It takes 5.4 tourists per day to generate the same revenue as one conservation hunter.
- What is the ecological and carbon footprint and tourism vs. conservation hunting?
- Camps and lodges need to be 5.4 times bigger to generate the same revenue.
- The footprint of these lodges take away animal habitat
- Hunting camps are far smaller, hosting far fewer guests to generate the same revenue.

- That is 28,750 18-wheeler trucks loaded to capacity with meat. That is a lot of venison!

An estimated 1.47 million tons of venison meat is the product of conservation hunting annually in Namibia

If one converts the value of this meat to money, its value would be around N$ 29.4 million (US$ 2.1 million).

It is my resilient and dedicated belief that there is both a place for conservation hunting as well as tourism in Namibia. The two cater to different markets, a different clientele seeking different experiences.

To compare conservation hunting and tourism sectors, let's go to the numbers:

- Namibia's tourism:
  - Currently (2016) 1.5 million tourists visit Namibia each year
  - Average tourist stay = 9 nights
  - Average spend by a tourist per day = N$ 1,840 (US$ 132)
- Tourism contributes N$ 5.2 billion (US$ 371 million) or 3.5% of the country’s GDP in the primary sector and a total of N$ 15.1 billion (US$ 1.07 billion) or 10.2% of the country's GDP to the secondary and tertiary sectors.
- Tourism creates 45,000 jobs in Namibia (6.5% of all jobs) per year in the primary sector.
- Interestingly - there is an average of 33.3 tourists for each job created in Namibia in tourism.

- Conservation hunting:
  - 5000 hunters per year
  - Hunters spend an average of N$ 90,000 (US$ 6,429) per trip
- Using the same average stay as a tourist, this means hunters are spending an average of N$ 10,000 per day. This is five times the value per day that hunters spend, excluding the venison that they contribute to the Namibian economy:
  - Conservation hunting contributes N$ 450,000,000 towards Namibia’s GDP in the primary sector, which is 0.24% of the country’s GDP!
  - This is an estimated N$ 1.35 billion (US$ 96 million) total including the secondary and tertiary sectors or 0.75% of the country's GDP.
  - N$ 100 million (US$ 7.14 million) goes directly to communal conservancies
- This accounts for 50% of the revenue earned by communal conservancies annually, directly from conservation hunting.

Tourism is obviously the winner by sheer volume, but what about revenue and ecological impact of these numbers as well as employment?

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A Hunter speaks out

- Habitat degradation - Roads and foot paths take habitat away from wildlife.

Meat
- Conservation hunters produce 294 kg (647 pounds) of meat per hunter on average per trip – a total of 1.47 million tons of meat
- To feed 1.5 million tourists, at an average of 180 grams (6.5 ounces) of meat per day per person one needs = 270 tons (600,000 pounds) of meat per day:
- For 9 days on average this is a total of 2.43 million kg of meat for all tourists.

With conservation hunting alone, if we only give venison to tourists – which many lodges do - there is not enough to go around.

- Water is an incredibly scarce resource in Namibia. Most water is pumped out of underground reserves.
- At 100 liters (26 gallons) per person per day (a very low number) tourism alone uses 150 million liters (57 million gallons) of water per day = 60 Olympic size swimming pools of water per day for guests only.
- Vegetables – a vegetarian in the middle of Namibia’s wilderness has a far greater negative ecological effect eating fruit and vegetables transported thousands of kilometers to get there than eating venison.

- Shower and toilet waste

Fossil fuels
- Tourism uses an enormous amount of fossil fuels to get tourists to Namibia, and then onto their destination. Camps and lodges then also need to be supplied with fuel as the tourists are driven around.
- Electricity needs to be generated. Solar has become a popular option.

- Trash
- This needs to be dealt with and is often too expensive to be taken to the nearest town for recycling = it is buried close to the camp or lodge.

- Employment
- The huge number of those employed in conservation hunting vs. tourism is significant.

There is place for all forms of tourism – and conservation hunting is also a form of this. We need to respect each other and understand the crucial role each plays in conservation, ecological impact, contribution to GDP, job creation, and the production and consumption of venison.
HUNT FOR QUALITY

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Unique African ceramic art

For over 30 years Ardmore Ceramics has transformed the South African art scene by bringing together fundamental western ceramic techniques and the raw creative talent from Kwa-Zulu Natal. Working as the largest US distributor to bring these beautiful ceramics to the US for art collectors, wildlife enthusiasts, and others willing to help support the lives of these individual artists, Pascoe Gallery has continued to assist in Ardmore’s mission. Here are a few of our most impressive pieces currently on exhibition.

Our Leopard urn pair is one of the most impressive pieces currently in our gallery. It features two dazzling urns adorned with playful leopards. Ardmore painter Mickey Chonco is known for his extraordinary sensitivity for color as is shown in the beautiful combination of hues on the urns.

Leopard Urns Pair – MK16JUN18
H. 22 in. x L. 11 in. x W. 8 in. - $19,500
SCULPTOR: Sabelo Khoza
PAINTER: Mickey Chanco

Pascoe Gallery’s King Cheetah Vase is one of a kind, featuring a dazzling array of various cheetahs native to the Kwa-Zulu region. The vase pays homage to the very rare King Cheetah which has an unusual coat mutation of long black stripes along its back, instead of typical cheetah spots.

King Cheetah Vase – SD35MAY18
H. 13 in. x L. 9.5 in. x W. 9.5 in. - $6,500
SCULPTOR: Senzo Duma
PAINTER: Thabiso Mohlakoana
Four countries, including South Africa, are home to 98% of black rhinos, and Ardmore regularly portrays these iconic animals. Elvis Bonginkosi is one of Ardmore’s top artists, and prefers to paint in realistic styles such as in the sculpture shown above.

Rhinoceros Sculpture Family – Male – EL41JUL18
H. 10 in. x L. 16 in. x W. 7 in. – $3,950
SCULPTOR: Molapo Mokoena
PAINTER: Elvis Bonginkosi Mkhize

Molapo Mokoena sculpted a wonderful female leopard, and rising Ardmore painter Bongekile Ntombela who delights in painting genet cats, leopards, and giraffes because of their unique animal patterns, colors the sculpture in rufous tones and with distinct leopard spots.

Leopard Sculpture Female – BN54JUL18 – $4,500
SCULPTOR: Molapo Mokoena.
PAINTER: Bongekile Ntombela

The elephant motif is an integral part of Zulu culture, symbolizing wisdom, strength and power. Senzo Ndshalintshali is the son of legendary Ardmore artist Bonnie Ndshalintshali. His keen ability to sculpt the human figure is evident in the numerous Zulu figures surrounding the tureen.

Elephant Rider Tureen – SMN555
H. 23 in. x L. 16 in. x W. 16 in. - $21,000
SCULPTOR: Senzo Ndshalintshali
PAINTER: Mama Ntombela

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SCULPTOR: Senzo Ndshalintshali
PAINTER: Mama Ntombela
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International Tel: +27 15 516 1081
Cell: +27 83 654 8019 | Office Cell: +27 72 774 3768
E-mail: info@fieldandstream.co.za
Webiste: www.fieldandstream.co.za
This is a first for the hunting industry, and a first for Africa:

Because we are financially and editorially independent, publishing our own magazine and hosting our African Hunting Expos – along with being based in Africa as well as in North America – this unique outfitter verification program answers a call from the international hunter.

Whether you’re a serious big-game hunter, or dreaming of your first African safari but believe it’s too difficult to make it a reality – think again!

Africa is the ultimate destination and home to the widest variety of game available. Equally diverse is the range of hunting experiences offered by the numerous outfitters across the continent, and which you need to assess when making your choice. Our job here is to help you make the right decision, based on the information we provide, having visited the following outfitters and compiled the profile independently.

Over the next few pages is the list of members and please visit www.africanhuntinginfo.com for more information and complete profiles.

**Mebenca in Afrika Safaris**
MEBENCA in Afrika Safaris is Spanish owned, on 10000 hectares of pristine African savannah. Near the Botswana border. Enjoy luxury accommodation with 34 animal species to hunt.
Tel: +27 81 018 1771
Email: mebenca@mweb.co.za
Web: www.mebencainafrika.org

**Otterskloof Safaris**
Otterskloof Private Game Reserve is on 14000 ha of pristine bushveld and is located in one of the most scenic biodiversity’s in South Africa and have three luxury and exclusive lodges in the southern Free State province.
Tel: +27 82 697 6014
Email: abel@otterskloof.com
Web: www.otterskloof.com

**Motsomi Safaris**
Motsomi Safaris is a family run outfit. Pieter & Ria’s beautiful lodges are in pristine African bushveld, catering for rifle and bow hunters, guaranteeing an unbelievable hunting experience, nothing is too much to ask; even the blinds are comfortable!
Tel: +27 83 404 0111
Email: info@motsomi.com
Web: www.motsomi.com

**Stanley Pieterse Safaris**
Stanley Pieterse Safaris is in the heart of the South African Limpopo valley and numerous species of animals occur in this area. We cater for rifle and bow hunting, from the beginner to the serious trophy hunter.
Tel: +27 82 484 1826
Email: Stanley@spsafaris.com
Web: www.spsafaris.com

**Kuduskop Safaris**
Set in a untouched part of the Eastern Cape, the reserve offers 5000ha of unspoiled and breathtaking scenery with high plateaus, hills covered with spekboom, 1000m-high peaks, large canyons with cliffs and an 11kms stretch of dense riverine biotope. Exceptional biodiversity with greater kudus, cape elands, waterbucks and warthogs roaming in big numbers, including all typical plains game.
Tel: +27 87 806 3935
Mobile: +27 78 756 3657
Email: jomarle@kuduskop.com
Web: www.kuduskop.com
AAA Serapa Safaris
AAA Serapa Safaris ensures a safe and exclusive hunting safari, with the highest quality personalized service offering you an unforgettable experience & they will make your hunting dreams come true.
Tel: +27 82 556 0760 (Apie)
Email: yolande@lionhuntingsafaris.com
Web: www.lionhuntingsafaris.com

Quagga Safaris
Quagga Safari has been offering quality and affordable safaris since 1991. Over the years it has built up to one of South Africa’s premier Safari destinations and they fine-tune all the little detail that make each client have a dream hunting experience. It’s all about personal attention.
Tel: +27 83 668 3240
Email: safari@quagga.co.za
Web: www.quagga.co.za

Dries Visser Safaris
Dries Visser Safaris combines the hunting experience and dedication with the art of hunting, with personal care and attention to provide hunters with an experience of a lifetime. The best concessions, skilled and experienced professional hunters are used.
Tel: +27 83 282 4822
Email: dries@dvisser-safaris.co.za
Web: www.dvisser-safaris.com

Tsessebe Safaris
Tsessebe is a 100% Spanish company managed from South Africa. Jose's goal is to make safaris an unforgettable hunting experience for his clients, always finding a high quality trophies as well as offering a good service.
Tel: +27 78 580 0104
Email: marzal@tsessebe.com
Web: www.tsessebe.com

FM Safaris
FM Safaris Private Game Ranch has very unique vegetation types, which broadly classified into Nama Karoo, Kalahari and Karoo mountain vegetation. This variety of vegetation creates rich biodiversity, which provide suitable habitats for a wide variety of fauna and flora.
Tel: +27 83 264 8725
Email: kalahari@fmsafaris.co.za
Web: www.fmsafaris.co.za

Greater Kuduland Safaris
Greater Kuduland Safaris owns 70 000 acres, with over 35 species of game. They offer fair chase on large unspoilt areas. Not only will you be hunting on some of South Africa’s largest privately owned reserves, but will also be amongst 4 of the “Big 5”.
Tel: +27 15 539 0720
Email: howard@greaterkuduland.co.za
Web: www.greaterkudulandsafaris.co.za

Impisi Safaris
Family-owned Impisi Safaris, a world-class hunting destination on 13000 acres of private land in the Limpopo Province, offers over 25 different plains-game plus Big Five species.
Tel: +27 72 803 4723
Email: anton@impisisafaris.com
Web: www.impisisafaris.com

eZulu Game Reserve
Our hunting areas are located in South Africa’s malaria-free Eastern Cape province, home to unique African species, and we offer some of the very best dangerous- and plains-game hunting in the country. Our magnificent trophies have been carefully preserved.
Tel: +27 42 235 1624 or +27 87 8072 562
Email: ezulu@hotmail.com
Web: www.ezulugamereserve.com

Southern Cross Safaris
Southern Cross Safaris is a family owned business in the Eastern Cape of South Africa. Our clients will enjoy superb hospitality with the best hunting opportunities available here, as well as in Mozambique & Tanzania.
Tel: +27 48 886 0606
Email: southerncrosssafaris@gmail.com
Web: www.southerncrosshunting.net

Southern African Outfitters
FM Safaris
FM Safaris Private Game Ranch has very unique Nama Karoo, Kalahari and Karoo mountain vegetation. This variety of vegetation creates rich biodiversity, which provide suitable habitats for a wide variety of fauna and flora.
Tel: +27 83 264 8725
Email: kalahari@fmsafaris.co.za
Web: www.fmsafaris.co.za

Southern Cross Safaris
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Tel: +27 48 886 0606
Email: southerncrosssafaris@gmail.com
Web: www.southerncrosshunting.net
Southern African Outfitters

Savannah South Safaris
The Eastern Cape boasts healthy herds of more than 30 species of antelope as well as numerous game birds varieties. Our hunting areas, rich in both historical interest and scenic beauty, are carefully selected to offer the highest quality in trophy hunting.
Tel: +27 82 567 4973
Email: savannahhec@intekom.co.za
Web: www.savannahsouthsafaris.com

Adansonia Safaris
Overlooking the Waterberg Mountains, Mof & Minnie, your host and hostess will give you a great South African welcome and guide you with your choice for an unforgettable African Safari experience.
Tel: +27 82 898 1974
Email: adansonia@lantic.net
Web: www.adansonia.co.za

TDK Safaris
TDK Safaris is built on trust and integrity and believe in ethical and responsible hunting through sustainable utilization. They operate in South Africa on their own property as well as carefully select their concessions offering an amazing 35 different species.
Tel: +27 73 368 4190
Email: kevin.brits@tdksafaris.com
Web: www.tdksafaris.com

Cheetah Safaris
Cheetah Safaris and Sable Safaris Zambia is a company that can offer you all the dangerous and plains game of Southern Africa. Situated on the banks of the Matlabas River, guests can fish, game view and bird watch from the luxury lodge.
Tel: +27 82 576 2043
Email: info@cheetahsafaris.co.za
Web: www.cheetahsafaris.co.za

Intrepid Safaris
On our private preserve located a mere 5 miles from the Limpopo River, our guests can view and hunt a huge variety of game animals. Among these are Cape Buffalo, Rhino, Sable, Leopard, Giraffe, Kudu and many, many more.
Tel: +27 83 633 5197
Email: info@intrepidsafaris.co.za
Web: www.intrepidsafaris.co.za

Bandur Safaris
Bandur Safaris has for the last 22 years established a reputation for sustaining large herds of game that can be hunted as well as offering top quality trophies.
Tel: +27 82 775 8045
Email: bandursa@lantic.net
Web: www.bandur.co.za

Wintershoek Safaris
Wintershoek OWN over 110 000 acres in four unique areas in the Northern Cape Province of South Africa. We also have access to some of the best Big Game Hunting/Hunting areas in the rest of South Africa.
Tel: +27 53 204 0042
Email: wiiaan@wintershoek.com
Web: www.wintershoekjvz.com

Phillip Bronkhorst Safaris
Phillip Bronkhorst Safaris is renowned for their personal attention to detail letting you enjoy a truly memorable experience and a lifetime of friendship are just some of the factors important to them.
Tel: +27 82 552 7269
Email: pbsafari@lantic.net
Web: www.pbsafaris.com

Spiral Horn Safaris
Spiral Horn Safaris is three miles from the border of Botswana on the Limpopo River. Join Louis for a true hunting experience! They specialize in both bow hunting and rifle hunting in South Africa.
Tel: +27 76 577 6292
Email: safari.spiralhorn@gmail.com
Web: www.spiralhorn.co.za
Southern African Outfitters

Eulalie Hunting Safaris
Eulalie Safari is in the Limpopo province of South Africa and the lodge is on the side of the Koedoesrant Mountain, an area known for notoriously large kudu. Ian’s wealth of hunting knowledge will make your dreams come true.
Tel: +27 82 375 7244
Email: ian@eulaliehunting.com
Web: www.eulaliehunting.com

Mabula Pro Safaris
Christo, Stella and the Mabula Pro Safari team will ensure that your African Safari will be the experience of a lifetime. We offer the discerning hunter - both bow and rifle - the opportunity to take home the best while catered for in luxury.
Tel: +27 832555069
Email: christo@mabulaprosafaris.co.za
Web: www.mabulaprosafaris.co.za

Wild Footprint Safaris
Tel: +27 14 594 1901
Email: pl@wildfootprintsafaris.com
Web: www.wildfootprintsafaris.co.za

Kwalata Wilderness
Kwalata Wilderness, a true hunter's paradise, hosts 4 of the big 5 on its privately owned 32 000 acre expanse in the Waterberg mountains of South Africa's Limpopo province. Here you will not only enjoy fair chase hunting but admire prolific wildlife and some of the most scenic terrain in Africa.
Tel: +27 14 755 4104
Email: office@kwalata.com
Web: www.kwalata.com

Daggaboy Safaris
Daggaboy Safari, under the expert guidance of owner outfitter Gerhard Vos plus the luxuriously comfortable lodge, will give any hunter and unforgettable experience!
Tel: +27 82 653 3129
Email: gerhardvos@daggaboy safaris.co.za
Web: www.dbsafaris.com

Bobby Hansen Safaris
Bobby Hansen Safari is owned and operated by Bobby and Vanessa Hansen of South Africa, where they have exclusive rights to private properties managed to maintain the highest trophy quality. Bobby has been professionally hunting for over 25 years.
Tel: +27 83 702 180
Email: info@bobbyhansensafaris.com
Web: www.bobbyhansensafaris.com

Eulalie Hunting Safaris
Eulalie Safari is in the Limpopo province of South Africa and the lodge is on the side of the Koedoesrant Mountain, an area known for notoriously large kudu. Ian’s wealth of hunting knowledge will make your dreams come true.
Tel: +27 82 375 7244
Email: ian@eulaliehunting.com
Web: www.eulaliehunting.com

Trophy Safaris cc
Trophy Safari is privately run by Douw & Bekker Paber, a professional hunting company, which offers its clients a unique and exclusive adventure, whilst maintaining the highest standards in personal service and hunting ethics.
Tel: +27 14 763 5598
Email: douw@trophy safaris.co.za
Web: www.trophy safaris.co.za

Safari Trails International
Russell Lovemore is the owner, Professional Hunter and outfitter of Safari Trails International. With 15 years’ experience in the Safari Hunting industry he is therefore well equipped to make sure you have a wonderful hunting experience and a truly memorable safari.
Tel: +27 83 303 7600
Email: Russell@safari-international.com
Web: www.safari-international.com
Sadaka Safaris
Situated in untamed Africa, Sadaka Safaris is a mere 2 hours from Johannesburg. Your hosts, Ewert and Karen will personally insure that all your requirements and needs are catered for and guarantee to exceed all your expectations of an African Hunting Safari.

Tel: +27 82 627 0350
Email: ewert@sadakasafaris.co.za
Web: www.sadakasafaris.com

Bushmen Safaris
Bushmen Safaris has years of experience in Africa and our trips will evoke a lifetime of memories. As bow hunters, our clients have placed more than 125 animals in the top 10 of the World Record Books.

Tel: +27 82 616 1942
Email: shannonvzyl@hotmail.com
Web: www.bushmensafaris.com

Dumukwa Safaris
Dumukwa Safaris is literally on the banks of the Limpopo river. Thick riverine bush and open savannah for hunting and a comfortable lodge will make this a truly unique hunting experience.

Tel: +27 82 378 0733
Email: dumukwasafari@icon.co.za
Web: www.dumukwa.com

Kuvhima Safaris
Kuvhima Safaris provide hunters the opportunity to hunt a wide selection of game on various concessions. From the main lodge the hills are home to leopard and have caves with ancient Bushman paintings. The accommodation is 5 star.

Tel: +27 14 765 0252
Email: kuvhima@mweb.co.za
Web: www.kuvhima.co.za

Graham Jones Safaris
"Over the years, it has been invaluable to hear from our guests that what they will treasure most, is knowing they lived a safari the way it once was offered and are both grateful and delighted they experienced it ‘The Proper way’.

Tel: +27 82 343 7663
Email: gjjsafaris@icon.co.za
Web: thesafarisofgrahamjones.com

Southern African Outfitters

Tusker Safaris
Tusker Safaris offers a focused bow hunting service. Jan and Hettie thrive on realizing their clients’ primary needs with personalized attention. They take the expectations of their clients and turn them into reality.

Tel: +27 83 730 1297
Email: tuskersafaris@lantic.net
Web: www.tuskersafaris.co.za

Limcroma Safaris
Limcroma Safaris is situated in the Limpopo Province of South Africa. Professional Hunter Hannes Els will be your host for an unforgettable African safari vacation. This region is one of the best hunting destinations in South Africa.

Tel: +27 83 627 0350
Email: hannes@limcroma.com
Web: www.limcroma.com

Pelser Bowhunting Safaris
With over 40 years combined professional hunting experience between them, Nico and Will guarantee to share their skills and make your bow hunting dreams a reality.

Tel: +27 82 6145731
Email: npelser@lantic.net
Web: www.pelserbowhunting.com

Liam Urry Safaris
Liam Urry Safaris is privately owned and take pride in providing a quality of service and a level of exclusivity guaranteed to give you a true “African experience”. We operate throughout South Africa and Africa, with many prime hunting areas.

Tel: +27 82 390 5861
Email: liam@lusafaris.co.za
Web: www.lusafaris.co.za
Southern African Outfitters

**Roger Whittall Safaris**

Founded in 1977, Roger Whittall Safaris is in its 4th decade of big game hunting safaris. Roger and Guy operate in prime areas in Zimbabwe and Mozambique, providing quality fair chase hunting safaris to the discerning African hunter and an adventure of a lifetime.

Tel: +263 774 186 005  
Email: rogerwhittallsafaris@gmail.com  
Web: www.rogerwhittallsafaris.com

**Didimala Safaris**

It would be a pleasure to have you join Didimala Safaris in creating the most memorable African Safari Experience possible. We believe that we are able to offer you an unforgettable Safari whilst operating under the highest ethical standards.

Tel: +27 83 294 5347  
Email: deine@didimalasafaris.co.za  
Web: www.didimalasafaris.co.za

**Falcon Safaris**

Falcon Safaris is a privately owned Game Reserve encompassing 4000 Hectares of pristine Bushveld, ranging from open savannah to mountainous terrain. We have in excess of 15 species available for hunting for bow and rifle hunters.

Tel: +27 14 786 0238  
Email: gerhard.falconsafaris@gmail.com  
Web: www.falconsafaris.co.za

**J P Big Game Safaris**

J P Big Game Safaris is a company specializing in African trophy hunting safaris. We pride ourselves as leaders in our field as we specialize in Big 5 hunting adventures. Our staff has vast experience in the ability to guide clients on a once in a lifetime big game safari.

Tel: +27 73 213 7902  
Email: stilbaaisafari@gmail.com  
Web: www.jpsafaris.com

**Afri-Sun Safaris**

Afri-Sun is located on the R379, Morokweng Vostershoop Road in the North West Province. The nearest town is Vryburg, 221km. The Botswana border is about 20km from the lodge. There are over 350 bird species that makes the Kalahari their homes. The Sand Grouse fly’s in great numbers from water hole to water hole to quench their thirst. They are ground dwelling birds restricted to treeless, open country, such as plains, savannahs and semi-deserts.

Mobile: 066 484 4229  
Email: afrisun72@gmail.com  
Website: www.afri-sun.com

**Bush Africa Safaris**

Owned and operated by Schalk and Terina van Heerden, safaris are conducted from the main (5 star) lodge on 10 000 acres of private land as well as many thousands of acres privately owned under concession of Bush Africa Safaris.

Tel: +27 82 452 0749  
Email: info@bushafricasafaris.co.za  
Web: www.bushafricasafaris.co.za

**Omujjeve Hunting Safaris**

Realise your lifelong dream of a perfect African Safari. We cater to your hunting needs and to your spouse and children with Windhoek city tours and shopping, game drives and fishing; all of this, luxury accommodation and exquisite cuisine!

Tel: +264 811 280 041  
Email: omujjeve@mweb.com.na  
Web: www.omujjevesafaris.com

**Bergzicht Safaris**

Bergzicht Game Lodge is a beautiful Namibian hunting ranch containing 22 different species of African plains game and offers you an opportunity to experience a trophy hunting trip, specifically planned around these African animals.

Tel: +264 81 128 4825  
Email: hannesd@africaonline.com.na  
Web: www.bergzicht-hunting.com

**Klawerberg - Namibia**

Discover the exotic, breathtaking country of Namibia. Share in the excitement of stalking magnificent trophies through the brush veld, one-on-one with your guide. Hunting on this private game farm is a dream come true.

Tel: +264 62 560 007  
Email: klauer@namibiahunting.net  
Web: www.namibiahunting.net
OtjiruzeJagd Guest Farm
Otjiruze was registered as a hunting farm in 1974. Namibian conservancies, with more than 25 species of game. Here you can hunt limitlesslly, and not see a boundary fence. Since 1990, over 80% of the trophies taken were awarded a gold medal.
Tel: +264 62 503106
Email: otjiruze@mweb.com.na
Web: www.otjiruze.com

Aru Hunting Safaris
Aru's unique terrains and passionate team ensure an unforgettable experience. Situated in the heart of Namibia, we offer plains and big-game hunting with an abundant range of sustainable species. Our luxury lodges, Kalakwa and Veronica, provide a welcome respite after the hunt. Enjoy a taste of Africa, at its finest
C: +264 (81) 129 5536
F: +264 88 645 376
E: info@arugamelodges.com
Tel/Fax: +264 81 128 1215
Email: damuller@iway.na
Web: www.daggaboy.com

Uhlenhorst Safaris
Uhlenhorst Hunting Safaris has been a family business for over 40 years. Here you will experience a variety of landscapes from red sand dunes, dense bush to open acacia veld. Uhlenhorst is on the border of the beautiful Kalahari Desert.
Tel: +264 812 944 676
Email: hoecon@mweb.com.na
Web: www.huntuhlenhorst.com

Nick Nolte Hunting Safaris
Nick Nolte Hunting Safaris invites you to experience a hunting safari in magnificent Namibia, one of Africa's most politically stable countries. Hunt more than 20 species of plains game available on free roaming concessions of approximately 100,000 hectares.
TelFax: +264 64 570888
Email: info@nicknoltehunting.com
Web: www.nicknoltesafaris.com

Daggaboy Hunting Safaris
Daggaboy Hunting Safaris is in the mountainous area known as the Khomas Hochland & offers plains game on a 8000ha ranch as well as concessions for dangerous game in the Eastern Caprivi of northern Namibia.
Tel: +264 81 128 1215
Email: damuller@iway.na
Web: www.daggaboy.com

Hunters Namibia Safaris
Hunters Namibia Safaris is one of Namibia’s most experienced and respected safari companies, offering exceptional trophy game hunting, luxurious accommodations and a full range of truly exciting options for the hunter.
Tel: +264 81 303 3010
Email: huntersn@mweb.com.na
Web: www.huntersnamibia.com

Westfalen Hunting Safaris
“DON’’T CHANGE YOUR HUNTING STYLE, CHANGE YOUR HUNTING DESTINATION”. Situated in North Western Namibia, Westfalen is a private hunting area of 37 000 acres, offering FREE RANGING plains game.
Tel: +264 61 238 772
Email: arubhunt@iway.na
Web: http://arubhunt.com

Kikuyu Lodge
Kikuyu Lodge is in the Eastern Cape Province on the Bushman’s river and encompasses over 30 square miles of pristine wilderness. This is truly a natural paradise with over 200 different species of birds and a large variety of game animals.
Tel: +27 82 578 1827
Email: hunt@kikuyulodge.co.za
Web: www.kikuyulodge.com

Aru Hunting Safaris
Aru’s unique terrains and passionate team ensure an unforgettable experience. Situated in the heart of Namibia, we offer plains and big-game hunting with an abundant range of sustainable species. Our luxury lodges, Kalakwa and Veronica, provide a welcome respite after the hunt. Enjoy a taste of Africa, at its finest
C: +264 (81) 129 5536
F: +264 88 645 376
E: info@arugamelodges.com
Tel/Fax: +264 81 128 1215
Email: damuller@iway.na
Web: www.daggaboy.com

OtjiruzeJagd Guest Farm
Otjiruze was registered as a hunting farm in 1974. Namibian conservancies, with more than 25 species of game. Here you can hunt limitlesslly, and not see a boundary fence. Since 1990, over 80% of the trophies taken were awarded a gold medal.
Tel: +264 62 503106
Email: otjiruze@mweb.com.na
Web: www.otjiruze.com

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C: +264 (81) 129 5536
F: +264 88 645 376
E: info@arugamelodges.com
Tel/Fax: +264 81 128 1215
Email: damuller@iway.na
Web: www.daggaboy.com

Hunters Namibia Safaris
Hunters Namibia Safaris is one of Namibia’s most experienced and respected safari companies, offering exceptional trophy game hunting, luxurious accommodations and a full range of truly exciting options for the hunter.
Tel: +264 81 303 3010
Email: huntersn@mweb.com.na
Web: www.huntersnamibia.com

Arub Safaris
Managed by owners Malan and Barista Lambrechts, this professionally run hunting outfit has been Malan’s passion for more than 20 years. Our Safari Ranch is yours while are with us and will make your walk and stalk hunt one you will never forget.
Tel: +264 61 238 772
Email: arubhunt@iway.na
Web: http://arubhunt.com
Southern African Outfitters

Afrika Jag Safaris
Afrika Jag Safaris is based on a hunting farm 100 km south of the Etosha National Park near Outjo. Form a spectacular setting for a unique Bow and Rifle hunting experience.
Tel: +264 81 232 633
Email: lukas@afrikajag.com
Web: www.afrikajag.com

Byseewah Safaris
Ken Morris, founder of World Wide Ethical Hunters with over 45 of experience, welcomes you to Byseewah Safaris, covering an area of over 28,000 ha and is situated close to Etosha Pan. The terrain is diverse, with Mopane forests, acacia woodlands, open savannah, hills, valleys and a large pan.
Tel: +264 67 31 2117
Email: byseewah@iway.na
Web: www.byseewah.com

Leopard Legend Hunting Safaris
Leopard Legend Hunting Safaris prides itself on offering a truly unforgettable lifetime experience. We go one step further to accommodate your hunting needs.
Tel: +264 81 236 0833
Email: info@leopardlegend.com
Web: www.leopardlegend.com

Gras Hunting Ranch
The Gras Hunting Ranch is located 232 km south of Windhoek. The hunting area covers over 92,800 acres of pristine savannah. Known for its abundant wildlife and majestic views, it is considered one of the most beautiful game ranches in Namibia.
Tel: +264 63 264 141
Email: info@grashuntingranch.com
Web: www.grashuntingranch.com

Onduri Hunting Safaris
Onduri Hunting Safaris lodge is located 450 km NW of Windhoek on a 13,000 ha farm, near Outjo and the Etosha National Park. Due to its location and hilly landscape, a huge variety of plain game is offered.
Tel: +264 67 312 125
Email: ondurisafaris@gmail.com
Web: www.onduri.com

Progress Safaris
At Progress Safaris, we take great care in scouting each hunting area beforehand and ensuring a sustainable outcome. Mature trophies are our aim combined with an exhilarating stalk. Each hunting safari is planned individually.
Tel: +264 62 560 033
Email: progress@mweb.com.na
Web: www.progress-safaris.com

Shona Hunting Adventures
At SHA we believe that animals should not be hunted simply for the size of their horns, tusks or ivory. The true trophy lies in the whole experience and the contribution that is made toward the environment. For too long there has been a stigma created among the non-hunting community that African game is only hunted for its so-called “trophies” and that the conservation value has been neglected. SHA specializes in Conservation Hunting, the selective taking of individual animals out of a natural environment.
Email: shona@africanhuntingnamibia.com
Web: www.AfricanHuntingNamibia.com

Rosslyn Safaris
Operating for over 40 years, Rosslyn Safaris offers professional and responsible hunting. Fabulous leopard, sable and plains game can be hunted with either bow or rifle. A large, good quality tented camp and high populations of animals allow for large groups or individual hunters.
Tel: +263 778 486493
Email: Juliet@rosslynsafaris.com
Web: www.rosslynsafaris.com
Southern African Outfitters

John Sharp Safaris
John Sharp is one of the most experienced big game hunters operating in Southern Africa today & while adhering to his strict ethics, he epitomises the authentic ‘Great White Hunter’ of legend. John is a true gentleman and puts the client at the centre of everything he does.
Tel: +263 77 221 7067
Email: hunts@john-sharp-safaris.com
Web: www.john-sharp-safaris.com

Pro Safaris Africa
Pro Safari is a Zimbabwean hunting company with access to the best hunting concessions throughout Zimbabwe & Namibia for both dangerous and plains game. Every client gets a personalized, unique hunting experience & do not offer pre-planned hunting packages.
Tel: +263 9 2368 94
Email: info@pro-saf.com
Web: www.pro-saf.com

De Klerk Safaris
De Klerk Safaris is situated in South Africa in the Kalahari Desert, a unique ecosystem famous for its huge, black-maned lions, enormous gemsbok, springbok, and other desert species. The two lodges only two hours' drive apart, offer clients a choice between different areas and species.
Tel: +27 82 828 4899
Email: dksafaris@gmail.com
Web: www.dksafaris.com

Eland Safaris
Tel: +27 82 493 6216
Email: info@elandsafaris.co.za
Web: www.elandsafaris.co.za

Stormberg Elangeni
At Stormberg Elangeni Safaris, where over 40 species of plains game occur, we ensure your safari is professionally organized. Most safaris are from our lodges in the Kat River and Stormberg Conservancies.
Tel: +27 46 622 9828
Email: admin@sesafaris.com
Web: www.stormberg-elangeni-safaris.com

Tinashe Outfitters
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eventually licenses were expensive. Black rhino he regarded as a nuisance to be avoided. As for lion and Cape buffalo, "you can't hunt them forever." Leopards were in a category by themselves — the "snakes of the big-game world." He hunted them, but they held no fascination except in staying alive. And so much for the Big Five.

Major Maydon’s lifetime bag in Africa is something to be envied. He hunted Walia ibex in the Semien region of Abyssinia (Ethiopia) and mountain nyla farther south. In Kenya, he took a big bongo bull high in the Aberdare, and Lord Derby eland in Sudan. Other rarities included Nubian ibex, addax and scimitar-horned oryx, and a dozen others. The list of countries hunted includes Sudan, Somaliland, Abyssinia, Egypt, Libya, Kenya, Tanganyika, Mozambique, the Rhodesias, South Africa, Namibia, and Botswana.

Maydon was, in some ways, ahead of his time. Big bags were not his goal, and he scorned substandard heads. He always wanted the best one he could get, and would not shoot a lesser head just to tick it off the list. Nor did he believe in mowing down the game in order to feed a camp full of hungry followers. Ravenous for meat they might be, he wrote, but they wasted as much as they ate, and accommodating this was no reason to massacre animals.

As he wrote, he was a “still-hunter,” which suggests he may have read Theodore Van Dyke’s book, as that term was not in general use in Africa at that time. Still-hunting is very similar to stalking, but Maydon reserved that term for what happened after you had spotted an animal and were attempting to get close enough for a shot.

Interestingly, in his Mauser rifle, he used Great War military ammunition almost exclusively, but always made certain he was close enough for a sure, killing shot. Shot placement? “Just behind the shoulder, rather lower than higher.” He had his share of failures, of course, but took every possible measure to avoid them.

Local knowledge — familiarity with the game and the terrain that can only be acquired by living there — was of the utmost importance, and in every country he covers, he explains about local tribes, certain customs, and how to find genuinely knowledgeable men — shikaris, Wandrobo hunters, Bushmen, and the like — who knew how to hunt. Not one to limit his tales to his successes, he goes into some detail about his very first expedition to Africa. It was a three-month-long venture into Portuguese East in which he and his companions made every mistake possible, from hiring “ownees” instead of real bush natives, to concentrating on the wrong game first, and, by neglecting map and compass, allowing themselves to be “guided” in a circle for the first month.

The account of hunting in the Semien massif of northern Abyssinia is a great story, combining danger, fear (of heights), larceny (by a local guide), and misfortune — a fine ibex that fell thousands of feet, destroying body and skull, and losing the broken horns. What parts of the ibex Maydon did manage to recover was through lowering skinners by ropes and sending up the bits, piecemeal. In the end, Maydon did shoot a 44-inch Abyssinian ibex (#1 in Rowland Ward, 1928, and #2 in the 1989 edition.) His companion, Gilbert Blaine, shot a 41-incher. On that expedition, simply coming back alive was an accomplishment.

Obviously, Major Maydon learned from his mistakes. He was nearing fifty when he wrote his book, long-since retired from the army and living in South Africa. If he had a favorite game animal, it seems to have been the Barbary sheep. He loved deserts and high country, and after hunting wild sheep in the Pamirs, Persia, and the Himalayas, he found the Barbary sheep the hardest to spot, the most elusive, and most cunning of them all. But, reading Maydon, one gets the impression he was as much in love with their country as he was with them.

As he wrote, in hunting big game, “you may be resorting to your natural state, the primitive; but if so, I say, give me the primitive. The game is merely an excuse to an end. You do not go to the wilds for the mere killing, but to win your freedom.” It is an attitude of which we could use a great deal more.

Big Game of Africa is long-out-of-print, but you can find it through the Internet. It is not cheap, and never has been, but if I could have only three or four books on African hunting, it would surely be one of them.

The aoudad is beautifully camouflaged, wary, and cunning. Formerly a dweller of the fringes of the Sahara Desert, where it is also known as the Barbary sheep, they are now readily found in west Texas — where they are still beautifully camouflaged, wary, and cunning.
By the book

Maydon is not a name that is commonly grouped with Baker, Selous, Bell, and Taylor, although it should be. In 1935, Major H.C. Maydon published a book on African hunting that was completely outside the norm. It was not an account of one expedition into unknown territory, like some of Baker’s, or about a lifetime of hunting mainly one species, like Bell. Instead, it was the first, as far as I know, of what we might call a handbook on where to go, and how to get there.

Maydon’s Big Game of Africa was intended to be about the nuts and bolts of hunting in Africa for the man without connections or family money — the man who was “keen, mad keen” to hunt big game. In the course of it, Maydon’s own unquenchable enthusiasm shines through like a beacon.

Hubert Conway Maydon was not born into money, never became wealthy and, for that matter, did not enjoy what we might call a stellar career in the British Army. Although a professional soldier and Sandhurst graduate, who served through the Great War when sheer attrition often guaranteed promotion, Maydon only achieved the rank of major. I suspect, although I have no way of knowing for sure, that his devotion to big-game hunting and his penchant for taking long leaves to pursue rare animals in far-off climes, might have contributed to that.

Maydon was born in 1884 and raised in Natal, South Africa, where his father was a minister in the colonial government. He graduated from Sandhurst in 1904 and joined the 12th Lancers, a cavalry regiment. At various times he was stationed in India and parts of Africa, and retired in 1924 when he was just 40 years old. He married in 1930, had one daughter, and died in 1944.

Major Maydon’s literary career was brief. He was editor of Big Game Shooting in Africa, one of the volumes in the Lonsdale Library series, which came out in 1935. As well as editing that volume, he contributed two articles of his own — on hunting Barbary sheep and scimitar-horned (white) oryx in the Sahara. That same year, his own book, Big Game of Africa, was published by Charles Scribner’s Sons.

This book was quite unlike anything that had gone before. It was intended as a guide to hunting all over Africa, written specifically for young men who, like himself, were long on enthusiasm but short on cash. He included advice on what rifles to get, and how to get good ones for less money, but did not go on about it at length. He listed the camp equipment required, and how it should be obtained. From there, he dealt with individual species, countries (or territories, or colonies) and licences.

Major H.C. Maydon counted the aoudad, or Barbary sheep, of the Sahara Desert as the most difficult to hunt of all the different species of wild sheep found from Africa to the Himalayas — and Major Maydon had hunted most of them. This old ram was taken in Texas, the only area where they are now readily hunted.

If this sounds like a tourist guide such as Europe on $5 a Day, it really was not. Although Maydon may not have intended it as such, it is almost the autobiography of a hunter who has outfitted himself almost exclusively, managed to get into remote and forbidding areas by hook or by crook, on camel-back or on foot, spending months at a time in the company of only a pal or two and his native guides.

Maydon’s advice is invariably both practical and pragmatic. For example, he emphasized the importance of having fresh-baked bread. This required yeast, which he advised the hunter to buy in England and take with him, as local yeast was unreliable. He also advised him to learn to make his own bread, ahead of time, otherwise he might find himself in a pinch trying to make bread by reading the instructions on the yeast tin.

By comparison to this advice on bread making, he gave scant attention to rifles themselves. He preferred a Mauser in 8x57 (7.9mm) and a .470 double of unidentified origin. He also admired the .303 British, but worried about the problem of importing ammunition into some jurisdictions. (The Sudan, for example, restricted the import of some calibers, which was partly the reason for the development of the .470 in the first place.) Like most experienced hunters and riflemen, he believed you were better off buying a best-quality rifle, second-hand, from a reputable dealer, than trying to save money with a cheap gun. Aside from these, the only rifle he mentions by name is a Mannlicher .355 (9x56).

While in India, Maydon hunted in the Central Provinces, on the plains, and in the jungles of the Terai. He hunted in Kashmir and the Himalayas, and developed a particular affinity for wild sheep.

Oddly enough, Maydon was not an enthusiastic elephant hunter, partly because
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